

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
Tennessee Valley Authority  
Normandy Dam Drought Response Release Change

Middle Tennessee is experiencing an exceptional drought. Consequently, the stored volume of water and pool elevation of Normandy Reservoir on the Duck River are much lower than normal. The state of Tennessee has requested that the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) temporarily reduce the volume of water released from Normandy Dam. The proposed change would conserve water in Normandy Reservoir to help meet needs of the Duck River Utilities Commission (DRUC) and other users of Normandy Reservoir. If the drought persists, it would also better ensure that more water is available in later months to help reduce potential impacts to water users and aquatic resources downstream of Normandy Reservoir.

TVA and the co-lead and cooperating agencies identified below have prepared a supplemental environmental assessment (EA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and applicable implementing regulations. This document supplements an EA prepared in October 2007 to address an earlier request by Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) to temporarily reduce flows from 155 cfs to 120 cfs, as measured at Shelbyville. Despite the earlier efforts to conserve water, the level of water in Normandy Reservoir has continued to decline, though not as dramatically as it would have absent careful management. TVA and TDEC are co-lead agencies on this supplement EA. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) are cooperating agencies.

The agencies considered two alternatives: the No Action Alternative and the Action Alternative to Change Normandy Release Schedule. Under the No Action Alternative, TVA would continue to operate Normandy Dam by releasing enough water to maintain a minimum flow of 120 cfs as measured at Shelbyville through spring (May 31) 2008. TVA would also maintain minimum flow releases from Normandy Dam of no less than 40 cfs. Under the proposed Action Alternative, TVA would, as specifically requested by TDEC, temporarily reduce the flow as measured in the Duck River at Shelbyville, Tennessee (DRM 224.1), from 120 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 80 cfs until May 31, 2008, while maintaining a minimum flow of at least 40 cfs from Normandy Dam. A second control point would be to maintain total flow at the Milltown gauge (DRM 180.2) at no less than 165 cfs. The proposed action would result in conservation of water and reservoir elevations approximately one foot higher per month than would be the case under the current operating policy for Normandy Reservoir.

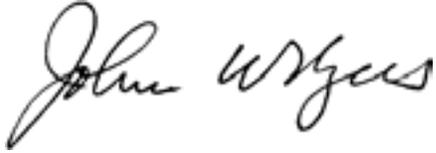
Under the No Action Alternative (i.e., continuing to operate Normandy Dam by releasing enough water to maintain a minimum flow of 120 cfs at Shelbyville through spring 2008), TVA would not try to save additional water in Normandy Reservoir during the Spring and this additional water would not be available to help offset the effects of the drought later in the summer. The amount of water available for human consumption and aquatic species uses would be less, contributing to possibly serious impacts to water quality, public health, safety, and aquatic species downstream from in the area.

Under the Action Alternative, downstream water supply is expected to not be affected because the temporary reduction of flows would not de-water downstream intakes. Water quality and aquatic life near the dam also would not be impacted. However, water quality and aquatic life downstream of Shelbyville could be affected by reductions in available aquatic habitat, issues associated with assimilation of nitrogenous wastes from wastewater outfalls, and minor reductions in dissolved oxygen (DO) levels, (although they would remain over 8 ppm). Under the conditions described in the supplemental EA and the commitments listed below, TVA has concluded that these impacts, including potential impacts on federally listed species would be insignificant. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has concurred with a finding of “not likely to adversely impact” for all listed federal aquatic species that were identified in the EA, and that the action would not result in the adverse modification of any designated critical habitat. Conclusions of insignificant impact in the earlier EA of October 2007 remain valid and unchanged for other resources including cultural resources, prime farmland, land use, managed areas, floodplains and flood risk, wetlands, vegetation, wildlife, invasive species, air emissions, and solid and hazardous waste. With reduced flows, it is expected that flow conditions below the dam would continue to support fishing, paddle sports, and float related recreation, as users adjust to the new schedules. On the reservoir, drought related impacts to reservoir recreationists would be ameliorated by the higher water levels than would otherwise occur.

The section titled, “Commitments,” identifies the following special commitments to help ensure that impacts are insignificant:

1. TVA will monitor flows at the Shelbyville and Milltown gauges daily. From the date of initiation through May 31, 2008, flows measured at Shelbyville and the Milltown gauges will be maintained at no less than 80 cfs and no less than 165 cfs, respectively.
2. Instantaneous flow at Normandy Dam shall be no less than 40 cfs.
3. As identified and stipulated in the present supplemental EA, TDEC will continue to monitor and sample water quality during the period of changed flows, and will provide data to TVA, USFWS, and TWRA bimonthly, as well as coordinate additional monitoring, as appropriate.
4. In the event that results from monitoring show that reduced flows is adversely affecting in-stream habitat and/or water quality in excess of the effects predicted in the subject supplemental EA, TVA would increase flows, as appropriate, up to the normal operating guide level after coordinating with TDEC, USFWS, and TWRA.
5. Should TDEC and municipal water and wastewater providers prepare a long-term water supply plan for the Duck River, TVA will assist by providing available data and information needed to complete the plan.
6. If at any time during the period described in this supplemental EA flows drop below 165 cfs at Milltown, TVA, TWRA, and USFWS would perform biological and physical habitat monitoring at Lillard Mill with the assistance of TDEC and The Nature Conservancy.

The NEPA Policy staff of Environmental Strategy and Management reviewed the subject EA and determined that the potential environmental consequences of the proposed action have been adequately addressed, and that temporarily changing flows is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the environment. Accordingly, an environmental impact statement is not required.



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Date