

CommunityForum

Practical, or not?

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Rappahannock Record

Kilmarnock, VA

It is not surprising that an independent contractor who has done work for Virginia Dominion Power should claim that burying the power lines they plan to stretch across the river would be “impractical.”

The electrical power industry in America is much addicted to over-head lines—so that whatever beauty may lie beyond any road or city street must be glimpsed through a screen of big poles and black lines. This is necessary, we are told, because it is more “practical.” It costs less.

But is this really true? Do we really know the cost of destroying beauty? A more “practical” use of federal lands would be to lease them to lumbermen, miners, and sheep herders, but a wise national leadership believed that our National Parks would provide a greater,

if intangible, benefi

The town council of Kilmarnock might have thought burying power lines an “impractical” expense, but they concluded that a more attractive town center was not only more pleasing but more profitable.

We agree with this judgment every time we buy clothes, a car, or a house—and we do not count it “impractical” when we paint that house or mow its lawn. We understand full well that beauty has a monetary—as well as aesthetic—value.

Even if it were possible, we would not dream of placing huge wire towers across the great Potomac, nor should we allow them across our lovely Rappahannock.

To do so would not, in the long run, be “practical.”

**AJ McKelway,
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