

Rainbow River Corridor

Partnerships & Regional Incentives

Citrus, Marion

| | |
|---|--------------|
| <i>Year Added to Priority List</i> | 2007 |
| <i>Project Acres</i> | 1,231 |
| <i>Acquired Acres</i> | 172 |
| <i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i> | \$2,926,164 |
| <i>Remaining Project Acres</i> | 1,059 |
| <i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i> | \$10,102,141 |

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Rainbow River Corridor project will protect most of the undeveloped or minimally developed private land remaining along the Rainbow River. The southern parcels will preserve a remaining large portion of undeveloped shoreline along the eastern side of the river and provide a connection to the southern end of the Rainbow Springs State Park. In addition, the potential restoration of altered habitats would help restore and maintain water quality and habitat along one of Florida's largest spring-run streams. This project will increase biodiversity protection by conserving 916 acres of rare species habitat, preserving landscape linkages and conservation corridors by preserving 1,062 acres of ecological greenways, protecting surface waters of the state by preserving 1,154 acres that provide surface-water protection, preserving aquifer recharge areas, and by increasing natural-resource based recreation opportunities by filling several land gaps between sections of the Rainbow River State Park.

General Description

The Rainbow River, a large spring-run stream, is a state-designated Aquatic Preserve and Outstanding Florida Water that runs southward for approximately six miles before entering the Withlacoochee River at Dunnellon. The State Park encompasses the headwaters, with a first magnitude spring considered Florida's fourth largest, as well as much of the eastern side of the northern 60 percent of the river. This river is one of the longest spring runs in the world and represents a rare and unique natural resource worldwide. The Marjorie Harris Cross Florida Greenway State Recreation and Conservation Area adjoins a short stretch of the river at Dunnellon, then extends eastward to include a 3/4-mile common boundary inland with the state park; it also includes a tract on the western side of the river but with only two very narrow connections with the river itself. Two of the main goals of acquiring these land parcels are to fill the gaps in existing public lands, Rainbow Springs State Park (RSSP) and Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway (CFG), that are adjacent to the proposed properties and to provide added protection to this river and the ecosystem that it supports. It would connect the current northern and southern parcels of the park. The proposed acquisitions would provide a more contiguous system of natural areas

by creating an intact corridor between conservation lands. It would also provide added protection for the river by safeguarding the remaining undeveloped lands in the already significantly altered waterway.

The Rainbow River Corridor (RRC) encompasses several disjunct tracts lying to the north of as well as along both eastern and western sides of the river. Nearly all tracts (but not necessarily all ownerships) are contiguous with public lands. The Headwaters Property Group (370 acres) lies north of the river and runs from the state park to SR 40. The Indian Creek Property Group (193 acres), which lies along the eastern side of the river and includes about 1,264 feet of river frontage, shares its northern and southern boundaries with the state park. The Meredith Property (63 acres) is a split parcel with a small tract along the eastern side of the river (ca. 1849 feet frontage) that is surrounded by the state park. The larger tract to the west of the river is isolated from the water. The Rainbow River Ranch Property (ca. 247 acres) is north of SR 484 with 5390 feet of frontage along the eastern side of the Rainbow River. The Greenberg Property (89 acres) has ca. 3,298 feet of frontage along the western side of the river, north of Dunnellon. The Blue Run of Dunnellon Property (24 acres) is on the southern side of SR 484, east of the river across from Dunnellon, and has ca. 1,322 feet of river frontage. The Nature Preserves of America property (47 acres) is at the confluence of the Rainbow and Withlacoochee rivers, with the Rainbow River forming ca. 2,813 feet of its northern boundary, and the Withlacoochee River forming ca. 3,409 feet of its southern boundary. The FWC has calculated the river frontage as encompassing 15,935 feet.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

| FNAI Elements | Score |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Gopher tortoise | G3/S3 |
| Eastern diamondback rattlesnake | G3/S3 |

Public Use

Much of this is identified for full-fee acquisition adjacent to the park, which will mean that public access will be provided across the acquired parcel for varied natural resource recreation currently offered within the park, along with water-based recreation. Potential recreation would include hiking, biking, and picnicking. The river frontage could be used as a rest stop for canoeists, kayakers and tubers. The southern triangular 47-acre parcel is heavily forested and has several wetland areas. This property is currently used as the Rainbow River Club and includes several buildings including a clubhouse, cabins for lodging, and boating and cookout facilities. The acquisition and use of the facilities could be continued as park lodging, administration, park residence and low impact recreation such as hiking, birdwatching, kayaking and education if the membership of the current club is dissolved. The northwest, 374-acre parcel would help protect the headsprings recharge area and could provide a suitable site for future park development. The 110-acre Priest parcel is a wetland area and would be limited to passive activities such as hiking, bird watching and kayaking.



Acquisition Planning

2007

On June 15, 2007, the ARC added the Rainbow River Corridor project to the A-list of the Florida Forever Priority List. This full-fee project was sponsored by the Rainbow River Conservation, incorporated as RRC, Inc. in a proposal submitted on December 30, 2006. It has about 1,183 acres and an assessed taxable value of \$1,157,483.

2008

On March 28, 2008, the City of Dunnellon acquired 32.4 acres of this project for a riverside park on the south side of Highway 484 (the Cunningham/Nelson Tuber Exit Property). Funds came from the City (\$320,000) and a grant from the Florida Communities Trust (\$2,606,164). The city manages this site.

2011

On December 9, 2011, the ARC placed this project in the Partnerships and Regional Incentives category in the Florida Forever list.

2017

In calendar year 2017, a total of 5.09 acres in this project were acquired fee-simple using Florida Forever program funding.

2021

On June 11, 2021, the ARC approved an addition of 47.78 acres in Marion County to the project boundary.

Coordination

Rainbow River Conservation Inc. worked with the TPL and submitted the application to FCT for acquiring the Cunningham/Nelson Tuber Exit Property. DSL has been pursuing a portion of this area that is within the park optimum boundary, on behalf of DRP.

Management Policy Statement

DRP will manage its property under a single-use concept as part of Rainbow River State Park. and under the single-use concept as part of the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway. The primary objective of management of the Rainbow River project is to preserve the water quality of the Rainbow and Withlacoochee Rivers and Rainbow Springs by protecting the land above the underground conduits that supply the spring and providing and ensuring that the resource-based outdoor recreational opportunities of the park will continue to be enjoyed by the public. Precluding major residential and commercial development along the river will assist efforts to preserve water quality, as well as wildlife habitat in this fast-developing region.

Manager(s)

The property is proposed to be managed DRP. DRP notes that much of this is a full-fee acquisition adjacent to the park, which will mean that public access will be provided across the acquired parcel for varied natural resource recreation currently offered within the park, along with water-based recreation.



Management Prospectus

Qualifications for state designation

The project will be included in the management of the Rainbow River State Park. The site can be used for a variety of compatible resource-based outdoor recreational activities. As a part of the Rainbow River State Park, hunting would not be permitted. Public use of the cabins and recreational facility on the southern parcel may be continued. The site can be utilized for a variety of compatible resource-based outdoor recreational activities. As a part of the Greenway, hunting would not be permitted.

Conditions affecting intensity of management

The Rainbow River project will be a high-need management area with emphasis on perpetuation of the property's resources, particularly as related to the Withlacoochee and Rainbow Rivers, the springs of the Rainbow River, and compatible resource-based recreation. An evaluation of the condition of existing structures will need to be completed. OGT portion of the Rainbow River project will emphasize perpetuation of the property's resources, particularly the Withlacoochee and Rainbow Rivers, the springs of the Rainbow River, and compatible resource-based recreation. Both managing agencies will need an evaluation of the condition of existing structures. Public use of existing structures, such as those existing on the southern parcel, and the addition of any other infrastructure for the lands added to the park will increase the intensity of management. Restoration would require an intensity of management as dictated by study of the site.

Management implementation, Public access, Site security and Protection of infrastructure

Vehicular access by the public will be confined to designated points and routes. Emphasis will be given to the protection of water quality of adjacent rivers and springs. Resource management activities in the first year of each fee title acquisition will concentrate on site security and development of a resource inventory. Long-term management may include a wide range of resource-based recreation and associated facilities. The integration of appropriate public uses will create a recreational linkage between the State Park and land managed by the Office of Greenway and Trails.

Revenue-generating potential

DRP expects no significant revenue from this property immediately after fee title acquisition, and the amount of future revenue will depend on the nature and extent of public use and the facilities existing or developed in the future.

Cooperators in management activities

DRP will, as appropriate, cooperate with local governments, other state agencies, and the water management district to further resource management, recreational and educational opportunities, and the development of the lands for state park and for Greenway purposes.

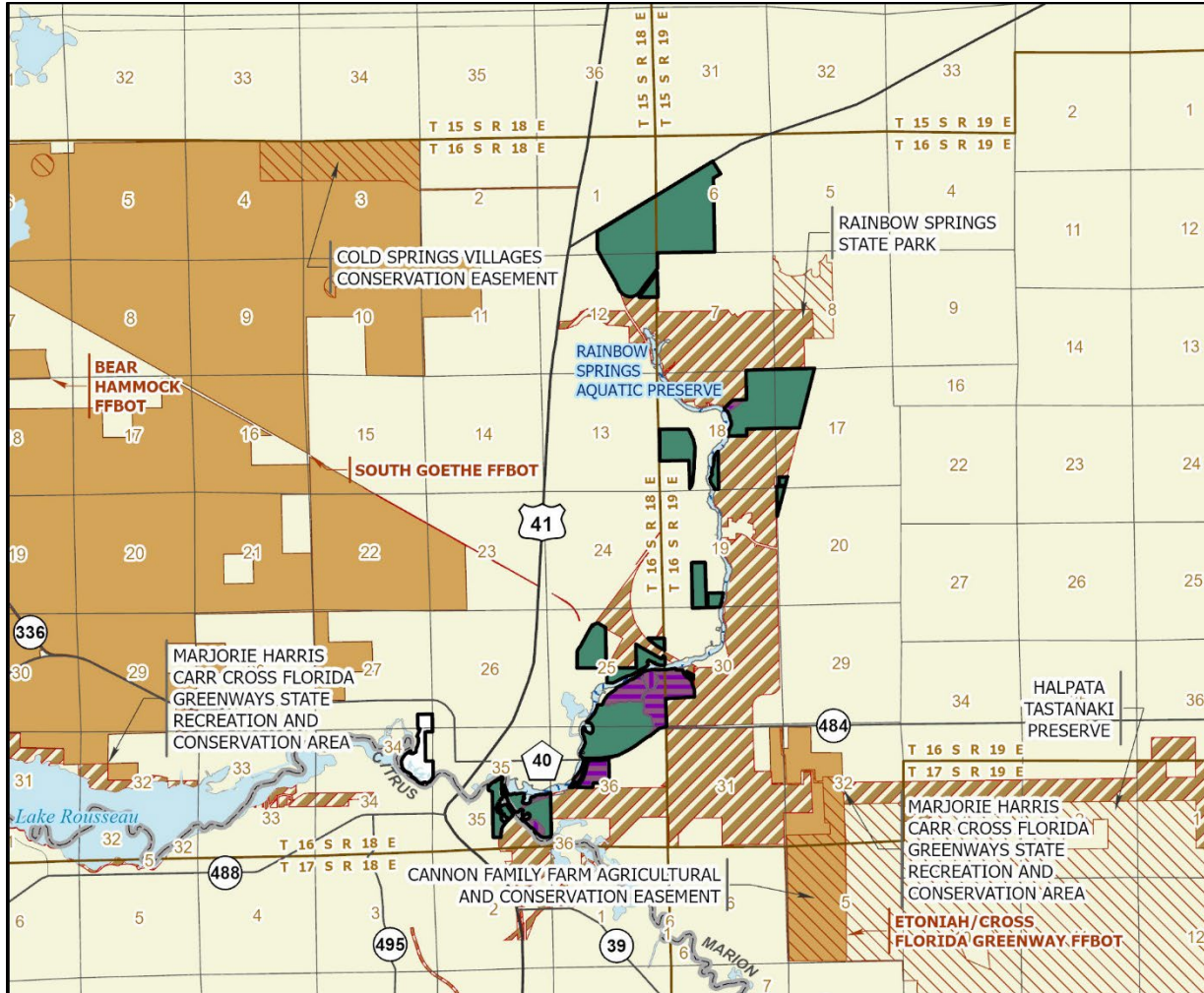


Management Cost Summary

| <u>DRP</u> | <u>Startup</u> | <u>Recurring</u> |
|------------|----------------|------------------|
| Salary | \$0 | not provided |
| OPS | \$45,000 | not provided |
| Expense | \$10,000 | not provided |
| OCO | \$46,000 | not provided |
| FCO | \$10,000 | not provided |
| TOTAL | \$111,000 | not provided |

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted by DRP and OGT

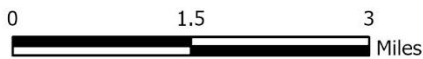




RAINBOW RIVER CORRIDOR

CITRUS AND MARION COUNTIES

-  Florida Forever BOT Project Boundary
-  Acquired for Conservation (Fee Simple)
-  Acquired for Conservation (Less-Than-Fee)
-  Essential Parcel(s) Remaining
-  State Owned Conservation Lands
-  Other Conservation Lands
-  Other Florida Forever BOT Projects
-  State Aquatic Preserve



FEBRUARY 2022

Map 1: FNAI, February 2022