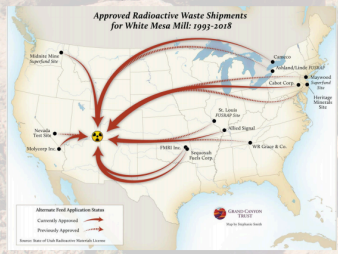


Environmental Justice in the Southwest Posters

Energy Fuels Mill Development on Ute Land



- 3 miles north of White Mesa between Blanding and Bluff in San Juan County in southeastern Utah
- In operation for **40 years**
- Now "the leading producer in uranium"
- Reaping resources & leaving Ute land destroyed - a step on industries "treadmill of production"



Radioactive Contamination in White Mesa, Utah (Wiisi-vü-garü)



White Mesa Ute Resistance for Justice

- Built directly above hundreds of culturally significant and sacred Indigenous sites, including burials and ceremonial structures
- "Those who control the land, control its resources" - LaDuke et. Churchill - *The Political Economy of Radioactive Colonialism*
- Direct praxis requires asserting native rights on their land
- Ritual dances fight off submission, invigorates community, and honors native struggle in non-violent demonstration

Quick Facts

- 521 abandoned uranium mines across southwest reservations
- Mountainous-desert alpine biome
- White Mesa Utes are a native amalgam of Ute, Paiute, and Navajo ancestry.



Uranium	
atomic number	92
atomic weight	238.0289
symbol	U
electron configuration	[Rn]5f ³ 6d ¹ 7s ²
name	uranium
physical state at 20 °C (68 °F)	Solid
Crystal structure	Orthorhombic
Equal relative strength	Actinide elements

Uranium and Paá (Water)

- **Contaminated mine waste** is causing hypertension, heart disease, autoimmune diseases, and congenital disabilities
- Half-life of uranium 238 is **4.5 billion years**
- Accumulates through natural resources and the life they sustain.
- Overtime, radioactivity will seep into irrigation sources for New Mexico and California - pushing capital "Death Drive" forward



Radioactive Contamination in White Mesa, Utah by Joseph Raiti

WASTELANDING CYCLE

The Treadmill of Production and Capitalism

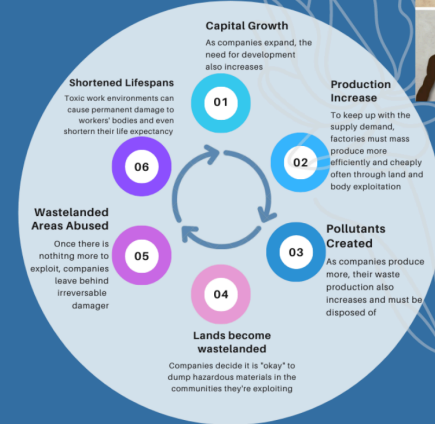
Capital gain is used as a catalyst for developments in terms of resource extraction in the case of the Church Rock Spill of 1979. The need for capital gain in exchange for the health of the community and land is what Melanie Yazzi claims is the Death Drive for the Dine people (Navajo).

Corporate owners will continuously provide unfair wages, no protection from toxins, and will even contaminate local resources rather than sustainably support the land they're taking from. They leave irreversible pollutants and can pay their way out of illegal dumping fines rather than properly disposing toxins.

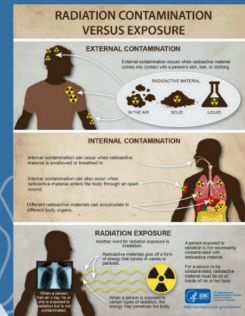
Land values increase when precious resources are found there however the opposite value is given to the people who live there. Through the wastelanding process, its decided that communities that are being extracted from are not valuable enough to stop companies from polluting the land they once saw as priceless.

After extraction is complete, the giant mess left behind is always burdened on the community. Burdens that cannot be afforded by many Nations as clean-up efforts cost more than whatever profit increase these communities may have seen during the business "boom," including health burdens.

Sources:
 Churchill, Ward, and Winona Laduke. "Native America: The Political Economy of Radioactive Colonialism." *Insurgent Sociologist* 13, no. 3 (1986): 51-78. doi:10.1177/089692058601300306
 Voyles, Traci Brynne. *Wastelanding Legacies of Uranium Mining in Navajo Country*. Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2015.
 Yazzi, Melanie K. "Decolonizing Development in Diné Bıkeyah." *Environment and Society* 9, no. 1 (2018): 25-39. doi:10.3167/ares.2018.090103.



BY: LILY TEJEDA-BARILLAS



Images:
<https://earthfirstjournal.org/news/2017/07/14/remembering-the-church-rock-uranium-spill-july-17-1979/>
<https://wordpress.u Toledo.edu/disastermedicine/2019/11/03/dc-radiation-contamination-vs-exposure/>

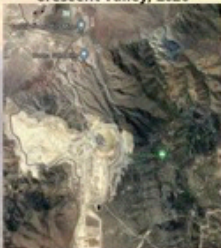
The Wastelanding Cycle by Lily Tejada-Barillas

Environmental Justice and Gold Mining: Western Shoshone

The Problem

For decades, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and gold mining corporations have been trying to obtain Western Shoshone land in Nevada for gold mining. Two Shoshone elders, Carrie and Mary Dann, were sued for trespassing and grazing on their ancestral land near Mount Tenabo. A 32-year legal battle ended in 2006 with a United Nations order for the U.S. to cease taking Shoshone land. The fight for environmental justice continued, however, when Barrick, a large mining corporation, received approval from the BLM to expand their Cortez mine located on the flank of Mount Tenabo. In 2008, the Western Shoshone, other tribes, and environmental groups sued the BLM, which began a legal conflict which ended in 2012 with a court decision that allowed Barrick to continue construction.

Barrick's Cortez Gold Mine, flank of Mount Tenabo in Crescent Valley, 2020



From Google Maps

Injustices

- Gold mining uses large amounts of water, and Nevada is already a water-stressed area.
- Barrick's 8 gold mines have had 147 spills or seeps of cyanide, arsenic, or mercury- all of which are toxic and can harm communities and livestock that live and graze nearby.
- Mount Tenabo is a culturally significant gravesite for the Western Shoshone
- Mount Tenabo and the surrounding land host culturally and medicinally used plants

Solutions

- Cease giving land to mining corporations
- Create and enforce laws that require mining companies to pay royalties to the Western Shoshone
- Reclaim old mines
- Develop systems to reuse gold and other metals
- Reduce the number of gold mines
- Return ancestral lands to the Western Shoshone
- Include Western Shoshone in decision-making positions in the Bureau of Land Management, Judicial System, and regional planning offices.



Background photo from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mypubliclands/21647557224/>

"To take our land is to take our life. And I find it quite appalling that the the United States is legitimizing the theft of Western Shoshone land. I

look at that as spiritual genocide against the Western Shoshone people that believe the earth is its mother". Carrie Dann, "Our Land, Our Life,"

YouTube video, posted by Oxfam America, February 2008.

Timeline

1863

Treaty of Ruby Valley: Gives title of Newe Segobia (most of Nevada) to Western Shoshone.

1872

Mining law that allows prospectors to cheaply purchase land from gov't. Directly benefits corporations and government.

1973

U.S. Government sues Carrie and Mary Dann for trespassing

1979

U.S. Government makes \$26 million payment for much of Newe Segobia; Western Shoshone refuse.

2003

Large gold deposit discovered. BLM round up Dann's livestock with helicopters, armed forces

2006

United Nations orders U.S. to cease taking Western Shoshone land and begin land return negotiations.

2008

Western Shoshone sue BLM and request primary injunction to stop Barrick's Cortez gold mine expansion.

2009

Primary injunction denied, Barrick begins construction. Plaintiffs file appeal, appeal is granted and Barrick halts construction

2010

Barrick requests amendment to primary injunction, allowed to continue limited construction. Plaintiffs file motion to halt project but are denied.

2012

Primary injunction removed, Barrick continues with full construction.

Toxic Release Inventory by Industry in Nevada: 96% of total toxic releases come from Metal Mining



Environmental Protection Agency, "Toxic Release Inventory by Industry" Chart, Accessed October 3, 2020. <https://www.epa.gov/toxic-releases-and-emissions/trend-and-use-toxic-releases>

Go Further: Check out [this interactive map](#) to further explore the relationship between race, income, and pollutant exposure.

Water Pollution in Indigenous Communities

Quick Facts:

- Air pollution is the culprit behind 9 million early deaths each year- 90% of which are occurring in lower income or minority communities.
- Affordable housing is often located in areas more apt to face the effects of natural disasters, or in areas where mining, landfills, and/or agriculture industries are more present
- Caucasian individuals have the lowest exposure rates in 11 out of 14 individuals.

Effects on the Food Chain:

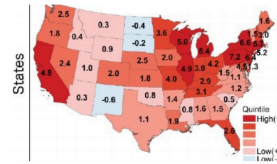
- Animals of the utmost importance to Indigenous communities are being impacted in detrimental ways.
- These animals often hold nutritional, and cultural importance.
- There is increased fear of consumption of contaminated foods leading to malnutrition.

Disproportionate rates of Exposure and Reporting Within Indigenous Communities:

- While most know disparities exist within exposure to natural disasters in relation to income, the extent to which this is occurring is often not fully realized.
- The levels of lead and other contaminants is often close to 10 times the amount measured in wealthier communities.
- Due to lack of infrastructure, technology, and government support, the rates at which natural disasters are detected and reported is significantly lower in lower income communities.

So, what can we do?

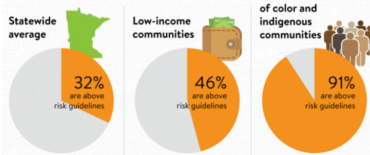
Raising awareness and education on issues of environmental justice is incredibly important. Further, typical ways to reduce your environmental impact can help: reducing water usage, reducing single use plastic, reducing fossil fuel burning, and increasing recycling and reusing efforts. Stop buying "fast fashion", and instead support local businesses.



Map showing differences in exposure to pollutants (NO2) between low income POC and high income, white individuals.

Air quality risk

These communities are more likely to be near higher levels of air pollution.



Health Effects:

- Diabetes
- immune system problems
- increases in infections
- Hypertension
- neurodevelopmental effects
- Cancer
- Autism
- Cardiovascular disease
- Anemia
- Growth deficiencies
- Psychological disorders

Colorado Springs: Martin Drake Coal Plant and Environmental Racism

Problem Overview

Burning coal for energy creates a severe public health hazard, especially for those living in close proximity to the coal plant.

Martin Drake is a coal plant located immediately adjacent to downtown Colorado Springs, where a disproportionate amount of people of color and low-income communities suffer from these adverse health effects created by the plant.

Coal Plants and Health

The negative health effects caused by coal cause a severe problem for those living near it. Burning coal produces pollutants in the form of sulfur dioxides and nitrous oxides. These pollutants are associated with developing asthma, an increased risk of death from both respiratory and cardiac diseases, as well as lung cancer.

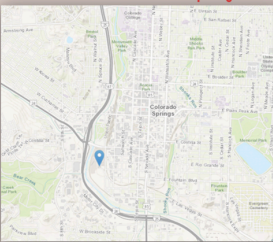
Lifespans of those living in a city close to coal plants can be shortened by up to 14 years in comparison to living in a clean city. (1)

Nitrous oxides from burning coal lead to the formation of ground-level ozone. Exposure to this causes increased pulmonary and lung risks and diseases. People with existing conditions, children, older adults, and those who spend more time outdoors, especially those who work outside are even more at-risk. (2)

Environmental Hazard

Health risks stem from coal-fired power plants being a threat to our environment. The main pollutants from these coal-fired power plants are carbon dioxide and nitrous oxides. As a whole, these coal plants are a huge environmental risk as coal and other fossil fuel plants account for 26% of global CO2 emissions alone. (3)

Martin Drake Power Station in relation to downtown Colorado Springs



Environmental Racism and Injustice

Within one mile of Martin Drake:

- 16.8% Hispanic origin	- 12% Hispanic origin
- 7.2% African-American	- 6.6% African-American
- 2% American Indian	- 0.9% American Indian.
- 1.7% Asian/Pacific Islander	- 3% Asian/Pacific Islander.
- 7.3% multiracial	- 3.9% multiracial
- 4% other (non-white)	- 5% other (non-white)

Colorado Springs as a whole:

- 20.1% of working age do not have a high school diploma	- 9.1% of working age do not have a high school diploma
- 29.4% below the poverty level	- 8.7% below the poverty level (4)

Response

Community members and organizations like Beyond Coal have been vocal in raising concerns for public health and the environment, prompting Colorado Springs Utilities to create a plan that retires coal generation for Colorado Springs by 2030, including a plan to decommission Martin Drake by 2023. (5)

Niko Linder

References

1. Schneider, Conrad, and Jonathan Banks. "The Toll From Coal: An Updated Assessment of Death and Disease from America's Dirtiest Energy Source." Clean Air Task Force, September 2010. 1-16. https://www.catt.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/CATF_Pub_TheTollFromCoal.pdf

2. "Health Effects of Ozone Pollution." EPA, Environmental Protection Agency, July 28, 2019. <https://www.epa.gov/ground-level-ozone-pollution/health-effects-ozone-pollution>

3. Magill, Bobby. "Coal Plants Lock in 300 Billion Tons of CO2 Emissions." Climate Central, Climate Central, August 28, 2014. <https://www.climatecentral.org/news/coal-plants-lock-in-300-billion-tons-of-co2-emissions-179306>—Note: These existing coal and other fuel of the transportation sector (trucks, Worldwide, coal-burning released 14.4 tons of CO2 in 2011.

4. Thomas, Stephanie. "The Social Justice Case for Shutting Down Drake." Citizens Project, December 13, 2017. <http://www.citizensproject.org/2017/12/13/the-social-justice-case-for-shutting-down-drake/>

5. "Sustainable Energy Plan." Colorado Springs Utilities, accessed October 14, 2020. <https://www.csu.org/Pages/SustainableEnergyPlan.aspx>

Colorado Springs: Martin Drake Coal Plant and Environmental Racism by Niko Linder

Rio Grande Compact

Water scarcity

To understand the climate of the region is necessary to understand the compact. The Rio Grande Valley is fed by snow melt in Southern Colorado down into Northern New Mexico, then traveling down through Mexico into arid climates down the state of New Mexico and curving into Texas to create the border between Texas and Mexico and finally dumping into the Gulf of Mexico. The river is far from flowing at the levels of the past. It is siphoned of for irrigation for agriculture, its corresponding aqueduct is pumped up from the ground for drinking water, it is dammed up and pumped many miles away from its flow and it runs cities plumbing sewage and all. The river is in great demand which puts strain on the system, often leaving it as not much more than a trickling creek at time of the year. Increases in population, pollution and climate change have all



The Rio Grande runs 1,900 miles. Agriculture and Municipalities divert some 95% of the rivers flow

population, pollution and climate change have all heightened the issue.

History

The river has sustained life in the region since long before Europeans have arrived and continues to be the limiting factor for civilization. The River has a long history and so does contention of right to its water. Tensions between states has long been tied to the river, in 1938 tensions had inflamed as new technologies made larger control of the water possible. In response the Rio Grande Compact was formed

Compact

The compact was signed by the states of Colorado, New Mexico and Texas. The goal was to form a legal regulation to ensure just distributions of water among the states. Colorado must give New Mexico a certain amount and interestingly New Mexico has to present Elephant Butte with a certain amount which is then distributed between Texas and New Mexico.

Texas V. New Mexico and Colorado

In 2013 Texas sued New Mexico over the water below Elephant Butte, claiming the increased irrigation and pumping of ground water in the region was taking water owed to Texas through the compact. New Mexico claimed the compact did not involve that stretch of river in response. The federal government then got involved inline with Texas, in part to ensure water treaties with Mexico were not broken. The case rose all the way to the supreme court over whether the federal government could get involved, the court ruled that they are able too.



The river did not reach the Gulf in 2001 and 2002. In 2020 Albuquerque's largest drinking water provider stopped diverting water from the river to keep it from running dry through the city



Who feels the effects of this ruling?

The reaches of the ruling will be far reaching affecting New Mexico, Texas and Mexico. The effects will be felt the most in Southern New Mexico as they allow more water to run by and flow across the border. Communities are going to have to let more water go while the future will also bring less water.

What is Being done?

A water conservation pilot program south of Elephant Butte. State politicians and a government funded state engineer are working to come up with a plan that allows the state to work with residents to identify areas that can be left unplanted at times to lower the use of surface and ground water. There is a lot of planning and bureaucracy still needing to be worked through, but an ongoing litigation expedites the process.

The Rio Grande Compact by Aidan Kinsley

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY IN THE SAN LUIS VALLEY

by Olivia Jacobson
SW220 - Oct. 2020



Source: Joe Mahoney, *In the San Luis Valley, Community Change Leaders Step Forward*, The Colorado Trust, 2016. Pictured: Shirley Romero Otero.

The longstanding cultural traditions of communal water and land management in the town of San Luis, in the San Luis Valley in southern Colorado, are threatened by the forces of colonialism and capitalism. Wealthy individuals and corporations seek to buy the water and the land while convoluted legal systems make defending the community's rights difficult. However, the people of San Luis draw on their deep connections with each other and the Earth as well as their identity as stewards to organize the community in ongoing resistance and resilience; the community advocacy and activism, embodying both the collective nature of environmental justice (EJ) work and the foundational EJ mantra "we speak for ourselves", throws a wrench in the so-called "treadmill of production".

ACEQUIAS

Acequia - A system of communal irrigation that equitably distributes water among users

Parcjantes - Voting members, each of whom represent their acequia and their right to the water they need. Parcjantes elect leadership.

Mayordomo - Leader who manages the infrastructure, schedule and allocation of water among the acequias

Despite having the state's most senior water right, the small-scale farmers in the San Luis acequia community are vulnerable to losing their water rights to corporate pressure. Defending their water rights is costly and time consuming, and they are further disadvantaged by the requirements of written and "official" proof of historic use. In response to corporate and government threats to the farmers and the water, the San Luis community formed the Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association (SdCAA), an organization representing around 300 families and over 73 acequias in the area with the mission to "preserve acequias, their traditional governance and water rights". The people of San Luis draw strength from their responsibility to the water, to that sacred soul of the community, and through the SdCAA, raise their voices and fight to continue their traditional relationships with the water.



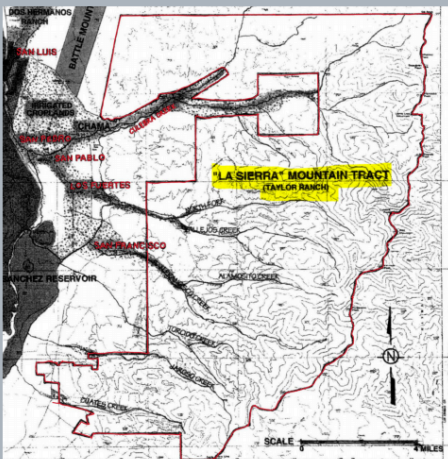
Source: Christi Bode, *El agua es vida: Acequia Communities of Southern Colorado*, 2016

LA SIERRA

La Sierra - A tract of almost 80,000 acres of common land that has been used by the people of San Luis for food, wood and water for generations. The people of San Luis understand themselves to be stewards of this land, and access to the land is essential for the health of both the land and the people.

In 1960, a North Carolina lumber baron Jack Taylor purchased the La Sierra land and began fencing it off, barring local access. This initiated a long and ongoing conflict between the San Luis community and the legal "owners" of the land. The Land Rights Council was formed in 1978 under the leadership of Shirley Romero Otero and Apolinar Rael to fight for the community right to continue their traditional stewardship of the land. A 40 year legal battle ensued and as a result 1,000 people - descendants of the original land grant settlers - gained legal access to La Sierra in perpetuity. However, complications have since arisen and Shirley and the Land Rights Council continue to advocate for their relationship with the land and cultural identity as stewards.

Source: Christi Bode, *El agua es vida: Acequia Communities of Southern Colorado*, 2016



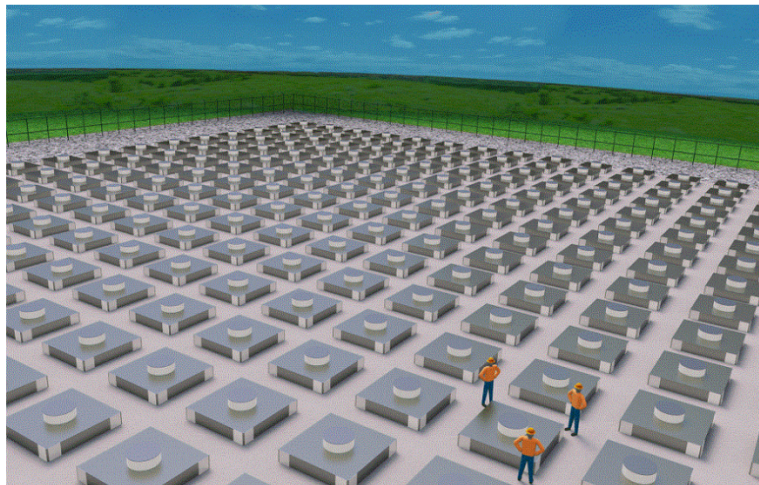
Source: Sangre de Cristo Land Grant Commission, *Sangre de Cristo Land Grant Commission Report*, 1993 (color emphases are my addition)

"As long as we can keep the land with the water and people on the land taking care of their own little community...those things that happen on the outside will happen, but somehow we'll still survive, like we have for over 200 years."

- Junita Martinez, SdCAA Secretary 2016

Source: Christi Bode, *El agua es vida: Acequia Communities of Southern Colorado*, 2016





Environmental Racism and Injustice

The state has a long and detailed history dealing with extractive and polluting industries designating the land as a barren wasteland and the predominantly Native American and Mexican-American inhabitants as expendable bodies.



Community Resistance and Indigenous Sovereignty

The project has gained attention from EJ advocacy groups across the nation, a group of these organizations have filed an appeal in federal court calling for a review of federal regulators' denial of multiple contentions against the NRC. Some of the contentions include an "alleged lack of consideration for historic and cultural properties near the proposed site, an insufficient assurance of financing by Holtec for the project including bonding in case of an emergency, and the application's "underestimation" of the volume of waste that would be stored." As well as, "lack of a 'significant risk assessment' as required by NEPA, and the proposal lacks a plan of adequate safety oversight during development." Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham has also voiced her opposition to the project in a letter to U.S. Secretary of Energy Rick Perry. Citing lack of tribal consultation as a key concern, almost all of the state's indigenous nations have formally opposed the project. The photo to the left shows Rose Gardener representing Alliance for Environmental Strategies speaking out at a scoping meeting hosted by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on May 3.

Nuclear Colonialism in Southeastern New Mexico: A Legacy of Wastelanding



Holtec International, a company specializing in nuclear waste and storage management applied for a license to the Nuclear Regulation Commission to build the nation's largest nuclear waste facility in the Southeast corner of New Mexico. At least



waste facility in the Southeast corner of New Mexico. At least 173,000 tons of toxic nuclear waste would be transported by rail with tracks cutting across up to 45 states. The facility is meant to be a temporary solution while the federal government continues to search for permanent locations to store and handle the waste. For the Indigenous nations of New Mexico, this proposal does not present a new issue but brings up decades-

Nuclear Colonialism in Southeastern New Mexico by Miriam Holleb

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
FOR NATIVE COMMUNITIES

**COLORADO RIVER BASIN
DROUGHT & DEPLETION**

The Colorado River Basin has been in drought since 2000. It is considered the most overallocated river system in the world. Indigenous nations on the basin experience water scarcity drastically more than large cities and landlord developments serviced by the basin, and are never included in discussions and policymaking regarding water allocation.



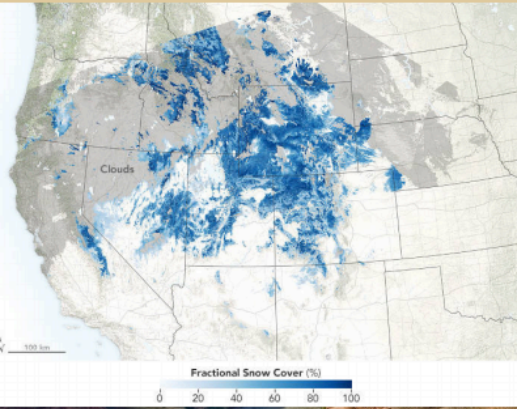
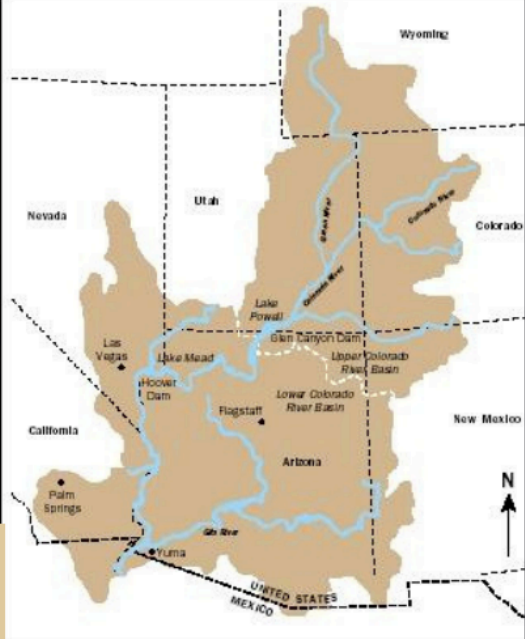
"WE SPEAK FOR OURSELVES"

APPROPRIATE ETHICS FOR WATER ALLOCATION DEMANDS NATIVE SOVEREIGNTY AND LEADERSHIP.



1922 - 2019

INDIGENOUS NATIONS ARE NOT ONLY EXCLUDED, BUT ALSO IGNORED, IN POLICYMAKING FOR WATER ALLOCATION.

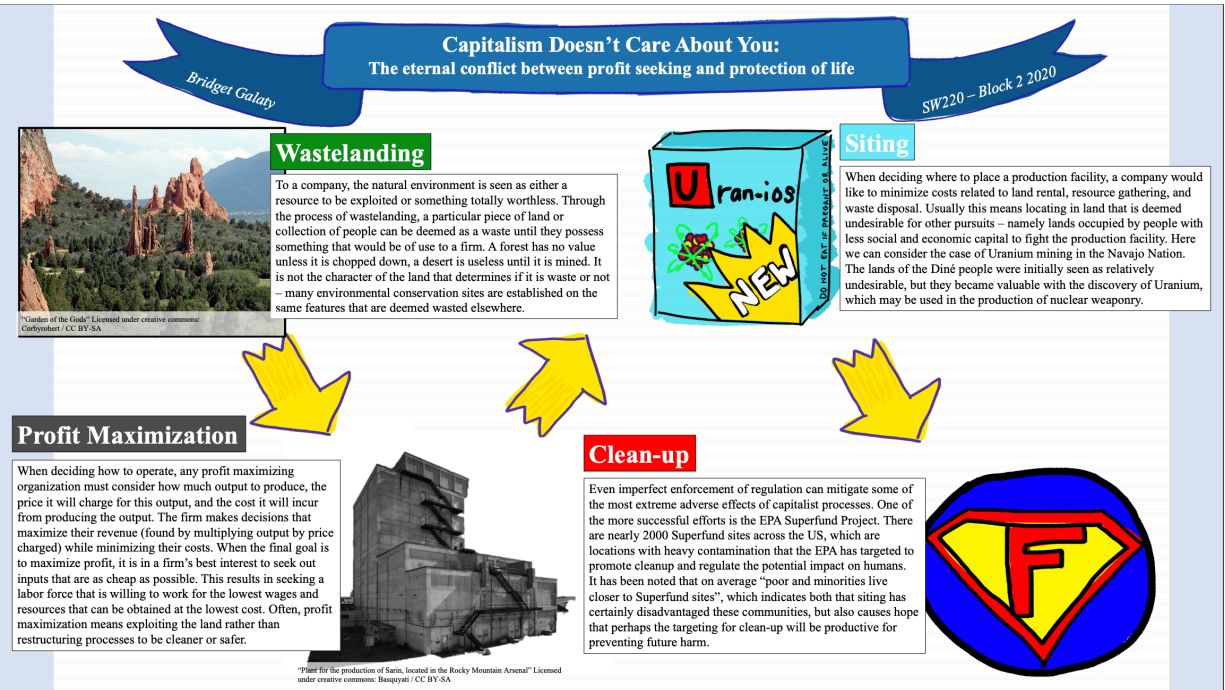


29

INDIGENOUS NATIONS LIVE ON THE AREA COVERED BY THE BASIN. THE BASIN ALSO EXTENDS INTO MEXICO.



Colorado River Basin Drought & Depletion by Alex Hill



Capitalism Doesn't Care About You by Bridget Galaty

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN THE SW

LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LAB

An in-depth look how the capitalist drive for technological advancement inherently hurts indigenous populations

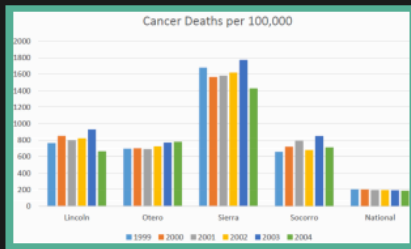
BACKGROUND

- LANL created in 1943 on San Ildefonso Pueblo land
- Pajarito Plateau: composed of solidified volcanic ash and sits on a series of mesas separated by canyons
- Manufactured thermonuclear bombs, dumped nuclear waste, and set off explosions all on land — Trinity Bomb
- Purposefully chose land because of nearby communities → **wastelanding**
- **Capitalist development** at what cost?



Chromium Plume Dimensions and Facts
 ~1 mile long, ~0.5 mile wide
 ~900-1,000 feet below ground surface
 Total chromium mass~ 72,000 kg
 Chromium is in hexavalent Cr(VI) form

WHAT AND HOW



Effects: A Contemporary Issue

- Trinity atomic bomb
- high exposure levels and infant deaths
- Study of beans, squash, and corn show high levels of radionuclides
- In 2000s cancer levels much higher than national average
- Intergenerational effects of radiation
- Government still has offered no reparations
- **Results in exploitation and cultural erasure**

Attempted Solutions:

2003

Sampling done by the NMED DOE Oversight Bureau indicated unsafe PCB levels

2006

Local government waiting until 2006 to issue fish advisory because of PCBs

2014/15

Amigos Bravos petitioned EPA to address the suit and address LANL contamination. EPA agreed but cited urban runoff as cause.

The events outlined above exist for two main reasons: contamination at LANL and the Trinity bomb are ones of **slow violence**, a “representational bias against slow violence” exists, meaning such instances are not typically seen as actual violence. while most proposed solutions come from within the state. Further because these solutions take place **within the system** that created them, they are not effective and only continue to reproduce injustice



SO WHAT?



The environmental injustices at Los Alamos National Laboratory are indicative of a nationwide issue where Indigenous populations are disproportionately subjected to environmental violence that are constantly being reproduced through the institutions we interact with everyday. If we do not dismantle the hegemony that supports colonialism and capitalism values, we will lose the culture and people of the Pueblo and other indigenous populations throughout the country.

Los Alamos National Lab by Willa Frantzis

The most polluted zip code in America

"It's not something we wanted, it's something we're enduring."

- Drew Dutcher, president of the Elyria and Swansea Neighborhood Association

WHO?

- The Elyria and Swansea Neighborhood vs. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)
- Primarily latinx and low-income community

HEALTH RISKS

- 22 facilities are currently continuing to release toxic chemicals into this neighborhood, according to the EPA's Toxic Release Inventory
- The neighborhood is currently surrounded by or on top of 2 superfund sites and 6 brownfield sites
- PM10 - tiny particulate matter that can increase respiratory illness - will increase with the Central 70 Project

WHY IS THIS AN ISSUE OF EJ?

- Residents of the Elyria and Swansea neighborhoods have been disproportionately affected by pollution and toxic waste for decades
- Candi Cdebaca, the district's city councilwoman, is the first elected council member on Denver's city council who is from this zip code
- These neighborhoods have lacked representation for decades, and have had a higher number cancer and asthma cases than any other neighborhood in Denver

WHAT?

- The Central 70 Project seeks to widen I-70 directly over the 80216 zip code of Denver, recently deemed the most polluted zip code in the country
- The project may result in loss of housing due to eminent domain, and increased health risks due to increased exposure to heavy metals and air pollution

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

- Earthjustice, an environmental law firm, sought to terminate the project in a lawsuit against CDOT in 2017, which ended in a settlement
- The Central 70 Project will continue on the grounds that CDOT contributes \$550,000 in a Community Health Study (CHS)
- The CHS will examine air, water, soil, and noise pollution, socioeconomic factors, barriers to mobility, and the availability to healthy foods

OPTIMISM

"The CHS is a first step toward identifying and addressing the causes of the serious health disparities between our community and others across Colorado and building a commitment to establishing public health equity"

- Ean Tafoya, treasurer of the Colorado Latino Forum

Navajo Water Rights and Infrastructure Issues



Colorado River Compact 1922

- Allocated 15 million acre-feet of water to Upper and Lower Basin States
- Ignored Indigenous water needs



Winter's Doctrine

- Winters vs. United States established water rights attached to the date reservation is created
- La Sierra (San Luis Valley)
- Rio Grand Water Basin
- land access rights and water rights under negotiation



Development

- Discovery of oil and uranium on the reservation
- U.S. Government wanted Navajo to have a central government (1923)
- Developing Phoenix (water goes to agricultural and municipal use first)



Water as a Commodity

- "Use it or lose it" principle
- Beneficial use
- River Basin Accounting allowed for economically unsustainable practices
- Navajo's unquantified water rights (don't have an enforceable figure for the amount of water they use)



Covid

- Lack of running water, medical infrastructure, internet access, information and adequate housing
- \$600 million relief package arrived 10 days late



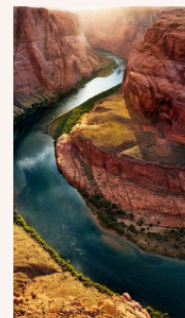
Relief Bill

- President of the Navajo Nation plans on using part of the 600 million dollar relief package to increase water infrastructure
- Push the restrictions on the bill, "We're going to test them. We don't want to get hit hard like this again" (Nez)



Native American Seeds

- Cultural and ecological importance of water rights
- Shirley Romero-Otero: Environmental justice is impossible with "land and water vultures who want to use the water for development... We use the water to sustain and survive."
- Treat it with respect (hiking to the headwaters in La Sierra and honoring the river)
- "A river is a body of water. It has a foot, an elbow, a mouth. It runs. It lies in a bed. It can make you good. It has a head. It remembers everything." (Natalie Diaz)



Izzy Atkin

Fracking at Bella Romero Academy

"The COGCC's decision to permit this development not only demonstrates a reckless disregard for human health and welfare; it is also an egregious example of environmental injustice." - The Sierra Club

Who?



Bella Romero Academy

80.6 % Latinx
11% White
6.5% African American
1% White
84% Free or reduced lunch

Frontier Charter Academy

74.3% White
21.2% Latinx
2.2% Multiracial
1% Asian
17% Free or reduced lunch

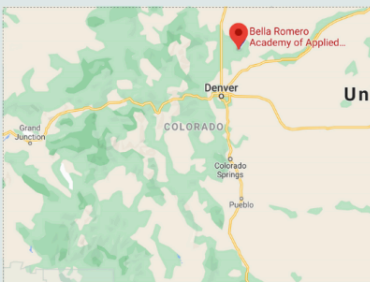
What?

- Fracking wells were placed next to Bella Romero Academy after pushback from Frontier Charter Academy resulted in their move
- The company requested a permit to drill 24 wells
- Some wells were within 1,000 ft of the school's field/playground
- Pushback from the majority Latinx community has not been taken seriously by Weld County



During 2019, there were four benzene leaks that occurred during school days

Where?



Bella Romero Academy is a K-8 school located in Greeley, Colorado. Greeley, Colorado is situated within Weld, a county north of Denver. Weld County has more than 23,000 active fracking wells.

When?

2013 - A permit to frack outside of Frontier Charter Academy is granted to the company Mineral Resources

2014 - Strong pushback from community members delay the process significantly

2014 - Mineral Resources is acquired by Extraction Oil and Gas who deem the site "not preferable" because of its proximity to Frontier Charter Academy

2015 - 2016 - Pushback from the Bella Romero community ensues

March 2017 - Permit is granted by the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) despite community pushback
2017 - The Sierra Club, Colorado NAACP, and other environmental groups come together to sue the COGCC

2018 - School board devises elaborate evacuation plan for students in case of well explosion
May 2018 - Bella Romero is featured in the New York Times

2019 - Bella Romero is featured on the Daily Show with Trevor Noah
2019 - Spikes in benzene levels are recorded by environmental organization, four of which occurred on full schooldays

2020 - Andrew Romanoff calls for an end to fracking near Bella Romero
June 2020 - community members send a petition straight to Jared Polis
2020 - Extraction Oil and Gas applies for bankruptcy

Why?

-Fracking near Bella Romero has largely been ignored because the community members aren't taken as seriously as their Frontier Charter Academy counterparts

-Mineral Resources deemed Frontier Charter Academy as a location that was "not preferable" but the company didn't think this was a problem when placing the fracking well near Bella Romero

-Patricia Nelson, a mother from the community, described the demographics of the area as a large population that speaks English as a second language. Additionally, she says there's a large refugee population who felt as if they would be putting themselves in an uncomfortable place by speaking out.

-The company took advantage of the community to get what they wanted. This is **environmental racism**.

Key Concepts: Environmental Racism, Environmental Justice, Fracking, Accessibility, Manipulation of information