

Rainbow River Conservation, Inc.

Spring Newsletter 2010

RRC continues in its efforts to protect the Rainbow River and its environment through conservation, education, advocacy and stewardship. Following is an update since our last newsletter.

Annual River Cleanup

The next important RRC sponsored event is the [Annual River Cleanup Saturday, May 15th](#). All members and friends of the Rainbow River are encouraged to meet at the Rio Vista Park at 9 AM to organize and begin the cleanup. For a location map see our website at www.RainbowRiverConservation.com. Following the cleanup a free picnic will be held at noon at the Rio Vista Park. Those who participated last year will be phoned. New volunteers should call Jerry Rogers at 352-489-4648. This is always a great day to celebrate the Rainbow River.



Education Efforts

RRC had a successful weekend at Dunnellon Boomtown Days providing educational materials to the public. Large posters are being distributed to strategic locations in and around Dunnellon. RRC and the local boy scouts assisted SWFWMD in storm drain marking throughout Dunnellon. RRC is seeking volunteers to read to grade school children about protecting our environment. If interested in this reading program contact Terry Blaes at 352-465-6492.

Blue Run Park

Volunteers recently planted some 625 aquatic plants within the park that were provided by SWFWMD. More substantial improvements are on hold because of the lack of grant funding from Florida Forever and other sources. Thirty-five people participated in an interpretive river walk led by RRC members Bill Vibbert and Sandra



Aquatic Plant restoration by RRC Members

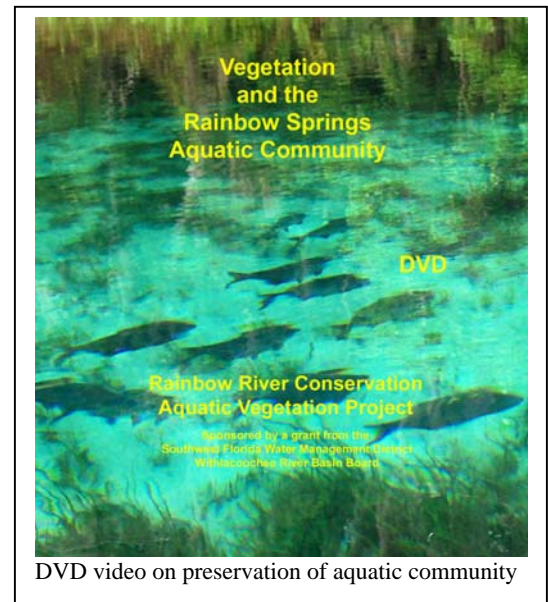
Marraffino. The renovation of the Blue Run parking lot has been placed on hold until the Fall while waiting for CR 484 to be repaved and the end of the busy summer recreation period.

Springs Protection

A Springs Rally was held at the Capitol Building in Tallahassee February 16th. About 300 people traveled to the rally, approximately 50 of them from Marion County. Visits were made to individual legislators to encourage them to support a statewide springs protection bill. It appeared, however, that most of our legislators were more concerned about cutting programs in order to balance the state budget. Thus, we might see failure of this type of legislation for the fifth year in a row. It is discouraging as we see our springs and rivers more polluted with nitrates and bacteria. The federal EPA has recently invoked a program of numeric nitrate limits on our water bodies and we hope that this will result in tighter controls on nitrates entering these waters.

Recreation Impacts on the River

We have seen a tremendous increase in recreation on the Rainbow River. An adverse effect of this is the impact on the natural aquatic vegetation that provides the habitat and sustenance for the river wildlife. When this natural vegetation is uprooted due to careless boating, diving and tubing practices it is usually replaced by invasive species or remains barren. RRC is in the process of studying this problem and has developed a DVD to advocate for preservation practices on the river. Many copies of this 10 minute video were given out at Dunnellon's Boomtown Celebration. Copies will be available at the Rainbow River Cleanup on May 15th.



DVD video on preservation of aquatic community

Rainbow River Ranch

As reported by RRC in the past efforts have been made by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to purchase development rights on the Rainbow River Ranch property in order to protect the river and its associated wildlife habitat. The developer refused these offers and eventually sued the City of Dunnellon under the Bert Harris Act. In an attempt to settle the lawsuit the City recently approved a settlement with the developer which will have substantial impacts on the land and the river. Because the settlement agreement serves to violate the City's comprehensive plan and Florida Statute 163, RRC has elected to sue the City for compliance. We have been joined by fifteen individual plaintiffs in this lawsuit.