

# Rainbow River Conservation, Inc.

## Fall 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 Meeting and Membership Renewal

RRC will hold its annual meeting November 13<sup>th</sup> starting at 9 AM at the Rainbow Rivers Club. For directions refer to [www.RainbowRiverConservation.com](http://www.RainbowRiverConservation.com) for a map. Our keynote speaker will be Dr. Robert Knight, Director of the Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute, whose topic will be “Rainbow Springs – A Springs Health Report Card”. Also on the agenda is Sandra Marraffino, Florida Audubon member, whose topic will be “Lake Rousseau – A Haven for Florida Wading Birds”. President Burt Eno will provide a brief overview of RRC activities and accomplishments for the past year. This should be a very interesting and informative meeting. All RRC members and the public are encouraged to attend.



Rainbow Springs aquatic garden

This is *membership renewal time*. Enclosed is a 2011 membership form and a return envelope. Please enclose your membership fee and mail the completed form as soon as possible.

### Education Efforts

The RRC Education Committee continues to reach out with information which will help protect the Rainbow River and its environment. RRC members are engaged in reading to Dunnellon Elementary School students. If you wish to join this activity please call Terry Blaes at 352-465-6492. RRC member Paul Marraffino has completed a SWFWMD Education Grant which resulted in the production of posters, brochures, and DVDs which show river scenes and explain how to recreate on the river without destroying the natural vegetation that supports the aquatic life. If you wish to receive copies of these media to help educate river users please call Paul at 352-465-4120.



Osprey nest in Lake Rousseau preserve

## **Blue Run Park**

The repaving of CR 484 adjacent to the Blue Run of Dunnellon Park is finally done. A fiber optics cable was rerouted and storm water culverts were installed. Marion County should now proceed with parking lot and river access improvements. RRC recently completed a Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program proposal with matching commitments from Marion County and the City of Dunnellon. If funded, the grant would permit trails, restroom and picnic pavilion development in the park. Keep your fingers crossed.

## **River Impairment**

We know that the Rainbow River is suffering from increased nitrates and algal formation. As a result the Florida Department of Environmental Protection is placing the river on the impaired waters list. This should result in more attention being paid to the health of the river. Efforts will be directed toward reducing nitrates entering the watershed from fertilizers and septic tanks. FDEP has recently awarded a 3-year contract to Pandion Systems to renew the Rainbow Springs Basin Working Group with a mission to formulate a restoration strategy. FDEP is also cooperating with SWFWMD to award a grant to the University of Florida to study the impact of recreation on the Rainbow River aquatic vegetation, a project initiated by RRC.

## **Water Supply and Distribution**

As mentioned in our Summer newsletter Senate Bill 550 turned into more of a statewide water supply and distribution legislation than a springs protection bill. Each water management district must develop such a plan which could mean redistribution of water within each water district. The Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority has made recommendations to SWFWMD that well fields should be established in northwest Marion County and/or water be should siphoned off of Lake Rousseau to supply areas south of Marion County. This gives us great concern because the ecology of the Rainbow River is very dependent upon the springs recharge to the north and the level of water in the Lake Rousseau reservoir. SWFWMD was supposed to have performed a minimum flows and level study on the Rainbow River in 2010 but this has been delayed until 2011. We hope that the MFL team appreciates the delicate balance required for the Rainbow River.

## **RRC Litigation**

As reported previously RRC and 15 individuals moved to intervene in the Bert Harris lawsuit settlement agreement between the owner of Rainbow River Ranch and Conservation Land Group and the City of Dunnellon. Because the City violated its comprehensive plan, and thus Florida Statute 163, the Florida Department of Community Affairs also moved to intervene. The case filings are recorded on our website at [www.RainbowRiverConservation.com](http://www.RainbowRiverConservation.com). As of this writing the circuit court has not ruled upon intervention. We are, however, encountering considerable expense to pursue this very worthy endeavor and would appreciate any donation to our legal fund. Since RRC is a non-profit organization any donation would be tax deductible.

**Enjoy the Rainbow River but treat it kindly for the sake of generations to come.**



Cypress reflection