

Reclamation and Revegetation Inspection Report

Foxtail Wind Farm

Foxtail Wind, LLC

ND PSC Case No. PU-17-284

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 a Reclamation and Revegetation Inspection. This report addresses the Orders established by the Commission and issues established in Case No. PU-17-284.

The Foxtail Wind Farm is a 150-megawatt (MW) wind energy facility consisting of 75 wind turbines, access roads, underground electrical collection and communication systems, an Aircraft Detection Lighting System (ADLS), a collection substation, an operations and maintenance building, and a meteorological evaluation tower (MET). The 75 wind turbines constructed are Vesta V-110 and V-120 turbines. The turbines are 2 MW for a total nameplate capacity of 150 MW. The Project Area encompasses approximately 20,000 acres in Dickey County, North Dakota.

The site was visually inspected on October 18, 2022 by Keitu staff. It appears to be returned as near as practical to preconstruction conditions at the time of visit.

Overall, the project was very well-maintained, secured, and in good condition. Keitu did not note any issues regarding reclamation of the Project and reseeded areas appeared to be stabilized with over 70% vegetation consisting primarily of the desired native grass mix used during reseeding. Turbine site access roads running through fields in active crop production were kept to a reasonable width to maximize the area being farmed and crop density in areas previously disturbed by construction activities appeared equal to adjacent areas not affected during construction of the Project.

Introduction

The Project was approved in January, 2018 and construction began in June, 2018. The Project was placed into commercial operation in December, 2019; however, construction for the Project was completed in the April, 2020 with the installation of the Aircraft Detection Lighting System (ADLS). The Foxtail Wind Farm is operated by Xcel Energy. The Project is a 150 MW wind energy facility consisting of 75 wind turbines and associated facilities.

The Project is under the jurisdiction of the North Dakota Public Service Commission, which issued its Certificate of Site Compatibility No. 53 for Case No. PU-17-284 on January 31, 2018.

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 Consolidated Application for Certificate of Corridor Compatibility 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 PSC 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 October 18, 2022 to visually inspect the site. Digital photographs were taken showing typical Project infrastructure. The Project was in operation at the time of visit.

As-Built Inspection Follow-Up

An As-Built inspection was conducted on March 4, 2021 by Keitu Staff. During this inspection it was deemed by Keitu staff that the Project was constructed in compliance with the siting laws, siting rules, and applicable Commission Orders apart from one item.

The ADLS for the Foxtail Wind Farm was not operational by December 31, 2019 when the Project become operational as required by the Commission's Order. Foxtail Wind completed construction of the ADLS in April, 2020 and agreed to a Consent Agreement with the ND PSC. As of June, 2020 the Foxtail Wind Farm was in compliance with the Commission's Orders.

Observations

Project areas occurring in crop lands appeared to be returned to pre-construction conditions at the time of visit. Crop density appeared to be similar to areas adjacent to the Project area. Portions of the Project occurring in range or pasture land had approximately 80-100% ground cover, and appeared to be primarily composed of the desired native vegetation planted during reclamation. Reseeded areas appeared to be well maintained for noxious and invasive weeds. Areas noted during the reclamation and revegetation inspection appeared to be stabilized and in good condition.

Recommendations

Reclamation and revegetation of the Foxtail Wind Farm appeared to be successful. Keitu does not have any further recommendations at this time.

Conclusion

Overall, the Project appeared to be constructed as designed with minimal impacts to the surrounding environment. The Project site is in good condition and is well maintained. The Project's ground cover is as near as practical to preconstruction conditions, and areas disturbed during construction in active crop production appeared to have similar crop density as adjacent areas not affected by construction activities.

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.

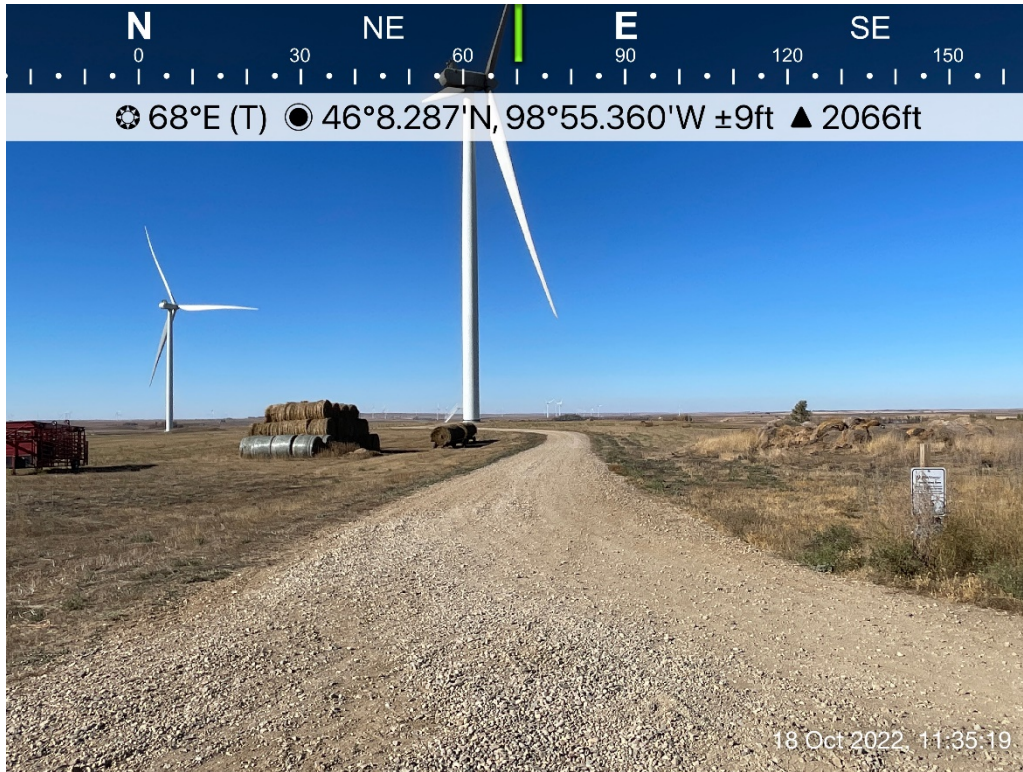


11/2/2022

Jaimee Antognazzi, Operations Manager

Date

Report Photo #1: Access Road through Pastureland and Turbine Site T-5



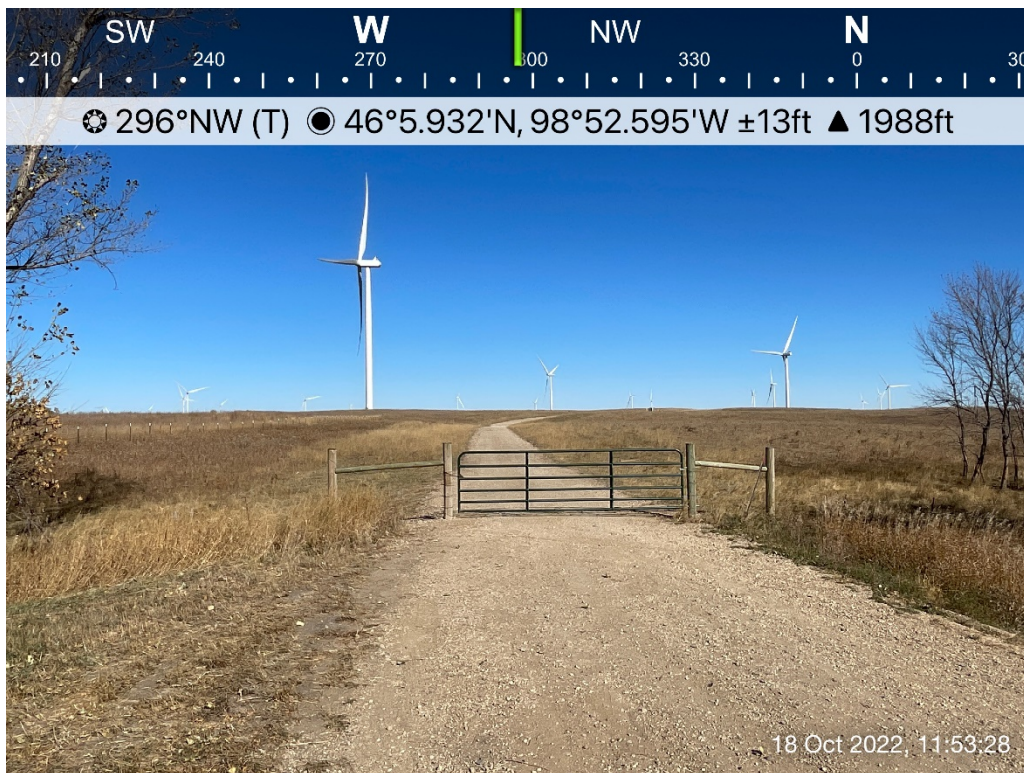
Report Photo #2: Access Road through Cropland and Turbine Site T-7



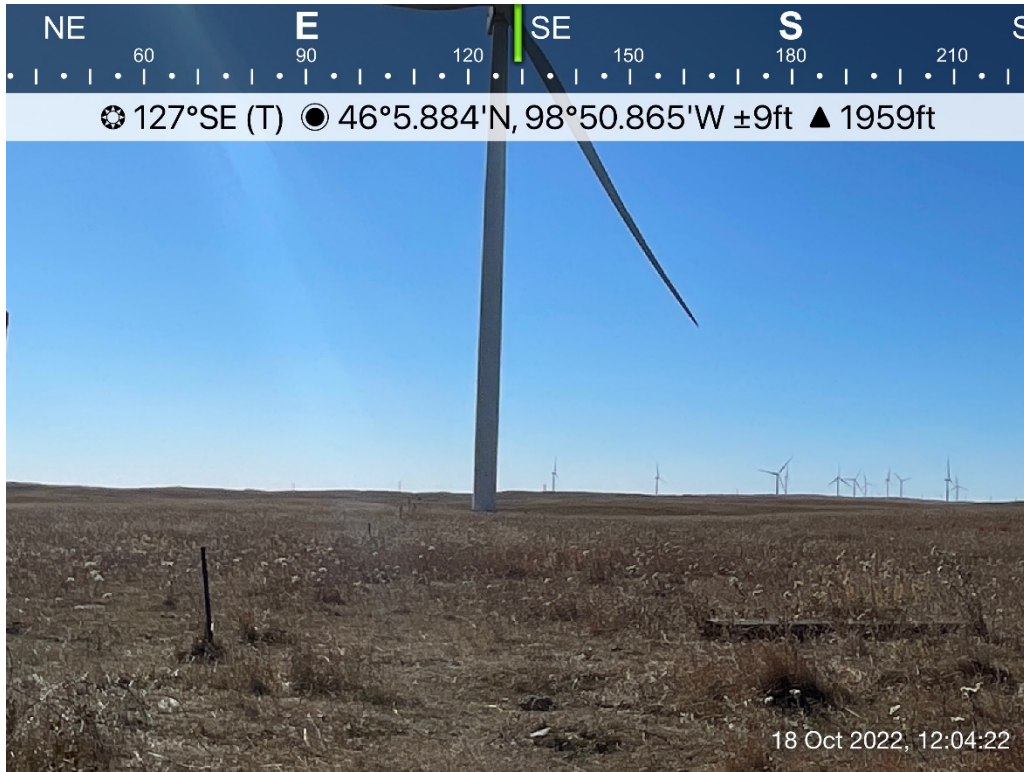
Report Photo #3: O&M Building and Tree Plantings



Report Photo #4: Access Road to Turbines T-51 to T-53 and Gate where Trees were Removed



Report Photo #5: Turbine Site T-56 in Pastureland



Report Photo #6: Access Road through Pastureland and Turbine Sites T-64 to T-67



Project Photo Location Map:

