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Celebrating Springs Protection Awareness Month



From left, Senator Rob Bradley, Senator Charles Dean, Representative Keith Perry, FDEP Deputy Secretary for Water Policy and Ecosystem Restoration Drew Bartlett, St. Johns River WMD Executive Director Ann Shortelle, the Ichetucknee Partnership mascot Bellamy Beaver, Southwest Florida WMD Executive Director Robert Beltran, Representative Elizabeth Porter, back row Suwannee River WMD Executive Director Noah Valenstein, and Northwest Florida WMD Executive Director Brett Cyphers, missing from photo, Representative Baxley.

Live Oak, FL, April 19, 2016 – With leadership from Sen. Charles Dean and Rep. Elizabeth Porter, the Florida Legislature has once again declared April Springs Protection Month, demonstrating their continued commitment to Florida’s springs. Leaders from around the state joined Rep. Porter and Sen. Dean in Tallahassee to demonstrate their in support of springs protection. Rep. Porter and Sen. Dean submitted resolutions in their respective chamber which recognizes April 2016 as Springs Protection Awareness Month.

“Springs are vital to natural systems and play a significant role in the state’s economy,” said Rep. Porter. “Florida’s springs has shaped the lives and livelihood of generations past as it will for the future,” Rep. Porter added.

With the singular goal of increasing the awareness to preserve and restore springs, Rep. Porter recently hosted a press conference and was joined by several Legislative Members, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) secretary for Water Policy and Ecosystem Restoration, Drew Bartlett, in addition to directors from the four water management districts that have springs in their districts.

“I am proud to have the opportunity to provide the leadership in the Senate that is needed to protect and restore our springs,” said Sen. Dean. “It is only through our collective efforts that we as state leaders can ensure that our springs are protected.”

“The water management districts and local governments continue to show their commitment to protect and restore springs throughout the state. The projects we have funded illustrate what can be accomplished when we work collaboratively to protect our valuable water resources,” said Deputy Secretary for Water Policy and Ecosystem Restoration Drew Bartlett. “Unprecedented levels of state funding have achieved results and will further protect and restore our springs.”

Noah Valenstein, executive director of the Suwannee River Water Management District stated, “Partnering with the state and our communities strengthens our efforts to protect and restore springs.” He added, “The District appreciates the committed leadership of Governor Scott, the Legislature, FDEP and local governments to improve the health of springs.”

Under Governor Scott’s leadership, a record \$135 million has been provided for springs restoration. Additionally, the recently signed Legacy Florida Bill provides up \$50 million in recurring funding for restoring and protecting our springs.

The Governor’s commitment to investing this level of funding for the implementation of springs projects will significantly reduce nutrient loadings and substantially reduce groundwater use in our springsheds.

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