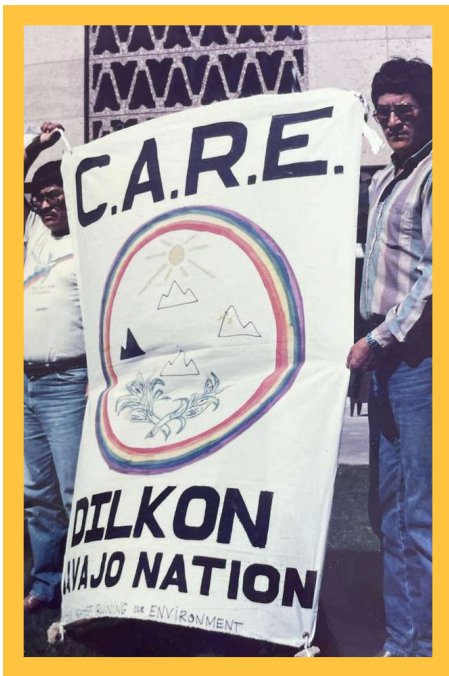




**PROTECTING MOTHER
EARTH CONFERENCE**
**And the Formation of
Indigenous Environmental Network**

June 1990: First Protecting Mother Earth Conference



First Protecting Mother Earth Conference

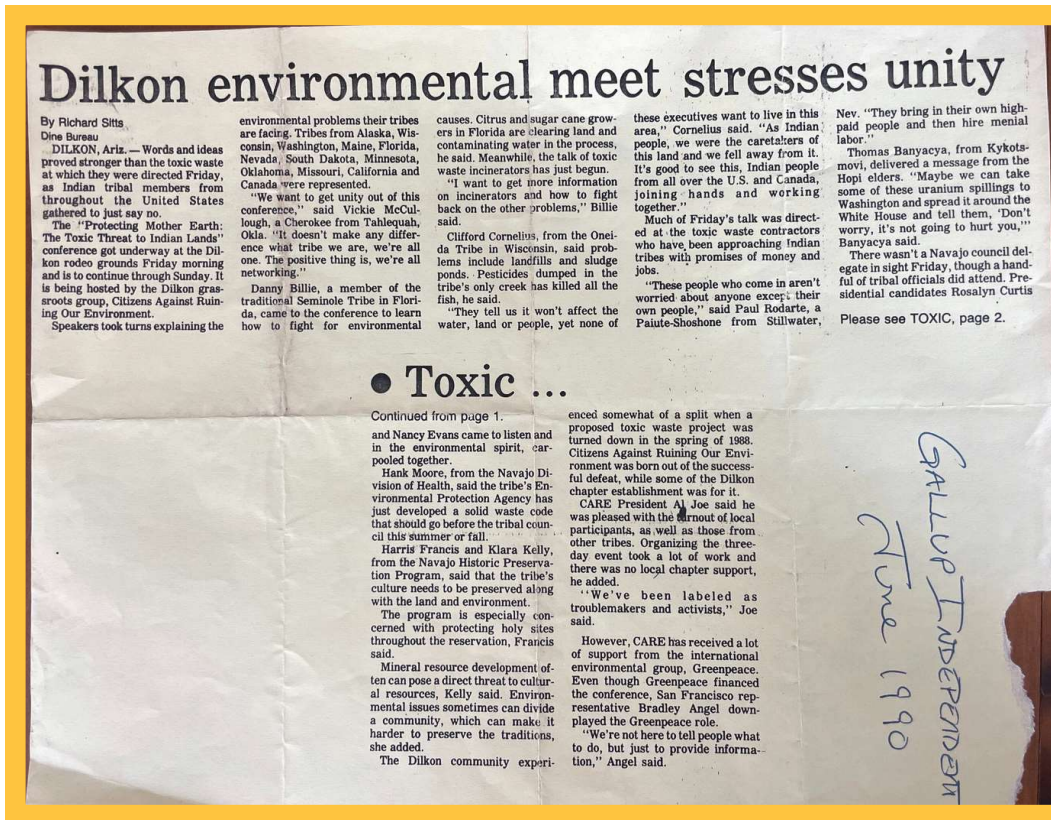
Dilkon, Arizona Navajo Nation

hosted by C.A.R.E

(Citizens Against Ruining Our Environment)

Dine/Navajo community group that defeated a
proposed hazardous waste incinerator

1990 Gallup Independent Article



1990 St. Lewis Post Dispatch Article

Indian Nations Fight Toxic Waste Invasion

By Bill Lambrecht

Post-Dispatch Washington Bureau

DILKON, Ariz. — An unprecedented "toxic powwow" drew Indians from across North America this weekend to discuss ways to resist pollution threats from invading toxic waste operators.

Many people throughout the United States don't realize what is happening on or near our reservations," said Johnny Jackson, co-chief of the Mescalero Indians, of Washington state. Jackson's tribe is fighting a proposed landfill near their reservation. If approved, the landfill would cover a centuries-old Indian burial ground.

"I've often wondered what it would be like if we hauled our garbage and disposed of it where their cavalry was buried, or one of their presidents," Jackson said.

Leaders and activists from more than 20 tribes in 16 states traveled to Navajo land in Arizona to talk over what many see as threats from commercial waste operators. About 150 people attended.

In 100-degree weather at a rodeo ground, they sweated both the heat and new conflicts between beliefs about the sanctity of land and the bounties from waste ventures.

Many reported longstanding problems from toxic waste, uranium mining and careless use of herbicides on tribal lands.

Breaking tradition, the Indians

linked scattered reports of waste plans into a pattern that stretches across the country and includes Alaska and Canada.

"In a few years, this could turn us into zombies," warned Guy White Thunder, 65, an Ojibwa Sioux from South Dakota. His tribe is considering a non-toxic landfill proposed by Amcor Corp. of Torrington, Conn.

James Ransom, a Mohawk from New York, said his tribe had received seven or eight waste offers since last year. They turned all offers down.

Part of the Mohawk Reservation already is a Superfund site scheduled for federal clean-up because of toxic PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) from manufacturing nearby.

Like others at the gathering, Ransom spoke of conflicts between wastes and Indian teachings. For instance, turtles are revered in Indian lore. In Indians' sauna-like "sweat lodges," hot rocks that make steam are arranged for the rituals into the shape of a turtle.

Ransom said that snapping turtles routinely found on Mohawk land are so heavily laden with chemicals that their tissue would be declared hazardous waste under federal law. Poisoned frogs, he said, manage only one jump and then fall over on their sides.

"We have to use tradition to educate people about Mother Earth," Ransom said.

The Indians talked of ways to equip themselves to analyze offers and ask

tribal lands.

Breaking tradition, the Indians charted campaigns to publicize their concerns and to form alliances with non-Indian environmental groups.

On Saturday, they set up a network to share details on waste operators and promised to help one another with economic development that doesn't rely on garbage.

Tribes are promised \$1 million or more a year plus jobs for opening up land for incinerator and landfill operations. Some get promises of relief from their own waste accumulation over the years.

Substantial corporations as well as fly-by-night operators are looking at Indian lands, federal authorities say.

For example, Waste-Tech Services Inc. of Colorado, a subsidiary of Amoco Oil Co., signed a contract in April with the Kaw Indians of Oklahoma to build a toxic waste incinerator and landfill. Waste-Tech has approached as many as 15 tribes, an agent for the company has said.

For waste operators, self-governing Indian lands offer a way to avoid state pollution laws, which often are strict. Federal laws apply, but inspections are infrequent.

"It is an ideal, isolated place to bury your waste. It is the Third World," said Dr. Franklin Freeland, a Navajo physician with the federal Indian Health Service in Winslow, Ariz., at the three-day gathering. Indians

The Indians talked of ways to equip themselves to analyze offers and ask better questions. Tribes usually bring in lawyers for contract negotiations. But signing decisions are left to tribal councils.

Some feel at a disadvantage when waste operators come knocking.

"They have sweet tongues," said Thomas Banyacya, 80, a Hopi from Arizona.

Bonnie Bravo said that she and other Hualapai Indians in Arizona came away frustrated from meetings with a company trying to mine uranium on their reservation.

"People are not used to that kind of language structure and they give up very easily. Plus, we're not bred to be so aggressive," Bravo said.

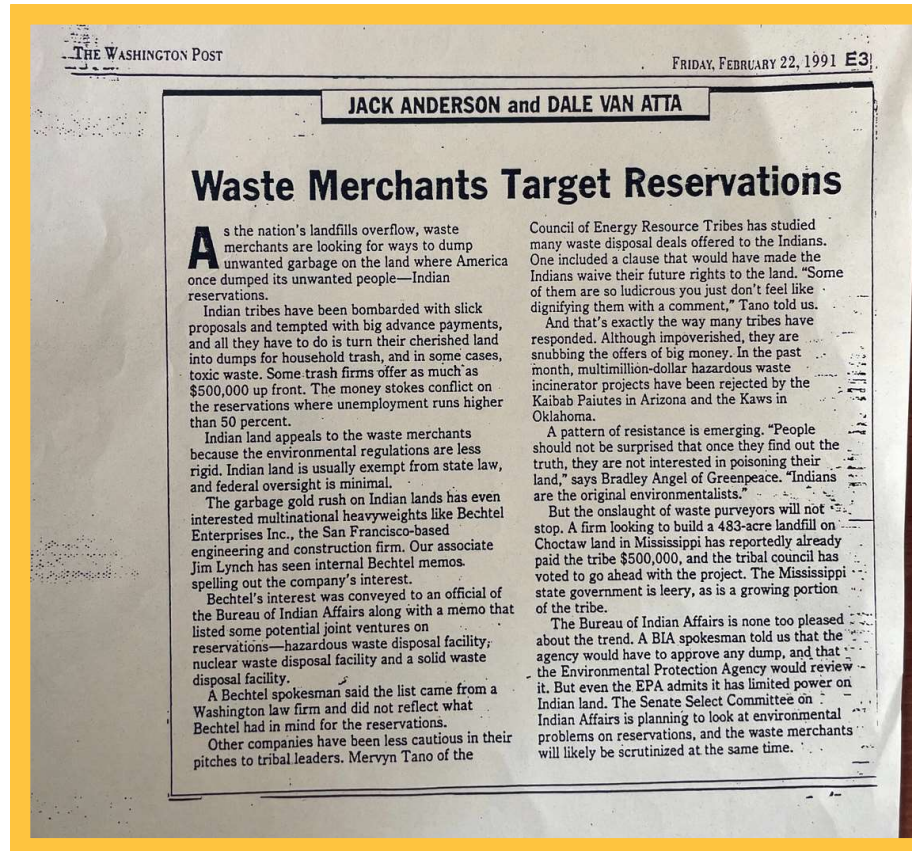
A few worried, too, that tribal leaders could be swayed by companies who hold dinners for them and send them on trips to look at other waste operations.

"It used to be whiskey. Now it's just good food," said Joann Tall, a Sioux from Porcupine, S.D.

Vivienne-Caron Jake, a Palute from northern Arizona, complained that many in her tribe were unconcerned about an incinerator proposal from Waste-Tech.


"I talked to one Indian the other day who told me that all he wanted was a six-pack, his television and a cold room. He wanted to be left alone," Jake said. "Where are our warriors?"

1991 Washington Post Article



Posters


**1991 Protecting Mother Earth:
The Toxic Threat to
Indian Lands Conference**



June 7, 8, and 9, 1991
"Bear Butte"
Sacred Mountain of the Lakota/Cheyenne
Sturgis, South Dakota

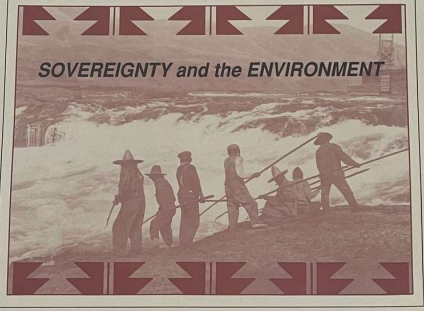
Conference Activities: Cultural Workshops, Sweat Lodge
Ceremonies, Pow Wow (Friday), Environmental Workshops

Hosted by

Native Resource Coalition	605-867-5479	Glencoe Camping Resort 
Oglala Sioux Nation	605-867-5618 (FAX)	
Good Road Coalition	605-747-2874	
Rosebud Sioux Nation	605-747-2729 (FAX)	

NO ALCOHOL or
DRUGS ALLOWED
*Not responsible for thefts,
accidents or injuries.*

PROTECTING MOTHER EARTH
1992 Conference



SOVEREIGNTY and the ENVIRONMENT

JUNE 4-7
CELILO VILLAGE, OREGON
(90 miles east of Portland, about 12 miles east of Dalles, Oregon)

THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE
on DEVELOPMENT and the ENVIRONMENT

SOVEREIGNTY

Nuclear Waste • Toxic Waste Dumps • Mining • Ground Water Pollution
Dams • Pollution

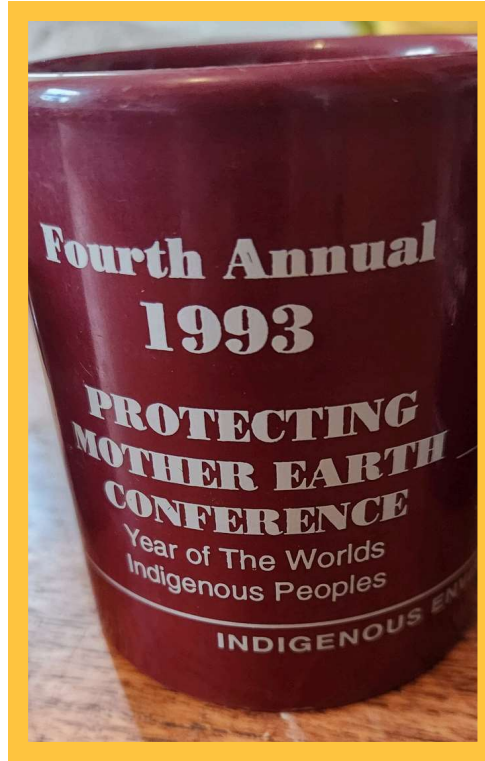
Grassroots Organizing • Skills Building • Fundraising • Coalition Building
• Sustainable Development • Media • Youth Development

Sponsored by the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) & the Indigenous People's Alliance (IPA)
Hosted by the Columbia River Defense Fund (CRDF) & the Indigenous People of the Columbia River
Contact IEN, (515) 652-5674, IPA (505) 256-0097 or SGF (707) 839-1178

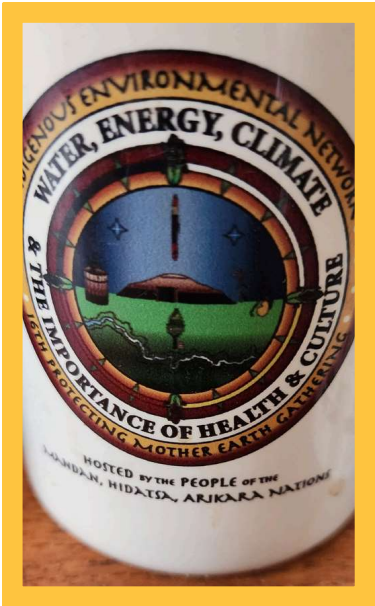
T shirts



Mugs



Mugs

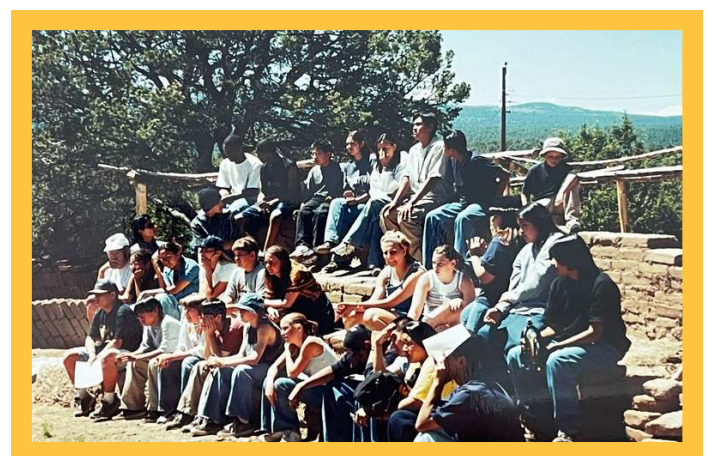


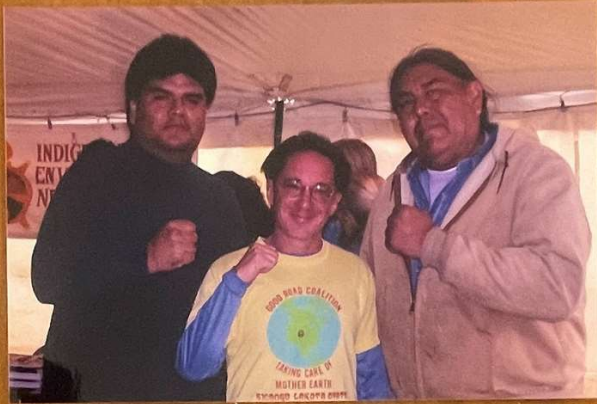
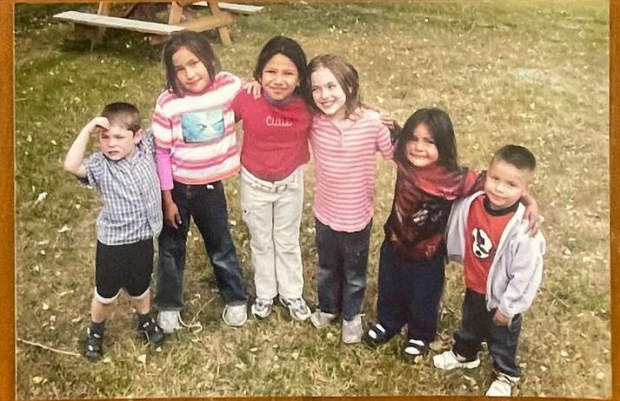
In 1989, the grassroots Dine/Navajo community group Citizens Against Ruining our Environment (CARE) defeated a hazardous waste incinerator proposed for their small community in Dilkon on the Navajo Nation (Arizona). At the same time, many dozens of Native Nations were being approached by companies attempting to locate hazardous waste and garbage landfills and incinerators on tribal lands. At the CARE victory celebration in Dilkon, the people decided to host a grassroots conference to bring together Indigenous people from across the country facing similar threats.

The first "Protecting Mother Earth, Toxic Threats to Indian Lands" conference was held in June 1990 in Dilkon, with 200 people from 25 tribes attending. The participants decided that an Indigenous Environmental Network should be formed, and this was formalized at the 2nd Protecting Mother Earth Conference held in 1991 at Bear Butte in South Dakota, sacred land of the Lakota and Cheyenne peoples who were also fighting proposals for large commercial landfills. 500 people attended the conference at Bear Butte, and formed the Indigenous Environmental Network.

Images from the Early Protecting Mother Earth Conferences







1991: Toxic Threat to Indian Lands

By Bradley Angel

<https://www.ejnet.org/ej/toxicthreattoindianlands.pdf>

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