

Political ecology of dams in Teesdale.

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SYNOPSIS. Between 1894 and 1970, six dams were built in the beautiful Pennine landscape of Upper Teesdale in North East England to supply industrial consumers on Teesside. Political influences on the decisions to build these impounding reservoirs are explored to discover the reasons for ignoring alternatives; some of them much less intrusive on the rural environment. Was the concept of a sequence of dams in upland dales overtaken by a megadam with consequent major transfers of water between catchments? With hindsight, should preference have been given to provision of domestic and industrial water storage by the “Metropolitan” solution of pumped storage off-river reservoirs close to the point of use? By asking who benefits and who pays, economically, socially and environmentally, this historical analysis presents a wide perspective on the social and environmental impacts of dams and reservoirs with implications for future choices.