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## - Why he did it - An interview with St. Johns Bridge Rappeller #10

*This is an interview with Greenpeace activist, Dan Cannon, 29, of Washington DC, about his recent Greenpeace action on the St. Johns Bridge.*

*My first reaction on Wednesday morning, July 29, when I learned that activists were dangling from the St. Johns Bridge was utter amusement. It's a gutsy and novel way to make a point. Is it a point that needs to be made?*

**A**rctic drilling is risky and Shell does not have a good track record. Throughout 2012 there were major issues, violations and equipment failures. In spite of that and against climate activists' advice, the Obama administration recently approved the company's Arctic drilling permits. It's ironic since the melting of the Arctic has come to symbolize the acute problems we are facing with climate warming.

Civil disobedience has a long and proud, but not particularly pretty, history locally and in the greater US. The labor, civil rights, gay rights and women's suffrage movements have been met with violence, disdain and ugliness. The popular opinion during all these movements was, "it would do no good anyway." Nonetheless, armed only with a sense of outrage, ingenuity and a will to act in spite of all odds, activists have rocked the status quo and instigated change. Grassroots movements such as the Greenpeace action are a proud and important part of American history.

**Q:** What made you decide to

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**rappel off the St. Johns Bridge?**

**A:** *There's a lot of reasons. I have nieces and nephews and would like to see them inherit an economy that isn't relying on fossil fuels. Shell is a very good example of how our economy is bought and paid for by large corporations. Shell's influence over policy makers is destructive to the democratic process. I ask, "Is it OK?" That's what triggers me. The fact that Shell could have a year where things went wrong like 2012 when there were multiple equipment failures, safety and environmental violations during Arctic drilling—it was a disaster. Yet the Obama administration approved permits for more drilling.*

**Q:** What was it like hanging from the bridge? How many hours were you there?

**A:** *We were there 40 hours. I have a mountaineering background and climb on the weekends. Hanging for 40 hrs. wasn't the easiest thing to do but it was a worthwhile cause. To say I wasn't scared at times would not be true. Setting up camp takes a lot of effort and time. While we were hanging, we had to do things to keep moving. We put up the streamers so we could move around. Lowering ourselves when the Fennica tried to come through both times was a*

*way of moving too.*

**Q:** Did the rappellers allow the other ships and boats to pass?

**A:** *We absolutely let the other ships pass through. There was a pretty tall sailboat and we had to rise up for. We were only focused on blocking the Fennica and only lowered when it tried to pass both times.*

**Q:** Local authorities claimed that the rappellers had to be removed for safety. Do you agree?

**A:** *We are professional climbers, so safety is our number one concern. It's our priority. I don't think we were a safety concern. The safety of Shell's profits were what we were more interested in.*

**Q:** Was the hot weather a problem?

**A:** *We were prepared. We had long pants and sleeves. We had sunscreen. The sun was very intense, but there was a constant breeze over the river. I'm used to the muggy heat of the east coast so the dry heat wasn't so bad.*

**Q:** Could you communicate with the other rappellers?

**A:** *Yeah. I was climber 10 and I could yell to climber 11 and climber 9, who were closest to me. I stayed in contact with folks via*

*This is a vantage point most people will never have the opportunity to experience. Greenpeace activist Dan Cannon saw it for 40 hours in late July in 100 degree temps.*



*twitter otherwise.*

**Q:** Would you do it again?

**A:** *Yeah, absolutely.*

**Q:** Do you have anything else you would like to say to the people of Portland?

**A:** *All the climbers were very*



*Cannon was St. Johns Bridge hanger/protestor #10.*

*appreciative of the support they received from people at the park. We were very blown away. We are super grateful.*

*To see more photos from Dan's vantage point on the bridge, go to danenvirocannon on twitter.*



### SEND YOUR BRIDGE PICTURES

Send your unique (and personally taken) photos of the **St. Johns Bridge** to the Review.

You could win \$100. See page two for full details

This week's Masthead winner was sent in by Betsy Valle. This is the way we should remember Summer 2015!