

Teaching with Primary Sources Across Tennessee

LESSON ACTIVITY:

THE DEBATE OVER NORTH SHORE ROAD

This lesson activity explores the debate over the construction of North Shore Road through the Great Smoky Mountain National Park in North Carolina between Bryson City and Fontana Village. Students will study primary sources images, maps and the HABS survey data pages to determine environmental impact of the North Shore Road project.



GRADE LEVEL & SUBJECTS:

High School Environmental Science & Geography

TN STATE CURRICULUM STANDARDS:

Environmental Science:

Conceptual Strand 4:

- Humans use natural resources in a variety of ways

Guiding Question 4:

- How can natural resources be sustainably managed for the benefit of all living things?

Course Level Expectations:

- CLE 3260.4.3 Compare and contrast preservation and conservation.
- CLE 3260.4.4 Evaluate the impact of human activities on natural resources.

Geography:

- 3.1 understand the characteristics and uses of maps, globes, and other geographic tools and technologies
- 3.8 understand how human systems modify the physical environment
- 4.3 understand global development and environmental issues

PRIMARY SOURCES USED:

- Great Smoky Mountains National Park Roads & Bridges, Northshore Road, 1 mile spur at Fontana Dam & Bryson City to Noland Creek, Gatlinburg vicinity, Sevier, TN
 - 1. Opposition sign posted on private property at the entrance to the road looking NW. HAER TENN,78-GAT.V.6I-1 (See left)
 - 2. Northshore Road, view of rock cut along road. HAER TENN,78-GAT.V.6I-2
 - 6. Northshore Road, bridge before tunnel, deck view. HAER TENN,78-GAT.V.6I-6
 - 7. Northshore Road, tunnel portal HAER TENN,78-GAT.V.6I-7
 - 8. End of road from inside tunnel looking NW. HAER TENN,78-GAT.V.6I-8
 - 9. Roadway and Fontana Dam looking N. HAER TENN,78-GAT.V.6I-9
- Great Smoky Mountains National Park / National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. [1980]
- Great Smoky Mountains National Park. [1951]

ACTIVITY:

1. Circulate images 2, 6, 7, 8, and 9 of North Shore Road. Ask students to list ways that the environment has been impacted by construction in these images.
2. Have students read the data pages and include any reference to environmental impact included in the report.
3. Have students discuss their findings.
4. As a class, view the 1951 and 1980 map of the park. Locate Bryson City and Fontana Village on each map. Have the class discuss the observations. What roads are located in this area? Where is the proposed North Shore Road? How does the construction of North Shore Road impact the conservation of the southwest section of the park?
5. Circulate image 1. What do they observe in this image? Is the sign in favor or opposed to the construction of North Shore Road? Ask students to reflect on why citizens of Swain County, North Carolina were in favor of the road project.



EXTENSIONS:

- Divide the class into two groups and have them debate construction of the road. Students should do additional research to discover viewpoints and discussion points each side used in their arguments.
- Have students research how this debate was resolved and write a Letter to the Editor either in favor or opposed to the resolution.
- Have students compare and contrast the 1980 map of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park with the [1926 map](#) of the proposed area for the park. How was the landscape changed by the construction of Fontana Dam? Then have students research the benefits and drawbacks of the dam.

