

Cattle Watering Lanes Extending into Tellico Lake

WATeR is working with TVA, local cattlemen and local cattleman's associations to provide better methods for watering cattle that removes the safety hazards, removes a source of pollution from the lake, eliminates bank erosion, and provides a healthy source of water for the cattle. An example of a modern watering system is shown below.



When TVA acquired land to form Tellico Lake decades ago, they allowed farmers direct access to the lake to water their cattle. This entailed building fenced lanes from their pasture to the lake. To assure access during the winter when the lake elevation was lowered six feet for additional flood storage, this required extending the fencing 50 feet or more into the lake from the summer shoreline. However, these fenced lanes become submerged by as much as six feet during the remainder of the year when the lake is at full pool as shown in this photograph.



There are several compelling reasons from both the farmers' and public's standpoint why these fenced watering lanes need to be replaced with modern watering stations:

- A submerged fence is a hazard to boaters and recreational tubing and skiers;
- Cattle pollute the water by defecating and urinating directly into the lake;
- Cattle erode the shoreline as they enter and leave the lake;
- The direct access to the lake is unhealthy and hazardous to livestock often resulting in injury and/or death to older/weaker animals. Younger calves that may become mired in mud or entangled in the fencing causing exposure, exhaustion, pneumonia, or possible drowning.

The first step in the process is to identify locations of fenced lanes extending into Tellico Lake for watering cattle. Working with landowners, a team composed of members of TVA, NRCS, Soil Conservation Districts, UT Extension Service, and WATeR can evaluate a design, estimate cost, and provide financial support for the appropriate installation of upgraded stations. The goal is to provide better site-specific livestock water stations, restoration of the shoreline, and provide a riparian buffer of AG friendly vegetation.