HoustonEngineering Inc.
Maple Grove Office P 763.493.4522 F 763.493.5572
6901 East Fish Lake Road, Suite 140 Maple Grove MN 55369

December 10, 2015

Mr. Jerry Lein
North Dakota Public Services Commission
600 E. Boulevard, Dept. 408
Bismarck, ND 58505-0480

Re: Permit Compliance Inspections for Bison 4 Wind Project, Minnesota Power
HEi Project Number: 6077-004
Contract No. PU-668-13-EE

Dear Jerry,

Please find enclosed one copy of the Final Compliance Inspection Report for the Bison 4 Wind Project. This represents Houston Engineering's final deliverable associated with Contract No. PU-668-13-EE.

Sincerely,

HOUSTON ENGINEERING, INC.

Emmy Baskerville

Emmy Baskerville

Cc: Bart Schultz, HEI

FINAL REPORT **December 09, 2015**

210 MW Bison 4 Wind Project, Minnesota Power (PSC Case No. PU-13-127)

NDPSC Contract No.: PU-688-13-EE

Prepared By: Houston Engineering, Inc. / Emmy Baskerville, Environmental Scientist and Bart Schultz, Project Manager

Introduction:

Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) was contractually hired by the North Dakota Public Services Commission (NDPSC) to complete the construction inspection activities, as part of the 210 MW Bison 4 Wind Project, (PSC Case No. PU-13-127). The following report is a summary the inspection details and our conclusion of permit compliance.

Summary of Activities / Items Completed to Date:

Houston Engineering, Inc. completed site visits on June 5, 2014, October 22, 2014 and September 11, 2015. Please see the inspection reports from these site visits. The following is a review of the findings from these site visits:

June 5th, 2014: This initial site visit occurred on June 5, 2014. The major construction activities included site clearing, stockpiling useable soil and implementation of the stormwater pollution prevention controls for construction. HEI observed:

- access roads and pads under construction
- historic / cultural resource areas and wetland areas that had been avoided by construction
- topsoil separation activities,
- a laydown area and silt fence installation and
- Tree clearing operations in progress.

Construction signage was observed along public roadways in the areas where heavy equipment was in use. Road rutting was observed around 59th Avenue adjacent to turbine 463. See Inspection Report, attached.

October 22nd, 2014: HEI observed active construction on 25 turbine structures. Tree clearing activities, erosion control (biorolls, seeding), dust control and restoration activities were also observed. Avoidance of archaeological / historic sites and wetlands was noted. Minor rutting on roadways was observed throughout the areas visited. See Inspection Report, attached.

September 11, 2015: This site visit was completed after construction was finished. HEI observed restoration of disturbed areas. With the exception of a few small areas, vegetation was reestablished in all disturbed areas. Vegetation within the construction limits was indistinguishable from adjacent undisturbed areas. In areas where vegetation had not been completely reestablished, there was evidence of repairs including reseeding or gravel. Public roadways where rutting had been observed during the active construction operations were repaired to pre-construction conditions. (see Inspection Report, attached)

Conclusion of Compliance:

HEI visited the Bison 4 Wind Project site on three separate occasions and observed the initial site construction and restoration activities. Based on our observations during these site visits, the Bison 4 wind project is compliant with the terms of the permit from the North Dakota Public Services Commission. The restoration activities performed at the project site are appropriate for the existing land uses, and was found to be in compliance with the intent of the Certificate of Site Compatibility for Energy Conversion Facility, Certificate Number 34.

INSPECTION REPORTS

STATUS SUMMARY REPORT # 1 August 1st, 2014

210 MW Bison 4 Wind Project, Minnesota Power (PSC Case No. PU-13-127)

Permit Compliance Review

NDPSC Contract No.: PU-688-13-EE

Reporting Period: September 26th, 2013 – August 1st, 2014
Prepared By: Houston Engineering, Inc. / Emmy Baskerville, Environmental Scientist and Bart Schultz, Project Manager

General:

Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) was contractually hired by the North Dakota Public Services Commission (NDPSC) to complete the construction inspection activities, as part of the 210 MW Bison 4 Wind Project, (PSC Case No. PU-13-127). The following is a summary of the work completed to date and the anticipated timeframe for the completion of the permit compliance review. One environmental compliance site visit has been completed, and one additional site visit is planned during the construction process, and one additional after construction is complete. This field inspection report is for the initial site visit which occurred during June 2014.

Summary of Activities / Items Completed to Date:

The first site visit has been completed since construction was initialized. The focus of this initial site visit was environmental compliance inspection on areas of the wind project that were actively under construction. HEI drove throughout the Bison site and identified sections which were actively under construction. HEI visited the Index Areas as shown on **Figure 1: Bison 4 Wind Project - Index**. HEI did not observe active construction activities taking place within many of these areas so the focus the inspection was on areas actively in construction. Index areas where construction was observed includes Index areas 3, 5, 8 & 9 on the day we visited the on site.

The first environmental compliance visit targeted access roads and pads that were under construction. No turbines were being constructed or erected at the time of our site visit. HEI utilized GIS mapping and data from the applicant to aid in the identification of the exclusion, avoidance and selection criteria, as outlined within the permit. During the compliance site visit, we identified the following resources that were within and adjacent to the turbines under active construction: historic / cultural resources, tree clearing areas and wetland avoidance areas. Also observed during our site visit were topsoil separation, an active laydown area, and the installation of silt fencing around and adjacent to bare soil on the access roads and pads.

All areas observed under construction had appropriately placed erosion control (silt fencing). In addition, appropriate construction signage along public roads was observed within the heavy equipment areas. Tree removal activities had occurred and the debris had been removed from the site (no debris was observed). One archaeological / historic area adjacent to turbine 463 was identified. HEI observed that the access road construction had completely avoided this area, complying with the permit stipulations. Rough road rutting was noted along 59th Avenue, adjacent to turbine 463. The road near turbine 463 will require some restoration.

Future Activities for the next reporting period:

HEI will perform the second permit compliance trip as construction progresses to further access permit compliance for the construction activities. Based on the current pace of construction, HEI anticipates that the next site visit will occur in the late fall, 2014. Additionally, HEI will complete one final permit compliance site visit after construction ends to verify that all permit compliance issues have been addressed, focusing on road restoration and restoration of open soil areas. Based on the current pace of construction, HEI anticipates that this compliance visit will take place in the spring of 2015.

Photos

	**Photo 1:** Access road for Turbine 463, from the south facing north. The staked archaeological / historic area can be seen in the foreground, and the access road construction avoids this identified area.
	**Photo 2:** Silt fencing surrounding the pad for turbine 463. From the southeast facing northwest from 28th street.

	**Photo 3:** Access road for turbine 462. The county road conditions in this area were relatively rough, however active construction equipment was in the area. This roadway will need to be restored to the original condition.
	**Photo 4:** Access road (foreground) and pad (background) for turbine 461. Silt fencing was observed surrounding the pad.

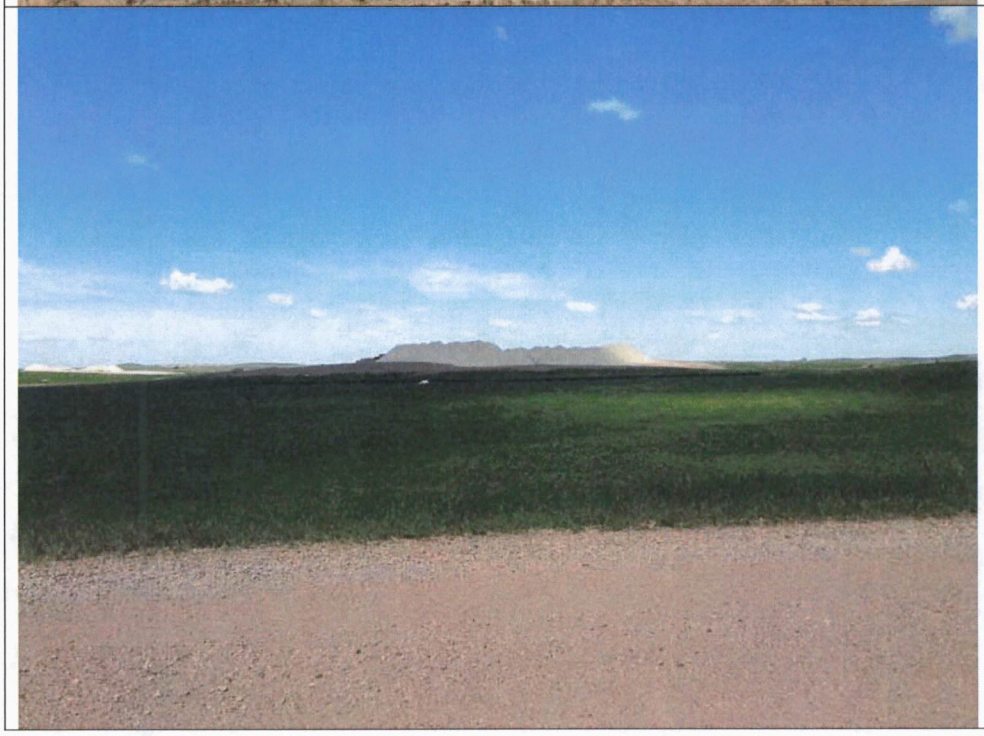
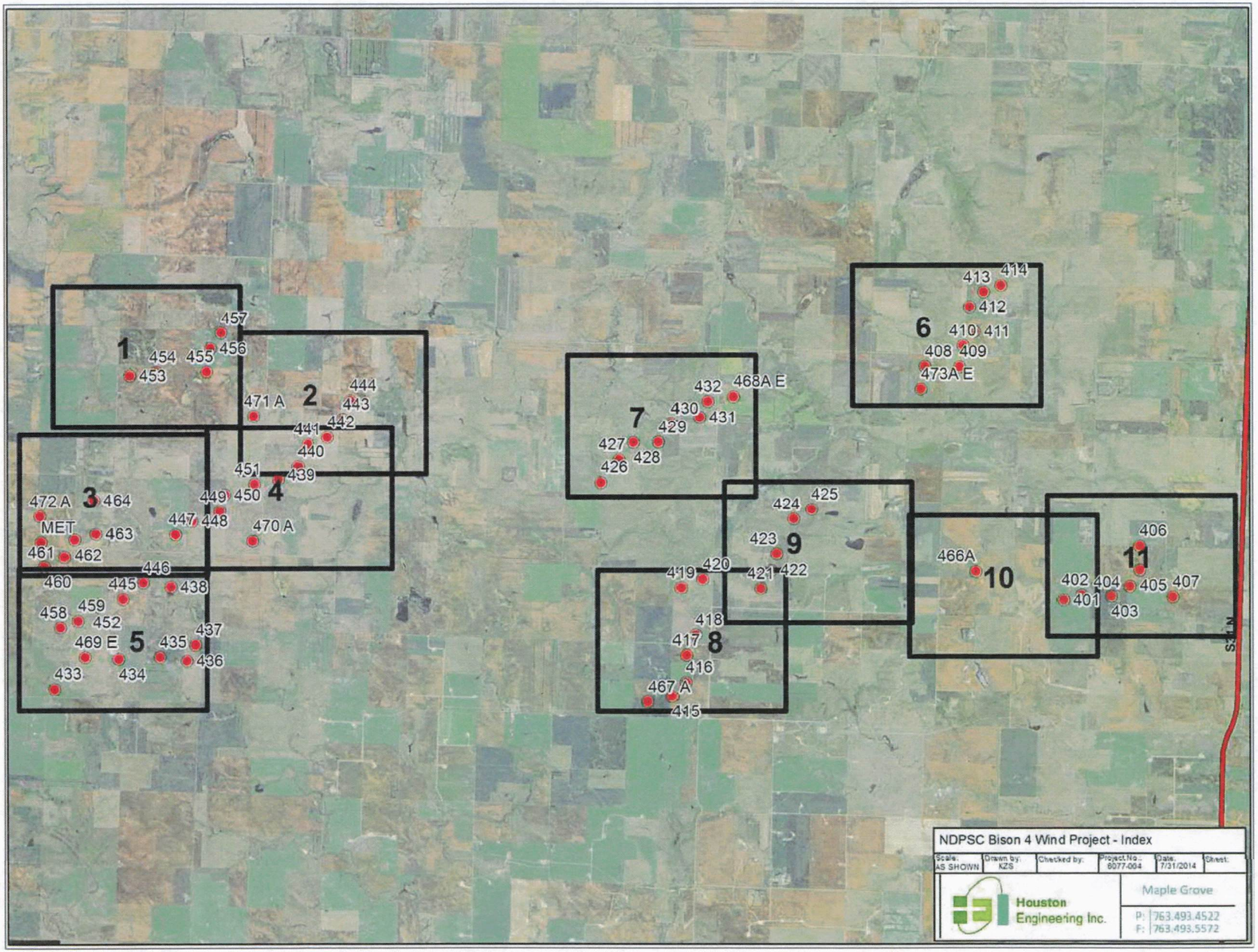
	**Photo 5:** Access road and pad construction for turbines 452 (foreground) and 459 (background). Silt fencing observed.
	**Photo 6:** Active construction on pad for turbine 420. Silt fencing observed surrounding pad.

	**Photo 7:** Laydown area.
	**Photo 8:** Completed access road for turbine 421, from the south facing north.

FIGURE 1: Bison 4 Index Map


1
2
3
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6
7
8
9
10
11
MET
NDPSC Bison 4 Wind Project - Index
Houston Engineering Inc.
Maple Grove
P: 763.493.4522
F: 763.493.5572

Field Data

Bison 4 | Visit 1

Index 1

no active const. obs.

Index 2

no active const. obs.

Index 3

pole 463 - road rutting (county gravel)

* ~~active~~ construction of access road ~~obs~~. ~~obs~~. complete

* silt fence installed

* soil separation (top) obs.

* avoidance of archl hist res.

462

* ~~active~~ construction of access road complete? appears

* silt fence in place

461

* ~~active~~ looks like access rd. complete?

- silt fence in place

INDEX 5

452 | 459(?)

active const. of access ROAD

silt fences in place

- const. equipment obs.

419 | 420

→ active const of access ROAD / PAD

→ silt fences in place

→ tree rem. appears complete

~~XXXX~~ LAYDOWN AREA

→ active const. of access ROAD | PAD
→ concrete trucks obs
→ public ROAD signage obs.
→ silt fence in place

421

→ access ROAD complete, no ~~other~~ Const. observed

no other active const. observed today.

STATUS SUMMARY REPORT # 2 November 21st, 2014

210 MW Bison 4 Wind Project, Minnesota Power (PSC Case No. PU-13-127)

Permit Compliance Review

NDPSC Contract No.: PU-688-13-EE

Reporting Period: August 1st, 2014 -- November 21st, 2014
Prepared By: Houston Engineering, Inc. / Emmy Baskerville, Environmental Scientist and Bart Schultz, Project Manager

General:

Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) was contractually hired by the North Dakota Public Services Commission (NDPSC) to complete the construction inspection activities, as part of the 210 MW Bison 4 Wind Project, (PSC Case No. PU-13-127). The following is a summary of the work completed to date and the anticipated timeframe for the completion of the permit compliance review. Two environmental compliance site visits have been completed during construction, and one additional site visit is planned after construction is complete, with an estimated timeframe of Spring 2015. This field inspection report is for the second site visit which occurred on October 22nd, 2014.

Summary of Activities / Items Completed to Date:

HEI met Daniel McCourtney from Minnesota Power on site. Upon arrival on site, we observed dust control watering activities on the gravel roads. We traveled throughout the Bison 4 complex and identified and observed sites which were actively under construction as well as sites where construction and restoration had been completed.

The following completed structures were observed during our site visit: 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 426-431, 434, 463, 462, 461, 439, 444, 417, 418 & the weather structure (MET). Turbines 457, 456, 460, 433, 452, 445, were under construction at the time of our visit, however conditions on the day of our site visit were too windy and no active construction was observed.

The focus of our site visit was on turbines that were constructed adjacent to archaeological / historic sites and wetlands to verify their siting compliance. Additionally, tree clearing, erosion control, dust control, and restoration activities were also the focus.

Compliance

The following turbines were visited to observe their construction relative to their vicinity to known archaeological / historic sites: 424, 425, 401, 402, 431, 463, 434, & 444. Each of these turbines were constructed outside of the site limits. The archaeological / historic boundary was marked with permanent fence posting within each of these sites. See photos. No construction within these archaeological / historic site limits was observed.

Turbines 442 and 443 were reviewed to determine their siting compliance relative to the identified wetlands in the area. All turbines were constructed outside the limits of the wetlands, and no wetland impacts were observed.

Biorolls and erosion control seeding was observed within the areas of turbines 421, 424, 402, 405, 426-431 & 439. No erosion or sedimentation issues were observed throughout the site. All areas observed under construction had appropriately placed erosion control measures, which included biorolls, silt fencing and hydroseed.

Minor rutting, likely from the construction equipment was noted on the roadways. This is not unusual given that construction is actively underway in many of these areas. We will observe these areas when construction is complete, and verify that roadways are returned to their pre-construction condition.

Future Activities for the next reporting period:

HEI will perform the final permit compliance inspection once construction is complete. This is anticipated to be Spring 2015.

Photos

Photo 1: Site 421, showing erosion control measures.

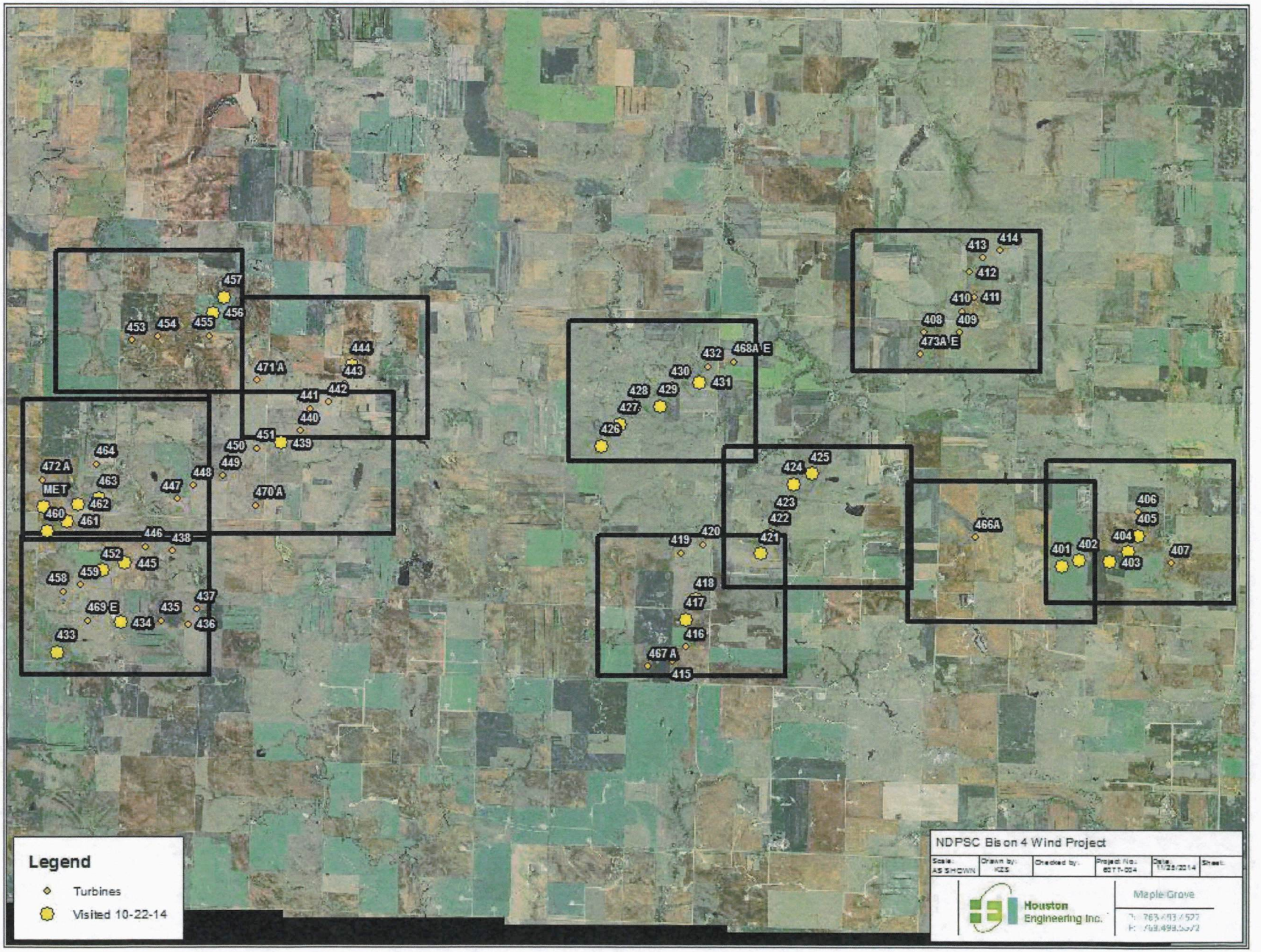
Photo 2: Site 408, showing avoidance of significant archaeological site.

	**Photo 3:** Site 457, showing turbine laydown area.
	**Photo 4:** Site 433, actively under construction.

	**Photo 5:** Site 434, showing avoidance of significant archaeological site.
	**Photo 6:** Active construction on pad for turbine 452.

	**Photo 7:** Site 439, recent hydroseeding.
	**Photo 8:** Site 440, recent seeding.

FIGURE 1: Bison 4 Index Map


Legend
Turbines
Visited 10-22-14
NDPSC Bison 4 Wind Project
Houston Engineering Inc.
Maple Grove

Field Data

(transmitted previously via email on 10-29-14)

Bison 4 – 10/22/14

⊛ 11:35 → entering area, dust management on gravel roads observed.

⊛ 11:40 → meet Daniel McCourtney, begin visit. visiting completed turbines, restoration to be completed

421: biorolls, erosion control in place

422: ok

423: ok

424: biorolls observed in ROW ditch

road b/w 424 & 425 avoids historical site

401: major archaeo/historic site, const. avoids entire site - okay

402: silt fencing observed, access road avoids historic/archaeo site

403: ok

404: ok, seeding, restoration complete

405: biorolls observed in ROW ditch

431: archaeo/historic site avoided

string 426–431
- seeding in adjacent ROW complete
- restoration complete

457: under construction

456: under const.

Bison 4 - 10/22/14 cont.

463: visited previously. access road avoids archaeo/historic site.
- silt fence observed.

462-461: ok

MET weather tower: ok, const. complete

460: grading taking place. okay

433: under const - pic

434: ~~our~~ major archaeological site. Avoided

452: under const. crane on site
445: under const. okay
439: recent hydro seed - pic
silt fence observed

WETLAND avoided b/w 424 & 423

444: archaeological/hist. site Avoided - pic

417 & 418: okay

(X) END site visit @ approx 2pm

STATUS SUMMARY REPORT # 3 October 16, 2015

210 MW Bison 4 Wind Project, Minnesota Power (PSC Case No. PU-13-127)

Permit Compliance Review

NDPSC Contract No.: PU-688-13-EE

Reporting Period: November 22nd, 2014 – September 11, 2015
Prepared By: Houston Engineering, Inc. / Josh Kadrmas, Environmental Engineer and Bart Schultz, Project Manager

General:

Houston Engineering, Inc. (HEI) was contractually hired by the North Dakota Public Services Commission (NDPSC) to complete the construction inspection activities, as part of the 210 MW Bison 4 Wind Project, (PSC Case No. PU-13-127). The following is a summary of the work completed to date and complete the permit compliance review. Summary Report #3 represents the final environmental compliance site visit. This site visit which was conducted on September 11, 2015 following completion of construction.

Summary of Activities / Items Completed to Date:

HEI met Tim Mork, Bison Wind Energy Center, at the site. We traveled throughout the completed Bison 4 complex and reviewed the progress towards revegetation of disturbed areas. The western network of turbines (west of 56th Avenue) was reviewed as this was the last section of the project to be constructed.

With only a few minor exceptions, the disturbed areas had reestablished continuous vegetation. In most areas, the previously disturbed areas were indistinguishable from adjacent undisturbed areas. In areas where vegetation had not yet reestablished, there was evidence of repairs including reseeding or new gravel. See photos.

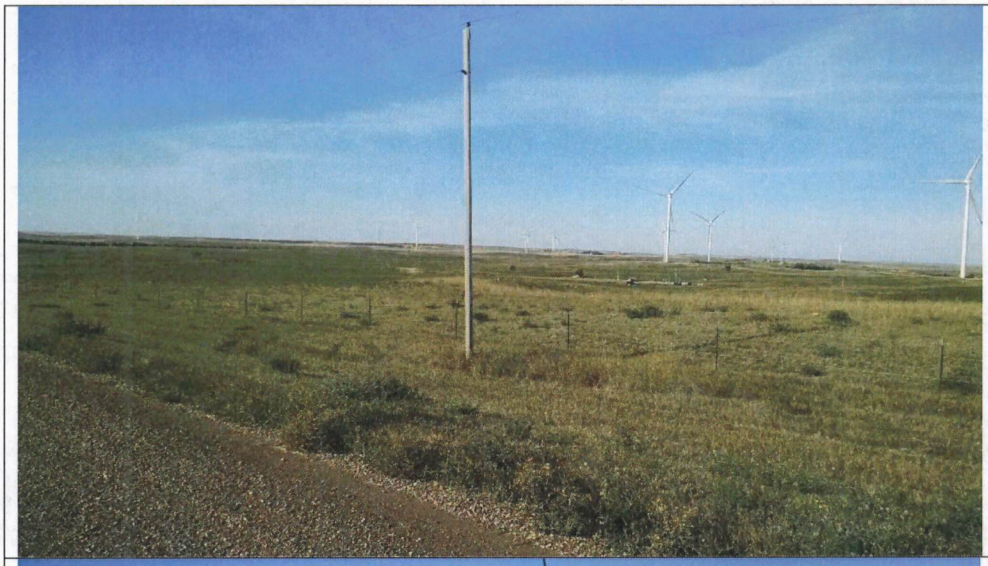
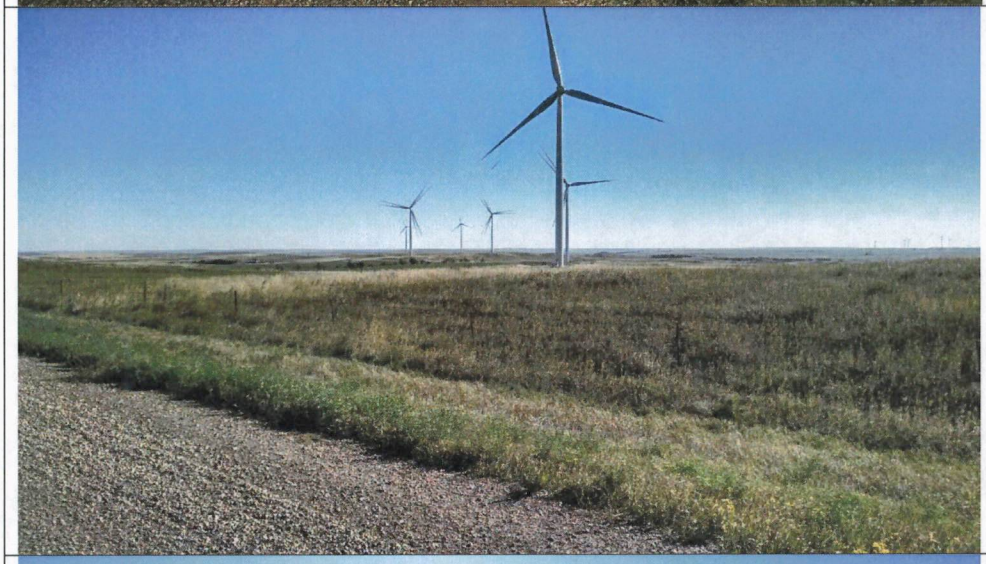
Tim stated that they will continue to maintain these areas with mowing, weed control, reseeding, or surface repairs, as needed. Tim also stated that they are working closely with the adjacent land owners to address any of their concerns.

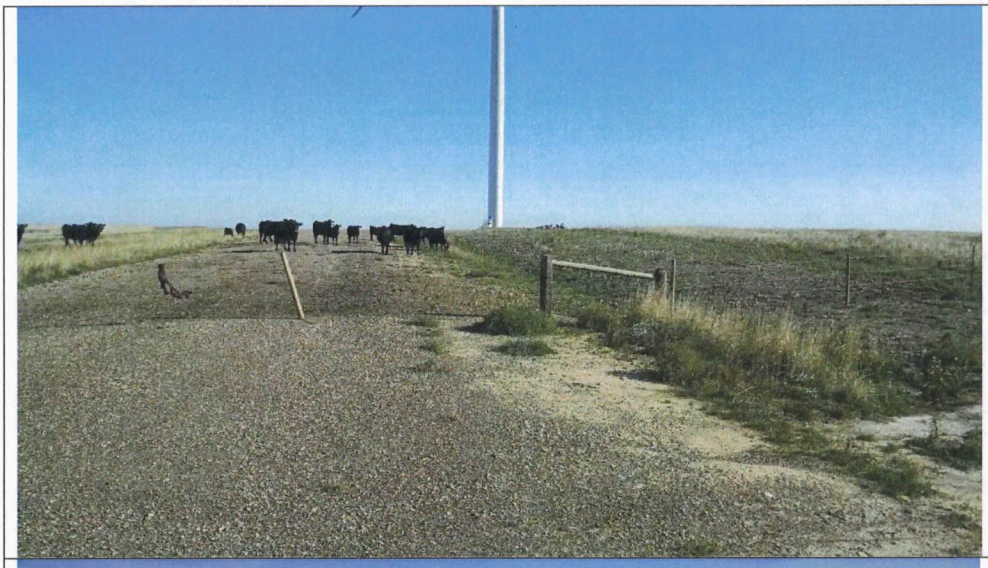
Compliance
Only minor areas of erosion were observed. Evidence of progress in stabilizing problem areas was noted. No indications of stormwater violations were observed.

Future Activities for the next reporting period:

No additional inspections are planned.

Photos

	**Photo 1:** Looking west from 57th Ave at Collector line crossing. Turbine 451 is on the right of the photo.
	**Photo 2:** Looking east from 57th Ave at Collector line crossing. Turbine 439 is the closest one in view.
	**Photo 3:** Partial revegetation of area near Turbine 441

	**Photo 4:** Cattle grazing the new vegetation near Turbine 444.
	**Photo 5:** revegetation progress near Turbine 441.
	**Photo 6:** revegetated collector line ROW.

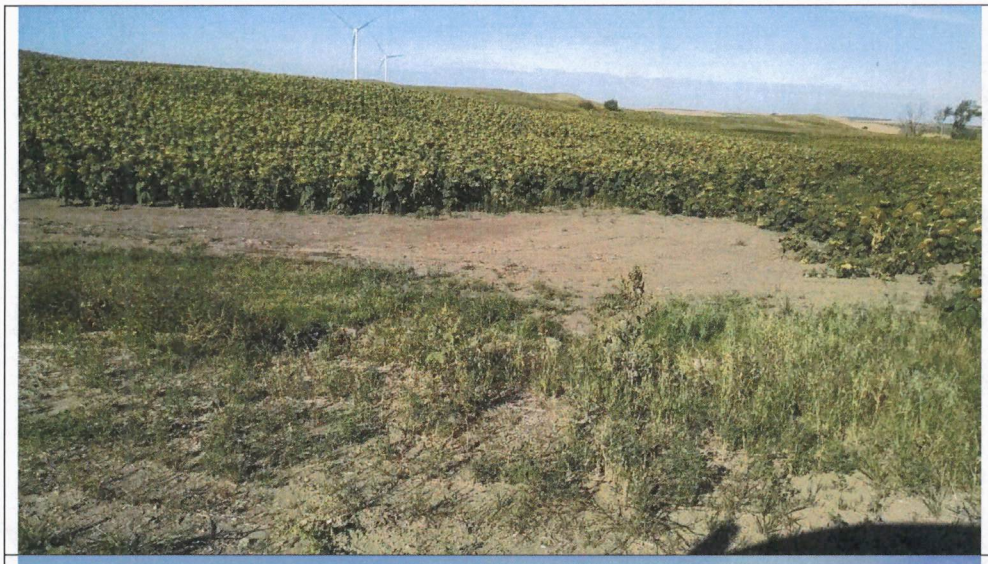
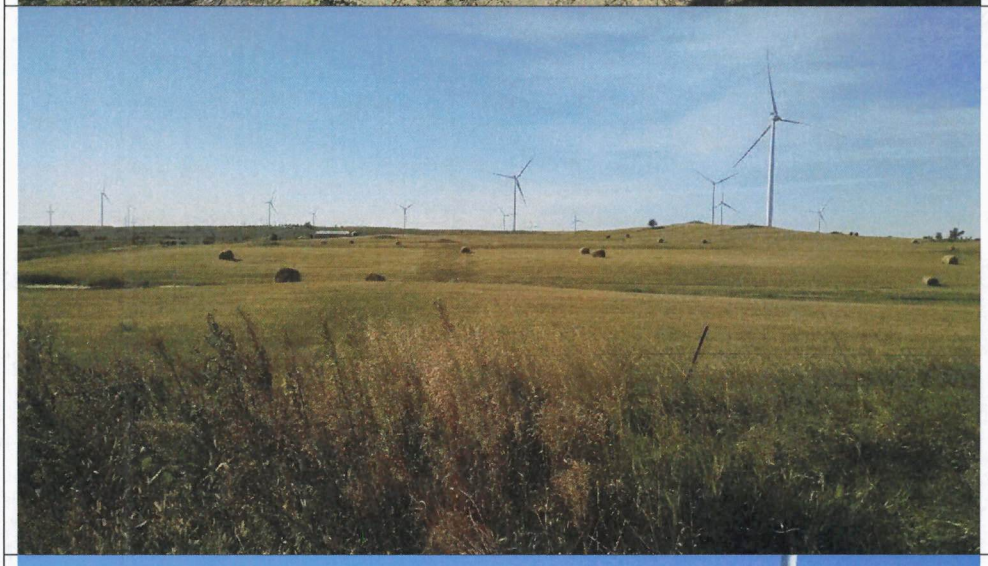
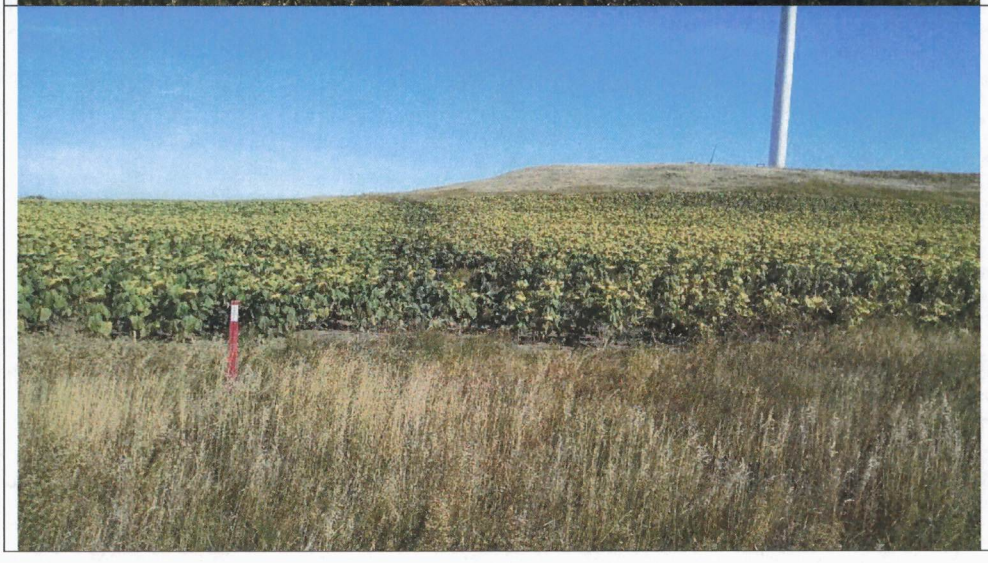
	**Photo 7:** small area of erosion, deposited in the field near Turbine 456.
	**Photo 8:** Looking south along revegetated ROW, north of Turbine 464.
	**Photo 9:** Collector line ROW with 2015 crop of sunflowers planted over it.

Photo 10: Collector line ROW with 2015 crop of sunflowers planted over it.

Field Data

Bison 4 6077-004

Date 9-11-15	Day Friday
Hours Worked	
Working Days Charged	Total Working Days to Date
Reasons for Time not Charged	

Weather

Sunny

Engineering Staff

Josh Kadrmas, HEI

Work in Progress

0905 Onsite @ Bison 4 facility
0930 Begin tour of western portion with Tim Mork
1200 Finished tour. A few areas of erosion were noted and would get addressed by Tim. Majority of disturbed areas had been reclaimed. No major issues observed.
1210 Leave site

Contractor's Labor Force

Tim Mork, Bison Wind Energy Center – Allete

Contractor's Equipment Summary

Project Visitors

55543
55790

Project Manager Signature