

Ten Things Everyone Should Know about Florida's Springs

1. **Florida's Concentration Of Springs Is Unique.** Geologists estimate that there are over 600 springs (33 with over 65 million gallons per day) in the State of Florida, representing perhaps the largest concentration of freshwater springs on Earth.
2. **Florida's Springs Are Found Mostly In North And North-Central Florida.** Springs occur roughly from De Funiak to Tampa.
3. **Springs Have Tremendous Environmental, Economic, Aesthetic, And Historic Value.** Florida springs continue to draw awed and grateful visitors today our twelve state parks that are named for springs attracted over two million visitors in 2001 (\$7 million in annual revenue in these 12 state parks).
4. **The Karst Geology That Gives Rise To Springs And Sinks Makes Them Vulnerable.** The permeability that allows water to create Florida's spring, sinks and underground conduits also makes our groundwater vulnerable to surface water pollution.
5. **Florida's Springs Are "Windows" On The Aquifer.** What we see coming out of the springs is what is flowing through our Aquifer, the source of over 90% of Florida's drinking water.
6. **Springs Are Not The Beginning But The End - Protection Begins In The Recharge Zones.** Springs whose recharge zones are protected in a natural state (such as in the Ocala National Forest) have the least water quality and quantity problems.
7. **Springs Can (And Have) Run Dry From Overuse.** Kissengen Spring in Polk County stopped flowing in 1950 because of pumping in its recharge area.
8. **Damage To Springs Can Originate Far From The Spring Itself and Develop Slowly.** Groundwater generally travels more slowly than surface water. Pollutants move slowly through the aquifer and similarly, it may take years for these pollutants to be removed.
9. **Florida's Department Of Environmental Protection Is Committed To Protecting Springs.** The Department protects Florida's springs through the Florida Springs Initiative. This comprehensive protection effort is supported by Governor Bush and the Legislature who have appropriated \$5 million to fund research, monitoring, education and landowner assistance projects. The Florida Springs Task Force is a component of the Springs Initiative. Secretary David Struhs formed the task force to determine the status of Florida's springs and develop strategies for their protection. The task force produced a report in November 2000.
10. **Spring Basin Working Groups Are Key To Local Management.** Local Spring Basin Working Groups and local landowner practices are critical to Springs protection. If you live in a spring recharge area:
 - Use less fertilizer and less water on your lawn.
 - Keep your septic tank maintained.
 - Take a child to see a spring.
 - Encourage landowners to protect sinkholes.
 - Inform your county commissioner that you support his efforts to provide stormwater management and land use decisions that will protect springs in your county.