



THE BASE AMONG THE JACK PINE

*a short intro to the largest
national guard training facility in the united states,
and the fight to stop its expansion*

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*compiled by river valley revolt
rivervalleyrevolt.noblogs.org*



Camp Grayling is a Michigan Army National Guard training facility located at the headwaters of the Au Sable River on forests and wetlands stolen from the Odawa, Ojibwe, and Missassauga. At 230 square miles, it is the largest National Guard training site in the country—larger than the cities of Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Lansing put together.

The massive training facility is used by all branches of the United States military, the Department of Homeland Security, police departments, private security forces, and foreign military units.

In January 2022, the National Guard proposed an expansion of Camp Grayling to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. This would add 250+ square miles bringing the total size of the site to almost 490 square miles, twice the size of the City of Chicago.

The military claims the massive land grab is to provide training space for emerging threats, requiring “immersive, multi-domain exercises which integrate land, air, maritime, cyber, and space domains over greater distances than those afforded with Camp Grayling’s current size.”

More specifically, the military wants to expand their “National All-Domain Warfighting Center” which includes the current 230 square miles of training space at Camp Grayling and 17,000 sq. miles of airspace over the Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center. The military rents out facilities at the NADWC at cheap rates to private companies hoping to test war-making technologies. As the domain of space becomes integrated into military actions, the Department of Defense sees an expanded Camp Grayling and the NADWC as ideal for testing new surveillance, weapons, communications, vehicular, AI, robotic, and electromagnetic technologies.

A Camp Grayling expansion is a bet on a future without the Kirtland’s Warbler or the Black Bear. It is a quiet, empty river that gets lower and lower each year until it finally dries up completely. It is a fighter jet that breaks the sound barrier and no one in the forest is startled, because no one is around to hear it. It is a bomb dropped thousands of miles away on relatives we have yet to meet from a sky without birds. It is an escalation by those who make war against those who don’t. We say “fuck no” to a Camp Grayling expansion!

**against all empires
and for the steady streams and rivers
no soldiers in the forest
no space race on stolen land
no camp grayling
stop the military dystopia**

some challenges to fighting the expansion.

1. Even though the project is wildly unpopular, basically only two people have the power to say no to it and they’re the Governor of Michigan and the head of Michigan DNR (two people who are easily bought).
2. It’s a land transfer, not a construction project. Even if we advocated for people locking down to construction equipment, there’s nothing to lock on to.
3. Ridiculously, Camp Grayling is currently identified by certain powerful bureaucrats as a site that conserves endangered species, natural features, and the environment, and thus paper-wrenching in the form of lawsuits, court orders, etc. is unlikely to work.
4. Protesting in Michigan is easily felonized and a lot of people we love have been targeted. This was published in a zine by river valley revolt at rivervalleyrevolt.noblogs.org.

Now that we’ve outlined that, know this: we are committed to fighting the Camp Grayling expansion tooth and nail and we hope to do so in a way that keeps us energized for Line 5 and other shit coming our way. In this small zine, we hope to provide a little context for people who want to fight with us. A longer zine with much more context is available at <https://tinyurl.com/jackpinescreenread>.

This zine will discuss sexual violence, violence against children, destruction of nature, anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, and imperialism.

context: pollution and contamination at camp grayling

The US Department of Defense is the largest polluter on the planet. Since 2001, the military has produced 1.2 billion metric tons of greenhouse gases and accounts for 80%+ of the US federal government’s fuel consumption. It alone consumes more fuels and emits more carbon than most countries. The environmental effects of US military activities worldwide include chemical contamination of soil and ground water, dramatic habitat alteration, pollution, population declines, and biodiversity losses.

Superfund sites are areas of land identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as so severely polluted they need immediate and intense remediation, requiring long-term planning and response to clean up. Of the 1,334 active superfund sites in the country, over half (700) of them are current or former military training sites or bases. Training facilities in particular have repeated and ongoing use which leads to consistent site-specific degradation and contamination.

Here we identify three forms of pollution already produced by Camp Grayling. Please note there are many more than what is covered in this zine.

PFAS are a group of manufactured chemicals containing fluorinated surfactants that are resistant to heat, water, and oil. PFAS chemicals were first found in 2016 near the Army Airfield on the northern half of Camp Grayling. In 2019, the wells of 1100 nearby homes were tested, and 300 of those samples (about 30%) tested positive for PFAS. As recently as 2021, stormwater runoff from Camp Grayling was found to have a PFAS level of 439 parts per trillion (ppt), over 6 times the EPA guidelines.

PFAS do not break down in the environment. Instead, they move through soils and contaminate groundwater. They bioaccumulate, meaning they build up in the blood and organs of wildlife and human populations. The military still owns the patent for the type of PFAS contaminating the earth near Camp Grayling.

one of the major PFAS contaminants at Camp Grayling is used in part to stop jet fuel fires and slow jet fuel spills - and jet fuel fires/spills are also major environmental contaminants. The two main types of jet fuel used by the US Military are JP-5 and JP-8, both of which contain chemicals that move from the soil into ground water, attach to other particles, then sink down into the sediment. The exact impact of these fuels on the environment isn't fully known, but research suggests that when spilled, both JP-5 and JP-8 will be detectable in soil for decades.

Jet fuel accounts for 70% of operational energy use by the US Military. The US Military's main source for jet fuel is Repsol, a Spanish multinational that touts itself as an environmentally-friendly petrol company (things that make you go hmm...) but has drilled dozens of oil wells in the Peruvian rainforest, impacting many Indigenous communities including Aymara, Quechua, Shipibo-Conibo, Aguaruna, Machiguenga, and Yagua people.

The impacts of war are far-reaching, and the sound of war is no different. Increases in electromagnetic radiation and noise (like sonic booms and jet aircraft noises) can lead to adverse physiological and behavioral changes to wildlife and plants, like stress, reduced fertility, and impaired ability to find food, water, or shelter. These are serious threats to the long-term survival of eco-systems of Camp Grayling.

For the human population, the reminder of wartime is pervasive. Whether it's hearing gunshots and explosions when you're camping, or seeing fighter jets over the rivers and humvees in town, the influence of military in this area is impossible to ignore and immeasurable on the psyche.

context: "conservationists" sold out forests and wetlands

In Michigan, state natural resources funding has been tied to oil and gas leases. How did that happen and how is it related to Camp Grayling?

In 1968, Shell Energy drilled seven separate exploratory wells in Northern Lower Michigan in Kalkaska and Otsego counties. In 1970 Shell announced it had discovered a major gas reserve in the area now known as the Pigeon River State Forest (northeast of the proposed CG expansion). This was met with protest from conservationists who completely opposed any drilling in the big forests of Northern Lower Michigan.

After years of conservation efforts against oil and gas exploration, Tom Washington, director of the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, conceded with the Michigan Oil and Gas Association to continue drilling in the Pigeon River State Forest. In exchange, the revenue created by oil leases and royalties would be used to buy more lands for so-called sportsmen to use, and in 1976, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund was created. Money was quickly used to purchase 70 miles of river frontage and more than 25,000 acres along the Au Sable and the Manistee, part of the proposed expansion area.

The current Camp Grayling boundaries include significant oil fields in the southern area near an artillery shelling range. These fields are operated by BreitBurn Energy Partners. The expansion area "Area 1" includes two more significant oil fields in the area, both currently operated by Missaukee Oil and Gas. New oil and gas permits in this area would have to be approved by the DNR and the National Guard, thus giving the military a seat at the table.

To say there is a history of harm in the US military's hunger for natural resources would be an understatement, and perhaps eludes the purview of this zine.

context: children in prison (cn: sexual violence, anti-Blackness)

Within the current boundaries of Camp Grayling sits a maximum security youth detention center called "Shawono Center School." This facility cages youth ages 12-21 who have been convicted of felonies. The current population is majority Black, despite the Black community of Northern Lower Michigan being very small. The facility has one of the highest rates of sexual assault of any facility in the country, with 27% of the youth reporting SA by other youth or staff.

In 2008, a survey reported 21% of the youth were specifically sexually assaulted by staff.

context: a tiny history of the michigan national guard

Hillsdale, 1964: Mostly white union workers at the Essex Wire Corporation went on strike. In response, Essex hired mostly Black workers from out of town to replace union workers. After a bombing, widespread protests, and a shooting, Governor Romney called in the National Guard to protect the Essex plant and corporate higher-ups.

Benton Harbor, 1966: Over 300 Black youth gathered to protest racial violence from white police officers and white residents. The youth were attacked by cops and riots broke out, lasting several days. Cecil Hunt, a Black teenager, was murdered in a drive-by and a white man was charged (but never convicted). Governor Romney called in the National Guard to suppress the riots.

Detroit, 1967: Detroit Police attempted to arrest 82 Black residents at an after-hours bar. After decades of police violence, segregation, and bureaucratic neglect, witnesses to the arrests fought back with riots. Local and state police were quickly overwhelmed. Governor Romney called in the National Guard, and President Johnson called in the Army.

Everywhere, 1968: After the assassination of Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr., over eight thousand Michigan National Guard troops were deployed to quash protests.

Benton Harbor, 2003: Already reeling from the killing of Arthur Partee in April 2003, people rioted in August after white officers chased Terrance Shurn, a 27-year-old Black resident of Benton Harbor, who crashed and died as a result of the chase. Governor Granholm deployed National Guard troops to aid Michigan State Police, who at this point had acquired their own tanks and other war machines through US military redistribution.

Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, other cities, 2020: After the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, uprisings began nationally. In response, Governor Whitmer called in the National Guard to suppress protests in various cities.

Other notes:

1. Michigan National Guard has also been deployed to suppress protests in other states (Kenosha, WI after the murder of Jacob Blake)
2. National Guard troops from several states train at Camp Grayling, including Indiana and Ohio. These states deploy National Guard at the Southwest Border to terrorize migrants and refugees.

context: line 5 and enbridge

“Line” 5 is actually two parallel pipelines that currently pump millions of gallons of tar sands oil across the Upper Peninsula and then along the bottom of the Straits of Mackinac, a delicate water system that connects Ininwewigichigami to Naadowewigichigami. Enbridge is currently attempting to get permits to construct a vehicle-sized tunnel beneath the straits to rehouse the pipelines and increase pumping capacity. Currently, Michigan’s Governor and Attorney General disapprove of the pipeline and have ordered it shut down; however, Enbridge continues to pump oil with no consequences despite the order to stop. Water protectors know a Line 5 fight is coming.

The lands and waters of Camp Grayling and the Straits of Mackinac were colonized/occupied under the same treaties, and Line 5 and Camp Grayling both violate treaty rights that were promised to Indigenous people.

During the fight against Line 3, Enbridge paid for new gear, overtime wages, and even training for officers to deal with protestors. A multi-agency “fusion center” was established just to fight water protectors, which had elements of local law enforcement, FBI, Border Patrol, National Guard, and private security. It is not a far stretch to say that Enbridge would pay for training at Camp Grayling, with or without the expansion.

connected; decentralized.

When we say we are decentralized, we essentially mean that our tactics and paths of resistance are self-determined, unpoliced, and diverse. Everyone is encouraged to plug in. We hope folks can rebel boldly and creatively within their skills and interests; taking action with the folks they know and trust. We don’t have leadership, we don’t ask each other for permission to do things. We share feedback, but we don’t need to agree on everything! At the end of the day you will do what suits you and I will do what suits me.

We are going to try our best to make as much information and as many resources as possible available to each person who wishes to resist in this movement. We are not a political party, nor are we a well-orchestrated campaign. We are messy, and chaotic, and inconsistent - but this is our strength. No one knows everything, and no one can predict what comes next. The movement is multi-faceted and ever-changing, and you are invited in whatever way you see fit. See you in the woods, friends.

WOW. you made it through this wordy little zine.