

Springs Academy Tuesdays - Springs Stresses

August 3, 2016



The fifth meeting in this very successful series was held today, Aug. 2 at the North Florida Springs Environment Center in High Springs. The series runs through Sept. 6, and has had a loyal following throughout.

Today's presentation was about things we do not want to hear: groundwater pumping, fertilizers, wastewater disposal and (excessive) recreation. These are things that stress our springs, to the point of drying them up.

Spring flow is analogous to a cup of water overflowing the rim of the cup. Draw a little water out from a hole in the bottom of the cup, and the overflow stops. This is what happens when we over-pump the aquifer, and a drop of only ten feet can dry up

a major spring. In some areas of Florida, such as the northeast and southwest, the aquifer has dropped up to 60 feet lower than pre-development times. The water that used to flow from major springs such as White Springs, on the Suwannee, now is pulled out of wells.

In three of the five water districts, we have 29 thousand consumptive use permits, (CUPS) which shows we are over-permitted. Nearly every CUP issued results in a permit for increased nitrogen as well as a permit to use water. This is because the CUPs are used mostly for agriculture (which uses fertilizers) or development which produces wastewater.

Excess nitrogen in drinking water can produce health problems in humans and destroy plant life in the rivers. Different types of algae in the springs have several negative results: reduced native plants, impaired water quality, lowered food chain support, less wildlife, and declining aesthetics.

September's meeting will deal with springs advocacy on a local, state and national level. The popular series is free with the public welcome, but a \$5 donation is requested to help with expenses.