

Rainbow Springs State Park

Planning Region: Gulf Coast

County: Marion

Lease/Management Agreement Number: 3900

Overview

Rainbow Springs State Park is home to Florida's 4th largest 1st Magnitude Spring and one of the most productive spring systems in the state. Rainbow Springs State Park was once a private roadside tourist attraction prior to state acquisition in 1990. Today visitors come to enjoy many activities such as swimming, snorkeling, tubing, canoeing, camping, and hiking.

Total Acreage: 1,584.43

| Natural Communities | Acres |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Basin Swamp | 35.13 |
| Depression Marsh | 5.09 |
| Floodplain Swamp | 4.99 |
| Hydric Hammock | 141.63 |
| Mesic Flatwoods | 145.45 |
| Scrubby Flatwoods | 7.15 |
| Sandhill | 531.02 |
| Spring-Run Stream | 13.64 |

| Altered Land Cover | Acres |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Altered Landcovers | 702.80 |

Acquisition: Rainbow Springs State Park was initially acquired on October 20, 1990 with funds from the Conservation and Recreational Lands (CARL) program. Currently the park comprises 1,584.34 acres.

Resource Management Component Objectives

Hydrology

- Conduct/obtain an assessment of the park's hydrological restoration needs.
- Monitor and evaluate the natural hydrological conditions and functions within the headspring and improve approximately 0.1 discontinuous acres of spring-run stream natural community.
- Monitor and evaluate impacts associated with soil erosion at Rainbow Springs State Park

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Natural Communities

- Within 10 years, have 950 acres of the park maintained within the optimum fire return interval.
- Conduct habitat/natural community restoration activities on 244 acres of sandhill community
- Conduct habitat/natural community restoration activities on 75 acres of sandhill and flatwoods natural communities on the Rainbow River Ranch parcel.
- Conduct natural community/habitat improvement activities on at least 10 acres of sandhill community and successional hardwood forest

Imperiled Species

- Update baseline imperiled species occurrence inventory lists for plants and animals
- Monitor and document 7 selected imperiled animal species in the park (SE Kestrel, Indigo snake, striped newt, gopher frog, gopher tortoise, Suwannee cooter, and Bachman's sparrow will be monitored).
- Monitor and document 1 selected imperiled plant species in the park (Giant orchid).

Invasive and Nuisance Species

- Annually treat 200 acres of invasive plant species in the park.
- Develop and implement measures to prevent the accidental introduction or further spread of invasive plants in the park including written guidelines provided to park staff.
- Implement control measures on 3 nuisance and invasive animal species in the park (feral cats, dogs, and hogs).

Cultural Resources

- Assess and evaluate 55 of 55 recorded cultural resources in the park.
- Compile reliable documentation for all recorded historic and archaeological resources.
- Bring 11 of 55 recorded cultural resources into good condition including Gift Shop, Rainbow Falls, and developing plan for submarine boats and Sandhill Cistern

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Land Use Component Objectives

Conceptual Land Use

Northern Tract

Entrance Station

- Build new entrance station

Parking Area

- Develop signage for wayfinding
- Remove fencing
- Redesign parking area

Headsprings Day Use Area

- Build Paddle craft pedestrian walkway
- Xeriscaping alterations to improve viewshed
- Assess safety enhancements

Primitive campground

- Build two small group camps

Southern Tract

Campground

- Connect to waste services
- Study Entrance Improvements

Tube Concessions/Exit Area

- Install RV site/hookups
- redesign entrance area

Griffitts Addition

- Remove of relict horse stable

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Optimum Boundary

Optimum Boundary

There are roughly 40 parcels in the Park's Optimum Boundary that total 1,274 acres. They are divided into 4 groupings based on their location relative to the park: Northwest, Northeast, Central, and South.

The Northwest group totals approximately 394 acres spread across 11 parcels. 375 acres are within the Rainbow River Corridor Florida Forever Project.

The Northeast group totals approximately 674 acres spread across 18 parcels. 178 of these acres are within the Rainbow River Florida Forever Project. These would connect inland areas between the northern and southern tracts. Protection would be offered to Sandhill communities and the Gissy Spring/spring-run, which flows directly into the Rainbow River.

The Central Group consists of approximately 17 acres separated across 4 parcels. 14 of these acres are found within the Rainbow River Florida Forever Project. These properties would connect shoreline between the northern and southern tracts.

The South Group is composed of approximately 190 acres divided across 7 parcels. All of the 190 acres are within the Rainbow River Florida Forever Project. These properties would provide greater springhead protection.