

# BREAKING THROUGH THE BS IN DEFENSE OF PEOPLE AND NATURE

## *THE SYSTEM WON'T SAVE US*

The Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) is proposing a national symposium to connect activist movements in the US and unite to care for the earth and end state-sanctioned violence against human communities.

Empowering workers, protecting public health, returning Indigenous sovereignty and land, defunding violence, achieving equity and equality for all, and preserving the environment are interrelated goals that are worthy of a unified effort.

To build power together towards these shared goals, we want to gather together in an accountable space to share strategies and tactics for effectively disrupting capitalism, colonialism, white supremacy, eco-facism, and the patriarchal status quo.

We ask these questions:

- How do we resist the ongoing harms that are caused by our colonial, white supremacist government and the corporations that run it, and what strategies require neither permission nor approval from that very same corporate state, its agencies and courts?
- What can we do to ensure that necessary liberatory movements don't get co-opted by reformists trying to preserve the status quo, when time and time again we see radical transformation neutralized and movements appeased by performative reforms?
- How can we turn to each other to keep ourselves safe when, for example –
  - after 50 years of the Clean Water Act the water in this country is dirtier than ever;
  - corporations can build fossil fuel infrastructure on unceded Indigenous territory with the full and violent support of federal permitting agencies and local police (even while knowing that continued construction of fossil fuel infrastructure will doom us all to the sixth mass extinction); and
  - an incredible nationwide uprising has laid bare the truth that police violence is the sixth leading cause of death for young Black men and that the 180 billion dollars we spend on police and prisons in this country have no positive effect on safety or well-being in communities.

These are but a few of the atrocities in a constellation of injustices that come to mind.

**What are *Your* top priorities deserving of a unified, nationwide strategy for change?**

We want to plan this symposium with the understanding that, while racial capitalism and settler colonialism diminish life for everyone, they act with particular violence against certain identities and communities. To that end, we encourage collaborators led by communities most directly impacted by state-sanctioned violence to bring their own questions, content, and goals for us to explore.

We are asking organizations like yours, to partner with us as we plan this symposium. We are inviting your participation as a co-sponsor, an organizer for a panel discussion, or to participate as a panelist. Your choice.

As a co-sponsor, we are inviting you to join us to organize and prioritize discussion topics, panelists and participants; as well as funding suggestions and opportunities.

As a panel organizer, you would be responsible for putting together a panel on a topic of your choice. This would include submitting an abstract on the panel discussion to be reviewed and accepted by the symposium co-sponsors.

**Let's have an open discussion.**

*How can people, living in their communities and in their natural surroundings, compel others to respect the autonomy and integrity of exploited people, communities and environments?*

*What obligations and duties does every member of society owe in common, so that social and environmental justice can become the norm?*

**Let's create some actionable take-aways!**