

## Tars Sands Mine And Protestors Resume Activities



Work stopped in eastern Utah last winter at the first tar sands mine in the United States. But now investors and improving oil prices have cleared the way for the project to restart.

The Canadian company, [U.S. Oil Sands](#), idled construction in February on the Tavaputs Plateau. Oil prices had fallen below \$30 a barrel. Now they're close to \$50. And last week the company announced that investors have contributed nearly \$10 million dollars to finish the mine's bitumen-processing plant.

US Oil Sands is using a citrus-peel solvent to separate petroleum from the porous rock. Barclay Cuthbert, U.S. Oil Sands vice president of operations, says the company wants to show that mining tar sands this way won't leave toxic residue and vast waste ponds.

"It's about proving the technology," he says. "It's really going to show people you can produce bitumen in ways that are very environmentally responsive."

Mine operators hope to be producing petroleum by the barrel before next year, but critics

doubt the experiment. They say the mine puts Colorado River tributaries at risk and generates climate pollution.

The group [Utah Tar Sands Resistance](#) is planning a protest campout next weekend. Climate activists in the [Rising Tide](#) network hope their message goes global. One of them is Lauren Wood.

“Just like any other corporation,” she says, “these are zombie projects that always come back to haunt us. And until we make a true stand against dirty fossil fuels, they’re gonna keep coming back.”

Protestors say they’re planning to fight the project all summer by trying to reclaim the mine site with native plants, art and song.