

Rainbow River Conservation, Inc. Spring Newsletter 2012

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 Winter newsletter.

Blue Run Park

The storm water mitigation project at Blue Run of Dunnellon Park initiated by RRC and funded by SWFWMD and Marion County has been completed. With its new parking lot and water access ramp this park will be pivotal to river recreation and hiking. It only remains for the county to install some trail signage within the park.



New Access Ramp at Blue Run of Dunnellon Park

Upcoming Events

As usual, RRC will have an information and education booth at BOOMTOWN DAYS April 21st and 22nd. Also, the annual RIVER CLEANUP and picnic will be held May 19th at the Rio Vista Park starting at 9 AM. For a location map see our website at www.rainbowriverconservation.com. Those who participated last year will be called. New volunteers should call Jerry Rogers at 352-489-4648.

Legislation

The Florida Legislature has completed its 2012 session. The sponsor of HB 639 dropped her requirement of removing reclaimed waste water from “waters of the state”. Language from HB 999 and SB 820 was incorporated into HB 1263. This bill passed and it removes the requirement of a statewide septic tank inspection program except for counties containing first magnitude springs. County commissions may opt out of this requirement with a 60% majority vote. Bills that failed were SB 1362, which proposed to lower the boundary of sovereign waters, SB 604, which would have pre-empted local

fertilizer ordinances, and SB 958, which would have raised the permissible noise levels of airboats.

River Conditions

We are very concerned about river conditions. With the extended drought we find that the river level and flow is at an all time low. Consequently, the natural vegetation in the river, which supports all of the life in the river, is very exposed to harm. With seasonal recreation upon us, we fear that tubers, divers, and motorboats will wreak extraordinary damage to the vegetation and the ecosystem as a whole.



Rainbow River level is down 35 Percent due to extreme drought.

The scenario described above is exacerbated by excessive water withdrawals from the aquifer in the river recharge basin. Proposals abound for further development which would extract more water from the aquifer in the recharge basin. A good case in point is the Adena Springs Ranch which proposes to grass feed cattle and harvest them in a slaughterhouse on site in north Marion County. The ranch owner has requested approval from St. Johns Water Management District to withdraw 13.3 million gal/day to water the grass, more water than the daily consumption of the City of Ocala. This, if approved, will likely be the death knell of Silver Springs. It would also have a secondary adverse effect upon Rainbow Springs because such a withdrawal would shift the boundary between the Silver and Rainbow Springs recharge areas to reduce the size of the Rainbow Springs recharge area. If you find this scenario objectionable go to www.floridaswater.com and find Adena Springs Ranch consumptive use permit under District News and offer a comment.



Belted Kingfisher looking for insects on the river