


Wičozani?: Rosebud Reservation's Drinking Water from Mni Šošé

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Wicozani

Wicozani means people who have good health. Our elders teach us that we can't buy wicozani, but we can do our best to attain it by taking care of ourselves and praying for one another. Wicozani is spiritual wealth that comes through living in harmony with all creation. Today, I wish wicozani for each of you. By remembering these teachings and upholding the philosophy of our elders, we can all have spiritual wealth.

- Warfield Moose, Jr., Lakota spiritual leader and author of The Lakota Philosophy of Healing through Song

Wičozani & Treaties

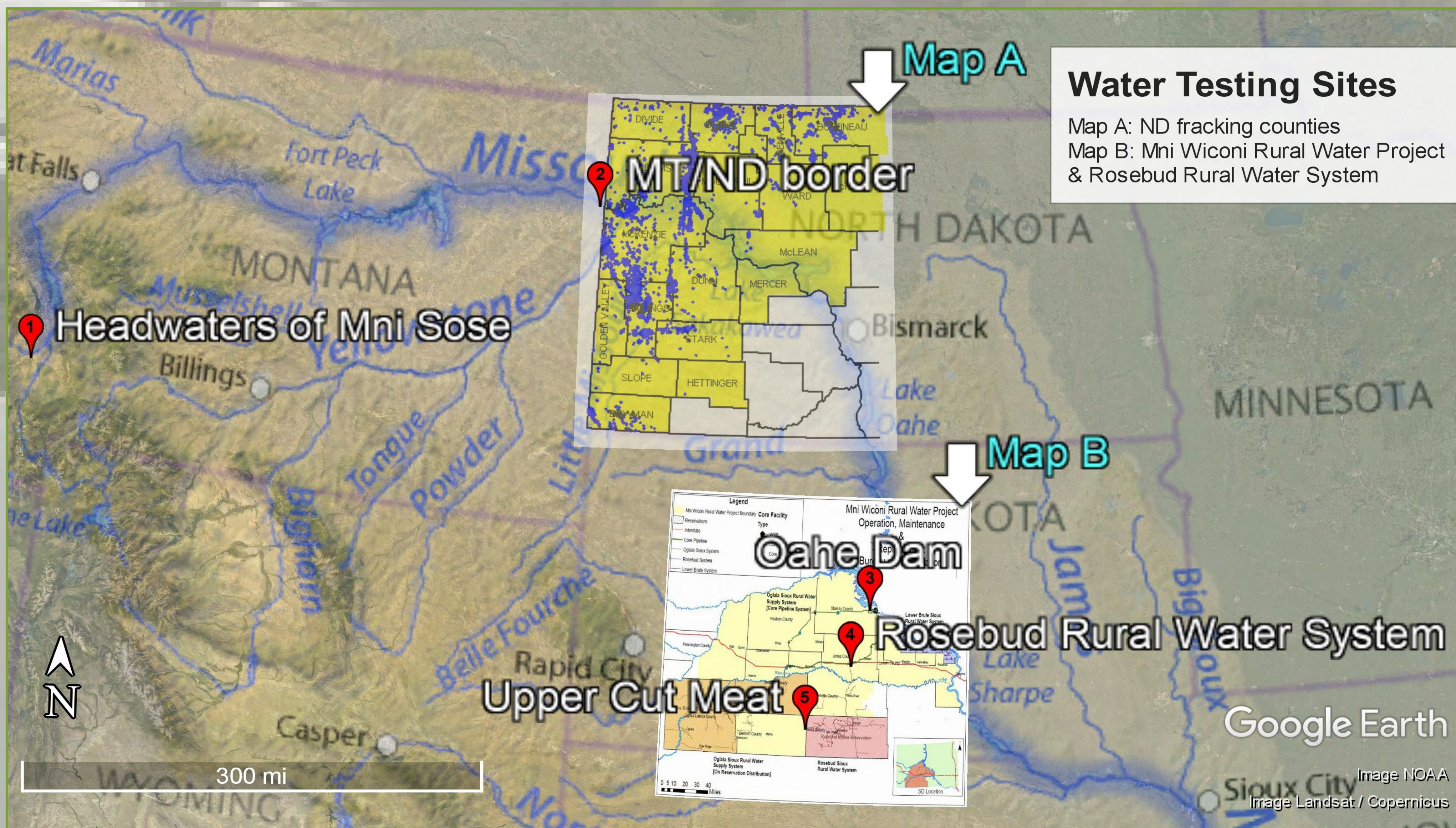
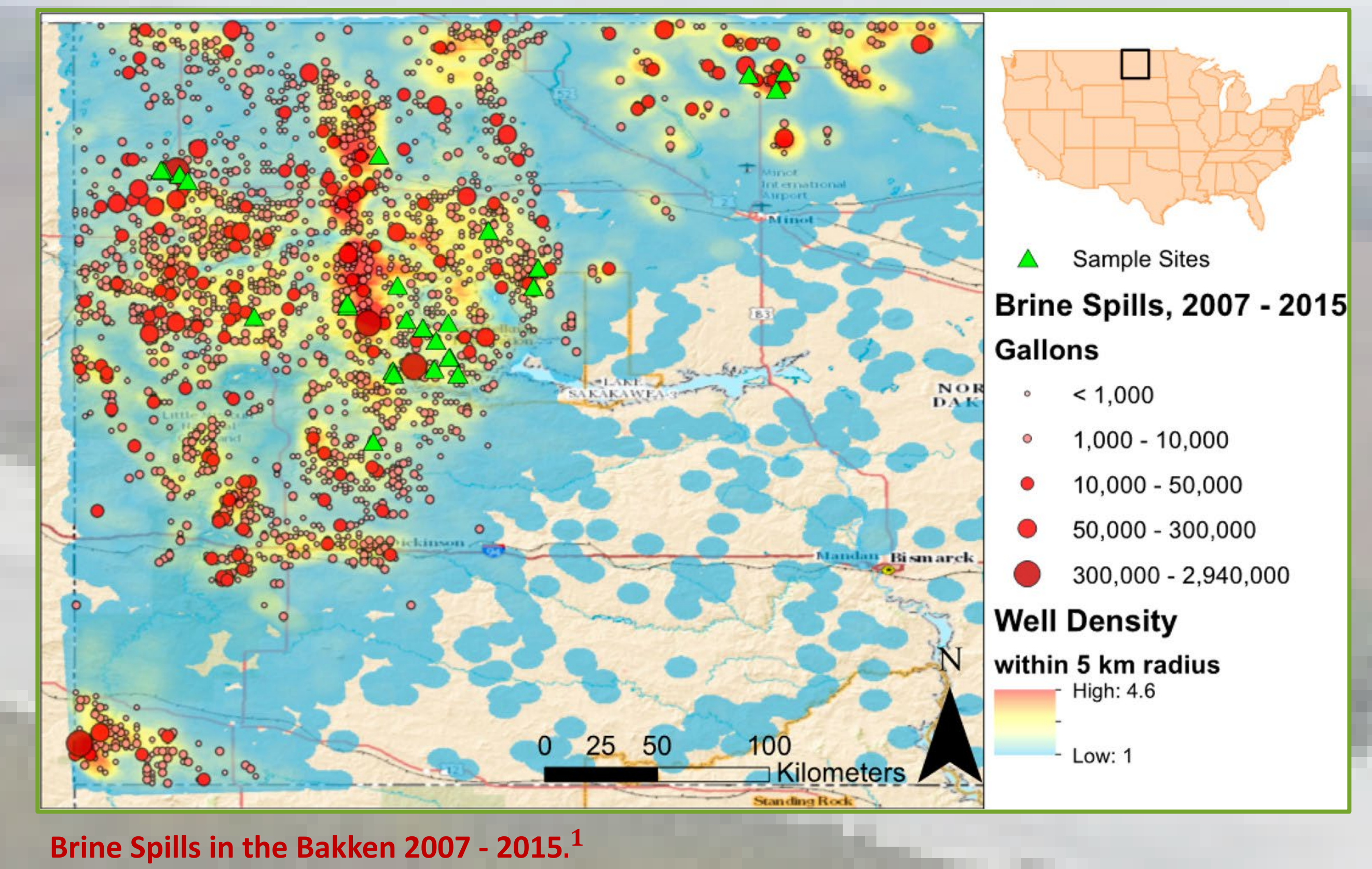
- Mni Wičoni means, "Water is life." Mni Šošé means "Rushing, muddy water" and has provided water to Indigenous people for time immemorial.
- Očeti Šakowin, also known as the Sioux Nation of Indians, have inherent rights, recognized by treaties made with the United States.
- Acts of Congress, such as the Dawes Act of 1877, Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, and the Pick-Sloan Act of 1944, removed bands of Očeti Šakowin from their ancestral lands and forced them onto several reservations.
- These congressional acts also have a direct impact on water quality and the water cycle of Mni Šošé.
- The Mni Wičoni Rural Water Project was authorized by Congress in 1988 to provide clean water to the Lower Brule Reservation, Rosebud Reservation, Pine Ridge Reservation, and central areas of South Dakota, sourced from Mni Šošé.
- Since the early 2000s, Mni Šošé has experienced thousands of fracking brine spills in the Bakken.¹
- See handout for Očeti Šakowin's 1851 & 1868 treaty territories

Research Question

How is the drinking water quality from the Mni Wičoni Rural Water Project on the Rosebud Reservation affected by oil extraction activities along Mni Šošé?

Literature Review

- Očeti Šakowin is not allowed to be the stewards of their territory, as promised in the Fort Laramie treaties.⁹
- When tribes try to protect the environment, there are many barriers preventing them from asserting their voice, such as the complex jurisdictional issues in Indian Country.³
- These exclusions by state and federal entities damage relationships rather than create a collaborative effort between tribes who have treaty rights and the federal government that has a legal obligation to abide by the supreme law of the land.⁴
- Tribal sovereignty enforced through treaty rights should always supersede individual states and private business practices.
- The fracking industry operates on Mni Šošé in the Bakken oil fields of North Dakota.
- Having access to clean water is a human rights issue, not just an Indigenous issue.
- We must protect the quality of life provided by Mni Šošé, turtle island's longest river.



Locations of water testing sites on: Missouri River watershed map,⁵ Mni Wičoni Rural Water Project / Rosebud Rural Water System Map,⁶ ND producing counties.⁷

Methods

This study on the water quality of Mni Šošé, or the Missouri River, will test for fifty dangerous chemicals used in fracking fluid.

- The headwaters site, near Three Forks, MT, will be tested bi-annually to create a baseline.
- The Montana & North Dakota border site will be tested bi-annually because the river does pass through oil extraction activities in Montana.
- The Oahe Dam site, near Fort Pierre, SD, where the intake to the Mni Wičoni Rural Water Project is located, will be tested monthly.
- The Murdo, SD site is the beginning of the Rosebud Rural Water System after branching off the Mni Wičoni Rural Water Project and will be tested monthly.
- The Upper Cut Meat community site is near the western end of the Rosebud Rural Water System on the Rosebud Reservation and will be tested monthly.

Test results will identify how chemicals are present before and after being treated at the Mni Wičoni Rural Water Project's treatment facility in Fort Pierre, SD. Any fluctuations can be compared to data from North Dakota's website for spill reporting from six counties and one reservation fracking on the Missouri River.



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Acknowledgments

Wopila tanka to Lakota elders who continue our stories and to the wakanya who inherit the world.

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