

“Fears Over Fracking,” Editorial By OSFR In Ocala Star Banner, Jan. 4, 2015

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The [Ocala Star Banner](#) today, January 4, 2015 has published the opinion editorial “Fears Over Fracking,” by OSFR president Merrillee Malwitz-Jipson and historian Jim Tatum.

The article can be read in its entirety at this [link](#). OSFR is grateful to Brad Rogers, Doug Ray and the [Ocala Star Banner](#) for printing our opinion piece and helping spread the word about the this very real threat to our way of living.

Fears over fracking

By Merrillee Malwitz-Jipson and Jim Tatum
Special to the Star-Banner

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A recent study at Duke University found that 92 percent of water and drilling fluids remained deep underground. Are these substances what we want to inject into our groundwater or allow to be anywhere near our aquifer?

There is no such thing as safe fracking.

Some chemicals used in fracking are non-toxic, but a new study says that out of 81 common compounds, there's very little known about the potential health risks of about one-third of them. But some, indeed, are well known carcinogens: benzene, toluene,

xylene, methanol, lead, hydrogen fluoride, naphthalene, sulfuric acid, formaldehyde and crystalline silica.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection chief of mining, Calvin Alvarez, says that fracking is not a "factor" in South Florida, and Ed Garrett, DEP section administrator, says that we don't frack in Florida. But Ed Pollister, owner of Century Oil, says that fracking is inevitable, and if he doesn't do it, somebody else will.

Fracking, however, has occurred in Florida, and it is allowed by the DEP. And the interest in fracking is recent and growing: In the past five years, there have been 37 drilling applications granted, and of these, 16 have been granted in the past year. This recent surge of fracking interest in Florida is due mostly to the new extraction technology, which makes it possible and profitable to exploit previously inaccessible pools of oil and gas.

When we think of the oil and gas industry, we usually don't think of Florida because it is not a big oil producing state. But extraction started in 1943. There are operating wells pumping oil from the Sunniland Oil Trend in Collier, Henry, Lee and Dade counties and in the Panhandle, in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties, in what is known as Jay Field.

The winds of public opinion may be shifting in Florida. In the recent off-year elections, the monumental Amendment 1 was approved by a landslide. The people spoke with a loud voice, saying they want to protect what is good and unique in Florida, our land and water.

Even more recently, proposed Senate Bill 166 seeks to prohibit hydraulic fracturing in Florida. If passed, it would take effect in July 2015. There is also a statewide effort to ban fracking at the local level where authorities are acting rather

than just listening to their residents.

The time is here to take an important step toward protecting what we cannot afford to lose. Our Santa Fe River Inc. has been a leader in opposing the threat posed by the Sabal Trail pipeline project. We must encourage our lawmakers to save Florida. The potential for mineral rights exploration in North and Central Florida could easily destroy our aquifer and drinking water source.

Merrillee Malwitz-Jipson and Jim Tatum are both from Fort White. Malwitz-Jipson is president of Our Santa Fe River Inc., and Tatum is the group's historian.

The complete editorial can be read at our post at this [link](#).

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