

Cultural Resource Management



TVA has a rich history in cultural resource management that goes back to its establishment in 1933. As a federal agency, TVA is responsible for identifying, managing, and protecting cultural resources that are found on its property or affected by its actions. These cultural resources may include historic buildings, structures, sites or objects, archaeological resources, Native American burials, funerary objects, sacred items, and other historic resources. Laws, executive orders, and associated regulations are in place that obligate TVA to protect these important sites and resources. These include the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), and the Archaeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA).



Objectives:

- Comply with all federal laws related to cultural resource management on federal lands or on lands affected by TVA actions
- Increase our knowledge base regarding significant cultural resources on TVA lands through identification, evaluation, and documentation
- Protect and preserve significant archaeological and historic resources through improved and enhanced management practices such as monitoring, shoreline stabilization, archaeological curation, and enforcement of federal laws
- Provide educational and outreach opportunities within TVA communities concerning the necessity of protecting cultural resources and sharing the unique history of the Tennessee Valley
- Consult and partner with stakeholders, such as federally recognized Indian tribes (Tribes), whose ancestral lands fall within the Tennessee Valley



Cultural Resource Management



Programs

Cultural resource management at TVA is implemented through seven functional programs. These programs help ensure compliance with applicable laws and support the sound stewardship of archaeological and historic resources that fall within the agency's management responsibility.

PRESERVATION PROGRAM

NHPA requires federal agencies to establish a preservation program to identify, evaluate, and nominate historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places and manage these resources in a way that preserves their historic integrity. TVA is also responsible for managing a large number of archaeological collections that were excavated from TVA land throughout its history.

SECTION 106 COMPLIANCE

Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to consider the effects its undertakings will have on historic properties (e.g., historic structures or archaeological sites eligible for the National Register). Undertakings include most TVA projects as well as projects permitted, funded or licensed by TVA. Agencies must provide consulting parties an opportunity to comment on such undertakings prior to approval.

NAGPRA COMPLIANCE

NAGPRA provides for the protection of Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects vital to Native American cultural identity (cultural items). It provides a process whereby TVA can return cultural items in its control to Native American lineal descendants or Tribes.

TRIBAL RELATIONS PROGRAM

The United States government has a unique legal relationship with Tribes set forth in the Constitution, treaties, statutes, and court decisions. TVA's Tribal Relations program builds and maintains government to government relationships with the Tribes who once lived in the Tennessee Valley. TVA regularly consults and partners with Tribes to protect, manage, and learn from the significant Native American archaeological sites located in the Tennessee Valley.

THOUSAND EYES ARCHAEOLOGICAL OUTREACH

ARPA requires agencies to develop programs to increase public awareness of the need to protect archaeological sites located on its public lands. TVA's Thousand Eyes program provides educational opportunities across the Valley and a volunteer site stewardship program where members of the community can assist TVA in monitoring archaeological sites in danger of being damaged by illegal looting and natural impacts.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND PROTECTION

TVA is responsible for the management and protection of archaeological sites on its land. TVA monitors sites that have been recorded on TVA land that are in danger of being threatened by looting, erosion, or other impacts in order to identify the appropriate action plans for protection. Protection efforts include increased monitoring, signage, stabilization, gating, and increased patrols under the ARPA Enforcement program.

ARPA ENFORCEMENT

ARPA protects archaeological sites on Indian and federal lands. The Act prohibits the removal or damage of archaeological resources and provides both criminal and civil penalties for violations.