

# Rainbow River Conservation, Inc. Summer Newsletter 2018

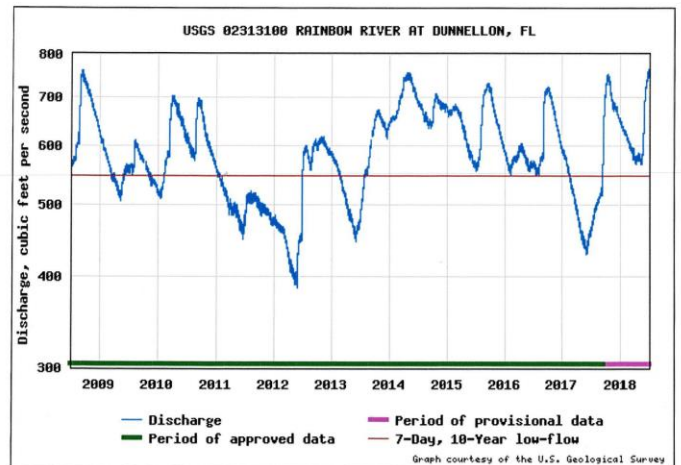


## Recent Events

RRC participated in the Dunnellon Boomtown event April 14<sup>th</sup> with its education booth. On May 19<sup>th</sup> RRC held its Annual River Cleanup. In spite of the threat of rain about 100 participants scoured the river for trash and had a picnic afterward. County Commissioner Kathy Bryant was on hand to cruise the river and to hand out prizes. A good thing is that less trash is being found in the river.

## River Conditions

Rain replenishes the aquifer and results in a higher spring flow and river velocity. This helps to cleanse the river and wash away some of the algae caused by excessive nitrates deposited in the Rainbow River recharge basin. Last spring a rainy period started and raised the river flow from about 425 cfs to 520 cfs when Hurricane Irma passed through the basin. In a matter of several days it boosted the flow to 750 cfs. Over the next six months the winter dry period set in and the flow dropped to about 570 cfs. In the last couple of months we have had an abundance of rain and the river flow has rapidly climbed to about 765 cfs, the highest peak in ten years. This too is a good thing.



Rainbow Springs flow over time in cubic feet per second

## Rainbow River Assessment Program

Bill Vibbert continues to lead the river assessment program, each month measuring various water condition parameters as well as wildlife presence and sending this information to the Florida Springs Institute for analysis. On June 2<sup>nd</sup> Bill and several members of his team attended a workshop at the Institute in High Springs where they received instruction and certification in use of meters to measure dissolved oxygen, conductivity, and light in the water.

## Blue Run Park

Dunnellon's second application for FRDAP funding of the Blue Run Park bathroom was turned down, causing another delay in building a much needed facility for the tuber season.



RRC members learn water testing at Florida Springs Institute

However, County Parks & Recreation Director Jim Couillard has found that such an infrastructure can be funded in part by a HUD grant. Jim is hopeful of being able to garner that grant money and, with funds already committed by Marion County, construction on the bathroom facility can start in September.

### **Rainbow River Ranch**

After 112 acres, with a ½ mile river frontage, of the Rainbow River Ranch was sold to SWFWMD and another 57 acres, with a ½ mile of river frontage, was sold to Jim Gissy, Jerry Dodd has left 11 acres, with 600 feet river frontage, and 80 acres upland abutting Hendrix Drive and CR 484. He has now presented a plan to the City of Dunnellon to split the 11 acres into two home sites with septic tanks and to change the land use of the 80 acres from AG (1 unit/10 acres) to MDR with R-3 zoning (3 units/acre). This 240 home sites proposal will have an impact on the environment of the Rainbow River as well as a heavy impact on infrastructure, including schools, traffic, and fire/rescue. The City Council has approved this plan and intends to file to the state for a Comprehensive Plan amendment to accommodate it.

### **Basin Management Action Plan**

On June 29<sup>th</sup> the FDEP adopted 13 BMAPs to affect 24 Outstanding Florida Springs, one of them being the Silver/Rainbow BMAP. In 2015 FDEP had adopted a BMAP for the Rainbow alone with the stated goal of reducing nitrate levels in the Rainbow River by 30% in the first 5 years. Well, three years went by and nitrates continued to climb to 2.6 mg/L. Now we have a re-start with the same goals, an 82% nitrate reduction in 20 years. The trouble here is that there are no teeth in the BMAPs. They rely mainly on voluntary compliance with nitrate reduction goals. For instance, in the Rainbow recharge basin agricultural practices contribute 54% of the nitrates and voluntary Best Management Practices (BMPs) are the only management tool. This is our most serious environmental problem and the state is using a fly swatter to attack the elephant in the room.



Reducing nitrates will allow these baby Limpkins to continue to flourish in the Rainbow River

### **Rainbow River Minimum Flow Rule**

As previously discussed SWFWMD, under a legislative mandate, adopted an emergency minimum flow rule for the Rainbow River one year ago. This was supposed to be replaced within 120 days with a permanent minimum flow rule but, to date, this has not been done. The emergency rule is deeply flawed and, in reality, places no practical limit on the minimum flow of the river, thus no limit on withdrawals from the river recharge basin in support uncontrolled development. Requests for action have fallen on deaf ears as the District lawyers continue to stonewall and ignore the problem.

### **Support Donations for Rainbow River Conservation**

RRC is a non-profit corporation and relies for funding on memberships and donations. Please note that RRC is a Guidestar Gold Recipient and is registered on Network for Good, Great Nonprofits, and AmazonSmile. You may make donations on [www.networkforgood.org/donate](http://www.networkforgood.org/donate) or one of their partner websites such as Facebook and GreatNonprofits at Rainbow River Conservation, Inc. You can also make donations through AmazonSmile by buying products at [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) and specifying your charity as Rainbow River Conservation. An Amazon sheet of instructions link is included on our home page at [www.rainbowriverconservation.com](http://www.rainbowriverconservation.com). You may, of course, send a check to RRC at the address on the bottom of this page. Thank you for your support.