

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
BACON BEND PENINSULA HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is proposing to conduct various levels of timber harvests on 5 tracts, totaling approximately 60 acres, of upland hardwood timber on Bacon Bend peninsula on Tellico Reservoir in Monroe County, Tennessee. TVA is also proposing to construct a new access road from the existing haul road in order to access the large tract at the end of the peninsula. The proposal is intended to improve wildlife habitats on TVA-owned land managed by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) as part of the Tellico Lake Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The goal is to reduce the overall basal area (density), remove planted loblolly pine and promote variance in age class on a tract that is dominated by mature upland hardwoods. The proposal supports and is consistent with TVA's mission of environmental stewardship, the objectives for biological resource management in the 2011 Natural Resources Plan (NRP), and TVA's management goals set forth in the 2000 Tellico Reservoir Land Management Plan (RLMP).

Bacon Bend peninsula is licensed to TWRA for wildlife management with TVA retaining the right to harvest timber. The peninsula consists of mostly upland hardwood stands that are over 100 years in age. Landings and roadbeds have been maintained in grasslands or food plots by TWRA. Dormant season prescribed fire and timber thinning have been used as management tools by TWRA to create and maintain quality early successional habitat for turkey, quail, various song birds and small mammals.

TVA would reduce the basal area (density) of the 26-acre stand to approximately 20 square feet (ft²) per acre, while reducing the other four stands to approximately 40 ft² per acre. The 10-acre stand contains densely planted pine stockings that may be reduced to 20 ft² per acre in the concentrated area. TVA would use the shelterwood harvesting method on four of the tracts (excluding the 4-acre tract), which would allow TVA to establish a new generation of seedlings of a particular species or group of species without planting. This method would allow for an increase in overall forest health. TVA would remove the trees along the existing haul road within the 4-acre tract. The 26-acre tract contains several dead or dead and downed trees in the existing stand as a result of wind damage about 6 years ago. Dead snag trees would be left standing unless they pose a hazard to landings or haul roads. TVA would utilize the existing haul road network to access the tracts of land. Heavy equipment (log trucks, front loader, feller-buncher, etc.) would be utilized during harvesting activities. TVA would adhere to standard Best Management Practices (BMP) as outlined in *Silvicultural Activities on TVA Lands/TVA timber harvesting* (1994) to minimize potential impacts. All timber harvested would be sold by competitive bid.

The existing haul road network would be maintained and minor grading, installation of water control structures, and placement of aggregate surface materials (various sized limestone based gravel) may be required. Approximately 1000 feet of new haul road would be built, per BMP specifications, in order to access the 26-acre tract for the proposed timber activities.

The proposal is subject of an environmental assessment (EA) prepared by TVA. In the EA, TVA addressed potential impacts of the proposed project as well as the alternative of not implementing the action (i.e., taking no action). In the EA, TVA identified relevant environmental

issues and reviewed the potential impacts of implementing the project to the following resources: endangered, threatened, or special status plant, aquatic, or wildlife species; archaeological and historic resources; floodplains; wild and scenic rivers; and wetlands. In its review, TVA identified no adverse or potentially significant impacts that would result from the proposal. The EA addresses the beneficial impacts of the habitat improvement actions. The EA is incorporated herein by reference. As confirmed by the EA, the proposal meets TVA's obligations under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Conclusion and Findings

Based on the findings listed above and the analyses in the EA, we conclude that the proposed action of conducting timber harvesting activities on Bacon Bend Peninsula would not be a major federal action significantly affecting the environment. Accordingly, an environmental impact statement is not required.



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Date Signed