

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
SOUTH HOLSTON DAM RESERVATION HABITAT ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is proposing to establish various habitat enhancement areas on its South Holston Dam Reservation in Sullivan County, Tennessee. TVA would establish habitat for state-listed salamanders, a wildlife food plot and five monarch butterfly habitat areas. The proposal is intended to improve wildlife habitats and increase wildlife-oriented recreational opportunities on TVA-managed lands. 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, and TVA's management goals set forth in the 2010 Northeastern Tributary Reservoirs Land Management Plan.

TVA would establish habitat for state-listed salamanders, a wildlife food plot and five monarch butterfly habitat areas. The proposed wildlife food plot would be approximately 1 acre in size and would be located under existing Bristol Tennessee Essential Services transmission lines near TVA's maintenance facility. A non-selective herbicide would be used to eradicate the existing vegetation (fescue) and then the area would be lightly disked and seeded with both annual and perennial plants such as perennial rye, white clover, red clover, and orchard grass. TVA is proposing to establish up to 20 small vernal pools to provide suitable habitat for state-listed salamanders, specifically the four toed salamander. These pools would be approximately 6-feet-long by 6-feet-wide and 6 to 8 inches deep, located adjacent to existing salamander habitat. The pools would be constructed using a hand shovel. A plastic liner specifically designed for wetland construction would be installed. These areas would serve as breeding sites for the salamanders and other amphibians. Before implementing the project, TVA would complete an excavation permit for the proposed salamander habitat areas.

The proposed monarch butterfly habitat areas would each be 10 feet by 30 feet plots and would be located throughout the dam reservation. The plots would be planted with vegetation known to support the multiple life stages of the Monarch. The existing vegetation would be removed using a non-selective herbicide. The area would then be lightly disked and seeded with native, desirable plant life. The vegetation in the plots would consist of a high concentration of milkweed patches, which is the host plant for the Monarchs. Other native flowering plants would be planted which would attract other species of butterflies as well as pollinators such as honeybees, which are also in decline.

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; wetlands; visual resources; and to special management areas. 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 enhancement actions. The EA is incorporated herein by reference.

Conclusion and Findings

Based on the findings listed above and the analyses in the EA, we conclude that the proposed action of establishing a wildlife food plot, salamander habitat, and five monarch butterfly habitat areas on South Holston Dam Reservation 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