

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Tennessee Valley Authority
Wilson Dam Bascule Bridge Replacement
Colbert and Lauderdale Counties, Alabama

Due to the age and condition of the existing bascule bridge which daily provides access to the main lock chamber and the lock operations building at Wilson Dam, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) have jointly proposed to replace it with a new fixed bridge. TVA prepared an environmental assessment (EA) of this proposed action in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and implementing regulations; this EA is incorporated by reference. The USACE was a cooperating agency in the preparation of the EA.

TVA considered two alternatives in the EA: the No Action Alternative and the Action Alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, a new fixed bridge would not be constructed, and the bascule bridge would continue to operate and function as it currently does. TVA would need to address essential repairs in the immediate future, as well as long-term repairs within the next 10 to 15 years. There are some issues such as gear wear and steel corrosion which could not be addressed without a nearly complete overhaul of the structure. Under the Action Alternative, based upon the design provided by the USACE, a new 340-foot long, concrete and steel bridge would be constructed downstream of the current bascule bridge over the west end of the auxiliary lock. It would be a three-span, continuous composite steel-plate-girder type with integral abutments. An existing concrete abutment that was once part of a temporary bridge previously built to allow construction of a new lock would be removed. A new 1500-foot approach from the existing road to the new bridge would be constructed. TVA's preferred alternative is the Action Alternative to construct the new fixed bridge.

The existing bascule bridge would, under the Action Alternative, also remain in place and operational, and be maintained for the short term (1 to 4 years). Eventually, TVA will need to make a decision regarding disposition of the existing bascule bridge; however, TVA is not at this time proposing long-term plans for that bridge. Implementation of the Action Alternative does not preclude consideration of the array of options available to TVA for continued maintenance or disposition of the bascule bridge. Once a proposal for the bascule bridge is developed, TVA will fully examine the environmental consequences associated with that proposal and its reasonable alternatives.

A Categorical Exclusion Checklist was prepared indicating that resources not affected by the proposed action include threatened and endangered plants and terrestrial animals, terrestrial ecology, wetlands, prime farmland, noise, and recreation. Further analyses with respect to certain resource areas in the EA indicated that impacts to visual resources, floodplains, and dam safety would be insignificant, and that there would be no impacts to navigation. With the implementation of standard best management practices (BMPs) and certain other control measures and commitments outlined in the EA, the impacts to managed areas, water quality and surface water, aquatic ecology,

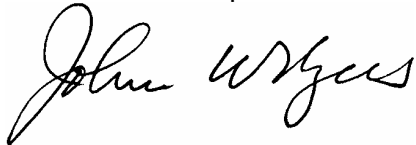
and solid waste would be insignificant, and there would be no impacts to threatened and endangered aquatic animals.

Wilson Dam, completed in 1925, is on the National Register of Historic Places, and it has officially been recognized by the U.S. Government for its historical significance. The dam was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) on November 13, 1966. Pursuant to Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, TVA surveyed the area of potential effects, reported on historic properties, addressed agency responsibilities specific to the NHL listing for Wilson Dam, and consulted with the Alabama State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) on the proposed action. TVA concluded that the Action Alternative had an effect, but not an adverse effect, on Wilson Dam. The Alabama SHPO concurred with this determination with the condition that the new bridge should be painted or concrete tinted to more closely match the color of the dam.

The EA section titled "Commitments" identifies the following special commitments to ensure that impacts to the NHL-designated Wilson Dam are insignificant:

TVA and the USACE will work with the Alabama SHPO collaboratively to determine the concrete color for the new bridge. The USACE will communicate to the bridge construction contractor that there will be coordination with TVA and the SHPO to designate an appropriate color that best matches Wilson Dam's current appearance. The contractor will supply five color samples (colors to be determined by TVA and Alabama SHPO) of texture finish that will be applied to small sections of the lock concrete. TVA and the Alabama SHPO will choose the color that best matches the existing concrete of Wilson Dam. This color will be used for the concrete-applied texture finish and structural steel coating.

The NEPA Policy staff has reviewed the subject EA and determined that the potential environmental consequences of the proposed action have been addressed. TVA concludes that, with the implementation of the above-described BMPs, control measures, and commitments, the Action Alternative to construct a new fixed bridge to provide access to the main lock area of Wilson Dam is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the environment. Accordingly, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required.



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Date