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**Project Number:** 2008-75

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY**  
EAGLES LANDING GOLF COURSE EXPANSION, PHASE 2, GISTS CREEK  
SEVIERVILLE, SEVIER COUNTY, TENNESSEE

The Sevierville Public Building Authority (SPBA) proposes to realign a portion of Old Knoxville Highway (OKH) and expand the Eagles Landing Golf Course (ELGC) in Sevierville, Sevier County, Tennessee. SPBA stated that the OKH improvements are necessary to assist in alleviating traffic congestion in the city and are an essential component of the city's growth plans. The golf course expansion is part of the city's development plan to attract visitors to the nearby Sevierville Events Center project.

The proposed OKH improvements would result in the relocation of 1,845 feet of Gists Creek. The proposed relocated stream channel would be 1,556 feet in length, resulting in 289 feet of stream loss. Also associated with OKH improvements are the elimination of 35 linear feet of an unnamed tributary to Gists Creek (Stream Ex-2) and the replacement of an existing 25-foot culvert on Gists Creek. The ELGC expansion would result in the relocation of an unnamed tributary to the Little Pigeon River (Stream Ex-4), the elimination of an unnamed tributary to Gists Creek (Stream Ex-3), and the elimination of several wetlands. A 337-foot section of Stream Ex-4 would be relocated into 452 feet of a proposed channel, resulting in 115 feet of additional stream footage. Approximately 418 linear feet of Stream Ex-3 would be filled for the ELGC expansion. Seventeen low-quality and small (size range from 0.01 to 1.11 acres) wetlands throughout the golf course would be eliminated, totaling 2.99 acres. SPBA has requested that the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) issue the required approval of these activities under Section 26a of the *TVA Act*.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) prepared an environmental assessment (EA) of the proposed project in December 2008. TVA was a cooperating agency in the preparation of this EA, which is incorporated by reference. The EA evaluated three alternatives: (1) the No Action Alternative, (2) the Applicant's Final Proposal, and (3) the Applicant's Final Proposal With Added Special Conditions. Under the No Action Alternative, TVA would not issue the Section 26a permit, and the proposed golf course construction and roadwork would not occur. Under either Action Alternative, TVA would issue a Section 26a permit for the stream relocations and eliminations, culvert replacement, and wetland eliminations associated with the proposed golf course expansion and roadwork. The two Action Alternatives differ in the number of special conditions and mitigation measures imposed to reduce potential environmental impacts; many of the conditions included in Alternative 3 are standard requirements in TVA permits.

SPBA has proposed to mitigate the loss of stream footage by restoring a 1,493-foot-long section of Gists Creek that is currently channelized and impounded. The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) assessed Gists Creek and determined that it is not high quality but fully supports its classified uses, which include fish and aquatic life, recreation, livestock watering, wildlife, and irrigation. SPBA proposes to remove the impoundment and

create 1,245 feet of sinuous channel in the vicinity of Hole 17. The 375 feet of stream downstream of the impoundment would have accumulated sediment removed and in-stream habitat measures installed. Additional mitigation footage would also be created by the relocation of Stream Ex-4. The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) has recommended and SPBA has agreed to relocate fish and other aquatic life from the impacted portions of Gists Creek to the new stream channel. Both tributaries proposed to be eliminated would have a French drain system installed to convey any seepage to the receiving stream. The wetland impacts would be compensated by creating a total of 9.02 acres (3:1 ratio) of wetlands at eight locations within the ELGC. The mitigation areas would be created by lowering the existing surface elevation to utilize the groundwater resources at the site. Following the stream relocations and wetland mitigation, a five-year monitoring program would be implemented. The streams and wetlands monitoring program would include vegetation, hydrology, and soils (wetlands) assessments. An annual monitoring report would be provided to USACE and used to adjust the site mitigation strategy as needed to achieve the proposed results. TDEC issued a Water Quality Certification, which included these mitigation measures, on September 2, 2008. With the above-described mitigation measures, impacts to streams and wetlands would be minor and insignificant.

TVA determined that impacts on water quality and aquatic life would be predominantly short term and insignificant. Existing noise levels would not significantly increase. Impacts on wildlife and their habitat, visual resources, recreation, and air quality would be insignificant. Best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to control fugitive dust as well as to minimize sediment transport off site and into the Little Pigeon River. Socioeconomic impacts are expected to be positive and beneficial to the Sevierville area and region.

No federally or state-listed as endangered or threatened species or habitat to support these species are known from the project site or immediate vicinity. Consequently, no impacts to species listed as endangered or threatened are anticipated. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concurred with this determination in a letter dated August 28, 2008.

Two archaeological surveys of the area were completed in April and June 2005 by an SPBA consultant. In response to Joint Public Notice (JPN) 08-47, the Tennessee Historical Commission (THC) stated that some portions of property within the area of potential effect (APE), in particular the Gists Creek restoration site, may have never been surveyed for archaeological resources. THC requested a survey of those areas and advised that additional consultation under Section 106 of the *National Historic Preservation Act* was necessary. In a letter to THC dated November 26, 2008, USACE indicated that it had determined that the entire golf course expansion project (including the OKH realignment and Gists Creek relocation) was within the APE. USACE also indicated that, due to previous disturbances from agricultural activities and golf course construction, it did not believe a survey of the restoration site was warranted. Regarding SPBA's need to place fill material for the golf course expansion in the northern portion of the property, USACE acknowledged the existence of an archaeological site (40SV33), which was identified by the applicant's consultant in 2005. The development fill would be placed using accepted low-impact techniques previously described to THC. Based on this information, USACE determined that the proposed placement of fill over Site 40SV33 would not affect the archaeological site. In a letter dated December 4, 2008, the THC concurred with USACE that no properties listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places would be affected by the proposal. The THC also has no objection to the placement of fill over Archaeological Site 40SV33 provided no ground disturbance reaches below that fill level and the development is limited to the golf course expansion. TVA has independently reviewed the potential effects on historic property and agrees with USACE's determination.

Consistent with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), culverts are repetitive actions in the floodplain that result in minor impacts. Stream relocations and elimination of a stream are not considered repetitive actions in the 100-year floodplain. The applicant has evaluated other alternatives and provided information to document that there is no practicable alternative to performing these activities in the floodplain to facilitate the construction of the golf course and relocation of the OKH. The relocated streams would provide the same or greater flows; therefore, TVA has determined that the impacts to flooding would be minimal and that the project complies with Executive Order 11988.

**Mitigation and Special Permit Conditions**

As part of its Section 26a approval, TVA would require use of BMPs and other general and standard conditions. SPBA would also adhere to conditions of approval contained in the USACE and TDEC authorizations. TVA has not identified the need for other mitigation to further reduce potential impacts.

**Public and Intergovernmental Review**

On July 19, 2008, USACE and TVA issued JPN No. 08-47 to advertise the proposed actions. Comments in response to the JPN were received from TWRA, THC, and USFWS; their comments have been addressed in the EA. No comments were received from the general public.

**Conclusion and Findings**

TVA has independently reviewed the USACE EA and found it to be adequate. TVA is therefore adopting this EA. We conclude that, with the above-described mitigation and permit conditions to minimize adverse environmental impacts, issuance of a Section 26a permit necessary for the OKH improvements and ELGC expansion would not be a major federal action significantly affecting the environment. Accordingly, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required.



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Date Signed