Manatee Spring has attracted wildlife and people for thousands of years. In past centuries, Native Americans lived at the spring. Naturalist William Bartram visited the site in 1774, and described it in his famous journal. The spring was a center of activity in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Nearby Clay Landing was a stagecoach and riverboat stop. Up to the 1940s fishing shacks were located around the spring and people visited it by boat.

The State of Florida began acquiring land around the spring in 1949, and opened the State Park in 1955. Manatee Spring was the first major spring purchased by the State of Florida.

Manatees visit the 1200 feet-long spring run year round. During the winter, they use the spring as a warm water refuge. The spring

contributes millions of gallons of water per day to the Suwannee River.

Park visitors enjoy wildlife viewing, swimming, canoeing, hiking, and camping. Divers continue to explore and map the Manatee Spring cave system.

But Manatee Spring is threatened by nutrient pollution. Water flowing from the spring carries approximately 265 tons of nitrates per year. Only four other first magnitude springs in Florida have water with a higher concentration of nitrates. The nutrient pollution feeds fast-growing, nuisance algae. Native aquatic eelgrass has declined, possibly due to a natural cycle and algae has taken over the habitat. Drought has led to decreased spring flow and low water levels in the spring run.

Nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizer and human and livestock wastes, are picked up by stormwater as it flows over lawns, gardens, pastures, agricultural fields, and golf courses. Polluted stormwater can flow into sinkholes or seep through soil to reach the aquifer. Nutrients can also leach into the aquifer from septic tanks and wastewater facilities.

To protect the water, you must protect the land …

Chinese proverb

Guidelines

To protect Manatee Spring, the Suwannee River, and your drinking water:

- Support Suwannee River Water Management District decisions that protect the natural flow of the spring.
- Support the Levy County Commission and the City of Chiefland in implementing land use decisions that protect groundwater flowing to Manatee Spring.
- Perform regular septic tank maintenance.
- Minimize fertilizer and pesticide use.
- Never dump anything into sinkholes.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Florida Springs Initiative

For further information call
Manatee Spring State Park
(352) 493-6736

www.dep.state.fl.us/springs/

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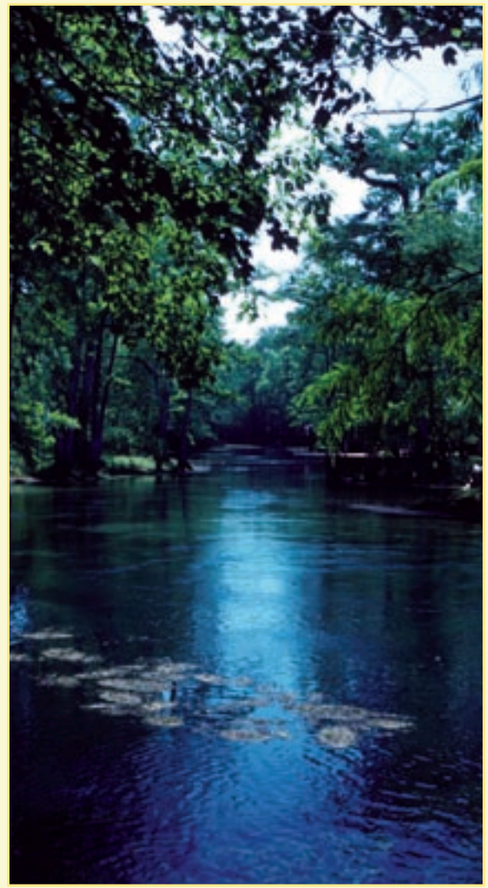
Let's Protect

Manatee Spring



...the Real Florida

If you live in the Manatee Spring Basin . . .

Your activities in the basin can pollute the groundwater that flows to family wells and to Manatee Spring.

Land Use Activities closest to Manatee Spring have the greatest impact on the health of the spring.

Sinkholes are direct connections between the land and the aquifer. Any pollutants dropped into a sinkhole will contaminate our drinking water and our springs.

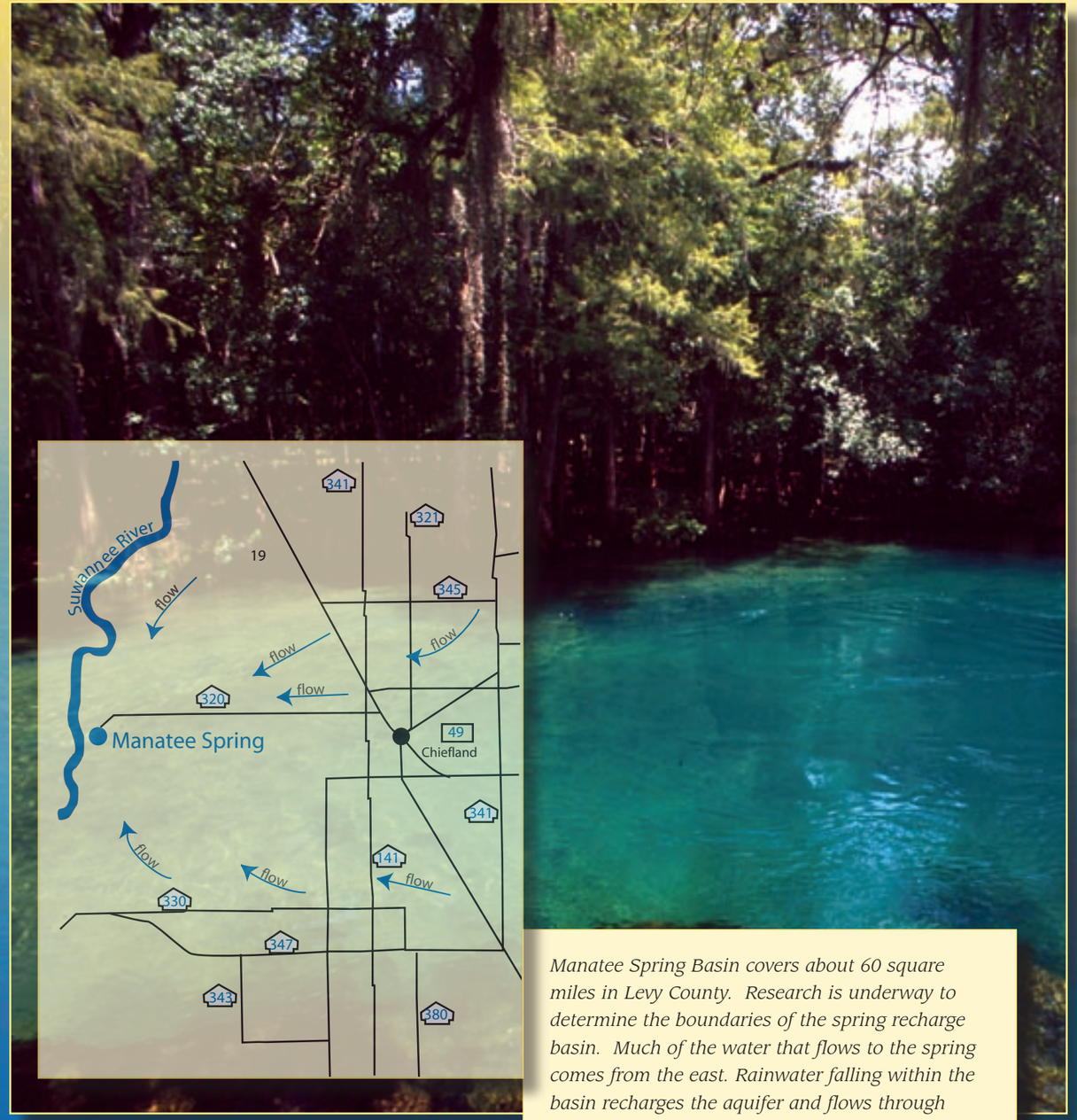
The Future of recreation and wildlife at Manatee Spring depends on the quality and quantity of groundwater flowing to the spring from the basin.

Your Water Consumption in the basin affects the amount of water available to Manatee Spring. Learn how to use less water by visiting:

http://floridaswater.com

You Can Help improve water quality at Manatee Spring by using pesticides and slow-release fertilizer *only* as needed. The following web site presents safe lawn care practices for Florida yards:

http://hort.ufl.edu/fyn/maintain3.htm



Manatee Spring Basin covers about 60 square miles in Levy County. Research is underway to determine the boundaries of the spring recharge basin. Much of the water that flows to the spring comes from the east. Rainwater falling within the basin recharges the aquifer and flows through limestone to the spring. Arrows indicate the direction of groundwater flow.

More facts about Manatee Springs:

- Manatee Spring is one of Florida's 33 first magnitude springs, with an average flow that ranges from 70 to 155 million gallons per day.
- The concentration of nitrates in water flowing from Manatee Spring is about 1.67 milligrams per liter. This is more than 80 times what is found in groundwater in undeveloped areas of North Florida. Scientists have noted that ecological decline of spring systems occurs at less than 1 milligram per liter.
- Ongoing monitoring and research projects are helping scientists understand how the groundwater flow system works in the Manatee Spring Basin