

# The Longest Walk 2



In 1978, the historic Longest Walk created historic changes for Native America. At the time, eleven legislative bills had been introduced in the 95th U.S. Congress that would have abrogated the Native Treaties that protect Native sovereignty. In response to this, the Longest Walk of 1978 began. It was a peaceful, spiritual effort to educate the public about Native American rights and the Native way of life. The 3,600 mile walk was successful in its purpose: to gather enough support

Thirty years later the walkers, led by Dennis Banks of the Leech Lake Ojibwa Nation, have set out to commemorate the anniversary of the first walk. On February 11, 2008, Longest Walk 2

Native American belief that we are all connected to this earth, and that we are all brothers and sisters under the same sky. This way of thinking has brought many people from all regions of the

Walkers of the plans for them as they made their way through New Mexico.

The Walkers made their way to Sheep Springs, NM and were greeted by Elouise Brown, President of *Dooda Desert Rock*

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to halt the proposed legislation abrogating Indian treaties with the U.S. government.

The Longest Walk arrived in Washington, D.C. on July 15, 1978, with hundreds of supporters, including Muhammad Ali, Senator Ted Kennedy, and Marlon Brando. The eleven legislative bills that threatened Native sovereignty were defeated, protecting the remaining Treaty rights Native Americans possessed. The following month, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) and the American Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 were passed. As a result of the 1978 Longest Walk, Indigenous people were finally granted the right to freedom of religion, a fundamental right now guaranteed to all Americans under the U.S. Constitution.

"In 1978, our communities faced many hardships such as non-existing religious rights and criminalization of our people who fought for cultural survival. This is why the Longest Walk was necessary. As Indigenous Peoples in the United States our environment and our cultural survival are directly correlated and are still imperiled today. This is why we must walk once again," states Jimbo Simmons of the International Indian Treaty Council.

**Thirty years later the original walkers, led by Dennis Banks of the Leech Lake Ojibwa Nation, have set out to commemorate the anniversary of the first walk.**

participants embarked on a five-month journey from San Francisco to Washington, D.C., and are scheduled to arrive on July 11, 2008. Two routes have been mapped out across the United States. The "original" Northern route will travel through the eleven states taken in 1978. The Southern route will travel through thirteen states, including New Mexico. The walk is stopping in hundreds of communities along the way, listening to the plight of local people in their quest to protect their sacred sites, concerns for Native American Rights, and the protection of the environment. A goal of the Longest Walk 2 is to raise awareness about issues impacting our world environment, to protect sacred sites, and to clean up Mother Earth.

While making their way across the country, Longest Walk 2 participants are pulling out their trash bags and cleaning up the roads, leaving it better than they found it. The theme of the Walk is "All Life is Sacred." This pertains to the

world to participate. People from Japan, Belgium, Canada, Alaska, Germany, Poland, Sweden, and Mexico, are just some of the people who were encountered when they passed through New Mexico on the Southern Route.

On Sunday, April 6, 2008, the Longest Walk 2 participants entered New Mexico through the Navajo Nation from Window Rock, Arizona on Highway 264. There in Window Rock, before the sun had risen, the cooks were up and had breakfast cooking for the 150 walkers, readying them to start the journey to the *Dooda Desert Rock* camp-site in north-western New Mexico. The Walkers start each day gathered in a giant circle with a prayer, then go on to discuss route plans, news, chores, needs, birthdays, and any

(DDR), the main opponents to Site Global Energy's proposed coal-fired power plant, Desert Rock (see *Voices from the Earth*, Fall 2007). The Desert Rock site is about 45 minutes southeast of Shiprock, NM, surrounded by beautiful landscape and a few homes. Brown had coordinated a Mother Earth/Father Sky Music Festival at the camp site. By the time the Walk had arrived, there were hundreds of people gathered there. People had come from all over the state to show their support, become educated, and listen to some great music. Dennis Banks addressed the crowd and spoke about their journey from San Francisco, about 1,330 miles and 53 days away. Banks had heard about Brown's fight against Site Global Energy's project that would add a fourth coal burning

information that needs to be heard. At this point, Dennis Banks introduced Thomas Andrews (Diné/Nez Perce), Longest Walk New Mexico Organizer, to the group. Andrews brought supplies donated by Albuquerque supporters, and updated the

power plant to the Four Corners area, and dedicated his support. A huge feast had been prepared for the Walkers as the concert started and rocked Desert Rock.

The Walk then proceeded to Crown-point, where they were greeted by Diné

## VOICES from the EARTH

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# What is the Longest Walk 2008?

The Longest Walk 2008, a 30-Year Commemorative, will begin February 11, 2008 walking five months, 4,400 miles from San Francisco to Washington, D.C.

## WHY ARE YOU WALKING?

We walk to promote harmony with the Earth. We walk for the Seventh Generation, for our youth, for peace, for justice, for healing of Mother Earth, for the healing of our people suffering from diabetes, heart conditions, alcoholism, drug addiction, and other diseases. We walk with the message: *All Life is Sacred, Save Mother Earth.*

## WE WILL CLEAN OUR PATHWAY AS WE WALK?

The Clean Up America Campaign is an effort to clean up our country's highways and roads by collecting debris found along the Longest Walk route. This monumental task will engage Walkers in a global effort at a grassroots level to promote harmony with our delicate environment. Longest Walk participants will carry specially marked trash bags to separate the collected refuse into trash bins and recycling bins. A rotating team of walkers will pick up trash along the way with trash pickers leaving a healthy trail of earth in their path.

## WHO CAN WALK?

The Longest Walk is open to people of all nations and cultures. We ask that you fill out a registration form (go to [www.longestwalk.org](http://www.longestwalk.org)) and abide by the code of conduct.

### Code of Conduct:

- Respect for fellow walkers body, mind, soul and personal belongings
- There is a NO tolerance policy regarding the following:
  - no alcohol, no drugs
  - no sexual harassment
  - no weapons of any kind (knives, guns, mace, pepper spray, etc.)

## HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED IN MY COMMUNITY?

- Volunteer with your local state Longest Walk coordinator
- Support the Longest Walk when they are in your community
- Make a financial contribution or in-kind gift — see our wish lists for much-needed items!
- Start a Clean Up Campaign in your neighborhood!

College students who educated them on uranium issues. "It was extremely important that the walkers learn about the uranium wars that directly impact Crownpoint and Church Rock, both Navajo communities," stated Anna Rondon, AZ/NM Organizer for the Longest Walk 2. Crucial information and stories from the community were shared, and Leona Morgan, a local activist/organizer, provided an overview of the past and present uranium mining projects. Rondon further stated that "A lot of this information will be going into the Manifesto which will be delivered to Washington D.C. leaders, and will serve as a collective voice of indigenous communities that bear the burden of government/corporate industrial

bring awareness, raise funds, and entertain. The committee had support from the community to help plan the event, including support by the SAGE Council, the University of New Mexico's KIVA Club, the Native American Community Academy,

Thomas Andrews, the Albuquerque/New Mexico coordinator said, "This cold weather is a reminder of just how hard it is for the walkers, who will walk through all types of weather across the country for what they believe." As part of the

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La Plazita Institute, the National Indian Youth Council, and many individuals. Volunteers had gathered at the SAGE Council office for weekly meetings to lay out plans on how to care for the walkers

event a community BBQ was held. People brought in their grills and started cooking in the middle of downtown.

The Longest Walk has touched many people wherever they have gone, and in many cases inspired people to give up their belongings and join the Walk. One man, Glen Chalk (Maidu) from Oroville, CA said: "It's been an awesome experience to be out here, seeing all these different people, seeing what their problems are, and how they are making movements to fix it. I want to bring this back to our tribe and show them that if you believe in something, to go for it. I gave up everything: my school, work, car, house. I believed in something, so I went for it. I want to take this back to my youth and show them if they take action, they can do whatever they want in life."

Many people have joined the walk. It has become a large family — with up to 150 people walking, it is a mobile community. Every person has their role, and



Long Walk 2 (Southern Route) marches into the Dooda Desert Rock campsite.




Elouise Brown and Dennis Banks lead the marchers into the Dooda Desert Rock camp.

development." Dennis Banks, during his talks to other communities, continually mentions how we must stop the nuclear industry from further uranium mining.

An event held on Friday April 11, 2008, in Downtown Albuquerque was organized by the Albuquerque Volunteer Committee called Critical Mass. It included musicians, dancers, poets, and local organizers to

once they reached New Mexico. The committee decided to host an event for the Walk and started calling people to help. People responded quickly to help with the walk, with donations of food, clothes, and art. In addition, the City of Albuquerque donated space for the event. Things came together and, despite the cold weather, people came and enjoyed themselves.

is responsible for anything, from scouting the route ahead, to selling t-shirts. In May, while in New Orleans, LA, the Walk stopped for a week to help rebuild homes damaged by Hurricane Katrina. There are Native Americans in the area that still need assistance, so planners added this stop in the itinerary to lend a helping hand.

The Walk will continue into Washington D.C. by July 8th and host a three-day Cultural Survival Summit where they will meet with different leaders and discuss the many issues that are facing Native America, many of which they have seen firsthand. On July 11th, participants in the Longest Walk 2 will march onto the National Mall with supporters from all over the world and deliver their manifesto to the Federal Government. 

— Thomas Andrews

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Longest Walk 2  
[www.longestwalk.org](http://www.longestwalk.org)

Dooda Desert Rock  
[www.desert-rock-blog.com](http://www.desert-rock-blog.com)