

University of Florida – Duke Energy Water Symposium 2018

February 8, 2018



Keynote speaker Sandra Postel, OSFR President Mike Roth, UF Water Institute Director Wendy Graham

Dr. Wendy Graham did an outstanding job putting together this monumental, two-day gathering of water researchers and making it all presentable to the public. Unfortunately, there had to be many concurrent sessions in order for everything to be squeezed into two days, meaning we had to miss some sessions we would have liked to have seen while choosing the ones we most wanted

to attend.



Rick Copeland
of Aquifer
Watch,
speaking



Bob Knight,
water scientist

Which simply attests to the tremendous variety of topics available. The mechanics played out like clockwork, with everything in its place and on time, and easy to find. Busy that we were, there were ample break times for refreshments and coffee.

The sub title of this symposium is “Sustainable Water Resources, Complex Challenges, Integrated Solutions, Shaping Our Water Future.”

That seems to cover more than we could handle, and indeed it was. Topics ranged from the local and specific to world-wide and very general. Of the local we saw the issue of Rodman Dam and the Ocklawaha River, the Ichetucknee River, Kanapaha, and

the forever-on-going Silver River and Springs (more to be said later.)

Farther away geographically and topically were wastewater plans in Belize, projects in Brazil, and theories of modeling and of legal issues. In between were urban water and nutrient management, coastal flooding and climate change.

Technology was not left behind, especially as related to farming and agriculture, as well as for shaping our water future. Much too much to list.



Prominent water advocate Karen Chadwick addresses Panel members: Jennifer Adler, Sandra Postel, Margaret Ross Tolbert, and moderator Cynthia Barnett

As writer of the OSFR newsletter, we found of interest the various panels on communication, understanding audiences, and telling the water's story through words, paintings and photography. All in all, an abundance of great topics and information.



Springs Restoration panel John Good, Thomas Frick, Thomas Frazer, Dean Dobberfuhl, moderator Casey Fitzgerald

As the symposium was co-sponsored by industry, it would follow that water users as well as water management would be well represented. We found somewhat disappointing the absence of the water scientists to address one of our major issues with our sad and sorry water situation in Florida, namely over-pumping. That is probably a political “no no” since the policy from Tallahassee likely dictates this protocol.



Stacie Greco of Alachua Co. Environmental

Dept. addresses
panel

Ironically, we heard that fundamentally important word only twice in two days- from Sandra Postel in her keynote address, and Margaret Ross Tolbert when she spoke on the excellent “Telling Water’s Story” panel. We did not hear it where it should have been, with the springs restoration discussions. Thank you Sandra and Margaret, for your courage and candor. And to Cynthia Barnett for repeating the “o-p” word.

It has long been known that excess nitrates and over-pumping are the largest contributors to the decline of our rivers, springs and aquifer. We would much prefer that the time and money used for the CRISPS project be used to actually restore Silver Springs, instead of just talking about it. We are long past the point of knowing what we need to do.



OSFR President Mike Roth addresses the final panel and requests better management of our water supply

Our water management planners are equally in denial when they predict huge water deficits in their twenty-years plans, yet continue to issue large withdrawal permits.

Finally, one of the panelists on last plenary session recommended greater faith and empowerment in our water agencies. Recently the editorial staff of major newspapers such as *the Gainesville Sun* and *the Orlando Sentinel* have written editorials indicating that our water managers are remiss and have lost the faith of the people by allowing our water resources to decline. This would indicate that, rather than be empowered, on the contrary these agencies should strive to regain the trust of the public by carrying out their mission of protection rather than exploitation for the benefit of industry.

It is not just the editors of these newspapers, but also staff writers of many major newspapers, letters to the editor, individual op-eds as well as citizens addressing public input sessions held by agencies, who have become stronger and stronger in their outcries.

It would be nice to see more representation of organizations such as Sierra Club, Florida Defenders of the Environment, Ichetucknee Alliance, Florida Springs Institute, Florida Springs Council, or even Our Santa Fe River. It was nice to see St Johns Riverkeeper and Caloosa Riverkeeper there.

At any rate, it was a great event and we are looking forward to the next one.

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

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