

Ginnie Springs, 1997

Learn about  
this spring



# SPRINGS FLORIDA'S FRAGILE FOUNTAINS OF YOUTH ETERNAL

FEATURING THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF JOHN MORAN

AN EXHIBIT CREATED BY THE SPRINGS ETERNAL PROJECT IN COOPERATION WITH ALACHUA CONSERVATION TRUST  
WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE LYDIA B. STOKES FOUNDATION, THE FELBURN FOUNDATION AND THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION





Myakka Springs, Chippola River, 2010  
photo by John Moanan and David Moyndan

For more than 30 years I've been on a search for these pools of stunning blue wonder.

# SPRINGS ETERNAL A PERSONAL ODYSSEY OF DISCOVERY

I often wonder what Florida must have looked like to Juan Ponce de León and those other early European explorers, pushing forth into the interior of the peninsula in what surely was a remarkable odyssey of discovery.

We know now that Ponce wasn't really searching for a Fountain of Youth, but as a child growing up in Florida that myth took hold of me and never really let go. Like many of you, I've been on a quest of my own, seeking out these pools of stunning blue wonder that are the springs of Florida.

When I moved from South Florida to attend the University of Florida in 1973, I knew what a freshwater spring looked like. I'd never been to a spring before, but every schoolchild in Florida grows up seeing pictures of the glass-bottom

boat rides at Silver Springs, or the mermaid show at Weeki Wachee.

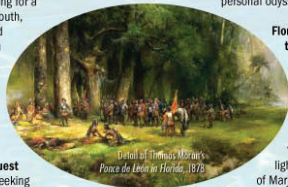
Soon I was venturing out from Gainesville to see for myself, and I found my



Self portrait, Gilchrist Blue Springs, Santa Fe River, 1983

way to Ginnie and Poe and Blue Springs, and I went spring hopping on the Suwannee and then on to the big springs of the Ocala National Forest.

Nothing had prepared me for the experience of standing there in real time, beholding these incredible gems of the Florida landscape. And so began my personal odyssey of discovery.



Detail of Thomas Moran's Ponce de León in Florida, 1879

Florida is home to the largest and most impressive array of freshwater springs in the world. These "bowls of liquid light," in the words of Marjory Stoneman

Douglas, have lured explorers and artists and tourists and investors since the time of the Timucua.

And yet, 500 years after the arrival of Ponce de León on his mythical search, our real magic fountains are imperiled by pollution, neglect and the groundwater demands of a thirsty state.

Some have stopped flowing and many are choked with algae, their blue waters turning murky and green. Once a source of awe, our springs are now a source of deep concern, their future unclear.



My daughter Alexia, Poo Springs, Santa Fe River, 1981

This project is a visual celebration of the springs we were given, a meditation on the springs we could lose, and an invitation to the people of Florida to fall in love with our springs all over again, mindful that the choices we make today foretell the Florida of tomorrow.

*John Moanan*  
John Moanan  
Co-Director, The Springs Eternal Project, 2015

Slime outbreak, Santa Fe River near Poo Springs, 2012  
The Santa Fe is a state-designated Outstanding Florida Water.



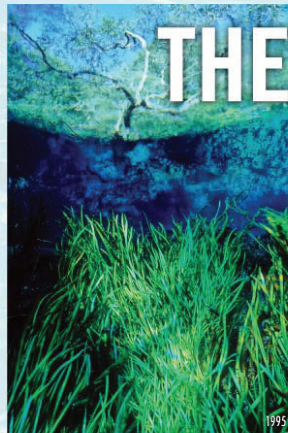


Perhaps you have a favorite place in natural Florida where you have felt the presence of the divine. For many years, **this was my place.**

Here, I would be filled with wonder by this gift of beauty beyond measure, this endless bounty of life-giving water flowing onward to the sea.

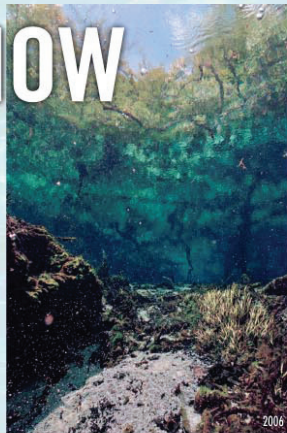
Here, in the crown jewel of Florida's State Parks, I would be filled with gratitude that people I would never know had the wisdom and foresight to set aside this special place, protected forever – or so I believed.

Those are great memories, but it all seems like a dream. Now when I go to the Ichetucknee I wonder, how could we so dishonor the spirit of creation?



# THEN & NOW

I have stood on the banks of the Ichetucknee and I have grieved for my loss – our loss – as I consider with each passing year that my collection of old springs photographs seems less a reflection of the real Florida than a catalog of what once was.



## ICHETUCKNEE SPRINGS STATE PARK

Like many Florida springs, Ichetucknee Springs has lost much of its flow and is now choked with algae. Its blue waters are turning murky and green.

We know how we got here: Groundwater overpumping, pollution from fertilizer, sewage and manure. And lack of political will.

If a foreign power had invaded Florida and done to our springs what we've managed to do all by ourselves, we'd be up in arms to defend our precious waters.

One spring, four decades, five views.

Devil's Eye Spring, 2012



# THEN & NOW

"Ecological destruction in Florida is nothing less than economic suicide."

—Gov. Reubin Askew, 1971

"Florida continues to lead the nation in developing innovative programs to ensure the health of our state's waterways."

—Gov. Rick Scott, 2011



Ichetucknee Springs  
State Park, 2011

Learn about  
this spring:





# SPRINGS ETERNAL JEWELS OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

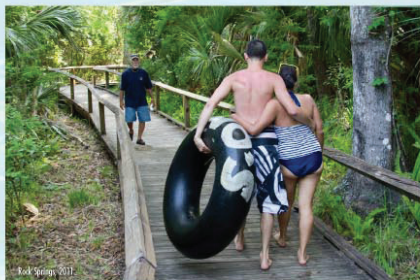
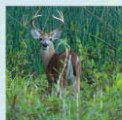
## WEKIWA & ROCK SPRINGS



I have a hunch that on some level every person you see in these pictures understands that **clean and abundant water lies at the heart of the Florida experience** - today, tomorrow, forever.

**The joy you see here is real and important.** When we argue over whether we can afford to clean up our waters, know **there is value in moments like these.**

Connecting with nature and with each other in the real Florida - the one and only Florida - is central to our quality of life and demands to be factored into our economic models.



# SILVER SPRINGS FATE UNCLEAR FOR FLORIDA ICON



1962

One of the wonders of the natural world, Silver Springs has the chance to turn the corner from more than 50 years of regulatory neglect and decline to a future of recovery and protection. **True restoration of Silver Springs will likely require the following regional efforts:**

- **A permanent reduction** of existing groundwater extraction throughout North and Central Florida to less than 50 percent of today's rates.
- **Elimination** or major reduction of all urban/suburban uses of nitrogen fertilizers.
- **An incentive-based program** to shift agriculture from water- and nitrogen-intensive crops to managed forests.
- **Upgrades** to all regional wastewater treatment facilities and replacement of many septic systems by central treatment facilities.
- **Restoration of the Ocklawaha River** to allow unimpeded migration of fish and manatees up the Silver River.
- **An informed and energized public** that has easier access to Silver Springs through the new state park and the ability to recognize and oppose threats and celebrate successes.

— Dr. Robert Knight, Director of the Florida Springs Institute, 2013

Learn about  
this spring.



Silver Springs State Park, 2013

Photographer Alan Youngblood so loves Silver Springs that he got married underwater here in 1991. Since then, he says, "The flow is far less. The nitrate levels are so high everything is covered with thick algae. It's a fabulous resource in decline."

"We now face one of the greatest emergencies in Florida's modern history. Our prized and supposedly well-protected rivers and springs are 'sick' from pollution and in need of restoration and protection by our state governmental agencies and Legislature..."

—Former Gov. Bob Graham and former Assistant Secretary of the Interior Nat Reed, in a 2013 op-ed published in several Florida newspapers





# SPRINGS ETERNAL THEN & NOW

"When you buy a spring, all you're buying is a hole in the ground. You're not protecting the water."

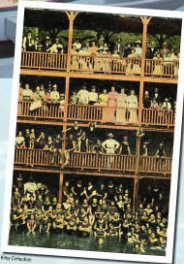
—Jim Stevenson, Former Chairman of the Florida Springs Task Force

## WHITE SPRINGS

2012

**L**egend has it that when Spanish explorers arrived in the 1530s, the site on the banks of the Suwannee was inhabited by Timucuan Indians who considered the springs sacred and bathed without fear of attack by neighboring tribes.

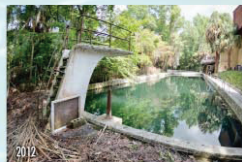
In 1903, White Springs was enclosed with concrete and coquina walls. Henry Ford and Teddy Roosevelt were among the famous visitors who came to take the healing waters. Since the 1980s, the spring rarely flows.



## A DEATH IN POLK COUNTY KISSENGEN SPRING

**P**hosphate mining killed the flow of Kissengen Spring in 1950, making it Florida's first spring to die from human causes.

In 2011, a rush of memories greeted a tour by a group of seniors, all lovers of Kissengen in their youth, when none could imagine their beloved spring would soon cease to flow. A weedy puddle is all that remains.



## FORGOTTEN TREASURE GLEN SPRINGS

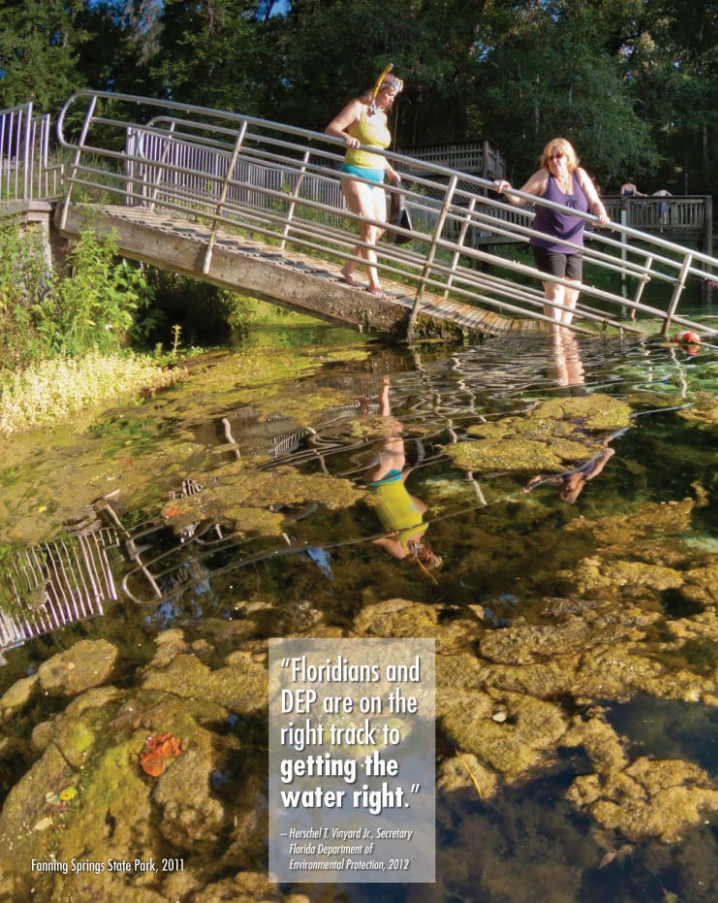
**C**losed to the public and hidden in plain sight, Glen Springs lies in the middle of Gainesville on property owned by the Elks Club. Gainesville's favorite swimming hole was closed in 1970 when the city banned the practice of flushing chlorinated water, used weekly to cleanse the pool, downstream into Hogtown Creek.

Nearby residential wells, septic tanks and fertilizer use have significantly impacted the spring flow and water quality.

Elks Club member Linda Califf, pictured, is leading a community effort to clean the spring and pool. A community effort is underway to restore Glen Springs, though it's unlikely to re-open for swimming.







"Floridians and DEP are on the right track to getting the water right."

—Herschel T. Vinyard Jr., Secretary  
Florida Department of  
Environmental Protection, 2012

## FANNING SPRINGS ONCE A FLORIDA GEM, NOW FLORIDA'S SHAME



1989



2012

### THEN & NOW



2011

When you look at slime-encrusted Fanning Springs, do you see evidence of a state committed to "getting the water right"? I see a growing **public health threat**, a deepening **environmental crisis**, and a looming **economic disaster**. I see a **public relations nightmare** for a state that can ill afford to lose its reputation for natural abundance and clean water. I see a **message to the future** that says the desires of today are more important than the needs of tomorrow. I see a picture of **heartbreak and shame**.



2002





*Oasis in the Dark, Savannah River, 2012*  
photo by John Moran and David Maymashan



# BRONSON'S FAVORITE SWIMMING HOLE BLUE SPRINGS

# THEN & NOW

**L**evy Blue Springs stopped flowing in early 2012, during a record-setting drought compounded by massive groundwater pumping throughout the region. Suwannee River Water Management District records and accounts from long-time locals indicate that the spring's flow had never previously stopped.



1999



2012



2011

**A** stagnant pool in 2011, Convict Springs on the Suwannee River revived after back-to-back tropical storms in 2012.

**Every gallon of water we pump from the Floridan Aquifer – for our farms and mines and lawns and homes – is one less gallon available for our springs and spring-fed rivers and the vital ecosystems they support.**

2012



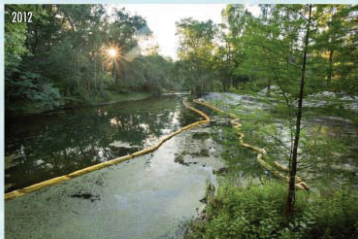
**FLOWING  
ONCE MORE  
CONVICT  
SPRINGS**



1999

## END OF AN ERA POE SPRINGS

**E**neebled by excessive groundwater pumping, pollutants and drought, Poe Springs hit record low flows in 2012.



2012

SPRINGS  
ETERNAL

# THEN & NOW

## PARADISE LOST PEACOCK SPRINGS

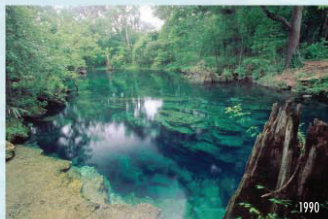
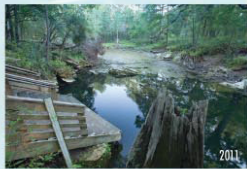


Photo by Lesley Scordale

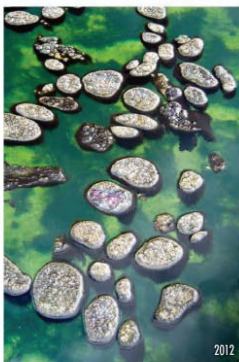
**T**he growth of algae in our springs is fueled by sewage, manure and fertilizer, and it makes me angry to see them this way.

When I hear the phrase, "I want my America back," this is what I think of: **I want my Florida back. I want my springs back.** I want to live in a state where it would be unthinkable that we the people would allow the loss of such a priceless natural legacy.



**S**ulphur Springs is "a prime example of the serious degradation that can occur in the absence of planning and protection," a 2000 state report said about its polluted water and reduced flow. During times of drought, the City of Tampa pumps millions of gallons a day from the spring to a drinking water reservoir two miles away, where **coliform bacteria and other contaminants** are scrubbed by the city's water treatment process.

A popular swimming hole since the late 1800s, **Sulphur Springs was closed to the public in 1986.**



## POLLUTION BEFOULS TAMPA LANDMARK SULPHUR SPRINGS

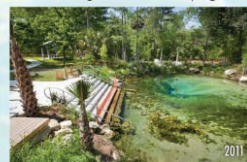


## FADED BEAUTY PITT SPRING



**T**he acclaimed 18th-century naturalist William Bartram was so moved by the extreme clarity of a Florida spring that he described it as "**the blue ether of another world.**" That description seemed apt when I first visited Pitt Spring in 1992.

**When I returned in 2011, I found that the years have not been kind to this fading beauty on Econfina Creek. The Northwest Florida Water Management District completed a \$1.3 million restoration project here in 2012, but recurring outbreaks of algae now tarnish the spring.**



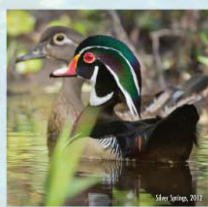
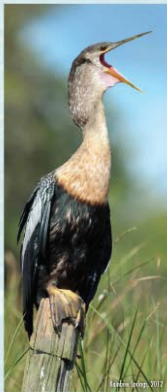
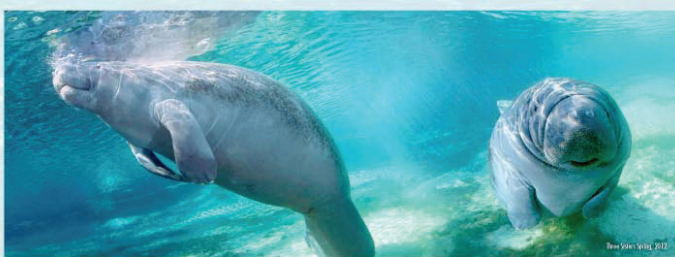




Learn about  
this spring:



*Look Into the Eye, Silver Glen Springs, 2012*





# SPRINGS ETERNAL

## *Places for People*





## The Vision

### Save Our Springs, Save Our Aquifer.

Together, we can restore Florida's iconic springs to their rightful health and radiant beauty.

Healthy springs ensure clean drinking water for everyone, provide habitat for a vibrant array of plants and animals, and breathe life into communities and businesses. They delight the senses and offer sanctuary for the soul.

Through education, commitment, leadership and action, we can share this priceless gift – one of the most beautiful and productive aquifer systems in the world – with our children and theirs, for generations to come.

# TEN THINGS WE CAN DO TO SAVE OUR SPRINGS.

## The Problem

Groundwater over-pumping and pollution from fertilizers, manure, sewage, pesticides and other toxic chemicals are rapidly degrading the health of our springs and aquifer – the source of drinking water for 90% of Floridians. Over-pumping also increases the potential for sinkholes and makes the freshwater layers of our aquifers susceptible to saltwater intrusion.

## The Solutions

Restoring our springs isn't complicated. It requires using less water, stopping pollution at its source, and returning spring flows to levels that sustain diverse and thriving ecosystems of plants, wildlife and people. But we need to act now, before we lose our springs forever.

**1. Visit a spring – and take a friend who's never seen one.** Explore the real magic and beauty of Florida.

**2. Use less water.** Everything we do costs water, from irrigating lawns and turning on lights to deciding what to eat for dinner. It's up to us to make smart water choices, every day.



**3. Support Florida farmers who use water wisely,** grow the right crop in the right place, and avoid chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Shop local and buy organic whenever possible. The quality of our food directly impacts the quality of our water.

**4. Grow native.** Lawns and landscaping account for half the water used by Florida households. Native plants and grasses don't need irrigation or chemical fertilizers to sustain them. It's our choice, Florida: Do we want artificially green lawns or naturally blue springs?

**5. Stop pollution at its source.** Pesticides on the lawn, fertilizers on the tomatoes, cleaning products and medications flushed down the drain – everything we use comes back to us in the aquifer – and ends up in our springs and drinking water. Choose and use products mindfully.



**6. Know your springshed.** Even if you live far from a spring, you may live in a "springshed," an area where withdrawing water, depositing animal and human waste, and applying chemicals to the land directly determine the health of a spring.

**7. Volunteer and donate to organizations** working on springs restoration, education and conservation. Connect with local groups that use experience, sound science and the law to pursue effective and timely solutions.

**8. Be Informed. Speak Up.** We are destroying Florida's springs with pollution, over-pumping and regulatory neglect. It's time to call upon government officials to enforce and strengthen the laws that protect our springs and aquifer. Tell them to stop issuing Water Use Permits and costly subsidies that over allocate the resource and protect polluter profits more than our public waters. Attend meetings where decisions are made, write letters, demand accountability, and share your observations widely. Be vigilant: Florida's water must remain a shared public resource, not a privately owned commodity. Our water should be held in public trust for all Floridians, now and future.

**9. Let's develop a Florida water ethic** and get politics out of our decisions about water. For a start, we can create a balanced statewide Water Budget based on peer-reviewed science and models that reflect the reality of Florida's hydrogeology. We can require monitoring of all groundwater uses as the basis for effective conservation. We can abide by the Federal Clean Water Act and make private polluters – not taxpayers – pay for cleaning up their own messes, and use the savings generated to help fund springs and aquifer restoration. We can embrace an economy that prospers by prioritizing clean and sustainable water, food and renewable energy, and leaves Florida's natural resources intact – and thriving – for our children and theirs.

**10. Create your own springs project!** Dream and scheme, initiate and collaborate. All of us can be voices for Florida's magnificent springs.



For more information, see our TAKE ACTION page: [SpringEternityProject.org](http://SpringEternityProject.org)

Text by Lesley Gamble, Co-Director  
Spring Eternity Project





Photo by Lesley Gamble *Where Endless Meets Disappearing #1*, Peacock Spring I, Luraville, Florida, 2012.

The spirit of a spring  
permeates your body,  
flickers through  
prisms of licking light,  
erupts in rogue cyclones  
of sand and silt and shells,  
all shearing surprise and  
surprisingly soundless.

Surrender to the throb of rail  
and tumble and a **radiant calm**  
**arises**, gathers you up,  
pillows you aloft.

**Deep quiet** abides.

Peacock Spring is still transporting.  
But the brilliant blue hues and rock-hewn  
beauty are tenuous now, fleeting.

Once **transparent as air** and  
brimming with a vivid array of plant  
and animal life, the spring is hazy,  
lethargic and sputtering; choking  
on a **thick-tongued coat**  
of monochromatic algae,  
the result of pollution and  
over-pumping, political neglect  
and a lack of public knowledge.

One response to grief is a relentless  
fascination, here tempered to an  
insistent yet **tender curiosity**.  
There's an inexorable, even  
sumptuous beauty to be found  
limning the **porous and**  
**uncertain** boundaries  
between **flying and falling**,  
ecstasy and imperilment, the reality  
of finitude and the promise of forever.

What Florida's springs bring home  
so eloquently, in addition to our  
drinking water, is this message,  
still crystal clear: We are all on  
life support, a very **fragile life**  
**support** system, and we're  
all in this together.

Nature and humans, art and  
technology, are one continuous  
sensorium. Let us **nurture** one  
another in this vast intelligent life,  
in the **trembling** that is living.

We are water, and water connects us all.

*This photograph was taken in natural light shuddering  
under great clouds, and a relentless rush of goosebumps.*  
—Lesley Gamble, Co-Director, *Springs Eternal Project*



## STILL STUNNING BLUE SPRINGS

**T**hese pictures of Gilchrist Blue Springs aren't evidence that we are "getting the water right" here in Florida. They are, rather, a reminder that all is not lost and there is much worth fighting to save. *All photos were made in 2013.*





# SPRINGS ETERNAL

## A CLEAR FUTURE FOR FLORIDA

**F**lorida, we need to talk. If democracy is fundamentally about having a conversation, then the question here is, "Who speaks for our springs?"



As the Everglades are to South Florida, our unique and irreplaceable springs define the health and identity of our region and state. They are our blue-water calling card to the nation and the world.

**Our springs are world-class treasures. They deserve world-class protection.**

As civilized people, we need to develop ways to grow our food and dispose of our waste without depleting and defiling the source of our water. For the measure of a civilization is not merely what it creates, but what it refuses to destroy.

The vast Floridan Aquifer, the source of our drinking water and our springs, is neither invulnerable to pollution nor is it infinite. **Withdrawals are exceeding deposits in our bank of liquid assets,** and saltwater intrusion is rising.

The average Floridian uses a **excessive 134 gallons of fresh water every day.** Our population is expected to double in the next half century, and **the old ways of using water are simply not sustainable.** Resistance to change is no longer an option.

**We are all part of the problem, but together we can fix this.** We must embrace change, not because we are governed by law but because we are governed by conscience.

**Here's what you can do right now:**

- **Use less water. Be mindful of your water footprint** and consider that the choices you make today about diet, energy consumption and family size will profoundly impact the Florida of tomorrow.
- **Turn off the sprinklers, quit fertilizing, and a spring will whisper, "Thank you."** Half the groundwater used at homes in Florida - water that otherwise would be available for our springs - is poured on lawns and landscaping.
- **Pay attention to the people and agencies that are responsible for managing and protecting our waters;** they are not immune to the influence of moneyed special interests that value their profits above our waters. **The survival of our springs depends on public advocacy.**



**We get to decide. Which path shall we choose?**



Our Water. Our Future.  
**SAVE OUR SPRINGS**  
SavesOurSprings.org

## We are creatures of spirit, drawn to these sacred waters body and soul.

**Many may say they love Florida,** but we know that love is more than words or a feeling we have today. **Love is also action and a commitment to tomorrow.**

Here in Florida, we need a new way of thinking and doing for the next 500 years - a mindset of environmental patriotism that defines wellbeing in terms larger than dollars.

**We need brave political leaders and engaged citizens** who are willing to question the old ways of thinking that see the Earth only in terms of dominion and ownership, rather than stewardship.

Ask not what Florida can do for you. Ask what you can do for Florida. **Be a voice for our springs.** Water is what sustains us, connects us, and defines us.

Water is the lifeblood of Florida.

**Go to a spring today. Dive in!** In your body and in your heart, **feel what a gift beyond measure it is to call this place home.**



SAVING OUR SPRINGS  
WILL ENSURE AN  
ADEQUATE WATER  
SUPPLY FOR OUR  
CHILDREN AND  
GRANDCHILDREN.

IT'S THE RIGHT  
THING TO DO.



© Lesley Gamble

# The Springs Eternal Project

LESLEY GAMBLE JOHN MORAN RICK KILBY

INSPIRING FLORIDIANS TO VALUE, CONSERVE AND RESTORE OUR PRECIOUS WATERS

**T**ogether, nature photographer John Moran, artist and historian Lesley Gamble, and graphic designer Rick Kilby, are the Springs Eternal Project. Their collaboration fills museum walls, wraps city buses, and continues to develop creative forms of educational outreach inspiring Floridians to value, conserve and restore our precious waters. Learn more at [SpringsEternalProject.org](http://SpringsEternalProject.org)



More than 150,000 visitors viewed the Springs Eternal exhibit at the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville in 2013.



Facilitated outreach activity by Florida design makers, including former Governor Clinton and Rep. Gwen Gandy, at the Springs Eternal Project, the Graham family and Dr. Robert Knight.



Margaret Rose, taking a walk through the Springs of the Urban Aquifer.



Lesley Gamble's public art and service project, Urban Aquifer, at the Florida Museum of Natural History.



Lesley Gamble's Springs Eternal, Gainesville through the lens of the Gainesville Orchestra, World Bank.



## MEET THE SPRINGS ETERNAL PROJECT PARTNERS

**John Moran** is a photographer who would like to make only beautiful pictures of natural Florida. But reality keeps getting in the way. Rooted in wonder, gratitude and concern, Moran's work is a deep meditation on water and Florida's future. Moran is the author of *Journal of Light: The Visual Glory of a Florida Nature*. Photographer. His photos have been published in *National Geographic*, *Time*, *Smithsonian* and on the cover of the *National Audubon Society Field Guide to Florida*. He has been named Photographer of the Year for the Southeastern U.S. by the National Press Photographers Association.

Moran's ongoing program, seeking a photographer's search for the soul of Florida, have been called "exquisite," "lyrical," and "breathtaking." Florida author and scholar Gary Mormino says, "If Florida had a Photographer Laureate, John Moran should hold that title!"

**Rick Kilby** is on a mission to create awareness of Florida's unique culture, history and natural environment in an effort to save them preserved for future generations. His book *Finding the Fountain of Youth: Pioneers of Leon and Florida's Magical Waters* received the bronze medal in the Visual Arts category of the Florida

**Lesley Gamble, Ph.D.**, is most at home in the pulsing lens of a radiant Florida spring. Glistening with a lingering eye inspired her to create *Art, Water, Ecology*, a course she teaches at the University of Florida, and the Springs Eternal Project. In partnership with John Moran.

As Co-Director, Dr. Gamble developed *Urban Aquifer*, an ongoing public art performance using Regional Transit System buses, the [SpringsEternalProject.org](http://SpringsEternalProject.org) website, a wealth of resources on springs culture, science, art and advocacy, and educational outreach that includes exhibition tours for policy makers, take action cards, and creative collaborations with other artists and educators. Her video *Swimming Through Art*, available on Vimeo, debuted with the Gainesville Orchestra.

We are water, and water connects us all. Let us nurture one another in this vast beautiful life.

**Book Awards in 2013.** The book's accompanying exhibit has been displayed at the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville, the South Florida Museum in Bradenton, and Bok Tower Gardens in Lake Wales. Rick speaks statewide about the connection of myth and legend to Florida's breathtaking springs.



The *Urban Aquifer*, creative collaboration is central to the Springs Eternal Project.