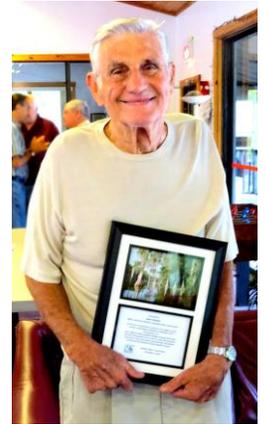


Rainbow River Conservation, Inc. Winter Newsletter 2015

RRC continues to work for the protection of the Rainbow River and its environment.
Mark your calendars, the next River Cleanup is scheduled for May 16th.

Annual Members Meeting

There was a good turnout for the RRC annual meeting December 6th. Nathan Whitt, Ann Coyne, Roger Barth, Gretchen Martin, and Bill Vibbert were elected to the Board of Directors. Officers elected for 2015 are President Burt Eno, Vice-President Jerry Rogers, Treasurer Gretchen Martin, and Secretary Karen Contrera. Jack Dennis was honored and presented with a plaque for his 30 years of RRC Board service.



Jack Dennis

President Eno gave a review of RRC activities and accomplishments in the year 2014. Sky Notestein, SWFWMD Senior Environmental Scientist, gave a very



Sky Notestein

informative talk on SWFWMD's "Rainbow Springs Protection Initiative" which is part of a 5-year vision for improving springs through research, education, restoration, conservation, land acquisition, and establishment of minimum flows and levels. Terry Hansen, FDEP hydrogeologist, presented the Basin Management Action Plan for reducing Rainbow Springs nitrate pollution. He listed the sources of nitrates in the springs basin and emphasized the need for stakeholder cooperation in reducing the level of nitrates by 82%. The power point presentations of these talks are included on www.RainbowRiverConservation.com.

Projects and Events

On December 4th and 5th Jerry Rogers, Dan Rutkowski, Roger Barth, and Aquatic Preserve Manager Jeff Sowards refurbished the 50 Wood Duck boxes along the Rainbow River and found 47 of them had egg shells in them representing a 94% productivity. RRC's Education Committee is working on its proposed grant program to support field trips for local schools to perform science studies in the Rainbow River basin.



Wood duck family

Springs Legislation



Senator Dean at Dunnellon Trail Dedication

Last year the Florida Senate Bill entitled “Springs and Aquifer Protection Act” failed for lack of a House companion bill. This year, however, Senator Charlie Dean intends to re-file his bill and expects a companion House bill to be filed. We should do everything we can to influence passage of these bills. Also, Constitutional Amendment #1, commonly referred to as the Water and Land Conservation Amendment, was passed by an overwhelming ratio of 3 to 1 in November. This provides that 1/3 of real estate document stamp taxes will be earmarked for water and land conservation, a great potential boon for funding of springs and aquifer protection. We just need to watch what the legislature does in terms of appropriating this money to the right causes.

Blue Run Park Trail Spur

Last spring the 2.5 mile trail extension across the Withlacoochee River opened for bike and hike use. It is expected that this trail will soon be connected at its southern end to the Withlacoochee State Trail in Citrus County and at its eastern end to the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway. Last month the City of Dunnellon completed a paved trail spur parallel to the Rainbow River between the Withlacoochee trail extension and the Blue Run Park parking lot on CR 484. This fulfills part of the vision RRC had when planning the acquisition and development of this park. Many recreationists are now enjoying this trail spur.



Enjoying the trail in Blue Run Park

Rainbow River Ranch

RRC’s intervention in the egregious lawsuit settlement between the City of Dunnellon and the Rainbow River Ranch developer has been slowly grinding its way through the litigation process. Recently, Judge Rogers denied our motion for an evidentiary hearing without comment. This would seem to mean that he can make a decision about acceptance or rejection of the settlement agreement without further evidence provided by the intervenors. However, at the first of this year, the case was reassigned to Judge Lisa Herndon. We don’t know what impact this will have upon the case at this point so we will just have to wait and see. Meanwhile, Dunnellon Councilman Dennis Evans continues to advocate for the settlement agreement by attempting to change the city’s Comprehensive Plan and River Corridor Protection Ordinance to comply with the developer’s plan. RRC representatives have been vigorously arguing the impropriety of Councilman Evan’s activity.

Membership

We are lacking a number of membership renewals for 2015. If you have not yet paid your membership dues please use the attached membership renewal form and return it with your dues to the address indicated. When advocating for protection of the river member numbers count.



Spider Lily