

Reclamation and Revegetation Inspection Report

Northern Divide Wind Energy Center

Northern Divide Wind, LLC

ND PSC Case No. PU-19-376

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.



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 a Reclamation and Revegetation Inspection. This report addresses the Orders established by the Commission and issues established in Case No. PU-19-376.

The Northern Divide Wind Energy Center is a 200-megawatt (MW) wind energy facility consisting of 74 wind turbines, access roads, underground electrical collection and communication systems, an Aircraft Detection Lighting System (ADLS), a collection substation, an operations and maintenance building, one permanent meteorological evaluation tower (MET), and two temporary power performance MET towers. Of the total 74 wind turbines, 66 are GE 2.72 MW turbines, and 8 are GE 2.3 MW turbines. The turbines have a nameplate capacity of approximately 200 MW. The Project Area encompasses approximately 10,900 acres in Burke County, North Dakota.

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 June, 2020 and construction began in July, 2020. Construction for the Project was completed in the spring of 2021 and is operated by NextEra Energy Resources, LLC. The Project is a 200 MW wind energy facility consisting of 74 wind turbines and associated facilities. Northern Divide Wind, LLC also constructed a 41 mile, 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line that will interconnect the generated power to the electrical grid at the existing Basin Electric Tande Substation near Tioga, North Dakota. Divide 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. 63 for Case No. PU-19-376 on June 10, 2020.

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 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 September 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 with the exception of one item.

Construction inspection reports were not filed monthly July 2020 through October 2020. On January 13, 2021, construction reports for July 2020 through November 2020 were filed with the commission, reports were filed monthly thereafter.

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, but were mostly weeds and nonnative species. Even though they were undesirable species, 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's ground cover is as near as practical to preconstruction conditions, but the is populated with undesirable plant species.

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.



9/19/2022

Jaimee Antognazzi, Operations Manager

Date

Report Photo #1: Established Grasses along Access Road



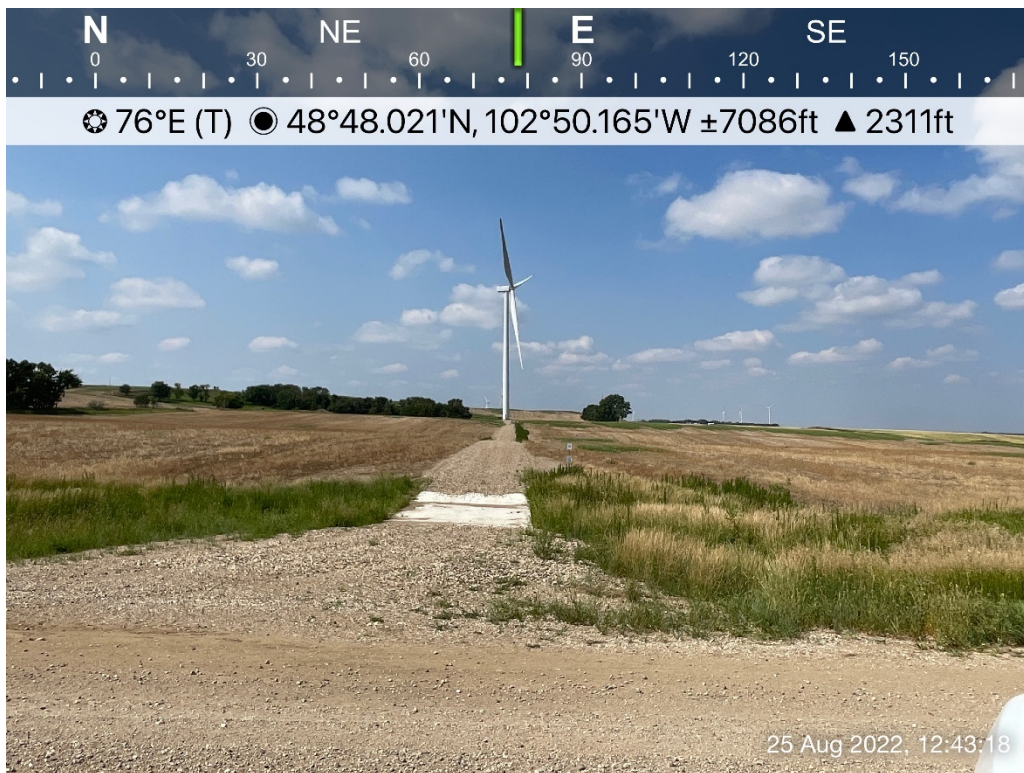
Report Photo #2: Undesirable Vegetation and Silt Fence along Access Road



Report Photo #3: Undesirable Vegetation near Turbine Site 55



Report Photo #4: Cropland on both Sides of Access Road



Project Photo Location Map:

