

Tennessee Valley Authority Site Clearing and Grading Specifications

1. **General** - The project manager with the clearing and/or grading contractor(s) shall review the environmental evaluation documents for the project or proposed activity (categorical exclusion checklist, environmental assessment, or environmental impact statement) along with all clearing and construction appendices, conditions in applicable general and/or site-specific permits, the storm water pollution prevention plan, open burning or demolition notification requirements, and any Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) commitments to property owners. The contractor shall then plan and carry out operations using techniques consistent with good engineering and storm water management practices as outlined in TVA's best management practices (BMPs) manual. The contractor will protect areas that are to be left unaffected by access or clearing work at and adjacent to all work sites. In sensitive areas and their buffers, the contractor will retain as much native ground cover and other vegetation as possible. BMPs shall be installed before general site clearing or grading, with progressive stabilization BMPs applied from the perimeter toward the interior work areas as grading is completed. Any stabilized area that must be disturbed in subsequent steps shall have temporary BMPs installed until work is completed and the area is restabilized.

If the contractor fails to use BMPs or to follow environmental expectations discussed in the prebid, prework meeting or present in contract specifications, TVA will order corrective changes and additional work, as deemed necessary in TVA's judgment, to meet the intent of environmental laws and regulations or other guidelines. Major violations or continued minor violations will result in work suspension until correction of the situation is achieved or other remedial action is taken at the contractor's expense. Penalty clauses may be invoked as appropriate.

2. **Regulations** - The clearing contractor shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local environmental and antipollution laws, regulations, and ordinances, including without limitation, all air, water, solid and hazardous waste, noise, and nuisance laws, regulations, and ordinances. He or she shall secure, or ensure that TVA has secured, all necessary permits and authorizations and made all appropriate notifications to conduct work on the acres shown on the drawings and plan and profile for the contract. The contractor's designated project manager will actively seek to prevent, control, monitor, and safely abate all commonly recognized forms of workplace and environmental pollution. Permits or authorizations and any necessary certifications of trained employees knowledgeable of environmental requirements shall be documented with copies submitted to TVA's project manager or project environmental person before work begins. The contractor and subcontractors will be responsible for meeting all conditions specified in permits. Permit conditions shall be reviewed in prework discussions.
3. **Land and Landscape Preservation** - The contractor shall exercise care to preserve the condition of cleared soils by avoiding as much compacting and deep scarring as possible in areas not to be developed for buildings, structures, or foundations. As soon as possible after initial disturbance of the soil and in accordance with any permit(s) or other state or local environmental regulatory requirements, cover material shall be placed to prevent erosion and sedimentation of water bodies or conveyances to surface water or groundwater. The

placement of erosion/sediment controls shall begin at the perimeter and work progressively to the interior of the site. Repeated work in an area will require establishment of a ground cover immediately after each disturbance is completed. In areas outside the clearing, borrow, fill, or use and access areas, the natural vegetation shall be protected from damage. The contractor and his or her employees and subcontractors must not deviate from delineated access routes or use areas and must enter the site(s) at designated areas that will be marked. Clearing operations shall be conducted to prevent any unnecessary destruction, scarring, or defacing of the remaining natural vegetation and adjacent surroundings in the vicinity of the work. In sensitive public or environmental areas, appropriate buffer zones shall be observed by modifying the methods of clearing or reclearing, grading, borrow, or fill so that the buffer and sensitive area are protected. Some areas may require planting native low-growing plants or grasses to meet the criteria of regulatory agencies, executive orders, or commitments to special program interests.

4. **Streamside Management Zones** - The clearing and/or grading contractor(s) must leave as many rooted ground cover plants as possible in buffer zones along streams and other bodies of water or wet-weather conveyances thereto. In such streamside management zones (SMZs), tall-growing tree species (trees that would interfere with TVA's National Electrical Safety Code clearances) shall be cut, and the stumps may be treated to prevent resprouting. Low-growing trees identified by TVA as marginal electrical clearance problems may be cut and then the stump treated with growth regulators to allow low, slow-growing canopy development and active root growth. Only approved herbicides shall be used, and herbicide application shall be conducted by certified applicators from the Transmission Operations and Maintenance (TOM) organization after initial clearing and construction. Cutting of trees within SMZs must be accomplished by using either hand-held equipment or other appropriate clearing equipment, such as a feller-buncher. The method will be selected based on site-specific conditions and topography to minimize soil disturbance and impacts to the SMZ and surrounding area. Disturbed soils in SMZs must be stabilized by appropriate methods immediately after the access or site is cleared. Stabilization must occur within the time frame specified in applicable storm water permits or regulations. Stumps within SMZs may be cut close to the ground but must not be removed or uprooted. Trees, limbs, and debris shall be prevented from falling into water bodies or immediately removed from streams, ditches, ponds, and wet areas using methods that will minimize dragging or scarring the banks or stream bottom. No debris will be left in the water or watercourse. Equipment will cross streams, ditches, or wet areas only at locations designated by TVA after the application of appropriate erosion-control BMPs and consistent with permit conditions or regulatory requirements.
5. **Wetlands** - In forested wetlands, tall trees will be cut near the ground, leaving stumps and roots in place. The cambium may be treated with herbicides applied by certified applicators from the TOM organization to prevent regrowth. Understory trees that must be initially cut and removed may be allowed to grow back or may be treated with tree growth regulators selectively to slow growth and increase the reclearing cycle. The decision will be situationally made based on existing ground cover, wetland type, and tree species, since tall tree removal may "release" understory species and allow them to quickly grow to "electrical clearance problem" heights. In many circumstances, herbicides labeled for water and wetland use may

be used in reclearing. At substation, switching stations, and communications sites, wetlands are avoided unless there is no feasible alternative.

6. **Sensitive Area Preservation** - If prehistoric or historic artifacts or features that might be of archaeological or historical significance are discovered during clearing, grading, borrow, or fill operations, the activity shall immediately cease within a 100-foot radius, and a TVA project manager, a project environmental person, and the TVA Cultural Resources program manager shall be notified. The site shall be protected and left as found until a determination about the resources, their significance, and site treatment is made by TVA's Cultural Resources Program. Work may continue beyond the finding zone and the 100-foot radius beyond its perimeter.
7. **Water Quality Control** - The contractor's clearing, grading, borrow and fill, and/or disposal activities shall be performed using BMPs that will prevent erosion and entrance of spillage, contaminants, debris, and other pollutants or objectionable materials into drainageways, surface waters, or groundwater. Special care shall be exercised in refueling equipment to prevent spills. Fueling areas shall be remote from any sinkhole, crevice, stream, or other water body. Open burning debris shall be kept away from streams and ditches and shall be incorporated into the soil. Only materials allowed to be burned under an open burning permit may be incorporated into the soil.

The clearing and grading contractor(s) and subcontractors will erect and (when TVA or contract construction personnel are unable) maintain BMPs, such as silt fences, on steep slopes and adjacent to any stream, wetland, or other water body. BMPs will be inspected by the environmental technician or other designated TVA, or contractor personnel routinely and at least as frequently as required by the permit or good management practices and during periods of high runoff; any necessary repairs will be made as soon as practicable. BMP runoff sampling will be conducted in accordance with permit requirements. Records of all inspections and sampling will be maintained on site, and copies of inspection forms and sampling results will be forwarded to the project environmental person.

8. **Turbidity and Blocking of Streams** - If temporary clearing, grading, borrow, or fill activities must interrupt natural drainage, appropriate drainage facilities and erosion/sediment controls shall be provided to avoid erosion and siltation of streams and other water bodies or water conveyances. In Tennessee, conditions of an Aquatic Resource Alteration Permit shall be met. Turbidity levels in receiving waters or at storm water discharge points shall be monitored, documented, and reported if required by the applicable permit. Erosion and sediment control measures such as silt fences, water bars, and sediment traps shall be installed as soon as practicable after initial access, site, borrow, fill, or right-of-way disturbance and after sequential disturbance of stabilized areas due to stepwise construction requirement in accordance with applicable permit or regulatory requirements.

On rights-of-way, mechanized equipment shall not be operated in flowing water except when approved and then only to construct necessary stream crossings under direct guidance of TVA. Construction of stream fords or other crossings will only be permitted at approved

locations and to current TVA design or construction access road standards. At any construction site, material shall not be deposited in watercourses or within stream bank areas where it could be washed away by high stream flows. Any clearing debris that enters streams or other water bodies shall be removed immediately. Appropriate U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and state permits shall be obtained for stream or wetland crossings.

9. **Air Quality Control** - The clearing or grading contractor shall take appropriate actions to limit the amount of air emissions created by clearing and disposal operations to be well within the limits of clearing or burning permits and/or forestry or local fire department requirements. All operations must be conducted in a manner that prevents nuisance conditions or damage to adjacent land, crops, dwellings, highways, or people. If building renovation or demolition is involved, the required air quality organization shall be notified the minimum 10 days in advance, and if the start date is delayed, re-notified to start the clock again.
10. **Dust and Mud Control** - Clearing, grading, borrow, fill, or transport activities shall be conducted in a manner that minimizes the creation of fugitive dust. This may require limitations as to type of equipment, allowable speeds, and routes utilized. Control measures such as water, gravel, etc., or similar measures may be used subject to TVA approval. On new construction sites and easements, the last 100 feet before an access road approaches a county road or highway shall be graveled to prevent transfer of mud onto the public road.
11. **Burning** - The contractor shall obtain applicable permits and approvals to conduct controlled burning. The contractor will comply with all provisions of the permit, notification or authorization including burning site locations, controlled draft, burning hours, and such other conditions as stipulated. If weather conditions such as wind speed or wind direction change rapidly, the contractor's burning operation may be temporarily stopped by TVA's ROW forester or project environmental person. The debris to be burned shall be kept as clean and dry as possible and stacked and burned in a manner that produces the minimum amount of smoke. Residue from burning will be disposed of according to permit stipulations. No fuel starters or enhancements other than kerosene will be allowed.
12. **Smoke and Odors** - The contractor will properly store and handle combustible and volatile materials that could create objectionable smoke, odor, or fumes. The contractor shall not burn oil or refuse that includes trash, rags, tires, plastics, or other manufactured debris.
13. **Vehicle Exhaust Emissions** - The contractor shall maintain and operate equipment in a manner that limits vehicle exhaust emissions. Equipment and vehicles will be kept within the manufacturer's recommended limits and tolerances. Excessive exhaust gases will be eliminated, and inefficient operating procedures will be revised or halted until corrective repairs or adjustments are made.
14. **Vehicle Servicing** - Routine maintenance of vehicles will not be performed on the site, right-of-way, or access route. However, if emergency or "have to" situations arise, minimal/temporary maintenance to vehicles will occur in order to mobilize the vehicle to an off-site maintenance shop. Some heavy equipment may have to be serviced on the right-of-way,

site, or access route, except in designated sensitive areas. The clearing, grading, borrow, or fill contractor will properly maintain these vehicles with approved spill protection controls and countermeasures. If emergency maintenance in a sensitive or questionable area arises, the project environmental person or project manager will be consulted. All wastes and used oils will be properly recovered, handled, and disposed/recycled. Equipment shall not be temporarily stored in stream floodplains, whether overnight or on weekends or holidays.

15. **Noise Control** - The contractor shall take steps to avoid the creation of excessive sound levels for employees, the public, or the site and adjacent property owners. Concentration of individual noisy pieces as well as the hours and locations of operation should be considered.
16. **Noise Suppression** - All internal combustion engines shall be properly equipped with mufflers. The equipment and mufflers shall be maintained at peak operating efficiency.
17. **Sanitation** - A designated representative of TVA or the clearing, grading, borrow, fill, or construction contractor shall contract a sanitary contractor who will provide sanitary chemical toilets convenient to all principal points of operation for every working party and at each construction step. The facilities shall comply with applicable federal, state, or local health laws and regulations. They shall not be located closer than 100 feet to any stream or tributary or to any wetland. The facilities shall be required to have proper servicing and maintenance, and the waste disposal contractor shall verify in writing that the waste disposal will be in state-approved facilities. Employees shall be notified of sanitation regulations and shall be required to use the toilet facilities.
18. **Refuse Disposal** - The clearing, grading, borrow, fill, or construction contractor and subcontractor(s) shall be responsible for daily cleanup and proper labeling, storage, and disposal of all refuse and debris on the site produced by his or her operations and employees. Facilities that meet applicable regulations and guidelines for refuse collection will be required. Only approved transport, storage, and disposal areas shall be used. Records of waste generation shall be maintained for a site and shall be provided to the project environmental person assigned to the project.
19. **Brush and Timber Disposal (Initial Clearing)** - For initial clearing, trees are commonly part of the contractor's contract to remove as they wish. Trees may be removed from the site for lumber or pulpwood, or they may be chipped or stacked and burned. All such activities must be coordinated with the TVA ROW forester or project environmental person and the open burning permits; notifications and regulatory requirements must be met. On rights-of-way, trees may be cut and left in place only in areas specified by TVA and approved by appropriate regulatory agencies. These areas may include sensitive wetlands or SMZs where tree removal would cause excessive ground disturbance or in very rugged terrain where windrowed trees are used as sediment barriers along the edge of the right-of-way, site, or access. Trees that have been cut may not be left on a substation, switching station, or communications site.

20. **Restoration of Site** - All disturbed areas, except for farmland under cultivation and any other areas as may be designated by TVA's specifications, shall be stabilized in the following manner unless the property owner and TVA's ROW forester or project environmental person specify a different method:
- A. The subsoil shall be loosened to a minimum depth of 6 inches if possible and worked to remove unnatural ridges and depressions.
 - B. If needed, appropriate soil amendments will be added.
 - C. All disturbed areas will initially be seeded with a temporary ground cover such as winter wheat, rye, or millet, depending on the season. Perennials may also be planted during initial seeding if proper growing conditions exist. Final restoration and final seeding will be performed as line, site, or communications facilities construction is completed. Final seeding will consist of permanent perennial grasses such as those outlined in TVA's A Guide for Environmental Protection and Best Management Practices for Tennessee Valley Authority Construction and Maintenance Activities (TVA, 2022). Exceptions would include those areas designated as native grass planting areas. Initial and final restoration will be performed by the clearing contractor with emphasis on using landscaping materials provided in guidelines for low maintenance native vegetation use.
 - D. TVA holds the option, depending upon the time of year and weather condition, to delay or withdraw the requirement of seeding until more favorable planting conditions are certain. In the meantime, other stabilization techniques must be applied.
 - E. Vegetation designated by the Federal Invasive Species Council must be eliminated at the work site, and equipment being transported from location to location must be inspected to ensure removal and destruction of live material.

References

Tennessee Valley Authority. 2022. *A Guide for Environmental Protection and Best Management Practices for Tennessee Valley Authority Construction and Maintenance Activities, Revision 4*. Edited by S.T. Benefield, R.L. Brannon, J.C. Buttram, B.V. Dalton, G.D. Dalton, C.A. Henley, W.G. Martin, A.E. Masters, C.L. Phillips, C.A. Suttles, and R.C Wilson. Chattanooga, TN. Retrieved from <<https://www.tva.com/Energy/Transmission-System/Transmission-System-Projects>> (n.d.).

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