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## Permanent Protest Set Up at US Oil Sands Project in Utah



The first tar sands strip mining project in the U.S. is gearing up to start operation <sup>[1]</sup> in Utah, but not without resistance from a group that announced on May 29 that it is setting up a permanent protest vigil <sup>[2]</sup> at the site.

The Canadian company US Oil Sands Inc. <sup>[3]</sup> (USOS) leased over 32,000 acres in the Bookcliffs range in eastern Utah near the PR Spring campground for what it calls the first bitumen mining operation in the U.S. Bitumen is the sticky black substance also known as asphalt, with a viscosity similar to cold molasses.

US Oil Sands plans to dig up huge amounts of sand containing the bitumen and then heat the sand to release the bitumen, separate out the sand, and then use solvents to thin the gooey substance enough so it will flow through pipes and into trucks. USOS got the green light [4] to go ahead with the pilot project from the Utah Water Quality Board in 2012, and then solicited investors to fund the project.

In mid-May, USOS announced [5] (pdf) that its tar sands pilot project was fully funded, and they are purchasing equipment and moving into the operational phase.

## Civil Disobedience

As the project works its way toward fruition, though, it is getting strong pushback from Utah Tar Sands Resistance [6], an environmental group that has set up a permanent protest at the PR Spring site, inside the boundaries of the public land leased for the project.

In an act of civil disobedience last weekend, protesters from the group, which is vowing to stop the project, walked onto the company's 10 acre test site and unfurled a huge banner saying "Climate Justice is Survival: Now or Never."

Utah Tar Sands Resistance plans to maintain a summer-long protest at the site, and is offering tours and camping opportunities to people who want to come to eastern Utah and see what an oil sands strip mining operation looks like, and the damage it does to the environment.



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**Links:**

[1] <http://www.mining.com/utah-oil-sands-project-nearing-construction-49155/>

[2] <http://www.tarsandsresist.org/storm-brewing/>

[3] <https://www.google.com/finance?cid=5796664>

[4] <http://www.desmogblog.com/2012/10/26/tar-sands-south-first-us-tar-sands-mine-approved-in-utah>

[5] [http://www.usoilsandsinc.com/en/news/140514\\_q1\\_press\\_release\\_v5\\_final\\_for\\_release1.pdf](http://www.usoilsandsinc.com/en/news/140514_q1_press_release_v5_final_for_release1.pdf)

[6] <http://www.tarsandsresist.org/>

[7] <http://www.desmogblog.com/directory/vocabulary/16171>

[8] <http://www.desmogblog.com/directory/vocabulary/10154>

[9] <http://www.desmogblog.com/directory/vocabulary/8143>

[10] <http://www.desmogblog.com/directory/vocabulary/13403>

[11] <http://www.desmogblog.com/2014/05/31/permanent-protest-set-u-s-oil-sands-project-utah>