

# **Aurora Wind Project Williams and Mountrail Counties, North Dakota Archaeological Summary Report**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Aurora Wind Project, LLC (Aurora Wind) is proposing to construct a wind project (Project) that will generate up to 300 megawatts in Williams and Mountrail Counties, North Dakota. The Project will result in the construction of up to 121 wind turbines, depending on the final turbine model selected. Additional Project facilities include access roads, electrical collection and communication systems and cabling, an operation and maintenance building, permanent meteorological towers, and a Project substation. Aurora Wind also plans to construct an approximately 20-mile-long, 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line to facilitate the Project's interconnection. The proposed transmission line would extend from the Project substation in Williams County to the point of interconnection at the existing Basin Electric Power Cooperative's Tande 345-kV Substation, located in Mountrail County. Aurora Wind has submitted a separate application to the North Dakota Public Service Commission for a Certificate of Corridor Compatibility and Route Permit for the proposed transmission line. Construction is anticipated to begin in the second quarter of 2019 with commercial operation by the end of this year. No federal funding is anticipated.

The Project will require a Certificate of Site Compatibility from the North Dakota Public Service Commission (Commission) (Case Nos. PU-18-351 and 352); therefore, the Project is subject to review by the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (NDSHPO) under North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) 49-22-09. The archaeological investigation of the Project area included the proposed construction footprint provided by Aurora Wind and a 1-mile buffer (Study Area). The area surveyed was much larger than the actual construction footprint to allow for any adjustments that may be needed to avoid any significant sites (See attached map). For the wind project a 600-foot diameter area was surveyed at each turbine location. The width of the linear corridors surveyed was 200 feet for access roads and 100 feet for collection lines. The transmission corridor surveyed was 150 feet wide. The wind project survey covered 4,075 acres and the transmission line corridor was 361 acres, for a total of 4,436 acres. Should the Project design change to outside of the completed survey corridor, additional survey will be required.

The primary objective of the archaeological investigation was to identify existing cultural resources through a systematic survey of the proposed construction corridors and wind turbine locations for the Project. All work was conducted to professional standards in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the NDSHPO in *North Dakota SHPO Guidelines Manual for Cultural Resources Inventory Projects* (2017), consultation with the NDSHPO, as well as the *Secretary of*

*the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation*, (48 FR 44716-44742) and the *Secretary’s Standards for Identification* (48 FR 44720-44723).

**RESULTS**

A review of the State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND) site and GIS files acquired in January 2018 revealed 32 previously recorded archaeological sites and non-archaeological resources, 6 isolated finds, and 21 site leads within the Study Area for the Project (an area including a 1-mile buffer around the construction footprint).

The two previously recorded sites (32WI1180 and 32WI1729) found within the survey corridors were both found not eligible for the NRHP. Evidence of both sites was noted during the current investigation, but because of the previous findings at each site and the fact that no additional data was recovered during the current investigation to change or question the previous findings, they are still recommended not eligible for the NRHP.

A total of 23 archaeological sites and 3 isolated finds were recorded during current the investigation. Twenty-two of these sites and 2 isolated finds were recorded within the wind project area and the remaining site and isolated find were recorded within the transmission line survey corridor. Twenty of the 22 wind project sites date to the historic period, including 11 farmsteads, 8 dumpsites, and a farm activity and storage area. All of the historic period sites within the wind project area are recommended as not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP and are not recommended for avoidance by the Project (Table 1).

**Table 1: Wind Project Area Historic Site Recommendations**

Site	Site Type	Site Integrity	NRHP <sup>1</sup> Status Recommendation within Survey Corridor	Recommended Action
32WI2315	Farm activity area and storage facility	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2317	Dumpsite	Fair	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2318	Farmstead	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2319	Farmstead	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2320	Dumpsite	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2321	Farmstead	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation

Site	Site Type	Site Integrity	NRHP <sup>1</sup> Status Recommendation within Survey Corridor	Recommended Action
32WI2322	Dumpsite	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2323	Farmstead	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2324	Farmstead	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2326	Dumpsite	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2327	Farmstead	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2328	Farmstead	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2329	Dumpsite	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2330	Dumpsite	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2331	Dumpsite	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2332	Dumpsite	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2333	Dumpsite	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2334	Farmstead	Fair	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2335	Farmstead	Good	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2336	Farmstead	Fair	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WI2337	Farmstead	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WIX790	Isolated Find	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation

<sup>1</sup> NRHP = National Register of Historic Places

The remaining two sites within the wind project area are Native American stone circle sites of unknown age or cultural affiliation. Both of these sites remain unevaluated against the NRHP criteria of significance and are recommended to be avoided by the Project (Table 2). A 50-foot avoidance buffer is proposed around these sites.

The two isolated finds recorded within the wind project area are of unknown Native American age or cultural affiliation and are also recommended as not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP or avoidance by the Project (Table 2).

**Table 2: Prehistoric Sites and Isolated Find Recommendations**

Site	Site Type	Site Integrity	NRHP <sup>1</sup> Status Recommendation within Survey Corridor	Recommended Action
32WI2316	Stone circles and cairn	Good	Unevaluated	Avoidance/ No further investigation
32WI2325	Stone Circle	Good	Unevaluated	Avoidance
32WIX788	Isolated Find	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WIX789	Isolated Find	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation

<sup>1</sup> NRHP = National Register of Historic Places

Both the site and isolated find were recorded within the transmission line corridor date to the historic period. The site is a dumpsite and the isolated find may be part of dispersed dumpsite. Both the site and isolated recorded within the transmission line corridor are recommended as not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP and are not recommended for avoidance by the Project (Table 3).

**Table 3: Transmission Line Corridor Historic Site and Isolated Find Recommendations**

Site	Site Type	Site Integrity	NRHP <sup>1</sup> Status Recommendation within Survey Corridor	Recommended Action
32WI2320	Dumpsite	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation
32WIX790	Isolated Find	Poor	Not eligible	No further investigation

<sup>1</sup> NRHP = National Register of Historic Places

If changes to the construction footprint occur, Burns & McDonnell recommends those areas be surveyed for cultural resources and results be submitted to ND SHPO in the form of an addendum Class III report for review. Concurrence from the ND SHPO will be obtained prior to construction of the Project. Once the ND SHPO concurrence letter is received it will be submitted to the Commission.