

# TVA River Neighbors

## TVA Announces New Watershed Teams *A Conversation With Ruben Hernandez*

*So what happened to the Land Management Offices? Where are the River Action Teams? Legitimate questions to ask, in light of TVA's recent announcement to combine the functions of these two groups.*

*For the answers, we went to Ruben Hernandez, who heads a new organization in TVA called Resource Stewardship. He's charged with managing 11 new multi-disciplinary Watershed Teams, which will provide Valley citizens with a full range of services related to land and water stewardship.*

*Hernandez and his family have spent the last 27 years in East Tennessee. They live in a subdivision on Fort Loudoun Lake and are avid boaters—so he has much in common with people who use TVA lakes. "I have both a professional and personal interest in taking care of our lakes and the land around them. And that's just what we're going to do through our new Watershed Teams..."*

### ***Will the Watershed Teams provide all the services I'm used to receiving from TVA's Land Management Offices and River Action Teams?***

The new teams will provide all those services and more. Plus, they'll be easier to access. When you're working with one of our Watershed Teams, you'll have a complete slate of TVA products and services available to you—from shoreline stabilization to water quality, use of TVA lands, recreation, or whatever. By putting the two groups together, we'll have an even stronger tool for protecting and improving the natural resources that make this region so special.

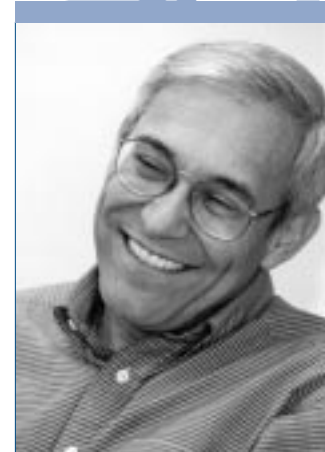
***What exactly is the purpose of these teams?***  
Watershed improvement. The teams are there

to help community groups protect and restore the watersheds where they live. We can provide information and technical assistance. We can help find partners and funding. We can pitch in and help with specific projects. We're there to do whatever we can to help achieve local watershed goals, consistent with good resource stewardship.

### ***Why the emphasis on watersheds?***

We've learned that it's much more efficient and effective to coordinate and tailor the implementation of resource programs to watersheds—the entire area drained by a stream, river, or lake. The reason is simple: all these resources are interconnected. Focusing on the whole watershed helps identify the most critical resource needs and the best way to meet them. A watershed

QA



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### Special Addition:

Handy tear-off map and guide to services offered by TVA's new Watershed Teams



## Watershed Teams *continued*



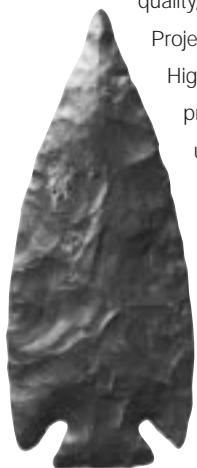
*"My goal is to build a seamless organization that is focused on watershed improvements—an organization that our employees can feel good about and that people in the watersheds feel comfortable coming to for help."*

### Case in Point: Hiwassee Island

The reclamation work underway at Hiwassee Island on Chickamauga Lake is a prime example of how TVA's new Watershed Teams will work. Land and water specialists on the Chickamauga Team are working together to stabilize about 1,500 feet of critically-eroding shoreline on the island's north side.

The 300-acre island was occupied by prehistoric Native Americans between AD 1000 and 1500. It's known by archaeologists all over the world and was even used to define time periods relating to prehistoric occupations of the upper Tennessee Valley. The island also is very important to a wide variety of waterfowl, including Sandhill Cranes.

"The benefits of stabilizing this shoreline go far beyond erosion control and water quality," according to Project Leader Martin High. "We're also preserving the island's unique natural and cultural heritage. It's just the kind of multipurpose project our Watershed Teams are here to promote."



focus also makes sense in terms of involving lake users, property owners, and businesses in protecting the waters and lands that are most important to them.

### *Can I call on the same folks I'm used to dealing with when I have a question about water quality or TVA land?*

Sure. There may be a few personnel changes as we work through the process of integrating the two groups. But we're trying our best to minimize the disruption to our stakeholders. We'll continue on-going projects and look for new opportunities for collaboration.

Which brings up an important point... We see community involvement as a critical component of our watershed work. Without it, we'd never be successful. Watershed residents must be involved if resource improvements are to last. We can't do it alone. It's as simple as that.

### *Why is this change happening now? Is it because of the loss of appropriated funding?*

It's totally independent of the loss of appropriated funding. We've been working for a while now to integrate the functions performed by our Land Management Offices and our River Action Teams... and combining them into one organization was just the next logical step. I think the timing—the fact that TVA is strengthening its resource stewardship efforts as we face our first year without appropriated funding—demonstrates TVA's strong commitment to these traditional functions.

### *If these activities are now going to be funded by the power program, how will that change things?*

I know some folks are opposed to using power dollars for stewardship activities. But I would say to them that these types of activities enhance the quality of life in the Tennessee Valley—which is important because the cost of electricity isn't the only factor companies consider in deciding where to locate or expand their facilities.

Other people have the opposite concern. They're worried that less money will be spent on stewardship activities if we use power revenues. But remember that funding for these activities had been declining steadily until Congress's recent decision to allow TVA to refinance its debt. The TVA Board has consistently emphasized the importance of our stewardship programs to the region and the nation. They value these programs, and we will continue to provide them to the Tennessee Valley.

### *What are your goals for the future?*

We have a lot of talent on our Watershed Teams, and I want to leverage it to gain multiple benefits for the people of the Tennessee Valley and the environment. My goal is to build a seamless organization that is focused on watershed improvements—an organization that our employees can feel good about and that people in the watersheds feel comfortable coming to for help.

## TVA Lake Levels<sup>1</sup>

Tributary Lakes	Observed March 31 Levels		Targeted Summer Operating Levels <sup>2</sup>	
	feet	meters	feet	meters
Blue Ridge	1672.2	509.7	1682-1687	512.7-514.2
Boone	1371.8	418.1	1382	421.2
Chatuge	1917.5	584.5	1923-1926	586.1-587.1
Cherokee	1047.5	319.3	1060-1071	323.1-326.4
Douglas	969.5	295.5	990-994	301.8-303.0
Fontana	1656.1	504.8	1693-1703	516.0-519.1
Hiwassee	1488.6	453.7	1515-1521	461.8-463.6
Normandy	869.2	264.9	873-875	266.1-266.7
Norris	1003.6	305.9	1010-1020	307.9-310.9
Nottely	1757.3	535.6	1770-1777	539.5-541.6
South Holston	1715.5	522.9	1721-1729	524.6-527.0
Tims Ford	879.3	268.0	883-888	269.1-270.7
Watauga	1950.4	594.5	1949-1959	594.1-597.1
<b>Main River Lakes</b>				
Chickamauga	676.5	206.2	681.5-682.5	207.7-208.0
Fort Loudoun/Tellico	808.7	246.5	812-813	247.5-247.8
Guntersville	593.8	181.0	594-595	181.1-181.4
Kentucky	355.2	108.3	359	109.4
Nickajack	633.7	193.2	632.5-634	192.8-193.2
Pickwick	412.1	125.6	413-414	125.9-126.2
Watts Bar	736.3	224.4	740-741	225.6-225.9
Wheeler	553.1	168.6	555-556	169.2-169.5
Wilson	505.5	154.1	506.2-507.7	154.3-154.7

<sup>1</sup> Elevations above mean sea level.

<sup>2</sup> Elevations are based on normal weather conditions and may be lower or higher depending on actual conditions.

## Lake Operations Update

**Tennessee River Lock Closures** — Kentucky Lock will be closed May 11 through May 25 to repair and replace anchors in the lock walls that support the lock gates. Passage around Kentucky Lock is available on the Cumberland River using Barkley Canal and Lock. The following locks will be closed

for scheduled inspection and maintenance: Guntersville Main Lock, June 1 through June 15; Guntersville Auxiliary Lock, June 16 through June 30; Fort Loudoun Lock, July 13 through July 27; and Chickamauga Lock, August 10 through September 10. At Fort Loudoun and Chickamauga, auxiliary locks are not available to pass traffic.

**1999 Ocoee River Release Schedule** — Water releases below Ocoee No. 2 Dam for whitewater recreation began March 27 and will continue through November 7. Releases are scheduled on weekends through the Memorial Day holiday; daily, except for Tuesdays and Wednesdays, from May 30 through August 30; on September 4-6; and on weekends from September 11 through November 7. Additional releases are planned October 4-8 for special events at the Ocoee Whitewater Center.

**Hematite Dam Repairs** — TVA is repairing the breached area of LBL's Hematite Dam, which failed after a period of heavy rain last June, and fixing suspected leakage areas around the spillway. The work is expected to be completed by early summer, in time to fill the reservoir for the recreation season.

### Let It Rain!

Don't complain too much if the weather doesn't cooperate for some of your outings this spring. We need the rain to fill tributary lakes to summer recreation levels. A wet April and May would help to make up for an eight-inch rainfall deficit—the result of very dry conditions from July to December last year.

We've had enough rain to reach the target levels specified in our Lake Improvement Plan every year since the plan was completed in 1991. But, looking at the last 100 years of record, the odds say to expect drought conditions an average of one year out of every 10. TVA river schedulers and others monitor rainfall patterns closely to be prepared for that possibility and to minimize the impacts on lake users and aquatic life.

### For Up-to-the-Minute Lake Level and Release Information...

Visit our web site at [www.lakeinfo.tva.gov](http://www.lakeinfo.tva.gov) or call our toll-free lake information line: 632-2264 in Knoxville, 751-2264 in Chattanooga, 386-2264 in Muscle Shoals, and 1-800-238-2264 from all other locations. If you are hearing-impaired, call 1-800-438-2264.

## "Scheduling" Around-The-Clock

It might be more fun to "rock" around-the-clock, but the folks in TVA's River Scheduling section have too much work to do. As of January 4, they're on duty 24 hours a day to make sure that the water in the Tennessee River system is put to the best possible use.

While most people are sound asleep, at least three river schedulers are sitting in front of their computers in TVA's Knoxville office complex. They're busy checking rainfall and streamflow information as it comes in, calculating runoff, watching storm systems move across the radar screen—all with the goal of figuring out how to route the water through the river system so that it's available where and when it's needed.

The late hours aren't exactly new to the River Scheduling group. "There have been plenty of times when 24-hour staffing was necessary because of heavy rains," explains Randy Kerr, River Forecasting Specialist, "but it was never done on a routine basis."

So why now? According to Greg Lowe, Manager of River Scheduling, the time was right because of several changes at TVA and in the electric utility industry: "Updating our hydro generation schedule more often will help us stay competitive. We'll be able to make better decisions about when to use the water, and it will help other groups in TVA—the people who maintain our hydro plants, for example—plan their work more efficiently." Plus, the majority of TVA hydro plants will be automated before long, says Kerr. "Without an operator on site, it will be up to us to stay on top of the situation by monitoring the information generated by computers."

It's a hard adjustment for some of the staff, admits Kerr, but everyone agrees that it was the right move: "We want to meet the changes that are occurring head-on and continue to provide our high level of service."

### Mark Your Calendar

#### Earth Day:

April 22, 1999

#### National Clean Boating Week:

July 10-18, 1999

### Opening Dates for TVA Campgrounds

#### March 19

- Douglas Dam Tailwater
- Mallard Creek (Wheeler)

#### March 26

- Barton Springs (Normandy)

#### April 2

- Loyston Point (Norris)

#### April 16

- Watauga Dam
- Cherokee Dam
- Douglas Dam Headwater

#### April 22

- Foster Falls (near Jasper, TN)

#### Open year-round

- Melton Hill Dam
- Pickwick Dam
- Wilson Dam

## Recreation Facilities Get Facelift

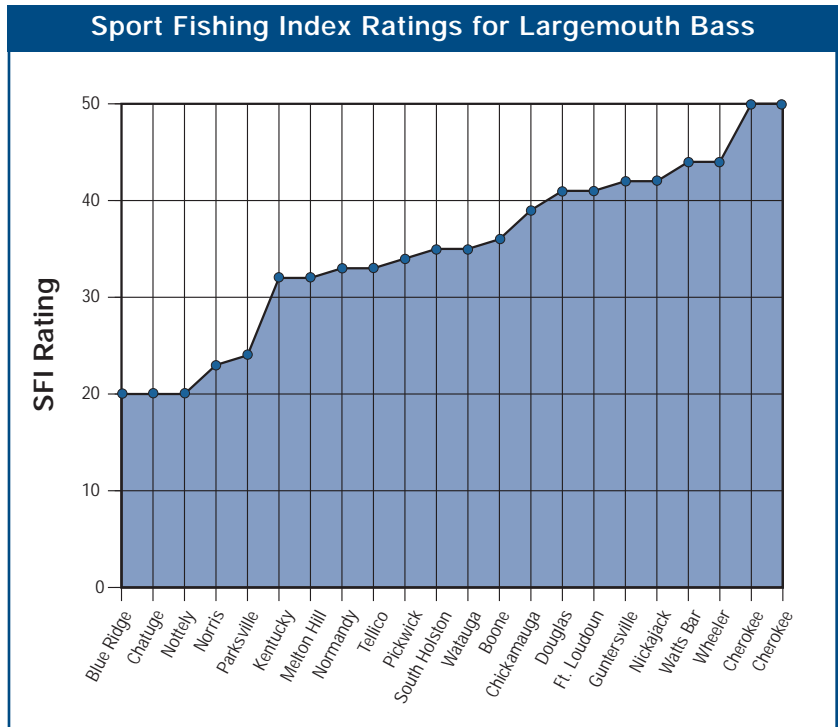


TVA is improving facilities at several recreation areas this year, including the following:

- Building new launching-ramp courtesy piers at Melton Hill Dam Reservation, the Round Island boat ramp on Wheeler Lake, and the Bussell Ferry ramp below Fort Loudoun Dam.

- Adding water and electric hook-ups to several campsites at the headwater campground on Douglas Lake and the Loyston Point campground on Norris Lake and refurbishing campsites at Foster Falls recreation area near Jasper, Tennessee.
- Renovating restroom facilities at Mallard Creek campground on Wheeler Lake, at the Foster Falls recreation area, and on the south side of Guntersville Dam Reservation.
- Expanding parking facilities at the Oseola Island recreation area below South Holston Dam.
- Building a new group picnic pavilion at Fontana Dam Reservation.

Sport Fish Index (SFI) values shown at right are based on 1997 electrofishing samples by TVA and/or state fisheries agencies. SFI scores reflect both quality and quantity aspects of fish communities, as well as information about fishing success and fishing pressure. Quality of largemouth bass fishing is better in reservoirs with higher numerical values.



## Oil Spills: What You Need To Know

In the wee hours of February 10, a ruptured pipeline caused more than 45,000 gallons of high-sulfur diesel fuel to spill into the Tennessee River near downtown Knoxville. Within hours, TVA was on the scene—helping the pipeline owner contain and clean up the spill.

What would happen if such an environmental disaster occurred on your lake? There's no single answer. A lot depends on the circumstances: the extent and nature of the spill; the proximity to water intakes, hydro operations, or environmentally-sensitive areas; weather and wind conditions; and so on.

The main thing to know is that the sooner a spill is reported, the sooner it can be contained. And that's where you and your neighbors come in. Whenever you see a sheen on the water—a rainbow-type effect that indicates a fuel spill—you're encouraged to call the National Response Center at 1-800-424-8802. This hot line is

operated by the U.S. Coast Guard, in cooperation with the Environmental Protection Agency.

TVA's Environmental Response Team is standing by to help. "Although our first responsibility is to respond to incidents caused by TVA and to spills that affect TVA operations, we're prepared to help others outside the agency," explains Project Leader Ron Majiros. "We have specialized equipment and expertise designed to stop the flow, contain the spill, and clean it up. Our goal is always to minimize effects downstream: to people living along the shoreline, to the environment, and to TVA operations. Valley citizens who live on and use the lakes are our 'eyes and ears' when it comes to spotting potential problems. By calling the National Response Center when you observe a sheen on the water, you can help us identify and resolve the situation much more quickly."



TVA crews work to contain Colonial Pipeline's diesel-fuel spill along the Knoxville waterfront.

## Land Planning Begins On Norris and Cherokee

**T**VA is beginning work on land plans for Norris and Cherokee Lakes. If you want to participate, please call 1-800-882-5263. We'll add your name to our

mailing list to ensure that you are notified about opportunities for input.

The Norris and Cherokee plans are the latest in a series of planning efforts undertaken by TVA to help guide the future management of

shoreline property around TVA lakes. "The plans help TVA set management objectives that reflect the needs and concerns of the people who use the land," according to TVA Land Planning Specialist Spencer Boardman. Other objectives include ensuring compliance with federal laws,

dealing with increasing development pressures, and protecting land for future generations.

Public involvement is critical to the process. "Without public input, it would be difficult to identify all the issues pertaining to future public needs related to TVA land," explains Boardman. "Public involvement helps us broaden our perspective and ultimately results in better decision-making."

Plans for managing TVA reservoir land are developed using the guidelines set by the National Environmental Policy Act, which specifies the steps for public involvement. The Act also requires an evaluation of a reasonable range of alternatives and their effects on the natural environment.

Land management plans already have been completed for Chickamauga, Guntersville, Kentucky, Nickajack, Watts Bar, Pickwick, and Wheeler Lakes, and plans for Melton Hill and Boone are ready for TVA Board approval. Planning for Tellico, Tims Ford, and the Bear Creek Lakes is in progress.



Citizens attending a public meeting to discuss the Tellico Reservoir Land Use Plan listen to TVA's Eric Rauch describe management alternatives.

## Getting the Lead Out on South Holston Lake...

**B**attery Hollow needs a new name. The piles of battery casings that once were visible during the winter along Harr Road and in the Cave Springs Branch area on TVA's South Holston Lake are gone.

Dumped in the 1940s by a company that separated the lead out of old batteries, the casings were both an eyesore and a threat to the environment. The cleanup began in the winter of 1997 and was completed last spring. Working with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Forest Service, TVA removed about 30 tons of slag-like material, contaminated soil, and casings from the Harr Road site and about 100 tons of soil and casings from the Cave Springs Branch area. Both sites were officially removed from Tennessee's list of Inactive Hazardous Substances Sites on October 6.

## ... and at the Wilson Dam Reservation

Another successful cleanup was completed in August at the site of the old Florence Wagon Works plant on TVA's Wilson Dam reservation. Workers noticed some paint chips in the soil surface in 1994, prompting a thorough study of the entire site. The level of lead was above allowable limits in an area about 150 feet by 200 feet, near an old paint shop. To solve the problem, TVA cleared and graded the contaminated area, capped it with 24 inches of clay, and put down topsoil and sod to establish a barrier between the contamination and the surface. Workers also constructed a fence to keep vehicles out of the area.

### Navigation Aids— Who to Call

To report missing or damaged buoys, hazard markers, or dayboards on recreational channels on the Tennessee River and its tributaries, call TVA at 423-632-4678. To report missing or damaged navigation aids marking the commercial river channel, call the U.S. Coast Guard. From Paducah, Kentucky, to Pickwick Lock, call 901-642-4457. Above Pickwick Lock to Knoxville, call 423-622-2101.

## Dealing with Debris at TVA Dams

It's the time of year when "spring cleaning" seems like the thing to do. From Fort Loudoun to Kentucky, lake users have been hard at work in recent weeks picking up trash and debris along streambanks and shorelines. On Gunter'sville Lake alone, over 100 volunteers picked up about 20 tons of trash during the second annual River Rescue. Hats off to all of you for donating your time and energy to help keep our lakes and rivers clean.

TVA Watershed Teams have been actively involved in many of these clean-ups. Plus, we have an added responsibility. An amazing amount of debris—everything from tree branches, logs, stumps, plastic, styrofoam, tires, cans, and even parts of docks that have broken off and floated away—accumulates on the back side of TVA dams, and it's up to us to deal with it. As resources permit, those responsible for the operation and maintenance of hydro projects and dam reservations tackle the job of clean-up. "Last year," says TVA Recreation Specialist Bob Marker, "we removed over 1,600 cubic yards of accumulated drift material



from behind TVA dams. That's enough to fill 200 dumpsters."

After it's fished out of the water, the drift material still has to be disposed of. The man-made debris is hauled to landfills, while woody material is piled on land to dry out. Then it's either burned, or in some cases, used as firewood for folks staying at TVA campgrounds.

"The work we do to get this drift material out of the water and disposed of properly complements the outstanding work being done by volunteers all across the Valley," says Marker. "And many different groups within TVA are involved. For example, our Watershed Teams sponsor litter clean-ups and shoreline stabilization projects that help to control erosion—a major factor in the proliferation of woody debris. As part of our commitment to maintain good water quality throughout the system, we want to do what we can to underscore the efforts of citizen groups to keep the lakes free of trash. Working together, we can make TVA lakes cleaner and more enjoyable for everyone."



### Apply Now For A "Watershed Assistance Mini-Grant"

A new grant is available this year to support the organizational development of local watershed partnerships. Groups can receive up to \$4,000 for "targeted, short-term technical assistance projects," such as hosting a meeting of diverse watershed interests, enabling under-funded citizen groups to participate in partnership efforts, holding a strategic planning retreat, or hiring a professional facilitator to help identify and prioritize watershed issues. The grant program is part of the Clean Water Action Plan announced by President Clinton last year and is being administered by River Network, a national nonprofit river and watershed conservation organization. For more information, call River Network at 503-241-9256 or visit their web site: <http://www.rivernetwork.org/wag.htm>. Proposals are due June 15.

## Needed: Volunteer Anglers

### Have You Moved?

If you have a new address, are getting more than one copy of *TVA River Neighbors*, or want to stop receiving our newsletter, call us at 423-632-8502 or write to:

*TVA River Neighbors*

River Operations

400 West Summit Hill Drive

Knoxville, TN 37902-1499

**T**VA's annual black bass "depletion survey" is underway, and volunteer anglers are invited to participate.

Here's how it works: volunteers are given an hour to fish selected coves, which are blocked off with a net. Then they get to ride along as TVA biologists "deplete" the remaining fish in the cove using electrofishing equipment. All the fish are counted, weighed, measured, and released outside the cove.

If you'd like to help—or just watch—call TVA at 256-386-2201 or 423-632-1721, or send an e-mail to [gseeber@tva.gov](mailto:gseeber@tva.gov).



### 1999 Depletion Survey Schedule

Kentucky .....	4/19-21, 4/26-29	Fort Loudoun .....	5/24-26
Nottely .....	5/3	Cedar Creek .....	6/2-3
Chatuge .....	5/4	Boone .....	6/7
Normandy .....	5/10-11	Douglas .....	6/8-9
Tims Ford .....	5/12-13	Cherokee .....	6/10-11
Pickwick .....	5/17-19	Tellico .....	6/14-15
Wilson .....	5/20-21	Fontana .....	6/21-22

*Note: Surveys already have been completed on Watts Bar, Wheeler, Gunterville, and Chickamauga.*

### *TVA River Neighbors*

Tennessee Valley Authority

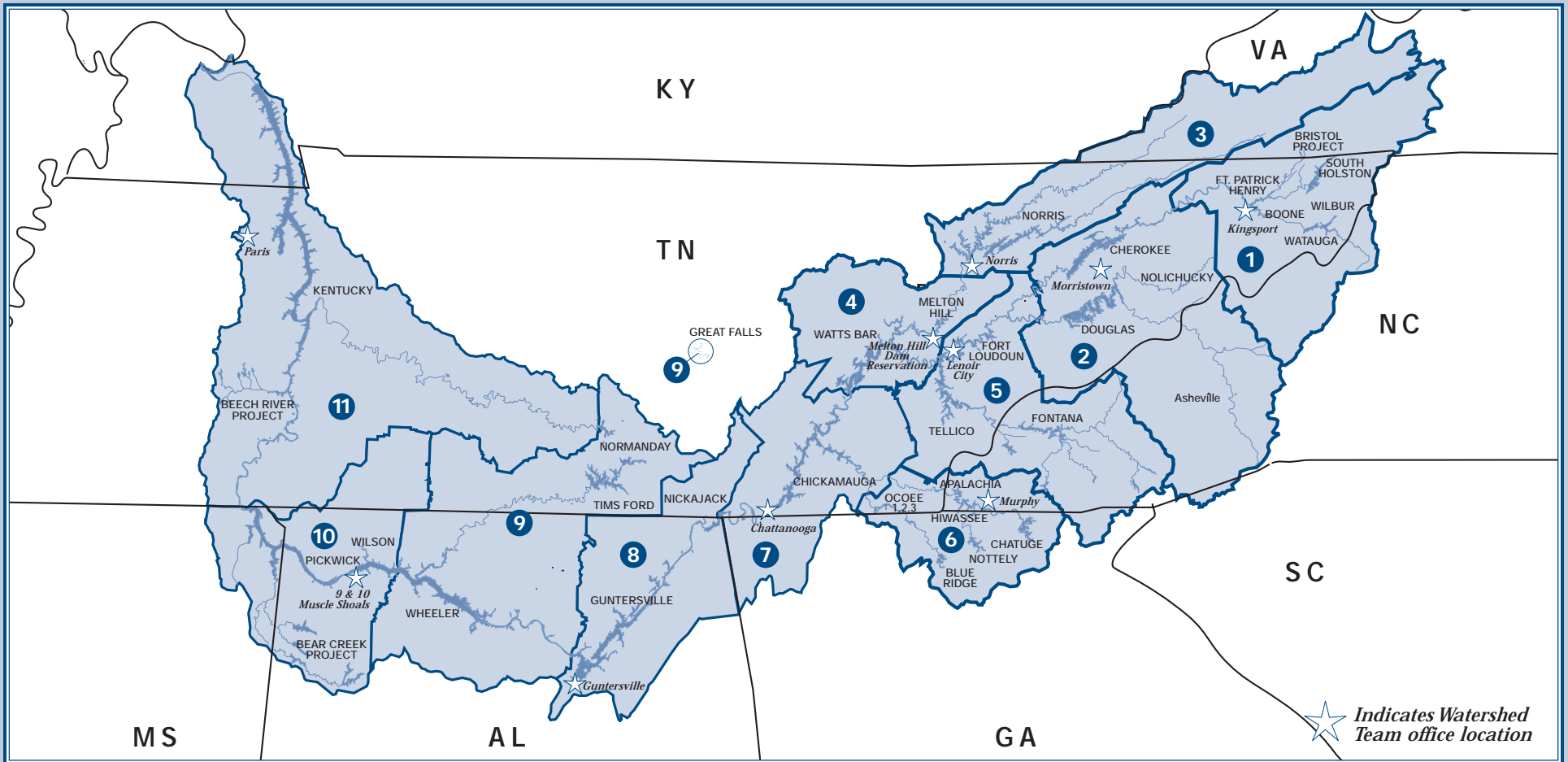
River Operations

400 West Summit Hill Drive

Knoxville, Tennessee 37902-1499



# TVA Watershed Teams



 Indicates Watershed Team office location

## NORTHEAST REGION

Regional Manager,  
Russell Harris III (423) 632-3266

- 1** **HOLSTON**  
Timothy McKeehan (423) 239-2000  
Boone, Bristol Project, Fort Patrick Henry, Holston, Watauga, Wilbur
- 2** **CHEROKEE - DOUGLAS**  
Susan Fuhr (423) 632-2753  
Cherokee, Douglas, Nolichucky
- 3** **CLINCH - POWELL**  
Teresa McDonough (423) 632-1542  
Norris, Clinch, Powell

## MIDEAST REGION

Regional Manager,  
Eric W. Rauch (423) 632-6373

- 4** **MELTON HILL**  
Michael Crowson (423) 988-2440  
Melton Hill, Watts Bar
- 5** **LITTLE TENNESSEE**  
Robert Farrell (423) 988-2420  
Fontana, Fort Loudoun, Tellico, Little Tennessee

## SOUTHEAST REGION

Regional Manager,  
William S. Ambrose (423) 751-8160

- 6** **HIWASSEE**  
Hugh Standridge (828) 837-0237  
Apalachia, Blue Ridge, Chatuge, Hiwassee, Nottely, Ocoee 1, 2, and 3
- 7** **CHICKAMAUGA - NICKAJACK**  
Lee Carter (423) 954-3811  
Chickamauga, Nickajack
- 8** **GUNTERSVILLE**  
Joel Williams (256) 571-4280  
Guntersville, Sequatchie

## WEST REGION

Regional Manager,  
Kenneth S. Cooley (256) 386-2851

- 9** **WHEELER**  
David Schmidt (256) 386-2560  
Elk, Great Falls, Normandy, Tims Ford, Wheeler
- 10** **PICKWICK**  
Buff Crosby (256) 386-2228  
Bear Creek Project, Pickwick, Wilson
- 11** **KENTUCKY**  
William McKibben (901) 641-2013  
Beech River Project, Columbia, Duck, Kentucky

# Watershed Teams Offer "One-Stop Services"

TVA's new Watershed Teams combine the expertise previously available through our Land Management Offices and River Action Teams. With one call, you can access a complete slate of watershed services, including:

## Resource Protection and Improvement

- Water quality monitoring and assessment
- Conservation practices for homeowners, farmers, and developers
- Organizing a citizens group or finding agency partners for water quality improvements
- Clean-ups along lakes, rivers, and streams
- Habitat enhancement projects for fish and wildlife
- Clean boating initiatives, including marine sewage disposal and best management practices for marinas
- Streambank and shoreline stabilization projects
- Stormwater management for urban areas
- Protection of natural and cultural resources

## Shoreline Management and Land Use

- Permits for boat docks and other waterfront development
- Requests for use of TVA public lands
- Information about TVA landrights
- Identification and resolution of encroachments on TVA public lands
- Aquatic plant management and mosquito control

## Outreach and Education

- Presentations to schools and civic groups on topics relating to TVA public lands and water quality
- Staffing exhibits at local festivals and environmental fairs
- Information about recreation opportunities

## So give us a call...

If you'd like to know more about our activities and how you can get involved, if you or your group need help with a watershed improvement project, or if you simply have a question, contact the Watershed Team in your area. Office locations and phone numbers are listed on the back of this page.

We look forward to hearing from you!

