

Documentary “Troubled Waters” shown in Gainesville

April 15, 2017



Panelists Shannon Blankinship, Dr. Robert Knight and Jim Gross

Today, April 14, 2017 St. Johns RIVERKEEPER, Florida Defenders of the Environment, Florida Springs Institute, and USGBC Heart of Florida Region presented a panel discussion and screening of the documentary, *Troubled Waters: Connections and Consequences*.



Heather
Obara,
Moderator

Panelists included OSFR advisors Jim Gross, Executive Director, Florida Defenders of the Environment, and Dr. Robert Knight, Executive Director, Florida Springs Institute, as well as Shannon Blankinship, Outreach Director, St. Johns RIVERKEEPER.

The film, narrated by WJXT-TV 4 newscaster Bruce Hamilton, is an all- Florida production and the press release provided the following information:

“Some of the more than 30 people featured in the program include: former U.S. Senator Bob Graham; State Senator Audrey Gibson; Seminole County Commissioner Lee Constantine; Jacksonville City Council President Lori Boyer; Lisa Rinaman, the St. Johns Riverkeeper; Dr. Quinton White, Executive Director of JU’s Marine Science Research Institute; Clay Henderson, Executive Director of Stetson’s Institute of Water And Environmental Resilience; Dr. Bob Knight, Executive Director of the Florida Springs Institute; Jim Gross, Executive Director of Florida Defenders of the Environment; Ryan Smart, President of 1000 Friends of Florida; Vince Lamb, Brevard community activist; Karen Chadwick, Vice President of Putnam County Environmental Council; Dr. Ann Shortelle, Executive Director for the St. Johns Water Management District; Drew Bartlett, Deputy Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection; and Mary Sue Scott, a DeBary community activist.”



Lisa Rinaman,
St Johns
Riverkeeper
and key
environmental
ist

Congratulations go to all those involved with this excellent documentary, which explains the problems our water resources are experiencing and the solutions we must take. It is lamentable that we have excellent water laws and protections but that in our state we have a complete leadership void in Tallahassee. As stressed in the film, it is imperative that we change the self-serving non-leaders and replace them with those who will follow the will of the people. We must be more vocal during elections to make known the importance of environmental issues.

The documentary points out that our water leaders in the DEP and water districts exhibit explicitly the head-in-the-sand mindset which condones the constant and continual degradation and death of our rivers and springs. They continue to issue devastating and excessive groundwater permits to serve industry and developers rather than conserve and protect our rivers and springs.

The two most recent examples of this total disregard for conservation are the further groundwater pumping of the Silver Springs springshed to service one private enterprise and the additional drawdown of the Rainbow river. One could add the 2016 revisions of toxins allowed in our waters by the DEP. No

matter how hard they try (and they try very hard,) these state employees are unable to justify any public interest here. These and other similar egregious actions result in a shameful loss of respect for our non-protective agencies, and illustrate the points made by the film.

Since there is absolutely no leadership in Tallahassee, it is incumbent on local governments to step up and enact strong laws and regulations regarding our resources, and develop plans and programs to guarantee preservation. This is already happening with climate change in many areas.

We are happy to note that OSFR was represented by at least seven members at this event.

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

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