"Watchdogs of the Prairie"

Dakota Counsel

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Legislative training preps members for action

ABOVE: *DRC Board member Cheryl Kary facilitates discussion at DRC's Nov. 19 Legislative training.*

BELOW: *Former Representative Kenton Onstad talks about North Dakota state government.*

On Saturday, Nov. 19, more than 25 DRC members attended OUR CHANCE TO CHANGE: Demystifying the Legislative Process, a training hosted by Dakota Resource Council in Bismarck.

"Our main goal was to build members' confidence to access our state government," said Don Morrison, DRC Executive Director. "We wanted members to leave the training ready for the 2017 Legislative Session – and that means knowing there is a role for you in making change happen and that by working together with DRC members you'll get better and better at it. Now is always the best time to start changing our government for the better."

Don Morrison opened the training offering a lay of the land of the North Dakota State Legislature, including the election results and what that means for DRC's role during 2017 and beyond. Kenton Onstad, former state representative, gave a basic overview of North Dakota's system of government, breaking down the roles, functions, and challenges of each branch, how townships, cities, and counties work together (and sometimes don't), and the basic processes of bills, initiatives, and referendums. Next, incoming board member and Treasurer Cheryl Kary provided a history of tribal governments and Native American sovereignty. She also discussed a very compelling cultural dimensions theory in the context of the Standing Rock Nation and Dakota Access Pipeline. Psychologist Dr. Geert Hofstede's original theory proposed four dimensions along which cultural values could be analyzed: individualism-collectivism; uncertainty avoidance; power distance (strength of social hierarchy) and masculinity-femininity (task orientation versus person-orientation). It was a very productive discussion on how differences in cultural awareness (and our responses to those) can impact major social and political events. See page 9 of this issue for more information on Standing Rock and DAPL.

The afternoon sessions included DRC Ag and Food Organizer Tim Glaza sharing effective tools and techniques for lobbying and influencing decisions made by legislators, as well as about the cycle of accountability and how DRC members can contribute to holding elected officials accountable. Contact Tim at 701.224.8587 or tim@drcinfo.com for more resources and to talk more about strategies to hold leadership accountable.

Oil and Gas Organizer Nicole Donaghy shared tips for testifying at a variety of venues, from Legislative hearings to

county commission meetings. Training participants took part in a mock Legislative hearing, with the honorable Don Morrison presiding. A hypothetical issue was presented, and members wrote individual testimony. Three volunteers -- DRC member DeDe Aaron, member and new organizer Liz Loos, and incoming board member Dan Neurohr – presented their testimony and answered questions from mock legislators. It was a helpful exercise to see what kinds of experiences make for compelling testimony and offered a safe way to practice fielding questions. Contact Nicole at 701.224.8587 or Nicole@drcinfo.com for more resources on this subject or to talk through how you can help DRC by testifying on issues that are important to you.

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ABOUT US

The Dakota Counsel is published every quarter by Dakota Resource Council, a nonprofit, grassroots, activist organization. Dakota Resource Council's mission is to promote sustainable use of North Dakota's natural resources and family-owned and operated agriculture by building member-led local groups, empowering people to influence the decision-making processes that affect their lives and communities.

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Ready for 2017? We are

The 25 members who attended DRC's day-long legislative training on Nov. 19 experienced some of the tools to make change happen, just as other DRC members have done for the past 39 years, in preparation to successfully make our voices heard in our legislative process.

Craig Scott, DRC Chair

This is the kind of training that helped me not only to win some DRC issues, but also to become successful at work. It's the skills, attitude, realistic planning, and experiences of working together for common goals.

At our recent training, I was delighted to see our skillful DRC staff and an experienced community leader provide the framework and learn about the lay of the legislative landscape. We talked about how an idea becomes a law, lobbying steps, tools, actions steps, testifying, being a spokesperson, and holding elected officials accountable. It also was valuable to learn the history and unique role of Native Americans and how to better understand each other in the process.

This is how change happens. While it won't happen overnight, DRC has realistic campaign plans for our issues and legislative work. During the 2017 North Dakota Legislative Session, there will be times when many North Dakotans will agree with us as we stick up for farmers, ranchers, rural communities, clean energy, and deal with accountability for the contamination from oil development. We need to be ready to stand up and join together.

You can be part of these efforts in many different ways: contacting legislators, going to local legislative town hall events, attending hearings, testifying, sharing DRC information on bills, telling your friends about what is going on, and much more.

Please contact the DRC office to volunteer – we can always use your help! We do not have the resources to tackle every issue, but for those we do, we will go to the mat for. Remember that we're all climbing the mountain together, and just like in a tug of war, we'll win if we're all pulling in the same direction.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY 2017

Jan 3	Ag & Food Task Force Call
Jan 3	ND Legislative Session begins
Jan 14	DRC Board Meeting, *Bismarck*

FEBRUARY 2017

Feb 15-18	Principles of Community Organizing, *Grand Junction, CO*

Contact a DRC organizer if you are interested in learning more about the great opportunity of POCO!

DRC board meets in Jamestown on Nov. 12

Meeting at the University of Jamestown on Nov. 12, the DRC Board of Directors welcomed two new members to the board: Cheryl Kary of Bismarck and Dan Neurohr of Dodge. Both were elected by the membership at DRC's Annual Meeting on Oct. 22 in New Town.

The Board reviewed the organization's finances, debriefed the annual meeting, encouraged Board members and other leaders to attend WORC's Principles of Community Organizing (POCO) in 2017, discussed and approved the 2017 Preliminary Budget that had been prepared by the Finance Committee, discussed and approved updating revisions to the personnel policies that had been prepared by the Personnel Committee, and discussed progress of efforts regarding Standing Rock and Just Transition. At the annual meeting, members passed a resolution for DRC to implement a policy of Just Transition when working on energy issues. Attending the board meeting were 14 board members and five staff. Three Board members were absent.

Weiss is WORC Sec-Treas

DRC Past Chair Linda Weiss was recently elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Western Organization of Resource Council (WORC) Board. She and Lisa DeVille are DRC's representatives to the WORC Board and both attended the WORC Board Meeting in Billings, MT, on December 2-3.

Clean Energy organizer Lowstuter hired in August

In August, Claire Lowstuter started at Dakota Resource Council as an organizer focusing on clean energy issues. Since joining, Claire has been working on the ND Clean Energy State Table, as well as organizing DRC's clean energy working group and re-energizing DRC affiliate Missouri Valley Resource Council.

After graduating high school and college in northern Colorado, Claire and her husband, Derek, served two years in Ethiopia with the Peace Corps, working on conservation and natural resource management issues. Claire and Derek moved to Rugby, ND, in 2013, where she worked with the NDSU Extension Service. She has experience and appreciation for collaborating with people in different areas of expertise.

Read more about Claire's hobbies on the DRC website. Reach Claire at 701.224.8487 or at claire@drcinfo.com.

Loos hired to organize Standing Rock campaign

DRC hired Liz Loos to work with members to strengthen relationships with the people of Standing Rock and to build positive connections among people in the Bismarck-Mandan area on our common issues and concerns for the future. *Read more about DRC's work regarding Standing Rock and the surrounding area in this newsletter.*

Liz moved from Louisiana to Bismarck in July 2013, with her husband, Frank, and son, Gus. She completed a bachelor's in Environmental Studies at Chatham College and earned her master's in Ornithology at Louisiana State University and a Ph.D in Environmental and Evolutionary Biology from University of Louisiana.

Liz's first day as a full-time field organizer will be January 1. She's worked on a contract basis since mid-November to organize the DRC Community Forum and begin outreach to members and the community. Reach Liz at eloos@drcinfo.com or 701.224.8587. Check DRC's website for more info about Liz!

Prairie Fire films shown at Heritage Center

Date of film screening coincided with 35-year memorial of activist Henry Martinson's death

Dakota Resource Council, the State Historical Society of North Dakota, the North Dakota AFL-CIO, and Cinema 100: Bismarck-Mandan Film Society presented *Rebel Earth* and *Survivor* of the *Prairie Trilogy* at the North Dakota Heritage Center on Sunday, Nov. 20.

The entire Prairie Trilogy was produced and directed by John Hanson and Rob Nilsson. The films follow the life and movement building of Henry Martinson, who helped organize the Nonpartisan League. The date of the free film screening coincided with the 35-year anniversary of Martinson's death, on Nov. 20, 1981. All of the public libraries in North Dakota have a copy of the *Prairie Trilogy* on DVD, so don't miss out on seeing these important films.

A panel discussion followed the films. Panelists discussed the importance of everyday people organizing for change that benefits ordinary people and connected the importance of past movements in North Dakota, like the NPL, to current events and opportunity for change.

Panelists Robert Carlson, former President of the North Dakota Farmers Union, DRC Executive Director Don Morrison, and retired Professor of History from University of North Dakota Dr. Barbara Handy-Marchello, along with moderator Waylon Hedegaard, President of the North Dakota AFL-CIO, talk about the NPL at the North Dakota Heritage Center on Nov. 20, 2016.

Dakota Resource Council affiliate news and information

BARC hosts coffee and collaboration sessions to connect
In the fall, BARC hosted two "coffee and collaboration" sessions in Dickinson for current members to reconnect, and also to bring new community members to learn about DRC's work. Because of that success, BARC hosted a holiday potluck for members in Billings and Stark counties and the surrounding area on Monday, Dec. 19 from 6-8 p.m. in Belfield. Please contact organizer Cecilia Montesdeoca or BARC Chair Linda Weiss for information on the next BARC event.

Fort Berthold P.O.W.E.R. elects new officers
Fort Berthold Protectors of Water and Earth Rights (P.O.W.E.R.) recently elected new executive officers. Lisa DeVille of Mandaree will serve as President, Thomas Abe of Parshall will serve as Vice President, Dorothy Ventsch of New Town will serve as Treasurer, and Joletta Bird Bear of Mandaree will serve as secretary. Reps to the DRC board are Walter DeVille of Mandaree and Shelly Ventsch of New Town.

Missouri Valley Resource Council restarting efforts
DRC's Bismarck area affiliate, Missouri Valley Resource Council, is rebuilding with help from organizer Claire Lowstuter. Claire has been meeting with DRC members and potential new members in Bismarck-Mandan to find out what issues matter to them and how they can work together to make their community a better place to live. On Nov. 19, MVRC members co-hosted a social and soup supper at the Bis-Man UU church after the DRC legislative training. Early in 2017, MVRC should be ready to hold regular meetings and begin campaign planning. To get involved in MVRC, please contact Claire at Claire@drcinfo.com or 303-565-6790.

MECTA members meet in Keene
Members of McKenzie County Energy & Taxation Association (MECTA) met on Oct. 21 at DRC member Donny Nelson's home in Keene, ahead of Dakota Resource Council's Annual Meeting in New Town, ND, on Oct. 21. If you're interested in becoming more active in MECTA, contact organizer Tim Glaza at tim@drcinfo.com or 701.224.8587.

SARC collects pledges for solar garden project
Members of South Agassiz Resource Council (SARC) have been working since last summer on a solar garden project. In October, SARC gave Cass County Electric Co-op the funds SARC collected to purchase two solar panels for the Fargo Public Schools system.

DRC'S ANNUAL MEETING, OCT. 21-22, 2016

TOP LEFT: *Executive Director Don Morrison opens the annual meeting.* ***UPPER RIGHT:*** *This year saw the addition of an Art Show & Auction that focused on DRC issues.* ***BOTTOM RIGHT:*** *Organizers Cecilia Montesdeoca and Nicole Donaghy lead a breakout session.* ***BOTTOM CENTER:*** *Marie Hoff accepts her Art & Grace Link Award.* ***ABOVE:*** *Ag and Food breakout session.*

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"It's important to remember that although the legislators running the hearings may try to make you feel intimidated, no one can better tell your specific story and experience with the issue at hand," Donaghy said. "It's not your job to be an expert on anything other than your own experience – if you don't know something, it's OK to say so and refocus on your prepared testimony."

Communications Coordinator Jennifer Weisgerber talked about what being an effective spokesperson means for DRC members, best practices for working with the media, and how people can take many opportunities in their day-to-day lives to promote DRC and our issues. Some of the benefits to DRC members actively representing the organization in media include highlighting that DRC is a strong, membership-based organization, that member's lives are directly impacted by the issues we speak out on, and it builds power by demonstrating that there are a variety of voices that support DRC campaign issues. Contact Jennifer at 701.224.8587 or jennifer@drcinfo.com to talk more about participating as a spokesperson – more members are always needed on our media outreach list.

The training closed with an evaluation and request for DRC members to participate in Legislative actions during 2017. Members were asked to think about specific issues they want to be involved with, as well as specific forms of action they wanted to commit to during the upcoming session and contacts within their network who should be involved in DRC's work. Please contact Oil and Gas Organizer Cecilia Montesdeoca at Cecilia@drcinfo.com or Clean Energy Organizer Claire Lowstuter at claire@drcinfo.com to talk more about issues or actions you would like to take during the upcoming session.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Join the Legislative Action Committee. It's a great way to stay updated on opportunities for involvement that often occur with short notice, and you can help keep DRC's top Legislative priorities at the forefront of members' minds and actions. Contact Nicole Donaghy, Oil and Gas Organizer, for more information.

The training agenda and content was created in partnership with Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC). Kevin Williams, Deputy Director of WORC, was thwarted by winter weather in Colorado, but will hopefully participate in a future DRC training.

Is there a training you would like to see? Let us know! DRC is committed to providing useful training that offers support and tools for our members to be successful across all of our campaigns.

The fall of the Trans-Pacific Partnership

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the largest trade deal ever, is dead! After several years of organizing and putting pressure on decision makers, DRC and national allies prevented the TPP from coming up for a vote in Congress. The TPP would have taken away the sovereignty and democracy of the United States and given it to other countries and multi-national corporations.

In mid-September, DRC members Karen Erickstad and Tyler Sanford of Bismarck participated in a fly-in lobby trip organized by Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC) and Food and Water Watch. During the full lobby day on Sept. 15, Erickstad and Sanford urged all three members of North Dakota's Congressional delegation to oppose the TPP and to stop it from coming up for a vote.

"Engaging in the democratic process – however you can – is definitely worth the time and energy, regardless of how responsive our elected officials are to us. We have spoken up on behalf of DRC members and family farms, so now we can say that we told our elected officials our stance and gave them the opportunity to represent us," Erickstad said. "The more people we can get to call into our senators and representatives to voice their stance on an issue, the more likely our elected officials may be persuaded to act in alignment with our views."

Shortly after the November 2016 election, the leadership in Congress declared TPP will not be voted on and President-elect Trump is opposed to the TPP. When the TPP was being proposed, Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D) was undecided, Sen. John Hoeven (R) leaned in support, and Rep. Kevin Cramer (R) leaned opposed to the TPP.

This system of so-called free trade is rigged to benefit corporations because it gives them power to overturn laws they see as a barrier to profits. For example, the United States had a sensible country of origin labeling law (COOL) for meat. Canada, Mexico, and corporate meat companies felt that COOL was a barrier to trade and unfair. Canada and Mexico took their complaint to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and they won. Congress repealed the entire country of origin labeling law. Another example involves the Keystone XL. Although thousands of activists pushed Obama to reject the Keystone XL pipeline, TransCanada is suing the U.S. because they believe his decision is unfair.

From right: DRC Ag and Food Organizer Tim Glaza, DRC members Tyler Sanford and Karen Erickstad, and representatives from Senator Heidi Heitkamp's office in D.C.

TransCanada is asking the United States taxpayers to pay them $15 billion under NAFTA. A staffer with Sen. Heitkamp's staff said giving more power to other countries and multi-national corporations at the expense of democracy is just a "trade-off" we need to make. In addition to the lobby day on Sept. 15, the trip also included background, planning, and strategy sessions with other community organizing groups from Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, Montana, Colorado, Idaho, and Oregon. Both Sanford and Erickstad said seeing the inner mechanisms of the government was a "demystifying" experience that reinforced the power of participation.

"In our current age of social media and the internet, the barriers for the average person to participate politically have never been lower," said Sanford. "Without our participation, North Dakota and America as a whole would cease to be democratic. So our active participation is not only beneficial, it's essential."

"I came away feeling like our government was less out of my reach having walked amidst the places where our elected officials work," Erickstad said. "It was encouraging to meet the folks from other states fighting the same fight as DRC."

Later in October, DRC members Marie Hoff (Bismarck), Father Tom Graner (Rugby), and Cathy Schwinden (Fargo) organized community conversations to talk about what the TPP would mean for ND. DRC members and others sent 30 postcards and made phone calls urging Congress to publicly commit to opposing the TPP. Thank you to everyone who took action over the past years!

Continuing to defend family farming

DRC files motion to intervene in Farm Bureau lawsuit

On Monday, Oct. 17, Dakota Resource Council (DRC) filed an intervening motion to protect North Dakota's anti-corporate farming law, joining the North Dakota Farmers Union, which filed a request to intervene on Oct. 12. DRC's intent is to uphold the voice of North Dakotans, who voted overwhelmingly to reject corporate farming this June by a 3-1 margin.

"This case is about the soul of agriculture. Citizens are told that their long-held values are getting in the way of progress, or that the family farm is obsolete. But the truth is just the opposite – the family farm is our future," said Sarah Vogel, DRC member and former North Dakota Agriculture Commissioner. "It is critical for groups like DRC to intervene because they help the people who live and work here have a voice in these critical decisions about our future."

The North Dakota Farm Bureau filed a lawsuit weeks before the statewide vote in June to repeal the entire anti-corporate farming law.

"In my view, the people spoke very clearly about the importance of keeping the anti-corporate farming law. Corporate farming will not strengthen our rural communities. We have an ideal system of family farm agriculture right here," said Link Reinhiller, DRC member and former Farm Bureau board member. "It's the agriculture of the future, where food safety, food security, and good stewardship are a way of life."

"In North Dakota, there's a finite amount of land and resources for agricultural production. Moving production from independent farmers and ranchers to corporate control means that our finite resources go directly into the control of the corporations," said Jeri Lynn Bakken, a DRC member and rancher in Adams County. "Under the corporate structure, long-term productivity, and stewardship of land and natural resources takes a backseat to shareholders' profits."

Governor Dalrymple signed the repeal of the corporate farming law in 2015, but it was referred by an alliance led by North Dakota Farmers Union, of which DRC was a key partner. Voters rejected corporate farming in all 53 counties and statewide 75% to 25% on June 14, 2016. The North Dakota Farm Bureau and their corporate allies are leading the way to ignore the voters and 84 years of family farming history in the state by suing North Dakota's anti-corporate farming law. Look for letters to the editor on the lawsuit from DRC members Jeri Lynn Bakken and Marie Hoff.

"This is a critical case regarding states' rights, not only for North Dakota but for the country," said attorney Derrick Braaten of Baumstark Braaten, a law firm in Bismarck representing the case.

The Attorney General and the North Dakota Farm Bureau both object to DRC's intervention. However, the Attorney General is in support of DRC filing an amicus curiae brief. It remains to be seen whether the judge will allow DRC to intervene. Stayed tuned.

WORC Ag & Food Team meets in Billings

DRC member Wayne Fisher and Ag and Food Organizer Tim Glaza traveled to Billings, MT, for the annual WORC Agriculture and Food Campaign Team face-to-face meeting on Oct. 3-5, 2016. The campaign team's chair, Mabel Dobbs, stepped down after decades of service. The new chair is Wink Davis from Western Colorado Congress. The campaign team continued its work to stop the TPP and talked about the 2018 Farm Bill and what the WORC member groups could work together on.

P.O.W.E.R. meets with Heitkamp staff

DRC members make strong case for BLM methane rules

NEW TOWN, ND – On Sept. 22, Members of Fort Berthold Protectors of Water and Earth Rights (P.O.W.E.R.) and students from Nueta, Hidatsa, and Sahnish College (NHSC) met with staff from Senator Heidi Heitkamp's office to discuss the Bureau of Land Management's methane reduction rules, which were released earlier that month. The rules focus on loss of revenue from faulty oilfield infrastructure and flaring.

Florence Laducer-Garrett and Joletta Bird Bear with Hetikamp staff Norman McCloud in New Town on Sept. 22.

P.O.W.E.R. members discussed how an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) was never conducted at Fort Berthold prior to the influx of oil and gas development. An EIS is required as part of the environmental review process under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) prior to developing an area, such as drilling and flaring, on reservation lands. This major oversight has resulted in heavy impacts on human health, with respiratory illnesses on the rise and environmental damage with reports of discolored snow around flares and changes to wildlife migration.

"There is no active ambient air quality monitoring for this reservation. It surrounds us, all over around us. But there's none here. And we are the epicenter of the Bakken boom," said Florence Laducer-Garrett, an environmental science student at NHSC. Laducer-Garrett shared results of her air quality study and called for stronger air quality monitoring, underscoring the lack of research on human and environmental health impacts.

Earlier this year, Three Affiliated Tribes Chairman Mark Fox underscored the importance of cutting natural gas waste. "The oil companies don't get paid, the tribes don't get paid, and the individuals that own mineral rights here on Fort Berthold do not get paid, so flaring is not a good thing," he said. The group requested the meeting with Senator Heitkamp staff Norman McCloud to ask that she openly support the BLM's rules to curb flaring on the Fort Berthold Reservation. The rules will also ensure that mineral owners and the tribe will receive proper compensation for gases flared and vented.

"I would ask that the focus be on the youth. Especially the children and the babies who are living close to open flaring right here on Fort Berthold, who are consuming the methane that's in the air," said Joletta Bird Bear. "I wish she [Heitkamp] had come out here. She would've witnessed that [lack of gas capture] herself." *Read our expanded version of this story at www.drcinfo.org.*

Western Organization of Resource Councils intervenes on behalf of BLM methane rule

In November, the Obama Administration released the finalized Bureau of Land Management rule that is designed to reduce methane produced from oil and gas development on taxpayer owned and tribal lands.

The rule has met opposition from Western Energy Alliance and the Independent Petroleum Association of America. The groups filed in Wyoming court, which happens to be the same court that killed the BLM fracking rule. North Dakota has since petitioned to be an intervenor in the case on the side of the oil industry, which is expected to be granted. Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC) Board of Directors recently approved WORC's intervention to support the rule. Along with 10 other national environmental organizations, WORC will fight to keep the much-needed rule alive. Members of DRC's Oil and Gas Task Force and Fort Berthold P.O.W.E.R. have advocated and pressed for stronger regulation on flaring and venting on tribal and federal lands.

"It's time for the implementation of the best available technology to capture natural gas that could bring needed revenue to the many allotted mineral owners. It is time to fully enact the 'no waste' rule in North Dakota," said Joletta Bird Bear, P.O.W.E.R. member and resident of Mandaree, ND. The groups contend that the Bureau of Land Management has the authority to enforce the methane reduction rules.

Standing with Standing Rock

For the past 10 years, all sorts of people in western North Dakota have been dealing with the impacts of oil development – the good and the bad. Unfortunately, state officials and the oil industry have framed development as all or nothing, "for" oil or "against" oil, and, "Drill, baby, drill!" vs. "Keep it in the ground!" Most DRC members see those as false choices. Most people have just wanted reasonable development without destroying the place in the process.

DRC members and their neighbors tried to get oil companies to avoid putting well pads where they hurt farmers' and ranchers' livelihoods, such as blocking moving cattle from one pasture to another. Industry and state officials didn't listen. DRC members went to hearings and submitted comments about radioactive waste. State officials didn't listen. DRC members and friends voiced great concern about pipeline safety. State officials didn't listen. DRC members worked with Duke University to document and prove widespread contamination from toxic fracking spills. State officials didn't listen. DRC members recommended making oil transfer safer on trains. State officials didn't listen. DRC members and many others said, "Don't be lenient on oil companies who violate the law and degrade surrounding families' livelihoods!" State officials didn't listen.

Indigenous people on our continent haven't been listened to for more than 500 years. When the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) was proposed, the people and leaders of the Standing Rock Sioux Nation explicitly told the company and government agency heads through many official and unofficial means for more than two years that the tribe opposed DAPL crossing under the Missouri River, right next to Standing Rock's border. State officials and the company didn't listen. For an overview of what happened, see video of DRC's November Community Forum at www.drcinfo.org.

Meanwhile, during the past six years, DRC's Oil and Gas Task Force and local organizing work included oil pipeline safety, spill and siting issues, and two years of technical assistance to DRC members and friends at Standing Rock. Members told the Army Corps of Engineers about problems with DAPL at a forum in Fort Yates in February 2015. At DRC's October 2015 Annual Meeting in Killdeer, DRC members took an official position opposing DAPL because of concerns about water, land, farmers, ranchers, and too many people at risk.

By early 2016, a movement began on the hills along the Cannonball River. It was prayerful, respectful, peaceful, and committed to not being ignored this time. It grew with a youth run to the Army Corps of Engineers office in Omaha, NE, and the White House in Washington, D.C., gaining solidarity and support along the way, as well as ugly racist experiences. By August, more than a thousand people had joined several camps.

ABOVE: *On Oct. 29, Bismarck-Mandan supporters showed solidarity at the Rally to Protect Our Future, organized with DRC member Kirsten Kelsch.* ***LEFT:*** *DRC member Karen Van Fossan of the UU speaks to the crowd. Also speaking were Don Morrison, Linda Weiss, Lisa DeVille (DRC), and Paul Seamans from Dakota Rural Action (SD).*

Want more information on DAPL and DRC?

Our website features many resources on the Dakota Access Pipeline and DRC's work with Standing Rock, including DRC statements, fact sheets, and the Community Forum video.

Many DRC members and staff have been to the camps and the Standing Rock area, to show support and a willingness to understand. Past Chair Marie Hoff has been there about six times since August. Her car's bumper carries a 10-year-old Missouri Valley Resource Council (MVRC) sticker calling for protection of Missouri River water. It's noticed and appreciated by others standing with Standing Rock.

"The openness and solidarity around protecting everyone's water is inspirational," said Hoff. "This commitment is so very necessary to protect our water and earth, here and around the world."

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DRC requests damages, fees from Health Council

After weeks of postponements, Dakota Resource Council and North Dakota Energy Industry Waste Coalition returned to the courtroom on Dec. 20. The groups are requesting that the judge grant damages and reasonable attorney's fees after ruling that the state had violated open meetings laws.

DRC is also questioning the validity of the radioactive waste rules that were passed at the illegally noticed meeting in August 2015. In August 2016, the Health Council held another meeting to "ratify" the rules and reaffirm their previous decision. DRC's attorney, Sarah Vogel, argues that the ratification of rules is not a declaration of retroactivity, hence the rules can be voided.

Health Council attorney Jeffrey Petrie conceded that the Health Council followed the opinion of Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem by simply issuing a copy of the 2015 meeting minutes to DRC. He said this action renders the lawsuit moot and that voiding the TENORM rules would have no practical effect. Petrie also provided an affidavit from Health Council secretary Londa Rodahl stating that the failure to properly notify the public for the August 2015 meeting was accidental. No other members of the Health Council filed an affidavit.

"Our work [to this point] is upholding a very important principle, notice should be given to the public at the same time the public body is notified," Vogel said, maintaining that the remedy doesn't uphold the spirit of the law.

The case centers around new rules passed by the Health Council to increase the limits on radioactive material accepted in permitted landfills from 5 picocuries to 50 picocuries, effective January 2016. At the "redo" meeting in August 2016, the Health Council failed to disclose the results of a recent "sting operation" they performed in May and June that revealed multiple incidences of radioactive waste being accepted at non-permitted landfills as they were vocally supporting the new increased limits. DRC continues to push for more accountability and responsible oversight from North Dakota's state government to protect public health.

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Many differing agendas emerged in the heated confrontations, but very little information came out to help people navigate what was really happening. The lack of reasonable state leadership was astounding. State and county officials sent law enforcement into an authoritarian overreaction mode that served as a typical divide and conquer tactic. It worked. Lots of local people got angry.

"It's frustrating there are so many stories flying around that just aren't true," said Linda Weiss, DRC Oil and Gas Task Force Chairperson. "It helps when I get information directly from people who've been there or from our folks who've been working on these issues for a long time."

As with any movement that grows so quickly, no one group of people can control the intent of all who participate or the impact of that participation. Some of the protests in Bismarck seemed to just aim to make people uncomfortable, which was particularly frustrating to DRC members who work so hard for focused specific results from our actions. People who live here need to be at the forefront of efforts to win a better future, and by working together, DRC can ensure that North Dakota values are being represented.

DRC has been building our relationships, publically stating our take on the issues, organizing, and supporting events such as the Nov. 28 Community Forum that created a safe space to listen to each other. The forum turned out more than 200 people on a blizzardy night and the video from the event had more than 100,000 views online. Since then, we've witnessed the U.S. Army Corps deny the final permit, but the future of the Dakota Access Pipeline is still uncertain.

DRC leaders and members are now turning to developing where we go from here. DRC has hired Liz Loos as field organizer to help with this work that encompasses oil, renewable energy, and a ripped-apart local community. Missouri Valley Resource Council (MVRC) in Bismarck is a potential vehicle for planning and carrying out next steps. On a more regional level, the Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC) Board passed a resolution supporting the Standing Rock people in the protection water and opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline crossing the Missouri River.

"North Dakota used to be clear about what we valued. But the oil industry has taken so much control and that has destroyed our sense of who we are. They have convinced us that our primary values are money, profit, and this thing they call progress that has nothing to do with a good way of life," said Cheryl Kary, DRC Board member. "We need to find the language to come together and talk about what we value and how we keep a healthy balance in North Dakota."

Climate cyclists bike through Bismarck

LowCarbon Crossings hosted community dicussion and ride

TOM STROMME/Tribune. Bicyclists leaving Bismarck on Sunday morning for the 40-mile ride to the pipeline protestors encampment in Morton County at the Cannonball River are, from left, Kelly Suchy, Sarah Elmer, Chase Iron Eyes, Mindy Ahler and Ryan Hall with Low Carbon Crossings, DRC organizer Tim Glaza, and Ian Easton.

Earlier this fall, Dakota Resource Council staff and members recently had the pleasure of collaborating with LowCarbon Crossings, a bicycle touring duo who was riding across the U.S. to "bring together groups of people who are passionate about bicycling and about helping to solve the climate crisis, and create events where the force of those people can inspire action in others. And have a great time doing it!"

LowCarbon Crossings, the Bismarck-Mandan Unitarian Universalist Congregation, and Dakota Resource Council co-hosted a "Cycling Toward Climate Solutions" community conversation on Saturday, Oct. 1, 2016. These conversations were taking place across the U.S. as the riders, Mindy Ahler and Ryan Hall, made their way to Washington, D.C. for the Citizens Climate Lobby November Lobby Days. The idea is to bring community members together to engage in meaningful conversations about climate change and what we can do to decrease its negative impacts on the environment and human health. Mindy Ahler, North Wind Regional Coordinator for Citizens' Climate Lobby and Co-Director of Cool Planet, and Ryan Hall, a volunteer with AmeriCorps, are also promoting healthy lifestyles and bicycling as a fun, zero-emissions mode of transport. That is one reason why they encourage community members to hop on their bikes and join them for one or more legs of their journey.

DRC Clean Energy Organizer Claire Lowstuter and Ag and Food Organizer Tim Glaza coordinated a group ride from Bismarck to Standing Rock Indian Reservation on Oct. 2. Seven community members from Bismarck-Mandan joined Mindy and Ryan as they rolled south on Highway 1806.

These events attracted media attention from local outlets, including KX News, KFYR-TV, The Bismarck Tribune, and High Plains Reader. For more information, please visit the LowCarbon Crossings Facebook page and website at www.lowcarboncrossings.wordpress.com.

ND Clean Energy State Table seeing growth

Dakota Resource Council and the Dacotah Chapter of the Sierra Club are continuing to work with allied organizations across North Dakota on the Clean Energy State Table. The group met Sept. 24 in Fargo to work on power mapping and to continue discussion on the partnership agreement. Another meeting was held Saturday, Nov. 5 in Bismarck and focused on campaign planning for how the State Table would work on North Dakota's implementation of the recently stalled Clean Power Plan. A full table convening was hosted Dec. 10 in Bismarck. Current table participants are working to recruit a wider diversity of organizations in order to build equity and for the table to better reflect the population and needs of North Dakota.

DRC members writing LTEs on Green Revolution

As promised, the Clean Energy Working Group (CEWG) is following up on the Green Revolution exhibit at the North Dakota Heritage Center in Bismarck. The exhibit reopened with additions as promised, but the outcome was disappointing. By the end of November, CEWG members had sent letters to the editor to several North Dakota newspapers, calling out the continued blatant influence of the oil, gas, and coal industries on the exhibit about green and renewable energy. The CEWG wants to show the state that we are paying attention and will not stand idly by as our government continues to cater to extraction industries.

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