To: Jacksonville Waterways Commission Chair, Council Member Lori Boyer

From: Steven Davis, Waterways Commission

Subject: Jacksonville Waterways Competitive Distant Swim Events Summary

Date: August 14, 2018

**2018 Summer and Fall St Johns River Activation Athletic Program**

The 2018 program includes the Jacksonville Triathlon Series and Up the River Downtown Marathon Swim Race.

The successful DRC Triathlon Series outgrew the former venue which presented increasing challenges, and it was time for a change. JumpingFish, an organization that advocates for the waterways through athletics had been researching and leveraging the athletic potential of the St. Johns since 2011. The St. Johns Riverfront provides the series with the opportunity to become one of the largest Sprint & Olympic events in the country and its time has come.

• Jacksonville Triathlon Series Race #1, Saturday, June 16, 2018.

Race #1 ran without any major issues. Included was a Sprint Triathlon and an Olympic Triathlon. The race attracted over 600 competitors from the southeast and beyond for this event. Approximately 200 participated in the Olympic Triathlon starting at Riverside Arts Market, and 400 participated in the Sprint beginning at Hogan Street. In addition to the athletes, support personnel took part in activating the river including volunteer kayakers from Jacksonville and Northeast and Central Florida.

• Jacksonville Triathlon Series Race #2, Saturday, July 14, 2018.

The second of the Jax Triathlon Series ran without any significant issues. Included was a Sprint and an Olympic Triathlon. The race once again attracted over 600 competitors from the southeast and other parts of the country.

• Jacksonville Triathlon Series Race #3, Saturday, August 4, 2018.

Race #3 continued our run of racing without any major issues. Included was a Sprint and an Olympic Triathlon. The race once again attracted over 600 competitors.

Including the athletes, volunteers and support personnel we estimate over 2,000 people entered the St. Johns River for the events. Many attendees, athletes, friends, and families were out of towners patronizing the Omni and Hyatt and local establishments.

**The Numbers:**

* 1,963 athletes registered for the series.
* 63% Male / 37% Female
* Largest Age Groups – 30-39   24% / 40-49   26% /  50-64   25%
* The Hyatt reported approx. 100 room nights
* The OMNI reported approx. 150 room nights
* 73% of Athletes from Florida, Remaining 27% for 19 other states

**Up the River Downtown 10k Swim Race,** coming September 22, 2018

The 20th Global Swim Series (GSS) race in the United States is Jacksonville, Florida’s: **Up the River Downtown**. DRC Sports, JumpingFish Athletics and Jacksonville University Water Sports are partnering for Jacksonville’s first marathon swim race in the St. Johns River. Jacksonville’s Up the River Downtown 10k Open Water Race starts at Jacksonville University on the Dolphin Green Beach with the flood current and finishes at Riverside Arts Market at the Fuller Warren Bridge. The swim takes the competitors under the Hart and Matthews bridges, past the Stadium, through the Main Street Bridge, and under the Acosta and Railroad bridges ending at Riverside Arts Market where awards where we will present awards on stage. Race organizers expect approximately 100 elite swimmers to participate, along with numerous volunteers on kayaks, paddle boards, and in safety boats. JumpingFish began organizing Up the River Downtown as exhibition swims in 2011 aiming to bring the community back to St Johns River.

**Coltman and Baughman Triathlon at Hanna Park**, coming September 23, 2018.

Triathlon returns to the beaches where it all started in Jacksonville, Beautiful Hanna Park.

This event is a Sprint Triathlon: Swim 0.5 Mile, Bike 20K,  Run 5K**.**

**Significant Challenges**

1. Swimming in the St. John’s River with no easy public access in/out of the water. We had to develop a safe and effective system of entry and exit.
2. Fast moving water with changing currents. Scheduling the race is based on the tidal direction and speed. We also mobilized a force of Boats from the Coast Guard Auxiliary, Power Squadron, JSO and Fire Rescue. We provided swim and safety support with dozens of Kayaks and Lifeguards.
3. Water quality was a recurring question. However, our water testing showed that the water was safe to swim by a better margin than many other bodies of water in the state.

**Jax Series Sprint Triathlon Distances:**

SWIM: 1/4 mile in the St Johns River, with the ebb current, from Hogan Street to the Main Street Bridge.

BIKE: 15 miles on the flat, fast, out & back CLOSED course along the urban riverfront around EverBank Field, Home of the Jaguars.

RUN: 5K (3.1 miles) on the fast & flat, out and back course downtown and along the Riverside North Riverwalk.

**Jax Series Olympic Triathlon:**

SWIM: 1.5k [0.93 miles] with the ebb current of the St. John's River (dock start) from the Fuller Warren at Riverside Arts Market.

BIKE: 40k [25 miles] on the flat, fast, out & back CLOSED course along the urban riverfront around EverBank Field, Home of the Jaguars.

RUN: 10k [6.2 miles] on the fast & flat, out and back course Downtown and along the Riverside North Riverwalk.

*Chris Moling, Director, DRC Sports Jim Alabiso, Director, JumpingFish Athletics*