



APPENDICES

OUR LANDS - OUR FUTURE: RECREATION &
CONSERVATION CHOICES FOR NORTHERN COLORADO

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Natural Areas and Nature-Based Facilities 2012
Citizen Survey Overview of Findings

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APPENDIX A., LARIMER COUNTY AND MUNICIPALITIES: NATURAL AREAS AND NATURE-BASED FACILITIES 2012 CITIZEN SURVEY OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS



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Larimer County and Municipalities: Natural Areas and Nature-Based Facilities 2012/2013 Citizen Surveys Overview of Findings

June 2013

Prepared for:

Larimer County, CO

City of Fort Collins

City of Loveland

Town of Berthoud

Town of Estes Park

Town of Johnstown

Town of Timnath

Town of Wellington

Town of Windsor

Prepared by:

RRC Associates, Inc.

4940 Pearl East Circle, Ste 103

Boulder, CO 80301

303/449 6558

www.rrcassoc.com



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INTRODUCTION / METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to gather public feedback on Larimer County’s municipal and county natural areas and nature-based facilities. The project was based on a partnering of Larimer County and all the municipalities (partner agencies) in the County to investigate regional land conservation, recreation, and stewardship. The study included a survey program designed to probe usage characteristics of parks, trails and other facilities, community values with respect to natural areas, satisfaction with current facilities, the importance of various natural area features, views on natural area and trail management, and communication. This feedback and subsequent analysis were designed to assist the partner agencies in future planning and policy formulation efforts.

The survey was conducted using three methods: 1) a mail-back survey, 2) an online invitation-only survey to further stimulate response from those residents already within the defined random sample, and 3) an open-link online survey for members of the public who were not part of the random sample. Unless stated otherwise, the analysis herein focuses primarily on surveys received via the first two methods. A total of 7,500 surveys were mailed to a random sample of Larimer County residents in August 2012, with 7,250 being delivered after subtracting undeliverable mail. The final sample size for this statistically valid survey was 922, resulting in a response rate of 12.7 percent and a margin of error of approximately +/- 3.4 percentage points calculated for questions at 50 percent response¹. Results from the open link survey generated an additional 1,248 responses.

The primary list source used for the mailing was a third party list purchased from Melissa Data Corp., a leading provider of data quality solutions with emphasis on U.S., Canadian, and international address and phone verification and postal software. Use of the Melissa Data list also includes renters in the sample who are frequently missed in other list sources such as utility billing lists.

This statistically valid survey represents Larimer County’s demographics. As to be expected, the respondent profile differed slightly from Larimer County’s census profile. The sample was slightly more female (53 percent of survey respondents, compared to 50.4 percent according to the census), educated (nearly all of the respondents obtained a high school diploma or higher, compared to 93.9 percent of Larimer County), and likely

¹ For the total random sample size of 922 margin of error is +/- 3.4 percent calculated for questions at 50% response (if the response for a particular question is “50%”—the standard way to generalize margin of error is to state the larger margin, which occurs for responses at 50%). Note that the margin of error is different for every single question response on the survey depending on the resultant sample sizes, proportion of responses, and number of answer categories for each question. Comparison of differences in the data between various segments, therefore, should take into consideration these factors. As a general comment, it is sometimes more appropriate to focus attention on the general trends and patterns in the data rather than on the individual percentages.

to own a home (86 percent of the sample, compared to 67 percent of the County). There was also less Hispanic and Latino representation among survey respondents (2 percent of survey respondents, compared to 10.8 percent of the County, according to census data). Additionally, as is typical among data collection efforts of this kind, the sample skewed older. Approximately 31 percent of respondents were age 65 or older, whereas 12.3 percent of the Larimer County population is in this cohort. For this reason, the underlying tabular data for the random sample responses were weighted by age to ensure appropriate representation of Larimer County residents across different demographic cohorts in the overall sample, and so that the resulting analysis reflects the conclusions and opinions of the underlying population. This weighting improved the slight discrepancies between the respondent profile and census data. The percent of respondents who own a home was brought down to 79 percent, households earning an annual income of \$75,000 and under per year increased by 3 percentage points, and respondents in the 18-24 age group increased from 3 percent to 18 percent.

As responses to the open-link version of the questionnaire are “self-selected” and not a part of the randomly selected sample of residents, results from the open-link questionnaire are kept separate from the mail and invitation web versions of the survey for the overall analysis. The majority of the discussion that follows focuses primarily on results from the randomly selected sample of residents.

This report is organized around topics that generally follow those explored by the survey instrument. The report summarizes findings from the following subject areas:

- **About individuals and their household:** Outlines respondent demographics, such as the location of residence in the County, years spent living in Larimer County, and size and make-up of the household.
- **Use of natural areas/nature-based facilities:** Explores the frequency of visits to County-wide natural areas, the location of these visits, and reasons that inhibit use of natural areas. This section also provides an in-depth look at the activities commonly participated in by respondents, children in the household, and the household overall.
- **Values placed on natural areas:** This section investigates attitudes regarding conservation/acquisition and recreation in the County. Respondents were asked about funding allocation and preferred sources of funding.
- **Communication:** Presents results on current and preferred methods of receiving information about County-wide natural areas. Respondent familiarity with natural areas and nature-based opportunities in the County is also examined.
- **Then and now: Comparing survey results:** A brief comparison of the similarities and differences regarding the natural areas of Larimer County, between a similar survey taken in 2001 and the current survey.
- **Suggestions and comments (open-ended responses):** Respondents had many opportunities to express opinions, including elaborating on “other” items not

listed within survey questions, voicing additional comments or suggestions regarding methods to obtain additional funding, commenting on land conservation priorities, and other considerations related to natural areas important to them.

The results from the study have been presented in several different formats. This report provides an overview of findings, highlighting selected results using graphs and charts to summarize data. A PowerPoint presentation has also been provided that presents findings in a slide show format. This package of slides was used for a presentation to the Larimer County-wide Regional Open Space Board Summit and will be used in other presentations by department staff. Additionally, an extensive set of “cross-tabulation” tables are provided. These tables break the results down by the Random Survey and the Open Link survey and segment responses by key variables including age, presence of children in the household, location in the County, and income. Together, these tables provide the partner agencies and interested parties with an ability to explore survey results in detail.

Finally, the open-ended comments from the study are presented. They represent over 100 pages of input, presented verbatim. The comments were received from both the mail surveys and the web surveys. All responses from the Internet versions of the survey have been presented along with responses obtained from paper surveys. These responses are presented in formats that combine comments with several other variables (including location in County and presence of children in the household) in order to provide greater usability of responses. In addition, the results from the Random Survey are separated from those obtained via the Open Link.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The average number of visits per year to natural areas is 23.7 times, most of which take place in Fort Collins (80%). These findings suggest a strong relationship between residents and County-wide natural areas.
- Roughly a third of the sample felt deterred from visiting Larimer County natural areas for various reasons. The most common reason was “not aware of natural areas or facilities” (12 percent of overall sample). This has implications for more targeted communication efforts regarding the nature-based recreation available in the County.
- Walking, hiking, running, and biking on either pavement or natural surfaces are the most common activities engaged in by respondents, children in their household, and the household overall. Satisfaction with these activities in Larimer County is generally high, except for biking on roads, which received lower ratings than most

other activities. Although not probed in the survey, findings may suggest dissatisfaction with safety or road shoulders.

- Frequent engagement in walking, hiking, running, and biking emerges in other parts of the survey as well. Respondents plan to increase their participation in these activities within the next year, and would like to see more land or facilities provided for walking/hiking/running on natural surfaces and pavement, and biking on paved trails. As far as recreational development is concerned, walking/running/hiking and biking trails may be a priority for future expansion. Although slightly less popular, camping and fishing were also identified by respondents as activities they would like to increase their participation in and for which they would like to see more land or facilities provided. Increasing opportunities to engage in these activities may also be worthwhile.
- A vast majority of respondents support the use of public funds toward conservation/acquisition. When asked how they would allocate funds toward a variety of categories, most respondents demonstrated broad support for a variety of goals related to conservation/acquisition, rather than a preference for special interests.
- Respondents are most in favor of implementing user fees as a way to obtain funding for conservation/acquisition, followed by extending sales taxes. Respondents are least in favor of increasing sales taxes for funding these projects. Although user fees are the most popular option, roughly 7 percent of the sample indicated fees deterred them from using County-wide natural areas. While this percentage is relatively low, it does point to some potential conflicts between funding and use, going forward.
- In response to a question that asked respondents to place themselves on a scale where “strong emphasis on resource conservation and protection” was at one end, and “strong emphasis on outdoor recreation” was at the other end, residents prefer an “equal balance” in prioritization toward preservation and recreation, rather than favoring one over the other.
- Over half of respondents indicated they were “not at all” or “somewhat” familiar with County-wide natural areas. These findings point to potential improvements that can be made in regards to communication efforts. The most common method for receiving information about County-wide natural areas or nature-based recreation is at the natural area or program location. Consequently, respondents who are currently unaware of these areas are not effectively receiving information that could increase their familiarity or use of County-wide areas. Encouragingly, however, significantly more respondents are familiar with these areas now than they were when surveyed back in 2001.

- Roughly 10 percent of respondents receive information via email, and yet it is the most preferred method of contact. This poses a potential opportunity for the County to explore future communication, and at a lower cost to the County.

FOLLOW-UP SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND SUMMARY

Respondents to the Larimer County Open Lands Survey 2012 were asked if they wished to participate in a follow-up survey to be distributed in early 2013. This follow-up survey's purpose was to gather additional information concerning planning and funding for open lands, land conservation, and an assessment of user experiences. Surveys were mailed to participants that provided emails and expressed a willingness to participate, and in addition an "open link" version of the survey was created and publicized. This version of the survey provided an opportunity for a broad cross-section of County residents to participate in the follow-up survey.

The follow-up survey was web-based. It collected 324 responses from the original sample of participants (termed the Invitation respondents) and 344 from the open link respondents. Unlike the random sample of respondents to the 2012 Survey, the follow-up survey was based on randomly sampled respondents who expressed a willingness to participate in the Our Lands – Our Future study. Therefore, the methods allowed for greater self-selection than the first survey. Based on this consideration, the follow-up sample was not reweighted to more closely represent the age profile of the underlying County residents.

The follow-up survey respondents were compared in demographic terms to the underlying population and to the weighted data that was analyzed in the preceding discussion in this report. Results show that the followup respondents are generally similar, but they were somewhat less likely to be from Fort Collins (43% in the follow-up Invitation Survey, compared to 53% in the weighted Invitation survey data) and were slightly older (average age 51 compared to 45).

As a result, the responses that have been analyzed and presented in this report should be used with some caution – they were not randomly obtained and they have not been reweighted. Nevertheless, the survey results present a tool for examining local opinions and evaluating relative preferences for various options presented in the survey. In general, results from the re-sampled respondents and open-link respondents are for the most part similar, indicating that there are widely held opinions on most of the topics measured through this survey. Respondents were provided with background information about the Larimer County Open Lands Program and the Help Preserve Open Space Tax prior to answering the survey questions.

- The survey evaluated land conservation priorities and the results show a clear ranking of importance. Among the four choices presented, regional open space and

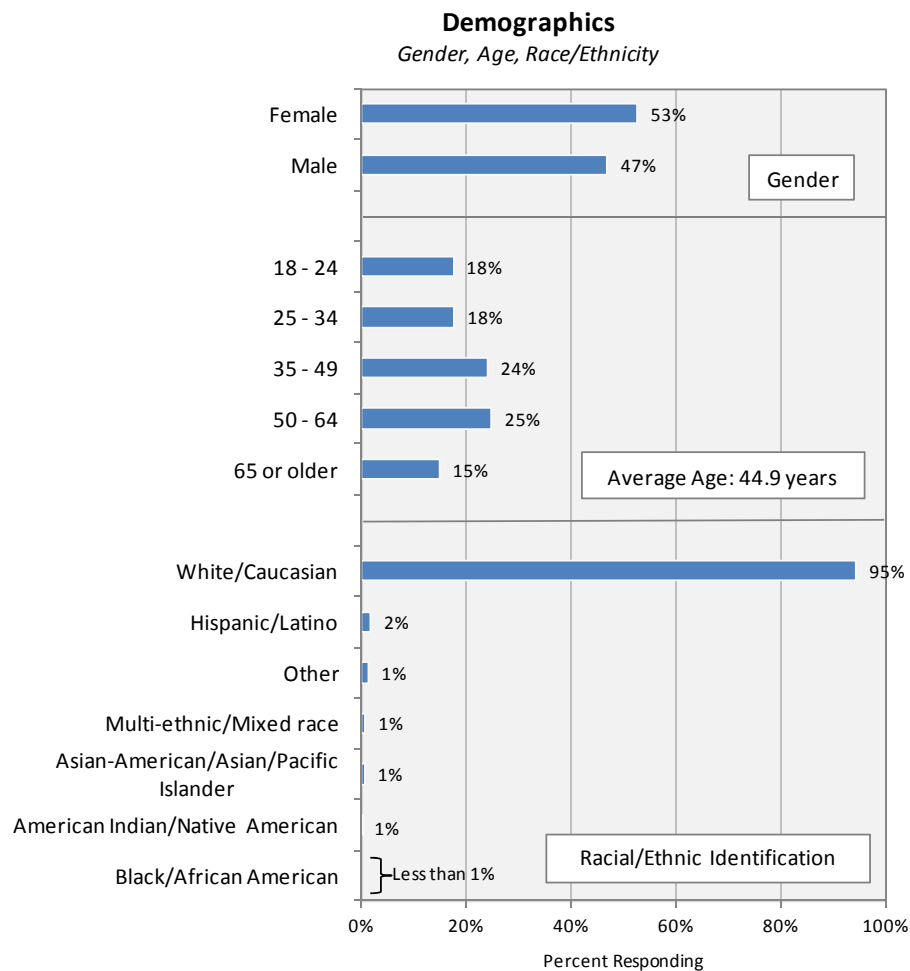
trails was considered the most important, followed by natural resource and wildlife areas, urban open space and trails, followed by working farms and ranches (conservation easements). Some differences by community exist among the rankings and these differences are probed further within the report.

- A question probed preferred conservation values for preserving working farms and ranches. There was roughly equal importance expressed for: conserving local food production for crops and livestock, conserving habitat (grasslands, wetlands, riparian areas), and limiting future urban development in rural areas.
- When asked about preferences for the use of water rights, most of the respondents indicated in-stream flows (water to support healthy rivers, wetlands, fish, etc.) as an important use. Another large block identified wildlife habitat (creating riparian areas or ponds) as important. Although recreation on lakes and/or rivers for fishing, boating, etc., and irrigation for farms and ranches gathered relatively less support, between 33% and 50% of respondents indicated these water rights as important.
- The importance of various land uses and recreational activities supported by open space tax dollars was rated. The questions contained in the follow-up survey addressed new categories of land uses and recreational activities that were not addressed in the 2012 survey. A number of these uses had come up in public meetings and in the open comments section of the 2012 survey. The project partners and Advisory Board desired to use the follow-up survey to understand relative priorities. Designated backcountry campsites without structures was the most identified choice, followed by “wild zones” (where children can play in a natural environment with few restrictions). Archery, rifle ranges and trap/skeet shooting received least support overall, but all categories that were measured received at least 15% of respondents giving the land use/activity a 4 or 5. These results were probed by community and by age of respondent and, not surprisingly, there are differences. The shooting and archery uses receive relatively greater ratings of importance among residents of less urban towns and the unincorporated County.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

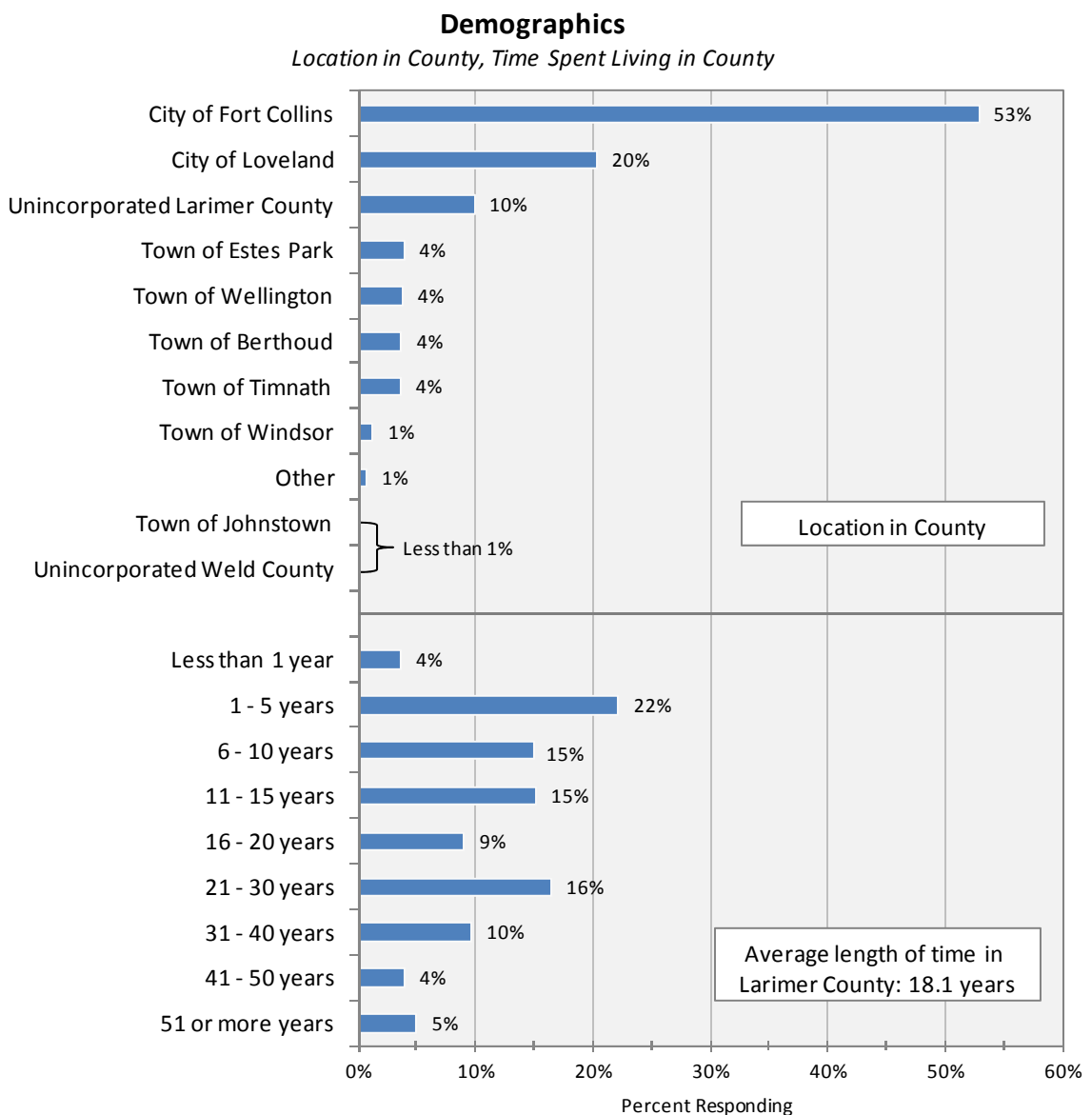
The questionnaire contained a series of demographic questions designed to portray various attributes of responding household members. These questions were used to ensure the representativeness of responses, and they were also used to crosstab responses so that survey results could be segmented and differences and similarities between groups (such as location of residence in the County) could be probed.

The random survey was targeted at residents 18 years and older. The age profile of responses is virtually identical to the County as a whole because of the weighting of results. The average age of respondents was 44.9 years. The ethnicity of respondents included 95 percent White/Caucasian respondents, 2 percent Hispanic/Latino and 3 percent identifying themselves as other races. There were slightly more female (53 percent) than male (47 percent) respondents. Overall, the respondent profile is representative of Larimer County’s residents, except for the underrepresentation of Hispanic/Latino residents.



The survey asked, “How long have you lived in Larimer County?” and the overall average was 18.1 years. About 26 percent of respondents have lived in the County five years or less.

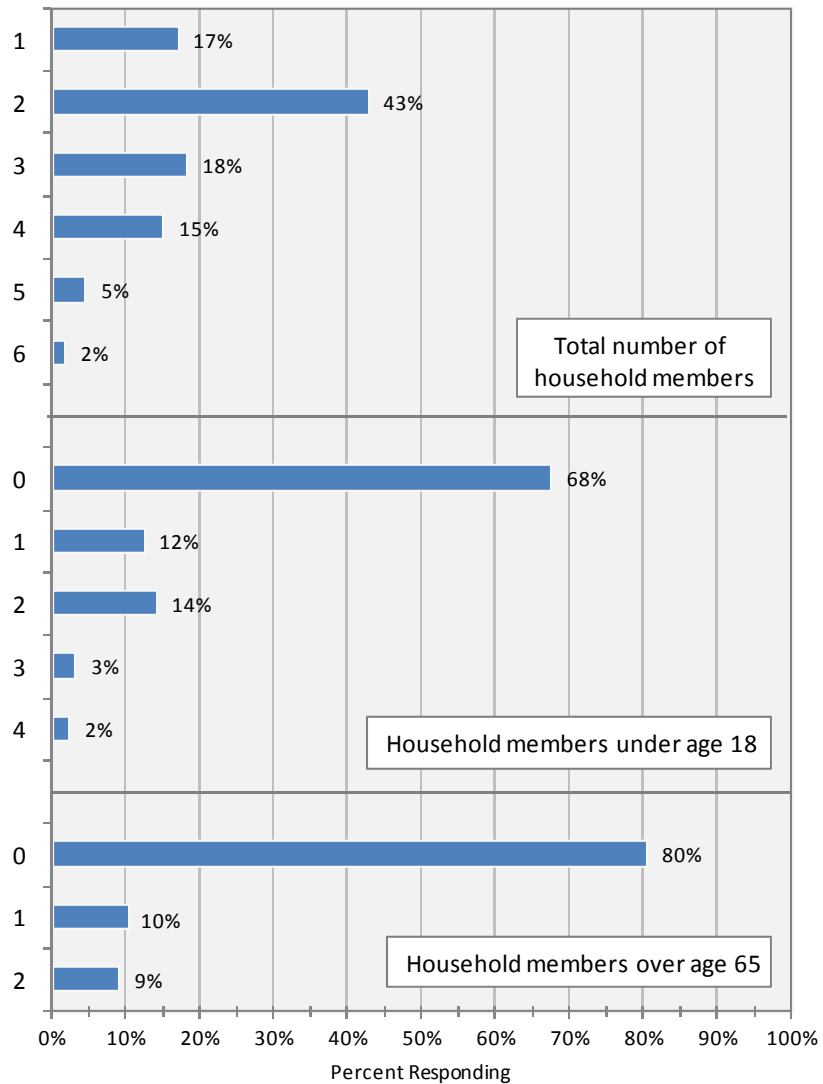
Survey responses were also grouped geographically. The survey had two questions that considered geographic locations: ZIP Code and the geographic categories summarized in the graph below. The responses are generally representative of the distribution of overall population in Larimer County. Additionally, the Open Link survey contained a question on location of residence, in or outside the County. This question was not included in the Random sample survey because the Random survey was only distributed to County residents.



The questionnaire contained three questions designed to determine “household status” or the makeup of the family unit. Respondents indicated how many people live in the household, how many members are under age 18, and how many members are over age 65. Nearly half of respondents live in two-person households (43 percent), and there are near even distributions of those who live by themselves, in three-, or in four-person households (17, 18, and 15 percent, respectively). About 7 percent of respondents live in households of five or more people. Almost a third all households include a family member under age 18 (31 percent), and approximately 19 percent of respondents indicated one or two members of the household are over age 65.

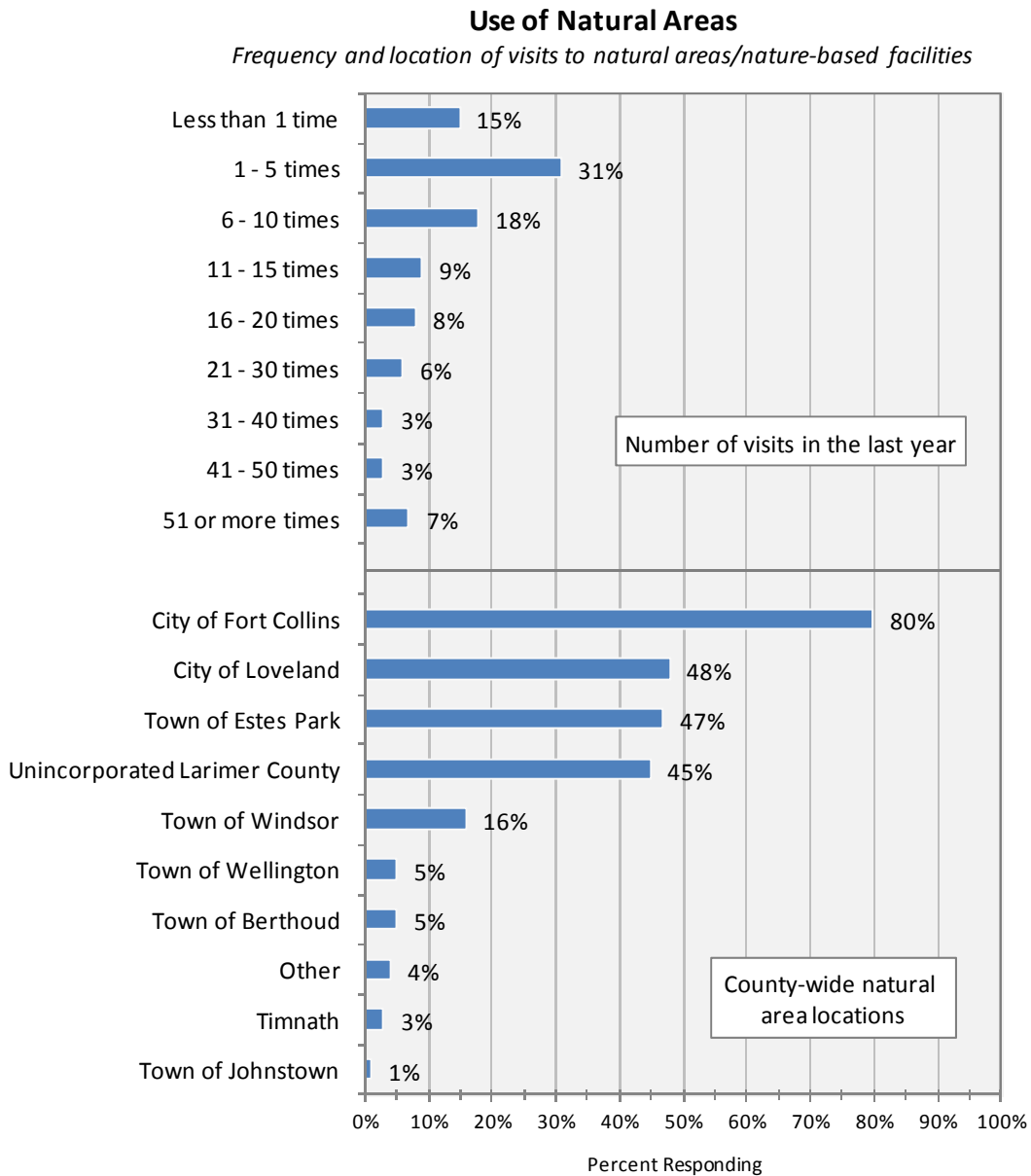
Demographics

Size of household, Members under 18 and over 65

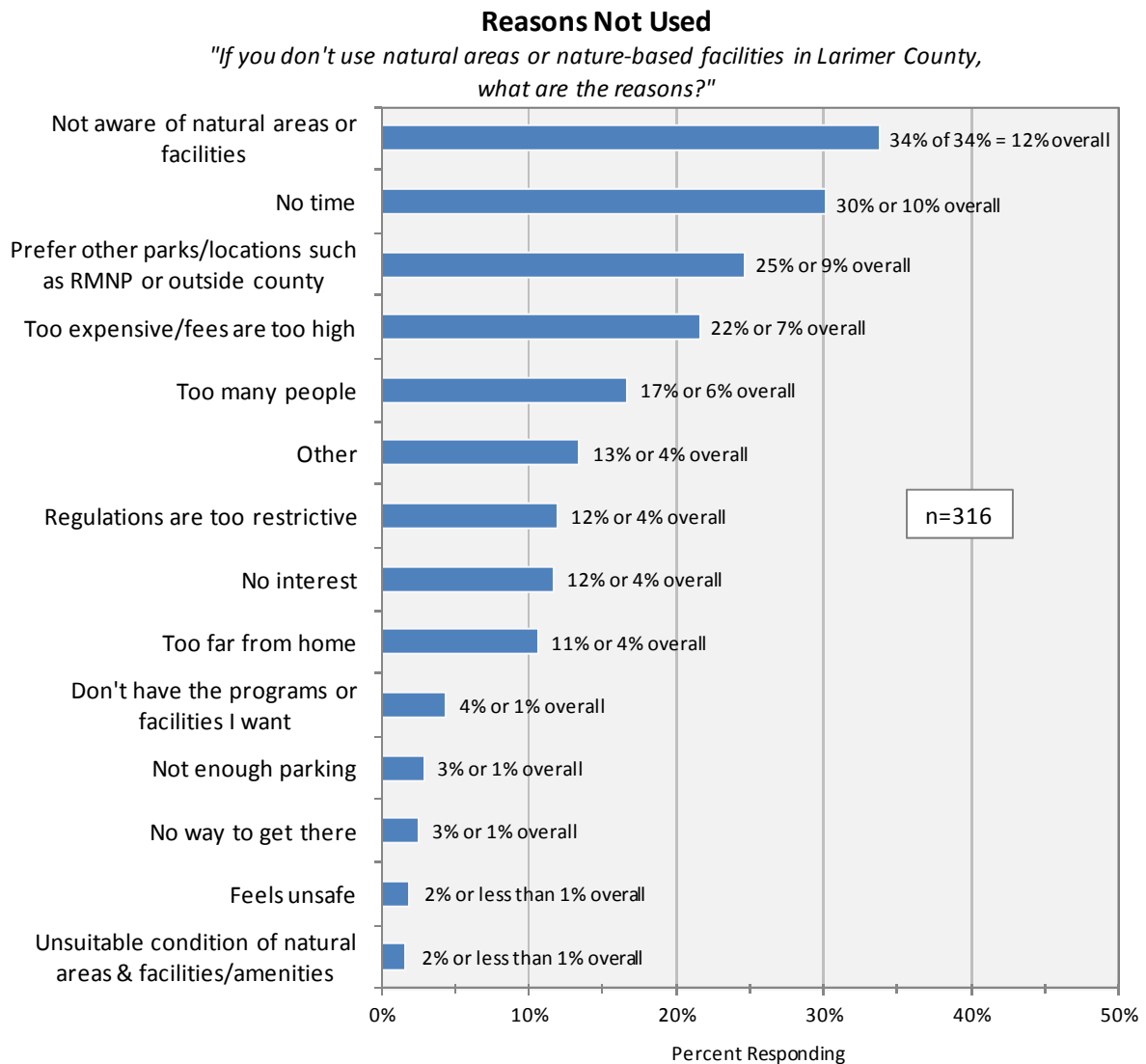


USE OF NATURAL AREAS / NATURE-BASED FACILITIES

The survey measured frequency of visits to municipal or county natural areas or nature-based facilities throughout Larimer County, as well as the specific geographic location of these visits. The average number of visits per year to natural areas or nature-based facilities was 20.1 visits. Results suggest that about 80 percent of County residents visited the natural areas of the City of Fort Collins, while a near-even distribution of residents also visited Loveland (48 percent), Estes Park (47 percent), and unincorporated Larimer County (45 percent) in the past 12 months.



While nearly three-quarters of all respondents visited at least one natural area or nature-based facility in the County within the past year, about 316 respondents (34 percent of sample) identified reasons that inhibited use or more frequent use of these areas. One purpose of the study was to understand in greater detail the reasons that County-wide natural areas are not used. As illustrated below, “not aware of parks, programs, and facilities” (34 percent) was the most identified reason for not visiting, followed by lack of time (30 percent), prefer other parks and locations (25 percent), and too expensive/fees are too high (22 percent). Factors such as safety, parking, and condition of parks and facilities are seldom identified as the reason for not visiting (less than 5 percent of responses for each of these reasons).

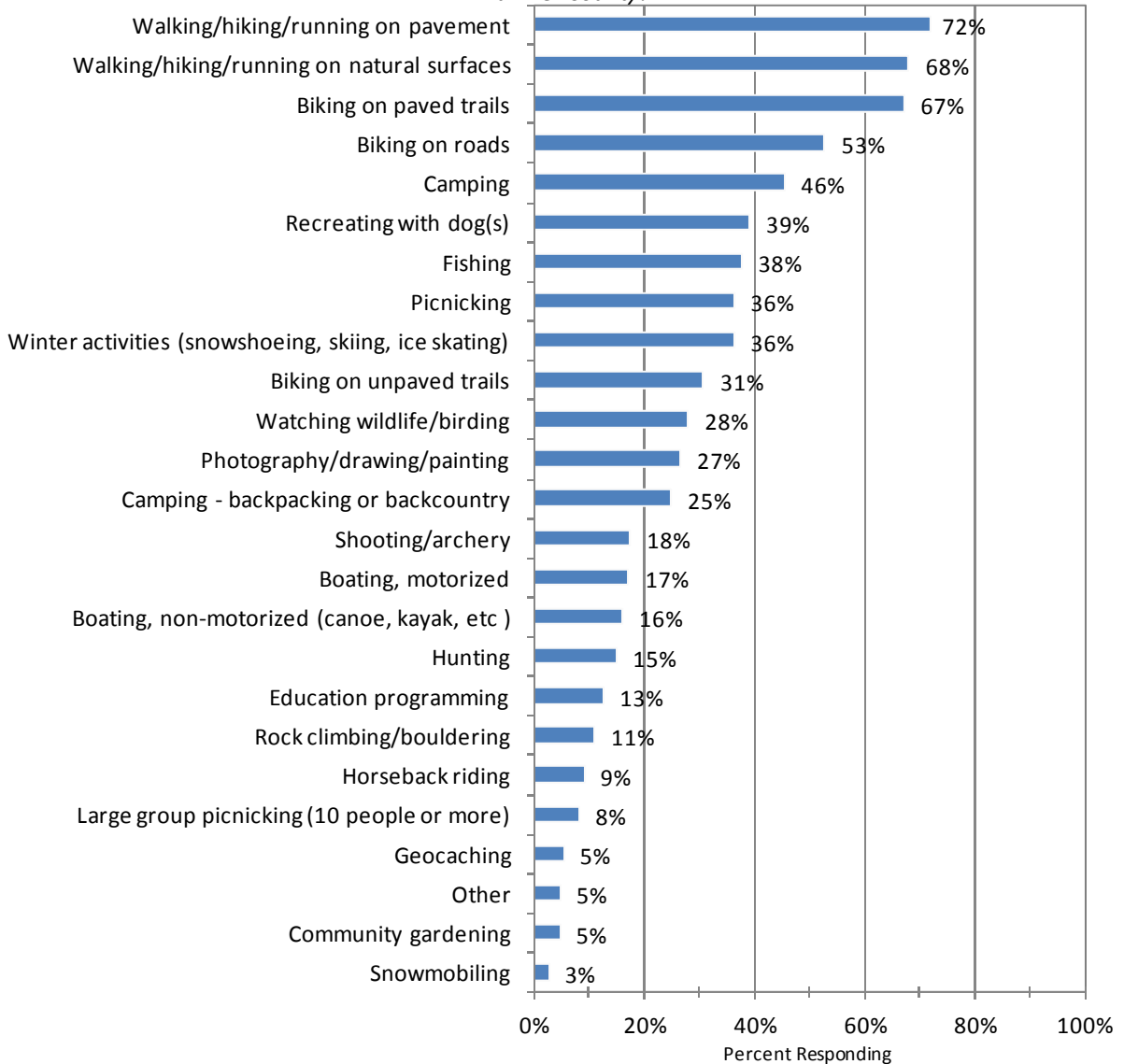


The questionnaire provided an “other” category, which gave respondents the option of listing other hindrances to using Larimer County open lands. Examples of responses include: *Ability, Beetle kill- areas are closed, Dirty toilets, Dog access restricted, Health problems, Lack of a consolidated recreation pass.*

Activities in Larimer County were probed in detail and results are graphed below. Respondents were instructed to think about their outdoor activities and interests “anywhere in Larimer County, municipal or county.” Respondents were asked, “Do any members of your household participate in this activity in Larimer County?” Most respondents participate in more than one activity, either on a single trip or on multiple trips over the course of time. The graph below shows these patterns with 25 different activities investigated. Results indicate that the most frequent activities among households are: Walking/hiking/running on pavement (72 percent) and natural surfaces (68 percent), biking on paved trails (67 percent) and roads (53 percent), and camping (46 percent).

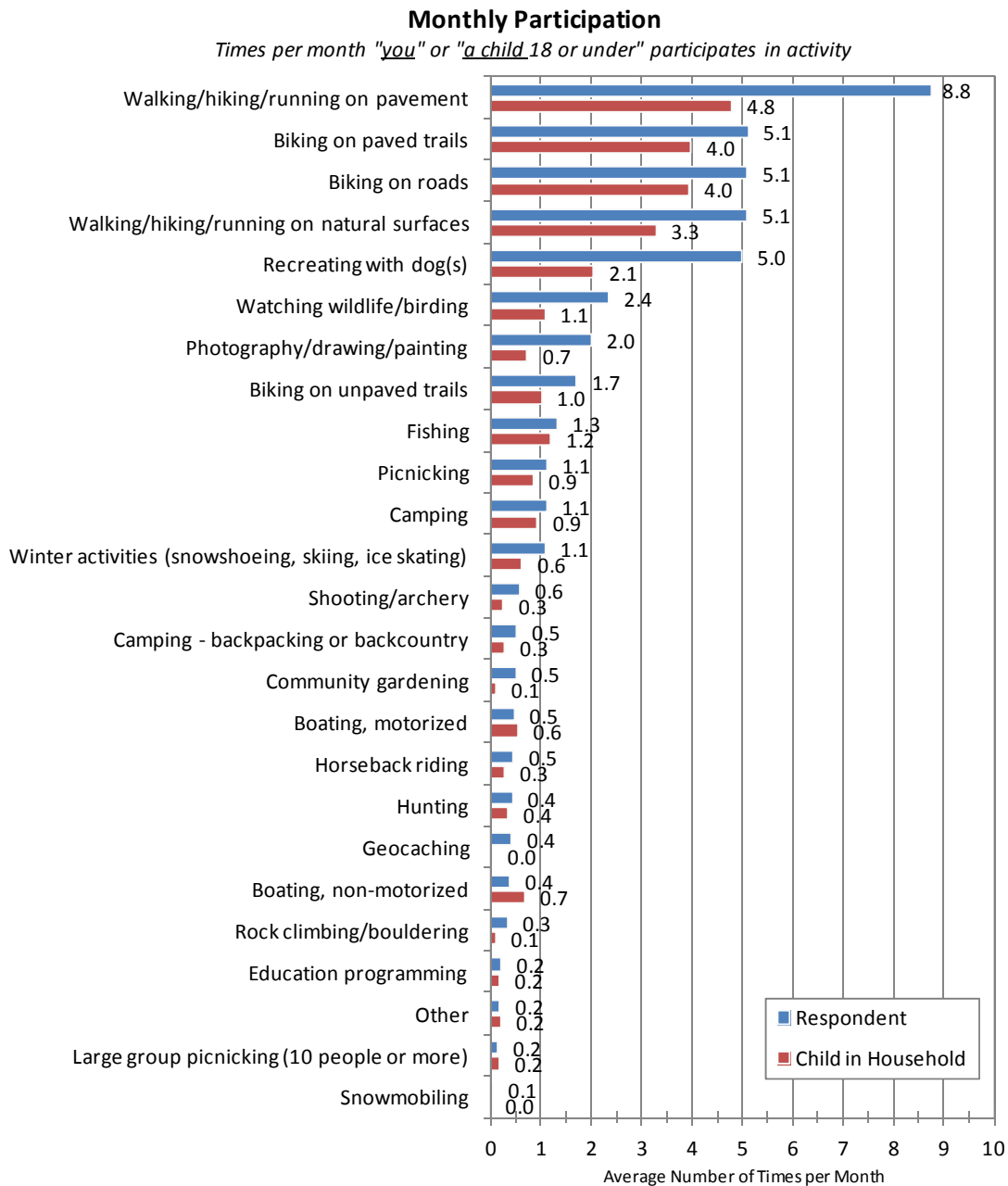
Household Activities

Do any members of your household participate in the following activities in Larimer County?



About 5 percent of respondents indicated participation in “other” categories, and were able to identify activities not listed. Examples of responses include: *ATV, Motorcycling, Swimming.*

In order to understand participation in greater detail, the questionnaire directed respondents to indicate their personal participation in activities in Larimer County as well as that of household members under age 18. Among respondents, walking/hiking/running on pavement was the activity participated in most frequently (8.8 times a month on average), followed by biking on paved trails (5.1) and roads (5.1), walking/hiking/running on natural surfaces (5.1), and recreating with dogs (5).



These five activities are also the most commonly identified activities for children in the household, but are not engaged in as frequently, on average. Taken together, these three questions provide a holistic view of the activities commonly engaged in by residents of the County.

Responses to individual monthly activity participation were also examined by location of residence in the County. Notable differences in activity participation between locations are briefly summarized below:

City of Fort Collins: The top five activities of Fort Collins respondents mirror the patterns recorded for the random sample.

City of Loveland: These respondents are more likely to recreate with dogs (6.1 times per month) than the average respondent (5 times per month).

Town of Estes Park: Respondents from Estes Park engage in wildlife and bird watching more than twice as often (5.5 times per month) as respondents from other parts of the County. Participation in photography, drawing, and painting also nears the top of list of activities participated in by respondents from Estes Park (2.6 times per month).

Town of Timnath: Respondents from this part of the County go camping more frequently than other segments of respondents (2.6 times per month, compared to the average of 1.1 times per month).

Town of Wellington: Respondents from Wellington participate in wildlife and bird watching more frequently than the average respondent (4.7 times per month), and are also more likely to engage in hunting (2.3 times per month).

Town of Windsor: Windsor residents participate in backcountry camping 2.7 times per on average, compared to the sample average of .5 times per month.

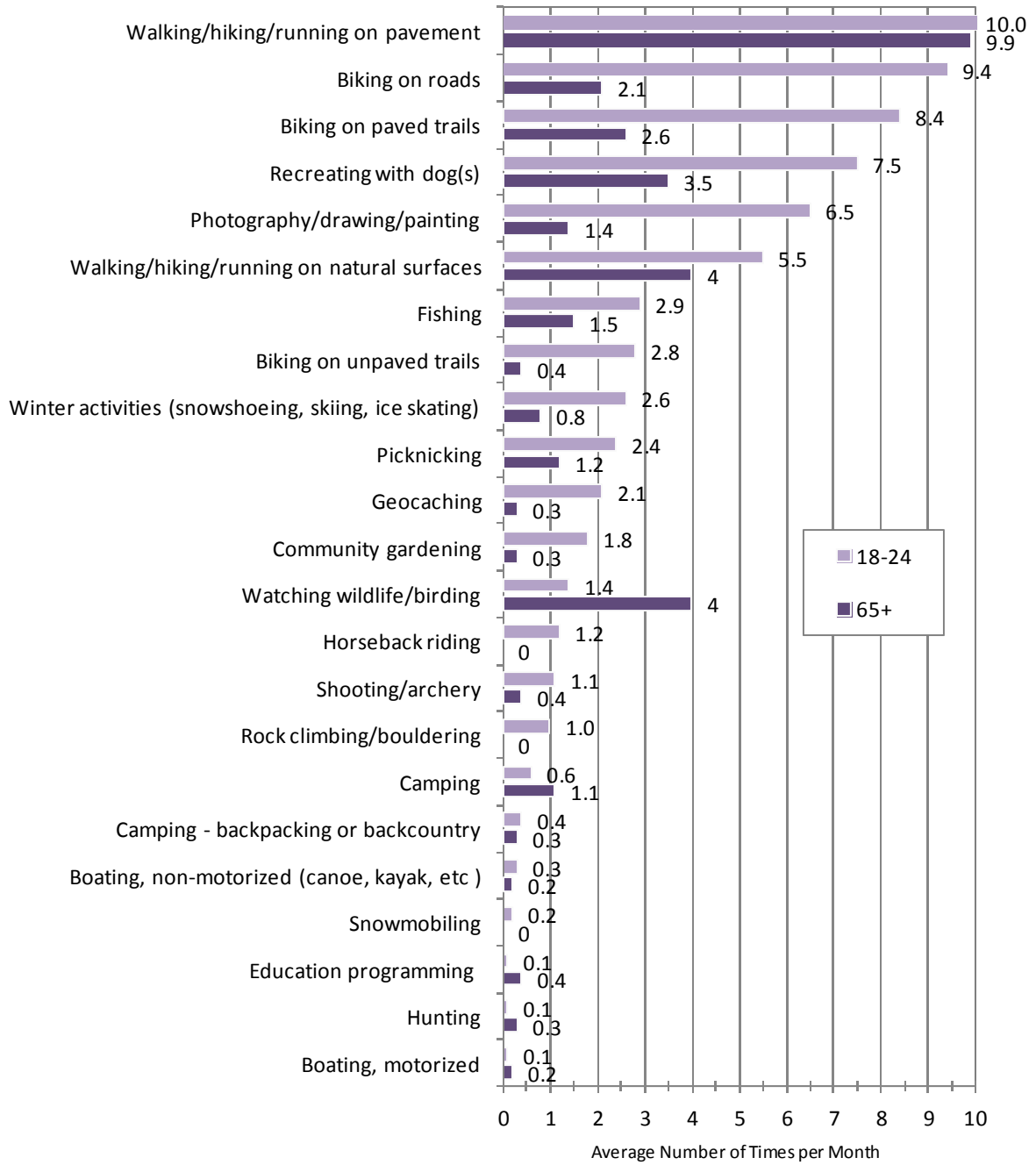
Unincorporated Larimer County: Respondents who live in Unincorporated Larimer County also participate in wildlife and bird watching more frequently than the average respondent (3.8 times per month).

The full results for activity participation by location can be found in the cross-tab tables provided with this report under separate cover.

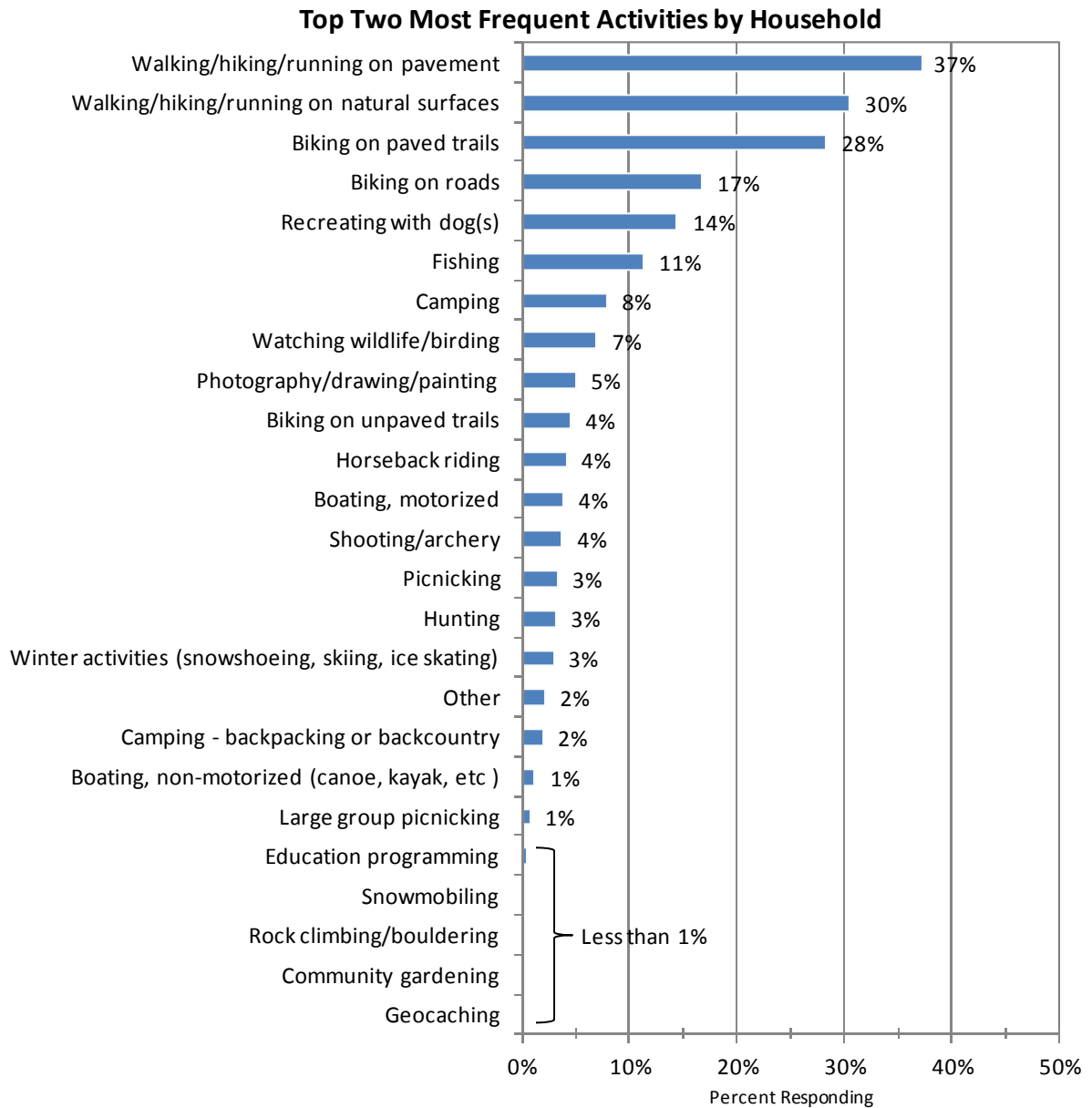
Responses to this question were also examined by age of the respondent. The youngest (18-24) and oldest (65 or older) age groups' monthly activity participation are graphically examined on the next page. Walking/hiking/running on pavement remains the top activity for each of these age groups (roughly 10 times per month for each age segment). Younger respondents are much more likely to actively participate in a variety of activities on a monthly basis. Older respondents partake in wildlife and bird watching much more frequently (4 times per month, on average) than respondents who are 49 or younger. Respondents in the 23-34 age range are more likely to participate in camping (3.2 times per month, on average), than other age segments.

Monthly Participation, by Age

Times per month 18-24 and 65+ age groups participate in activity



A follow-up question concerning activities asked, “Which two of the above activities are your household’s most frequent activities?” and these are shown in the graph below. Walking/hiking/running on pavement (37 percent) or natural surfaces (30 percent) were the most frequent activities, followed by biking on paved trails (28 percent) and roads (17 percent).

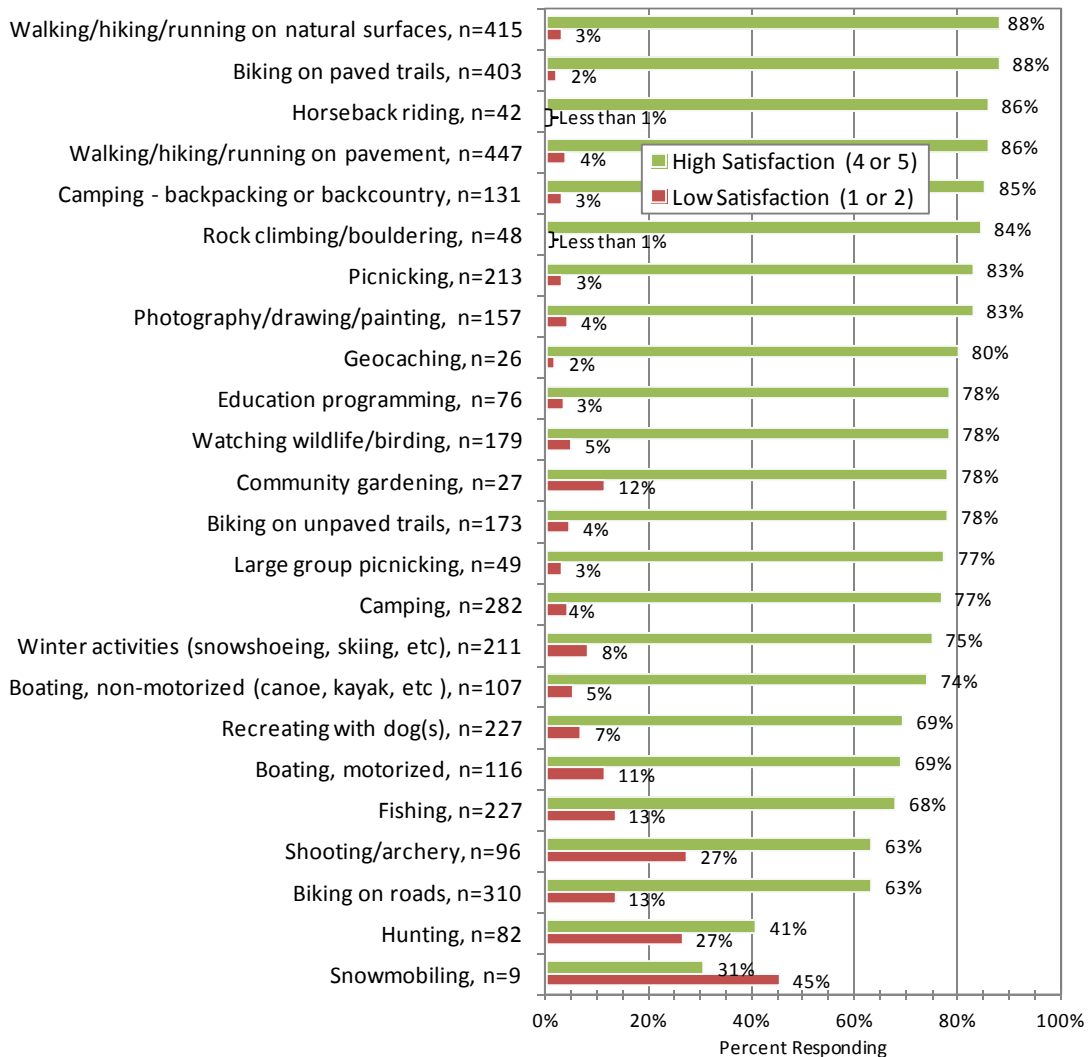


The survey contained a question designed to rate satisfaction with each activity experienced throughout Larimer County. A 5-point scale was used to measure responses: 1= “Low Satisfaction” and 5= “High.” In general, ratings were very positive as illustrated by the graph below. Note that in this graph the “satisfactory” (midrange) responses are not portrayed in order to emphasize areas of particular strength or weakness.

The highest rated activities were walking/hiking/running on natural surfaces and biking on paved trails (88 percent). It is worth taking note of a few activities that received low satisfaction scores. Hunting received a relatively low satisfaction score of 27 percent. While snowmobiling received a high percentage of low satisfaction scores (45 percent), the response rate for this particular activity was noticeably lower than other activities (n=9).

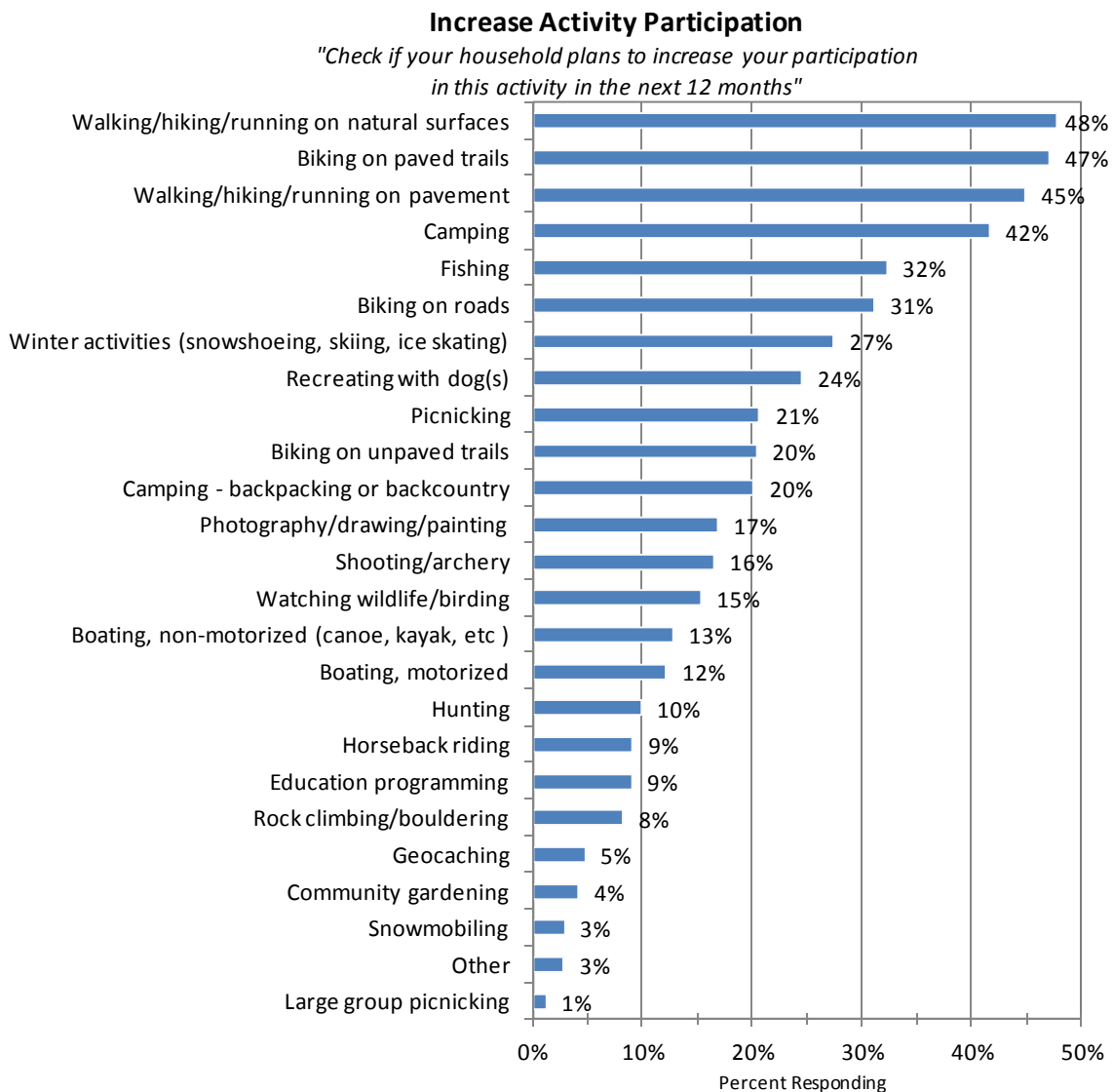
Satisfaction with Activity in County

“Overall how satisfying has your experience been throughout Larimer County with this activity?”



Conversely, 13 percent of respondents indicated low satisfaction with biking on roads. Not only did this particular activity receive a high response rate (n=310), but as illustrated previously, this is one of the most common activities in the County among households. Clearly, the data suggest some issues related to cycling satisfaction. Although not probed in the survey, we speculate that safety and road shoulders may be contributing to these results.

The questionnaire also asked respondents to identify activities in which they plan to increase participation within the next year, as well as activities for which they would like to see more land or facilities provided. Respondents identified several activities in addition to the common household activities of walking/hiking/running on natural surfaces (48 percent) and biking on paved trails (47 percent) or roads (31 percent). These include camping (42 percent), fishing (32 percent), winter activities (27 percent), and recreating with dogs (24 percent).

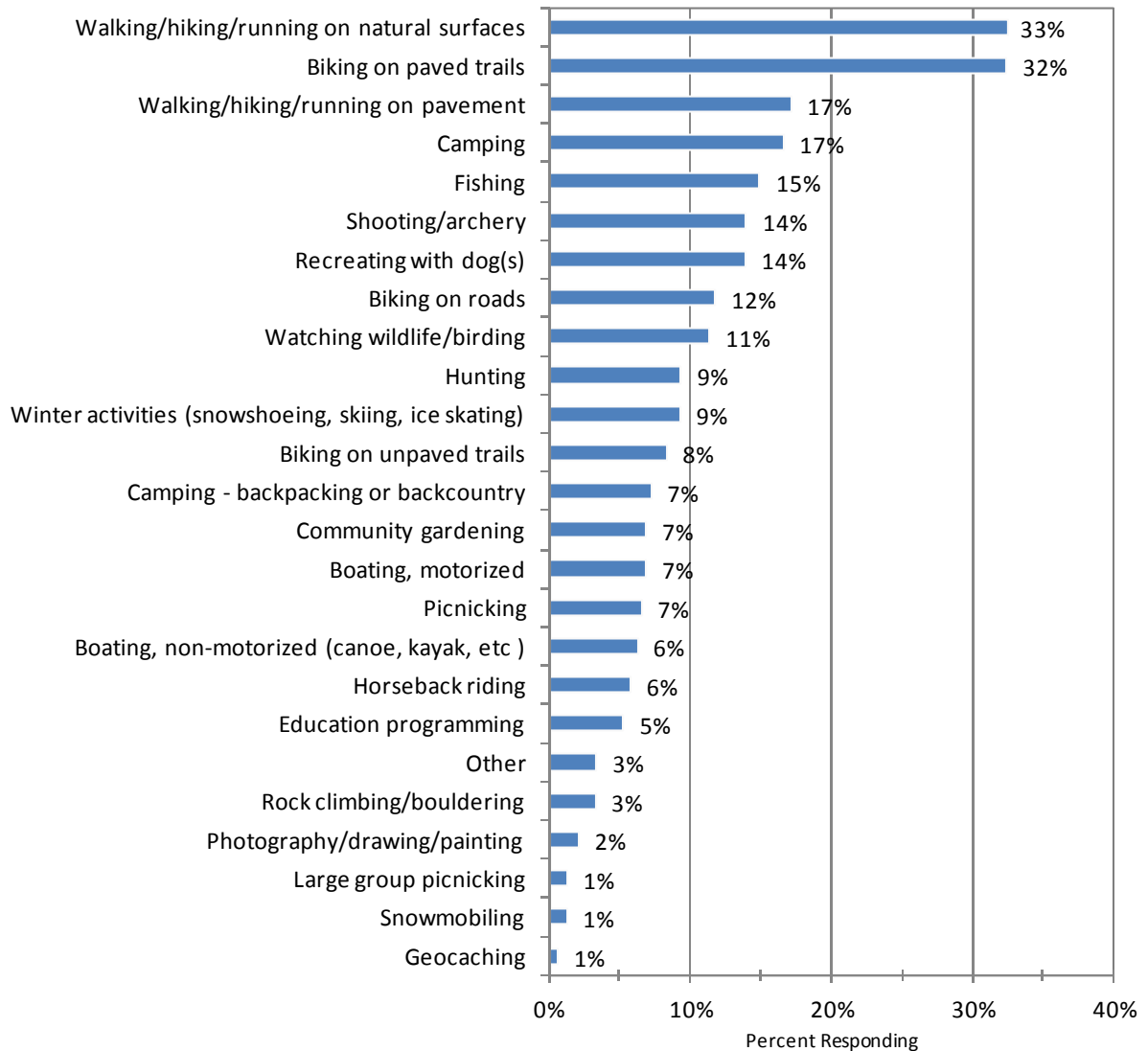


On a related note, participants identified activities for which they would like to see more land or facilities provided. Respondents were able to indicate up to three activities, and the results are graphed below. The top seven activities listed include:

Walking/hiking/running on natural surfaces (33 percent) and pavement (17 percent), biking on paved trails (32 percent), camping (17 percent), fishing (15 percent), shooting/archery (14 percent), and recreating with dogs (14 percent). Taken together, these responses reveal important points of focus so that residents may have more opportunities to participate in these activities within Larimer County.

For which activities would you like to see more land/facilities provided?

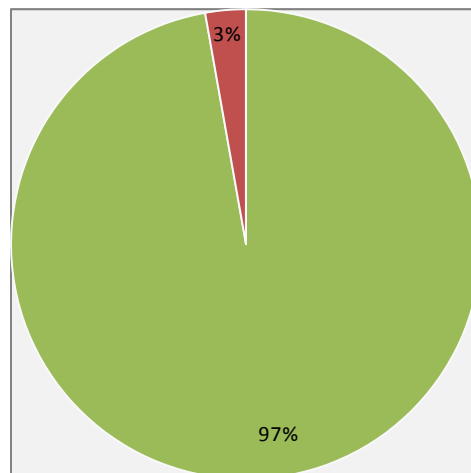
Top Three Choices



VALUES PLACED ON NATURAL AREAS

A question on the survey was designed to elicit feedback on priorities for future expenditures. The question asked, “If you had \$100 in public funds to spend on natural areas, agricultural land, and/or construction of nature-based recreation facilities, how would you allocate those funds in \$5 minimum increments?” For this question, respondents were given the option of allocating funds toward fifteen categories of expenditures, or indicating that “public funds should NOT be spent on land conservation, acquisition or other improvements.” A vast majority of respondents (97 percent) demonstrated support for allocating funds toward conservation, by partaking in the allocation exercise. Only about 3 percent of respondents indicated that public funds should not be spent toward this purpose. It should be noted that because of the format of the question this breakdown may somewhat under-represent those who do not wish for public funds to be spent toward conservation/acquisition. The choice to indicate that funds should not be spent in this way was presented after the expenditure categories, perhaps allowing respondents to complete the allocation exercise before realizing they could have expressed different interests. However, taken as a whole, the survey results suggest strong support for conservation/acquisition programs and show that this support is broadly distributed to a number of different elements of the open lands programs.

How Should Public Funds be Spent?



- Funds SHOULD be spent on land conservation/acquisition
- Funds SHOULD NOT be spent on land conservation/acquisition

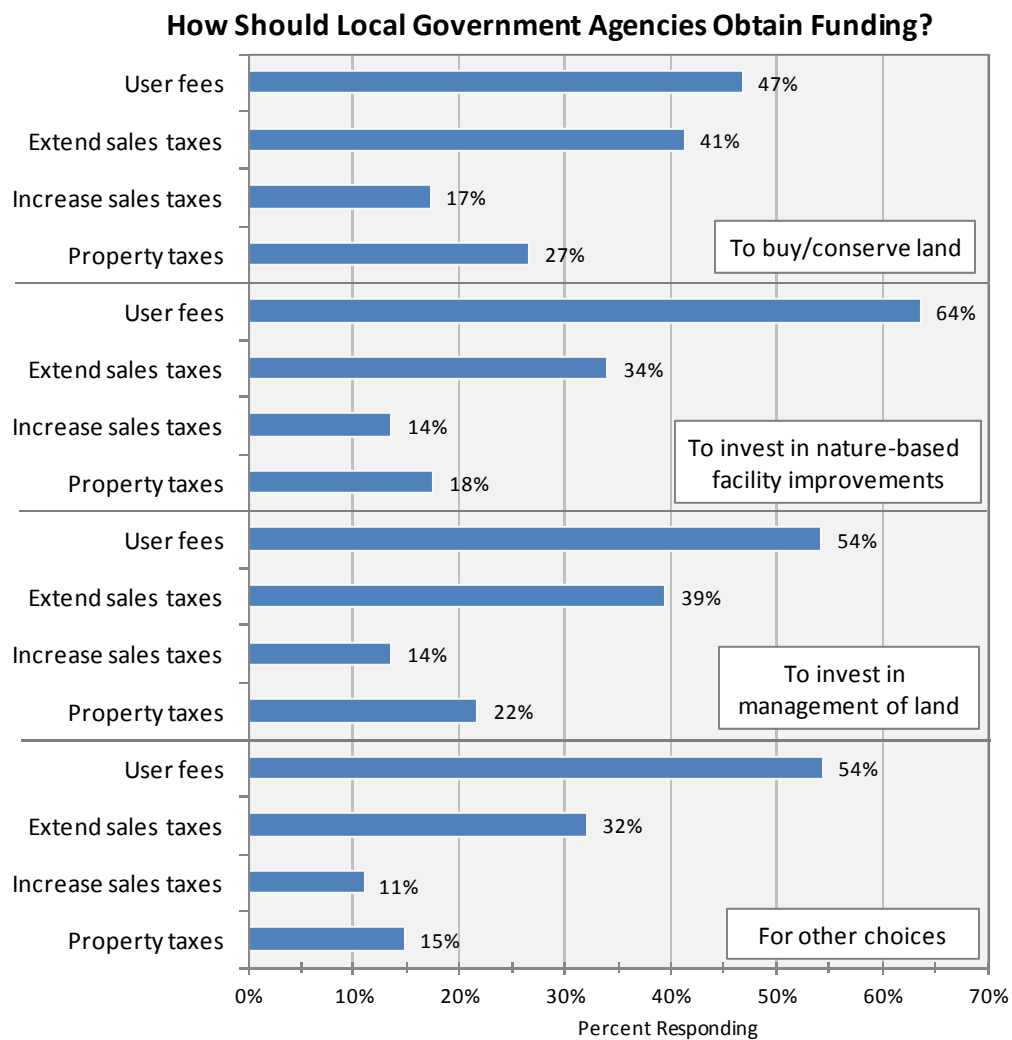
The fifteen categories for expenditures were broken into various types of land acquisitions and improvements. As illustrated below, the responses provide an overall prioritization of investments. In general, respondents seem to favor buying land or acquiring rights over investing in existing lands. However, all categories received some degree of financial support. For each category/choice below, no more than 2 percent of respondents opted to allocate the full \$100 to that particular choice, and a strong majority of respondents spread the \$100 over a large number of choices. This indicates significant support from respondents for allocating dollars to a broad set of purposes.

How Would You Allocate \$100 in Public Funds?



Approximately 7 percent of respondents indicated that public funds should be spent toward “other” priorities, and were given the option of listing additional items for funding allocation. Examples of responses include: *Ban fracking, Education programs for children, Off-leash areas for dogs, Public shooting range, Replant wild flowers, Improve Larimer County fisheries.*

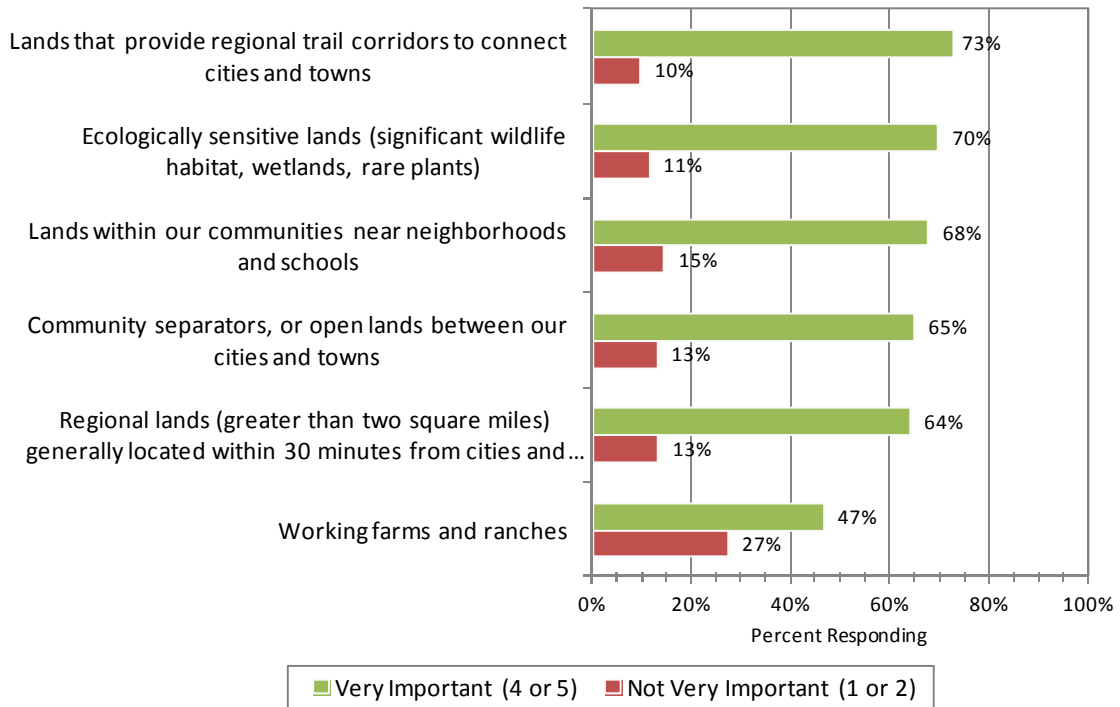
The survey probed respondent attitudes toward funding by asking “How should local government agencies obtain funding for the above activities?” This question allowed respondents to choose one or more sources of funding. Overall, respondents seem to favor user fees (ranges from 47 to 64 percent), followed by sales tax extensions (32 to 41 percent), as sources of funding for future projects.



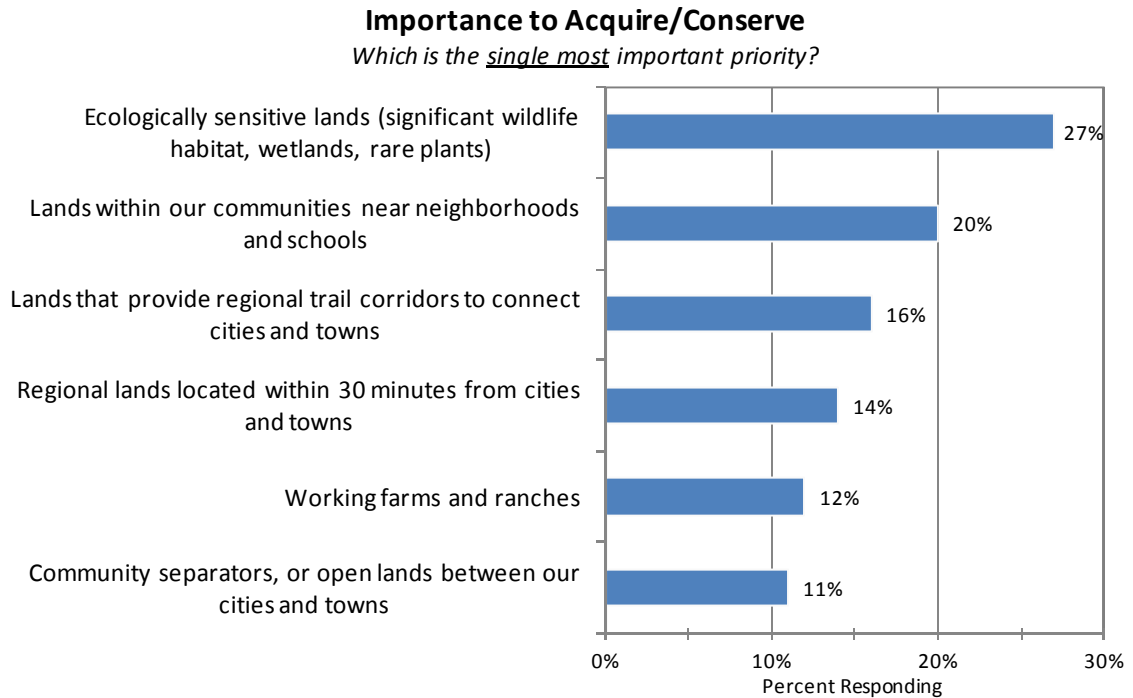
The survey also measured community priorities regarding land acquisition and conservation for six different categories of lands found throughout Larimer County. Respondents answered using a 5-point scale: 1=“Not at all important” and 5=“Very important.” As shown in the graph, “lands that provide regional trail corridors to connect to cities and towns” were rated as the most important (73 percent), while working farms and ranches were rated as relatively less important (47 percent). However, in all categories approximately half of respondents or more called the land preservation choice either a “4” or “5” on the five-point scale. Also, it should be noted that the statistical margin of error is ± 3.4 percent. In other words, there are relatively slight differences placed on the top five categories of land preservation.

Importance to Acquire/Conserve

How important should each of the following be in prioritizing land acquisition or conservation through the County?



An additional question asked which of the six land categories respondents consider to be the single most important priority, in order to understand community attitudes in greater detail. Different priorities emerge once the respondents identified the most important among these categories. “Ecologically sensitive lands” are considered the most important (27 percent), followed by lands near neighborhoods and schools (20 percent).

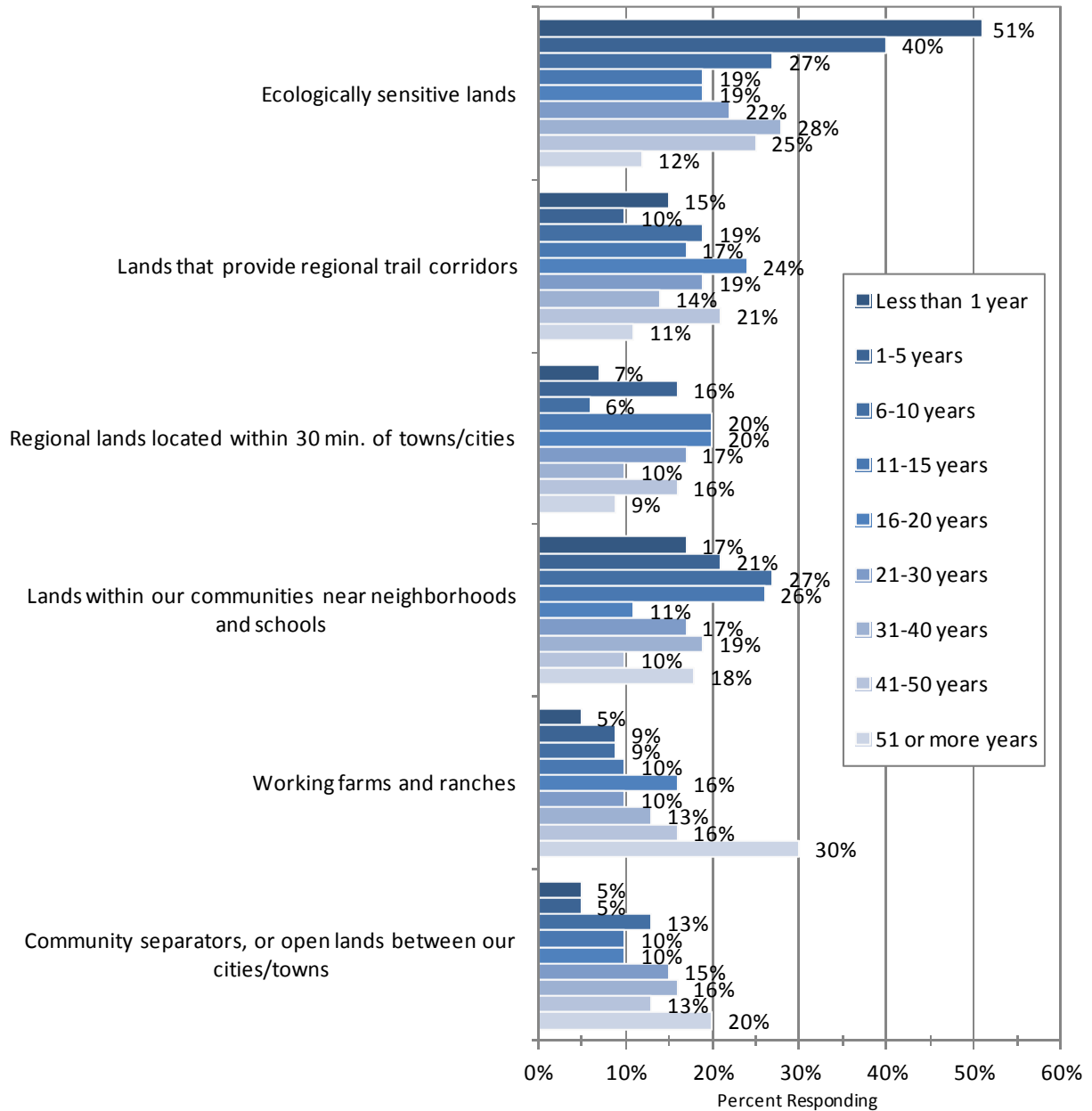


Further, the responses have been segmented under separate cover so that the results can be considered in more depth. For example, the responses from different parts of the County, and from those respondents that have children still at home, are portrayed separately. In general, there is similarity between the responses from different subgroups when cross-tabulations are performed, but the survey results provide a tool for looking at responses in greater detail and with more precision than simply considering the overall response patterns.

As shown in the graph on the next page, in which responses are segmented by length of time living in Larimer County, slight trends emerge when time in the County is considered. For example, respondents who have lived in the County for five or less years tend to prioritize ecologically sensitive lands (51 percent of respondents who have lived in the County one year or less, and 40 percent of those in the County one to five years). There also seems to be a positive relationship between time spent in Larimer County and support for working farms and ranches.

Importance to Acquire/Conserve, by Time Living in County

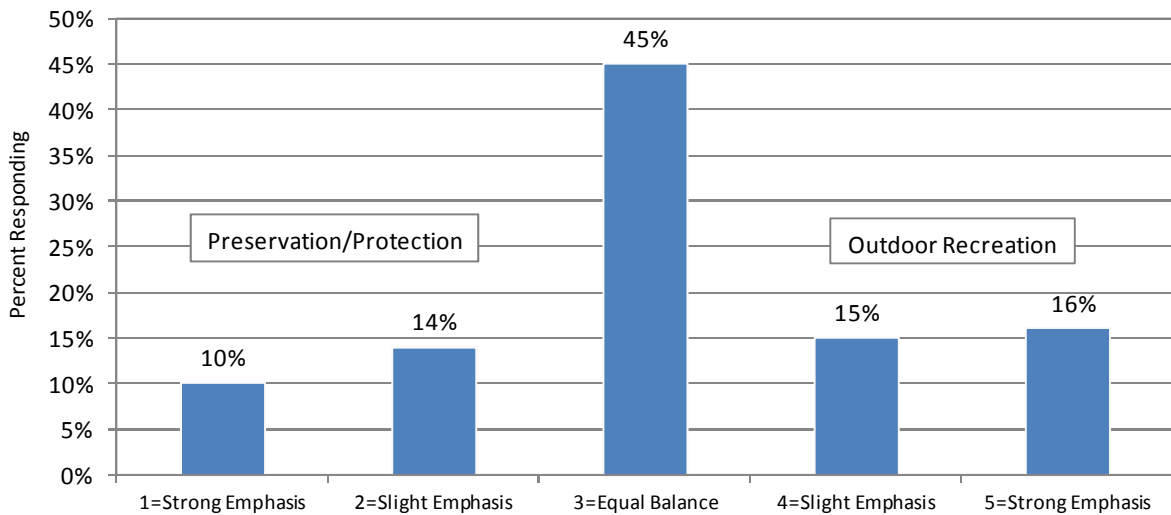
Which is the single most important priority?



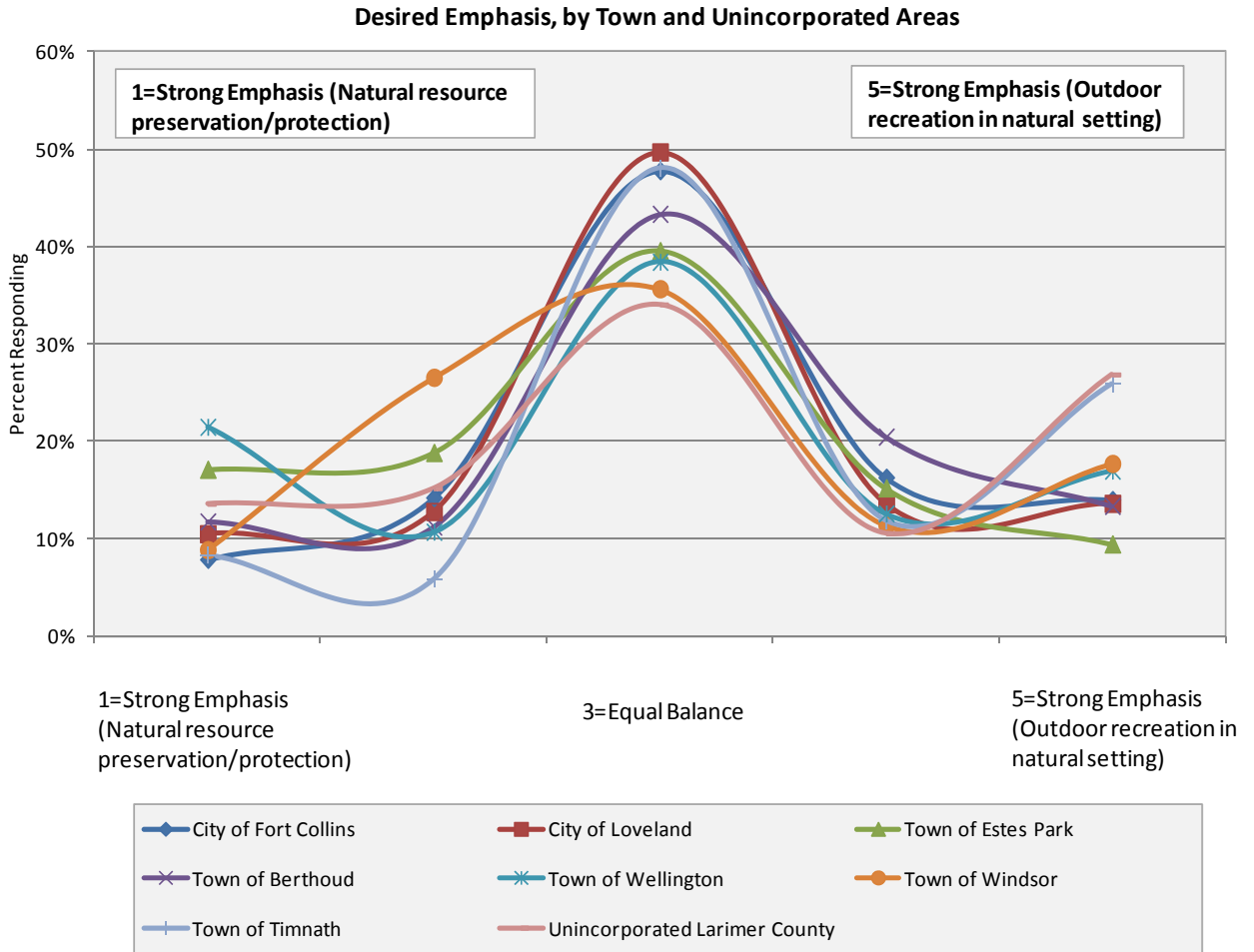
A scale question was used to determine where citizens place themselves in terms of “Natural resource preservation” or “Recreation.” The question asked the “Emphasis you would like to see Larimer County and our cities and towns pursue.” At one end of the spectrum was emphasis toward “natural resource preservation/protection” and at the other end was “outdoor recreation in a natural setting.” In the middle was “Equal balance.” Results show an almost perfect “bell curve” distribution with most respondents (45 percent) in favor of balance, and about equal numbers on either side of balance. However, there is a slight trend toward pursuing outdoor recreation.

Emphasis on Preservation vs. Recreation

“Using the scale below please circle the word choice that indicates what emphasis you would like to see Larimer County and our cities and towns pursue.”



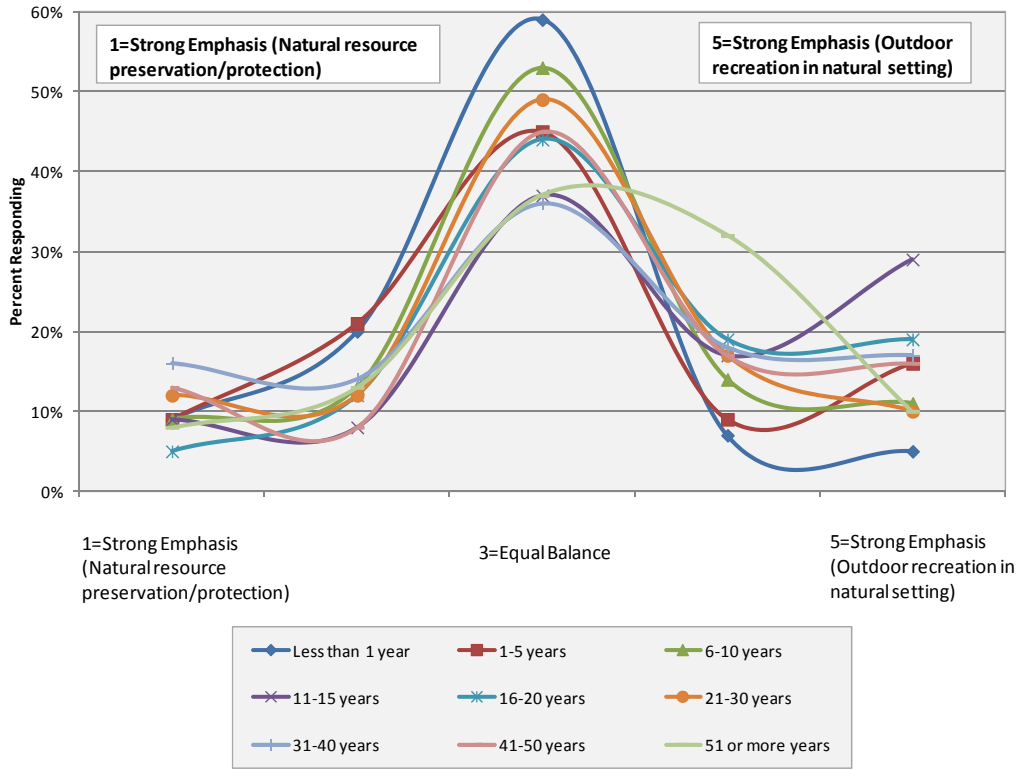
This question was also examined carefully by conducting a series of crosstabs to compare results from segments of respondents. Interestingly, there is relatively little difference in opinion by where respondents reside in the County. As shown on the next page, although residents of Windsor and Estes Park tend to more heavily favor an emphasis toward preservation, overall the results show consensus toward an equal balance between preservation and recreation in Larimer County.



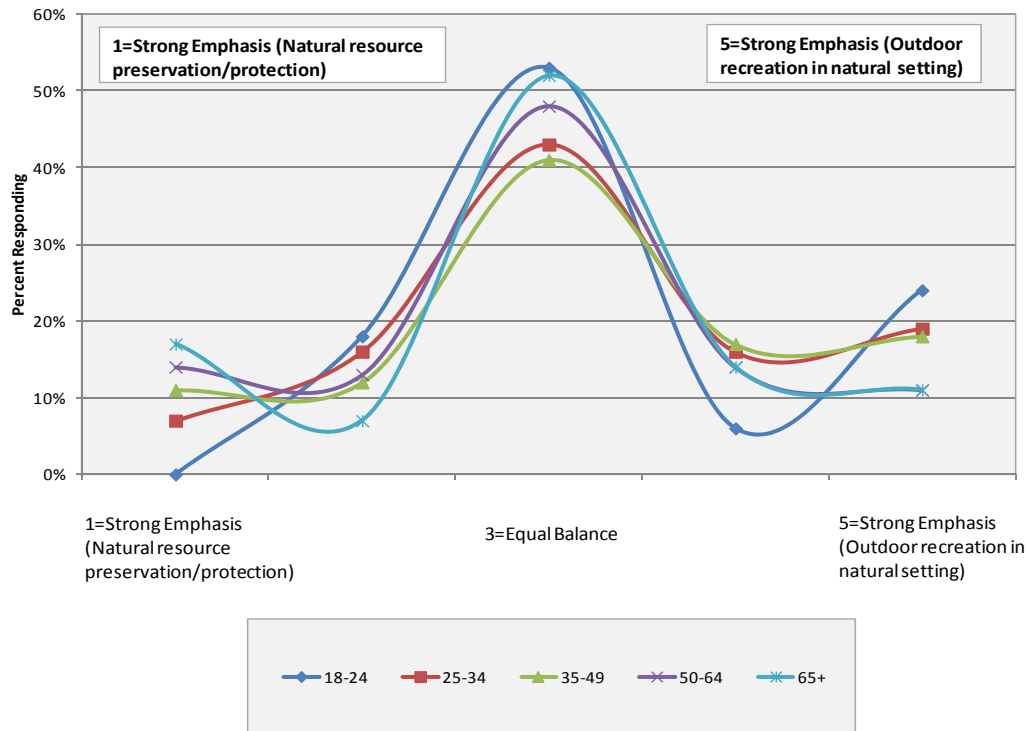
Slight differences do emerge, however, when responses are segmented by time living in Larimer County. There is a slight trend among respondents who have lived in the County 11 or more years to lean toward an emphasis on recreation. Respondents who have lived in the County for one year or less are the most likely to favor balance between these two goals (59 percent of this segment).

When responses are broken down by age, some slight trends can be recognized as well. Respondents in the 18-24 age group are the most likely to favor an emphasis toward recreation (24 percent of this age segment), while respondents who are 65 or older most strongly support an emphasis toward resource preservation and protection (17 percent). The three middle age groups generally favor equal balance between the two, as shown on the next page.

Desired Emphasis, by Time in County

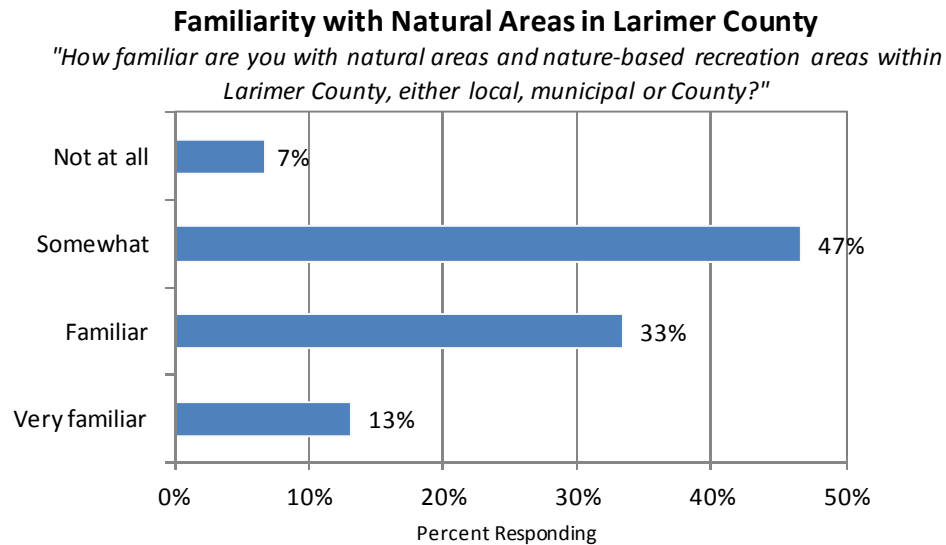


Desired Emphasis, by Age



COMMUNICATION

An item on the questionnaire asked respondents how familiar they were with the natural areas in Larimer County. Nearly half of respondents reported they were familiar (33 percent) or very familiar (13 percent). Therefore, slightly more than half of respondents indicated they were “not at all” (7 percent) or “somewhat” familiar (47 percent).

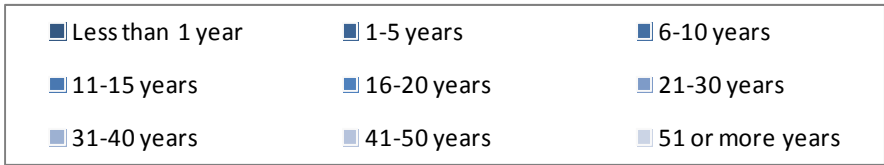
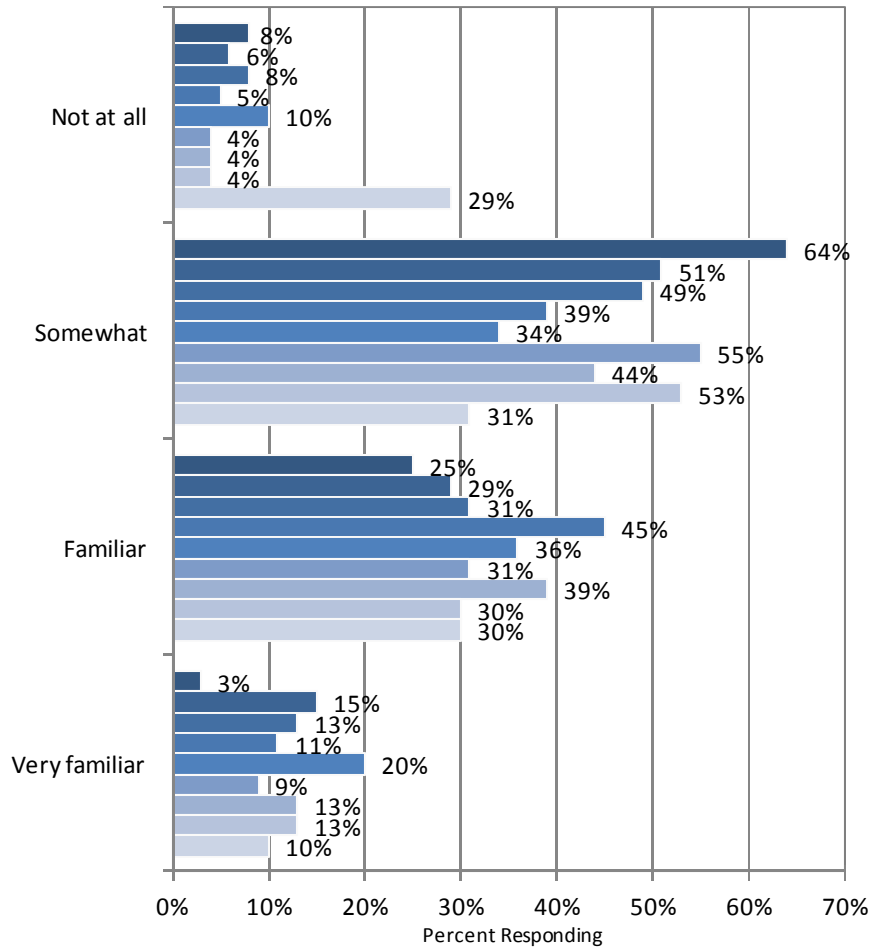


This question was examined by conducting a series of crosstabs to compare results from segments of respondents. This is a worthwhile exercise, because future communication efforts can be specifically targeted toward groups that express unfamiliarity with the natural areas and nature-based facilities of Larimer County. The crosstabs indicate that respondents who have lived in the County between 16 and 20 years are most likely to be “very familiar” (20 percent). There are relatively even levels of those who consider themselves “very familiar” among the different segments (ranges from 9 to 15 percent), except for respondents who have lived in the County one year or less (3 percent). Interestingly, respondents who have lived in the County for the longest period of time (51 or more years) are the most likely to report being “not at all” familiar (29 percent).

This question was also investigated by location of residence. Residents of Fort Collins (51 percent), Town of Estes Park (52 percent), and Unincorporated Larimer County (58 percent), are the most likely to report being familiar or very familiar with these areas. This might be related to the proximity of these areas to nature-based opportunities.

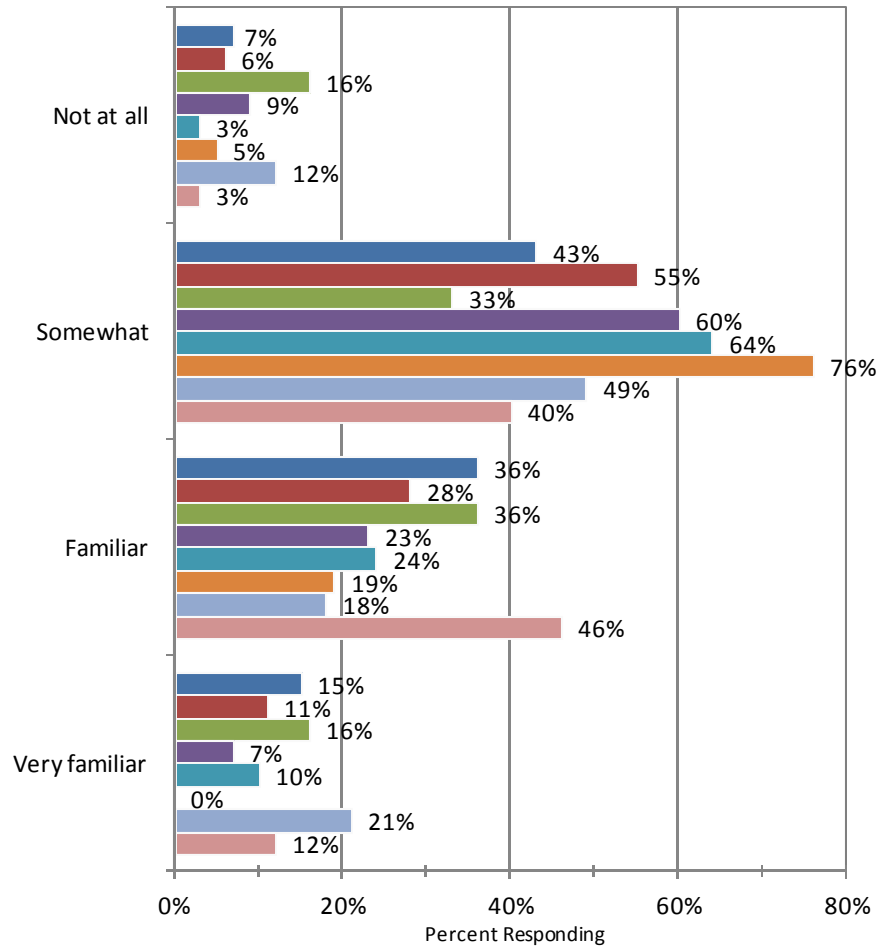
Familiarity with Natural Areas in Larimer County, by Time in County

"How familiar are you with natural areas and nature-based recreation areas within Larimer County, either local, municipal or County?"



Familiarity with Natural Areas in Larimer County, by Location

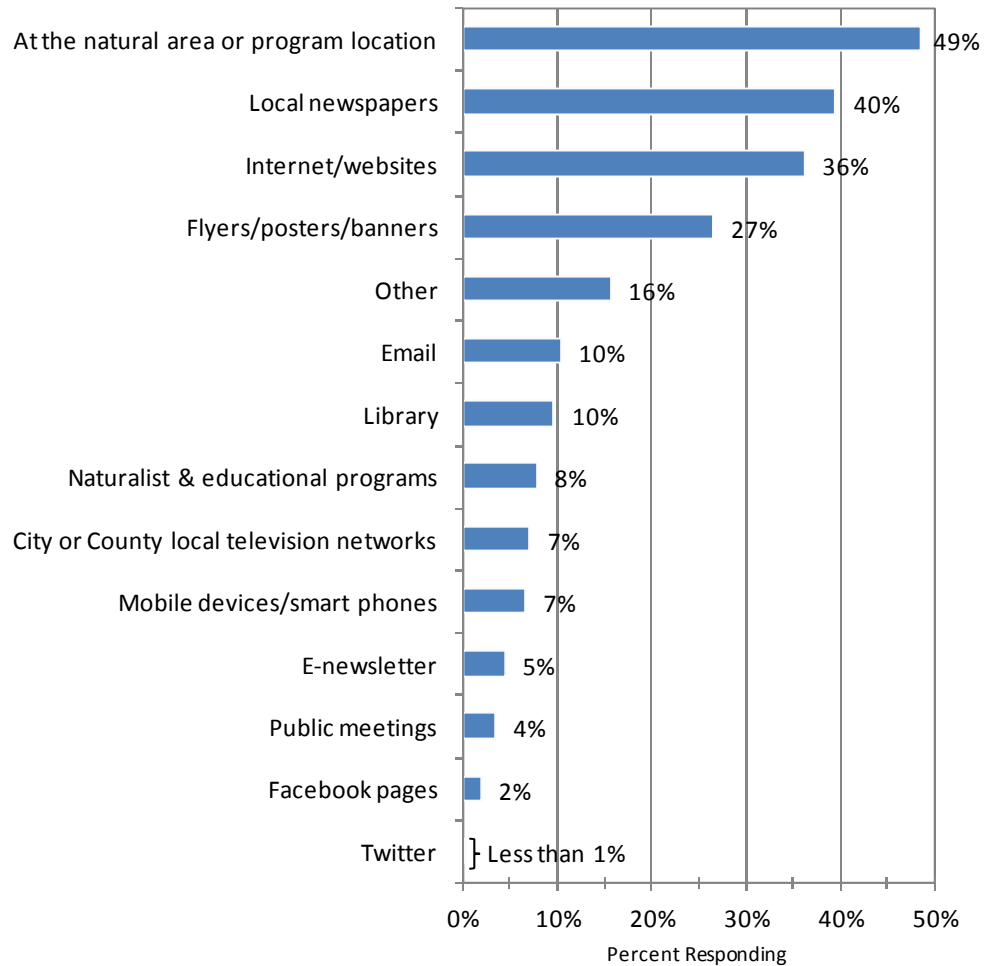
"How familiar are you with natural areas and nature-based recreation areas within Larimer County, either local, municipal or County?"



Survey results indicate that the most common source of information about Larimer County “natural areas, nature-based recreation, agricultural lands, trails and programs” is at the natural area or program location (49 percent), followed by local newspapers (40 percent).

Current Method of Receiving Information

“How do you usually or currently receive information about natural areas, nature-based recreation, agricultural lands, trails and programs?”



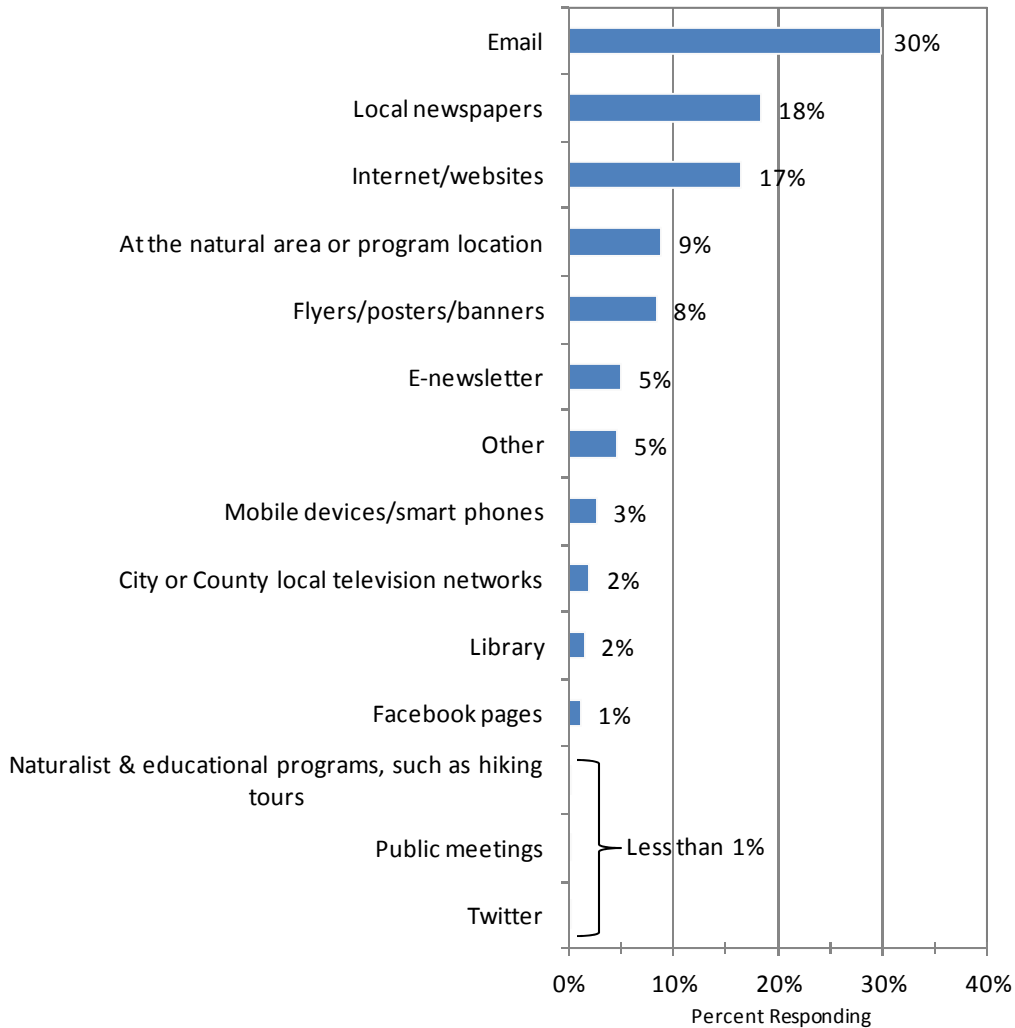
The questionnaire provided an “other” category, to give respondents the option of listing other ways they receive information about Larimer County open lands. Examples of responses include: *Agency maps, Bike Maps, Booths at downtown events, Calendar, City bill flyer, Direct mail, Driving around, Friends/family/word of mouth, Local magazines, Nonprofits, Radio, TV.*

Respondents were also asked to identify the “Best way to reach you,” with most respondents indicating email was the best mode of communication (30 percent). This was almost double the next two most identified preferences of local newspapers (18 percent) and Internet/websites (17 percent). These results were probed by age of respondents, which revealed some minor but important differences between age groups. Almost a quarter of respondents between the ages of 18 and 24 prefer to receive open land information via flyers/posters/banners. In contrast, local newspapers receive greater mention among respondents between the ages of 50 and 64 (37 percent), as well as those age 65 and older (43 percent). Interestingly, there were no differences in preference for communication via social media sites (e.g., Facebook or Twitter) among the segments of respondents, with less than 2 percent of each age group indicating preference.

Preferred Method of Communication

“What is the best way to reach you?”

Write in any one number choice from the list above.”



THEN AND NOW: COMPARING SURVEY RESULTS

Larimer County Open Lands commissioned a survey similar to this one back in 2001. While the wordings of several questions diverge slightly between these two surveys, meaningful comparisons can still be made between then and now. It is worthwhile to briefly discuss the changes, as well as their implications.

Both surveys asked respondents to indicate their familiarity with Larimer County's open lands. In 2001, only 13 percent of respondents indicated they were familiar or very familiar with the natural areas of Larimer County. In contrast, 46 percent of respondents from this year's survey noted they were familiar or very familiar. Although the two questions differ in scaling (5-point scale in 2001 and 4-point scale in 2012), this difference is both significant and encouraging.

Similarly, respondents were asked to partake in a funding allocation exercise in both surveys. The categories are slightly different between the two surveys, but similar priorities emerge between the two. Protecting wildlife habitat and water sources were allotted large increments of money both in 2001 and 2012. Respondents allotted wildlife habitat \$20 in 2001, making it the top priority, and \$11 in 2012, making it the second most important priority. Water sources were allotted \$16 in 2001, making it the third most important priority and \$15 in 2012, making it the top priority. The 2012 survey did contain seven additional funding categories, however, which allows us to see that respondents also prioritize funding for the expansion of recreation opportunities. While "lands with outstanding scenic qualities" made the top three for funding priorities in 2001 with an average of \$17 allocated, buying land or acquiring rights for outdoor recreation opportunity was the third category most likely to be supported in this year's survey (with an average of \$10 allotted for this purpose).

In 2001, the survey asked "How important to you is the development of a regional trail system in Larimer County?" to which 70 percent of respondents indicated it was important or very important. These values have been similarly reflected in the 2012 survey. In the funding allocation exercise, creating greenways or trail corridors that connect communities and parks ranked fourth (an average of 9 dollars allotted to this category). When asked how important lands are that provide regional trail corridors to connect cities and towns, 778 respondents gave a 4 out of 5 rating on average.

SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS (OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES)

The survey contained several open-ended questions designed to elicit feedback in residents' "own words." These comments were consolidated and have been provided verbatim under separate cover. As noted previously, they represent over 100 pages of input, a substantial volume of commentary and a strong indication of the depth of attention and time that was invested by interested citizens in the Larimer County-wide Natural Area Citizen Survey.

FOLLOW-UP SURVEY RESULTS

Larimer County Open Lands Survey 2012 provided an option to be invited to participate in a follow-up survey to be distributed early in 2013. The objective from this second survey was to obtain additional information concerning selected topics and to potentially link responses from the initial Open Lands Survey to the subsequent survey. The follow-up survey was conducted exclusively on the Web.

The follow-up survey provided the following background as an introduction:

“Since 1996 the ¼ cent Larimer County Help Preserve Open Space (HPOS) sales tax has conserved approximately 50,000 acres and over 120 miles of hiking trails across Larimer County, including municipal parks and open spaces that also benefit from these funds. Of the conserved lands, almost 75% are open to the public and 25% are conservation easements.”

Based on this information, questions specific to the HPOS, uses of the HPOS, and other questions regarding land conservation and user experiences were analyzed.

The follow-up survey collected 324 participants from the original “opted in” participants in the Open Lands 2012 survey, and an additional 344 participants from the Open Lands 2012 Open Link survey for a total of 668 respondents for the follow-up survey. Fifty-two respondents to the Open Link survey were collected from a community meeting.

As illustrated below, Fort Collins had the largest number of respondents followed by unincorporated Larimer County and City of Loveland. The smaller communities of Berthoud, Timnath, Wellington, and Johnstown had lower representation just as they did in the initial Open Lands Survey. They all have relatively low population which helps to explain the generally lower number of responses.

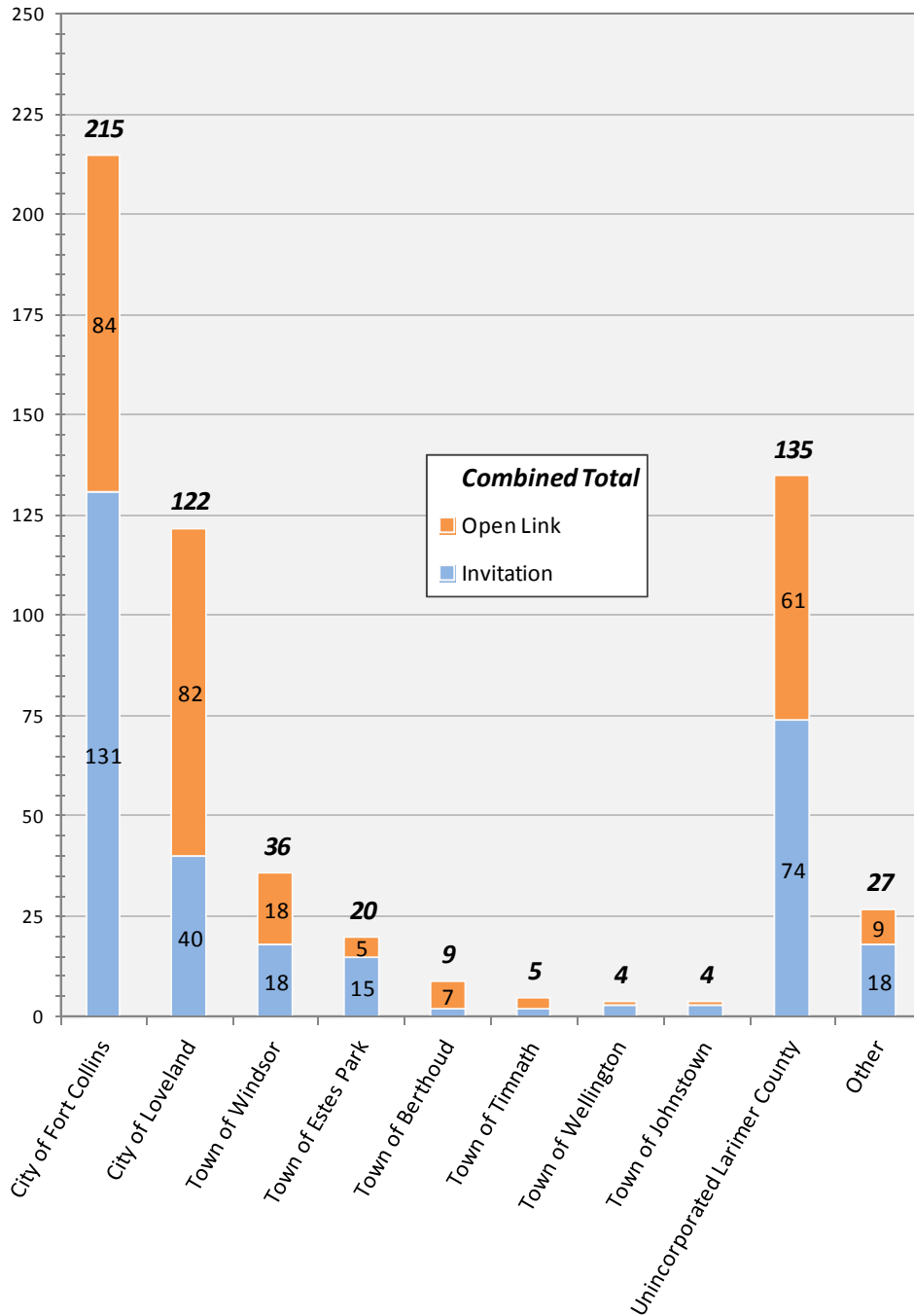
While the data has been examined and selectively presented by community of respondent, we discourage placing too much emphasis on the statistical findings from the communities within the County. The general trends or direction of responses by city is worth noting, but the facts that sample sizes are relatively small (for example, ranging from 215 respondents in total from Fort Collins, 4 responses from Wellington and Johnstown), and that the survey was not distributed at random, require some caution in interpreting findings.

In the following discussion the results from the Invitation version of the survey are often compared to the results from the Open Link respondents. It is notable that the overall response patterns are often very similar; however, they are not identical. In general, both sets of responses indicate similar priorities and opinions.

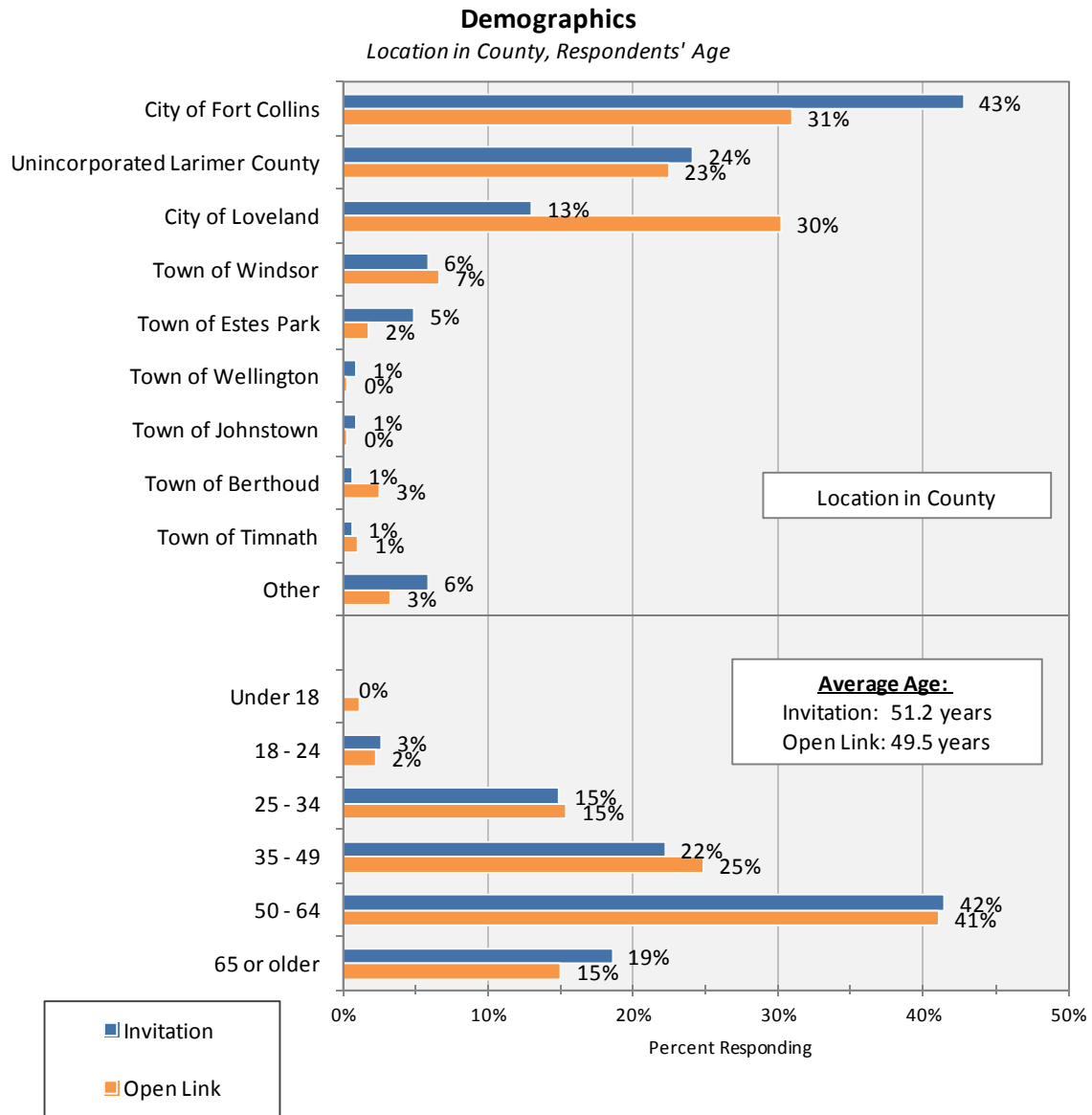
Unless otherwise noted, the following graphs compare results from the open link methodology to the random sample (i.e. invitation). Though n-values for each question differ somewhat from graph to graph, generally, there were about 300 invitation and 275 open link participants for each question.

Sample Sizes by Community

Invitation Compared to Open Link



The follow-up survey results were not weighted. This decision is based on recognition that the overall sample was not obtained using a randomized technique. Respondents have “self selected” to participate. Because the data was not weighted the age profile is moderately different from the county-wide average, with the average age of follow-up survey respondents almost 5 years older. There were higher percentages of older age cohort respondents, and lower percentages of younger ones.



Importance of Land Conservation Options. The survey included a series of questions that probed importance placed on differing land conservation techniques. The Web Survey presented a short summary of key attributes of the conservation options, followed by a question that asked respondents to rank the importance they place on each option using a 1 (“most important”) to 4 (“least important”) scale. In the Web version of the survey the position of each of the choices was randomly ordered to ensure that no single conservation option appeared in the same relative position on all surveys. Below are the descriptions of these conservation options.

**IMPORTANCE
FOR CONSERVATION:
RANK 1-4**

_____ **Urban Open Space & Trails:** These lands provide non-motorized recreation such as hiking, biking, fishing and horseback riding, close to urban areas. These are the most expensive to conserve and manage due to the facilities that are needed for public access and high urban land prices, and it takes the land off of the tax rolls. Examples of Urban Open Spaces are Pineridge Natural Area and Morey Wildlife Reserve.

_____ **Regional Open Space & Trails:** These lands provide non-motorized recreation such as hiking, biking, fishing and horseback riding, further away from urban areas. These are the second most expensive to manage due to the facilities that are needed for public access, and the larger acreage, and it takes the land off of the tax rolls. Examples of Regional Open Spaces are Horsetooth Mountain Open Space, and Bobcat Ridge Natural Area.

_____ **Working Farms & Ranches - Conservation Easements:** These lands provide ongoing production of food and fiber that maintains agricultural heritage and sense of place in Larimer County. These lands are the least expensive to conserve because the land is owned and maintained by private owners and public access is typically not provided, and land stays on the tax rolls. Examples include Bee Centennial Farm and Sylvan Dale Ranch.

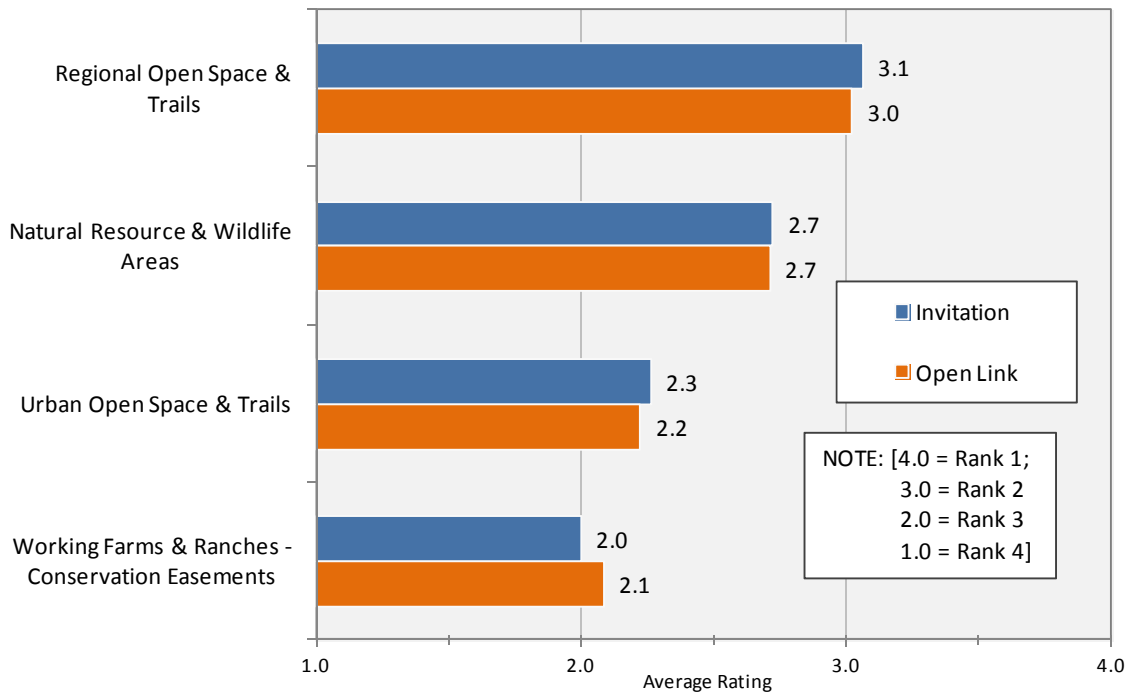
_____ **Natural Resource & Wildlife Areas:** These lands conserve important plant species and plant communities as well as critical wildlife areas and corridors. They are the second least expensive to maintain because public access is limited and ecosystems are relatively self-sustaining. When conservation easements are used, private land stays on the tax rolls. Examples include Cathy Fromme Prairie Natural Area and Dakota Ridge Conservation Easement.

By assigning a value of 1.0 for the lowest ranked land type for conservation and a value of 4.0 for the highest ranked land type, Regional Open Space & Trails had the highest average at 3.1 for invitation (3.0 for open link). This land type was followed by Natural Resource & Wildlife Areas (2.7 each for invitation and open link); Urban Space & Trails (2.3 for invitation; 2.2 for open link); and finally Working Farms & Ranches – Conservation Easements (2.0 for invitation; 2.1 open link).

It is important to remember that these results do not suggest that there is weak support for the lower rated categories, Urban Open Space, and Working Farms & Ranches-Conservation Easements. Rather, the ratings are relative to one another and show that on average Regional Open Space and Trails is highest ranked.

Ranked Importance of Land Type Conservation

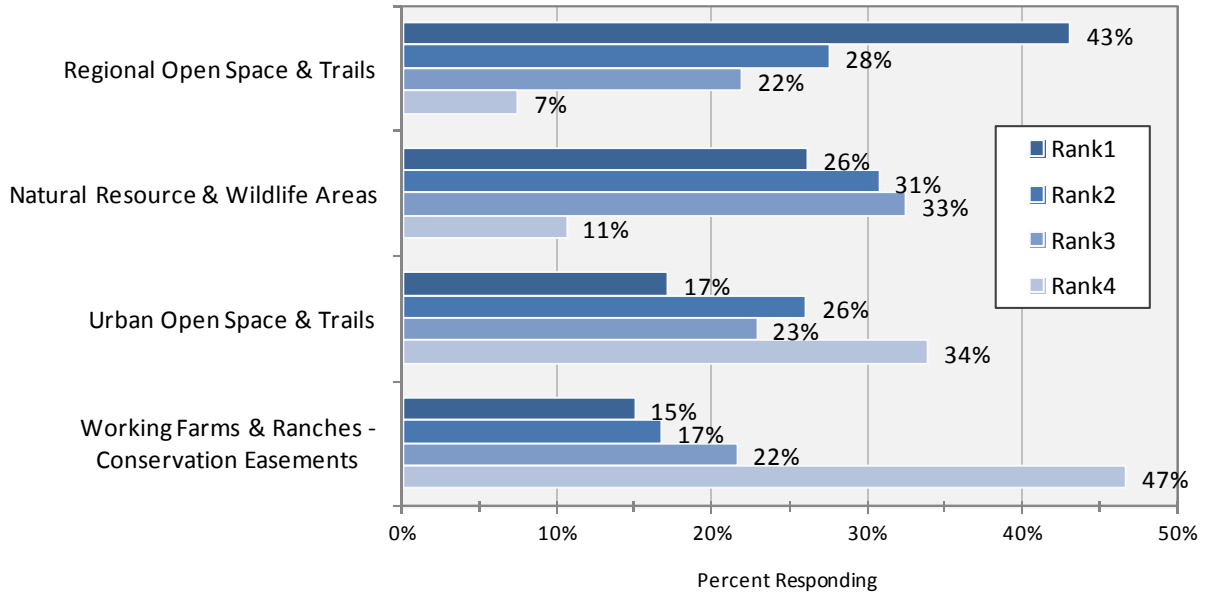
*Average Rating
(Invitation Compared to Open Link)*



This ranking is evidenced by the distribution of respondents ranking each land type as 1, 2, 3, or 4. Regional Open Space & Trails had the most #1 rankings and the least #4 rankings. Meanwhile Working Farms & Ranches – Conservation Easements had the least #1 rankings and the most #4 rankings (modest variation between the invitation and open link).

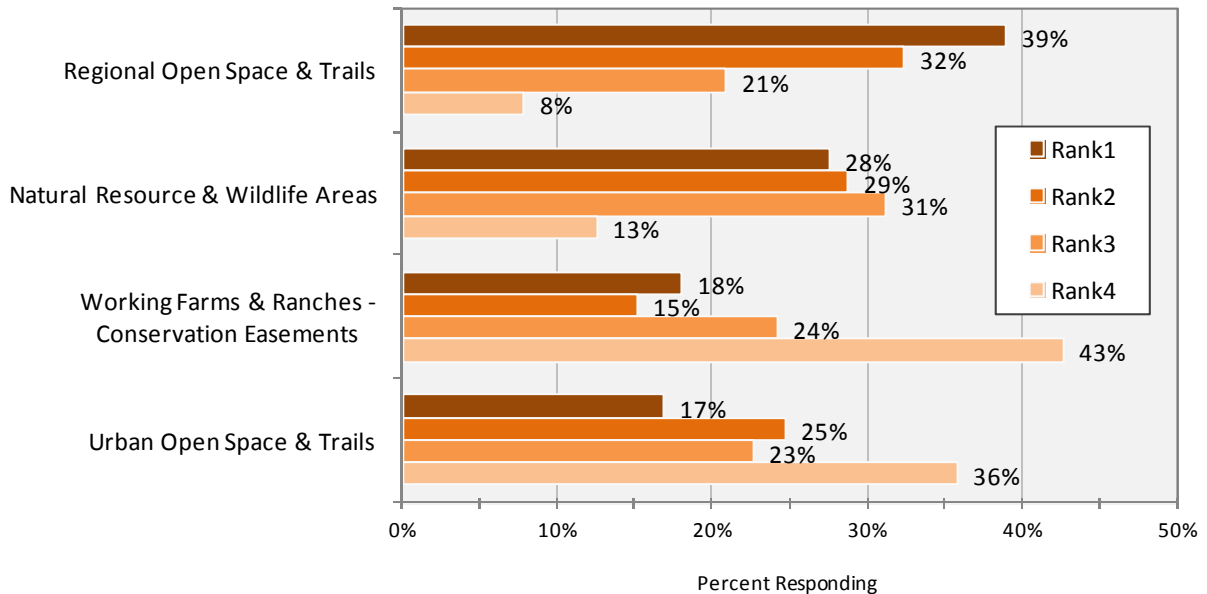
Ranked Importance of Land Type Conservation -

Percentage Ranked 1, 2, 3, and 4 (Invitation)

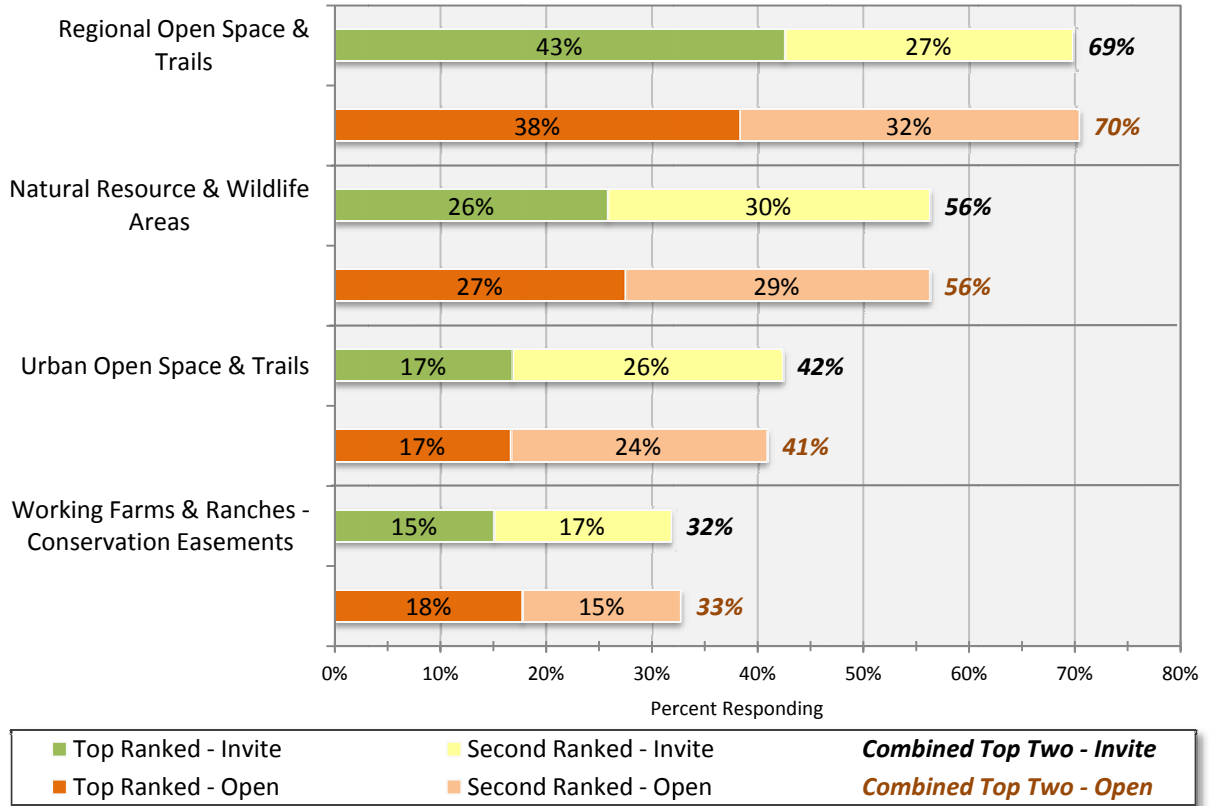


Ranked Importance of Land Type Conservation -

Percentage Ranked 1, 2, 3, and 4 (Open Link)

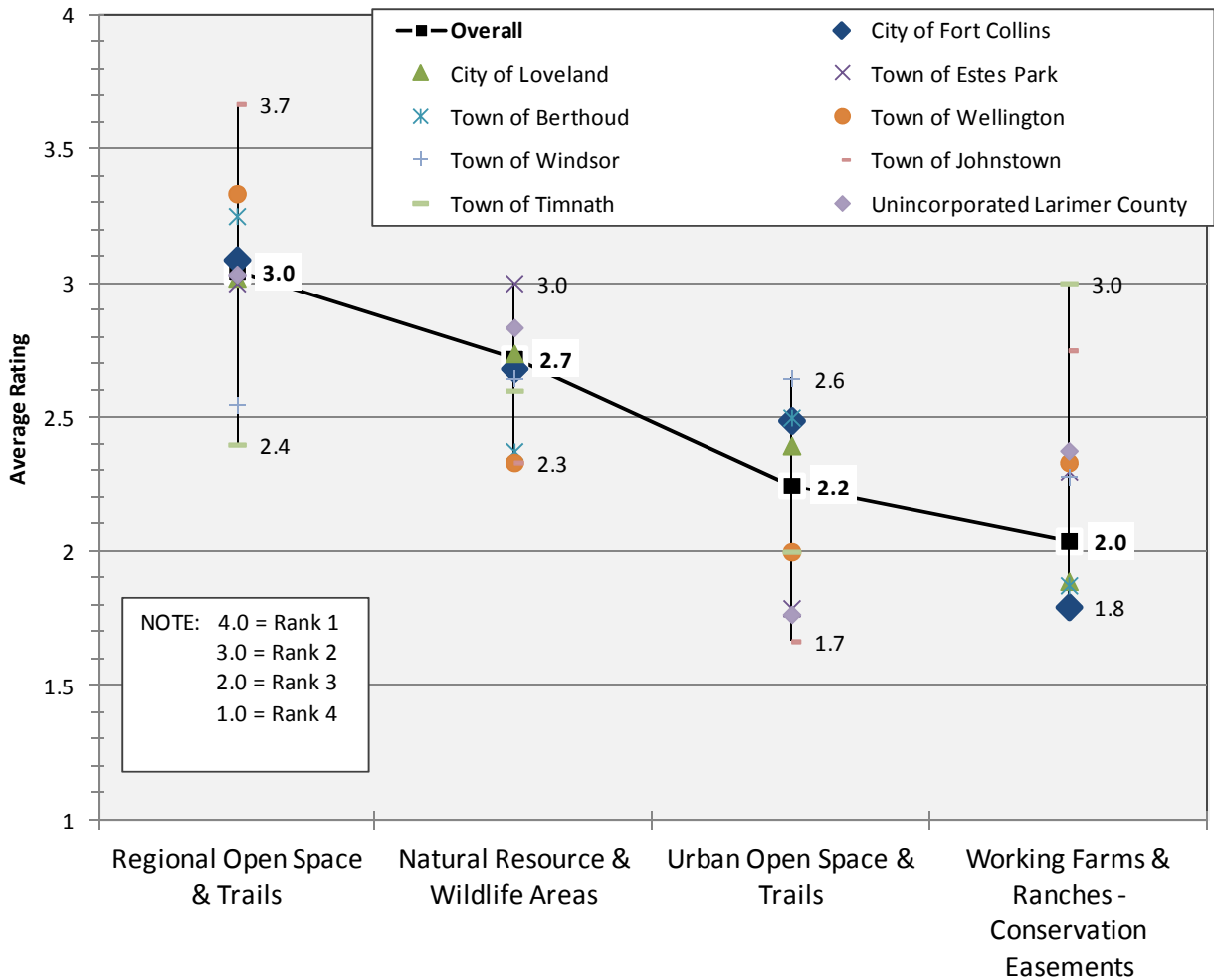


Ranked Importance of Land Type Conservation - Combined Top Two
(Invitation Compared to Open Link)



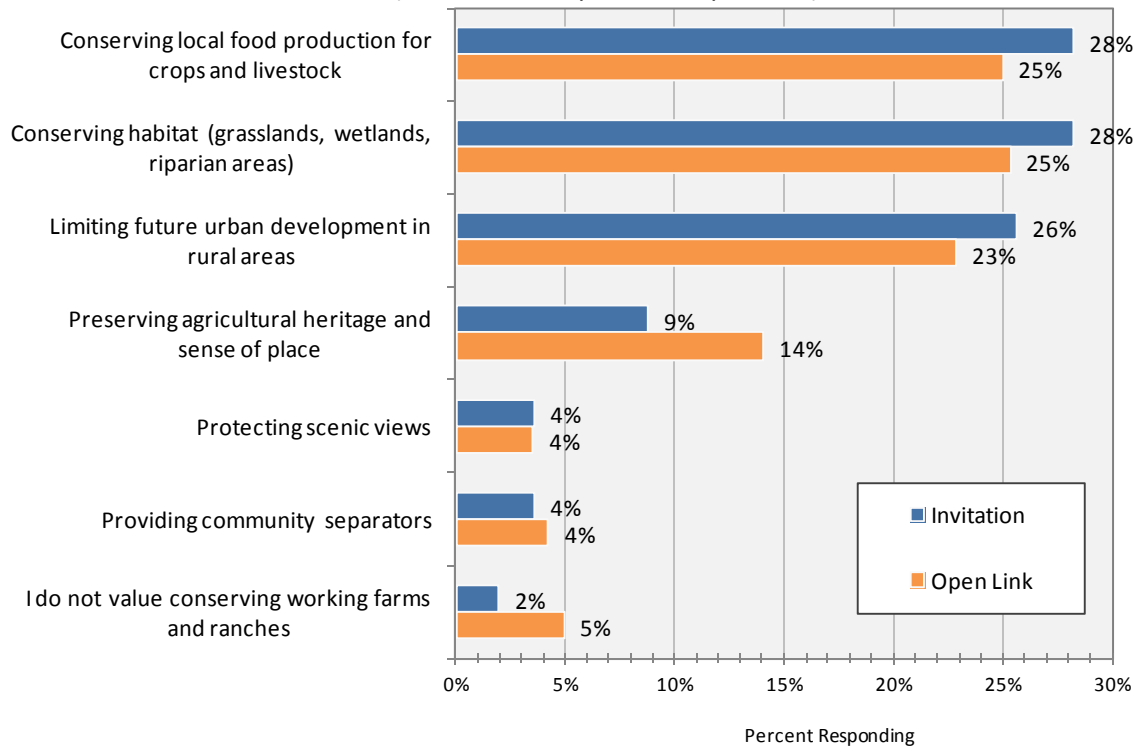
Further analysis by community indicates that there is general agreement across communities in terms of the overall priorities for types of land conservation. However, the “spread” or range of opinions varies. For example, many communities within Larimer County agreed on the level of importance for Natural Resource & Wildlife Areas (a smaller spread of responses), whereas there was more disagreement and range of opinion regarding the level of importance for Regional Open Space & Trails and Working Farms & Ranches, and Urban Open Space & Trails to a lesser extent. In general, smaller communities, and residents of unincorporated Larimer County, tended to place more importance on working farms and ranches. Their rankings are somewhat different than those by residents of larger towns such as Fort Collins and Loveland.

Ranked Importance of Land Type Conservation - Average Rating by Community



In a follow-up question to the previously described results, respondents indicated what they felt was most important for conserving working farms and ranches. With no clear majority, “conserving food production for crops and livestock,” conserving habitat (grasslands, wetlands, riparian areas), and limiting future urban development in rural areas rated highest with roughly ¼ of respondents each.

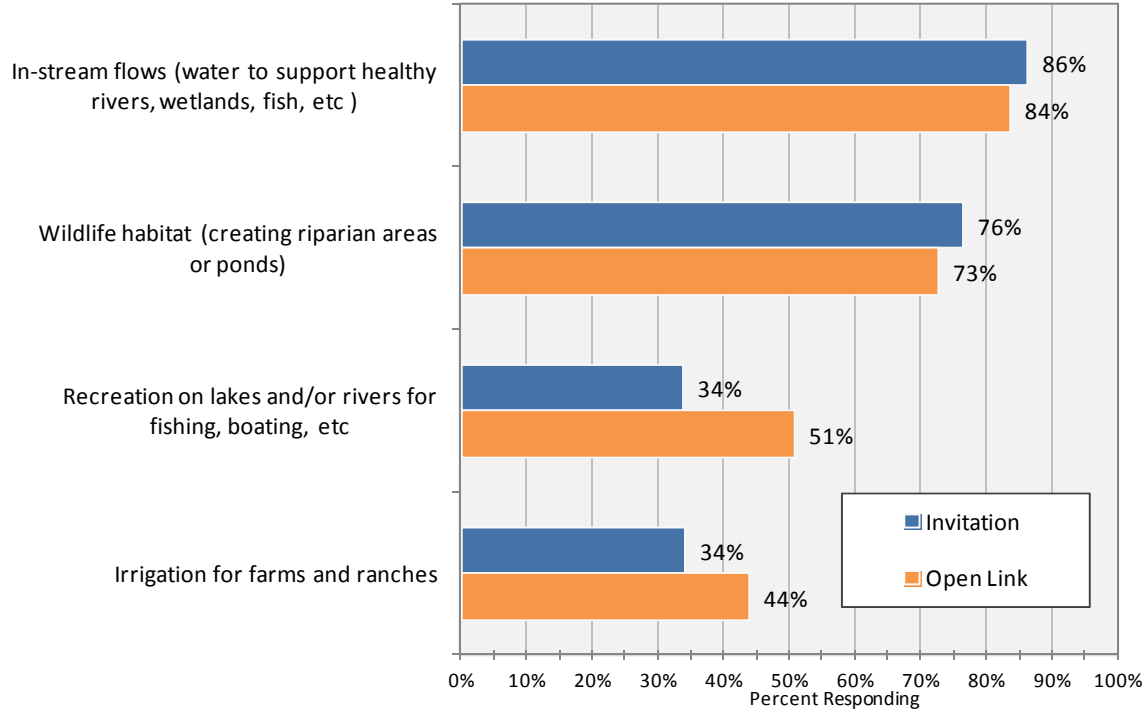
Most Important Aspect of Conservation for Working Farms and Ranches
(Invitation Compared to Open Link)



The majority of respondents indicated that open space tax dollars should be used to purchase water rights for “in-stream flows (water to support healthy rivers, wetlands, fish, etc.)”, and wildlife habitat (creating riparian areas or ponds); although many respondents also indicated tax dollars should be used for recreation on lakes and/or rivers for fishing, boating, etc., and irrigation for farms and ranches.

Open Space Tax Dollars Should be Used to Purchase Water Rights for the Following Purposes:

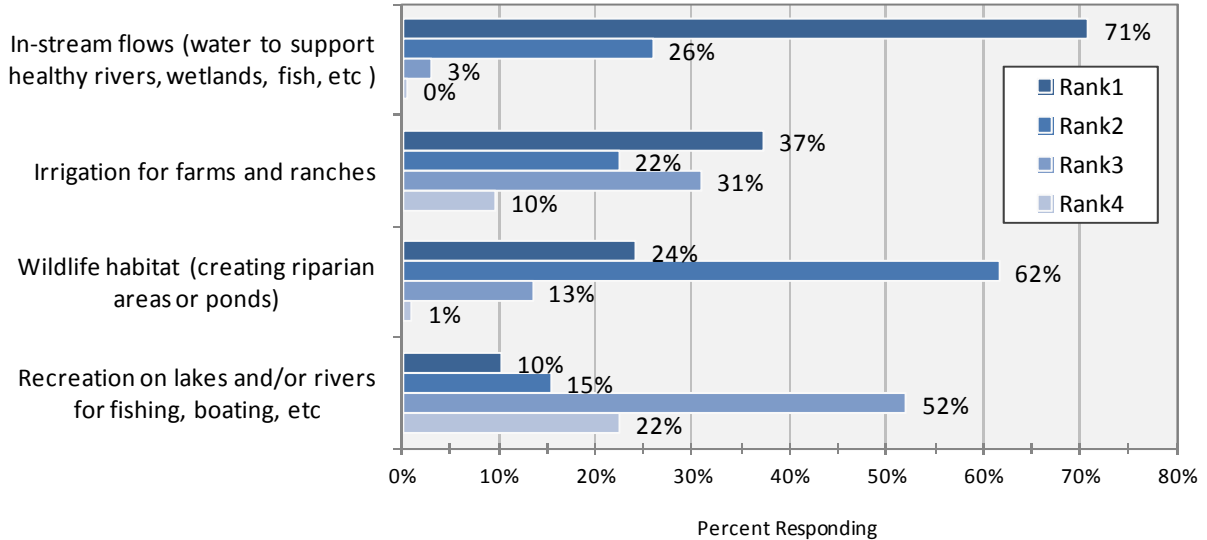
(Invitation Compared to Open Link)



A separate survey question asked respondents to rank order their priorities for the uses of water rights. In other words, for those uses that they supported (shown in the graph above), the questionnaire asked the respondent to rank among the uses. When asked to rank among the supported purposes there were variations in rankings. However, as shown below, in-stream flows are most identified by both Invitation and Open Link respondents as their first choice (between 63% and 71%).

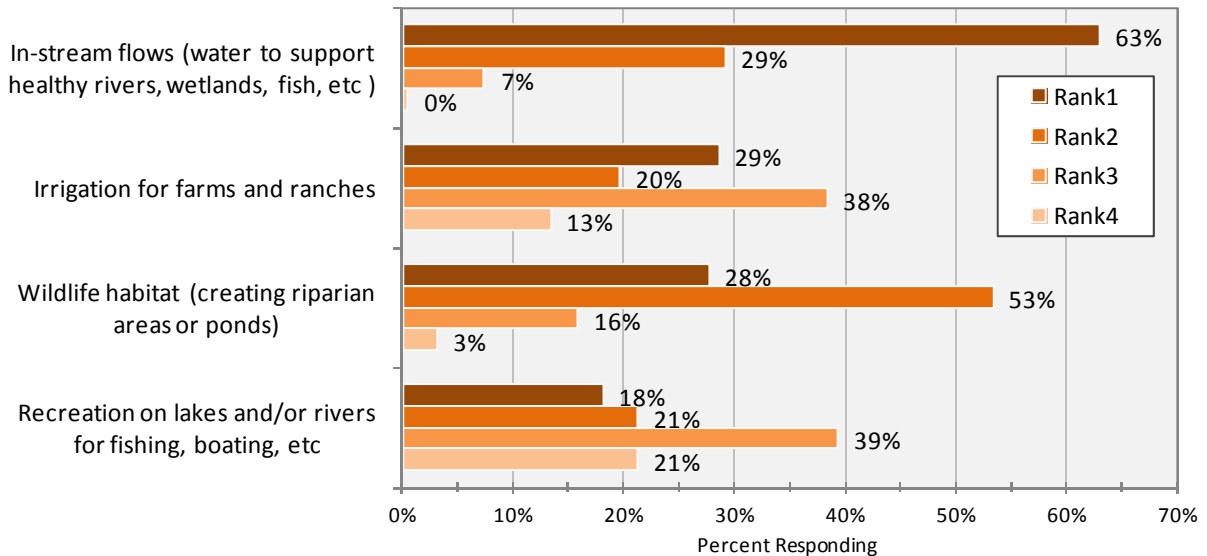
Ranked Importance of Use of Open Space Tax Dollars for Water Rights -

Percentage Ranked 1, 2, 3, and 4 (Invitation)



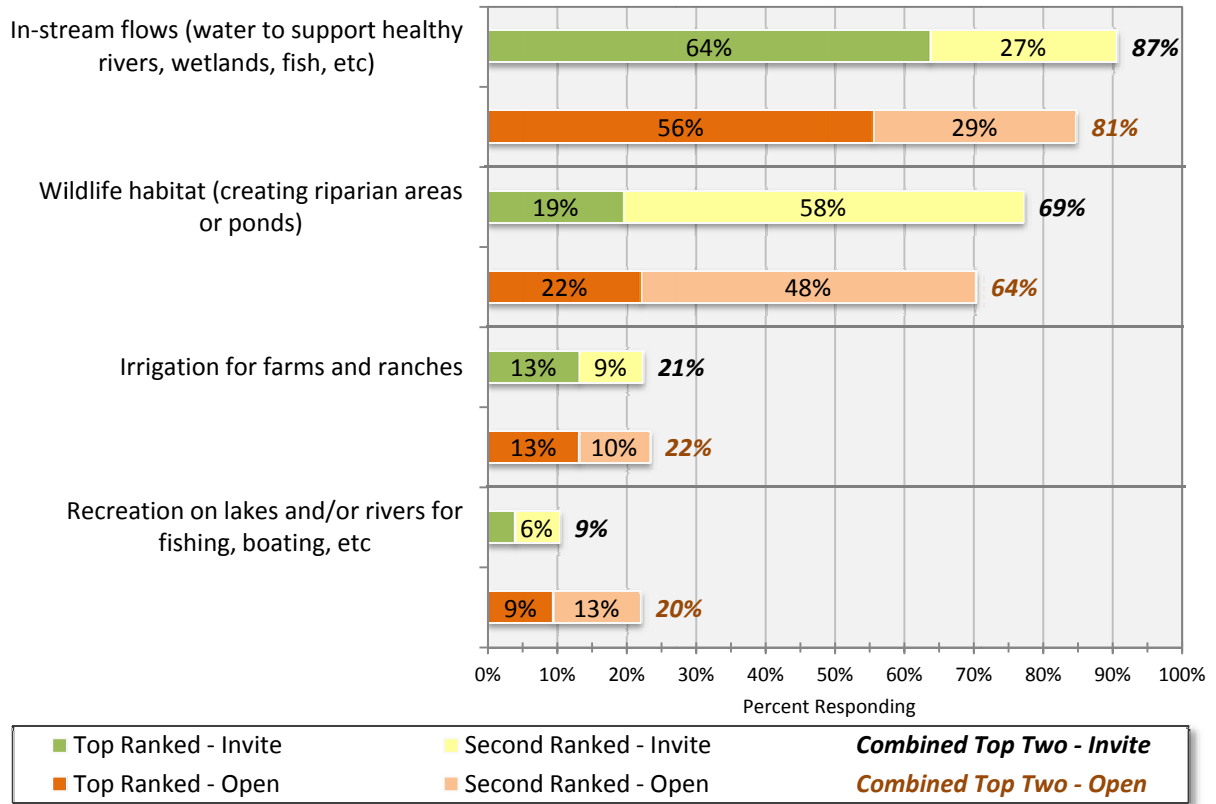
Ranked Importance of Use of Open Space Tax Dollars for Water Rights -

Percentage Ranked 1, 2, 3, and 4 (Open Link)



By combining the top two rankings a different assessment can be made regarding which method(s) are most important to the community. With 87 percent for invitation respondents (81 percent for open link), in-stream flows was rated most often as the most important or second most important use of open space tax dollars for water rights. Wildlife habitat followed with 69 percent (invitation) and 64 percent (open link).

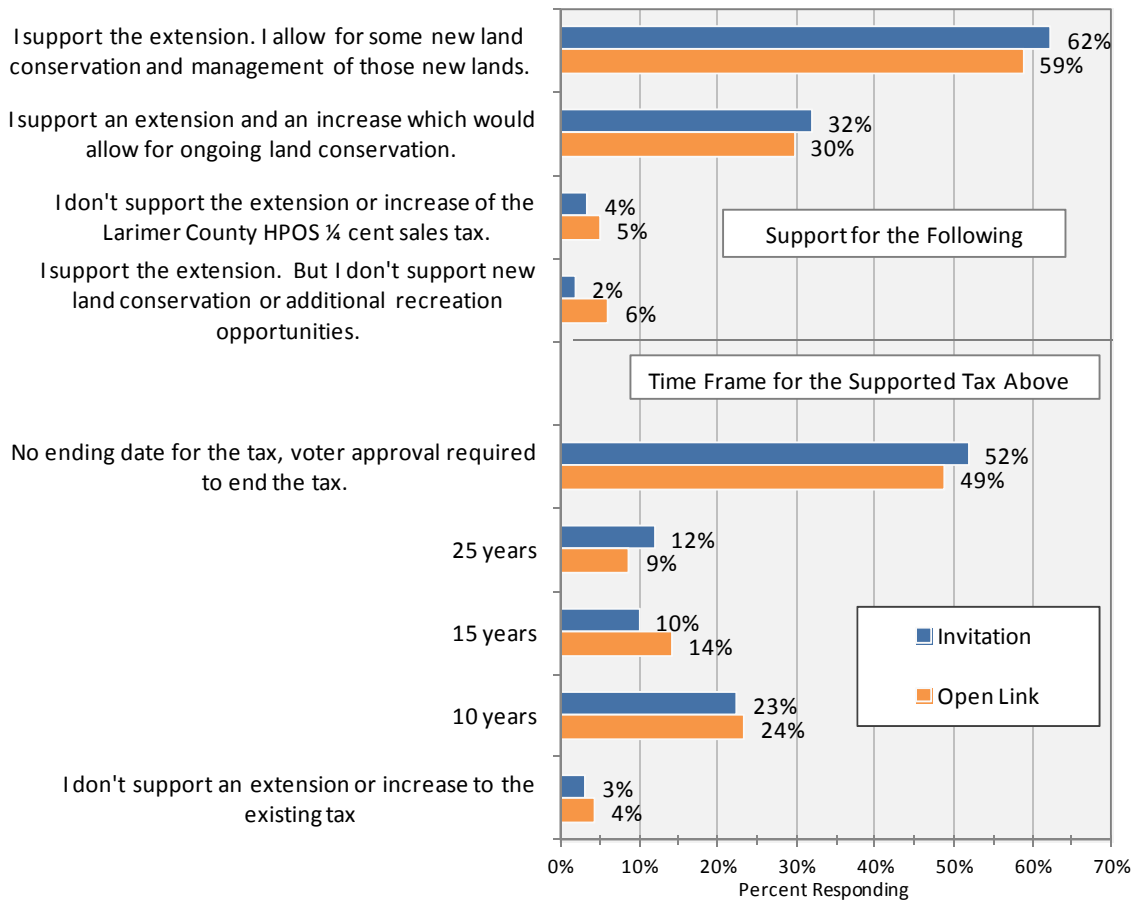
**Ranked Importance of Use of Open Space Tax Dollars for Water Rights -
Combined Top Two (Invitation Compared to Open Link)**



Support for HPOS Extension. Respondents were asked their level of support for a HPOS extension, as well as the time frame for that extension. A clear majority, 94 percent, indicated support for the extension and for both new land conservation and management of those new lands or for ongoing land conservation. An additional 2 percent reported support for the extension but without new land conservation or additional recreation opportunities. Only 4 percent do not support an extension or increase of the HPOS.

Concerning the length of time for the supported tax, about half of the respondents indicated “No set ending date for the tax but a voter approval to end the tax.” Only 3 to 4 percent of respondents indicated no support for an extension or increase to the existing tax. The similarities between responses from Invitation and Open Link survey participants is notable; however, there is a clear division between those that support no ending date (about 50%), and those that support different ending dates that will likely require greater evaluation as proposals move forward in the future.

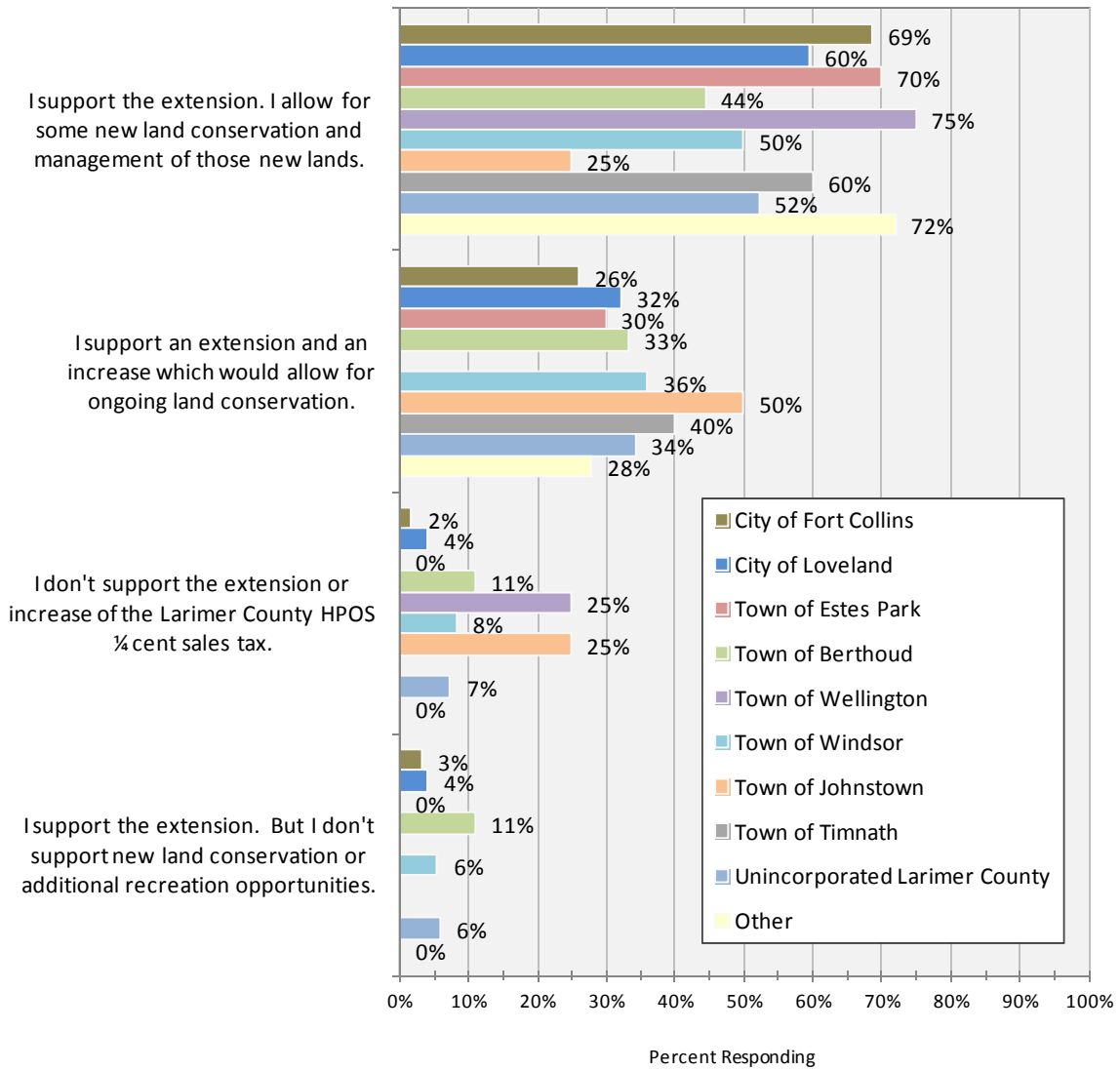
Support for HPOS Tax Extension Purposes -
Support for Extending the HPOS Tax, Time Frame for Support
(Invitation Compared to Open Link)



Support for HPOS Tax Extension Purposes -

By Larimer Community

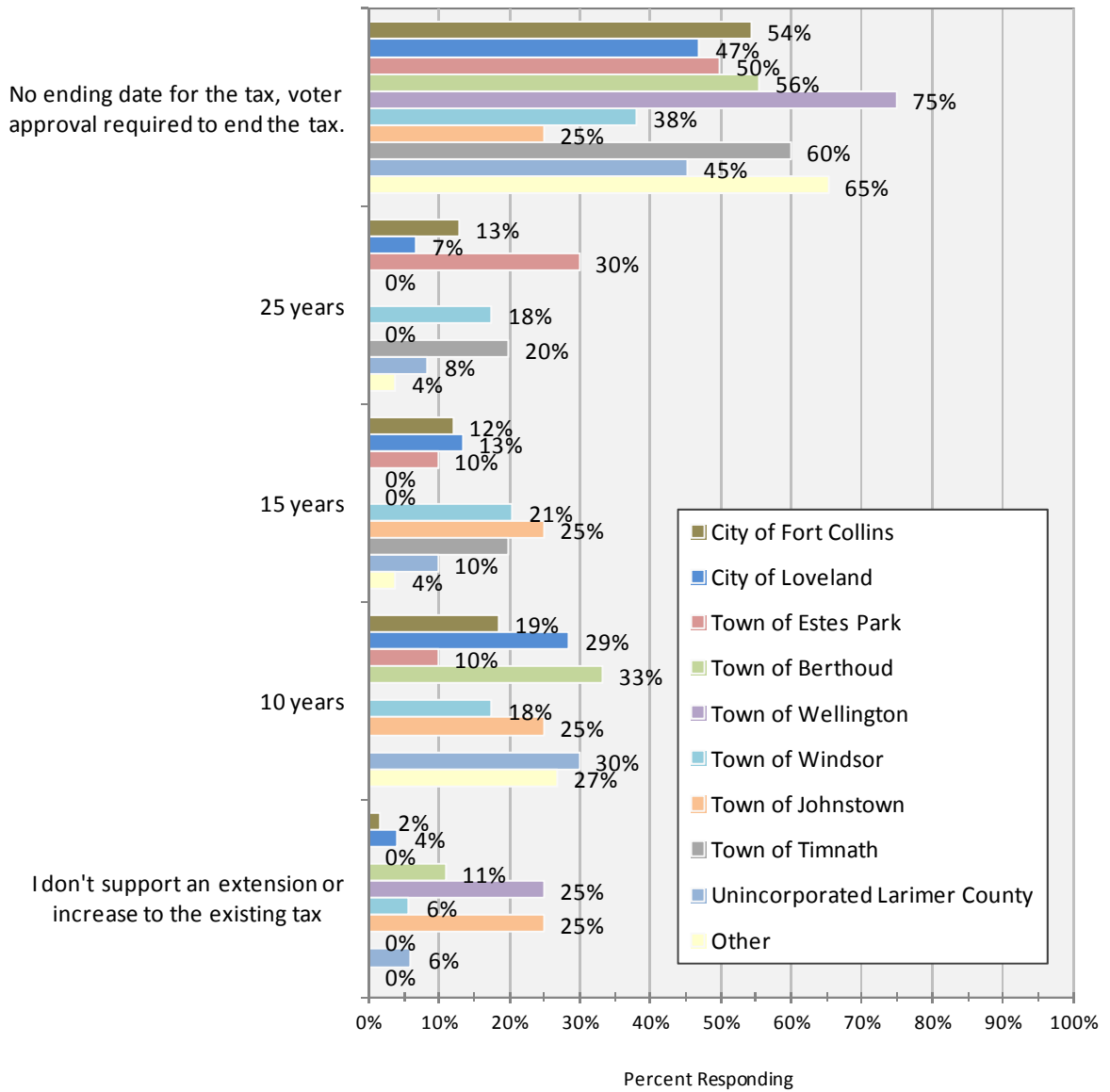
Invitation and Open Link Results Combined



Time Frame for HPOS Tax Extension -

By Larimer Community

(Invitation and Open Link Results Combined)

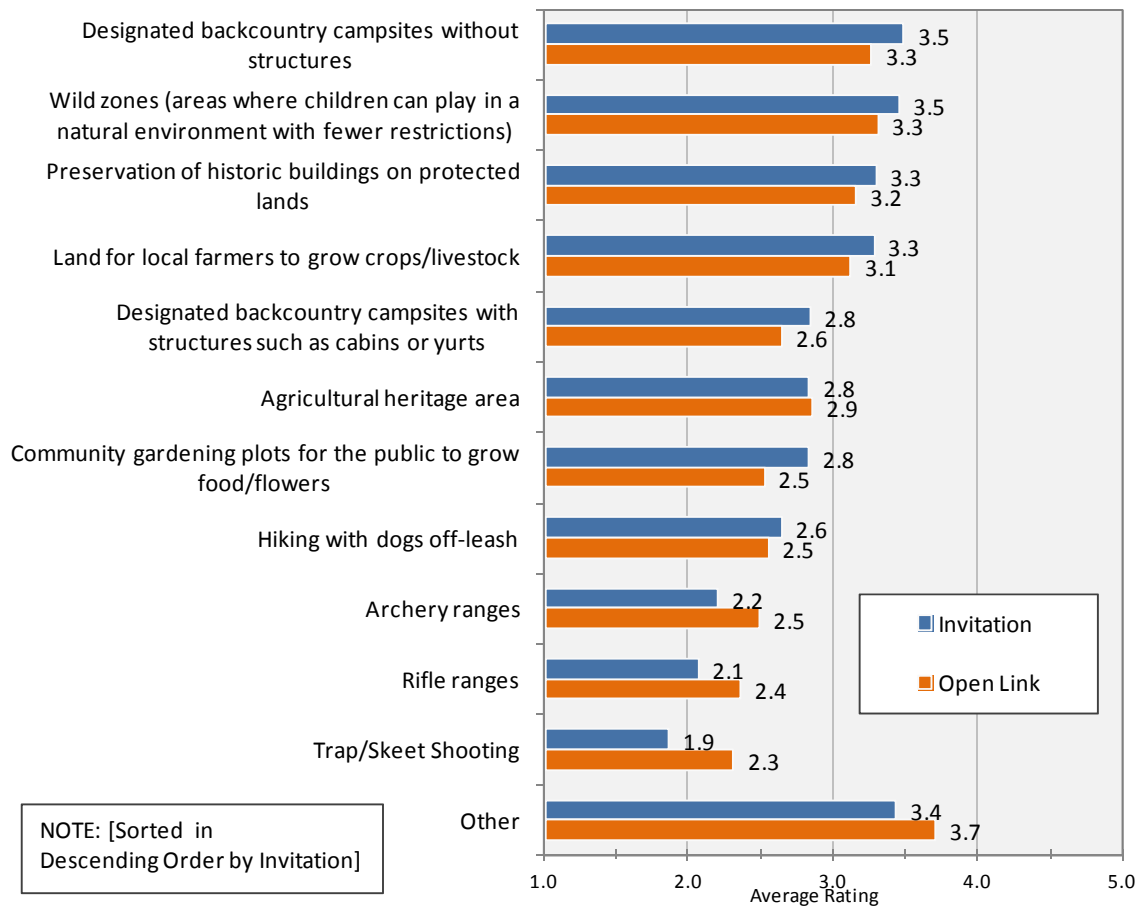


Importance of Different Land Uses for Support by Open Space Tax Dollars. The survey asked respondents to evaluate various land uses assuming that appropriate land was available, supported by Open Space tax dollars. The uses that were rated most important to households based on the “mean” rating (that is, averaging the scores 1-5) ranged from designated backcountry campsites without structures, wild zones (areas where children can play in a natural environment with fewer restrictions), and land for local farmers to grow crops/livestock. The uses rated less important included trap/skeet shooting, rifle ranges, and archery ranges.

The “Other” category offered an opportunity for respondents to write-in important land-uses. Many of these “write-ins” referred to trail-based hiking.

Importance of Land Uses Supported by Open Space Tax Dollars -

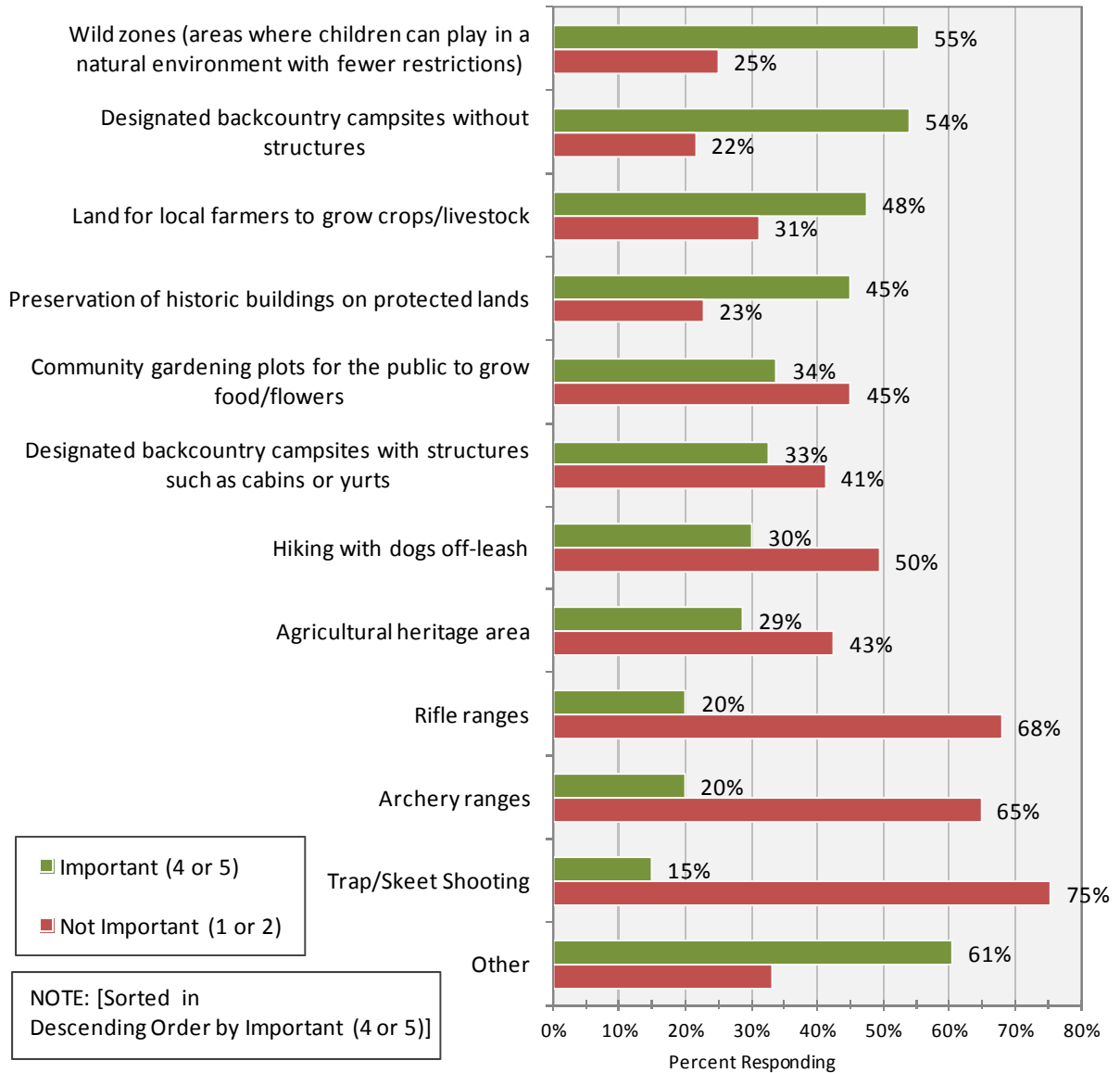
*Average Rating
(Invitation Compared to Open Link)*



Looking at these same results in a different way, the graph below shows the percent of respondents that called the land uses “important” (4 or 5) or “unimportant” (1 or 2). As shown, there is a group of between 15 and 20% of respondents that consider rifle ranges, archery ranges and trap/skeet shooting important, even though the majority (68

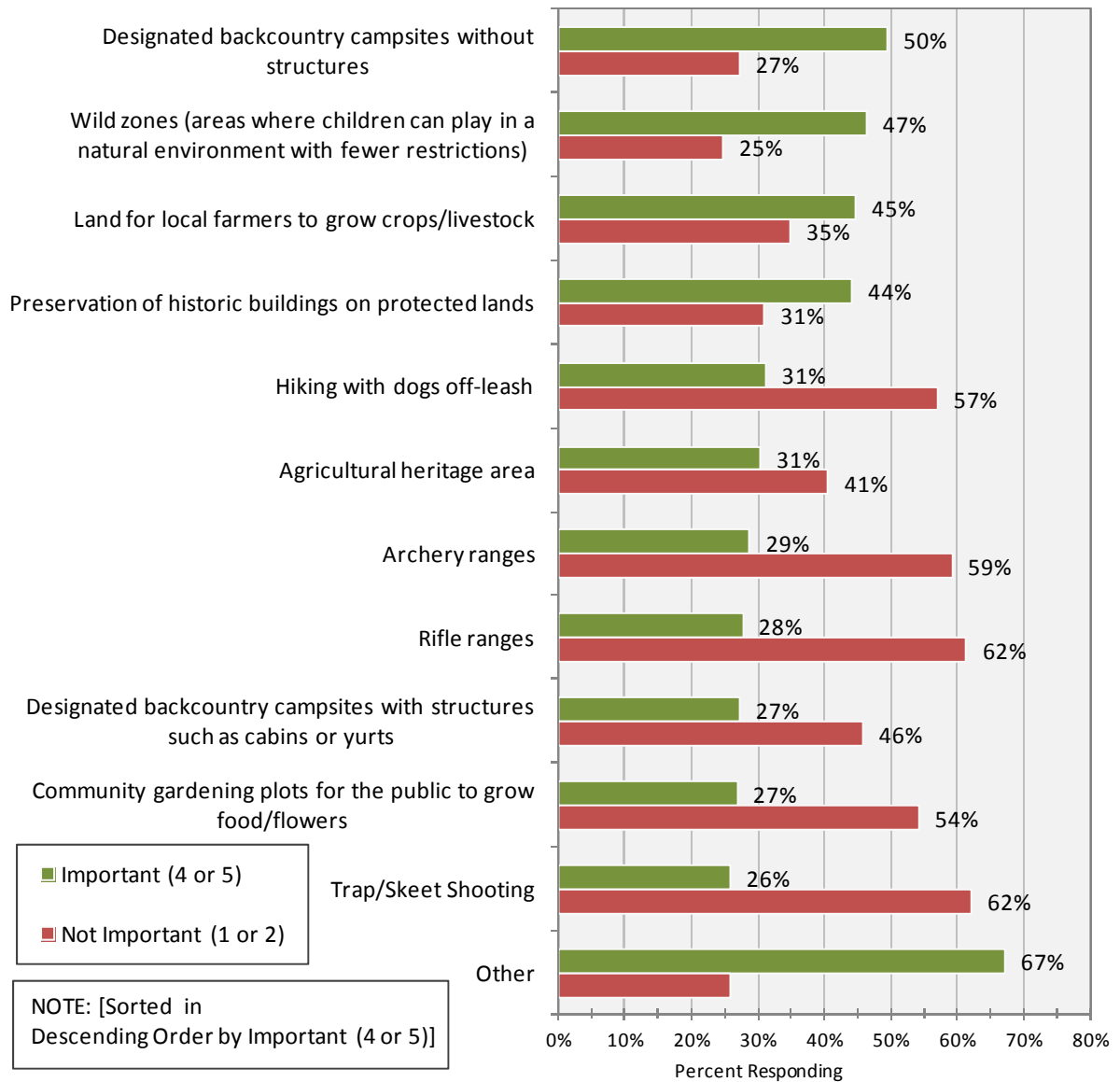
to 75%) consider these land uses relatively unimportant. These results help to explain that there is a segment that feels strongly about these (and the other activities that were evaluated), and while not widely held, the opinions of these groups are often strongly expressed and deeply felt.

Importance of Land Uses Supported by Open Space Tax Dollars -
Percent Important vs. Not Important (Invitation)

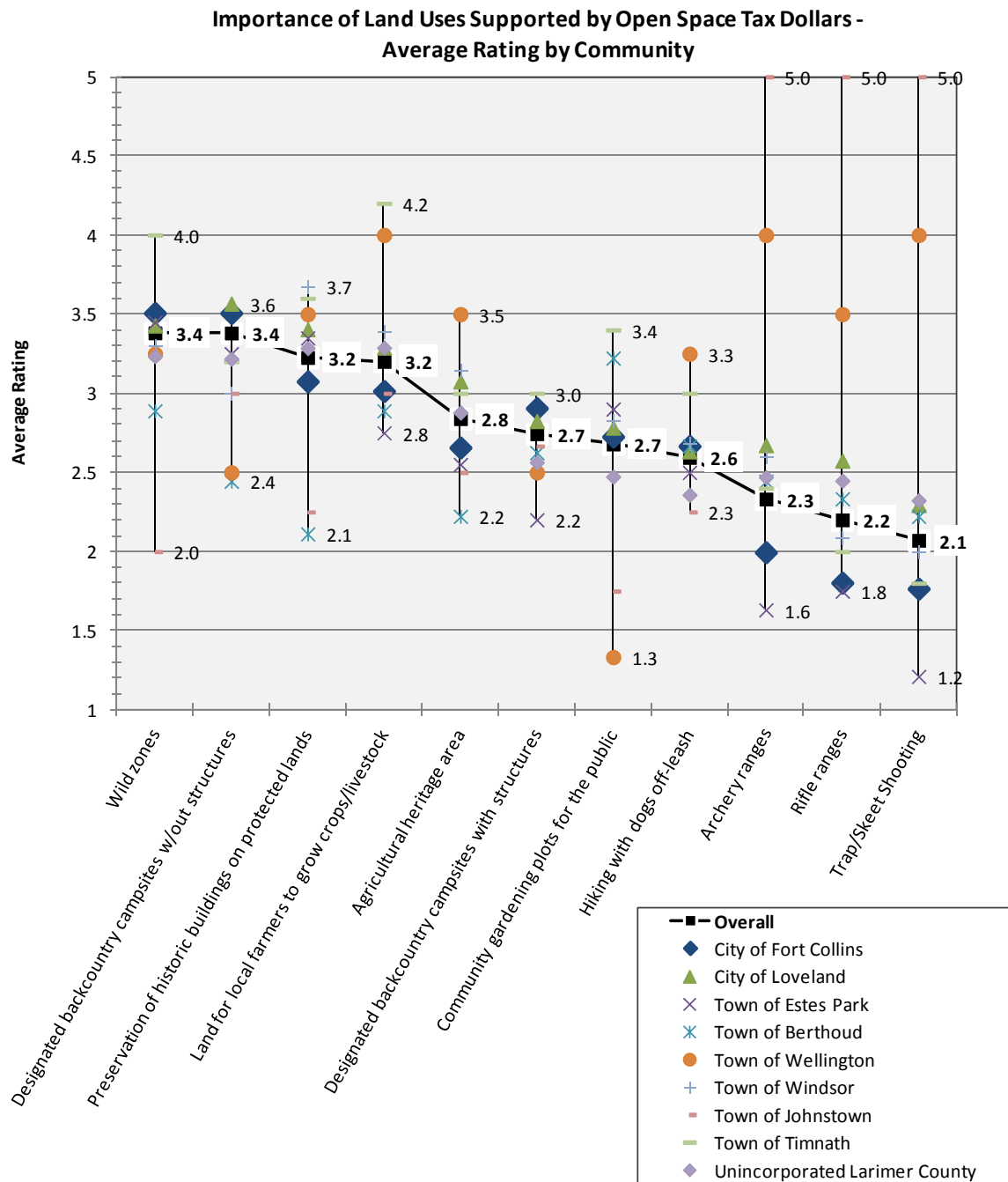


Importance of Land Uses Supported by Open Space Tax Dollars -

Percent Important vs. Not Important (Open Link)

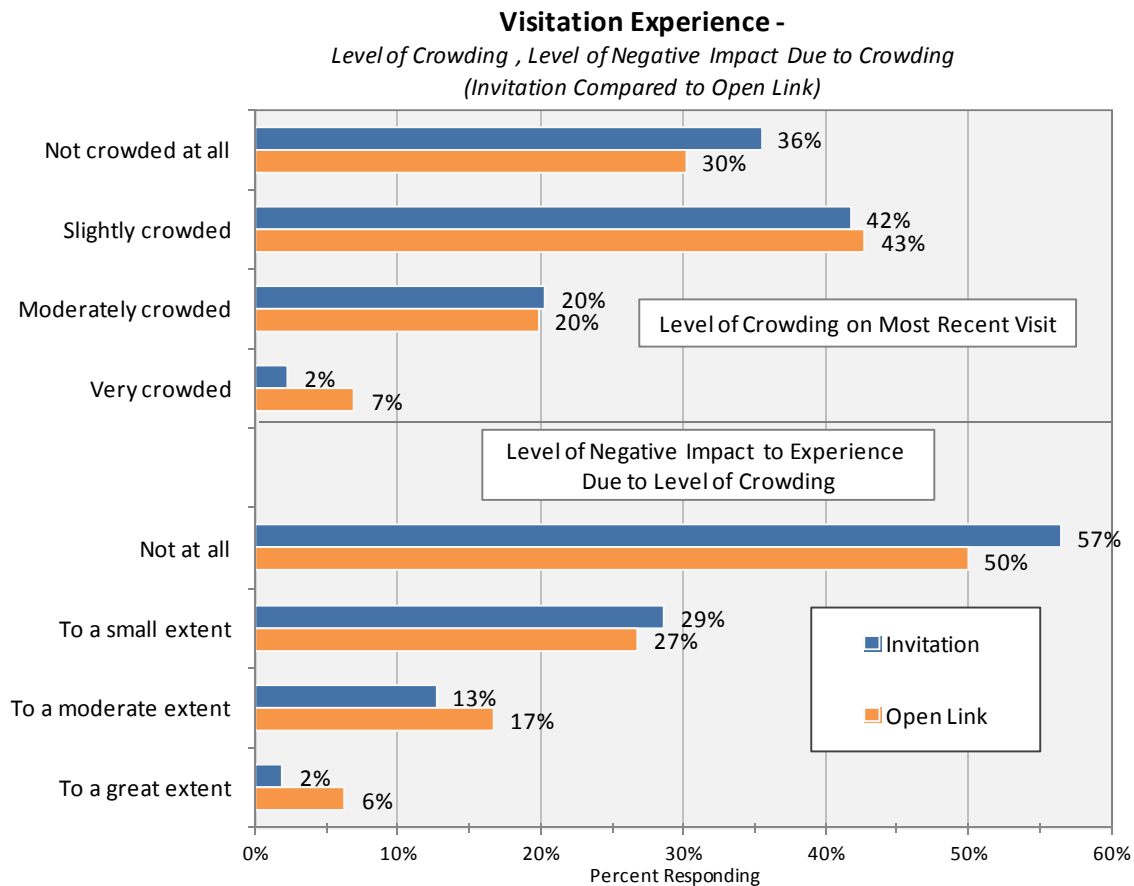


The range of opinion varied considerably by community regarding the importance of land uses by open space tax dollars. Uses such as designated backcountry campsites with structures such as cabins or yurts; hiking with dogs off-leash; designated campsites without structures; and agriculture heritage areas had fairly strong consensus on level of importance. However, archery and rifle ranges and trap/skeet shooting showed a broad range of expressed importance, with respondents from several of the smaller towns giving very high priority to these uses.



Crowding. Regarding the most recent visit to open space/natural areas by the respondents, very few indicated the space to be “very crowded” and roughly one third as “not crowded at all.” Results were generally quite similar among Invitation and Open Link respondents.

In a follow-up question, respondents were asked “To what extent, if at all, did the crowding negatively impact your visit?” An even higher percentage of respondents indicated that the level of crowding did not impact their experience negatively at all (57% Invitation and 50% Open Link compared to 36% and 30% respectively in the previous question). In other words, while some crowding is evident in local natural areas, it is generally not evident to a major extent today.



Respondents that encountered crowding were asked to identify where it occurred. A count of comments was conducted and results showed that a few open land areas dominated. Most mentioned was Devil’s Backbone or just “Devil’s” mentioned 69 times. This was followed by Horsetooth (49 times), Maxwell Natural Area (25 times), “Trails and Trail Heads” (27 times), Poudre (11), Coyote Ridge (11 times), and Pineridge (6 times). Additionally, a number of other areas were mentioned sporadically, typically 4 or fewer times (Lory, Carter, etc.). Clearly, Devil’s Backbone and Horsetooth Reservoir are the locations where crowding is most frequently experienced. A complete listing of the word count data has been provided under separate cover.

APPENDIX B., ONLINE MAPPING TRAINING GUIDE



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Our Lands, Our Future Online Mapping Training Guide

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About This Site

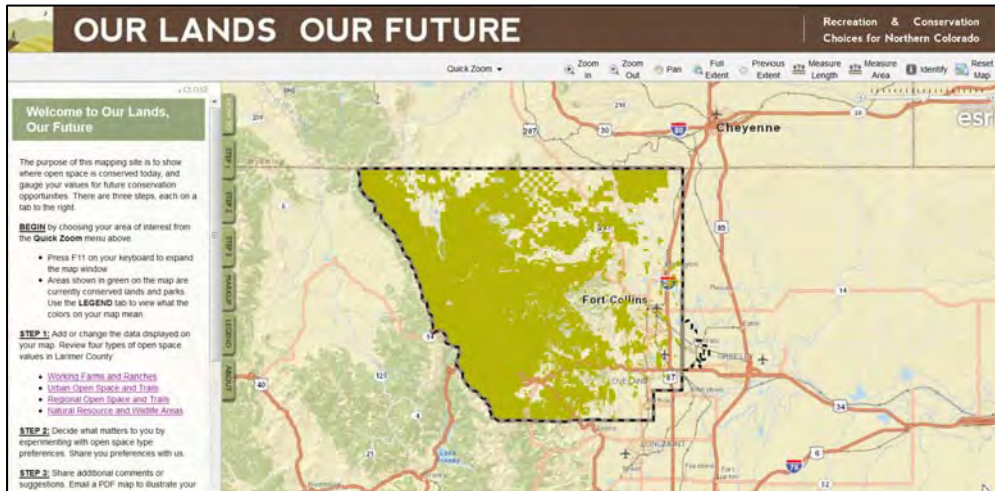
The purpose of this mapping site is to show where open space is conserved today, and gauge your values for future conservation opportunities. You can:

- Explore current conditions by adding or changing data on the interactive map.
- Learn about different types of Open Space values.
- Decide what matters to you by experimenting with open space type preferences.
- Share you preferences with open space planners.

Getting There

○ Web Link

- This site will be available as a link directly from the Our Lands, Our Future Public Survey.
- You can also access this site by using the following internet address:
<http://tplgis.org/OurLands-OurFuture/>



- Note: Mozilla Firefox works best for this mapping site. Internet Explorer version 7 or higher also works well.
- Note: This mapping site is data intensive. If you are on a dial-up connection, you will experience slow loading and refresh delays. You may want to consider going to the local library for better performance.

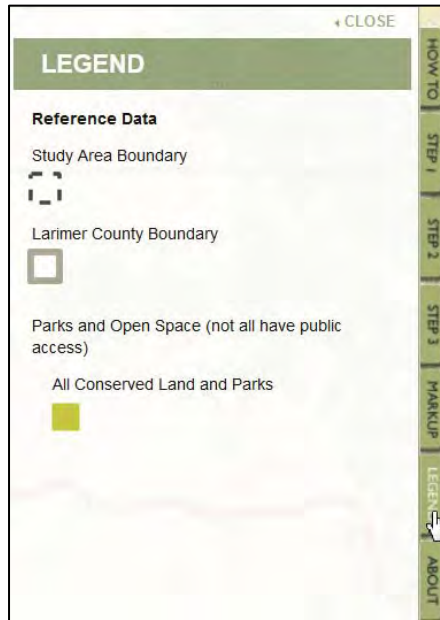
Explore the Map

○ Change to full screen viewing

- Press the F11 key along the top of your keyboard to change your browser to full screen mode. This will minimize the amount of scrolling you must do to work with the entire map.
- To return to a normal browser window, simply press the F11 key again.

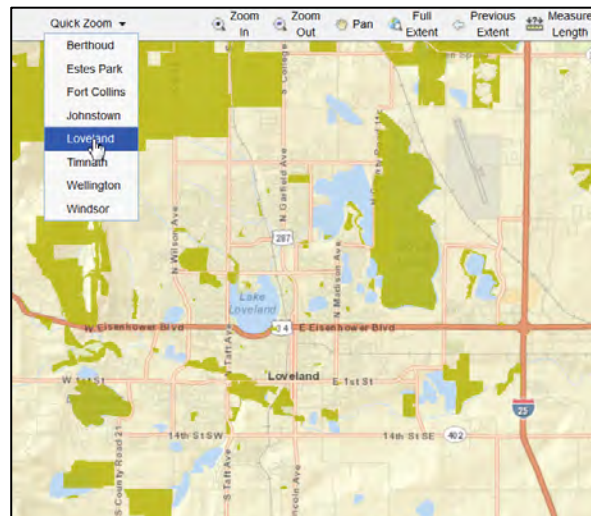
- **Show the map legend**

- Areas shown in green on the map are currently conserved lands and parks.
- Use the LEGEND tab (at the lower left of the map) to view what the colors on your map mean.

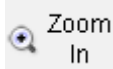


- **Zoom to your area of interest**

- Use the Quick Zoom tool to zoom into your city (tools and buttons are along the top of your map).



- **Take a closer look**



- Click the zoom in button.
- Use your mouse to drag a box around a specific location.
- Notice that detailed road information appears.



- Click the pan button.
- Drag your mouse to the right or left to adjust the view.

○ **Three Steps**

- There are three basic steps to getting the most out of this mapping site to explore and share your open space preferences:

STEP 1: Add/Change Data on the Map
STEP 2: Determine What Matters to You
STEP 3: Share Your Comments

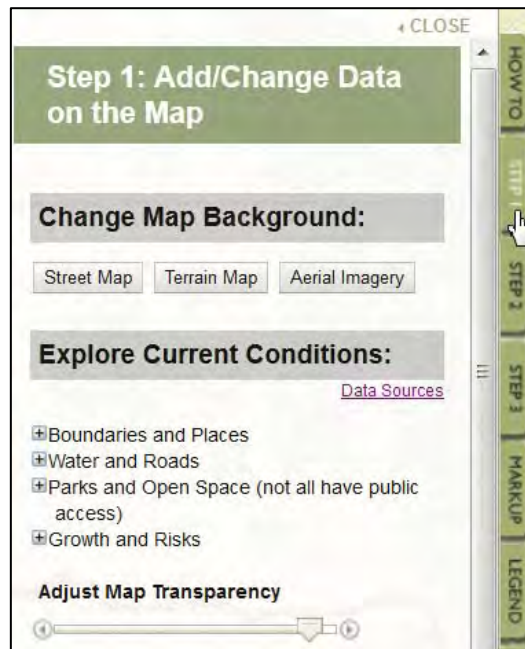
- Use the STEP 1, STEP 2, and STEP 3 tabs to the left of the map to follow this sequence.

STEP 1: Part A - Add/Change Data on the Map to Explore Current Conditions

Click the **STEP 1** tab to the left of the map

○ **Change the map background**


- When you click the STEP 1 tab, a data selection panel will appear. Note that you can close this panel at any time by clicking [Close](#) at the top right of the panel.

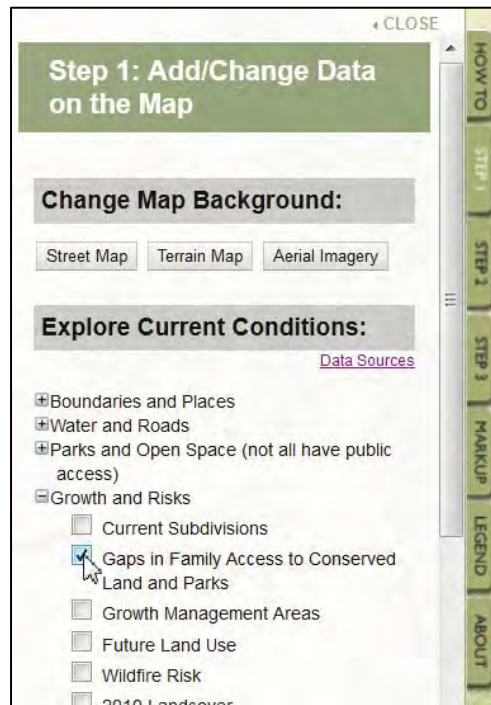


- Click the button labeled “Aerial Imagery” to change the map backdrop to a high resolution image. Experiment with other backdrops.

○ **Turn on additional map layers to explore current conditions**

- With the STEP 1 tab still open, click the “Street Map” button at the top to change the background to a street display.

- On the STEP 1 tab, locate the **Explore Current Conditions** section. Click the small “plus sign”  to the left of the words “Growth and Risks”.




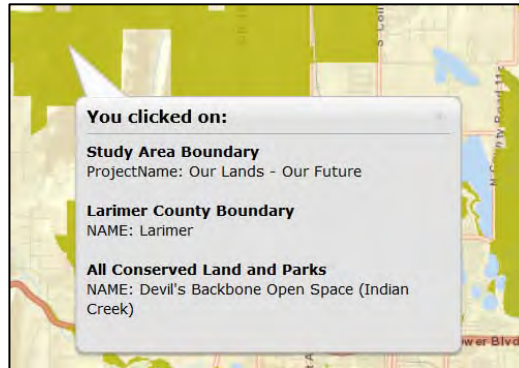
- This will display a list of “Growth and Risks” data that you can add to your map. Click the box to the left of “Gaps in Family Access to Conserved Land and Parks” to add this data to your map.
- This data layer depicts areas that may have higher need for new park and open space as identified in the 2012 *Larimer County Plug in to Nature Study*. Note that you can click the “Data Sources” link at any time to review more detailed information about the data provided in this mapping site.
- On the panel on the left, use the **Adjust Map Transparency** slider to change the transparency of the overlay data so that you can see mapped features underneath the Underserved Areas. Click the triangular tab on the slider and hold the mouse button down to drag it to the left.



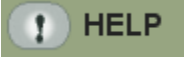
- Experiment with different transparency levels. Notice that the transparency level of all overlay data changes at once.
- Experiment with choosing other data to display on your map. For example, add Schools and University Lands to your map by expanding the “Boundaries and Places” layer list, and clicking to the left of the “Schools and University Lands” layer on this list.

- **Get information about specific features**

- Make sure the “All Conserved Lands and Parks” layer is still displayed on your map (switch back to the STEP 1 tab, and turn layer back on if necessary).
- Click the  Identify button at the top right of the map.
- Now click on one of the green Conserved Lands features on the map.
- An information box will appear that describes the feature(s) that you clicked.



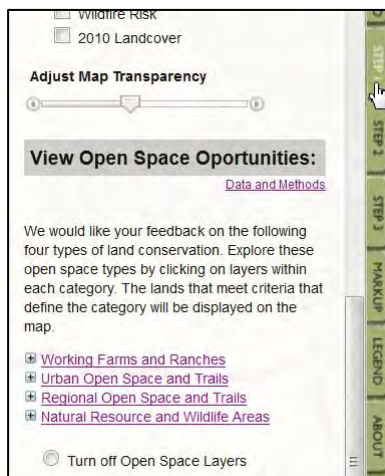
- **Get help**

- Click the  button at the bottom left of your map for a copy of this user guide and tutorial.
- Still need help? Send an email to gis.support@tpl.org

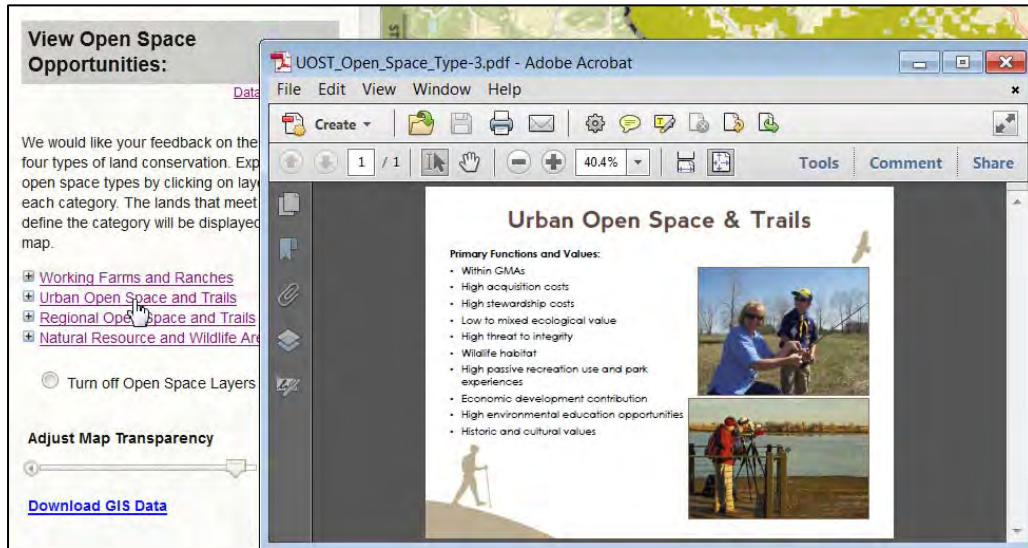
STEP 1: Part B - Review the four types of open space values in Larimer County

- **Map open space priority areas**

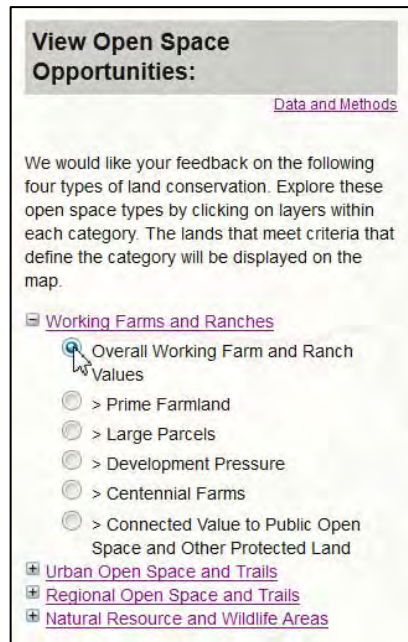
- “Our Lands, Our Future” organizes the region's conservation accomplishments and potential futures into four open space types:
 1. Working Farms and Ranches
 2. Urban Open Space and Trails
 3. Regional Open Space
 4. Natural Resource and Wildlife Areas
- Click the STEP 1 tab to the left of the map.
- Find the section labeled **View Open Space Opportunities:**



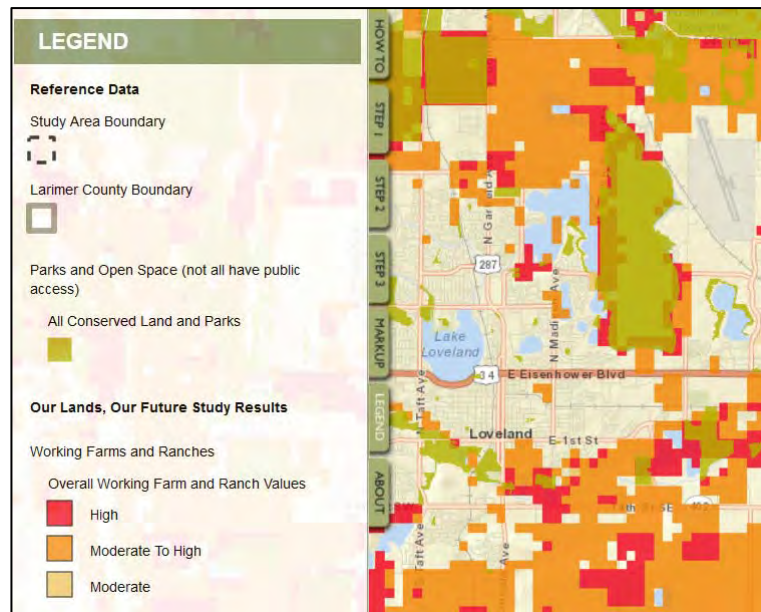
- Click on the words for any Open Space Type to get a more detailed description.



- Click the small “plus sign” **+** to the left of the words **Working Farms and Ranches**.
- This will display a list of landscape characteristics considered by the Our Lands, Our Future project team to identify high value land for each open space type.
- Any of the items in the list can be displayed on your map, by clicking the small circle to the left of the words.
- Click the small circle to the left of “Overall Working Farm and Ranch Values”. This will display overall priority areas for Working Farms and Ranches on your map. This data layer was created by weighting and combining the characteristics listed.



- Remember that you can use the LEGEND tab at any time, for a description of the colors displayed on your map. The darker the red, the higher priority for conservation.



- Note that only one Open Space Opportunity layer can be displayed on the map at a time.
- Explore the Open Space values and criteria maps for the Our Lands, Our Future study.
- For more information about the data, methodology, or weighting that was used to create any Open Space map, click on the [Data and Methods](#) link.

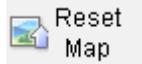
STEP 2: Determine What Matters to You

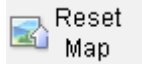
Click the **STEP 2** tab to the left of the map

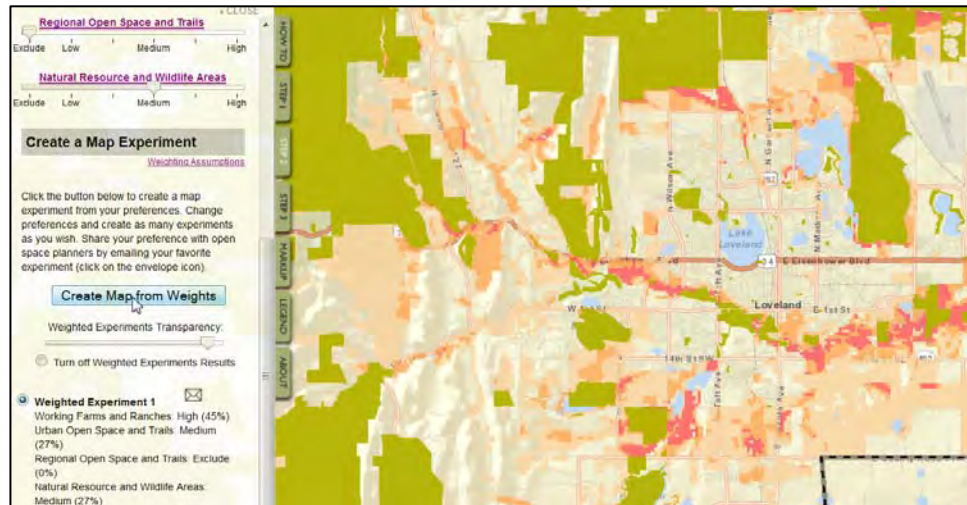
- **The concept of weighted open space goals**
 - Master planning and development include consideration of areas for open space conservation and protection.
 - “Our Lands, Our Future” organizes the region's conservation accomplishments and potential futures into four open space types:
 - Working Farms and Ranches
 - Urban Open Space and Trails
 - Regional Open Space
 - Natural Resource and Wildlife Areas
 - Depending on local priorities and landscape characteristics, certain open space types may have greater influence on planning and conservation strategies.
 - Open Space goal weighting allows you to assign importance levels to each Open Space type, and combine these goals to create a composite map based on local open space protection priorities.

- **Run an Open Space weighting experiment for your town**

- Click the STEP 2 tab to the left of the map

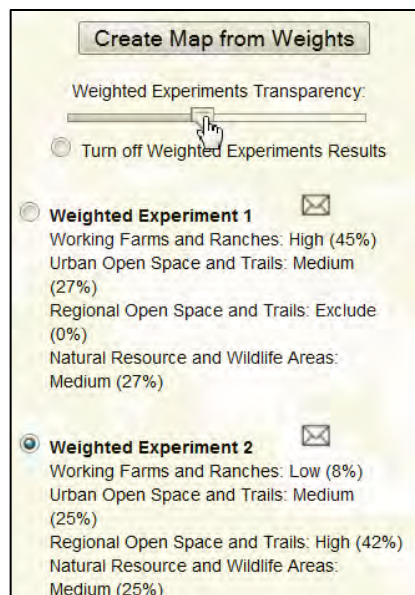



- Click the  button to return to the original map. This will reset the layers you have turned on, clear all graphics and selections, and zoom to the full extent of the map.
- Use the Quick Zoom tool to zoom into your city.
- Move the sliders to reflect the types of conservation and open space that matter to you. Any Open Space type can be excluded from the weighting exercise by sliding to the "Exclude" position.
- Click the "Create Map from Weights" button to create a map experiment from your preferences.
- Since the composite is computed "live", this process can take up to a minute or more to display the results on your map. Be patient.

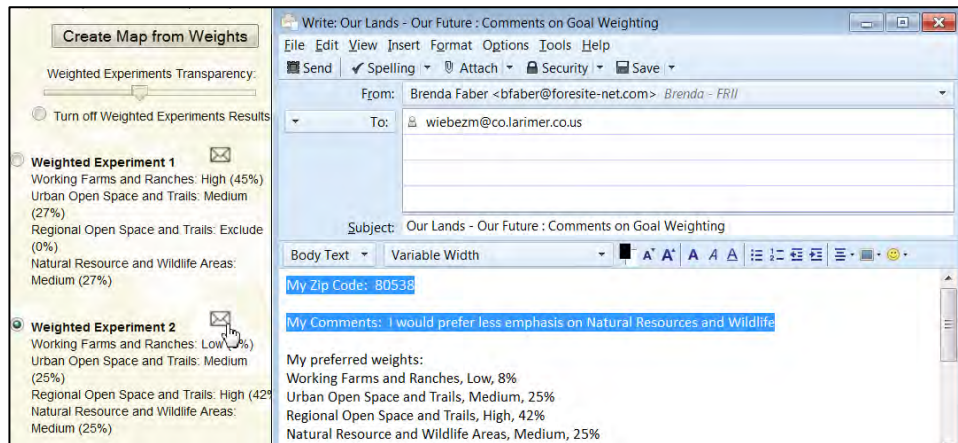


Change preferences and create as many experiments as you wish.

- A record of each weighting experiment will be displayed, reminding you of the relative "importance" you assigned to each goal.



- Click the circular button to the left of each to toggle between maps for each experiment. Click the circular button next to “Turn off Weighted Experiment Results” to clear all weighted experiments from the map view.
 - Use the slider bar provided, to adjust the transparency of the weighting result map. This will allow you to view and compare to other data layers in the map.
- **Share your preferred scenario with Our Land, Our Future project team**
- Share your preference with open space planners by emailing your favorite experiment. Click on the envelope icon  to the right of the Weighting Experiment you would like to share. **Include your zip code and comments in your email.**



STEP 3: Share Additional Comments

Click the **STEP 3** tab to the left of the map.

- **Send additional comments**
- To share additional ideas and/or maps with Larimer County Open Space staff, click the mail icon provided.

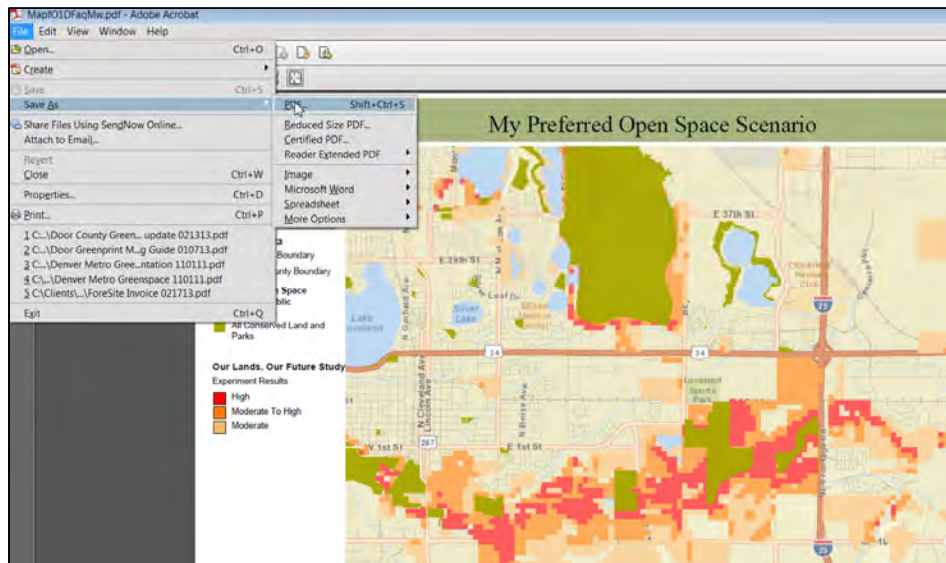


- **Create a PDF map to print or share**

- If you would like to create and share a PDF map of your work, enter a title for your map in the space provided.



- Click the "Create Map PDF" button.
- Be patient while the mapping site generates a PDF map for you. This process can take up to a minute.
- Depending on your browser you may be prompted to Open or Save the PDF.
- If you choose to Open, an 8.5 X 11 formatted map will be displayed that you can print or save to your computer hard drive for sharing. To save to your local computer, use the PDF viewer File menu.




- Close the PDF window.

OPTIONAL: Annotate your map

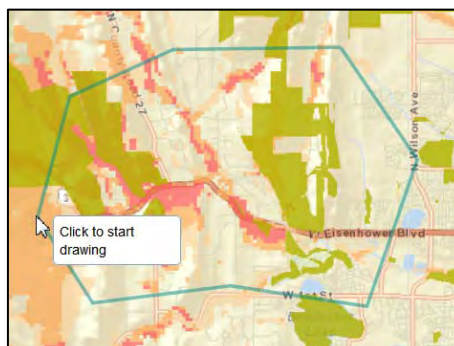
- **Add graphics and text to your map**
 - Click the MARKUP tab on the left panel to add graphics and text to your map.

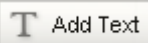


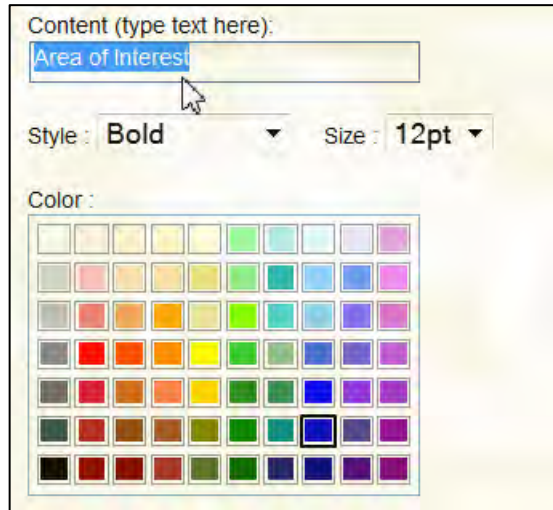
- To sketch a polygon on your map, click the  Add Polygon button.
- Choose a color for your polygon, and then select a style such as Solid or Hollow.



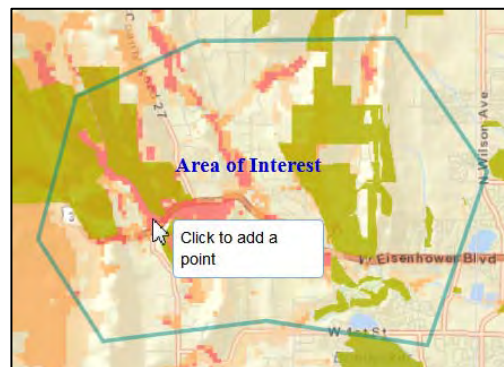
- Choose a color for your polygon, and then select a style such as Solid or Hollow.
- Begin sketching a shape on your map by clicking points. Double click to finish the sketch.


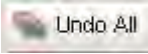


- Now add text to your map, by clicking the  button.
- Choose a color and style for your text using the options provided.
- Enter a message in the message in the “Content” box.



- Now click on the map to add your text.



- If you want to reposition or change the text or graphics, use the  or  button, and recreate the text or graphics using the methods described above.

APPENDIX C., REFERENCE OVERLAYS AND MODEL CRITERIA



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OUR LANDS, OUR FUTURE

Recreation Conservation Choices for Northern Colorado

Group	Reference Dataset	Date	Source
Boundaries and Places			
	Larimer County Boundary	2012	Larimer County
	Study Area Boundary	2012	Larimer County boundary, Windsor GMA boundary
	Cities	2012	Larimer County
	School and University Lands	2012	Larimer County
	Parcels	2012	Larimer County, Weld County assessor offices
Water and Roads			
	Roads	2012	Larimer County
	Rivers	2012	National Hydrography Dataset
	Riparian Areas and Wetlands	2012	Colorado Division of Wildlife, Fish and Wildlife Service, ESRI, NDIS
	Waterbodies	2012	National Hydrography Dataset. 2007 Larimer County. Cooper + Merit National Hydrography Dataset
Parks, Open Space and Trails			
	Public Land by Manager	2012	COMaP version 9 Private with updates by Logan Simpson Design
	Locally Conserved Land by Open Space Type	2012	COMaP version 9 Private with updates by Logan Simpson Design. Data is symbolized into four open space types: 1. Urban Open Space and Trails 2. Regional Open Space 3. Working Farms and Ranches 4. Natural Resource and Wildlife Areas These 4 broad types of open space share similar functions, values.
	All Conserved Land and Parks	2012	COMaP version 9 Private with updates by Logan Simpson Design
Growth and Risks			
	Growth Management Areas	2012	Larimer County
	Subdivisions	2012	Larimer County
	Future Land Use	2012	North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization
	Underserved Areas – Plug Into Nature Focus Areas	2012	2012 Larimer County Plug in to Nature Study. Focus areas (that is, underserved areas) based on demographics, future growth areas, and proximity to open space.
	Wildfire Risk	2012	Larimer County
	2010 Landcover	2010	2010 Landcover, courtesy of US Geological Society

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OUR LANDS, OUR FUTURE
Recreation Conservation Choices for Northern Colorado

"Our Lands, Our Future" organizes the region's conservation accomplishments and potential futures into four open space types:

1. Urban Open Space and Trails
2. Regional Open Space
3. Working Farms and Ranches
4. Natural Resource and Wildlife Areas

These 4 broad types of open space share similar functions, values, acquisition and facility development costs, and long-term management costs.

Available data was collected, reviewed and organized into the 4 open space types based on their availability, completeness, and accuracy for County-wide modeling. The inputs and criteria listed below are those the partners and Advisory Board members determined to be the most important with respect to Larimer County. The partners discussed many other possible considerations but excluded them for a variety of reasons, such as criteria were too subjective or difficult to measure, mapping data were not available, or inputs were redundant with one or more selected factors. Also, if too many factors are included the model becomes diluted and some factors have such minimal impact on the final score that they are meaningless in helping to differentiate opportunities.

Geographic proximity was also considered between certain factors. For instance, the vacant lands near existing public open space was given a weight compared to vacant lands that were farther from public open space.

The model uses the relative "criteria weights" in a weighted sum computation to give emphasis to certain criteria over others. Weights were established through the results of a 2012 statistically-valid survey of County residents in consultation with the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trail Advisory Boards of Larimer County and its municipalities in November 2012.

Common Assumptions:

- The project area is Larimer County and the Town of Windsor's Growth Management Area in Weld County.
- Model gives priority to vacant, unprotected lands. Vacant lands were determined through an analysis of size and Larimer and Weld county parcel attributes, such as the number of building on a parcel. Parcels under 2 acres within Growth Management Areas, and parcels under 34 acres outside of Growth Management Areas were not considered as priorities.
- Proximity to existing public open space and other protected lands is a consideration in all open space type models.

Open Space Type	Criteria	Criteria Weights	Proximity Considered?	Methodology	Data (Date, Source)
Working Farms and Ranches	<p><u>Criteria and Weighting Rationale:</u> In 2001, Larimer County's Agricultural Advisory Board and the American Farmland Trust developed a systematic Land Evaluation Site Assessment (LESA) methodology specifically for Larimer County to evaluate agricultural properties. LESA combines a Land Evaluation (LE) of soil-based qualities of a site (from best to poorest soil capability) with Site Assessment (SA) non-soil factors (farm size, strategic values, etc.) that affect a site's importance for agricultural use. The 2001 study did not produce GIS mapping data, but rather defined a set of criteria that was adopted in July 2001 by the County Commissioners. Today the Open Lands Program uses the LESA system in evaluating specific agricultural parcels for conservation. "Our Lands, Our Future" patterned criteria and datasets after the County's LESA system to determine the quality and sustainability of regionally-significant land for agricultural uses; and to provide a spatial tool for analyzing farmland conversion and protection issues.</p> <p>Water availability and senior water rights was not available on a parcel-basis across the County through the Colorado Department of Water Resources. Therefore, the potential for irrigation will continue to be evaluated on a case by case basis.</p> <p>Lands remaining in active agriculture have many secondary community and environmental values that should be recognized when considering conservation priorities, such as community separation, habitat values, scenery, and historic resources. These were considered by incorporating centennial farms and adjacency with public open space and other protected land, such as conservation easements, into the model. Other secondary values are already considered in the other 3 open space types (i.e., natural resource and habitat areas).</p>				
	Prime Farmland	3.1	No	Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oil seed crops and is also available for these. All types of prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, and farmland of local importance were included. This model identifies areas with most productive farmland soils, using data from the Natural Resources Conservation Service soils database. The data used for this analysis does not account for adequate irrigation supply.	NRCS Larimer County Soil Survey, 1980. NRCS Colorado Prime Farmland at http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/nri/documents/prime_far
	Large Parcels	1.4	No	The efficiency associated with farming large acreage often results in large farms being more economically viable than small farms. Also, in areas with increasing development pressure, conflicts often arise between farm operations and neighboring land uses. Large farms have the ability to shelter a greater percentage of their operations and adjacent working lands from neighboring subdivisions, potentially reducing conflict. Farms and ranches were given a rank based on their size relative to other parcels throughout the County. Parcel sizes were prioritized in four categories: 5-150 acres, 150-300 acres, 300-640 acres, and greater than 640 acres.	2012 Larimer County Parcel Database
	Development Pressure	1.5	Yes	Site Assessment of development pressures impacting a site's continued agricultural use: Risk to agricultural viability increases as urban development approaches farm properties. Increased conflict between urban and rural land uses and increased property values are the primary motivators for land conversion. The model addressed threats to agriculture by prioritizing lands closer to annexed boundaries. Properties that have been annexed were not considered in the analysis.	2012 Municipal Boundaries, Larimer County
	Centennial Farms	1.2	No	Farms and ranches can have cultural or historical value due to their role in our history or by being the location where events occurred before the farm or ranch was established. Centennial farms were given a priority in this model.	2012 Colorado State Historic Preservation Office
	Connected Value to Public Open Space and Other Protected Land	0.6	Yes	Site Assessment of other public values supporting its retention in agriculture: This model prioritizes working ranch and farm properties based on connectivity to other conserved land properties. Farming/ranching adjacent to other working lands or protected open space can be beneficial to the agricultural producer because neighboring land use conflicts and the likelihood of subdivision may be avoided. Some working farms and ranches have strategic value as components of a community separator, greenbelt or open space plan and their continuity adds to the scenic quality of the region. Preserving land in working agriculture can be an economical means of providing the public with open land. Preserving land adjacent to existing protected open space effectively enlarges the open space and is considered a public benefit. Agricultural parcels within 0.5 miles of existing conserved land were included in the model.	2012 COMaP

OUR LANDS, OUR FUTURE

Recreation Conservation Choices for Northern Colorado

	Criteria	Criteria Weights	Proximity Considered?	Methodology	Data (Date, Source)
Urban Open Space and Trails	<u>Criteria and Weighting Rationale:</u> Vacant properties with natural features, greenway opportunities, or that could provide access to multiple, contiguous, passive recreation uses. Opportunities for new greenway connections were assigned highest priority for focusing new land conservation and easement efforts.				
	Inside of Growth Management Areas			This model searches for opportunities inside of Growth Management Areas.	2012 Larimer County 2012 City of Fort Collins 2012 City of Loveland
	Underserved Areas	1.8	No	In 2012, Larimer County, GOCO, and its partners completed a landmark study on the connection of families and children to nature entitled Plug in to Nature. The study researched and addressed opportunities improving the connection between youth and families to nature through education, child care, and nature programming, based on literature review, mapping, and extensive public outreach. The study identified Focus Areas of demographic and locational advantage, or in other words, underserved urban areas by mapping potential future development, high density of children and residential units, place of interest to the public for future outdoor activities, and residential areas, existing and potential schools, and child care facilities without access to parks and open space within 1/4 mile.	2012 Larimer County Plug in to Nature Study
	Riparian Areas, Rivers, Water Bodies, and Wetlands	2.6	Yes	To identify water quality, water supply, and riparian corridor priorities, this model utilized hydrology and riparian vegetation. 1) Riparian vegetation inventories were not available for the entire extent of Larimer County. Two Fish and Wildlife Service datasets covered one-half of the County and were merged into one layer for greater coverage, then buffered by 100 feet. 2) For areas not covered by the CDOW and FWS riparian datasets: - Perennial rivers were buffered by 300 feet. - Intermittent rivers were buffered by 100 feet. - Water bodies were buffered by 100 feet. - Wetlands were buffered by 100 feet.	Fish and Wildlife Service For more information: http://ndis1.nrel.colostate.edu/riparian/riparian.htm ESRI NDIS National Hydrography Dataset 2007 Larimer County, Cooper + Merit inventory
	Planned Trail and Bike Corridors	2.4	Yes	This model prioritizes lands that contribute to planned regional trail corridors, if within 0.5 miles.	2012 NFRMPO 2001 Larimer County Open Lands Master plan
	Adjacency to Public Open Space and Other Protected Land	2.0	Yes	This models prioritizes parcels that are near existing conserved lands and conservation easements, such as Federal (Forest Service), State (State Stewardship Trust), County (Larimer County Open Lands), City, and non-profit and private conservation easements. State Board and other lands that are no protected in perpetuity were not included.	2012 COMaP 2012 Larimer County Parcels
	Natural Landcover (unpaved areas)	1.0	No	This model prioritizes landscapes with natural land cover. No priority is given to urban, barren, and disturbed lands.	2010 GAP Land Cover

OUR LANDS, OUR FUTURE

Recreation Conservation Choices for Northern Colorado

	Criteria	Criteria Weights	Proximity Considered?	Methodology	Data (Date, Source)
	<u>Criteria and Weighting Rationale:</u> The Regional Open Space analysis combines the scale and proximity criteria listed below to depict overall priorities for regional preservation.				
Regional Open Space and Trails	Outside of Growth Management Areas			This model searches for opportunities outside of Growth Management Areas.	2012 Larimer County
	Large Parcels	1.0	No	This model searches for parcels greater than 100 acres.	2012 Larimer County
	Adjacency to Public Open Space and Other Protected Land	1.6	Yes	This model prioritizes parcels that are near existing conserved lands and conservation easements, such as Federal (Forest Service), State (State Stewardship Trust), County (Larimer County Open Lands), City, and non-profit and private conservation easements. State Board lands that are not protected in perpetuity were not included.	2012 COMaP
	Potential Conservation Areas	1.7	No	This model prioritizes the 2010 Statewide Potential Conservation Areas (PCA) developed by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP). The PCA's represent CNHP's best estimate of the primary area required to support the long-term survival of targeted species or natural communities. PCA refers to the ability of a conservation area to maintain healthy, viable, targets over the long term (100+ years), including the ability of the targets to respond to natural or human caused environmental change. The PCAs do not necessarily preclude human activities, but their ability to function naturally may be greatly influenced by them. PCAs at all scales may require ecological management or restoration to maintain their functionality and long term persistence. The PCAs that were rated as High, Very High, and Outstanding Biodiversity Significance were incorporated into the model.	2010 Statewide Potential Conservation Areas, Colorado Natural Heritage Program For more information: http://www.cnhp.colostate.edu/download/gis.asp
	Planned Trail and Bike Corridors	1.5	Yes	This model prioritizes lands that contribute to planned regional trail corridors, if within 0.5 miles.	Most current Larimer County and municipality trail plans
	Heritage Sites and Overland Trail corridor	0.5	No	Sites with cultural or historical value due to their role in our history or by being the location where events occurred were given priority. These include the Overland Trail corridor and sites listed on the Colorado or National Register in undeveloped areas.	2012 Colorado Historic Preservation Office 2012 National Register of Historic Places 2011 National Park Service Overland
	Front Range Foothills Backdrop, Steep Slopes, and Major Landmarks	1.4	No	This model prioritizes major landforms, highly visible slopes, and steep slopes and cliffs that establish the unique Front Range backdrop. These include: - Slopes over 30% based on a 10-meter Digital Elevation Model (DEM); - Named landforms - Foothills and mountains with slopes over 10% that can be seen from Highways 287 and 15 as determined through a viewshed model.	2012 Larimer County 2012 Geographic Information Naming System
	Riparian Areas, Rivers, Water Bodies, and Wetlands	1.4	Yes	To identify water quality, water supply, and riparian corridor priorities, this model utilized hydrology and riparian vegetation. 1) Riparian vegetation inventories were not available for the entire extent of Larimer County. Two Fish and Wildlife Service datasets covered one-half of the County and were merged into one layer for greater coverage, then buffered by 100 feet. 2) For areas not covered by the CDOW and FWS riparian datasets: - Perennial rivers were buffered by 300 feet. - Intermittent rivers were buffered by 100 feet. - Water bodies were buffered by 100 feet. - Wetlands were buffered by 100 feet.	Fish and Wildlife Service For more information: http://ndis1.nrel.colostate.edu/riparian/riparian.htm ESRI NDIS National Hydrography Dataset 2007 Larimer County, Cooper + Merit inventory

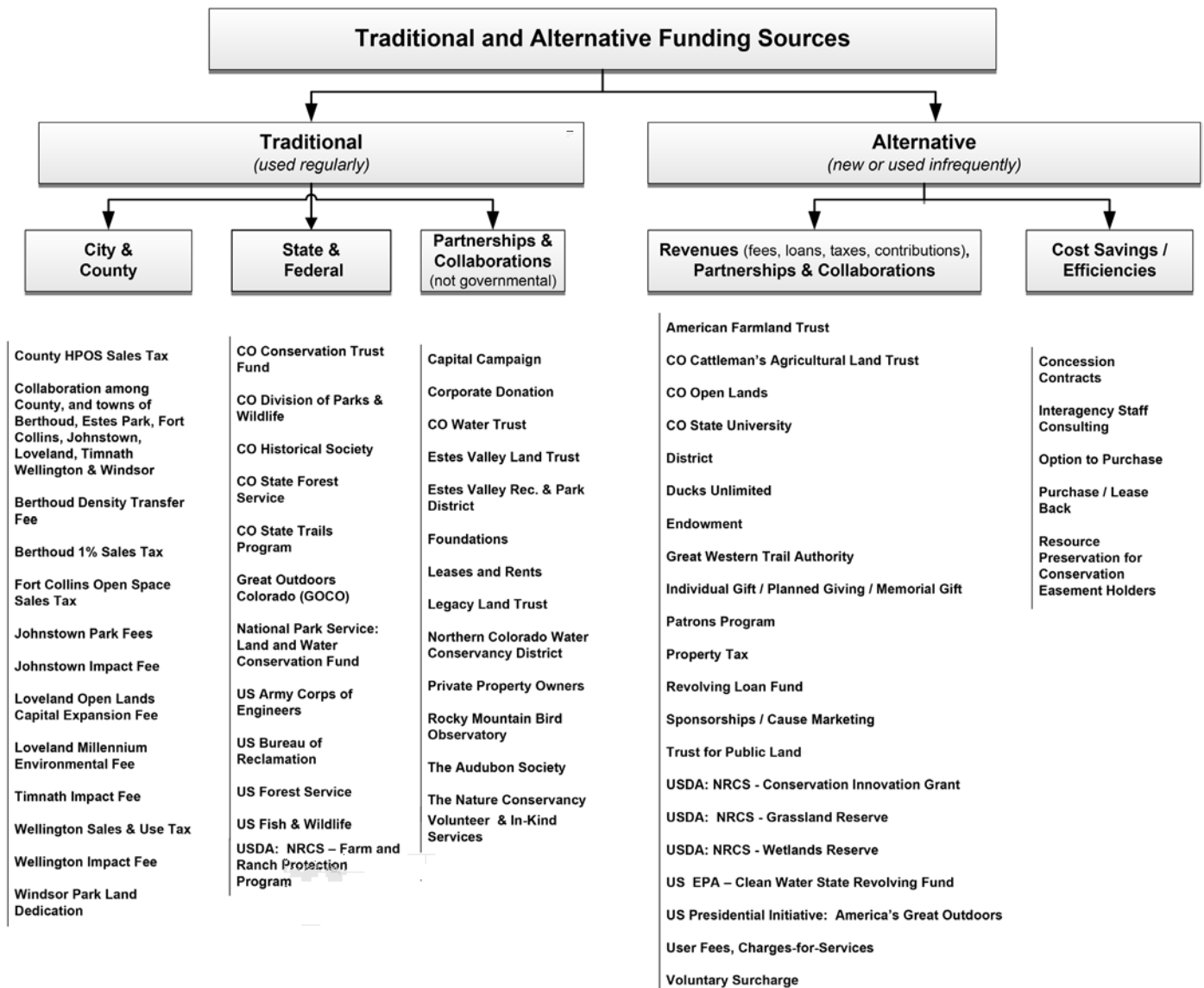
OUR LANDS, OUR FUTURE

Recreation Conservation Choices for Northern Colorado

	Criteria	Criteria Weights	Proximity Considered?	Methodology	Data (Date, Source)
Natural Resource and Wildlife Areas	Criteria and Weighting Rationale: Data indicating landscapes with high ecological values, critical habitats, water resources, and/or unique resources were modeled as shown below to depict overall priorities for Natural Resource and Wildlife Areas.				
	Vacant Parcels	0.9	No	Undeveloped parcels were given priority. The following query identified vacant parcels from the Larimer County assessors database - Parcels between 2-35 acres no buildings - Parcels between 35-80 acres with less than 2 buildings - Parcels between 80-150 acres if less than 5 buildings - Parcels between 150-300 acres if less than 8 buildings - or parcels greater than 300 acres In the Windsor GMA in Weld County, vacant parcels were defined as - Parcels between 2-35 acres with an improved actual value of \$0 - Parcels between 35-80 acres with an improved actual value of less than \$200,000 - Parcels greater than 80 acres.	2012 Larimer County parcels 2012 Weld County parcels
	Adjacency to Public Open Space and Other Protected Land	0.6	Yes	This model prioritizes parcels that are near existing conserved lands and conservation easements, such as Federal (Forest Service), State (State Stewardship Trust), County (Larimer County Open Lands), City, and non-profit and private conservation easements. State Board lands that are not protected in perpetuity were not included.	2012 COMaP
	Potential Conservation Areas	1.1	No	This model prioritizes the 2010 Statewide Potential Conservation Areas (PCA) developed by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP). The PCAs represent CNHP's best estimate of the primary area required to support the long-term survival of targeted species or natural communities. PCA refers to the ability of a conservation area to maintain healthy, viable, targets over the long term (100+ years), including the ability of the targets to respond to natural or human caused environmental change. The PCAs do not necessarily preclude human activities, but their ability to function naturally may be greatly influenced by them. PCAs at all scales may require ecological management or restoration to maintain their functionality and long term persistence. The PCAs that were rated as High, Very High, and Outstanding Biodiversity Significance were incorporated into the model.	2010 Statewide Potential Conservation Areas, Colorado Natural Heritage Program For more information: http://www.cnhp.colostate.edu/download/gis.asp
	Critical Wildlife Habitat Areas	2.5	No	Severe winter range, concentration areas, production areas, migratory corridors, nest sites, for Bald Eagle, Bighorn, Great Blue Heron, Greater Sage Grouse, Moose, Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, Pronghorn, River Otter throughout Larimer County as determined by Colorado Parks and Wildlife.	2012 Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Species Activity Mapping
Riparian Areas, Rivers, Water Bodies, and Wetlands	1.4	Yes	To identify water quality, water supply, and riparian corridor priorities, this model utilized hydrology and riparian vegetation. 1) Riparian vegetation inventories were not available for the entire extent of Larimer County. Two Fish and Wildlife Service datasets covered one-half of the County and were merged into one layer for greater coverage, then buffered by 100 feet. 2) For areas not covered by the CDOW and FWS riparian datasets: - Perennial rivers were buffered by 300 feet. - Intermittent rivers were buffered by 100 feet. - Water bodies were buffered by 100 feet. - Wetlands were buffered by 100 feet.	Fish and Wildlife Service For more information: http://ndis1.nrel.colostate.edu/riparian/riparian.htm ESRI NDIS National Hydrography Dataset 2007 Larimer County, Cooper + Merit inventory	

APPENDIX D., FUNDING RESOURCES

This appendix summarizes funding sources that have been used historically in Larimer County and provides an illustrative list of potential (alternative) funding sources that could be used to supplement existing sources or replace the County Help Preserve Open Spaces (HPOS) sales tax if voters elect not to extend the tax beyond 2018. Funding resources are presented in two categories: traditional and alternative. Traditional funding sources are those that the County and its municipal partners have historically used on a regular or occasional basis. Alternative funding sources are those that have not been used. Should the County find itself in a situation where sales tax revenues are no longer available for open space acquisition, capital improvements, operations or maintenance, then these alternative resources might be considered. Municipalities in the County might consider one or more of these alternative funding resources to supplement their current resources.



Traditional Funding Sources

Larimer County and its municipal partners are among the most resourceful group of local governments in the nation in applying various funding resources and partnership opportunities to the acquisition and stewardship of open lands. The table that follows lists the historic or traditional funding sources that have been used in Larimer County on a regular or occasional basis. The list is organized in three broad categories by source of the revenue: City and County, State and Federal, and non-governmental partnerships and collaborations. A separate section, Current Finance Practices, describes how each funding source has been used by the County and each of its municipal partners.

Table D.1: TRADITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES		
Name	Description	Example
City and County		
County Help Preserve Open Spaces (HPOS) Sales Tax Initiative	In 1995, voters approved a 0.25% sales tax; in 1999, voters extended the tax through 2018. Funds are available for open space purchase, property development, operation, management and administration. At least 55% of the revenues are distributed back to municipalities annually. The County's share must be expended as follows: 70% for acquisition and development and 15% for management; 15% is discretionary.	Between 1996 and 2011, total HPOS sales tax revenues have averaged \$8.2 million.
Municipal Sales Tax (Open space is the sole purpose)	The City of Fort Collins has a municipal sales tax dedicated to open space. In 1992, Fort Collins voters approved a 0.25% sales tax for natural areas. Voters have extended the tax twice in 1992 and 1997. The current tax is set to expire in 2030.	City of Fort Collins
Municipal Sales Tax: (Open space is an optional purpose)	Two towns impose a municipal sales tax where a portion of funds are used for open space. In 1997, Berthoud voters approved a perpetual 1% sales tax for specific types of projects including the purchase of open lands and buffers. In 2011, Wellington voters expanded the authorized purposes of its 1% sales tax to include development and maintenance of parks, trails and open space.	Town of Berthoud Town of Wellington
Impact Fees	These are fees imposed on new development to finance impacts associated with the development. Three towns use a portion of impact fee proceeds for open space	Berthoud Density Transfer Fee Johnstown Impact Fee Timnath Impact Fee
Land Dedication	This practice requires new land developments to dedicate a portion of land for park or open space. Wellington has an open space land dedication requirement. Windsor allows open space land dedication as partial credit of its parkland dedication requirements.	Wellington Open Space Land Dedication; Windsor Park Land Dedication
Collaboration	Every municipality has partnered with the County on at least one open space project acquisition or management. Fort Collins has also partnered with Loveland and Wellington. Loveland and Berthoud have partnered on several land acquisitions and easements.	County and municipalities of Berthoud, Estes Park, Fort Collins, Johnstown, Loveland, Timnath, Wellington and Windsor



Table D.1: TRADITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES		
Name	Description	Example
State and Federal		
Conservation Trust Fund	Colorado lottery net proceeds are distributed as follows: 40% to the Conservation Trust Fund; 50% to the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund; 10% to State Parks and Wildlife. Annually, each local government receives a portion of Conservation Trust Fund revenues on the basis of population and its per capita share. Funding expires in June 2024.	Disbursements to each local government occur annually. A few municipalities use these revenues for open space purposes.
Great Outdoors Colorado	Great Outdoors Colorado receives 50% of the Colorado lottery net proceeds. It distributes funds in four categories, including competitive grants for acquisition of and management of open space. Funding for GOCO expires in June 2024.	Disbursements to local governments and land trusts are on a competitive basis and vary annually. Between 1995, the first year that competitive grants were awarded in Larimer County through 2011, \$23.8 million in competitive grants were provided in the County for conservation purposes.
Other State Agencies	Loveland has collaborated with the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife on several Boyd Lake enhancements. The State Forest Service has assisted in developing stewardship plans including the Larimer County Wildfire Mitigation Plan and the Forest Restoration Pilot Grant for Chimney Hollow Open Space.	CO Division of Parks and Wildlife CO Historical Society CO State Forest Service CO State Trails Program
Federal Agencies	Larimer County and its municipal partners have received grants from a number of federal agencies. For example, the County, Berthoud, Fort Collins, Loveland, Windsor and Welling have each received multiple grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Also, the County also manages recreation services at several US Bureau of Reclamation facilities, including Carter Lake, Flatiron Reservoir and Horsetooth Reservoir.	US Army Corps of Engineers; US Bureau of Reclamation; US Forest Service; US Fish & Wildlife; National Park Service - Land and Water Conservation Fund



Table D.1: TRADITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES

Name	Description	Example
Partnerships & Collaborations (not governmental)		
With Local Land Trusts	These collaborations have focused both on acquisition and management of specific sites. For example, the Estes Valley Land Trust has partnered primarily with Larimer County. The Legacy Land Trust has on-going strategic alliances with Larimer County, Berthoud, Fort Collins, Loveland, and Johnstown.	Estes Valley Land Trust Legacy Land Trust
With Colorado and Rocky Mountain Land Trusts	Berthoud worked closely with the CO Cattleman’s Agricultural Land Trust during its initiative to conserve agricultural property.	CO Cattleman’s Ag. Land Trust Colorado Water Trust
With National Land Trusts	Larimer County, its municipalities have partnered with numerous national organizations. These land trusts have partnered in a variety of capacities and using a range of specialized services such as providing technical advice, providing additional access to financial capital, facilitating transactions and functioning as a financial intermediary.	American Farmland Trust; Ducks Unlimited The Audubon Society; The Conservation Fund; The Nature Conservancy; The Trust for Public Land
With Districts	Larimer County manages recreation services along the Colorado-Big Thompson Project which is operated by Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District. The Town of Estes Park and the Estes Valley Recreation and Park District are jointly evaluating how the two organizations might pursue land conservation not only with each other but also with the Estes Valley Land Trust.	Estes Valley Rec. & Park District Northern CO Water Conservancy District
With Private Property Owners	Every conservation easement that is managed by the County or its partners involves the cooperation and collaboration of the conservation easement holder.	
Others	These partnerships typically focus on individual projects. For example, Larimer County secured a State Historical Fund grant to complete an archaeological assessment on an open space site; the assessment was completed by CSU. The Town of Windsor and the Great Western Trail Authority formed an intergovernmental agreement where the Authority owns and maintains the Great Western Trail through Windsor.	Colorado Heritage Program Colorado Open Lands Colorado State University Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory Great Western Trail Authority



Alternative Funding Sources

With voter approval, Larimer County and its municipal partners have benefitted from substantial annual revenues from the Help Preserve Open Spaces Sales Tax (HPOS) initiative since 1996. Currently, annual sales tax revenues have averaged \$8.2 million. There is no other known source of revenue that will likely generate the same volume in the future.

Larimer County is one of eight counties in Colorado with a dedicated sales tax for open space. (Other counties are Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Douglas, Gunnison, Jefferson, and Park). If Larimer County voters choose not to extend the sales after 2018, then the County and its partners will need to secure other revenue sources to continue stewardship of its existing open space acreage.

With this perspective in mind, a number of alternative revenue sources are outlined in the table that follows. These revenue sources have been used by other counties and municipalities that do not have access to a substantial, dedicated stream of sales tax revenues. None of these alternative revenue sources would likely replace the volume of HPOS sales tax revenues. They are grouped into two categories.

- Revenues, Partnerships & Collaborations. Revenues may be from fees, grants, loans, taxes, or contributions; they may be from corporate, government, non-profit or private resources. Partnerships and collaborations include a few opportunities that the County and its partners have not pursued, historically.
- Cost Savings and Efficiencies. This list includes opportunities to save costs, or postpone costs.

Table D.2: ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES			
Name	Description	Applicability / Examples	Feasibility Considerations
REVENUES (Fees, Taxes, Contributions), PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS			
Capital Campaign	A capital campaign is an initiative to raise money for a specific project, usually land or a conservation easement.	This concept works best when focused around a signature acquisition with an element of urgency. Estes Valley Land Trust used this approach to raise money to conserve the 1,179 acre Meadowdale property in 1996. This successful effort triggered the formation of the land trust.	Capital campaigns require a compelling purpose, an effective presentation strategy and a sustained volunteer commitment.
Corporate Donation	There are a number of corporations with a Colorado presence that are actively involved in preservation of the environment. Some seek to mitigate their corporate environmental footprint; others prefer to fund a program for a particular target group or objective.	One example is Wal-Mart's "Acres for America" program. Since 2005, Wal-Mart has partnered with the National Fish and Wildlife Federation in an effort to conserve an acre of land for every one occupied by a Wal-Mart facility. As of January 2012, the project has protected 687,000 acres.	A number of national companies have a presence in Larimer County, including some who selected the location, in part, because of the natural environment. The economic development specialists in the County and municipalities could help cultivate relationships between individual firms and open space donation opportunities.
District	A district can be created to provide land acquisition and stewardship for open space purposes. Revenues can be from user fees, charges for services, grants, impact fees or property taxes. A district can partner with a land trust or local government to achieve a shared objective.	While most of the 54 park and recreation districts in Colorado focus on improved parks and recreation projects, some are also involved in open lands acquisition and stewardship. Examples include the Estes Valley Recreation and Park District in Larimer County, South Suburban and Perry Park districts in Douglas County, Evergreen and Foothills in Jefferson County, and the Arapahoe Parks and Recreation District.	Park and recreation districts require a popular vote of electors within the district.



Table D.2: ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES

Name	Description	Applicability / Examples	Feasibility Considerations
Endowment	<p>An endowment is a fund comprised of gifts and bequests that are subject to a requirement that the principal is retained intact and invested to create a stream of income. The endowment may require the principal to remain intact in perpetuity, for a defined time period or until sufficient revenues are established to achieve a designated purpose. A private-nonprofit organization is a typical endowment holder.</p>	<p>An endowment could be created to fund the perpetual operations and maintenance of a particular property, all properties within a watershed or viewshed, or all properties within a jurisdiction. The size of the endowment would correspond to the revenues needed to achieve its purpose. One example is the Colorado Open Lands \$3 million Stewardship Endowment Fund that enables it to monitor and protect the land under its care.</p>	<p>Endowments are most often initiated by civic-minded citizens in response to an urgent or pending need. A few large gifts from known individuals or organizations can establish credibility. Other affluent and civic-minded individuals and organizations might contribute, knowing that their investment will have continuing value towards the intended purpose. An endowment might be suitable for planned giving or a memorial gift.</p>
Foundations (Existing)	<p>While not a legal term, the common definition of a foundation is a non-governmental entity that is established as a nonprofit corporation or a charitable trust, with a principal purpose of making grants to unrelated organizations, institutions, or individuals for scientific, educational, cultural, religious, or other charitable purposes. This broad definition encompasses two foundation types: private foundations and grant-making public charities.</p> <p>A private foundation derives its money from a family, an individual, or a corporation. A grant-making public charity (sometimes referred to as a “public foundation”) derives its support from diverse sources, which may include other foundations, individuals, and government agencies.</p>	<p>One example is the Gates Family Foundation which recently refocused its priorities into four areas, including “responsible stewardship of our natural resources.” In collaboration with the Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust, it recently provided funds in North Park (Jackson County) to permanently conserve land at the headwaters of the North Platte River.</p> <p>With the Colorado Conservation Partnership, it is also developing plans to provide funds for the Upper Colorado River corridor to protect priority landscapes in Grand and Eagle counties.</p>	<p>Approaching the Gates Family Foundation regarding its priority watershed initiative may be timely.</p> <p>More generally, this concept requires research to find existing foundations whose giving purposes align with the needs of the County and its partners. Once a foundation is identified, the applicant (County, municipality, land trust, district) should initiate communication to explore more specifically whether its needs and the foundation’s giving purposes fit. A formal application would likely be required.</p>
Foundation (new) for Open Lands in Larimer County	<p>This would be a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting and enhancing open lands in Larimer County.</p> <p>The foundation could receive donations, make grants, advocate for open lands, fund technical assistance, partner with local governments and land trusts, function as a convener, host educational conferences and other related purposes.</p>	<p>In 2004, the Denver Mountain Parks Foundation was formed to receive donations from individuals, corporations and foundations for Denver Mountain Parks.</p> <p>In 2003, the Telluride Foundation established a Land Conservation Field of Interest Fund to provide fiscal support to organizations working to protect open space, water and wildlife habitat in San Miguel County and in the San Miguel River Watershed. Distributions from the Fund are used to catalyze land preservation and restoration projects that might not transpire without the Fund’s fiscal support.</p>	<p>This concept is most easily initiated within the private sector by a civic leader or civic organization. Foundation roles, responsibilities and funding can expand over time.</p> <p>Sometimes, grantors prefer use a private nonprofit organization as a funding or management intermediary rather than fund a local government directly.</p>



Table D.2: ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES

Name	Description	Applicability / Examples	Feasibility Considerations
Individual Gifts / Planned Giving / Memorial Gifts	If there are specific, signature acquisitions, then it may be possible to attract affluent individuals to help fund these acquisitions and assure perpetual upkeep as long as the entity responsible for collection and use the funds is established. Some donors seek recognition; others prefer to be anonymous. Tax advantages are important to most donors.	If there are specific, signature capital improvements, then affluent and/or civic-minded individuals might be willing to fund these acquisitions and assure their perpetual upkeep.	Encouraging individual gifts, planned giving or memorial gifts require a thoughtful communications plan, a clear description of purpose and an established receiving organization. The recipient could be a local government, a land trust or a foundation.
Patrons Program	A patrons program is a concept where people who care about land conservation pay an annual fee, most of which goes into land conservation purposes. This group would be treated "special" throughout the year via gatherings, special lectures, special guided tours, etc. A portion of the fee could also pay for annual permits to all parks in the County.	There is a groundswell of local support of the Larimer County Open Lands, evidenced by the recent survey results. A patrons program could be run by the County or by a nonprofit foundation dedicated to the open lands program. One example where a patron program is used in the State of Wisconsin, where people may become an in-state or out-of-state conservation patron. An annual fee provides funds to the State plus admission to parks, hunting and fishing licenses.	This idea may require years to develop a substantial and reliable revenue stream. However, patrons often become a continuing source of support for initiatives under consideration.
Property Tax	A property tax could be imposed and dedicated to open lands acquisition or operations and maintenance.	There are 11 Colorado counties that impose a property tax dedicated to open space acquisition and other related activities such as park and trails development and open space stewardship.	This would require a popular vote. As an illustration, a 1 mill levy would generate about \$4.1 million in property tax revenues, countywide, if imposed in 2013.
Revolving Loan Fund	Revolving loan funds are financial resources that are created to facilitate acquisition of conservation land on favorable terms. Most often the fund provides bridge loan (short-term financing). Some funds also help secure take-out funding. They function primarily at the national, regional and state level.	There are about 25 state or regional revolving loan funds in the US, including three in Colorado: The Colorado Conservation Loan Fund, the Colorado Conservation Trust Tax Credit Revolving Loan Fund and the Colorado Open Lands Revolving Loan Fund.	These loans can facilitate the acquisition of property by removing some transaction barriers. The tool is not broad but can be very helpful in individual circumstances.
Sponsorship and Cause Marketing	Some signature projects may be suitable for corporate, foundation or individual sponsorship. Depending on the level of sponsorship, organizations would likely seek visibility via signage, a plaque or other form of recognition. Specific fundraising initiatives might be suitable for "cause marketing" where companies link the purchase of a product with a donation to a cause.	Applications of this concept vary significantly. Some companies will wrap a marketing initiative around an environmental objective. For example, Coca-Cola donated \$1 per \$10 of product sold at participating retailers as part of a California Preserve Our Parks fundraising campaign. An example of a more traditional sponsorship with naming rights is Coors Field in Denver.	The concept of allowing any organization to name or be recognized in association with a publically-owned facility can be controversial and should be considered thoughtfully.



Table D.2: ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES

Name	Description	Applicability / Examples	Feasibility Considerations
<p>USDA: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) - Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG)</p> <p>(A direct grant federal program)</p>	<p>The NRCS provides Conservation Innovation Grants (CIGs) to improve conservation practices in conjunction with agricultural production.</p> <p>Grants are intended to stimulate the development of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging the Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection.</p> <p>Funds are authorized under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Funds come from EQIP.</p>	<p>Applicants may be State or local governments, land trusts and individuals. In Colorado, \$750,000 grants are available in 2013 through a statewide competitive grant process; maximum grant award, \$75,000; requires 50% match, including 25% in kind.</p> <p>Larimer County has not applied for a CIG grant at least since 2005, according to NRCS staff.</p>	<p>Funding is available annually on a competitive grant basis through the Colorado state office of the NRCS.</p> <p>Nationally, some recent grants have related to drought mitigation concepts. This may become pertinent in future years.</p>
<p>USDA: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) - Grassland Reserve Program</p> <p>(A direct federal grant program)</p>	<p>The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grasslands on their property through rental contracts and the purchase of permanent easements. The program emphasizes support for working grazing operations, enhancement of plant and animal biodiversity, and protection of grasslands that are under threat of conversion to cropping, urban development and other activities. Participants voluntarily limit future development of the land, while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices and operations. Funding is through the Commodity Credit Corporation and the USDA Farm Service Agency.</p>	<p>Eligible land includes privately owned grasslands, land that contains forbs for which grazing is a predominant use or land that has historically been dominated by grassland, forbs or shrubs that has potential to serve as wildlife habitat of significant ecological value. There is no minimum acreage.</p> <p>Eligible applicants are local or state governments and land trusts with experience to manage a GRP easement.</p>	<p>Competitive applications are received by the Colorado state office of the NRCS. In this program, easements may be held by a local government, land trust or the US DA.</p> <p>Typically, grants are ranked each spring. However, grant authorization is currently on hold because funding authorization has not come through for the current fiscal year. This program is relatively small; only one easement and 1 rental contract were approved during the last fiscal year</p>



Table D.2: ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES

Name	Description	Applicability / Examples	Feasibility Considerations
<p>USDA: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)</p> <p>Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program</p> <p>(FRPP)</p> <p>(A direct federal grant program.)</p>	<p>The Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP) provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and rangeland in agricultural uses. Working through existing programs, USDA partners with State, tribal or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements or other interests in land from landowners. Originally enacted in 1996 and expanded in 2002, it is managed by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Funding is from the Commodity Credit Corporation.</p>	<p>The FRPP provides funding on a competitive basis to help pay for up to 50% of the cost of purchasing a conservation easement on private agricultural land. Up to 25% of the easement's value may be donated and counted as a match.</p> <p>One example is the Mesa Land Trust and FRPP. Between 2002 and 2014, \$3.44 million in FRPP funds were used to purchase agricultural easements that helped landowners in Palisade dedicate land to farming while providing capital to improve and expand their farm operations.</p>	<p>This is a competitive program. Land trusts or local governments submit proposals to the Colorado state office of the NRCS.</p> <p>Historically, between \$8 and \$9 million of federal funds have been distributed in Colorado annually. Funding for Colorado is determined at the national level, based in part on the volume of requests in Colorado for the last 3 years. Individual applications have ranged between \$60,000 and \$1 million. Each spring, Colorado NRCS staff rank and award applications.</p>
<p>USDA: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)</p> <p>Wetlands Reserve Program</p> <p>(A direct federal grant program)</p>	<p>The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program that enables private landowners to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. The program's goal is to achieve the greatest wetland functions and values, along with optimum wildlife habitat, on every acre enrolled in the program. Technical and financial support is offered through three options: permanent easements, 30-year easements, and restoration cost-share agreements for a minimum, ten-year duration.</p>	<p>To be eligible for a WRP grant, the landowner must have owned the land for at least one year and the land must be restorable and suitable for wildlife benefits. The landowner continues to control access to the land and may lease the land for recreational activities. This program has been used in a few instances over the years in Larimer County but details are not available from the USDA staff.</p>	<p>In Larimer County, the program is managed by the Colorado state office of the NRCS and by the USDA Service Center in Fort Collins.</p>
<p>US EPA – Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)</p> <p>(A state directed federal program)</p>	<p>EPA provides annual "capitalization" grants to states, which use the money to provide loans to public and private borrowers. Funds are primarily for water quality improvements but grants have been provided land conservation for watershed protection.</p> <p>Funding is provided through the Clean Water Act.</p>	<p>Napa County (CA) used the CWSRF to acquire parcels along the Napa River to protect from future flooding and reconnect with its historic flood plain. Repayment is through a local sales tax.</p> <p>Wellington, Windsor, and Berthoud have received CWSRF loans for the more traditional water quality improvement purposes.</p>	<p>Nationally, watershed protection is an emerging grant purpose for these revolving funds.</p> <p>The Colorado programs are managed by the Water Quality Control Division of the Department of Public Health. Colorado calls this program the Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund. (WPCRF)</p>



Table D.2: ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES

Name	Description	Applicability / Examples	Feasibility Considerations
<p>US Presidential Initiative: America's Great Outdoors (AGO)</p>	<p>This initiative was launched in 2010 by President Obama to "foster a 21st-century approach to conservation. The initiative is lead jointly by the US Departments of Interior and Agriculture, the EPA and the Council on Environmental Quality of the President. The initiative provides additional funding authorization for existing federal agencies including the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and Bureau of Reclamation's river restoration activities.</p>	<p>Through the AGO, federal agencies have partnered in Colorado to initiate several projects, including The Rocky Mountain Greenway in Denver, the Yampa River Basin large landscape conservation project and the Dolores River tamarisk removal project.</p>	<p>This program provides additional funding for federal agencies that undertake an AGO project. Collaboration among multiple federal agencies is a key component. Grants are available on a competitive basis.</p>
<p>User Fees, Charges for Services, etc.</p>	<p>User fees are imposed on users based on their usage. There are two broad philosophies regarding user fees: cost recovery and market driven.</p>	<p>User fees are most applicable for facilities with current or potential controlled access such as parking lots, docks, etc.</p> <p>Larimer County and its municipal partners already apply user fees in many circumstances. This concept would be to extend this practice for access or use of open lands.</p>	<p>If demand needs to be managed more effectively at some high visitation sites, then constructing controlled access facilities and charging a fee may be a cost effective solution.</p>
<p>Voluntary Surcharge or Company Pay Back</p>	<p>Voluntary surcharges are small voluntary charges that a supporting business adds to a customer's bill; revenues are typically given to the nonprofit. The customer can remove it voluntarily. Some concepts function similar to a sales tax. A company pay-back is where participating companies pledge to contribute a fixed percent of their net revenues.</p>	<p>There are several successful examples in Colorado and Wyoming including programs managed by the Crested Butte Land Trust, the Grand Teton National Park Foundation, Jackson Hole Land Trust and the Middle Park Land Trust.</p>	<p>This concept could be activated to support a particular project or to help fund activities of a particular organizations.</p>
<p>COST SAVINGS / EFFICIENCIES</p>			
<p>Concession Contracts</p>	<p>A concessionaire is a business that operates under a contract or license associated with a degree of exclusivity within a certain geographic area. The owner of the concession — the concessionaire — pays either a fixed sum or a percentage of revenue to the entity in return for the opportunity to operate a particular business exclusively within an area or facility.</p>	<p>Larimer County uses concessionaires at Carter Lake Marina and Inlet Bay Marina at Horsetooth Reservoir. This concept would be to expand the tasks that current concessionaires currently provide to include open lands stewardship or create additional venues suitable for concessionaires. It would be pursued only if a private concessionaire could deliver stewardship services more effectively than the county or local government.</p>	<p>This concept is applicable where there is an opportunity for a private operator to earn revenue by "renting" a site on an annual or multi-year basis. If the contract is long enough, then the concessionaire can be expected (required) to construct capital improvements.</p>



Table D.2: ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES

Name	Description	Applicability / Examples	Feasibility Considerations
Interagency Staff Consulting	The County and larger cities have staff with specific expertise in land acquisition, capital development and operations and management. Smaller municipalities do not have specialized expertise. Governments with specific expertise could lend their staff to others in need.	There are examples of established interagency sharing agreements regarding social services in Colorado (Jefferson County), California (King County) and California (San Diego County). Other examples relate to technology, court systems and database sharing.	This concept might require a memorandum of understanding. Compensation to the lending government could be a consideration.
Option to Purchase	<p>This is a real estate agreement that assures the option holder of the right to purchase property at a fixed or to-be-determined price but without an obligation to do so. It ensures that the land won't be sold or developed during the option period.</p> <p>Purchase options are widely used in business transactions as well as for conservation projects, including land, conservation easement and trail easement acquisitions.</p>	<p>This concept would be applicable if a government wanted to secure a key parcel but did not have sufficient money to purchase it immediately or as a tool to assemble parcels.</p> <p>The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association provides extensive information regarding the benefits of this approach.</p>	Purchasing an option can be a cost-effective tool to delay acquisition costs. Purchasing an option does impose costs that might not be recovered if the option is not exercised.
Purchase / Lease Back	Land owners that want to donate or arrange for the purchase of their land but also want interim use of the land might consider a purchase / lease back. The purchase price (if applicable) could be deferred.	This financial tool might be attractive to potential sellers or donors that want to complete a transaction but continue to earn money from or reside on the land.	In Colorado, there are three revolving loan funds that might provide funding. National organizations, such as the Trust for Public Land and The Nature Conservancy, might also provide funding.
Resource Preservation for Conservation Easement Holders	Technical advice and cost-sharing programs are available through the USDA for private land owners of conservation property.	USDA: Grassland, Healthy Forests, Wetlands Reserve Programs. These three programs assist land owners on a voluntary basis to restore, enhance and protect their property through easements, technical advice and cost-share agreements.	Local government costs would include the resources needed to spread the word about this resource.
Volunteer & In-Kind Services	Volunteers in existing nonprofit organizations who are already committed to land conservation purposes can be activated effectively to maintain specific areas or support specific activities.	Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, Colorado Mountain Club and the Wildland Restoration are a few current examples.	This requires thoughtful organization and continuing management to maintain quality control. It may be a cost-effective solution for particular operations and maintenance needs.



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