

SpringsWatch on the Weeki Wachee

I wonder if there's
a SpringsWatch
program here?

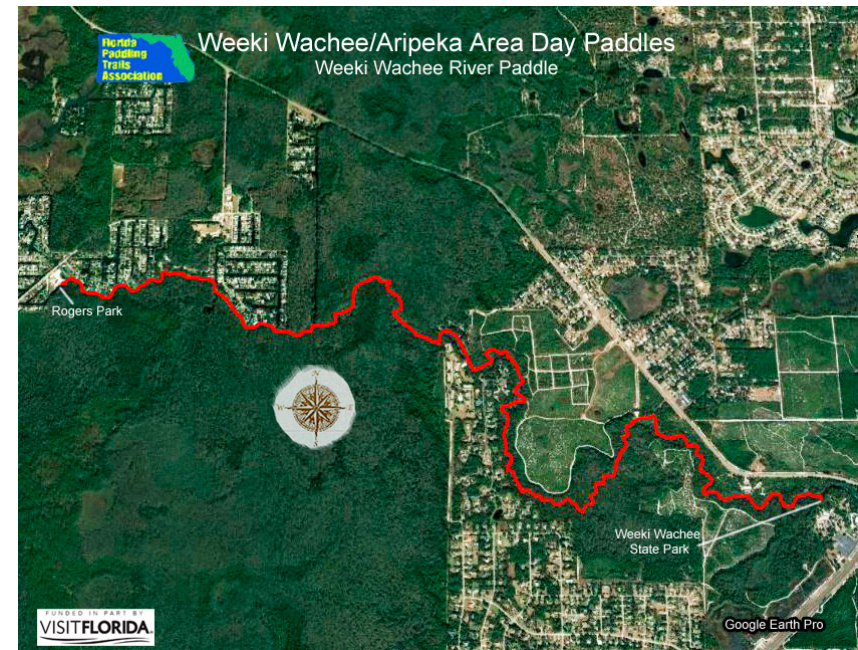
ooo

Jill Lingard
SpringsWatch Volunteer



The River

- Weeki Wachee is the Seminole name for “little spring” or “winding river.”
- 55 miles north of Tampa, 14 miles west of Brooksville
- 7.5 miles from head spring to Gulf
- Tidally influenced
- Chassahowitzka WMA
- Lower half residential
- **Our monitoring area:** 5.5 miles from Weeki Wachee State Park to Rogers County Park



Getting Started

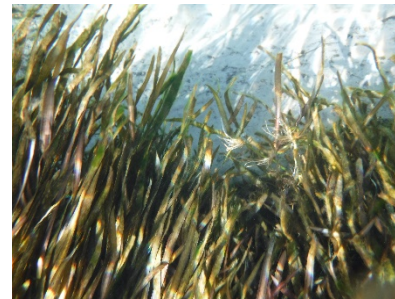


- **Initial scouting trip: 11/28/17**
 - Establishing stations for water readings
 - Deciding on areas for fish counts
- Getting state park (launch), paddling concessionaire, and county park (take-out) on board
- Securing equipment and gathering gear
 - Paddleboards vs. kayaks
 - Waterproofing the light meter
 - Creating underwater fish count checklists
- Reaching out to LakeWatch
- Recruiting volunteers
- **First session: 8/19/2018**



Initial Observations

- 21 stations is too many! Pared back to 15.
- Water clarity and submerged vegetation changes drastically from station 1 to 15.



- Hospital Hole
- Most commonly seen fish:
 - Mullet
 - Sheepshead
 - Sunfish
 - Needlefish
 - New ones for me: Snook, Crevalle Jack



- Always spot at least 1 manatee (year-round).

Primate Interaction

- Kayakers, paddleboarders, tubers, motorboaters, rope swingers, sandbar partiers...OH MY!
- State park kayak launching limit
- Carrying capacity study
- “Rescues”
- 4-6 educational conversations per outing



SPRINGS WATCH RESEARCH IN PROGRESS



Plans Moving Forward



- Recruit and train more volunteers
 - Florida Master Naturalist Program
 - Paddlers! FPTA, ACA, Tampa Bay Sea Kayakers, Kayak Adventure Group
- Market project through state park contacts
- Engage local citizens