

OSFR President Mike Roth Speaks about the Santa Fe on Channel 20

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It's not money that's going to solve the problem, it's political will.

This quote by OSFR President Mike Roth was in the video (which we were unable to post) and not in the text, but it is the most important idea to take away from this broadcast. Florida spends millions on our springs, rivers and the aquifer, but they continue to decline.

The headline sounds good, but this money will not fix the

springs. Tallahassee will throw out acronyms like BMAPs, BMPs, and MFLs and MTDLs (Basin Management Action Plans, Best Management Plans, Minimum Flows and Levels, and Maximum Total Daily Loads, respectively.) The money will be spent paying salaries for those devising ways to treat or study symptoms, or contractors building “improvements,” but the sources of the problems will not be addressed.

Why? Politicians want to appear to the public that they are fixing the problems; that’s what leaders are for. They throw money at them but do not take the time to understand what is needed and what the problems are. Once the money is thrown and having in their minds fixed the problem, they go on to something else.

Mr. Clemons is a perfect example of the politician without the will, as he dismisses the issue saying essentially, that money will fix it. His will is to ignore the two essential sources of decline, which is excess nitrate from agriculture (in the rural Santa Fe basin) and over-pumping. Notice he avoids the word “agriculture,” but mentions the safe word “septic tank.”

Two opposing poles, ostensibly heading for the same goal, but not in reality. Roth wants to restore the river, and Clemons wants to look good to the public so he can be re-elected. If he were serious about the river, he would do a bit of research and soon learn the truth.

See the [original newscast at this link.](#)

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

-A river is like a life: once taken, it cannot be brought back-



One hundred million dollars of the state budget will cover the restoration efforts for the Florida Springs, but environmentalists that we spoke to say politicians might be focusing on the wrong thing.



Michael Roth, of Our Santa Fe River Inc., says he can see how pollution is affecting Florida's springs on a daily basis.

"We'll pull hundreds if not thousands of pounds of garbage out of the river on a mission," said Roth.

While Roth is concerned about the way the money is going to be spent, State Representative Chuck Clemons says this new budget is only the beginning of a long road to restoration.

"My philosophy with the money that's been allocated is to plug the hole in the environmental bottom of our boat and to make sure the septic tank systems and the other things that are polluting in and around our Springs are done away with," said Clemons.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's website lists that twenty-nine of the proposed projects in the upcoming year will focus on Springs in North Central Florida.

Michael Roth and other activists tell us they are concerned there isn't going to be enough money dedicated to preventing the pollution in the first place.

Roth says his organization's mission is to restore and educate.

You can find a detailed list of proposed Florida Springs projects [here:](https://floridadep.gov/sites/default/files/FY2019-2020_springs_proposed_projects_0.pdf)
https://floridadep.gov/sites/default/files/FY2019-2020_springs_proposed_projects_0.pdf