

DRAFT

**Whooping Crane Likelihood of
Occurrence Report Summary
Wilton IV Wind Energy Center
Burleigh County, North Dakota**

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Executive Summary

The likelihood of whooping cranes occurring in the Wilton IV Wind Energy Center Project Area is low, despite the Project Area's position in the central portion of the whooping crane migration corridor. The major factor that contributed to this assessment was the lower proportion of suitable wetland habitat within the Project Area than the surrounding area. There are no recorded historical observations of whooping cranes within the Project Area. A total of 81 observations occurred within the 35-mile buffer area around the Project Area. The majority of these observations occurred along the Missouri River to the west, Lake Audubon to the northwest and Long Lake to the southeast of the Project Area. The two most likely impacts of wind development on whooping cranes are: 1) direct mortality of whooping cranes due to collisions with transmission lines, turbines, or other facilities; or 2) whooping cranes' avoidance of the area around the facility. Each project site is unique with respect to the relationship of the facilities with potential whooping crane habitat. The whooping crane observations should be used for general inference regarding use of an area and cannot be used for micro-siting features away from whooping crane sightings because some of the observations may lack precise locations.