

A dozen ways our current system of laws have **failed** Florida waters

“Although considerable attention has been given to protect and conserve waters in the State, including Article II, Section 7 of this Constitution and a comprehensive body of State environmental laws and regulations, such attention has not corrected the continuing decline in the condition of waters in the State.”

– excerpt from the proposed amendment, “[Right to Clean and Healthy Waters](#).”

1. Florida is #1 for most acreage of lakes too polluted to swim in or support aquatic life.

Florida’s estuaries are also ranked 2nd in the nation for most impaired. Environmental Integrity Project – “[The Clean Water Act at 50](#)” (Mar 17, 2022)

2. About 80% of Florida’s 1,000 springs are impaired due to excessive nitrogen.

Elevated nitrate levels in drinking water have negative impacts on human health (reduced blood oxygen, certain cancers, birth defects, etc.). “[Analyzing Nitrates in North Florida’s Drinking Water](#)” (Oct 23, 2018)

3. Human impact has reduced the flow of Florida’s 1,000 springs by one third.

During dry years...hundreds of springs stop flowing entirely and many reverse flows, allowing tannic and salty surface waters to enter...the Floridan Aquifer. “[Not One Drop More](#)” (Aug 27, 2019)

4. It would take 217 years to achieve OFS water quality goals.

Ryan Smart, Executive Director, Florida Springs Council – [Funding Report](#) of the 2021-2022 springs projects proposed for funding by water management districts.

5. Red tide has exploded in frequency.

Based on a [timeline of red tide](#), from 1878 to 1994, there has been a recorded 64 months of red tide (4.6% of the time). Over the last 29 years, there have been 200 months of red tide (58% of the time). That’s a 1,160.9% increase.

6. The impacts of red tide and blue-green algae blooms on local economies grow.

[In one study of red tide events of 2017-2019](#), for example, surveys showed a 36%-61% decrease in sales revenue for chartering / marine recreation businesses.

7. There are nearly a million acres of coastal estuaries and 9,000 miles of rivers and streams impaired with fecal bacteria.

Verified by the FL DEP [Fecal Bacteria may be in the Water where you’re swimming...](#)” (Feb 1, 2022)

8. 800 manatees starved to death last year, after 1,100 the year before.

Starvation due to pollution-fueled seagrass loss continues to linger as a major issue for Florida manatees. [Citing Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission preliminary data results](#). (Jan 11, 2023)

9. Coral is dying off the coast of Florida.

“Land-based sources of pollution are known to affect coral growth and reproduction, have been linked with increased coral disease and bleaching, and contribute to coral reef ecosystem decline in Southeast Florida.” [FloridasCoralReef.org](#)

10. The health effects of more frequent blue-green algae blooms are disastrous.

Studies show “people who live next to waterbodies with frequent toxic algal blooms have a 25% greater risk of developing ALS.” [Brain Chemistry Labs](#) (Feb 26, 2020)

11. The dangerous effects of polluted waters also hurt our drinking water & food supply.

Depending on how much you’re exposed to cyanobacteria (in certain blue-green algae blooms), “microcystins can cause liver and kidney damage when consumed.” [FDA](#)

12. Neither Floridians nor visitors trust our waters anymore, for good reason.

[Story](#) after [story](#) after [story](#) after [story](#), people are getting hurt from the simple act of entering Florida’s waters, to include Florida’s beautiful beaches.