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PRESS RELEASE

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Ichetucknee Alliance’s Court Win Forces Florida to Do More to Stem Water Pollution

“This week’s precedent-setting legal victory requiring the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to keep its commitment to provide meaningful protections against nitrate pollution for the state’s outstanding springs was led by the Ichetucknee Alliance and other plaintiffs including Our Santa Fe River, Rainbow River Conservation and the Silver Springs Alliance,” reports John Jopling, President of the Ichetucknee Alliance.

In 2016, finding that “action is urgently needed” to protect Florida springs, the Florida Legislature passed the Florida Springs and Aquifer Protection Act that required DEP to create Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) to achieve pollution reduction goals for impaired Outstanding Florida Springs such as the Ichetucknee.

When the BMAP was published for the Santa Fe and Ichetucknee river basins, it was declared ineffective by the Ichetucknee Alliance’s advisory board who viewed the BMAP as “a fig leaf” of the sort we see all too often from the state agencies that are charged with protecting our springs.

The Ichetucknee Alliance and other plaintiffs called the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to account, challenging the BMAP in court as wholly inadequate for meaningful protection of Florida’s endangered springs.

In the decision issued yesterday, the First District Court of Appeal agreed. The court’s ruling forces the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to draft new, *effective* Basin Management Action Plans for the Ichetucknee and the other Outstanding Florida Springs.

The Alliance is grateful for the critical backing of the Florida Springs Council, for the commitment of the other plaintiffs, and for the financial contributions of the many Floridians that enabled this case to go forward. This is an important win not only for the Ichetucknee but also for all of Florida's freshwater springs that are internationally recognized environmental treasures.

For more information, contact Ichetucknee Alliance President John Jopling at the telephone number and email address listed above.

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