



## WATER POLICY

# Florida Spring Initiative

## What Decision Makers Should Know

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Water is one of Florida's most abundant natural resources. Water is a crucial resource that impacts not just the environment, but important industries that contribute to Florida's economy, such as tourism, agriculture, and business. To avoid water conflicts between users, enact appropriate public policy, and responsibly manage water resources, it is important to understand the best available science on the topic as well as public opinions about water issues.

### Public opinions of water in Florida

1. Floridians are more concerned about water quality and safety than water quantity.
2. Florida residents place the most importance on clean drinking water (93%). They are then concerned with clean beaches (90.5%), oceans (89.3%), bays/estuaries (89.1%), lakes and rivers (88.9%); plentiful water for agriculture (88.6%); and clean groundwater (88.1%).
3. More people believe that water quality is getting worse as opposed to getting better.
4. 34.4% of Floridians said quality is declining in bays and 33.9% believe the water quality of our oceans is declining.
5. Almost 40% of Florida residents have experienced some kind of negative impact due to water quality including poor quality drinking water; closed beaches, springs, rivers, or lakes; and prohibitions on eating fish they have caught.
6. Almost 50% of Florida residents feel saltwater intrusion is a highly or extremely important issue.

### Specific information about the Florida Spring Initiative

**Definition of a spring:** A spring is a point where groundwater flows out of the ground, and is thus where the aquifer surface meets the surface of the earth. With more than 900 freshwater springs, Florida has one of the largest concentrations of springs on Earth. Most of the springs are located in northern and central Florida.

**Importance of springs:** Florida has one of the largest concentrations of freshwater springs in the world. Florida springs have provided immeasurable natural, recreational and economic benefits for residents and visitors and also provide habitats to wildlife.

**Threats to springs:** The health of springs depends largely on the activities in the spring basin and at the spring itself. The people closest to the spring can have the biggest impact



on a spring's health. Three major threats to springs are listed by the FDEP: Lawn care, human consumption, and recreational activities.

**Sources of pollutants:** Pollutants impacting water quality include pathogens, nutrients, sediment, and metals. Currently, the major pollutants found in Florida are nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, through leaching and runoff.

**Best Management Practices:** BMPs are the most effective, practical means of preventing or reducing pollution from nonpoint sources.

**Water quality monitoring:** Since water quality decrease can be influenced by seasonal climate and human activities, water quality should be monitored continuously to ensure water use safety.

For more information visit [www.piecenter.com/pep](http://www.piecenter.com/pep).

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