

DocType: EA-Administrative Record
IndexField: Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
ProjectName: Ft. Loudoun Bridge (US321) Temporary Licenses
ProjectNumber: 2011-3

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

TEMPORARY LICENSE OF PROPERTY ON THE FORT LOUDOUN DAM RESERVATION FOR CONSTRUCTION OF BRIDGES OVER THE TENNESSEE RIVER, LOUDON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

On October 22, 2012, the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) submitted an application to the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) for a temporary license of 6.08 acres on the Fort Loudoun Dam Reservation (FLDR) on tracts FL-1 and FL-2 and Tellico Dam Reservation (TDR) on tract TELR-103, to provide staging, haul roads, lay down areas, and install and operate temporary barge loading facilities for the construction of new bridges over the Tennessee River at River Mile 601.8 and the Tellico canal. The license would allow barge transportation of construction material and equipment to the new bridge construction sites on the Tellico canal and downstream of Fort Loudoun Dam. Approval would allow TDOT to complete the upgrading of U.S. Highway 321 (State Route 73) from Lenoir City, Tennessee to Blount County, Tennessee from two to four lanes in order to relieve traffic congestion and improve safety.

Areas A and B (4.68 acres) are part of FL-2 on the left descending bank of the Tennessee, downstream from Fort Loudoun Dam. A dock would be constructed at Area A for a crane which would unload materials from trucks to barges. Area C (1.28 acres) is part of FL-1 along the southeast bank of the Tellico Canal and east of the existing U.S. Highway 321. A dock is proposed at the laydown area to load materials onto barges. Area D (0.08 acres) is part of parcel TELR-103 along the north bank of the Tellico Canal and west of the existing U.S. Highway 321 Bridge over the canal. Area D is needed to access the proposed pier for the bridge crossing the Tellico Canal.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHA) and TDOT issued an environmental assessment (EA) in May 1998 which addressed environmental impacts of new bridge construction on the proposed road location and affected area including the TVA property involved. In April 2008, TVA prepared a supplement to the FHA/TDOT EA (TVA 2008) to consider the environmental impacts of removing the existing U.S. Highway 321 bridge on top of Fort Loudoun Dam and its associated approach ways, and providing improved access to Lenoir City and TVA property. On April 30, 2008, TVA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and adopted the FHA/TDOT EA.

TVA prepared a second supplement to the 1998 FHA/TDOT EA to address the potential effects of issuing the license for the temporary use of the additional property, which was not previously addressed. The second supplemental EA (SEA) is incorporated herein by reference.

Alternatives

From the standpoint of the National Environmental Policy Act, the alternatives remain the same as for the 1998 FHA/TDOT EA, which are the No Action (No Build) Alternative and the Proposed Action (Build) Alternative for construction of the bridges over the Tennessee River

and the Tellico Canal, which includes easements across TVA property and removal of the old bridge. The Build alternative would be modified to include the temporary use of about six acres of TVA land, divided into four additional areas (A-D), to provide staging, haul roads, lay down areas, and install and operate temporary barge loading facilities to transport building materials and equipment for the project. Modification of the canal bank would be needed to provide adequate elevation to facilitate easy access to the barges on the canal. After the project is completed, all of the rock will be removed and the areas would be restored to previous elevations and contours. TVA's preferred alternative remains the Action Alternative.

Impacts Assessment

Expansion of the project area to facilitate the movement of construction material and equipment would have no additional environmental impacts on socioeconomics, environmental justice, prime farmlands, hazardous materials, recreation, parks and managed areas, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, climate change, or Nationwide Rivers Inventory streams. There would be a minor and insignificant increase in noise from the loading and unloading of barges and movement of materials.

The temporary use of the additional property would have additional minor and insignificant impacts to floodplains, visual resources, terrestrial and aquatic resources, water quality, and navigation and transportation. The additional activities planned in the floodplains would comply with the TVA Flood Control Storage Loss Guideline and be consistent with Executive Order (EO) 11988 (Floodplain Management).

TVA finds that no historic properties that are listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places would be adversely affected by the proposed undertaking. An archaeological survey was conducted and no previously unrecorded archaeological resources were identified. Pursuant to federal regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, TDOT consulted with the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). The SHPO concurred with TDOT's finding that no archeological resources would be affected. Pursuant to the federal regulations implementing Section 106, TDOT also consulted with federally recognized Indian tribes and received no responses.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to federal or state-listed endangered and threatened species would occur as a result of these actions. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was contacted to ascertain whether the proposed changes in project scope necessitate that TDOT reopen formal consultation for the snail darter, orange-foot pimpleback, pink mucket for compliance with the Endangered Species Act and to determine whether additional coordination would be required for the Indiana bat. The USFWS concurred with the TDOT determination that the proposed actions are "not likely to adversely affect" the Indiana bat. USFWS stated that, provided that incidental take is not exceeded during mussel relocation efforts or as a result of construction activities, the requirements of Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 are fulfilled.

Additional cumulative effects from the use of additional TVA property would result in a minor and insignificant increase of adverse effects to vegetation and wildlife.

Mitigation

To reduce the potential for adverse effects to environmental resources, TVA would expand the use of the standard and routine conditions and non-routine mitigation measures described in the 1998 FHA/TDOT EA and 2008 TVA FONSI to include the additional areas.

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The proposed additional temporary use of approximately 6 acres of TVA property by TDOT for bridge construction will comply with the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, EO 11988 (Floodplain Management) and EO 11990 (Wetlands Protection). Based on the findings in the second supplemental EA and the implementation of the mitigation measures, TVA concludes that the proposed changes to the Action Alternative for bridge construction near Fort Loudoun Dam would not be a major federal action affecting the environment. Accordingly, an environmental impact statement is not required.



29 August, 2013

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Date Signed