

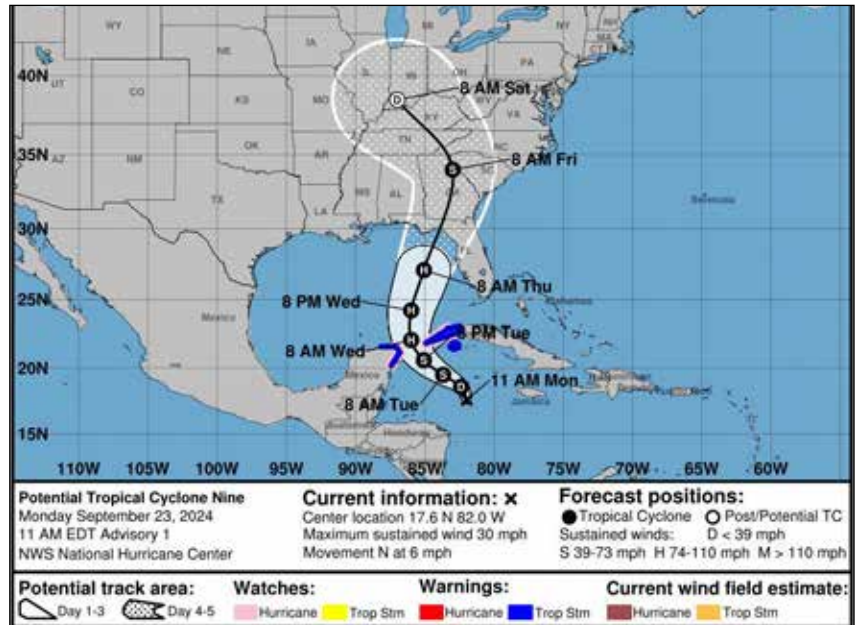
TVA Project, Blocked by Eco-Fascists, Would Have Saved Most of the Lives Lost in Hurricane Helene Flooding in North Carolina

by Richard Freeman

Nov. 6—Hurricane Helene made landfall on Florida’s Gulf Coast Sept. 26, then proceeded northward on a 500-mile storm path, crossing into Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky and southwestern Virginia. It wrought massive destruction of homes, workplaces, community centers, places of worship, hospitals, rail, roads, and electricity grids, wiping out whole towns in southwestern North Carolina.

All features of the fierce storm were extreme. The storm surge on the Florida coast reached 11 feet; wind speed was 140 miles per hour going into Georgia; wind gusts as far inland as South Carolina caused vast power outages; torrential rains caused flooding. Helene’s impact revealed the inadequacy of the U.S. infrastructure base, from shoreline defenses, to a modern power grid system, to flood control infrastructure.

But far and away, the most dramatic feature of the storm and lack of infrastructure was the vast flooding in the Appalachians in western North Carolina. In only three days, the town of Asheville received 13.98 inches of rain. All told, Busick, in the same region, got 30.78 inches in just a few days. Taking the official Helene death toll of 232 (other figures are given), 117 of them are from North Carolina. (The oth-



NOAA



CC/Bill McMannis

Top, map shows the path of Hurricane Helene’s devastation. Below, power lines in Asheville, N.C., downed by the storm.

ers are South Carolina: 48; Georgia: 33; Florida: 20; Tennessee: 12; Virginia: 2.) The real figure is no doubt higher and still rising, from follow-on causes.

The even bigger story than Helene’s weather extremes is that a project of flood defense infrastructure was proposed 60 years ago in western North Carolina, that would have prevented or mitigated death and destruction entirely! But it was thwarted and never built.

The Tennessee Valley Authority designed and proposed a package of dams and other waterworks in 1965, because the river through the Asheville region—the 219-mile long French Broad River—is within the watershed of the Tennessee River Basin. The French Broad flows down the western slopes of the Appalachians, and just east of Knoxville, joins the Holston River to form the Tennessee River.

Blame It on ‘Climate Change’

These facts about hurricane patterns, the history of obstruction of flood defenses and the like have not only been blacked out by the media and politicians, but even as the hurricane gathered force in the Gulf of Mexico, the population-reduction environmentalists, financed by the City of London and Wall Street, were proclaiming that the hurricane was spawned and/or intensified by global warming. They made the sole issue, “climate change.”

On Oct. 9, coming only two weeks after the storm, an ultra-environmentalist strike force known as the World Weather Attribution (WWA), based in Britain, released a report entitled “Climate Change Key Driver of Catastrophic Impacts of Hurricane Helene That Devastated Both Coastal and Inland Communities.” Their so-called study was just the linear output of their model’s assumptions that global warming determines all weather. The report lies that anthropogenic activity, which is heating up the Earth, is what caused Hurricane Helene and almost every other storm. They denounce such activities as human beings burning fossil fuels; carrying out energy-intensive, chemically-fertilized agriculture; and the building of capital-intensive industry and productivity-generating infrastructure. To the WWA, these factors are

responsible for the ensuing destruction from storms. The WWA’s solution is to stop such physical economic development, build more low-energy-flux density “renewables,” and impose population-reduction.

The WWA is an alliance of environmentalist organizations, led by the Grantham Foundation, based out of both Imperial College in Britain and the London School of Economics. The Grantham Foundation is in an official alliance with the Royal Foundation, whose patron is King Charles III, and whose president is the Duke of Kent, a leading member of the British Monarchy. On Oct. 9, *The New York Times* plastered the British WWA’s study prominently on its pages, and other



FEMA Photo/Madeleine Cook

Devastation from Hurricane Helene in Asheville, N.C. The state’s death toll reached 117.

media, robot-like, followed suit.

This climate-change falsehood attempts to obscure the decisive reason for the wreckage triggered by Helene: that flood control–water management infrastructure for the affected areas was never built, which would have prevented much of the destruction. In the case of southwestern North Carolina, in the period 1965-72, the infrastructure was deliberately blocked by an alliance of rabid environmentalists, and fiscally conservative Republicans, a portion of whom shared the views of the old Confederacy.

The Tennessee Valley Authority, an expert agency in flood control, whose work was studied and emulated by China and dozens of other countries, proposed a scientific, integrated project for flood control of the

French Broad River Water Basin (FBRWB), using dams, levees, retaining walls, and reservoirs. The above coalition, aided by Wall Street financing, ganged up to smear and halt the project.

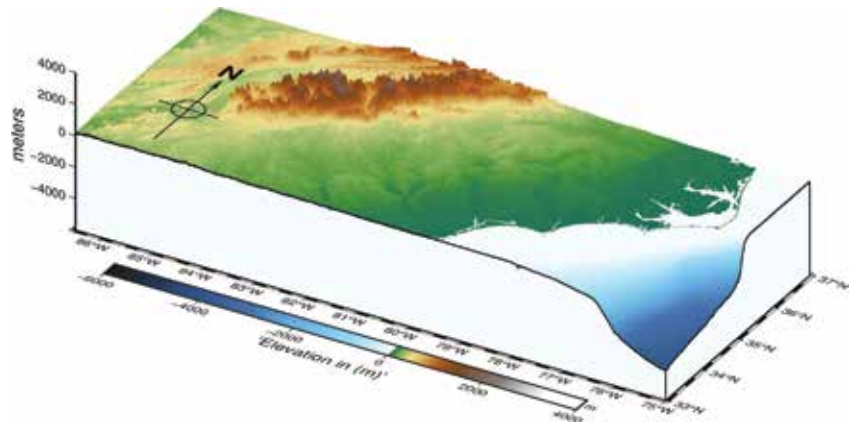
Had the FBRWB and other similar projects been built, two-thirds to 90% of those who died in Hurricane Helene would still be alive today. Most of the destruction would never have ensued. That is the reality of Hurricane Helene. The fascist green movement itself, and its ideology in all its manifestations, in conjunction with President Richard Nixon's August 1971 taking the dollar off the gold-reserve system, which produced a global casino economy and the accelerating collapse of the U.S. physical economy, are together the real causes of the path of death and destruction swept by Hurricane Helene.

Mankind can use its creativity and Promethean power of forethought and science, to use large rainfall from storms to provide massive flows of water for electricity generation, to irrigate deserts and regular cropland to produce food, and to produce abundant drinking water. Man abets and improves nature, making the biosphere bloom. It is such a perspective that the U.S. should at long last re-instate and act upon now.

The Appalachian Ridge and Valley Region

The ridge and valley formations of the Appalachian Mountains present a severe challenge in many locations, to protect against flooding. The Appalachians extend for almost 2,000 miles (3,200 kilometers) from the Canadian Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, southward to the central part of the State of Alabama, and—a side note—they have some of the world's most ancient exposed rock, about 1.2 billion years old.

On Sept. 27, what happened is what has been going on for more than 200 million years. The dense saturated rain clouds from Hurricane Helene came up from the Florida Gulf to North Carolina's southwestern highlands, and as the clouds crossed the Appalachian ridges, going from east to west, they discharged their rain. This pattern has been occurring for tens of millions of years, without any assistance from the mythical global warming—which is easily discerned from



CC/Jcooksey1

The topographical features that have caused consistent weather patterns for thousands of years, not just recently caused by purported anthropogenic global warming.

any topographic map and basics of hydrology.

This process played out in the City of Asheville (population 95,000) located in Buncombe County at an elevation of 2,125 feet in the Blue Ridge Mountains, as the Appalachians are called here. Asheville is in a bowl-shaped valley, and as the heavy rains continued, with nowhere to go, the flood waters rose higher and higher. The rivers in Asheville overflowed—the French Broad River, and its principal tributary, the Swannanoa River. This produced a scene of devastation.

Of the 117 deaths in North Carolina reported from Hurricane Helene, southwestern North Carolina experienced 78 deaths, or 63% of the state's total. Southwestern North Carolina alone accounted for 29% of deaths for all six states most affected by the storm.

Much of the eyes of the U.S., and parts of the world, were focused on Asheville, as the city was devastated, and the media played up the devastation. There were near non-stop video replays of scenes of people stranded in trees, or viewing, with broken hearts, their shattered homes. They spoke of their missing loved ones. With no solution or mention of infrastructure offered, the effect of the media coverage on the destruction of the storm was meant to demoralize the population.

The same Asheville “process” occurred throughout the Appalachian Mountains, in such towns as Black Mountain, Burnsville, etc.

The mayor of a town in the Appalachian Mountains, which had been wiped out and was still without electricity, told *EIR* Oct. 14 that with respect to building infrastructure, many of the people did not want their property to be ordered to have infrastructure. The edi-

tor of a North Carolina online newspaper, when asked about infrastructure, told *EIR* that there may not be a way to prevent flooding from coming again.

The demoralization of the population is palpable, though that can be turned around.

Flooding Time and Time Again

The historical record shows repeated floods in western North Carolina. A 1965 Tennessee Valley Authority study reported that as early as the Eighteenth Century, settlers in this region were recording floods. The study reported that in 1791, a “Great Flood” occurred; there was “an unusually high flood” on the French Broad River, and the tributary Swannanoa River experienced “the greatest flood known.”

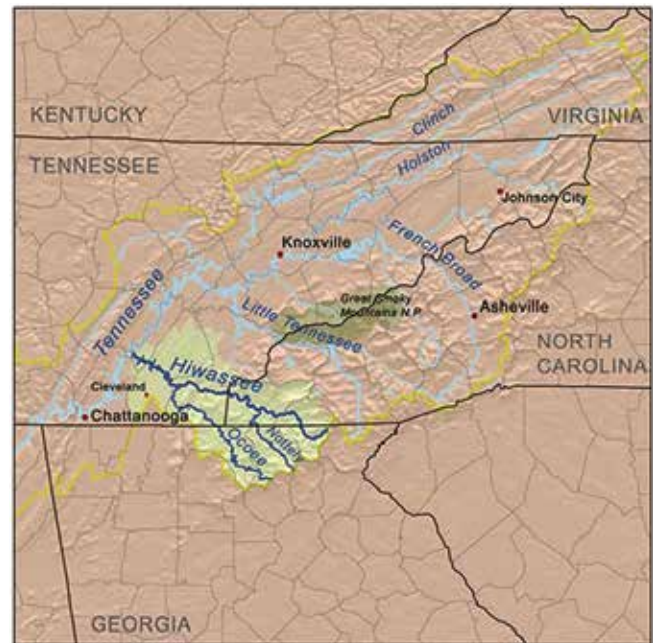
Over the ensuing centuries, many more floods were recorded. For example, the French Broad River overflowed in August 1852, June 1876, May 1901, and in July 1905. Then came the mammoth flood.

On July 17, 1916, a hurricane dumped between 15 and 22 inches of rain in just 24 hours in the area of western North Carolina, including Asheville. According to an historical document, entitled “French Broad [River] Adventures,” the telegraph station at Asheville reported: “Asheville and Biltmore [the Vanderbilt estate] are flooded. The water is up to the ceiling in the depot.... It is in All Souls church—it is in the hospital—the beds are floating—the patients are drowning! The tannery is washed away—bridges are gone. Captain Lipe and some of the nurses are drowned at Biltmore. Other people are up in trees, surrounded by water, and they cannot get them out of the river.... Box cars are floating down” the French Broad River which runs through Asheville.

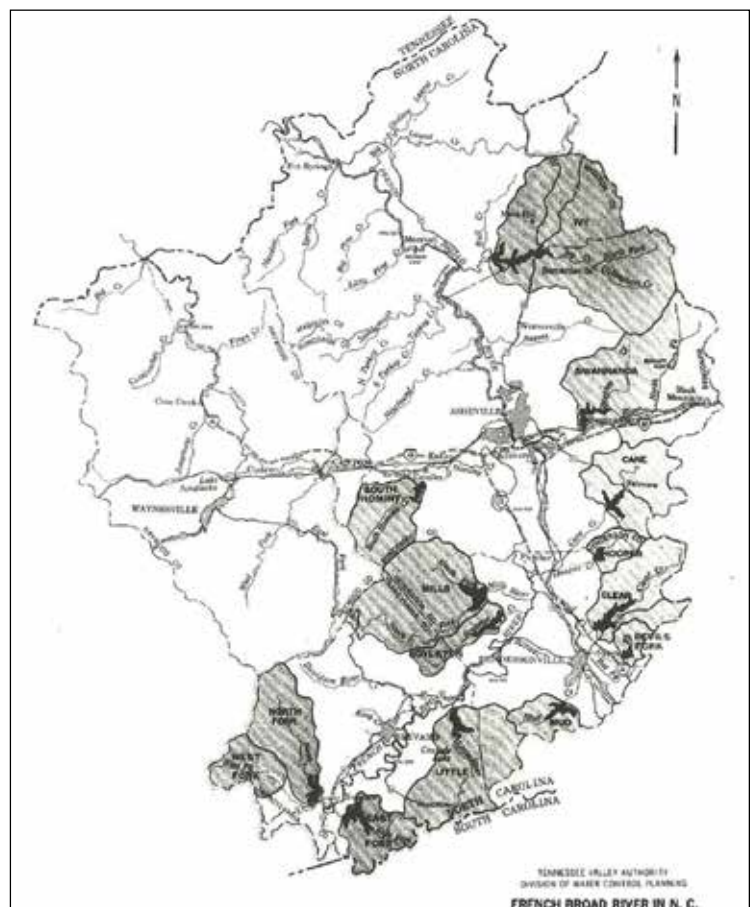
This 1916 flooding event, in terms of the volume of rainfall during the first 24 hours, and in terms of damage, was easily as bad as, and likely exceeded, the impact of the tragic 2024 flooding. The made-up doctrine of global warming did not exist in 1916, and did not cause the 1916 flood; nor did it cause the flood of 2024.

The 1965 TVA Plan for Flood Control

As the repetition of floods of the French Broad River continued, with floods occurring in 1961 and 1964, engineers went to work at the Tennessee Valley’s headquarters in Knoxville,



CC/Kmusser, based on USGS data



Top, map of the French Broad River watershed. Below, 1965 TVA plan for flood control, that would create a scientifically-based, integrated water-control system for the Upper French Broad River Basin.

Tennessee. This cycle of nature-prompted floods had to be stopped and superseded by man.

The TVA had the experience to handle this. The TVA was created on May 18, 1933, but it took a few years to go into operation, because it was fiercely opposed by the Morgan banking and Duke family interests, which ran large power companies in the South, and which brought many lawsuits to stop the TVA from building anything.

In the period from the late 1930s through the 1950s, the TVA built some of the most magnificent water management infrastructure in the world, turning the flood-prone, impoverished, disease-ridden 40,000 square mile Tennessee Valley watershed into an advancing economy, with ultimately 49 dams.

The location map here shows the French Broad River, whose headwaters rise in southwest North Carolina, across from the border of South Carolina. The river heads north, passing through Asheville, where it is joined by the waters from the tributary Swannanoa River, then continues northwest crossing the Appalachian Mountains into Tennessee. Here it eventually joins into the Holston River, at Knoxville, as the Tennessee River, going on to the Ohio River, finally joining into the Mississippi River, and emptying into the Gulf of Mexico. The area of the French Broad River Basin in North Carolina, which the TVA plan covered, is 2,830 square miles.

In 1965, the TVA's Office of Tributary Area Development announced its plan that would create a scientific, integrated water control system for the Upper French Broad River Basin. The project can be seen in the attached TVA-proposed map for the plan. The project called for the construction of fourteen impoundments—2 dry dams and 12 permanent pools dams; 74 miles of channelization improvement of rivers, principally the French Broad River; and building 1.4 miles of levees in Asheville, among other points. A “dry dam” only fills up during heavy rains, and then releases the water afterward. The “12 permanent pools” dams have reservoirs behind them (which could be pools for wet retention centers), and have features for flood control. TVA officials stated that the dams would preserve valuable farmland, protect urban centers, and encourage the development of industry along the French Broad River.

The total project was slated to cost \$99 million (about \$1.1 billion in 2024 dollars). The TVA plan was

a top-down approach to develop, in an integrated way, all the features of the water basin as a whole. This refers to the various specific features of the entire watershed area, from drainage, to soil types.

With the TVA's expertise and long experience in building dams, its Upper French Broad River Basin plan would have worked, reducing flooding, and in many areas, eliminating it.

Rabid Green-Fascist Opposition

As the plan was being released, an anti-1965 TVA flood control plan alliance was formed of different groups, holding different ideologies, but all sharing one common objective: to defeat and bury the TVA's Upper French Broad River Basin scientific project. Three ring-leaders stand out:

Dr. Jere Brittain. With a doctorate in horticultural history, he portrayed himself as a simple country boy, who loved the land, wildlife and his family home, which was slated for removal. A total of 60 homes would have been purchased in his county to make way for the project's reservoirs, with the owner paid for his property at fair market value. In 1970, Brittain pulled together the main anti-TVA organization, called the Upper French Broad Defense Association (UFBDA), which its members called the “Dam-Fighters.” Later, he wrote a poem to express his view, which read, “Keep the rivers runnin' free, and damn the TVA.” The vision of rivers running free, unrestrained by flood control features that would save lives, became the dominant idea.

Fiscal conservatives, anti-Big Government. According to an article in the October 2018 issue of *Environmental History*, entitled “Watershed Democracy,” by authors Bruce Stewart and Christopher Manganiello, the anti-TVA coalition had groupings in it who were hard core, anti-TVA fiscal conservatives, many of whom never wanted President Franklin Roosevelt's TVA in the first place. These groupings supported President Richard Nixon's pledge to “reduce federal spending, cut ‘wasteful’ government agencies, and balance the national budget.”

Sierra Club. This organization played a leading role in the anti-TVA coalition. Above all, in the critical 1970-71 period, the eco-fascist Sierra Club set the anti-TVA ideology, basically against infrastructure and for depopulation. Look at the Sierra Club's history. In 1892, Henry Starr Jordan was one of the founders

and members of the original board of directors of the Sierra Club. Jordan was a kingpin of the eugenics movement, and cofounded the Human Betterment Foundation, whose research and model laws were used to help create Nazi Germany's eugenics legislation. Other original Sierra Club members shared that view, which reflects the fact that the "environmentalist" movement was created to purvey eugenics' goals. Today, the Sierra Club is a leader in the fight to tear down hundreds of existing dams, in order to conform with "nature," minus human beings.

It was not an accident that just at the time of the fight over flood control infrastructure in the Blue Ridge Mountains, the anti-development National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) was brought into existence, taking effect on January 1, 1970. It was created by the same environmentalists who were leading the anti-1965 TVA plan. NEPA had broad powers. It required that before a dam, or any major project could be built, so-called "environmental impact studies" had to be prepared, stating whether the project would adversely affect the environment, defined as broadly as possible. Some excuse would be found to block the TVA North Carolina project, despite the fact that the U.S. Congress had already appropriated millions of dollars to construct it.

The TVA was boxed in by the coordinated action of the national NEPA, the rabid anti-TVA grouping in southwestern North Carolina, and the media which trumpeted the anti-dam cause, by attacking the alleged "authoritarian" methods of the TVA. However, in addition to its flood control program for the Upper French Broad River Basin, the TVA had already designed and proposed 12 other flood control programs for other river basins in contiguous areas. Thus, the fight for the Upper French Broad River Basin became a fight for the future of flood control and water management projects in the extended Appalachian region, and also a national fight for the principle of



In the early 1940s, the TVA built Douglas Dam in eastern central Tennessee, shown here in a 2013 aerial photograph. During Helene, its reservoir filled to capacity, but performed as designed.

flood control.

The TVA, unprepared for this fight, gave in. The first "Earth Day" had just happened in 1970, to worship "Mother Earth." The TVA fight was a battle that decisively shaped the course of history on U.S. water infrastructure.

Had the TVA's flood control projects been built in North Carolina and the other states hit by Hurricane Helene, two-thirds to 90% of those who died during the disaster would still be alive today.

There is a useful anecdote. Douglas Dam is a hydroelectric and flood control dam in Sevier County, Tennessee, situated downstream on the French Broad River from Asheville, North Carolina. The TVA built it in the 1940s. During Hurricane Helene, though river levels reached highs, the dam performed as designed, preventing widespread flooding. Darrell Guinn, a TVA official explained:

"Douglas [Dam] is catching a lot of the rain that Asheville saw. Throughout the system though, the dams performed exactly like they were supposed to.... We stored the maximum amount that we could at Watauga and Douglas. Those are the reservoirs that received the heaviest rainfall from the North Carolina side of things, and so those are the reservoirs that really kinda filled up to capacity."

There was heavy water flow, but the dam held.