

From: [Leveridge, Max C](#)
To: [Ryan King](#)
Subject: External: RE: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND
Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2026 5:04:33 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image020.png](#)
[image021.png](#)
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[image026.png](#)
[image027.png](#)
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[image030.png](#)
[image031.png](#)
[image032.png](#)
[image033.png](#)
[image034.png](#)

Ryan,

Good news, I talked to the guy that used to be our easement coordinator, he said don't even worry about wetlands 75 and 108. For 67, he said it would be hard for us to justify a permit to fill a wetland for that long if it's possible to jughandle around the south end there or if y'all are able to work with the landowner to put in a temporary road north of the wetland. Essentially, as long as there are other options it would be hard for us to write the justification for the permit. If you absolutely cannot work around the wetland, let me know.

Just keep me updated and let me know if you have any other questions --



Max Leveridge
Wildlife Refuge Specialist
NWCG GIS Specialist

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[J. Clark Salyer Wetland Management District](#)

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From: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2026 13:47
To: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

Max,

That update helps.

The timeframe is a little up in the air right now. For some background, we are still awaiting FAA approval for this repower project. The current administration does not like wind, and the Department of War and Department of Airforce are holding this up right now. After months of works towards this, we are still unsure when/if we will receive that approval. This is putting construction in question for 2026. Through the ND Public Service Commission, we have approval to do the road improvements, but we are holding off until we know more about the FAA (we don't want to build up the roads and it's a year or so until we receive that FAA approval. So, if we receive that approval soon, we would start construction in the fall of 2026, pausing for the winter, and finishing in the spring of 2027. So that puts those impacts at ~12 months potentially. If we don't receive FAA approval until a later date and construction is pushed to next year, that could be 6 months of temp impacts.

For Wetland 75, thinking out loud here, would installing a temporary culvert under there temporarily road count as mitigation to not impede that water flow?

Wetland 67 – yes, would be temporary fill, removed and reclaimed once construction is complete. They were going to look in the field at this one to see if that jughandle would work.

Wetland 108 – they can stay on that south side of the road, so let me know after you have had a chance to dig in a little more.

Sounds good on the potential SUP. We've done SUP's in the past for grassland easements and they took 3-6 months.

Again, thanks for the update. Let me know what you find out.

Ryan King | Environmental Coordinator

Direct: 701.557.5558 | Cell: 701.426.9469



From: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2026 10:28 AM

To: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>

Subject: External: RE: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

Good morning Ryan,

What would the timeframe be that this temporary fill would be in the wetlands before it is completely removed?

For more site specific points:

Wetland 75 – I'll have to look closer at this wetland to determine any mitigation, but generally if you can maintain a similar water level and dynamics (runoff, drainages, etc) before and following the project, it should be fine. I'll follow up on this when I have a chance to take a closer look.

Wetland 67 – would this be temporary fill too? Jughandle would be ideal if you can make it work, but also mind the wetlands surrounding that intersection. I don't anticipate y'all impacting those, just a heads up.



Wetland 108 – this is another one I'll have to take a closer look at. As of now, it looks like the work you have mapped should stay out of the basin. Especially if any dirtwork there is temporary (and stays out of the basin), I generally don't see much of an impact. I'll follow up on this one too when I have a chance to take a closer look.

Also for these basins, I can meet you or your contractors out there and/or flag them so y'all know where about we'd consider the edge. As for permitting timing, would you be looking at a ROW? These would take several years to get through the works based on what I'm

seeing. I think these temporary impacts should also be able to fit under a special use permit which would take considerably less time. It would still require completion of NEPA, Endangered Species Act, and Cultural Resources Review, which on the quick side if everything is an exception can take 2-3 months. This one I'll have to ask about just since these aren't the types of projects I've completed permits for in the past and at quick review I'm not sure they are covered under our exceptions but I may be mistaken, but I'll be meeting with just the guy today who should have the answers and can get back to you once I know more.

I know that's probably not as many answers as you were hoping for, but I'll see if I can get you more!



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From: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>

Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2026 09:07

To: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>

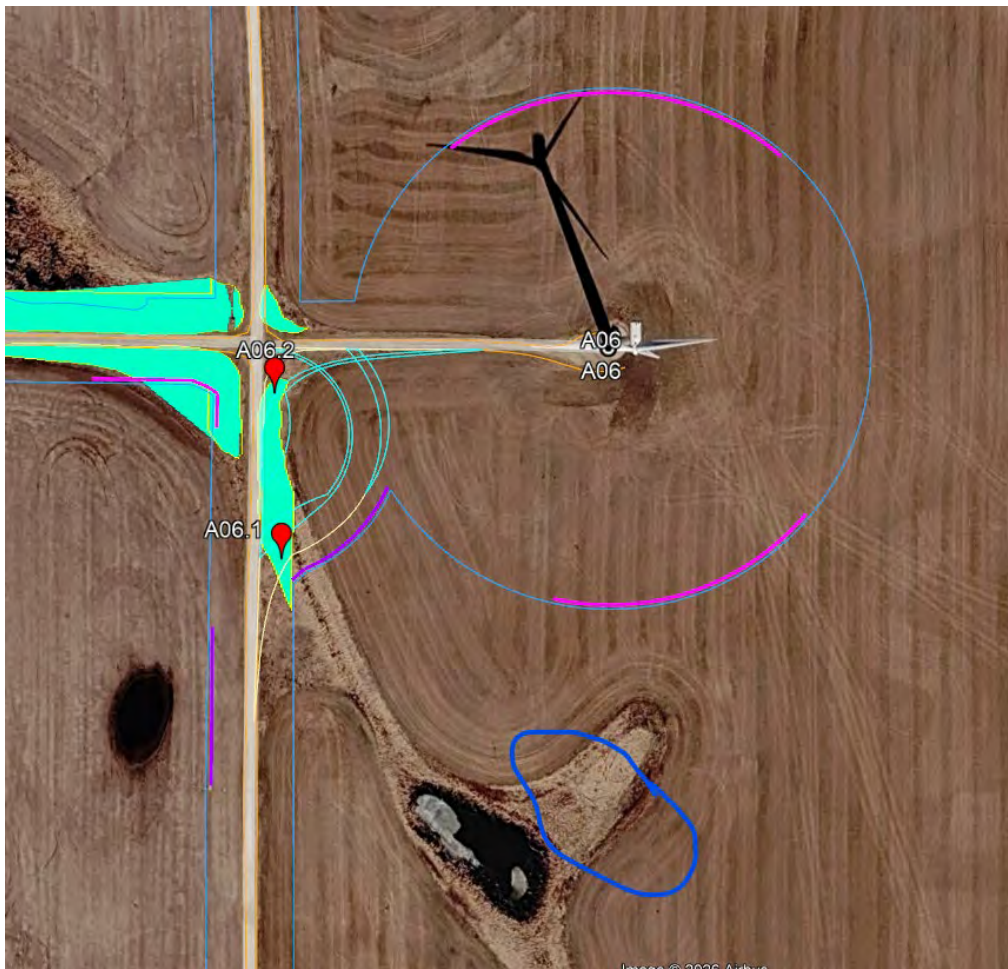
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

Good morning, Max,

This project has hit a few delays, so construction will not begin until closer to this fall. With that, our contractor is exploring a couple different access routes, including 3 areas that are near USFWS protected wetlands. I will outline each below. As we go through this exercise, we are hoping to get an estimated timeframe of permitting approval if we were to pursue impacts to protected wetlands. Our contractor is looking at ways of avoiding this, but we hope to compare their efforts vs potential permitting efforts for these.

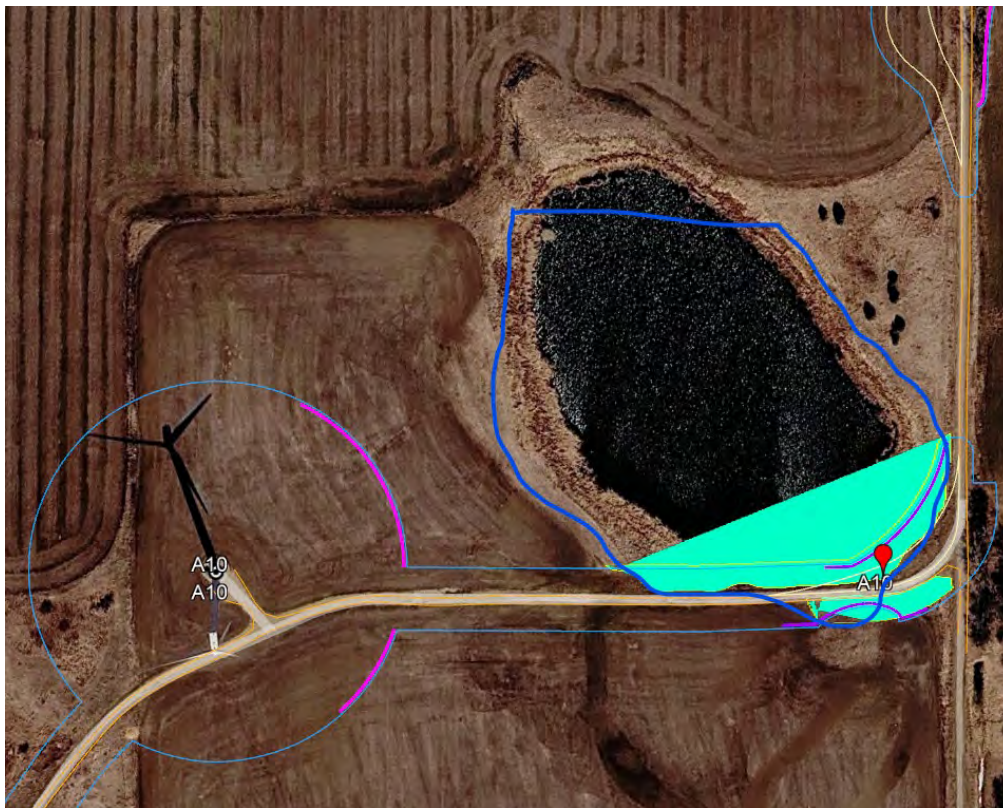
Turbine A06 – wetland 75 (47.943818, -101.228390).

The blue circle is roughly the protected boundary you provided. From your notes below, I understand wetland 75 (where the red pins are) is not protected but is connected to the protected basin. If we were to want to temporary fill parts of that wetland, what mitigation efforts could be made that satisfies USFWS in that we would not affect or alter the protected basin?



Turbine A10 – Wetland 67 (47.95555, -101.250891)

Again, blue is the rough boundary you provided. The contractor is looking to install a jughandle approach to the south of the wetland area but I wanted to get an idea of permitting efforts for this wetland if that approach is not feasible. Currently, it looks like the proposed disturbance is 0.04 acres but that is from our field delineated boundary – disturbance within your provided protected boundary would be more.



Intersection of 27th St & 317th Ave – Wetland 108 (47.906914, -101.250948)

The blue on the north side of the road is your protected wetland. What are your thoughts on potential impacts to the south side of the road wetland?



Thanks for your help here. Again, just looking for permitting effort levels and potential timeline for approvals so we can weigh our options.

Thanks!

Ryan King | Environmental Coordinator
Direct: 701.557.5558 | Cell: 701.426.9469



From: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 8, 2026 2:20 PM
To: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>
Subject: External: Re: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

Perfect, I appreciate your consideration and flexibility working around our wetlands! If you have any other questions come up or if you'd like me to visit the sites with you/the contractors to flag the basin edges before y'all start work, just let me know.

Best --

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From: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>
Sent: Friday, May 8, 2026 12:46:15 PM
To: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

Thank you for that, Max,

OK, I will remove restrictions from Wetlands 8 and 107. I will continue with NO IMPACTS to Wetlands 67, 108, 110, and 112 (close enough to the protected and they should be able to work around). And then, I have spoken with the contractor about Wetlands 75 and 117 that are unprotected, but adjacent to protected wetlands and they will adjust their expansions around those wetland boundaries.

So, we should be good to go then. Thanks again for your help with this. I will pass this along and will be in touch if any questions pop up.

Thanks,

Ryan King | Environmental Coordinator
Direct: 701.557.5558 | Cell: 701.426.9469



From: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 8, 2026 8:21 AM
To: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>
Subject: External: RE: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

Hi Ryan,

I will preface with wetlands 75 and higher all appear to draw off to the east rather than their intended basins. For our purposes, we use the intent rather than as it appears on the map just because of projection/transformation issues between basemaps or the data itself.

Wetland 8 is not protected.



Wetland 67 is protected.



Wetland 75 is not protected but is connected to protected basins (off the top and bottom of the image), so your work may potentially affect them depending on what you do.



Wetland 107 is not protected.

See below screenshot

Wetland 108 is immediately adjacent to a (if not *the*) protected basin, so your work may potentially affect it depending on what you do.

See below screenshot

Wetlands 110 and 112 (I don't know which is which) – the wetland adjacent to the south side of the road is not protected, the larger basin I would consider protected (the shapefile doesn't draw exactly on top of it but the intent appears to be that basin), then the little drainage further south does not appear to be protected.



Wetland 117 is not protected as you have it mapped but on the east side of the road is connected to a protected basin (cut off at the top of the image), so your work may potentially affect it depending on what you do.



My understanding is that your contractors will essentially be **temporarily** building up approaches and turning radii. My disclaimers about “may affect” basins are largely concerned with decreasing water **to** or increasing water **from** these basins (essentially draining), as I understand you are not looking to add fill to these basins, so I won’t touch on that. As long as building up these roadbeds for the

directly nonprotected wetlands you had identified doesn't cause these issues to the water level in the protected basins, ultimately decreasing the amount of water in the basins, then you should be fine to continue. Please correct me if I'm wrong on any of my understanding though. I have a meeting this morning at 9 but will be around the rest of the day if you want to give me a call at the cell number in my signature and we can talk through more specifically what the contractors are looking to do and if it may affect the basins or not.

Hopefully this starts to help but if you still need them, I can get you a shapefile early next week too.



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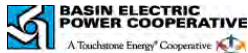
From: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 7, 2026 09:05
To: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

Max,

Attached is a document that has a table of the wetlands in question as well as snips of each wetland. You'll see our contractors proposed temporary turning radii and approach widening locations. Just looking to confirm or deny for each location. You already confirmed wetland 8 is not a protected wetland, so I will go ahead and allow them to widen that approach.

Thank you,

Ryan King | Environmental Coordinator
Direct: 701.557.5558 | Cell: 701.426.9469



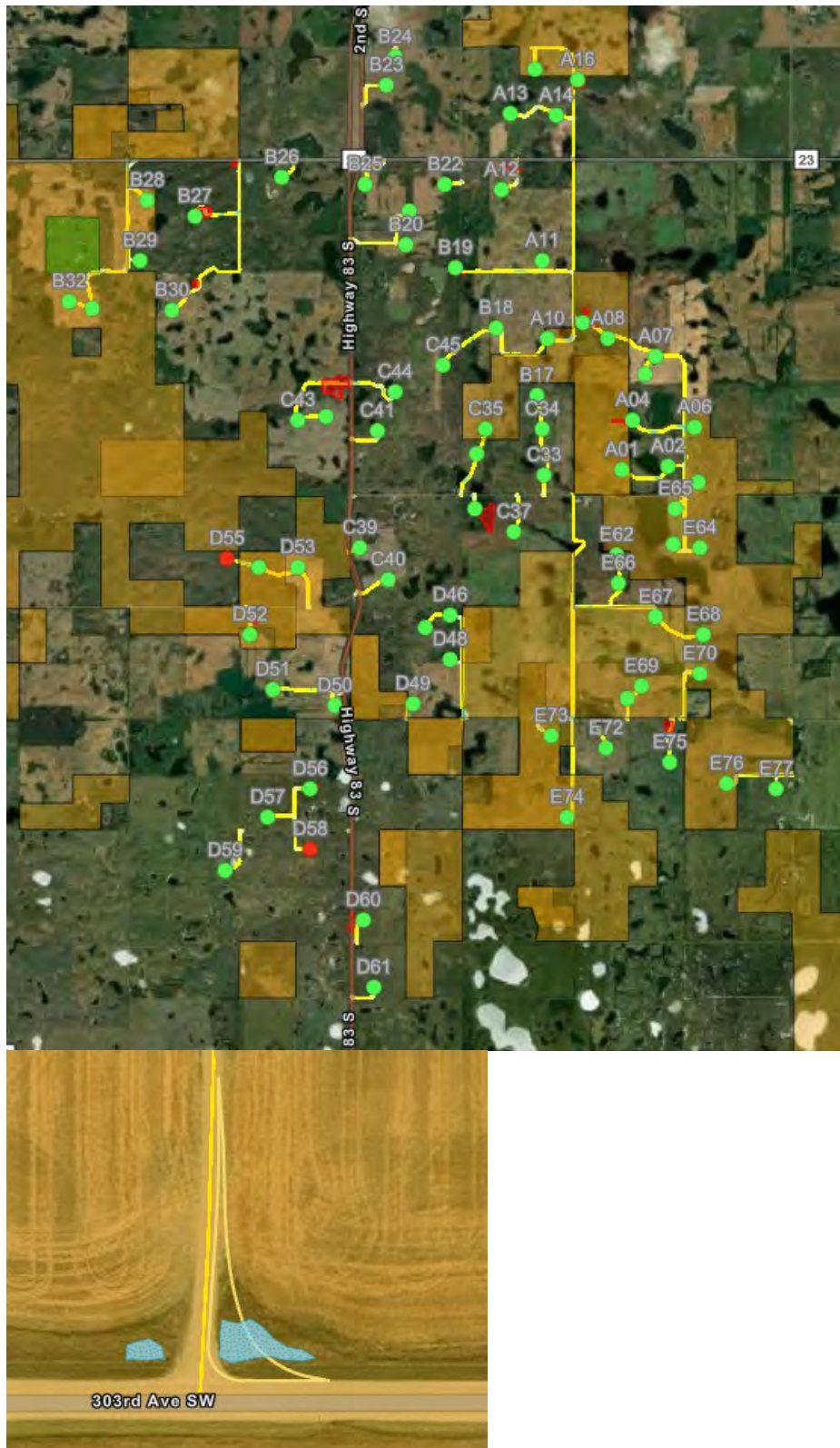
From: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 7, 2026 7:16 AM
To: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

Good morning,

It would be for multiple. Below is a snip of the area with the wetland easements highlighted in yellow. On a previous project, the Crosby district was able to send shapefiles of all the wetland basins under easement. And if that isn't doable, totally ok. Like I said, just was hoping to verify boundaries. Also below is a snip from the access road to D53, D54, and D55 (Sec4, T151N, R83W). Our contractor is proposing to widen some approaches and I'd be curious if some of these road ditch wetlands are covered under easement.

If it would be better for me to highlight these on a case-by-case basis, I certainly can, too.

Thanks,



Ryan King | Environmental Coordinator
 Direct: 701.557.5558 | Cell: 701.426.9469



From: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, May 6, 2026 4:56 PM

To: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>

Subject: External: RE: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

Hi Ryan,

Which turbines are you asking for specifically? Or are you asking for the wetlands around all of them?

Also were you able to find an answer to the lease term question?

Thanks --



Max Leveridge

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From: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>

Sent: Wednesday, May 6, 2026 14:56

To: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

Max,

Would you happen to have the wetland basin boundaries within your Wetland Easements for this area? I just want to verify that those boundaries align with what our consultant delineated in the field. I understand that those boundaries may not be exact but, correct me if I am wrong, those boundaries are what need to be avoided even if they are shifted spatially? Does that make sense? Also, I am curious if road ditch wetlands are included in those easements. We have been asked about a few of those wetlands and if they are covered under what USFWS manages.

Thank you,

Ryan King | Environmental Coordinator

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From: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>

Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 7:42 AM

To: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>

Cc: Erin Fox Dukart <EDukart@bepc.com>; Dusti Schirado <DSchirado@bepc.com>

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

Good morning,

That all sounds great, Max. Thank you for that update.

I can confirm that we will stay within the 30 feet for our access roads and the 150-foot radius around E73 and A01. I can also confirm that we will not be impacted those wetlands along the E73 access road. We will stay within the 30-foot access road, and the wetland boundaries will be staked for avoidance. And lastly, I can confirm we will stay on the east side of the fenceline at A04.

That would be great if you could talk with your biologist about an approved seed mix for those areas. I have cc'd Dusti Schirado, our land agent for the project who will be overseeing the reclamation.

For your lease term question, are you asking what the original lease term when it was signed in 2009 or what we would be requesting now (i.e. new life of the project)? I attached the original Partial Term Relinquishment again for Dusti.

Thank you again for looking into this.

Ryan King | Environmental Coordinator

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From: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 9:05 AM
To: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>
Cc: Erin Fox Dukart <EDukart@bepc.com>
Subject: External: RE: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

Good morning Ryan,

Sorry it took me so long to respond, I was out sick last week. I was able to talk with our realty folks this morning about what the partial term relinquishment and release document means. This document essentially acts as your SUP for the work exactly as described in the document for the **E73** turbine and access road and **A01** turbine and access road, including as you mentioned "for the purpose of the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of two turbines...including but not limited to access roads..." As long as you stay within **15 feet on both sides of the centerline** (30 feet total width) as mapped and a **150 foot radius of the center point** as identified in the document (I'm guessing this is the turbine itself), you won't need an additional SUP since this would fall under the maintenance specified in the document. I know you mentioned that you aren't proposing any impacts to wetlands, but I noticed in your picture of E73, you've highlighted a portion of the wetland just northwest of where the access road meets 317th Ave SE. That wetland, as well as the other basins in that photo, is under easement so please avoid any impacts. If you anticipate this impact to be unavoidable, let me know.

As long as you stick east of the fenceline for **A04** as you specified, you will not be on easement and would not require an SUP.

I would be happy to talk to our private lands biologist to get you an approved seed mix for our easement sites, or if you already have a seed mix you can send that list my way and I can take a look.

Otherwise, please just let me know when you have a specific date you plan to start work on E73 and A01, then let me know once y'all are wrapped up. The last question I have is what is the term of the lease which this partial term relinquishment and release was established under? Just so we can include in our files if it has been extended or not.

If you have any other questions or concerns, or would like me to double check for easements on any other tracts you plan to work on, don't hesitate to reach out!



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From: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2026 11:40
To: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>
Cc: Erin Fox Dukart <EDukart@bepc.com>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

Max,

Have you had a chance to review this information, specifically what the relinquishment means for this repower? We are planning to submit our ND PSC documentation for this, and I have a section for Agency Approvals and have a highlight in there for what will be needed from USFWS.

Thank you,

Ryan King | Environmental Coordinator

Direct: 701.557.5558 | Cell: 701.426.9469



From: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>

Sent: Monday, April 20, 2026 7:41 AM

To: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>

Cc: Erin Fox Dukart <EDukart@bepc.com>

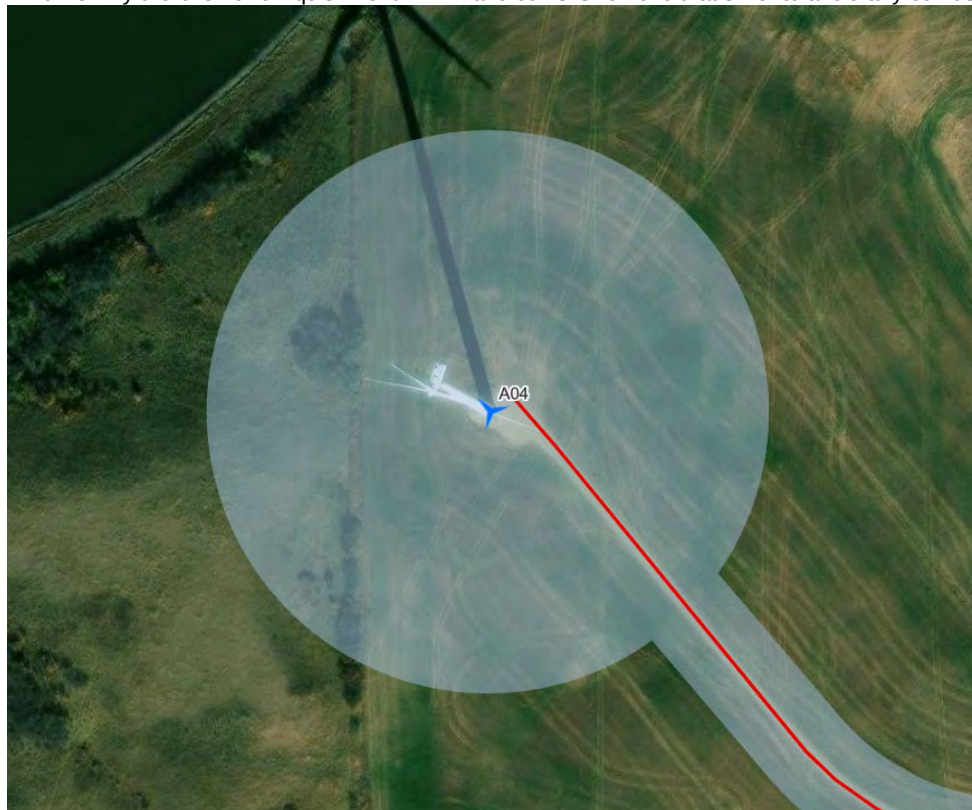
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

Max,

You are correct, nothing new will be installed into the ground – the original foundations and tower will remain in place. The replacements will only be up-tower.

Yes, we are looking to repower every turbine in the park, E73 included.

For A04, see below. While our standard workspace buffer goes into the easement, we will not impact it, and our temporary workspace will remain to the east of the fence in the cultivated field. This was the case during the original construction, too, which is why there is no relinquishment. I will have our GIS remove that sliver to avoid any confusion for our contractor.



Let us know when you have had a chance to digest the language. We'd be happy to chat on a call to discuss next steps.

Thank you,

Ryan King | Environmental Coordinator
Direct: 701.557.5558 | Cell: 701.426.9469



From: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2026 2:06 PM
To: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>
Cc: Erin Fox Dukart <EDukart@bepc.com>
Subject: External: RE: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

Hi Ryan,

Thank you for those answers! Other than temporary topsoil removal, it sounds like you don't anticipate any further ground disturbance (e.g., installing anything new into the ground)? We do have both grassland and wetland easements in section 14 where E73 is. Are you also looking to do work on that turbine? If so, I'll likely need to look into those files too. And do you or Erin happen to have record of a relinquishment and release for A04?

Let me look into that wording and see what exactly it would entail, I haven't come across relinquishment and release documents yet, so I can't give an immediate interpretation on it.

Thanks!



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From: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2026 13:20
To: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>
Cc: Erin Fox Dukart <EDukart@bepc.com>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

Max,

Erin Fox Dukart, cc'd, who was with Basin during the original permitting and build of this wind farm, found the attached Relinquishment and Release of Waterfowl Habitat Protection Easement. This has language for 2 turbines, A01, which I covered below, and E73. In the attached map, again, I see an easement in the parcel where A01 is, but don't for Section 14, where E73 is (circled on the map).



To answer your questions, we are scheduled to start construction late May or June. I apologize for not bringing this up sooner and we understand we would need your approval before doing any construction within your easements. The temporary disturbance will include topsoil clearing within our temp workspace (the blue circle above and in the snip from my first email) for material delivery and assembly. I can track down a more exact footprint for each of these if you need. I know each site's disturbance will slightly vary based on terrain and accessibility around the turbine. After construction, topsoil would be replaced and the area would be reseeded with an approved seed mix. No, we are not proposing to impact any wetlands.

In a paragraph on page 3 of the Relinquishment, it states, "This instrument only releases and relinquishes the waterfowl habitat protection rights of the United States of America in the Released lands for the purpose of the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of two turbines...including but not limited to access roads..." We will be interested on your take with that sentence and whether this construction effort fits into that.

Thank you for looking into this and we will await a response next week after you've had a chance to review your files.

Thanks,

Ryan King | Environmental Coordinator
Direct: 701.557.5558 | Cell: 701.426.9469



From: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2026 11:15 AM
To: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>
Subject: External: RE: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

Hi Ryan,

I'd be happy to take a look at this! Unfortunately our servers are currently down and the hard files are over at Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge, but I'll be popping over there next week and can let you know what I find then.

In the meantime, is this currently in the planning stage or do you have a date already set for when you'd like this work to begin? Also what work would go on in this temporary work space (so I can get an idea of the type of disturbance)? As far as I can tell based on the photo you sent, it doesn't appear your buffer would affect our wetland easement, but I'll double check when our servers are back up.

As far as the permit, I'll have to see when I get the files next week, but I'd imagine there was a special use permit for the original project (unless included in something like a ROW). This would have been only issued for that initial period, so this upgrade project would likely require a new special use permit for the disturbance in your temporary work space, which could take several months to get through all the right channels (SHPO review alone took around a month to get back to us on the most recent permit I did).

I'll let you know what I find next week though!

Max Leveridge
Wildlife Refuge Specialist
NWCG GIS Specialist
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From: Ryan King <RKing@bepc.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 15, 2026 14:20
To: Leveridge, Max C <max_leveridge@fws.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Basin Electric Prairie Winds ND

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

Good afternoon, Max,

Basin Electric is proposing to upgrade our Prairie Winds ND wind farm in Ward County (see attached KMZ for the current layout). The upgrade includes increasing the blade length and upgrading the internal components of the turbine. The towers and access roads will remain in the same location, and no new turbines are proposed. Based on pages from our original PSC application, I see there are (or at least were) USFWS grassland and wetland easements within our project area (See attached USFWS provided PDF easement map). I cannot find anything in our files regarding an SUP or land permit, specifically for the Section 36, T152N, R83W grassland easement, right in the middle of the pdf map.

Based on the snip below of our GIS map, I see one turbine (A01) within the grassland easement, with some temporary workspace of A04 in there as well. My questions to you are, do you have record of an SUP for these areas? I am looking for language for potential requirements for this proposed repower. We plan to use the temporary workspace outlined below but wanted to make sure the original agreement would cover this. I don't see any language in our previous documents indicating we impacted any wetland easements. So, it would just be this one grassland easement in question.



I hope this all makes sense. Happy to answer any further clarification questions. Let me know if hopping on a call would be easier for discussion.

Thank you,

Ryan King

Environmental Coordinator

Basin Electric Power Cooperative

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