

Rainbow River Conservation, Inc. Spring Newsletter 2011

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.

Future Events

RRC will have its booth at **Boomtown Days** April 16th and 17th in Dunnellon. Many educational displays and brochures will be available. Our **Annual River Cleanup** is scheduled for May 14th. All members and friends of the Rainbow River are encouraged to meet at Rio Vista Park at 9 AM to organize and begin the cleanup. For a location map see our website at www.RainbowRiverConservation.com. Following the cleanup a free picnic will be held at noon at the Rio Vista Park. Those who participated last year will be phoned. New volunteers should call Jerry Rogers at 352-489-4648. This is always a great day to celebrate the Rainbow River.

Blue Run Park

Renovations to alleviate storm water runoff directly to the Rainbow River at the north end of Blue Run Park are underway. This is a Cooperative Funding Initiative promoted by RRC and funded by Marion County and the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Three retention ponds are being constructed to capture runoff from CR 484 and the Blue Run Park parking lot. It is expected that this phase of the project will be completed by May. In the meantime this parking lot and river access point are closed. The trails are still accessible through the San Jose parking lot.

While the CR 484 parking lot renovations are underway KP Hole is not allowing any tubers to enter the river. A new concessionaire under the name of Nature Quest has been selected to run the Rainbow Springs State Park tuber and kayak operation and is presently open on the weekends. After the summer season is over the Blue Run Park river access will again be closed so that the county can construct a storm water mitigating water access ramp.



Scenes from Rainbow River Cleanup 2010



Blue Run Park stormwater improvement construction

Litigation Update

Originally, the Dunnellon /Dodd Bert Harris lawsuit settlement agreement was filed under a different case number than the lawsuit itself. Judge King has now consolidated the cases and has ordered arrangement of a hearing to be conducted by the attorneys on the merits of the settlement agreement. We certainly hope that the judge will simply see that the settlement agreement is invalid because of its violation of the Dunnellon comprehensive plan and Florida Statute 163. Court filings are recorded on our website www.RainbowRiverConservation.com under Litigation Docket.

Rainbow Springs Restoration

RRC members have been participating in a stakeholders' effort to develop a Rainbow Springs restoration plan. This is a grant sponsored by the Department of Environmental Protection and administered by Normandeau Associates with Pete Colverson as the moderator. The stakeholders are developing objectives and means to address water quantity and quality, recreation, and biodiversity. The next meeting of this group is April 14th at 9 AM in the Felburn Pavilion at Rainbow Springs State Park. We encourage all concerned parties to come and participate in this important exercise.



Green Heron on reeds

Environmental regulation

The governor and the legislature are busy de-regulating the state, including environmental protections. Legislative bills have been proposed to prevent the federal EPA from imposing nutrient standards on Florida water bodies, even though two-thirds of inland water bodies are classified as impaired. Legislative bills have also been put forward to remove the statewide septic tank inspection requirement of SB 550 passed last year. However, this might be mitigated by a recent amendment to require septic tank inspections in counties where first magnitude springs are located. The paring down of the Department of Community Affairs could also have a significant adverse effect on protection of sensitive lands.



Traveling up river