

## One Dish One Spoon

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Minwenzha, a long time ago, our people the Anishinaabe made an agreement with the Haudenosaunee nation, or the Six Nations Confederacy, referred to as the One Dish One Spoon Treaty or the Great Peace of Montreal. The year was 1701. Canonized as an Indigenous law, it describes an agreement for sharing hunting territory among two or more nations. People are all eating out of the single dish, that is, all hunting in the shared territory. One spoon signifies that all peoples sharing the territory are expected to limit the game they take to leave enough for others, and for the continued abundance and viability of the hunting grounds into the future..

This week, I saw a photo of the One Dish, One Spoon Wampum belt. Simple and elegant, the wampum and the treaty remain. That's a teaching, a good one. We all live here, drink the same water, breathe the same air, and basically are eating from the same bowl We are relatives. This week seems to have been one of conflict. As the stakes get higher for the fossil fuels industry, they lash out, individuals who believe their loyalties lie with fossil fuel companies, increase their hating on us. Conflict is all around. We still eat out of one bowl.

Crazy weather, or Mother Earth's response to our poor decision making took a small toll. Cyclone blizzard storms filled with dust picked up in Texas hit northern Minnesota. That dust, or top soil probably came from some glyphosate or fracked oil fields, who knows. That the snow was colored yellow and orangish.

On the green path, a 50 year old fossil fuel legacy is coming to the end. The Navajo Generating Station ( NGS) drained Navajo water and resources and filled tribal government coffers with fossil fuel dollars. Both the Navajo and Hopi Tribe benefitted in terms of tribal revenues from the Kayenta Mine, which fed the 2,250-megawatt NGS power plant, transporting the coal on a rail line. That was then. Due to federal policies, leasing, destruction of Navajo crops, orchards and livestock, about 85 % of the Navajo General Fund comes from fossil fuels. That's a tough act to follow.

Courage and wisdom are a precious combination. In a time of catastrophic climate change, the Navajo Nation did not buy an ancient coal fired generator, and coal strip mine, nor another coal strip mine. Peabody Energy, which runs the Kayenta Mine, laid off 40 employees in late February and is sending its last shipment of coal to the power plant by the end of summer. Peabody Coal filed for bankruptcy in 2016, saddled with a bunch of aging coal strip mines and toxic wastes. Some of those liabilities, the corporation was hoping to sell off to the Navajo Nation. As well, Salt River Project, owner of the ancient Navajo Generating Station was hoping that the Navajo nation would assume liability for the plant. As one newspaper noted," The owners wanted the energy company to take on any known or unknown liabilities for the plant, but the Navajo Nation declined." NGS was used to move Navajo water through a series of canals to cities like Phoenix and beyond. That plan too becomes questionable in a time of water scarcity and

climate change. Navajo Nation Council Speaker Seth Damon said alternative energy, tourism and carbon credits can all help with the loss of jobs.

### **Let the Sun Shine**

They say that hindsight is 20/20. Fifty years of coal, oil and uranium have brought a good deal of revenue to the Navajo Nation, and destroyed large areas of land, never reclaimable. Money and heartache. The Navajo nation, while generating power for New Mexico, Arizona and beyond did not even have power in their own communities. That is changing now.

In 2017, the Kayenta Solar Facility came on line- 27 megawatts of power for Navajo people. This wholly owned Navajo project, is the first-of-its-kind utility-scale solar project within the Navajo Nation.

“The completion of this project demonstrates that the Navajo Nation is ready for large scale renewable energy production,” NTUA General Manager Walter Haase explains. “This is...a gigantic first step toward enhancing the green economy for the Navajo Nation.” “I want to thank the citizens of the Kayenta Chapter for approving this new direction for the Navajo Nation as a supplier of renewable energy,” Kayenta Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown said. “Our community is proud of being the first Navajo community to have a large scale solar energy farm on the Navajo Nation.”

The Kayenta Solar project consists of 119,301 photovoltaic panels on single axis trackers which follow the daily path of the Sun. The plant’s output of 27.3 MW is enough energy to service approximately 13,000 homes. The service life of the plant is expected to exceed 25 years, during which it will generate up to 1,900 GWh of energy. The project cost \$60 million, and was built by Navajo people ( who have more electrical engineers than any other tribe) . Contractor was Australian Solar company Isolax, and the project was up in six months. This power goes to the communities.

With the eminent closing of coal generation on Navajo nation, the largest tribe in the country is poised to move renewables to market on the same power lines which carried coal generation for fifty years.

**One Dish One Spoon. We are counting on you.**