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Public Access to Private Land: Research Summary

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Public Access to Private Land: Research Summary



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University of Maine – School of Forest Resources
March 25th, 2016



Key Questions



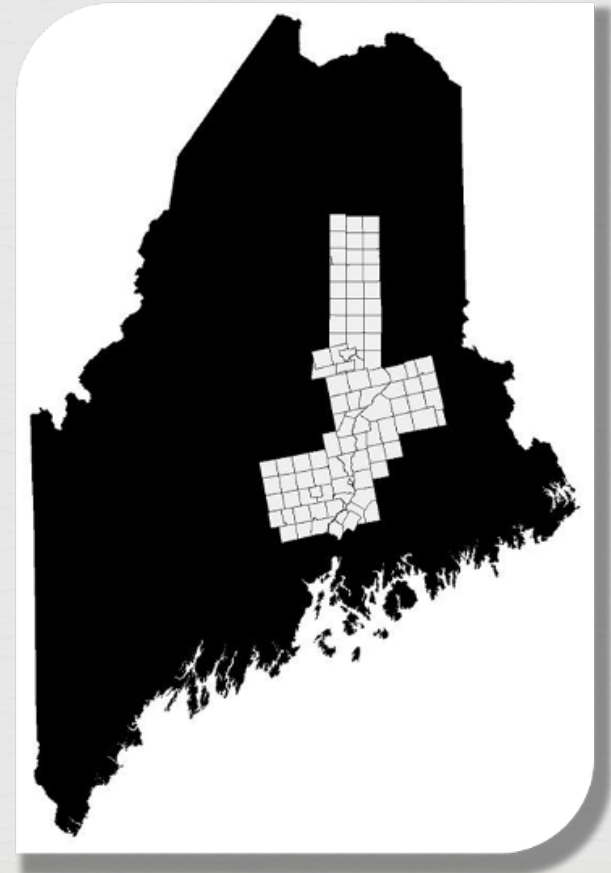
- œ Is there a widespread problem?
- œ If so, what are the problems?
- œ What are potential solutions?



Penobscot County (PC) Survey Research – 2007-08



- Sampling:
 - Family forests, industrial, & other owners by parcel
 - 2500 surveys, 750,000 acres
 - Selected based on tax info and available parcel-level GIS
- Response Rate & Size:
 - 51.72%, 853 unique private, individual landowners



Focus Group (FG) Research – 2009-10



∞ 10 Focus Groups:

∞ 70 Landowners & 19 Other Stakeholders

∞ Landowners in: Baldwin, Bremen, Farmington(2), Machias, Presque Isle, Wells

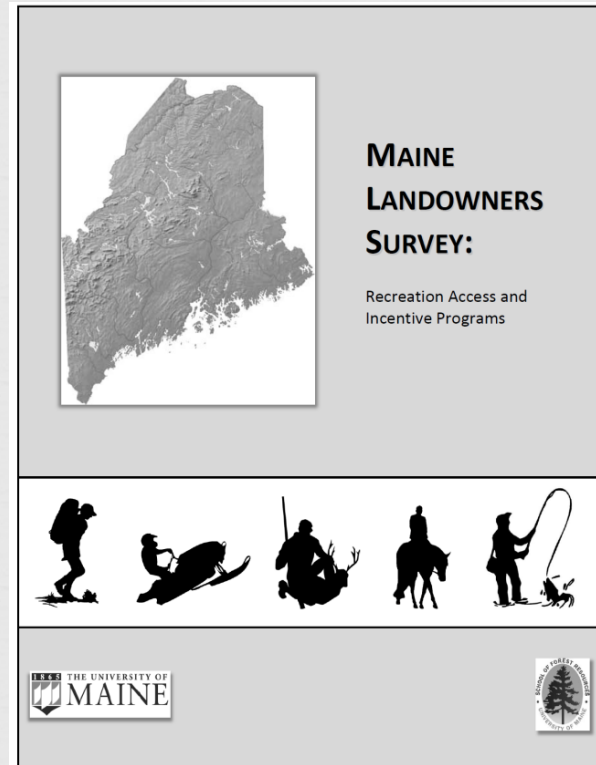
∞ Recreation interest groups, landowner and agricultural interest groups, & government agency representatives in Augusta



Statewide (S) Survey Research – 2010-11



- ∞ Focused on policies & programs
- ∞ 1,600 landowners
- ∞ Organized towns & LURC
- ∞ 10-1,000 acres
- ∞ 50% response rate

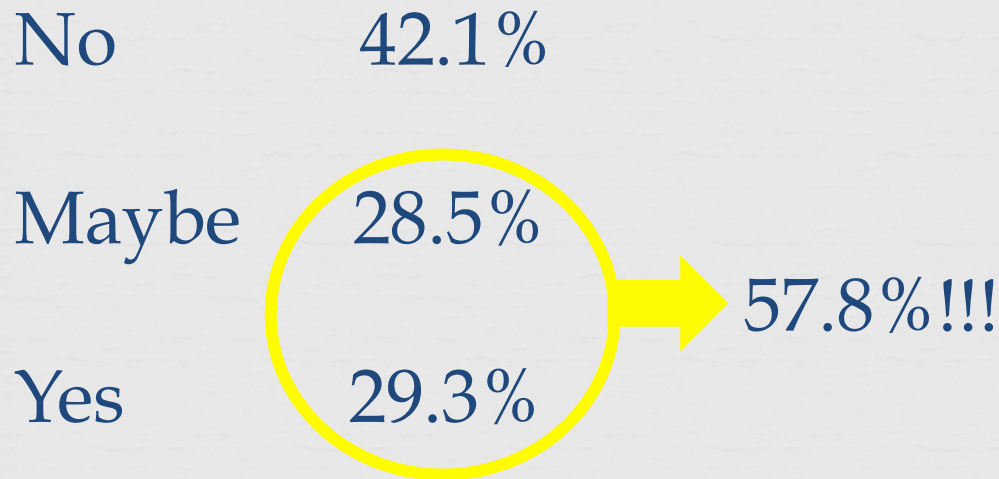




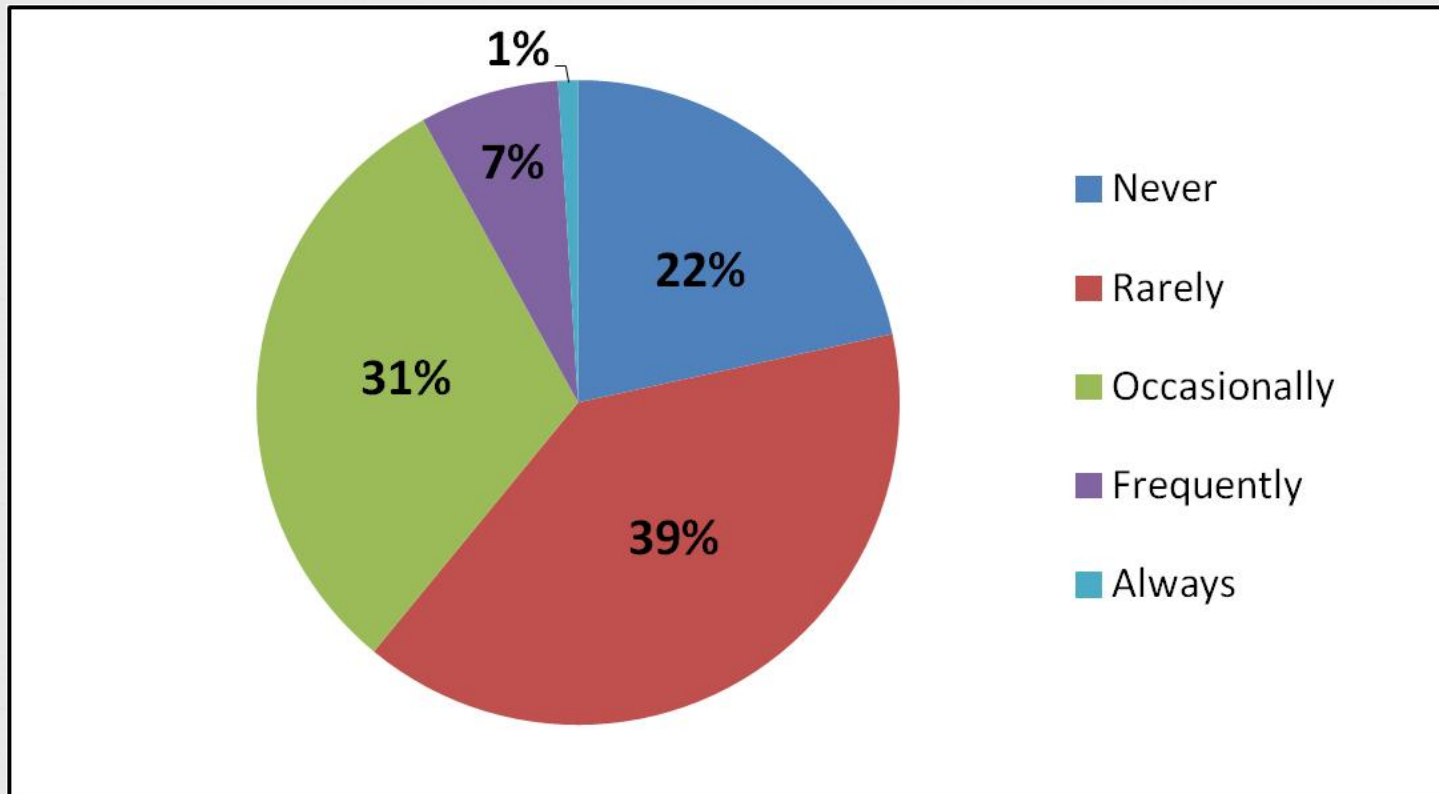
œ Is there a widespread problem?

œ Yes.

Do you plan to restrict or prohibit some types of recreation on your land in the future?



Frequency Public Participates in Recreation Activities that I do NOT Wish to Have





∞ If so, what are the problems?

∞ Many.

Problems



Severity	Not	Minor	Major/Moderate
Hunters ignoring signs	67.1	13.7	19.2
Litter from hunters	61.4	21.0	17.6
ATV riders ignoring signs	77.4	6.3	16.3
Vandalism from hunters	76.6	9.5	13.9
Loss of personal safety from hunters	65.0	21.6	13.4

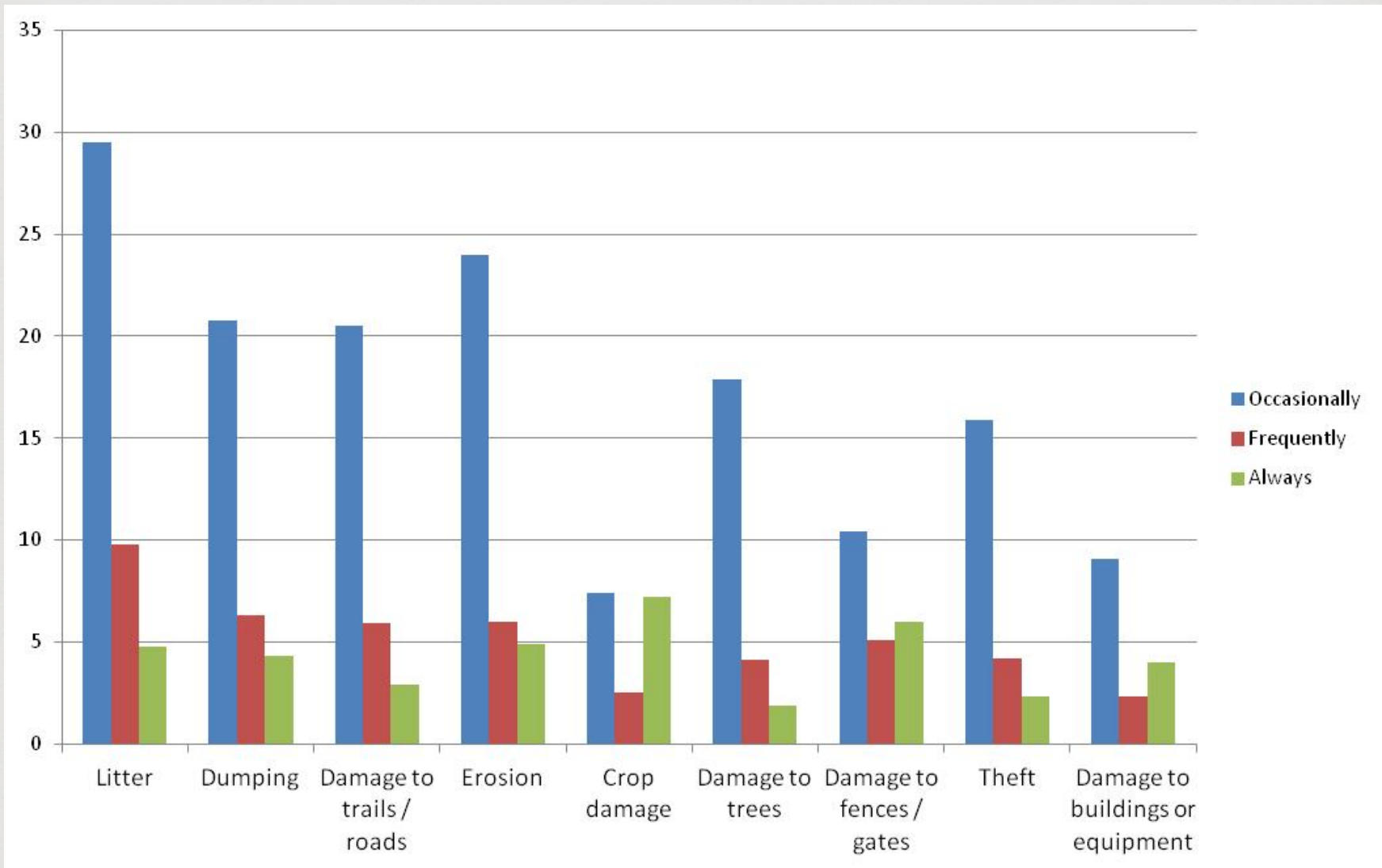
Frequency	Not	Rarely	Always/Very
ATV riders ignoring signs	70.5	16.9	12.7
Litter from hunters	49.2	38.2	12.5
Illegal construction by ATV riders	80.1	12	7.8
Equipment/Bldg damage from ATV riders	76.8	15.5	7.7
Loss of personal safety from hunters	59.2	35.0	5.7

Source: PC Survey

Problems Identified in Focus Groups



- ∞ Physical Damages – Littering & dumping
- ∞ Access Policies – Liability concerns
- ∞ User Behaviors – Off-trail riding



Source: S Survey



∞ What are potential solutions?

∞ Many good options. Some bad ideas.

First off...



- œ The solutions depends on who you ask:
 - œ Landowners: Harsher fines for litter & dumping
 - œ Former MLSAB: Annual clean-up day
 - œ Recreation Interest Groups: PSAs
 - œ Government: ATV training & PSAs
 - œ Landowner Interest Groups: Enhance state LR program

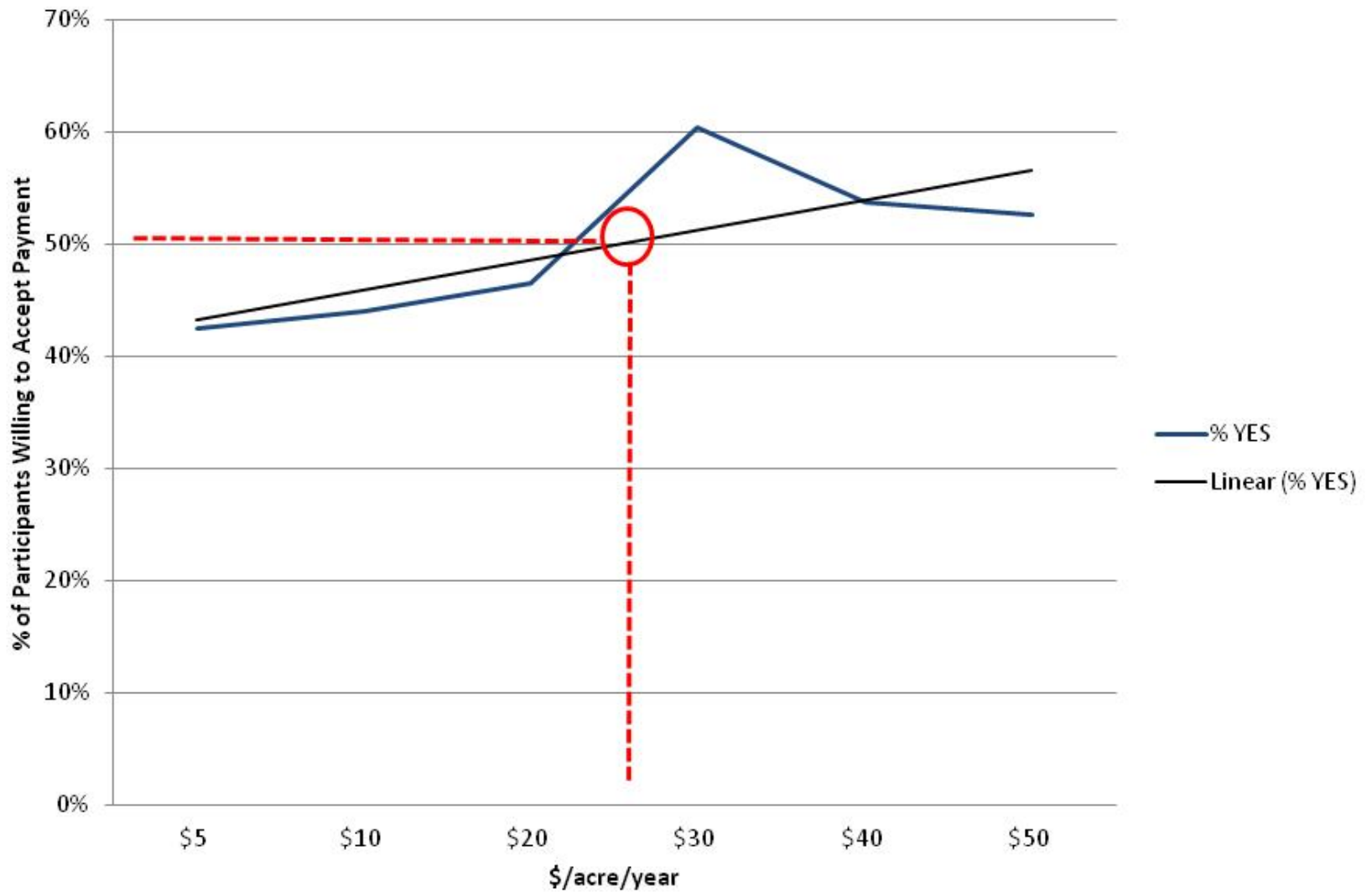
Second...



œ We can breathe a sign of relief.

œ Paying landowners not an option.

Willingness to Accept Payment for Access



The Importance of Respect

Feeling respected by recreationists is an important factor for me to allow access.

Agree to Strongly Agree

From Away: 58%

Mainers: 78%

Liability Concerns



☞ I am familiar with Maine's landowner liability laws:

☞ 30.4% Somewhat or strongly agree

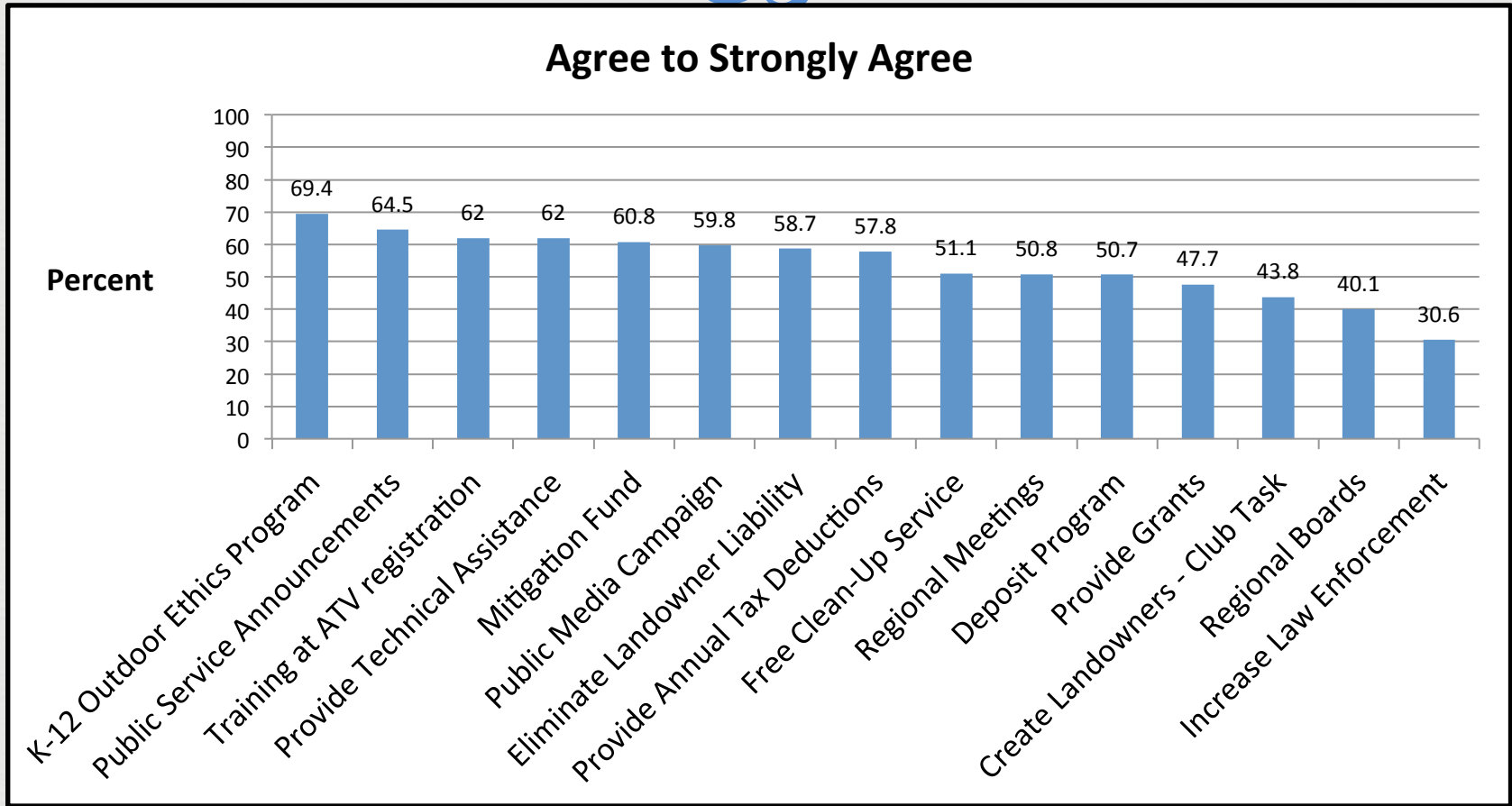
☞ 18.4% Somewhat or strongly disagree

☞ The landowner liability law does not protect me sufficiently from recreationists using my land:

☞ 25.2% Somewhat or strongly agree

☞ 11.0% Somewhat or strongly disagree

Landowners Supportive of a Multi-Faceted Approach



Surprises!



1. Recreation activity-specific preferences and problems exist.



2. It's not the people from away who are posting.



Surprises!

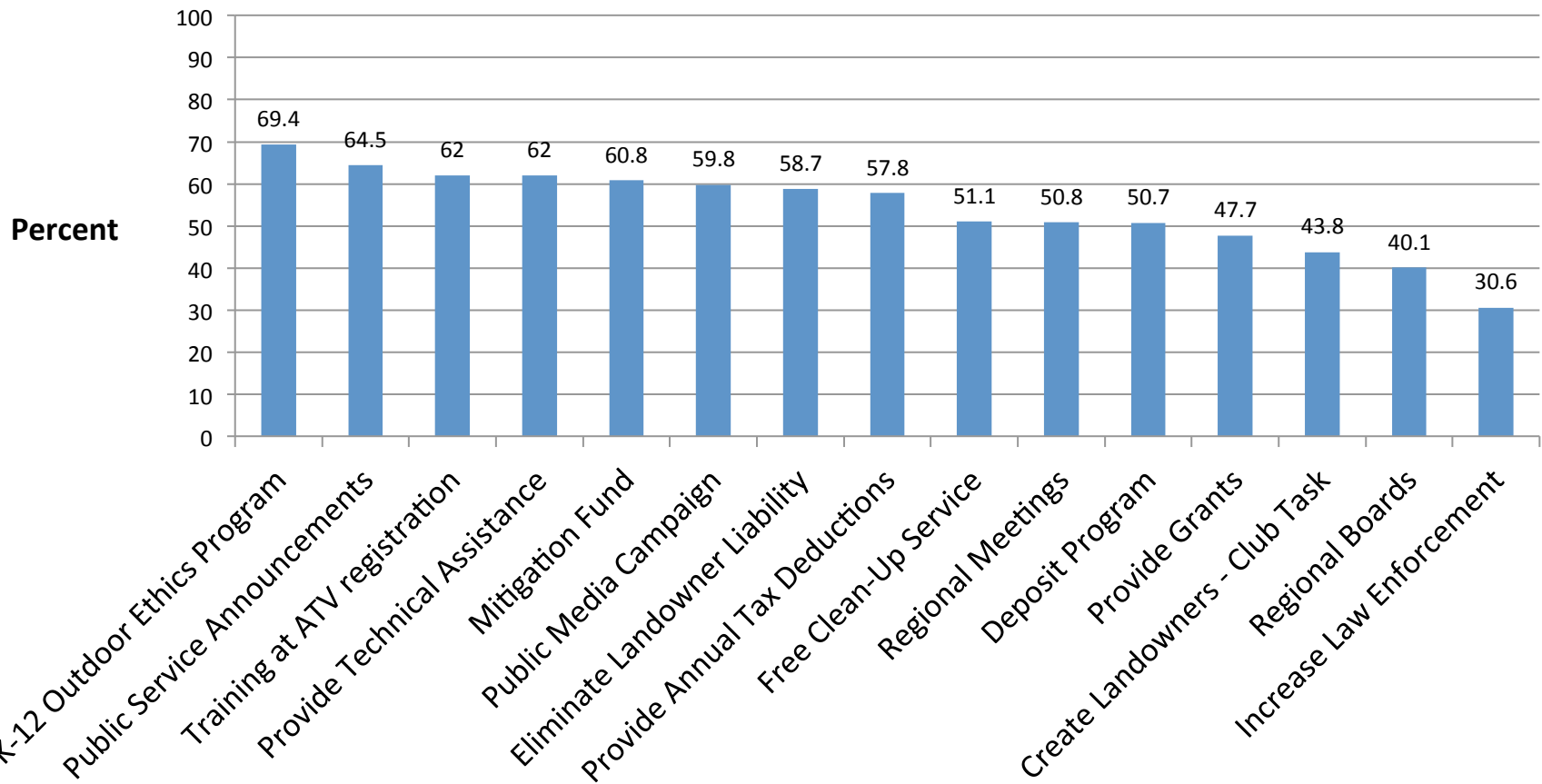


3. It pays to look closely for possible efficient & effective policies/programs.

Present Access	Future w/o Program	Future w/ Program	Policy-Maker Interest
Yes	No	Yes	High
No	No	Yes	High
Yes	No	No	Medium
No	Yes	Yes	Medium
Yes	Yes	Yes	Low
No	No	No	Low
No	Yes	No	--
Yes	Yes	No	--

Combine this graph with posting plans (see next slide)

Agree to Strongly Agree

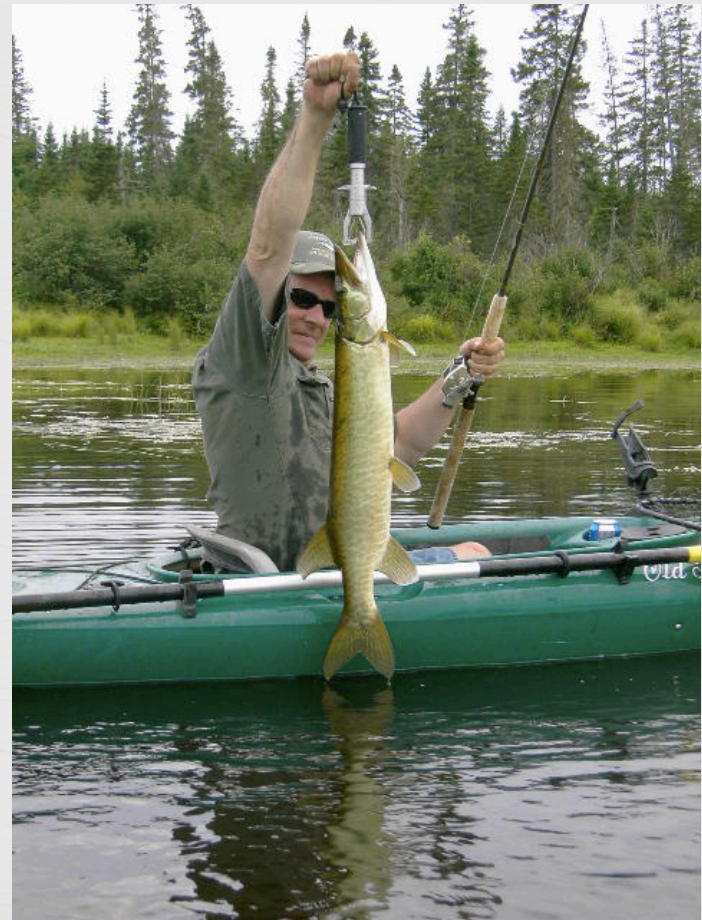


Top Five Landowner Preferred Programs by Posting Plans



Yes Planning to Post	Maybe Planning to Post	Not Planning to Post
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ATV Training• K-12 Ethics• Respect PSA• Ethics Media Campaign• No Liability w/ Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• K-12 Ethics• ATV Training• No Liability w/ Fees• Respect PSA• Ethics Media Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• K-12 Ethics• Respect PSA• No Liability w/ Fees• Technical Assistance• Tax Deduction

What about Land Users?



Land User Survey - 2013



- œ Online survey using Qualtrics software
- œ Email lists provided by IF&W:
 - œ Hunting
 - œ Fishing
 - œ Snowmobiling
 - œ ATV
 - œ Wildlife
 - œ Wildlife Park
 - œ News

Land User Survey - Methods



- Population: 227,524 emails
 - Proportional, random selection of 4,000
 - Removed duplicates
 - Sent 3,936 email invitations
-
- Response rate:
 - 493 started (12.5%)
 - 399 answered at least one question (10.1%)
 - 300 completed entire survey (7.6%)

Who Responded?



œ 70% working full-time, 18% retired

œ 89% male

œ Education

œ 15% HS or less,

œ 35% some college/ associates (AA, AS)

œ 29% bachelors (BS, BA)

œ 21% grad degree (MS, PhD, JD, MD)

Who Responded?



∞ Residency:

- ∞ 67% live in ME full time,
- ∞ 7% seasonal,
- ∞ 26% out-of-state

∞ Landownership:

- ∞ 28% own >10 acres of land in ME
 - ∞ 62% of them live on their land
 - ∞ 54% do not post their own land

Results



58% feel that posting is increasing:

Answer	Response	%
Increasing	232	58%
Decreasing	36	9%
Staying the same	45	11%
Not sure	86	22%
Total	399	100%

Results



☞ 58% feel there is not enough open land:

Answer	Response	%
Not enough	231	58%
Just right	72	18%
Too much	6	2%
Not sure	89	22%
Total	398	100%

Results



63% have experienced posting of land they once used:

Answer	Response	%
Yes	231	63%
No	110	30%
Not Sure	27	7%
Total	368	100%

Results



53% are either extremely concerned or very concerned about issues related to public recreation access to private land in Maine:

Answer	Response	%
Not at all concerned	17	4%
Somewhat concerned	157	40%
Very concerned	146	37%
Extremely concerned	64	16%
Not sure	13	3%
Total	397	100%

Results



47% of land users live in areas that are highly posted:

Answer	Response	%
A very limited amount (0-20%) is open to recreation users	98	25%
A limited amount (21-40%) is open to recreation users	88	22%
A moderate amount (41-60%) is open to recreation users	102	26%
A substantial amount (61-80%) is open to recreation users	40	10%
A very substantial amount (81-100%) is open to recreation users	18	5%
Not sure	53	13%
Total	399	100%

Results



78% of land users recreated on private land in Maine last year:

Answer	Response	%
Yes	288	78%
No	65	18%
Not Sure	15	4%
Total	368	100%

Results

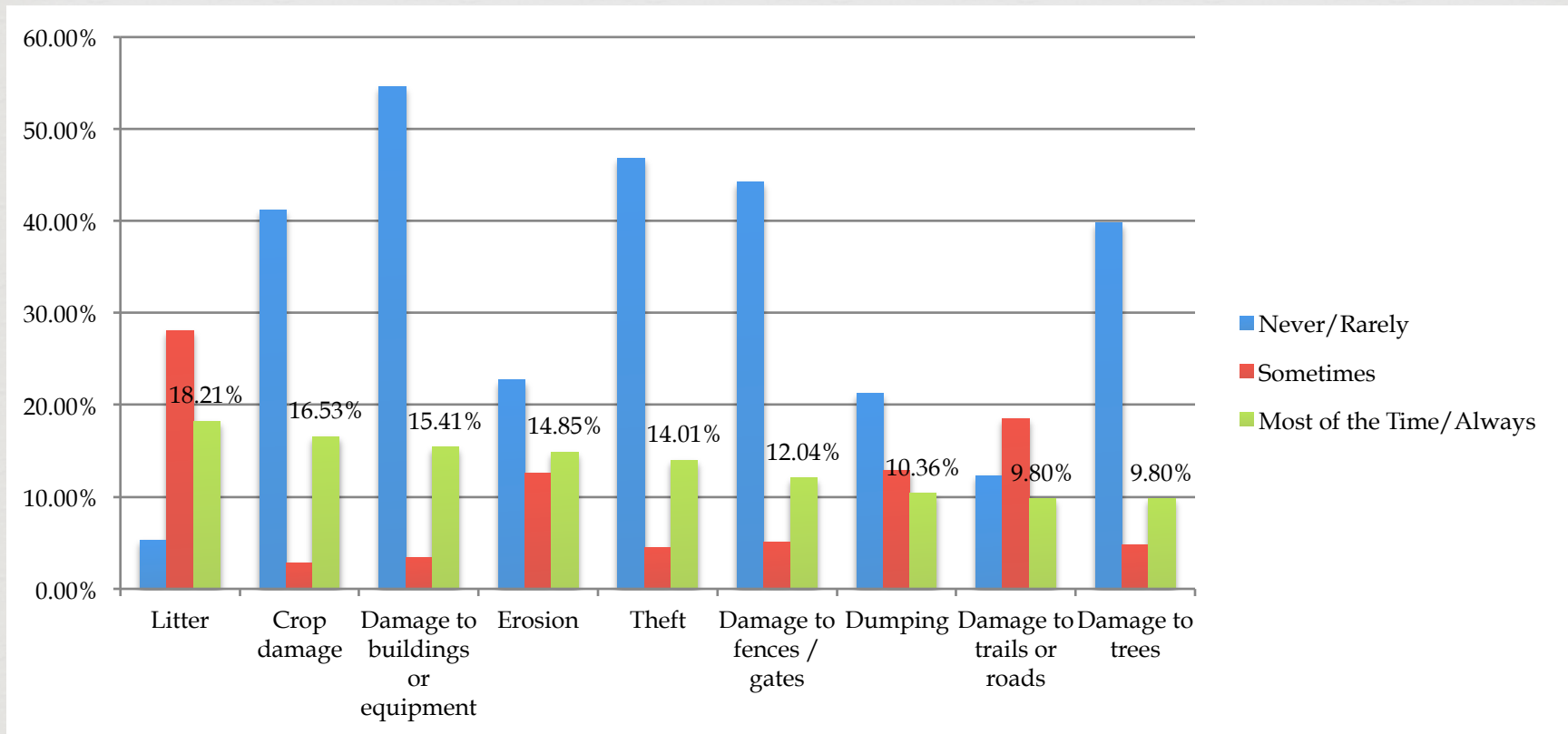


- ∞ 77% knew who owned the land
 - ∞ 33% residential landowner, 32% large landowner
 - ∞ 62% asked permission to use the land
 - ∞ 47% asked permission in person, 11% asked permission over the phone

Results



Issues similar to landowner surveys:



Results



Who is causing the problems viewed similarly:

ATV Riders

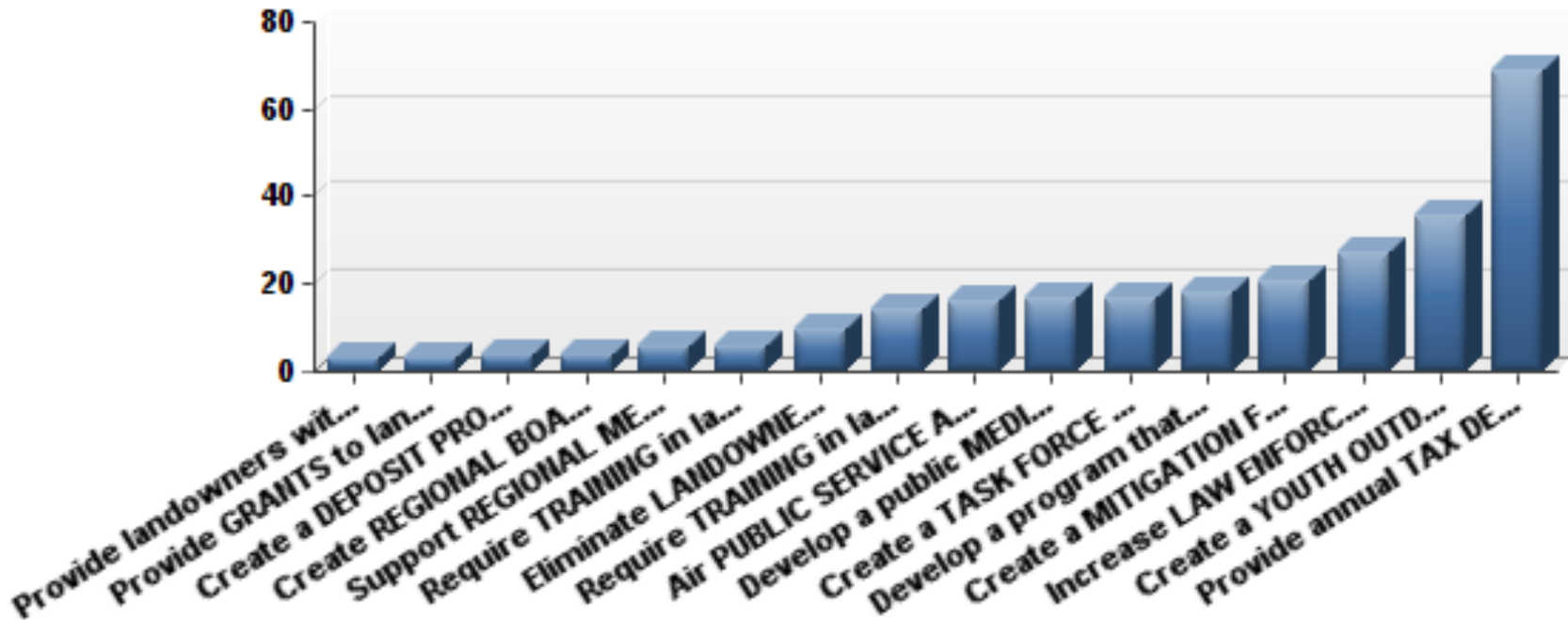
Locals illegally dumping

Teenagers

Results



Top 3 policy preferences for tax deductions, youth-based programs, and law enforcement shared:



Recommendations



- ❧ Capitalize on shared concern held by landowners and land users
 - ❧ More joint action-oriented efforts

- ❧ Focus on issues corroborated on both sides
 - ❧ Illegal dumping, ATV use, etc.

- ❧ First step could be youth programs
 - ❧ Think outside the box: apps, YouTube, after school options, reinvigorate safety programs

Questions?



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