

Floating Houses on TVA Reservoirs a.k.a “Nonnavigable Houseboats”

Regional Resource Stewardship Council

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TVA Introduction

- ◆ Floating structures used primarily for human habitation rather than transportation and navigation are becoming increasingly common on TVA reservoirs.
- ◆ TVA previously approved such structures, called “nonnavigable houseboats” in TVA’s regulations, as regulated obstructions under Section 26a of the TVA Act.
- ◆ TVA stopped approving nonnavigable houseboats on February 15, 1978, but allowed those with permits to remain on the reservoirs under certain conditions.



TVA Definition of “nonnavigable”

- ◆ Current TVA regulations prohibit the mooring of new nonnavigable houseboats on TVA reservoirs.
- ◆ Post-1978 floating houses that do not meet certain criteria are prohibited as nonnavigable:
 - ◆ Floating on a hull or pontoons
 - ◆ Equipped with a motor/rudder and having 180° visibility
 - ◆ Registered as a vessel in the state of principal use
 - ◆ Compliant with all applicable requirements related to vessels





TVA's 26a Regulations for Pre-1978 Nonnavigable Houseboats

- ◆ Each pre-1978 nonnavigable houseboat has a unique TVA-number which corresponds to the reservoir it is located on.
- ◆ Pre-1978 nonnavigable houseboats are currently allowed to be moored in a marina or on privately-owned property where the owner of the floating house has permission.
- ◆ Regulations also include conditions such as:
 - ◆ Floating house must be equipped with a Marine Sanitation Device
 - ◆ If the floating house is on a no-discharge reservoir, it must have pump out capability
 - ◆ The floating house must be maintained in a good state of repair, including floatation systems
 - ◆ Expansion, except as approved in writing from TVA, is not allowed

TVA Norris Reservoir Inventory – Winter 2011

- ◆ In 2011, TVA staff conducted a comprehensive inventory of all “floating houses” associated with marina harbor limits on Norris Reservoir. The number of structures has more than doubled in 15 years.

No. of Marinas	1997 Total Floating House Count	2006 Total Floating House Count	2011 Total Floating House Count*
23	527	860	1262

*does not include slipped houses potentially meeting data requirements (total = 1615)

- ◆ The number of nonnavigable houseboats with TVA-numbers on them actually decreased over time. The number of floating houses with state numbers nearly doubled.

2006 Houses with TN#	2011 Houses with TN#	2006 Houses with TVA#	2011 Houses with TVA#	2006 House without #	2011 Houses without #
369	666	262	247	229	357

- ◆ The presence of floating houses is primarily a tributary reservoir issue; however, there are a few present on the mainstem reservoirs.

Negative Public Perceptions of Floating Houses

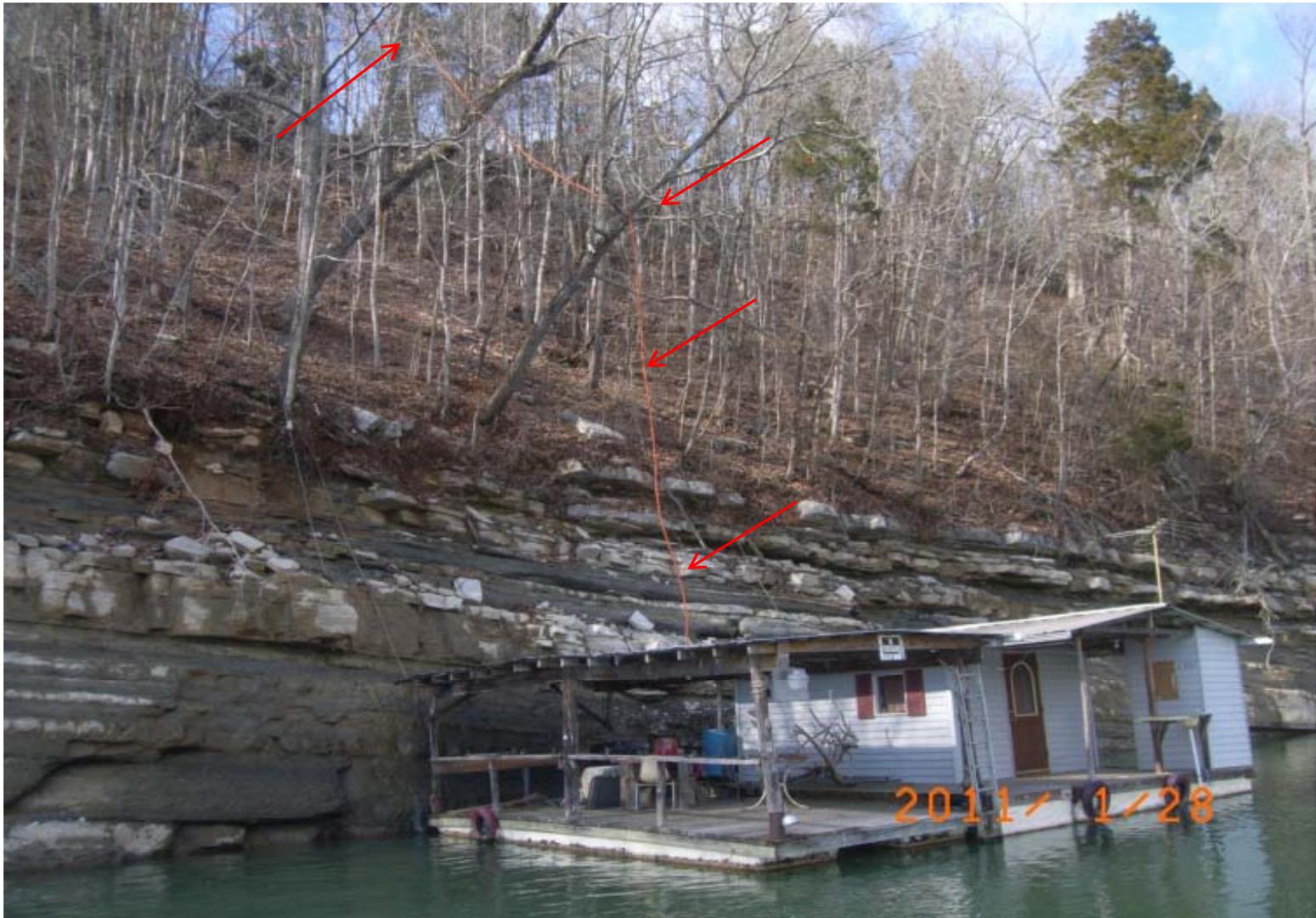
- ◆ Unregulated Growth
- ◆ Developers are not playing by the “rules”
- ◆ Water quality: discharge of sewage and waste water
- ◆ Hazardous mooring systems
- ◆ Unsafe electrical systems
- ◆ Floating houses outside of harbor limits affect navigation and views from private property and TVA-managed resource conservation properties
- ◆ Altered viewshed that is atypical of “scenic lake”
- ◆ Lack of building codes
- ◆ Derelict structures
- ◆ Operating construction business on TVA-managed public property
- ◆ Exclusive private use of a public resource area: 12 month term limits on slips with automatic renewal
- ◆ Compliance with deeds and agency policies

TVA Mooring and Waste Hazards



TVA Electrical Hazards







TVA Viewsheds - Subdivisions



TVA New Construction



TVA Modified Floating Houses



TVA Derelict Structures

