

**Between the Rivers: Reconstructing Social and Environmental
Histories of a Forest Community
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The story of *Between the Rivers* is a story of a displaced forest community's struggle for cultural identity and environmental justice. Though the displacement by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) occurred almost forty years ago, the community has been fighting for continued non-commercialization of the land and recognition of their heritage and cultural rights, first against the TVA and in more recent years against the US Forest Service. In the course of my dissertation, I wish to address why, in spite of a compelling case, the residents of BTR have been unable to garner much support for their fight from either state or non-state actors.

To address this issue, I seek to examine how three actors involved in this controversy – *state agencies* (originally the Tennessee Valley Authority and since 1999, the US Forest Service), *environmental organizations* (Audubon and others) and *local residents* – construct the question of forest management in different terms. In particular, in this proposal I seek to understand *why the three actors construct one single issue in different terms, and what are the implications of such constructions for forest resource management on the one hand and identity construction on the other*. In other words, I wish to examine how the mantra of *global* environmental protection shaped the adverse response of the first two actors to the *local* understanding of the environment as mediated by place, histories, and memories. The story of LBR illustrates how the cultural significance of a place can be missed not because anyone necessarily intends to ignore it, but simply because of the impact of the template that is applied to its evaluation. It is the construction of this template and the organizational logic behind it that I seek to examine.