



SPRINGS

FLORIDA'S **FRAGILE** FOUNTAINS OF YOUTH

ETERNAL

AN EXHIBITION OF THE FLORIDA MUSEUM
OF NATURAL HISTORY

FEATURING THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF **JOHN MORAN**
MARCH-DECEMBER 2013

THEN & NOW



Peacock Springs State Park, 1990



Peacock Springs State Park, 2011

THIS PROJECT SEEKS TO INSPIRE ALL FLORIDIANS TO VALUE, CONSERVE AND RESTORE OUR PRECIOUS WATERS.

CONCEPT

Florida is home to the largest and most impressive array of freshwater springs in the world. Ichetucknee, Wakulla, Weeki Wachee, Rainbow and Silver—these “bowls of liquid light,” in the words of writer Marjory Stoneman Douglas, have lured explorers, nature-lovers, artists, tourists and investors since the time of the Timucua.

And yet, on the eve of the 500th anniversary of Ponce de León’s arrival and his mythic search for the Fountain of Youth, Florida’s springs are imperiled—due to pollution, neglect and the ground-water demands of a thirsty state. Some have stopped flowing and many are choked with algae, their blue waters turning murky and green. Once a source of awe, our springs are now a source of deep concern, their future unclear.

Springs Eternal: Florida’s Fragile Fountains of Youth is a multimedia project directed by Florida nature photographer John Moran. Trained as a journalist, Moran has been on a quest to document the wild heart of Florida with the passionate eye of an artist for more than thirty years. He is the author of *Journal of Light: The Visual Diary of a Florida Nature Photographer* (2004). Past museum exhibitions include *Florida’s Grand Old River: A Photographic Essay on the Suwannee* (1991), and *Journal of Light: A Photographer’s Search for the Soul of Florida* (2005).

Springs Eternal: Florida’s Fragile Fountains of Youth assembles springs-related photographs from Moran’s personal collection, current work, and state archives. A narrative of the changes many of us have seen becomes an opportunity for the public to rethink, re-envision and actively engage with the future of our springs and state, inspiring all Floridians to value, conserve and restore our precious waters.

A companion exhibit, *Finding the Fountain of Youth: Discovering Florida’s Magical Waters*, lends additional cultural history and context, while a *Springs Eternal* website and Lesley Gamble’s *Urban Aquifer*, a nine-month artwork performed by a fleet of Regional Transit System buses, transport the exhibition beyond the walls of the museum and out onto highways virtual and concrete.

Springs Eternal is a visual celebration of the springs we were given, a meditation on the springs we could lose, and an invitation to the people of Florida to fall in love with our springs all over again, mindful that the choices we make today foretell the Florida of tomorrow.

***Springs Eternal* consists of three parts:**

- **CORE** – the museum exhibition
- **EVENT** – *Urban Aquifer*, a mobile public art project
- **LEGACY** – a *Springs Eternal* website

A companion book, published by University Press of Florida, is scheduled for release in 2014.



Fanning Springs State Park, 2011

CORE: THE EXHIBITION

Springs Eternal: Florida’s Fragile Fountains of Youth is an exhibition premiering at the Florida Museum of Natural History in March 2013. Timed to coincide with the Viva Florida 500 commemoration of Ponce de León’s arrival, the exhibit will run through the end of the year before traveling on to other venues statewide.

Located in the Central Gallery of the Florida Museum, a series of photo and text panels will chronicle the story of our springs—their beauty, their ecology, and the people who are drawn to them, body and soul.

The exhibit will also focus on the reality that many of our springs are in decline, their flow diminished because of groundwater over-pumping and long-term rainfall deficit, their waters choked with algae fed by nutrient-laden sewage, manure and fertilizer. Additional scientific, historical and cultural information hosted on the *Springs Eternal* website will be accessible to smartphone users through QR matrix barcodes embedded in the photographic panels.

High above the gallery, large-scale photo transparencies illuminated through clerestory windows will display stunning underwater panoramic views—sixty feet long—of two springs, one healthy and one impaired. Dramatic and immersive, the aquarium-like atmosphere creates an opportunity for wonder and empathy, while the striking visual comparison invites questions and deeper reflection.

Much of Florida's history, identity and attitude have been shaped by a connection to the myth of the Fountain of Youth. A companion exhibit developed by designer Rick Kilby, *Finding the Fountain of Youth: Discovering Florida's Magical Waters*, looks at the way Florida's reputation for healing, restorative water has been used to sell the state while shaping popular culture. Using amusing vintage ads and other lively images, *Finding the Fountain of Youth* offers a visual survey of Florida's beloved aquatic attractions, providing a cultural and historical context for Florida's current struggles to protect its waters.



EVENT: THE URBAN AQUIFER

Springs featured in this exhibition will travel far beyond the walls of the museum, streaming through the virtual space of the Internet as well as the concrete highways and byways of Gainesville. Windows onto the aquifer, the springs make visible our essential connections not only to water, but also to each other.

Urban Aquifer, created by *Springs Eternal* associate Lesley Gamble, is a real-time performance artwork, a concrete poem, a mobile educator and an ongoing public service event that “daylights” the aquifer beneath our feet. Wrapped in luminous full-scale images of springs selected from Moran’s and Gamble’s collections of photographs, a fleet of nine Regional Transit System buses will flow throughout our urban conduits as a metaphoric aquifer, the lifeblood of our region.

Each bus will depict one of our springs, described by William Bartram as “the blue ether of another world”—surprising, dramatic, radiant. While the aesthetic appeal of this moving artwork implies

poetry, actual phrases culled from historical and literary references to the springs will float suspended across the aqueous imagery.

One bus conveys “a secret and lovely place,” Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings’s description of a spring. Other phrases may be drawn from springs encomia, such as Archie Carr’s “a singular blessing of the Florida landscape” and Jacques Cousteau’s “visibility forever.”

Together, the circulating buses create chance grammars, spurring observational games and a sense of playful delight. Phrases, like people, meet, pass, and continue on to their various destinations, small poems springing up in unlikely places.

QR matrix barcodes printed on each bus offer immediate access to more detailed information about the featured spring, linking viewers to the *Springs Eternal* exhibition and website. Whether you are riding a bus or just happen to see a “bowl of liquid light” glide by, you can enjoy the aesthetic, satisfy your curiosity about its origin, and learn more about the waters that nourish and sustain us.

Urban Aquifer meets people where they live in the course of their daily lives, reaching out in particular to those who may never have visited a museum or a spring. Visually compelling, it offers an effective means to capture attention, provoke questions and delight, and provide access to more comprehensive information about our springs.

LEGACY: THE SPRINGS ETERNAL WEBSITE

“Visibility Forever” is one goal of the *Springs Eternal* project. We believe that the clarity and long-term health of our springs are best supported by a public that clearly understands, strongly values, and is actively committed to conserving, restoring and protecting our springs and aquifer.

The *Springs Eternal* website will continue beyond the duration of the exhibition, offering an easily navigable site for users to access and contribute to a wide range of information about the springs. Topics addressed will include springs history and culture, current developments in springs science and public policy, and citizen journalism—multimedia expressions of the stories, experiences and wisdom of local people who know and love their springs, rivers and watersheds.

QR matrix barcodes on exhibition panels and *Urban Aquifer* buses link viewers to content found online at the *Springs Eternal* website, offering the potential to expand connections between typically disparate audiences; in this case, museum visitors, people who see and ride the RTS buses, and Internet users.

Although the exhibition and related events in Gainesville are timed to coincide with the statewide commemoration of Ponce de León’s arrival, the *Springs Eternal* website responds to the need for an ongoing public forum dedicated to Florida’s real treasures, our unique and irreplaceable springs.



THE OPPORTUNITY: VISIBILITY FOREVER

As the Everglades are to south Florida, our Springs are vital to the ecological, social and economic well-being of our region and state; our blue-water calling card to the nation and the world.

To recapture the treasure of “visibility forever”—the vibrant health of our springs and a clear vision for their future—*Springs Eternal: Florida's Fragile Fountains of Youth* invites the public to become re-enchanted, to revisit and re-imagine the myth of Florida's waters in new and sustainable terms.

We need your support NOW to complete this project.

- Your contribution will support production, materials, research and fieldwork. Our budget total is \$250,000.
- Donations of any amount are welcome. Contributions will be acknowledged on a donor recognition panel displayed during the exhibition at the Florida Museum of Natural History.
- Please consider making a charitable gift of \$10,000 or more (see Special Support Opportunities, below).
- Contributions are tax-deductible, under the umbrella of Alachua Conservation Trust, the project 501(c)(3) fiscal agent.

• **DONATIONS by CHECK:** payable to “ACT-Springs Eternal Project”
Mail to: Springs Eternal Project c/o Alachua Conservation Trust
7204 SE CR 234, Gainesville, FL 32641

• **DONATIONS by CREDIT CARD:** Go to JohnMoranPhoto.com.
Click on the **Support Springs Eternal** graphic on the homepage and follow the instructions there.
(On the payment form, please specify that your donation is for the “Springs Eternal Project.”)



Mystic Springs, Chipola River, 2009



White Sulphur Springs, 2012

SPECIAL SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

- **\$100,000** Sponsor eight *Urban Aquifer* buses for nine months, with donor name or business logo prominently displayed on the back panel. Also enjoy a day of spring hopping with John Moran, plus a 40" x 60" framed exhibition photograph by John Moran.
- **\$20,000** Sponsor one *Urban Aquifer* bus for nine months, with donor name or business logo prominently displayed on the back. Also receive a 40" x 60" framed exhibition photograph.
- **\$10,000** 40" x 60" framed exhibition photograph.
- **\$5,000** 30" x 40" framed exhibition photograph.

Thank you for your support of the springs, for understanding the need to inspire a public will to conserve and protect Florida's waters, and for your generosity in helping to make this project a success.

You can learn more about the project at JohnMoranPhoto.com.

Please contact us directly if you would like more information.

John Moran, project director:
JohnMoranPhoto@gmail.com • 352.373.9718

Lesley Gamble, associate project director:
lgamble@ufl.edu • 352.374.4087

Springs Eternal: Florida's Fragile Fountains of Youth is a project of the Alachua Conservation Trust.
AlachuaConservationTrust.org

