The Dam Fighters: Commons Environmental Rhetoric, Rhetorical Citizenship, and Local Ethos

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Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
In
Rhetoric and Writing

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October 23, 2020
Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: rhetorical theory, grassroots, activism, environmentalism, Appalachia, rivers, Tennessee Valley Authority, archives, environmentalist, democracy

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation project, I examine the ways in which a grassroots environmental organization, the Upper French Broad Defense Association (UFBDA), was able to contribute knowledge and voice concerns regarding a Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) proposal between 1961 and 1972. The TVA proposal included a plan for comprehensive water resource development in western North Carolina which would have required in the implementation of 14 dams, flooding of more than 18,000 fertile agricultural acres and displacing 600 families from their ancestral homes. Employing archival research methods, in this dissertation I analyze the UFBDA's everyday rhetorical tactics which contributed to their overall success in preventing the implementation of the TVA project. I situate archival sources alongside contemporary scholarship in democratic practice, environmental rhetoric, rhetorical citizenship, and ethos, as discussed in rhetoric and writing studies. Overall, this dissertation demonstrates the ways in which the UFBDA case study offers a generative model for future environmental controversies, providing specific techniques which can contribute to the success of grassroots organizations mired in environmental controversies and contentious decisions.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

In this dissertation project, I examine the ways in which a grassroots environmental organization, the Upper French Broad Defense Association (UFBDA), was able to contribute knowledge and voice concerns regarding a Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) proposal between 1961 and 1972. The TVA proposal included a plan for comprehensive water resource development in western North Carolina which would have required in the implementation of 14 dams, flooding of more than 18,000 fertile agricultural acres and displacing 600 families from their ancestral homes. In order to complete this dissertation project, I explored two archival collections pertaining to the UFBDA. Based on my findings in the archives, I provide new understandings of how grassroots environmentalism works, particularly in terms of how environmentalists use language in order to participate in decisions about the environment. More specifically, this dissertation documents how members of the UFBDA were able to describe the western North Carolina landscape as a commons and not a wilderness, work together across counties to create new opportunities to share their concerns over the TVA project, and establish their own credibility as knowledgeable citizens about their local environment. By highlighting specific components of the UFBDA's work, this dissertation provides examples that can be used by future grassroots environmental organization facing similar challenges regarding environmental controversies.

Dedicated to all “Dam Fighters” past, present, and future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have so many wonderful people to thank and acknowledge her for their help and support for this project along the way. To operate chronologically, I would first like to recognize Heather South, archivist extraordinaire at Western Regional Archives in Asheville, North Carolina, who first introduced me to the UFBDA records. Also many thanks to Gene Hyde, a fantastic archivist and dear friend who helped me access the UFBDA records at UNCA and has been, along with his partner Barrie, a kind listener and great source of encouragement in this project. Many thanks also to Aaron Purcell, my first editor who helped me transform early work on this project into a publication for *The Journal of East Tennessee History*. My work on the UFBDA received so much support from my beloved Wofford College faculty friends and mentors: Mark Byrnes, Kenneth Banks, and Tim and Catherine Schmitz. I would not be the writer and reader I am today without the continued mentorship and encouragement from John Lane, Wofford professor emerita, accomplished poet, nature writer, and novelist. So many thanks for John and his wife Betsy Teter for encouraging me and creating such a vibrant literary community in Spartanburg, S.C. my first home away from the mountains. My work here also benefits from my training and mentorship I received as a graduate student in Appalachian Studies at Appalachian State University. So many thanks to Sandy Ballard for teaching me so much—how to be a compassionate and effective editor, how to conduct research, how to laugh (especially at oneself), and how to care for houseplants. Also many thanks to Tom Hansell for supporting my work on a digital humanities and documentary film website on the UFBDA during my time at Appalachian

State. My dissertation would not be what it is without the mentorship and assistance of Katy Powell. Thank you for being such a wonderful guide to writing and rhetoric and so many things. Many thanks as well to the members of my dissertation committee, Kelly, Carolyn, and Sheila. I so appreciate your expertise and efforts helping me with this project. I was fortunate to have so many excellent teachers and mentors during my time at Virginia Tech including Amy Nelson, Julie Mengert-Oakley, Chris Lindgren, Jennifer Sano-Franchini, and Dean of Graduate Education, Karen DePauw. I am grateful for the Rhetoric and Writing PhD at Virginia Tech for providing me with ample travel funding so that I could work with Lisa Villadsen at the International Rhetoric Workshop in Ghent, Belgium in Summer 2018. Thanks to Lisa for being such an encouraging mentor, and as the work presented here demonstrates, I am deeply inspired by her work in rhetorical theory. I could not have made it through the PhD, much less finished the dissertation without my wonderful network of friends throughout the Blue Ridge. Thank you for the laughter, encouragement, and kindness: Sarah, Iris, Steve and Kelly, Cindy and Greg, Kim and Rory, Caleb and Irina, Meg and Garrett, Pam and Owen, Ahana, Mallory, Aaron and Nora, Paul and Terri, Gene and Barrie, and so many more. Many, many thanks to my uncle, Craig Goforth for always being there to chat about all things PhD. As always, I am eternally grateful to my adorable and hilarious mom and dad, Holly and Gerald, and my beloved sister, Sheridan Kate. And beyond all else, thank you to my Trevor, for reminding me of my strengths when I feel weak, and being a source of love and joy in this world.

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"seal the river at its mouth
Take the water prisoner"

–Townes Van Zandt, "Lungs"

"A desperate conflict against the Goliath that had built 50 impoundments in Tennessee, planted developments in six adjoining states including four lakes in North Carolina and moved from triumph to triumph without so much as a public hearing on the way. From such a conflict there should be valuable lessons for the future, but no adequate study has been made of it by local or national press. Our steps to victory are little understood."

–Interview with Martha Gash Boswell. Recorded 11 October 1983, p. 21. Folder 4 Box 3 UFBDA Records, Western Regional Archives, Asheville, North Carolina.

Despite significant public protests, Earth Day demonstrations, and congressional hearings, many U.S. environmentalists feel frustrated that their concerns, goals, and agendas are not often incorporated into public policy. Instead of being a productive movement that transforms the national political landscape, U.S. environmentalism is a social movement marked by loss. Since environmentalism's inception in the early 20th century, American environmentalists have continually experienced deep disappointment as federal public policies continually dismiss, discount, and even ignore environmentalists' concern. For example, wilderness advocate and founder of the Sierra Club, John Muir, took President Teddy Roosevelt on a three-night camping trip through the land that would become Yosemite National Park in 1903. Muir escorted fellow nature-lover Roosevelt through the granite valleys to persuade Roosevelt to stop the state of California from damming Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Valley, which Muir

repeatedly referred to as more beautiful, scenic, and wild than any other valley in the region. Over three days and two nights camping out beneath the western stars, Muir tried to convince President Roosevelt to use his federal power to prevent the Hetch Hetchy Dam. While Roosevelt was likely moved by the valley's beauty, Muir was not able to convince Roosevelt to save Hetch Hetchy from a dam, and the valley was flooded soon after their fateful camping trip (Gifford pp. 19-20; 35). Muir's failure to secure Roosevelt's support in offering Hetch Hetchy Valley federal-level protection is an early example of environmentalism's failed efforts to secure favorable national policies regarding their key goals, a problem which persists today. Environmentalism as a social movement continues to be largely ignored and discounted in matters of public policy. As one example of many historic and contemporary incidents, the U.S., as of this writing, has yet to take any substantial measures to combat global climate change, despite environmentalists' fervent protests and organizing efforts on this issue since the late 1990s.

In this dissertation project, I extend work in environmental rhetoric regarding the issue of public participation in environmental controversies and policy. As I will discuss in this introductory chapter, many scholars have explored models and means through which the public, and in many cases environmentalists and environmental activists try and influence decisions about environmental projects. While many of these models offer possible new strategies and tactics for increased public involvement, despite these studies of how the public can be involved in environmental decision-making, many environmentalists still lament the overall ineffectiveness of environmentalism as an

activist-centered social movement. Rather than simply adding yet another model to the study of public participation in environmental rhetoric, I here offer a focused case study on a highly successful environmental organization. In this dissertation, I address issues of *both* how can we increase public participation in debates about environmental controversies *and* how environmental groups can have greater political efficacy, or a greater sense of accomplishing their desired aims. In this dissertation, I demonstrate how environmental rhetoric helps environmentalists both increase levels of public participation in environmental debates and to achieve their goals for environmental protection in such scenarios.

Research Problem: Lack of Political Efficacy for Environmental Activists

Many scholars in environmental sociology have argued that environmentalism, as a social movement "has arguably been one of the most successful social movements of the 20th century" as it effected "mass cultural and political change" (Agnone "Amplifying," 1593). While environmentalism may objectively seem effective, many environmental organizations feel as though they lack political efficacy, that their concerns and issues are not a high priority for many policy makers. As environmental sociologist Jon Agnone has documented, "although the public overwhelmingly supports strict environmental standards and regulation . . . environmental concerns are never high salience issues comparable to the economy and foreign policy" (1609). Similarly, Robert Brulle and J. Craig Jenkins, in their analysis of the failed 2002 bipartisan efforts to improve fuel efficiency in U.S manufactured-cars, suggest that this case study "demonstrates the political obstacles that stand in the way of even the most basic baby

steps toward addressing environmental problems at home and around the world" ("Fixing" 15). In analyzing the difficult circumstances surrounding environmentalism in the 21st century, Brulle and Jenkins argue that, despite the thousands of environmental agencies and non-profits nation-wide, "the political clout of the environmental movement appears to have eroded steadily since the early 1990s" and further, "most critics agree the environmental movement is at best currently on the defensive—and this at a time when we face growing and perhaps irreversible environmental degradation" (16). While analyzing the efficacy of the entire environmental movement is far too broad of a topic for even a single dissertation, as I will document in the next section, I will extend existing work in environmental communication and rhetorics of science and technology with regard to public participation in environmental decision-making.

Literature Review: Public Deliberations & Environmental Decision-Making

As environmental communication scholars Hollie M. Smith and Todd Norton write, "We live in an age of participation" (456). While public input and participation is now commonplace in U.S. democracy, with respect to environmental issues, public involvement in environmental decision-making increased exponential following the 1969 passage of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Smith and Norton, 465). After NEPA mandated public input on development projects, "federal, state, and local government agencies within the United States have incorporated some degree of public participation into their policy decision processes" (Walker "Public Participation," 101). While many entities incorporated public input after NEPA, the legislation mandated public input for projects with an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in order to

“address issues of environmental justice in their actions” (Endres, “Sacred Land,” 331). While public participation in environmental deliberations has increased since the passage of NEPA, many scholars in environmental rhetoric and communication have critiqued, theorized, and called for expanded notions of public participation.

In their call for advanced theories and practices of public participation, many environmental communication scholars have discussed the traditional, technocratic modes of public input that have dominated many environmental deliberations. For example, Smith and Norton argue that “Traditional forms of environmental public participation follow a fairly straightforward process” (457). Traditional notions of public participation include the following steps: “technical experts offer the public a range of options including the agency’s preferred option among other available and non-option options” next, the “lead agency then utilizes a standard set of institutional structures or mechanisms such as public comment periods, testimony, hearings, and surveys” (Smith and Norton 457). In addition to this system on the part of agencies, the public has historically been involved via “public hearings, letter writing, and other public comment periods involving the federal government and American citizens” (Smith and Norton 457). While these systems of public participation likely are familiar to most Americans, and have been in place for decades, many scholars have expressed skepticism about how effective these efforts often are in terms of incorporating public interests (see Smith and Norton, Endres, among others).

Fears surrounding traditional forms of public participation are numerous, but mostly consist of the concern that these methods can leave the public voice “muted” in

final rounds of decision-making and that perhaps in these instances, "public participation can function as a bit of a façade, in the absence of what may be the good intentions of managers to arrive at the very best resource decision" (Smith and Norton 458). Environmental communication scholar Danielle Endres has categorized traditional public participation in many environmental deliberations as representing a "technocratic model" of public participation. Endres argues that most of our theoretical models for public participation in environmental deliberations "assume a technocratic one-way model of communication" wherein "decision makers are set aside from members of the 'public,' a monolithic conception of the public that means who is not a decision maker or expert" ("Science and Public Participation" 51). Further, Endres argues that technocratic forms of public participation "constraining participation and dialogue between publics and decision makers" (51). Not only does the technocratic model constrain dialogue, but it also represents an inherent power imbalance. As Endres notes, the "technocratic model of public participation in decision making is heavily weighted against citizens, particularly with regard to scientific argument" (54). I agree with Endres that "There is no doubt that we need new and improved models of public participation in environmental decision making" (54). This dissertation, therefore, is a result of a need to theorize new models of public participation. Through a case study in public input into environmental decision-making, this dissertation highlights a public participation model that not only allowed ordinary citizens to participate in an environmental decision, but one that also demonstrated how citizens were able to effectively achieve their aims. The case study presented in this dissertation demonstrates the need to not only increase the level of

public participation in environmental decision-making, but that we should also examine instances when citizen groups feel successful in their efforts to weigh-in on environmental controversies. In other words, this dissertation emphasizes the ways in which rhetorical tactics can both increase the level of public participation *and* the effectiveness of public involvement in preserving environments.

Searching for New Models of Public Participation

While scholars certainly want to increase public engagement in science and technology, as environmental communication scholars Katz-Kimchi et al suggest, "it still remains unclear *how* exactly to engage the pubic in terms of rhetorical and persuasive strategies" (1). In order to provide clarity into how to engage the public, several scholars have offered alternative models of public participation. For example, Robert J. Brulle, citing the limitations of traditional models of public participation, Brulle offers a theoretical model for public input that relies on civic engagement. Brulle argues that "democratic civic engagement is core to successful social change efforts," particularly in the context of environmental deliberations (82). Critiquing the common approach of providing "top-down" messaging and organizing strategies in environmental decision-making, Brulle suggests that it is "well known that political mobilization campaigns are more effective and legitimate if they engage citizens in a sustained dialogue rather than treating them as mass opinion to be manipulated" (91). Acknowledging the importance of legitimate public input, Brulle argues that "Broad-based civic participation cannot be brought about by expert advocacy, but instead, individual citizens "need to actively participate in the creation and maintenance of their civic institutions" (91). For Brulle,

"The way to institute democratic politics is to practice democratic politics" (91). In order to shift away from top-down environmental communication strategies, Brulle offers three specific recommendations for approaching the civic engagement model of public participation, including, "(1) shifting towards challenge messages that provide reasonable alternative actions, (2) changing the model from top-down communication towards legitimate civic engagement, and (3) offering an example of how our society *could* become ecologically sustainable" (93). While Brulle's recommendations for environmental communication are certainly promising, his advocacy of the civic engagement model of public participation does not address the legitimate ways in which becoming engaged in democratic politics is not always an option for marginalized citizens.

Deborah Cox Callister offers an alternative model for public participation in environmental decision-making which attempts to account for the marginalization associated with many citizens who take a less anthropocentric view of nature, including Native American groups. Callister's work offers a new model for public participation that "responds to calls for pragmatic ways to expand participation" beyond the anthropocentric nature/culture divide to account for the non-human (435). Callister offers the "land community participation model" or LCP to meet these issues in participation, a model which features "participation, power, and chronemics" in three continua that "bind and constitute participatory communication in environmental decision-making" (435). Rather than adhering to strict demarcation lines in her discussion of public participation, Callister suggests that we move "toward an

environmental democracy that can accommodate a wise spectrum of *participatory communication*, including internatural and extrahuman (more than human) communication, in environmental decision-making practices and processes" (436). Callister argues that existing models for public participation in environmentalism "remain limited in ability to address anthropocentrism (human-centered interpretations and decisions) and extrahuman participation" (437). Further, according to Callister, these models "fail to foreground: (1) the *land community*, which includes nature as all living things . . . embedded within the environment; (2) what counts as participation—broadly conceived—including an expressive land community; (3) how power constrains and enables human and extrahuman participation . . . and (4) *chronemics* or cultural notions of time that drive decision-making and hold the potential for transcending dominant temporal orientations" (437). Callister argues that her LCP model "offers a broad definition of public participation in environmental decision-making that includes a wide spectrum of how land community members interact, communicate, represent, and enact participation" (439). In her concluding comments, Callister suggests that through an "extensive review of participatory communication scholarship (and beyond) supports the need for a new participation model that responds to contemporary environmental crises" and she therefore offers the LCP model as a new theoretical tool and practical model to meet that end (450). While Callister's model certainly makes space in public participation for the nonhuman world, her advanced thinking may be harder to implement in real world scenarios because of the lack of wide-spread public knowledge about chronemics.

Speaking from decades of experience as both an environmental communications scholar and as a mediator for environmental deliberations, Gregg B. Walker offers insights into his experiences using a particular communication tactic in public participation scenarios. More specifically, Walker highlights the "use of worksheets to guide conversations among stakeholders on environmental management issues" (100). Walker suggests that these worksheets, which provide members of the public with some templated language, can help facilitate effective dialogue in environmental deliberations. Walker argues that the use of worksheets in traditional public participation venues allows for "collaborative citizen engagement," as it "involves both dialogue and deliberation" (101). Walker argues that whereas dialogue "fosters learning, learning generates shared understanding, and shared understanding supports deliberation" (101). Further, Walker argues that deliberation "features [the] critical examination of ideas, leading to discussions of feasibility, implementation, monitoring, and adaptation," all of which are "components of sound environmental decisions" (101). Walker argues that the worksheet method he advocates functions as a way to "foster dialogue and learning" while simultaneously working to "structure conversations so that all voices are heard" (108). Walker conceives of this method of public participation as helping us conceive of a pluralistic model of public participation which "values dialogue, deliberation, and learning," (101). Further, Walker suggests that pluralistic public participation embodies the principles of "FAAITH – fairness, accountability, access, inclusiveness, transparency, and honesty" (101). Walker argues that pluralistic public participation processes "encourage negotiation of shared meanings and interpretations

in order to generate *shared* understanding" and therefore, "provide [participants] access to and ownership in the decision-making process" which are necessary for "sound environmental policy" (102). Walker's practical, pluralistic public participation model is rooted in first-hand experience, while also providing theoretical insights and goals regarding what equitable public participation in environmental decision making might look like. Much like Walker's participation model, the dissertation presented here also incorporates theoretical knowledge about participation and democracy with practical evidence from archival sources pertaining to a real-world case study in environmental controversy.

Similar to Walker, Smith and Norton examine a specific case study in environmental decision making which combines both "traditional and innovative forms of participation" (456). In their analysis the authors highlight that even when more innovative and "seemingly collaborative forms" are employed, participation is often "occupied by powerful and more organized groups" often at the cost of squeezing out citizens and marginalized groups (456). In response to these concerns about public participation, scholars and practitioners of public participation have advocated for the development of "collaborative approaches to public participation, featuring open communication, shared decision space, and potential to define both problems and solutions" (458). The authors suggest that citizens advisory boards can increase public participation when coupled with "traditional modes of participation" because these boards "allow for selected participants to represent various stakeholder interests and the community by functioning as liaisons with experts and the public, debate alternative

plans, and make recommendations to government agencies" (458). Smith and Norton, in their study of a citizen advisory board, are particularly interested in "situations when government agencies give legitimate power to these boards to influence policy decisions and when the board shows signs of high 'collaborative potential,' but power imbalances still surface and lead to unsuccessful outcomes" (459). In their broader recommendations, the authors suggest that "*In critical analysis of participatory spaces, structural conditions and discursive processes must be theorized dialectically*" (emphasis original, 469). Similarly, the authors argue, "*Analysis of innovative forms of participation is challenging because we need to look for powerful relationships among representatives, organizations, and interests beneath the veneer of collaboration*" (emphasis original, 469). The authors suggest that their work, examines "the relationship between structure and discourse within environmental decision-making, focusing on one case that employed traditional and innovative forms of participation" and they argue that "true participation, even with innovative structures [like the citizen advisory board], often yields to powerful organized groups because of the problems of representation" (471). Smith and Norton provide practical strategies for improving the quality of public participation in environmental decision making.

Public Participation Amidst the Constraints of Traditional Deliberations

As this literature review has demonstrated thus far, many scholars in environmental communication and rhetoric have purported alternative models for deliberation, citing the limitations and issues surrounding top-down, technocratic, and traditional forms of public participation in environmental decision-making. Other

scholars, however, have conducted rhetorical analyses of existing forms of public participation, examining the ways in which the public can or cannot participate, based on current systems for public input. For example, Justin Mando examines citizen testimony in a public hearing about fracking to highlight “vicarious experience” as a particular rhetorical tactic in environmental controversies. In his analysis, Mando suggests that both proponents and opponents of fracking employ the tactic, “vicarious experience” to provide audience members with a vivid understanding of the place in discussion. While both opponents and proponents employ “vicarious experience,” Mando argues that fracking supporters use less descriptive details than fracking opponents who represent landscapes with more vivid details, giving audience members the feeling of being in the place in question, a difference in rhetorical strategy which Mando argues “affects how audience members are invited to engage with these scenes, which may impact the acceptance and circulation of these arguments as well as the way people experience the place they live” (352). Mando argues that the overall “rhetorical effect” of invoking “a specific geographic location,” “depicted for the purpose of bearing witness to the experience” is “to provide the audience with a vicarious experience of a place” (353). Further, by appealing to the vividness of a place, speakers “control the representation to lead their audience toward a certain evaluation. The speaker assumes that if the audience were to experience that place first-hand – to be proximate to it – their positions on the issue would match” (353). According to “the vicarious nature of this appeal and the creation of the sense of proximity,” Mando refers to this appeal in public hearings about environmental controversies as “vicarious proximity” (353).

Mando's careful, close analysis of public hearings relating to environmental deliberations offers vicarious experience as a powerful tactic for environmental communication and public participation.

Similarly to Mando's contribution, Merav Katz-Kimchi et al, offer "several effective rhetorical strategies, based on research being conducted by the authors (1)" from a number of different studies and topics. These effective rhetorical strategies include: "activating cultural memory, positive engagement, interactivity and invitation, aesthetics, and variety (2)." The authors describe cultural memory as "not found in the archives, but is defined as that knowledge of the past and its major products that citizens of any culture share as a human group at a given moment" (2). Further, the authors suggest that "positive engagement is more productive for change than eliciting negative emotions such as fear . . . . we believe the public is, in fact, capable of understanding but needs encouragement and help to do so" (2). Matz-Kimchi et al also suggest that "While interactive engagement and active learning may be the best approach, it is still important to realize that individuals have different learning styles and prior knowledge bases. It is therefore advantageous in an attempt at persuasion and education to engage different learning styles and to present the same types of information in different ways" (3). Similarly, the authors suggest that "We determined that *aesthetics* is an important consideration when using visual communication in order to engage the public. Aesthetics in classical rhetoric is related to *enargia* and *euphonia*, the principles of vivacity in imagery and harmony in sound and its analogues" (3). Further, "in order to engage the public using high quality aesthetic displays, it may be advisable to approach

the problem with an interdisciplinary team of design/visual rhetoric/visual communication experts who are familiar with appropriate visual strategies" (3-4). Additionally, the authors suggest that "In addition to the importance of interactivity in public engagement, variety in public engagement efforts is very important to the engagement's success" and "a public engagement effort with a good amount of visual variety in addition to thought-provoking content invites a more ongoing, deeper visual experience, a eudaimonic experience, rather than a brief hit of pleasure with a quick look away that the public will soon forget" (4). In conclusion, the authors suggest that "Each of the strategies recommended here focuses on enhancing an audience's capacity for critical thinking and information literacy. This is important for ethical reasons of course, but it is also a particularly strong need for rhetorical situations where the situation itself is less defined" (6). These recommendations help us consider the ways in which to increase public participation in pre-existing scenarios in public deliberation.

Terri Martin has also contributed a close examination of an existing public deliberation regarding environmental decision making, in order to analyze the limitations to public deliberation. In her analysis of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) surrounding the Allain Dunhangan hydropower project in northern India, Martin analyzed citizen involvement in this deliberation and found that "meaningful public involvement was compromised—despite repeated objections by citizens and independent consultants—by four communication practices: (1) failing to provide adequate access to information (2) predetermining EIA outcomes by controlling the definition of issues ('definitional hegemony'); (3) privileging scientific/technical

discourse; (4) utilizing 'consultative' forms of communication that promote one-way flows of information rather than more interactive forms that encourage the joint construction of information and values." (171). Further Martin argues that "these practices persist because they serve as acts of power that privilege dominant actors and interests in the larger socio-political context" and further in "altering communication practices that compromise the quality of public participation may require attending to the interaction between communication practices, relations of power, and the larger socio-political context in which public participation takes place" (171). In her "scene-setting" for this study, Martin suggests that "Public participation processes have always played a crucial role in providing local people with 'voice' in environmental decisions" (172). In her literature review, Martin highlights three key justifications for incorporating the public into environmental deliberations including "public participation is seen as an essential aspect of democratic governance" (173), "public participation is lauded as a way to improve the quality of environmental decisions," and it is "believed to foster social legitimacy for environmental decisions by building public trust – or even a sense of ownership – in the decision-making process, and by reducing conflict among stakeholders" (174). Further, Martin writes, "Decisions about development and the environment inevitable involve conflict between different, and often contradictory, material interests and social values" (187). In addition, "Public participation offers the opportunity to address these issues, at least in part" (187). Martin argues that her research "suggests that identifying communication practices that provide citizens with access, standing, and influence is only the first step towards ensuring that citizens have

voice in environmental decisions" (188). In establishing my own exigence for the present study, Martin suggests, "We also need to better understand why practices that curtail public involvement seem to persist, and why practices that enhance public involvement are often resisted" (188). In the dissertation presented here, I look to a case study in public participation in environmental deliberation to understand the rhetorical function of the group's particular rhetorical tactics.

While Martin's assessment of the limits to public participation paints a grim portrait for the power and potential future of deliberative democracy, Lauren E. Cagle and Carl Herndl offering a more positive outlook. In their article entitled, "Shades of Denialism: Discovering Possibilities for a More Nuanced Deliberation about Climate Change in Online Discussion Forums," Cagle and Herndl critically examine the "rhetorical practices underlying productive deliberation about climate change" by analyzing a Reddit forum, to demonstrate "that good faith deliberation—which is essential to deliberative democracy—exists online" (22). In particular the authors focus on four rhetorical concepts, the distinction between discussion and debate, the distinction between good and bad magic, ethical response/ability and rhetorical listening. In sum, the authors argue that "collaborative climate change deliberation exists and that forum participation guidelines can promote productive styles of engagement" (22). In their findings of the Reddit subforum "Change My Mind," the authors' analysis highlights that "contrary to widespread perception, collaborative deliberation about climate change does exist online," and "deliberately constructed guidelines for forum participation seem to create space for and perhaps actively

promote potentially productive styles of engagement" (23). In analyzing their Reddit findings, the authors turn to Krista Ratcliffe's rhetorical listening as a means for "hearing the recurring topics in climate change deliberation in new ways that are specific to the individuals involved in the deliberation and the contexts in which they're deliberating" (28). Further, rather than "continually act out the disagreements about the existence, causes, and extent of climate change . . . deliberators committed to rhetorical listening can pay attention to broader discourses and contexts, which offers an opportunity to invent and deliberate unexpected understandings of and responses to those with whom they disagree" (28). Thus, "For public sphere climate change discourses, this approach offers a way out of the dead-end sorting of participants into believer and denier camps, with no room for individuals to define themselves in different or more complex ways" (28). Cagle and Herdl's study helps provide a bit of hope regarding the potential for legitimate deliberation regarding environmental controversies.

Environmental communication scholars have also emphasized the need to study environmentalist discourse as it unfolds. For example, Danielle Endres, in her analysis of public participation surrounding the debates regarding the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste site in the U.S. makes a clear case for studying public participation *in situ*, rather than simply espousing a continuous stream of alternative models for public participation. Endres writes, that "while they make valuable and significant theoretical moves, new models of public participation in environmental decision making may not help publics navigate within traditional models of public participation. In other words, it is important to also develop our understanding of how people work within the constraints of current

models of public participation" (54). Endres suggests that her own work, which offers "An analysis of how members of publics attempt to engage in scientific argument within the current models will not only inform new models of public participation . . . but can also yield practical strategies for publics faced with traditional technocratic venues for participation" (pp. 54-55). In terms of framing my own exigence, Endres suggests that "Understanding specific rhetorical strategies is important for further refining our understanding of the relationship between science and policy making" (57). In her analysis, Endres highlights a particular tactic the public participants used was making "scientific arguments that cited peer-reviewed scientific research to support their claims about the unsuitability of the Yucca Mountain site" (58). Further, "A second way in which public commenters attempted to engage in scientific argument was through asking questions that attempt to challenge the scientific method or findings of the DOE studies" (61). Endres concludes by arguing that "we must not only develop new models of public participation that meaningfully involve stakeholders in the process, but also investigate how participants engage in current flawed models of public participation" (69). In the dissertation study presented here, I aim to do just that, by exploring an historic case study in public deliberation in order to demonstrate how rhetors engaged in a flawed model of public participation in an environmental controversy.

Scholars like Endres has also emphasized the importance of local citizens participating in environmental decision-making. In her article, "Sacred Land or National Sacrifice Zone: The Role of Values in the Yucca Mountain Participation Process," Danielle Endres writes that "Local participation in environmental decision making is

fundamental tenet of environmental justice" and further argues that "the lack of a viable means for discussion of competing values is a flaw in the currently used model of participation" (328). Endres, in her analysis of the Yucca Mountain high-level nuclear waste site in the U.S. demonstrates how the lack of discussion pertaining to values, "occludes participation by marginalized American Indians" (328). In her analysis, Endres argues that the Yucca Mountain is a "polysemous value term" meaning it is "a rhetorical text" with "multiple meanings" and these multiple meanings are "based on different (often cultural) premises" (332). Endres highlights two conflicting understandings of Yucca Mountain which prevent Native Americans and the federal agency, the Department of Energy, from reaching a clear public participation method. While Native Americans saw Yucca Mountain as sacred land, the DOE viewed the land as a national sacrifice zone. Endres's work "calls for a model of participation that attends to the intersection between polysemous value terms and cross-cultural differences" (339). Much like Endres, in this dissertation project, I aim to continue conversations about how meaning and difference influence public deliberation.

Similar to Endres, in their article, "Citizens Speaking as Experts: Expertise Discourse in Deliberative Forums," Leah Sprain and Lydia Reinig analyze the use of citizen expertise discourse in environmental forums to highlight "how expert and lay knowledge are fused in deliberative democracy" (357). In their analysis, the authors highlighted three different forms of expertise, institutional, local, and issue, and found that lay participants most frequently employed institutional expertise. In demonstrating exigence for their study, the authors write, "Environmental governance requires a wide

range of stakeholder involvement," and stakeholder participation "reduces marginalization, increases public trust, and contributes to civic capacity" (357). Emphasizing the function of public participation, the authors suggest that "participation can co-construct solutions that are better adapted to the local context, reduce implementation costs, lead to ownership of decisions, and transform adversarial relationships while including diverse perspectives and ways of knowing" (357). The authors define the three types of expertise identified in their study as follows: "institutional expertise" relies on "knowledge and status" derived from "positions in professional fields, government, and civil society organizations" (361). "Local expertise is when knowledge derives from living in the area impacted by a problem that results in the interactional identity of expert" (362). Issue expertise refers to "participants' extensive knowledge of the issues under deliberation" and is characterized "by showing exceptional knowledge of local political systems, governing policies, and community planning; technical knowledge not tied to professional experience; historical knowledge of practices and the issue at hand; and the ability to provide instances of how others have addressed this issue" (363). In sum, this research demonstrates the "importance of multiple ways of knowing within deliberative epistemology by demonstrating how community members use several types of expertise discourse during deliberative forums on environmental issues" (367). Further, the authors argue that "Rather than focusing on how experts crowd out citizens, our data draw attention to how deference to other community members' expertise may require deliberative designs that minimize hierarchies and maintain the conditions necessary for democratic deliberations" (367).

Sprain and Reinig here argue that we not only need *more* involvement from the public in democratic deliberation, but instead we need public participation that is *more* effective. In other words, we should, as scholars of rhetoric and writing studies, look to the ways in which citizen participation in environmental deliberations achieves citizen goals and desired outcomes.

Much like Sprain and Reinig, I work in this dissertation to demonstrate the ways in which community members leverage their expertise in public deliberations about environmental decision-making to achieve their goals. Based on the literature reviewed here, I ask the following research questions in this dissertation project:

1. How can citizens legitimate their own knowledge and expertise within environmental controversies and public deliberations?
2. How is political efficacy defined in environmental controversies?
3. How can scholars of rhetoric and writing studies examine political efficacy in environmental controversies as a nuanced set of rhetorical opportunities rather than simply examining these controversies as either a simple "success" or "failure?"

These questions will be addressed by examining a particular moment in environmental history where a group of unlikely environmentalists were able to successfully prevent the implementation of 14 dams which would have dramatically reshaped the local landscape and elicited devastating ecological and social effects.

Case Study Overview: Upper French Broad Defense Association and the "Dam Fight"

In order to understand public participation and political efficacy in environmental decision making, this dissertation will examine, as a case study, the Upper French Broad Defense Association's (or UFBDA's) "dam fight" with the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). In 1966, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), a U.S. federal bureaucracy, released a plan for comprehensive water resource development in western North Carolina, which included 14 dams, 74 miles of river channelization, the displacement of 600 families, and the flooding of around 18,225 acres of the region's most fertile farmland ("Grassroots Along the Upper French Broad").[1] The magnitude of human and ecological impacts of this TVA project immediately sparked resistance and activism in the plan's four affected counties, Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania. Citizens across these counties began gathering together, sharing information about the plans, and preparing arguments in opposition to this proposed plan for "progress" in the region. In 1970, concerned citizen-activists officially formed the Upper French Broad Defense Association (UFBDA), proclaiming themselves the "dam fighters" and embracing the motto, "United we stand, divided we may be dammed."[2] Within the first year of their existence, the UFBDA printed 50,000 pamphlets, increased their membership from 100 to 900, presented a slideshow containing information about the proposed plan to 50 civic organizations, and sent 3,500 signed postcards to state

[1] Martha Gash Boswell, "Grassroots Along the Upper French Broad: The Valley Versus the Tennessee Valley Authority, 1961-1972," folder 13, box 2, UFBDA records WRA.
[2] Jere Brittain, "Statement to UFBDA Members," [no date, ca. early 1970], folder 7, box 1, UFBDA Records WRA.

and federal politicians.[3] The UFBDA's rhetorical activity within their first year culminated with a massive public hearing held by the TVA, wherein UFBDA members voiced their concerns and opposition to the TVA's 1966 plan. One week after the UFBDA spoke out at the TVA hearing, the Governor of North Carolina, Robert Scott, condemned the TVA plan for its lack of research and consideration of local opposition, suggesting that the TVA should revise their proposal to take into account the "objections of the citizens of the Upper French Broad area who, until lately have seemingly not had much opportunity to be heard."[4] Previously, I have argued that the UFBDA's "strong regional knowledge and shared understanding of the local environment contributed to the success of the UFBDA" (Murray 2015). Using the Upper French Broad Defense Association's (UFBDA) decade-long conflict with Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) as a case study, I ask, *what everyday rhetorical tactics did the UFBDA members use as they opposed the TVA's dam project?*[5]

In this project, I examine the ways in which the "success" of the UFBDA in preventing the implementation of TVA's project contributes to how we understand

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[3] Martha Gash Boswell, "Report of the Corresponding Secretary for 1970-1971, folder 6, no. 1, UFBDA Collection UNCA.

[4] Connie Blackwell, *The Asheville Citizen*, 10 September 1971, folder 6, box 3, UFBDA records WRA.

[5] In this research question, I employ the term *everyday* as inspired by work in everyday rhetoric, which resituates the site of rhetorical inquiry from the classical canon of "Great men speaking well" to more modern understandings as rhetoric as an integral part of daily life. The phrase *everyday* in this research question is also reflected in the key findings of this dissertation, mainly the emphasis on ordinary democracy and the ways in which this project extends understandings of rhetorical citizenship. In ordinary democracy (as discussed in Chapter 2), Karen Tracy emphasizes the ways in which average citizens talk amongst themselves as a legitimate form of everyday democratic practice. Similarly, Kock and Villadsen echo the daily, routine, and common nature of democratic activity in their term rhetorical citizenship, which I discuss in connection with the UFBDA in Chapter 6. In my UFBDA-specific research question, I also use the term *tactics* rather than strategies based on my reading of Michel de Certeau's influential text *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984). de Certeau distinguishes between tactics and strategies, suggesting that tactics are employed by groups who possess less power than the dominant group in society. In contrast, strategies are used by dominant, more powerful groups.

environmental rhetoric and public deliberation about environmental issues. I ask how does the UFBDA's combined concerted efforts help us consider environmental activism as a series of nuanced contributions rather than a *reductive* notion of "success" versus "failure?" Further, this project interrogates the idea of what "success" is in environmental grassroots movements, and in particular, how everyday environmental rhetoric functions in deliberations about development projects.

Moving Beyond Literacy: Towards Appalachian Cultural Rhetoric

The UFBDA's geographic location, in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina, functions not as a static backdrop, but instead, places this case study in a region of the greater U.S. that has been maligned, misunderstood, and misrepresented for centuries. Local color writers, trying to sell newspapers to the burgeoning post-Civil War U.S. middle class, composed sensationalized, hyperbolic accounts of Appalachian mountaineers are backwards, inbred, vile, and ignorant (Shapiro). While these accounts were certainly subjective and very narrowly informed by fact, the impression they left behind, of Appalachia as a "strange place" populated by even stranger people took hold in the U.S. cultural imagination. Stereotypes of the "hillbilly" persist even today, as seen in J.D. Vance's recent pejorative "memoir" of the region. Working from the backdrop of this cultural milieu about Appalachia, many scholars in rhetoric and writing studies have worked to highlight the role of Appalachian identity in the classroom, particularly in terms of ethnographic literacy studies with Appalachian students in the academy. In the following pages, I will briefly review studies of literacy in terms of Appalachian rhetoric, as that is the most common topic for many scholars in rhetoric and writing studies

examining the Appalachian region. However, in this dissertation project, I also help to encourage rhetoricians to move beyond just studying literacy in order to also acknowledge and examine additional literacies and knowledges within the Appalachian region and its culture.

Many scholars in rhetoric and writing studies have worked to combat negative Appalachian stereotypes by conducting in-depth studies of literacy in Appalachian residents, particularly with an emphasis on how Appalachian students encounter challenges, marginalization, and resilience in their literacy acquisition. For example, in "Splintered Literacies," Amanda Hayes shares her own experience with literacy and her cultural background as it clashed with who she thought she was "supposed to be" in a classroom setting. Hayes writes that her own experience with school was "splintered" because "A hillbilly background was a thing to overcome, not embrace" and therefore, she and other students similar to her, "didn't and couldn't write Appalachian in school" ("Splintered" 226). Hayes's literacy narrative helps us see how the ways in which students are told to behave, write, and speak have serious consequences in that they "shape the knowledge we value" as a culture more broadly" ("Splintered" 227). And in Hayes' case, she was taught *not* to value the knowledge of her Appalachian community and heritage. Lucky for us as scholars, Hayes did not abide by these warnings, but has persisted to highlight the struggles and strengths of other Appalachians in the writing classroom.

Hayes has also argued that Appalachian English, although popularly maligned and rarely the focus of academic scholarship, is a variety of English practiced by many

students who arrive at higher education institution each semester, and therefore Appalachian English should be discussed and studied within composition and literacy studies scholarship. Hayes laments the fact that "few Appalachian students encounter forthright or positive explorations of their dialects in formal education settings" due to three main causes on the part of educators: (1) ignorance of Appalachian cultural distinctiveness (2) cultural discrimination against Appalachian students and (3) economic and social notions that being less Appalachian could help students be more successful ("Op'nin,'" pp. 170-72). Hayes argues that as rhetoric and writing teacher-scholars we must take Appalachian English seriously because it serves as an example of "linguistic creativity" and, more consequentially, *not* taking Appalachian English further marginalizes Appalachian students, making members of a marginalized cultural group feel even more distanced from and out of place in higher education (pp. 175-77).

Similar to Hayes, Sara Webb-Sunderhaus has also examined the ways in which the purported insufficiency of Appalachian English negatively impacts students in higher education. In her article, "Keep the Appalachian, Drop the Redneck," Webb-Sunderhaus examines Appalachian students' literacy narratives through the lens of "tellability" which helps her analyze "which narratives are worth telling and for further assessing who can tell which narratives in which context" (12). As a theoretical frame, Webb-Sunderhaus argues that tellability "can help us process how and why students make" rhetorical choices in their identity narratives and the cultural forces they face while making these choices, thereby allowing us to "come to a deeper understanding of our students and their needs" (18). Highlighting the variability among the corpus of literacy narratives she

collected in central Appalachia, Webb-Sunderhaus success that literacy narratives "were sometimes limited by public discourses of Appalachianness," while at other times "students used untellable narratives as a means of performing a range of Appalachian identities" (13). Webb-Sunderhaus thoughtfully demonstrates the rhetorical skill associated with literacy narratives as she argues that Appalachian college students "skillfully and creatively mediated the rhetorical situation they faced, crafting tellable and untellable narratives of Appalachian identity in response to their audience's needs" (13). Webb-Sunderhaus argues that the attention to audience shaped the ways in which students performed their identities surrounding literacy acquisition, which reveals within these Appalachian students "a level of rhetorical savvy that many instructors would love to see in their students' writing" (29). Webb-Sunderhaus's work highlights the ways in which Appalachian stereotypes affect Appalachian students' identity and literacy, but also how these students use their own rhetorical skills to convey these messages, with particular attention to their audiences, thereby helping scholars build the case for Appalachian people as legitimate objects of rhetorical study.

In addition to her work examining the "tellability" of Appalachian literacy narratives, Webb-Sunderhaus has also examined Appalachian identity and student experience in the composition classroom as a "contact zone," drawing on Mary Louise Pratt's popular theoretical term which references the intersection of multiple literacies, knowledge bases, and cultures ("Living with Literacy's Contradictions"). In this ethnographic study that featured interviews with Appalachian students at an open-admissions college in Central Appalachia, Webb-Sunderhaus suggests that a new

metaphor for literacy emerged in her analysis, one that suggested that literacy had a direct correlation with economic status (208). In other words, the interviews Webb-Sunderhaus collected revealed that many students perceived an increase in literacy with better financial outcomes in their future. Further, Webb-Sunderhaus's analysis revealed that for the students she interviewed, "academic literacy practices and a college degree are forms of economic power and capital—valuable commodities in a region as disenfranchised as Appalachia" (212). For many of the students Webb-Sunderhaus interviewed, literacy practices in college were not only a way to secure a better future, but also influenced the ways in which these students performed their "Appalachianness" – often encouraging them to enact their Appalachian identity in connection with their new literacies, in order to protect their connection to their working-class roots, suggesting that although they were attending college to secure a better future, they were still connected to their homeplace (221). Much of Webb-Sunderhaus's work helps us reconsider the intersections of literacy, power, and capitalism, with a particular focus on how these massive forces influence Appalachian students in their daily efforts to succeed and thrive in higher education.

In work similar to Hayes and Webb-Sunderhaus, Nathan Shepley also conducted in-depth interviews with Appalachian-identifying students in Appalachian Ohio to examine the influence of their geographic location on the ways in which students write. Shepley aptly characterizes the liminality of many Appalachian college students as he writes, "In one sense, Appalachian Ohio students who find themselves in this geographic and cultural place have not left their home cultures; in another sense, they

are a cultural 'other'" because they are pursing degrees in higher education (76). While Shepley's work certainly compliments and extends previous work focused on interviewing Appalachian college students, he suggests that as composition scholars "we have done less well at accounting for the limitations of our writing pedagogies when teaching students who identify strongly with a specific local and culture that are apart from academe" (76). In response to this gap in composition theory and pedagogy, Shepley contends that we must address the connections between place and writing in order to teach writing responsibly, in order to create a responsible writing pedagogy that values "the society or societies students come from" (87). Further, Shepley envisions that a responsible, place-based pedagogy for Appalachia may include "making room for expressivist writing assignments that harken back" to students' homeplaces and might also "warrant a turn to local concerns via other writing genres [including] persuasive writing, critiques, research essays [and] rebuttal arguments" (88). Shepley's work helps us further consider the consequences of ignoring the role of place in writing pedagogies and instead helps us envision what a place-based pedagogy for Appalachia might entail.

Several rhetoric and writing studies interested in Appalachian literacy have also studied literacy in historic contexts, rather than contemporary cases of literacy in the composition classroom. For example, in "Literary Choices in an Appalachian Community," Kim Donehower examines the literacy narratives and oral history interviews of 10 western North Carolina women who were taught to read and write by what Donehower refers to as "literacy missionaries," or outside do-gooders who arrived

in Appalachian between 1920 and 1970 in order to bring social uplift to what they perceived as a backwards and impoverished region in the U.S. With this complicated cultural backdrop to this study, Donehower asks, “When people start their pursuit of literacy from a position of stigmatization” like is the case for many Appalachians, “what paths might their literacy acquisition take?” (341). Donehower’s analysis of 10 personal narratives reveals that “the pursuit of literacy in Appalachia is both driven and complicated by the relationships between the many different groups that make up the Appalachian cultural landscape” (341). Donehower’s findings are quite similar to Hayes and Webb-Sunderhaus’s contemporary research about Appalachian identity and literacy in the college classroom. Uniquely, however, Webb-Sunderhaus also offers two particular theoretical considerations that literacy scholars interested in Appalachia should keep in mind. Namely that (1) “the presence of any literacy worker in Appalachia is likely to be interpreted as a re-inscription of the Appalachian literacy stigma, even if the workers or researchers themselves have no wish to promote such stereotypes” and (2) “despite dominant images of Appalachian culture as homogeneous and monolithic, differences within Appalachian communities contribute as much to local literacy learning as differences between Appalachian literacy and that of the outside world” (359). Donehower’s work in Appalachian literacy demonstrates that that rather than being seen as an illiterate backwater, Appalachia can serve as a poignant example of “the myriad roles literacy can play in human relationships, and vice versa” (360). Donehower’s cautions about reifying the stigma associated with the perceived lack of

literacy in Appalachia is an incredibly prescient warning, one that applies to works in broader studies of Appalachian cultural rhetoric as well.

Although focused on an Appalachian women's autobiography, which does include a literacy narrative, Jane Greer's work analyzes her grandmother's 1985 text conceives of Appalachian rhetoric more broadly, incorporating a cultural rhetoric perspective as Greer analyzes the text's construction of womens' daily lives in Appalachia. In the book chapter "Women's Words, Women's Work," Greer analyzes Myrtle Tenney Booth's 1985 biography which catalogues, among other things, "how Appalachian farmwomen approached their daily chores (pp. 90-91). Booth's autobiography demonstrates that the daily chores of many rural Appalachian women, ranging from "tending livestock, maintaining vegetable gardens, weaving cloth, preserving fruits, making butter and cheese, sewing clothes, preparing meals, raising children, nursing the sick," among others – "required technical expertise, reasoning skills, intellectual flexibility, and rhetorical sophistication" (91). In her analysis of this wide range of activities, Greer helps us see the multiple literacies of Appalachian womens' daily lives, a perspective that helps us think about Appalachian rhetoric beyond the bounds of the historic or contemporary classroom. Overall, Greer argues that Booth's autobiography demonstrates "her understanding of labor not necessarily as a marketplace commodity, but as a communal resource" (91). Greer also broadens these findings from one single autobiography as she argues that by listening carefully "to how workers deploy the literacy resources available to them to describe their daily activities creates opportunities to appreciate the social value they ascribe to their labor

and can expand how we understand civic participation" (90). While Greer's work is clearly connected to literacy studies, her conception of literacy activities in the daily lives of rural workers in Appalachia opens new opportunities for rhetoricians interested in Appalachia and opens new sites of analysis for Appalachian cultural rhetoric.

Similar to Greer, Cassandra Parente, in her analysis of labor organizer and folk singer Aunt Molly Jackson helps us understand the intersection of work and art in Appalachia in the mine wars of the 1930s in the Central Appalachian coal fields. Parente argues that balladeer and labor organizer Aunt Molly Jackson is not just a folk hero, but is also a rhetorical figure worth of scholarly attention. More specifically, Parente demonstrates how Jackson capitalized on a *kairotic* moment of economic collapse in the 1930s U.S. as she used "the rhetorical power of folk music to rally miners and their families and to publicize the dire conditions in 1930s Harlan County" (160). Parente demonstrates how many Appalachian women of this period, particularly those who lived in coal towns, sought a way to respond to the "horrid conditions in mines and mills" and therefore turned "to an available means of persuasion commonly used by women in their [Appalachian] communities: folk music" (160). Parente argues that Jackson, and other folk singers of the time, used "traditional patterns of rhythm and rhyme to convey a new, subversive message" while gaining "center stage at strikes and rallies, exerting their rhetorical power to support local workers" (160). In her analysis, Parente highlights how "it was Jackson's rhetorical effectiveness that led, paradoxically, to the undoing of her successful balance between the collective and the individual" (160). For example, many left-wing activists, "attempting to capitalize on her embodied

ethos," thus "transplanted her body and voice to urban contexts and her lyrics to print publications" actions that "stripped Jackson of the rural, folk ethos that made her part of the communal tradition" (160; 160-161). Parente makes the case for Jackson's significance in the history of rhetoric by suggesting that Jackson's story "challenges current understandings of women's rhetoric" in two significant ways: (1) "by redirecting scholars' gaze to folk singing," and (2) "by countering scholars' default portrayal of working-class women as silent and invisible" (161). Parente not only highlights the significance of Jackson as a solitary rhetorical figure, but also works to revitalize the rhetorical nature of folk songs as well, writing, "While functioning as an available means for women, folk songs' rhetorical potential and women's involvement in the tradition have often been dismissed" (162). By focusing on the rhetorical tactics of Aunt Molly Jackson, Parente legitimizes folk music and organizing as additional sites of study for Appalachian cultural rhetoric and further extends Appalachian rhetoric beyond more traditional settings of the classroom.

In arguing for studying Appalachian rhetoric outside of more traditional forms of literacy acquisition, I by no means want to discount the solid ground that Appalachian literacy studies have established for future studies of Appalachian rhetoric. Many of the works cited in this brief review build on the work of Peter Mortensen, whose work in the misrepresentation of literacy and intelligence in Appalachia not only inform literacy studies of Appalachia, but also, most certainly, the study of Appalachian rhetorical savvy presented in this dissertation. For example, Mortensen has studying the representations of "illiteracy in bureaucratic, journalistic, and literary treatments of

Southern Appalachia," he discovered "a substantial practice by metropolitans of blaming illiteracy in southern Appalachia for the region's supposed failure to integrate materially and culturally into the national economy" ("Illiterate Sorrows" 2). Ironically, Mortensen highlights that although Appalachia has been conceived of as having greater rates of illiteracy than the rest of the US, while in reality, "it has ever been the case that patterns of illiteracy in southern Appalachia resemble such patterns elsewhere in the United States" (2). Mortensen's scholarship helps us approach Appalachian with an understanding of the complex, historic perceptions of the region as illiterate. While Mortensen certainly highlights that the notion of Appalachia as *more* illiterate than other portions of the U.S., is not necessarily accurate, he still helps us understand that this perceived illiteracy has long shaped how many approach the region. While I have been arguing here that we should work to expand Appalachian rhetoric beyond studies of literacy, because as Donehower points out, studying literacy can function to reify stereotypes about illiteracy, we should certainly not abandon projects that help us better understand how and why literacy operates in Appalachia. In this dissertation, I want to continue expanding our notion of literacy into different components of Appalachian culture. More specifically, I hope to show in the UFBDA case study, nuanced literacies and rhetorical strategies that were effective in one Appalachian socio-cultural context. In this dissertation, I emphasize the environmental activist literacies of a successful environmental organization, and highlight their key rhetorical tactics which contributed to their success.

In my efforts to research and theorize Appalachian cultural rhetoric, I am drawn to Jonathan L. Bradshaw's recent work examining the role of heritage claims and the persistence of messages in Appalachian social justice organizations. In "Heritage Claims as a Civic Art for Rhetorical Circulation," Bradshaw argues that "*heritage claims* to a particular cultural community" such as Appalachia "can provide a civic art for inventing, producing, and moving compositions." For Bradshaw, heritage claims function "as a civic *techne*" as they help rhetors make decisions about the invention and circulation of particular messages. While some have dismissed heritage claims as romanticize, nostalgic notions of a place, Bradshaw argues that "Heritage claims differ from rhetorics of nostalgia in the ways they rhetorically engage the past" because while "Heritage claims build continuities between the past and current civic deliberations" whereas "nostalgic rhetorics often draw a line of difference between the past and the present." Further, Bradshaw argues that "heritage claims provide pivotal rhetorical resources for deliberations about economic futures." By using AppalShop, an eastern Kentucky documentary film and media hub, as well as the coal industry funded Friends of Coal campaign throughout central Appalachia, Bradshaw shows how case studies in Appalachian rhetoric can contribute to broader topics in rhetorical theory, as he makes the case for Appalachian-specific heritage claims as offering a new conception of *techne*.

Bradshaw has also extended rhetorical theory based on the "slow circulation" of social justice messages in Appalachia. Bradshaw suggests that while many scholars in circulation studies are interested in the speed and reach of arguments, he encourages

scholars to think of the persistence of arguments (481). To encourage this thinking, Bradshaw offers a model of "*slow circulation*" which "calls us to attend to the persistence of rhetorical elements over time, arguing that this persistence is just as culturally relevant to the work of rhetors as are their transformations in public discourse" (481). Based on his case studies within the Appalachian region, and his in-depth interviews with regional social justice advocates, Bradshaw argues that "advocacy work for social change is just *slow*," meaning that "many of the speedy, viral circulation models with which we are so comfortable as frames for digital media are unfit for the types of rhetoric work some small-scale, regional, and community advocacy groups aim to do" (481). Bradshaw's work in both his study of heritage claims as *techne*, as well as his *slow circulation* model demonstrate that Appalachian rhetoric can extend beyond the study of literacy, and further, that lessons from Appalachia can help us build and expand rhetorical theory, as well. Similar to Bradshaw's work, in this dissertation project, I will demonstrate how the UFBDA, as a case study, can help us both develop Appalachian cultural rhetoric as a burgeoning subfield of rhetoric and writing studies *and* demonstrate the ways in which this case study from Appalachia can help us better understand the role of rhetoric in deliberations.

In my efforts to build a more robust example of Appalachian cultural rhetoric within this dissertation, I draw my understanding of cultural rhetorics from scholars like Phil Bratta and Malea Powell. In their Introduction to the special issue on cultural rhetorics for *enculturation*, Bratta and Powell suggest that "cultural rhetorics is a *practice*, and more specifically an embodied practice" which requires a higher level of

engagement with the "particular culture in which" scholars are situating their work. Further, Bratta and Powell suggest that a cultural rhetorics approach requires that scholars understand "a specific culture's systems of beliefs, relationships to the past, practices of meaning-making, and practices of carrying culture forward to future generations." As a scholar, my own interdisciplinary background, which includes extensive graduate training and a Master's degree in Appalachian Studies certainly helps me approach Appalachian rhetoric with a cultural rhetorics approach because of my deep understanding of the region. However, cultural rhetorics scholarship is not only context-rich in terms of the culture at the focus of a particular study. Cultural rhetorics also requires scholars to not simply apply existing rhetorical frames onto diverse cultural practices, but instead to approach cultural rhetoric as warranting its own rhetorical theory in and of itself. Therefore, throughout this dissertation, rather than applying rhetorical models to the UFBDA, I demonstrate the ways in which the UFBDA enrich, extend, and further contribute to models and ideas within rhetorical theory, thereby adhering to a cultural rhetorics approach.

Outline of Remaining Dissertation Chapters

In Chapter 2: Theories of the Public, Deliberation, and Democracy, I review the theoretical frame guiding this dissertation, ordinary democracy. In particular I discuss theories of deliberation, democracy, and the public sphere and how they connect to issues of citizen involvement in debates, and the ways in which scholars in rhetoric and writing have contributed to theoretical understandings and practical implications for deliberations within a democracy. I demonstrate that while there is a myriad of theories

regarding deliberation and democracy, Karen Tracy's notion of ordinary democracy is best suited as a theoretical frame for the case study at the center of this dissertation.

In Chapter 3: Archival Research Methods, I discuss existing scholarship on archival research methods including the potential "gifts" as well as specific challenges within this particular approach to scholarship. I discuss the role of *ethos* in both conducting ethical archival research as well as writing about archival scholarship. And lastly, I provide a detailed account of my own research method and methodology for this dissertation, chronicling how and why I approached the archives to investigate the everyday rhetorical tactics of the UFBDA.

In Chapter 4: Historical Overview of the "Dam Fight," 1961-1971, I provide a comprehensive overview of the UFBDA's "dam fight" with the TVA, relying on archival documents from three UFBDA collections. I provide an historical overview so that readers are better prepared to follow the more in-depth analysis chapters that follow, and do not get lost in the minutiae of this decade-long conflict along the way. I also provide this historical overview with the hopes that other scholars may continue to work on the UFBDA in rhetorical studies, and hopefully this comprehensive overview can help others see how the UFBDA can further inform rhetorical theory and practice.

Building on critiques of wilderness rhetoric in environmental communication scholarship, in Chapter 5: Towards Commons Environmental Rhetoric, I demonstrate the ways in which the UFBDA rhetorically constructed western North Carolina, not as a wilderness, but as a commons. In their rhetorical construction of the commons, the UFBDA were able to demonstrate the ways in which the western North Carolina

Landscape is *used*, while also highlighting all that would be lost if the TVA dams were constructed in the region. I highlight the ways in which commons environmental rhetoric can serve as a productive discourse within environmentalism, helping environmental rhetors overcome non-productive discourse patterns and theoretical gaps associated with a strict adherence to the rhetoric of wilderness preservation.

In Chapter 6: Rhetorical Citizenship, Generativity, & Greeting, I examine the ways in which Christian Kock and Lisa Villadsen's concept of "rhetorical citizenship," when combined with Robert Asen's Discourse Theory of Citizenship help us better understand the ways in which the UFBDA secure their political success in their protracted opposition to the TVA. As a theoretical term, rhetorical citizenship refers to the ways in which people are involved with rhetoric, both as its recipients, and by crafting their own messages and expressing rhetorical agency. By incorporating archival sources in this chapter, I demonstrate that UFBDA members enacted rhetorical citizenship as a key rhetorical tactic of their dam fight. I turn to rhetorical citizenship because as a theory it helps me trace both the "top down" as well as "bottom up" rhetoric circulating around the plan to implement 14 TVA dams in western North Carolina. By "top down" I am referring to the public messaging the UFBDA received from TVA. In contrast, by "bottom up" I mean the private discourse among UFBDA members and their supporters, as both occur within instances of ordinary democracy. I show that the UFBDA engaged in rhetorical citizenship, while also collaborating and reaching out to other civic organizations within the region, thereby enacting the "generativity" that Asen discusses in his Discourse Theory of Citizenship. While

rhetorical citizenship with an emphasis on generativity helps us understand the UFBDA's efforts to collaborate with other groups and political leaders, this theorization does not account for the UFBDA's immense local knowledge, which also contributed to their rhetorical success in expressing opposition to TVA's proposed dam project.

In Chapter 7: Enacting an Ethos of Local Knowledge in the Public Hearing, I demonstrate the ways in which UFBDA members established their own credibility as experts about the western North Carolina landscape by emphasizing their local knowledge of the region. In this analysis, it is clear how we can "re see" ethos and its connection to "dwelling place" in terms of knowledge about one's local environment. By emphasizing the local, UFBDA members demonstrated themselves as having a different, although legitimate expertise from what the TVA knew. This analysis demonstrates that by building a localized ethos, environmental activists can showcase their expertise in public deliberations.

In the concluding chapter, I draw out the major implications of my analysis for rhetorical theory more broadly. I also point to future directions that I plan to take with this research. I also highlight the ways in which this case study offers implications for practitioners of environmental rhetoric as well. I argue that my analysis of the UFBDA's tactics and their success also offers a public pedagogy for future environmental controversies, as I theorize a way to understand environmental movements as a series of rhetorical opportunities rather than a simple "success" or "failure."

Chapter 2: Theories of the Public, Deliberation, and Democracy

The study of the UFBDA "dam fighters" is, at its core, a study in democracy and deliberation. In this saga, citizens worked together to share information, collaborate, and create spaces for their voices to be heard. By studying the dam fighters in the context of public deliberation, I am able to extend existing conversations within rhetoric and writing studies as well as to better understand, on a theoretical level, what took place in the dam fight between 1961 and 1972. As Jeff Grabill and Stacey Pigg highlight, "Public conversations and deliberation take many forms" ranging from "structured processes" to "various forms of consensus conferences," and to "practices such as public meetings designed and conducted by Federal agencies" ("Messy Rhetoric" 100). Further, the authors suggest that "Public deliberation is certainly much easier to facilitate or study if we can bound the public or norm the discourse in some way" ("Messy Rhetoric" 100). However, the authors caution against such a norming because "We all engage in public issues more frequently and perhaps more passionately via spaces that are not explicitly understood as deliberative forums" ("Messy Rhetoric" 100). The authors urge rhetoricians to embrace the "messiness of public discourse" despite how challenging it can be. In the study of the UFBDA presented here, I made a concerted effort to grapple with, rather than diminish or flatten, the inherent "messiness" surrounding issues of public deliberation and democracy.

In this project, I also examined the ways and degrees in which democracy operated in this historic case study. I sought to understand the ways in which the

UFBDA offer us a glimpse into democracy in action. As Iris Marion Young writes in *Inclusion and Democracy*, "We have arrived at a paradoxical moment when nearly everyone favours democracy, but apparently few believe that democratic governance can *do* anything. Democratic process seems to paralyze policy-making. Ideals of public discussion and holding officials accountable have little institutional effect; they seem only to generate mass gossip" (*Inclusion and Democracy* 4). Further, Young writes, "Democracy is not an all-or-nothing affair, but a matter of degree; societies can vary in both the extent and the intensity of their commitment to democratic practice" (*Inclusion and Democracy* 5). Inspired by the work of Young, I also approached the study of the UFBDA as a means to study the commitment of democratic practice within western North Carolina, and more specifically, how the UFBDA's efforts made held the TVA's feet to the fire, so to say, forcing the government's hand and making them seek "the consent of the governed."

My extended study of the UFBDA has also offered me a renewed appreciation for the work and political discourse of ordinary citizens, a commitment I affirm throughout this project by framing the work in terms of political communication that happens within civic organizations and in communities. As Bernard Yack writes, "Political deliberation is a social practice in which citizens communicate with each other about how they should direct the actions of their political communities" ("Rhetoric and Public Reasoning" 419). Further, Yack suggests, "As such, it has two basic elements: some form of public reasoning; some way in which citizens exchange their views about matters of common interest; and an opportunity to consider together this exchange of

opinion and argument in reaching decisions about which collective action to support ("Rhetoric and Public Reasoning" 419). Further, still, "Supporters of political deliberation argue that political communities make better political choices when the judgement of citizens is informed by the public exchange of views in this way" ("Rhetoric and Public Reasoning" 419). Inspired by Yack's work, I sought to better understand, through my study of the UFBDA, the role of citizen opinion in political choices, particularly the deliberation over whether or not to place 14 dams along the French Broad River.

In addition to these broad ideas of publicness, political communication, and democracy, this dissertation project is also influenced by theories of the public sphere, deliberative rhetoric, deliberative democracy, the problem of trust in democracy, and most significantly, ordinary democracy. In this chapter, I provide a review of these theories to better establish the theoretical framework for the study of the UFBDA presented here.

Public Sphere Theory

As scholars, practitioners, and educators, rhetoricians have long been interested in civic life. As Celeste M. Condit notes, "Cicero was both the foremost rhetorical theorist in his era and an active Roman politician" who sought, via activism, to participate in achieving social change in his place and time (*Public Work of Rhetoric* p. 120). While rhetoricians have historical ties to studies of democracy, the more recent study of public life, under the umbrella term of public sphere theory, has also had a profound influence on rhetoric and writing studies, more broadly. As a prominent topos of democracy, the public sphere rests "on the powerful faith that rational deliberation

among private citizens about matters of public concern" will, in turn, "produce a more inclusive, empathetic, and just society" (*Public Work* 39). The notion of the public sphere, most often associated with Jürgen Habermas's study of the bourgeois middle class, has, since its publication, "catalyzed a body of criticism on the possibilities and limitations of democracy as a deliberative, nonviolent means of deriving principles to guide a demos that is both inclusive and radically diverse (*Public Work* 44). Many critics of Habermas, including Nancy Fraser, Michael Warner, and Gerard Hauser, have worked to problematize the idealized public sphere, motivated by a shared "impetus to conceive a public that better accounts for the political complexities that confound democratic deliberation" (*Public Work* 44). Mirroring critiques of the insular public sphere, scholars in rhetoric and writing have incorporated public sphere theory into rhetorical scholarship as a way to critically examine processes of exclusion in democratic society.

In our field's research, the focus on exclusion can be seen in the emphasis on "counterpublics." As featured in edited collections such as *Counterpublics and the State* and *What Democracy Looks Like*, scholars in rhetoric and writing studies have advanced the development of counterpublic theory as an extension of the exclusionary nature of the bourgeois public sphere. By further developing counterpublic theory, scholars in rhetoric and writing have developed more nuanced understandings of the exclusionary nature of the public sphere, and in turn, have a more complicated understanding of how rhetoric functions in society, and in deliberative democracies in particular.

Counterpublicity: Exclusion and Publics

The notion of exclusion from and within the public sphere has had a powerful impact on the work of many scholars in rhetoric and writing studies, particularly in terms of encouraging studies of counterpublics via case studies and deepening theoretical knowledge of counterpublic theory. In my examination of counterpublic theory in rhetorical studies, three major themes emerged including, (1) the relationship of counterpublics to the broader public sphere, (2) the multiplicity of the public sphere, and (3) the notion that participation in counterpublics should not dissolve difference, but instead seek deliberation while maintaining difference. I will briefly discuss each of these theoretical advancements in public sphere theory below.

As the editors of *Counterpublics and the State* suggest, the "counter" in "counterpublics" is a reference to the varying degrees of exclusion counterpublics experience "from prominent channels of political discourse and a corresponding lack of political power" (2). While the "public" often "indicate[s] something potentially" open, concerning, known, and constituted by all members of a society, applying the prefix "counter" to the term public, inverts the term's characteristics. Instead of conceiving of the public as something widely accessible, then, counterpublic denotes the exclusion that often alters deliberation in practice (*Counterpublics* 9). Further, the counterpublic is, by definition, "a site of resistance," whose "rhetorical identity is an arena for hearing proscribed voices, expressing proscribed ideas, and entertaining the alternative reality they advance to the existing order" (*Counterpublic* 36). Similarly, counterpublics help us realize that the public sphere is neither a "normative idea" nor an "empirical entity"

(*What Democracy* 80). As the contributors to *What Democracy Looks Like* emphasize, the public sphere performs both a theoretical and an empirical function. Theoretically, counterpublic theory denounces the public sphere as "imperfect, incomplete, or more fatally, delusional" (*What Democracy* 80). Empirically, counterpublics help scholars "denounce the taken-for-granted societal arrangements, challenge current normativities, and push the social imagination to conjure up new political possibilities" (*What Democracy* 80). The incorporation of counterpublic theory into rhetorical studies has helped further theorize counterpublics, helping scholars conceive of counterpublics' relationship to the public sphere.

Rhetoricians interested in the public sphere have also worked to recognize "the public sphere as a multiplicity of dialectically related public spheres rather than a single, encompassing arena of discourse" (*Counterpublics and the State* 6). Understanding the multiplicity of the public sphere stems in part from critics of Habermas's bourgeois public sphere which advances notions of public deliberation occurring within "a single overarching arena as a positive and bolstering" component of democracy (*Counterpublics* 6). In contrast, rhetoricians who have examined counterpublics in their work suggest that there are in fact "a multiplicity of publics," thereby undoing the "conceptual hierarchy" of the singular, bourgeois public sphere in order to theorize "alternative, nondominant publics amid wider publics" which help explain the "complex discursive practices" that constitute democratic societies (*Counterpublics* 6). Gerard Hauser's monograph, *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres* (1999) offers an early acknowledgement of the multiplicity of the public sphere. Hauser

comments that his work shifts "focus away from the political role of a unitary public sphere" in order to see the public sphere as composed of "multiple discursive arenas," that give the public sphere a *reticulate* structure. In Hauser's reticulate public sphere, which is a "rhetorical model of multiple public spheres," he offers a framework "for examining the discursive arenas in which public opinion is formed" (81). Further, the reticulate public sphere, as a metaphor, reveals the "symbolic resources that are active in shaping political and social will" (81). Acknowledging the public sphere as public *spheres* not only helps rhetoricians conceive of the conditions in which counterpublics exist, but also to develop clearer understandings of the public sphere as a rhetorical space.

Rhetorical studies scholars have also made a valuable contribution to counterpublic theory in the idea that counterpublics derive their power from exclusion, and thus the counterpublic's aim is to participate in wider deliberations *without* dissolving difference, but *while* maintaining difference. For example, as mentioned in *Counterpublics and the State*, counterpublics' "opposition invariably grows from a power differential that excludes their issues and/or voices from general consideration and weight in official judgement" (37). Further, were counterpublics acknowledged and fully incorporated into a broader public sphere, "the need for resistance would disappear, and with it, the counterpublic sphere" (37). Similarly, as contributors to *What Democracy Looks Like* demonstrate, while "the public sphere seeks social change in which differences between participants are supposed to be bracketed" in stark contrast, "counterpublics both affirm and punctuate these differences" (*What Democracy* 80).

Further, counterpublics not only work to show that the public sphere is an "untenable" ideal, or a quixotic pursuit, but also "highlight the ways in which it becomes inclusionary threatens to produce domination" (*What Democracy* pp. 79-80). Rather than including counterpublics into broader public spheres as an extension of domination, "the work of counterpublicity begins in the faith that we can reconcile opposition and consensus" without subsuming one of these spheres into the other (*Counterpublics* 76). Rhetoricians have advanced counterpublic theory in terms of recognizing that deliberation in the public sphere should not involve the dissolution of the public sphere, but should instead find productive tension within the maintenance of the differences that constitute publicity.

While notions of counterpublicity seek to understand how marginalized and excluded groups make their ideas known, it is important to acknowledge that as a broad metaphor, the public sphere is the location in which deliberation occurs. Counterpublics are not seeking to create their own public, but are competing for space in the public sphere more broadly. As Eric Doxtader writes, "Frequently concerned with questions of accountability and representation, public deliberation is often addressed to both institutional bodies and private citizens" (340). Within the public, social movements and subaltern communities appear, issues challenges, and prompt debate. In either case, public deliberations involve movements, opposition, translation, and reconciliation across domains of discourse" (340). Accordingly, Doxtader argues that "The public sphere is energized by a basic contradiction," because "To form a collective interest that might enhance the political autonomy of all citizens, the public depends on a process of

deliberation that excludes many voices and interests" (345). In the dissertation project presented here, I seek to understand the ways in which the UFBDA negotiated their presence and participation in the public sphere amidst the competing and confliction interests, stemming from both government and private citizens, in western North Carolina at the time. In other words, in this project, I highlight how the UFBDA were able to enter and interact within the public sphere, after the release of the TVA proposal to place 14 dams on the Upper French Broad River, and more specifically, how citizens engaged in deliberative rhetoric to influence the question of whether or not to dam the river.

Deliberative Rhetoric

According to Aristotle, deliberative rhetoric constitutes one of three "species" of rhetoric, along with forensic (or judicial) rhetoric as well as epideictic rhetoric. In "Aristotle on the Kinds of Rhetoric," Eugene Garver writes, "The three kinds of rhetoric are three ways in which argument leads to a judgment" and further, the existence of three kinds of rhetoric, according to Garver, "means that there are three ways in which argument leads to a judgement" ("Aristotle on the Kinds of Rhetoric," 5). In other words, Garver suggests that "deliberative, judicial, and epideictic rhetoric lead to judgements in different ways" ("Aristotle on the Kinds of Rhetoric," 5). As Garver writes, "Deliberative rhetoric is about the particular things Greek assemblies had to worry about; judicial rhetoric is partly shaped by the peculiarities of Greek legal procedures" ("Aristotle on the Kinds of Rhetoric," 8). Clearly for Garver, the legacy of rhetoric's origins in ancient Greece have left an indelible mark on how we think of these categories of rhetoric

today. Further analyzing the existence of three forms of Rhetoric, Garver writes, “The existence of the three kinds of rhetoric, like the existence of the polis, saves Aristotle equally from purely descriptive accounts of how persuasion in fact works from an idealism that tells us instead how it should work” (“Aristotle on the Kinds of Rhetoric,” 13). Further, Garver argues that the three kinds of rhetoric are “not what one might expect” because “The three kinds of rhetoric are too politically restricted to be universal or exhaustive” (“Aristotle on the Kinds of Rhetoric,” 15). Garver continues, “there is another respect in which Aristotle’s understanding of the three genres of rhetoric does both more and less than other classificatory schemes, and which challenges other approaches to classifying kinds of rhetoric” (“Aristotle on the Kinds of Rhetoric,” 15). In this dissertation project, I work to further elucidate the role of deliberative rhetoric and its potential in terms of a specific controversy regarding the environment.

Much like Garver, several rhetoricians have explored deliberative rhetoric in Aristotelian terms. As Christian Kock suggests in “Aristotle on deliberation,” “The identity of rhetoric is closely bound up with deliberation, inasmuch as the function of rhetoric . . . is to deal with such matters as we deliberate upon without arts or systems” (“Aristotle on deliberation” 15). Further, Kock argues that “Ethics, in turn, might learn from rhetoric and politics that rhetorical deliberation in the state is a distinctive human activity that is just as necessary and worthy as the individual’s deliberation over ethical choice, as well as being more complex” (“Aristotle on deliberation” 24). Similarly, As Bernard Yack writes, “For Aristotle, the means by which we communicate our reasoning to each other in political deliberation is the particular form of persuasive speech he calls deliberative

rhetoric" ("Rhetoric and Public Reasoning" 421). Further, Yack continues that "We deliberate together in political communities by making and listening to each other's attempts to persuade us that some future action will best serve the end that citizens share with each other, the common good or advantage of the political community" ("Rhetoric and Public Reasoning" 421). Further, "It is this shared goal that distinguishes deliberative rhetoric, and therefore public reasoning, from the other forms of rhetoric and political judgement that Aristotle examines" ("Rhetoric and Public Reasoning" 421). Yack also highlights the future-oriented component of deliberative rhetoric. Yack writes, "Aristotle, it seems, reserves the term *deliberative* for the last of these three forms of rhetoric and public judgement because, like deliberation in general, it focuses on the choice of future action rather than on the assessment of past actions and character" ("Rhetoric and Public Reasoning" 421). Yack argues that "For Aristotle, public reasoning takes the form of deliberative rhetoric. A relatively small subset of the political community takes it upon itself to persuade the rest of its members about what best serves their shared or common good" ("Rhetoric and Public Reasoning" 427). While Aristotle's notion of deliberative rhetoric is an important starting place for the study of how communities make decisions, the space for actual deliberation that Aristotle allows is much too narrow in terms of the present study.

Many scholars of democracy and deliberation have been critical of the limited nature of public deliberation, as conceived of in models of the public sphere and Aristotelian forms of deliberative rhetoric. Simone Chambers has highlighted the limiting conception of who can deliberate and how they may do so, in her analysis of

deliberative rhetoric. Chambers suggests that “In an effort to challenge the assessment that the mass public can never be deliberative” she investigates “the idea of deliberative rhetoric” (“Rhetoric and the Public Sphere” 324). Chambers suggests that the term deliberative rhetoric “allows us to think about promoting deliberation in a context where face-to-face dialogue is the exception rather than the rule and where a small number of elites dominate political communication” (“Rhetoric and the Public Sphere” 324). Further, Chambers argues that “Although a promising theoretical category, deliberative rhetoric appears to be an ideal, only occasionally reached in our media-dominated, survey-driven public sphere” (“Rhetoric and the Public Sphere” 324). Chambers writes, “The study of deliberative rhetoric refers to two things. First it refers to the subject matter. For Aristotle, generally involves thinking through which actions will best achieve one’s ends. Deliberative rhetoric deals with political questions having to do with choosing a collective course of action. It is future and action oriented and the Democratic Assembly is its natural home” (“Rhetoric and the Public Sphere” 335). Chambers continues, “But the deliberative of deliberative rhetoric also refers to the process in the sense of ‘thinking through’ one’s options for future action as opposed to impulsively charging ahead (“Rhetoric and the Public Sphere” 335). The emphasis here on future actions makes deliberative rhetoric a powerful pair alongside environmentalism, which is focused on future action and future resource use in terms of sustainability. As Chambers writes, “If rhetoric in general is the study of how speech affects an audience then deliberative rhetoric must be about the way speech induces deliberation in the sense of inducing *considered* reflection about a future action”

("Rhetoric and the Public Sphere" 335). Accordingly, "Deliberative rhetoric makes people think, it makes people see things in new ways, it conveys information and knowledge, and it makes people more reflective" ("Rhetoric and the Public Sphere" 335). Chambers asserts that "Deliberative rhetoric, . . . engages citizens' practical judgment and as such treats its audience as autonomous deliberators deserving of respect" (337). The study of the UFBDA presented here is certainly an examination of deliberative rhetoric, as Chamber defines it, because this dissertation explores the ways in which citizens create and express decisions about public policy, thereby reemphasizing rhetoric's role in the study of policy and decision-making.

In describing rhetoric's role in deliberations, acclaimed rhetorical studies scholar Gerard A. Hauser writes, "The art of effective expression known as rhetoric, in turn, has been reduced from a method of public deliberation to the 'mereness' of gambits and ploys detached from material content and designed to secure the uninformed assent of the governed. By not contesting its steady marginalization, Rhetoric Studies squanders its birthright and reneges on its promise to democracy" ("Rhetorical Democracy" 12). Therefore, what is at stake here is not simply the study of how particular environmental groups engage in deliberations, but also making the role of *rhetoric* clear and more in line with the field's origins in terms of rhetoric's connection to democratic practice. Also emphasizing the importance of deliberation in the field of rhetoric in the present while also making predictions regarding the future of the field, Raymie E. McKerrow, writes "The concern over how decisions are made, via public deliberation, will become even more pronounced, especially in the context of challenging those deliberative theories

that see rhetoric's province as damaging the prospects for reasoned discourse" (205). Erik Doxtader, however, is less optimistic about the intersection As Erik Doxtader writes, "Public deliberation can yield norms of material equality, democratic representation, and justice," however, "experience teaches that public consensus-building is not always realistic or desirable" ("Characters in the Middle of Public Life," 336). While deliberation clearly has its benefits, Doxtader also reminds us that deliberation is not easy. Doxtader suggests that "Upon entering the commons" of the public sphere, "intent on announcing our presence, we discover that things are not so simple" (338). Further, Doxtader writes, "Deliberative choice is rendered difficult as we find ourselves caught *between* conflicting impulses: personal motivation and collective need; desire for change and institutional stability; concern for the just and interest in the good" ("Characters in the Middle of Public Life," 338). The study of the UFBDA presented in this dissertation aims to help scholars in rhetoric and writing studies better understand the possibilities, as well as the limits, of deliberative rhetoric, by focusing on a particularly successful debate regarding an environmental controversy.

The Problem of Trust in Democracy

The qualms that some scholars have expressed regarding the potential effectiveness of deliberative rhetoric, are not dissimilar to the overarching problem of trust that operates in democracies. For example, in "Deliberation and Trust," Robert Asen discusses trends of decreasing levels of trust in American democracy and offers some theorizations for this decline and its significance, ranging from healthy citizen skepticism, to an overall decrease in democratic health (5). Similarly, according to

Hauser, “Democracy is grounded on the principle that public opinion should influence the course of society. Yet this opinion, its content, and its representation are difficult to define and interpret” (*Vernacular Voices* xi). “A democracy is based on the premise that public opinion should matter in deciding the course of society. Yet what counts as such an opinion, how we learn its content, and how it gets represented are anything but certain” (*Vernacular Voices* 1). In addition, Candice Ray writes in *Democracy’s Lot*: “While democracy has had critics since its inception in Classical Greece, while countless human atrocities have been performed in its name, a powerful sense of its presumed virtue continues to persuade people to sacrifice their lives to pursue this hallowed thing we call democracy” (2). Rai acknowledges that while democracy has the rhetorical power to “stitch together diametrically opposed ideologies, and mobilize people toward incommensurable public goods suggest that one cannot know democracy in the abstract” (2). Further, Rai suggests that “This idea that democracy and the public work of rhetoric can only be captured by inhabiting particular places—where one might observe democracy’s concrete uses, evocation, and practices—lured me into the field to study the workings of democracy as it is practiced by ordinary citizens in a radically diverse and politically charged gentrifying neighborhood” (2). While Rai’s skepticism of democracy lies in questions about when and how to observe democracy in action, other scholars are on the whole less optimistic about democracy’s potential.

Many scholars emphasize the ways in which elites and government officials often possess a fear of democracy, viewing it as the movement of the (often uninformed)

masses. As Bernard Yack writes, “At its best, political deliberation helps guide a public-spirited citizenry through complex and ambiguous issues. At its worst, it is a matter of the crooked leading the blind, as Plato was eager to point out” (“Rhetoric and Public Reasoning” 428). Hauser and Benoit-Barne write, suggest that the problem of trust is an essential issue that must be addressed if “a deliberative democracy” aims to “flourish under conditions of political pluralism: the problem of trust” (261). The fear and trust anxieties associated with democracy are certainly nothing new, as Elizabeth C. Britt highlights, “Anxiety about the deliberative abilities of ordinary citizens, feared to be too easily influenced by the powers of rhetoric, has accompanied democracy since its birth” (103). Similarly, Alexander Livingstone suggests, “A general skepticism concerning the claims of public reason has seeped into much of the landscape of contemporary political theory, making this kind of easy rejection of deliberation both comprehensible and all too plausible. Yet this kind of rejection is too fast and depends on a straw account of what deliberative democracy means” (270).

Simone Chambers has also discussed the problem of trust, in “Rhetoric and the Public Sphere.” Chambers writes, “The pathologies of the democratic public sphere, first articulated by Plato in his attack on rhetoric, have pushed much of deliberative theory out of the mass public and into the study and design of small-scale deliberative venues. This move away from the mass public can be seen in the growing split in deliberative theory between theories of *democratic deliberation* (on the ascendancy) which focus on discrete deliberative initiatives within democracies and theories of *deliberative democracy* (on the decline) that attempt to tackle the large question of how the public,

or civil society in general, relates to the state" (323). Chambers writes, "For Plato, then, democratic politics always tends away from philosophy and trust and toward rhetoric and power. Because the framers of public policy require political power and because political power is acquired through popular support, the democratic politician will always try to convince the most people he can . . . . The problem is that democracy by its very nature rewards quantity over quality; it rewards the one with the most support over the one with the deepest truth" (328).

Similar to Chambers, Hauser reflects on the ways in which the ideals of democratic deliberation often are in contest with notions of who should be able to participate in a democracy, contributing to the problem of trust. Hauser writes, "Democracy is, at its best, a reflection of the culture in which it is situated, and it carries the price of permitting the wise and the foolish their say" (1). Further Hauser suggests that "The problematic aspects of Athenian democracy, in fact, are reflected through its association with rhetoric" because "The principle of majority rule rests on an assumption that your neighbor can be trusted to participate in a reasonable fashion to resolve public problems. However, the educated have always been wary of the mob's susceptibility to the to the demagoguery of unscrupulous rhetorical practices" (2). And further, "From its beginning, democracy has been in tension between the elite, who invoke their privilege to decide based on superior training to engage in rational deliberation (education), and the common citizens, who point to their numbers as the expression of public will (2). However, "the ideals of deliberative decision making by competent citizens and of popular sovereignty through the authorizing agencies of the people's voice and vote

remain alive at least at the level of aspiration" (2). While the problem of trust is certainly a central concern in any discussion of public deliberation and decision-making, the study presented here aims to shed more insight on how the masses can, in fact, have a positive impact, through rhetorical interventions, in instances of deliberation.

Deliberative Democracy

My study of the UFBDA and issues of public participation in environmental controversies presented in this dissertation is also influenced by theories of deliberative democracy. Simone Chambers provides an excellent overview of deliberative democratic theory, writing that "deliberative democracy does assume that (a) each individual citizen ought to deliberate about at least some public issues (even if it is just over the fence) and (b) citizen deliberation can be better or worse (even the one over the fence)" (331). Further, Chambers describes current theories of democratic deliberation as focusing on "the process" of deliberation while also defining deliberation itself "in terms of encouraging reflection and thoughtfulness about public policy in a noncoercive and discursive way" (334). Chambers, in contrast, is less interested in what citizens do with their opinions about a public policy than how that opinion itself is *formed*. Accordingly, Chambers asserts that "how citizens form their opinions and come to their policy preferences is an integral part of a theory of deliberative democracy even though most theories of democratic deliberation have turned their back on this as a wasteland of nondeliberation" (333). In her critique of deliberative democracy, Chambers writes, "More and more deliberative democratic theory looks at and investigates alternatives or supplements to mass democracy in the form of innovative

small-scale deliberative experiments, rather than ways of making mass democracy itself more deliberative. Today, the deliberative democratic theory pays almost no attention to elections or campaigns, referendums or broad questions of public opinion formation. Instead, theorists concentrate on citizen juries, participatory planning cells, citizen assemblies, and deliberative polls" (331). Chambers acknowledges that studying deliberation is a worthwhile endeavor because "there can be more or less deliberativeness in the system; politicians can be more rather than less deliberative" (344). Just as political figures may be more or less deliberative, Chambers also highlights that not all citizens have the same level of access to deliberation. She writes, "That the poor and marginalized do not have the same access to communicative power as the rich and established is a huge problem for deliberative democratic legitimacy" (339). Building on Chambers' work, I am interested in viewing the UFBDA's efforts in their opposition to the TVA, because it helps us analyze and critique the ways in which marginalized rhetors, such as the Appalachian environmentalists in this case study, are both excluded from and yet also subvert and include themselves, in more traditional settings for public deliberation.

Robert Ivie, in his study and critique of notions of democracy and deliberation, has advocated for a "rowdy" conception of democratic deliberation. Writing that "the notion that democratic deliberation at its bets and now is primarily rhetorical," offering a "'rowdy' rhetorical conception of deliberation" (277). Further, Ivie argues that "A rhetorical conception of deliberation . . . promotes democratic practice immediately—in the here and now—rather than postponing it indefinitely into a hypothetical future where

the condition of diversity would no longer apply and where participatory democracy would be sufficiently disciplined by an illusion of universal reason to yield a reliable and supposedly rational consensus" (278). Further, "Rhetorical deliberation is often a rowdy affair, just as politics is typically messy. Boisterous disagreement, when it occurs, however, need not be taken as a sure sign of hostility, alienation, misbehavior, inefficiency, or even impending chaos and ruin" (278). Ivie argues that the "conception of 'rowdy' rhetorical deliberation places a premium on strategies of identification (consisting of images bound to ideas and reason embodied in desire) that are situated, partial, ambiguous, temporary, and achieved through various styles of communication, all of which are address to particular audiences" (279). Further, Ivie argues that "a rhetorical model of deliberation is suitable to practicing democracy in the here and now under the actual conditions of agonistic polities rather than forestalling it endlessly until the masses are miraculously transformed into elites and diversities of culture, interest, and perspective are somehow reduced to a homogenous consistency of purpose and understanding" (284). As the discussion of the UFBDA presented here demonstrates, these "dam fighters" were indeed rowdy in that they helped to disrupt the hegemony the TVA held over public discussion surrounding the dams, in order to validate their own approach to rhetoric and their knowledge of western North Carolina.

Arabella Lyon, has been more critical of contemporary deliberative democratic theory, arguing that it is not quite helpful in its most recent iteration, because it is not about rhetoric and does not allow the public to have power: "Instead of focusing on individuals or society, theorists of deliberative democracy focus on procedures of

decision making and argue that legitimate law results from public and /or legislative deliberation by reasoned arguments among equal participants. Deliberative democracy acknowledges the democratic requirement of dialogue, but in defined and regulated ways. Finding justice in procedural participation, rather than the populist will (rule by the majority) or equitable distribution of power, opportunity, and rights, deliberative democracy depends on normative commitments to institutionalized, rational deliberation" (9). Further, Lyon suggests that deliberative democracy "does not value the contingency and conflict inherent in deliberative rhetoric and it does not address deliberation or justice outside of the frame of democracy, modernity, and reason" (pp. 9-10). Similarly, as Iris Marion Young writes in *Inclusion and Democracy*, the current model of deliberative democracy "implies a strong meaning of inclusion and political equality which, when implemented, increases the likelihood that democratic decision-making processes will promote justice" (*Inclusion and Democracy*, 6). Young suggests that "On a deliberative understanding of democratic practice, democracy is not only a means through which citizens can promote their interests and hold the power of rulers in check" (*Inclusion and Democracy*, 6). Young argues that "Inclusive democratic practice is likely to promote the most just results because people aim to persuade one another of the justice and wisdom of their claims, and are open to having their own opinions and understandings of their interests change in the process" (*Inclusion and Democracy*, 6). For Young, "Some formulations of ideals of deliberative democracy, however, tend to restrict their conception of political communication to argument, and to have too biased or narrow an understanding of what being reasonable means" (*Inclusion and*

Democracy, 6). In Chapter 6 of this dissertation, I will demonstrate the ways in which questions of deliberation and political communication, can, in fact, yield meaningful insights, particularly as I study the ways in which the UFBDA enacted rhetorical citizenship in their opposition to the TVA.

While many theorists do not explicitly point it out, deliberative democracy is, and must be based in the study of how deliberation actually operates in democracies. For example, as Hauser and Benoit-Barne write, "This literature [on deliberative democracy] contains two dominant conceptions of deliberation. One, found mostly among political scientists who are committed to a rational choice model, focuses on deliberation as it occurs in representative assemblies and other official governmental sites. The second, not exclusive of the first, worries that quality of deliberation with respect to political choice and understands deliberation on the philosophical terms of communication" (261). "A deliberative model of democracy provides such a [different] vocabulary, by construing democracy in terms of *participation* in the ongoing conversation about how we shall act and interact—our political relations. A vocabulary of participation brings certain types of activity into focus" (264). Further, as Hauser and Benoit-Barne write, "current discussion of deliberative democracy has largely omitted serious consideration of its rhetorical dimensions. We argue that such an omission keeps the discussion from focusing on how democracy actually works and from encouraging a culture of civic engagement that might make it work even better . . . . We argue that the grassroots resources of civil society are the major cultural resources for deliberative democracy to thrive provided we nurture its rhetorical inflections" (261). Similarly, Hogan and Tell

suggest that "If democratic deliberation is to produce sound collective judgements, people must look beyond their own 'self-interest and limited points of view' and join with others in determining the 'general interest' or the 'common good'" (479). Further, Hogan and Tell argue that "Moreover, there must be 'rules' to guide our deliberations, lest they degenerate into name-calling, confrontation, or even coercion and violence" (479). Patricia Roberts-Miller also emphasizes the need to conceive of democracy as an active site of deliberation, as she writes, "For democracy to work, people have to talk. For it to work well, we need to talk well. Or, in other words, a basic principle of democracy is that the ability of the general public to make appropriate decisions depends to a large degree on the quality of public discourse. The more that the public has the ability to argue together about issues of common concern, the more that the polis approaches the goal that political theorists have called 'deliberative democracy'" (459). While many scholars advocate for theories of deliberative democracy to be more in tune with the practicalities of *actual* deliberations, for the purpose of this project, I turn to the notion of ordinary democracy.

Ordinary Democracy

Several scholars have advocated for more studies of deliberation and democracy in everyday life. For example, Gerard A. Hauser argues that "The rhetorical democracy of the twenty-first century rests on the hurly-burly of civil society. Citizens still adhere to the ancient tenet that democratic politics must be a public activity open to all and distinct from the private preferences reflected in commercial transactions" (5). Further, according to Hauser, "For rhetoric to be democratic, it must go beyond procedural

norms to embrace practices of *deliberative inclusion*. Inclusion means more than giving voice to a point of view." And therefore, "Rhetorical democracy at its best does not expect contestants to find one another's reasons acceptable as their own, but it does respond to them as legitimate contributions to the deliberative process" (Hauser, "Rhetorical Democracy" 9). Similarly, Arabella Lyon writes in *Deliberative Acts* that "Ordinary people, who are the substance of democracy, do not imagine their democracy as a model (or as low politics) but as a situated practice to be worked with for their welfare and the welfare of their nation. They may value relationships, stability, self-fulfillment, and emotions more than reason" (10). The study of the UFBDA is certainly an exploration into ordinary democracy in that it examines the ways in which citizens made space for themselves and for each other to express their concerns about a pending government policy.

Rai, in *Democracy's Lot*, also emphasizes the necessity of situating theorizations of democracy in everyday practices via ordinary citizens: "While democracy offers powerful rhetorical resources that inspire and facilitate citizen participation, the range of incompatible political projects that can be legitimately pursued in its name suggests that we can only understand democracy in the contexts of its practice, and that no amount of earnest labor or theorizing will undo the paradoxes of democracy. Therefore, another idea threaded throughout the book is a wondering over how to build a politics forged in the ambivalence of democratic practice, rather than in its presumed virtue. Ultimately, this book seeks to deepen our understanding of the work that democratic rhetoric does and the promises and pitfalls of everyday democratic practice" (9). In her

conceptualization of democracy, Rai offers three main points: "(I) I offer a *conceptualization of the public* as dynamic, emergent, contested, multiple, crafted through ongoing activity, and profoundly situated in, manifest from, and tethered to particular contexts, times, and materiality conditions; (2) I focus on the *centrality of everyday 'talk,' communicative labor, and discursive artifacts* in rhetorical models of the democratic public and on *how materialities, affective, valences, and nonhuman agencies both shape and enact democratic persuasions*; (3) I consider the *formation and qualities of democratic subjects* that are capable of engaging in democratic practice, and, more generally, what *forms of democratic subjectivities emerge within the concrete, ideologically infused spaces* of the field site; and (4) Implicating the previous points, I study the *relationship between rhetoric and materiality* within everyday democratic practice and public formation" (10). Further, "at the core of the public sphere and its derivatives is the hope that people might discover shared norms to guide everyday politics through debate (as opposed to the use of force, the sway of social status, or raw power). Ordinary talk is the lifeblood of democratic publics, and within rhetorical studies, figured as one of the most prevalent objects of study and sites of invention and intervention" (12).

While the work of Hauser, Lyon, and Rai certainly contribute to my understanding of ordinary democracy, I draw most heavily for this theory from the work of Karen Tracy, in her work in both *Challenges of Ordinary Democracy* and *The Prettier Doll*. In *The Prettier Doll* Tracy writes, "For too long, discussions about the meaning of democracy have been conducted in an idealized key, shorn of contextual particulars" (*The Prettier*

Doll 5). The study of the UFBDA presented here helps fill in some of these gaps, by offering lots of contextual particulars in the context of a case in ordinary democracy. Further, Tracy elaborates, "There is little understanding of what does on as elected officials and citizens seek to be democratic in community-level public meetings" (*The Prettier Doll* 5). Tracy suggests that "ordinary democracy focuses on how citizens and elected officials speak in public meetings within actual sites of local governance" (*The Prettier Doll* 6). Tracy defines ordinary democracy as "the coming together of a practical meeting concerns, ideals of democratic decision making, and the myriad of concerns, both self-serving and legitimate, that participating individuals bring" (*The Prettier Doll* 8). Tracy argues, "In sum, we need the concept of ordinary democracy if we are to understand an important, overlooked facet of democracy—what people actually say and do in representative, local governance groups" (*The Prettier Doll* 8). Tracy writes, "Democracy as a practice and democracy as a principle have had little to do with each other. This chasm is problematic. Ideals formed without attention to the communicative actions that would enact them are inherently limited. There needs to be traffic between observations concerning what is governance ought to be" (*The Prettier Doll* 6). In order to combat this divorce, Tracy suggests that "Ordinary democracy foregrounds democracy's empirical force" (*The Prettier Doll* 6). Similarly, in *Challenges of Ordinary Democracy,* Tracy argues that "Public meetings in which elected officials gather with their citizens, superintendents, and high-ranking school staff to talk with one another, after which the elected officials will vote on matters, are a staple of U.S. democracy" (2). Tracy acknowledges that "Depending on who does the talking, where it occurs, and who

the listeners are, this talk has different names—participation, discussion, a work session, communications, a hearing, deliberation, debate," yet, "Through these varied types of meeting talk, the ideals of democracy that animate American life touch down and become actual practices" (2). Thus, Tracy offers the term ordinary democracy to describe and theorize "the communicative practices that occur in local governance groups. The concept refers to what actually happens in groups committed to acting democratically" (2). As Karen Tracy writes in the Introduction to *The Prettier Doll*, ordinary democracy in her term for the "discursive actions, decision-making practices, and participation frames that occur in public meetings of local governance groups" (5). According to Tracy, "Ordinary democracy is about mundane meeting exchanges; it is what goes on when local governance groups talk" and further, it "involves the actions of praising and blaming others as a group makes, avoids, and reshapes its decisions" (*The Prettier Doll* 5). Because I am focused on the ways in which ordinary citizens found themselves enmeshed, and created their own avenues for public participation, ordinary democracy is a very suitable theoretical frame for the dissertation presented here.

Similar to Tracy's concept of ordinary democracy, Linda Flower's notion of a local public also emphasizes the everyday work of citizens seeking to create equitable deliberations where their voices and concerns are addressed. Flower defines the local public as opening "a distinctly generative space for deliberation, one that can actually use difference, based on race, status, or discourse as a resource—but only if such marginalized perspectives can gain standing and be heard" ("Difference-Driven Inquiry" 308). Further, Flower elaborates, "For difference to gain a voice may depend on a

discourse that can delay consensus, acknowledge conflict, and provoke a difference-driven inquiry" (308). Flower theorizes local publics in the context of "the discursive practices of a Community Think Tank" which calls a local public into being (308). Flower further describes the Community Think Tank as a deliberative, rhetorical practice which "reveals how using difference to articulate unrecognized conflict can provide a more adaptive, transformative inquiry" (309). Flower argues that "The meaning of conflict in local publics . . . lies in the performative work it does" (311). Similar to the notion of ordinary democracy, Flower argues that Community Think Tanks demonstrate that "local public deliberation can open up a unique space for the knowledge work of ordinary people" (321). An emphasis on the "ordinary" is especially important because "Policy scholars have pointed out that controversy, unlike dispassionate intellectual disagreement, rises out of and is rooted in experienced contradictions and experiential knowledge" ergo, the knowledge that many citizens possess (321). Further, "Unlike a discourse that operates with logical or abstract generalization, invoking situated knowledge is more like publicly screening a home movie of the mind, in which speakers embed ideas in richly situated representations, with actors, actions, motivations, and imagined outcomes" (321). Further, still, Flower suggests that " A discussion designed to elicit such knowledge can draw new realities and rarely articulated differences in understanding up to the level of awareness and into the discussion" (321). Overall, Flower argues that the benefit of the Community Think Tank and the local public it elicits is that "The potential for change lies in the diverse meanings people take home . . . which may in turn result in further conversations, altered understanding, or even

eventual transformations in practice" (328). For this dissertation project, the notion of ordinary democracy is the most compelling and well-suited theoretical frame, because it allows me to explore the ways in which citizens communicated with each other and in turn, were able to effectively voice their concerns to a larger governing body, which eventually supported their opposition to the dams and helped terminate the project.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have reviewed a number of theories that influenced my approach to this dissertation, including public sphere theory, deliberative rhetoric, deliberative democracy, the problem of trust in democracy, and most importantly for the present work, ordinary democracy. As my discussion of these theories demonstrate, the UFBDA case study has direct connection to a number of key issues in the field, namely that of how ordinary citizens, by communicating with one another, can influence broader decisions of public policy and development. As a rhetorician, I work throughout this dissertation to show that the UFBDA exerted this "influence" through the art and practice of rhetoric. I agree with Stob that in order for a public to enact its potential, it must be rhetorically attuned and "must be able to use the language that bonds its members together to advance its purposes, to produce its fruits in social interactions" (237). Throughout this dissertation, I examine the UFBDA as a group that successfully used language to accomplish their goals and spread their opposition to the TVA, demonstrating that the dam fighters represent a powerful, generative example of an instance of ordinary democracy.

Chapter 3: Archival Research Methods

> *"Nothing is thus more troubled and more troubling today than the concept archived in this word 'archive.'"*
>
> *—Jacques Derrida, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression," p. 57*

The *Ethos* of Archival Research

As described in the Introduction to this dissertation project, I turn to the archives to examine documents pertaining to the UFBDA's dam fight and their opposition to the TVA. In my approach to the archives, and in writing about archival research as I do in this chapter, I am careful to consider the role of ethos in connection with this research method, as discussed by prominent rhetoricians like Vicki Tolar Burton and Lynée Lewis Gaillet. For example, in the canonical article, "Octalog III: The Politics of Historiography in 2010," contributor Vicki Tolar Burton suggests that scholars of rhetoric and writing studies should "interrogate archival work by bringing the pressure of *ethos* to bear on practices of border crossing" (111). She asks. "As we cross into the archives of others, what is the *ethos* of the historian of rhetoric?" (111). And further, she poses the question, "As historians of rhetoric, who are we" in the stories we try to tell in our own research (111). In addition to concerns over the role of our own opinions and experiences clouding the research process, Tolar Burton also warns that once we are in the archives, archival research becomes even more complicated. She writes, "we arrive in the archives, and things are a bit of a mess—disorganized, uncatalogued, overwhelming" (111). Tolar Burton compares this disorientation to "traveling strangers"

who are “in danger of not seeing what is before us, missing our change to dwell” among what is available to us in the archives (111). In order to avoid missing the forest for the trees, Tolar Burton recommends that as researchers we should “enact good will by observing the etiquette of the host archive” therefore enacting “a deeper *ethos* of knowledge and character by a willingness to dwell with the documents, to practice slow reading as we lift the rhetors from their musty folders, seeking clues to their rhetorical situations and literary practices” (112). For Tolar Burton then, ethos is not simply a matter of conveying your ability to construct an effective historical account, but that a concern for ethos should also influence the methods by which we approach the archives.

Tolar Burton admits that archival research is not inherently particular easy or cost-effective, writing “travel is expensive, so researchers are tempted to hurry, to get everything fast, to possess the archive” (112). Tolar Burton warns researchers not to succumb to these pressures but instead, to “Slow down. Breathe. Dwell” within the archives and with the artifacts” (112). Further, Tolar Burton suggests that we should dwell within the materiality of the archive itself, including the “city, building [and the] artifacts” in order to “scrutinize the systems and motives of the archive’s collectors and sponsors” (112). While Tolar Burton encourages us to examine the rhetoricity of the archive and the processes involved in archiving, we must, as archival researchers, also dwell with our own choices. She suggests we “examine our own place in systems of grants, tenure and promotion, access and publication, acknowledging that we may sometimes conceal the partialness of our knowledge under the cloak of academic

authority" (112). Similarly, Lynée Lewis Gaillet has emphasized the importance of ethos in the writing of archival research. Gaillet writes, "it is imperative that readers trust the ethos of the archival researcher, given that triangulating archival data is often difficult to do, and understand what the researcher 'counts' as evidence" ("(Per)Forming Archival Research Methodologies" 39). As Tolar Burton and Gaillet highlight, considering one's own credibility as an archival researcher is crucial for conducting ethical work in the archives. Similarly, it is also necessary for researchers to write about their methods in the archives in a clear and precise manner, so that their readers can best understand their approach and feel confident in their findings.

On a practical level, this chapter serves as a guide for the what archival documents were examined, how they were examined, and where these artifacts are located, for those who may be interested in future research on this topic ("An Argument for Archival Research Methods" pp. 71-72). My understanding of what a methods chapter, like this one, should entail is influenced by Barbara L'Eplattenier who suggests that methods sections "should describe the pragmatic goals, issues, and actions of our archival researcher" ("An Argument for Archival Research Methods" 71). I agree with L'Eplattenier that methods sections should illuminate the *how* and *why* of the research process. In terms of archival research, these key facts often include "information such as data location, collection, material conditions" and any other detail relevant to "obtaining the materials that are the foundation" for the story and analysis I offer in this dissertation ("An Argument for Archival Research Methods" 71). Therefore, in the section of this chapter entitled, "Archival Methods for the Study of the UFBDA," I provide

many key facts pertaining to the two UFBDA archival collections cited in this project, including "the name and location of the archives; the finding aids used to locate information; the amount of time spent in the archives; the number of linear feet in a collection; the amount of the collection examined; the *provenance* of the artifacts; the physical state of the artifacts; problems; issues or difficulties with the materials; interesting facts about the materials; missing articles from the archives; and the specific types of materials examined" ("An Argument for Archival Research Methods" 71). In other words, a good methods section "offers us details regarding the circumstances of the research and pulls back the curtain on the work done" letting "us see the man behind the curtain" ("An Argument for Archival Research Methods" 72). One of the intentions behind exposing the work done in the archives is to offer others information on these collections for their own or possible future research opportunities. But, there is also a more rhetorical motive, one tied to notions of ethos, operating here.

A methods section also helps establish the ethos or credibility of the research itself. One of my primary objectives in this chapter is to demonstrate my own qualifications and effectiveness as an archival researcher. As L'Eplattenier suggests, "A methods section allows us to decide whether we can trust" a particular account and "how much we want to trust it" ("An Argument for Archival Research Methods" 74).

L'Eplattenier contends that there is a direct relationship between the methods used and the credibility of a research study. For example, L'Eplattenier writes, "Is an archival history that was developed with the archival researcher spending only three hours in the archives with 1.5 linear feet as valid as the one where the researcher spent

thirty hours with 5.5 linear feet?" ("An Argument for Archival Research Methods" 74). Further, "Shouldn't we, the readers, and users of those histories, know about what went into their construction? ("An Argument for Archival Research Methods" 74). By detailing the how, why, and what of archival research, historiographers not only help others see what was available to them, but can also allow researchers to put forth a less idealized, more nuanced portrait of the trials and tribulations of the archival research process. As L'Eplattenier writes, a methods section "shows us the cracks, fissures, and gaps" to allow us to see how an historical account is compiled ("An Argument for Archival Research Methods" 74. These revelations help expose "our blind spots, our areas we didn't realize we could research, and our awareness of the fragmentary nature of [the] archival world" ("An Argument for Archival Research Methods" 74). By demonstrating what we did, what we found, and the limitations of our process, methods sections not only demonstrate our own credibility as researchers, but also our awareness of the limits of both our own thinking and the availability of materials within the archives.

In addition to building ethos through the practicalities of research in the archives, a methods section also has the potential to divulge a researcher's stance or orientation to a project, a move which further develops the researcher's credibility and influences debates regarding the possibility of objectivity in the writing of history. An Archive, just as the act of history writing itself, is not neutral, but is instead a window into a past time and place and what people thought was important enough to preserve. A similar process of valuing occurs as researchers identify projects, as I did in my continued interest and research surrounding the UFBDA. As Ramsey et al. comment in *Working in*

the Archives: Practical Research Methods for Rhetoric and Composition, most scholars in rhetoric and writing studies "realize that our historiographies will be subjective, given in large part to the interestedness of our research stance and our theoretical grounding" (11). For me, a research stance is most akin to a methodology, as a theoretical orientation that shapes our methods and guides our research processes. The existence of a methodology does not undermine the value of the research, but instead, identifying the methodological influences for a project, and the researcher's interest in a topic, helps us see that research is not a transparent, value-less process, but that instead we are all motivated by certain stances, outlooks, and orientations. Therefore, highlighting one's own methodology helps to further reveal the *why* of the research process to accompany the *what* and *how* associated with the methods of a project. Within this chapter, in the section entitled, "Method vs. Methodology and My Research Stance," I distinguish between methods and methodology to highlight the theoretical underpinnings which guided my examination of archival documents within the development of this dissertation.

In this chapter, I work to highlight my own methods and methodology and to demonstrate my broad knowledge of archives and archival research. In another attempt to build my own ethos as an archival researcher, in this chapter I discuss possible methods for archival research, challenges, as well as "gifts" of the archives. I begin, however, by examining the numerous definitions of archives, as scholars have highlighted the archive as an expansive term which denotes both a rhetorical entity and a process of valuing.

Archives Definition(s):

As Mike Featherstone highlights, scholars have frequently recognized archives as the "place where government records are stored" and, similarly, the archive was initially understood as "the site where official records were guarded and kept in secrecy" ("Archive" 591). Given the archive's close associations with government, it is not surprising that historically, archives were "part of the apparatus of social rule and regulation" helping to facilitate "the governance of the territory and population through accumulated information" ("Archive" 591). Further, Featherstone writes that "Archives also housed the proliferations of files and case histories as populations were subjected to disciplinary power and surveillance" ("Archive" 591). Similarly, also emphasizing the role of archives as processes of power and surveillance, Michel Foucault, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language,* suggests that "The archive is the first law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statement as unique events" (129). Foucault's reading of the archive as establishing the primacy of the "appearance" of events, clearly demonstrates the power held within government records and how they can influence the ways in which we all remember, and therefore experience the past.

Historically, archives were not only crucial for governance, but also for the creation of national identities. Featherstone writes that "while states possessed extensive archives, which were the accumulated records of monitoring its population, archives were also important for the other part of the nation-state couplet, the formation and legitimation of the nation" thereby making the archive "a crucial site for national

memory" ("Archive" 592). While archives can certainly be the site for government records, surveillance of the populace, as well as the formation of both national identities and memories, many scholars in rhetoric and composition have turned to the archive to enrich our field's historiography, studying the ways in which rhetoric and writing studies, and even rhetorical education have changed over time.

Archives, as part of university and public libraries, have often been deemed the "treasure troves" of institutions, containing items that most people, let alone most researchers, often feel distanced from, fearing they may not be worthy of items contained in a space named "Special Collections." As if the physical location of many archives is not intimidating enough, archival artifacts are also enriched with power as they are understood as the primary basis for writing histories. For example, as Jessica Enoch and Jordynn Jack write, "Archives are often associated with the creation of history; they house documents that enable researchers to conduct meticulous historiographic research" ("Remembering Sappho" 521). Similarly, Linda Ferreria-Buckley suggests that although "Archives have long been understood as providing the stuff from which histories are constructed," our modern conception of the archive "originated in revolutionary France" as "the National Archives were founded in 1789" and "the Archives Department in 1796," thereby "bringing together management of all public repositories and agencies" (578). Similarly, Ferreria-Buckley writes, "The English Public Record Act followed in 1838 and systematized archives in England" (578). In response to the growth of state-sponsored archives, "Many agencies and citizens emulated these record-keeping practices" developing archives of their own (Ferreria-

Buckley 578). The archive's role as a source of history is directly connected to the ways in which governments and states have maintained public records. While these records are often fruitful for a wide-range of research projects, there are, of course, significant missing perspectives from such institutional archives.

In an effort to expand our scholarship beyond the limited records associated with state and government archives, as Lynda Walsh highlights, many scholars in rhetoric and writing studies have begun to look for ways in which to incorporate many missing voices, particularly in terms of perspectives that may have been excluded or concealed by a dominant historiography ("Resistance and Common Ground" 2). Similarly, Heidi A McKee and James E. Porter have also emphasized that for many scholars, "the actual 'what' of an archive is likewise expansive and ever-expanding," as "scholars have challenged researchers to look beyond canonized public figures to include the public and private writings of women and people of color and, by extension, the rhetoric of any and all persons who may be overlooked" ("The Ethics of Archival Research" 61). As McKee and Porter note, "The dramatic and expansion of the archive that began in the 1970s and that continues today raises interesting questions of what an archive is and what it means to do archival research" ("The Ethics of Archival Research" 61). According to McKee and Porter, changing our sites and methods of archival research leads to a more equitable record of rhetorical history and can often take our field's body of knowledge into previously unexplored, and incredibly exciting arenas.

Similarly, in their article, "Drama in the Archives: Rereading Methods, Rewriting History," Cheryl Glenn and Jessica Enoch comment that "Not all archival research in

rhetoric and composition begins—or ends—on a university campus or at a great research library" (326). Further, Glenn and Enoch write, "With increasing regularity, many researchers in rhetoric and composition have looked beyond" exclusive institutional archives to "consider what other, lowercase-A archives might hold, archives that don't immediately promise insights into the practices and histories of our field" (326). According to Glenn and Enoch, "even when we don't have the good fortune to find archives in our relative's attic or bureaus or in our colleague's bottom drawer, there are smaller, local archives that call us to reconsider what the archive is and what purpose this archive can serve" (328). Glenn and Enoch further argue that "These smaller collections or accidental discoveries also expand our notions of what counts as a primary resource, as an archive, and especially what counts as a contribution to rhetorical theory and composition practice as well as to the history of our discipline" (328). As Glenn and Enoch demonstrate, writing the history of rhetoric is not confined to the institutional library and there are many ways to rethink archival research, first by redefining what counts as an archive. Similarly, Thomas P. Miller and Melody Bowdon write, "With the transition from the Rhetorical Transition to the rhetorics of others' traditions, historians are reinventing archival methods because the definition of archives as depositories of the public record became problematic when we recognized the limitations imposed on the 'public'" ("A Rhetorical Stance on the Archives of Civic Action" 592). Further, according to Angela G. Ray, "The term *archive* has the ordinary meaning of 'repository or collection' at the same time that contemporary scholars across the humanities are exploring its rich theoretical implications" ("Rhetoric and the Archive"

45). One of the most powerful and fruitful theoretical implications for archival research is the effort to see the archives in the world around us, rather than simply considering archives as the product of powerful governments and institutions.

Increasingly, scholars in rhetoric and writing studies (as well as many other disciplines across the humanities), have called for an expanded definition of the archives. For example, Buehl et al. suggest that "the concept of 'archives' is not confined to describing institutional storage facilities" but instead, "Archives can also be constructed by collecting materials or contextualizing family artifacts" ("Training in the Archives: Archival Research as Professional Development" 298). Additionally, the development and expansion of archives into online spaces "have expanded how archives can be accessed, created, and populated" (Buehl et al "Training in the Archives: Archival Research as Professional Development" 298). As Buehl at al argue, "archives resonate with multiple and sometimes contradictory associations" and each archive "presents intellectual, methodological, and rhetorical resources and challenges" ("Training in the Archives: Archival Research as Professional Development" 298). Similarly, geographer Tim Cresswell uses the term "archives" "in a broad sense to refer to collections of artefacts collected by experts and enthusiasts" ("Value, gleaning and the Archive at Maxwell Street, Chicago" 166). Cresswell has expanded the definition of archives even further by suggested that "Place is an archive too ("Value, gleaning and the Archive at Maxwell Street, Chicago" 168). Cresswell argues that "a broader definition of archives is needed" because "While it is generally accepted that formal archives (usually of documents and images) are leakier and messier than might be

expected" scholars "have been slow to consider the utility of thinking of other kinds of collecting and other kind of space as archival, including places themselves" ("Value, gleaning and the Archive at Maxwell Street, Chicago" 176). Further, Cresswell argues that "Seeing archives everyday will help to further problematise the notion of the archive as a rarified and imperial space and allow us to include more and become messier ourselves in our archival practice" ("Value, gleaning and the Archive at Maxwell Street, Chicago" 176). Both Buehl and Cresswell emphasize the benefits of collecting and even creating archives from vernacular, everyday sources, artifacts which would often be overlooked in the creation of many institutional archives.

Similarly, Lynée Lewis Gaillet has described how "Contemporary archival researchers push the boundaries of defining what counts as an archive" ("(Per)Forming Archival Research Methodologies" 39). Gaillet argues that "No longer are 'sanctioned' collections (housed in special collections and recognized research libraries) or traditional venues for rhetorical performance and agency the sole purview of the archival researcher" ("(Per)Forming Archival Research Methodologies" 39). Instead, Gaillet writes "Archives are now viewed as primary sources for creating knowledge rather than mere storehouses for finding what is already known" ("(Per)Forming Archival Research Methodologies" 39). Gaillet argues that "Ultimately, archives shape identity" ("(Per)Forming Archival Research Methodologies" 54). Therefore, "Expanding definitions of archives" as well as "the increasing numbers of researchers who see themselves as archivist-researchers," and the arrival of "more codified information for working in the archives" all, collectively, "pave the way for composition and rhetoric

scholars to make new knowledge through archival research" ("(Per)Forming Archival Research Methodologies" 54). In her discussion of the expanding notion of archives, Gaillet demonstrates the ways in which these more informal archives have the potential to be intensely generative, providing researchers as a way to create new knowledge, rather than record or possibly translate knowledge that is already housed in archival collections.

Barbara Biesecker has similarly highlighted the role of archives in the generation of new knowledge. While acknowledging that archives are many things, including "an historical space, a political space, or a sacred space, a site of preservation, interpretation, or commemoration," Barbara A. Biesecker argues that whatever we may think of the archives, they are always "the provisionally settled scene of our collective invention, of our collective interest of us and it" ("Of Historicity, Rhetoric: The Archive as Scene of Invention" 124). In this groundbreaking argument, Biesecker suggests that she is "challenging a whole set of presumptions that underwrite the lion's share of critical *and* theoretical work" in the field ("Of Historicity, Rhetoric: The Archive as Scene of Invention" 124). According to Biesecker, because "the archive may best be understood as the scene of a doubled invention rather than the site of a singular discovery," we can, as researchers, can "the evidentiary status of any archive" and "its inherent (by virtue of its 'realness') capacity to guarantee in advance or serve as ultimate arbiter of identity, history, practice, criticism, and theory" ("Of Historicity, Rhetoric: The Archive as Scene of Invention" 124). Further, Biesecker suggests that this double invention, opens "the way toward writing a different kind of rhetorical history that will not be governed by the

notion of referential plentitude and the motif of truth" ("Of Historicity, Rhetoric: The Archive as Scene of Invention" 124). Biesecker's argument arises from the exigence that "scholars of persuasive speech have not yet begun robustly to engage the entailments of the archive's irreducible undecidability even though we are *uniquely* positioned to do so, given the deconstruction of 'fact' or of referential plentitude does not reduce the contents of the archive to 'mere' literature or fiction," but instead, "delivers that content over to us as the elements of rhetoric" ("Of Historicity, Rhetoric: The Archive as Scene of Invention" 130). Further, Biesecker suggests that by being attuned to the rhetoricity of the archive itself, we can escape the tie to "what the archive cannot *authenticate* absolutely but can (be made to) *authorize* nonetheless" which further, "issues an invitation to write rhetorical histories of the situated and strategic uses to which archives have been put" ("Of Historicity, Rhetoric: The Archive as Scene of Invention" 130). Biesecker's efforts to demonstrate the archive's role as a seat of invention also connects to other, quite similar, work that seeks to provide a more diverse approach to writing rhetorical history from the archives as well.

Efforts to destabilize the hegemony of institutional archives over archival research in rhetoric and writing studies are also a rhetorical effort themselves. As Jessica Estep argues, feminist historiographers in rhetoric and writing studies have actively contributed to evolving definitions and meanings of the archive through their work ("Applying Archival Methods and Methodologies" 482). For example, Estep suggests that feminist historical researchers have worked to "'democratize' archival research to include women, minorities, and other marginalized voices through several

avenues" including: "by broadening the definition of an archive to include less traditional sites; by seeking to increase access to archival resources, particularly through digitization and meta-data; by encouraging previously marginalized groups to create their own representative archives; by rhetorically analyzing the silences within the archives to augment the stature of those who have been silenced; and by encouraging the use of critical imagination" ("Applying Archival Methods and Methodologies" pp. 482-83). The efforts of feminist and revisionist scholars in rhetoric and writing have clearly helped to revise the canon of our field itself, which is a considerable rhetorical accomplishment. Just as the work to expand archival definitions is a rhetorical endeavor, scholars in rhetoric and writing have also demonstrated that archives themselves, are rhetorical.

Archives as a Rhetorical Process

While scholars in rhetoric and writing have worked to expand definitions of the archive, our field has also began to recognize the rhetorical properties of the archives themselves. As KJ Rawson highlights, in recent years, "our field's longstanding commitment to archives became increasingly focused on the rhetorical dimensions of archives" (Rawson 327). Similarly, Enoch and VanHaitsma insist that "Archives are rhetorical" and that they derive their rhetoricity from the ways in which they are generated ("Archival Literacy" 218). Enoch and VanHaistma emphasize that archives "are created in time and space by human beings who make decisions about the selection, preservation, and presentation of materials" and further, "each of these decisions (and more) shape in important ways the kinds of meanings that can emerge"

from the archives ("Archival Literacy" 218). Accordingly, archives garner their "rhetorical power" primarily through this "process of selection" wherein archive builders "choose what is important and what is not" thereby making "implicit arguments about historiographic significance" of particular artifacts and collections ("Archival Literacy" 220). The formation of archives highlights the ways in which the choices involved with selecting and creating these entities can include subtle arguments and in turn, influence the research produced from those artifacts.

Recognizing the rhetorical significance of the creation of archives, several scholars have analyzed the process of archival selection. For example, Alexis E. Ramsey-Tobienne writes, "archival selection involves identifying historical materials that could function within the logic of a particular collection" and further, once materials are acquired, "the selection process transforms historical materials into archival objects" ("Archives 2.0" 332). As Ramsey-Tobienne argues, "Archival selection is frequently guided by collection development policies, or collection scopes, which articulate the parameters of an existing collection while guiding acquisition decisions in the future" ("Archives 2.0" 332). Similarly, as discussed in the edited collection, *Working in the Archives*, "Archivists take care to determine and maintain the original order to the extent possible given their" (55). Further, it is important to recognize that "Archivists do not impose their own organizational principles upon materials that are already organized but rather devote their efforts to identifying and clarifying the organizational principles followed by the creator, recognizing that the arrangement itself may be of interest and significance to researchers" (55). As Ramsey-Tobienne and others have suggested,

archivists shape archival collections as they sort, select, and order items. However, it is important to note that acknowledging this rhetoricity is not to say that archivists shape collections with ill intent. Rather, the role of the archivist is not to create arguments about collections, but to make collections available and accessible to researchers.

While many researchers have highlighted the ways in which archives are created as a rhetorical act, scholars have also discussed the rhetorical nature of the archives as experienced while searching through archives. For example, in her account of the practical difficulties of locating images in archives, Cara A. Finnegan writes, "We need to recognize that archives—even seemingly transparent image archives—function as terministic screens, simultaneously revealing and concealing 'facts,' at once enabling and constraining interpretation" ("What is This a Picture Of" pp. 117-18). Finnegan concedes that "The suggestion that the archive is a rhetorical construction is hardly new, of course" but, she worries that "in our desire to trumpet the general uses and benefits of archives, we too quickly gloss over the specific, complex, rhetorical negotiations such research often requires" (118). In her research with archival photographs, Finnegan argues that "Images in archives prompt complex rhetorical negotiations" ("What is This a Picture Of" 118). Based on her own experiences in the archives, Finnegan states that she has "come to embrace archival research as a process of rhetorical negotiation that parallels the demands of other critical practices" ("What is This a Picture Of" 121). Further, Finnegan suggests that "Recognizing that the space of the archive both prompts discovery and requires interpretation and evaluation has the potential to make our experiences in the archive more fruitful and our resulting

scholarship richer" (121). Finnegan's acknowledgement of the rhetorical nature of archival research can also help us better understand the archive, itself.

It is important to note that, as a result of the valuing and collecting associated with archives, archives are also not transparent or neutral spaces. For example, Katrina M. Powell, in her article, "Hidden Archives: Revealing Untold Stories" has commented on the lack of neutrality in the archives. Powell writes, "The archive is not merely a neutral repository," but instead, "It is a system governed by those who have the power to choose what gets archived and therefore produce meaning through that discursive formation" (26). Similarly, Ellen Cushman suggests that scholars "need to understand the troubled and troubling roots of archives if they're to understand the instrumental, historical, and cultural significance of the pieces therein" ("Wampum, Sequoyan, and Story" 116). Charles E. Morris also argues that the current body of scholarship using archival research, within rhetoric and writing studies "demonstrates that the archive significantly influences what we are able to study, to say, and to teach about rhetorical history, and what we do, as rhetors, with its holdings in our scholarship, in our classrooms, and in the streets" ('The Archival Turn in Rhetorical Studies" 115). According to Morris, "The archive, therefore, should rightly be understood not as a passive receptable for historical documents and their 'truths,' or a benign research space, but rather as a dynamic site of rhetorical power" ("The Archival Turn in Rhetorical Studies 115). As these writers demonstrate, researchers must be aware of the rhetorical components of archival selection and organization. Acknowledging the rhetoricity of archives, however, does not mean that scholars of rhetoric and writing

abandon archival research all together. In contrast, many researchers have emphasized specific "gifts" of archival research, which I review in the next section.

"Gifts" of Archival Research

Scholars have identified a wide variety of potential benefits for employing archival research methods in rhetoric and writing studies. For example, McKee and Porter write, "In archival work, a researcher's purpose might be to expand the rhetorical canon; to deepen our understanding of a particular person in a particular time, place, and culture; to uncover and recover overlooked rhetorics and to honor and recognize heretofore overlooked rhetoricians; to challenge historical (mis) representations; and to provide current communities access to the knowledge of past communities" (64). For many rhetoricians, the primary "gift" of the archive is its function as a window to the past. Buehl et al suggest that "Archives fuel the historical imagination and provide evidence for complicating the narratives of our past" ("Training in the Archives: Archival Research as Professional Development" 298). While there are clearly a wide array of benefits for scholars interested in engaging archival research methods, the notion of particular "gifts" associated with archival research emerged from scholar Susan Wells.

In her influential work entitled, "Claiming the Archive for Rhetoric and Composition," Wells describes three particular gifts that archival research offers including: "resistance to our first thought, freedom from resentment, . . . and the possibility of reconfiguring our relation to history" (58).Wells argues that the "archive resists knowledge in a number of ways. It refuses closure; often, it simply refuses any answer at all" (58). According to Wells, this resistance to closure is "fruitful" because it

“forbids totalization” and further, “It prompts us, as contending scholars, to resist early resolution of questions that should not be too quickly answered” (58). Further, Wells highlights the second gift of the archives as “a loosening of resentment” regarding how our field perceives its own value versus the ways in which our field is recognized in higher education more broadly (59). Archival research offers scholars an exciting avenue for original research which can help avoid bitterness about perceptions regarding the field’s intellectual merit. And lastly, Wells describes how the archive offers the chance for valuable recovery work needed to revise our field’s history, by, for example, “recovering the work of club women, of schoolchildren, of new trade unionists,” in order to “understand the stakes of the broad struggle to define the terms of literacy with which we have associated ourselves” (60). Further, in her discussion of this type of recovery work, Wells suggests that it “is really nobody’s work but our own to recover these texts; through our reconstruction and reading, their production of literacy speaks more loudly than the arrogance that neglects it” (60). As Wells highlights here, there are several gifts for rhetoric and writing scholars interested in archival research. Many scholars in the field have also examined how these gifts may enrich our students’ lives as well.

Several scholars have emphasized the pedagogical importance of archival research. For example. Buehl, Chute, and Fields, in *College Composition and Communication* (2012) advocated for the need to train graduate students in rhetoric and writing studies about archival methods. The authors contend that “Introducing early career scholars to archival methods” can alter “their beliefs about knowledge, research,

teaching, and their discipline(s)" ("Training in the Archives: Archival Research as Professional Development" 274). While acknowledging the numerous studies in rhetoric and writing studies that *use* archival methods, the authors lament the lack of knowledge surrounding how to *do* archival research. Buehl et al. suggest that "our field has yet to articulate good and replicable models for teaching archival methods" and that more scholars in our field should discuss ways to *teaching* and *learning* in the archives" ("Training in the Archives: Archival Research as Professional Development" 278). In their call for advanced training in the archives, the authors suggest that "archival training should be conceived in broad terms, and archives should be viewed as training sites where research skills and habits of mind can be taught and strengthened" ("Training in the Archives: Archival Research as Professional Development" 278). Buehl et al. describe many benefits of archival research. For example, they suggest that "Archival training helps researchers think methodically about texts and contexts—an important faculty for developing any research project" ("Training in the Archives: Archival Research as Professional Development" 278). Further, the Buehl et al. suggest that "archival training is an ideal tool for teaching students of any level to think about the material, temporal, and rhetorical constraints of research" ("Training in the Archives: Archival Research as Professional Development" pp. 278-79). While these authors are clearly interested in the benefits for future faculty members and graduate students in terms of archival research, other scholars have looked into the benefits of incorporating the archives into other curricula, as well.

Many teacher-scholars in rhetoric and writing studies have discussed the pedagogical benefits of incorporating archival research methods into undergraduate courses. For example, as Wendy Hayden writes in “And Gladly Teach: The Archival Turn’s Pedagogical Turn,” “Recently scholars in rhetoric and composition have recognized these opportunities for undergraduate research and expanded archival research pedagogies to undergraduate students, inspiring us to think about the many ways we can incorporate archives into undergraduate instruction and what goals in such projects should be” (134). Further, Hayden writes that “The archival turn in rhetoric and composition studies has provided the opportunity and the methods to engage students in primary research and help them redefine the purpose of research—and thus the purpose of their undergraduate education” (134). Hayden writes “Pedagogies incorporating archival research and archival materials support an inquiry-based model of education” (135). As Hayden suggests, “Primary research in the archives requires students to adopt a more nuanced approach to information literacy” and further, “Synthesizing these primary sources into a coherent narrative involves further development of that nuanced approach” (135). In sum, Hayden suggests that through primary research, “Student engagement in such projects often increases, and they learn valuable skills they could not in a traditional research project” (135).

Hayden suggests that not only can archival research enrich student learning, incorporating archives in the classroom can also demonstrate, both to teachers and to students themselves, how they can conduct primary research which can generate new knowledge. Hayden argues that archival research assignments in the undergraduate

classroom “these assignments emphasize the feminist research strategies and feminist pedagogies collaboration and invitation” (pp. 135-36). Further, these assignments “invite students to participate in our scholarly conversations, such as those on the methods and methodologies of archival research, the local elements of archival research, the recovery of marginalized voices, and the relationship between feminist and digital historiography” (pp. 135-36).

As Hayden suggests, students that encounter the archives also begin to question the rhetorical elements of the archives themselves. Hayden writes, “Students working with archives, whether physical or digital, often ask questions about what the archive contains, how it is organized, and what is left out—questions derived from their actual research experiences” (137). Hayden’s work also helps demonstrate how archival research can help students see themselves as contributing to our field as well. Hayden writes “In the context of our current conversations on archival research as well as recent work on undergraduate research, asking students to undertake the difficult task of archival research invites them into the scholarly community, where they have much to contribute” (418). Further, working in the archives helps students “transform from thinking of themselves as students seeing that their insights and their work have value to an academic field” (418). Hayden writes that although many scholars in rhetoric and writing studies have developed “research methods in archival work” has “provided a set of tools useful for researchers, but these tools are not often connected to pedagogy” (“‘Gifts’ of the Archives: A Pedagogy for Undergraduate Research” 420). Hayden suggests that while researchers are developing new methods for archival research,

“these tools are not often connected to pedagogy” even though archival research in undergraduate courses “can elicit enthusiasm for implementing such projects in first-year writing courses” (“‘Gifts’ of the Archives: A Pedagogy for Undergraduate Research” 420). As discussed in Hayden’s work, there are certainly opportunities to extend the “gifts” of archival search to undergraduate students in our classrooms. Scholars have also emphasized the benefit of forming relationships within the archives.

Archival researchers in rhetoric and writing studies have also discussed the benefits of developing “relationships with information specialists” associated with archives (Buehl et al “Training in the Archives: Archival Research as Professional Development” 279). Similarly, Jessica Enoch describes the many benefits of working with archivists as we research in the archives. Enoch writes, “By speaking *with* archivists about the communal and civic goals of their archive, we elaborate on what counts as a research method” (61). Further, Enoch suggests that “In addition to accessing and retrieving information, we must also see as viable and important the acts of sharing our research and writing with archivists, listening to them, and learning more about what the information we retrieve says not just about our history but about their community’s past, present, and future” (61). Similarly, in discussing the roles of archivists, Jessica Estep writes, “Rather than serving as gatekeepers, archivists serve as beacons, making visible historical records that force institutions of our present democracy to be help accountable for their actions and decisions” (“Applying Archival Methods and Methodologies” 482). Alexis E. Ramsey-Tobienne recommends developing “a relationship with the archivist,” to “see them not as a gatekeeper or a

hindrance to the collection, but as a resource throughout the research process" ("Archives 2.0" 24). Ramsey-Tobienne also contends that archival researchers contribute to the archives, encouraging "our colleagues to leave papers to archives," asking "archivists about certain holdings thereby encouraging their processing, and continue to actively share our archival experiences with each other" ("Archives 2.0" 24). As these authors demonstrate, archivists can be incredibly helpful for researchers in the archives, and in fact, forming positive working relationships with archivists offer yet another "gift" of the archives because these connections can often lead to collaboration in scholarship, and often gives scholars more insight into specific collections.

As I have discussed in this section, there are clearly many potential benefits associated with conducting archival research. While these gifts certainly encourage many scholars, including myself, to enter into the archives, there are also very specific challenges associated with this type of research as well, which I will discuss in the following section.

Challenges of Archival Research

One particular challenge many researchers face when they turn to the archives is the overall lack of scholarship focused on the ways in which we should interact with archival collections once we enter the archives. Further, many scholars in rhetoric and writing studies have lamented the lack of explicit discussions of archival methods in our field. Without a developed body of research in how to best conduct archival research, it is difficult for many scholars to find their footing in the archives and develop ethical research projects from archival sources. For example, Jessica Enoch writes that

although there have been discussions regarding broader issues like “historiographic method and methodology,” as a field, “we have not spent as much time articulating and analyzing the *particular* research strategies that allow us to tell a ‘reconfigured, more fully textured story’ of our field’s past” (48). Enoch asks, “How can describing, explicitly, our methods we use in archival research help us expand histories of rhetoric and composition and what counts in our field?” (48). Enoch argues that focusing on methods, rather than methodologies, is important because it allows us to “gain insight on the specific practices that enable us to produce a research project” (49). Further, Enoch argues that “By making research methods visible, we attain a clearer sense of what historians are and are not doing when they compose their narratives” and further, through this close look, “we have the opportunity to assess the practices that open up and close down historiographic possibilities, learning more about the methodological thruways and roadblocks that allow for and prevent alternative histories to be composed” (49). As Enoch and others have described, there is not necessarily a wide body of literature within rhetoric and writing studies specifically, which offers practical insights into archival research.

Similarly, McKee and Porter highlight, one particular challenge regarding archival research is that we often do not have enough time or space in our field’s journals to fully delve into the ethical complexities of archival research. McKee and Porter suggest, “Sometimes the ethical complexities are not foregrounded, or at least not as much as they could be, because of work-limit constraints in publications, genre conventions and expectations (that often put emphasis on data and not process), and the very nature of

ethical decision making—how it's woven into everything we do as researchers and is thus sometimes difficult to explain concisely or something of which we are not always fully aware" ("The Ethics of Archival Research" 62). While the ethics of archival research may not always be fully discussed in our field, McKee and Porter maintain that there are always significant ethical concerns and implications surrounding archival research. McKee and Porter write, "Whether the archive is a well-organized, curated collection or merely a jumble of papers, the people and the communities it represents are embodied as a living presence in the materials" and further, "that embodiment raises significant ethical questions for archival researchers" ("The Ethics of Archival Research" 60). McKee and Porter provide an example about the importance of ethical archival research from Appalachia, specifically, as they write, "For example, when Peter Mortensen began his work with the University of Kentucky Appalachian collection, he was very 'aware of damage done in the past' by researchers using the archives 'to perpetuate harmful myths' about Appalachia" (74). Accordingly, Mortensen reported to McKee and Porter that he "had 'a lot of conversations with colleagues at the University of Kentucky,' getting their feedback about his research and his role as a researcher, how to approach his research ethically, and how to represent the persons and places of Appalachia'" (74). Further, McKee and Porter suggest that "Existing in the liminal spaces between person and artifact, researcher and researched, archives create ethical gray zones for researchers where decisions about how to proceed—or even whether to proceed—can be difficult" ("The Ethics of Archival Research" 60). As McKee and Porter demonstrate, the minimal scholarship available on the practicality of archival research is not only a

potential source of frustration for some archival researchers, but is also deeply connected to specific ethical concerns associated with the archives as well.

Another key ethical concern, and specific challenge associated with archival research, resides in the archive's deep-seated connection to power and the cultures in which archival collections are formed. Archives tend to reflect the power structures of the cultures from which they are created. In response to this challenge, Carter and Conrad make it a point to explore "obligations to the local communities and writers currently missing from our formal archives" (85). While Carter and Conrad acknowledge that "people historically excluded from public spaces are increasingly present in our field's conferences and publications," they argue that these historically marginalized individuals "remain altogether absent from our local histories, formal archives, and collective memories" (85). Similarly, Carter and Dent argue that "The literate lives of historically marginalized populations are often underrepresented in formal archives and collective memories" ("East Texas Activism" 153). Relatedly, Jessica Enoch has acknowledged that many scholars in rhetoric and writing studies have worked to "counter officialized disciplinary narratives by composing histories" of the field "that account for marginalized rather than elite writing programs and pedagogies" ("Changing Research Methods" 47). Just as archival researchers need to be aware of the archive's rhetoricity, as discussed in the previous section, scholars also need to be cognizant of the archive's complex relationship to structures and discourses of power.

Archives are certainly powerful entities and reflections of power. However, they are also in most cases incomplete. As French post-structuralist philosopher Michel

Foucault argues, “It is obvious that the archive of a society, a culture, or a civilization cannot be described exhaustively; or even, no doubt, the archive of a whole period” (130). In his discussion of the “never completed, never wholly achieved” archive, Foucault suggests that “The archive cannot be described in its totality” because the archive “emerges in fragments, regions, and levels, more fully, no doubt, and with greater sharpness, the greater the time that separates us from it” (130). Archives are incomplete and fragmented because they represent the remnants of a certain place and time rather than the entirety of relevant notes, letters, and other artifacts. Carter and Conrad suggest, as archival researchers, “We capture what we can, always aware that we can never capture everything; thus, our records are always partial, inadequate interpretations, rather than reliable, complete, unbiased, and unfiltered historical records” (98). Similarly, David Gold writes, “gaps remain” in archival research, “particularly where archival sources are thin” (“Remapping Revisionist History” 25). Archival collections are inherently incomplete as artifacts and items are lost in the progression of time. However, the availability of archival collections to public research is another way in which the archive is often incomplete. As discussed in the edited collection, *Working in the Archives*, one particular challenge in terms of archival research also resides in the availability of archival materials to researchers in the archives. Archival researchers may be under the common assumption that “once inside, the researcher can access” all of an archive’s holdings “or that all their holdings are available for public use” (79). However, “in reality, most archives have more unprocessed or partially processed collections than they do fully processed collections,

creating, in effect, three distinct archives—the hidden, or partially hidden or partially processed, and the visible archive, which itself encompasses both traditional archives and, increasingly, digital archives" (*Working in the Archives* 79). As these authors demonstrate, the archive's incomplete nature in terms of individual collections and collections that are available to researchers do pose considerable challenges to forming consistent and complex research based on archival sources.

As I have discussed in this section, scholars in rhetoric and writing studies have observed several challenges for archival research ranging from a lack of knowledge about how to approach and conduct research in the archives, the archive's connection to power, and the archive's inherent incompleteness. However, as I discuss in the next section, another concern for archival research, known as archive fever, stems from a less rational place than many of the challenges discussed thus far, but it is no less of a concern.

My Archive Fever

I am a frequent sufferer of what French philosopher Jacques Derrida has diagnosed as "Archive Fever." For Derrida, *le mal d'archive*, or the sickness that afflicts some archival researchers, represents the "feverish desire" of longing *for* the archive (Steedman 1159). For sufferers of Archive Fever, it is simply not enough to *visit* an archive. The Fever brings about an intense need to *possess* the archive itself. Archive Fever elicits "a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive" when the archive is out of reach and an insatiable desire to search through the archive, even when collections are far too large to sift through in an afternoon, or even an extended

research trip (Derrida 57). My particular strain of Archive Fever prompts me to take several hundred images of archival documents during research trips, photographs which I promptly copy into dated folders on my computer and rarely ever examine again. Truly the epitome of a malady, I know.

Jacques Derrida, in his widely read essay "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression" suggests that the archive "takes place at the place of originary structural breakdown" of memory ("Archive Fever" 14). Derrida's essay comes from his reading of an historical account of Sigmund Freud's life and work, written largely in the archives. Derrida's own account is highly influenced by Freudian theories, as seen in his emphasis on the "death drive." Derrida suggests that "The death drive tends thus to destroy the hypomnesic archive, except if it can be made up, painted, printed, represented as the idol of truth in painting" and further, "The death drive is not a principle" but instead, "threatens every principality, every archontic primacy, every archival desire" (14).

Derrida suggests that "Nothing is thus more troubled and more troubling today than the concept archived in this word 'archive'" ("Archive Fever" 57). Further, Derrida suggests that "Nothing is less reliable, nothing is less clear today than the word 'archive'" and what is so troubling about the term archive, according to Derrida, is that our vision of the archive is incredibly clouded (57). For Derrida, the archive contains remnants of "the trouble of troubled and troubling affairs" including "the trouble of secrets, of plots, of clandestineness, of half-private, half-public conjurations" which always exist in the liminal space "between public and private, between family, the

society, and the State, between the family and an intimacy even more private than the family, between oneself and oneself" (57). For Derrida, the trouble of the archives, and all of the troubling troubles therein, can cause *le mal d'archive*, or *archive fever* (14). Derrida suggests that archive fever "can mean something else than to suffer from a sickness, from a trouble or from what the noun 'mal' might name. It is to burn with a passion. It is never to rest, interminably, from searching for the archive right where it slips away. It is to run after the archive, even if there's too much of it" ("Archive Fever" 57). Further, it is "to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement" (57).

In her discussion of "Archive Fever" and Derrida's thoughts on the matter, Carolyn Steedman writes, "Archive Fever comes on at night, long after the archive has shut for the day" and "Typically, the fever—more accurately, the precursor fever, the feverlet—starts in the early hours of the morning, in the bed of a cheap hotel, where the historian cannot get to sleep" and cannot sleep because "you lie so narrowly, in an attempt to avoid contact with anything that isn't shielded by sheets and pillowcase" (1164). Steedman writes that the first sign of archive fever "is an excessive attention to the bed, an irresistible anxiety about the hundreds who have slept there before you, leaving their dust and debris in the fibers of the blankets, greasing the surface of the heavy, slippery coverlet" (1164). Steedman suggests that what keeps the historian awake "is actually the archive, and the myriads of its dead, who all day long have pressed their concerns upon you" (1164). According to Steedman, the historian comes

to realize that “these people” within the archives “have left me the lot” (1164). And further, the archival researcher comes to think, “I could get to hate these people; and, I can never do these people justice; and finally, I shall never get it done” (1165). Steedman suggests that the full fever of the archive “usually comes on at the end of the penultimate day” at the archives because “Either you must leave after tomorrow . . . or the archives is about to shut for the weekend” and further, “it’s expensive being in the archive, as your credit card clocks up the price of the room, the restaurant meals” (1165). Given these temporal and financial challenges of archival research, Steedman writes as you face leaving the archive, “Your anxiety is that you will not finish, that there will be something left unread, unnoted, untranscribed” (1165).

My first outbreak of archive fever occurred in January 2014, as I worked as an undergraduate intern for archivist extraordinaire, Heather South, at Western Regional Archives (WRA) in Asheville, North Carolina. As a WRA intern, I helped South develop finding aids, fulfill patron research requests, and coordinate volunteer efforts. But, above all, my early days in the archive made visible the too often invisible work of archivists, taking in documents, creating some form of order in the chaos, and most importantly, making collections available for researchers. Developing an understanding of and appreciation for archives and archivists only ignited my Archive Fever, causing a dramatic flare-up in the Summer of 2014 as I ventured back to WRA to begin my research on the Upper French Broad Defense Association (UFBDA). The UFBDA—an incredible group of environmental activists from western North Carolina who successfully defeated the Tennessee Valley Authority’s plan to place 14 dams on

tributaries of the French Broad River between 1966-1972—has been the central focus and motivation of my research ever since I first opened those heathered-grey archival boxes and began reading all about their "dam fight" (Murray 2015).

My Archive Fever, particularly as it pertains to my research regarding the UFBDA, is not merely a selfish impulse to collect, or hoard documents and materials pertaining to this fantastic story in environmental history. Rather, my Archive Fever comes on in spells when I feel like I am an inadequate scholar, researcher, and writer when it comes to telling the story of the UFBDA. My research with the UFBDA is not merely a means to an end—I am not writing about these incredible people to earn a PhD or land a particular job. My UFBDA research and its associated Archive Fever manifest because this research is what acclaimed Appalachian photographer Roger May once referred to as my "heart work"—the activity that is closest to home and the most meaningful, because, well, it is about my home, identity, and family history. My family has lived in Buncombe County and along the French Broad river for seven generations on one side and three on the other. Had the UFBDA not stood up to the TVA, the landscape of my home, and my memories, would be utterly devastated—fertile farmlands transformed to mudflats and sacrificed for measly drawdown reservoirs. My attachment to western North Carolina, the people of these mountains, and to the French Broad River itself are not only a trigger for my Archive Fever, but also a powerful motivator for conducting ethical, effective archival research. While Archive Fever poses its own maddening challenges, it has also encouraged me to approach the archive with particular methods in mind, as I discuss in the next section.

Archival Methods for the Study of the UFBDA

As discussed earlier in this chapter, many scholars have lamented the lack of practical knowledge, both in terms of graduate training as well as available scholarship regarding archival research. However, while conducting research for this dissertation, I found *Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process* (Kirsch and Rohan eds.) to serve as an excellent starting point for how to understand and develop my own methods for this project. In the Introduction to *Beyond the Archives*, Kirsch and Rohan suggest a few important starting points for scholars crafting archival research methods, writing that they "consider genuine curiosity, a willingness to follow all possible leads, an openness to what one may encounter, and flexibility in revising research questions, and the scope of a project to be key factors for conducting successful historical work" (*Beyond the Archives* 5). In addition to the key factors that Kirsch and Rohan highlight, I was also drawn to Jean Pfalzer's discussion of spending time "hanging out" in archives as a productive, non-hurried approach to archival research. For example, Pfalzer writes, scholars who are drawn to conduct archival research "are nontraditional detectives" who "believe in informed serendipity in the archives," that is, archival researchers understand that the more time one spends "hanging out" with particular archival collections, there is a greater chance that one will find something particularly compelling which will further enrich the research itself ("Hanging Out: A Research Methodology" pp. 131; 141). Inspired by both the genuine curiosity Kirsch and Rohan promote, along with the impulse to "hang out" in archives and among archival collections, I have spent a tremendous chunk of time pouring over the archival records pertaining to the UFBDA.

I first viewed the collection entitled, “Upper French Broad Defense Association, Organizational Records” housed at the Western Regional Archives (WRA) in Asheville, North Carolina in January 2014. As an undergraduate at Wofford College, I elected to conduct an archives internship during the college’s January term that year where I shadowed and worked alongside archivist Heather South at WRA. As an archival intern, I helped researchers find more information about collections, filled research requests, retrieved boxes for researchers from the closed archival stacks, and even completed my own finding aid for a new archival collection that included 500 maps of the Southern Appalachian region. It was during this time, in fact, that South showed me the UFBDA records themselves, as she knew I was studying both Environmental Studies and History at Wofford. Knowing my interest in both environmentalism and Appalachia, South magnanimously let me spend 1-2 hours each afternoon of my internship reviewing the four-box collection pertaining to the UFBDA. So, over the course of January 2014, I spent 23-46 hours examining the archival sources regarding the UFBDA at WRA. However, over the course of that summer (2014), my research on the UFBDA really began, and thus I began spending even more time “hanging out” in archives.

In Spring 2014, I began discussing with Dr. Mark Byrnes, an accomplished 20th century American historian at Wofford College, if he would chair my honors thesis in history on the topic of the UFBDA. Much to my good fortune he agreed and along with Dr. Ken Banks of History and Professor John Lane of Environmental Studies, I found myself surrounded with excellent mentors and readers who encouraged my own

“Archive Fever” about the UFBDA, and thus over the summer of 2014, I spent several weeks in the archives developing the necessary research notes and findings. I estimate that during the summer of 2014 I spent a collective 80 hours, or two full weeks of research with both the UFBDA WRA collection, and the UFBDA collection housed at the University of North Carolina at Asheville (UNCA), entitled, “Upper French Broad Defense Association (1967-1977) Collection.” In addition to Heather South, I am lucky to have developed a friendship with Gene Hyde, Head of Special Collections and University Archives at UNCA. Hyde has helped my research in so many ways, including letting me take as many pictures as my digital camera would hold of UFBDA items, pulling countless boxes from the closed stacks for me to view, and even encouraging me to continue pursuing my studies through the MA in Appalachian Studies at Appalachian State University. Both Hyde and South have become friendly and familiar faces at various regional conferences and I am fortunate to know them both as they certainly made my research process easier, more fulfilling, and overall have helped me grow and improve as an archival researcher.

After completing the Honors thesis in History for Wofford College and graduating in May 2015, I was approached by Dr. Aaron Purcell, an acclaimed TVA historian and the University Libraries Special Collections Director at Virginia Tech, to submit an article on my UFBDA research for an upcoming issue of *The Journal of East Tennessee History*, for which Purcell serves as Editor. Much to my delight, this opportunity sent me back to the archives of both WRA and UNCA, for what I would estimate is 40 hours in each archive. In preparing this article (Murray 2015), I not only spent time in the

physical archive, but also spent approximately 80 hours over a two-week period revisiting the hundreds of images of specific UFBDA artifacts that I had collected during my summer 2014 research at both UNCA and WRA. In sum, by August 2015 I estimate that I spent about 300 hours with the archival documents, or digital reproductions of those documents, pertaining to the UFBDA. While I spent a considerable amount of time in 2014-2015 working on the UFBDA, I did not return to this collection until I began my PhD in rhetoric and writing studies at Virginia Tech.

As an incoming PhD student, I was eager to learn about the ways in which rhetorical theory could help me better understand the effects and significance of the UFBDA's victory against the TVA's proposal, and vice versa, I wanted to see how the UFBDA's saga and success could help enrich rhetorical theory. Therefore, using the storehouse of images I had collected previously on the UFBDA archives, as well as requesting additional scans of certain records from South at WRA, I began writing about the UFBDA in several course papers during my PhD coursework from 2017-2019.

In November 2019 I passed my comprehensive exams for the PhD in Rhetoric & Writing Studies in the English Department at Virginia Tech. As part of this process, I completed a dissertation proposal outlining how I would approach UFBDA archival collections as a rhetorician. By January 2020, I was excited and ready to get to work in the archives, but due to teaching, writing, and other research responsibilities, I decided that the best option would be to go home to Asheville over spring break in Mid-March 2020, to see family, old friends, and of course, visit the archives. Well, I suppose by now, we all know how that plan worked out—not so well.

The irony is not lost on me that my desire to satiate my own Archive Fever was impeded by the outbreak of a global pandemic from a virus that among other symptoms, causes a virulent fever. As coronavirus swept across the globe, and as the U.S. emerged as a hotspot of COVID-19 cases, archives across the nation, and all over Asheville, closed their doors. Like many of us, I was initially disappointed by these closures, but as I learned more about the virus, and went into quarantine myself, I quickly embraced an altered day-to-day, one where the goal was to neither contract the virus, nor pass it to others. In the necessarily slower pace of life instituted by the novel coronavirus, concerns about research productivity, much less Archive Fever, quickly eroded. To be completely honest, my immediate reaction to limited access to archives, was most akin to burying my head in the proverbial sand. But, nonetheless, as the semester wound down in May 2020, like most chronic conditions, my Archive Fever came back once again, as I realized this summer could provide some much-needed writing time towards the dissertation, as well as the flexibility to explore my own repository of digital images from the archives.

Just as my own Archive Fever was beginning to return, Heather South provided me with a tremendous gift—scans of all four boxes within the collection that serves as the foci of this dissertation project: "Upper French Broad Defense Association [UFBDA]: Organizational Records, 1961-1975" located at WRA. With the organized, high-resolution scans South provided me in May 2020 I was able to resume my research with an archive of my own, even though I could not have access to the UNCA and WRA

archives in person.[6] I wrote to South immediately after receiving these gifts, expressing my gratitude, a measly effort for all the help and kindness she has shown me over the years. South's immense gift allowed me to jump back into my research with the feverish work ethic that has guided this work all along. I estimate that between May and June 2020, I was able to spend approximately 200 hours with the archival documents of the UFBDA, the time in which I wrote the majority of the analysis chapters of this dissertation (chapters 5, 6, and 7). Despite limited access to in-person archival research during 2020, my earlier archival work, which created a productive relationship with the archivist, meant that I could examine sufficient archival records for this project. There is still much to do and with regained access post-pandemic, I plan to return to the archives, to continue this research and transform this dissertation into a book-length project.

Part of my motivation to spend such a large amount of time researching the UFBDA revolves around my personal attachment to the project itself, as I have alluded to earlier in this chapter. In fact, one of TVA's 14 dams, on Hominy Creek, would have flooded the community into which I was born, erasing Candler Elementary School where I attended as a child, and making the land on which my family home sat in the area completely uninhabitable. At times, I have worried that my deep personal connection to

[6] Changing one's research protocol and plans in response to changes in the environment is a hallmark of responsible research. McKee and Porter also highlight the necessity of revising one's research protocol when necessary, in order to show reflexivity to the changing nature of a particular research project. As McKee and Porter write, "The research process is marked by ethical revisionings and the need for researchers to be recursive in their thinking and actions, to be open to adjusting not only what they're doing but why and how they're doing it" ("The Ethics of Archival Research" 63). Further, according to McKee and Porter argue that "Ethics is not a single moment or a few isolated moments in the research process when a difficult question pops up" ("The Ethics of Archival Research" 64). Instead, "Ethical questions are woven throughout the research, and ethically aware reflection is necessary throughout the process" ("The Ethics of Archival Research" 64).

this research project could compromise the research's integrity. However, thanks to the work in *Beyond the Archives*, I eventually came to understand my connection as a point of strength for my approach to this research. In their collection, *Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process,* the editors write that they are convinced that "the most serious, committed, excellent historical research comes from choosing a subject to which we are personally drawn, whether through family artifacts, a chance encounter, a local news story, or some other fascination that sets us on a trail of discovery, curiosity, and intrigue" (*Beyond the Archives* 8). Further, the authors suggest that "personal connection can make all the difference in our scholarly pursuit: it brings the subject to life and makes us more likely to pursue hunches, follow leads, and spend extra time combing through archival materials than we would without a 'passionate attachment'" (*Beyond the Archives* 8). In this sense, my "personal attachment" to the UFBDA saga has enriched my research, as it has inspired me to spend a vast amount of time with the archival documents and thus given me a clearer portrait of what transpired in the group's decade-long "dam fight" against the TVA. As I have discussed in this section, I spent a large amount of time looking through the UFBDA documents since first learning of this group in 2014. While I have discussed the *what* of my research methods here, I also find it necessary to discuss the *why* of my methods, which I will discuss in the following section.

Method vs. Methodology

I, like many scholars in rhetoric and composition distinguish between method and methodology. As L'Eplattenier suggests, "methods are the means by which we conduct our research, how we locate and use primary materials, about archives locations and restrictions, about the condition of the materials, about the existence of evidence or the lack of evidence and about the triangulation of information" ("An Argument for Archival Research Methods" 69). In other words, methods discuss *what* we did in the archives and *how* we did it. In contrast, methodology helps explain *why* we took a certain approach to our research. A discussion of one's methodology reveals the theoretical underpinnings that influence the practical decisions made in the archives (L'Eplattenier, "An Argument for Archival Research Methods" 69). Similarly, in distinguishing between methods and methodologies, Jessica Estep writes, "Archival methods and methodologies . . . require on the one hand selection, access, examination (methods) and on the other hand, interpretation and positionality (methodologies)" ("Applying Archival Methods and Methodologies" 491). In the context of this dissertation project, my methodology is influenced by an interest in everyday rhetoric.

The turn towards everyday rhetoric is another effort to democratize rhetorical studies—to further decenter our field's canon from its roots as "great men speaking well" in Ancient Greece and Rome and to instead focus on the ways in which rhetoric encounters and influences our everyday lives. I conceive of everyday rhetoric as also intimately connected to Karen Tracy's notion of ordinary democracy as discussed in the previous chapter. Everyday rhetoric is both the means through which citizens express

their opinions and concerns and the ways in which rhetoric is enmeshed in citizens' and in fact all peoples' daily lives. Conceiving of rhetoric as an everyday occurrence and practice helps us to understand how rhetoric operates in democracies, as is the primary concern for this dissertation. Methodologically, my interest in everyday rhetoric is reflected in this dissertation's primary research question, as well as in the ways in which I approached archival collections for this project. As I looked for everyday rhetoric in the archives, I came to see that for the UFBDA members, writing each other letters, writing letters and sending reports to political officials, and sharing information about TVA's plan with other civic organizations was an *everyday* activity—both in terms of the frequency with which members engaged in these activities and the means through which they crafted these messages. Methodologically, viewing the UFBDA materials as evidence of everyday rhetoric helped me better assess the value and function of the UFBDA's rhetoric, recognizing these individuals as powerful rhetors themselves, rather than simply focusing on the words and artifacts of political leaders and TVA officials at the time.

While a methodological attunement to everyday rhetoric is clearly influential in this project, Cheryl Glenn's notion of rhetorical feminism also influences my methodology in this dissertation. In *Rhetorical Feminism and this Things Called Hope* (2018), Glenn "introduces the theory of rhetorical feminism and clarifies how our feminist rhetorical practices have given rise to this tactic (or theoretical stance)" (1). Glenn carefully distinguishes between *feminist rhetoric* and *rhetorical feminism*. Glenn defines feminist rhetoric as "a set of long-established practices that advocates a political

position of rights and responsibilities that certainly includes the equality of women and Others" (3). Further, Glenn uses the term *Others* to resonate with women, people of color, or people disenfranchised on the basis of their race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, ability, language, or all the possible intersections of these identity markers" (3). According to Glenn, "Feminist rhetorics also focuses on rights, contributions, expertise, opportunities, and histories of marginalized groups" (3). Further, feminist rhetoric "relies on rhetorical concepts and practices, including a response to an exigence, attention to audience, arguments based on reason and evidence, purposeful and appropriate language, and, of course, the rhetorical appeals of ethos, logos, and pathos" (3). In contrast, Glenn describes *rhetorical feminism* as a "tactic" or a set of tactics, "a theoretical stance" that is "responsive to the ideology that is feminism and to the key strategy that is feminist rhetoric" (3). Glenn describes rhetorical feminism as "anchored in hope" and offering "a way to disidentify with hegemonic rhetoric, with the dominant rhetorical histories, theories, and practices, articulated in Western culture" (4).

Glenn writes, as a tactic, "rhetorical feminism is in a constant state of response, reassessment, and self-correction" (4). Further, rhetorical feminism "employs and respects vernaculars and experiences, recognizing them as sources of knowledge" and it "shows us ways to reshape the rhetorical appeals, including a reshaped ethos rooted in experience, and a reshaped pathos that values emotion" (4). And lastly, "rhetorical feminism uses and represents alternative delivery systems, especially those long considered feminine, such as silence and listening" (4). Glenn enumerates the multiple benefits of rhetorical feminism as follows: "a conceptual action, a trope that can be used

to help negotiate cross-boundary mis/understandings and reconciliations; illuminate rhetorical theories and advance feminist rhetorical research methods and methodologies; energize feminist teaching, mentoring, and administration; and secure our hopes for the future" and through this methods "rhetorical feminism works in the service of and to advance feminist rhetoric" (4). Glenn's discussion of rhetorical feminism also benefits how we see rhetoric, more broadly. Glenn writes, "After all, he stubborn belief to which rhetoricians seem to hold fast is that rhetorical practices should *do* something, that rhetorical inquiry should make a difference in the world" (4). Glenn suggests that "Rhetorical feminists steadfastly believe that human lives are equal in value—and that we must continue to work to make that so in our world" (4). For Glenn, and I agree with her, "We can use our feminist rhetorical agency, our rhetorical feminism to realize our hope" (4). Rhetorical feminism, as a methodology, has been helpful for me throughout this project, as I work to demonstrate the ways in which the UFBDA's saga can function as a public pedagogy for future environmentalists, showing how this successful case study can provide much needed hope for environmental controversies and public debates in the future.

In addition to the archival research methods and methodologies discussed thus far, this dissertation is also influenced by Aaron Hess's discussion of critical-rhetorical ethnography, as an approach to this project. Hess writes that "Rhetorical scholarship has relied upon textual criticism as a method of examining discourse" but, he argues, "in the critical turn, rhetorical theory and praxis have been reconsidered, especially in regard to the types and locations worthy of rhetorical examination" ("Critical-Rhetorical

Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric" 127). Further, Hess suggests that scholars interested in vernacular rhetorical discourses accordingly "examine locally situated discourses as they articulate against oppressive macrocontexts" ("Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric" 127). In light of these trends, Hess offers "critical-rhetorical ethnography as a method for exploring such discourses in the field of argumentation, using the concepts of invention, Kairos, and phronesis" ("Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric" 127). Further, Hess suggests that as a method, critical-rhetorical ethnography "offers rhetorical scholars a set of theoretical and methodological guidelines for observing and participating within vernacular advocacy" ("Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric" 127).

In his discussion of the usefulness of critical-rhetorical ethnography as a method, Hess argues that this method is "designed to give rhetoricians an insider perspective on the lived advocacy of individuals and organizations that struggle to persuade in public for changes in policy, social life, or other issues that affect them" ("Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric" 128). Further, Hess elaborates that this method "is not mere observation of advocacy but rather an embodiment and enactment of advocacy through direct participation" ("Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric" 128). Scholars who practice critical-rhetorical ethnography "engage in a vernacular organization's ideals and events, traveling with them to picket, to protest, to petition, or to perform" ("Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric" 128).

In addition to these embodied elements, as “a rhetorical method,” critical-rhetorical ethnography “is understood as an inquiry into advocacy, argumentation, and deliberation” (“Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric” 128).

The interest to incorporate previously unheard voices in rhetorical scholarship, responds to a larger concern within the field. Hess writes, “Recent rhetorical scholarship has recognized the needs for an expansion of rhetorical methods to incorporate new theoretical perspectives, especially those that are interested in the everydayness of rhetorical discourses” (“Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric” 128). Further, Hess argues that “rhetoric should be augmented with a participatory sensibility and method, through which rhetoricians advocate alongside vernacular organizations, arguing for their causes” (“Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric” 128). Hess proposes to fulfill this mandate, by “combining two longstanding methodological traditions” in rhetorical studies, therefore introducing the method of “*critical-rhetorical ethnography*” (“Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric” 128). Ultimately, critical-rhetorical ethnography “offers rhetorical scholars a method for seeking out and working within local and vernacular discourses” (“Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric” 148). Further, as an approach, this method “is useful to examine how counterpublic or protest groups gather; or to be a part of an organization seeking social change regarding issues of race, class, sexuality, or gender; or in witnessing firsthand how other grassroots political

organizations convene" ("Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric" 148). A methodology entwined with critical-rhetorical ethnography helps me study the UFBDA as a productive protest group who successfully and rhetorically opposed the hegemony of the TVA's plan within this case study.

Conclusion

As Barbara L'Eplattenier writes, "Methods make the invisible work of historical research visible" ("An Argument for Archival Research Methods" 69). In his chapter I have taken great lengths to make visible the work of archival research in this project as well as to develop my own ethos as a researcher, "one that comes from the explicit presentation of the research" ("An Argument for Archival Research Methods" 75).

One thing I know for sure: whether a researcher is overwhelmed with Archive Fever or not, success in the archives is absolutely not a solitary endeavor. Archival research methods have often been misconstrued as a both an isolated and isolating activity. As discussed in *Working in the Archives*, "The isolated nature of archival research conjures up notions of isolated writers producing texts that are the products of a benevolent muse" (*Working in the Archives* 195). However, the "sense of isolation while conducting archival research is illusory, more of a statement about that particular moment . . . than about the larger enterprise" (*Working in the Archives* 195). Instead, "the social forces that shape archival research are many, from a researcher's experiences and expectations, to contemporary events, to the choices made by those who have donated papers to an archive, leading to fragments of information that even the best archive will offer" (195). Further, the multiple social worlds that come to bear on

any researcher's attempts at archival research create a rich complexity to what might be construed as a relatively simple act—just open up a box and look" (*Working in the Archives* 203) as "The histories that emerge from archival research are also never simple, never complete" and "This conclusion should not be surprising of course, for good historical narratives are about people and the programs and practices that they have shaped" (*Working in the Archives* 203).

Archival research is not about a monastic researcher pouring over old documents in a reading room for hours. For me, archival research would not even be possible were it not for the hard work of archivists who diligently make materials available to researchers. In my experience, archival research involves a collaboration between researchers and archivists. For those of us who study an historically marginalized place like Appalachia, it seems important to not only collaborate with archivists, but to approach the research process itself as a communal endeavor, working not to displace the documents in the archives with our own theories and ideologies, but to work with the writers, rhetors, and citizens represented in archival collections. While Archive Fever drives my need for time in the archives, archival research is absolutely not conducted in isolation, whether, before, after, or during a global pandemic.

Chapter 4: Historical Overview of the "Dam Fight," 1961-1972

At a public hearing on August 31, 1971, Carolyn Moore described Mills River in western North Carolina as "one of the few places in America where you can see the beauty of nature all around you. Mills River has clean, pure air, crystal clear water, beautiful picturesque mountains, fertile soil, and many rare and wild plants and flowers" (Moore, "A statement"). Moore provided this evocative description of her local environment because it was a landscape in jeopardy, not troubled by air pollution, deforestation, or other environmental crises of the time, but threatened by the Tennessee Valley Authority. Carolyn Moore and more than 300 citizens of Appalachian North Carolina were gathered for a hearing at University of North Carolina at Asheville to voice their concern about TVA's comprehensive plan for water resource development in the region (Boswell, "Grassroots). Another resident, Rebecca Brittain, was particularly struck by the potential of the Authority's project: "it is frightening to think that TVA can come to any area it wishes and decide to build a dam, thus dislocating families and neighbors who have lived in that area all their lives. This doesn't sound like the American way of life, but, instead sounds like something that happens in Russia or China" (Brittain "A statement).

The 1971 hearing was the result of nearly a decade of grassroots activism from a group of western North Carolinians who formally banded together in 1970 as the Upper French Broad Defense Association (UFBDA). The group's own corresponding secretary, Martha Gash Boswell, identified the significance of the 1971 Asheville hearing in her unpublished history of the Association's efforts and actions: "the basic

victory was won in the Asheville hearing of 1971 – a clear moral victory that made political victory inevitable" (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 1). The hearing garnered the group enough additional support and political clout that by November 1972, TVA withdrew its proposal for the entire dam project for the region (Kenworthy "TVA Drops Plan"). The efforts of the UFBDA greatly contributed to the termination of this massive project, one that consisted of 14 dams, 74 miles of river channelization, flooding 18,225 acres, and a $6 million dollar levee for the region's most prosperous and populous metropolis, Asheville (Boswell, "Grassroots" p. 2). The group's role in the preservation of their local environment is indubitably impressive but also demonstrates a more significant lesson for the region. The UFBDA's battle against the TVA illustrates the power and potential of Appalachian communities to fight for the preservation of their landscape, culture, and way of life when they are endowed with regional knowledge, the support of an up-and-coming political leader, and an awareness of changes in national policy.

Historical Context: Flood Control in WNC

In mid-August, 1940, a high-intensity hurricane made landfall in western North Carolina, and after five days of heavy rain, a flood began. The 1940 flood in western North Carolina caused widespread crop and property damage, destruction one estimate suggests cost more than $20 million.[7] This flood event and its hefty price tag sparked the development of the first plan for flood control in the region. The TVA oppositionists who later formed the UFBDA, were well versed in this history thanks to a 1967

7 "Flooding in North Carolina: The 1940 Flood." National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association. Web Accessed 24 March 2015. <http://www.floodsafety.noaa.gov/states/nc-flood.shtml>. According to this article, the 2015 equivalent of the damage from the 1940 flood would be $330 million.

presentation by a member of the State Legislature of North Carolina, Representative Charles Taylor.

In a speech delivered to a Transylvania county citizen's group on February 2, 1967, Representative Charles Taylor presented a comprehensive history of water resource development in western North Carolina beginning with the first invitation extended to TVA in 1941, when a citizen's group known as the Western North Carolina Flood Control Committee requested that the TVA develop a plan to limit flooding in nine mountain counties (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 1). By 1942 a preliminary report from the Authority's study was released which included two separate plans, each offering flood control and economic growth via increased tourism and recreation opportunities. Four mountain counties proceeded with TVA's plan: Cherokee, Clay, Graham, and Swain; a choice that by 1967 had not resulted in any appreciable economic growth and for three of the counties brought about population loss (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 2). In Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties however, county commissioners promptly rejected TVA's plan after receiving backlash from local citizens about the prospect of dams in Buncombe, Henderson, and Transylvania counties which would have flooded large portions of these counties in order to give flood control to the region's most populous and prosperous city, Asheville (Taylor, "Speech" pp. 2-3).

Although 1942 was the end of TVA's first flood plan for the region, flooding did not end in Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties. Without any flood control measures, these areas were continually ravaged by floods.

Consistent crop damage and economic loss from flooding caused Henderson and Transylvania counties to establish another flood control committee made up of county commissioners (Taylor, “Speech” p. 3). Believing that the TVA plan resulted in too many flooded acres, in 1957 this county commissioner committee invited the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) to study flood patterns in the region, hoping they could develop a plan that would offer flood control without flooded acres, unlike the previous TVA plan (Boswell, “Grassroots,” p. 2). The SCS study did just that, recommending a series of small headwater dams on the Upper French Broad, dams that would offer equivalent flood control to TVA’s initial plan without flooding mountain towns and farms (Taylor, “Speech” p. 3).

In Transylvania County, TVA’s plan suggested a dam on the Little River tributary just before it reaches the French Broad River. The Little River dam and its associated flooded acres would have resulted in large amounts of flooding throughout the Little River community, forcing many residents off their land and out of their homes, a devastating consequence for flood control which was not present in the study and subsequent plan the SCS completed (Taylor, “Speech” p. 3). Transylvania county citizens responded positively to the new SCS plan and accordingly, on June 3, 1961, Transylvania county commissioners held an election to determine if citizens would allow them to levy a small tax to assist in the implementation and maintenance of the SCS dams scheduled for the county. Citizens of the Little River community in Transylvania County voted 166 to 8 in support of the tax increase. Although citizens in Transylvania

County were clearly more supportive of the SCS plan than that of TVA, the SCS plan was not implemented.

According to Representative Charles Taylor, the U.S. Forest Service and Wildlife Commission organized a strong opposition to the SCS plan for five western North Carolina counties. Taylor suggested this “inter-agency fight” continued until the SCS plan “was placed in a state of limbo” (Taylor, “Speech” p. 4). The struggle for power between the Forest Service and the SCS, left western North Carolina without any definitive action toward flood control once again, a status that proved particularly perilous on August 24, 1961. After nearly a month of unusually high levels of precipitation, the Upper French Broad River overflowed onto banks, flooding agricultural plots causing crop damages of more than $1 million, resulting in significant economic hardship for western North Carolina farmers (Rostvedt, “Summary of Floods” pp. 92-97). This devastating flood event caused the Western North Carolina Regional Planning Commission, along with the NC Department of Water Resources, to ask TVA to develop a plan for comprehensive development of western North Carolina’s water resources along the French Broad for the second time.

After three years of data collection and surveys, TVA and the NC Department of Water Resources released a two-volume report entitled “Economic Development of the French Broad Area” in May 1964 (Taylor, “Speech” p. 4). This report contained the Authority’s plan for water resource development in the Upper French Broad watershed, which perhaps unsurprisingly, included a series of dams. These dams were nearly identical to those proposed in 1942, inciting backlash in Transylvania County, leading

many residents to think that TVA had nefarious designs for the region aimed at attacking the area's landscape and way of life. Bureaucratic laziness on the part of TVA is a more likely explanation for the dams, but whatever the motivation behind TVA's 1964 regurgitation of the 1942 plan, it added fuel to the TVA oppositionists' fire (Taylor, "Speech" p. 6). The Authority not only upset local residents by proposing dams which had already been rejected, they were also perceived as operating outside the bounds of their initial assignment. Although TVA was only requested to devise a plan for water resource development, after the plan was presented the Authority proceeded, according to the TVA oppositionists, "on their own," to complete a study of the economic viability of their plan. In February 1965, TVA stated that their plan for a series of dams in western North Carolina was in fact economically feasible, a finding that resulted in a considerable amount of opposition from Transylvania County residents. TVA's plan slated three dams within Transylvania County in the exact location of the 1942 plan dams that sparked controversy and protest two decades prior, on Upper French Broad tributaries, Cathey's Creek, Davidson River, and Little River (Taylor, "Speech" p. 4).[8]

These three dams received disparate treatments based on economic interests in the area. The Cathey's Creek dam was planned to flood the town of Rosman, many family homes and farms, and a newly built industrial plant, American Thread, worth $3 million and an employer to many local residents. These prospects at Cathey Creek created a loud outcry from local residents who would later join the UFBDA. The Cathey's Creek dam was immediately removed from TVA's western North Carolina

8 Although an economic feasibility study often accompanied any study of TVA, Representative Charles Taylor suggested to the Transylvania County Citizens and Taxpayer's League that TVA had completed this task on their own, without an invitation or request from any local politicians.

project in exchange for three headwater dams above the town of Rosman. Local citizens and agencies also opposed the Davidson River and Little River dams. The Davidson River dam was eventually dropped in spring 1966 after a series of complaints to TVA from the Wildlife Commission and the US Forest Service, as Davidson River runs through Pisgah National Forest and therefore falls under the US Forest Service's jurisdiction (Taylor, "Speech" p. 5).

The Little River community was not as fortunate as those near the sites of the Davidson River and Cathey's Creek dams. Without the prominence of a multi-million-dollar industrial plant or the intervention of the US Forest Service, the pleadings of local residents who would lose their homes in the dam were not powerful enough to remove the Little River plan from TVA's development proposal in western North Carolina. Thus in September 1966, Transylvania County commissioners accepted TVA's updated project plan, with the Cathey's Creek and Davidson River dams removed in exchange for three smaller headwater dams along with the Little River dam (Taylor, "Speech" p. 6). According to one of these commissioners, Hale Sinard Jr., the commissioners were reluctant to adopt the plan and only did so because TVA suggested that their rejection of the project would compromise the plan for the entire five-county region. Thus, the commissioners accepted the plan without the Cathey's Creek dam while accepting the "three [headwater] dams and with regret the Little River dam" (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 5).

The revised 1966 TVA plan for water resource development in Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania Counties consisted of 14

impoundments, 74 miles of river channelization, and a $6 million levee, which would provide flood control primarily for the city of Asheville within Buncombe County (Boswell, “Grassroots,” p. 2). In the UFBDA’s brief history compiled by the organization’s corresponding secretary, Martha Gash Boswell, she describes the Asheville levee as a source of many questions directed toward TVA. Boswell suggests that only a small portion of the city lies within the flood plain of the French Broad River, a characteristic that caused many to question the necessity of an additional, and very expensive, levee. TVA informed Boswell that the Asheville levee was absolutely necessary because of “the great loss of life in the 1916 flood” (Boswell, “Grassroots” p. 2). However, in the July 17, 1916 Asheville Flood, only two individuals were killed, both of whom perished while “trying to feed and rescue people trapped in the Glen Rock Hotel” (“Asheville Victims Claimed by Flood”). The nearby town of Biltmore however, suffered three deaths. In a 1983 interview, Boswell suggested that Biltmore was susceptible to great harm if the Asheville levee was implemented. Boswell stated that the Asheville levee “would have pushed all of Swannanoa flood waters into the lap of Biltmore Village,” resulting in more severe floods. Yet unfortunately, according to Boswell, “Biltmore never saw that” (Boswell Interview, p. 22).

Boswell described that in four of the five counties included in TVA’s 1966 plan for western North Carolina, “the acceptance of TVA development was almost universal” (Boswell Interview, p. 22). Because Haywood County commissioners vehemently refused the TVA plan for their region, the county was removed from TVA’s western North Carolina project just weeks after the project’s proposal was released (Boswell

Interview, p. 21). Of the remaining four counties, Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania, all incumbent county commissioners accepted TVA's offer for water resource development (Boswell Interview, p. 22). Of these four counties, based on TVA's own criteria, only Madison County qualified for the Authority's assistance because this criterion states that for federal development in counties via one of their projects, a county must have, "low income and a shrinking population." In 1969, a leader of a Madison County non-profit pleaded for TVA's assistance in the rapid development of an impoundment: "We are a 100% poverty area; 67% of our families have incomes of less than $3,000 a year" (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 3)[9]

The impoverished conditions of Madison County prompted local officials to request TVA to implement their county's single impoundment, on Ivy Creek, as the first installation in the western North Carolina project (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 3). Historian Ronald Eller has documented the mass migration of Appalachians from the region in the 1960s, which illustrates the motivations for Madison County's request. Appalachian farming practices failed to significantly advance past the turn of the twentieth century, a condition that made it difficult for many residents to obtain steady incomes. Accordingly, many young Appalachian adults chose to migrate from the region seeking factory jobs in the Midwest, primarily Ohio. Between 1950-1960, half of all land laborers and farmers left Appalachia, and by 1960 only 6% of the region's population was employed in agriculture. In Madison County, 2,000 family farms were abandoned by this migration, causing those left behind and formerly employed on farms to find new means of

9 Sufficient archival material does not exist to adequately illustrate the validity of this "100% poverty" claim. However, in 1969 Madison County was highly impoverished region and it is quite possible that the poverty levels in this county, if not 100%, were incredibly close to that value. According to the U.S. Census, the 1969 poverty line of annual incomes for farming values with a household of four was $3,222.

employment, a disposition that contributed to the county's devastating "100% poverty" condition, and their own open invitation to TVA (Eller, *Uneven Ground*, pp. 28-30).

Unlike Madison County, Buncombe, Henderson, and Transylvania counties were not severely impoverished, yet local leadership still supported the TVA plan for the region. As UFBDA member Martha Gash Boswell recalled, "the county commissioners of all four counties…of all major towns, the mens' clubs, the chambers of commerce, the newspapers, the TV stations, the state government, and all the members of the North Carolina Congressional delegation except Congressman Jonas of Mecklenburg, rushed to promote the TVA plans" (Boswell Interview, p. 22). Boswell, like other members of UFBDA, feared the wide-reaching acceptance of the TVA plan would result in its rapid implementation, and accordingly, those who felt strongly about the negative impacts of the plan began to organize themselves (Boswell Interview, p. 22).

"People Cannot Be Pushed Around at the Whim of Bureaucracy"

In a 1983 interview, UFBDA member Elmer Johnson recalled how his involvement with the "Dam Fighters" began in 1968. "Alex Duris who lives in Henderson County had written several letters to the Asheville paper about the TVA project. I knew nothing about it prior to that," Johnson recalled. Johnson was a member of Boswell's Citizen and Taxpayers League and was present when the League gathered together to learn about the TVA project. He stated that before gathering at Mills River in 1970 to officially form the Upper French Broad Defense Association, "there had been individuals working without being organized and without having an official name for an organization." Of these individuals, the most active local residents who would eventually

contribute to the formation of the UFBDA were Martha Gash Boswell, Jere Brittain, and Alex Duris (Johnson Interview).

In Henderson County, TVA planned six impoundments, which would flood 4,840 acres of land, most of which consisted of farmland and suburban properties. The Henderson County dams would result in the removal of 300 families, half of the number of families affected by the entire TVA project. The Mills River impoundment within Henderson County was first on TVA's schedule for the project, and because of its wide path of devastation, the removal of 75 families and the destruction of a historic church, this dam received a bulk of the scrutiny and outrage that accompanied the TVA plan into the early 1970s (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 4). Dr. Jere Brittain, a Ph.D. in Applied Chemistry, placed himself at the forefront of the opposition to the Mills River impoundment. Brittain's own seven-generation family farm was jeopardized by TVA's impoundment that would flood 500 acres, most of which had been producing profits between $500 and $1,000 per acre in the decade prior to the release of TVA's plan 1970s (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 4). Dr. Jere Brittain organized the Mills River Community Club, the Twin River Youth Club, as well as the Mills River Baptist Church in opposition to the TVA plan, a collection of citizens he referred to as the "Dam Fighters" 1970s (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 7).

Alex Duris, who would later become a founding member of the UFBDA, also voiced opposition in Henderson County. Rather than gathering other groups together as Brittain did, Boswell described Duris' early work as "a one-man publicity office, sending streams of letters to the press, and to publications, and spreading propaganda in all

directions" (Boswell Interview, p. 22). Boswell also refers to her own group, the Citizens and Taxpayers League of Transylvania County as "spreading propaganda." According to Boswell, in her town of Brevard, support for TVA was extremely strong "in City Hall, in the Chamber of Commerce, in the service clubs and businesses establishments." Yet eventually oppositionists surfaced among a diverse group including a local art shop, whitewater boating enthusiasts, and a supper club. Boswell herself, as well as several other members of the Citizens and Taxpayers League, wrote numerous letters to Senator Everett Jordan with specific questions and complaints about TVA's plan for western North Carolina (Boswell Interview, p. 23). Yet, perhaps rather than letter writing, Boswell's most valuable contribution to the fight against TVA was her ability to network with like-minded groups from other counties, a skill that greatly contributed to the emergence of the UFBDA.

Martha Gash Boswell invited another Transylvania county group, the Little River Community Club, to a Citizens and Taxpayer League meeting in order to share a speech by Charles Taylor on the financial consequences of the Authority's plan for the region. The two groups then decided that this information was compelling enough to share with the county's other residents and that it if widely circulated, would garner additional support for their opposition. The groups secured a two-page transcript of the speech in the *Transylvania Times*, yet the article's publication did not result in resounding results. Boswell stated that the piece "should have converted the county in one reading" yet it only served to sever the relationship between TVA oppositionists and

the local paper. After this piece in the *Times*, Boswell stated that the paper "refused to publish any of our propaganda any further" (Boswell Interview, p. 22).

This refusal by the *Times* came as quite a surprise to Boswell and her fellow League members. When Boswell first sent a copy of Taylors' speech to the *Transylvania Times* for printing, the paper replied that they were fully supportive of the Citizens and Taxpayer's League's opposition to the TVA plan and that every piece Boswell sent to their office, whether notices for meetings or additional reports on the plan, would be printed. When asked in a 1983 interview what made the paper drastically alter its relationship with the TVA oppositionists, Boswell suggested that the Democratic Executive Committee informed the newspaper "that that was not the thing to do" (Boswell Interview, p. 31). Even without the support of the local newspaper, Boswell continued her efforts and connected with another sect of TVA oppositionists: Alex Duris' group out of Hendersonville.

In September 1969, Duris contacted Boswell, informing her that he was aware of her work in Transylvania County fighting the Authority's plan. He affirmed that his own local group was determined to combat TVA's goal for resource development in the region in order to illustrate that "people cannot be pushed around at the whim of a bureaucracy." Duris' first letter to Boswell highlights another significant characteristic of western North Carolina's "Dam Fighters." Duris was, like many of his accomplices, elderly. Most were either of retirement age or quite close, a group that would experience significant economic hardship in the relocation process that would accompany the TVA dams (Letter from Alex Duris to Martha Gash Boswell, 2 Sept. 1969). In order to

illustrate to TVA that they would not be displaced with ease, Duris' group was selling stickers emblazoned with the phrase "Keep TVA out of WNC" (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 14). These bumper stickers, according to Duris, were making quite a statement in Asheville, and were sold in order to both spread their oppositional message and raise funds for the future of the "Dam Fight." In a letter, Duris asked Boswell to "use the enclosed sticker as a conversation piece or wear it on the bumper of your car" (Letter from Alex Duris to Martha Gash Boswell, 2 Sept. 1969). Boswell surpassed Duris' expectations and even requested his permission to sell additional stickers at the Citizens and Taxpayers League meetings, a request he happily granted, and one that led to continued correspondence and cooperation (Letter from Alex Duris to Martha Gash Boswell, 10 Sept. 1969).

Boswell also connected with the leader of Mills River's resistance to TVA, Dr. Jere Brittain. In January of 1970, Boswell requested 5-10 copies of Brittain's report on the TVA plan for the Transylvania County Commissioners in order to pass along that data to Senator Everett Jordan. Jordan claimed he was in favor of the TVA plan based on reports from departments within the state government of North Carolina which suggested that the plan was beneficial for the region. Brittain's report contained contradictory information that Boswell thought might help sway the opinion of Senator Jordan. The correspondence between these two dam fighting leaders also marked the initial collaboration of the two groups as Boswell requested Brittain's aid in writing letters stating opposition to TVA's plan addressed to Senator Jordan and Representative Charles Jonas. Boswell reported that she was requesting 50 individuals to write directly

to both of these politicians because she believed that “saturation bombing is better than scattered targets” (Letter to Brittain from Boswell, 26 Jan. 1970).

Boswell also requested that Brittain and Duris make statements at an upcoming Citizens and Taxpayers League meeting, a request they both gladly fulfilled (Letter from Boswell to Brittain, 30 Jan. 1970). Boswell and Brittain remained in contact, especially as Boswell visited Washington, D.C. frequently while splitting her time between western North Carolina and southern Virginia. In March of 1970, Boswell shared findings from two days spent reading the congressional records of testimonies before the House Appropriations Committee, the group responsible for the disbursement of funds for federal projects, including the federally owned corporation, the Tennessee Valley Authority. While in the nation’s capital, Boswell discovered congressional minutes in which Aubrey Wagner, TVA’s chairman at the time, was quoted as stating that the TVA project for western North Carolina would be “about a hundred million dollar project” and that state and local participation would amount to about $11 million. This hefty price tag inspired Boswell to investigate the estimated annual increases in revenue that would accompany the project and could be used to offset some of these local participation costs (Letter to Brittain from Boswell, 29 March 1970). Here she found two instances where Aubrey Wagner contradicted himself. In a 1971 letter to a NC Senator, Wagner suggested that the affected region could expect to see annual benefits in excess of $4.5 million. However, Boswell discovered in the records of 1970 Senate meeting that Wagner stated the annual benefits of the project would be $4,798,000, a figure that did not take into account the project’s $3,618,000 cost locally, meaning the annual benefit

was actually only $1,180,000 (Boswell, “Grassroots,” p. 8). Boswell continued to keep a close eye on the appropriations developments and suggested annual benefits of the TVA plan, and these fiscal discrepancies often fueled the “Dam Fighters’” opposition.

Boswell continued her associations with both Duris and Brittain. Perhaps foreshadowing the organization that would begin later that year, both Duris and Brittain attended a June 1970 Citizens and Taxpayers League meeting to share additional data from their own communities with Transylvania County’s “Dam Fighters” (Letter to Boswell from Duris, 23 June 1970). Boswell shared with Brittain after this event that she hoped for future close collaborations (Letter to Brittain from Boswell, 23 June 1970) In 1970, western North Carolina “Dam Fighters” formally banded together under the organization name the Upper French Broad Defense Association. On a 1970 letter, UFBDA chairman Jere Brittain inscribed the motto “United we stand, Divided we may be dammed” which illustrates the significance of the union of the TVA oppositionists in western North Carolina (Statement to UFBDA Members from Chairman Jere Brittain). Without the formation of the UFBDA, TVA’s plan for water resource development in Appalachian North Carolina would have been implemented.

“Save WNC from TVA”

According to the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Mills River Dam and Reservoir, the first component of a “multipurpose water control system” planned for western North Carolina, would elicit significant improvements in the region. The advancements that TVA suggested would accompany their project were fourfold: (1) an increased water supply for the Hendersonville-Asheville area, (2) reduced flooding in Asheville and

surrounding farmlands, (3) increased stream flow downstream to improve water quality, and (4) economic development through new opportunities for recreation and waterfront construction via the creation of a reservoir (Tennessee Valley Authority, "Environmental Statement"). The UFBDA initially opposed the TVA's plan for western North Carolina because the group felt that flooding more than 18,000 acres to implement 14 dams, and channeling 74 miles of free-flowing streams would incur far too high a cost in exchange for the potential benefits TVA offered. However, as the group learned more about the four distinct components of what TVA promised to deliver, the association's skepticism on the plausibility of the Authority's claims grew. The UFBDA, based on their regional knowledge, distrusted many of the TVA's promises for advancements in western North Carolina. With many of the claims associated with their Upper French Broad project, it seems apparent that the TVA struggled to understand the way of life western North Carolinians enjoyed, largely because they were unable to quantify it in terms of economic value.

The UFBDA's opposition to TVA's plan for western North Carolina was not simply structured around the loss of more than 18,000 acres of farmland and the displacement of 600 families, both of which would have been devastating. Instead, UFBDA's opposition to the proposed project stemmed from well-researched and logical objections to each of the plan's alleged "benefits." Through their vast regional knowledge of their local history and landscape use, the UFBDA systematically undermined each of the TVA's arguments in favor of their western North Carolina project and made a strong

case that local residents needed to "Save WNC from TVA."[10] The UFBDA sought to protect their communities and landscapes from TVA's definition of progress, one that included new construction and landscape degradation in the name of bringing tourists into the region to generate revenue. In contrast, the members of the UFBDA saw their landscape as inherently valuable without TVA's infrastructure, worth that they sought to protect by preventing the Authority from intervening in the region.

In the Tennessee Valley Authority's environmental statement on the proposed Mills River Dam and Reservoir, the federally-owned corporation describes the reservoir as "a 660-acre lake with 14 miles of shoreline" which they claimed would attract 28,000 visitors annually (TVA "Environmental Statement"). In fact, TVA suggested that 11 of the 14 impoundments slated for western North Carolina would result in reservoirs large enough for recreational purposes, a characteristic that TVA suggested would result in the development of new recreational facilities and the expansion of three existing campsites (TVA "Environmental Statement," p. 11). Across Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, and Madison counties, the Authority estimated 300,000 visitors per year using these lakes for recreation activities such as boating and fishing. TVA purported that these reservoirs would also result in increased shoreline construction, creating a desirable location for vacation rentals, lakeside residential communities, and new industrial manufacturing plants (Cannon, "A Reevaluation"). In theory, these lakes would have benefitted western North Carolina economically. However, members of the

10 The slogan, "Save WNC from TVA" appeared on another bumper sticker which the "Dam Fighters" sold in western North Carolina, folder 13, box 1, UFBDA UNCA.

UFBDA were skeptical of how realistic the benefits from these lakes actually were, based on TVA's ventures in other western North Carolina communities.

Following the 1940 flood in western North Carolina, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, and Swain counties all accepted TVA's offer to construct dams and reservoirs for increased recreation opportunities and decreased damage from future floods. However, by 1967 it was apparent that TVA's "development" plan for the counties actually resulted in a decrease in both population and per capita income (Taylor "Speech" p. 12). Of the four counties that accepted the Authority's plan in the 1940s, only Graham County increased in population by 1970, but any benefits from its meager increase of 154 residents were significantly outweighed by the population losses experienced over three decades in the remaining counties. Cherokee, Clay, and Swain counties all experienced a population decrease numbering in the thousands by 1970. In contrast, Buncombe, Henderson, and Transylvania counties, all of which refused TVA's first offer for "comprehensive water resource development," experienced population growth between 1940 and 1970 (Table 1).

Table 1: Population change in select western North Carolina Counties, 1940-1970.[11]

County	TVA Lakes Present Per County	1940 Population	1960 Population	1970 Population	Net Change in Population 1940-1970	Percent Change in Population 1940-1970
Cherokee	Hiwassee, Appalachia	18,813	16,335	16,330	-2,483	-13.2%
Clay	Chatuge, Nantahala	6,405	5,526	5,180	-1,225	-19.1%
Graham	Fontana, Santeetlah	6,418	6,432	6,562	+144	+2.2%
Swain	Fontana	12,177	8,387	7,861	-4,316	-35.4%
TOTALS		43,813	36,680	35,933	-7,880	-65.4%
Buncombe	None	108,755	130,074	145,056	+36,301	+33.4%
Henderson	None	26,049	36,163	42,804	+16,755	+64.3%
Transylvania	None	12,241	16,372	19,713	+7,472	+61.0%
TOTALS		147,045	182,609	207,573	+60,528	+51.16%

11 Data for Table 1 from Rep. Charles Taylor's February 7, 1967 speech, folder 6, box 3, UFBDA WRA; and Martha Gash Boswell's "Grassroots Along the Upper French Broad" folder 13, box 2, UFBDA WRA. "Net Change in Population 1940-1970" figures calculated by subtracting 1970 populations from 1940 populations. Percent change in population calculated by dividing net change figures by 1940 populations. Clearly Buncombe County is an outlier in this data set. However, because Transylvania and Swain counties are so similar in initial population levels as well as Henderson and Cherokee, comparisons between the two groups can still be made.

By 1967, Cherokee, Clay, Graham and Swain counties had not only experienced much more population loss than Buncombe, Henderson, and Transylvania Counties, but the counties that welcomed TVA in 1942 also had significantly lower per capita incomes. In 1967, the average per capita income among the counties which supported TVA's first offer at water resource development was $744.50 per year whereas the counties which refused TVA's plan in 1942 (Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, and Transylvania,) had an average per capita income of $1,384.75 per year (Taylor "Speech"). These differences in incomes communicated to UFBDA members that TVA's presence in a county clearly did not guarantee economic growth and prosperity. Certainly these income and population disparities cannot be connected entirely to the presence of the TVA. However, it is apparent that these changes were noted and observed by members of the UFBDA and certainly did not encourage any confidence in what effects TVA would have in the group's own western North Carolina counties. TVA's 1942 development projects did not elicit increased recreation opportunities and did not attract any new industrial plants to the region. This lack of appreciable positive change in the region after 25 years of TVA presence certainly added to UFBDA skepticism about the same offers being made to their own counties.

Members of the UFBDA also opposed TVA's promised recreation opportunities because local residents already had recreational uses for the area forests and streams, which TVA failed to acknowledge. In their 1971 environmental statement, TVA declared, "the Upper French Broad basin presently has virtually no water-based recreation opportunities" (TVA "Environmental Statement" p. 11) This statement struck a chord

with UFBDA chairman Jere Brittain who wrote in a letter to TVA on August 2, 1971 that "the Upper French Broad basin is widely known and intensively used for stream-based recreation." Brittain included several examples of this existing recreation, such as "trout fishing, canoeing, hiking, swimming, and camping." Mills River was also home to several youth camps and both public and private camping facilities, which Brittain found that the TVA statement "callously ignores" (Letter from Brittain to TVA, 2 Aug. 1971).

Part of TVA's omission of recreation from the discussion of their environmental statement may have been based on the Authority's misunderstanding of the local use of the landscape. Within their environmental statement on the proposed Mills River dam and reservoir, TVA stated that the "reservoir area presently has no fishing access points open to the public" (TVA "Environmental Statement," p. 14). Dr. Jere Brittain replied directly to this claim in a letter to TVA stating "from the earliest memories of the oldest citizens in Mills River the public has fished freely in Upper Mills River." The absence of designated public access points for fishing did not mean that residents were not fishing. Brittain clarifies: "Trout fisherman simply park their cars on the public roads, and go fishing" and in doing so receive "virtually no interference by property owners" (Letter from Brittain to TVA, 2 Aug. 1971). TVA clearly did not understand the reality of fishing conditions in the Mills River area. Local residents viewed the river as a commons and did not need designated public fishing access points for recreation.

This existing use of the landscape certainly negated TVA's suggestion of increased benefits from reservoir construction. It also seems that the TVA had difficulty understanding the existing use of the French Broad because at least in terms of trout

fishing, the river's use as a commons did not easily translate into profits and economic growth. With the type of recreation Jere Brittain described, the only economic tie would have been in trout licenses, a much more nebulous profit than what the TVA was promoting. TVA was more focused on developing recreational businesses such as campgrounds, new construction projects that would have been easier to attach to economic growth. Because the commons use of the Upper French Broad was not easily connected to annual profits, the TVA had difficulty understanding it and therefore did not perceive its absence as a potential loss as the members of the UFBDA did.

TVA's plan for water resource development in western North Carolina also promised improved water quality by diverting water from higher quality streams, such as Mills River, into more heavily polluted segments of the French Broad River. TVA suggested that the Mills River dam and reservoir specifically would provide additional water to "reduce the plant nutrient concentrations in the French Broad River and the headwaters of Douglas reservoir," a large TVA lake in East Tennessee which actually did result in increased recreation and development unlike many of the Authority's western North Carolina reservoirs. This "dilution solution" to water pollution was explained at the UFBDA's August 1971 hearing by an ecologist on the faculty of nearby Warren Wilson College, an institution which would have lost a substantial part of its campus in the implementation of TVA's plan for the region. Dr. Willis Eggler commented that within TVA's plan for the region, "clean water from Mills River, and other rivers, would be used to dilute only partially treated wastes." Dr. Eggler did not approve of this "dilution solution," as he claimed it would not lessen the negative impacts of pollution

but instead would only send pollutants further downstream where they would accumulate in lakes, estuaries, and oceans. Instead of sending pollutants through watersheds, Dr. Eggler suggested that the "only ways by which our waterways can possibly survive as living ecosystems will be through complete treatment of sewerage, and reprocessing and recycling of chemical industry wastes at the source" (Eggler, "A Statement"). From an ecological standpoint, the use of water from Mills River and other French Broad tributaries to dilute pollution was not much of a "solution."

By spring of 1971, TVA's offer of improved water quality for western North Carolina was no longer necessary. On March 9, 1971, North Carolina's Board of Water and Air Resources issued a proclamation reassigning the classification ratings for many different stream segments in western North Carolina, all of which had been previously rated Class E, the lowest rating the board afforded. TVA originally proposed to use their "dilution solution" to raise the French Broad River and many of its tributaries to Class C, a classification indicating the rivers were healthy enough for recreational usage. However, without any intervention on the part of TVA, by March 1971, all of the French Broad's tributaries were improved from their previous Class E ratings. In fact, six of the French Broad segments that TVA proposed to improve were reclassified as Class A-II rivers, healthy enough to serve as a breeding grounds for trout ("New Classifications assigned"). These improvements in water quality were achieved not by flushing polluted streams with less polluted water, but instead by targeting and eliminating many different sources of pollution, just as Dr. Eggler had so vehemently encouraged (Blackwell, "Scott finds TVA Statement 'Inadequate'"). While it is unclear if these river cleanups

were instituted to attack the necessity of TVA involvement in the region, they did just that. By addressing point-source pollution in the region, the water quality of the French Broad River improved without the intervention of TVA. This improvement in water quality further negated the necessity of TVA's plan for the region in the eyes of the UFBDA and further bolstered their opposition to the plan's implementation.

The members of the UFBDA also questioned the necessity of TVA's intervention in western North Carolina in terms of the potential flood control the Authority's plan would elicit. In TVA's environmental statement about the Mills River dam and reservoir, the Authority described the proposed dam as being "an earthfill structure, 2,400 feet long and a maximum of 108 feet high." This infrastructure, according to TVA, could control a drainage area of 66 miles, and "create and reservoir which will provide controlled flood storage of 10,000 acre-feet" of water. The Authority suggested that this increased storage capacity could, in the instance of a flood event, "provide a high degree of flood protection to some 600 acres of agricultural land along Mills River" as well as reducing the impact of floods in Asheville and on an additional 1,600 acres of agricultural land along the French Broad River (Blackwell, "Scott finds TVA Statement 'Inadequate'"). While most members of the UFBDA agreed that western North Carolina could benefit from some level of flood control, they did not agree that the large Mills River dam and reservoir or any of the TVA dams were necessary to achieve such protection.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, there was an alternative plan that UFBDA members were aware of which also offered flood control, yet without the permanent

flooding of agricultural acres that accompanied the construction of reservoirs. In 1957, Henderson and Transylvania county commissioners requested the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) to complete a study of the Upper French Broad River and develop a flood control plan for the region. This study resulted in the recommendation of installing small headwater dams in the counties, which would provide flood control without flooding privately owned acres of land (Taylor "Speech").

The members of the UFBDA supported this plan, viewing it as a superior alternative to the TVA dams for the region because it would allow for the preservation of the 64 homes and 60 farms within the Little River community. In 1969, Representative Charles Taylor requested that the TVA investigate the validity of the SCS plan for the region and it was reportedly discovered that this alternative in Little River would "cost about the same and give approximately the same flood control as the TVA dam" (Letter from Boswell to Jordan, 9 Sept. 1970). Despite being equal in cost and effectiveness, TVA claimed that the SCS plan was inadequate because it would not provide the estimated $75,000 in recreational activities and $90,000 in water storage value that the Authority's own project would bring to the Little River Community each year (Letter from Boswell to Jordan, 9 Sept. 1970). For members of the UFBDA, this disparity in recreational activities and water storage values did not convince them that the TVA plan was more appropriate for the region than the plan from the SCS. A lack of consideration and exploration into the SCS plan was a common complaint against TVA in statements at the August 1971 hearing as well. Charles H. Campbell, Mayor of Brevard, NC asked at the hearing, "Are there alternatives available which would meet our reasonable needs

[for flood control] without so great a cost?" Campbell concluded his statement by stating that that question had "not been answered to my satisfaction", once again illustrating that UFBDA members were not convinced that the TVA plan was the only option for the development of water resources in western North Carolina ("Impact of the Proposed TVA Project").

The proposed TVA plan for western North Carolina also included increased water supply for the cities of Hendersonville and Asheville as a benefit of implementing 14 dams and reservoirs in the region. UFBDA members, as well as their allies, the members of the Joseph LeConte Chapter of the Sierra Club, questioned this potential benefit. A representative of the Sierra Club of North and South Carolina discussed TVA's claim to "make water supplies available to cities in the drainage [basin]." The group's spokesperson hinted that this promise was not a common or initially sanctioned role of TVA: "We wonder when the furnishing of a water supply to municipalities became one of the purposes of the TVA." This speaker went on to state that if TVA can accomplish this goal, "then does it not follow that the cities therein can do the same as well?" Rather than flooding surrounding communities in order to secure a greater supply of drinking water, the conservationist suggested "letting those that need water in the future build purification plants when the time comes." While TVA and their opposition did not as heavily discuss the proposed benefit of increased water supply for municipalities as other alleged benefits such as recreation, flood control, and water quality, it was still a bone of contention for members of the UFBDA and their supporters.

Overall, the UFBDA did not see the four proposed benefits of the TVA plan for western North Carolina as legitimate. Increased recreation and economic development could not be taken seriously as a benefit because TVA hadn't accomplished those goals in other nearby mountain counties where the Authority was present for more than 25 years. An increase in water quality was no longer necessary as point-source pollution was curtailed and stream classifications improved. TVA's plan would offer flood control, but the existence of an alternative plan which would offer equal protection prevented many from accepting the Authority' project as the only option. The project's offer of the creation of a new municipal water supply did not seem within the bounds of TVA's authority and also did not seem necessary for this benefit to be implemented immediately at the cost of thousands of acres in surrounding counties. The UFBDA clearly utilized their regional knowledge to investigate each of the benefits of the TVA plan, research and data collection that ultimately illustrated to the group that the project was not worth the drastic associated costs.

UFBDA's First Year

After several years of organization and research, by 1970 the UFBDA were fully prepared to disseminate their message across the mountains. Their regional knowledge and reasonable skepticism about TVA's promises for western North Carolina would not have been enough to prevent the implementation of the Authority's development project. Thus the group set out to share their findings and beliefs with others, a goal they made significant progress toward during the UFBDA's first year. Within the first year of its existence, the UFBDA members made two impressive achievements:

spreading their own propaganda, and sharing their message and opinions with TVA officials at a public hearing. The organization began with 100 members who gathered together at the Mills River School on September 19, 1970. By October 23, 1971, the UFBDA had recruited nearly 900 members. The UFBDA also welcomed an additional branch of the organization in the Swannanoa Valley thanks to the initiative of Warren Wilson College faculty and students. By collecting dues from their members, and by accepting donations, the UFBDA accumulated an organizational fund of $6,500. This increased membership and financial capital allowed the group to spread its messages to a wider audience than ever before. Within its first year, the group financed trips for delegates to the nation's capital Washington, the state capital in Raleigh, as well as local County Courthouses and City Hall meetings (Letter to UFBDA Members from Brittain, 23 Oct. 1971).

The UFBDA also frequently used flyers and pamphlets to spread its opposition to TVA. According to Dr. Jere Brittain, UFBDA chairman, the group "printed more than 50,000 pieces of literature" in their first year of existence (Letter to UFBDA Members from Brittain, 23 Oct. 1971). The UFBDA focused on three different pamphlets, each aimed at portraying a different negative component or outcome of the TVA plan. The literature of the UFBDA not only illustrated the consequences of the Authority's western North Carolina project, but also appealed to three different themes to evoke action. These themes - aesthetic beauty, outside intrusion, and an overall loss of autonomy - would have certainly appealed to many common desires and fears in residents at the time. An appeal to the region's natural beauty would have certainly appealed to local

residents and was a common tactic of contemporary environmental organizations. The Sierra Club's David Brower had used this tactic in 1966 by combining Ansel Adams' stunning landscape photographs with full-page magazine ads aimed at preventing a dam to flood the Grand Canyon (Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, p. 246). The UFBDA members also appealed to popular mining songs including the lyric homage to Harlan County's mining struggles, "Which Side Are You On?" popularized by Pete Seeger (Seeger, "Which Side"). Similarly, the group used another image illustrating TVA's control over the region's rivers and reminiscent of Townes Van Zandt's 1969 mining song "Lungs" which includes the emotional phrase, "seal the river at its mouth, take the water prisoner" (Van Zandt "Lungs"). All of these brochures aided the UFBDA's efforts to evoke anti-TVA sentiment throughout the region by tapping into preexisting currents in popular culture at the time.

One of these brochures, which sought to inform readers of the preexisting value of the region's landscape, was emblazoned with a bold title, "You Can Help Save 14 Beautiful Valleys in the Upper French Broad Basin" (Figure 1). This document grabbed readers' attention with a sketch of three deer grazing in a field with towering mountains and a pristine white chapel in the background. This image certainly achieved the caption's aim, to portray Mills River as a "special kind of place where deer can still roam." This pamphlet, which includes a description of UFBDA as "a citizen's group organized to oppose [the] TVA project" also displays a statement from the UFBDA, declaring the inherent value of the natural, undisturbed landscape of western North Carolina. The UFBDA statement demands that the communities of western North

Carolina jeopardized by the TVA plan “with their valuable land, water, and human resources, are of more value to the region and to America than a series of drawdown reservoirs.” By describing the value of the current landscape unmarred by TVA, the UFBDA aimed to garner opposition against the Authority’s project to alter the region’s rivers and streams (UFBDA “You Can Help”).

Figure 1: Brochure printed by the UFBDA

Another UFBDA pamphlet titled, “The TVA Takeover in Western North Carolina,” aimed at pitting the community residents of the region against the Authority, as seen in the document’s subtitle, “Which Side Are You ON?” This document sought to convince citizens, politicians, and anyone who was willing to read it, that the TVA’s actions in western North Carolina were at best, questionable (Figure 2). By employing the loaded

term “takeover,” the group was appealing to both the universal as well as regional fear of outside groups gaining control. This term was particularly evocative in the Appalachian Mountains, a region that in the 1960s was flooded with motivated yet often misguided volunteers aimed at taking over programs and fighting poverty in the region. In addition to appealing to the fear of a “takeover,” the UFBDA also included several specific incriminating statements about the Authority such as, “No public hearings have been held concerning the TVA plan” and “No vote of the people has endorsed the plan.” In this document the “Dam Fighters” also questioned TVA’s promises of flood control and water quality improvements, suggesting that the both of the offers might not be possible. Yet the most damaging claim against TVA within this piece of literature is the UFBDA’s claim that the Authority “created a PUPPET organization to perform local public relations work for TVA” (UFBDA “The TVA Takeover’).

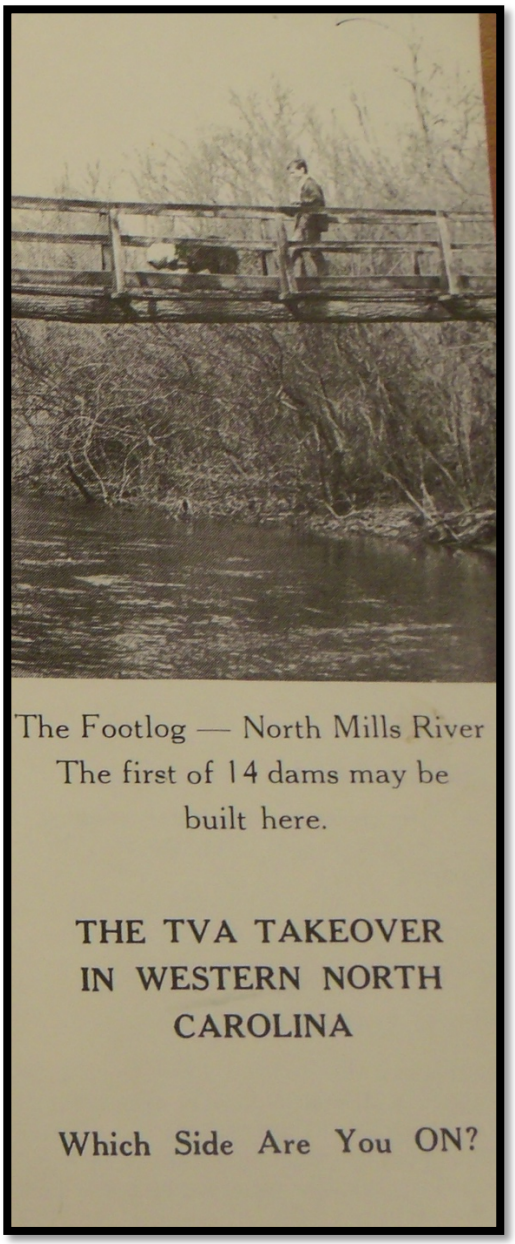

Figure 2: "The TVA Takeover in Western North Carolina" flyer released by the UFBDA.

This "puppet organization, " known as the Upper French Broad Economic Development Commission (UFBEDC), had a rather unsavory origin according to members of the UFBDA. The UFBEDC was developed through the TVA and consisted of many local county commissioners and other leaders who gave presentations about

TVA's plan at community meetings. Many UFBDA members were unhappy with the composition of the UFBEDC: mainly politicians from Haywood County. That region abruptly had voted against and was removed from TVA's plan for the region, but its politicians were active leaders of the so-called "puppet organization." The UFBEDC visited local organizations, informing them about the plan, many of which subsequently offered support for TVA's plan. With this brochure, the UFBDA sought to shed light on the questionable origins and actions of the UFBEDC in the hopes that those who received TVA's attempt at a grassroots organization would be more cautious about lending their support (UFBDA "The TVA Takeover").

UFBDA's third pamphlet aimed to suggest that if the TVA project were implemented, TVA would have and maintain control over the water resources in western North Carolina. This flyer, titled, "Is this what we want for WNC…TVA control of our rivers and streams?" contained a photograph of Mills River with a sketch of a hand tightening a faucet drawn over top (Figure 3). This image, captioned with the following statement, "Only TVA will control the valve, releasing water from our streams when needed or wanted downstream in Tennessee," the caption read. This caption not only implies that TVA would be in control, but also that TVA would not use that control to benefit residents of western North Carolina. This image aimed to evoke fear and hesitation surrounding TVA's plan because it would harm North Carolinians and their landscape for the benefit of residents of Tennessee, perhaps playing into the lingering impulse toward "State's Rights" in Southern states. Many UFBDA members felt that the genuine purpose for TVA's project on the Upper French Broad was to implement dams

and reservoirs which would allow them to increase water levels and extend the recreational season of their east Tennessee reservoir, Lake Douglas. The group's perception on the connection between the Upper French Broad impoundments and Lake Douglas were not completely unfounded. In a 1970 Senate hearing, TVA chairman Aubrey Wagner stated that the project in western North Carolina was vital "for assisting…in the streams of the area and in the lower reaches of the French Broad, including the Douglas Reservoir" (Boswell, "Grassroots," pp. 5-6).

Figure 3: Flyer printed by UFBDA.

The UFBDA did not limit its propaganda dissemination to literature, but also shared its message via a slide presentation which they presented to more than 50 civic clubs, community and school groups within the first year of their existence (Letter to UFBDA Members from Brittain, 23 Oct. 1971). While these presentations were aimed at educating nearby groups about the TVA plan and which areas would be flooded locally, the most compelling component were the slides prepared by UFBDA members Hap Simpson and Elmer Johnson. Simpson and Johnson monitored and regularly photographed Lake Douglas, the TVA reservoir that many in the group felt was the genuine motivation behind the Authority's western North Carolina project. Simpson photographed Lake Douglas' banks every month of the UFBDA's first year documenting the dramatic changes in water levels on the reservoir. Simpson took photos of the muddy banks of Lake Douglas as the water levels dropped throughout the seasons. Perhaps most compelling were the images of the reservoir from the winter of 1970, which illustrates that the lake is virtually non-existent, as the bottom of the center of the lake is seen as snow-covered mud. These images, when paired with Johnson's aerial photos documenting the change in lake shape and size were quite compelling evidence to support the idea that the real reason for the western North Carolina TVA project was to offer more water flow into Lake Douglas, so that nearby homeowners would not have a view of a mudflat for months out of the year (Boswell "Grassroots" pp. 13-14).

The "Dam Fighters" not only educated other local citizens on the TVA's project for western North Carolina but also encouraged them to make statements about the plan to local, state, and federal level politicians. Within the first year of the UFBDA's

existence, the group sent 3,500 post cards to politicians in the North Carolina Mountains as well as Washington. According to an estimate by Martha Gash Boswell, each politician targeted by this campaign "received from 100 to 300 cards each" (Boswell, "Report of the Corresponding Secretary"). These postcards, printed on brightly colored cardstock, were distributed by the UFBDA preaddressed to politicians such as Senator Everett Jordan, Representative Roy Taylor, Governor Robert Scott, and Henderson County Commissioner, Clyde Jackson. These cards were not only preaddressed, they were also already printed with statements of opposition. Each of the cards contained the following statement, "I am opposed to the TVA program for the upper French Broad River Basin, of Western North Carolina." These postcards allowed many mountain residents with a relatively easy, and accessible way of contacting politicians. Rather than having to compose letters themselves, a task that may have sparked anxieties, concerned citizens could simply sign their name and affix a stamp in order to voice their opposition to TVA to the powers at hand (UFBDA Postcards).

The UFBDA "Didn't Seem to Have an Outlet Anywhere"

The UFBDA had to work extremely diligently in spreading their message because their Association had such meager political support from local, state, and national leaders. When interviewed in 1983, UFBDA corresponding secretary Martha Gash Boswell described that in the "11-year battle for the control of the Upper French Broad," the TVA had much more political support and clout than the "Dam Fighters." Boswell recounts that TVA was "powered by Congress, backed by the Raleigh establishment, by the commissioners of the four counties, Buncombe, Madison, Henderson, and

Transylvania" (Boswell "Interview" p. 21). With TVA supported by federal, state, and local politicians, residents in western North Carolina who opposed the Authority's plan for the region initially received very little political support. According to Boswell, the widespread support of the TVA in western North Carolina made the "Dam Fighters" feel that they "didn't seem to have an outlet anywhere" (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 22).

While the UFBDA members often felt that they lacked the political support their cause merited, three unlikely politicians did in fact lend the group some political clout and ultimately aided their cause. The first of these, Senator Everett Jordan, although never supporting the UFBDA cause, fulfilled his duty as an elected official by serving as a liaison for communication between the UFBDA members (mainly Martha Gash Boswell) and TVA Chairman, Aubrey Wagner. The UFBDA also received support from Representative Charles Jonas of Mecklenburg County, a strict conservative who was the state's only Republican in Congress when elected in first 1952 (2 Old Friends Vie for a House Seat"). The UFBDA initially received support from only one local politician, the young up and coming conservative, Charles Taylor whom the group rallied around to ensure election. Both Taylor and Jonas, being fiscal conservatives, arguably supported the UFBDA's opposition because it would have saved the federal government upwards of $100 million. Rep. Jonas was involved in cutting billions from President Johnson's 1967 budget, illustrating that he was more concerned in reducing government spending than saving 600 farms and homes in western North Carolina (Hunter, "Sharp Cuts Seen"). Similarly, Representative Charles Taylor's subsequent political record illustrates that he was perhaps not a genuine protector of the landscape. Decades later in 1995,

protestors picketed signs that read “Charles Taylor, The Best Politician Money Can Buy” based on his involvement with a bill that would double logging levels in all of America’s National Forests (Newman, “Taylor Proposes Massive Logging” p. 3). The political associations and subsequent voting records of both Jonas and Taylor illustrate just how remarkable their support of the UFBDA was. The “Dam Fighters” received unlikely political support which made the “unlikely environmentalists” much more successful.

The overall lack of political support for the TVA oppositionists certainly did not stem from a lack of effort on the part of the UFBDA. Boswell recalled that when it came to Senator Everett Jordan, she “deviled him quite a lot” with letters. Boswell frequently posed questions to Senator Jordan about the Authority’s plan for western North Carolina. Jordan would then forward Boswell’s letters to TVA’s chairman Aubrey Wagner, write a response to Boswell, and send her a copy of TVA’s response as well. Although these responses were often not what Boswell wanted to hear, as Jordan’s support of TVA’s plan did not waiver despite her frequent inquiries, Boswell commended Jordan’s diligence. In her history of the UFBDA, Boswell described that Jordan “meticulously forwarded every criticism of the project to TVA headquarters.” Thanks to Jordan’s efforts, Boswell collected more than 18 statements and explanations about the Authority’s project, supplying the “Dam Fighters” with valuable details, before the UFBDA officially formed (Boswell, “Grassroots,” p. 7).

In a reply Senator Jordan wrote Martha Gash Boswell in June of 1967, following one of her many letters of complaint against TVA, Jordan stated that he was “open to finding a fair and reasonable development plan for the French Broad River Basin”

(Letter to Boswell from Jordan, 17 June 1967). Although Boswell felt that in many ways Jordan's interactions with the Transylvania County "Dam Fighters" were fair and reasonable, she did not find the responses she received from TVA chairman, Aubrey Wagner, either fair or reasonable. Boswell was extremely reluctant to accept TVA's word about the proposed impoundment on the Little River within her own community in Transylvania County. Boswell was particularly concerned with the cost of the Little River dam and wanted a more specific figure on the number of acres this impoundment would flood. It seems that TVA shied away from answering Boswell's inquiry directly but instead assured her that "the water from the Little River dam would be used for Transylvania County." This claim sparked an entirely new set of complaints from Boswell based on the location of the Little River Dam. When interviewed in 1983, Boswell recalled that if the Little River dam was slated for the edge of Henderson County, "nine miles downstream and on the other side of a very considerable ridge." Boswell found it highly unlikely that this ridge would be traversed in order to keep the water from the Little River dam in Transylvania County. Instead she remarked, "the only place that they [TVA] could have put that water would be Henderson or Asheville" (Boswell, "Interview," p. 23). While Boswell's interactions with Senator Jordan did give her additional information from TVA, it did not successfully change Jordan's position of support and the ambiguity of Wagner's statements further agitated the "Dam Fighters."

Boswell's correspondence with Representative Roy A. Taylor was even less fruitful than that with Senator Everett Jordan. In a letter from June 1967, Taylor stated that he would "continue to support TVA" based on their ability to offer less crop damage

and more recreation opportunities (Letter from Boswell to Taylor, 1 June 1967). This of course agitated Boswell and her fellow oppositionists because as previously discussed, the citizens who eventually formed the UFBDA knew that there was an existing plan via the Soil Conservation Service which would offer similar amounts of flood control and reduced crop damage. Similarly, the group studied the case of four other mountain counties in western North Carolina which accepted the offer of TVA plans in the 1940s and did not receive any additional recreation but instead suffered large population losses. Taylor also deferred to TVA's expertise in terms of the best location for each of the proposed impoundments, a diffusion of responsibility that likely irritated Boswell and the members of the Transylvania Citizens and Taxpayer's League. Despite the fact that members of his own constituency were in jeopardy at the hands of TVA, the only consolation Representative Taylor offered was that he lamented the loss of private property (Letter from Boswell to Taylor, 1 June 1967).

Although Boswell and the other "Dam Fighters" who would eventually form the UFBDA lacked political support among their own region's political leaders, they were not completely without political support. Boswell recounts that the group did have an unlikely supporter in Representative Charles Jonas of Mecklenburg County. Boswell remembers "all the members of the North Carolina Congressional delegation except Congressman Jonas of Mecklenburg, rushed to promote the TVA plans" (Boswell, "Interview," p. 22). When asked why Jonas took an interest in the citizens' fight against TVA even though his district was in no way affected by the project, Boswell stated, "in the first place Jonas is an honest man. He is a totally honest man. How could you look

at this proposition and not see that it was a phony." While Boswell may have believed Jonas aided the group based on some inherent altruistic notions, his political identity as a fiscal conservative and his voting record indicate that his support of the UFBDA project was tied to his desire to cut government spending. For example, as a member of the Congressional Appropriations committee, Jonas promoted cutting billions of dollars from the space program in 1967 (Hunter, "Sharp Cuts Seen").

Although his motivations to aid the UFBDA may not have been as altruistic as the group may have liked, Jonas did contribute greatly to the group's success. When interviewed in 1983, Boswell remarked that without Jonas' support, "we would have had the dam at Mills River. I think there is no doubt about that" (Boswell, "Interview," p. 31). Jonas was instrumental in placing a freeze on a nearly $4 million appropriation for the dam on Mills River. Jonas argued that this appropriation was a "boondoggle" which President Nixon at the time was keen on terminating in the name of fiscal responsibility. By appealing to the political impulse of the time, Jonas was able to cease the funding of the Mills River dam and preserve the region (Boswell, "Interview," p. 26).

Although the UFBDA acquired a few allies in Washington, TVA sought to create its own support in western North Carolina with the similarly named, Upper French Broad Economic Development Commission (UFBEDC). TVA formed the UFBEDC on July 1, 1968 with a contract extending until June 30, 1970 to serve as the Authority's source of information in western North Carolina. The UFBEDC provided TVA with progress reports on the Authority's project in the region, with a staff focused on preparation for development of the region, and another serving as a liaison between TVA and local

groups. In exchange for these services, TVA agreed to provide the UFBEDC with economic incentives of at least $2,500 per year and not in excess of $9,000 per year (Letter to Felmet from TVA General Manager, 1 July 1968). (By comparison, the UFBDA spent all of 1970 acquiring an operational fund of $6,500; Letter to UFBDA Members from Brittain, 23 Oct. 1971). The TVA wrote to David Felmet, the UFBEDC's chairman, that the TVA and the UFBEDC could work together to accelerate economic growth in western North Carolina via the Authority's plan for "comprehensive resource development" (Letter to Felmet from TVA General Manager).

The early efforts of the UFBEDC did not bode well for the "Dam Fighters." On January 1, 1968, *The Asheville Citizen* ran a full-page article entitled "Economic Commission Boosts Five-County Area." According to the article, the UFBEDC "through its endorsement" obtained $332,000 for Haywood County Schools, and $50,000 for Memorial Mission Hospital in Buncombe County. Executive secretary of the UFBEDC L.D. Hyde suggested that the UFBEDC would continue securing appropriations like this from Congress throughout 1968, with plans for requests that totaled $2,984,015 (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 13). The UFBEDC secured these funds by appearing before congressional hearings on behalf of citizens of western North Carolina, a habit which, as Boswell remarked, gave them additional support as a commission as well as garnering support for their parent organization, TVA. Boswell stated in her own history of the UFBDA that in 1968, "federal gravy from TVA's local spout made our task doubly difficult" (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 13).

While the public image of the UFBEDC began on a high note, it eventually condemned itself in the eyes of the local public. The demise of the UFBEDC began at a February 1969 hearing in Hendersonville of TVA officials, UFBEDC members, and county residents. At this hearing, which stretched for more than four hours, a shouting match erupted and henceforth, TVA speakers and UFBEDC members refused any future invitations for debate or discussion with local community members. This attitude of distaste for interaction with the affected public was also present at a UFBEDC discussion at the Asheville YMCA. Although the UFBEDC executive secretary scheduled this meeting, once the discussion began, it quickly transformed into a lecture as he "refused to share the platform" and "would answer no questions on the TVA project" (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 13). Despite the loss of public support stemming from these meetings, the UFBEDC continued to report back to both Congress and TVA that a large portion of the residents of western North Carolina supported the comprehensive plan for water resource development. Before Congress on March 2, 1970, UFBEDC executive secretary, S. V. Griffith produced signatures of 12 citizens representing 9 families who supported the Mills River impoundment. Griffith stated that these signatures stem from 9 of the 75 families "whose lands will be flooded" by the Authority's project. Boswell herself questioned the validity of three of these signatures suggested that they "appear to be the work of the same good penman" (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 14). Whether or not these signatures were forged, it is clear that with the support of only 9 out of 45 affected families, the UFBEDC had not illustrated widespread support as it intended. With its distaste for public debate, and questionable

petition submissions, the UFBEDC only succeeded in improving the appearance of the UFBDA. As tensions brewed between local residents and the UFBEDC, the UFBDA emerged as a genuine citizens' group, one that actually entertained and encouraged discourse with concerned citizens.

The decline of the UFBEDC certainly contributed to the success of the UFBDA but the most influential support the UFBDA received was from the young up and coming local politician, Charles Taylor. Taylor began his campaign for State House of Representatives in May of 1966 with a platform that according to Boswell "contained a crucial plank – Stop TVA!" Taylor ran this campaign among three mountain counties, among voters in the tri-county region. Although only one of these three counties (Transylvania) was threatened directly by TVA, his inclusion of election reform merited tremendous support in Jackson and Swain counties. Taylor's political aspirations were also aided by his ability to "be both exciting and convincing in political encounters, and always ready to meet any gathering large or small" (Boswell, "Grassroots" p. 14). Taylor, being a native of Transylvania County, also had an impressive network of friends, acquaintances, and allies, among 4-H club members, an organization in which he served as a local, state, and national leader. Despite his charisma and social networks, Taylor was at a disadvantage in terms of his political affiliation. As a Republican, Taylor belonged to the minority party of Jackson, Transylvania, and Swain Counties, an adversity that Boswell and other Transylvania County Democrats made an effort to overcome.

Boswell and other local political activists formed the group "Democrats-for-Taylor" to garner votes for this young anti-TVA politician. This group elicited more Democratic volunteers for Taylor's campaign, mainly by making phone calls to their neighbors and received, according to Boswell, "unexpected success" on Election Day in 1966 when Taylor received 2,000 Democratic votes in Transylvania County (Boswell, "Interview," p. 10). Taylor also secured a majority in Jackson and Swain Counties and thus "three Democratic counties sent their first Republican and first conservationist to Raleigh" (Boswell, "Interview," p. 11). Luckily for the UFBDA, Taylor did not forget about his campaign promise to "Stop TVA" once he got to Raleigh. In February of 1967, Taylor presented his own study on the Authority's plan for Transylvania County to the newly formed citizen's group, the Transylvania Citizens and Taxpayers League. This presentation resulted in a unanimous vote by the 100-citizen audience to oppose TVA's plan for the region (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 12). This first formal step towards the opposition of the Authority's water resource development plan could not have happened without the election and support of Rep. Charles Taylor.

In his first term in the NC State House, Taylor continued to gain popularity. When he ran again as an incumbent in 1968, he received a 4,000-vote majority and maintained his office (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 13). Taylor continued to investigate and oppose TVA's plan for western North Carolina and in February of 1970, Taylor met with TVA chairman Aubrey Wagner and the Authority's board in Knoxville, TN. At this meeting, Taylor stated that the Authority's current plan "was not in the best interest of western North Carolina." Taylor also correctly foreshadowed the outcome of the entire

fight for water resources in the region by warning TVA that “short of some kind of compromise, based on the SCS [Soil Conservation Service] small dam program, a substantial public organization would ultimately defeat the entire project.” While TVA’s Board “scoffed at the idea of defeat” they did “agree to study the questions raised and to meet later with Taylor to discuss alternatives.” On May 1, 1970, Taylor met again with TVA leaders, and much to the disappointment of the “Dam Fighters,” “no modifications of the TVA project were offered” (Boswell, “Grassroots,” p. 14).

When these discussions with TVA proved unfruitful, Taylor did not abandon the anti-TVA cause but instead resorted to sly tactics, which were ultimately quite successful. In fact, these political maneuvers allowed for the UNCA Hearing, an event that turned the tide for the UFBDA in their fight against the TVA. As 1970 was quickly coming to a close, Taylor “picked out a bill that was particularly popular and he wrote one of those nice little addenda to the bill as a very innocent amendment.” Without explicitly mentioning TVA or Transylvania County, Taylor scribed an amendment that required “if any organization was going to channelize a river, or a stream in North Carolina, they should be required to have a public hearing first.” This amendment passed without contest, and TVA headed into 1971 with a large new obstacle to overcome for its western North Carolina project for water resource development (Boswell, “Interview,” p. 28).

“The Hall Blossomed Yellow”

On August 31, 1971 at a public hearing at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, the UFBDA were finally able to voice their concerns about TVA’s plan for the

region directly to TVA officials. The UFBDA's previous year of spreading propaganda proved extremely beneficial for this gathering because as UFBDA corresponding secretary Martha Gash Boswell described, the hearing was initially supposed to happen in the course of one day. However, there was such a large turnout, with so many citizens who wished to give statements, that the event went on for three days. According to Boswell, the event was made much more tolerable by the "unfailing supply of prime country food from the valley kitchens in a nearby classroom" which the UFBDA organized. The UFBDA not only worked as a group to keep members in attendance fed, the members also displayed a visual symbol of their solidarity, yellow scarves. UFBDA member Arthur Dehon designed yellow kerchief scarves, which Boswell referred to as "the brilliant triangle, worn across the shoulders." Dehon passed out these scarves to every "Dam Fighter" so that "the hall blossomed yellow" and illustrated that more than two thirds of the audience members supported UFBDA in their opposition to the TVA (Figure 4) (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 20).

Figure 4: Image from within the UNCA hearing. UFBDA group members and supporters wearing yellow scarves. Image courtesy of Western Regional Archives.

At the UNCA hearing, the UFBDA majority was clear not only in the prevalence of these scarves but also in the statements themselves. According to the official TVA record of the event, there were 58 statements of support for TVA and 281 statements in opposition to the Authority's plan for the region (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 21). The statements in opposition to TVA came from a variety of different sources including conservation organizations, scientists, local residents, as well as members of the Mills River Baptist Church, which was subject to flooding and destruction if the TVA plan were implemented.

The conservation organizations that spoke out against TVA at this hearing included some of the most well-known groups aimed at landscape preservation and environmental protection in the US, such as the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, and

the Wildlife Federation. These groups were all dissatisfied with TVA's current environmental impact study of the project's implementation, a report that only considered the impact of the Mills River dam rather than describing the ecological consequences of the project's 14 impoundments. The environmental impact statement also failed to recognize the existing recreational uses of the free-flowing rivers and streams along the upper French Broad Basin. The conservationists present at the UNCA hearing were extremely concerned about the environmental impacts of the 54 miles of river channelization included in TVA's project, a process that would negatively impact the water quality of the region's water resources. Although this process was an undisputed component of TVA's project plan, the Authority did not discuss the negative impacts, such as a decrease in dissolved oxygen levels, that river channelization could elicit. Overall, the conservation groups were dissatisfied with TVA's meager environmental impact statement. One member of the Sierra Club commented that "TVA's environmental statement is almost totally devoid of any consideration of adverse environmental effects" (UFBDA, "Impact of the Proposed TVA Project," p. 25). Similarly, the conservation groups argued that when considering the change in residents' way of life, and the alteration of the landscape, the cost was far too high, and outweighed any potential benefits of the project (UFBDA, "Impact," pp. 1-48).

Also at the UNCA hearing, eight graduate students from the University of Georgia also questioned TVA's existing environmental impact statement. As scholars studying with Dr. Ronald North in the Institute of Natural Resources, the group prepared and presented research questioning a variety of TVA's claims within the Authority's

statement, such as the alleged benefit of increased availability of fish and game, the plan's true cost in the agricultural sector, TVA's promise for increased recreation opportunities, as well as possible flood control alternatives for the region. In sum, these papers examined each facet of explanation as to why the TVA was installing 14 dams and flooding more than 18,000 acres. Each of these studies concluded with that the TVA's environmental impact statement was inadequate and with the recommendation that the project be either suspended or completely terminated (UFBDA, "Impact," pp. 50-188).

Individual residents made statements at the UNCA hearing also criticizing the Authority's environmental impact statement. In their environmental impact statement about the Mills River dam and reservoir, the TVA suggested: "No major shifts in land-population relationships are expected to result aside from the relocation of families presently living within the reservoir area" (TVA, "Environmental Impact Statement," p. 11). A young resident of the Hopper's Creek community within Mills River spoke out against this claim, stating that the area slated for a TVA dam and reservoir was one where farmers are good stewards of the land and neighbors still assist one another, a truly idyllic place (UFBDA, "Impact," pp. 195-98). Youngblood suggested that in fact there would be a shift in population demographics after the implementation of the TVA dam in Mills River because the lives of area residents were so entwined with those of their neighbors, and if some of those neighbors were relocated, the remaining residents would suffer, and likely chose to relocate. Youngblood pleaded with TVA officials that if they would simply "get to know our people, let us show you some of the treasured

landmarks – see how closely our lives are linked to those of our neighbors," the Authority "would not, could not, destroy this beautiful Hopper's Creek Valley and community. It is just too high a price to pay!" (UFBDA, "Impact," p. 199).

Members of the UFBDA also took aim at the TVA environmental impact statement at the UNCA hearing because it stated that the dam and reservoir on Mills River would affect "No areas of historical or archeological interest" (TVA, "Environmental Statement" p. 10). In response to this claim, UFBDA members presented a 17-page history of the first century of the Mills River Baptist Church beginning with its construction in 1833 (Patton, "Mills River Baptist Church" pp. 349-75). The association also shared with TVA officials and hearing attendees a supplemental history up to 1971 that documented the significant improvements that the church underwent in the 1960s such as, the construction of a parsonage, the addition of five Sunday schools rooms, and the implementation of a new electric heating system Patton, "Mills River Baptist Church" p. 378). This information was clearly included to illustrate that the Mills River Baptist Church was an area of historical interest that was threatened by the TVA plan.

The UNCA hearing not only illustrated that there was a lack of support surrounding TVA's plan but also made another complaint about the Authority's project quite apparent. Nearly every individual who spoke out against TVA at the August 1971 hearing voiced concerns over the meager and incomplete nature of the Authority's environmental impact statement for the project. Overwhelmingly, the majority of speakers at the UNCA hearing felt that the TVA statement on the environmental

impacts of the project did not include enough detail about the negative ecological impacts of stream channelization. Similarly, hearing attendees criticized TVA's focus on only the Mills River Dam and Reservoir, rather than all of the project's 14 impoundments (UFBDA, "Impact," pp. 189-249). The opposition to the TVA's environmental impact statement fortuitously coincided with a political development on the national level, the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The NEPA, which Boswell described as "the Magna Carta of ecologists," required environmental impact statements for proposed development projects in the US. This law required "full justification for the impact of any major construction on the environment" (Boswell, "Grassroots, p. 14). This legislation not only placed heavier restrictions on environmental impact statements, but created a new body, within the Office of the President, for UFBDA members to appeal to. The NEPA, once enacted in 1970, also created the Council on Environmental Quality within the office of the President (Morgan, *The 60s Experience*, p. 232). Members of the UFBDA packaged copies of transcripts from the UNCA hearing and according to UFBDA chairman Jere Brittain, these transcripts were organized based on "the framework of Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act," in order to highlight that TVA was in fact in violation of the new national legislation (Letter from Brittain to Council on Environmental Quality, 5 Oct. 1971). While it is unclear just how fruitful the UFBDA's correspondence with the Council on Environmental Quality within the Office of the President, it stands as an interesting development where advancements on the national level allowed a local group to reach

out past their congressmen for a new audience to receive their complaints about the federally-owned corporation, TVA.

"An Inevitable Erosion of Interest"

The 1971 UNCA hearing was extremely valuable for the UFBDA cause, not only because it illustrated that the TVA's environmental impact statement was incomplete, but also because it provided the UFBDA's cause additional attention and support. Within a week of the conclusion of the hearing, Governor Robert Scott of NC issued a public statement requesting that the TVA redraft its environmental impact study of the Mills River Dam and Reservoir. Governor Scott cited many of the UFBDA's own concerns in this request including that the initial impact statement did not include information about all 14 dams within the regional project and that TVA's statement "provides an unfair treatment of water based recreation by saying no fishing access points are open to the public in the area" (Blackwell, "Scott Finds TVA"). Governor Scott even mentioned the members of the UFBDA directly. Scott said that TVA's revised impact statement should take into account the "objections of the citizens of the Upper French Broad area who, until lately have seemingly not had much opportunity to be heard" (Blackwell, "Scott Finds TVA"). The proceedings of the UNCA hearing clearly garnered more political support for the UFBDA cause, and the Association's continued involvement in politics ultimately led to the termination of the TVA project.

In the UFBDA's unpublished organizational history, Martha Gash Boswell states: "For 1972 our ambitious target was the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners, as these three men had the unquestioned authority to stop TVA intrusion with a single

resolution" (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 24). The group accomplished just that by supporting three Republican candidates for commissioner seats, all of whom were elected and "pledged to meet the challenge of flood control by more acceptable means than TVA impoundments" (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 24). The November election of 1972, much like the UNCA hearing, elicited rapid and dramatic responses on behalf of the UFBDA's cause. By November 14, one week after the election of three anti-TVA commissioners in Transylvania County, TVA announced that they would abandon all plans for their project along the Upper French Broad (Boswell, "Grassroots," p. 27).

TVA's announcement attracted national attention, even an article in *The New York Times.* As quoted in the *Times,* TVA officials stated that because "adequate local support and commitment no longer exist" in western North Carolina, the "substantial Federal investment" was being withdrawn (Kenworthy, "TVA Drops Plan"). The *Times* explicitly mentioned the UFBDA by name, describing their origins amidst TVA's plan for western North Carolina which "did not have the support of the farmers who would have lost their land, and they formed the base of an opposition that grew as retired executives and environmental groups…lined up against the harming of trout streams" (Kenworthy, "TVA Drops Plan"). The article also featured a statement from a TVA official attempting to explain the termination of the project which was "'caught up in budget limitations' and the growing concern for environmental protection." Rather than citing the efforts of the UFBDA directly, this official commented that perhaps the project was a doomed product of its time. With the growing concern for environmental protection of the early 1970s, "there has been an inevitable erosion of interest" in the

project by local government officials (Kenworthy, “TVA Drops Plan”). Whether formally recognized by TVA or not, in November of 1972, the UFBDA had nevertheless achieved the outcome for which they had been fighting for a decade. With the termination of the TVA project, the group was able to successfully “Keep TVA out of WNC.”

Without the creation of the UFBDA, the implemented of TVA’s project would have dramatically altered the landscape and culture of western North Carolina. The UFBDA represents a rare success story where individuals with vast community connections were able to collect and subsequently spread regional knowledge in order to preserve their homes and their way of life. These “unlikely environmentalists” not only redefine the label of “environmentalist” but their 11-year battle against TVA also addresses many pejorative stereotypes about Appalachian peoples. The members of the UFBDA were clearly not isolated and ignorant hillbillies but were engaged and knowledgeable community members whose dedication to landscape preservation is a legacy worth considerable scholarship. The UFBDA’s tactics for propaganda dissemination and their efforts in gaining political support illustrate an admirable ability for improvisation as the age demands it, a willingness crossing over boundaries in order to achieve their goal. The saga of the UFBDA illustrates the potential and power of Appalachian communities endowed with regional knowledge and an understanding of national political changes to preserve their landscape and culture. This Association illustrates what Appalachian Studies scholar Gurney Norman passionately argues -- that the inhabitants of the American Mountain South are “leaders and teachers of civic virtue for the nation, not

scabs upon the body politic as the negative hillbilly stereotype would have it" (Norman, "Notes," p. 329).

Chapter 5: Towards Commons Environmental Rhetoric

> *"Mainstream environmentalists have been too quick to dismiss rural points of view as hopelessly backward in regards to the environment; they have too often failed to recognize how environmental ethics can arise from rural people's experiences of living on and working the land."*
>
> —Kathryn Newfont, "Grassroots Environmentalism: Origins of the Western North Carolina Alliance." *Appalachian Journal,* vol. 27, no. 1, p. 57.
>
> *"Names are important. The name 'wilderness' is fraught with historical baggage obfuscating the most important role of wilderness areas for contemporary conservation. The received wilderness idea has been and remains a tool of androcentrism, racism, colonialism, and genocide. It privileges virile and primitive recreation, because the mean reason wild lands were originally preserved is for such utilitarian purposes."*
>
> —J. Baird Callicott, "Contemporary Criticisms of the Received Wilderness Idea." USDA Forest Service Proceedings RMRS-P-15-VOL-1. 2000, pp. 24.

As the historical overview provided in the previous chapter demonstrates, understanding the UFBDA also helps us revisit the origins of the American environmental movement. As a social movement, environmentalism is often associated with ideals surrounding wilderness preservation. However, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, the UFBDA offer a conception of nature in their environmental rhetoric that is not based on wilderness, but is instead based on the notion of the commons. In this chapter, I work to demonstrate the ways in which the UFBDA work to rhetorically construct a fundamentally different form of nature. The UFBDA's construction of what I call *commons environmental rhetoric* is a key answer to the research questions guiding

this dissertation. More specifically, I work in this chapter to demonstrate that constructing a commons approach to understanding the local landscape functioned as a key methods through which the UFBDA were able to legitimize their own expertise and knowledge of the region's landscape. I argue, ultimately, that the use of commons environmental rhetoric affords more opportunities for citizens to legitimate their knowledge and voice their concerns than wilderness-based environmental rhetoric.

In the American environmental movement, the power of the wilderness idea looms large over the goals, philosophies, and motivations behind environmental protection. Previous accounts of the connection between wilderness and environmentalism have often, in fact, connected the progress of environmentalism as a social movement to the concerted efforts of "wilderness saints" who fought to preserve pristine land for the enjoyment of future Americans. However, more recently scholars have come to see that "American environmentalism not as the tale of heroic individuals saving a found object, wilderness, but as the confluence of conflicting discourses conspiring to create a wilderness vision" (DeLuca 637). In other words, the idea of wilderness is a rhetorical construction, and one that can limit the possibilities and potential of US environmentalism.

As I will explain in this chapter, strict adherence to wilderness ideals within the environmental movement poses its own epistemological challenges, which in turn, obfuscate many ontological concerns. In other words, the ways in which we "think" of environmentalism has a direct connection to the ways in which we accept environmental activities "to be." In focusing on wilderness, many other forms of environmental activism

are elided, erased, and ignored. One particular form of environmentalism that is often erased in the process of adoring wilderness, is commons environmentalism. Commons environmentalism emphasizes the use of nature, by a collective group, rather than seeing nature on as a wild place free from the alterations of human beings. In this chapter I demonstrate the ways in which the UFBDA enacted a commons environmental rhetoric in their statements, histories, and archival documents.

In the UFBDA's unpublished history, "Grassroots Along the Upper French Broad," the group's corresponding secretary, Martha Gash Boswell writes, "The struggle for control of our river and of the future of our river valleys pitted defiant citizens against entrenched official Establishment from Brevard to Washington" (1). Boswell describes the UFBDA's "dam fight" as "a genuine grassroots revolt against the many Powers That Be" and "it succeeded!" (1). Throughout the historical pamphlet, "Grassroots Along the Upper French Broad," Boswell demonstrates the collective effort of the UFBDA members and their supporters in their work to denounce and prevent the Tennessee Valley Authority's efforts to place "massive impoundments on the Upper French Broad River and its tributaries" (1). Boswell's 27-page pamphlet provides an overview of the UFBDA's decade-long "dam fight" against the TVA, particularly documenting the ways in which local residents collaborated across political lines and county boundaries to fight for the preservation of the Upper French Broad river basin landscape. In this chapter, I analyze Boswell's history of the UFBDA, "Grassroots Along the Upper French Broad," along with corresponding archival documents from three archival collections pertaining to the UFBDA. In my analysis I work to highlight the "commoning" work of the UFBDA,

particularly the ways in which the UFBDA worked to rhetorical construct the Upper French Broad River region as a commons, a shared landscape which through their environmental activism, the group sought to protect. Accordingly, I ask: *how does the UFBDA represent commons environmentalism and how can their documents help us understand how commons environmental rhetoric operates in grassroots social movements?* I conclude this chapter with a broader discussion of how commons environmental rhetoric, as enacted by the UFBDA can work to help create a more equitable, inclusive form of environmentalism, one that does not engage in the knowledge hierarchy whereby in the pursuit of wilderness, a seemingly quixotic ideal, potential participants in seeking environmental progress are ignored or left behind on the basis of their race, class, or other concerns.

Wilderness and its "Troubles"

The notion of wilderness in U.S. ecological thought occupies strange ground—it is *both* an idea *and* a place. Wilderness as an idea has deep historic roots, one that is connected to understanding the "New World" as a strange yet bountiful place, full of untapped natural resources. While wilderness as an *idea* is relatively old, the notion of wilderness as a *place*, or even *specific places* is a result of the 1964 Wilderness Act, the federal law that created wilderness areas, describing them as those areas where man and how own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain" (Callicott 24). Wilderness areas in the U.S. are certainly afforded vast protections against development and destruction, however they are also

often the product of erasure regarding human connection to the landscape. In this section, I will discuss many key issues surrounding the *idea* of wilderness. However, I want to make it clear, as acclaimed environmental studies scholar J. Baird Callicott. has also done, that "I am not here criticizing the *places* we call 'wilderness'" (24). Instead, I aim to continue Callicott's work in criticizing "a *name*, a concept, the *received* wilderness idea" (Callicott 24). The *name* wilderness is limiting in terms of environmental protection and what environmentalism can look like, flavoring what causes and controversies environmentalist choose to advocate for. As Callicott argues, "We need a new name that will better focus" environmental organizations on current issues of conservation (30). Later in this chapter, I will suggest, as a rhetorical intervention, that the name "commons" should replace and reanimate environmental rhetoric and thus environmentalism. But first, I will discuss some of the key philosophical issues associated with the *idea* of wilderness in order to justify my critique and subsequent revision.

In U.S. contexts, the *idea* of wilderness is certainly nothing new, as many scholars have attributed the concept to Puritan idealists who came to the U.S. as colonists. Callicott suggests that as English colonists, Puritans were "focused on land to live on and to make over into a landscape like the one they left behind" (24). In their efforts to transform portions of North America into deforested pastures and hills like those they left behind, the Puritans were struck by the wilderness around them, one they chose to see as "essentially empty of human beings, and thus available for immediate occupancy" (Callicott 25). However, even these early declarations of

“wilderness” demonstrate the socially constructed nature of the idea, as the “American continents were not, however, empty lands when ‘discovered’ by Europeans and settled by English colonists” (Callicott 25). As Callicott argues, the very act of labeling landscapes as “wilderness” “is to put a spin on them; it is to socially construct them, not as objective, autonomous nature” but as something over which human beings have sole dominion. Flavored with Judeo-Christian notions of man’s supremacy over nature, many scholars have argued that early New England colonists developed and spread the roots of wilderness in the U.S. In contrast, other scholars, including esteemed environmental historian, Donald Worster have argued that the Puritan roots of wilderness in America is also a social construct, one in which “the ‘discovery’ or ‘invention’” is the product of wealthy elites that quickly led to the ecological destruction and genocide of the continent’s first nations people (224). In contrast, Worster argues that “the love of nature (i.e. wilderness) was not merely a ‘cultural construct’ of the romantic period in Europe” but that it has much older cultural roots (225). While I do concede that the early English colonists have impacted the evolution of the U.S. notion of wilderness, I also draw the cultural roots of this idea further back, particularly in terms of the notion of the pastoral.

The idea of the pastoral, in terms of a natural area as a retreat from the hustle and bustle of everyday (and often urban) life, is likely an ideological ancestor of wilderness in the U.S. As ecocritic Terry Gifford writes, the term “pastoral” is most often used in four distinct ways (*Pastoral* 1) including: (1) “a historical form with a long tradition, which began in poetry, developed into drama and more recently could be recognised [sic] in novels and nature writing,” (2) “a broader use of ‘pastoral’ to refer to

an area of content" which "refers to any literature" (3) "a skeptical use of the term – 'pastoral' as pejorative, implying that the pastoral vision is too simplified and thus an idealisation [sic] of the reality of life in the country," and (4) "neutrally descriptive of literature concerned with a life of pastoral farming practices in raising grazing animals" (p. 2). Further, according to Gifford, "Pastorals demand alert readings that are capable of making critical judgements about their inner tensions, their contextual functions, their multiple levels of contradictions" (13). Arguing that the pastoral is more complex than some have pejoratively discussed, Gifford suggests that notions of the pastoral are rooted in an even older idea of Arcadia (*Pastoral* 13). Gifford continues that "it was Virgil (70-19 BCE) who" in his *Eclogues* "created the literary distancing device of Arcadia that has become the generic name for the location of all pastoral retreats" (20). As this brief discussion of the pastoral and Arcadia highlights, I agree with Worster that the *idea* of wilderness is a product of several iterations of cultural influence.

Whether we relate notions of wilderness to the Puritans or the pastoral, seeking out the roots of wilderness highlights the socially construction nature or this concept, as it represents an idealized version of the natural world. As Kevin Michael DeLuca argues, "wilderness is a social construction and one that is worth preserving" as long as the preservation is couched in "the recognition that wilderness is not a divine text but a social achievement" (p. 649). However, some scholars have cautioned that acknowledging the social nature of the wilderness *idea* can be taken too far as some "revisionist historians" now contend that notions of North America as "virgin land" was in fact, never accurate, but that instead, "The continent was not a wilderness; it was a

landscape thoroughly domesticated and managed by the native peoples" (Worster 222). As environmental historian Donald Worster contends, wilderness revisionists suggest that the first nations peoples of North America "created a vast sweep of grassland all the way from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains, and they did so by constant burning" and in fact, "All over the continent, they completely civilized the wasteland long before" the arrival of European colonizers and colonists (222). Worster acknowledges that while it is important to acknowledge the agency that Native American nations and cultures had over their changing landscape, it is likely that the claims that America was *never* a wilderness revolve around "huge extrapolations from limited examples" (223). While Worster's analysis here calls into question the extreme notions of wilderness revision, demonstrating the severe conclusions some who embrace the social nature of wilderness arrive at, his argument falls into one of the most common pitfalls surrounding wilderness, confounding wilderness as an *idea* with wilderness *places*, one of the main threads of contention within the broader wilderness debate.

The wilderness debate, which incorporates competing ideas on the philosophical origins and historical implications of wilderness, sparked serious debate among environmental historians, particularly surrounding William Cronon's work in the late 1990s. "THE TIME HAS COME TO RETHINK WILDERNESS" William Cronon declared in his controversial edited collection, *Uncommon Ground* (69). Cronon's essay within this book, entitled, "The Trouble with Wilderness or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," caused such a commotion among scholars that it was re-published, along with essays from several of Cronon's critics and his response, in the inaugural issue of

Environmental History. Cronon began his essay admitting that "This will seem a heretical claim to many environmentalists" that the idea of wilderness should be interrogated (7). Arguing that wilderness has for a long time been held as "a fundamental tenet" of American environmentalism, Cronon suggests that "The more one knows of its peculiar history, the more one realizes that wilderness is not quite what it seems" (7). Instead, Cronon argues, "Far from being the one place on earth that stands apart from humanity, it is quite profoundly a human creation -- indeed, the creation of very particular human cultures at very particular moments in human history" (7). Cronon suggests that wilderness "is not a pristine sanctuary where the last remnant of an untouched, endangered, but still transcendent nature can for at least a little while longer be encountered without the contaminating taint of civilization" (7). Instead, wilderness is more accurately, "a product of that civilization, and could hardly be contaminated by the very stuff of which it is made" (Cronon 7). Although Cronon's deconstruction of wilderness elicited critical responses from other scholars--including prominent environmental historian Samuel P. Hays who claimed Cronon neither understood nor valued the "on the ground" activities of early wilderness activists (Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness: A Response," p. 48)—his argument that "If we defend wilderness and wild nature in such a way that we lose the support of the general public -- because we fail to recognize and honor the human cultural values which members of the public hold dear -- then we will produce the very opposite of our intended effect" ("Trouble with Wilderness" 52-53) is of importance to environmental rhetoricians and environmentalists

trying to craft effective messages and arguments pertaining to environmental deliberations.

While many scholars who interrogate the notion of wilderness within U.S. contexts, because modern environmentalism emerged within the U.S., American ideas surrounding environmental protect and activism have spread around the world, with significant consequences, and garnering international critiques. Perhaps the most powerful wilderness critique comes from Indian historian Ramachandra Guha, who in 1989 released "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique" an essay that, according to environmental historian Paul S. Sutter, "sent tremors through the U.S. environmental community" (Sutter 543). In "Radical American Environmentalism," Guha offers a poignant critique of deep ecology, a common ethical foundation for mainstream American environmentalism which contains four key components including, **(1)** an urge for the shift from "an anthropocentric" to a "biocentric" perspective that does not privilege humans over the nonhuman (73), **(2)** a "focus on the preservation of unspoiled wilderness–and the restoration of degraded areas to a more pristine condition" (73), **(3)** an "invocation of Eastern spiritual traditions," especially in terms of understanding the connection between perceived "primal" peoples and the natural world (73), **(4)** and the belief that as environmentalists who subscribe to deep ecology, are the "'leading edge' of the environmental movement" (74). Guha suggests that rather than a productive ethic for wilderness preservation, deep ecology proponents are endowed with "a justification for the continuation of such narrow and inequitable conservation practices" and further, that "the international conservation elite"

employ “the philosophical, moral, and scientific arguments used by deep ecologists in advancing their wilderness crusade” (75). Guha emphasizes that the impulse to “equate environmental protection with the protection of wilderness” is a “distinctively American notion” and one that differs dramatically from the “archetypal concerns of radical environmentalists in other cultural contexts” (79-80). Guha’s critique reminds us that the philosophical undergirding of U.S. environmentalism, as a social movement based on deep ecology and wilderness preservation, has significant repercussions for conservation policy and scientific study, effects which can often further marginalize and ignore different extant expressions of environmental consciousness. As this brief review of the wilderness debate demonstrates, the very *idea* of wilderness is contentious among many scholars, both in where it comes from and what it means for the history of the environment. However, in the next section, I will discuss another key concept that is also, in part, a product of wilderness, the nature-culture dualism.

The Nature-Culture Dualism

Wilderness, as it emphasizes nature as being “out there” and a distant place to visit as a reprieve from one’s own daily life, works to instill a divide between nature and culture, which has long plagued environmental thought. As Callicott argues, the idea of wilderness, which is “associated with outmoded equilibrium ecology and ignores the ecological impact of at least eleven thousand years of human inhabitation of the Americas” also “perpetuates a pre-Darwinian” notion of separating “‘man’ from nature” (24). Even beyond the confines of the wilderness debate, the separation of nature and culture has deep epistemological roots in western society. As Melissa F. Baird writes,

“The nature/culture paradigm has deep roots in Western models of time and space and is tied to historical formations and colonial practices” (209). In the context of the pervasive presence of the separation of nature and human nature, many scholars have focused their intellectual labor on trying to overcome this rigid duality.

More specifically, several scholars in rhetoric and writing studies, acknowledging the ways in which this dualism limits our thinking about environmental rhetoric and the possibilities of environmentalism as a social movement, have generated rhetorical interventions surrounding the notion of the nature-culture divide. For example, Peterson and Peterson, in their contribution to Waddell’s *And No Birds Sing*, argue that Rachel Carson’s writing offer a way to reevaluate the relationship between the human and the non-human. Peterson and Peterson writes, “In repositioning humanity as part of, rather than apart from, nature, Carson offers a new vision of science that emphasizes human affinity with other living creates rather than with technologically constructed objects” (101). Similarly, in the Introduction to *Green Talk in the White House*, Tarla Rai Peterson argues that “If it does nothing else, rhetoric provides order to otherwise confused complexity” which is particularly necessary for work in environmental rhetoric because “The very use of the term *environment*, for example, enables us to impose order on nature” because it casts nature, once again, as “out there” and separate from man (30). Peterson’s intervention via rhetoric is, however, hopeful as she argues that we can “turn to the concept of agency to discover that, just as human have chosen to separate themselves from the natural environment, so can they choose to reunite themselves with it” because “An explicitly rhetorical approach to environmental issues

enables such efforts to proceed within a spirit of friendly skepticism (as opposed to cynicism)" (30). Relatedly, Sidney I. Dobrin and Christian R. Weisser, in their work on ecocomposition which "locates writing in place and environment" argue that "Ecocomposition resists discursive maneuvers that create dualistic splits such as nature/culture and (hu)man-made/natural" and instead, "ecocomposition argues for a more holistic approach to seeing humans' place in the world" (*Natural Discourse*, 10). The work reviewed here makes clear that rhetoric does have a particularly productive role to play in reevaluating, and hopefully, overcoming the divide between nature and culture.

While several scholars in rhetoric and writing have discussed paths beyond the nature-culture dualism, Elizabeth Mazzolini's work *The Everest Effect: Nature, Culture, Ideology*, has been most influential over my own thinking regarding this much-needed rhetorical intervention. In *Everest Effect*, Mazzolini employs Mt. Everest "as an anchor to participating in conversations that point out how nature is even more 'cultural' than most discourses about it assumes" (8). Further, Mazzolini suggests that "culture—the very thing that is taken to be liable for ruining the innocent mountain—is more 'natural' than we have come to believe" (8). In other words, Mazzolini contends that "in many ways culture is further beyond the reach of intentional action, more immutable, and essentially more thoughtless than is commonly held to the case" (8). In essence, nature is far more cultural, and culture is far more natural than we have previously recognized. Mazzolini makes a compelling case for selecting Mt. Everest as the cornerstone of her analysis, writing, "the huge mountain would seem to be the very antithesis of *culturally*

constructed" but yet, "despite Everest's seeming inexorability, the mountain's status and value in culture over the past century or so has shifted according to human events" (5). Overall, Mazzolini helps us see that "arguments for nature and culture's imbrication have reached a limit" and "that limit shows how arguments relating nature and culture actually rely on nature and culture being separate" (140). As a rhetorical intervention, Mazzolini argues that "Instead of making arguments for their relation, it is now time to engage not only the ways that nature has always already been cultural, but also the ways culture is already natural" (140). What is at stake in revising the nature-culture divide, and what I think makes Mazzolini's work incredibly valuable, is the chance to rethink "human responsibility toward nonhuman nature as a matter of working *within* and *in accordance with* processes beyond human control even when they are human generated . . . rather than working *upon* and *with reference to* outside ideals" (140). Mazzolini's work offers us a way to see that what is cultural is also natural, ergo, what is natural is also cultural, and most importantly, demonstrates the ways in which embracing this line of thinking can allow us to swim along with the current in terms of our interventions in natural world, rather than struggle to swim upstream.

While Mazzolini's work is the most effective for my own work, Nathaniel River's recent work on wilderness and environmental rhetoric has thus far garnered the most attention in rhetoric and writing studies. Rivers, in "Deep Ambivalence and Wild Objects," recently offered a new, "strange environmental rhetoric" which would "involve not a removal of humans from the environment, but another way of comporting ourselves within environments" (421). Rivers suggests that this new environmental

rhetoric is needed for environmentalism so that environmentalism, as a cultural practice, can be "engaged not simply in human discourse, but in the nonhuman, in the object as well" (422). As the theoretical terms in his title suggest, Rivers builds his argument from new materialist and object-oriented ontologists in order to suggest that "environmental rhetoric overemphasizes human agency" and that when we give ourselves "the responsibility to save or fix the planet," we over-invest "in our own agency, enacting the same hubris that results in dispositions toward the non-human nature that environmentalists might very well (and rightly) condemn" (423). Rivers urges environmental rhetoricians to theorize and develop "stranger environmental rhetorics that do not remake (even perhaps unwittingly) the sorts of ontological presuppositions that currently short-circuit environmentalism" and seek out rhetorical "footprints" in the world around us, whether they are discursive or non-discursive, human or nonhuman" (427; 438). While theoretically, I do see the point that Rivers makes saying humans give ourselves too much agency in environmental rhetoric, which can enforce the nature-culture dualism.

However, I believe, as this dissertation project demonstrates, that one of the goals of environmental rhetoric is to contribute valuable insights for practitioners, offering rhetorical insights for rhetors who discuss and advocate for, the environment. I am skeptical that environmental rhetoric centered around non-human objects would be effective, and therefore it seems that this advocation of a "stranger environmental rhetoric" would not help environmentalists reach their goals, as the UFBDA for example were able to do, but would, in fact, make what is already considered a "strange" or

fringe social movement to me, seem even that much stranger, further alienating environmentalists from being able to participate in public deliberations about the environment, as in the key "dam fight" at the center of this dissertation.

While Rivers' development of a "strange environmental rhetoric," is certainly in accordance with the recent ontological turn in rhetorical studies, I worry that it may not clearly translate to practitioners. Rather than seeking out non-human rhetorics, I think it is an easier leap for environmental rhetoricians to emphasize the interconnectedness of humans and nature in their studies of environmental rhetoric. Many scholars across the humanities have emphasizes this interconnection, one of which is philosopher Timothy Morton. In his 2012 book, *The Ecological Thought*, Morton targets his wide readership as he offers a re-theorization of the ecological crises that plague our daily lives. Morton condemns other academics who write only to their discourse communities as he suggests "Humanities scholars have some very important ideas, if only they would let others read them" because "[w]e simply can't leave environmentalism to the anti-intellectuals" (13). Morton further comments on his attention to audience in that while his book is "deeply informed by critical theory" he does not explicitly discuss critical theory in *The Ecological Thought*. Morton justifies this choice because he argues that "people who aren't members of the in crowd of specialists familiar with the language of theory (and the kinds of things that are cool to say with it) badly need to read this book" (13).

While Morton certainly hopes *The Ecological Thought* will garner diverse audiences, his main argument is rather straightforward. Morton argues that the ecological crisis we currently face "is so obvious" that it becomes easy "to join the dots

and see that everything is interconnected" (1). For Morton, this interconnectedness "is *the ecological thought*" and "the more we consider it, the more our world opens up" (1). For Morton, the ecological thought is not simply a matter of thinking about climate change or other environmental disasters directly, but it is instead a more abstract way of thinking that embraces the interconnectedness of people, places, things, time, and environments. Morton argues that the ecological thought is inescapable -- we cannot help but recognize it. Further, as we recognize the interconnectedness of all things, we open up our minds to make necessary interventions in policy, culture, and philosophy, in order to create innovate solutions directed at resolving and intervening in the myriad of environmental crises that we currently face.

In addition to his main argument of the interconnectedness of all things, Morton also aims to revise our understanding of ecology. Morton suggests that "ecology isn't just about global warming, recycline, and solar power -- and also not just to do with everyday relationships between humans and nonhumans" (2). Ecology is not just a scientific endeavor to fund environmental activism, but instead, "the ecological thought surpasses what passes for environmentalism" because "[i]t goes beyond self, Nature, and species" (3). Morton writes that "[t]he ecological thought must interrogate both the attitude of science, its detached authoritarian coldness; and the nihilistic, baselessly anthropocentric arguments in the humanities as well as the humanist refusals to see the big picture, often justified by the self-limiting arguments against 'totalization' -- talk about shooting yourself in the foot" (12). For Morton, in contrast to the nihilistic, scientific discourses, "[t]he ecological thought is about warmth and strangeness, infinity and

proximity, tantalizing 'thereness' and head-popping, worldless openness" (12). Morton argues that "the ecological thought infects other systems of thinking and alters them from within, gradually disabling the incompatible ones" (19). And for Morton, "[t]he infection has only just begun" (19).

For Morton, ecology is inherently about interconnectedness. Morton suggests that the ecological thought is "a practice and a process of becoming fully aware of how human beings are connected with other beings" ranging from beings as "animal, vegetable, or mineral" (7). The connection for Morton between all life forms, both human and nonhuman, demonstrates that "the ecological thought is interconnectedness in the fullest and deepest sense" (7). For Morton, interconnectedness is a matter of "radical intimacy with other beings" (pp. 37-38), and therefore, he argues, "[t]he ecological view . . . . is a vast, sprawling mesh of interconnection without a definite center or edge" (8). It is a "radical intimacy, coexistence with other beings, sentient and otherwise . . . the ethics of the ecological thought is to regard beings as people even when they aren't people" (8). Morton argues that "the ecological thought realizes that the boundaries between, and the identities of, beings are affected by this interconnection" (94).

In his subsequent book, *Being Ecological* Morton argues that as people, we are already inherently entangled in the natural world through symbiosis. Morton writes:

> "But you are already a symbiotic being entangled with other symbiotic beings. The problem with ecological awareness and action isn't that it's horribly difficult. It's that it's too easy. You are breathing air, your bacterial

> microbiome is humming away, evolution is silently unfolding in the background. Somewhere, a bird is singing and clouds pass overhead. You stop reading this book and look around you.
>
> You don't have to *be* ecological. Because you *are* ecological." (157)

According to Morton, the nature-culture divide is not useful, because well, what is cultural is already natural, people *are already* ecological. While I find these ideas interesting, it does seem a bit too simple to overcome such an entrenched dualism in this way.

While it is not particularly productive for theorists or practitioners, the nature-culture dualism is an entrenched component of American environmentalism. As Elizabeth Mazzolini writes, "the fact remains that nature and culture often remain linguistically and rhetorically divided, as evidenced by the large amounts of ink spilled trying to link them" (*Everest* p. 10). The divisions surrounding the nature-culture dualism, Mazzolini argues, is even evident in the term's name itself: "The 'and' or even the hyphen that links nature and culture in scholarly literature stubbornly remains the very problem it has been recruited to solve" (*Everest,* pp. 10-11). As I have demonstrated here, the nature-culture dualism is a key issue for many scholars concerned with environmental rhetoric, and with notions of wilderness in particular. While I do not possess enough hubris to claim that I have "solved" this dualism, in the following sections, I will demonstrate how an environmentalism based on ideas of the

commons, rather than wilderness, may be helpful in limiting the hegemonic power and destructive nature of this dualism. Commons environmentalism, in its focus on local environments, and the interconnectedness of people and place, has the potential to invoke a more inclusive form of environmentalism, one that is useful for people in rural places who live with and on the land, rather than simply functioning for urban elites as a reprieve from nature "out there" as wilderness does. In the following section, I explore the possibilities of commons environmental rhetoric, and then, I demonstrate the ways in which the UFBDA enacted this rhetoric in their internal documents, flyers, and hearing statements.

Towards Commons Environmental Rhetoric

Commons environmental rhetoric, as I define it in this chapter, is a discursive manifestation and rhetorical construction of commons environmentalism. Commons environmentalism, as described by Appalachian historian Kathryn Newfont, stems from the realization that mainstream U.S. environmentalism, particularly in its adherence to ideals regarding wilderness preservation, does not adequately suit studies of environmentalism in rural areas. Newfont writes, "Mainstream American 'wilderness' environmentalism has rarely resonated with people from rural cultures" because it remains rooted "in an urban and suburban sensibility in which the outdoors is primarily a place to visit and use recreationally" (57). Accordingly, "the wilderness model seems foreign and even threatening to many rural people" for which "the outdoors is not only a place to play—but also—and more importantly—a place to work, to produce a living" (57). Further, the outdoors "is a place to live rather than visit" for many rural Americans,

making it “a part of the fabric of everyday life rather than a retreat from the ordinary round” (57). Newfont bases her analysis of commons environmentalism in her study of “unlikely” environmentalists who, much like the UFBDA, rallied together to stop a destructive environmental project in western North Carolina, known as the Western North Carolina Alliance (WNCA). Newfont argues that the saga of the WNCA “demonstrates convincingly the power of mobilized rural environmentalism” and “offers a compelling example to the potential strength and depth of rural communities’ commitment to particular lands and to responsible land stewardship” (59). Further, Newfont argues that theoretically, the WNCA, and I would also add the UFBDA, suggest “that the roots of mountain people’s commitment” to their local environments “lie in a regional tradition of treating the woods as effective commons” which “have historically provided a rich harvest of fruits, nuts, herbs, and wildlife, as well as recreation, aesthetic appreciation, and spiritual renewal to members of the community” (59). While Newfont’s work highlighting historic examples of commons environmentalism have certainly been influential to my theorization of commons environmental rhetoric, her work has also inspired examinations of commons environmentalism in other contexts.

Other scholars have examined the role of the commons in environmental activism as well. For example, Brian T. McNeil offers an examination of commons environmentalism in the context of mountaintop removal coal mining in West Virginia. In his analysis of environmental groups Coal River Mountain Watch and Friends of the Mountains, McNeil argues that “comments from activists, their opponents, and selected arguments from literature on environmentalism” within his case study “illustrate activists’

treatment of the environment as a kind of commons that emphasizes myriad social and cultural relationships" (138). Further, the form of commons environmentalism expressed in this environmental controversy "challenges the common mythologies of industrial progress and wilderness preservation," because of its "emphasis on lived experience in the environment" (pp. 138-139). Much like Newfont, McNeil found that commons environmental activism emphasizes the relationships between nature and human nature as found in one's own daily life, particularly as exhibited in rural areas.

Commons environmentalism can function as a productive alternative form of environmental advocacy involving different values and conditions than is often found in wilderness protection. While commons environmentalism is likely found in many diverse corners of the world, for the purpose of the study presented here, I draw my definition from Kathryn Newfont, in her 2012 work on the subject, *Blue Ridge Commons.* As Newfont notes, the commons can be understood as "any resource that is widely accessible, used by many people, and communally owned" (Newfont 9). Further, "Commons resources are not privately owned by any single person or group, though within a commons some specific resources may be reserved for certain claimants" (Newfont 9). Commons systems are "dynamic" and "nearly always contested" however, they are also "regulated and managed either through formal laws and rules or through informal traditions and social sanctions," therefore, "illegal or unsanctioned harvest of commons resources is considered poaching, theft, or invasion," and are all infractions worthy of punishment (9). While these features compose the theoretical notion of a

commons, this form of land stewardship also has a strong sociocultural basis in American society.

According to Newfont, the "concept of the commons has existed in various forms across many human cultures over millennia" (9). Despite the historical roots of the commons, many Americans do not readily conceive of nature in this manner. As Newfont writes, "the word 'commons' whisks many of us immediately to past centuries and distant lands" and this trend is particularly popular in the United States, "where private property holds center stage" we, as citizens, "rarely think in terms of commons systems" (9). Despite the popular perceptions of the commons, it does in fact have deep roots in the U.S. (Newfont 9). Newfont argues that although "the U.S. commitment to private property has been far better publicized and understood, the commons has been no less fundamental to American history and culture" (9). Drawing from studies of commons environmentalism then, commons environmental rhetoric then, as I use the term here, entails discursive and rhetorical constructions of the environment as a commons, a shared landscape which provides food, recreation, and social community, while also emphasizing the importance of local environments and the environments in which many rural people encounter in their daily lives.

Focusing on the Local Through Commons Environmentalism

Commons Environmentalism rhetoric, as it works to promote commons environmentalism, is not only perhaps less focused on seeing nature as separate from humanity, as is often seen in wilderness preservation, but also emphasizes placing attention in one's own localized environment. As a cautionary tale of heralding

wilderness, Cronon warns that in the process of glorifying wilderness areas as pastoral retreats, we may simultaneously ignore and therefore devalue our own local environments. In his response to critics of "The Trouble with Wilderness," Cronon suggests that "we should not celebrate wilderness in such a way that we prevent ourselves from recognizing and taking responsibility for the sacred in our everyday lives and landscapes" (55). Cronon argues that "nature should be fully a part of even the most urban lives, that we should attend as much to our own 'backyards' as we do to remote wilderness areas, and that we should not make a fetish of pristine nature as we pursue these goals" (48). Since "our most serious environmental problems start right here, at home" Cronon argues that in order to remedy those problems, "we need an environmental ethic that will tell use as much about *using* nature as about *not* using it" (emphasis original, 21 "Trouble with Wilderness).

Rather than praising and even idealizing far away landscapes, commons environmentalism helps us focus on the landscapes that are interconnected with where we work, live, and encounter in our everyday activities. The means by which nature is represented and understood in commons environmentalism is in its everyday iteration, best explained by Scott Hess's theoretical term, "everyday nature." In his essay, "Imagining an Everyday Nature," Hess suggests that "'Nature,' has been defined by the mainstream environmental movement and a variety of post-Romantic aesthetic traditions as existing apart from the social and economic structures of everyday life, often in places of wild or scenic beauty, with as little trace of humanity as possibly" (91). Meanwhile, "work, daily consumption, economic activity, and social relationships have

been cast as a separate and often opposed sphere: the sphere of the human, contrasted against the sphere of nature" (91). In contrast, "Everyday Nature" as a theoretical orientation towards the natural world, reunites these spheres, and acts as "a standing reminder that we can imagine nature without having to escape our own lives, work, and relationships," taking "nature out of the sphere of the transcendent and reintegrates it into the ordinary, returning value and spirituality into our everyday lives" and the way we interact with the environments around us (102). Understanding "Everyday Nature" therefore becomes a matter of recognizing nature "in our daily actions and lifestyles, our social structures, and the places and communities in which we live, through which we generate our main environmental impacts" (108-09). Hess does not aim to challenge the inherent value of wilderness, but to instead redefine "'nature' to include also the everyday and, in so doing, reshaping also the senses of self, work, and society with which our ideas or nature are inextricably and interdependently defined" (85).

Much like Cronon's emphasis on local landscapes over wilderness areas, Hess offers the theoretical term "Everyday Nature" to help us understand that "we can imagine nature without having to escape our own lives, work, and relationships" (102). Arguing that "'Nature,' has been defined by the mainstream environmental movement and a variety of post-Romantic aesthetic traditions as existing apart from the social and economic structures of everyday life, often in places of wild or scenic beauty, with as little trace of humanity as possible," Hess suggests that simultaneously, "work, daily consumption, economic activity, and social relationships have been cast as a separate

and opposed sphere" (91). For Hess, this separate and opposed sphere, or "the sphere of the human" is detrimentally "contrasted against the sphere of nature" preventing us from being able to consider the environment "in our daily actions and lifestyles, our social structures, and the places and communities in which we live, through which we generate our main environmental impacts" (91; 108-09). In order to remedy this dangerous dichotomy, Hess suggests that "Everyday Nature" can take nature "out of the sphere of the transcendent and re-integrat[e] it into the ordinary, returning value and spirituality into our everyday lives" and the ways we interact with the environments around us (102). Hess's "Everyday Nature" redefines "nature," itself, in the process including "the everyday and, in doing so, reshaping also the senses of self, work, and society with which our ideas of nature are inextricably and interdependently define" (85).

By combining Hess's "everyday nature" with the study of commons environmentalism, we not only see a different path towards environmental activism from that purported by wilderness advocates, but we also further engage with conversations in ecocomposition and environmental rhetoric emphasizing the importance of engagement with local environments, both for practitioners, as well as other rhetoric and writing scholars in the field, who can emphasize the local pedagogically to help their students feel more connected to their local university community, as well as improve their writing. For example, Derek Owens, in *Composition and Sustainability: Teaching for a Threatened Generation*, writes that "Educators have a responsibility to help students resist the cynicism and hyperboredom of contemporary, consumer culture by discovering the kind of self-worth that comes from being amazed at one's local world"

(69). Owens contends that attention to the local has largely been absent from higher education because "The local places that students and staff and faculty go home to after leaving the university behind remain largely invisible, supposedly unrelated to the activity of the academy, despite mission statement rhetoric about serving community and helping students become responsible citizens" (70). Similarly, Weisser and Dobrin, in *Ecocomposition* argue that "ecocomposition's place within rhetoric and composition and within English departments must be defined by those local places and by the individuals who inhabit those places" because "Ecocomposition begins locally with concern for, an inquiry into, the relationships that affect local, student, and experienced writers" (24). As this discussion demonstrates, there are clearly beneficial pedagogical lessons to be learned from emphasizing the local in the writing classroom. Although pedagogy is not the explicit focus of this dissertation project, in the next section I will further demonstrate the ways in which the UFBDA's use of commons environmental rhetoric can serve as a powerful pedagogical example for both practitioners and students of what commons environmental rhetoric might look like and how it can be beneficial in the context of debates surrounding environmental controversy.

The UFBDA's Rhetorical Construction of Commons Environmentalism

In my search to better understand both the UFBDA and commons environmentalism, I began my analysis with a close reading of Boswell's "Grassroots Along the Upper French Broad." As the opening quotes of this chapter demonstrate, Boswell's approachable style and ethos as a credible member of the "dam fight" since the release of TVA's plan to dam the French Broad in 1961 make Boswell's history

worthy of rhetorical study. Boswell's exigence, as described in "Grassroots Along the Upper French Broad," is to create a record for future readers and residents interested in fighting to protect their beloved landscapes. For example, Boswell writes, "Many stories of our local Davids are already lost, but I hope to preserve available stories of individual and mass effort against the TVA Goliath" (1). For Boswell, the UFBDA is not simply a story of one David successfully defeating a federal Goliath, but is instead a bigger story about how to gain political efficacy in grassroots efforts at environmental preservation. As discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, many contemporary environmentalists feel as though their issues and concerns are often not influential in terms of political policy at the state and national level. In "Grassroots Along the Upper French Broad," Boswell casts political clout, not as a weakness of the UFBDA, but instead as a strength of this particular group. For example, Boswell suggests that "political clout is still the only power recognized in Washington where the decision so often lies" (1). For Boswell, the UFBDA represents a successful "political struggle" fought slowly "step by step" which "may hold a special interest for other fighters on the ecology front" (1). As I will demonstrate through rhetorical analysis throughout this dissertation, the UFBDA were very successful in their use of "political clout" as they made information about the UFBDA public over the decade-long "dam fight." However, the UFBDA were not simply successfully politically because of their massive information campaigns, but, as I argue throughout this dissertation, the UFBDA won their "dam fight" because of the *way* they rhetorically constructed land use in western North Carolina. More specifically, by constructing the Upper French Broad River Basin as a

commons, as a place where (mostly white) citizens farm, fish, and tend the land collectively, the UFBDA were able to more successfully demonstrate what the loss of these lands would do to local communities**.** Rather than emphasizing just the ecological damage or cost of the TVA project, I will demonstrate in this chapter how the UFBDA members, in their texts, constructed the Upper French Broad River basin as a commons, as a place tied to a community of people, all of which would be lost with the implementation of TVA dams.

Commons environmental rhetoric is present in one of the UFBDA's annual meeting statements, penned by UFBDA president Jere Brittain. Brittain wrote to his "Fellow Dam Fighters" that he recently took a walk in his community along North Mills River. Brittain recalls that he "paused on the foot-log which leads to Grandpa's house" where he "listened for awhile to the good sound of the river" as it paused "to form the swimmin' [sic] hole" as it rushed "over the shallows at the old fording place." Brittain observed "Colorful stones, polished and rounded through uncounted centuries, and transient October leaves caught" in the "first morning light" (UFBDA Box 1e Bylaws, etc., Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers, By-Laws, Minutes, Leaflets, etc." UFBDA Annual Meeting Report, October 12, 1972). On his walk, Brittain also observed two deer "having breakfast at Aunt Lola's apple tree" and carpenters hard "at work remodeling the handsome old Sitton house" along with the Moore family's freshly gathered corn, and the 140 year-old "white-frame church" standing "serenely in the grove at the big bend by South Mills River" (UFBDA Box 1e Bylaws, etc., Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers, By-Laws, Minutes, Leaflets, etc." UFBDA Annual Meeting Report, October 12,

1972). Brittain's account certainly provides a descriptive, even artistic portrait of his neighborhood, but, more importantly, this archival source is also evidence of commons environmental rhetoric, as Brittain makes a concerted effort to describe the ways in which many different families and family members have left their presence on the landscape. By infusing details about how people have used the Mills River area over the years, Brittain demonstrates that this community is not a wilderness, but is an intricate component of the region's daily lives as well as its history.

The UFBDA also represented the western North Carolina landscape as a commons in many of the group's flyers. For example, one particular flyer entitled, "You Can Help Save 14 Beautiful Valleys . . . in the Upper French Broad Basin" contains a large charcoal sketch on the front of the first page (see Figure 5).

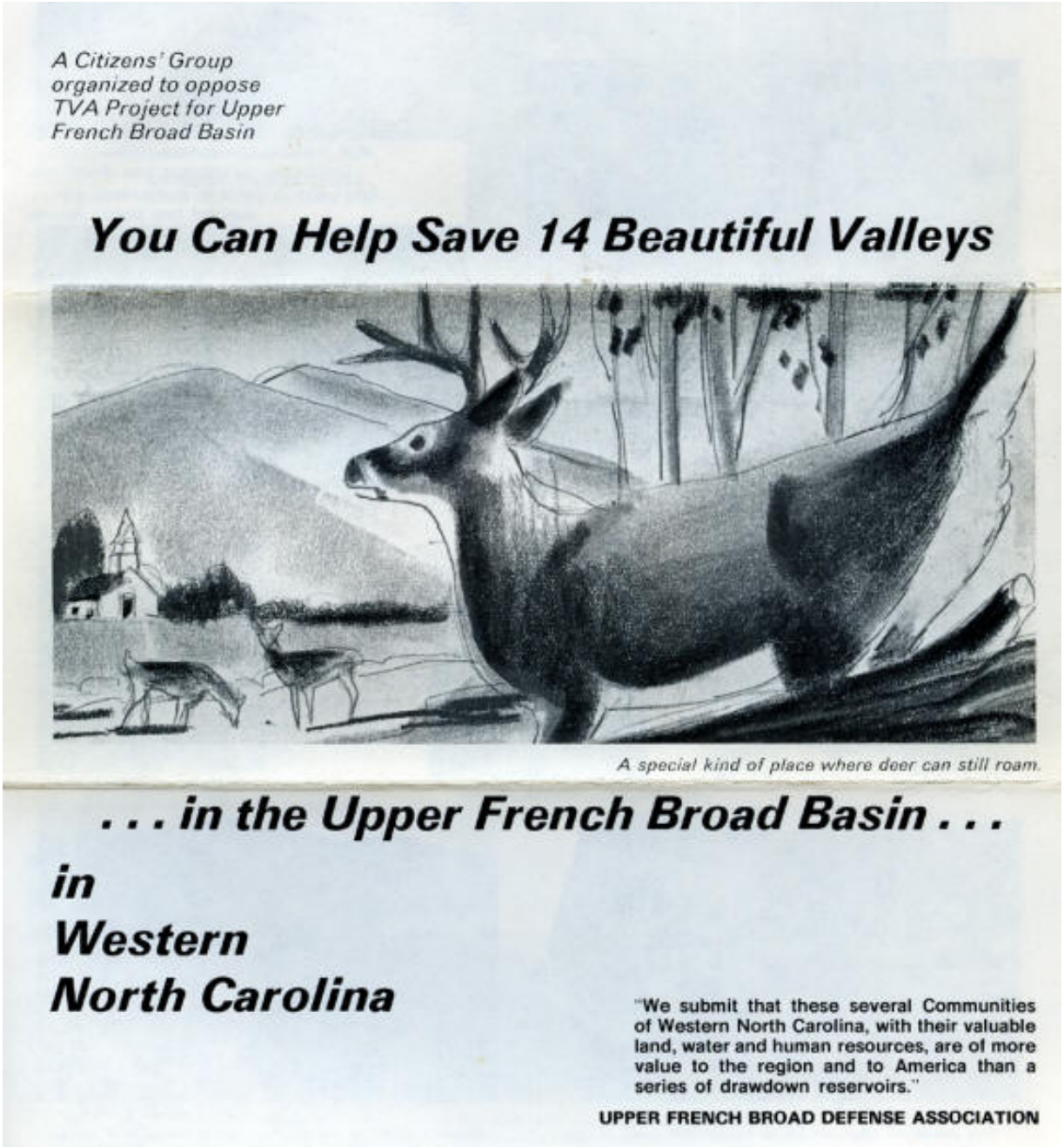

Figure 5: UFBDA Pamphlet, "You Can Help Save 14 Beautiful Valleys." Folder 13, Box 1, Upper French Broad Defense Association (1967-1977). Ramsey Library Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville.

In this sketch, the valley is not portrayed as a wilderness absent of any human interaction, but instead contains a large image of the Mills River Baptist Church, a well-

known church in the region which was also, as UFBDA members were quick to point out, subject to destruction in the TVA's plan for the French Broad. By including a visual representation of the Mills River Baptist Church, UFBDA members were clearly signifying that the Mills River Community was not full of untouched wilderness lands, but that it was a commons, a shared space in which community members were free to congregate and worship. In the foreground of this image, there is a sketch of a large 7-point buck, along with two does grazing alongside it. Below the image of the buck, the UFBDA creators included the phrase, "A special kind of place where deer can still roam" suggesting that the Upper French Broad River Valleys were not as overly populated as the nearby city of Asheville, and that wildlife still used the land as a commons, themselves. While the representation of free-roaming animals may seem, to some, more akin to a depiction of wilderness than the commons, given that the deer is a highly populous and commonly hunted for recreation as well as food supply throughout western North Carolina, rather than serving as symbol of wildness, the deer in this flyer help to form the UFBDA's commons representation as they demonstrate just one of the species that can be harvested from the western North Carolina commons. The deer on this flyer demonstrate as the community stands, without the dams, there are plenty of deer for hunters to use, showing the deer as yet another ample resource within this particular commons.

In addition to the charcoal sketch on the front of the "You Can Help Save 14 Beautiful Valleys" flyer also includes a longer quote, attributed to the UFBDA, which further demonstrates how the group understood, and therefore rhetorically represented,

their local environment. In the bottom right-hand corner of this flyer, the UFBDA included the following quote, “We submit that these several Communities of Western North Carolina, with their valuable land, water and human resources, are of more value to the region and to America than a series of drawdown reservoirs” (UFBDA “You Can Help Save”). By employing the plural pronoun “we” in this pull quote, the UFBDA represent a united front of concerned citizens across western North Carolina. Although the TVA project included 14 dams across 4 separate counties, UFBDA members were careful to represent their arguments in terms of the collective individuals, properties, and communities at risk because of these dams. In this opening quote we see the UFBDA invoking the commons by clearly combining the natural and human resources of the regions affected by the dams and furthermore clearly communicating that they view western North Carolina as a collaborative, communal landscape, one that would be severely and negatively altered by the TVA’s plan to disrupt communities and create shallow man-made dams.

While commons environmental rhetoric is present throughout the archival collections pertaining to the UFBDA, the group’s, massive, over 300-page report, entitled, “Environmental Impact of the Proposed Tennessee Valley Authority Water Resources Project for the Upper French Broad in Western North Carolina” contains a plethora instances of commons environmental rhetoric. In their massive “Environmental Impact” report, the UFBDA collated, archived, and then disseminated all of the anti-TVA statements and reports submitted for the fall 1971 TVA hearing. As the memo within the front matter of the report states, this large manuscript was then shared with the TVA,

the federal Council on Environmental Quality, and the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as a plethora of other governmental agencies at both the state and national level. The UFBDA's circulation of these statements, which are rich with commons environmental rhetoric, emphasizes the importance of this particular rhetorical tactic for the UFBDA's efforts to communicate their own immense knowledge of the local environment.

As a key rhetorical tactic[12], commons environmental rhetoric appears throughout the UFBDA and their supporters' comments directed towards the TVA at the fall 1971 three-day public hearing. For example, in Charles H Campbell's, letter to the TVA for the August 31, 1971 hearing, he writes, about the importance of the local water supply for the community's shared livelihood. Campbell, as Mayor of the City of Brevard within Transylvania County writes, that the region's "abundant supply of water is a cornerstone of" the region's tourism, "prosperous agriculture and thriving industries" (24). Campbell makes it clear that these rivers and streams are a commonly held resource, as he continues "These streams are sources of beauty and recreation for those of us who choose to live in Brevard and Transylvania County" and further, Campbell states, "We hold these resources as a public trust" one that must be preserved "for future generations" (24). As Mayor Campbell's statement clearly indicates, the region's water resources are understood as a shared, valuable component of the landscape, and one

[12] I use the term "tactic" here, based on my reading of Michel de Certeau's highly influential text, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. de Certeau makes a vital theoretical distinction between the terms *strategy* and *tactic*. For de Certeau, a strategy is used by those in power, whereas "a tactic is an art of the weak" (37). de Certeau further elaborates that tactics are not used by those who are "weak" in the literal sense, but instead to those who do not hold power in society and are therefore often required to use wit and trickery to achieve their aims. Based on de Certeau's work, I use the term *everyday rhetorical tactic* to describe what the UFBDA accomplished against the hegemony of the TVA.

that is connected to citizens' everyday lives, and work, therefore clearly demonstrating commons environmental rhetoric. In the rest of this section, I highlight four essential components of commons environmental rhetoric, as theorized through my study of the UFBDA's archival documents, including: (1) the commons as a critique of progress and commercial interests, (2) the importance of protecting recreation and non-human animals, (3) local knowledge of the commons, and (4) maintaining the commons for the future.

Critique of Progress and Commercial interests

Commons environmental rhetoric functions as a critique of progress and commercial interests which seek to commodify and control nature. For example, as the Conservation Council of North Carolina mention in their public hearing statement, "the wishes of commercial interests" and "the plans of those who identity progress" in the proposed TVA project, associate progress in the region "with the volume of concrete poured and the acreage of water impounded" rather than placing value in "our natural environment which so many of us share" (p. 34). Similarly, citizen and UFBDA member Arthur H. Dehon, in his public hearing statement shared that "It never ceases to amaze" him "how ignorant of our critical world environment men with power remain" (p. 249). Further, Dehon continues, "If this T.V.A. program is started and completed, dover 600 families will be uprooted" and therefore the "entire character, environment, and spirit of a unique area on this earth will be lost" (p. 249). Offering a jeremiad that "The world's resources are not inexhaustible," Dehon laments that the TVA dams would be implemented just "So that a generation or two can hopefully be more economically

comfortable" (p. 249) which, in Dehon's view, is certainly not worth the loss of a massive, productive commons landscape. Similarly, Swanannoa resident Ernest R. Lawrence argued that the TVA project which values the TVA's very specific form of development over the agriculture and recreational practices already existing in the area, would make living in the region even more difficult. Lawrence states "The mixture of agriculture, industry and tourism" in western North Carolina is "basically sound" even though, he concedes, "The amount of usable land for all three purposes is dwindling daily" and yet, "more and more people" are relocating to the area "because of the climate, natural beauty" and perceived friendliness of the mountain inhabitants (p. 94). For Lawrence, there is already intense regional competition surrounding existing forms of land use, and therefore the TVA project which would take "about 18,000 acres" out of "individual circulation" is extremely unwise and "is not the way to improve Western Carolina" (p. 94). As these archival records demonstrate, many UFBDA members were worried about the notion of "progress" that the TVA offered, one that for many citizens, came at far too high a price. Through commons environmental rhetoric then, residents found a rhetorical tactic that allowed them to critique notions of progress and the for-profit commercial interests bound up in the TVA's proposed plan for water resource development in western North Carolina.

Protecting Recreation and Non-Human Animals

Commons environmental rhetoric also allows for advocacy on behalf of recreation opportunities and non-human animals. For example, in her statement for the TVA hearing, Jeanette Austin warned about the costs of destroying both local fishing

grounds and fish populations, suggesting that “Obliviating natural fishing and canoeing areas and valuable farming land” in exchange for the TVA’s “mosquito-breeding mud flats, fluctuating lakes that leave boat docks and vacation homes high and dry, along with a 74-mile drainage ditch,” should “be classed as expected costs” in the TVA’s project, “rather than expected benefits” (p. 294). Members of the Twin Rivers Youth Club also expressed concerns for the local fauna, asking TVA “How much of our Wildlife will you kill with your dam”? (p. 194). Further, the Youth stated that “Those deer that live off our beautiful low lands that tourists come from miles to see and count 40 to 60 at a time” will be forced to either move into forest lands or “out to the bust road and be killed” if and when TVA implements its dams, thereby destroying the lands on which the deer graze (p. 194). Citizen R.B. Fuller also expressed concerns for the region’s deer population, while discussing the status quo in terms of hunting and commons environmentalism in the region, stating that “privately owned lands joining and near the Pisgah National Forest now have much more big game per given area than the National Forest” because these landowners “have protected the game here and permitted only a limited number of hunters and have carefully conserved the game” (p. 319). Fuller worries that if these carefully maintained private hunting grounds are eliminated or “purchased” by TVA via eminent domain, “we will soon have no big game and only a smattering of small game” and therefore, Fuller objects “to the TVA becoming the owner of these private game lands” and further urges “that the TVA be denied becoming the owner of these areas throughout the Upper French Broad River” basin (p. 319). As Fuller’s comments demonstrate, many citizens objected to the TVA project because it

would so adversely affect the pre-existing recreation and land management systems within the region. As these archival sources demonstrate, commons environmental rhetoric allows for the advocacy of non-human animals and for existing recreation styles within landscapes that come under attack along with environmental development projects.

Local Knowledge of the Commons

Commons environmental rhetoric also allows practitioners to showcase their local knowledge of the landscape as an intricate part of their daily lives. For example, Rose Blanchard, an undergraduate at the nearby Warren Wilson College, testified at the hearing that when she pictures "Western North Carolina" in her mind she can "see fertile valleys blending into-tree covered mountains" and "rivers and streams flowing in their crooked paths through the valleys" (p. 220). The harmony and beauty Blanchard sees in the landscape is mirrored in the social life of the community as well. Blanchard said, in the Western North Carolina community, she also sees "contented people going about the tasks of raising their crops and educating their children" (p. 220). As Blanchard makes clear, taking care of farmland and the environment is just as much a part of taking care of one's family in the region as well. Another member of the Warren Wilson College Community emphasized the university's approach to a commons system of working the land. For example, one speaker shared how he started working "on the college farm and dairy at 16" where he discovered the "dignity of labor working this land" (p. 279). Further, this student continued that the labor program was not only influential for him as an individual but that "This labor program is a vital part of the

philosophy of Warren Wilson" and that is the TVA dams are constructed, flowing the land and taking "away the farm land, the beef cattle pastures, the pig lots, the auto-mechanics service center" then you might as well "cut out a piece of the heart of Warren Wilson" (p. 279). Work on and in the landscape extended beyond the Warren Wilson campus however. For example, in his statement, local citizen Billy Edd Wheeler confronted TVA officials with the following knowledge of his local landscape and the work his community members typically do. Wheeler stated, "I am a farmer and you tell me it will be for the common good if I give up my barns and my church and that this shoreline will be divided and subdivided so that people with more money than I have can buy lots of and build summer houses and run their expensive boats over the spaces where I have toiled and earned a living and learned and loved and raised my children" (p. 280). As these statements illustrate the UFBDA and their supporters expressed concern at the TVA hearing because of their use and connection through work to the landscape. Commons environmental rhetoric, therefore, helps highlight the connections between where people live and work. Rather than emphasizing nature as a pristine wilderness located "out there" and apart from humans, commons environmental rhetoric emphasizes the interconnectedness of people and place.

In its emphasis on local knowledge and localized ways of life, commons environmental rhetoric is also connected to religious ideals, particularly the Judeo-Christian notion of men as the stewards of God's earth. For example, Perry L. Stone expressed his understanding of how people should care for the commons as follows: "Man is the steward, manager or caretaker of God's holy earth, and must give account

to the divide owner of his use of it" (p. 231). For Stone, the notion of Stewardship comes with great responsibility in terms of land use. Stone elaborates that "God has given man dominion over his handiwork but that does not mean the right to mar its beauty, consume its resources prodigally, rob the soil of fertility, poison the streams, pollute the atmosphere, or violently upset the ecology by which all human, animal and plant life is sustained in this thin envelope of soil, air and water which surrounds the planet" (p. 231). Similarly, Frank D. Bell also invokes Christian principles in his discussion of the western North Carolina environment. Bell states, "Even if God did make a mistake in making the mountain slopes steep and the rainfall abundant" and therefore making floods a likely, if not frequent flooding, but, as Bell continues "a lot of us mountaineers like it the way it is" (p. 262). Bell advocates for keeping "some of creation like the Lord made it" such as "trees that free oxygen from its compounds and put it back into the market" (p. 262). As these artifacts demonstrate, the UFBDA often connected their understanding of care for the earth to Christian principles of stewardship and dominion, further emphasizing the connections between ideals about nature and citizens' everyday lives. Commons environmental rhetoric, as a product and process, emphasizes the interconnectedness of local cultures with their surrounding commons landscape.

Commons for the Future

Commons environmental rhetoric, as theorized through the study of the UFBDA, also emphasizes the importance of preserving and maintaining the commons for future generations. For example, as Brittain shared in his public hearing statement, "Whenever

I visit the Mills River Valley, I always climb up to the top of Brittain's Mountain to look at the beautiful panoramic view of the community and to marvel that is [sic] changed so little over the past thirty years" (p. 54). Brittain continues "I would like to be able to" continue viewing the landscape "for another thirty years unless a much more persuasive case for its destruction can be made than I have yet heard" (54). Clearly for Brittain, the TVA plan and its associated dams are nowhere near as valuable as the preservation of the commons itself. Similarly, Mrs. Willis A. Eggler stated at the public hearing that "We are not the only generations to use, to enjoy, this land; it came to us as a heritage, it is our privilege and our duty to hold it, unscathed, for the generations who will follow us" (236). Further, Mrs. Eggler continues, "True, the land has suffered injury, but today we know enough to being to mend some of man's past mistakes, and to avoid adding others" (p. 236). Much like Dr. Brittain, Mrs. Eggler sees the commons as worth protecting for future generations, rather than destroying the same landscape for the sake of "progress." UFBDA member Elmer W. Johnson also emphasized the need to protect the land for future generations in his hearing statement, urging citizens to "Leave an option for future generations" and continuing, "Don't hand over our rivers and valleys to power hungry, self-perpetuating bureaucrats and politicians, who are unresponsive to 'We the people'" (p. 253). In another statement, presented on behalf of the Friends of the Earth environmental organization, Johnson again urged against the damming of the French Broad, stating "Proceeding with dams and channelization in the French Broad River Basin deprives future generations of any say regarding water resources" and further, "the rate at which we are building dams and channelizing streams there will not

be many natural free-flowing bodies of water left by the end of this century" (p. 38). As these artifacts illuminate, the UFBDA, through their use of commons environmental rhetoric not only emphasized the ways in which the commons was connected to the daily lives of citizens at the time, but also looking ahead to how future generations could use this landscape as well. Commons environmental rhetoric, therefore, not only highlights the ways in which nature and human nature are intertwined in the present, but also looks to the future to protect that symbiotic relationship.

As I have described in this section, the UBFDA enacting commons environmental rhetoric in their comments, statements, and flyers discussing the TVA's proposed project. Commons environmental rhetoric, as I have theorized here differs from wilderness in that it emphasizes the ways in which humans live within natural environments, rather than casting nature as "out there" and far off from peoples' daily lives. More specifically, my analysis of commons environmental rhetoric through the UFBDA case study demonstrates that this form of environmental rhetoric, can, in practice, help rhetors (1) critique progress and commercial interests in development projects (2) advocate for the protection of recreation and non-human animals, (3) emphasizes local knowledge of the commons, and (4) advocates for the commons looking into the future.

Conclusion

Wilderness, as an idea, looms large over ecological thought in the U.S. As I have discussed in this chapter, however, the notion of wilderness is certainly not a perfect, much less a productive base for environmentalism as a social movement. I agree with

environmental historian Donald Worster that “sometimes wilderness defenders have hurt their cause” by advocating for wilderness *places* while maintaining a strict emphasis on wilderness as an *idea*, which ultimately “alienates thoughtful people and lacks any social compassion” for different ways that people experience and interact with the environment (222). While my discussion of the wilderness debate and the nature-culture divide demonstrate that I am not an advocate for strict wilderness ideals, the wilderness movement is certainly a powerful sector within environmentalism. For example, in their analysis of discourse community within American environmentalism, Carmichael et al. have highlighted wilderness as one of three mainstream discourses within the movement, along with conservation/wildlife management and reform environmentalism (pp. 423-424). In addition to these three mainstream discourses, Carmichael et al. have also identified “six alternative discourses that present themselves as more authentic than the mainstream” including “environmental justice, ecospiritualism, ecofeminism, green/antiglobalization, deep ecology, and animal rights” (pp. 423-424). In their analysis of environmentalist discourses, Carmichael et al point to future research regarding “whether these discourses are mutual,” working to “legitimate and promote one another” or whether they “are competitive, that is vying for resources in the same niche space” (425). In my analysis of the environmental rhetoric, I found that the wilderness discourse is certainly competitive, silencing other forms of environmental interaction, and environmental activism. In contrast I have offered commons environmental rhetoric as a discursive manifestation of commons

environmentalism, and one that should be acknowledged as one of the discourse communities within environmentalism as well.

As I have discussed in this chapter, commons environmental rhetoric offers a new path forward to understanding and writing about the environment. Rather than understanding nature as apart from humanity, commons environmental rhetoric emphasizes "everyday nature" and the myriad ways in which the natural world is both intertwined and a product of human culture, and vice versa. As the Joseph LeConte Chapter of the Sierra Club reiterated in their hearing statement directed towards TVA, "We call upon the TVA to try to learn a new lesson" and "Instead of dominating and destroying nature, we invite them to turn their staff to methods of accommodating themselves to nature and learning to live with it as a part of it" (p. 28). If the TVA were to see themselves as a part of, rather than apart from nature, the Sierra Club Members insisted, then TVA officials would understand "that they must leave the Mills River Valley and the Upper French Broad undammed" (pp. 29-30). By invoking commons environmental rhetoric, the UFBDA were able to clearly highlight how the landscape was already in use, thereby highlighting land use opportunities that would be destroyed by the dams. Commons environmental rhetoric helps environmental organizations demonstrate the ways in which the environment is enmeshed and involved in local life, thereby not constructing nature as a human-less wilderness, but a place where much more is at stake if the landscape is threatened or destroyed. Commons environmental rhetoric, then, as an approach to environmental rhetoric, may offer future environmental activists a path forward towards land preservation that recognizes local knowledge and

can help preserve environments from destruction and degradation in the name of "progress."

Chapter 6: Rhetorical Citizenship, Generativity, & Greeting

> *"Win or lose, we have made up our minds to fight TVA on every sector and every front, so that it will recognize its moment of truth—namely that in this day and time, people cannot be pushed around at the whim of bureaucracy. As things stand now, we have fought TVA to a standstill up to the present and foreseeable future. It is with the more distant future that we are concerned."*
>
> —Alex Duris in a letter to Martha Gash Boswell, dated Sept. 2, 1969 (UFBDA Box 1a Correspondence, Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers Correspondence, 1969" 3, Letter from Alex Duris to Martha Boswell dated Sept. 2, 1969).
>
> *"We remain steadfast in our opposition to this project. It costs more than it's worth; it destroys more than it conserves; it is an arbitrary and capricious use of the powers vested in the Tennessee Valley Authority."*
>
> —*Jere A. Brittain in a letter to John Barron of the Tennessee Valley Authority dated September 28, 1972* (UFBDA Box 1d Correspondence, Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers Correspondence, 1972")

Scholars of rhetoric and writing studies have long been interested in the intersections between rhetoric and civic life. As Celeste Condit writes, "Rhetorical theorists have, not doubt, long been entangled in efforts for social change" arguing that "Cicero was both the foremost rhetorical theorist of his era and an active Roman politician" (120). Since the ancient days of Cicero, rhetorical studies scholars have continued to study the role of rhetoric and the public, as contributors to the acclaimed collection *The Public Work of Rhetoric* highlight "local communities as places where we as citizen-scholars also encounter and address myriad issues that make life as a citizen and neighbor both challenging and rewarding" (ix). Overall, this collection highlights "how we enter into public problems in our communities," and how "the community can

be a resource that is an invaluable resource" for civic education (xii). While citizenship and citizen rhetoric has been a focus within the field at large for quite some time, civic discourse has been less of a concern for many scholars in environmental rhetoric.

For many scholars in environmental rhetoric, citizenship is often seen as important for isolated acts involving public deliberation, but is not often identified as a continued necessity for success in environmental activism. Environmental rhetorician Beth Jorgensen has identified this lack of emphasis on citizenship in the field and encourages environmental rhetoricians and practitioners of environmental rhetoric to keep an emphasis on civic life in mind in their work. Jorgensen argues, "we need to keep sight of our roots in rhetoric as a practice of democratic citizenship" and relatedly, environmental rhetoricians "need to engage readings and discussions that explore rhetorical and technical choices in terms of social and/or environmental justice" (*Topic-Driven Environmental Rhetoric* 77). Jorgensen recommends not only incorporating civic concerns into environmental justice research, but also making our findings more applicable to *actual* citizens. Jorgensen writes, "we need to direct projects toward civic empowerment" so that our students "can carry their empowerment to" real-world scenarios that influence their lives such as higher education administrators and "back to their neighborhoods" (*Topic-Driven* 77). For the following chapter, drawing exigence from Jorgensen and the need to reintegrate citizenship into studies in environmental rhetoric, I demonstrate the ways in which rhetorical citizenship functioned as an entry point to ordinary democracy for members of the UFBDA, particularly as they enacted sociability as discussed by Robert Asen and Iris Marion Young. Overall, this chapter

demonstrates another successful rhetorical tactic used by the UFBDA, namely that of rhetorical citizenship, and also highlights how this rhetorical tool has implications and serves as an example for contemporary environmental rhetoric as well.

UFBDA members enacted rhetorical citizenship as one of their key rhetorical tactics. As a practice, rhetorical citizenship helped the UFBDA secure their political success in the "dam fight." In the following of analysis of rhetorical citizenship also draws on Robert Asen's discourse theory of citizenship, particularly as the group generated sociability among other citizen groups and politicians across the western North Carolina region. While rhetorical citizenship with an emphasis on sociability helps us understand the UFBDA's efforts to collaborate with other civic groups and political leaders, this theory does not account for the UFBDA's immense local knowledge, which also contributed to their rhetorical success in expressing opposition to TVA's proposed dam project. Rhetorical citizenship allows us to trace both the "top down" (i.e. public) and "bottom up" (i.e. private) rhetoric occurring in instances of ordinary democracy. UFBDA were both recipients of TVA public rhetoric and displayed/invented their own rhetorical messaging.

Rhetorical Citizenship & Generativity

Rhetorical citizenship, as conceived by rhetoricians Christian Kock and Lisa Villadsen, is particularly useful to the present study of the UFBDA because it refers to how people are involved with both public rhetoric as recipients, and by expressing their own rhetorical agency. As Kock and Villadsen suggest, rhetorical citizenship operates "as a conceptual frame" which accentuates "the fact that legal rights, privileges, and

material conditions are not the only constituents of citizenship" but rather, "discourse that takes place between citizens is arguably more basic to what it means to be a citizen" (*Rhetorical Citizenship* 11). Further, Kock and Villadsen write, that rhetorical citizenship "unites under one heading citizens' own discursive exchanges," whether "in public or in private conversation" (*Rhetorical Citizenship* 13). In other words, the authors suggest that rhetorical citizenship emphasizes both "the active or *participatory* aspect of citizenship, and the public discourse of which citizens are the *recipients* (*Rhetorical Citizenship* 13). Rhetorical citizenship, therefore, offers a productive model for integrating "two complementary aspects" of civic rights, as "one the one hand, there are *rights* that we, as citizens are accorded" and "on the other hand there is all that which other citizens are entitled to expect from *us*, precisely because we are citizens" (*Rhetorical Citizenship* 14). Rhetorical citizenship is a particularly useful rhetorical lens for the study of the UFBDA presented here because it helps me understand the ways in which the UFBDA *both* interacted with public rhetoric—particularly the messages and plans from the TVA as well as their own public messages, statements, and flyers—*and* developed and shared their own private discourse—particularly in terms of information shared via correspondence from citizens who worked together to officially form the UFBDA in 1970.

Rhetorical citizenship is also particularly effective for the study presented here because of the specific types of questions this theory allows me to ask and what this theory offers in terms of rhetorical interventions. Because rhetorical citizenship focuses on "how citizens actually engage each other across various forms of public information

allows us to both consider the macro and micro practices" involved in sharing knowledge (Kock and Villadsen 9). Accordingly, rhetorical citizenship allows me to ask, "What possibilities—and obstacles—are there for 'ordinary' citizens to engage in public discourse?" (Kock and Villadsen 10). As I argue in this chapter, citizen members of the UFBDA created additional opportunities to engage in public discourse by engaging in generativity and creating new relationships with existing civic organizations. Similarly, rhetorical citizenship, as a concept, is less focused on "what a particular utterance is like, or how effective it is," but instead addressed "how suited" discourse "is to constructive civic interaction" (Kock and Villadsen 11). Accordingly, as Kock and Villadsen describe, "thinking of rhetorical citizenship becomes an impetus for forging more explicit links between particular utterances and their role in the maintenance and development of civic life" thereby emphasizing the "*critical and social potential* of rhetoric" in terms of the "was we 'do' citizenship discursively and the way we talk about how society are both constitutive or and influential on what civic society is and how it develops" (*Rhetorical Citizenship* 13). Therefore, rhetorical citizenship helps us ask how ordinary citizens can both engage in public discourse, and, more importantly, how particular artifacts of discourse can further encourage and boost more public discourse and deliberation. As the archival sources discussed in this chapter demonstrate, the UFBDA made a clear and concerted effort to work alongside other citizens and to encourage and even create more opportunities for public deliberation, thereby engaging in rhetorical citizenship as an access point to everyday democracy.

While I will make the case in this chapter that UFBDA members enacted rhetorical citizenship in their "dam fight" against the TVA, Robert Asen's discourse theory of citizenship also offers a crucial theoretical component to understanding the specific ways in which the UFBDA engaged in civic discourse, namely the notion of generativity. In his essay, "A Discourse Theory of Citizenship," Robert Asen "calls for a reorientation in scholarly approaches to civic engagement" from "asking questions of *what* to asking questions of *how*" (Asen, emphasis added, p. 189). Asen argues that his discourse theory, based in *how* citizens encounter civic life allows scholars to attend to the "modalities of citizenship" and recognizes citizenship's "fluid and quotidian enactment and considers action that is purposeful, potentially uncontrollable and unruly" and supportive of radical but achievable democratic practices" (189). As a means for assessing the modalities of civic life, Asen identifies five potential foci for the study of citizen engagement including, "how citizenship engagement proceeds generatively, exhibits risk, affirms commitment, expresses creativity, and fosters sociability" (198). While the UFBDA arguably engages in each of these modalities to a varying degree, the group's generativity is most clear and directly demonstrates the means through which they engage in rhetorical citizenship. Asen suggests that in order to understand how "citizenship engagement proceeds generatively," scholars can examine "the ways that citizenship engagement expands discursive space by widening public agendas and inviting greater participation" (199). Asen is also careful to acknowledge that within generativity, "The value of greater participation" in civic engagement "lies not in its quantitative but its qualitative contributions" (199). Further, Asen argues that "more

voices" in a generative public sphere "bolster public agendas because they raise distinct perspectives and encourage different ways of participating" (199). In the following section, I will demonstrate how the UFBDA engaged in a generative form of rhetorical citizenship in their "dam fight" against the TVA, in my analysis of the group's archival sources.

Rhetorical Citizenship and Generativity in UFBDA Correspondence

In the archives, I found several examples of generativity and rhetorical citizenship in the correspondence between activists that would formally become members of the UFBDA in 1970. As mentioned in the historical overview chapter of this dissertation (Chapter 4), the UFBDA officially formed in 1970 as a coming together of several citizen group across the four counties affected by the TVA plan. In a letter dated Sept. 2, 1969, Alex Duris, who would later become UFBDA treasurer, wrote to Martha Gash Boswell, who would go on to become the UFBDA's corresponding secretary, complementing Boswell's organizing efforts and discussing the ways in which his local organization distinguished between their "public" and "private" opinions regarding the TVA project. Duris writes, "A number of us here in Henderson County who have been fighting to save our homes from TVA, have heard on a number of occasions now that you have been very helpful to us in taking an interest in our plight and have been busy of your own accord in helping defeat the present concept of the so called flood program" (UFBDA Box 1a Correspondence, Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers Correspondence, 1969" 3, Letter from Alex Duris to Martha Boswell dated Sept. 2, 1969). Further, Duris suggests that members of his group are not opposed to *all* forms

of flood control, but are rather opposed to the TVA program, given all of its associated costs. Duris writes, “We have at public meetings, in print and privately stated that we recognize the need for a common sense flood program which would be adequate to do the job without the total destruction of lands and homes than the program professes to protect” ” (UFBDA Box 1a Correspondence, Folder “UFB Defense Ass’n Papers Correspondence, 1969” 3, Letter from Alex Duris to Martha Boswell dated Sept. 2, 1969).

Duris’s Sept. 2, 1969 letter to Boswell also describes another key tactic by the UFBDA that demonstrates their enactment of rhetorical citizenship through generativity: their “KEEP TVA OUT OF WNC” bumper sticker campaign. Duris informs Boswell that his local group’s “latest project is the placing of auto bumper stickers” on cars in the affected counties (UFBDA Box 1a Correspondence, Folder “UFB Defense Ass’n Papers Correspondence, 1969” 3, Letter from Alex Duris to Martha Boswell dated Sept. 2, 1969). Duris was not only informing Boswell of his local effort, but also, as a mark of generativity, inviting her to use a bumper sticker as a way to communicate to others about the TVA’s potentially devastating project. Duris wrote to Boswell, “I would appreciate it, if you would use the enclosed sticker either as a conversation piece or wear it on the bumper of your car” (UFBDA Box 1a Correspondence, Folder “UFB Defense Ass’n Papers Correspondence, 1969” 3, Letter from Alex Duris to Martha Boswell dated Sept. 2, 1969). Duris also made it clear that more of these stickers could be mailed to any of Boswell’s fellow activists in Brevard, should they want any. Duris’s correspondence with Boswell here is an excellent example of the generativity between

various citizen groups within western North Carolina. By working together among different burgeoning civic groups, the activists who would go on to form the UFBDA, laid significant rhetorical ground work, crafting their own messages and circulating their own public rhetoric, all while working to point out the inconsistencies in the TVA's project.

After their first correspondence over the TVA's plan, Duris and Boswell continued their communication and sociable collaboration. In a letter dated Sept. 10, 1969, Duris relays to Boswell that another concerned citizen, Dr. Jere Brittain, of the Mills River community had recently emerged as a powerful speaker and advocate for citizens opposed to TVA's plan. Duris reported that "For over 4 hours," Brittain "had L.D. Hyde, and the representative of the TVA on the hot griddle at a public meeting" (UFBDA Box 1a Correspondence, Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers Correspondence, 1969" 3, Letter from Alex Duris to Martha Boswell dated Sept. 10, 1969). Duris was clearly impressed with Brittain as an orator, writing to Boswell, "should you want an outside speaker at a public rally or the Citizens and Taxpayers League, I o believe you would have to search quite diligently to fine one as good as he is" (UFBDA Box 1a Correspondence, Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers Correspondence, 1969" 3, Letter from Alex Duris to Martha Boswell dated Sept. 2, 1969). Further, Duris encourages Boswell to contact Brittain directly, providing her with his phone number and address. The correspondence between Duris and Boswell demonstrates the generativity between the two and their inclination towards working together proved an important tactic for the later formation of the UFBDA.

Boswell did, in fact, begin to correspond with Dr. Brittain, further expanding her network of followers to the North and South Mills River Community Club, which Brittain coordinated. In a letter dated Jan. 26, 1970, Boswell wrote to Brittain discussing an upcoming Citizens and Taxpayers League about the proposed TVA project and expressed how she hoped that this gathering would include talks from both Brittain and Duris (UFBDA Box 1b Correspondence, Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers Correspondence, 1970" Letter from Martha Boswell to Jere Brittain, dated Jan. 10, 1970). In this letter, Boswell not only continues to build social relationships between civic groups, she also enacts rhetorical citizenship as she describes the ways in which public rhetoric from the TVA influenced both the policy decisions *and* the ways in which the UFBDA crafted their rebuttal to the Authority's discourse. For example, Boswell informs Brittain that she received a letter from Senator Jordan in which he informed her that "scientific reports and letters from the state led him to support TVA" (UFBDA Box 1b Correspondence, Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers Correspondence, 1970" Letter from Martha Boswell to Jere Brittain, dated Jan. 10, 1970). Boswell also informed Brittain that she was planning to send an annotated copy of Brittain's own researched report about the "TVA boondoggle" to Senator Jordan, along with another report from state representative Charles Taylor describing alternatives to TVA's plan. (UFBDA Box 1b Correspondence, Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers Correspondence, 1970" Letter from Martha Boswell to Jere Brittain, dated Jan. 10, 1970). Boswell's correspondence with Brittain not only shows the generativity and continued collaboration between disparate county-level anti-TVA organizations, but also makes it clear that the members

of the UFBDA were not simply recipients of TVA's public rhetoric, but also felt fully capable of retorting the Authority's claim that their plan for the region was the only option.

As mentioned in the historic overview chapter of this dissertation (Chapter 4), the UFBDA did not officially form until the fall of 1970. However, in the weeks and months leading up to the UFBDA official amalgamation, each of the civic groups across the four affected counties continued their organizing efforts. In the group's correspondence from summer 1970, it is clear that there was a flurry of activity, and more importantly that group members were strategizing about how their more "private' discussions would influence their public reaction to the TVA's policies. For example, in a letter dated, May 31, 1970, Alex Duris informed Martha Gash Boswell that his local group had met the following evening in order to "discuss plans for putting out case before our countycommissioners [sic] and more important[ly], before the public" (UFBDA Box 1b Correspondence, Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers Correspondence, 1970" Letter from Alex Duris to Martha Boswell, dated May 31, 1970). Duris reports that "We came to the conclusion after examining many facets that we would not at this time ask for a meeting with our commissioners because all we have gotten from them in the past was evasions and no commitments" (UFBDA Box 1b Correspondence, Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers Correspondence, 1970" Letter from Martha Boswell to Jere Brittain, dated Jan. 10, 1970). Further, Duris relays that "we plan, say in early October to hold a public meeting to invite residents of all five counties under the sponsorship of the Community Development Council" (UFBDA Box

1b Correspondence, Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers Correspondence, 1970" Letter from Martha Boswell to Jere Brittain, dated Jan. 10, 1970). According to Duris, at this later meeting, his group planned "to ask a representative of TVA, the UFBEDC, the county commissioners of Henderson County, somebody like Charles Taylor, Mr. Smart, Jere Brittain, and public personalities to engage in a round table discussion-debate of the issues involved in the TVA program" (UFBDA Box 1b Correspondence, Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers Correspondence, 1970" Letter from Martha Boswell to Jere Brittain, dated Jan. 10, 1970). In this letter, it is clear that the Duris-led faction of anti-TVA activists clearly worked behind the scenes to craft their messages in civic meetings.

Similarly, the correspondence between Jere Brittain and Martha Gash Boswell in June 1970 demonstrates the continued collaboration across county lines. Boswell wrote to Brittain that "It was a pleasure to have you and Mrs. Brittain meet with our group and your address was full of interest and stimulation for our members" (UFBDA Box 1b Correspondence, Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers Correspondence, 1970" Letter from Martha Boswell to Jere Brittain, dated June, 23, 1970). Further, Boswell wrote that she hoped Brittain's appearance at the Transylvania-county based Citizens and Taxpayers League would "lead to closer collaboration between the workers" in the two counties, commenting that Brittain's "lovely pictures" and message would not be easily forgotten (UFBDA Box 1b Correspondence, Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers Correspondence, 1970" Letter from Martha Boswell to Jere Brittain, dated June, 23, 1970).

The UFBDA also used letters to reach out to more civic groups for potential information sharing sessions and collaborations. In an undated [but probably fall 1970/winter 1971 because identifies UFBDA as “newly formed”] letter signed by the founding members of the UFBDA the group states the UFBDA was recently formed “to defend and preserve certain natural and human resources of the Upper French Broad Valley, especially those valuable lands and communities lying within the flood plains of the proposed Tennessee Valley Authority impoundments.” (UFBDA Box 1d Correspondence, Folder “UFB Defense Ass’n Papers Correspondence, n.d.” Undated Newsletter). In this newsletter, the UFBDA announce their formation of a speakers bureau, writing, “We would like to present to your organization the reasons why we are opposed to the T.V.A. plan, and to offer for your information the advantages and reasons for the alternative program of true flood control thru the use of headwater dams and not impoundments which will destroy our most beautiful and productive valleys” (UFBDA Box 1d Correspondence, Folder “UFB Defense Ass’n Papers Correspondence, n.d.” Undated Newsletter). In the closing remarks of this newsletter, the UFBDA included a phone number for contact and the following: “If you would like to have one of our speakers for a program, or if you would like to receive our literature for distribution to your members, please contact us” (UFBDA Box 1d Correspondence, Folder “UFB Defense Ass’n Papers Correspondence, n.d.” Undated Newsletter). In this newsletter, we see direct evidence of the UFBDA’s generativity as they offer to share information while presenting for other civic organizations.

Recollections of Rhetorical Citizenship and Generativity in Oral Histories

Evidence of the UFBDA's enactment of rhetorical citizenship and generativity is also clear in two key oral history interviews, conducted in 1983 with UFBDA group members, Martha Gash Boswell, and Elmer W. Johnson. These interviews—conducted separately by Ron Holland of the Western Office of Archives and History in Asheville, North Carolina—show the myriad ways in which the UFBDA's formation was a communal effort across diverse citizens groups in order to garner support for their anti-TVA platform. As discussed in Chapter 4, the UFBDA did not officially form until 1970, although there were citizens writing and sharing information each other about the TVA plan following its initial release in 1961. In the nine years between the TVA's proposal release and the official formation of the UFBDA, concerned citizens across the region enacted rhetorical citizenship with attention towards generativity as a way to create new opportunities and modalities for public participation in the decision over whether or not to place dams along the French Broad River.

Martha Gash Boswell's oral history interview sheds light on the ways in which the concerned citizens who would later form the UFBDA first began sharing information with their neighbors in order to voice their concerns about the TVA proposal. As Boswell recalled, "The first organized effort" to oppose the TVA "came from the Mills River and Little River Community clubs, supported by local Baptist churches and by neighbors along the river" (22). The Mills River efforts, led by Dr. Jere Brittain—who would later become UFBDA chairman—became a "focal point" in the region for citizens opposing the dams (pp. 22-23). Boswell recalls that in the Little River Community, "the people

were particularly bitter because their valley would almost be totally destroyed" by the TVA dams (p. 22). Fearing what the TVA would do to their fertile agricultural lands, the Little River "dam fighters," led by Brittain, completed incredibly creative information-gathering missions: "they actually hired an airplane and sent a delegation to Congress to plead for help" (Boswell interview, p. 22). In the Hendersonville community, Boswell identified Alex Duris as the leader of the anti-TVA efforts, describing home as "a one-man publicity office, sending streams of letters to the press, and to (conservation) publications, and spreading propaganda in all directions" (22). Hearing of the burgeoning efforts in Mills River and Hendersonville, Boswell formed her own group to combat the growing support for TVA. According to Boswell, "In Brevard, support for TVA and progress were so strong, that the first efforts were cloaked under the name of 'Citizens and Taxpayers League'" (22). Boswell's recollections not only help us understand how the initial citizens' groups were created among the affected counties, but she also makes the generativity clear across county lines, as these burgeoning groups began collaborating and sharing information. For example, Boswell's Citizens and Taxpayers League "invited Little River to share a report by Charles Taylor, on the financial disaster involved in TVA impoundments" (22). Boswell also recalled the valuable collaborations with Dr. Brittain of the Little River community within Mills River, noting that Brittain "made a very fine set of slides for illustrations for his speech and we invited him to come to Brevard" and invited his group of "dam fighters" in Little River to hear his presentation as well (22). For Boswell, this collaboration clearly marked the beginning of the path towards forming a larger, multi-community organization, as she

said, “and in that way we began building toward a regular organization” (p. 23). As Boswell’s oral history demonstrates, the early efforts of the citizens who would eventually form the UFBDA, consisted of clear collaborations among citizen groups, and this generative approach offered new opportunities for citizens looking to share information and speak out about the TVA’s proposal for the Upper French Broad.

In his oral history interview, UFBDA member E.W. Johnson offered similar recollections regarding the generativity and rhetorical citizenship of regional residents concerned about the TVA dams. For example, Johnson recalled that Henderson County resident Alex Duris “had written several letters to the Asheville paper about the TVA project” and that is how Johnson first learned of the dam proposal. Johnson recalled that Boswell “had picked up his letters and had contacted him” asking him to share information with the Citizens and Taxpayers League she had formed in Brevard. Johnson, also a resident of Brevard, stated that Boswell got a number of local citizens together on multiple occasions to “listen to what Alex and Mr. Brittain had to say about the TVA project” (Johnson interview, p. 1). By inviting Duris and Brittain to present at Citizens and Taxpayers League meetings, Boswell is not only encouraging the sharing of information about the pending TVA project, but is also engaging in a generative form of rhetorical citizenship, giving Duris and Brittain new avenues and new opportunities for public participation. In describing the Citizens and Taxpayer League, Johnson described it as a “very loose organization” without “a regular chairman of the group” so at each meeting the members “would decide who would be chairman of the next meeting,” and it was up to that designated chairman “to call the next meeting” (1). Further, according

to Johnson, the Citizens and Taxpayers League was “just a group of people who would see something needeed, [sic] public attention,” and would “just get together” (pp. 1-2). According to Johnson, the number of attendees at League meetings was flexible, “it was sort of a fluid group of people” ranging from “eight to ten people at a meeting” and “sometimes 25 or 30, depending on whatever the issue happened to be” (pp. 1-2). Similar to Boswell, Johnson also acknowledges that prior to the official 1970 formation of the UFBDA, “there had been individuals working without being organized and without having an official name for an organization” (Johnson 1). Johnson’s personal level and style of engagement with the TVA project also demonstrates tremendous generativity through rhetorical citizenship. When asked how he was most heavily involved in the ‘dam fight,’ Johnson replied: “Publicity and spreading, getting a ground swell started by appearing before all sorts of organizations, civic groups, church groups, and sometimes just a more or less extemporaneous groups [sic] would be called together” (Johnson interview, p. 2). Further Johnson shared that the “dam fighters” would “give our program to anyone that would listen to us” offering their knowledge “at various meetings in Asheville and Hendersonville, Brevard, various schools throughout the county, community groups of all kinds and then of course we tried to get publicity into the paper’s eye” (Johnson interview p. 2). As the involvement and activity of both Boswell and Johnson illustrate, even before the official formation of the UFBDA, citizens were extremely busy sharing information about the TVA proposal, and most importantly, completing the vital rhetorical work of creating new and expansive avenues for discourse among citizens.

Evidence of Generativity in Boswell's "Grassroots"

Martha Gash Boswell, as dedicated member and corresponding secretary of the UFBDA wrote an unpublished booklet chronicling the UFBDA's efforts entitled, "Grassroots Along the Upper French Broad: The Valley People Versus the Tennessee Valley Authority, 1961-1972." In addition to providing a condensed historical overview of the UFBDA's "dam fight" with the TVA, "Grassroots" provides insight into the ways in which the UFBDA enacted rhetorical citizenship through their generativity with other groups in the western North Carolina region during the decade they spent actively opposing the TVA. Through rhetorical citizenship infused with generativity, the UFBDA members worked to create more opportunities for public discourse and public participation in the debate over whether or not to dam the French Broad River's 14 tributaries. For example, as Boswell writes in "Grassroots," the members of what would become the UFBDA rallied around up and coming politician Charles Taylor, who running for state representative as a Republican in 1966, offered much needed reprieve for the dam fighters, with his crucial platform slogan, "Stop TVA!" (10). For Boswell, Taylor's emergence onto the state political scene was a vital component of the UFBDA's eventual success, but was also a culmination of deep-seated and diverse concerns within North Carolina at the time. As Boswell writes in "Grassroots," "Progressives of both parties" were becoming increasingly "dissatisfied with local policies, "particularly with regard to conditions in our Black community, where improvements in housing, roads, and recreation had been long delayed" (10). Similarly, according to Boswell, "there was growing uneasiness with respect to" local government

officials “and their hidden dealings with TVA” (10). Therefore, rallying around and behind Charles Taylor’s campaign was incredibly generative for stopping TVA, improving conditions for marginalized populations within the community.

Boswell also describes the ways in which the dam fighters engaged in rhetorical citizenship and generativity across existing civic organizations in western North Carolina. For example, Boswell describes how “At Little River” in Mills River, “Rev. Jesse Bailey kept us in touch with his congregation of heart workers through the regular church bulletin” (16). The inclusion of UFBDA concerns in the church newsletter certainly gave the UFBDA a wider audience and in fact gave them the chance to potentially inform and even influence church goers who may have been otherwise unaware of the TVA proposal. Similarly, Boswell reports that “Morris Hawkins” served as UFBDA “spokesman at the Community Club” in Mills River and “his wife preserved important records” pertaining to the TVA opposition in “her prize-winning scrapbook” (16). Boswell also commented on this generative form of civic engagement surrounding the UFBDA efforts, writing “From so many angles ours was a truly grassroots organization” and one which operated “in neighborly fashion from the kitchens of Mills River and Little River, from Austin Art Shop in Brevard, from Dorothy Rhoades’ parlor in Asheville, through the Biltmore Forest Garden Club, and from gas stations and country stories along the river” (16). As Boswells account demonstrates, the dam fighters created new avenues for public participation, and new locations of and methods for sharing information with local residents, all of which are key components of rhetorical citizenship and generativity. These localized efforts, were, in fact, particularly

generative, as Boswell describes in “Grassroots” that “It was from station and store that we gathered thousands of signatures for our petitions” to hold a TVA public hearing and many of the individuals who signed these documents, also endorsed the UFBDA’s anti-TVA sentiments “later at the polls,” even if they were never enrolled members in the UFBDA (16). As Boswell’s account and my analysis demonstrate, the UFBDA engaged in rhetorical citizenship as they encouraged information dissemination and discourse among citizens in various, generative ways in their pursuit of the termination of TVA’s project. In the following section, however, I will focus on one particular form of the UFBDA’s generative civic engagement, particularly, the sharing of food at public gatherings.

Food as a Generative Greeting in Rhetorical Citizenship

The UFBDA employed a number of methods to encourage rhetorical citizenship and create generative paths toward public participation in the TVA dam controversy. However, in this section I want to highlight the UFBDA’s use of providing and sharing food as a particularly generative strategy for civic engagement. In my analysis of food as a generative greeting in this section, I draw heavily on the work of Iris Marion Young’s work in *Inclusion and Democracy* both in terms of the role of citizens’ discussion and sharing food as a means to increase opportunities for public engagement. For example, Young writes, “Private mumblings about a perceived problem break into a more public discussion in civil society, leading to citizens organizing to promote wider discussion of the problem and of ways for government to address it” (3). Young’s quote on how civic issues become a matter of concern is similar

to the notion of rhetorical citizenship and generativity discussed thus far, because both emphasize the importance of creating new, broader avenues for discussion and deliberation surrounding controversies. In addition to this shared emphasis on the importance of citizen discourse, Young also provides necessary notions of how we can perceive food as a generative greeting in instances of rhetorical citizenship.

Young's discussion of greetings help us understand *why* ordinary citizens often feel excluded and ignored in instances of public deliberation. For example, Young writes, "It is not uncommon to hear a complaint from individuals or groups who have tried to make claims and arguments in a political discussion" and have, in turn, "been ignored, or worse, spoken about by others as though they were not there, deprecated, stereotyped, or otherwise insulted" (58). As discussed throughout this dissertation, there are many limits and hindrances to engaging in public deliberation, as exhibited in the UFBDA case study. However, Young also helps us see that citizens can *incite* a public acknowledgement, or a greeting, in order to receive the much needed recognition that they are often denied in public discussion and debate. For Young, "situations of political communication, in which participants explicitly acknowledge the other participants" as in the case of a greeting, "are more substantively inclusive than those that do not" (57). In other words, what is at stake in the study of greetings is an "expanded conception of political communication," one that can help "those who wish to design inclusive deliberative practices with more attentive ways of allowing for and evaluating the contributions people and groups make to political discussion" (80). Young also highlights that greetings have "a very important place, moreover, in situations of

communication among parties who have a problem or a conflict, and try to reach some solution through discussion" (59). Young's theorization of deliberation, and greetings in particular, make it clear that this theoretical intervention is useful for the study of the UFBDA because it emphasizes how and why citizens may turn towards a greeting in practice and how theoretically, emphasizing the role of the greeting can help scholars highlight the potential of reevaluating deliberative theories.

Young defines a greeting, or a public acknowledgement as "a form of communication where a subject directly recognizes the subjectivity of others, thereby fostering trust" (53). Although greetings constitute "a specific communication gesture with important and not sufficiently noticed functions for democratic practice," signifying its potential theoretical contributions, Young also identifies what a greeting looks like in a wide array of practical applications including: "literal greetings, such as 'Hello,' 'How are you?' and addressing people by name" as well as "the forms of speech that often lubricate discussion with mild forms of flattery, stroking of egos, deference, and politeness" (58). Further, Young writes, "Greeting includes handshakes, hugs, the offering of food and drink, making small talk" all "before getting down to real business" (58). According to Young, in the moment of greeting, "a speaker announces her presence as ready to listen and take responsibility for her relationship to her interlocutors, at the same time that it announces her distance from others" (60). Young acknowledges that "If gestures of greeting are divorced from ongoing processes of political discussion, debate, and decision-making" then they are, performative, becoming "political window-dressing" (60). While there is a risk of greetings not being

productive, if appropriately enacted, greetings have tremendous power to "assert discursive equality and establish or re-establish the trust necessary for discussion to proceed in good faith" (60). In practice, Young's notion of the greeting can offer specific strategies for re-establishing trust in deliberations and making public discussions more equitable, particularly for ordinary citizens who are often excluded and even ignored in many political debates.

While the practical applications of greetings are quite clear, Young's notion of greeting as a gesture in political communication has significant theoretical implications for public debate as well, particularly in terms of the ethical components of political discourse. Young draws her notion of greeting as part of "communicative ethics" via her reading of Emmanuel Levinas. Drawing upon Levinas's notion of the Saying and the Said, Young emphasizes the need to open oneself, becoming vulnerable to the other, in an ethical imperative, before discussion, discourse, or deliberation can begin (58). Opening oneself in an ethical attachment to the other, via Levinas is akin to being held *hostage* as simultaneously, "recognize another person" while finding "oneself already claimed upon by the other person's potential neediness" (Young 58). The notion of this *a prior* ethical commitment to others in communication is vital for Young's theorization of greetings because, as Young writes, greeting "refers to those moments in everyday communication where people acknowledge one other in their particularity" (pp. 57-58). In terms of "particularity," Young is hereby maintaining the need to acknowledge the other, while also acknowledging the other's difference from the self. Further, Young elaborates, that her notion of the greeting "*precedes* the giving and evaluating of

reasons in discussion that aim to reach understanding" and "If parties do not recognize and acknowledge one another," then "they will not listen to arguments," rendering political dialogue impossible (79). It is important to acknowledge that greetings happen "before getting down to real business" in public debate, as Young highlights. The primacy of greeting highlights the ethical entanglements of public discussion.

Young's theorization certainly highlights the ways in which ethics factors into political communication. However, in terms of rhetorical studies, greeting, via Levinas, can also help us address the question of where rhetoric begins. Diane Davis, in *Inessential Solidarity*, argues that we are "held hostage" to the other or the *Autrui*, in Levinas's work, not by an ethical imperative, but in a rhetorical one. Throughout *Inessential Solidarity*, Davis suggests that while Levinas wrote of metaphysics as first philosophy in *Totality and Infinity*, he in fact meant rhetoric. Davis argues that although Levinas did not classify his work as rhetorical, his discussions of the relation between self and other, particularly in terms of his metaphor of the face, elicits a "rhetorical imperative," a call to engage with the other via language that serves as an opening for ethics. Davis suggests that in our encounter with the face of the other, we are confronted with "a *rhetorical* imperative," further described as "an obligation to respond" (14). Riffing off of Levinas' ideas in *Totality and Infinity*, Davis suggests that this rhetorical imperative takes place *before* we can consider how we construct knowledge alongside the other, and before we consider the shape of being for the other. Instead, for Davis (via Levinas,) there is no possible route to ontology or epistemology "unless a

preoriginary 'after you,'" transpires (14). For Davis, this rhetorical acknowledgement can best be understood as "pure appeal" or "persuasion without a rhetorician" (14).

Davis writes that the face, for Levinas, is not one's own but is always the Other's or "*le visage d'Autrui*," and further, the face is not so much a reference to the other, but instead emphasizes "the dissolution of that figure," which in its disfiguration creates an interruption in identification "and therefore the opening of ethics" (50). As Davis writes,

> "The encounter with Autrui occurs solely in the language relation, in the saying of the face, which is before all else an invocation, a greeting, an appeal to which I cannot not respond . . . He obviously doesn't put it this way, but what else is Levinas describing here than a rhetorical imperative that comes in from out of nowhere, an obligation to respond that precedes comprehension, announcing itself not through the production of constative meaning but through its performative interruption? What else is he describing but an exemplary instance of persuasion without a rhetorician? This obligation, as unlocatable as it is undeniable, is the condition for symbolic exchange, he proposes, an 'invitation' to speak." *(57)*

In her discussion of the face, Davis suggests that the face manifests a "radical alterity," an extreme otherness, which "interrupts me by addressing me, appealing me, turning me into its addressee," all of which are rhetorical acts, or as Davis suggests in the quote listed above, "persuasion without a rhetorician" (55; 57). In terms of the "performative

interruption" Davis describes in the quote listed above, she is drawing on Levinas' idea that the face "manifests itself as an interruption of my spontaneity" which calls into question one's own idea of the world" and also, for Davis' point more directly, "introduces me to a relation that already obligates me" (57). In this way, Davis demonstrates that the interruption the self receives from the face not only opens the way for ethics, but does so in a pre-existing, obligatory manner, meaning the self realizes it is already bound to the other. It seems to me that Davis is here attempting to connect Levinas' previous discussions of the face and how we encounter the Other via metaphysics and instead suggest that that encounter is inherently a rhetorical matter.

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meaning the self realizes it is already bound to the other in a rhetorical imperative. As this discussion of the face demonstrates, Davis works to connect Levinas' ideas of the Other to show that encounter is an inherently rhetorical matter.

Davis' intellectual lineage to Levinas is apparent in the main thesis of *Inessential Solidarity* as well. For example, Davis writes, "Rhetoric, I submit, is first philosophy" clearly drawing on Levinas' revolutionary suggestion in *Totality and Infinity*, that his description of metaphysics, rather than ontology is first philosophy -- that we must first delineate between the self and the other before we can ask what it means "to be." I see the quote listed above (from p. 57) as another iteration of Davis' suggestion of rhetoric as first philosophy, which I argue, is her central point throughout the book. In the quote above, Davis is suggesting that although Levinas did not share a similar understanding of rhetoric as our field now holds, his work is inherently, primarily *rhetorical* -- that the interruption of the face, its beckoning, engaging, and persuasive "talking" is fundamentally a mark of rhetoricity. In this way, the quote listed above is a crucial element of support for Davis' overall argument. As mentioned in her introduction, throughout *Inessential Solidarity*, Davis aims to show that "Levinas situates a *rhetorical* imperative (an obligation to respond) prior to and as the condition for gathering into presence associated with being-there" (14). Further, Davis suggests "Forget ontology, epistemology -- even ethics" because Levinas shows us that "rhetoric is first philosophy" because "a nonsubjective persuasive appeal is what *calls* for tropological intervention each time" (14). In the quote listed above, it seems to me that Davis is demonstrating that the interruption in identification associated with the marked disfiguration of the face

is a preexisting rhetoricity, a call to persuasion that exists before we can question being (ontology) or knowing (epistemology) -- that rhetoric is, fundamentally, first philosophy.

Davis's work, insisting that Levinas's work *is* in fact rhetorical, also helps us see the rhetorical dimensions of Young's theorization of greeting as well. Young's notion of the greeting "acknowledges the presence and point of view of diverse social segments in the political public" (7). By recognizing the other in public debates as different from us, but nevertheless connected to us in a rhetorical, ethical imperative, as Davis helps us see, demonstrates the usefulness of Young's greeting, both in terms of practice and in terms of rhetorical theory. Young's specific identification of offering food and drink as a greeting demonstrates the ways in which these greetings, which importantly happen *before* any broader discussion or deliberation occurs, can make the ensuing communication more equitable. Similarly, Davis's use of this *a priori* entanglement with others in terms of rhetoric's origin, helps us see that *greetings are themselves rhetorical.* In the remainder of this section, I will highlight the ways in which the UFBDA's use of greeting, in terms of sharing and offering food, is a rhetorical tactic, one that focuses on expanding avenues for political communication in a realm where ordinary citizens were often discounted and excluded from decision-making.

The UFBDA's rhetorical tactic of providing food before beginning sharing information and having discussions with other citizens effectively extends their use of rhetorical citizenship and generativity by establishing much needed trust and respect among local residents. For example, in a letter from Martha Gash Boswell to Jere Brittain in August 1970, Boswell documents several of the greeting gestures the group

generated. Boswell informed Brittain that the group was planning "to sponsor covered dish suppers at Mills River—North and South and at Little River to acquaint people with what will be destroyed by the TVA dams" (UFBDA Box 1b Correspondence, Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers Correspondence, 1970" Letter from Martha Boswell to Jere Brittain, dated Jan. 10, 1970). While Boswell describes the covered-dish suppers as happening simultaneously to sharing information about the TVA project, Young and Davis help us see that in actuality, sharing food serves as a prerequisite to ethical political communication. Similarly, Boswell relays that "Members of the Conservation Council of North Carolina will be invited for tours of the endangered areas so that they will have a first hand picture of the proposed destruction, and thereby enable them to better back our cause" adding that there will also be meals shared with members of this group, further enhancing the group's efforts of sharing information about the pending TVA plan (UFBDA Box 1b Correspondence, Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers Correspondence, 1970" Letter from Martha Boswell to Jere Brittain, dated Jan. 10, 1970). In addition, Boswell continued, that "by holding covered dish suppers, we hope to entice a number of summer visitors into becoming interested in our fight, and perhaps even secure some monetary backing from them" (UFBDA Box 1b Correspondence, Folder "UFB Defense Ass'n Papers Correspondence, 1970" Letter from Martha Boswell to Jere Brittain, dated Jan. 10, 1970). It is worth noting here that by "summer visitors" it is unlikely that Boswell is talking about campers. More likely, she is talking about the numerous wealthy Americans who owned second (or even third) homes in and around Asheville, NC. Boswell's emphasis on securing monies from this particular group adds

evidence to this thesis, in that otherwise the UFBDA operated on a rather tight budget. By extending a greeting to a more privileged group, the UFBDA were able to enhance their own abilities to share their research about the TVA plan, thereby making public deliberations about the dam more transparent, increasing the visibility of citizens' perspectives, rather than letting the TVA continue to dominate the discourse. As Boswell's letter to Duris demonstrates, the UFBDA employed sharing food as a generative greeting within rhetorical citizenship, as they worked to expand discursive opportunities for themselves and other citizens wanting to express their concerns and opinions regarding the TVA proposal.

In her unpublished historical pamphlet, "Grassroots along the Upper French Broad," Boswell also documents several instances of greetings as a key rhetorical practice and strategy which continued to the UFBDA's ultimate success. For example, Boswell writes that Ethel Hawkins of the Little River Community Club "found support for her community suppers in almost every house in the valley, no housewife reluctant to contribute, even when the husband's official position barred him from active cooperation" (7). In this particularly informative quote, Boswell illustrates for us how food greetings were not only generative in that they invited more citizens to the UFBDA's events, but that sharing food was also *subversive*—a method for women to participate in the TVA opposition, even when social and political obligations may have otherwise prevented their families from being active "dam fighters." Food was also both generative and subversive in the context of the three-day TVA hearing in fall 1971. As discussed in the historical overview chapter of this dissertation (Chapter 4), this hearing was initially

slated for three hours on the afternoon of August 31, 1971. However, the UFBDA's constant supply of food allowed the hearing to proceed for three days, with the last utterances occurring on September 2, 1971. As Boswell writes, the TVA public hearing was surprisingly productive, given the "unfailing supply of prime country food from the valley kitchens" being served out of "a nearby classroom" ("Grassroots" 20). As these statements make clear, sharing food clearly served as a generative greeting and helped them reach their rhetorical goals, particularly in terms of increasing participation in their anti-TVA efforts, sharing their own perceptions of the TVA plan, and perhaps most importantly, *insisting* that the TVA listen to them, specifically in the context of the public hearing.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated the ways in which the UFBDA enacted rhetorical citizen in their opposition to the TVA proposal. As Kock and Villadsen emphasize in their writings on rhetorical citizenship, this theory must maintain a "dual focus" on "what one might call, respectively, the participatory and the receptive aspects of civic interaction" (10). Rhetorical citizenship if focused on the participatory nature of rhetoric in terms of rhetorical agency, or "citizens' possibilities for gaining access to and influencing civic life through symbolic action" (Kock and Villadsen 10). Simultaneously, rhetorical citizenship also embraces "how people may be involved with, and evaluate, public rhetoric . . . as recipients" (Kock and Villadsen 10). In the analysis of UFBDA documents presented here, I have focused more on the participatory nature of rhetorical citizenship, namely how the UFBDA expressed their own rhetorical agency within the

narrow bounds on public debate, imposed by the hegemonic power of the UFBDA—namely the agency's continued refusal to host a public hearing in the region. As discussed in the historical overview chapter of this dissertation (chapter 4), UFBDA members, and residents of western North Carolina were certainly recipients of TVA rhetoric, particularly in terms of the TVA's measly 11-page Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that discussed only *one* of the 14 proposed dams. In this chapter, I chose to focus more on the participatory nature of the UBFDA's rhetorical citizenship, because the overarching goal of this dissertation project is to highlight the creative rhetorical tactics the UFBDA employed and which ultimately, contributed to their success in preventing the implementation of the TVA dams. In my future work on the UFBDA's "dam fight" I plan to incorporate more aspects of the UFBDA as "recipients" of TVA rhetoric, namely by conducting research at the TVA archives in Atlanta, Georgia. By later emphasizing the recipient nature of the UFBDA's interaction with the TVA, it is my hope, that the power of the received rhetoric will make the UFBDA's participatory rhetoric even more significant.

The discussion of the UFBDA in this chapter helped demonstrate the practical application of rhetorical citizenship. However, this discussion of rhetorical citizenship can also help us better understand Karen Tracy's theory of ordinary democracy, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. Rhetorical citizenship serves as a powerful entry point to the study of ordinary democracy, as both of these theoretical lenses value citizen discourse. As Karen Tracy writes in her contribution to Kock and Villadsen's edited collection *Rhetorical Democracy*, "In representative democracies, the main way

ordinary folks influence what becomes policy is by voting for the representatives who will make decisions" (150). However, throughout her work, Tracy highlights "another avenue for influence," namely that "Citizens can speak at public meetings in which a governance group is considering a particular policy issue" as is the case in the deliberations surrounding whether or not to implement the TVA project, at the heart of this dissertation (*Rhetorical Citizenship* 150). Tracy argues that "Citizen testimony in public meetings is the bread and butter, or at least a main entrée, of American democracy" (*Rhetorical Citizenship* 160). Acknowledging the importance of citizens talking, Tracy suggests that "Any useful notion of rhetorical citizenship needs to take account of the frequency of citizens' speeches of advocacy in public meetings" (*Rhetorical Citizenship 160).* In my discussion of the UFBDA presented here, by emphasizing the ways in which the dam fighters created new opportunities to talk to other citizens about the proposed TVA project, I have demonstrated how the relationship between rhetorical citizenship and ordinary democracy.

I also worked in this chapter to put the notion of rhetorical citizenship in conversation with other ideas about public deliberation, civic engagement, and political communication, namely—Asen's notion of generativity and Young's concept of greeting. I have demonstrated the ways in which the UFBDA also embraced Asen's notion of generativity, from his Discourse Theory of Citizenship as they made concerted efforts to establish connections with other citizens across county lines and in neighboring communities. In addition, through generativity, the UFBDA were able to generate new avenues for public information sharing, particularly as they spread their knowledge to

other citizens within the region. As Asen writes, “Citizenship should not be reserved for special occasions” but instead, studying civic discourse highlights the “potentially accessible and powerful everyday enactments of citizenship” (“Discourse” 207). Further, according to Asen, “Taking discourse seriously means treating discourse expansively” and acknowledging the ways in which discourse and citizenship can relate to a wide range of methods for civic engagement (207). Seeking to understand rhetorical citizenship and emphasizing citizen discourse, I employed Asen’s notion of generativity to show the ways in which the UFBDA worked to generate more discussion in their communities regarding the TVA proposal for the Upper French Broad. However, recognizing that there were additional, related tactics the UFBDA used in their enactment of rhetorical citizenship, I also discussed Iris Marion Young’s theorization of sharing food as a greeting that generated more trust and equity in political communication. By bolstering my discussion of rhetorical citizenship with the terms generativity and greeting, I was able to catalogue a wide variety of the key rhetorical tactics that the UFBDA employed in their opposition to TVA.

The notion of rhetorical citizenship, particularly combined with generativity and greeting, is a productive way to view the rhetorical tactics of the UFBDA, particularly in terms of highlighting how the dam fighters engaged in efforts of sharing information and talking to other citizens. Via this study of the UFBDA, I see rhetorical citizenship not only as a theoretical lens, but also as a mode of engagement—a tool for practitioners seeking social change. While rhetorical citizenship clearly has a wide range of practical components, on a theoretical level, it does not account for *all* aspects

of the ways in which UFBDA members, as participants, engaged other citizens and the TVA. Rhetorical citizenship, as discussed here, does not quite account for one key aspect of the UFBDA's rhetorical prowess, namely—local knowledge. In the case of the UFBDA, the group members' local knowledge helped them enact local citizenship. Therefore, as this chapter demonstrates, local knowledge of a citizens' environment and community, should also be a more explicit component of rhetorical citizenship theory. My analysis of the UFBDA's archival records here demonstrate a key limit to rhetorical citizenship—it does not adequately account for the importance of local knowledge in public discussion. Thus, rhetorical theory must expand to help us better understand the rhetorical potentialities within local knowledge. For example, as highlighted in *Rhetorics, Literacies, and Narratives of Sustainability*, "Once tapped, local knowledge can illuminate the unspoken motives, values and assumptions that people use to interpret a complex situation" (Goggin 14). And further, as local knowledge is "elicited and shared" it "informs participants' realistic representations of complex social issues" (14). Local knowledge helps inform how citizens create, perceive, and interact with issues that impact their local communities. In the following chapter, I demonstrate the ways in which the UFBDA constructed an ethos based on local knowledge in order to communicate their opposition to the TVA's proposal for the Upper French Broad.

Chapter 7: Enacting an Ethos of Local Knowledge

> *I am not setting myself up as an expert. I know these things from actual observation and experience. And to many people, this is also common knowledge.* (p. 291; Statement by Alex J. Duris, Addressed to the Presiding officer, Mills River Dam and Reservoir Hearing, dated Aug 17, 1971, vol. 2).
>
> *"Many of the 600 families to be displaced by the project now suffer anxiety and uncertainty. Some have faced the threat of TVA proposals for more than thirty years. Several families trace their ancestry seven generations to pioneers of the region. These people are deeply rooted in these valleys. To displace them from their ancestral homes would needlessly weaken the fine fabric of life in this region.* ("Statement of Upper French Broad Defense Association, Prepared and presented by Jere A. Brittain, Ph.D., Chairman" vol. 1, p. 127).

Ethos, as one of the three Aristotelian rhetorical appeals, is widely recognized as relating to "credibility" or "ethics." Recent work within rhetorical studies, however, has emphasized the ways in which ethos is connected to the pursuit of social change. For example, Jonathan L. Bradshaw discusses the ways in which "advocacy work for social change" is an inherently slow process (3). Bradshaw argues that social change is slow in terms of rhetorical circulation, as arguments and ideas move "through public deliberation, texts, and other media productions until they accumulate a cultural ethos that can begin to affect wider change and deeper impact" (3). While ideas pertaining to advocacy and social justice may matriculate slowly through society, their movement and eventual uptake is dependent upon their "cultural ethos" (Bradshaw 17). In other words, for ideas regarding progress to "have a better change of effecting change over the long

haul" they must resonate widely across members of a social group, they must be part of a shared ethical notion within communities.

While ethos certainly plays an important role in public debates and advocacy, the burden of ethos construction is often placed on rhetors themselves, which can be even more challenging for rhetors from marginalized groups, experiences, or identities. For example, in *Rethinking Ethos: A Feminist Ecological Approach to Rhetoric*, editors Ryan, Myers, and Jones work to "disrupt everyday definitions of *ethos* as 'credibility' or 'character'" in favor of studying how ethos can instead "create more ways for women to enter and shift dominant public discourse" (vii). The editors suggest that "women are often being asked to adopt a troublesome ethos, whether they try to use an Aristotelian ethos or a common, contemporary rendering of ethos" (vii). Several contributors to *Rethinking Ethos*, thus, emphasize the ways in which women, as often marginalized and excluded rhetors in public debate, enact "unusual rhetorical maneuvers such as sharing a meal or reclaiming stereotypes as ways that women advocate for themselves and others" (x). *Rethinking Ethos* challenges scholars in rhetoric and writing studies to "rethink scholarship and to advocate for new theories" of ethos that examine the term's role in the everyday lives of a wide variety of rhetors (vii).

Constructing ethos poses a formidable challenge to marginalized rhetors, but it is certainly possible, and in fact, is often a crucial rhetorical move which can help achieve desired goals for social change and environmental protection. For example, Mary Beth Pennington has done an excellent job of demonstrating the ways in which Judy Bonds, an environmental activist who opposes mountain top removal (MTR) coal mining in

Appalachia by drawing attention “not only to the physical” and social effects of environmental degradation but “also to the historically ignored discrimination that has made environmental decimation possible” (Pennington 168). Pennington highlights that Bonds’ efforts serve a larger, rhetorical purpose as she “(1) shares her personal experience to establish motivation for her activism, (2) prompts audiences to view how they themselves play a part in the MTR problem” and “(3) positions MTR as the exigency for a national conversation about the causes of environmental injustice” (152). More specifically, Pennington argues that “Bonds’ ethos arises from her rhetorical awareness of location and relationality, which she leverages into “an environmental justice rhetoric that demands that the speaker: (1) publicly recognize where she stands, both geographically and culturally (in this case, in relation to her audience and within her social milieu); and (2) leverage that relational awareness as a way to effect change” (169). Ultimately, Bonds’ ethos allows her to create “a dialogue about the ways in which existing power structures obstruct change” (169). The case study of Judy Bonds’ constructed ethos has practical implications for environmentalists as well, as Pennington writes, “Taking notes on Bonds’ ethos can help environmental justice activists to achieve” their goals (169). Similarly, in this chapter, I will analyze the ways in which the UFBDA constructed an ethos based on local knowledge of the region threatened by the proposed TVA dams.

Between August 31 and September 2, 1971, over 300 of local residents of western North Carolina gathered for a public hearing held by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in the Lipinsky Auditorium of the University of North Carolina at

Asheville. At this hearing, (only the second local hearing held in TVA's history,) residents expressed concern over the TVA's proposed plan to place 14 dams and channelize 74 miles of stream along the French Broad River, throughout the mountain communities surrounding the city of Asheville. The TVA's initial proposal was released in 1962 and generated considerable protest among local citizens, particularly in terms of the high social and environmental costs associated with the project: the flooding of nearly 20,000 acres of productive, privately-owned farmland, and the displacement of more than 600 people from their homes (Murray 47-48). One local resident, 20-year-old Lynn Brittain of South Mills River, was so bothered by the TVA project that she shared the following statement at the three-day hearing: "I am concerned about the environmental loss, the loss of valuable farmland, the loss of a beautiful community, and last but certainly not least the tragic loss of the Mills River Baptist Church" (208). Brittain continued, "I am not a television commentator, a radio announcer, or a politician who sees a mirage in the form of dollar bills, nor am I a greedy man hoping to make a buck by taking advantage of other peoples' misfortune" (208). "I am a concerned citizen and taxpayer who can see the tremendous waste and blunder that the proposed TVA dam would create if built" Brittain declared (208). As these quotes demonstrate, many of the anti-TVA speakers at the public hearing invoked their own identities and knowledges in the statements made to the TVA.

In this chapter, I demonstrate the ways in which UFBDA members established their own credibility as experts about the western North Carolina landscape by emphasizing their local knowledge of the region. In this analysis, it is clear how we can

“re see” ethos and its connection to “dwelling place” in terms of knowledge about one’s local environment. By emphasizing the local, UFBDA members demonstrated themselves as having a different, although legitimate expertise from what the TVA knew. This analysis demonstrates that by building a localized ethos, environmental activists can showcase their expertise in public deliberations.

Definitions of Ethos in Rhetorical Studies

For Aristotle, ethos, or the character of the speaker, was a key entry point to the rhetorical act of persuasion, occurring “whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence; for we believe fair-minded people to a greater extent and more quickly [than we do others] on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt” (Kennedy 38). While many scholars point to this passage from Aristotle as the earliest surviving definition of ethos, as my analysis aims to show in the following pages, this is by no means the only, or even the most robust definition of ethos. Nedra Reynolds, for example, cautions us from thinking of ethos-building as an equitable, harmonious process, as she writes, “We must remember that in classical Greece and Rome, slaves and women were not welcome to share in the public space of experience and ideas” and therefore, “it is risky to assume, in a view of *ethos* as a social act, a speaker who is a unified, moral individual or a community of like minds where opposition is never an issue” (329).

My exigence for this exploration of ethos, stems largely from the work of Nedra Reynolds and Julie Nelson Christoph. Reynolds, in “Ethos as Location: New Sites for Understanding Discursive Authority,” suggests that ethos “encompasses the individual

agent as well as the location or position from which that person speaks or writes" (326). Further, Reynolds suggests that ethos has the potential to "open up more spaces in which to study writer's subject positions or identity formations, especially to examine how writers establish authority and enact responsibility from positions not traditionally considered authoritative" (326). The public hearing statements analyzed in this paper, stemming from young Appalachian residents, certainly occupy the space Reynolds describes as "not traditionally considered authoritative." While Reynolds highlights the importance of expanding studies of ethos to marginalized rhetors, Christoph highlights the rhetorical function of personal experiences in the development of ethos. Christoph writes, "What is lacking among discussions of the personal, Aristotelian *ethos* of poststructuralist theories of subjectivity is a theory of how individual writers compose and present versions of themselves as living people within the texts they write" (662). Christoph asks, "How does a writer call upon lived personal experience in depicting himself or herself as what Aristotle calls a 'certain kind of person?' How do subject positions enter into this depiction? How does the material context of a writer's life infuse his or her own writing" (662). The following analysis is my attempt to answer these questions in the limited scope of hearing statements over the implementation of dams in western North Carolina in the 1970s.

Christoph's work also informs my exigence in the ways in which she describes the complex processes involved with ethos construction as well as the contexts that inform this process. Christoph suggests that "Constructing *ethos* in texts involves a complex process of placing oneself within the myriad levels of contexts in which all

writers exist" including "issues of gender, race, class, as well as the more specific contexts of national policy debates, family histories, and ideological conflicts" (678). Acknowledging the intricacies surrounding ethos, then, Christoph suggests that "We must look for the more specific, more complex family, regional, moral, and microcultural placements that ultimately shape the range of options from which writers can draw to create identities in texts that are rich, fluid, and complex" (678). In my inductive analysis provided in the following pages, I hope to approximate an Appalachian activist ethos focused on the following elements: Preservation, Christianity, Temperance, Farming, Community, and Patriotism, in order to develop a nuanced understanding of how the intersectional identities of these speakers informed both their rhetorical situations as well as their development of a very specific, overlapping ethos.

Many scholars have interpreted ethos as the means through which rhetors proclaim information about themselves, in order to establish their own credibility or authority on a particular topic, text, or issue. For example, Michael Halloran suggests, in "Aristotle's Concept of Ethos, or If Not His Somebody Else's," that "In its simplest form, *ethos* is what we might call the argument from authority, the argument that stays in effect," or which suggests, "Believe me because I am the sort of person whose words you can believe" (60). Julie Nelson Christoph suggests that "Aristotle's theory of *ethos* is salient to modern discussions of the personal, in that he was the first to discuss the relevance of connections between speaker and message, and to offer a theory of composition that considers how to present character in a way that appeals to a particular audience" (661). Christoph continues that "Aristotle reminds us that while a

sense of character in a text need not involve autobiography or narrative, the personal — or at least the appearance of it — is always a component of the persuasive capabilities of a text" (661). Similarly, Candace Spiegelman, in "Argument and Evidence in the Case of the Personal," suggests that "Many scholars also claim that uses of the personal are strategic" because "the personal may function as a mask in a calculated performance, creating a reader friendly voice and persona . . . . Or it may operate in the service of an argument as a kind of ethos-building strategy, where the narrator establishes his or her credibility by means of a voice or persona with which the audience might identify (in Kenneth Burke's sense of the term) or trust (in Aristotle's sense) and thus be persuaded" (67). While the use of personal information and experiences is certainly rhetorical, it is however, not completely equal with ethos in either its composition or its rhetorical effect.

As Roger B. Cherry argues in "Ethos Versus Persona: Self-Representation in Written Discourse," "two common terms for describing self-representation — *ethos* and *persona* — are often conflated" despite the fact that "there are good historical and conceptual grounds for maintaining a distinction between them" (251). Cherry suggests, that attending to the distinction between ethos and persona "refines our critical vocabulary for analyzing the multi-dimensional nature of self-representation in writing" (251). For Cherry, both ethos and persona have not been given adequate study within composition, a lack of scholarship which is ironic given "the almost universal significance attached to the self-as-speaker of self-as-writer by rhetoricians and discourse theorists" (252). Cherry's analysis of the self hints at the intimate connection

between the self and the broader rhetorical situation in which writers write, as he argues that "Decisions about self-portrayal are not independent, but vary according to the way in which writers characterize their audience and other facets of the rhetorical situation" (252). Cherry suggests that "A better understanding of self-representation in written texts can thus contribute to a more complete understanding of how writers construct rhetorical situations in the act of composing" (252). Further, Cherry writes that "The question of self-representation in the written text is most fruitfully approached as part of a larger question of how writers define and portray rhetorical situations in the texts they produce" because the "way in which the variables that constitute a rhetorical situation are perceived determines the 'problem' that speakers or writers pose for themselves to solve through discourse" (264). What is at stake in this personal, solitary definition of ethos, is not the idea that ethos contains personal details, because many scholars have demonstrated that including personal information is very much rhetorical. Instead, the key issue regarding the personal in terms of ethos, is that it can lead too far into the realm of universalization and essentialization, missing the mark in terms of the inherently social constructivist nature of ethos in rhetorical theory.

Ethos as Socially Constructed

In theoretical interrogations of the term *ethos*, many rhetorical studies scholars have helped us see the social nature of ethos itself, or as Nedra Reynolds succinctly suggests: "The classical notion of *ethos* . . . as well as its contemporary usage, refers to the social context surrounding the solitary rhetor" (327). For example Jim W. Corder, in "Hunting for Ethos," suggests that the work of other scholars in our field helped him see

"that *ethos* is *not in the text,* but in the reader or community, in their construction of or projection upon the text" (301). Corder more explicitly describes his understanding of the social nature of ethos construction, as he writes, "the writer is not autonomous, but only part of a social community that constructs and interprets discourse, that the notion of the self as a source of meaning is only a Romantic concept . . . that the language by which we view and construct the world comes from society, not from the individual" (301). Similarly, Michael Halloran suggests, "The word *ethos* has both an individual and a collective meaning. It makes sense to speak of the *ethos* of this or that person, but it makes equally good sense to speak of the *ethos* of a particular type of person, of a professional group, or a culture, or an era in history" (62). Both Corder and Halloran help us understand the sociocultural components of ethos, as does Reynolds.

In her analysis of "Ethos as Location," Nedra Reynolds suggests that "Standard translations of the Greek word *ethos* have not maintained its complexity" (327). Reynolds suggests, that on the simplest level, ethos is often substituted for the term "ethical appeal" but that in classical rhetoric, the term ethos was in fact "one of three strands of the *pisteis*, intertwined with *logos* and *pathos*" (327). Acknowledging that even Aristotle's original meaning of the term was likely more complicated than many scholars allow, Reynolds further demonstrates the social constructivist nature the term has taken on today, as she writes, "In ordinary uses today, the term *ethos* often refers to the character of an age, era, society, or culture, something like *zeitgeist"* (327). Reynolds' analysis here helps us understand that "*ethos* is not measurable [in] traits displayed by an individual; rather, it is a complex set of characteristics constructed by a

group, sanctioned by that group, and more readily recognizable to others who belong or who share similar values or experiences" (327).

Ethos as "Dwelling Place"

For the purposes of this analysis, I find that the understanding of ethos as a "dwelling place" best serves the theoretical orientation to social construction as well as the importance of actual places, as highlighted by the archival statements highlighted in my analysis. Many rhetorical studies scholars have connected their understanding of ethos to its etymological origins as "dwelling place." For example, Vicki Tolar Burton, in "Octalog III" suggests that "In the earliest days of Greek civilization, the days of Homer and Hesiod, *ethea*, the root of *ethos*, meant 'a dwelling place'" (111). Further, "The notion of *dwelling*" Tolar Burton argues, "shapes Aristotle's story of the strangers who went into the wilderness in search of the wise philosopher Heraclitus, only to find him living in poverty," and "Sensing that his visitors were disappointed with what they saw and intended to leave, Heraclitus reached out, inviting the travelers to *dwell* with him" (111). Even this mythic tale of the ancient Greeks hints at the communal, social nature of ethos.

Similarly, Jansen B. Warner, in "Building a 'Dwelling Place' for Justice" argues that ethos's etymological roots offer us a way to consider how "rhetorical practice constructs symbolic 'places where people can dwell with and for others,'" a "notion of ethos" which "poses significant implications for the sociocultural function of rhetoric; in particular it proposes that rhetoric cultivates the condition through which modes of 'knowing' and 'being' take shape" (110). Further, Warner suggests that "insofar as

rhetoric constitutes a 'dwelling place,' it also provides a discursive context for people to understand themselves and their relationship to public affairs" (110). While Warner emphasizes ethos as "dwelling place" can help rhetors understand themselves, Dale L. Sullivan, in "The Ethos of Epideictic Encounter," suggests that "Ethos is not primarily an attribute of the speaker, nor even an audience perception: It is, instead, the common dwelling place for both, the timeless, consubstantial space that enfolds participants in epideictic exchange" (127). Since the case study I present here occurred in a deliberative, rather than epideictic setting, Sullivan's model of ethos as a dwelling place is less helpful than other models for the present work.

Michael Halloran has also discussed the ways in which ethos's Greek roots influence our understanding of the term. As Halloran suggests, "In contrast to the modern notions of the person or self, *ethos* emphasizes the conventional rather than the idiosyncratic, the public rather than the private" (60). Halloran suggests that "The most concrete meaning for the term [ethos] in the Greek lexicon is 'a habitual gathering place,'" and he suggests that "it is upon this image of people gathering together in a public space, sharing experiences and ideas that its meaning and character rest" (60). Halloran argues that "To have ethos is to manifest the virtues most valued by the culture to and for which one speaks" and in Ancient Athens, as Aristotle tell us, these values included "justice, courage, temperance, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality, gentleness, prudence, and wisdom" (60). Much as Halloran's theoretical description of ethos involves shared cultural values, the following analysis of public hearing

statements reveals the construction of the UFBDA's specific ethos within their dam fight with the TVA.

While the literature reviewed here demonstrates that many rhetorical studies scholars have highlighted the connection between the social nature of ethos and its early definition as a "dwelling place," theoretically, the study presented here most closely aligns with Nedra Reynolds' emphasis on the complex, collective process of cultivating cultural ethos. Nedra Reynolds argues in "Ethos as Location," that "Careful attention to the etymology of *ethos* — its connections to space, place, or location helps to reestablish *ethos* as a social act and as a product of a community's character" (327). Further, Reynolds argues that "As its etymological history shows, gathering or meeting is literally at the root of ethos. This crucial part of its definition emphasizes both the spatial — a gathering place — and the idea of presence, of speakers and listeners" (333). While many scholars direct us to think critically about the meaning of ethos as a "dwelling place," Reynolds offers the most helpful theoretical contribution to this discussion for my own work, in that she uses the dwelling place metaphor to encourage scholars to reevaluate the places where ethos, and in fact, rhetoric, often occurs.

As Reynolds suggests, "Locating ethos in written texts requires attention to the mediation or negotiation that goes on in the spaces between writers and their locations" (333). Reynolds offers that "*Ethos*, in fact occurs in the 'between' . . . as writers struggle to identify their own positions and the intersections of various communities and attempt to establish authority for themselves and their claims" (333). For Reynolds, the "betweens" of ethos are not only important for understanding the spatial metaphors of

ethos, like “their intersections with others and the places they diverge,” but it also allows us as rhetorical scholars to maintain the theoretical orientation of ethos as “dwelling place” “without limiting it to arenas of spoken discourse and without assuming that those gathering places are harmonious or conflict-free” (333). Reynolds offers that in practice, attending to “‘the betweens’” means “attending to the rhetorical strategies writers use to locate themselves, their texts, and the particular discursive communities they are mediating within and between” (333). Reynolds’ work offers us to see ethos as more than just an exertion of authority, or even the harmonious recapitulation of shared values, but instead, as a complex negotiation of power and cultural identity, thereby offering a more dynamic understanding of the term and how it works, one which has greatly influenced the approach of the present study.

Ethos of Local Knowledge

Within my emphasis on ethos as dwelling place, in my analysis of the UFBDA here, I also highlight, more specifically, how the dam fighters constructed ethos around their immense local knowledge of the landscape threatened by the dams. As my analysis of archival sources demonstrate the following section, UFBDA members established their authority and as experts on the “dwelling place” in question in terms of the TVA proposal—their communities across western North Carolina which the TVA planned to flood. Within rhetoric and writing studies, several scholars have emphasized the value and function of local knowledge within the establishment of regional literacy and literary scenes (see, for example, Carter and Dent). As Carter and Dent have argued, “Local literary scenes,” which emphasize the role of knowledge about one’s

local environment and community, “have much to teach us about the ways that historically marginalized rhetors garner rhetorical agency” (152). While local knowledge has been connected to notions of rhetorical agency, its connection to ethos is not yet clear. As Nedra Reynolds writes, “What’s needed are studies of *ethos* in written discourse that extend outward to include multiple texts as well as the historical and political contexts for those texts” (334). In the analysis of ethos presented here, I answer Reynolds’ call to action by emphasizing the ways in which the UFBDA’s diverse archival documents demonstrate an ethos construction based in local knowledge of western North Carolina and the communities at jeopardy in the TVA project. The UFBDA’s use of an ethos of local knowledge, helped the “dam fighters” leverage their own expertise in the TVA public hearing, showing how their personal and experiential knowledge should be taken into consideration in the decision whether or not to dam the Upper French Broad and its tributaries. An ethos of local knowledge, therefore, allows ordinary citizens to leverage their situated knowledges as on par with the technocratic expertise of development organizations.

Familial Ties to the Land

In the TVA public hearing from August 31-September 2, 1971, several UFBDA members and their supporters expressed an ethos of local knowledge by showcasing the length of time they and their families have called western North Carolina home. For example, in his statement, UFBDA Chairman Jere Brittain, shared “I was born and spent the first eighteen years of my life in the Mills River Valley just upstream from the proposed dam” on Mills River (p. 48). Further, Brittain announces, “I am a direct

descendant of the Sitton, Gillespie, and Brittain families who have lived in the Valley for almost as long as this nation has existed" (p. 48). By highlighting his familial and personal background in the community, Brittain demonstrates that he does have expertise on the Mills River community, expertise which, had previously been utterly ignored or dismissed by the TVA. Mrs. Betty Sue Presley made similar claims towards an ethos of local knowledge, stating "I have lived on North Mills River all of my life" on a family farm that extends back in time "for four generations" (p. 296). Further, Presley argues, quite subversively, "I may be selfish in wanting to stay in the valley so that my children and grandchildren can enjoy some of the freedom I have known" in the Mills River Valley, where her family's "roots are firmly grounded" (p. 296). UFBDA member Alex Duris made similar claims through an ethos of local knowledge at the TVA hearing, stating "I live in the Clear Creek impoundment of the TVA program. I have lived here for 24 years, I have never seen the small tributaries that flow into Clear Creek in my neighborhood to no more than fill the creek beds with some very slight 'flooding'" (p. 291). Duris continues, sharing his immense knowledge of his local environment, "though a flood plain on the other side of Clear Creek does collect water extending for several hundred feet beyond the Clear Creek water bed to no great depth since it is a flat flood plain" because "Nature of course, has provided the flood plain to perform this exact function" (p. 291). In his statement, Duris is clearly connecting his personal ties to the community and his residency there to knowledge about how the creeks and rivers operate—thereby also further casting doubt on the necessity of the TVA plan in terms of flood control.

Similarly, Carolyn Moore argued in a hearing statement directed towards TVA, “If you were to trace the ancestry of the people in our community you would find that most of the families go back several generations” (p. 189). Further, Moore suggested that if the Mills River dam “is constructed,” then “families that have always lived in this area and together will be separated and scattered from place to place” (189). Moore suggested that this displacement will have serious costs, as many of these residents are elderly and would be “forced to leave their homes, their church, their families and loved ones and the community they love so dearly” (189). Mrs. Carol Wilkie also emphasized the history of sacrifice across the Hoopers Creek community, sharing that its residents have “always responded to duty when the need to arose to protect its life and property” elaborating that ancestors of this community fought in the American Civil War, the Spanish-American War, WWI, the Korean war, “And, even now men from this valley have and are serving in Viet Nam [sic]” (p. 244). While many citizens emphasized their lineage in the region in connection with the past, other young community members demonstrated their local knowledge in ethos construction as a means to advocate for their futures. For example, Danny Youngblood shared, “My dream is to one day follow in the steps of my Dad—to tend and farm the land that he so proudly farms today” (p. 199). Further, Youngblood states, “My dream is to build my own home and raise my family on the same land that has been ours for nearly 75 years” and he poignantly asked, “Will this dream come true—or will it be smashed with your bulldozers and earth-moving machinery?” (p. 199). Similarly, at the TVA hearing, Howard Crawford shared, “I was engaged in dairy farming with my father for ten years” in western North Carolina

and even though his family's land "is along the river," he relays, "we have never lost a crop because of flooding" as the "water which comes through our community does not cause enough damage downstream to justify flooding our entire community" (293). Much like Duris, Crawford connects his long history in the region to notions of family and his experiential knowledge about the reality of flooding in his community.

Cultural Significance of Churches

Several members of the UFBDA emphasized the importance of churches and religious life in western North Carolina as they constructed their ethos of local knowledge in the public hearing. For example, UFBDA Chairman Jere A. Brittain warned that "Several churches would be displaced" or at least "adversely affected by the project" TVA offered for the Upper French Broad River (p. 127). Further, Brittain elaborates that "There Churches" jeopardized by the TVA plan "serve as both religious and cultural centers of their respective communities," thereby both reinforcing the importance of leaving these structures intact, as well as further cultivating an ethos of local knowledge for the TVA. Similarly, Carolyn Moore stated, "Should TVA construct this dam they would be destroying a historic and beautiful church" as "The Mills River Baptist Church was built some 135 years ago by hard work and long hours by our forefathers" (p. 189). Further Moore shares that "The river flows on three sides of the church" and "Many of the people to be affected by the dam attend this church, and have for most of their lives" (p. 189). Similarly, one young residents stated that "our grand parents [sic] and great grand parents [sic] constructed" the Mills River Baptist Church "135 years ago," "not with money but with sweat and hard work" and "Each giving of his

time to build a meeting house where everyone is welcome" which TVA, with its proposed dams, would soon flood. In his statement for the TVA hearing, Rev. Zeke C. Crawford made similar remarks regarding the history and significance of the Mills River Baptist Church. For example, Crawford highlighted that "Since its organization in 1835, the Mills River Baptist Church has ministered to the spiritual needs of an estimated 2,000 members" including "Generation after generation of our people—7 or 8" who have all "professed faith in Jesus Christ and joined the Fellowship through baptism in the water of South Mills River" (p. 223). Further, Rev. Crawford continued, that the members of this church "have lived out useful and productive lives of service both within our valley and beyond; some have been farmers, some teachers, some blacksmiths, some nurses, some factory workers, some college professors, some homemakers, some soldiers" but yet, "all bore the indelible influence of their early training" in the Mills River Baptist Church (p. 223). As Crawford makes clear, "The Mills River Baptist Church serves as the social center of the North & South Mills River Community" where the three meetings held each week "provide experiences" for local residents "not only in worship but in social fellowship with friends, relatives and neighbors" (p. 224). As these statements demonstrate, a key component of the UFBDA's ethos of local knowledge was sharing their knowledge about the active religious life surrounding the Mills River Baptist Church. By emphasizing their local knowledge of preexisting groups and values in the community, the UFBDA were able to push back against the TVA's hegemonic power over the discourse surrounding the dams. An ethos of local knowledge allowed

the UFBDA to showcase their own rhetorical agency and offer their own opinions about the proposed dams.

Emphasis on Existing Quality of Life

Another key component of the UFBDA's ethos of local knowledge was the emphasis on the existing quality of life in the communities threatened by the TVA dams. In other words, by sharing the knowledge of their daily lives in these communities, the dam fighters were able to inform the TVA and all the attendees of the public hearing, that life in western North Carolina was already of an exceptionally high quality, and further, their quality of life would only dissipate, were the TVA dams implemented along various tributaries of the Upper French Broad. For example, as Jesse A. Bailey, Pastor of the Little River Baptist Church shared, "Mills River, like Little River and other communities in the area to be a part of the [TVA's] Upper French Broad project, has a long history of being a prize-winning community in the Community Development Program" (p. 226). Further, Bailey argued that these communities are worthy or merit because "They are true communities" and "They have a unity and pride that stems from a rich history dating back to the early years of our nation" all of which the TVA program "will destroy . . . forever" (p. 226). With these communities erased, Bailey argues that there will be an absence of the "common heritage, and the long-standing acquaintances with each other that the present families have" which will only bring about feelings of sadness and grief that the accompanying displacement would only exaggerate as part of the "tragedies of families being uprooted from the old home place" (p. 226). Bailey also laments the effect of displacement for the elderly residents in his community,

stating that “Most of these senior citizens will live out their remaining days without ever really feeling ‘at home’ anywhere” and they will be “permanently displaced people” (226). Bailey’s public hearing statement makes clear that the Mills River community, which would be flooded in the TVA project was already a strong, close-knit group of residents. Bailey’s use of an ethos of local knowledge allowed him to showcase what all would be lost in the TVA’s plan for the Upper French Broad River.

Many of the UFBDA members and their supporters emphasized the existing value of their communities, in ethos of local knowledge. For example, in her hearing statement, Vonnie Goode shared that “Some Government Authorities and individuals think that flooding a community like Mills River, does not upset anyone or anything” but, she continued, “being a native of this community and knowing its many values, upsets many people and myself” (277). Further, Goode suggested that the TVA project “destroys nature and the fundamentals this country was founded on” and “If our country has more communities such as this one, there wouldn’t be nearly as much lawlessness” (p. 277). Similarly, in her public hearing statement Mrs. Betty Sue Presley also emphasized the productive, scenic nature of the Mills River community suggesting that it “has been richly blessed with beauty, and we also have an abundance of wildlife to enjoy” and further that “This land has been entrusted to us, so as good stewards of this land,” so she stated she “would like to see the Mills River Dam Plans packed away and forgotten” (p. 296). In her description of the local environment, Mrs. Presley listed off that in “The Mills River Community, We have camping picknicking, [sic] and hiking as well as fishing and game hunting” and residents “can hike into the wise open spaces to

enjoy the sights not made by man" all of which is at stake in the TVA's proposed project in the region (p. 296). Similarly, in her statement for the public hearing, Rhonda M. Stansell suggested that were the TVA to implemented their dam plan, "There would be families, children, hospital employees, teachers, farmers, factory workers, who will have to find a new residence, mostly likely not in this county" (p. 286). While displacement would certainly be a high cost to the residents, Stansell argues that the TVA are wholly ignorant and immune to caring about the destruction of communities across western North Carolina. Stansell argued, "It matters not that this is a community that loves life, gives much to the country, provides a fellowship and provides services for all the county" and "It matters not that these people have given their life, love and services to this country" (p. 286). Stansell continued, "It matters not churches, homes and people will be broken hearted just for the pleasures of a few people who would like to have a big lake, a bit time and make a lot of money" (p. 286). Through her ethos of local knowledge Stansell was able to showcase all that would be lost along with the implementation of the TVA dams, costs that TVA is seemingly immune to.

Additional members of the UFBDA, also working to construct an ethos of local knowledge, shared what they knew about their communities, and even extended an offer to TVA officials to come to these communities and experience their splendor for themselves. For example, in his statement Danny Youngblood stated, "It must be easy for you to fly over communities and drive by homes—deciding just how much land is needed for your dams and reservoirs—but I would ask you to please take the time to visit our Church, to get to know our people" continuing, "let us show you some of the

treasured land-marks—see how closely our lives are linked to those of our neighbors—so close that if a part of us are taken away—the gap can never be filled" (199). Youngblood argues that the destruction of his community, "is just too high a price to pay!" for any of the proposed benefits associated with the TVA project" (199). Similarly, another citizen at the hearing suggested TVA officials take a visit, claiming, "Mills River, at present offers you a good place to begin a communication with the Earth which sustains you" urging that TVA officials "Go there soon, with your eyes and minds open and receptive to some deep gentle messages which you may not have heard for a long time" (p. 89). Further, this citizen directs TVA officials to "Grasp a handful of black soil" because "The valley's low voice is good medicine for ears strained by the loud noise of 'progress'" (p. 90). However, along with the TVA dams, "this voice will be silenced for your lifetime and mine and our children's" (p. 90). And finally, this citizen statement asks that "while there is still a dry spot left," before the ensuing flooding associated with the dams, TVA officials should "sit down and try to get a sense of time" and consider "How long did it take for a community to form here? 100 years? 200? Better yet, how long was needed for this valley to evolve? 1000 years? 10,000? A million? How quickly can you bring all this to extinction with your 'project'" (p. 91). By inviting TVA officials to their communities, these UFBDA speakers are able to construct and ethos of local knowledge that allows them to juxtapose what they *do* know, with what the TVA *does not* know about their communities, thereby offering an avenue for placing their situated knowledge on a more equitable starting point alongside the TVA's technical reports and information regarding the dams.

Overall, the UFBDA's construction of an ethos of local knowledge demonstrates a clear avenue for marginalized groups, whose concerns and opinions have not otherwise been heard, can legitimate and leverage their knowledge in debates often dominated by technocratic discourse. The UFBDA's use of local ethos makes public opinion count, in a deliberation where it had been previously undermined and dismissed. As one Swannanoa resident conferred at the TVA hearing:

> "PUBLIC OPINION gets very little consideration on an issue of this type; it is all laid out as the 'facts of life' and only the decision is presented. This is worked out by a staff of engineers, lawyers, etc., looking toward, or producing only ONE side of the picture. It is noted that our correspondence came from a Division of Law—TVA. This Division of Law is a tax supported Government organization and legal staff. We believe that the legal aspect of the whole subject should be taken into consideration. Both PROS and CONS should have the services of this Legal Division equally. A true consumer protective services should be rendered by this Legal Division on the OVERALL QUESTION." (statement from Swannanoa, NC resident, vol. 2, pp. 259-260)

The UFBDA's rhetorical use of their local knowledge and awareness of their environment and communities, helps them demonstrate just what exactly is at stake in the TVA's massive, 14-dam proposal. As Alex J. Duris relayed at the hearing, in terms of the TVA dams, "There can be no question whatever about adverse impacts upon

both environment and ecology. Once that many acres are destroyed, birds, and other wildlife who live in river and creek bottoms will have had their homes destroyed and in turn will themselves be destroyed" (291). Further, Duris shared that "In our neighbor hood there are widows, people with serious health problems, people with in-adequate incomes who manage to eke out a more rounded life because of gardens, a cow, etc. There will be the virtual total destruction of one major dairy and serious impairment of at least one other" (289). The detail and knowledge provided in these statements is no trivial matter, but is instead a legitimate, rhetorical means through which the UFBDA were able to enter into the debate surrounding the TVA dams. As Alex Duris described, "I am not setting myself up as an expert. I know these things from actual observation and experience. And to many people, this is also common knowledge" (p. 291)—an ethos of local knowledge stems from lived experiences, and yet is a no less credible form of knowledge in debates and controversies surrounding issues of environmental degradation and displacement.

Conclusion: Localized Ethos for Environmentalism

In this chapter, I have reviewed relevant literature surrounding common understandings of ethos within rhetoric and writing studies. Additionally, in connection with my analysis of the UFBDA through the archives, I have also suggested that the UFBDA enacted an ethos of local knowledge to legitimate their voice and concerns within the TVA public hearing. The analysis and findings presented in this chapter are largely motivated by Nedra Reynolds work, particularly as she asks, "How do writers identify themselves, claim authority, and position their projects" (333). In the case of the

“dam fight” UFBDA members and their supporters employed their immense awareness of their communities, via an ethos of local knowledge, to demonstrate their authority and expertise about the current conditions in the region, and most importantly what should happen in the future to their shared “dwelling place.” The study of ethos and local knowledge presented here is also inspired methodologically by Aaron Hess’s notion of “critical-rhetorical ethnography” as an approach for “seeking out and working within local and vernacular discourses” (148). By studying vernacular rhetoric, as in this case study of the UFBDA, rhetorical scholars can “examine locally situated discourses as they articulate against oppressive macrocontexts” (127). The study of vernacular rhetoric and local knowledge also helps “critical rhetoricians gain a fuller sense of the advocacy inherent to competing comprehensions within political deliberation” (Hess 131). In the study of local knowledge and ethos presented here, I have demonstrated the ways in which a close rhetorical analysis of the UFBDA’s public hearing statements can illuminate how a successful environmental organization was able to legitimate their own voices within a particularly contentious public policy debate.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

> *The purpose of this study in local history is fourfold:*
>
> 1. *To tell the story of the Upper French Broad Defense Association and the conflict from which it developed and to clarify the opposition that confronted us, in the hope that our experience may be helpful to fellow conservationists in other efforts in the protection of our fragile earth.*
>
> 2. *To record the names and activities of many supporters of the UFBDA, some of them unknown or soon to be forgotten.*
>
> 3. *To pinpoint political situations that spelled frustration or step by step led to ultimate victory.*
>
> 4. *To reiterate the basic reasons for our opposition to the TVA project for the Upper French Broad.*
>
> *– Martha Gash Boswell, "Grassroots Along the Upper French Broad: The Valley People Versus the Tennessee Valley Authority, 1961-1972" [unpublished pamphlet]*

Just as Boswell identified four specific goals for her pamphlet, "Grassroots," in this concluding chapter, I too have distinct rhetorical aims. This chapter (1) revisits the guiding research questions for this dissertation and recapitulate key findings, (2) discusses key implications for this project, (3) discusses the limitations of the present study, and (4) discusses calls for future research. The research findings presented here offer three distinct rhetorical tactics which contributed to the UFBDA's success and may be useful when applied to present and future environmental controversies. As featured in each of the three key analysis chapters of this dissertation (see Chapters 5-7), my research on the UFBDA helped me understand how the UFBDA constructed a version of nature as a commons rather than a wilderness (Chapter 5), worked collaboratively

across county lines to create additional opportunities for citizens to share information (Chapter 6), and used their local knowledge as a way to construct their ethos in a public hearing. While this dissertation yields three specific tactics which contributed to the UFBDA's success and could also be used by modern environmental activists facing similar challenges to those that the TVA posed for the "Dam Fighters," the historical research and archival sources featured in this dissertation (and especially those quoted in Chapter 4), demonstrate that this environmental battle was certainly not a straight path to success for the UFBDA. The UFBDA spent more than a decade gathering and sharing information and voicing their concerns about the TVA plan. Although I highlight three specific tactics the group used in their "dam fight," there was no single tactic, event, or happening that guaranteed the UFBDA's success in defeating the TVA. The UFBDA's experiences demonstrate that "success" or perceived efficacy for environmental organizations is not a simple process. While this realization may be disheartening for some environmentalists. It need not be. Instead, the UFBDA offers hope in that even when the odds may seem insurmountable—as it often did for the UFBDA—there is still more to be done, and all is not lost. Overall, this project—in terms of the analysis of the UFBDA presented here, as well as the implications for practitioners which I will discuss in this chapter—offers a nuanced way to understand environmental moments as a series of rhetorical opportunities, rather than a simple success or failure.

Research Questions and Key Findings

As discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, this project stemmed from three specific research questions:

1. How can citizens legitimate their own knowledge and expertise within environmental controversies and public deliberations?
2. How is political efficacy defined in environmental controversies?
3. How can scholars of rhetoric and writing studies examine political efficacy in environmental controversies as a nuanced set of rhetorical opportunities rather than simply examining these controversies as either a simple "success" or "failure?"

These research questions stem from my study and review of relevant literatures surrounding public participation and deliberation in environmental controversies. As I highlighted in Chapter 1, many environmental communication scholars have developed models and made recommendations about how to increase and improve public participation in environmental decision-making. What is less clear, however, is how citizens can make their knowledge and expertise known and accepted when entering into these debates and discussions. While environmental communication scholars are interested in how to improve the effectiveness of public involvement in environmental controversies, many scholars in the environmental humanities more broadly have demonstrated that environmentalists often do not feel as though their efforts are very effective. In other words, even when environmentalists (or environmental activists) have a seat at the table, they often do not feel as though their concerns, complaints, and

input is incorporated into what often happens to the environment. Therefore, I developed the second and third research question above so that I could explore how a very successful organization, in this case, the UFBDA, achieved their political effectiveness (research question 2) and how, as a rhetorician, I can present a study of the UFBDA which does not seemingly flatten the "dam fight" into a David and Goliath-like narrative, but one that affords the decade-long saga with the appropriate nuance and complexity (research question 3). While the three over-arching research questions listed above stem from extant conversations in environmental rhetoric and environmental humanities scholarship more broadly, I also approached the analysis chapters (5-7) of this dissertation with a question which targeted the UFBDA archival collections, specifically.

In my approach to the records in the archives relating to the UFBDA, I asked, *what everyday rhetorical tactics did the UFBDA members use as they opposed the TVA's dam project?* In this research question, I employ the term *everyday* as inspired by work in everyday rhetoric, which resituates the site of rhetorical inquiry from the classical canon of "Great men speaking well" to more modern understandings as rhetoric as an integral part of daily life. The phrase *everyday* in this research question is also reflected in the key findings of this dissertation, mainly the emphasis on ordinary democracy and the ways in which this project extends understandings of rhetorical citizenship. In ordinary democracy (as discussed in Chapter 2), Karen Tracy emphasizes the ways in which average citizens talk amongst themselves as a legitimate form of everyday democratic practice. Similarly, Kock and Villadsen echo the daily,

routine, and common nature of democratic activity in their term rhetorical citizenship, which I discuss in connection with the UFBDA in Chapter 6. In my UFBDA-specific research question, I also use the term *tactics* rather than strategies based on my reading of Michel de Certeau's influential text *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984). de Certeau distinguishes between tactics and strategies, suggesting that tactics are employed by groups who possess less power than the dominant group in society. In contrast, strategies are used by dominant, more powerful groups. Based on de Certeau's work, I conceive of the TVA as using strategies to try and garner local and political support for the proposed dams, whereas the UFBDA used various tactics to try and voice their concern and make the lack of support for the TVA project visible to their elected local officials. Emphasizing the significance of the "everyday" and of "tactics," I approached the major analysis chapters of this dissertation (Chapters 5, 6, & 7) with this research question in mind. In the process of answering the query, *what everyday rhetorical tactics did the UFBDA members use as they opposed the TVA's dam project*, I identified three key tactics: commons environmental rhetoric (Chapter 5), rhetorical citizenship, generativity, and greeting (Chapter 6), and an ethos of local knowledge (Chapter 7).

In Chapter 5: Towards Common Environmental Rhetoric, I argued that the UFBDA offer a conception of nature in their environmental rhetoric that is not based on wilderness, but is instead based on the notion of the commons. In this chapter, I work to demonstrate the ways in which the UFBDA work to rhetorically construct a fundamentally different form of nature. The UFBDA's construction of what I call

commons environmental rhetoric is a key answer to the research questions guiding this dissertation. Further, commons environmental rhetoric offers a new path forward to understanding and writing about the environment. Rather than understanding nature as apart from humanity, commons environmental rhetoric emphasizes "everyday nature" and the myriad ways in which the natural world is both intertwined and a product of human culture, and vice versa. By invoking commons environmental rhetoric, the UFBDA were able to clearly highlight how the landscape was already in use, thereby highlighting land use opportunities that would be destroyed by the dams. Commons environmental rhetoric helps environmental organizations demonstrate the ways in which the environment is enmeshed and involved in local life, thereby not constructing nature as a human-less wilderness, but a place where much more is at stake if the landscape is threatened or destroyed. Commons environmental rhetoric, then, as an approach to environmental rhetoric, may offer future environmental activists a path forward towards land preservation that recognizes local knowledge and can help preserve environments from destruction and degradation in the name of "progress."

In Chapter 6: Rhetorical Citizenship, Generativity, & Greeting, I discussed the practical application of rhetorical citizenship and how the UFBDA enacted rhetorical citizenship in their opposition to the TVA. I also worked in this chapter to put the notion of rhetorical citizenship in conversation with other ideas about public deliberation, civic engagement, and political communication, namely—Asen's notion of generativity and Young's concept of greeting. I have demonstrated the ways in which the UFBDA also embraced Asen's notion of generativity, from his "Discourse Theory of Citizenship" as

they made concerted efforts to establish connections with other citizens across county lines and in neighboring communities. In addition, through generativity, the UFBDA were able to generate new avenues for public information sharing, particularly as they spread their knowledge to other citizens within the region. Recognizing that there were additional, related tactics the UFBDA used in their enactment of rhetorical citizenship, I also discussed Iris Marion Young's theorization of sharing food as a greeting that generated more trust and equity in political communication. The notion of rhetorical citizenship, particularly combined with generativity and greeting, is a productive way to view the rhetorical tactics of the UFBDA, particularly in terms of highlighting how the dam fighters engaged in efforts of sharing information and talking to other citizens. Via this study of the UFBDA, I see rhetorical citizenship not only as a theoretical lens, but also as a mode of engagement—a tool for practitioners seeking social change.

In Chapter 7: Enacting an Ethos of Local Knowledge I suggested that the UFBDA enacted an ethos of local knowledge to legitimate their voice and concerns within the TVA public hearing. In the study of local knowledge and ethos presented here, I have demonstrated the ways in which a close rhetorical analysis of the UFBDA's public hearing statements can illuminate how a successful environmental organization was able to legitimate their own voices within a particularly contentious public policy debate. In addition to these three key tactics: commons environmental rhetoric, rhetorical citizenship, and local ethos, there are also several implications of this research that I will briefly review in the following section including: seeing the UFBDA as part of rhetorical

theory and history, understanding the commons as a productive metaphor for environmental rhetoric, and seeing the UFBDA's "dam fight" as a public pedagogy.

Key Implications from this Dissertation

UFBDA as Part of Rhetorical Theory and History

A key implication for this project is to establish the UFBDA's place in rhetorical theory and history. As demonstrated in my analysis in Chapters 5-7, my study of the UFBDA clearly enhances rhetorical theory and knowledge. However, I also want to make a case here for the UFBDA to be part of rhetorical history, particularly in terms of the history of environmental activism and environmental rhetoric. As an historic case study of environmental rhetoric, the UFBDA is worthy of historiographical note because, after all, the UFBDA were successful—the TVA dams were never built. Similarly, the UFBDA is also quite remarkable because of its diverse political support. For example, as Boswell writes in "Grassroots," "The campaign for a Republican Board of County Commissioners was fought for several reasons: protection of our valley communities, ecology as a cause, a change in governmental practice, for party loyalty and party backlash. We had the now hopeful support of threatened communities, of the UFBDA and many retirees. We also had the solid support of the Black community, many of whose leaders were now living in Mickey Park, a new development, planned and organized by Charles Taylor. We had the leadership of Cornelius Hunt, soon to be elected as our first Black alderman, of Rev. F.H. Goldsmith, of Selena Robinson, an outstanding civic leader" (26). Future research on the UFBDA should further explore

these collaborations across racial lines and illuminate the degree to which the UFBDA did create a more inclusive form of grassroots environmental activism.

Commons as a Productive Metaphor for Environmental Rhetoric

In Chapter 5, “Towards Commons Environmental Rhetoric,” I focused on the ways in which the UFBDA employed appeals to the commons, rather than wilderness, when discussing the environment in Western North Carolina. However, the commons can, in fact, be a productive metaphor for all of the tactics I've highlighted throughout this dissertation—in terms of environmental rhetoric, rhetorical citizenship, and ethos. The commons is a particularly powerful concept for environmental rhetoric, in terms of how scholars understand the construction and dissemination of rhetoric, on a theoretical level, and on a more practical one, the commons offers a powerful metaphor to keep environmentalism focused more on a collective, which is the movement's strength—it is, after all, powered by the people.

UFBDA as a Public Pedagogy

While the metaphor of the commons offers a productive base for the practice of environmental rhetoric, the case study presented here also contains valuable lessons for modern environmental activists as well. In other words, the UFBDA and their key rhetorical tactics highlighted in this book offer a public pedagogy to practitioners in the environmental movement.

Limitations of the Present Study

Like any work of research and writing, this dissertation is by no means perfect. I firmly believe there is no such thing as a “perfect” dissertation. One particular flaw with

this study centers around the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic did limit my access to some of the archives containing UFBDA materials during the Spring and Summer of 2020. In particular, I was not able to view the small collection pertaining to the UFBDA at Warren Wilson College, which documents the student chapter of the dam fighters housed on campus. While I do not anticipate that this collection would yield dramatically different research findings, it will be important to visit that archive and augment the current findings with sources from that collection.

In the Introduction of this dissertation, I referenced my interest in expanding Appalachian cultural rhetorics. I discussed the ways in which a cultural rhetorics approach, which is rooted deeply in the culture at the center of the study. I offered the historical context chapter of this dissertation, which serves as a deep dive into the time and place at the center of the "dam fight," as one means to approach cultural rhetorics. I also connected this work with existing work in Appalachian Studies, namely Kathryn Newfont's *Blue Ridge Commons*, as another way to situate my work in a meaningful constellation with Appalachian culture, meaning-making, and environmental interaction. While these two moves suggest that this project is working in the direction of cultural rhetorics, this approach could be a more integral and meaningful part of the dissertation. Further work on this topic should make the necessity and usefulness of a cultural rhetorics approach within this topic more salient.

Call for Future Research

Future research on this project will not only fortify the cultural rhetorics approach, carving a new path for Appalachian cultural rhetoric, but it will also address questions that this project raises for scholars of rhetoric and writing studies more broadly. For example, readers may wonder, after reading Chapter 5 of this dissertation about how rhetorical theory can be more explicit in the study of commons environmental rhetoric. In future work on this project, I aim to turn to the study to *topoi*, or commonplaces, in order to better understand and refine my findings in terms of commons environmental rhetoric. Similarly, based on my findings presented in Chapter 6, I plan to explore what generativity and greeting may look like in more digital and less face-to-face instances of activism. For example, what might generativity and greeting have to teach us about hashtag activism? Is there a reasonable equivalent in the digital age to supplying food to fellow activists at public hearings? And lastly, my work in Chapter 7 on local ethos also raises new questions about ethos and public participation. One interpretation of this localized ethos is that members of the UFBDA were operating in an anti-expertise fashion, calling into question and spreading as much doubt as possible in terms of the TVA's proposal. As an ardent environmentalist writing this dissertation in the age of "climate deniers," this alarms me. In future research, I aim to explore the ways in which local ethos is not necessarily anti-expertise, but instead is a different form of expertise which is legitimate and worthy of public attention. While the analysis chapters raise many questions for exploration in other environmental controversies, I would also like to deepen my understanding of the UFBDA, as well.

Future research on the UFBDA should also include new oral histories with surviving members of the UFBDA to further enrich the study's findings and contribute to the existing archival collections pertaining to the UFBDA. In closing, I will refer to Boswell's interview because her oral history interview (originally recorded in 1983) and that of Elmer Johnson were so very helpful in conducting this research. Future research on the UFBDA should incorporate more oral history interviews, as this format is clearly generative for the former "dam fighters."

. . . .

When asked in 1983 if there was anything left of the UFBDA, Martha Gash Boswell replied, "Well, no. So many of the people who fought were old and tired and we had put everything we had into the battle and we won" (Boswell, "Interview," p. 33). Boswell also describes that while some UFBDA members were tired by their battle with TVA, Alex Duris had not yet had enough of the "Dam Fight." Duris "took up various fights that were going on like New River" dam controversy of 1974-1978 encouraging other UFBDA members to participate by sending money and writing letters to politicians involved in the issue (Boswell, "Interview," p. 34). Although the group supported other issues, as an organization, the UFBDA did not continue with the same strength and virility after TVA's announcement abandoning their project for western North Carolina. The remaining leadership of the UFBDA decided to donate their remaining Association fund to the organization of the first annual French Broad River Week in 1976, an event that included river cleanups, fundraisers for continued protection and educational

opportunities about the French Broad watershed (Boswell, “Interview, p. 34; Bingham “French Broad River Week”).

However, the members of the UFBDA were not the only group funding the French Broad River Week. The Land-of-Sky Regional Council created the French Broad River Foundation (FBRF) to organize the first French Broad River Week with the assistance of funds directly from TVA. The mission of both the FBRF and the French Broad River week was to keep the French Broad on the minds of local citizens in terms of both recreation and conservation (“History of the French Broad River”). The FBRF relied heavily on local participation from both residents and politicians, particularly a county commissioner in Transylvania County, Bill Ives. Ives, who opposed the TVA plan from the beginning of his campaign in 1972, appointed former UFBDA member Elmer Johnson to head a river clean up committee of local citizens dedicated to improving the health of the French Broad. Johnson and his collection of cleanup volunteers approached TVA to borrow equipment; a request the TVA quickly filled and thus the Authority who once planned to dam the region became the “promoter of the French Broad as a flowing river” (Boswell, “Interview,” p. 33). The collaboration between the TVA and the UFBDA continued to advance with the creation of the Hap Simpson Riverfront Memorial Park.

Hap Simpson was a dedicated member of the UFBDA, most widely remembered for his research and photographs of the dramatically altered water levels of Lake Douglas throughout 1971. Simpson passed away not long after the TVA plan’s termination and the city of Brevard, appreciative of his efforts, began to organize plans

to honor his memory. TVA purchased a small parcel of land along the French Broad, giving it to the former members of the UFBDA, which they used to create the Hap Simpson Riverfront Park. Boswell recalled that Simpson's "memorial park really comes from the generosity of TVA" (Boswell, "Interview," p. 35)[13] The generosity of the TVA continued at the opening celebration in 1974 at the Hap Simpson Riverfront Park when the Authority presented the former UFBDA members with a plaque commemorating their long efforts to preserve the French Broad. Boswell commented that by 1974, it became apparent to the "Dam Fighters" that "we lost our enemy. The enemy had become a treasured friend" (Boswell, "Interview," p. 35). While I certainly value Boswell's story, memory, and experience, I do not share her optimism and positive outlook towards the TVA.

Instead of complimenting the TVA as the final point in this dissertation, I would rather emphasize the UFBDA's efforts and what their "dam fight" can teach us about democracy, public participation, and environmental rhetoric. As I have documented and presented in this dissertation, the UFBDA's grassroots opposition to the TVA helps us better understand the theoretical concepts of commons environmental rhetoric, rhetorical citizenship, and ethos. In my study of the UFBDA's use of language and persuasion, I explore archival collections and worked to once again, give voice to the brave, intelligent, and savvy citizens along the Upper French Broad River. The letters, pamphlets, flyers, and reports from the UFBDA archives help us better understand how grassroots environmentalism works, and how specific strategies the UFBDA enacted

13 The Hap Simpson Riverfront Park still exists as of 2015 and is a frequent spot for canoe and kayak portage, allowing more individuals, in the spirit of the UFBDA to access the undammed French Broad River for recreation.

contributed to their success in defeating the TVA and preventing the implementation of the 14 dams along the French Broad. In this dissertation, I have contributed new insights into how the UFBDA were able to describe the western North Carolina landscape as a commons and not a wilderness, work together across counties to create new opportunities to share their concerns over the TVA project, and establish their own credibility as knowledgeable citizens about their local environment. By highlighting specific components of the UFBDA's work, this dissertation provides examples that can be used by future grassroots environmental organization facing similar challenges regarding environmental controversies. Overall, this dissertation demonstrates the ways in which the UFBDA case study offers a generative model for future environmental controversies, providing specific techniques which can contribute to the success of grassroots organizations mired in environmental controversies and contentious decisions.

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