



DAKOTA RESOURCE COUNCIL

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NEWS RELEASE

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Group effort saves community from oil waste dump

Lack of state planning ahead should not damage local areas

WHITE EARTH, ND --- When CCS Midstream Services (now Tervita, LLC) announced plans for an oil waste treatment facility on the edge of the scenic White Earth Valley, residents understood that it could mean the end of the kind of lives they wanted to live. It could also hurt their livelihoods as ranchers.

Rancher Scott Davis said, "The whole community pulled together and sent many letters and emails to the county commissioners."

The community effort was successful. After almost two years, Tervita pulled out of the proposed White Earth project.

The site at the top of the valley would have become an industrial zone with a facility to receive and dispose of oil and gas production waste, including some slightly radioactive, plus hundreds of trucks coming and going on dusty roads creating a dangerous intersection.

Davis was very concerned about how harmful the dump would be to the water and air and how it could drive him out of the ranching business.

Rose Person, White Earth, said, "Our success was due to residents working together. Our biggest worry was water contamination and the erosive soils of the White Earth Valley." The White Earth River eventually flows into Lake Sakakawea.

Many of the White Earth residents joined the Dakota Resource Council, a community-based group that brings people together to address issues that affect their lives and livelihoods. DRC members are farmers, ranchers, small business people and others from across the state of North Dakota.

In many cases, the rush to catch up to chaotic oil development and the lack of state planning ahead has led to poor decisions about where to put oil waste dumps and other infrastructure. Through DRC's Build a Better Bakken effort, the group works with people to make sure that decisions are made more carefully, that local residents are involved in the decision-making, and that intrusive facilities are not put where they damage others' lives and livelihoods.

DRC members led the effort in White Earth. Rose Person did a lot of research which she has shared with other communities facing similar decisions. She said Mountrail County officials “took a good long look at everything and backed us up.”

Davis said the group pointed out to county commissioners information about issues that have gotten a little out of control elsewhere, such as the spill from a disposal well by Williston, and how dangerous it would be to the area where the White Earth disposal well was going to be located. Davis said, “That was an eye opener.”

Davis’ advice to other people would be to “get enough people together and you can do about anything. Adjusting to all these changes brought by the oil field is ongoing.”

The successful effort by White Earth members is an example of how DRC brings communities together. For more information, contact 701-224-8587 or www.drcinfo.com.