

From: "Florida Department of Environmental Protection"  
<FloridaDEP@public.govdelivery.com>  
Date: May 1, 2013, 10:26:16 AM EDT  
To: disalz@yahoo.com  
Subject: STATEMENT FROM DEP SECRETARY HERSCHEL T. VINYARD JR. REGARDING  
PASSAGE OF NUMERIC NUTRIENT CRITERIA LEGISLATION  
Reply-To: FloridaDEP@public.govdelivery.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 1, 2013  
CONTACT: DEP Press Office, 850.245.2112, DEPNews@dep.state.fl.us

STATEMENT FROM DEP SECRETARY HERSCHEL T. VINYARD JR. REGARDING PASSAGE OF  
NUMERIC NUTRIENT CRITERIA LEGISLATION

TALLAHASSEE - Today, after bi-partisan support in the House and the Senate, the numeric nutrient criteria bill (SB 1808) will now be presented to Governor Rick Scott for his signature. The legislation, combined with new state rules, form the foundation of a state-federal agreement that enables a focused, state-led solution to protecting Florida's waters. The legislation is key to ending litigation and allowing the state to implement better protection of our waterways.

These actions will result in having numeric nutrient standards for 99 percent of Florida's lakes, streams, springs, estuaries and coastal waters. Such standards have already been reviewed by the fantastic scientists at DEP and by EPA.

I applaud the leadership of Sen. Charlie Dean and Rep. Jake Raburn and the support of the Florida Legislature on this important issue. Florida has to address the problem of excess nutrients if we are to restore and protect the health of the rivers, lakes, springs and estuaries of this great state.

These measurable nutrient criteria will result in cleaner, safer water for all Floridians.

**Background:**

In March, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reached an agreement to continue the protection of Florida's waterways from excessive levels of nitrogen and phosphorus. High levels of these pollutants cause algal blooms and are among the largest contributors to water quality problems in Florida. This agreement marks a significant step forward in protecting and restoring water quality

across the state.

The agreement builds on momentum from November 2012, when EPA approved the state's numeric nutrient criteria to cover all lakes, rivers, streams and springs, as well as estuaries from Clearwater Harbor to Biscayne Bay. The legislation and some Department rulemaking in 2013 set the stage to finish the job of setting numeric nutrient criteria for Florida's waterways.

The plan calls for this legislation as well as adopting additional state rules that in combination will eliminate the need for continued dual rulemaking and secure the foundation for a single, state-led solution for the state of Florida. Currently, state and federal rules are in place for some Florida waterbodies.

The legislation requires the Department to complete its nutrient criteria rulemaking for remaining coastal and estuarine waters by Dec. 1, 2014, and establishes interim nutrient standards until then. The legislation further clarifies and puts into law requirements for nutrient conditions in all managed conveyances and canals, and makes it clear that all state criteria will go into effect when EPA has ceased nutrient rulemaking in Florida and removes the federal criteria.

In addition, the Department has adopted a clear implementation plan for the criteria so application of the new rules can occur immediately. The agreement with EPA, once implemented and completed, will be coupled with EPA's prior approval in November of the Department's adopted water quality standards. The result will be Florida having numeric nutrient standards for lakes, streams springs, estuaries and coastal waters, the vast majority of waterways in the state.

#### About the Florida Department of Environmental Protection

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is the state's principal environmental agency, created to protect, conserve and manage Florida's environment and natural resources. The Department enforces federal and state environmental laws, protects Florida's air and water quality, cleans up pollution, regulates solid waste management, promotes pollution prevention and acquires environmentally-sensitive lands for preservation. The agency also maintains a statewide system of parks, trails and aquatic preserves. To view the Department's website log on to [www.dep.state.fl.us](http://www.dep.state.fl.us).

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Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>  
Ocala.com Editorial on Springs  
April 29, 2013 8:33 AM

## **Editorial: Two different conversations**

*Published: Sunday, April 28, 2013 at 6:30 a.m.*

There are two distinct conversations going on about Florida's freshwater springs.

One conversation is being held in communities — places like Ocala and Apopka and Lake City — and is focused on the urgent need to stop the degradation of our springs that are equal parts environmental and economic assets. There is an urgency to that conversation.

The other conversation is taking place in Tallahassee, sort of, where lawmakers are indifferent to the escalating number of officially “impaired” springs and their value to the communities surrounding them. There is no urgency to this conversation. To the contrary, lawmakers are finding reasons to postpone it.

That was made crystal clear this week when the chairman of the House Agricultural and Natural Resources Subcommittee, Rep. Matt Caldwell, told the Tampa Bay Times the Legislature would not pass any bills this year focused on spring restoration or protection. Instead, Caldwell said he “thought it was best” to await the completion of a series of minimum-and-flow studies, aimed at determining at what level springs and rivers would experience “significant harm.” The thing is, those studies have been mandated since 1972 and remain unfinished, while most of Florida's 700 springs are already deemed harmed, many significantly.

The community conversations, like the one we are having in Ocala about Silver Springs, are about saving remarkably beautiful and beloved natural treasures for generations to come. They are about recognizing that these uniquely wonderful windows to the aquifer can be economic engines, providing jobs and new eco-friendly development at a time when every place in Florida needs it. They are about addressing the polluted water and receding spring flows that signal our aquifer also is polluted and receding.

We wonder where our own representatives in Tallahassee, Reps. Dennis Baxley and Charlie Stone, are in the conversation there. We understand they can't take a high-profile role in every issue, because not every issue is relevant to Ocala/Marion County. But the springs are not only relevant to our community, we are ground zero in the conversation. We are home to the world's most famous springs, Silver Springs. Because of that, our community has the potential to turn restoration and repair of the granddaddy of all springs into an eco-tourism boom. We can be a model for all springs communities. That Silver Springs is located in the heart of 350,000 people, along a major interstate, with plenty of tourist accommodations and amenities, makes it a golden opportunity.

Yet, our representatives are missing in action, and their colleagues in Tallahassee inexplicably demur and delay.

If they are unsure how to go about saving Florida's springs, we can refer them to dozens of state-sponsored studies that are gathering dust. If they are unsure who can implement the springs restoration and protection recommendations in those studies, we suggest they ask our local governments and those in other springs communities around Florida. They are full of ideas and political will, but short on support and money.

Jim Stevenson, who is known as Florida's Mr. Springs, recently lamented the Legislature's disinterest in our springs, saying, "We don't protect what we don't value." Obviously, Florida's communities value their springs, and you can hear it in the urgency of their ongoing conversations. If only we could get our representatives in Tallahassee to value them, too.

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# Tampa Bay Times

## Despite petition, Legislature to do nothing to help springs this year

Craig Pittman, Times Staff Writer

Monday, April 22, 2013 6:29pm

Although thousands of Florida voters signed a petition demanding action, the Legislature will not pass any bills aimed at restoring and protecting the state's iconic springs this year, according to the chairman of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee.

The reason, according to Rep. Matt Caldwell, R-Lehigh Acres, is that state regulators are already setting what are called "minimum flows and levels" for the major springs, an effort he said should take another year and a half and help legislators figure out what further assistance might be needed.



"I thought it was best to let them move forward with that," Caldwell said, explaining Department of Environmental Protection officials "came and told me ... they'd like to be able to finish that."

But setting minimum flows and levels, or MFLs for short, does little to help springs, according to Jim Stevenson, who headed the Florida Springs Task Force under former Gov. Jeb Bush.

One reason why: The MFL standard is based on avoiding what the law calls "significant harm," as opposed to avoiding any harm at all.

"The MFLs will not protect spring flow," Stevenson said. "If the Legislature really wanted to help the springs, they would take that word 'significant' out."

Florida's springs are suffering. Many are thick with toxic algae blooms fed by increasing nitrate pollution. Compounding the problem is a decline in their flow that in some cases resulted in them sputtering out completely. And geologists have found a disturbing increase in saltiness in a few freshwater springs, which could signal future problems with the state's drinking supply.

The springs initiative begun under Bush led to the state's purchase and preservation of thousands of acres that could have been developed or otherwise contributed to the pollution of the aquifer. But the Bush group's recommendations for new laws were ignored by the Legislature — except for one involving septic tank inspections, which was passed and then repealed before it took effect.

Something similar happened with the MFL law. The Legislature decreed more than 30 years ago that state regulators should set minimum flows and levels for major waterways across Florida. The idea was to figure out how much more those rivers, springs and lakes can be drained for water supply purposes before causing "significant" environmental problems.

But the five water management districts and the DEP have been slow to carry out that law. So far, MFLs have been set for 22 of the state's 1,000 springs, with another 26 scheduled to be finished this year, according to DEP press secretary Patrick Gillespie. Another 23 are slated for 2014.

Wakulla Springs, the largest in the state, has never had an MFL set by the Northwest Florida Water Management District. The district had been scheduled to set one in 2012 but failed, and earlier this year the agency requested permission to put off setting the limits for another 11 years.

When the Southwest Florida Water Management District, or Swiftmud, proposed levels for the Chassahowitzka and Homosassa rivers in 2011, it made residents along those rivers skeptical about the whole minimum-flow program. Ron Miller, vice president of the Homosassa River Alliance, labeled it "a statewide project to create a map of water sources available for development" that will "lead to the destruction of our already impacted springs, rivers and lakes."

And Marty Kelly, who was in charge of the river flow project for Swiftmud, conceded that the law on setting minimum flows doesn't provide for any guard against gradual damage from increased pumping: "You're either significantly harmed or you're not."

Don't expect the Legislature to take the word "significant" out, said Caldwell, a real estate appraiser.

Setting a minimum flow that prevented any harm would mean "you'd have to remove any development adjacent to the springs," Caldwell said. "We have to take the straws out of the ground. That might require putting on a statewide development moratorium to protect the springs — but I think that's politically infeasible."

Still, Caldwell said, "If we don't do something, we're going to keep drawing it down until there's nothing left of it altogether."

Bills were filed in the House and Senate this year calling for the water districts to draw up plans for saving the springs and issue orders to make those plans happen. Neither bill ever got out of committee.

White Springs Mayor Helen Miller, who has spearheaded efforts by a coalition of North Florida government officials to get the state to better protect springs, said she was disappointed in the failure to act, especially since 15,000 people signed petitions calling for greater state protection for the springs.

"The will of the people should count for something," Miller said. The failure to act shows that "on the state level we have a dearth of leadership on water issues."

*Craig Pittman can be reached at [craig@tampabay.com](mailto:craig@tampabay.com)*

**Despite petition, Legislature to do nothing to help springs this year 04/22/13**

**Subject:** FWD: St. Johns River Water Management District Water News  
**Date:** Thursday, April 18, 2013 4:36:37 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** richardowen@owenconsultingservices.co  
**To:** Nancy Smith

----- Original Message -----

Subject: St. Johns River Water Management District Water News  
From: Water News <waternews@sjrwmd.com>  
Date: 4/18/13 4:16 pm  
To: richardowen@owenconsultingservices.co

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## St. Johns River Water Management District Water News

April 18, 2013

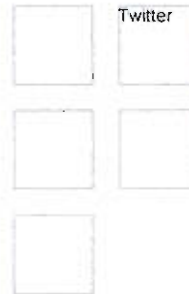
### Update on Adena Springs Ranch permit application

Adena Springs Ranch on April 18 responded to the St. Johns River Water Management District's Request for Additional Information (RAI) relating to the ranch's **consumptive use permit request** for 5.3 million gallons a day (mgd) of water for agricultural and livestock uses in Marion County.

The District has until May 18 to determine whether the application is complete. If the application is not complete, the District will issue another RAI and the applicant will have 120 days to respond or to ask for an extension of the time frame. If the application is considered complete, District staff will determine if the requested allocation of water meets District permitting criteria.

In its initial application in December 2011, the applicant requested 13.267 mgd. On Dec. 14, 2012, the applicant amended its application to reduce the allocation to the 5.3 mgd currently requested.

#### Connect with us



#### Upcoming meetings

For a listing of upcoming meeting dates, times and locations, visit:

- [Governing Board meetings and agendas](#)
- [Other District meetings and notices](#)

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District staff contacts for:

- [Local governments](#)
- [Public and media](#)

[How to contact your local government](#)

#### About us

The St. Johns River Water Management District is a regional agency of the state of Florida whose mission is to protect and ensure the

## **Arsenic in water must be addressed**

By The Staff

Wednesday, April 17, 2013 at 10:24 pm (*Updated: April 18, 8:21 am*)

**THE ISSUE:** Many wells in northwest Citrus have high arsenic levels.

**OUR OPINION:** An issue that needs final resolution.

For almost a decade, a problem with high arsenic levels in multiple wells in northwest Citrus County has been known, and for several years now the state has provided special filters to remove arsenic from about 200 wells.

In a recent commission meeting, county water resources director Ken Cheek explained the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is footing the cost of a study to determine the cost of the filtration program compared with providing county water to the area.

The source of the arsenic contamination is unknown. Theories range from the presence of former cattle dip tanks where arsenic was used to control ticks and fleas to industrial contamination to naturally occurring deposits of the heavy metal.

The problem was identified about 2005 when a woman living in the area was found to have high levels of arsenic in her hair, indicating a long-time consumption of the metal. This led to investigation of more than 700 wells in the area and arsenic filters being provided for about 200 of them.

The current study will determine whether it makes sense to continue this program or for the county to provide water to the area. The county can then determine if it is willing to commit to expansion of county water into this more sparsely-populated part of the county.

If the county is interested, it can pursue a combination of grant funding and assessments to fund the expansion, but it is likely to be another year before the study is complete and the county has information for making this decision.

We understand and appreciate that with water and sewer being enterprise funds paid for by users rather than tax dollars there would be some hesitation about expanding into areas where population density may not justify the cost.

At the same time, the presence of arsenic in some county wells is a public health issue that needs to be addressed, and the best long-term solution is for county water to be expanded into this area. We encourage the commission to seek funding for expansion of the water system and to make plans to bring county water to the affected area.



Diane Salz <disalz@yahoo.com>  
Fwd: U.S. EPA APPROVES STATE'S RESTORATION TARGET FOR SILVER SPRINGS  
April 17, 2013 8:24 AM

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Florida Department of Environmental Protection" <[FloridaDEP@public.govdelivery.com](mailto:FloridaDEP@public.govdelivery.com)>  
**Date:** April 17, 2013 8:11:22 AM EDT  
**To:** [disalz@yahoo.com](mailto:disalz@yahoo.com)  
**Subject:** U.S. EPA APPROVES STATE'S RESTORATION TARGET FOR SILVER SPRINGS  
**Reply-To:** [FloridaDEP@public.govdelivery.com](mailto:FloridaDEP@public.govdelivery.com)



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 17, 2013

CONTACT: DEP Press Office, 850.245.2112, [DEPNews@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:DEPNews@dep.state.fl.us)

## U.S. EPA APPROVES STATE'S RESTORATION TARGET FOR SILVER SPRINGS

~Restoration efforts continue in and around iconic spring~

**TALLAHASSEE** – The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's restoration target for Silver Springs, called a total maximum daily load, has been approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The Department adopted the [total maximum daily load](#) for nitrate, in this case a maximum acceptable concentration, at 0.35 milligrams per liter in November. This is the same water quality target the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has set for springs – based on the Department's data – and that has been upheld in both state and federal courts. Meeting the target nitrate concentration will be a major step toward bringing the Silver Springs system back into balance. The Department received [this letter](#) notifying of the approval.

"This action solidifies and supports the scientific foundation of the restoration plan currently under development by the Department," said Drew Bartlett, Director of the Department's Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration. "This paves the way for the actions that will ultimately restore this iconic spring."

The Department's Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration recently held the first meeting to develop this restoration plan, or basin management action plan, for Silver Springs. Understanding the problem based on hard data and science and addressing it through concrete actions developed with local stakeholders will help

restore the springshed and protect it into the future.

But the Department is not waiting to finish planning before investing in projects to improve water quality. For example, the Department is contributing \$300,000, along with Marion County (\$300,000) and the St. Johns River Water Management District (\$100,000) to eliminate the discharge from the Silver Springs Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, located within 1.5 miles of the main boil of Silver Springs. Wastewater will be redirected to the Silver Springs Shores Wastewater Treatment Plant, which provides higher level treatment and is 10 miles from the head spring.

In a subsequent phase of the project, a series of small "package" wastewater treatment plants will also be connected to the Silver Springs Shores facility, which will provide better treatment and reduce pollution. Implementation of these actions collectively will eliminate some two tons of nitrogen currently discharged into the Silver Springs system every year.

In January, the Department announced that the Silver Springs Attraction will become a state park Oct. 1, 2013, following a vote by the Governor and Cabinet. Department staff members are conducting an environmental site assessment on the property and work is expected to start next week on the transition from a for-profit amusement park into a state park. Parks staff members, through public input, have developed a [Interim Facilities and Operations Plan](#) and continue work on a long-term management plan.

The Division of Environment Assessment and Restoration and Division of Recreation and Parks continue to work together to identify additional and future environmental cleanup projects that aim to restore Silver Springs, while converting it to one of Florida's award-winning state parks, greenways and trails.

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## Column: Keeping Florida's water flowing

Florida's future depends on access to a reliable supply of fresh water. While we're surrounded by seas and receive abundant rainfall, in some regions during certain times of the year, we are using water faster than Mother Nature can provide it. As our population continues to grow — this year we will surpass New York as the third most populated state in the nation — pressure on our fragile water supplies will increase.

Florida's environment, economy and quality of life all depend on water. If we want to continue to attract businesses and draw tourists while protecting our environment, we must ensure we have the water supply to meet our needs, not just today, but for our future.

Fortunately, there are solutions. We've already taken several steps to protect our available

water supply and reduce our water use, where possible, through thoughtful conservation measures. As a result of efforts led by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to help agricultural producers implement best practices and use new technologies, Florida agriculture is using less water now than at any time in the past while, at the same time, increasing productivity and efficiency.

The latest irrigation technologies dramatically reduce water use and, when combined with new computerized tools, make it possible for producers to control their irrigation systems over the Internet or with a smartphone. The agriculture department also deploys mobile irrigation labs to advise farmers on how to improve their irrigation system efficiency and irrigation scheduling. Across the state, more than 9 million acres of farm, ranch and nursery lands are taking advantage of the programs the department offers to protect and conserve water resources.

Florida's farmers should be applauded for their efforts. Because of their hard work and investment, they've been able to save nearly 11 billion gallons of water each year. Local communities and public water supply utilities have also implemented successful conservation programs and water reuse projects that are making a difference.

But conservation and reuse alone will not be enough.

The next step must be to explore sources of water that won't deplete. We must find ways to grow our water supply from sources that are resistant to drought and shortage. Simply put, our water supply options must become more diverse.

Droughtproof water supplies, like seawater desalination, should be more aggressively pursued and included in water planning as future sources of Florida's water supply. The collection and storage of water for groundwater recharge and as an alternative source of water should continue to be encouraged with incentives to attract private landowner participation.

I am urging policymakers, water utilities, local officials, agricultural producers, business leaders and all Floridians to be proactive and innovative as they consider new water sources and technologies.

A sustainable vision for Florida's future will require a more comprehensive, long-term water policy and a mechanism to fund it. It will champion the combination of water conservation and innovative alternative water sources. It will ensure all Floridians that water will not become the crisis that today's leaders failed to prevent.

*Adam H. Putnam is Florida's commissioner of agriculture. He wrote this exclusively for the Tampa Bay Times.*



*Across Florida, more than 9 million acres of farm, ranch and nursery lands are taking advantage of programs the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services offers to protect and conserve water resources. Because of farmers' hard work and investment, they've been able to save nearly 11 billion gallons of water a year. Associated Press (2007)*