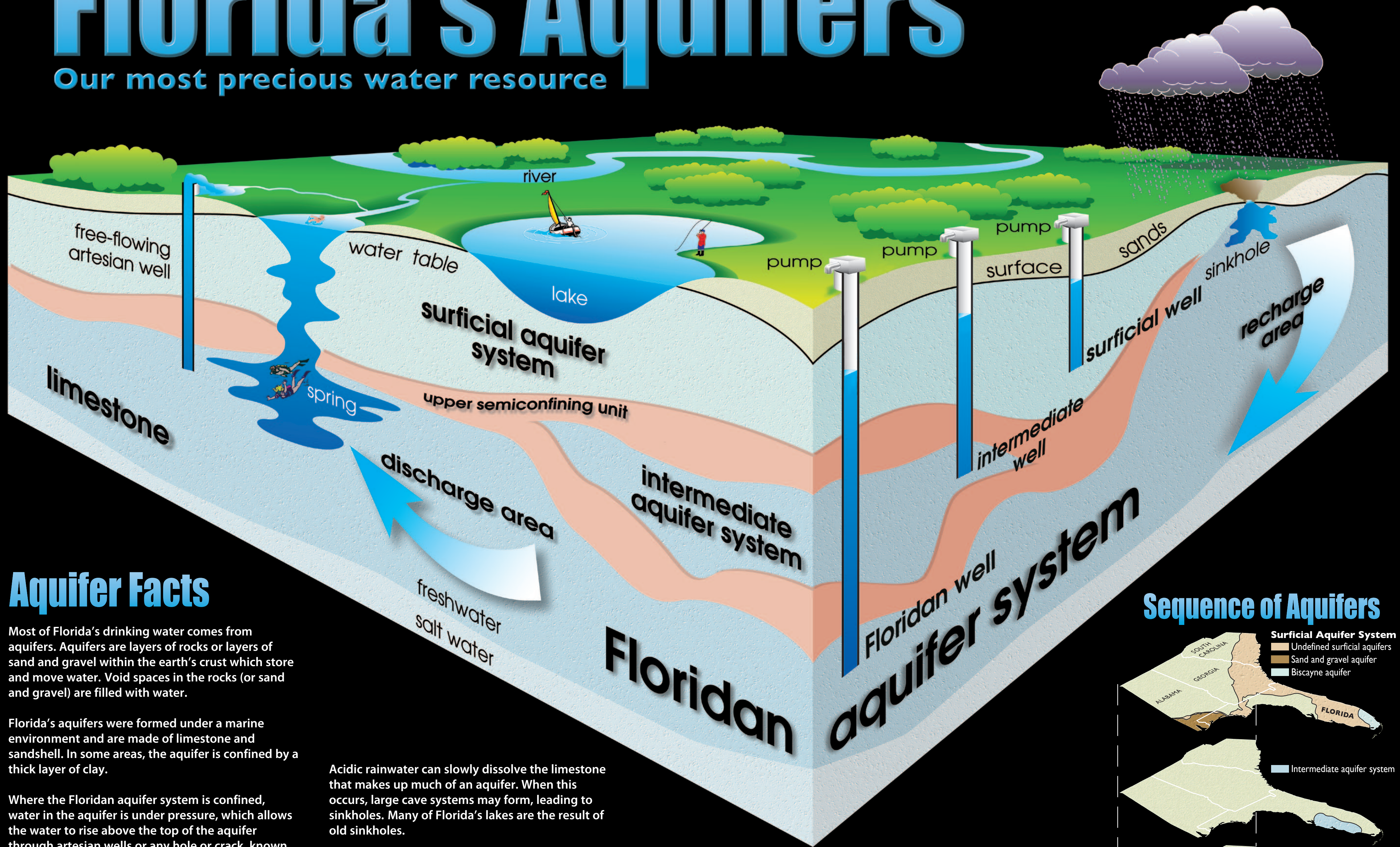


Florida's Aquifers

Our most precious water resource



Aquifer Facts

Most of Florida's drinking water comes from aquifers. Aquifers are layers of rocks or layers of sand and gravel within the earth's crust which store and move water. Void spaces in the rocks (or sand and gravel) are filled with water.

Florida's aquifers were formed under a marine environment and are made of limestone and sandshell. In some areas, the aquifer is confined by a thick layer of clay.

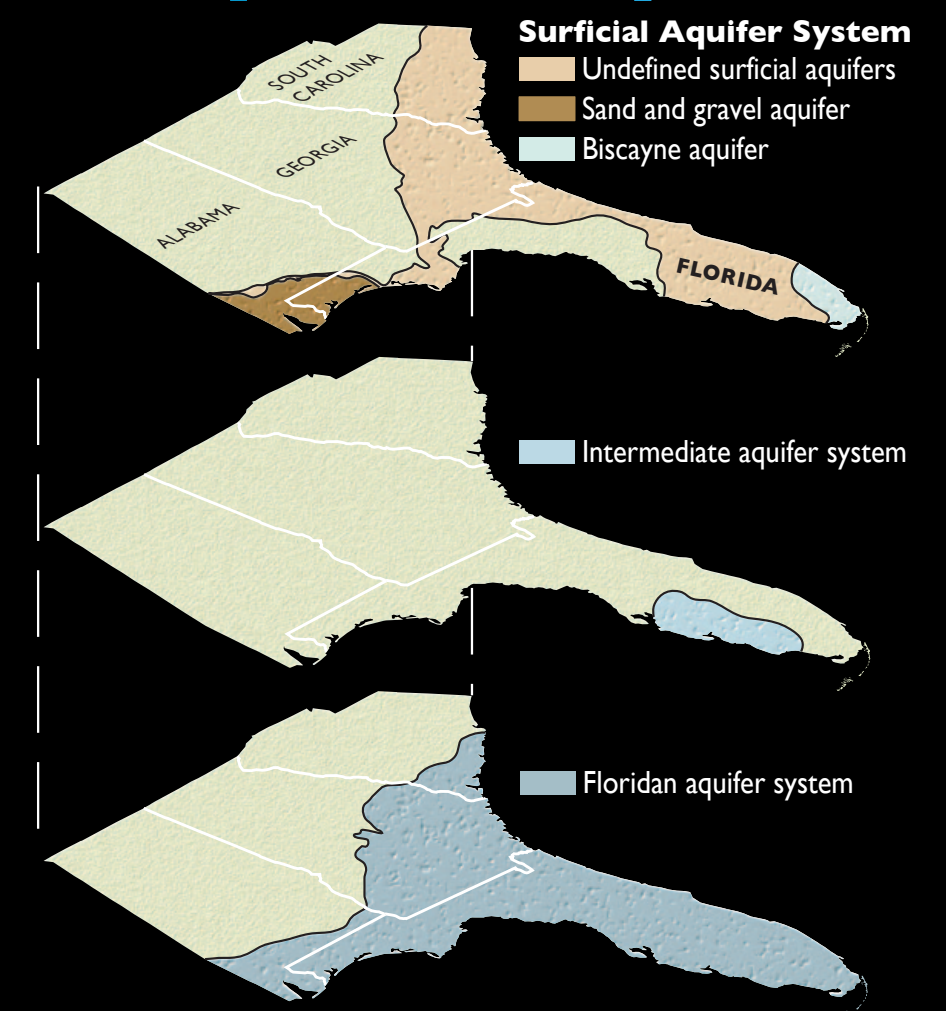
Where the Floridan aquifer system is confined, water in the aquifer is under pressure, which allows the water to rise above the top of the aquifer through artesian wells or any hole or crack, known as a spring.

The Floridan aquifer system is replenished in a natural process called "recharge" by rainfall in areas where the soil is suited for allowing the water to seep into the ground.

Acidic rainwater can slowly dissolve the limestone that makes up much of an aquifer. When this occurs, large cave systems may form, leading to sinkholes. Many of Florida's lakes are the result of old sinkholes.

Salt water, found naturally in aquifers, is heavier and more dense than freshwater. The two usually stay separate, with the freshwater floating on top of the salt water. In areas where too much freshwater is pumped out of the aquifer, wells may become salty — known as saltwater intrusion.

Sequence of Aquifers



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