PROJECT MUSE®

This Side of the Mountain

George Brosi

Appalachian Heritage, Volume 36, Number 1, Winter 2008, p. 4 (Article)

Published by The University of North Carolina Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/aph.2008.0012>

➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/237258>

THIS SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

George Brosi

The REA, the Rural Electric Administration, promoted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and passed by Congress in 1935, made dramatic improvements in the quality of life for rural Americans.

It is time for another nationwide initiative to transform the quality of life not only for rural dwellers, but for all Americans. I hope that all presidential candidates from all parties will take a firm stand to enact a similar program that will allow for all homes to enjoy safe and sanitary water and sewer facilities. This is the only way to obliterate the scourge of so-called “straight pipes” that channel sewage directly into our precious streams and to guarantee that all citizens can enjoy potable and sanitary water for drinking and washing.

To achieve this goal will take many approaches. Some communities desperately need sophisticated sewer systems. In other places, the homesteads are more spread out, so composting toilets or septic systems and wells make more sense. Some homes may find themselves served by a couple of stop-gap measures before the ultimate goal is reached. Finding appropriate sanitary technology will also be a tremendous opportunity for the government to assist start-up businesses and innovative entrepreneurs at the forefront of job creation and ecological sensitivity. Programs such as VISTA can be instrumental in discovering homes that need to upgrade water and sewer facilities and also in formally charging businesses that have polluted wells and septic systems and should be obliged to pay to replace family systems.

The result will ultimately be cost effective because cleaner water will substantially reduce the costs of treatment for existing water systems and place a greater burden on industrial, agricultural and extractive polluters who will no longer be able to blame poor water quality on households. Most important, it will be great for wildlife, for fishermen, for rural renters and home-owners and for all humanity.