



Global Nonviolent Action Database

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Caledonia First Nations Defend Grand River Territory 2006-2011.

Time period notes: *The actions of the campaign were concentrated in 2006-2010, although the court hearings prolonged until June 2011.*

28 February

2006

to: 8 July

2011

Country: Canada

Location City/State/Province: Caledonia, Ontario

Location Description: *Grand River reserve, Highway 6 as well as Argyle Street. 15km East of Brantford, Ontario.*

Goals:

The Six Nations of Grand River aimed to regain the rights to their land which was un-rightfully sold by the Canadian government to the developers of Douglas Creek Estates.

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 002. Letters of opposition or support
- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention
- 032. Taunting officials
- 172. Nonviolent obstruction

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 183. Nonviolent land seizure

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 183. Nonviolent land seizure

Methods in 4th segment:

- 183. Nonviolent land seizure

Methods in 5th segment:

- 029. Symbolic reclamations › Archeological dig
- 183. Nonviolent land seizure

Methods in 6th segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 004. Signed public statements

Classifications

Classification:

Defense

Cluster:

Economic Justice

Human Rights

Group characterization:

- Six Nations of Grand River

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Dawn Smith and Hazel Hill

Partners:

Not known

External allies:

Caledonia residents in support of the Protesters, Other First Nations groups

Involvement of social elites:

not known

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

- residents of Caledonia

Groups in 2nd Segment:

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

Segment Length: 9 months

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

Developers of Douglas Creek Estates, residents of Caledonia, Canadian Government

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

not known

Campaigner violence:

There was violence taken by the campaigners during the first segment of the campaign. On the 7th of August 2006, both the campaigners and the opponents began throwing rocks at one another. No one was seriously injured.

Repressive Violence:

not known

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

6 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

2 points out of 3 points

Notes on outcomes:

The people of Grand River First Nation were not only granted the rights to their land, but also awarded \$20 million.

During the 18th Century the Iroquois aided the British government to defend what is now known as Canadian territory from the Americans. As an expression of gratitude to the Iroquois, the British gifted to them six miles along both sides of Grand River as a place to never be disturbed; as spiritual land for the people to forever enjoy.

Since then, the Canadian government has been selling portions of the Six Nations of Grand River reserve for commercial use. The Canadian government did not inform the people of the Six Nations of Grand River of these transactions, nor share the profits. After hearing that developers planned to begin construction of a housing development, Douglas Creek Estates, the people of the reserve decided to take action by informing the developers that this land was not the Government's to sell.

The Developers of Douglas Creek Estates had already constructed a project office on the site and the construction was set to momentarily begin. On 28 February 2006, residents of the Six Nations of Grand River erected tents on the construction site to represent their possession of the land in question. Developers demanded in writing that protesters leave by the 3rd of March 2006. The residents remained in the tents. Dawn Smith, a resident of the Six Nations of Grand River burned the written demand.

On 20 April 2006 the Ontario Provincial Police arrested twenty-one people for failure to remove themselves from the land. At this time, protesters in support of the Six Nations of Grand River ignited tires across Highway 6 and Argyle Street to block traffic. Additionally, protesters trespassed into the developer's office and burned all of their documents.

Four days later, the residents of Caledonia demonstrated in support of the developers. Some non-indigenous Caledonia residents were planning to organize their own defense team. The Canadian government advised against this. By early May, both the Premier of Ontario and the Indian Affairs Minister were working with the Caledonian and Grand River residents attempting to resolve the conflict.

Allies of the Six Nations of Grand River maintained the blockades of Highway 6 and Argyle Street. Several traffic accidents had occurred on the back road detours. After a traffic collision on the 16 May 2006, the protesters allowed one lane of traffic to pass through on Argyle Street. The Ontario Provincial Police removed the road blockades entirely on 22 May 2006. The protesters remained on Argyle Street for one full day, blockading traffic with their bodies instead of the tires. Hazel Hill, a resident of the Six Nations of Grand River became a spokesperson for the ongoing protest.

The residents of the Six Nations of Grand River filed a class-action lawsuit against the Ontario Provincial Police to the Supreme

Court of Canada. On 20 June 2010, the Residents of the Six Nations of Grand River began excavating the construction site for historical spiritual artifacts. Through the month of August, the courts recommended that negotiations continue until the protesters agreed to leave the construction site. On 16 January 2007, the residents performing the excavation revealed an ancient burial ground on the proposed housing site.

On 8 July 2011, the Canadian Supreme Court issued a verdict on the case. The Judge Chris Bentley awarded the victims of the Six Nations of Grand River \$20,000,000 and affirmed their rights to the land.

Research Notes

Influences:

not known

Sources:

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