

Tubing at Rainbow Springs State Park Some Frequently Asked Questions

- Q. Is tubing permitted at Rainbow Springs State Park?**
- A. Yes. The tube entrance is located on 180th Avenue Road on the east side of the Rainbow River.
- Q. Is there a limit on the number of tubes allowed on the river?**
- A. Yes and the park is closed when we reach our maximum carrying capacity. We recommend avoiding the weekends if possible or arriving early on weekends and holidays. Call the park at 352-465-8555 to check the tubing availability status or follow us at www.twitter.com/FLStateParks or on www.facebook.com/FLStateParks
- Q. Can I launch a canoe or kayak at the tube facility?**
- A. At the tube facility there is no location that allows launching or landing of canoes or kayaks. Day visitors must launch their own vessel at the headsprings; be prepared to portage 1,800 feet to the canoe launch. Canoes and kayaks are available for rental from our concessionaire [Nature Quest, Inc. \(www.rainbowspringspark.com\)](http://www.rainbowspringspark.com)
- Q. How do you go about tubing at the state park?**
- A. At the 180th Avenue Road entrance you pay the park admission, park in the parking lot provided and then go to the concessionaire building. Our concessionaire, [Nature Quest, Inc. \(www.rainbowspringspark.com\)](http://www.rainbowspringspark.com), operates within the park to rent tubes and provide transportation to the put in point on the river. The state park facilities are designated to allow you to float the upper portion of the river. The beauty is you only need one vehicle! [Nature Quest, Inc. \(www.rainbowspringspark.com\)](http://www.rainbowspringspark.com) provides transportation upstream and then you float back downstream to where you started. We like to think of it as a one stop shop – tube and transportation is all here; you do not need to bring a tube or another vehicle.
- Q. Are there any restrictions about tubing that I should know?**
- A. Yes. [Marion County ordinances Chapters 3 and 5](#) prohibits any disposable containers on the river (drink bottles, food wrappers, Styrofoam cups). Also, all alcoholic beverages are prohibited from the Rainbow River. (Marion County ordinances, Chapters 3 and 5 can be found at <http://www.municode.com/resources/gateway.asp?pid=10237&sid=9>)
- Q. Is there a tubing season?**
- A. The tube facilities are open on weekends only starting the first Saturday of April until Memorial Day weekend. From Memorial Day until Labor Day the facilities are open seven days a week. After Labor Day weekend the facilities remain open on weekends through the month of September. During the months of October through March the facilities are closed.
- Q. During the tubing season, what are the tube facility hours?**
- A. The park facilities at the tube entrance on 180th Avenue Road open at 8:00 a.m. during the tubing season. To allow for sufficient time for visitors to make it off the river and out of the park by closing time, all visitors wanting to tube need to be in the park by 3:30 p.m. The

park entrance on U.S. 41 (the headsprings entrance) is open from 8:00 a.m. to sunset every day of the year. After you tube, come to the headsprings to picnic, enjoy our nature trails and garden or take a swim.

Q. How long does the tube float last?

A. The time to float the approximately 1 and ½ mile float varies due to wind and water conditions. Typically the float will last about 1 ½ to 2 hours.

Q. Is there a longer float available?

A. Yes, there are two ways to float the river longer. One is to take repetitive trips from the tube facility at the state park. The other is to start at the Marion County Park, K P Hole, on the west side of the river. That float covers the upper and lower river and is approximately 4 hours long, terminating at the SR 484 Bridge in Dunnellon.

Q. If I start at the state park facility, can I float to the SR 484 Bridge in Dunnellon?

A. To float to the SR 484 Bridge in Dunnellon you would have to begin your float at the Marion County Park, K P Hole. The state park facilities are designed so you begin and end at the same point. Keep in mind that the state park tube take out (the terminus point of the state park tube float) is not an authorized launching location to begin your float.

Q. If I start at K P Hole, a county park, can I end my float at the state park facility?

A. Yes, though that is not the intent of the state park facilities. To start at K P Hole and to then terminate at the state park you will need to have pre-arranged transportation to K P Hole. The in-park tram, which transports visitors up stream above the K P Hole, could be utilized, but you will need to pay the transportation fee at that time. There is no designated shuttle service that would transport you from the state park to the K P Hole facility approximately 12 miles away by road. Therefore you would have to have made prior arrangements to be transported back to K P Hole. If you do, remember that access to the park closes at 3:30 p.m. and you will need to start your float from K P Hole by 12:00 p.m. Also, you and anyone coming into the park to transport you are required to pay the appropriate park entrance fee to the State Park.

Q. If I start at K P Hole, a county park, can I stop and use the state park facility?

A. Rainbow Springs State Park has a daily entrance fee. Therefore if you were to enter the park from the river you would be required to pay the park entrance fee. If you start at K P Hole then your intended destination is the SR 484 bridge which is four hours downstream or 2 ½ hours downriver of the state park exit facility.

Q. Is tube launching permitted from the headsprings entrance to the park on US 41?

A. Due to the sensitivity of the vegetation and the spring bowl bottom there is a need to protect the headsprings even more than the rest of the river. Thus, the only access permitted on the river within the park boundary (the first 1700 feet of the spring run) is restricted to designated swimming areas and non-motorized USCG approved vessels, such as canoes and kayaks. Foot traffic associated with tubing would have an unacceptable, long lasting impact to the river bottom.

Q. If I cannot swim, is tubing safe?

A. Tubing is a water related activity. As such there is an inherent risk involved. If you cannot swim it is highly recommended that you wear a USCG approved personal flotation device

while tubing. It is not unusual to flip a tube and it will then float away from you. Tubes are not dependable as a personal safety device.

Q. Can I drive my car to the river to launch my tube or canoe/kayak?

A. Access to the river is via the tram service and established trails/boardwalks. There is not vehicle access to the river within the state park. At the tube facility there is no location that allows launching or retrieving of canoes or kayaks. Day visitors must launch at the headsprings; be prepared to portage your vessel 1,800 feet to the canoe launch or rent a canoe or kayak from Nature Quest, Inc. (www.rainbowspringspark.com), our concessionaire.