



RRC continues to advocate for the protection of the Rainbow River and its environment.

**Membership Renewal**

Since our last newsletter 152 RRC members have renewed their membership. However, 96 members have not done so yet. We urge those latter members to renew their membership for 2013 by returning the attached membership form. Those receiving this newsletter by USPS mail may return the enclosed form. It is important for us to keep up our membership in order to have a strong representative voice for the protection of our beloved river. Please attend to this as soon as possible.

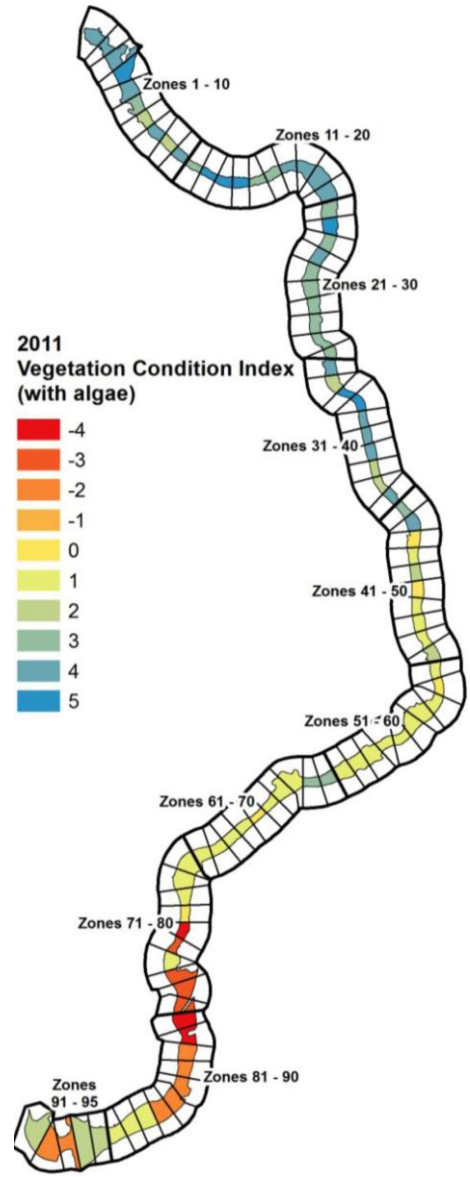
**Annual Meeting**

Our annual meeting December 1<sup>st</sup> was a great success with good attendance and lively discussion. SWFWMD Staff Environmental Scientist Mary Szafraniec presented a talk entitled “Tracking Ecological Change in the Rainbow River” wherein she noted a substantial decline in native Sagittaria and exotic Hydrilla. She attributed the decline in Hydrilla to periodic herbicide treatments. However, she attributed the decline in Sagittaria to crowding out by Lyngbya, a filamentous algae fed by high nitrates. The vegetation condition in 2011 is shown at right. This study, as well as the study reported in the next paragraph, can be found under the Education section on our website [www.RainbowRiverConservation.com](http://www.RainbowRiverConservation.com).

The second presentation entitled “Rainbow River Environmental Study” was by University of Florida Associate Professor Steve Holland and graduate student Amanda Croteau. Dr. Holland, on the basis of a one-year video study at six stations along the river, reported 16,500 paddle boats, 660 motor boats, 9000 swimmers/divers, and 84,000 tubers. Ms. Croteau, on the basis of periodic sampling of torn or uprooted aquatic vegetation at 26 transect stations along the river, concluded that most of the vegetation damage was done by motor boats traversing shallow areas, often to avoid tubers and divers.

Elections held at our meeting resulted in Jerry Rogers, Dan Rutkowski, Nathan Whitt, and Kathryn Taubert being elected to the RRC Board of Directors. The Board subsequently elected Burt Eno as President, Jerry Rogers as Vice-President, Gretchen Martin as Treasurer, and Kathryn Taubert as Secretary.

Algae Conditions on Rainbow River



Source: 2011 Rainbow River Vegetation Study - D. C. Woithe Atkins - SWFWMD

## RRC Projects

Members of RRC, under the leadership of Jerry Rogers, recently cleaned and refurbished the Wood Duck boxes on the Rainbow River. They found evidence that 47 of the 49 boxes showed signs of nesting. At the time of the refurbishing the team found three of the boxes to be housing bats. The Wood Duck project has been in existence since 1994 and some of the boxes will have to be replaced but this has been a very successful project for encouraging the Wood Duck population on the river. We should thank Greenways and Trails for supplying the boat and Aquatic Preserve Manager Jeff Sowards for captaining the boat.

RRC will have its education booth stationed at the Manatee Festival at Three Sisters Springs January 19<sup>th</sup>. Members will be seeking to have visitors sign the Water and Land Legacy petition at the festival. This is a petition for a constitutional amendment in the 2014 election cycle to dedicate 1/3 of existing doc stamp revenue to acquiring and protecting sensitive land and water resources in the state. This petition drive is the initiative of Senator Bob Graham's Conservation Coalition.



One of 49 wood duck boxes on the Rainbow

Please mark your calendars for the next Annual River Cleanup on May 18<sup>th</sup>. Each year this is a well-attended and successful event offering a picnic and good fellowship. Jerry Rogers will again head up this effort and seek volunteers.

This past September RRC commissioned a Recreational Guidelines Project recognizing the enormous amount of traffic on the Rainbow River at certain times of the year and the resulting adverse effect that this sometimes has upon the ecology of the river. RRC member Kathryn Taubert has been spearheading this project, seeking collaboration with the various authorities, commercial enterprises, property owners, and user groups to see if recreational guidelines can be developed to help protect the river. So far, in meeting with various representative parties, Ms. Taubert has found interest and enthusiasm for this effort. Stay tuned for further developments. If you would like to know more or have suggestions for this project you may email Ms. Taubert at [rrc\\_bellsouth.net](mailto:rrc_bellsouth.net) (note the underscore before @).



Kayaking on the Rainbow River yields many wildlife viewing opportunities

## Rainbow River Ranch

In our Fall Newsletter we reported that the City of Dunnellon and the Department of Economic Opportunity had signed a settlement agreement with the Rainbow River Ranch developer. As we pointed out there are many egregious environmental, economic and legal problems with this agreement and RRC remains opposed to this settlement. Just a month ago the RRR attorney notified the court that they would be filing this agreement seeking judgment in their favor. RRC has no choice but to stand by its convictions and go to court in opposition. This will take a considerable amount of money and we are appealing to you to make a tax deductible donation to RRC to help defray the expense of this effort. Please send donations to Rainbow River Conservation, P.O. Box 729, Dunnellon, FL 34430.

Rainbow River Conservation Inc., P.O. 729 Dunnellon, FL 34430