

2016 GFWC Florida Legislative/Public Policy Creativity Report



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

The Blountstown Woman's Club is located in a small rural area of North Florida, known as the Panhandle. This active community club has a membership of 22 ladies. So, when they took up "Preventing Fracking, Preserving Quality Living" as their battle cry it was a huge undertaking for this small club. The members of this small club took the lead when seismic testing by Cholla Oil was permitted to take place in the Dead Lakes wetland area in Calhoun County. This first step in hydraulic fracturing has been the writing on the wall in areas though out their country. This well thought-out plan of attack against a very real issue in their community deserves the Creativity Award for Legislation and Public Policy.

- The women co-founded Calhoun County Citizens Against Fracking. Fracking involves high pressure injection of an average of 5 million gallons of water, sand, and thousands of gallons of toxic chemicals into a deep gas or oil well. The injection of fracking fluid breaks open rocks and releases gas, which rises to the surface and is captured, stored, or transported via pipeline or truck.
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- Members coordinated three "free" movie screenings held at public libraries throughout the County. Citizens were prompted to attend by the numerous editorials, articles, and local news coverage. Club members provided popcorn, frack-free water and goodies for the attendees to enjoy. The overall goal of these efforts was to increase public awareness that fracking, for either oil or gas, is a totally different process than the regulated drilling for conventional oil.
- The Club held a River Rally in an attempt to appeal to the many who enjoy fishing and hunting in their pristine environment and make them aware of this issue and their need to act. 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 got on the agenda and addressed the Altha Town Council, Blountstown City Commission and Calhoun County Commission regarding the health and environmental threats of this practice. At their regularly scheduled meetings on Tuesday, June 14, both the Blountstown City Council and the Calhoun County Commission made their first move to keep hydraulic and acidic fracturing out of their constituents' backyard. 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 have 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.

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