

An abstract painting with a complex, layered texture. The color palette is dominated by various shades of blue, from light sky blue to deep, dark navy and teal. Interspersed with these are vibrant greens, ranging from lime to forest green, and touches of white and light grey. The brushstrokes are thick and expressive, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is reminiscent of a natural landscape, perhaps a forest floor or a rocky streambed, captured in a highly stylized, painterly manner.

AQUIFERIOUS

ENTER THE SPRINGS

FLORIDA: SPRINGS HEARTLAND OF PLANET EARTH

Alachua County is the center of what has been called Florida's Springs Heartland, a region where the U.S. Geological Survey has identified over 1,000 freshwater springs—the largest concentration of such springs in the world. Over two-thirds of the world's first magnitude springs are right here in Florida. So our region isn't just the Springs Heartland of Florida; it's the Springs Heartland of Planet Earth!

Florida's springs, the top layer of the aquifer (underground water supply) that provides our drinking water, are tourist attractions that continue to lure national and international visitors, our favorite summer cooling-off spots, habitats for fish and wildlife, economic engines for our rural communities and inspiration for writers, artists and musicians. These natural treasures are, however, in serious peril.

Over time, spring flows and aquifer levels are falling and water pollution is increasing. The results are visible in sinkholes that form when the aquifer is low and in the algae and cloudy water we see in springs that were once crystal clear. The problems in our springs today warn us of possible water supply problems for future generations.

There are three major threats to our springs:

1. We're taking too much water out of the aquifer that feeds the springs.
2. We're allowing too much pollution to enter the groundwater that feeds that aquifer.
3. We haven't ignited the political will that's needed to save the springs by limiting water use and stopping pollution at its source.

Almost anywhere in North Central Florida, whatever goes onto the ground can seep into the ground and the aquifer. Large parts of Alachua County lie within the springshed that feeds the Santa Fe River springs—so the water you use for irrigation and the fertilizer and pesticides you apply to your lawn or farm can affect both water quality and quantity in springs many miles away. Depending on how deep into the aquifer those pollutants go, they can show up years from now—like a snapshot of the conditions that were present when the water first entered the aquifer.

Pollution in this fragile water system comes from both humans and animals and from urban, suburban, and agricultural areas. The culprits are fertilizers, pesticides, septic tanks and wastewater sprayfields. Since we all contribute to that pollution and we all use water, we all have a part to play in protecting and saving the springs.

To learn more about the aquifer, and our springs, as well as steps you can take to restore, protect and preserve them, visit the links provided in this pamphlet.

1. Springs are often classified by the volume of the water they discharge. The largest springs are called "first-magnitude," defined as springs that discharge water at a rate of at least 2800 liters or 100 cubic feet (2.8 m³) of water per second.

Books

Silenced Springs: Moving from Tragedy to Hope, Robert L. Knight
AQUIFERIOUS: 12 Florida Springs, With Art & Narrative, Margaret Ross Tolbert
Mirage: Florida and the Vanishing Water of the Eastern U.S., Cynthia Barnett
Blue Revolution: Unmaking America's Water Crisis, Cynthia Barnett
The Springs of Florida, Doug Stamm and Steve Leatherberry
Finding the Fountain of Youth:
Ponce de Leon and Florida's Magical Waters, Rick Kilby

Internet & Video Resources

AQUIFERIOUS

<http://aquiferious.com>
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/346949600899/>

WATER'S JOURNEY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GsaahKpnzVU>

WE ARE WATER

<http://www.amazon.com/We-Are-Water-Jill-Heinerth/dp/0979878993>

HOWARD T. ODUM FLORIDA SPRINGS INSTITUTE

<https://howardtodumfloridaspringsinstitute.wildapricot.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/floridaspringsinstitute>

SPRINGS ETERNAL PROJECT

<http://springseternalproject.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/SpringsEternal>

FLORIDA SPRINGS COUNCIL

(scroll down for links to websites of member organizations)
http://springsforever.org/?page_id=416

SPRINGS OF FLORIDA

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/geology/geologictopics/springs/bulletin66.htm>

SPRING HUNTERS

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/353314354867715/>

FLORIDIANS' CLEAN WATER DECLARATION CAMPAIGN

<http://www.wewantcleanwater.com>
<https://www.facebook.com/FCWDcampaign>

CENTER FOR EARTH JURISPRUDENCE

<http://earthjuris.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/earthjuris>

AQUIFERIOUS Enter the Springs is presented by the City of Gainesville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department, sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture, as well as VisitGainesville