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## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY**

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT FOR SITE PREPARATION AND ACCESS ROAD CONSTRUCTION ALCORN COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI**

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) proposes to provide an economic development grant to the Alliance, an economic development corporation representing the City of Corinth and Alcorn County, Mississippi. The grant, along with matching funds from the Alliance, would be used to clear approximately 42 acres of trees and brush on the property and to construct a preliminary access road to the property. These actions would allow the Alliance to show the property to prospective buyers and tenants and recruit additional commerce and industry to the Corinth area.

The proposed action is the subject of an environmental assessment (EA) prepared by TVA. The EA is incorporated by reference.

Two viable alternatives were available for consideration in the EA. Under the No Action Alternative, TVA would not provide the requested funds to the Alliance.

Under the Action Alternative, TVA would provide the requested funding to the Alliance. Consequently, approximately 42 acres of the subject property would be cleared, including grubbing and stump removal, and a preliminary access road from Barnstable Road (County Road 220) to the cleared area would be constructed. Construction of the access road would involve the crossing of an unnamed tributary of Clear Creek and a floodplain area. Plans call for mulching woody debris and spreading the mulch onsite. The Action Alternative is TVA's preferred alternative.

Because of the location of the proposed development site, there would be no effects to navigation or to prime farmlands. The proposed development would not affect recreation resources or opportunities, Wild and Scenic Rivers, streams listed on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory, or any managed areas. The proposed site preparation is not expected to generate any significant amounts of solid wastes requiring disposal in landfills or other offsite facilities.

The Alliance has indicated that standard erosion control measures would be implemented during the proposed site preparation. The Alliance is also responsible for implementing measures required in its Construction Stormwater Permit. Thus effects to local surface waters and to groundwater quality and quantity are expected to be insignificant.

Clearing the approximately 42-acre site and constructing the access road are not expected to affect terrestrial life to any significant extent. Appropriate measures would be implemented at the proposed stream crossing to avoid direct and indirect effects to local aquatic life. No federally listed plants occur on the 42-acre site to be cleared or on the 141-acre parcel scheduled for eventual development. The state-listed pin oak occurs in undevelopable wetland areas of the 141-acre parcel, but would not be affected by proposed activities. Thus, there would be no effects to any federally listed or state-listed plants.

There are no records of occurrence within 3 miles of the proposed site for any state-listed or federally listed terrestrial animals. However, the federally listed Indiana bat and the northern red-eared bat (proposed for federal listing) have the potential to occur statewide. No caves or hibernating sites for bats exist in the project area, and no such habitats would be affected by the proposed clearing or road construction. Due to previous timber management, potential suitable summer roost habitat for Indiana bats on the 42-acre area to be cleared was limited to 5.25 acres. Tree removal on the 5.25-acres of potential bat habitat was completed by the Alliance during the non-maternity season (September 1 through April 30). Thus, TVA determined the proposed actions may affect but would not adversely affect the Indiana bat and would not jeopardize the existence of the northern long-eared bat. Although the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) considers the Mitchell's satyr butterfly (federally listed as endangered) potentially present, areas suitable for the butterfly are not present in the proposed project area. Therefore, TVA determined that there would be no adverse effects to the Mitchell's satyr butterfly. No state-listed or federally listed aquatic species or designated critical habitats are known to occur on the Alliance property. Therefore, no effects to federal or state-listed aquatic species would occur. The USFWS concurs that the work activities on the site would not adversely affect any protected species or their habitats.

The 42-acre area to be cleared contains no wetlands. Because measures would be implemented to control erosion and control surface runoff, no indirect or long-term effects to local wetlands are expected. Thus, the proposed project is consistent with Executive Order (EO) 11990 (Protection of Wetlands). The proposed clearing and road construction are considered repetitive actions in the floodplain. Because disturbed areas would be stabilized to prevent erosion and the access road would be constructed such that upstream flood elevations would not be increased, potential effects to floodplains would be minor, and the project is consistent with EO 11988 (Floodplain Management).

Results of two cultural resources surveys indicated no historic resources are present within the 42-acre property to be cleared or within the access road corridor. TVA found that no historic properties would be affected by the proposed undertaking and consulted with the Mississippi State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and federally recognized Indian tribes. The SHPO did not respond within 30 days of receipt of TVA's request for review. No responses were received from federally recognized tribes. Therefore, TVA's responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act are fulfilled.

The proposed site preparations would require a limited workforce and are expected to take 6 months or less. Thus, any effects to the local economy are expected to be insignificant. No disproportionate effects to any minority or economically disadvantaged populations are expected. Because of the temporary nature of the proposed site preparation and the limited number of workers required, any effects to the local transportation system would be minor.

Because the subject property is generally not visible from local roads, perceived changes in the visual quality of the local area are expected to be minor and insignificant. Likewise, noise-related effects would be minor, and the proposed work is not expected to generate unpleasant odors. Although some localized air pollutants would be generated during the proposed clearing and road construction, potential effects to local air quality are expected to be temporary and insignificant.

The Alliance may eventually develop its property for commercial or industrial purposes. When combined with reasonably foreseeable future actions, the proposed clearing of 42-acres and construction of the access road would not result in measureable cumulative impacts to any

resources. Future activities on the Alliance property that could affect surface water and groundwater are subject to various state and federal regulations. The eventual build-out of the property would result in a minor cumulative loss of wildlife habitat and would constitute a long-term commitment of the property for industrial and commercial uses. As stated in the EA, areas containing wetlands and floodplains would be avoided and are not considered developable portions of the property. Thus, no long-term effects to wetlands and floodplains are expected.

Headwaters, Inc., a biological contractor retained by the Alliance, coordinated with the USFWS regarding the potential presence of listed species on the 421-acre Alliance property and potential effects to such species. This coordination forms the basis for fulfilling TVA's obligations under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. TVA contacted the Corinth Service Center of the Natural Resources Conservation Service regarding the presence of prime farmlands. This coordination confirmed that there would be no impacts to prime farmlands and that the proposed action is consistent with the Farmland Protection Policy Act. In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, TVA consulted with the Mississippi State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) regarding potential effects to cultural resources. Additionally, TVA contacted the Choctaw Nation, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians, and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

**Mitigation**

To minimize or reduce the environmental effects of the proposed project, the Alliance will ensure that its construction contractors are in compliance with storm water permitting requirements, and the Alliance will be responsible for ensuring that applicable BMPs to minimize and control erosion and fugitive dust are implemented during construction. TVA has not determined the need for any non-routine measures to reduce potential environmental effects.

**Conclusion and Findings**

Based on the findings listed above and the analyses in the EA, we conclude that the proposed action of providing an economic development grant to the Alliance 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