Tennessee Valley Authority Encyclopedia Article

Tennessee Valley Authority

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Tennessee Valley Authority

The idea for the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) emerged with the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt as President of the United States, and it became one of the major symbols of his "New Deal" policies designed to rescue the country from the social and economic problems of the Depression of the 1930s. TVA activities have included improved navigation, flood control, production of electricity (and its distribution to small towns and rural areas), **fertilizer** production, **soil conservation** and stabilization, reforestation, improved **transportation** facilities, and recreational sites.

The TVA was established when Roosevelt signed the Implementing Act in May of 1933. Within a few months of its passage, the Norris Dam and the town of Norris, Tennessee were under construction and the controversy began. Early opponents labeled it "socialistic" and un-American, contrary to the American ideal of private enterprise. The most enduring criticism has been that TVA is too single-minded in its emphasis on power production, especially after hydro-capacity was exhausted and the agency turned first to **coal** and then to **nuclear power** to fuel its **power plants**. TVA has most recently been criticized for being too concerned about profit-making and too little concerned about a project's environmental impacts, such as **air pollution** created by generating plants and effects on **endangered species**.

The Tennessee Valley Authority has, however, effected change in the intended region. Nearly all of the region's farms now have electricity, for example, compared to only 3% in 1933, and the area has been growing economically. It is now closer to the nation's norms for employment, income, purchasing power, and quality of life as measured by jobs, electrification, and recreational facilities. A cleanair plan was initiated in 1998 to cut 170,000 tons of toxic emissions from TVA's coal-fired plants yearly.

See Also

Tellico Dam

Resources

Books

Creese, W. L. *TVA's Public Planning: The Vision, The Reality*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990.

Nurick, A. J. *Participation in Organizational Change: The TVA Experiment*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1985.

Organizations

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