



**PRESS RELEASE
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Learn More About Our Water Problems on Feb. 29, 2016, at Florida Gateway College

How does the water we all use affect conditions in the Ichetucknee River and springs? What is likely to happen to the Ichetucknee in the next severe drought? What do we know for certain and what are the most common myths about water in North Central Florida? Are we safeguarding our supply of drinking water? How does our water supply relate to our economy? These questions and more will be discussed by geologist Jim Gross at "Up & Down With the Floridan Aquifer" from 7-9 p.m. Monday, Feb. 29, 2016, in room 102 of the Wilson S. Rivers Library and Media Center at Florida Gateway College, 149 SE College Place, Lake City, Florida 32025. Admission is free and everyone is invited to attend.

The presentation is the fourth in a series of popular programs called "Water Voices" created by the Ichetucknee Alliance and designed to broaden and deepen the conversations about water that are being held in our area. The first three sessions were held in High Springs in 2015.

"At many public meetings, we hear how much we don't know about our water and how we need to do more studies," Gross explained. "But there are many things we *do* know—things we are certain about. One of these things is that every single drop of water we pump out of the ground diverts water away from natural systems like the Ichetucknee; there's no uncertainty about this. We also know that because so much water gets pumped during droughts, we risk the danger of saltwater intrusion into our wells and water supply. In terms of solving some of our problems, we also know that if we stopped polluting, we could see results in our springs in a matter of years."

Gross will offer a detailed discussion of:

- How significant groundwater withdrawals in North Florida compare to the amount of available water.
- Who is using how much water and why that is important to know.
- Common myths about groundwater and how these myths undermine sustainable management.
- What it will take to achieve long-term security in our groundwater supplies.

There will be time at the end of the program for questions and answers and an opportunity for audience members to have one-on-one conversations with Gross and with members of the sponsoring organizations.

Gross is a licensed professional geologist in both California and Florida. He has more than 35 years of experience in water resources work, including 18 years in long-term regional water supply planning for two Florida water management districts, St. Johns River and South Florida. He has worked for industry, academia, regional planning agencies and consulting firms. He has a master's degree in geology from New Mexico State University. Gross and his family live in Gainesville.

Water Voices is organized by the Ichetucknee Alliance and co-sponsored by the Alliance, the Water Resources Program at Florida Gateway College, and Our Santa Fe River.

For more information, email wordwitch@windstream.net or call Lucinda Merritt at 386-454-0415.

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