

# Reclamation and Revegetation Inspection Report

Northern Divide Wind Energy Center 345 kV Transmission Line

Northern Divide Wind, LLC

ND PSC Case No. PU-19-377

## 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 a Reclamation and Revegetation Inspection. This report addresses the Orders established by the Commission and issues established in Case No. PU-19-377.

The Northern Divide Wind Energy 345kV Transmission Line Project (Project) is approximately 41 miles in length, with approximately 23 miles located in Burke County and approximately 18 miles located in Mountrail County. The Project begins with a connection to the associated Northern Divide Wind Energy Center collection substation in Burke County, North Dakota and terminates at the interconnection point at the Tande Substation in Mountrail County, North Dakota. The Project Route consisting of a 150-foot wide corridor totals 100.5 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 that the construction area is restored to its pre-construction state. 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. The Project was well-maintained, secured, and in good condition. During the Reclamation and Revegetation Inspection, the areas appeared to have been properly restored. Vegetation had not be reestablished in all areas due to construction being completed in the fall and will be seeded next spring. Overall, the Project appeared to be constructed as planned with numerous efforts to minimize impacts and to stay in compliance with the siting laws, siting rules, and Commission Orders.

## 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 345-kilovolt (“kV”) transmission line and associated facilities. Northern Divide Wind also constructed a Wind Project, which has a nameplate capacity of up to 200 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”). Northern Divide 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 an average height of 120 feet and average spans of 775 feet. Guyed structures were required at approximately 43 locations, with up to 8 guy wires per structure. The Project includes a shield wire strung at the top of the structures to provide lightning protection. Bird flight diverters were mounted to the shield wire per Avian Power Line Interaction Committee guidelines.

The Project is under the jurisdiction of the North Dakota Public Service Commission, which issued its Certificate Corridor Compatibility No. 217 for Case No. PU-19-377 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.

## **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.



9/19/2022

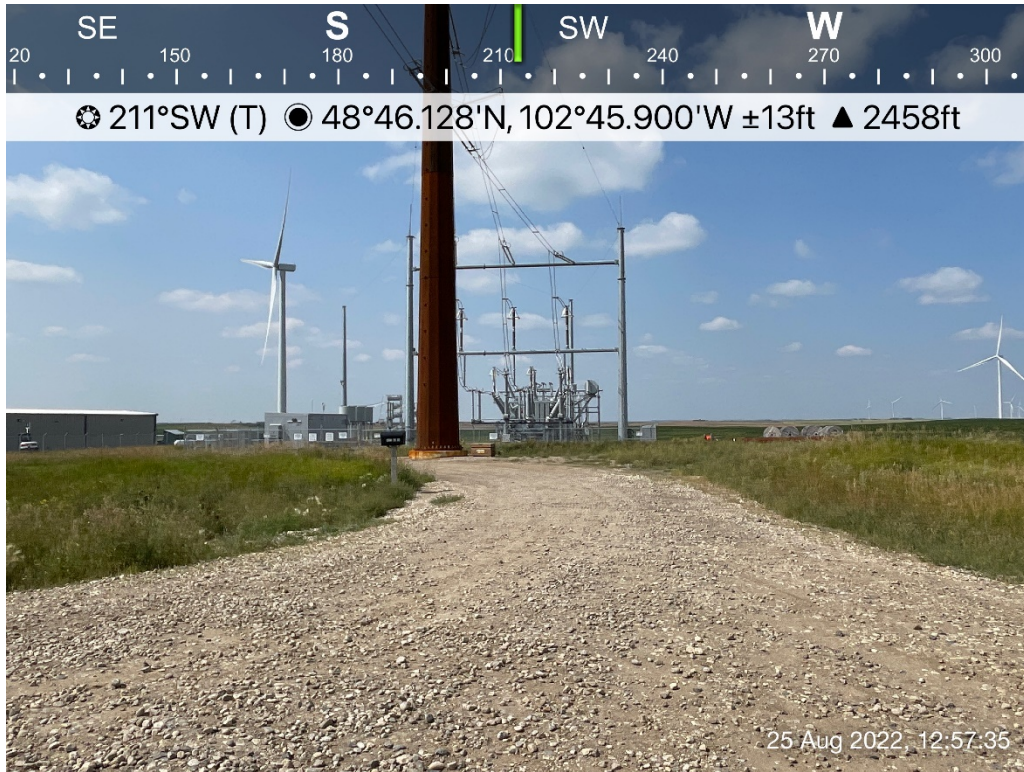
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Jaimee Antognazzi, Operations Manager

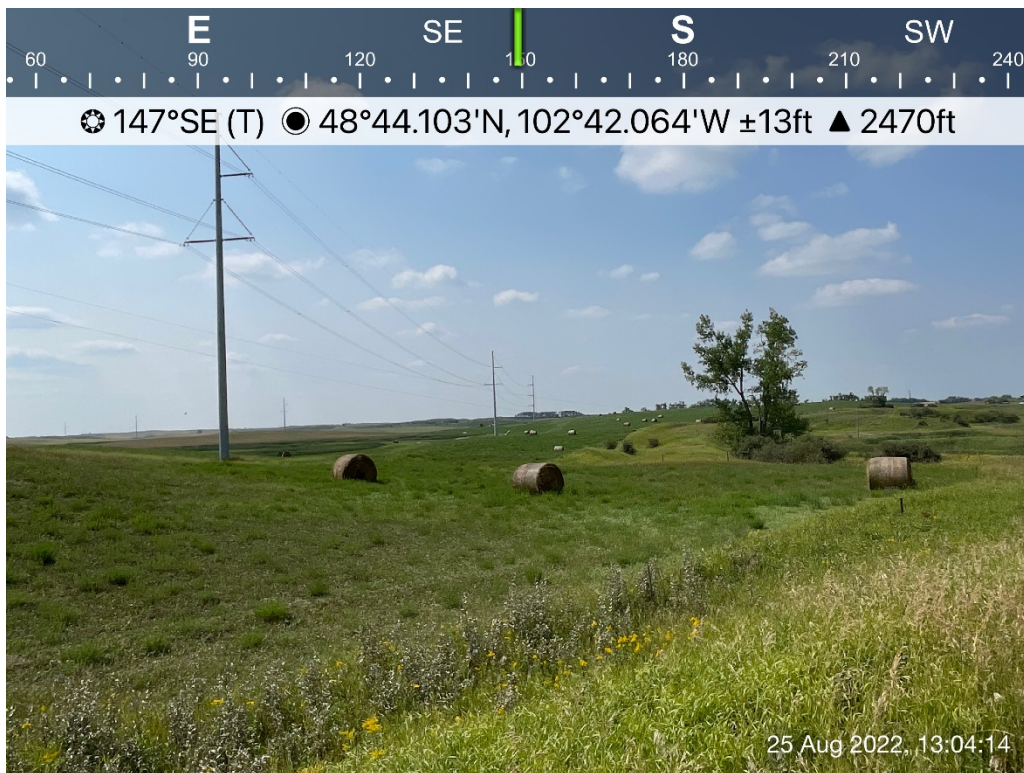
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Date

**Report Photo #1:** Reclamation surrounding Substation



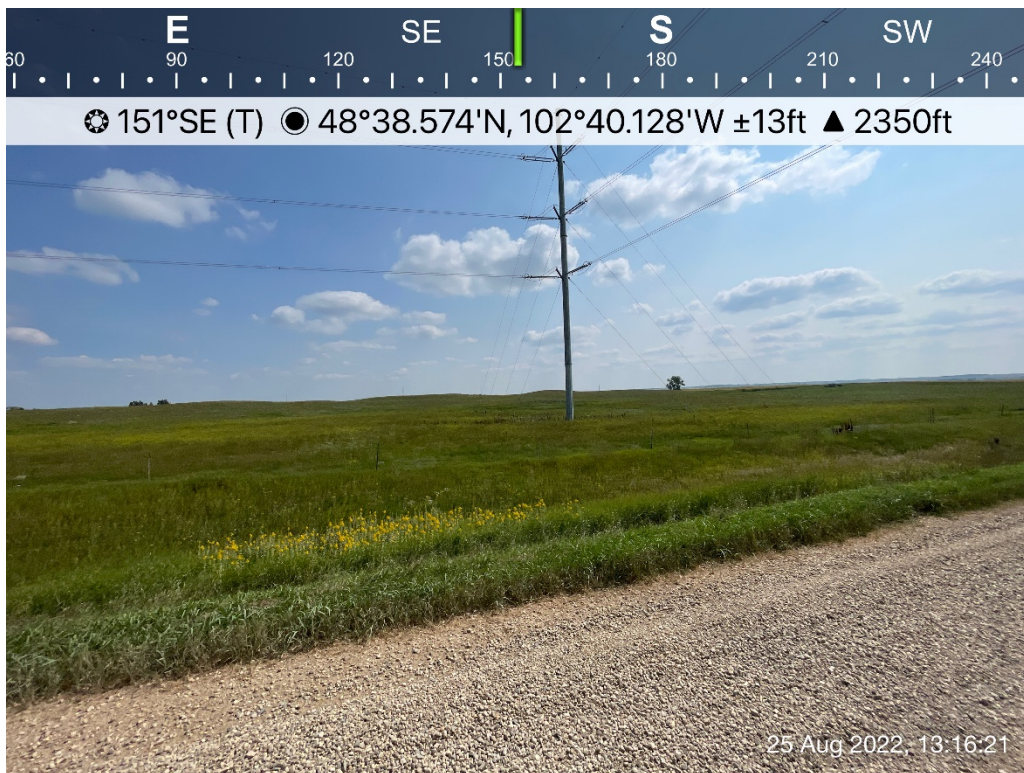
**Report Photo #2:** Transmission Poles in Pastureland



**Report Photo #3:** Transmission Poles along Road in Pastureland



**Report Photo #4:** Guyed Structure in Pastureland



**Project Photo Location Map:**

