



Georgia Chapter

Footnotes Issue #107: October 7, 2015

Sabal (aka Sinkhole) Trail Update: Is FERC a Rubber Stamp or a Regulator?

On Sept. 4, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued a [draft Environmental Impact Statement \(EIS\)](#) for the Sabal Trail natural gas pipeline project. The Sabal Trail project would include over 500 miles of new natural gas pipeline in Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. This \$3.5 billion project is proposed to allow Florida Power & Light and Duke Energy to build over 3,200 megawatts of new fossil fuel power plants burning fracked gas in Florida. There is no benefit to Georgia for the passage of Sabal Trail through southwest Georgia.

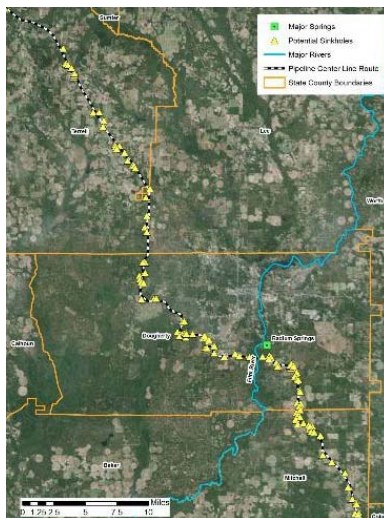
Much damage could result in Georgia to people and the environment as the compressor station for Georgia is proposed to be located in the city limits of Albany. These noisy, brightly lit industrial facilities are significant

sources of noise, air, and water pollution. Perhaps the most reckless part of the proposal is the siting of the pipeline along hundreds of potential sinkholes. So many potential sinkholes are identified along the pipeline that the project is now called the Sinkhole Trail by concerned citizens. There is a long list of other problems such as the health threat to the residents of Albany, the reduction of property values, the taking of private property, damage to some of Georgia's best farmland, the threat to the quail plantations and the economy of southwest Georgia, the numerous river crossings, the destruction of wetlands, and the taking of habitat of endangered species like the gopher tortoise. Citizens [raised all of these flaws at hearings](#) in Southwest Georgia last week.

All of these concerns were ignored by FERC in the draft EIS. It appears the entire process may be tainted by conflicts of interests. Merjent is the lead contractor on the EIS. The Merjent website says: "[We route them, survey them, permit them, inspect them, and provide operations and maintenance support services. We know pipelines and have supported all aspects of constructing new and maintaining existing pipeline systems across North America.](#)" Merjent has been paid by Transco, the company that has proposed construction of the Sabal related Hillabee Expansion in Alabama.

Cardno-Entrix is a direct contractor for Spectra, the proposed builder of the Sabal Trail project. Cardno-Entrix provided [Appendix H of the draft EIS](#). Cardno's work on the Keystone XL project for Trans Canada led to a story in the [New York Times on October 7, 2011](#), which resulted in an investigation by the Inspector General to look into whether the industry was "flouting the intent of a federal law meant to ensure an impartial review of environmental analysis of major projects.

With all these financial ties between the pipeline companies and pipeline contractors, does anyone think the citizens of Georgia are getting an impartial review of the issues? Is FERC just a rubber stamp for the oil and gas pipeline industry? [Click here to take action.](#)



Potential sinkholes along the Sabal Trail

**National Sierra Club President Aaron Mair Visits
Atlanta October 22**



The Georgia Chapter will present a Panel Discussion entitled "Equity & Environmental Justice: Progress & Challenges 25 Years After the Letter to the 'Big 10'"

[RSVP here](#) and join us at the Center for Civil & Human Rights to hear Sierra Club National President Aaron Mair moderate a panel to explore questions such as:

- What has changed since the 1990 Southwest Network for Environmental & Economic Justice letter called out the 10 largest green organizations for exclusivity? What organizational barriers to effective Environmental Justice work still exist?
- How can the environmental movement combat opponents who attempt to create a conflict between economic justice and environmental justice issues? How do we ensure climate solutions address both?

Sierra Club Meetings

Smart Energy Solutions Committee, Monday, October 5, 7:00 p.m.
Contact Cecilia Harris, ceciliaharris@gmail.com

Wildlands & Wildlife Committee, Monday, October 19, 7:00 p.m.
Contact William Tomlin, wmltom@gmail.com

RAIL Committee, Monday, October 26, 7:00 p.m.
Interim Contact: Colleen Kiernan, colleen.kiernan@sierraclub.org

Don't live in Atlanta? Check out our [Local Groups](#).

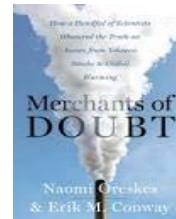
Other Events



October 7-8 - Cleantech Open Southeast Innovation Summit - This year's 4th Annual Cleantech Open Southeast Innovation Summit is October 7th - October 8th and for the first time, it's in Atlanta at the GTRI Conference Center! The Summit showcases our region's best social impact startup companies and fosters key sustainability industry connections for all attendees. Please [register here](#)

to attend.

October 16 - Merchants of Doubt - Join the Gwinnett Group to view the award-winning documentary that illuminates the false "debate" around climate change. Based on the book by Dr. Erik Conway and Dr. Naomi Oreskes, this film highlights how a small group of spin doctors have spread misinformation and confusion among American citizens to delay progress on such important issues from health effects of tobacco and fire retardants to global climate change. Click [here](#) for details.



November 6-8 - HemlockFest - HemlockFest offers an eclectic mix of rock, blues, folk, bluegrass and world music and family activities in a peaceful and beautiful setting. The eleventh annual HemlockFest offers another amazing array of some of the area's most incredible talents. All proceeds from HemlockFest are applied to the cause of saving the hemlocks and preserving the integrity of the Southern Appalachian ecosystem. [Tickets here!](#)

December 10 Georgia Chapter Holiday Open House - Save the date and join us for our 4th Annual Holiday Open House! Meet fellow Sierrans and our coalition partners, view a slideshow of highlights of the year and enjoy some holiday cheer! Our Open House will be from 4:30-8:30 at the Chapter Office.



Looking for more? Check out our [Meetup Group](#) for even more events!



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