

Call To Meeting Next Tues. Aug. 12, 2014: OSFR's Challenge Will Not Be Heard By Judge

August 8, 2014



[Ichetucknee headspring](#) photo

by Merrillee Malwitz-Jipson

In May of 2014 members of Our Santa Fe River, Inc., (OSFR) first learned that SRWMD had issued to a farmer a water use permit (WUP) allowing an average daily rate (ADR) of 2.3142 million gallons and a maximum daily rate (MDR) of 33.1200 gallons, for land to be newly converted from silviculture to row cropping. This amounts to roughly 845 million gallons per year, to be withdrawn from the Suwannee, Santa Fe and Ichetucknee springsheds. SRWMD staff estimated this one permit would reduce the entire springflow of the Ichetucknee headspring by nearly one percent.

Due to confusion over the deadline for submitting the challenge

because of Memorial Day, a legal holiday, the challenge was inadvertently filed one day late, and on June 18, 2014, the district dismissed the petition on the basis that it was not timely filed. OSFR then employed a law firm who cited five precedences where late petitioners had challenges accepted due to "excusable neglect," but the district intends to disallow this challenge, due to the technicality, at the Governing Board meeting next Tuesday in Live Oak.

There are many things wrong with this action by SRWMD. OSFR's position is that the board has been issuing excessive water use permits in our basin and this practice needs to be stopped. Agriculture should not be a magic word which allows unlimited water withdrawals, but that is now the case. Help us make a line in the sand and send a clear message that huge allocations distributed from our public water supply, found in the Floridan aquifer, need to end.

The SRWMD Governing Board meets next Tuesday, August 12, 2014 at Live Oak and on the agenda is the recommendation to deny continuation of the challenge. OSFR requests that all concerned citizens attend this public meeting and show support for protecting our springs and rivers. The meeting is at 9 a.m. at Suwannee River Water Management District headquarters located at 9225 CR 49, on the eastern outskirts of Live Oak. You are welcome and encouraged to speak for the rivers but that is not necessary. You might be asked to simply stand if you support water conservation. Your help is sorely needed and appreciated.

Your presence at this meeting will not stop this permit. What it will do is show the women and men who sit on this powerful board, that we, the public, care about what they are doing and that their actions are wrong. They are mandated to manage our public waters and they believe it is their mission to disperse it until there is none left. They may deny that statement with

words, but their actions show the reverse.

Please come.