



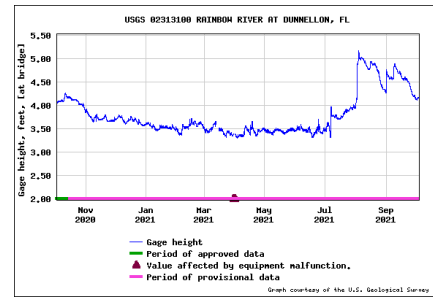
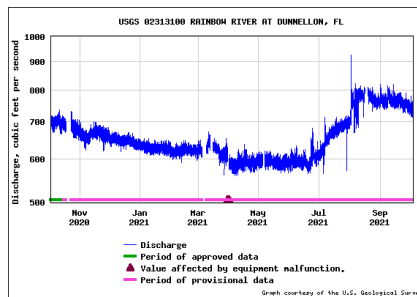
**Rainbow River Conservation Meetings**

We thought that the Covid-19 pandemic was on its way out and RRC meetings could resume but then the Delta variant raised its ugly head. Consequently, the Board of Directors opted to pause again on meetings, including the annual members meeting which had been scheduled for November. If, and when, the pandemic subsides sufficiently RRC will resume board meetings and perhaps schedule an annual meeting in the Spring. We shall keep you posted.

**River Conditions**

After a long Covid pause, the Rainbow River SpringsWatch program resumed sampling in September. We are joined by two new volunteers, Linda Wilinski and Carol Pickles. Rainbow River conditions are good with record rainfall that has resulted in high flow and level. The high velocity has kept the spirogyra algae at bay, and we see few areas of the large algae mats that we witnessed last year. Water clarity is excellent approaching 50 feet in the middle river. The extensive stands of strap-leafed Sagitaria are stable with good distribution of Vallisneria (eelgrass).

Our volunteers include Sandra Marraffino (our birding expert), Ray and Michelle Blasingame, swimmer Martha Henwood, and Bill Vibbert. Special thanks go to Ray, our boat captain, and to the Blasingames for providing a pontoon boat.



**Blue Run Park Pedestrian Pathway**

In our Summer Newsletter we discussed the fact that, based upon misinformation provided by Dunnellon’s representative to the Marion County Transportation Planning Organization, the proposed pedestrian pathway across the Rainbow River bridge and into the Blue Run Park was removed from the planned East Pennsylvania Ave multi-modal project. We are pleased to report now that RRC has managed to rectify this error and Marion County is now moving ahead to seek FDOT funding for the multi-modal project to include widening the pedestrian lane to the Blue Run Park entrance.

**Florida Wildlife Corridor Coalition (FWCC)**

The FWCC is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving corridors for safe passage of wildlife in various parts of Florida. The mission is to identify, for State purchase or conservation easements, land parcels that permanently connect, protect and restore Florida wildlife corridors. One of the techniques that FWCC has in drawing attention to their efforts is to film hiking and paddling treks through wild Florida. One such trek was 100 days to travel 1000 miles from the Florida Everglades to the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia. Another was a 70-day trek of 1000 miles from the Everglades headwaters to the Gulf Islands National Seashore near Pensacola. More recently, FWCC filmed a 4-day kayak trip,

involving three local high school girls, from Rainbow Springs to the Gulf of Mexico and Homosassa. Excerpts from these trips are included in the FWCC Facebook page.

While in the Rainbow Springs area FWCC personnel took an interest in potential wildlife corridors in the vicinity. We pointed out to them that RRC had developed the 2007 Rainbow River Corridor Project which resulted in the remaining private parcels of land along the east side of the Rainbow River being placed on the Florida Forever List. Securing State ownership or conservation easements of these parcels, and taking advantage of State-owned lands across the river and to the northwest, could potentially open wildlife corridors through the Goethe Forest and beyond. The same holds true for the Nine Island Cove and Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenways properties along the Withlacoochee River to the west of Dunnellon. Collaboration with FWCC might be advantageous to RRC in maintaining the Rainbow River and its environs.

### **Nine Island Cove Property**

In our Summer Newsletter we reported that RRC President Burt Eno and Dunnellon Mayor Bill White had made a trip to Tallahassee to advocate for the addition of the Nine Island Cove property to the Florida Forever Rainbow River Corridor Project. The result was that the FDEP Acquisition and Restoration Council voted unanimously to do so. RRC's intention was to apply for Florida Communities Trust funds to purchase the Nine Island Cove property and deed it to the City of Dunnellon as was the case with the Blue Run Park. Unfortunately, no State funding was allotted to the FCT program this year. Alternatively, RRC is looking into the possibility that State funding might be derived from the Florida Wildlife Corridor Act passed by the legislature this year.



### **Miscellaneous Notes**

Due to our delay in meetings this year we will likewise be delaying our member renewal requests until the Winter Newsletter at the first of the year. We would like you to know that, in spite of the lack of meetings due to the Covid virus, a number of RRC members have kept busy staying abreast of legislation, litigation, mitigation funding, and other opportunities affecting the welfare of the Rainbow River. We invite you to stay abreast of our mailings whether they originate from the RRC or are passed along from other



conservation minded organizations. Please keep an eye on our Rainbow River Facebook for useful information as well as some extraordinary photos. With the holiday season coming up please keep in mind opportunities to benefit RRC's treasury through purchases at Amazon Smile or other fund sharing organizations. Direct, tax deductible, contributions may always be made to the RRC address below.