

# Dakota Counsel

March 2016

Organizing

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Research

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Advocacy

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Education

Vol. 39, No 2

## Vote NO to Corporate Farming

Last year, legislators decided to rollback an 84-year-old law preventing corporate farming in North Dakota. You can overturn the legislature’s decision by voting NO on Measure 1 on June 14. DRC members and allies are ramping up the campaign to educate and motivate North Dakotans to turn out and vote NO on Measure 1. Voting

No on Measure 1 is meaningful because it will prevent the repeal of North Dakota’s anti-corporate farming law. We will win the measure when thousands of people stand up and talk with their family, friends, and neighbors to reject corporate farming. Can we count on you to vote NO on Measure 1?



**The Bakken family owned and operated ranch**

### **Some ways you can help us win:**

- carrying pledge cards**
- writing a letter to the editor**
- making a contribution**
- volunteering to make phone calls or knock on doors**
- hosting a presentation or event in your community**

A community group in Buffalo is fighting the type of factory operations we are working to prevent with the referendum. Rolling Green Family Farm (LLP) is an investment group proposing to build a 9,000 hog facility in Buffalo, ND. DRC members Todd and Sue Leake of Emerado made a presentation to 78 community members in Buffalo on the negative impacts of factory farming. DRC members Sarah Vogel and Bill Marcks submitted letters to the editor in opposition to the proposed hog factory. The letters were published in the Grand Forks Herald and Fargo Forum. Bill Marcks wrote “Our group of Concerned Citizens of Buffalo certainly is not opposed to animal agriculture, but it is resistant to the corporate control and potential devastation of our water quality, air quality and much more.”

DRC member Jeri Lynn Bakken, Adams County, was featured in a Fargo Forum article on the proposed hog factory (Jan 24) and said factory farms of the kind being proposed in Buffalo will proliferate if the state’s attempt to loosen its ban on corporate farming stands. “We’re going to see bigger operations and more of this kind of thing happening,” she said. “People who think this can’t happen in their area need to keep their eyes open.”

The Department of Public Health held an informational meeting and public hearing on Thursday, March 17. Stay tuned for updates and news by following us on Facebook or calling field organizer Tim Glaza 701-202-6260.

DRC member Marie Hoff’s letter to the editor (Jan 26, Fargo Forum) referenced academic work on the subject. “Numerous studies show the detrimental impacts on communities near corporate farms. University of North Dakota Rural Sociology professor Curtis Stofferahn synthesized findings from eight decades of research: Corporate farms increase income inequality and disrupt the social fabric of the community. Communities lose their local autonomy and outsiders have greater influence.”

The Dakota Counsel is published four times a year 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 that empower people to influence the decision-making processes that affect their lives and communities.

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**Bismarck Office**  
1200 Missouri Ave., Ste. 201  
Bismarck, ND 58504  
Phone (701) 224-8587  
www.drcinfo.org  
Don Morrison, Executive Director  
don@drcinfo.com  
Nicole Donaghy, Organizer  
nicole@drcinfo.com  
Tim Glaza, Organizer  
tim@drcinfo.com  
Gregg Greenquest, Organizer  
gregg@drcinfo.com  
Sonda Sauers, Organizer  
sonda@drcinfo.com  
Liz Anderson, Office Manager  
liz@drcinfo.com

#### **Dickinson Office**

P.O. Box 1095  
Dickinson, ND 58602  
Phone: (701) 483-2851  
Fax (701) 225-1938  
Aleta Hendricks,  
Business Manager  
aleta@drcinfo.com

## **Springing Forward** by DRC Board Chair Craig Scott

Along comes spring to North Dakota – maybe a little earlier than it should – and it brings new growth, renewed efforts and refreshed enthusiasm.

DRC ended 2015 continuing steady growth in membership and with a decent financial footing. Our campaigns on oil and gas issues and agriculture and food were making their marks. New in the past year were the first new local affiliate in 10 years and a start in rebuilding our clean energy efforts.

Since then, DRC doubled down on our campaigns. Members are working to stop the corporate farming law from being dismantled by helping with phone banking, getting friends to pledge to vote no, writing letters to the editor, and working with new members in Buffalo who are fighting the very real destruction that comes with corporate factory livestock operations.

In February, 75 DRC members, and friends from WORC, Northern Plains Resource Council and Three Affiliated Tribes came out to support new rules to reduce venting and flaring on public and tribal lands.

An exciting March has three new staff people joining DRC – two field organizers and a communications coordinator. We are getting close to being fully staffed again. I hope you get the chance to meet each of them soon.

Our members are the backbone of DRC. Members work together through issue task forces and local affiliates with support and encouragement of our field organizers. DRC's focused issue campaigns have goals, objectives and specific decision-makers as targets. There are opportunities for training for DRC members on organizing, leadership, media and our issues. I hope you can take advantage of all the opportunities DRC has to offer.

Our issue campaigns are most successful when members bring personal experience, commitment to making change, expertise, support for each other, hard work, elbow grease, and financial support. These are an integral part of what we do. If you are active in one of our campaigns, you know this. If you're not active in one of our campaigns, please read through this newsletter, find a campaign you'd like to join, answer the emails and action alerts, attend a meeting or event. Or, call a field organizer about that campaign. It'd be a great help if each DRC member gave some time – an hour a week – so we can win on our issues.

Looking forward to a great year of grassroots efforts on critical issues that move our community forward. Thank you for all you do.



### **DRC BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Marie Hoff/Travis Schulz  
Larry Heilmann  
Lynn Wolff

# TPP Only Benefits Corporations



**DRC Member Jim Unkenholz at rally in Bismarck**

Over 150 community members gathered in Bismarck to demonstrate against the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement. The Obama administration and 11 other Pacific countries signed the TPP on February 4 and it is now up to Congress on whether to approve or reject the deal with a simple majority up or down vote.

The Minot Daily News (February 25) published a story on the rally in Bismarck along with an op-ed from DRC Chair Craig Scott. Craig wrote in the op-ed, "Family farming and ranching is the backbone of North Dakota's economy. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement is an urgent threat and Dakota Resource Council members urge Congress to vote against this disastrous and unfair trade deal. The TPP is an egregious trade agreement negotiated in secret by corporate advisors that would dramatically push North Dakota and the United States into an endless spiral of economic decline."

The story on the rally and the TPP included quotes from DRC member Todd Leake. Todd says we are against these types of deals because it takes away our sovereignty by allowing foreign companies to sue us. "We don't agree with companies or foreign states challenging our national laws and being able to usurp safeguards, which

are on our products and which we worked so hard for." Canada, Mexico and their corporate allies used the World Trade Organization to force our Congress to repeal COOL (Country of Origin Labeling) late last year.

DRC members Link Reinhiller, Beulah, and Gene Wirtz, Underwood, each submitted letters to the editor which were published in several newspapers across North Dakota. Reinhiller wrote "These are not the usual agreements to encourage trade. They give corporations the power to undercut our environmental, health, safety, and labor laws and regulations. The TPP would trump U.S laws and policies."

Gene Wirtz expressed concerned with how these trade agreements will affect his livelihood. "As a farmer, farm commodity prices are significant, and this trade agreement does not prevent other countries from manipulating their currency. Lowering the value of their currency makes North Dakota's commodities more expensive and then less competitive in the world. This must be addressed." He concluded "If our North Dakota delegation wants to really represent North Dakotans, they will vote against this anti-American power giveaway to the WTO."

Rep. Kevin Cramer, Sen. Heidi Heitkamp and Sen. John Hoeven have already voted to remove Congress' ability to amend the deal, how much more are they willing to concede?"

Call Sen. Heitkamp (701) 258-4648, Sen. Hoeven (701) 250-4618, and Rep. Cramer (701) 224-0355 and urge them to reject the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

I know the **600 corporations** that wrote this trade deal have America's best interest at heart.





# Building The Base and Shifting The Dominant Narrative

DRC, other WORC member groups, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, Land Stewardship Project (MN) and Missouri Rural Crisis Center work together on base-building and shifting the dominant narrative. The group – the Food and Agriculture Justice Collaborative (FAJC)- met in Billings on February 20.

DRC member Gene Wirtz and DRC organizer Tim Glaza participated in the meeting and Gene was elected chair of the Steering Committee.

The FAJC is about building power, learning from each other, coordinating on issues (e.g. Trans-Pacific Partnership) and transforming the national conversation on food and agriculture to reflect our members' values.



**FAJC Chair Gene Wirtz**



## The land. The people. The power.

Working with labor and farm allies and other community leaders, SARC and DRC organized a film screening of *Northern Lights* at the historic Fargo Theatre on Friday, February 12. Director John Hanson and former Agriculture Commissioner Sarah Vogel were present and stayed after the film for a question and answer on the Nonpartisan League with over 450 people in the audience.

Director John Hanson was interviewed by the Fargo Forum and said of *Northern Lights*, "It's a classic underdog story. The powerless people worked to take a state over. There's a lot of powerlessness people feel these days around the country and I think it strikes that nerve." Hanson says, "The corporate powers in the days of the NPL really had the farmers under their thumb. That's very similar to today. The 'Big Money Boys,' as the NPL used to put it, have an unusual amount of power again these days. I think that strikes a nerve too."

# Citizens Speak in Favor of Methane Reduction

On March 3 in Dickinson, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) held the last of four public hearings around the country on their proposed rules on methane reduction. The rule is intended to reduce venting and flaring of methane from oil and gas infrastructure and wasting of natural gas resources on federal and tribal lands due to oil and gas production.

In addition to reducing methane, the BLM rule will also increase federal royalties that are distributed to state and tribal governments, which means more revenue that can be used for infrastructure, schools, and social programs.

Thirty people testified in favor of the rules and also made recommendations for improvement by requesting that the rules include existing infrastructure. We had members from Western Organization of Resource Councils, Western Energy Project, Dacotah Chapter of Sierra Club, Environmental Law and Policy Center, Fort Berthold POWER, Northern Plains Resource Council, Environmental Defense Fund and Taxpayers for Common Sense testify.

Eight speakers in opposition came from the North Dakota Petroleum Council, ConocoPhillips, Oasis Pe-

troleum, Petroleum North, McKenzie County Economic Development, Rep. Vicky Steiner (R-Dickinson), and



**People turn out in Dickinson to support methane reduction**

Department of Mineral Resource's Lynn Helms. Many of the comments from opposition called for more studies on a state-by-state basis and claimed the rules should not be a one-size-fits-all. Also, there were frequent requests for an extension to have the public comment period pushed back further into the year so that industry may catch up with the rules. Some arguments stated the rules are duplicative and unnecessary because of the oil industry's voluntary efforts, that BLM would be better off focusing on more timely approvals of rights-of-way for pipelines, and that requirements should only apply to new and not existing wells.

Public comments are due to the BLM by April 18. Contact organizer Nicole Donaghy for further information.

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## Lisa brings North Dakota to the EPA

DRC Board member Lisa DeVille of Mandaree talked with Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) Administrator Gina McCarthy about the Clean Energy Plan and thanked McCarthy for signing the tribal treaty rights guidance. Lisa explained there is still a long way to go.

Lisa was in Gulfport, MS for the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC), which is a federal advisory committee to the EPA. The NEJAC provides advice and recommendations about issues related to environmental justice. Lisa is one of 29 members on the council from various backgrounds such as academic, community groups, industry/business, non-government organizations, state/local governments and tribal governments/groups.

The group met March 15-17 to discuss community recovery and revitalization.



**WORC and DRC Board member Lisa DeVille talks with EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy**



# WELCOME!



## Organizer Gregg Greenquest

Gregg joins the DRC staff as a field organizer working on oil and gas and agriculture issues. He was born and raised in Breckenridge, Minnesota and has lived in North Dakota for most of his life. Gregg has been in the Bismarck-Mandan area for over 20 years and has worked as a land use planner for local governments, serving with the Bismarck/Burleigh Planning Department for eight years and as the Planning Director for Morton County for three years. Gregg also worked for the Lewis and Clark Regional Development Council and in the private sector as a professional consultant, assisting cities and counties with their planning and zoning programs. Gregg has earned three degrees, an Associates Degree from North Dakota State College of Science in Civil Engineering and Surveying Technology, a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Minnesota Morris in Liberal Arts, and a Master's Degree from Minnesota State University Mankato in Urban and Regional Studies. Gregg enjoys the outdoors and is an avid fisherman and bow hunter.

## Corporate Farming Referendum Time to Volunteer

Phone calling to voters on Measure 1

### Tuesday, March 22, Fargo

Labor Temple 3002 1st Ave N

5:30 p.m. Training - Phone calls after

### Monday, March 28, Jamestown

NDFU State Office 1415 12th Ave SE., main entrance

5:30 Training - Phone calls after

### Tuesday April 5, Bismarck/Mandan

DRC Bismarck Office, 1200 Missouri Ave., Ste. 201  
northside entrance

5:30 p.m. Training - Phone calls after

### Thursday, April 7, Fargo

Labor Temple 3002 1st Ave N

5:30 p.m. Training - Phone calls after

## Organizer Sonda Sauers



Sonda grew up in Mandan, ND. She moved to the Fargo-Moorhead area for college where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Minnesota State University Moorhead.

While in school she began to realize her passion for organizing, working as the Regional Coordinator for 1Sky and serving as the president of MSUM's environmental group. After graduating Sonda continued to organize as she worked on conservation campaigns in North Dakota, Colorado, and Maryland. She joins DRC as a Clean Energy Organizer.

## Communications Coordinator Jennifer Weisgerber



Jennifer Weisgerber is an activist and communications professional from Bismarck with experience in nonprofit marketing, graphic design, and event planning. She most recently worked as a marketing coordinator at Bartlett & West, an

employee-owned engineering company, but brings a background in the nonprofit sector from her work at CAWS North Dakota, a statewide nonprofit working to end sexual and domestic violence. Jennifer also serves as vice president for Dakota OutRight, a volunteer advocacy organization working to improve the lives of LGBTQIA North Dakotans and their families. Jennifer is a strong supporter of local agriculture, the Missouri River, and stewardship of North Dakota's natural resources. She has a wide variety of interests, including her three dogs, photography, gardening, volunteering, cooking, motorcycles, and bonfires.

# Calendar of Events

**April 5** - Landowner forum on radioactive landfills in Dunn County

**April 8** - Comment period ends for BLM methane rules (see article)

**May 5** - Voting starts! North Dakota Secretary of State begins mailing out absentee ballots

**May 14** - DRC Board of Directors Meeting, tbd

**June 14** - Vote NO on Measure 1

**July 8-9** - DRC Board and Staff Retreat, tbd

**July 20-23** - Principles of Community Organizing (POCO) training, Billings, MT

## NDIC Rules Hearings in April

include rules to severely limit who can testify at the NDIC Oil and Gas Public Hearings.

Please contact Nicole if you'd like to get involved or testify

**April 11**, 9 a.m. Conference Room of the Oil and Gas Division Building,  
1000 E. Calgary Avenue, Bismarck

**April 12**, 9 a.m. Conference Room of the Oil and Gas Division  
Dickinson Field Office, 926 E. Industrial Drive

**April 13**, 9 a.m. Williston Community Library, 1302 Davidson Drive

**April 14**, 9 a.m. Conference Room of the Oil and Gas Division  
Minot Field Office, Seven 3rd Street SE, Suite 107

## Another One Bites the Dust

December 17 our beloved Chrysler took its last trip down Highway 3 destined for a DRC anti-corporate farming meeting in Rugby. Despite the fact we had just given her a new set of wheels and oil change for Christmas, she left us stranded miles from the destination, not giving another inch.

We are reaching out once again to you, our loyal members, for help. Our staff has just doubled in size and we are in dire need of another vehicle to get our organizers where they need to be to do DRC's important work for you. If you happen to have an extra new(er) well-maintained vehicle hanging around and need a tax deduction, we would be more than happy to take it off your hands. As you know, we are a 501 (c) (3) so it's a win-win for both of us! Call Aleta at 701-483-2851 or aleta@drcinfo.



**Keep up to date with DRC!**



**DRC on FACEBOOK**  
To get the word out 'SHARE' our posts with your friends.



**I'D LIKE TO SUPPORT DRC  
ENCLOSED PLEASE FIND:**

### General Membership

\_\_\_ \$500 • Watchdog of the Prairie

\_\_\_ \$250 • Sustaining

\_\_\_ \$100 • Century Club

\_\_\_ \$ 55 • Household

\_\_\_ \$ 35 • Individual

\_\_\_ \$ 15 • Student/Low Income

### BARC/DRC Membership

Household \$60\_\_\_ Individual \$40\_\_\_

### Ft. Berthold/DRC Membership

Household \$65\_\_\_ Individual \$ 45\_\_\_

### GFC3/DRC Membership

Household \$60\_\_\_ Individual \$40\_\_\_

### MCETA/DRC Membership

Household \$65\_\_\_ Individual \$ 45\_\_\_

### MVRC/DRC Membership

Household \$60\_\_\_ Individual \$40\_\_\_

### SARC/DRC Membership

Household \$75\_\_\_ Individual \$ 45\_\_\_

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

City, State\_\_\_\_\_

Zip\_\_\_\_\_ Phone\_\_\_\_\_

Email\_\_\_\_\_

# Fare Thee Well

By Aleta Hendricks

I love this quote; “Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming, ‘Wow! What a Ride!’”

And that is my sentiment exactly after 24 years at DRC, “Wow! What a Ride.” Although I am not quite used up and worn out, the time is right to move on to the ultimate goal of retirement. It is exciting, terrifying and sad all at the same time and a decision that has gone around my head so many times, I’m still spinning!

I have seen plenty of ups and downs especially financially as many non-profits experience. But during those times, it was so impressive and heartwarming to watch the staff and board pull together and the loyal members step up to the plate to fight for DRC’s well-being. And that’s what it is all about coming together in so many ways. Had we not had that cohesiveness, working together for a better North Dakota, I’m pretty sure I would have been long gone myself. DRC is like family, we can agree to disagree but ultimately have DRC’s best interest at heart.

I am proud to say that my longevity holds the record here at DRC and I challenge any staff present or future to beat that record! Idleness is not an operative word for this organization and the David’s are not afraid of the Goliath’s.

Many wonderful memories have been made during my time and there are many stories to entertain. I have made some awesome friends through DRC and have been saddened due to the passing of some great members throughout my term but feel I’m a better person from the entire experience.

A very fond farewell to all. My official last day is April 29, and I will start the next journey in my life. Hopefully our paths will cross sometime, somewhere and we will share our fondest memories of life with DRC.

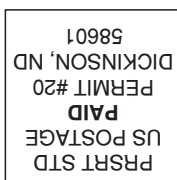
**DRC is hiring!**

**One Business Manager**

**Check DRC website.**

**Call 701-224-8587.**

**Looking for a committed, qualified candidate**



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**Dakota Resource Council  
P.O. Box 1095  
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