Tennessee Valley Authority land policies: The case of Meigs County, Tennessee

John Sharp Fox

University of Tennessee

Follow this and additional works at: https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_gradthes

Recommended Citation

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact trace@utk.edu.
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by John Sharp Fox entitled "Tennessee Valley Authority land policies: The case of Meigs County, Tennessee." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Geography.

Charles S. Aiken, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY LAND POLICIES: THE CASE
OF MEIGS COUNTY, TENNESSEE

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

John Sharp Fox
March 1977
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Dr. Charles S. Aiken, under whose guidance this thesis was completed, and to committee members Dr. Leonard W. Brinkman, Jr., and Dr. Theodore H. Schmudde, grateful appreciation is given. Appreciation is also expressed to the Tennessee Valley Authority Division of Reservoir Properties and Department of Regional Studies, to the Offices of Tax Assessor and Register of Deeds of Meigs County, Tennessee, and to the residents of the Meigs County portion of Watts Bar Lake.
ABSTRACT

This thesis identifies land acquisition and disposal policies of the Tennessee Valley Authority and analyzes the effects of one acquisition policy and all disposal policies on the Meigs County, Tennessee portion of Watts Bar Lake. The Tennessee Valley Authority has had three land acquisition policies and three land disposal policies from the agency's beginning in 1933 through 1975. Acquisition policies have been (1) the "buy" policy of purchasing half again as much land as was flooded, (2) the "under-buy" policy of purchasing land only if ownership were essential, and (3) the "over-buy" policy of purchasing a wide margin of land around a reservoir. Disposal policies have been (1) the "no-sell" policy of retaining all excess land, (2) the "sell-excess" policy of disposing of excess land that could not be justified for retention, and (3) the "controlled-sell" policy of selling land only if the agency were satisfied that commercial development was assured.

The TVA land policies have had varied effects on land use in the study area. More than half of the excess land purchased under the "buy" acquisition policy in Meigs County for Watts Bar Reservoir has been retained by TVA. The agency has done little to develop retained land. Most of it is idle. Effects of the policies on land sold to the public are reflected in fragmentation, absentee ownership, undesirable development, and inflated prices of lakefront parcels.
In purchasing land for the Watts Bar Project, TVA either should have acquired no excess land or should have purchased a wide margin around the lake.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Meigs County</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Sources</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY LAND ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICIES</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Land Acquisition Policies</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The &quot;Buy&quot; Policy</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The &quot;Under-buy&quot; Policy</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The &quot;Over-buy&quot; Policy</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Land Disposal and Retention Policies</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The &quot;No-sell&quot; Years, 1933-1944</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The &quot;Sell-excess&quot; Period</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. &quot;Controlled-sell&quot; Policy</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL OF LAND FOR THE WATTS BAR PROJECT IN MEIGS COUNTY</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Acquisition of Land</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Disposal of Land</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. EFFECTS OF TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY POLICIES ON LAND RETAINED BY THE AGENCY</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Uses of Retained Land</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Licensing and Leasing of Retained Land</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# V. EFFECTS OF TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY POLICIES ON LAND

### A. Sizes of Tracts Sold by the Tennessee Valley Authority

1. Large Tracts Without Water Access
2. Large Tracts with Water Access
3. Small Tracts with Water Access

### B. Effects of the Termination of Land Sales

### C. The Protective Strip

1. Problems in the Perception of Ownership of the Protective Strip
2. Special Concessions to Lot Owners for Use of the Protective Strip
3. TVA's Opportunity to Control Undesirable Development with the Protective Strip

### D. TVA Policy Effects on Ownership Patterns

### E. Conclusions
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. BUYERS, SIZES, AND PURCHASE PRICES OF TRACTS SOLD AT THE AUCTION AT PEAKLAND POST OFFICE, NOVEMBER 7, 1950.</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. BUYERS, SIZES, AND PURCHASE PRICES OF TRACTS SOLD AT THE AUCTION AT EUCHEE BOAT DOCK, SEPTEMBER 26, 1956.</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. SPECIFICATIONS, PRESENT USES, AND PROPOSED USES OF TRACTS RETAINED BY TVA (XWBR(R) TRACTS)</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. CHARACTERISTICS OF LARGE TRACTS WITHOUT WATER ACCESS</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. CHARACTERISTICS OF LARGE TRACTS WITH WATER ACCESS.</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. CHARACTERISTICS OF SMALL TRACTS WITH WATER ACCESS.</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. LOCATION OF THE WATTS BAR DAM AND RESERVOIR</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. WATTS BAR DAM AND LOCKS</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. WATTS BAR RESERVOIR</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. UNFLOODED LAND OWNED BY THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY IN MEIGS COUNTY ON WATTS BAR RESERVOIR, 1942</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY LAND POLICIES, 1933-1975</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. HYPOTHETICAL RESULTS OF THE &quot;BUY&quot; POLICY</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. HYPOTHETICAL RESULTS OF THE &quot;UNDER-BUY&quot; POLICY</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. HYPOTHETICAL RESULTS OF THE &quot;OVER-BUY&quot; POLICY</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. FARM BOUNDARIES, 1939</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. C. A. CULVAHOUSE FARM, 1942</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. VACANT CULVAHOUSE FARMHOUSE, TEN MILE, TENNESSEE</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. ABANDONED CULVAHOUSE GENERAL STORE, TEN MILE, TENNESSEE</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. EXCESS TRACTS DELINEATED BY TVA</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. TRACTS SOLD AT MASS AUCTIONS</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. MEIGS COUNTY LAND AFFECTED BY THE WATTS BAR PROJECT, 1939-1975</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. OWNERSHIP PATTERNS, SOUTHERN PORTION OF THE STUDY AREA, AUGUST, 1975</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. OWNERSHIP PATTERNS, SOUTH-CENTRAL PORTION OF THE STUDY AREA, AUGUST, 1975</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. OWNERSHIP PATTERNS, NORTH-CENTRAL PORTION OF THE STUDY AREA, AUGUST, 1975</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURE PAGE

19. OWNERSHIP PATTERNS, NORTHERN PORTION OF THE STUDY AREA, AUGUST, 1975 ............................... 55
20. MEIGS COUNTY PARK PLANS, 1954. ................................. 63
21. MEIGS COUNTY PARK PLANS, 1966. ................................. 66
22. SUBDIVISIONS, AUGUST 1975. ................................. 71
23. PLAT MAP OF THE MEIGS SUBDIVISION. ................................. 72
24. STATE ACCESS AREA T-4. ........................................ 76
25. A PORTION OF XWBR-201. ........................................... 84
26. BOATHOUSE AND DOCK ON XWBR-197 ................................. 93
27. BOATHOUSES AND DOCKS ON XWBR-197 ................................. 93
28. THE XWBR-227 SUBDIVISION ........................................... 96
29. SCOTT SUBDIVISION, 1947-1950 ........................................ 97
30. PART OF EUCHEE BOAT DOCK (XWBR-232) AS VIEWED FROM THE SOUTHEAST. ................................. 100
31. PART OF EUCHEE BOAT DOCK (XWBR-232) AS VIEWED FROM THE WEST ........................................... 100
32. PART OF LAKEVIEW TRAILER PARK (XWBR-200) ................................. 101
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the course of United States history, the Federal government has disposed of a tremendous amount of land. Certain Federal programs have necessitated reacquisition of private land. Development of national highways, parks, forests, and reservoirs requires condemnation of private land "for the good of the people." Several land use specialists, including Marion Clawson, have advocated governmental purchase of land for the purpose of controlling development. ¹

Eminent domain is "the inherent sovereign power of the United States, subject to the duty of making just compensation therefor, to appropriate any property within its geographical limits for use in any of its constitutional activities." ² The power of eminent domain is awesome, and governmental agencies use this power in varying ways and degrees. The impacts, good or bad, are felt in affected areas.

The government draws its power of eminent domain from the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which states that "No person shall be . . . deprived of life, liberty, or

¹Lecture by Marion Clawson, Institute for Public Service Conference, Nashville, Tennessee, February 7, 1974.

property without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation." The last three words, "without just compensation," give the government the ability to condemn private land and satisfy the "due process of law." There is no "just reason" clause—only one that assures the second party payment from the first party for what is lost. And the government is assigned the task of deciding the worth of what is taken.

It is difficult to assess the value of condemned land that is taken from an unwilling seller. Market value is the worth usually given to the land. To quote Lowenfeld:

Market value is the price that would be set between a willing seller and a willing buyer and takes into account neither the special value of particular property for the condemnor nor the condemnee's particular need for or attachment to that property.

Market value also does not take into account the "latent value" of a piece of land—the possibility that the land may be worth many times the present market value in a relatively short period of time.

The Tennessee Valley Authority, created in 1933 during the Great Depression, is a governmental agency with the power of eminent domain. The agency has had three principal objectives—(1) flood control in the Tennessee and lower Mississippi valleys, (2) improvement of navigation on the Tennessee River, and (3) generation of cheap electrical power. The initial goal of TVA was construction of a

---

3Excerpt from the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America.

nine-dam chain with navigation locks providing a nine-foot channel from Paducah, where the Tennessee River empties into the Ohio River, to Knoxville, where the Holston and French Broad rivers merge to form the Tennessee (Figure 1). The chain was completed with the closing of the Fort Loudon Dam in 1943. After the initial goal was met, TVA turned its attention to the building of dams on the several tributaries of the Tennessee River and to economic development in its electric power region. With the vaguely worded Tennessee Valley Authority Act of 1933, the agency has experienced few limitations since its inception.

A. Purpose of the Study

After a dam site has been selected by TVA for a proposed reservoir project, the Authority has the difficult task of estimating the amount of property that will be needed for the construction of the dam and for the reservoir. The procedure for estimating the amount of land required has followed different policies, all but one resulting in the purchase of excess land. The agency has at times sought to retain excess land and at other times has sought to sell excess land to the public.

The purposes of this thesis are to describe and analyze the present land uses and ownership patterns in an area where excess land was purchased by the Tennessee Valley Authority for a reservoir

\(^5\) Interview with R. Brown Wright, Department of Regional Studies, Tennessee Valley Authority, Knoxville, April 23, 1974.
Figure 1. Location of the Watts Bar Dam and Reservoir.
and to determine how present uses and ownership patterns have been affected by TVA land purchase, disposal, and retention policies. Obviously, the entire Tennessee Valley Authority system could not be handled in a study of this length. For this reason, the Meigs County portion of Watts Bar Lake was chosen.

In 1939 the United States was winding its way out of the Great Depression. Although there was much tension abroad, most of President Roosevelt's programs at home were beginning to work, and the general domestic outlook was encouraging. The Tennessee Valley Authority was one successful program, and in 1939 the agency was planning and negotiating the purchase of land for the Watts Bar Reservoir, the next-to-last link in the nine-dam chain on the Tennessee River (Figures 1 and 2).

Four counties were involved in the impoundment of the Tennessee River at Watts Bar—Meigs, Rhea, Roane, and Loudon. The reservoir area lay in the Ridge and Valley of east Tennessee, nearly equidistant between Knoxville to the northeast and Chattanooga to the southwest (Figure 1). Rhea, Roane, and Loudon counties had sizeable towns and limited industrial development, but Meigs County had no industry and no urban population. Decatur, the county seat, was a community of 205 persons in 1940.\footnote{United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Vol. 1 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1942), p. 1024.}

\footnote{The bar and creek in the area of the new dam were historically named "Watsy," according to J. Howard Hornsby, a lifetime resident of the area. The Tennessee Valley Authority changed the name to "Watts."}
Figure 2. Watts Bar Dam and Locks.
Authorization for the Watts Bar Project came on March 16, 1939, and actual construction on the dam began on July 1. The Tennessee Valley Authority started filling the reservoir on January 1, 1942, and the first of five generating units (30,000 kilowatts each) went into operation in mid-February.

Watts Bar Reservoir is 72.4 miles long and has an average width of 0.82 miles (Figure 3). The Tennessee Valley Authority purchased 49,486 acres for the lake in fee simple and obtained flowage and easement rights to 5,214 acres. At 745-foot elevation, the reservoir covers approximately 43,100 acres, of which 10,300 acres are the former river channel. Therefore, TVA purchased 16,686 acres of land that were not flooded.

In buying land for the Watts Bar Project, the Tennessee Valley Authority purchased whole landholdings but also created severance tracts by purchasing only parts of certain holdings. The Authority designated each parcel of land purchased with a WBR (Watts Bar Reservoir) number.

The study area for this thesis is all land purchased by the Tennessee Valley Authority between 1939 and 1942 in Meigs County, Tennessee, for the impoundment of the Tennessee River at Watts Bar.

---

8 At the time of construction, the Watts Bar Dam contained the highest single-lift lock in the world (70 feet).


10 Ibid., p. 337.
Figure 3. Watts Bar Reservoir.

Of the 49,486 acres purchased for the Watts Bar Project, 7,394.08 acres were in Meigs County. The 750-foot contour line, five feet above the contour of maximum flooding, is considered by the Authority to define the minimum amount of land needed for reservoir management. In this thesis the 750-foot contour is the dividing line between "reservoir land" and "excess land." The Authority purchased 4,394.68 acres below the 750-foot contour line (Figure 4). Of the 2,999.40 acres purchased above the 750-foot contour, the Authority has retained 1,700.80 acres (56.7 percent) and disposed of 1,298.60 acres (Figure 4).

Beginning in the middle 1940's the Tennessee Valley Authority assessed the excess land that it had acquired for the Watts Bar Reservoir. It was divided and designated with XWBR (Excess Watts Bar Reservoir) numbers. The Authority then auctioned some of the XWBR tracts to the public in compliance with Section 31 of the TVA Act of 1933. Some of the XWBR tracts that were sold have remained intact, some have been merged, and some have been subdivided.

B. Meigs County

Meigs County in the late 1930's was agriculturally oriented. Ninety-three percent of the population was engaged in agriculture, and the remaining 7 percent was employed in woodworking and services.\(^{11}\) The bottomlands of the Tennessee River were more than

\(^{11}\)Department of Regional Planning Studies, Tennessee Valley Authority, Economic Life and Some Major Reservoir in the Spring City (Group I) Portion of the Watts Bar Reservoir Area (1939), p. 3.
Figure 4. Unflooded Land Owned by the Tennessee Valley Authority in Meigs County on Watts Bar Reservoir, 1942.
a mile wide in places; natural flooding posed no major problems to
agriculture. The floods, in fact, were very beneficial, for they
deposited a layer of rich silt over the bottomlands during the idle
months with a "Nile River effect." Rarely did a flood adversely
affect crops. Water above flood stage during the growing season
was not recorded at Kingston from the time of establishment of a
flood gauge station in the late 1800's to the filling of Watts Bar
Reservoir in 1942. Corn and hay were the main bottomland crops,
and beef cattle were raised on the table and uplands. In 1939,
12,812 acres of corn were under cultivation, down 2,644 acres from
the 1929 figure, reflecting the effects of the Great Depression.
Another important crop, strawberries, had fallen from 1,397,398
quarts in 1929 to 469,212 quarts in 1939. This drop in production
was due primarily to the disintegration of the regional market in
Cincinnati, rather than the presence of TVA in the area.

A 1942 report of the TVA Reservoir Property Management Division
assessing pre-flood conditions stated that, "In some localities,

--------------------
12 Land Acquisition Department, Appraisal Section, Tennessee
Valley Authority, Background Appraisal Study of the Watts Bar
Reservoir Area (Rockwood, Tennessee: 1940), p. 34.
13 Interview with Mr. and Mrs. J. Howard Hornsby, Meigs County,
Tennessee, April 27, 1974.
14 United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census,
Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Vol. 1 (Washington:
was 7,694 acres after the impoundment of the Watts Bar Reservoir in
1942. Farmers were allowed to plant the riverbottoms through the
summer of 1941, and they did so with no threat of crop loss due to flooding.
15 Ibid., p. 954.
16 Interview with A. B. Culvahouse, Meigs County, Tennessee,
August 12, 1975.
notably Meigs County, farms were of such small scale and low productivity as to merge into subsistence classifications.\textsuperscript{17} This statement, for the most part, was correct after the flooding of the reservoir; but it was not true when applied to northern Meigs County, the area directly affected by the lake, before the impoundment of the river. Most of the farms away from the river were small with low production, but these farms were not directly affected by TVA. The farms flooded by the lake were large, productive ones, and they employed much of the interior population of the county. These farms were important to the tax base of Meigs County, and after flooding an increased tax burden had to be carried by the upland areas.

Economically, Meigs County today seems to be on the wrong side of the lake. The Tennessee Valley Authority built the original construction camp (now Pete Smith's Resort), the Watts Bar Steam Plant, and the new Watts Bar Nuclear Plant across the river in Rhea County. The nuclear plant has become quite a problem for Meigs County. Many construction workers reside in rented mobile homes in the county and send their children to the county's school system, but there is little direct or indirect compensation from TVA.\textsuperscript{18} Also, farm labor is scarce, for the minimum wage at the nuclear plant for common laborers is $4.89 per hour. Meigs County in

\textsuperscript{17}Reservoir Property Management Department, Tennessee Valley Authority, \textit{Final Report, Population Readjustment, Watts Bar Reservoir Area} (1942), p. 3.

\textsuperscript{18}Interview with J. Dudley Culvahouse, Decatur, Tennessee, May 8, 1974.
effect is a "dormitory" political unit; the majority of the gainfully
employed population works outside the county.\textsuperscript{19}

Meigs County has never had a railroad line, and this fact has
severely hindered industrial development. Industry locating in the
county would be hurt by the lack of competitive bidding for trans­
portation services; water and highway transportation would be the
only choices.\textsuperscript{20} Meigs County's proximity to Interstate 75 could
possibly prove fruitful in the future. The interstate highway
connects Knoxville with Chattanooga, and is located ten miles to
the east.

Land bordering the Watts Bar Reservoir has undergone many
changes since it was purchased by the Tennessee Valley Authority.
The land was not used as intensely as the bottomlands before flooding.
Principal uses were for farmsteads, pasture, and timber. With the
filling of the reservoir, land uses have changed to amenity-oriented
recreation and second-home residences. Land values no longer are
measured in relation to agricultural capacity but in relation of
proximity-to-water. As a result, land ownership patterns have
greatly changed.

C. Sources

Information on which this thesis is based has come from a
variety of primary and secondary sources. The University of Tennessee

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{20}Interview with Jon Loney, Recreational Branch, Division of
Library and Tennessee Valley Authority Technical Libraries were valuable sources for information on the history of TVA and the Watts Bar project. Maps of acquisition and disposal of property by TVA were obtained from the very comprehensive TVA map library. Field-checking by automobile and boat was required to update many of the maps, especially with regard to present land use. Many discussions and interviews were held with land owners, developers, residents of Meigs County, and with TVA personnel in Knoxville and Athens, Tennessee. Considerable personal information, together with various documents and maps, were obtained during these interviews and discussions. Finally, property data for the thesis was gathered from files in the offices of the Register of Deeds and the Tax Assessor in the Meigs County Courthouse, Decatur, Tennessee.

---

Reservoir Properties, Tennessee Valley Authority, Knoxville, Tennessee, April 26, 1974.
A. Land Acquisition Policies

The general policy of the Tennessee Valley Authority since its inception has been to purchase more land for a reservoir than will be flooded, but this policy has, by necessity, been flexible. Defined on the basis of amount of land purchased, TVA has pursued three acquisition policies since 1933: the "buy," the "under-buy," and the "over-buy" (Figure 5). The "buy" policy lasted from 1933 to the mid-1950's, and was interrupted by the "under-buy" policy during World War II. The "over-buy" policy has guided Authority land acquisition since the mid-1950's.

1. The "Buy" Policy

For the majority of its reservoirs, the Tennessee Valley Authority has exercised the "buy" policy of acquiring land, and the Watts Bar project came under it. Under this policy the Authority flooded about two-thirds of the land purchased. For Watts Bar the Authority actually strove to buy half again as much as was flooded. A publication of the Water Control Planning Department of TVA in 1938 stated that:

Overpurchase allowance was determined by laying out a representative number of property lines on the T.R.S. sheets and noting the percentage of overpurchase required to avoid unreasonable severance of the marginal properties
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Acquisition Policy</th>
<th>Disposal Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>TVA Act of 1933</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>BUY</td>
<td>NO-SELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>UNDER-BUY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>BUY</td>
<td>SELL-EXCESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>OVER-BUY</td>
<td>CONTROLLED-SELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5. Tennessee Valley Authority Land Policies, 1933-1975.**
The unit price of the land was based on the advice of the Land Acquisition Department, and the overpurchase allowance of 50 percent of the actual reservoir area agrees with the actual results of former projects that have been completed.¹

Overpurchase of land was justified for three reasons: (1) control of the immediate watershed area, especially around the dam, (2) the lower costs of purchasing entire tracts rather than bearing expensive road relocation and severance costs, and (3) the "elimination of the owners' privilege of holding for a more favorable market."²

The Tennessee Valley Authority thought that the former landowners should have no advantages over the general public with regard to lake access and future waterfront ownership. The landowners felt that they were on the land long before TVA was created and that they should have the first chance to repurchase part of the land that TVA took from them. A weighty argument existed on both sides. With regard to farms severed by the "taking line" for a reservoir, the Authority attempted to adhere to the following policy:

The land owner is to be left in no worse situation after severance than before. If the amount paid for the land purchased, the salvage value of improvements, and the value of the remainder after severance as an independent tract, [are] equal to the value of the original unit, no severance damage has been caused. If the total of the three items mentioned is less than the value of the


²Tennessee Valley Authority, Land Acquisition Department, Appraisal Section, Background Appraisal Study of Watts Bar Reservoir Area (Rockwood, Tennessee: June, 1940), p. 110.
original unit, the difference is the severance damage. This policy must have been difficult to explain to land owners affected by it, for no long-range yields of the affected land were taken into account, only the present situation.

In practice, the acquisition line on a "buy" reservoir was not consistent. The Authority adhered to a metes and bounds system, sometimes following tract boundaries and sometimes not. By purchasing this marginal strip, TVA created a complicated situation (Figure 6). The Authority's control of the immediate watershed area and its influence in general was increased, but it created several continuous and interrupted layers of land in the process. Fragmented landholdings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>private ownership</th>
<th>&quot;backland&quot; (unaffected whole tracts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TVA ownership</td>
<td>&quot;severance tract&quot; (the part of a tract not purchased by TVA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;excess tract&quot; (part of a tract or a whole tract purchased by TVA above the line of maximum flooding)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Hypothetical Results of the "Buy" Policy.

---

3Tennessee Valley Authority, Land Acquisition Department, Departmental Practice Manual, Appraisal Section Manual (revised July, 1940), Section VI, p. 1.
were difficult to piece together and the great increase in number of tracts added to difficulty in managing and regulating the immediate watershed.

2. The "Under-buy" Policy

The "under-buy" policy was in effect between 1942 and 1945. The principal dams built during this period were the Douglas, Fontana, and Cherokee dams on tributaries of the Tennessee River, and the Fort Loudon Dam near Lenoir City, Tennessee. With the "under-buy" policy, the Authority bought entire tracts of land only if they were to be completely flooded or were needed for a specific related program. Flowage easements (containing few stipulations) were acquired if part of a tract was to be inundated. Land was purchased above the line of maximum flooding for access points, malaria control stations, dam reservations, and small recreational parks and wildlife areas (Figure 7). Less than 500 acres above the line of maximum flooding were purchased for the entire Douglas Reservoir Project. 4

Effects of this sparse buying policy are illustrated by the following diagram:

---

4 This figure does not include the dam reservation, construction area, and access roads.
With the "under-buy" policy, the Tennessee Valley Authority's influence on land surrounding a reservoir is small. There was no initial fragmentation of land parcels bordering the lake. The agency has had rights only to the land that it flooded, and, consequently, TVA has had little control over development in the reservoir area.

3. The "Over-buy" Policy

In recent years the Tennessee Valley Authority has purchased much more excess land for reservoirs than during the "buy" period. The "over-buy" policy is essentially the same as the "under-buy" policy in the sense that there is little land fragmentation and resultant severance tracts. Landholdings, for the most part, are purchased intact. The agency maintains complete control over the wide watershed apron of the reservoir and thereby has total control over the future use of the land (Figure 8).

The new "over-buy" policy has been a concerted effort on the part of the Agency, as currently exhibited by the Tellico Project on the Little Tennessee River, to make a profit on the sale of
the private sector and will add two additional transfers between the two sides.

B. Land Disposal and Retention Policies

The Tennessee Valley Authority has had various policies concerning disposal of excess reservoir land. The TVA Act of 1933 is a maze of specific and vague directives outlining the Authority's limitations and responsibilities regarding sale of excess land.

Section 31 of the Act of 1933:

authorizes and directs the Authority, as agent of the United States of America, to sell at public auction after due advertisement to the highest bidder any land purchased by the Authority, in the name of the United States of America, not necessary to carry out plans and projects actually decided upon. . . .

Buffering this directive are section 4(k)(a), authorizing individual sales of property for private recreational purposes, and the vague section 22, authorizing the Authority to create "demonstrations" within the region to illustrate different ways of reservoir development.\(^7\)

The Tennessee Valley Authority has had three policies of land disposal since 1933 (Figure 5, p. 16). The first was the "no-sell" policy, one of not selling excess land to the public. The second policy, the "sell-excess," was an attempt to adhere as closely as possible to section 31 of the TVA Act of 1933. The third, the present "controlled-sell" policy, goes hand in hand with aggressive

\(^7\)The Tennessee Valley Authority Act of the Congress of the United States of America, approved by Congress on May 18, 1933.
TVA development plans and the "over-buy" policy of land acquisition. In assessing disposal and retention policies for reservoirs within the TVA system, the land acquisition policy for each project must be constantly referred to. Also, the Authority has been purchasing and disposing of land within its system simultaneously through time, and the policies cannot be viewed singularly. If the Authority purchased a small amount of land on a reservoir, then land disposal presented no problem to the Agency. If, on the other hand, a large amount of excess land was purchased, different disposal and retention policies affected that land.

1. The "No-sell" Years, 1933-1944

Between 1933 and 1944 the Tennessee Valley Authority sold no land (Figure 8). Because the agency either had purchased little excess land under the "under-buy" acquisition policy or had purchased the specified amount of excess land needed to complete a reservoir project under the "buy" acquisition policy, TVA believed that it possessed no surplus land around its reservoirs. In buying excess land for the Watts Bar Project the Authority had no intention of reselling any of it. According to Ned H. Sayford, who in 1936 was the Director of the Engineering Service Division of TVA:

Altogether there is inherent in public possession of this marginal property, not alone important elements of reservoir protection and control but also unusual opportunities to

---

8 The Board of Directors for several years had declared certain isolated tracts surplus (under Section 31) and had sold them, but the first formal land sales program was initiated in August, 1944.
augment the more obvious benefits of this mammoth public
development. It seems reasonable to say that by acquiring
the bordering areas, the Authority makes it possible not
only to capture and control for the public certain potential
values which otherwise would escape entirely or would accrue
unearned to a few bordering landowners, but to enhance those
values and turn them to public account, in terms of soil
and forest conservation, game preservation, scenic beauty,
opportunities for recreation and wholesome outdoor living,
travel interest, added river business, waterfront betterment
and other values. These with their power to stimulate public
interest and to create new activities, can mean much in
specific returns as well as in enhanced well being to the
people of the Tennessee Valley region and to all who come
here. 9

Sayford had a heady distrust for John Doe entrepreneurs. He
believed that the Tennessee Valley Authority had to control a
protective strip around its reservoirs so that the "lakes and the
shores [could] be protected effectively against nuisance and outlawry,"
and "inappropriate and unsightly development [could] be prevented." 10

Some of the Tennessee Valley Authority's land was used for
private purposes. Use of lands were given to private individuals
and to selected private and governmental institutions under leasing
and licensing agreements. Through these agreements, the Authority
could maintain ownership of land while making it appear that it was
used productively. The Authority maintained "projected" uses for
all land it owned, but leasing agreements gave "present" uses as well.

---

9 Tennessee Valley Authority, Engineering Service Division,
A Review of the Policy and Procedure for Fixing the Extent of
Reservoir Lands, September, 1936, p. 11.

10 Ibid., p. 9.
2. The "Sell-excess" Period

Near the end of World War II, the Tennessee Valley Authority's view concerning excess land changed. There developed the belief that the amount of excess land needed to construct a reservoir was not the same as the amount of watershed land needed to maintain a reservoir after flooding. The "Wheeler Review" in June, 1945, quoted the following from a memorandum of General Manager Gordon R. Clapp to the TVA Board of Directors: "In conducting the land acquisition program, it was necessary . . . to acquire more land in the various reservoir areas than is needed for the Authority's permanent requirements."\(^{11}\) In essence, Clapp said that there was more land in TVA's inventory than was needed.

The reasons for the change in Tennessee Valley Authority's land policies are vague. A 1955 TVA publication, Reservoir Land Review and Sales Programs, stated that, "At the completion of its major construction program, TVA was aware it had acquired considerable surplus land as an incident to the land purchase program."\(^{12}\) With this in mind, on August 17, 1944, the General Manager of the Authority requested the Director of Property and Supply to begin reviews of unflooded reservoir properties and to coordinate these reviews with

---

\(^{11}\) Tennessee Valley Authority, Department of Property and Supply, Land Division, Review of Wheeler Reservoir Properties to Determine Surplus Land (Knoxville, Tennessee: June, 1945 to June, 1946), p. 1.

\(^{12}\) Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Property and Supply, Land Branch, Reservoir Land Review and Sales Programs, August 1944 through June 30, 1966 (revised August 1955), Sec. 1, p. 1. The latter date in the title should read June 30, 1955.
other interested TVA divisions concerning their projected land requirements. The main reason for the studies was to identify surplus lands in the TVA reservoir inventories. The initial move to conduct these reviews was the preparation of a report, "Review of Reservoir Land Policy for the Kentucky Project," sent by Gordon R. Clapp to the Board of Directors on June 19, 1944. Along with the reviews of surplus lands the Authority saw the need to develop a land sales policy:

in which the program divisions would concur and cooperate and, at the same time, allow this branch to dispose of the surplus property in the most economical manner and realize the maximum amount of revenue. A sensible and practicable land ownership pattern that simplified reservation boundary surveys and reduced land management problems was established. Land required for program uses was subjected to careful scrutiny, and every effort was made to reduce the acreage retained to an essential minimum. Areas scheduled for transfer to other public agencies were identified, and steps designed to effect the transfers promptly were recommended. Tracts suitable for agricultural and forestry uses were properly delineated as individual parcels or to fit in with the adjoining land pattern, and all sales were held so that the tracts disposed of would contribute to the economy of the region under private ownership and reduce TVA's capital investment in reservoir lands as the revenue was derived from sales. The policy conforms strictly to Sections 31 and 4(k)(a) of the Act.14

The formal land sales program initiated in August, 1944, served three purposes: (1) TVA developed a comprehensive review of all land that it owned, (2) the Authority, with the cooperation of many of its divisions, decided specifically the amount of land that it needed


14 Ibid., Sec. 2, p. 7.
for all projects and developments, and (3) surplus land that could be sold to the public pursuant to the stipulations of Section 31 of the Act of 1933 was identified and delineated. Sales were made from the late 1940's to 1960, when the Board of Directors stopped all sales for private recreational purposes and severely constricted sales for other purposes.\footnote{15 Interview with Norman Allgood, Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Reservoir Properties, Athens District Office, Athens, Tennessee, September 16, 1975.}

A common belief exists among employees of the Tennessee Valley Authority that the land sales program was initiated by the Eisenhower Administration, which came into power on January 20, 1953. This Administration did, in fact, sustain the sales program through the late 1950's, but it actually began nine years before Eisenhower took office.

Toward the end of the "sell-excess" period of land disposal, the TVA policy was that:

\begin{quote}
After the disposal of its surplus reservoir land, TVA should be able to describe its reservoir land holdings as consisting only of lands needed for flowage purposes (partly owned in fee and partly subject to TVA flowage easement), plus such additional lands as cannot practically be severed from overflow areas, or as are needed to serve defined authorized programs of TVA or other public agencies.\footnote{16 Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Property and Supply, Land Branch, Reservoir Land Review and Sales Programs, August 1944 through June 30, 1966 (revised August 1955), Sec. 1, p. 1.}
\end{quote}

Therefore, the Authority hoped to have only a skeleton inventory of unflooded land necessary for reservoir management and defined, but
not necessarily funded or operational, programs. The agency was liberal in assessing possible uses of reservoir land and retained much of it. Between the inception of the land reviews in 1944 and June 30, 1952, the Land Branch considered for review 387,788 acres of reservoir land, of which 144,902 acres (37.4 percent) were declared surplus and 242,886 acres were retained by the Authority or transferred to other governmental agencies. 17

3. "Controlled-sell" Policy

In 1960 the Tennessee Valley Authority Board of Directors passed a resolution whereby no additional land in the TVA reservoir system could be sold to the public for private recreational use. 18 Political pressure on the Authority had been eased by 1960, and TVA was becoming increasingly concerned about the future growth of its depressed region. As the agency became more involved in recreational and regional development programs, however, officials believed that too much land had been sold and that sale of additional property would hinder development of the reservoirs. The Authority wished that it still possessed much of the land that had been sold. 19

The "controlled-sell" policy of land disposal is better understood in context of the land acquisition policy that paralleled it

17 Ibid., p. 3.

18 Interview with Norman Allgood, Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Reservoir Properties, Athens District Office, Athens, Tennessee, September 16, 1975.

19 Ibid.
In 1960, for new projects the Authority was making a concerted effort to "over-buy" land. It did not seem logical to continue the "sell-all" policy of land disposal on existing reservoirs.

The Tellico Project is the latest project of the Tennessee Valley Authority under the "controlled-sell" disposal policy. The Authority intends to flood only about one-third of the land purchased for the project in the Little Tennessee River Valley. TVA plans to make a considerable profit in selling the excess land back to the public. Proceeds from the sale of lakeshore lands, estimated at $10,900,000.00 in 1966, would be returned to the United States Treasury to pay part of the cost of the project.\(^\text{20}\) The Agency had definite plans for the reservoir lands even before the inclusion of the Boeing Corporation in the project as a surrogate private developer:

To provide a basis for determining how the land should be used and the most appropriate agent for sound development, TVA has joined with state and local governments through their planning agencies on studies of the reservoir and adjacent areas. Tellico studies will include analyses of land use needs in the surrounding region and the preparation of plans for the use and development of the reservoir and its shorelines. Provisions will also be made for the general identification of land best suited to recreation, residence, commerce, industry, and the utility services needed in the area, and specific developmental proposals for key public facilities.\(^\text{21}\)

\(^\text{20}\)Tennessee Valley Authority, The Tellico Project of the Tennessee Valley Authority (Knoxville, Tennessee: April, 1966), p. 10.

\(^\text{21}\)Ibid., p. 11.
The Tellico Project has been fought consistently by environmental groups, the most influential and effective of which is the Association for the Preservation of the Little Tennessee River. Construction of the dam has been temporarily halted by a restraining injunction in order to protect the habitat of the Snail Darter, a small fish indigenous only to the lower part of the Little Tennessee River that has been placed on the endangered species list. The Tennessee Valley Authority is fighting to close the completed dam, for the agency believes totally in its objectives and, also, it realizes that the Tellico Project will probably be the last reservoir that it will build. 22

---

22 Interview with R. Brown Wright, Tennessee Valley Authority, Department of Regional Studies, Knoxville, Tennessee, April 12, 1974 and April 23, 1975.
ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL OF LAND FOR THE
WATTS BAR PROJECT IN MEIGS COUNTY

A. Acquisition of Land

The Tennessee Valley Authority is a corporation created
by and duly incorporated pursuant to an Act of Congress
approved May 18, 1933, and is authorized to exercise in
the name of the United States of America the right of
eminent domain and to condemn all real estate deemed
necessary by it for the purposes of the Tennessee Valley
Authority Act.1

The quotation is an excerpt from the 1941 decree condemning
917 acres owned by C. A. Culvahouse for the Watts Bar Project.
Armed with the power of eminent domain, the Authority met with little
resistance from most landowners in the reservoir area. Ninety-one
percent of the tracts were purchased by voluntary transfer, 7
percent were condemned for defective title, and only 2 percent
were condemned for refusal to sell at the appraised price.2

---

1 Also, Sections 41 and 25 of the TVA Act of 1933 give the
agency the power of eminent domain. Section 41 provides that the
Authority "shall have the power to acquire real estate for the
construction of dams, reservoirs, transmission lines, power houses,
and other structures, and Navigation projects at any point along the
Tennessee River, or any of its tributaries..." Section 25 provides
that the Authority "may cause proceedings to be instituted for the
acquisition by condemnation any lands, easements, or right of ways
which, in the opinion of the corporation, are necessary to carry out
the provisions of the Act."

2 Tennessee Valley Authority, Technical Report No. 9, The Watts
Bar Project (Washington: United States Government Printing Office,
The percentage of acreage in the last category was greater than two percent of the total. Because owners of large properties received less per acre than the owners of smaller tracts, they resisted forced sales. Small tracts were assumed to be worth more per acre because they were easier to sell on an open market. ³

The Authority's specific policy concerning acquisition of land for the Watts Bar Project was as follows:

- Purchase in fee of all land lying below elevation 745, except where flowage easements appeared clearly desirable, with a protective strip, in either case, approximately 50 feet wide; acquisition of flowage easements (as a rule, the flowage easements prohibit the erection or maintenance of all structures except fences within the easement area) on all lands lying between elevation 745 and an appropriate backwater line, except where fee purchase appeared clearly desirable; acquisition of easement or fee title of a strip (strip) approximately 50 feet wide where the backwater line was confined to the natural stream banks, except that no acquisition would be made above the elevation of easement or fee title on a strip approximately 50 feet necessary to eliminate impractical severances, inaccessible farm remnants, islands, peninsulas, tips projecting into the reservoir, and the relocation of roads or other facilities which would cost substantially more than the property they would serve.⁴

Because there was farmable upland in the Meigs County portion of the Watts Bar Reservoir, TVA did not purchase all of the acreage of farms affected by the lake. Severed farms, although seriously affected by the loss of their bottomlands, could continue as viable agricultural units.⁵

---


⁵ This is in contrast to the Norris Project, which was built in
The market value that TVA used as a yardstick for assessing individual farms was developed by members of the Watts Bar Appraisal Section, also known as the "Study Group." The Study Group gathered sales histories between 1912 and 1939 (excluding several Great Depression years) on farms that were severed by or contiguous to the 760-foot elevation contour line. One hundred and eighty farm sales were chosen from the court records. Less than one-third of the transactions, however, contained riverbottom land. Farmers had been reluctant to sell the bottomland, a rare commodity that usually had been owned by the same families for several generations. The Study Group then made a detailed study of 31 farms in the reservoir area. While these farms were "considered as being more nearly representative of the reservoir area," they contained "Large areas of cheap upland, and rough cut-over timberland. . . ." Only 11 percent of the land on the 31 farms was considered by the TVA appraisers to be first class riverbottom land, and 9 percent was considered to be second class riverbottom. The prices paid for the 31 farms were compared to the Farm Real Estate Index for the State of an area of long narrow valleys and marginal farms. The situation is described in A Review of the Policy and Procedure for Fixing the Extent of Reservoir Lands by the Engineering Service Division of the Tennessee Valley Authority, September, 1936, page 6.

6Tennessee Valley Authority, Land Acquisition Department, Appraisal Section, Background Appraisal Study of Watts Bar Reservoir Area (Rockwood, Tennessee: June, 1940), p. 94.

7Ibid.

8The appraised values of this bottomland ranged from $40 to $150, and the average was $91 for second riverbottom and $130.40 for the first riverbottom.
Tennessee for 1926-1932 and 1936-1938. The Study Group concluded that "the average appraised value of $59 (per acre) can be considered as representing the average market value of farm lands in the Watts Bar Reservoir area." From the detailed study of 31 farms, the first bottomland of Meigs County was appraised at $132.80 per acre, and the second bottomland was assessed at $69.30 per acre.

The Tennessee Valley Authority purchased 7,394.08 acres in Meigs County for the Watts Bar Project. Of this, 4,394.08 acres were below the 750-foot contour, and 2,999.4 acres were above the line. The agency purchased 76 Watts Bar Reservoir tracts (WBR tracts) in Meigs County, ranging from a tenth of an acre to more than 900 acres (Figure 9). Tract size averaged 97.29 acres. The majority (91 percent) of the tracts were purchased between May, 1940 and February, 1942. Tennessee Valley Authority Technical Report No. 9 stated that the land purchased by the Authority in Meigs County accounted for 3.6 percent of the county tax revenues in 1939. This percentage seems low, for it means that $3,300.00 were paid in taxes on more than 7,000 acres of productive farmland. But it must

---

9 Tennessee Valley Authority, Land Acquisition Department, Appraisal Section, Background Appraisal Study of Watts Bar Reservoir Area (Rockwood, Tennessee: June, 1940), pp. 105-106.

10 Ibid.

11 Tennessee Valley Authority, Maps and Surveys Division, Land Acquisition Maps, March 1939 through April 1940, Nos. 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 16, 19, and 20.

Figure 9. Farm Boundaries, 1939.

Source: TVA Land Acquisition Maps for the Watts Bar Project.
be remembered that the land purchased by the agency in Meigs County was only 0.06 percent of the county's total land area. The Tennessee Valley Authority in 1974 paid $1,520.00 to Meigs County in retribution for ownership of the 6,094.88 acres of Watts Bar land and lake. 13

Of the 7,394.08 acres purchased by TVA in Meigs County for the Watts Bar Reservoir, 915 acres was acquired from C. A. Culvahouse (Figure 10). The acquisition of Culvahouse's farm was similar to the acquisition of the seven other large farms in the study area, except that Culvahouse was the only large landowner to contest the settlement. Compensation for Culvahouse's 915 acres was set by appraisers at $55,000.00, an average of $59.98 per acre. This figure was in accordance with the $59 per acre average value of whole farms set by the Study Group. Culvahouse's land, however, was more than 60 percent first riverbottom. His expansive farmhouse and his general store also were condemned by TVA, even though both were above the 750-foot contour (Figures 11 and 12).

A person who contested TVA's condemnation process did not have the right to a jury trial. The case was taken before a three-man arbitration board, two of whom were appointed by the Authority. 14 Culvahouse was allowed to keep his house and store and was awarded an additional $12,244. This arbitration ruling was upheld in

13 The Authority agreed to pay annual property taxes on all land acquired for the Watts Bar Project (flooded and un-flooded) at the 1939 tax rate.

Figure 10. C. A. Culvahouse Farm, 1942.

Source: TVA Land Acquisition Maps for the Watts Bar Project.
Figure 11. Vacant Culvahouse Farmhouse, Ten Mile, Tennessee.

Figure 12. Abandoned Culvahouse General Store, Ten Mile, Tennessee.
By separate TVA action, Culvahouse was allowed to keep his sawmill. The sawmill was excluded from condemnation when TVA discovered that its relocation would cost approximately $20,000.

B. Disposal of Land

The Tennessee Valley Authority reviewed Watts Bar Reservoir excess lands between February and September, 1949. The report stated that:

In the year 1948 of the 18,000 acres of land in the Watts Bar Reservoir, exclusive of the dam reservation which contains 1,320 acres, 4,178 acres was licensed for agricultural uses, 950 acres was leased for recreational uses, and 1,208 acres was being used by another Government Agency (A.E.C.). Approximately 12 acres had been disposed of, 356 acres had been declared surplus and approved for sale under either section 4(k)(a) or section 31 of the TVA Act, and the remaining acreage is woodland or idle land.

As a result of the review, TVA declared 10,100 acres (56.1 percent) of the 18,000 excess to be surplus and designated 7,900 acres to be retained or transferred to other government agencies. Supplemental reviews did not declare any additional land surplus.

Seventy-six tracts (WBR tracts) totaling 7,394.08 acres were purchased for the Watts Bar Project in Meigs County. Eighty-three excess tracts (XWBR tracts) totaling 2,999.4 acres were delineated by the Land Branch of the Division of Property and Supply in the

---


county after the reservoir was flooded (Figure 13). Boundaries for the excess tracts were determined by persons in the Land Branch Division at Chattanooga.\textsuperscript{17} They attempted to divide the surplus land into tracts that would bring the maximum monetary return:

The correct delineation of the surplus land into sales tracts often determines its salability; for example, frequently, a tract contains insufficient acreage to comprise a farm unit, and the adjoining owners are the only prospective purchasers unless the property can be adapted to some special purpose.\textsuperscript{18}

Also, an attempt was made to divide the land with the best interest of the area in mind:

Tracts suitable for agricultural and forestry uses were properly delineated as individual parcels or to fit in with the adjoining land pattern, and all sales were held so that the tracts disposed of would contribute to the economy of the region under private ownership and reduce TVA's capital investment in reservoir lands as the revenue was derived from sales.\textsuperscript{19}

Little happened to TVA property in Meigs County during the first two years of the Watts Bar Lake's existence. The Tennessee Valley Authority had an unwritten policy that forbade mention of future uses for the excess land purchased for the reservoir. Then again, few people in the area seemed to care. They were absorbed in re-settlement and in adapting to their new farms. Also, the new dam had the progressive image of a great producer of electricity for the war effort.

\textsuperscript{17}Interview with Truitt Fore, Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Reservoir Properties, Knoxville, Tennessee, September 15, 1975.

\textsuperscript{18}Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Property and Supply, Land Branch, Reservoir Land Review and Sales Programs, August 1944 through June 30, 1966 (revised August 1955), pp. 11-12.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.
Figure 13. Excess Tracts Delineated by TVA.

Source: TVA Division of Reservoir Properties' Watts Bar Reservoir Maps.
The Authority began issuing licenses and short-term leases for agricultural purposes in 1943. The contracts contained strict use clauses and liberal opportunities for each party to break a lease or license upon short notice. The first authorization for use of leased land other than for agricultural purposes was given to the Tennessee Military Institute at Sweetwater on February 1, 1944.\textsuperscript{20} The school was given a ten-year lease on tracts XWBR-68R and XWBR-235 to be used as a "group camp" (Figure 13).\textsuperscript{21} Because of strict land use and building restrictions, the school used the property mainly for camping and bivouac operations that required few improvements. Tennessee Military Institute did not renew its lease, and the land reverted to the Authority. Today the property remains in TVA ownership, and is a part of the Hornsby Hollow Public Use Area.

The Tennessee Valley Authority licensed XWBR-232 to the Culvahouse brothers in 1946 and leased the property to them on August 1, 1947, for use as a commercial boat dock.\textsuperscript{22} That same year the Authority leased 26 lots on the peninsula just upstream from the Culvahouse boat dock for 19 years. The lots were not advertised for lease; news spread by word of mouth. The peninsula was given the name Meigs Subdivision.

\textsuperscript{20}Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Property and Supply, Land Branch, Review of Watts Bar Reservoir Properties to Determine Surplus Land (Knoxville, Tennessee: February, 1949), p. 52.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid. The lease was for 123 acres and included other land "lying between the 735- and the 745-foot elevations. . . ."

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., p. 55.
There were sporadic sales by the Authority between 1950 and 1956. On May 24, 1951, the Culvahouse brothers purchased the land on which they had built their boat dock. Also, three large tracts containing much shoreline were sold in 1952 and 1953. Tract 243, containing 149 acres with 12 miles of waterfront, had the longest shoreline. Tract 244 consisted of only 13.4 acres, but it had more than two miles of shoreline. Tract 245 in the extreme northwest corner of Meigs County had 167 acres and three miles of shoreline. All three tracts were not readily accessible, and the Authority sold them in the hopes that they would be developed by private enterprise.

The Tennessee Valley Authority conducted two large auction sales, disposing of 62.6 percent of the surplus land in Meigs County on Watts Bar Lake. The first was held at the Peakland Post Office one mile east of the dam reservation on November 7, 1950, and the second was held at the Euchee Boat Dock (XWBR-232) on September 26, 1956. At the Peakland sale, excess tracts 182 through 210 (not including tracts 183, 184, and 197) were sold (Figure 14 and Table 1). The 26 parcels comprised 648.1 acres, 49.9 percent of all land sold by the Authority in Meigs County to the public. The Agency received $35,535.00 for the tracts, an average of $54.83 per acre. The tracts

---


25 This percentage does not include XWBR-234, which will be dealt with separately.
Figure 14. Tracts Sold at Mass Auctions.

Source: TVA Division of Reservoir Properties' Reservoir Maps and the Meigs County, Tennessee, Warranty Deed Record.
### TABLE 1

**BUYERS, SIZES, AND PURCHASE PRICES OF TRACTS SOLD AT THE AUCTION AT PEAKLAND POST OFFICE, NOVEMBER 7, 1950**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buyer</th>
<th>XWBR No.</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Purchase Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>$950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sloan</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dixon</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott, Jr.</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trew</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>1850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philpott</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson (Elizabeth Ann)</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>*9400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Johnson</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Johnson (et ux)</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>*1180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Johnson</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watson</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgeman &amp; Trew</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>*530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgeman &amp; Trew</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuell</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>*1025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuell</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Johnson</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>*2600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Johnson</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Johnson</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>3500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moore</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moore</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>5500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hake</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>5200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26 parcels 648.1 acres **$35,535**

Average Tract Size - 24.93 acres

Average Price per Acre = $54.83

---

*Auctioned as a block.

**49.9% of the land sold by TVA to the public in the study area.

ranged from 1.1 to 96 acres; the average size was 24.93 acres. Nine tracts, 182 through 192, excluding 183 and 184, were considerably larger than the other tracts sold at Peakland. They were carved from the original dam reservation and intended for agricultural uses. These nine tracts comprised 495.2 acres, 74.8 percent of the acreage of the sale. The $24,300.00 realized by TVA for these nine tracts was 68.4 percent of the total auction receipts. Eleven tracts sold in the November sale contained less than five acres each. Although the tracts totaled only 23.6 acres, they brought $4,155.00, an average of $352.12 per acre, contrasted with an average of $49.07 per acre for the nine largest ones.

The November 7, 1950 sale contained land that was sold in parcels large enough for agricultural purposes. The mass sale on September 26, 1956, offered little land that either was suitable for agriculture or contiguous to an operating farm unit. The first auction sale consisted of the excess reservation lands through the Wanns Branch tracts. The second included most of the land from the eastern tip of Wanns Branch to the future site of the Red Cloud Cottages (Figure 14 and Table 2). The 1956 sale disposed of 25 tracts, 12.7 percent of the land sold by TVA to the public in Meigs County. The average parcel contained 6.68 acres, considerably smaller than the 24.93 acre average for the November, 1950, auction sale.\textsuperscript{26} The largest tract, number 299, contained 26.2 acres. This tract was

\textsuperscript{26}The November, 1950 average was 36.01 acres if each sale is used to compute the average.
TABLE 2

BUYERS, SIZES, AND PURCHASE PRICES OF TRACTS SOLD AT THE AUCTION AT EUCHEE BOAT DOCK, SEPTEMBER 26, 1956

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buyer</th>
<th>XWBR No.</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Purchase Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whitaker</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>$1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitaker</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitaker</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberts and Fening</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. B. Culvahouse</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. B. Culvahouse</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. B. Culvahouse (et ux)</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cullis and Cullis</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guthrie</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>4450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgemon and Carter</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgemon, Carter, and Janeway</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. A. Culvahouse</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>4400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. A. Culvahouse</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>2200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purdy</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowan</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henshaw</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manning</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blake</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>2550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewing</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runyan</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marye, Cooper, and Swindell</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>7500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25 parcels  167.1 acres  $48,075

Average Parcel Size = 6.68 acres

Average Price per Acre = $287.70

*12.7% of the land sold back by T.V.A. to public in the study area.

the only piece of property sold in Meigs County by TVA during the September sale that did not contain any shoreline on Watts Bar Lake. The Authority received $48,075.00 for the 167.1 acres, an average of $287.70 per acre, which was $232.87 more than the 1950 mass auction average.

Because of TVA's "three-sell" rule, auctioned land was not concentrated in the hands of three or four people. This rule specified that no person could purchase more than three XWBR tracts at an auction. Because most of the XWBR tracts were sold in two auctions, this rule was especially significant. The rule, however, pertained to individuals, not to families. Husbands and wives could purchase tracts separately and jointly. One family bought 411 acres during the first auction.

Of the acreage above the 750-foot contour line, 1,700.8 acres have either been retained by TVA or transferred to other governmental agencies, and 1,298.6 acres have been sold by the Authority to the public (Figure 15). The final sale of an XWBR tract in the study area coincided with the last strike of the hammer at the 1956 mass auction.

---

27 Statistics for the auctions were compiled from the Warranty Deed Record and Tax Assessor's Office in the Meigs County Court House, Decatur, Tennessee, from the Reservoir Properties Map of the Tennessee Valley Authority, and from interviews.

28 Tennessee Valley Authority, Department of Property and Supply, Land Branch, Reservoir Land Review and Sales Programs, August 1944 through June 30, 1966 (revised August, 1955), Section II, p. 7.

29 In the 1950 sale, the Johnson family of Athens, Tennessee, purchased ten large tracts. The 411.1 acres that they bought was 63.4 percent of the acreage offered at the sale. Elizabeth Johnson purchased four tracts as one, because TVA had grouped them to be sold in one block.
Sales of lots in the Meigs Subdivision, however, continued until 1962. The Tennessee Valley Authority began selling the leased lots in the Meigs Subdivision in May, 1953. The person holding the lease to lot received the first chance to buy the property under Section 4(k)(a) of the TVA Act of 1933, regardless of whether or not he had improved the property. All leased lots were sold at prevailing market prices. Lot number 22, sold on June 12, 1962, was the last piece of property marketed by TVA in Meigs County.

It is important that all TVA publications concerning land evaluation and ownership recommendations during the period of mass land disposal were kept confidential by the agency. During the 1950's, a private investor might have had good reason to believe that the Authority was going to sell land on a particular reservoir, but he did not know how much, where, or when. By February, 1949, the Authority knew which tracts it wished to sell and which ones it wished to retain. If TVA had made this information public, present land uses on certain tracts probably would be quite different. More developers could have incorporated properties that were to be sold into their plans.

---

30 The first sale was to Dr. C. O. Foree (lot 7) on May 13, 1953. The 1.71 acre lot was sold for $650.00.

31 Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service aerial photos taken in May, 1953 show only ten cabins complete or under construction.

32 Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Property and Supply, Land Branch, Review of Watts Bar Reservoir Properties to Determine Surplus Land (Knoxville, Tennessee: February, 1949). A few parcels were recommended for interim retention and scheduled for re-evaluation periodically.
CHAPTER IV

EFFECTS OF TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY POLICIES ON LAND

RETAINED BY THE AGENCY

The Tennessee Valley Authority created three basic types of tracts when it subdivided the excess Watts Bar Reservoir land in Meigs County in the 1940's. They were: (1) large tracts (more than five acres) without water access, (2) large tracts (more than five acres) with water access, and (3) small tracts (less than five acres) with water access (Figures 16-19). These three types of tracts were the result of the irregular acquisition line that left thin strips of excess land in some places and wide strips in others after the reservoir was flooded. The large tracts with no water access were created mainly from the dam reservation area. Small tracts with water access were carved primarily from narrow parts of the excess strip.

Under external political and internal administration pressures, TVA began in 1950 to sell the tracts in Meigs County that were of no use to the agency. If there were any doubts concerning the value of a particular tract, it was retained. The Authority retained six of each of the two types of tracts with water access (Table 3). Nine small tracts were transferred by deed to the State of Tennessee to

1 Five acres were chosen as an arbitrary figure for dividing the large tracts from the smaller ones.

51
Figure 16. Ownership Patterns, Southern Portion of the Study Area, August, 1975.

Source: TVA Division of Reservoir Properties' Watts Bar Reservoir Maps and field observation.
Figure 17. Ownership Patterns, South-Central Portion of the Study Area, August, 1975.

Source: TVA Division of Reservoir Properties' Watts Bar Reservoir Maps and field observation.
Lines indicate property boundaries, August, 1975

Figure 18. Ownership Patterns, North-Central Portion of the Study Area, August, 1975.

Source: TVA Division of Reservoir Properties' Watts Bar Reservoir Maps and field observation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>XWBR(R) Number</th>
<th>Acres Above 750' Contour</th>
<th>Tract Type</th>
<th>Facilities</th>
<th>Uses Proposed by TVA</th>
<th>Present Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59R</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Picnic Tables Bath House</td>
<td>Dam Reservation</td>
<td>Dam Reservations and agricultural Picnic Facilities Camping Lots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60R</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Commerical Landing Dam Reservations</td>
<td>Commercial Landing Ramp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61R</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Picnic Tables Bath House</td>
<td>Canal Site Dam Reservations</td>
<td>Picnic Facilities Camping Lots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211R</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Safety Harbor Dam Reservations</td>
<td>Public Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>229R</td>
<td>198.0</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Large Open Convention Hall</td>
<td>Public Recreation Dam Reservations</td>
<td>Meigs County Public Beach (Lease exp. 1977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68R</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>Large (Island)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Reservations Operations Dam Reservations</td>
<td>Islands Public Recreation Idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71R</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>Small (Islands-2)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Reservations Operations Dam Reservations</td>
<td>Islands Idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73R</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Reservations Operations Dam Reservations</td>
<td>Public Recreation Idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202R</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Picnic Tables</td>
<td>Safety Harbor Dam Reservations</td>
<td>Idle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>XWBR(R) Number</th>
<th>Acres Above 750' Contour</th>
<th>Tract Type</th>
<th>Facilities</th>
<th>Uses Proposed by TVA</th>
<th>Present Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>228R</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Picnic Tables, Bath House, Small Boat Dock</td>
<td>Public Recreation</td>
<td>Hornsby Hollow Public Use Area Athens City Schools Day Camp (Leased)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>252R</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Small (Islands-2)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Reservation Operations-- Islands</td>
<td>Idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>253R</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Small (Islands-3)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Reservation Operations-- Islands</td>
<td>Idle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tennessee Valley Authority Reservoir Properties Maps and field observation.
be used for public access. Thus, after 1950 three basic ownership patterns evolved on the unflooded land in Meigs County that TVA purchased for Watts Bar Reservoir: (1) land owned by TVA, (2) land owned by the State of Tennessee, and (3) land owned by private investors (Figures 16-19).

A. Uses of Retained Land

The Tennessee Valley Authority has had major influences on ownership patterns and land uses in the study area through retention of more than half the excess unflooded land. Fifty-seven percent, 1,700.8 acres, is still owned by the agency. All tracts recommended for retention in 1949 are still held, except one.²

The major areas that are owned by TVA are: (1) the dam reservation (XWBR-59R), including Meigs County Park (XWBR-229R), (2) the 891-acre Foushee Peninsula (XWBR-61R) containing Foushee Pass and Little Foushee public use areas, and (3) XWBR's 228R and 68R containing the Hornsby Hollow Public Use Area and the Athens City School Day Camp. In addition, TVA owns several small, narrow tracts of shoreline and various islands (Figures 16-19 and Table 3). Most of the land has remained idle during the 35 years of TVA ownership (Table 3). The Authority designates a contemporary or a proposed use for each tract of land. Contemporary designated uses usually are vague, for example, "wildlife management" and "reservations

²The Meigs Subdivision, XWBR-234, which was recommended for interim retention, was sold after re-evaluation.
operations." Proposed uses are for unspecified future dates. Two active contemporary uses are cattle grazing on 14.3 percent and low-order recreation on approximately 5 percent. Therefore, about 20 percent of TVA land supports low-order uses and approximately 80 percent is idle. The idle land is legally available to the public for camping, picnicking, and hiking. Random camping on reservoir land spurred TVA to create a Recreation Branch in 1969.

Because the reservoir flooded most of the bottom land, topographically the land owned by the Authority around Watts Bar Lake is rolling to hilly. Most of the land is forested. Much of the dam reservation area (XWBR-59R) is either in pasture or park-like forest (Table 3). The leased Meigs County Park (XWBR-229R) remains largely as it was at the time of TVA acquisition--forested with some pasture. Foushee Peninsula (XWBR-61R) is forested and idle except for a recreational area at the base of the peninsula. The large Hornsby area (XWBR's 228R and 68R) is forested and idle except for the cabin and cafeteria area of the Athens City School Day Camp and a small thinned-forest public use area. All other TVA tracts are forested and idle.

B. Licensing and Leasing of Retained Land

The Tennessee Valley Authority has two ways of retaining land while consigning it private uses. Public Law 87-852 gives TVA the power to grant easements in the forms of licenses and leases to
individuals and to government and private agencies. ³ The important point is that these easements permit private uses of land, but the deeds remain in the hands of the Authority. Most licenses are granted to individuals to use land for agricultural purposes. These licenses are especially appealing to TVA because they permit no permanent structures and no permanent land use beyond seasonal agricultural functions. Although they are normally granted for five years, the licenses can be broken by either party on short notice. The Authority can cancel a license if a better use arises for the land. The Authority presently has 284 acres under license in the study area, all within the dam reservation area (XWBR-59R, Table 3).⁴

A TVA lease is a stronger agreement than a license. The TVA Board of Directors can approve a lease for up to nineteen years, and there is firm commitment by both parties on the specific use of the land.⁵ Leases for agricultural purposes are generally issued for five years. Longer leases are usually granted to educational and governmental bodies with programs for the development of the leased land. Three long-term leases have been issued by TVA in the study area. They are: (1) a portion of XWBR-229R to the Tennessee Military Institute for a training camp, (2) a portion of XWBR-228R to the

³ Interview with Truitt Fore, Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Reservoir Properties, Knoxville, Tennessee, September 15, 1975.

⁴ Interview with Bob Wear, Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Reservoir Properties, Athens, Tennessee, January 22, 1976.

⁵ Interview with Norman Allgood, Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Reservoir Properties, Athens Branch, Athens, Tennessee, September 16, 1975.
Athens, Tennessee, City School System, and (3) XWBR-229R to the Meigs County Park Board. The Tennessee Military Institute lease expired several years ago when the school began experiencing financial troubles. The Athens city school system runs a good summer day camp, and its lease is not in jeopardy. The school system has constructed several cabins and a small cafeteria building on its leased property. The Meigs County Park Board lease expires in 1977, but there is little chance that it will be renewed due to a lack of development of the park.

During the years of the Tennessee Valley Authority's "sell-excess" land disposal policy, the agency sought to give active uses to desirable land that it wished to retain. The creation of county parks was one method used to retain land. The original policy concerning county parks was to transfer the land in deed to a county if the land was developed to the satisfaction of the Authority. In more recent years renewal of the lease has been the reward for development.6

Meigs County Park (XWBR-229R) is a tract of land that will revert to TVA when the present lease expires (Figure 16, p. 52). The Authority initiated the park but, knowingly or not, has kept the tract from being developed. The Authority solicited the creation of a Meigs County Park Board, created two sets of elaborate developmental plans for the poor county to follow, and systematically

---

6Interview with Truitt Fore, Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Reservoir Properties, Knoxville, Tennessee, September 15, 1975.
rejected every effort but one by the county to carry through with
the TVA plans.\textsuperscript{7}

Tract 229R was leased by the Tennessee Valley Authority to
Meigs County in 1958 for 19 years to be developed as a recreational
park. Until 1954, the tract was part of the dam reservation.\textsuperscript{8}
In 1954 plans for a proposed county park on the tract emerged from
the drawing boards of the TVA Site Planning Section (Figure 20).\textsuperscript{9}
At the time the Authority was under considerable pressure from within
and from without to conform to the instructions of Section 31 of
the TVA Act of 1933--to dispose of all land not needed by the
Authority to carry out plans and projects "actually decided upon."\textsuperscript{10}
Tract 229R was a prime piece of land that TVA considered prime for
future use, but no plans for actual use existed in the early 1950's.
Consciously, or just by chance, the Authority started events rolling
that would keep the tract in TVA ownership.

The initial park plans were elaborate for the small, rural
Meigs County. They included such facilities as a small boat dock,

\textsuperscript{7}The successful effort was the construction of a large, open-air
meeting building funded by the Volunteer Electric Cooperative, a large
purchaser of electricity from TVA.

\textsuperscript{8}There is no mention of XWBR-229R as a separate tract in the
Authority's 1949 Review of Watts Bar Reservoir Properties to Determine
Surplus Land.

\textsuperscript{9}Tennessee Valley Authority, Site Planning Section, "Preliminary
Sketch Plan for Development of Meigs County Park, Meigs County,

\textsuperscript{10}Tennessee Valley Authority Act of 1933, approved by the
Congress of the United States of America on May 18, 1933, Section 31.
Figure 19. Ownership Patterns, Northern Portion of the Study Area, August, 1975.

Source: TVA Division of Reservoir Properties' Watts Bar Reservoir Maps and field observation.
Figure 20. Meigs County Park Plans, 1954.
eight fisherman's cabins, a caretaker's house, a lodge and bath house, a fair grounds, and a camping area. The rest of the 198 acres were to be used for low-order recreation (Figure 20). In early 1957, nearly three years after the drawing of the preliminary park plans, TVA contacted the Meigs County Court concerning the possibility of forming a Meigs County Park Board to negotiate with the Authority for land to be used as a county recreational park. The court created such a board and appointed to it a group of leading citizens. Enthusiasm ran high, and the property was leased from the Authority on May 29, 1958, for a period of 19 years.

Between 1961 and 1965 the Tennessee Valley Authority rejected several attempts by the Meigs County Park Board to develop the tract. The agency did authorize the construction of a "fair grounds" building by the Volunteer Electric Cooperative at a cost of $10,000, but it offered no help in erecting a caretaker's house or concession stands. Funding of development was solely the responsibility of the county. The Volunteer Electric Cooperative's "fair grounds" building was completed in 1961 and remains the only building in the park. In 1962 a Texan applied to the Park Board for a sub-lease to develop the southeast corner of the park with $30,000. He proposed building a small dock, a picnic area, eight fishermen's cabins, and a residence for himself. The Authority refused him a sub-lease because of a lack of adequate funding. The Park Board believed that the funds were sufficient.  

---

In December, 1965, A. B. Culvahouse, Chairman of the Meigs County Park Board, wrote Maxwell A. DeVoe, Manager of the Athens Branch of TVA's Division of Reservoir Properties, requesting that new site plans for Meigs County Park be developed by TVA. The original plans made by TVA were at that time nearly twelve years old, and little action had been taken on them. The request was granted. The new 1966 plans were more extravagant than the 1954 plans, calling for such facilities as a reception and reservation station, nine hole par three golf course with a large clubhouse, a larger marina and service dock, an amphitheater, and a swimming pool with sunning area (Figure 21). The County Park Board tried to develop the park with the new TVA plans, but every overture made by them was turned down by the Authority. If the county could not fulfill the 1954 plans, how could it possibly comply with the new expanded plans of 1966?

Meigs County is named for Return Jonathan Meigs, a colorful figure who was instrumental in the founding of the county in the early 1800's. In the late 1960's a group of Pennsylvania descendants expressed interest in promoting establishment of a community college on tract 229R. They offered to donate $400,000 to the college if it

---


Figure 21. Meigs County Park Plans, 1966.
were named for R. J. Meigs. The state was in the process of choosing a site for a community college, but the final choice was Cleveland, Tennessee. Meigs County Park was taken out of consideration early because TVA refused to allow the tract to be used as a college site. The descendants of Meigs were contacted by the Park Board about the possibility of developing a county park in the honor of Meigs, but they would not invest enough money to satisfy the Authority.  

The Meigs County Park Board ceased meeting in 1969. It had spent twelve years trying to conform to the plans of the Authority, but all that existed was a large open-air building with a gravel floor. The lack of development was due to four reasons. (1) Both the 1954 and 1966 park plans drawn up by the Authority were much too elaborate for Meigs County. (2) The Tennessee Valley Authority required an "all or nothing" type of development and put all responsibility for funding on the county. (3) Communication between the Authority and the Park Board was not good, spawning misunderstandings and resentment. (4) The Park Board did not exhaust all possible sources of funding, especially state and federal sources. The present lease for Meigs County Park expires in May, 1977, and the general consensus of personnel at the Tennessee Valley Authority is that the park lease will not be renewed.  

Upon expiration of the lease, the tract will be returned to the Authority reservoir land inventory to be assigned "forecast uses."

---


15 This opinion is based on interviews with several persons in
C. Private Efforts to Develop Retained Land

In designating a "forecast use" for each piece of property the Authority believes that this is the "best" use for the particular piece of land at the time of classification. The classification remains until a better use surfaces. There have been attempts by private interests to purchase and develop TVA-retained land in the study area since 1960, but none have been successful. The Authority believes that no plan has warranted disposal or long-term leasing of its land in the study area.

Foushee Peninsula (XWBR-61R) is a tract where at least one viable plan for private development with adequate funding has been proposed. Several years ago Jones C. Beene, III, owner of Plastics Incorporated of Athens, Tennessee, employed Henry Norris, an Atlanta landscape architect of national prominence, to do a feasibility study on the development of the 891-acre Foushee Peninsula into a resort with a golf course, a marina, condominiums, and restaurants. In addition to his own financing, Beene believed that he had the monetary support of several major suppliers of his plastics industry. He even purchased more than 100 acres of privately owned land at the base of Foushee Peninsula as a first step in his grandiose plans.

The Tennessee Valley Authority rejected the plans of Beene. No specific reasons were given for rejection of the plans; they

the TVA Division of Reservoir Properties, Recreation and Resources Branch, and the Department of Regional Studies.
simply did not qualify as justifiable uses of the peninsula. The property is still held by the Authority for the following proposed uses: (1) a canal site, (2) public recreation, and (3) wildlife management. A canal through the base of the peninsula would be a "make-work" project. Commercial river traffic is minimal and does not warrant a canal to lessen the distance between Chattanooga and Knoxville. Public recreation has proved successful on the peninsula. The area is named "Tent City" by many indigenous residents. Recreation, however, is confined to the sides of the base of the peninsula; most of the land is idle. Wildlife there is, but management there is not.

Bob Wear of the Athens District Office of TVA has stated: "I don't think TVA will ever let go of the Foushee Peninsula." Jon Loney of the Recreation Branch believes that the recreational designation is a permanent use for the property.

---

16 Interview with Jones C. Beene, IV, Knoxville, Tennessee, December 2, 1975. In a later conversation, Chuck Redfern of Plastic Industries cited a change in high level management in the Division of Reservoir Properties as the main reason for TVA's refusal.


18 A better canal site is at the northern end of Iron Hill Island just to the northeast of Foushee Peninsula. Greater distance would be saved using this site, and the costs would be much less. Small boats can presently navigate the narrow body of water during normal pool level.

19 Interview with Bob Wear, Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Reservoir Properties, Athens District Office, Townsend, Tennessee, January 22, 1976.

20 Interview with Jon Loney, Tennessee Valley Authority, Recreation and Resources Branch, Knoxville, Tennessee, August 20, 1975.
D. TVA Development of Retained Land

Twelve residential subdivisions have been developed from the original large tracts with water access in the study area (Figure 22). One of the twelve was created by the Tennessee Valley Authority and eleven were developed by private investors. The TVA subdivision, Meigs Subdivision (XWBR-234), has been the only instance in which the Authority has entered into development in the study area, except for building of picnic tables and bath houses in public use areas.

On the 33.2 acre tract 234, the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1944 partially cleared the land, built access roads, and divided the area into thirty small lots (Figure 23). The lots originally were intended to be retained through leasing, but when TVA's disposal policies changed, the lots were sold. The leases for Meigs Subdivision were issued in 1947 and 1948 for periods of 19 years. Twenty-four lots (numbers 4-9 and 12-29) were leased, with expiration dates in 1966 and 1967.21

The possibility of renewing the leases appeared good, and some of the owners began immediately to build cabins. A report issued by TVA in February, 1949 stated that "several of the lessees have built summer homes," and the Authority was in the process of formulating a "new policy to provide for the sale of cabin site subdivisions

---

21 Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Property and Supply, Land Branch, Review of Watts Bar Reservoir Properties to Determine Surplus Land (Knoxville, Tennessee: February, 1949), p. 82.
Figure 22. Subdivisions, August 1975.
Figure 23. Plat Map of the Meigs Subdivision.

Source: Plat Map Section, Office of the Register of Deeds, Meigs County, Tennessee.
developed under lease agreements pursuant to section 4(k)(a) when such subdivisions are found to meet certain criteria to be established." The first sale of a lot to a lessee was in May of 1953. Most sales were conducted between 1953 and 1955, but they continued until the last lot (number 22, 1.16 acres) was sold on June 12, 1962. Lessees were not forced to buy immediately. They could purchase the property at any time during the course of their lease for the prevailing market price. Most saw the fair market price rising by a positive exponential curve and decided to buy early.

By 1953 twelve cabins were either built or nearing completion on the peninsula. In 1975 there were twenty cabins and five mobile homes in Meigs Subdivision. Three lots, 3, 10, and 11, were placed in common ownership of the lessees for the development of community meeting areas, boat ramps, and picnic areas. In 1975 the lots were idle and overgrown.

The Tennessee Valley Authority entered into the development of the Meigs Subdivision during the time of the "no-sell" land disposal policy. When the "sell-excess" policy came into effect,

22 Ibid., p. 53.
26 There is a clause in each deed specifying that only a permanent residence (as opposed to "mobile") is allowed.
the Authority viewed the subdivision lots as excess and sold them. Under the "controlled-sell" policy, the Authority encourages economic development of the region, but it makes every effort to stay out of active development. No new projects like the Meigs Subdivision or any other economic activity have been entered into by the Tennessee Valley Authority in the study area since the agency disposed of the Meigs Subdivision.

E. Conclusions

Much of the unflooded land acquired by the Tennessee Valley Authority in Meigs County for the Watts Bar Project has been retained by the agency. Most of the retained land has lain idle since its acquisition, a result of TVA's reluctance to enter into active land development, the Authority's strong regulation of land it has licensed or leased, and a reluctance by the Authority to dispose of any reservoir land since 1960. Because TVA believes that all land it presently owns could be of use to the agency in its future reservoir development or possible re-development, the agency has cooperated little with local civic and governmental groups in their attempts to develop Authority-retained land and has rejected all attempts for development of TVA land by private entrepreneurs.

TVA-owned land in the study area seems to be suitable only for recreational development. Industrial development seems unlikely because of poor topography and meager transportation facilities. If the land had been sold or regulated more loosely by the Authority, its development for recreation probably would be much greater than it is today.
CHAPTER V

EFFECTS OF TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY POLICIES ON LAND DISPOSED OF BY THE AGENCY

The Tennessee Valley Authority's land policies have had considerable effects upon excess reservoir land disposed of by the agency. The agency has made it a practice to transfer land to state and local governments for specific purposes, such as boat ramps. The Authority has transferred to the Tennessee state government eight small tracts in Meigs County on Watts Bar Reservoir to be used for public access. According to Truitt Fore of TVA's Division of Reservoir Properties, the Authority is not satisfied with the ways in which the State of Tennessee has used its public access tracts on Watts Bar Lake. Most are eroded, gravel boat ramps that are seldom policed for trash (Figure 24). ¹

Because only eighteen acres in the study area have been transferred by the Authority to another government agency, the majority of land disposed of during the "sell-excess" period was sold to the public. Between 1950 and 1962, the Authority sold 1,298 acres, 43.3 percent of the excess land it had acquired in Meigs County for the Watts Bar Project. The land was divided by TVA into 62 tracts

¹Interview with Truitt Fore, Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Reservoir Properties, Knoxville, Tennessee, September 15, 1975.
Figure 24. State Access Area T-4.
A. Sizes of Tracts Sold by the Tennessee Valley Authority

The Tennessee Valley Authority Land Branch divided the excess land on Watts Bar Reservoir into tracts in the 1940's. The excess land that eventually was sold consisted of eleven large (more than five acres) tracts without water access, eighteen large tracts with water access, and thirty-three small (less than five acres) tracts with water access. Most of the large tracts without water access are idle. Several of the large tracts with water access have been subdivided into small lots by private developers. The small tracts have been intensively developed with private recreational dwellings.

1. Large Tracts Without Water Access

When delineating boundaries for excess Watts Bar Reservoir land, the Tennessee Valley Authority created eleven large parcels with no shoreline on the lake—XWBR tracts 183 through 192 and tract 229 (Figures 16 and 18, pp. 52 and 54). Together they totaled 615.3 acres. Tracts 183 through 192 were originally part of the dam construction area and later part of the dam reservation. Under the "sell-excess" land disposal policy, these tracts were auctioned to the public in 1950 and 1956. All of the tracts except number 229 were sold at the first auction (Table 4). The Authority hoped that the large tracts would be merged with adjacent farmlands. The aims

2 Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Property and Supply, Land Branch, Review of Watts Bar Reservoir Properties to Determine Surplus Land (Knoxville, Tennessee, February 1949), p. 22.
TABLE 4
CHARACTERISTICS OF LARGE TRACTS WITHOUT WATER ACCESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number Tract</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Date Sold</th>
<th>Price/@</th>
<th>Present Number of Tracts</th>
<th>Permanent Structures</th>
<th>Present Land Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>183</td>
<td>8.7@</td>
<td>12/20/50</td>
<td>$78.16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Grazing and idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>86.0@</td>
<td>12/20/50</td>
<td>49.42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Grazing and idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>185</td>
<td>93.0@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>47.14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Grazing and idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>186</td>
<td>74.0@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>47.63</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Grazing and idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>187</td>
<td>79.0@</td>
<td>12/20/50</td>
<td>69.62</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Grazing and idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>188</td>
<td>21.8@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>47.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 Residences</td>
<td>Permanent residential and idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>189</td>
<td>30.5@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>39.34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190</td>
<td>47.7@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>36.47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>191</td>
<td>23.6@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>36.47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>192</td>
<td>96.0@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>36.46</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 Residence</td>
<td>Permanent residential and idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>229</td>
<td>26.2@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>83.97</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Idle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tennessee Valley Authority Reservoir Properties Maps and field observation.
of TVA, however, have not been achieved (Table 4). The tracts have not been merged with the backland; they have undergone limited subdivision (Table 4). The number of tracts has increased from eleven to fourteen. The Authority accurately predicted that the large tracts with no shoreline, for the most part, would be immune to speculation on the same scale as that of the lakefront property. If the Authority had divided these tracts into many small ones, it is doubtful that they could have been sold in the early 1950's. 

Tracts 184, 185, 186, and 187, 189, 190, 191 have been merged to create two farms, only one of which is active. Tract 188 has been subdivided into three tracts, two of which have houses. Tracts 183, 192, and 229 have no active use. These large tracts with no water access could possibly become residential subdivisions in the future.

2. Large Tracts with Water Access

Seventeen large tracts with considerable waterfront were auctioned by the Tennessee Valley Authority (Table 5). Seven of the tracts were bought by developers from outside the area. All seven had been subdivided by 1963. Six of the seventeen tracts were purchased by people who had hereditary ties to the area. Three sons of former farmers purchased five of the six tracts. The widow of a farmer purchased the remaining one. Four of the large tracts

\[3 \text{XWBR tracts 193, 194, 195, 196, 227, 230, and 243.}

\[4 \text{XWBR tracts 201, 228, 492, 232, 233, and 238.} \]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tract Number</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Date Sold</th>
<th>Price/@</th>
<th>Present Number of Tracts</th>
<th>Permanent Structures</th>
<th>Present Land Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>182</td>
<td>37.3@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>$139.41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Pasture and idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>193</td>
<td>22.0@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>26.58</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2 Cabins</td>
<td>2nd Home residential and idle (part of Lots O' Lake Subdivision)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>194</td>
<td>12.0@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>26.58</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6 Cabins</td>
<td>2nd Home residential and idle (part of Lots O' Lake Subdivision)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>195</td>
<td>10.4@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>26.58</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3 Cabins</td>
<td>2nd Home residential and idle (part of Lots O' Lake Subdivision)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>33.5@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>28.36</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6 Cabins</td>
<td>Sleepy Lagoon Subdivision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>199</td>
<td>10.6@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>47.14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Cabin</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201</td>
<td>33.1@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>55.89</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 Residence</td>
<td>Residential, agricultural, and idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Vacant chicken barn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>227</td>
<td>10.6@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>419.81</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4 Cabins</td>
<td>XWBR-227 Subdivision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>228</td>
<td>22.0@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>227.27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 Residence</td>
<td>Residential (permanent 2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230</td>
<td>16.7@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>449.10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5 Cabins</td>
<td>Residential (permanent 2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 Mobile homes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tract Number</td>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Date Sold</td>
<td>Price/@</td>
<td>Present Number of Tracts</td>
<td>Permanent Structures</td>
<td>Present Land Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>492</td>
<td>12.6@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>$349.20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 Residence</td>
<td>Residential (permanent and 2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 Mobile homes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>232</td>
<td>11.4@</td>
<td>05/24/51</td>
<td>421.05</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 Residences</td>
<td>Residential (permanent and 2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 Block cabins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boat dock facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28 Mobile homes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Euchee Boat Dock, Inc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>233</td>
<td>12.9@</td>
<td>12/10/53</td>
<td>65.89</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(divided parcel)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>234</td>
<td>35.2@a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20 Cabins</td>
<td>Residential (permanent and 2nd home) and idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 Mobile homes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>238</td>
<td>14.6@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>119.86</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22 Cabins</td>
<td>Culvahouse Subdivision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 Mobile homes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>243</td>
<td>149.0@</td>
<td>04/18/52</td>
<td>80.54</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7 Commercial cabins</td>
<td>Residential (permanent and 2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11 Private cabins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Primitive trailer park</td>
<td>Idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>244</td>
<td>13.8@</td>
<td>04/18/52</td>
<td>36.23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>245</td>
<td>167.0@</td>
<td>12/10/53</td>
<td>35.93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Idle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^a Meigs Subdivision, reference Figure 23, p. 72.

Source: Tennessee Valley Authority Reservoir Property Maps and field observation.
were purchased by persons from outside the area who apparently had no plans for their properties.\textsuperscript{5}

Residential subdivision is the dominant contemporary use of the large, water-access tracts (Figure 22, p. 71). Twelve of the original eighteen tracts that were auctioned to the public have been subdivided (Table 5). The present number of tracts, 193, would be much higher if Euchee Boat Dock (XWBR-232), which contains seven permanent structures and 28 mobile homes, were not counted as a single tract. The remaining six large tracts are ideal for subdivision. Tract 201, especially, has potential for future subdivision, but the widow who owns it is content to graze cattle on this 33.1-acre unit that is contiguous to her 480-acre farm (Figure 25). A significant factor that makes it prime for subdivision is that the Authority sold the land to the 745-foot contour line. The tract has 12.3 acres along a mile of shoreline at the 745-foot contour line. The buyer of a lot would own property down to the contour of maximum flooding, while nearly all present lot owners control the land only to the 750-foot contour. Tract 245, which also borders the 745-foot contour line, is prime for subdivision. Again, the owner has no desire to subdivide his land, a theme prevalent for all idle, large tracts in the study area.

3. Small Tracts with Water Access

An important trait of excess land fronting on Watts Bar Lake sold by the Tennessee Valley Authority is its division into small lots.\textsuperscript{5} XWBR tracts 182, 199, 244, and 245.
of varying size. A total of 235 tracts, not including the 30 tracts in the TVA-sponsored Meigs Subdivision, now exist as a result of subdivision of some of the original 62 tracts.

Tennessee Valley Authority land policies have influenced the study area in five significant ways. (1) The placing of the property into private hands has meant that laissez faire development could proceed on land that had previously been subject to governmental policy and control. (2) The change in TVA's land disposal policy in 1960 from one of "sell-excess" to basically one of retention resulted in the supply of lakefront land that was available to the public diminishing during a time in which the demand for reservoir land was rapidly rising. (3) The dividing of the excess land by TVA into different size tracts has had great influence on the boundaries of the present tracts along the lake. There are only three instances where excess tracts have been merged with backland. Even though many of the tracts have been subdivided, the XWBR boundaries remain as the outer limits of the subdivisions. (4) Retention and regulation of a protective strip of land between the excess tracts that were sold and the reservoir have given the Authority a potential (but, as yet unused) power to regulate private development on land sold by the agency. Instead, the protective strip has taken on the appearance of private land and has made private tracts appear much larger. (5) By selling small tracts of land for recreational purposes, the Authority has produced a seasonal population. A social enclave has been created between the reservoir and the established rural community.
Figure 25. A Portion of XWBR-201.
In creating small parcels for the mass auctions of November 7, 1950, and September 26, 1956, the agency attempted to answer three questions: what were the best possible uses for the land that was to be sold; how could the land best blend with the landscape; and what size tracts would best benefit the Authority monetarily? Most small lakefront tracts were created around Wann's Branch (Figure 17, p. 53). There the Authority owned a thin strip of shoreline that, if partitioned correctly, could provide a number of building sites for summer cottages. In the 1950 auction, the smaller the sizes of the lake tracts the greater the per acre returns. This was also true for the 1956 auction (Table 6). Few of the tracts are presently idle; most contain permanent seasonal dwellings.

Fifty-eight tracts have been created from the original 33 small tracts. The Tennessee Valley Authority created a linear subdivision of small, lakefront tracts between tracts 202 and 224 (Figure 17, p. 53). When auctioned, the lots averaged 1.9 acres; the largest was 4.7 acres and the smallest was 0.5. The 22 original tracts have become 50 lots during the past 20 years. Subdivision of the area, however, has ceased. There is a dwelling on nearly every lot.

There was one consolidation and subsequent subdivision of small tracts with access to Watts Bar Lake. Tracts 211 through 213 (totaling 6.8 acres) were purchased by one man. He kept a large

---

6Compiled from the Warranty Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Meigs County, Tennessee.
### TABLE 6

**CHARACTERISTICS OF SMALL TRACTS WITH WATER ACCESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tract Number</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Date Sold</th>
<th>Price/@</th>
<th>Present Number of Tracts</th>
<th>Permanent Structures</th>
<th>Present Land Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>197</td>
<td>4.9@</td>
<td>05/20/50</td>
<td>$204.08</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Cabin</td>
<td>Part of Scott Subdivision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>198</td>
<td>4.4@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>170.45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 Cabins</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mobile home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>4.0@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>43.75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22 Mobile homes</td>
<td>Lakeview Trailer Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Residence</td>
<td>(25 lots)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>merged with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>backland, 3.7@</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202</td>
<td>3.3@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>180.15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>203</td>
<td>1.1@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>272.73</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Cabin</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>204</td>
<td>1.9@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>157.89</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 Cabins</td>
<td>Residential (permanent and 2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205</td>
<td>1.1@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>318.18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 Cabins</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>206</td>
<td>1.1@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>272.73</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Cabin</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207</td>
<td>1.7@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>250.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 Cabins</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>208</td>
<td>0.5@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>203.84</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Boat dock facilities</td>
<td>Sam's Boat Dock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>209</td>
<td>2.1@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>203.85</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Residence</td>
<td>Residential (permanent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210</td>
<td>2.4@</td>
<td>11/07/50</td>
<td>187.17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 Cabins</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211</td>
<td>2.9@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>551.72</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3 Cabins</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212</td>
<td>4.7@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>382.98</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3 Cabins</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home) and idle part of Whitaker Subdivision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tract Number</td>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Date Sold</td>
<td>Price/@</td>
<td>Present Number of Tracts</td>
<td>Permanent Structures</td>
<td>Present Land Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>213</td>
<td>2.8@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>$553.57</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Residence</td>
<td>Residential (permanent) (part of Whitaker Subdivision)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>214</td>
<td>2.4@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>625.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Residence</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>215</td>
<td>1.3@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>576.93</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7 Mobile homes</td>
<td>Residential (permanent and 2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>216</td>
<td>2.1@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>488.10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 Residence</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home) and idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>217</td>
<td>2.1@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>666.66</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 Residence</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home) and idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>218</td>
<td>1.7@</td>
<td>06/20/50</td>
<td>2941.18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Residence</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>219</td>
<td>0.7@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>2750.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Residence</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220</td>
<td>0.5@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>1500.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Cabin</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>222</td>
<td>1.2@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>1208.33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 Cabins</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Mobile home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>223</td>
<td>1.0@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>150.33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 Cabin</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 Mobile homes</td>
<td>Abandoned boat dock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vacant boat dock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>224</td>
<td>3.7@</td>
<td>10/18/52</td>
<td>554.05</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Residence</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vacant boat dock</td>
<td>Abandoned boat dock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tract Number</td>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Date Sold</td>
<td>Price/@</td>
<td>Present Number of Tracts</td>
<td>Permanent Structures</td>
<td>Present Land Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>225</td>
<td>4.0@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>$118.75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>226</td>
<td>2.7@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>500.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Residence</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>237</td>
<td>4.7@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>154.26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 Cabin</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home) and idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>239</td>
<td>4.5@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>111.11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>241</td>
<td>3.1@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>354.84</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Cabin</td>
<td>Residential (2nd home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>242</td>
<td>4.9@</td>
<td>09/26/56</td>
<td>520.41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Residence</td>
<td>Residential (permanent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tennessee Valley Authority Reservoir Property Maps and field observation.
lot and sold the rest of the property as thirteen small lots, all of which bordered the lake.

B. Effects of the Termination of Land Sales

The Tennessee Valley Authority has not offered any land for sale in the study area since the auction at Euchee Boat Dock in 1956. The retention by the Authority of more than half the excess reservoir land acquired for the Watts Bar Project has increased the demand for land sold to the public. The supply of land to the public ceased sixteen years ago, creating a positive, exponential curve demand for the nearly 1,300 acres that had come into private ownership.

The TVA Board of Directors resolution in 1960 that ended sale of land for private recreational use had a marked effect on private land in the study area, especially with regard to subdivision development. The resolution was passed for three reasons. First, the Authority recognized the small amount of economic input in an area offered by private recreational cabins. Second, TVA thought that it had sold too much land to the public in the 1950's. Thirdly, the pressure from within the agency and from the federal government to sell land had almost vanished by 1960.

After the resolution, developers and prospective buyers of

---

7 The last tract was sold at auction in September of 1956. However, lessees of the TVA Meigs Subdivision continued to buy their lots until the last one was purchased in 1962.
cabin lots alike realized that the land in private hands in 1960 was all that would be available as cabin sites in the future. After the supply of available subdivision land was cut off in 1960, cabin sites took on a speculative quality and prices began to increase rapidly.\(^8\) The pre-1960 subdivisions have been more intensively improved with structures than post-1960 subdivisions, because most buyers purchased lots for the purpose of building second homes. Many of the lots purchased in subdivisions platted after 1960 were speculative investments. Of the 115 lots in pre-1960 subdivisions, 56 percent have permanent-structure dwellings, while only 20 percent of the 65 post-1960 subdivision lots have permanent structures on them. The Homestead Subdivision, which consists of 14 lots, was developed on part of the large XWBR-243 in October, 1961. The lots were excellent cabin sites, and all were sold in a short time. By the end of 1975, however, Homestead Subdivision contained only one residence.

Several tracts subdivided after 1960 were less than ideal. TVA's halting land sales increased demand for even the worst waterfront lots. The Lots O' Lake Subdivision was developed after the 1960 TVA Board resolution (Figure 22, p. 71). It is composed of XWBR tracts 193, 194, and 195 which are located on a very steep

\(^8\)In the late 1950's and early 1960's, choice lakefront lots cost approximately $500 per acre. By 1975 this price had increased to more than $10,000. In the summer of 1975, property contiguous to the northern end of the study area was auctioned by a developer. The lots were not ideal for second-home development, but they sold for between $12,000 and $15,000 each. Most lots were less than one-half acre in size.
bank. The vertical relief from the back of the tract line to the water is between 120 and 135 feet. On September 28, 1963, it was divided into 45 lots averaging 0.92 acres each. In 1966 four houses were located in the Lots O' Lake Subdivision; the number had increased to ten by the summer of 1975. The developers still own 21 of the lots, 16 of which have no lakefront.

C. The Protective Strip

The Tennessee Valley Authority's "protective strip" around Watts Bar Lake consists of land between the reservoir pool-level and the lakefront boundary of excess land. The Authority views this strip as a hazard zone, not as excess land. It can vary between zero and sixteen feet in elevation, depending on the current pool-level and the contour to which the Authority sold excess land. Most tracts were sold to the 750-foot contour, but early in the disposal period some were sold to the 745-foot contour. The level of maximum flooding is the 745-foot contour. Normal pool level is 741 feet in summer and 734 feet in winter.

1. Problems in the Perception of Ownership of the Protective Strip

Both physical and perceptual problems have developed with regard to the protective strip. Citizens who purchased XWBR tracts

---

9 The drop in elevation is concentrated within 100 feet of the lakeshore.

10 Records of the Office of the Tax Assessor, Meigs County, Tennessee.
consider the land contiguous to their property, but below the 750-foot contour, as their property. This problem of perception of ownership stems from TVA's longstanding practice of allowing residents to develop the portions of the protective strip contiguous to their properties. Owners have been allowed to landscape and manicure the land, raft raft the shore, and construct boat docks (Figures 26 and 27).

Conversely, the general public does not realize that land below the 750-foot contour is not private land. Among the reasons for this belief are: (1) the lack of a distinct boundary defining the limits of public property, (2) the fact that the protective strip is public property is not advertised, and (3) the fact that a house on the lake implies private ownership to the water. Also, TVA recreational areas are labeled "public use area," implying that these are the areas that the public is to use. If the public does use the protective strip, it must enter from the water, unless the owner of the contiguous land gives permission to cross his property. Although there are several state public access points along the shore of the study area, they are just that--points. In most cases, it is difficult, if not impossible, to reach the protective strip from these access points because of thick undergrowth and rough topography.

Tennessee Valley Authority lands, not just the protective strip, appear off-limits to most. According to Bob Wear of TVA's Athens District Office, Division of Reservoir Properties, licenses and leases for agricultural and any other uses make the land
Figure 26. Boathouse and Dock on XWBR-197.

Figure 27. Boathouses and Docks on XWBR-197.
because TVA sold this parcel down to the contour of maximum flooding. The Authority does not have the leverage in tract 200 that it could have on Euchee Boat Dock with its extensive dock facilities and wider protective strip.

D. TVA Policy Effects on Ownership Patterns

Few of the original residents of the area affected by the Watts Bar Reservoir purchased excess tracts from the Tennessee Valley Authority between 1950 and 1956. Most of the tracts were purchased by residents of neighboring counties to the east.

There are several reasons why the original land owners did not buy land back from the Authority in the 1950's. There was a span of eleven years between purchase of land for the Watts Bar Project and the first TVA auction of excess land in 1950. Most of the families had relocated with the help of TVA in other areas in east Tennessee and had broken most of their ties with northern Meigs County. Also, to create XWBR tracts, the Authority erased most old farm boundaries (Figure 9, p. 35). The new tracts had little resemblance to original farms. In addition, the area did not appear the same after flooding. A farmer looks at land in a different manner from an urban dweller. The lay of land, its fertility, and production capability are things a farmer considers. Aesthetic, amenity values are most important to the city dweller.

The few original owners who remained in the area after flooding had little desire to purchase land from TVA in the 1950's. J. A. Hagler had purchased a farm across the ridge in Ten Mile Valley after TVA
condemned his farm for the reservoir. When urged by family and friends to buy back the old Hagler home place, he refused, saying that he never wanted to see "that damn lake" as long as he lived.\textsuperscript{17} When A. B. Culvahouse begged his father to purchase XWBR-230 when it was offered in the 1956 auction, the elder Culvahouse also refused, saying that TVA had given him $35 an acre for the same land that was now going to the highest bidder. The tract sold for $7,500, an average of $449.10 an acre.\textsuperscript{18}

The principal cities of permanent residence of people who bought excess land were Athens in McMinn County and Sweetwater in Monroe County. Residents of Knoxville and Chattanooga were, for the most part, not interested in the Watts Bar Reservoir because of distance. More than half of the lots in the Meigs Subdivision were leased to residents of Athens and Sweetwater. Advertisements by TVA in newspapers such as the Athens Daily Post Athenian amplified interest for land on the lake.

A seasonal, urbanite resident was superimposed on the existing rural farm population when the excess tracts were auctioned to the highest bidder in the 1950's. Many of these new residents were professionals such as doctors, lawyers, and bankers. As there has been little absorption of the excess land sold to the public into the backland, so has there been little absorption of the new population

\textsuperscript{17} Interview with Jack Ewing, Ten Mile, Tennessee, October 15, 1975.

\textsuperscript{18} Interview with A. B. Culvahouse, Ten Mile, Tennessee, August, 1975.
Figure 32. Part of Lakeview Trailer Park (XWBR-200).
Figure 30. Part of Euchee Boat Dock (XWBR-232) as viewed from the Southeast.

Figure 31. Part of Euchee Boat Dock (XWBR-232) as viewed from the West.
perceptually private and discourage use by the public. ¹¹

Because of the protective strip, small lots that appeared to be much larger than they were could be created by developers. The subdivisions of A. B. Culvahouse are examples. The first of his subdivisions was on XWBR-238 (Figure 22, p. 71). This tract was composed of an eight-acre island above the 750-foot contour and seven acres of lakefront land on the mainland. Because of TVA's policy of retaining land below the 750-foot contour, the tract was 14.6 acres in size but controlled approximately 30 acres at the normal summer pool level. Culvahouse subdivided the island part of tract 238 in June, 1957, into small lots, averaging approximately 0.43 of an acre. ¹²

The amount of land above normal pool level, however, was more than twice that for each lot. ¹³ The small size was beneficial to a person who purchased a lot, for he paid much lower taxes than the usable size of the lot warranted.

2. Special Concessions to Lot Owners for Use of the Protective Strip

The Tennessee Valley Authority has at times granted special concessions to owners of lots. One example is that of a family from Oak Ridge who purchased XWBR-227, a 10.6-acre peninsula, in 1956. The family kept one appealing lot and sold the rest of the tract

¹¹Interview with Bob Wear, Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Reservoir Properties, Athens District Office, Townsend, Tennessee, January 22, 1976.


in four lots. TVA allowed the lot owners to build part of an access road below the contour of maximum flooding (Figure 28). Without the road, the lots would have been waterlocked.

Because the acquisition line for the Watts Bar Reservoir was irregular, the margin between the lake and the backland in places was considerable, but in others it was very narrow. At several locations the backland was close enough to the lake that it could be used for waterfront cabin sites. One piece of backland was especially close, and the owner developed a subdivision in 1947 to compete with TVA's Meigs Subdivision.

The first privately-developed subdivision in Meigs County on Watts Bar Lake was the Scott Subdivision on the western side of Wann's Branch (Figure 22, p. 71, and Figure 29). It is the severance (backland) part of two tracts purchased by TVA. The developer, C. F. Scott, in 1948 built a road between his property and XWBR-197 and created thirteen 100-foot by 200-foot lots along it.

A person could rent a lot from the government with lakefront property in Meigs Subdivision or own a lot adjoining the shoreline in Scott Subdivision. Those who bought parcels in the Scott Subdivision were given permission by the Authority to build docks and boathouses on TVA land (Figures 26 and 27). Curiously, the section of land condemned as WBR-197 (XWBR-196) was quite large when compared to the narrow severance strip condemned as WBR-108 (XWBR-197). The Authority decided to sell tract XWBR-197 in 1949 at public auction because the "tract appear[ed] to be especially desirable for providing the adjoining cabin site lots with ingress and egress to and from
Figure 28. The XWBR-227 Subdivision

Source: Plat Map Section, Office of the Register of Deeds, Meigs County, Tennessee.
Figure 29. Scott Subdivision, 1947-1950.

Source: Plat Map Section, Office of the Register of Deeds, Meigs County, Tennessee
the lake."\textsuperscript{14} The tract was purchased by C. O. Scott, who had sold all the lots in his subdivision. He sold portions of the tract to the subdivision lot-owners and kept portions. A difficult situation would have developed if someone other than Scott had purchased XWBR-197. Lot-owners would not have had access to their improvements on the protective strip.

3. TVA's Opportunity to Control Undesirable Development with the Protective Strip

The Tennessee Valley Authority has the power to guide development along the lake shore with the protective strip but has failed to do so. A property owner must construct all of his boatdocking facilities on the protective strip and must receive permission from the Authority before building the structures. The Authority has used a policy of "control of the backland by regulation of the protective strip" on other reservoirs, notably Norris Reservoir, but it has not used the policy in the study area.\textsuperscript{15}

One type of undesirable development is the overcrowded, poorly-planned mobile home park. When contemplating the sale of excess reservoir lands, the Tennessee Valley Authority was not aware of the emerging problems associated with mobile homes. The possibility

\textsuperscript{14}Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Property and Supply, Land Branch, \textit{Review of Watts Bar Reservoir Properties to Determine Surplus Land} (Knoxville, Tennessee: February, 1949), p. 57.

\textsuperscript{15}Interview with R. Brown Wright, Tennessee Valley Authority, Regional Studies, Knoxville, Tennessee. A land owner must develop his property to the satisfaction of the Authority in order to obtain approval to use the protective strip.
of putting 50 or more dwellings on eight acres was incomprehensible in 1949. To TVA, an eight-acre lot would probably be kept intact or be subdivided into six to twelve private homesites. Mobile home parks are as a rule very profitable ventures, and one way of virtually assuring full occupancy is to locate a park on a lake. The owner rents to both full-time residents and weekend warriors who are not wealthy enough to afford a cabin.

There are two mobile home parks in the study area. The largest has been incorporated with Euchee Boat Dock, XWBR-232 (Figure 18, p. 54, and Figures 30 and 31). There are 28 mobile homes on the property. Septic tanks for the mobile homes are 55-gallon oil drums, and much of the drinking water is obtained from two wells in the middle of the peninsula, a situation presenting the possibility of a considerable health problem. In short, Euchee Boat Dock is undesirable development that TVA has done nothing to discourage.

The second mobile home park is the Lakeview Trailer Park (Figure 17, p. 53, and Figure 32). A recent development, this park is a result of the merger of XWBR-200 and a small amount of backland. In August, 1975, the park consisted of a house and 25 mobile home lots, 21 of which were occupied. The Tennessee Valley Authority has had little control over this parcel in the past. The protective strip between tract 200 and the reservoir is narrow to non-existent,

---

16 The area health inspector inspects only if a septic tank has been ordered. This is a major reason why owners of mobile home parks can use 55-gallon drums and not be detected—no septic tanks are ordered.
into the social and economic activities of northern Meigs County. The two cultures are quite different, and the TVA acquisition line is the line between them.

E. Conclusions

There will be little further subdivision of land sold by TVA in the study area to the public. Large tracts with water access purchased for development were quickly subdivided after purchase or after TVA's halt of land sales in 1960. The present owners of large tracts probably will not subdivide them, and there is no more land entering the inventory from TVA. Small tracts with water access cannot change. Large tracts without water access have possibilities for residential subdivision, but not in the near future. They must wait for greater economic development of the area between Knoxville and Chattanooga.

The protective strip will become a major problem in the future. With an increase in the awareness of the public that the protective strip is public land and the increasing demand for developed public recreational land, the Authority will be forced to take action either in favor of or against lot owners who have improved the protective strip.

---

19 The only active developer in the area, Dick Wilson of the Red Cloud Corporation, sells one or two lots per year.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The founders of the United States surely did not foresee a phenomenon such as Watts Bar Reservoir when they composed the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution nearly two hundred years ago. Their principal reason for including the power of eminent domain was for road right-of-ways in the new country. The fact remains, however, that the Tennessee Valley Authority has the power of eminent domain. The Authority has been able to condemn the amount of land considered essential for a project. Perception of the amount that is essential has varied. Land acquisition has followed three basic policies since the inception of the agency in 1933. The first was the "buy" policy, acquiring half again as much land as was flooded in building a reservoir. This policy persisted from 1933 until the late 1950's. It was interrupted during the years of World War Two by the "limited-buy" policy, using flowage easements and purchasing land only if ownership were essential. In the late 1950's, the Authority sought to become involved in accelerated regional development and began the "over-buy" policy, purchasing two to three times the amount of acreage that was flooded.

Paralleling these land acquisition policies have been three policies for disposing of excess land. The first, a "no-sell" policy held that the land belonged to the public and that none should be sold to private interests. In the mid-1940's, the attitude that
the Authority had created "excess land" in the course of building reservoirs emerged. A policy of cautious adherence to land disposal sections of the TVA Act of 1933 was formulated within the agency. Land sales continued under pressure from the Eisenhower Administration until the late 1950's. A TVA board resolution in 1960 discontinued sale of land for private recreational use. Since 1960, the Authority has been reluctant to dispose of excess land except for specific commercial and industrial purposes. A "controlled-sell" policy has paralleled and complemented the "over-buy" land acquisition policy.

The purposes of this thesis are to identify past and present land policies of the Tennessee Valley Authority and to assess the effects of the "buy" acquisition policy and the three disposal policies on the Watts Bar Project in Meigs County, Tennessee. Between 1939 and 1942, TVA purchased 7,394 acres in the county, 4,395 acres of which were flooded. Of the remaining 3,000 acres, the Authority sold 1,299 to the public in the 1950's, transferred 17 to the State of Tennessee to be used as public access points, and retained 1,684. While the Authority has disposed of land on other reservoirs under the "controlled-sell" policy, no land has been sold in the study area.

The Tennessee Valley Authority land policies have had varied effects on land use in the study area. More than half the excess land acquired by TVA has been retained, and the agency has done little to develop it. Most of the TVA land remains as it was when it was purchased. Effects of policies on land sold to the public are reflected in fragmentation, absentee ownership, undesirable development, and inflated prices of lakefront parcels.
Land sold to the public in small tracts in the 1950's has been intensively developed, primarily with second-home dwellings. Large tracts with no water access sold to the public remain in the same idle state that they were in when the reservoir was flooded. Most large tracts with water access have been subdivided for second-home development. Those subdivided before 1960 have been intensively improved, but the ones subdivided after 1960 contain few structures.

There has been little justification for the Tennessee Valley Authority's acquisition or retention of excess land in the study area. A flowage easement on land bordering the lake would have exercised nearly as much control as the ownership of excess land. A serious question is raised as to whether the Authority should have purchased excess land for the Watts Bar Project. The agency had no plans for the land when it was purchased. The Authority presently has no plans for development of land it still retains.

In purchasing excess land for the Watts Bar Project, the Authority first should have created plans for economic development with specific ends in mind to justify the acquisition. The agency should have become actively involved in developing the area in conjunction with private, civic, and other governmental parties, for a passive economic development policy seldom works in a poor, rural area. Second, the Authority should have designated possible uses for excess land that was sold to the public. TVA can exercise controls on uses of disposed land only through the protective strip, a ribbon of land between the lake and the private property. The Authority has not used its power to regulate development along this ribbon of land.
Third, the Authority should have sold land with monetary gains in mind, thereby offsetting some or all costs of land acquisition. Neither TVA nor the original owners benefited monetarily from the sale of excess land in the study area. It largely has been outside speculators who have reaped the financial rewards generated by the excess land. Original owners should have at least shared in the monetary gains, for the old families had far greater claims to the profits than did the outside speculators who eventually got them.

The "under-buy" acquisition policy promoting laissez faire lakeshore development and the "over-buy" policy of strictly planning and implementing all reservoir development are superior to the "buy" acquisition policy used for the Watts Bar Project. By retaining more than half the excess land in the study area, the Authority put great pressure on demand for the land that it sold to the public. This pressure probably is not as great with the "under-buy" and "over-buy" policies, for the pressure is spread over all of the lakefront property. Also, fragmentation is probably greater with the "buy" acquisition policy. The Authority created a pattern of intermittent public and private ownership. It is a pattern of laissez faire development intermingled with strict governmental regulation.

More studies need to be conducted concerning land policies of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Studies conducted by the agency tend to deal with optimum land use and basically disregard the processes by which a piece of property arrived at its present use. The Authority has two reservoir projects, Tellico and Duck River, that still must run the entire course of land disposal. Also, studies of this type are especially needed if reservoir redevelopment becomes a reality.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


Public Documents

Tennessee Valley Authority Act of the Congress of the United States of America. Public Law 17 (May 18, 1933, 48 Stat. 58.).


Tennessee Valley Authority, Land Acquisition Department, Appraisal Section. *Background Appraisal Study of Watts Bar Reservoir Area.* Rockwood, Tennessee: 1940.

Tennessee Valley Authority, Land Acquisition Department. Instructions to Land Buyers: Reservoir Purchases. June, 1936.

Tennessee Valley Authority, Land Branch. Reservoir Land Review and Sales Programs, August, 1944 through June 30, 1966 (sic 1955).


Tennessee Valley Authority, Department of Regional Planning Studies. Economic Life and Some Major Reservoir Problems in the Spring City (Group I) Portion of the Watts Bar Reservoir Area. 1939.


Unpublished Materials


Beene, Jones C. IV. Knoxville, Tennessee. Interview 2 December and 5 December, 1975.


Fore, Truitt. Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Reservoir Properties, Knoxville, Tennessee. Interview 15 September, 1975.

Hornsby, Mr. and Mrs. J. Howard. Meigs County, Tennessee. Interview 27 April, 1974.

Ledford, Oben. Tax Assessor, Meigs County, Tennessee. Interview 20 April, 1974.


Wright, R. Brown. Tennessee Valley Authority, Department of Regional Studies, Knoxville, Tennessee. Interview 12 April, 1974 and 23 April, 1975.

Flowage Topography Maps. These maps show relief, topography, and cultural features before the flooding of the reservoir. Scale is 1:15,000.

Land Acquisition Maps. These maps give relief, land ownership, tract size, and cultural features before the flooding of the reservoir. Scale is 1:14,700.


Quadrangel Maps. These maps give forest cover, relief, physical features, cultural features, and topography after the flooding of the reservoir. Scale is 1:24,000.


All maps were acquired from the Tennessee Valley Authority Map Library, Knoxville, Tennessee.
VITA

John Sharp Fox was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, on October 8, 1947. He attended elementary school in Knox County and received his high school diploma from The Baylor School in Chattanooga in 1965. In September, 1965, he entered the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and received a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in geography in June, 1973. His education was interrupted by two years of military service.

John Fox entered the Graduate School of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in September, 1973, and received the Master of Science degree in geography in March, 1977. He is a member of the Association of American Geographers and Gamma Theta Upsilon. He is married to the former Martha Culvahouse.