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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
DECONSTRUCTION OF THE WATTS BAR MARINA AND RESORT

TVA proposes to demolish deteriorating structures at the Watts Bar Marina and Resort (Resort) in Rhea County, Tennessee. The Resort is located immediately northwest of the Watts Bar Dam, on Parcel 300 described in the Watts Bar Reservoir Land Management Plan. In 2010, TVA closed the Resort and restricted access to the area due to violations of the license agreement that included unauthorized residential use of the facilities. The cabins are deteriorated and uninhabitable, the restaurant is closed, the grounds overgrown, and the roadways blocked with fallen trees. Criminal activity has been reported to local law enforcement authorities, and there is evidence that the facilities are being used for illegal purposes. The abandoned facilities may contain hazardous materials such as lead-based paint, fuel, oil, and chemicals that could pose a risk to the environment if not properly disposed of before further deterioration of the structures.

To eliminate potential environmental risks and improve the feasibility of the site being used for developed recreation in the future, TVA proposes to remove approximately 40 small cabins, a restaurant, the marina building, and several small auxiliary structures. Swimming pools would be filled, covered with soil, and reseeded. Parcel 300 would continue to be zoned for developed recreational use. The proposed action is the subject of an environmental assessment (EA) prepared by TVA. The EA is incorporated by reference.

In the EA, TVA assessed the consequences of implementing the No Action Alternative, under which the Resort would not be demolished. Under the No Action Alternative, further degradation of the facilities is expected from exposure to weather, vandalism, and aging. The No Action Alternative would fail to meet TVA's objective of eliminating hazards to the environment and encouraging recreational use of the parcel. Thus, deconstruction of the Watts Bar Resort and Marina (Action Alternative) is TVA's preferred alternative.

Impacts Assessment

Implementing the Action Alternative would result in no impact to natural features such as unique or important terrestrial and aquatic habitats; wetlands; prime or unique farmland; natural areas; threatened or endangered species; Wild and Scenic Rivers; floodplains; and groundwater. The proposed action would not affect archaeological resources, socioeconomic resources, environmental justice, or transportation. The minor amounts of noise, air pollutants, and greenhouse gases temporarily generated would be insignificant. Because some of the Resort buildings had formerly been part of the village housing workers that built the Watts Bar Dam and Steam Plant, an architectural survey was conducted to evaluate impacts to historic resources. Results of the survey indicated that due to alterations and deterioration, the integrity of the structures is poor. TVA determined that the structures individually and collectively did not meet the criteria for eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. The Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer concurred the project area contains no historic properties eligible for listing on the NHRP. Therefore, implementing the Action Alternative would not impact historic resources.

Due to the termination of the commercial license agreement and closure of the area, the Resort currently does not provide recreational opportunities. Therefore, implementing either the No

Action Alternative or the Action Alternative would not result in immediate changes in recreation opportunities on Watts Bar Reservoir. However, under both alternatives, Parcel 300 would remain designated as suitable for developed recreation uses in the future. Under the No Action Alternative, the continued presence of dilapidated cabins, restaurant, and marina building may decrease the feasibility of restoring the facility to recreational use. Conversely, implementing the Action Alternative could increase the probability the site could be restored for recreational use.

Because TVA will implement routine best management practices to prevent runoff from bare soil, adopting the Action Alternative would result in no measureable impact to surface water. Removing the deteriorating facilities would somewhat improve visual quality around Parcel 300.

TVA would implement measures and controls to identify and properly dispose of solid, hazardous, and special waste. Best management practices for preventing, containing, and cleaning up spills would be implemented. Except for a small amount of suitable materials (concrete, brick) used to fill swimming pools, demolition debris, hazardous materials, and special waste would be transported to an approved off-site landfill. Consequently there would be no or negligible release of these materials, and no significant adverse impacts to the environment from waste disposal.

Intergovernmental Review

Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), TVA consulted with the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding findings of the architectural survey of the Resort. On November 7, 2011, the Tennessee SHPO concurred with the findings of TVA's investigation of cultural resources in the project area, thereby meeting TVA's consultation requirements under Section 106 of the NHPA.

TVA also consulted with 11 Native American Tribes, none of which expressed concerns or objections to the proposed demolition of the Resort.

Mitigation

TVA has not identified the need for any nonroutine mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts of undertaking the proposed action

Conclusion and Findings

Based on the findings listed above and the analyses in the EA, we conclude that the proposed action of deconstructing the Watts Bar Marina and Resort would not be a major federal action significantly affecting the environment. Accordingly, an environmental impact statement is not required.



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Date Signed