

# Semiannual Report on the Progress of Remedy Selection – Ash Pond Complex

Gallatin Fossil Plant Gallatin, Tennessee

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#### Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	1	
	1.1 Regulatory Background	1	
	1.2 Overview of July 2019 Closure Plan	2	
	1.3 Summary of State Required Investigation and Remedy Selection Process	3	
	1.4 Report Contents	3	
2.0	Site Background and Characteristics		
3.0	Groundwater Assessment Monitoring Program	5	
	3.1 Groundwater Monitoring Network	5	
	3.2 Groundwater Characterization	6	
4.0	Assessment of Corrective Measures	7	
	4.1 Source Control Measures	7	
	4.2 Potential Remedial Technologies	8	
5.0	Selection of Remedy: Current Progress	8	
	5.1 Data Requirements for Design of Groundwater Corrective Action	10	
	5.2 Semiannual Reporting, Public Meeting, Remedy Selection, and Final Report.	10	
6.0	References	11	

# Figures

Figure 1	Overview of CCR Management Areas
Figure 2	Hydraulic Heads, Unconsolidated Unit
Figure 3	Hydraulic Heads, Carters Aquifer
Figure 4	Hydraulic Heads, Lebanon Aquifer
Figure 5	CCR Rule Monitoring System Ash Pond Complex
Figure 6	Arsenic Concentration Trend Plots GAF-410U and GAF-450L

#### Acronyms

ACM APC CARA CCR CFR CRM EAR EI GAF GWPS MNA NPDES NRL PRB	Assessment of Corrective Measures Ash Pond Complex Corrective Action/Risk Assessment Coal Combustion Residuals Code of Federal Regulations Cumberland River Mile Environmental Assessment Report Environmental Investigation Gallatin Fossil Plant Groundwater Protection Standards Monitored Natural Attenuation National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System North Rail Loop Permeable Reactive Barrier
_	<b>č</b>
PRB	•
SRL	South Rail Loop
SSL	Statistically Significant Levels
TDEC	Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority
ug/L	Microgram per liter
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency

# **1.0 Introduction**

In accordance with the requirements in 40 CFR § 257.97(a), this report has been prepared to describe the current progress in selecting and designing a remedy for the Ash Pond Complex (APC) (including Ash Pond A, Ash Pond E, Middle Pond A, and Bottom Ash Pond) (hereinafter collectively referred to as APC Multiunit) at the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Gallatin Fossil Plant (GAF) in Gallatin, Sumner County, Tennessee.

# 1.1 Regulatory Background

On April 17, 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) published a rule that set forth national criteria for the management of coal combustion residuals (CCR) produced by electric utilities. The requirements can be found in Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (40 CFR) Part 257, Subpart D. The rule includes requirements for monitoring groundwater, assessing corrective measures, and selecting a remedy if constituents listed in Appendix IV of the rule are detected in groundwater samples collected from downgradient monitoring wells at statistically significant levels (SSL) greater than groundwater protection standards (GWPS).

In January 2019, TVA completed an evaluation of whether there were SSLs over established GWPS as defined in 40 CFR § 257.95(h) for one or more Appendix IV constituents in accordance with 40 CFR § 257.95(g). At the APC Multiunit, as a result of at least one SSL in a downgradient well, TVA initiated an assessment of corrective measures in accordance with 257.95(g)(3)(i).

There are currently SSLs for arsenic in two downgradient wells (GAF-410U, GAF-450L). No new SSLs were identified in 2022. Refer to SSL notices for each sampling event at GAF on TVA's CCR Rule Compliance Data and Information website:

#### https://www.tva.com/environment/environmental-stewardship/coal-combustion-residuals/gallatin

In accordance with 40 CFR § 257.96(a), TVA prepared the 2019 Assessment of Corrective Measures (ACM) Report for the APC Multiunit, added it to the operating record on July 15, 2019, and uploaded it to the CCR Rule Compliance Data and Information website on August 14, 2019. The ACM Report provided an assessment of the effectiveness of corrective measures in accordance with 40 CFR § 257.96(c). As described in Section 1.2 (below), closure of the APC Multiunit is integrated into the ACM process. Four primary strategies were evaluated to address groundwater exhibiting concentrations above the arsenic GWPS:

- Monitored Natural Attenuation (MNA);
- In-Situ Physical/Chemical Treatment;
- Permeable Reactive Barriers (PRB); and
- Hydraulic Containment and Treatment.

Following preparation of the ACM Report, TVA began the process to select a remedy. Semiannual reports are required pursuant to 40 CFR § 257.97(a) to document progress toward remedy selection and design. Semiannual progress reports have been prepared and placed in the operating record since January 2020 and uploaded to the CCR Rule Compliance Data and Information website:

#### https://www.tva.com/environment/environmental-stewardship/coal-combustion-residuals/gallatin

To aid/support remedy selection, TVA will continue to review new data as it becomes available and implement changes to the groundwater monitoring and corrective action program as necessary to maintain compliance with 40 CFR § 257.90 through § 257.98.

At least 30 days prior to the selection of the remedy, the owner/operator must discuss the results of the ACM in a public meeting required by 40 CFR § 257.96(e). The selected remedy must, at a minimum, meet the requirements of 40 CFR § 257.97(b) and must consider the evaluation factors set forth in 40 CFR § 257.97(c) in the selection process. Once a final remedy is chosen, a final report describing the remedy and how it meets the standards set forth in 40 CFR § 257.97(b) will be prepared. The owner/operator must also provide a schedule for implementing the selected remedy that takes into account the factors set forth in 40 CFR § 257.97(d).

# 1.2 Overview of July 2019 Closure Plan

A revised Closure Plan was prepared for the APC Multiunit as a result of an agreement between TVA and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) to close the APC Multiunit by removing the CCR from the APC Multiunit. This Closure Plan was added to the operating record on July 19, 2019, and was posted on TVA's CCR Rule Compliance Data and Information website on August 19, 2019.

As agreed with TDEC, TVA is closing the APC Multiunit by following a closure-by-removal approach pursuant to 40 CFR § 257.102(c). Closure activities are anticipated to include pond drawdown, CCR dewatering, and CCR excavation and removal. CCR is expected to be transported and disposed of in an on-site permitted landfill.

Potentially impacted underlying soils will be addressed. Post-excavation surfaces will be graded to promote positive drainage, and permanent vegetation or permanent stabilization will be established.

Implementation of the revised Closure Plan will serve as groundwater source control as the CCR will be removed from the APC Multiunit impoundments.

# 1.3 Summary of State Required Investigation and Remedy Selection Process

Since 2016, TVA has been conducting an environmental investigation (EI) of CCR disposal sites at its GAF coal-fired site in Tennessee under the oversight of TDEC. TVA submitted an Environmental Assessment Report (EAR) to TDEC on July 9, 2021. TDEC provided review comments on the EAR to TVA on December 21, 2021. A revised EAR (TVA, 2022) was submitted by TVA to TDEC on September 20, 2022. TDEC review comments on the revised EAR are pending as of the date of this report. The EAR provides an evaluation of the extent of impacts associated with CCR constituents based on data from the EI, including groundwater impacts. After TDEC approval of the EAR and the Removal Plan, TVA will submit a Corrective Action/Risk Assessment (CARA) Plan for groundwater impacts at the APC Multiunit to TDEC for review and approval. The CARA Plan will present the proposed remedy for groundwater corrective action at the site, including the closure by removal. The CARA plan will specify the actions that TVA proposes, the basis for those actions, and will include a schedule of activities to be completed by TVA. The agreement between TVA and TDEC for closure of the APC Multiunit includes a public comment period on the proposed CARA Plan of at least 30 days. Following the public comment period, TVA will have 30 days to provide TDEC with responses to the public comments. The public comments and TVA responses will be considered in TDEC's review and approval of the CARA Plan. Following TDEC approval of the CARA Plan, TVA will complete remedy selection in accordance with 40 CFR § 257.97.

## 1.4 Report Contents

Following this introduction, the progress report provides summaries of the GAF site characteristics, the groundwater assessment monitoring program, the findings of the ACM process, and the current progress of groundwater remedy selection.

# 2.0 Site Background and Characteristics

This section provides a brief overview of the CCR management operations and geologic setting for GAF.

#### CCR Management Operations

GAF is located at 1499 Steam Plant Road in Gallatin, Sumner County, Tennessee. The facility is located on the north bank of the Cumberland River and between Cumberland River Mile (CRM) 246 and 241.5. The Cumberland River is impounded by the Old Hickory Dam located approximately 25 miles downstream (CRM 216.2). GAF construction began in 1953. GAF began operations in 1956 with full operation in 1959, following completion of the fourth generating unit.

The coal combustion process at GAF historically generated by-products that included fly ash and bottom ash. CCR management units at GAF are depicted in **Figure 1**. The fly ash and

bottom ash were managed at the former Non-Registered Site (NRS) from 1956 until approximately 1970. From approximately 1970 until 2019, CCR was managed in the APC Multiunit in accordance with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit No.TN0005428 issued by TDEC. Approximately 11.9 million cubic yards of CCR material is currently present in the APC Multiunit, with the majority present in Ash Pond A. The APC Multiunit covers approximately 383 acres.

TVA's scrubber system (constructed 2013-2016) and bottom ash dewatering facility (completed 2019) currently produce dry CCR material. The dry CCR material is managed in the 52-acre Class II Landfill (Tennessee Solid Waste Permit IDL83-0219) called the North Rail Loop (NRL) Landfill. The landfill is constructed with both a soil and geosynthetic liner system and groundwater monitoring well network. Cell 1 began receiving CCR in June 2016; Cell 2 began receiving CCR in September 2021.

With the completion of the Flow Management System in 2019, the APC Multiunit has been removed from service. In accordance with 40 CFR § 257.102(g), the Notice of Intent to Close the APC Multiunit was placed in the Operating Record on July 19, 2019, and posted to the CCR Rule Compliance Data and Information website on August 19, 2019. Process flows and NRL Landfill leachate have been rerouted to the Flow Management System. The Flow Management System effluent is discharged to the Cumberland River at NPDES Outfall 010.

#### Hydrogeologic Setting

A hydrogeologic conceptual site model (CSM) is needed to support decision making during Remedy Selection. This section of the report provides a summary of the hydrogeologic conceptual site model. The CSM was updated as the EAR was prepared.

GAF is located within the Central Basin Aquifer system of Middle Tennessee (Brahana and Bradley, 1986). Primary porosity is largely absent from the limestone formations in the Central Basin Aquifer system. Therefore, groundwater within these formations flows through secondary porosity consisting of a network of water-bearing fracture zones that have been developed and enhanced by dissolution of the limestone.

Groundwater in the vicinity of the APC Multiunit is encountered in water-bearing zones within the alluvium/unconsolidated materials (limited to isolated areas west of the APC Multiunit), Carters Limestone and Lebanon Limestone formations. In the limestone formations, these water-bearing zones have been developed primarily along the nearly flat-lying horizontal bedding planes. The primary water-bearing fracture zone in the Lebanon Limestone occurs at a recognizable stratigraphic horizon, which has been developed largely where the T-3 bentonite layer has been eroded and the Lower Carters (i.e., bedrock below the T-3) is exposed to weathering and karst activity. As a result, the Lower Carters Limestone does not transmit water (does not form an aquifer) on the southeast side of the APC Multiunit (see **Figure 3**).

North of the APC Multiunit is a large area where many surficial karst features are present. Hydraulic heads in both aquifers in this area are low (similar to the Cumberland River) with little to no gradient. This area has been termed a hydraulic trough, as there is a gradient towards this area from the north, south, and east. Dye trace studies have verified the trough feature and groundwater flow westward to the Cumberland River.

The highest hydraulic heads in both bedrock formations are present in the vicinity of the Bottom Ash Pond and along the southern portion of the APC. In the Lebanon Limestone, the hydraulic gradient is radial from this area to the east, south, and west towards the Cumberland River as well as northward towards the area of low hydraulic head north of the APC, as shown in **Figures 3** and **4**. In the Lower Carters Limestone, the gradient is primarily westward towards the River and northward towards the trough.

# 3.0 Groundwater Assessment Monitoring Program

Groundwater assessment monitoring for the APC Multiunit is conducted at GAF in accordance with 40 CFR § 257.95. This section of the report summarizes the results of the groundwater assessment monitoring program to date for the APC Multiunit.

# 3.1 Groundwater Monitoring Network

In compliance with 40 CFR § 257.91, the APC Multiunit certified groundwater monitoring well system contains 23 monitoring wells: 7 background monitoring wells and 16 downgradient monitoring wells. The monitoring well locations are shown on **Figure 5**.

The primary target of monitoring is the Carters Limestone, with 10 wells located along the downgradient waste boundary of the unit. At least one well in the Lebanon Limestone on each downgradient side of the unit was also included in the network, typically paired with Carters wells, or where the first water-bearing zones were encountered in the Lebanon.

The background monitoring wells (GAF-412C, GAF-412L, GAF-414L, GAF-426C, GAF-426L, GAF-427C, and GAF-427L) represent conditions unaffected by CCR (40 CFR § 257.91(a)(1) and (c)(1)). The background wells are hydraulically separated from the APC Multiunit by an area of low hydraulic head, so they represent conditions unaffected by CCR.

The downgradient monitoring wells (24, GAF-402C, GAF-402L, GAF-405C, GAF-406L, GAF-410U, GAF-416C, GAF-422C, GAF-446C, GAF-449L, GAF-450C, GAF-450L, GAF-451CR, GAF-452C, GAF-452L, and GAF-453C) monitor groundwater downgradient near the waste boundary (40 CFR § 257.91(a)(2) and (c)(1)). There are 10 downgradient monitoring wells completed in the Carters Limestone, five monitoring wells in the Lebanon Limestone, and one monitoring well screened in alluvium/unconsolidated materials.

The certification of the groundwater monitoring system is included in the facility operating record and on the TVA's CCR Rule Compliance and Information website:

https://www.tva.com/environment/environmental-stewardship/coal-combustion-residuals/gallatin

# 3.2 Groundwater Characterization

Characterization of the nature and extent of the GWPS exceedances for arsenic in groundwater is understood from the EI activities (2016 – 2020) and CCR Rule assessment monitoring that was conducted in 2018 through 2022. Supplemental investigations may be conducted during the selection of remedy process to aid in selection and design of a remedy. Groundwater monitoring results are summarized below:

- Arsenic continues to exceed the GWPS at GAF-410U. This well is screened in alluvium/unconsolidated materials. The published GWPS for arsenic is 10 ug/L. Figure 6 presents a concentration trend plot for arsenic in this well through September 2022.
- GAF-410U is screened in alluvium, which has a very limited extent in this area (Figure 2). Alluvium is not present and/or water-bearing zones are not found in overburden in the areas surrounding this well. Thus, its horizontal extent in alluvium at and beyond the waste boundary is defined by the limited extent of water in that geologic unit.
- In the vertical direction, a nearby well is screened in the underlying Carters Limestone (GAF-446C, **Figure 5**). This well is already part of the CCR Rule monitoring network, and arsenic is not above the GWPS in this well. Thus, the vertical extent at and beyond the waste boundary is defined by the existing well network.

Since 2021, arsenic has also been (statistically) greater than its GWPS at GAF-450L.

- Arsenic continues to exceed the GWPS at GAF-450L. The well is screened in the Lebanon Limestone unit. **Figure 6** presents a concentration trend plot for arsenic in this well through September 2022.
- GAF-450L is screened in the Lebanon Limestone bedrock (**Figure 5**) which is the deeper water-bearing zone beneath the APC Multiunit. Horizontal extent at and beyond the waste boundary is bound by the lack of arsenic GWPS exceedances in other CCR Rule monitoring wells along the Cumberland River.
- In the vertical direction, a shallower paired well screened in the Carters limestone (GAF-450C, **Figure 5**) does not exhibit arsenic above the GWPS.

Refer to SSL notices for each sampling event at GAF on TVA's CCR Rule Compliance Data and Information website:

https://www.tva.com/environment/environmental-stewardship/coal-combustion-residuals/gallatin

# 4.0 Assessment of Corrective Measures

TVA prepared the 2019 ACM Report for the APC Multiunit, added it to the operating record on July 15, 2019, and posted it on TVA's CCR Rule Compliance Data and Information website on August 14, 2019. The ACM Report provided an assessment of the effectiveness of corrective measures in accordance with 40 CFR § 257.96(c). The potential remedial technologies presented in the Assessment of Corrective Measures Report also apply to the SSL for arsenic at monitoring well GAF-450L identified in 2021.

As described in Section 1.2, closure of the APC Multiunit will be by removal of the CCR, and closure represents the key source control measure for the purposes of remedy selection under 40 CFR § 257.97.

## 4.1 Source Control Measures

The objectives of corrective measures under 40 CFR § 257.96(a) are to "prevent further releases [from the CCR Unit], to remediate any releases, and to restore affected areas to original conditions." Ultimately, in accordance with 40 CFR § 257.97(b)(3), the selected corrective measure must at a minimum "[c]ontrol the source(s) of releases so as to reduce or eliminate, to the maximum extent feasible, further releases of constituents in appendix IV to this part into the environment."

The Preamble (80 Fed. Reg. 21302, 21406) to the CCR Rule discusses that source control measures may include modifying operational procedures. TVA has already implemented operational changes such as reducing free water in Ash Pond E, constructing a new flow management system, and rerouting flows previously sent to the APC Multiunit.

As noted in Section 1.2, the APC will be closed by removal in accordance with the current Closure Plan (July 2019). Closure-by-removal of the APC Multiunit will serve as source control measures as required under 40 CFR § 257.97(b)(3). These measures will eliminate the potential for migration of CCR constituents to groundwater after completion of the removal efforts.

TVA has been working closely with TDEC on various plans and documents related to APC removal.

On September 17, 2020, the Record of Decision for the Environmental Impact Statement completed pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act for closure by removal was published. On September 28, 2020, TVA submitted to TDEC for review and approval a Removal Plan for removal of CCR from the APC Multiunit impoundments. On December 23, 2020, TDEC provided comments on the Removal Plan to TVA and required a revised Removal Plan be submitted. On February 8, 2021, TVA submitted the updated Removal Plan Revision 1 to TDEC

for review and approval. Implementation of the Removal Plan, once approved, will be overseen by TDEC.

TVA submitted a Solid Waste Permit Application to TDEC in 2020 for a new on-site landfill, the South Rail Loop (SRL) Landfill, for receipt of CCR to be removed from the APC Multiunit. TDEC's review of the SRL Landfill permit documents has been completed and a permit (IDL830000224) was issued to TVA on August 5, 2022. TVA has selected a construction contractor for the initial cells (4 and 5) to be developed for the new landfill. Construction started in November 2022. The contractor estimates that Cell 4 may be ready to receive CCR removed from the APC starting in the Summer of 2024 pending unusual weather or other unanticipated construction delays.

Continued semi-annual groundwater assessment monitoring will be conducted throughout the closure process to track changes in groundwater conditions as a result of these closure and operation changes. These data will be considered in the selection and design of a remedy in accordance with 40 CFR § 257.97. Groundwater assessment monitoring as required by 40 CFR § 257.96(b) will continue until a groundwater remedy is selected. Long-term groundwater monitoring is a component of the corrective measure implementation.

# 4.2 Potential Remedial Technologies

The APC Multiunit will be closed-by-removal in accordance with 40 CFR § 257.102 and applicable state law.

In addition to this source control measure, four primary strategies have been evaluated to address groundwater exhibiting concentrations above the arsenic GWPS including the following:

- MNA;
- In-Situ Physical/Chemical Treatment;
- PRB; and
- Hydraulic Containment and Treatment.

The ACM Report provides a more detailed description of each of these corrective measures. The effectiveness of each potential corrective measure was assessed in accordance with 40 CFR § 257.96(c), and all are considered feasible for remediating arsenic in groundwater at the APC Multiunit.

# 5.0 Selection of Remedy: Current Progress

A remedy to address SSLs for arsenic in groundwater will be selected in accordance with 40 CFR § 257.97 and subject to TDEC's approval of the CARA Plan in accordance with the agreement between TDEC and TVA. At this point in the selection process, each of the

corrective measures presented in Section 4.2 meets the requirements of the remedy as defined in 40 CFR § 257.97 and is still being considered. Following agreement on the selected remedy with TDEC (via TDEC's review and approval of the APC CARA Plan), TVA will prepare a Remedy Selection Report describing the selected remedy and how it meets the standards specified below pursuant to 40 CFR § 257.97(b)(1)-(5). Remedies must: (1) Be protective of human health and the environment; (2) Attain the groundwater protection standard as specified pursuant to §257.95(h); (3) Control the source(s) of releases so as to reduce or eliminate, to the maximum extent feasible, further releases of constituents in appendix IV to this part into the environment; (4) Remove from the environment as much of the contaminated material that was released from the CCR unit as is feasible, taking into account factors such as avoiding inappropriate disturbance of sensitive ecosystems; (5) Comply with standards for management of wastes as specified in §257.98(d).

#### Remedy Selection Progress

Since completion of the ACM in 2019, the following activities have taken place or are on-going towards selection of the groundwater remedy:

- In 2019, TVA and TDEC signed a Consent Order specifying that the APC will be closed by removal of the CCR material. This agreement was a principal component of the remedy selection process.
- Between 2019 and 2020, TVA completed a hydrogeologic characterization of the on-site location of a proposed landfill for disposal of the CCR to be removed from the APC.
- TVA submitted to TDEC a permit application for the proposed new landfill. TVA has also applied for other permits related to development of the landfill at this location.
- In August 2022, TDEC issued the final solid waste permit (IDL830000224) for the new landfill.
- TVA has selected a construction contractor for the initial cells (4 and 5) of the new landfill. Construction started in November 2022. The contractor has estimated that Cell 4 may be ready to receive CCR removed from the APC starting in the Summer of 2024 pending unusual weather or other unanticipated construction delays.
- In 2020, TVA submitted to TDEC for review and approval a Removal Plan for removal of CCR from the APC Multiunit impoundments, which TDEC reviewed and provided comments on. In 2021, TVA submitted the updated Removal Plan Revision 1 to TDEC for review and approval.
- In 2020, TVA completed a site-wide EI which included the area of the APC. The findings of the investigation were submitted to TDEC in 2021 in an EAR. In 2022, TVA submitted a

revised EAR to TDEC addressing TDEC's comments. TDEC review comments on the revised EAR are pending as of the date of this report. Upon TDEC approval of the EAR, the findings of the EI will serve as the basis for the CARA Plan.

- As part of the revised EAR in 2022, TVA provided additional characterization of conditions associated with the APC including delineation of the extent of arsenic in the Carters Limestone and Lebanon Limestone groundwater in the vicinity of the APC.
- As part of the EAR, TVA has proposed a groundwater monitoring network to TDEC to be used for groundwater monitoring at the APC during construction activities. This network is under review by TDEC.

In support of the remedy selection process, additional evaluation is needed and is ongoing, as described below.

# 5.1 Data Requirements for Design of Groundwater Corrective Action

Characterization of the arsenic impacts in accordance with 40 CFR § 257.95(g) is complete beyond the limit of waste at the APC Multiunit. As noted in Section 1.3, the EI is complete, and TVA has submitted a revised EAR (TVA, 2022) to TDEC for review and approval. The EAR will inform the development of the CARA Plan. Pursuant to the agreement between TDEC and TVA (Consent Order No. 15-23-IV dated July 24, 2019), the groundwater remedy for the APC Multiunit must be approved by TDEC. TVA will implement the APC closure-by-removal pending TDEC's approval of the APC Removal Plan. TVA expects the source removal to improve the conditions in groundwater over time.

TVA has identified items associated with the APC that may be evaluated further in the CARA process through additional studies, including:

- Identifying potential attenuation mechanisms that may influence the fate and transport of constituents of concern.
- Assessing the potential effectiveness of the attenuation mechanisms based on sitespecific geochemical conditions.
- Developing a preliminary conceptual site model of the fate and transport, including geochemistry and attenuation processes, for constituents in groundwater at the APC.
- Additional groundwater flow modeling and/or fate and transport analyses.

# 5.2 Semiannual Reporting, Public Meeting, Remedy Selection, and Final Report

Progress toward the selection of the remedy will be documented in semiannual reports in accordance with 40 CFR § 257.97(a). At least 30 days prior to selecting a remedy, a public

meeting to discuss the results of the corrective measures assessment will be conducted as required by 40 CFR § 257.96(e). A final report will be produced after the remedy is selected. This final report will describe the remedy and how it meets 40 CFR § 257.97. Recordkeeping requirements specified in 40 CFR § 257.105(h), notification requirements specified in 40 CFR § 257.106(h), and internet requirements specified in 40 CRF § 257.107(h) will be complied with as required by 40 CFR § 257.97(e).

# 6.0 References

- Brahana and Bradley, 1986. Preliminary Delineation and Description of the Regional Aquifers of Tennessee – The Central Basin Aquifer System. Prepared by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. USGS Water- Resources Investigations Report 82-4002.
- TVA, 2022. TVA Gallatin Fossil Plant Environmental Assessment Report, Revision 1. September 16, 2022.

# **Figures**











