

Western University

From the Selected Works of Richard B. Philp

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Environews #9: The Sunshine State is in a state.

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ENVIRONEWS #9: The Sunshine State is in a state. The waters of the northern Gulf of Mexico have been invaded by lion fish. This beautiful fish has venomous spines that inject a very painful toxin into the flesh of anyone unlucky enough to be pierced by one. Cardiac deaths have resulted. The fish is edible and it is hoped that a commercial fishery might evolve to keep the population, which is competing with native species, in check.

Around 2000 my wife and I visited Wakulla Springs, a remarkable pool fed by an underground river through coral limestone which has been explored by divers for miles upstream. At that time a mastodon bone was clearly visible on the bottom, 200 feet down. Now, according to an article in the Tampa Bay Times by Diane Roberts (Apr 6/'14) the water is so cloudy from nutrients from sewage, septic tanks, agricultural fertilizers and cow manure that nothing is visible. The story is being repeated at other springs such as Ginnie, Rainbow and Silver Springs. Rivers are becoming covered with blue-green algae with "more than 100 times the World Health Organization's recommended limits for toxins". According to the author wetlands are being destroyed, fouling the Everglades as a result. In the same issue an editorial points the finger at the Republican legislature of Governor Rick Scott for its failure to protect the environment.