

GLOBAL WARMING ROCK 'N' ROLL

Nice President-turned-environmental leader Al Gore's work received some much-deserved praise at February's Academy Awards, as the Davis Guggenheim-directed film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, took home the Oscar for Best Documentary. The film, based on Gore's much-delivered slideshow presentation and bestseller book about the urgency of global warming, won an award for the year's best original song, Melissa Etheridge's "I Need to Wake Up." Gore renewed his call for action: "It's not a political issue, it's a moral issue," he stated at the ceremony. "We have everything we need to get started with the possible exception of the will to act."

The momentum from this victory was immediately applied to Gore's next major action, a March 21 date to testify before Congress. In preparation for the event his own website, www.algore.com, in tandem with MoveOn.org, acted to gather signatures and messages for Gore to present, and an impressive number of responses were garnered in just a few days as the initially targeted goal of 250,000 was easily passed. More than 500,000 responses were quickly gathered, and they sat in boxes next to Mr. Gore as he appealed to of members of the Energy and Environment subcommittees of the House. "A day will come," Gore said in a firm and pointed speech, "when our children and grandchildren will look back and ask one of two questions." According to Mr. Gore, they would either wonder at our inaction and refusal to see the reality, or ask how we found the "uncommon moral courage" to rise above politics and do what is right.

Unmovable Republican skeptics, such as Joe Barton of Texas ("global warming science is uneven and evolving") and James Inhofe of Oklahoma, challenged Gore's position and personal energy usage, but in the new Democratic Congress, Mr. Gore received a far more positive response than he might have a year ago.

On February 15, Gore announced a new project to further the cause: SOS, or Save Our Selves, which is described as "The Campaign for a Climate in Crisis." Partnering with Gore are Kevin Wall, the Emmy-winning CEO of Control Room which produces and distributes live concerts and MSN Network, among others. The mission of the campaign is to raise awareness about climate change by reaching people all over the world through the media.

SOS's flagship project is Live Earth, a concert set for July 7, 2007, featuring over 100 artists performing simultaneously at seven sites on six continents: Tokyo, Japan; Sydney, Australia; Shanghai, China; London, England; Johannesburg, South Africa; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and New York City. Each concert site will be designed for minimal environmental impact, and the performances are expected to reach an audience of 2 billion people through MSN online viewership, TV broadcasting, and concert attendance. Proceeds from viewers are expected to form the foundation for a new, multi-year global effort to combat the climate crisis.

Live Earth promises to bring a powerful boost to the continuing battle to raise critical awareness about the crisis of climate change. To learn more about it, visit Gore's website, www.algore.com, or www.liveearth.org.

State of Disunion

NUMBER OF POUNDS OF POLLUTION annually released by the Cameo coal-fired powerplant: 168,283	NUMBER OF SQUARE MILES of arctic sea ice that has melted: 400,000
NUMBER OF POUNDS of Hydrofluoric Acid released in Mesa County annually: 72,000	PERCENT THE INTENSITY, AND DURATION of hurricanes and tropical storms has increased since the 1970s: 100
NUMBER OF RADIOACTIVE BUILDINGS found in Grand Junction before the clean-up: 4200	RANK OF 2006 as the hottest year on record in the US: 1
NUMBER OF DOLLARS spent cleaning up radioactive uranium mill-tailings in GJ: 450,000,000	NUMBER OF BILLS Congress has passed to cut global warming pollution: 0
	NUMBER OF U.S. CITIES that have pledged to meet the Kyoto requirements: 358

CALL TO ACTION

The Red Pill is looking for volunteers: graphic designers, writers, poets, cartoonists, artists, and photographers are needed. Get your work published now. Help distribute The Red Pill in your community, church, and school: contact us at gjredpill@hotmail.com. You can also do your part to keep us in print by donating time, paper, film, copies, and of course money (it doesn't print itself).



The Red Pill is produced by Grand Junction Alternative Media, with the aim of publishing stories and ideas that the mainstream media won't cover. It is distributed free, collects no advertising, and is completely staffed by volunteers. All materials are copyleft, no rights are reserved.

PHOTOCOPY AND DISTRIBUTE AT WILL!

BE THE MEDIA!

gjredpill@hotmail.com



THE URANIUM MINE THAT IS NOT A MINE

In Western Colorado today, when you hear the term 'energy boom' most people think of natural gas, or maybe oil-shale, but a uranium mining industry has silently reemerged after twenty years of inactivity.

In the summer of 2005, a 'Uranium Expo' was held at the convention center in Grand Junction. The price of uranium has skyrocketed in recent years, and spurred interest in mining uranium again.

The Department of Energy, which manages uranium mining tracts in Mesa, Delta, Montrose, and San Miguel counties, proposed last summer expanding its 13 active uranium leases to 38 leases with 42 separate uranium mines (including two open-pit mines). DOE estimates that this expanded program would employ 570 people for ten years, and produce 90,000 tons of ore a month.

Cotter Corporation, a subsidiary of General Atomic, is a major player in the resurgent uranium industry in Colorado. The Cotter Corp. uranium mill in Canon City is one of two uranium mills left in operation in this country, and Cotter runs 4 mines in Western Colorado: JD-6, JD-8, and JD-9 in Paradox Valley area, and SM-18 on Spring Creek Mesa overlooking the former town site of Uravan (a uranium mining town, so radioactive that the entire town had to be evacuated and buried).

The SM-18 mine was originally patented in 1926, as the Wright Mine, for the vanadium (a metal found in the same ore as uranium) reserves. Later the mine was used to produce uranium for the Manhattan Project which developed the first atomic bombs. SM-18 shut down in 1980, along with most of the other uranium mines in the West, because of the steady decline of the price of uranium.

Cotter Corporation, in 2004, reopened SM-18 and two other mines, and according to the Colorado Department of Minerals and Geology's *Colorado Mineral and Mineral Fuel Activity 2004* report, Cotter Corp's mines produced 112,803 pound of Uranium in 2004.

Mining operations in Colorado are overseen by the Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety (DRMS), formerly the Department of Minerals and Geology. In April of 2006, DRMS's Mined Land Reclamation Board ruled that SM-18 was a 'Non-Designated Mining Operation' (non-DMO), which freed Cotter Corporation from most environmental oversight. At the same April meeting the Mined Land Reclamation Board found that Cotter Corp's other three mines were 'designated mining operations.' SM-18's non-DMO status exempted Cotter from filing an Environmental Protection Plan. Essentially the board ruled that SM-18 is a mine, that is not a mine.

The statutes are pretty clear "Designated mining operations" means a mining operation at which: (1) Toxic or acidic chemicals used in extraction of metallurgical processing are present onsite; or (2) Acid or Toxic forming



SM-18 Uranium Mine

materials will be exposed or disturbed as a result of mining operations." SPLP leech tests results done by DRMS in July of 2005 found, "toxic contaminants leaking from the mine facilities," according to a brief filed by the Energy Minerals Law Center.

Cotter Corporation, despite expectations of growth in the industry, has had problems with its mill in Canon City and has temporarily ceased operations at all of its Colorado uranium mines. SM-18 hasn't been inactive for a little over a year. Video of the SM-18 mine site given to The Red Pill shows a large uranium ore pile sitting next to a county road exposed to the elements, chemicals slowly dripping from tanks, and road run-off water diverted over waste rock.

A Motion to Intervene, made by a coalition of environmental groups, was granted in August 2006, and the hearing is coming up in September of this year, but you should let the board know that we need tight environmental oversight of the upcoming uranium boom. You can let them know by writing to:

MLR Board
C/O CDRMS
1313 Sherman St. Rm. 215
Denver, CO 80203

Or just give them a call at 1-(303) 866-3567 •

gjredpill@hotmail.com

RESISTING DESERT ROCK

Indigenous resistance against the proposed Desert Rock coal fired power plant continues despite intimidation and harassment. By Nathan Coe

On the Navajo Reservation of New Mexico, indigenous elders and youth have been battling energy giants—and their plan to construct a new coal-fired power plant on Navajo lands—in an attempt to protect their lands and traditions. In December of 2006, resisters erected a barricade and engaged in a tense standoff with law enforcement. Though the barricade has since been removed, indigenous resisters remain on site to vigil and protest against the destruction of their sacred lands, while others seek to educate, organize, and rally their people, as well as the public at large.

In the deserts of the Southwestern United States—the area known as the Four Corners—energy and resource wars are nothing new. Locals say that there is nothing pettier than water politics in the Southwest. The legacy of coal and other mining and oil and gas drilling is a long one, as is the legacy of colonialism and the battles fought by the indigenous to protect their sacred lands.

Over thirty years ago the Four Corners area was designated as a “National Sacrifice Area” by the National Academy of Sciences, by which they meant that the area was to be sacrificed to corporate interests and the extraction of natural resources, from oil and gas to coal to copper and other minerals and metals. The lands of the American Southwest have long suffered the ravages of heavy mining and oil and gas drilling.

Now, on the Diné (Navajo) reservation, at a site near the town of Burnham, New Mexico, twenty five miles Southeast of Shiprock, Sithe Global Power

and Diné Power Authority plan to build a 1,500 megawatt coal-fired power plant that has been dubbed “Desert Rock.” Despite claims to “clean coal,” coal-fired power plants produce the highest emissions, at 13.7 million tons of carbon dioxide per year (anywhere from 10 to 15 million metric tons per year, according to various estimates). The plant would use approximately forty seven gallons of water per minute, leading to dangerous levels of mercury emissions into the streams and rivers, the ground water, and the water table. Desert Rock could potentially increase state mercury emissions by 40%. According to various estimates, Desert Rock would increase the total net emissions in the state of New Mexico by anywhere from 14% – 20%. The Environmental Impact Study due January of this year has been delayed, and is expected to be released some time around the end of May.

Many involved in the fight against Desert Rock argue that the history of exploitation and appropriation of their sacred and ancestral lands amounts to environmental racism, and—because their culture and traditional way of life is bound to the land—ethnocide and genocide. The activities of energy corporations on tribal lands has always violated and disrupted traditional indigenous culture and values, by destroying sacred sites and ceremonial grounds.

While Joe Shirley, President of the Navajo Nation, sides with Sithe & the DPA, arguing that the new power plant will bring much needed money and jobs to the reservation, the people know better. Though a certain number of jobs would indeed be created,

some question whether this is worth the cost of the destruction of their sacred lands, and thus, their traditional way of life. There are two other coal-fired power plants in the region (Four Corners and San Juan), and they have brought nothing but decimation. Driving through the Four Corners areas one can see the haze created by these generating stations. And while Desert Rock would burn **Black Mesa** coal to generate electricity for Las Vegas, Phoenix, and Tucson, the majority of the residents in the area of Desert Rock are without electricity or running water.

The Blockade

On Tuesday, December 12th, 2006, local elder Alice Gilmore noticed activity on her property. Upon closer investigation, local residents discovered that—though the project was still in the environmental review process and had not been given final approval—“exploratory” water drilling had begun at a site located on the Gilmores’ property. A coalition of two local groups, Diné CARE & the Doodá Desert Rock Committee, had already been organizing to oppose this project, and were on the scene to defend their sacred lands. Elders and children formed a blockade on the road to bring a halt to the activities on their land. In the cold, starry December night, they huddled around the sacred fire and spoke in hushed voices.

Facing harassment and **threatened with arrest** (one report noted that “Desert Rock trucks have repeatedly rushed them and have almost run-over people a number of times as they attempt to get by”), the Elders, Youth, and supporters held off the corporate interests, and the police that enforce their will, until December 21st, when, according to a **press release** from Diné CARE & Doodá Desert Rock:

These women were brutally forced out, their food

taken away, their camp dismantled this afternoon in clear violation of their constitutional rights and in absence of any form of restraining order or other legal mandate... They have committed no crimes, were not interfering with any work going on at the location, and were acting within their rights to gather peacefully in the hopes of persuading our Navajo Nation government not to make this kind of mistake again.

According to another report:

Sithe, in collusion with our Navajo Nation executive office, have strong-armed, threatened, lied to and otherwise coerced our local population to accept this proposed power plant throughout the past two years. Families have had their land taken from them with insufficient compensation to move anywhere else. We’ve been told, as we’ve been told many times in the past, that this polluting monster will bring “hundreds of jobs” to the Navajo Nation, and lots of economic benefits. Time after time, we’ve heard this same lie for too many projects just like this one. After over a hundred years of such development the Navajo people are among the poorest people in the entire United States.

DPA went as far as to request restraining orders against ten of the blockaders, but a deal was eventually struck that allowed the resisters to remain on site as long as they did not blockade the road (perhaps a tactically unfortunate compromise). Today, the Resistance Camp still stands, and the resistance to Desert Rock and all decimation of the sacred Earth continues.

DPA went as far as to request restraining orders against ten of the blockaders, but a deal was...

Continue to read the rest of the article at <http://shiftshapers.gnn.tv/2962/>

Every Monday • 5pm

Grand Junction’s peace group, A Voice of Reason meets to discuss and act on issues surrounding the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
Call 245-3720 for more info and meeting place

Every Friday • Noon

A Voice of Reason holds a lunch hour peace vigil to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
At the intersection of 12th and North.

April 24th-30th • All Day National Turn of Your TV Week.

Unplug the Drug!

Thursday, April 26th • 7:30PM

Grand Junction Alternative Media will be screening *Sir, No Sir*, a documentary about the G.I resistance that ended the war in Vietnam.
Saccomanno Lecture Hall @ MSC Science Building.