



"VARIETY IN HUNTING AND FISHING"

NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

100 NORTH BISMARCK EXPRESSWAY BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA 58501-5095 PHONE 701-328-6300 FAX 701-328-6352

November 3, 2011

Irina Gumennik
Tetra Tech EC Inc
160 Federal Street, 3rd Floor
Boston, MA 02110

Dear Ms. Gumennik:

RE: Wilton IV Wind Energy Center – Burleigh County, North Dakota
NextEra Energy Resources, LLC

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has reviewed this project for wildlife concerns.

Our primary concern with wind power development is the disturbance of native prairie associated with construction of turbines, access roads, and other associated facilities. We ask that work within native prairie be avoided to the extent possible. This could include micro-siting turbines onto adjacent previously disturbed land, locating access roads on existing section line trails rather than across undisturbed native prairie, etc.

The National Wetland Inventory indicates various wetlands within the proposed project area. We recommend that any unavoidable wetland impacts be replaced in kind, above-ground appurtenances not be placed in wetland areas, and no alterations be made to existing drainage patterns.

We also recommend that routine monitoring for avian and bat mortality be included as part of the facility maintenance plan for the life of the project. We would appreciate being kept informed as this project progresses, and if possible, we would like the GPS coordinates for each turbine after the site has been established.

Sincerely,

Greg Link
Chief
Conservation & Communication Division

js



Jack Dalrymple, Governor
Mark A. Zimmerman, Director

1600 East Century Avenue, Suite 3
Bismarck, ND 58503-0649
Phone 701-328-5357
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E-mail parkrec@nd.gov
www.parkrec.nd.gov

November 4, 2011

Irina Gumennik
Tetra Tech, EC Inc.
160 Federal Street, 3rd Floor
Boston, MA 02110

Re: Application to ND PSC for Certificate of Site Compatibility

Dear Irina Gumennik,

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department (the Department) has reviewed the above referenced proposed application for Certificate of Site Compatibility as a potential location for the proposed Wilton IV Wind Energy Center, Burleigh County.

Our agency scope of authority and expertise covers recreation and biological resources (in particular rare plants and ecological communities). The project as defined does not affect state park lands that we manage or Land and Water Conservation Fund recreation projects that we coordinate.

The North Dakota Natural Heritage biological conservation database has been reviewed to determine if any plant or animal species of concern or other significant ecological communities are known to occur within an approximate one-mile radius of the project area. Based on this review, we have occurrences of *Pascopyrum smithii* – *Stipa comata prairie* (Central mixedgrass prairie), *Pascopyrum smithii* – *Bouteloua gracilis/Carex filifolia* (Western wheatgrass) prairie documented adjacent to project area. Please see the attached spreadsheet and map for more information on these occurrences.

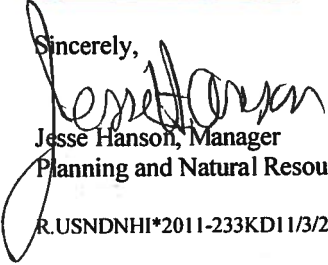
Because this information is not based on a comprehensive inventory, there may be species of concern or otherwise significant ecological communities in the area that are not represented in the database. The lack of data for any project area cannot be construed to mean that no significant features are present. The absence of data may indicate that the project area has not been surveyed, rather than confirm that the area lacks natural heritage resources.

Given the potential for not only habitat disturbance and disruption but the threat to nesting, feeding and migratory bird and bats in the area we suggest that all efforts be made to avoid impacts to wildlife species and their habitats. In an effort to avoid or minimize impacts to wildlife and their habitats we encourage proper evaluation of all potential wind energy sites. To identify and assess adverse impacts to wildlife we suggest pre and post construction avian and bat monitoring studies be conducted. Regarding any reclamation efforts, we recommend that any impacted areas be revegetated with species native to the project area.

It is our policy to charge requests for data services including data retrieval, data analysis, manual and computer searches, packaging and collection of data. A standard fee of \$60 has been assessed. An invoice for services provided has been enclosed..

We appreciate your commitment to rare plant, animal and ecological community conservation, management and inter-agency cooperation to date. For additional information please contact Kathy Duttonhefner (701-328-5370 or kgduttonhefner@nd.gov) of our staff. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed project.

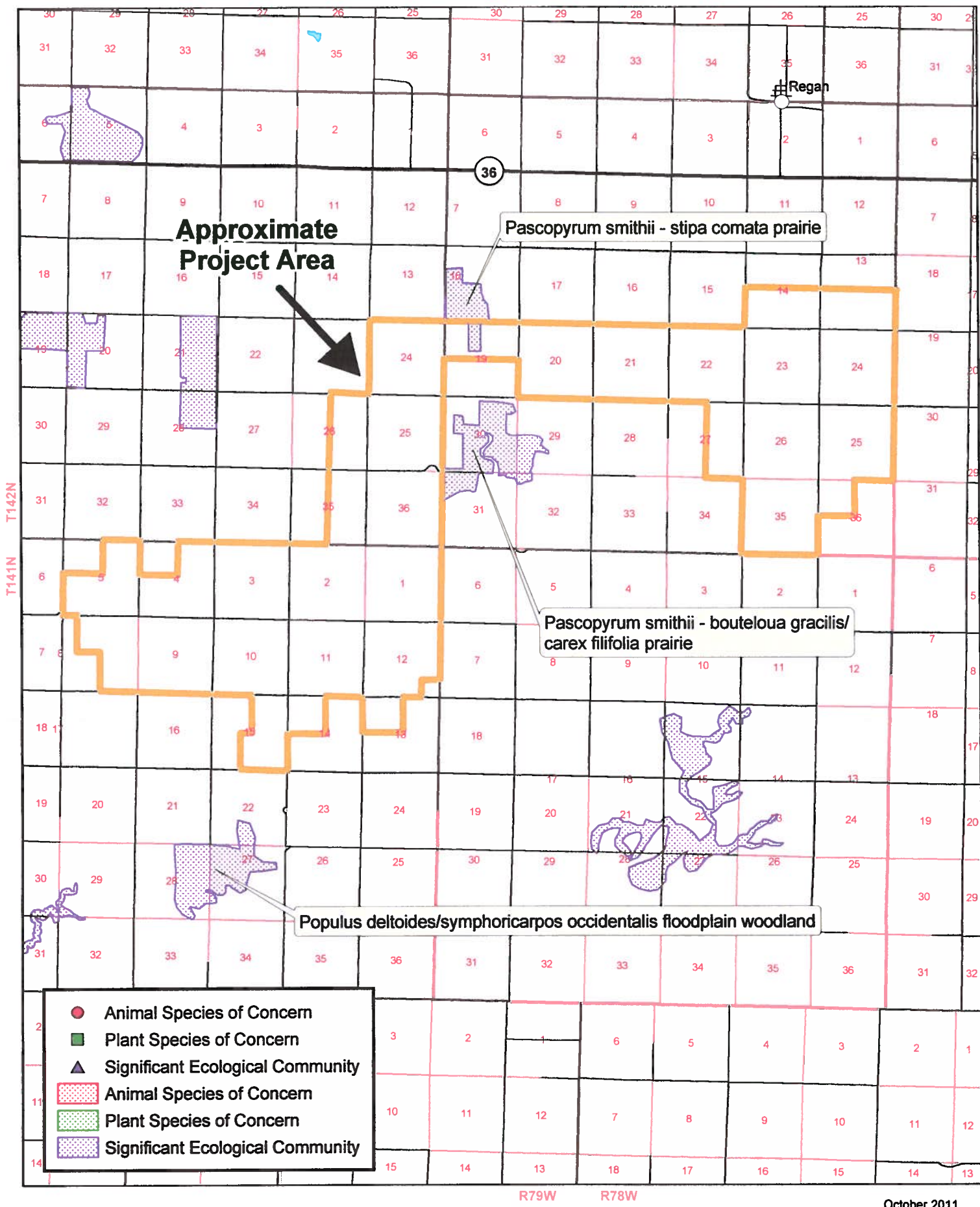
Sincerely,


Jesse Hanson, Manager
Planning and Natural Resources Division

R.USNDNHI*2011-233KD11/3/2011DL11.9.2011

.....
Play in our backyard!

North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department North Dakota Natural Heritage Inventory



**Approximate
Project Area**

Pascopyrum smithii - stipa comata prairie

Pascopyrum smithii - bouteloua gracilis/
carex filifolia prairie

Populus deltoides/symphoricarpos occidentalis floodplain woodland

- Animal Species of Concern
- Plant Species of Concern
- ▲ Significant Ecological Community
- ▨ Animal Species of Concern
- ▨ Plant Species of Concern
- ▨ Significant Ecological Community

R79W R78W

North Dakota Natural Heritage Inventory
Rare Animal and Plant Species and Significant Ecological Communities

State Scientific Name	State Common Name	State Rank	Global Rank	Federal Status	Township Range Section	County	Last Observation	Estimated Representation Accuracy	Precision
<i>Pascopyrum smithii</i> - <i>bouteloua gracilis</i> /carex filifolia prairie	Western Wheatgrass Prairie	S3S4	GNR		142N078W - 29; 142N078W - 31; 142N078W - 30; 142N078W - 32	Burleigh	2010-08-10	Low	
<i>Pascopyrum smithii</i> - <i>stipa comata</i> prairie	Central Mixed Grass Prairie	S2	GNR		142N078W - 18; 142N078W - 19	Burleigh	2010-08-10	Low	
<i>Populus deltoides</i> / <i>symphoricarpos occidentalis</i> floodplain woodland	Western Cottonwood Floodplain	S3	GNR		141N079W - 27; 141N079W - 33; 141N079W - 21; 141N079W - 28; 141N079W - 22	Burleigh	2010-08-11	Low	

North Dakota Natural Heritage Inventory Biological and Conservation Data Disclaimer

The quantity and quality of data collected by the North Dakota Natural Heritage Inventory are dependent on the research and observations of many individuals and organizations. In most cases, this information is not the result of comprehensive or site-specific field surveys; many natural areas in North Dakota have never been thoroughly surveyed, and new species are still being discovered. For these reasons, the Natural Heritage Inventory cannot provide a definite statement on the presence, absence, or condition of biological elements in any part of North Dakota. Natural Heritage data summarize the existing information known at the time of the request. Our data are continually upgraded and information is continually being added to the database. This data should never be regarded as final statements on the elements or areas that are being considered, nor should they be substituted for on-site surveys.

Estimated Representation Accuracy

Value that indicates the approximate percentage of the Element Occurrence Representation (EO Rep) that was observed to be occupied by the species or community (versus buffer area added for locational uncertainty). Use of estimated representation accuracy provides a common index for the consistent comparison of EO reps, thus helping to ensure that aggregated data are correctly analyzed and interpreted.

Very high (>95%)

High (>80%, <= 95%)

Medium (>20%, <= 80%)

Low (>0%, <= 20%)

Unknown

(null) - Not assessed

Precision

A single-letter code for the precision used to map the Element Occurrence (EO) on a U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5' (or 15') topographic quadrangle map, based on the previous Heritage methodology in which EOs were located on paper maps using dots.

S - Seconds: accuracy of locality mappable within a three-second radius; 100 meters from the centerpoint

M - Minute: accuracy of locality mappable within a one-minute radius; 2 km from the centerpoint

G - General: accuracy of locality mappable to map or place name precision only; 8 km from centerpoint

U - Unmappable



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
3425 Miriam Avenue
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501



NOV 23 2011

Ms. Irina Gumennik
Tetra Tech, EC Inc.
160 Federal Street, 3rd Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02110

Re: Application to North Dakota Public Service
Commission for Certificate of Site Compatibility for
Wilton IV Wind Energy Center in Morton County,
North Dakota

Dear Ms. Gumennik:

This is in response to your October 17, 2011, letter, regarding the proposed NextEra Energy Resources, LLC (NextEra), Wilton IV Wind Energy Center (Wilton IV) in Burleigh County, North Dakota. Tetra Tech, EC Inc. (Tetra Tech) is requesting assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, North Dakota Ecological Services Office (Service), with regard to identifying any concerns or issues that would influence a decision, by your client NextEra, regarding the use of the land in the proposed project area, as well as applicable permits that may be required from the Service. We offer the following comments under the authority of and in accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703 et seq.) (MBTA), Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668-668d, 54 Stat. 250) (BGEPA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Pub. L. 91-190, 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347, January 1, 1970, as amended), and Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) (ESA).

This office is aware that the subject project will require an interconnection agreement with the Western Area Power Administration (Western). Western will be the lead Federal agency for NEPA review, as well as ESA section 7 consultation for the proposed project. The Service provided comments and recommendations by letter dated August 25, 2011, in response to Western's Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Wilton IV project. Until such time that Western designates Tetra Tech as their non-Federal agent for informal consultation under Section 7 of the ESA, and for coordination under our other authorities, we will continue to provide technical assistance to Western, as the project's environmental analysis moves forward.

If you have any questions, please contact Terry Ellsworth of my staff or myself at (701) 250-4481, or at the letterhead address.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey K. Towner
Field Supervisor
North Dakota Field Office

cc: Western Area Power Administration, Billings
North Dakota Public Service Commission, Bismarck
Director, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, Bismarck
(Attn: G. Link)