

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE PROPOSED GREENWAY AND GOLF
PRACTICE FACILITY, FORT LOUDOUN RESERVOIR, KNOX COUNTY,
TENNESSEE

The University of Tennessee (UT) and Knox County, Tennessee, have requested that the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) issue the land use licenses and Section 26a permit necessary to develop and operate a greenway and a golf practice facility on land adjoining Fort Loudoun Reservoir between Tennessee River Miles (TRM) 643.5 and 645.2 along the left-descending bank in Knox County, Tennessee. The greenway and golf practice facility are being developed by UT in partnership with Knox County and the city of Knoxville. They would occupy 38 acres of UT property, 4 acres of TVA property currently licensed to Knox County for public recreation purposes, and 7 acres of former TVA property transferred to Knox County for public recreation purposes. TVA land use licenses are required for the portions of the greenway and golf practice facility proposed to be located on TVA land. Activities requiring approval under Section 26a of the TVA Act, as well as approval by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the River and Harbor Act, are pedestrian bridges and fill for the greenway and golf practice facility, a culvert for the greenway, and the riprap stabilization of 9,000 feet of reservoir shoreline. The potential effects of the proposed land use and permitting actions have been evaluated in an environmental assessment (EA) prepared by TVA; this EA is incorporated by reference. The USACE was a cooperating agency in the development of this EA.

The EA evaluated the following two alternatives: 1) the No Action Alternative, under which the permit request would be denied; and 2) the Action Alternative, under which TVA would issue revocable land use licenses to UT and Knox County for public recreation purposes and the Section 26a permit for the bridges, culvert, fills, and riprap stabilization, and USACE would issue the necessary Section 10 and Section 404 permits.

The EA concludes that the proposal would not cause impacts to navigation, groundwater, or noise. The impacts to water quality and aquatic ecology would be insignificant, and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) issued the necessary Aquatic Resource Alteration Permits on September 25, 2006, and December 18, 2007. No fill or construction would occur in wetlands, and the impacts to wetlands would be insignificant. The proposed action would result in fills and the placement of riprap within the 100-year floodplain. Although the fills would result in no loss of flood control storage, the placement of riprap would result in a small loss of flood control storage. The effects on flooding and flood flows would be minimal, and the city of Knoxville issued a "No-Rise" Certification on January 10, 2008. The golf practice facility and greenway are considered an acceptable recreational use of the floodplain, the placement of riprap is considered a repetitive action in the floodplain, and the project complies with the TVA Flood Control Storage Loss Guideline and Executive Order 11988 on floodplain management.

Impacts to terrestrial ecology would be insignificant with implementation of the mitigation measures listed below. There would be no impacts to threatened or endangered species or

their habitats, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concurred with this determination in a letter dated January 18, 2008. The proposed action would change the existing use of the project area; this change, however, is compatible with applicable land use plans, and the impacts on prime farmland would not be adverse. The greenway and golf practice facility would not contrast significantly with the existing landscape character. The proposed action would have beneficial impacts on public recreation and minor beneficial socioeconomic impacts. Impacts on traffic would be insignificant.

The proposed action would affect archaeological resources and historic structures eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). TVA, the SHPO, UT, and Knox County have executed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to address compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act. With adherence to the terms of this MOA, as well as implementation of the mitigation measures listed below, TVA has determined that the effects of the greenway, golf practice facility, and riprap stabilization on archaeological resources would not be significant. The SHPO concurred with this determination in a letter dated December 6, 2007. On January 18, 2008, TVA requested SHPO concurrence with its finding that the greenway, golf practice facility, and riprap stabilization would not adversely affect historic structures eligible for or listed in the NRHP. In a letter dated February 20, 2008, the SHPO requested that TVA consult with representatives of certain affected historic structures and the Sequoyah Hills Neighborhood Association to solicit their views regarding potential impacts of the riprap stabilization. On February 25, 2008, TVA sent notices to representatives of the affected historic structures and the Sequoyah Hills Neighborhood Association requesting their comments within 15 days regarding the installation of riprap stabilization. TVA will reassess its finding of "no adverse effects" in coordination with the SHPO taking into account any comments received during the 15-day comment period. TVA anticipates confirming its earlier finding that the greenway, golf practice facility, and riprap stabilization would not adversely affect historic structures eligible for or listed in the NRHP.

The cumulative impacts of the proposed action would be insignificant.

Public Involvement

The proposed action was the subject of a Joint Public Notice issued by USACE and TVA in November 2007. The Tennessee Historical Commission, TDEC Division of Natural Areas, and USFWS commented on the public notice; their comments have been addressed in the EA. No comments were received from the general public.

Mitigation and Permit Conditions

In addition to adherence to routine permit conditions, including the use of construction-related best management practices, the following mitigation measures would be required. These measures and conditions would reduce the potential for adverse environmental effects.

The following measures would be included as standard conditions in the Section 26a permit and land use licenses:

- For purposes of shoreline bank stabilization, all portions of the stabilization will be constructed or placed, on average, no more than 2 feet from the existing shoreline at normal summer pool elevation.
- You agree that spoil material will be disposed of and contained on land lying and being above the 824.4-foot contour. Every precaution will be made to prevent the reentry of the spoil material into the reservoir.

The following measures and conditions would be included as additional conditions in the Section 26a permit and land use licenses:

- Bank stabilization would not be conducted from March through June to protect bank nesting bird species.
- The golf practice facility would follow guidelines in the Tennessee Handbook for Golf Course Environmental Management.
- Applicants would incorporate measures into their landscape plan to address the exotic, invasive plants found in the riparian zone along the entire shoreline area in an effort to replace these species with native flora that would provide the highest level of natural habitat for the proposal.
- Before greenway construction is complete, the applicant would coordinate with Wildlife Management Area personnel to determine if signage describing the strict hunting regulations is necessary and, if so, the appropriate location of such signage along the greenway.
- No golf practice facility construction would occur along the lower terrace as described in the site evaluation (Phase II).
- The placement of cut and fill for the golf practice facility would be monitored by qualified archaeologists (ARL personnel), and archaeological features would be marked for avoidance. No cuts would occur where intact features were recorded; the location would remain the same or fill would be placed above it.
- During the greenway construction, personnel from the ARL would monitor the installation of pipe and headwalls in existing ditches (where excavation is necessary) to determine the existence of archaeologically significant materials.
- During the drainage placement under greenway (where excavation is necessary), personnel from the ARL would monitor to determine the existence of archaeologically significant materials.
- During the installation of bridge abutments for the greenway, ARL personnel would investigate the abutment footprints to determine the existence of archaeologically significant materials.
- If archaeological features were encountered during the golf practice facility and greenway construction monitoring, UT would abide by the stipulations in the MOA.
- If it is necessary to cut a keyway along the beach area, personnel from ARL would monitor the installation of riprap stabilization to determine the existence of archaeologically significant materials.
- There would be no bank reshaping, and all vegetation would be removed by hand.
- A layer of non-woven 6.4 oz. per yard geotextile filter fabric would be placed along the entire shoreline proposed for stabilization prior to placing riprap.

- The applicants would place Class C, D, or D50 riprap to the top of the bank.
- All work would be conducted during dry weather conditions.
- If heavy equipment (trackhoe) were required for accessing areas for stabilization that a barge cannot reach or if a keyway were necessary, archaeological monitoring would be necessary. If archaeological resources were exposed during this procedure, all work would cease in the area where the resources have been encountered.
- If this project is not completed within five years of submittal to TVA, UT would consult with the SHPO to determine if these requirements were still suitable or if additional investigations would be necessary.

Conclusion and Findings

TVA has assessed the potential impacts associated with the proposal. We conclude that, with the above-described mitigation and permit conditions to minimize adverse environmental impacts, issuance of the land use licenses and Section 26a permit necessary for the construction and operation of the greenway and golf practice facility 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