

# Bottling permit risks harm to environment – Gainesville Sun Editorial

August 11, 2019



Ginnie Springs, photo Gainesville Sun

The Gainesville Sun has the following excellent editorial in today's August 11, 2019 newspaper. Nestle claims they only bottle water from sustainable sources.

It is a fact that current usage of the Santa Fe River and its springs is not allowing it to sustain itself– the river and aquifer are declining in quantity and quality.

The flow is down approximately 30% from earlier times, and a

study by the Florida Springs Institute shows that the nutrient loading is up about three times the maximum level recommended by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Read the complete article [here in the Gainesville Sun](#).

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

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

---

## EDITORIAL

Bottling permit risks harm to environment

The Gainesville Sun editorial board

Florida is giving away its most precious natural resource, allowing companies to then make substantial profits from it. Worse yet, the amount these companies are taking from that resource risks harming the environment and reducing the amount available for public use.

The resource in question is the Floridan Aquifer system, which provides most of the state's drinking water. The water also flows from the natural springs that provide recreational benefits for residents and attract tourists from around the world.

Despite these benefits, Florida's regulatory agencies have allowed excessive pollution and pumping of groundwater by homes and farms and other businesses. While agriculture at least provides food for a growing population, water bottlers are selling the life-sustaining liquid at a premium in plastic bottles that persist indefinitely in the environment if not recycled.

A water-withdrawal permit sought by Seven Springs Water Co., for water used at a High Springs bottling plant bought in January by Nestlé Waters North America, has revived concerns over the impact of such withdrawals. The plant is near Ginnie Springs and other springs feeding into the Santa Fe River.

The permit would allow up to 1.152 million gallons of groundwater to be pumped per day. While the bottling plant has operated since 1998 and is allowed to use that much water under its expiring permit from the Suwannee River Water Management District, it had used no more than 0.2659 million gallons per day during the past four years. Nestlé's arrival raises the possibility of higher usage.

.....

Tens of millions of taxpayer dollars are already being spent in Florida on projects to recharge the aquifer and restore damage caused by excessive water withdrawals, only to have additional permits issued that make matters worse. The state doesn't tax these withdrawals to make water bottlers pay for the impact of their operations.

The permit sought by Seven Springs and Nestlé will be a critical test. Too often regulators such as Florida's water management districts, and the political appointees on their governing boards, have put private interests ahead of the public good.

The water management district's staff and board need to do their jobs this time in preventing further harm of the Santa Fe and its springs, rather than making it easier for a multinational corporation to rake in profits.

