

# WMNF Interviews OSFR's Merrillee Malwitz-Jipson

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January 14, 2020 by [Seán Kinane](#) and filed under [News and Public Affairs](#), [Water](#).



Photo by Merrillee Malwitz-Jipson



Merrillee

Malwitz-Jipson

The well-known and respected station WMNF has done another interview with Merrillee Malwitz-Jipson for her thoughts on the meeting about Nestle with the High Springs City Commission. She is now recognized internationally as an expert on bottled water, having been invited to a conference in Canada, which she attended, and to other bottled water events in Switzerland and France.

She has successfully spearheaded the fights for years to keep bottling plants out of the Santa Fe River basin and is familiar with the regulations and the intricate process of permits and procedures. She is also an experienced [organizer](#) of [protests](#) and [demonstrations](#) to educate the public about corporate greed, which is what we have at Ginny Springs.

See the original article here at this [link to WMNF](#):

*Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.*

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*– A river is like a life: once taken,  
it cannot be brought back © Jim Tatum*

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## City of High Springs weighs in on Nestlé water permit request

This year a water management district in north Florida will decide whether to allow the company Nestlé a renewal of a permit to take [water](#) from the Santa Fe River basin and bottle it for sale at supermarkets.

Last Thursday the city commission of High Springs, northwest of

Gainesville, heard from opponents and some supporters of the plan.

WMNF spoke about the meeting with Merrilee Malwitz-Jipson, a board member with [Our Santa Fe River](#).

*“We’ve been working really hard to stop a water grab for bottled water purposes at the Ginnie Springs system on the Santa Fe River by Seven Springs Water Company and by Nestlé. A hundred or more people came in front of the High Springs Council members asking them for a resolution opposing this water grab. And in the end there were actually 2 resolutions in front of them. One, asking for a reduced amount of water, and the other one opposing it outright.*

*“They had intended to ask the Suwannee River Water Management District, who actually has the deciding vote on his permit, to let them know their wishes by the residents. An so, in the end, what they ended up doing was not doing either one of the resolutions, but intend to write a very strong-worded letter to the water management district reflecting the multitude of residents that came to the podium.*

*“Most of them were opposed to the water grab, the water use permit, at Ginnie Springs to be put in bottled water. There were, of course, Nestlé employees that came and spoke in favor of the water use, because they are employed in one way or another at that bottle water plant. And there were a handful – a small amount – of other people that either knew the Seven Springs Water Company business owners or were related in one way or another to the actual people that are taking the water from our Springs and selling it to a bottled water business.*

*“A strongly-worded letter is the best that we could get from High Springs. They recognize that this business has existed for 20 years. It is a plant that’s been operating to put our spring*

*water in plastic. They recognize that there are jobs that have been created out there. But they also recognize that our spring water has more value and meaning to our community than perhaps a few jobs.*

*“So, a strong letter written to the water management district conveying the residents’ concerns is what they intend to do at this point in time. The bottled water permit will be heard in front of the water management district sometime after February. It could even be in March or in April. We will, of course, let the public know when that happens because they will be the deciding factor. And, that was expressed many, many times during this meeting process. We just were wanting solidarity, public-interest solidarity, representing the residents of our community. We wanted High Springs to be that voice.*

*“And so, they chose to have a letter as the voice for the residents, which is a really good thing. It’s hopeful for us to let the district know that public interest matters. It’s part of the three-pronged test. And we hope that more people in the State of Florida reach out to the water management district and let their opinion be known that this is nothing but a water grab for corporate gain. And we don’t want to [see] spring water bottled in plastic anymore on our grocery store shelves.*

*“We want the residents in Florida to speak to the grocery store managers, the convenience store managers: ‘stop selling spring water in plastic.’ It is not a beneficial nor reasonable use of our fresh spring water. We want that water to remain in its natural state.”*

[Go to the link above to hear the audio of this transcription.]

On Saturday at 9:00 a.m. Our Santa Fe River is one of the groups organizing what they call a [“Ginnie Springs Kayaktivism Sit-in”](#)

near the town of Fort White in North Florida.