**PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

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**Rally in Solidarity with Standing Rock**

**Scott Park**

**207 E. Springfield Ave**

**Champaign, IL 61821**

**Friday, September 16th from 5:00pm-7:00pm.**

**Champaign, IL-**

“Chaŋtémawašte hípi! Glad you are here!”

On Friday, Sept. 16th, Native American/indigenous organizers and their allies will gather for a peaceful rally in Scott Park beginning at 5pm in solidarity with the Camp of the Sacred Stone at Standing Rock in North Dakota.

The Camp of the Sacred Stone has become the site of one of the largest examples of Native-American peaceful protest in history led by the activism of the Standing Rock Sioux Nation to protect our water and resist construction of a controversial oil pipeline that would cut across the American Midwest and end in Illinois.

Community members in Champaign-Urbana—joining the efforts of over 200 Native-American tribes to protect our water and our environment—call upon their neighbors, friends, and colleagues to join them in standing in solidarity with those protecting our earth.

Over the Labor Day weekend, security guards for pipeline used attack dogs and pepper spray against the protectors in a manner reminiscent of civil rights protests in the 1960s. Last Friday, a federal judge denied the Standing Rock Sioux's request to stop construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline, but the Justice Department, the Department of the Army, and the Interior Department then blocked construction, pending further discussion. The pipeline is desecrating land sacred to the Standing Rock Sioux and putting critical water supplies at risk of contamination. One of the protectors, Barbara Boring (Cherokee) explained, “this situation lends clarity to a remarkable array of issues surrounding care for our beautiful planet Earth and all of the people and other creatures who share it,” adding “The events in North Dakota are an extraordinary example both of capitalist institutions aligned against pro-human, pro-environmental interests, and the 21st century model of how genocide is aimed at Indigenous peoples. This is not a time to stay silent or passive to determine what we do. Come and join the movement instead!”

Nonetheless, mainstream media coverage of these events has been largely absent to date, and most news is being transmitted via social media. Those gathering at Scott Park aim to stand in solidarity with #NODAPL aim to lend their voices to the cause.

Local Native-American and Indigenous organizers emphasize that this event is Native-organized, requesting “our entire community to join us, but honor our request for this to be a Native-led and Indigenous-centered space.” They plan to begin with a schedule of Indigenous speakers, followed by an open mic for all in attendance. “Community, please join us. In our tradition, all our children are our children. Everyone belongs here!”

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