

George F. Thompson Publishing, L.L.C.  
217 Oak Ridge Circle  
Staunton, VA 24401-3511, U.S.A.  
www.gftbooks.com

BOOK INFORMATION SHEET (7.18.19)

**Author (as it should appear on the book):** John Willis

**Title:** *Mni Wiconi / Water Is Life*

**Subtitle:** *Honoring the Water Protectors at Standing Rock and Everywhere in the Ongoing Struggle for Indigenous Sovereignty*

**Contributors:** with contributions from Lakota people and allies, a foreword by Terry Tempest Williams, and an afterword by Shaunna Oteka-McCovey

**Partner:** Published in association with the American Land Publishing Project

**Book pages:** 244

**Number and type of illustrations:** 124 color photographs by the author, 11 color photographs of artwork, 5 color maps, 16 color ledger drawings, 6 letters, 1 color painting, and 13 historic documents, drawings, and photographs

**Trim size:** 10.0" x 11.0"

**List price:** \$45.00

**Discount:** Trade

**ISBN:** 978-1-938086-66-3

**Interactive e-book?** No.

**Edition size:** 1,400

**Publication date:** 1 November 2019

**Advances:** 1 October 2019

**To warehouse:** 15 October 2019

**Distributor:** Casemate/IPM

**Bookstore categories (list three):** Photography/Native American Studies/Environment

**Tagline:** A timely and comprehensive look at the protests at Standing Rock!

**Audience:** General readers interested in photography, Native American studies, and the environment, especially land-use decisions regarding pipelines and alternative energy sources.

**Selling points (list three):** (1) Standing Rock made international news for nearly a year, and this is the first full account of that event; (2) Americans are increasingly interested in and concerned by the current and long-standing plight of American Indians everywhere; (3) the struggle for sovereignty of indigenous lands continue, and this book represents an important chapter in a long history of abuse and neglect by the U.S. government.

**Description of the work:**

When the Standing Rock Indian Reservation learned that the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) would pass through and along its sovereign and sacred lands, including burial grounds, the leaders said: No DAPL on Lakota land. This quickly led to a groundswell of support of the movement to relocate DAPL away from native lands and to engender new ways of thinking about energy use and a green future.

From the very beginning, the movement at Standing Rock followed the long-standing Lakota tradition of prayerful, peaceful resistance along the lines used by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the civil rights movement. Tens of thousands of people known as Water Protectors came to Standing Rock from all over the world and from more than 300 Indian nations. For nearly a year, they participated in organized prayerful and peaceful protests that, unfortunately, created conflicts with those in government who did not wish to relocate DAPL away from Lakota land, resulting in more than 800 arrests of Water Protectors.

Standing Rock also became a rallying cry for native and non-native U.S. veterans who came from all over the U.S. to Standing Rock to protest the brutal assault by police on the Water Protectors at Blackstone Bridge on November 20, 2016. The vets came to reject such police action, declaring that they fought overseas to defend and protect the rights of all citizens to engage in peaceful public dissent and protest.

In *Mni Wiconi / Water Is Life*, John Willis has assembled a compelling story—a true mosaic—of what happened at Standing Rock from the perspective of those who were there and witnessed life in the camps and conflicts with authorities. He shares his ever-insightful and penetrating photographs with contributions of art, poems, and commentaries by more than fifty other Water Protectors who were there plus an impassioned foreword by Terry Tempest Williams and contemplative afterword by Shaunna Oteka-McCovey. *Mni Wiconi* is a gift—a *wopila*—to the memory of Standing Rock and the ongoing challenges facing native people.

**Blurbs:**

“Not since the 1973 American Indian takeover of Wounded Knee has an event galvanized and unified the indigenous community and focused attention on the issues facing indigenous people on Turtle Island the way that the 2016–2017 protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) did in North Dakota. Whatever one's stake and opinion is about this pivotal occurrence, we should all agree that it must be fairly and accurately recorded in order that it not be misrepresented or characterized as anything other than what it was: a social, political, and cultural defense of Grandmother Earth by those whose values and philosophies are based on their relationship with her. *Mni Wiconi / Water Is Life* has done that eloquently from the indigenous perspective.”  
—Joseph Marshall III, Sicangu Lakota, and author of *Walking with Grandfather: The Wisdom of Lakota Elders*

“Standing Rock was and is a Selma Moment for us all, a convergence of the power of people facing the power of corporations. John Willis gives a space for our narratives—told through words, music, prayer, and art. We remember it all, vividly. The short-term battle over DAPL was lost to the economics of addiction; the longer-term battle over our reliance on fossil fuels in our future rages on. Through it all we know that Water is Life and what we lived, saw, breathed, and felt at Standing Rock helped us remember what it is to be alive, coherent, and present for the future generations. We should all be grateful for this book.”

—Winona LaDuke, author of *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life*

“Lest we forget, John Willis has created an extraordinary document on Standing Rock, where the Water Protectors initiated a movement that offers a fresh indigenous model for future protests. This is an important book, a striking compendium of photographs, art, and deeply moving commentaries and poems by native activists and non-native allies that reveals the daily workings of the camps and offers spiritual and political incentives to continue the struggle. The images and texts convey the inspirational immediacy of participants' experiences, resurrecting the energy that will continue to spark resistance. Standing Rock was not a failure, as some would have it, but a beginning.”

—Lucy R. Lippard, author of *Partial Recall: Photographs of Native North Americans*

“*Mni Wiconi / Water Is Life* is a gift, as life is a gift—beautiful, tragic, many-layered. The story pays tribute to Standing Rock, and the book is worthy of the story and the legend. The story—in pictures, in honorary relics, and in eloquent words—is told in a way that must be listened to, as the place and struggle must be witnessed. I congratulate John Willis and all those who have participated in this collective narrative.”

—Wendy Ewald, MacArthur Foundation Fellow and photographer

“As this book does, I honor all the Water Protectors. The sacrifices they made at Standing Rock were for all the people now and in future generations. In my mind, the Water Protectors were just like Sundancers, earning appreciation and respect for the great commitment they gave to protect life.”

—Richard Move Camp (*Wicasa Wakan*), Lakota Spiritual Leader

“In *Mni Wiconi*, John Willis along with his contributors bear witness to the sacrifice and spiritual dedication of thousands of people who supported the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's resistance to the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline on sacred and sovereign grounds. This powerful book allows those of us who were not present to appreciate the perseverance of people committed to protecting the safety and sovereignty of an indigenous nation and local community against corporate power. Willis and his contributors honor and preserve the prophetic power of the community that came together at Standing Rock and assure that the community's message will be heard for years to come.”

—George Miles, Curator, Beinecke Rare Book Library Collection of Western Americana, Yale University

“John Willis’s powerful and empathetic photographs from Standing Rock are an essential and unforgettable document that let us all be witness to the injustices perpetrated on indigenous Americans, who, for countless generations, have been the guardians and protectors of their sacred lands and waters.”

—Kevin Bubriski, documentary photographer and author of *Portrait of Nepal* and *Power Places of Kathmandu: Hindu and Buddhist Holy Sites in the Sacred Valley of Nepal*

“As I opened the pages of this book the pictures began to fill my memory with the life that was in the Camp. Remembering faces as I paged through kindled again the relationships that were formed as we chose to make our Stand with Standing Rock. The words on the pages fixed the pictures with thoughts, reflections and focus. This was the Camp. This was a significant part of the movement. As it memorializes everyone that came—it is not simply a record of the past, but a call to continue what was begun.”

—The Rev. Dr. John Floberg, Priest of the Episcopal Church on Standing Rock

(Father John was the one who called clergy of all faith to come stand with Standing Rock. He hoped he might get up to 100 to respond. In the end over 550 came in support.)

**About the Author (use the jacket and catalog version from the Author’s Information form):**

John Willis is Professor of Photography at Marlboro College and a co-founder of the In-Sight Photography Project ([www.insight-photography.org](http://www.insight-photography.org)) and Exposures Cross Cultural Youth Photography Program ([www.exposures-program.com](http://www.exposures-program.com)). He was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in Photography after *Views from the Reservation* was first published in 2010. His photographs are in more than sixty collections, including the Amon Carter Museum, Center for Creative Photography, George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film, J. Paul Getty Museum, Heard Museum, High Museum of Art, Library of Congress, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, National Gallery of Art, National Museum of the American Indian, Nelson-Adkins Museum of Art, Princeton University Art Museum, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Whitney Museum of American Art, and Yale University Gallery of Art. His other books are *Recycled Realities*, a collaborative effort with photographer Tom Young (Center for American Places, 2005) and *Views from the Reservation: A New Edition* (George F. Thompson Publishing, 2019). His Website is [www.jwillis.net](http://www.jwillis.net).

**About the Contributors:**

*Shaunna Oteka-McCovey*, a member of the Yurok Tribe, is an environmental lawyer, writer, and poet, and the

author of *The Smokehouse Boys* (Heyday Books, 2005).

*Terry Tempest Williams* is an environmental activist and the author of fifteen books, including *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place* (Pantheon Books, 1991), *Finding Beauty in a Broken World* (Pantheon Books, 2008), and *The Hour of Land: A Personal Topography of America's National Parks* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2015).