

Regional Resource Stewardship Council Minutes

July 21, 2020

Tennessee Valley Authority Meeting held by virtual means.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Regional Resource Stewardship Council (RRSC or Council) convened for the first meeting of its 11th term at 9:30 a.m. EDT on July 21, 2020, virtually. The meeting recording is available at www.tva.gov/rrsc.

Council members attending:

RaeLynn Butler	Kim Klinker	Sen. Clay Scofield
Keith Carnahan	Ronald Lambert	Danette Scudder
Robert Englert, Jr.	Tom Littlepage	Robert Sneed
Ray Hardin	Whitney Lipscomb	Randy Wiggins
Richard Holland	Will Nelson	Greg Young
Mark Iverson	Ron Robertson	

Designated Federal Officer (DFO): Joe Hoagland

Facilitator: Liz Upchurch

- Appendix A – TVA staff and members of the public who attended the meeting
- Appendix B – Agenda
- Appendix C - Written public comment
- Appendix D- Council Advice

Meeting presentations and recording can be found at www.tva.gov/rrsc

1. Welcome and Introductions

Meeting facilitator Liz Upchurch began the meeting by introducing RRSC Chair Kim Klinker, who gave opening remarks and conducted a “roll-call” to determine attendance. Each member gave their name, their individual topic of interest, how long they had individually served on the RRSC, and a bucket-list item.

The meeting facilitator then introduced Joe Hoagland, DFO, who stated the intention of the RRSC to provide updated environmental information about the Tennessee Valley to both the public and TVA leadership and provided an overview of TVA’s responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic and recent organizational changes made within TVA Innovation & Research. He then introduced the new senior manager of Stakeholder Relations, Althea Jones.

A. Safety Moment and Meeting Protocols

Meeting facilitator provided an overview of the virtual meeting protocols and a safety moment on health problems associated with summer heat.

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B. Previous TVA RRSC Recap

The meeting facilitator provided a short recap of the last RRSC meeting that occurred in the Pickwick Area and included topics such as Dam Safety and Monitoring, Flood Recovery Efforts at the campground, and River Bank Erosion Impact and Safety. The facilitator also went over several suggestions made by members during the previous meeting, such as hosting presentations from our joint project partners and invite stakeholders to provide their insights on key meeting topics.

C. Meeting Purpose

The facilitator briefly covered the agenda for the meeting, which included an update on the impacts of COVID-19 and TVA's response, general TVA introduction for new members, a virtual public listening section, RRSC discussion between members and the development of an advice statement, general information surrounding TVA's recently adopted environmental policy and sustainability report, and an update on the Natural Resource Plan and Asian Carp Activities.

2. DFO Update—Joe Hoagland

The DFO provided a short reminder of TVA's history and core purposes, including its mission of low-cost energy production, environmental stewardship and economic development geared towards the betterment of the Tennessee Valley. He discussed TVA's continued progress towards reducing carbon emissions across the enterprise and protection of wildlife and natural resources around the Valley. He concluded with a short recap of TVA's COVID-19 response and general business-related updates.

Hoagland said, "This meeting will be an opportunity for you to learn about what TVA does and to ask questions. This meeting also includes an opportunity for the public to address this group. Later in the session, we will have time to hear your views and perspectives on today's subjects."

A. FACA Briefing—Kendra Mansur

TVA's Office of General Counsel, Attorney Kendra Mansur, thanked the RRSC for its work and provided a presentation on the history of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as well as TVA's RRSC.

3. Southeastern Grasslands Initiative and Pollinators Presentations—Dwayne Estes, Ph.D. and TVA's Adam Dattilo

Southeastern Grasslands Initiative Executive Director Dr. Dwayne Estes gave a presentation titled "The Importance of Rights-of-Way for Grassland/Pollinator Habitat". The presentation covered the environmental diversity across the southeast, dangers to these habitats and grassland health, and the loss substantial grassland area within the TVA service area. Dr. Estes linked the degradation of grassland habitats to the loss of pollinators in the area how grasslands found under transmission and power lines can be used to rehabilitate these species and their habitats.

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TVA Senior Botanist Adam Dattilo followed with a presentation titled “TVA Right-of-Way Grasslands: Promoting Pollinators across the Valley,” in which he built on Dr. Estes’ presentation by again bringing the idea of using areas under TVA transmission and power lines as viable pollinator habitat rehabilitation grasslands to the attention of the council members. He also discussed several restoration projects TVA is engaged in currently to meet these goals, environmental degradation and diversity tracking methods, and the challenges and opportunities going forward in working with these right-of-ways (ROWs).

There are resources available surrounding how many seeds or live plants can be taken. There are also resources available from a genetic standpoint concerning how to maintain the genetic viability of populations moving forward if plants are introduced to a new location.

EPRI and SGI partnered on a research study for this work, along with members SGI and Mississippi State. SGI focuses mostly on botany, and then about three to five individuals and some graduate students are also involved in that work from Mississippi State. Education is a big part of this as well.

Publications about conservation of the Monarch butterfly usually describe an “all hands on deck” approach, meaning we need everything, to save that species. From a biodiversity and pollinator standpoint, which pollinators have several economic benefits to both the food supply and the economy as a whole meaning we need these for many issues. Changing how we do things is important. Perhaps changing practices from having clean field edges to letting things grow along the margins for pollinating insects. The ROWs can be important too but not every one of them. Broadly speaking, ROWs are important parts of the broad picture.

When asked how much these practices cost in comparison to traditional ROW management Dattilo said that TVA compared costs between a once commonly used broadcast aerial application approach with this newer method and found them to be similar in costs when the trade-offs of dealing with numerous issues including potential nearby landowner impacts and the need to have staff walk the ROWs before spraying.

TVA realized that low-volume foliar application to woody plants was the best all-around economic alternative, driving TVA to adopt this strategy going forward.

The research study is made up of TVA, SGI, and EPRI, which is a narrow study only concerned with TVA ROWs. EPRI is working with several other utilities across the east coast on similar projects. Southern Company in Alabama has a project akin to this one, and other utilities in New England are also doing similar work. There are many opportunities to partner with other utilities, state departments of transportation, and other partners that manage land in the TVA area to do this great work.

4. TVA Environmental Policy—Rebecca Tolene

TVA Vice President of Environment Rebecca Tolene provided an overview of TVA’s newly refreshed environmental policy, passed by the Board in May of this year, which

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focuses on a strong environmental management system and to set a clear direction for environmental goals. She then gave a short overview of the 2019 Sustainability Report and how it aligns with TVA's mission, including sustainability across the Valley and TVA's planned strategy to reach these goals.

Before moving on to RRSC members' perspectives, the meeting facilitator asked if any members of the council would like to ask a questions about any previous presentation.

5. RRSC Perspectives

The RRSC Members were asked to respond to two questions related to the topic of the previously presented Pollinator and Grasslands Initiative:

1. At a high level, what types of partners should be engaged in the Pollinator and Grasslands projects?
2. What engagement methods would be the most effective?

RaeLynn Butler: Thank you. I appreciate the presentations today and this this is excellent and exciting work. The diversity and restoration of these habitats is important. In terms of the question, getting more utilities involved while also working with DOTs. They have so much ROW land throughout the valley, their partnership could help connect these ecosystems together to increase the amount of grasslands that these endangered species could use. I think another aspect of this, in terms of cultural compliance, there are many plant species that are important for cultural and medicinal purposes by the Tribes. So knowing what plants are available in the ROWs could create opportunities to partner with distended communities and Tribes, possibly to look at gathering some of those plants at some point, or to partner with local environmental groups. So at a high level those are just some ideas.

Robert Englert, Jr.: Well I think we should reach out to every public utility, gas and transportation companies. There are enough power lines and ROWs to make a difference. I can't imagine that those groups would not jump on board with this, especially after listening to the chemical application to woody plant species which is mainly what the fight in their ROWs. I can't imagine they wouldn't jump on board. How you go about engaging these groups could be to get the presenters' great ideas to the external partners. They've already done some outreach so continuing that would be helpful.

Mark Iverson: My thoughts are aligned with RaeLynn and Robbie's. I got the impression from the presentation that this is probably going to be in small batches considering that the opportunity to do vast tracts of land may be a little bit more challenging to do. ROWs fit into that idea well. So this does lead to other opportunities to co-join with other public utilities. Like Robbie mentioned, it seems that from a cost perspective, over time, once you take care of the woody species and establish a good grasslands area this type of ROW management becomes very cost effective. It is a win-win for ratepayers and for diversity of our habitats. This is a perfect nexus of all those pieces. Once we establish really good programming, spreading this out to other utilities would be in everyone's interest.

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Kim Klinker: I think I am going to reiterate what has been said. I think about the comment that a lot of these easements may run through private property and how these private individuals have the ability to manage easement land. That might be a really special and important aspect. So again, in a lot of things we talk about, I think it's really important to look at how TVA can communicate the importance of these areas and teach the public about it. I also think the public as a whole would want to participate in it. From a high level perspective, the private sector is also of high level importance because they affect a lot of this land. So as we mentioned before, not only private owners but railroads, DOTs, and farmers' groups could be engaged to use the land that they may have. Some ideas I had, considering the small size of this group, a lot of this engagement could be done via online means. In my community, we are always looking for good speakers to come and teach our community about issues similar to the ones we've spoken about today. It may not require the subject matter expert to be present, but events such as these could aid in wider engagement.

Ron Lambert: I truly believe one of the greatest assets would be the farming community because they have a vast amount underutilized acreage. If we could also engage the soil and water districts, which are comprised of farmers, onboard and educated they would become good advocates for the program. Also, developing programming around how pollinators affect the landowners' bottom line would prove to increase engagement. These could take the form of cost-share programs to assist with the burns or establishment of these areas. The other area to look at is small towns, such as Cumberland Gap or Harrigut in Tennessee. Harrigut is a tree city but would love to become a pollinator city through planting. Increasing resources could help move these cities towards this goal.

Tom Littlepage: This is an issue much bigger than TVA but TVA leadership can certainly be helpful. This needs to be part of an interaction on many fronts, as TVA engages with resource agencies of other states, and could be rolled into some Forever Wild organizations and their programming. Looking at cultural resources, TVA has traditionally tried to avoid disturbing them but now I am wondering if there is a way to integrate these practices into cultural resource preservation. Working with the agriculture community as a whole is also important. In doing this, we should work to make sure people understand TVA is not the main decision-maker but is working to coordinate engagement and partnership. In terms of ROWs, I am assuming this is a part of other discussions within the utility industry trying to promote a more organized approach to ROW management.

Whitney Lipscomb: I want to echo what everyone is saying in regards to engaging more utilities and DOTs. I think this can be done by looking to state agencies and state regulatory agencies (Dept. of Environmental Quality). As Tom mentioned, it is very important to get all utilities on the same page, and the creation of this united front can be achieved by our public utility staff and their counterparts in other states. I would also echo working with municipalities. I also think that these utilities and cities want to be good environmental stewards and perhaps there is a way to market that as a means of

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economic development. There is a marketing/education component that could even be used in schools to teach about biodiversity and restoration.

Ron Robertson: I would like to echo some of the ideas that Ron and Kim mentioned. The NRCS and the county soil conservation districts would be extremely important in dealing with farmers in this area. There is an NRCS program called Conservation Stewardship which I am participating in and one of the requirements is having a pollinator field/area on your farm. Farmers are not naturally inclined to diverse vegetation in our fields, but we all have areas that can't be farmed economically so I think we are open to using those areas for these purposes. I think there should be some incentive financially to do that, but again we all have a lot of small areas that are not conducive to traditional farming. Perhaps some thoughts around mowing empty lots as a means of protecting these pollinators' habitats. We could also engage the general public in the idea that maybe we don't need to mow everything. In my area, we have so much rain that we have to stay on top of the woody species or they will dominate the fields. Farmers understand the importance of pollinators because they help our crops.

Danette Scudder: There are a couple of entities that have been mentioned as potential partners that I would like to underscore. I know SEPA has been mentioned, but also the Army Corps of Engineers and their environmental responsibility as it relates to the area they are tasked with overseeing. I know that we are involved with Team Cumberland, and we have often had environmental presentations in their meetings. We have developed and provided ROW management training and partnered with others that provide technique and best practices training that could be expanded to include pollinator and grassland restoration and preservation to meet these goals. The economic side of this is also important but may not be as intuitive to those who are familiar with traditional ROW management.

Robert Sneed: I would like to echo what Danette just said about engaging the Army Corps of Engineers because I worked there for 36+ years so I know things work there. They would be a great group to engage and work with, especially in the Nashville district because 9 of the 10 projects we maintain produce hydropower which means a lot of ROWs and transmission lines. Also, there are a lot of land-holdings in different environmental settings in relation to these projects that could be used. The local offices also have a defined natural resource role which could be used to this advantage.

Randy Wiggins: Yes I agree with what everyone has said, especially in relation to engaging other LPCs, the NRCS, and soil and water districts. The North Carolina DOT has a lot of ROWs in the state that could be used. Some that may not have been mentioned that we could look at could be the TVA farmers' group, the Xerces Society and the Honeybee Association. Looking in North Carolina, there is a program called "present use value", PUV, where individuals can take their acreage and put it into some type of forestry and get a reduced rate for tax purposes. There is a section that applies to wildlife conservation but does not apply to pollinators. This could be another avenue that could be taken into account from a high level. Wildlife and forest services could be engaged as they already do many projects for local conservation such as prescribed burns, cuttings, and plantings, but I don't know if they get involved in planting native

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grasses and plants it may only be trees. This could be another group to reach out to. There are a lot of other groups in our area, such as quail and wild turkey conservation groups that would be very interested in this.

Greg Young: I am glad to be here and to participate in this discussion. I work for the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and serve as the Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Environment. I handle the environmental regulatory side of the house here. Jim Bryson handles the state park side. With that, considering the state parks that are housed within TDEC, I would like to echo what Whitney said about exploring opportunities to leverage state agencies and state parks to see if there are opportunities to use their ROWs and open lands to advance these programs. Second, I have worked with Dwayne on a couple of projects and I can say that being able to restore landscape on a large scale where humans have caused harm is a great win-win opportunity for all involved. There may also be an opportunity to utilize these grasslands for carbon sequestration, as has been done on the Cumberland Plateau.

Keith Carnahan: One thing that I think we should look at is partnering with LPCs as they do their ROW clearing and maybe looking at trying to get some of these wildflowers and grasslands in there.

6. RRSC Public Listening Session

One member of the public signed up to address the RRSC during the virtual meeting.

Dale Miller: Mr. Miller is a member of The Ridges at Tellico Lake Homeowners Association (HOA). He discussed a non-developed public access area that has seen a substantial amount of littering and inappropriate waste disposal that he says is ruining the area for other members of the public who do follow the rules. He thanked Cathy Coffey and Chris (NAME) for their help and information that they have provided to him in regards to this issue. He says that he would like to see if TVA could potentially make the waterfront access more difficult to get to in order to lower the prevalence of loitering and improper boat-launching and incorrectly parked RVs.

The meeting facilitator thanked Mr. Miller for his comments and DFO Joe Hoagland reassured him that staff would be following-up with him about his concerns.

A second citizen, Julie Graham, Executive Director of the Middle East Tennessee tourism council, provided written comments to provide her perspective on the importance of collaboration and partnership for improving the quality of lives and recreational opportunities in the region. Her remarks are attached in Exhibit C. and excerpts are below.

7. Natural Resource Plan Update—Ben Bean

TVA Policy and Senior Special Program Manager Ben Bean provided a short overview of the newly adopted 2020 Natural Resource Plan. He began by going over the differences between the previous 2011 NRP and the new 2020 NRP, including its expanded focus areas and the use of Focus Area Action Plans (FAAPs) to bridge the

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gap between these focus areas and eventual project creation. He finished by reminding the Council of TVA's continued efforts to involve the public and various external stakeholders in proactive ways.

8. Status of Asian Carp in the Valley—Dennis Baxter

TVA River & Reservoir Compliance Manager Dennis Baxter presented a short overview of the different species of Asian Carp that are currently found throughout the Tennessee River Watershed and highlighted both their history and the potential dangers they present to the ecosystem overall. Mr. Baxter then outlined some national strategies being used to control the population, as well as TVA objectives and strategies towards the same end. This topic will be discussed more in depth in the upcoming RRSC meeting towards the end of the year.

Committee members discussed promoting and advertising culinary use of the Asian Carp as a means of population control, and Dennis Baxter felt that if we can increase the demand for these fish, it would incentivize more fishermen to catch them and would serve as a good tool in our toolbox for controlling their population.

It was noted there was a small delay in acoustic tests on at Barkley Reservoir due to some flood damages that occurred earlier in the year but they are still conducting the tests alongside others along the Mississippi River, to give TVA much more information down the road when TVA may begin suggesting certain policy changes.

The Bubbler system is compressed gas and TVA is also looking into CO₂, which is a little different considering that it actually strips dissolved oxygen out of the water. Fish will avoid those areas but the bubbler systems are being tested to see if it can help.

9. Recap and Next Steps

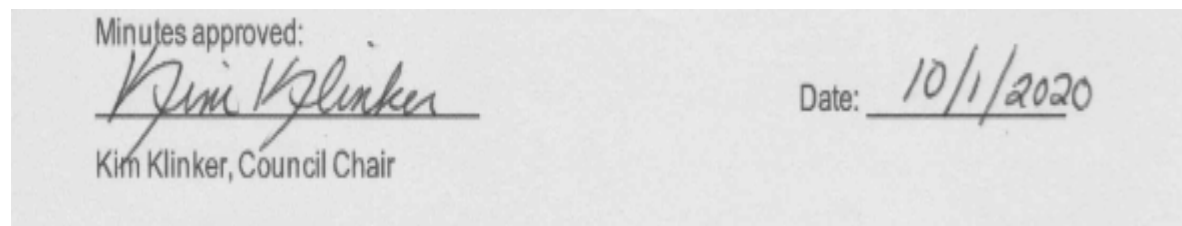
RRSC Chair Kim Klinker thanked the members and staff for their participation and productive discussion, as well as the presenters for sharing their work. DFO Joe Hoagland also thanked the members for their time.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Minutes approved:

Date: _____

Kim Klinker, Council Chair



Minutes approved:
Kim Klinker
Kim Klinker, Council Chair
Date: 10/1/2020

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Appendix A

Non-Council Meeting Attendees

TVA			
Joe Hoagland	Tim Daugherty	Liz Upchurch	Cathy Coffey
Deborah Murray	David Bowling	Adam Dattilo	Rebecca Tolene
Barbara Perdue	Rusty Smith	Jessica Coleman	Scott Lea
Rachel Terrell	Tom Barnett	Ben Bean	Dennis Baxter
Kelly Baxter	Althea Jones	Rebecca Hayden	Frank Edmondson
Carla White	Chris Cooper	Hugh Standridge	Tiffany Foster
Sarah Eason	Jennifer Bogus	Anne Aiken	Holly Hoyle
Lauren Pelto	Fiona Hubbard	McKenzie Whitten	Kendra Mansur
Abby Glass	Leslie Golden	Micheal Clement	Kelie Hammond
Noah Ankar			

Members of the Public In Attendance

Jo Anne Lavender (Meeting Facilitator)
Dale Miller
Dwayne Estes
Jonathan McCall
Julie Graham
Ann Williams
Roy Bryant
Brian Atkins

Others

Jennifer Short - Elite Reporting

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Appendix B

Meeting Agenda

Regional Resource Stewardship Council

July 21, 2020—Virtual Meeting

WebEx Event Registration:

July 21, 2020 all times are EDT	
9:30	Welcome, Introductions, and TVA Update RRSC Chair Kim Klinker and Designated Federal Officer Joe Hoagland (DFO) Safety Moment, Meeting Protocols , Liz Upchurch, Facilitator
10:00	Federal Advisor Committee Overview Kendra Mansur, Attorney, Office of General Counsel
10:15	Pollinators and the SE Grasslands Initiative Dr. Dwayne Estes, Executive Director, Southeastern Grasslands Initiative Adam Dattilo, Senior Botanist, Biological Compliance
11:15	Environmental Policy Update Rebecca Tolene, Vice President, Environment
11:30	RRSC Perspectives—Pollinators and the Grasslands Initiative
12:00	Break (60 minutes)
1:00	Public Listening Session
1:30	RRSC Advice Statement—Pollinators and Grasslands Initiative
2:15	Natural Resource Plan Update
2:30	Asian Carp Update
2:45	Recap and Next Steps
3:00	Adjourn

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Appendix C Written Public Comment

July 22, 2020

Good Morning Cathy,

Below are the comments that I had planned to make yesterday. No burning/ pressing issue except an ask in my last sentence:

Name: Julie Graham

Home Address- PO Box 900 Norris, TN 37828

Current regional projects that have TVA investment:

- Executive Director of the Middle East TN tourism council, a 16 county tourism non-profit organization. Our brand is 9 Lakes of East TN
- Volunteer Exec Director for the TRV Stewardship Council, a 120 county/ 7 state, 501c3 organization. Our brand is ExploreTRV. Examples of our “geotourism” work:
<https://tennesseerivervalleygeotourism.org/entries/new-thinking-new-design-for-newest-virginia-state-park/4fb32d11-5ea3-40e1-b3de-d5ef5bb46830>
<https://www.trvstewardshipcouncil.org/a-habitat-at-work-winter-grasslands-and-marshes/>
<https://tennesseerivervalleygeotourism.org/entries/any-man%E2%80%99s-journey-on-america%E2%80%99s-great-loop-inner-waterway-cruise/4ee490d7-8559-4683-b0ea-d16456ff3428>
<https://www.trvstewardshipcouncil.org/peaches-and-carp-southern-invaders/>
- Past Board Chair- Keep TN River Beautiful, the first river/ water affiliate of Keep America Beautiful

Let me begin by thanking the group for their work. We share a mission in conserving the rich recreational, cultural, and heritage of the Tennessee River Valley. We also recognize that regional collaboration is increasingly important to achieve sustainability in this mission. All of the above listed projects encompass my filter of three “P’s”- people, place, and prosperity.

My most recent collaborative project was the completion of a feasibility study to connect four public land trail systems for an integrated regional system of sustainable multi-modal trails. Our partners included four public land tracts- TVA, 2 State Parks, 3 three counties- Anderson, Campbell, and Union. We brought together mayors, stakeholders, and end users to complete the final report. A special thank you to Clay Guerry and TVA for supporting this regional opportunity.

What was the outcome of the study?

People- Community and livability principles- The final report made recommendations that will advance health and safety for locals and visitors to the region.

Place- The final report promotes sustaining the natural beauty of the region; interpreting the history for locals and visitors; the project as a premium destination asset with economic value; and provides a tool for local governments to adopt in their land management plans.

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Prosperity- The final report provided recommendations that will decrease cost of trail maintenance, attract private investment, connect local businesses to visitors using the trails, and provided a document that can be used by the individual counties to apply for grant support to develop the project.

We are working at the most grassroots level, interacting daily with people ranging from homeowners with concerns about un-encased dock floats to visitors asking about the use of TVA recreation areas to local governments asking for assistance to grow their economic potential. I use the annual Natural Resource plan to guide the work that we do. This is the first year I did not receive one and would love to have a copy on hand as a reference.

Thank you,

Julie

Julie Graham, Executive Director
Middle East Tennessee Tourism Council
865-585-0811

9LakesEastTN.com

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#9LakesEastTn

Upcoming METTC Events: Plan to Attend



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Appendix D Council Advice

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Advice Statement Questions

At a high level, what types of partners should be engaged in the Pollinator and Grasslands Project? What engagement methods would be the most effective?

ADVICE STATEMENT

The RRSC supports TVA's continued work to promote grasslands and pollinator habitat restoration. These are important aspects to a healthy environment and also provide benefits such as continued food security, erosion control and stronger, diverse plant, animal and insect support systems. We understand that the Southeast has lost most of its native grasslands that are vital to the region. We encourage TVA to reach out to other utilities, local power companies, federal, state and local agencies with jurisdiction over land management; special interest groups such as wildlife conservation entities, railroads, agricultural interests, etc., to engage them in this dialogue and work.

Further, TVA should seek to form partnerships with advocacy groups, large land management agencies; share TVA's ROW best practices with local power companies and other utilities; help establish a unified approach that goes beyond just ROW management for other grassland restoration/conservation efforts; and prioritize those areas most in need of immediate action.

Possible methods could include: co-hosting informational webinars, meetings, cost-sharing reclamation activities, establishing an on-going working group, resource sharing website, presentations uploaded to YouTube, social media education and outreach, present at conferences, create promotional education materials such as a calendar and screen-saver downloads, DVDs for county agriculture departments to share with the students/public, and include pollinator messaging in existing youth and other outreach efforts.