Alternative Spring Break 2010 to the Navajo Nation

WELCOME PACKET

Environmental Racism: The Navajo Nation’s Fight for JUSTICE
Navajo Nation Participants,

Hello and congratulations on being selected as a participant for the Alternative Spring Break 2010's trip to the Navajo Nation! We are really happy you will be traveling with us and are excited about the activities we have planned for this trip. Believe it or not, after winter break there will only be seven weeks left until departure. Because of this we need to jump right in and begin preparing for the trip. In this welcome packet you will find:

- □ A welcome letter from your co-leaders (What you are reading right now 😊)
- □ A welcome letter from the Alternative Break Office Including:
  - A list of forms you must turn into the CSC (on website)
  - Online Payment Instructions
  - Important Information Checklist for all Participants
  - AU Emergency Contact Information
  - Expectations and Code of Conduct (to be signed by you)
- □ Pre-Departure Schedule
- □ A Brief Background on Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice
- □ UN REPORT: Pollution of Navajo Lands
- □ Tentative Organizations We Will Be Working With
- □ Suggested Reading List
- □ Packing List
- □ A Note About Fundraising
- □ Resources on Campus
- □ Contact List

Our trip to the Navajo Nation will be **March 6-March 14, 2010**. We will be flying down as a group and will be staying in a few different locations throughout the reservation. We will be speaking with different stakeholders involved with mining issues and working with various non-profits and grassroots advocacy groups. There will also be a variety of opportunities to learn about Navajo culture, history, and environmental justice.

Our pre-departure sessions will start in January, and we hope to have insightful and lively discussions as a group before actually getting to Navajo Nation. We also encourage you to research the aspects of the trip that you are most interested in before departing for the Navajo Nation. The more background knowledge you have before arriving on the reservation, the more you will get out of the trip.

Please regularly check your e-mail in the following weeks. We will notify you about any changes of cancellations in pre-departure meetings and when forms and payments are due. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us. We are both here to make sure that you have the best possible experience. We are so excited to have you on this trip!

Thanks,

Katie Mayer and Amy Gastinger
WELCOME TO ALTERNATIVE BREAKS!!!!

Congratulations on being selected to participate in an Alternative Break trip! You are about to embark on a journey of transformation, reflection, activism, and community involvement. As you know, the Alternative Break program is student-run, with the Community Service Center (CSC) and the Alternative Break Coordinator serving as resources for the student leaders of each trip. Please read this letter carefully for important information about

**FORMS YOU MUST TURN IN TO CSC: ON WEBSITE:** [www.american.edu/altbreak](http://www.american.edu/altbreak) under “Participant Applications & Forms”

- Medical/Emergency Contact form
- Copy of health insurance card
- Consent & Release Waiver Form
- Copy of passport (for international trips)
- Code of Conduct Signature form

**PAYMENT DEADLINES:**
Monthly payment installments are due according to your payment schedule. Talk to your trip leaders for dates.

**ONLINE PAYMENT INSTRUCTIONS:**
1. Log-on to my.american.edu, click on the Finances or Life@AU tab.
2. Under your personalized links, click on “Alternative Break E-payment.”
3. Choose your trip.
4. Enter your credit card information and click submit!
5. Payments are non-refundable.

**PAYMENT INSTRUCTIONS VIA CASH OR CHECK:**
1. Obtain deposit slip from Community Service Center with the trip Account # to ensure that the payment is placed in the correct account.
2. Bring payment and Deposit Record to the payment windows in Student Accounts (before 4:30 PM in Asbury 300).
3. Bring the original payment receipt *back* to the Community Service Center (MGC 273). You must keep a copy of the receipt for yourself. *If you do not bring back the receipt we have no way of knowing if you paid!!!*
4. Put the receipt in your trip box in the CSC.
5. Payments are non-refundable.
IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

☐ The pre-departure meetings are MANDATORY. You must attend in order to get to know other students on your trip, learn about your destination and talk about health/safety issues.

☐ You are responsible for making an appointment with your doctor to find out which immunizations you need.

☐ You are covered under AU’s international travel insurance (information from Alt Break website: http://www.american.edu/finance/rmehs/intravel.cfm)

☐ Safety, US State Department, CDC immunizations, and other links are on the Alternative Break website. www.american.edu/altbreak

☐ Your leader is responsible for providing the trip itinerary and destination information. Please ask them any questions you have.

☐ Academic credits: You can either do an independent study with a professor of your choice or take SIS 386: Selected Topics in Global Social Justice. (Register through Alternative Break office.)

☐ Fundraising for your trip: If you solicit checks from individuals or businesses, they should be made out to “American University” and mailed to the AU Development Office. See the Alternative Break website for more information.

AU EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION:
202-885-3636 Public Safety
2nd Marcy Campos, Community Service Center Director; work: 202-885-7378, cell: 301-996-6343, home: 301-270-6343
3rd Fanta Aw, Assistant Vice President, Campus Life; work: 202-885-3357 home: 301-562 1499, cell: 240-413-2277
**EXPECTATIONS & CODE OF CONDUCT:**

The following is a list of minimum expectations; your individual trip groups will discuss and formulate additional participant expectations as necessary.

**Code of Conduct:**
1. Participate in all mandatory weekly pre-departure meetings.
2. Make payments and turn in all necessary forms on time.
3. Travel with the group at all times.
4. Abide by the alcohol and other drug free policy of Alternative Breaks.
5. Prepare individually for your trip by completing required readings.
6. Behave in a safe and responsible manner.
7. Respect the customs and local community.
8. Respect your trip leader, fellow participants & faculty/staff advisor.
9. Process the AB experience individually and with your group through reflection, conversation and other group activities.
10. Follow-up after trip with activism on social justice issues learned.

**Program Reminders:**
1. Turn in all necessary forms on time.
2. Participants who wish to receive course credit for participation will be required to complete additional criteria. SIS 386 or independent study credit is optional. See individual trip advisor for details.
3. Participants must become aware of relevant health and safety risks relevant to your destination. **You are responsible for making an appointment with your doctor** to find out which immunizations you need.
4. Make payments on time.
5. All payments made to Alternative Break are non-refundable.

I understand that **failure to comply** with any of these expectations may result in my inability to participate in the trip, **dismissal from trip at my own expense**, or may affect future Alternative Break participation.

Print Name: ____________________________________________ AU ID: __________

Signature: ____________________________________________ Date: __________
NO ALCOHOL POLICY

Alternative Break Programs are alcohol-free trips. No exceptions! Students who violate the alcohol policy are at risk of being sent home at their own expense. You are an unofficial ambassador of the AU community. Please carry yourself as such.

The governing council of the Navajo Nation prohibits the sale of alcohol. So it is extremely important that we abide by the laws of the Nation.

Thank you,
Amy, and Katie
PRE-DEPARTURE SCHEDULE

Session 1:

Theme: What is an “Indian” and what is “Service?”

Group Dynamics:
• Meet your co-leaders, faculty advisor, and fellow participants

Theme Development:
• What is an “Indian”?
• Discussion on what “service” is and its relationship to social justice
• Discussion of UN Report from Welcome Packet

Logistics
• Go over payment plan, deadlines, and refund policy.
• University travel requirements
• Assign Reading No. 1 (We will discussing during Session 2)

Session 2:

What is Environmental Racism, and what does it have to do with Navajo Nation?

Group Dynamics:
• Continue building relationships with other participants

Theme Development:
• Discussion of Reading No. 1
• What is Environmental Racism

Logistics
• Introduction to the group journal
• Assign Reading No. 2
• Reminder of payment plans

Session 3:

What is Environmental Justice?
Group Dynamics:

- Continue building relationships with other participants

Theme Development

- Discuss Reading No. 2
- Environmental Justice

Logistics

- Meeting time for Session 6 (Meeting with Desert Rock Energy Company) and Session 7 (Trip to the National Museum of the American Indian)
- Assign Reading No. 3

Session 4:

The TRUE History of Native Americans within the United States

Group Dynamics:

- Continue building relationships with other participants

Theme Development

- Discussion of Reading No. 3
- Native American History Jeopardy
- Native American Policy/History with the US Government.

Logistics

- Journal Assignment
- Assign Reading No. 4.

Session 5:

Cross-cultural training/ Culture Shock: What to Expect on the “Rez”

Group Dynamics:

- Continue building relationships with other participants

Theme Development

- Introduction to “Rez Life”
- Discussion of Reading No. 4

Logistics

- Safety concerns and departure day logistics
Session 6:

Meeting with Desert Rock Energy Company Representatives

Group Dynamics:
- Group traveling together downtown

Theme Development
- The legal argument from the perspective of the power plants

Logistics
- Go over packing list

Session 7:

National Museum of the American Indian (Field Trip!)

Group Dynamics:
- Group journaling

Theme Development
- National Museum of the American Indian: Cultural Aspects of the Navajo.

Logistics
- Any questions?
- Gift Ideas

Session 8:

Packing List and Final Preparations

Group Dynamics:
- Final group bonding session

Theme Development
- Recap of previous themes and readings, any questions?
- Expectations/ Reservations for trip
- Journaling

Logistics
- Planning for departure!!! 😊
ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE:
What does it have to do with the Navajo, and how does it apply to this trip?

Environmental Racism occurs when environmental policy, practice, and directives disproportionately affect and disadvantage a group of people solely on the grounds of race. Environmental Justice refers to the removing of environmental racism. Striking examples of both environmental racism and environmental justice are present on Navajo Nation regarding past and present mining on Navajo lands.

Mining on Navajo lands has its roots in economic exploitation, racial oppression, devaluation of human life and the natural environment, as well as in corporate greed. Environmental racism can be seen as a form of institutional discrimination where the actions carried out by the US government and US corporations have had a differential and negative impact upon the Navajo people that has led to a cycle of exploitation and dependency, resulting in toxic living conditions, inadequate schools, high levels of poverty, and extremely high incidents of health problems for the Navajo people.

As a trip participant you will explore the health, environmental, legal, political, economic, sovereignty, and ethical dilemmas posed by decades of uranium and coal mining on Navajo lands. Through interaction with various stakeholders, you will gain a better understanding why these factors are the result of environmental racism, and not just unfortunate circumstances.

Questions to keep in mind throughout the pre-departure session and actual trip:

- Why are environmental regulations strongly opposed in some communities but have become accepted norms on Navajo lands?
- Why are some workers protected from environmental and health threats while other workers (such as the Navajo people and other Native Americans) are not?
- How can environmental justice be incorporated into environmental protection?
- What institutional changes are needed in order to achieve a just and sustainable society on the Navajo lands?
- How effective have US Government attempts for compensation been in addressing the health problems of the Navajo people related to Uranium exposure?
- What community organizing strategies and public policies are effective tools against environmental racism?
INTERNATIONAL EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON INDIGENOUSPEOPLES
AND PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

KHASBAROVSK, RUSSIAN FEDERATION

AUGUST 27.-29, 2007

Pollution of the Navajo Nation Lands

Paper by

KIMBERLY SMITH
BLACK MESA WATER COALITION
ARIZONA, USA
Introduction
The cost of the fossil fuel economy within the United States of America (USA) has always been imposed on the indigenous peoples in the Americas. However, the human costs have far exceeded the monetary value. In the past, Native American Tribes were relocated to what was considered worthless pieces of land. Now, these worthless pieces of land are rich in oil, gas, coal, uranium, and water. Indigenous lands contain 30% of the all coal in the USA. The Navajo Nation has the largest coal mining operations not only in Southwest of the USA but also in the entire world. Not only that, 37% of all uranium is found in indigenous territories in the USA. For twenty years, uranium was mined on the Navajo Nation lands and the impact of the mining operations on Navajo territories and its peoples were, and continues to be enormous.

The Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934, also known as the Wheeler Howard Act, gave tribes the right to govern themselves. The IRA ended all traditional tribal forms of government and put in place a governing structure that was both relied upon and was subservient to the federal government. More importantly, it gave the tribal landholders the right to sell their lands. As a result, it made it easier for energy corporations to access tribal lands and enter into mining contracts with indigenous peoples.

Energy Corporations see the abundance of fossil fuels as a gift, but the impact on indigenous peoples are enormous as water supplies are polluted, there are diminished food resources, forced removals from homelands, increased rates of health ailments, and are being held hostage, economically. The Navajo Nation is one indigenous nation that has direct contact with energy companies. The Navajo Nation has a land base that is rich in culture and natural resources.

The Navajo Nation
The Navajo Nation extends from Northern Arizona into Western New Mexico to Southeastern Utah. The Navajo land base is the size of Ireland. The Navajo are the second largest indigenous nation in the USA. There is an energy gold mine within the 18.5 million acre land base. Navajo land is abundant in gas, coal, water, and uranium. Currently, there are 12 extractive industries operating within our territories. Of those, there are 7 coal-fired power plants that are polluting our lands. These industries have had an enormous affect on the economy, our people, our culture, and our rights to these resources and lands. Over half of the Navajo population lives below the USA poverty line despite the rich mining operations on our lands. This creates a difficult situation for the Navajo people. On the one hand, the environmental impact of the extractive resources and the need for employment renders indigenous peoples as economic hostages. On the other hand, and in most cases, the tribal governments are in favor of the mining developments. This creates a dilemma because it divides the people and their government.

The Navajo Nation economy includes traditional activities, such as: sheep and cattle herding, weaving, jewelry making, and art trading. The Navajo government employs hundreds of people in civil service and administrative jobs. There are also tribal members that set up roadside stands selling handmade crafts, especially on major highways or near major tourist attractions.

The Navajo Nation's extensive mineral resources are among the most valuable held by Indigenous nations within the United States. Aside from employment in mining, the Navajo government is the next biggest employer for the Navajo population. Navajo members also work in retail stores and other business activities within the Nation's reservation or in nearby towns.
As stated earlier, the reservation is the second largest in the nation. Currently, the unemployment rate is 43% and the annual per capita income is $5,759 according to the Navajo Division of Economic Development. It is clear that the abundance of natural resources and the mining activity has done little to improve the unemployment rate.

Tribal members have worked over long periods in the coal and uranium mining industries, however, uranium mining have ceased in Navajo lands but the effects are still felt today. The contamination and the mining activities are putting the local population at risk through water depletion, drought, relocation from their traditional areas and toxic water. A rise in cancer rates and other respiratory illness continues to plague the Navajo peoples. Global warming is also a major issue experienced within the Navajo Nation due to the pollution of uranium, gas, and coal mining on our territories. In the following section, I will review the history and impacts of mining and pollution.

**Four Corners Power Plant and the San Juan Generating Station**

In 1963, the Four Corner Power Plant opened. The Four Corners plant has five generating units which were installed between 1963 and 1970. It produces 2,040 megawatts of power at capacity. Nearly 80% of its employees are Navajo. The power plant is located on the Navajo Reservation in Northwest area of New Mexico. It is one of the largest power plants in the USA. The average power plant in the United States only generates 213 megawatts. The Four Corners Power Plant is the only coal-fired power plant in the nation that has been allowed to operate without enforceable federal, state, or tribal pollution limits for significant pollutants, such as nitrogen oxides.

Since this plant has been able to operate without any meaningful federal, state, or tribal emission limits, the plant emits an astonishing amount of pollution. Every year the plant emits over 15 million tons of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and carbon dioxide emissions. It also emits 590 pounds of mercury. The plant's annual emission of nitrogen oxides, 40,742 tons, is the highest of all coal-fired power plants in the nation and is equivalent to the emissions from approximately 2 million vehicles that have driven 15,000 miles a year. If the Four Corners plant were required to meet enforceable pollution limits and to adopt cleaner technologies, air quality would be dramatically improved. For instance, installing reduction technology at the facility would reduce nitrogen oxide emissions by as much as 90%. In addition, increasing the efficiency of the scrubbers would greatly reduce sulfur dioxide emissions. No power plant in the USA emits more total nitrogen oxides than the Four Corners Power Plant, according to Dirty Kilowatts, a report compiled from governmental data.

This power plant and the neighboring San Juan Generating Station are both on the list of the 50 dirtiest power plants in the USA. Due to its production output - 2,040 megawatts, the Four Corners Power Plant also puts out a large amount of emissions. Its around-the-clock operation produces enough electricity for 300,000 homes in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. This power plant has five coal-fueled generating units and the emissions from these generating units drift in the wind to surrounding communities. The emissions include: nitrogen oxide, carbon dioxide, mercury, and sulfur dioxide. In fact, Four Corners was the nation's No. 1 emitter in 2004 of total nitrogen oxide - releasing 40,742 tons of the gas into the air. Based on production, the plant was No. 25 with 5.44 pounds of nitrogen oxide emitted per megawatt hour of power. In addition, Four Corners was No. 24 nationally in the emission of carbon dioxide with 15.1 million tons and No. 37 in the release of mercury with 590 pounds.
A few miles away is the neighboring San Juan Generating Station, the nation's No. 21 emitter of total nitrogen oxide in 2004, releasing with 26,880 tons into the air. It was also No. 34 in the release of carbon dioxide with 13.1 million tons and it tied with Four Corners in the emission of mercury with 590 tons.

Currently, a coalition of environmental groups has filed a lawsuit challenging new federal regulations for the Four Corners Power Plant near Farmington. The coalition seeks to force the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to revisit the regulations, known as a Federal Implementation Plan. The Federal Implementation Plan was an EPA attempt to end a legal limbo that was created when courts ruled that New Mexico had no regulatory authority over a power plant on reservation land. The Navajo Nation also did not issue an Implementation Plan for Four Corners, so regulatory responsibility fell on the EPA.

Environmental groups say that the federal plan is inadequate because it sanctions the power plant's existing pollution levels. The Clean Air Act charges EPA with protecting the health of people who live near large pollution sources like the Four Corners Power Plant. Yet, this plan does nothing to protect the communities. In turn, the pollution causes asthma among the Navajo children and other children in the region. It also impairs the visibility of Mesa Verde National Park and the entire region. The plant's contribution to satisfy the increasingly insatiable demand for electricity extracts a price on the health of surrounding communities and the environment. The pollution in this area is said to be ten times worst than the city of Los Angeles.

Currently, there is a proposal to build a new coal fired power plant in the area - the Desert Rock power plant, which is an initiative of Sithe Global, a private energy firm based out of New York. Grassroots organizations, as well as Navajo community members are resisting the development of the power plant. Sithe Global has partnered with the Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley and Dine Power Authority (DPA) in the hope of making this plant a reality.

The Black Mesa Mine

The Black Mesa coalmine lies within the Navajo and Hopi reservations. There were two coalmines on Black Mesa, the Black Mesa Mine and the Kayenta Coalmine. The coal that is mined at Kayenta is carried to the Navajo Generating Station in Page, Arizona via railway. The Black Mesa coalmine, a controversial strip mine, was shut down on December 31, 2005 for its emission credits. This mine fed the Mojave Generating Station at Laughlin, in the state of Nevada, via a slurry pipeline that used water from the Black Mesa N-aquifer. The N-aquifer is the sole drinking source for the Navajo and Hopi People. Black Mesa is located on the Colorado Plateau. The mesa has been home to indigenous peoples for at least 7,000 years. The land is now split between the Hopi and Navajo tribal reservations.

Since the 1960s, the mesa has been a strip mined for coal by the Peabody Western Coal Company, the world's largest private-sector coal company. Peabody Energy's use of groundwater to transport coal has been controversial. Each year, the water level in the N-aquifer lowers to over 100 feet because of Peabody’s need to transport their coal. Peabody Energy has forced thousands of Navajos and Hopis to relocate so that they can use indigenous land for strip mining. Until a few years ago, seven environmental regulations were waived so that the Peabody Energy Company could mine without any safeguards or enforceable limits from the government.
In creating the mine and using the water source, they were destroying the Navajo and Hopi cultures. Both the aquifer and the land are sacred to the Hopi and Navajo tribes.

The US Government ordered the Navajo and Hopi to move off their land so the coal company can mine it. When the Navajo and Hopi did move, they are given no financial assistance or any other form of administrative or legal remedy and often fell into bankruptcy. More importantly, their homelands were being destroyed. Presently, the only mine in operation is the Kayenta Coalmine. Like the Four Corners Power Plant, it contributes to pollution and associated health hazards in the surrounding indigenous communities. In the following section, I will overview the effects of the pollutants from coal-fired power plants.

Nitrogen Oxides
When nitrogen oxides enter the environment, they are broken down rapidly in the atmosphere by reacting with other substances commonly found in the air. The reaction of nitrogen dioxide with chemicals produced by sunlight leads to the formation of acid rain. Nitrogen dioxide also reacts with sunlight, which leads to the formation of ozone and smog conditions in the air we breathe. The general population is primarily exposed to nitrogen oxides by breathing in air. People who live near burning sources, such as coal, may be exposed to higher levels of nitrogen oxides. There are several ways that nitrogen oxides affect health. Low levels of nitrogen oxides in the air can irritate your eyes, nose, throat, and lungs, possibly causing you to cough and experience shortness of breath, tiredness, and nausea. Breathing high levels of nitrogen oxides can cause rapid burning, spasms, and swelling of tissues in the throat and upper respiratory tract, reduced oxygenation of body tissues, a build-up of fluid in the lungs, and death. Skin or eye contact with high concentrations of nitrogen oxide gases or nitrogen dioxide liquid, often results in serious burns.

Carbon Monoxide
Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas. Breathing carbon monoxide can lead to suffocation, unconsciousness, and even death. Heart damage is also caused by carbon monoxide exposure.

Mercury
Exposure to breathing mercury metal vapor affects the human brain, spinal cord, eyes, and kidneys. It may also cause mood changes, inability to concentrate, memory loss, loss of feeling in the hands, tongue, or eyelids, including an inability to see and kidney disease. Swallowing mercury compounds can cause severe kidney damage.

If a pregnant woman eats large amounts of fish contaminated with mercury, her unborn child may develop vision, hearing, taste, smell, memory damage as well as mental disability. Very high exposure to breathing mercury metal vapor in the air can poison quickly. Children are more susceptible than adults to mercury poisoning.

Sulfur Dioxide
The effects that sulfur dioxide has on your health can very dangerous. Exposure to very high levels of sulfur dioxide can be life threatening. Burning of the nose and throat, breathing difficulties, and severe airway obstructions occurred in miners who breathed sulfur dioxide. Long-term exposure to continual levels of sulfur dioxide can affect your health. Lung function changes were seen in some workers exposed to low levels of sulfur dioxide for 20 years or more.
Children who live in, or near heavily industrialized areas where sulfur dioxide exists may experience difficulty breathing as well as changes in the ability to breathe deeply. Children may be exposed to more sulfur dioxide than adults because they breathe more air for their body weight than adults.

**Uranium mining**

Uranium mining on the Navajo Nation began in the 1940’s and continued until the 1960s. It has been over thirty years since uranium mining ended but the impacts are still felt today. Hundreds of abandoned mines have not been cleaned up and the land is dotted with contaminated tailings. These mines were left with no warning of the health hazards. Within this area, the Navajo peoples have suffered from high cancer rates and respiratory problems. Cancer rates among Navajo teenagers living near mine tailings are 17 times the national average. It was in the 1970s, that Navajo uranium miners and their families began to see the effects of the mine. They asked for assistance to broadcast the fact that their lung diseases had been caused by their work in underground uranium mines in the 1940s-1960. The miners sought help from the federal government and the government compensated workers that were employed before 1971. Although the government provided some form of assistance to the miners for their illness, they have yet to clean up the sites of hundreds of abandoned mines that present environmental and health risks in many Navajo communities.

In April of 2006, Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley approved legislation banning uranium mining within Navajo Nation. There is no mining on the Navajo reservation but Hydro Resources Inc. has been working with the Federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission for many years to try to get approval for mining near the Navajo communities of Crownpoint and Church Rock, New Mexico. The company estimates around one hundred million pounds of uranium exists in these areas making it worth millions of dollars. Hydro Resources proposes to inject chemicals into the aquifer next to the communities’ water supply. This aquifer is the only source of drinking water for 10,000 to 15,000 people living in the Eastern Navajo Agency in New Mexico.

In 1979, the largest accidental release of radioactive material in USA history happened in Churchrock in the state of New Mexico. A tailing dam burst, sending eleven hundred tons of radioactive mill wastes and ninety million gallons of contaminated liquid pouring toward Arizona into the Rio Puerco River. Today, the Navajo communities still cannot use the water.

**Water – Bennett Freeze**

More than 700,000 acres of the Western Navajo Nation have been in limbo for nearly 40 years due to a land dispute with the Hopi Tribe. The dispute stemmed from access to religious sacred sites. The Navajos claimed that the land was theirs and that they have used it for generations. The Hopis said that the land is part of the Hopi aboriginal homeland and that they used it for thousands of years before the Navajos arrived in the mid-1800s. The Hopi also claimed that the land contains sacred springs, eagle-nesting sites, and shrines essential to the Hopi religion. The dispute involved land designated by the federal government for the Navajo peoples and has resulted in a federal lawsuit that may be one of the longest in USA history. A freeze was put into place to stop one tribe from gaining any advantage in the legal proceedings by pursuing a strategy of developing the land with housing and infrastructure improvements. The freeze originally covered 1.5 million acres. In 1997, the land size reduced when the Hopi Tribe agreed to eliminate about 800,000 acres, saying they contained no religious sites.
With the freeze, Navajo people living within the area were not allowed to do any type of house repairs or construction, including extensions of water and electrical lines. This has left thousands of families, mostly Navajo, without running water, lights, or modern appliances. The Navajo people were also forbidden to practice their spiritual ceremonies due to the Bennett Freeze's ban on building Hogans (Navajo traditional dwellings). In the winter, Navajos were forbidden to gather firewood for heating and all year round are forbidden to gather wood for cooking.

The Bennett Freeze was a tactic used by the U.S. government to deprive Navajos of all human rights. As well as imposing unbearable conditions upon Navajos, it was also an attempt to force them off their homelands so the Peabody Coal Company could have free access to the land and underlying aquifer. In December of 2006, the 40-year freeze was lifted. In the end, no land was lost and religious practices of both tribes were recognized.

All of the turmoil that the Navajo and Hopi people have endured is due to the energy industries. Right now, tribes are taking a stand. Tribes are organizing and taking action against corporations and the tribal governments who are not representing the interests of their people. The proposed Desert Rock Power Plant is facing resistance from many of the surrounding Navajo communities. The grassroots organization are gaining allies from across Indian country and the USA. The coalition that is resisting the Desert Rock Power Plant is called DOODA Desert Rock. DOODA in Navajo word that means “no”. The coalition have started a postcard campaign, which encourages the public to write to Sithe Global, the State of New Mexico, and the Navajo Nation President’s office. Currently, they are engaged in the Environmental Impact Statement hearings over the proposed Plant.

A New Path
Native American tribes are looking for ways to create clean renewable energy projects to cater to the high-energy demands. The Just Transition Coalition is a group that is looking to create solar and wind projects in the area of Black Mesa. The Just Transition Plan is a proposal from several diverse groups to encourage development of renewable energy. This plan is a long-term solution to the pollution and groundwater pumping needed to run the Mohave power plant. Funding for these new energy projects is proposed to come from the extra profits made by the Mohave owners from the sale of federal pollution credits through the Environmental Protection Agency. The Just Transition plan is a new path that incorporates the Navajo philosophy of “walking in beauty”.

Conclusion
Our struggles have been long and hard but we have a duty to care for Mother Earth and to sustain our healthy environments for the seven generations ahead. Our successes have come due to our faith in the land and from the support of many people around the world. In the end, we hope that we will inspire others to take back what is theirs whether it is land, clean air, or the right to exist. We need to always remember to Honor The Earth.
LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS

Black Mesa Water Coalition

The Navajo Aquifer is the sole source of drinking water for the Black Mesa region of the Navajo Nation and is the life source for the spiritual and cultural survival of the Diné and Hopi people and all living things in the region. Peabody Coal pumps more than 4,500 acre-feet of pristine drinking water from the Navajo Aquifer each year. “Slurry”—water mixed with crushed coal—is then pumped from Black Mesa to 1,500-megawatt Mojave Generating Station that serves California, Arizona and Nevada, but does not provide power to the Hopi and Diné people living on the Navajo Nation. Black Mesa Water Coalition was formed in October 2001 by Hopi and Diné youth to address the damage Peabody Coal has done to the Navajo Aquifer for the last 30 years. The youth came together to educate their community and non-Native communities about the fight to evict Peabody Coal from Black Mesa. They also created public outreach campaigns on issues pertaining to water on Black Mesa, the fossil fuel industry, and renewable energy alternatives. In 2008, Black Mesa Water Coalition joined other groups, including Diné CARE, New Energy Economy, Mexico Youth Organize, Grand Canyon Trust, and Green Jobs Now, to create the Navajo Green Jobs Campaign. The purpose of the campaign is to ensure that President Obama’s administration looks to Native America as a wellspring of a new, green, low carbon economy, that also fulfills the potential development of tremendous human and economic potential in the poorest community in the United States -- Native America.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

The BIA is an agency of the federal government of the United States within the US Department of the Interior charged with the administration and management of 55.7 million acres of land held in trust by the United States for Native Americans in the United States, Native American Tribes and Alaska Natives.

Dooda Desert Rock (“No Desert Rock”)  

Dooda Desert Rock is a movement taking place within Diné CARE. It is a group of indigenous residents of the Four Corners area of New Mexico dedicated to stopping the ill-conceived Desert Rock plant proposed by the Sithe Global LLC Corporation and the Diné Power Authority. Elouise Brown, a leader in DDR, believes that economic development must not come at the expense of the health of our children, the air we breathe, our sacred land and water, and our way of life. With her work she aims to protect and preserve the natural state of Harmony and Beauty against corporate intrusion and environmental injustices.

Diné CARE (Citizens Against Ruining our Environment)

Diné CARE is an all-Navajo environmental organization, based within the Navajo homeland and associated with the Women's Earth Alliance. They strive to educate and advocate for their traditional teachings as they protect and provide a voice for all life in the Four Sacred Mountains. They promote alternative uses of natural resources that are consistent with the Diné philosophy of Beauty Way. They started as a small, community based organization in 1988 to prevent the location of a toxic waste incinerator and dump in the Navajo community of Dilkon, Arizona. After their
successful defense there, they received considerable regional attention, and soon were called upon by other Navajo groups to assist in similar situations. They have thus grown into a multi-issue, Reservation-wide organization. Their growth has permitted them the chance to share among themselves the many experiences and struggles, and to see a distressing pattern in the way that the system of funding and supporting environmental activism fails to work in Native lands.

**The Diné Environmental Institute**

Located at Diné College, the Diné Environmental Institute was established to meet the documented environmental needs of the Southwest region of the United States and of the Native Nations. In the current atmosphere surrounding the need to establish national energy independence, this effort takes on added urgency and importance and will provide an essential contribution to that end. The Diné Environmental Institute is based on Sa’ah Naaghái Bik’eh Hózhóón (SNBH) the Diné traditional living system which places human life in harmony with the natural world and the universe.

**The Diné Power Authority**

The Diné Power Authority was formed as an enterprise of the Navajo Nation to promote the development of power to utilize Navajo coal. The Diné Power Authority is working closely with Sithe Global Power, LLC to develop the Desert Rock Energy Project. The Diné Power Authority will participate in the ownership of the project. The Desert Rock Energy Project is being developed by Sithe Global Power, LLC with Diné Power Authority (DPA), an enterprise of the Navajo Nation. DPA was established as an enterprise by the Navajo Nation Council to promote the Navajo Nation’s development of energy resources. This project represents a substantial economic development for the Navajo Nation. However, although DPA employs many Navajos, it is also the source of great controversy as noted by the Diné CARE and WEA activism against the Diné Power Authority’s plans.

**Dine College's Uranium Education Program (UEP)**

UEP is an empowerment program for Navajo Native Americans concerning radiation and environmental health issues arising from the legacy of former uranium mining/milling operations and other serious environmental impacts on the Navajo reservation. Uranium mining and milling has left large areas of the Navajo reservation contaminated with abandoned mines, mine waste and mill tailings and associated radiation. There are well-documented problems with lung cancer and silicosis in former Navajo uranium miners, and there is great concern among uranium millers and other Navajos who reside near contaminated areas about late effects of radiation exposure from these sources. There has been growing concerns over various environmental issues and their impacts to health and the environment. A growing partnership between Dine' College - UEP and the local Navajo community, IHS primary care physicians, the Navajo Division of Health, Saccomanno Research Institute of Grand Junction, the University of New Mexico Center for Health Promotion for Rural American Indians, the Northern Arizona University's Environmental Outreach Program, US-EPA, US Army Corp of Engineers, and researchers/scientists with expertise in radiation and environmental health issues will be maintained and expanded to provide information and skills for this minority group. The emphasis in the educational program will be on empowering local Navajo community members to assess information needs, to plan and design mitigation actions to address
these concerns, establish research directions, and to evaluate their educational efforts in their own community with culturally competent modalities. In addition, UEP will strive to establish ongoing community efforts beyond the period of this project.

**The Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN)**

IEN was established in 1990 within the United States by grassroots Indigenous peoples and individuals to address environmental and economic justice issues. IEN's activities include building the capacity of Indigenous communities and tribal governments to develop mechanisms to protect sacred sites, land, water, air, natural resources, health of both their people and all living things, and to build economically sustainable communities. IEN accomplishes this by maintaining an informational clearinghouse, organizing campaigns, direct actions and public awareness, building the capacity of community and tribes to address EJ issues, development of initiatives to impact policy, and building alliances among Indigenous communities, tribes, intertribal and Indigenous organizations, people-of-color/ethnic organizations, women groups, youth, labor, environmental organizations and others. IEN convenes local, regional and national meetings on environmental and economic justice issues, and provides support, resources and referral to Indigenous communities and youth throughout primarily North America - and in recent years - globally.

**The Navajo Area Indian Health Service (NAIHS)**

NAIHS is responsible for the delivery of health services to the Navajo Nation. A major portion of the NAIHS health care delivery system is sponsored by the Navajo Tribe itself, which operates the Navajo Division of Health (NDOH) in Window Rock, Arizona. The NDOH created in 1977, has the mission of ensuring that quality and culturally acceptable health care is available and accessible to Native Americans through coordination, regulation, and where necessary, direct service delivery. The Navajo Nation provides a variety of health-related services in the areas of nutrition, aging, substance abuse, community health representative (e.g., outreach), and emergency medical services (e.g., ambulance). The NAIHS is one of 12 IHS regional administrative units of the Indian Health Service, an agency of the U.S. Public Health Service Department of Human Health Services.

**The Navajo Environmental Protection Commission**

The NN-EPA was established in 1972. In 1995, legislation made the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NN-EPA) a separate regulatory branch of the Navajo National government and charged it with protecting human health, welfare, and the environment of the Navajo Nation. In April 1995, the Navajo Nation Council passed a resolution establishing the NNEPA and approved adoption of the Navajo Nation Environmental Policy Act. This Act provides guidance for the NNEPA in addition to recognizing that a clean environment contributes to maintaining harmony and balance. The mission of the NNEPA is as follows: 'With respect for Dine' values, protect, preserve, and enhance public health, welfare and the environment for present and future generations by developing, implementing, and enforcing strong environmental laws; to foster public awareness and cooperation through education and motivation.'
Save the Peaks Coalition:

On the outskirts of Flagstaff, Arizona lies a sacred mountain called the San Francisco Peaks. It is a place of profound spiritual significance to Dine, Hopi, Apache, Havasupai and others, who consider it one of the four sacred mountains of this region of the Southwest. Native people from around the region come to the mountain to harvest medicinal and sacred herbs, as well as to heal and pray. In 2004, a coalition of Indigenous communities, concerned citizens, agencies, business people, religious and spiritual leaders, skiers, snowboarders, conservationists, students, teachers and taxpayers joined together to prevent Arizona Snowbowl Ski Resort from unnecessary expansion and use of 180 million gallons of “reclaimed wastewater” for snowmaking. This coalition became known as Save the Peaks Coalition and they committed to protecting the San Francisco Peaks. Save the Peaks Coalition advocates for respect and the protection of the sacred mountain by holding prayer vigils and gatherings, raising public awareness, as well as supporting lawsuits by tribes and environmental groups to stop the expansion and snowmaking with wastewater.

Women’s Earth Alliance’s (WEA) Women and Land Initiative:

WEA’s Women and Land Initiative links pro-bono advocates and indigenous women environmental justice activists for timely, collaborative, and culturally-sensitive advocacy in order to halt environmentally-destructive practices, protect human rights, and innovate sustainable resource-use systems that support healthy communities and ecosystems. Through its Advocacy Network, WEA provides expert technical support services to oppose environmentally-unjust projects and to catalyze visionary environmental and human rights policy shifts.
PACKING LIST:

Suggested packing list:

Notes about the list:

- Please note that this list is not exhaustive, so what makes the list we consider important
- Ask questions, no question is silly!
- Because we are renting two vans, please do not bring a suitcase. Bring a duffle bag or backpack

1) Clothing

The average temperature in Albuquerque is around 60 degrees. However the temperature can range from the low 40s to upper 70s. It will also most likely be chilly at night. Suggested items:
- Sweatshirt/Hoodie
- One pair of nicer clothing, including pants
- We will be hiking one day so be sure to bring a pair of comfy shoes
- Clothing in general shouldn’t have bad language/graphics on it
- Simple, nice, plain clothes are best

2) Other

- Sleeping bag and pad
- Towel and Washcloth (as well as any other shower stuff/toiletries)
- Feminine hygiene products
- If you are veggie, snack bars are good to have just in case we are invited to eat where there is not any vegetarian food offered (for the majority of the time we will be cooking though and can make vegetarian dishes)
- Dried fruit, nuts, snacks, etc.
- Powder soy or rice milk (especially if you are lactose intolerant or have a delicate system)
- A journal for reflection and notes during meetings
- Any prescriptions and other medications you take daily (birth control, vitamins, etc.)
- Any medicines that you rely on occasionally (Tylenol, Tums, etc)
- High SPF sunscreen
- Water bottle
- Insect Repellant
- Sunglasses
- Camera
- Day pack
- A bandana
SUGGESTED READINGS:

The following list of suggested readings have been selected by our faculty advisor, Jack Soto

The Navajo Creation Story
—Diane Bagane

Between Sacred Mountains: Navajo Stories & Lessons from the Land
—Sam Bingham

Ecocide of Native America: Environmental Destruction of Indian Lands and Peoples
—Donald A. Grinde

The Tainted Desert: Environmental and Social Ruin in the American West
—Valerie Kueltz

Diné: A History of the Navajos
—Peter Iverson (Editor)

Reclaiming Diné History: The Legacies of Navajo Chief Manuelito and Juanita
—Jennifer Nez Denetdale

For Our Navajo People: Diné Letters, Speeches, and Petitions, 1900-1960
—Monty Roessel (Adapter)

***For listings of other books: http://serc.carleton.edu/research_education/nativelands/navajo/environmental.html

A NOTE ON FUNDRAISING:

The co-leaders would definitely appreciate if anyone wanted to volunteer to be the Fundraising Coordinator. If you are interested in this position please e-mail your co-leaders at:

km6823a@american.edu (Katie), or
amy.gastinger@gmail.com (Amy)

Also, if you would feel more comfortable working with others we can put together a fundraising committee. Please e-mail us know if you would like to be part of a fundraising committee.

For individual fundraising there will be a letter writing party for all Spring 2010 Alternative Breaks hosted by the Alternative Breaks Office. Participants will have the opportunity to write letters to family and friends explaining their trip and to see if anyone might be willing to donate funds towards the trip. The Alternative Breaks office will also be looking into other fundraising options.
ON CAMPUS RESOURCES

One of the best ways to make the most out of your trip is to get as involved as possible with what interests you. Here are some on campus resources where you can learn more about some of the themes of the trip, such as Native American history, culture, relations to the United States government, environmental justice, health, development, etc.

- **Student Advocates for Native Communities (SANC)**
  - SANC meets weekly and puts on both advocacy and cultural awareness events throughout the year. To find out how you can get involved and when their meetings are email sanc.american@gmail.com
  - You can also check out their website, which is a work in process http://sancau.wordpress.com

- **Eco-Sense**
  - Eco-Sense has a very strong presence at American University and is a club committed to environmental sustainability and advocacy.
  - Email: au_eco_sense@yahoo.com Website: www.auecosense.blogspot.com

- **Alt Break Center**
  - Their new office is located on the second floor of MGC 202A across from the GLBT center
  - Hours: Monday - Friday 9 am - 5 pm
  - This is a great place to figure out how to get the most out of this trip. Here you can learn more about getting credit for this trip.
  - www.american.edu/altbreak

- **Community Service Center**
  - The center is located in MGC 273
  - Hours: Monday - Friday 9 am - 5 pm
  - http://www.american.edu/ocl/volunteer/
  - Email: volunteer@american.edu

- **AU’s Native American Films**
  - The link below gives a list of all of the Native American related films in the AU library
  - http://www.library.american.edu/subject/media/american_indian.html

- **WINS**
  - Washington Internships for Native Students also known as WINS is one of the AU Washington Semester Programs for students of sovereign American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian nations and offers the opportunity to build leadership skills while living, studying, and interning in Washington, DC.
  - Jack Soto is the Director and contact for the WINS program
  - To contact the wins program email wins@american.edu
  - http://www.american.edu/wins/

- **CASJ**
  - The Community Action and Social Justice Coalition is a collection of AU clubs that are committed to social justice.
  - They have an office in the basement of the Kay Spiritual Life Center.
  - Email: casj@american.edu Website: http://aucasj.org/
CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Beth Mora
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(Note: Beth will be coordinating the letter writing fundraising project)