

Letter to the Editor: The need to educate is clear

Written by Gallupsun Staff
Friday, 09 December 2016 05:50

Editor,

Winter is in full effect at Standing Rock North Dakota. The Water Protectors at Oceti Sakowin are working tirelessly to create temporary homes for the thousands of elders, families and Water Protectors there willing to freeze rather than abandon this sacred land and our plight for our planet. They have been working tirelessly to ensure everyone's safety but as their numbers grow, so do their needs.

Oceti Sakowin Camp is the main camp of 6,000+ people with over 100 Dine' (Navajo) at the NoDAPL front lines it is fitting that the Navajo Nation take a stand with the Water Protectors and call upon the Obama administration to intervene before January 20th, 2017 while the Navajo Nation Flag still stands at Oceti Sakowin before the USACE deadline is imposed on December 04, 2016. Donald Trump has a personal financial investment in the DAPL so it is a guarantee he will push it forward.

While the Morton County Sheriffs Department and Dakota Access Pipeline cohorts cry foul and spew propaganda against the peaceful Water Protectors, ironically they continually spray the front line of defense with water in sub-zero weather, shoot them point blank with rubber bullets, use Stinger (Concussion) grenades and massive amounts of OC Pepper Spray, the pain-inducing Long Range Acoustic Device, viciously beat them with fists and batons, sic Attack Dogs upon them, circle the camps with surveillance planes and helicopters, jam their cell phones, bar and arrest the media, shoot the Water Protectors drones down, block key access roads preventing medical personnel from reaching and attending to the wounded and even attacking the them while the Protectors are arrested, strip searched and jailed in dog kennels with their arms marked with Nazi-type numbers, their vehicles are impounded, property lost and sacred items destroyed.

This is not a "Native American" issue as millions of others down the line also depend on the clean water source they are defending with their lives regardless of the "Trust Responsibility" and Treaty rights that are threatened by Energy Transfer Partners in their haste to meet a January 01, 2017 deadline of their contractors to start the flow of oil and with the Water Protectors being subjected to a literal War Zone at Standing Rock. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced that it will not grant permission for the pipeline to cross under the Missouri River, and ordered that the project undergo an environmental review.

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The need for public education is urgent as the similar Pinon Pipeline Project is already underway in the Eastern Navajo Agency. Please join us through out December every Saturday from 12 to 4 pm at the Gallup Cultural Center, located at 201 East Highway 66.

These Gatherings are to also educate the public about the ongoing Pinion Pipeline Project in the Eastern Navajo Agency which will destroy traditional cultural properties and sacred sites including the historical Chaco Canyon site and directly impact wildlife, sacred sites, home site lease areas and water quality. There is exploratory drilling ongoing before public meetings are happening and this needs to be reversed ASAP. The Dine Medicine Men Association, Inc. (Dine Bi Nahaga Yeé Da'ahoota) needs to be included in the entire process as well the local chapters of Nageezi, Lybrook, Pueblo Pintado, Whitehorse Lake, Baca-Prewitt, and Counselor chapters.

President Begay has not attended any local meetings regarding the PPP and he needs to make it clear that what is on the surface and underneath belongs to the Navajo People, not the corporations that intend to rob us of our natural resources. The Navajo Nation Council would do well to step forward on The Navajo People's behalf and their God-given rights.

Mervyn Tilden

Church Rock, NM