



VOICES *from the* EARTH



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Community COLLABORATIONS



Collaboration is a recursive process where two or more people or organizations work together toward an intersection of common goals — for example, an intellectual endeavor that is creative in nature — by sharing knowledge, learning and building consensus. In particular, teams that work collaboratively can obtain greater resources, recognition and reward when facing competition for finite resources.

— WIKIPEDIA.ORG

“This process of exploring, mining and being possessed by the mighty dollar has even corrupted the minds of our leaders that we voted for. The ones that are to be praised the most are the students of Elim that care enough to speak up and want to protect their subsistence lifestyle, for these are the ones that will benefit or be destroyed.”

— FLORA SIMON,
ELIM STUDENTS AGAINST URANIUM



Collaboration is the latest buzzword for what many in the environmental/social justice community have been doing for decades — working together toward a common goal. From a group of neighbors getting together to protect their street, to a group of organizations working together to clean up a community, each are an example of a collaboration. Organizations even collaborate together to push for funding to help their common goals. Collaborations make it clear that there is power in unity.

For many communities and organizations in this issue of *Voices from the Earth*, the goal of collaboration is to have a cleaner environment than already currently exists. For others, it is to prevent the type of contamination that other communities have previously experienced. This issue of *Voices* introduces a new collaboration of groups in New Mexico — the Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment (MASE). The goal is to gather together groups and individuals that have worked on uranium issues, and give them the power, as a group, to influence our government to protect our water and citizenry.

Two participants from MASE, Candace Head-Dylla from Bluewater Valley Downstream Alliance and Laura Watchempino of the Pueblo of Acoma, testified before the Economic and Rural Development Committee of the New Mexico State Legislature. By working collaboratively, MASE has been able to have many voices heard (see pages 3–8).

This type of collaboration is not limited to New Mexico. In Texas, community groups fighting Uranium Resources Inc. are finding new allies. Together they’ve formed the Alliance of Texans for Uranium Research and Action. They are working to clean up their water from past contamination due to *in situ* uranium mining, and to prevent new contamination by protesting new mines (see page 8).

In Alaska, the Native communities in Elim are working together with the Center for Water Advocacy and Southwest Research and Information Center to influence the State of Alaska to make sure their lands are not contaminated by the search for Uranium (see page 9). While in Nebraska, the Oglala Sioux are working with the Western Nebraska Resources

Council and others to oppose the expansion of the Crow Butte uranium mine, and to deal with the contamination from existing mining (see page 10).

Nationally, organizations are working together to prepare for the next round of Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) hearings in November and December. The hearings will be across the country in nine states and Washington, D.C. regarding plans to support the expansion of nuclear power in the U.S. and around the world. Ultimately, the fate of this program will rest in the hands of the next presidential administration and Congress (see page 2).

These are some of the stories that show that collaborations can and do work to bring needed change. 

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