

DATA REQUEST RESPONSE
Bear Valley Electric Service, Inc.

Response provided by:	Jon Pecchia
Title:	Utility Manager
Data Request Number:	OEIS-BVES-22-003
Date Received:	June 3, 2022
Date Due:	June 8, 2022
Date Provided:	June 8, 2022

REQUEST

Q01. Fault Indicators

- a. In Section 7.3.2.3, Bear Valley (BVES) writes that it plans to increase the number of fault indicators in 2022 and 2023 with the installation of 129.**
 - i. As of January 1, 2022, how many fault indicators had BVES already installed?**
 - (1) How many of those fault Indicators were installed in 2021?**
 - ii. Is BVES planning to install additional fault indicators past 2023 in its territory?**
 - (1) If so, provide the total number of fault indicators BVES plans to install in its territory.**

Response:

As of January 1, 2022, Bear Valley had 110 Fault Indicators (FIs) in its system. No FIs were installed in calendar year 2021. The current plan is to install an additional 129 FIs as follows:

- 50 FIs in 2022
- 79 FIs in 2023

Bear Valley will then evaluate if additional FIs are necessary. The 110 FIs currently installed in Bear Valley's system are not integrated into SCADA. Bear Valley may replace some of these FIs after 2023 with SCADA compatible FIs based on Bear Valley's experience in integrating some of the 129 FIs into SCADA.

Q02. Weather Stations

- a. In Section 7.3.2.1 (pg. 141), BVES describes integrating weather**

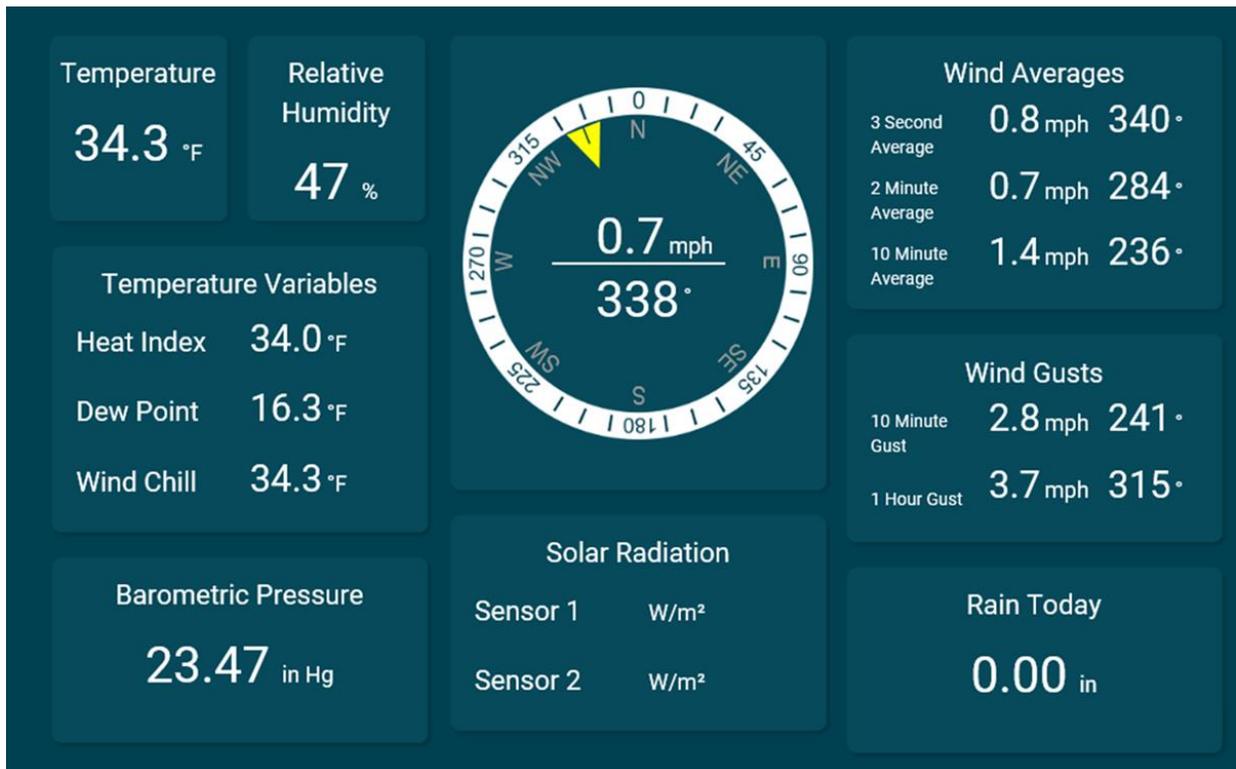
station outputs with SCADA to be able to display and set alarms and notifications based on weather conditions.

i. When does BVES expect to integrate weather stations with SCADA?

Response

No date has been set yet as there are two issues that Bear Valley is considering. They are:

- Bear Valley recently (December 2021) completed installing its Fiber Network in its service area and is integrating substations and key switches into SCADA as a priority.
- Weather station information is currently captured via a cellular network and monitored continuously with alarm capability through the weather stations (Orion) network. This system is providing excellent information real-time displays and history. Please refer to the sample screen display below. Therefore, Bear Valley is still evaluating whether or not to integrate the weather stations into SCADA and is considering the following factors (1) will there be an improvement in weather station information displays in SCADA over the current setup and (2) will the bandwidth taken up by shifting weather stations to the SCADA worth the gain.



Q03. Fire Potential Index (FPI)

- a. Is BVES planning on developing an FPI or metric serving as an FPI?**
 - i. If not, please describe why.**
 - ii. If so, please provide timeline for completion.**

Response

Bear Valley is not currently planning on developing an FPI of its own. Bear Valley currently utilizing the NFRDS as its guide. This process has been in place for over five years and in this time period Bear Valley has not experiences any ignitions.

As discussed in Section 7.3.1.1., Bear Valley has engaged Technosylva to improve its weather and fire risk forecasting. Technosylva’s work has just begun and should be fully implemented by the end of 2022. During this process, Bear Valley will evaluate whether or not there is value in having a specific FPI system or whether or not to have our Operations Team evaluate the Technosylva

fire risk heat maps real-time and make our assessments using this powerful tool.

Q04. End Projections of Maturity Survey

- a. In BVES’s Maturity Survey, its capability levels for the current year (2022) are lower than its projected end (2023) levels for 25 capabilities; in some cases the current levels are 2-4 levels lower than end projections. Does BVES still expect to meet its end projection maturity levels?**
- i. If so, how will BVES meet its end projections?**
 - ii. If not, explain why BVES will not meet its end projections, including a narrative as why there is such disconnect between current maturity levels and end projections.**

Response

In responding to this question, Bear Valley reviewed the maturity model again and at this point assesses that it is on track to achieve the indicated maturity levels. Many of the items will be achieved when:

- Bear Valley fully implements the ignition probability and risk maps that we developed by REAX Engineering at the circuit level for the entire BVES system for current climate conditions. These were finalized in late December 2021.
- Bear Valley fully implements the ignition probability and risk maps that we developed by REAX Engineering at the circuit level for the entire BVES system for future (2050) climate conditions. These were finalized in late December 2021.
- Bear Valley has engaged Technosylva to improve its weather and fire risk forecasting and provide ignition probability and wildfire risk at the circuit level in near real-time. These forecasts are to be automatically pushed to Bear Valley, creating a significant capability for Bear Valley across many capabilities.
- Bear Valley continues to improve its GIS database and is upgrading its vegetation management inventory database with significant improvements to its capabilities which will allow for better management of inspections and tree trimming activities.

Q05. Decreases in Maturity

- a. **Question F.II.a of the Maturity Survey reads “Does the utility have a clearly explained process for determining whether to operate the grid beyond current of voltage designs?” In 2020 and 2021, BVES responded “Yes;” however, in 2022, BVES changed its answer to “No.” Why does BVES no longer have a process for determining whether to operate the grid beyond current or voltage designs?**

Response

Bear Valley re-evaluated its previous response and its current capabilities and determined that it does not have a process for determining whether to operate the grid beyond current of voltage designs. Bear Valley also has determined that there are no scenarios where operating the system beyond its current or voltage designs would be justified; therefore, there is no need to develop this capability as a priority.

- b. **Question F.IV.b of the Maturity Survey reads “Which of the following does the utility take into account when making PSPS decisions?” In 2021, BVES selected “a partially automated system in which recommends circuits for which PSPS should be activated and is validated by SMEs;” however, in 2022, BVES selected “SME opinion.” Why does BVES no longer use a partially automated system which recommends circuits for which PSPS should be activated?**

Response

In responding to the 2021 Survey, Bear Valley interpreted “a partially automated system” to mean use of the NFRDS. Since then, Bear Valley through collaboration effort has gained a better understanding of how the larger utilities are making PSPS decisions and what a partially automatic system would look like. Therefore, Bear Valley re-evaluated its response to better reflect the current and projected situation. As discussed in Section 7.3.1.1., Bear Valley has engaged Technosylva to improve its weather and fire risk forecasting for the purpose of evaluating PSPS. Technosylva’s work has just begun and should be fully implemented by the end of 2022. During this process, Bear Valley will evaluate whether or not is will be able to implement a partially automated system.

- c. Question J.II.b of the Maturity Survey reads “Are there communities in HFTD areas where meaningful resistance is expected in response to efforts to mitigate fire risk?” In 2020 and 2021, BVES responded “No;” however, in 2022, BVES responded “Yes.” Please describe the reasons for the response changing to “Yes” and any actions BVES is taking to ameliorate meaningful resistance in response to efforts to mitigate fire risk.**

Response

Bear Valley had rarely received push back on its vegetation clearing efforts. However in 2021 Bear Valley saw an increase in push back and complaints from residents regarding vegetation clearance efforts including removal of hazard trees. While each case was resolved satisfactorily with the specific customers, Bear Valley concluded it should change its response to “Yes” for this item given the uptick in complaints regarding vegetation clearance.

- d. Question J.IV.a of the Maturity Survey reads “What is the cooperative model between the utility and suppression agencies?” In 2020 and 2021, BVES responded “Utility cooperates with suppression agencies by working cooperatively with them to detect ignitions, in addition to notifying them of ignitions as needed.” However, in 2022, BVES responded “Utility cooperates with suppression agencies by notifying them of ignitions.” Why does BVES no longer work cooperatively with suppression agencies to detect ignitions?**

Response

Bear Valley changed this response because it initially considered the fact that it was installing the ALERTWildfire cameras in the service area as “working cooperatively with them to detect ignitions.” Bear Valley has re-assessed this position since, while Bear Valley did install the cameras, Bear Valley does not (and does not have the capacity) to monitor the cameras 24/7. Cameras are monitored by the San Bernardino County. Therefore Bear Valley modified its response. Bear Valley does work cooperatively with suppression agencies to report ignitions.

Q06. Updating of Vegetation Management Plan

- a. On page 193, BVES mentions that its Vegetation Management Plan is updated on an as-needed basis not to exceed three years. In a footnote on the same page, BVES states that BVES met with stakeholders in the previous year to gather feedback and input into its vegetation maintenance program.**
 - i. What came out of those meetings? What were the suggestions?**
 - ii. Has and/or will BVES change its vegetation maintenance program, emergency planning, and/or wildfire mitigation strategy in response to these meetings?**
 - (1) If so, how?**
 - (2) If not, why?**

Response

Bear Valley updated its Vegetation Management Plan in October 2021 partly as a result of working with stakeholders mainly regarding policy on clearing base of poles or structures that have non-exempt equipment per CALFIRE requirements and clearance requirements for brush, limbs and foliage in the right of way (ROW). This update also included more detailed guidance on Bear Valley’s Tree Trunk and Major Limb Exception policy and added some periodic Quality Assurance Audits to the program.

Q07. Qualifications of Vegetation Management Quality Control Personnel

- a. In Appendix E “BVES Vegetation management and Vegetation QA/QC/ Programs” Table 5-2, BVES lists the designated staff that are assigned vegetation management quality control (QC) checks. Describe and/or list the qualifications (e.g., education, training, experience, certifications, licenses) for each designated staff that qualifies them to perform vegetation management QC checks.**

Response:

Qualifications (e.g., education, training, experience, certifications, licenses) for each designated staff that qualifies them to perform vegetation management QC checks are as follows.

Contracted Personnel:

- Shane Smith (Davey Resource Group) serves as the main contractor managing BVES’s account and holds more than four years of experience as a Utility Forester with three years attributed to certifications through the International society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist. Mr. Smith also holds a Tree Risk Assessment

Qualification.

- Additional foreman (Mowbray Tree Service) account for:
 - 29 ISA Certified Arborists
 - One Registered Professional Forester
 - Two biologists supporting environmental compliance and commitments

BVES Personnel:

- Paul Marconi (President)
 - 38 years of engineering and technical experience with electrical power systems including field inspections of equipment
 - Managed the vegetation management program for four years and provided oversight of the vegetation management program for an additional three years
 - Has conducted vegetation management clearance inspections for seven years

- Jeff Barber (Operations Supervisor)
 - Spent over 42 years in the utility industry
 - Journeyman Lineman- Trimmed and maintained proper clearances
 - Power Troublemaker – Emergency trimming and identification for planned vegetation crew trimming
 - Line Crew Foreman – Direct crews during emergency power restoration on proper vegetation clearing
 - Operations Manager – Developed and directed the day to day vegetation trimming program through operations staff
 - Assistant General Manager of Operations – Oversee the entire vegetation management program for Pasadena Water and Power Municipal Utility (PWP) – under my program implementation and oversight, for 17 years PWP received the highest award given to a utility vegetation program; the Tree Line Utility USA award given by the National Arbor Day Foundation

- Jon Pecchia (Utility Manager)
 - BS and PE Chemical Engineer
 - Over a year of conducting quality check (QC) tree trims
 - 10 years as environmental consultant conducting site inspections and project management involving a variety of environmental and safety issues

- 13 years of experience in general management of industrial equipment used in hazardous areas
- Tom Chou (Utility Engineer and Wildfire Mitigation Supervisor)
 - 13 years as an Electrical Engineer
 - Eight Years with BVES as substation designer, transmission/distribution designer and compliance engineer
 - Over a year of conducting QC experience for vegetation management
- Jared Hennen (Wildfire Mitigation and Reliability Engineer)
 - 10+ years as a wildland firefighter, three of which were utility firefighter contracted by San Diego Gas & Electric and Pacific Gas & Electric
 - Almost two year of conducting tree trim QC for BVES
 - Manages the vegetation management programs at BVES
- Rick Villines (Field Inspector)
 - 22-year Journeyman lineman
 - Has been conducting tree trimming QC for 4 months

END OF REQUEST