

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*From left, Lake City Chamber of Commerce Troy Adams, The Ichetucknee Partnership Abbie Chasteen, Lake City Chamber of Commerce Dennille Decker, Lake City Chamber of Commerce Mike McKee, Lake City Chamber of Commerce Brad Wheeler, Representative Kathleen Peters, Sen. Rob Bradley, Representative Chuck Clemons, The Ichetucknee Partnership mascot Bellamy Beaver, Representative Elizabeth Porter, Florida Department of Environmental Protection Interim Secretary Ryan Matthews, St. Johns Water Management District Executive Director Ann Shortelle, Northwest Florida Water Management District Governing Board Member Jon Costello, Suwannee River Water Management District Executive Director Noah Valenstein.*

**DISTRICT CELEBRATES SPRINGS AWARENESS WITH PARTNERS**

LIVE OAK, FLA., Apr. 7, 2017 – The Suwannee River Water Management District (District) celebrated the declaration of Springs Awareness for the month of April in Tallahassee this week.

Under the leadership of Rep. Elizabeth Porter and Sen. Rob Bradley, Florida has continued their commitment to the conservation and revitalization of Florida's springs and natural resources.

The District is home to the largest number of first-magnitude springs in Florida and the United States, which provide important natural and economic benefits to the area. In fact, 21 of the 33 first-magnitude springs in Florida are located within District boundaries.

"The springs in our District are the finest in the world," said Noah Valenstein, executive director for the District. "Not only do they support local economies but they are the eyes into the health and sustainability of our aquifer in terms of water quality and quantity."

Springs discharge up to 65 million gallons of fresh water per day (mgd) and are essential for the flow of most rivers within the District. Additionally, springs are estimated to support 1,000 area jobs and generate \$95 million annually in economic output.

Under Gov. Rick Scott, along with support from Rep. Porter and Sen. Bradley, springs have received historic levels of funding – \$50 million last year and a recommended \$65 million by Gov. Scott for 2017-2018.

"The District is thankful to Gov. Scott and the legislature for their leadership and support of these irreplaceable resources," said Valenstein. "We must ensure the springs are protected now and for future generations to enjoy."

The mission of the Suwannee River Water Management District is to protect and manage water resources using science-based solutions to support natural systems and the needs of the public. The District holds true to the belief of water for nature, water for people. Headquartered in Live Oak, Florida, the District serves 15 surrounding north-central Florida counties.

For more information about the District, visit [www.mysuwanneeriver.com](http://www.mysuwanneeriver.com) or follow us on Facebook and Twitter, search @SRWMD.

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