WHY ARE PEOPLE ARGUING ABOUT WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN TO UKRAINE'S REVEALED LANDSCAPE?

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

When the Nova Kakhovka dam in southern Ukraine was destroyed in June 2023, a huge reservoir drained away. The disaster flooded towns and caused many deaths, but it also revealed a landscape that had been hidden underwater since the 1950s. Archaeologists working near Khortytsia Island have found traces of thousands of years of human life, including Bronze Age objects, Scythian pottery, a Byzantine storage jar, old anchors and a wooden boat made from one tree trunk. The area was also important to the Zaporizhzhian Cossacks, a powerful Ukrainian community that developed there from the sixteenth century. Ukrainian historians and environmental groups want the exposed land protected as a world heritage site. Other people argue that the dam and reservoir should be rebuilt to support farming and electricity production after the war. The debate is about more than archaeology. It is also about nature, national history and the future of Ukraine.

WHY IS THIS INTERESTING?

The destroyed dam has uncovered evidence from many different periods, from prehistory to the Cossacks. The argument over rebuilding it shows how modern decisions can affect historic landscapes and how the past can become part of a country's struggle over its future.

THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

"Should Ukraine rebuild the dam or protect the historic landscape now revealed?"

Source: The Guardian

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/oct/10/ukraine-unesco-great-meadow-dnipro-dont-rebuild-dam