

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROPOSAL FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF W.C. GARDINER INDUSTRIAL PARK
YALOBUSHA COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI (WATER VALLEY)
EAXX-455-00-000-1737714500

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 or improved sites and facilities within the TVA service area and positions communities to compete successfully for new jobs and capital investment. TVA proposes to provide an economic development grant through InvestPrep funds to the City of Water Valley to assist with the development of a portion of the W.C. Gardiner Industrial Park (WCGIP) in Yalobusha County, Mississippi. The area of TVA's Proposed Action (herein referred to as the Project Area) encompasses 42.3 acres of disjunct forested areas and open grassy land adjacent to Highway 7, in Water Valley, Mississippi.

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 City of Water Valley. 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 City of Water Valley 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. In the event the Project was postponed, any effects would be delayed for the duration of the postponement. If the City of Water Valley were not able to secure the funding for the Proposed Action, 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 City of Water Valley, to be matched with non-TVA funds to facilitate the development of a portion of the WCGIP. TVA funds for the 42.3-acre Project Area would be used for clearing 13.7 acres of trees. Felled trees would be cut and sold or burned on site. Stumps would be removed and burned on site. The Project Area would be graded to create a 300,000-square-foot (SF) dirt building pad and a sediment basin. Approximately 94,000 cubic yards of cut and fill would be needed, but no borrow from off-site sources would be required. A new park entrance with a box culvert, signage, a 0.38-mile-long paved connector road between Highway 7 and Industrial Park Road, and a roundabout for tractor trailers would also be constructed. The Action Alternative also includes grading related to the draining and removal of a farm pond. Following the site improvements, the disturbed areas would be stabilized with seed and mulch. Activities required for the Action

Alternative would occur over approximately 15 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, wetlands, land use, prime farmland, managed and natural areas, and recreation.

Resources that could potentially be impacted (negatively or positively) by implementing the Action Alternative include air quality and climate change, groundwater, soils, surface water and aquatic zoology, terrestrial zoology, and botany. Implementation of the Action Alternative could create potential impacts to the human environment, including archaeological resources, historic structures and sites, visual effects, noise, socioeconomics, and transportation issues.

Construction-related activities, including the burning of trees and stumps, would result in minor and short-term impacts to air quality and climate change. 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, impact regional air quality, or affect nearby persons.

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.

Soils would be disturbed by the Proposed Action, including tree clearing and grading. Stabilization of disturbed soils following grading to sufficiently reduce sedimentation would occur by the implementation of erosion control measures in accordance with a project-specific construction general permit/stormwater pollution prevention plan. BMPs would be used during site development to avoid contamination of surface water in the Project Area. These factors would effectively avoid or minimize impacts on soils and from soil erosion.

The Action Alternative would affect one non-jurisdictional channel and one non-jurisdictional open-water pond. The Action Alternative includes drainage, grading, and removal of the non-jurisdictional open-water pond. Both the channel and pond were confirmed as non-jurisdictional by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Erosion control measures would be implemented, in accordance with a project-specific construction general permit/stormwater pollution prevention plan, to sufficiently reduce sedimentation. This would ensure that this TVA-funded Proposed Action would be compliant with the Clean Water Act (CWA) Sections 401 and 404. Impacts to common aquatic species potentially found in the pond would not be significant, and no rare, threatened, or endangered aquatic species protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), or habitat suitable for listed aquatic species occur in the Project Area.

The Proposed Action would not be likely to affect populations of wildlife species common to the area, as the amount of habitat to be removed is relatively small, of lower quality, and similar herbaceous habitats and forested fragments exist in the surrounding landscape. Under Section 7 of the ESA, the Proposed Action would not jeopardize the continued existence of the alligator snapping turtle due to lack of suitable nesting habitat observed within the Project Area. Grading could impact monarch butterfly foraging habitat; however, significant impacts would not be anticipated as these impacts would be expected to be minor due to the small quantity of habitat potentially present in the Project Area along unmowed field edges. The Proposed Action would not jeopardize the continued existence of this species.

No caves or other hibernacula for southeastern bat or tricolored bat exist in the project footprint or would be impacted by the Proposed Action. Approximately 3.64 acres of suitable summer roosting habitat for tricolored bat are proposed for removal as part of proposed activities. Yalobusha County, Mississippi, is considered within the range where tricolored bats hibernate. TVA recommends that the City of Water Valley remove trees outside of the pup season (May 15—July 31) to avoid direct impacts to tricolored bats. With the use of identified conservation measures and BMPs, the Proposed Action would not jeopardize the continued existence of tricolored bats and effects would be minor. The Proposed Action would have no effect on southeastern bat.

Impacts to common plant species removed and common wildlife species removed or disturbed would be minor and insignificant. Approximately 13.7 acres of trees would be cleared in the Project Area. No habitat for uncommon or rare plant communities is present within the Project Area or would be affected by the Proposed Action. No plants protected under the ESA, or habitat suitable for listed plant species, or state-listed plants are present in the Project Area.

No archaeological sites were identified during a field survey of the Project Area. Under the Action Alternative, there would be no impacts on archaeological resources. Given that there are no known historic structures within the project footprint and that the proposed project does not involve the construction of above-ground resources, no historic architectural resources would be impacted by the project, directly or visually.

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.

Construction 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. It is anticipated that sound levels would not exceed 85 decibels at the Project Area boundary per Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards. Thus, noise-related impacts resulting from the implementation of the Action Alternative are anticipated to be temporary and minor.

Minor beneficial socioeconomic impacts during the construction of the Proposed Action would occur. No long-term impacts to community services are anticipated and there would be no impacts to low-income 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 City of Water Valley, or its contractors, would ensure all grading activities conducted would be in compliance with stormwater permitting requirements and use applicable BMPs to minimize and control erosion and fugitive dust during these actions.

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 stream channels from direct surface runoff. Servicing of equipment and vehicles is expected to be done with care to avoid leakage, spillage, and subsequent surface or groundwater contamination. Oil waste, filters, and other litter would be collected and disposed of properly.

TVA recommended specific avoidance and conservation measures be implemented as a part of the Action Alternative to reduce effects to tricolored bat, including recommended tree clearing outside of the pup season.

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 WCGIP would not be a major federal action significantly affecting the environment. This finding is dependent on the implementation of the mitigation measures described above. Accordingly, an environmental impact statement is not required.



Dawn Booker
Senior Manager, NEPA Compliance
Major Projects

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Date Signed