



Annual Meeting

We had a very successful annual meeting December 5th at the Rainbow Rivers Club. Approximately 65 audience members were present to hear Jeff Sowards, Rainbow Springs Aquatic Preserve Manager, talk about and pictorially show the destructive impacts that increased recreational uses have had on the aquatic vegetation in the river. Sandra Marraffino, Florida Audubon member, also presented a slide show of Birds of the Rainbow River. President Burt Eno presented a review of the year's activities and accomplishments. At the meeting three incumbents were re-elected to the Board of Directors and Jeff Selvaggio was elected to replace Barbara Weston who chose not to run again because of other commitments. We thank Barbara for her many years of service to the RRC Board. The Board then elected officers for the coming year to be President Burt Eno, Vice-President Jerry Rogers, Treasurer Gretchen Martin, and Secretary Jeff Selvaggio.



Recreation impact on river vegetation

Membership Renewal

RRC has approximately 230 members. If you have not yet paid your dues for 2010 you will receive this newsletter by USPS mail with a renewal application enclosed. We ask that you return this form with your check so that we can keep you on our membership roster. You will receive your 2010 decal by return mail and you will continue to receive quarterly newsletters and other pertinent information associated with RRC activities. Much of our success is due to the fact that we speak with many voices.

Springs Rally

The Rainbow River and the ecosystems that it supports are dependent upon the quality of water entering at Rainbow Springs. This in turn is dependent upon the human activities that impact the 700 square mile spring shed that feeds these springs. Marion County has recently passed a Springs Protection Ordinance that will offer some restriction on harmful activities locally but we need statewide legislation to protect all of the springs in Florida. On February 16th there will be a statewide Springs Rally in Tallahassee in an attempt to influence our legislators to pass a springs protection bill this year. RRC is one of the sponsors of this rally and needs many volunteers to appear at the rally. Transportation will be arranged for the trip.



Rainbow Springs Pristine Headwaters

Please call Burt Eno at 352-465-2828 or Jerry Rogers at 352-489-4648 for more details. If you cannot make the trip then email or call your state senator and representative to advocate for springs protection.

Blue Run of Dunnellon Park

Plans for renovation of the CR 484 parking lot to alleviate storm water runoff into the Rainbow River are complete and are undergoing permit review. The project has been delayed but, hopefully, it will be completed before summer is here. Plans are nearing completion for an improved water access at the park. Further improvements, such as bathroom and picnic facilities, have been delayed because of the lack of Florida Forever funding. You should contact legislators to advocate continuation of Florida Forever funding. See link to legislator contacts at www.RainbowRiverConservation.com

Threats to the River

We continue to be concerned with threats to the health of the Rainbow River. These include excessive levels of nitrates emanating from the springs and the loss of vegetation due to careless recreational uses of the river. We are also concerned with the Minimum Flows and Levels study proposed this year by SWFWMD. We know that it is foolhardy to think that we can extract water from the Rainbow and Withlacoochee Rivers to ship southward and still have viable water ecosystems. Too little emphasis has been placed on statewide water conservation. Rainbow River Conservation has received a grant from SWFWMD to develop printed and video material to educate the public in protecting Rainbow River vegetation through proper visitor recreational methods.

Recent Events

Burt Eno spoke at the Marion County Legislative Delegation meeting in November and at the Florida Senate Inland Waters Committee in December advocating for statewide springs protection and funding for Florida Forever. The RRC Education Committee continues to participate in the Rainbow Springs State Park environmental education program for high school students. This committee could use more members to achieve additional goals. If you can volunteer call Terry Blaes at 352-465-6492. RRC members serviced the wood duck boxes on the Rainbow River in November and found that 48 of the 49 boxes had nests in them.

Tasks For 2010

The coming year will prove to be eventful with important tasks to be accomplished. We must continue to advocate for funding of the Florida Forever program in order to protect sensitive lands from over-development, we must advocate for State legislated aquifer and springs protection to insure the quantity and quality of our drinking water and the health of our rivers, and we must support water conservation and oppose water transfers from our water bodies to South Florida. We must also continue to improve the Blue Run of Dunnellon Park and address the impacts of recreation on the Rainbow River.



Current Blue Run river access point



Mother and baby Moorhen in river marsh grass