

The Fight To Protect Water

In Cannon Ball, North Dakota, an oil pipeline is being built and is 95% complete. The pipeline is supposed to meet demands from energy consumers in the USA. Meanwhile, the nonviolent Native American resistance over the past few years has blossomed into a peaceful prayer movement. Here are five facts provided by allied non-Indigenous sources available to the community here in Calaveras County, five points to help us understand what's happening.

FUNDING AND PURPOSE (FACT #1): The Dakota Access PipeLine (DAPL) project costs \$3.8 billion. Institutions supporting the DAPL include Citibank and Wells Fargo; they directly bankroll this 1,200 mile-long pipeline. President-elect D. Trump has invested more than \$500,000 in the Texas-based developer of the pipeline called Energy Transfer Partners (ETP). ETP is joined by Sunoco Logistics as another corporate entity trying to finish the pipeline. Every major player in the financial industry has extended some form of credit to ETP. If completed, DAPL is intended to carry hundreds of thousands of barrels of some of the dirtiest oil on the planet across four states, putting public health, critical water supplies, cultural resources and ancestral burial grounds in danger.

THOSE WHO STAND IN OPPOSITION (FACT #2): The Standing Rock Sioux tribe is leading the opposition, and the resistance to DAPL includes the largest coalition in the past 525 years against encroachment—about 300 Native American Nations and Tribes plus environmental justice groups (including Indigenous Environmental Network, Sierra Club and 350.org). Water protectors have been camping onsite at the Standing Rock Reservation and nearby since April 2016. When DAPL began using violence (dog bites, pepper spray, rubber bullets, etc.) against water protectors other protest events and vigils sprang up around the US and on other continents. The Cannon Ball River sits alongside the site and flows into the Missouri River. Standing Rock's water protection site includes four specific camps for the thousands of demonstrators (both Native and non-Natives live together in camp): Sacred Stone Spirit, Oceti Sakowin (which means The Seven Council Fires), Red Warrior (within Oceti Sakowin), and across the river is the Rosebud Camp. In the Camps there is no alcohol, drugs or weapons allowed. Hundres of activists have been arrested, and dozens have been wounded and injured by alleged law-enforcers (see **FACT #5**)

THE MOTIVATION OF WATER PROTECTORS (FACT #3): The resistance coalition comprises environmentalists, activists and allies, collectively known as “water protectors” who believe the pipeline threatens everything from farming and drinking water to entire ecosystems, wildlife and food sources surrounding the Missouri. This prayer-driven fight is about healing and restoring balance with Mother Earth. It's about acting with the next seven generations in mind and making sure that what we do today will benefit, not harm future humans. The Indigenous people leading the Standing Rock movement know they *will* defeat the DAPL through prayer, unity and by putting their bodies on the line. Their movement is for the end of fossil fuels and the beginning of a just transition to healthier energies.

LAWFUL CONTROL OVER THE DISPUTED LAND (FACT #4): The Standing Rock Lakota (a.k.a. Sioux) have peacefully gathered on their own treaty-authorized homelands as well as neighboring lands seized by “imminent domain”. Dakota Access LLC, a subsidiary of Energy Transfer Partners, has also used the strong-arm of government to force farmers and landowners to hand over their land to the pipeline against their will. After the federal government relegated the Lakota people to the “Great Sioux Reservation” in 1851, the treaty was re-written and “renegotiated” by force whenever resources were discovered or when the U.S. government wanted land.

POLICE COMMIT VIOLENCE IN NORTH DAKOTA (FACT #5): In September, water protectors were confronted violently by security guards from British mercenary firm G4S. Pipeline police, North Dakota National Guard and sheriffs imported from around the country, have turned the standoff into a war zone, armed with military grade weapons, tanks with snipers on top of them, and have regularly used LRADs (high pitched noise weapons to disperse crowds). On Sunday the 20th of Nov. police froze water protectors with water cannon spray, causing hypothermia and cardiac arrest for many demonstrators.

How Can I Learn More?

The main website is here: NoDAPLSolidarity.org

The vigil for today is here: CatholicWorker.biz/standingrock



Two Things To Do:

- *Take your money out of the banks which support DAPL, and otherwise tell those banks to divest from the DAPL now for the sake of humanity. Cutting funding stops the project. It costs \$3.8 billion to build the pipeline. Without capital, Standing Rock and future humans win.*
- *Act as an ally; go to Standing Rock to support the movement. (Look online for cultural protocols before reaching Standing Rock. Show up prepared to take care of yourself.) Report back to your community. Send them money if you can (see their information online above).*