BACKGROUND INFORMATION, UPDATES, AND HOW YOU CAN HELP

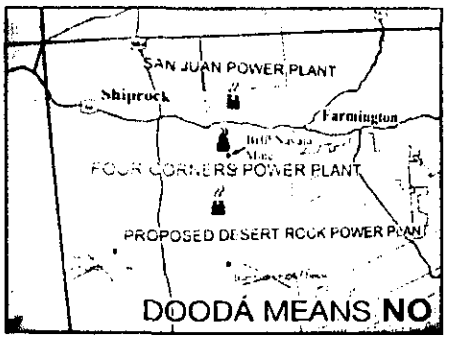
Doodá Desert Rock!

By Elouise Brown

In December of 2006, the community of Chaco Rio in the Navajo Nation (SW of Farmington, New Mexico) put its collective foot down in opposition to the proposed Desert Rock power plant. This facility would be the third coal plant within a 20-mile radius and a third economic hit to the impoverished Navajo (Diné) Nation.

Toxic emissions levels from industry are already lethal in the region. Children and the elderly require medical attention at five times the national average. Local citizens and non-profit organizations have compiled statistics about health care, insurance, financial stability and environmental issues. They have looked at endangered cultural philosophies in an industrial existence. The people cannot afford another suicidal decision on a power plant with disputed benefits for the community. If Desert Rock is built, the price will be high for the Diné. We will pay with our lungs, our health, our descendents and the land that defines our people.

Doodá means "absolutely no!" in Diné. Doodá Desert Rock (DDR) is a grassroots movement to defend Diné elders' livelihoods and existence. These are things that define the experience and function of a fading people. They define the very purpose of being Diné. It is inclusive to all people who appreciate the ground they walk on. Educated youth, traditional elders, environmentalists and wildlife conservationists have pulled together to make this effort a multicultural and multigenerational fight against the deadly impacts of coal-fired power plants everywhere.



The DDR movement has been in existence for the last four years but it rapidly accelerated following the events of December 12, 2006. This acceleration is the direct result of intervention from the elders, who would be forced to relocate for a minimum of 40 years if the coal plant is built. They would have to abandon their homeland, ancestral burial sites, sacred prayer locations and animal feeding grounds, all for the sake of the 400 permanent jobs the plant would bring. Divided up, these jobs translate to $16 per individual per month, but how long would that last?

This handout was prepared in March of 2010 for the DDR California Speaking Tour.

Coal-fired power plants are a dangerous and obsolete form of industrial technology in a world of possible alternatives. Is a human soul worth $16 a month? Would you sell your backyard for the construction of a toxic facility? Do Diné people still have a voice in our own nation? Is our health being considered? Why do we elect officials if we have no say? Think about how our kids will feel while wearing goggles and an oxygen mask, knowing their lives will be shorter than their parents'.

The people of DDR have asked these questions, in the Diné language, to the Diné elders who would be most directly impacted at Chaco Rio, NM. Various local and worldwide organizations oppose this coal-burning site. The $2.3 billion and 580 acres on the Navajo Reservation that would be used for the plant should be used for environmentally friendly projects that would help the people and the nation as a whole.

Elders and local residents were not informed of the progress or status of the proposed Desert Rock project. It is not a done deal. The sole purpose of DDR is to defend and preserve our lands, water, air and people—not for ourselves but for generations to come. Our core philosophy is to protect our future from within—not with corporate bias, political influence or self-destructive economic development. We want cultural preservation for all humanity, equal and alike.

As a resident of the Earth, you are involved. Maybe you are not directly involved now, but eventually you or your children will be. We extend our gratitude to our supporters for all of your contributions. We welcome all who wish to save sacred indigenous lands from corporate intrusion.



Bleeding Sky by James Joe