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University of North Carolina Asheville  
The Upper French Broad Defense Association, A Moment When American Democracy Worked

A Senior Thesis Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Department of History  
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Bachelor of Arts in History

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### **Abstract**

The Upper French Broad River Valley in western North Carolina has been prone to flooding for thousands of years. However, only since the Tennessee Valley Authority's establishment in 1933 has there been an incorporation willing to take on the challenge of wide scale flood control and resource management in the Tennessee Valley. Since the Authority's inception, flood control, energy production through the development of hydroelectric dams and natural resource management projects were proposed for rivers throughout the Tennessee Valley, specifically along the Upper French Broad. Nevertheless, the people in western North Carolina, established and reinforced through time by their interpretation of history and cultural value systems, have been skeptical of large scale government run programs where local access and control over natural and human resources would have to be necessarily relinquished to non-local entities. The TVA's principal concern for the most recent proposal to dam and channel the French Broad River in 1966, was not the specific resource management needs defined by the citizens of the Upper French Broad Valley, but to bring the region out of what the Authority defined as economic depression with the application of technocratic expertise. Using primary sources from the Upper French Broad Defense Association Collection at the University of North Carolina at Asheville Special Collections, and relevant secondary sources, this essay will investigate the group known as the Upper French Broad Defense Association which was made up of citizens from Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, and Haywood counties that coalesced to fight the TVA over maintaining local access and control over their regional river system from 1966 to 1973.

In May of 1966, after five years of abstract planning, the Tennessee Valley Authority officially proposed a massive infrastructure project to dam and channel the Upper French Broad River Basin in Western North Carolina.<sup>1</sup> The project originally included 14 dams, 74 miles of river channelization and the flooding of 18,225 acres of the region's most productive farmland, displacing at least 600 families.<sup>2</sup> The project would have directly affected Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, and Madison counties, putting a large swath of the subdivision of Mills River underwater. The original motivations for the TVA, state agencies such as the Upper French Broad Economic Defense Committee,<sup>3</sup> the Upper French Broad Development Commission and the North Carolina Department of Water and Air Resources,<sup>4</sup> was a belief that resource development would not only inhibit future environmental and economic damage from flooding and create a better water management system but also stimulate economic growth through tourism by building human-made lakes where "virtually no water based recreation existed."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Martha Gash Boswell, "Grassroots Along the Upper French Broad: The Valley Versus the Tennessee Valley Authority, 1961-1972," <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/404282/ufbda-history-original.pdf>. Boswell not only wrote a concise history of the conflict between the TVA and local citizens against the development project contained in this document but she was also the recording secretary for the the Upper French Broad Defense Association.

<sup>2</sup> Boswell, "Grassroots Along the Upper..." 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> Aelred J. Gray and David A. Johnson, *The TVA Regional Planning and Development Program: The Transformation of an Institution and Its Mission*, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub Ltd, 2005, 69).

<sup>4</sup> Martha Boswell, Seven Questions and Answers on the Proposed Development of the Upper French Broad, Date Unknown. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Association Collection. Box 1. Folder 6.

<sup>5</sup> Tennessee Valley Authority, "Environmental Statement: Mills River Dam and Reservoir," June, 29, 1971. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Association (1967-1977) Collection. Box 1, folder (7). Also see, "Environmental Statement- Mills River Dam and Reservoir," Tennessee Valley Authority, Office of Health and Environmental Sciences. Chattanooga, Tennessee. June, 1971. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Collection. Box 3. Folder (11).

Originally, only a small number of environmentally conscious citizens, including those who were going to be directly effected through the impoundment of personal property, were willing to fight the TVA on the merits of projected benefits. Between the 19th of September, 1965, through the project's termination on November 14, 1972,<sup>6</sup> some of these concerned citizens came together to form the Upper French Broad Defense Association (UFBDA), also called the Dam Fighters,<sup>7</sup> to oppose the TVA and the Authority's supporters. The UFBDA, with the help of national environmental groups such as the Sierra Club,<sup>8</sup> the new governor Robert Scott, who took office in 1969, and overwhelming public support by the end of the proposal process,<sup>9</sup> successfully stopped the dam and channel project. On September 8, 1971, after the first and only round of official public hearings the TVA held for local citizens to challenge the comprehensive impact statement for the project,<sup>10</sup> Governor Scott reacted by

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<sup>6</sup> John Barron, Statement made by director of Tributary Area Development for the TVA. 14 November, 1972. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Association Collection. Box 4. Folder (9).

<sup>7</sup> Boswell, 1.

<sup>8</sup> Jere A. Britain. Council on Environmental Quality Report. Date Unknown. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Association Collection. Box 1. Folder (9). 2.

<sup>9</sup> Roy Taylor, "Withdraw of Support for TVA Project." September 1971. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Collection. Box 4. Folder (9).

<sup>10</sup> This hearing begun on August 31, 1971, at UNCA. The hearing was originally scheduled for one day "but there was there was such a large turnout, with so many citizens who wished to give statements, that the event lasted three full days." Savannah Paige Murray, "United We Stand, Divided We May Be Dammed:" Grassroots Environmentalism and the TVA in Western North Carolina, *The Journal of East Tennessee History* , Vol. 87, 2015. 58.

saying that we must “take into account the objections raised by this office and various state agencies, as well as objections of citizens”<sup>11</sup> before such a broad project got underway.

Savannah Paige Murray in “United We Stand, Divided We May Be Dammed: Grassroots Environmentalism and the TVA in Western North Carolina,”<sup>12</sup> organizes and outlines the story of who, what, when, where and why the UFBDA came into existence. Murray connects important events which clarify the specifics of the conflict between the TVA and U.F.B.D.A, and why the dam and channel project was doomed for unpopularity from its inception. Murray not only clarifies the pragmatic reasons why many people in Western North Carolina were skeptical that the TVA would be able to deliver on the stated goals of the infrastructure project, but also that the “TVA’s lack of concern for local culture” and “the anti agriculture paradigm of the agency’s plan was the catalyst of the grassroots efforts of the UFBDA”<sup>13</sup>

Although Murray is critical of the TVA throughout her investigation, Stewart Massey, in the Upper French Broad “Dam Fighters!”: The Upper French Broad Defense Association<sup>14</sup> claims that the TVA’s failure to come up with substantial evidence to justify the project, the bureaucratic nature of the proposal process, and the UFBDA’s ability to focus on a common interest as the reasons why the dam and channel project was ultimately terminated. Massey states that “The ‘Dam fighters’ fought... to keep the Upper French Broad a free-flowing river,” while also claiming that “the UFBDA in rallying support and dedication to a common interest

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<sup>11</sup> Donald Remer, “French Broad Plan Irks Asheville,” *Asheville Citizen Times*. September 8, 1971. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Association Collection. Box 7. Folder (1).

<sup>12</sup> Savannah Paige Murray, “United We Stand, Divided We May Be Dammed: Grassroots Environmentalism and the TVA in Western North Carolina,” *The Journal of East Tennessee History*, Vol. 87, 2015. P. 48-49.

<sup>13</sup> Murray, 63.

<sup>14</sup> Stuart Massey. “Upper French Broad ‘Dam Fighters!’: The Upper French Broad Defense Association” Senior Thesis Submitted to The Faculty of the Department of History, University of North Carolina at Asheville, November 26, 2013. [http://toto.lib.unca.edu/sr\\_papers/history\\_sr/srhistory\\_2013/massey\\_stewart.pdf](http://toto.lib.unca.edu/sr_papers/history_sr/srhistory_2013/massey_stewart.pdf)

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showed that grassroots opposition to TVA can be successful.”<sup>15</sup> However, Massey and Murray do not focus on contextualizing, comparing or synthesizing the UFBDA movement against the larger historiography of regional environmental movements or the historical relationship between the peoples of the Tennessee River Valley with the TVA but instead focus specifically on the conflict between the UFBDA and TVA.

Kathryn Newfont, in *Blue Ridge Commons Environmental Activism and Forest History in Western North Carolina*,<sup>16</sup> delineates the historical relationship between the peoples of Appalachia and the regional environment. Newfont clarifies, by focusing on the social aspects of environmentalism, important cultural and political realities that have existed over time in Western North Carolina. The genesis of this centuries old relationship is rooted in the dependency the mountain peoples have had, and continue to have, on the natural resources around them. Instead of the modern conceptualization one may have of the environmental movement, which is almost wholesale against looking at the wilderness as an economic resource, Newfont grounds her interpretation in what she defines as the “concept of the commons” as “central to American thought about nature.”<sup>17</sup> This brand of environmentalism exists and has been passed down through cultural community value systems up and down the spine of Appalachia. Newfont states that these communities, in general, “both rejected wilderness environmentalism and built a regional forest protection movement on their own powerful model.”<sup>18</sup> Although this kind of environmentalist is subject to “ingroup conflict,”

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<sup>15</sup> Massey, 22.

<sup>16</sup> Kathryn Newfont, *Blue Ridge Commons, Environmental Activism and Forest History in Western North Carolina* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Newfont, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Newfont, 9.

where the foundations of legitimacy are fluid and “change over time,”<sup>19</sup> the nature of commons environmentalism is defined by maintaining communal access and control over their natural resources.

While the relationships between the TVA and regional populations has been a popular scholarly topic over the past seventy five years, certain works have direct and indirect parallels to the struggle between the bureaucracy and the UFBDA. Michael McDonald and John Muldowny in *TVA and the Dispossessed: The Resettlement of Population in the Norris Dam Area*,<sup>20</sup> thoroughly and critically investigate the methods and rationales the TVA used to relocate local populations in order to build their first major project, the Norris Dam. Although this text was published over three decades ago, potentially making the book “outdated,” the data, statistics and insights into the TVA’s initial methods are still relevant. The authors focus on a particular community in the Tennessee River basin that was removed, including cemeteries, churches and well over a thousand residents so the land could be dammed for hydroelectric power. This text stimulated multi generational conversations between historians and other academics interested in the History of the TVA, while positing the prevalent conclusion that “It is ironic that TVA’s development has encouraged the process of modernity to the degree that new people have entered the Valley who want to preserve the region as it was, while those who lived in it as it was have either left it or have been unable, in many respects, to secure the advantages which TVA was created to provide.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Newfont, 17.

<sup>20</sup>Michael McDonald and John Muldowny, *TVA and the Dispossessed: The Resettlement of Population in the Norris Dam Area* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1981).

<sup>21</sup>Mcdonald, 272.

In *Prisoners of Myth: The Leadership of the Tennessee Valley Authority, 1933-1990*,<sup>22</sup> Erwin C. Hargrove attempts to differentiate and dispel myths still being perpetuated about the TVA's past with a "scholarly overview of the remarkable Tennessee Valley Authority."<sup>23</sup> This text was categorized by the American Historical Association as the first comprehensive history of the TVA, and is relevant for anyone interested in the Tennessee Valley Authority's legacy, perceived and real. Hargrove focused on the evolution of the TVA over six decades and how the stated intent of broad programs and infrastructure development matched the reality on the ground.

*TVA and the Grass Roots, A Study in Politics and Organization*,<sup>24</sup> was originally published in 1949. However, this most recent publication has peer analysis from sociologists, economists, and historians that juxtapose and critique Philip Selznick's original analysis. Selznick, a sociologist that worked for the fledgling bureaucracy on and off for a decade, wrote about his experiences as an organizational manager. The author's observations juxtaposed with peer reviewed critique and examination is fascinating and contemporarily relevant to any investigation into the technocratic dimensions of the TVA. Selznick writes specifically about differentiating the actual bureaucracy of the TVA from what communities thought was going to be a more representative grassroots programs. Selznick finds that decisions made from within

**Commented [2]:** Instead of this laundry list of works, author could have achieved greater analytical depth if they had grouped them into general thematically-organized paragraphs, with solid topic sentences, in order to address the issues covered in these works.

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<sup>22</sup> Erwin C Hargrove, *Prisoners of Myth: The Leadership of the Tennessee Valley Authority, 1933-1990* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

<sup>23</sup> Michael McGerr, Review of Erwin G. Hargrove, *Prisoners of Myth: The Leadership of the Tennessee Valley Authority, 1933-1990*, Princeton Studies in American Politics: Historical, International, and Comparative Perspectives, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994, Pp, xvi, 374.

<sup>24</sup> Philip Selznick, *TVA and the Grass Roots, A Study in Politics and Organization*, 2nd ed. (New Orleans, LA: Quid Pro Books, 2011).

the hierarchy of the Authority for future projects and the delegation of land and resources was run by a protective ideology consumed by regional special interests.

M.L. Downs in *Transforming the South: Federal Development in the Tennessee Valley, 1915-1960*,<sup>25</sup> has written a focused history of the economic, cultural and political impacts of the Tennessee Valley Authority's energy and development projects. Downs attempts to connect the initial intentions of the many development programs proposed and created by the TVA to the reality of how these policies unfolded and affected the populations they were designed to serve. Overall, Downs gives the reader an historically grounded interpretation of the ways in which the TVA transformed from the New Deal's inception into the nineteen sixties.

The purpose of this investigation is not to retell the story of the UFBDA,<sup>26</sup> nor to reinforce or specifically come up with an original conclusion that explains the multifaceted relationship between the TVA and the people they historically existed to serve over time. Some of the factors that brought the UFBDA into existence to challenge the TVA's claims for economic and resource development<sup>27</sup> are unique to the specific project proposed for the Upper French Broad, which should not be ignored. However, the ideas, values and principles that undergirded the UFBDA movement pre-existed any attempt to dam and channel the French Broad in the late 1960's. Moreover, the series of events that mediated the conflict of interests between the UFBDA and the TVA was one of the first times local citizens successfully engaged and injected their right to due process to challenge a TVA project since its inception. Although

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<sup>25</sup> M. L. Downs, *Transforming the South: Federal Development in the Tennessee Valley, 1915-1960*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014).

<sup>26</sup> The work of Savannah Paige Murray, Stuart Massey and Martha Boswell, the UFBDA's head secretary, when synthesized, tell a comprehensive story of the UFBDA.

<sup>27</sup> Cooperative Plan for Economic Growth. Tennessee Valley Authority. Study Knoxville, Tennessee. September, 1967. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Collection. Box 2. File (2).

this may be due to the fact that the TVA was unsure of its purpose at the time,<sup>28</sup> the intersectional values that Kathryn Newfont exposes to construct the concept of the commons connected past, present, and future within the grass roots UFBDA movement that opposed the TVA.

Furthermore, although due process is established as a principal assumption and right in the constitution,<sup>29</sup> McDonald and Muldowny, among other historians that have added to the historiography on the TVA, make clear that when it comes to the process the Authority utilized in the past for impounding land in the name of social, developmental and technological progress, due process<sup>30</sup> for local communities and individuals has not always existed. Nevertheless, the conflict between the UFBDA and the TVA, which directly challenged the standard procedures and exercise of powers granted to the TVA over time, was ultimately defined by one journalist covering the conflict as, the “Democratic Processes Beats the TVA.”<sup>31</sup>

One of the principle reasons why previous investigations into the UFBDA have not focused on putting the movement into broader historical context is that the genesis of infrastructure proposals for the Upper French Broad was fluid and difficult to trace to one specific moment in time. “Following devastating floods in August 1940 TVA began to prepare

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<sup>28</sup> Erwin C. Hargrove, *Prisoners of Myth: The Leadership of the Tennessee Valley Authority 1933- 1990* (Knoxville, 1994), 4-8.

<sup>29</sup> Section One of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution states that “nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” Accessed October 21, 2016. <https://www.congress.gov/constitution-annotated/>

<sup>30</sup> Throughout this paper the assumption correlated with the application of the concept of due process is that individual citizens at least have access to the political decision making process concerning their property and issues concerning their community.

<sup>31</sup> Mark Ethridge III, “Democratic Processes Beats the TVA.” *The Charlotte Observer*. November 26, 1972. Upper French Broad Defense Association: General Records, State Archives of North Carolina, Western Regional Archives, Asheville N.C., Box 3, Folder (9).

a flood control plan for the North Carolina portion of the French Broad Watershed.”<sup>32</sup> Years later, as Martha Gash Boswell, the head secretary for the the UFBDA contends, “On the invitation of an ad hoc Western North Carolina flood control committee,”<sup>33</sup> brainstorming for comprehensive development projects were initiated and published by the TVA in 1940, interrupted by World War Two, and then in the early 1960’s, growth, development, and resource management strategies began to resurge from special interests and interrelated state and federal agencies.<sup>34</sup>

Although the August 1940 flood mainly affected Mills River and low lying areas around the City of Asheville, the Upper French Broad region in general had been historically vulnerable. In response, infrastructure projects to ameliorate water overflow had been in common circulation since such large scale projects were conceivable.<sup>35</sup> In 1961, and then again in April 1966, after further bouts of flooding, the State Planning Task Force under the direction of Governor Dan Moore,<sup>36</sup> started reevaluating the possibility of infrastructure projects that would solve or reduce the negative effects of rain overflow.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, after Governor Moore asked relevant agencies to consult each other for potential solutions, state department heads began reaching out to the TVA to consider a regional resource management system. Eventually, as the scope of the project expanded, not only did the TVA go from consultant for

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<sup>32</sup> Aelred J. Gray and David A. Johnson, *The TVA Regional Planning and Development Program: The Transformation of an Institution and Its Mission*, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub Ltd, 2005), 67.

<sup>33</sup> Boswell, 2.

<sup>34</sup> Boswell, 2-3.

<sup>35</sup> M. H. Satterfield, “TVA-State-Local Relationships.” *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 40, no. 5, 1946, P. 984. [www.jstor.org/stable/1949561](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1949561). 935-936.

<sup>36</sup> “Remarks by Governor Dan Moore on Occasion of First Anniversary of State Planning Task Force,” April 18, 1966. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Collection. Box 1 Folder 8.

<sup>37</sup> Boswell, 3-5.

potential development to taking over as manager, but abstract proposals began to show signs of materializing in the near term as geographical surveys and economic and environmental impact statement outlining the affected areas were circulated.

As the proposal process began churning again in the 1960's conflict reignited within and across the regional community. Although Madison county, which was a 100% poverty area and where 67% of the families had incomes of less than \$3,000 a year,<sup>38</sup> maintained support for development funded by federal largesse throughout the proposal process, Buncombe, Henderson and Transylvania counties were a different story. Not only were the tax bases much broader in these counties but so was the spectrum and diversity of private and public interests concerning the TVA's plans.<sup>39</sup> For Buncombe county, three dams that were proposed would have affected over 75 families and put a large piece of Warren Wilson's campus under water. However, a \$6 million levee that was part of the proposal, designed specifically to protect Asheville's narrow industrial park area and also bring a long-term water source from TVA's proposed infrastructure became a wedge between certain private and public interests.<sup>40</sup> While this part of the project, and other infrastructure proposed to specifically support private trade interests in Henderson county persuaded both county's representatives to originally be "indifferent"<sup>41</sup> to the loss of thousands of acres of fertile farmland,<sup>42</sup> Transylvania county maintained opposition. Hale Siniard Jr. a representative for the county commissioners office in

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<sup>38</sup> Boswell, 3- 4.

<sup>39</sup> Due to among other reasons population density in the proposed impounded areas for Buncombe, Henderson and Transylvania counties.

<sup>40</sup> UFBDA, "Impact of the Proposed TVA Project," 1:189-249, folder 7, box 3, UFBDA Records WRA.

<sup>41</sup> Boswell, 4.

<sup>42</sup> And hundreds of established family's and cultural artifacts, specifically in Mills River.

Transylvania put forth a statement in the *Transylvania Times*, on December 14, 1967, that “Transylvania voted against this project as it would take over one-third of our farm land, industry sites and ruin our county.”<sup>43</sup>

From 1967 to 1970, as interests both private and public took sides on the pending project, those in opposition, who were meeting at the scarce opportunities to challenge the proposal,<sup>44</sup> went from atomized individuals to coalescing into a grassroots organization. Moreover, while the original catalyst against the project came from Transylvania citizens and also those in Mills River who were about to lose their property, as enough locals in the surrounding region were educated on the massive scope of the TVA’s proposal, support for the opposition swelled. Coalescence began to culminate into concentrated political action during “The crown of the year,” referring to 1969, where “Brittain’s address at the December meeting of the Conservation Council of North Carolina, was followed by a resolution for a public hearing and for TVA to ‘immediately suspend all activities’ until impartial agencies assessed the total impact of the project.”<sup>45</sup> As Jere Brittain, originally just a concerned citizen that later become the UFBDA’s chairman, made his case against the viability of the TVA’s environmental and economic impact statements,<sup>46</sup> he successfully persuaded the Conservation Council to use its authority to put the brakes on the project for further review. This opened up a

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<sup>43</sup> Hale Siniard Jr. “Statement on the TVA Project,” *Transylvania Times*, on December 14, 1967. Upper French Broad Defense Association: General Records, State Archives of North Carolina, Western Regional Archives, Asheville, N.C., USA. Box 3. File (7).

<sup>44</sup> Such as community and business organization meetings in Buncombe, Henderson, Haywood and Transylvania counties; public hearings specifically for the community to dialogue with county commissioners, who had a large say in the acceptance or denial of the TVA project, and political rallies specifically for Charles Taylor, a republican running for State House representing Transylvania county in a heavily democratic area that was the first, and for a long time, the only, regional politician against the Upper French Broad Development Project. See Boswell, pg 5-14.

<sup>45</sup> Boswell, 14.

<sup>46</sup> Bowman, 50-55.

short window of opportunity for those against the project to collectively figure out the best strategy to achieve their goals and stop the TVA from taking access and control of the Upper French Broad River.

A month after, coinciding with a “preliminary meeting” that eventually established the UFBDA as an official non profit, which was held on September 8th, 1970 at the Mills River Community Center<sup>47</sup> President Johnson who had budgeted \$3.3 million for the Mills River portion of the project<sup>48</sup> was succeeded by Richard Nixon who only appropriate \$300,000 into his budget.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, on January 1, 1970, just a few months before the UFBDA became an official organization, the Environmental Protection Act, which Boswell calls “the magna carta of ecologists,” became effective. This piece of legislation established that full justification for the impact of any major construction on the environment and the economy was now required.”<sup>50</sup> The NEPA act not only generated further legal and political impasse between the TVA and the UFBDA, but also was a turnaround in purpose for national legislation which for decades had given broader jurisdiction to unelected Federal Agencies over state water and land rights.<sup>51</sup>

As noted before, dissension had not only been between the TVA and local citizens, but the Upper French Broad Economic Development Commission in 1970, and through 1971, “still

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<sup>47</sup> Jere Brittain. “First Anniversary Newsletter.” October 23, 1971. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Association Collection. Box 1. Folder (5).

<sup>48</sup> Marjorie Hunter, “Sharp Cuts Seen: Both Sides in Congress Predict Reduction in Domestic Funds” *New York Times*, January 25, 1967.

<sup>49</sup> Boswell, 15. The signing into law of the NEPA Act and the change in the money appropriated for the Mills River project in the federal budget when Nixon took over cannot be overlooked in context to the chronology of events relevant to the conflict between the UFBDA and TVA.

<sup>50</sup> Boswell, 15.

<sup>51</sup> This concept will be discussed in more depth later on.

held that a large majority of our river people supported TVA.”<sup>52</sup> The UFBEDC,<sup>53</sup> which not only had direct access to individuals on committees in the state legislature, but also economists appointed to the President’s Budget Bureau, still maintained four years after it had executed its only public survey of the dam and channel project that there was a preponderance of support for the TVA. On March 2, 1970, S.V. Griffith, the executive secretary of the UFBEDC, presented to the Western Regional Planning and Development board, which also had to approve certain details of the project, and state representatives in the legislature, that “there is general approval of the impoundment.”<sup>54</sup>

The confusion for where public opinion stood continued on July 8th as a chairman for the UFBEDC, David Felmet, circulated an extensive list of corporate endorsements ranging from the “State of North Carolina to a Haywood County Volunteer Fire Department.” Boswell contends that even though the “list seems factual for 1966, though odd errors were found in the Brevard records,” by 1970 a number of organizations the UFBEDC claimed still supported the project, even though no new public survey had been executed, had shifted their allegiance publically.<sup>55</sup> The establishment in Raleigh,<sup>56</sup> the UFBEDC and other special interest groups including the Chamber of Commerce and regional trade organizations, had either not come to the realization that public support had shifted, were myopic about the purpose of the project,

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<sup>52</sup> See, “Referendum Proposal On Flood Plan Rapped.” *Asheville Citizen Times*. Saturday, October 31, 1970. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Association Collection. Box 1. Folder (12), for a review of dissension between the UFBDA and UFBEDC. Both organizations claim to represent “the people” even though the UFBEDC chairman, David Felmet, is against a public referendum. Also see Boswell, 16.

<sup>53</sup> Not to be confused with UFBDA.

<sup>54</sup> Boswell, 16.

<sup>55</sup> Boswell, 16.

<sup>56</sup> Bowman, 56.

only cared about their commercial interests, or refused to critically investigate the likelihood of success for claims made in the TVA's economic and environmental impact statements.

The notion that public support was still behind the TVA could no longer be propagated after the proceedings of 1970 and 1971 as membership for the UFBDA surged passed 700.<sup>57</sup> On May 19, 1971, a delegation representing those against the TVA, including Jere Britain, went to Washington to meet committees in the House and Senate. Britain's testimony to the Senate Subcommittee on Public Works not only outlined all of the inaccuracies within the environmental and economic impact statements and the reasons why such an extensive project was unnecessary and contradicted recent NEPA legislation<sup>58</sup> but also the mismanagement and lack of transparency of the proposal process. The UFBDA's testimony forced the TVA and UFBEDC's representative, David Felmet, at the committee hearing the next day to admit that there was "token opposition... on Mills River... largely from what we classify in our area as 'birders,' and Sierra Club members who can't climb two flights of stairs to a hearing. Felmet further defined 'birders' as city people and transplants that don't want any industrial improvement."<sup>59</sup>

Even though a Mr. Bousquet, who had been a clerk for the Public Works Committee for twenty years, stated that Britain's testimony "was one of the finest and the most thoroughly documented he had ever heard given before this committee,"<sup>60</sup> the Senators on the Committee

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<sup>57</sup> Boswell, 17.

<sup>58</sup> Specifically that of section 102 of the act which "specifically provides that the [Environmental] Impact Statement reveal irretrievable loss of resources, alternatives to the proposed action, and any adverse environmental effects." See, Bowman, 60. Accessed January 24, 2017. <https://energy.gov/nepa/downloads/national-environmental-policy-act-1969>

<sup>59</sup> Boswell, 17.

<sup>60</sup> Boswell, 17

moved to appropriate the \$4 million needed for the Mills River portion of the project. Martha Boswell, whose recording of the proceedings throughout the proposal process was meticulous takes offense to the idea that those against the project and constitute the UFBDA were “birders.” She states that most of the families apart of the UFBDA come from “pioneer stock” and not transplants but have long histories living in the western part of the state. Furthermore, the most advantageous news that developed during the UFBDA’s time in Washington was that the Charles Taylor, a member of the state House of Representatives that was against the TVA’s plan and allying with the UFBDA had pushed a bill requiring the TVA to grant a public hearing and referendum that had been requested since 1963 back in the state legislature. Reinforced by specific language in the newly established NEPA Act, “This sly addendum passed unnoticed and the trap snapped shut” claims Boswell. “The TVA shortly announced a hearing for August 31 at University of North Carolina at Asheville.”<sup>61</sup>

As the hearing date crept closer, the UFBDA worked hard to reinforce and garner new support for their cause directly at the grassroots level. However, UFBDA members were also skeptical that a referendum would ever be offered and decided to do everything in their power to get three Republicans, who were all against the TVA’s plans, elected as county commissioners in the upcoming election in Transylvania county. The UFBDA decided that their cause should be tied to these commissioners, who had unilateral authority to stop the TVA, and that riding a wave of fiscal conservatism across the state and country at the time would be a successful strategy.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Jere Brittain. “News Release.” August 27, 1971. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Association Collection. Box 1. Folder (12).

<sup>62</sup> See Bowman, 61.

The grassroots movement behind the UFBDA came to a climax during the only official public hearing during the first week of September 1971. Not only did a substantial anti TVA crowd show up to UNCA that day but the TVA was forced to “extend the hearing dates”<sup>63</sup> as over 300 requests were received to make statements against the project.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, a few months after the hearing, the three Republican County commissioners supported by the anti-TVA movement won their elections, hammering the last nail in the coffin for the proposed flood control project. The TVA announced on November 14, 1972, a week after the county commissioner elections, that they were relinquishing their project along the Upper French Broad. The New York Times reported three days later that “Yesterday, a TVA official said that, with the project ‘caught up in budget limitations’ and the growing concern for environmental protection, ‘there has been an inevitable erosion of interest’ by local government.”<sup>65</sup> While J. Miles Cary, a journalist for the Knoxville Journal, that the TVA’s withdrawal was “an all too rare display of bureaucratic obedience to clearly expressed public will.”<sup>66</sup> A few months later, the Board of the Directors of the UFBDA put out a news release headlined Personal Note to the Members and Friends of the UFBDA, stating that

“Thanks to the work, money, influence, and votes supplied by each member and friend of UFBDA, fourteen beautiful valleys have escaped destruction at the hands of the Tennessee Valley Authority. It is reassuring to find that a determined group of

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<sup>63</sup> Jere Brittain. “News Release.” August 27, 1971. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Association Collection. Box 1. Folder (12).

<sup>64</sup> “TVA Extends Hearing on Dam Project, Asheville Times. August 27, 1971. Upper French Broad Defense Association: General Records, State Archives of North Carolina, Western Regional Archives, Asheville N.C., USA. Box 1. File (5).

<sup>65</sup> E.W. Kenworthy. “TVA Drops Plans for 14 Dams Along River in North Carolina.” *New York Times*. November 17, 1972. Accessed September 24, 2016. [http://www.nytimes.com/1972/11/17/archives/tva-drops-plan-for-14-dams-along-river-in-north-carolina.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/1972/11/17/archives/tva-drops-plan-for-14-dams-along-river-in-north-carolina.html?_r=0)

<sup>66</sup> J. Miles Cary, “Stopped in Its Tracks.” The Knoxville Journal. November 15, 1972. Upper French Broad Defense Association: General Records, State Archives of North Carolina, Western Regional Archives, Asheville, N.C., USA. Box 3. File (9).

concerned citizens can participate effectively within our system. We were able to influence both public opinion and government policy. There can be little doubt that this experience has sharpened our sensitivity to the opportunities indeed the obligations of citizenship.”<sup>67</sup>

Although the UFBDA came about specifically to fight the TVA, the larger historiographical questions of why the TVA’s project was so controversial and disconnected from the public’s own conception of their interests goes largely unanswered throughout Boswell’s record. The values and principles behind the UFBDA existed before the TVA proposed the 1967 project to dam and channel the Upper French Broad. Moreover, to fully understand the disconnect between Western North Carolina citizens and centralized government bureaucracies such as the TVA, one cannot start at the group’s inception. Considering that history does not start or stop at dates we might find useful as categories in the moment, we must aggregate and synthesize the relevant events that precede the time of interest. This is why the confluence of factors that brought the TVA and UFBDA into contact must be contextualized with the pieces of legislation that gave jurisdiction to modern governmental agencies over environmental resources in the region.

In 1911 congress enacted “a watershed piece of legislation” called the Weeks act, which “began a process that ultimately resulted in federal purchase of over 24 million acres in the East for national forests.”<sup>68</sup> This act authorized the federal government to protect, by purchase through the newly created National Forest Reservation Commission, “forestlands in the headwaters of navigable streams,” and “gave consent for states to enter into compacts for the purpose of conserving forests and water supplies, and authorized federal matching of funds for

**Commented [4]:** This paragraph seems to be a transition from the blow-by-blow political moves to analysis of these moves, but it's hard to tell exactly what the author's objectives are here.

**Commented [5]:** So we've gone from the 1970s to 1911? Confusing organization. Background might be better placed just after the historiographical section?

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<sup>67</sup> Board of Directors, UFBDA. “News Release, A personal Note.” February 15, 1973. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Association Collection. Box 1. Folder (12).

<sup>68</sup> Newfont, 69.

approved state agencies to protect forested watersheds of navigable streams.”<sup>69</sup> This act not only constructed the legal framework for federal and state purchases of property in order to “protect forested watersheds,” but was reinforced over the next two decades by the Clarke McNary Act in 1924, which “eliminated the purchase restriction to watersheds of navigable streams and increased the matching of funds for state forestry agencies,” and the Woodruff-McNary Act of 1928, which “greatly increased authorization for purchase.”<sup>70</sup> These pieces of legislation and the powers of control they granted to federal and state governmental agencies were not only the precursors to the initiation of the National Park Service, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Appalachian Regional Commission, but also where the original language that defined the future jurisdiction of the Authority came from.<sup>71</sup>

What do these pieces of national legislation, including the NEPA act, have to do with the uphill political battle the UFBDA undertook against the TVA almost half a century later? In the words of Wilma Dykeman and her husband James Stokely, from a piece written in 1970 in the *Tennessee Valley Perspective*<sup>72</sup> concerning the historical relationship between TVA and the progress of the region, “yesterday and tomorrow coexist in today.”<sup>73</sup> Dykeman, while

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<sup>69</sup> Richard Davis, “Encyclopedia of American Forest and Conservation History.” New York: Macmillan, 1983. Vol. Two, p. 685.

<sup>70</sup> Davis, 685.

<sup>71</sup> United States act of Congress, Tennessee Valley Authority Act, May 18, 1933.  
[https://www.tva.com/file\\_source/TVA/Site%20Content/About%20TVA/TVA\\_Act.pdf](https://www.tva.com/file_source/TVA/Site%20Content/About%20TVA/TVA_Act.pdf) . 1.

<sup>72</sup> A Quarterly Magazine funded by the TVA.

<sup>73</sup> Wilma Dykeman and James Stokely “The Changing Tennessee Valley Region” *Tennessee Valley Perspective*, Fall 1970. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Collection. Box 1 Folder 8. 1.

illuminating the “natural and human paradox”<sup>74</sup> within the Tennessee River Valley and how the TVA has in certain ways bridged the “gap between natural bounty and economic necessity,” reflected with a “modern resident” who stated that “Time and again people pass through and look at our scenery and tell us we live in the Promised land. They’re right. We’ve been promised more and gotten less than any folks in this country.”<sup>75</sup>

Although Dykeman and Stokely were not necessarily arguing for wholesale support of the TVA’s plan for the Upper French Broad, nor specifically past value the TVA had brought to the region, they do state that

Perhaps it is significant that the place where this man lives is part of one of the newest tributary area development associations spearheaded by TVA and composed of five Little Tennessee River counties in southwestern North Carolina. This may be another important move to translate national promises into community practicalities and render the local human scene more compatible with nature’s magnificence.<sup>76</sup>

Dykeman and Stokely articulate throughout the article, with an engaging literary style native to them, that integration of the culture and history of the valley peoples with futuristic ideas of social progress would not only be complicated but so would their relationship with the institutions claiming to bring such positive change. As “The philosopher Heraclitus has told us, ‘Nothing is; everything is becoming.’ So it is with this region. Old and familiar as they seem, neither the Tennessee Valley nor its people are easy to pinpoint, examine, and describe.”<sup>77</sup>

As Dykeman and Stokely so deftly outlined, the complex historical relationship between the peoples of the valley and the political bodies that have existed to govern them over time had been fraught. The idea of progress for those that came to the valley in search of freedom did not

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<sup>74</sup> Dykeman, 5.

<sup>75</sup> Dykeman, 6.

<sup>76</sup> Dykeman, 6.

<sup>77</sup> Dykeman, 10.

come from hierarchical organizations such as the TVA, but was rooted in “the fierce individualism and self-reliance of the early frontiersman.”<sup>78</sup> As Boswell states, the progeny of these frontiersmen, among national environmental groups such as the Sierra, made up and supported the UFBDA. Historical and cultural artifacts had been passed down through values that have existed longer than any specific political establishment or technological advancement allowing the idea of flood control to be possible. Moreover, the value systems of individualism and self-reliance for the valley people was *directly* intertwined with their dependence on the resources from the surrounding forests and rivers. These systems could only exist if those maintaining them continued to have control over the rules and regulations that governed the communities relationship with the natural environment.

Although nobody past or present has been able to comprehend and express the history and culture of the Valley People better than Wilma Dykemen, her claim that the upper French Broad project “is part of one of the newest tributary area development associations spearheaded by TVA and composed of five Little Tennessee River counties in southwestern North Carolina” was not exactly accurate. As Martha Boswell clarified, “Nine western counties were offered economic growth, flood control, tourism, and recreation at federal expense and on an overpowering scale”<sup>79</sup> since 1942. While four counties in western North Carolina, Cherokee, Clay, Graham and Swain had taken the TVA up on their offer, the counties that had originally opposed the manufacturing of flood control and economic development were never off the Agency’s radar. Moreover, “by 1970 the taxpayer’s total investment in this project amounted to

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<sup>78</sup> Dykeman, 10.

<sup>79</sup> Boswell, 2.

\$1.5 million, even though TVA's 1966 recommendation turned out to be almost a carbon copy of the 1942 report."<sup>80</sup>

The TVA, as it proposed to dam and channel the Upper French Broad, was attempting to materialize what many citizens, including Wilma Dykeman, originally believed would be a worthwhile attempt at social, technological and economic development. What the Authority, as an institution, was unconscious of or unable to integrate into their plans is what Newfont organizes as a *de facto* challenge to the *de jure* rules and regulations that many in the affected areas culturally subscribed to. The Upper French Broad project did not exist in a vacuum but was part of a multi decades process where state and federal governments had been taking control over access to land and resources by purchases and powers granted through legislation from the Weeks act in 1911, up to the attempt to impound over 18,000 acres in the late 1960's in Western North Carolina. As Newfont states, changes to the commons system through government legislation over time had turned the "the long-standing *de facto* forest commons" into "a *de jure* commons owned by the federal government and regulated by federal and state agencies."<sup>81</sup>

Although Newfont goes on to explain some of the benefits of these changes, specifically, standardized rules and regulations that created more sustainable environmental practices, less volatile arbitration of claims to commons resources, and, to "eventually enable local people to combat these threats in ways that would have been nearly impossible if the forests had been privately owned,"<sup>82</sup> the TVA was unable to communicate, expand upon, or

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<sup>80</sup> Boswell, 2.

<sup>81</sup> Newfont, 73.

<sup>82</sup> Newfont, 73.

combine the affected populations cultural values with the benefits the Agency projected to materialize. Instead, the bureaucracy was focused on the “difficulty in placing the flood control plan within a context of overall area development” and that the “TVA had given much thought and spent considerable money on the TVA plan and that any study group should not start all over again as if a flood control plan did not exist.”<sup>83</sup>

What the TVA, and special interest groups in favor of the dam and channel project were unable to reconcile, or even consider, was that local access and control to regional environmental resources had been an underlying community foundation that many citizens against the project believed was being permanently threatened. Moreover, the TVA not only failed to substantiate its capacity for delivering promises embedded in the current projects economic and environmental impact statements,<sup>84</sup> but skepticism was reinforced by contradictions between claims made before past development projects with the material conditions on the ground years later.<sup>85</sup> Jere Britain, a prominent public representative and the group’s chair, thoroughly exploited these false claims in letters to both state and federal congresses, specifically the Public Works Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and other limited avenues for challenging the TVA throughout the proposal process.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Gray and Johnson, 68.

<sup>84</sup> UFBDA, “Impact of the Proposed TVA Project,” folder 7, box 3, UFBDA Records WRA.

<sup>85</sup> This premise is reinforced by many investigations into the TVA’s past, including all of the surveys cited in this work. For example, although the TVA had constructed multiple hydroelectric power generation installations by this time, over 90 percent of the region’s electricity was still powered by coal despite the fact that a principal goal for the TVA for years had been to provide a majority of the Valley with subsidized hydroelectric power. TVA. “1966 Annual TVA Report.” Chattanooga Tennessee. 1996. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Collection. Box 7, Folder (1).

<sup>86</sup> Murray, 54-61.

One of the reasons for the disparities in the environmental and economic impact statements for the Upper French Broad project proposal was the fact that the TVA had been going through a transition in its overall mission for over a decade. Accordingly, the process of re-organizing and reprioritizing the principal goals for the Authority had only made the disconnect between the purpose of developing the Tennessee River Valley with local and regional needs unclear. As Aelrod J. Gray, the former chief of regional planning for the TVA and David A. Johnson, Professor Emeritus at the University of Tennessee assert, “By the mid 1950’s TVA had virtually completed the water improvement program as envisioned in its 1936 report to Congress, *The Unified Development of the Tennessee River System*. In fact, 1954 marked the first time in 21 years that TVA did not have a major system dam under construction,”<sup>87</sup> adding another factor in which to fully understand the scope and reasons for the conflict that ensued with the UFBDA.

The Upper French Broad project had come about at the end of the TVA’s transition from its original purpose in 1936 to the TVA’s own reassessment of its place in the region. One of these changes was that the TVA no longer maintained funding directly from Congress for projects and had to rely on its own power production as a revenue source. “In 1957, for example, out of a total budget of \$186.6 million, \$177.6 million was allocated to the power program with but \$9 million going to all non-power functions.”<sup>88</sup> This forced change in revenue source from Congress not only incentivised new dam projects to create proceeds for future operations, but also justified new project ideas tied, “although in some cases tenuously, to the

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<sup>87</sup> Gray and Johnson, 61.

<sup>88</sup> Gray and Johnson, 60.

river improvement program” established by the “original TVA Board”<sup>89</sup> in 1936 which had been largely ignored for decades. Furthermore, the TVA was not the only circumstance relevant to our story that was going through a transformation of its mission, but so were the demographic and economic patterns which had characterized the South since the nation was founded. Increasing urbanization added to the impetus of the idea of “transformation” from within the “TVA’s fostering of industrialization not only in the Tennessee Valley but also the entire South.”<sup>90</sup> All of which added to the landscape in which the UFBDA and TVA came to a head as the TVA sought to justify its existence and create future value and demand for its services.

For many Western North Carolina citizens, cultural values existed indivisibly with maintaining local control over their environment, which is only reinforced in Massey’s analysis when he states in his conclusion that “The legacy of the Upper French Broad Defense Association did not end with TVA’s decision to cancel their plans for the Upper French Broad.” In June of 1990, Western North Carolina residents and offspring of UFBDA members coalesced to fight another development proposals which included Mills River as a possible drinking source for nearby municipalities. Decades after the Upper French Broad dam and channel project had been abandoned, Massey claims that although it was generations later, the descendants of the UFBDA and those transplants passionate about maintaining access and control over their rivers “organized for the same purpose.”<sup>91</sup> Why? Because the ideas that

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<sup>89</sup> Gray and Johnson, 61.

<sup>90</sup> Gray and Johnson, 60.

<sup>91</sup> Massey, 21.

undergirded the UFBDA movement pre-existed any attempt to dam and channel the French Broad to fight the TVA in the late 1960's.

What Massey alludes to, and Murray more explicitly investigates in her work is that the underlying values which set the groundwork for why peoples with diverse and arguably divergent interests were able to put their differences aside to fight the TVA, such as with the UFBDA, had been passed down for decades. The UFBDA movement was set within the historical precedents of what Newfont calls commons environmentalism and native in certain ways to the region. Additionally, the premise of the commons as a set of cultural ideas rooted in Western North Carolina is bolstered by the revitalization of the values which anchored the UFBDA in the early 1990's, a generation later, to keep the French broad a free flowing river under local control. Not only was the disconnect between the TVA and interest groups such as the Upper French Broad Economic Development Commission with the UFBDA political and environmental but more importantly downstream from sociocultural values that were not going to be given up without a fight.

Attempting to come up with one comprehensive framework that explains the entire political relationship between the TVA and the peoples living in the regions the bureaucracy were meant to develop through time is almost certainly doomed for critique. Such an approach not only assumes that the populations living in the Tennessee River Valley were monolithic in perspective, interests and vision for their beloved region, but also that the mission and purpose of the TVA had been consistent over its eighty four year existence. Instead, qualitatively contextualizing and comparatively analyzing and aggregating micro grassroots movements that have existed in support of and against the TVA against each other serves a more grounded and localist interpretation. Although the story of the U.F.B.D.A ought not to be directly labeled

solely under the umbrella of environmental, political, sociological or cultural history, but a confluence of all of the above, the ideas that brought local peoples and eventually national organizations together under the umbrella of environmentalism is a democratic story worth preserving and learning from.

Ideas outlast individuals, but more importantly, have had and will continue to have direct implications on how history unfolds. Cultural and social constructs, such as those that defined the UFBDA, are examples of the factors that determine human behavior, *regardless* of their subjective nature. The idea that environmental resources should be accessible and under local control is not indigenous to western North Carolina, but some western North Carolinians have chosen to steadfastly maintain such a vision. Just as Newfont states that “in the last quarter of the twentieth century, western North Carolina’s forest activists crafted positions and mobilized effective campaigns that drew strength from their region’s commons history and culture.”<sup>92</sup> So too will individuals and groups passionate about local control over their environmental and economic destinies continue to fight corporations, special interests and out of touch governments solely interested in exporting profits or baseless definitions of technological, environmental and cultural progress.

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<sup>92</sup> Newfont, 274.

### Primary Source Bibliography

Barron, John. Statement made by Director of Tributary Area Development of TVA. 14 November 1971. Ramsey Library. Asheville NC. Upper French Broad Defense Collection. Box 4. File (9).

This statement, made by John Barron, the Director for the TVA's upper French Broad River project, signified the official cancellation of the dam project. The TVA administration cites the "waning lack of local support" as the principal rationale for abandoning the project.

Britain, Jere. Council on Environmental Quality Report. Date Unknown. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Association Collection. Box 1. Folder (9). 2.

This source clarifies the relationship between the UFBDA and Sierra Club and elucidates the extent of a common purpose between the two environmental groups.

----- "First Anniversary Newsletter." October 23, 1971. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Association Collection. Box 1. Folder (5).

This source is a compilation of the notes from the first meeting of the UFBDA which established the group's mission statement, goals and purpose. Moreover, this source clarifies the perspective of the UFBDA leadership and why they believed they were just in their interpretation of the law governing whether or not the TVA could impound property for the Upper French Broad project and why the NEPA act is relevant to the conflict between the UFBDA and TVA.

----- "News Release." August 27, 1971. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Association Collection. Box 1. Folder (12).

The tone for this news release compared to others shows how excited UFBDA leadership was about the upcoming hearing and that they were going to make sure to take full advantage of the only public hearing the TVA was finally forced into offering.

Board of Directors, UFBDA. "News Release, A personal Note." February 15, 1973. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Association Collection. Box 1. Folder (12).

This news release, which was circulated to all of the UFBDA members, discusses the UFBDA's success and more importantly why the group was able to stop the TVA from damming and channeling the Upper French Broad.

Boswell, Martha Gash. "Grassroots Along the Upper French Broad: The Valley Versus the Tennessee Valley Authority, 1961-1972,"  
<https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/404282/ufbda-history-original.pdf>.

*Martha Gash Boswell* was not only the head secretary for the UFBDA but also wrote her perspective on the conflict between the UFBDA and TVA in this source. Boswell not only strived to put forth her opinions in this history but aggregated interpretations from both those for and against the project. This source was heavily consulted throughout the research process and weighed against statements and data the TVA was coincidentally putting forth from the 1960's until the project was ultimately terminated.

“Remarks by Governor Dan Moore on Occasion of First Anniversary of State Planning Task Force,” April 18, 1966. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Collection. Box 1 Folder 8.

This source provides an anchor for the reignition of infrastructure proposals by the TVA and State Agencies along the Upper French Broad.

Taylor, Roy. “Withdraw of Support for TVA Project.” September 1971. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Collection. Box 4. Folder (9).

This source provides the date and reasons why the governor no longer supported the TVA project for the Upper French Broad.

*Cooperative Plan for Economic Growth*. Tennessee Valley Authority. Study Knoxville, Tennessee. September, 1967. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Collection. Box 2. File (2).

This initial proposal put out by the TVA not only explains why the dam and channel project is necessary but also claims that the project will bring economic growth and prosperity in the future. In this proposal, the TVA claims that the progress it brought to other counties in North Carolina and the entire Tennessee Valley, will be brought to the French Broad River basin. The bureaucratic rhetoric used throughout this artifact embodies the positivism not only the government, but also, special interests and individuals in favor of the project utilized throughout the litigation period to manipulate the democratic process in their favor.

*Environmental Statement – Mills River Dam and Reservoir*. Tennessee Valley Authority, Office of Health and Environmental Sciences. Chattanooga, Tennessee. June, 1971. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Collection. Box 3. File (11).

This declaration put out by the TVA highlights the rhetoric, lack of balance, and due process applied during the brainstorming and project proposal period. Although there were fourteen dams and over 54 channels suggested by the TVA this is the only official environmental statement that provides proof there was an evaluation of the possible long term cause and effects.

“National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) | Compliance and Enforcement | US EPA.”  
US Environmental Protection Agency. <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/nepa/>

NEPA, signed into law by President Nixon on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1971 was designed by congress to hold government funded projects accountable. This act required project managers, and all subsidiaries to the project, file joint statements that justified the project according to multiple standards that applied to the upper French Broad River dam and channel proposal. Government funded contractors, or corporations, which fail to achieve or act in accordance with these standards are subject to legal action from “governments or private citizens.” NEPA, without a doubt, was seminal to the proposal proceedings.

TVA. “1966 Annual TVA Report.” Chattanooga Tennessee. 1996. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Collection. Box 7, Folder (1).

The data in this report proves that although one of the TVA’s main goals from its inception was to produce enough hydroelectric power to provide cheap energy to those populating the Valley, the Authority was no where near close to their original goal almost 40 years later.

Tennessee Valley Authority Act. “Tennessee Valley Authority Act of 1933.” [48 Stat. 58-59, 16 U.S.C. sec. 831]  
[https://www.tva.com/file\\_source/TVA/Site%20Content/About%20TVA/TVA\\_Act.pdf](https://www.tva.com/file_source/TVA/Site%20Content/About%20TVA/TVA_Act.pdf)

This is the legislation Franklin Roosevelt pushed through congress to establish the TVA as a federal corporation in 1933. This legislation anchors the disconnected official purpose for initiating the TVA in 1933 to the statement of purpose for the upper French Broad River basin proposal. The language used to justify many of the claimed future benefits that would come with damming and channeling the Upper French Broad were inconsistent with the original objectives for creating the TVA.

Dykeman, Wilma and Stokely, James. “The Changing Tennessee Valley Region” *Tennessee Valley Perspective*, Fall 1970. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Collection. Box 1 Folder 8. 1.

This piece gives the reader an understanding of the contentious relationship between the Valley people, the TVA, and Governments in general over time. Nobody had a better understanding of French Broad and the Valley peoples culture and this piece clarified how and why the TVA’s place in that culture was complicated.

#### Newspaper Articles

Miles, Cary J. “Stopped in Its Tracks.” *The Knoxville Journal*. November 15, 1972.  
Org.19, Upper French Broad Defense Association: General Records, State

Archives of North Carolina, Western Regional Archives, Asheville, NC, USA.  
Box 3. File (7).

*This article specifically gives credit to the UFBDA movement for stopping the dam project. Miles compares the movement to past local movements attempting to stop the TVA, and how the UFBDA's success in stopping the TVA was an anomaly not the norm.*

Remer, Donald. "French Broad Plan Irks Asheville," *Asheville Citizen Times*. September 8, 1971. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Association Collection. Box 7. Folder (1).

*The Citizen Times, although did not track the conflict between the UFBDA and TVA meticulously, focused on the fluctuation of public opinion throughout the proposal process. This piece embodies the fluidity of public opinion and how many local citizens were becoming more skeptical of the TVA as more information regarding the scope of the project became available.*

Mark, Ethridge III. "Democratic Processes Beats the TVA." *The Charlotte Observer*. 26 November 1972. Org.19, Upper French Broad Defense Association: General Records, State Archives of North Carolina, Western Regional Archives, Asheville, NC, USA. Box 3. File (9).

*The Charlotte Observer, the Asheville Times, and a few other regional newspapers tracked the upper French Broad River basin dam and channel proposal, especially as public support grew. This article specifically outlines the coalition that supported the UFBDA, and those who engaged the democratic process and deserve credit for fighting the TVA.*

Kenworthy, E.W. "TVA Drops Plans for 14 Dams Along River in North Carolina." *New York Times*. November 17, 1972. Accessed September 24, 2017.  
[http://www.nytimes.com/1972/11/17/archives/tva-drops-plan-for-14-dams-along-river-in-north-carolina.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/1972/11/17/archives/tva-drops-plan-for-14-dams-along-river-in-north-carolina.html?_r=0)

*Article in the New York Times that disusses the reasons why the TVA withdrew its plans for the Upper French Broad because of waning public support.*

"Referendum Proposal On Flood Plan Rapped." *Asheville Citizen Times*. October 31, 1970. Ramsey Library. Asheville N.C. Upper French Broad Defense Association Collection. Box 1. Folder (12).

*This article reinforces that the UFBEDC and TVA continued to propagate that public opinion was on their side for the project where no such evidence existed.*

#### Secondary Source Bibliography

Aelred J. Gray and David A. Johnson, *The TVA Regional Planning and Development Program: The Transformation of an Institution and Its Mission*, Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub Ltd, 2005, 69.

Aelrod J. Gray, the former chief of regional planning for the TVA and David A. Johnson, Professor Emeritus at the University of Tennessee wrote the history of how the TVA's mission and purpose changed over time; specifically during the 1950's and 1960's. They assert that "By the mid 1950's TVA had virtually completed the water improvement program as envisioned in its 1936 report to Congress, *The Unified Development of the Tennessee River System*. In fact, 1954 marked the first time in 21 years that TVA did not have a major system dam under construction."<sup>93</sup> Many critics of the TVA over time claim that the TVA was searching for problems to justify its existence instead of talking to local communities to figure out infrastructure that may actually increase productivity on the ground. This text just adds another contextual factor in which to fully understand the scope and reasons for the conflict with the UFBDA.

Davis, Richard. "Encyclopedia of American Forest and Conservation History." New York: Macmillan, 1983. Vol. Two, p. 685.

This text indepthly explains the technical language that was used by the TVA and how and why the language changed over time. Moreover, Davis delves into the power the TVA Act gave the Authority according to precedent and how the act was interpreted at the time.

Downs, M. L..*Transforming the South: Federal Development in the Tennessee Valley, 1915-1960*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014.

Professor Downs has written a focused history of the economic, cultural and political impacts of the Tennessee Valley Authority energy and development projects. Downs attempts to connect the initial intentions of the many development programs created to the reality of how these policies unfolded. Although Downs is not entirely uncritical of how money funneled to localities from the federal government, he on occasion conflates "local communities" with local and regional special interests, which is a significant difference I will continue to hash out.

Gregg, Sara M. *Managing the Mountains: Land Use Planning, the New Deal, and the Creation of a Federal Landscape in Appalachia*. Yale University Press, 2010.

Professor Gregg has written the history of how federal and state land use policy throughout Appalachia in the 1920's transitioned into the formation of New Deal policy. Greg specifically takes a look at industrial development during "the preceding decades (of the New Deal)," and how "economic depression, erosion, drought, and government policies (preface)" affected the environment, Appalachian farmers and America's future relationship with the region. She specifically looks at all of these developments through an environmental lens.

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<sup>93</sup> Gray and Johnson, 61.

Hargrove, Erwin C. *Prisoners of Myth: The Leadership of the Tennessee Valley Authority, 1933-1990*. Princeton University Press, 1994.

This text has been categorized by the AHA as “the first comprehensive history of the TVA, and is sure to rank as the best introduction for anyone interested in the Tennessee Valley Authority.” Professor Hargrove focuses on the “evolution” of the TVA over six decades and how the intent of related programs match up with the reality on the ground. Although this text is over twenty years old, there are numerous sources that Professor Hargrove collected, and I will continue to mine them for related and valuable outlets.

Massey, Stuart. *Upper French Broad ‘Dam Fighters!’: The Upper French Broad Defense Association Senior Thesis Submitted to The Faculty of the Department of History, University of North Carolina at Asheville, November 26, 2013*. Accessed October 20, 2016. [http://toto.lib.unca.edu/sr\\_papers/history\\_sr/srhistory\\_2013/massey\\_stewart.pdf](http://toto.lib.unca.edu/sr_papers/history_sr/srhistory_2013/massey_stewart.pdf)

Stuart Massey also wrote a short history of the UFBDA and his interpretation is interesting and was helpful while organizing my thoughts on the group. Although Stuart focused on the conflict between the UFBDA and TVA he did not put the group in context of the larger historiography of the western North Carolina region or the TVA’s relationship with local populations. I consulted this source to reinforce my interpretation and weight which events Stuart prioritized against the events I believed were most important.

McDonald, Michael, and John Muldowny. *TVA and the Dispossessed: The Resettlement of Population in the Norris Dam Area*. University of Tennessee Press. 1981.

Although this text was published over thirty-years ago, potentially making the book “outdated,” the data and statistics in the book are still relevant. Anyone researching how the TVA and federal land use policy changed throughout the twenties, into the New Deal, will find the information in Muldowny and McDonald's book informative. The authors focus on a particular community in the Tennessee River basin that was removed; including cemeteries, churches and well over a thousand residents, because the land they were living on was to be dammed for hydroelectric power. This text also stimulated informative, transitional and generational dialectics between historians that were and are interested in related subject matter, which has been resourceful.

Michael McGerr, Review of Erwin G. Hargrove, *Prisoners of Myth: The Leadership of the Tennessee Valley Authority, 1933–1990*, Princeton Studies in American Politics: Historical, International, and Comparative Perspectives, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994, Pp, xvi, 374.

This source was initially used to contextualize and review *Prisoners of Myth* and helped reinforce Hargroves macro perspective.

Murray, Savannah Paige. “United We Stand, Divided We May Be Dammed: Grassroots Environmentalism and the TVA in Western North Carolina,” *The Journal of East Tennessee History* , Vol. 87, 2015.

Savannah Paige Murray investigates in “United We Stand, Divided We May Be Dammed: Grassroots Environmentalism and the TVA in Western North Carolina,” the story of who, what, when, where and why the UFBDA came into existence. Although Murray connects important events which clarify the specifics of the conflict between the TVA and U.F.B.D.A, and why the dam and channel project was doomed for unpopularity from its inception, she does not focus on the historiographical context of the UFBDA and TVA. This source was consulted on multiple occasions to reinforce my interpretation of events and their broader context in the chronology that defines the conflict between the UFBDA and TVA.

Newfont, Kathryn. *Blue Ridge Commons, Environmental Activism and Forest History in Western North Carolina*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2012.

Kathryn Newfont, in *Blue Ridge Commons, Environmental Activism and Forest History in Western North Carolina*, delineates the historical relationship between the peoples of Appalachia and the regional environment. Newfont clarifies, by focusing on the social aspects of environmentalism, the important cultural and political realities that have existed over time in Western North Carolina. The genesis of this centuries old relationship is rooted in the dependency the mountain peoples have had, and continue to have, on the natural resources around them. Instead of the modern conceptualization one may have of the environmental movement, which is almost wholesale against looking at the wilderness as an economic resource, Newfont grounds her interpretation in what she defines as the concept of the commons as. This brand of environmentalism exists and has been passed down through cultural community value systems up and down the spine of Appalachia. Although this kind of environmentalist is subject to “ingroup conflict,” where the foundations of legitimacy are fluid and “change over time,”<sup>94</sup> the nature of commons environmentalism is defined by maintaining communal access and control over their natural resources.

M. H. Satterfield, “TVA-State-Local Relationships.” *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 40, no. 5, 1946, P. 984. [www.jstor.org/stable/1949561](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1949561). 935-936.

This source was used to contextualize the political relationship between the TVA around a decade after the Authority’s genesis and local communities. The data and perspective Satterfield offers was helpful for understanding the controversial process the TVA used to impound land.

Selznick, Philip. *TVA and the Grass Roots, A Study in Politics and Organization*. Quid Pro Books. 2011.

Selznick was a sociologist that lived and ran bureaucracy within the TVA on and off for a decade. This text was originally published in 1949. However, this most recent publication

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<sup>94</sup> Newfont, 17.

has peer analysis from sociologists, economists, and historians that elaborate and critique Selznick's original analysis. The author's insights, focus and peer reviewed critique and analysis is fascinating and contemporarily relevant to any investigation into the TVA. Specifically on differentiating the actual bureaucracy of the TVA, from what communities thought was going to be a more representative grassroots programs. And also, how decisions for the emerging bureaucratic infrastructure and delegation of land and resources, was run by a "protective ideology," consumed by regional special interests.

### [Timeline The UFBDA](#)

Cover Letter:

Dear Dr. Dunn, I believe that in the final draft of my paper I addressed the specific comments and concerns that you, Dr. Pierce and Catherine recommended. I addressed the specific technical annotation and footnote issues you pointed out during the semester. I reorganized the format of the paper into chronological order and was more selective about the ideas and data included therein to focus on educating the reader and my arguments. Additionally, I have made sure that at least 60% of my footnotes are primary sources, since we are miners, and that the primary sources are annotated correctly in the bibliography. I have made sure that the timeline presentation is up to date, includes sources, and is attached to my paper. I have also focused on removing any grammatical errors you and or Catherine pointed out to make sure the reader's focus is on substance and my analysis. I would like to thank Catherine and the History Department staff, all of whom worked hard during my time here at UNCA to improve my critical thinking, writing and communication skills. Moreover, I would like to thank you individually for all of the above and more. We have spent almost two years together investigating topics that range from pre-revolutionary North Carolina history to modern Guatemala. Your passion for teaching, critically examining the past and putting the individual student first is obvious, and all anyone can ask from their professor. The journey so far has been a pleasure and worth every moment.

Regards,

Benjamin