



**Applied
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April 26, 2012

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<http://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2010/08/13/2010-20005/notice-of-availability-of-the-draft-environmental-impact-statement-for-the-combined-licenses-for>

Re: Third Supplemental Comments on Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) of Proposed
Combined Licenses for Levy Nuclear Plant Units 1 and 2, Docket Nos. 52-029 and NRC-2008-0558
Project No. SAJ-208-00490 (IP-GAH)
New Information - Supplemental DEIS Required

Dear Project Managers Hambrick and Bruner:

On March 12, 2012, I submitted my second supplemental comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed Combined Licenses for Levy Nuclear Plant Units 1 and 2 ("LNP" and "project") referenced above. My preliminary comments on the DEIS were submitted on October 26, 2010 and my initial supplemental comments on the DEIS for the proposed project were submitted on November 27, 2010. My comments describe the myriad grave inadequacies of the LNP DEIS and failure to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Clean Water Act (CWA), the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act ("Magnuson-Stevens Act") and other federal requirements.

That supplemental comment letter confirmed that although my comments were not comprehensive, they were sufficient to justify the necessity for a supplemental DEIS, pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 1502.9(c)(1) & (2). To date, no supplemental DEIS has been released, however significant new information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed project and its impacts has been released since my last supplemental comment letter. That new information is summarized below.

A. Environmental Relevance of More Detailed Seismic Analysis

1. A letter dated March 15, 2012 was sent by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission ("NRC") staff to Progress Energy Florida ("PEF") as a request for additional information ("RAI") to support the licensing process. The letter, number 108, directs PEF to:

Evaluate the seismic hazards at your site against current NRC requirements and guidance, and, if necessary, update the design basis and structures systems and components important to safety to protect against the updated hazards (seismic portion only - of detailed Recommendation 2.1 - Enclosure 7 of SECY-12-0025).

2. In my professional opinion, the additional information that PEF will submit in response to this RAI regarding seismic hazards alone, regardless of whether changes in the design and structures are made, will be significant in evaluating the environmental impacts of the proposed project. This new seismic information will be relevant to environmental impacts regarding wetlands, water quantity and water quality and coastal ecosystems including habitat, as addressed in my 4/9/12 affidavit to the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (“ASLB”), which is incorporated herein as **Exhibit A**.

3. Note that “Contention 4A” referenced in that affidavit addresses adverse impacts to wetlands, water quantity and water quality but does not encompass all of the adverse environmental impacts of the proposed project, including impacts related to the additional seismic information that PEF has been directed to submit in the RAI.

4. Please also note that during a pre-hearing conference call with the ASLB on March 29, 2012, staff announced that the agencies intend to release the final EIS **before** PEF provides the additional information requested in the RAI. Clearly that action would result in a grossly deficient final EIS.

5. Releasing a supplemental DEIS with the additional information produced in response to the RAI and the other critical information referenced in my previous supplemental comment letters, prior to the preparation of the final EIS would not delay the project based on PEF’s admissions that they are in no rush to break ground. On page 12, line 22-page 13, line 7 of the Transcript of the ACRS 589th Meeting on December 1, 2011, PEF stated (emphasis added in bold):

...in April of 2010 we modified that contract to change the in-service dates for the first unit to 2021 and the second unit to 2022. The planned in-service date of 2021 for that first unit supports our generation needs in Florida. **And the time line extension will allow Progress Energy to complete the licensing process and benefit from the construction experience of other companies that have already begun construction of new nuclear plants.**

6. **Therefore, a supplemental DEIS is required with the additional information responsive to the RAI for public comment and for your agencies to take a hard look at how that information affects the extensive adverse off-site and cumulative impacts described above, as required by federal law.**

B. Levy County State Park Springs Turn Brown/Reverse Flow

1. Since I submitted my last supplemental comment letter to you the flow in springs in Levy County state parks has been reduced so significantly that some springs have turned brown and reduced flow. See the article titled “Fade to Brown,” incorporated herein as **Exhibit B1**, and the following link for “Code Blue Emergency Fanning Springs” regarding these critical problems in Manatee Spring State Park and Fanning Spring State Park: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoLhS3_-Lgc&context=C447c2f6ADvjVQa1PpcFNee_CgsSDr_aP3t5GRxJGB8hikPPhGgoY%3D

2. Also since I submitted my last supplemental comment letter to you several private residential wells have gone dry immediately west of the proposed LNP project site and in the vicinity of the proposed Tarmac/King aggregate mine that would supply the raw materials for the proposed LNP project.

3. In my professional opinion, the article in Exhibit B incorrectly attributes this serious problem to “drought” while the eye-witness testimony provided at the link above correctly attributes the problem to excessive removal of water from the ecosystem. In addition to removal via groundwater pumping, this depletion of groundwater occurs from the precise types of excavations required for the project, including proposed excavation for stormwater pits and the proposed Tarmac/King aggregate mine west of the project that would supply the raw materials for the proposed LNP project.

4. These incidents are clear indicators of the water crisis that Levy County is facing **without** the additional depletion of groundwater and surfacewater permitted for the proposed LNP project and the further aquifer depletions that would result from the proposed Tarmac/King mine.

5. This water crisis is not confined to the county that PEF has selected as the site of the proposed LNP project. The water crisis is widespread and increasing in severity. The global water crisis has been addressed by Maude Barlow, first Senior Advisor on water issues for the United Nations and author of “Blue Gold” and “Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis.” She summarizes our water crisis in, “Not a Drop to Drink,” which is incorporated herein in transcript form as **Exhibit B2**. On page 2 of her transcript she asks the critical question:

Why are we talking energy only? Why aren’t we talking about our dwindling water supplies?

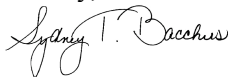
6. Based on these clear signals of the water crises in Levy County and world-wide, **a supplemental DEIS is required for your agencies to take a hard look at the obvious lack of water available for the proposed LNP project and alternatives that do NOT require water use in Levy County, such as roof-top solar panels and “decoupling” rate structures to induce serious energy conservation without requiring construction of a new power plant.**

C. Wildfires in Vicinity of Proposed Project Caused by Aquifer Depletion

1. In my professional opinion, the water crisis described above also is the cause of the destructive wildfires that have occurred in Levy County last April through June and this year since my last supplemental comment letter was submitted. The wildfires last year were located in Goethe State Forest, in the vicinity of existing mines north of the proposed LNP project site. According to the Florida Division of Forestry, that destructive wildfire burned 3,124 acres. The extent of that destructive wildfire is shown in **Exhibit C1**, which is incorporated herein. A brief description of the human impacts of that destructive wildfire is provided in **Exhibit C2**, which is incorporated herein. My opinion is based, in part, on an inspection of that area that I conducted after submitting my last supplemental comments to you. The map of the most recent fire is not available yet. **Therefore, a supplemental DEIS is required for your agencies to take a hard look at all of these cumulative impacts.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional supplemental comments regarding the grossly deficient DEIS.

Sincerely,



Sydney T. Bacchus, Ph. D.
Hydroecologist
appliedenvirserve@gmail.com

Exhibits:

- A. 4/9/12 Environmental relevance of more detailed seismic analysis
- B1. 4/5/12 Fade to Brown/Code Blue Emergency Fanning Springs
- B2. 1/27/12 Not a Drop to Drink
- C1. 6/9/11 Levy State Forest Wildfire Badlands map
- C2. 6/13/11 Road closures near two North Florida wildfires

cc:

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Mark Sramek, NOAA Habitat Conservation Division

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

BEFORE THE ATOMIC SAFETY AND LICENSING BOARD

In the Matter of)	April 9, 2012
Progress Energy Florida, Inc.)	Docket Nos. 52-029-COL
Levy Nuclear Plant, Units 1 and 2)	52-029-COL

AFFIDAVIT OF SYDNEY T. BACCHUS
IN SUPPORT OF JOINT INTERVENORS'
SUPPLEMENTAL MOTION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME
AND REQUEST FOR COMPLETION OF RAI SEISMIC STUDY PRIOR TO HEARING

Under penalty of perjury, I, Sydney T. Bacchus, Ph. D., declare as follows:

1. **Name and address** - My name is Sydney Bacchus. My business address is P. O. Box 174, Athens, Georgia 30603.

2. **Joint Intervenors' expert on environmental impacts** – I am a Hydroecologist. In 2009, after reviewing initial documents prepared and/or submitted by Progress Energy Florida, Inc. (PEF), I was retained as the Ecology Party of Florida's expert for the above-referenced proposed project regarding myriad large and irreversible adverse environmental impacts that would occur if the proposed Levy Nuclear Plant Units 1 and 2 ("LNP") was constructed and additional large and irreversible adverse environmental impacts if operation of the proposed LNP occurred.

3. **New seismic analysis is inside scope of Contention 4A.** - A letter dated March 15, 2012 was sent by NRC staff to Progress Energy Florida ("PEF") requesting additional information ("RAI") to support the licensing process. The letter, number 108 directs PEF to:

Evaluate the seismic hazards at your site against current NRC requirements and guidance, and, if necessary, update the design basis and structures systems and components important to safety to protect against the updated hazards (seismic portion only - of detailed Recommendation 2.1 - Enclosure 7 of SECY-12-0025).

This seismic analysis will have a significant bearing on Contention 4A ("C4A") because seismic issues combined with the underlying regional karst aquifer system are the basis for modifications to the enormous excavation and massive impermeable structures planned for LNP 1 & 2.

Construction of the proposed LNP includes the roller compacted concrete structure below each nuclear island, essentially creating "artificial bed rock" for the nuclear reactors. A November 15, 2011 staff teleconference with PEF on SRP Section: 19 - Probabilistic Risk Assessment and Severe Accident Evaluation, Application Section: 19.59 QUESTIONS for PRA and Severe Accidents Branch (SPRA) 19-75 made it perfectly clear that the function of the roller compacted concrete primarily was of concern in the event of a seismic event impacting the karst aquifer system, resulting in liquefaction. The concern of C4A is not liquefaction, but the impact of constructing the roller compacted concrete mats - one for each nuclear island, plus a "test mat" - for a total of three.

4. **Karst connections** - There can be no debate over why issues impacting karst and karstic connections influence C4A. Intervenor specifically addressed the underlying regional karst aquifer system at the proposed LNP site and described LARGE adverse environmental impacts that would result from construction of the proposed LNP at that karst site. In fact, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement fails to correctly identify problems with the underlying geology of the Levy area. This failure to address the karst formation and potential adverse environmental impacts related to the presence of sinkholes, relict sinkholes underlying the depressional cypress wetlands throughout and surrounding the proposed LNP site and fractures in the affected area of the proposed LNP will lead to misidentification of dewatering and aquifer flow issues. See the map of some of the recognized sinkholes in the affected area of the proposed LNP, incorporated herein as Bacchus Attachment 1.

5. **Dewatering and altered natural hydroperiod** – Construction of the proposed LNP includes multiple significant excavations and the dimensions and nature of those excavations may, in fact probably will, change in response to the referenced RAI. One of the most significant issues of the Intervenor's contention ("C4A") is the dewatering and alteration of the natural hydroperiod from construction of the proposed LNP at the proposed site. See Intervenor's contention.

6. **Potential new understanding of seismic issues may change design of seismic-related structures** such as the bridge mats below the nuclear islands. Since RAI 108 specifically directs PEF to do the seismic study and also consider if an "update" is "necessary" and to report any updates to structures, it is reasonable to wait and see if there are changes that would impact the issues raised here, and in previous filings on C4A.

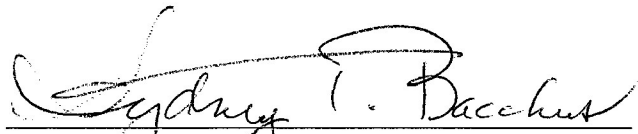
7. **Significant change of LNP structures can result in significant LARGE adverse environment impacts** – In my professional opinion, significant changes in proposed LNP structures at the proposed LNP site can result in significant LARGE adverse environment impacts

8. **NEPA considerations** – In my professional opinion, if the Intervenor is forced to proceed with the hearing before the Board on the proposed LNP they will not have access to the essential information ensured by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

9. **Relevance of the seismic study to Contention 4A** – The seismic study may yield information clarifying the characteristics and condition of the karst features at the proposed LNP site. Any new information regarding the karst features could clarify the connection(s) of the proposed site to the underlying Florida aquifer stem, as well as connections to water bodies referenced in C4A.

10. **A complete record** – It is my expert opinion that a complete record requires that the seismic study be part of the evidentiary hearing of C4A because this issue constitutes a substantial and significant component of my testimony as an expert witness for the Intervenor.

11. **Declaration** - I declare under penalty of perjury that the statements above are true and correct, to the best of my knowledge, and that the expressions of opinion stated above are based on my best professional judgment.



Executed in Accordance with 10 CFR § 2.304(d)

Sydney T. Bacchus, Ph. D.

Hydroecologist

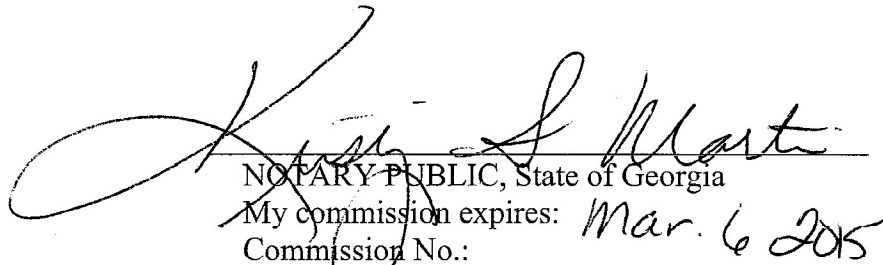
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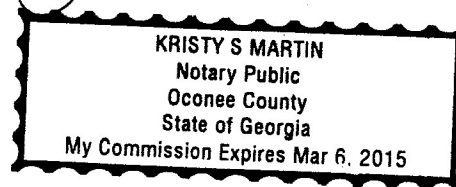
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SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED before me this 9th day of April 2012, by the
affiant, SYDNEY T. BACCHUS, who is personally known to me or who has produced
GADL as identification.


NOTARY PUBLIC, State of Georgia
My commission expires: Mar. 6 2015
Commission No.:



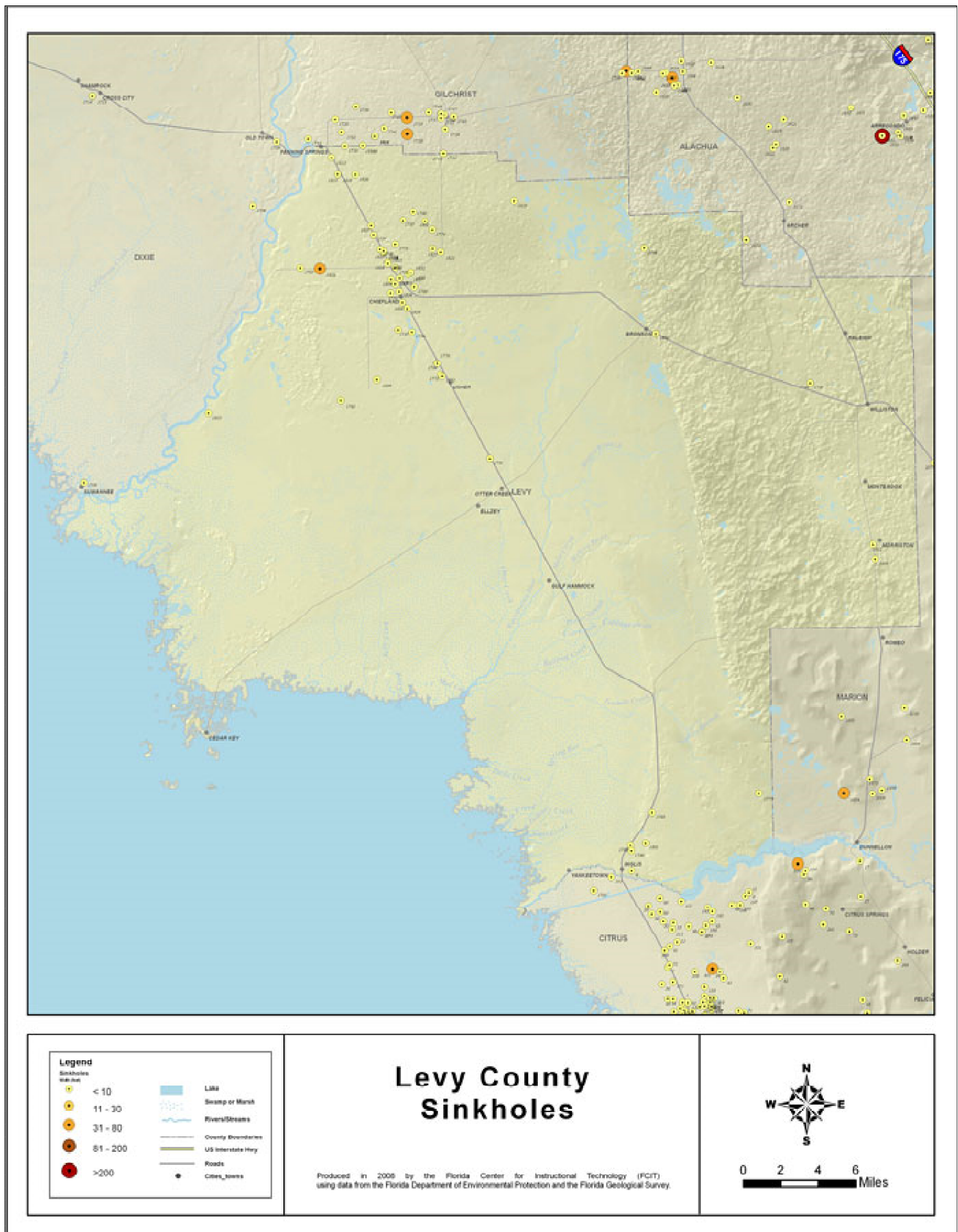


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[FL Maps](#) > [County](#) > [Levy](#) > Sinkholes of Levy County, Florida , 2008

[Site Map](#)

Sinkholes of Levy County, Florida , 2008



Title: Sinkholes of Levy County, Florida Main Map Page
Projection: [Zoomify Version](#)
Source Bounding Coordinates: [B/W PDF Version](#)
W: E: N: S: [Color PDF Version](#)
Puzzles: [Easy](#), [Medium](#), [Hard](#)
[Google Earth](#)

Description: This map was created by FCIT and represents reported sinkhole events in Levy County based on data gathered by the Florida Geological Survey (FGS) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). " This dataset represents a set of points for reported sinkhole events. The data herein represents reported sinkhole activity but may also contain non-karst related subsidence such as collapsed septic systems, water mains, and/or other man-made features. This information contained in this dataset is primarily used to more fully understand the unique relationship between karst and the state's groundwater resources and aquifer systems." DATA DISCLAIMER This geologic data was developed to carry out agency responsibilities related to management, protection, and development of Florida's natural resources. Neither FDEP/FGS or the Florida Center for Instructional Technology assumes any responsibility for the consequences of inappropriate uses or interpretations of the data.

For a complete list of sinkholes in this county, click [here](#).

Place Names: Levy, Yankeetown, Gulf Hammock, Ellzey, Otter Creek, Usher, Bronson, Raleigh, Williston, Montbrook, Morriston, Cedar Key, Chiefland, Fanning Springs,

ISO Topic Categories: boundaries, geoscientificInformation, inlandWaters

Keywords: Sinkholes of Levy County, Florida , Sinkhole, Karst, Caves, Sinks, physical, political, ksinkhole, transportation, physical features, geological, county borders, roads, boundaries, geoscientificInformation, inlandWaters, 2008

Source: Florida Center for Instructional Technology, *Sinkholes* (Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, 2008)

Map Credit: Courtesy of the Florida Center for Instructional Technology

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[Site Map](#)

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Fade to Brown

^A

Drought impacts yet another Levy spring

By Mark Scohier, Staff writer

Thursday, April 5, 2012 at 5:00 am *(Updated: April 5, 5:00 am)*

Bronson Blue Springs has lost its sparkle.



Mark Scohier

Levy County Parks and Recreation Director Matt Weldon stands on a sandbar Tuesday morning that used to be submerged by spring water.

«Severe drought, according to Suwannee River Water Management District Engineer Meagan Wetherington, has caused the spring to quit flowing. And recent rains, though not enough to recharge the aquifer, have caused water from nearby swamps, heavy with tannins, to flow into the spring, staining it muddy brown.

"It's in sad shape," said Levy County Parks and Recreation Director Matt Weldon on Tuesday. "It's the lowest it's ever been. Nobody we've talked to, old-timer wise, has ever seen it this low."

Weldon, standing on a drought-exposed sandbar at the spring, said Bronson Blue usually keeps flowing, even in times of drought. "You know it's bad times when this one's low."

The spring, which brings in about \$20,000 a year from swimmers, has dropped 10 inches just in the last week, he said.

Wetherington said Tuesday that water levels in the Bronson area are as low as they were in 2002, a time when Levy County set records for low levels. And levels are continuing to fall, she said.

Blue Springs, which partially feeds the Waccasassa River, is generally classified by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection as a 3rd magnitude spring, pumping between 1 and 10 cubic feet of cool, clear water every second.

Weldon said the spring will not be open until flow is restored.

The Bronson area, and much of Levy County, is suffering from a 20-inch rainfall deficit for the last 12 months, Wetherington said. Compare that with record flooding the county saw in 2010, which racked up a 25-inch surplus. "That's a difference of a year's worth of rain," she said.

Wetherington said conditions for Blue Springs, just like the rest of the springs in the Tri-County Area, are not likely to improve in the next several months. The rains that typically come in April, May and June tend to do little for aquifer recharge, she said. Heavy downpours tend to "sheet" across the land before the water has a chance to seep into the ground. The area needs slow, steady rain.

"So, definitely feast or famine for Levy County."



This photo shows Blue Springs in March 2011.

Mark Scohier

[Buy this photo](#)

2 of 2



MAUDE BARLOW

Not a Drop to Drink

Denver, Colorado 27 January 2012

Maude Barlow is the National Chairperson of The Council of Canadians, Canada's largest public advocacy organization, and the co-founder of the Blue Planet Project, working internationally for the right to water. She is the recipient of the Right Livelihood Award, the alternative Nobel Prize and the Citation for Lifetime Achievement, Canada's highest environmental award. She served as the first Senior Advisor on water issues for the United Nations. She's the author of many books including "Blue Gold" and "Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis."

I'm going to talk a little about the global situation and then come back here to the U.S. and to Colorado. And then I'm going to talk about what I think we need to do about the water crisis. If I'm a little negative at first, forgive me. I'll get positive later. But I think it's really important, particularly for young people. Forgive me, because I hate people my age who say to young people, "Oh, my, it's the end of everything." Well, it isn't, of course. We've got lots we can do. But I do think it's important to have the courage to say the truth about the situation that we're in, so I will spend a little bit of time doing that. And that is to say this: That back in Grade 6 pretty well everyone in the world learned a lesson that was wrong. Our teachers weren't lying but it was wrong. That lesson was that you can't run out of water; that we have a hydrologic cycle with a limited but finite specific amount of water, and it goes around and around in the cycle, and it can't go anywhere and you can't—maybe we started to realize you can pollute it, but that's really as far as far as we got.

What we know now is that that's not true. We are a planet running out of water, running out of accessible, clean water. I have a PowerPoint that shows the Earth maybe about this big stripped of its water, and beside it is a little around ball, and that shows all the water in the world to scale. But beside that is a tiny dot you can hardly see, and that's the available fresh water in our world. What are we doing with it? Where is it going? We're polluting it, of course. That's one of the big things. We are putting the equivalent of sewage and toxins into our water systems every year equivalent to all the weight of all 7 billion of us on the planet, every single year. And we are also using water far faster as we become so-called more sophisticated, more urban, more so-called developed. The population is growing, but the use of water is doubling at the rate of population. So it's not that we don't have enough water for all. It's that we don't have enough water for the uses to which we are putting it.

We are also displacing water massively. We're extracting our rivers to death to grow inappropriate crops and commodities in deserts and so on. We have a global trade system, and I want to tell you about something called virtual water trade. Virtual water is the water that is used to produce a commodity or to produce computers or

cars or whatever. There's water used in mining and energy, particularly like fracking or the more-difficult-to-get-at energy. All this water, if it's then either destroyed or is exported out of the watershed with the export, it's gone permanently from the watershed. One of the reasons that I have opposed these global trade agreements and the whole notion of unlimited growth and exponential free trade, more stuff, more growth, is that we are destroying our water system, because we grow things with it and then ship it away.

Then we're pumping our groundwater faster than we can replenish it, with technology we did not have 50 years ago. A brand-new study on groundwater taking says that we're doubling our exponential use and abuse of groundwater every 20 years. Several examples come to mind. The Ogallala Aquifer that runs down the spine of the western U.S. that produces most of the food here is only producing half the food it was producing in the 1970s. And the Ogallala center of the Department of Agriculture here in the U.S. says that it will be in this lifetime that it will actually run out. They say there's no question about if it will. It absolutely will. It's a question of when. There's another study on groundwater takings that said that if the Great Lakes water, for instance, is being pumped as quickly as groundwater around the world, the Great Lakes could be bone dry in 80 years. I think that's an absolutely stunning statistic.

One of the things that's happening, then, of course, is that we're pumping water out of aquifers, out of rivers, out of lakes, and we are sending them to big cities. When we say cities, 5, 10, 20, 30 million people. And if those cities are anywhere near the ocean, we're dumping that water into the ocean, we're not returning it to the land. So we are depleting the land of water sources and we are creating desertification in over 100 countries in the world. This same study on groundwater takings said that probably at least a quarter of the cause of rising oceans is not climate change as we have understood it. Rather, it is the shifting of land-based water into the ocean. It's the dumping of freshwater, which then becomes salinated water. And if you think that desalination is an easy answer, just take it back. It is not. It's expensive, it's energy-intensive, and it puts a terrible polluting brine back into the ocean.

So what we're hearing from scientists is that we're not just experiencing drought—you will hear the word "drought"—but in fact we're running out of water in many parts of the world. China has used so much of its water to produce its so-called industrial miracle, to send running shoes and toys all over the world. There are 4,000 cities in China in danger of having to be deserted because of the encroachment of desert. Twenty-two countries in Africa are in crisis. Every single country in the Middle East is slated for the end of water. We're not talking water shortages. The end of water. Australia, the Murray-Darling, the major river system, no longer reaches the ocean. They had a little bit of a reprieve last year with the floods. But this is a perfect example of this virtual water. Huge industrial farms, great big agribusinesses have built up all along the Murray-Darling, and they suck the water up, they grow cotton, they grow rice, they produce wine, and they ship it all over the world, and it is shipped out of the water system. This very sophisticated, so-called, First World country is absolutely running out of water very quickly. India, Mumbai, is hitting the bottom of its water table.

The image that I want you to have is of a bathtub. There's lots of water in the bathtub, and there are people around the bathtub and they have blindfolds on and they've got straws and they're sucking the water out of the bathtub. If you could see this coming, one and one and two and two, that would be one thing. But when you have exponential overuse or exponential environmental destruction, you don't see it coming fast enough. These people around the bathtub are getting lots of water. There's lots of water for everybody until there's no water for anybody. This is the image that we need to have in our mind, that we are not replacing this water in the ground.

Mexico City is sinking. They took all the water from underneath the city—it's called subsidence—and now literally—churches are kind of half falling into the ground. And the U.S. The U.S. Midwest, the U.S. Southwest, you know the story here in Colorado. It's very important that we understand. The RDC, our Resource Defense Council, says that there are now at least 40 states that face in either the immediate or in the not too distant future a reality of water crisis in this country. I find it astounding, in all of our countries, my country and yours, we still have federal elections in which the word "water" is never mentioned. The discussion of water just doesn't take place. I think, Why are we talking energy only? Why aren't we talking about our dwindling water supplies?

What we're finding, of course, is that with this crisis coming—and, of course, it's affecting in them different ways around the world—we have a number of conflicts growing. The first, of course, is between those who can afford lots of water for whatever they want and those who cannot. There's a new study from the World Health Organization that says that in the Global South every three and a half seconds a child dies of waterborne disease. It is

simply the biggest killer of children, far more than accidents, HIV-AIDS, and war put together. The lack of clean water, the lack of access to accessible water is the number one killer of children in the world. This is growing as the gap between rich and poor grows.

You might want to know, and I think we need to say, however, that it's not just in the Global South. Or should I say, the Global South is not just in other countries. It's right here in North America. A few years ago the City of Detroit cut off the water to 42,000 families in inner-city Detroit. We think the numbers are probably closer to 90,000 families now. They are eking out a water living the way people in villages in the Global South eke out water, having to go and try to find it, buy it, whatever. And social services have come in and taken a number of their children away. So this issue is growing here. As we see a growing gap between rich and poor, growing in Europe, growing in Canada, growing in the U.S., and as we see water getting more and more expensive, which is happening, we are going to see water haves and have-nots in the so-called First World as well.

Then we have nation states looking outside their borders for new supplies of water, just the way they look outside their borders for secure energy supplies. That's what the whole debate around the Keystone pipeline to the U.S. from Canada is about. I love it when American politicians say, "We need a domestic secure source of energy." And we say, "Wait a minute. That's Canadian. Okay, all right, you can have it." Actually, we give it away in NAFTA, so it's not really Canadian anymore. Which is funny. We all kind of smile when we hear that this is domestic energy. But it's all owned by the big energy companies; it has nothing to do with nation states anymore anyway. So countries are looking outside of their own borders.

And one of the things we're seeing are land and water grabs. There has been land twice the size of the United Kingdom bought up by either investment companies, hedge fund companies, or countries, even countries like China and India, but certainly wealthier countries like Saudi Arabia and so on, buying up land and water for a future time when they don't have the ability to grow food for their own people and don't have the water they need for their own needs.

We also have conflict growing between the needs and demands of big cities and rural communities, indigenous communities, and nature. So we're plundering our wilderness and our rural communities for water to pull into large cities. Mexico City has put pipelines into indigenous lands and just confiscated the water. You've got to start thinking of water as gold. That's why I called my first book on water *Blue Gold*, because you will see, actually, armed fortresses, armed guards and dogs and guns around these water sources, because they are becoming contested the way gold mines or energy sources are.

But I think the biggest debate that we're having and the one I've been most deeply involved in, is the issue as to whether water is a commodity to be put on the open market, like oil and gas or electricity or running shoes or whatever, and sold to the highest bidder, or is water a commons, a human right, a public trust, is it something that is a shared heritage of humanity and of the Earth, because I don't think we can separate them. Is water a resource for our convenience and profit, or is water the essential element in the living ecosystem that gives us life? This is a very intense struggle that we're having.

It takes a number of forms. One of them is around utilities, water services. We've had intense fights. Colleagues in Bolivia have got rid of not one but two big transnational water companies. I remember being in a place called Orange Farm in South Africa, poverty as far as you can see, rats in the gutters, kids with no shoes, no water anywhere, and burning garbage. But suddenly the miracle that to every block of these tarpaper shacks is a state-of-the-art pipe bringing beautiful clean water. But between the pipe and the tap is a state-of-the-art water meter. The only way you can get at the water is to get an electronic key charged up, and you have to pay for it. With unemployment at around 80% in that community, nobody can afford it. I can remember standing with one of the activists there, who said, "It gives new meaning to the old saying, 'Water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink.'" So the women take the vases or the containers on their heads and walk the 5 miles to the polluted water source, which is why we see the diseases like cholera coming back.

Then there's bottled water. We've got bottled water fights all over the world. I noticed here in the theatre that only bottled water is allowed in here. So I just want you to know I broke the rule. I have tap water. If you were to take just the single bottles that people drank in the world last year, the little individual ones, the little plastic ones, and put them end to end, they would reach to the moon and back 65 times. It is absolutely insane to be paying for and taking care of source water and have clean, safe water coming out of our taps and have to turn to bottled water. That's not to say there aren't parts of the world where you cannot get clean water out of at your tap. I understand that. But that's not the case here. The bottled water industry and the bottled water struggle is a huge one.

Then we have what are called water markets, or sometimes called water rights. We have the beginning of that here in Colorado. But it can be taken to extremes. In Australia what they did was—they thought this would make everything more efficient—they converted the licenses to these big companies to water rights, and then they said, "You will trade them, but we think, because you're going to be able to sell them and make money, you will use less water and you will sell the excess and everybody will be happy." That's not what happened. The big companies bought out the little companies' water

rights and the small farmers' water rights. Then the big investors started coming in, and then big foreign investors started coming in. Now the Labour government tried to buy back some of these rights because the Murray-Darling river system was desperate, but they couldn't afford it. The price of water had risen so high that the government could not afford to bring this water back.

Chile has gone further than any country in the world in privatizing water. This is a direct legacy of the Pinochet regime, because he started this. But you can actually have public water auctions. They have water auctions where mining companies—and I hate to tell you, it's Canadian, they're the worst in the world—the Canadian mining companies are there outbidding local first nations or tribal people or communities or farmers or whatever and just buying up that water. So it can go to an extreme and is moving into areas of real private accumulation. T. Boone Pickens, the gazillionaire energy guy in Texas, is buying up huge amounts of the Ogallala Aquifer and holding on to it. I'm not sure what for. I think he's in his late eighties, so I'm not sure what he's going to do.

So we have a huge corporate grab. If you look at the chart for the demand—and this is my last stat I'm going to give you—this is a study that was just done by all the major water guzzlers, Coca Cola and Pepsi and Nestlé and the big food companies. They coordinated their research and they said by 2030—that's not a very long time away—the demand in our world for water will outstrip supply by 40%. It's an absolutely terrifying statistic. If you look at the chart, the demand goes straight up and the supply is going straight down. The private sector knows that there's money to be made in water and there's also power to be held. As one investment banker told a big conference in London, England, last year, "The water crisis provides an opportunity to make buckets and buckets of money."

Now Colorado. I don't have to tell you that you have a problem, we have a problem here in this area. The reprieve last year with the snowpacks was just that. It was just a reprieve. And I don't think it's going to be matched this year. I sure didn't see much snow, coming in here today. Lake Meade is perilously near the level at which the Secretary of the Interior may have to declare a water shortage and impose severe water restrictions. There's a study by the Scripps Institute of Oceanography that says with climate-change models they can say absolutely that the runoff in this area will decline by between 10% and 30% over the next two decades. As I say, the NRDC has come out with a new study. If you go to their website, they actually have a map of the U.S. showing all the areas of drought and coming drought and over that they overlay where the population is growing. It tells a story that is something we need to know.

Here's something I want to say really strongly to you. We need to think about what we're doing with our water. One of the things here in the U.S. is that you're growing a

great deal of food in places that don't have water to grow this food and you're shipping it away. A third—most Americans don't know this—a third of your daily water withdrawals, a third, leave not only the watershed but leave the country altogether. You're a net water exporter through commodity trade. This is things like biofuel, ethanol, and that kind of thing. These are the questions that we're going to have to grapple with that people don't particularly want to.

I also want to raise the concern of fracking. And then I'm going to stop telling you about problems and start telling you about what I think we need to do. The worst thing you could do, it seems to me—well, second worst, okay. The first is to build a pipeline over the owing Ogallala Aquifer, that is already dramatically distressed, and send the dirtiest oil in the world through it, this corrosive oil that absolutely, I promise you, will spill and would spill into the Ogallala. Except that the President has made that one very good decision to not allow it. But I guess the second dumbest thing is to allow fracking in a state where the water crisis is as perilous as this one is. There are now 48,000 fracked wells already in Colorado and each well uses between 1 and 5 million gallons. Just try to do the math here, the amount of water.

We're not just talking here about water that's used and then put back into the system in a healthy state. As you know, fracking requires the use of chemicals. In one study in New York the EPA there couldn't get the answer, as you know, from the manufacturers about what chemicals are in the fracking fluid. So they did their own study by fracking sites, and they listed 257 toxins and carcinogens that are in the water in the fracking areas. It takes 10 pages to list what they found in this one study. I am Canadian, but I also chair the board of Food and Water Watch here in the U.S. We're calling for a full moratorium on fracking. We think that it's absolutely the most dangerous development.

So what do we do with this very bleak reality? I'm actually hopeful. My husband always says, "Do people willingly come to hear you speak? Why do they do that on a Friday night?" You could go to a movie or out to dinner. But if you take a hard look at it—we have a wonderful writer, Margaret Atwood—you may know her writing—in Canada, and she says, "The world seen clearly is seen through tears," which I think is gorgeous. Whenever anybody gets weepy over something that they feel passionate about, I always pull that quote out, because I think it's true.

The world right now—we are in trouble ecologically, from the fish in the sea—90% of the big fish are gone—the hunt for minerals, and it is mineral hunting, as water mining is water hunting. I see this bottled water. In a movie that just came out in Europe—I think I'm probably going to get sued—I called Nestlé "water hunters." But they are. They're aggressive, seeking out the last

remaining non-fossil, clean fuels and forests and minerals and fish in the sea.

We really have to ask ourselves some hard questions about the whole notion of growth. It's why I continue to talk about the issue of trade. We continue to get deeply involved in these trade agreements. The U.S. under Obama was going to question trade, he was going to take a revisit to NAFTA. None of that has happened. He's now aggressively promoting a number of trade agreements, as is my government. We have a very, very right-wing government in Canada right now. They're actively, aggressively promoting globalization, open markets, deregulation. So I think of Grover Norquist, who was the tax adviser to George Bush, who used to say the appropriate size of government is small enough to put it in a bathtub so that any time you need to pull the plug, you can just do that and down it goes.

So big picture, I think we have to really question this mantra of growth and we're going to have to come back to more sustainable economies. That doesn't we're all going to live like our great grandparents. Nobody is saying that. But something has to change. We need to start asking ourselves some very hard questions. Here in Colorado there are going to be big questions around big corporate farms that export your water away versus more sustainable local farms. There are going to be hard questions around snowmaking and that whole industry. I've seen it up front. I was at the Sundance—I know, a different state but same thing—a couple of years ago for a film done on my work. And just the condos they were putting up. Every condo had a dishwasher and a washer and a dryer and shower heads that really poured the water down. This is in a state that doesn't have water. We need to think really carefully about what we're doing and about the notion that we continue to grow.

But what to do immediately around this? I think we need to come to some practical guidelines based on some principles. I would offer you these three, and then I'd like to talk with you, not at you. We in our movement have really struggled through a lot of work to try to come to a consensus on these, because we feel it's very important to take the time to have the principles; otherwise your policies and your laws and your solutions are all over the place and they're not going to work.

The first principle is that water is a sacred commons and a public trust. We go back to the notion of the commons. The commons is a very well old and yet a very new term again, and I think you're going to be hearing a lot more about it. The enclosure of the commons in England was during a time when the peasants were allowed to hunt and fish and grow their small crops on nobility land. But it was understood that they had a right to live. Then the laws came in in the 1600s that enclosed the commons, and many people died.

So many of us talk about the modern enclosure of the commons as being this move to privatize absolutely everything. What are carbon markets if it isn't a way of trading pollution and privatizing the air? What are water markets, if not that? So the modern commons, the language we're trying to bring back now, is based on the notion that certain national resources, air and water and oceans, are central to our very existence, and therefore the governments have the responsibility to exercise their fiduciary role to make sure that they're governing in the interests of all of their people, not just a privileged few, and they don't allow a privileged few to have particular and special access to these waters or these commons.

And the public trust doctrine is basically the legal basis, it's the legal framework that you use to articulate and to accept and to adopt the notion of the commons. For instance, the notion of a public trust is that shoreline must be open to all. Even though there might be private homes along there, nobody can stop you from walking up and down a shoreline or enjoying the water of a shoreline. So this notion that we have the right to claim certain commons for all of us because if we don't, many will die while others have privileged access. This is going to be very difficult to move to in Colorado, because you have moved some direction in the area of water rights, and it's very entrenched in the American West. It's far less entrenched in the American East, and particularly in New England. But I believe that eventually every state in the U.S. is going to have to come up with a long-term plan, a statewide plan, a watershed-wide plan, that clarifies that the people here are the keepers of the watershed and the sacred water commons and set out priorities for access.

I'll give you an example. I worked with a government in Vermont. Four years ago they realized that there was a lot of free-for-all taking of their groundwater, particularly bottled-water companies coming in and just helping themselves. So the government, with myself and a few others, drafted legislation, and then it was unanimously adopted, that said that their groundwater is a public trust, belongs to all Vermonters, belongs to the ecosystem and belongs to future generations. Those are the owners of the water. They actually set priorities in time of shortage. One of those priorities is water for local food production rather than for food production for commercial export. As I say, this is tough to do, and they don't have the big, big agribusiness interests that exist here or in California. But I think it's a model really worth looking at.

So that's the first, that water is a sacred commons and a public trust. That doesn't mean there isn't an economic use for water or an economic purpose for water. Of course there is. But anyone who uses water—and in Vermont they say if you're going to access it, you have to have a license and you have to ensure for the owners, the people of Vermont, that you're not hurting that water. They've

already used it to challenge a nuclear waste plant. So it's a law with teeth and it's a law that's moving.

The second is that water is a fundamental human right. You might say that's a motherhood and I would say, I would have agreed with you, but I've been involved in the fight too long to know that actually not a motherhood. We have had a very, very intense struggle over this issue. Up against us were big corporations, the bottled-water companies, the big utilities like Suez and Veolia, the World Bank, wealthy countries. My country has consistently opposed the right to water. Part of it is that the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, Australia have this notion that they don't want to extend the concept of rights to second and third generations, so more community-based and so on, so they just resist any new human right. But it's been a terrible uphill battle.

We thought it was going to be another 20 years at the UN. A couple of years ago I had the honor of serving as the senior adviser on water to the 63rd president of the General Assembly, Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann from Nicaragua. He and I and the ambassador from Bolivia, Pablo Solon, came together to promote the right to water at the UN. Ambassador Solon, had the courage in the summer of 2010 to put a resolution to the General Assembly, which was adopted. I was there the day it got adopted. They had to vote on it because many countries were opposed. When you're at the UN and they're voting, they do it from their chairs. It's all electronic, up on a big board. I was convinced we were going to lose. I was holding hands with my staff and saying, "Don't worry. We'll come back another time. We'll win another time," blah, blah, blah. Anyway, we won. And it was joyous and wonderful. And no country, even the U.S., not even my country, voted against. Forty-one abstained but 122 voted for it and it was adopted. And then only months later the Human Rights Council also adopted a similar resolution but spelled out the obligations on governments.

We had a test case within a couple of months. The Kalahari Bushmen of Botswana have been treated horribly by their government, which considers them an embarrassing anachronism because they still live the way their ancestors did. The government wants turn the Kalahari into an eco-theme park, and they found diamonds and De Beers wants in. So they started removing the people and making them live off the desert. The Bushmen kept coming back, so they smashed their water bore wells. In a series of court cases they won the right to go back to the desert but not to their water. But what was so lovely is when these two resolutions were adopted, the Kalahari Bushmen went back to the Supreme Court of Botswana and said, "We are armed with these two resolutions. We want the right to our water recognized." The Supreme Court unanimously said, yes, you do, and forced government to allow them to go back to provide water, to reopen that bore well, and to pay them for never, ever all

of the suffering that they've incurred but some of it. So it's just a tremendous victory for us.

So that's the second, that water is a human right. By the way, I've written a guide for the Great Lakes called "Our Great Lakes Commons: A People's Guide for Saving Great Lakes." What we want to do is have the Great Lakes named a common, as a human right, a public trust and a protected bioregion. So if you want to go to our website, canadians.org, and get a model of what this might look like, I think this could work for any watershed.

The third, then, that the sacred water commons has rights, too. The water itself and watersheds themselves and other species have rights beyond their use to us. Most human—and I would exempt indigenous peoples or first people's in many places—but most "modern" humans, in the West particularly, have seen nature, and in this case water, as a resource for us, for our use, for our convenience, for our profit. It's time to put that behind us. When you see nature that way, then you're going to take the hard path, to high technology, desalinization, big dams, and so on. If you take the soft path, you're going to go water restoration, you're going to take the path of conservation, of protection of source water. Martin Luther King said, "Legislation may not change the heart, but it will restrain the heartless." Infrastructure investment, cutting our virtual export imprint, local, sustainable food production, and so on. There are ways and there are plans that we can build to conserve water and share. There's another water for all if we treat it very differently. If we protect it and then we share it more equitably among us, we can save the world's water. Many of us are challenging the whole notion of the marketization of nature, the commodification of nature.

When the UN gathers in Rio in June—this is the Rio+20—you're going to hear a lot about something called "the green economy." At first blush you're going to think that must be good, it's good for the economy and it's green. But the image that the powers that be are bringing to this green-economy discussion is basically continued free trade, continued deregulation, continued unlimited growth, continued marketization and commodification of nature, but with friendly technology. "Oh, let's trade that technology and let's make lots of money on it." I'm sorry to say this, but I think we're going to have to build a fight against this notion, as it's being promoted by the World Bank and others, of this green technology.

So we need instead a body of law that regulates human behavior in order to protect the integrity of the Earth and other species. Our human rights must be balanced against those of ecosystems and the Earth itself. What would it look like if the Gulf could sue BP? Think of it. At the moment, you know who can sue BP? Only those individual families and businesses that can prove that they lost property in the spill. Nobody can sue on behalf of the ecosystem or the aquatic life there or the

future, the inability of people to live there in the future or just the general damage done to the local population.

We came together after the failure of the climate summit in Copenhagen two years ago in Bolivia and we came out of it with something called the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth. We are deeply hoping that one day it will take its place alongside the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the manifesto for our time. I do believe every now and then humans take an evolutionary step forward, and this is one in which I think this is happening.

So I'm just going to finish the formal part of this with two quotes, and then I would like to talk with you. The first is from a man named Cormac Cullinan. Cormac is the person who wrote the first draft of the Universal Declaration. He's a lawyer from South Africa, an environmental and human rights lawyer. And he says this about the rights of nature: "The day will come when the failure of our laws to recognize the right of a river to flow, to prohibit acts that destabilize the Earth's climate, or to impose a duty to respect the intrinsic value and right to exist of all life will be as reprehensible as allowing people to be bought and sold. We will only flourish by challenging these systems and claiming our identity as well as assuming our responsibilities as members of the Earth community."

The other quote I want to leave you with is from Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. I loved it before the films, but I did love the films. It's Gandalf, and he's facing that night when all evil may triumph over all good. He's talking about being a steward. I'm speaking to all of you who have come here tonight because you wouldn't be here if you weren't stewards. I want to share this with you. I've kind of got Tolkien on the brain because not long ago we took a group of journalists and people up to the tar sands in northern Alberta. We took a bus and we toured and we took them up in a helicopter. I came back to Edmonton and we held a press conference. And I called the tar sands Canada's Mordor from the *Lord of the Rings*. So the next day in the *Edmonton Journal*, front page, it had my quote, and then it had a photo of Mordor from the film and a photo of the Syncrude site in the tar sands. So help me, you wouldn't know which was which. There were just no Hobbits in the Syncrude site. Anyway, one of the energy poobahs said—he should have said, "There's no such thing, and that's a terrible thing to say." What he said was, "It's not as bad as Mordor," which I thought was not the smartest thing to say. Anyway, here is Gandalf speaking as a steward that night, because much, of course, of the *Lord of the Rings* is about an assault on nature.

He says, "The rule of no realm is mine.... But all worthy things that are in peril as the world now stands, those are my care. And for my part, I shall not wholly fail of my task...if anything passes through this night that can still grow fair or bear fruit and flower again in days to

come. For I also am a steward. Did you not know?" Thank you.

Q&A

The a question is about information. It's easier to let water flow than get the information out. It's been hard with the mainstream media. There are exceptions. I would say *The New York Times* has done a good job of telling the water crisis story. And I've seen some good reports here in Colorado as well. The questions that don't get asked, though, are the deeper ones, the ones that get to the heart of what the problem is. So we have drought, so too many people chasing too little water, and leave it at that. Instead of saying, Why do some get access to so much? Why is it that the computer companies get to have—and this is in certain states—access to cheaper water than what residents pay? This is very common. If a state wants to lure industry, it will do it by lowering standards or lowering taxes for that industry or whatever, and in this case by saying, "We'll give you water at a cheaper rate if you come and locate here." Because they're desperate to bring jobs. Those are the deeper questions about where is the water going.

I go back to this again and again. As we have built a global food trade so that food that could be grown a half a mile down the road and you could be using is shipped away and you're buying stuff from halfway around the world, it's insane. There's nothing wrong with trade as long as it's based on some common sense. There was a study done a couple years ago, and they compared the number of livestock from England that were shipped to Europe for slaughter for food and then the number of livestock from Europe to Great Britain. And it was about the same. So what's the point? It's terrible for the environment, it's terrible for the animals. It doesn't make any sense except if you're trying to get the prices down, if you're trying to make the farmers in Europe competitive against the farmers in Great Britain. Those are the kinds of questions we haven't heard asked.

When you read about the Horn of Africa and you read about the terrible drought there and you hear about the suffering and the death, everybody just about has the same analysis: Too many people, drought, too few resources, and corruption. That's what you're going to hear over and over again. What you don't hear is that the North American and European hedge funds and investment funds and wealthy countries have come in and bought up the best land and have access to the best water. And they help themselves to water, which is used to grow food for export, and the people there get left with none. That's the stuff you're not going to read, maybe, in *The New York Times*. I shouldn't say. I don't read it enough that I can say for sure. But I can sure speak about the Canadian media. You're not going to read that in our mainstream newspapers.

That's why we have to support ways of getting this information out. I would urge you to go to the website of Food and Water Watch, foodandwaterwatch.org, here in the U.S., because it has tremendous information on fracking, on the situation here, on food, who's growing what food, who's got privileged access.

We live in a world of haves and have-nots. And we have to look at the depletion in our resources in connection with the growing inequality in our world. We cannot separate them. That's why in our movement we are trying to pull together environmentalists and scientists and those who are warning about the crisis over here, because they've been working in isolation, with those working on the human rights development issue over here. We've got to put it together. If the answer is, let's find more money to dig more wells, but you're running out of groundwater, that's not the answer. If the answer is, we'll ask those people to take care of their water, but they don't have any sanitation and they're desperately poor and they have to use the rivers to defecate in, that's not the answer. You can't have one without the other. So it's not that you're not reading that there is a water crisis. If you want to read it, it's around there, it really is.

It's the deeper political set of questions. And I find in all of our countries—I'm not just saying this for the U.S.—I'm finding the level of debate at the political level inane. I don't have another word for it. It's inane. I don't mean there aren't smart people running for office. It's just that we're not going to the deeper level of these questions. It's as if people are afraid to tackle the underlying questions.

I know it's a long answer, but I deeply agree with you. I think the information flow is very important, and that's why this event is so important. And you go home and you talk to people and you share information. That's how we build a movement.

The question is about here you have first in time, first in right. We have it in Alberta as well. You have it in most Western states in the U.S., whereas in the Eastern states they have more of a public trust kind of law. It's going to be very controversial here, but I don't think you're going to be able to do anything else. I think it's only going to be a matter of time before California and Colorado and Arizona and every single state is going to have to take a different approach to water. If they continue to allow water to be privatized, water rights to be entrenched to those who got there first, water to be traded and sold as a property, what you're going to go find with time is that water is cut off to people, people who can't afford it. The way it is in communities and villages in the Global South. It is not impossible to think of in North America or in Europe poor people not having access to basic water. Look, in Greece, where they've plummeted in their standard of living with these austerity measures and so on, there are people going hungry, there are people begging

on the streets. It's not impossible in the so-called First World to think of this.

We never had poor people in Canada. We had a very strong set of social safety nets. We still have public Medicare for all, health care for all, but we've lost a lot of others. We used to look like a big egg, with a large middle class and a fairly small population of poor, well served by a social security net and a fairly small group of wealthy. We've totally changed shape. We bought all the neoliberal, market-based ideals. And now we have a really entrenched wealthy group at the top and we look like a pear, with more and more of us falling out at the bottom. That's the demographic shift that's happening in our countries, and it's happening dramatically. We're either going to allow the continuation of this privatization and we're going to see all the small farms go down and we're going to see people without water access or we're going to come to a fair way to allocate water. This first in time, first in right made sense when they did it, and it doesn't make any sense anymore.

I read a bunch of stuff coming here, just to bring my mind up to date on Colorado. And I saw statements from a lot of officials who said some things fairly similar to what I've said tonight, that we've got to stop living the way we've been living, that we have to start living more fairly and justly, that we've got to bring a more just economic system to the water allocation here. I saw some statements that made me happy to see, because I thought it was the beginning of real soul searching. If you're left, right, or center, if the people who are voting for you don't have access to water, you're going to be held responsible. So I do think there's a sea change.

What I would like, and this is what I would hope would come out of this gathering here, is the nugget, the beginning of a movement to start to say, Let's put out the alternative. Let's not just say, These are the problems, and you, government, go fix it. No, no. We're going to articulate the principles that would work here. We've done this, as I say, for the Great Lakes. A man named Jim Olson—some of you may know his name—is a lawyer in Traverse City, Michigan, who fought the case against a big bottled-water company in their community, Ice Mountain, but it's owned by Nestlé. He's a wonderful man and he's done huge work on public trust. He and I presented to the International Joint Commission just before Christmas—this is the Canada-U.S. commission that oversees joint waters, all the binational waters, particularly the Great Lakes.

We said to them, Okay, there's this agreement and there's that agreement and, yes, there have been improvements in Lake Erie, although they're going back now, and, yes, the eagles came back because you took away DDT. But, but, but, but. We've got fracking, we've

got this tar-sands oil, we've got mining, we've got multipoint pollution, we've got more invasive species, we've got over-extraction. We're losing the battle. We're losing the battle because we don't have a common language. We want the common language to be that these lakes belong to the people who live on them and love them. We want the common language that nobody has the right to hurt them in any way, no one has prior or preferential access, anybody using them for a commercial purpose has to answer to those who own the lakes, the people who live around them and on them. That aquatic life and other species have a right to live and thrive, that the lakes themselves have rights. We put this message.

And let me tell you, there were some left-wingers and some right-wingers in this group, and they loved it. Because it gave them a handle on a concept that they could start to put together to move forward with in terms of what would be an alternative. If we don't put alternatives out, if we're not articulating what could be different and why our vision is different, then I don't think that we're going to succeed fast enough. Because I am very worried about catching this crisis. I think it's catchable, and I believe that hope is a moral imperative. But I also think that we're up against time. I think it would be wonderful if out of this gathering came that desire to start to articulate this kind of language here. It will be met with skepticism. But to hell with it. They're wrong.

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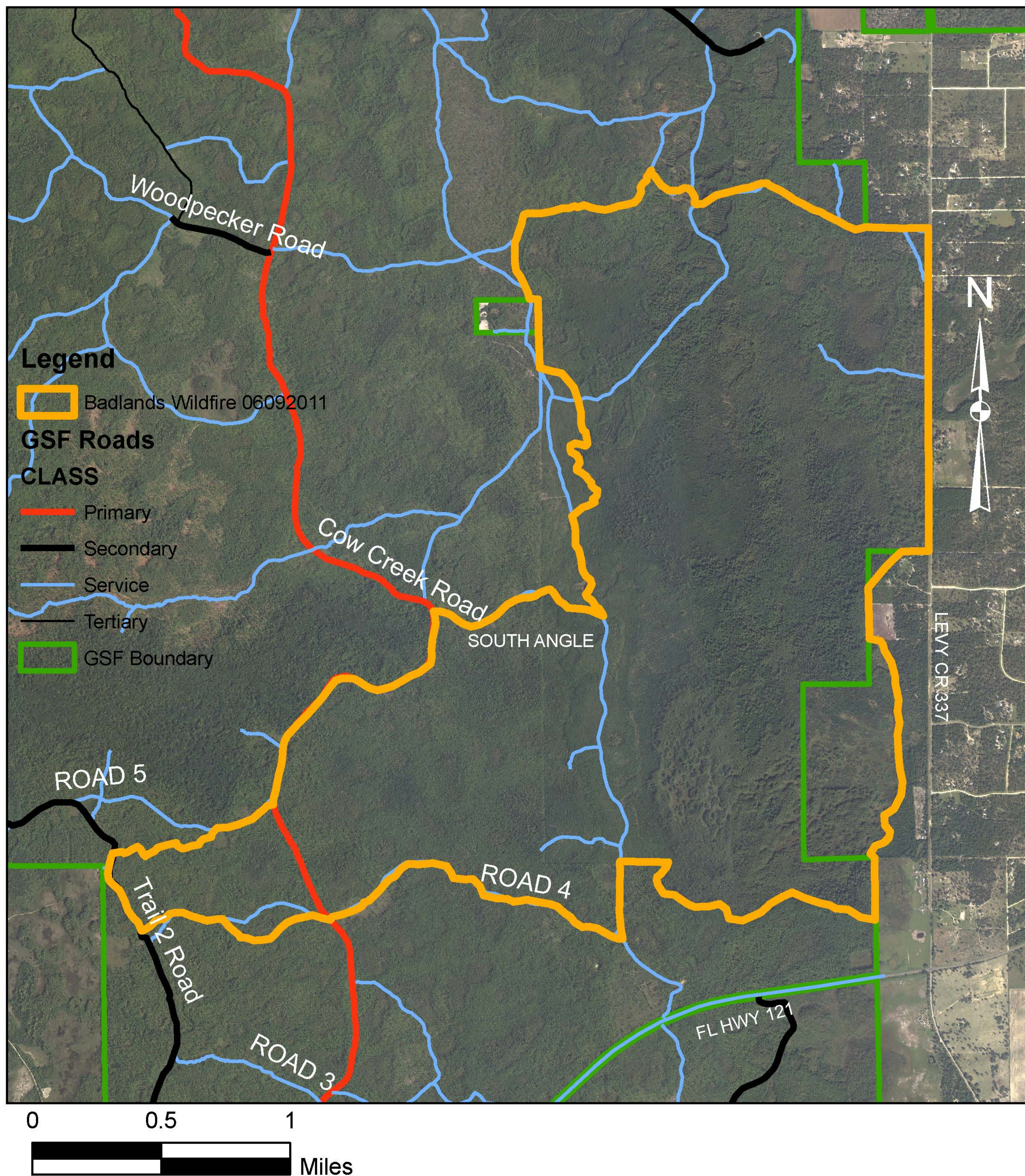
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Goethe State Forest
Badlands Fire 2011
June 9, 2011
3124 acres

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Road closures near two North Florida wildfires

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At least two roads have been shut down because of large wildfires that were started by lightning in public forests, one in Bradford County and the other in Levy County.

In both counties and elsewhere around North Florida where dozens of fires are burning, officials are urging drivers to be aware that they could encounter smoky conditions that could significantly reduce visibility during the day and at night.

A fire that started in the Santa Fe Swamp Conservation Area a week ago had grown to 1,500 acres by Monday afternoon. Bradford County Emergency Management spokesman Michael Heeder said that, although lines have been plowed around the fire, it is not considered under control.

On Monday, the fire was being pushed along by winds from the southeast and southwest at between 3 and 8 mph. No homes were immediately threatened by the fire, according to Heeder, but residents were urged to remain vigilant in case sparks or embers cross fire lines.

To ensure that emergency vehicles could get to and from the fire and that residents could reach their homes, officials closed Southeast 11st Avenue on the west side of the swamp to all non-residents on Monday. The decision to close the road between State Road 100 and County Road 18 was made after officials noticed large numbers of non-residents driving through the area trying to get a view of the fire.

In Levy County, the Bad Land Fire in the Goethe State Forest had burned more than 3,000 acres and was 75 percent contained by Monday afternoon. Officials shut down State Road 121 between U.S. 19 at Lebanon Station and County Road 337 for other reasons, said Division of Forestry spokeswoman Ludie Bond.

There has been a lot of smoke along the road, and now we have trees that burned a few days ago falling on the road,” Bond said. “And as those trees fall, they are pulling down electrical lines.”

According to Bond, the road could be closed for a few more days to allow heavy equipment room to maneuver as the fallen trees are removed and electrical service restored.

The Florida Highway Patrol and local agencies said they have been working together to determine when roads need to be closed for safety reasons.

Officials said drivers should remember to use their low beams in areas of heavy fog or smoke to avoid being blinded by the reflection of their own headlights.



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