



## CHAPTER 8

# Public Engagement

<b>8.1 Goal</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>8.2 Benefits</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>8.3 Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>180</b>
Education and Communication	181
Involvement	182
Partnerships	183
<b>8.4 Measures of Success</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>8.5 Resource Area Programs</b>	<b>184</b>
8.5.1 Environmental Education	185
8.5.2 Volunteer Program	186
8.5.3 Foundation and Trust Fund	187



TVA has been charged with managing its natural resources in an integrated manner to ensure the protection, enhancement and conservation of these resources for future generations to enjoy. TVA is developing overarching public engagement programs to increase public awareness and promote opportunities for volunteer involvement, environmental education, and financial or resource assistance. These programs do not replace resource area-specific public outreach activities but rather work in concert with them to form an integrated, consistent outreach approach. Each of the programs below has an associated public engagement component:

Resource Area	Public Outreach Program
Biological Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dispersed Recreation Management</li> <li>• Leave No Trace</li> <li>• Trails Management</li> <li>• Boundary Maintenance</li> <li>• Migratory Birds Management</li> <li>• Dewatering Projects Management</li> <li>• Forest Resource Management</li> <li>• Nuisance Animal Control</li> <li>• Wildlife Habitat Council – Third-Party Certifications</li> <li>• Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Partnerships</li> </ul>
Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archaeological Outreach (Thousand Eyes)</li> <li>• Corporate History Program</li> </ul>
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Tours</li> <li>• Camp-Right Program</li> <li>• Recreation Information Management</li> <li>• Recreation Management Regulations</li> </ul>
Water Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tennessee Valley Clean Marina Program</li> <li>• Water Resources Outreach Campaign</li> </ul>
Reservoir Lands Planning	There are no significant public outreach efforts under the Reservoir Lands Planning resource area.

**Figure 8.1** Resource area-specific public outreach programs

## 8.1 Goal

TVA will actively develop public engagement programs to increase public awareness, education and involvement opportunities (e.g., volunteer efforts) in support of implementing NRP programs. TVA will coordinate with external stakeholders to achieve this goal.

## 8.2 Benefits

Through management efforts in this resource area, TVA expects to realize the following benefits:

- Increased public awareness and appreciation of the natural resources of the Tennessee Valley region through an integrated education and communication effort across all resource areas
- Greater public understanding of the value and benefits associated with the protection of natural resources
- Increased sense of public ownership and pride in the management of the region's natural resources



## 8.3 Implementation Strategy

The public engagement programs support TVA's objective to actively develop and promote public outreach programs to increase public awareness, education and involvement opportunities in support of implementing NRP programs. TVA will coordinate this effort with external stakeholders. These programs act as

a consistent link between resource areas and external stakeholders.

Within public engagement, TVA has structured its implementation strategy based on the following characteristics:

- Education and communication
- Involvement
- Partnerships



## Education and Communication

Through an environmental education program, TVA will create opportunities to share natural and cultural resource information with a variety of audiences, such as school groups, civic groups and other organizations, elected officials, business leaders, and the general public. TVA will focus on web-based materials along with presentations, printed materials, and hands-on demonstrations or displays to relay information. The web-based materials will be accessed through TVA's website and include topics such as cultural and natural resources, conservation practices, water quality, native plants and wildlife habitat. TVA will explore the possibility of installing interpretive displays to promote key messages.

To maximize the effectiveness of the program, TVA will develop a process to target locations for presentations and hands-on demonstration sites, respond to requests from potential audiences, create and refresh materials, and track programs delivered. TVA will coordinate, when possible, with partners within TVA



and outside of TVA to deliver environmental education programs. Recognizing the experience of other agencies involved in environmental education, TVA will consult with others as well as pull from TVA's own current and historical educational program materials to develop a purposeful and relevant program.



## Involvement

The public plays an integral role in the protection, enhancement and conservation of natural resources through volunteering. By establishing a volunteer program, TVA will create a coordinated and efficient approach for recruiting, training and working with volunteers. TVA will manage such a program by identifying resource program needs, defining volunteer roles, developing relevant training, and providing guidance and oversight for volunteers. Volunteer opportunities will include activities specific to an event, such as but not limited to Earth Day, National Trails Day, World Monitoring Day, and Public Lands Day. Task-based activities will include both short- and long-term volunteer opportunities such as but not limited to building and maintaining TVA trails, removing non-native plants on TVA-managed public lands, planting trees and shrubs along reservoir shorelines, enhancing habitat, performing visual surveys, and collecting resource data.

The volunteer program will also include opportunities to “adopt” a section of TVA lands and perform needed stewardship activities with TVA staff providing guidance. The adoption process will provide meaningful involvement for organizations, groups or individuals and allow TVA staff to explain the importance of these stewardship activities and the fact that volunteer efforts are needed and appreciated. Engaging the public through hands-on activities is an effective way to enhance their appreciation of the resources and is likely to spur participants to share their experiences on TVA lands with others.

TVA will utilize the websites [volunteer.gov](http://volunteer.gov) and [tva.com](http://tva.com) to promote volunteer opportunities and use [tva.com](http://tva.com) to inform the public of the work performed. To ensure the volunteer program is successful, TVA will create a method of tracking the volunteer efforts, providing recognition to volunteers, and

adapting the program as needed. Additionally, TVA will seek advice from many of the established and successful volunteer programs operated by state and other federal agencies.

Involvement also includes an opportunity for interested stakeholders or participants to make a positive contribution to stewardship activities and meet their sustainability goals through a foundation and trust fund program. TVA will establish a stand-alone foundation and trust fund to be independently managed, or it will partner with an existing fund. Additionally, TVA will investigate the strategies businesses, corporations and others are using to determine which environmentally friendly or sustainable practices those organizations are willing to support. With this information TVA will develop a methodology to recruit and encourage participation. To help promote involvement, TVA will encourage participation by targeted communications to businesses, corporations and land trust organizations, as well as annual promotions and marketing campaigns.



## Partnerships

TVA will continue to develop and maintain Valleywide relationships to help create, implement and fund NRP-related programs and activities where appropriate. Potential partners include state and other federal agencies, nongovernment organizations, TVA distributors of power, foundations, businesses and academia. The benefits of such relationships include:

- Improved efficiency and effectiveness of resource management efforts
- Coordinated and comprehensive messaging and public outreach across the region
- Expanded resource management offerings and recreation opportunities, helping to maximize public benefit
- Shared information and best management practices to support regional and national resource management efforts



## 8.4 Measures of Success

Implementation efforts in this resource area will be regularly evaluated to track progress using the following measures of success:

Resource Area	Measures of Success	Time Frame
Public Engagement	Integrate all education programs across resource areas and implement 8-10 resource area modules	3-5 years
	Leverage TVA efforts by 2-3 times using external resources	10 years
	Develop GIS databases and share with partners to facilitate resource management	5-10 years

## 8.5 Resource Area Programs

When developing the NRP, TVA identified programs and activities to support the goals of each resource area. The following

sections discuss each program in more detail, highlighting current activities, NRP activities, and expected implementation benefits. In addition, relationships between resource areas and other programs are discussed to help show linkages throughout the NRP.



### 8.5.1 Environmental Education

The environmental education program will seek to increase the public's knowledge and understanding of the value of natural resources and the challenges faced in preserving, enhancing and managing these resources for future generations. This program will also provide consistent stewardship messages across all NRP programs as well as inform the public on its role in resource management across the Tennessee Valley. Examples of educational campaigns include:

- Presenting information to stakeholders about the rich ecological and cultural resources that are within the region and the benefits of protecting these resources
- Creating and maintaining an external TVA website in conjunction with the main TVA website to highlight natural resources within the region and share ideas on how to protect them
- Developing outreach campaigns to educate youth about the importance of getting outside to enjoy the Tennessee Valley's resources

#### Current Activities

TVA has historically provided resource-area-specific environmental education tools and programs to various audiences across the region.

#### NRP Activities

- Develop and implement a comprehensive and coordinated environmental education program

#### Benefits

Through management efforts in this resource area, TVA expects to realize the following benefits:

- Increased public awareness and appreciation of the natural resources of the Tennessee Valley region through an integrated education and communication effort across all resource areas
- Greater public understanding of the value and benefits associated with the protection of natural resources
- Increased sense of public ownership and pride in the management of the region's natural resources



## 8.5.2 Volunteer Program

A volunteer program will enhance TVA's resource stewardship capabilities by tapping into the strengths of the TVA community and providing opportunities for the public to assist in resource protection, improvement and enhancement. Volunteer activities will support each resource area (i.e., biological, cultural, recreation and water resources) and enhance current program offerings. The volunteer program will also create a sense of public ownership and serve as a form of public education and outreach. A volunteer program will enhance TVA's resource stewardship capabilities by tapping into the strengths of the TVA community and providing opportunities for the public to assist



in resource protection, improvement and enhancement. Volunteer activities will support each resource area (i.e., biological, cultural, recreation, and water resources) and enhance current program offerings. The volunteer program will also create a sense of public ownership and serve as a form of public education and outreach. Examples of public involvement opportunities include:

- Members of the public assisting TVA staff to remove overgrown vegetation along a trail on TVA managed public lands on National Trails Day
- A girl scout troop “adopting” a parcel of TVA managed public lands and working with TVA staff to enhance the wildlife habitat

To help promote opportunities, TVA will continue to use the [www.volunteer.gov](http://www.volunteer.gov) and [www.tva.gov](http://www.tva.gov) websites to engage community members, corporate volunteers, local students, and other types of service or volunteer organizations.

### Current Activities

TVA currently provides various volunteer opportunities across the Tennessee Valley. This program is intended to formalize these efforts in a systematic manner moving forward.

### NRP Activities

- Establish and implement a formal volunteer program

### Expected Benefits

Key benefits of this program are:

- Expanded education, awareness and ownership messages across the Tennessee Valley Region
- Increased opportunity for public involvement in the management and improvement of the region's natural resources

### 8.5.3 Foundation and Trust Fund

A foundation and trust fund program will build strong partnerships with regional and local stakeholders and organizations, as well as corporations with ties to or interest in the Tennessee Valley that are looking for opportunities to have a positive environmental impact in the region. As part of this program, TVA will create an independent foundation and trust fund or partner with an existing fund to provide interested stakeholders the opportunity to fund stewardship projects with a positive environmental benefit on public lands throughout the Tennessee Valley. Though the fund will be independently managed after its creation, this program will let TVA provide a reliable mechanism to stakeholders desiring to invest in resource stewardship. Examples include:

- A corporation providing materials to stabilize a section of eroding reservoir shoreline in order to prevent archaeological artifacts buried along the shoreline from being washed away
- A local business providing materials or labor to plant shrubs and trees along the water's edge to reduce pollution from entering the stream or reservoir

#### Current Activities

TVA does not currently participate in a stewardship-focused foundation and trust fund.

#### NRP Activities

- Establish an independent foundation and trust fund or form ties with an existing conservation-focused foundation and trust fund to solicit private donations to support conservation and natural resource projects and programs



#### Expected Benefits

Key benefits of this program are:

- Additional resources and funding for NRP programs to protect, conserve and enhance the region's resources
- Protection of additional resources and improved or expanded recreation opportunities (e.g., cultural tourism, water quality, dispersed recreation, boating, fishing, etc.)
- Enhanced public sense of ownership in the management of the region's resources