

Weeki Wachee River Post-Survey Report



This report represents data collected
October 10 - 27, 2022

Submitted by

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Executive Summary

Introduction & Background

The Southwest Florida Water Management District and Hernando County, with support from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, carried out a study regarding the recreational use of the Weeki Wachee River. The popularity of this destination as a recreational hub has highlighted concerns surrounding the degradation of the river and its ecosystems.

A study conducted by Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions showed that managing the kinds of activities that occur on the river and limiting where certain activities can occur may be as important, if not more important, as capping the number of users. Science-based recommendations were provided at the conclusion of the study with management options that could reduce the negative impacts of recreation on the river.

In February 2021 the District collaborated with The Taproot Agency to gather initial data in a social media pre-survey regarding visitor behaviors at the river. A District-led campaign began on March 1, 2021, to educate targeted audiences about the recreational best management practices that will help protect the Weeki Wachee River and reduce ecological impacts. Following the campaign, a post-survey was conducted via social media in November 2021 to determine whether behaviors have changed because of the campaign.

This report provides data gathered during an annual follow-up survey conducted via social media in October 2022 to determine if behavior change is continuing in a positive trajectory based on the campaign and continued education.

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

The Taproot Agency deployed a social media survey using the ads function of the Facebook platform. The ad was active October 10 – 27, 2022, and gathered 429 total responses.

As in previous Weeki Wachee surveys, parameters were set for the Facebook ad to run in the geographic area of the following Florida counties: Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas and Polk. Respondents were only excluded based on whether they had visited the Weeki Wachee River. If their response was “more than five years ago,” “don’t know” or “never visited,” they were terminated from the survey.

To avoid potentially skewed results/reactions and mirror the pre-survey, the members/followers of the following Facebook groups were also removed from this post-survey data: Friends of Weeki Wachee Preserve, Weeki Wachee River Rescue Team, Weeki Wachee River Rangers. The survey sample resulted in a theoretical margin of error of approximately +/-5% at the 95% confidence level.

Post-Survey Insights

The following insights were gleaned from the post-survey data represented in this report as it was compared to responses in the pre-survey.

- Regarding exiting vessels on the river, continued positive change was recorded:
 - 5%-point increase in those indicating they do not exit their vessel while on the river (highest recorded percentage across surveys)
 - 3%-point drop in those indicating they park on riverbanks or sand point bars

- Of note, 8% of respondents selected “other” for this question with several indicating they anchor their vessels when exiting on the river
- Some positive changes in opinion were recorded in how many respondents agreed with statements regarding actions while on the river:
 - 1%-point increase in those who strongly agree that climbing on banks and sand point bars damages the river
 - 7%-point increase in those who agree (2%) and strongly agree (5%) that climbing trees and rope swings damages trees
 - Overall respondents are still neutral on whether sandy white bottoms are a sign of an unhealthy spring, though there was a 6% increase in how many agreed with the statement (+1% point strongly agree; +5% points agree)
 - No change was recorded in the number of respondents who strongly agree people should stay in their vessels on the river – while there was an increase in the number who remain neutral (+1% point) and who disagree (+5% points) with the statement
- Continued positive changes in respondents recognizing current challenges with the river were recorded:
 - 6%-points decrease since the pre-survey in the number of respondents who don’t believe the river is currently facing any challenges
 - Considerable increases were recorded in recognition of the following challenges, in line with the education provided in the campaign
 - Trampled vegetation – 4% points
 - Too many people recreating on the river at one time – 12% points
 - Worn down or eroded shorelines – 10%
 - “Too many motorized vehicles” was added to the list in the annual survey and 63% of respondents selected this as a current challenge the river is facing
- As in both previous surveys, when respondents were asking how likely they were to take certain actions if they knew it would benefit the health of the river, the majority respond they were very likely to take those actions. It is worth noting that, even though the very likely percentages were high to begin with, there were increases in those response.
- As in the post-campaign survey, internet and social media outlets were two of the most memorable vehicles for campaign messaging. While social media saw a 1%-point increase, those who selected internet increased by 16% points. In the annual survey we added the District’s website as an option and 17% of respondents recalled seeing messaging through that site, making it the third highest platform for recognition.

Sample Demographics

When was the last time you visited the Weeki Wachee River?

	2021 Pre-Survey	2021 Post-Survey	2022 Annual Survey
Within in the last six months	42%	51%	50%
6 months to one year ago	21%	18%	16%
One to five years ago	26%	19%	21%
More than five years ago*	6%	7%	6%
Don't know*	1%	1%	1%
Never visited*	4%	4%	6%

* Respondent was terminated as not qualified for this survey.

In which Florida county do you live?

	2021 Pre-Survey	2021 Post-Survey	2022 Annual Survey
Citrus	9%	11%	10%
Hernando	29%	19%	32%
Hillsborough	12%	14%	4%
Pasco	18%	19%	7%
Pinellas	20%	24%	11%
Polk	7%	4%	4%
Other*	2%	8%	24%
I don't live in FL	4%	2%	8%

*Respondents were given the option to enter the name of their Florida county in a text box. Not all respondents who select the "Other" choice provided additional information. Responses that were recorded (single response unless otherwise noted): Alachua (5), Brevard (4), Broward, Charlotte (3), Clay, Duval, Hendry, Lake (2), Lee, Levy, Manatee (4), Marion (4), Martin (2), Miami-Dade, Orange (2), Palm Beach, Putnam (2), Sarasota (3), Seminole (2), Sumter (2) and Volusia.

The following table provides a breakdown by timeframe of when residents last visited the river.

2021 Pre / Post / 2022 Annual	Within the last six months			6 months to one year ago			One to five years ago		
Citrus	44%	47%	42%	20%	13%	35%	36%	40%	23%
Hernando	56%	71%	69%	23%	14%	14%	21%	15%	17%
Hillsborough	41%	58%	42%	21%	24%	17%	38%	18%	42%
Pasco	48%	63%	44%	27%	19%	17%	26%	19%	39%
Pinellas	44%	67%	39%	29%	16%	13%	27%	16%	45%
Polk	36%	69%	75%	24%	15%	17%	39%	15%	8%
Other*	22%	55%	36%	11%	23%	29%	67%	23%	35%
I don't live in FL	52%	0%	24%	10%	33%	29%	38%	67%	48%

River Behaviors & Opinions

Which of the following resources do you use when planning a trip to the Weeki Wachee River?
Select all that apply.

	2021 Pre-Survey	2021 Post-Survey	2022 Annual Survey
YouTube videos	5%	8%	8%
Social media pages (Facebook, Twitter)	19%	25%	27%
Search engines (Google, Bing)	26%	25%	28%
Travel Websites	3%	5%	5%
WeekiWachee.com	20%	16%	17%
Visitors Bureau	2%	2%	3%
Word of Mouth	30%	27%	34%
Other*	30%	25%	30%

*Responses entered in the "Other" text box are recorded in Appendix II.

Please select up to three recreation activities you engage in while on the Weeki Wachee River.

	2021 Pre-Survey	2021 Post-Survey	2022 Annual Survey
Boat (motorized vehicle)	13%	14%	19%
Kayak or Canoe	77%	69%	80%
Paddleboard	7%	18%	15%
Fishing	N/A	N/A	10%
Tubing	6%	5%	6%
Swim or snorkel	41%	39%	41%
Rope Swing	3%	5%	4%
Observe wildlife (manatees, birds, etc.)	50%	50%	51%
Camp	2%	2%	2%
Hike	4%	4%	4%
Picnic	9%	6%	7%
Other (no responses recorded)	3%	3%	3%

If you exit your vessel, where do you leave it while on the river?

	2021 Pre-Survey	2021 Post-Survey	2022 Annual Survey
I don't leave my vessel while I'm on the river	32%	33%	38%
Park on riverbanks or sand point bars	40%	29%	26%
Tie off in shallow waters	19%	24%	24%
Let it float freely	5%	8%	5%
Other	4%	5%	8%

*Other responses recorded include (separated by semi-colons): Sand bars only not on the banks; Leash to a tree; Boat dock or ramp; Upper deck dock; Anchor pole; End of the state park; Sand anchor; Anchor (3); There are no rest stops...so usually a sandbar if I really gotta pee; Just hang on to it most of the time; On sand, not the riverbank; On my dock; All of the above; Tether vessel to me or sandbars outside of park; Can't do that now so I guess I would let it float freely; Tie to hanging roots protruding into River; Only for a moment to pee; Rogers park; Also we do not exit our vessel on while in weeki Wachee spring park property; I float with it tethered to me; Tether; Anchor out of traffic; I live here – I get off my vessel only at my house; Tie to my arm; Paddleboard leashed to me or on the bank not on vegetation.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

ALL RESPONDENTS (2021 Pre/Post/ 2022 Annual)	Strongly Agree			Agree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
People should stay in their vessels on the river.	15%	23%	23%	17%	19%	16%	27%	20%	21%	30%	24%	29%	12%	15%	11%
Climbing on banks and sand point bars damages the river.	28%	40%	41%	31%	28%	26%	23%	17%	20%	15%	11%	8%	4%	4%	4%
Climbing trees and rope swings damages trees.	28%	33%	38%	30%	26%	28%	22%	22%	15%	16%	13%	14%	5%	7%	5%
Sandy white bottoms are a sign of an unhealthy spring.	7%	10%	11%	8%	10%	15%	47%	50%	42%	29%	23%	25%	9%	10%	8%
The number of vessels should be limited on the river.	31%	41%	36%	42%	33%	34%	13%	12%	13%	11%	10%	11%	3%	5%	6%
Vessels should only be allowed to park in designated spots on the river.	26%	34%	33%	34%	31%	27%	15%	12%	17%	18%	14%	18%	7%	9%	5%
The river is too crowded with visitors.	31%	39%	35%	27%	29%	31%	28%	19%	24%	11%	9%	8%	4%	3%	2%

Note: what follows is a breakdown of the agreement statements by county of residence (includes the “other” and “I don’t live in FL” as well).

Note: A breakdown of each statement with all six counties responses appears as Appendix IV in this report.

CITRUS COUNTY (2021 Pre/Post/ 2022 Annual)	Strongly Agree			Agree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
People should stay in their vessels on the river.	16%	30%	23%	26%	17%	27%	20%	17%	15%	29%	20%	19%	10%	10%	15%
Climbing on banks and sand point bars damages the river.	39%	33%	54%	33%	27%	19%	12%	20%	8%	12%	7%	15%	4%	7%	4%
Climbing trees and rope swings damages trees.	35%	30%	54%	28%	20%	23%	12%	20%	12%	16%	13%	8%	10%	10%	4%
Sandy white bottoms are a sign of an unhealthy spring.	2%	3%	8%	16%	10%	19%	39%	33%	50%	31%	30%	19%	12%	17%	4%
The number of vessels should be limited on the river.	24%	37%	35%	39%	37%	42%	20%	7%	8%	14%	10%	12%	4%	3%	4%
Vessels should only be allowed to park in designated spots on the river.	26%	33%	38%	39%	23%	35%	8%	7%	4%	24%	17%	12%	4%	13%	12%
The river is too crowded with visitors.	24%	33%	38%	29%	13%	31%	33%	30%	23%	10%	10%	8%	4%	7%	0%

HERNANDO COUNTY (2021 Pre/Post/ 2022 Annual)	Strongly Agree			Agree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
People should stay in their vessels on the river.	26%	19%	37%	19%	15%	16%	26%	12%	12%	23%	23%	23%	8%	10%	13%
Climbing on banks and sand point bars damages the river.	44%	37%	53%	26%	19%	18%	18%	10%	14%	8%	10%	7%	5%	4%	8%
Climbing trees and rope swings damages trees.	42%	29%	45%	26%	23%	30%	18%	12%	12%	8%	10%	7%	5%	6%	7%
Sandy white bottoms are a sign of an unhealthy spring.	15%	10%	14%	10%	8%	12%	47%	38%	47%	22%	16%	21%	5%	7%	7%
The number of vessels should be limited on the river.	42%	36%	53%	36%	22%	23%	10%	11%	9%	8%	6%	9%	4%	6%	6%
Vessels should only be allowed to park in designated spots on the river.	39%	29%	46%	28%	19%	23%	17%	14%	12%	11%	4%	13%	5%	14%	7%
The river is too crowded with visitors.	51%	38%	48%	24%	22%	24%	14%	12%	20%	8%	4%	6%	3%	3%	2%

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY (2021 Pre/Post/ 2022 Annual)	Strongly Agree			Agree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
People should stay in their vessels on the river.	10%	18%	17%	17%	11%	17%	26%	21%	17%	32%	26%	42%	15%	18%	8%
Climbing on banks and sand point bars damages the river.	22%	40%	25%	25%	16%	42%	29%	24%	17%	17%	13%	17%	7%	3%	0%
Climbing trees and rope swings damages trees.	17%	24%	42%	36%	21%	33%	30%	24%	25%	13%	21%	0%	2%	5%	0%
Sandy white bottoms are a sign of an unhealthy spring.	10%	11%	8%	3%	16%	17%	46%	34%	25%	26%	24%	50%	15%	11%	0%
The number of vessels should be limited on the river.	28%	37%	42%	46%	37%	42%	9%	8%	0%	13%	8%	17%	4%	5%	0%
Vessels should only be allowed to park in designated spots on the river.	17%	29%	25%	32%	24%	42%	12%	11%	8%	32%	24%	17%	7%	8%	8%
The river is too crowded with visitors.	32%	29%	33%	25%	37%	50%	20%	21%	0%	19%	8%	17%	4%	0%	0%

PASCO COUNTY (2021 Pre/Post/ 2022 Annual)	Strongly Agree			Agree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
People should stay in their vessels on the river.	10%	20%	28%	16%	11%	17%	30%	19%	17%	31%	22%	33%	13%	19%	6%
Climbing on banks and sand point bars damages the river.	21%	30%	56%	34%	26%	11%	26%	13%	17%	15%	17%	11%	5%	6%	6%
Climbing trees and rope swings damages trees.	28%	30%	39%	22%	20%	22%	24%	22%	17%	23%	9%	17%	5%	9%	6%
Sandy white bottoms are a sign of an unhealthy spring.	4%	9%	11%	16%	6%	17%	43%	44%	28%	25%	17%	39%	13%	15%	6%
The number of vessels should be limited on the river.	28%	30%	28%	36%	20%	33%	17%	13%	12%	15%	20%	22%	4%	7%	6%
Vessels should only be allowed to park in designated spots on the river.	20%	32%	39%	36%	30%	22%	18%	9%	6%	18%	15%	28%	9%	6%	6%
The river is too crowded with visitors.	27%	32%	44%	24%	26%	29%	33%	13%	6%	14%	15%	22%	3%	6%	0%

PINELLAS COUNTY (2021 Pre/Post/ 2022 Annual)	Strongly Agree			Agree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
People should stay in their vessels on the river.	10%	15%	19%	17%	19%	10%	28%	19%	22%	33%	25%	39%	11%	15%	10%
Climbing on banks and sand point bars damages the river.	27%	35%	39%	36%	35%	36%	20%	12%	16%	16%	7%	7%	1%	3%	3%
Climbing trees and rope swings damages trees.	29%	25%	39%	32%	28%	19%	22%	25%	13%	14%	12%	23%	3%	3%	7%
Sandy white bottoms are a sign of an unhealthy spring.	7%	6%	10%	8%	6%	19%	43%	54%	42%	36%	20%	19%	7%	6%	10%
The number of vessels should be limited on the river.	35%	33%	36%	42%	42%	42%	12%	7%	13%	9%	6%	3%	3%	3%	7%
Vessels should only be allowed to park in designated spots on the river.	27%	28%	26%	38%	33%	26%	13%	12%	16%	15%	13%	32%	7%	6%	0%
The river is too crowded with visitors.	27%	33%	32%	32%	30%	32%	29%	19%	32%	8%	7%	0%	4%	1%	3%

POLK COUNTY (2021 Pre/Post/ 2022 Annual)	Strongly Agree			Agree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
People should stay in their vessels on the river.	11%	23%	25%	23%	8%	8%	20%	23%	17%	23%	31%	25%	23%	15%	25%
Climbing on banks and sand point bars damages the river.	31%	31%	25%	20%	15%	17%	23%	31%	50%	23%	15%	8%	3%	8%	0%
Climbing trees and rope swings damages trees.	23%	31%	25%	29%	23%	33%	20%	23%	8%	20%	15%	25%	9%	8%	8%
Sandy white bottoms are a sign of an unhealthy spring.	11%	8%	8%	0%	23%	33%	54%	23%	33%	26%	39%	17%	9%	8%	8%
The number of vessels should be limited on the river.	23%	62%	25%	46%	31%	8%	11%	0%	33%	17%	8%	17%	3%	0%	17%
Vessels should only be allowed to park in designated spots on the river.	20%	46%	25%	31%	15%	8%	20%	8%	33%	20%	15%	17%	9%	15%	17%
The river is too crowded with visitors.	20%	46%	33%	29%	31%	25%	37%	23%	33%	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%

OTHER (2021 Pre/Post/ 2022 Annual)	Strongly Agree			Agree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
People should stay in their vessels on the river.	10%	24%	9%	10%	43%	15%	20%	19%	35%	40%	10%	29%	20%	5%	12%
Climbing on banks and sand point bars damages the river.	10%	52%	27%	20%	29%	38%	40%	19%	29%	20%	0%	5%	10%	0%	2%
Climbing trees and rope swings damages trees.	20%	67%	27%	10%	19%	32%	20%	14%	21%	40%	0%	17%	10%	0%	3%
Sandy white bottoms are a sign of an unhealthy spring.	0%	24%	9%	10%	19%	14%	60%	43%	42%	20%	14%	21%	10%	0%	14%
The number of vessels should be limited on the river.	50%	57%	26%	40%	29%	46%	10%	14%	11%	0%	0%	11%	0%	0%	8%
Vessels should only be allowed to park in designated spots on the river.	10%	38%	20%	20%	43%	35%	30%	14%	27%	30%	5%	17%	10%	0%	2%
The river is too crowded with visitors.	30%	52%	23%	30%	33%	42%	30%	10%	24%	10%	5%	11%	0%	0%	0%

I DON'T LIVE IN FL (2021 Pre/Post/ 2022 Annual)	Strongly Agree			Agree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
People should stay in their vessels on the river.	35%	33%	19%	13%	50%	14%	17%	17%	29%	30%	0%	38%	4%	0%	0%
Climbing on banks and sand point bars damages the river.	48%	67%	24%	22%	33%	29%	17%	0%	29%	13%	0%	14%	0%	0%	5%
Climbing trees and rope swings damages trees.	48%	33%	24%	22%	50%	24%	17%	17%	19%	9%	0%	29%	4%	0%	5%
Sandy white bottoms are a sign of an unhealthy spring.	4%	17%	10%	4%	17%	10%	57%	50%	38%	30%	17%	43%	4%	0%	0%
The number of vessels should be limited on the river.	35%	50%	14%	35%	0%	33%	17%	50%	33%	13%	0%	19%	0%	0%	0%
Vessels should only be allowed to park in designated spots on the river.	44%	33%	29%	35%	50%	19%	9%	17%	29%	9%	0%	24%	4%	0%	0%
The river is too crowded with visitors.	22%	33%	14%	13%	33%	14%	48%	17%	52%	17%	17%	14%	0%	0%	5%

Based on what you know or have heard, what challenges does the Weeki Wachee River face?

	2021 Pre-Survey	2021 Post-Survey	2022 Annual Survey
No challenges at the moment	10%	5%	4%
Too many kayakers	32%	33%	32%
Trampled vegetation	37%	44%	48%
Too many people recreating on the river at one time	53%	51%	63%
Worn down or eroded shorelines	39%	41%	51%
Climbing and rope swinging from trees	33%	37%	39%
Murky water	20%	16%	17%
Too many vendors on the river	19%	23%	22%
Too many motorized vehicles (e.g. boats, jet skis, etc.)	N/A	N/A	63%
Other*	18%	22%	12%

*Responses for “Other” are included in Appendix III.

Note: what follows is a breakdown by county showing the percentage of respondents identifying challenges the river faces.

(2021 Pre/Post/ 2022 Annual)	Citrus			Hernando			Hillsborough			Pasco			Pinellas			Polk		
No challenges at the moment	8%	7%	4%	7%	4%	6%	13%	8%	0%	18%	2%	6%	12%	12%	7%	3%	0%	17%
Too many kayakers	41%	47%	42%	55%	37%	46%	33%	24%	42%	31%	33%	50%	31%	30%	16%	29%	46%	47%
Trampled vegetation	63%	53%	65%	52%	43%	53%	36%	34%	42%	37%	48%	44%	44%	41%	29%	49%	39%	33%
Too many people	57%	57%	69%	66%	52%	69%	61%	50%	83%	55%	44%	61%	64%	54%	55%	49%	77%	58%
Worn down or eroded shorelines	39%	60%	65%	59%	40%	60%	35%	29%	58%	40%	50%	50%	46%	38%	39%	37%	39%	33%
Climbing and rope swinging from trees	43%	43%	62%	53%	41%	44%	32%	29%	50%	33%	43%	44%	38%	29%	36%	34%	54%	25%
Murky water	22%	20%	8%	25%	12%	23%	23%	11%	25%	20%	19%	17%	26%	16%	16%	14%	8%	8%
Too many vendors on the river	20%	17%	19%	36%	11%	23%	20%	18%	17%	18%	24%	17%	20%	16%	29%	20%	31%	8%
Too many motorized vehicles	N/A	N/A	69%	N/A	N/A	49%	N/A	N/A	58%	N/A	N/A	56%	N/A	N/A	71%	N/A	N/A	33%
Other	12%	20%	15%	12%	15%	12%	20%	37%	8%	28%	19%	11%	26%	33%	10%	20%	23%	8%

Note: Audiences in the “Other” or “I don’t live in FL” were excluded from this breakdown as they are not a primary target of the campaign.

How likely are you to take the following actions knowing it would protect the Weeki Wachee River?

2021 Pre/Post/ 2022 Annual	Very Likely			Somewhat Likely			Not at all Likely		
Stay in the vessel when possible.	63%	61%	67%	25%	25%	16%	12%	14%	17%
If you have to leave the vessel, tie off in shallow waters.	75%	81%	78%	20%	13%	18%	5%	6%	4%
Avoid docking on riverbanks.	67%	73%	75%	24%	17%	16%	8%	10%	9%
Don't trample vegetation or kick up silt.	88%	88%	88%	10%	10%	11%	2%	3%	1%
Avoid climbing on banks and walking on sand point bars.	65%	65%	74%	25%	24%	17%	10%	11%	9%
Don't climb trees or use rope swings.	80%	79%	80%	11%	10%	12%	9%	11%	8%
Don't throw out litter or leave anything behind.	98%	97%	98%	0%	<1%	1%	2%	2%	1%

Are you a member of or follow any of the following social media groups/pages? Select all that apply.

	2021 Pre-Survey	2021 Post-Survey	2022 Annual Survey
Friends of Weeki Wachee Preserve	10%	14%	24%
Weeki Wachee River Rescue Team	6%	8%	9%
Weeki Wachee River Rangers	6%	9%	7%
Weeki Crime Watch	2%	3%	6%
Friends of Weeki Wachee State Park	8%	12%	14%
Nature Coast Conservation	4%	6%	9%
Sierra Club Adventure Coast	1%	3%	8%
I do not belong to/follow any of these pages.	71%	62%	63%

Note: Data presented in this report removed respondents who reported be part of/following the following groups listed above: Friends of Weeki Wachee Preserve, Weeki Wachee River Rescue Team and Weeki Wachee River Rangers. They are included here to show the small percentage of the whole number of respondents they accounted for in the survey. Similar to previous surveys, the majority (63%) of respondents were not members/followers of these groups.

In the past six months, where did you see or hear messages about protecting the Weeki Wachee River? Select all that apply.

	2021 Post-Survey	2022 Annual Survey
I have not seen or heard messages about protecting the Weeki Wachee River.	12%	15%
Radio	3%	1%
Internet	22%	38%
Social media	63%	64%
Billboard	1%	1%
Television	8%	6%
Newspaper	11%	10%
Water Management District website	N/A	17%
Restaurant/Bar	2%	2%
Kayak shop	5%	4%
Vacation rental or hotel	1%	1%
Newsletter	2%	4%
Don't know	4%	5%

2021 Post/ 2022 Annual	Citrus		Hernando		Hillsborough		Pasco		Pinellas		Polk	
I have not seen or heard messages	23%	12%	4%	6%	13%	17%	7%	11%	19%	10%	15%	25%
Radio	10%	4%	3%	1%	3%	0%	2%	0%	1%	3%	8%	0%
Internet	10%	50%	16%	41%	24%	25%	20%	22%	30%	48%	31%	8%
Social media	67%	54%	59%	71%	63%	67%	74%	61%	58%	65%	77%	50%
Billboard	3%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	0%	8%	0%
Television	13%	0%	10%	12%	5%	0%	9%	11%	7%	10%	15%	8%
Newspaper	20%	19%	10%	17%	18%	17%	9%	0%	9%	10%	15%	0%
District website	N/A	35%	N/A	16%	N/A	25%	N/A	17%	N/A	10%	N/A	8%
Restaurant/bar	3%	0%	1%	3%	3%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	15%	8%
Kayak shop	3%	12%	4%	0%	13%	0%	2%	6%	4%	10%	8%	0%
Vacation rental or hotel	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	3%	8%	0%
Newsletter	3%	4%	3%	7%	0%	8%	4%	6%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Don't know	3%	4%	3%	3%	5%	8%	6%	6%	3%	0%	0%	25%

Appendix I: 2022 Weeki Wachee River Annual Survey

1. **When was the last time you visited the Weeki Wachee River?**
 - a. Within the last six months
 - b. 6 months to one year ago
 - c. More than one year to five years ago
 - d. More than five years ago [TERMINATE]
 - e. Don't know [TERMINATE]
 - f. Never visited [TERMINATE]

2. **In which Florida county do you live?**
 - a. Hillsborough
 - b. Pasco
 - c. Hernando
 - d. Pinellas
 - e. Citrus
 - f. Polk
 - g. I don't live in FL
 - h. Other [TEXT BOX]

3. **Which of the following resources do you use when planning a trip to the Weeki Wachee River?**
Select all that apply.
 - a. YouTube videos
 - b. Social media pages (Facebook, Twitter)
 - c. Search engines (Google, Bing)
 - d. Travel Websites
 - e. WeekiWachee.com
 - f. Visitors Bureau
 - g. Word of Mouth
 - h. Other [TEXT BOX]

4. **Please select up to three recreation activities you engage in while on the Weeki Wachee River.**
 - a. Boat (motorized vehicle)
 - b. Kayak or Canoe
 - c. Paddleboard
 - d. Fishing
 - e. Tubing [SKIP TO Q6]
 - f. Swim or snorkel [SKIP TO Q6]
 - g. Rope Swing [SKIP TO Q6]
 - h. Observe wildlife (manatees, birds etc.) [SKIP TO Q6]
 - i. Camp [SKIP TO Q6]
 - j. Hike [SKIP TO Q6]
 - k. Picnic [SKIP TO Q6]
 - l. Other [TEXT BOX] [SKIP TO Q6]

5. **If you exit your vessel, where do you leave it while on the river?**
 - a. I don't leave my vessel while I'm on the river.
 - b. Park on riverbanks or sand point bars

- c. Tie off in shallow waters
- d. Let it float freely
- e. Other [TEXT BOX]

6. **How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)**
- a. People should stay in their vessels on the river.
 - b. Climbing on banks and sand point bars damages the river.
 - c. Climbing trees and rope swings damages trees.
 - d. Sandy white bottoms are a sign of an unhealthy spring.
 - e. The number of vessels should be limited on the river.
 - f. Vessels should only be allowed to park in designated spots on the river.
 - g. The river is too crowded with visitors.
7. **Based on what you know or have heard, what challenges does the Weeki Wachee River face? Select all that apply.**
- a. No challenges at the moment
 - b. Too many kayakers
 - c. Trampled vegetation
 - d. Too many people recreating on the river at one time
 - e. Worn down or eroded shorelines
 - f. Climbing and rope swinging from trees
 - g. Murky water
 - h. Too many vendors on the river
 - i. Too many motorized vehicles (e.g. boats, jet skis, etc.)
 - j. Other [TEXT BOX]
8. **How likely are you to take the following actions knowing it would protect the Weeki Wachee River? (Very Likely, Somewhat Likely or Not at all likely).**
- a. Stay in the vessel when possible.
 - b. If you have to leave the vessel, tie off in shallow waters.
 - c. Avoid docking on riverbanks.
 - d. Don't trample vegetation or kick up silt.
 - e. Avoid climbing on banks and walking on sand point bars.
 - f. Don't climb trees or use rope swings.
 - g. Don't throw out litter or leave anything behind.
9. **Are you a member of any of the following social media groups? Select all that apply. [RANDOMIZE]**
- a. Friends of Weeki Wachee Preserve
 - b. Weeki Wachee River Rescue Team
 - c. Weeki Wachee River Rangers
 - d. Weeki Crime Watch
 - e. Friends of Weeki Wachee State Park
 - f. Nature Coast Conservation
 - g. Sierra Club Adventure Coast
 - h. I do not belong to/follow any of these pages.
10. **In the past six months, where did you see or hear messages about protecting the Weeki Wachee River? Select all that apply.**
- a. I have not seen or heard messages about protecting the Weeki Wachee River.
 - b. Radio
 - c. Internet

- d. Social media
- e. Billboard
- f. Television
- g. Newspaper
- h. Water Management District website at WaterMatters.org
- i. Restaurant/bar
- j. Kayak shop
- k. Vacation rental or hotel
- l. Newsletter
- m. Don't know

Appendix II: “Other” text responses Q3

- Cortez county parks to make sure Rogers is open
- Enjoy the water
- Flawed question.I don't PLAN a trip, I just go.
- Friend
- Grew up in the area.
- Hernando county parks website
- I live here on the water.
- Just go
- Kayak club
- Live 5 minutes away
- Lots of my friends from Miami have relocated there
- Map
- My experience
- Paddled 30+ years
- State Park
- State park to reserve launch
- Tides near me, underground weather
- Used to live there
- VRBO
- Vrbo, air b&b
- Weeki wachee springs state park

Appendix III: “Other” text responses Q7

- Enjoy life
- Scuba
- Relax
- Sometimes teach the tourist children how to catch blue crab

Appendix IV: Agreement statements all counties

People should stay in their vessels on the river. (2021 Pre/Post/2022 Annual)	Strongly Agree			Agree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
Citrus	16%	30%	23%	26%	17%	27%	20%	17%	15%	29%	20%	19%	10%	10%	15%
Hernando	26%	19%	37%	19%	15%	16%	26%	12%	12%	23%	23%	23%	8%	10%	13%
Hillsborough	10%	18%	17%	17%	11%	17%	26%	21%	17%	32%	26%	42%	15%	18%	8%
Pasco	10%	20%	28%	16%	11%	17%	30%	19%	17%	31%	22%	33%	13%	19%	6%
Pinellas	10%	15%	19%	17%	19%	10%	28%	19%	23%	33%	25%	39%	11%	15%	10%
Polk	11%	23%	25%	23%	8%	8%	20%	23%	17%	23%	31%	25%	23%	15%	25%

Climbing on banks and sand point bars damages the river. (2021 Pre/Post/2022 Annual)	Strongly Agree			Agree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
Citrus	39%	33%	54%	33%	27%	19%	12%	20%	8%	12%	7%	15%	4%	7%	4%
Hernando	44%	37%	53%	26%	19%	18%	18%	10%	14%	8%	10%	7%	5%	4%	8%
Hillsborough	22%	40%	25%	25%	16%	42%	29%	24%	17%	17%	13%	17%	7%	3%	0%
Pasco	21%	30%	56%	34%	26%	11%	26%	13%	17%	15%	17%	11%	5%	6%	6%
Pinellas	27%	35%	39%	36%	35%	36%	20%	12%	16%	16%	7%	7%	1%	3%	3%
Polk	31%	31%	25%	20%	15%	17%	23%	31%	50%	23%	15%	8%	3%	8%	0%

Climbing trees and rope swings damages trees. (2021 Pre/Post/2022 Annual)	Strongly Agree			Agree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
Citrus	35%	30%	54%	28%	20%	23%	12%	20%	12%	16%	13%	8%	10%	10%	4%
Hernando	42%	29%	45%	26%	23%	30%	18%	12%	12%	8%	10%	7%	5%	6%	7%
Hillsborough	17%	24%	42%	36%	21%	33%	30%	24%	25%	13%	21%	50%	2%	5%	0%
Pasco	28%	30%	39%	22%	20%	22%	24%	22%	17%	23%	9%	17%	5%	9%	6%
Pinellas	29%	25%	39%	32%	28%	19%	22%	25%	13%	14%	12%	23%	3%	3%	7%
Polk	23%	31%	25%	29%	23%	33%	20%	23%	8%	20%	15%	25%	9%	8%	8%

Sandy white bottoms are a sign of an unhealthy spring. (2021 Pre/Post/ 2022 Annual)	Strongly Agree			Agree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
Citrus	2%	3%	8%	16%	10%	19%	39%	33%	50%	31%	30%	19%	12%	17%	4%
Hernando	15%	10%	14%	10%	8%	12%	47%	38%	47%	22%	16%	21%	5%	7%	7%
Hillsborough	10%	11%	8%	3%	16%	17%	46%	34%	25%	26%	24%	50%	15%	11%	0%
Pasco	4%	9%	11%	16%	6%	17%	43%	44%	28%	25%	17%	39%	13%	15%	6%
Pinellas	7%	6%	10%	8%	6%	19%	43%	54%	42%	36%	20%	19%	7%	6%	10%
Polk	11%	8%	8%	0%	23%	33%	54%	23%	33%	26%	39%	17%	9%	8%	8%

The number of vessels should be limited on the river. (2021 Pre/Post/ 2022 Annual)	Strongly Agree			Agree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
Citrus	24%	37%	35%	39%	37%	42%	20%	7%	8%	14%	10%	12%	4%	3%	4%
Hernando	42%	36%	53%	36%	22%	23%	10%	11%	9%	8%	6%	9%	4%	6%	6%
Hillsborough	28%	37%	42%	46%	37%	42%	9%	8%	0%	13%	8%	17%	4%	5%	0%
Pasco	28%	30%	28%	36%	20%	33%	17%	13%	11%	15%	20%	22%	4%	7%	6%
Pinellas	35%	33%	36%	42%	42%	42%	12%	7%	13%	9%	6%	3%	3%	3%	7%
Polk	23%	62%	25%	46%	31%	8%	11%	0%	33%	17%	8%	17%	3%	0%	17%

Vessels should only be allowed to park in designated spots on the river. (2021 Pre/Post/ 2022 Annual)	Strongly Agree			Agree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
Citrus	26%	33%	39%	39%	23%	35%	8%	7%	4%	24%	17%	12%	4%	13%	12%
Hernando	39%	29%	46%	28%	19%	23%	17%	14%	12%	11%	4%	13%	5%	14%	7%
Hillsborough	17%	29%	25%	32%	24%	42%	12%	11%	8%	32%	24%	17%	7%	8%	8%
Pasco	20%	32%	39%	36%	30%	22%	18%	9%	6%	18%	15%	28%	9%	6%	6%
Pinellas	27%	28%	26%	38%	33%	26%	13%	12%	16%	15%	13%	32%	7%	6%	0%
Polk	20%	46%	25%	31%	15%	8%	20%	8%	33%	20%	15%	17%	9%	15%	17%

The river is too crowded with visitors. (2021 Pre/Post/ 2022 Annual)	Strongly Agree			Agree			Neither Agree nor Disagree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
Citrus	24%	33%	39%	29%	13%	31%	33%	30%	23%	10%	10%	8%	4%	7%	0%
Hernando	51%	38%	48%	24%	22%	24%	14%	12%	20%	8%	4%	6%	3%	3%	2%
Hillsborough	32%	29%	33%	25%	37%	50%	20%	21%	0%	19%	8%	17%	4%	0%	0%
Pasco	27%	32%	44%	24%	26%	28%	33%	13%	6%	14%	15%	22%	3%	6%	0%
Pinellas	27%	33%	32%	32%	30%	32%	29%	19%	32%	8%	7%	0%	4%	1%	3%
Polk	20%	46%	33%	29%	31%	25%	37%	23%	33%	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%