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The Snail Darter and the Dam: How Pork-Barrel Politics Endangered a Little Fish and Killed a River

Zygmunt J. B. Plater

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Even today, thirty years after the legal battles to save the endangered snail darter, the little fish that blocked completion of a TVA dam is still invoked as an icon of leftist extremism and governmental foolishness. In this eye-opening book, the lawyer who with his students fought and won the Supreme Court case—known officially as *Tennessee Valley Authority v. Hill*—tells the hidden story behind one of the nation's most significant environmental law battles.

The realities of the darter's case, Plater asserts, have been consistently mischaracterized in politics and the media. This book offers a detailed account of the six-year crusade against a pork-barrel project that made no economic sense and was flawed from the start. In reality TVA's project was designed for recreation and real estate development. And at the heart of the little group fighting the project in the courts and Congress were family farmers trying to save their homes and farms, most of which were to be resold in a corporate land development scheme. Plater's gripping tale of citizens navigating the tangled corridors of national power stimulates important questions about our nation's governance, and at last sets the snail darter's record straight.

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