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Editor,

My Journey to Standing Rock Reservation:

In November I took a trip to the Standing Rock Reservation in North / South Dakota and brought a load of locally donated items for the protestors in Cannonball, North Dakota who were planning to spend the winter and had sent out request for items to help the protestors winter in. First I'd like to thank all of the local merchants who donated. Rossi's, Mendo Mills and Mason Building supply for the propane canisters used for cook stoves, Fort Bragg Outlet for boxes of clothing and Dog Food, Corners of the Mouth in Mendocino for Vitamins, Out of this World in Mendocino for Kids Toys, Friends of the Library for a box of books, David's Deli for 20# of Coffee and a large bag of Candy, A lady on West Street who had extra coats, Mike Normoyle for down fisherman overalls, Woody's Weld-all for an old water tank that he converted to a trash burner for \$50, Members of the Christian Science Society in Ukiah for donated clothing, Fort Bragg Feed & Pet for dog food, Braggadood Signs & Graphics for their reduced cost magnetic signs for the sides of my pick-up, John and Bonnie Clyde of Salem, Oregon who collected clothing from their neighbors who some went to the store and bought new items and others for their support. Local people were aware of and sensitive of the issues that are being protested, It is water rights, corporations vs people, violations of Native American's sacred land, insensitivity to the environment, greed and mostly government rights vs people's rights.

I would also like to thank all of the local people who donated but were not a part of my load. A couple of those are Thanksgiving Coffee and The Outdoor Store. I'd also like to thank The Outdoor Store for providing a store credit for items I bought for the trip and didn't use and returned well after their return date allowances

I'd also like to thank some people who donated money for gas. The Environmental Center in Ukiah gave me \$200, I had an appointment in a dental office in Ukiah the morning of the day I left and when talking about where I was headed a lady in the waiting room gave me \$40 for gas and on my first night I was at a friend's house and went to a party at his son's house down the hill and one attendee gave me \$100 and another \$20. for gas. People who believed in the cause the demonstrators were protesting about but couldn't take the time to go back. The trip cost a lot more but every dollar helped.

Another part of my collecting efforts, I reached out to Corporate America who have profited greatly from indigenous art and asked for assistance for the protestors at Standing Rock. With the ever present internet, I would send emails to clothing and outdoor equipment suppliers via their contact button on their web page and received a number of replies but nothing in the way of supplies. I sent emails asking for seconds or return items that might help the protestors during winter (gloves, jackets, blankets, etc.). I sent them to Land's End, Sundance Company, Eddie Bauer, Peruvian Collections, Pendleton Woolen Mills, LL Bean and a few others. The responses I got were "we only donate to causes our employees support", or we've donated for this year and will have another round next year or we only donate to 501c non-profit corporations or we are asked by many so get in line. My feelings afterwards were that its giving to people not a non-profit. Its people that do the work to make the corporations what they are

and its people that buy the products these companies produce. Yet when people need something of the corporations they only give it to those who qualify.

I also reached out to a couple of water companies with the same type of emails, Crystal Geyser and Arrowhead because the issue is about the water quality for 10,000,000 residences downstream as well as the other areas I mentioned. I asked that maybe they could send bottled water for the protestors. Again no response.

One person I talked with when I mentioned the water companies he responded that they would profit if the river became polluted and they probably would not respond. I answered that I didn't want to be that cynical.

As I was driving back I thinking about the lack positive response from the corporations who make millions off Indigenous people's art and that maybe a National Native American Organization could file a federal suit requiring that all companies using indigenous art in their products should cease and desist their use of the symbols, motif, etc. until a written agreement is made between the Native American Organization and said company to use their art. I called an attorney friend and asked him if it was a stupid idea or if it is something that can be done just to halt things enough to get corporations thinking about where they get there art and who created it. I know some companies do pay their designers something but as someone in the design field where does one get the design. I would say that more then 70% of the designs reflecting indigenous art come from designers being inspired by museum collections or photos of Native American ceremonies or something else of Native American origin. The original artist are struggling to get by while the corporations using their art openly are making millions. So far no word back from my lawyer friend.

My trip was amazing I got to drive through some of the most beautiful areas of our country. I traveled through the Columbia Gorge crossing the Columbia River at the Bridge of the Gods where legend says was a stone bridge crossing at one time which I think was true with what else I found on my trip. Another story for the future. After the Gorge I traveled at night through Montana where I became aware and was amazed at my pickup trucks performance. It was cold and dry and the speed limit through Montana is 80 mph. I was doing about that when I hit a sheet of black ice. My pickup is a 2009 Toyota Tacoma with a traction control system. It worked amazingly well. I didn't know of its capabilities but that system saved me more often than I deserve thru my trip. At the black ice it reduced the speed of the engine and squatted down and got me through it. At other times I was sideways on solid ice covered roads and it pulled me out of it. Its an amazing system that should be on every car in snow/ice zones but it should also be respected and not relied upon. Excessive speed in any snow or icy condition is not smart. On the road through North Dakota I got distracted by Theadore Roosevelt National Park and then the Enchanted Highway which lead me a back way to the reservation away from where roads were blocked by the authorities. The Enchanted Highway has amazing metal oversize animals that were depictions of those animals sent to us that help us in some manner. There are goats, pheasants, antelopes, grasshoppers, etc at different locations along the highway. They had donation boxes at each location which I was going to use but all of them have the bottom door for access removed and are not in use. Along this stretch I found that I didn't think camping out was a good idea. I had brought camping gear but it was to cold and I'm not as hardy as I thought. In making that decision it came in handy on my next gas stop. At the pumps were a couple of local farmers who didn't seem to like the protest, so I started our conversation saying that I am headed to Standing Rock but that it was to cold and there was no way that I was camping in this cold. That the protestors and police should all go home for Thanksgiving like the troops did in WW1. Their thoughts were that things have gotten out of hand there and people should go home. On my next gas stop before reaching the reservation the people there were both mad about the protestors. The woman felt that in the camps were the greatest

concentration of drugs and alcohol than any other place in the state of North Dakota. She was probably partially correct. They also complained about burning cars and destroying property. We talked about those people are the few that are ruining it for all of the legitimate work that was being done. The media was also playing that part up and was not giving equal time to the people who were the true workers for the cause. Also the man of the couple got so agitated over there being children there not going to school and not being cared for that I had to calm him down because he was shaking so badly. I thought he might go into cardiac arrest. I proceeded on from there to the reservation where I had decided that I would get a room at the hotel next to the Casino close to the protest and find where to place my donations and not really get involved with the front line activity of the protest. When I got to the hotel it was full because many other people thought it was too cold also. After finding no rooms at the hotel, I was at the convenient store/ gas station at the Casino thinking about what I was going to do and telling a man about the hotel being full and another man heard me and said he had an extra bedroom and that I could stay with him. He ended up being one of the tribe elders living three houses down from the chairman of the tribe on Chairman Drive on the reservation. It was an educational stay with him.

The first night a couple from one of the camps came to shower he was Apache and she a Navajo, both were from Arizona and have been camping at the protest since April. She had a 6" bruise on her leg from a rubber bullet shot by the authorities and they planned to stay until the end. The next day I was able to wash my cloths but Poncho the elder said his dryer didn't work. In looking into it he had never had gas and was a little afraid of it. I got it working and showed him how to use it. We also were visited by four Cherokee women which were interesting. They were at another camp on the reservation and were showering and cooking breakfast for everyone. The character of each was interesting. One the oldest was very involved with the movement and had a lot to say, another was a little overweight and on the lazy side, one was young and attractive but was on her cell phone doing stuff most of the time and the last was a caretaker who had a daughter. She was the one who cooked the meal and waited until everyone else was feed and had taken their shower before she took her turn.

Later that day I decided to deliver my goods to one of the camps for distribution. The camp I found was named Sacred Stone. They had real tight restrictions on where to go and no photographing was allowed. I found the place to unload and waited my turn. I started to unload and looked around and they had more stuff than they could get rid of. There was a pile of gloves about 3' high as well as a pile of hats about the same height. They had a tent about 20' x 12' that was full of jackets on hangers. There were no lines of people trying to get stuff. I told the attending lady that I was going to take my stuff elsewhere because they weren't going to get rid of what they had. She said it would be gone in a few days. In looking around no one seemed to need anything that I had. I heard that Warren Buffet had donated \$3 MM to the camps. I also heard that the Post Office was so overwhelmed that they couldn't get everything moved out. There were large piles of packages addressed to the camps that couldn't be delivered because they didn't have the staff to deal with them. A lady who went back from Ukiah said that she worked for two full long days trying to get things distributed but only put a dent in what was there. Anyway I found the reservation distribution center for the Lakota Tribe and gave them my load except for the trash burner that Eli the Apache said that he could use at his encampment. I tried to deliver the burner but was stopped from driving onto the camp because they were shutdown because it was rumored that the police were about to raid the camp. The police were assembling on the hill above the camp which I could see. I started to take a few photos of the place but was immediately told to stop. It wasn't posted as such but I got a few which are included with this.

That day was Thanksgiving with feast being planned at the camps. There were a lot of people driving in the days I was there. It was Thanksgiving Week and therefore a lot of good intenders were showing up. I don't know how well things went. Eli came by later that night and he and I dropped off the burner at his site. Driving into the camp there was a lot of partying going on and a lot of wonder around trying to figure out what to do. Some of the partying was ceremonial with drumming and Native American dancing and friendship being extended. It was not all one big party.

With me I had a copy of the November issue of Smithsonian Magazine. In that magazine is an article about President Ulysses S. Grant. In the article they detail some of the aspects of the reservation established by Grant for the Lakota people and the the war he intensionally started with the Lakota people to take back the Black Hills because of the discovery of Gold and the pressure he was getting from his constituents. The Smithsonian found old records indicating Grant's direct involvement in stealing the Black Hills from the Lakota people. I had the people who visited the elders house read the article and then later the chairman asked for my copy to start another protest in Custer, North Dakota to ask for the government to return the Gold stolen from the tribe. I don't know if that protest has started.

The last I heard of Standing Rock a few weeks ago was that the bitter cold has reduced the population of the protestors to where the encampments look like ghost towns because the portable toilets froze. The protestors are getting composting toilets brought in and will resume the protest as the toilets are established.

The pipeline installation under Obama has stopped but the President Elect has vowed to get it going again once in office.

You can if desired contact the Mendocino Environmental Center for further information.

Thanks again to all of the local people whom have participated.

On a final note, I had some long conversations with Poncho the elder. He had a couple of dreams that he was concerned about. The first was that he saw people falling from the sky which he attributed to the biblical reference of the bad angels being cast out of heaven. My thoughts were that that already happened. A few nights later I saw a program on PBS that showed a group of Lakota men in an army unit that liberated one of the Nazi Concentration Camps where they were throwing bodies onto trucks and maybe he was seeing that. His other dream concerned the water supply for Nestle and Dasani. He said they had move one of there bottling plants to the Bay Area and he dreamt that rats were getting sores from drinking their water. He attributed the contamination to the tsunami debris in the Pacific Ocean from Japan that may hit the Pacific Coast in the years ahead. As a beach debris gleaner myself, I've heard rumors of a mass hitting in 18 months from now.

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