

Commissioners Hear About Mine

December 15, 2016



Courtney Snyder speaks with passion

Six mine opponents were present at the Bradford commissioners meeting tonight, Dec. 15, 2016, and two spoke against it. Courtney Snyder gave a sincere and impassioned plea to the commissioners, and your historian pointed out that to count on the DEP for protection would be folly.

Other faithful were in the audience, including Charlie Trowbridge, who made the hour-plus journey from Fort White, and Eldridge Hayez. Two new allies, riparian land owners Gayle Roberts and Chris Deren, were present and we welcome them to our group to oppose the mine threat.

Little other news, except County Attorney Will Sexton announced an up-coming joint meeting of the full boards of commissioners from Bradford and Alachua Counties. To our disappointment, the

mine topic will not be discussed.



Right to left, Courtney Snyder, Charlie Trowbridge, Chris Deren, and Gayle Roberts

In case it might be of interest, following are the comments expressed by your historian to the commissioners.

Starke, FL Dec. 15, 2016

Good evening Mr. chair, members of the board, my name is Jim Tatum, and I live at 914 SW Riverland Ct., Fort White. I represent Our Santa Fe River, Inc, a non-profit from Fort White. Thank you for allowing me to speak.

I understand that you are considering the mine application you have pending. I urge you to deny this application and revise your LDRs to prevent new mines on the banks of the Santa Fe

River or close to it.

Last February, referring to the phosphate mine proposal, a spokesperson for HPSII made the statement at a BoCC meeting in Lake Butler: “...the State of Florida has very rigorous rules and regulations that are designed to protect the environment and this project.” (Mandy Wettstein)

The HPS Enterprises website states” State permits require HPS Enterprises to follow a specific plan that will prevent negative impacts to water wells.” AND “The Florida Department of Environmental Protection will also review and require assurances that the groundwater will not be adversely affected.”

So, does this mean we have no worries? Then why are so many groups and agencies opposing the mine?

During my appearances before legislative and policy making bodies, I have sometimes heard the idea that “We have a Dept. of Environmental Protection that will not allow harm to come to our state.” Not long ago DEP Secretary Jon Steverson said, “The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is absolutely committed to the safety of all Floridians and our shared environment.” He said this at a press release about the aquifer-poisoning Mosaic sinkhole in Polk Co. on Sept. 20, 2016.

But at the time he said this, the DEP had kept quiet for almost three weeks about the possible harmful drinking water in neighboring wells. The DEP knowingly let people drink water very possibly contaminated for almost three weeks.

At the same press conference, Steverson said: DEP will finalize its ongoing investigation to determine any necessary accountability measures to ensure this doesn’t happen again.”

But the sink hole was already an "AGAIN." Spills and contaminations have happened earlier, multiple times. There will be more "AGAINS." Count on it.

This is the same DEP that last July in Tallahassee worked so hard and argued so long to allow more toxins in our drinking water. Their stance was that a few of us are expendable, just collateral damage, as long as industry gets to put poison in our drinking water. They devised a contrived, extremely complicated formula to determine how many of us will contract cancer, and were proud of their low number. It took about an hour to explain. There were rational voices at that hearing that said, they could avoid ALL cancer deaths from toxins, by simply not allowing any to be put in by industry. They would have none of it, that was not considered.

Such naïve thinking, that the DEP will protect us.

My point is: DEP WILL NOT PROTECT you nor your county, nor your drinking water nor OUR Santa Fe River.

It is up to us, it is up to you. Please stop this mine however you can.

Thank you.

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

-A river is like a life: once taken, it cannot be brought back-
