



Preliminary Ignition Investigation Report

Ignition Database Index:	20240347
Electric Incident Investigation (EII) Number:	N/A
Incident Name:	Bucks Fire
PG&E Facility Ignition?	Yes
CPUC Reportable Ignition?	Yes
Date & Time of Incident:	May 1, 2024, at 1348 Hours
Street Address:	Silver Lake Road and Bucks Lake Road
City:	Meadow Valley
County:	Plumas
Latitude/Longitude:	39.928003, -121.083794
State Responsibility Area (SRA) / Local Responsibility Area (LRA) / Federal Responsibility Area (FRA)	Federal Responsibility Area (FRA)
PG&E Division:	North Valley
High Fire Threat District (HFTD):	Tier 2
High Fire Risk Area (HFRA):	Yes
EPSS Buffer:	No
Fire Index Area (FIA):	285
Fire Potential Index (FPI) Rating: FIA	R1
Fire Potential Index (FPI) Rating: Circuit	R1
Was there a PSPS event at the time of ignition?	No
Suspected Initiating Event:	Contact- 3 rd Party
Failure Driver:	Contact from Object
Failure Sub-driver:	Vegetation Contact
Circuit:	GANSNER 1101
Circuit Protection Zone:	GANSNER 11012006
Nominal Voltage:	12kV
Pole SAP Equipment ID:	100438785
Subject to PRC 4292 Veg Pole Clearance:	N/A
PG&E Equipment associated with ignition:	Primary Conductor
EPSS enabled at time of ignition?	No
Fault Type:	Line to Ground
Wire Down (Primary)?	Yes
Lead Agency/Agency Having Jurisdiction:	United States Forest Service
Fire Size:	<.25 acres
FAS Field Remarks:	logging outfit thinning an area fell tree into line
HAWC Summary:	1545 Hours - Irwin report of a vegetation fire, no radio traffic coming through, there is an outage in the area will continue to monitor for radio traffic as well as OMT for any updates; 1549 Hours - Incident

	name is Bucks, still waiting for an update on conditions; 1615 Hours - Per PSS [REDACTED] a private tree company fell a tree into the lines igniting an approximately 1-acre vegetation fire, units at scene have stopped the forward progress of the fire. There is no longer a threat to assets; 1754 Hours - Received a call from PG&E Law team and shared the following: Resources responded to a vegetation fire near the intersection of Bucks Lake Road and Silver Lake Road in Plumas County. The fire had forward progress stopped at approximately 1 acre. There was an outage in the immediate area impacting approximately 319 customers on Gansner 1101 on OIS# 2443598. Per the PSS a private tree crew cut a tree into the lines igniting an approximately 1-acre fire, Plumas National Forest resources were able to contain the fire and mitigate any further threat to PG&E assets. Notifications have been made to PSS and DCC. 1928 Hours - Per FAS report # 20240501 T-Man comments: logging outfit thinning an area fell tree into line. Suspected cause third party non-PG&E contractor.
Injuries / Fatalities / Property Damage / Media Attention:	No
Weather Conditions:	75.2° F; 19% Humidity; 14mph Wind Speed; WNW Wind Direction; 21mph Wind Gusts
Red Flag Warning (RFW) / High Wind Warning (HWW):	N/A
911 Standby Relief Time:	N/A
OIS #:	2443565, 2443598, TR6622372
ILIS #:	24-0060994
FAS #:	T006383920, T006383922, T006383935, T006384085
TOTL #:	N/A
Assigned Attorney:	N/A
Ignition Investigator & Phone:	[REDACTED]

Executive Summary

On May 1, 2024, at approximately 1402 hours, a PG&E troubleshooter was dispatched to a two-phase overhead segment of the Gansner 1101 12kV primary distribution circuit in response to multiple SmartMeter™ auto-generated outage reports. The outage reports resulted from a vegetation management crew performing work for the United States Forest Service (USFS) on The Mount Hough Ranger District within the Plumas National Forest. The crew reported a fallen tree had damaged overhead powerlines near Silver Lake Road and Bucks Lake Road, Meadow Valley, California.

This location of the incident was in a Tier 2 Elevated High Fire Threat District (HFTD), High Fire Risk Area (HFRA), and Federal Responsibility Area (FRA) approximately one-half mile from the 2021 Dixie Fire footprint.

By analyzing phone calls made to the Distribution Call Center (DCC), it was determined the troubleshooter arrived at the Incident Location at approximately 1434 hours. Once at scene, the troubleshooter located a third-party tree cutting contract crew on-scene standing by observing a large tree leaning against both spans of 2-aluminum conductor steel reinforced (ACSR) primary overhead (OH) conductor in-between the 40-foot wood poles and an active fire on the ground below (SAP 100438785 and 100391188). The automated upstream protective device, Line Recloser 2006 (SAP 40172574), was manually opened at 1434 hours.

The troubleshooter called the Distribution Operator and requested they contact 911. Resources from the Meadow Valley Volunteer Fire Department and the United States Forest Service (USFS) - Plumas National Forest responded after the troubleshooter arrived on-scene, and the forward progress of the fire was already stopped at approximately one-tenth of an acre by the troubleshooter. The approximately one-tenth of an acre fire known as the “Bucks Fire” was extinguished by the troubleshooter, the Meadow Valley Fire Department and the USFS. The troubleshooter remained on-scene to provide his statement to the USFS Investigator. The troubleshooter was unable to patrol, so he opened the additional fuse at Fuse Cutout 18735 at 1649 hours to make it safe and tagged it Man-On-Line (MOL). The repair crew arrived on-scene to ground the line and remove the tree from the lines at 1705 hours.

The third-party contractor was identified as G E Forestry, Inc. located in Medford, Oregon. From reviewing data from [usaspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov), it appears the company was awarded a blanket purchase agreement (12363N23F4251) for a forest wide fuel reduction mechanical stewardship service contract, located in the Plumas National Forest. The contract began on August 9, 2023, and runs through January 1, 2027. See https://www.usaspending.gov/award/CONT_AWD_12363N23F4251_12C2_12363N23A4169_12C2 for details on the contract.¹

Initial analysis indicates the ignition was caused by a tree that was cut and fell into the lines via the Non-PG&E third-party logging contractors (G E Forestry, Inc.), working on behalf of the USFS. The tree fell and made contact with both energized phases, which resulted in arcs, sparks, and ignited a fire on the ground below.

There was a 14 miles per hour (MPH) westerly northwestern wind with 22 MPH wind gusts shortly before the initial outage reports. Per the HAWC, the temperature was estimated at 70° F with 12% humidity. The 226-

¹ The initial obligated amount was for the sum of \$1,547,812.00. On February 29, 2024, there was a reduction in the contract of \$7,031.00 due to an administrative action. We have requested the contract from the Washington Office to determine if that was for a rules violation of the contract that could have contributed to this ignition (i.e. not having suppression tools, etc.). The report will be updated as necessary once it is received.

minute outage affected 319 customers. The outage began at 1348 hours and the line was returned to service at 1734 hours. At that time the scene was safe, and all the customers were restored.²

System Protection Analysis

EPSS was not enabled for the Gansner 1101 distribution circuit at the time of the ignition due to the R1 FPI conditions for the circuit, the expected wind speeds, relative humidity, and fuel moisture thresholds for the service area.

Ignition Impact

The ignition was contained to the vegetation, resulting in a fire that was approximately .1 acres in size. There were no reports of injuries, fatalities, or property damage. The 226-minute outage affected 319 customers. The outage began at 1348 hours and was returned to service at 1734 hours.

Sequence of Events

May 1, 2024

- 1353 hours First no light
- 1402 hours Troubleshooter dispatched to ignition
- 1434 hours Troubleshooter arrived at scene, LR2006 opened
- 1601 hours Plumas National Forest dispatch contacted, confirmed USFS resources at scene
- 1652 hours LR2006 closed
- 1734 hours Fuse 18735 closed, 319 customers service restored

Corrective Notification Associated with Ignition

A priority 'B' EC tag #128719146 was created on May 6, 2024, to replace a section of burnt 2-ACSR conductor. This priority 'B' EC tag is scheduled to be completed by August 6, 2024.

A priority 'B' EC tag #128718742 was created on May 6, 2024, to remove a dead or dying Fir tree that is within striking distance from a 12kV primary conductor in a fire area. The tree is approximately 32-feet from the conductor and is approximately 65-feet tall. The tree has a split growth 3-feet above the ground line. This priority 'B' EC tag is scheduled to be completed by November 6, 2024.

² This information is preliminary and based on all information made available to PG&E as of May 13, 2024. Upon receipt of requested documents from the USFS (fire investigation report, dispatch records and the blanket purchase agreement 12363N23F4251).

Pending Work

Type	Number	Description	Priority	Date Identified	Due Date
EC Notification	128719146	Replace burned conductor	B	05/06/2024	08/06/2024
	128718740	Clearance of conductor impaired	E	05/06/2024	05/13/2024
	128718742	Remove dead/dying Fir tree	B	05/06/2024	11/06/2024
	117142279	Replace decayed pole	E	05/01/2019	05/01/2020
COE Notification	N/A				
LC Notification	N/A				
Veg Work Order	N/A				

Please note this may not include pending major program or project work at the incident location.

Asset Info & Most Recent Inspections and Tests

SAP Pole Structure ID#	100438785	
Info / Inspection	Most Recent Date	Findings
Install Date:	1949	40-foot, Douglas Fir, Class 4 wood pole
Inspection:	July 3, 2022	No anchor, guys, hardware, framing or vegetation conditions reported
	June 27, 2021	No anchor, guys, hardware, framing or vegetation conditions reported
Patrol:	N/A	
Corrective History:	N/A	
Aerial Inspection Records:	N/A	
VM Inspection:	N/A	
EVM Inspection:	N/A	Not previously in EVM scope
Equipment Test:	N/A	
Pole Intrusive Test:	Dec. 19, 2008	PTT Test results show the pole passed with a calculated strength of 100.
WSIP Inspection:	May 1, 2019	No compelling abnormal conditions for the pole, equipment and associated spans were noted.

*Incident Location: SAP ID 100438785

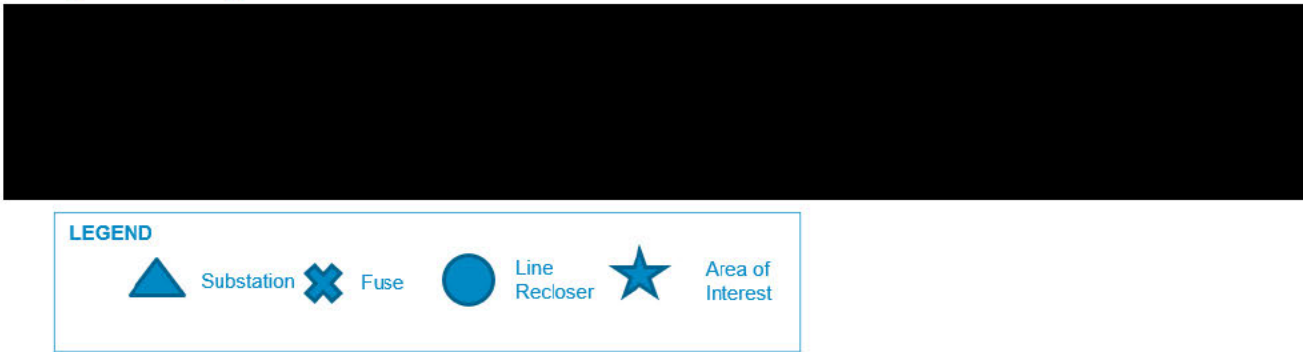
Hazard Barrier Analysis:

Hazard	Third Party Contact	Sub-Hazard	Vegetation Contact
Target	Tree fell into distribution line		
Barrier	Expected vs. Observed Performance	Why did the barrier not prevent the ignition event? (See ICF Codes)	Opportunity
Barriers that were Assessed as Opportunities			
Covered Conductor on Primary Conductors	Expected Performance: Covered conductor should lower the risk of a wildfire. Requires tree wire to be installed for new construction and reconstruction work in Tier 2 and Tier 3 Fire Areas and Zone 1 (tree mortality) areas.; Observed Performance: Barrier did not exist	Strategy: Program Strategies; Line Equipment Related; Program limited to certain conductors	We need to review if this an area that would benefit from covered conductor being installed in the forest.
Public Safety Outreach	Expected Performance: To mitigate fire ignition due to vegetation that was deemed probable to fall into or otherwise impact electric facilities.; Observed Performance: Barrier did not perform as expected	Non-Conformance: Work Non-Conformance; Work Execution; Work not performed in accordance to standard.	Third-party contractor working for the USFS on the PNF, fell a tree into the powerlines they were attempting to clear around.

Potential Next Steps / Associated CAP Items:

There are no recommended potential next steps or associated CAP items currently.

Single Line Diagram



Photos and Diagrams of Events

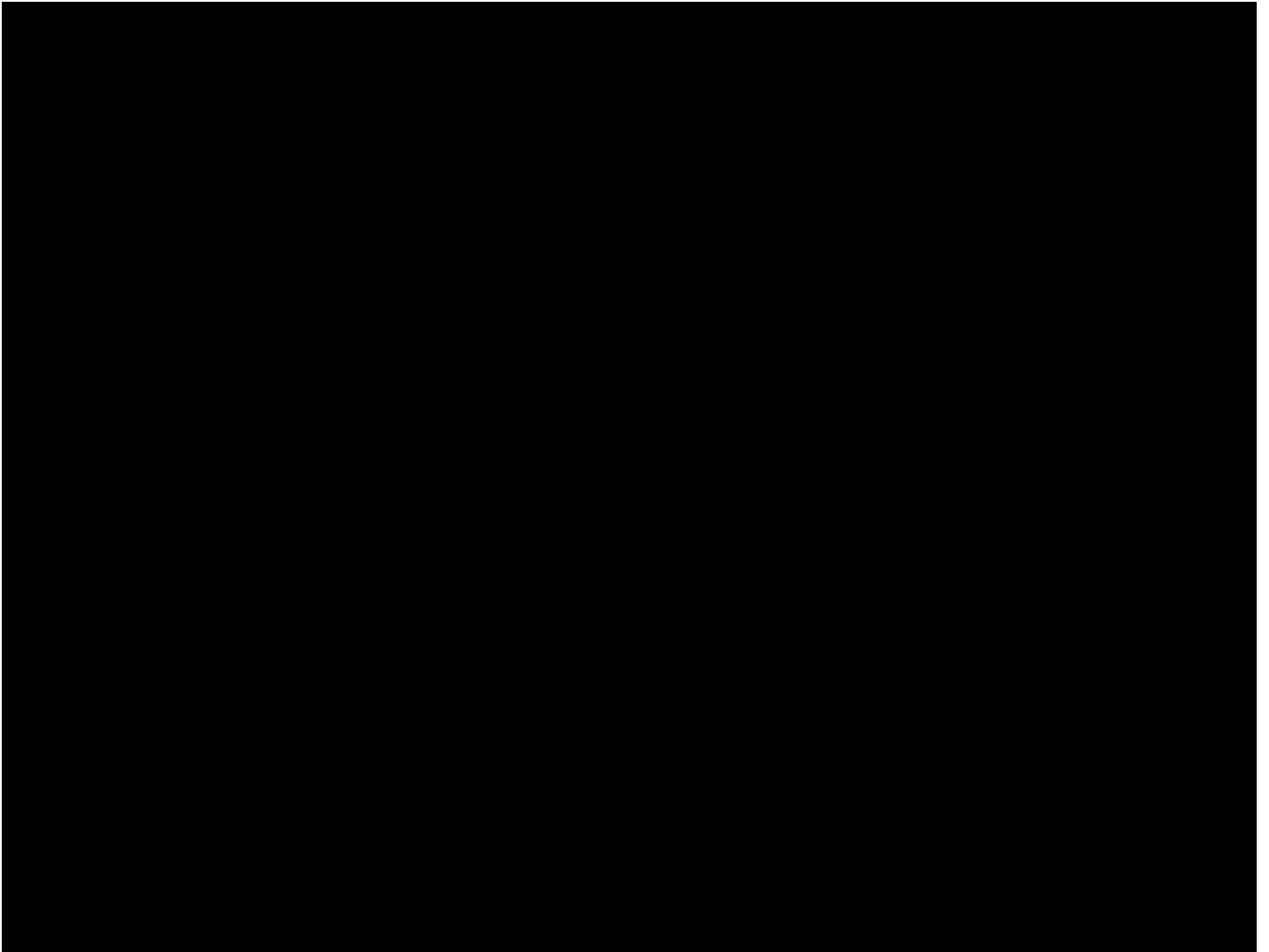


Figure 1 – Google Earth view of Incident Location (designated by red arrow) where contract crew hired by the USFS fell a tree into the conductors.

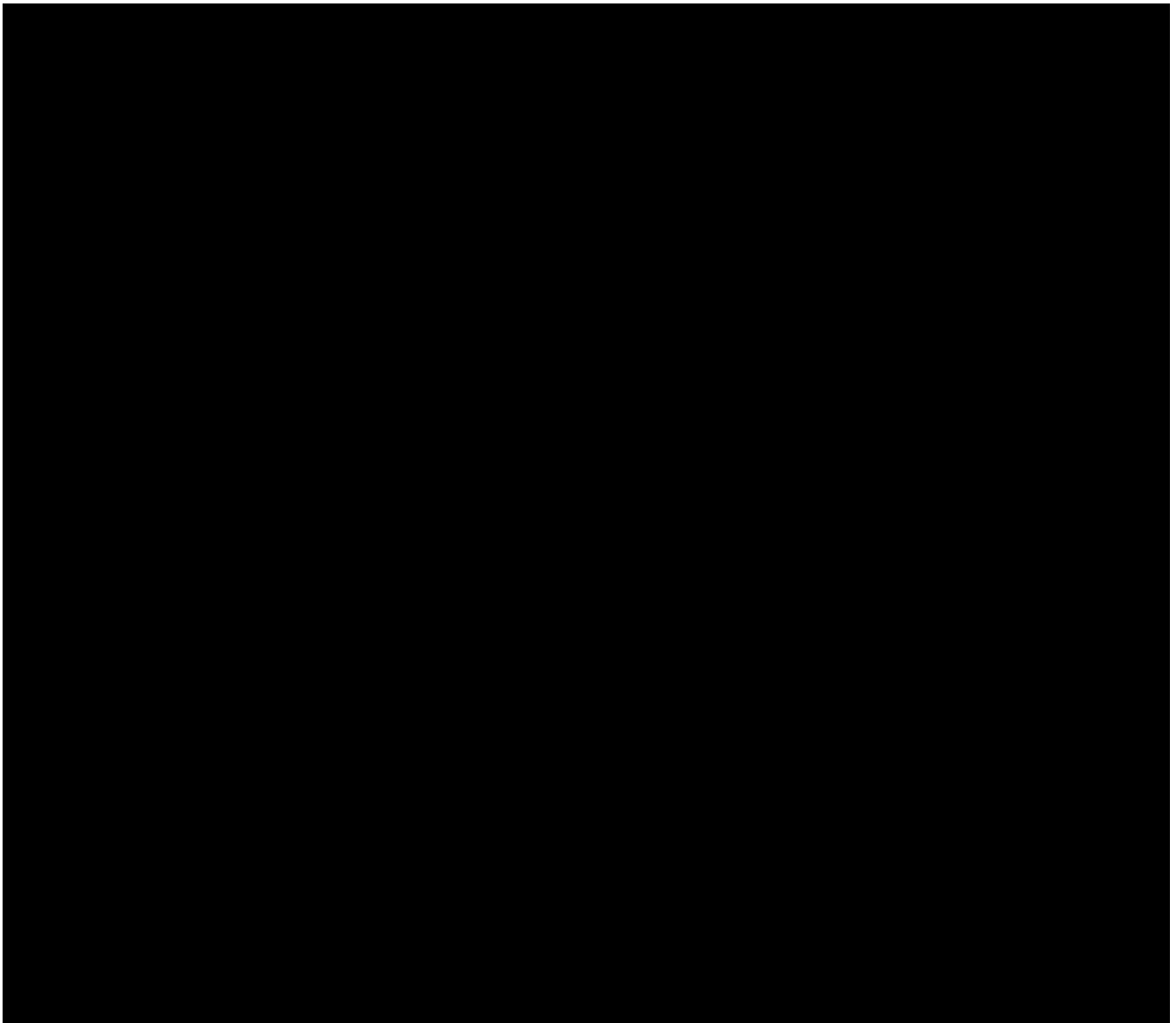


Figure 2 – Google Earth view of Incident Location showing location of Fuse 18737 which was operated due to line to ground fault.

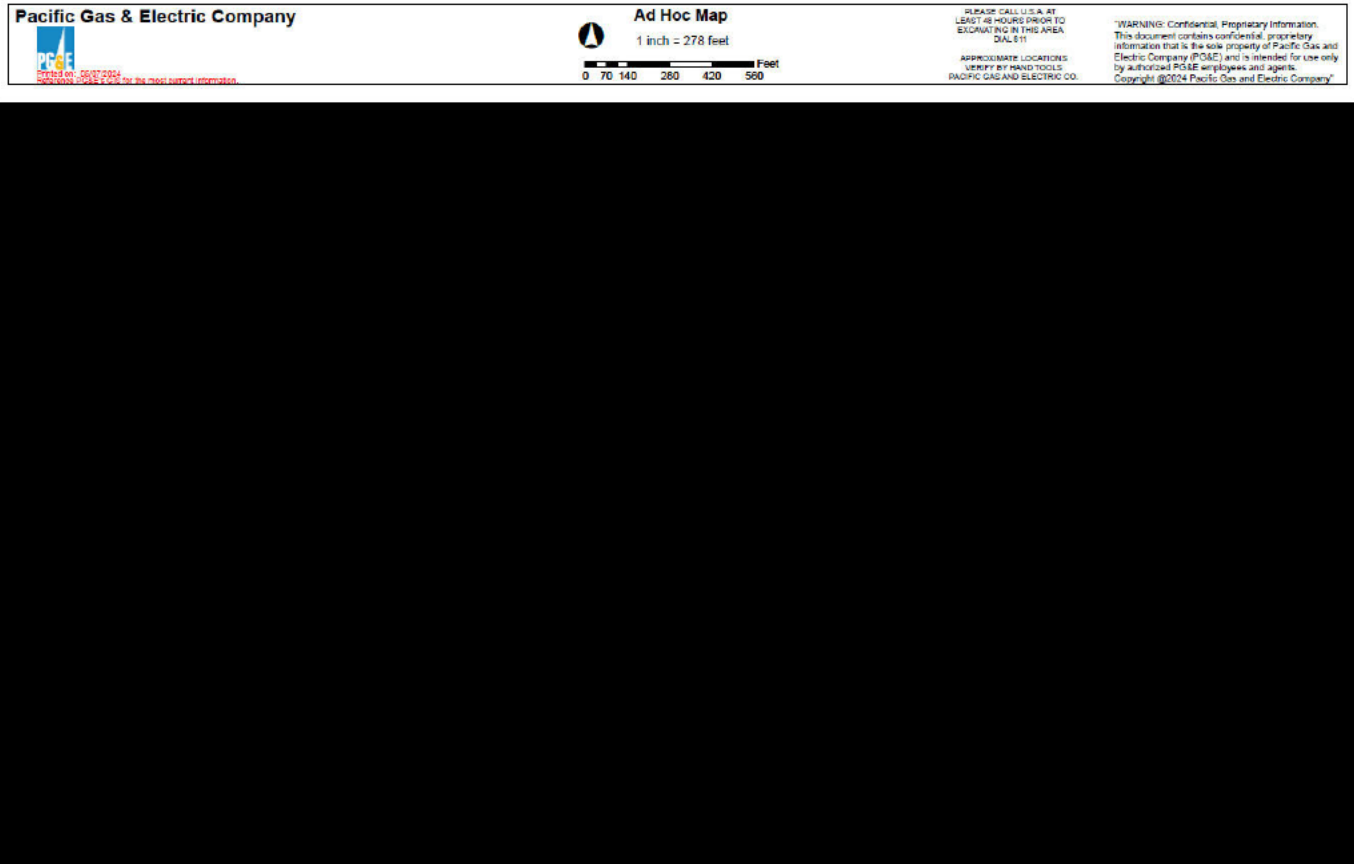


Figure 3 – Overview map showing distribution circuit and the area flown by drone



Figure 4 – Image of Pole SAP ID# 100438785 as captured in Sharper Shape dated May 18, 2021.



Figure 5 – Image of area of origin with subject tree in picture taken by troubleshooter



Figure 6 – Image of contractor vehicle, G E Forestry, Inc., responsible for cutting subject tree that caused ignition.



Figure 7 – Image of Meadow Valley Volunteer Firefighters conducting mop up operations on fire.



Figure 8 – Image of conductor where tree made contact with the conductor, resulting in the ignition of the fire.

Attachments

Attachments and references can be located in the ESA folder, located below:



-----END of REPORT-----