

Letters to the Editor: “The Water Dragon”

May 10, 2009

The following is a letter to the editor of the *Gainesville Sun*, written by Michael Patrick of Gainesville. Read on for the letter, which can be seen in its original form [HERE](#). You will have to scroll past one letter to reach this one written by Mr. Patrick.

The water dragon

The water dragon has raised its ugly head once again.

During my lifetime, I have witnessed Florida's population outstrip its water resources. As a former groundwater geologist for the Suwannee River Water Management District, I am concerned for the future of Florida's water quality and natural habitat.

In response to a recent article in The Gainesville Sun, which basically stated that inhabitants within Florida have legal rights to water, even when that water is not from their area, I would like to bring up a few points to consider.

Seminole County is in the process of obtaining a permit to extract surface water from the St. Johns River. The problem seems insignificant at first. This one county asking for a small fraction of the St. Johns water may seem innocent enough. If allowed, I see a precedent being established, that will lead to one court battle after another.

In effect, if Seminole County can siphon this water, why can't we?

The other point I would like to make is that whenever a natural system is tampered with, nature always loses. Examples which come to mind are the Everglades, the Peace River and the Kirkpatrick dam on the Oklahawa River.

The decision to move water out of its natural watersheds is a bad idea. The solution is conservation. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Floridians excessively irrigate lawns with pure drinking quality water. My own family uses more water than we need.

Look at areas in the western U.S. with little natural water and see how they think of water as a luxury. My guess is that water use could be cut by 50 percent and we would still have a quality lifestyle and consequently, healthy springs, streams, lakes and estuaries in our state.

Michael Patrick,

Gainesville