

# OSFR Quoted in Newspaper

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Pete Ackerman leads the peaceful protest in Dunnellon, sponsored by OSFR and attended by many.

OSFR president Pam Smith, along with your historian, were quoted in the Riverland News covering the successful Sabal Trail protest in Dunnellon. The article can be seen at this [link](#).

*Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.*

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

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PIPING UP

Protesters say pipeline a threat to environment

By Jeff Bryan

Thursday, February 2, 2017 at 6:00 am (*Updated: February 2, 6:02 am*)

It might have been a brisk January morning; however, the message from those who came from near (Dunnellon) and far (Jacksonville) was stern: the Sabal Transmission Line is bad for the Florida environment.

Jeff Bryan

Protesters brought plenty of signs and banners for their march to City Hall on Saturday as part of an event called, "Walk for Water, Speak for Springs," which was a protest against the Sabal Trail Pipeline. The event drew scores of people from across the state.

Currently under construction, the Sabal Transmission Line is a \$3-billion natural gas pipeline that will span 515 miles, cross three states and run right through the greater Dunnellon area. In Florida, there is 266.8 total miles of pipeline that additionally goes through Citrus, Hamilton, Suwanee, Gilchrist, Alachua, Levy, Sumter, Lake, Polk, Osceola and Orange counties. In addition to the planned pipeline, Sabal Trail will have five compressor stations, including one in Marion County near Dunnellon.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approved the project in August 2016, allowing Sabal Trail officials to proceed with construction. Clearing and grading started about one month later.

"It's dangerous," said Peter Ackerman, the event organizer who recently began renting a home in the Dunnellon area. "It provides a risk to the people close enough. The schools are in

the blast zone.”

Ackerman called Saturday’s protest an “informative march,” with a lot of speakers who would later assemble at the City Hall Gazebo and address the dozens of protestors.

“The city of Dunnellon is under siege,” he said about the pipeline, though Ackerman acknowledged the route does not cross into the city limits.

Ackerman chided the construction of the Sabal Pipeline as well as Spectra Energy, the parent company behind the project.

“The company is infringing on the personal property rights of the citizens,” he said about the use of eminent domain.



OSFR president Pam Smith

Boring under rivers and through aquifer recharge areas is a threat to the wildlife and water supply throughout the state, according to Pam Smith and Jim Tatum of Our Santa Fe River, an organization which helped plan Saturday’s protest.

“It can have a very detrimental affect on the water supply,” Smith said.

Tatum pointed to Spectra Energy’s track record for pipeline

incidents.

“They have the worse record,” he said. “It’s terrible.”

They also pointed out that both Florida Power & Light and Duke Energy won’t be using all of the gas to supply power to residents throughout the state; that a good portion, they said, will be exported to other countries across the world.

“We’re fighting for clean water,” Smith said, noting a push is on for the state to eye solar power as another option.

Added Tatum: “This is going to further lock us into fossil fuel usage.”

Dunnellon resident Sharon Huston considered it the best “walk” she’s been to since she started attending events last October.

“It seemed to me that everyone I met was there to ‘Walk for the Water,’” said Huston, who organized a protest in mid-January at Dunnellon High and Elementary schools. “People were cooperative, making sure they did not block traffic. When a few people shouted obscenities as they drove by, probably less than a handful, no one from the Walk responded in kind. The police officers were helpful when it came to crossing streets. I didn’t hear anything negative about anyone – it was a show of support – a genuine desire to want to protect our water from pollution and contamination.”

Andrea Grover, spokeswoman with Sabal Trail, said the project is proceeding as scheduled and residents can look for it to wrap up in about seven months. The pipeline will start in Alabama, extend through Georgia and end up in central Florida.

“We are on target for an end-of-June in-service date so that means the gas will be flowing to customers,” Grover said.

According to FERC, the overall multi-state project construction will disturb about 13,670 acres of land.

The pipeline will supply gas to the new 1,640 megawatt combined-cycle natural gas plant under construction at Duke Energy's Crystal River complex which, when completed, will serve about 1.7 million customers statewide beginning in 2018.