

## **Brainerd Lakers United for the Environment (BLUE)**

### **October 14th Meeting Agenda**

The October monthly meeting will be held in the Fellowship Hall (basement) of the First Congregational United Church of Christ (UCC). The church is located at 415 Juniper, Brainerd, MN 55401 (across from the street from the SW corner of Gregory Park). The meeting will be convened on Thursday October 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. **Note: Masking and social distancing are once again required by the church.**

#### **Old Business:**

- Discussion of the 'Water Protectors' continued resistance to Line 3
- Discussion of the September BLUE/DSA Stop Line 3 vigil held on Saturday September 18<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm in Brainerd at the intersection of Washington and East 6<sup>th</sup> near the historic water tower.
- Discussion of the September BLUE/DSA Stop Line 3 vigil held on Saturday October 2<sup>nd</sup> at 3:00 pm in Brainerd at the intersection of Washington and East 6<sup>th</sup> near the historic water tower.
- Discussion of supporting the Brainerd Area Coalition for Peace (BACP) Adopt-a-Highway cleanup project at 11 a.m. on Saturday October 16<sup>th</sup> for MN #371 near County Road #76 north of Little Falls.
- Discussion of the September BLUE/DSA Stop Line 3 vigil held on Saturday November 6<sup>nd</sup> at 3:00 pm in Brainerd at the intersection of Washington and East 6<sup>th</sup> near the historic water tower.
- Discussion of Honor the Earth's eighth annual "Ride Against the Current of the Oil" held on September 15 through September 26<sup>th</sup>
- Discussion of the Water Protectors protest of Enbridge's sponsorship of this year's Apple Fest in Bayfield WS, and their rally to STOP LINE 5 in its proposed new route across northern Wisconsin.
- Further discussion of the tribal suit for the rights of the entity 'wild rice' to survive and flourish along the route of Line 3.
- Further discussion of BLUE facilitating a 'plastics audit' on or around Earth Day 2022 in support of the Break Free from Plastics Act.
- Discussion to identify possible future BLUE events or actions.

#### **New Business:**

- Treasure's report

Brainerd Lakers United for the Environment (BLUE) held our monthly meeting on Thursday, September 16. The meeting took place online via the Zoom website. The BLUE meeting took place online because BLUE chair Dean Borgeson's truck needed repairs. Dean, Pat Scott, and Doug Olson joined the BLUE meeting.

Meeting participants discussed "Treaty People Walk for Water" participants visiting the Brainerd United Church of Christ (UCC) during the weekend of Friday, August 13 through Sunday, August 15. Treaty People Walk for Water was a walk from Camp Firelight, north of Itasca State Park, to the Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul. The Walk began on Saturday, August 7 and ended with a large Stop Line 3 vigil on Wednesday, August 25 at the State Capitol. Hundreds of people joined the Walk. The Walk demanded Line 3 be shut down immediately and Indigenous treaty rights be respected. Honor the Earth, Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light, MN 350, and many other environmental organizations supported Treaty People Walk for Water. Around 40 to 50 Treaty People Walk for Water participants visited the Brainerd UCC. Volunteers from BLUE, the UCC, the Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, the Underwood Unitarian Universalist Church, and Lakes Area Move to Amend (LAMTA) provided food, prepared meals, and washed dishes while the Water Protectors visited the UCC for food and rest. Many of the Treaty People Walk for Water participants were new environmental activists, galvanized by their opposition to Line 3. A few Treaty People Walk for Water participants came away as far away as Maine, Virginia, and Oregon to join the Walk. The Walk participants were a diverse group in age and ethnicity.

The "Treaties Not Tar Sands" rally at the Minnesota State Capitol on Wednesday, August 25 drew over 2,000 people. LAMTA members and staunch Line 3 opponents Virgie Bundy and Roger Grussing joined the rally. The rally demanded President Biden honor his pledges to protect the environment, seriously address climate change, and respect Indigenous treaty rights by shutting down Line 3 immediately. Meeting participants agreed BLUE will donate \$50 to Honor the Earth and \$50 to the Unitarian Universalist Fund for a Just Society in recognition of their hard work helping make Treaty People Walk for Water possible. After the Treaties Not Tar Sands rally ended, Water Protectors set up teepees on the State Capitol grounds to continue to press their case against Line 3 and remind the public the land once belonged to the Dakota. On Friday, August 27, the Minnesota State Patrol negotiated with the Water Protectors to remove the teepees. After much negotiation and tribal ceremonies, the Water Protectors removed the teepees. The State Patrol arrested nearly 70 Water Protectors on Saturday, August 28. The Water Protectors chained themselves to the gate of the Minnesota governor's mansion. The Water Protectors did this to call on Governor Walz, who refuses to publicly meet with Water Protectors and other Stop Line 3 opponents, for a meeting. Walz refused to meet with the Water Protectors. The State Patrol's heavy-handed arrests of the Water Protectors contrasted sharply with their more patient negotiations the day before. The State Patrol falsely accused the Water Protectors of threatening Governor Walz and his family. The Water Protectors made no such threats. They committed peaceful civil disobedience to get Governor Walz's attention and, ideally, a meeting.

50 Water Protectors, including Brainerd Lakes Area Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) member Basil Harrington, interrupted a speech by Governor Walz at a Democratic Farmer Labor (DFL) Party fundraiser in Alexandria on Saturday, September 4. The Water Protectors challenged Governor Walz' support of Line 3. They questioned why he changed his mind on the pipeline when he opposed building Line 3 while running for governor in 2018. They questioned how he could support Line 3 knowing the climate crisis is in a Code Red stage, according to United Nations scientists, when Line 3 would only exasperate climate change. Rather than address the Water Protectors' concerns and engage them in dialogue, Governor Walz left the DFL Party fundraiser. Video of the Water Protectors peacefully challenging Governor Walz at the DFL Party fundraiser can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sz22mxOyKdl&t=27s>

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) sought to have a lawsuit filed in White Earth Ojibwe Reservation tribal court defending the right of wild rice to grow without being polluted by Line 3 dismissed in federal district court. The judge ruled in favor of the Water Protectors' suit, stating the White Earth Ojibwe Reservation tribal court has jurisdiction in the matter because the lawsuit involves federally recognized treaty rights. The Minnesota DNR is appealing the district court's ruling to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, which covers Minnesota. The case could eventually go to the United States Supreme Court.

Honor the Earth will hold their eighth annual "Ride Against the Current of the Oil" from Wednesday, September 15 through Sunday, September 26. The ride begins at the Welcome Water Protectors Center near Palisade and ends at the Old Crossing and Treaty County Park in Red Lake Falls. The Ride Against the Current of the Oil involves experienced horseback riders, including Honor the Earth executive director Winona La Duke. The Ride Against the Current of the Oil will demand President Biden order the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to perform an environmental impact statement on Line 3 and shut the pipeline down. [The Ride Against the Current of the Oil went well. Photos of the Ride Against the Current of the Oil can be viewed on Honor the Earth's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/WinonaLaDukeHonorTheEarth>]

The Stop Line 3 vigil on Saturday, August 21 went well. Four people joined the vigil. Two of the vigil participants, BLUE members Donna Bowen and Gayle Nielsen, had the opportunity to talk with people who stopped by the vigil to make a strong case against Line 3. Meeting participants agreed bringing Stop Line 3 pamphlets to the Stop Line 3 vigils would be a good idea. Vigil participants could hand out the pamphlets to people who aren't sure why Line 3 should be opposed. People could read the information on the pamphlets and learn more about the environmental harm the construction of Line 3 causes and why Line 3 should not be completed and made operational.

BLUE and DSA will hold a Stop Line 3 vigil on Saturday, September 18. The vigil will be held at the intersection of Sixth and Washington Streets, Brainerd, across from the historic Brainerd water tower. The vigil is scheduled to last from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Signs are available for vigil participants or vigil participants may bring signs to the vigil. [The Stop Line 3 vigil went well. BLUE members Donna Bowen and Doug Olson and DSA members Julius Kapushinski and Holden Hollister joined the vigil. The vigil received mostly positive responses from passing motorists.]

BLUE and DSA will hold a Stop Line 3 vigil on Saturday, October 2. The vigil will be held at the intersection of Sixth and Washington Streets, Brainerd, across from the historic Brainerd water tower. The vigil is scheduled to last from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Signs are available for vigil participants or vigil participants may bring signs to the vigil.

Pat contacted Forestview Middle School science teacher Letitia Laske about her class possibly conducting a plastics audit during the school year. Ms. Laske expressed interest and said she would discuss the plastics audit with other Forestview Middle School science teachers. The plastics audit could be conducted in April 2022, around Earth Day (April 22). Pat has not heard back from Pine River-Backus High School's principle about the plastics audit. The principle expressed interest in the plastics audit when Pat contacted him.

BLUE will invite everyone who signed up on the BLUE sign-up sheet at the BLUE booth at Arts in the Park on Sunday, June 27 to the BLUE meeting on Thursday, October 14. To encourage more people to join the BLUE meeting, BLUE members are asked to bring beverages and wrapped food to the meeting. Hopefully, at least a few of the people who signed the BLUE sign-up sheet will join the October BLUE meeting. BLUE will hold our next monthly meeting on Thursday, October 14 in the Brainerd United Church of Christ (UCC) Fellowship Hall at 6:30 p.m. The Fellowship Hall is in the downstairs section of the UCC. The UCC is located at 415 Juniper Street, Brainerd, near the southwest corner of Gregory Park.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

BLUE Meeting Notes Submitted by Doug Olson