

Global Underwater Explorers
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Global Underwater Explorers arose from a belief that laypersons, working in collaboration with scientists and regulators, can bring compelling benefit to the discovery and conservation of the aquatic realm. These ideas began to take shape in the early 1990s during several research projects (primarily involving groundwater protection in Turkey and Florida). GUE was incorporated in 1998, seeking IRS non-profit 501(c)3 status in 2001. The founding body included educators, researchers, and underwater explorers interested in furthering the exploration, documentation, and conservation of the aquatic realm. GUE currently leverages its administrative infrastructure together with hundreds of international members to organize global aquatic projects; these are designated to expand public awareness and organize protection for water resources. Meanwhile, similar resources are used to expand scientific collaboration, building upon well-established success in the flooded caves of Florida.



Global Underwater Explorers Donation Form

I/ We would like to donate a sum of \$ _____ as a
 personal gift corporate gift (*please select one*)
Please apply this donation to
 General Support
 Conservation Program
 Wakulla Springs

Please add me to the GUE mailing list.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Date:
Name:
Title:
Organization Name:
Address:
City/State: Zip Code:
Phone: Fax:
Email:

PAYMENT OPTIONS

A. Credit Card
Name on Card:
 Visa MasterCard American Express
Credit Card Number
Expiration Date

B. Check
Please fill out Contact Information and include your check when mailing form.

Mail the completed form to:

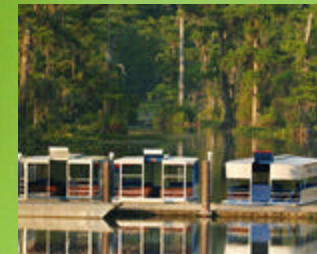
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GUE is recognized by the IRS as a 501[c] 3 organization. All contributions to GUE are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.



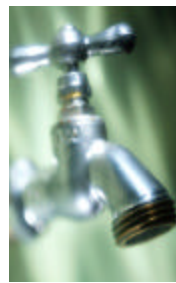
Balance

**Advancing Environmental Strategies
Through Grassroots Energy**



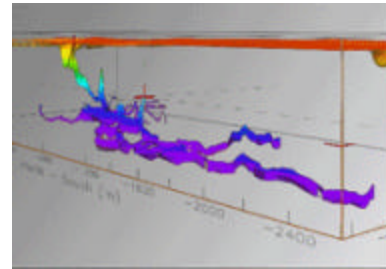
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Balancing human need with the environment remains a global challenge. The need for economic prosperity and the demands of growing populations creates a complex set of issues needing resolution. The difficult lessons of the rainforests and global warming have shown mankind that often what we do not understand – the unknown of the natural world – can have long-term, often irreversible, devastating results.



The limits of human knowledge are not easily overcome when the scope of the issues spans multiple environmental disciplines and human demands. Grassroots organizations, conservation groups, resource management agencies, utility agencies, policy makers, and citizens identify solutions founded upon individualized priorities and capacities. Efforts to protect and remedy the environment become fragmented and eventually stagnate.

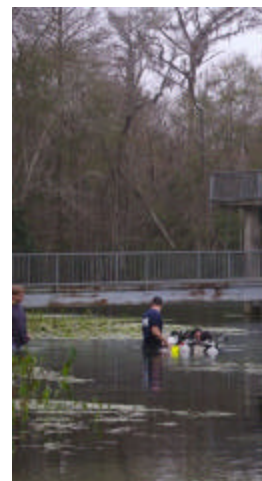
The unique ecological infrastructure of the Woodville Karst Plain in northwest Florida represents a significant environmental challenge. The 280,000-acre area covers portions of three counties, shares a border with the Gulf of Mexico, and includes three protected areas – the Apalachicola National Forest, the St. Marks' Wildlife Refuge, and Wakulla Springs State Park. The state capitol of Tallahassee lies within the Woodville Karst Plain and the region continues to experience rapid population growth. Secluded oases of crystal-clear water are scattered across the landscape.



An exceptional environmental life support system exists in the Woodville Karst Plain. Nutrient-rich water is dispersed across the region through underground tunnels that feed the many sinkholes, streams, and rivers on the surface.



The remarkable biodiversity includes threatened and endangered species - 37 species of plants; 6 species of reptiles including the American alligator and various turtles; 1 species of fish; 4 species of invertebrates; 7 species of birds including the Bald Eagle; and 3 species of mammals including the Florida Black Bear and the gentle giant of freshwater systems, the Manatee.



The environment is vulnerable by design in the Woodville Karst Plain. Surface contamination easily reaches ground and surface waters. The effects of human activity are most obvious at Wakulla Springs – the “crown jewel” of Florida’s state park system.

Water quality standards have proven inappropriate for maintaining the ecological balance needed for the unique natural settings in the area. Invasive plants now clog the springhead and are expanding along the Wakulla River. Native plants and wildlife are dying. Tourism has dropped. Communities are losing their natural treasures.



Significant grassroots energy exists in the region. With effective collaboration, a comprehensive approach, and community action, the region will rapidly advance environmental strategies and the future of Wakulla Springs will be greatly enhanced.

Global Underwater Explorers is undertaking activities to advance environmental strategies in the Woodville Karst Plain and improve the ecological health of Wakulla Springs. The project will improve the quality of available data, ensure the timely dissemination to affected groups and citizens, and advance collaborative strategies.



Developing an effective collaborative mechanism across diverse organizations in the region will ensure the various environmental disciplines and human demands are represented in environmental strategies.

Preserving momentum by conducting critical activities that are beyond the capacities of organizations such as research, outreach, and education will ensure grassroots energy is maintained and effective.



A standalone facility will be introduced in the region to serve as a learning center, research facility, and monitoring station. The Woodville Karst Plain represents one of the most unique of karst environments in the world. Therefore, the facility will provide a rare opportunity for international, national, state, and regional scientists to conduct research and further study.

GUE maintains long-standing relationships with governments, universities, grassroots organizations, advocacy groups, and researchers. The activities of this project are widely recommended and there is currently significant grassroots energy to remedy and protect Wakulla Springs. Currently, GUE has a Memorandum of Agreement with the Hydrogeology Consortium and GUE’s non-profit affiliate, the Woodville Karst Plain Project, is actively involved in investigative activities. GUE has collaborative relationships with numerous organizations in the regions. To formalize these relationships, GUE is actively pursuing formal commitments from organizations interested in participating.



GUE has worked for more than ten years to advance the protection of water resources in northwest Florida through exploration, documentation, supporting focused applied research, and public outreach. GUE has leveraged an aggressive public outreach program to raise public awareness about the issues facing Wakulla Springs and thereby consolidate and focus the responsible government agency actions and data collection assets into a more effective effort. In so doing, this effort will become a replicable model for leveraging grassroots energy to guide the pertinent government agencies into more effective vehicles for environmental protection in other parts of Florida and around the world.

Karst aquifers similar to the Woodville Karst Plain are found on every continent. The groundwater that runs through some of these regions represents one of the world’s most important freshwater reserves, accounting for an estimated 25% of the world’s potable groundwater. The model developed through GUE’s work will provide a foundation for international efforts to balance human need with the environment.