

Reclamation and Revegetation Inspection Report

Oliver Wind III 230 kV Transmission Line

- Morton and Oliver Counties

NextEra Energy Resources, LLC

ND PSC Case No. PU-16-122

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-16-122.

The Oliver Wind III 230 kV Transmission Line is located in Morton and Oliver Counties, North Dakota. The project consists of approximately 4.5 miles of a new 230 kilovolt (kV) overhead transmission line on private property in Morton and Oliver counties and is owned and operated by NextEra Energy Resources, LLC. Construction for the Project began in July 2016 and was completed in December 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. It appeared to be constructed as planned with numerous efforts to minimize impacts.

Introduction

The Oliver Wind III 230 kV Transmission Line (Project) was approved and constructed in 2016-2017. The Project is operated by, Oliver Wind III, LLC., a wholly-owned, indirect subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources, LLC (NEER). The Project consists of approximately 4.5 miles of a new 230 kilovolt (kV) overhead transmission line on private property in Morton and Oliver counties, North Dakota. The project also includes a new 5-acre switchyard (Minnkota switchyard) that was constructed at the northern terminus of the transmission line. The project will connect the Oliver III Wind Energy Center to the electrical grid via a tap to the existing Minnkota Power Cooperative, Inc. (Minnkota) Center to Mandan 230 kV Overhead Transmission Line. 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-16-122 on June 22, 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 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 and substation were in operation.

As-Built Inspection Follow-Up

The following issues were found during the As-Built Inspection. They were not applicable to reclamation and revegetation of the Project, however, Oliver Wind, LLC did comply with the Order and Certification points found deficient during the As-Built Inspection.

- 1. Order #4. The May 27, 2016 Certification Relating to Order Provisions – Transmission Facility Siting with accompanying Tree and Shrub Mitigation Specifications is incorporated by reference and attached to this Order.**

A Tree and Shrub Mitigation Report was filed with the Commission on June 12, 2017. This met the requirements set forth by this order.

- 2. (Certification #28) Company understands and agrees that, prior to beginning construction of the transmission facility at a location, it shall send a letter to each landowner with whom an easement was executed for that location specifying the name and phone number of the company representative who is responsible for receiving and resolving landowner issues for the life of the easement.**

On July 17, 2017, Oliver Wind III, LLC filed documents showing contact information for its Land Services department was included in the Notice of Exercise of Options agreements, which were executed before construction began.

Observations

Construction was complete during the time of visit. A large part of the project area was crop land. Current crops appeared to be similar in height and density to crops growing outside of the Project area. Vegetation cover varied in non-crop land. Vegetation found on the south and west sides of the substation appeared to be seeded grasses growing with approximately 5-10% ground coverage. The north and east sides of the substation had nearly 100% ground coverage but consisted of weeds and nonnative species. No noxious weeds were noted at the time of visit.

Recommendations

1. Continual maintenance should be done to encourage the revegetation of desirable species.

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. The vegetation appears to have been returned as near as practical to its original condition. Areas around the substation lacking sufficient coverage and with excess weeds should begin to return to as near as practical to preconstruction conditions as growing seasons continue and drought conditions 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.



09/14/2017

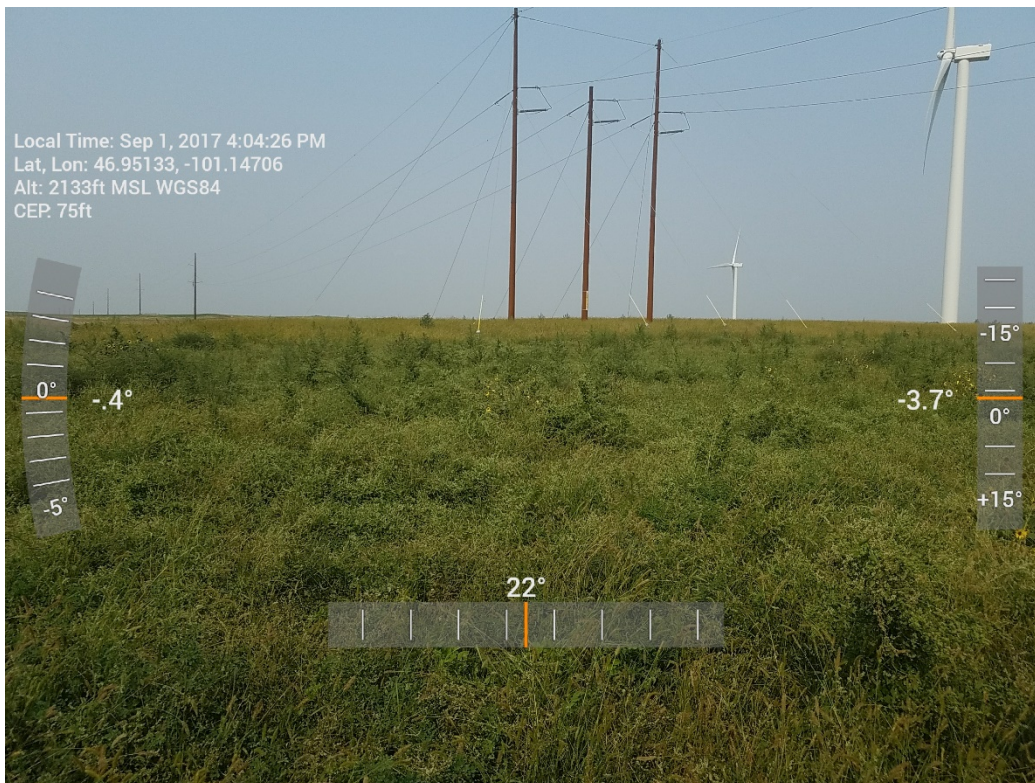
Jaimee Antognazzi, Operations Manager

Date

Report Photo #1: West Side of Substation



Report Photo #2: North Side of Substation.



Report Photo #3: Hay Field under Transmission Line.



Report Photo #4: Corn field under Transmission Line.



Project Photo Location Map:

