

The Jacksonville Downtown Investment Authority has chosen to move forward with a third restaurant at the old Jacksonville Landing site. This one will be located directly along the river posing troubling questions about litter, resiliency and views that public officials assure residents not to be worried about.

Disturbingly, Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan supported the additional development, a betrayal of her campaign promises to support a public riverfront park for all centered on green space, and lots of talk about downtown resiliency since taking office. Her actions speak louder than her words.

The great potential for a natural, recreation-oriented riverfront park and greenway extending along the north bank of the St. Johns River through downtown is diminishing daily as development and business interests overrule the wishes of the people.

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The Florida legislature appears to be on the verge of allowing citizens to shoot and kill black bears more easily [by citing “self-defense.”](#) As of now it is illegal to shoot black bears in Florida.

While the worst of the anti-environment bills have been defeated during this legislative session, this one appears set to pass, potentially opening the floodgates to allow yahoos to shoot bears – or whatever else they think might be a bear – which happens onto their property.

Human-bear interactions are becoming more common as development squeezes the bears into smaller and smaller areas and with everyone having a video camera monitoring their property 24/7, more and more bears are appearing on camera, frightening residents ignorant to their behaviors.

Speaking of ignorant, meet one of the bill’s sponsors, Rep. Jason Shoaf (R- Port St. Joe), who introduced the term “crack bears” to America.

“They break your door down and they’re standing in your living room growling and tearing your house apart,” [Shoaf said while introducing legislation at a committee meeting.](#) “When you run into one of these crack bears, you should be able to shoot it.”

Yikes.

There has never been an incidence of a bear standing in a Florida living room growling and tearing a house apart. There has never been an incidence of a bear in Florida on “crack.” Shoaf’s stupidity appears fueled by the Hollywood horror/spoof movie “Cocaine Bear.”

And you thought you’d heard everything.

LINK: <https://www.gainesville.com/story/news/2024/02/22/shooting-bears-in-self-defense-closer-to-becoming-law-in-florida/72697622007/>

LINK: <https://www.wfla.com/news/florida/florida-bill-allowing-residents-to-kill-crack-bears-in-self-defense-clears-senate/>

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Bad news for the Gulf and Indian River Lagoon. With all the rain we’ve had in north Florida this winter, the Army Corps of Engineers has begun [discharging water from Lake Okeechobee](#) to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries to lower lake water levels. While water levels in Lake Okeechobee have become too high for the lake to be healthy, water discharges will befoul the areas it’s dumped out into making harmful algal blooms on both coasts likely.

The water – and I’m using that term loosely, it’s more like toxic waste by the time it comes out of Lake O – should be sent south toward the Everglades to slowly filter before reaching Florida Bay, but the sugar companies that own the land immediately south of Lake O have leveraged/paid off the Army Corps and state officials into pushing it to the coasts.

Lake O water is badly contaminated by agricultural runoff – manure, fertilizer, pesticide – runoff from residential yards – fertilizer, pesticides – and development and roads – oil, gas, coolant, chemicals. When the toxic water reaches the Gulf and Indian River Lagoon after shooting down the dredged-out Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie “rivers,” it’s brown in color.

LINK: <https://www.wflx.com/2024/02/20/environmentalists-concerned-about-lake-okeechobee-releases-st-lucie-river/>