The Standing Rock Saga

> *We are unapologetically Indigenous, we embody resistance, everything we do from eating rubber bullets for breakfast to holding our frontline has been done in a manner that is nothing but spiritual.*
>
> —RED WARRIOR CAMP COMMUNIQUE, DECEMBER 15, 2016[1]

As things often do in Indian country, it began with a story, this one a prophecy. Ancestors of today's Lakota, the people of Oceti Sakowin, had for generations warned about a black snake that would slither across the land, bringing destruction to the Earth and her people. The day representatives for Energy Transfer Partners entered the council chambers of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe on September 30, 2014, to present plans for the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), it perhaps came as no surprise to the tribal council that another pipeline was threatening Lakota lands. Other Lakota bands, Plains tribes, and white ranchers and farmers were, after all, already fighting the Keystone XL Pipeline. But nobody that day could have predicted the debacle the DAPL would turn into—the extremes to which Energy Transfer Partners (ETP) would go to put down tribal opposition to the project, beginning with CEO Kelsey Warren's lie that the tribe had not registered their dissent to the project early enough, and that if they had, the pipeline could have been rerouted. Or the human rights abuses by ETP's private security firms and militarized state police that would bring United Nations observers to the protest camps. Or the level of support the tribe would receive for a cause millions of people around the world found to be righteous. Then again, maybe they could have.

The startling truth is that there are 2.4 million miles of black snakes in the United States. These pipelines convey more crude oil, gasoline, home heating oil, and natural gas than any other country in the world.[2] Of the total miles, 72,000 are dedicated to crude. Pipelines are "an

extremely safe way to transport energy across the country," says the oil industry's Pipeline101.com, claiming they are generally considered safer than truck or rail transport. Yet hundreds of pipeline leaks and ruptures occur each year, with consequences that range from relatively benign to catastrophic. And with the pipeline infrastructure aging, critics warn about increasing risk of accidents.

Pipelines are so ubiquitous and normalized in the American political (and actual) landscape that they aren't even heavily regulated. While numerous federal and state agencies oversee some aspects of the pipeline infrastructure, most government monitoring and enforcement is conducted through a small agency within the Department of Transportation called the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, PHMSA ("fimsa") for short. The agency's mandate requires that only 7 percent of natural gas lines and 44 percent of all hazardous liquid lines be subject to rigorous and regular inspection criteria. The rest are inspected less often.[3]

So when Energy Transfer Partners initiated the permitting and construction process, it was business as usual. The pipeline—1,172 miles long and spanning four states—was designed to connect Bakken Oil Field crude to an oil field tank farm in Illinois, flowing 470,000 barrels per day. It's hard to say if ETP was caught off guard when they encountered a dramatic groundswell of protest in 2016. Not that there hadn't been indications of the possibility of a backlash; in 2015, farmers in Iowa registered their dissent against the project with letters to the Iowa Utilities Board. The following year a lawsuit was filed by thirty Iowans contesting the state's granting eminent domain to ETP. At the same time, opposition to the Keystone XL Pipeline had become so high profile, due to the cross-sectional organizing of many diverse groups, that President Barack Obama had rejected Keystone's permit, sealing its fate in 2015. Pipeline protests were nothing new, given that the history of pipeline opposition goes back to at least 1968 with the building of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, and the battle against the Trans-Alaska Pipeline is still considered the biggest pipeline battle in history.[4] What took ETP by surprise, however, was the Obama administration's order to halt the DAPL project in December 2016 as the result of a massive grassroots resistance movement that mobilized millions of people in the United States and beyond.

The resistance movement, organized around the hashtags #NoDAPL, #Mniwiconi, #Waterislife, and #Standwithstandingrock, officially began in April 2016 when a small group of women from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (SRST) set up camp and named it Camp of the Sacred Stones, or Sacred Stone Camp.[5] The idea was to monitor pipeline construction while registering tribal dissent in a tangible way and, they hoped, to stop the project. SRST had known about the DAPL project since at least 2014 when Energy Transfer Partners conducted their first meeting with the tribal council. As reported by the *Bismarck Tribune*, an audio recording from September 30 documents the first meeting between ETP and the tribal council in which the company outlines its planned route less than a mile from the reservation boundary and crossing under the Missouri River at Lake Oahe. The council argued that while the route was not within current reservation boundaries, it was well within the boundaries acknowledged in the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie, and the treaty of 1868. The council expressed its concern about the potential of desecrating sacred sites and the danger of contaminating the community's water supply in the event of a pipeline rupture. The tribal council informed company representatives at the meeting that in 2012 they had passed a resolution opposing all pipelines within the treaty boundaries.[6]

Even more significant, ETP did not mention that an earlier proposal had the pipeline crossing the Missouri River north of Bismarck (some seventy miles away), as documented by a map included with other documents provided to the North Dakota Public Service Commission (PSC) as part of the permitting process. The same document shows that a change to the route was made in September, the same month as the meeting with the tribal council. A permit for that route had been rejected by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) after an environmental assessment concluded that among other consequences, it posed too great a risk to wells that served Bismarck's municipal water supply.[7] This led to a charge of environmental racism by the Standing Rock tribal council, a claim the PSC dismissed. On July 27, 2016, SRST filed a lawsuit against the Army Corps, claiming multiple federal statutes were violated when it issued permits to ETP.[8] And a carefully orchestrated campaign to discredit the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe emerged, backed by fossil fuel interests in a state whose political machine is heavily influenced by industry money and where 90 percent of the population is white.

Meanwhile, back at Sacred Stone Camp, people kept coming. By late August there were thousands of people at what was being referred to generally as Standing Rock, and new camps were popping up. Sacred Stone, Oceti Sakowin, and Red Warrior were the three primary camps people came to. Hundreds of tribal nations in the United States sent their support, financial and otherwise, and messages of encouragement poured in from Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities all over the world. Oceti Sakowin came to be the central gathering place for new arrivals, who were visually greeted by the dozens of tribal nation flags that regally lined the road of the main entrance. People brought donations of firewood, tents, construction materials, clothing, sleeping bags, and anything and everything needed for life in the camps. Kitchens staffed with volunteers fed the masses with donated food. The demonstrators refused the term "protestors," referring to themselves instead as "water protectors," and their main organizing principle was peaceful prayer and ceremony. "*Mni Wiconi*" was their mantra, meaning "Water is life" in the Lakota language. Drugs, alcohol, and weapons were banned in the camps. Although violence was strictly eschewed, civil disobedience was embraced; people put their bodies in the way of the construction path, locked themselves to heavy equipment, and got arrested.

As remarkable as the gathering was, few outside Indian country or the environmental movement were initially aware of what was happening in North Dakota. The mainstream press had turned a blind eye—until the violence began. On September 3, 2016 (Labor Day), as people attempted to block the digging up of a sacred site, ETP brought in a private security firm armed with approximately eight attack dogs and mace. The security personnel sprayed people directly in the face and eyes and pushed the dogs to bite people. One dog was unleashed and ran into the crowd in attack mode.[9] At least five people and a horse were bitten, and around thirty people were injured by the chemical spray. Images and video of the dog attacks went viral on social media, thanks to the handful of journalists at the site, particularly Amy Goodman of the popular program *Democracy Now!*, for whom an arrest warrant was later issued by the Morton County Sheriff's Department. Footage of a German shepherd with its mouth covered in blood was viewed by millions of people. The mayhem and viciousness of attacks on American Indians was a chilling reminder of a history of brutality used against the Lakota Sioux by the US military

in the staunch defense of their lands and freedom, and the dog attacks evoked the history of Christopher Columbus's savage rampage and genocide against the Arawaks on Hispaniola in which dogs were used. After that day the world started paying attention to the #NoDAPL movement at Standing Rock.

Instead of discouraging people from coming into what was increasingly turning into a risky situation, the Labor Day incident attracted even more people to the encampment as Standing Rock began currying widespread favor in the media. SRST tribal chairman Dave Archambault Jr. came to be the most recognizable face in what had grown into a global movement. Archambault (and other Lakota people like LaDonna Brave Bull Allard and Dallas Goldtooth) suddenly had a public platform to tell their stories, which described a long line of violent depredations against the seven nations of the Oceti Sakowin (literally "Seven Council Fires"), the Great Sioux Nation's traditional name for themselves. These accounts include centuries of genocidal policies, treaty violations, illegal land seizures, and environmental catastrophes perpetrated by the US settler government. The creation of Lake Oahe itself is one such environmental catastrophe against the Standing Rock people. Under the Pick-Sloan Missouri River Basin Program, the Lake Oahe Dam was one of five dams built in Oceti Sakowin treaty territory. Completed in 1962, the lake created by the dam destroyed more Native land than any other water project in the US, eliminating 90 percent of timberland on the Standing Rock and Cheyenne Sioux reservations and the loss of much grazing and agricultural land.[10] Altogether, the nations lost 309,584 acres of vital bottomlands and more than one thousand Native families were displaced without their consent. In the words of Kul Wicasa Lakota scholar Nick Estes, "Entire communities were removed to marginal reservation lands, and many more were forced to leave the reservation entirely."[11]

On one hand, the Dakota Access Pipeline was only the most recent intrusion into the Standing Rock Sioux's lands and sovereignty. On the other, it represented a breaking point, the final straw in which SRST sent the message that they would not tolerate the further desecration of their treaty lands and the potential contamination of their water—especially for the sake of profits of a fossil fuel conglomerate and for which the tribe would see no benefits whatsoever. Proponents of the DAPL argued that because the pipeline did not cross reservation boundaries, and because

the company conducted a meeting with the tribal council, the Army Corps' permit was in compliance with the law. But SRST contended that the territory within the original treaty boundaries, which covers a far larger area than the current reservation boundaries, was legally subject to a more extensive environmental study than had been done.[12] The council also argued that the tribe should have been consulted much earlier and more thoroughly, especially given the presence of traditional burial grounds and Lake Oahe as the primary source of drinking water for the reservation.[13]

SRST consistently maintained that all they wanted was for an EIS, an environmental impact statement, to be performed and the pipeline rerouted away from the lake. Their legal team, the iconoclastic nonprofit Earthjustice, continually filed motions designed to halt construction, force the EIS, and push the Army Corps to deny the easement for the lake crossing. The court and even other departments of the federal government responded with a joint request for ETP to voluntarily halt construction, which the company declined to heed.[14] On September 16 a federal district court in Washington, DC, ordered the company to temporarily cease construction, but the company ignored the order and work continued.[15] On October 10 another joint statement was issued by the three federal departments—the Army Corps, the Department of Justice, and the Department of the Interior—repeating requests for a voluntary stoppage.[16] Still, the work continued. While the tribal council wrangled with lawyers, courts, and federal agencies, water protectors on the ground continued to put their bodies in the way of construction, and tensions mounted. Observers pointed out that instead of following their mandate to protect the public, the Morton County Sheriff's Department, becoming increasingly militarized, was in reality protecting Energy Transfer Partners pipeline project. And then the standoff at Standing Rock took a shocking turn for the worse.

Construction crews, whose drill pad was on a bluff adjacent to the Oceti Sakowin encampment, had drawn closer to the Lake Oahe crossing. A group of water protectors had set up a new camp—with tipis, tents, a small kitchen, and a sweat lodge—directly in the crew's path and blockaded the main road in and out of the area. They named it the 1851 Treaty Camp, in commemoration of the original Fort Laramie treaty. Media reports said the camp was on private land that the Dakota Access Pipeline

had recently purchased, but water protectors asserted it was unceded treaty land, land that had been wrongfully taken to begin with.[17] A statement issued on October 24 by Mekasi Camp-Horinek, an Oceti Sakowin camp coordinator, read, "Today, the Oceti Sakowin has enacted eminent domain on DAPL lands, claiming 1851 treaty rights. This is unceded land. Highway 1806 as of this point is blockaded. We will be occupying this land and staying here until this pipeline is permanently stopped. We need bodies and we need people who are trained in nonviolent direct action. We are still staying nonviolent and we are still staying peaceful."[18] Three days later, on October 27, the militarized police conducted a violent sweep of the camp, with more than three hundred officers from five states in riot gear and aided by eight all-terrain vehicles, five armored vehicles, two helicopters, and numerous military grade Humvees.[19] Several live Facebook feeds captured police using high-tech sound weapons (known as Long Range Acoustic Device, or LRAD), tasers, beanbag guns, pepper spray, concussion grenades, and batons; and snipers were reportedly seen on the armored vehicles.[20] One horse was shot and later had to be put down. Police alleged that water protectors set fires to several vehicles and a bulldozer, that a Molotov cocktail was thrown at them, and that a woman fired three shots at police; claims that were unsubstantiated by any of the videos. The violence lasted several hours, and at the end of the day 141 people had been arrested and many people were injured, some severely.

Ironically, the same day Ammon and Ryan Bundy were acquitted of charges in the armed takeover of the Malheur Wildlife Refuge (formerly the Malheur Indian Reservation) in January 2016. Commentators noted the disproportionate use of police violence against the Standing Rock water protectors, compared to the way the Malheur situation was handled.[21] Indian people recalled the chilling parallel of militarized violence in 1973 during the seventy-one-day siege at Wounded Knee in South Dakota.

The numerous videos captured on October 27 went viral, further galvanizing the world's attention and support for Standing Rock's cause. The violence, however, didn't end there. On the evening of November 20, police again attacked peaceful water protectors with rubber bullets, tear gas, and mace after they attempted to remove a police blockade on Highway 1806. The violence became potentially lethal when police sprayed the crowd with a water cannon in the subfreezing temperatures. One young woman, Sophia Wilansky, was hit with an explosive device that nearly

blew her arm off. Legal observers with the National Lawyers Guild said that numerous people lost consciousness after being shot. More than one hundred people were hurt and many were hospitalized, and there were speculations that the water cannon was mixed with mace. An elderly woman went into cardiac arrest and was revived on the scene.[22]

Throughout the months of the Standing Rock standoff, President Obama had remained mostly silent, aside from one interview with *NowThis News* on November 1, where he said, "We are monitoring this closely. I think as a general rule, my view is that there is a way for us to accommodate sacred lands of Native Americans. I think that right now the Army Corps is examining whether there are ways to reroute this pipeline."[23] Meanwhile, an extremely contentious presidential election was just a few days away, with polls favoring the Democrat, Hillary Clinton. Clinton had also been silent on the Standing Rock issue but finally issued a statement on October 27, the same day as the 1851 Treaty Camp incident and the Bundy decision. The only reason she said anything at all was because a contingent of Native youth stormed her campaign office in Brooklyn, New York, demanding some kind of acknowledgment. The statement was not what the #NoDAPL activists had hoped for. In a scant four sentences, Clinton said that "all voices should be heard" and that all parties involved needed to "find a path forward that serves the broadest public interest."[24] Indian country viewed Clinton's position as no less than a tacit endorsement for the DAPL project, or in the words of one commentator, "a crock."[25] As for the Republican candidate, Donald Trump, while he made no official statement, it was widely presumed what a Trump presidency—as outlandish as it seemed at the time—would mean for the DAPL: green lights all the way. It had been well publicized that Trump was an investor in Energy Transfer Partners, and that ETP had also donated a lot of money to the Trump campaign. It was, however, a matter of speculation about how a Clinton presidency would handle the DAPL. But then on Tuesday, November 9, the unthinkable happened, and Trump was elected president.

A few days after the election, with more than half the country in shock (especially Indian country and their allies in the environmental movement), Energy Transfer Partners CEO Kelsey Warren appeared on CBS News, breaking his own silence on the pipeline controversy. Noting that the pipeline was already 84 percent complete, Kelsey expressed

that he was "100 percent confident" that the Trump administration would grant the contested easement and get the project completed. It was a bitter pill, yet no reasonable person could argue against it being probably true.[26]

But on December 4 the DAPL roller coaster took another surprising turn—the one that caught ETP off guard—when the Army Corps announced it would not grant the permit for the lake crossing. It clearly seemed to be a major victory for Standing Rock. The corps said that after discussions with the tribe and the company, more work was necessary, and that "the best way to complete that work responsibly and expeditiously is to explore alternate routes for the pipeline crossing." This could best be accomplished, the Army Corps said, through engaging full public input and analysis and an environmental impact statement "that could aid in future showdowns with President-elect Donald Trump's incoming administration."[27]

The #NoDAPL movement could bask for a moment in the glow from that victory. It was fragile, however, with the looming threat of what a Trump administration would bring, and everyone, especially water protectors, knew it wouldn't be good. Reality set in when Trump took office and within days started signing executive orders. One executive order after another, sometimes several a day, came for the first several weeks of his presidency, signaling his intention to make good on some of his more controversial campaign promises, like banning and deporting undocumented immigrants, building a border wall, and overturning the Affordable Care Act, among many others. Reviving the Dakota Access Pipeline was at the top of his list when on January 24, 2017, his second day in the White House, he signed a presidential memorandum "regarding construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline" and authorized both the Dakota Access Pipeline and the Keystone XL Pipeline.[28] The memorandum itself had no legal teeth to overturn the Army Corps' decision to order an EIS but did make clear the administration's pro-fossil-fuel agenda and intention to move the project forward. Two weeks later the environmental review had been canceled and the easement was granted by the Army Corps.

Attempts to evict the water protectors from the #NoDAPL encampments began in November. The evictions were supported by the Morton County Sheriff's Department, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Standing Rock tribal council, and, eventually, the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Deadlines were set and changed. Given that the winter had brought abundant

snow and that the camps were in a known floodplain, officials were concerned about the impact of the snowmelt. Newly elected governor Doug Burgum ordered a final date, February 22. Under the supervision of hundreds of armed police, one hundred fifty or so of the people who remained at Oceti Sakowin ceremoniously marched out of camp, while fires burned wooden structures in the background and people drummed and sang prayer songs. A stalwart group of forty-six unarmed water protectors held their ground and the following day were arrested at gunpoint. The same day at a White House press conference, in response to a question about why the president hadn't yet intervened to try to negotiate a solution between Standing Rock and Energy Transfer Partners as promised, press secretary Sean Spicer stated that the president had "been in contact with all parties involved, . . . working and communicating back and forth."[29] Chairman Archambault responded that the claim was "absolutely false"; there had been no contact despite repeated requests for meetings with the Trump administration—just one in a myriad of "alternative facts" the new administration immediately became known for.

Although on the surface it appeared that the #NoDAPL movement was defeated in the wake of a hostile Trump administration, water protectors, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and Indian country more broadly claimed the nearly yearlong protest movement as a victory on many fronts. For one thing, it was the ground for a ceremonial reunification of the Seven Council Fires—including a revival of the term "Oceti Sakowin"—in a way that hadn't occurred since the Battle of the Little Big Horn. And it brought more than three hundred tribal nations together in solidarity for Standing Rock's cause and for environmental justice throughout Indian country. Beyond that, it was widely acknowledged by scholars and other commentators as the most significant Indigenous protest in recent US history. As part of the climate justice movement, it arose spontaneously and on the heels of the Idle No More movement and the less successful Occupy movement a few years earlier. By comparison, the last Native resistance movements of major consequence occurred in the 1960s and early '70s, beginning with the Fish Wars in the Pacific Northwest (approximately 1964–74) and the Alcatraz Island occupation of 1969–71. Then, the Trail of Broken Treaties and takeover of the Bureau of Indian Affairs building in 1972 and the seventy-one-day armed siege of Wounded Knee

in 1973, while viewed as militant and violent, nonetheless contributed to a growing national consciousness about the United States' pattern of injustice toward American Indians. Collectively those actions led to sweeping changes in federal Indian policy, which included the Boldt Decision of 1974 (reaffirming tribal treaty rights) and Public Law 93-638, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975. These and many more progressive legislative acts and court decisions constituted a reversal of previously oppressive federal policy and accorded new respect for government to government relationships between the United States and tribal nations, however imperfectly implemented.

Those previous victories happened amid a social revolution that resulted in new levels of enfranchisement for a number of historically marginalized people. Half a century later, the gains made during the civil rights era (approximately 1954–68) became threatened as a result of a growing conservative backlash during the Reagan years—and intensified despite eight years of an African American presidency—reaching startling proportions during the Trump campaign. Two decades of neoliberal policies under Democratic and Republican leadership led to the worst economic recession since the Great Depression. The subprime mortgage debacle and bank bailouts, ever-widening gaps in wealth and income, loss of the American manufacturing base and rampant offshoring of previously American-held jobs, and a health-care crisis became fertile ground for a blame game that pitted economically struggling people against each other. Renewed racial tensions evidenced in particular by disproportionate incarceration of people of color and rampant police brutality led to new movements like Black Lives Matter, while right-wing operatives like Donald Trump, the so-called alt-right, and a Republican-controlled Congress, were widely perceived as stoking the flames of xenophobia and racism. "Trumplicans" (Trump Republicans) seized power by promising extreme market fundamentalism reliant on fossil fuels, an authoritarianism that would have made Richard Nixon proud, and a toxic rejection of what they referred to as "political correctness," which was really just a dog-whistle invoking their hatred of Democratic values. Shored up by a disdain for the media and a loose relationship with the truth, the Trump administration was on a collision course with Standing Rock and served as little more than a thinly disguised sponsor for the Energy Transfer Partners' Dakota Access Pipeline.

It is no surprise that the #NoDAPL movement would spring up in Indian country. In the big picture, after all, it was just one more assault on the lands, resources, and self-determination of Native peoples since the beginning of American settler colonialism. As the Standing Rock story illustrates, the assaults have never ended. It also illustrates the trend in the past couple of decades of the uniting of the environmental movement with Indigenous peoples' movements all over the world, something that hasn't always been the case. Environmentalists recognize that the assaults on the environment committed by relentless corporate "extractivism" and development are assaults on the possibility for humans to sustain themselves in the future. They recognize that in some ways, what happened to the Indians is now happening to everybody not in the 1 percent.

This book is not about Standing Rock—but it takes Standing Rock as an excellent example of what environmental injustice in Indian country looks like. It starts from the assumption that colonization was not just a process of invasion and eventual domination of Indigenous populations by European settlers but also that the eliminatory impulse and structure it created in actuality began as environmental injustice. Seen in this light, settler colonialism itself is for Indigenous peoples a structure of environmental injustice. As this book will argue, however, the underlying assumptions of environmental injustice as it is commonly understood and deployed are grounded in racial and economic terms and defined by norms of distributive justice within a capitalist framework. Indigenous peoples' pursuit of environmental justice (EJ) requires the use of a different lens, one with a scope that can accommodate the full weight of the history of settler colonialism, on one hand, and embrace differences in the ways Indigenous peoples view land and nature, on the other. This includes an ability to acknowledge sacred sites as an issue of environmental justice—not merely religious freedom—and recognize and protect sites outside the boundaries of reservation lands or on aboriginal lands of nonfederally recognized tribes. Overall, a differentiated environmental justice framework—we could call this an "Indigenized" EJ—must acknowledge the political existence of Native nations and be capable of explicitly respecting principles of Indigenous nationhood and self-determination.

These principles of nationhood and self-determination are plainly evident in the ways Native peoples have always fought to defend and remain

on their lands and the life those lands give them. From the intrusions of the earliest colonists into Native gardens, to the havoc wreaked by railroads and the imposition of reservation boundaries, to today's pipeline and fracking conflicts, Indigenous peoples have been forced into neverending battles of resistance. As the #NoDAPL movement made clear through the slogan "Water is life," Native resistance is inextricably bound to worldviews that center not only the obvious life-sustaining forces of the natural world but also the respect accorded the natural world in relationships of reciprocity based on responsibility toward those life forms.[30] The implicit question this book asks is what does environmental justice look like when Indigenous peoples are at the center?

To that end, this book proceeds in eight chapters that identify Indigenous approaches to conceiving of environmental justice. Having laid the foundation with the Standing Rock story, it views environmental justice and injustice from a variety of angles, taking a view on the history of American Indians' relationship with the US as an environmental history. It uncompromisingly exposes the roots of white supremacy not only at the governmental level but even within the environmental movement itself, ultimately for the purpose of building effective alliances around issues of common concern. It recounts numerous examples of how Native and non-Native peoples are working together to build those partnerships, and the importance of women to these efforts, and takes you on a journey to Southern California to tell a story about how one coastal sacred site and iconic surf break were simultaneously saved as a result of successful coalition building and recognition of the sacred site's importance. Finally, the book looks for a way forward for environmental justice in Indian country by identifying positive trends and innovative ways communities are rallying together to build a more sane future in the face of relentless corporate power, an entrenched fossil fuel industry, and its collusion with the US State.

The most I hope to accomplish is to scratch the surface of what environmental justice means in Indian country, in terms of academic theory, activist praxis, and where the two meet in the formulation of government policies at all levels. It is a daunting (and humbling) task in which this is but one possible starting point; it is undoubtedly incomplete and imperfect, but one that I hope scholars more accomplished than I will expand and build upon in time.