

Friends of Royal Lake (FORL) Spring 2022 Community Survey Report

August 11, 2022

Survey Goals:

- To characterize how park resources are used by community members
- To identify and prioritize potential improvements and maintenance efforts from the perspective of survey respondents at a level of specificity to support potential implementation by County agencies.

Methods - Overview

- 6-member volunteer team
- Design phase from January – April 2022
 - Field testing at key park locations
 - Fielded from April 10 – May 10, 2022
 - 433 respondents
 - Two key components to survey
 - Overall perspective for all respondents on natural environment, parking, frequency of visits, distance travelled to park, etc.
 - Individual activities
 - Trails (380)
 - Civic activities (231)
 - Playground (208)
 - Soccer (146)
 - Tennis and basketball (117)
 - Baseball (58)
- Survey team is confident that respondents are broadly representative of park users overall and by activity

Who Responded ?

For how many years have you been visiting the parks?

Year Range	Respondents	Percentage
< 5	151	36%
5-10	74	17%
10-15	52	12%
15-20	35	8%
> 20	112	26%
Total respondents	424	100%

What distance do you travel to visit the park?

Distance	Number	Percentage
Less than 1 mile	271	64%
1-3 miles	121	29%
More than 3 miles	32	8%
Total respondents	424	100%

Who Responded ?

Years Visiting by Distance Travelled

Year Range	Distance			Total
	Less than 1 mile	1-3 miles	More than 3 miles	
< 5	56%	32%	13%	100%
5-10	64%	26%	11%	100%
10-15	69%	27%	4%	100%
15-20	66%	34%	0%	100%
> 20	72%	25%	3%	100%

In which neighborhood do you live?

Neighborhood	Number	Percentage
Kings Park West	204	47%
Lakepointe	27	6%
Glen Cove	23	5%
New Lakepointe	16	4%
Village Park	13	3%
Bonnie Brae	8	2%
Other	139	32%
Total	430	100%

Many Park Visitors include Children & Families

Do you bring children of any age?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	219	51%
No	214	49%
Total respondents	433	100%

Typically Bring Children

Years Visiting	No	Yes
< 5	35%	65%
5-10	34%	66%
10-15	42%	58%
15-20	86%	14%
> 20	72%	28%

Overall Insights

- Universal agreement that the parks are a **highly valued community resource**
- **Preserving the environment** at the parks is central:
 - 94 percent (318 / 338) expressed agreement with the statement : ***a top goal is to preserve peace, quiet, and the natural environment.***
 - 61 percent (206 / 338) expressed disagreement with the ***goal of creating more activities and amenities at the parks around Royal Lake.***
- **Native plants:** Nearly all (96 percent, or 267 / 277) who expressed an opinion agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: *I would like more native plants to be planted to improve the ecology of Royal Lake.*
- **Garbage cans and pollution:** Nearly three-quarters of respondents (73 percent) agreed cited pollution / litter in or near the lake as a problem that merits attention. Over two-thirds of respondents (68 percent, or 227 / 336) agreed or strongly agreed *that more garbage cans should be placed throughout the parks.*
- **Fishing lines:** Over four-fifths of those expressing a perspective (83 percent, or 204 / 246) agreed that fishing lines being improperly discarded is a problem.

Findings by Activity - Trails

- Trail use is the most common activity – 88 % of respondents completed this section
- Trails include both circuit and feeder trails
- Most common uses: walking, running, walking a dog, watching nature
- Nearly one-half (47 %) bring children when they use trail
- 82 percent of trail users completed one or more other activity sections

- Circuit trail issues:
 - Drainage is a commonly cited problem; paving is not a favored solution
 - 81 % of users agree: “I avoid the trail after a rainy day because its too muddy”

- 2 Park Entrance trails with concerns:
 - Richardson Court near soccer field:
 - 10 % use this entrance
 - Most of those want improvements to the entrance – ongoing discussions w/ FCPA

Findings by Activity – Trails (continued)

- Add trail from top of the dam to the lower part of the circuit trail
 - 11% walk down from the top of the dam to the circuit trail.
 - We believe this number is based on park patrons who live at either Lakepointe or New Lakepointe and those who walk the circuit trail and then take the upper dam trail and then go down to the lower part of the circuit trail.
 - 35% support adding this trail segment
 - 51% who entered the trail at Lakepointe or New Lakepointe want to add this trail
- Discussions with those who go from the top of the dam to the lower trail see that the mat installed to cover newly planted grass was added to be a trail.

Findings by Activity – Civic Events, Social Activities and Concerts

- 2nd highest response rate (53 % - 233 individuals)
- 79 % reported they were likely to attend a Braddock Nights concert in Summer 2022
- 44 % reported they were likely to participate in another civic event including KPWCA Halloween Parade or Spring Egg Hunt

Findings by Activity – Playground

- 48 % (233) respondents
- Questions on both Lakeside Park and Royal Lake Park (Katie's Playground)
- Top Improvements Cited:
 - Shade Structures
 - Toilet Facilities
 - Water Fountains
 - Play Equipment for Older Children
 - Zipline

Findings by Activity – Soccer Field

- 33 % (146) respondents
 - Over three-quarters (77 %) either have, or care for, a child on a Kings Park West Soccer team or come to the field to watch soccer practices or games.

Desired improvements

- 56% would like goose droppings to be cleaned up regularly
- 51% would like improved drainage
- 38% would like more grass to be planted
- 31% would like benches added to spectator area
- Support for adding
 - Trash cans (19 comments about trash or garbage) and
 - Benches (5 comments) near the field.

Findings by Activity – Basketball / Tennis Court

- 25 % of respondents completed this section
- 38 % - 45 % like the courts just the way they are

Desired improvements

- Resurface basketball court at Katie's Playground (basketball)
- Repaint lines on basketball courts
- Add benches in both locations (26 % - at Lakeside Park)
- Resurface tennis courts (21 %)

Findings by Activity – Baseball Field

- 13 % (58) respondents
 - Least common activity based on response rates
- 60 % either have or bring a child to the park to practice or play baseball, including those who say they watch baseball from the benches adjacent to the field.
- 40 % would like better drainage of the baseball field.
- Other potential improvements
 - Higher Fencing (26 %) and
 - Storage Shed (21 %).

Selected open-ended responses :

- *“The field should be open for use unless there is some definite reason to the contrary. The sign will often inexplicably say the field is CLOSED and NO TRESPASSING.”*
- *“Remove signs discouraging use.”*
- *“Control of geese needs to be improved.”*
- *“A net could be added to the top of the dugout fence at a small expense.”*

Summarizing Participation across Activities

Characteristics of Respondents, by Activity Participation

Activity	Respondents	Brings Children 0-13 to Park		Sections Completed average	Only That Section percent	Most Cited Potential Improvements			
		#	percent						
Trail	380	178	47%	2.8	18%	Muddy when raining - drainage (71 %)	Segmen from lower dam to top of dam (35 %)	Lower dam pathway (33 %)	
Civic / Braddock Nights	231	108	47%	3.4	1%	Plant more grass (33 %)	Picnic (30 %)	Seating (26 %)	Stage (15 %)
Playground	208	181	87%	3.5	3%	Shade structure (68 %)	Toilet / portapotty (63 %)	Picnic (26 %)	Benches (25 %)
Soccer	146	118	81%	3.8	3%	Goose dropping cleanup (56 %)	Improve drainage (51 %)	Plant more grass (38 %)	Add water fountain (20 %)
Tennis / Bball	117	66	56%	4.1	2%	Resurfacing (33 %)	Repaint (26 %)	Benches (24 %)	Maintenance equipment (19 %)
Baseball	58	41	71%	4.7	3%	Improve drainage (40 %)	Fencing (26 %)	Storage shed (21 %)	Maintenance equipment (19 %)

Summary and Next Steps

- We are confident that respondents are broadly representative of park users overall and by activity
- Respondents universally agree that the parks are a highly valued community resource
- A top goal is to preserve peace, quiet, and the natural environment
- Care of the environment is central to park patrons
- Next steps:
 1. **Development of a capital improvement and maintenance priority list for presentation to Fairfax County Park Authority and Department of Public Works and Environmental Services offices**
 2. **Prepare and publish a revised Royal Lake Community Vision Plan**