

# Reclamation and Revegetation Inspection Report

Aurora Wind Project

Aurora Wind Project, LLC

ND PSC Case No. PU-18-352

**Prepared for:**

North Dakota Public Service Commission  
Public Utilities Division  
State Capitol  
600 East Boulevard – Dept. 408  
Bismarck, ND 58505-0480

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Reclamation and Revegetation Inspection Report  
Keitu Engineers & Consultants, Inc.



September 2022

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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-18-352.

The Aurora Wind Project (Project) is located in Williams County, North Dakota. The Project consists of 71 turbines generating up to 300 megawatts. Construction for the Project began in October 2019 and was completed in April 2020. 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 Amending Certificate and Permit 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 August 24, 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 fall of 2020 and is operated by Enel Green Power. The Project is a wind energy conversion facility consisting of 71 wind turbines, a substation, collection lines, meteorological towers, an ADLS system, and access roads. The Project will convey power from the Wind Project substation to the point of interconnection to the grid at the existing Basin Electric Power Cooperative Tande 345kV Substation via the 345kW transmission line also built by Aurora Wind. Aurora Wind submitted a separate application to the Commission for a Certificate of Site Compatibility for the transmission line.

The Project is under the jurisdiction of the North Dakota Public Service Commission, which issued its Certificate of Site Compatibility No. 59 for Case No. PU-18-352 on May 7, 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 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 August 24, 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 July 28, 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.

## **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 areas disturbed by construction activities 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.



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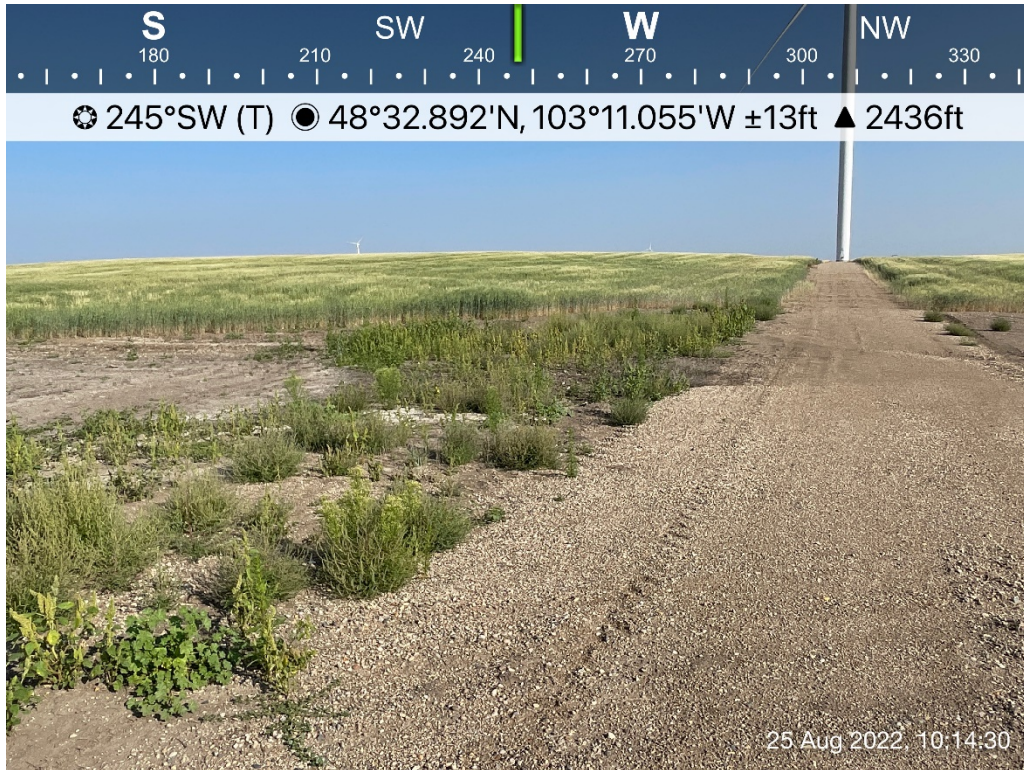
Jaimee Antognazzi, Operations Manager

9/15/2022

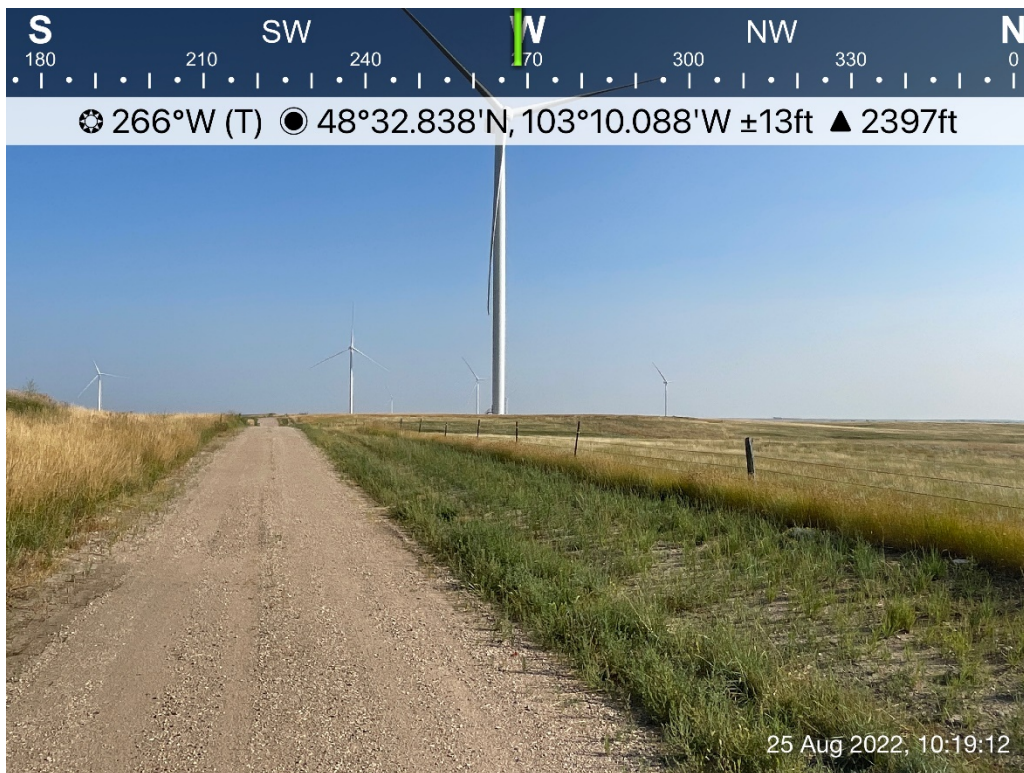
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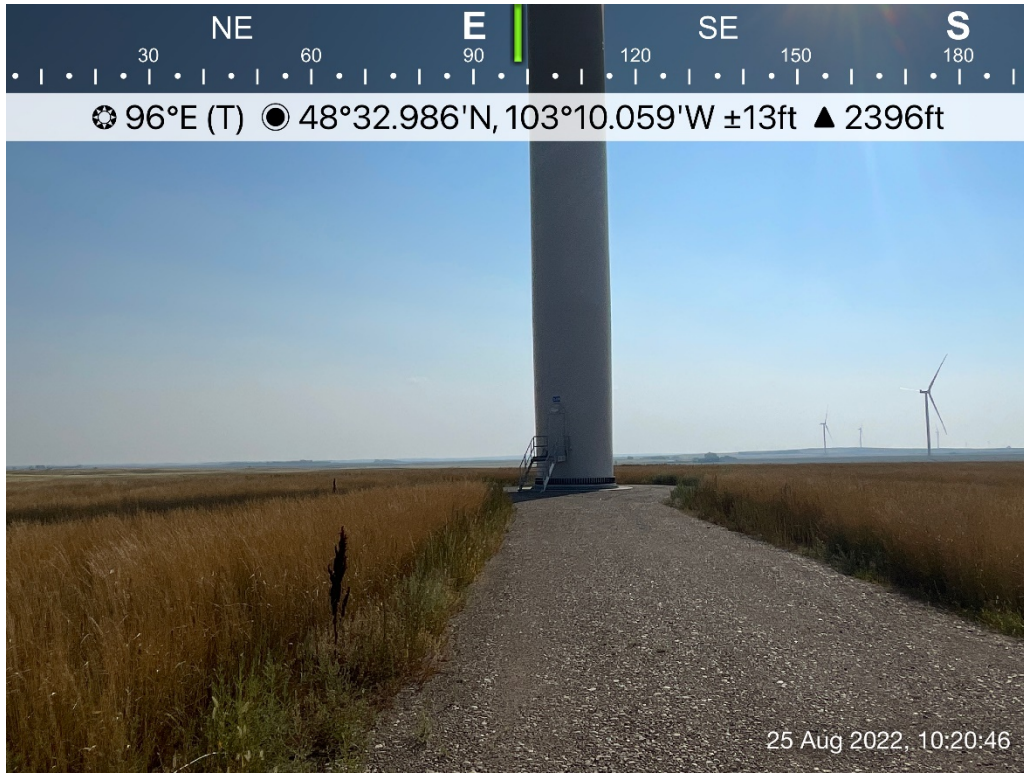
**Report Photo #1:** Wetland Area Near Access Road and Wheat Fields in Production



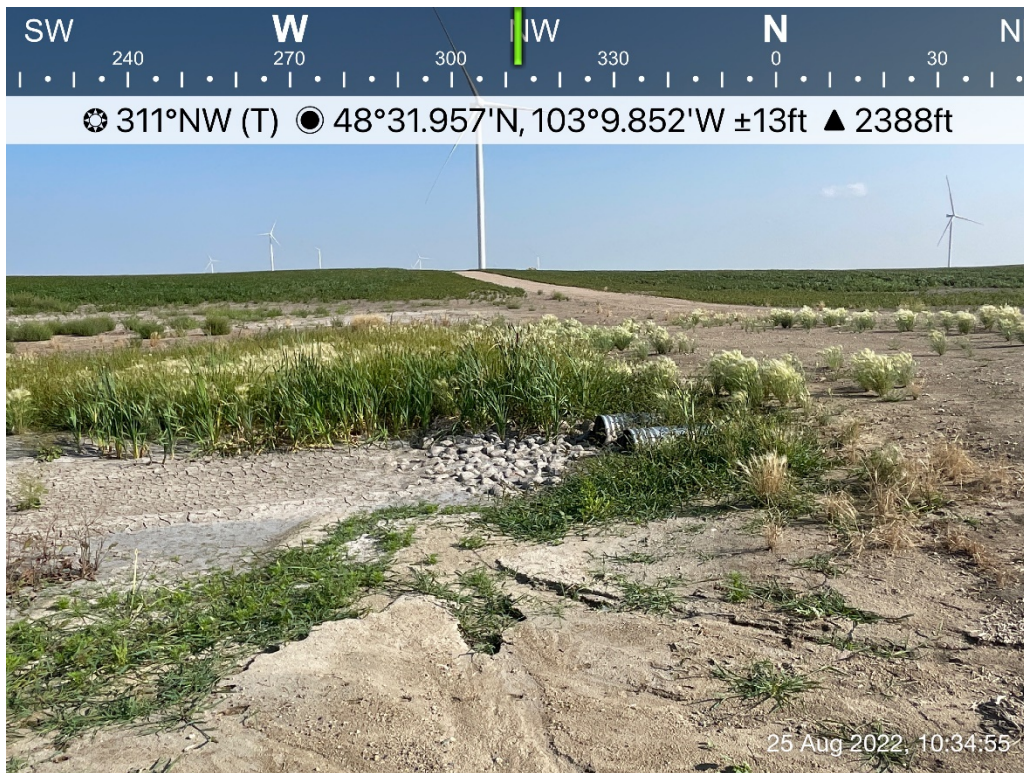
**Report Photo #2:** Grasses in Different Stages of Establishment along Access Road



**Report Photo #3:** Established Grasses along Access Road and Turbine Site



**Report Photo #4:** Culvert under Access Road and Wetland Area



**Report Photo #5:** Wheat Field and Wetland Area along Access Road



**Report Photo #6:** Overview of Turbine Sites and Cows Grazing in Adjacent Pastureland



**Project Photo Location Map:**

