

“ON EFFORT”

Newsletter

Winter 2015-16

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THE DOLPHIN PROJECT

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The Dolphin Project is an all-volunteer, non-profit research, conservation and education organization, founded in 1989, dedicated to the protection of wild estuarine Bottlenose dolphins and our shared environment. Tax ID# 58-1914176

FROM THE HELM

Greetings Crew!

I hope y'all had a wonderful Hanukkah and Christmas. We're looking forward to a happy and successful new year in 2016.

This newsletter features the events of 2015 and upcoming 2016 events. If you have any friends who you think might be interested in joining TDP or just learning about the local dolphins, check out the training dates here and on our website. For you researchers, please make note of the survey dates and sign up soon.

The next SEAMAMMS (SouthEast And Mid-Atlantic Marine Mammal Symposium) will be held in Savannah in April 1-3, 2016 ...a first for Georgia since SEAMAMMS started!!!! Savannah State University and Dr. Tara Cox will host the event and TDP will assist by coordinating the social aspects of the weekend. SEAMAMMS is a great opportunity for TDP folks to hear/see the latest research directly from the scientists themselves, comment and ask questions. More details will follow in emails.

The threats to our coast continue and we'll keep you informed. TDP has joined other environmental groups to have a bigger voice. Updates are within this newsletter.

Get Well wishes and prayers go out to two of our special Skippers: Frank Sitera and Ron Sattelle.

Enjoy this newsletter and take note of special dates for 2016.

Thank you for your support.
Peach

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2016 RESEARCH SURVEYS

Our research is more important than ever due to the many hazards facing the local Bottlenose dolphins and our coast. The research paper, co-authored by Kate Doyle and TDP, presented at 2015 SEAMAMMS proved that our data is critical to marine mammal research. We need YOU to add to the data. Please sign up 5 weeks prior to the date you are available for a survey. Putting the crews together and boat logistics is comparable to working out a puzzle and takes time and effort. Sometimes we can accommodate last minute registrations, but no promises -so sign up early.

February 5

May 14

September 17

March 6

June 4

October 15

April 9

July 16

November 12

August 13

2016 TRAINING DATES...

Do you have friends that might like to join TDP? Do you need a refresher course or updates?

**Dolphin Program and Training Workshop at the
Richmond Hill GA Library from 10:30AM-1:00PM**

January 23rd

The venues and times have not yet been confirmed for the following dates. The information will be posted on our website and to you by email once confirmation is made.

February 27

July 23

March 19

August 20

May 7

September 17

June 18

November 5

A TOAST TO OUR VOLUNTEERS...

For those who missed our November social, Peach and attending crews toasted some special TDP volunteers:

“While all of our members, are deeply appreciated and valued, because without all of you, we wouldn’t be the respected and successful organization that we are today , the longest running – 26 years, and **only** all-volunteer dolphin research organization in the United States. ... there are times we need to acknowledge certain individuals who go above and beyond the call of duty. While there are several in this room that meet that criteria, I’d like to mention three people tonight in particular....



Dr. Lori Muskat, was unable to join us tonight, lives in the Atlanta area, has been a member over 14 years, helps with education outreach in Atlanta, serves as an outstanding survey photographer, and processes our survey data for input into the OBIS-SEAMAP and Mid-Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphin Catalog, located at Duke University. Lori is currently our Principal Investigator - which means she is responsible for our NOAA permit – a responsibility which she does not take lightly. Our permit, like all similar government research permits must be renewed every 5 years. The Dolphin Project’s permit expired at the end of 2014, and through Lori’s diligence and meticulous attention to detail, she not only secured our permit, but she fine-tuned it to be undeniably professional. The Dolphin Project owes Lori our deepest gratitude. A toast to our friend, Lori!

Frank Sitera has served as a Board Director and has been a die-hard skipper for The Dolphin Project, since joining several years ago, he would skipper his boat every month on surveys, despite severe back pain from his service in the Navy. Unfortunately his pain became too much to bear. Earlier this year (2015) despite critical surgery, he’s been told his skipper career must come to an end. However, for those of us who know Frank, the doctors don’t know how stubborn he can be. We all pray that Frank has a successful recovery. A toast to our friend, Frank!



Don Bender has served as The Dolphin Project Vice President, as the Education Outreach Coordinator for Atlanta, facilitator of events and school lectures in the Atlanta area, Don has served as a Team Leader for our research surveys for many years. While he’s stepping down from our Board, he will always be a valuable member, supporter and friend of The Dolphin Project and especially to me. A toast to our friend, Don!

TDP BOARD of DIRECTORS

Don Bender, Ron Sattelle and Krystal Goodwin have retired from The Dolphin Project Board of Directors. We deeply appreciate the time, efforts and expertise of all three of these wonderful people. They have all expressed their continuous support and we look forward to working with them.

We welcome Cheryl Tilton and Mary Cirincione to the Board of Directors.



Cheryl has tirelessly served as the Merchandise Chairperson for many years and served on the Board in the past. She hosts and participates in education outreach events. A lady who wears many hats, she brings great insight to the Board.



Mary is fairly new to this area and TDP but has proven to be an ardent supporter of our organization. She is an excellent research photographer and assists in many education outreach events. Mary is currently assisting with publicity and secretarial duties.

There is still have a vacant Board position. If you would like to offer your expertise to TDP, contact Peach: thedolphinproject@gmail.com

MIKE'S DOLPHIN RESEARCH

TDP member/photographer, Mike Gould, travels the Eastern seaboard and Bahamas aboard his sailboat, Cirdan, when he's not docked in the Kilkenny River (Richmond Hill, GA) With a background in computer technology, Mike has developed a database of the dolphins he's seen in the Georgia estuaries and in the Bahamas. He's also recording their sounds with a hydrophone both in the Kilkenny area and the Bahamas. Currently he's in the Bahamas and participating in research there. When Mike comes back this summer, he'll offer a presentation of his research at our Dolphins & Desserts Social. This should be a really exciting program and we're looking forward to hearing Mike!



PARTNERSHIPS

Did you know that The Dolphin Project has partnerships with many organizations in order to work together to have a bigger voice when opposing environmental threats? We attend meetings, participate in conference calls and rallies.

TDP works with the GEORGIA WATER COALITION, GEORGIA ASSOCIATION of MARINE EDUCATORS, NATIONAL MARINE

EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION, SAVANNAH RIVERKEEPER, OGEECHEE RIVERKEEPER, ONE HUNDRED MILES, GLYNN ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION, NOAA, GADNR, CENTER FOR A SUSTAINABLE COAST, OCEANA, the SEA PARTY COALITION, BLUE FRONTIER CAMPAIGN, SAVE OUR SEAS FOUNDATION, CLEAN COAST, SOUTHERN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTER, et al.

NOAA's DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM

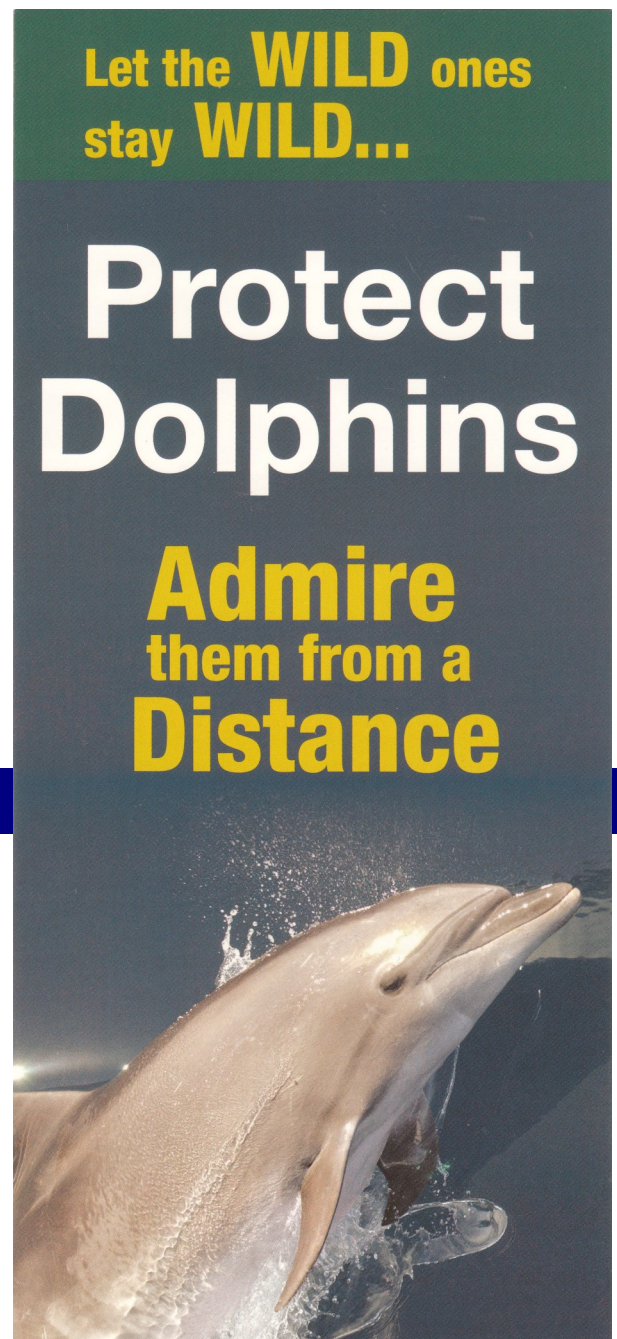
Our friend, Cheryl Mundy is the NOAA's Marine Mammal Outreach Specialist for the Southeast Region. She has reached out to TDP to help with NOAA's new Dolphin Conservation program. This involves distributing brochures and rackcard holders to marinas and yacht clubs on the Georgia coast pertaining to the protection of coastal dolphins. Tom Workman and Ron Sattelle have offered to chair this committee.

If you know of a location that could use some brochures and/or would like to assist, contact: thedolphinproject@gmail.com. There's a lot of area to cover on the Georgia coast!

SMART PHONE APPS

There are now smart phone apps available to ID dolphins and report injuries:

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/protected_resources/outreach_and_education/mm_apps/index.html



VOLUNTEERS in 2015



SEAWORLD UPDATES

July 2015

One Direction singer Harry Styles amplifies the anti-SeaWorld campaign during a concert in San Diego. "Does anybody like dolphins?" he asked the audience. After they screamed "Yes" back at him, he replied: "Don't go to SeaWorld." Analysis of social media showed this single event caused the highest spike in negative commentary about SeaWorld online since Blackfish was first shown. The same month SeaWorld is accused by PETA of sending a staff member undercover to infiltrate the animal rights charity, accusing the company of running a "corporate espionage campaign". SeaWorld suspends the employee.

August 2015

SeaWorld reports an 84% drop in earnings in the second quarter of 2015, compared with the previous year, along with a 2% drop in visitors.

November 6 2015

Congressman Adam Schiff says he will

introduce legislation that will force SeaWorld to end the captivity of orcas. The Orca Responsibility and Care Advancement (Orca) Act will phase out captive orcas in the US within 50 years.

November 9 2015

SeaWorld announces it will end theatrical orca shows at its theme park in San Diego next year, as part of a major overhaul of the company, but not at its theme parks in Orlando or San Antonio. Chief executive Joel Manby, said the company "is listening to our guests, evolving as a company ..." and that the new orca environment will be launched in 2017. Manby also said that revenues are still falling and that the company expects a \$10m hit to its profits this year. Schiff welcomed the news, but stated that "much more needs to be done". He called on SeaWorld to end its orca breeding program and work to create ocean sanctuaries. The SeaWorld announcement marks a major concession at one of its flagship parks.

article from : <http://www.theguardian.com/travel/2015/nov/11/brancheau-blackfish-san-diego-shutdown-seaworld-timeline>

2015 DOLPHIN STRANDINGS

Georgia strandings:

- 2- manatees
 - 1- Pilot whale
 - 1- Atlantic Spotted dolphin
 - 3-pygmy sperm whales
- BOTTLENOSE:**
- 17- adult
 - 5-Unknown
 - 2-yearlings
 - 2- juvenile
 - 5- subadult

- 1- stillborn calf
- 3- newborn
- 3- entagled/released

South Carolina strandings:

- 43-BOTTLENOSE
- 1-striped dolphin
- 1-dwarf sperm whale
- 8- pygmy sperm whales
- 1-unidentified delphinid

OIL WELLS OFF OUR COASTS

Jan./Feb 2016. - Obama Administration Atlantic Lease Sales finalized.

The following synopsis is from OneHundredMiles.org: For the first time in decades, communities of Georgia and South Carolina are threatened by oil and gas development activities. On Tuesday January 27, 2015 the United States Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) released a draft program that will lease ocean land for oil and gas development. Despite evidence that only minimal deposits of oil and gas are available off Georgia's coast, the federal government draft plan could change the face of Georgia's coast forever.

The Truth About Offshore Drilling

- In 2013, the United States consumed a total of 6.89 billion barrels of petroleum. BOEM's draft 5-year program estimates that only 550 million barrels of oil are available off the South Atlantic Coast. This amount of oil would support our nation's needs for less than a month.
- Oil and gas exploration increase noise in our oceans and will have a negative impact on our marine mammals, especially the endangered North Atlantic right whale.
- The practices associated with recovering and processing offshore oil and gas will industrialize coastal landscape and communities. Our Georgia coast will lose our economic base of tourism and fisheries if oil and gas companies operate along our coast.

If coastal residents and leaders speak now, Georgia will be removed from the federal agencies' plans!

Negative Impacts to Marine Mammals

- Georgia's state marine mammal, the North Atlantic Right Whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*), is considered among the most endangered marine mammals in the world. Only about 400 individuals exist today. Our coast is the only place where right whale calves are born.
- A significant and growing problem in our oceans is noise. Marine mammals depend on underwater sound waves to communicate and locate food. The noise from offshore drilling and construction puts our marine mammals at risk.
- Sea birds are attracted to offshore drilling platforms by lights, flares, and human food waste. As a result, they risk collision with drilling rigs and contamination from oil and other chemicals
- Oil spills break down and accumulate through the food chain poisoning sea life and human food supplies.

The federal government has begun the permitting process allowing for the exploration of oil and gas reserves. Exploration of energy reserves is the first step in any offshore drilling or production of reserves. Seismic waves, the same type of waves used to study earthquakes, are used to explore deep underground for reservoirs of oil and natural gas. The new permits that have been issued for energy exploration could be devastating to our already threatened wildlife and their critical habitats.

Transformation of the Georgia Coast

- Georgia's \$2 billion dollar tourism industry and recovering real estate market are dependent on healthy natural resources and scenic vistas.
- If energy sources are discovered off the Georgia coast, some jobs would be created at the refineries and storage facilities as well as the process of building pipelines to move oil under our

beaches and across our marshes. But this small gain is not worth the cost to our coastal landscape and communities.

- Safety technologies have advanced over the past 10 years, but even a single incident of spillage or leaks could be devastating to our local wildlife communities.
- Whenever oil is recovered from the ocean floor, additional chemicals and toxic substances (like mercury, lead, and arsenic) come up too and are released into the ocean.

Lessons from the Past | the BP Deepwater Horizon Disaster

The Gulf of Mexico, home to most of the United States' offshore drilling operations, has suffered one spill larger than 100,000 gallons every other year on average since 1964. The 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon disaster was estimated to have killed or injured more than 25,000 dolphins and whales, along with tens of thousands of sea turtles, 80,000 birds and untold numbers of fish and shellfish. Technological improvements have failed to significantly reduce the risk. 98.8 percent of offshore spills in the Gulf of Mexico from 1964 to 2012 were caused by weather, equipment failure, human error, or "external forces."

What You Can Do:

1. By educating yourself about the issues, you can take action! Share your knowledge with friends and family and let legislators know: **Not on our coast!**

Contact your Representatives. Call or email your Congressman to let him or her know your concerns. Make your voice heard. BOEM and the GA DNR have closed official public comment periods on seismic testing and the proposed offshore drilling. Now is the time to help our local officials engage in the decision

making. Write a letter to BOEM and encourage your city and county officials to oppose offshore activities!

Contact Alice at (912) 264-4111 or email alice@onehundredmiles.org for information and draft resolutions.

The SEA PARTY COALITION

aims to stop proposed offshore oil drilling in the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans and replace it with clean energy and sensible ocean planning.

The Sea Party Coalition represents coastal and inland cities and towns, businesses, fishermen, surfers, divers, boaters and other concerned citizens regardless of political affiliation who support a healthy and vibrant coastal economy and oppose proposed new oil surveying and drilling along the Atlantic Coast and in the U.S. Arctic Ocean. We see proposed acoustic air gun surveys and planned federal offshore oil leasing as a threat to marine wildlife, human health and safety, our economy, our environment, and our way of life.

As a better solution to our energy needs we support the development of clean renewable energy including offshore wind energy where responsibly situated.

In 2016 we will educate elected officials and the public about why we need to stop offshore drilling and restore the blue in our red, white and blue.

www.seaparty2016.org

VOLUNTEERS in 2015



Kinder Morgan sued over South Carolina spill

<http://chronicle.augusta.com/archive/daily/20151105>

A lawsuit filed Thursday in Anderson County alleges that a pipeline company with a project expected to affect the Augusta area was “reckless” in maintaining a pipeline that spilled an estimated 369,000 gallons of gasoline on a rural South Carolina farm in December.

Belton is the proposed starting point for a new Kinder Morgan project, the 360-mile Palmetto Pipeline. It’s expected to run through properties in Aiken, Edge-field, McCormick, Rich-mond and Burke counties locally. One of the property owners is William S. Morris III, who owns Morris Publishing Group LLC, the parent company of *The Augusta Chronicle*.

The suit claims that the spill “permanently damaged and devalued” the Lewis property, which had been listed to be sold as commercial property months before the incident. The spill was the result of a crack in a sleeve installed over a dent in the 26-inch pipe in 1991 – before Kinder Morgan owned the system – something the suit alleges was done incorrectly and maintained insufficiently.

Last month, Kinder Morgan spokeswoman Melissa Ruiz told *The Chronicle* that sleeves are a standard way to repair and reinforce pipelines. Techniques have improved exponentially since the time the sleeve was installed beneath the Lewis property, she said.

The Office of Regulatory Staff was named in the suit because it “failed to require (Kinder Morgan) to provide for sufficient maintenance, repairs and operational attention to the pipeline.” Kinder Morgan’s history of pipeline spills was also called into question.

The Lewises are seeking actual and punitive damages from Kinder Morgan, and an injunction, writ of mandamus or court order requiring the company to pay for testing and remediation to be determined by state and federal agencies.

In an e-mail Thursday, Kinder Morgan spokeswoman Sara Hughes said Plantation Pipe Line Co., a subsidiary of Kinder Morgan, offered to purchase the contaminated areas of the Lewis property at its appraised value, or compensate the family for lost crops or rental income.

“In short, Plantation has promised that the site will be cleaned and the plaintiffs will be made whole,” she said.

Hughes said the company rejected a request to be paid “an outrageous amount which was completely divorced

from reality,” adding that the company is unwilling to negotiate a settlement based on “unrealistic appraisals, an unsupported threat of punitive damages or a desire to collect an unjustified windfall from the incident.”

“Notwithstanding the filing of the suit,” the statement read, “Plantation stands ready to fully compensate the plaintiffs for their actual losses, and we remain committed to cleaning up the property completely.”

Lunches, lobbyists and gifts smoothing path for Palmetto Pipeline

Updated: November 15, 2015 - 1:12pm

<http://savannahnow.com/taxonomy/term/31>

If you think the proposed Palmetto Pipeline is dead, you haven’t been talking to anyone from Kinder Morgan. “We’re pursuing the project and our plan is to file for the permits required on the project very likely this fall,” said Allen Fore, the company’s vice president of public affairs. “That’s a likely schedule.”

The Houston-based company is moving forward despite a legal battle that’s left many Georgians believing the 210-mile petroleum project was buried before a single pipe could be put into the ground. Attorneys for the company appeared in Fulton County Superior Court on Friday to appeal a May decision by the Georgia Department of Transportation denying it the right to condemn property because it failed to show a public need for the project. Judge Kimberly Esmond Adams said she won’t issue her ruling until the new year.

Even if Kinder Morgan loses, then exhausts its appeals and can’t condemn property, Fore said North America’s largest energy infrastructure company plans to build its Palmetto Pipeline from South Carolina, through Georgia and on to Jacksonville. The company hasn’t previously built an interstate pipeline without having eminent domain to fall back on, but Fore said that doesn’t matter: The Palmetto Pipeline will be built. “Because we have a good project,” he said. “We have a project designed to meet the regulatory standards of the state. We have customer commitments, and we have great relationships with landowners. So we are confident the project will go forward.” Kinder Morgan could go forward simply by acting like any other company: With enough money to buy rights from willing sellers, it can build.

Costlier pipeline

Georgia law governs petroleum pipelines — including this one — with a stringent set of rules that don't apply to the more common natural gas pipelines. Initially written in the '90s to protect wealthy and influential landowners whose quail plantations were threatened by an oil pipeline, the law erects extra hurdles for petroleum pipelines that natural gas pipelines don't need to jump.

A pipeline carrying gasoline, diesel and ethanol, as this one proposes, must first get DOT approval and then another go-ahead from the state Environmental Protection Division before it can force the sale of easements from unwilling sellers.

This eminent domain process doesn't exist in most states although South Carolina is among those looking into beefing up restrictions in the face of new pipeline projects. Kinder Morgan officials say they prefer to avoid using eminent domain. They say they have completed other pipelines without invoking it and already have consent to survey — which they view as a willingness to cooperate — from a majority of those along the pipeline's route. Kinder Morgan has bought some of that cooperation. Over the summer it started offering some landowners cash to access their land for a look around. But even if it's never applied, having eminent domain to use as a last resort is a powerful bargaining chip. Landowners know a court can force their hand and they'll end up with only the fair market value of their property minus legal fees.

Kinder Morgan spokeswoman Mel Ruiz said the company has completed five pipelines without eminent domain, but unlike Palmetto, those pipelines were for individual customers in its terminals business and didn't cross state lines. "Interstate and common carrier pipeline projects will almost always have eminent domain available under either federal or state law," Ruiz said. Without eminent domain, the cost of the pipeline could become prohibitive, said Chris Paul, professor of finance at Georgia Southern University. "It really disadvantages their leverage in terms of dealing with people in purchasing the easements," he said.

Bruce Gamble, managing director in Navigant Consulting's Global Construction practice, agreed. "The process of acquiring right of way through 600 private parcels is time consuming and expensive," Gamble said. "Not having the power of eminent domain available will most likely increase both the cost and length of time required to assemble the right of way."

Late last month Kinder Morgan issued \$1.6 billion in preferred shares, a stock that offers fixed payments like a bond, in this case a 9.75 percent payment annually until they convert to common shares in three years. The move says nothing about the pipeline's viability except that the company can raise cash when needed, Paul said. "They have the economic capability to raise the money obviously. They just raised a billion something dollars to build the pipeline," he said. "They have the financial resources. The question is do they have the legal rights."

The \$1 billion Palmetto Pipeline is just a small part of Kinder Morgan's \$21.3 billion project backlog. "It's a lot," said Michelle Michot Foss about that backlog. Foss is chief energy economist and program manager at the University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology's Center for Energy Economics. "KM is big and proposing substantial new projects. Not all of them will go forward. Some of these will be postponed. Lots of sorting out is in the process of happening in these businesses."

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postponed. Lots of sorting out is in the process of happening in these businesses.”

Spending ‘what is necessary’

Kinder Morgan has indicated it is willing to spend more freely than in the past to ensure the opportunity to build Palmetto but won’t discuss how much it’s spent already on its public relations effort. “We will spend what is necessary to get the message out,” Ruiz said.

For evidence, look no further than local high school football fields. When the McIntosh County Academy Buccaneers score a touchdown, fans find themselves looking at a new billboard with a now-familiar thunderbolt and black letters that spell out Kinder Morgan. The same will soon be true for the South Effingham Mustangs.

Kinder Morgan had pledged donations totaling \$178,250 to eight groups along the path of the Palmetto Pipeline. At least one additional donation was rebuffed: the Augusta commission declined an offer of \$25,000 worth of emergency call boxes for the city’s Riverwalk. Fore said this generosity is only partly new — the company hadn’t previously donated to high schools. But before the pipeline project it had donated \$125,000 toward the purchase of an “all hazards” boat for Savannah Fire & Emergency Services and \$50,000 to Savannah Tech for programs related to training workers for its Elba Island facility. Nine other donations dating back to May 2013 totaled about \$80,000. “Yes, this is project driven, no question about that,” said Fore. “But it’s also incredibly meaningful to the company and to me personally.”

Kinder Morgan Foundation — which is separate from the company — gives out additional grants to schools and arts and youth organizations of up to \$5,000 apiece.

Pipeline project opponents such as the Ogeechee Riverkeeper attach a different meaning to the donations. “Since its menacing project was put in limbo, Kinder Morgan has tried to give the impression of good community stewardship by donating over \$50,000 to schools and litter-prevention efforts in Georgia,” the organization wrote in a press release in October. “However, the public should not be swayed by the company’s actions. After all, this is the same outfit whose three Palmetto Pipeline surveyors were arrested and charged with criminal trespass after being denied access to a private farm in Screven County earlier this year.”

Those surveyors requested a jury trial that probably will not be heard until March, said Janis Reddick, clerk of Superior Court in Screven County. As for the donations, they’re part of a multi-faceted company campaign — including a barrage of warm and fuzzy ads, private listening sessions with local opinion leaders and the deployment of a small army of lobbyists.

Tough in court, tender in ads

Until recently, the largest energy infrastructure company in North America was hardly a household name here. Founded in 1997 by a former Enron executive, Kinder Morgan owns a fuel importing terminal in Savannah — purchased three years ago — and pipelines that crisscross the state. But to buy those assets, the \$100-billion company needed only cash, not the goodwill of local residents.

Kinder Morgan’s customers are big oil companies that store liquefied natural gas on Elba or pay to transport their oil and gas through pipelines. It had never tried to build a petroleum pipeline in Georgia. When it did kick off that effort in the spring, the Georgia DOT handed the company its veto on eminent domain. Shortly after that, ads began to appear in newspapers and on TV featuring down-home landowners praising the company.

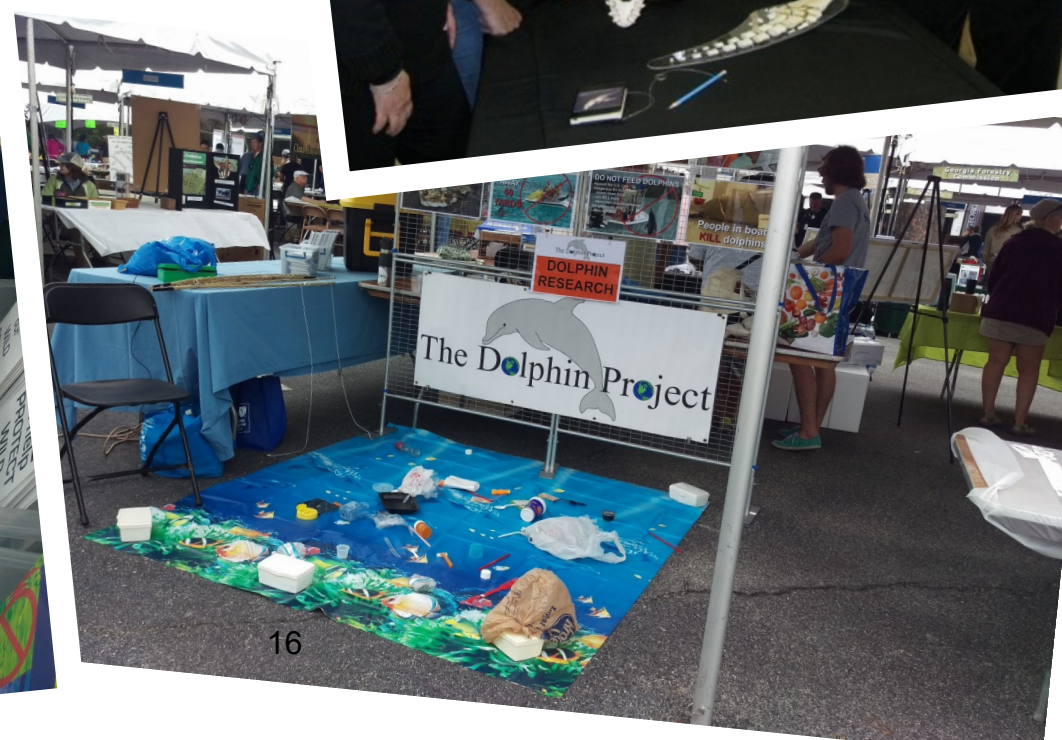
Advertising like this was new for the famously penny-pinching company, whose corporate literature as recently as May boasted “we don’t spend money on executive perks or glitzy marketing initiatives.” The Palmetto Pipeline changed that position, said Fore, the public face of the company for the pipeline project. “We haven’t ever advertised nationally before,” Fore said. “This advertising campaign we did here which you’re familiar with — we spent quite a bit of money in the Savannah Morning News — we haven’t done that before as a company, promoting or discussing either who we are or what we do.”

One ad featured Frank Flanders, whose property in an unidentified part of Georgia has a pipeline running through it. “The people we’ve met are just like you and I,” says Flanders about Kinder Morgan agents. “They’re hunters, they’re fishermen; they’re someone in the field that knows the property and knows the area and knows what you as a property owner are trying to do with your property.”

In court documents, landowners aren’t so treasured. In recent filings, Kinder Morgan argues to exclude landowners from intervening in its appeal, saying “they have no legal interest in this appeal of GDOT’s denial of Palmetto’s application.”

At best, the landowners’ claims are “not ripe,” Kinder

VOLUNTEERS in 2015



Morgan claims, noting that this particular decision is only the first of several that would be required to take their property under eminent domain. “Any interest of the landowner movants could be asserted if and when they are named as parties to a proceeding where their property rights are sought,” Kinder Morgan attorneys write.

Landowners disagree.

Seven in all are seeking to join the suit, including Millhaven Company and Mills Tract, companies owned by the family of William S. Morris III, who also owns Morris Publishing Group LLC, operator of the Augusta Chronicle, The Savannah Morning News and the Jacksonville Times-Union. In their court filing, the landowners state the pipeline’s impact on their property “cannot be overstated.” Landowner Debo Boddiford, who did not file to be an intervenor, said she’s been frustrated by Kinder Morgan. Even though the company was rebuffed by the DOT, it continues to survey, even on state land. Land agents who were all smiles at first have stopped returning calls. “We revoked our rights as did many neighbors and relatives,” Boddiford said in August. “We asked for our original documents back. It’s been three months, and we haven’t gotten them.”

Listening sessions

Land agents may not be listening to property owners, but over the summer, Kinder Morgan invited Savannah-area community leaders to private listening sessions in which Fore, among others, pitched the pipeline giant’s merits and solicited feedback. Bill Kelso, vice president for advancement at Armstrong State University, attended one of these get-togethers in August. He went because he was invited, he said, and because he was curious, though he was not “up-to-speed” on pipeline issues. “For me it was loud and clear that it was an effort for officials with Kinder Morgan to try to understand the community better,” Kelso said. “What do you value? What’s important? The meeting was not about the pipeline. It was about how Kinder Morgan can be more effective in being a community partner.”

Fore spends four to five days a week on the road, traveling to this project and others around the country. “That’s one of many things we’ve been doing and will continue to do to get feedback from the communities,” he said. “Feedback from some of these events has led to community donations and all that. It’s a very productive way to fully understand the community.”

The listening sessions have provided a way for Kinder Morgan to pitch directly to these hand-picked leaders its message about what it’s already doing here. It’s emphasized its plans at the Elba Island LNG facility,

whose five blue tanks are visible miles away. It plans to convert Elba to an export facility, a pricey prospect that’s awaiting federal approvals. “They’re doing some significant infrastructure upgrades,” Kelso said. “When you talk about ultimately a \$4 billion investment, well, that’s lot of money.”

Savannah Downtown Business Association President Ruel Joyner attended one session. The numbers he heard discussed were \$5 billion in infrastructure, about 50 jobs and a recent \$20,000 contribution to an anti-litter campaign. That set of figures, the owner of 24e Design Co. said, reminded him of the satirical cartoon “The Simpsons” with its famously greedy and out-of-touch Mr. Burns, who owns the nuclear power plant. “I told him to get his checkbook out and triple whatever they were going to give,” Joyner recalled in a telephone interview. “When they invest, it’s not going to buy them love, but people will have to listen. They still may not want what you’re doing, but they’ll have to listen. They have \$5 billion in infrastructure and put \$20,000 back and they’re wondering why they have a PR issue.”

Large lobbying team

Kinder Morgan advertised heavily in the Peach State over the summer, but it hasn’t abandoned old-fashioned lobbying. The Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission lists 12 lobbyists working for Kinder Morgan or the Palmetto Products Pipe Line, each of them making at least \$10,000. “They spend the bulk of their time doing, I really call it education,” Fore said. “Education focused on elected officials and making sure they understand who we are, what we do, why we’re doing what we’re doing and being a resource for them because as elected officials they get questions, and we want to make sure those questions are answered.”

Among those dozen lobbyists are at least five who have previously worked in state government, some in high positions. In April, the Palmetto Products Pipe Line engaged the services of Joe Tanner and Associates, an Atlanta lobbying firm full of former top environmental regulators, including former EPD director Harold Reheis and two former assistant EPD directors.

If the pipeline gets its DOT certificate, its next and final stop is DNR before it can exercise eminent domain. Tanner and Associates may be particularly helpful on a petroleum pipeline. Company founder Joe Tanner, who helped create the DNR and twice served as its commissioner, also wrote the current petroleum pipeline law. Kinder Morgan in August hired a former GDOT staffer, Stephanie Carter Kindregan, to work for the company directly. Most recently a lobbyist for Delta, Kindregan was a “special advisor to the DOT commissioner” in 2011. She wrote on LinkedIn that at DOT she “lobbied for the successful passage and signage

VOLUNTEERS in 2015



Peach Hubbard with Katherine Doyle of SSU, who authored a research paper comparing TDP and SSU photo ID

of the Department's legislative agenda; wrote and prepared legislation improving the daily operations of the Department; and developed the Department's legislative agenda for approval by the State Transportation Board." Also lobbying for the pipeline's interest is Atlanta firm Troutman Sanders Strategies, where former state government workers abound. Among those registered to lobby for Kinder Morgan is Robb Willis, who served the Georgia State Senate as chief of staff for the President Pro-Tem and Senate Appropriations Committee. Willis also briefly served in the lieutenant governor's office.

Lasting presence

Win or lose in court, pipeline or not, Georgians are likely to be reminded about Kinder Morgan for years to come. That \$30,000 donation to McIntosh school came with the requirement that the Buccaneers advertise their new sponsor. The football field sign was \$2,500 and the basketball court will be another \$500. Sponsorship in South Effingham likewise came with conditions. A contract for Kinder Morgan's \$45,000 a year "platinum sponsorship" of the Mustangs spells out where 13 banners, signs and painted logos will appear.

And the school's fans will hear about Kinder Morgan: "An announcement on the PA system each quarter for football and basketball games. Three announcements during baseball and softball games. The announcement will state "We want to thank our Double Platinum level Sponsors (Kinder Morgan being one of those), we thank you for supporting Mustang Athletics."

Kinder Morgan uses cookie cutter campaigns

With ads featuring locals and donations targeting schools and nonprofits along the route, Kinder Morgan's p.r. campaign looks tailor made for Georgia. But with a few tweaks that tailoring fits other parts of the country, too. The Palmetto Pipeline is one of about 15 pipeline and

other infrastructure projects awaiting approval and construction. In New England, the company has proposed the Northeast Energy Direct or NED Pipeline from Wright, N.Y., to Dracut, Mass.

Authorization of that natural gas project by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is nearly guaranteed, but the project has still met fierce resistance in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. In response, the company has rolled out ads that look similar to those in Georgia but feature native New Englanders praising the company.

Tim Reichert, department head and Georgia Athletic Association Professor at the University of Georgia, calls Kinder Morgan's efforts "advocacy advertising." "They are building goodwill and positive public opinion among informed citizens, but influential stakeholders see those messages as well," he said. "I haven't seen the ads specifically but guess that they are talking about jobs, local economy and safety. Companies buy advertising time/space to advocate what they consider the positive effects of their presence, which can be quite different if filtered through news — if it even gets picked up at all."

As in Georgia, Kinder Morgan conducted telephone surveys in New Hampshire. The goal, said New Hampshire-based anti-pipeline activist Kathryn Eiseman, seemed to be to guide respondents toward a statement of support for the Northeast Energy Direct pipeline. Surveys are standard practice, Fore said. "It's used in not just political campaigns, but I think every major company that is talking about launching a new product or trying to understand what folks are thinking or feeling. You do get some understanding of attitudes and perceptions through that medium as well."

The company opened its pocketbook to local groups in New Hampshire and Massachusetts, too, giving among other smaller donations a \$300,000 gift to the nonprofit Londonderry Trailways to extend a biking and hiking trail in the town of 11,000 people.

RECOMMENDATION

Hub and I saw the movie, "In the Heart of The Sea", after the holidays. It's the story of author Melville's interview of the last survivor of the whaling vessel "Essex" which was destroyed by a great white whale. We both recommend the film, directed by Ron Howard. The story is fascinating and the visual effects are awesome.

Ironically the bottom line of the story is holds true for today....people destroy whales, thereby affecting the natural balance of the sea, for greed. It's still happening with the seismic testing, oil wells, and pipeline.

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2015 Richmond Hill Christmas Parade.
Theme: Christmas at the Movies.

TDP's entry: Dolphin Tale.

We won: "Best Use of Theme" trophy.



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