

**RE-EVALUATION OF
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)**

**RIVER HERITAGE HOTEL
PERMANENT EASEMENT AND CHANGE IN LAND ALLOCATIONS FOR WILSON DAM
RESERVATION LANDS
LAUDERDALE COUNTY, ALABAMA**

TVA proposes to grant a permanent easement to the Public Park Authority of the Shoals (PPA) over approximately 12.8 acres of TVA Wilson Dam Reservation lands (see Attachment 1). If the easement were granted, PPA intends to construct a hotel and related facilities. TVA previously issued a FONSI on this proposal on May 7, 2002, and an amended FONSI on June 6, 2002. TVA has re-evaluated the impact of a 200-250 room six-story hotel above elevation 585 mean sea level (msl) in lieu of the three-story structure (with 125 to 200 rooms) first evaluated in the environmental assessment (EA) and the five-story structure evaluated in the June 6, 2002, reevaluation. The proposed types of facilities and their locations are the same as originally assessed in the final EA and FONSI of May 7, 2002.

The Retirement System of Alabama has provided TVA with additional changes to the proposed River Heritage Hotel and Convention Center entrance designs. Specifically, the hotel orientation has been rotated approximately 90 degrees, in a clockwise direction, along a more east-west axis (see Attachment 2). It would now have six floors at a height of 74 feet above elevation 585 msl rather than five floors at 55 feet and a lobby tower with a height of 103 feet above elevation 585 msl. The entrance has been changed coming in from the northeast, off Cox Creek Parkway South (previously identified as Alabama Highway 133), rather than from the southeast. Additionally, the revised development plan shows the loss of many of the existing trees on the east side of the property.

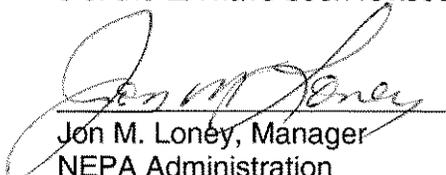
Because the new hotel entrance has been relocated to Cox Creek Parkway South, new signage located along this road would impact the viewshed approaching the National Historic Landmark Wilson Dam. The height of the sign would be one of the more important design elements that would impact this viewshed. However, the city of Florence has a Comprehensive Plan to regulate the visual appearance of structures and site design, to enhance the visual appearance of corridors through Florence, and to improve the image of city gateways. Although not in an area specifically referenced, the proposed development is located in an area that is extraordinarily close to the Cox Creek Overlay District (a corridor) and in a proposed city gateway. The sign ordinance within this plan would limit the height of any signage for the hotel. To further reduce visual impacts, signage should be visually compatible with natural background colors and surrounding historic architectural elements. The final design plan will be submitted to TVA for review.

The revised plan also shows the loss of many of the existing trees on the east side of the property. To reduce the visual impacts from the loss of these trees, additional trees would need to be planted along the eastern facade of the proposed hotel, to increase the visual buffer for Wilson Dam. These trees should be an appropriate mixture of both fast and slow growing deciduous and evergreen. Further, hay bales and silt fencing would be used to establish a perimeter around trees to be retained to minimize impacts from heavy equipment during construction.

TVA has determined that a six-story hotel would have an effect, but not an adverse effect on the Wilson Dam National Historic Landmark if the attached commitments are implemented and provided that the height of the new hotel will not exceed six stories or 74 feet and that the height of the lobby tower will not exceed 103 feet above elevation 585 msl (see attachment 3). By using natural background colors, retaining existing tree cover on the southern and southeastern portions of the tract, planting additional deciduous and evergreen tree buffers, and using cut-off optics, any visual effects on Wilson Dam will be reduced. In a March 16, 2003 letter, the Alabama SHPO concurred with TVA's determination that a six-story structure would not have an adverse effect on Wilson Dam (see Attachment 4).

TVA has reviewed this change in the proposed action and determined that the commitments identified in previous FONSI's for turning movements and radii, and for vegetation removal in the area between the TVA-owned land along the shoreline and the power line right-of-way are no longer needed. Because easement boundaries have been identified, TVA will retain control of the entrance to the access road to Wilson Lock which is needed to maintain proper turning movements and radii. Additionally, because of the type of activities (walking trails, passive recreation) that would be allowed in the area south of the power line right-of-way, and because TVA will review planting plans, including any disturbance to existing vegetation located on the southern portion of the parcel, there would be minimal vegetation removal to ensure visual protection in this area (see Attachment 1).

TVA has reviewed this change in the proposed action and determined that it would not change the conclusions in the earlier EA and FONSI's. Accordingly, we reaffirm the conclusion in the earlier FONSI's that approval of a permanent easement over 12.8 acres of the Wilson Dam Reservation and the change in allocation of this acreage would not be a major Federal action significantly affecting the environment. Accordingly, an environmental impact statement is not required. This FONSI is contingent upon adherence to the two mitigation measures listed in the attached EA that would be implemented by TVA, and nine mitigation measures to be implemented by the applicant. Upon re-evaluation, the mitigation measures identified on page 8 of the EA have been revised and are attached.


Jon M. Loney, Manager
NEPA Administration
Environmental Policy and Planning
Tennessee Valley Authority

May 14, 2003
Date

Mitigation Measures

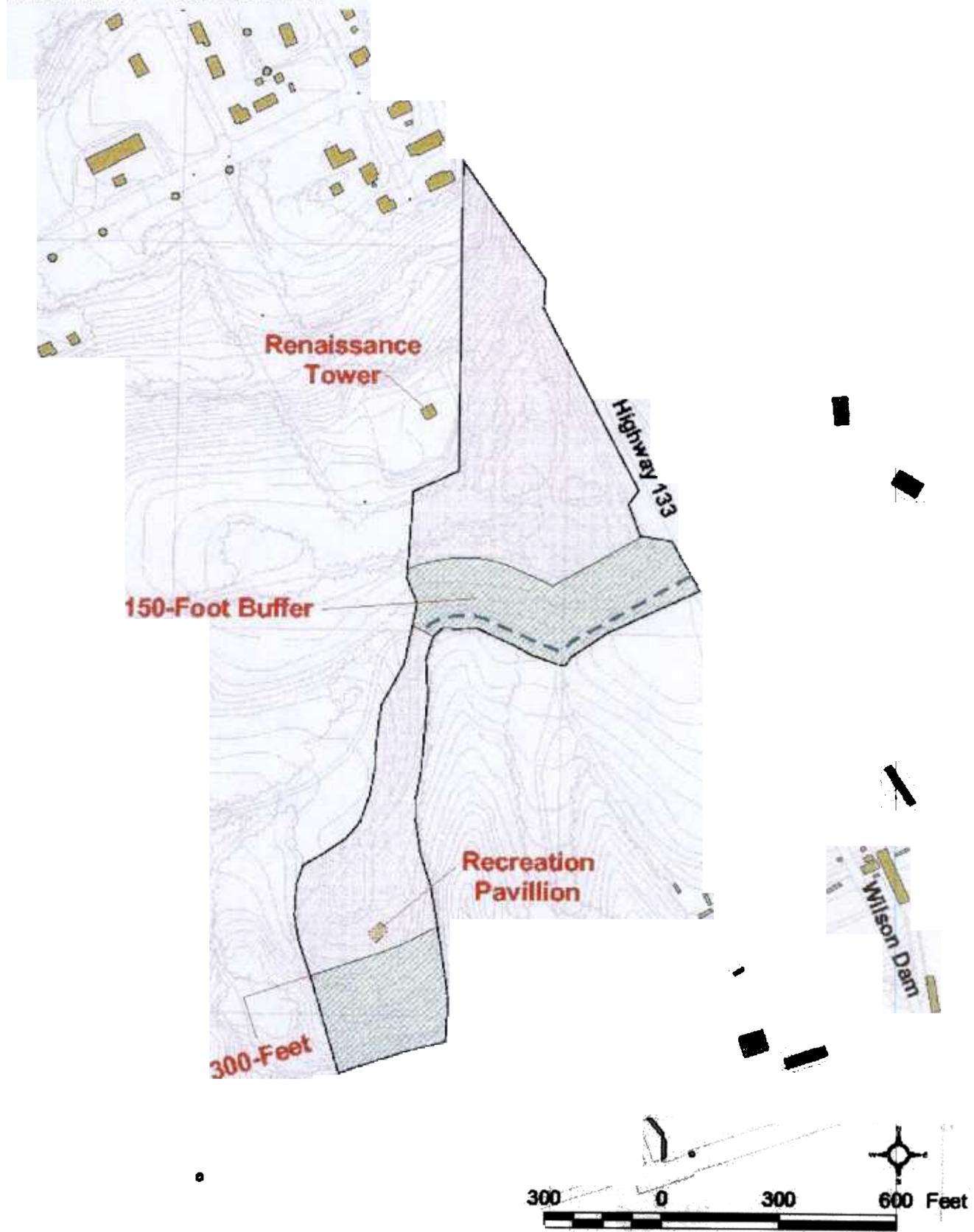
The following mitigation measures would be implemented by TVA:

1. TVA will maintain the visual buffer created by the tree cover on the TVA-owned land along the shoreline.
2. TVA will review and approve final site development plans relative to external color schemes, external lighting and sign design and specifications, construction BMPs for soil and erosion control to include use of hay bales and silt fencing to establish a perimeter to protect trees to be retained from damage from construction equipment, and planting plans, including any disturbance to existing vegetation located on the southern portion of the parcel. Final site development and planting plans also will be reviewed by the Alabama SHPO.
3. To screen the hotel parking lot, TVA will plant additional trees along and near the eastern side of the hotel easement.

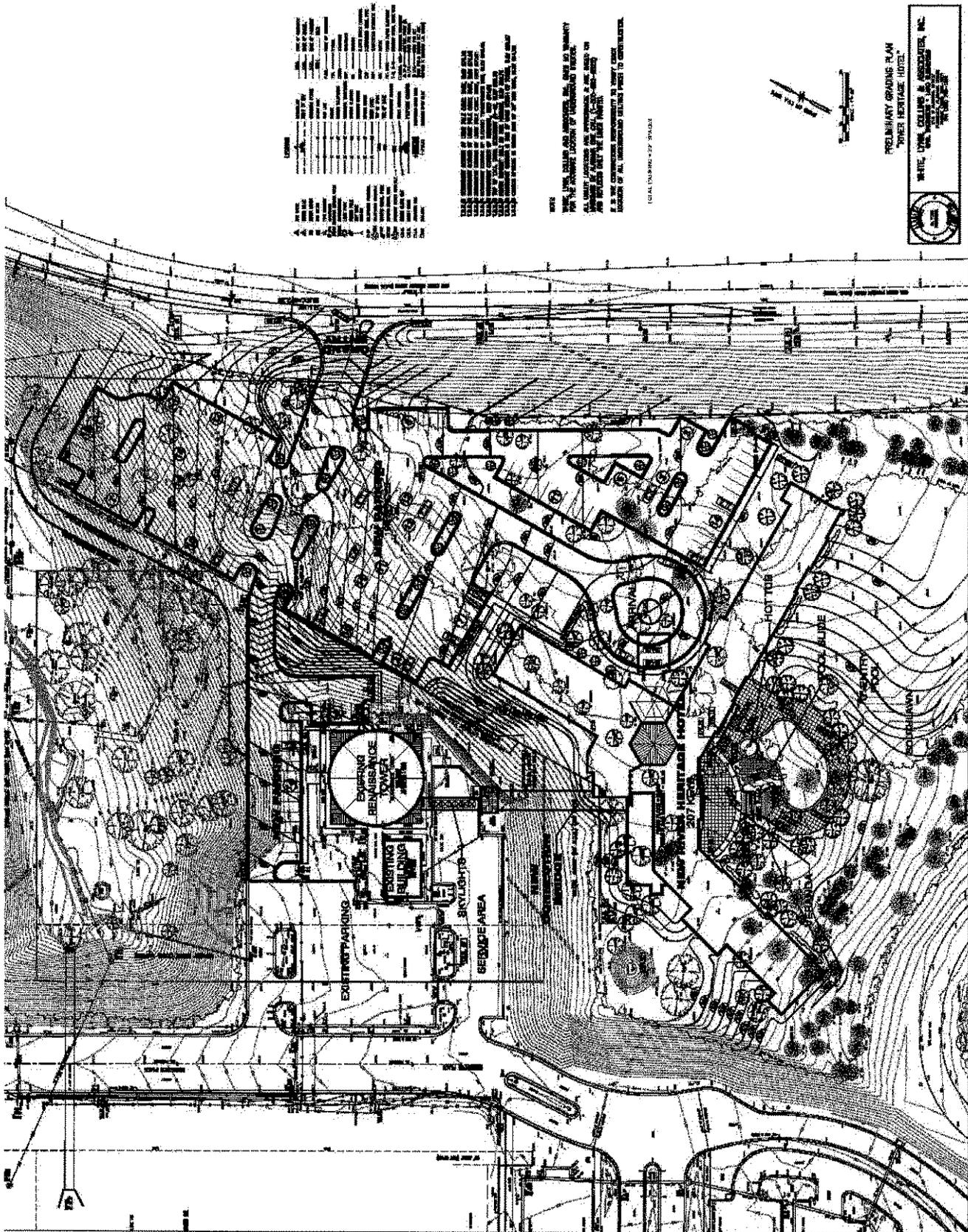
The applicant will submit to TVA for review and approval the final site development plans relative to items identified in TVA's mitigation measure number 2. In addition, the following mitigation measures would be implemented by the applicant. :

1. The southern 150 feet of existing tree cover on the knoll as measured from the centerline of the access roadway and the trees located on the east side of the hotel will be retained.
2. The architectural color scheme shall be visually compatible with natural background colors and surrounding historic architectural elements. This color scheme also applies to signage, which shall not extend above the tree line.
3. Additional trees will be planted along the southern and southeastern facade of the proposed hotel, and other key areas. These trees shall be an appropriate mixture of both fast and slow growing deciduous and evergreen.
4. The height of the new hotel will not exceed six stories at a height of 74 feet above the elevation of 585 feet mean sea level (msl) and a lobby tower at a height of 103 feet above elevation 585 msl.
5. Lighting styles with direct cut off optics will be used to minimize light impacts at nearby Historic Wilson Dam.
6. The portion of the land that is adjacent to the canal will not have any permanent structures within 300 feet of the water's edge. Walking trails and passive recreational facilities will be the only uses in this area.
7. All excavation and construction activities shall be conducted with the best management practices as defined by Section 208 of the Clean Water Act and implementing regulations to control erosion and sedimentation so as to prevent adverse impact on water quality and related aquatic interests.

Attachment 1 – Easement Area



Attachment 2 – Preliminary Grading Plan



NO.	DESCRIPTION	DATE
1	ISSUED FOR PERMITTING	10/15/11
2	REVISIONS	11/15/11
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Attachment 3

March 17, 2003

Ms. Stacye Hathorn
Alabama Historical Commission
468 South Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900

PROPOSED RIVER HOTEL, TVA RESERVATION, FLORENCE AHC 02-0555 -
ADDENDUM TO JUNE 05, 2002 LETTER AND ENCLOSURES STATING TVA'S DETERMINATION
OF NO ADVERSE EFFECT ON WILSON DAM NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK BY
CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROPOSED RIVER HERITAGE HOTEL

Dear Ms. Hathorn:

The Retirement System of Alabama has provided TVA with additional changes to the proposed River Heritage Hotel and Convention Center entrance designs as provided in our June 5, 2002 letter. Specifically, the hotel orientation has been rotated approximately 90 degrees, in a clockwise direction, along a more east-west axis. It will now have six floors at a height of 74 feet rather than five floors at 55-feet and a lobby tower with a height of 103 feet. The entrance has been changed coming in from the northeast, off Cox Creek Parkway South, rather than from the southeast.

After due consideration of these additional proposed changes, TVA has determined that this construction will result in an effect on Wilson Dam but again, the effect will not be adverse with the implementation of the seven measures enumerated in our June 5, 2002 letter.

This no adverse effect determination is also contingent on an additional mitigation measure that ensures adequate plantings to screen the entrance road and hotel parking lot.

Sincerely,

Original signed

J. Bennett Graham, Manager
and Senior Archaeologist

JBG:SLN
Enclosures
cc: Files, RS, NRB 2A-N



STATE OF ALABAMA
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
466 SOUTH PERRY STREET
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-0900

LEE H. WARNER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 16, 2003

TEL: 334-242-318
FAX: 334-240-347

Mr. Bennett Graham
Manager and Senior Archaeologist
Tennessee Valley Authority
Post Office Box 1589
Norris, Tennessee 37828-1589

AHC 2002-0555 TVA Reservation, Florence Dr. Bennett Graham
Manager and Senior Archaeologist
Tennessee Valley Authority
Post Office Box 1589
Norris, Tennessee 37828-1589

Dear Bennett:

We have reviewed the changes in the above referenced project and agree with your determination that the project will not have an adverse effect on Wilson Dam, a National Historic Landmark, as long as the measures outlined your letter of June 5, 2002 are carried out.

When we reviewed the plan with the architect, we asked to be included in the review of the site plan as it was developed, and specifically mentioned the landscape development of the area between the road and the parking lot.

The Historical Commission is pleased to see this project go forward in North Alabama. At your convenience, we need to discuss a timetable for implementation of the items in the June 5th letter.

Truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Elizabeth Ann Brown".

Elizabeth Ann Brown
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer