



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE: Women's Water Walk to Begin With Opening Ceremony and Prayer on Sept. 19 at Oquaga Creek State Park

On Sept. 20, There Will Be an Event in Sidney, New York, With Songs by Dar Williams, Bethany Yarrow and Members of the Onondaga Women Singers

BAINBRIDGE, N.Y. — The Women's Water Walk will begin Saturday, Sept. 19, at 11 a.m. at Arctic Lake in Oquaga Creek State Park with a public ceremony honoring water, community and the responsibility to protect the waters that sustain life.

Led by Indigenous grandmothers and rooted in prayer and positive action, the walk was coordinated by the Waterfall Unity Alliance to help raise awareness around the serious threats the proposed Constitution Pipeline poses to the water, land and rural communities in the region.

The Constitution Pipeline is a 30-inch fracked gas mega-pipeline proposed by the Oklahoma-based Williams Companies, which would run from northeastern Pennsylvania to upper Schoharie County, New York. Rejected in 2016 by New York state as a danger to New York's water, the project has returned as a coordinated effort between the federal government and fossil fuel companies that opponents say is an attempt to accelerate the re-permitting process and override New York's previous decision.

"The Women's Water Walk is not political. It's a prayer for our water and a call for us to come together to protect our water, our communities, and future generations. Men are welcome to walk alongside us and support this prayer carried by the women—because ultimately, it is a prayer for all life. It's an honor to walk beside these Indigenous

Grandmothers and the prayers that they and their ancestors have carried on this land for generations,” said **Bethany Yarrow, a Schoharie County resident, co-founder and acting director of Waterfall Unity Alliance and organizer of the Women’s Water Walk.**

The pipeline would cut through 125 miles of forests, wetlands, wildlife habitats and farmland, including trenching through more than 300 water bodies and 82 trout stream crossings. The Women’s Water Walk was organized to alert communities to this accelerated process that has included little to no community consultation.

“If constructed, the Constitution Pipeline would cut right through my property. In the event of an explosion, this puts my family within the 800-foot incineration zone. I have spent years removing invasive species from the forests, planting native trees, and nurturing the meadows here. The thought that this would all be destroyed to build an unnecessary fracked gas pipeline to power AI data centers is devastating. This pipeline would tie our region’s future to fossil fuels at the exact moment we must do the opposite. I am so grateful to every person walking across New York to raise awareness and help protect our water, farms and forests,” said **Tanja Konwinski, a Schoharie County resident.**

The day will open with a ceremony on the lakefront led by Owénn:nakon Sandra Deer and Abuela Kunana. There will be water-honoring songs by members of the Onondaga Women Singers, Bethany Yarrow, Bless the Streets and other singers, artists, organizers and community members who will be joining in prayer and solidarity.

“Water is life. Water is the first medicine. Water transforms, heals, and has memory – and as we walk this journey, I have been reminded that my ancestors loved this landscape just as they loved their children. Owén:nakon Sandra Deer iontiats (my name is). I am of the Bear Clan family (wakskaré:wake). I am a mother, grandmother, great grandmother (Teiokotere’serané:ten), and a Moon Dancer. As a Haudenosaunee, Kanien’kehá:ka (Mohawk) woman, my responsibility is to preserve lands and waters for those “faces yet to come”. This walk is not only to raise awareness regarding land and

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water protection, it is a Prayer that all Water, and its land, be protected and respected for the coming generations as well as the wildlife, plants and medicines that thrive within these natural ecosystems,” said **Owén:nakon Sandra Deer**.

“Water is the blood of our sacred Mother Earth,” said **Abuela Kunanate Nanixitemikimetzli of the New York Moondance**. “It is what gives us life. We are blessed with pure, abundant water, and now we are being called to come together and protect our precious resources.”

Following the opening ceremony, participants will begin walking at 12:30 p.m. The first day’s route is about 7.5 miles long, ending at Butts Road, crossing Masonville Creek.

On the second day of the walk, Sunday, Sept. 20, walkers will cross the pipeline route for the first time in Pine Hill State Forest just outside Sidney, New York, and then head into town, where there will be a welcoming reception open to the public from 3 to 6:30 p.m. at the Mexican restaurant La Patrona at 64-66 Main St.

At the reception, there will be singing with beloved singer-songwriter **Dar Williams**, **Bethany Yarrow**, and **members of the Onondaga Women’s Singers**, as well as a pipeline information session and community discussion over guacamole and tacos, with a special discounted menu offered by the restaurant in support of the Water Walk.

“I want us to come together so that our future generations know that we did everything that we could to protect the food, soil, water and air of this beautiful Earth so they can enjoy it as I did as a child, and I do now,” said **Erin Dudley, a lead coordinator of the walk**. “I hope that you will join us in the Women’s Water Walk, where we can come together to block greed, build community and protect what takes care of us.”

Information about the route, daily schedule, participation, and ways to support the walk is available at womenswaterwalk.org.

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About the Waterfall Unity Alliance

[Waterfall Unity Alliance](#) is a women-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Skóhare (the Schoharie Valley) in upstate New York, the ancestral territory of the Kanien'kehá (Mohawk People). Its mission is to protect Skóhare and all Earth, build alliances across movements and cultures, and help create solutions to the existential challenges of our time. The organization supports projects that restore relationships of reciprocity and respect and uphold traditional knowledge and values as a way of healing the planet and society.

Supporting Organizations

The Women's Water Walk is led by Waterfall Unity Alliance with support from the Center for Oil & Gas Organizing, Center for Earth Ethics, Copal, Frack Action, Sanctuary Earth, Earth Guardians, Riverkeeper, Hartwick College, Nanixitemikimetzli, the Stop the CON Coalition, The Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society, Food and Water Watch, and other partner organizations working to protect the water and communities of New York.