

the land in central Florida. Evaporation from water bodies ranges from about 46 inches in northern Florida to about 54 inches in the southern portion. The potential for evapotranspiration depends upon solar energy and atmospheric conditions such as air temperature, humidity, and wind speed. Actual evapotranspiration depends upon available moisture and the amount of vegetative ground cover.

In northwest Florida, permeable soils and sloping land readily pass rainfall into the shallow aquifers and streams. Also, much of the vegetation is dormant in winter, reducing evapotranspiration during several months. These conditions result in streamflow amounting to 20 to 30 inches of runoff in an average year. By contrast the southern portion of the state is mostly flat and supports year around vegetative growth. Evapotranspiration is high and runoff averages from below 5 inches up to 10 inches per year (USGS).

Surface water supplies in Florida are visible in the form of numerous lakes and several major rivers. Of Florida's five largest rivers, four are in the drainage basins of northern Florida with headwaters in Alabama or Georgia. The fifth largest, the St. Johns, involves an extensive system of wetlands and lakes lying along the eastern part of the peninsula from Indian River County to Jacksonville, where it flows into the ocean. Southern Florida is dominated by the Kissimmee - Okeechobee - Everglades basin which extends from near Orlando to the southern tip of the state, now involving hundreds of miles of canals and levees for surface water management utilizing Lake Okeechobee as a reservoir. Many streams in the southern part of the state have been altered by a system of canals which relieve high water conditions and deliver water to agriculture and growing population centers on the lower east coast. Some portions of the original Everglades function as shallow water conservation areas. The remaining Everglades at the southern tip of the peninsula comprise the Everglades National Park which receives water from this managed system.

Most areas of the state rely on groundwater supplies for municipal, industrial and agricultural uses. Florida has several prolific aquifers that yield large quantities of water to wells, streams and lakes as well as some of the world's largest springs. The principal source of groundwater for most of Florida is the Floridan aquifer. It is the source of municipal water supply for such cities as Tallahassee, Jacksonville, Gainesville, Orlando, Daytona Beach, Tampa, and St. Petersburg. It also yields water to thousands of domestic, industrial and irrigation wells throughout the state. The thick layers of porous limestone which comprise the Floridan aquifer underly all of the state, although in the southern portion the water it