

ACROSS THE LINES

A publication of the **Seeds of Peace Collective:** supporting nonviolent direct action since 1986



If You Build It, We Will Come: The Fight Against Tar Sands in Eastern Utah

by Camila Ibañez

[This past Summer, Seeds of Peace provided food and logistical support for the Canyon Country Action Camp, which culminated in a direct action that shut down preliminary construction on the site of the first proposed tar sands mine in the United States. The action also halted work on the access road being built to service both the tar sands mine and other oil and gas operations in the surrounding area. Members of Seeds of Peace, active in the southern Utah chapter of Rising Tide, collaborated with Peaceful Uprising to plan and organize the camp. The following is an article written by a camp participant and was originally published on the blog Waging Nonviolence.]

The wake-up call came at 4 a.m. Emerging from my tent in the still-dark morning hours in Green River, Utah, I joined the nearly 100 other people gathered that morning for a quick breakfast before loading into a caravan of cars. Among the group were climate justice organizers from Canyon Country Rising Tide, Tar Sands Blockade, Peaceful Uprising, the Salt Lake Dream Team, and the Lakota and Diné Nations, all of whom had spent the previous week together at the nation's first action camp to stop commercial tar sands mining in the United States.

We drove three hours to a remote section of southeast Utah called PR Spring, on the Tavaputs Plateau, where the Canadian company US Oil Sands is beginning initial construction of the planned tar sands mine. Upon ddd

arrival the group marched onto the test pit where three machines were shifting dirt and began chanting, "No Tar Sands! No Way! Not Ever! Not Today!" Forming a circle around the machines to halt construction, we performed a spiritual water ceremony led by Lakota and Diné tribe members. After about a half hour, the men waiting in their machines got out and left the work site.

Most of us then made our way farther into the site, where we could see the tar sands seeping up through the ground. From the plateau, where we stood, the mountainous landscape of Utah provided a sharp contrast to the mine's stripped earth. Some stayed back to make sure the construction workers didn't return, while the rest of us moved farther up the road to where machines were paving in anticipation of future construction. Along with another activist, I scaled a bulldozer and dropped a banner reading, "If you build it, we will come!" as younger members of the indigenous tribes balanced on another part of the bulldozer and raised their fists in the air.

THE SPECTRUM OF THE FRONTLINE

The most important difference between this camp and other activist gatherings was its specific emphasis on approaching climate justice through the lens of indigenous and frontline-impacted communities. As Henia Belalia, the director of Peaceful Uprising and one of the lead organizers of the camp, explained, "We have been prioritizing frontline voices

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News and Updates From the
**SEEDS OF PEACE
COLLECTIVE**



by *Flicker*



Scenes from Black Mesa (from top): tarpology 101; letting the truck cool; preparing frybread for a feast; inside our new trailer with some custom built shelves
photos courtesy of Shelby

Since the last issue we have been to the Appalachias of Southeast Ohio, the sacred lands of Black Mesa, the blistering canyons of Southern Utah, the torrential forests of North Carolina, the high valleys of Montana and up and down the East coast. It has been a busy year.

We are now operating two kitchens, one on the West coast and one on the East. The East coast kitchen, headed by Grumble and members of Radical Action for Mountain Peoples Survival (RAMPS), has been supporting actions, marches and summits quite literally nonstop over the past twelve months. The west coast kitchen has been working primarily in the Rocky Mountains and desert Southwest.

Over the next year we will be supporting direct action against Peabody coal on Black Mesa, helping to put a nail in the coffin of mountaintop removal coal mining, bringing an end to tar sands mining in Utah before it starts, supporting resistance to pipelines and fossil fuel infrastructure and supporting Earth First! forays in the forests of Cascadia. We are excited to work with these communities that are redefining, broadening, and escalating the movement for social and environmental justice.

We hope to see you, in the streets and in the woods, and wherever resistance is in bloom. □

Contact us! Via email @ seedsofpeace@riseup.net or via phone @ 406-241-9932.

2014 ACTION & EVENT CALENDAR

Mountain Justice Summer Camp
June 14 - 22 Whitesburg, KY
[The 10th annual Mountain Justice Summer camp will feature nine days of workshops, trainings, learning about coal mining and mountaintop removal and Appalachian history and culture.]
www.mountainjustice.org

Earth First! Climb Camp
June 15 - 22 Southeast MN
[The Earth First! Climbers Guild will host a climbing camp in the Driftless Area of the Upper Midwest.]
www.earthfirstjournal.org

2014 Earth First! Rendezvous
July 1 - 7 Southern Cascadia
[Join EF! for their annual gathering, this year in the wilds of Cascadia. Revelers will converge to network, strategize and howl. And pull off an awesome action!]
www.earthfirstjournal.org

Summer for Climate Justice Action Camp
July 15-22 Eastern UT
[An action field school! Escalation of the struggle to end proposed tar sands mining on the Tavaputs plateau.]
www.peacefuluprising.org/Summer-for-Climate-Justice

Rising Tide North America Continental Gathering
Date and Location TBA
[Rising Tide chapters from across North America will converge to network, train and shape the climate movement.]
www.risingtidenorthamerica.org

Peoples Climate March
September 20-21 New York City
[United Nations meets to discuss action on climate change. Tens of thousands will meet in the streets to commandeer their message. Not to be missed!]
www.350.org

The Peabody Connection: This is What Solidarity Looks Like

by Serafina

If you remember, In January of 2013 Seeds of Peace supported a three-week long action camp bringing together communities from across the country with a common target: Peabody Coal, the world's largest coal corporation. The action camp brought together resisters from Black Mesa, residents of the coal fields of Appalachia, and people working to stop the city of St. Louis from subsidizing the coal industry. The convergence was powerful to say the least. In one action, twelve people were arrested in front of the Peabody Headquarters asking that the CEO, Greg Boyce, accept a letter from the residents of Black Mesa. Participants in the camp deepened their understanding of the interconnectedness of these issues, developed crucial skills in campaign strategy, implemented direct actions, and discussed issues of systemic racism, oppression, and climate justice.

In a globalized economy controlled by multinational corporations, one community's fight for justice is inextricably linked to issues in distant places (by subsidies, resources, trade deals, equipment and product supplies, shipping routes, etc). Often, the long term success of a campaign is reliant upon a broader collaborative strategy to leverage power against those companies, policies, and governments that are responsible. Considering this framework, we see the importance of supporting front-line communities directly engaged in resistance, as well as the importance of weaving these struggles into a complex tapestry that points to the root of the issue (ie. extraction-based economies). From that point, we begin to see endless strategic opportunities to mobilize the greater public in solidarity actions and campaigns, obviously taking direction from and supporting the people most impacted.

For example, Peabody Coal operates a massive strip mine on Black Mesa, AZ, ancestral homelands of the Diné (Navajo) people. During the company's 45 years of operation, thousands of Diné residents have been forcibly relocated in order to clear the land for Peabody's strip mines. An estimated 70 percent of a once-pristine desert aquifer has been drained for these coal operations. To this day, Diné and Hopi people are engaged in resistance to this forced relocation.

Peabody also owned and operated coal mines in Appalachia from 1984 until 2011, when they sold their Appalachian assets to a newly created company called Patriot Coal. Patriot Coal is now in Federal District hardearned pensions and health-care coverage of over 20,000

bankruptcy court in St. Louis claiming that it cannot pay retired miners and their families. This shifting of assets allows Peabody Coal to continue to operate free of any legal obligation to their own retired workers.

Peabody and Patriot Coal both have their corporate headquarters in St. Louis, MO. In 2010, Peabody received tax breaks on \$61 million of purchases from the city government--\$2 million of which was originally allocated to the St. Louis Public Schools. Power plants in and around St. Louis burn Peabody's coal and are a leading cause of high asthma rates in the city.



Taking the streets of St. Louis at the January, 2013 camp

When seen through a broader lense, each of these seemingly isolated incidents becomes an obvious part in Peabody's larger pattern of exploitation and the government's complicity in that exploitation. This opens doors for new alliances, greater popular support, and increased pressure on the corporation.

This cross-movement dialogue continued in June at a gathering on Black Mesa entitled "Decolonizing the Mind/Mine" and was organized by Diné resisters and Black Mesa Indigenous Support. People representing front-line communities from as far away as Palestine and Hawaii and as near by as the neighboring homesite attended the event. Some of the groups represented were Idle No More, RAMPS, No More Deaths, the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, the Palestinian Youth Movement, Rebel Diaz, Seeds of Peace (also cooking!) and many more. A traditional Diné planning process using the four directions was applied as a guide for the week, connecting spirituality, resistance, and giving space to discuss the nuances of joint struggle, solidarity, and allship. *continued on page 7*

The Climate Movement's Pipeline Preoccupation

by Arielle Klagsbrun, David Osborn, Maryam Andragi
and Kirby Spangler

Architecturally, a keystone is the wedge-shaped piece at the crown of an arch that locks the other pieces in place. Without the keystone, the building blocks of an archway will tumble and fall, with no support system for the weight of the arch. Much of the United States climate movement right now is structured like an archway, with all of its blocks resting on a keystone — President Obama's decision on the Keystone XL pipeline.

This is a dangerous place to be. Once Barack Obama makes his decision on the pipeline, be it approval or rejection, the keystone will disappear. Without this piece, we could see the weight of the arch tumble down, potentially losing throngs of newly inspired climate activists. As members of Rising Tide North America, a continental network of grassroots groups taking direct action and finding community-based solutions to the root causes of the climate crisis, we believe that to build the climate justice movement we need, we can have no keystone — no singular solution, campaign, project, or decision maker.

The Keystone XL fight was constructed around picking one proposed project to focus on with a clear elected decider, who had campaigned on addressing climate change. The strategy of DC-focused green groups has been to pressure President Obama to say “no” to Keystone by raising as many controversies as possible about the pipeline and by bringing increased scrutiny to Keystone XL through arrestable demonstrations. Similarly, in Canada, the fight over Enbridge's Northern Gateway tar sands pipeline has unfolded in much the same way, with green groups appealing to politicians to reject Northern Gateway.

However, the mainstream Keystone XL and Northern Gateway campaigns operate on a flawed nnnnnnnn

assumption that the climate movement can compel our elected leaders to respond to the climate crisis with nothing more than an effective communications strategy. Mainstream political parties in both the US and Canada are tied to and dependent on the fossil fuel industry and corporate capitalism. As seen in similar campaigns in 2009 to pass a climate bill in the United States and to ratify an international climate treaty in Copenhagen, the system is rigged against us. Putting Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper at the keystone of the archway creates a flawed narrative that if we, as grassroots groups, work hard enough to stack the building blocks correctly to support them, then elected officials will do what we want. Social change happens when local communities lead, and only then will politicians follow. While we must name and acknowledge power holders like Obama, our movement must empower local communities to make decisions and take action on the causes of the climate crisis in their backyards.

**TO MATCH THEM, WE NEED
A MOVEMENT OF COMMUNITIES ALL ACROSS
THE CONTINENT AND
THE WORLD TAKING DIRECT ACTION TO STOP THE
EXTRACTION INDUSTRY, FINDING
COMMUNITY-BASED SOLUTIONS,
AND ADDRESSING THE ROOT
CAUSES OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS.**

Because of the assumption that the climate movement can trust even “sympathetic” politicians like Obama, these campaigns rely on lifting up one project above all else. Certain language used has made it seem like Keystone XL is an extreme project, with unusual fraud and other injustices associated with it. Indeed the Keystone XL project is extreme and unjust, as is every fossil fuel project and every piece of the extraction economy. While, for example, the conflict of interests

between the State Department, TransCanada and Environmental Resources Management in the United States, and Enbridge and federal politicians in Canada, must be publicized, **it should be clear that this government/industry relationship is the norm, not the exception.**

The “game over for climate” narrative is also problematic. With both the Keystone and Northern Gateway campaigns, it automatically sets up a hierarchy of projects and extractive types that will inevitably pit nnnnn



communities against each other. Our movement can never question if Keystone XL is worse than Flanagan South (an Enbridge pipeline running from Illinois to Oklahoma), or whether tar sands, fracking or mountaintop removal coal mining is worse. We must reject all these forms of extreme energy for their effects on the climate and the injustices they bring to the people at every stage of the extraction process. Our work must be broad so as to connect fights across the continent into a movement that truly addresses the root causes of social, economic, and climate injustice. We must call for what we really need — the end to all new fossil fuel infrastructure and extraction. The pipeline placed yesterday in British Columbia, the most recent drag lines added in Wyoming, and the fracking wells built in Pennsylvania need to be the last ones ever built. And we should say that.

This narrative has additionally set up a make-or-break attitude about these pipeline fights that risks that the movement will contract and lose people regardless of the decision on them. The Keystone XL and Northern Gateway fights have engaged hundreds of thousands of people, with many embracing direct action and civil disobedience tactics for the first time. This escalation and level of engagement is inspiring. But the absolutist “game over” language chances to lose many of them. If Obama approves the Keystone XL pipeline, what’s to stop many from thinking that this is in fact “game over” for the climate? And if Obama rejects Keystone XL, what’s to stop many from thinking that the climate crisis is therefore solved? We need those using the “game over” rhetoric to lay out the climate crisis’ root causes — because just as one project is not the end of humanity, stopping one project will not stop runaway climate change.

The fights over Keystone XL and Northern Gateway have been undoubtedly inspiring. We are seeing the beginnings of the escalation necessary to end extreme energy extraction, stave off the worst effects of the climate crisis, and make a just transition to equitable societies.

societies. Grassroots groups engaging in and training for direct action such as the Tar Sands Blockade, Great Plains Tar Sands Resistance, the Unist’ot’en Camp, and Moccasins on the Ground have shown us how direct action can empower local communities and push establishment establishment green groups to embrace bolder tactics. Our movement is indeed growing, and people are willing to put their bodies on the line; an April poll by the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication found one in eight Americans would engage in civil disobedience around global warming.

However, before the Keystone XL and Northern Gateway mainstream campaigns come to an end, we all must recognize the dangers of having an archway approach to movement building. It is the danger of relying on political power-holders, cutting too narrow campaigns, excluding a systemic analysis of root causes, and, ultimately, failing to create a broad-based movement. We must begin to discuss and develop our steps on how we should shift our strategy, realign priorities, escalate direct action, support local groups and campaigns, and keep as many new activists involved as possible.

We are up against the world’s largest corporations, who are attempting to extract, transport and burn fossil fuels at an unprecedented rate, all as the climate crisis spins out of control. The climate justice movement should have no keystone because we must match them everywhere they are — and they are everywhere. To match them, we need a movement of communities all across the continent and the world taking direct action to stop the extraction industry, finding community-based solutions, and addressing the root causes of the climate crisis.

*This article was originally published in **Waging Non-violence** in October, 2013. This article appears through a collaboration with *Earth Island Journal* and was jointly published there.*

If You Build It, We Will Come

(continued from pg. 1)

— either people from the frontline extraction communities, or people in the state of Utah who are already breathing the worst air in the nation.”

The rural and largely indigenous population of southeast Utah will face significant health problems if the commercial tar sands mines continue, such as rare forms of cancer — including leukemia, lymphoma and lupus, which are already severely impacting the Mikisew Cree First Nations and Athabasca Chipewyan communities living downstream from tar sands operations in Canada.

The challenge is not new; these same communities have long been fighting the adverse health impacts, particularly poor air quality, imposed by the oil industry’s influence in the region. Historically, however, the national climate justice movement has largely marginalized these voices — a legacy that this camp sought to challenge through panels exploring the intersectionality of frontline communities, morning rituals led by tribal leaders and even an “Anti-Government Arts and Crafts” workshop held by a 10-year-old Lakota boy.

One of the primary reasons that socially and economically marginalized communities have been traditionally excluded from the climate justice movement is because of the mainstream environmental movement’s emphasis on the potential for green capitalism to solve the problem. Under this rationale, it is possible to achieve sustainability while still living comfortable, overly consumptive lives — a framework that doesn’t resonate with or include economically disenfranchised communities. In contrast, many at the recent tar sands action camp found that solidarity meant opposing not only climate change, but also capitalism.

“We need to be anti-capitalist for us to be climate justice activists,” said one trainer during a workshop. “We can’t just stop them from creating an institution [like tar sands mining] to continue something that they are compelled to continue. We need to stop the system in order to hit the root cause.”

Itza Duron, a migrant rights organizer with the Salt Lake Dream Team, further explained how the capitalist critique gradually took hold throughout the week-long camp.

“It just made sense,” she said. “All of our struggles are so intermingled that when you get down to the base of it, all of these problems are directly correlated with capitalism. By like the third day of the camp, everyone kind of understood that. It was really beautiful.”

However, even if solidarity made sense on a more abstract, theoretical level, there were still challenges in implementing this unity during the camp itself. One of the problems faced was the question of whether or not to wear masks during the nonviolent, yet illegal, action to halt construction at the mine site.

Many camp participants who regularly experience different treatment by law enforcement because of the color of their skin — including members of the Lakota community, those lacking U.S. residency papers, and women of color like myself — favored the idea of covering our faces. When the media and police come with cameras and handcuffs, we are the ones with the most to lose. Yet, others argued that masked protesters create an image too threatening for outside viewers.

The concern was that the media would portray us as terrorists and no one would want to join the next action. However valid that line of reasoning may be, it ignores the fact that white activist communities have a choice to appear non-threatening — a privilege that is not always accessible for communities of color. During the camp, the young people of the Lakota nation were greeted and presented as warriors — both in accordance with the nation’s traditional social structure and in recognition of the global resource war against multinational oil corporations.

This introduction reminded activists from less affected areas of society that the climate justice movement is an extension of the battle for land and survival that indigenous communities have been fighting for centuries. We know that marginalized communities at all points of extraction, transportation and refining will suffer the most from climate change and dirty energy extraction. The level of solidarity established by the broader climate justice movement will be one of the central factors determining its success.

SCARING OFF INVESTORS

The morning after taking direct action against US Oil Sands, the group gathered in a circle to listen to organizer Leah Dale.

“We stopped construction for a day, and no matter what negative things happened yesterday, we won just a little more,” she said.

Fingers shot up in the air twinkling in agreement, a familiar scene from Occupy general assemblies. The debrief helped activists better understand how the action is only one part of a much longer campaign to shut down the construction of tar sands indefinitely.

The day of the action, US Oil Sands’ stock dropped 13 percent, an indication, organizers say, that investors are skittish about the potential for disruption on this project. Similarly, delays to the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline, caused in part by an intense direct action campaign over the last six months, have also inspired investors to cut their stakes in tar sands companies. This is yet another indication that these types of targeted actions affect economic markets more than corporations would like anyone to think.

As the banner drop made perfectly clear, even if they do manage to fund and build the tar sands mine, we will come. □

The Peabody Connection

(continued from page 3)

One participant, Nick Mullins, who was born and raised in Southwestern Virginia and until recently was an underground coal miner, reflected, “Thousands of miles away from my Appalachian home in a foreign environment, I began to feel even more strongly the connections: the power of all life, the struggles we all face, and the need to protect our children’s future. If only people could understand as the native elders do—that the land, the water, and the air are more important than any manmade economy ever could be.”

These alliances, forged across issues, cultures, and geographic boundaries, will continue to strengthen and deepen our understanding of solidarity and climate justice, influencing the way we organize in the coming years. These gatherings were organized by Black Mesa Indigenous Support (BMIS), residents of Black Mesa, AZ, the West Virginia based Radical Action for Mountain Peoples’ Survival (RAMPS), and Missourians Organizing for Reform and Empowerment (MORE). As we go to press, some of these same players are organizing a spring action camp on Black Mesa. □



Protecting the Sacred

Moccasins on the Ground Spreads Knowledge and Vows Resistance

by Flicker

Over the past year and a half a groundswell of indigenous and first nations resistance has been building all over Turtle Island (a.k.a North America). On the US front, Moccasins on the Ground has been uniting communities fighting fossil fuel infrastructure projects through a series of action camps focused on education and direct action. The training platform is organized by Owe Aku, a Lakota founded NGO based in South Dakota. The Owe Aku website states:

“The Moccasins on the ground training focuses on skills, tactics, and techniques of nonviolent direct action. The skills discussed include blockading heavy equipment, strategic media, street medic training, know your rights with respect to civil disobedience, building solidarity and alliances, international human rights and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Lakota sacred teachings on water, and many topics under the umbrella of direct action.”

The camps have been in preparation for what many feel is the inevitable construction of the Northern Keystone XL pipeline, which would run from Morgan, MT to Steele City, NE. More specifically, it is in preparation to confront and stop its construction. While Owe Aku and MOTG have focused primarily on KXL, the trainings have been about more than that.

The trainings have also focused on a resurgence of Uranium mining in South Dakota, which is threatening ground water supplies on the Pine Ridge reservation -- and the town of White Clay, NE which continues to prey upon members of the Lakota nation with sales of alcohol to an otherwise dry nation.

The camps have brought together community members, landowners, seasoned activists, and frontline defenders from other struggles to share stories, teach one another and contribute to an increasingly connected movement for social and environmental justice.



MOTG camp participants in MT showing solidarity

In August of 2013, Seeds of Peace supported one such MOTG training in Whitehall, MT. Together with Indian People’s Action (Butte, MT) and Owe Aku, 100 people gathered for three days to engage in NVDA and blockades training, media work, story telling, song and dance, discussions, and of course lots of delicious food. The crowd was diverse and drew folks from frontline communities in Canada and all over the US. Along with skill sharing and networking, the camp contributed to an encouraging shift in environmental activism towards inclusivity and joint struggle across boundaries. Look for more MOTG trainings in the near future, especially as the decision on Keystone draws nigh. □



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