

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROPOSAL FOR THE
KEITH PROPERTY
GRAVES COUNTY, KENTUCKY (HICKORY)

An integral part of Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) mission is to promote economic development within the TVA service area. TVA provides financial assistance to help bring to market new/improved sites and facilities within the TVA service area and position communities to compete successfully for new jobs and capital investment. TVA proposes to provide an economic development grant through InvestPrep funds to Graves County Economic Development (GCED) to assist with the development of the Keith Property in Graves County, Kentucky. The area of TVA's Proposed Action (herein referred to as the Project Area) encompasses 50 acres of mostly open grassy land with some forested areas located immediately north of Hickory Road, 0.5 mile west of Highway 45, and about one mile northwest of Hickory, Kentucky.

The proposal is the subject of an Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared by TVA, which is incorporated herein by reference. In the EA, TVA evaluated potential impacts of the Proposed Action (i.e., the Action Alternative) as well as the alternative of not implementing the action (i.e., the No Action Alternative). Under the No Action Alternative, TVA would not provide InvestPrep funds to the GCED. TVA would not be furthering its mission of promoting economic development by assisting the local community to compete successfully for new jobs and capital investment through the Proposed Action. The GCED may seek alternate funding (if available) to combine with their existing funds to develop the site. Success in obtaining alternate funding would result in similar impacts and benefits as the Action Alternative. If the GCED were not able to secure the funding for the Proposed Action, the land use at the site would likely remain unchanged, no environmental impacts would be anticipated, and the economic benefits associated with the Action Alternative would not be accomplished.

Under the Action Alternative, TVA would provide InvestPrep funds to the GCED, to be matched with non-TVA funds, for site improvements to the Project Area. These improvements would include clearing of 5.1 acres with trees and stumps burned on-site, demolition and removal to a permitted landfill of an old home, barn/outbuilding, silo, and associated debris. Proposed activities would also include filling of a pond near the southern boundary of the site, grading of a 500,000 square foot dirt building pad (with approximately 160,000 cubic yards of cut and fill needed with no off-site borrow necessary), and three detention ponds. The finished floor elevation would be approximately 494 feet above mean sea level. Erosion prevention, sediment control, and stabilization measures, such as seeding and straw mulch would be implemented after grading is complete. Activities required for the Action Alternative would occur over approximately 12 months and would require a small workforce that would most likely be assigned from a local contractor.

TVA's preferred alternative is the Proposed Action Alternative. This alternative would meet the purpose of the Project and would further TVA's mission to promote economic development in the TVA service area.

The potential impacts of the Action Alternative are described in detail in the EA. Implementation of the Action Alternative would have no impact on solid and hazardous wastes, floodplains, land use, natural areas, or recreation.

Resources that could potentially be impacted (negatively or positively) by implementing the Action Alternative include air quality and climate change, groundwater, soils, surface waters, wetlands, aquatic zoology, terrestrial zoology, botany, archaeology, and historic structures and sites. Implementation of the Action Alternative could also create potential minor adverse impacts to the human environment, including prime farmland, visual effects, noise, and transportation issues. Implementation of the Action Alternative could create potential minor positive impacts on socioeconomics and would have no effect on environmental justice communities.

Construction-related activities would result in minor and short-term impacts to air quality and climate change. Cleared trees and stumps would be burned. With the use of best management practices (BMPs) impacts would be minimal, temporary, and localized; and would not be anticipated to result in any violation of applicable ambient air quality standards or impact regional air quality.

Near-surface grading activities would not intersect with the principal water supply aquifer in the area and effects to groundwater would be minor. Soils disturbed by grading would be stabilized after construction, thereby preventing erosion and sedimentation. The Proposed Action would result in conversion of 24.2 acres of prime farmland. However, the impacts to prime farmland would be considered minor on a county level, as the Natural Resources Conservation Service indicated that the Action Alternative would convert only 0.02 percent of the prime farmland in Graves County, Kentucky.

Five presumed jurisdictional, intermittent streams, 13 presumed non-jurisdictional, ephemeral channels, two presumed non-jurisdictional ponds, and one presumed non-jurisdictional palustrine emergent wetland are located in the Project Area. The Action Alternative would impact all of these resources, except possibly one ephemeral channel, one intermittent stream, and one pond based on a conceptual activities drawing provided by the GCED. The conceptual activities drawing is preliminary and subject to change. The impacts would be caused by tree clearing, grading and/or development of detention ponds causing disturbance, modification or removal of the resources. Unavoidable potential impacts to presumed jurisdictional features would be addressed through implementation of measures required by agency permitting (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Kentucky Division of Water), including use of BMPs during construction, restoration, and/or compensatory mitigation as required. Permit approval and any associated compensatory mitigation would ensure impacts are not significant. Unavoidable potential impacts to presumed non-jurisdictional features would result in impacts to waterbodies, by disturbance, modification or removal. Site planning would avoid and minimize impacts to these aquatic features to the extent practicable. Stormwater runoff would be addressed with adequate retention and conveyance designs, erosion controls, and additional BMPs as necessary, to ensure effects on downstream waters are insignificant. This would ensure that this TVA-funded Proposed Action would be compliant with the Clean Water Act Sections 401 and 404 and Executive Order 11990. Impacts to the common aquatic species potentially found in the two ponds would not be significant and no rare, threatened, or endangered aquatic species occur in the Project Area.

Impacts to common plant species removed and wildlife species removed or disturbed would be minor and insignificant. Approximately 5.1 acres of trees would be cleared in the Project Area. Overall, habitat suitability for listed species in the Project Area was low due to past agricultural activity, site disturbance, and the presence of invasive or introduced species. However, some potential habitat was observed. An area near a pond in the northwestern corner of the Project Area may provide marginal habitat for the state-threatened American frog's bit, the state-endangered floating pennywort, and the state-sensitive thread-like naiad. The wetland in the southeastern portion of the Project Area may provide marginal habitat for the state-sensitive plant bull paspalum, which is a wetland plant that has been observed in disturbed areas. However, no federally listed or state-listed species were observed during the botanical survey and no impacts would occur.

Neither migration nor overwinter habitat for the whooping crane exists within the Project Area. The whooping crane is listed as federally endangered in the southwest U.S. Outside of this region, the whooping crane is categorized as a non-essential experimental population, but federal agencies must not jeopardize their existence. The Proposed Action would not jeopardize the continued existence of whooping crane.

No suitable winter roosting habitat (i.e., caves) exists in the Project Area for gray bat (which also uses caves in the summer), Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, or tricolored bat. Suitable foraging habitat for listed bat species occurs within the Project Area along forested edges and over and along riparian corridors and ponds. Approximately one acre of suitable summer roosting tree habitat for Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, and tricolored bat would be removed under the Proposed Action.

A number of activities associated with the Action Alternative were addressed in TVA's programmatic consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on routine actions and federally listed bats in accordance with ESA Section 7(a)(2), which was completed in April 2018 and updated in May 2023. For those activities with potential to affect bats, TVA committed to implementing specific conservation measures. These activities and associated conservation measures are identified in the TVA Bat Strategy Project Screening Form (Attachment 2 of EA) and must be reviewed/implemented as part of the Action Alternative. With implementation of these conservation measures, no significant impacts are expected to affect federally listed or proposed-listed bats. Therefore, the requirements under Section 7 of the ESA have been met.

No significant archaeology resources or historic structures and sites were identified during the field surveys. Under the Action Alternative, there would be no impacts on archaeological resources or historic structures and sites because no sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places are present in the Project Area.

Construction vehicles and equipment visible during grading activities would have a minor visual impact over the temporary construction period. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Action would result in only a minor overall change in visual quality.

Noise would be localized and temporary, and no receptor would be exposed to significant noise levels for an extended period. Further, construction activities would be expected to be conducted during daylight hours, when ambient noise levels are often higher, and most individuals are less sensitive to noise. Thus, noise-related impacts resulting from implementation of the Action Alternative are anticipated to be temporary and minor.

Minor beneficial socioeconomic impacts during construction would occur. No long-term impacts to community services are anticipated and there would be no disproportionate impacts to low-income or minority communities in the area.

Additional traffic would be generated during construction activities. However, the amount of additional traffic generated would be minor and have a negligible impact on overall traffic volumes.

Mitigation

To minimize or reduce the environmental effects of site activities associated with the Action Alternative, the GCED, or its contractors, would ensure all grading activities conducted comply with construction stormwater permitting requirements and utilize applicable BMPs to minimize and control erosion and fugitive dust during these actions. These practices include, but are not limited to, installation of sediment and erosion controls (silt fences, sediment traps, etc.); management of fugitive dust; and a restriction allowing work during daytime work hours only.

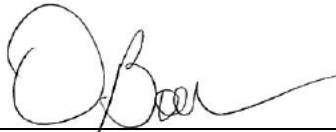
Operations involving chemical or fuel storage or resupply and vehicle servicing would be handled outside of riparian areas and in such a manner as to prevent these items from reaching a watercourse. Earthen berms or other effective means would be installed to protect nearby surface waters from direct surface runoff. Servicing of equipment and vehicles would be done with care to avoid leakage, spillage, and subsequent surface or ground water contamination. Oil waste, filters, and other litter would be collected and disposed of properly.

Unavoidable potential impacts to presumed jurisdictional surface water features would be addressed through implementation of measures required by agency permitting, including use of BMPs during construction, restoration, and/or compensatory mitigation as necessary.

Specific avoidance and conservation measures would be implemented as a part of the Action Alternative to reduce effects to federally listed bats. These measures are identified in the TVA Bat Strategy Project Screening Form (Attachment 2 of EA).

Conclusion and Findings

Based on the findings listed above and the analyses in the EA, we conclude that the Proposed Action of TVA funding to assist with the development of a portion of the Keith Property would not be a major federal action significantly affecting the environment. This finding is dependent on implementation of the mitigation measures described above. Accordingly, an environmental impact statement is not required.



Dawn Booker
Senior Manager
NEPA Compliance
Environment & Sustainability

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Date Signed