



Use Patterns and User Preferences of On-Site River Recreationists

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Interest in improving the Chicago River corridor for recreation and other benefits has been growing in recent years. Deciding how best to respond to this interest requires an understanding of current recreational visitors' perceptions and uses of the corridor. Toward this end, we interviewed 582 visitors engaged in a wide spectrum of activities at a range of sites throughout the Chicago River corridor. In addition to collecting data on recreational activities, our survey asked people about other characteristics of their use of the river, perceptions of the river corridor, and the river's importance in their enjoyment of recreation activities. Survey questions included both closed-ended and open-ended response formats. Survey sites were grouped into five areas: Skokie Lagoons, North Branch/North Shore Channel (NSC), Loop, Palos, and Cal-Sag areas.

Clear river corridor use patterns emerged. Most activity took place alone or in small groups. Many respondents visited frequently—half reported visiting the area at least weekly. Most drove to the site, except in the Loop where most walked. Visit length varied considerably, but overall, visits of an hour or less were most common.

The respondents to the on-site survey reported 50 different activities. These fell into eight major activity groups: biking, sitting and relaxing, fishing, walking/hiking, boating, having lunch, "other passive" activities (like people watching and nature observation) and "other active" activities (like baseball and frisbee). Some of these activities, like fishing and boating, are traditionally thought of as river recreation activities. In other activities, like relaxing and biking, the river may play an indirect, but still important, role. Activities varied considerably by area, and were somewhat dependent on the facilities available. The Skokie Lagoons area had the greatest variety of activities; the North Branch/NSC area had a combination of active sports and various passive uses like bringing children out to play; in the Loop area, the primary activity was taking a lunch break; in the Palos area biking dominated; and most respondents in the Cal-Sag area were power boaters.

The river was very important to most recreationists, particularly where access—either physical access or visual—was greatest. Increased river access was called for by some of the people we interviewed, particularly respondents in the Loop and power boaters, and the current access was appreciated by even more. The many attributes respondents mentioned—scenic beauty (including both skyline and natural scenery),

solitude, and appreciation of natural areas—may be provided in many ways, particularly in areas that lack open space. And, for many respondents, the recreation site where they were interviewed seemed to be an end in itself, and they obtained benefits without "going anywhere" along the river from the recreation site. These two things—the reported importance of scenic beauty, solitude and natural areas in a variety of settings, and that a variety of access points were well used and enjoyed—indicate that all new access need not be highly developed marinas, large parks, or complex trail systems (though these are valued by respondents). Access at street dead-ends, strategically placed benches, and other modest access can also provide these benefits.

Water quality was the predominant issue for respondents. Many of the people we spoke with seemed to feel that the river was quite polluted and a seemingly high number of respondents felt that direct industrial and other dumping was still a significant problem. Some were aware of the recent improvements in water quality, but it seemed that public perception of water quality was low overall. Such findings indicate the need for more public outreach about recent water quality improvements. Some of the recent improvements are less noticeable to the naked eye (and nose) and may need greater explanation to the public. Examples in this category include the changes in aquatic habitat from eliminating chlorine in the waste water treatment process. At the same time, the public's desire for a cleaner river should not be glossed over.

Facilities were also an important issue, ranking second to water quality in importance. Many different aspects of facilities were mentioned by respondents—some praised, others criticized. Respondents liked the bike trails at the Skokie Lagoons and Palos area, Loop visitors liked the benches and river walk there, and Cal-Sag respondents liked the boat ramps in their area. Changes to better accommodate certain activities were mentioned most, particularly stocking fish; increasing path maintenance; improving water fountain and toilet facilities; and increasing tables, grills, and the like. Major new development did not seem to be as important to these respondents as increased maintenance of existing facilities.

Scenic qualities and natural areas were important, and many respondents wanted natural areas improved (which may lead to improved scenic qualities as well). This was particularly true in the Loop where current recreation users called for more green areas. Restoring natural areas or providing more trees and formal landscaping were the nature-related changes suggested most often.

Crime and safety were not reported as major problems by the people we interviewed, except in the North Branch/NSC area, where many respondents requested additional attention to these issues. One possible approach to these concerns could be thinning vegetation in some areas to increase both visual access to the river and perceived safety. Other user conflicts identified by respondents focused on boaters, anglers, and the use of trails and other facilities. Boaters and anglers were specifically interested in stricter law enforcement for their fellow recreationists (e.g., enforcing no-wake zones).

The Chicago River corridor is an important recreational resource enjoyed by the Chicago area residents we interviewed. Respondents reported a wide range of activities and felt that the river was important to their enjoyment of these activities. Scenic beauty and the current facilities are important to, and appreciated by, current recreational visitors. Water quality concerns are prevalent and urgent to these visitors. Managers have opportunities to enhance the enjoyment of the river for current recreationists, and perhaps to open new possibilities for future recreationists.

PART 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES

The Chicago River corridor is used for recreation by many Chicago area residents. People enjoy the varied recreational opportunities the river provides, whether they live near the river or travel several miles to reach it. Some enjoy water-based activities like boating, others appreciate the opportunity to discover turtles with their children, while others find a lunch-time respite from the office on riverside plazas.

In recent years, two factors have led to calls for further enhancement of recreation opportunities along the river. First and foremost are the water quality improvements that have been made and the promising prospects for continued improvement. Second, increased direct use of the river for boating, canoeing, and fishing has been reported, and riverside bike trails are popular. Current recreation visitors' uses and perceptions of—and their concerns about—current river recreation opportunities can inform and help guide possible recreation improvements. This study was initiated to help develop an understanding of these perceptions, uses, and concerns.

The objectives of this study were to identify:

1. The range of activities people engage in along the river corridor.
2. River corridor use characteristics including access to the area, length of visits, distance traveled to the site, and frequency of use.
3. Users' perceptions of the river corridor and its importance to enjoyment of recreation activities.

STUDY METHODS

An on-site user survey provides information for the analysis of current users' activities, attitudes, and perceptions of the river corridor as well as the universe of current users (e.g., nearby residents to out-of-state visitors). Because our objective was to identify the full range of activities people were engaged in along the river corridor, we took a broad view of recreation and the settings in which it takes place (e.g., a lunch break along the river downtown as well as the more traditional fishing and baseball).

SAMPLING

A purposive sampling design was used to get adequate representation of individuals from different use and demographic subgroups as well as from a range of areas along the river. This design facilitates discovery of the current range of river corridor uses, can help delineate the population of current users (e.g. activities engaged in and local vs. regional use), and allows for comparison among user subgroups and areas (e.g., activity groups or gender).

SURVEY DEVELOPMENT AND PRETEST

A 24-item survey was developed by scientists at the USDA Forest Service North Central Research Station (NCRS) in conjunction with the ChicagoRivers partners (Appendix 3.1). The survey was field tested on 35 respondents. Minor revisions simplified both question wording and recording of the answers. The questionnaire included open-ended questions to capture the wide range of activities, user perceptions and attribute preferences, and closed-ended questions to measure attitudes about specific river-recreation related issues. Questions focused on three major areas: **river use characteristics** (activities, transportation to the site, distance traveled to the site and the time this took, visit length); **perceptions of the river** (the importance of the river, potential problems in the corridor, liked and disliked attributes, perceptions of recent improvements, and suggested changes for rivers in the Chicago area); and **demographics** (age, racial/ethnic background, income, residence).

INTERVIEW PROCEDURES

All interviews were conducted on-site and face-to-face, with the interviewer writing respondents' answers to open-ended questions verbatim. The interviews were conducted by a trained research assistant from the NCRS, with some assistance from Northeastern Illinois University students. Survey respondents were selected carefully, controlling for interviewer bias as much as possible, and ensuring that a representative sample of the recreation visitors were interviewed. A minimum number of interviews was established for each site, and a sampling interval was determined based upon the intensity of use at a given site. For instance, where there were few recreationists, each solo visitor or a member of each group was interviewed. In places with, or at times of, higher use, a predefined selection protocol was used (e.g., to interview the second person from the right in every other recreation group).

The face-to-face interviews took place throughout the river study area during May, June, and July of 1993. May, June, and July are believed to be the months when river corridor use is highest. For instance, approximately 60% of the annual bike trail use along the North Branch Bike Trail at the Skokie Lagoons occurs during these months. Interviewers were at each site on weekdays and weekends, during mornings and afternoons. Most sites were visited two or more times in each time period (e.g., weekday mornings).

Most recreationists (nearly 90%) who were approached agreed to participate in the survey. The primary reasons for refusal were lack of time and language barriers (primarily Spanish and Eastern European languages).

STUDY AREAS

Recreation sites in six of the the study reaches were chosen for the on-site survey (Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1). Four study reaches were not surveyed due to lack of access to areas near the river. The West and Middle Forks of the North Branch (Reaches 1 and 2) have a lot of public land along the river, but these areas are undeveloped and not easily accessible. The South Branch and the northern segment of the Sanitary and Ship Canal (Reaches 7 and 8) are highly industrialized areas with few recreational opportunities.

The survey sites were grouped into five areas for analysis (sites in Reaches 4 and 5 were grouped due to proximity). These are described below. We refer to *areas* in this report, not the river reaches used in other ChicagoRivers reports, because the sites selected were not intended to represent the entire river reach, but rather to capture the characteristics and sense of place of a smaller area in the corridor.

1. The Skokie Lagoons (Reach 3): The Lagoons are part of the Cook County Forest Preserves, located along the Skokie River north of Chicago. They are bounded by the Edens Expressway to the west, the Chicago Botanic Garden to the north, residential areas to the east, and a mixture of private golf courses, forest preserves, and residential areas to the south. Created as the largest WPA project in the country, the Lagoons are a popular recreation area for the Chicago metropolitan region. Survey sites included paved and unpaved trails, shore areas, and boat docks.

2. The North Branch/North Shore Channel (NSC) Area (Reaches 4 and 5): City parks and county forest preserves edge the river as it runs through residential and commercial areas on the north side of Chicago. For many residents, these open areas are a few minutes’ walk from their houses and apartments, and are as accessible as their back yards. Survey sites were either along the North Branch of the Chicago River or the North Shore Channel, and were between Lawrence and Peterson Aves. including the Chicago Park District’s Eugene Field and Legion Park, and LaBagh Woods, a Cook County Forest Preserve. Trails, developed facilities like ball areas, and unofficial river access areas were surveyed.

3. The Loop Area (Reach 6): The Chicago River flows through the heart of the city, by the popular Wrigley building plaza, the tour boat docks, and other open areas where people enjoy the river sights and sounds. Survey sites included Centennial Fountain; North Pier; and riverside cafes, restaurants, and plazas along the Chicago River between Lake Shore Dr. and Jackson Blvd.

4. The Palos Area (Reach 9): The Palos Forest Preserve is the largest open space in Cook County. Hiking and bicycle trails crisscross the preserve. The county’s only rock canyon can be found in Palos, as can areas of native vegetation being restored by volunteers and the Forest Preserve District. Sloughs, creeks, and portions of the Chicago River corridor offer water-based recreation. Residential, industrial, and commercial sites surround the Palos Forest Preserve. Portions of the I&M Canal bike trail that parallel the Sanitary and Ship Canal were surveyed (other recreation sites in this area were too far from the river corridor to include, and “user-made” riverside trails were not in use when interviewers were on-site).

5. The Cal-Sag Area (Reach 10): The Cal-Sag area has a mixture of industrial, commercial, and residential uses, with recreation and open spaces sprinkled throughout. Several smaller forest preserve sites are located in the area, as are private marinas, and large landfills that have served Chicago for decades. Survey sites include the Alsip boat landing, Beaubien Woods and Calumet Boating Center Cook County forest preserve areas, and private marinas near the O’Brien Locks.

TABLE 3.1
Survey areas

River reach	Survey site name	Number of people surveyed				
		Total (n)	Weekend am	Weekend pm	Weekday am	Weekday pm
3	Skokie Lagoons	148	12	77	29	30
4 & 5	North Branch/NSC	135	17	66	24	28
6	Loop area	165	18	45	47	55
9	Palos area	55	7	23	19	6
10	Cal-Sag area ¹	79	33	46	0	0

¹ The Cal-Sag Area was sampled on weekdays, but no recreationists were present.

At certain sites a particular type of activity predominated. For instance, the Palos area respondents were primarily bikers and the Cal-Sag area respondents were often power boaters. This reflects the nature of river access in these reaches: the I & M Canal bicycle trail in the Palos area and the marinas along the Cal-Sag channel were virtually the only recreation points near the waterways. The sample reflects these limitations. However, because interviewers were at each location morning and afternoon, on weekdays and weekends, and explored nearly all potential use areas, we are confident that the sample captures overall warm-weather use characteristics of these sites.



FIGURE 3.1
Map of study reaches with location of on-site surveys

CODING OF OPEN-ENDED SURVEY RESPONSES

Responses to open-ended questions such as “What things do you like best about this stretch of the river and the areas around it?” were coded using specific category codes developed to capture the full flavor of their original comment (survey questions 6, 8, 9, and 14, Appendix 3.1). For instance, “color/sound of water” was separate from “cool breeze/fresh air.” After data entry was complete, categories with few responses were grouped with other similar response categories: both “color/sound of water” and “cool breeze/fresh air” were grouped in “other nature-related” liked attributes.

We recorded multiple responses for each open-ended question. To analyze responses to open-ended questions by activity group (e.g., boaters), we assumed that the first activity reported was the respondents’ main activity (over two-thirds of the people we spoke with reported only one activity), and developed a set of variables based on this first activity. After an initial discussion of activities, we use these single-activity variables in this report.

ANALYSIS

Various statistical methods were used to determine any significant difference based on site, activity, or demographic groups (one-way tables, ANOVA, and cross tabulation with chi-square). We report the probability values in tables as appropriate; all differences discussed in this chapter are significant at the .05 level.

LIMITATIONS

Although the survey provides considerable valuable information for planning future recreation improvements of the river, there are several important limitations to keep in mind.

First, the survey does not, and was not designed to, provide information about the overall percentage of Chicago area residents who participate in various activities along the river. The sampling design does not allow for this kind of inference.

Second, responses to questions about rivers in the Chicago area (survey questions 13 and 14) seemed to focus on the river corridor at the interview site. For instance, responses to “What changes do you think most need to be done to make rivers in the Chicago area better for recreation?” included general comments like “clean it up” and specific suggestions like “we need a rest room here.” However, the responses are still useful, and provide many insights into respondents’ perceptions of changes in river quality, and changes they would like to see made to the entire Chicago River corridor.

Finally, special characteristics of winter use are not captured in this survey. Cross-country skiing and other winter activities were, of course, not reported. Site attributes that are liked and disliked and characteristics of recreationists may change with the season. To gather this information, this survey would need to be implemented in the other seasons.

PART II RESULTS OF THE OVERALL SAMPLE

A total of 582 surveys were completed; 344 (59%) on weekends and 238 (41%) on weekdays (Table 3.1). This section presents highlights of the overall sample. Tables in Appendices 3.2 and 3.3 provide detailed information on the responses of the overall sample by river use patterns, perceptions of the river, and demographics, as well as by area and activity groups.

DEMOGRAPHICS

We asked respondents about themselves—their age, place and length of residence, race, gender, and family income level (survey questions 18-24). The demographics of the respondents were similar to those in previous studies of forest preserve recreationists (Young and Flowers 1982). Still, these results characterize the sample only, not all users of the river corridor. Major characteristics of the sample are:

- The respondents were primarily white/European-American (78%). Black/African-American was the second largest racial/ethnic group (10%). The respondents at the North Branch/NSC area were most diverse, and the respondents at the Palos area were least diverse. A higher than overall percentage of the respondents were African-American in the Skokie Lagoons, Loop, and Cal-Sag areas; a higher percentage were Hispanic/Latino in the North Branch/NSC area; and a higher percentage were Asian-Americans/Pacific Islanders in the Skokie Lagoons and North Branch/NSC areas. Table 3.2 summarizes these groups by area.
- The largest age group of respondents were in their thirties (30%). Visitors 50 years or older made up 22% of the sample.

TABLE 3.2
Respondents from racial/ethnic groups, by area

Racial/ Ethnic Group ¹	Total	Skokie Lagoons	North Branch and NSC	Loop Area	Palos Area	Cal- Sag Area
		% reporting ²				
African- American/Black	10	13	6	11	0	15
Hispanic/Latino	6	3	14	3	7	1
Asian-American/ Pacific Islander	3	3	5	1	2	3
North American Indian	2	2	4	2	0	1
Euro-American/ white	78	78	70	81	89	80

¹ Differences by race/ethnicity across sites were significant: $\chi^2 = 46.63$, 20 df, $p < .01$; ² Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

TABLE 3.3
Activities reported by respondents¹

Major Activity Categories	Just passing through, commuting (8)	Picking up trash/recycling (1)
<i>Sitting, relaxing, resting (95)</i>	Talking, socializing, get together (8)	Playing an instrument (1)
<i>Bicycling (93)</i>	Play cards or board games/crafts (7)	Taking in fresh air (1)
<i>Fishing (71)</i>	Shopping (7)	Other Active Activities (90)
<i>Lunch hour/eating (69)</i>	Watch/meet people, “girl watching” (7)	Roller-blading (27)
<i>Walking, hiking (58)</i>	Studying (5)	Play baseball/softball (17)
<i>Boating (power) (54)</i>	Unorganized partying, drinking (5)	Jogging, running (11)
Other Passive Activities (276)	Waiting for someone (5)	Canoeing, kayak (10)
Watching park, general sightseeing (32)	Watch sports (5)	Frisbee (6)
Picnicking, barbecuing (27)	Photography (4)	Play volleyball (6)
Reading/writing (27)	Smoking (4)	Play basketball (3)
Sunbathing (27)	Bird, animal watching (3)	Play soccer (2)
Taking children out to play (22)	Participate in organized festival/event (3)	Play football (2)
Taking dog out to walk or play (22)	Dating, kissing, affection (2)	Waterskiing (2)
“Vacationing,” “hanging out” (15)	Boat tours (1)	Play other sports (1)
Working on car/boat (13)	Horseshoes (1)	Play tennis (1)
Working (paid—often reading) (11)	Leading a river tour (1)	Tubing (1)
	Listening to music (1)	Windsurfing (1)

¹ 806 responses were given. Up to five responses were coded per interview, all are reported here. Frequencies are given in parentheses. Activity groups used for comparison are in italics.

- Half of the respondents were Chicago residents. In the North Branch/NSC area, virtually all visitors were Chicago residents. The Palos Area visitors were predominantly suburban residents. In other areas, there were varying degrees of mix between Chicago and suburban residents.
- There were more men than women in the sample (62% male, 38% female).

RIVER USE CHARACTERISTICS

We asked river users about what activities they engaged in during their visit, how long they planned to stay on site, how often they visit, how they got there, and what size their group was (survey questions 1-6 and 15-17). Highlights of those results follow.

ACTIVITIES

Respondents reported engaging in 50 different activities (Table 3.3). The six most commonly mentioned activities were: walking/hiking, biking, motor boating, fishing, sitting and relaxing, and eating lunch. The remaining array of activities were grouped into “other passive” activities and “other active” activities. The “other passive” activities ranged from taking in fresh air to dog training, from trumpet practice to photography. The “other active” group included sports, canoeing, and other more vigorous activities. Activity highlights include:

- “Other passive” activities was the largest category, both in number of responses and number of activities mentioned. This suggests that river areas are used for many different kinds of activities—some structured, others unstructured. The most common passive activities were watching the park/sightseeing, picnicking, reading or writing, sunbathing, taking the kids or the dog out to play, and

“hanging out.” Some of these activities appear to be independent of the river; in others the river may be an integral part of the experience (for instance, watching the river flow by might have been important to someone who said they were “hanging out”). That so many different activities are engaged in along the river suggests that the river is a place that facilitates creativity and individual expression.

- Activities varied considerably by site; characteristics of the river and its corridor and available facilities affected this to some extent. The Skokie Lagoons had a mix of active and passive use; fishing and biking were important activities. “Other passive” activities were prominent at the North Branch/NSC area. Major activities in the Loop were eating lunch and relaxing. The Palos area had many cyclists and roller-bladers. Boating was the main activity in the Cal-Sag area. Table 3.4 summarizes the activity groups by area.

TABLE 3.4
Activity groups, by area¹

	Total	Skokie Lagoons	N. Branch and NSC	Loop Area	Palos Area	Cal-Sag Area
Activity		% reporting ²				
Other Passive	28	16	47	31	0	32
Bike	14	26	6	1	64	0
Sit/relax	13	4	13	29	0	4
Fish	11	29	10	1	2	5
Other active	10	10	13	2	22	1
Walk/hike	9	10	11	13	2	0
Motor boat	8	0	0	1	0	57
Eat lunch	7	4	0	21	0	1

¹Based on first response to activity questions.
²Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

TRANSPORTATION, VISIT LENGTH AND FREQUENCY, AND GROUP SIZE

Respondents varied greatly in their transportation to the site, their visit length, group size, and frequency of visiting the river. Respondents traveled to the area by a variety of means, stayed anywhere from a few minutes to several days, recreated alone or in groups as large as 200, and had come for the first time or nearly every day. Use pattern highlights include:

- Most of the recreation took place in small groups or individually. Groups of more than six people were reported by only 8% of respondents. Recreating alone was the predominant pattern in the Loop, but larger groups were most common in the North Branch/NSC area. Groups of two to six people were more common in the other areas. Children were more likely to be a part of the group in the North Branch/NSC and Cal-Sag areas.
- Most respondents drove to the area—including cyclists. The Loop was the only area where walking was the most common means of transportation to the area.
- Most visitors either lived or worked nearby (within one mile) *or* traveled over four and a half miles to the area. Visitors from nearby walked, drove, and biked to the area. Nearby use was most common in the North Branch/NSC area and in the Loop. The Skokie Lagoons, Palos, and Cal-Sag areas had more regional use.
- Half of the respondents were frequent visitors, coming to the area at least weekly. Daily visits were most common in the North Branch/NSC and Loop (the two areas with heavier local use).
- Visit length varied considerably by area and activity; visits of one hour or less were most common overall. Visits of less than an hour were the rule in the Loop. The longest visits were reported in the Cal-Sag area, where 15% planned overnight stays on their boats.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE RIVER

Respondents were asked three questions about their perceptions of the stretch of river where they were interviewed, and two questions about rivers in the Chicago area in general. Two open-ended questions were asked about what they liked and disliked about the site where they were interviewed (survey questions 8 and 9). Respondents were also asked closed-ended questions about the importance of the river to their enjoyment of their recreational activities that day, and about their perceptions of potential problems such as water quality interfering with their use and enjoyment of the river (survey questions 7 and 10). Questions about rivers in the Chicago area in general were used to assess what they thought most needed changing to improve the rivers for recreation, and whether they felt river recreational quality had improved, stayed the same, or gotten worse in the past few years (survey questions 13 and 14). Highlights from the sample include:

- The majority of the respondents—65%—indicated that the river in their area was “very important” to their enjoyment

of their recreation activity. It was particularly important to respondents in the Skokie Lagoons, Loop, and Cal-Sag areas.

- The qualities of the river mentioned most often as “likes” were scenic beauty, facilities (like parking, picnic areas, plazas, rest rooms), solitude/quiet, peacefulness, and other nature-related features (like landscaping). The importance of attributes varied by area: scenic qualities were more important in the Skokie Lagoons, Loop, and Palos areas; facilities were more important in the Loop and Cal-Sag areas; and opportunities for solitude were more important in the North Branch/NSC area.
- When asked what they did not like about the river, many respondents (32%) said “nothing.” Those that did express a dislike cited water pollution, poor facilities, user conflicts, and trash. Water pollution was mentioned the most in the Skokie Lagoons and Cal-Sag areas. Poor facilities were mentioned as a problem in all areas, but was *less* often mentioned in the Loop. User conflicts were more commonly reported in the North Branch/NSC and Cal-Sag areas.
- Water quality and garbage dumping were the most-cited problems that might interfere with the use and enjoyment of the site; they were mentioned by over half of the entire sample. Water quality was rated more of a problem in the southern areas (Cal-Sag and Palos). Dumping was rated a problem by at least half of the respondents in all areas.
- Respondents wanted a cleaner river. When asked what changes were needed to improve Chicago area rivers, 37% said clean up the water, and 9% said clean up the trash and the corridor. Activity- and facility-related improvements were also mentioned frequently.

PART III ISSUES OF MANAGERIAL INTEREST

Results of this survey can help managers deal with many issues about public use of the Chicago River Corridor. These general issues include:

- How important is the Chicago River to current recreation users? What is the nature of this importance, and what effect might this have on management?
- What is the public’s meaning of “clean?” Will they know a clean Chicago River when they see it? What emphasis should managers place on education and on remediation?
- How much access is desirable? What *kinds* of access—physical, visual, both? What problems might arise from, or be reduced by, increased access?
- How important are opportunities to experience nature and scenic beauty to current recreational users?
- What developments do current users most want to see? What level of development should be aimed for—large or small scale, riverside trails or pocket parks?
- Do people feel safe recreating along the river? Are there important safety concerns that need to be addressed?

These questions can not be fully answered by these survey results, but useful information is available. The issues discussed in this section are based on questions like these that we have been asked by managers and planners, as well as on prevalent themes in the survey responses. Particular attention is given to respondents' likes and dislikes of the specific site where they were interviewed; their perceptions of specific problems' effects on their recreational enjoyment of the interview site; their impressions of river recreational quality improvements, and the changes they would like to see made to rivers in the Chicago area. Respondents' comments and ideas in each of these areas can contribute to our understanding of the issues affecting current and potential use of the Chicago River (see Study Methods discussion and Appendix 3.1 for more detail on the survey questions).

Five key issue areas are discussed here: importance of the river to recreational enjoyment and river access issues; water quality; facilities and development; crime, safety, and user conflicts; and nature, natural areas, and scenic qualities. Each issue area will begin with a brief report of pertinent findings and then introduce relevant differences between respondents by survey area, activity, and demographic group.

IMPORTANCE OF RIVER USE AND ACCESS

The river was very important to most visitors; few rated the river as unimportant or detrimental to their recreational enjoyment. The importance of the river was associated with river access. Where access was greatest, so too was the importance of the river to recreationists. For this reason, importance and access are discussed together. This discussion is based on several survey items about the river at the interview site, including ratings of the river's importance and of some specific problem areas, the likes and dislikes mentioned, and comments about desired changes for Chicago area rivers (survey questions 8, 9, 10, and 14).

RECREATION USERS

When asked "how important do you feel the river here is to the enjoyment of your recreation activities today (very, somewhat, not important, or detrimental)?" the majority of respondents said "very." This was the case in most areas and for most activity groups. At least three-quarters of respondents in the Cal-Sag, Skokie Lagoons, and Loop areas rated the river as very important, while respondents in the North Branch/NSC and Palos areas reported more diverse feelings about the importance of river (Table 3.5).

Water-based activity groups like boaters and anglers were most likely to rate the river very important, and this is not surprising. But the river was also important to walkers and people on their lunch breaks (Table 3.6). The river was rated very important to more than 50% of the respondents in each activity group except biking. However, bikers' perceptions vary considerably by area: 62% of the cyclists in the Skokie Lagoons rated the river as very important, but only 26% of the cyclists in the Palos area did so.

TABLE 3.5
Importance of the river
for recreational enjoyment, by area¹

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important or detrimental ²
% reporting			
Cal-Sag area	82	14	4
Skokie Lagoons	80	15	5
Loop area	75	19	6
N. Branch/NSC area	40	23	37
Palos area	31	58	14
Total	65	22	13

¹Based on survey question 7; differences across sites significant at the .01 level.
²These two response categories are reported together because only 4 of the 582 respondents reported the river was "detrimental" to their enjoyment.

TABLE 3.6
Importance of the river
for recreational enjoyment, by activity¹

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important or detrimental ²
% reporting			
Fish	97	3	0
Motor boat	87	9	4
Lunch	76	21	2
Walk	73	15	12
Other Passive	59	15	26
Sit/relax	56	35	9
Other Active	55	31	15
Bike	43	44	13
Total	65	22	13

¹Based on survey question 7; differences across sites significant at the .01 level.
²These two response categories are reported together because only 4 of the 582 respondents reported the river was "detrimental" to their enjoyment.

ACCESS TO THE RIVER

Lack of open space on the river was rated a problem by at least a third of respondents in every area except the Skokie Lagoons, and by over half in the Cal-Sag area (Table 3.7). Although Cal-Sag respondents rated lack of open space along the river as a problem, they also appreciated the current access—they were the group most likely to mention it as an important attribute. Loop respondents were most likely to mention *increased* access as a way to improve Chicago area rivers. North Branch/NSC respondents were the only ones bothered by fences blocking access; almost a quarter of these respondents rated fences a problem. Unlike those in other areas, Skokie Lagoons respondents did not rate lack of open space along the river or fences blocking access as problems, and they were relatively unlikely to suggest increased access to Chicago area rivers as a change they wanted.

TABLE 3.7
River access, by area

Area	Likes access ^{1,3,5}	Wants increased river access ^{1,4,5}	Lack of open space a problem ^{2,3}	Fences a problem ^{2,3}
% reporting				
Skokie Lagoons	3	7	16	1
N. Branch/NSC area	3	9	32	24
The Loop area	7	10	34	12
Palos area	2	4	42	17
Cal-Sag area	23	3	55	6
Total	7	7	33	12

¹Differences across sites significant at the .01 level. ²Differences significant at the .05 level. ³From questions 8 & 10, based on the interview site. ⁴From question 14, based on Chicago area rivers in general. ⁵Sparse cells may affect stability of results.

TABLE 3.8
River access, by activity

Area	Likes access ^{1,3,5}	Wants increased river access ^{1,4,5}	Lack of open space a problem ^{2,3}	Fences a problem ^{2,3}
% reporting				
Walk	2	4	25	16
Bike	1	4	27	6
Motor boat	38	2	60	9
Fish	5	0	25	8
Sit/relax	3	7	37	13
Lunch	10	14	35	10
Other Passive	6	12	30	12
Other Active	4	11	33	22
Total	7	7	33	12

¹Differences across sites significant at the .01 level. ²Differences significant at the .05 level. ³From questions 8 & 10, based on the interview site. ⁴From question 14, based on Chicago area rivers in general. ⁵Sparse cells may affect stability of results.

For activity groups, access was most important to boaters—over a third mentioned access as a liked attribute (Table 3.8). A majority of boaters also rated lack of open space along their stretch of the river as a problem. Access was important for recreationists engaged in other activities as well. At least one-quarter of respondents in each activity group rated lack of open space along their stretch of the river as a problem. This was particularly a problem for people on-site to eat lunch or to sit and relax. “Other active” recreationists were most likely to rate fences blocking their access to the river as a problem.

DISCUSSION

Importance of the river and access to it appear to be linked. The areas with the highest ratings of the river’s importance were also the areas where physical or visual access was greatest. For instance, in the Cal-Sag and Skokie Lagoons areas, it is easy to get to the river’s edge, and each area has boat ramps. Similarly, visual access was high in the Loop and, again, the Skokie Lagoons—it is easy to see the river from trails and plazas, and therefore easier to enjoy its presence.

Activity groups, too, show a clear association between physical or visual access and importance of the river. Boaters and anglers, who rated the river as very important, need direct access to the river. Walkers and people on their lunch breaks, who also rated the river as important, were generally in the Loop or Skokie Lagoons—two areas with higher levels of visual access to the river. And the greater visual access in the Skokie Lagoons may explain some of the difference in river-importance ratings between cyclists on the Palos area bike trails and those on the Skokie area trails.

In the North Branch/NSC and Palos areas, two areas where the river was rated less important, several factors limit accessibility. Both areas have dense vegetation along the river, are often fairly steeply banked, and the river is lower than the prevailing grade, making visual access of the channel more difficult. Neither the North Branch/NSC area or the Palos area has accommodations for direct access to the river, although informal access points have been created, such as the low-head dam on the North Branch/NSC near Foster Avenue for fishing.

The river is also important to different activity groups whether or not the activity depends on water. For instance, neither walking nor taking a lunch break relies on the river the way that boating does, but respondents in both of these activity groups rated the river as very important to their recreational enjoyment.

Although increased access may be desirable in some areas, it could also bring difficulties. For instance, crowding may become more of an issue with additional use, and safety issues may also be affected.

In our study, crowding was not rated as a significant problem in any area except the Skokie Lagoons on Sundays, so the possibility of crowding as a problem may be slight. But, the potential of this is difficult to gauge with this data.

Increased access could also affect perceptions of safety. Like crowding, concerns about personal safety were limited in our results. Safety may be perceived as better with more people around or worse due to more strangers in the area. Dense vegetation can also play a role in perceived safety; this will be discussed further in the crime, safety, and user conflict issue area.

The increased river access called for by many respondents may be provided in many ways, not just by highly developed marinas and large parks. Access at street dead-ends, strategically placed benches, and other modest access can provide the scenic beauty, solitude, appreciation of natural areas, and other attributes desired by users. Access need not always be a trail or access to in-stream use of the river; some recreationists just enjoy a site without “going anywhere” along the river.

WATER QUALITY

Water quality is a major issue to the recreational users of the Chicago River that we interviewed. Many respondents’ comments echo the original Clean Water Act’s goals of achieving

fishable, swimmable waters. Although some were aware of recent water quality improvements, many were not. Few, however, thought that water quality in Chicago area rivers had gotten worse. A gap seems to exist between the progress that has been made and the public perception of that progress. At the same time, recreation users' desires for even cleaner water were apparent.

Several different interview questions provided information about respondents' perceptions of the larger issue of water quality. Some focused specifically on the stretch of the river where the interview took place; others dealt with rivers in the Chicago area in general. Concerns about dumping along the banks and water odor, comments about water pollution, and perceived improvements in Chicago-area river recreational quality all provide insights into respondents' overall assessment of water quality (survey questions 8-10 and 13-14). Water quality and dumping garbage in the river and along the banks were very important issues to many people we interviewed in every area. Water odor was a very important issue in some areas, but not in others. In order to look at water quality as an overall issue, we developed an index that averages the percent of the sample who indicated that water quality was a problem on the separate items dealing with water quality (Table 3.9).

Although water quality was a critical issue, the news is not all bad. Not only were respondents in some areas less concerned about water quality, but a third felt that, overall, the rivers in the Chicago area had improved for recreation, and some specifically mentioned that they like the fact that the river corridor is clean or getting cleaner. As with water quality as a problem, we developed an index that averages the percent of the sample who indicated improvements in water quality on the separate water quality items (Table 3.10). These observations of recent improvements, and desire for continued cleanup, however, often accompanied negative impressions of present water quality.

	WQ ¹ mentioned by respondent ²	WQ rated a problem ²	Dumping rated a problem ²	Water odor rated a problem ²	Want improved WQ ³	Overall WQ Deterior- ation Index avg. % ⁴
	%					
Cal-Sag area	33	67	67	43	52	52
Palos area	16	66	76	56	31	49
Skokie Lagoons	22	56	61	18	39	39
N. Branch/ NSC area	13	46	61	35	42	39
The Loop area	19	55	51	25	32	36
Total sample	20	56	60	31	38	41

¹WQ = water quality. ²From questions 9 and 10, based on the interview site. ³From question 14, based on Chicago area rivers in general. ⁴Average of columns 1-5.

	Area river quality has improved ³ %	The river is getting cleaner ² %	Overall WQ ¹ Improvement Index avg. % ⁴
Cal-Sag area	56	11	34
The Loop area	36	11	24
Skokie Lagoons	34	5	20
Palos area	31	4	18
N. Branch/NSC area	22	10	16
Total sample	34	9	22

¹WQ = water quality. ²From question 8, based on the interview site. ³From question 13, based on Chicago area rivers in general. ⁴Average of columns 1 and 2.

WATER QUALITY BY AREA

Respondents in the Cal-Sag area were the most likely to feel that water quality was a problem (Table 3.9). Respondents in these areas mentioned it most often, and when asked, were most likely to rate it as a major problem. At the same time, respondents in this area saw both the most improvement in Chicago-area river quality, and most wanted continued water quality improvements in area rivers (Table 3.10). In short, they saw the progress that had been made, liked it, and wanted more done to solve what they saw as a still serious problem. With other study areas, the picture is less clear. Different aspects of the water quality issue were critical in some areas and unimportant in others. The Palos area ranks second in the overall water quality deterioration index. Respondents in this area were more concerned with dumping and water odor than were respondents in the other surveyed areas, and Palos respondents rated water quality a problem almost as often as Cal-Sag respondents. The remaining three areas had very similar water quality deterioration index totals. Respondents at the Skokie Lagoons were the second most likely to mention water quality as a problem; dumping was also a concern. Respondents in the North Branch/NSC area rated water odor as a particular problem, were the second most likely group to want improved water quality in Chicago area rivers, were much less likely to rate Chicago-area river quality as improved, and considered dumping along the river in their area a problem. Respondents in the Loop were, overall, the least concerned with water quality, and ranked second in their perceptions of recent improvements.

WATER QUALITY BY ACTIVITY

Boaters, "other active" recreationists, and walkers differed the most from other activity groups in their perceptions of water quality (Table 3.11). Boaters in particular were most likely to think that water quality was a problem. Their responses mirror those from the Cal-Sag area—seeing many problems as well as seeing recent improvements (Table 3.12). This is not surprising given that 57% of respondents in the Cal-Sag area were boaters. Still, "other active" recreationists were more likely than boaters to rate water quality and water odor as problems.

Water quality was much less of an issue for walkers—as a group, they were the least concerned about all of the water quality related issues except odor. Walkers were also second only to boaters in their likelihood of noticing recent water quality improvements in Chicago area rivers (Tables 3.11 and 3.12).

Although anglers were similar to the total sample in the overall water quality index, they mentioned water quality as a dislike often—second only to boaters in frequency. This suggests that water quality has a greater importance to anglers, even though their overall opinion on all factors affecting water quality was average. Anglers were also much *less* likely

TABLE 3.11
Perceptions of water quality deterioration,
by activity

	WQ ¹ mentioned by respondent ²	WQ rated a problem ²	Dumping rated a problem ²	Water odor rated a problem ²	Want improved WQ ³	Overall WQ Deterior- ation Index avg. % ⁴
	%					
Motor Boat	34	66	68	43	51	52
Other Active	26	68	62	49	33	48
Lunch	24	67	60	31	43	45
Bike	14	54	64	41	36	42
Fish	27	53	66	16	36	40
Other Passive	18	53	56	27	41	39
Relax	15	59	53	28	39	39
Walk	11	37	46	21	27	28
Total Sample	20	56	60	31	38	41

¹WQ = water quality. ²From questions 9 and 10, based on the interview site. ³From question 14, based on Chicago area rivers in general. ⁴Average of columns 1-5.

TABLE 3.12
Perceptions of water quality improvements,
by activity

	Area river quality has improved ³ %	The river is getting cleaner ² %	Overall WQ ¹ Improvement Index avg. % ⁴
Motor Boat	55	9	32
Walk	39	14	27
Lunch	38	7	23
Bike	42	2	22
Other Passive	33	10	22
Relax	24	13	19
Fish	27	8	18
Other Active	27	7	17
Total Sample	34	9	22

¹WQ = water quality. ²From question 8, based on the interview site. ³From question 13, based on Chicago area rivers in general. ⁴Average of columns 1 and 2.

to feel that river quality in the metropolitan area had improved, and they were twice as likely as the overall sample to rate area river quality as having gotten *worse*.

RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SOURCES OF DUMPING AND POLLUTION

Respondents' feelings about water quality problems and the source of the pollution are shown in their responses to the open-ended questions about what they dislike about the site where they were interviewed and what changes they want for rivers in the Chicago area. The perception that illegal dumping and industrial pollution are common occurrences seemed widespread. Comments included: "stop industrial dumping," "pollution laws enforced—change laws, make 'em stronger," "control dump sites and pollution," "stop industrial runoff/drainage," "less chemical dumping," "clean debris, pollution, old beds, cars etc." and "less pollution—EPA get a handle on factories."

WATER QUALITY BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Respondents in their teens or twenties were more likely to consider water quality a serious problem than those in older age groups. Also, the percentage of respondents rating water quality as a problem—major or somewhat—declined through the age categories. People of color were more likely to rate Chicago area river quality as having gotten worse, which is not surprising because 30% of these respondents were anglers, a group with similarly low impressions of improvements in river quality.

DISCUSSION

Over the past decade, many significant water quality improvements have been made throughout the corridor. Some of these improvements are readily apparent, such as the cleaning of trash from the river by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District's skimmer boats, and the reduction in solid waste in the river due to their Deep Tunnel project. Other improvements are less discernible to the average person, but are none the less important, such as increased dissolved oxygen concentrations and decreased ammonia levels. Together, these improvements are significant and have important ramifications for recreational use of the river system.

These improvements have been noticed by some respondents. Although we asked about perceived improvements to rivers in the Chicago area in general (survey question 13), the response patterns indicated that respondents often answered with the stretch of river where interviewed in mind. Where the respondent was most familiar with the river, or the changes were most visible—litter cleanup in the Loop, reduced pollution and dumping in the Cal-Sag area—the perception of improved quality was greater. Views on river quality improvements differed between boaters and anglers. Boaters perceived increased quality more than other activity groups, perhaps because they have more direct contact with the water. However, anglers, too, come in close contact with the water, and many of them perceive river recreation quality as worse than several years ago. Yet, anglers and boaters are very similar in their perceptions of dumping as a major issue.

Responses to open-ended questions showed that perceptions of the effectiveness of current environmental laws and the successful efforts of local and federal agencies to control point-source pollution may not accurately reflect the actual changes in the area's waterways. Still, some of the areas in the survey, such as the Cal-Sag area, do face serious pollution problems. Respondents there were aware of this. But comments about industrial dumping and other pollution were made in each area we surveyed in the Chicago River corridor, even if industry was relatively far away.

Water quality was *the* predominant issue for the recreationists we interviewed. Some of our findings clearly show the great need for more public outreach about recent water quality improvements. Some of these improvements are less noticeable to the naked eye (and nose) and may need greater explanation to the public. Examples in this category include the changes in aquatic habitat from eliminating chlorine in the waste water treatment process.

Public outreach and education may improve general understanding of the positive trends in water quality. But outreach alone will not address the concerns of many river corridor recreationists about water quality or their interest in continued water quality improvements. The respondents clearly want continued cleanup.

FACILITY AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Facilities were important to the people we interviewed but were also sometimes seen as problems. Respondents rated lack of facilities such as benches and paths third to dumping and water quality as overall problems, mentioned facilities as both likes and dislikes, and suggested many facility-related changes (e.g., maintenance) and specific activity-related changes (e.g., stocking fish) to improve Chicago area rivers (survey questions 8-10 and 14). These responses can help guide planning for specific areas or activities.

FACILITY ISSUES BY AREA

Just over a third of Skokie Lagoon respondents rated lack of facilities a problem, and they were also most likely to mention poor facilities as a disliked feature of the area. Facility-related comments include: “[I] prefer a walking path isolated from the bike path,” “[I’d like] more water access for canoes, boat rentals, and more space between the dams.” A third of the respondents at the Skokie Lagoons suggested activity-related changes to improve Chicago area rivers (Table 3.13). They particularly wanted fish stocked in the Lagoons (bluegill, crappies, northern, muskie, and various kinds of bass).

North Branch/NSC respondents complained about the lack of water fountains and rest rooms, and were most likely to mention facility-related changes. Comments include: “Peterson Park has a nice washroom. We should have one here, too.” They also indicated a need for park furniture: “[I’d like] a porta-potty, grills, and picnic tables.”

Respondents in the Loop liked the facilities available to them—they mentioned facilities as a liked attribute more often than respondents in other areas. Comments include: “I really just like the water; I also appreciate the tables set up along the river, and all the other areas where the public can enjoy the river.” Still, there were some complaints. Some indicated that Lower Wacker Dr. and the empty lot behind it was unsightly (the lot is now a golf course), or that they were frustrated that the riverwalk was not continuous. One respondent said, “clean it up a bit, plant more trees, [put in] more benches.”

In the Palos area, the bike trails were liked by many—not surprising as we were talking primarily with bikers. But Palos respondents also reported a need for more washrooms and drinking fountains: “There’s no toilet at this place!” They rated lack of facilities and boat ramps as a bigger problem than in most other areas: “We could use some boat launches and restaurants.” When making suggestions for changes, however, these respondents rarely returned to the facilities issue—their percentages of facility- and activity-related changes are some of the lowest of the areas (Table 3.13).

TABLE 3.13
Facility likes and dislikes, by area

	Likes ²		Dislikes ²		Problems ²		Changes ^{3,5}	
	Facilities ¹	Trails ¹	Poor facilities	Toilets ¹ water fountain ^{1,4}	Lack of facilities	Lack of boat ramps ¹	Facility-related ¹	Activity-related ¹
	Percent reporting							
Skokie Lagoons	10	10	25	5	37	17	10	33
N. Branch/NSC area	20	1	20	12	39	19	27	19
The Loop area	39	0	10	2	48	13	15	12
Palos area	7	40	22	26	56	42	7	13
Cal-Sag area	33	0	19	1	62	44	14	33
Total	20	6	17	8	46	22	15	22

¹Differences across sites significant at the .01 level. ²From questions 8, 9, & 10, based on the interview site. ³From question 14, based on Chicago area rivers in general. ⁴Sparse cells may affect stability of results. ⁵Facility-related changes refer to general issues like maintenance and related issues, while activity-related changes refer to activity-specific recommendations like stocking fish.

The Cal-Sag respondents liked the boat ramps, docks, and marinas: “[This is the] friendliest marina, a nice group of business owners, it’s kept up clean and nice, not dealing with drunk rowdies.” Still, these respondents rated lack of facilities and boat and canoe landing areas as problems more often than in any other area. The changes they suggested were more often specifically boating-related changes. These included removing underwater obstacles and increasing the number of boat fueling areas and docks: “[We need] more marinas—revitalize deserted industrial sites.”

FACILITY ISSUES BY ACTIVITY

Some of the activity groups’ facility-related responses were not surprising: Cyclists liked the bike trails, anglers were very interested in stocking the fishing areas, and boaters were most likely to rate lack of boat ramps a problem (Table 3.14). But other activity group responses were less predictable.

People on site to walk and hike were somewhat more likely to mention poor facilities as a dislike, but they were the activity group least likely to rate lack of facilities as a problem. Cyclists mentioned poor facilities and lack of toilets and water fountains as dislikes. People on their lunch breaks mentioned facility-related likes most often—usually referring to the benches and plazas available to them along the river in the Loop. “Other active” recreationists mentioned poor facilities, lack of toilets, and lack of water fountains as dislikes, and they rated lack of boat ramps a problem nearly as often as boaters did.

DISCUSSION

Facilities were an important issue, ranking only behind garbage dumping and water quality. But the respondents focused on maintaining existing facilities; many specifically mentioned garbage pickup and trail maintenance. They were

less interested in developing a new, large-scale complex of shops, boat slips, and other entertainment facilities like the North Pier development (although some did mention an interest in this type of facility development). There is some interest in additional boating facilities as indicated by the “other active” recreationist group’s interest in more boat ramps, and the Skokie Lagoon and North Branch/NSC visitors’ interest in canoeing and boating related facilities (e.g., rentals).

One of the clear interests of current users was in more and better toilet and drinking water facilities in several areas (particularly the Palos and North Branch/NSC areas), and more benches, tables, or grills in most areas. Changes to better accommodate certain activities, particularly by stocking fish, and other changes like path maintenance, water fountain and toilet improvements, and an increase in tables, grills and the like, were the changes mentioned most. Garbage pick up and trail maintenance were specifically mentioned by many respondents.

CRIME, SAFETY, AND USER CONFLICTS

Concerns about crime and safety issues could affect the recreational use of the river corridor. We asked current recreationists whether or not personal safety (e.g., concern about attack), public safety (e.g., concern about falling in the water), or vandalism were problems at the site where they were interviewed (survey question 10). Respondents also offered crime, safety, and user conflict related information when asked about their likes and dislikes about the river corridor and when they suggested changes for rivers in the Chicago area (survey question 8, 9, and 14).

TABLE 3.14
Facility likes and dislikes, by activity

	Likes ²		Dislikes ²		Problems ²		Changes ³	
	Facilities ^{1,4}	Trails ^{1,4}	Poor facilities	Toilets ^{1,4} water fountain ^{1,4}	Lack of facilities	Lack of boat ramps ¹	Facility-related ^{1,4}	Activity-related ^{1,4}
	Percent reporting							
Walk/hike	29	6	23	2	33	12	19	19
Bike	12	30	24	15	49	27	8	21
Motor Boat	32	0	19	0	55	51	11	26
Fish	6	3	14	0	39	8	17	55
Sit/relax	28	0	15	5	51	11	13	12
Lunch	40	0	12	0	57	17	19	5
Other Active	7	13	25	17	47	46	15	11
Other Passive	31	0	17	10	43	19	19	22
Total	20	6	17	8	46	22	15	22

¹Differences significant at the .01 level. ²From questions 8, 9, & 10, based on the interview site. ³From question 14, based on Chicago area rivers in general. ⁴Sparse cells may affect stability of results. ⁵Facility-related changes refer to general issues like maintenance and related issues, while activity-related changes refer to activity-specific recommendations like stocking fish.

CRIME AND SAFETY

Concerns about crime were most significant in the North Branch/NSC area. Those concerns included gangs, vandalism, and the need for more police protection (Table 3.15). Comments from North Branch/NSC area respondents include: “[There are] too many criminal elements, winos, gangs,” and “Control the gangs—weekends and weekdays, late afternoon and evenings.”

In the Palos area, crime and safety were also concerns, but were less often mentioned than in the North Branch/NSC area. About one-quarter of Palos respondents rated public and personal safety as problems. In the Cal-Sag area, public safety was rated a problem by one-fifth of the respondents. Still, most respondents in each area did not report concerns about accident or assault as problems.

USER CONFLICTS

Respondents mentioned several forms of non gang-related user conflicts, from disregard of no-wake zones to dog owners who let their dogs run off the leash. Both boaters and anglers wanted increased surveillance of other boaters’ and anglers’ activities—and these two groups were the most likely to see non gang-related user conflicts as a problem (Table 3.16). Many boaters mentioned a need for licensing of boaters, with required education and increased enforcement of existing laws. No wake zones and drunk driving were particular concerns: “[Those] ding-a-lings not knowing what a no-wake area is,” “Enforce tougher laws about drinking on the boat.” Anglers, too, wanted increased enforcement—specifically in enforcing catch limits and checking that all anglers have the necessary licenses. Trail conflicts were another area of user conflicts. Some walkers felt that cyclists went too fast and that the trails were crowded. Some respondents wanted wider or separate trails for different uses (e.g., separate biking and walking paths).

TABLE 3.15
Safety-related issues, by area

	Public safety like water accidents a problem ³	Personal safety a problem ^{1,3}	Graffiti, vandalism a problem ^{1,3}	Dislikes user conflicts ^{1,3}	Mentioned user conflict related changes ^{2,4}
Percent reporting					
Skokie Lagoons	9	14	14	14	7
N. Branch/NSC area	7	32	62	41	15
The Loop area	7	12	15	4	4
Palos area	26	27	25	6	9
Cal-Sag area	20	9	15	34	15
Total	11	18	26	17	10

¹Differences significant at the .01 level. ²Differences significant at the .05 level. ³From question 9 and 10, based on the interview site. ⁴From question 14, based on Chicago area rivers in general.

TABLE 3.16
Safety-related issues, by activity

	Public safety like water accidents a problem ⁴	Personal safety a problem ^{1,4}	Graffiti, vandalism a problem ^{1,4}	Dislikes user conflicts ^{1,4}	Mentioned user conflict related changes ^{2,5}
Percent reporting					
Walk/hike	10	29	25	19	5
Bike	15	15	19	8	11
Motor boat	12	9	11	23	9
Fish	5	17	20	30	9
Sit/relax	9	17	27	13	9
Lunch	2	14	17	7	7
Other Active	18	23	44	18	13
Other Passive	9	16	33	27 ³	10
Total	11	18	26	17	10

¹Differences significant at the .01 level. ²Differences significant at the .05 level. ³Reflects North Branch/NSC responses, primarily focused on gang problems. ⁴From question 9 and 10, based on the interview site. ⁵From question 14, based on Chicago area rivers in general.

DISCUSSION

Crime is a major issue in urban areas, and therefore could be expected to be a very important issue to recreationists in Chicago, but this was generally not the case for the recreationists we interviewed. Crime and safety were a concern in some areas (particularly the North Branch/NSC area), but were not critical issues to many of the current recreational users that we interviewed. The issues of crime and safety may converge with lack of visual access to the river in the North Branch/NSC area. Previous research shows that perceptions of safety in parks are often linked to dense vegetation (Schroeder and Anderson, 1984; Talbot and Kaplan, 1984). Dense vegetation may be feared as a place where criminals can hide, or guns and drugs can be stashed. Increased visual access could, therefore, lead to a greater sense of safety. Thinning the vegetation along the river—as in the North Branch/NSC area where safety is an issue and visual access to the river is low—would be one way of increasing visual access, and perhaps increasing perceptions of safety as well. Of course, different management of vegetation will not eliminate gangs and other safety issues. But it could affect the impact of these concerns on recreation enjoyment along the river corridor.

Whether or not fencing helps personal safety has been an issue for the MWRD and other managers (Kelly and Bielenberg, 1993). Do fences protect people from accidents along the river, or hinder their rescue when these accidents occur? Respondents to this survey did not make a connection between safety and fences: they did not call for increased fencing, or for large-scale removal of existing fences (Table 3.7). If a problem, fences are seen more as an issue of access.

Other user conflicts identified by respondents focused on boaters, anglers, and the use of trails and other facilities. These can be managed in several ways including public education or creating new facilities (like separate walking paths).

While safety is always important, it was not a primary concern for most of those we interviewed.

NATURAL AREAS AND SCENIC QUALITIES

The opportunity to experience nature was important to many respondents, and the river—whether flowing between high-rises or through forest preserves—provided these opportunities. Scenic qualities were also important to many respondents; these qualities were the attributes mentioned most often as liked about the interview site. Still, users differed in their appreciation of scenic qualities and natural areas currently available at their interview site and in the enhancements they would like to see made to rivers in the Chicago area (survey questions 8-10 and 14).

NATURAL AREAS AND SCENIC BEAUTY BY AREA

The lack of natural areas along the river was rated a problem by at least a quarter of the respondents everywhere except the Skokie Lagoons. Loop respondents expressed the most concern—55% rated lack of natural areas for vegetation and wildlife a problem (Table 3.17). Loop respondents also most often mentioned wanting nature-related *changes to* improve Chicago area rivers. This is another example where the respondents' comments seemed to refer to the specific site rather than to Chicago area rivers in general: they suggested restoring natural areas and increasing the amount of landscaping and trees. At the same time, many of these respondents appreciated the changes made recently: "I like the recent improvements, the hotels, park areas, seating," and "It may be in the middle of the city, but you wouldn't know it." Loop respondents also often mentioned scenic qualities as an attribute they liked about their site.

Scenic qualities and nature-related attributes were not mentioned often in any of the open-ended questions by respondents in the Cal-Sag area, but this response group was second highest in rating lack of natural areas a problem. This pattern

TABLE 3.17
Nature-related issues, by area

	Likes scenic qualities ^{1,3}	Likes nature-related features				Dislikes nature-related feature ^{1,3}	Lack of natural areas a problem ^{1,3}	Suggested improved natural areas ^{1,4,5}
		Wildlife ^{1,3}	Trees ^{2,3}	Nature areas ³	Other nature ^{1,3,5}			
Percent reporting								
Skokie Lagoons	28	14	8	16	3	3	17	5
N. Branch/NSC area	13	7	12	12	8	7	29	5
The Loop area	27	2	7	1	17	5	55	13
Palos area	22	16	16	11	9	11	26	4
Cal-Sag area	13	3	1	4	6	5	37	0
Total	22	8	8	9	9	5	34	6

¹Differences significant at the .01 level. ²Differences significant at the .05 level. ³Based on questions 8, 9, & 10, about the interview site. ⁴Based on question 14, about rivers in the Chicago area. ⁵Sparse cells may affect stability of the results.

TABLE 3.18
Nature-related issues, by activity

	Likes scenic qualities ^{1,3}	Likes nature-related features				Dislikes nature-related feature ³	Lack of natural areas a problem ^{1,3}	Suggested improved natural areas ⁴
		Wildlife ^{1,3,5}	Trees	Nature areas	Other nature ^{1,3}			
Percent reporting								
Walk/hike	23	12	4	12	15	8	33	10
Bike	32	16	11	12	6	4	18	2
Motor Boat	11	2	0	0	2	0	43	0
Fish	13	6	5	9	3	6	17	5
Sit/Relax	20	1	9	3	15	3	41	4
Lunch	19	5	14	10	17	10	52	14
Other Active	33	11	15	13	9	9	35	6
Other Passive	21	7	9	9	9	6	38	9
Total	22	8	8	9	9	5	34	6

¹Differences significant at the .05 level. ²Differences significant at the .01 level. ³Based on questions 8, 9, & 10, about the interview site. ⁴Based on question 14, about rivers in the Chicago area. ⁵Sparse cells may affect the stability of the results.

is even clearer in responses by activity group—boaters, too, almost never mentioned scenic qualities or nature-related attributes in open-ended questions, but again were second in rating lack of natural areas a problem when specifically asked about them (Table 3.18).

Natural features (wildlife, trees, nature areas, and other nature) were mentioned most often as a liked attribute in the Palos area. However, these respondents also cited nature-related *dislikes* the most. Palos respondent's comments include: "The river seemed stagnant in places," "I like the look of the area and the natural habitat," and "[This is] like being in the country."

In the North Branch/NSC area, natural features were an appreciated, if not the most important, attribute to these respondents. In their words: "[I like that there are] a lot of birds to listen to," "[I like] the fact that [the river] is here—one of the few natural things—place for birds and small animals," and "I like the turtle!" Visitors in this area also liked the trees and expressed some interest in riverside nature trails.

Many fewer Skokie Lagoons respondents rated lack of natural areas a problem. They also mentioned scenic qualities as a liked attribute most often. Comments such as "Seems like you are in wilderness" and "It's pretty—I saw two deer" were common at the Skokie Lagoons.

DISCUSSION

Urbanites often indicate that trees and water features are important attributes in their recreation settings, that they are more likely to choose sites with these attributes, and that they are very willing to pay for these features (Dwyer, et al., 1989). The on-site survey responses seem to support these earlier findings.

Interacting with nature and appreciating the scenic qualities of the river corridor were important to most respondents. For some, it seems these opportunities allowed for recuperation and rest: "[I like the] scenery, peaceful..." "[The] river makes you feel good—makes you cool," "[The river is] really relaxing. You can forget about your problems."

Other research on human/environment interactions underscores the importance of nature and its role in rejuvenation that these respondents report. Nearby nature has been shown to have many important effects on people's lives, including reducing stress, increasing job satisfaction, increasing a sense of community, and speeding recovery from surgery (Kaplan, 1993; Lewis, 1992; Ulrich, 1984; Ulrich and Parsons, 1992). The comments made by many respondents show that the river may be playing an important restorative role in their lives.

In the Loop, respondents indicated specifically that they were interested in enhanced nature, not just in enhanced open space. Recent riverside developments like the park with Centennial Fountain and the golf course south of Wacker Drive both help meet the needs expressed by these respondents.

Recreation visitors to the river may be specifically seeking out a less urbanized place to recreate, and the river corridor

offers this to them. Given the evidence of the importance to urbanites of trees and other vegetation in recreation areas, as well as the benefits of nearby nature to beleaguered urban dwellers, the public expenditure required to enhance the natural features of the Chicago River corridor may be warranted.

PART IV CONCLUSIONS

The various branches of the Chicago River range in settings from the pastoral to the industrial, with recreational opportunities throughout. The recreationists we interviewed were taking advantage of many of these opportunities. They were engaged in a wide array of activities, many of them not traditional river recreation activities like boating and fishing. Chicago area residents made use of the open space and facilities along the river to play softball, to spend time with their children as they learned about turtles and other aquatic life, to read and write, and to relax and let go of the cares of the day. The river corridor accommodated all of these activities and more.

Some respondents lived or worked near the site where we interviewed them, but others regularly traveled miles from their homes to the bike trails, fishing holes, great birding spots, and boat ramps they prefer. And, most of the visitors we interviewed came often, making use of the recreation opportunities offered by the river and its corridor on a daily and weekly basis.

Current uses of the river corridor can guide future improvements. Trails are well used and liked, but respondents report that maintenance is crucial and facilities like rest rooms are necessary. But not all development needs to be trails—smaller areas along the river can be an end in themselves. These types of spaces are also well used and enjoyed by current recreationists. Increasing the number of, and access to, these types of areas is worth exploring and may facilitate the recuperative benefits some recreationists reported. And while areas like the North Pier development are popular, current users did not call for significantly more development along these lines.

Although recreation enhancement opportunities abound, continued attention to water quality is important. The trends in improved water quality do not seem to be widely understood, and there is an opportunity here for outreach. Still, there is a clear interest among respondents in achieving even better water quality. This issue came out in most every question we asked, whether it was about what people like about the area or what they don't like, what they want changed, and what they consider a problem. Water quality matters.

The Chicago River Corridor is an important recreational resource enjoyed by the Chicago area residents we interviewed. Scenic beauty and the current facilities are important to and appreciated by current recreational visitors. Water quality concerns are prevalent and urgent to these visitors as well. Managers have opportunities to enhance the enjoyment of the river for current recreationists, and perhaps to open new possibilities for future recreationists. Given the chance, people seem to come to love the river.

**APPENDIX 3.1
SURVEY INSTRUMENT**



Summer 1993 River User Survey

Location:
Date:
Day:
Time:

Hi, I'm (*your name*) from Northeastern Illinois University and we are working with the not-for-profit group Friends of the Chicago River on a study of how people use rivers and adjacent areas for recreation and leisure. This information will be used to help plan for future river improvements in the metropolitan area. May I ask you a few questions about your use of the river and areas around it? Your answers will be strictly confidential. (*If they hesitate, tell them it will only take a few minutes and that their input is important. Record reason for refusal, if any* _____.)

First I'd like to ask you some questions about your recreation and leisure at this place today...

- How did you get to this place today? ___ auto ___ bike ___ on foot ___ public transportation
___ other: _____
- About how long did it take you to get to here today? _____ minutes
- About how far is that in miles? _____ miles
- How often do you visit this place? (*probe for first time, once a year or less, 2-3 times/year, 4-10 times/year, 11-25 times/year, nearly every week, nearly everyday*).
- About how long do you plan on being at this place today? ___ hours
- What kinds of things are you doing here today? (*Probe for activities—"anything else?"*)
- How important do you feel the river here is to the enjoyment of your recreation activities today?
___ **very important**; (*I would not be here if the river wasn't here*)
___ **somewhat important**; (*river plays some part in the enjoyment of my recreation here*)
___ **not important**; (*river just happens to be here and plays no part in the enjoyment of my recreation*)
___ **detrimental**; (*river detracts from the enjoyment of my recreation*)
- What things do you **LIKE BEST** about this stretch of the river and the areas around it? (*Probe for other positive attributes, and if appropriate, why?*)
- What things do you **NOT LIKE** about this stretch of the river and the areas around it? (*Probe for other negative attributes, and, if appropriate, why?*)
- To what extent do you feel each of the following items are problems that interfere with your use and enjoyment for this stretch of the river? For each potential problem I mention, please indicate if it is "not a problem," "somewhat of a problem," "a major problem," "don't know," or "doesn't apply."

Item	Not a Problem	Somewhat of a Problem	A Major Problem	Don't Know/ NA
a. Water quality				
b. Water odors				
c. Noise from boats, industry, or traffic (<i>circle which</i>)				
d. Garbage dumping on bank or in river				
e. Lack of public open space on the river				
f. Fencing blocking access to the river (✓ if not enough _____)				
g. Lack of shore recreation facilities like paths & benches				
h. Lack of canoe or boat landings				
i. Poor Fishing				
j. Mosquitos and other insects				
k. Public safety—water accidents, etc.				
l. Personal safety from crime				
m. Graffiti and vandalism				
n. Crowding and conflicts among boaters				
o. Crowding and conflicts among recreationists on shore				
p. Not enough natural areas for vegetation and wildlife				

The next few questions refer in general to rivers in the metropolitan area...

11. Are there places **on rivers** in the Chicago area that are especially important to you for recreation or other reasons?

___ No ___ Yes—> 11a. Where? (*probe for special places, views, history, etc.*)

11b. Why are these areas important to you?

12. Besides what you're doing today, are there other things you do on rivers in the metropolitan area, including different seasons or special events? (*Probe for activities, in other locations, or with other people, or special events*)

13. Over the last several years, do you think the quality of rivers in the Chicago area has gotten better for recreation, gotten worse, remained about the same, or are you not sure?

___ gotten better ___ gotten worse ___ remained about the same ___ not sure

14. What changes do you think most need to be done to make rivers in the Chicago area better for recreation? (*Probe for add'l suggestions—development & facilities, land policies, programs, etc.*)

___ not sure

~~~~~To be filled out by respondent~~~~~

***The last few questions are for statistical purposes only. We need to be sure that we have talked with a broad spectrum of people, so that we can be more confident about the results of the survey. All answers will be strictly confidential.***

15. How many people are you here with today in addition to yourself? \_\_\_ others

16. How many of these are 12 years of age or younger? \_\_\_ 12 or younger

17. Are you here as part of an organized group? \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ yes

18. What is the zip code where you live? \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_

19. How many years have you lived in the Chicago area? \_\_\_ years in total

20. What is your occupation? (include student, homemaker, retired, unemployed, self-employed):

21. What is your age? \_\_\_ years

22. Are you \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_ Male

23. How do you identify your race? (check all that apply) \_\_\_ Black/African Amer. \_\_\_ Hispanic/Latin

\_\_\_ Asian \_\_\_ White \_\_\_ Native American/N. Amer. Indian \_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

24. What was your total family income last year, before taxes? (Check one)

\_\_\_ less than \$15,000      \_\_\_ \$15 - \$25,000      \_\_\_ \$25 - \$50,000  
\_\_\_ \$50 - \$75,000      \_\_\_ \$75 - \$100,000      \_\_\_ more than \$100,000

***Thank you very much! We really appreciate your help.***

## APPENDIX 3.2 AREA TABLES

**TABLE 3.2.1  
Demographics by area**

|                                        | Total<br>(n=582) | Skokie<br>Lagoons<br>(n=148) | N. Branch<br>& NSC<br>(n=135) | The<br>Loop<br>(n=165) | Palos<br>Area<br>(n=55) | Cal-Sag<br>Area<br>(n=79) |
|----------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Percent reporting by area <sup>1</sup> |                  |                              |                               |                        |                         |                           |
| <b>RACE/ETHNICITY<sup>2,3</sup></b>    |                  |                              |                               |                        |                         |                           |
| White/European-American                | 78               | 78                           | 70                            | 81                     | 89                      | 80                        |
| Black/African-American                 | 10               | 13                           | 6                             | 11                     | 0                       | 15                        |
| Hispanic/Latin                         | 6                | 3                            | 14                            | 3                      | 7                       | 1                         |
| Asian-American                         | 3                | 3                            | 5                             | 1                      | 2                       | 0                         |
| N.A. Indian/Native American            | 2                | 2                            | 4                             | 2                      | 0                       | 3                         |
| Other/mixed                            | 1                | 1                            | 1                             | 1                      | 2                       | 1                         |
| <b>AGE<sup>2</sup></b>                 |                  |                              |                               |                        |                         |                           |
| Teens & 20s                            | 24               | 24                           | 26                            | 31                     | 16                      | 11                        |
| 30s                                    | 30               | 26                           | 28                            | 33                     | 38                      | 29                        |
| 40s                                    | 19               | 18                           | 17                            | 19                     | 16                      | 25                        |
| 50+                                    | 22               | 30                           | 27                            | 12                     | 22                      | 23                        |
| <b>FAMILY INCOME<sup>2,3</sup></b>     |                  |                              |                               |                        |                         |                           |
| <15,000                                | 8                | 7                            | 13                            | 7                      | 2                       | 5                         |
| 15,000-25,000                          | 15               | 16                           | 22                            | 10                     | 18                      | 9                         |
| 25,000-50,000                          | 29               | 28                           | 27                            | 26                     | 47                      | 28                        |
| 50,000-75,000                          | 14               | 11                           | 10                            | 18                     | 7                       | 22                        |
| 75,000-100,000                         | 8                | 5                            | 6                             | 13                     | 7                       | 6                         |
| 100,000+                               | 6                | 10                           | 3                             | 7                      | 6                       | 4                         |
| Not given                              | 20               | 23                           | 20                            | 18                     | 13                      | 27                        |
| <b>RESIDENCE<sup>2</sup></b>           |                  |                              |                               |                        |                         |                           |
| Chicago                                | 50               | 37                           | 91                            | 46                     | 18                      | 37                        |
| Other                                  | 45               | 60                           | 7                             | 50                     | 75                      | 51                        |
| <b>GENDER<sup>2</sup></b>              |                  |                              |                               |                        |                         |                           |
| Male                                   | 62               | 68                           | 63                            | 50                     | 64                      | 76                        |
| Female                                 | 38               | 32                           | 37                            | 49                     | 36                      | 24                        |
| <b>ACTIVITY GROUP</b>                  |                  |                              |                               |                        |                         |                           |
| Walk/hike                              | 9                | 10                           | 11                            | 13                     | 2                       | 0                         |
| Bike                                   | 14               | 26                           | 6                             | 1                      | 64                      | 0                         |
| Motor Boat                             | 8                | 0                            | 0                             | 1                      | 0                       | 57                        |
| Fish                                   | 11               | 29                           | 10                            | 1                      | 2                       | 5                         |
| Sit/Relax                              | 13               | 4                            | 13                            | 29                     | 0                       | 4                         |
| Eat Lunch                              | 7                | 4                            | 0                             | 21                     | 0                       | 1                         |
| Other Active                           | 10               | 10                           | 13                            | 2                      | 33                      | 1                         |
| Other Passive                          | 28               | 16                           | 47                            | 31                     | 0                       | 32                        |

<sup>1</sup>Percents may not total 100 due to rounding and responses not given. "Not given" is included in income due to large number of non-responses. <sup>2</sup>Significant at the .01 level.  
<sup>3</sup>Sparse cells may affect stability of the results.

**TABLE 3.2.2**  
**River use characteristics by area**

|                                             | <b>Total<br/>(n=582)</b> | <b>Skokie<br/>Lagoons<br/>(n=148)</b> | <b>N. Branch<br/>&amp; NSC<br/>(n=135)</b> | <b>The<br/>Loop<br/>(n=165)</b> | <b>Palos<br/>Area<br/>(n=55)</b> | <b>Cal-Sag<br/>Area<br/>(n=79)</b> |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Percent reporting by area <sup>1</sup>      |                          |                                       |                                            |                                 |                                  |                                    |
| <b>TRANSPORTATION TO SITE<sup>2,3</sup></b> |                          |                                       |                                            |                                 |                                  |                                    |
| Car                                         | 58                       | 78                                    | 57                                         | 18                              | 91                               | 94                                 |
| Bike                                        | 7                        | 17                                    | 7                                          | 3                               | 7                                | 0                                  |
| On foot                                     | 30                       | 4                                     | 39                                         | 66                              | 2                                | 4                                  |
| Public transportation                       | 4                        | 0                                     | 2                                          | 12                              | 0                                | 0                                  |
| Other                                       | 1                        | 1                                     | 0                                          | 0                               | 0                                | 3                                  |
| <b>DISTANCE TRAVELED<sup>2,3</sup></b>      |                          |                                       |                                            |                                 |                                  |                                    |
| Less than 1 mile                            | 36                       | 7                                     | 59                                         | 67                              | 6                                | 11                                 |
| 1 - 3 miles                                 | 6                        | 7                                     | 10                                         | 4                               | 2                                | 6                                  |
| 3 - 4½ miles                                | 9                        | 10                                    | 10                                         | 4                               | 7                                | 14                                 |
| 4½ - 10 miles                               | 28                       | 43                                    | 19                                         | 8                               | 55                               | 42                                 |
| 11 miles or more                            | 19                       | 32                                    | 2                                          | 15                              | 27                               | 24                                 |
| <b>HOW LONG TO GET TO SITE<sup>1</sup></b>  |                          |                                       |                                            |                                 |                                  |                                    |
| Less than 5 minutes                         | 32                       | 9                                     | 44                                         | 56                              | 11                               | 18                                 |
| 6 - 10 minutes                              | 18                       | 17                                    | 24                                         | 13                              | 22                               | 18                                 |
| 11 - 15 minutes                             | 12                       | 16                                    | 10                                         | 3                               | 26                               | 17                                 |
| 16 - 30 minutes                             | 23                       | 37                                    | 19                                         | 10                              | 27                               | 32                                 |
| 31 - 90 minutes                             | 11                       | 17                                    | 2                                          | 13                              | 11                               | 14                                 |
| <b>VISIT LENGTH<sup>1</sup></b>             |                          |                                       |                                            |                                 |                                  |                                    |
| Less than half an hour                      | 20                       | 10                                    | 16                                         | 41                              | 2                                | 10                                 |
| 30 - 60 minutes                             | 24                       | 19                                    | 22                                         | 36                              | 29                               | 8                                  |
| 1 - 3 hours                                 | 34                       | 51                                    | 40                                         | 11                              | 62                               | 23                                 |
| 4 hours - full day                          | 19                       | 20                                    | 18                                         | 10                              | 7                                | 44                                 |
| Overnight                                   | 3                        | 0                                     | 1                                          | 2                               | 0                                | 15                                 |
| <b>VISIT FREQUENCY<sup>1</sup></b>          |                          |                                       |                                            |                                 |                                  |                                    |
| First time                                  | 14                       | 12                                    | 9                                          | 23                              | 15                               | 10                                 |
| 2 times/year or less                        | 5                        | 6                                     | 7                                          | 6                               | 0                                | 4                                  |
| 2 - 3 times/year                            | 7                        | 10                                    | 7                                          | 6                               | 4                                | 8                                  |
| 4 - 10 times/year                           | 9                        | 14                                    | 4                                          | 6                               | 15                               | 9                                  |
| 11 - 25 times/year                          | 15                       | 21                                    | 16                                         | 6                               | 13                               | 22                                 |
| Weekly                                      | 19                       | 14                                    | 20                                         | 14                              | 38                               | 22                                 |
| Daily                                       | 31                       | 24                                    | 36                                         | 41                              | 16                               | 27                                 |
| <b>GROUP SIZE<sup>2,3</sup></b>             |                          |                                       |                                            |                                 |                                  |                                    |
| Self                                        | 32                       | 34                                    | 28                                         | 41                              | 27                               | 18                                 |
| One other person                            | 31                       | 27                                    | 25                                         | 38                              | 49                               | 22                                 |
| 3 - 5 people                                | 28                       | 35                                    | 28                                         | 18                              | 16                               | 48                                 |
| 6 - 11 people                               | 5                        | 2                                     | 7                                          | 2                               | 4                                | 11                                 |
| 12-200 people <sup>4</sup>                  | 3                        | 1                                     | 12                                         | 1                               | 0                                | 0                                  |
| <b>CHILDREN IN GROUP<sup>2,3</sup></b>      |                          |                                       |                                            |                                 |                                  |                                    |
| Yes                                         | 23                       | 23                                    | 42                                         | 9                               | 9                                | 32                                 |
| No                                          | 76                       | 76                                    | 59                                         | 91                              | 87                               | 66                                 |
| <b>ACTIVITY GROUP</b>                       |                          |                                       |                                            |                                 |                                  |                                    |
| Walk/hike                                   | 9                        | 10                                    | 11                                         | 13                              | 2                                | 0                                  |
| Bike                                        | 14                       | 26                                    | 6                                          | 1                               | 64                               | 0                                  |
| Motor boat                                  | 8                        | 0                                     | 0                                          | 1                               | 0                                | 57                                 |
| Fish                                        | 11                       | 29                                    | 10                                         | 1                               | 2                                | 5                                  |
| Sit/relax                                   | 13                       | 4                                     | 13                                         | 29                              | 0                                | 4                                  |
| Eat Lunch                                   | 7                        | 4                                     | 0                                          | 21                              | 0                                | 1                                  |
| Other Active                                | 10                       | 10                                    | 13                                         | 2                               | 33                               | 1                                  |
| Other Passive                               | 28                       | 16                                    | 47                                         | 31                              | 0                                | 32                                 |

<sup>1</sup>Percents may not total 100 due to rounding and responses not given. <sup>2</sup>Significant at the .01 level. <sup>3</sup>Sparse cells may affect stability of results. <sup>4</sup>One respondent reported a group of 200; the next largest was 81.

**TABLE 3.2.3**  
**Perceptions of the river by area**

|                                                       | <b>Total<br/>(n=582)</b> | <b>Skokie<br/>Lagoons<br/>(n=148)</b> | <b>N. Branch<br/>&amp; NSC<br/>(n=135)</b> | <b>The<br/>Loop<br/>(n=165)</b> | <b>Palos<br/>Area<br/>(n=55)</b> | <b>Cal-Sag<br/>Area<br/>(n=79)</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Percent reporting by area <sup>1</sup>                |                          |                                       |                                            |                                 |                                  |                                    |
| <b>IMPORTANCE OF RIVER FOR ENJOYMENT<sup>3</sup></b>  |                          |                                       |                                            |                                 |                                  |                                    |
| Very important                                        | <b>65</b>                | 80                                    | 40                                         | 75                              | 31                               | 82                                 |
| Somewhat important                                    | <b>22</b>                | 15                                    | 23                                         | 19                              | 58                               | 14                                 |
| Not important or detrimental                          | <b>13</b>                | 5                                     | 37                                         | 6                               | 11                               | 4                                  |
| <b>IMPRESSIONS OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT<sup>3</sup></b> |                          |                                       |                                            |                                 |                                  |                                    |
| Better                                                | <b>34</b>                | 34                                    | 22                                         | 36                              | 31                               | 56                                 |
| Worse                                                 | <b>15</b>                | 14                                    | 20                                         | 13                              | 15                               | 14                                 |
| Same                                                  | <b>21</b>                | 18                                    | 33                                         | 17                              | 18                               | 19                                 |
| Not sure                                              | <b>29</b>                | 35                                    | 24                                         | 34                              | 36                               | 11                                 |
| <b>MOST LIKED ATTRIBUTES<sup>5</sup></b>              |                          |                                       |                                            |                                 |                                  |                                    |
| Scenic qualities <sup>2</sup>                         | <b>22</b>                | 28                                    | 13                                         | 27                              | 22                               | 13                                 |
| Facility related <sup>2,4</sup>                       | <b>20</b>                | 10                                    | 20                                         | 39                              | 7                                | 33                                 |
| Solitude <sup>3</sup>                                 | <b>15</b>                | 19                                    | 22                                         | 10                              | 15                               | 10                                 |
| Peaceful <sup>2</sup>                                 | <b>10</b>                | 14                                    | 4                                          | 15                              | 7                                | 4                                  |
| Other nature-related <sup>2</sup>                     | <b>9</b>                 | 3                                     | 8                                          | 17                              | 9                                | 6                                  |
| <b>MOST DISLIKED ATTRIBUTES<sup>5</sup></b>           |                          |                                       |                                            |                                 |                                  |                                    |
| Water pollution <sup>2</sup>                          | <b>20</b>                | 22                                    | 13                                         | 19                              | 16                               | 33                                 |
| Poor facilities                                       | <b>17</b>                | 25                                    | 20                                         | 10                              | 22                               | 19                                 |
| User Conflicts <sup>2</sup>                           | <b>17</b>                | 14                                    | 41                                         | 4                               | 6                                | 34                                 |
| Trash <sup>2</sup>                                    | <b>12</b>                | 23                                    | 16                                         | 4                               | 7                                | 4                                  |
| Nothing <sup>2</sup>                                  | <b>32</b>                | 28                                    | 24                                         | 48                              | 20                               | 30                                 |
| <b>PERCEIVED PROBLEM AREAS<sup>6</sup></b>            |                          |                                       |                                            |                                 |                                  |                                    |
| Garbage dumping <sup>3</sup>                          | <b>60</b>                | 61                                    | 61                                         | 51                              | 76                               | 67                                 |
| Water quality                                         | <b>56</b>                | 56                                    | 46                                         | 55                              | 66                               | 67                                 |
| Lack of shore recreation facilities                   | <b>46</b>                | 37                                    | 39                                         | 48                              | 56                               | 62                                 |
| Mosquitos and other insects <sup>2</sup>              | <b>36</b>                | 35                                    | 45                                         | 10                              | 67                               | 54                                 |
| Lack of natural areas <sup>2</sup>                    | <b>34</b>                | 16                                    | 29                                         | 55                              | 26                               | 37                                 |
| <b>DESIRED CHANGES<sup>5</sup></b>                    |                          |                                       |                                            |                                 |                                  |                                    |
| Clean the water <sup>3</sup>                          | <b>38</b>                | 39                                    | 42                                         | 32                              | 31                               | 52                                 |
| Activity Improvements <sup>2,4</sup>                  | <b>22</b>                | 33                                    | 19                                         | 12                              | 13                               | 33                                 |
| Facility Improvements <sup>2,4</sup>                  | <b>15</b>                | 10                                    | 27                                         | 15                              | 7                                | 14                                 |
| Clean the corridor <sup>2,4</sup>                     | <b>13</b>                | 22                                    | 17                                         | 9                               | 4                                | 9                                  |
| <b>ACTIVITY GROUP</b>                                 |                          |                                       |                                            |                                 |                                  |                                    |
| Walk/hike                                             | <b>9</b>                 | 10                                    | 11                                         | 13                              | 2                                | 0                                  |
| Bike                                                  | <b>14</b>                | 26                                    | 6                                          | 1                               | 64                               | 0                                  |
| Motor boat                                            | <b>8</b>                 | 0                                     | 0                                          | 1                               | 0                                | 57                                 |
| Fish                                                  | <b>11</b>                | 29                                    | 10                                         | 1                               | 2                                | 5                                  |
| Sit/relax                                             | <b>13</b>                | 4                                     | 13                                         | 29                              | 0                                | 4                                  |
| Eat Lunch                                             | <b>7</b>                 | 4                                     | 0                                          | 21                              | 0                                | 1                                  |
| Other Active                                          | <b>10</b>                | 10                                    | 13                                         | 2                               | 22                               | 1                                  |
| Other Passive                                         | <b>28</b>                | 16                                    | 47                                         | 31                              | 0                                | 32                                 |

<sup>1</sup>Percents may not total 100 due to rounding and responses not given. <sup>2</sup>Significant at the .01 level. <sup>3</sup>Significant at the .05 level. <sup>4</sup>Sparse cells may affect stability of results. <sup>5</sup>Based on open-ended survey items (questions 8, 9, and 14). <sup>6</sup>Percentages of responses indicating issue as "somewhat" or a "major" problem (question 10).

**TABLE 3.2.4**  
**“To what extent do you feel each of the following items are problems that interfere with your use and enjoyment for this stretch of the river?” by area**

| Area:                                                             | Total (n=582)                  |      |     | Skokie Lagoons (n=148) |      |     | N. Branch/NSC (n=135) |      |     | The Loop (n=165) |      |     | Palos Area (n=55) |      |     | Cal-Sag Area (n=79) |      |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------|-----|------------------------|------|-----|-----------------------|------|-----|------------------|------|-----|-------------------|------|-----|---------------------|------|-----|
|                                                                   | Major                          | Some | Not | Major                  | Some | Not | Major                 | Some | Not | Major            | Some | Not | Major             | Some | Not | Major               | Some | Not |
| ITEM                                                              | Percent reporting <sup>2</sup> |      |     |                        |      |     |                       |      |     |                  |      |     |                   |      |     |                     |      |     |
| Garbage dumping on bank or in river <sup>4</sup>                  | 33                             | 27   | 40  | 31                     | 30   | 37  | 32                    | 29   | 39  | 29               | 22   | 50  | 38                | 38   | 24  | 43                  | 24   | 33  |
| Water quality                                                     | 28                             | 28   | 44  | 21                     | 35   | 42  | 24                    | 22   | 55  | 33               | 22   | 45  | 29                | 36   | 35  | 39                  | 28   | 33  |
| Lack of shore recreation facilities like paths & benches          | 15                             | 31   | 54  | 11                     | 26   | 62  | 13                    | 26   | 61  | 16               | 32   | 53  | 18                | 38   | 44  | 19                  | 43   | 38  |
| Mosquitos and other insects <sup>3</sup>                          | 15                             | 21   | 63  | 13                     | 22   | 64  | 13                    | 32   | 55  | 1                | 9    | 91  | 29                | 38   | 32  | 39                  | 15   | 46  |
| Not enough natural areas for vegetation and wildlife <sup>3</sup> | 13                             | 21   | 65  | 7                      | 10   | 82  | 11                    | 18   | 72  | 18               | 37   | 45  | 6                 | 20   | 75  | 19                  | 18   | 61  |
| Poor fishing <sup>4</sup>                                         | 12                             | 9    | 79  | 16                     | 10   | 74  | 14                    | 10   | 76  | 2                | 2    | 95  | 9                 | 16   | 75  | 20                  | 13   | 67  |
| Lack of public open space on river <sup>3</sup>                   | 11                             | 21   | 67  | 5                      | 11   | 83  | 12                    | 20   | 68  | 12               | 22   | 66  | 13                | 29   | 59  | 20                  | 35   | 45  |
| Water odors <sup>3</sup>                                          | 10                             | 21   | 69  | 3                      | 15   | 80  | 13                    | 22   | 66  | 7                | 18   | 75  | 16                | 40   | 44  | 18                  | 25   | 57  |
| Graffiti and vandalism <sup>3</sup>                               | 9                              | 17   | 73  | 2                      | 12   | 85  | 27                    | 34   | 38  | 1                | 13   | 86  | 9                 | 15   | 76  | 5                   | 10   | 85  |
| Lack of canoe or boat landings <sup>3</sup>                       | 8                              | 14   | 77  | 5                      | 12   | 82  | 6                     | 13   | 81  | 6                | 7    | 88  | 13                | 29   | 58  | 20                  | 24   | 56  |
| Noise from boats, industry, traffic <sup>3</sup>                  | 5                              | 21   | 74  | 11                     | 34   | 54  | 2                     | 16   | 82  | 6                | 24   | 71  | 7                 | 9    | 84  | 0                   | 6    | 93  |
| Personal safety from crime <sup>3</sup>                           | 5                              | 14   | 81  | 2                      | 12   | 84  | 10                    | 22   | 69  | 1                | 11   | 88  | 11                | 16   | 73  | 3                   | 6    | 92  |
| Fencing blocking access to river <sup>3,5</sup>                   | 4                              | 8    | 88  | 0                      | 1    | 98  | 8                     | 16   | 77  | 2                | 10   | 88  | 4                 | 13   | 84  | 5                   | 1    | 94  |
| Conflicts and crowding among recreationists on shore              | 2                              | 13   | 85  | 1                      | 19   | 79  | 3                     | 11   | 86  | 1                | 12   | 87  | 4                 | 7    | 89  | 0                   | 8    | 90  |
| Public safety—water accidents, etc.                               | 2                              | 8    | 89  | 1                      | 7    | 90  | 3                     | 4    | 93  | 0                | 7    | 93  | 9                 | 16   | 75  | 4                   | 17   | 80  |
| Crowding, conflicts among boaters <sup>4,5</sup>                  | 1                              | 5    | 93  | 0                      | 3    | 96  | 0                     | 1    | 99  | 2                | 4    | 94  | 2                 | 4    | 95  | 1                   | 20   | 79  |

<sup>1</sup>Major = “a major problem;” “some” = “somewhat of a problem;” “not” includes “not a problem” and “don’t know/does not apply” response categories. <sup>2</sup>Percent may not total 100 due to rounding and missing answers. <sup>3</sup>Differences between areas significant at the .01 level. <sup>4</sup>Differences between areas significant at the .05 level. <sup>5</sup>Sparse cells may affect stability of results.

**TABLE 3.2.5**  
**“What things do you like best about this stretch of the river and the areas around it?” by area**

| Attribute                                      | Total<br>(n=582) | Skokie<br>Lagoons<br>(n=148)   | N. Branch<br>& NSC<br>(n=135) | The<br>Loop<br>(n=165) | Palos<br>Area<br>(n=55) | Cal-Sag<br>Area<br>(n=79) |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
|                                                |                  | Percent reporting <sup>1</sup> |                               |                        |                         |                           |
| Scenic <sup>2</sup>                            | 22               | 28                             | 13                            | 27                     | 22                      | 13                        |
| Other facility related attributes <sup>2</sup> | 20               | 10                             | 20                            | 39                     | 7                       | 33                        |
| Solitude <sup>3</sup>                          | 15               | 19                             | 22                            | 10                     | 15                      | 10                        |
| Peaceful <sup>2</sup>                          | 10               | 14                             | 4                             | 15                     | 7                       | 4                         |
| It's clean/getting cleaner                     | 9                | 5                              | 10                            | 11                     | 4                       | 11                        |
| Other nature-related attributes <sup>2</sup>   | 9                | 3                              | 8                             | 17                     | 9                       | 6                         |
| Natural areas/features <sup>2</sup>            | 9                | 16                             | 12                            | 1                      | 11                      | 4                         |
| Wildlife <sup>2</sup>                          | 8                | 14                             | 7                             | 2                      | 16                      | 3                         |
| Trees <sup>3</sup>                             | 8                | 8                              | 12                            | 7                      | 16                      | 1                         |
| Other activity-related attributes              | 8                | 3                              | 11                            | 11                     | 6                       | 9                         |
| River <sup>3</sup>                             | 7                | 9                              | 3                             | 10                     | 2                       | 4                         |
| Access <sup>2</sup>                            | 7                | 3                              | 3                             | 7                      | 2                       | 23                        |
| Location <sup>2</sup>                          | 6                | 6                              | 7                             | 0                      | 4                       | 15                        |
| Trails <sup>2</sup>                            | 6                | 10                             | 1                             | 0                      | 40                      | 0                         |
| Boats (watching) <sup>2</sup>                  | 5                | 5                              | 1                             | 10                     | 2                       | 4                         |
| Fishing <sup>2</sup>                           | 5                | 11                             | 4                             | 3                      | 2                       | 1                         |
| Open space <sup>3</sup>                        | 5                | 3                              | 9                             | 7                      | 0                       | 1                         |
| Being outdoors                                 | 3                | 3                              | 3                             | 4                      | 0                       | 1                         |

<sup>1</sup>Percent will total more than 100 as multiple responses were recorded. <sup>2</sup>Differences significant at the .01 level. <sup>3</sup>Differences significant at the .05 level.

**TABLE 3.2.6**  
**“What things do you like least about this stretch of the river and the areas around it?” by area**

| Attribute                                              | Total<br>(n=582) | Skokie<br>Lagoons<br>(n=148)   | N. Branch<br>& NSC<br>(n=135) | The<br>Loop<br>(n=165) | Palos<br>Area<br>(n=55) | Cal-Sag<br>Area<br>(n=79) |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
|                                                        |                  | Percent reporting <sup>1</sup> |                               |                        |                         |                           |
| Nothing <sup>2</sup>                                   | 33               | 28                             | 24                            | 48                     | 20                      | 30                        |
| Water pollution <sup>2</sup>                           | 20               | 22                             | 13                            | 19                     | 16                      | 33                        |
| Poor facilities                                        | 17               | 25                             | 20                            | 10                     | 22                      | 19                        |
| Other users <sup>2</sup>                               | 17               | 14                             | 41                            | 4                      | 6                       | 34                        |
| Trash <sup>2</sup>                                     | 12               | 23                             | 16                            | 4                      | 7                       | 4                         |
| Other problems with the built environment <sup>3</sup> | 8                | 5                              | 4                             | 14                     | 6                       | 10                        |
| Other problems with the natural environment            | 5                | 3                              | 7                             | 5                      | 11                      | 5                         |
| Toilets (lack of, dirty) <sup>2</sup>                  | 5                | 3                              | 9                             | 1                      | 13                      | 1                         |
| Noise (traffic) <sup>2</sup>                           | 4                | 10                             | 2                             | 3                      | 2                       | 0                         |
| Water fountains (lack of) <sup>2,4</sup>               | 3                | 2                              | 3                             | 1                      | 13                      | 0                         |
| Smells <sup>2,4</sup>                                  | 3                | 1                              | 3                             | 3                      | 11                      | 0                         |

<sup>1</sup>Percent will total more than 100 due to multiple responses. <sup>2</sup>Difference significant at the .01 level. <sup>3</sup>Differences significant at the .05 level.

<sup>4</sup>Sparse cells may effect stability of results.

**TABLE 3.2.7**  
**“What changes do you think need to be done to make rivers in the Chicago area better for recreation?,” by area**

| <b>Change</b>                         | <b>Total<br/>(n=582)</b> | <b>Skokie<br/>Lagoons<br/>(n=148)</b> | <b>N. Branch<br/>&amp; NSC<br/>(n=135)</b> | <b>The<br/>Loop<br/>(n=165)</b> | <b>Palos<br/>Area<br/>(n=55)</b> | <b>Cal-Sag<br/>Area<br/>(n=79)</b> |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|                                       |                          |                                       |                                            | Percent reporting <sup>1</sup>  |                                  |                                    |
| Clean the water <sup>3</sup>          | <b>38</b>                | 39                                    | 42                                         | 32                              | 31                               | 52                                 |
| Activity Improvements <sup>2,4</sup>  | <b>22</b>                | 33                                    | 19                                         | 12                              | 13                               | 33                                 |
| Not sure <sup>2</sup>                 | <b>17</b>                | 15                                    | 11                                         | 22                              | 36                               | 8                                  |
| Facility Improvements <sup>2,4</sup>  | <b>15</b>                | 10                                    | 27                                         | 15                              | 7                                | 14                                 |
| Clean the corridor <sup>2,4</sup>     | <b>13</b>                | 22                                    | 17                                         | 9                               | 4                                | 9                                  |
| Mediate user conflicts <sup>3,4</sup> | <b>10</b>                | 7                                     | 15                                         | 4                               | 9                                | 15                                 |
| Increase river access                 | <b>7</b>                 | 7                                     | 9                                          | 10                              | 4                                | 3                                  |
| Nature Improvements <sup>2,4</sup>    | <b>6</b>                 | 5                                     | 5                                          | 13                              | 4                                | 0                                  |

<sup>1</sup>Percent will total more than 100 due to multiple responses. <sup>2</sup>Difference significant at the .01 level. <sup>3</sup>Differences significant at the .05 level.

<sup>4</sup>Sparse cells may effect stability of results.

## APPENDIX 3.3 ACTIVITY TABLES

**TABLE 3.3.1  
Demographics by activity**

|                                            | Total<br>(n=582) | Other<br>Passive<br>(n=163) | Bike<br>(n=84) | Sit/<br>Relax<br>(n=75) | Fish<br>(n=64) | Other<br>Active<br>(n=55) | Walk/<br>Hike<br>(n=52) | Boat<br>(n=47) | Lunch<br>(n=42) |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Percent reporting by activity <sup>1</sup> |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                |                 |
| <b>RACE/ETHNICITY<sup>2,3</sup></b>        |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                |                 |
| White/European-American                    | 78               | 78                          | 88             | 81                      | 50             | 84                        | 89                      | 85             | 71              |
| Black/African-American                     | 10               | 8                           | 2              | 8                       | 31             | 6                         | 0                       | 11             | 19              |
| Hispanic/Latin                             | 6                | 9                           | 2              | 3                       | 8              | 9                         | 6                       | 0              | 7               |
| Asian-American                             | 3                | 4                           | 4              | 1                       | 6              | 0                         | 2                       | 0              | 0               |
| N.A. Indian/Native American                | 2                | 2                           | 2              | 5                       | 3              | 0                         | 2                       | 0              | 2               |
| Other/mixed                                | 1                | 0                           | 1              | 1                       | 2              | 2                         | 2                       | 2              | 0               |
| <b>AGE<sup>2</sup></b>                     |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                |                 |
| Teens & 20s                                | 24               | 27                          | 17             | 24                      | 25             | 31                        | 12                      | 15             | 41              |
| 30s                                        | 30               | 31                          | 37             | 33                      | 25             | 29                        | 15                      | 32             | 33              |
| 40s                                        | 19               | 16                          | 17             | 21                      | 20             | 24                        | 25                      | 19             | 12              |
| 50+                                        | 22               | 24                          | 23             | 15                      | 30             | 11                        | 48                      | 15             | 10              |
| <b>FAMILY INCOME<sup>2,3</sup></b>         |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                |                 |
| <15,000                                    | 8                | 11                          | 1              | 9                       | 16             | 6                         | 6                       | 0              | 7               |
| 15,000-25,000                              | 15               | 15                          | 16             | 8                       | 39             | 15                        | 6                       | 6              | 12              |
| 25,000-50,000                              | 29               | 29                          | 39             | 35                      | 17             | 31                        | 25                      | 23             | 26              |
| 50,000-75,000                              | 14               | 15                          | 7              | 15                      | 5              | 16                        | 15                      | 21             | 19              |
| 75,000-100,000                             | 8                | 9                           | 7              | 9                       | 0              | 9                         | 14                      | 6              | 12              |
| 100,000+                                   | 6                | 5                           | 10             | 1                       | 2              | 7                         | 8                       | 4              | 19              |
| Not given                                  | 20               | 17                          | 20             | 23                      | 22             | 16                        | 27                      | 38             | 5               |
| <b>RESIDENCE<sup>2</sup></b>               |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                |                 |
| Chicago                                    | 50               | 63                          | 31             | 51                      | 73             | 47                        | 35                      | 28             | 50              |
| Other                                      | 45               | 34                          | 63             | 43                      | 25             | 47                        | 65                      | 55             | 45              |
| <b>GENDER<sup>2</sup></b>                  |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                |                 |
| Male                                       | 62               | 58                          | 69             | 53                      | 86             | 56                        | 60                      | 72             | 48              |
| Female                                     | 38               | 42                          | 31             | 45                      | 14             | 44                        | 40                      | 28             | 52              |
| <b>AREA</b>                                |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                |                 |
| Skokie Lagoons                             | 25               | 15                          | 46             | 8                       | 67             | 27                        | 29                      | 0              | 14              |
| North Branch/NSC                           | 23               | 39                          | 10             | 24                      | 22             | 31                        | 29                      | 0              | 0               |
| The Loop                                   | 28               | 31                          | 2              | 64                      | 3              | 7                         | 40                      | 4              | 83              |
| Palos Area                                 | 10               | 0                           | 42             | 0                       | 2              | 33                        | 2                       | 0              | 0               |
| Cal-Sag Area                               | 14               | 15                          | 0              | 4                       | 6              | 2                         | 0                       | 96             | 2               |

<sup>1</sup>Percents may not total 100 due to rounding and responses not given. "Not given" is included in income due to large number of non-response. <sup>2</sup>Significant at the .01 level.  
<sup>3</sup>Sparse cells may affect stability of the results.

**TABLE 3.3.2**  
**River use characteristics by activity**

|                                             | Total<br>(n=582) | Other<br>Passive<br>(n=163) | Bike<br>(n=84) | Sit/<br>Relax<br>(n=75) | Fish<br>(n=64) | Other<br>Active<br>(n=55) | Walk/<br>Hike<br>(n=52) | Motor<br>Boat<br>(n=47) | Lunch<br>(n=42) |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Percent reporting by activity <sup>1</sup>  |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| <b>TRANSPORTATION TO SITE<sup>2,3</sup></b> |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| Car                                         | 58               | 59                          | 64             | 29                      | 84             | 78                        | 31                      | 98                      | 21              |
| Bike                                        | 7                | 4                           | 36             | 3                       | 0              | 2                         | 0                       | 0                       | 10              |
| On foot                                     | 30               | 33                          | 0              | 60                      | 14             | 15                        | 58                      | 2                       | 62              |
| Public transportation                       | 4                | 4                           | 0              | 8                       | 2              | 2                         | 10                      | 0                       | 7               |
| Other                                       | 1                | 1                           | 0              | 0                       | 0              | 4                         | 2                       | 0                       | 0               |
| <b>DISTANCE TRAVELED<sup>2,3</sup></b>      |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| Less than 1 mile                            | 36               | 41                          | 6              | 67                      | 22             | 26                        | 54                      | 6                       | 71              |
| 1 - 3 miles                                 | 6                | 6                           | 5              | 7                       | 3              | 11                        | 10                      | 9                       | 2               |
| 3 - 4½ miles                                | 9                | 6                           | 8              | 5                       | 9              | 9                         | 10                      | 21                      | 7               |
| 4½ - 10 miles                               | 28               | 31                          | 50             | 7                       | 25             | 42                        | 12                      | 40                      | 7               |
| 11 miles or more                            | 19               | 12                          | 27             | 13                      | 39             | 11                        | 15                      | 23                      | 12              |
| <b>HOW LONG TO GET TO SITE<sup>2</sup></b>  |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| Less than 5 minutes                         | 32               | 35                          | 7              | 53                      | 16             | 33                        | 35                      | 17                      | 67              |
| 6 - 10 minutes                              | 18               | 18                          | 20             | 21                      | 9              | 20                        | 21                      | 26                      | 5               |
| 11- 15 minutes                              | 12               | 10                          | 16             | 5                       | 22             | 16                        | 15                      | 11                      | 2               |
| 16 - 30 minutes                             | 23               | 24                          | 33             | 8                       | 39             | 20                        | 10                      | 34                      | 14              |
| 31 - 90 minutes                             | 11               | 9                           | 18             | 11                      | 14             | 6                         | 15                      | 13                      | 5               |
| <b>VISIT LENGTH<sup>2</sup></b>             |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| Less than half an hour                      | 20               | 26                          | 7              | 40                      | 2              | 9                         | 27                      | 4                       | 31              |
| 30 - 60 minutes                             | 24               | 20                          | 24             | 32                      | 5              | 16                        | 42                      | 11                      | 55              |
| 1 - 3 hours                                 | 34               | 27                          | 57             | 20                      | 50             | 60                        | 27                      | 21                      | 7               |
| 4 hours - full day                          | 19               | 18                          | 11             | 7                       | 42             | 13                        | 4                       | 57                      | 7               |
| Overnight                                   | 3                | 7                           | 0              | 1                       | 2              | 0                         | 0                       | 6                       | 0               |
| <b>VISIT FREQUENCY<sup>2,3</sup></b>        |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| First time                                  | 14               | 9                           | 14             | 25                      | 13             | 16                        | 25                      | 13                      | 2               |
| 2 times/year or less                        | 5                | 10                          | 4              | 7                       | 3              | 0                         | 4                       | 6                       | 0               |
| 2 - 3 times/year                            | 7                | 8                           | 5              | 1                       | 16             | 6                         | 10                      | 9                       | 5               |
| 4 - 10 times/year                           | 9                | 6                           | 14             | 7                       | 13             | 13                        | 8                       | 9                       | 5               |
| 11 - 25 times/year                          | 15               | 14                          | 19             | 8                       | 16             | 16                        | 10                      | 23                      | 14              |
| Weekly                                      | 19               | 16                          | 18             | 13                      | 17             | 29                        | 19                      | 26                      | 19              |
| Daily                                       | 31               | 37                          | 26             | 39                      | 23             | 20                        | 25                      | 15                      | 55              |
| <b>GROUP SIZE<sup>2,3</sup></b>             |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| Self                                        | 32               | 36                          | 36             | 39                      | 19             | 26                        | 35                      | 9                       | 45              |
| One other person                            | 31               | 23                          | 38             | 32                      | 41             | 31                        | 40                      | 15                      | 38              |
| 3 - 5 people                                | 28               | 28                          | 23             | 25                      | 38             | 27                        | 21                      | 57                      | 17              |
| 6 - 11 people                               | 5                | 6                           | 0              | 3                       | 3              | 9                         | 2                       | 17                      | 0               |
| 12-200 people <sup>4</sup>                  | 3                | 9                           | 0              | 0                       | 0              | 6                         | 2                       | 0                       | 0               |
| <b>CHILDREN IN GROUP<sup>2,3</sup></b>      |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| Yes                                         | 23               | 19                          | 12             | 16                      | 30             | 29                        | 17                      | 38                      | 7               |
| No                                          | 76               | 72                          | 85             | 83                      | 70             | 69                        | 83                      | 57                      | 93              |
| <b>AREA</b>                                 |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| Skokie Lagoons                              | 25               | 15                          | 46             | 8                       | 67             | 27                        | 29                      | 0                       | 14              |
| North Branch/NSC                            | 23               | 39                          | 10             | 24                      | 22             | 31                        | 29                      | 0                       | 0               |
| The Loop                                    | 28               | 31                          | 2              | 64                      | 3              | 7                         | 40                      | 4                       | 83              |
| Palos Area                                  | 10               | 0                           | 42             | 0                       | 2              | 33                        | 2                       | 0                       | 0               |
| Cal-Sag Area                                | 14               | 15                          | 0              | 4                       | 6              | 2                         | 0                       | 96                      | 2               |

<sup>1</sup>Percents may not total 100 due to rounding and responses not given. <sup>2</sup>Significant at the .01 level. <sup>3</sup>Sparse cells may affect stability of results.

<sup>4</sup>One respondent reported a group of 200; the next largest was 81.

**TABLE 3.3.3**  
**Perceptions of river by activity**

|                                                       | Total<br>(n=582) | Other<br>Passive<br>(n=163) | Bike<br>(n=84) | Sit/<br>Relax<br>(n=75) | Fish<br>(n=64) | Other<br>Active<br>(n=55) | Walk/<br>Hike<br>(n=52) | Motor<br>Boat<br>(n=47) | Lunch<br>(n=42) |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Percent reporting by activity <sup>1</sup>            |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| <b>IMPORTANCE OF RIVER FOR ENJOYMENT<sup>2</sup></b>  |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| Very important                                        | 65               | 59                          | 43             | 56                      | 99             | 55                        | 73                      | 87                      | 76              |
| Somewhat important                                    | 22               | 15                          | 44             | 35                      | 3              | 31                        | 15                      | 9                       | 21              |
| Not important or detrimental                          | 13               | 26                          | 13             | 9                       | 0              | 15                        | 12                      | 4                       | 2               |
| <b>IMPRESSIONS OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT<sup>2</sup></b> |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| Better                                                | 34               | 33                          | 42             | 24                      | 27             | 27                        | 39                      | 55                      | 38              |
| Worse                                                 | 15               | 10                          | 4              | 21                      | 30             | 22                        | 17                      | 9                       | 17              |
| Same                                                  | 21               | 28                          | 17             | 23                      | 23             | 26                        | 12                      | 19                      | 10              |
| Not sure                                              | 29               | 29                          | 38             | 32                      | 20             | 26                        | 33                      | 17                      | 36              |
| <b>MOST LIKED ATTRIBUTES<sup>5</sup></b>              |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| Scenic qualities <sup>3</sup>                         | 22               | 21                          | 32             | 20                      | 13             | 33                        | 23                      | 11                      | 19              |
| Facility related <sup>2</sup>                         | 20               | 31                          | 12             | 28                      | 6              | 7                         | 29                      | 32                      | 40              |
| Solitude <sup>3</sup>                                 | 15               | 17                          | 16             | 16                      | 25             | 11                        | 21                      | 2                       | 5               |
| Peaceful <sup>2</sup>                                 | 10               | 5                           | 11             | 20                      | 13             | 6                         | 14                      | 2                       | 14              |
| Other nature related <sup>3</sup>                     | 9                | 9                           | 6              | 15                      | 3              | 9                         | 15                      | 2                       | 17              |
| <b>MOST DISLIKED ATTRIBUTES<sup>5</sup></b>           |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| Water pollution <sup>3</sup>                          | 20               | 18                          | 14             | 15                      | 27             | 26                        | 11                      | 34                      | 24              |
| Poor facilities                                       | 17               | 17                          | 24             | 15                      | 14             | 25                        | 23                      | 19                      | 12              |
| User Conflicts                                        | 17               | 27                          | 8              | 13                      | 30             | 18                        | 19                      | 23                      | 7               |
| Trash                                                 | 12               | 14                          | 11             | 8                       | 19             | 20                        | 4                       | 6                       | 7               |
| Nothing <sup>3</sup>                                  | 32               | 28                          | 30             | 44                      | 34             | 15                        | 44                      | 34                      | 38              |
| <b>PERCEIVED PROBLEM AREAS<sup>6</sup></b>            |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| Garbage dumping                                       | 60               | 56                          | 64             | 53                      | 66             | 62                        | 46                      | 68                      | 60              |
| Water quality <sup>3</sup>                            | 56               | 53                          | 54             | 59                      | 53             | 68                        | 37                      | 66                      | 67              |
| Lack of shore recreation facilities                   | 46               | 43                          | 49             | 51                      | 39             | 47                        | 33                      | 55                      | 57              |
| Mosquitos and other insects <sup>2</sup>              | 36               | 35                          | 43             | 19                      | 39             | 53                        | 35                      | 45                      | 21              |
| Lack of natural areas <sup>2</sup>                    | 34               | 38                          | 18             | 41                      | 17             | 35                        | 33                      | 43                      | 52              |
| <b>DESIRED CHANGES<sup>5</sup></b>                    |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| Clean the water                                       | 38               | 41                          | 36             | 39                      | 36             | 33                        | 27                      | 51                      | 43              |
| Activity Improvements <sup>2,4</sup>                  | 22               | 21                          | 20             | 12                      | 55             | 11                        | 19                      | 26                      | 5               |
| Facility Improvements                                 | 15               | 19                          | 8              | 13                      | 17             | 15                        | 19                      | 11                      | 19              |
| Clean the corridor                                    | 13               | 10                          | 11             | 11                      | 25             | 18                        | 6                       | 13                      | 22              |
| <b>AREA</b>                                           |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| Skokie Lagoons                                        | 25               | 15                          | 46             | 8                       | 67             | 27                        | 29                      | 0                       | 14              |
| North Branch/NSC                                      | 23               | 39                          | 10             | 24                      | 22             | 31                        | 29                      | 0                       | 0               |
| The Loop                                              | 28               | 31                          | 2              | 64                      | 3              | 7                         | 40                      | 4                       | 83              |
| Palos Area                                            | 10               | 0                           | 42             | 0                       | 2              | 33                        | 2                       | 0                       | 0               |
| Cal-Sag Area                                          | 14               | 15                          | 0              | 4                       | 6              | 2                         | 0                       | 96                      | 2               |

<sup>1</sup>Percents may not total 100 due to rounding and responses not given. <sup>2</sup>Significant at the .01 level. <sup>3</sup>Significant at the .05 level. <sup>4</sup>Sparse cells may affect stability of results. <sup>5</sup>Based on open-ended survey items (questions 8, 9 and 14). <sup>6</sup>Percentages of responses indicating issue as "somewhat" or a "major" problem (question 10).

**TABLE 3.3.4**

**“To what extent do you feel each of the following items are problems that interfere with your use and enjoyment for this stretch of the river?” by activity**

| Activity:                                                         | Total (n=582)                  |      |     | Other Passive (n=163) |      |     | Bike (n=84) |      |     | Sit/Relax (n=75) |      |     | Fish (n=64) |      |     | Other Active (n=55) |      |     | Walk/hike (n=52) |      |     | Motor Boat (n=47) |      |     | Lunch (n=42) |      |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------|-----|-----------------------|------|-----|-------------|------|-----|------------------|------|-----|-------------|------|-----|---------------------|------|-----|------------------|------|-----|-------------------|------|-----|--------------|------|-----|
|                                                                   | Major                          | Some | Not | Major                 | Some | Not | Major       | Some | Not | Major            | Some | Not | Major       | Some | Not | Major               | Some | Not | Major            | Some | Not | Major             | Some | Not | Major        | Some | Not |
| Item                                                              | Percent reporting <sup>2</sup> |      |     |                       |      |     |             |      |     |                  |      |     |             |      |     |                     |      |     |                  |      |     |                   |      |     |              |      |     |
| Garbage dumping on bank or in river                               | 33                             | 27   | 40  | 28                    | 28   | 44  | 27          | 37   | 36  | 36               | 27   | 37  | 44          | 22   | 34  | 38                  | 24   | 36  | 17               | 29   | 52  | 43                | 26   | 32  | 41           | 19   | 41  |
| Water quality <sup>3</sup>                                        | 28                             | 28   | 44  | 25                    | 28   | 47  | 20          | 33   | 46  | 35               | 24   | 41  | 30          | 23   | 36  | 24                  | 44   | 31  | 21               | 15   | 62  | 43                | 23   | 34  | 41           | 26   | 33  |
| Lack of shore recreation facilities like paths & benches          | 15                             | 31   | 54  | 17                    | 26   | 58  | 11          | 38   | 51  | 15               | 36   | 49  | 17          | 22   | 61  | 20                  | 27   | 51  | 6                | 6    | 87  | 15                | 40   | 45  | 14           | 43   | 43  |
| Mosquitos and other insects <sup>4</sup>                          | 15                             | 21   | 63  | 15                    | 20   | 65  | 14          | 29   | 56  | 4                | 15   | 81  | 22          | 17   | 61  | 16                  | 36   | 44  | 12               | 23   | 65  | 28                | 17   | 53  | 10           | 12   | 79  |
| Not enough natural areas for vegetation and wildlife <sup>4</sup> | 13                             | 21   | 65  | 11                    | 27   | 62  | 4           | 14   | 80  | 16               | 25   | 59  | 11          | 6    | 83  | 11                  | 24   | 60  | 17               | 15   | 67  | 21                | 21   | 55  | 19           | 33   | 48  |
| Poor fishing                                                      | 12                             | 9    | 79  | 9                     | 7    | 83  | 8           | 10   | 80  | 9                | 3    | 88  | 31          | 20   | 48  | 13                  | 18   | 65  | 4                | 2    | 94  | 19                | 9    | 70  | 2            | 2    | 95  |
| Lack of public open space on river <sup>3</sup>                   | 11                             | 21   | 67  | 15                    | 15   | 70  | 7           | 20   | 73  | 11               | 27   | 63  | 6           | 19   | 75  | 7                   | 24   | 67  | 10               | 15   | 73  | 21                | 38   | 41  | 12           | 24   | 64  |
| Water odors <sup>3</sup>                                          | 10                             | 21   | 69  | 7                     | 20   | 73  | 11          | 30   | 60  | 9                | 19   | 72  | 5           | 11   | 84  | 16                  | 33   | 49  | 8                | 14   | 77  | 19                | 23   | 57  | 10           | 21   | 69  |
| Graffiti and vandalism <sup>4</sup>                               | 9                              | 17   | 73  | 9                     | 25   | 67  | 11          | 8    | 79  | 11               | 16   | 73  | 8           | 13   | 80  | 16                  | 27   | 53  | 8                | 17   | 75  | 2                 | 9    | 87  | 2            | 14   | 83  |
| Lack of canoe or boat landings <sup>4</sup>                       | 8                              | 14   | 77  | 8                     | 11   | 81  | 7           | 20   | 77  | 7                | 4    | 89  | 2           | 6    | 92  | 15                  | 31   | 53  | 6                | 6    | 87  | 23                | 28   | 49  | 2            | 14   | 83  |
| Noise from boats, industry, traffic <sup>4,5</sup>                | 5                              | 21   | 74  | 2                     | 23   | 76  | 12          | 23   | 66  | 4                | 23   | 73  | 3           | 13   | 83  | 7                   | 20   | 71  | 10               | 27   | 62  | 2                 | 4    | 94  | 10           | 31   | 60  |
| Personal safety from crime                                        | 5                              | 14   | 81  | 4                     | 12   | 84  | 5           | 10   | 83  | 4                | 13   | 83  | 6           | 11   | 83  | 7                   | 26   | 64  | 6                | 23   | 71  | 2                 | 6    | 89  | 2            | 12   | 86  |
| Fencing blocking access to river <sup>3,5</sup>                   | 4                              | 8    | 88  | 7                     | 5    | 88  | 0           | 6    | 94  | 0                | 13   | 87  | 5           | 3    | 92  | 7                   | 15   | 76  | 6                | 10   | 83  | 6                 | 2    | 92  | 0            | 10   | 90  |
| Conflicts and crowding among recreationists on shore              | 2                              | 13   | 85  | 2                     | 10   | 88  | 2           | 18   | 77  | 1                | 16   | 83  | 0           | 14   | 86  | 2                   | 13   | 80  | 6                | 4    | 90  | 0                 | 13   | 85  | 0            | 12   | 88  |
| Public safety—water accidents, etc.                               | 2                              | 8    | 89  | 1                     | 8    | 91  | 5           | 10   | 85  | 0                | 9    | 91  | 2           | 3    | 95  | 7                   | 11   | 78  | 2                | 8    | 90  | 6                 | 15   | 77  | 0            | 2    | 98  |
| Crowding, conflict among boaters <sup>3,5</sup>                   | 1                              | 5    | 93  | 2                     | 4    | 94  | 1           | 0    | 96  | 1                | 1    | 91  | 0           | 3    | 97  | 0                   | 6    | 89  | 0                | 6    | 94  | 2                 | 28   | 68  | 0            | 2    | 98  |

<sup>1</sup>Major = “a major problem;” “some” = “somewhat of a problem;” “not” includes “not a problem” and “don’t know/does not apply” response categories. <sup>2</sup>Percent may not total 100 due to rounding and missing answers. <sup>3</sup>Differences between areas significant at the .05 level. <sup>4</sup>Differences between areas significant at the .01 level. <sup>5</sup>Sparse cells may affect stability of results.

**TABLE 3.3.5**  
**“What things do you like best about this stretch of the river and the areas around it?,” by activity**

| Attribute                                        | Total<br>(n=582) | Other<br>Passive<br>(n=163) | Bike<br>(n=84) | Sit/<br>Relax<br>(n=75) | Fish<br>(n=64) | Other<br>Active<br>(n=55) | Walk/<br>Hike<br>(n=52) | Motor<br>Boat<br>(n=47) | Lunch<br>(n=42) |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Percent reporting <sup>1</sup>                   |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| Scenic <sup>3</sup>                              | 22               | 21                          | 32             | 20                      | 13             | 38                        | 23                      | 11                      | 19              |
| Other facility related attributes <sup>2,4</sup> | 20               | 31                          | 12             | 28                      | 6              | 7                         | 29                      | 32                      | 40              |
| Solitude <sup>3</sup>                            | 15               | 17                          | 16             | 16                      | 25             | 11                        | 21                      | 2                       | 5               |
| Peaceful <sup>2</sup>                            | 10               | 5                           | 11             | 20                      | 13             | 6                         | 14                      | 2                       | 14              |
| It's clean/getting cleaner                       | 9                | 10                          | 2              | 13                      | 8              | 7                         | 14                      | 9                       | 7               |
| Other nature-related attributes <sup>3</sup>     | 9                | 9                           | 6              | 15                      | 3              | 9                         | 15                      | 2                       | 17              |
| Natural areas/features                           | 9                | 9                           | 12             | 3                       | 9              | 13                        | 12                      | 0                       | 10              |
| Wildlife <sup>3,4</sup>                          | 8                | 7                           | 16             | 1                       | 6              | 11                        | 12                      | 2                       | 5               |
| Trees                                            | 8                | 9                           | 11             | 9                       | 5              | 15                        | 4                       | 0                       | 14              |
| Other activity-related attributes                | 8                | 11                          | 7              | 8                       | 3              | 4                         | 14                      | 6                       | 10              |
| River                                            | 7                | 9                           | 5              | 9                       | 5              | 2                         | 8                       | 2                       | 7               |
| Access <sup>2,4</sup>                            | 7                | 6                           | 1              | 3                       | 5              | 4                         | 2                       | 38                      | 10              |
| Location <sup>2,4</sup>                          | 6                | 4                           | 1              | 3                       | 9              | 6                         | 6                       | 21                      | 2               |
| Trails <sup>2,4</sup>                            | 6                | 0                           | 30             | 0                       | 3              | 13                        | 6                       | 0                       | 0               |
| Boats (watching) <sup>2,4</sup>                  | 5                | 4                           | 2              | 11                      | 0              | 0                         | 10                      | 0                       | 14              |
| Fishing <sup>2,4</sup>                           | 5                | 2                           | 2              | 3                       | 28             | 0                         | 6                       | 2                       | 0               |
| Open space <sup>2,4</sup>                        | 5                | 11                          | 1              | 4                       | 2              | 4                         | 4                       | 0                       | 5               |
| Being outdoors <sup>2,4</sup>                    | 3                | 2                           | 4              | 3                       | 0              | 2                         | 2                       | 0                       | 12              |

<sup>1</sup>Percents may not total 100 due to rounding and responses not given. <sup>2</sup>Significant at the .01 level. <sup>3</sup>Significant at the .05 level.  
<sup>4</sup>Sparse cells may affect stability of results.

**TABLE 3.3.6**  
**“What things do you like least about this stretch of the river and the areas around it?,” by activity**

| Attribute                                                | Total<br>(n=582) | Other<br>Passive<br>(n=163) | Bike<br>(n=84) | Sit/<br>Relax<br>(n=75) | Fish<br>(n=64) | Other<br>Active<br>(n=55) | Walk/<br>Hike<br>(n=52) | Motor<br>Boat<br>(n=47) | Lunch<br>(n=42) |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Percent reporting <sup>1</sup>                           |                  |                             |                |                         |                |                           |                         |                         |                 |
| Nothing <sup>3</sup>                                     | 33               | 28                          | 30             | 44                      | 34             | 15                        | 44                      | 34                      | 38              |
| Water pollution <sup>3</sup>                             | 20               | 18                          | 14             | 15                      | 27             | 26                        | 12                      | 34                      | 24              |
| Poor facilities <sup>4</sup>                             | 17               | 17                          | 24             | 15                      | 14             | 25                        | 23                      | 19                      | 12              |
| Other users <sup>4</sup>                                 | 17               | 27                          | 8              | 13                      | 3              | 18                        | 19                      | 23                      | 5               |
| Trash                                                    | 12               | 14                          | 11             | 8                       | 19             | 20                        | 4                       | 6                       | 7               |
| Other problems with the built environment <sup>2,4</sup> | 8                | 12                          | 6              | 5                       | 3              | 7                         | 10                      | 13                      | 7               |
| Other problems with the natural environment <sup>3</sup> | 5                | 6                           | 4              | 3                       | 6              | 9                         | 8                       | 0                       | 10              |
| Toilets (lack of, dirty) <sup>3,4</sup>                  | 5                | 7                           | 10             | 3                       | 0              | 6                         | 2                       | 0                       | 0               |
| Noise (traffic)                                          | 4                | 3                           | 8              | 5                       | 2              | 4                         | 2                       | 0                       | 10              |
| Water fountains (lack of) <sup>2,4</sup>                 | 3                | 3                           | 5              | 3                       | 0              | 11                        | 0                       | 0                       | 0               |
| Smells <sup>3,4</sup>                                    | 3                | 1                           | 6              | 5                       | 0              | 7                         | 2                       | 0                       | 2               |

<sup>1</sup>Percents may not total 100 due to rounding and responses not given. <sup>2</sup>Significant at the .01 level. <sup>3</sup>Significant at the .05 level.  
<sup>4</sup>Sparse cells may affect stability of results.

**TABLE 3.3.7**  
**“What changes do you think need to be done to make rivers in the Chicago area better for recreation?,” by activity**

| <b>Change</b>                        | <b>Total<br/>(n=582)</b>       | <b>Other<br/>Passive<br/>(n=163)</b> | <b>Bike<br/>(n=84)</b> | <b>Sit/<br/>Relax<br/>(n=75)</b> | <b>Fish<br/>(n=64)</b> | <b>Other<br/>Active<br/>(n=55)</b> | <b>Walk/<br/>Hike<br/>(n=52)</b> | <b>Boat<br/>(n=47)</b> | <b>Lunch<br/>(n=42)</b> |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
|                                      | Percent reporting <sup>1</sup> |                                      |                        |                                  |                        |                                    |                                  |                        |                         |
| Clean the water <sup>3</sup>         | <b>38</b>                      | 41                                   | 36                     | 39                               | 36                     | 33                                 | 27                               | 51                     | 43                      |
| Activity Improvements <sup>2,4</sup> | <b>22</b>                      | 22                                   | 20                     | 12                               | 55                     | 11                                 | 19                               | 26                     | 5                       |
| Not sure <sup>2,4</sup>              | <b>17</b>                      | 14                                   | 21                     | 24                               | 3                      | 26                                 | 27                               | 9                      | 14                      |
| Facility Improvements                | <b>15</b>                      | 19                                   | 8                      | 13                               | 17                     | 15                                 | 19                               | 11                     | 19                      |
| Clean the corridor                   | <b>13</b>                      | 10                                   | 11                     | 11                               | 25                     | 18                                 | 6                                | 13                     | 22                      |
| Mediate user conflicts               | <b>10</b>                      | 10                                   | 11                     | 9                                | 9                      | 13                                 | 6                                | 9                      | 7                       |
| Increase river access <sup>2,4</sup> | <b>7</b>                       | 12                                   | 4                      | 7                                | 0                      | 11                                 | 4                                | 2                      | 14                      |
| Nature Improvements                  | <b>6</b>                       | 9                                    | 2                      | 4                                | 5                      | 6                                  | 10                               | 0                      | 14                      |

<sup>1</sup>Percents may not total 100 due to rounding and responses not given. <sup>2</sup>Significant at the .01 level. <sup>3</sup>Significant at the .05 level.  
<sup>4</sup>Sparse cells may affect stability of results.

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## NOTES

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