

# August activities

## Introducing TVA

### **What Is Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)?**

The Tennessee Valley Authority, or TVA, is the largest public power company in the United States. TVA also carefully manages the nation's fifth-largest river to reduce flood damage, make rivers easier to travel, provide recreation, protect aquatic life and keep the water clean. TVA helps make the Tennessee River Valley a good place for families to live and work.

### **What TVA Does**

Have you ever wondered what TVA does? The answer is: many different things.

TVA is the largest public power company in the United States. It's called "public" because it's owned by the U.S. government, unlike most companies that are owned by individual people or investors. Through its electricity plants, TVA supplies power to 10 million people in the Southeastern United States.

In addition to producing power for many Americans, TVA also manages the nation's fifth-largest river system. The Tennessee River flows 652 miles from East Tennessee down into Alabama and back up into Kentucky, where it joins the Ohio River. All along the Tennessee River, TVA employees work to reduce the dangers of flooding, make it possible for boats to travel safely, and keep the water clean.

In the 41,000-square-mile area drained by the Tennessee River, TVA also operates some of the country's best outdoor recreation areas. Although TVA was first set up in 1933 as an agency supported by Americans' tax dollars, today, it runs all of its programs and pays its employees with the money it earns by making and selling electricity.

So, the next time you turn on a computer, drink from the school water fountain or go fishing on a TVA reservoir, you will know what part TVA plays in helping everybody in the Valley lead a better life.

### Energy Generation Videos TVA

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## The History of TVA

<https://www.tva.com/kids/tva-history>

If you were carried back in time to 1933, you might not recognize most areas in the Tennessee Valley, the region that runs through seven Southeastern states and surrounds the Tennessee River.

At that time, the region was in bad shape compared with the rest of the United States. It was dangerous to travel on major stretches of the Tennessee River. Many people who lived in the Valley had no electricity and were barely getting by. Farmers were suffering because the soil where they grew their crops was poor and worn out.

To make matters worse, the entire country was in the middle of a huge economic slump known today as the Great Depression, which meant many people had no jobs. Many families in the Tennessee Valley region were unable to buy or grow enough food to stay healthy.

When our 32nd president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, entered office in 1933, he wanted to help the people of the Tennessee Valley become more prosperous, healthy and productive. To do this, President Roosevelt signed the Tennessee Valley Authority Act on May 18, 1933.

This act of Congress created the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), a federal corporation. The new agency was asked to tackle important problems facing the Valley, such as flooding, providing electricity to homes and businesses, and replanting forests. Other TVA responsibilities written in the act included improving travel on the Tennessee River and helping develop the region's business and farming.

Today, TVA has certainly lived up to President Roosevelt's hopes. TVA is the largest public power company in the United States. The agency also carefully runs the nation's fifth-largest river system to reduce flood damage, make rivers easier to travel, provide recreation and protect water quality. The Tennessee Valley is now a great place for families to live and work.

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## Currents of Change

To learn more about the development of TVA in the Tennessee Valley, in either large group or small group explorations, use the Currents of Change online resource!

Instructional resources associated with TVA History are available at:  
<https://currentsofchange.net/>

- PowerPoint Presentations
- Primary Sources
- Multifaceted historical lens on the Tennessee Valley