

Enhance Access to the River

Access should meet specific goals and criteria and might utilize incentives to provide access on private property. For instance, the Comprehensive Plan may include an objective to provide public river access every "X" miles. Further, zoning may require that commercial redevelopment on the river provide some degree of public access. A detailed study should be commissioned to develop a waterfront access master plan and to identify specific properties that may be acquired by the City. Agencies such as the Trust for Public Land can be a tremendous help in conducting this type of analysis.

The diagram to the right begins to identify general locations for new parks and boat ramps to serve a broader distribution of the population. In addition, there is a need to improve existing facilities which are not adequately maintained. The City's Boat Ramp Master Plan identifies facilities which are in need of repair, as well as opportunities for expanding existing facilities.

There are also opportunities to enhance access to the river's associated creeks and tributaries. One example is the planned trailhead at the Julington Durbin Creek Preserve which will improve access to the peninsula formed at the confluence of two creeks. With nine miles of shoreline along the two creeks an approximately three miles of hiking trails, visitors have an opportunity to experience a number of natural ecosystem communities and observe wildlife such as bald eagle, osprey, gopher tortoise, bobcat, turkey, deer and numerous species of wading and songbirds. Manatees also seasonally swim in both creeks.

Action Items for Sub-Principle 5.3:

1. Continue efforts to restore the health of the Lower St. Johns River Basin.
2. Create development standards that protect natural areas.
3. Create specific goals and criteria to increase public access to the river.
4. Implement the City's Boat Ramp Master Plan.

Diagram: The diagram to the right illustrates existing waterfront access and target areas for additional public waterfront access. (Source: Zyscovich Architects, 2009 using JPDD GIS Database, 2007)

