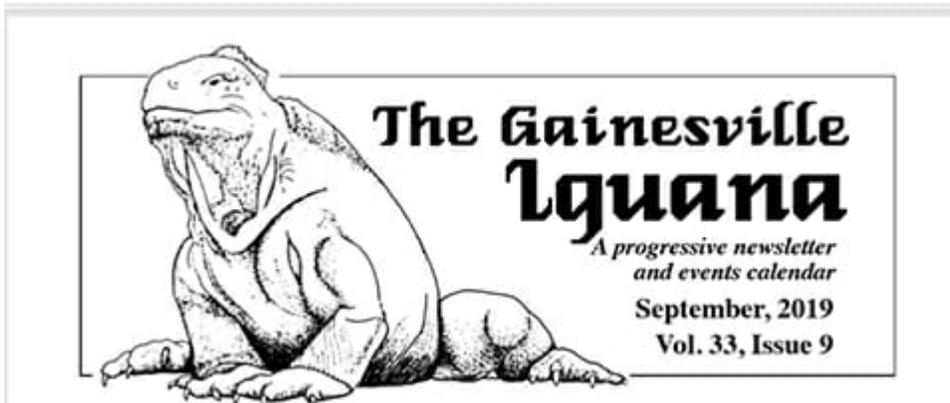


OSFR Op-Ed in Gainesville Iguana

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Nestlé's drain on Ginnie Springs

By Merrillee Jipson and Jim Tatum, Board Members of Our Santa Fe River

What's wrong with bottled water and Nestlé?

What's right about it?

We can think that maybe if you are out somewhere, hot and thirsty, it is convenient to have a bottle of water handy. Of course you could have that same amount of water in a nondisposable container. And it would be free. And likely it would be healthier. And you would not leave a plastic container to trash the ground.

What's wrong?

Everything.

Pulling millions of gallons of water out of our spring is slowly

killing the springs and lowering the aquifer. Nestlé claims they only take water from sustainable springs, but this is untrue.

The water from Ginnie Springs is sourced from a falling aquifer which is consistently going down and the springs flow is about 30 percent less now than in past decades.

The State of Florida has declared the Santa Fe River and Ginnie Springs to be "in recovery" because the flow is lower than it should be. Nestlé will make huge extractions which are unnecessary and which benefit only them, and can only have a negative impact on these already over-pumped waters.

One part of the 3-Prong Test, used by Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) to issue these types of water use permits is given only if the withdrawal is in the public interest. Drying up the springs is not in the public interest. Making money from the water is in Seven Springs and Nestlé's interest.

The Santa Fe River is also declared an "Outstanding Florida Waterway," which is also supposed to provide extra protection from depletion by greedy corporations. Seven Springs Water Partnership, locally owned, gets the water free, up to over one million gallons per day, and they sell it to Nestlé. It costs them \$115, a one-time fee. ...

It is true that agricultural irrigation uses more water than the bottling plants, but one huge difference is that we may get tomatoes or potatoes from farms. We need agriculture to eat. We do not need to buy water in a bottle that we can get from our tap. And the tap water is probably healthier than Nestlé's. The water from Ginnie Springs contains over three times the maximum nitrate content recommended by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Nestlé's bottled water from Crystal Springs at the Hillsborough County plant contains over six times

the recommended maximum. Nestlé's website gives a detailed analysis of the mineral content of their spring water, but they fail to mention nitrate content.

In spite of their propaganda, Nestlé obviously cares much more for money than for the environment. Otherwise they would not consider further damaging an already fragile and damaged natural treasure.

To take ACTION to stop Nestlé's newest American water bottling permit located on the Santa Fe River: Contact the Governor DeSantis' office at <https://www.flgov.com/email-the-governor/> It is crucial to stay vigilant and pressure SRWMD staff and Board to do the legally right thing in terms of "reasonable and beneficial and with the public interest" and any other statutory right given to deny this permit (found in F.S. 373, Section II).

Please be thoughtful and take time with your response to them. These comments are vital to the public interest component of the permit process. The River needs your voice to speak for it now. This is one more reason Nature needs rights!

See the original article at this link in [the Gainesville Iguana](#).