

SRWMD Valenstein Visits Columbia Co. BOCC

February 6, 2016



Foreground right to left, SRWMD Director Noah Valenstein, OSFR policy director Merrillee Malwitz-Jipson, OSFR board member Terry Phelan, Ichetucknee Alliance president John Jopling.



OSFR policy
director,
Merrillee Malwitz-
Jipson

Tues. Feb. 4 at the board of commissioners in Lake City, the executive director of Suwannee River Water Management District Noah Valenstein appeared and spoke briefly. Newly appointed after Ann Shortelle was moved to the St. Johns District, Valenstein introduced himself and touched on some projects and also fielded questions from the audience. He was accompanied by Carlos Herd, who did not speak.

Our Santa Fe River Policy Director Merrillee Malwitz-Jipson and board member Terry Phelan addressed the board on issues regarding the Falling Creek water transference by pipeline project and also the Fort White chicken factory.



OSFR board member Terry Phelan

Malwitz-Jipson questioned why the county has remained inactive on the fracking front for one year, since the original request to have this county look into drafting rules to ban fracking in their county and support a statewide ban. The commissioners had no answer for her. The Florida Association of Counties met this week in Tallahassee and was expected to discuss their position on fracking, now that pro-fracking bills are passing, which preempt local control by counties. Columbia County did not send a board member to participate.



John
Quarterman
from WWALS
Coalition,
Georgia

The preemption of local rule is but one issue looming over Columbia County, whose commissioners are seemingly in complete ignorance. They also are ignoring the issue of wastewater disposal as well as the myriad of health risks which are part of fracking, including the right of fracking companies to inject undisclosed poisons into our earth and through our aquifer.



Fort White resident Charles Trowbridge shows the board models of the one cubic foot of solids and four gallons of liquid waste that one chicken produces in six months time. He opposes the chicken

factory.

The big news directed at our efforts for the evening was the announcement that Mr. Valenstein has arranged a stakeholder and agency Best Management Plan (BMP) meeting for the end of this month to discuss nutrient loading in high recharge of the Floridan aquifer. This is a meeting that stemmed from the chicken factory issues. The county is holding off our AG-3 zoning workshop until this meeting or more like them take place.