

Heywood Article Corrects Inaccuracies

December 5, 2016



Harriet Heywood

Harriet Heywood of Thonotosassa, who also happens to be Co-Coordinator of Trade Justice Alliance, and Florida State Coordinator of People Demanding Action, has published an article in the [Citrus County Chronicle](#) regarding the Sabal Trail forum which recently took place at Citrus Springs near Dunnellon.

Ms. Heywood was motivated to write a rebuttal after reading the coverage of the forum in an article in the *Chronicle*. She felt the article gave an inaccurate picture of the event.

Your writer also attended that event, and most certainly must agree with Ms. Heywood that the Sabal Trail spokesperson does not tell the true picture.

Whitewashing the risks involved is just one of their flaws—even more serious, Sabal Trail has submitted an Environmental Impact Study to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that is blatantly false and gives an inaccurate picture.

The parent company, SpectraEnergy, has been heavily fined for safety infractions, and has one of the worst safety records of any energy company in the U.S. If one investigates the safety record of this company, there is plenty to cause concern.

You can read the OSFR post about this event at "[Citrus Springs Sabal Trail and LNG Forum.](#)"

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

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

Sabal Trail forum was informative

Saturday, December 3, 2016 at 5:24 pm (*Updated: December 3, 5:31 pm*)

I was an attendee at the Public Forum on Sabal Trail on Nov. 21.

As an attendee, I found the forum at the Unitarian Universalist Church, endorsed by the League of Women Voters, to be both educational and well-presented, and the event was well-attended. To read the Sabal Trail-perspective piece, in The Chronicle almost a week post-forum, you might believe speaker and attendee fears were unfounded.

However, Spectra Energy, the parent company of Sabal Trail has an extremely bad safety record, with blowouts, leaks and explosions occurring far more often than Sabal Trail's spokesperson admitted in the Sunday article, including an explosion in Pennsylvania last April and a huge blowout in The Arkansas River in 2015, among many other accidents and safety violations. The article covering the forum colored speakers and

attendees as ill-informed worrywarts. As far as I could tell, no one from Sabal Trail attended the forum.

I have since learned that sinkholes and drilling blowouts have already occurred recently, in both Georgia and North Florida, video-documented by Sierra Club's Merrillee Malwitz-Jipson and John S. Quarterman, president, WWALS Watershed Coalition.

A sinkhole opened at a Sabal Trail construction site in Suwannee County, near the Santa Fe River, on C.R. 49 between Branford and Live Oak (the site of the O'Brien, Hildreth Compressor Station) damaging at least the road there. And another well-documented Valdosta, Georgia area Withlacoochee River drilling blowout occurred as Sabal Trail was drilling under the river. Impossible events, according to Sabal Trail's spokesperson.

There are other documented incidents of wildlife and wetland destruction in the Hunter Creek region as the pipeline makes its way to South Florida for export. Forum attendees were not ill-informed worrywarts. They were well-educated concerned citizens.

There were numerous safety concerns raised about the STROM LNG export facility currently under construction in Crystal River, its close proximity to Seven Rivers Hospital, and what the disaster plan would be should an accident occur there. There were questions about the legality of land being taken through eminent domain for a product that is being shipped overseas, and not connected to a Florida Utility, many questions left hanging for lack of answers.

There are a few questions that beg answering about the wisdom involved in approving the Sabal Trail Pipeline:

1. We already have a brand new Florida Gas Transmission Line (FGT). Why do we need another private for-profit line that takes a shortcut over our fragile world-famous springs and

river systems, with an unknown quantity for export and five planned export facilities?

2. The “Natural Gas” comes from the Marcellus Shale where countless people are having to abandon their homes, and their waterways are poisoned from fracking chemicals. People are getting sick and dying. What is the moral reason to approve such a project when clean solar is waiting for development?
3. Approving these projects ensures a commitment to burning more fracked methane-intense greenhouse gas for decades, at a time when the people are demanding clean solar energy, and Floridians just rejected the industry’s attempt to hoodwink us with Amendment 1. So what is the reasoning behind the rush to climate chaos?

It’s all well and good that a for-profit company should try to sell the cost-benefit-analysis of a project in the interest of its investors, protected by force majeure. We the people, and our environment, however, are assured of paying the ultimate price into an indefinite future.

But the Fourth Estate is hopefully a neutral agency working in the interest of our precious Nature Coast, not solely towards the expansion of a new “extreme energy coast.” Where is our representation?

Harriet Heywood

Homosassa