

Rainbow River Conservation, Inc.

Spring Newsletter 2014

RRC continues to fulfill its mission of protecting the Rainbow River through Education, Stewardship, Conservation, and Advocacy.

Membership

RRC lists 285 members (or member families) at the present time. However, a number of these are in arrears in dues payment. If you are receiving this newsletter with a renewal form and return envelope you are not paid to date. We need your membership to increase our voice in Advocacy and we would appreciate your returning the membership form with your check for payment.

Upcoming Events

RRC will have its education booth at Boomtown Days in Dunnellon April 26th and 27th. Also, the Annual Rainbow River Cleanup and Picnic is scheduled for May 17th at Rio Vista Park starting at 9 AM. See our website at www.RainbowRiverConservation.com for a location map. Those who participated last year will be called. New volunteers should call Jerry Rogers at 352-489-4648.

Withlacoochee Trail Extension

The Withlacoochee Trail extension from CR 39 in Citrus County to the Little League Field east of Dunnellon is now complete. Bikers and hikers are enjoying the trip through the woods and over the new Withlacoochee River Bridge. Plans are in the works for a trail spur to bring these pedestrians through the Blue Run Park and into Dunnellon.

RRC Projects

RRC is engaged in several Education and Stewardship projects. Recently, RRC volunteers refurbished and added to the Wood Duck boxes along the river. There are now 50 of these distributed along the river and the nesting productivity remains high.

The Recreation Guidelines project has taken a major step forward. A grant from the Felburn Foundation allowed us to develop a souvenir quality map-fold brochure which will be distributed to outlets doing business on the Rainbow River as well as individual recreationists. The brochure contains a map of the river and nine panels of information for recreationists and



New Withlacoochee State Trail south of Blue Run Park



New trail bridge across Withlacoochee River



View of river from bridge - Photos - Burt Eno

property owners to enjoy and stay safe on the river while protecting this world class resource. RRC board member Kathryn Taubert led this project with the assistance of representatives from commercial operators, property owners, recreational user groups, and city, county and state officials.

Rainbow River Ranch

Nearly two years ago RRC intervened in the proposed settlement agreement between the City of Dunnellon and the Rainbow River Ranch property owner. This past January 13th a hearing was held in circuit court on this matter with about 50 RRC members in attendance. Our attorneys, Ralf Brookes and Tom Pelham, did an outstanding job of representing our interests, arguing that the proposed settlement agreement was a circumvention of land use law. We are now waiting for the court's ruling.

State Legislation

The state legislature is now in session. Senate Bill 1576 is a robust effort by Senators Dean and Simmons to rectify low flows and excessive nutrients in Florida's outstanding springs, one of which is Rainbow Springs. Doc stamp tax money is proposed to fund upgrades to sewer plants, conversion of septic tanks to central sewer collection systems, and reduction of urban and agricultural fertilization as well as to curb aquifer pumping. The bill has successfully passed two committees so far. Unfortunately, a companion House Bill 1313 has not gained traction, primarily because House Speaker Will Weatherford has resisted such legislation and wants to put it off another year.

Of note is the status of the Water & Land Legacy petition circulated last year, calling for a constitutional amendment to dedicate 1/3 of doc stamp tax revenue for land conservation. The petition was successful and Amendment #1 on the election ballot for next November calls for this amendment to the state constitution. RRC highly advocates for this amendment.

Help Needed

RRC needs some volunteer help. We need a secretary to record and transcribe board meeting minutes once a month. This would require attendance at board meetings in Dunnellon the 3rd Monday evening of each month. Once the minutes are transcribed the president reviews them and distributes them to the board for approval at the next meeting.

We also need someone to administer membership. This would require maintaining a spreadsheet of member contact data and dues payments. It also requires mailings pertaining to quarterly newsletters and dues payments. Most effort is expended in the fall when dues notices are sent out.

If you have any interest in helping with these tasks please call President Burt Eno at 352-465-2828 for further information.

