

Reclamation and Revegetation Inspection Report

Aurora Wind Project
Aurora Wind Project, LLC

ND PSC Case No. PU-18-351

Prepared for:

North Dakota Public Service Commission
Public Utilities Division
State Capitol
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Reclamation and revegetation inspection report
Keitu Engineers & Consultants, Inc.



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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-18-351.

The Aurora Wind Energy Transmission Line (Project) is approximately 20 miles in length, with approximately 17 miles located in Williams County and approximately 3 miles located in Mountrail County. The Project Route consisting of a 150-foot wide corridor totals 364 acres. The purpose of the Reclamation and Revegetation Inspection was to ensure the Project was constructed in compliance with the siting laws, rules, the applicable Commission Order for the Project, and the construction area is restored to pre-construction conditions. Prior to the inspection, Keitu reviewed all Project documents to verify any and all aspects requiring site verification.

The site was visually inspected on August 25, 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 listed an item to be addressed at the Commission's discretion in the Recommendations section of this report. If the recommendation is followed, the Project should continue to be as near as practical to pre-construction conditions.

Introduction

The Project was approved in May, 2019 and construction began in October, 2019. Construction for the Project was completed in the summer of 2020 and is operated by Enel Green Power. The Project is a 345-kilovolt (“kV”) transmission line and associated facilities. Aurora Wind is also constructing a Wind Project, which will have a nameplate capacity of up to 300 megawatts (“MW”). The Project will convey power from the planned Wind Project substation to the point of interconnection to the grid at the existing Basin Electric Power Cooperative Tande 345kV Substation (“Tande Substation”). Aurora Wind submitted a separate application to the Commission for a Certificate of Site Compatibility for the proposed Wind Project.

The transmission line was constructed using steel monopole structures with spans of approximately 600-900 feet. The permanent right-of-way for the transmission line will be up to 150 feet wide. The Project design includes a shield wire, which will be strung at the top of the poles to provide lightning protection. The shield wire will also contain a fiber optic core that forms part of the communication system for the transmission line, allowing for monitoring and remote control of interconnection facility components.

The Project is under the jurisdiction of the North Dakota Public Service Commission, which issued its Certificate of Corridor Compatibility No. 210 and Route Permit No. 220 for Case No. PU-18-351 on May 29, 2019.

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 (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 August 25, 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 October 22, 2020 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.

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. The disturbed areas appeared to be stabilized.

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 is in good condition and is well maintained. The Project is as near as practical to preconstruction conditions.

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.



Jaimee Antognazzi, Operations Manager

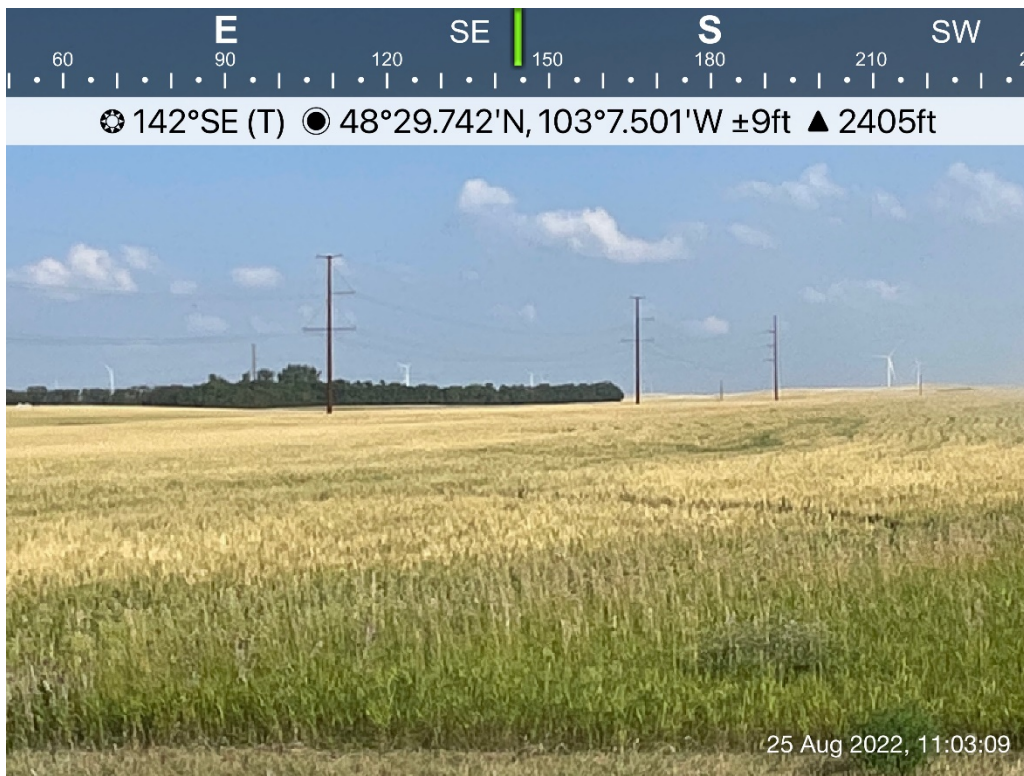
9/19/2022

Date

Report Photo #1: Established Vegetation at Substation



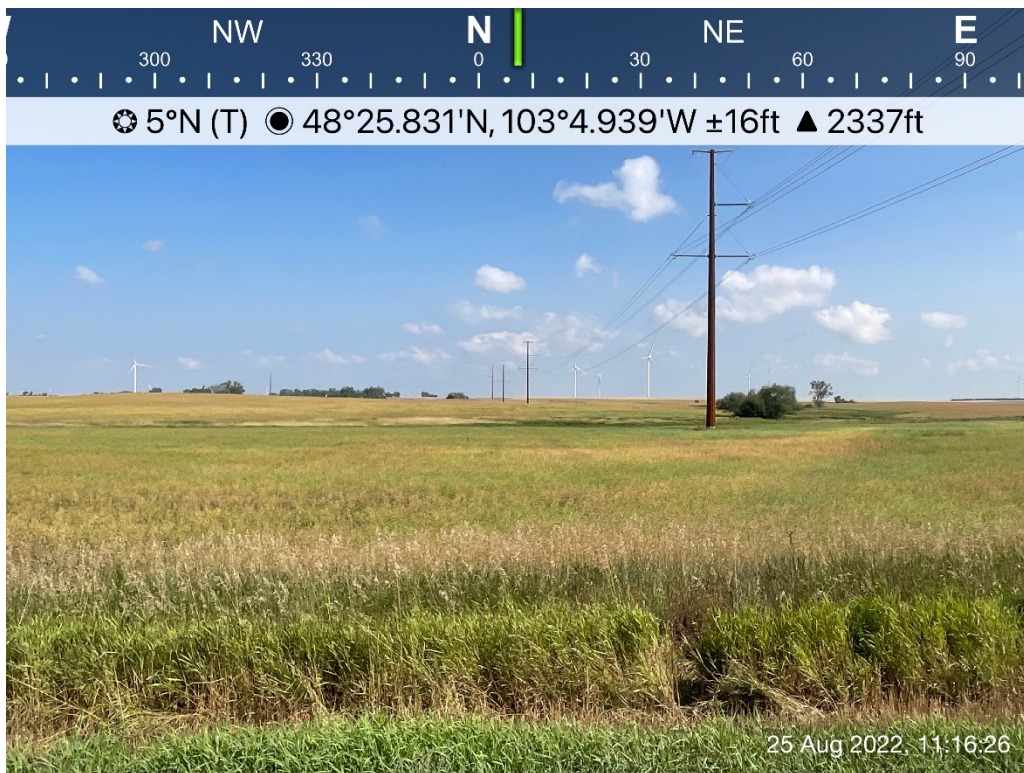
Report Photo #2: Transmission Poles in Wheat Field



Report Photo #3: Transmission Pole near Wetland



Report Photo #4: Transmission Poles through Cropland



Project Photo Location Map:

