

# Along the WaterFront

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Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association, Inc.

August, 2016

Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association Inc. is a non-profit, grassroots organization dedicated to the protection of Lake Santa Fe as designated by the State of Florida as an Outstanding Florida Water

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Please plan to attend the Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association's

## **ANNUAL MEETING**

7:00 to 9:00 PM

**Friday, August 19th**

Parish Hall

**Trinity Episcopal**

on SR 26 in Melrose

### Newsletter

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photography by

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## Letter from our President

Greetings Lake Dwellers and Friends,

We hope this long, hot summer has been enjoyable for all, and that you are looking forward to the Santa Fe Lake Dwellers' Annual Meeting, where we elect our Board of Directors for the coming year and catch up on all the issues important to us as residents of this beautiful part of Florida.

Our first speaker this year is **Mark Hoyer**, Director of the Florida LAKEWATCH program. 2016 marks the 30th year that LAKEWATCH and their citizen volunteers have been documenting the health of Florida's lakes, and Lake Santa Fe has been participating since the very first year! After Mr. Hoyer informs us about the LAKEWATCH story, and how it relates to Lake Santa Fe, we will have another speaker, **Dr. Joe Rush**, who will talk about alligators. Joe, a lake resident and current president of the Melrose Business and Community Association, has been studying gators recently, and has much knowledge to share. So please join us as we learn about these two issues which are so important to all who love our lake...and bring a friend or neighbor!

After our election and speakers, your board will update you on the issues we have been following. We have learned in recent years, as our part of Florida becomes more attractive to developers and industry, that we must be proactive in finding effective ways to balance inevitable growth with the protection of

a healthy environment and way of life that has largely disappeared in Central and South Florida. To that end, your board members work to stay engaged and vigilant about these issues through attendance at many meetings, letters to newspapers and lawmakers, and sharing information to keep our members informed.

Our newsletter has a variety of subjects that you will find of interest, and which we will discuss at our meeting:

Proposed Phosphate Mine in Bradford and Union Counties

I-75 Relief and Toll Road Task Force reaching conclusion

Melrose Rural Cluster Boundary in Alachua County

Melrose Historic District Committee formed

Why You Should Vote!

Please mark your calendars for August 19, 7 to 9 pm, at Trinity Episcopal Parish Hall, and join us for an informative meeting. Your attendance, and renewed membership, are always very much appreciated.

Light refreshments will be served.

- Jill McGuire, President



## The I-75 Relief-Toll Road Task Force

by Fiona Sunquist

As many of you remember, in 1988 the Lake Area was stunned by the announcement that FDOT was in the planning stages of constructing a 6-lane toll road across the Melrose area as part of a larger plan to connect Tampa and Jacksonville.

At the time, FDOT projected great need for the facility and suggested there would be massive traffic tie-ups in the future if the proposed limited-access toll road were not built.

Area citizens mobilized to oppose the toll road. They attended meetings, wrote letters, and made phone calls. They suggested US 301 was a better option as it went in the right direction, provided a connection to Jacksonville, and was largely underutilized. Their opposition was successful. A year and a half later, the project was shelved for unknown reasons.

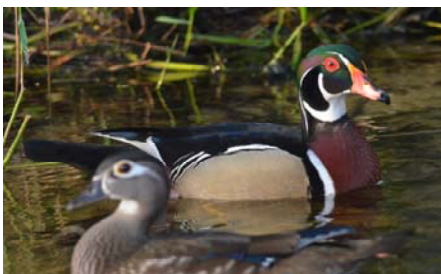
In 2015, 28 years later, the Jax-Tampa toll road reappeared, folded into a wide-ranging FDOT project entitled "I-75 Relief". The main goal of the I-75 Relief project was to alleviate traffic problems on I-75, but attached to it was the goal of "developing new, high-capacity transportation corridors to serve the Tampa Bay to Northeast Florida study area". FDOT appointed a 21-member Task Force and held seven public meetings to study transportation needs in the 6 counties involved. Concurrently, Lake Area citizens reactivated their old networks.

They attended the meetings, made phone calls, filled out FDOT comment forms, and sent emails registering their disapproval of the reincarnated Jax-Tampa toll road, and urging FDOT to use existing highways.

Today, FDOT is not the same organization it was 30 years ago. Many of the documents we did not have access to in 1988 are now on-line, as are all public comments submitted. The comments will be counted and analyzed and remain as part of the project record - so it is very important to email your comment to DOT at

<http://www.i75relief.com/contact.html#comment>

The final recommendations of the Task Force are due out this fall, but all indications are that our comments may be having an impact. The idea of a new toll road across the Lake Area has not yet been given consensus approval. The "new multi-modal multi-purpose corridor between Tampa and Jacksonville" has been pushed into the next round of evaluation studies. FDOT will continue to study need and "potential areas of opportunity". So stay tuned.



## Melrose Rural Cluster Update

by Judy MacLaren

The Alachua County Board of Commissioners will have a final public hearing to consider adoption of a proposed amendment to the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan relating to Melrose on August 16th. Amendment CPA#05-16 delineates a more precise boundary for the Melrose Rural Cluster on the Future Land Use map based on criteria adopted in the Plan. Keeping informed about what is happening now is important so we can keep the lake area beautiful for future generations, and the Alachua County designation of rural cluster is a good safeguard for such a purpose. SFLDA has worked closely with Growth Management's Planning Department to define these boundaries, as well as planning for the implementation of our own Special Area Plan. We hope this will provide extra protection for our lake area, preserving our community and its rich historical background. The Santa Fe Lake Dwellers web site,

[www.lakesantafe.org](http://www.lakesantafe.org)

and the Melrose Grapevine at

[www.melrosefl.com](http://www.melrosefl.com)

are sites that will help keep you informed with the happenings in our lake community. You can keep up with the up coming meetings that will have a direct effect on our community.

Check out the Growth Management website at:

<http://growthmangement.alachuacounty.us/planning/melrose>

# Phosphate Mining Proposal in Bradford and Union Counties

The recent proposal by the company HPS II to mine phosphate in Bradford and Union Counties has met with two different responses by the Commissioners of these counties. The HPS II Company is comprised of four families who are proposing a phosphate mining operation on 11,000 acres in Bradford and Union counties on both sides of the New River, just upstream of the confluence with the Santa Fe River. Citizens of Bradford and Union Counties, as well as members of The Sierra Club, Our Santa Fe River, Santa Fe Lake Dwellers, and the Alachua County Commission have expressed their concerns about the impact phosphate mining will have on the already impaired rivers and springs in North Central Florida and the impact to the aquifer.

## Union Commissioners Enact Moratorium

Union Commissioners showed up to their February 15, 2016 meeting to a standing room only crowd of residents there to oppose the mining. Union Commissioners voted to enact a moratorium on mining permits, to give commissioners time to revise their Comprehensive Land Use (CLU) Plan and Land Development Regulations (LDRs). After proper advertisement, and two public hearings with a large attendance of opponents to the mining, the final vote of 5-0 was in favor of the moratorium in Union County on April 18, 2016.

## Bradford Commissioners Reject Moratorium

In contrast, Bradford County Commissioners heard from concerned citizens during public comments on February 18. The county attorney Will Sexton instructed commissioners that they were not allowed to com-

ment on the issue of phosphate mining. Again at the March 17th meeting there were citizens who spoke opposing the phosphate mining, but no dialog took place with their commissioners.

Bradford BOCC called an "emergency meeting" for an unrelated issue on March 31, with just one day notice, and the mining moratorium was placed on the agenda. At the meeting Commissioner Danny Riddick, under the recommendation of the North Florida Regional Planning Council, told the commissioners that their LDRs were "grossly inadequate" for phosphate mining in the county. In attendance at this meeting was Jack Hazen of HPS, but no one in opposition to the mining was aware of, or present, at the meeting. Commissioners voted No on the moratorium after much discussion with the HPS representatives.

After hearing from mining opponents via email and phone calls as a result of the "emergency meeting," Bradford commissioners scheduled a "workshop" for April 29th to answer questions regarding the phosphate mining proposal.

At the next meeting, April 21, there were 25 speakers in opposition to the phosphate mining. At the end that meeting, County Attorney Will Sexton revealed that HPS II had submitted a special exception permit application that morning. Although the fees for the permit had not been paid at that point, and were not paid until April 29, it was stated that Commissioners were now in a quasi-judicial position due to a pending permit, and therefore unable to enter into dialog with the public.

On these grounds, the scheduled workshop was cancelled. There have since been many questions regarding the procedure in which the

mining application was submitted as well as the handling of the "emergency meeting". Residents feel strongly that they have been denied equal access to their Commission through manipulation of the permitting process.

## Alachua County Commissioners offer Assistance

Alachua County Commissioners held a special meeting on May 3 to hear concerns from citizens of Alachua, Bradford and Union Counties, as well as members of The Sierra Club, Our Santa Fe River and the Santa Fe Lake Dwellers, that the mining would further decrease flows and degrade the already impaired rivers and springs in the North Central Florida area. Other concerns included the impacts to the wildlife, environment and the quality and quantity of water in the aquifer. Chris Bird, Director of the Alachua County Environmental Protection Department, was directed by Alachua County Commissioners to draft letters to Bradford and Union Counties offering assistance in evaluating the phosphate mining permit. Union Commissioners accepted their assistance but Bradford County has not. At this time the permits in Bradford County are still pending, and concerned citizens continue to speak out against this massive mining proposal at every Commission meeting. If you would like to express your concerns to Bradford County Commissioners please contact them by email at [bocc@bradfordcounty.gov](mailto:bocc@bradfordcounty.gov) or by phone at 904-966-6327. The Commission meets on the first Monday morning, and third Thursday evening, of each month.

Stay updated on this issue on Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/nominating4phosphateBU/>

## Why You Should Vote

by Terry Brant

Today only half of all voters bother to vote on Election Day, and many fewer vote in the primary elections. Some believe it won't make a difference, others are angry, but no matter the reason, if you don't vote, you can't make a difference, or help bring about things you support.

The primary election on August 30, 2016, is a very important local election. You will be voting on a U.S. senator, and depending on your district, you will be voting for county judges, school board members, or county commissioners. In Alachua County, voters will be electing county commissioners who will determine whether or not **Plum Creek/Weyerhaeuser** will be allowed to build on area wetlands with related infrastructure, roadway, and traffic considerations.

You will also be considering Constitutional Amendment 4 that will exempt solar power devices for your home from property taxes. Your board supports this amendment as it will help consumers save money. On the other hand, we do not support Amendment 1, on the November ballot, which was written by utilities and would actually punish consumers for generating their own solar power.

If any of these issues are important to you, please be sure to vote. Your vote is the one time you can be sure of having the best chance to have a direct effect to influence policy and government.

In this primary election, and in November, your vote will directly shape our environment, quality of life, and the future direction of our communities. Please find the time to be informed, make a difference - vote!

## Melrose Historic District Committee formed in Putnam County

by Stasia Rudolph

After ten months of work; organizing, complying with county statues and meeting with Putnam county officials, **The Melrose Historic District Committee** has been approved by the Board of County Commissioners of Putnam County. A group of concerned Melrose citizens did the heavy lifting to bring the committee into existence. Over the next six months, the committee will focus on reconciling the Federal, State, and Putnam County designations of historical properties in Melrose. Our goal is to preserve the historical character of our town.

In addition, the committee will be a resource for local historic information and provide guidelines for building modification and new structures in the Putnam County section of Melrose. Our mission is to build the historic register of Melrose Putnam County and to take advantage of all the resources to preserve our historic structures.

Members of the committee include: Linda Kemp as president, Rosemary Daurer as vice-president, Stasia Rudolph as secretary, and with Kathi Warren and Dan Rawlins as directors. Board members bring a wide breadth of experience to the committee from community activism to executive leadership and all board members share a love of Melrose as their hometown.

The committee meets on the last Monday of every month at Mossman Hall at 7pm. The public is welcome. Any inquiries can be directed to Linda Kemp (352) 246 4545, [lindakemp20132@gmail.com](mailto:lindakemp20132@gmail.com) or to Stasia Rudolph (786) 371 6689, [stasiarudolph@yahoo.com](mailto:stasiarudolph@yahoo.com)