



Rainbow River Conservation, Inc.

Winter 2024 Newsletter

The dogwoods and redbuds are blooming, hopefully Spring is right around the corner!

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING Our Annual Membership Meeting on Dec. 2nd, 2023 was a great success. Put Dec. 14th, 2024 on your calendar for our next Annual Meeting. We will announce our program when we are closer to that date. Speaking of meetings, our monthly Board meetings are open to all members as well as the public. The meeting is on the third Monday of each month beginning at 7:00pm at the Rainbow Springs Community Center 19330 SW 83rd Place, Dunnellon. Please join us!

PROPOSED SAND MINE A sand mine was proposed in Levy County to be 400 acres with a depth just 3 feet above the water table. This large sand mine was approved by SWFWMD. It is within the Rainbow Springs water shed area. RRC members sent letters and emails to the Levy County Commission to voice our objection to this mine. Five RRC Board members attended the meeting on Feb. 6, 2024, but no one was allowed to speak. The Commissioners approved the sand mine with 22 restrictions including only allowing 20 acres to be mined and restricting the time and hours of operation. We understand lawsuits are forthcoming from other opponents to the mine.

FSI SPRINGS WATCH PROGRAM Over 550 participants took part in the 7.2K run in Gainesville on a beautiful sunny day in February to raise money for the Florida Springs Institute's Springs Watch Program. Rainbow River Conservation proudly took part in the sponsorship of this event. It was a wonderful experience that brought together springs enthusiasts of all ages for some exercise, beer, music and fundraising.

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LAW ENFORCEMENT ON THE RIVER RRC and Rainbow River residents have become concerned about the lack of enforcement of the river rules on the Rainbow. At the present there is one officer assigned to the river for a 4-hour shift on Saturday and Sunday beginning with Memorial Day and going to Labor Day. This is a volunteer deputy that is paid for by Marion County, not the sheriff's department. The rest of the year there is no deputy assigned to patrol the river. This has become unacceptable. In the past there was a deputy on the river for 40 hours a week. The sheriff has said he cannot help with an increase in river patrol.

RRC is considering hiring a deputy to patrol the river at a cost of \$65 an hour. The board has agreed to go forward with this if a solution is not reached before summer.

SPRINGS PROTECTION ZONE Rainbow River Protection Zone Project has been ongoing and is in a committee in Tallahassee. We are waiting for approval by them, so the request for \$250,000 for the Vessel and Shorelines Impact Study. We hope this will be approved this year.

House Bill 1641 and Senate Bill 1126 would have eliminated all of the laws in the state that pertain to the disposable containers on the rivers. It would eliminate the ability of local officials to create laws specific to their situations. The state would have control over such laws and be able to write one law that would cover the whole state.

RRC asked our members to write emails and letters to the state legislatures opposing these two bills. With the help of Dennis and Susan Jones the Senate Bill was dropped. These two bills are dead for this year but we must watch out for next year. Be watching for announcements regarding future bills of this nature. We appreciate our members backing our opposition.

T-SHIRT DESIGN RRC is looking for a new T-shirt design for the back of our shirts. We are not changing our logo on the front just the back design. We have had seven designs on the T-shirts since we started our T-shirts in 1990. If any of our members would like to have their design on our shirts please contact president Jerry Rogers at 352-229- 1432. The designs should be related to the Rainbow River. Please help us out!

Boomtown days festival is coming up on April 13th, 2024. Come by and see our booth!

River cleanup is Saturday May 18th, 2024. Please put this date on your calendar, we can use your help.

We have had a request for a lifetime membership at the price of \$1000. The board agreed so we are offering this as an option for those who would to do so.

We have had a great response to members paying their 2024 dues, but we have had a few members who still have not paid. If this is you an application is enclosed.