

Noted Environmental Attorney To Speak At COTI Annual Meeting

Public Invited To Attend



David Guest

David Guest, an environmental litigator for 35 years and former managing attorney for Earthjustice Florida in Tallahassee, will be the keynote speaker at COTI's annual meeting on March 21. For decades Guest has been a major force in protecting Florida's most important natural features, the Everglades, Lake Okeechobee and the state's mangrove forests and beaches from overdevelopment and pollution.

According to Guest, "Solving the hardest environmental problems by taking on the worst actors head-to-head can change peoples attitudes about what is possible." He has successfully taken on the federal and state governments as well as corporate polluters.

Among his successes were a litigation campaign that forced the state and federal agencies to comply with the Clean Water Act and set numeric limits for phosphorus and nitrogen pollution, first in lakes, rivers and streams and later in estuarine and coastal water. He also helped stop what would have been the nations largest coal plant next to Lake Okeechobee.

Though recently retired from Earthjustice, Guest remains involved in the litigation to require the state to comply in good faith with Amendment 1, the citizen initiated Florida Land Legacy Amendment that was adopted by an overwhelming 75% of voters in 2014. That Amendment was intended to allocate 33% of real estate doc stamp revenue to fund the Land Acquisition Trust Fund and to be used for the purchase and management of new lands through the Florida Forever program. The state legislature has interpreted the Land Legacy Amendment as allowing it to use those funds to cover ongoing operating expenses of state agencies instead of buying and restoring conservation and recreation lands.

The case is scheduled to be heard this July.

Mr. Guest will talk about a number of environmental issues of current interest, including the status of the Land Legacy Amendment litigation and the status and future of the Everglades.

The public is invited to attend the meeting at the Sanibel Community House on March 21. Coffee and Danish will be served at 9:00 AM. The program, including announcement of COTI's Citizen of the Year, will begin at 9:30.