

**Regional Resource Stewardship Council Minutes**  
**September 22, 2021**  
**Tennessee Valley Authority**  
**Virtual Meeting**

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Regional Resource Stewardship Council (RRSC or Council) convened for the fourth meeting of the 11th term at 9 a.m. ET on Wednesday, September 22, 2021. The meeting was held virtually, in keeping with public health guidance during the coronavirus pandemic. Meeting presentations are available at [www.tva.gov/rrsc](http://www.tva.gov/rrsc).

**Council members attending:**

RaeLynn Butler, Richard Holland, Mark Iverson, Kim Klinker (Chair), Ronald Lambert, Tom Littlepage, Whitney Lipscomb, John McConnell, Will Nelson, Ron Robertson, Danette Scudder, Robert “Bob” Sneed, Catherine Via, Randy Wiggins and Greg Young

**Designated Federal Officer:** Melanie Farrell

**Facilitator:** Jo Anne Lavender

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

**Purpose**

The purpose of the meeting was to present information on TVA’s proposed Biodiversity Policy, River Management and Natural Resources updates and to obtain RRSC Advice on the proposed Biodiversity Policy.

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

- A.** RRSC Chair Kim Klinker welcomed attendees and iterates the Council’s role in advising TVA in its efforts to manage the Tennessee River System against competing priorities while providing maximum recreational benefit for all residents of the Tennessee Valley. She speaks of the Council’s purpose to increase public participation in TVA’s decision-making process by providing advice from many diverse perspectives so that TVA can respond responsibly to the needs of people across the region. She identifies TVA’s dedication to long-term solutions on a variety of country and global issues, strategizing to find the means of achieving long-term goals to better the planet.
- B.** Melanie Farrell, TVA’s Vice President of External Strategy & Regulatory Oversight and the Designated Federal Officer for the RRSC, welcomed and thanked everyone for being at the meeting and expressed her enthusiasm for the conversations to be discussed today.
- C.** Jo Anne Lavender, Meeting Facilitator, welcomed Allen Clare in his new role as TVA’s Vice President of River and Resource Stewardship and Rebecca Hayden in her new role as TVA’s Interim Director of Natural Resources.

Lavender noted that during the fourth term, the RRSC covered the following topics: TVA Asset Management Strategy, TVA Carbon Strategy and Sustainability Report, Asian

Carp Barrier Study, Joint meeting with the Regional Energy Resource Council, Natural Resource Plan, Tellico Land Plan Update, Community Outreach and Partnerships, Environmental Policy Update, COVID impacts on TVA and the region and Flood Control. The Council provided the TVA Board with advice on TVA's Sustainability Program, on future TVA Sustainability Reports and on Pollinators and Grasslands Initiative.

## **2. Public Comments**

Stephanie Biggs, an attorney with the Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC), expressed SELC's concern over activities by Volunteer Sand and Gravel located within the flood plain of the Duck River located in Humphreys County, Tennessee. She explains, in her view, the location and operation of Volunteer's mine pose a direct threat to the biodiversity of the Duck River and TVA Region. In TVA's commitment to protecting the flora and fauna within the waterways, she asks TVA to utilize full authority under Section 26a of the TVA Act.

## **3. Designated Federal Officer Briefing (Presentation can be found at [www.tva.gov/rrsc](http://www.tva.gov/rrsc)) — Melanie Farrell**

Melanie Farrell provided an update on the TVA Board of Directors. In April 2021, the White House made the following nominations to fill Board positions: Beth Prichard Geer, Chief of Staff to former Vice President Al Gore and a member of Nashville Mayor John Cooper's Sustainability Advisory Committee; Robert "Bobby" Klein, retired line foreman for the Electric Power Board of Chattanooga and former Vice President of the IBEW labor union; Kimberly Lewis, CEO of PROJECTXYZ Inc. and member of the Huntsville Madison County Chamber of Commerce; and Michelle Moore, CEO of Groundswell, a clean energy nonprofit. A confirmation hearing before the Environment and Public Works Committee will likely occur during the Fall of this year followed by a full vote by the Senate. TVA's Federal Affairs team is engaging with the four nominees and providing support through the confirmation process.

Farrell also reported updates of two major activities within TVA:

- On August 26th, 2021, a U.S. District Court Judge ruled that TVA did not breach contractual obligations in the failed sale of the Bellefonte Nuclear Plant to Nuclear Development, LLC. Under the ruling, TVA retains control over the Bellefonte site near Hollywood, Alabama. Although the Court ruled that TVA did not breach the contract, the Court ordered TVA to return Nuclear Development's original down payment and a portion of other costs in the total amount of \$22.95 million (plus interest). TVA retains full possession and control of the Bellefonte site. TVA looks forward to working with leaders across the organization and engaging the community to make the property of best use in the North Alabama region. TVA will let the nuclear license on the facility expire on October 1st, 2021.
- TVA has spent the last year developing a new external-facing approach to better engage, support and serve its communities. Over the last year, External Relations has focused on local partnerships and relationships across the Valley. The new regional operating model integrates TVA's focus on its local power companies and direct serve customers and communities such as state and local governments, the general public and stakeholders within the TVA region. This model aligns the resources that support natural resources, TVA's plans, communities and economic development.

## **4. Proposed Biodiversity Policy (Presentation can be found at [www.tva.gov/rrsc](http://www.tva.gov/rrsc)) — Rebecca Tolene, TVA Vice President, Environment and Chief Sustainability Officer**

Rebecca Tolene presented a comprehensive overview of the proposed TVA Biodiversity Policy. Tolene began by providing the Council an update on TVA's larger Sustainability Program. TVA's 2020 Sustainability Report included many global reporting initiative measures and highlighted operational accomplishments, including work in cultural resources. The feedback received from the bondholder community and others regarding sustainability disclosures was all very positive. The supplemental Carbon Report addressed TVA's path forward, what is being explored, what TVA is executing presently and the technologies TVA is evaluating for the future.

Tolene began by connecting TVA's sustainability framework to TVA's mission. She introduced the topic of biodiversity and reiterated to the Council that the efforts discussed on biodiversity align with TVA's Environmental Policy. She added that the Board approved the Council's recommendations for TVA's Environmental Policy in May 2020. The primary objective of the Environmental Policy is to produce increasingly clean, reliable and affordable power; support for sustainable economic growth in the Region; and to promote proactive environmental sustainability in a balanced and ecologically sound manner.

Tolene took the Council on a virtual field trip to demonstrate TVA's current biodiversity efforts. The video shows how TVA's reservoirs and rights-of-way contribute to the conservation of critical habitat. TVA aims to keep the current habitat in good condition so that plants and animals may thrive and communities can enjoy public lands. Conservation of biodiversity has always been an essential component of TVA's purpose and the Biodiversity Policy will assist TVA in integrating biodiversity conservation into other operations. TVA projects must incorporate biodiversity conservation as economic progress necessitates sustainability. Internal and external communication and expansion this Policy intends to improve will formalize TVA's existing conservation efforts into a more comprehensive program consistent with TVA's Environmental Policy, Sustainability Goals and Natural Resource Plan. Tolene explains how the Policy will help TVA conserve biodiversity across its operating footprint.

TVA strives to work with local and regional partners to protect its biodiversity contributing to ecosystem health and human well-being. Demonstrating the value of biodiversity, Tolene points out bees as being responsible for one in every three bites taken by humans. The role of species in the ecosystem is critical, such as agricultural nutrients and bacteria and the carbon sequestration that trees provide. Biodiversity offers genuine economic benefits, especially with TVA reservoirs: Insect pollinators were worth \$34 billion in 2012; Medicine discoveries derived from new biodiversity; and Ecotourism generated an estimated \$11 billion economic impact in the TVA reservoirs.

The Southeast is a hotspot of biodiversity as it supports roughly two-thirds of the country's fish species, over 90% of its mussel species and half of its crayfish species. In North America, biodiversity is under severe threat. Tolene shares there are 2.9 billion fewer breeding birds than there were in 1970. She points out further concerns: A loss of habitat increases greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; Tropical deforestation accounts for 8% of global emissions, and Up to a million species could likely be threatened with extinction over the next decade. TVA aims to offset the impacts of dam construction and other emissions related to power generation and remain proactive at improving habitat and biodiversity. TVA's Biodiversity Policy will enable better communication and collaboration on actions more effectively both internally and externally. As part of TVA's commitment to the Biodiversity Policy, the Biodiversity Action Team was formed and charged with highlighting current conservation activities and identifying and prioritizing future conservation opportunities while minimizing the negative impacts of TVA's operations. The Biodiversity Policy will leverage TVA's biological expertise to nest biodiversity conservation measures within capital and O&M projects. TVA will increase its outreach efforts

and collaborate with local, state, federal, and nonprofit organizations and the local power companies.

**5. River Management Update** (Presentation can be found at [www.tva.gov/rpsc](http://www.tva.gov/rpsc)) - **James H. Everett, PE, TVA's Senior Manager, River Forecast Center**

James Everett spoke about TVA's River Management mission, where the benefits now extend beyond the core three, including water supply, recreation and water quality, and touched on the challenges of balancing competing goals.

When highlighting River Management's new communication approach, Everett credited the Council for their past advice. He reported that stakeholder outreach was strengthened, which became especially critical for carrying out numerous outreach efforts. Important information on risk management was made available in real-time via social media channels. The new approach's effectiveness was confirmed by the Communications' social media engagement professionals. He highlighted the achievements gained through a traditional media outreach during fiscal year 21. The results included 500 stories, interviews, or media mentions, indicating a 97% increase in favorable coverage of tropical storms Fred and Ida, the second wettest August on record and flood storage recovery/fall drawdown coverage.

The month of August 2021 became the second wettest month in the Valley's 132-year history, totaling 10 inches of rain or 200% above normal. Related messaging over the fall downturn was crafted in a positive tone to promote TVA and River System Management. He explains the unpopular viewpoint held by shoreline interests on the draining of tributary lakes in preparation for winter runoff. Nonetheless, he underlines the importance of it in planning for flood season. Despite the recent challenges, he believes they have succeeded in engaging stakeholders and promoting public resources. He recounted a fly-fishing event that drew dozens of stakeholders, community members and leaders from the South Holston Reservoir to fish a world-famous trout stream below the South Holston Dam. He highlighted the greater opportunity to collaborate in communications with Trout Unlimited and other groups which he attributed to the rise of public use of resources. Further, TVA reached a critical milestone with its briefings on the nearly completed Boone Dam. Over the summer, pool levels at the Dam were normal for the first time in seven years. Everett shared the communication plan that will cover the Dam and its various purposes since TVA will be drawing the lake down there this Fall.

Everett elaborated on the floods that occurred in Waverly, Tennessee, last August. He shared that the perfect storm was generated when gulf moisture, a frontal system and other atmospheric conditions combined to produce massive amounts of rain within a short time. The area, he says, is prone to rapid flooding and TVA was fortunate it did not occur near a TVA dam. The Kentucky Reservoir, Everett explained, is one of the largest flood storage reservoirs. It absorbed the effects of the water, making quick handling of that extra volume fortunate. The flood was classified by the National Weather Service as a once-in-a-thousand-year event, as it was so unusual that science is unable to measure its rarity. TVA normally investigates flood events for their implications, including dam operation, nuclear plant operation and community flood risk. According to an internal study, this flood has a recurrence period of one in 100,000 years and maybe one in 200,000 years. Because of the storm's rarity, TVA is closely analyzing the flood event in detail, looking at atmospheric conditions and pixel-by-pixel forecasts to see what the storm would do if positioned in various areas throughout the Valley. The information will determine potential impacts on TVA reservoirs and preparation of an official emergency response. Many protocols are underway to detect large amounts of rain early in a storm. Early detection is crucial during a flood of this magnitude so that the National Weather Service can

issue a downstream warning and people may be notified as soon as possible. The extent to which such circumstances influence TVA's future actions will be communicated as messaging.

## **QUESTIONS/ANSWERS**

Council member Mark Iverson was interested in TVA's management for collecting debris when caused by severe rainfall. Everett explained that the process is incorporated into plans and models in technical work to forecast these types of events. He described how it contributes to internal operating procedures and response protocols to predict potential impacts on infrastructures such as bridges and roads and the numerous challenges associated with debris loading. He referred to the Council's earlier involvement with debris management during briefings on aquatic vegetation, a common element of TVA's operations. The Council expressed their appreciation to Everett for his and TVA's efforts to prevent flooding storms and commended their communication.

### **6. Natural Resource Update** (Presentation can be found at [www.tva.gov/rpsc](http://www.tva.gov/rpsc)) - **Rebecca Hayden, TVA's Interim Director of Natural Resources**

Rebecca Hayden discussed a few of the Natural Resource Plan's 10 focus areas: Reservoir Lands Planning; Water Resources Stewardship; Recreation; and Public Outreach and Information. Hayden described the floating cabin initiative as a defining moment in recreation for which the Council provided guidance. Phase two of the floating cabin regulations was published in the Federal Register on September 10, 2021, and will take effect on October 12, 2021. All floating cabins must be registered by January 10, 2022, which is 90 days after the effective date of the regulations. TVA is collaborating with floating cabin owners to ensure all are registered. The program remains controversial, particularly among owners of floating cabins, raising the prospect of a dispute over the program's future direction. Hayden shared that the goal has been to maintain open communication to avoid surprises and notes that wastewater and electrical compliance issues may continue to persist. The objective of the stakeholder groups and public discussions is to encourage owners, marina operators, state and federal agencies, and others to become more involved in resolving issues. Hayden presumes that continued engagement of stakeholders will build unity to gain a collective voice, strike a balance between opposing demands, and seek the point that prioritizes fair access and safety.

Hayden began the discussion of water resource stewardship by sharing the announcement made by the US Fish and Wildlife Service on September 1, 2021, that sought to remove the snail darter from the endangered species list. The snail darter made headlines in 1975 due to and in connection with the construction of the Tellico Dam near Lenoir City, Tennessee, which was the only known location for the fish. Following the Supreme Court's ruling, TVA launched a Reservoir Release Improvement Program that involved increasing dissolved oxygen to more than 300 miles downstream of TVA dams. She stated that the result is an increase in the health and water quality of the river system. The snail darter and other wildlife and fish communities benefit from the clean and abundant water. During this time, researchers collected and released snail darters in new areas, and they have since been identified in areas where they were not previously released. As a result, she says it is heartening to see the US Fish and Wildlife Service recommend the delisting. Hayden made a connection between the timing of the announcement and Tolene's remarks on biodiversity. Saying that, she finds it interesting how this 2 to 3-inch fish raised so much awareness about biodiversity in and of itself and having it in such a great spot is a big milestone.

Beginning a discussion on Reservoir Lands Planning, Hayden updated the Council on a Tellico milestone. TVA is updating the 2000 Tellico Reservoir Land Management Plan to respond to

new issues and changes in land use conditions and circumstances, and to reflect current land planning standards. TVA has proposed reallocating approximately 2,075 acres (16.2 %) of the 12,788 acres of TVA-managed public lands. Hayden anticipates that a draft land plan will be available for public comment by the Fall season. She informed the Council of a public scoping activity held in a virtual setting between January and February 2021. Of the 46 comments received, 40 supported TVA's direction, specifically on expanding recreational opportunities. Of those not in favor, two supported increased conservation and less development, one preferred the land be used for trails and three favored increased residential development. Hayden informed the Council of an environmental assessment that is underway, which will involve a comparison of three alternative scenarios. She communicated her excitement about the prospect of land planning activities moving forward as they will establish the framework for managing public lands and reservoirs.

Hayden described and showed a video of TVA's ecotourism efforts at Loyston Point. TVA has invested and entered into community partnerships as part of an overarching community plan. She described the mountain bike trail system that will transform the trail system into a destination trail center. The Council heard of the enhancements made to the habitats of bats and other species, a campground addition and a ramp. Recently, Loyston Point was highlighted as a place to explore on the Tennessee River Valley Geotourism page and the National Geographic website.

Hayden's discussion over the fourth item covering Public Outreach and Information informed the Council of the Fiscal Year 2022 Stewardship Book's scheduled completion in November 2021. The Book summarizes the previous year's accomplishments as well as future plans and objectives.

## **7. Advice Questions and Discussion**

The Council was asked four advice questions and provided input and Advice.

The first advice question was, "Any general thoughts on the Biodiversity Policy and its value to TVA's sustainability efforts? Any recommendations for implementation of this policy?"

The Council commended TVA for being proactive rather than reactive in the proposed Policy. Council member Randy Wiggins said that as a large landowner with a sizeable footprint across the Region, TVA is well-positioned to maintain its position as the Region's leader in environmental stewardship and preservation, setting the standard for other stakeholders such as power companies and large landowners. As custodian of the Region's assets, success in all other priorities, such as ecotourism, low-cost energy, and economic growth, is assured. The Council sees this as a great opportunity for TVA to establish itself as a leader on the national stage. They regarded TVA as a significant proponent for biodiversity, connecting it to environmental sustainability and economic growth. Council member Whitney Lipscomb expanded further suggesting that TVA's focused efforts in supporting pollinators would serve as a model for other organizations who might be encouraged to follow TVA's lead in expanding its biodiversity policies and environmental programs. Economic development is increasingly linked to improved quality of life, with biodiversity, resource stewardship, and other issues playing a larger role. Council Chair Kim Klinker praised TVA's emphasis on biodiversity policy for bringing together various internal organizations that collaborate to carry out programs. She believes that maintaining TVA's strength is vital, and she, like the others, believes that TVA is well-positioned to lead both inside and outside the service region. The Council recommended that the Policy

indicators be expanded further in order to better understand what TVA is aiming to accomplish and why it is vital in tackling the problem of bringing together a varied range of people and opinions, such as evidence of a healthy stream. The Council suggested that TVA consider including the words "and operation" at the conclusion of the Policy to reflect that TVA takes this into account: All planning efforts; Collaboration with others and nearby landowners; and How TVA manages projects.

The second advice question was, "We have seen growing economic benefits from biodiversity in the TVA region from ecotourism to ED prospect-siting. Does the Council have advice on how TVA can continue supporting this growth into the future?"

Council Members asked whether performance and improvement measures were in place, noting that it is critical to demonstrate the metrics used to identify positive impacts. The Council asked if TVA would be including performance measures or other policy components in other operations. Inquiring whether it extends beyond the sustainability branch or organizational structure in terms of TVA's energy production and economic development functions and whether there are performance concerns for how this biodiversity strategy impacts or helps other core TVA missions.

Rebecca Tolene told the Council of TVA's opportunity to improve metrics implementation once the Board has approved the Policy. Tolene confirmed that all of TVA's annual business plans had integrated the environmental initiatives. While not all the initiatives are biodiversity-related, as some address water, air, or waste emissions - incorporating them into the business plans ensures that they are resourced, budgeted and tracked throughout the year. With that, the Council concurred that TVA was on the right track. The Council stressed the importance of tracking progress to establish the Policy's effectiveness in mitigating negative impacts and lowering costs associated with biodiversity enhancement. The Council was enthusiastic about TVA's dedication to this area and the direction TVA is taking to engage communities and individuals who enjoy recreational activities in the Valley. The Council recommended a social media outreach for encouraging recreational reservoir users to connect their personal experiences with biodiversity, generating an online community response to TVA's initiative. In addition to local partners, Council member RaeLynn Butler asserted that Tribes make terrific collaborators. Although many have departed the Valley region, she said natural resources are cultural resources for tribes, and they regard TVA's protection of cultural resources as part of natural resources. Outside of the Valley, she believes there is an excellent possibility for collaboration and relationship building. Tolene applauded the tribes' participation with TVA on plants and their historical value to tribes and plants, saying it adds another depth to the biodiversity message.

The third advice question was, "If part of this is 'getting the word out,' then how can TVA effectively communicate the Biodiversity Policy and its positive impact on the TVA region?"

The Council advised TVA to use its expertise to produce a strategy, or best practices and standards, to assist a new or existing firm in its determination for how it might function differently to support the region's biodiversity through the business model it intends to adopt or carry out.

The Council emphasized the importance of collaboration with state economic development agencies and local tourism groups to market TVA's assets. The members said marketing should convey TVA's efforts to protect and sustain these assets, encouraging people to participate in experiences. Tolene agrees that the Council's comments are all excellent ideas that will be evaluated for application. She also applauded Allen Claire and Rebecca Hayden for their work in ecotourism, mentioning TVA's collaboration with National Geographic and inviting the Council

to view the marketing materials online and provide any input. Council member Danette Scudder asserts that the next generation, notably generation z and alpha, should be regarded in implementing, promoting, and integrating the biodiversity program throughout the Valley. She highlights several strategies for generating interest in TVA's role in stewardship and the influence it can have, describing possible organizational alliances to reach these generations that deliver measurable outcomes. The Council agreed with Scudder and expressed their enthusiasm about the progress. They believe it is an ideal opportunity for TVA to accomplish its

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When highlighting River Management's new communication approach, Everett credited the Council for their past advice. He reported that stakeholder outreach was strengthened, which became especially critical for carrying out numerous outreach efforts. Important information on risk management was made available in real-time via social media channels. The new approach's effectiveness was confirmed by the Communications' social media engagement professionals. He highlighted the achievements gained through a traditional media outreach during fiscal year 21. The results included 500 stories, interviews, or media mentions, indicating a 97% increase in favorable coverage of tropical storms Fred and Ida, the second wettest August on record and flood storage recovery/fall drawdown coverage.

The month of August 2021 became the second wettest month in the Valley's 132-year history, totaling 10 inches of rain or 200% above normal. Related messaging over the fall downturn was crafted in a positive tone to promote TVA and River System Management. He explains the unpopular viewpoint held by shoreline interests on the draining of tributary lakes in preparation for winter runoff. Nonetheless, he underlines the importance of it in planning for flood season. Despite the recent challenges, he believes they have succeeded in engaging stakeholders and promoting public resources. He recounted a fly-fishing event that drew dozens of stakeholders, community members and leaders from the South Holston Reservoir to fish a world-famous trout stream below the South Holston Dam. He highlighted the greater opportunity to collaborate in communications with Trout Unlimited and other groups which he attributed to the rise of public use of resources. Further, TVA reached a critical milestone with its briefings on the nearly completed Boone Dam. Over the summer, pool levels at the Dam were normal for the first time in seven years. Everett shared the communication plan that will cover the Dam and its various purposes since TVA will be drawing the lake down there this Fall.

Everett elaborated on the floods that occurred in Waverly, Tennessee, last August. He shared that the perfect storm was generated when gulf moisture, a frontal system and other atmospheric conditions combined to produce massive amounts of rain within a short time. The area, he says, is prone to rapid flooding and TVA was fortunate it did not occur near a TVA dam. The Kentucky Reservoir, Everett explained, is one of the largest flood storage reservoirs. It absorbed the effects of the water, making quick handling of that extra volume fortunate. The flood was classified by the National Weather Service as a once-in-a-thousand-year event, as it was so unusual that science is unable to measure its rarity. TVA normally investigates flood events for their implications, including dam operation, nuclear plant operation and community flood risk. According to an internal study, this flood has a recurrence period of one in 100,000

years and maybe one in 200,000 years. Because of the storm's rarity, TVA is closely analyzing the flood event in detail, looking at atmospheric conditions and pixel-by-pixel forecasts to see what the storm would do if positioned in various areas throughout the Valley. The information will determine potential impacts on TVA reservoirs and preparation of an official emergency response. Many protocols are underway to detect large amounts of rain early in a storm. Early detection is crucial during a flood of this magnitude so that the National Weather Service can issue a downstream warning and people may be notified as soon as possible. The extent to which such circumstances influence TVA's future actions will be communicated as messaging.

## **QUESTIONS/ANSWERS**

Council member Mark Iverson was interested in TVA's management for collecting debris when caused by severe rainfall. Everett explained that the process is incorporated into plans and models in technical work to forecast these types of events. He described how it contributes to internal operating procedures and response protocols to predict potential impacts on infrastructures such as bridges and roads and the numerous challenges associated with debris loading. He referred to the Council's earlier involvement with debris management during briefings on aquatic vegetation, a common element of TVA's operations. The Council expressed their appreciation to Everett for his and TVA's efforts to prevent flooding storms and commended their communication.

### **6. Natural Resource Update (Presentation can be found at [www.tva.gov/rrsc](http://www.tva.gov/rrsc)) - Rebecca Hayden, TVA's Interim Director of Natural Resources**

Rebecca Hayden discussed a few of the Natural Resource Plan's 10 focus areas: Reservoir Lands Planning; Water Resources Stewardship; Recreation; and Public Outreach and Information. Hayden described the floating cabin initiative as a defining moment in recreation for which the Council provided guidance. Phase two of the floating cabin regulations was published in the Federal Register on September 10, 2021, and will take effect on October 12, 2021. All floating cabins must be registered by January 10, 2022, which is 90 days after the effective date of the regulations. TVA is collaborating with floating cabin owners to ensure all are registered. The program remains controversial, particularly among owners of floating cabins, raising the prospect of a dispute over the program's future direction. Hayden shared that the goal has been to maintain open communication to avoid surprises and notes that wastewater and electrical compliance issues may continue to persist. The objective of the stakeholder groups and public discussions is to encourage owners, marina operators, state and federal agencies, and others to become more involved in resolving issues. Hayden presumes that continued engagement of stakeholders will build unity to gain a collective voice, strike a balance between opposing demands, and seek the point that prioritizes fair access and safety.

Hayden began the discussion of water resource stewardship by sharing the announcement made by the US Fish and Wildlife Service on September 1, 2021, that sought to remove the snail darter from the endangered species list. The snail darter made headlines in 1975 due to and in connection with the construction of the Tellico Dam near Lenoir City, Tennessee, which was the only known location for the fish. Following the Supreme Court's ruling, TVA launched a Reservoir Release Improvement Program that involved increasing dissolved oxygen to more than 300 miles downstream of TVA dams. She stated that the result is an increase in the health and water quality of the river system. The snail darter and other wildlife and fish communities benefit from the clean and abundant water. During this time, researchers collected and released snail darters in new areas, and they have since been identified in areas where they were not previously released. As a result, she says it is heartening to see the US Fish and Wildlife Service recommend the delisting. Hayden made a connection between the timing of the

announcement and Tolene's remarks on biodiversity. Saying that, she finds it interesting how this 2 to 3-inch fish raised so much awareness about biodiversity in and of itself and having it in such a great spot is a big milestone.

Beginning a discussion on Reservoir Lands Planning, Hayden updated the Council on a Tellico milestone. TVA is updating the 2000 Tellico Reservoir Land Management Plan to respond to new issues and changes in land use conditions and circumstances, and to reflect current land planning standards. TVA has proposed reallocating approximately 2,075 acres (16.2 %) of the 12,788 acres of TVA-managed public lands. Hayden anticipates that a draft land plan will be available for public comment by the Fall season. She informed the Council of a public scoping activity held in a virtual setting between January and February 2021. Of the 46 comments received, 40 supported TVA's direction, specifically on expanding recreational opportunities. Of those not in favor, two supported increased conservation and less development, one preferred the land be used for trails and three favored increased residential development. Hayden informed the Council of an environmental assessment that is underway, which will involve a comparison of three alternative scenarios. She communicated her excitement about the prospect of land planning activities moving forward as they will establish the framework for managing public lands and reservoirs.

Hayden described and showed a video of TVA's ecotourism efforts at Loyston Point. TVA has invested and entered into community partnerships as part of an overarching community plan. She described the mountain bike trail system that will transform the trail system into a destination trail center. The Council heard of the enhancements made to the habitats of bats and other species, a campground addition and a ramp. Recently, Loyston Point was highlighted as a place to explore on the Tennessee River Valley Geotourism page and the National Geographic website.

Hayden's discussion over the fourth item covering Public Outreach and Information informed the Council of the Fiscal Year 2022 Stewardship Book's scheduled completion in November 2021. The Book summarizes the previous year's accomplishments as well as future plans and objectives.

## **7. Advice Questions and Discussion**

The Council was asked four advice questions and provided input and Advice.

The first advice question was, "Any general thoughts on the Biodiversity Policy and its value to TVA's sustainability efforts? Any recommendations for implementation of this policy?"

The Council commended TVA for being proactive rather than reactive in the proposed Policy. Council member Randy Wiggins said that as a large landowner with a sizeable footprint across the Region, TVA is well-positioned to maintain its position as the Region's leader in environmental stewardship and preservation, setting the standard for other stakeholders such as power companies and large landowners. As custodian of the Region's assets, success in all other priorities, such as ecotourism, low-cost energy, and economic growth, is assured. The Council sees this as a great opportunity for TVA to establish itself as a leader on the national stage. They regarded TVA as a significant proponent for biodiversity, connecting it to environmental sustainability and economic growth. Council member Whitney Lipscomb expanded further suggesting that TVA's focused efforts in supporting pollinators would serve as a model for other organizations who might be encouraged to follow TVA's lead in expanding its

biodiversity policies and environmental programs. Economic development is increasingly linked to improved quality of life, with biodiversity, resource stewardship, and other issues playing a larger role. Council Chair Kim Klinker praised TVA's emphasis on biodiversity policy for bringing together various internal organizations that collaborate to carry out programs. She believes that maintaining TVA's strength is vital, and she, like the others, believes that TVA is well-positioned to lead both inside and outside the service region. The Council recommended that the Policy indicators be expanded further in order to better understand what TVA is aiming to accomplish and why it is vital in tackling the problem of bringing together a varied range of people and opinions, such as evidence of a healthy stream. The Council suggested that TVA consider including the words "and operation" at the conclusion of the Policy to reflect that TVA takes this into account: All planning efforts; Collaboration with others and nearby landowners; and How TVA manages projects.

The second advice question was, "We have seen growing economic benefits from biodiversity in the TVA region from ecotourism to ED prospect-siting. Does the Council have advice on how TVA can continue supporting this growth into the future?"

Council Members asked whether performance and improvement measures were in place, noting that it is critical to demonstrate the metrics used to identify positive impacts. The Council asked if TVA would be including performance measures or other policy components in other operations. Inquiring whether it extends beyond the sustainability branch or organizational structure in terms of TVA's energy production and economic development functions and whether there are performance concerns for how this biodiversity strategy impacts or helps other core TVA missions.

Rebecca Tolene told the Council of TVA's opportunity to improve metrics implementation once the Board has approved the Policy. Tolene confirmed that all of TVA's annual business plans had integrated the environmental initiatives. While not all the initiatives are biodiversity-related, as some address water, air, or waste emissions - incorporating them into the business plans ensures that they are resourced, budgeted and tracked throughout the year. With that, the Council concurred that TVA was on the right track. The Council stressed the importance of tracking progress to establish the Policy's effectiveness in mitigating negative impacts and lowering costs associated with biodiversity enhancement. The Council was enthusiastic about TVA's dedication to this area and the direction TVA is taking to engage communities and individuals who enjoy recreational activities in the Valley. The Council recommended a social media outreach for encouraging recreational reservoir users to connect their personal experiences with biodiversity, generating an online community response to TVA's initiative. In addition to local partners, Council member RaeLynn Butler asserted that Tribes make terrific collaborators. Although many have departed the Valley region, she said natural resources are cultural resources for tribes, and they regard TVA's protection of cultural resources as part of natural resources. Outside of the Valley, she believes there is an excellent possibility for collaboration and relationship building. Tolene applauded the tribes' participation with TVA on plants and their historical value to tribes and plants, saying it adds another depth to the biodiversity message.

The third advice question was, "If part of this is 'getting the word out,' then how can TVA effectively communicate the Biodiversity Policy and its positive impact on the TVA region?" The Council advised TVA to use its expertise to produce a strategy, or best practices and standards, to assist a new or existing firm in its determination for how it might function differently to support the region's biodiversity through the business model it intends to adopt or carry out.

The Council emphasized the importance of collaboration with state economic development agencies and local tourism groups to market TVA's assets. The members said marketing should convey TVA's efforts to protect and sustain these assets, encouraging people to participate in experiences. Tolene agrees that the Council's comments are all excellent ideas that will be evaluated for application. She also applauded Allen Claire and Rebecca Hayden for their work in ecotourism, mentioning TVA's collaboration with National Geographic and inviting the Council to view the marketing materials online and provide any input. Council member Danette Scudder asserts that the next generation, notably generation z and alpha, should be regarded in implementing, promoting, and integrating the biodiversity program throughout the Valley. She highlights several strategies for generating interest in TVA's role in stewardship and the influence it can have, describing possible organizational alliances to reach these generations that deliver measurable outcomes. The Council agreed with Scudder and expressed their enthusiasm about the progress. They believe it is an ideal opportunity for TVA to accomplish its goals and properly underline its commitment to stewardship.



The Council was asked how TVA could effectively communicate the Biodiversity Policy and its positive impact in the TVA Region. The Council provided different ways for TVA to engage and share information across the Valley, increasing TVA's reputation in the Valley and across the United States. Members suggested additional methods for conveying short-focused messages about biodiversity with a personal impact factor that connects to folks who live, work, and recreate in the Valley.

The fourth advice question was, "Does the Council have advice on how TVA can improve communications in regions or with local communities when a project or TVA operations has the potential to cause a negative impact?"

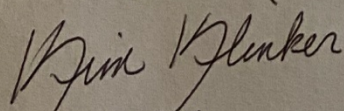
The Council agreed that TVA must remain transparent, open and honest. It emphasizes the need for TVA's preparedness for managing or mitigating adverse outcomes. Melanie Farrell states that she sees the new external-facing regional model as a critical tool for gaining buy-in in these cases, particularly for garnering further resources to help the Environment and Natural Resource teams, as suggested by the Council.

The Council Members present unanimously approved the Council Advice Statement attached as Appendix C.

## **8. Closing Comments**

Melanie Farrell expressed gratitude to the Council on behalf of TVA and its Board of Directors for their participation, comments, questions, and advice during the 11th Term's conclusion. The 12th Term will begin in the Spring if approved by the TVA Board of Directors.

**Minutes approved:**

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kim Klinker".

Kim Klinker, Chair



## Appendix A

### Meeting Non Member Attendees

Robert Phillips	Self Employed
Jennifer Short	Bassett Reporting
Bo Baxter	Conservation Fisheries
Stephanie Biggs - SELC	Southern Environmental Law Center
Adam Dattilo	TVA
Allen Clare	TVA
Andrew Scalf	TVA
Barbara Perdue	TVA
Cathy Coffey	TVA
Deborah Murray	TVA
Frank Edmondson	TVA
James Everett	TVA
Jo Anne Lavender	TVA
Kelie Hammond	TVA
Kelly Baxter	TVA
Kendra Mansur	TVA
Latricia Lloyd	TVA
Lauren Turner	TVA
Liz Upchurch	TVA
Logan Stephens	TVA
M Carolyn Koroa	TVA
McKenzie Whitten	TVA
Pamela Anderson	TVA
Rachel Terrell	TVA
Rebecca Hayden	TVA
Rebecca Tolene	TVA
Spencer Sessions	TVA
Terry O'Quinn	TVA
Thomas Barnett	TVA
Tiffany Smith	TVA
Travis Henry	TVA
Althea Jones	TVA - CMO
Melanie Farrell	TVA - DFO
Jennifer Bogus	TVA-OIG
Rick Taylor	TVA-OIG

## Appendix B

### Regional Resource Stewardship Council Meeting Agenda

September 22, 2021

<b>9-9:10</b>	<b>Welcome / Call RRSC Meeting to Order</b> – Chair Kim Klinker and DFO - Melanie Farrell
<b>9:10-9:30</b>	<b>Introductions and Agenda Review</b> , Advice Qs (Facilitator –JoAnne Lavender)
<b>9:30-10</b>	<b><i>Public Comment</i></b>
<b>10:00-10:10</b>	<b>TVA Update</b> - Farrell
<b>10:10-11:00</b>	<b>Proposed Biodiversity Policy</b> - Rebecca Tolene includes Q&A <b>Seeking Advice</b>
<b>11-11:10</b>	Break
<b>11:10-12:00</b>	<b>Advice discussion</b> - Lavender
<b>12:00-12:10</b>	<b>River Management Update</b> – James Everett
<b>12:10-12:40</b>	Lunch Break
<b>12:40-1:00</b>	<b>Natural Resource Update</b> – Rebecca Hayden
<b>1:00-1:50</b>	<b>Finalize Advice Statement/Vote</b> - Lavender/Klinker
<b>1:50-2</b>	<b>Thank you for your service</b> - Farrell

## Appendix C

# RRSC September 22, 2021 Meeting Advice Statement :

**The RRSC has reviewed the proposed Biodiversity Policy and is in support of the adoption and implementation of the Policy.** The RRSC appreciates that this policy supports the mission of TVA especially as it is a proactive policy not reactive. TVA should be a leader in this effort nationally as well as regionally. If we all do not take care of our natural assets all aspects of TVA's mission and reputation will suffer. TVA's clear expertise already in this area should be used to build local, state, regional and national partnerships that should be highlighted and shared with companies being recruited to the region.

TVA has a vested interest in monitoring for, recognizing and responding to threats to biodiversity that come from sources such as invasive species, climate change, human activities outside of TVA activities which emphasize the need for this policy.

To improve upon the proposed policy, it would be beneficial to see what metrics are being used to measure success for TVA overall and examples of how various business units will also measure their success in protecting and promoting Biodiversity. This can be shared in an annual report for external audiences.

TVA can set the standard for other businesses to follow and provide Best Practices. One of those is that TVA is bringing together all of its business units to play a role and be responsible for Biodiversity successes. This makes TVA stronger internally and thus makes it stronger externally, which is critical to our region's overall health.

**As TVA implements the Policy, the RRSC recommends taking these things into consideration:**

- Biodiversity goes beyond power companies.
- Build partnerships with like-minded groups such as Tribes, businesses with large rights-of-ways, universities, new businesses coming to the area and help those businesses to implement their own biodiversity plan, etc.
- Work with entities like National Geographic and others lets TVA's expertise Biodiversity standards travel outside our area.
- Bridging the age gap is imperative to involve younger generations. Speak to them where they get their information, i.e.,

- Primary info is YouTube for these young people/Create campaign for this platform;
- Target social media influencers to highlight Biodiversity and great opportunities of ecotourism in region;
- Get them invested by ...creation of curriculum for teachers in region...i.e., Scholastic Magazine “Get off your screen”;
- First Lego League partnership that creates projects students can execute on with deliberate outcomes;
- Hire expert in Social Media platforms that specializes in program development and measurement;
- Partner with LPCs on these types of programs;
- Opportunity for high school students looking for careers...show biodiversity kits, bring in LPCs to career days; curriculum for HS as well as grade school;
- Demonstrate through clear communications on how the different indicators show healthy streams; what do they do?

### **How can we communicate positive impact on region?**

Create a podcast... if not your own team up with Radio Lab or others/ Ted talks / Dirtbag Diaries  
Materials for campgrounds and marinas;

Create the right sound bite...how do fish show good health i.e., Short statements;

Create and share best practices for new and existing businesses in our region such as;

- Pollinator-designated city program;
- Ecotourism is important;
- Working with state Economic Development Departments;
- Work with local and state tourism groups;
- Use video as marketing tool;
- Make sure we tie how it impacts individual... “1 in 3 bites of food comes from pollination.”

### **If operations will negatively impact biodiversity in the area:**

- We suggest working with neighbors and community leaders by asking them for suggestions on what would be appropriate trade-offs;
- We often get good news but want to hear bad or tough news...give me straight up information;
- Be open and transparent, be prepared to answer how you will address it;
- Outward facing approach. This is an opportunity to build trust and buy-in.