

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

# Section 3 Progress Report Executive Order 13287

SEPTEMBER 2020





# I. Introduction

This report provides a brief update on the progress made by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in identifying, managing, and protecting historic properties pursuant to Executive Order 13287 (Preserve America). The report focuses on new initiatives that have been made since 2017 and summarizes efforts from program areas included in previous reports.

## II. Identifying Historic Properties

### **Historic Building and Structure Survey**

In fiscal year 2019 (FY19), TVA initiated a multi-year project to develop a comprehensive inventory for historic buildings and structures on TVA land and adjacent to TVA transmission lines. This project will include the development of a GIS layer for the cultural resource data management system that will improve Section 106 project reviews for the agency as well as management of the resources.

Major facilities assessed in FY19 include Bull Run Fossil Plant and Wilbur Hydroelectric Project. In addition, TVA developed the historic context for its power transmission resources. In FY20, the agency continued with survey of non-power dams and other facilities. Plans for FY21 include development of the historic context for recreation resources and a survey of additional facilities and TVA-owned buildings and structures. We will provide the results of this initiative in our next progress report in FY23.

### **Archaeological Survey**

TVA continues to conduct annual archaeological inventory to identify archaeological sites on its property. Since 2017, TVA has inventoried 2,009 acres of land and identified approximately 29 archaeological sites. This did not include surveys completed in order to meet the requirements of Section 106. TVA

is unable at this time to calculate this total. While we are still unsure of the exact cumulative number of acres surveyed, a recent tally of archaeological sites indicates that we now have identified over 12,500 archaeological sites on TVA land.

### **Documentation of Stone Cairns**

In FY19, TVA initiated a project to determine best management practices for stone features or cairns located on TVA property or within TVA project boundaries. There are many questions and conflicting interpretations as to what these features mean, and disagreement on how best to assess them. For this reason TVA is developing a management plan to identify ways to consistently document and protect these features, particularly those identified as being sacred to Native Americans. This plan will include a new standardized documentation form and will stipulate how the agency will consult with federally-recognized Indian tribes regarding the significance of stone cairns.

### **Trail of Tears/Removal Route Documentation**

In FY20, TVA initiated a multi-phased project to document Trail of Tears/Removal Route locations on or near TVA land or TVA easement properties. We are compiling existing data from local Trail of Tears chapters in the Tennessee Valley as well as research that has previously been conducted. Future phases of the project will focus on gathering data from federally-recognized Indian tribes and ground truthing those locations where Trail of Tears/Removal Routes intersected TVA land. This effort will help TVA better manage any sensitive resources associated with these routes as well as support project reviews under Section 106 .

### Evaluation work with Tribal Training Opportunities

Since 2017, TVA has also worked on several projects to further evaluate known archaeological sites on TVA land. These projects also included opportunities for tribal representatives to receive archaeological training.

### Bell Site (40RE1) Test Excavations

In 2014, TVA conducted ground penetrating radar and magnetometer testing at the Bell Site (40RE1) located on Watts Bar Reservoir in Roane County, Tennessee. This site was initially excavated in the 1930s by the Works Progress Administration prior to the impoundment of Watts Bar but this investigation and others on Watts Bar were never completed due to the outbreak of World War II. In 2018, TVA returned to the site to ground truth the anomalies identified in 2014. The Bell Site represents a very large, Mississippian village site less well known in the context of Mississippian sites in the East Tennessee region. Results of the geophysical work and limited testing helped place the site in its larger cultural context and demonstrated the site's significance. TVA has used these results to improve the agency's management of the parcel.



### Bussell Island (40LD17) Geophysical Testing

TVA conducted ground penetrating radar and magnetometer testing at the Bussell Island site (40LD17) in Loudon County, Tennessee. Previous excavations on Bussell Island indicated the site is

deeply stratified, with Early Archaic components deeply buried beneath the surface. The site is best known for its Mississippian component with two substructure mounds, a plaza, village, and multiple midden areas. Bussell Island was placed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1977 (Chapman 1982). However, the site was subject to extensive looting and it was not clear how much of the site remained intact. One primary purpose of the survey was to assess the integrity of the site. Results indicate that while looting has impacted the site, intact deposits and potential features were identified across the entire area examined.

## III. Protecting Historic Properties

### Archaeological Site Protection

TVA continues to identify and prioritize archaeological sites that are in need for protection each year. In the last three years, the agency saw an increase in flood events due to heavy rains which resulted in severe erosion along the Tennessee River. This erosion had a negative effect on archaeological sites and resulted in the exposure of Native American burials in numerous locations. In FY18, TVA protected approximately 500 feet of shoreline in Roane County, Tennessee. In FY19, TVA's stabilization efforts were focused on protecting five locations along the river (approximately 1,500 linear feet) where burials had been affected by extensive flood events. FY20 brought additional heavy rains and TVA's stabilization efforts were once again focused on protection of burials. One site located on Pickwick Reservoir in Hardin County, Tennessee, had such severe erosion that at least four burials were exposed. TVA constructed a berm and backfilled an area approximately 800 feet by 300 feet to protect the burials and exposed archaeological features, and to ensure that additional burials are not exposed in the future. Burials were also protected at two locations on Wheeler Reservoir (approximately 1,000 feet in Marshall County, Alabama), one on Kentucky Reservoir (300 feet in Humphreys County, Tennessee), and one on Chickamauga Reservoir (300 feet in Rhea County, Tennessee).





In FY20, we have seen many impacts that have resulted from the Covid-19 pandemic. However, one positive story is that TVA was able to divert funds from canceled projects toward the protection of archaeological sites. With these funds, TVA was able to protect an additional 5700 feet of shoreline which included six archaeological sites.

In addition to this work, TVA also monitored 430 sites and protected six sites (2900 linear feet) in Madison and Lauderdale Counties in Alabama as part of our Reservoir Operations Compliance Project.

### **Thousand Eyes Archaeological Outreach Program**

Since 2017, TVA has hosted two site stewardship workshops and trained 15 additional volunteers to assist in monitoring archaeological sites on TVA land. These trainings were held at Kentucky Dam near Gilbertsville, Kentucky and at the Florence Mound Museum in Florence, Alabama. TVA now has a total of 45 volunteers trained to assist.

TVA participated in over 70 outreach events in the last three years. Most recently, TVA partnered with the Florence Mound Museum to host an archaeological stewardship lecture series. Speakers included

archaeologists and tribal representatives who spoke about different aspects of archaeological stewardship. The primary goal of this series was to increase awareness of archaeological site protection issues in a community that has seen an increase in the vandalism and illegal excavation of archaeological sites in the past 10 years.





### Section 106 PA

In 2020, TVA executed a Programmatic Agreement (PA) that governs how TVA fulfills its Section 106 responsibilities. The signatories include the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) and seven State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs); and invited signatories include 20 federally recognized Indian Tribes. The PA identifies a suite of activities that are unlikely to affect historic properties if present and excludes these activities from further review under Section 106. It also identifies repetitive activities with foreseeable effects to historic properties that require further review by TVA Cultural Resources staff, but may not require formal consultation. All other TVA undertakings are elevated to formal consultation as described by 36 CFR 800.

## IV. Using Historic Properties

### Muscle Shoals Reservation Updates

In 2017, TVA reported on its efforts to improve historic properties on its Muscle Shoals Reservation in Colbert County, Alabama. Preliminary efforts included replacing the roof on the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) pavilion. In 2019, TVA renovated the restrooms of this facility in order to make the pavilion more user friendly.

TVA also conducted restoration work on the Insectory building, known as the “Animal House” built in 1940.



# V. Update on Other Cultural Programs/Activities

## Update to Natural Resource Plan

In 2020, TVA published an updated version of its Natural Resource Plan in an effort to establish a more strategic level approach that will provide flexibility in meeting changing resource, user and programmatic needs. The 2020 NRP serves as a strategic document that, over the next 15 to 20 years, guides the direction of TVA's resource stewardship and stewardship funding. TVA made only minor changes to the Cultural Resource Management focus area programs. In addition, TVA will now use its Program Alternative Section 106 PA for compliance with NRP projects that are considered undertakings.

## Development of Cultural Resource Management System

In 2018, TVA began a comprehensive update to the Integrated Cultural Database (ICD). This next iteration of ICD was renamed the Cultural Resource Management System (CRMS) because of its expanded features. CRMS improves existing features of ICD and adds new features like task automation, file sharing with consulting parties, and a new mobile app.

Over the past three years TVA has continued to enter legacy Section 106 project and cultural resource records into ICD. Since the 2017 Progress Report, TVA has entered over 9,000 legacy records. The completion of legacy records entry for Transmission projects in 2019 allowed the Cultural Compliance group to develop a project screening GIS layer. This layer allows project managers to see if their project involves areas previously inventoried for cultural resources and helps them anticipate Section 106 compliance needs. In

2020, TVA will have completed legacy Section 106 project record entry for the following internal business units: Nuclear, Hydropower, Fossil, Gas, Mineral Rights, Renewables, Power Purchase Agreements, and Economic Development.

The completion of CRMS was scheduled for December of 2020. The project was paused in the Spring of 2020 due to a reorganization of TVA's IT department. CRMS development is scheduled to restart in 2021 and would likely be completed within a year of the restart. Legacy records entry will continue for the next three years with a focus on completing record entry for TVA's reservoir land and entering historic architectural resources, historic districts, and landscapes. When CRMS development is complete, the legacy records entered into ICD will be migrated to CRMS and the project will be considered complete. Once complete TVA will be able to accurately calculate the status of both its archaeological and historic structures inventories for Section 110 reporting purposes.

## Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP)

Development of the CRMP continues to be on-hold. However, the agency is working on developing policies and procedures to formalize the various legal requirements under federal law. Many of these procedures will be incorporated into the CRMP. An updated status of the CRMP will be provided in FY23.

## Archaeological Curation

TVA continues with its project to improve archaeological collections at the University of Alabama. In FY20, the agency funded the development of a curation plan to help guide archaeological curation needs for the future. As part of this study, a consultant contacted archaeological repositories with TVA collections to identify condition, research use of collections, and whether or not the institution was interested in continuing as a TVA repository. The ultimate goal of this effort is to consolidate collections wherever possible and systematically improve those collections in poor condition by focusing on the most-at-risk resources. It is anticipated that this effort will take several decades to complete.

# VI. Successes, Opportunities, Challenges

## Highlights

The development of an alternative agency procedures PA with seven states and over 20 tribes has been a huge highlight for the agency since our last report. This PA will provide a clearer understanding of process and activities required for Section 106 review and streamline compliance for the diverse projects implemented across the agency.

As with most federal agencies, TVA has struggled with resource needs, including staffing and funding. In the last three years; however; we have been able to expand our staff to include 10 full time archaeologists and one full-time architectural historian. These additions were made to assist in the increasing workload associated with TVA Undertakings and Section 106 consultation.

With the addition of a full-time architectural historian, TVA has been able to improve its documentation and management of historic buildings and structures on TVA land. The development of a comprehensive inventory will also help facilitate Section 106 consultation in the future.

## Challenges

In an effort to keep rates low for the people of the valley, TVA continues to look for ways to reduce O&M spending. Keeping compliance obligations as a priority for those funds is an internal challenge, but we are committed to continuing our stewardship efforts.

TVA has faced challenges with the development of its data management system. Staff changes and resource needs combined with a very large amount of legacy data has proved to be a significant challenge in completing this project in the time originally planned. But in spite of these challenges, TVA has been able to complete the project in phases and has developed several tools to facilitate Section 106 reviews for the agency. TVA remains committed to the development of both an integrated data management system and a cultural resource management plan to help guide the agencies cultural resource programs in the future.

400 West Summit Hill Drive  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37902

[www.tva.com](http://www.tva.com)