



# Water Monitoring Could Shed Light On What Causes Wakulla Springs' 'Dark Water Days'

By JESSICA PALOMBO-OCT 8, 2014

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Florida Geological Survey workers drill a monitoring well in Leon County on Tuesday, Oct. 7.  
*Credit Jessica Palombo / WFSU News*

To better manage Wakulla Springs and other Big Bend water bodies, Northwest Florida water managers are embarking on an unprecedented water monitoring project. The first step is drilling new wells to find out where water travels underground.

A giant drill bit turned the earth near the Miccosukee Greenway in Leon County on Tuesday. This new well is one of several the Northwest Florida Water Management District is installing to take samples of whatever's underground. It's all part of a giant mapping project that eventually will help managers set what are called minimum flows and levels for nearby water bodies including the St. Marks River Rise.

District scientist Graham Lewis says, "A lot of the other water management districts have been doing minimum flows and levels for 15, 20 years. We've kind of been lagging behind."

He says a relatively low population has allowed Northwest Florida to manage water without the strict water-level guidelines. But recently, he says, changes in Wakulla Springs have jump-started the effort.

Lewis says, "We've started to see over the last few years a number of what the park down there calls 'dark-water days.'"

The water's often so dark, he says, the popular glass-bottom boat tours can't run.

In addition to helping set minimum flows and levels, he says the monitoring project should shed light on what's ailing Wakulla Springs—and whether anything can be done about it.