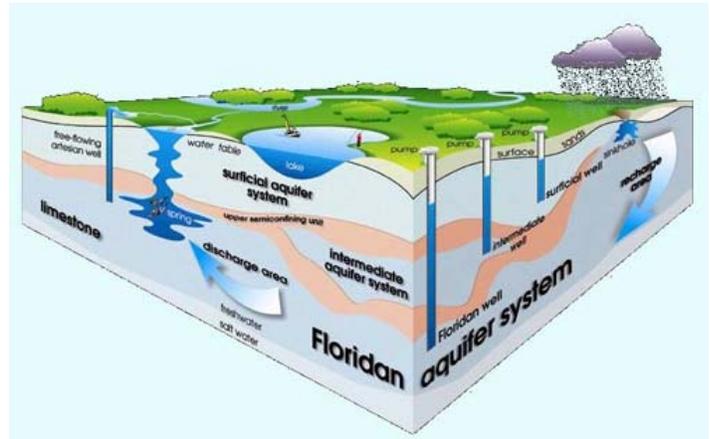


Linda Seals, Community Development &amp; Public Policy

FS# 2101CDS

## Floridan Aquifer and Groundwater FAQs

In Florida, we are surrounded by water: lakes, canals, springs, estuaries, and even the ocean, but most of our tap water comes from ground water mostly found in the Floridan aquifer. What is an aquifer? An aquifer is a body of rock saturated with water that can easily move. In Florida, that water moves into wells or springs. If you have ever dug a hole in Florida and found water, you reached the water table. The water table is the upper zone of the aquifer. There are other aquifers in Florida, but the Floridan aquifer is the principal source of ground water for Brevard County.



Did you know that the Floridan aquifer is one of the highest producing aquifers in the world?

### Where does the Floridan aquifer get its water?

Recharge is the term used when water is added to the aquifer system. The primary source of recharge in the Floridan aquifer is rainfall. Florida averages 50-60 inches of rain annually. But not all of that rainfall enters the aquifer. Some is lost to the atmosphere through evapotranspiration (a combination of water loss through evaporation from soil and transpiration from plants). The water that remains may be inhibited by heavily compacted soils, but where soils are well-drained (loose sand or porous limestone bedrock), water will percolate into the aquifer and “recharge” it.

### How much ground water do Floridians use?

Public supply (the water that comes from your tap) and agriculture are the biggest users of ground water in Florida. Statewide, public supply accounts for 40% of groundwater used, and 39% is used for agricultural irrigation. According the USGS, 62% of Florida’s groundwater withdrawals in 2010 came from the Floridan aquifer. In 2013, Brevard County used 53.34 million gallons of water per day (mgd) for public supply, 51.15 mgd for agricultural irrigation, and 3.35 mgd for landscape irrigation (includes golf courses and athletic fields)(SJWMD 2013).

## What threatens the availability of Florida's Groundwater?

Numerous threats exist including population growth, climate change, sea level rise, and pollution. We can all do our part to conserve water and ensure the Floridan aquifer continues to provide fresh water for generations to come. Here are a few tips for conserving water at home:

- Verify your home is leak free--read your water meter before and after a one-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter does not read exactly the same, there is a leak somewhere.
- Repair leaky faucets and pipes.
- Check toilet tanks--add a few drops of food coloring into the tank. If the toilet is leaking, color will appear in the water in the bowl within 30 minutes.
- Install a displacement device in the toilet tank. This will cut down on the amount of water needed per flush.
- Operate the dishwasher and washing machine only when you have a full load.
- Connect a shut-off nozzle to your hose.
- Use a broom and dustpan instead of a hose to clean debris off the patio, sidewalk, and driveway.
- Become an involved citizen--report all significant water losses (broken pipes, errant sprinklers, open hydrants, etc.).

### Resources

UF/IFAS Living Green: [http://livinggreen.ifas.ufl.edu/water/water\\_conservation.html](http://livinggreen.ifas.ufl.edu/water/water_conservation.html)

Florida Department of Environmental Protection: <https://fldep.dep.state.fl.us/swapp/Aquifer.asp>

The United States Geological Survey Water Science School: <http://water.usgs.gov/edu/watercyclegwstorage.html>

St. Johns Water Management District: <http://floridaswater.com/>