

Protect Sacred Water For The Ojibway

Photography and Story by Danny Beaton

In Tiny Township, Ontario, across the road from where the County of Simcoe is now in the process of draining and raping one of the world's purest sources of water on Mother Earth is the protest camp set up by 5 native women against what is called Dump Site 41. Local farmers, fishermen, native and non-native citizens organized as "Citizens for Safe Water" are trying to convince Honorable Dalton McGuinty and Minister of the Environment John Gerretsen or any one else who will help to STOP this dump site. Scientist William Shotyk, a geochemistry professor at the University of Heidelberg in Germany states in a Dec. 16th Globe and Mail article by Martin Mittelstadt, "It's the best water on Earth. This is an area of artesian wells, where water frequently rises out of the ground under its own pressure. This is kind of like the old growth forest of natural waters."

The machines are roaring and clanking away in the distance as I sit on a pine stump in the clover field across from Dump Site 41, writing. We had just finished a traditional ceremony at our Sacred Fire, led by Leon King (brother of Spiritual Elder Gloria King of Beausolei Island First Nation, sacred Ojibway territory for thousands of years). As a Mohawk, I have witnessed and experienced the healing of the land after feasting on Lake Trout, Whitefish, fresh strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, venison, corn soup and the power of mineral waters from the Alliston Aquifer, which clean and rejuvenate our wounded bodies from Western diets.

Henry Lickers, Environmental Science Officer for the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, says the Alliston Aquifer appears to be one of the most pristine water sources in Ontario. Protected over centuries by forests and natural occurring barriers, this aquifer has survived in this time of industrialization and massive resource utilization. The building of a landfill site on this aquifer does not make

ethical sense. Money, politics, and waste are poor substitutes for pristine water, health, and clean environments. I hope that the Ontario and Canadian governments are extracting very large long-term liability insurances for this site, since the cleanup cost will be enormous when the barriers fail. Building Dump Site 41 on this sacred Alliston Aquifer is shortsighted, foolish, and irresponsible.

Wilmer Nadjiwon of Cape Croker, Georgian Bay, understands the Sacredness of the Waters because his nation survived using the resource of the fish for their very existence. The biggest concern is that the Dump Site 41 is so close to the creeks that run into the rivers that run into Georgian Bay. This should be of interest to every Canadian that depends on Georgian Bay for their drinking water, for their livelihood through sports and tourism activities, for fishing opportunities, for inspiration to clear thinking about what is really important for our welfare on this Sacred Mother Earth. Our children deserve to have a good life for their children and their children. Clean water is LIFE!

Gloria King Speaks Out For Mother Earth:

My birthplace was Midland, Ontario. My parents were Wilson King and Lavina Sylvester. My Dad never had a middle name; he was Podawadami and my Mom was Ojibway. We come from Christian Island; originally my Dad and his family came from around Wisconsin area where the red dirt is. I am here because I come to do Water Ceremonies with the women here. This is my role as an Anishnabia Kwe, to speak for the water and pray for the water. I was told that when I pray for the water it turns to medicine.

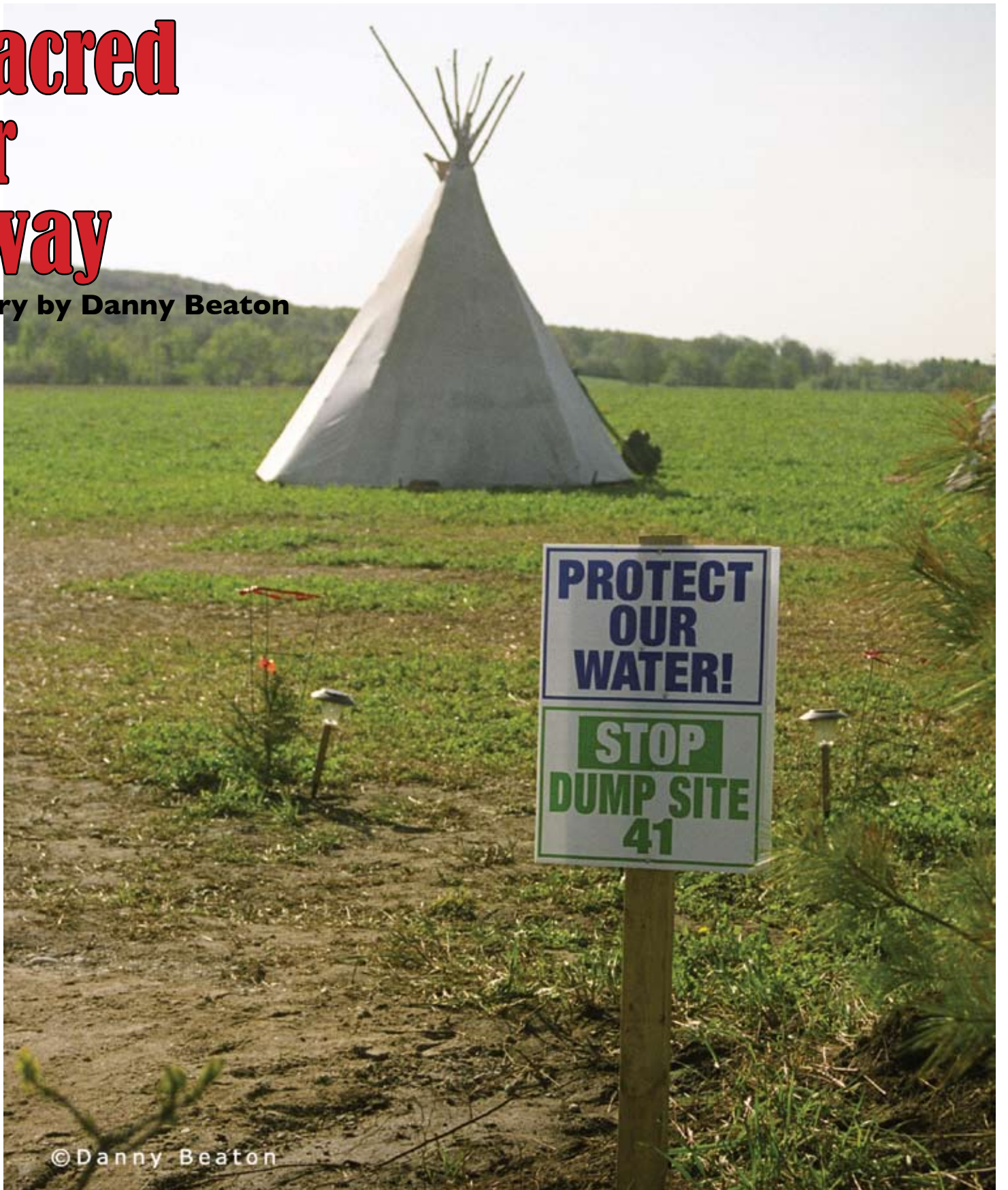
I really love what my niece Vicky Monague is doing here to stop the dump site. I taught her how to care for the Water and Mother Earth. The people who are coming here to join us all care about what is happening—they are coming to protect Mother Earth from harm. When the people first came here they were not at all happy, but through the Sacred Fire and our ceremonies with our Sacred Teachings that we shared, we are changing them into happy people. The youth are changing; you can see a difference. They are looking shinier—they are looking shinier than I've ever seen them. I am very proud of our youth. I am happy they are here helping our camp, helping

with fire keeping, helping with all the chores of making this camp work. I am happy that they can help us protect Mother Earth.

When I was young, we grew up surrounded by water. We would go down to what was known as Douglas Lake, and we would swim all day. Soon as we had something to eat, we'd be gone all day. We'd be swimming like fish all day long. We knew the lake, but we were surrounded by water. We were able to go to the main village and swim off the dock there. Water has been our Life.

In the old days, we could play without worrying about contamination. I truly believe today, if you offer your tobacco, the slime on the water will float away. I have seen it with my own eyes. Our ceremonies are very powerful. Our people have always maintained them. We respect our medicines. We have a way of life with the Creator and Mother Earth by giving thanks throughout our lifetime. This has been passed on to us from our ancestors. I think about my grandmother. We used to haul water a ways down from the road. My Mom and I would be carrying a big washtub in between us and a pail in each hand beside

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us to get it to the house so we could do laundry. I truly believe when my grandmother was younger, she would go down to the water's edge, put her dipper in water and lifted, and they could drink that water.

Today we can't do that, and I'm sorry to see all this happening here. It's such a beautiful place here. If you would ever look at this area where we are you would find we have valleys here, the land where they want to build the dump site is our home, too. It is the home of my ancestors. I hope for myself that this dump site never happens.

We have been told by our prophecies that the water is going to be forever flowing, and I believe that. Being a Water Speaker is being able to see that water, and we as women can do praying for that water, that the Gift of Life that is going to flow through us. This is not good what is happening here.

Most everything we ate when we were little came from the water and the bush. My father used to travel to our three islands here in the winter to feed us. We lived a good life here for many years. The water for us is very important. I myself have diabetes. I need clean water everyday to clean the diabetes out. If I drink our water, it cleans my system out; the more water I drink, it cleans me out. Water is my people's main source, as we make a lot of our juices and teas with it.

Fish is something our people eat a lot of—all the water is so important. Being one who lives by myself and getting older, I cannot fish anymore; my sons bring me my fish now. We have a water treatment plant for many years here, but when I found these surface springs here in Elmvale just across the Bay and down the road, I began to pray for that water, and when I tasted that water it was so good—it was the most beautiful water that you have ever tasted. There is nothing in it to change it; they never put anything in that water to clean that water. It is completely natural water from a natural spring with no pump. It's just pure water; it is medicine for our



Gloria and Leon King, - Ojibway Spiritual Leaders
Photo by Danny Beaton

people. If most of our people drank this water I am sure they would not have much diabetes. This water would clean their system and the sugar would leave their bodies.

Everything grows with water. If you have a garden, you have to spray your plants with water. When the waters come from Spiming up above where the thunders come from, I believe what it does is the Water comes and purifies Mother Earth before we walk there. The sky, the Manados, cleanses you; the water that comes from there cleans you, purifies you as well as your gardens.

When it rains on us or my girls, I know that the Creator is blessing us. He is blessing us with his water—that is what is happening. Rains clean everything and purify everything when we do our ceremonies. That's the way I look at it, before we step on Mother Earth when we're doing ceremonies."

Conclusion from Danny:

We have been camped out across from Dump Site 41 since May 8, 2009. We are watching machines rape the most beautiful farmland and water in North America, and it hurts us deeply. We have decided to protest peacefully without intimidation or violence.

This is a call for all people of Good Minds to speak out for our children's future now. We are all witnessing the mismanagement and rape of our Sacred Mother Earth. We need to organize now with Native spiritual elders to defend what belongs to our children. It is a crime to rape the Alliston Aquifer and Sacred Surface Springs of Georgian Bay. Leachate and contamination will seep into the Alliston Aquifer and under to the Laurentian River, traveling along on top McDonald Creek to the Wye River, into the Wye Marsh, then into the Georgian Bay. This is hypothetical to government analysts. Our fish, berries, cedars, pine, herbs, and our plants and Sacred Springs will become polluted. Possibly our clean air will become toxic. Our traditional native diet, which is all we have left to heal with, will become poisoned, say our elders.

We need support from native studies and environmental studies, teachers and students, using their computers and networks, to pressure the Premier of Ontario Honorable Dalton McGuinty (send email to dmcguinty.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org) and the Minister of the Environment of Ontario Mr. John Gerretsen (send

email to jgerretsen.mpp@liberal.ola.org).

Add your name to our online petition (www.dannybeaton.ca)—over 5000 people have already signed! Anyone willing to help is most important to us. Please Contact National Chief Phil Fontaine at AFN (toll free 1-866-869-6789) to unite all of our chiefs now to stop this eco-genocide to the Ojibway people's homeland. Contact Ontario Chief Angus Toulouse (807-626-9339) for further strategy. Additional contact info is available on the AFN website (www.afn.ca).

Visit our peace protest camp at Elmvale, Township of Tiny, across from dumpsite 41.

For further information about Citizens for Safe Water, contact Mr. Stephen Ogden (705-322-2398 or email stephenogden@sympatico.ca) or Mr. & Mrs. John and Anne Nahuis (email nahuis@csolve.net) or Mrs. Vicki Monague (705-247-2636).

This is why I am here: to support my Ojibway relations and relatives to defend our children's Water. Please help me. Please help us. Your support is needed. Thank you for listening. All My Relations.



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