

# Rainbow River Conservation, Inc. Spring Newsletter 2009

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.

## Blue Run Park

RRC continues to work with its partners on improvements in the Blue Run of Dunnellon Park. The fencing is completed, the trails are marked, invasive plants have been removed, wire grass and slash pine seedlings have been planted, and a new sign has been erected in front of the park. We made the cut for FRDAP grant funding which would allow building of a comfort station, picnic pavilions, wayside exhibits, and other facilities. However, it does not look like the State Legislature is going to fund FRDAP this year. Nevertheless, many people have begun to enjoy walks in the park. RRC also assisted the Trust for Public Lands to apply for another Florida Communities Trust grant to expand the Blue Run Park north of CR 484. Unfortunately, the Legislature also cut Florida Forever funding so the application effort was suspended.



## RRC Events Including Our Annual River Cleanup



RRC had a successful weekend at Dunnellon Boomtown Days providing educational material to the public. The next important event is the **Annual River Cleanup Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>**. All members and friends of the Rainbow River are encouraged to meet at the Rio Vista Park (for a location map see our website at [www.RainbowRiverConservation.com](http://www.RainbowRiverConservation.com)) at 9 AM to organize and begin the cleanup. Following the cleanup a free picnic will be held at noon at the Rio Vista park. Those who participated last year will be called. New volunteers should call Jerry Rogers at 352-489-

4648. This is always a great day to celebrate the Rainbow River.

## Threats to the River

RRC members have continued to advocate for protection of the Rainbow River and its wildlife. As of this writing we do not know if the State Legislature or the Marion County Commission will pass bills or ordinances for Springs Protection or Fertilizer Use. We do know that the nutrient level in Rainbow Springs is rapidly increasing, causing considerable growth of hydrilla and lymgbya in the river. We

also realize that the intensity of some of the recreational uses on the river in the summer time are threatening to the health of the river and we are working with Marion County Parks and Recreation to address this concern.

We have noticed that the soft shell turtle population on the river has decreased and we have received a number of reports of night time turtle harvesting. Upon contacting the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission we found that they are proposing a rule to effectively eliminate commercial fresh water turtle harvesting and they will have a public hearing on the proposed rule June 17<sup>th</sup> in Crystal River. We encourage our members to attend that hearing or send us letters in support of the new rule that we can transmit to the Commission.



Perhaps you have heard that the St. Johns Water Management District approved the withdrawal of water from the St. Johns River for piping to Seminole County. This has been approved by their Board without completion of a minimum flows and levels study and without a water conservation plan for Seminole County. Such withdrawals from the Oklawaha River promise to be next, followed by similar displacements along the Withlacoochee and Rainbow Rivers to be approved by the Southwest Florida Water Management District. We are convinced that this would result in irreparable harm to the Rainbow River.

### **RRC Membership**

Some RRC members have not yet paid their dues for 2009. If you are receiving this newsletter with a membership form enclosed please complete the form and send your dues (\$15 for family membership) to RRC. Your membership is important to our success in advocating for our river and our environment. Membership forms and additional information can be found on our website. New RRC brochures are available and you can ask for multiple copies by writing to [rrc\\_@bellsouth.net](mailto:rrc_@bellsouth.net).

### **Education Efforts**

One of RRC's major efforts is to educate the public about the beauty and uniqueness of the Rainbow River and its associated environment so as to protect it for future generations. At the present time we need people who are willing to serve on our Education Committee to reach out to the public with information and programs that will help us to fulfill this objective. If interested, please provide your contact information to Terry Blaes in care of [rrc\\_@bellsouth.net](mailto:rrc_@bellsouth.net). We could also put some good informational articles on our website. Allow us to consider them by sending them to this same email address.

### **Enjoy Our Natural Resources**

We wish you all a pleasurable Summer. Enjoy our natural resources but do all you can to preserve them for the next generation.



Sandhill Cranes take their chicks for a swim on the Rainbow River near Gruff's Restaurant. (Photo Sandra Marraffino)