**TL 6926 – Valley Center Transmission Line Fire Hardening Project**

**Project Update**

**August 19, 2021**

**Oak Tree #268:**

Upon receiving a claim, SDG&E hired an arborist to review the condition of Oak Tree #268. The arborist’s report is attached.

Upon completion of SDG&E’s independent arborist’s investigation, the County of San Diego hired its own arborist, whose investigation reached the same conclusion as SDG&E’s. Results of the county arborist’s investigation are below.

*RECON Arborist, J. R. Sundberg, conducted an assessment of an oak tree at 30730 Cole Grade Rd, Valley Center, CA 92082 at the request of Mr. Thomas Duffy. The assessment was conducted to determine the potential causes of tree decline observed by an adjacent homeowner.*

*The oak tree was identified as a coast live oak (Quercus agrifolia) and is located northeast of the intersection of Cole Grade Road and Cool Valley Ranch Road at these coordinates: 33.26939760945776, -117.02363758542371 WGS84. The oak tree bore a metal tag with the number 268. The tree was growing along an ephemeral stream channel partly on exposed boulders. It is a mature tree with a diameter greater than 40 inches measured at approximately three feet above the ground surface. Exit holes from wood boring insects were observed in sizes ranging from 1 to 8 mm, and shapes varied from oval to oblong. Exit holes were abundant below the main branches and scattered higher up. No exit holes suggesting gold-spotted oak borer were observed. There was abundant frass (powdery material made of wood and insect excrement) on the root crown. Three areas of gummosis (gummy sap) were observed near the trunk base. The tree crown had sections which have thinned, that is some branches are lower in vigor and dying back , but no general defoliation (uniform loss of leaves) was observed.*

*Other coast live oak trees in the immediate vicinity had some evidence of wood borers (exit holes, frass) but appeared to have full crowns, no overall defoliation, and generally appeared healthy. This included trees tagged 30 and 31, which were located closer to the dewatered area, and more to be likely affected by dewatering.*

*From the variability of exit holes and abundant frass, the inspected tree likely has an infestation of multiple species of common wood boring insects such as ambrosia beetles (Scolytidae), flatheaded borers (Buprestidae), and roundheaded borers (Cerambycidae). Due to the successional nature of wood borer infestation, this indicates the tree has likely had an ongoing infestation for at least two years, and most likely more. Gummosis may be a response to the insect damage, mechanical damage, or other infection. The fact that trees closer to the dewatering appear unaffected indicates the dewatering operation did not likely contribute to the coast live oak in question. The tree is very mature and is likely declining due to wood borers and has been for a number of years.*

*Feel free to contact me if you need any photos or additional information.*

*Thanks,*

*J. R. Sundberg*

*Botanist/Biologist*

*ISA Certified Arborist****RECON Environmental, Inc.***

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**Claims:**

SDG&E has set up a specific claims representative within our claims department to immediately investigate any concerns customers may have.  We have identified an arborist and hydrogeologist to work with customers and our claims team to evaluate any concerns.

The claims process is the first step in identifying potential impacts and commencing a dialogue between SDG&E and concerned customers.  Initiating a claim does not forfeit the ability of the customer to initiate litigation.

 If you believe you have been impacted by the project’s dewatering activities, please visit <https://www.sdge.com/businesses/savings-center/services/how-make-claim> to download a claims form and obtain additional information on SDG&E’s claims process.

Please don’t hesitate to contact Todd Voorhees at 844-765-6388 or via email at [tvoorhees@sdge.com](mailto:tvoorhees@sdge.com) should you have any questions.