

# 6.11 Summer School: Environmental Justice with Joye Braun

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

carbon credits, communities, summer, environmental justice, happening, carbon, offset, refineries, talking, braun, scheme, credit, called, pipelines, policy, party, hear, important, buying, tree

## SPEAKERS

Jasmine Bradshaw, Joye Braun

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00

You're listening to the First Name Basis podcast, Season Six, Episode 11: "Environmental Justice â€” What in the World Are Carbon Credits? Hello, First Name Basis fam, and welcome to Summer School! Summer School is a series where I will share tips and tidbits that you can be thinking about this summer when it comes to anti-racism. I know that summer is so busy and so fun, and I want you to have everything you need to continue along your anti-racist journey this summer. So some of these tips will be for you, the grownups, and some of them will be for your kiddos, for your students, for any of the children in your life that you want to talk to about race, racism, and anti-racism. So let's get our summer on and learn together in Summer School. Hello, First Name Basis fam, I am so glad you are here. Welcome to our very first episode of Summer School! I'm super excited for this new series that we have to share with you. Today we are talking about environmental justice, and we are going to be discussing carbon credits. Now, what you're going to hear is actually a little clip that we have taken from one of our Policy Parties. So every other month â€” we're taking a break for the summer because I am moving across the country, but we will start up again in the fall â€” every other month we have a Policy Party where we will invite an expert from the community to come and share with us and teach us all about the policies that are directly affecting the communities that we want to uplift and be in solidarity with. So a couple of months ago, we had an environmental justice Policy Party, and we had a woman named Joye Braun join us. She is from the Indigenous Environmental Network, and she is a community organizer and activist. She has been on the front lines of so many different really important environmental justice issues. And when we were talking to her, she was talking about carbon credits. And she kept saying, "carbon credits, carbon credits," and I finally was like, "Am I the only person who does not know what this is?" Like? I've heard the word but I don't really understand it. So for this Summer School episode, we are going to help you understand, just like I needed a little bit of help to understand what the heck are carbon credits. What do they mean? Are they even a real thing? Like is it possible? Joye teaches us all of that. So let me tell you a little bit about Joy Braun. "Eagle Feather Woman is a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. Joye was one of the first campers at Sacred Stone Camp, moved to Oceti Sakowin Camp, and was at Blackhoop or Seven Generations Camp during eviction of the camps. Joye's history of community activism includes the long fought campaign

against the Keystone XL, the project resurrected at the same time Dakota Access Pipeline was renewed and continues to threaten her homelands. She is also making stance to protect the sacred Black Hills, her ancestral sacred lands, against fracking, uranium and gold mining. Joye travels extensively and speaks throughout the Northern Plains, and participates in Indigenous gatherings in the US and Canada, speaking about the negative impacts the extractive economy has on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, the abuses taking place in the oil patch, pipeline work and communities where man-camps bring drugs, human trafficking and increased crime rates wherever they're located. She is also a mother and a grandmother." One of my favorite things about Joye when I was listening to her was her warmth. She really made us feel a sense of community, and she gave us so much grace, and I was just really grateful. So I want you to hear from Joye herself. She is so stinking cool. One of the things I mentioned was environmental genocide. Like if I was talking to someone, how would I explain it to them? If I said like, "This is what environmental genocide is, this is what it looks like," what what do you say?

**J** Joye Braun 04:29

Well, one of the biggest forms of environmental genocide that is happening right now is a thing that everybody's all going crazy for. They're all like, "Ooh, this is the latest bling," and "Oh the American government's just having a heyday with it." And it's called cap and trade, and it's called carbon credits, and it's called carbon offsets, and it's called...and then they have all these fancy things: hydrogen hubs, carbon pipelines... "We're gonna offset this, we're gonna do this." It's all a bunch of baloney, because this is what happens: Shell, Exxon energy transfer, whatever, Manchin and all his coal mines, whatever. They say they're going to offset what they're doing in these communities. Let's just take San Francisco, outside of San Francisco, for example. We're going to offset what these refineries are putting out into the air right now. We're going to do that. We're going to plant trees over here. Well, how long does the tree take to grow? 40, 50, 60 years? We don't have the time. What happens in those communities that are living right next to that refinery in the meantime? They're dying. They're dying of cancer. They're dying of leukemia. The kids are having asthma attacks and dying. This is happening right now outside of San Francisco. And you can see flares of what happens outside of there. It's largely Latino, and Asian-Pacific and Black communities right there. And the large Indigenous community right there. There's a couple of tribes that live right there. That's happening right now. And this is all carbon cap and trade and offsets and blah, blah, blah, blah. And the American government's going wholely over it. Same thing happens in the Amazon. We're going to "offset" what we're doing over here, by polluting this community right here, by buying and going over here to the Amazon and erasing the biodiversity of the Amazon forest and planting one single kind of tree. Usually palm tree. And why did they find palm tree? Because of palm oil. This is happening right now. This is, this is environmental genocide. Right now. The world...things are happening. Those things are happening in Nairobi. Things are happening in Morocco. Definitely things are happening in Ukraine that aren't even being talked about beyond the war, because the Russians, what they did to pipelines, what they did to get it to that nuclear place. I mean this is beyond crazy that they would utilize those things to not only try to kill off Ukrainians, but also kill off their own people. This is environmental genocide. Now, do you think that Mother Earth isn't gonna fight back? Why do you think we have such strong hurricanes? Why do you think the tornadoes are so bad? Why do you think the floods are so unprecedented? Why do you think COVID happened? Because she's fighting back.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 07:40

Okay, what is it carbon credit? What actually is that?

J Joye Braun 07:53

So carbon, everything is made up of carbon, right? You and me, the plants here: everything's made of carbon. Pollution is definitely made up of carbon. So what they've decided to do is they quantified carbon. They've given carbon, the energy, the waste, that these refineries that these coal companies do, whatever it is: quantified carbon. Okay. So this company says, "I'm going to release 100 carbon. So 100 pollution, but I want to offset my pollution by buying credit. Think of your credit card bank. Buying credit, by doing something good in Alaska or the rainforest, I'm gonna go plant 100 trees over in Alaska. And that's gonna offset that's gonna negate the 100 pollution that I did. Doesn't work that way. Like I said, How long does it take for a tree to grow? In order for a credit to have absolutely, truly net zero â€” which net zero is a fallacy, by the way â€” but to truly have zero, it would have to be immediate. And it would have to have no consequence on the people or the environment around them. That doesn't happen. So these engineers and these financiers and a lot of the people that are still polluting or doing the pollution right now have come up with a whole new scheme for making money and hurting people, because now they're, these carbon schemes are trying to be forced onto people's lands, like carbon pipelines, hydrogen hubs. I even heard one lady was trying to get people to put silicone on the Arctic ice, as if the ice doesn't already reflect the sun. But she was trying to get people to put silicone on the Arctic ice as a scheme. These are all schemes. They're all, it's all madness

J Jasmine Bradshaw 10:10

In the chat, Derek says that one of the popular ways to get credit is by saying, "For every person who texts this number, we will plant a tree." That does sound really ridiculous

J Joye Braun 10:22

And how long do they do that as a marketing scheme? And as a way of...its greenwashing. It's called greenwashing. So be very careful. You have power with your money. You have power with how you buy things. You have power, you know, instead of throwing out the washing machine, you go buy, I mean, go get it repaired or find somebody to repair it. Share tools: somebody has a tiller, they needed tiller, you borrow each other's stuff. I've seen, they call it "tool libraries" before. But there's so many ways that we individually can, really do make a difference. It may not seem like but we do. Because every single drop that we felt we stopped, we were stopping that. That effect is starting to happen. You're already seeing those things starting to happen.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 11:24

All right, is that making a little more sense, what in the world carbon credits and carbon offsets and all of those things are? I think it's so important that we have this knowledge so that we can be empowered to try to make change in our communities when we are seeing businesses and

other entities trying to use this confusing language to pretend like they're not hurting the environment. If you enjoyed that little clip of our Policy Party, you can hear the rest of it at [firstnamebasis.org/policyparty](http://firstnamebasis.org/policyparty). This one was our environmental justice one, we also had a Policy Party about immigration. So go and check those out. I'll put the link in the show notes. But I'm so grateful to Joye Braun for taking the time and for teaching us so much. I think about that Policy Party all the time, and I go back and re-listen to her because she is so wise. All right, as you are going on your summer adventures, remember that the environment is such an important piece of the puzzle. One of my favorite things that Joye said during the Policy Party at the very beginning is that we are not separate from the environment. We are part of the environment. And that has really changed my perspective on what my role can look like in the fight for environmental justice. So [firstnamebass.org/policyparty](http://firstnamebass.org/policyparty) or just visit the link in the show notes to grab the replay of Joye Braun and our conversation about environmental justice. Thanks for listening to Summer School! I hope you're having the best summer ever. And you know what would make a fantastic summer activity? Bite-Sized Black History. Bite-Sized Black History is our program that we created just for you so that you and your children can learn about amazing people from Black history. We have created 24 different bite-sized podcast episodes about different amazing people from Black history. So just go to [firstnamebasis.org/blackhistory](http://firstnamebasis.org/blackhistory) and you can invest in Bite-Sized Black History for your family on your summer road trip. How perfect would that be? All right, love y'all. I'll talk to you soon.