

Six Nations Marks 7th anniversary of Reclamation

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Writers

A small but hearty group of Six Nations people and supporters battled the cold last Thursday to mark the 7th anniversary of the 2006 Reclamation.

Seven years ago on Feb. 28 a group of Six Nations people walked onto unceded Six Nations lands adjacent to Caledonia and reclaimed unceded Six Nations lands that had been slated for a housing development.

That action spurred a summer long protest that erupted after a botched OPP raid in April of 2006 caused thousands of Six Nations people to descend on the land.

But Thursday it was about 24 people who made their way down a slushy Sixth Line Road late to the front

numbered but armed OPP from the site and launch a summer long protest heard around the world.

But Thursday was a day to remember.

The group began the procession down the road without a police escort but were blocked off halfway through by OPP Sergeant Brad Moore. He informed them they needed a police escort to march down Hwy. 6. He then sped away and remained at the intersection of Hwy. 6 and Sixth Line, directing traffic, before stepping out of his cruiser to address the group that was about to head onto Highway 6.

"It would be much safer for everyone involved if we could keep you in one lane," he said. "I'd really like for you to be on the shoulders. That would be safer for



Remembering the 2006 Reclamation of unceded Six Nations lands bordering Caledonia, Six Nations marked the 7th anniversary with no resolution to bitter land dispute in site. (Photo by Jim C Powless)

"I thought we were pretty respectful and diplomatic, for everything that we were going through," she said. "We were getting rocks

"I'm showing the government and the police officers that we're still here," she said. "I think that they're hoping we're going to give up and go home and go to

lives and works in Hamilton. He didn't want to give his last name.

"I couldn't be here the first day when this all happened but I'm here now showing

that's a big, powerful statement we've been making," she said. "I think this is a great anniversary. Every seven years there's a change, so this is a moment



Hazel Hill, HDI speaks to marchers marking the anniversary.



Six Nations people remember 2006 Reclamation that launched a summer long standoff with Canada. ... (Photo by Jim C Powless)

entrance of the former Douglas Creek Estates turned Kanonhstaton on Highway 6 to mark the anniversary.

They walked with flags, and banners and memories floating through the air during the peaceful march.

They set out from what became known as Silverpines Camp on Sixth Line.

The camp marks the spot where about 100 OPP stood shoulder to shoulder blocking Six Nations from re-entering the then housing site during an early morning raid on April 20, 2006. It was that raid that brought hundreds of Six Nations people the protest that morning, eventually escorting out-

everyone involved - the motoring public, and yourselves."

He then added, "There are civil and criminal ramifications for blocking a highway."

The marchers continued down Highway 6, spanning both lanes from time to time making their way to the front entrance of Kanonhstaton.

Jacqueline House was on the site from day two of the reclamation. House, who said she holds a lot of memories from the long, hot summer of 2006, remembers most the positive way in which Six Nations handled themselves.

thrown at us, names hurled at us even our kids were out here and they got to see what we went through. I thought that was a good learning experience for them - maybe not the way it should have been but that's reality."

Resolving the outstanding land ownership question, she says will take time.

"It's going to take a lot of time because we're dealing with sovereignty. We're the ones who are a sovereign nation."

Doreen Silversmith was at the Reclamation seven years ago. Participating Thursday said shows Canada Six Nations won't be forgotten.

bed and I don't think so." Silversmith compared the fight at Kanonhstaton to the Idle No More movement.

"Idle No More is fighting for the treaty rights and we're fighting for our treaties, as well. It's a reasonable expectation for all people to rise up, not just us. We're fighting for land rights issues and also the," she said.

A number of Six Nations people living in Hamilton came out to celebrate the anniversary.

"I'm here to celebrate the reclamation of this land," said Chris, who was raised on Six Nations but now

my support."

He said marches show, "That we're still here. We're going to fight for what is ours. And we're proud people. It makes me feel very proud. I have two young children - a four-year-old and three -month-old. I want to show them this is what we do. We stand up for our own."

Hazel Hill, interim director of the Haudenosaunee Development Institute, praised the people for holding onto the land for the past seven years.

"We've demonstrated our strength and endurance at standing up against oppression and colonialism so

of change for our people going into the next phase and who knows what that's going to bring."

She said there wouldn't have been any progress on recognizing Six Nations' land rights and treaty rights had it not been for Janie Jamieson and Dawn Smith leading the people onto the site seven years ago.

"I think the Confederacy has made great strides in making sure that the treaty rights have been respected and recognized," said Hill. "It's been a long road but I always say, it started here. It started at Kanonhstaton. It started with us stopping that development."