

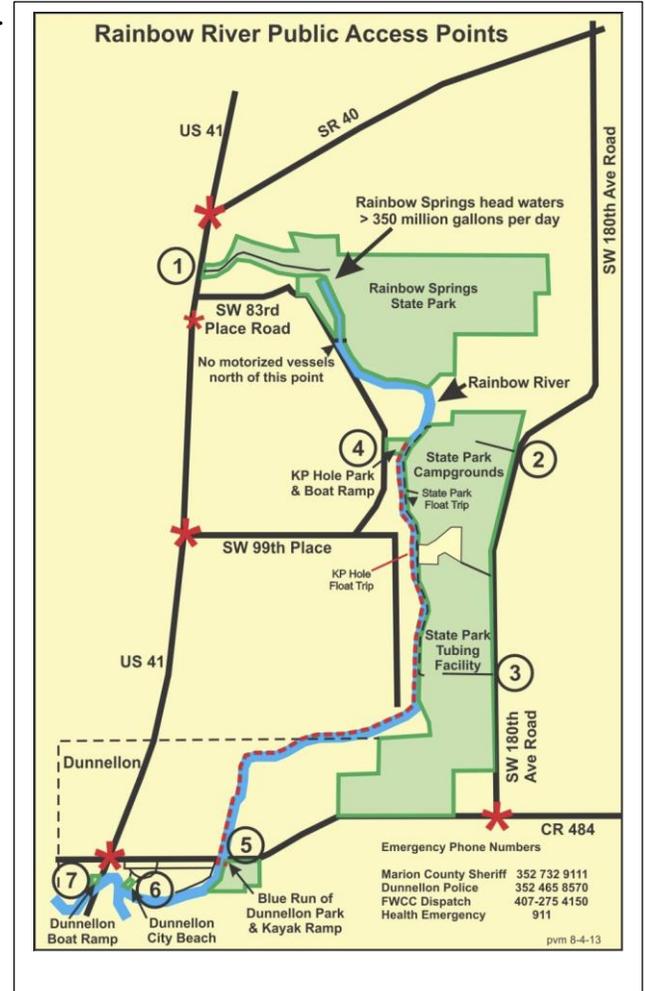


Enjoying Diving on the Rainbow



The Rainbow River is a first-magnitude, spring-fed river, designated by the State of Florida as an Outstanding Florida Waterway and Aquatic Preserve. Recreational users should access the river only from one of the 7 public access points shown in the map below. Because of the river's popularity, it is important that visitors follow proper etiquette so that all can have an enjoyable visitor experience and the resource will be preserved for generations to come.

- The main head springs are protected. Motorized vessels, anchoring, diving and fishing are not permitted upstream of the sign at the Rainbow Springs State Park southern boundary, which is the first 1700 feet of the spring run.
- Avoid entanglement and standing in vegetation in or adjacent to the river, barefoot or with fins. Destruction of the grasses will result in loss of food sources for wading birds and other aquatic creatures, some of which are federally protected and feed only in areas like the Rainbow River. Destroying native vegetation also encourages growth of destructive, invasive plants, and can make the water unhealthy for recreation.
- Taking any type of alcohol or disposables on the Rainbow River is prohibited by law. Acceptable containers include Tupperware, Rubbermaid or a thermos. Unlawful containers include: paper sacks, boxes, breakable plastic utensils, paper napkins and towels.



- Boats should only drop divers off in rock-bottomed areas, because the divers tend to stand on the bottom while waiting for the rest of their group to enter the water.
- It is your responsibility to abide by the laws of Florida waters, including the Rainbow and Withlacoochee Rivers. All laws are enforced by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), the Marion County Sheriff's Department and the Dunnellon Police Department. <http://myfwc.com/boating/regulations/#nogo>
- Do not dig up or remove any object from the river bottom unless you are properly authorized to do so, either by the State of Florida, or as a volunteer of the annual Rainbow River Conservation, Inc. River Clean-up Day in May.

Enjoying Diving on the Rainbow

Keeping the Rainbow River Healthy and Beautiful

- Do not collect or harass wildlife or their eggs, or feed and harass alligators, all of which are against state law. Turtle poaching is prohibited. Don't remove or cut vegetation without proper permits.
- Divers are required by law to use a Diver-Down flag no smaller than 12 by 12 inches while diving in any body of water within the State of Florida.
- All dive groups are required to stay within 100 feet of a dive flag while in the river. Flags should be removed when all divers/snorkelers are out of the water.
- Consider your tolerance for cold before entering the water. Even on a warm day, the Rainbow River's constant 72° F temperature is still more than 26 degrees below body temperature. Heat is conducted away from the body at a rate 25 times faster in water than air. Bring a non-disposable thermos with a hot, non-alcoholic beverage to warm your "core temperature" if you get cold.
- Wear your dive whistle should you require assistance or surface too near other river traffic. Use it only in case of emergency.
- Keep float lines taut in the rapidly changing river depths to avoid entanglement in vegetation, root systems and submerged branches.
- Groups of divers should always attempt to stay in line with the river, not across it. Spreading out makes it difficult for boats to avoid divers and may force boats to enter shallow, grassy areas, causing prop damage to plant life found.



Stay within 100 feet of a dive flag, closer is better



Divers lined up laterally across the river can make it difficult for boat traffic to safely pass

- Maintain adequate buoyancy to avoid entanglement and destruction of native vegetation, which are natural filters for the river. Swimming through or standing in aquatic plants can tear them out, stir up sand deposits and silt on the plants, blocking out sunlight and hindering their growth. Avoid kicking up silt or standing in the vegetation which is easily uprooted or torn.
- Exercise caution in surfacing since boaters may be unable to readily avoid you without backing into and destroying native vegetation with motor props. Raise your hand over your head when ascending to the surface. Descend below the approaching boat's motor to avoid getting hit by the prop. If the water is too shallow, swim to the side and/or raise your hand to avoid getting your head injured.
- All diving gear should be free of any aquatic plants prior to entering or leaving the Rainbow River. Introductions of non-native, invasive aquatic plants can lead to the restriction of recreational activities such as boating, swimming and fishing.