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# MFLs and Springs Protection

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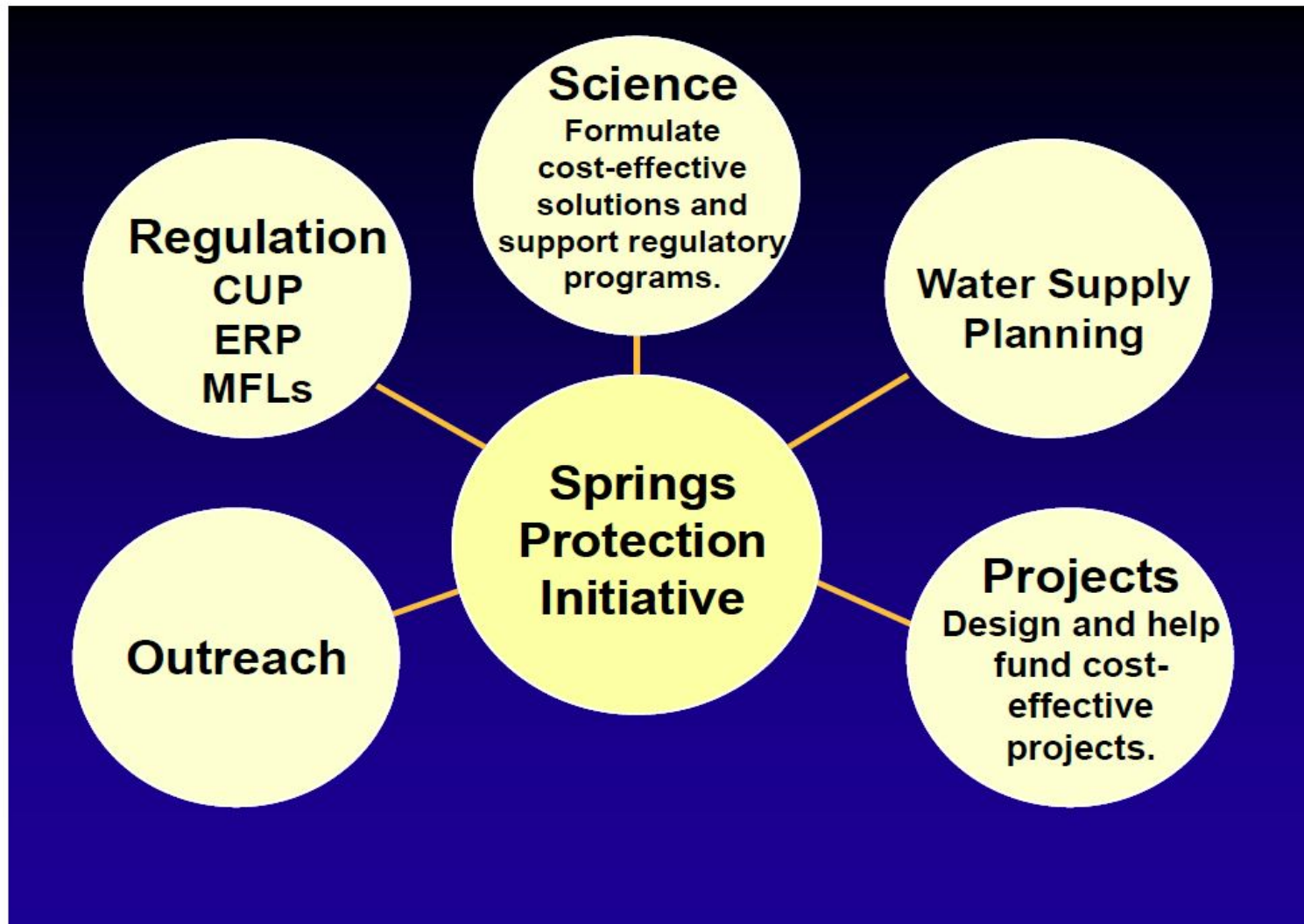
September 22, 2017

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# What is an MFL?

- Minimum flow for a given watercourse is the limit at which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources or ecology of the area (rivers, streams, estuaries, springs)
- Minimum water level is the level of groundwater in an aquifer and the level of surface water at which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources or ecology of the area (lakes, wetlands, aquifers)
- MFLs can be adopted by DEP or a WMD





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MFLs do not permit any  
consumptive uses of water

# How are MFLs developed?

- Must use “best information available”
- Must consider changes and structural alterations (i.e., dams) to watersheds, surface waters, aquifers and the effects such changes have had on hydrology



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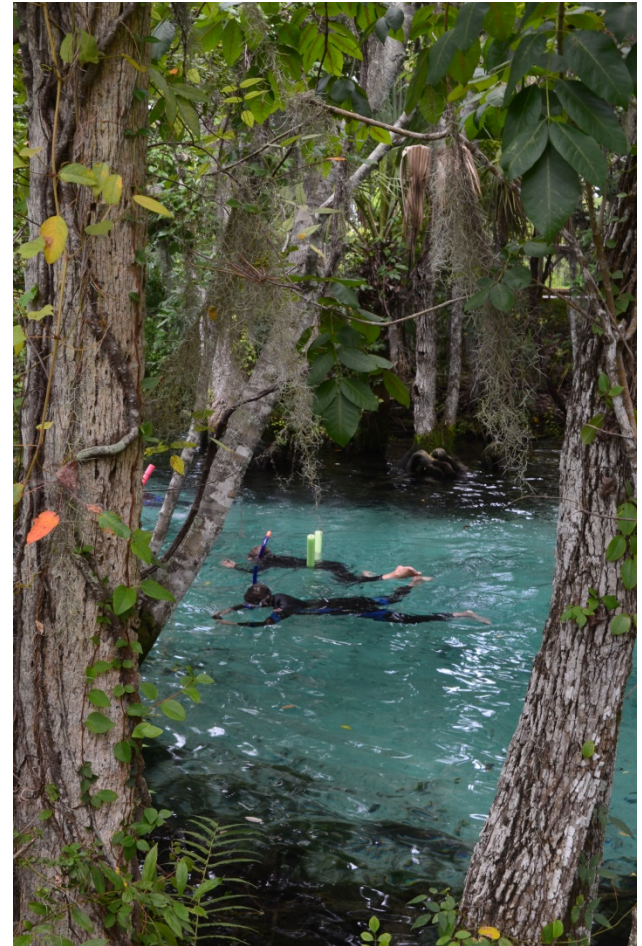
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# Water Resource Implementation Rule

- Consideration shall be given to the protection of water resources, natural seasonal fluctuations in water flows or levels, and environmental values associated with coastal, estuarine, aquatic, and wetlands ecology
- WMDs determine what factor(s) to be used in developing MFL



# Prevention/Recovery Strategies and Reevaluation

- Required if the existing flow or level in a waterbody is below, or is projected to fall below within 20 years, the applicable minimum flow or level
- Strategy must be developed to:
  - a) Achieve recovery to the established MFL as soon as practicable; or
  - b) Prevent the existing flow or level from falling below the established MFL
- Periodic reevaluation and revision of established MFLs required by Section 373.0421(3), F.S.; no specific time frame required



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# Peer Review

- Independent scientific peer review required prior to establishing an MFL if requested by DEP, WMD governing board, or by written request by a substantially affected person
- Independent = “review by a panel of independent, recognized experts in the fields of hydrology, hydrogeology, limnology, biology, and other scientific disciplines, to the extent relevant to the establishment of the [MFL]”
- WMDs often undergo voluntary independent peer review prior to adoption of MFL – no further peer review required



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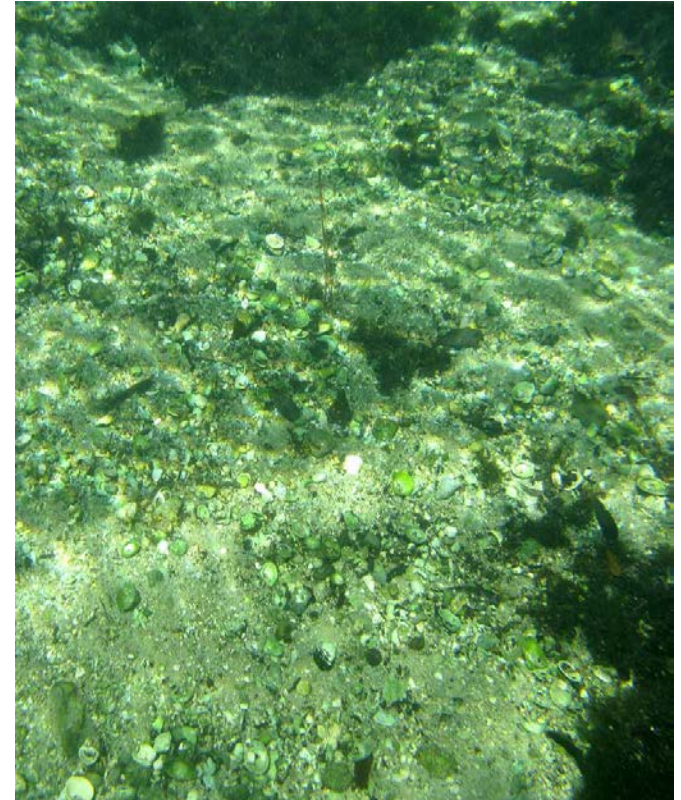
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# Springs Protection

- More than 900 springs in Florida
- Provide natural, recreational, and economical benefits for residents and visitors
- Florida has made springs protection a priority – \$50m for 2018 springs projects from DEP
- Healthy Spring – flow, water clarity, aquatic vegetation, fish and wildlife
- Spring Threats – increases in nutrients, loss of habitat, reductions in discharge, increases in salinity, nutrients



# Florida Springs Protection

Restore

Protect

Educate

Preserve

Community Involvement



# MFLs for Outstanding Florida Springs

- WMDs to adopt MFLs for Outstanding Florida Springs by July 1, 2017 (NWF – July 1, 2026)
- Adopted this year:
  - SJRWMD – Silver Springs
  - SWFWMD – Rainbow River, Crystal River/Kings Bay Systems (emergency rules)
  - SRWMD – Falmouth, Troy, Lafayette Blue, and Peacock Springs (emergency rules)
- Administrative Challenges
- Outstanding Florida Springs which have the potential to be affected by withdrawals in an adjacent WMD
  - collaboration required between WMDs and DEP to develop and implement a recovery/prevention strategy if not meeting adopted MFL



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# Priority List and Schedule

- Each WMD to submit to DEP for review and approval a priority list and schedule for the establishment of MFLs within its jurisdictional boundaries
- Based on “importance of waters to the state or region” and “existence of or potential for significant harm”
- Must include waterbodies experiencing/reasonably expected to experience adverse impacts, first magnitude springs, and second magnitude springs within state/federal lands purchased for conservation purposes
- Must identify voluntary independent peer reviews, reservations, MFLs which may be affected by withdrawals in adjacent WMD



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# Permitting/RWSPs/Increasing Quantities

- DEP is required to adopt uniform rules for issuing WUPS
  - Must prevent groundwater withdrawals that are harmful to the water resources
  - A uniform definition of the term “harmful to the water resources”
- WMDs are required to include in the RWSPs an assessment of:
  - how the RWSP and identified projects support the recovery or prevention strategies for implementation of adopted MFLS (including OFS) while ensuring that sufficient water will be available for all existing and future reasonable beneficial uses and the natural systems and adverse effects of competition for water supplies will be avoided
- Aquifer replenishment/recharge



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Questions?

