

Lawsuit Filed Over Oklahoma's 'Fracking' Earthquakes

The Oklahoma Sierra Club and the public interest law firm Public Justice have filed a federal lawsuit against three energy companies who have been fracking in Oklahoma. The suit against New Dominion, Chesapeake Operating and Devon Energy Production Company alleges that wastewater from fracking and oil production have contributed to the state's alarming increase in earthquake activity. The lawsuit demands the companies, as a first step, reduce the amount of production waste they are injecting into the ground.

The lawsuit was filed the same day that the Oklahoma Corporation Commission made their strongest push to date to reduce the state's seismic activity. According to the Associated Press, the state's oil and gas regulator ordered operators of nearly 250 injection wells to reduce the amount of wastewater they inject underground.

The commission's measure comes three days after a 5.1 magnitude earthquake shook northwest Oklahoma. Not only was the quake felt in seven other states, it's the third-strongest tremor ever recorded in the state, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) said. The Fairview, Oklahoma's 5.1 magnitude earthquake on February 13 that was felt in Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico and Texas. It was the largest earthquake in the state since a 5.6 earthquake struck in 2011. Oklahoma has gone from two earthquakes a year before 2009 to two a day, making it the earthquake capital of the world. Scientists concluded in April 2015 that the injection of wastewater byproducts into deep underground disposal wells from fracking operations have triggered the near-daily quakes.

Hands Across the Sand

"On May 21st at noon in corresponding time zones, people around the world will join hands on beaches and in cities for the sixth annual Hands Across The Sand to oppose expanded offshore drilling, hydraulic fracking, mountain top clearing, coal plants and tar sands and to call for clean energy solutions for a sustainable planet. Hands Across The Sand is a movement made of people of all walks of life and crosses all borders and political affiliations. It is about supporting the advancement of clean energy sources that will sustain our planet. This movement is not about politics; it is about protecting coastal economies, oceans, marine wildlife and fisheries from the threats of expanded offshore drilling and the accidents associated with that drilling. It is about protecting our ground water from carcinogenic chemicals used in fracking and protecting our lands from oil spills. Hands Across The Sand participants are joining hands on May 21 to say NO to the use of filthy fuels and YES to clean energy. They are joining hands to implore leaders and decision-makers to end the United States' dependence on oil and coal and embrace a clean energy future for a sustainable planet.

Locally, we will be meeting in Jacksonville Beach at the end of Beach Blvd located just beyond the Life Guard Station starting at 11:00 am for sign in. Be there to make a stand and send a message to our state and national legislators that we are united in our message of no more dirty fuels poisoning of our oceans and waterways and YES to clean, sustainable energy.

For more details log on to www.handsacrossthesand.org or e-mail Candice Rue at c.rue@att.net for more information."

Senator Nelson Calls for Study of Fracking in Big Cypress National Preserve

Senator Nelson has written a letter to the Interior Department to request the Department to take an in-depth look at the idea of fracking in the Big Cypress National Preserve. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell has already determined that the plans by Texas-based Burnett Oil Co. to look for oil across 110 square miles of the preserve in eastern Collier County would do minimal harm. A final decision is pending.

"If history is any indication, approval of Burnett's request for a massive seismic survey essentially signals a green light for future drilling and fracking," Nelson wrote. "That's why I strongly urge you to complete an Environmental Impact Statement for Burnett Oil Company's proposed seismic survey, in compliance with the National Park Service's responsibility under the National Environmental Policy Act." Nelson added.

The call for an EIS also makes a play for time: "A more in-depth review could delay any decision on the testing plan for years," Nelson said in a statement issued Friday. In his letter, Nelson stated that last year's review does not look closely enough at whether endangered species, such as the Florida panther, could escape the tests. It also fails to consider burrowing animals, such as the gopher tortoise.



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Sierra Club Outings

No pets allowed on outing except where designated in the outings description. Outing participants are required to sign a waiver and release of liability at the start of the outing. The waiver can be found at: sierraclub.org/outings/national/participantforms/forms/individual_waiver.pdf

JOIN US ON MEETUP: OUTINGS HAVE BEEN FILLING UP FAST!

For the most up to date information and to ensure your spot, join our MeetUp site. Details of all outings can be found there with easy access to programs and interactions, or check our website.

www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Northeast-Florida-Group

Saturday, March 5, 10:00 a.m.: Hike the Theodore Roosevelt Area

We'll walk the beautiful Timucuan Ecological and Historical Preserve in the Theodore Roosevelt area of Jacksonville. Experience a few miles of peaceful, wooded nature trails, vast grasslands supporting water and land animals, and ancient piles of oyster shells revealing clues about an extinct culture. This will be about a two hour hike of three miles. Some of the hiking will be up steep inclines and on uneven trails.

The trail entrance is at 13165 Mount Pleasant Rd., 1 mile southeast of Fort Caroline National Memorial. Bring water and insect repellent. Children are capable of hiking three miles are OK. No pets, please. RSVP on Meetup or to Outing Leader Janet Stanko at janestan@bellsouth.net.

Saturday, March 12, 2016, 10:00 am: Hike Ravine Gardens State Park

Don't miss amazing Ravine Gardens State Park! This park is beautiful this time of year due to about 100,000 azalea plants in bloom; be sure to bring your camera. The hike distance is approximately four miles over moderately challenging terrain, which winds around trees and curves, up and down stairs, with several elevation changes. The park is located 1600 Twigg Street, Palatka, FL 32177.

Please bring bug spray, sunglasses and water. Children are welcome, but please keep in mind this is a somewhat challenging hike. For lunch, either bring a picnic lunch to enjoy at the very nice picnic area adjacent to the parking lot, or I'll plan a group lunch at Corky Bell's Seafood on the St Johns River. RSVP on Meetup.com (Sierra Club Northeast Florida) or with outing leader Ken Fisher at 904-210-7765 / kpf1965@gmail.com

Saturday, March 19, 9:00 am: St. Johns River Celebration Clean-Up

Help us participate in a city-wide cleanup of the St. Johns River and its tributaries. We will be cleaning up two boat ramp areas and Julington Creek. Meet at Palmetto Leaves Park (13799 Old St Augustine Rd. across from the Bartram Park Shopping Center) at 9:00 a.m. Some will stay and clean up that area; others will drive to the Hood Landing boat ramp to clean up that area. We also need kayakers to sweep Julington Creek between these two points to clean up any trash in the creek. All kayakers meet initially at Palmetto Leaves Park. Trash bags provided. Bring gloves and trash grabber (if you have one). Kayakers must wear PFD. RSVP on Meetup or to Outing Leader Bill Armstrong at armsfam@yahoo.com.

Thursday, March 24, 10:00 a.m.: Weekday Hike Bayard Conservation Area (John P. Hall, Sr. Nature Preserve)

Let's hike a trail in this beautiful, upland pine area with its multiple trails, natural settings, and unspoiled St. Johns River banks.

We'll hike about 7 miles with a snack along the St. Johns River. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the trailhead for the Bayard Conservation Area, also known as the John P. Hall, Sr. Nature Preserve. After the hike, we could go to Ronnie's in Green Cove Springs for some down-home food.

Please bring water, snack, sun tan lotion, and bug repellent. No pets, please.

Saturday, March 26, 2016, 6:00 pm: Downtown Jacksonville Walk

Let's go on a sunset historic walking tour throughout downtown Jacksonville. Our walk will take us over both the Acosta and Main Street Bridges, past Waterfront Park, The Landing, on both the Southbank and Northbank walking paths.

We will meet at in the parking lot of the brand new Fresh Market in the trendy Brooklyn neighborhood of Jacksonville, located at 150 Riverside Ave, Jacksonville, FL 32202.

Starting at this time will allow us to see the city's landscape change as the sun sets and the lights come to life. The walk is approximately five miles and will last until 8:30 pm. Once the walk is complete, you are welcome to join a group dinner at Burger Fi, located adjacent to the Fresh Market.

RSVP on Meetup.com (Sierra Club Northeast Florida) or with outing leader Ken Fisher at 904-210-7765 / kpf1965@gmail.com.



The Forgotten Coast: Return to Wild Florida

Following in the footsteps of a wandering Florida black bear, three friends leave civilization and become immersed in a vast and unexplored wildlife corridor stretch-

ing from the Everglades to the Florida-Alabama border. The rugged thousand-mile journey by foot, paddle, and bike traverses Florida's Forgotten Coast – a wilderness that has the potential to change the way we see the natural world.

The Sierra Club is helping to sponsor a screening for this groundbreaking film on Sunday, March 6th at UNF's Robinson Theater. Doors open at 3pm. There will be a discussion panel and reception after the screening. Tickets are free and can be obtained online on our Sierra Club's website.



Save the St Johns

The St. Johns Riverkeeper is launching a 13-day journey of the St. Johns River to raise awareness and engage you in an urgent call-to-action. On March 22-April 3, Lisa Rinaman, the St. Johns Riverkeeper, and a small team of river advocates embark on a journey of the entire 310-mile length

of the St. Johns River from the headwaters at Fort Drum to the mouth at the Atlantic Ocean. Please join us on a group paddle and/or a meal at one of the wonderful fish camps and restaurants along the river. Check the website www.savethestjohns.org for more details and to register for specific events.

Honoring our Next Environmental Leaders

The next generation of environmental leaders in Northeast Florida was honored at a memorable event on February 4 in Jacksonville Beach organized by Warren Anderson Jr. and The Public Trust Environmental Legal Institute of Florida. At the event, named Pass the Torch, honorees included the Sierra Club's Maria Andal, Jake Fitzroy, Julianne Mammana and James Taylor.

Congratulations to the 54 honorees and a big round of applause to Warren and The Public Trust Environmental Legal Institute for organizing a very fine event.



Congratulations to Bill Armstrong

Bill is our outings chair and an outstanding outings leader. Bill has passed the 100 outing mark, meaning he has lead 100 outings! He has recently been recognized with the Sierra Florida "Otter" award which goes to exceptional outing leaders. We are most grateful for his able leadership and dedication.

Don't Forget to Laugh



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Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968 or visit our website www.sierraclub.org

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Meeting Calendar

Monday, March 7 @ 6pm

PV Program: Tree Ordinance &
Riverkeeper Update
PV Beach Library

Monday, March 14 @ 6:30pm

JAX Program: National Parks in American South
Lakewood Presbyterian Church, 2001
University Blvd W.

Wednesday, March 16 @ 6:30pm

Combined ExCom and Conservation
Committee Meeting
6850 Belfort Oaks Road, Jacksonville

*"We never know the worth of
water till the well is dry."*

- Thomas Fuller, 1732



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General Programs

Visit our websites for maps to all meeting locations:

florida.sierraclub.org/northeast

www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Northeast-Florida-Group

Ponte Vedra Program

March 7 @ 6:00pm

New St Johns County Tree Ordinance & Matanzas Riverkeeper Update

Did you know St. Johns County currently permits clear cutting every tree on a lot or in a development, and removal of the entire tree canopy? Virginia Quelch will speak to the NE FL Sierra Club about the actions of the St Johns County Citizens for a New Tree Ordinance. Their mission is to save St. Johns County from clear cutting, and preserve the old growth trees. They are looking for more support from the citizens and communities in St. Johns County.

Also, Neil Armingeon, Matanzas Riverkeeper and one of the State's more out-spoken environmental activists, will speak about the Matanzas River and his quest to preserve and protect the river. Neil has 24 years of non-profit environmental organization experience. He served nine years as the St. Johns Riverkeeper in Jacksonville.

The Matanzas River estuary stretches approximately 23 miles from the St. Augustine Inlet southward to about seven miles south of the Matanzas Inlet. The Matanzas River Basin occupies more than 120,000 acres (186 square miles) and supports significant fish and wildlife resources. The basin contains the last relatively undisturbed and intact tidal marsh creek systems along Florida's east coast.

All are welcome! For further information, contact Larry Lickenbrock at (904) 537-6047. The program will be held **in the PGA Room** of the Ponte Vedra Beach Public Library on Library Road at A1A (blinking light south of the intersection of A1A and Solana Road, on A1A about two miles south of Butler Boulevard).

Jacksonville Program

March 14 @ 6:30pm

National Parks in the American South: Tourism, Politics, and the Protection of Nature

The Centennial of the National Park system will officially kick off in August of this year, but we are already celebrating! We will host Dr. Charles Closmann, History Professor at UNF, who will talk about the history of the National Parks of the South. Dr. Closmann will focus on Everglades, and Great Smokey Mountain National Parks and Fort Caroline National Memorial, how each of these was created and what bigger lessons we have learned about America's National Park system.

March 14th, Lakewood Presbyterian Church, 2001 University Blvd. W, rear of education bldg. Look for the driveway between the signs. 6:30-7:00 Social time. Program begins at 7:00. Free. All welcome. Please bring your own cup for refreshment to reduce waste in the landfill.

