

Normandy Reservoir – Optimization of Reservoir Releases Final Environmental Assessment & Finding of No Significant Impact

March 2025

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why does the Optimization EA not include drought management planning?

A: Optimization of releases from Normandy Reservoir has utility and benefits to TVA that are independent of a drought management plan.

TVA is seeking greater flexibility in how it manages water releases from the reservoir into the Duck River while continuing to meet key operational goals related to water supply, water quality, and sensitive aquatic habitat.

TVA will conduct a separate environmental review of the drought management plan once it's drafted.

Q: Is TVA lowering the instantaneous flow at Shelbyville?

A: No. TVA is not proposing to lower the flow target at Shelbyville.

The proposal is an accounting adjustment from an instantaneous flow to a weekly average. This allows for better management of flows, especially during times of critical need. TVA will use the weekly average adjustment plus a minimum instantaneous flow requirement to ensure daily flows protect water supply, water quality, and sensitive aquatic habitat downstream.

Q: Will this change be noticeable?

A: The changes in flow will be gradual, minor, and temporary. The modeled flows of the Duck River show fluctuations of 0.1% to 0.7% (0.1 ft to 0.9 ft), which is well within the normal historic variability of the river.

Q: How does TVA plan to implement Optimization of Normandy?

A: TVA prepares an annual operational strategy which incorporates lessons learned and outlines operational techniques. Optimization of Normandy will be incorporated into the operational strategy plan with key guidance for the River Forecast Center, which is staffed 24/7 to ensure TVA meets all operational objectives. Stakeholder engagement will be a key component of implementation.

Q: Will recreation be impacted by the change?

A: There are no anticipated impacts to recreation.

Q: When will this change go into effect?

A: TVA plans to implement the new operating procedures June 1, 2025.

Q: If Optimization of Normandy had been in place in the 2007/2008 drought, how would Duck River flows or Normandy Reservoir elevations been different?

A: In 2007-2008, due to low reservoir elevations and prolonged drought conditions TVA issued a supplemental EA to alter the release schedule of Normandy Dam, reducing the minimum flow at Shelbyville from 155 to 120 cubic feet per second (cfs) during the summer months (June to November). This was implemented in October 2007.

In February 2008, additional reductions were made to further reduce the minimum flow at Shelbyville from 120 to 80 cfs through May 31, 2008. The minimum reservoir elevation was 852.1-feet on January 31, 2008, 11.9 feet below normal winter pool.

Had optimization been implemented, the minimum reservoir elevation would have been about 854-feet (an additional 2-feet of water), which represents approximately 1.4 billion gallons of stored water available to maintain releases downstream without implementing flow reductions.

Q: How does this align with the initiatives of Executive Order 108?

A: In November 2024, the Governor of Tennessee issued Executive Order 108, which outlined a set of objectives and actions to conserve the Duck River watershed, including drought and habitat conservation planning. TVA is currently working collaboratively with the State of Tennessee and partners to address these issues.