

Addendum 2—Advisory Group Members and Report

**Rainbow Springs State Park
Advisory Group Members and Report**

Dale Burns
Mayor
City of Dunnellon

Kathy Bryant
Commissioner
Marion County BOCC

Anne Bishop
Administrator
Marion County Soil and Water

Larry Steed
Park Manager
Rainbow Springs State Park

Michael Edwards
Senior Forester
Florida Forest Service

Tom Matthews
Public Access Planner
FWC Northeast

Robby Creech
Captain
FWC Northeast Law Enforcement

Samantha Cobble
Biologist
FWC Northeast

Cyndi Gates
Senior Land Management Specialist
SWFWMD

Jeff Sowards
Manager
Rainbow Springs Aquatic Preserve

Jason O'Donoghue
Archaeologist
Division of Historical Resources

Bob and Sue Holloway
Adjacent Property Owner

Omer and Terry Blaes
Adjacent Property Owner

Nancy Browall
Adjacent Property Owner

Marty Schwartz
President
Marion County Audubon Society

Jeff Glen
Director
Florida Trail Association-Sandhill

Jim Couillard
Director
Marion County Parks and Recreation

Burt Eno
President
Rainbow River Conservation Inc.

Loretta Shaffer
Director
Marion County Tourism

Joanne Black
President
Dunnellon Chamber of Commerce

Connie Santoro
President
Friends of Rainbow Springs

Athena Phillips
President
Florida Native Plant-Citrus

Chris Spontak
President
Marion County Aquaholics Paddlers

Rainbow Springs State Park Advisory Group Members and Report

The Advisory Group meeting to review the proposed unit management plan (UMP) for Rainbow Springs State Park was held virtually via Microsoft Teams Meeting on Wednesday August 18, 2021 at 9:00 AM.

Daniel Dickson represented FWC Law Enforcement, Trisha Green represented Rainbow Springs Aquatic Preserve, Greg Wiley represented Marion County Parks and Recreation, Sky Wheeler represented Marion County Tourism, and Peter Baranowicz attended with Chris Spontak to represent Marion County Aquaholics Paddlers. Appointed members unable to attend included Dale Burns, Kathy Bryant, Michael Edwards, Bob and Sue Holloway, Omer and Terry Blaes, Nancy Browall, Marty Schwartz, Sarah Younger, Jeff Glen, Jim Couillard, Robby Creech, Joanne Black, and Connie Santoro.

Attending Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) staff members from the park, district office, and the Office of Park Planning were Larry Steed, Tina Miller, Anne Barkdoll, Dan Pearson, Clif Maxwell, Kim Tennille, Daniel Alsentzer, Preston Early, Yasmine Armaghani, and Joel Allbritton.

Mr. Allbritton began the meeting by calling roll for members and attendees, explaining the purpose of the advisory group, and thanking advisory group members for their time and participation in the meeting. Mr. Allbritton then asked each member of the advisory group to express their comments on the draft management plans. After all the comments were shared, Mr. Allbritton described the next steps for drafting the plans and the meeting was adjourned.

Summary of Advisory Group Comments

Anne Bishop (Marion County Soil and Water) began the meeting by stating that the plan was very detailed and that she didn't have any comments at this time.

Tom Matthews (FWC Northeast) stated that we need to consider wildlife disturbance in all of the various forms when developing new public access opportunities or doing any other management other than habitat management.

Daniel Dickson (FWC Northeast Law Enforcement) commented that they have no comment or issue with the management plan.

Cyndi Gates (SWFWMD) commented on and explained the details of the restoration activities that are being conducted on Rainbow River Ranch. Mrs. Gates noted a few typos in the abbreviations of the Southwest Florida Water Management District in the document and asked for clarification of exotic goals and surveys. Mrs. Gates commented that the lease with SWFWMD is not listed in the Acquisition History and discussed the missing parcel from the management plan maps that needs to be included. Joel Allbritton responded to the missing parcel question and detailed that there is an ongoing lease amendment with SWFWMD to amend that parcel into the park boundary. Anne Barkdoll then commented on and addressed the questions concerning the exotic goals and surveys.

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Trisha Green (Rainbow Springs Aquatic Preserve) read through an email from Jeff Sowards the aquatic preserve manager detailing his comments on the plan. These comments included editorial and formatting issues as well as updated species names for the vermiculated sailfin catfish and status descriptions for the glass bottom boats. Mrs. Green relayed Mr. Sowards concerns about the proposed paddle craft drop-off and issues with access and stormwater due to two way vehicular traffic. Anne Barkdoll clarified that the proposal for a paddle craft drop-off was for pedestrian use only by either carrying or using a portage cart to get vessels from the drop-off location to the launch area. Mrs. Green noted that she would relay the responses to the questions and comments to Jeff Sowards.

Jason O'Donoghue (Historical Resources) stated that overall the plan looks pretty good and that the goals and objectives in regards to historical resources were good and achievable. Mr. O'Donoghue expressed his concerns in regards to discrepancies in the listing of resources in the plan and the resources that the Florida Master Site File show for the park. Mr. O'Donoghue stated that he would compile a list of the discrepancies and send them to Joel Allbritton for making the edits. Mr. O'Donoghue also stated that DHR would like to see all of the sites be visited on an annual or biannual basis.

Greg Wiley (Marion County Parks and Recreation) stated that he did not have any comments on the plan but asked if there was anything in the plan about a connection to the Cross Florida Greenway. Joel Allbritton explained that there was not anything in the plan currently that talked about a connection but that the idea would be looked into more. Mr. Wiley expressed his support of a connection to the Cross Florida Greenway and that it could connect the park to Dunnellon via a pedestrian bridge that the county is currently working on.

Sky Wheeler (Marion County Tourism) commented that the plan was a very nice plan and well put together but that she had not received any comments from Loretta Shaffer to relay to the group.

Athena Phillips (Florida Native Plant Society) commented that this is one of the most thorough plans that she has seen. Mrs. Phillips asked about the upland forest and upland mixed woodlands natural communities management and why they were mentioned so briefly and not on the natural communities map. Mrs. Phillips asked about cogon grass treatments along the roadside of the Griffiths addition and partnerships with other agencies on exotic treatments. Mrs. Phillips asked whether fertilizers or irrigation were used in the ornamental gardens near the headspring. Anne Barkdoll responded that the upland mixed woodlands and upland forest are on the natural communities map but that they are such a small area that it is very hard to see on the map but that she would revisit the area and make changes as necessary. Anne Barkdoll then detailed the cogon grass treatments, partnerships with other agencies on treatments, funding sources that the park receives for exotic treatments, and that there are no fertilizers used in the gardens. Joel Allbritton read a message from Tina Miller in the chat that said that no fertilizers or irrigation are used in the gardens.

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Chris Spontak (Marion County Aquaholics) deferred his comments to another member of the group Pete Baranowicz whom he said has more knowledge of state parks. Mr. Baranowicz stated that he did not have time to read the entire management plan but that he was able to read about half of the document. Mr. Baranowicz expressed his concerns about the proposed paddle craft drop-off and issues with access and stormwater due to two way vehicular traffic. Mr. Baranowicz commented that we should look at the system that Juniper Springs uses for the portage of vessels to the water via a portage cart. Joel Allbritton clarified that the proposal for a paddle craft drop-off was for pedestrian use only by either carrying or using a portage cart to get vessels from the drop-off location to the launch area.

Samantha Cobble (FWC Northeast Biologist) detailed the line transect distance sampling survey for gopher tortoises that was conducted in 2018. Mrs. Cobble commented on the restoration efforts of removing sandpine and planting longleaf pine and how important this is to the gopher tortoise.

Larry Steed (Park Manager) discussed the paddle craft proposal and the potential to alter the route to not use the emergency access road but instead use the newly installed sidewalk that runs by the new bathhouse.

Burt Eno (Rainbow River Conservation Inc) commented that the water quality and quantity discussions and references are old and outdated. Mr. Eno stated that the Atkins report from 2012 states 18% loss in flow, but actual loss is more significant than that. Mr. Eno commented that the referenced SWFWMD MFLs are flawed as they state the withdrawal of water is only affecting the flows by 2%. Mr. Eno discussed the DOAH judge and Lawsuits between SWFWMD and RRC. Mr. Eno also commented that water decline has been 20% or more in last 20-25 years and discussed inadequacies of BMAP and need for more accurate analyses. Mr. Eno commented that RCC is not getting cooperation from DEP or SWFWMD on correcting problems on Rainbow River. Mr. Eno discussed the recreational study on Rainbow River from 2012 and how it is old and outdated as well as how recreation on the Rainbow River is causing significant effects to the river and its health via turbidity and extensive algae growth. Mr. Eno stated that RCC does not want increased recreational use on the river until we can get a handle on the issues he brought forward. Anne Barkdoll and Dan Pearson commented that we will be reviewing and updating the hydrological sections and the references to old reports and studies.

Joel Allbritton asked if there were any additional members of the public or advisory group members that would like to speak as well as provided his contact information to everyone via screenshare and the chat. Mr. Allbritton explained the various ways to provide comments to him and that the comment period would be open until September 1, 2021. Mr. Baranowicz commented on the various rules prohibiting motorized vehicles and swimming within the park that is not in the designated swimming area and asked about enforcement of these rules via park or FWC Law Enforcement. Mr. Baranowicz suggested that during summer months FWC Law

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Enforcement station a vessel nearby to enforce those rules. Daniel Dickson with FWC Law Enforcement explained the manpower issue and that FWC works the tuber entrance during peak summer months but that he would forward the concerns to the supervisor that works the area. Larry Steed detailed the invaluable service of the park's friends group using their electric pontoon boat to help monitor and warn of these violations. Cyndi Gates asked if the park had plans for any recreational opportunities on the Rainbow River Ranch property. Joel Allbritton and Clif Maxwell commented that there were not any proposed recreational opportunities planned for that area for this management plan update, but it could be considered in the future management plan updates.

Written Advisory Group Comments

Jason O'Donoghue, Cyndi Gates, Michael Edwards, Jim Couillard, and Jeff Sowards provided written comments on the management plan with recommendations of items to add to or change in the plan.

Staff Recommendations

- Updates will be made to the plants and animals list to address species that may have been added or removed since writing the management plan.
- The resource management and land use components will be edited from comments received during the meeting and during the comment period.

Notes on Composition of the Advisory Group

Florida Statutes Chapter 259.032 Paragraph 10(b) establishes a requirement that all state land management plans for properties greater than 160 acres will be reviewed by an advisory group:

"Individual management plans required by s. 253.034(5), for parcels over 160 acres, shall be developed with input from an advisory group. Members of this advisory group shall include, at a minimum, representatives of the lead land managing agency, co-managing entities, local private property owners, the appropriate soil and water conservation district, a local conservation organization, and a local elected official."

Advisory groups that are composed in compliance with these requirements complete the review of State park management plans. Additional members may be appointed to the groups, such as a representative of the park's Citizen Support Organization (if one exists), representatives of the recreational activities that exist in or are planned for the park, or representatives of any agency with an ownership interest in the property. Special issues or conditions that require a broader representation for adequate review of the management plan may require the appointment of additional members. The DRP's intent in making these appointments is to create a group that represents a balanced cross-section of the park's stakeholders. Decisions on appointments are made on a case-by-case basis by Division of Recreation and Parks staff.