



## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What do SpringsWatch volunteers do on monitoring sessions?**

A: SpringsWatch volunteers dip meter probes into surface waters at a series of stations to measure water temperature, dissolved oxygen, specific conductivity, and light attenuation. They also take photos of submerged aquatic vegetation and collect water samples. All these tasks can be done from a kayak, canoe, paddleboard, or motorized boat. In some cases, our volunteers simply walk into the spring they're monitoring or take measurements from a dock. "Wetter" tasks include measuring water clarity with a Secchi disk and conducting fish counts. These activities require snorkeling. There are enough volunteers on each session so that various tasks can be spread among the group. If you prefer not to get wet, you won't need to.

**Q: I have no experience with water quality data collection. How will I learn it?**

A: Team leaders will provide all the on-the-job training you'll need while on the water. We've trained volunteers from age 7 to 70 on how to use the various instruments involved in data collection.

**Q: If I sign up to volunteer, do I have to commit to participating every month?**

A: That's up to you. Some people volunteer once. Others return to assist monitoring efforts again and again. Some groups have lengthy lists of volunteers and usually need only 5-6 participants per outing, so it's unlikely SpringsWatch is an activity you'll be doing every month.

**Q: Can volunteers work with more than one SpringsWatch group?**

A: Yes. Scroll down the [website](#) to see the location of our 11 statewide SpringsWatch groups. You may live near more than one of them and you're welcome to help out more than one SpringsWatch group as your schedule allows. Just indicate the groups you're interested in on the volunteer application below.

**Q: How long does each SpringsWatch monitoring session take?**

A: This question has many different answers. While the core of the monitoring tasks remains consistent from group to group, the distance volunteers travel varies along with mode of transportation—all this

impacts how long it takes to complete an outing. Here are estimates of the typical length of time a monitoring session takes for each SpringsWatch group—this does not factor in driving time to get there.

- Homosassa River: 1 hour
- Ichetucknee River (dry): 1 hour
- Ichetucknee River (wet): 2 hours
- Jackson Blue: 3 hours
- Kings Bay: 3 hours
- Panhandle: 1 hour
- Rainbow River: 4 hours
- Santa Fe River: 2 hours
- Silver River: 1 hour
- Wakulla Springs: 1.5 hours
- Weeki Wachee River: 5 hours
- Wekiva River: 1.5 hours

**Q: Do I need to have my own canoe, kayak, or paddleboard to participate?**

A: You will for these groups: Ichetucknee-wet, Jackson Blue, Kings Bay, Rainbow, Santa Fe, and Weeki Wachee. Kayaks are the preferred mode of transportation on Kings Bay and the Santa Fe River. Other groups are either walking into the springs they're surveying or utilizing motorized pontoon boats provided by state parks. The Wekiva SpringsWatch group has boats provided to them by Wekiva Island, so volunteers don't have to bring their own.

**Q: Do I need any other gear to participate in SpringsWatch?**

A: If the group you volunteer with does fish counts or Secchi readings and you want to participate in those activities, bring a mask, snorkel, and fins and a line to tow your board or boat with as you swim.

**Q: Can children participate?**

A: Yes, children under 18 may participate with a parent or guardian. Be mindful of the length of monitoring sessions (listed by group above) and your child's attention span and energy. While we love getting youth involved in springs science, not every group's experience is appropriate for every child.

**Q: Do volunteers ever get IN the water during SpringsWatch monitoring sessions?**

A: Some of our groups perform fish counts and measure water clarity with a Secchi disk. Those activities will require some swimming and snorkeling. They're optional activities though, and there are many other tasks volunteers can choose to do which will keep them dry.

**Q: After I complete and submit a volunteer application, how long will it take before I'm able to get on the water with a SpringsWatch team?**

A: It depends on the group you're interested in volunteering with. Many of our SpringsWatch groups have rosters numbering over 50 volunteers, and they typically need at most 5-6 people on each session. So it may take a few weeks for a volunteer slot to open up in some cases. Please be patient—the experience is worth waiting for!

**Q: Many of the SpringsWatch groups take place in and around state parks. Will I have to pay state park entrance fees to volunteer for SpringsWatch?**

A: No. State park entrance fees are waived for SpringsWatch volunteers.