



RRC continues to seek ways to protect and preserve the Rainbow River and its environment.

Administrative Changes

Nancy Browall, our long time RRC board member and membership chair, has stepped down from these positions and we wish to thank her for her excellent service. Deidre Whitt has volunteered to take on the membership chair position and we thank her for that. We are still looking for a secretary to replace Kathryn Taubert who wishes to spend more time on program organization and fund raising. The secretary serves as a board member and is required to attend most board meetings (3rd Monday of the month at 7 PM) and transcribe minutes. Please call President Burt Eno at 465-2828 if interested in volunteering.

Education Committee

RRC has several members serving on an Education Committee chaired by Nathan Whitt. At present, they are communicating with the Marion County Schools Science Coordinator Jacqua Ballas to see if RRC can provide resources to bring education about our springs and rivers into the schools. The committee is planning an open house for Marion County educators at Rainbow Springs State Park August 14th. Stay tuned for more information about this event.

River Recreation

Summer is here and recreation on the Rainbow River is extremely high. The sheer numbers of people on the river displace the wildlife and, to some extent, destroy the native vegetation. There seems to be no appetite amongst the government agencies and the business community to control and schedule the recreation to protect the river. As a partial answer to the problem RRC developed, with input from various agencies and recreation businesses, a voluntary set of guidelines for various forms of recreation on the river and published them on our website at www.RainbowRiverConservation.com. RRC also acquired a grant from the Felburn Foundation to develop and reproduce 25,000 souvenir quality fold-out brochures to contain these guidelines and a map of the river.

River Conditions

The substantial rains we have had in recent months have been good for the river. Flow is up and the clarity has correspondingly improved. We are still concerned with the high level of nitrates in the river and the growth of lyngbya. These algae mats suffocate the natural vegetation which affords the



Blue Run Park river access ramp in June

food sources and habitat to the fish life in the river. Not surprising, sources of nitrates are fertilizer and human and animal waste. Fertilizers must be reduced and human and animal waste treatment must be improved throughout the 700 square mile Rainbow River recharge basin. Meanwhile, the RRC Annual River Cleanup event in May went well with about 150 participants. V-P Jerry Rogers is to be thanked for another job well done.

Basin Management Action Plan

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has been working on a Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) and has identified the major sources of nitrates contributing to pollution of the river. Their target for the health of the river is an 82% reduction of the nitrates. This is a very ambitious goal and it will take projects and cooperation at every level of government, business and home ownership in the river recharge basin. It will also require substantial reductions in the amount of water that is being pumped out of the aquifer for irrigation purposes. For a more complete Rainbow Springs Action Plan developed by the Florida Springs Institute see our website at www.RainbowRiverConservation.com.



Limpkin with mussel

Springs Legislation

Senate Bill 1576, sponsored by Senator Charlie Dean, made it through two committees and into the Senate Appropriations Committee where it was stripped of much of its funding. The companion House Bill was not allowed out of committee and therefore springs legislation failed this year. The Water & Land Legacy Petition, however, was successful and now will appear as Amendment #1 on the ballot in November. If passed, this state constitutional amendment will require that one-third of existing doc stamp tax, which used to be the funding for the Florida Forever Program, will be earmarked for water and land conservation programs. RRC encourages a YES vote on Amendment #1.



Morning weavers

Rainbow River Ranch Litigation

The court on June 19th issued an order pertaining to the January 13th hearing in regard to the settlement agreement between the Rainbow River Ranch developer and the City of Dunnellon. The court expressed concern that the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) had approved of the agreement but had not demonstrated that it is in the public interest. The judge granted leave to the parties to amend their petition to satisfactorily address this issue or, otherwise, an evidentiary hearing will be scheduled to address the claims of the petitioners and the intervenors. Naturally, we prefer an evidentiary hearing to show why the proposed settlement agreement is detrimental to the river and its environment and we will continue to work toward that end in this litigation.

It is clear that the above legal matter is perhaps far from over and, for RRC to continue to fight for protection and preservation of the river, we need additional funding. Therefore, once again, President Burt Eno issues the challenge of a one-to-one match to any contributions made to our legal fund. Please generously make your tax deductible contribution to RRC at the address given at the foot of this newsletter.