

3. PUBLIC INPUT

PUBLIC MEETING FORMAT



Two public meetings were held to gather input on the Water Trails Master Plan. Meetings were held at the Island Park Beach House in Cedar Falls on July 31, 2018 and the Waterloo Boathouse on August 2, 2018. The meetings were open-house format, and the same materials were presented at each meeting. A total of 75 individuals attended the two meetings according to the sign-in sheets. Each meeting space was divided into four sections:

- 1. Sign-in and informational handouts**
A minimum of one staff member was seated at the sign-in table to greet attendees during each meeting. Several informational handouts were available on the topics of land ownership, emergency response, planned whitewater courses, issues with dredging, and general water trails information.

- 2. Pushpin activity**
Meeting attendees were then shown a map of Black Hawk County and given five pushpins each representing some amount of money (e.g. \$10,000). Attendees were then prompted to place the pushpins at locations in the County where they would invest in river-related improvements.

- 3. Interactive map and discussion**
A laptop and projector were set up displaying the interactive map of the Black Hawk County water trails. The map shows existing river accesses, public lands, water trails, campgrounds, parking, and other information useful to paddlers planning a trip.

- 4. Input surveys**
Paper survey forms were available for attendees which included nine questions on one side and a drawing activity on the other side. The drawing activity asked respondents to identify their favorite day trip for a specified activity.

In addition, several displays were situated throughout each meeting space. These displays covered a variety of topics related to water trails topics:

- Meandered and non-meandered rivers
- River classifications (development classification and skill level)
- The Cedar Valley Paddlers Trail
- Ongoing local projects
- Parking considerations
- Signage

Discussions took place between meeting attendees and staff throughout the meeting space. This provided attendees the opportunity to learn more about the water trails process before filling out their survey form.

Meeting materials including the input surveys, informational handouts, and displays are shown in [Appendix X](#).

SURVEY RESULTS

As described previously, meeting attendees were given multiple ways of providing input including the pushpin activity, survey form, and drawing activity. The results of these surveys are shown below.

The survey form and activities were also available online. The online surveys were promoted on the Cedar Valley Water Trails website and Facebook page. The pushpin activity and drawing activity were presented in the form of multiple-choice questions. In addition, a mock run-through of the public input meetings was held on July 30, 2018, and members of the steering committee were encouraged to provide their input on the activities and survey forms.

Altogether, 92 individuals participated in the survey process. This does not include two additional individuals who contacted the Water Trails Coordinator directly via phone and email. Figure 3-1 shows where the responses were collected from, and Figure 3-2 shows where each survey respondent is from.

Figure 3-1: Survey retrieval methods

July 30, 2018	Steering committee	9 responses
July 31, 2018	Island Park Beach House	31 responses
August 2, 2018	Waterloo Boathouse	13 responses
August 6-21, 2018	Online surveys	39 responses

Figure 3-2: Home jurisdiction of survey respondents

Cedar Falls	45 respondents
Waterloo	30 respondents
Hudson	4 respondents
Black Hawk County	2 respondents
Evansdale	2 respondents
Janesville	2 respondents
La Porte City	2 respondents
Denver	1 respondent
Gilbertville	1 respondent
Grundy County	1 respondent
Jesup	1 respondent
Readlyn	1 respondent

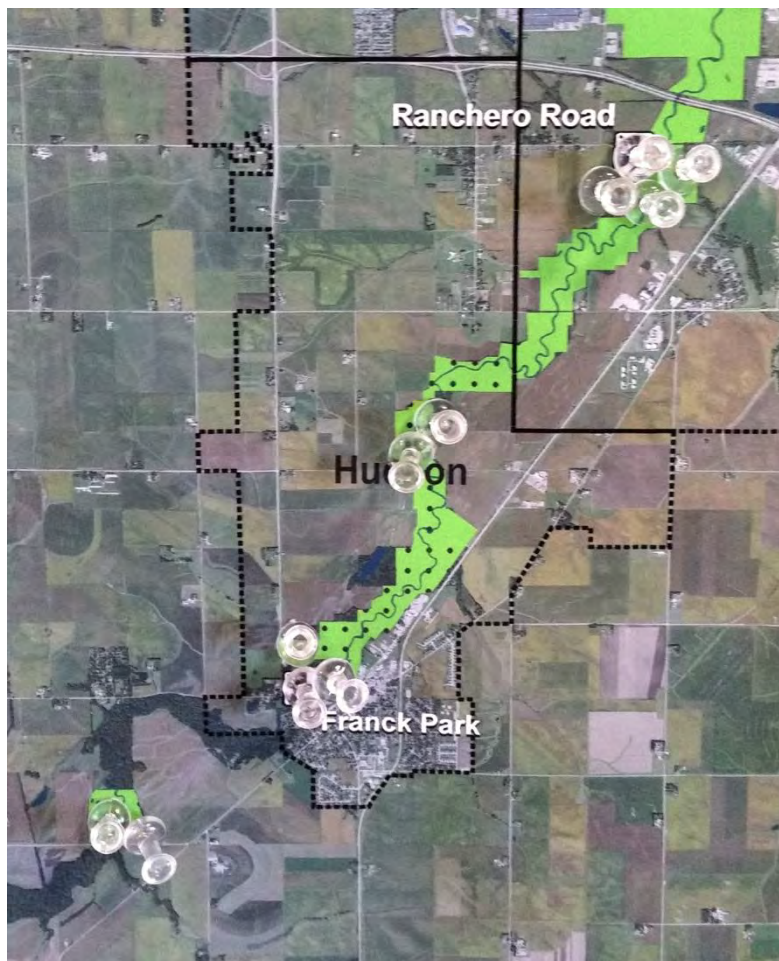
PUSHPIN ACTIVITY

The first activity at the public input meetings was the pushpin activity where attendees identified five places they would like to see investments made along the water trails. In the online surveys, this was asked as Question 2: “If you could make five investments in Black Hawk County to improve paddling and boating, where would you make these investments? You may type the same area more than once.” A link to the map shown in [Appendix X](#) was also provided.

Several responses provided online were not suitable for this exercise, such as “Cedar River” or “Improved access”, and therefore were not included in the final results.

Altogether, 354 pins were counted in total. Of the 137 responses given online, 118 were included in this analysis. A total of 167 pins were counted from the meeting in Cedar Falls, and 69 pins were counted from the meeting in Waterloo. Results from the Steering Committee meeting were not included in this analysis.

The size of the physical pushpins became problematic at the public meetings. After about a half-dozen pins were placed at a particular access, it became impossible for additional pins to be placed at the same location. Accordingly, some liberties were taken in the analysis, particularly along the section of the Cedar River between the Washington Union access and George Wyth State Park. Many pins in this area were assigned to the nearest river access or lake. If this exercise is used in the future, smaller pushpins or fewer pushpins per respondent would alleviate this problem.



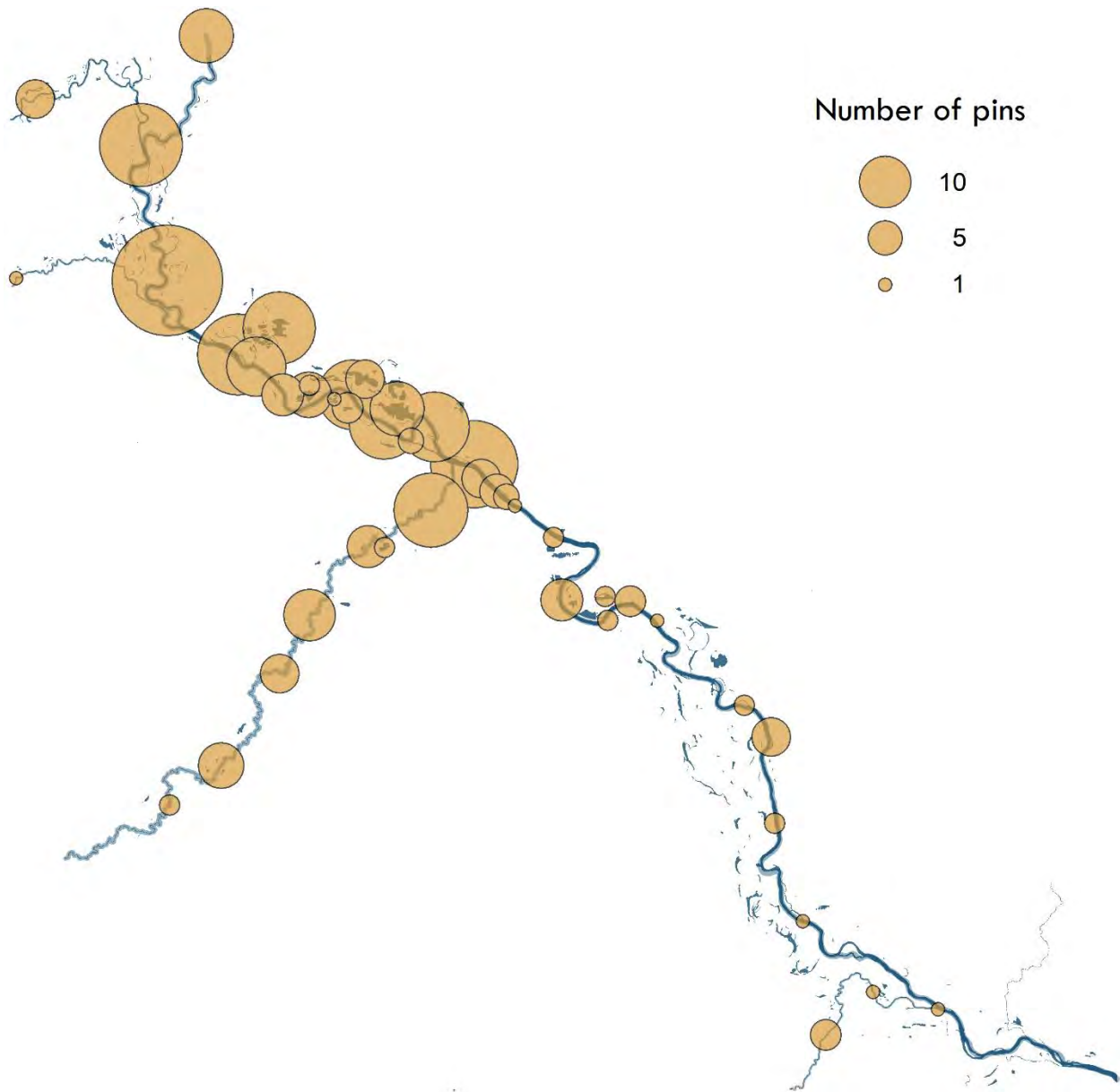
Portion of the pushpin activity map at the Island Park Beach House meeting

Figure 3-3 shows the top areas identified in this exercise, arranged by jurisdiction. These results are likely influenced in part by the location of the public input meetings. Figure 3-4 shows these results graphically on a simple map of the water trails.

Figure 3-3: Pushpin activity results

Location and number of responses		Water trail	Jurisdiction
Black Hawk Park	38	Cedar River	Black Hawk County
Waterloo Boathouse	25	Cedar River	Waterloo
Washington Union	23	Cedar River	Black Hawk County
Island Park	22	Cedar River	Cedar Falls
Hope Martin Park	19	Black Hawk Creek	Waterloo
Big Woods Lake	18	None	Cedar Falls
George Wyth State Park area	17	Cedar River, Paddlers Trail	Iowa DNR
Sherwood Park	17	Cedar River	Waterloo
Cedar Bend Park	17	Cedar River	Waterloo
Gateway Park/Tourist Park area	13	Cedar River	Cedar Falls
Janesville	11	Cedar River	Janesville
Brinker Lake	11	Paddlers Trail	Iowa DNR
Ranchero Road	10	Black Hawk Creek	Waterloo
Franck Park	8	Black Hawk Creek	Hudson
Alice Wyth Lake	8	Paddlers Trail	Iowa DNR
Washington Park	7	Cedar River	Cedar Falls
Deerwood Park	7	Cedar River	Evansdale
Between Ranchero Road and Hope Martin Park	7	Black Hawk Creek	Black Hawk County
Thunder Woman Natural Area	6	None	Black Hawk County
Waterloo Marina area	6	Cedar River	Waterloo
Gilbertville	6	Cedar River	Gilbertville
Between Franck Park and Ranchero Road	6	Black Hawk Creek	Black Hawk County, Hudson
George Wyth Lake	6	Paddlers Trail	Iowa DNR
Park Avenue/4th Street area	5	Cedar River	Waterloo
Elk Run Access	4	Cedar River	Evansdale
Wolf Creek	4	None	La Porte City
Lake Manatt	4	Paddlers Trail	Black Hawk County
Sans Souci Island wing dam	3	Cedar River	Waterloo
6th Street	3	Cedar River	Waterloo
Mitchell Sand Pits/Riverview Recreational Area	2	Cedar River	Waterloo
Cedar Terrace Park	2	Cedar River	Waterloo
Just north of Gilbertville	2	Cedar River	Black Hawk County
Cedar River Natural Resource Area/Miller Creek	2	Cedar River	Black Hawk County
Bopp Access	2	Black Hawk Creek	Black Hawk County
Greenbelt Lake	2	None	Waterloo
Fisher Lake to Alice Wyth Lake	2	Paddlers Trail	Iowa DNR
Meyers Lake	2	None	Evansdale
Beaver Creek	1	None	Black Hawk County
11th Street	1	Cedar River	Waterloo
Casebeer Heights	1	Cedar River	Evansdale
South of Cedar River Natural Resource Area	1	Cedar River	Black Hawk County
McFarlane Park	1	Cedar River	Black Hawk County
Brandon Road Bridge over Wolf Creek	1	None	Black Hawk County
Shirey Lake	1	Paddlers Trail	Black Hawk County

Figure 3-4: Map of pushpin activity results



DRAWING ACTIVITY

Survey forms at each public meeting were double-sided with a drawing activity on one side and a questionnaire on the reverse side. The drawing activity asked respondents to select one activity (e.g. kayaking, power boating) and highlight their favorite day-trip on the map. There were some inherent challenges with this activity, as many respondents highlighted more river segments than could reasonably be part of a one-day trip. Instead of including only those responses that followed the instructions, it was decided to include all of them to maximize the response rate for this activity.

In contrast to the pushpin activity which identified points along the water trails, the drawing activity prompted respondents to highlight segments between access points. The drawing activity map is shown in [Appendix X](#).

Figure 3-5 shows the number of times each segment was highlighted, by activity selected. If a respondent selected multiple activities, the drawn route was counted for each activity. Some liberties were taken to ascertain whether different segments applied to different activities. For these reasons, totals are not shown in this table, as that would skew results towards those respondents who selected more than one activity. The number of responses is underlined for segments that are the most popular for a given activity. Figures 3-6 through 3-10 show these results geographically by activity type.

Figure 3-5: Drawing activity results

	Canoeing	Kayaking	Pontoon Boating	Power Boating	Rowing	Other
Janesville to Washington Union	4	9	1	0	0	0
Washington Union to Black Hawk Park	<u>5</u>	<u>18</u>	6	2	0	3
Black Hawk Park to Island Park	3	<u>15</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	0	1
Tourist Park to Gateway Park	1	5	3	1	0	1
Gateway Park to Washington Park	2	7	3	1	0	1
Washington Park to George Wyth State Park	2	10	5	1	0	2
George Wyth State Park to Sherwood Park	3	11	<u>7</u>	1	2	3
Sherwood Park to Cedar Bend Park	3	10	<u>7</u>	2	2	2
Cedar Bend Park to Waterloo Boathouse	3	11	<u>7</u>	2	<u>3</u>	2
Waterloo Boathouse to Park Avenue	1	3	6	1	2	1
Riverview Recreation Area to Deerwood Park	0	3	0	0	0	1
Deerwood Park to Cedar Terrace Park	0	8	0	0	0	0
Cedar Terrace Park to Gilbertville	1	7	0	0	0	1
Gilbertville to Cedar River Natural Resource Area	0	6	0	0	0	1
Cedar River Natural Resource Area to Cedar River Access/McFarlane Park	0	5	0	0	0	0
Franck Park (Hudson) to Rancho Road	0	8	0	0	0	0
Rancho Road to Hope Martin Park	1	<u>13</u>	0	0	0	0
Hope Martin Park to Waterloo Boathouse	0	6	2	1	0	1
Brinker Lake	1	4	0	<u>4</u>	0	0
George Wyth Lake	2	<u>15</u>	0	1	0	0
Fisher Lake	1	3	0	1	0	0
Alice Wyth Lake	1	7	0	1	0	0
Shirey Lake	1	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Manatt	1	1	0	0	0	0
Big Woods Lake	1	<u>17</u>	0	2	0	1

Figure 3-6: Map of drawing activity, canoeing trips

Canoeing

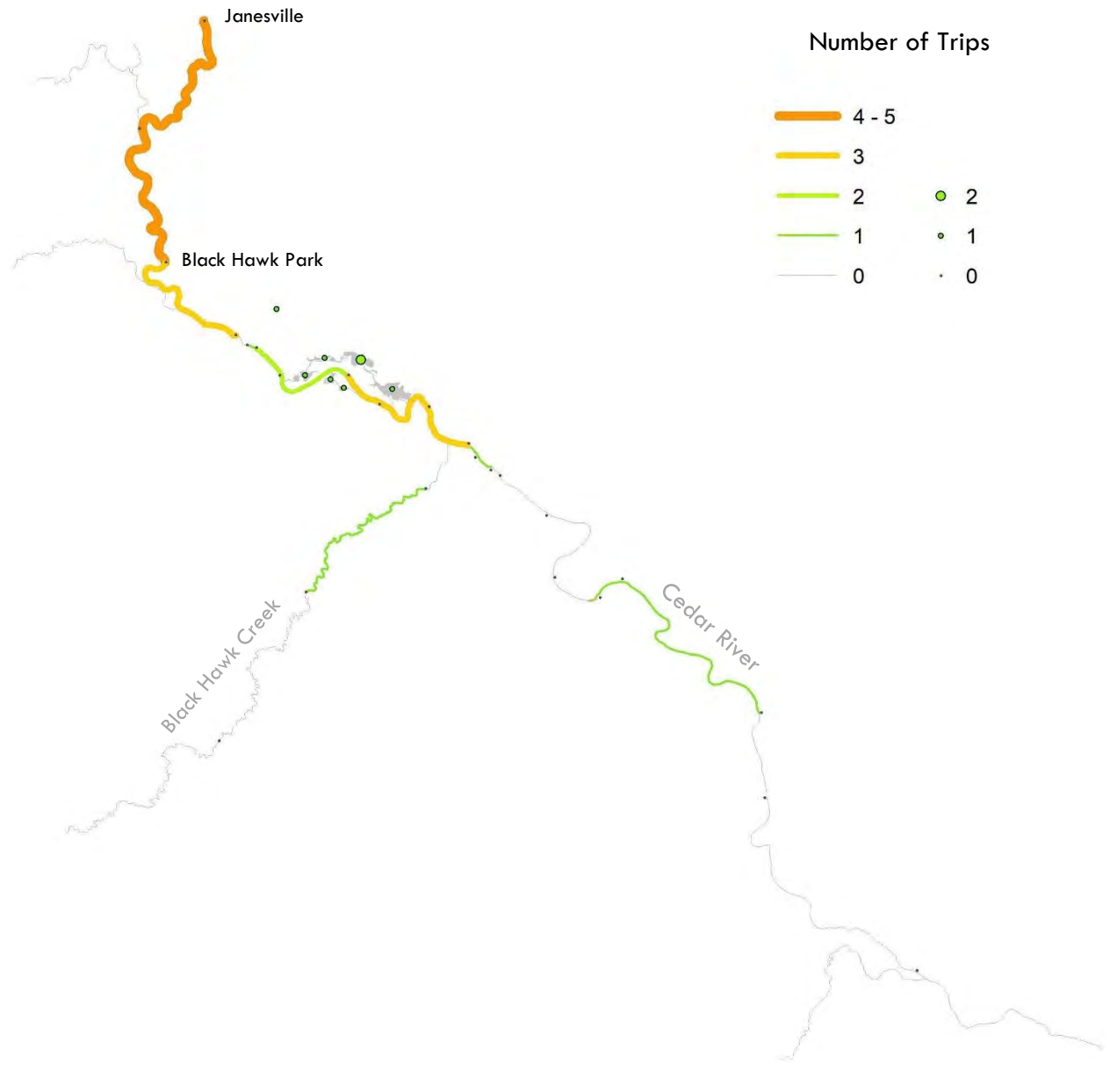


Figure 3-7: Map of drawing activity, kayaking trips

Kayaking

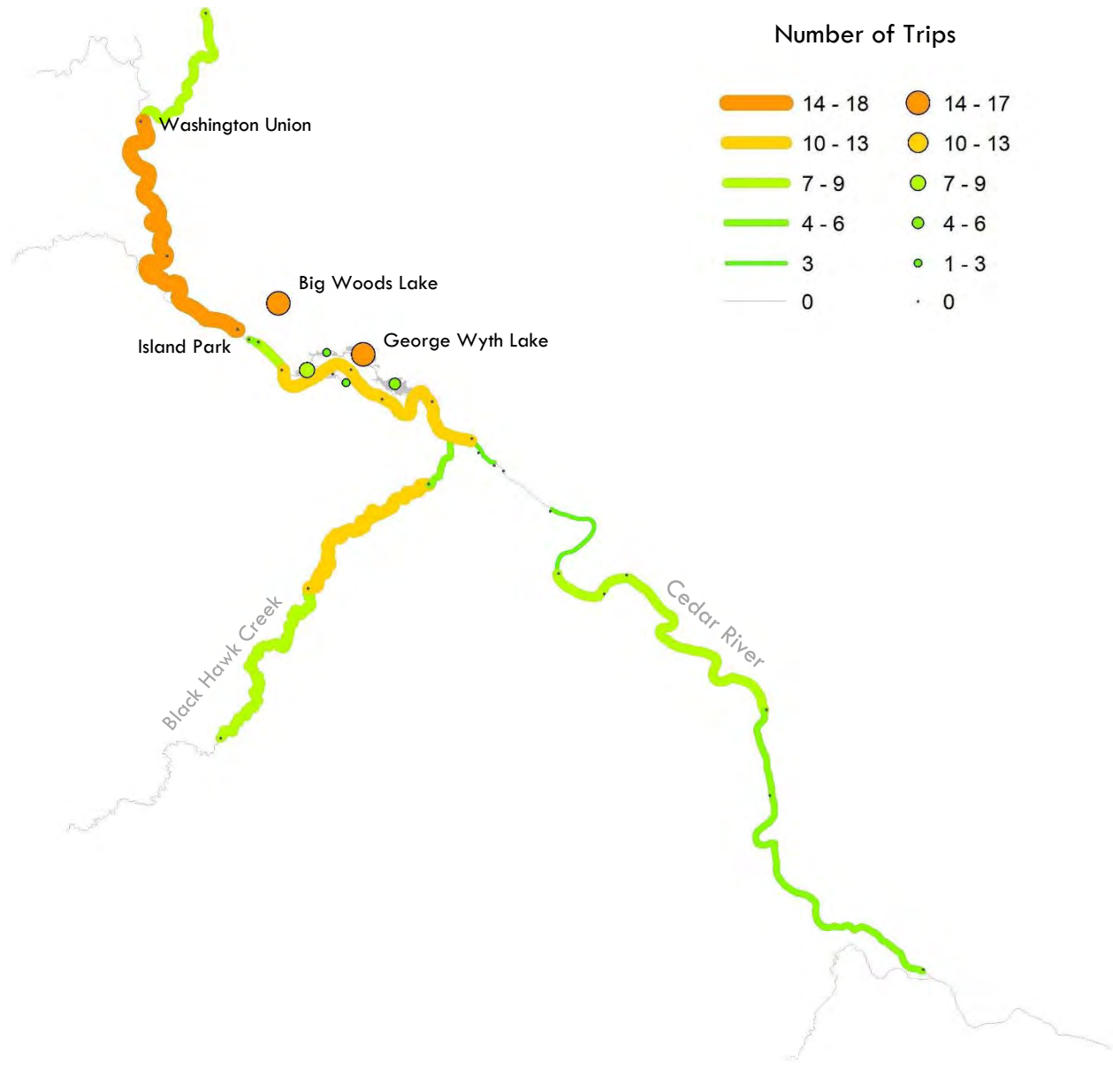


Figure 3-8: Map of drawing activity, pontoon trips

Pontoon Boating

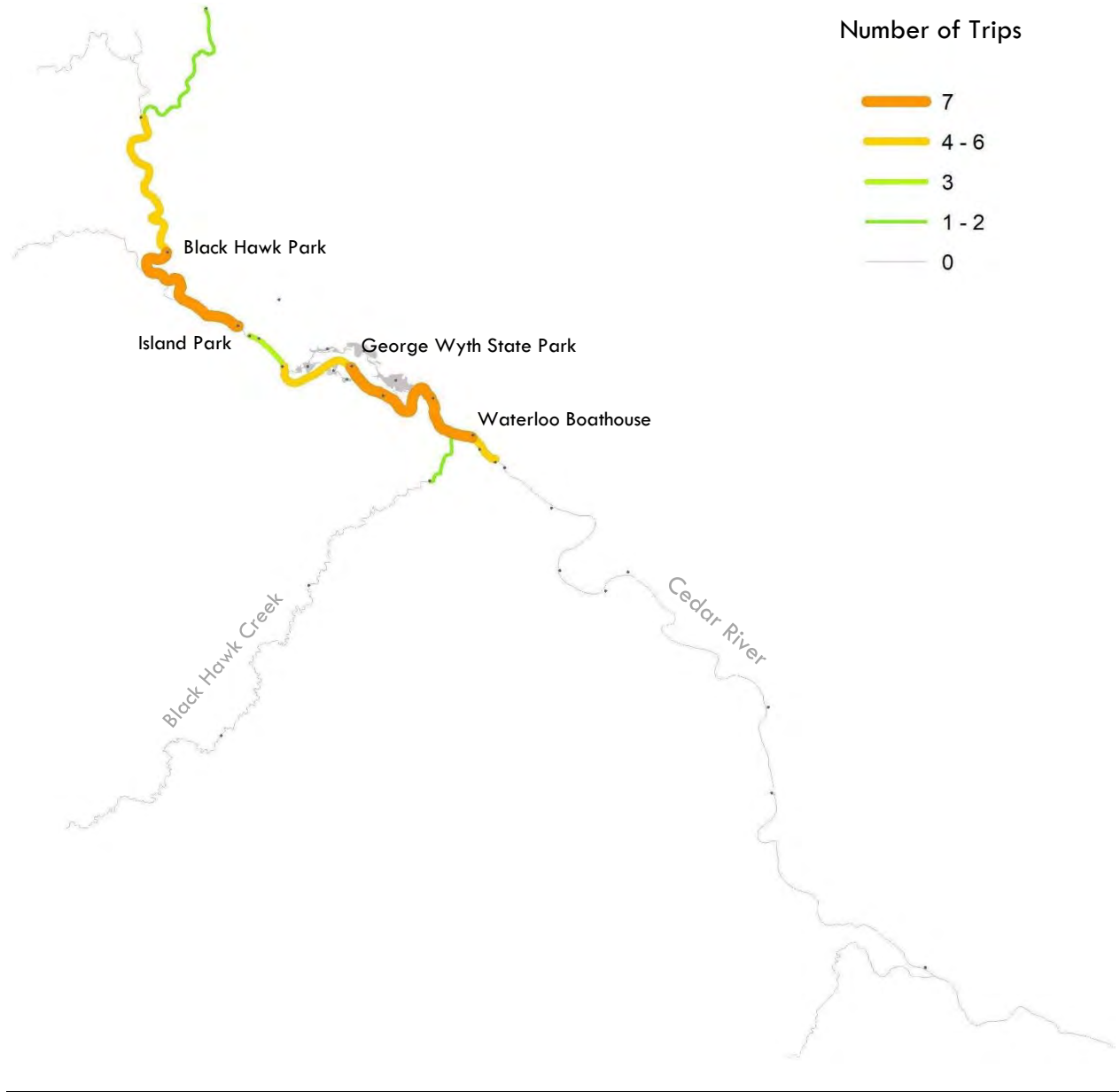


Figure 3-9: Map of drawing activity, power boat trips

Power Boating

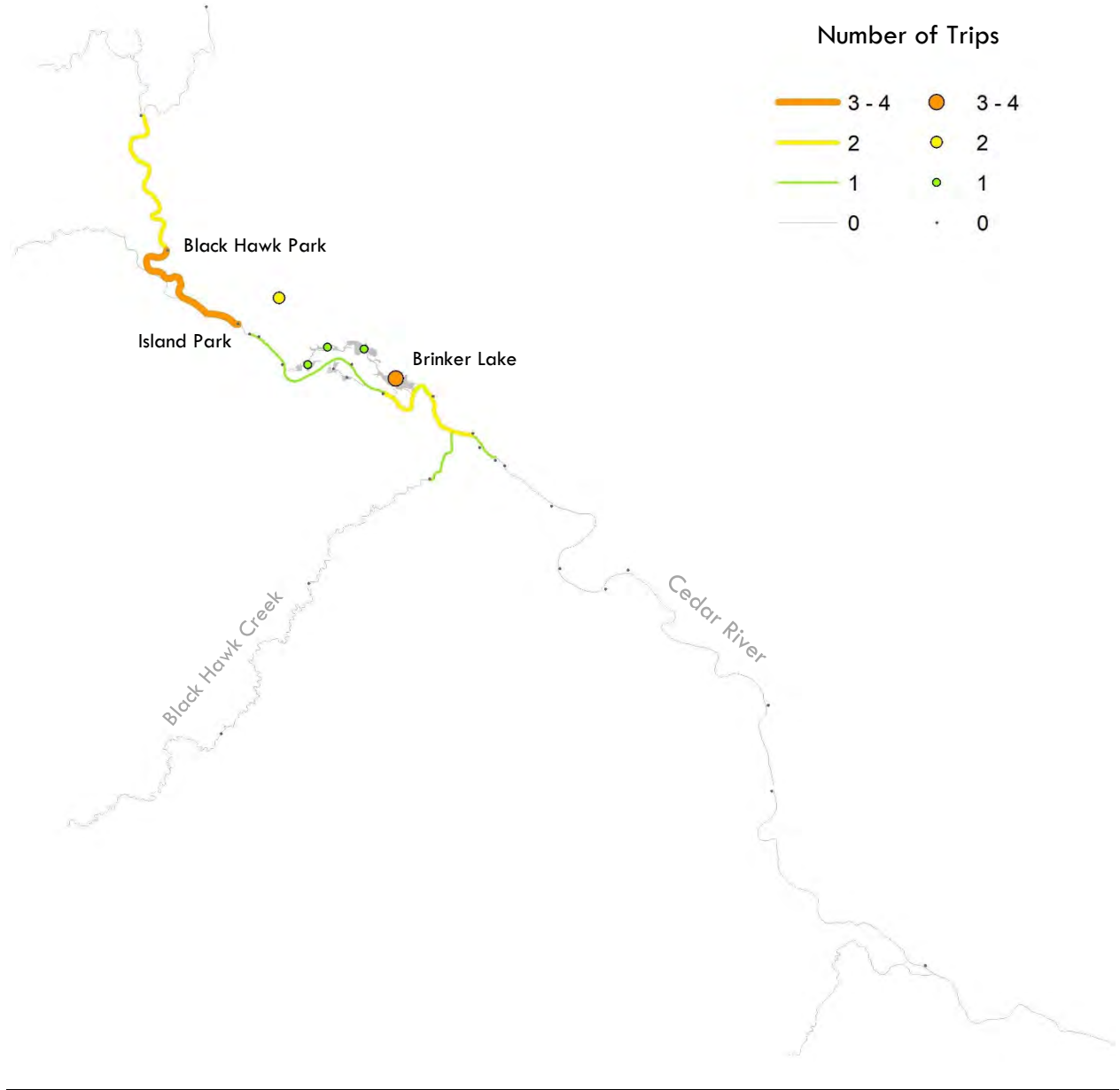
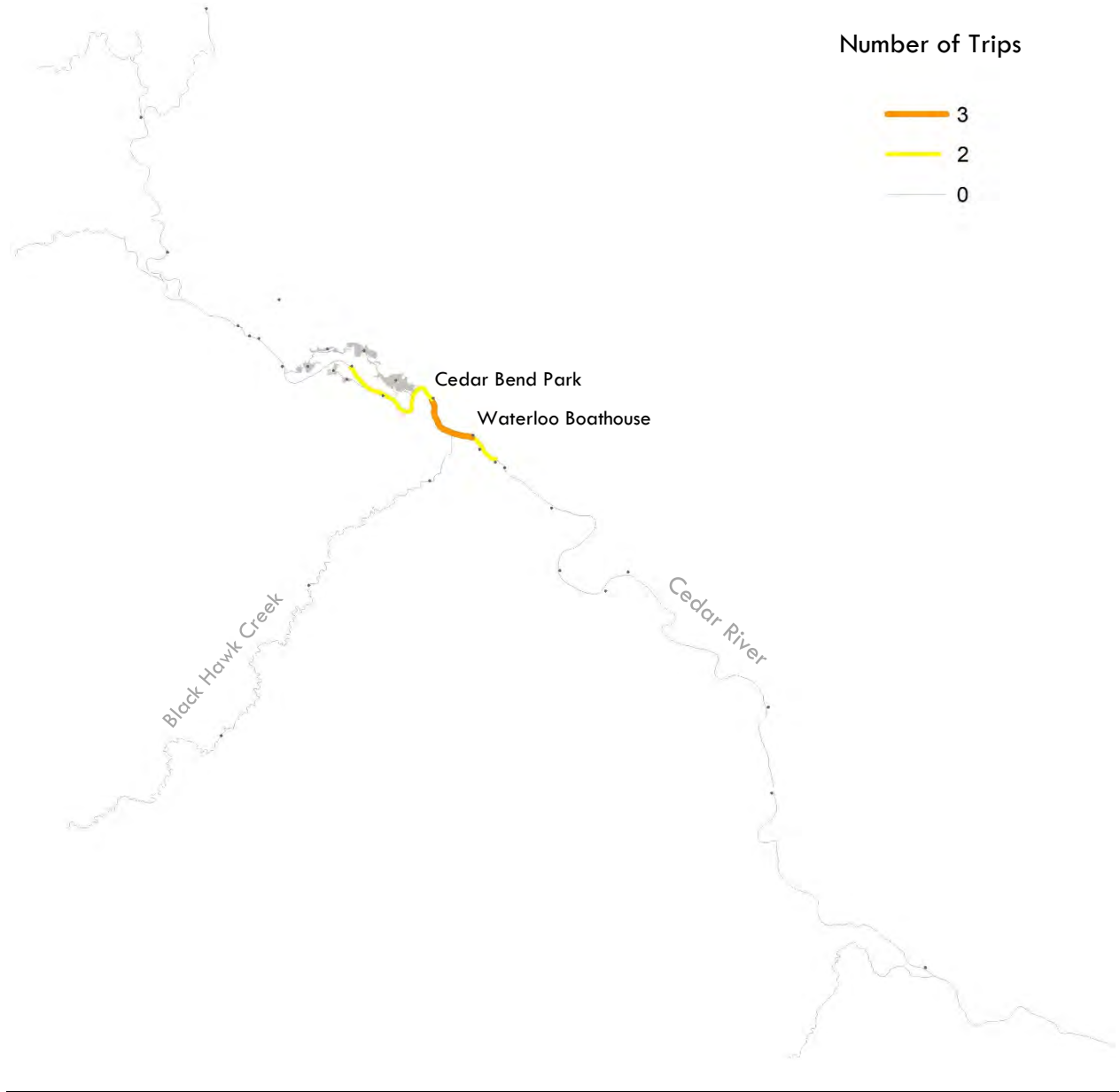


Figure 3-10: Map of drawing activity, rowing trips

Rowing



QUESTIONNAIRE

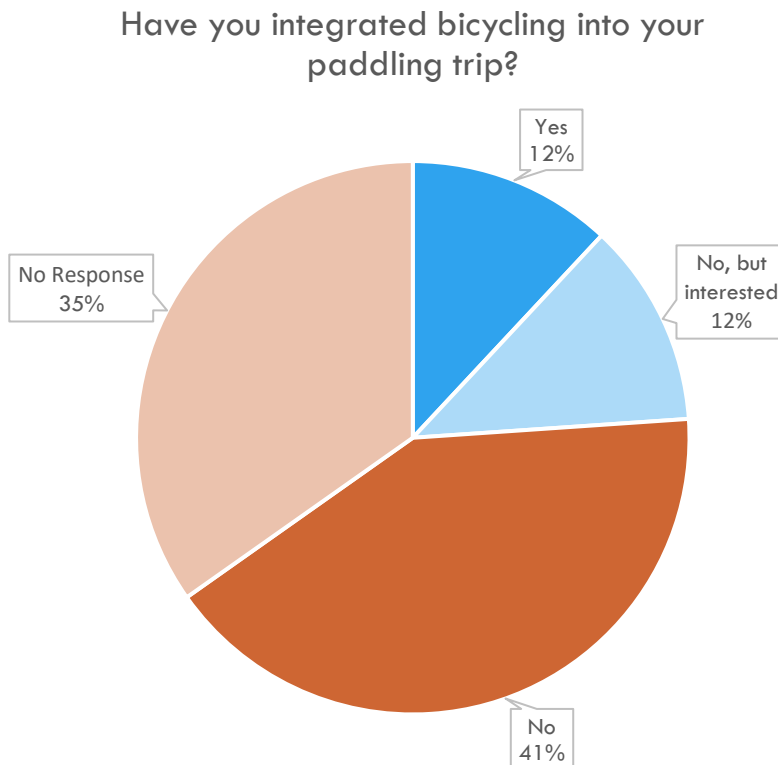
All remaining public input received at the public meetings was obtained using the survey forms shown in [Appendix X](#). The first question on the questionnaire asked what city the respondent lives in. The next three questions asked the following:

- Are there any maintenance problems you are aware of at any river access area in Black Hawk County?
- Is there anywhere you would have liked to use the restroom, but there was none available? If so, where?
- Is there anywhere you would have liked fresh drinking water, but there was none available? If so, where?

There was a wide variety of responses to these three questions. Each response was site-specific to a particular river access area or lake. Accordingly, these responses are included for each respective area described in [Chapter Four](#).

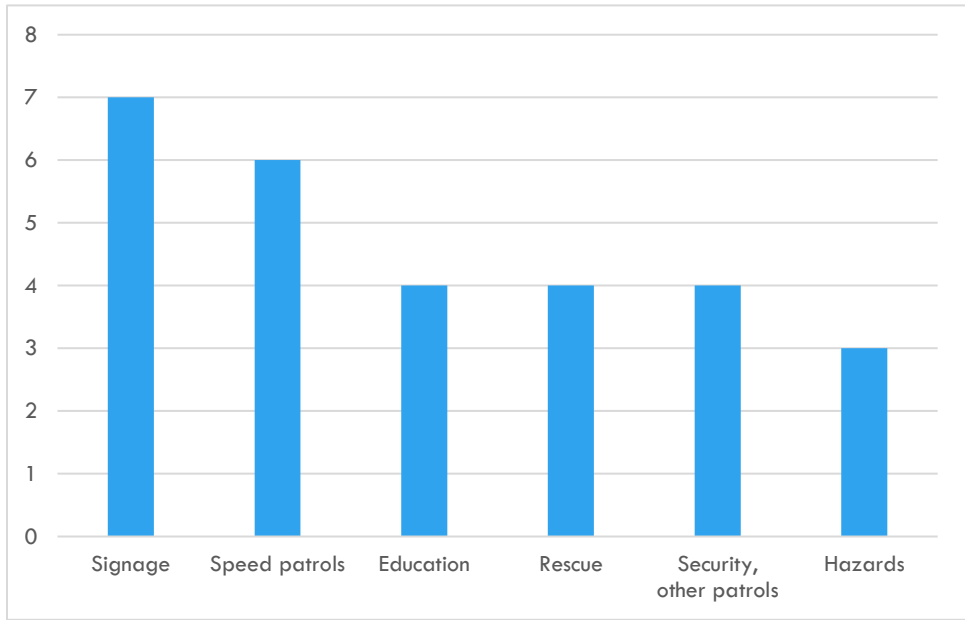
The next question asked, “Have you ever integrated bicycling into your paddling trip? If so, where?” The results of this question are shown in Figure 3-11:

Figure 3-11: Percentage of respondents who have integrated bicycling and paddling



The next question on the surveys asked, “Is there anything law enforcement and emergency response officials should consider to improve their service and the safety of the rivers?” This question was added after coordinating with the Black Hawk County Sheriff. A variety of responses were received and are included in [Appendix X](#). These responses can be grouped together by overall theme. Figure 3-12 shows the themes respondents addressed in their answers to this question.

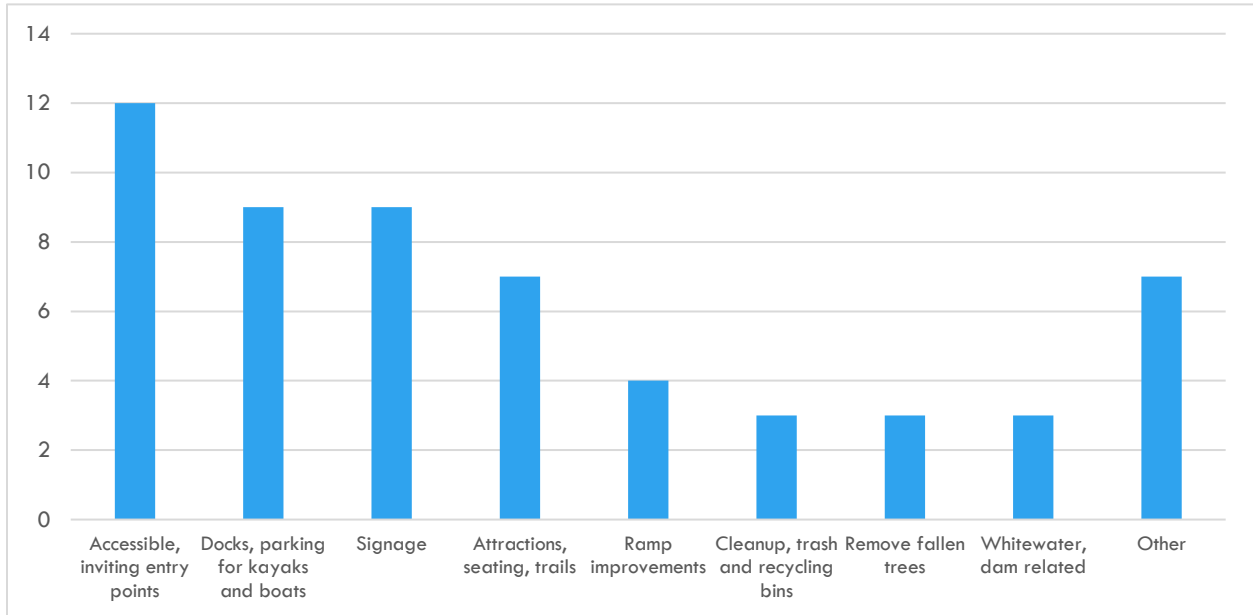
Figure 3-12: Respondents recommendations for law enforcement and emergency response



Respondents were then asked if they would participate in an “Adopt and Access” program and volunteer to clean up the access areas on a regular basis. In all, 17 respondents provided their contact information to offer to volunteer. Several other respondents indicated they already clean up access areas. Individual responses to this question are not included in this document.

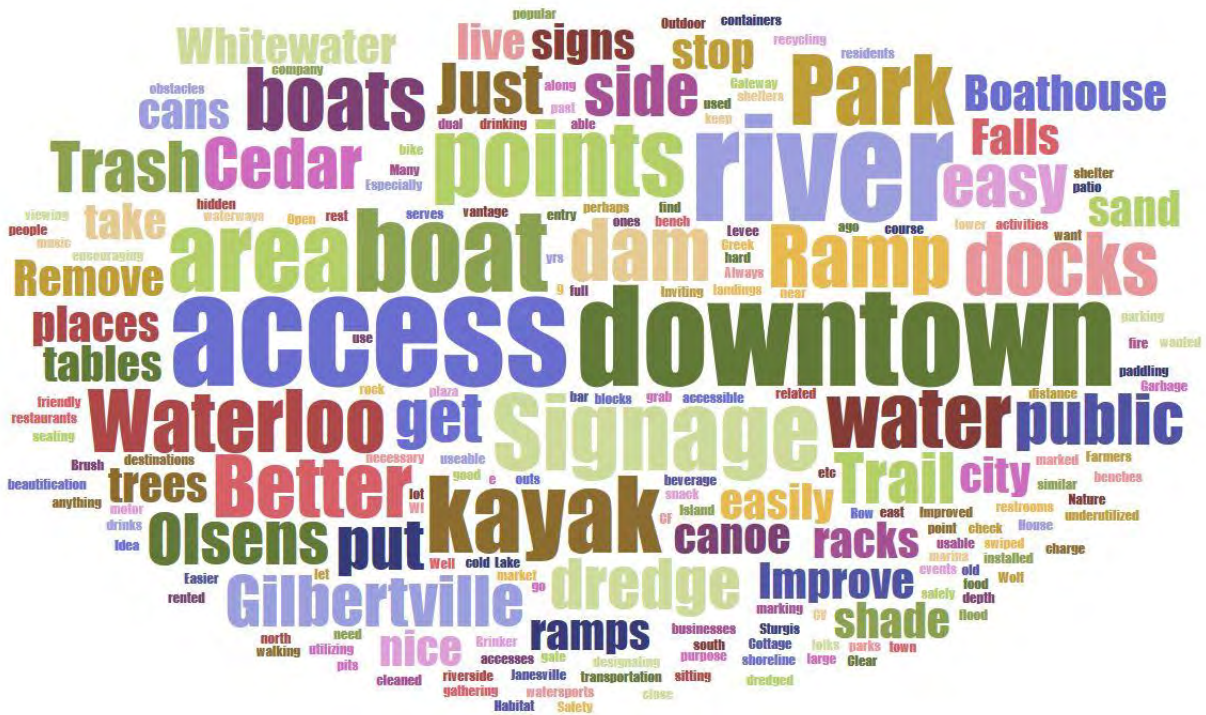
The next question asked, “What improvements would be most beneficial to you between the river and your city’s downtown area?” This question in particular was added to identify potential additions to the proposed projects in downtown Waterloo and downtown Cedar Falls, though the results can also be applied to other communities’ downtown areas including Gilbertville, Hudson, and Janesville. A variety of responses were received for this question as well, and they are included in [Appendix X](#). Responses can be grouped together by the following themes shown in Figure 3-13:

Figure 3-13: Respondents recommendations for downtown river improvements



Results of this question can also be displayed as a word cloud. A word cloud takes every written response and scales each word by the number of times the word was used. This can show common themes among responses. Figure 3-14 shows a word cloud for the question, “What improvements would be most beneficial to you between the river and your city’s downtown area?”

Figure 3-14: Word cloud of recommendations for downtown river improvements

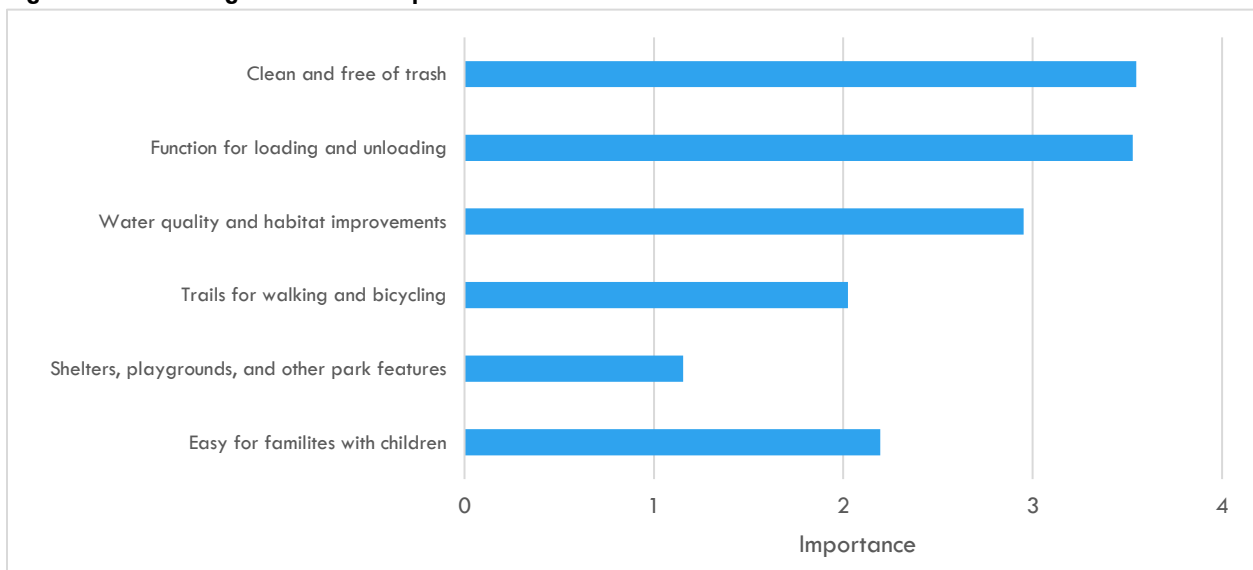


The last question of the survey asked respondents to rank the following list in order of what is most important to them:

- River accesses are clean and free of trash
- River access areas function well for loading and unloading
- River access areas include water quality and habitat considerations
- River access areas include trails for walking and bicycling
- River access areas include shelters, playgrounds, disc golf, and other park features
- River improvements are inviting and easy for families with children

Figure 3-15 shows the results of this question. Some respondents did not provide a ranking for all six categories. In those cases, the responses they gave were included in the analysis, and non-responses were not included and do not affect the average rankings.

Figure 3-15: Ranking of river access priorities



Overall, respondents valued accesses that are clear and free of trash and that function for loading and unloading. Water quality and habitat improvements also ranked highly among the six options.

PROJECTS RECOMMENDED BY THE PUBLIC

A number of recommendations from the public were mentioned in various parts of the survey. The following lists include all recommendations provided by the public. This list does not show public comments in their entirety, but rather a summary of each recommendation overall. Duplicate recommendations have been removed. The list also does not include responses to the questions regarding restrooms or drinking water, as they would overwhelm the rest of the recommendations. **This is not a list of final project recommendations.**

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

General Projects

- Install signs showing public accesses
- Install mile marker signs along the riverbanks
- Install on-river signs for accesses and portages
- Install signs on bridges
- Install “no wake” signs for boaters
- Install “no staggering” signs for paddlers
- Install signs with distances to the next river access
- Install accessible fishing areas from shore
- Install kayak/canoe racks similar to bike racks
- Install areas to stop and rest along rivers with seating
- Install geolocator information at accesses
- Install blue light emergency phones with safety kits

Cedar River

- Establish a new access at Park Drive parking lot near South Riverside Trail
- Dredge the river from Waterloo to Gilbertville, and north of Island Park
- Add reservable wilderness camping on Cedar River between Washington Union Access and Black Hawk Park

Black Hawk Creek

- Establish a program to remove fallen trees and log jams
- Install a new kayak access between Hudson and Rancho Road

Cedar Valley Paddlers Trail

- Install trails and markings for portages
- Reduce portage distance by relocating put-ins and take-outs
- Create navigable passage for paddlers between Cedar River and Brinker Lake
- Establish boat ramp to Brinker Lake on Donald Street

CEDAR RIVER ACCESSES

Janesville

- Improve boat ramp at Janesville access

Washington Union

- Expand size of Washington Union access
- Install a new boat ramp on southeast side of bridge

Black Hawk Park

- Improve the Black Hawk Park boat ramp

Island Park

- Install kayak docks at Island Park

Downtown Cedar Falls

- Install whitewater features
- Install more boat parking (i.e. docks)
- Improve Olsen's Boat House site for kayak and boat parking
- Install a dock on south side of Cedar Falls dam
- Install a boat ramp at Gateway Park

Sherwood Park

- Install a boat dock at Sherwood Park
- Add 10 or 15 feet of concrete to the Sherwood Park boat ramp

Cedar Bend Park

- Open the Cedar Bend Park boat ramp
- Install boat dock at Cedar Bend Park

Waterloo Boathouse

- Improve existing docks with decking and floats or replace with new docks
- Install cleats to tie up boats for loading and unloading
- Install another dock at the Waterloo Boathouse
- Expand parking lot for large trucks and trailers
- Install cameras at the trailer parking lot
- Use Waterloo Boathouse as a restaurant

Downtown Waterloo

- Install whitewater features
- Install river access Downtown Waterloo
- Install accessible ramp below dams
- Open floodwalls to improve river access

Gilbertville

- Install kayak dock at Gilbertville access
- Install signage to Gilbertville access
- Establish a new access near Gilbertville Depot

BLACK HAWK CREEK ACCESSES

Franck Park

- Install concrete ramp at Franck Park

Hope Martin Park

- Replace ramp at Hope Martin Park

OTHER WATERBODIES

Big Woods Lake

- Widen the sand ramp on the south side of Big Woods Lake
- Install more docks like the south dock at Big Woods Lake
- Restore wetland connection between Big Woods Lake and Alice Wyth Lake

Meyers Lake

- Install a kayak ramp on Meyers Lake

Wolf Creek

- Install walking trail along Wolf Creek from La Porte City to Cedar Valley Nature Trail