



Ocklawaha River Restoration Project-at-a-Glance

About the Project

The Rodman Dam was constructed in 1968 as part of the Cross Florida Barge Canal project before the project was halted by the federal government. The damming of the Ocklawaha River flooded more than 7,500 acres of forested wetlands, 16 miles of river and at least 20 springs.

Benefits of restoration extend well beyond Putnam County from the headwaters of the Ocklawaha in Lake County to the estuaries of the St. Johns River in Duval County and beyond. Restoration has been identified as one of three essential components of the Silver Springs Basin Plan and an essential action to improve water quality in the St. Johns River.

Some scientists call it “the Everglades of the north” but with a cost less than one Everglades restoration project. The economic and environmental return on investment would be unprecedented.

Key Restoration Benefits

- Improve the economies of Putnam and Marion Counties by attracting more out-of-area visitors through improving the recreational experience and attracting manatees and historic fish populations back to the Ocklawaha and Silver Springs
- Provide more diverse and attractive recreational opportunities such as multi-day paddling experiences, striped bass fishing, bank fishing, addition camping sites and manatee viewing
- Bring back migratory fish populations, fish diversity and volume of fish in the Ocklawaha and Silver Rivers with restored historic connection to the St. Johns River
- Connect major wildlife areas to south and north creating contiguous wildlife corridor for bears, deer, turkeys, panthers and many other native vertebrates
- Provide safe access and expanded manatee habitat for hundreds of manatees along the Ocklawaha River and Silver Springs
- Conserve and showcase the cultural heritage of this historic steamboat route
- Increase water supply by reducing evaporation off the reservoir, uncovering blocked springs and increasing flow to the St. Johns River
- Reduce invasive and exotic aquatic plant blockages by to increasing water flow and velocity, reducing water temperature and improving water clarity
- Restore 7,500 acres of valuable forested floodplains forest and wetlands destroyed
- Improve 8,000 acres of wetlands downstream of the dam to the St. Johns River
- Uncover most of the 20 natural springs now drowned due to the reservoir
- Re-establish tributary flows to the Ocklawaha from Orange and Deep Creeks
- Improve the entire food web in Silver, Ocklawaha and Lower St. Johns River
- Expand habitat for almost a dozen state-listed plants