

Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale
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Religion and Ecology News Articles

September – October 2016

September 2016

Official Support for Standing Rock Sioux Tribe against DAPL

Organized by Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

THE STORY:

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (SRST) has taken a strong stand against the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), a 1,134 mile long oil pipeline starting from the Bakken Oil Fields in North Dakota and ending up in refineries in Patoka, Illinois. It is proposed to transport over 570,000 barrels per day.

To date, more than 300 tribes and first nations officially stand with Standing Rock by way of tribal resolutions, letters of support, or tribal delegations joining the camp. There are entire cities and municipalities such as Santa Barbara, Seattle, and Minneapolis/St. Paul supporting us, and they aren't the only ones. There are millions of people the world over standing in solidarity as well. 80,000 people in Ireland rallied recently to say #NoDAPL. The local, global, national, and tribal communities all support our fight and we've got more coming in every day. We're also receiving an outcry of support from our allies, friends, and relations who aren't able to come to North Dakota but want to provide for, look after, and contribute to the cause up here. That's what this crowdfunding is for.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has been providing a multitude of support services for the thousands of people resisting DAPL as we have seen the encampments grow and grow with each day. We have been supporting the camps by way of:

- Food and meals
- Porta-johns
- Trash Collection
- Hand Washing Stations
- Community Shelters and Tents
- Emergency Management Team
- Firewood and Hauling
- Community Wellness Initiatives
- And much, much more.

Please consider supporting us as we support the #NoDAPL water protectors who have come from so far away. We need your help however you can give it.

Dakota Access Pipeline would contribute to 50 million tonnes CO2 per year. This is the equivalent of 10 million cars or 15 coal plants. Every one of those tonnes of CO2 is a threat to all people on the planet. We can't all breathe poison air.

The pipeline is a huge risk to prairie, farm lands and critical waterways as well, including the Missouri River. It is a massive pipeline that would transport crude oil. News report after news report continues to come out about oil spills across the continent. It's never a matter of if the pipelines will leak and/or burst, it's a matter of when. Energy Transfer Partners, the owner of Dakota Access LLC, is already responsible for over \$9 million in property damage stemming from their dirty operations. Thousands of gallons have already been spilled. We don't want to be the next statistic and we don't want our children's futures threatened by fossil fuels.

They've already desecrated burial sites of ancestors, effigies, and rock formations critical to the spiritual, emotional, and psychological well-being of our communities. None of that can ever be brought back. That's why everyone is here in support, so that no more of these abuses continue and healing can happen. This pipeline is proposed to cross the Missouri River, less than one mile away from our community and less than 500 feet from our border. 18 million people downstream stand to be affected, too. This is Standing Rock's fight but it's not just a native issue.

We have a saying here in Standing Rock: *Mni Wiconi*. It means "water is life," and it's true. You can't drink oil.

Please consider giving today and letting us know how you want the funds to be used. We'll make it happen.

With extended gratitude from us and the nearly 3,000 people camped up here in solidarity,

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

<https://www.crowdrise.com/official-support-for-standing-rock-sioux-tribe-against-dapl/fundraiser/standing-rock-sioux-tribe>

September 1, 2016

Catholics are obligated to care for the planet, just like care for the sick, Pope Francis says

By Julie Zauzmer
Washington Post

Pope Francis, who has made the environment a clear focus of his papacy over the past three years, deepened his vision Thursday of a green church in which caring for the planet is as important a Catholic commitment as caring for the sick and the hungry.

Catholics currently subscribe to seven corporal and seven spiritual “works of mercy” — obligations that include sheltering the homeless, visiting prisoners and burying the dead. On Thursday, in an address explaining why Catholics must make practical changes in their daily routines to safeguard the earth that God created, Francis added care for the environment as an eighth work of mercy.

The modern world has new forms of poverty, Francis said, and thus requires new forms of mercy to address them.

“When we mistreat nature, we also mistreat human beings,” he wrote in his message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, which falls on Sept. 1. He discussed the effect of global warming, which he noted is caused in part by human activity, on the world’s poorest people.

“This is leading to ever more severe droughts, floods, fires and extreme weather events,” Francis wrote. “Climate change is also contributing to the heart-rending refugee crisis. The world’s poor, though least responsible for climate change, are most vulnerable and already suffering its impact.”

Environmental awareness, along with concern for the world’s poor, especially in the global south, has been a clear concern of Francis’s papacy since he became the first non-European pope since the eighth century. His first major treatise as pope was last year’s “Laudato Si,” an encyclical on the environment that linked human mishandling of the climate to mistreatment of the poor. He quoted frequently from that encyclical in his message Thursday.

In this message, he said that every Catholic should go to Confession to repent his or her sins against the environment. Then that confession should lead to concrete changes in Catholics’ daily behavior, no matter how small: Francis suggests turning off lights to avoid wasting energy, taking care not to cook more food than necessary and using public transportation or carpooling to cut down on gasoline use.

Caring for the planet, Francis said, will be a new act of mercy alongside long-established forms of charity that were inspired by Jesus’ words in the book of [Matthew](#). “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me,” the text says.

To the five actions suggested in that passage, Catholics have also added burying the dead and giving alms to the poor to the list of [corporal works of mercy](#), meaning physical actions. The list of seven [spiritual works of mercy](#) includes comforting the sorrowful, instructing the ignorant, and praying for the living and dead.

Francis said Thursday that care for creation actually belongs on both lists, spiritual and corporal. “Grateful contemplation of God’s world,” he said, is a spiritual mercy. And daily behaviors to protect the landscape of that world should be considered a corporal mercy.

William Dinges, a religious studies professor at Catholic University of America, said he has seen Francis's earlier writings and speeches on the environment propel parishes to focus on ecological activism, and elevating that activity to a work of mercy will further spur Catholic volunteerism.

Catholics are long accustomed to social justice meant to help people, and are learning that helping the planet helps people too, Dinges said. "Where he's really, I think, pushing us forward in Catholic social teaching is trying to get us to see that this is one problem. It's not two, separate and unrelated," Dinges said of the problems of climate change and poverty.

When Dinges started an eco-ministry in his own parish more than 25 years ago, few Catholics were concerned about the issue. Today, it's at the forefront of parish discussions and theological inquiry, he said. "I could tell you 87 reasons to be concerned about the environment, none of which have anything to do with religion. But for those of us who are people of faith, this is a profoundly moral and religious issue," Dinges said. "We are called to respond to it that way, with prayer."

Brian Murphy contributed to this report. This post has been updated.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2016/09/01/pope-francis-makes-care-for-the-planet-a-new-act-of-mercy-like-care-for-the-poor/>

September 1, 2016

Deeming Pollution of Earth Sinful, Pope Proposes Climate Action as Sacred Duty

Humans are turning the planet into a 'polluted wasteland full of debris, desolation, and filth,' says Pope Francis

By Nika Knight, staff writer
Common Dreams

Pope Francis on Thursday put forth an urgent call for people to actively work to save the environment, proposing that the Catholic Church add such a duty to the list of "seven mercies," which includes feeding the hungry and visiting the sick, which Catholics are required to perform.

"Francis described man's destruction of the environment as a sin," the *Guardian* [reported](#).

"The modern world has new forms of poverty, Francis said, and thus requires new forms of mercy to address them," the *Washington Post* [noted](#).

In his speech to mark the church's World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, which the pope created last year, Francis accused humans of turning the Earth into a "polluted wasteland full of debris, desolation, and filth."

Remarking on the planet's rapid warming, Francis observed that "[c]limate change is also contributing to the heart-rending refugee crisis. The world's poor, though least responsible for climate change, are most vulnerable and already suffering its impact."

"We must not be indifferent or resigned to the loss of biodiversity and the destruction of ecosystems, often caused by our irresponsible and selfish behaviour," he said. "Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence."

"We have no such right," Francis said.

Francis' speech built on ideas he [first put forth last year](#) in *Laudato Si*, his unprecedented encyclical on climate change and environmental protection.

Earlier this month, Francis also [excoriated capitalism](#) for leading to endless war.

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2016/09/01/deeming-pollution-earth-sinful-pope-proposes-climate-action-sacred-duty>

September 1, 2016

Season of Creation marks month of eco-contemplation for Christians

By Brian Roewe
National Catholic Reporter

Christians across the globe Thursday joined in celebrating the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, but for many the day only marks the beginning of a longer contemplation on the planet the pope regularly refers to as our common home.

The Season of Creation is a month-long prayerful observation of the state of the world, its beauty and the ecological crises that threaten it and all its inhabitants. It runs from Sept. 1, the World Day of Prayer for Creation, through Oct. 4, the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi.

For many Catholics, the day of prayer for creation landed on their radar for the first time last year after Pope Francis officially placed it on the Catholic liturgical calendar. Because of the timing -- Francis instituted the annual prayer day just three weeks before Sept. 1 -- many Catholic groups scrambled to piece together small celebrations with an eye toward larger, more coordinated events this year.

At the Vatican Thursday, Francis helped kick off the Season of Creation by celebrating the World Day of Prayer for Creation [with a message](#) that urged Catholics to view care for creation among the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

The Season of Creation comes as the planet continues its own season of sizzling temperatures.

July 2016 was the warmest month ever recorded -- with modern records extending back 136 years -- and 15 consecutive months of record global heat. NASA has projected 2016 will eclipse 2015 as the warmest year on record, which would make it 16 of the 17 [warmest years on record](#) since 1880 occurring since 2001 (the remaining year, 1998, is tied for 6th on the list).

A Christian tradition of creation care

While 2016 marks the first year of concerted Catholic participation in the Season of Creation, other Christian denominations have recognized it for decades.

A common origin point is 1989, when Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I proclaimed Sept. 1 as a day of prayer for creation in the Orthodox church. From there, faith communities, often at the parish and grassroots levels, began extending the celebration beyond a day throughout the month and until the Assisi feast.

One of the earliest organized celebrations of the season [occurred in 2000](#) at a Lutheran church in Adelaide, South Australia. Three years later, the Catholic bishops of the Philippines issued a pastoral statement creating a day and season for creation, with different dioceses then adding them to their calendars in subsequent years. In 2007 the Third European Ecumenical Assembly adopted it, with the World Council of Churches following suit the next year.

It's been the passion at the local level that has grown the Season of Creation into something bigger, said Episcopal Rev. Fletcher Harper, executive director of GreenFaith, an interfaith environmental coalition. That the pope, ecumenical patriarch and the archbishop of Canterbury now all recognize it "represents an affirmation of the really good work that people all over the world, that Christians all over the world have been doing," he told *NCR*.

For many, the day and season have come to symbolize not only collective awareness of the responsibility to properly tend to the earth, but also a gathering point for all Christians and faiths.

"I can't think of many themes and specific campaigns that bring Christians together at such scale as this one," said Tomas Insua, co-founder and global coordinator of the Global Catholic Climate Movement, who added that this year's efforts mark a first in terms of global coordination around the season.

Prayer and action

The 300-plus climate network of Catholic organizations has led coordinating efforts for the 2016 Season of Creation along with the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, which produces the monthly papal prayer intention videos. For the Season of Creation, it released a modified version of Francis' [February prayer intention](#) calling for care for creation. [The prayer intention for September is for the centrality of the human person.]

"As we are [the pope's] official service of prayer we couldn't miss this project," said Jesuit Fr. Frédéric Fornos, international director of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (formerly called the Apostleship of Prayer).

Fornos said the pope encourages all the Catholic church to be engaged in the day of prayer and the spiritual and lifestyle transformations he has called for in his encyclical “*Laudato Si*”, on Care for Our Common Home.”

“He gave us the direction, and then we commit ourselves,” Fornos told *NCR* in an email.

During a private audience Thursday morning, Fornos said Francis was aware of the ecumenical initiatives planned around the World Day of Prayer.

Other sponsors of the Season of Creation include the World Council of Churches, GreenFaith, the ACT Alliance and the Anglican Communion Environmental Network.

Events around the Season of Creation began Thursday morning with an ecumenical online prayer service. Almost 200 additional prayer services on six continents have been planned, according to the Global Catholic Climate Movement. A map of the various events is on its website and the [Season of Creation website](#). Insua told *NCR* roughly half of the celebrations are ecumenical.

Prayer is essential to the season, said Fornos.

“[C]hanging our lifestyle is not enough, because change requires a deep conversion. It is the prayer, closeness to Jesus, at his word, which can transform our hearts and our lives and help us to live everyday with a simple way and solidarity style,” he told *NCR*.

Along with the pope’s video, people can pray with Francis though the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network by using its Click To Pray app. The daily prayer for Thursday read in part, “Father of All Creation, on this World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, I am thankful for the beauty of the world that you have created for all your children. Help me to live each day aware of my vocation as a steward of your creation and work with others for the care of our common home.”

In addition to prayer, many have used the Season of Creation as occasion to live out their litanies.

On Thursday morning the English charity Christian Aid announced that more than 3,500 churches in the United Kingdom have already or plan to substitute fossil fuels for renewable energy as an electricity source, including 2,000 parishes from 16 Catholic dioceses.

Along similar lines, the Global Catholic Climate Movement anticipates a major announcement at the season’s end of religious congregations divesting from fossil fuels. On the one-year anniversary of Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si*’, four Pacific-area religious orders announced their divestment intentions. Global Catholic Climate Movement will host a [Sept. 7 webinar](#) on divestment.

Other plans under way for the Season of Creation include:

- The Vatican produced a [booklet for vespers celebrations](#) on the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. Similar liturgical resources have been compiled by the U.S.

bishops' conference, Global Catholic Climate Movement, Franciscan Action Network and Columban Mission Institute in Sydney. ([all available here](#))

- The Sisters of Mercy will share a visual meditation daily [on their website](#), inviting photographers to send their own shots demonstrating “an aspect of the beauty of our world.”
- The Catholic Climate Covenant has released materials for its [annual Feast of St. Francis program](#), now in its fifth year. This year's theme centers on the presidential election and echoes the pope's call for constructive dialogue – at home and in politics – about the impacts of environmental harm on the poor.
- Numerous faith groups are using the season as a way to prepare for participation in a wider climate mobilization set for mid-October.

Having an official date for creation care on the Catholic liturgical calendar is “massively significant” in terms of making it concrete in their daily lives and communities,” Insua said.

“Having this happen every year will be a good way of not letting *Laudato Si'* fade away,” he said.

Liturgical emphasis

Another way to breathe life into the encyclical would be formally adding a season for creation in the liturgical year, according to one Australian priest.

Columban Fr. Charles Rue has proposed doing just that, viewing it as “one way to structurally help implement the vision of Pope Francis given in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*,” he wrote [in a proposal paper](#) that has circulated among faith-based environmental circles. A fellow Columban, Fr. Sean McDonagh, has [made a similar endorsement](#) of inserting creation care deeper into the spiritual and liturgical lives of Catholics.

Rue added that a new liturgical season focused on creation “would help believers face the 21st century ecological challenge” in a way that recognizes its magnitude.

“Church communities would be in a better position to dialogue with people of other churches and faiths, scientists and people of good will about earth as our common home, leading to new commitments as congregations and individuals,” he said.

Insua said the development of a liturgical season of creation would be a big step toward embedding *Laudato Si'* into the mindset and lives of Catholics. For now, Harper of GreenFaith said seeing the day of prayer eventually raise to the significance of other notable days within the religious calendar would be a major step forward in ingraining environmental concern with faith.

“What I'd love to see is the day of prayer for creation assume some of that dignity and the ability to provoke the kind of introspection and change in life,” he said.

<https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/eco-catholic/season-creation-marks-month-eco-contemplation-christians>

September 4, 2016

VIDEO: Dakota Access Pipeline Company Attacks Native American Protesters with Dogs and Pepper Spray

By Amy Goodman
Democracy Now!

On September 3, the Dakota Access pipeline company attacked Native Americans with dogs and pepper spray as they protested against the \$3.8 billion pipeline's construction. If completed, the pipeline would carry about 500,000 barrels of crude per day from North Dakota's Bakken oilfield to Illinois. The project has faced months of resistance from the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and members of nearly 100 more tribes from across the U.S. and Canada.

Democracy Now! was on the ground at Saturday's action and brings you this report.

Watch the video here:

http://www.democracynow.org/2016/9/4/dakota_access_pipeline_company_attacks_native

September 5, 2016

Morocco to give 600 mosques a green makeover

Mosques across Morocco will be fitted with solar energy systems in government scheme to boost clean energy awareness

By Arthur Neslen
The Guardian

Six hundred "green mosques" are to be created in [Morocco](#) by March 2019 in a national consciousness-raising initiative that aims to speed the country's journey to clean energy.

If all goes to plan, the green revamp will see LED lighting, solar thermal water heaters and photovoltaic systems installed in 100 mosques by the end of this year.

Morocco's ministry of Islamic affairs is underwriting [the innovative scheme](#), paying up to 70% of the initial investment costs in a partnership with the German government.

Jan-Christophe Kuntze, the project's chief, said: "We want to raise awareness and mosques are important centres of social life in Morocco. They are a place where people exchange views about all kinds of issues including, hopefully, why renewables and energy efficiency might be a good idea."

Morocco has established itself as a regional climate leader with high-profile projects, ranging from [the largest windfarm in Africa](#) to [an enormous solar power plant in the Sahara desert](#), which opened [earlier this year](#).

In November, [Marrakech will host the COP22 climate summit](#) to discuss preparations for implementing the Paris climate agreement.

The country's environment minister, Hakima el-Haité, told the Guardian that religion could make a powerful contribution to the clean energy debate, shortly before an [Islamic declaration on climate change](#) last year.

“It is very important for Muslim countries to come back to their traditions and remind people that we are miniscule as humans before the importance of the earth,” she said. “We need to protect it, and to save humankind in the process.”

The new green mosques project plans to do this with established technologies that can be adapted to public buildings and residential homes. By training electricians, technicians and auditors, it hopes to direct Morocco's clean energy along the path followed by German's [Energiewende](#), (energy transition).

But Kuntze stressed that Germany was offering technological support, rather than financial opportunities for its own industries.

“We are not representing any German business interests at all,” he said. “The good thing about this project is that the Moroccan government came up with the idea themselves. It is something new and really innovative and it has not been tried anywhere else before, to my knowledge.”

The initiative has broken new ground for gender equality in Morocco too. Many *mourchidates* (female clerics) have been involved in the project, as well as imams, and about a quarter of the participants in recent seminars have been women, Kuntze said.

Under the project's energy service contract model, contractors will eventually be paid by the energy savings generated from the clean power systems they install. As the renovations should cut the mosques' electricity usage by 40%, these should be substantial.

The first 100 mosques to get a green makeover are mostly based in big population centres – such as Rabat, Fez, Marrakech and Casablanca – but the project will quickly move on to smaller villages and towns. With 15,000 mosques dotted around the north African country, the idea's growth potential is clear.

The objective was to kickstart a renovations industry for sustainable companies that could employ many Moroccans in the clean energy sector, Kuntze said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/sep/05/morocco-to-give-600-mosques-a-green-makeover>

September 8, 2016

My 48,180-pound trash pile

By Jennifer Mertens
National Catholic Reporter

Four years of waste in a single mason jar?

"That's crazy!"

My reaction was similar to many who discover the [story of Lauren Singer](#), a 25-year-old woman committed to a "zero waste" lifestyle.

I discovered Singer's [TEDxTeen talk](#) while preparing to teach my high school students about Pope Francis' encyclical [Laudato Si'](#). How could I make the pope's call to environmental stewardship real and engaging for teens? Although it seemed daunting -- even impossible -- to calculate every item of a person's trash, Singer's commitment nonetheless intrigued me.

So much so, that my students and I ended up investigating our own trash. For one week, we tracked all our waste production: plastic bags, banana peels, straws, toilet paper and more.

At every turn, I seemed to generate more waste. Never before had I thought twice about fruit produce stickers or plastic clothing tags.

Seven days later, our lists revealed a stunning quantity of trash. The results seemed on par with the Environmental Protection Agency's estimate: the average American produces [4.4 pounds of trash daily](#) or 1,606 pounds each year. My own 30-year lifetime pile of trash? That's a whopping 48,180 pounds. And that's just one individual. Think about adding up all the trash of over 300 million Americans. In 2013, [the EPA calculated](#) that Americans produced approximately 254 million tons of trash; only about 34 percent of this was recycled or composted.

"What will we do when there's no place left to put all the garbage?" Pete Seeger's words echo urgently in my mind.

It's an important question, as my 48,180 pounds of garbage are not going anywhere. Hundreds of my baby diapers, chip bags and countless other plastics will never biodegrade. My produce bags are going to exist for centuries after my death. My straws will forever be buried alongside the [500 million straws](#) Americans dispose of every day.

On this Earth -- our "common home" -- we cannot throw away our trash. There is no "away." We pour this trash into our oceans, now filled with [46,000 plastic pieces](#) per square mile. In our landfills, it generates methane -- a greenhouse gas [25 times more potent](#) than carbon dioxide. My own waste piles up in the local dump, topped with an American flag that now marks the highest elevation point in the county. Although I am privileged to never see or smell my waste, it hasn't

gone "away." My 48,180 pounds of trash has been relocated from my own backyard to someone else's neighborhood.

Needless to say, the seven-day waste investigation was as eye-opening for me as it was for my students. It has since been daunting to investigate my environmental impact -- a lifestyle so unsustainable that, were it adopted by all people in the world, [nearly five planets](#) would be needed to support us all. This process, however, has also invited me to reflect anew on the vital link between environmental stewardship and my Christian faith.

Without doubt, the environmental challenges facing our planet are among today's most pressing ethical issues. Responding with the full weight of his papacy in *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis denounces ecological degradation as a sin that reduces God's creation to "among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor" (*Laudato Si'*, 2).

In his push for action, the pope has supported the [Paris Agreement](#), a landmark global climate pact [just recently ratified](#) by the USA and China. Last week, he added [care for our common home](#) as a spiritual and corporal work of mercy.

Pope Francis' witness compels us to ask: What is my relationship with the Earth? How am I called to care for God's creation? Can my lifestyle honor the integral connection between human life and our Earth?

As highlighted by our class investigation, waste management is just one aspect of these larger questions. Recast in this light, Lauren Singer's lifestyle doesn't seem so bizarre. Her approach is a necessary, even prophetic response to a moral crisis that is already profoundly impacting our planet's future.

No magic solution exists. God will not swoop down from heaven to clean up our trash. In the words of Alice Walker, "we are the ones we have been waiting for."

As Christians called to hope through the Resurrection, we can each take concrete action. We have been graced by Christ's own outpouring of love for us -- a love that can shape and sustain our response in our families, workplaces, church and in the broader community. Those of us privileged with time, resources and education bear particular responsibility.

Fortunately, we *are* the ones we have been waiting for. We don't need to wait any longer.

We can simply begin by taking time to reconnect with our Earth. Powerfully, *Laudato Si'* calls us to cultivate a sacred awe and gratitude for God's creation. Here, we are invited to an "ecological conversion" steeped in a "loving awareness that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures, but joined in a splendid universal communion" (*Laudato Si'*, 220). Responding in love to God's own generosity, we can give ourselves generously for the Earth.

Start with one step. Choose just one.

Begin, perhaps, with your own seven-day trash investigation. As Singer suggests, get to know your garbage. What waste do you produce? Are there products you can recycle or replace with reusable alternatives? Even a few simple steps can reduce the amount of your daily trash.

For example, do you really need a plastic bag to hold just a couple of items? Consider bringing your own reusable shopping bags to the grocery -- including [reusable produce bags](#). Find opportunities to shop bulk food aisles and local farmers' markets. Sign up for a compost workshop to reduce your food waste, turning it into rich soil instead of relying on synthetic fertilizers.

Many sustainable action steps do not need to be taken alone. There is tremendous community-building potential in gathering your parish, school, workplace and/or family to create a waste reduction program. You could even start by engaging your local community this weekend; learn how to reduce your car emissions waste by checking for local area events to celebrate [National Drive Electric Week](#).

There are countless possibilities for getting started. As Pope Francis reminds us, "all of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents" (*Laudato Si'*, 14). We are the ones we have been waiting for.

[Jennifer Mertens teaches religion at a Catholic high school in Cincinnati. She holds a Master's of Divinity degree from the Catholic Theological Union.]

<https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/young-voices/my-48180-pound-trash-pile>

September 8, 2016

Caring for creation - central to Pope Francis' papacy

By Tony Magliano
Catholic Online

As the first pope in history to write an encyclical letter on the environment, Pope Francis demonstrated to the Catholic Church and world, the urgent importance of caring for God's creation.

But Francis' challenging green encyclical "*Laudato Si'*" (subtitled "On Care for Our Common Home") was but the first major initiative of a papacy significantly dedicated to teaching us to care for both humanity and the earth - which he insists are intimately connected to each other - "integral ecology."

The Holy Father's next major environmental step was establishing the "World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation" celebrated every first day of September.

In this year's Sept 1 message titled "[Show Mercy to our Common Home](#)", Pope Francis highlights, along with Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, "the moral and spiritual crisis at the root of environmental problems."

Supported by overwhelming [scientific evidence](#), the pontiff warns, "Global warming continues, due in part to human activity: 2015 was the warmest year on record, and 2016 will likely be warmer still. This is leading to ever more severe droughts, floods, fires, and extreme weather events. . The world's poor, though least responsible for climate change, are most vulnerable and already suffering its impact."

The Holy Father points us to another fact: "Human beings are deeply connected with all of creation. When we mistreat nature, we also mistreat human beings. . Let us hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."

In highly prophetic language, Pope Francis challenges us to personal and ecological conversion. He writes, "As individuals, we have grown comfortable with certain lifestyles shaped by a distorted culture of prosperity and a disordered desire to consume more than what is really necessary."

"And we are participants in a system that has imposed the mentality of profit at any price, with no concern for social exclusion or the destruction of nature."

"Let us repent of the harm we are doing to our common home."

In "Show Mercy to our Common Home," Pope Francis then takes another major environmental step forward by adding "care for our common home" to the traditional works of mercy.

As a spiritual work of mercy, "care for our common home" should inspire us to have "a grateful contemplation of God's world which allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand on to us," says Francis.

And as a corporal work of mercy, "care for our common home," should move us to exercise "simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness," and thus should lead us to actively build a better world.

The [Union of Concerned Scientists](#) has some great ideas to help us "build a better world."

Called "America's Best Idea," the 1872 designation of Yellowstone National Park - the world's first national park - inspired a worldwide national park movement comprising over 100 nations. This outstanding example of wise and loving care for our common home proves that we are capable of cherishing [God's creation](#).

In "Show Mercy to our Common Home," Pope Francis urges us to ask ourselves, "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?"

How we answer this piercing question, will significantly determine the fate of our common home.

<http://www.catholic.org/news/hf/faith/story.php?id=70767>

September 9, 2016

IUCN: Where Is The Concern Over Military's Environmental Impact?

By Kelsey Amos
Civil Beat

Despite the threats military activities pose to the natural world, surprisingly few panel discussions at IUCN broached the subject.

A week ago, a group of 15-20 activists and students gathered on the University of Hawaii Manoa campus to share the remarkably similar and interconnected stories of nations and peoples from around the Pacific that are struggling against the environmental destruction and limitations on sovereignty caused by the U.S. military and U.S. interests.

There were seasoned demilitarization and aloha aina activists from Hawaii in attendance who spoke about the desecration of iwi kupuna to build Marine Corps base at Kaneohe, as well as activists concerned with the proliferation of military bases and their effects on the environment and local and indigenous life in [Guahan](#) (Guam), South Korea (notably on [Jeju Island](#)) and the Philippines. Also discussed were the legacies of French and U.S. nuclear testing in Tahiti and Micronesia.

Sometimes it's a foreign military that does the dirty work for U.S. interests. We spoke about the violence and repression going on in [West Papua](#) as the Indonesian government makes sure that the Grasberg mine — one of the largest gold mines in the world — continues to run for the benefit of its owner, Arizona-based Freeport-McMoRan.

What spurred this meeting was the visit of several activists from Okinawa who are struggling against the building of a new U.S. air base at Henoko Bay, the latest in a long history of adverse effects on Okinawa from the presence of military bases. These Okinawan activists were here to take part in the World Conservation Congress but also headlined in a panel talk on Okinawa attended by over 70 at Kamakakuokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies on Thursday night.

One general theme is that truly protecting our environment means paying attention to the effects of militarization and war on the land, indigenous peoples and local autonomy in Pacific Islands.

After all, it is well known that [modern war is ecologically devastating](#) and releases hundreds of thousands of tons of [pollutants](#) and [greenhouse gasses](#) into the atmosphere. Closer to home, we know from the examples of Kahoolawe, Pohakuloa, Makua Valley, Puuloa (Pearl Harbor, which

once boasted [the most fishponds on Oahu](#)) and many other sites that it is indigenous land and peoples and local people who pay the unspoken costs of housing the U.S. military.

Steven Aftergood of the Federation of American Scientists put it most simply in [a post](#) about the military's turn toward considering its environmental impacts, writing that "military operations by their nature are not environment-friendly."

What goes on in one part of this vast Pacific Ocean surely affects all other parts of it.

Yet, a quick search of all 1,349 items in the IUCN World Conservation Congress' online program for the keyword "military activities" yields [nine results](#).

Furthermore, the celebrated Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument puts no limitations on the U.S. military. [The proclamation](#) that President Barack Obama signed to expand the monument states, "The prohibitions required by this proclamation shall not apply to activities and exercises of the U.S. Armed Forces, including those carried out by the United States Coast Guard." It goes on to state that nothing in the proclamation will limit the U.S. military's ability to use property under their control or limit the availability of property for their use.

In other instances around the world, such caveats allow for paradoxical situations around the Pacific and in other oceans where [conservation areas actually house or provide a buffer for military bases](#).

Conservation and Connections

I participated in last week's talk story and sign-making event as a student wanting to learn more from folks on the front lines of demilitarization and environmental struggles. One thing that became apparent is that in the Pacific, as in the world, we are all connected, and our efforts at protecting the environment need to first acknowledge and then foster our interconnectedness.

As [Peter Apo has noted](#), the Western model of protecting the land, called conservation, depends on drawing an imaginary line around an area in order to "preserve" it. Too often such approaches sever the connections between indigenous peoples and their land while leaving unquestioned the logic that puts military objectives high above environmental concerns and regulations.

Under conservation models, the rest of us are also cut off from ever forming a real, respectful and responsible connection with land; what we get instead are touristic models where we conspicuously consume "outdoorsy" experiences and products that may still be environmentally harmful.

Conservation models, by setting aside only some land or ocean to protect, also make us feel like it's OK to destroy other islands, lands and ecosystems when it's convenient or "necessary." But it's not OK. [#OurIslandsAreSacred](#) and what goes on in one part of this vast ocean surely affects all other parts of it.

There will surely be positive effects on marine life from setting aside such a large tract of ocean and taking pressure off of over-fished species. And I'm glad that concern for the environment has gone mainstream.

But I am even more hopeful about the international coalition of activists, scholars, and advocates that is drawing connections between struggles and pointing in the direction of where more work has to be done.

Kelsey Amos is a graduate student and graduate assistant at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. She is also a writer/coordinator for the Purple Maia Foundation, which provides "access to empowering technology education for underserved youth in Hawaii."

<http://www.civilbeat.org/2016/09/iucn-where-is-the-concern-over-militarys-environmental-impact/>

September 9, 2016

To understand the Dakota Access Pipeline protests, you need to understand tribal sovereignty

Policy has to be paired with indigenous people's experiences.

By Victoria M. Massie
Vox

[Tensions are rising](#) in North Dakota as Standing Rock Sioux members, activists, and allies protest the construction of the [Dakota Access Pipeline](#), which could damage their water supply.

In many ways, the story surrounding the [1,172-mile pipeline](#) may seem familiar. Environmentalists have long criticized the US's dependence on oil, and the increasing reliance on [fracking](#) to satisfy it. Dakota Access LLC, the company behind the pipeline, says the project would create [8,000 to 12,000 jobs through construction](#) (though [Mother Jones reports](#) that Iowa State University professor David Swenson disputes this figure). However, oil spills are fairly common and [companies rarely catch them](#), leaving local communities to fend for themselves as corporate interests are prioritized over the environment.

But there's also another key issue at play: race, and the need to recognize indigenous tribes' right to self-determination.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, located just South of the pipeline, has sued the federal government for failing to consult the tribe before the Army Corps of Engineers [discreetly](#) approved the pipeline in July. As the [Washington Post reported](#), the pipeline will run under the Missouri River, the major natural water supply, and through sacred areas that aren't considered official parts of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

"#NoDAPL has made clear that climate change isn't up for debate for most indigenous peoples," [Aura Bogado](#), a staff writer at [Grist.org](#) who focuses on environmental racism, told me in an email interview. "It's a real phenomenon that can mean the difference between life and death."

And while a [federal judge](#) has affirmed the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's concerns that corporate and government entities alike [failed to consult them](#), American history shows there is a violent history of denying indigenous groups sovereignty over their own lives.

Bogado discussed what current protests can teach us about centering race in environmental journalism and the importance of amplifying indigenous people's stories.

The interview has been lightly edited for clarity.

Victoria Massie: To begin, how did you get involved in covering environmental racism as a journalist?

Aura Bogado: I've covered racial justice for a while, and have always had a particular interest in climate and the environment – but it's really tough to write about this intersection. Although nonwhite people tend to live with more contaminated air, water, and soil, there remains a fundamental disengagement about this in both the mainstream environmental movement as well as in environmental journalism.

Pair this with the fact that I'm an indigenous woman who has a [particular way of thinking about climate](#), and you get an idea of what I'm up against. Those challenges are changing and even decreasing, but not fast enough to catch up with the way the planet is warming. Nevertheless, I'm committed to writing about environmental racism.

VM: A major component of the Dakota Access Pipeline protests is the fact that the pipeline isn't just an environmental hazard; it's one that is being implemented with pretty much no regard for the Standing Rock Sioux. How does this fit into a broader discussion of tribal sovereignty?

AB: This is such a great question, because the issue of [tribal sovereignty](#), which is just as important as the environmental hazard, is getting lost in the pipeline story.

Too many people tend to think of tribal sovereignty as something that's allocated, which can be given or taken away depending on the circumstance. But it's not. The Standing Rock Sioux Nation's tribal sovereignty, which essentially precedes colonization, is permanent, and it's recognized (as opposed to granted) by the federal government.

The nation is concerned that its waters would be contaminated and that its sacred sites will be desecrated by this pipeline project. On the surface, that claim can easily look like a specific racial group got together to lodge an environmental complaint, but there's a lot more than that: It's actually a tribal sovereign nation that's making an important claim about self-determination and its ability to survive and exist in the future.

But this isn't just lost on journalists. It extends to the highest office in the federal government. During his trip to Laos this week, President Obama was asked about the pipeline. He issued, at best, [a lackluster answer](#). Obama gave great lip service to his culturally appropriate communication with indigenous peoples, but he added that he couldn't even provide an answer "on this particular case."

Aside from asserting ignorance on a topic I can't help but think he's already been briefed on, Obama also missed an opportunity to publicly recognize the Standing Rock Sioux Nation's tribal sovereignty. That's a real shame, as is his decision to skirt the environmental and climate hazards the pipeline presents.

VM: When we talk about environmentalism, we hear a lot about climate change, politicians, and CO2 emissions. These are all a part of the story, but as the #NoDAPL protests are showing, they're not the full story. Race is also a critical part of the issue. How have you seen race erased from the environmentalism story as a journalist, and how does #NoDAPL demonstrate the importance of foregrounding race in the conversation?

AB: Environmental racism is woven into our society's fabric. The very founding of this country was an environmental disaster, made possible through settler colonialism, and vice versa. The historical emissions produced by [white colonists have greatly contributed to climate change](#), leaving indigenous peoples and people of color — that is, the very people who didn't contribute to global warming much at all — most vulnerable. I see a lot of stories that reference climate change without much of an understanding about who's responsible for creating it. It didn't appear out of nowhere; it was part of a larger violent process of theft and genocide, and it's stunning to me that most environmental journalists don't really seem to get that.

But it wasn't only in colonizing the land. It's also about the way cities were constructed. [Racial housing covenants](#) often segregated people of color into areas that had the most factories, oil refineries, heavy industry, and so forth. Although explicit racial segregation for housing is illegal today, the legacies of those neighborhoods, and who's affected by contamination and pollution, haven't changed much.

If you live in a city, look up your closest landfill. Chances are that landfill, and all the health and environmental concerns that stem from it, [is in a neighborhood of color](#). These neighborhoods and sacrificial zones were literally designed to be that way, and not much has changed.

You're right that a lot of environmental and climate stories focus on science and policy — and too often, that casts people aside. As an environmental journalist, I understand and keep up with the science: We can nerd out on greenhouse gases, lead, and particulate matter for days. But I also pay attention to how much science matches up to experience.

The people I focus my stories on don't worry about the number of parts per million of carbon dioxide allowed in the Paris climate deal; they worry about the number of asthma inhalers they can afford to buy in order to survive.

#NoDAPL has made clear [that climate change isn't up for debate for most indigenous peoples](#). It's a real phenomenon that can mean the difference between life and death.

VM: What questions do you find journalists aren't asking when it comes to covering the #NoDAPL protests?

AB: You asked a great question about tribal sovereignty — but few journalists even understand what that means. There are [several Indian law scholars](#) who'd like nothing better than to have a journalist call and ask them to explain what tribal sovereignty is. That attorney might not be quoted in a story, but that journalist will be armed with a crucial understanding moving forward with which to explain what's happening in Standing Rock and elsewhere.

I'm also surprised that reporters aren't pressing the two leading presidential candidates on the pipeline. I can image what Trump's answer might be, but what about Clinton? She's claimed she supports environmental justice — her claim could be buffered by issuing a simple statement, although it seems rather late for that now. Since she's failed to say anything about the pipeline, reporters might want to press her campaign on it.

Aside from *what's not* being asked, I also wonder *who's* being asked. I think it's great that more white folks are getting involved, and even heading to North Dakota, but I worry about the way that white voices are validating what indigenous peoples, and people of color who are in solidarity, can say for themselves. So I think it's incumbent upon reporters to get out of their comfort zones and talk to more than just white sources for this story.

VM: [The Toronto chapter of Black Lives Matter](#) just recently traveled down to stand with #NoDAPL protesters. Why are these kinds of alliances important for understanding the complexity of the problem?

AB: The enslavement of black people in the Americas complicates the settler colonial matter I talked about earlier. One legacy of enslavement is that black skin continues to be an indicator that marks one's place in a racial hierarchy. Black Lives Matter has built a worldwide movement and has also taken the time to work thoughtfully with indigenous peoples. There's probably an amazing story waiting to be told about the meetings, especially among women and gender nonconforming people, that have taken place behind the scenes before and after BLM arrived at Standing Rock.

BLM knows it has the media's attention, so it made a strategic decision to head to Standing Rock in order to get journalists to pay attention. It's also brought much-needed supplies there. And it's created some visibility for black indigenous folks to also be recognized. Every step of the fight against the pipeline has seemed historic to me. But this allegiance is toward the top of that list, and deserves more coverage.

VM: What can coverage (or lack thereof) of the #NoDAPL protests teach us about how indigenous communities stories are told?

AB: For the most part, stories about indigenous communities *aren't* being told. We have a way of relegating indigenous peoples to the past, so stories that are taking place today rarely resonate with mainstream journalists. There are, of course, indigenous reporters and reporters of color that write about this — but the system that keeps journalism so white tends to keep the publishing gate closed in terms of what we can cover and when.

Then again, I do think that #NoDAPL has revitalized the argument [that] it's important for journalists to pay attention to the fact that already marginalized communities are the ones on the front lines, fighting against environmental injustices. There's a great opportunity here created by indigenous peoples. I hope we don't miss it.

<http://www.vox.com/2016/9/9/12851168/dakota-access-pipeline-protest>

September 12, 2016

Native American Activist Winona LaDuke at Standing Rock: It's Time to Move On from Fossil Fuels

By Amy Goodman
Democracy Now!

Watch the video here:

http://www.democracynow.org/2016/9/12/native_american_activist_winona_laduke_at

While Democracy Now! was covering the Standing Rock standoff earlier this month, we spoke to Winona LaDuke, longtime Native American activist and executive director of the group Honor the Earth. She lives and works on the White Earth Reservation in northern Minnesota. She spent years successfully fighting the Sandpiper pipeline, a pipeline similar to Dakota Access. We met her right outside the Red Warrior Camp, where she has set up her tipi. Red Warrior is one of the encampments where thousands of Native Americans representing hundreds of tribes from across the U.S. and Canada are currently resisting the pipeline's construction.

TRANSCRIPT

This is a rush transcript. Copy may not be in its final form.

AMY GOODMAN: This is *Democracy Now!*, democracynow.org, *The War and Peace Report*. I'm Amy Goodman. While *Democracy Now!* was covering the standoff at Standing Rock earlier this month, on Labor Day weekend, we spoke to Winona LaDuke, longtime Native American activist, executive director of the group Honor the Earth. She lives and works on the White Earth Reservation in northern Minnesota. She spent years successfully fighting a pipeline similar to Dakota Access, the Sandpiper pipeline. We met her right outside the Red Warrior Camp, where she has set up her tipi. Red Warrior is one of the encampments where thousands of Native Americans, representing hundreds of tribes from across the U.S. and Canada, are currently resisting the pipeline's construction. Her tipi is painted with animals that are threatened by

climate change. We began by asking Winona LaDuke why communities are now protesting the pipeline.

WINONA LADUKE: It's time to end the fossil fuel infrastructure. I mean, these people on this reservation, they don't have adequate infrastructure for their houses. They don't have adequate energy infrastructure. They don't have adequate highway infrastructure. And yet they're looking at a \$3.9 billion pipeline that will not help them. It will only help oil companies. And so that's why we're here. You know, we're here to protect this land.

AMY GOODMAN: Explain what happened to the Sandpiper pipeline, the one that you protested, the one that you opposed.

WINONA LADUKE: What we opposed, yeah. So, for four years, the Enbridge company said that they absolutely needed a pipeline that would go from Clearbrook, Minnesota, to Superior, Wisconsin. That was the critical and only possible route. They proposed a brand-new route that would go through the heart of our best wild rice lakes and territory, skirting the reservations, but within our treaty territory. They did not consult with us, and they made some serious errors in their process. They underestimated what was going to happen there.

And so, for four years, we battled them in the Minnesota regulatory process, which is a process which is more advanced and slightly more functional than North Dakota's regulatory process, which, from what I can see, is largely nonexistent. And in that process, we attended every hearing. We intervened legally. We rode our horses against the current of the oil. We had ceremonies. And they cancelled the pipeline. That's what they did, after four years' very, very ardent opposition by Minnesota citizens, tribal governments, tribal people, you know, on that line.

And that pipeline, you know, big problem—we still have six pipelines in northern Minnesota to go to Superior, the furthest-inland port. But their new proposals are not going to happen there. Enbridge has said that they still want to continue with their proposals for line three. The first pipeline they want, they want to abandon. The beginning of a whole new set of problems in North America, the abandoning of 50-year-old pipelines, with no regulatory clarity as to who is responsible. And so we are opposing them on that, that they cannot abandon, and they cannot—they still cannot get a new route.

But when they announced that, you know, in my area, I could have said, "Hey, good luck, y'all. We beat it here. Good luck." You know? But, no, we said we're going to follow them out here, too, because we believe that—you know, we could spend our lives fighting one pipeline after another after another, but someone needs to challenge the problem and say, "This is not the way to go, America. This is not the way to go for any of us." So, we came out here to support these people.

AMY GOODMAN: So talk about everyone who's out here.

WINONA LADUKE: There are a lot of people out here, you know? It's very funny, because I feel like I've been like the Standing Rock switchboard, the travel guide, for the past two weeks.

You know, everybody hits me up on Facebook, calls me up: "Hey, LaDuke, I want to bring out this. I got some winter coats. You know, what should I do?" I was like, "Oh, my gosh!" You know?

So, a lot of people are coming here, united. You know, so what I know is out here is like—you know, I go walk in here, and I've seen people from the—you know, from Wounded Knee in 1973. I've seen people I worked with in opposing uranium mining in the Black Hills in the 1970s and '80s, you know, out here. I mean, I've been at this a while. You know, it's like Old Home Week out here. I've seen people from Oklahoma that opposed the Keystone XL pipeline, and Nebraska. And I've seen people from, you know, out in our territory that are opposing the pipelines here. The tribal chairman of Fond du Lac is here, and, you know, a whole host of Native and non-Native people. And there are a lot of people that just do not believe that this should happen anymore in this country, that are very willing to put themselves on the line, non-Indian people, you know, as well as tribal members, and they are here. And it is a beautiful place to defend.

AMY GOODMAN: For people who are watching in New York and Louisiana, in California and India, China and South Africa, why does this matter to them?

WINONA LADUKE: This matters because it's time to move on from fossil fuels. You know, this is the same battle that they have everywhere else. You know, each day or each week, there's some new leak, there's some new catastrophe in the fossil fuel industry, as well as the ongoing and growing catastrophe of climate change. The fact that there is no rain in Syria has directly to do with these fossil fuel companies. You know, all of the catastrophes that are happening elsewhere in the world has to do with the fact that North America is retooling its infrastructure and going after the dirtiest oil in the world—the tar sands oil and the oil out of North Dakota, the fracked oil—rather than—you know, they were working with Venezuela's—it also has to do with crushing Venezuela, because Venezuela has the largest oil reserves in the world. And rather than do business with Venezuela, they were bound and determined to take oil from places that did not want to give it up, and create this filthy infrastructure. So, this carbon—this oil is very heavy in carbon and will add hundreds of millions of tons of CO₂ to the environment, if these pipelines are allowed through. So, that is—you know, it affects everybody.

AMY GOODMAN: Now, some tribes are for the pipeline. Can you describe the division?

WINONA LADUKE: You know, I don't know that I would say some tribes are for it. I would say some interests in Indian country have been for the pipeline. I mean, historically, the Three Affiliated Tribes is an oil-producing tribe, but they came down here to support the opposition to the pipeline. They came down there. Their whole tribal council came down here a couple of days ago. You know, but the fact is, is that, you know, some tribes have been forced into production of fossil fuels. Eighty-five percent of the Navajo economy, for instance, is fossil fuel-based. About the same percentage of the Fort Berthold economy is fossil fuel-based.

So, you know, just to give a little historic picture: You come out here with your smallpox, and you wipe out 95 percent of the people, the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara people, in the early 1800s. They live along these villages, you know, just trying to hang in there. Then you come out

here, and you flood their lands. And the agricultural crops that they produced are now owned by Monsanto and Syngenta as trademarked varieties that they created. Right? And then you're out here in North Dakota, and everybody in the country flies over North Dakota and looks down and says, "Well, that's North Dakota." Nobody comes out here. And so stuff continues out here for a hundred years, where these people are treated like third-class citizens, you know, where they have no running water in their houses, and they have oil companies coming out here. And you have high rates of abuse and violence against women and children, and it accelerates and increases in the oil fields, until you have an epidemic of drugs, which now hits this community. This community doesn't get any benefit from oil, but the meth and heroin that came out of those fields is here, you know? Because those dealers came up here, and then they saw these Indian people, and they said, "Well, we'll just go there." And so these reservations are full of it. You know? And then you say, you know, to that tribe up there, the BIA cuts some backyard deals and starts oil extraction. And so, then you—

AMY GOODMAN: The Bureau of Indian Affairs.

WINONA LADUKE: Bureau of Indian Affairs. And then you end up with oil—you end up with haves and have-nots in the oil fields. And you end up with a tribe that now has oil revenues that are coming in. And they look out there, frankly, and they say, "You know? Things haven't been going too well for us, so we're going to sign a few more of these leases, because, after all, you know, nothing has ever worked out well for us. And so, we're going to get a little bit of money." And that's how you get—you know, you force people into that, with a gun to their head, and then they end up destroying their land, you know, which is what is happening up there on that reservation. And they've had huge investigations into corruption at the leadership. But, you know, you force poor people. You force people into that situation, and that's a perfect storm.

AMY GOODMAN: You've talked and written about Native Americans having PTSD, post-traumatic stress syndrome.

WINONA LADUKE: Yeah, we have ongoing; I didn't finish it, I still have it. You know, you say "Enbridge," and I get this little like quirk, you know, and because the Indian wars are far from over out here. But, you know, what you get is intergenerational trauma, is what it is known as, historic trauma. And other people have it. But you have a genetic memory, and you look out there, and you see—every day you wake up, and you see that your land was flooded. And that big power line that runs through this land, that doesn't benefit you. You still have to—you know, everything that is out here was done at your expense, but you still have to pay for it. And every day you go out there, and some—you know, you got a roadblock, that the white people put up, coming into your reservation. And every day you go out there, and you look at your houses, and you see that you've got crumbling infrastructure, and nobody cares about it. And you've got a meth epidemic, and you've got the highest suicide rates in the country, but nobody pays attention. You know, and so you just try to survive. That's what you're trying to do. Like 90 percent of my community, generally, I would say, is just trying to survive.

You know, I mean, in my community, we have rice. We still have our wild rice. And we can go, and we can harvest wild rice. And we can be Anishinaabe people. You know, we can still live off of our land. You know, these people have a much tougher time living off of their land. The

buffalo were wiped out, you know? But this year is their stand. This is their stand. They've got a chance to not have one more bad thing happen to them. And from my perspective, my perspective is, is that \$3.9 billion pipeline, these guys don't need a pipeline. What they need is solar. What they need is wind. Look at this wind. You know, what they need—they have like class 7 wind out here. What they need is solar on all their houses, solar thermal. They need housing that works for people. They need energy justice. This is this chance, America, to say, "Look, this community does not need a pipeline. What this community needs is real energy independence." They call this energy independence, you know, shoving a pipeline down people's throats, so that Canadian oil companies can benefit, and, you know, a bunch of people can—the world can worsen. That is not energy independence. Energy independence is when you have solar. Energy independence is when you have wind. Energy independence is when you have some control over your future. That's what these people want.

AMY GOODMAN: That was Winona LaDuke, longtime Anishinaabe activist from White Earth Reservation in northern Minnesota.

http://www.democracynow.org/2016/9/12/native_american_activist_winona_laduke_at

September 14, 2016

Native Rights and Concerns at Standing Rock: The Important Role of Science

By Andrew Rosenberg, director, Center for Science & Democracy
Union of Concerned Scientists

Over the past months, we have all had an opportunity to see democracy in action with all its challenges. No, I don't mean the endless coverage of the presidential campaign. I am talking about people taking action to protect the rights, health, safety and culture, standing with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and other Lakota nations in North Dakota. I mean free speech, the right of peaceful assembly, the right to petition our government for redress of grievances, the importance of the United States honoring its commitments to Native nations, and the well-being of all people. Because these principles have not been applied equally to all people—and especially to Native Americans—in North Dakota, Native Americans are on the ground demanding that these rights be upheld.

I believe that in addition to the many social, economic, legal, cultural, and other perspectives upon which others may speak more eloquently and authoritatively than I, the Dakota Access pipeline battle has a core element of the role of science in promoting democracy.

Dakota Access Pipeline construction in North Dakota

At issue is the construction of part of an oil pipeline in North Dakota, a state that has seen a boom, and yes, partial bust of oil production over the last decade or so. The state of North Dakota and the Army Corps of Engineers have approved moving forward with construction near Standing Rock Sioux tribal lands, crossing the Missouri River, through lands held as sacred to

sovereign tribes. To some, the pipeline is a vital economic development with literally billions to be made. But at what cost? And to whom? And where do the benefits flow from those billions?

Notably, the route of the pipeline has already been moved from a proposed crossing under the Missouri River north (upstream) of Bismarck, ND because of concerns about water contamination of the municipal water supply serving the city and high potential consequences of leaks and spills. The new route that the company is moving forward with is a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Reservation—implying, perhaps, that the tribe’s water supply is less “consequential”.

The company has made lengthy assurances of the safety of the pipeline and its monitoring plans, claiming it will transport crude oil in a “[safer and environmentally responsible manner](#)”. Given that pipeline leaks and spills are far from rare, for such a project—encompassing four states and in the vicinity of many tribal nations—the environmental impact assessment should be based on sound science instead of foregone conclusions. Such an assessment would give people the best information from which to exercise their political rights.

Science and public policy at Standing Rock

When government makes decisions on a project like the pipeline, science comes into play, not only in designing the project itself, but in analyzing the consequences. When federal agencies, in this case the Corps of Engineers, take an “action” such as permitting construction of this pipeline through federal lands or watershed areas of the Missouri River under federal control, they must analyze the impacts on the “affected environment” including the natural and human environment, according to the National Environmental Policy Act. This scientific analysis *may* start with a limited environmental assessment (EA) to determine if any environmental impacts are likely. The EA process has only limited opportunity for public input. If no “significant” impacts are determined to be likely, the analysis can end there and the permit process moves forward. But if there are possible significant environmental impacts, then a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required.

Without going into too much detail, there are four key points about the process of preparing an EIS:

1. It requires a detailed scientific analysis of a proposed “action” (e.g. permitting a specific route for the pipeline) and several reasonable alternatives;
2. It requires an extensive process of public input as well as consultation with other government bodies (including, notably in this case, sovereign tribal governments);
3. The scientific work in preparing a properly done EIS doesn’t have a foregone conclusion. That is, it doesn’t mean from the outset that it has been decided that there are significant impacts that must be mitigated or that there is only one acceptable alternative. That emerges from the analysis which includes the public and other input; and
4. It is a timely and costly process as befits a costly and highly lucrative development project.

For Dakota Access (the company that wants to build the pipeline), only an EA was prepared and it was determined the project could go ahead because it found no significant impact.

Hmmm. I used to oversee management of marine fisheries around the country, and the agency I worked for frequently and very laboriously prepared EISs to permit fishermen to go out and catch fish. And now a pipeline carrying millions of barrels of toxic fossil fuels that will be used for energy, chemical products, and plastics can be said *a priori* to have no impact on natural and human communities? That seems to defy common sense.

The way the project is structured and the specific lobby efforts by the fossil fuel industry are revealing. Even though the pipeline is more than a thousand miles long, for the purposes of federal permitting it is “considered” to be just a series of small projects, each of which are analyzed for their environmental impacts independently. The industry secured that particular set of exemptions from requirements of the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and National Environmental Policy Act to ease permitting of their construction projects.

I wonder what would happen if the project developers were not allowed to refer to the economic benefits of the full collection of sections of the pipeline when talking about its importance. In that scenario, the section under review would be essentially worthless because moving oil only through that section isn’t worth anything. No billions of dollars in revenue, no claims of energy independence, no big employment numbers, because that section is unrelated to other sections in its benefits just like they analyze the impacts?

The Dakota Access Environmental Assessment (EA) does not consider the low-income and Native communities that could be affected by the proposed pipeline. Only the communities outlined in red and blue were evaluated for environmental justice impacts.

Environmental justice

One of the biggest problems highlighted by this project is the issue of Native rights and environmental justice. In this case, the burden was directly and consciously shifted onto Native American tribes and communities as has happened too many times throughout the history of the country.

The Dakota Access project should have been fully and deeply analyzed and, most importantly, included consultations with the sovereign tribal governments before issuing a permit. But it wasn’t. The US Environmental Protection Agency said the analysis was inadequate. The Standing Rock tribal government said it was inadequate. In fact, Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II [said](#) that that “the first draft of the company’s assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.”

As important as it is for human and environmental health, possible water contamination is not the only concern here. There is a critical question of impacts on lands sacred to Native people. How can the Army Corps, or Dakota Access, or anyone for that matter determine the impacts on sacred lands, sites, and burial grounds without consulting with the tribe? How can one determine

a priori that there will be no impacts? At the very least, a thorough analysis of environmental justice concerns—fully engaging with the tribe and surrounding communities—is essential.

Moving the route away from the city of Bismarck to near the reservation, ignoring the need for input from the people near the changed route, dismissing concerns out of hand about sacred sites and lands and cultural impacts, and proceeding with construction based on a claim of economic benefits without regard to the costs to those most impacted: these are the meat and bones of how environmental injustices are allowed to happen.

By no means is this an isolated case. Indigenous people of America have lived this story time and again. The sacrifice of tribal lands and sacred areas in the name of “development” is all too common. Another case in point is the fight over designation as a National Monument of the Greater Grand Canyon area, sacred to Native American tribes who have already suffered devastating effects from uranium mining, impacts on drinking water and other development impacts. What could be more monumental than the Grand Canyon? What could be more monumental than the cultures of the indigenous peoples of this land?

At Standing Rock, and at the Grand Canyon, as well as many other examples too numerous to speak to here, our democracy has a chance to listen to its people. It is important that science not be used for purposes of political, economic and cultural repression. Science can be an instrument for justice, and that is what needs to happen here.

<http://blog.ucsus.org/andrew-rosenberg/native-rights-and-concerns-at-standing-rock-the-important-role-of-science?autologin=true>

September 16, 2016

Indigenous communities mobilize to defend Guatemala’s forests from loggers

By Jeff Abbott
Waging Nonviolence

Across Guatemala, indigenous communities are organizing to challenge logging in the country’s vast forests. These communities are concerned with the impact that both legal and illegal logging will have on their watersheds and on the environment.

On June 15, concerned residents from the highland Ixil Maya municipality of Nebaj, Quiche staged a protest outside the municipal building to express their concern with the steady increase in trucks leaving town loaded with lumber. The action was organized by residents and members of the Indigenous Authority of Nebaj in order to pressure the state authorities to strip the nine companies of their licenses to exploit timber on private lands. Residents raise concern over the fact that the deforestation affects everyone in the area.

Following the protest, concerned residents in the neighboring Ixil municipality of Chajul blocked and detained several trucks transporting lumber from the region for a number of hours. They

demanded that the National Institute of Forests, or INAB, and the Division for the Protection of the Environment cease their operations and described the amount of lumber being taken from the local forests as “excessive.”

The initiative in Nebaj and Chajul follow the actions taken by the members of the Indigenous Authorities of Cotzal, another neighboring Ixil municipality, who filed the initial complaint to INAB over their concern of the cutting of trees.

The Indigenous Authorities of Nebaj also issued a statement to INAB asking them to take action. But the government body declined to act and issued a statement that they are planting new trees for every one that is cut down. But this response did not satisfy concerned residents.

“We went to the government bodies and issued statements asking to cease extending licenses for the exploitation of forests,” said Caty Terraza, the communications representative for the Indigenous Authorities of Nebaj. “They told us that they are sowing new trees, but how long will it take for those trees to grow to the same size as the trees that were there before?”

The companies involved in logging operations responded to the protests by significantly reducing the number of trucks transporting lumber from mountains. According to residents, however, it is unclear if this will continue into the future.

The mobilization of communities organizing to challenge logging operations in the highlands of Guatemala represent a growing concern over the destruction of the environment by companies. This challenge to logging companies reflects the understanding of communities of the vital part forests play in the protection of the water sources.

“The trees serve us and the animals,” Terraza said. “The loss of trees is drying up the aquifers. As a youth and as human, I must think of my future, and what I’m leaving my children.”

Other communities held similar protests following the actions taken in the Ixil region.

On June 26, a similar action was held in Santa Cruz del Quiche, the department’s largest city. Once again protesters were demanding that authorities stop issuing licenses for the exploitation of forests.

Increase in logging across Guatemala

Guatemala is home to vast forests and jungles, but these regions have increasingly come under threat to deforestation. Critics blame uneducated campesinos clearing land for agriculture as one of the prime culprits. This does represent a threat, but there are other bigger threats, including lumber companies, and organized crime.

The protest over logging industry activity in indigenous regions occurs at a time in Guatemala of increased concern over deforestation, and comes after the [historic march for water in April 2016](#). Community representatives, nongovernmental organizations, and activists see a connection between forests and water. The Guatemalan government too maintains a campaign of

reforestation, but this has not stopped companies from cutting down forests for the valuable woods, or the razing of forests by narco-traffickers in the northern department of Petén to build landing strips.

The Guatemalan Ministry of the Economy [actively promotes](#) the investment of companies interested in exploiting the country's nearly 2 million acres of forests. Logging companies and lumber traders have taken an interest in the vast forests of the highlands of Guatemala, where they can find rare hard and soft woods, such as teak, mahogany, oak and the more common pine. These resources can fetch hefty prices at market.

The exportation of lumber and products produced from wood from Guatemala has increased significantly. [From 2013 to 2014](#), lumber exports increased eight percent, from \$6.7 million dollars to \$8.6 million. This continues the long trend of the increase in the exportation of lumber and wood products, such as furniture.

But this increase in export of lumber brings the companies into conflict with indigenous communities. According to research by Guatemalan environmentalist and researcher, Juan Skinner, the indigenous regions of the country on average contain more forest cover than the non-indigenous regions of the country.

A 2005 report that he authored highlights that municipalities that are less than 25 percent indigenous have forest cover of around 12 percent. Whereas regions where the population is more than 75 percent indigenous have forest cover of around 35 percent.

Protecting communal forests

Guatemala's Mayan communities are not alone in their concern with the destruction of forests. The southern Xinca community of Quesada, Jutiapa has long taken steps to protect the forests that make up their communal territory.

The Xinca people are one of the many ethnicities that make up Guatemala. The rural community in the southern department of Jutiapa has held their forest as communal lands since the 1850s, with subsequent generations continuing to protect the mountain and the forests. Today the forests represent 80 percent of the more than 13,500 acres of land, with the remainder utilized for crops, such as coffee and maize.

“Our ancestors left us the land and a group to protect our mountain,” said Jak Mardogeo Ogorio, a representative of the communities' Directive Council. “All this was passed down through the generations, and we continue this today. In order to cut a tree down, you first must receive permission from the council.”

The community leaders have also barred any large-scale logging operations.

“We don't permit companies to operate in our forests,” Ogorio said. “In past epochs companies tried to negotiate for access to the forests, but they always wanted more. How many years for a

new tree to grow? Up on the mountain there are trees that you cannot encircle with three people. This is what we are protecting.”

Ogorio and the other 13 members of the community council work directly with the residents to build awareness of the importance of the forests through regular meetings, trainings and a campaign to build alternative cooking stoves that utilize less firewood. In August and September 2016, the council implemented the insulation of 400 cooking stoves in conjuncture with Utz Che, a Guatemalan non-governmental organization.

“This project allows us to slow deforestation because the stoves use less firewood, and there is no need for more and more wood,” Ogorio said. “These stoves allow us to protect our forests.”

Community leaders of Quesada maintain vigilance over the threat of forest fires on communal lands for which they receive funding from INAB. This has generated work opportunity in a region where there are not many options.

Facing down logging firms

The community of La Bendición in the southern department of Esquitla is one of the few regions on Guatemala’s southern coast not dominated by sugar and African oil palm plantations. Residents of the small community were displaced by the country’s 36-year-long internal armed conflict. At the end of the war they negotiated the purchase of a 5,500-acre coffee farm through the Land Fund in 2000 for about \$1 million, far more than the value of the land.

When the families already burdened by debt arrived in 2001, they were shocked to learn that the land was not in the state that the Land Fund had promised. There were no rivers, as they were promised there would be, and the high winds meant that their crops were damaged, and there was no paved road. But there was a forest that contained an aquifer. Disappointed residents quickly left the community, leaving just 53 families of the original 170.

Residents continued to be burdened by debt, despite the rich forests. In 2002, the Land Fund proposed a solution: sell the forest.

“The same Land Fund that assisted us in purchasing our land was pressuring us to sell the forests in order to resolve the debt,” said Veronica Hernandez, a 47-year-old community leader. “But we refused because if we would have sold our forests, we would have been left without water, or with contaminated water.”

Since refusing to sell the land to logging interest, the community has organized to maintain the forests, and protect them from illegal logging and from forest fires. The residents also hold regular community-wide meetings to work to train everyone on the importance of the forests, and to guarantee that no one goes up into the mountain to cut down the precious trees.

“The forests are a source of life,” Hernandez said. “If there are no forests and no trees, then there is no life. The forests give us water, the air and fruits, which we are able to eat and to sell at market.”

Residents have also worked to develop projects like those being implemented in Quesada in order to decrease their impact on the forests. These stoves and solar projects are received across the community to great success.

The residents' resolve to protect their forest was further strengthened following the April 2016 water march, when thousands of campesinos marched to demand the protection of Guatemala's water sources.

"The April march was important for us and other communities along Guatemala's coast," Hernandez said. "It has strengthened our drive to protect the forests and the mangroves along the coast."

Despite the fact that the community was able to hold off the lumber interests following the purchase of the land, Hernandez and the other residents maintain vigilance to guarantee that no company comes to exploit their land and forests.

"These companies always come into our communities to rob from us," Hernandez said. "They then leave us with all the costs."

Building consciousness in the community

Back in Nebaj, the Indigenous Authority is working to replicate the awareness in La Bendición and Quesada over the importance of forests.

"We are trying to inform community members of the impacts of deforestation," Terraza said. This sharing of information is strengthened through the local Ixil University, which works to build awareness, and bring higher education to the region.

"But we have to do more," Terraza added. "We must struggle to guarantee that people know what the impacts are."

The Indigenous Authorities of Nebaj stated that they are considering other actions, including the continuation of pressure on the state bodies, including INAB, the continuation of protests, and the direct action of blocking trucks transporting lumber.

"[INAB] is an institution of the state," Terraza said. "If we have all these trees, then it is because we have protected the forests for some time; our ancestors also protected these forests. It should not be so easy for them to arrive and issue licenses to companies to exploit the forests."

<http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/guatemalan-indigenous-defend-forests/>

September 16, 2016

The 'spiritual battle' over the Dakota Access pipeline

By Emily McFarlan Miller
Religion News Service

NEAR THE STANDING ROCK SIOUX RESERVATION, N.D. (RNS) -- It's [being called](#) "the largest, most diverse tribal action in at least a century": scores of Native American tribes camped among the hills along the Cannonball River.

They've gathered in tents and teepees, and in prayer and protest, to oppose the construction of an oil pipeline, engaged in what both activists and religious leaders are calling a spiritual battle.

And they [won](#) a partial victory on Sept. 9, when the federal government [ordered a provisional halt](#) on construction near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.

What's behind the opposition to the pipeline, and what makes it spiritual? Let us 'Splain ...

What's the backstory?

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has filed a lawsuit over a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit for the construction of a \$3.8 billion underground pipeline that would run nearly 1,200 miles from the Bakken and Three Forks oil fields in North Dakota to an existing pipeline in Illinois.

The Dakota Access pipeline would transport 470,000 barrels of crude oil per day, [according to Dallas-based Energy Transfer](#), the parent company of Dakota Access. It would reduce the amount of oil shipped by truck and train, providing safer transport of oil, the company argues.

But it also would snake through sacred sites on lands where the Sioux once lived and, [according to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe](#), a spill would "present an existential threat" since the pipeline would come within a half-mile of their reservation.

Who's protesting?

An estimated 8,000 people were camped along the Cannonball River this past week.

Camp coordinator Phyllis Young says members of 280 Native American tribes have come to express their support — from as far away as Hawaii and Ecuador, according to the [Sacred Stone Camp Facebook page](#). Many non-Native people also have joined.

So what does opposition to the pipeline have to do with religion and spirituality?

"You can't separate spirituality from our everyday life," said Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Councilman Dana Yellow Fat. "We do everything with prayer."

The demonstration began in April with a 26-mile prayer ride on horseback from Sitting Bull's burial site in Fort Yates. Prayer continues at the camps throughout the day: in the morning and evening and at mealtimes, in vigils, in songs, in prayer ties knotted to fences along construction sites, in the sage and cedar and tobacco that is burned.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II has mentioned visions and dreams by several Lakota and Dakota Sioux about “a black poisonous snake trying to come among us.” He has also cited instructions the Sioux believe the Creator has given them to care for the land, including the water and all creation.

“Mni wiconi” — “Water is life” — has become one of the rallying cries of those opposing the pipeline.

[Mark Charles](#), a Navajo Christian and Washington correspondent for Native News Online, puts it this way: “The way most Natives feel about the land where they’re living is the way most European Christians (American Christians of European origin) feel about Israel. Why? Because that’s where their creation story takes place.”

Why are Christians getting involved?

Bruce Ough, bishop of the United Methodist Church’s Dakotas-Minnesota Area and president of the United Methodist Church’s Council of Bishops, calls it “a spiritual battle.”

“Ultimately, this is a protest about the stewardship of God’s creation and justice for the indigenous peoples of the Great Plains,” Ough said.

It’s also about reconciliation, said Shantha Ready Alonso, executive director of [Creation Justice Ministries](#). Many non-Native Americans participating in the demonstration want to acknowledge the injustices done to indigenous peoples by European Christians who took their lands and played a role in massacres of Native Americans.

“There’s a lot to confess, there’s a lot to repent and, in this case, this is an opportunity to stand with the tribe and affirm and follow their leadership in taking one more step toward reconciliation,” Alonso said.

Representatives from several Protestant Christian denominations, including the [United Methodist Church](#), [United Church of Christ](#), [Episcopal Church](#), [Presbyterian Church \(USA\)](#) and [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#) — as well as the Nation of Islam — have visited the camps or spoken out against the pipeline project.

<http://religionnews.com/2016/09/16/the-splainer-the-spiritual-battle-over-the-dakota-access-pipeline/>

September 18, 2016

As Blessing of the Waves hits 9th year, paying respect to the ocean and each other

By Laylan Connelly
Orange County Register

Pedro Castagna gingerly held onto Fr. Christian Mondor, known as “surfing padre,” waves lapping at their feet as they walked into the water.

The 91-year-old Catholic priest from the Saint Simon and Jude Catholic Church, who swapped out his long brown robe for a wetsuit, stopped and blessed Castagna just before the surfer joined others forming a circle and splashing water toward the sky, a gesture to give thanks to the joy the ocean provides.

“We are all brother and sister and the water is our source of life,” Castagna said of the various religious believers who showed up Sunday near the Huntington Beach Pier for the annual Blessing of the Waves event. “We are such a free country, where else can you do this? I’ve been to a lot of places where you can’t fly another flag or preach another religion.”

And that is the purpose of the annual event, now in its ninth year: to listen and learn about a spectrum of spiritual beliefs, all of which pay respect to water and the ocean in various ways.

Fog loomed as the event started early morning with a special tribute to H2O church pastor Sumo Sato, a well-known figure in the surfing community and recent Surfers’ Hall of Fame inductee who is battling stage 4 colon cancer.

“It’s a nasty disease. Thanks for praying for me,” he said to the hundreds of people who showed up for the service on the north side of the Huntington Beach Pier.

He talked about surrendering to God, and told a story about nearly dying in big Hawaiian surf last October, at first panicking but then recognizing he was being cared for by a higher power.

Anthony Boger, pastor at Surf City United Methodist Church, spoke about how a person can live for up to 60 days without food - but no one can live more than three days without water.

“Water is so every present in our American lives, we actually take it for granted because it is so readily available to us,” he said. “You won’t miss your water until the well runs dry.”

Nancy Cotta, council secretary of the King of Glory Lutheran Church, talked about the ocean’s powers and strength.

“There is beauty and relaxation. Besides this calm, there is turmoil. There is sunshine, and there is overcast. It can feed us and give us life, or it can take life away,” she said. “It gives us needed storms in the winter, and it cools us from the heat in the summer... They can be a source of entertainment, and they can be a source of disaster. These waves have the power to take down our pier, and they have.”

Rhonda Ragab, Muslim representative for the event, told people about how her religion uses water as a cleanser. Before praying five times a day, it is Muslim tradition to wash the face, hands and feet with water as a physical cleanse.

Before the surfers hit the water, Mondor and others sprinkled the crowd using rosemary branches soaked in salt water.

“We ask your blessing upon all the creatures that inhabit the sea, from the smallest plankton to the formidable sharks and humpback whales, for they all have a place in the order of your creation.

“But please keep the great whites always in their space, and not in ours,” he said, drawing a chuckle from the crowd.

<http://www.oregister.com/articles/water-729399-event-church.html>

September 19, 2016

10 Photos That Show the Magnificent Light Shining on Standing Rock

Despite all the news of pipeline regulation, court appeals, and activist arrests, Native photographer Josue Rivas reminds us that it is actually a peaceful place.

By Josue Rivas
Yes! Magazine

A month and a half ago, I was deeply moved by an urgent plea for support from friends and relatives who are in solidarity with the people of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation in North Dakota. As a Native photojournalist, I believe it's important to let our people tell their own stories. That's why I drove 1,545 miles to connect with the protectors of this land and report on what is happening here. This tribe has been fighting to protect their clean water, critical habitats, and sacred sites from an oil pipeline that would cross under the Missouri River.

For the most part I've been documenting the action on the front lines, but there came a moment when I realized I had to take a step back and see something else. I don't consider myself a landscape photographer, so learning how to capture the beauty of the land was a challenge.

One day I sat near the Cannonball River and listened to the water. It was then that the spirits of this land told me to just follow my light. This is what I saw.

See the photos here:

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/planet/10-photos-that-show-the-magnificent-light-shining-on-standing-rock-20160919>

Josue Rivas wrote this article for [YES! Magazine](#). He is a member of the Mexica Tribe and a photographer and activist based in Los Angeles. Follow him on Instagram [@josue_foto](#) and Twitter [@josue_foto](#).

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/planet/10-photos-that-show-the-magnificent-light-shining-on-standing-rock-20160919>

September 19, 2016

Mining leaves a Wisconsin tribe's hallowed sites at risk

Modern boundaries complicate —and stymie—the Menominee Tribe's effort to protect burial grounds.

A “Sacred Water” story.

By Brian Bienkowski
Environmental Health News

Editor's Note: This story is part of "[Sacred Water](#)," EHN's ongoing investigation into Native American struggles—and successes—to protect culturally significant water sources on and off the reservation

Part 1 of 2

MENOMINEE RESERVATION, Wisc.—Guy Reiter was an archaeologist before he was an activist. But the two merged after a dream six years ago.

“I was in a van and when we drove by the White Rapids I looked over and saw an elder sitting on a dam, in full Indian regalia,” Reiter says. “He flagged me down, I climbed the dam, and he started talking to me in Menominee.”

Menominee is the language of Reiter's tribe, the Menominee Indians of Wisconsin. The dam is on the Menominee River, where the history of the tribe begins.

We were climbing down, and as soon as my feet hit the ground, I woke up, with tears in my eyes,” he says.

Reiter won't say what the elder said that brought such tears. The dream was a gift, not to be shared. “Anytime I get to experience ancestors is a real profound time,” he says.

But four months later, on an archeological trip in 2010 with other researchers from the College of Menominee Nation, Reiter saw the dam: It was indeed on the White Rapids, a former settlement site for the Menominee people.

Downstream from the rapids is the fight that has consumed Reiter's life since: A proposed open-pit copper, gold and zinc mine along the river on the Michigan side of the border. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality this month announced their mining permit approval. There

are still hurdles before shovels hit dirt—including a pending wetland permit and public comment period—but time is running out for the tribe.

The river and mine are both off the reservation. But the river and land around it remain central to Menominee culture.

That's the crux facing tribes across the nation today: Cultural resources—both on and off reservation—get sullied, destroyed, defaced by activities happening off reservation and forces beyond Native Americans' control.

The Sioux—and hundreds of other tribes—are getting headlines now, protesting the destruction of off-reservation cultural artifacts and the risk to water resources by a North Dakota oil pipeline. But as the Menominee show, tribes across the country are fighting similar battles.

“Unfortunately these problems didn’t occur overnight and the solutions won’t come overnight,” says Lawrence Roberts, assistant secretary of Indian Affairs at the U.S. Department of Interior.

“Sometimes it’s litigation or just working with state and local government so they’re fully educated about tribal rights,” he says. “In permitting and development it’s important to recognize tribes’ rights to hunting and gathering and fishing ... that means protecting streams and sacred objects.”

That's hard to do. For tribes already beset by a host of social ills—poorer health, higher unemployment, greater alcoholism, even less plumbing than neighboring populations—such environmental injustices add further insult.

This is about far more than preserving sacred burial mounds. These injustices degrade the quality of life for Native Americans nationwide, tainting their traditions, and saddling their populations with illness and poor health.

Our six-month investigation into environmental injustice in Indian Country found tribes nationwide in a struggle to protect rivers that are cultural birthplaces, revered forests and outcrops that serve as spiritual retreats, plants that have been gathered centuries before reservations were invented, and the remains of their dead. These represent the last vestige of tribal freedom before artificial borders changed their way of life.

We also found successes: Tribal coalitions in the Pacific Northwest bringing the Native perspective into fisheries management; south-central U.S. tribal involvement in drought planning and climate change adaptation and the strong, unified tribal voice fighting for the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah.

The most recent example of this revival of Native pride—and rights—is a bit of windswept prairie that has become the flashpoint for Native American voice and culture: The Standing Rock Sioux tribe's fight against the Dakota Access pipeline. The pipeline, aimed to carry crude oil from North Dakota's Bakken fields to existing pipe in Iowa, would span four states, pass under

the Missouri River a half mile upstream from the tribe's reservation, and impact burial grounds and other culturally important sites.

Earlier this month, the same day a federal judge declined to halt construction, the Obama administration rescinded pipeline permits for U.S. Army Corps land at the Missouri River and called for a nationwide examination of the protection of tribal lands and resources.

"This case has highlighted the need for a serious discussion on whether there should be nationwide reform with respect to considering tribes' views on these types of infrastructure projects," the departments of Army, Justice and Interior said in an unusual joint statement.

But while hundreds of tribes are gathered in solidarity with the Sioux at Sacred Stone Camp, the Menominee are waging—and losing—their fight in northern Michigan without that same national spotlight.

Menominee burial grounds left outside reservation boundaries may soon become islands in an industrialized, strip-mined landscape as three groups of mounds sit within the boundaries of the Back Forty project site.

The mine's tailings will sit 150 feet from the river; acid leaching from waste ponds could contaminate groundwater, the river and its fish. The tribe's reservation is about 80 miles away, across the state border. But its cultural headwaters are along the Menominee River, where Aquila Resources Inc., hopes to start digging.

With the mine on track for state approval, Reiter and other Menominee members are appealing to the federal government and the power of grassroots opposition in order to stop the mine.

"We don't have a migration story like some tribes," says Reiter, a member of the tribe's Conservation Commission.

"Our story starts right there."

Off-reservation challenges

The Menominee held title to 10 million acres across northern Michigan and Wisconsin before encroaching settlers and questionable deals forced them to 226,000 acres 60 miles northwest of Green Bay. The waters of the Menominee remain an important part of their culture. But important decisions are controlled by Michigan. The feds are mostly out. And Michigan, just before Labor Day, announced its intent to approve the mine.

Tribes are sovereign under federal law. They deal with states and the feds in a government-to-government capacity. Certain aspects of preserving off-reservation resources have been clear: fishing or hunting rights, for example, on traditional lands, lakes and rivers, even in the off-season. But rights become opaque when disputes arise over aspects that aren't readily tangible—especially the preservation of spiritual and historically relevant places.

A lot of this murkiness stems from the more holistic environmental perspectives from Native Americans, which doesn't always jive with modern laws and regulations.

“When a waterway is polluted, for other communities it's inconvenient: You can't recreate, maybe you can't go boating,” says Elizabeth Hoover, a Brown University assistant professor and researcher of environmental health and justice in native communities. “But for indigenous people that had a very specific relationship with that river, a kinship, to have that interrupted is a very different thing culturally.”

Brian Howard, a legislative associate at the National Congress of American Indians, says that for a lot of off-reservation development, specifically energy projects, “tribal consultations are happening after the fact” in an attempt to streamline permitting and approvals.

Howard cited a case in the Southwest where Apaches from the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation, established in 1872 in Arizona, are fighting a proposed copper mine in the Tonto National Forest, which forms the western border of their reservation lands. The Apaches have long considered the Oak Flat area of the Tonto National Forest as hallowed. It also happens to have a lot of copper ore underneath it.

Last year mining company Resolution Copper got the ore, via a rider tucked into the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act. The language, inserted largely due to efforts from Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., authorized a swap of 3.8 square miles in the Flats for company-owned land outside the forest. As a litany of federal environmental reviews take place, the Apache are stuck fighting as Resolution Copper burrows into the ground for exploratory drilling while awaiting approval.

“Congress mandated the land for the private company and then there was the awareness of the sacredness of the site,” Howard says.

In Massachusetts, two Wampanoag tribes—the Aquinnah and the Mashpee—fought the proposed Cape Wind Farm in the Nantucket Sound. The turbines, they argued, would block views of the first light, part of traditional ceremonies. The Aquinnah sued the federal government for not consulting the tribe under the National Historic Preservation Act. The lawsuit was consolidated with others, and they lost. The wind project, however, is still in limbo, mired in other litigation.

In Wisconsin, the Ho-Chunk Nation this year fought a state bill that would have removed some burial mound protections in the state. The bill failed to pass in April—a victory for Wisconsin tribes, but the ruling doesn't impact the Menominee in their current fight, as their burial mounds lie unprotected across the border in Michigan, a further sign that 19th century boundaries don't work for indigenous tribes.

Just four years ago, in a case similar to the Menominee's, the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community of the Lake Superior Band of Chippewa fought the Eagle Mine in Michigan's Upper Peninsula—about 160 miles north of the Menominee reservation in Wisconsin—over pollution fears and its

location near Eagle Rock, a spiritual gathering place for the tribe. They lost; the mine owners, Lundin, have been conducting exploratory drilling since.

In each case, the cultural relevance of certain areas didn't fit neatly into legal frameworks, checked boxes and permit requirements.

“We’re trying to change that,” says Roberts, of the U.S. Department of Interior. Just like states and counties, some tribes are just better equipped to analyze and tackle and organize around environmental issues, he adds.

For the Coast Salish tribes in the Northwest, unifying across both state and international borders has propelled Native interests to the forefront of political and scientific decisions made on the Salish Sea, a network of waterways in northwestern Washington state and British Columbia. The tribal coalition has become central to efforts to save and spur salmon stocks.

“For years it was fragmented jurisdictions: departments of water, departments of land,” says Emma Norman, chair of the science department and Native environmental science program at Northwest Indian College in Washington state. “By fragmenting, state and federal agencies were losing the bigger context.”

“When the Coast Salish tribes came together they brought out the relationship to land, to the family, to ancestors, your unborn, future generations.”

The power of tribal unification can also be seen in Utah right now, where 27 tribes—the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition—have banded together to propose the Bears Ears National Monument on land where Native artifacts are subject to looting and tribes still graze cattle and hunt. President Obama is expected to make a decision on the monument under the Antiquities Act—the first time tribes have invoked the presidential act—before he leaves office.

“That’s our grandmas, aunts and uncles in that ground”

On an unseasonably warm day in May back in Wisconsin, Guy Reiter is in constant motion—answering calls, setting up meetings, honking and waving to friends, then switching gears in an instant and pointing to the history tucked into the inconspicuous forests and rivers of the reservation.

“I just love this place, man,” he says, tugging on his Green Bay Packers hat. He pulls the truck off to stop at Spirit Rock, a rock so central to Menominee that legend says when the rock crumbles away, the Menominee tribe will disappear. Reiter offers tobacco at the rock and bows his head in silence.

Next he pulls the truck near Keshena Falls on the reservation. Out on the bridge, the water rolls and swirls below him.

This is where Menominee members would come in the spring for sturgeon, he says. “It was a big deal after a hard winter.” Before dams interrupted the flow, lake sturgeon would migrate to the falls to spawn in the spring, providing much-needed calories for Reiter’s ancestors.

The Menominee now celebrate annually with a powwow and sturgeon feast with fish provided by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Reiter’s ancestors traveled widely. Spirit Rock and the Keshena Falls are on the reservation, but the tribe also lived along the Menominee River, harvesting wild rice. And the mouth of the river, where it spills into Lake Michigan, 60 miles from the reservation border, is the center of tribe’s creation story.

The controversy sits near Stephenson, Michigan. Canada-based Aquila’s proposed 83-acre open-pit mine —dubbed the Back Forty Project—would pull gold, zinc, copper and silver out of the ground along the Michigan-Wisconsin border. It would open a 750-foot-deep gash next to the Menominee River, the largest drainage system in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

The state of Michigan has met with and included the Menominee tribe as it reviewed Aquila’s application, says Joe Maki, head of the mining division of Michigan’s Department of Environmental Quality. But there’s a clear impasse. Tribal authorities say the state holds too much power and argue federal agencies’ ability to step in and protect tribal resources has been neutered through litigation.

“That’s our grandmas, aunts and uncles in that ground,” Reiter says.

The Menominee is a massive river system, making up the border between northern Wisconsin and Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. More than 100 tributaries drain into it, a watershed covering 4,000 square miles. It supports large populations of bass, pike, walleye and spawning grounds for sturgeon.

Aquila has spent \$70 million over the past decade figuring out a way to mine while protecting the environment. Water used at the mine and processing plant would be sent to a wastewater treatment plant then discharged to the river, or seeped into groundwater. Cliff Nelson, vice president of U.S. operations at Aquila, says they haven’t yet decided on what type of water treatment system but most of the water will be recycled and re-used. “The rest will be cleaner than rainwater before we’re allowed to discharge,” he says.

New tax revenue for the four-county area near the mine in a typical operation year is estimated at \$20 million, according to a study by the University of Minnesota Duluth and commissioned by Aquila.

The [same study](#) estimates almost 250 new mine jobs, 1,330 construction jobs and royalties of more than \$16.5 million. These jobs are far from the tribe, and would come from three counties in Michigan—Menominee (a different county from the tribe’s home in Wisconsin), Dickinson and Delta—and Marinette County, Wisconsin. All four counties are more than 94 percent white

and all have unemployment rates between 5 and 6 percent—slightly above the national rate of 4.9 percent.

“People say there are not enough people here to fill all the jobs needed and they’re probably right,” Nelson says. “But our intention is to hire as many local people as possible.”

Aquila expects to pull 532,000 ounces of gold, 721 million pounds of zinc, 74 millions pounds of copper, 4.6 million ounces of silver and 21 million pounds of lead from the mine. The mine would have an estimated 8-year lifespan, Nelson says.

Alexandra Maxwell, executive director of the environmental nonprofit Save the Wild UP, says company documents hint at a longer lifespan, which would mean more time for potential pollution.

Nelson admits the total years for the life a mine could change if they find more resources. “Which would require getting more permits,” he says.

Maki, of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, says the agency’s goal is “a mine designed to close. We want them to make money but also leave behind a self sustaining environment,” he says. The current mine plan calls for about 23 years of Aquila cleanup, reclamation and monitoring after the eight-year life of the mine.

Maki and his team have the final say on state mines, and on Sept. 2 they said "yes." While the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reviews permits to check for air emissions and water discharge red flags, no other federal agencies have to sign off. Aquila needs a wetlands permit from the state and to sit out a two-month public comment period. The state has to make a decision by Dec. 1.

Preservation Act neutered

Tribes fighting for off-reservation resources largely rely on two federal laws—the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act.

Neither guarantee protection. Both force officials to consider impacts upon historic and cultural resources before granting developers, such as mining companies, permits and access to resources.

Tribes [can apply through the EPA](#) to take water quality standards into their own hands, and currently 53 tribes (the Menominee do not) enforce such water standards. But such regulatory power is limited to waters on the reservation.

The National Historic Preservation Act, designed to protect anything that could be eligible for the National Register, lost most of its teeth 13 years ago when the National Mining Association took exception to the feds interfering in state and local permitting issues and sued.

The mining association won in court at the United States Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C. The case homed in on language in what's called Section 106 of the act, which allows the federal agency to review projects and nominate properties for national and tribal registers, offering protection from potentially destructive development.

In the court case, however, the circuit court found that mining is a state-regulated activity, not federally funded or licensed, so the Council can't intervene.

Before the case, the Council could have gotten involved in cases such as the Menominee's, says Charlene Dwin Vaughn, assistant director of the federal permitting, licensing and assistance section of the Advisory Council of Historic Preservation Council, which enforces the Historic Preservation Act protections. Now, once state rules are in place, they have no say.

"The rug has been pulled out from under us," she says.

Litigation isn't the only route for Natives, says Al Gedicks, a sociology professor at the University of Wisconsin La Crosse, who focuses on mining and Native American communities.

"Some of the most effective opposition comes from the public education and organizing process," says Gedicks, who knows a thing or two about organizing. Gedicks has worked with Wisconsin tribes for decades protesting environmentally risky mining projects and advising them on holding on to land and resources guaranteed in treaties.

"Changing that public opinion and highlighting the injustice ... we're going to mobilize communities all the way downstream," Gedicks says of the current mine fight.

There is a palpable change in the tribe as it gathers its voice against the mine, Reiter says. Speaking events, fliers, websites and new partnerships proliferate, but that's only half the story: Tribal members have taken to days-long walks from the reservation to the Menominee River, tracing their ancestors' steps. They've re-seeded the river's mouth with wild rice—Menominee is Algonkian for "People of the wild rice," and other tribes in the region said that when the Menominee appeared, wild rice followed. When they left, the rice passed.

The tribe has also reinstated language programs at schools. The mine debate, Reiter says, has rekindled the tribe's river roots.

It's a revival Reiter himself has lived. In rallying against the mine, he's learned from elders of the obligation to watch over the river.

"It's pretty inspiring to see how those connections to the river are starting to come back," Reiter says. "With this mine, if there is a good part, it's making that connection again and speaking up for water, animals and trees."

"We're starting to get back in touch with our culture."

Part 2 tomorrow: Mine fight rekindles Menominee river roots

September 20, 2016

Genesis Farm | Restoring Paradise: One Watershed at a Time

Kosmos: Journal for Global Transformation

A Kosmos Interview with Sister Miriam MacGillis

Editor's note: On September 3, 2016 I had the great honor of enjoying a day with Sister Miriam MacGillis and our mutual friend, social activist Judy Wicks, at Genesis Farm in northern New Jersey. Walking the land with two remarkable women, I had a pervasive sense of being in both a physical space and a metaphysical one. Over a lovely and simple lunch, sitting amid the trees behind Sister Miriam's home, we discussed what it will take to restore our communion with the Earth. We continued this conversation via email. (R. Fabian)

...The whole thing is grace. Everything of the Universe—everything that has brought forth the carbon in my body, my body itself, the trees that are shining outside my window, the bees that are flying around collecting pollen—it's all grace if we recognize it. It's there for us.” – Sister Miriam MacGillis

Kosmos: How has the concept of Earth Literacy informed and inspired the mission of Genesis Farm?

Miriam MacGillis: ‘Earth Literacy’ is a term often used by Thomas Berry. He would say that we are not literate in the language and meaning of the natural world, the planet Earth and the greater cosmos from which everything has emerged. Our literacy has been centered only on the last few thousand years of human history which has shaped our perceptions about our identity and purpose. Earth Literacy suggests a process of learning the bigger story out of which everything has come, which has only recently been enabled by the scientific instruments we created, expanding our ability to see, hear and explore aspects of the inner and outer processes of this evolving Universe.

Thomas Berry's insights into the “bio-spiritual-psychic nature of the universe” from its beginnings over 13 billion years ago, provided a scientific confirmation of the total unity of the Universe, Earth, Life and human life. It called into question the fundamental principles on which western civilization had been developing over the last five thousand years, a worldview that assumed only humans possessed souls, spirit, psyches. This worldview relegated all other existence to mere physical matter and incorporated that thinking into our major western institutions which continue to selectively give rights to humans and no rights to what is not human. It explains why human fictions like corporations have more rights than rivers or seeds or mountains or eco-systems.

In the late 1980's, a group of people were gathered by Dr. McGregor Smith of Miami-Dade College, to develop curricula around these ideas for colleges and universities. This group used the term Earth Literacy to describe this academic program and to underscore its implications across all disciplines. A paper by Thomas Berry titled *The American College in the Ecological Age*, was a seminal resource and later became a chapter in his book, *The Dream of the Earth*. It was revolutionary.

Genesis Farm was part of this group and by 1993 we were offering the first accredited graduate courses in Earth Literacy through St. Thomas University in Miami, Florida. This university, in collaboration with Miami-Dade College and the efforts of McGregor Smith, was pivotal in pioneering this work.

Thomas Berry's work was central to the focus of the mission of Genesis Farm. I first heard him speak in 1977 while I was still on the staff of Global Education Associates. This organization founded by Gerald and Patricia Mische was also central to the focus of Genesis Farm, grounded as it was in the unity of the planet and the imperative of moving beyond the intense nationalism and militarism of the nation state system.

Thomas Berry also emphasized the needs for human societies to recognize that while Earth is a living unity with itself, Earth is also highly differentiated in the bio-regions which have taken shape over the five billion years of the planet's existence. Because of all the complexities of its tectonic activity and its distance to Sun and Moon and other planets in the solar system, each region of Earth needs to be understood in its own evolutionary terms. Each region's landforms, waters, climates and evolving communities of life are unique and highly vulnerable to the human societies which reside there, often without this prior understanding to temper the raw force of their technologies.

From our beginnings in 1980 until now, these ideas have inspired and totally challenged our small efforts to understand and share them.

Kosmos: What do you mean by the term 'resacralizing' the land and water?

Miriam MacGillis: The great American poet, Kentucky farmer and agrarian philosopher, Wendell Berry said "There are no unsacred places; there are only sacred places and desecrated places."

The realization that the entire Earth and all its life communities are the primary revelation of the divine, is a mystery we are immersed in on these lands comprising Genesis Farm and in this bioregion. From this perspective, every place is fundamentally, inherently sacred. It is a fragment of the most sacred text out of which the divine or the Great Mystery can be encountered. To desecrate it is not only sacrilegious but is also blasphemous. Western cultures especially have not been able to understand that our abstract understandings of the divine need to be corrected to include what Thomas Berry would describe as 'the primary revelation, the primary sacred text', from which our different cultural texts were derived in the first place. Thus he challenged all the worlds' religions to go back to their "origin stories" and without losing any of the wisdom they might contain, adjust them to the cosmological deficiencies they are now able to correct.

In the more recent years of growing ecological awareness, geologists, hydrologists, ecologists and others have been suggesting that the actual scale of a watershed is an appropriate scale to begin the restorative work necessary to correct the massive destruction, poisoning and habitat extinction that has accompanied the last century of industrialization.

For the last several years, through a very slow process of awareness and many, many conversations with people along the Musconetcong River Valley and watershed, we have been giving rise to the belief that at this scale we can contribute to the restoration and healing of our watershed both spiritually and physically. It will take mutually supporting collaboration to rid it of poisons related to its history in industrial chemical agriculture and manufacturing and weapons development.

Equally important, we sense it is absolutely essential that we acknowledge the violence done to the Lenape people who were the first peoples of this bioregion and watershed. Whatever our European ancestors and we have done here we have done on stolen lands. It is critical that this is acknowledged and that restitution be given in whatever ways are possible.

So too, the river and lands are violated. We create rituals of atonement to acknowledge this reality and to ask the spirits of the Lenape as well as the rivers and soils for guidance to address the alienation in our own minds and hearts. Hoping to join with multiple efforts of many groups and organizations involved in conservation and preservation work, we are planning to map a contemporary “way of pilgrimage”. A pilgrimage route through this water basin will provide an ancient experience of the archetypal journey into self-discovery and discovery of the sacredness of place. It will also open its vast geological story and its sacred legacy of life, abundance and beauty to be preserved at all cost.

Our attempt to restore the lands is through grass-roots organizing encouraging farmers and land owners to stop the flow of agricultural poisons and genetically-engineered crops from the soils of this river valley and to transition their farms into sources of affordable, healthy foods for all the people and animals of the watershed. One of our first projects is helping transition some farms into growing vital, chemical-free grains, restoring local mills, and encouraging bakers to provide bread from locally grown, safe and nutritious flours.

We believe the scale of most watersheds provides an attainable vision for resacralizing the desecrated places almost anywhere on this continent. We also believe it is essential that we heal the alienation from the natural world in our own hearts and minds and work to recover from our own addictions to consumerism. The mantra Genesis Farm holds in its present form of mission is: *“Restoring Paradise: one watershed at a time.”*

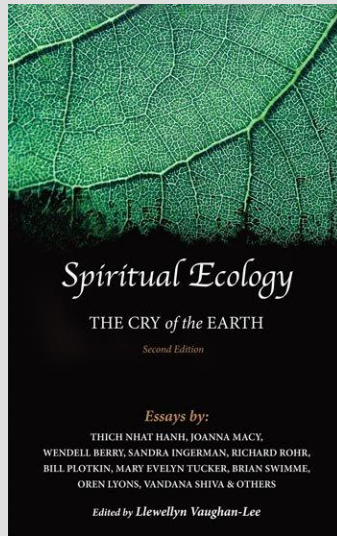
Economic growth, progress, development, fossil fuel energy, massive corporatization and war making have become relentless and ferocious physical forces. These forces have become institutionalized and increasingly centralized. It is possible in this dire hour of destruction to correct the cosmological course of this alienation and to recover our fundamental embeddedness and dependency on the entire Earth as a single sacred community.

All photos / Rhonda Fabian

More About the Work at Genesis Farm

The new expanded edition of Spiritual Ecology: The Cry of the Earth

The first edition of this book (published in 2013) fostered the emergence of the “Spiritual Ecology Movement,” which recognizes the need for a spiritual response to our present ecological crisis. It drew an overwhelmingly positive response from readers, many of whom are asking the simple question, “What can I do?”



This second expanded edition offers new chapters, including two from younger authors who are putting the principles of spiritual ecology into action, working with their hands as well as their hearts. It also includes a new preface and revised chapter by Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, that reference two major recent events: the publication of Pope Francis’s encyclical, “On Care for Our Common Home,” which brought into the mainstream the idea that “the ecological crisis is essentially a spiritual problem”; and the 2015 Paris Climate Change Conference, which saw representatives from nearly 200 countries come together to address global warming, including faith leaders from many traditions.

Bringing together voices from Buddhism, Sufism, Christianity, and Native American traditions, as well as from physics, deep psychology, and other environmental disciplines, this book calls on us to reassess our underlying attitudes and beliefs about the Earth and wake up to our spiritual as well as physical responsibilities toward the planet.

Contributors include: Chief Oren Lyons, Thich Nhat Hanh, Sandra Ingerman, Joanna Macy, Sister Miriam MacGillis, Satish Kumar, Vandana Shiva, Fr. Richard Rohr, Bill Plotkin, Jules Cashford, Wendell Berry, Winona LaDuke, Mary Evelyn Tucker, Brian Swimme, and others.

An Excerpt from an interview with Sister Miriam MacGillis reprinted from the new expanded edition of *Spiritual Ecology: The Cry of the Earth* with permission from *The Golden Sufi Center* (2016). www.spiritualecology.org

This land we inhabit was given as a gift to my Congregation of Dominican Sisters. One of the first things we did was to put it into preservation so that it would be safe from development. So

even if the Dominican Sisters were to lose this land, it's deed-restricted and the state holds that conservation easement, that covenant. It can't become a mall or a condo; it has to remain in farming and open space. If somebody gave you sacred texts to hold in your library, you would make sure they weren't subject to being violated—so that's an analogy.

Some twenty-plus years ago, we also dedicated a section of the land here to the *wild*, saying, "Humans are not permitted here." It's a sanctuary. It's going to be left alone—we are not mature enough to go there. Let it be what it wants to be and it will reveal itself. And a hundred, two hundred years from now, who knows what will be there? The idea was to constrain our inquisitiveness and our need to control it, or even to know it.

And so these things seem simple. We've also marked the equinoxes and solstices for thirty years here. As humans who are part of this land, we honor our unity with all the community of life as we circle the Sun at a particular moment in time. Whether we are entering into the phase of springtime renewal or summer ripeness, autumn inwardness or winter pregnancy, we just keep doing it.

Because that is the true endowment we carry in the collective consciousness of our human species, and it's written into the DNA of our bodies, even though we're not usually aware of that. But it's written into the DNA and memory of every single creature on this land. We carry that memory. We try to recover the memory of the whole inside ourselves—reconnect with that phenomenon. And it's sacred in its nature. Totally, totally sacred.

And then we have a little garden where we plant old varieties of seeds that have never been hybridized. The planet's seeds are in terrible danger, and we're just a very, very small part of a global movement in great alarm over what is happening to seeds. Not only through hybridization—which has accelerated because all the tiny local seed companies have been bought by huge corporations—but far more alarming because more and more companies like Monsanto are buying up the seed stock of the planet and then manipulating them and patenting them and claiming ownership of them.

The engineering of seeds and animals and all of life is a basic violation of the DNA memory. It's very real—it's happening. Monsanto has patents on all kinds of seeds and has manipulated government and government policies to give them the right to plant these seeds everywhere. Their pollen then moves out into the commons: the air, the water, the soil. The birds pick it up. The bees pick it up and transfer it unknowingly to the rest of the plants.

Our work is to help people understand the sacramental aspect of seeds, this primary revelation of the sacred in seeds. When you think of how many generations of plants have adapted to a place as members of an ecosystem over eons of time—before humans—and have creatively worked their way into that community of all beings and have both given themselves to it and been nourished by it—this is a primary sacred community. It's the primary source of a region's health, its sustainability, its ability to regenerate.

<http://www.kosmosjournal.org/news/genesis-farm-restoring-paradise-one-watershed-at-a-time/>

September 20, 2016

Online courses awaken beginners to unfolding universe story

By Sharon Abercrombie
National Catholic Reporter

A set of online courses set to debut this week will offer students an introductory dive into cosmological thought and the epic story of the unfolding of the universe and life itself.

“Journey of the Universe: A Story for Our Times” is a course series created by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, both research scholars in Yale University’s School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and co-founders of its Forum on Religion and Ecology.

The [three-class program](#) explores the universe’s formation through a multidisciplinary lens, along with the evolutionary implications for humans and their ecological future. It builds off the worldview of Passionist Fr. Thomas Berry, with one of the classes dedicated to his life and insights.

Tucker and Grim, who will teach the courses, are both students of Berry. In Tucker's words, she and Grim, her husband, have “lived and breathed” elements of the “Journey” work for more than 30 years since they studied with Berry in graduate school.

In 1992 Berry co-authored *The Universe Story* with cosmologist Brian Swimme, but it’s a book Swimme wrote with Tucker a decade later, *Journey of the Universe*, that forms the backbone of the academic program bearing the same name. Along with the book, the classes draw on a 2011 film, also titled *Journey of the Universe*, and an educational DVD series, “Journey Conversations,” where Tucker interviews scientists, historians, environmentalists and artists.

The trio of courses, along with a capstone, are a type of MOOC (Massive Open Online Course). They are offered through Coursera.org, which partners with universities worldwide in an effort to make education more accessible. The courses, which are open to anyone, start Wednesday and run through November; the six-week capstone project begins Nov. 2. Students can opt to enroll in any one of the courses on its own (at \$79 per course) or enroll in the full program (\$284). Portions of each course are also available to audit for free. The courses, however, do not earn university credit.

Two of the classes focus on the “Journey of the Universe,” with the first looking at the unfolding of life, and the second envisioning what our evolutionary journey could be today by weaving knowledge with activism. The third course examines Berry’s vision of the Earth community functioning as a living cosmology.

The “Journey” program, which is geared toward novices to cosmology, ties together recent scientific and evolutionary discoveries with history, philosophy, art and religion. The courses examines cosmic evolution as a creative process from the very beginnings of our universe 14

billion years ago. It envisions what role compassionate human beings, awakened to their integral role in the universe narrative, might hold “at this critical juncture in our planetary history.”

The Yale program dovetails with the [ongoing Christian celebration of the Season of Creation](#), which began Sept. 1 with the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and concludes on Oct. 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. That the season and the course intersect “is a marvelous synchronicity,” Tucker told *NCR* in an email.

“The Season of Creation is a further invitation to participate in the call of the papal encyclical toward an ecological conversion,” she said, responding from Germany where she was speaking at a Potsdam Institute conference looking at *Laudato Si’* as a catalyst for social change.

The Yale program adds an expanded dimension to the Season of Creation by celebrating the wonder of who humans are -- direct descendants of the stars. As Swimme and Tucker wrote in their book, “The essence of the Universe story is this: The stars are our ancestors.”

Berry, a historian of world religions who recognized the environmental crisis early on, insisted that celebrating this “star truth” will save the world from environmental devastation. It is ultimately wonder and delight that will guide us, he reiterated many times throughout his life. In *The Universe Story* Berry and his student Swimme tell how a solitary molten spark, unleashed by a creative force 14 billion years ago, has unfolded over time from stars into butterflies, giraffes, roses, oceans, mountains and humans.

Understanding the lineage of a continuous cosmic history can have dramatic real-life impacts, as evidenced through several of the interviews Tucker conducted in “Journey Conversations” that are part of the online course.

Belvie Rooks, for example, is an educator who helped a group of disgruntled African American kids living in South Central Los Angeles place themselves in the context of star people. Caught up in the violence of neighborhood turf wars, they lacked an expanded sense of who they were, Rooks told Tucker.

To move them out of their hopelessness, Rooks created an interactive computer program where the youths could tell their own stories -- those of their immediate families and as far back as they could, including the history of slavery -- and then view their own histories against a timeframe of 14 billion years. They looked at images of the universe from the Hubble Telescope and the famous NASA “Blue Marble” photo of Earth, as well as pictures of mountains and oceans and forests throughout the world, moving them beyond the pollution and ugliness in their own neighborhoods.

The project inspired them to “re-invent” their surroundings by joining a community program sponsored by a local congresswoman to help restore a trash-strewn empty lot into a green space.

Franciscan Sr. Marya Grathwohl, director of Earth Hope in Dayton, Wyo., has taught *The Universe Story* to prison inmates for a number of years. In her interview with Tucker, Grathwohl relates the story of an extremely unrepentant burglar. Once he participated in the three-week

program in which the class made their own art -- "Beauty creates relationships," she noted -- the man decided there might be a way to escape from his destructive lifestyle.

"It doesn't feel right to break into people's houses and steal their stuff when I'm so connected to everything and everybody," he told Grathwohl.

As Bay Area hip-hop artist/environmental activist Drew Dellinger summed up in his interview with Tucker, immersing oneself in the universe story "brings us face to face with a sacred revelation not based on dogma. We awaken to the mystery of creativity. We realize that there is no such thing as a thing, and that everything has a 'within.'"

<https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/eco-catholic/online-courses-awaken-beginners-unfolding-universe-story>

September 22, 2016

Tribes Across North America Unite in 'Wall of Opposition' to Alberta Tar Sands

More than 50 tribes signed on to the historic treaty alliance, banding together for the sake of their health and planet

By Lauren McCauley, staff writer
Common Dreams

In a historic show of unity, more than 50 First Nations across North America on Thursday signed a new [treaty alliance](#) against the expansion of [tar sands](#) mining and infrastructure in their territory.

Citing the threats to water and land through a spill or pipeline leak, as well the industry's undeniable impact on "catastrophic climate change," the [treaty](#) (pdf) states, "Tar Sands expansion is a collective threat to our Nations. It requires a collective response."

"Therefore," it continues, "our Nations hereby join together under the present treaty to officially prohibit and to agree to collectively challenge and resist the use of our respective territories and coasts in connection with the expansion of the production of the Alberta Tar Sands, including for the transport of such expanded production, whether by pipeline, rail or tanker."

Leaders gathered in Vancouver, which sits on Musqueam Territory, as well as on Mohawk Territory in Montreal for simultaneous ceremonies to cement the continent-wide agreement, which specifically unites the tribes in opposition to all five current tar sands pipeline and tanker project proposals—[Kinder Morgan](#), [Energy East](#), [Line 3](#), [Northern Gateway](#), and [Keystone XL](#)—as well as tar sands rail projects.

Canada's *National Observer* [reported](#), "At the signing on Musqueam land in Vancouver, the lineup of chiefs waiting to put their names down filled up an entire room. It was a powerful

ceremony, and participants clad in the regalia of their nations traveled from across [British Columbia] and northern Washington to be part of the growing movement."

"What this Treaty means is that from Quebec, we will work with our First Nation allies in B.C. to make sure that the Kinder Morgan pipeline does not pass and we will also work with our Tribal allies in Minnesota as they take on Enbridge's Line 3 expansion, and we know they'll help us do the same against Energy East," [said](#) Kanesatake Grand Chief Serge Simon.

As Carrier Sekani Tribal Chief Terry Teegee observed, "a pipeline cannot hope to pass through a unified wall of Indigenous opposition," nor can it find an alternate route around it.

"We are in a time of unprecedented unity amongst Indigenous people working together for a better future for everyone," added Rueben George of the Tsleil-Waututh Sacred Trust Initiative.

Indeed, the signing comes amid a [historic display](#) of strength and solidarity against the [Dakota Access Pipeline](#), with thousands of representatives from more than 185 tribes across Canada and the U.S. joining the Standing Rock Sioux encampment in North Dakota.

The Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion also comes the same day that a landmark report [confirmed](#) that tar sands mining in Alberta has poisoned the air and sickened local First Nations communities in that region.

"In this time of great challenge we know that other First Nations will sign on," [said](#) Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, who signed the document, referring to the threat of climate change.

"Indigenous people have been standing up together everywhere in the face of new destructive fossil fuel projects, with no better example than at Standing Rock in North Dakota," he continued.

As the treaty itself states, the tradition of reaching across tribal borders follows generations of similar agreements.

"We have inhabited, protected, and governed our territories according to our respective laws and traditions since time immemorial," it reads. "Many such treaties between Indigenous Nations concern peace and friendship and the protection of Mother Earth. The expansion of the Alberta Tar Sands, a truly massive threat bearing down on all of the Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island and beyond, calls now for such a treaty."

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2016/09/22/tribes-across-north-america-unite-wall-opposition-alberta-tar-sands>

September 22, 2016

Archeologists denounce Dakota Access pipeline for destroying artifacts

Coalition of 1,200 archeologists, museum directors and historians say \$3.8bn Dakota Access pipeline disturbs Native American artifacts in North Dakota

By Oliver Milman
The Guardian

Archeologists and museum directors have denounced the “destruction” of Native American artifacts during the construction of a contentious oil pipeline in North Dakota, as the affected tribe condemned the project in an address to the [United Nations](#).

The \$3.8bn Dakota Access pipeline, which will funnel oil from the Bakken oil fields in the Great Plains to Illinois, will run next to the Standing Rock Sioux reservation. The tribe has mounted a legal challenge to stop the project and claimed that several sacred sites were bulldozed by [Energy Transfer](#), the company behind the pipeline, on 3 September.

A coalition of more than 1,200 archeologists, museum directors and historians from institutions including the Smithsonian and the Association of Academic Museums and Galleries [has written to the Obama administration](#) to criticize the bulldozing, which Energy Transfer claims did not disturb any artifacts.

The letter states that the construction work destroyed “ancient burial sites, places of prayer and other significant cultural artifacts sacred to the Lakota and Dakota people”.

It adds: “The destruction of these sacred sites adds yet another injury to the Lakota, Dakota and other Indigenous Peoples who bear the impacts of fossil fuel extraction and transportation. If constructed, this pipeline will continue to encourage oil consumption that causes climate change, all the while harming those populations who contributed little to this crisis.”

The Obama administration has halted construction of the 1,170-mile pipeline that occurs on federal land while it reassesses the initial decision by the Army Corps of Engineers to allow the project to proceed. The approval sparked furious protests at a camp near the North Dakota construction site but Energy Transfer has [vowed to push ahead after a federal judge sided with the company](#).

“What the Standing Rock Sioux are going through is just one example of a systemic and historical truth around how extractive and polluting infrastructure is forced upon Native communities,” said James Powell, former president and director of the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum.

“It is long past time for us to abandon fossil fuel projects that harm native communities and threaten the future of our planet.”

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe has taken its case to the UN, addressing the human rights commission in Geneva on Tuesday. Dave Archambault II, chairman of the tribe, said that Energy Transfer has shown “total disregard for our rights and our sacred sites”.

“Thousands have gathered peacefully in Standing Rock in solidarity against the pipeline,” Archambault told commission members. “And yet many water protectors have been threatened and even injured by the pipeline’s security officers. One child was bitten and injured by a guard dog. We stand in peace but have been met with violence.”

Archambault said the pipeline violates the UN’s declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and called on the UN to use its “influence and international platform” to help the tribe.

Energy Transfer did not respond to a request for comment. The company has previously denounced “threats and attacks” perpetrated upon its employees.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/sep/22/archeologists-denounce-dakota-access-pipeline-artifacts>

September 25, 2016

UN Experts to United States: Stop DAPL Now

"The tribe was denied access to information and excluded from consultations," says UN special rapporteur

By Andrea Germanos, staff writer
Common Dreams

Backing up the Standing Rock Sioux and its [allies](#), a United Nations expert has called on the United States to stop the [Dakota Access Pipeline](#).

Echoing pipeline opponents' [concerns](#), the statement from the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, cited the pipeline's threats to drinking water and sacred sites. She also admonished the U.S. for failing to protect protesters' rights and failing to properly consult with communities affected by the fossil fuel infrastructure.

"The tribe was denied access to information and excluded from consultations at the planning stage of the project, and environmental assessments failed to disclose the presence and proximity of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation," Tauli-Corpuz [stated](#) Thursday—just two days after Standing Rock Chairman Dave Archambault II [urged](#) the UN Human Rights Council to help the tribe stop the pipeline.

Informed consent from those affected—and abiding by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples—is essential, she said, "particularly in connection with extractive resource industries."

Responding to the [crackdown](#) on pipeline protesters, she said, "The U.S. authorities should fully protect and facilitate the right to freedom of peaceful assembly of indigenous peoples, which plays a key role in empowering their ability to claim other rights."

According to Tom Goldtooth, the director of the [Indigenous Environmental Network](#), "The UN Expert got it right."

"What the U.S. calls consultation is not consultation but a statement telling people what they're doing after millions of dollars have been invested, painting Indigenous Peoples as spoilers. The right of free, prior, and informed consent begins prior to the planning process, not when their bulldozers are at your doorstep."

Tauli-Corpuz's statement was endorsed by seven other UN experts, including Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Léo Heller; Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, John H. Knox; and Special Rapporteur on cultural rights, Karima Bennoune.

The pipeline, slated to snake a 1,172-mile path across four states from the Bakken fields of North Dakota to a hub in Illinois, has faced months of building resistance.

Given the continued protests—and legal hurdles—"the way forward won't be simple" for the pipeline company, the *Bismark Tribune* [reports](#) this weekend.

And if it is ultimately halted, that'd be good news for pipeline opponents and proponents alike, [according to](#) Jacob Johns, a Spokane, Wash. resident and member of the An akimel O'Othm (Gile River Pima) and Hopi tribes.

"We're out there protesting on behalf of the people who were for the pipeline," he said to *KXLY*. "They don't realize we're out there fighting for each other, we are humanity trying to heal itself and save itself."

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2016/09/25/un-experts-united-states-stop-dapl-now>

September 27, 2016

President Obama should listen to the indigenous people fighting the Dakota Access Pipeline

By Celeste Goox yadí Worl
Grist

Something historic is happening right now in North Dakota. At the [camp](#) in Standing Rock, more than 4,000 indigenous people from 280 tribes have come together, bringing totem poles, handmade canoes, and other sacred objects to commemorate the occasion.

The last time this many tribes gathered to protect their homeland and sacred sites was 140 years ago — in 1876 at the Battle of Little Bighorn, or Custer's Last Stand, an armed conflict against colonialism.

Now, tribes are uniting in a peaceful, nonviolent collective prayer camp, making pilgrimage to support one of the most important causes of our time: fighting the Dakota Access Pipeline. That includes my own tribe, the Tlingit of Southeastern Alaska, who brought our war canoe. We are standing for our right to water, to keep fossil fuels in the ground, and — importantly — for the value of indigenous lives.

All of us have read in our history books about injustices against the Native American people. Genocide, broken treaties, stolen children sent to far-away boarding schools where they are abused if they speak their native tongue. The list is never-ending. And, as evidenced by violence against Native Americans trying to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline, still happening to this day. On Sept. 13, the government began [mass arrests](#) of indigenous people at the prayer camps, just days after oil-company security guards [unleashed attack dogs](#) on us.

When you grow up as an indigenous person, this history is intimately personal. And so it should be no surprise that we have a breaking point.

When the Standing Rock Sioux Nation first rose up against the Dakota Access Pipeline — a pipeline that not only threatens their water but our Earth itself — they struck a chord within all of us. In their prayer, in their protest, they moved indigenous people across the country to stand up.

Enough is enough. It is time to draw a line in the sand.

In 2014, President Obama visited the Standing Rock Sioux Nation Reservation. During his visit, he said, "I know that throughout history, the United States often didn't give the nation-to-nation relationship the respect that it deserved. So I promised when I ran, to be a president who'd change that — a president who honors our sacred trust, and who respects your sovereignty."

Now, more than ever, we need him to fulfill this vow.

We won a small victory earlier this month, when the Obama administration requested that the company building the pipeline voluntarily pause all construction activity within 20 miles of Lake Oahe, near the Standing Rock reservation, and then a federal court officially ordered a halt to construction in the area. But this action is only temporary. The company might yet be allowed to proceed as planned, or it might build this section of the pipeline at another spot down the Missouri River, which would still put our water at risk. And building the pipeline anywhere puts our climate at risk.

President Obama, we urge you to forge a new path and leave behind the one walked by so many presidents before you — presidents who have broken treaties and discarded our families and our culture without a second thought. President Obama, don't break your promise to us now.

Draw the line. This is bigger than one pipeline. This is about ongoing injustices Native Americans face across the country. This is about keeping fossil fuels in the ground and taking a stand on climate change.

We are in the midst of one of the most historically important indigenous unity events in history. For too long, many Americans have watched the ongoing injustices against Native Americans as if they are happening in a history book. But we are here, we are unified — and we are calling on you to join us.

Celeste Goox yadí Worl is a member of the Women Donors Network. Born in Southeast Alaska, she is Alaska Native, Tlingit from the Thunderbird House. She lives and works in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

<http://grist.org/justice/president-obama-should-listen-to-the-indigenous-people-fighting-the-dakota-access-pipeline/>

September 27, 2016

From prairie to the White House: Inside a Tribe's quest to stop a pipeline

By Ernest Scheyder and Valerie Volcovici
Reuters

Three days after guard dogs attacked Native Americans protesting an oil pipeline project in North Dakota in early September, an unprecedented event took place at the White House.

Brian Cladoosby, president of the National Congress of American Indians, which represents more than 500 tribes, spoke to nearly a dozen of President Barack Obama's Cabinet-level advisers at a September 6 meeting of the White House's three-year-old Native American Affairs Council.

It was the first time a tribal leader addressed a session of the council, and Cladoosby was invited in his role as the Indian Congress' leader.

Cladoosby, a Swinomish Indian from Washington state, spoke twice at the one-hour roundtable. He told Reuters he praised the Obama administration in his opening statement for its track record on Native American issues such as pushing to reform the Indian Health Service.

But when Cladoosby gave his closing speech, he delivered an impassioned request to his audience: stand with Native Americans who have united with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and block construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, a 1,100 mile conduit to get oil from North Dakota to Illinois.

That plea marked one of the previously unreported turning points in a drama that played out since February and culminated September 9 with an about face by the U.S. government, from giving the pipeline a green light to backing a request from North Dakota's Standing Rock Sioux to halt construction of the pipeline.

The tribe fears sacred sites could be destroyed during the line's construction and that a future oil spill would pollute its drinking water.

This month's win for the tribe, which could be reversed by regulators, is a rare instance of protests resulting in quick federal action and the triumph of an unusual alliance between environmentalists and Native Americans, who both say they were emboldened by the defeat of the Keystone XL pipeline last fall.

It also was the most galvanizing movement in Native American politics in decades, some tribal leaders said, as Crow, Navajo, Sioux and other traditional rivals united to fight what they considered an assault on their way of life.

Cladoosby did not play a high-profile role in the early days of the pipeline controversy. But that day he spoke to a high echelon of power, including Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, White House Domestic Policy Council director Cecilia Munoz, and the heads of the Departments of Energy; Agriculture; Education; Health and Human Services; and the Environmental Protection Agency, according to a senior administration official who asked not to be named and to a photo of attendees seen by Reuters.

"The world is watching," he said in prepared remarks shared with Reuters.

A few days earlier, video of pipeline security personnel in North Dakota armed with guard dogs and mace trying to disperse protesters went viral on social media.

One of the first videos was taken and posted on Facebook by Lonnie Favel, a member of Utah's Ute tribe who traveled to North Dakota to support the protests.

"I was getting messages of support from New Zealand, from Europe, from all over the world," Favel said.

Until then, Obama had not weighed in on the Dakota dispute even though he personally had visited the Standing Rock in June 2014.

Just a day after Cladoosby issued his plea to administration officials, Obama attended a young leaders conference in Laos where a Malaysian woman asked him about the Dakota Access pipeline and how he could ensure a clean water supply and protect ancestral land.

Obama said he needed to ask his staff for more information, but touted his track record protecting Native Americans' "ancestral lands, sacred sites, waters and hunting grounds," adding, "this is something that I hope will continue as we go forward."

A FATEFUL DECISION

In late 2014, pipeline operator Energy Transfer Partners made a fateful decision.

Dallas-based ETP chose to route its proposed Dakota Access pipeline away from North Dakota's capital, Bismarck, and southward within half a mile of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's reservation.

Part of its rationale, laid out in a report for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which regulates infrastructure projects that traverse certain inland waterways, was that the route would avoid Bismarck and thus pose no threat to the city's water supply. The Bismarck route also is more populated and thus would require more easements from multiple landowners. Ironically, that 139-page report concluded the Standing Rock route would raise "no environmental justice issues" because the pipeline would not cross tribal lands.

The Army Corps' decision angered environmental activists and unwittingly introduced a powerful new element into the environmental movement: Indian rights groups, who quickly tapped into an extensive network of green activists forged during five long years of protests against TransCanada's Keystone XL pipeline, which Obama formally nixed last November.

CAMPAIGN GAINS STEAM

The protest gained steam in February when Standing Rock Sioux leaders asked for legal help from Earthjustice, an environmental law group that had previously helped U.S. tribes and Canadian First Nations fight Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline, according to Jan Hasselman, an attorney from Earthjustice working on the North Dakota case, and tribal leaders.

Two months later, about 18 tribe members started praying daily near the pipeline's planned route in North Dakota. The participants would grow in size, creating a group called the Sacred Stone Camp.

The international environmental movement soon took notice, including, 350.org, an environmentalist group that helped defeat the Keystone XL pipeline. In July, the group sent a delegation to the Sacred Stone Camp to see how they could help.

In many ways, the Dakota Access pipeline drew its inspiration from the fight to stop the Keystone XL pipeline, according to organizers from 350 and other environmental groups.

"We didn't have to totally reinvent the wheel," said Josh Nelson of Credo, a progressive advocacy group.

By then the Sacred Stone Camp, located alongside the confluence of the Cannon Ball and Missouri rivers about an hour south of Bismarck, had swollen in size to thousands, forming a de facto town of tents, teepees and trailers, a school, medic, communal kitchen, horse corrals and a legal clinic.

The tribal members and environmentalists agreed to seize on the U.S. Army Corps' "fast-tracking" of permits for the pipeline in late July, which they argued was illegal and a violation of tribal rights, 350.org told Reuters. In this case, the Corps had the right to approve pipelines in

general and consider specific local concerns, such as Native issues, if appropriate. The Corps said it effectively considered its due diligence requirement met when it green lit the line in July.

Later that same month, the tribe filed suit against the Army Corps in federal court.

INTERNAL RIFT

While the government's reversal in September caught most by surprise, a March 29 letter from the Department of the Interior to the Army Corps reviewed by Reuters shows that disagreements within the administration had been percolating for months.

The Interior department, which is responsible for protecting Native Americans' welfare, said the Army Corps "did not adequately justify or otherwise support its conclusion that there would be no significant impacts upon the surrounding environment and community" from the pipeline.

Energy Transfer, the Department of Justice, the Army Corps and the Department of the Interior did not respond to requests for comment.

The letter presaged the intra-government fighting ahead of the White House's decision to temporarily block the line.

The federal delay of the pipeline "isn't something that just fell out of the sky," Archambault, the tribe's chairman, said in an interview. "We feed (federal regulators) information all the time on everything that's illegal here."

Archambault declined to discuss responses from federal regulators he received.

On September 9, just three days after Cladoosby made his plea at the White House, U.S. District Judge James Boasberg rejected a request from the tribe to block the \$3.7 billion project.

Minutes after that ruling, the Interior and Justice Departments, along with the Army Corps, suspended construction on a two-mile stretch of federal land below the Missouri River.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest said federal regulators, who could still ultimately approve the project, called the pause to make sure the concerns of all parties were taken into account. James Gette, a senior official in the environment and natural resources division of the DOJ, noted in a September 16 hearing that construction was halted mainly because the Dakota Access pipeline didn't have an easement for the area where the tribe gets its drinking water.

Protesters have vowed not to leave their camp until the pipeline is scrapped or moved far away from their reservation. Their concerns about potential spills, it turns out, have precedent.

An analysis of government data by Reuters shows that Sunoco Logistics, the future operator of the pipeline and a unit of ETP, has had the highest rate of spills since 2010 than any of its competitors. Sunoco told Reuters it has taken measures to reduce its spill rate.

Cladoosby admits he "was really surprised" by the fast moving events after his strategically-timed entreaty.

He will be back at the White House on Monday and Tuesday. Leaders of 567 native American tribes will meet with Obama in Washington to tackle a range of issues facing Native Americans from economic development to environmental protection - including the Dakota Access pipeline.

(Additional reporting by Mica Rosenberg, Ruthy Munoz, Julia Harte and Timothy Gardner; Writing By Terry Wade and Ernest Scheyder; editing by Eric Effron and Edward Tobin)

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/usa-pipeline-nativeamericans-interventio-idUKL2N1C202P>

September 29, 2016

N.D. militarized police push back Water Protectors with armored vehicles, tear gas and rifles

By Navajo
Daily Kos

Regardless of where our Water Protectors travel in North Dakota to conduct a peaceful prayer event against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline that threatens the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's drinking water, you would think that they wouldn't be met with armored vehicles and assault rifles. But they were.

Ever since [North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple declared a state of emergency and activated the National Guard to protect the pipeline](#), our Water Protectors don't know what they'll face. They have been pushed back by [private security guards armed with attack dogs and pepper spray](#). Some were bitten and sprayed as a newly reported ancestral burial site was deliberately bulldozed to destroy evidence.

Wednesday, September 28, the [Water Protectors' caravan was met with armored vehicles, helicopters dropping tear gas and police armed with military-style rifles](#).

Video shows that as the resisters are confronted, the militarized force starts locking and loading their weapons. Our people immediately raise their hands in unison and yell that they are not armed, that they are praying! The arrests begin, tear gas goes off and one videographer flees to get his footage out. Twenty-one are arrested.

[Thomas H. Joseph II's video account](#) is below the fold.

Alternative media outlet [Unicorn Riot also has footage](#) of the menacing confrontation.

BOHICA has more discussion here: [9/28/16 Standing Rock - Riot Gear, Tear Gas, MRAP](#) about how our government gives law enforcement surplus military vehicles.

BACKGROUND

April 2016:

Tribal members began protesting the 1,172-mile, four-state, [Dakota Access Pipeline](#) construction by setting up camp along the banks of Lake Oahe in North Dakota.

August 2016:

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed suit in federal district court in Washington, D.C., against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which is the primary federal agency that granted permits needed for construction of the pipeline. Background here—[Sacred tribal sites still in danger from DAPL](#) by *Earthquake Weather*

September 2016:

The small Sacred Stone Camp grows supporters there by the thousands with 280 tribes represented.

National attention grows from the next two events.

—[The Dakota Access Pipeline guards unleash attack dogs on our American Indian water protectors](#) by *navajo* (23,515 Facebook shares)

—[North Dakota activates National Guard to protect the pipeline instead of our tribes](#) by *navajo* (40,061 Facebook shares)

—[The Vicious Dogs of Manifest Destiny Resurface in North Dakota](#) by *Jacqueline Keeler*

—[North Dakota v. Amy Goodman: Arrest Warrant Issued After Pipeline Coverage](#)

Federal court denies the Standing Rock Tribe's request for injunction. However, a joint statement from the Department of Justice, the Department of the Army, and the Department of the Interior asked for construction to voluntarily be ceased on federally controlled lands.

—[Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request to stop Dakota Access Pipeline denied, Dept. of Justice steps in](#) by *navajo*

—[Partial Victory for Standing Rock Sioux](#) by *EarthquakeWeather*

Sacred Stone Camp is feeling this: [Erased By False Victory: Obama Hasn't Stopped DAPL](#)

A detailed analysis provided by attorney Robin Martinez—who is coordinating legal advice and representation for protesters at the North Dakota camps: [What You May Not Know About the Dakota Access Pipeline](#)

Sept. 13 — 22 Water Protectors are arrested and jailed without bond after locking themselves to construction machinery.

—[North Dakota's Governor Declared a State of Emergency to Deal With Peaceful Oil Pipeline Protesters. We Call It a State of Emergency for Civil Rights](#) by Jennifer Cook, Policy Director, ACLU of North Dakota

Sept. 14 — Morton County Sheriff [pursues felony charges](#) on those arrested. Twenty-three [people and their charges are named](#). As of 9/14 a total of 69 individuals have been arrested for illegal protest activities.

—[Judge drops injunction against tribal leaders](#) allowing them to protest lawfully

—[Cherokee give \\$50,000 to oppose North Dakota pipeline](#)

Sept. 16 — [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers grants Special Use Permit to Standing Rock Sioux Tribe](#) to use Federal lands managed by the Corps near Lake Oahe for gathering to engage in a lawful free speech demonstration.

—[Appeals court halts Dakota Access Pipeline work pending hearing](#) that will give the court more time to consider the tribes' request for an injunction.

Sept. 20 — [Standing Rock Sioux Chairman asks the United Nations for protection of the tribe's sovereign rights](#) by navajo

Sept. 23 — [1,200 archeologists denounce desecration of Standing Rock burial grounds by DAPL, UN agrees](#) by navajo

Sept. 26 — [N.D. pipeline activism sparks White House to plan consultations with Native tribes on infrastructure](#) by Meteor Blades

—[Earthjustice's FAQ on Standing Rock Litigation on the Dakota Access Pipeline and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's lawsuit.](#)

YOU can help:

—[OFFICIAL SUPPORT FOR STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE AGAINST DAPL](#) Organized by: Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2016/9/29/1575932/-N-D-militarized-police-force-back-Water-Protectors-with-armored-vehicles-tear-gas-and-rifles>

September 29, 2016

Standing Firm at Standing Rock: Why the Struggle is Bigger Than One Pipeline

By Sarah Anderson
Nation of Change

The first sign that not everything is normal as you drive down Highway 1806 toward the Standing Rock reservation in North Dakota is a checkpoint manned by camouflage-clad National Guard troops. The inspection on Sept. 13 was perfunctory; they simply asked if we knew “what was going on down the road” and then waved us through, even though the car we rode in had “#NoDAPL” chalked on its rear windshield.

“What is going on down the road” is a massive camp-in led by the Standing Rock nation, aimed at blocking the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (the DAPL in question), which would carry oil from the Bakken shale in North Dakota across several states and under the Missouri River. What began with a small beachhead last April on the banks of the Cannonball River on land belonging to LaDonna Brave Bull Allard has expanded to both banks of the river and up the road, to multiple camps that have housed as many as 7,000 people from all over the world. Because of them, first the [Obama administration and then a federal court](#) stepped in to temporarily halt construction of the pipeline near the campsite. Still, the people of Standing Rock and their thousands of supporters aren’t declaring victory and folding their tents just yet.

The legal struggles for a permanent shutdown of the pipeline construction continue: the people of Standing Rock have filed a lawsuit to halt construction, as has one of the South Dakota Native American nations and landowners in Iowa as well. As the lawsuits proceed, other members of the camp have been involved in nonviolent direct actions, locking their arms around construction machinery to prevent digging. Dozens have been arrested as part of those actions, including 22 people on Sept. 12, the day I arrived at the camp. That was days after the Obama administration’s call for a temporary halt to construction on the pipeline, and a stark reminder that the struggle was not over.

In addition to the legal battles and the direct actions, though, the people of the Oceti Sakowin and Sacred Stone camps were preparing for another challenge: a North Dakota winter. Already at night, the temperature drops to 40 degrees Fahrenheit; deliveries of blankets and warm clothing were constant, as was the chopping of wood for fires and discussion of what kinds of structures would allow the camps to stay in place through the bitter cold months ahead.

“We’re already winterizing in all aspects of the camp, young people working with the elders to find, whether it’s longhouses, whether it’s yurts, whether it’s any kind of structures that would keep us warm for the winter,” said Lay Ha, who traveled to North Dakota from the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming in late August and became part of the camp’s youth council.

They’re staying partly out of suspicion: A temporary halt is, of course, just temporary. “As far as I can see, it’s just another way to lull us to sleep, make us go to sleep so we leave and then they’ll start again,” said Ista Hmi, an elder from Wamblee, South Dakota on the Pine Ridge Reservation and a member of the Seven Council Fires. “The Missouri [River] here, it was poisoned already from the pesticides and all that but we were still able to clean it,” he said. “But

those are just topical compared to this oil. The oil, if it gets in here, it will start destroying the ecosystem underneath; it'll be dead water.”

“We’re protecting the water, we’re not protesters,” explained Lay Ha. To him, as to many others in the camp, that the action is led by Native people, that it is built around their belief in nonviolence and in the spirit of prayer, is vital. It is, to them, much more than a protest.

Ha is Arapaho and Lakota on his father’s side and Eastern Shoshone on his mother’s; he is part of what has become the largest coming together of Native people in, many said, more than 100 years. The flags that flap overhead represent something more than a fight for clean water — they are a powerful statement of solidarity, a declaration of common interest.

The first camp you pass once through the checkpoint is a small one on the side of the road overlooking the construction site. Further along, signs, flags and banners hang from the barbed-wire fence along the road. A massive banner declares “No DAPL!” Spray-painted on a concrete barrier are the words “Children Don’t Drink Oil.” Then emerges the breathtaking sight of what is now called the Oceti Sakowin camp: Flags from well over 200 Native nations and international supporters line the driveway into the camp, flapping in the high plains wind. People ride through the camp on horseback. At the entrance, when you drive in, you are greeted by security and a man with burning sage to smudge your car. Just beyond, at the main fire, a microphone is set up for speakers and performers: When we arrived, Joan Baez sat by the fire, singing “Blowin’ in the Wind.”

Kandi Mossett of the Indigenous Environmental Network was wearing a “No Fracking” T-shirt when I met her at the media tent, doing an interview alongside a delegation from Ecuador of indigenous people who have also fought the oil companies there. She is from northwestern North Dakota, the Fort Berthold reservation, and the oil that would travel through the Dakota Access Pipeline is extracted from her community. She came to Standing Rock for the formation of the original camp, known as the Sacred Stone camp, on LaDonna Allard’s land. At first, she remembered, the camp had anywhere from five to 30 people. Then, when Energy Transfer Partners, the company behind the pipeline, put out notification that it was going to begin construction, the camp swelled to 200, then 700. It spilled over the river, into what was at first simply called the overflow camp. But as that camp grew, the campers began to feel it deserved its own name. Oceti Sakowin is the name for the Seven Council Fires, the political structure of what is known as the Great Sioux Nation. “We had for the first time in 200 years or more, the Seven Council Fires of the Great Sioux Nation coming together in one place to meet again,” Mossett said.

Faith Spotted Eagle is also part of the Seven Council Fires, from the Ihanktonwan or Yankton band. She too was there on what she remembered as a wintry, blowing day in April when the Sacred Stone camp first opened. An elder and grandmother, she had also been part of the successful fight against the Keystone XL Pipeline, and pointed out that the networks activated by that fight were coming together again in North Dakota. In 2013, she said, a dream of her grandmother sent her to look at the 1863 treaty between her people and the Pawnee. On the

150th anniversary of that treaty, Jan. 25, 2013, those nations, along with the Oglala and Ponca, signed the [International Treaty to Protect the Sacred from Tar Sands Projects](#). “In that treaty, we declared that forevermore we would be allies to stop this extractive move to destroy Mother Earth from the Boreal forest down to the Gulf,” she said. Since that time, other nations have joined, and the treaty was renewed with prayers and a donation to the Sacred Stone camp.

“A lot of those networks, it took years for them to come together. Standing Rock will do the same thing for the next one. It is a progressive healing and learning,” Spotted Eagle continued. In the unlikely alliances that came together, from the Keystone XL fight to Standing Rock, with farmers and landowners joining their actions, she noted, “That was where the power was.”

To Dave Archambault II, the tribal chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux, the struggle — and the response from indigenous people — is global. He greeted reporters Sept. 14 alongside the delegation from Ecuador. “We all have similar struggles, where this dependency this world has on fossil fuels is affecting and damaging Mother Earth,” he said. “It is the indigenous peoples who are standing up with that spirit, that awakening of that spirit and saying, ‘It is time to protect what is precious to us.’” Nina Gualinga, one of the Ecuadorian visitors, noted, “The world needs indigenous people. The statistics say that we are 4 percent of the world’s population, but we are protecting more than 80 percent of the world’s biodiversity.”

In an age where courts have deemed corporate entities “persons” with legal rights, Spotted Eagle sees a certain symmetry in the encampment’s philosophy: “The corporations have become individuals, the privatization has given them rights of individuals to just go out and wreak havoc,” she said. “Well, the river has a right and that right is being infringed upon.”

So do the people who live around it, she argues. “We are above all challenging the lack of consultation, of course, and the free prior and informed consent. Then, just our cultural freedom. We would never put a native pipeline underneath Arlington Cemetery,” Spotted Eagle added. But, she noted wryly, “It’s always a risk when you go into the courts. These courts are the courts of the conqueror.”

Winter will be hard, Spotted Eagle concedes. She said she hopes “the outside world will help” with donations. But, she added: “The ones that will stay are really going to have to bear down and address their cooperation even deeper, because if you go wandering off by yourself, you can perish, literally, up here.”

That outside support from individuals and environmental groups, she said, should respect the leadership of the Native people.” The message to the big greens is, stand by us, don’t co-opt us. And sometimes, they have to stand behind us, because 4,000, 7,000 Indians is a lot of Indians.”

Some of the campers were planning trips back and forth, while others were committed to staying. The nature of the camp has been to swell and shrink; on the weekends, Kandi Mossett said, it grows exponentially. The estimate of 7,000 at one time does not count all the people who have passed through briefly, bringing messages of solidarity from places like Charlotte, North Carolina and Flint, Michigan. “I have people calling me, emailing me every day: ‘I am going to

be able to come out in two weeks, are you still going to be there?” Mossett said. “I say, ‘Of course.’”

For those who can't make it to the camp, Mossett noted, there are other ways that supporters have [held actions](#) in solidarity with the camps. “We are targeting the [financers of this project](#): the banks,” she said.

There are [petitions](#), Facebook pages for the [Sacred Stone](#) and [Red Warrior](#) camps, and a call for Barack Obama to visit the camp. “We will welcome you, we will greet you, we will feed you, we will put up a tepee for you,” Mossett said.

The long-term strategy, she said, is similar to that of the Keystone XL project. “They told us ‘You are crazy. It is a done deal.’ They told us that about the Keystone XL and they are telling us that now about Dakota Access, that it is a done deal. We respectfully disagree.” If the permit is granted, she said, they will continue to hold the space, to risk arrest, to halt construction. “Companies and shareholders, they only have so much patience and they are losing money,” she noted. “That is the bottom line: money. The more we can delay them, the more we can stall them, the more we know we are winning.”

The sentiments of Mossett and Spotted Eagle underscore what is perhaps most significant about the camps along the Cannonball River: What is happening here is something more than just a fight to stop a pipeline.

The word I heard over and over again from the people I interviewed was “decolonize.”

In the speak-outs and prayer circles, speaker after speaker, from the Pacific Northwest and from the Amazon, from New York to Arizona recalled the historic violence committed against Native American people not far from where the camp stood. Many recalled the [Battle of the Greasy Grass](#), what is taught to schoolchildren as the Battle of Little Bighorn, which [LaDonna Allard wrote](#) was the last time the Oceti Sakowin came together. But for her and others, the massacres at Wounded Knee and Whitestone were closer to mind. It was the anniversary of the Whitestone massacre, where 250 women and children were killed by the US military, when [private security guards turned dogs on the protesters](#) at Standing Rock. It was Faith Spotted Eagle's people, the Ihanktonwan, along with the Hunkpapa, that were killed there, and the use of police and security against peaceful protesters brought up those memories.

The echoes of historic struggles were everywhere, and to Spotted Eagle, they were reminders that the fight for the water is just a part of the fight for an entire way of life that was nearly crushed. She was raised speaking Dakota, and counted herself lucky to have her language and the worldview that came with it. The grass-roots organizing that brought together the camp, she said, was helping the Standing Rock people and other tribal governments to look past the structures imposed on them by the process of colonization. “If we don't stop and every single day examine how I have become like the colonizer, I asked my daughter, ‘What is going to

happen someday if we lose our songs, if we lose our language and we no longer think like Natives?’ She said, ‘Then the colonization process is complete.’”

In the camp, they experimented with bringing back the long-ago structure of the Oceti Sakowin. “The second part of that struggle is to wade through the colonialism that has happened between then and now and to figure out, ‘What can we bring back with some modifications that will work for the people?’” she said. “There have been a lot of attempts to revive the Oceti Sakowin, but it hasn’t happened because we didn’t have a common focus.”

The common struggle has in turn opened up a space for different people to come together and share their songs and dances, their prophecies and histories. The lack of good cell phone service, Lay Ha noted, forces people to be more present. “It just brings you back to the old days where you hear the language, you hear our culture, you get to see youth riding on horseback and it’s really a change, it’s really decolonizing ourselves.”

“We are at the right point in time,” Spotted Eagle agreed. “We are free at this space in time.”

Walking around the camp, you pass singing circles and the kitchen — Tuesday night the menu was moose, brought all the way from Maine by a visitor to the camp. A nurse from the medic tent made rounds, making sure that people knew that at night, the Standing Rock ambulance parked on the grounds would leave but the medics would be on duty. Young children played volleyball and posed for photographs, finished from their day at school — a fully recognized school that teaches both the core curriculum so children at the camp won’t fall behind their schools at home, and also teaches songs and dances, languages and history, about the treaties and the fight for the water.

At night, campfires burned and tepees glowed, lit from within, as the open mic for speak-outs gave way to singing and dancing.

“We have had a few growing pains, but that is to be expected when you go from 30 people to 1,000 people in two or three days,” Mossett said. “There are a lot of logistics behind the scenes, things that people don’t see. Where are people going to go to the bathroom? Bringing in porta potties. Waste disposal. It was a really beautiful thing to see the community step up on our own and say, ‘Did you forget we are sovereign nations? We are going to do this and make it happen.’”

The coming together of the nations was something Mossett wanted for as long as she could remember, and that more than anything helped her envision a victory, not just against the Dakota Access Pipeline, not just against the whole extractive industry but *for* something much bigger.

“This pipeline would have already been built if we hadn’t come out here, taken back the power for ourselves and said, ‘Hey, nobody is going to help us or protect us except for us,’” Mossett said. “I think it was the nonviolent direct actions. In fact, I know that it was the nonviolent direct actions that got us to this point.”

See photos of the fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline here:

<http://www.nationofchange.org/2016/09/29/standing-firm-standing-rock-struggle-bigger-one-pipeline/>

September 29, 2016

Military-Style Raid Ends Native Prayer Against Dakota Pipeline

Telesur

Up to 21 people were arrested during a peaceful prayer service.

North Dakota police with military-style equipment surrounded Native Americans gathered in prayer against the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline on Wednesday, disrupting their plan to cross sacred and treaty-protected land in protest of a project they fear will destroy their livelihood.

“ND authorities deploy armed personnel with shotguns and assault rifles, military vehicles, and aerial spray on peaceful Water Protectors gathered in prayer,” wrote the Sacred Stone Camp, in a Facebook post.

Officers with military-style armored vehicles and shotguns threatened the protesters, who call themselves “water protectors” for defending the Missouri River from imminent pollution, reported Unicorn Riot. Up to 21 were arrested, the channel reported.

Witnesses filmed the crackdown but said their access their Facebook was blocked. One participant, Thomas H. Joseph II, posted a chilling video narrating the mobilization and his getaway. Helicopters are heard as he says that tear gas is being dropped, and an officer loads his gun as protesters, some on horseback, chant, “We have no guns.”

In the video, Joseph said that “one guy’s about ready to blast us” but later added that no fires were shot.

“We gathered in prayer un-armed, prayed, sang songs, and attempted to leave,” he later wrote in a Facebook post. “No threats, No vandalism, No violence was taken on our part.”

Police and [private security](#) personnel have been more aggressively cracking down on actions against the pipeline since the governor declared a state of emergency. The state is currently investigating an incident in which contracted private security firm Frost Kennels [unleashed dogs](#) during a nonviolent direct action, ending with six bitten, including a pregnant woman and a child, according to organizers at the action.

Alternative media outlet Unicorn Riot previously [accused Facebook](#) of censoring its livestream of police repression, saying they received a popup security alert when they tried to post the video.

“We will not let them stop our mission to amplify the voices of people who might otherwise go unheard, and broadcast the stories that might otherwise go untold,” they told RT.

The pipeline, expected to transport over half a million barrels of oil a day through four states, has united over 300 tribes in resistance. Several lawsuits are pending against the company, which has retaliated with restraining orders. The White House halted construction on federal land, which makes up three percent of the pipeline's path, but has not issued any other statement against the pipeline—motivating Facebook users to demand a response after Wednesday's crackdown.

President Barack Obama met with tribal representatives on Monday but only made an indirect reference to the historic native gathering: “I know that many of you have come together across tribes and across the country to support the community at Standing Rock,” he said. “And together, you’re making your voices heard.”

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/US-Cops-Break-up-Native-Prayer-Service-Against-Dakota-Pipeline-20160928-0029.html>

September 30, 2016

The growing indigenous spiritual movement that could save the planet

By Jack Jenkins
ThinkProgress

When Pua Case landed in North Dakota to join the ongoing Standing Rock protests in September, she, like thousands of other participants, had come to defend the land.

Masses of indigenous people and their allies descended on camps along Cannonball River this year to [decry the construction](#) of the Dakota Access pipeline, a series of 30-inch diameter underground pipes that, if built, would [stretch](#) 1,172 miles and carry half a million barrels of crude oil per day—right through lands Native groups call sacred.

“We are not here to be anything but peaceful, but we are here,” Case told ThinkProgress, describing the moment she linked arms with fellow demonstrators and stared down rows of police in Bismarck. “We will stand here in our tribal names in respect and honor.”

But while media attention has focused on the massive, [sometimes heated](#) demonstrations—which include several alleged instances of brutality and [dog attacks](#)—there has been less attention paid to how the protest is recharging the larger climate movement, not to mention the peculiar nature of the participants. Case, for instance, traveled quite a long way to the Peace Garden State: she is from the sunny shores of Hawaii, not rugged North Dakota, and she claims a Native Hawaiian identity, not a Native American one. And she wasn’t there just to protest; the sacredness of the land is especially important to her, so she was also there to *pray*.

“Standing Rock is a prayer camp,” she said. “It is where prayers are done.”

Case's experience is shockingly common—both as a protester visiting a far-flung land to support a Native cause, and as a witness to an emerging indigenous spiritual movement that is sweeping North America.

She's part of something bigger that is, by all accounts, the theological opposite of the aggressively Christian “awakenings” that once dominated American life in the 18th and 19th centuries, when primarily white, firebrand ministers preached a gospel of “manifest destiny”—the religious framework later used to justify the subjugation of Native Americans and their territories. The diverse constellation of Native theologies articulated at Standing Rock and other indigenous protest camps champions the reverse: they seek to protect land, water, and other natural resources from further human development, precisely because they are deemed sacred by indigenous people.

And this year, after centuries of struggle, their prayers are starting to be answered.

The [size and intensity](#) of the Standing Rock protest caught many observers off guard—the media included. Beginning with just a few tents sprinkled across a barren field earlier this year, protesters now say nearly 10,000 people have visited the thriving camps, with guests hailing from as many as [300 different indigenous tribes](#).

“Seeing all the tribes come out was just incredible,” Caro “Guarding Red Tarantula Woman” Gonzales, a 26-year-old Standing Rock protester and founding member of the International Indigenous Youth Council, told ThinkProgress. “We can do that for every single indigenous fight.”

Expressions of solidarity between indigenous groups may sound predictable, but the history of Native American activism is pockmarked with internal squabbles. Early attempts to unify indigenous causes in the United States, such as the creation of the American Indian Movement in the 1960s, have since been marred by controversy and factionalism. Native Hawaiians once avoided connections between their cause and that of Native Americans, lest they suffer the same humiliating defeats as those in the continental United States. And while flashes of unified activism persisted throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, indigenous communities in North America often struggled to win major victories—legal, cultural, or otherwise.

But all that changed in December 2012, when four women in Western Canada—three First Nations women and one non-Native ally—held a teach-in to protest legislation they said would weaken environmental laws that protect lands Natives hold sacred.

The activists entitled their demonstration “Idle No More,” and the movement exploded on social media; within days, flash mobs performing traditional spiritual dances sprung up in city centers and shopping malls across the country. Taking cues from Occupy Wall Street's organic structure, a series of marches, rallies, and direct-action peaceful protests that blocked highways and railways quickly followed, making headlines in Canada and abroad.

Idle No More's success set off a firestorm of solidarity protests among indigenous groups in the United States, who in turn used the energy to draw attention to their own local fights—virtually all which involved some sort of spiritual claim. In Hawaii, protesters inculcated the same tactics—and sometimes even the same slogans—into an ongoing effort to [halt the construction](#) of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) atop Mauna Kea, a volcano Native Hawaiians consider sacred. In Arizona, members of the Apache nation [began occupying](#) an area known as Oak Flat, vowing to fend off the proposed development of a copper mine on land they call holy. And when environmentalists pushed back against the creation of the Keystone XL pipeline, organizations such as the Cowboy and Indian Alliance [bolstered](#) the existing climate change movement with Native activists in both Canada and the United States.

“Idle No More raised our consciousness,” Gonzales, who is of the Chemehuevi nation, said. “When people are chaining themselves to bulldozers, that is prayer.”

Meanwhile, something new happened: social media allowed indigenous people across the country to show support for their fellow activists with a few simple clicks, adding hashtags and memes to their own Facebook and Twitter profiles. The digital connections helped elevate their respective causes, but also forged real-world relationships between activists in different tribes.

By the time Standing Rock rolled around, a spiritual network of indigenous people was already in full effect.

“Many of the people I met at Standing Rock I've been friends with on Facebook for years,” said Case, who has been a key organizer in Native Hawaiian activist circles.

Case noted that she and several of the Standing Rock protesters had been “sending prayers” back and forth over social media for some time. These connections inspired Native Americans such as Caleen Sisk of California's Winnemem Wintu nation to join her in an occupation of Mauna Kea in Hawaii. Years later, Case returned the favor by assisting Sisk in her effort to [restore California waterways](#) once frequented by millions of local salmon.

“We prayed on each others' mountains and made commitments to one another,” Case said, speaking over the phone just minutes after finishing a ceremonial raft ride down the river. “They have prayed for us—they've come out physically to Mauna Kea. So now it's our turn.”

“The most important word here is alliances,” she said.

Asked about the movement's religious elements, Gonzales insisted spirituality isn't a cursory side-effect but a crucial, driving force behind the recent surge of Native environmental activism. Virtually all of the protests she has attended, she said, featured some form of prayer or sacred ritual.

“All of us are protesting because we are part of this sacred [connection] to the earth,” Gonzales said. “We are all the mountains, we are all the birds—it sounds corny, but it's true.”

It would be a mistake to characterize the new wave of indigenous activism as emanating from a uniform, codified theology. All of the activists ThinkProgress interviewed insisted they spoke only for themselves when discussing faith, explaining that each tribe harbors its own unique spiritual traditions, practices, and customs forged over the course of centuries, if not millennia.

But for all their differences, the various indigenous populations share a common theological belief typical of what Joshua Lanakila Mangauil, a Native Hawaiian activist, called “earth-based” cultures: that the environment, at least in parts, is sacred in and of itself.

“Earth-based cultures are tied to places,” Mangauil, whose current Facebook profile picture reads “Solidarity with Standing Rock,” said. “There is no separation from our spirituality and our environment—they are one and the same.”

“Other [religious groups] have these debates over whether or not God exists—but I know my god exists,” he added, referencing Mauna Kea, which towers above his island home. “It’s the mountain—I can *see* it.”

Religion has long been a part of Native American protest movements, as has its connection to the environmentalist struggle. But religious scholars say they’re also seeing something unusual this year: demonstrators are actively creating *new* religious expressions. Greg Johnson, a Hawaiian religion expert and an associate professor of Religious Studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder, said these indigenous protests are increasingly led by young, creative organizers who are “generating” religion through their activism.

“The kids of today’s generation know a new set of chants, a new set of prayers because of those who came before them,” Johnson said. He noted that Native Hawaiian schoolchildren are already singing songs written in the protest camps of Mauna Kea just a year before. “In this moment of crisis, the religious tradition is catalyzed, activated, but most of all articulated—this is when it happens.”

While this groundswell of religious generation is rooted in old traditions, it sometimes reawakens ancient elements that can challenge elders.

“To introduce another spiritual element—I am a two spirit,” Gonzales said, referencing a Native American term used to describe gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in their communities. Although traditionally [celebrated](#) in many tribes, two-spirit people have not always been welcomed by modern indigenous people. Yet when Gonzales and others formed the International Indigenous Youth Council at Standing Rock, the majority of the leadership identified as two-spirit—a designation they link to their faith.

“My sacredness as a human is part of my tradition—myself as a protector, as a sacred protector,” she said. “There are a lot of two-spirits at [the Standing Rock] camp, and that is sacred too... We see that as integral to our activism.”

Faith is a core mobilizing and stabilizing force for the movement, but it’s also central to the legal arguments used by Native groups to defend their land. In addition to other claims, both the [Oak](#)

[Flat](#) and [Standing Rock](#) lawsuits contend that the federal government—or the companies it employs—violated the National Historic Preservation Act, which requires agencies to “consult with any Indian tribe... that attaches religious and cultural significance to properties with the area of potential effects.” The [Hawaii case](#) is similarly rooted in disputes over sacred land, although the lawsuit currently focuses on state laws, not the federal statutes.

Native groups can also lean on the [American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978](#), which compels the federal government to “protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise [their] traditional religions...including but not limited to access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites.”

But according to Johnson, an expert on sacred land disputes, the law is often not enough to guarantee indigenous groups a win.

“There is very little track record of sacred land victories,” he said. “More likely what they will generate is allegiances, attention—the secondary effects of having made the case for their tradition.”

Indeed, the movement thus far has largely been sustained through protest and agitation. The legal case to protect Standing Rock ultimately fell flat in early September, for instance, when a U.S. District Court judge [denied](#) the nation’s request to halt pipeline construction. But the movement proved more powerful than one judge: shortly after the ruling, the Obama administration—under pressure from scores of Native groups and their allies—called on the Dakota Access to [stop construction](#) voluntarily, and the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals [temporarily halted work](#) on the pipeline shortly thereafter.

Such is the recurring—and [increasingly successful](#)—strategy of these protests. Slowly accruing support and attention over time, and leaning on sacred claims, activists whittle away the patience of corporations and government officials until they (ideally) give up.

In Hawaii, construction of the TMT is [currently stalled](#) while lawyers debate aspects of the construction process, prompting The Hawaii Island New Knowledge fund to begin investigating alternative sites. In March, the Obama administration moved to place Oak Flat on the [National Register of Historic Places](#), adding another bureaucratic hoop preventing the Resolution Copper company from installing a mine on site. The [Lummi Nation in Washington State](#) successfully [defeated](#) an effort to build the largest coal port ever in North America near their land earlier this year, and Native groups are also credited with helping [stop the construction](#) of the Keystone XL pipeline in 2015.

And in addition to their secular allies in the climate movement, indigenous groups are also attracting partners in [non-Native faith traditions](#). Representatives from the [Presbyterian Church \(USA\)](#), [United Church of Christ](#), [Episcopal Church](#), and the [United Methodist Church](#) have all visited the Standing Rock camp or expressed solidarity with the protesters, as has the Nation of Islam, according to the Religion News Service.

But the fight is far from over. Many of these disputes—including the Dakota Access Pipeline—are not yet resolved, and Native activists are already gearing up for new campaigns. In late September, dozens of tribes in Canada and the United States [signed a treaty pledging](#) to combat any further development of Canadian “tar sands,” which they say put their reservations and “sacred waterways” at risk of oil spills.

“If one of us loses, then we all have to work harder,” Case said. “We need to be stronger every day, and I believe the creator believes that’s what we need as well.”

Case said movement members will continue to lean on each other for strength moving forward (“We could use some prayer,” she joked) and that they won’t rest until they make it clear that the environment—earth, sky, and water—is, in a very literal sense, sacred.

“There comes a time when people have a right to say no—and now is that time,” she added. “So we’re saying no, resoundingly, like the thundering sky.”

<https://thinkprogress.org/indigenous-spiritual-movement-8f873348a2f5#.x4kz1g56f>

September 30, 2016

Citing Environmental Risks, Scientists Back Tribes in Dakota Access Fight

Meanwhile, a *Reuters* investigation finds pipeline spill detection system severely flawed

By Deirdre Fulton, staff writer
Common Dreams

Close to 100 scientists have signed onto a letter decrying “inadequate environmental and cultural impact assessments” for the [Dakota Access Pipeline \(DAPL\)](#), and calling for a halt to construction until such tests have been carried out as requested by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

Lead signatories [Stephanie Januchowski-Hartley](#), [Anne Hilborn](#), [Katherine Crocker](#), and [Asia Murphy](#) drew attention to the missive in [a letter](#) to the journal *Science* published Friday.

“The DAPL project is just one of many haphazard approaches to natural resource extraction that overlook broader consequences of oil development,” they wrote.

Furthermore, the [open letter](#) (pdf) states, “We as scientists are concerned about the potential local and regional impacts from the DAPL, which is symptomatic of the United States’ continued dependence on fossil fuels in the face of predicted broad-scale social and ecological impacts from global climate change.” Specifically, they cite the Standing Rock Sioux’s concerns that the pipeline project threatens biodiversity and clean water.

Underscoring those concerns, [a Reuters investigation](#) into the nation's pipeline system published Friday reveals that "sensitive technology designed to pick up possible spills is about as successful as a random member of the public...finding it, despite efforts from pipeline operators."

In fact, according to the *Reuters* analysis of U.S. Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) data, "[o]ver the last six years, there have been 466 incidents where a pipeline carrying crude oil or refined products has leaked. Of those, 105, or 22 percent, were detected by an advanced detection system."

Even more troubling, the data "shows the leak detection systems have caught small leaks and missed some of the largest," *Reuters* reports, with six out of the largest 10 pipeline spills in the U.S. since 2010 going undetected by these systems.

Beyond its potential for local devastation, DAPL will make it nigh impossible for the U.S. to meet its commitments under the Paris Agreement to limit global warming, the scientists said in their letter.

As Bill McKibben [said](#) Friday on *Democracy Now!* of the Standing Rock Sioux and their allies: "They're holding the line against something that threatens not only their reservation, but threatens the whole planet. We do not—we cannot pump more oil. We've got to stop opening up new reserves."

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2016/09/30/citing-environmental-risks-scientists-back-tribes-dakota-access-fight>

October 3, 2016

Under Hawaii's Starriest Skies, a Fight Over Sacred Ground

By Dennis Overbye
New York Times

MAUNA KEA, Hawaii — Little lives up here except whispering hopes and a little bug called [Wekiu](#).

Three miles above the Pacific, you are above almost half the oxygen in [Earth](#)'s atmosphere and every step hurts. A few minutes in the sun will fry your skin. Brains and fingers go numb. At night, the stars are so close they seem tangled in your hair.

Two years ago, this mountaintop was the [scene of a cosmic traffic jam](#): honking horns, vans and trucks full of astronomers, V.I.P.s, journalists, businesspeople, politicians, protesters and police — all snarled at a roadblock just short of the summit.

Abandoning their cars, some of the visitors started to hike up the hill toward what would have been a groundbreaking for the biggest and most expensive stargazing machinery ever built in the Northern Hemisphere: the [Thirty Meter Telescope](#), 14 years and \$1.4 billion in the making.

They were assembling on a plateau just below the summit, when Joshua Mangauil, better known by his Hawaiian name of Lanakila, then 27, barged onto the scene. Resplendent in a [tapa cloth](#), beads, a red loin cloth, his jet black hair in a long Mohawk, he had hiked over the volcano's cinder cones barefoot.

“Like snakes you are. Vile snakes,” he yelled. “We gave all of our aloha to you guys, and you slithered past us like snakes.”

“For what? For your greed to look into the sky? You guys can't take care of this place.”

No ground was broken that day or since.

To astronomers, the Thirty Meter Telescope would be a next-generation tool to spy on planets around other stars or to peer into the cores of ancient galaxies, with an eye sharper and more powerful than the [Hubble Space Telescope](#), another landmark in humanity's quest to understand its origins.

But to its opponents, the telescope would be yet another eyesore despoiling an ancient sacred landscape, a gigantic 18-story colossus joining the 13 telescopes already on Mauna Kea.

Later this month, proponents and opponents of the giant telescope will face off in a hotel room in the nearby city of Hilo for the start of hearings that will lead to a decision on whether the telescope can be legally erected on the mountain.

Over the years, some have portrayed this fight as a struggle between superstition and science. Others view the telescope as another symbol of how Hawaiians have been unfairly treated since Congress annexed the islands — illegally in the eyes of many — in 1898. And still others believe it will bring technology and economic development to an impoverished island.

“This is a very simple case about land use,” [Kealoha Pisciotta](#), a former telescope operator on Mauna Kea who has been one of the leaders of a group fighting telescope development on the mountain for the last decade. “It's not science versus religion. We're not the church. You're not Galileo.”

Hanging in the balance is perhaps the best stargazing site on Earth. “Mauna Kea is the flagship of American and international astronomy,” said Doug Simons, the director of the [Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope](#) on Mauna Kea. “We are on the precipice of losing this cornerstone of U.S. prestige.”

Big Glass Dreams

The road to the stars once ended in California at Palomar Mountain, whose [200-inch-diameter telescope](#) was long considered the size limit. The bigger a telescope mirror is, the more light it can capture and the fainter and farther it can see — out in space, back in time.

In the 1990s, however, astronomers learned how to build telescopes with thin mirrors that relied on computer-adjusted supports to keep them from sagging or warping.

There was an explosion of telescope building that has culminated, for now, in plans for three giant billion-dollar telescopes: the [European Extremely Large Telescope](#) and the [Giant Magellan](#), both in Chile, and the Thirty Meter Telescope.

Not only would they have a Brobdingnagian appetite for light, but they are designed to incorporate a new technology called [adaptive optics](#), which can take the twinkle out of starlight by adjusting telescope mirrors to compensate for atmospheric turbulence.

Richard Ellis, a British astronomer now at the [European Southern Observatory](#) in Garching, Germany, recalled being optimistic in 1999 when he arrived at the California Institute of Technology to begin developing what became known as the Thirty Meter Telescope. “The stock market was booming,” he said. “Everything seemed possible.”

Canada, India and Japan eventually joined the project, now officially known as the TMT International Observatory. It has been helped along by [the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation](#), formed by the founder of Intel, which has contributed advice and \$180 million.

[From Hawaii’s Mauna Kea, a Universe of Discoveries](#)

[Mauna Kea’s telescopes have helped advance important discoveries in humanity’s study of the universe.](#)

The telescope, originally scheduled to be completed by 2024, is modeled on the revolutionary 10-meter-diameter [Keck telescopes](#) that Caltech and the University of California operate on Mauna Kea. Like them, it will have with a segmented mirror composed of small, hexagonal pieces of glass fitted together into an expanse wider than a tennis court.

There are only a few places on Earth that are dark, dry and calm enough to be fit for a billion-dollar telescope.

Rising 33,000 feet from the seafloor, Mauna Kea is one of the biggest mountains in the solar system. The dormant ancient volcano has been the center of Polynesian culture — the umbilical cord connecting Earth and sky — seemingly forever.

The mountain is part of so-called “ceded lands” that originally belonged to the Hawaiian Kingdom and are now administered by the state for the benefit of Hawaiians.

On its spare, merciless summit, craters and cinder cones of indefinable age keep company with a variety pack of architectural shapes housing telescopes.

In 1968 the University of Hawaii took out a 65-year lease on 11,000 acres for a dollar a year. Some 500 acres of that are designated as a science preserve. It includes the ice age quarry from which stone tools were being cut a thousand years ago, and hundreds of shrines and burial grounds.

The first telescope went up in 1970. Many rapidly followed.

Places like Mauna Kea are “cradles of knowledge,” said Natalie Batalha, one of the leaders of NASA’s [Kepler planet-hunting mission](#). “I am filled with reverence and humility every time I get to be physically present at a mountaintop observatory.”

But some Hawaiians worried that knowledge was coming at too great a cost.

“All those telescopes got put up with no thought beyond reviving the Hilo economy,” said Michael Bolte, an astronomer from the University of California, Santa Cruz, who serves on the TMT board.

“Not a lot of thought was given to culture issues.”

Some native Hawaiians complained that their beloved mountain had grown “pimples,” and that the telescope development had interfered with cultural and religious practices that are protected by state law.

Construction trash sometimes rolled down the mountain, said Nelson Ho, a photographer and Sierra Club leader who complained to the university. “They wouldn’t listen,” he said. “They just kept playing king of the mountain.”

An audit by the State of Hawaii in 1998 scolded the university for failing to protect the mountain and its natural and cultural resources. An environmental impact study performed by NASA in 2007 similarly concluded that 30 years of astronomy had caused “significant, substantial and adverse” harm to Mauna Kea.

A Step Back for NASA

The tide began to shift in 2001 when NASA announced a plan to add six small telescopes called outriggers to the Keck complex. The outriggers would be used in concert with the big telescopes as [interferometers](#) to test ideas for a future space mission dedicated to looking for planets around other stars.

Ms. Pisciotta led a band of environmentalists and cultural practitioners who went to court to stop NASA. The group included the Hawaiian chapter of the Sierra Club and the [Royal Order of Kamehameha](#), devoted to restoring the Kingdom of Hawaii.

Ms. Pisciotta said she had once dreamed of being a cosmologist but lacked the requisite math skills and instead took a night job operating a radio telescope on Mauna Kea. She became disenchanted when a family shrine disappeared from the summit and the plans for the outriggers impinged on a [cinder cone](#).

“Cinder cones are burial sites. It’s time to not let this go on,” she said. The group prepared for court by reading popular books about trials.

In 2007, Hawaii’s third district court found the management plan for the outriggers was flawed and revoked the building permit.

“NASA packed up and left,” Ms. Pisciotta said.

Encountering Aloha

The prospective builders of the TMT knew they had their work cut out for them.

In 2007, the Moore Foundation hired Peter Adler, a consultant and sociologist, to look into the consequences of putting the telescope in Hawaii.

“Should TMT decide to pursue a Mauna Kea site,” [his report warned](#), “it will inherit the anger, fear and great mistrust generated through previous telescope planning and siting failures and an accumulated disbelief that any additional projects, especially a physically imposing one like the TMT, can be done properly.”

The astronomers picked a telescope site that was less anthropologically sensitive, on a plateau below the summit with no monuments or other obvious structures on it. They agreed to pay \$1 million a year, a fifth of which would go to the state’s Office of Hawaiian Affairs and the rest to stewardship of the mountain.

Quietly, they also pledged another \$2 million a year toward science and technology education and work force development on the island of Hawaii. The Moore Foundation also put some \$2 million into the Imiloa Astronomy Center, a museum and planetarium run by the University of Hawaii.

Dr. Bolte, a mild-mannered U.C.S.C. professor with a soothing lilt to his voice, became one of the most visible promoters of the project in community meetings.

He recalled going to a meeting in Hilo once where tensions were very high. Afterward, he said, he was afraid to go out to his car.

Sure enough, a crowd rushed him when he got there. “What kind of astronomy do you do?” they asked eagerly.

“The aloha spirit really exists,” Dr. Bolte said.

“Exploring the universe is a wonderful thing humans do,” he added. Nevertheless, “there was a core we never won over.”

“In retrospect, we might have underestimated the strength of the sovereignty movement.”

The Hawaiian Renaissance

In the years since the first telescopes went up on Mauna Kea, Hawaiian people and culture had experienced a resurgence of pride known as the Hawaiian Renaissance.

In 1976, a band of Hawaiians sailed the [outrigger canoe Hokulea](#) from Hawaii to Tahiti. The feat showed how ancient Polynesians could have purposefully explored and colonized the Pacific, navigating the seas using only the sun, stars, ocean swells and wind.

“And that was the first spark of shutting up everybody who said that we were inferior, that we were not intelligent,” Mr. Mangauil, the protester, said.

In 1978, the state recognized Hawaiian, which once had been banned from schools, as an official language.

With rising pride came — at least among some more vocal native Hawaiians — questions about whether the [occupation and annexation of Hawaii](#) by the United States in the 1890s was legal.

Telescopes on a sacred mountain constitute a form of “colonial violence,” in the words of J. Kehaulani Kauanui, an anthropologist at Wesleyan University.

Or as Robert Kirshner, a Harvard professor who is now also chief science officer at the Moore Foundation, put it, “The question in that case become not so much whether you did the environmental impact statement right, but whose island is it?”

Having cut their teeth fighting the outrigger project, Ms. Pisciotta’s group, known informally as the Mauna Kea Hui, was prepared when the TMT Corporation formally selected the mountain for its site in 2009.

Many Hawaiians welcomed the telescope project. At a permit hearing, Wallace Ishibashi Jr., whose family had an ancestral connection to Mauna Kea, compared the Thirty Meter’s mission to the search for aumakua, the ancestral origins of the universe.

“Hawaiians,” he said, “have always been a creative and adaptive people.”

Ms. Pisciotta and her friends argued among other things that an 18-story observatory, which would be the biggest structure on the whole island of Hawaii, did not fit in a conservation district.

In a series of hearings in 2010 and 2011, the state land board approved a permit for the telescope but then stipulated that no construction could begin until a so-called contested case hearing, in which interested parties could present their arguments, was held.

The Walk of Fame

The state won that hearing, and a groundbreaking ceremony was scheduled for Oct. 7, 2014.

The groundbreaking was never intended to be a public event, said Bob McClaren, associate director of the [University of Hawaii's Institute for Astronomy](#), which is responsible for scientific activities on the mountain.

"I thought it was reasonable to restrict access to those who were invited," he said.

Mr. Mangauil, who makes his living teaching hula dancing and Hawaiian culture, said later that he had wanted only to make the astronomers feel uncomfortable to be on the mountain and to get protesters' signs in view of the television cameras.

In an interview, he said he had nothing against science or astronomy, but did not want it on his mountain.

"Our connection to the mountain is like, that's our elder, the mother of our resources," he said. "We're talking about the wau akua, the realm of where the gods live."

There are no shrines on the very summit, he pointed out, which should be a lesson: Not even the most holy people are supposed to go there.

Unable to get to the groundbreaking, the Hawaiians formed their own blockade. Tempers flared.

"We were seeing the native Hawaiian movement flexing its muscles," Dr. Bolte said.

Seeing people hiking up the mountain past the port-o-potties, Mr. Mangauil stormed after them and wound up on the hood of a ranger truck, even more angry.

Guarding the Mountain

Lanakila's barefoot run set the tone for two years of unrest and demonstrations.

Protesters calling themselves Guardians of the Mountain set up a permanent vigil across the road from the Mauna Kea visitor center, stopping telescope construction crews and equipment from going up. Dozens were arrested.

Gov. David Ige has tried to appease both sides. While saying that “we have in many ways failed the mountain,” he said the Thirty Meter Telescope should go forward, but at least three other telescopes would have to come down.

Astronomers and business leaders grew frustrated that the state was not doing enough to keep the road open for construction trucks and workers.

“The result of the faulty law enforcement surrounding Mauna Kea is fostering tension, aggression, racism and business uncertainty,” business organizations and the Hawaii Chamber of Commerce wrote to the governor. “Ambiguity surrounding the rule of law has prompted a poor economic climate.”

Stopping trucks on the steep slope was dangerous, said Dr. Bolte, adding that “people were basically trapped at the summit.”

Dr. Simons, the Canada-France-Hawaii director, grew increasingly worried about the effect of the protests on the astronomers, who became reluctant to be identified as observatory staffers.

“It really tugged at us to see the staff going from being proud to scared in a matter of weeks,” he said.

Meanwhile Ms. Pisciotta’s coalition was plugging through the courts.

On Dec. 2, the Hawaiian Supreme Court revoked the telescope building permit, ruling that the state had violated due process by handing out the permit before the contested case hearing.

“Quite simply, the Board put the cart before the horse when it issued the permit,” [the court wrote](#).

Game of Domes

By mid-December, Clarence Ching, another member of the opposition, stood in a crowd with other Hawaiians and watched trucks carrying equipment retreat from the mountain.

“David had beaten Goliath,” he said. “We were even happy and sad at the same time — sad, for instance, that somebody had to lose — as we had fought hard and long.”

The court’s decision set the stage for a new round of hearings, now scheduled to start in mid-October. The case, presided over by Riki May Amano, a retired judge appointed by the Land Board, is likely to last longer than the first round, which consumed seven days of hearings over a few weeks, partly because there are more parties this time around.

Among them is the pro-telescope Hawaiian group called Perpetuating Unique Educational Opportunities or PUEO, who contend the benefits of the TMT to the community have been undersold.

Whoever wins this fall's contested case hearing, the decision is sure to be quickly appealed to the Hawaiian Supreme Court.

In an interview, Edward Stone, a Caltech professor and vice president of the Thirty Meter Telescope International Observatory, the group that will build the telescope, set April 2018 as the deadline for beginning construction. Depending on how it goes in Hawaii or elsewhere, the telescope could be ready sometime in the last half of the next decade.

"We need to start building this thing somewhere," he said.

"We still hope Hawaii will work," he added. "What we need is a timely permit, and we need access to the mountain once we have a permit."

But there is no guarantee that even if the astronomers succeed in court they will prevail on the mountain. In an email exchange, J. Douglas Ing, lawyer for the TMT Observatory, said they were "cautiously optimistic" that local agencies would uphold the law, but the astronomers have also been investigating alternative sites in Mexico, Chile, India, China and the Canary Islands.

"It's wise of the TMT to be exploring other sites," said Richard Wurdeman, the lawyer for the Mauna Kea Hui.

I asked Ms. Pisciotta what would happen if the giant telescope finally wins.

"It would be really hard for Hawaiian people to swallow that," she said. "It's always been our way to lift our prayers up to heaven and hope they hear us."

Dr. Bolte said he had learned to not make predictions about Hawaii.

In a recent email, he recalled photographing a bunch of short-eared Hawaiian owls. "These are called [pueo](#), and they are said to be the physical form of ancestor spirits," Dr. Bolte recounted.

Referring to the Hawaiian term for a wise elder, he said, "I had one kupuna tell me it was a great sign for TMT that so many pueo sought me out that trip, and another tell me it was a sign that we should leave the island immediately before a calamity falls on TMT."

See photos here:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/04/science/hawaii-thirty-meter-telescope-mauna-kea.html>

October 3, 2016

Catholic institutions internationally announce divestment from fossil fuels

Independent Catholic News

Today, on the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, Catholic institutions and communities from all over the world celebrated the culmination of the month-long Season of Creation with the largest joint announcement of their decision to divest from fossil fuels.

The Catholic communities committing to switch the management of their finances away from fossil fuel extraction include: The Jesuits in English Canada; the Federation of Christian Organisations for the International Voluntary Service (FOCSIV) in Italy; the Presentation Society of Australia and Papua New Guinea; SSM Health in the United States; the Diocese of the Holy Spirit of Umuaramá in the Brazilian state of Paraná; the Missionary Society of St. Columban, based in Hong Kong and with a global presence in 14 countries; and the Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco - Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Milan and Naples (Italy).

Commitments range from divesting from coal, as is the case of the US healthcare institution SSM, to redirecting the divested funds into clean, renewable energy investments, as FOCSIV has announced. As for the Brazilian Diocese of Umuaramá, it is both the first diocese and the first Latin American institution to commit to divest from fossil fuels.

The fossil fuel divestment movement was acknowledged during the presentation of Pope Francis's message on the World Day of Prayer for Creation by Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, when he pointed out that Pope Francis suggests that "social pressure--including from boycotting certain products--can force businesses to consider their environmental footprint and patterns of production. The same logic animates the fossil fuel divestment movement."

Major Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, and Anglican organizations came together between September 1st (World Day of Prayer for Creation) and October 4th to observe the Season of Creation, calling on the 2.2 billion Christians worldwide to pray and take action to care for the Earth.

The urgent need to stop all new fossil fuel infrastructure was highlighted by a recent report which found that the potential carbon emissions from the oil, gas and coal in the world's currently operating fields and mines would increase our planet's temperature beyond 2°C by the end of this century, and even with no coal, the reserves in oil and gas fields alone would cause warming beyond 1.5°C.

The campaign to divest from fossil fuels is the fastest growing divestment campaign in history, according to a report by the University of Oxford. Up to date, nearly 600 institutions worth over \$3.4 trillion globally have announced divestment commitments.

Quotes:

"Climate change is already affecting poor and marginalized communities globally, through drought, rising sea levels, famine and extreme weather. We are called to take a stand." **Peter Bisson sj, Provincial of the Jesuits in English Canada.**

"This announcement is for FOCSIV an important commitment on climate justice: we strongly believe that in order to fight climate change we need to act at the root causes removing financial support at fossil fuel industry and reinvest it in renewable. VIDES, a catholic NGO member of FOCSIV, has positively welcomed the message of Laudato Si' and Divestment, obtaining the important announcement of the Italian Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco. We will continue in addressing religious institutes: together, as Catholics, we have the moral duty of being the proofs of a concrete commitment to stop the climate crisis and promote environmental justice."

Gianfranco Cattai, President of FOCSIV.

"The Presentation Society of Australia and Papua New Guinea has made the commitment to work towards divestment of investments that are at the expense of the environment, human rights, the public safety and local communities. Presentation Sisters in Australia and Papua New Guinea believe that the healing of the planet will only come about with care for Earth and the whole community of life. We are one planet and one Earth community and we have a common destiny." **Sr Marlette Black, pbvm, President of the Presentation Society of Australia and Papua New Guinea.**

"As a Mission-based Catholic organization, SSM Health has always been deeply aware of the importance of caring for our natural resources. Our renewed commitment to the environment keeps us consistent in word and deed with the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, our founding congregation, and with the climate change encyclical released by Pope Francis in June 2015."

William P. Thompson, SSM Health President/Chief Executive Officer.

"As Bishop of Umuarama Diocese, in communion with the Catholic Church and attentive to the calls of the Gospel, I clearly understand the message of Pope Francis in Laudato Si', which calls us to care Common House through initiatives that protect all forms of life. We can not accommodate and continue allowing economic interests that seek exorbitant profits before the well being of people, to destroy biodiversity and ecosystems, nor continue dictating our energy model based on fossil fuels. We know that Brazil has abundant sources of clean and renewable energy that do not harm our common home. Therefore, I believe that the proposal to turn the Diocese of Umuarama into low-carbon is a practical way to achieve what Laudato Si' calls for."

Dom Frei João Mamede Filho OFMConv, Bishop of the Diocese of Umuarama, Brazil.

"Columbans have a long history of commitment to caring for the Earth as part of our missionary identity. We see our Socially and Environmentally Responsible Investment policy as an important expression of that commitment and therefore are exploring ways to direct our investments towards funds which respond positively to our issue priorities such as renewable energy, community-based microenterprise, and peace initiatives." **Fr. Kevin O'Neill, Columban Superior General.**

"All Bishops Conferences of the world called for 'an end to the fossil fuel era' in a powerful statement last year. The divestment announcement of these Catholic institutions simply is an update to their investment policies following the Bishops' appeal." **Tomás Insua, Global Catholic Climate Movement Global Coordinator.**

"The diversity and global distribution of the organizations taking part in this joint announcement show the leadership of the Catholic communities in going beyond prayers and taking concrete action in response to the repeated calls of Pope Francis to preserve our common home. We celebrate this announcement and hope that the message it conveys reaches people of all faiths and inspires more Catholic institutions, including the Vatican itself, to take away the harmful influence of the fossil fuel industry's ambition over our economies and societies, and push for clean and just energy sources for all humanity." **Yossi Cadan, 350.org Senior Divestment Campaigner.**

"For religious people, the aim of divestment is to bankrupt the fossil fuel industry morally, not financially. Hopefully, because of their duty to manage their resources, these companies will invest in renewable forms of energy." **Columban Fr. Sean McDonagh, leading international eco-theologian.**

"As Catholic Christians we know that our participation matters. It matters morally; it matters to God. Divestment from companies that continue to mine fossil fuels is a necessary and significant step toward building a world which is powered by the gifts God gave--like the sun and the wind. We can turn the course of our momentum away from greenhouse gasses and death and toward creativity, clean energy sources, and hope." **Nancy M Rourke, PhD, Associate Professor and Director of Catholic Studies Program at Canisius College.**

Links:

<http://catholicclimatemovement.global/>

<http://brightnow.org.uk/>

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=31050>

October 3, 2016

Monterey, Calif., diocese enters 'new era' with sustainable energy program

By Marie Venner
National Catholic Reporter

Energy use has electrified a swell of Catholics this summer in the three-county Monterey, Calif., diocese, where new initiatives inspired by Pope Francis' environmental encyclical seek not only wholesale changes in their parishes but the community as a whole.

The effort is the result of a partnership between the diocese and the Romero Institute, a non-profit law and policy center focused on social justice issues. Through its Green Power program, the institute is working with faith communities along California's central coast to set up "Green Power" teams to help them reduce electricity consumption and move toward the use of renewable energy in their church infrastructure. Part of that includes exploration of installing rooftop solar arrays where possible.

A first step in the new project came July 17 at Resurrection Church in Aptos, where Green Power and the Monterey diocese held a training session for 100 Catholics representing parishes through the diocese, which includes Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito counties.

In a letter a month earlier to his priests and deacons introducing the new environmental push, Monterey Bishop Richard Garcia said the program ushers in “a new era of green community culture where our parishes become a guiding light in sustainable, ecofriendly living.”

“Lowering carbon levels is now imperative to protect the earth,” he wrote.

Garcia said that in his encyclical “*Laudato Si’*, on Care for Our Common Home,” Francis acknowledged the reality of human-caused climate change, and that “all life systems are now threatened,” including the poor. Because of that, climate change is an issue of justice, said the bishop.

“This is our common home. We, as people of God and in Jesus’s name, must protect it from ourselves,” Garcia wrote.

In a follow-up letter Aug. 24, Garcia described the climate change initiative as “off to a strong start.” He also introduced a second dimension of the campaign in the diocese officially endorsing the adoption of Community Choice Energy (CCE) in the Monterey Bay region.

CCE, which became law in California in 2002, allows cities and counties a say in their energy provider by selecting the source and price of the electricity. The Monterey Bay area has been prepping to implement the program for three years, said the bishop. He encouraged priests and deacons to “mobilize Catholic support” in their parishes, in the form of advocacy and petition drives, for its passage. City councils and boards of supervisors are expected to be voting through the end of October on whether to join a CCE.

Forming a CCE would cut fossil fuel reliance in half within a year through expanded use of solar and wind energy, with those sources providing as much as 85 percent of electricity generation within 10 years, Garcia said in the letter. Economically, any profits from surplus electricity sold would return to the community through lower energy bills or construction of solar fields and wind farms -- and with them, local jobs. Garcia noted that Sonoma County, a region roughly half the size of the potential Monterey Bay Community Power, has seen \$35 million in surpluses in two years.

Earlier in his letter, Garcia said that through *Laudato Si’* the pope again “made clear that Earth’s changing climate threatens us all, especially the poor, and is due to human activity. He asked us to move away from fossil fuels and towards cleaner sources of energy, like wind and solar, and to consume less -- so that our earth and all living beings may flourish.”

In *Laudato Si’* paragraph 165, Francis said, “We know that technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels -- especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas -- needs to be progressively replaced without delay.”

Scientists say holding global warming at or below 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) -- a target included in the [Paris Agreement](#) reached by 195 nations last December -- would require eliminating 80 percent the world's carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and 100 percent by 2050. So far, average global temperatures have warmed roughly 1 degree above pre-industrial levels.

Meeting the ambitious 1.5 degrees goal, though, will require dramatic action and the development of technologies not currently existing. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates indicate that targeting a 66-percent chance of meeting the 1.5 goal would mean global carbon budgets would be exhausted in little more than five years.

The pope [stressed the urgency](#) of the climate issue last November ahead of the Paris climate change summit, saying "We are at the limit. We are at the limit of a suicide, to say a strong word."

As David Roberts [outlined earlier this month](#) at Vox.com, electricity offers perhaps the best route to full decarbonization of the energy sector, and with it to addressing climate change. But the benefits of an "electrify everything" strategy also extend to public health -- less energy from combustion means less pollutants in the air from fossil-fueled cars and power plants.

Spearheading the Monterey diocese's energy efforts is the Family Life and Social Concerns office, led by Deacon Warren Hoy. The deacon said the diocese is excited by the new initiative and partnership with the Romero Institute, which is on the steering committee of the Global Catholic Climate Movement.

"We're happy to see the parishes moving toward solar power to provide clean energy for themselves and perhaps others in need," Hoy said.

The Tani family, parishioners at Holy Cross Church in Santa Cruz, were among those attending the mid-July Green Power training program. For the last four years, Julie Tani has taught students at Good Shepherd Catholic School, in Santa Cruz, about the intrinsic value of living things through the school's "Life Lab" gardens.

"I want them to know that it's our job to take care of God's creation. We plant seeds, tend the garden, harvest produce, prepare food, eat, and compost the left-overs. We observe how we and the natural world are interconnected," she said.

Her husband, Hiro, said he's happy to see the diocese partner with the Romero Institute and hopes the project takes off, especially in identifying alternative sources of energy for its many buildings. He previously wrote the diocese expressing his desire to see it go solar. While that will be explored through this new endeavor, it's unclear if another of his requests may materialize.

"I said that priests and nuns should be driving electric cars or hybrids," he said.

[Marie Venner is chair of the National Academies' Transportation Research Board subcommittee on Climate Change, Energy, and Sustainability and former co-chair of the Risk and Resilience

Planning and Analysis subcommittee. She is also on the Steering Committee of the Global Catholic Climate Movement.]

<https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/eco-catholic/monterey-calif-diocese-enters-new-era-sustainable-energy-program>

October 4, 2016

Why We Are Singing for Water—In Front of Men With Guns and Surveillance Helicopters

We were water beings from the beginning. The river was our Grandmother and supplied everything we needed to survive.

By Linda Hogan
Yes! Magazine

We are singing for water and for the protectors of Earth's waters. We sing for water. Long-legged birds stand at the edges of lakes and rivers to watch for fish, their nests hidden in the rushes. A doe crosses land and stands guard as her little one drinks. All our brother and sister animals follow their worn paths to needed waters. Trees and plants subsist with the rain, snow, and groundwater in a place where living Earth supported large herds of bison for thousands of years.

As for us, we were water beings from the beginning. We rained from the broken waters of our mothers to enter this world. We drank from our mothers to thrive. Water is our life-blood, and like all creations on this blue planet, we were born to its currents and passages. So we sing for those who pray to protect the wide, long Missouri River on its elemental journey.

Near the Cannonball River, a place of chokecherries, Indiangrass, and other plants, thousands of people are camped. They know that by legal treaty rights the Missouri River and the land of this region belong to the Standing Rock Sioux. Water flows beneath the skin of this Earth body, and vast clear aquifers lie deeper in the near ground, with rivers and tributaries above. The "Plains" may be the wrong word to use for places existing in the midst of all the ground water and watersheds that support life here: animals, birds, food and medicine plants, expanses of wildflowers in the spring and then the harsh, cold seasons of winter. The tall grasses live because of waters from snow and rain.

My own nation, the Chicaza, lived with the Mississippi River throughout much of our long history. We called that wide rush of water The Long Person. She was our Grandmother and supplied everything we needed to survive. With great sorrow, we were removed from our homeland in 1837. We left in order to avoid future genocide. The U.S. government planned to place all of the tribes into Indian Territory and build a wall around it, opening the rest of the

country to settlers. Large numbers of Native peoples were chased toward what is now Oklahoma, but many of the Plains nations managed to remain, avoid capture, and try to return to their beloved homelands.

While many Northern Plains nations escaped life in Oklahoma, continuing actions by the federal government resulted in a shrinking land base for the Dakota and Lakota, including the Dawes Act of 1889, which opened most land for settlers throughout the country. The Fort Laramie Treaty is the only treaty that remains unbroken by the United States. Now it is a corporation breaking the heart of the people, ignoring the treaty rights and the water guaranteed to the Sioux by that 1868 treaty. The state government of North Dakota also has not upheld the treaty and backs the corporation, Energy Transfer Partners/Sunoco.

Most Native peoples and others are hoping the Standing Rock Sioux Nation will hold steady to all their treaty rights to the Missouri River, that the land and water will remain healthy and intact, and that the Dakota Access pipeline will never pass beneath the river nor cross the land in any way.

Thousands of water protectors have arrived to show their solidarity. The chiefs and leaders of over 300 tribal nations have appeared to speak of their own concern for the water and land. Others have sent water, money, and supplies.

Along these waterways, many negotiations decreased the land base, but the river system has grown even more important as trail and trade, especially for survival and subsistence for people who refused to give up their land for any hundred million dollars offered by the United States.

Other states are also affected by work on the Bakken crude pipeline. Citizens in Iowa have had their homes condemned by the Texas company that began fracking the Bakken fields. Fracking makes the land more vulnerable and more likely to shift and move, affecting tectonic plates. Water is removed and injected back into Earth with secret chemicals, their exact toxic ingredients protected by patents. This makes for a vulnerable Earth. The lawsuits in Iowa have at least slowed operations.

Bakken crude comes from one of the most dangerous work sites now in operation. Working men have been charred to death by explosions and fires, electrocuted. Native women near these “man camps” have been subject to abuse, rape, and sometimes have disappeared, often into the sex trafficking business, sometimes murdered.

Standing Rock, this part of the Plains, is the world of well-known leader and holy man Sitting Bull. It is land crossed during the time of the Fort Laramie Treaty, signed in what is now Wyoming. In my mind’s eye as I’ve studied the history, I see the many leaders of nations crossing this land to participate in negotiations with the American government. Wearing beautifully made regalia, most traveled on horseback or with wagons, the chiefs and the women

ambassadors of nations who thought the Fort Laramie Treaty would be a resolution to their problems. Even those who had earlier disputes came together with one another in kinship, camping together, sharing meals, and creating new relationships.

Now the chiefs of many tribal nations and other representatives have arrived again, this time to join in common protection for the water of this Earth and in solidarity with the Standing Rock and Lakota. This is still the land of the Standing Rock Sioux and other Lakota Nations, still held together by the words and memory of Sitting Bull, who loved and protected his people. No company or state has the right to take a thin, dirty business through it, a pipeline certain to break, destroying the water and contaminating the future.

But the Dakota Access corporation sent its private, aggressive militia to declare its own war on the people. With that amount of harassment, the water protectors could certainly be in danger. We already saw on the news that, after being told where the burial sites and sacred lands were, the bulldozers went to those areas and tore through the earth, the opposite of what was expected. What drives such hostility is hard to imagine.

The planes and helicopters have been flying over the vulnerable past and future of the land. What look like SWAT teams and men with assault rifles are set loose to aim the weapons of their anger or use attack dogs on the people who are only protecting the water, or were chopping wood or cooking for the others when the armed men arrived.

It stays with me. What drives this hatred is impossible for me to understand.

I think of the pilots and these men and I wonder, do they go home at times to happiness, to their own families? Do they carefully tend gardens or gently touch their loved ones? Do they protect their children from bullies? Do those with such fury on their faces think that the others are human beings like themselves? Do they realize that flying over the lands of the First People causes fear? Forever I will think of one picture, quickly removed from a website, showing a man point an assault rifle too near a crying girl, maybe 8 years old, her hair neatly French braided, her clothing impeccable.

I am a Chickasaw woman no longer on the waters of the Mississippi, but my daughters and grandchildren are Oglala Lakota. We know how many tribes in the South became extinct centuries even before the fur trappers and gold seekers journeyed to these Northern Plains. We've all survived massacres and hunger from the loss of our food sources, from freezing winters, even before the time of Custer's wars in this region.

Photographs from space reveal that Earth is a water planet. No living thing survives without water. It is for that reason space explorers search for planets that may contain this element; it is a sign of life.

Most First People have chants or songs about the sacred nature of water. Water is even used for baptism in Christian religions. I hear that even the waters have their distinct songs as they journey toward the oceans.

We live on a single globe of water, all of it one entity. It is alive, this elemental force, this yearning sacred creation, longing to reach an ocean. This is our body, and perhaps we are a part of its soul. It is always moving away, traveling and then returning, in its glorious circle. And we know that when we sing for water, we sing for ourselves.

At this time, we need to pray and sing for water in other locations as well. To name only a few, the San Juan River and its Animas tributary is still too polluted for use by the Navajo after the great wall of pollution from the Gold King Mine spill. The Menomenee are fighting a mining site at their water's source. California tribes have had water taken by bottling companies and their sacred springs have dried. The Amazon and other rivers in South America are under duress from mining, oil, deforestation, and mega-dam builders.

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/to-the-standing-rock-sioux-who-are-singing-for-water-20161004>

October 4, 2016

Can Americans find common ground on climate change?

Americans' views on climate change diverge sharply depending on their political affiliations, says a new Pew Research poll. But two areas of consensus are emerging.

By Ellen Powell, Staff
Christian Science Monitor

Climate change is still very much a political issue, finds a new poll by the Pew Research Center. But the seeds of consensus are present, too – and they may get to the heart of what Americans value.

The poll found that people's political orientations have a substantial influence on their perceptions of climate issues. Liberal Democrats express the most trust in climate scientists and are most likely to say that human or political action can prevent climate catastrophe. Conservative Republicans tend to be far more skeptical toward climate scientists, and tend to say that individual acts can make only a limited difference.

At the same time, there is emerging bipartisan US agreement on two key areas: the role of scientists in policy-making and support for renewable energy sources. These areas of consensus may reflect individuals' values and ideals – and a change in the way that climate science “speaks” to those values.

“The most important thing I’ve learned ... is that facts are not enough,” Katharine Hayhoe, associate professor of political science at Texas Tech University and the co-author of "A Climate for Change: Global Warming Facts for Faith-Based Decisions," tells The Christian Science Monitor in a phone interview. “We need to connect to people’s hearts,” she says.

Such a personal connection often comes through faith, which is “where many of our values come from,” Dr. Hayhoe explains. And connecting with the science in a more personal way may help increase trust in the science.

In fact, the Pew survey found that the more people cared about climate issues, the more likely they were to [believe that science presented an accurate picture of the issues](#). In the “climate-engaged” group, 67 percent said they trusted climate scientists to provide full and accurate information “a lot,” compared with 33 percent of those who cared some about the issues and 9 percent who had little interest in climate change.

Linked to this trust in science, more than 75 percent of Democrats and most Republicans told Pew that scientists should play a “major” role in formulating policy. That may be a shift from previous skepticism – and it’s a move that many scientists would welcome.

“Any time that you can formulate a policy based on data points and facts and not on unquantifiable emotions or opinions, I think that helps to formulate a solid policy,” Benjamin Corb, public affairs director for the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, tells the Monitor in a phone interview. But care must be taken to focus on the facts, he says: “Scientists are people ... it doesn’t matter if it’s a non-scientist or a scientist, if you’re letting your opinions overrule the evidence that’s in front of you, that would be problematic.”

For Hayhoe, policy cannot be based purely on scientific facts. Science does not make value judgments, and policy relies on values to “provide the framework to interpret the data,” she explains. Ultimately, the policy you choose to implement reflects where you want to go: as a community, a state or a nation. “It’s a human question,” she says.

A future-looking value judgment may be informing the emerging consensus around support for renewable energy sources. Some 89 percent of Pew respondents were in favor of more solar farms, while wind turbine farms were viewed favorably by 83 percent. Among traditional energy sources, the highest support went to “More offshore drilling,” at 45 percent.

The poll found that support for renewable energy sources was attributable to three broad sets of motivations: financial, health-related, and environmental. This broad base of motivations, rather than a [narrow appeal to personal guilt](#), may help to increase engagement across the political spectrum. A 2015 study across 24 countries found that these so-called “co-benefits” to environmental action motivated people regardless of whether they believed in man-made climate change.

“It’s much easier to [address the things that many people already care about](#) and link these things to environmental action, like creating jobs and the state of their local community, rather than

trying to change their stance on particular environmental issues,” explained co-author Gró Einarsdóttir, a PhD student from the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, to Science Nordic.

Increasing private money in clean energy technologies may be a particular spur to this consensus. The investments of individuals such as Elon Musk and Bill Gates suggest that the industry is not only economically viable, but may have huge potential for growth. That’s a change from the perception of renewable energy as a sink for government funds, which was fueled by events like the [Solyndra collapse](#).

Some policymakers are already finding areas of consensus. Senators Jim Inhofe (R) of Oklahoma and Barbara Boxer (D) of California have recently worked together on three environment-related bills: a transportation bill, a water projects bill, and the first update in 40 years to toxic chemicals regulation.

"People wonder how can we possibly bridge the divide," [Boxer] mused as the Senate debated the water bill. "And it is a fact that on certain issues we can't. There is a lesson there. ... We have never, ever taken those differences and made them personal. We respect each other and we [don't waste a lot of time arguing](#)."

<http://www.csmonitor.com/Environment/2016/1004/Can-Americans-find-common-ground-on-climate-change>

October 4, 2016

When it comes to the environment, it is in giving that countries will receive

By Tomás Insua
Huffington Post

Even the most optimistic among us would not dispute that our world is currently in a desperate state. From climate change to armed conflict, from pollution to widespread inequality, humanity suffers from innumerable afflictions. While some afflictions are more recent phenomena than others, how we cope with this suffering, and how we go about reducing the pain we inflict on ourselves and others, are dilemmas as old as humankind itself.

Today, on 4th October, the world’s 1.2 billion Catholics are celebrating the life and legacy of a man who has inspired whole movements, lifestyles, films and countless books since his death: St. Francis of Assisi. Indeed, St. Francis is the “the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and protects creation” who provided the inspiration for the [chosen name of the current pope](#).

Despite living 800 years ago, St. Francis - famed for his humble devotion to poverty, his harmony with nature and as a writer of prayers of sublime beauty - still has much to teach us, Catholics and non-Catholics, as we confront the complex challenges that currently face our society.

We face no greater challenge today than that posed by climate change. The vast majority of climate scientists tell us that increased concentrations of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere are trapping infrared heat before it escapes into space, leading to a dangerous increase in average temperatures on the Earth's surface and accompanying changes in the climate.

In concrete terms, this means sweltering [record-high temperatures](#) approaching those the likes of which we have not experienced in the last 11,700 years during which humankind has flourished. It means more frequent and intense [heatwaves](#) in regions from South Asia to the Middle East. It means deadly [floods](#) in Louisiana in the US in September and floods in France in June that caused [one billion euros worth of damage](#). It means [melting glaciers](#) and [heavy rains](#) in Italy. It means an increased risk of [forest fires](#) in Brazil. No demographic group is spared from climate change, though of course it is the poor that suffer most.

Humans are far from blameless in this, and we know it. The combustion of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas is the main driver of this problem, as it emits greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Furthermore, widespread and unsustainable deforestation can cause immense damage not only to biodiversity and displaced indigenous communities but also to the forest's capacity to absorb carbon dioxide in vast quantities.

Contemplating this situation, it is no wonder that Pope Francis turned back to St. Francis of Assisi for inspiration when he wrote his June 2015 eco-Encyclical [Laudato Si'](#), the title of which, translated as "Praised be", is taken from the saint's hymn Canticum of the Creatures.

Like St. Francis's song of praise to Brother Sun and Sister Moon, *Laudato Si'* has since emboldened many others to take action: the [Global Catholic Climate Movement](#), a coalition of 400 Catholic organizations, has led a [Laudato Si' Week campaign](#) as part of which thousands of people learnt more about the Encyclical's message and pledged to care for Our Common Home in concrete ways. Just today, religious institutions from different continents have [pledged to take their investments out of the fossil fuel companies that continue to contribute to climate change](#).

The ecological crisis we face is so severe, however, that groups of individuals and organizations cannot resolve it alone. Through their policies and pledges, governments must create the conditions for effective climate and environmental action to flourish.

Progress is being made: at the end of September, several major emitters of greenhouse gases reaffirmed their will to be bound by the terms of last December's historic Paris Agreement on Climate Change by officially ratifying it. Despite worrying statements from countries like Poland who seem to have misunderstood the core messages of *Laudato Si'* and [continue to invest heavily in coal](#), globally investment in renewables is rising and the [outlook for coal is bleak](#). The complex nature of the challenge and the limitations of the Paris Agreement mean that much still remains to be done in other fora, however.

Before the end of the year, countries have several opportunities to prove they appreciate the full gravity of the situation. As I write, 191 governments are gathered at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) General Assembly in Montréal in an attempt to curb greenhouse

gas emissions from aircraft. Given that the ICAO General Assembly only meets every three years, it is vital that countries reach an ambitious deal to ensure that, by 2020, carbon-neutral growth is achieved.

When they meet for COP22 in Morocco in November to discuss the finer details of the Paris Agreement, countries must similarly ensure they show the same spirit of ambition that was crucial to the success of Paris itself. Pope Francis was unequivocal about the importance of this next step in a recent seminar entitled “Laudato Si’ and the Path to COP22” at which I and over 40 distinguished scholars and leaders from various sectors discussed these matters with His Holiness. As I have outlined in a [paper](#) submitted at that conference, all of us - from countries to individuals to the Catholic Church itself - have a role to play in contributing to a positive outcome at COP22.

Let people of all faiths and none therefore take this, the last day of the month-long Christian [Season of Creation](#) during which Christian leaders have asked people around the world to pray for the environment, as an opportunity to reflect on our relationship with the world around us and work in solidarity to preserve what is most precious to us by meeting the challenge posed by climate change. For, to apply the words of St. Francis to a problem that affects us all and that we can only solve together, it truly is in giving that we shall receive.

Tomás Insua is Founding Coordinator of Global Catholic Climate Movement & Fulbright Scholar at Harvard Kennedy School.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tomas-insua/when-it-comes-to-the-envi_b_12326118.html

October 7, 2016

Flint Officials Are No Longer Saying the Water Is Fine

By Monica Davey
New York Times

FLINT, Mich. — All along, through months of complaints from residents of this city about the peculiar colors and odors they said were coming from their faucets, the overriding message from the authorities here was that the water would be just fine.

Yes, there had been a boil order when fecal coliform bacteria turned up in some neighborhoods last year. And yes, the extra chlorine that was pumped in to solve that problem seemed to create another one — increased levels of a different contaminant.

Still, the guidance from Flint officials about the temporary water supply they switched to in 2014 — partly to save money — sounded assuring. In a notice sent to residents in July, city officials declared: “This is not an emergency. If a situation arises where the water is no longer safe to drink, you will be notified within 24 hours.”

[The soothing talk](#) has vanished. In recent weeks, testing has shown increased levels of lead in the blood of some Flint children — and health officials pointed to the water as a possible source.

First, the city advised residents to run their water for five minutes before using it, to use only cold water for drinking and cooking, and to install lead-removing water filters. Then county officials issued an [emergency advisory](#) recommending that people not drink Flint's water unless it is tested for lead or filtered.

And last Friday, after corroborating that lead levels had risen in some children, state officials called for the water to be tested at all Flint public schools and for stepped-up efforts to replace lead service lines; they also promised \$1 million to provide filters.

Officials met here on Wednesday afternoon, and talks were underway, officials said, for additional solutions that could come as early as Thursday. Gov. Rick Snyder said on Twitter late Wednesday that he planned to make an announcement about the situation on Thursday morning.

Private groups have raced to donate bottled water to schools, where the water fountains are now shut off, as well as filters to families who cannot afford them. Saying “we’re just in a heck of a bind,” Robert J. Pickell, the Genesee County sheriff, began serving bottled water and food that need not be cooked in water to hundreds of inmates in the county jail. Some residents have begun washing their children and pets with bottled water.

And Flint's mayor, Dayne Walling, who had attended a 2014 event to celebrate the switch to the new water supply, called for returning to the city's old water supply and urged state officials to provide millions of dollars to help pay for it.

The contaminated water was just the latest blow to Flint, an economically battered city that has struggled for years with factory closings, job losses and population decline.

Along Saginaw Street downtown, where at least one business had an “un-leaded” sign posted by a jug of water, residents had lingering questions: Would filters really do enough to make the water safe? What about unfiltered showers? Could they rely on the water at work and at restaurants? And why had it taken so long for leaders to figure out that there was a problem?

“I don't think people know what's going on at all,” said Chris Thornton, 49, who described the first blast of water from his faucets some days as looking like urine, smelling like bleach and tasting of metal. After his wife, Ronda, 50, felt sick to her stomach for months, the Thorntons began buying jugs of bottled water, though the price — on top of an already steep water bill — has been overwhelming.

“As far as my family,” Ronda Thornton said, “we've just given up on the city's water.”

Flint's water problems are tied inextricably to its fiscal woes. In 1960, nearly 200,000 people lived here. But auto plants closed, and the population has dropped by half. By 2011, Flint's shrunken tax base and seemingly intractable budget problems prompted Mr. Snyder to appoint an

emergency manager for the city. Over the next four years, the city had four managers overseeing operations. Along the way, the city switched its water supply.

For decades, the city bought water from Detroit, which treated water from Lake Huron, then piped it here, 70 miles to the northwest. But with the costs mounting, Flint's leaders decided they could save millions by joining a new regional authority that would draw and treat its own water from Lake Huron.

There was one complication: Flint needed an alternative water supply from April 2014 until the new regional system is ready, probably next year. In the interim, Flint switched to using water from the Flint River, which state officials say had been a backup source in the past.

Ask residents about the Flint River, and many of them roll their eyes. They say it was once as a dumping ground for car parts, grocery carts and refrigerators. There have been significant improvements and intensive restoration campaigns in recent years, though a Flint River Fest set for Friday has been postponed, organizers said, given the "current drinking water crisis."

Even now, state officials say that treated Flint River water is safe and capable of meeting state and federal standards. Officials say the problem may be that some of the aging pipes and service lines that carry water into Flint's homes and businesses contain lead and are being corroded by water. The water Flint used to receive from Detroit was treated with chemicals intended to prevent such corrosion.

For months, questions about lead and other risks multiplied. "Everyone kept saying: 'It's safe! It's safe! It's safe!'" recalled Melissa Mays, a Flint resident who says she was sickened by the water and has helped organize residents over the issue.

Then in September, a researcher from Virginia Tech released findings from the water in hundreds of Flint homes showing elevated lead levels. Blood tests released by a local pediatrician — and corroborated last week by state officials analyzing their own testing — showed an increase in lead levels in children in some neighborhoods since 2014, when the city began drawing water from the river.

"We all have a concern about Flint's drinking water in terms of what we're seeing in terms of lead," Mr. Snyder said last week.

Mr. Walling said that the move to river water occurred when an emergency manager controlled the city, though the City Council did vote for the city's plans for a new, regional water system. He acknowledged supporting the move in a state of the city address, but said that he had not been given sufficient information about the safety risks.

"I had to work with what I knew at the time," Mr. Walling, who is up for election next month, said in an interview.

But for many residents, the authorities failed the city by taking so long to react. "Anytime you have to weigh money against the health and welfare of people, it always has to be the health and

welfare you go with,” said the Rev. Alfred Harris, a local pastor who has stopped conducting baptisms at his church because of concerns about the water. “We’ve been talking about this for the last 14 months, and they did not give a sincere ear to any of us. Shame on you!”

LeeAnne Walters said her son, Gavin, 4, who has immune system issues, had suffered direct consequences. After the switch to river water, which sometimes looked brown in their house, Gavin dropped to 27 pounds, far below the weight of his twin brother, she said. He sometimes seemed unable to pronounce words he knew, she said, and then test results showed an elevated lead level in his blood.

“He is going to deal with the side effects of this for the rest of his life,” Ms. Walters said. “I don’t think there’s a word angry enough to describe my anger. I trusted the city, and I helped the city poison my kid. Who thought this could happen in the United States?”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/08/us/reassurances-end-in-flint-after-months-of-concern.html>

October 10, 2016

Katharine Hayhoe, a Climate Explainer Who Stays Above the Storm

By John Schwartz
New York Times

LUBBOCK, Tex. — A member of Katharine Hayhoe’s church asked her a question after services a couple of weeks ago: “Do you feel our weather is getting more extreme?”

Time was, the question might have been the start of an argument with [Dr. Hayhoe](#), a climate scientist at [Texas Tech University](#) here. Instead, it led to a friendly discussion of the kinds of things they had both seen: Because of [climate change](#), the always shifting weather in West Texas was showing greater extremes, including more severe drought and fiercer inundations when storms came.

When she started her work spreading the word about climate change in Texas, very few people in the Lone Star State believed it was happening, and even fewer believed that people were causing it. Since then, acceptance has grown: A [2013 poll](#) by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication found that seven in 10 Texans agree that climate change is real, though fewer than half said humans were the major cause.

The [evidence of changing weather patterns](#) is not just in the news, but all around them: More than half of those in the Texas survey said they had personally experienced the effects of global warming.

Dr. Hayhoe is not a climate pioneer like [Al Gore](#) or a street-marching activist like [Bill McKibben](#) or a geek icon like [Bill Nye](#). But she has emerged as one of the nation’s most effective communicators on the threat of climate change and the need for action.

She lives and works out here in West Texas, but lately seems to be everywhere, kicking off [a series of “Global Weirding” videos](#), posting on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#), and speaking anywhere from local churches to international conferences. Last week, she appeared at the White House to discuss climate change [with President Obama and the actor Leonardo DiCaprio](#) at the first [South by South Lawn](#) ideas festival.

Dr. Hayhoe has come to prominence in part because she is just so darned nice. It would be too easy to chalk that up to her Canadian background — she says it does help explain her commitment to finding consensus — and she has found that she gets her science across more effectively if she can connect with people personally. In a nation seemingly addicted to argument as a blood sport, she conciliates. On a topic so contentious that most participants snarl, she smiles. She is an evangelical Christian, and she does not flinch from using the language of faith and stewardship to discuss the fate of the planet.

“Katharine Hayhoe is a national treasure,” said Anthony Leiserowitz, the director of the [Yale Program on Climate Change Communication](#). He said that she combined powerful communications skills, world-class scientific credentials and an ability to relate to conservative religious communities that can be skeptical about the risks of a changing climate.

[Gavin Schmidt](#), a NASA climate scientist, said in an email that Dr. Hayhoe’s faith is an important factor, because “people can accept unwelcome truths much more readily if they come from within, rather than from outside, their community/family/group.”

While some climate warriors treat those who are not inclined to believe them as dupes or fools, she wants to talk. “If you begin a conversation with, ‘You’re an idiot,’ that’s the end of the conversation, too,” she said over tacos at a Tex-Mex restaurant, having ordered in the fluent Spanish she picked up during her parents’ missionary service in Colombia. She is 44, but seems younger — someone who speaks with authority but can punctuate a statement about a surprising scientific fact with a wondering, almost giggly, “Isn’t that crazy?”

Now, in a presidential election race with high stakes for responding to climate change — Donald J. Trump has called global warming a hoax and [would reverse deals](#) that President Obama has spearheaded to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while Hillary Clinton has called for continuing along Mr. Obama’s path — there is room for many approaches. Some will rally the troops; she will reach out to the quiet people in the middle, the undecided, who might listen.

She gets her share of abuse; you really don’t want to read the [emails](#) she gets, and she spends a fair amount of her time on Twitter blocking people who try to bait her with abusive language. But she still tries to present herself and the science without tumult, and with a measure of optimism.

Dr. Hayhoe did not set out to be a smiling climate crusader. In the scientific circles of her training, she encountered no one who needed to be convinced that what she was studying was valid, any more than a professor of literature would have to argue in favor of the existence of books.

But then she started to realize that many people didn't agree. She discovered to her shock six months after her marriage to [Andrew Farley](#), a linguistics scholar, that he was among the dubious.

She discussed that moment of realization with her students in class last month. Her husband had only understood her dissertation work to be some arcane combination of chemistry and computation; he did not believe climate change was real.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/11/science/katharine-hayhoe-climate-change-science.html>

October 10, 2016

Indigenous groups are way ahead of everyone else at protecting forests

And they are turning the Dakota Access protests into a worldwide environmental movement.

By Alexander Sammon
Mother Jones

By the time three federal government agencies issued their [joint statement](#) halting construction of the Dakota Access pipeline on September 9, there were some [5,000](#) protesters on site in Cannon Ball, North Dakota challenging the project. The groups spread out over a massive campsite on the Standing Rock Sioux reservation, where the tribe says the proposed construction of the pipeline threatens their water source and sacred lands.

After hearing about the Standing Rock resistance, Native groups from all over the world came to stand in solidarity with the Sioux, traveling from Canada, Mexico, Brazil, and the Ecuadorian Amazon. The thousands of demonstrators represented [some 280](#) different indigenous tribes, by far the largest Native American protest in recent memory and perhaps one of the [largest ever recorded](#). The project's construction permits are being reconsidered for violation under the National Environmental Policy Act, a process that will run through [November 21](#). But no matter what happens with the pipeline, many of these demonstrators see the events at Standing Rock as a springboard for a larger indigenous solidarity movement.

It's not simply an issue of indigenous land rights—many groups who showed up at Standing Rock are hoping to mount a larger unified effort to combat climate change. According to Leo Cerda, Ecuador field coordinator of the group Amazon Watch and member of the Kichwa tribe, the plight of indigenous land rights in the face of corporate resource extraction is a global phenomenon. Cerda, who hails from the Ecuadorean Amazon, traveled with a group of four all the way to North Dakota to show solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux. "The indigenous struggle against governments and corporations is the same all over the world," Cerda told *Mother Jones*. "We have been among the only people doing anything to stop climate change," he added.

In Bolivia and Brazil, non-indigenous lands were deforested at nearly three times the rate of their indigenous counterparts.

A new [study](#) by the World Resources Institute, a resource management NGO, lends credence to that claim. Analyzing deforestation rates in Amazonian regions of Bolivia, Brazil, and Colombia over the course of 12 years, the WRI found that legally recognized indigenous forestlands experienced significantly lower rates of forest loss. In Bolivia and Brazil, non-indigenous lands were deforested at nearly three times the rate of their indigenous counterparts; in Colombia, the rate was double.

The study also found that indigenous forestlands in these three countries would provide between \$25 and \$34 billion in carbon sequestration over the next 20 years. The report urged for indigenously-held forestlands to become a central tenet of climate change mitigation strategies, a course of action conspicuously absent from Bolivia, Brazil, and Colombia's [Nationally Determined Contributions](#) to the UN's new climate [deal](#).

Still, indigenous land protectors are not waiting around for legislative assistance. Instead, they are putting to use protest methods practiced at Standing Rock. Last Wednesday, [CONFENIAE](#), a regional organization of 1,500 indigenous communities in the Ecuadorian Amazon, was surrounded and forcibly evacuated by 200 police and riot cops in relation to its role in blocking 29 proposed oil plots. According to Cerda, members of Amazon Watch are using police relation tactics learned in North Dakota to hold their ground and establish their rights. "We were surprised that the same sorts of rights violations by police happen in the so-called free world," he said of his time in North Dakota. Currently, Cerda's group is creating a camp of its own to protest land expropriation in the name of increased oil extraction in Ecuador.

The six-week governmental review process that will determine the fate of the Dakota Access Pipeline is slated to begin on October 11. Though there have been no early indications as to how that process might turn out, one thing is certain—indigenous groups worldwide will be watching.

<http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2016/10/how-dakota-access-pipeline-protests-launched-global-movement>

October 10, 2016

Ranchers Tote Guns as Tribes Dig In for Long Pipeline Fight

By Jack Healy
New York Times

As others built winter shelters over the weekend, she worked in the camp's supply area, sifting through thousands of donated sleeping bags, parkas and boots.

Fighting for Water

Nine indigenous groups gathered in New York City to show solidarity with the Standing Rock protest in North Dakota. They are also urging the city to rename Columbus Day "Indigenous Peoples Day."

A man stopped by and asked if there was a spare toothbrush. There were 4,000.

“This is my home now,” Ms. Henderson said.

It has been a month since the United States government made an unprecedented [intervention](#) in this high-plains battle over the environment, energy development and tribal rights by temporarily blocking the 1,170-mile [Dakota Access pipeline](#) from crossing under the Missouri River.

Tribal and environmental activists say that the pipeline would threaten water supplies for the Standing Rock Sioux and millions of others downstream, and that its route would destroy tribal burial grounds and sacred cultural lands. The pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners, says it has followed federal and state rules and claims that the pipeline would be a safer and cleaner way to move crude oil from fields to refineries.

On Sunday, a federal appeals court removed a major obstacle for the company by rejecting the Standing Rock Sioux’s request for an injunction against the pipeline. The tribe has sued in federal court, arguing that it was not properly consulted about how the pipeline’s route could affect ancestral tribal lands. (The company said Tuesday that it would resume that work.)

The appeals court said crews could resume work on private lands, bringing the pipeline closer to the [Army Corps of Engineers](#) land straddling the pipeline’s crucial river crossing.

Protesters Respond to Pipeline Ruling

The U.S. government temporarily halted construction on the Dakota Access pipeline after a federal court denied a Native American tribe’s request for an injunction.

The corps is responsible for deciding whether to grant the pipeline an easement to cross under the river. It has been reviewing its earlier pipeline-related decisions, made under federal environmental laws, and said on Monday that it hoped to reach a conclusion soon.

In a joint statement from the corps and the Interior and Justice Departments, officials again asked the pipeline company to pause construction within 20 miles of Lake Oahe, the dammed section of the Missouri. The agencies and the tribes will meet this week in Phoenix to discuss the need for nationwide reform on how Native Americans are consulted on major infrastructure projects like the pipeline.

“We continue to respect the right to peaceful protest and expect people to obey the law,” the agencies said in the statement.

David Archambault II, the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux, said that he was disappointed by the legal setback but that the tribe would make a “full-court press” to urge President Obama and federal officials not to let the pipeline cross the river.

“We’re hoping he does the right thing by our people at Standing Rock,” Mr. Archambault said.

Even with the government-ordered halt, the pipeline's progress never really stopped.

Crews kept digging ditches and draping sections of the light-green 30-inch pipe into ranchers' fields not covered by the federal order. And protesters kept dogging them, driving to construction sites as far as 80 miles from their camps to try to halt work.

On Monday, a holiday that many celebrate as Indigenous Peoples Day instead of Columbus Day, scores of protesters rallied and pitched a tepee beside a section of pipe near the tiny farming town of St. Anthony. Twenty-seven people were arrested. In all, about 130 have been arrested since the large-scale protests began this summer.

Ranchers are becoming edgy. Sheriff's deputies worried about being identified at protests have taken off their name tags, and some say they have been followed home. Local officials here are increasingly exasperated because Washington has declined or ignored their requests, they say, for emergency funds and federal law enforcement officers.

"The camp is on federal land, and the federal government has not responded to official requests for resources," said Cody Shulz, the chairman of the Morton County Commission.

Local officials also criticized Washington's move to intervene and pause construction, saying it had prolonged demonstrations that have drained money and left law enforcement stretched thin.

"It's made this whole situation more confusing in the long run," said Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier of Morton County, who has led the law enforcement response to weeks of anti-pipeline demonstrations. "It has dragged it on longer and put an uncertainty on the whole thing."

Jon Moll, 38, a sheriff's deputy in Morton County, has been working six- and seven-day weeks since the summer. He has carefully pulled down a protester who locked himself to the bucket of an excavator. Deputy Moll described the tensions of a demonstration last month where, sheriff's officials say, a protester on horseback charged at deputies.

"Some have no problem with us," Deputy Moll said as he drove past the camps on Saturday, many people offering a quick wave at his sport utility vehicle. "You have people that despise your existence."

Officers like Deputy Moll say they have been trying to keep tense face-offs in the rolling plains from spiraling into violence. Sheriff Kirchmeier says demonstrators have charged onto private property and attacked pipeline contractors. Demonstrators say security guards for the pipeline unleashed guard dogs on them during a confrontation.

Winter may be coming, but so are new supporters. A group of Comanche teenagers and their parents drove to a camp from Oklahoma over the weekend to march up a rural highway to land that the pipeline would cross. A group of 400 indigenous grandmothers is making plans to come. In South Dakota, people are raising money for 1,000 Oglala Lakota Sioux children to travel to the camps.

“Something bigger than us is happening here,” said LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, a tribal historian for the Standing Rock Sioux who helped found the first camp, on her property, in April.

On Sunday morning, she had just come home from buying breakfast supplies in Bismarck, N.D., for the camp. Her trips these days begin with her husband telling her to be safe.

“We watch every day,” she said. “We have a right to live here.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/11/us/tribes-protest-oil-pipeline-north-dakota.html>

October 10, 2016

Urgent action needed to prevent cholera becoming 'the real disaster' in Haiti

Christian Aid

Cholera could kill more people in Haiti than Hurricane Matthew, without urgent action to control the disease and ensure families have safe drinking water, Christian Aid warned today.

“I am worried that if it is not controlled as soon as possible, cholera will be the real disaster,” said Prosperity Raymond, Country Manager for Haiti, speaking after visiting the worst-hit south of Haiti.

“There is a risk that more people could die from the disease than from the hurricane.”

Hurricane Matthew hit on Wednesday 5th October and left [at least 400 people dead](#), an estimated [750,000 people needing aid and more than 25,000 houses](#) badly damaged.

“There is a lot of water around but it is not drinkable because animals have died in it, and so on. The risk of contamination is really high. We need to help families get clean drinking water,” added Mr Raymond.

Christian Aid is working with Norwegian Church Aid to get water purifying tablets to 1,500 families (around 9,000 people) in Haiti, said Mr Raymond.

The thousands of people forced out of their houses by Hurricane Matthew are also desperate for building materials so they can repair their properties and go home, he added.

They are currently sheltering in churches, schools and the houses that withstood the storm. The ground is too saturated for tents.

“People want to repair their homes quickly so they can return home. They are desperate for corrugated iron, clips, wood and hammers,” said Mr Raymond.

“We will provide the materials to 1,000 families, and help from an engineer if they want it, and they will fix their houses.”

He argued the Haitian government should now control and subsidise the prices of such materials, to help as many people as possible to repair their homes, where repair is even possible.

Mr Raymond also appealed to people in the UK to support [Christian Aid's Haiti appeal](#).

“We would like to help many more families to be able to return home and would be so grateful for support from people in the UK,” he said. “It will also help children return to school, which they can't do while schools are used for shelter.”

During his visit to the worst-hit part of Haiti, Mr Raymond also found that all the houses built there by Christian Aid partners following the 2010 earthquake had survived the hurricane and were each being used as shelter for between two and five families.

“The houses we built are saving lives, because they are sheltering other people,” he said.

Mr Raymond, who is himself from the south of Haiti, said that despite their struggle and dangers they face, people still have hope.

“The situation is really critical and people are living in difficult circumstances but they have faith in the future and they are happy with the help they are receiving,” he said.

“Even if they know they are living in the path of hurricanes, they continue to believe in a brighter future for their children.”

http://www.christianaid.org.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/October_2016/urgent-action-needed-to-prevent-cholera-becoming-the-real-disaster-in-haiti.aspx

October 10, 2016

Court Rejects Dakota Access Injunction, But Standing Rock Sioux Vow 'This is Not The End'

'This ruling puts 17 million people who rely on the Missouri River at serious risk'

By Nika Knight, staff writer
Common Dreams

A U.S. federal court of appeals [ruled against](#) the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe late Sunday evening and denied its request for an emergency injunction against the controversial [Dakota Access Pipeline](#).

The ruling allows Energy Transfer Partners—the Dallas-based company funding the project—to move forward with construction of the pipeline on all privately owned land up to the Missouri River," *NBC notes*. Construction was temporarily [halted](#) in late August while the case was considered by the court.

The ruling was handed down the evening before Columbus Day, which celebrates the arrival of Christopher Columbus to the Americas—an event that heralded centuries of genocide, many Indigenous people have [argued](#). A [growing movement](#) seeks to instate the holiday Indigenous Peoples' Day in its stead.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has vowed to continue its battle against the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the timing of the ruling helped prompt widespread [calls](#) for solidarity and support.

"This ruling puts 17 million people who rely on the Missouri River at serious risk," [said](#) Dave Archambault II, chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. "And, already, the Dakota Access Pipeline has led to the desecration of our sacred sites when the company bulldozed over the burials of our Lakota and Dakota ancestors. This is not the end of this fight. We will continue to explore all lawful options to protect our people, our water, our land, and our sacred places."

As *Native News Online* [explains](#): "The 1,168-mile pipeline crosses through the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's ancestral lands and within a half mile of the reservation boundary. Construction crews have already destroyed and desecrated confirmed sacred and historic sites, including burials and cultural artifacts. The original pipeline route crossed the Missouri River just north of Bismarck, the capital of North Dakota. The route was later shifted downstream, to the tribe's doorstep, out of concerns for the city's drinking water supply."

While the [two-page ruling](#) found that the tribe had not met the requirements for emergency injunctive relief, the court did note that the National Historic Preservation Act may require additional consultation. In fact, "the court's ruling acknowledged that it was 'not the final word,' noting that the final decision lies with the Corps of Engineers," as *NBC reports*. "While it said the tribe hadn't met the strict requirements of the act to force a halt to construction, the three-judge panel said it "can only hope that the spirit" of the [National Historic Preservation] act 'may yet prevail.'"

Indeed, a necessary easement is still awaiting Army Corps of Engineers approval, "a decision the Corps counsel predicts is likely weeks away [...] where the tribe alleges historic sites are at risk," the court's ruling observes. It is this easement that the Standing Rock Sioux and their allies hope will be denied based on the National Historic Preservation Act.

"That note, Archambault said, is the court's signal 'to not proceed' with the project," *NBC* writes: "It seems they are coming to the same conclusion as the federal government in acknowledging there is something wrong with the approvals for the pipeline," he said. "We see this as an encouraging sign."

"We are troubled by the court's decision," [added](#) Tom Goldtooth, executive director of the Indigenous Environmental Network, "but as water protectors and land defenders, our resolve to

stop this Bakken frack-oil pipeline will not be diminished. We will continue to support the tribe's efforts to hold the U.S. federal government accountable for rubber stamping this dirty oil project. Meanwhile, our hearts and minds go to the pipeline fighters who will continue to use prayer and peaceful civil disobedience to disrupt business-as-usual and stop this black snake from being completed. This fight is far from over."

The Obama administration had [previously requested](#) that Energy Transfer Partners voluntarily halt construction so that the tribe's concerns could be addressed, but the company, undeterred, has [refused](#) to stop building the pipeline.

Meanwhile, the growing [protest camp](#) of Indigenous [water protectors](#) and [allies](#) from around the world continues to [fight against the pipeline](#) and [peacefully occupy construction sites](#)—despite riot police being [deployed](#) against them—in an effort to put a stop to the project.

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2016/10/10/court-rejects-dakota-access-injunction-standing-rock-sioux-vow-not-end>

October 10, 2016

After Court Lifts Injunction, Government Once Again Calls for Voluntary Halt to Dakota Access

As arrests of water protectors continued on Monday, joint letter from three agencies says that Standing Rock Sioux objections should be considered

By Jon Queally, staff writer
Common Dreams

Repeating a [previous request](#) last month, federal agencies on Monday asked the company building the Dakota Access Pipeline to voluntarily halt construction so that objections raised by the Standing Rock Sioux and other tribes can be properly considered.

A joint statement issued by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, the Department of the Interior, and the Justice Department asked for the pause in work less than 24 hours after [a federal court lifted an injunction](#) against the controversial oil pipeline that opponents say threatens regional water supplies and infringes on tribal sovereignty.

According to *Reuters*, the joint statement said the Army Corp is still reviewing concerns raised by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and other tribal nations about the pipeline's path.

On Monday, protests against the pipeline continued with numerous arrests, including that of actress [Shailene Woodley](#) who live-streamed her arrest on Facebook live.

Despite Sunday's court ruling, pipeline opponents vowed to continue, and intensify, their resistance the project.

"Our hearts and minds go to the pipeline fighters," said Tom Goldtooth, executive director of the Indigenous Environmental Network. "[We] will continue to use prayer and peaceful civil disobedience to disrupt business-as-usual and stop this black snake from being completed. This fight is far from over."

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2016/10/10/after-court-lifts-injunction-government-once-again-calls-voluntary-halt-dakota>

October 10, 2016

Caring for Creation makes the Christian case for climate action

The new book by Mitch Hescox and Paul Douglas is a marriage of science and faith

By John Abraham
The Guardian

Most of you are aware of a growing movement amongst persons of faith to bring more action on dealing with climate change. The argument is powerful for the faithful – the Earth is God's gift to humanity. We should care for it accordingly.

From within this movement, there are huge voices, widely respected by both the scientific and faith communities. Perhaps the best known is [Dr. Katherine Hayhoe](#), a top climate scientist who is also an evangelist Christian. There are other persons and organizations who work similarly to connect these two world viewpoints in a powerful yet common-sense way.

Recently a [book](#) has been published by a faith-science duo. That duo is Paul Douglas, respected meteorologist, entrepreneur, Republican, and Christian, and his writing partner Mitch Hescox who leads the Evangelical Environmental Network (the largest evangelical group devoted to creation care). Their book, entitled Caring for Creation, provides a masterful balance of science, faith, and personal journey.

The style of the book is one I have not seen before. It is a side-by-side presentation of first science, then faith, then science, and back to faith. Interspersed within the main text are enlightening anecdotes mainly from weather forecasters across the country which show an informed lived experience of experts watching the climate change before their very eyes. Importantly the authors provide a list of concrete things that we all can do, starting right now to make a meaningful impact in reducing global warming.

Within this book there is real science. Not just about what is happening now, but the history of climate science, how we've known since the 1800s that human emissions of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide can warm the atmosphere. We also hear from Douglas about observed changes to the weather we all experience. This isn't a problem for far-off times or far-away places. This is an issue that is being manifested now.

Hescoc articulates a message grounded in the proposition that the creation is a gift from God and there is a real responsibility to care for it. Not only for others distant in time and space that may suffer, but for our own good. In fact, he argues persuasively that caring for this creation can help strengthen one's faith.

Hescoc also argues from a pro-life position. Caring for creation is the ultimate pro-life stance. Squandering resources and gifts will not only cause real harm to people and our economy, but it will endanger the lives of many of the most vulnerable.

Douglas provided a great summary:

I am a scientist but I believe in absolutes – I believe in more than I can observe, measure and test. The book of Genesis tells us that God made us in his self image. He gave us big, beautiful brains and the ability to think, reason, solve problems, make smart decisions, and improve our lives. He also gave us the good sense not to foul our nest.

Both of these intertwined stories of faith and science are woven together in a way that is easily accessible for non-scientists and people who are not of faith. We don't need to be climate scientists or religious experts to get a lot out of the authors' perspective.

There are a few quotes from the book that do a great job of encapsulating the central themes which I will share.

With respect to the science, Douglas reminds us that "no matter where you look – the oceans or atmosphere – the Earth is warming." He later adds, this means we "embrace the reality of today and see the world, not as we think it should be, but as it really is – the world we've influenced by releasing a trillion tons of carbon in the geological blink of an eye."

Hescoc states that, "It is almost incredulous that we meet God in creation but we haven't made the connection that caring for creation nurtures our relationship with him."

He later includes this excellent statement from Jonathan Koomey from Stanford. "What is conservative after all but one who conserves, one who is committed to protecting and holding close the things by which we live."

And perhaps the best statement, which so clearly encapsulates this book and the movement, is provided in the text by Dr. Hayhoe. She states, "Christian values demand we take action. [Climate change](#) disproportionately affects the poor and vulnerable – the very people that Christians are called to care for and love."

I would only add this addendum. Climate change affects us all, wealthy or impoverished, Eastern, Western, Northern, Southern, young or old, peach or olive or brown skinned. Taking actions can be motivated just by pure selfishness, wanting to maintain a high standard of living, or by selflessness, or by faith. It doesn't matter what the motivation is but with groups such as scientists and evangelists working together, the possibility is limitless.

October 12, 2016

Standing Rock: A New Moment for Native-American Rights

By Sierra Crane-Murdoch
The New Yorker

The last time Native Americans gathered and the nation noticed was in 1973. That February, after members of the Oglala Sioux tribe failed to impeach their chairman on charges of corruption, they, with leaders of the American Indian Movement, occupied the town of Wounded Knee, South Dakota. It was a final act in the movement's years-long campaign to compel the federal government to honor tribal treaty rights. Already, Native Americans had occupied Alcatraz Island, in a largely symbolic attempt to reclaim it, and Mt. Rushmore, which had been part of the Great Sioux Reservation until Congress redrew its borders. But at Wounded Knee the movement found its symbolic apex: the U.S. Marshals surrounded the occupiers, evoking the start of the massacre that had killed more than a hundred and fifty Lakota people in 1890. Over months, the standoff escalated. Officers manned roadblocks in armored personnel carriers, and neighboring states lent their National Guards. Both sides traded gunfire. The first man shot was a marshal, who survived but was paralyzed from the waist down. The second was a Cherokee man, who died. The third was Lawrence Lamont, an Oglala Lakota, whose death was the beginning of the end of the occupation.

There are echoes of Wounded Knee in the conflict that has sprung up near the [Standing Rock Sioux Reservation](#), in North Dakota. Since midsummer, thousands of Native Americans have gathered at the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball Rivers to protest the construction of the Dakota Access oil pipeline, which would cut just north of the reservation border, crossing sacred sites and imperilling Standing Rock's water supply in the event of a rupture. In July, the tribe filed a lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers, the agency that approved the project, arguing that it had failed to consult with the tribe as required by federal law. While the suit has played out in court, the protesters have said that they will stay until the pipeline is stopped, through winter if they must.

Federal officials have kept a careful distance, but what they have not lent in physical force the state has zealously supplied. In August, Governor Jack Dalrymple declared a state of emergency in North Dakota, warning executives at the pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners, that his administration could no longer "protect their workers adequately." Roadblocks were erected north of the protest encampment, and sheriff's deputies escorted school buses through the area. On September 3rd, the conflict reached its highest pitch. Protesters attempted to obstruct E.T.P.'s bulldozers, and in response the company sent in private security officers, who confronted them with pepper spray and dogs. Five days later, Dalrymple deployed the North Dakota National Guard. "You've got a tinder box here, sir," Chris Berg, a local TV news anchor, told him in an interview.

I arrived at the Standing Rock encampment the following evening with Lissa Yellowbird-Chase, a member of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation in North Dakota, who had been attending the protests nearly every weekend since mid-August. Tents and tepees sprawled along the banks of the Cannonball River; Yellowbird-Chase's uncle, who joined us, joked that they reminded him of "powwows in the old days, when we came by travois"—horse-drawn sleds once used by the Plains Indians. Earlier that day, the protesters had won their first major victory. After a judge ruled against the Standing Rock Sioux, the Obama Administration intervened, announcing that the pipeline would not be permitted onto the federal land beneath the Missouri River until the tribe was properly consulted. In the coming months, the Corps will reassess the impacts of the pipeline and meet with tribal leaders regarding this and other infrastructure projects. The Administration also requested that E.T.P. pause work on private land within twenty miles east and west of the river, but this was only temporary: on October 9th, a federal appeals court again ruled against the Standing Rock Sioux, allowing construction on private land to continue. (The next day, the Administration [renewed its stop-work request](#).)

Yellowbird-Chase set up camp by a grove of cottonwoods, for relief from the late-summer heat, and, beneath a tarp, hung a tin can containing cedar leaves and coals from a neighbor's fire to cleanse the site with smoke. The next morning, we set off for the main part of the encampment. I wondered whether the pause in construction would prompt people to leave, but it became clear, as we approached a mass of tent canopies, that the protest was still growing. Men and women unloaded donations from the trunks of cars—boxes of squash, bags of warm clothes—and passed them with cheerful efficiency down a line of volunteers. Others chopped firewood, hauled trash, peeled vegetables, and fed horses. I unloaded some donations and then joined Yellowbird-Chase for lunch. (It was important, she said, that "we eat with the people.") As we stood in line, friends and strangers stopped to chat. Many would greet us like this throughout the day, including an elderly white man who was handing out red feathers and who explained, timidly, that he'd dreamed of the protests before he'd come and, in this dream, had handed out red feathers. "That's cool," Yellowbird-Chase said, and stuck one in her hair.

Over the weekend, the encampment continued to swell with new visitors. Aztec dancers came from Minneapolis, then delegations from the Round Valley Indian Tribes in California, the Jemez Pueblo in New Mexico, and the Blackfeet Nation in Montana. They entered through a corridor lined with the flags of hundreds of other tribes who had offered support. These arrivals, which happened every day, signified as much a coming together of old enemies as of old friends. Weeks earlier, the Crow, who aided the U.S. Cavalry in its nineteenth-century battles against the Sioux, had come with blankets, coolers of meat, and a horse trailer full of cordwood.

The shared history that brought these tribes together is, of course, more recent than the massacre at Wounded Knee. In "Custer Died for Your Sins," a manifesto of the Native American-rights movement from 1969, the Sioux historian Vine Deloria, Jr., observed that, although "people often feel guilty about their ancestors killing all those Indians years ago," the twentieth century had in fact "seen a more devious but hardly less successful war waged against Indian communities." Deloria was referring to a host of injustices: the lack of funding for tribal education, which forced parents to send their children to government-run boarding schools; the termination of federal recognition for scores of tribes, which caused the loss of services promised by treaty; and a disregard for the sovereignty of tribes, manifest in the building of infrastructure

on Indian land without honest consultation or consent. In Deloria's time, that infrastructure was dams, which flooded forests and farmland on many reservations, including Standing Rock. Today, as Dave Archambault II, the tribe's chairman, suggested in [an editorial for the *Times*](#), that infrastructure is pipelines. "Tribes have always paid the price for America's prosperity," he wrote.

Most days, protesters march or caravan to nearby construction sites to dance, sing, and engage in prayerful ceremonies. When I was there, though, they stayed home, buoyed and exhausted by the turn of events. In the catharsis of the encampment, it would have been easy to forget the anxiety present just to the north, were it not for the surveillance helicopters circling daily overhead. As one hovered low over the encampment one evening, Yellowbird-Chase said wryly, "They're making sure we've had our three meals today." Some found these intrusions funny, as if the state were a petulant little brother, taking his games too seriously. I, and others, found them dissonant and unsettling. One morning, I ventured out to the pipeline route, on dirt roads through open pasture, and came across eight vehicles, six of them law enforcement. Another belonged to a local rancher, who told me, "When you see cars full of people and no license plate and bats in the back, you fear for your family." I asked whether he was willing to stay and talk longer. "No," he said. "It's too dangerous."

When people compare Standing Rock with Wounded Knee, they note that, at the height of the 1973 occupation, there were several hundred protesters; now there are several thousand, owing in part to social media. But there is another important distinction, which is that the movement has largely committed itself to nonviolence. At least ninety people have been arrested so far for acts of civil disobedience—trespassing on construction sites and locking themselves to bulldozers—but none were carrying weapons or behaving violently. In the confrontation on September 3rd, six protesters were bitten by dogs, and one security officer was pinned against his truck, then let go without injury. (The rancher I met, who said he witnessed the skirmish, claimed that he had seen Native Americans armed with tomahawks.) The protesters have taken to calling themselves "protectors," a semantic distinction that can sound a little hokey until you recall the historical stereotypes of savagery that they are laboring against.

On September 25th, protesters returned to the construction site to plant corn and willow trees in the pathway of the pipeline. Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier told the local press that a security guard was assaulted, sustaining minor injuries, and a protester was spotted with a gun. (Kirchmeier's office did not supply evidence of either claim, and no arrests were made.) Then, on September 28th, in perhaps the most troubling confrontation so far, officers surrounded a group of protesters, holding loaded rifles. The protesters threw their arms in the air, shouting, "We have no weapons! We have no weapons!" Both sides retreated unscathed, but it was a deaf and reckless nod to history on the part of the state. And it made me wonder whether the weapons that officers have seen are imagined, a way to give form to the fear that the protest inspires—the fear not of violence but of a people who have survived, who remember things the rest of us often choose to forget, and who have found each other, again, through this memory.

<http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/standing-rock-a-new-moment-for-native-american-rights>

October 16, 2016

'Do it for the water': Native Americans carry Potomac water on prayerful, 400-mile journey

By Julie Zauzmer
Washington Post

It's noon on a Thursday, and Reyna Davila-Day would ordinarily be sitting in her AP Human Geography class, memorizing the rivers of the globe.

Instead she's stumbling in and out of a gully alongside a busy road, ignoring the cars and trucks that whiz past, walking as fast as her 14-year-old legs can carry her. Instead of memorizing the world's most important rivers, she's walking one of them: The mighty Potomac, 405 miles from its source in West Virginia to the Chesapeake Bay.

In a 13-day relay, Davila-Day and dozens of fellow participants in a Native American ritual are walking the entire length of the Potomac, praying for its return to unpolluted health. They will speak to the water, sing to the water, and pray for the water.

And now, on a Thursday afternoon half a continent away from her Human Geography class, Davila-Day is carrying the water.

"It's us showing that the water needs to be cared for, and that we care about the water," she says, beads clinking against the copper vessel full of a few precious pints of the river. "At school, they ask why I do it. I tell them that the water has a spirit. They're like, 'It does?'"

The [Potomac River Water Walk](#) began with a water ceremony — a tradition in the Ojibwe tribe — at Fairfax Stone, the 18th-century marker now located in a West Virginia state park that marks the source of the Potomac River. Participants took water from the clear pool at the start of the river and filled the copper vessel. Starting on Oct. 7, a band of Native Americans and supporters began walking that vessel all the way from the river's clean source to its significantly more polluted end.

"We want the water to have a taste of itself. This is how you began, and this is how we want you to be again," explained Sharon Day, the organizer of the walk and Reyna's great-aunt.

The walkers made plans to pass through the District on Saturday — walking right past the White House — and to reach the Chesapeake Bay on Wednesday, Oct. 19. There, they'll pour the clean water into the polluted bay.

People tend to ask Day if the walkers' goal is to raise awareness about water pollution. Sure, awareness is nice, she responds — but that's a paltry goal. The intent of this walk is to speak to the water's spirit, not to a human audience.

“All the while, we’re speaking to that water. We’re telling the water how much we care about her,” Day said. “We really do support the work of other environmental groups. We believe what’s missing from most of this work is the idea that the water has a spirit, and we as spiritual people need to speak to that spirit.”

That resonated with Beth Brent. On her first walk, she planned to participate for a week and ended up walking for two months. “It’s a prayer. Something about being in prayer every day, it’s powerful,” said Brent, who is the local participant on this walk, as a resident of Harpers Ferry right on the Potomac.

Brent, too, has worked with water cleanup organizations, and found something in the walking that was missing there.

“They keep it in the realm of science and water monitoring. That’s a very colonizing, Western white male way of engaging with nature,” she said, noting that Ojibwe tradition allows only women to carry the water on these walks, with men in supporting roles.

Day trained as a medewin, a spiritual leader for her tribe, and she has participated in traditional Ojibwe walks all over the country. She has walked the length of the Mississippi, the Chippewa, the James, the Ohio and others in the past six years. She squeezes all that walking into the vacation days that she gets off from her job, where she is executive director of a Minnesota nonprofit supporting indigenous Americans living with HIV.

It takes about \$10,000 to pay for gas, food and other necessities for pulling off a walk like this one, she said. The funding comes from individual donations and grants from environmental nonprofits. When a supporter lets them stay in their home or pays for a hotel room, they sleep indoors; otherwise they stay in the RV that follows them on the road.

After all those exhausting days of walking, Day has seen the effectiveness of this sort of prayer-on-foot, she says. On an earlier walk, she carried water to Lake Superior, passing through the Penokee Range where mining companies were planning a project that could pollute the local waterways. The Native American walkers prayed for the Penokee — and twice the proposed mine has been blocked, she said.

“Those water spirits are more powerful than any bank, anything that money can buy,” Day said.

She doesn’t view her walks as a form of protest. A child of the ’60s, she protested plenty — against the Vietnam War, in favor of civil rights and feminists and lesbians and American Indians. “I spent my entire life protesting — until I carried that water,” she said. “It’s not a protest. It’s a movement toward something with love. You’re doing it because you love these rivers.”

This walk is no leisurely stroll. Day insists on a fast pace, roughly 15 minutes a mile, so that the group covers almost 30 miles a day. One person walks at a time, while the rest travel in cars and in an RV that constantly scoots ahead, about a mile at a time. At each stop, the RV pulls off the

road and the next walker hops out, ready to seamlessly grab the copper vessel from the previous walker and keep rushing down the road.

The walkers — sometimes as few as two people, almost a dozen on Thursday, anywhere from 50 to 100 over the course of the complete 13-day walk — have perfected their handoff of the copper vessel, like relay racers passing the baton.

“Ni guh izhi chigay nibi onji,” Barb Baker-LaRush says as she grabs the vessel. *I will do it for the water*, the words mean in Ojibwe. They’re written on the back of her shirt in more than 30 languages. She speeds down the shoulder of Route 9, barely wide enough for a person to walk. They’ve recently crossed from West Virginia into Virginia.

She explains her fast pace: “We’ve orphaned this water from the headwaters. We want to get this water as fast as we can back to her relatives.”

Baker-LaRush has raised seven children — four of her own and three of her husband’s — and has brought countless more into the world. At home in Wisconsin, she’s a doula. “When a woman is pregnant, that baby is growing in water,” she says as she totes the vessel past beer cans tossed on the side of the road and cars zooming perilously close. “I feel like this is my life’s work. This is part of my job.”

The two oldest of her 18 grandchildren came along with her. Karley Corbine, who is 11, is already thinking about bringing her own children on a water walk someday. “I just think of how we’re going to, how I’ll walk when I’m older and how clean the waters are going to be when I have kids.”

That’s the sort of attitude Day likes to hear. She remembers that at the end of that walk that took her through the Penokee Range, a child asked her, “Auntie, do you really think this is doing any good?”

The child doubted that the women’s walk could prevent further degradation of the environment. “The mining companies, they’re so strong. They have so much money,” the girl said.

Day responded: “But the water’s more powerful. The water’s more powerful and that’s who we’re speaking to.”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2016/10/16/do-it-for-the-water-native-american-women-carry-potomac-water-on-prayerful-400-mile-journey/>

October 19, 2016

Canadian Supreme Court Prepares to Hear Inuit Case With Global Implications

By Chris Williams
Truthout

On November 30, 2016, a case will come before the Canadian Supreme Court that will have momentous and potentially global implications. In April 2016 the Canadian Supreme Court, which hears only 5 percent of referred cases, agreed to judge an appeal brought by the Inuit community of Clyde River, Nunavut, against a five-year plan to carry out seismic blasting in Baffin Bay. The people who live in Clyde River, situated on Baffin Island, use the waters and ice of the Bay for hunting, a central component of their culture and primary source of food.

With [Greenpeace](#) helping to cover legal costs, this is the first time the Supreme Court has ever taken up a case from the autonomous Inuit territory of Nunavut in the 17 years since it split from the Northwest Territories. To bolster the legal campaign by amplifying the voices of Inuit activists and to respond to Inuit requests for alternatives to fossil fuels, Greenpeace sailed their ship *Arctic Sunrise* to the Arctic in August. At the formal invitation of the Hamlet Council, Greenpeace activists -- including British [actor Emma Thompson](#) -- were allowed to sail the *Arctic Sunrise* to deliver solar panels to Clyde River in response to the community's stated desire for alternatives to fossil fuel-driven development and the expense and pollution of diesel. For as Inuit campaigner, Nobel Prize Nominee and author Sheila Watt-Cloutier has legitimately asked in her book *The Right to be Cold*:

With the sea ice and permafrost of the Arctic rapidly melting, these mining operations are becoming more and more feasible and potentially profitable.... It's understandable, given the poverty, lack of food security and increasing difficulty of maintaining our traditional hunting culture, that the lure of resource-related jobs would be so great ... [But] all over the world, Indigenous peoples have suffered the devastating effects of these industries on their lands.... Given the wealth of evidence about the dangers of the extraction industries, we Inuit should be asking ourselves, "Why would it be any different for us? How will this industry, which is so counter to our own culture of stewardship of the land, be any different in the Arctic than it has been in other parts of the world?"

The Greenpeace vessel -- with current mayor of Clyde River, James Qillaq, former mayor [Jerry Natanine](#) and his daughter Clara aboard to help document changes to sea ice, observe wildlife and inform the other activists on board of the key issues -- set sail from St. Johns, Newfoundland, on the evening of August 4. At the invitation of Greenpeace I was onboard the *Sunrise* to document and report on the trip.

As we slowly emerged out of the protective harbor, long, slow swells set the ship rolling; the rounded hull is designed to rise up over thick ice, using the ship's mass to drop down and crack open safe passage. However, there's a drawback: the *Arctic Sunrise* is notoriously prone to pitching and lurching her way through even moderate seas.

Astern, the sun set over Newfoundland as we left one of the first European colonial settlements in North America, the port of St. Johns, named after John Cabot who sailed into the bay in 1497 on the feast day of Saint John the Baptist. Redolent with that imperial history, staring silently out to sea silhouetted atop the dark bulk of Signal Hill was Cabot's Tower, built in 1898 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of his fateful landing on the island.

The clouds were a luminescent series of glowing oranges, reds and purples as the sun sank below the receding promontory, turning the heaving ocean crimson. With each turn of the propeller, the jaws of the bay narrowed behind us. Over the bow, the horizon stretched into curved infinity. In the distance, blowholes spewed water from the heads of giant underwater mammals.

Our first whale sightings electrified the ship's complement of activists and crew. The life of whales is part of the reason we were heading far above the Arctic Circle to Clyde River. With a surface area comparable to Western Europe, the 37,000 Inuit living in communities across Nunavut share the high Arctic with several species of whale, as well as narwhals, walrus, seals, polar bears, caribou, fish and birds, all of which the Inuit hunt, eat or otherwise use.

Situated between Baffin Island and the southwest coast of Greenland, Baffin Bay is a sensitive ecosystem with an unusually high number of different species of Arctic marine mammals. Until the last century, the only humans to regularly cross through the area were Inuit communities, who have traversed and lived in the region for 4,000 years. Now, however, the area and its Indigenous inhabitants are facing the threat of seismic blasting to survey for oil and gas deposits.

New Threats From Seismic Blasting

For former mayor Natanine (and his generation), the decision to oppose drilling for oil and gas was something he initially did not consider until he spoke with Elders about the consequences of seismic testing carried out in the 1970s:

Our community here of Clyde River experienced seismic blasting in our area. My father's generation and his brothers were the ones who experienced and saw firsthand what it did to seals. When they were hunting seals, because [the seals] were deaf they could almost go right up to the seals and puss was coming out of [their ears]. At one point I was talking to my father, talking to my uncles trying to figure out what's going to happen with seismic blasting ... because I was in support of it, thinking it's going to bring all the resources and we'll be able to build our infrastructure from it.

It took those conversations and the experience of the older generation to start Natanine on the journey to activism and opposition to testing and oil drilling:

My father and my uncle, they both said, "You know we have to stop this, we have to do everything we can to stop this because of the impacts it's going to have on seals." Seals are the mainstay, everyday food and that really got to me because as a new generation after them my dream was fancy lights and casinos and whatever. They changed my heart and I started researching what seismic testing is, what it does and how it affects everything around it. It's a destruction machine, that's what it is; it's a destruction machine. They want to destroy, get the animals moved away so that the humans will move away and not be in their way to drill for oil.

Mounted on a specialized ship, seismic blasting (or "seismic testing," as the industry calls the practice) uses underwater air guns to send high power air blasts through the water and into the subsurface rock. When the signal bounces back to an array of detectors trailing six to 10 kilometers behind the survey ship, geologists analyze it to detect differences in density that

would indicate the location of a potential oil or gas deposit. "Testing" is a prelude to drilling. According to a [survey](#) carried out by the US Geological Survey (USGS) in 2008, the Arctic as a whole contains a substantial amount of oil and gas: 13 percent of the world's undiscovered oil, 30 percent of undiscovered gas and 20 percent of undiscovered natural gas liquids, with significant deposits, as well as minerals, in and around the Inuit territory of Nunavut (see the Greenpeace-commissioned Center for Sustainable Economy's "[Beyond Fossil Fuels](#)" report for details).

Despite growing resistance to drilling in the Canadian Arctic and elsewhere across the world, the current low price of oil and other technical constraints, Brad Hayes, president of geoscience consulting firm Petrel Robertson is [confident that energy companies will make progress](#) in the far north because reserves "are simply of too high a quality to be ignored.... They're not low-cost places to get at, because of their remoteness and what you need to do to plug in facilities, but once you have facilities and pipelines and so on, then you have an enormous resource of very high-quality oil and gas."

The Canadian Government and Fossil Fuel Exploitation

No real consultation took place to find out what residents of Clyde River thought about the proposed blasting. There was a [meeting](#) in 2014 before the National Energy Board's approval that was open to the public, but according to Dr. Shari Gearheard, a climate scientist and researcher for the National Snow and Ice Data Center who has been living in Clyde River for the last 16 years, the message was, "We're here to tell you what's going to happen."

The slide presentation was not in Inuktitut, drawings were not to scale and according to Natanine, any questions raised about the plan were summarily dismissed. When asked about potential impacts on marine life, company representatives were unable to provide answers. Despite oil industry assertions that seismic blasting is safe for underwater life, it's hard to square with the common-sense idea that animals that depend on sound for every aspect of their life activities could remain unaffected by high-volume sound inundating their domain every 10 seconds for months on end, with decibel levels comparable to .5 kilos of exploding TNT. [Michael Stocker](#), director of the nonprofit advocacy group Ocean Conservation Research in Lagunitas, California, notes, "Most animals in the ocean use sound the way animals on land use eyesight.... And when we talk about saturating their environment with noise, it's going to have some impact, regardless of whether we know what that impact is."

The National Energy Board says it plans to have one person spot whales from the bridge of the seismic vessel and call off blasting if a mammal is spotted within 500 meters. However, Stocker says, "Having somebody sitting on a watch stand looking for whales at 1,000 meters is a token gesture that's fairly meaningless." I would have to agree: Aside from the fact that whales spend most of their time underwater, having now spent many hours unsuccessfully looking for whales in the Arctic through often dense and shifting fog that regularly limits visibility to a few meters, it's hard to imagine such a system being effective even during periods of high visibility.

A day's travel north by ship from Clyde River is the other-worldly stunning beauty of Sam Ford Fiord, where cliffs soar a vertical mile above the opal blue waters and we see abundant narwhals. Ninety percent of the global population of narwhals is found in the Canadian Arctic and Baffin

Bay. One of only two surviving species of toothed whales in the Monodontidae family and highly specialized Arctic predators, these astonishingly odd-looking marine mammals sport a single giant tusk and are a staple of Inuit diet. The narwhals are thought to be particularly sensitive to noise.

In a [NOAA study](#) carried out in 2004, US government scientists found the dominant signal reaching sound detectors placed near the Mid-Atlantic Ridge on the floor of the Atlantic was from air guns operated 3,000 km away, off the coast of Nova Scotia, western Africa and northeast of Brazil.

Even the since-renamed Minerals Management Service, the corrupt US government agency that mismanaged the calamitous Deepwater Horizon oil spill of 2010 and failed to adequately regulate oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, registered "potentially adverse" impacts on sea life. As documented in [a Greenpeace-commissioned report on seismic testing](#) by Dr. Oliver Boisseau, a senior research scientist for Marine Conservation Research, "It is clear that noise from seismic activity has an impact on whales as it can damage their hearing, ability to communicate and also displace animals, affecting diving behavior, feeding and migration patterns. There are increasing indications that this could cause serious injury, and may also disrupt reproductive success and increase the risk of strandings and ice entrapments."

The Legal Fight to Stop Blasting

Knowledgeable and determined, Natanine has been tirelessly leading the legal fight against the blasting, explaining to other Inuit the dangers to their hunting grounds and the food they rely on to feed themselves. Organized by Natanine and others, Clyde River took its challenge to the National Energy Board's decision to grant blasting permission against the wishes of the community to the Canadian court of appeal. The judge, Justice Eleanor Dawson [ruled against Clyde River](#) in August 2015, writing that consultation had been adequate and whether the community agreed with the National Energy Board decision or not was irrelevant. Undeterred, Natanine pledged to [keep fighting](#). "We are going to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court of Canada," he said, and that is exactly where the case is now headed on November 30.

With the ongoing legal issues, seismic blasting has been successfully postponed three times. In the intervening two years, a lot has changed in the political and legal landscape of Canada, and some Inuits' understandably intense distrust and outright hatred for Greenpeace -- dating back to the organization's anti-sealing campaigns of the late 1970s that devastated the Inuit economy -- has also shifted. Greenpeace issued an apology for past mistakes and the negative impact they had on Inuit livelihoods that was [printed in Inuit media in 2014](#) and vowed a very different approach. Natanine was eventually convinced to give the organization another chance to help, not harm, Inuit. As Natanine explains it: "At first, I thought, [I hate those fuckers](#).... But, you know, they're just human. They didn't know what they were doing. And now, to acknowledge they were wrong and that they had this negative impact on us, it touched me inside. I thought I would just forever hate them."

Renewable Energy and the Arctic

In their [joint statement on the Arctic](#) released in March, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and US President Barack Obama write about how they will act "with partners" to implement "innovative renewable energy and efficiency alternatives to diesel and advance community climate change adaptation." They add, "We will do this through closer coordination among Indigenous, state, provincial, and territorial governments and the development of innovative options for housing and infrastructure."

Yet it took Greenpeace, at the request of the Clyde River Hamlet Council, to bring solar power to Clyde River to help them offset their use of diesel. Nunavut's government spends 20 percent of its annual budget on energy, primarily diesel for electricity production, heating and transportation. Electricity and heating cost more in Nunavut than anywhere else in Canada, which helps to explain why the government of Nunavut recently voted to change the law to promote renewable energy production through [net metering](#). In recognition of this and the desire to retain their culture while utilizing 21st century technology to reject fossil fuel-based development, Inuit in Clyde River now have a partially solar-powered community hall.

While solar cannot be a complete answer to electricity generation in the Arctic, it will help offset the financial, environmental and health costs of diesel and can begin to chart a different developmental pathway. If solar panels can be successfully installed and maintained in a remote community in the far northern reaches of land on the planet, it naturally raises the question: What's stopping so many other communities from using the wind and sun for power generation?

Echoing Watt-Cloutier, Natanine said that the real question facilitated by the production of renewable energy is about self-determination and social power -- not electrical power:

These companies are not in it to help us to gain that [independence] and we know that from experience and looking at other parts of the world. Oil and gas is not a good answer for us to gain independence, and as Inuit we want to get back to independence where we don't have to depend on anyone: that's what we have to work for. Get away from fossil fuels where the companies and governments will control us, to a point where we can have our own power. Maybe through solar power and through wind power or other renewable resources, and that's where we want to get to. We want to be able to control our own lives again.

Of course, if Canada were serious about genuinely addressing the issues of poverty, racism, lack of infrastructure, health issues, inequality and the impact of decades of neocolonial government policies for the 37,000 Inuit, it would be very easy. Given the hundreds of billions of dollars made through tar sands extraction and mining by Canadian companies around the world and with such a low population, it would be entirely possible to eradicate poverty in the whole of Nunavut. From data compiled by Idle No More, in which reparations for historical crimes and land theft is taken into account, the Canadian government is in debt to Indigenous peoples to the tune of [trillions of dollars](#).

After years of struggle and three years of postponement of seismic blasting, the people of Clyde River will have their day in court in Ottawa on November 30. A location to write into the calendars of anyone concerned with Inuit justice as the place to be. A second case based on similar arguments is being [brought by the Chippewa of the Thames First Nation](#) and will also be

heard by the Supreme Court on November 30. The Chippewas are fighting against the National Energy Board-approved decision to back Enbridge's expansion and reversal of its 830 km oil pipeline Line 9B, built in 1975, that runs from Sarnia, Ontario to Montreal, Quebec across their land.

Whichever way those decisions turn, they will reverberate across the whole of Canada. Furthermore, the Canadian Supreme Court is cited more than any other as precedent by courts around the world. Therefore, the decision holds implications for Indigenous peoples across the globe fighting to control their land and resist the further expansion of fossil fuel production. Further bolstering the Inuit legal case, on May 10 the Canadian government reversed its earlier stance and [officially signed UNDRIP](#) (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).

Whether they live up to that commitment will depend on how much pressure can be brought to bear on the National Energy Board, the Canadian government and Prime Minister Trudeau to live up to their climate change rhetoric and documented support of Indigenous rights. We will find out whether British Columbia Grand Chief Edward John was speaking in good faith when, in response to the signing of UNDRIP [he commented](#), "Indigenous governments are not some inferior form of authority.... They are the original form of authority over their lands, resources and territories."

For more on this topic, please read the first article in this series, "[On Melting Ice: Inuit Struggle Against Oil and Gas in the Arctic](#)."

See photos here:

<http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/38046-canadian-supreme-court-prepares-to-hear-inuit-case-with-global-implications>

October 23, 2016

83 arrested at Standing Rock yesterday, Dakota Access Pipeline wants war. Native drones shot down!

By Navajo
Daily Kos

Last night on October 22, 2016, [Dallas Goldtooth reported, via Facebook Live](#) about the 83 arrests that happened yesterday near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation where American Indian Nations are resisting the construction of a four-state oil pipeline being constructed under the Missouri River, the [water source for 17 million people](#). My detailed news timeline on Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) v. The Water Protectors [can be read here](#) if you need it.

Goldtooth, (Mdewakanton Dakota and Diné) the *Keep it in the Ground* Organizer for the [Indigenous Environmental Network](#) is the frontline's go-to reporter for the Water Protectors in North Dakota. I transcribed [emphasis mine] his impromptu video update:

Hey family, this is Dallas [Goldtooth], uh, you know who I am. I'm in the Bay Area in California right now at the Bioneers Conference which is large conference of people who are socially conscious and wanna protect the planet, basically, and here to just raise awareness about the fight against Dakota Access but also raise awareness about the on-going Indigenous resistance against extractive development and colonization, but that stuff doesn't matter.

I wanna give an update from what I know, 'cause I'm here. I carry a struggle that I'm not at the camp right now. And so, I've been wanting to give good, clear information as much as possible about what's happening.

And today, was one of the largest arrests, days of arrests so far, that we've seen. I wanna kinda' tell folks what happened as it was reported to me. And our organization is working to put out a press release, as soon as possible.

But, the main thing is that over 80 people, right now the confirmed amount from the sheriff, the Morgan County Sheriff's office, is that 83 people were arrested today, in a mass arrest situation.

Um, that did not need to happen, and it was a clear case of just overtly militarized law enforcement just over stepping their boundaries and **instigating** something that did not need to be instigated. [...]

Various people on the ground reported night-before-last on Facebook that:

- Four semi-trucks worth of pipe were being delivered to the burial sites that were desecrated on Labor Day.
- Photos show them parked ON the desecrated grave sites with trucks. Cranes, pipes, and equipment are being delivered.
- Helicopters are overhead. [The 'copters are constant, keeping the camps awake at night.]
- At least one new blockade is set up, facilitated by the national guard, north of camp, on highway 1806, just south of Fort Rice.
- Bi-plane is now circling.

These are all shots over the bow to incite our people to gather and force us to protect our ancestral burial sites.

DAPL did this once already: [The Dakota Access Pipeline guards unleash attack dogs on our American Indian water protectors](#). In short, on Labor Day weekend, DAPL stopped construction 25 miles away, deliberately moved heavy construction equipment to a newly reported grave site and bulldozed the surface evidence before it could be assessed by the state. Our tribes noticed and objected! They moved in **without weapons** urging them to stop. Can you imagine how upset our people were to see bulldozers plowing through sacred evidence that could halt this construction? DAPL was prepared for the outrage. DAPL pepper sprayed some of the Water Protectors and some were bitten by attack dogs.

Yesterday's DAPL action was a reprise of the Labor Day incitement. From an article FIVE years ago: [Oil Executive: Military-Style 'Psy Ops' Experience Applied](#)

Last week's oil industry conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Houston was supposed to be an industry confab just like any other — a series of panel discussions, light refreshments and an exchange of ideas. [...]

But things took an unexpected twist.

CNBC has obtained audiotapes of the event, on which one presenter can be heard recommending that his colleagues download a copy of the Army and Marine Corps counterinsurgency manual. (Click below to hear the audio.) That's because, he said, the opposition facing the industry is an "insurgency."

Another told attendees that his company has several former military psychological operations, or "psy ops" specialists on staff, applying their skills in Pennsylvania.

Audio clips at the link. DAPL knows what they're doing, inciting the public and expecting dramatic pushback. And influencing the police, state and federal governments to battle the public with them to protect the pipeline and corporate interests. DAPL wants war.

Unfortunately for that goal, we are being peaceful and representing with prayer.

Back to Goldtooth's video update:

...and just causing a lot of trauma for our Water Protectors on the ground. And, there was an action earlier this morning, there's folks that locked down at construction, to stop construction, [unintelligible] that occurred that were successful, that endeavor, but they weren't able to, we didn't have that many photos of it because police moved in pretty quick and shut off access to that site.

Meanwhile, over 300 Water Protectors did a walk of prayer and from what I understand, they were not on the easement itself but were on the land and doing a walk of prayer.

And the police, along, it was law enforcement, Dakota Access security, as well as the National Guard. So far, the National Guard has only stayed at the check point for traffic. They took that barricade down, they took out that checkpoint and they have since put up a new one. A military, a police barricade checkpoint for traffic on highway 1806.

But, this is the first time, really, that the National Guard was engaged in an operation to arrest people. They were helping corral folks, they were, um, pursuing Water Protectors who were on the land. So, at least 10 people were pepper sprayed as they were being pushed back towards the road.

As the group, the 300 people were out there praying, they were directed, they were given a clear instruction that if they stayed they would be arrested and they can move back, so the people said, okay, we'll start moving. So they started moving back towards the road.

But this group had women and children, it had women in it, it had children in it, it had pregnant women, it had some elders, there was some children there. Again. This was a prayer march, a prayer walk, that was not near, it was not near people locking down on equipment, it was a prayer walk.

And as they were making their way back to the road, the police started aggravating the situation, the groups split into two.

There was larger group with a lot of journalists, a lot of people with media and press in that group. And, that group was all arrested. They were corralled, the police circled them up and started picking them off, one by one.

There was the second group that had some of our youth, from our Indigenous Youth Council in the camp there. Um, one of the Water Protectors is a young woman, [there's a video on my page](#), that I shared it, where she was giving a testimony about her experience and in that testimony she was talking about how police were aggressively poking with the batons to push them back.

There was a ten-year-old child in that group. [Who was separated from his family] They were trying to say, hey, let the ten-year-old child go. Um, in that process, protecting a ten-year-old child from the aggressive police, this young woman's arm was struck with the baton, with a potential fracture in it. Protecting a ten-year-old child!

Uh, they ended up going, the child ended up going but they, a lot of the folks in that group ended up getting arrested, Um. You know... [deep breath out]

This is time a lot of folks are sharing information, like there is a general callout, and ongoing callout for people to come to camp, to **Stand with Standing Rock. This is a general call to action for people.**

I wanted to add something to this, is that, what we are in need of is **(1) People that are willing to get arrested.** (2) People that have training, a special focus on those that have actual training or have been in action experience, that know the ins and outs of civil, peaceful, civil disobedience and non-violent direct action.

There's a general callout for people who might have building skills to help us with the winter camp, which is no where near, which is separate from the action space.

And, to also understand that if you're going, it's your duty to listen to local leadership. Listen to the local Indigenous leadership and follow directions. Follow what's going on.

And, um, the other thing I want to end with is and I'm gonna end it here. Dakota Access isn't the only fight. It's not. I mean, it's the big fight right now, it's the big focus. And it can be one of the most monumental victories in our generation. Because not only will it demonstrate the power of Indigenous resistance and the power of self-determination and sovereignty, but it's also a moment for us to decide our future relationship with fossil fuels.

Dude, this is gonna, you have no idea, this could potentially strike, such, it's gonna be such a powerful moment for the climate justice movement but for us as a society. Or we're gonna, we're, demonstrating that people power is gonna decide the future of our society. And decide what just transition and climate justice looks like.

But, that's not the only fight, we have a number of front line Indigenous struggles happening all across this planet and it has to be understood that we are doing this in solidarity with each and every one of them. And this is a coordinating effort.

It is no mistake that there is a fight against the same old pipeline down in Florida, or against an [L&G?] liquid natural gas pipeline in the Klamath River basin up in Oregon or there's a struggle against oil port terminals and coal port terminals up in the Pacific Northwest. Or the fight against pipelines up in BC, or the East Coast, the AIM pipeline, that's actually on the verge of being built, I know it's called AIM, it's kina weird, right? There's a pipeline that's going underneath fricking New York City and actually going right near a nuclear power plant!

And people are standing up and resisting. So the movement against Dakota Access is not just a movement happening in South Dakota or Iowa. It's a movement that we're all a part of and a movement to keep fossil fuels in the ground. It's a bigger picture here. And each and everyone of us is a part of it. You're a part of it. I'm a part of it. And were doing this for the land, the water, the air, our future generations.

Um, and it just pisses me off, just to see, to see, [heavy, exasperated sigh] the response and the ridiculous, absurd escalation by law enforcement in North Dakota, by law enforcement in Iowa, by law enforcement and by our elected leaders in, in, and the fact that this shit was not even... like, that, our elected leaders... everyone's focused on the election, but there's **BEEN NO DISCUSSION ABOUT DAKOTA ACCESS, NO DISCUSSION ABOUT CLIMATE POLICY, NO DISCUSSION...** what the...? lookit.

President Obama himself has stated that the greatest single threat to our society and to this planet is climate change. And yet the current, top running Democrat, the candidate for the Democratic Party has not, has refused to actually address that issue. That's crazy and I [cellphone starts buzzing] I should reject that call... It's ridiculous! So if you...I'm just gonna explain it there. I'm gonna be all angry Indian now. [typical Dallas chuckle]

It's absolutely essential for us to talk about climate change and talk about the greater picture here. It's much bigger than one pipeline. This about the future of all of us. So, not to be all dramatic, but it is.

I'll talk to you guys later, I just wanted to give an update.

And look forward to the ongoing resistance, it's not just the resistance that happened today, there's much more beautiful movements that's happening tomorrow and the day after.

So, hope you guys have a good day, much love to you. I've not read any of the comments, I just wanna give this update about what happened today.

We still have Water Protectors in jail. We have our legal teams on the ground helping support, you know, continue to fund the movement, fund the pipeline fights, you know.

And also, the biggest way you can help is look at home, research what resistance is happening in your homelands. Whether you're, you know, fighting against the, the, freeway to go through your sacred mountain, uh, south mountain, the south of Phoenix, or whether you're on the East Coast, West Coast for wherever it be, you best believe there's a resistance there, and plug into it.

Support your local fights as well. Talk to you guys later.

Our people are still in custody, one man is missing five women from his family.

The frightening thing about Natives dealing with the police is detailed in this recent post by **Meteor Blades**: [American Indians killed by cops at highest rate in the nation, but they're invisible in the media.](#)

Kit O'Connell from Mint Press News reported that police have beaten, harassed, and strip-searched activists: [North Dakota Police 'Out Of Control' In Crackdown On Dakota Access Pipeline Protests.](#)

As reports of police abuse at Dakota Access Pipeline protests accumulate, a civil liberties NGO warns that activists' constitutional rights are under attack.

"In Standing Rock, the cops are out of control," warned [Cooper Brinson](#), staff attorney at Civil Liberties Defense Center, in a report published on Thursday.

Citing reports of humiliation, beatings by police, and unnecessary strip-searches of arrestees, Brinson wrote:

"The actions of police against the land and water protectors at Standing Rock are depraved, abusive, and disgraceful. They are exceedingly disrespectful and radically humiliating to the people who have occupied this land since time immemorial."

This is on top of the [strip search of Dave Archambault II, tribal chair of the Standing Rock Sioux, and Dr. Sara Jumping Eagle, a pediatrician](#) and member of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and [Actress Shailene Woodley](#).

Now, regarding the photo at the top of this story, [Winona LaDuke](#) had [this to say](#):

It makes me so sad. I want to feel like what we have been fighting for over the past hundred years is our dignity and that we as Indigenous people will be accorded full human rights. This is not the case in Morton County. The endless aggression, strip searching and attempts to humiliate our people are a continuation of 160 years of this. Morton County and North Dakota live in a colonial/military/pre- civil rights, old boy, paradigm. This is evidenced throughout North Dakota in the destruction of land and the desecration and oppression of native people and women. I pray for healing for my people and our land.

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2016/10/23/1585874/-83-arrested-at-Standing-Rock-resistance-yesterday-Dakota-Access-Pipeline-wants-war-over-oil>

October 23, 2016

How Far Will North Dakota Go to Get This Pipeline?

The militarized response is escalating, Dakota Access construction is accelerating. To be clear: North Dakota is acting as trustee for the company, using what it considers the powers of state to make this project so.

By Mark Trahant
Yes! Magazine

CANNON BALL, N.D. | A peaceful protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline ended in the arrests of 83 people in North Dakota on Saturday morning amid a chaotic scene in which police in riot gear used pepper spray to break up and subdue a group of 200 to 300 protesters.

It is the highest number of people arrested in a single day in North Dakota during the last several months of protest actions against the oil pipeline, bringing the total number of arrests up to 222.

Though the protesters behaved non-violently and cooperated with the police, North Dakota law enforcement officials described Saturday's events as a riot. —Rapid City Journal article

A line of trucks and commercial vehicles on North Dakota's Highway 6 Saturday was a speeding train. One vehicle after another. Traveling too fast and too close. Then, still on track, the entire train turned left and began racing down a rural dirt road.

It was clear why: This is where the Dakota Access Pipeline is being constructed.

Fresh dirt marks where the pipeline has been and where it's supposed to go. Construction is on a speedy timetable. As the company has testified in court it wants the 1,170 mile, \$3.8 billion project up and running by January 1, 2017.

Yet the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and several hundred people camped nearby are determined to slow down that train, protect the waters of the Missouri River, and ultimately, help the country begin the most important conversation of this era about energy, climate and survival.

So the machinery of the state of North Dakota has been engaged to stay on schedule. To be clear: North Dakota is acting as the trustee for the company, using what it considers the powers of state, to make this project so.

How far will North Dakota go? Look at where it has been.

The state has been an ally instead of a referee. Helping to craft a regulatory approach that avoided regulation. There is this crazy notion that the company did everything it was supposed to do—so leave them alone. Yah. Because the plan was to avoid pesky regulation. It's so much more efficient to be governed by official winks instead of an Environmental Impact Statement.

Even now the Dakota Access pipeline figures the state, with allies in D.C., will give in and sign the final paperwork. As the Energy Transfer Partners attorney told the court: "The status quo is that we're in the middle of building a pipeline." So, according to Oil and Gas 360, "the next step will be for ETP to acquire easements to drill the pipeline under Lake Oahe. In the most probable scenario, the Corps will grant permits while District Court litigation will continue. ETP would 'likely get notice on easement status by the end of October and would take 60 days to drill under the lake with a full crew and no major disruptions.'"

In other words: No worries. The state's machinery is supposed to make it so.

How far will North Dakota go?

They've already tried intimidation, humiliation, and the number of arrests are increasing. Pick on protectors, elders, journalists, famous people, anyone who could make the state appear potent. The latest tactic is to toss around the word "riot" as if saying it often enough will change its definition. "Authorities arrest 83 protesters during a riot Saturday," Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier posted on Facebook. "Today's situation clearly illustrates what we have been saying for weeks, that this protest is not peaceful or lawful. It was obvious to our officers who responded that the protesters engaged in escalated unlawful tactics and behavior during this event. This protest was intentionally coordinated and planned by agitators."

What's extraordinary about that statement is the sheriff's own pictures show a peaceful protest. As Mel Brooks once wrote in *Young Frankenstein*: "A riot is an ugly thing." This was not.

But the key phrase in the sheriff's words is fuel for the state's machinery, the words "... or lawful." That is the important phrase because the state would like a protest that lets the status quo continue building a pipeline. The idea of civil disobedience is that there are unjust laws (or in this case, rigged laws) and there are people willing go to jail to highlight that injustice. The state lost its moral claim when it moved the pipeline route away from its own capital city to near the Standing Rock Nation.

Again, the question is, how far will North Dakota go?

Is the state ready to arrest hundreds? Thousands? Tens of thousands? And then what? The illogical conclusion to that question is too terrible to think about.

Yesterday a call went out from the camps for more people. People who, as [Dallas Goldtooth of the Indigenous Environmental Network](#) said, are willing to get arrested. People who will interrupt their lives so that this pipeline will go no further. It's a call to a higher law than the one that's codified by North Dakota. And for every water protector arrested, there will always be someone else ready to be next.

How far will North Dakota go? The military-style law enforcement base at Fort Rice sends its message: Whatever it takes. Status quo must have its pipeline. That's frightening. Except, there is an antidote to those fears. It's found among the people at the Standing Rock camps who continue to use prayer as their status quo.

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/how-far-will-north-dakota-go-to-get-this-pipeline-20161023>

October 24, 2016

Planning to Travel to Standing Rock? Now Is The Time

By Sarah Sunshine Manning
Indian Country Today

“Non-violent direct action has been vilified in the media, but it's a major way that things have gotten done in this country,” said Marty Aranaydo, Mvskoke of Oakland, California.

Speaking from the Standing Rock reservation in North Dakota, Aranaydo, who is Tohono O'odham, Akimel O'odham, and Phillipino, emphasized, “that organizing is the power, and direct action is the muscle.”

Aranaydo is right. Everything from women's suffrage, civil rights, Native American rights, LGBTQ rights, (the list really is too long to continue) were accomplished as a result of non-violent direct action – that is, taking direct action to stop injustice and bring greater attention to matters.

On October 18, water protectors called for reinforcements as the Dakota Access construction is quickly closing in on the Missouri River in North Dakota.

Water protectors, skilled in non-violent direct action, should plan to make their way to Standing Rock as quickly as you can get here.

This massive call-to-action is endorsed by more than 10 groups, including the Indigenous Peoples Power Project (IP3), The Ruckus Society, the Indigenous Environmental Network, Honor The Earth, the Oceti Sakowin Camp, the Sacred Stone Camp, West Coast Women Warriors Media Cooperative, Ancestral Pride, Digital Smoke Signals, Greenpeace USA, and The Other98.

“If we’re going to beat the pipeline, we’re going to need more people,” Nick Tilsen, Oglala Lakota, and co-founder of the Indigenous Peoples Power Project, told me.

An informational [video](#) was released in accompaniment with the joint-statement made by the groups with the title, “Warriors Wanted.”

“We’re asking for reinforcements to come stand with us, to pray, and to protect,” Tilsen said. “Of all the times to take action, the time is now.”

On October 22, water protectors in the camps reported that Dakota Access construction was just a few miles from the camp, and approximately 5 miles from the Missouri River.

This amplified call comes on the heels of the October 9 denial of the federal injunction to halt the Dakota Access pipeline construction. After the federal injunction was lifted, Dakota Access construction immediately began working its way toward the Missouri River. The next day, hundreds of water protectors gathered at the site of Dakota Access construction. North Dakota police arrived quickly to the site with armored vehicles and assault rifles, ultimately making a total of 29 arrests.

Over the weekend, police arrested more than 100 water protectors.

In a joint statement released earlier this month, the Departments of Justice, Army, and Interior, once again, called on Energy Transfer Partners to voluntarily stop construction of the Dakota Access pipeline near the Missouri River in North Dakota. Energy Transfer Partners did not stop.

“Not surprisingly, Energy Transfer Partners has ignored the Obama Administration’s call to voluntarily halt construction and continues to desecrate our sacred places,” Dave Archambault, II, Standing Rock Sioux Chairman, said. “They have proven time and time again that they are more interested in money than the health and well-being of the 17 million people who get their drinking water from the Missouri River. They have bulldozed over the burials of our Lakota and Dakota ancestors and have no regard for the sanctity of these places.”

While the tribe continues to pursue all legal avenues to stop construction, organizers in the camps maintain their commitment to peaceful and prayerful non-violent direct action, which has been a major cornerstone of the months-long demonstration along the route of the pipeline.

Actions have ranged from prayer walks, to runs, rallies, marches, protests, the creation of campaign multi-media, social media campaigns, banner and sign-making, building and maintaining the resistance camps, holding space as a large group. Lock-downs to machinery in order halt construction have also been utilized.

IP3, an organization on the ground in Standing Rock, is conducting regular non-violent direct action trainings in the camps. The organization has so far trained hundreds of water protectors.

Thomas Lopez, Jr., Chicano, of Denver, Colorado, was among the many trained by IP3 in non-violent direct action earlier in September. Lopez attests not only to the value of non-violent action, but also to the value of focus and prayer.

“The entire training experience was so insightful, not just as I looked into myself, but also tried to understand things from the eyes of the oppressor,” Lopez said. “I’m not here fighting just for me, but my nieces and nephews. Thanks to this training, I realized that when engaging in non-violent direct action, I can go straight to prayer. This reminded me of who I am, and what I am here for. I remembered that prayer, peace, and love can take us farther than anything.”

Cy Wagoner, Dine’ of Shonto, Arizona, who is among the IP3 trainers who have facilitated trainings at the Oceti Sakowin Camp, said “there’s a lot of misconceptions about non-violent direct action.

“When done properly, it builds power and community, and it creates change. This is how movements are born,” he said.

While some direct-action, such as locking down to machinery, can prompt arrest, not all direct action necessitates arrest. Acts of civil disobedience, or peacefully disobeying the law without causing harm to others, *is* cause for arrest. You are breaking the law by choice, and for a purpose. Think lunch counter sit-ins during the Civil Rights Movement, think Rosa Parks refusing to sit in the back of the bus, and today, think water protectors locking down to DAPL machinery to stop the pipeline.

In another Facebook [video](#) posted by Mark K. Tilsen, Oglala Lakota from Porcupine, South Dakota, Tilsen delivered a poignant message to allies across the globe:

“I’m asking you to come to Standing Rock,” he said. “Follow local leadership, but you will be given autonomy to choose your actions, and how you choose to creatively stop the Dakota Access Pipeline. Please. Come to Standing Rock.”

Mark Tilsen has been stationed at the Oceti Sakowin camp for the past two months, also assisting in non-violent direct action trainings.

“We need help. We need bodies on the ground,” said Tilsen. “We need people here who are dedicated and willing. This is not a tourist action. This is not a party. We’re here to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline. Thank you.”

Since early August, nearly 200 arrests have been made in North Dakota as water protectors have placed their bodies on the line, defending water and sacred sites from the pipeline. Water protectors continue to strategize actions daily to halt construction, but they are calling for your help.

“The threat to water is imminent, and we are calling for boots on the ground,” the 11 groups said in their call-to-action statement. “The Oceti Sakowin Camp and Sacred Stone Camp are seeking brave and dedicated water warriors to build winter camps, accept leadership from indigenous

community members, and organize semi-autonomously to attack the weak points on the Black Snake.”

If you are among the millions who stand with Standing Rock, consider making your way there immediately, or at minimum, intensify support in whatever means you are capable. And as tensions heighten, it is increasingly that much more important that water protectors come focused and composed, bearing in mind that North Dakota law enforcement and pro-DAPL media eagerly await the moment that just one person slips into any semblance of hostility and/or violence. Yes, your help is needed, but just as you must come courageously, you must come responsibly.

Stop the Dakota Access pipeline. Water is life.

Sarah Sunshine Manning (Shoshone-Paiute, Chippewa-Cree) is a mother, educator, activist, and an advocate for youth. Follow her at [@SarahSunshineM](#).

See videos with this article here:

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/10/24/manning-planning-travel-standing-rock-now-time-166193>

October 27, 2016

Indigenous Youth Travel from Standing Rock to Clinton Headquarters to Demand Answers on Dakota Access Pipeline

Greenpeace Press Release

Brooklyn, New York - Today young people from Oceti Sakowin, the Seven Council Fires, and the Standing Rock Sioux Nation traveled to Hillary Clinton’s campaign headquarters in New York City to demand that she speak out against the Dakota Access pipeline. The Clinton campaign has thus far remained silent about the 1,100-mile pipeline that threatens sacred Indigenous land and water supply. The water protectors urged solidarity actions at local Clinton campaign offices across the country. The group also visited Trump tower to urge the Republican candidate to weigh in.

Commenting on today’s action and the need for Hillary Clinton to be vocal against the Dakota Access pipeline, the young people said:

"We made treaties and agreements. A violation of a native treaty is a violation of federal law. By refusing to stand against DAPL, Hillary is putting our environment, wildlife, culture, and land at risk. -- **William Brownotter, 16**

"As a young person I want to know what the next four years are going to entail. Is Hillary going to be focused on protecting our land? I want to know if my younger family is going to be safe.

Our present situation is in dire need of a leader that still remembers that our kids are here. We want to protect the future for the young ones that come after us. I'm here to support my family." - **Garrett Hairychin, 23**

"We are coming directly to Hillary at her headquarters because as the future president, she is going to have to work for us, and we want her to uphold the treaties and her promise to protect unci maka (Mother Earth)." -- **Gracey Claymore, 19**

"Young people need to speak up and not be scared of adult leaders. We are left to take care of what they mess up." -- **Marilyn Fox, 18**

There are 4 of the Oceti Sakowin youth runners in this youth delegation. The youth runners ran to deliver a message about climate change, to raise awareness of DAPL, and to pray for the water.

"When we stepped out onto the pavement we opened up the door to a ceremony that we didn't even know we are going to be a part of. Even though we didn't run to NY, this trip is still part of that journey." -- **Danny Grassrope, 24**

"We are here to tell Hillary how badly we need to protect the water. We didn't come all the way to NY for nothing. We didn't run all the way to Omaha or DC for nothing. We want to ask Hillary if she wants to see her great-grandkids line up for water rations." -- **Adam Palaniuk Killsalive, 18 who is one of the Oceti Sakowin Runners**

"With the land and the water, we don't speak their language. But we understand enough to know that they are hurting, and need our protection." -- **Danny Grassrope, 24**

Voicing the organization's support for the youth delegation, **Greenpeace Spokesperson Lilian Molina** said:

"Now is the time for Hillary Clinton to prove her commitment to both strong climate action and Indigenous sovereignty. Silence is not acceptable. Waiting is not acceptable. We are grateful for the young people who have traveled so far to say enough is enough. If you claim to be a climate champion, that means respecting Indigenous sovereignty, rejecting new pipelines, and keeping dangerous fossil fuels in the ground."

A large and growing community, led by indigenous groups, has come together in rejecting the Dakota Access pipeline. Thousands of people have gathered at a series of encampments on the lands of the Standing Rock Sioux in direct opposition to the pipeline's construction. Hundreds have been pepper sprayed and arrested in the process. American Indians from over 300 tribes have joined in solidarity, as have 21 city and county governments. Prominent politicians and members of Clinton's own Democratic Party have also rejected the pipeline, including Senator Bernie Sanders, Senator Elizabeth Warren, and Representative Raul Grijalva.

The Dakota Access pipeline is a direct violation of the sovereign rights and culture of the Standing Rock Sioux, placing serious risk to the nation's water supply, violating federal trust responsibilities guaranteed through treaties with the Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota tribes, and

desecrating burial and other historical sites. The fast-track process of approval disregarded key U.S. legislation, including the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act. And no proper Environmental Impact Statement, with substantive tribal consultation, was performed. On the basis of any single one of these conditions, construction must be halted. Indigenous communities, NGOs, and allies across the country demand an end to the Clinton campaign's silence on the issue.

The formal demand letter can be found here: <http://standwithstandingrock.net/statement-youth-standing-rock-tribe-future-president/>

Contact:

[Greenpeace](#)

Washington DC: (202) 462-1177

San Francisco: (415) 255-9221

<http://www.commondreams.org/newswire/2016/10/27/indigenous-youth-travel-standing-rock-clinton-headquarters-demand-answers-dakota>

October 27, 2016

Armed With Riot Gear, Militarized Police Begin Forcibly Clearing DAPL Protest Camp

'We will be peaceful, we will be prayerful, we will not retreat'

By Deirdre Fulton, staff writer
Common Dreams

Arrests have begun at the recently erected frontline camp in the path of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), as police and military move in on Indigenous water protectors and their allies in North Dakota.

With law enforcement seemingly interfering with cell signal, it is difficult to get a live feed from the ground. Some social media users were able to post video and updates from the scene:

[See the videos with this article here: <http://www.commondreams.org/news/2016/10/27/armed-riot-gear-militarized-police-begin-forcibly-clearing-dapl-protest-camp>]

According to eyewitness accounts, buses full of law enforcement were traveling toward the frontline camp on Thursday morning.

Earlier:

Indigenous water protectors and their allies are prepared for a crackdown by law enforcement on Thursday, vowing to hold ground they [reclaimed through eminent domain](#) last weekend despite

threats by [Dakota Access Pipeline \(DAPL\)](#) developer Energy Transfer Partners and local officials.

Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners warned on Tuesday that demonstrators occupying land in the pipeline's path—land to which both the corporation and local tribes lay claim—must leave or face prosecution. The new frontline camp sits just north of the main protest camp on federal land near Cannon Ball, a town about 50 miles south of Bismarck.

The Associated Press reported:

Law enforcement officials demanded that the protesters leave the private land on Wednesday, but the protesters refused. It appeared only thick fog and cloudy skies kept a large contingent of law enforcement officers from moving in. Officials have frequently monitored protesters by air.

[According to](#) a separate *AP* report:

Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney told reporters that authorities don't want a confrontation but that the protesters "are not willing to bend."

"We have the resources. We could go down there at any time," he said. "We're trying not to."

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said authorities would continue to try for a peaceful resolution but that "we are here to enforce the law as needed."

But the activists have refused to bend. The *Bismarck Tribune* [quoted protest organizer](#) Mekasi Camp-Horinek, of Oklahoma, as calling out, "No surrender, no retreat!" as he walked away from the negotiations with top law enforcement officials on Wednesday afternoon.

The *Tribune* reported:

Camp-Horinek said he told police the group did not intend to relocate, then warned protesters to expect 300 officers to remove everyone from the camp and take them to jail.

"We will be peaceful, we will be prayerful, we will not retreat," he said.

"We've got to make our bodies a living sacrifice," John Perko, a demonstrator from South Dakota, told the newspaper. "This is the most honorable thing I could be doing right now."

Another member of the movement, Didi Banerji, who lives in Toronto but is originally from the Spirit Lake Sioux reservation in North Dakota, told the *AP*: "I'm here to die if I have to. I don't want to die but I will."

Meanwhile, also on Wednesday, the Morton County sheriff's office—which the *Guardian* [notes](#) "has been leading the police response to the demonstration and [conducted mass arrests over the weekend](#)"—announced that the [use of dogs by private security guards](#) against protesters last month was potentially illegal.

The sheriff's office [reportedly determined](#) that "dog handlers were not properly licensed to do security work in the state of North Dakota" and passed the results of its investigation along to the Morton County States Attorney's Office and the North Dakota Private Investigators and Security Board for possible charges.

Private security workers were continuing to monitor water protectors on Wednesday afternoon, Leota Eastman Iron Cloud, a Native American activist from South Dakota who has been at the protests for months, told the *Guardian* by phone. "We're watching them watching us."

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2016/10/27/armed-riot-gear-militarized-police-begin-forcibly-clearing-dapl-protest-camp>

October 28, 2016

Why Dakota Is the New Keystone

By Bill McKibben
New York Times

MIDDLEBURY, Vt. — The Native Americans who have spent the last months in peaceful protest against an oil pipeline along the banks of the Missouri are standing up for tribal rights. They're also standing up for clean water, environmental justice and a working climate. And it's time that everyone else joined in.

The shocking images of the National Guard destroying tepees and sweat lodges and [arresting elders](#) this week remind us that the battle over the Dakota Access Pipeline is part of the longest-running drama in American history — the United States Army versus Native Americans. In the past, it's almost always ended horribly, and nothing we can do now will erase a history of massacres, stolen land and broken treaties. But this time, it can end differently.

Those heroes on the Standing Rock reservation, sometimes on horseback, have peacefully stood up to police dogs, pepper spray and the bizarre-looking militarized tanks and SWAT teams that are the stuff of modern policing. (Modern and old-fashioned both: The pictures of [German shepherds](#) attacking are all too reminiscent of photos from, say, Birmingham, Ala., in 1963.)

The courage of those protesters managed to move the White House enough that the government [called a temporary halt](#) to construction. But the forces that want it finished — Big Oil, and its allies in parts of the labor movement — are strong enough that the respite may be temporary.

In coming weeks, activists will respond to calls from the leaders at Standing Rock by gathering at the offices of banks funding the pipeline, and at the offices of the Army Corps of Engineers, for protest and civil disobedience. [Two dozen big banks](#) have lent money to the pipeline project, even though many of them have also adopted elaborate [environmental codes](#). As for the Corps, that's the agency that helped "expedite" the approval of the pipeline — and must still grant the final few permits.

The vast movement of people across the country who mobilized to block fossil-fuel projects like the Keystone pipeline and Shell's plans to drill in the Arctic need to gather once more. This time, their message must be broader still.

There are at least two grounds for demanding a full environmental review of this pipeline, instead of the fast-track approvals it has received so far. The first is the obvious environmental racism of the whole project.

Originally, the pipeline was supposed to cross the Missouri just [north of Bismarck](#), until people pointed out that a leak there would threaten the drinking water supply for North Dakota's second biggest city. The solution, in keeping with American history, was obvious: make the crossing instead just above the Standing Rock reservation, where the [poverty rate](#) is nearly three times the national average. This has been like watching the start of another Flint, Mich., except with a chance to stop it.

The second is that this is precisely the kind of project that climate science tells us can no longer be tolerated. In midsummer, the Obama administration promised that henceforth there would be a climate test for new projects before they could be approved. That promise was codified in the Democratic platform approved by Hillary Clinton's campaign, which says there will be no [federal approval](#) for any project that "significantly exacerbates" global warming.

The review of the Dakota pipeline must take both cases into account.

So far, the signs are not good. There has been no word from the White House about how long the current pause will last. Now, the company building the pipeline has pushed the local authorities to remove protesters from land where construction has already desecrated indigenous burial sites, with law enforcement agents using Tasers, batons, mace and "sound cannons."

From the Clinton campaign, there's been simply an ugly silence, perhaps rooted in an unwillingness to cross major contributors like the [Laborers' International Union of North America](#), which has [lashed out](#) against the many other, larger unions [that oppose](#) the project. But that silence won't make the issue go away: Sioux protesters erected a tepee in her [Brooklyn campaign](#) office on Thursday. If Mrs. Clinton is elected on Nov. 8, this will be the new president's first test on environmental and human rights.

What's happening along the Missouri is of historic consequence. That message should reverberate not just on the lonely high plains, but in our biggest cities, too. Native Americans have carried the fight, but they deserve backup from everyone with a conscience; other activists should join the protest at bank headquarters, Army Corps offices and other sites of entrenched power.

The Native Americans are the only people who have inhabited this continent in harmony with nature for centuries. Their traditional wisdom now chimes perfectly with the latest climate science. The only thing missing are the bodies of the rest of us joining in their protest. If we use them wisely, a fresh start is possible.

[Bill McKibben \(@billmckibben\)](#) is a founder of 350.org and teaches environmental studies at Middlebury College.

www.nytimes.com/2016/10/29/opinion/why-dakota-is-the-new-keystone.html
