

# Dakota Counsel

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## DAKOTA RESOURCE COUNCIL MEMBERS FEATURED IN WORLDWIDE MEDIA

National and international journalists have been interviewing Dakota Resource Council members about issues that impact their lives living with oil development in the Bakken. Journalists from across the United States and around the globe contact DRC because they are interested in getting the full story of the Bakken, including the “real life” human impacts for long-time North Dakotans.

Our members and their experiences on the issues have been covered in such news sources as *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post*, *Mother Jones*, *The Earth Island Journal*, *PBS News Hour*, *The Guardian* and media from Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland, and Japan. If you would like to see some of these pieces, please visit our website: [www.drcinfo.org](http://www.drcinfo.org) and click on our “DRC in the News” tab.

### DRC Members’ Real Life in the Bakken

The latest issue of *The Earth Island Journal* chronicles the stories and battles of DRC members Brenda and Richard Jorgenson, Pat Hedstrup, Donny Nelson, Kandi Mosset, and Derrick Braaten. Journalist Bill Gibson spent a week in North Dakota. He interviewed DRC members and staff as well as spent many hours of follow-up to get additional facts for this article. It has been reprinted by such news media as *The Guardian*, *Grist*, and *AlterNet*. If you would like a copy of this journal, please email: [info@drcinfo.com](mailto:info@drcinfo.com) or call 701-483-2851. The *Earth Island Journal’s* website has additional pieces about the Ft. Berthold Reservation and crime in the oil patch.

### Newsweek Journalist at DRC Annual Meeting

Journalist and author Mark Hertsgaard spent time with DRC members and others to gather information for “The

End of Pasta” that was published in *Newsweek*, December 17. It is available online at <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek>. While in North Dakota, he visited with members and staff at the DRC Annual Meeting in Bismarck, October 27.



### Help Spread the Information

DRC members are excellent folks to help others become better informed. You are most likely the best person to talk with your friends and family. Please pass along these national and international news articles by email, Facebook posts, or copying and handing them out at meetings, gatherings, church, or to your neighbors. Let us know if you need help finding the articles.

## DID YOU KNOW?



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The Dakota Counsel is published six times a year by Dakota Resource Council, a nonprofit, grassroots activist organization. The mission of Dakota Resource Council is to form enduring, democratic local groups that empower people to influence decision-making processes that affect their lives. DRC is committed to preserving sustainable agriculture and natural resources.

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Verle Reinicke, Linda Weiss, Marie Hoff, Bette Stieglitz, Leo Walker, Terrence Kardong, Theodore Bird Bear, Scott Davis, Philip Kambeitz, Cedar Gillette, and Carmen Wold along with two representatives from each affiliate.

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# LET'S GET INTIMATE

**By DRC Board Chair Verle Reinicke**



“We have to foster a greater sense of appreciation for beauty...where we live... I can appreciate the beauty of agriculture and farmland, but I also appreciate the pastoral landscapes (the ranch land, just the wild land). And I think we need all those in...the Great Plains. We need those things in balance.” Bill Whitney, Director, Prairie Plains Resource Institute, Aurora, NE.

We are people of place. We don't live somewhere in general. And the “place” for Dakota Resource Council is North Dakota, a Great Plains state. We are not the Upper Midwest or the South or the West, but the Great Plains.

We are a big place, an expansive and elusive horizon. It's enormous. Our resources are seemingly boundless.

At the same time, “(p)eople drive through here to get to mountains or to get to the forests and what they miss is the large sweeping landscape, the sea of grass, the ocean, the prairie. But to see it you've got to be pretty intimate with the prairie... You...gotta be on your hands and knees lookin'. You can't go by at 70 miles an hour and expect to see that” Chris Helzer Eastern NE Program Director, the Conservancy.

Whitney and Helzer are both featured in a sprawling documentary titled simply “Great Plains,” a work by Michael Forsberg, a photographer from Nebraska, featured recently on Prairie Public Television. Get it. It's worth the watching.

The film features people who have a love for and commitment to these Great Plains to which we belong. They spend their lives investing themselves in restoring and preserving the beauty and integrity of this place. They work against the forces which would rape and pillage and destroy.

We, the people of Dakota Resource Council, know these people. We value and fight for the same things. We are not about to let extraction of energy resources be an end in itself, only to leave the place blighted and bleak. We are not about to sit idly by while land and water are befouled and left unproductive for future generations.

As I write this, the 2013 Legislative Session is getting organized and taking shape. DRC will be present in the committee rooms and legislative chambers helping to shape and influence policy decisions during the days of the session. We will be informing you what is happening, calling on some of you to provide testimony.

All of us need to keep close contact with the legislators in our districts to let them know we're paying attention to them and that we want them to do the best for this place. We need to make sure they get down on their hands and knees to get intimate with this place and its issues.

# LOCAL OIL AND GAS TASK FORCE MEMBERS PREPARE FOR LEGISLATURE

DRC members in the New Town area gathered at Jim and Norma Stenslie’s home October 16 to meet with their state legislators to talk about the policy objectives the Oil and Gas Task Force identified to work on at the upcoming 2013 North Dakota Legislative Session.

Jim Stenslie said, “The conversation was very helpful in helping us understand the challenges our legislators face in getting bills passed, and in sharing with them DRC objectives. We were impressed with their knowledge of the issues and their willingness to do what they could to address our concerns.”

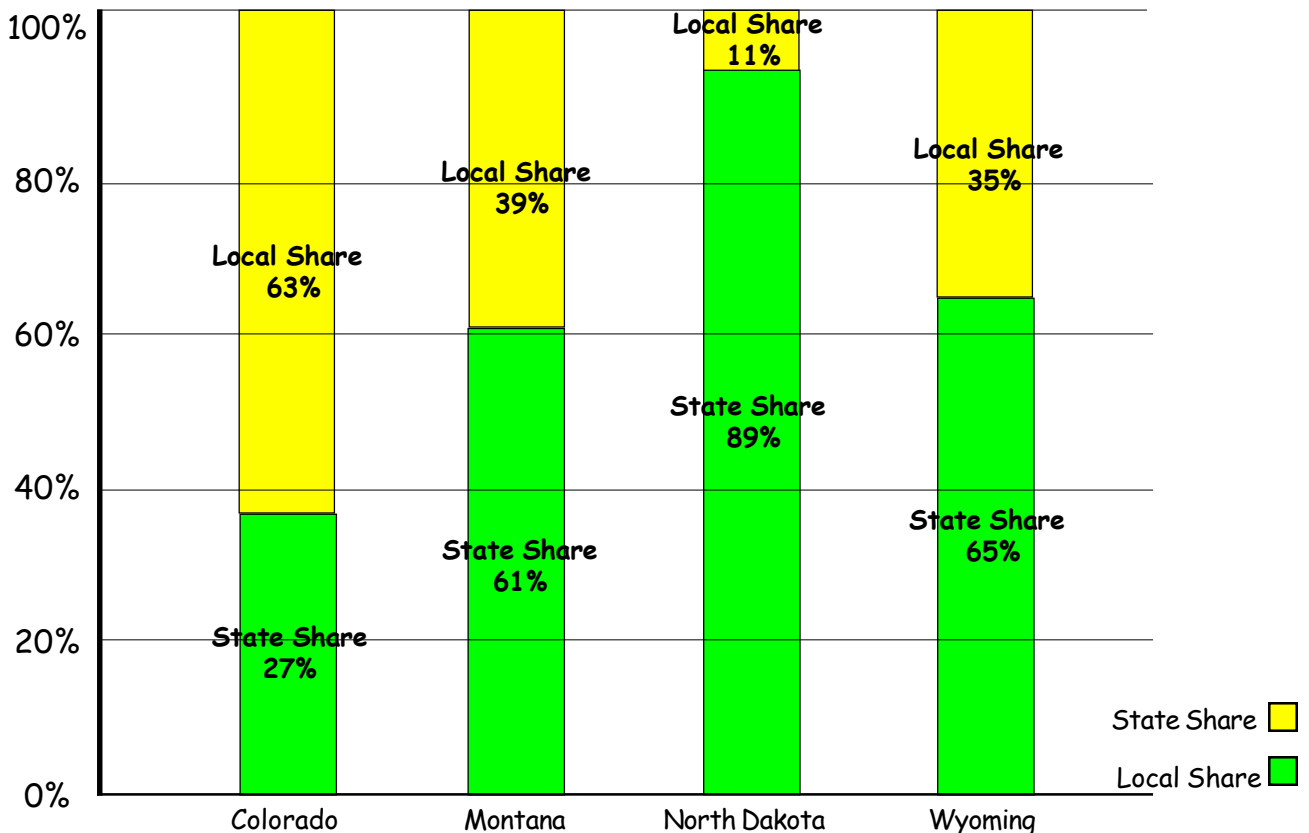
DRC members attending were Jim and Norma Stenslie, Dorothy Ventsch, Shelly Ventsch, and Theodora Bird Bear. The group met with District 4 Senator John Warner and Representatives Kenton Onstad and Tom Conklin. The legislators said the three DRC policy objectives they felt

had both Republican and Democratic-NPL support were flaring, setbacks and bonding.

Other Task Force objectives include legislation about waste dumps, water, and distribution of oil and gas tax revenue to local communities. Local governments are finding it difficult to keep up with infrastructure and service needs due to rapid oil development. The chart below shows how little North Dakota local governing bodies receive from oil and gas tax revenue compared to communities in other states. Legislation is expected to be introduced to increase this.

DRC members are encouraged to contact their representatives and talk about our policy improvements. If you would like more information on DRC’s oil and gas policy objectives and want to talk with your state legislators, please e-mail Sean Arithson, at [sean@drcinfo.com](mailto:sean@drcinfo.com) or call (701) 224-8587.

**Direct Distributions of Oil and Natural Gas Tax and Royalty Revenue to State, Local, and Tribal Governments, FY 2011 (North Dakota is Estimate for FY 2012 to Reflect Current Distribution Policy)**



SOURCE: Reprinted from Headwaters Economics, "Benefiting from Unconventional Oil," April 2012. According to the report, "North Dakota earmarks the smallest amount of total oil revenue for local governments, either through local tax collections, direct distributions, or dedicated energy impact grants. In North Dakota in FY 2011, only 7.9 percent of revenue was distributed directly to local governments. Changes made in the 2011 legislative session will increase the state's mandated direct contributions to 11.2 percent of total projected revenue."

# AFFILIATES IN ACTION

## MVRC

### Victory is in our Grasp

In November Missouri Valley Resource Council boosted its efforts to get curbside recycling in Bismarck. On November 13, several members of MVRC attended the Bismarck City Commission meeting in order to deliver their petition containing more than 620 signatures in support of curbside recycling.

Two weeks later on November 27, MVRC members again attended the Bismarck City Commission meeting in order to testify in support of curbside recycling. Member Colleen Reinke, spoke in favor of curbside recycling, her testimony was featured on KXNEWS.

Although the Commissioners did not vote to approve curbside recycling at the November 27 meeting, victory still is in our grasp.

A vote on curbside recycling is expected in December and members remain hopeful that their hard work will pay off by getting the City Commission to vote in favor of curbside recycling.

If you live in Bismarck and want to help in MVRC's efforts please email or call your Commissioners. To do so please visit: [www.bismarck.org/index.aspx?NID=27](http://www.bismarck.org/index.aspx?NID=27).



Photo by Scott Skokos

## SARC

The issues of energy efficiency and monitoring state agency actions and decisions were highlights of the discussion at the November 13 South Agassiz Resource Council, (SARC) membership meeting. Members agreed to form a monitoring task force composed of members and potential members to take up this effort. The first step will be to send an email to SARC members to find those who would like to be involved.

SARC joined with the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fargo-Moorhead to show the film Genetic Roulette on November 23. The film "makes the best case yet for why genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are linked to disorders" such as allergies, infertility, autism, cancer, inflammatory, and gastrointestinal. The film is by Jeffery Smith, author of the world's bestselling books on GMOs, and is produced by the Institute for Responsible Technology.

On December 10 SARC leaders met with DRC director Don Morrison to discuss potential issue campaigns that could be clearly focused and engage more members and new members to change public policies in a way that positively impacts people's lives.

## GFC3

On November 15, Grand Forks County Citizens Coalition, (GFC3) members met at the North Side Café and discussed the resolutions passed at DRC's 35th Annual Meeting. The resolution concerning monitoring state agencies' implementation of state laws and regulations was of particular interest. Participants said not only do state agencies need to be held accountable, but so do all governing bodies, all the way down to the county, city and township levels. The group also watched and discussed the film Genetic Roulette.

# CLEAN ELECTRICITY TASK FORCE: Working With NDARE For Energy Efficiency

The Clean Electricity Task Force (CETF) is currently working on a campaign to make North Dakota more energy efficient with the help of the North Dakota Alliance for Renewable Energy (NDARE). DRC has been a member of NDARE since 2009. NDARE is a group of renewable advocates and renewable energy industry representatives, which makes NDARE a great ally for DRC and the CETF in the upcoming North Dakota legislative session.

Field Organizer Scott Skokos recently attended NDARE's (North Dakota Alliance for Renewable Energy) meeting in Jamestown on November 13 in order to discuss legislative tactics to get an appropriation from the Resources Trust Fund for energy efficiency. During the meeting NDARE announced it would be releasing a study in Mid-December regarding the economic benefits related to renewable

energy development in North Dakota. If any members would like a copy please email [scott@drcinfo.com](mailto:scott@drcinfo.com). In addition, if anyone would like more information about NDARE please visit: [www.ndare.org](http://www.ndare.org).

The CETF most recently met in early October to discuss DRC's future campaigns regarding Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency. Some ideas that came from the call were to sponsor a tour of an energy efficient building in Bismarck with legislators during the 2013 legislative session, and to do a concerted outreach to regional energy efficiency professionals.

The CETF is always looking for new ideas and new people; if you would like to join the CETF please let us know by calling our Bismarck Office at 701-224-8587 or by emailing Scott Skokos at [scott@drcinfo.com](mailto:scott@drcinfo.com).

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## SUCKING OUT OIL, SUCKING UP LAND

**By Mark Trechock**

The state permitted expansion of an oil waste landfill near Williston this fall.

Dishon Disposal got a green light from the Health Department to add an 8.2-acre landfill unit and a surface impoundment for containing runoff.

At a November 6 hearing, local residents unsuccessfully raised objections to the permit because of Dishon's a history of violations.

Waste dumps represent yet another growing oil industry demand on agricultural land in western North Dakota.

Lynn Helms, head of the state Oil and Gas Division, recently predicted 7,000 wells in Dunn County alone. At six acres per well pad, that's about 65 square miles—more than 3% of the county's surface just for well pads.

That doesn't count frack water depots, pipeline-related facilities, storage areas, mancamps—or waste dumps.

Oil drilling creates a lot of waste, such as fracking water, salty produced water from drilling, and oil-soaked soil.

A lot of this waste has long wound up in reserve pits at a well site.

But over 50 of those pits—about 10% statewide—overflowed during the dramatic spring thaw of 2010, sending contaminated fluids coursing toward surface water—and the jurisdiction of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

That got the attention of the state's Oil and Gas Division (OGD). Eager to keep the EPA away, the OGD enacted rules last April that generally disallowed reserve pits at deeper wells—that is, wells that will be fracked.

An oil waste dump is one of the few oilfield installations that requires a state Health Department permit.

The department administers the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, which regulates landfills.

State law requires county approval of all new landfills. County commissioners can elect to let county residents decide about proposed permits in a special election.

One such vote was taken a few years ago in Bowman County, and voters approved a small waste facility in the lightly-populated western part of the county.

Other proposed oil waste facilities are pending in Stark and Billings Counties, while proposals in Mountrail and Dunn Counties are on hold in the face of strong local opposition.

Stark and Billings have already approved rezoning land for the proposed landfills, but state approval is pending.

In Mountrail and Dunn local opposition and the threat of a county vote have kept waste dump plans on hold.

Williams County voters did not have that opportunity because the Dishon site was an expansion of an existing landfill, not establishment of a new one.

# ART & GRACE LINK LEADERSHIP AWARD PRESENTED AT DRC's ANNUAL MEETING

Long-time Board Member Terrence Kardong was presented the 1st annual Art & Grace Link Leadership award honoring his many years of volunteer service on the Dakota Resource Council Board. Terrence has been an active member since 1980.



Left to right, former Staff Director Mark Trechock, Board Member Terrence Kardong, Grace Link and Executive Director Don Morrison



Link Reinhiller addresses the crowd about issues that ranchers face in the market. Link is a member of DRC's Ag Team and active in getting fair prices for beef.



Panelists Brenda Jorgenson, (l), White Earth, and Donny Nelson, Keene along with moderator Chair Verle Reinicke (r) contribute to the "Build a Better Bakken" discussion as part of the DRC annual meeting. Not pictured is Board Member Cedar Gillette who was also a participating panelist.



DRC Board members Leo Walker (l) and Marie Hoff along with Fred Wright, member from Bethesda, MD participate in the legislative role-play training in preparation for the 2013 legislative session

**DRC IS NOW DOING WEEKLY VIDEO  
UPDATES ON:**



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# A Big THANK YOU to our Annual Meeting Member Sponsors!



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DRC sincerely appreciates the support of the business member sponsors who contribute to our success. Please thank those who do business in your part of the state. Also, thanks the many members who contributed items to the DRC silent auction, which raised almost another \$1,200!

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\_\_\_\$ 55 • Household

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### BARC/DRC Membership

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

### 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\_\_\_

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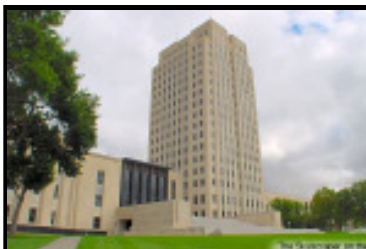
# WORC NEWS

**Congratulations Verle!** DRC chair Verle Reinicke was elected chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC) December 8 in Billings, MT. Other officers elected were Vice Chair Norm Cimon of Oregon Rural Action and Secretary/Treasurer Bob LeResche of Powder River Basin Resource Council.

Also attending the WORC meeting from North Dakota were DRC representative Gene Wirtz of Underwood, executive director Don Morrison, field organizer Scott Skokos and former DRC staff director Mark Trechock of Dickinson who recently became a regional organizer with WORC.

WORC, a regional network of seven grassroots community organizations, helps its member groups succeed by providing training and coordinating issue work. In addition to DRC in North Dakota, there is a state affiliate in South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho, and Oregon.

# 2013 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



Every Friday, during the legislative session, DRC will publish "The DRC Legislative Update."

You can read **The Update** on-line at [www.drcinfo.com](http://www.drcinfo.com).

We will mail or e-mail The Update directly to you if you let us know at 701-483-2851 or [aleta@drcinfo.com](mailto:aleta@drcinfo.com).

You can find contact information of your state legislators or how they vote at <http://www.legis.nd.gov/assembly/63-2013/>.

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