



"As urgent as your
next glass of water."

The Georgia Straight



WHITE WATER BLACK GOLD



A THREE YEAR QUEST FOR ANSWERS ABOUT THE WORLD'S THIRSTIEST OIL INDUSTRY: THE TAR SANDS

**DIRECTED AND PRODUCED BY DAVID LAVALLÉE
NARRATED BY PETER COYOTE**



SCREENING GUIDE

PLAN. WATCH. DIALOGUE. DO SOMETHING.

**LEARN HOW TO ORGANIZE A SUCCESSFUL SCREENING OF WHITE WATER BLACK GOLD,
INSPIRE YOUR COMMUNITY TO TAKE ACTION AND ORGANISE FOR REAL CHANGE.**



This action guide is designed to help you organize a successful screening of *White Water Black Gold* that will empower people to become leaders for a more sustainable future and help us move away from oil dependency. It will spark conversations with different stake holders about:

- a) the Alberta Tar Sands
- b) water pollution from industry
- c) Climate Change
- d) glacier retreat
- e) alternative energy
- f) community health
- g) ecological health
- h) viable solutions
- i) community action and awareness building



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White Water, Black Gold is an investigative point-of view documentary that follows David Lavalée on his three-year journey across western Canada in search of answers about the activities of the world's thirstiest oil industry: the Tarsands.

As a mountaineer and hiking guide, David is on the front lines of climate change. Over the past 15 years he has worked in the Columbia Icefields of the Canadian Rockies, and has noticed profound changes in the mountains: climate change is rendering these landscapes unrecognizable.

When David discovers that his province is ramping up growth in an extremely water intensive industry downstream of his beloved icefields, he is surprised he knows so little about this industry. This necessitates a journey: from icefields... to oilfields.

In the course of his journey he makes many discoveries: new science shows that water resources

in an era of climate change will be increasingly scarce (putting this industry at risk); First Nations people living downstream are contracting bizarre cancers; the upgrading of this oil threatens multiple river systems across Canada and the tailings ponds containing the waste by-products of the process threaten to befoul the third largest watershed in the world. Additionally, a planned pipeline across British Columbia brings fresh threats to BC Rivers and the Pacific Ocean.

White Water, Black Gold is a sober look at the untold costs (to water and people) associated with developing the second largest deposit of "oil" in the world.



BACKGROUND ON THE TAR SANDS

Canada's tar sands are the newest – and dirtiest – frontier of oil production

The price we all pay for this unconventional oil is too high to bear. The development of the tar sands is being driven by the spiraling price of oil, which means enormous profits for oil companies. But pursuing those profits in the tar sands requires everyone else to pay a high price characterized by the loss of investment in cleaner energy, the intensity of environmental impacts in the Boreal forest and the significant worsening of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Canada's Tar Sands are located in the Northern half of the province of Alberta along with some deposits in neighbouring Saskatchewan. Covering a landmass of 140,200 km², or 54,132 square miles, the deposits span a region the size of the State of New York or 2.5 times the size of Nova Scotia. The tar sands are located in the heart of Canada's Boreal Forest, a nearly continuous belt of coniferous trees that extends across the country. Home to a diversity of plant and animal species the region is commonly referred to as "the lungs of the planet," as it is one of the largest carbon storehouses in the world, second only to the Amazon rainforest. The region contains extensive wetlands, including bogs, peatlands and fens. The tar sands region of the boreal forest is the traditional territory of the Dene, Cree and Métis Indigenous people.

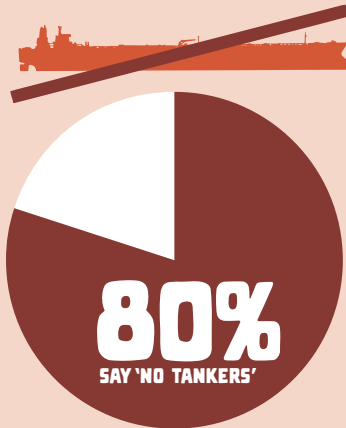
At an estimated 170 billion barrels, Canada's tar sands have put the country on the global oil map, making Canada 2nd only to Saudi Arabia for proven crude oil reserves. Since commencement of oil sands extraction, nearly 40 years ago, extraction of the resource has climbed steadily to the 1.31 million barrels per day in 2008. This figure is expected to nearly triple by 2018. Tar Sands oil is destined for the U.S. In 2008, Alberta exported 1.51 million barrels per day (bbl/d) of crude oil to the U.S., supplying 15% of U.S. crude oil imports, or 8% of U.S. oil demand. As of June 2009, there were approximately 5,012 oil sands (mineral rights) agreements with the Province totaling approximately 82,542 km² (31,870 square miles). This equates to an area that is nearly the size of the state of South Carolina. Close to 41% of possible tar sands areas are still available for leasing.

12 FACTS ABOUT THE TAR SANDS

From the Forest Ethics Website:
<http://forestethics.org/canada-tar-sands-facts>

FACT 1: TAR SANDS AND PUBLIC POLICY

80% OF BRITISH COLUMBIANS
ACROSS ALL POLITICAL SPECTRUMS
SUPPORT AN OIL
TANKER BAN
FOR CANADA'S
PACIFIC NORTH COAST



FACT 2: TAR SANDS AND PUBLIC POLICY

NINE
COASTAL FIRST
NATIONS
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
HAVE DECLARED A
TANKER BAN
IN THEIR TRADITIONAL
TERRITORIES



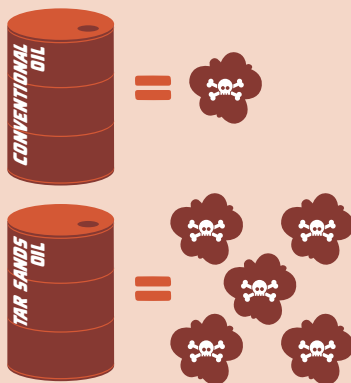
FACT 3: TAR SANDS AND PUBLIC POLICY

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS
AND MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES SUPPORT
KEEPING **OFF THE COAST**
YET: THE CURRENT CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT
REFUSES TO FORMALLY PROTECT IT



FACT 4: TAR SANDS ARE ONE OF THE WORLD'S DIRTIEST ENERGY PROJECTS

PRODUCING ONE BARREL
OF TAR SANDS OIL GENERATES
THREE TO FIVE
TIMES THE GLOBAL WARMING
EMISSIONS
THAT PRODUCING THE
SAME AMOUNT
OF CONVENTIONAL OIL WOULD



FACT 5: TAR SANDS DESTRUCTION IS GROWING

IF EXPANSION IS NOT
SHARPLY CURTAILED,
TOXIC TAR SANDS
OPERATIONS WILL EXPAND
THROUGHOUT AN AREA
THE SIZE OF
FLORIDA



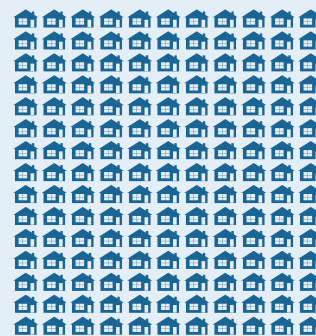
FACT 6: TAR SANDS THREATEN COMMUNITY HEALTH

DOWNWIND AND DOWNSTREAM OF THE TAR SANDS IN ALBERTA (AND NEAR U.S. REFINERIES USING AND PIPELINES CARRYING TAR SANDS OIL), **COMMUNITIES ARE EXPOSED TO CARCINOGENIC CHEMICALS** LIKE BENZENE AND TOLUENE, PLUS HEAVY METALS, LIKE MERCURY AND LEAD



FACT 7: TAR SANDS ARE WASTEFUL

PROCESSING TAR SANDS SLUDGE REQUIRES ENOUGH NATURAL GAS **IN ONE DAY TO HEAT THREE MILLION HOMES**



FACT 8: TAR SANDS IMPACTS ARE GETTING WORSE

THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT PREDICTS THAT **GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM THE MORE THAN TRIPLE IN THE NEXT DECADE**

CURRENT EMISSIONS:

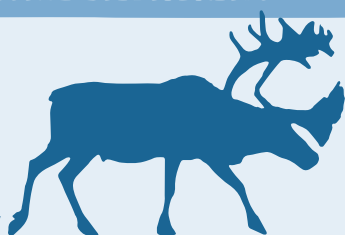


EMISSION ONE DECADE FROM NOW:



FACT 9: TAR SANDS ARE DESTROYING BIODIVERSITY

THREATENED WOODLAND CARIBOU HAVE DECLINED BY NEARLY



50% OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS IN THE TAR SANDS REGION

FACT 10: TAR SANDS SPEW TOXIC WASTE

THE TAR SANDS TOXIC LAKES GROW BY 1.8 BILLION LITRES **EACH DAY,** AND ARE LEAKING DANGEROUS CHEMICALS INTO THE NEARBY SOIL AND WATER.



FACT 11: TAR SANDS EXHAUSTING OUR FRESH WATER SUPPLY

EVERY DAY THREE MILLION BARRELS OF DRINKING WATER ARE LOST TO THE PRODUCTION OF TAR SANDS OIL



FACT 12: TOXIC WASTE FROM THE TAR SANDS IS KILLING OUR BIRDS

CERTAIN BIRD SPECIES HAVE ALREADY DECLINED BY AS MUCH AS

80%



IN AREAS HEAVILY AFFECTED BY TAR SANDS DEVELOPMENT. NOT TO MENTION, TAR SANDS HAVE KILLED HUNDREDS OF WATERFOWL WHO LAND ON TAILING PONDS



A film screening of *White Water Black Gold* can be a powerful tool for bringing people together around the issue of Climate Change and the Oil Industry. Careful pre-planning will ensure that your event has as much impact – and garners as much support – as possible.

While the issue of Climate Change and the Alberta Tar Sands is a serious one, adding some fun elements to your event will encourage more people to come. Consider offering food, door prizes, or a brief music performance by a local musician.

The following are the primary considerations to plan your event and follow-up. See the **Event Checklist** on pages 13 & 14 for a more detailed list of tasks and to help you get organized.

BEFORE THE SCREENING

1. Find Out What's Happening



We suggest that you first learn as much as you can about the Alberta Tar Sands and related actions in your community. You may already have some knowledge and concerns, but it can be helpful to learn more to help clarify your goals and strategy. Find the main people or groups working on Climate Change, Tar Sands or Energy Issues in your area, both in the local community and province/state wide. Ask them what they believe are the greatest needs for improvement and the primary obstacles. Identify the key decision-makers you'll need to try to partner with and pinpoint the most important things people can do to focus their efforts to make a difference.

2. Identify & Recruit Outreach Partners



Ask the groups and people you identify in the first step to partner with you to organize, share costs, promote the film event, and to work with you to tackle the issue in your community. Create a small organizing committee to help with the specific tasks of organizing the event. Also, network with counterparts in other regions or nationally who are already working on this issue, in part to learn from their successes. See the **Selected Resources** on page 19 for national organizations that may have local chapters in your area.

3. Sponsorship



Who your sponsor will be is a smart thing to research and consider in the beginning of your planning process, especially if you hope to host a large event. Know your costs before you seek monetary or in-kind sponsorship. Look to businesses who would benefit from reaching your event's attendees or ones with whom you have established relationships.

4. Financials/Ticket Sales/Proceeds



We encourage you to sell tickets to your *White Water Black Gold* screening. Not only do people value what they pay for, but also even a \$1–2 ticket price will help you recoup your licensing costs. If you bring in more, you can donate the proceeds to one of your local non-profits! For events that will reach over 300 people, contact whitegoldproductionsinc@gmail.com

5. Find a Venue and Date



Depending on your anticipated audience, find an appropriate venue for your screening and pick a date.

Make sure the venue is convenient for people to get to, that it will meet your audiovisual needs, and that it has adequate space. It could be a school auditorium, a local church or synagogue, community center, or even a theater. It's good to allow at least 4–6 weeks to organize an event. So, set a date far enough in advance that doesn't conflict with any other major events. Consider organizing your screening around a national or global climate change related date. "look up Environmental Dates" on the internet and see if there are any upcoming dates that work well with the theme of the movie and your event. Here are some suggestions but there are many more:

International Wetlands Day Feb 2
World Water Day March 22
Earth Day April 22nd
World Environment Day June 8
World Rivers Day (Last Sunday in September)
International Day of Climate Action October 24th

Confirm the duration of your rental agreement (book for at least 3 hrs), request an in-kind donation for some or all of the cost.

6. Register your event



Please e-mail David Lavalée at whitegoldproductionsinc@gmail.com to register your event. There is a fee to screen the film and David will discuss this fee with you once you let him know how many people you hope will be attending.

7. Promote the Event



Create a list of all possible channels for publicizing the screening. Write a short announcement of differing lengths for different publicity channels. Email and social networking sites can be fast, effective, and are free.

- Invite your guests via email, phone or list serve. Send your guests the movie poster
- Use Evite or MyPunchbowl to make an invitation and manage RSVPs in one place.
- Create a Facebook Event (& join our Facebook fan page) and link to our trailers via our press page or our website
- Use tools such as Evite, MyPunchbowl, or download our flyer via our downloadable resources page and send E-Blasts a few weeks before and 3 days before the event
- Send out a text to all of the contacts in your phone that would be interested either 1 day before or early in the morning on the day of. **Sample Text Message:**

Film screening of *White Water, Black Gold* today at Liberty Hall, 7pm! \$4 See www.whitewaterblackgold.com for info. Spread the word and bring your friends. Cheers!

- Tweet about it (@WWBlackGold)
- Put up Flyers 1.5 – 2 weeks prior to the event in highly frequented areas" as a bullet in the 'Promote the Event' section?

8. Plan the Program



Your screening will have the most impact if you do more than just screen the film. You'll want to invite a few people to speak after the film about what's happening locally, what can be learned from the film, and to share solutions. It can also be helpful to plan for a Q&A session with the audience, or small group discussions on focused questions. It's best to limit your event to no more than two hours, or you may lose people, especially in the evening (the full feature is 83 minutes long).

Consider carefully who you will invite to speak. Our experience is that it's best to limit speakers to just one or two so as not to dissipate the energy and inspiration the film generates. It's also important that the program be solution-oriented and that the audience be given specific things they can do. Be selective about your choices.

9. Make Invitee List



Plan to invite the “influencers” on this issue in your community, which includes politicians and energy and transportation planners. Young people play a key role, so be sure to make a special effort to target them. (Note that the film is appropriate for upper elementary students and older.) Consider whether to invite key decision makers to attend or whether it would be better to arrange a meeting with them afterwards to present your proposed changes.

10. Write A Press Release to your local newspaper and other news outlets to get the word out more broadly (example below).



Writing a good press release is the key to getting a large turnout, and the best way to reach a wide audience. To be thorough, and to save time in the future, do an inventory of all of your local media outlets (newspapers, weeklies, radio, and TV stations). You'll then want to go to these outlet's websites and look for their contact page where you can either submit your press release via a form, or an email address which they've set up to receive press releases. You can also email the release to the editor of the most relevant department. Once you've found the right email addresses for all of the local media, you can send out your release via a single email. **Remember to always put the email addresses in the BCC line.**

When writing the release, think of the best way to frame the issue and film event so that the media will want to cover the story. Use the sample below to write yours. Send out your press release one month in advance of the screening (This means you will need to have the Public Performance Rights and all of the event details confirmed by this time – see **Register Your Event** on the previous page). Send a follow up email to news outlets 2 weeks before the event if you haven't gotten a response yet.

If all goes well, you'll get a call from a reporter sometime before the event who will want to interview you. If you miss their call, be sure to call them back immediately, as they are often working on deadline. Sample **Press Release** below:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jane Doe

Phone: (555) 555 5555

Email: JDoe@anywhere.com

Award-winning documentary *White Water Black Gold* comes to <your town>

White Water, Black Gold is a jarring new documentary film on the tar sands following Edmonton Director David Lavalée as he journeys down the Athabasca River and across western Canada in search of answers about the battle between water and oil. The film follows an imaginary drop of water, and later an imaginary drop of oil, unveiling the threats the tar sands pose to the third largest watershed in the world and two separate oceans. *White Water, Black Gold* is a film about the inextricable link between water and oil in our modern world.

“Whether it’s a dam breach that could destroy the third largest watershed in the world (the Mackenzie), tailings ponds that are approaching the size of a great lake, or tanker traffic on Canada’s pristine west coast: it’s clear that our country’s water is in trouble,” said David Lavalée, Director of *White Water, Black Gold*. “Most people do not know that the tar sands impacts actually span half the country.”

Director David Lavalée worked as a hiking guide in the Columbia Icefields for 15 years. He saw profound changes to the mountain landscape as Alberta ramped up growth in the extremely water-intensive tar sands industry downstream. Lavalée’s burning curiosity to find out why took him on a three-year journey across Western Canada that resulted in the production of this film.

“I wanted to make this film to tell the story of water and how the tar sands are impacting an element essential to all life on this planet,” said Lavalée. “I hope that audiences will listen to the voices in this film, to see the impact the tar sands are having and be moved enough to become advocates for an energy future that does not pose such a great risk to our water resources.

The 83 minute feature-length documentary is narrated by American actor, author, director and screenwriter Peter Coyote.

Preview: www.vimeo.com/17123122

Twitter @WWBlackGold

Screening Date:

Screening Time:

Screening Location:

Admission/Suggested Donation:

This event is open to the public.

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For additional information, please contact <Jane Doe> at <your number/email>.

AT THE SCREENING

1. Welcome and Introductions



Assign volunteers to greet attendees as they enter, hand them any leaflets or other materials, and ask them to sign in. **Sign-in Sheets** are an invaluable way to gather data about your attendees that you can later use to keep them informed and prompt their support. In addition to contact information (name, address, email, and phone number), you may ask what skills or interests they bring to the issue.

When it's time to start the event, welcome everyone and thank them for coming. Explain the purpose of the event, the program, and the desired outcomes. Introduce the speakers or panel members, and encourage attendees to stay after the film for a Q&A, discussion, or other program you've planned.

Make sure to highlight the discussion or panel that will take place immediately after the film, otherwise people will leave, as is customary after viewing a film.

2. Pre-Film Discussion



Before showing the film, if there's time, you may want to engage the audience by having them very briefly (5 minutes) discuss a question on the topic. This can help focus their attention and break the ice. A simple way to do this is to have audience members turn to someone sitting near them and share for a few moments their thoughts on a question. Possible questions include:

What brings you here today? What interests or concerns you most about our reliance on oil?

Do you think it's important for our province to take a stand on Albertas Tar Sands? Why or why not?

As they are talking, you may want to listen in on some of the conversations. After a couple of minutes, get everyone's attention again. You might share one or two things you overheard, keeping it very brief. Also, say that you hope the film will inspire more conversation and ideas.

3. Show the Film



Briefly introduce the film as one that provides inspiration for what's possible, as well as a realistic portrayal of the obstacles to change. Encourage attendees to watch the film for concrete lessons and ideas that could be applied to your organizations initiatives. You may want to mention that the film has won a number of awards and has been broadcast across Canada.

5. Call to Action



As part of the discussion after the film, be sure to provide a few specific actions your audience members can take to take action in your community and let them know how they can get involved in the ongoing efforts. For example, you might ask them to call or write to their local representatives, spelling out the key points they should make. You could even hand out materials to write letters or sign petitions at the event. They could have craft nights where they make **Blue Drops** from felt (see page 18). Pinning these to their jackets shows solidarity and garners attention on water issues. You could even have some pre-made ones out at your event.

4. After the Film



Immediately after the film ends, engage your audience. Flip the lights on and turn the volume down as the credits start to roll-to avoid people leaving. Have someone quickly come to the front and guide the next part of your event. You could begin with some Q&A's about the film and then move into your line-up of speakers and other ideas you planned for as part of your screening program. Remember, screening this film is an opportunity to build momentum around your event.

6. Post-Film Discussion Option



If you don't have speakers or a panel, after the film you could ask audience members to discuss and reflect on the film and ideas for your community to engage in to make positive changes. As with the pre-screening questions, an effective way to handle the discussion is to provide focus questions for audience members to discuss with someone near them, or have people break into small groups. A few representatives can share some of their ideas with the whole group. Possible questions include:

What are one or two things you learned from the film that you were not aware of before?

What do you think it would take for our community to move forward on this issue?



AFTER THE SCREENING

After your successful screening, pat yourself on the back! But, also take time to do some follow-up, which will help make sure your event has the desired impact.

1. Plan Next Steps



Convene a meeting of organizers and partners to assess the overall results of the screening event and to plan next steps. Write up the results of this meeting to send to your event attendees and speakers.

2. Pre-Film Discussion



Send 'Thank-You' notes to your speakers, key partners and volunteers. Be sure to point out the impact of the event, their part in making it successful, and your desire to continue working with them for local change.

3. Follow Up with Attendees



A few days after the event, send out an update and survey via email to your attendees. Ask them to provide feedback on the event and inform them of your next steps, inviting them to get involved and identifying one or two concrete things they can do to support your efforts.

4. Share the Outcome with us



Please let us know the results of your screening and your ongoing plans. We've set up an ACTIONS TAKEN page on the *White Water Black Gold* website so the public can see how their actions are contributing to a larger movement around the film. You can see a tally of the actions taken on here: www.whitewaterblackgold.com
Also you can share your stories on our webpage here: www.whitewaterblackgold.com/share-your-story so people can be inspired and also learn from your actions!



4-6
WEEKS

At Least Four-Six Weeks Before

- **Find Partners.** Identify who is working on this issue in your community or province/state, and contact them as possible outreach partners.
- **Clarify Goals.** Identify the outcomes you'd like to see from the event.
- **Determine Budget.** Knowing the financial resources you have to work with will guide decisions about the venue, speakers, publicity, and refreshments.
- **Plan Program & Invite Speakers.** Considering your goals, decide how you will structure the event (speaker, panel, discussion, etc.) and who you will ask to speak.
- **Book Venue, Date, and Time.** Based on your plan for the program and the anticipated audience size, choose a suitable venue. Confirm availability of audiovisual equipment.
- **Make Invitee List.** Extend invitations to key organizations and influencers in your community.
- **Begin Promoting Event.** Use a combination of publicity avenues such as email, social media, newsletters, newspapers, radio, mail, and posters. See the *White Water Black Gold* website for downloadable publicity materials www.whitewaterblackgold.com
- **Plan Handouts.** Think about what information and materials you want the audience to have. Plan for design and printing. A sample handout is available on the *White Water Black Gold* website or the front page of this screening guide.
- **Order the DVD.** Notify David Lavalée of the date of your screening so it can be added to the *White Water Black Gold* website: whitegoldproductionsinc@gmail.com

2
WEEKS

Two Weeks Before

- **Confirm Speakers.** Articulate your expectations and goals for the event.
- **Hand out flyers** (community bulletins boards, events, schools, shopping malls)
- **Plan Refreshments.** If possible, arrange for locally-sourced food or drinks.
- **Test DVD.** Make sure you've ordered the *White Water Black Gold* DVD and tested it in a DVD player.
- **Recruit Event Volunteers.** Make sure you contact potential volunteers to help at the event.



One Week Before

- **Update Promotion.** Send out reminders through emails and social media.
- **Reconfirm AV Equipment.** Consider securing a technician to run audiovisual equipment at the event.
- **Finalize Set-up.** Ensure that you will have necessary chairs and tables, and other set-up needs.
- **Finalize Program.** Determine what will happen when, and who will do what; for example, who will introduce the film, who will speak, and who will facilitate the discussion. Also, identify possible questions to kick off the discussion, if necessary see the FAQ section to start off the discussion.
- **Assign Volunteers.** Get help to buy refreshments, set up the space, set up tables and chairs, greet attendees as they arrive, handle sign-in sheets, and clean up after the event.



One Day Before

- **Assemble Supplies.** Gather materials, refreshments, and everything else you'll need at the venue. Don't forget the DVD of the film!
- **Test Audiovisual.** Make sure equipment is operating properly and the DVD works in the equipment.
- **Remind Volunteers and Speakers.** Confirm arrival times and any other details or assignments.
- **Remind speakers of their topic and time limits.**



Two Hours Before

- **Arrive Early.** Get to the event well in advance and be ready for any surprises.
- **Set Up.** Double check that everything is in place and working. Test out the AV equipment.
- **Signup Sheets & Handouts.** Make sure these are ready and available.



At the Screening

- **"Roll 'em."** Present the film, and carry out your planned program.
- **Have fun!**



After the Screening

- **Decide 'Next Steps'.** Meet with outreach partners to determine the best actions.
- **Send 'Thank-Yous'.** Be sure to personally thank your speakers, panel members, and key attendees.
- **Follow Up with Attendees.** Send surveys and 'Next Step' plans via email.
- **Report Your Results.** Post your event results and lessons on the *White Water Black Gold* website: www.whitewaterblackgold.com

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Here are some questions and information to help facilitate a discussion on the tar sands.

1. WHAT ARE TAR SANDS?

Tar sands are a mixture of sand, clay, and a very heavy crude oil called bitumen, which is tar-like and does not flow on its own. To get the oil out of the ground, trees are cut down, the surface layer is strip-mined, and the underlying mixture is heated with steam in order to make it flow. Because the bitumen is very low quality, it is then processed and refined to turn it into synthetic crude oil which can be used as fuel. Producers reduce the density of the bitumen, generally by diluting it with light, low-viscosity petroleum. Condensate and/or naphtha, a very light oil obtained from natural gas production, are the most common diluents. Bitumen might require as much as 40 per cent dilution.

2. WHERE ARE THEY IN CANADA? AROUND THE WORLD?

The largest reserves of accessible tar sands are located in Northern Alberta, Canada, amidst pristine, untouched wilderness and under millions of hectares of boreal forest. The closest town is Fort McMurray, and there are a number of small communities located downstream from tar sands projects, where residents are suffering from the effects of pollution caused by the tar sands such as Fort Chipewyan. Large tar sands deposits are also located in Kazakhstan, Russia, Utah in the United States, Middle Eastern countries as well as the Orinoco oil belt in Venezuela.

3. WHY ARE TAR SANDS WORSE THAN CONVENTIONAL OIL EXTRACTION?

It takes immense quantities of water, and huge amounts of dirty energy, such as fracked natural gas, to create the steam needed to get oil out of tar sands, and processing and diluting the bitumen requires the use of even more dirty energy such as condensate and naphtha. But exploiting the tar sands goes farther than simply using up water, electricity, coal and natural gas. The air is polluted with nitrogen oxides and sulphur dioxide, water is contaminated with toxic chemicals, and millions of hectares of wilderness are destroyed in the process.

4. HOW MUCH DO THE TAR SANDS CONTRIBUTE TO CANADA'S GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS?

Oil from the tar sands produces five times as many greenhouse gas emissions as conventional oil. By 2015, the oil sands could emit more greenhouse gases than the nation of Denmark (pop. 5.4 million) a greater quantity of emissions than that produced by all of Canada's passenger cars today.

5. WHAT STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT ARE THE TAR SANDS AT NOW?

In 2007 there were over 3200 tar sands lease agreements in place, covering an area larger than Vancouver Island, and governments and the oil industry are constantly working to increase this number. Licenses are in place to divert 349 million m³ of water per year out of the Athabasca River. The area that can potentially be leased includes almost 150,000 km² of boreal forest – an area larger than the state of Florida, and double the size of New Brunswick. Existing tar sands operations produce just over one million barrels per day and these are causing plenty of damage. Up to five barrels of water are needed to extract each barrel of bitumen, and 500 – 1000 cubic feet of natural gas to produce a barrel of crude oil.

6. WHAT DO THE TAR SANDS MEAN FOR CANADA'S COMMITMENT TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL ON CLIMATE CHANGE?

Canada will be unable to meet its Kyoto commitments if the tar sands continue to operate. We need to reduce our emissions by about 280 million tonnes per year in order to meet Kyoto requirements. The tar sands are emitting over 40 million tonnes of greenhouse gases per year making it impossible to live up to our Kyoto commitments.

7. WHY IS CANADA EXPLOITING THE TAR SANDS NOW? DO WE NEED THE ENERGY?

Most of the oil produced by the tar sands goes to the United States. Americans appreciate having a "secure" source of energy on the North American continent so that they can attempt to reduce their dependence on oil from the Middle East. We don't really need the energy, but because of our inefficient transportation systems we sure use up a lot of it! Canada could have exploited the tar sands a long time ago, but chose not to because oil prices were low and production prices were high, meaning that oil companies couldn't make very big profits. Over the past few years, oil prices have gone up and technology has changed to allow companies to get the oil out more cheaply. The Alberta government also gives oil companies a huge incentive to exploit the tar sands: low royalty rates that mean the corporations get to keep most of the profits, even though they're destroying land that belongs to Albertans.

8. IS THIS JUST AN ALBERTA ISSUE OR A NORTH AMERICA WIDE ISSUE?

Pipelines are being proposed to bring tar sands crude from Alberta to ports in B.C. Texas, and the East Coast and to bring clean burning natural gas from Alaska and the Northwest Territories to fuel the tar sands. Pipeline already carry crude oil from the tar sands across Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and down into the US.

9. ARE THERE REFINERIES FOR BITUMEN IN CANADA AND THE US?

In Canada there are refineries in Alberta and Ontario that process tar sands crude that contribute to GHG emissions and pose risks to water depletion and contamination. There are over 100 refiners of Alberta Bitumen in the US.

10. THE TAR SANDS HAVE BEEN REFERRED TO AS AN ECONOMIC ENGINE IN CANADA. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR CANADIANS?

- Canada has some of the lowest royalty rates in the world and public subsidies to the oil and gas industry persist, the federal government spends close to \$1 billion annually on subsidies to the oil and gas industry.
- There are long-term economic impacts of tying our economy to finite resource development without collecting the necessary revenues through royalties, taxes and other methods to invest in diversifying our economy, or supporting vital social services and planning for the eventual bust of a finite resource boom.
- Countries like Norway collect two to three times more revenue per barrel than Canadian jurisdictions.
- More than half of the tar sands are foreign-owned, including big oil businesses like Exxon and Shell as well as other countries' national oil companies, meaning energy profits are heading out of our country.

11. ARE TECHNOLOGICAL FIXES LIKE CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE LEGITIMATE REASONS FOR ALLOWING ONGOING TAR SANDS DEVELOPMENT?

- The tar sands produce more than three times as much GHGs as conventional oil production and are the fastest growing source of GHGs in Canada. The tar sands are set to increase from five per cent to 16 per cent of Canada's total emissions by 2020.
- A recent CBC story revealed a government document that says reducing GHGs from the tar sands will be much more difficult than industry and some politicians suggest, "The ministerial briefing notes, initially marked "secret," say "Only a small percentage of emitted CO2 is 'capturable' since most emissions aren't pure enough,"
- Combined, the Canadian and Albertan government are spending 2.5 billion on carbon capture and storage technology.
- We need real limits on carbon emissions and the Canadian Conservative government has not demonstrated any commitment to this with their support of intensity-based targets that will actually allow overall GHG emissions to increase

References:

<http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/recent/tarsandsfaq/#1>
<http://www.canadians.org/energy/documents/dayofaction/Toolkit%20-%20questions.pdf>
<http://www.naturecanada.ca/advocate/bird.html?gclid=CJehsZXMgrYCFc5AMgodJ3MAcg#causes>
<http://forestethics.org/canada-tar-sands-facts>
http://dirtyoilsands.org/thedirt/article/quick_facts

TAKE ACTION

PRESSURE YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS FOR CARBON FRIENDLY POLICIES THAT HELP THE ENVIRONMENT, LIKE FEED IN TARIFFS AND HIGH CARBON TAXES ON THE BIG POLLUTERS

Write to your local Representative:

In Canada: www.parl.gc.ca

In the United States of America: www.usa.gov/Contact.shtml

REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

- Buy energy efficient technology when you need a new dishwasher, refrigerator, computer, or car.
- Shut down appliances and devices like computers and DVD players rather than putting them on standby to save energy and cut down on energy bills. Use power strips to eliminate “wall warts” that consume power even when shut down.
- Switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs to save energy and money and cut down on waste. They last longer and provide the same soft light as regular light bulbs. And the return on investment on compact fluorescent light bulbs currently out-performs the stock market!
- Adjust your thermostat by just one or two degrees and put on a sweater in the winter to reduce your energy use. And make sure window and door seals are tight in cold months.
- Walk or bike to and from work, school, and home. Public transportation is another great way to get where you’re going without unduly harming the environment.
- Carpool and visit multiple destinations whenever you drive.

As well as your primary carbon footprint, there is also a secondary footprint that you cause through your buying habits.

- Don’t buy bottled water if your tap water is safe to drink
- Buy local fruit and vegetables, or grow your own
- Buy foods that are in season locally
- Don’t buy fresh fruit and vegetables which are out of season, they may have been flown in
- Reduce your consumption of meat
- Try to only buy products made close to home (look out and avoid items that are made in distant lands)
- Buy organic produce
- Don’t buy over-packaged products
- Recycle as much as possible
- Think carefully about the type of activities you do in your spare time. Do any of the following cause an increase in carbon emissions? e.g. Saunas, Health clubs, restaurants and pubs, go-karting etc.

www.conservation.org/act/simplesteps/pages/simplesteps.aspx

MAKE BLUE DROPS TO DRAW ATTENTION TO WATER ISSUES

www.bluedrops.ca

'WHY THE BLUE WATER DROP?' STATEMENT:

"We are wearing the blue water drop to show our opposition to the destruction of land and water by unsustainable development projects. Together we can fight against tar sands exports, the building and expansion of pipelines, and the increase of tankers off the West coast. The blue water drop is a visual link to connect us to each other, to the movement, and to the world we are fighting to protect."

To download a printable sheet of this text (8 per sheet), go to http://bluedrops.ca/res/BlueDrop_Sample_Text.pdf

HOW TO MAKE THEM!

Simple: take some blue felt, cut out droplet shapes, and put a safety pin on each one so people can wear them.

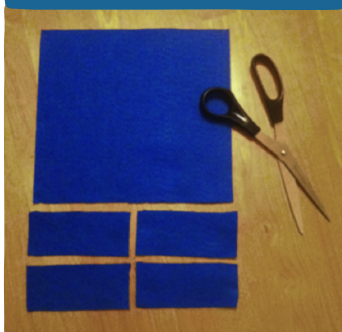
THINGS YOU'LL NEED:

- Blue felt
- Safety pins
- Scissors
- Optionally, a piece of paper explaining the significance of the symbol

Sheets of felt and packages of small safety pins can be bought at craft or sewing stores.

It ends up costing about 3¢ per drop.

STEP 1



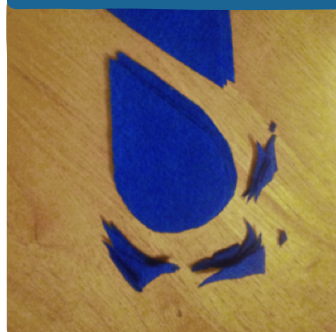
Cut out some narrow rectangles.

STEP 2



Cut diagonally across the rectangles. (You can stack them for maximum efficiency.) One end of the cut should be about 1/3 of the way down the rectangle, and the other end about 2/3 of the way down.

STEP 3



Round off the thick end.

STEP 4



Wear them! And hand them out liberally to anyone else who wants to wear them! If you're going to hand them out, you might want to attach a written blurb (above) explaining the meaning of the symbol and why we wear it.



CANADA

Sierra Club BC

www.sierraclub.bc.ca

Sierra Club BC advocates the responsible use of B.C.'s natural resources while promoting a modern, equitable economy by mobilizing people in British Columbia.

Dogwood Initiative

www.dogwoodinitiative.org

Everything we do is about giving people in British Columbia ways to take back decision-making power over their land and water.

Forest Ethics

www.forestethicsadvocacy.ca

ForestEthics Advocacy Association works to conserve and protect the natural environments of Canada while allowing for their sustainable use.

Blue Drop

www.bluedrops.ca

The blue water drop shows opposition to the destruction of the land and water by unsustainable development projects.

Canada Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) Southern Alberta

www.cpaws-southernalberta.org

CPAW's goal is to provide landscape scale, science-based support and advice for the conservation and protection of Alberta's protected areas and wildlands.

Environmental Defence Canada

www.environmentaldefence.ca

Environmental Defence tackles some of the most critical environmental and health issues of the day. From global warming, to harmful chemicals, to urban sprawl.

Pembina Institute

www.pembina.org

The Pembina Institute advances clean energy solutions through research, education, consulting and advocacy in Canada.

Greenpeace Canada

www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/campaigns/Energy/tarsands/

Greenpeace is an independent global campaigning organisation that acts to change attitudes and behaviour, to protect and conserve the environment and to promote peace.

USA

Bold Nebraska

www.boldnebraska.org

Bold Nebraska's mission is to change the political landscape and to restore political balance.

ClimateMama

www.climate mama.com

ClimateMama is about getting the facts, educating people on global warming and climate change, and taking action to make the world a better place for future generations.

Utah Tar Sands Resistance

www.tarsandsresist.org

Utah Tar Sands Resistance is a grassroots organization of people determined to keep tar sands and tar shale mining out of Utah, and out of the U.S.

Sierra Club US

www.sierraclub.org

America's Largest and most influential grassroots organization.

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