

HOW FLORIDA PROTECTS ITS SPRINGS

Florida is home to more first- and second-magnitude springs than any other state in the nation. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is nationally recognized for its water-quality assessment and restoration programs that incorporate monitoring, assessment, planning, partnerships and funding to safeguard these unique natural treasures for future generations.

MONITORING & ASSESSMENT

- DEP laboratory scientists perform analyses on more than 140,000 water samples in an average year, which includes analyses of samples collected to ensure the health of Florida's springs.
- Thirty percent of the nation's water-quality data comes from Florida – that's more than double the next highest state.
- To assess the health of a waterbody, scientists compare the collected data with the appropriate standards for the waterbody's type and classification.
- Nutrient pollution, specifically excessive nitrogen and phosphorous, is the primary source of water-quality imbalance in springs
- This scientific data, combined with the expertise of more than 3,000 DEP staff, including world-class scientists and water-quality experts, allows the department to understand the state's water conditions and make decisions that enhance waterways and address water-quality concerns.

PLANNING & PARTNERSHIPS

- DEP and Florida's water management districts partner to identify key projects that will help improve water quality, recharge water flow and protect habitat in Florida's iconic spring systems.
- By July 2018, DEP will have established science-based restoration targets or plans for all historic first-magnitude springs and other springs of special significance, known as Outstanding Florida Springs.

- To achieve water-quality restoration targets, DEP works with local stakeholders to develop and implement a comprehensive set of projects and strategies, designed to reduce nutrients and improve water quality over time. Progress is monitored and changes are implemented, as necessary.
- Florida is one of only four states to fully implement the National Numeric Nutrient Criteria Program, which includes the application of measurable water-quality standards to address pollution from sources such as septic tanks, runoff, livestock waste and fertilizer.

FUNDING

- Over the last seven years, the state of Florida has dedicated historic funding to restore and protect Florida's springs, with an investment of more than \$191 million in state funding.
- Since 2011, approximately \$360 million has been invested in Florida's springs through DEP and matching water management district and local government funds, which is the highest amount of funding in Florida's history.
- Florida's 2018-2019 state budget will continue these record investments with an additional \$50 million in state funding in vital springs protection projects and programs.



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