**Bronson Area Property Owner Says Gas Pipeline Just an Atom Bomb
on his Land**


By Terry Witt
Senior Staff Writer

Glenn Bryan owns a 1,300-acre hardwood forest north of Bronson that he calls his second home, a place of such tranquility that only bird song and the occasional sound of a vehicle driving down his mile-and-a-half dirt driveway can be heard in the stillness.
But Bryan is worried that his property could soon be bisected by a 36-inch natural gas pipeline that would send billions of cubic feet of natural gas every week down to big power plants in south central Florida.
The retired orthopedic surgeon couldn’t tap into the pipeline to use the natural gas flowing through his property, but he said federal law would allow the Sabal Trail Transmission LLC pipeline to be constructed through his property without his authorization.
He also says the natural gas pipeline would have such explosive potential that it would be like planting a bomb on his property.
“I feel very violated that they can put an atom bomb through my property,” Bryan said.
Florida Power and Light requested bid proposals in December of 2012 from gas transmission companies interested in transporting natural gas to its power plants. Sabal Trail Transmission, LLC won the contract.
Sabal Trail is contacting landowners who might be in the path of the pipeline to let them know the natural gas pipeline could be constructed through their property after a final route is selected.
Property owners in the Williston and Bronson areas have been contacted by Sabal Trail indicating that the final route has not been selected.
The retired Bryan lives part-time on his acreage. The property was once the Sanchez family homestead. It lies about three miles north of Bronson on County Road 337. The old Sanchez home remains on the property but is slowly being claimed by the elements.
Members of Bryan’s extended family lived near the Sanchez farm. In the early days of the county, dirt roads passed through the forest, connecting families and communities.
Sabal Trail Transmission has posted red-tipped wood markers alongside the Duke Energy power line that passes through Bryan’s property. The pipeline would be constructed adjacent to the power line and would pass under Bryan’s driveway.
The pipeline route passes through Hamilton, Madison, Suwannee, Gilchrist, Levy, Marion, Sumter, Lake, Polk, Osceola, Orange and Citrus Counties, according to Sabal Trail’s website.
Gilchrist County Administrator Bobby Crosby said the Gilchrist County Commission is planning for a February public meeting with Sabal Trail officials to answer questions about the pipeline.
Crosby said there are two proposed routes through Gilchrist County and rumors of a third route. He said he has been unable to get answers from Sabal Trail officials, but they are willing to answer questions from the public at the meeting.
“We’re kind of in the dark,” he said. “There’s nothing definite. I can’t get an answer from Sabal Trail.”
He said a public hearing is to be held before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission concerning the pipeline.
Bryan has done preliminary research on the Internet and has concluded that federal law gives utility companies the right to bury natural gas pipelines on private property without the owner’s consent.
He said his understanding is the company will purchase an easement through his property if his land is selected for the final route, and will pay for an attorney to represent him in negotiating a price for the land. But if Sabal Trail chooses to build through his property, he can’t stop the pipeline.
“They haven’t talked to me. All I know is they will pay me and supposedly pay a fair price,” Bryan said. “What is a fair price to put an atom bomb on my property?”
He has heard Sabal Trail might bury the pipeline 3 feet below the surface or as deep as 6 feet, but he has no firm information.
Bryan said he is aware of the instability in the world and figures a natural gas pipeline would be a natural target for terrorists. Natural gas pipelines are largely unguarded. The explosion of a 36-inch natural gas pipeline would be catastrophic for his property.
He is also wonders how emergency services would respond to a natural gas pipeline explosion to contain it. He said no one seems to know the answer and no one seems to know whether local firefighters would be trained for such an event.
Bryan said he doesn’t know the final price he would receive for a mile-long sliver of land the company would purchase from him. He has asked who would pay the property taxes on land used for the pipeline, but Property Appraiser Osborne Barker said he isn’t certain. Bryan figures he will probably get stuck with the bill.
“Every lawyer in the world has sent me letters and they explain their fee is being paid by the power company,” Bryan said. “There’s nothing I can do.”
Levy County already has two natural gas pipelines running the full length of the county. Florida Gas Transmission Co. pays about $1.6 million in mostly tangible Levy County property taxes for the two pipelines, according to Barker. The pipelines are considered tangible property.
The $1.6 million in property tax revenue is split between the Levy County Commission, Levy County School Board and other taxing authorities in Levy County. Barker said the value of the pipelines depreciate rapidly.