

**Attachment 1 – Nolichucky Sand Company Joint EA and TVA FONSI, 1999**

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)**

### **NOLICHUCKEY SAND COMPANY REQUEST FOR LICENSE AFFECTING 30.25 ACRES OF TRACT NOS. NOR-14A, -14, -15, AND -12B AND SECTION 26A APPROVAL FOR PIPELINE AND BOAT RAMP DAVY CROCKETT RESERVOIR GREENE COUNTY, TENNESSEE**

#### **Background**

In May 1999, TVA received a land use application from Nolichucky Sand Company (NSC) for use of TVA property to access a sand dredging operation proposed for Davy Crockett Lake. Upon further investigation, it was determined that a Section 26a approval also was needed for a buoyed pipeline and access ramp. If TVA granted land use and Section 26a approvals, NSC would dredge sand from a 30-acre portion of the lake bottom between Nolichucky River Miles 49 and 50.1. In addition, NSC would construct a dredge access point, including an intake pump, intake pipe, and boat ramp on TVA land which would service an upland sand processing facility on private land. The 0.25-acre dredge access point would be on TVA land at mile 50.1L. Approximately 200,000 tons per year of sand would be removed from the river, pumped to an upland detention area. Return water from the dewatering of the sand would drain into the river through piping.

The sand would be used for road construction, preparation of leachate beds for landfills, and sewage treatment systems. Nolichucky Sand would continue operating an existing dredge at Nolichucky River Mile 60 upstream from the proposed site. The additional facility would provide the flexibility to harvest sand from either site depending on market conditions and deposition in the river. The Nolichucky River carries a heavy sediment load due to historical mining operations in North Carolina.

The proposal was announced through U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Public Notice 99-49, dated May 19, 1999. In addition, TVA issued an additional public notice to further explain TVA involvement in the project. Responses to the two notices were received from the Tennessee Historical Commission (THC), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and six members of the public. THC's comments confirmed that the proposal would have no effect on National Register-eligible historic properties at the dredge or access sites. With respect to federally-listed endangered and threatened species, the FWS requested strict adherence to the conditions in place for the existing

permit at Nolichucky River 60. Other comments requested that impacts to water quality, aquatic ecology, and recreational boating be addressed. In addition, because the original public notice did not include all TVA actions and because the entire plant site had not been included in the original Area of Potential Effect, TVA conducted additional consultation with the Tennessee Historical Commission under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. By letter of August 10, 1999, the Tennessee Historical Commission concurred that no properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places would be affected by the proposed TVA actions.

TVA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jointly prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to review the environmental impacts of the proposal. The EA is attached and incorporated by reference.

### **Alternatives**

The EA prepared for the proposed land license and Section 26a approval evaluates the potential environmental impacts of two alternatives. Under the No Action Alternative, TVA would not issue a license or Section 26a approval. Under the Action Alternative, TVA would license 30.25 acres of TVA-owned land

### **Impacts Assessment**

The agencies concluded that implementation of any of these alternatives would result in insignificant environmental impacts. Under No Action, there would be no effect on lake bottom and riparian shoreline values; however, over time, the lake would continue to fill up with sand and the surface water area would be reduced. Under the Proposed Action, approximately 200,000 tons of the 600,000 tons per year of sand being deposited in the lake would be removed. To reduce dredging impacts on aquatic habitat, a 30-foot buffer would be maintained or the buffer would extend to the outer limit of the tree canopy (whichever is greater). About four acres of terrestrial and upland habitat on private land would be impacted at the sand processing facility. Winter closures of the sand dredging operation would reduce impacts to migratory waterfowl using the Nolichucky Wildlife Management Area and Waterfowl Refuge. Recreational boating would not be blocked, and any impacts to recreational fishing would be insignificant. Existing upland construction activities associated with this project have altered an archaeological site of unknown eligibility for the National Register. No National Register-eligible historic structures on the TVA land being licensed would be affected. There would be no impacts to wetlands or endangered or threatened species. Impacts to water quality would be insignificant. With the implementation of conditions to protect water quality and riparian habitats and to avoid disturbance to wintering waterfowl, any adverse effects would be held to insignificant levels.

### Conclusion and Findings

After review of the EA, TVA finds that the impacts of the licensing of lands along and under Davy Crockett Reservoir for sand dredging, as well as the impacts of approving under Section 26a of the TVA Act the construction of the pipeline and ramp would be minimal and would not have a significant impact on the quality of the environment. Accordingly, an environmental impact statement is not required.



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Aug 30, 1999  
Date