

OSFR Policy Director Testifies at Jasper Sabal Trail-WWALS Hearing

October 21, 2015



Merrillee Malwitz-Jipson waits to testify at WWALS-Sabal Trail hearing in Jasper. Chris Mericle in Foreground. Photo from WWALS website.

WWALS originally filed a petition with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to stop the pipeline on August 7th. The DEP denied that petition on August 14th. The amended petition was filed August 28, opposing the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's intent to issue a building permit for a 36-inch natural pipeline under the Suwannee River in Florida.

The hearings have been in progress since Monday, October 19 and will continue through Oct. 22, at the [Hamilton County Board of Commissioners Chambers](#), 207 NE First Street Jasper, Florida 32052.

The following has been taken from the WWALS website:

The only seat empty was the one WWALS board member Chris Mericle

was sitting in before he moved to the witness chair to testify. Notice the numerous Sabal Trail people from somewhere else filling up most of the rest of the rows, leaving elderly local citizens to stand: a concrete illustration of Sabal Trail invading.

Even Merrillee Malwitz-Jipson couldn't qualify as a witness, despite her nine years of activism through Our Suwannee River and numerous other organizations.

This is a very specific sort of hearing about a particular pair of permits, and it's hard to be a witness if you don't have degrees ending in -ology.

More about this case [on the WWALS web site](#).

But as Merrillee reminds us, [you can ecomment to FERC today](#).

Remember: ants outlived dinosaurs.

The Federal Regulatory Energy Commission has had a presence during the last year and a half in the South Georgia and Florida areas, paving the way for the pipeline and communicating with the public. Nearly all the input from the public can be summed up in John Quarterman's comment: "The combination of all this

opposition, what we of course want to do is to stop the pipeline”, says John Quarterman, with WWALS. “There’s no need for this pipeline. Solar power is what we should be doing.”

In spite of a huge preponderance of opposition by the public, the FERC has stated in its Environmental Impact Study that the risks and public outcry are of insufficient importance to halt the pipeline.