

Survey Research on Behaviors and Opinions Regarding Duval County Waterways

Methodology

As part of the research to develop an up to date Duval County Maritime Management Plan, a survey was conducted with Duval County residents to ascertain their behaviors and opinions regarding Duval County Waterways.

Most respondents have completed their surveys in a self-administered fashion, although interviewers were present to assist respondents (if necessary) when the survey was distributed at public gatherings. The questionnaires are available both online and printed on paper. The online version of the questionnaire was posted at the website www.JaxBoatPlan.com. This link to the online questionnaire was emailed to persons who requested it and to groups involved in maritime and waterway issues and activities. In addition, email addresses were collected (to subsequently email the link) and cards with the website were distributed at public gatherings such as the Jacksonville Boat Show, the City of Jacksonville Environmental Protection Board Water Education Festival, the US Coast Guard Auxiliary, and other meetings deemed relevant to the St. John's River and related Duval County waterways. The collection of survey data began in December 2015 and ended on October 31, 2016.

A total of 762 Duval County residents completed questionnaires regarding Duval County waterways. Of those respondents 89% (681) indicated that they had used a water access facility in Duval County at least once. Among the respondents who had used a water access facility, 65% (498) had done so within one month of the date that they completed their questionnaire.

The 762 respondents do not represent a scientific probability sample of all Duval County residents, and the study was not designed to do so. Rather, it is a convenience sample of persons willing to complete the questionnaire after being made aware of the County's task to create an up to date Maritime Management Plan. Outreach attempts have been purposefully diversified to reach as wide a variety of population subgroups as possible, hence producing the most representative sample possible given these methods.

Behavior and Usage Results

A list of seven water access facilities were offered to respondents as well as an “other specify” response, and respondents were asked to indicate which facilities they had used during the past month, and how often they had used each facility. Table 1 presents those water access facilities and the percentage of respondents who used that type of facility in the past month. As Table 1 indicates, public boat ramps were used most commonly, followed by riverwalks and waterfront parks. Boat docks were also used by more than one third of the respondents.

When analyzing and interpreting the survey results in the remainder of this section of the report, it will be helpful to think in terms of persons who enter the water when using water access facilities (for example, those individuals who primarily use boat ramps and docks and kayak launches) and those who do not enter the water (for example, those individuals who primarily use riverwalks, waterfront parks, and fishing piers). Approximately 65% of the respondents who had used a water access facility in the past month owned a boat and entered the water when using water access facilities. The remainder of the respondents (35%) did not. Comparisons of the two groups will be provided when their answers are noticeably different. Among the respondents who were boat owners, more than 70% owned motorized boats, about 20% owned kayaks, canoes, or rowing shells, and approximately 5% owned sailboats.

Table 1: *Q.2 Here is a list of some public water access facilities available in Duval County. Please tell me if anyone in your household (including yourself) has used any of these facilities in the past month.*

<u>Type of Facility</u>	<u>Percentage of All Respondents Using This Type of Facility in the Past Month</u>
Public boat ramps	62.0%
Kayak launches	23.5
Docks	45.6
Mooring Buoys	2.4
Fishing piers	19.5
Riverwalks	56.6
Waterfront parks	55.8
Other (please specify below)	6.4

When asked to indicate the actual facility they use most often, the respondents who enter the water cited the boat ramps at Sister’s Creek (Joe Carlucci and Jim King Park) most frequently. For those using riverwalks and parks, facilities in downtown area (the North and South bank Riverwalks, The Landing, and Riverside Arts Market) were mentioned by the most respondents.

Respondents were then asked to indicate how often they used public water access facilities in Duval County (Figure 1). The facilities that are used most frequently were riverwalks and waterfront parks. Nearly 10% of the respondents used these facilities at least every other day,

with an additional 25% of the respondents using these facilities at least once a week. Public boat ramps, docks, and kayak launches were also used by approximately one-third of the respondents on a weekly basis.

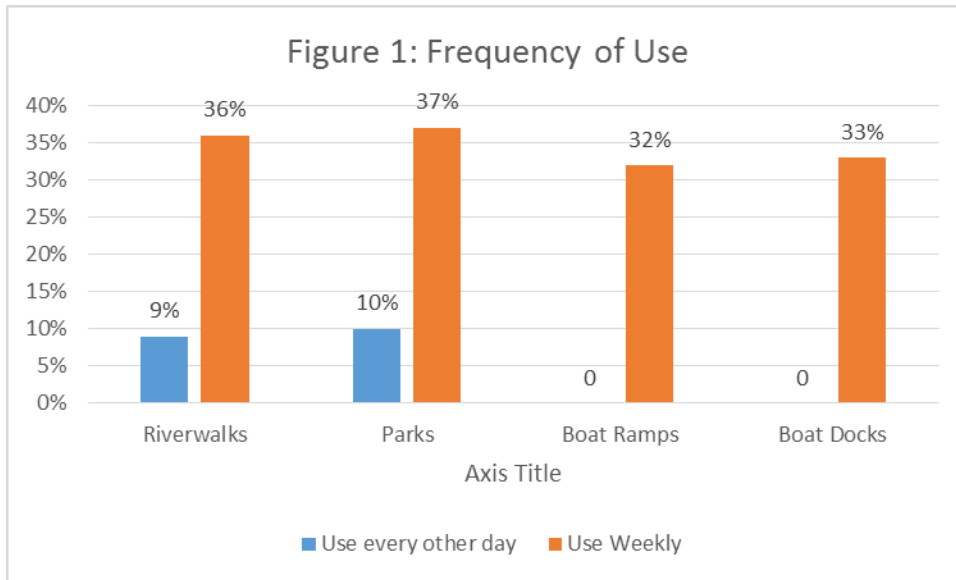
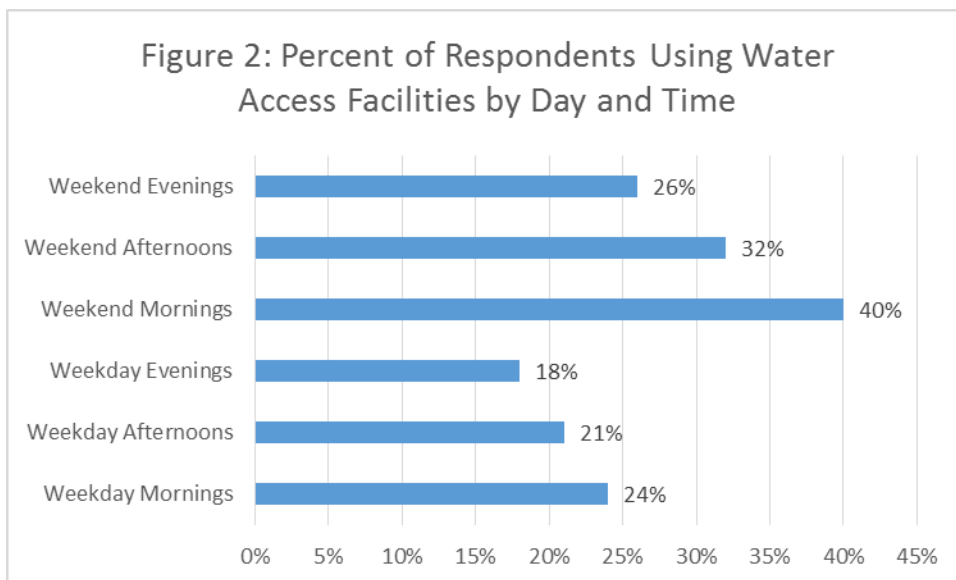


Figure 2 illustrates when waterway facilities are used most often. The results shown were consistent across all types of facilities including riverwalks and waterfront parks, as well as boat ramps and docks, and kayak launches. The weekends were more popular than the weekdays, and the mornings were more popular than the afternoons.



As would be expected, the most common reason for using these facilities varies by the type of facility (Table 2). Boat ramps and docks, and kayak launches were used for motorized boating, canoeing and kayaking, and paddle boarding. Riverwalks and waterfront parks were used for observing scenic views and nature, walking and exercising. A variety of facilities were used for fishing including fishing piers, waterfront parks, and boats.

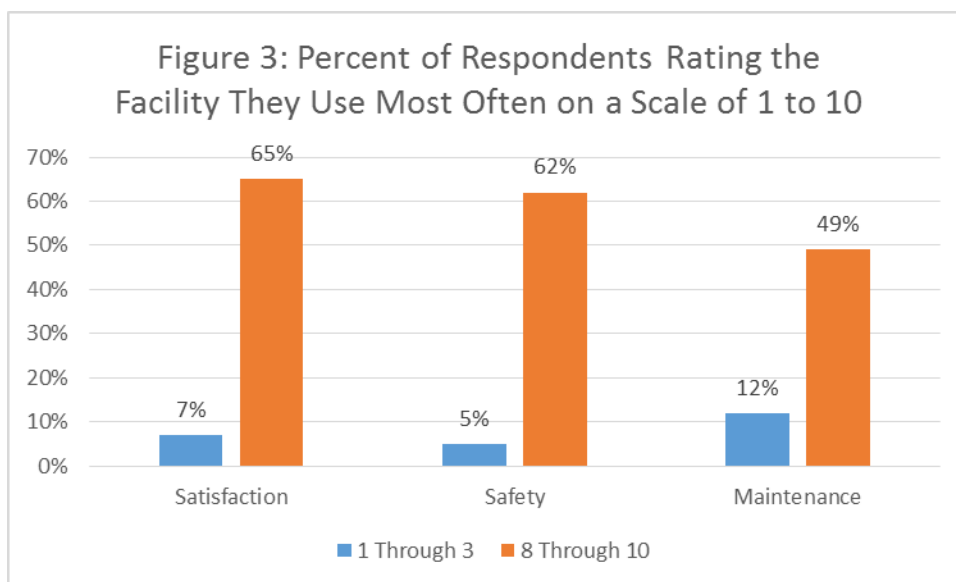
Table 2: Q6. *What is the main reason you use this facility (the facility you use most often)?*

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Percentage of all respondents citing this activity as the main reason for using the facility (they use most often)</u>
Motorized boating	23.0%
Fishing	21.5
Canoeing/kayaking	10.8
Observing scenic views/nature	15.7
Walking/exercising	14.4
Other (please specify)	14.6

For many respondents, water access facilities are located close to their homes. More than 50% of the respondents travel less than 5 miles to reach the facility they use most often. The remaining 45% travel more than 5 miles, with approximately one in four travelling 11 miles or more. The overwhelming majority of respondents, more than 80% travel by car or truck to water access facilities. An additional 6% reached their facility by boat. Less than 10% walked to the water access facility they used most often, and less than 5% traveled by bicycle.

Opinions and Ratings

Respondents were then asked to rate the water access facility they used most often in terms of satisfaction, safety, and maintenance on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 was the lowest rating and 10 was the highest rating. Figure 3 illustrates that most respondents rated their facilities favorably on all 3 criteria. The number of respondents rating facilities as an 8-9-10 was much greater than the number of respondents rating facilities as a 1-2-3. The mean rating for satisfaction was 7.24, for safety 7.62, and for maintenance 6.82. These results indicate that the respondents were satisfied with their facilities and felt that they were safe, but that there was room for improvement in terms of maintenance. It should also be noted that cross tabulations confirmed that these results are similar for persons who enter the water and those who do not.



After informing us about the facilities they use and their rating of those facilities, respondents were asked about the need for additional water access facilities along the St. Johns River and related Duval County waterways. Two-thirds of the respondents felt there was a need for additional water access facilities in addition to those they use. Once again, this result was fairly consistent for persons who entered the water and those that did not. Of course, the additional facilities they desired were different (Table 3). Those who entered the water were primarily interested in more boat ramps and docks, whereas individuals who did not enter the water cited the need for more Riverwalks and waterfront parks. Two additional answers were also mentioned frequently, kayak launches and fishing piers. Both of these facilities were mentioned more frequently in this question than in the usage question. This result suggests that persons who fish were not the only respondents to request more fishing piers, and that persons who kayak were not the only respondents to request more kayak launches. The most frequently cited “other specify” answer was the need for more waterfront restaurants.

Table 3: Q13. *In addition to the water facilities you currently use, do you have the need for any additional water access facilities? Which type? Where should they be located?*

<u>Type of Facility</u>	<u>Percentage of all respondents requesting more of this facility</u>
Public boat ramps	49.6%
Kayak launches	39.8
Docks	27.3
Mooring buoys	10.1
Fishing piers	18.8
Riverwalk/boardwalks	23.8
Waterfront parks	30.5
Other (please specify)	14.8

Figure 4 and Table 4 provide information as to where the respondents feel most additional facilities should be located. Respondents utilized the grid map shown in Figure 4 to specify the map quadrangle(s) where they would like additional facilities to be placed. The respondents could specify as many quadrangles as they would like for each additional facility, and most did specify multiple locations.

Examining both Figure 4 and Table 4 in tandem reveals that the desire for additional boat ramps is distributed rather equally along the entirety of the St. Johns River, from southern Duval County to the mouth of the river. The desire for additional boat docks is more concentrated, specifically in the Riverside/Avondale/Ortega areas, as well as Downtown and in San Marco. Riverside/Avondale/Ortega, Downtown, San Marco, and Arlington were the most popular areas for additional kayak launches, and as Table 3 indicates, there were almost as many requests for additional kayak launches as there were for additional boat ramps. The respondents specified Riverside, Downtown, and San Marco most frequently for additional riverwalks, suggesting the expansion of the existing facilities in those areas. The desire for additional waterfront parks is equally distributed from Ortega north through Arlington. Lastly, the respondents indicated that additional fishing piers should be located in two concentrations, one in the Riverside, Downtown, and San Marco areas, and the other at the mouth of the St. Johns River.

Figure 4: Grid map to identify the location of additional facilities

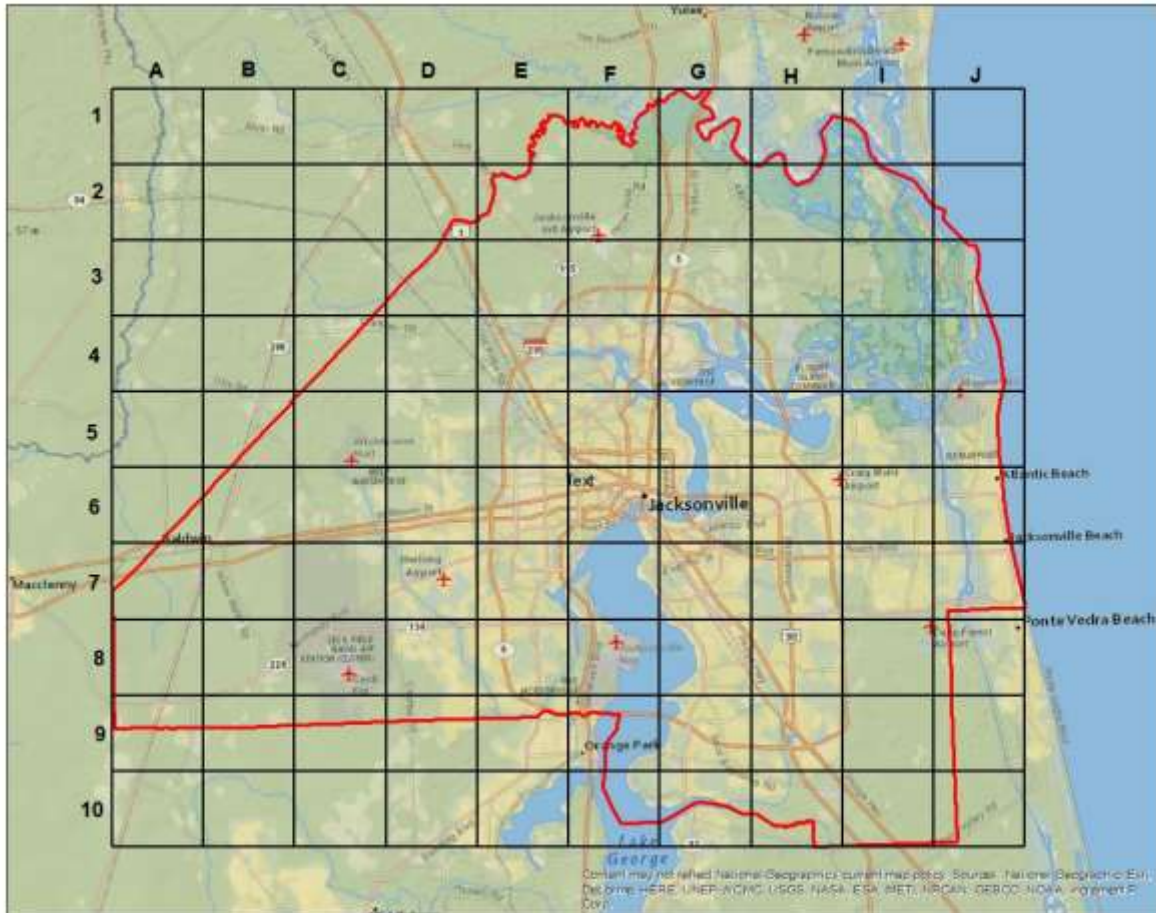


Table 4: New facilities requested by respondents by geographic location quadrants*

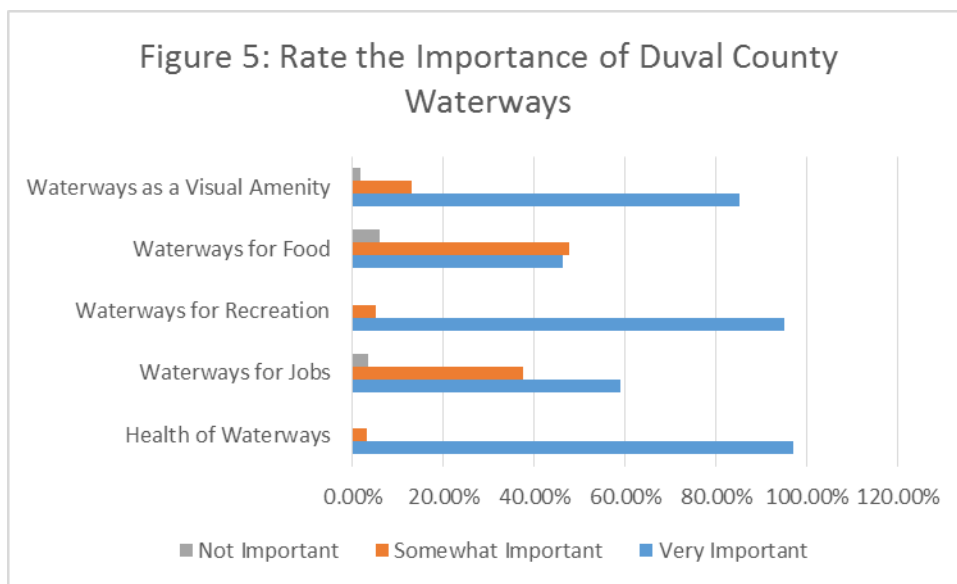
Zone #	Boat Ramps	Boat Docks	Kayak Launches	Riverwalks	Waterfront Parks	Fishing Piers	Mooring Buoys
E7	2	1	1			1	2
E8		1	1			1	1
F1			1				
F3				1			
F4	3	1	2	2	1	1	1
F5		1	3	1	1		2
F6	17	11	25	25	15	13	7
F7	10	6	8	9	12	4	5
F8	3	3	4	2	4	2	1
F9	4		3		2		1
F10	1	1	1	2	2	1	1
G1	1						
G4	11	4	7	3	5	4	1
G5	8	4	7	4	8	4	2
G6	12	12	13	10	15	12	4
G7	1		2	1	3		
G8	2	2	3	2	5	2	
G9	4	2	3	2	3	2	1
G10	3	1	2	2	2	1	4
H1		1			1	1	
H2		1			1	1	
H3		1	1		1	1	
H4	5	3	7	1	2	3	1
H5	17	5	12	3	4	5	1
I1	1						
I2	2		1				
I3	1						
I4	6	1	10		1	1	1
I5	8	3	7	1	2	4	2
J2			1	1			
J3			1	1			
J4	4	4	4	3	2	3	1
J5	10	4	7	3	2	4	
J6	32	3	14	4	5	3	4
J7	18		8	1	4		
J8	1		1				
J9	3						
J10	2						

*-Combined responses from Boat Plan (762) and Activating the Waterways (48) surveys

The survey concludes with several questions designed to obtain the respondents opinions about the importance of the St. Johns River and related Duval county waterways. The first question asked the respondents to rate the value of the St. Johns as an asset to the community on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 representing the least value and 10 representing the most value. More than 97% of those surveyed rated the St. Johns as an 8-9-10. For comparative purposes, a similar question was asked about two other high awareness assets in the Jacksonville community, the area’s naval bases and the Jacksonville Jaguars. Nearly 79% rated the naval bases as an 8-9-10, and nearly 50% rated the Jaguars as an 8-9-10.

These results illustrate two important points. First, as noted in the introduction, the sample for this study is not a scientific probability sample, it is a convenience sample of persons made aware of the need for an up to date county Maritime Management Plan. Hence, the sample will be selective of and biased towards persons who take an interest in the St. Johns River and related Duval County waterways. A similar question asked in a 2012 study about the St. Johns River utilizing a scientific probability sample found the naval bases to be more valued than the river. Second, the results do illustrate that individuals who interact with the river, whether that interaction is through boating, fishing or simply observing, will value the river.

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of Duval County waterways on five criteria: the health of the waterways, their importance as a source of jobs, recreation, and food, and as a visual amenity. Figure 5 illustrates that over 80% of the respondents consider the waterways as a very important source of recreation, and that they also consider them to be a very important visual amenity. More than 80% also expressed that keeping our waterways healthy is very important. Somewhat lesser percentages considered our waterways as a very important source of jobs and food, but those persons did express that they were somewhat important.



When asked about future spending priorities, nearly 60% of the respondents stated that the county should continue to support existing water access facilities (Table 5), whereas more than one-third felt that existing facilities should also be expanded. The desire for spending on specific facilities closely followed the results from the earlier question about desiring additional facilities: boat ramps, kayak launches, and boat docks were popular among individuals who enter the water. Riverwalks and shoreline walkways were most popular among those who do not enter the water. The other specify responses were comprised of a small number of individuals suggesting a wide variety of spending priorities, such as more waterfront restaurants, more parking at all types of facilities, and cleaning trash from waterways and litter prevention.

Table 5: Q24. *Of the issues listed below, which three would you like to see receive the most attention from the City of Jacksonville in terms of funding?*

<u>Type of Spending</u>	<u>Percent of all respondents prioritizing this type of spending</u>
Maintaining existing water access facilities	58.2%
Expanding existing water access facilities	36.0
Building new boat ramps	22.8
Building new kayak launches	21.6
Adding more docking facilities	19.2
Developing mooring fields	3.9
Dredging for recreational boating use	18.4
Building new fishing piers	12.2
Building new shoreline walkways	31.0
Downtown Riverwalks	40.0
Other (please specify)	14.9