

Reclamation and Revegetation Inspection Report

230 kV Transmission Line – Stark County

Brady Wind, LLC

ND PSC Case No. PU-15-797

Prepared for:

North Dakota Public Service Commission
Public Utilities Division
State Capitol
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Executive Summary

The State of North Dakota, acting through its North Dakota Public Service Commission (Commission), Division of Public Utilities, has contracted Keitu Engineers & Consultants, Inc. (Keitu) to perform consulting services for reclamation and revegetation inspections. This report addresses the inspection findings concerning issues requiring resolution, areas of concern, recommendations for resolution of issues, and a determination whether the area affected by construction activities has been restored as near as practicable to the condition as it existed prior to the beginning of construction, including the establishment of desired plant species where applicable in Case No. PU-15-797.

The 230 kV Transmission Line (Project) is located in Stark County, North Dakota. The Project consists of approximately 19 miles of a new 230 kilovolt (kV) overhead transmission line and associated facilities. Construction for the Project began in June 2016 and was completed in November 2017. The purpose of the reclamation and revegetation inspection was to ensure the Project was constructed in compliance with the siting laws, rules, and the applicable Commission Order for the Project. Prior to the construction inspection, Keitu reviewed all Project documents to identify any and all aspects requiring site verification.

The site was visually inspected on September 1, 2017 by Keitu staff. Overall, the project was very well-maintained, secured, and in good condition. A majority of the project area appears to be returned as near as practical to preconstruction conditions with some exception near the substations. Undesirable species are often found the first growing season after a soil disturbance. The Project area was also under severe to extreme drought conditions during summer of 2017,¹ which did not provide ideal conditions for the growth of desirable species.

¹ <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/Home/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?ND>

Introduction

The Brady Wind 230 kV Transmission Line (Project) was approved and constructed in 2016-2017. The Project consists of approximately 19 miles of a new 230 kilovolt (kV) overhead transmission line and associated facilities in Stark County, North Dakota. The project also includes a new 30 acre switchyard that was constructed at the western terminus of the transmission line. The project will connect the Brady Wind Energy Center to the Belfield to Rhame 230-kV transmission line in the southwest corner of the southeast quarter of Section 20 of Township 139 North, Range 98 West. The Project is under the jurisdiction of the North Dakota Public Service Commission (Commission), which issued its Order Amending Certificate and Permit for Case No. PU-15-797 on June 16, 2016.

Purpose and Scope of Inspection

The North Dakota Energy Conversion and Transmission Facility Act (North Dakota Century Code Chapter 49-22) authorizes the Public Service Commission (Commission) to determine that the location, construction, and operation of jurisdictional energy conversion and transmission facilities will produce minimal adverse effects on the environment and welfare of the citizens of North Dakota. Construction inspections ensure the Project is constructed in compliance with siting laws, rules, and the applicable Commission Order Amending Certificate and Permit (Order).

The Commission retained Keitu Engineers & Consultants, Inc. (Keitu) to complete a reclamation and revegetation inspection of the Project. The inspection process included a review of the Application for Amended Corridor Certificate and Route Permit (Application), Order, Certification Relating to Order Provisions (Certification), and other applicable documents to determine Project-specific siting and construction requirements; a site visit and inspection of facilities; documentation of compliance; and a report summarizing findings. This report includes, but is not limited to, site visit observations, documentation of compliance deficiencies, and a summary of issues that should be addressed for the Project to be considered complete and in full compliance.

Methods

Keitu reviewed North Dakota siting laws and rules, the Application, Certification, and the Order for the Project to identify what Project-specific documentation was required for compliance. Keitu then reviewed Project documents in the Commission Online Case Search to identify those siting laws, rules, and Application and Order assertions that already had written verification, those that still required documentation, and those that required physical site verification.

Keitu staff visited the Project area on September 1, 2017 to visually inspect the site. Digital photographs were taken showing typical Project infrastructure and documenting any problem areas. During the field visit, the transmission line was in operation.

As-Built Inspection Follow-Up

There were no areas of concern requiring follow-up found during the As-Built Inspection.

Observations

Construction was complete and the Project was operational during the time of visit. Cropland was the majority of the vegetation along the Project area. The plants in the cropland appeared to be similar in size and density to crops in areas adjacent to the Project area. Outside of the fences around the substations there were areas of bare soil and areas that had nearly 100% coverage which were dominated by weeds and nonnative species.

Recommendations

1. Continual maintenance should be done to encourage the revegetation of desirable species in areas near the substations.

Conclusion

Overall, the Project appeared to be constructed as designed with minimal impacts to the surrounding environment. The Project site was in good condition and well maintained. A majority of the project area appeared to be returned as near as practical to preconstruction conditions. Small areas near the substations had not been revegetated with desirable species at the time of inspection. With continued growing seasons and improvement of drought conditions, vegetative cover and quality should improve.

Management Review

The services performed by Keitu and its staff for this project have been conducted in a manner consistent with the degree of care and technical skill appropriately exercised by professionals currently practicing in this area under similar time and budget constraints.

Recommendations and findings contained in this report represent our professional judgment and are based upon available information and technically accepted practices at the present time and location. Other than this, no warranty is implied or expressed.



9/14/2017

Jaimee Antognazzi, Operations Manager

Date

Report Photo #1: Bare soil outside of substation.



Report Photo #2: Crop field under transmission line.



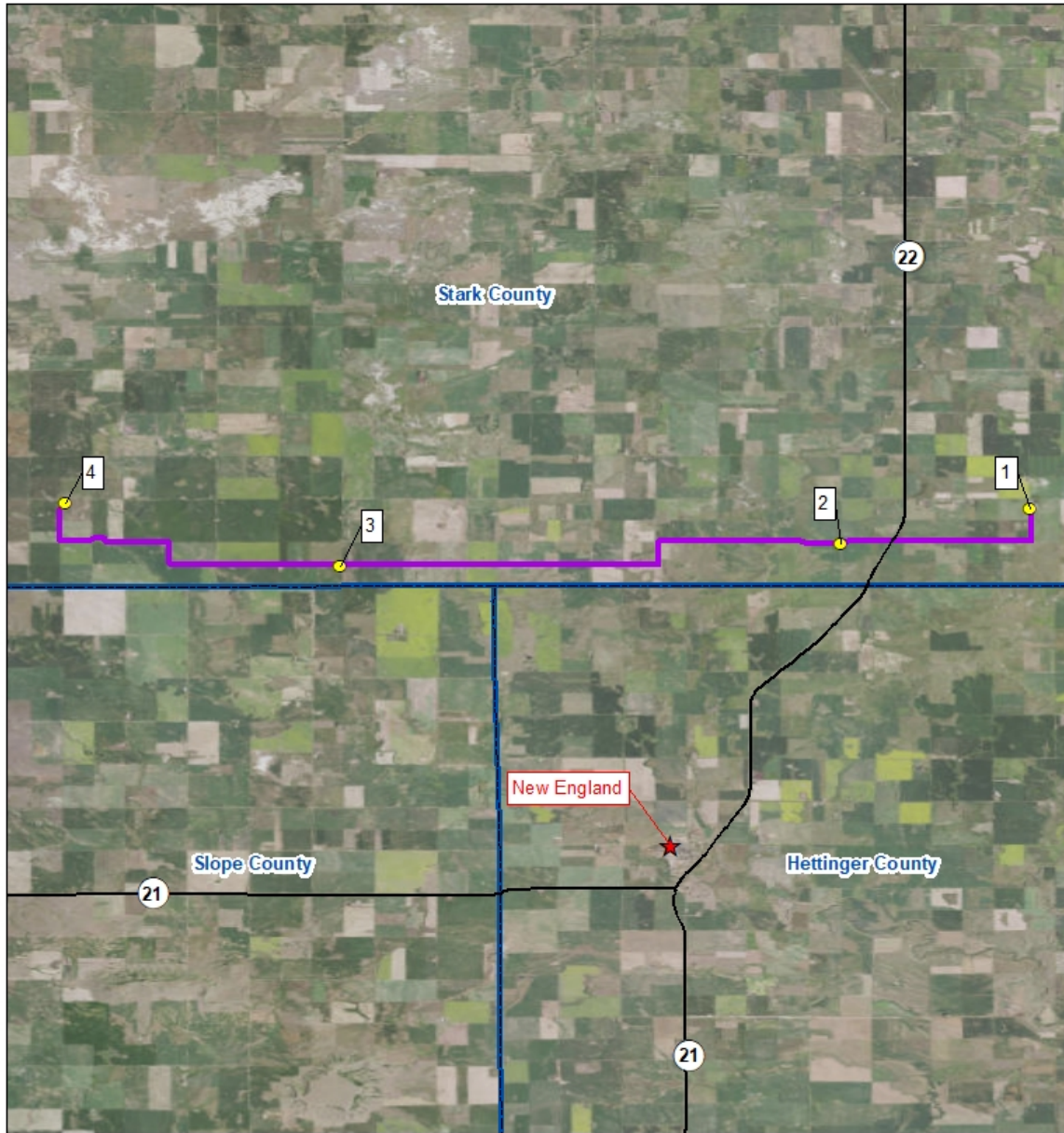
Report Photo #3: Desirable vegetation regrowth under transmission line.



Report Photo #4: Vegetation near west switchyard.



Project Photo Location Map:



<ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Town● Photo Point— Proposed Transmission Line— State Highway□ County Boundary	 	<p>ND PSC Case No. PU-15-797 Brady Wind, LLC 230 kV Transmission Line Stark County, North Dakota</p>
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