

# **Wekiva Youth Camp**

## **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Environmental Education / Canoeing**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Environmental Education program is based on Water Resources. It is requested that each camper come to camp with the knowledge of where their drinking water comes from. From there we discuss water conservation, aquifers, common water pollutants, storm water, etc. Campers are asked what major environmental problems they believe Florida is facing and we open the floor to ideas and discussion about how to find solutions.

The campers practice canoeing on the Wekiva River Monday through Thursday learning canoeing and leadership skills while being immersed in an environment much different than what they are used to. Campers additionally learn about the flora and fauna of the wetlands comprising the Wekiva River Basin, the unique hydrologic requirements of wetlands, native and invasive wetland species, and what species within this ecosystem are protected and why. Campers learn what a real wetland and a healthy river should look like in this exceptional environment.

The practice and knowledge acquired during the week culminates in an eight-mile canoe trip down the pristine Rock Springs Run. Campers are evaluated after the trip to determine environmental awareness and leadership ability. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade program is the last year as a camper and the evaluations determine which campers the Staff of Volunteers and Counselors believe have the potential to be the future leaders at Wekiva Youth Camp.