

Strong Environmentalists Join Commissioners

November 14, 2018



OSFR advisor Marihelen Wheeler and Ken Cornell were sworn in as commissioners for Alachua County on November 13. Both have a strong record for supporting environmental issues. Wheeler has consistently fought against Sabal Trail, and both have been active in opposing the proposed phosphate mine, as well as in supporting clean water issues.

In this year of midterm elections, these two were one of the few bright spots, where Florida tragically lost many opportunities to begin improving our horrible water situation. Our water is

becoming unusable and we continue to ignore this.

It seems incredible that we keep electing the very people causing the problem, or, if not causing, doing nothing about it. OSFR congratulates Marihelen Wheeler and Ken Cornell, and the intelligent people who voted them in.

Read this original article here in [the Gainesville Sun](#).

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

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

Wheeler, Cornell sworn in as county commissioners

By Sarah Nelson / Staff writer

Posted Nov 13, 2018 at 11:34 AM Updated Nov 13, 2018 at 11:10 PM
Wheeler said she intends to help set a more gentle tone amid the caustic rhetoric throughout the state and nation.

Marihelen Wheeler made a promise for political civility after her swearing-in to the Alachua County Commission Tuesday morning.

Just after taking over the District 2 seat, Wheeler said she didn't have much new to say, but that she's coming into the new position from a background full of "peacemakers," hoping to calm the tense rhetoric vibrating throughout the country.

"I am hoping that with the background that I bring, that we can calm the rhetoric down and in our community, make sure that we are talking to each other, not at each other," Wheeler said.

Adults, Wheeler said, must model respectful behavior for younger people.

Wheeler was elected to take over for Lee Pinkoson on Nov. 6, taking 65 percent of the vote. Pinkoson decided against running for another term after serving since 2002.

Chuck Chestnut, voted chair of the commission at Tuesday's meeting, also reiterated the need for an end to the negativity in the political realm. He said, however, that board meetings here have never had the negativity seen at the federal or state level.

"We all have to get along in the community," Chestnut said. "Civility is going to play a key role in this."

As for her first priority on the board, Wheeler said she intends to listen and learn from communities and colleagues.

"My first priority is to find out who our key players are," Wheeler said.

Wheeler's husband, Paul, and one of her sons, Jeremiah, attended the ceremony at her side.

Commissioner Ken Cornell also was sworn in at the meeting. He was easily re-elected to the District 4 seat after two opponents dropped out early in the race.