

PWCs are designed to be highly maneuverable, can traverse shallow water, and accelerate rapidly. The impact of these features is detrimental to a narrow, shallow spring run such as the Ichetucknee as can be observed in this clip (Click <https://youtu.be/FAEOkAb1yfk> ).

The following series of clips demonstrate the impact of just two Personal Watercrafts (PWCs) traversing the river while fully off plane. At 3:16 pm on August 21, 2025, the PWCs pass the camera location headed upstream. Even off plane, the vessels produce a large wake. Some areas near the shoreline on the Suwannee County side of the river immediately brown out while the main channel remains clear at this time (Click <https://youtu.be/9DG-QjrQTps> ). The second PWC clears the area shortly after the first (Click <https://youtu.be/hERlznklhmk> ) with shoreline turbidity rapidly spreading. By 3:22 pm, six minutes after the first PWC passed, the river is essentially browned out. SAV can be observed floating downstream after the vessels traverse the bridges into Ichetucknee Springs State Park (Click <https://youtu.be/TEZmeSv9MvM> ). Both PWCs came back down river at 3:24 pm, eight minutes after passing the camera location headed upstream. At that time, the river was entirely occluded with disrupted SAV continuing to float downstream (Click <https://youtu.be/cYkA8YYt2FA> ). SAV can be observed continuing to float downstream eight minutes after the PWCs first passed (Click <https://youtu.be/Mdr20U3pZEE> ). By 3:48 pm, thirty two minutes after the arrival of the PWCs, some slight reduction in turbidity can be observed. The clarity remains extremely poor as a group of swimmers and floaters come through, highlighting the impact of PWC generated turbidity on other recreational users (Click <https://youtu.be/BDrxqr8af6k> ).

The degradation of the upper section of the lower Ichetucknee from 218 SW Riverside Ave to TREPO Hodor Park can be observed in the following videos from September 26, 2016 (Click <https://youtu.be/JjUjVnwmOO4> ) and September 3, 2025 (Click <https://youtu.be/SwSvFRyN99w> ).

The overall impact of recreation on the lower Ichetucknee and issue of trash on the river bears mention. I personally swim the Ichetucknee year round on a daily basis from Dampier's Landing in Ichetucknee Springs State Park to the confluence of the Santa Fe River, a 4.5 mile stretch, traversing the entire section of the lower Ichetucknee. Over the five years of swimming the river, I have picked up thousands of pounds of trash, transforming the river bottom. Currently, I retrieve about 200 pounds of trash a week from the river during the warm months (see Figure 9), less during the quieter off season. These numbers do not include large items, including floating docks (see Figure 10), boats, the occasional bicycle, lawn chair, wheelchair (see Figure 11), and numerous concrete blocks. In addition, our community and river friends join in on large cleanups such as one in May, 2025 in which over 2600 pounds of pressure treated lumber in the form of three abandoned docks was removed (see Figure 12).