

PROTECTING OUR SPRINGS

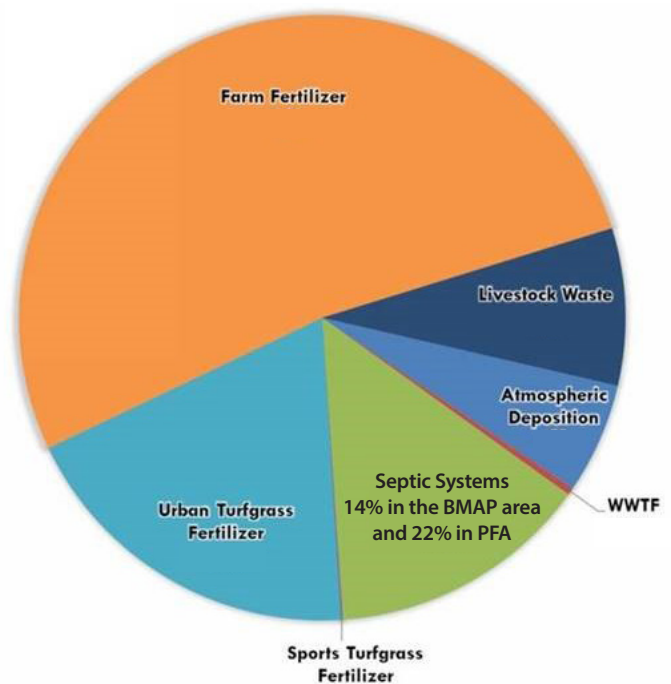
A Statewide Initiative

Photo credit: Amy K. Munizzi

Volusia County is home to three Outstanding Florida Springs: Volusia Blue Spring, DeLeon Spring, and Gemini Springs. Protection of our springs throughout Florida has become a high profile legislative and regulatory priority. That protection starts with the federal **Clean Water Act** which requires that state environmental agencies develop **Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)** for impaired **waters** as determined by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A TMDL establishes the amount of nutrient load that a water body can handle without water quality degradation. In Florida, the authority to develop TMDLs has been delegated to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). Over the past several years, the Florida Legislature has been aggressive in requiring FDEP to develop this scientific-based framework to address the degradation of our state's Outstanding Florida Springs.

The driving mechanism behind this effort is the **2016 Florida Springs and Aquifer Protection Act** passed by the Florida Legislature. This Act identified 30 Outstanding Florida Springs – 24 first magnitude springs and 6 other named springs – that require additional protections to ensure their conservation and restoration for future generations. These protections are included in the **Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs)** developed in response to the TMDL established for each of these springs. These plans are focused on reducing nitrogen pollution that is impacting the water quality of the springs. Nitrogen from septic tanks and agricultural/fertilizer sources have a greater impact on some springs more than others, so the BMAPs contain a tailored mix of strategies.

In 2018, the FDEP approved the **DeLeon Spring BMAP** that laid out the road map to address nutrient reduction for this spring. One of the elements of the Florida Springs and Aquifer Protection Act is an Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal System (OSTDS, also known as septic tanks) Remediation Plan, required where the loads from septic systems have been determined either to be greater than 20% of the nutrient load within the **Priority Focus Area (PFA)** or if FDEP determines that an OSTDS Remediation Plan is needed to achieve the TMDL. This is the case with DeLeon Spring where septic tanks have the 3rd largest impact on the spring and account for approximately 22% of the total nutrient load within the PFA (BMAP, 2018). FDEP has provided Volusia County with a grant to develop the OSTDS Remediation Plan for



DeLeon Spring BMAP Nitrogen Loading
Breakdown by Source (BMAP, 2018)

the spring system. FDEP relies on local input and local commitment to develop the best alternatives to address the nutrient loading from septic systems in the Priority Focus Area of the springshed. Local stakeholders in the process include the regulatory agencies (FDEP, SJRWMD, FDOH), the County, area municipalities, local business and industry, agriculture, environmental groups, and our residents. The state statute requires that OSTDS remediation plans contain the following elements.

- An evaluation of credible scientific information on the effect of nutrients, particularly forms of nitrogen, on springs and spring systems.
- Options for repair, upgrade, replacement, drain field modification, the addition of effective nitrogen-reducing features, connection to a central sewer system, or other action.
- A public education plan to provide area residents with reliable, understandable information about OSTDS and springs.
- Cost-effective and financially feasible projects necessary to reduce the nutrient impacts from OSTDS.
- A priority ranking for each project for funding contingent on appropriations in the General Appropriations Act.

We are in the process of developing various alternative scenarios to address the nutrient loads in the DeLeon Spring springshed that will meet the state legislative mandates and regulatory requirements AND best fit our community. We need your input! After visiting the information stations, please take the time to share your ideas, concerns and questions. Either at one of the two 30-minute Listening Sessions (6:45 pm and 7:30 pm) or through written survey/comment cards.

Also, please make sure you signed in so we can stay in contact with you throughout this process.

Thank you!

ERIN REED, PhD, PE
Water and Utilities Engineer
Volusia County Water Resources and
Utilities Department
Phone: (386) 943-7027 ext. 13287
Email: erinreed@volusia.org

BRIAN ICERMAN, PE
Jones Edmunds
Phone: (352) 377-5821
Email: bicerman@jonesedmunds.com

TERRI LOWERY
Jones Edmunds
Phone: (352) 377-5821
tlowery@jonesedmunds.com

