

DATE: January 8, 2019

TO: Board of County Commissioner's, Orange County, FL

FROM: Bob Stein,
4707 Mesa Verde Dr., Saint Cloud, FL 34769

SUBJECT: Split Oak Forest Resolution

I would like to thank the Board for allowing me to speak here today in support of the Split Oak Forest Resolution. I especially want to thank Commissioner Bonilla for bringing this proposed Resolution to protect Split Oak Forest forward for your consideration.

One of the primary purposes of Split Oak Forest is to protect threatened and endangered species such as the Gopher Tortoise, Florida Scrub-Jay and Eastern Indigo Snake. My concern is for a different species ... humans.

I am a Registered Nurse. I am not a land manager or developer. I am not a lobbyist or an environmentalist. My background is not in government or politics. What I do know about is health, healthcare and disease. I know about the irrefutable link between body, mind and spirit. I know that Mother Nature has better cures for much of what ails us than the pharmaceutical companies do. Obesity, depression, anxiety, hypertension, type II diabetes, osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease, colon cancer, elevated cholesterol and other lipid disorders, for example, are all linked to a lack of outdoor activity.

Life churns far too quickly, with far too much stress and drama. Returning to nature like Split Oak Forest provides an opportunity to relax and recharge ourselves. There is nothing more calming than the absolute quiet of the forest. Exercise in fresh air, where the only sound you can hear is the wind blowing through the trees to help us to unwind and reconnect with nature ... and, indeed, with ourselves as well. This is the reason why any proposal that disturbs any portion of Split Oak Forest cannot be accepted. No matter how little land is taken, taking even a part of it will irreparably damage the whole with fumes, noise, litter and potentially toxic run-off. Indeed, even extending the

Osceola Parkway near Split Oak Forest may potentially damage it forever.

Split Oak Forest was purchased with public funds as a PERMANENT conservation and mitigation area to be protected in PERPETUITY. I have a clear understanding of the words PERMANENT and PERPETUITY ... and they don't mean "only until there's money to be made". Do not allow Osceola County and CFX to destroy a park that belongs to the people of Orange and Osceola Counties.

In addition, I want to point out that the CFX Osceola Parkway Extension project will not even achieve one of it's primary stated goals ... to reduce traffic congestion. Expanding access to the undeveloped land east of Split Oak Forest will certainly do nothing except expand the urban sprawl with more homes and more traffic ... leaving us no better off than we are now and with no place to go to get away from it all.

I am a resident of Osceola County. It is distressing and frankly embarrassing that my elected officials have made the Split Oak Forest Resolution necessary. For the health of all citizens and other threatened and endangered species of Orange and Osceola Counties, I support the Split Oak Forest Resolution and ask you to continue to honor the protections this Board gave to it 24 years ago by adopting this Resolution.

Thank you for your time and consideration.