

Note: This document was shared by Councilman Hancock at the City Council Workshop on January 4, 2017.

1/4 Council workshop talking points:

As you know, in November, 2016 the city forwarded a letter to all our public partners along the Rainbow River Corridor highlighting concerns around too much activity during peak season, and continued degradation of the river resource.

Within that letter, we noted the issues, potential solutions, and the need to work together as good partners to improve the conditions all along the river corridor.

Therefore, I just want to share with Council four main areas for reference to help accomplish the goals we identified in our initial letter. I want to point out to Council that none of the proposed action items are new, or any surprise. In fact, some folks will tell you they have been working on these issues for many years.

Based on all our research and discussions, staff members and I feel these problems are not complex, and that it is simply a matter of will power, and that the three public parks and all the public agencies on the river can accomplish these action steps if we simply have the will to do so.

Let me remind the Council that last January I wrote an article titled "New Year, Same Old Problems". This was in reference to the City of Dunnellon failing to act on problems that had been festering for years. Well, this Council has shown the will to do something about those problems, and we're making progress.

I believe the Rainbow River Corridor issues are this years' headline, and that by this time next year conditions along the river can be very different, **IF** the three public parks have the will to do their part.

Dunnellon has publicly stated that we have the will and we want to do our part, and we are asking our partners to join us. And, this is all we can do. Each public park will decide for itself if they wish to be good stewards of the Rainbow River, and good neighbors to all the folks in this area, and how they will show this commitment through their actions.

These proposed action steps represent a starting guide as to what the primary goals are, some suggestions to accomplish them, and a reasonable time frame to do so. Accomplishing these four basic goals will help protect the river resource, and provide an enjoyable recreation experience for all river users and residents.

So, it's very simple.... where there is will, there is a way.

Rainbow River Corridor Public Park Proposed Action Steps, Responsibilities, and Time Frames

1. Reduce commercial float activity during peak river season: Immediate, KPH

As the only publicly funded park allowing commercial access to a public park on the Rainbow River, KP-Hole Park needs to align their park operating plan to the current published Capacity Advisory (see attached) as approved by the Marion County Board of County Commissioners. This current, posted policy calls for "...closing the park once all available parking spaces are filled."

Unfortunately, the current operating plan is once the available KPH parking spaces are filled, they continue to accept business from the Winn-Dixie parking lot, the Sunoco parking lot, and the Aquatic Wilderness Adventures parking lot; basically unlimited access is available as long as the entrance fee is paid.

The KP-Hole park operating plan should match the public policy commitment made by the MCBCC that protects the river and provide for an enjoyable experience for all users. This single action would have tremendous impact on improving current conditions.

2. Complete a river carrying capacity study, a facility capacity study, and a social capacity study: 6-12 months; KPH, RSSP, BRP

These studies allow for the Rainbow River to teach us what the right amount of activity should be. Each study provides important components to an overall public management approach that can protect the river resource, adhere to appropriate levels of use, and provide a quality experience for all river users.

Initial effort should be to pursue a "best practices" study for each element, and using the most cost effective way of completing them. It is reasonable to expect some funding to come from the park revenues being generated from the river activities to complete these studies.

3. Provide cohesive law enforcement along the river corridor during peak season weekends and holiday periods: Immediate; KPH, RSSP, BRP

Each park should fund coordinated law enforcement efforts for respective areas of the river. KPH provides Marion County Sheriff river patrol for the upper river corridor. RSSP provides law enforcement coverage through FWC along the middle river corridor. BRP provides City of Dunnellon Police river coverage for the lower river corridor.

4. Establish bi-annual River Corridor public operating policy review and updates: Immediate; all public agencies operating on the Rainbow River

All public agencies operating on the Rainbow River will meet pre and post peak season to review current operating policies and coordinate mutual efforts regarding public access and use of the river corridor.



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CAPACITY ADVISORY

Marion County Board of County Commissioners hopes everyone will continue to enjoy KP Hole Park. That's why park team members have implemented a new policy of closing the park once all available parking spaces are filled. Often, visitors have used unauthorized areas to park vehicles, outside of the park's staff control.

"We're receiving complaints, that some park visitors are blocking driveways of homes neighboring the park," said Judge Cochran, Marion County Public Information Officer.

KP Hole Park is "the family destination for spending the day on the Rainbow River," said Lee Niblock, Parks and Recreation Director and Bureau Chief. "The park is open every day of the year and offers swimming, picnicking, a boat ramp, tube and canoe rentals." The park is known for its popular tube run, the "Rainbow River Classic, the tuber ride of generations." Niblock wants to ensure guests park in designated areas, most importantly for their safety, but also to be a good neighbor to those whose driveways have been blocked.

Marion County's KP Hole Park at 9435 SW 190th Avenue Road, Dunnellon, welcomes visitors to tube, float or raft *from* the park until 1:45 p.m., each day.