Our 2020 Speaker Series focuses on our most vital natural resource: water.

Paradoxically, it seems that Southwest Florida has either too much water, too little, or not in the right places.

Our January speaker addresses how Bonita Springs’ central water utility provides clean drinking water and manages wastewater in the most cost-effective way.

In February, we confront the reality that unless we take concerted action, Florida’s drinking water problems and shortages will only get worse as the state’s population grows.

In March, we look at the health and challenges facing the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve, one of the state’s most significant natural and historical resources—one that affects our lives in ways we might never have imagined.

Our Mission

Is to preserve, protect, and promote the rich cultural heritage of Bonita Springs.

We invite you to become a member, make a donation, or volunteer at BonitaSpringsHistoricalSociety.org.

Speaker Series Talks are free to members and students. $5 donation requested for others.

January 23

What’s the Value of Clean Water?

February 13

Drying Up: The Fresh Water Crisis in Florida

March 26

Estero Bay: How Threatened?
Bonita Springs didn’t always have a steady source of good drinking water. Before 1971, the only source was shallow private wells producing smelly sulfur water. So how did Bonita’s first central water system, started by local residents, grow from serving a handful of homes to more than 75,000 customers?

Where does our water come from? How is water quality monitored? With people moving here every day, is it sustainable?

John Jenkins, executive director of Bonita Springs Utilities, Inc., answers these questions and many more. He follows the flow of water from deep underground aquifers through a sophisticated treatment system to the faucets in our homes.

He’ll also talk about wastewater treatment. How do they dispose of liquid and solid by-products? Do these contribute to nutrients in our waterways? What about septic tanks? Learn how news in the headlines affects us in Bonita Springs.

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THURSDAY FEBRUARY 13, 7 PM

Drying Up: The Fresh Water Crisis in Florida

FEATURING JOHN DUNN, JOURNALIST AND WATER ADVOCATE

How can it be that Florida, the nation’s wettest state, is facing a drinking water crisis?

John Dunn takes a hard look at the many causes of the state’s fresh water problems. Natural water systems are shrinking, saltwater intrusion is spoiling wells, and water quality continues to decline, contaminated by pollution, agricultural runoff, failing infrastructure, and toxic algae.

Has Florida passed the tipping point? Based on more than 100 interviews and years of research, Dunn presents the unsettling reality that “business as usual” isn’t an option. He reviews past and current restoration efforts as well as proposed future solutions that mimic natural hydrology.

Dunn believes that informed, motivated citizens play a vital role in keeping Florida from “drying up.” Learn what you can do to help protect life’s most precious resource!

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THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 7 PM

Estero Bay: How Threatened?

FEATURING STEPHANIE ERICKSON
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Estero Bay was designated as Florida’s first aquatic preserve in 1966, thanks to a grassroots citizen initiative that saved it from further development.

The bay, one of Florida’s 41 aquatic preserves, is home to many of the state’s endangered and threatened species and supports colonies of nesting and migrating birds. The bay borders two state parks and contains major archaeological and historic sites, including Mound Key.

But how healthy is this irreplaceable natural resource? The bay is under threat from too many nutrients and altered fresh water flows, which harm aquatic plants and native species.

Fortunately, people are just as passionate about the bay’s future today. Stephanie Erickson of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection describes the research, monitoring, and restoration efforts underway by her agency and others to preserve Estero Bay for many generations to come.

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 7 PM

What’s the Value of Clean Water?

FEATURING JOHN JENKINS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BONITA SPRINGS UTILITIES

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