

2016 GFWC Florida Legislation/Public Policy Report



GFWC Florida Chairman-Donna Peacock
1597 Fernando Dr.
Tallahassee, FL 32303
© 850-597-2398
(e) ddpeacoc77@embarqmail.com

1. The **Village Improvement Association of Orange City Woman's Club**, with a membership of 22 members, was invited to be part of a meeting to discuss policy and plans for the cities and charitable organizations in West Volusia County area to help the **homeless**. A debate was held as to how best to help the homeless, exactly where to do that, and with whose funds. With the input and help from this club a program will proceed under the management of the Neighborhood Center in De Land.
2. "Preventing Fracking, Preserving Quality Living" was the battle cry of the **Blountstown Woman's Club** as they took the lead when seismic testing by Cholla Oil was permitted in the Dead Lakes wetland area in Calhoun County. Their members co-founded Calhoun County Citizens Against Fracking, which involves high pressure injection of an average of 5 million gallons of water, sand, and thousands of gallons of toxic chemicals into gas/oil wells. The fracking breaks open rocks and releases gas, which rises to the surface and is captured, stored, or transported via pipeline or truck. Members coordinated three "free" movie screenings at public libraries throughout the County. Citizens were prompted to attend by the numerous editorials, articles, and local news coverage. Club members provided popcorn and frack-free water for attendees. The overall goal of these efforts is to increase public awareness that fracking, for either oil or gas, is a totally different process than the regulated drilling for conventional oil. Another attempt to appeal to the many who enjoy fishing and hunting in the pristine environment was a River Rally. One member designed, printed and distributed flyers reading, "Fracking is a Fishy Business." Others held up signs as cars passed. The most outgoing talked to boaters at the landing. Club members addressed the Altha Town Council, Blountstown City Commission and Calhoun County Commission regarding the health and environmental threats of this practice. Both the Blountstown City Council and the Calhoun County Commission made their first move to keep hydraulic and acidic fracturing out of their constituents' backyards. With much thanks, the Blountstown City Council passed a resolution to ban fracking within the city limits of Blountstown joining numerous Florida municipalities who have all gone on record that fracking is not welcome. The Calhoun County Commission did not move forward with their lawyer's drafted ordinance to ban fracking. Members attended meetings with representatives for Senator Bill Montford and former US Representative Gwen Graham. Emails, phone calls and letter writing campaigns continue. Calhoun's neighboring counties of Bay, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Jackson, Leon, Madison, Taylor and Washington have all banned fracking.
3. The **Lake Butler Woman's Club** became involved when a program was given at the club on Human Trafficking. They have a unique situation in that Interstate 10 & Interstate 75 intersect within 20 miles of their city. In addition to monitoring legislation, members were encouraged to watch for situations that might be human trafficking. Members use Facebook and cell phones to "like and share" alerts in order to help find missing people.
4. In an effort for Jackson County residents to have an opportunity to learn more about the candidates running for political offices, the Jackson County Chamber of commerce hosted a "Meet the Candidates" political forum. A committee made up of members of the **Marianna Woman's Club** coordinated the event. Members assisted with the candidate registration, meeting and greeting of those attending and served as pages during the event. It offered an opportunity for the club to work with the local Chamber, as well as providing a venue for the sharing of ideas on local issues.

2016 GFWC Florida Legislation/Public Policy Report

5. The **GFWC Lutz-Land O'Lakes Woman's Club** shared a comprehensive report of Legislative Action that included: monitoring the GFWC Legislative Action Center, making recommendations on Club's positions on current legislation to our 2 U.S. Senators, Senator Marco Rubio and Senator Bill Nelson, and to U.S. Representative, Gus Bilirakis, on Increased Funding for Programs that Address Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault; Dating Violence and Stalking; Devote Federal Resources to Combat Opioid Drug Epidemic; Pass Emergency Funding to Combat Zika; Make Global Vaccines a Priority with Shot @ Life; End Campus Sexual Assault; End Military Sexual Assault; Paycheck Fairness Act; and Women Air Force Service Pilot Arlington Restoration. At the beginning of the club year a column on current legislative events was started in the Club's monthly Newsletter. An email was sent to all members in August 2016 in lieu of a newsletter. The purpose of the email was to encourage all members to vote. Information was provided about voter registration, early voting, absentee voting and polling places.

6. The members of the **GFWC North Pinellas Woman's Club** are strong activists at their local level, taking on issues that included new parking meters in the downtown area, a new bridge between the main land and Honeymoon Island and the dumping of water that impacts sewer lines draining into Tampa Bay. The club is represented on the Chamber of Commerce boards of both Safety Harbor and Clearwater.

7. One of the avenues for local advocacy for the **GFWC Tampa Woman's Club** is the South Tampa Coalition made up of 17 neighborhood associations which represent 44,000 residents. The GFWC Tampa Woman's Club is the only non-neighborhood association organization in the Coalition. A member of the club sits on the Coalition and keeps club members informed of its activities and pending advocacy. The Coalition meets regularly with County Commissioners, City Council members and other city officials on issues affecting South Tampa. One of the issues in 2016 was the Stormwater Capital Improvement Plan. Councilman Maniscalco met with the coalition to present the proposal he would be making to City Council and get Coalition feedback on cost (\$251 million), Community Investment Tax (CIT) funding, and FDOT funds. Coalition members attended and advocated at City Council meetings and at public hearings and urged residents to email City Council. In the end, a Stormwater Capital Improvement Plan was passed in September. A note of appreciation was sent from Tampa's mayor to the club. GFWC Tampa Woman's Club was kept informed after each meeting and encouraged to advocate.

8. The **GFWC Woman's Club of Tallahassee** has been working for several years to restore the Passenger Train Service to the Panhandle and Tallahassee. Preprinted postcards were sent to Senator Nelson to ask for his continued support of Senate Bill 1626, which was heard and passed out of his committee. The postcards were sent immediately after Amtrak made a "trial run" through the North Florida panhandle, generating rallies at each stop and much media interest. Members attended the Tallahassee rally showing support for train service. In addition, a Club Resolution in support of reestablishing Amtrak service for the Panhandle of Florida was sent to GFWC Florida Resolution Chairman. Tallahassee is famous for its Canopy Roads. A recent move by the local government to dissolve the Canopy Roads Citizens Committee drew concerns from the members of the club. GFWC Woman's Club of Tallahassee donated meeting space at the clubhouse to the Los Robles Neighborhood Association and concerned citizens to attempt to stop the move to dissolve the Canopy Road Citizens Committee. The clubhouse is bordered by a canopy road and the club wanted to express strongly to the City Commissioners the Woman's Club's support for keeping the Canopy Roads Citizen's Committee.

2016 GFWC Florida Legislation/Public Policy Report
