The defense of private property in contestation of North American oil pipelines demonstrates the centrality of property not only to the structural reproduction of capital, but also to its Euro-American subject. Emphasizing their affective attachments to land and resentment at dispossession, landowners and populist environmental organizations in the Great Plains frequently compared individual, white settler experiences of eminent domain to the historic and ongoing dispossession of Native Nations by suggesting oil infrastructure corporations and the state were “treating us like Indians.” In order to account for the reproduction of white supremacy in environmentalism, I argue that we must understand how its oppositional politics can be linked to economic interests and political desires for the maintenance of landed private property.

Biography:
Kai Bosworth is a PhD candidate in the department of Geography, Society and Environment at the University of Minnesota, where he researches how liberal environmentalist subjects emerge from struggles over extractive industries, private property, and natural spaces in the Anthropocene. Kai’s solo and collaborative writing has appeared in Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, Miami Rail, The New Inquiry (with Out of the Woods), and Jacobin (with Not an Alternative), and he has committed manuscripts in preparation for Antipode, The Annals of the Association of American Geographers, The Routledge International Handbook of Gender and Feminist Geographies, Museums and Activism, Into the Void, and Capitalism and the Earth.