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# **Jackson County ATV/UTV Trail Study Survey Report, 2019**

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**Survey Research Center Report 2020/11  
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Students working for the Survey Research Center at UW-River Falls were instrumental in the completion of this study. We would like to thank David Foerster, Luke Spaeth, Hannah Nelson, Jennifer Pflum, and Ellie Peretz. We gratefully acknowledge their hard work and dedication.

The SRC would also like to thank Jon Schweitzer, Assistant Administrator, Jackson County Forestry and Parks Department for his assistance throughout the project. Finally, we would like to thank the volunteers who administered the survey and the trail users who took the time to participate in the study.

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## Executive Summary

The purpose of this study was to obtain trail surface preferences of ATV and UTV users of the Jackson County trail network and to solicit feedback about their trail experiences.<sup>1</sup> Jackson County officials chose to work with the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls on this project.

Initially, intercept survey data was to be collected by volunteers during the 2019 trail season (mid-May to mid-October). However, the study was hampered by flooding that caused trail closures in the late spring and early summer of 2019. At the end of the season, only 113 completed surveys had been collected falling far short of the 450 surveys expected over the entire 2019 trail season. Collaboratively, Jon Schweitzer and the SRC decided to extend data collection through the 2020 trail season. However, due to the coronavirus pandemic, intercept data collection in 2020 was cancelled to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

The analysis in this report is based on the 113 observations collected during the 2019 trail season. Due to the small sample size, there are concerns about the degree of representativeness of the results. Counter data showed 28,409 users on the trail system in 2019. Based on 2019 trail usage and the number of observations collected (113), the confidence interval of the results is plus/minus 9.2%, which is larger than had been planned.

## Key Findings

### ***Nearly All Respondents Rate Their Overall Experience on the Jackson County Trail System as Excellent or Good and There is a High Level of Satisfaction with Trail Elements in the System***

- The percentage of excellent and good ratings for the trail system were identical at 47%. Very few respondents rated the trail system fair (5%) or poor (1%).
- The highest satisfaction ratings went to trail access and parking for which 94% of respondents were very satisfied (66%) or satisfied (28%).

### ***A Slight Majority Prefer Both Natural and Gravel Trails Equally***

- Respondents' trail preferences were split. The largest portion (54%) liked both natural and gravel trail surfaces equally; while 34 percent favored natural trails, and a 12% favored gravel trails.

### ***Strong Majority Would Not Decrease Trail Usage in the Wisconsin Public Trail System if Annual ATV/UTV Registration Fees Were Increased***

- When asked how a \$20-\$25 increase in the annual cost to register ATV/UTVs would affect usage of the public trail system in Wisconsin, 69% of respondents said such an increase would not impact their use of the trail system, 23% said they would continue to use the trail system, but less often, and 8% would stop using the trail system altogether.

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<sup>1</sup> The Jackson County Trail System in Wisconsin contains over 100 miles of trails through the Black River State Forest and Jackson County Forest.

## Report and Analysis

### Survey Purpose

The purpose of this study was to obtain trail surface preferences of ATV and UTV users of the Jackson County trail network and to solicit feedback about their trail experiences.

### Survey Methods

It was decided that intercept surveys would be the best way to gather on-site feedback from trail users. Prior to the start of data collection, the SRC sent intercept survey instructions to Jackson County for training purposes. The instruction sheet emphasized the need to have random and representative sampling of trail users and provided volunteers with a standard script to use when approaching trail users. The intercepts were administered by approaching ATV/UTV riders encouraging them to participate, while informing them that it was a voluntary survey. Once voluntary informed consent to participate was secured, the rider was interviewed.

- Survey data was to be collected by volunteers during the 2019 trail season (mid-May to mid-October). The survey was to be administered on different days over the normal season at various trail entry/exit points.
- However, portions of the trail system were closed in May and June due to flooding.
- Intercept interviews with trail users were completed in June (1%), July (30%), August (32%), and September (37%) of 2019.
- Most intercepts were conducted in the afternoon (60%) compared to morning (25%), and evening (15%).
- 113 completed questionnaires were shipped to the SRC for processing.
- The study was to resume during the 2020 trail season. However, 2020 data collection was cancelled to adhere to social distancing guidelines to help curb the spread of COVID-19.

### Survey Design

The intercept survey was developed jointly in spring 2019 by the Survey Research Center and Jon Schweitzer, Jackson County Forestry and Parks Department. The intercept survey included 16 questions. In 2015, the SRC completed an economic impact study of the Jackson County Trail System that included some similar elements.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, comparisons between the current data and the 2015 study will be made, as appropriate, throughout this report.

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<sup>2</sup> "Jackson County ATV Trail Users Survey Report 2015," James Janke and David Trechter, Survey Research Center, University of Wisconsin-River Falls, January 2016. Data were collected by intercept interviews with trail users during the 2015 trail season (May 16 to October 15). The final 2015 survey sample consisted of 129 observations.

## Statistical Analysis

*Analysis by Demographic Subgroups.* In the analysis to follow, the SRC will summarize the 2019 Jackson County Trail Study Survey results and note any statistically significant results among different demographic groups. To facilitate the analysis, the SRC compared the following demographic groupings:

- those under 45 versus those 45 and above
- those reporting annual household incomes of \$75,000 and above versus those with annual household incomes of less than \$75,000
- those with higher levels of formal education (at least a 4-year degree) versus those with less than a 4-year college degree
- male versus female respondents

## Testing Methodology

*The SRC used statistical tests to identify questions with statistically significant differences across demographic groups and with statistically significant differences across responses from 2015 and 2019. In statistics, a result is **statistically significant** if it is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Statistical significance is expressed as a probability that the observed difference between two groups' averages is not real. A commonly used probability standard is .05 (5%). Statistical significance at the .05 level indicates there is only a 5 in 100 probability that the average values for the two groups are actually equal. Such a result does not mean the difference is necessarily large, important, or significant in the common meaning of the word. If there are a sufficiently large number of observations, even small differences of opinion can be statistically significant. **Response patterns that vary at statistically significant levels ( $p < .05$ ) are noted in the report.***

## Appendices

In addition to numeric data, respondents provided additional written answers. **Appendix A** contains respondents' written comments. **Appendix B** contains a copy of the survey questionnaire with a complete quantitative summary of responses by question. **Appendix C** contains the Intercept Instruction Sheet created by the SRC and shared with Jackson County representatives.

## Profile of Respondents

*Demographic Profile.* Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of respondents to the 2019 Jackson County ATV/UTV Trail Study Survey. The profile of respondents to the 2015 Jackson County Trail Study is included for comparison purposes.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>				
2019 Sample	102	66%	34%				
2015 Sample	122	69%	31%				
<b>Age</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>18 – 24</b>	<b>25 – 34</b>	<b>35 – 44</b>	<b>45 – 54</b>	<b>55 – 64</b>	<b>65+</b>
2019 Sample	111	2%	12%	17%	32%	26%	11%
2015 Sample	123	7%	15%	20%	33%	17%	8%
<b>Highest Level of Education</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Some High School</b>	<b>High School/ GED</b>	<b>Some College/ Tech</b>	<b>2-yr/Tech College Degree</b>	<b>4-year College Degree</b>	<b>Grad/Prof Degree</b>
2019 Sample	113	1%	34%	19%	25%	14%	7%
2015 Sample	125	0%	33%	26%	19%	18%	5%
<b>Annual Household Income<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>&lt;\$25,000</b>	<b>\$25-\$49,999</b>	<b>\$50-\$74,999</b>	<b>\$75-\$99,999</b>	<b>\$100 - \$149,999</b>	<b>\$150,000 or more</b>
2019 Sample	98	0%	13%	26%	24%	22%	14%
2015 Sample	112	2%	18%	27%	21%	25%	7%

### Demographic Information from 2019 Respondents

- Most survey respondents were male.
- Most were middle-age or older (69% were 45+). Only 14% (15 respondents) were under the age of 35.
- Twenty-one percent have at least a bachelor’s degree. For comparison, 30% of Wisconsin residents 25 and older have a four-year degree or more.<sup>4</sup>
- Approximately one-third have six figure household incomes. The U.S. Census estimates that the median household income in Wisconsin is 59,209.<sup>5</sup> So, the 2019 sample appear to have income levels that are higher-than-typical for Wisconsin.

### Comparisons to 2015 Respondents

Compared to 2015, the 2019 sample contains more older respondents (55+), and slightly more respondents with higher incomes (100K+).

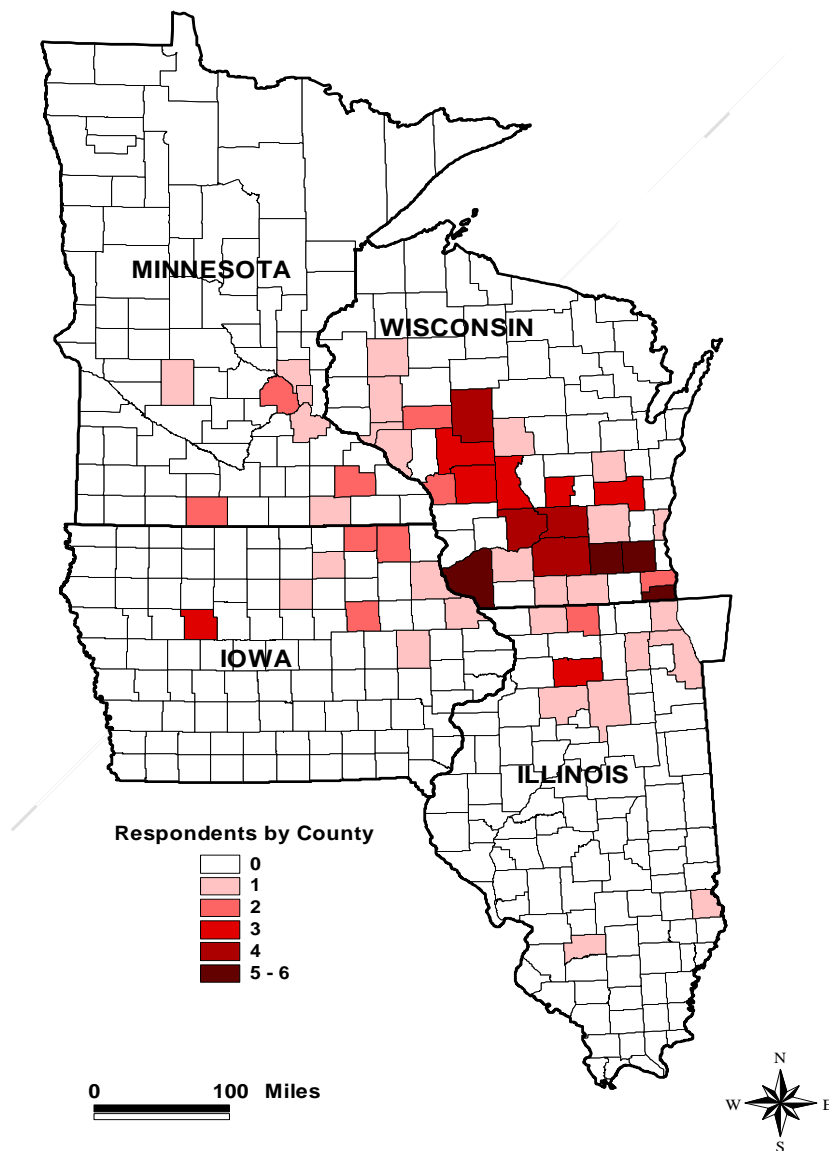
<sup>3</sup> The household income profile in Table 1 for both 2015 and 2019 participants exclude respondents who chose the “Prefer Not to Answer” option.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census, 2018 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimate, Wisconsin, <https://data.census.gov/>

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census, 2014 – 2018 average, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/WI/PST045218>

Home Location. Respondents were asked for the ZIP code of their home address. A total of 112 respondents provided a ZIP code. The SRC determined the state and county for each of the ZIP codes. Among the responses, 63% were from Wisconsin, 13% from Iowa, 12% from Illinois, 11% from Minnesota, and 2% from Arkansas. As shown in Map 1, 3% of the respondents were from Jackson County. The largest number of non-local respondents were from Waukesha or Grant Counties, with 5% each of the total. Jefferson and Kenosha Counties tied for third place with 4% each. Map 1 shows the distribution of visitors among the counties in the four states. The two responses from Arkansas residents are not shown.

**Map 1. Jackson County ATV/UTV Trail Users Survey  
Respondents By County  
2019**

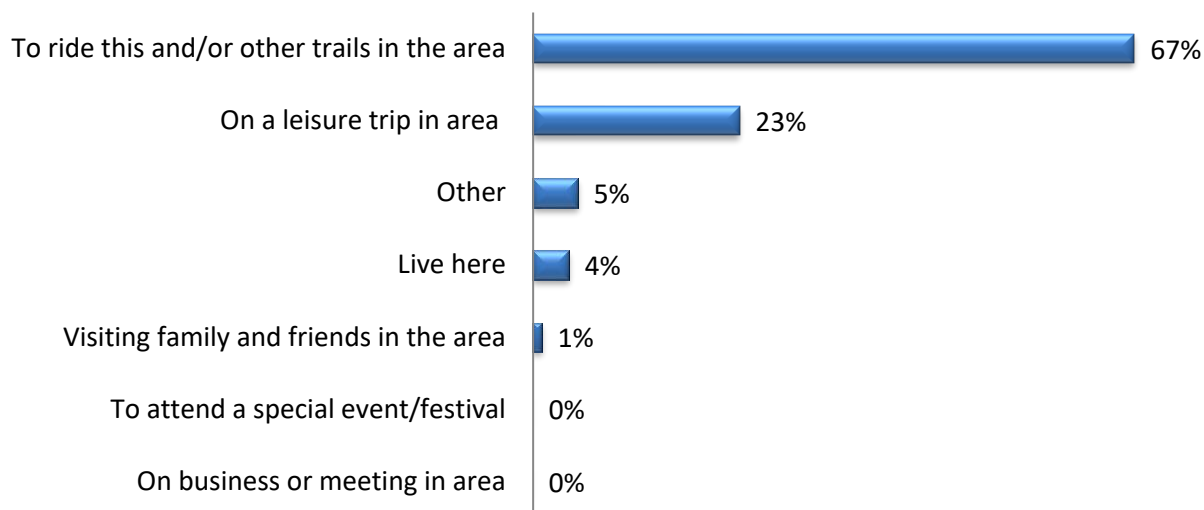




## Primary Purpose of Trip and Home Location

Primary Reason for Trip to the Area. As shown in Figure 1, approximately two-thirds of respondents said riding trails was the primary reason they were in the area. About one-fourth of respondents said that a leisure trip to the area was their primary reason (23%). Very few respondents live in the area (4%) or were in the area primarily to visit family and friends (1%). No one said they were in the area to attend an event, festival or were on a business trip.

**Figure 1. Primary Reason for Trip to the Area**



Demographic Comparisons: There were no statistically significant differences within any of the demographic groups.

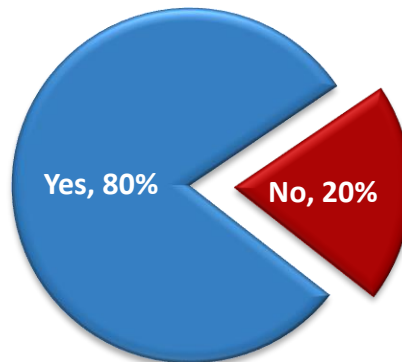
2015/2019 Comparisons. The reasons 2019 survey participants were in the area are similar to the reasons shared in 2015. However, the percentage of respondents who said they were on a leisure trip to the area increased significantly since 2015.

Table 2. Primary Reason for Trip to Area: Comparison of 2015-2019 Survey Results		
Reason	2019	2015
To ride this and/or other trails in the area	67%	69%
On a leisure trip in area	23%	15%
I live here	4%	7%
Visiting family and friends in the area	1%	4%
To attend a special event/festival	0%	2%
On business or meeting in area	0%	0%
<b>Modification.</b> In 2019,		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Live here, use trail as mode of transportation was changed to, I live here</li> </ul>		

## Trail Usage and Preferences

Prior Usage of Jackson County Trail System. As shown in Figure 2, the Jackson County trail network attracts a high proportion of return visitors. Eight in ten respondents had ridden these trails prior to the trip during which they were interviewed.

**Figure 2. Ridden Jackson County Trails Before**



### Demographic Comparison:

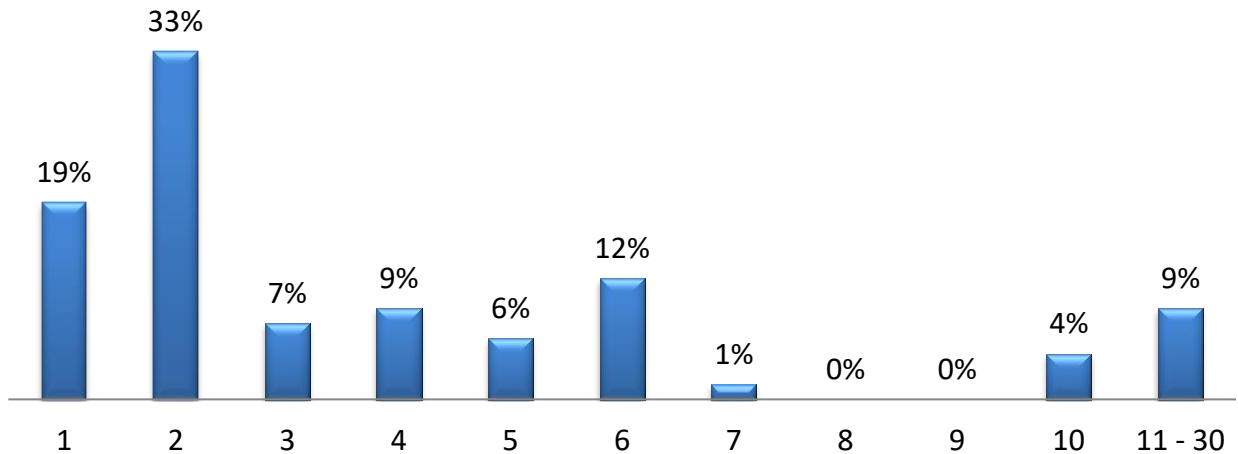
- Respondents with less than a bachelor's degree were more likely to have ridden Jackson County trails before (84% vs. 63% of respondents with at least a bachelor's degree).

2015/2019 Comparisons. The percentage of survey participants who have ridden on Jackson County trails before were similar for both 2015 (81%) and 2019 participants (80%) (Table 3).

<b>Table 3. Ridden on Jackson County Trails Before: Comparison of 2015-2019 Survey Results</b>		
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2015</b>
Yes	80%	81%
No	20%	19%

Ridden in Past 12 Months. Previous riders were asked how many times they had ridden the trail network in the past 12 months. Figure 3 summarizes the results. The most common annual ridership is two times (33%) or one time previously (19%). Approximately one-half of respondents have ridden the trails between two and five times in the previous 12 months, and 9% have ridden the Jackson County trails over 10 times in the past year. The mean (average) number of times respondents reported riding Jackson County trails in the past 12 months was 4.6 times.

**Figure 3. Number of Times Riding Jackson County Trails Past 12 Months**



Demographic Comparisons: There were no statistically significant differences within any of the demographic groups.

2015/2019 Comparisons. As the case in 2015, the most common annual ridership of the trails in 2019 is between two and five times.<sup>6</sup> The average number of times respondents reported riding Jackson County trails (annually) decreased slightly from 2015 to 2019.<sup>7</sup>

<b>Table 4. Ridden Jackson County Trails in Past 12 Months: Comparison of 2015-2019 Survey Results</b>		
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2015</b>
1 Time	19%	16%
2 – 5 times	55%	62%
6 – 10 times	17%	9%
More than 10 times	9%	11%
MEAN/AVERAGE Number of Times Riding the Trails	4.6	5.2

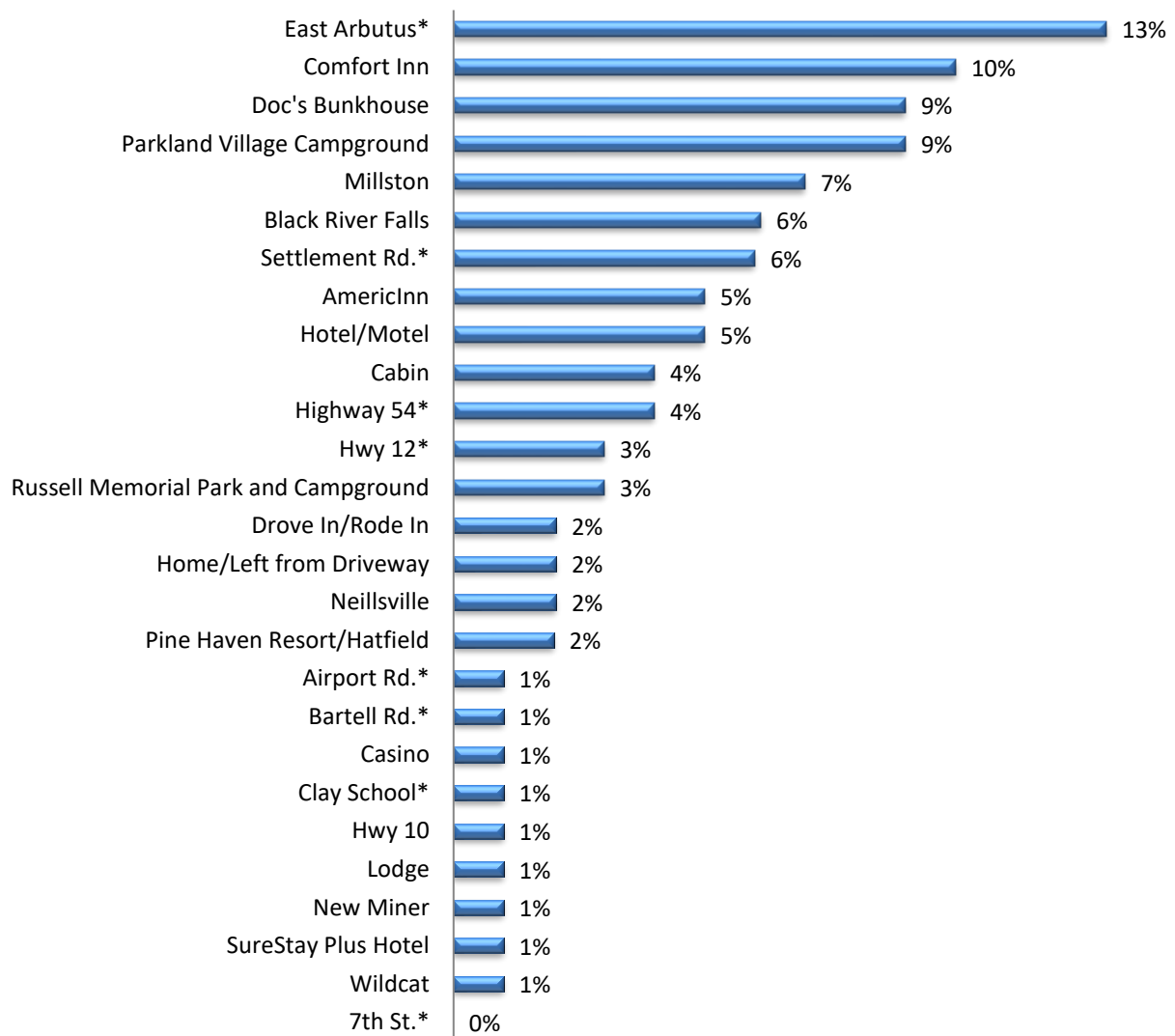
<sup>6</sup> Trail season lasting six months.

<sup>7</sup> As discussed earlier in the report, flooding contributed to trail closures in the spring/summer of 2019, possibly affecting the number of times trail respondents were able to use the Jackson County trail system in 2019.

*Parking Prior to Riding.* Respondents were asked to indicate their parking location prior to accessing the trail network. The survey questionnaire included nine locations plus an option to enter a location not included in the list (“other”). In the raw data, 70% of the respondents chose a site not included on the provided list. These were grouped and added to the list of places of entry (Figure 4, \* indicates an entry location included in the original list).

The most common access points included the East Arbutus lot (13%), the Comfort Inn (10%), Parkland Village Campground and Doc’s Bunkhouse (both 9%), Millston (7%), Black River Falls and Settlement Road (both 6%). All additional entry points were used by no more than 5% of respondents.

**Figure 4. Place of Entry to Trail Network**



Demographic Comparisons:

Due to the disparate nature of “other” written-in parking locations, demographic comparisons for this question were not completed.

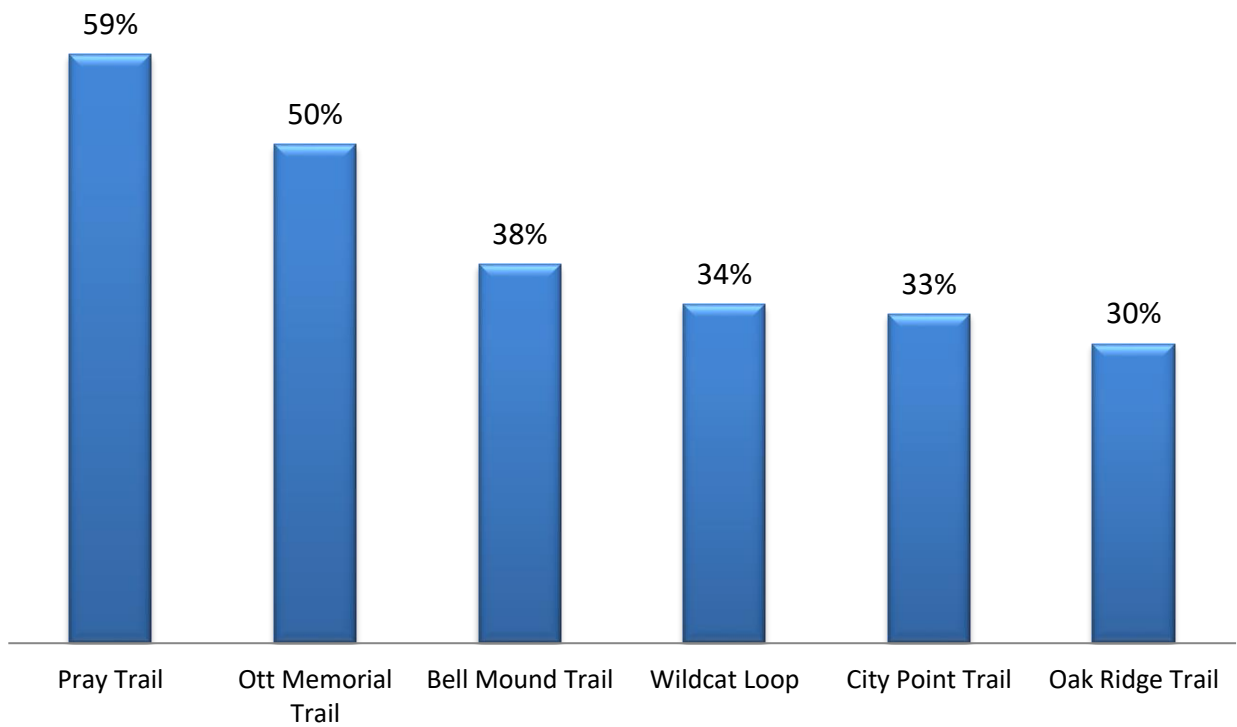
2015/2019 Comparisons. Comparisons between 2015 and 2019 are challenging due to the many locations not listed on the survey that respondents said was their place of trail entry. **Table 5 includes only the nine locations listed on the survey that were identical in both survey years.** The percentage of 2019 respondents who entered from Highway 54, Hatfield Pines, or Airport Rd. have decreased when compared to 2015 survey respondents. Again, due to parking locations of entry not listed on the survey, comparisons made between the two survey years should be used cautiously.

<b>Table 5. Place of Entry to Trails: Comparison of 2015-2019 Survey Results</b>		
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2015</b>
East Arbutus	13%	16%
Settlement Rd.	6%	4%
Highway 54	4%	12%
Highway 12	3%	5%
Hatfield Pines	1%	6%
Clay School	1%	1%
Airport Rd.	1%	6%
Bartell Rd.	1%	2%
7 <sup>th</sup> Street	0%	2%

Trail Segments Ridden. Respondents were asked to identify the trail segments they had ridden the day of the interview. Six trail segments were listed on the survey.

As shown in Figure 5, the most frequently used segment was Pray Trail, ridden by 59% of respondents, followed by the Ott Memorial Trail, ridden by 50% of trail users. Similar usage is shown for Bell Mound, Wildcat Loop and City Point Trails. Trail usage was lowest on the Oak Ridge Trail (30%).

**Figure 5. Trail Segments Ridden**  
*Total Exceeds 100% - Multiple Answers Permitted*



Demographic Comparisons: There were no statistically significant differences within any of the demographic groups.

2015/2019 Comparisons. Due to survey modifications, comparisons between the 2015 and 2019 survey results are not possible for this question.

Types of Equipment and Number of Vehicles. Interviewers noted the types of equipment used by Jackson County Trail users and the number of vehicles in each group, a summary of which appears in Table 6.

- Of the 239 types of equipment used on the trails by 113 intercept participants, 47% were ATVs, 48% were UTVs, and 5% were other types of vehicles.
- The average number of ATVs in the intercept participants' groups was 2.4.
- The average number of UTVs in the intercept participants' groups was 2.3.
- The average number of "other" vehicles in the intercept participants' groups was 2.2. No additional information was provided about what types of other vehicles were being used on the trails, although motorcycles are permitted.

<b>Table 6. Equipment Type, Jackson County ATV/UTV Trail Study, 2019</b>			
	<b># ATV Vehicles</b>	<b>#UTV Vehicles</b>	<b>#Other Vehicles</b>
Sum	113	115	11
Count	47	49	5
Average	2.4	2.3	2.2

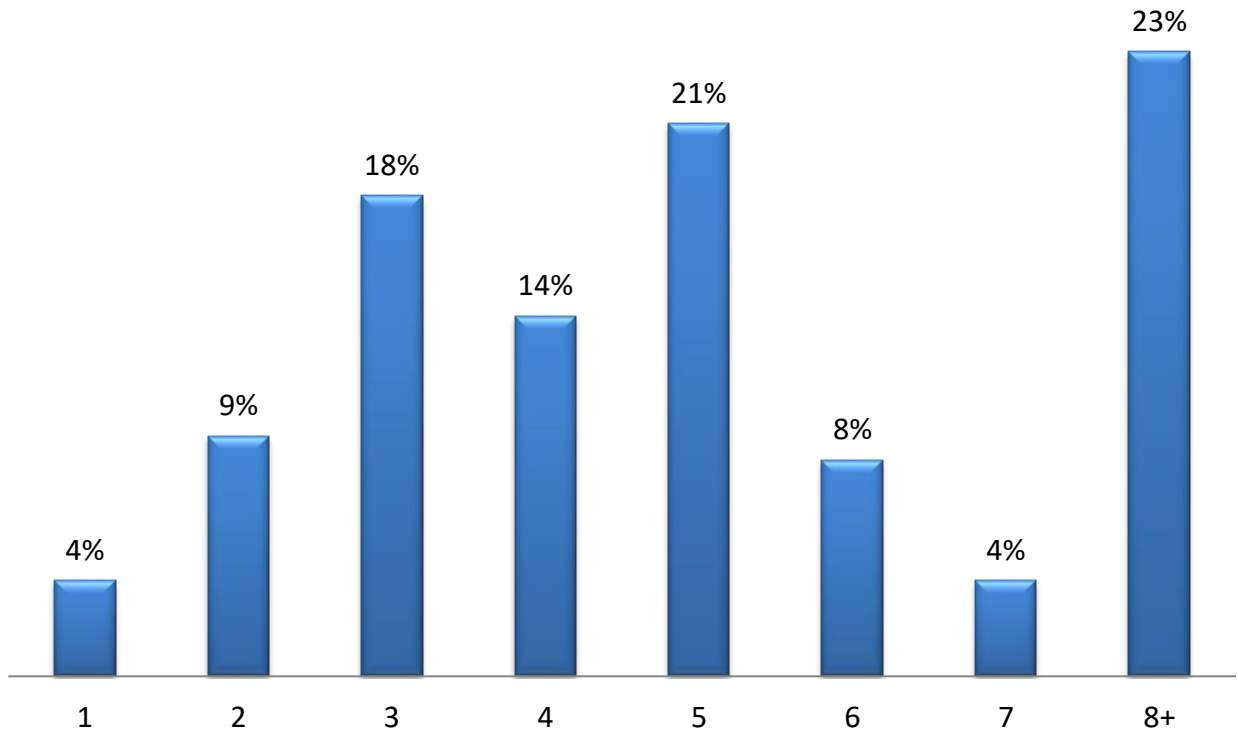
Demographic Comparisons: There were no statistically significant differences within any of the demographic groups.

2015/2019 Comparisons. The average number of ATVs in survey participants' groups in both survey years are similar (Table 7). The number of UTVs in survey participants' groups in 2019 is higher than in 2015. 2019 participants' groups were also more likely to include "other" types of equipment.

<b>Table 7. Equipment Type: Comparison of 2015-2019 Survey Results</b>		
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2015</b>
Number of ATV Vehicles per participant (avg.)	2.4	2.3
Number of UTV Vehicles per participant (avg.)	2.3	1.6
Number of Other Vehicles per participant (avg.)	2.2	0.0

Number of People in Group. Respondents were asked to indicate how many people were with them while they were on the trails. As shown in Figure 6, two-thirds of the groups had five or fewer individuals and slightly more than one-third of the groups had 6 to 21 participants. The mean (average) group size was 6.3 participants.

**Figure 6. Group Size**



Demographic Comparisons: There were no statistically significant differences within any of the demographic groups.

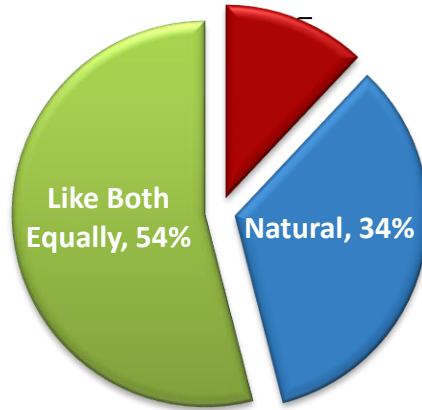
2015/2019 Comparisons. The average group size in 2015 was 5.0 and increased to 6.3 participants in 2019 (Table 8).

<b>Table 8. Group Size: Comparison of 2015-2019 Survey Results</b>		
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2015</b>
Number of people on the trails with survey participant (avg.)	6.3	5.0
The question's wording was different over the two surveys. The difference is shown below.		
<b>2019</b>	<b>2015</b>	
<i>How many people are on the trails with you today?</i>	<i>Including yourself, how many people are in your immediate travel group?</i>	



Surface Preference. When asked if they prefer natural, gravel, or both surfaces equally, a slight majority of trail users participating in the survey prefer both surfaces equally. When comparing only natural to gravel, respondents prefer a natural surface by nearly a three-to-one ratio (Figure 7).<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 7. Trail Surface Preference**



Demographic Comparisons: There were no statistically significant differences in any of the demographic groups.

2015/2019 Comparisons. The question described in Figure 7 was not included in the 2015 survey, so comparisons are not possible.

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<sup>8</sup> Later in the report, open-ended comments are summarized (Table 12 and Appendix A, Question 11). There were a few respondents who believe there is too much gravel on the trails.

## ATV/UTV Registration and Memberships

Increase in the Cost to Register ATV/UTV Vehicles. The following statement was provided to intercept survey respondents:

*The current annual cost to register UTV's and ATV's is \$30.00 for Wisconsin residents and \$35.00 for non-residents. Many public trail managers estimate that in order to maintain a natural/native soil surfaced trail system, the cost of a resident registration might have to increase to \$50.00 per year and the cost of a non-resident trail pass would have to increase to \$60.00 per year.*

When asked how such an increase would affect their use of public trail systems in Wisconsin, results shown in Table 9 indicate that 69% said such an increase would not impact their use of the trail system, 23% said that they would continue to use the trail system, but less often, and 8% would stop using the trail system altogether.

Table 9. How Would ATV/UTV Registration Increase Affect Usage of Public Trail Systems in Wisconsin? n= 110		
Would Not Impact Usage of WI Public Trail System	Would Continue to Use the WI Public Trail System, But Less Often	Would Stop Using WI Public Trail System
69%	23%	8%

### Demographic Comparisons:

- Respondents 45 and older were more likely to say that a fee increase would not impact their use of the Wisconsin Public Trail System (75% vs. 53% of respondents under 45).
- Respondents under 45 were much more likely to say that a fee increase would cause them to use the trails less often (41% vs. 16% of respondents 45+).

2015/2019 Comparisons. The question described in Table 10 was not included in the 2015 survey, so comparisons are not possible.

Memberships. Respondents were asked if they were members of the Wisconsin ATV Association or are members of another official ATV club. As shown in Table 10, relatively few respondents are members of either the Wisconsin ATV Association or other official ATV club.

Table 10. Memberships		
Member of:	Yes	No
The Wisconsin ATV Association	9%	91%
An Official ATV Club	15%	85%

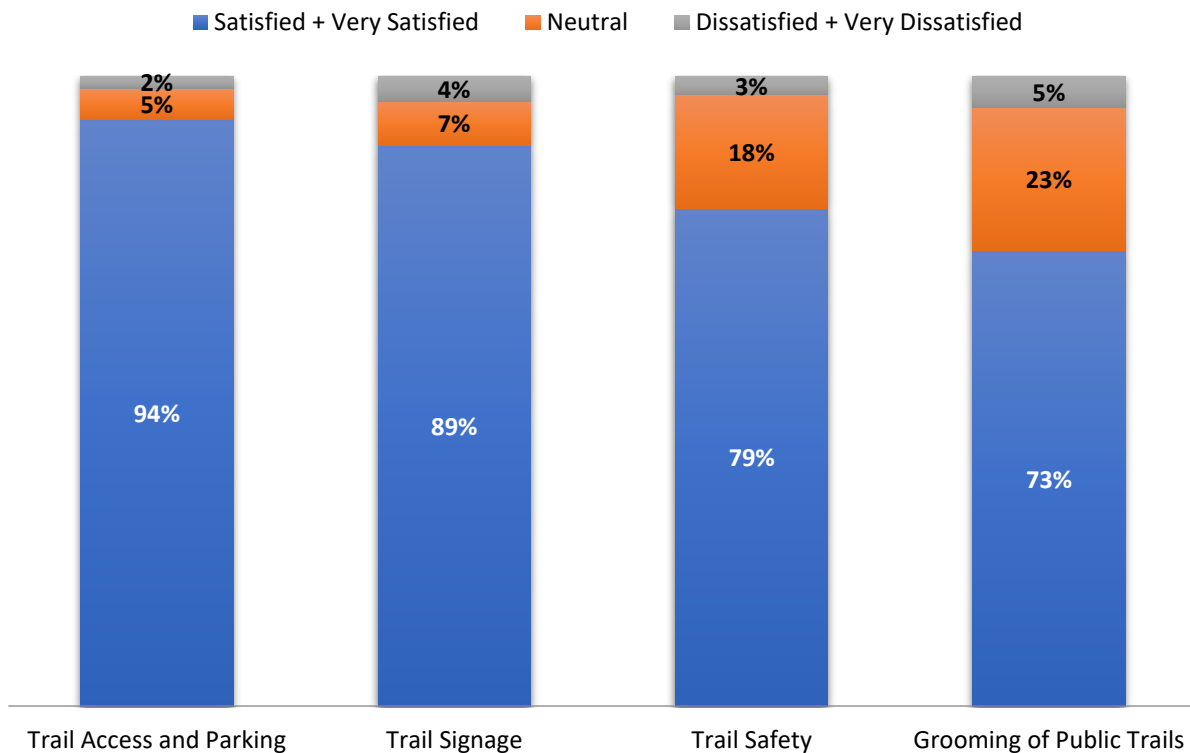
## Satisfaction and Experiences

*Level of Satisfaction.* Respondents were asked to identify their satisfaction with four aspects of the trail system using a Likert-type scale of very satisfied, satisfied, neutral, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied, and no opinion. The results are shown in Figure 8. The calculated percentages in Figure 8 exclude the count of respondents who chose the “no opinion” answer.

At least seven in ten respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with all four elements listed on the survey: access and parking, signage, safety, and grooming of public trails. The highest satisfaction ratings went to trail access and parking for which 94% of respondents were very satisfied (66%) or satisfied (28%). Trail signage received high ratings, with 58% saying they were very satisfied and 31% were satisfied. Relatively high proportions of respondents were “neutral” in terms of their satisfaction level with trail safety and the grooming of the trails and very few respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with these Jackson County trail features.

**Figure 8. Satisfaction With Trail Elements**

Excludes "No Opinion" Responses



Demographic Comparisons: This section in the survey had the most statistically significant differences and all related to household income. Respondents with household incomes of at least \$75,000 were more satisfied with all four trail attributes than respondents with less than \$75,000 household income.

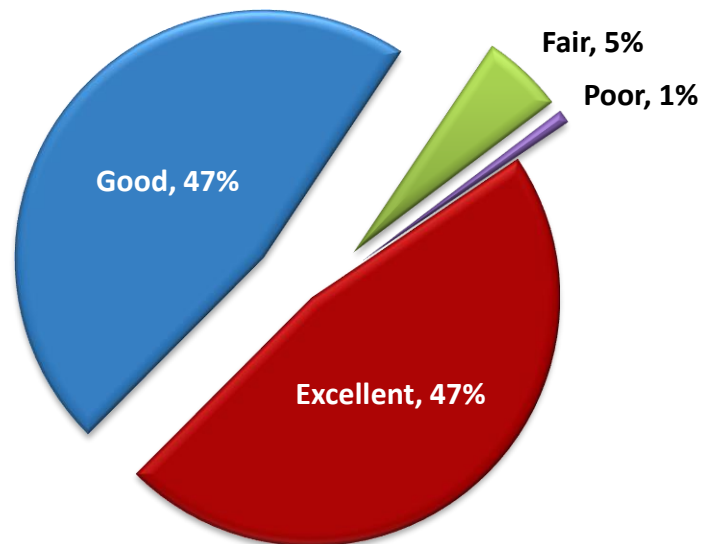
- All respondents with household incomes of at least \$75,000 (100%) were satisfied or very satisfied with **trail access and parking** (vs. 84% of respondents with household incomes of less than \$75,000).
- Ninety-eight percent of respondents with household incomes of at least \$75,000 were satisfied or very satisfied with **trail signage** (vs. 76% of respondents with <\$75,000 household income).
- Ninety percent of respondents with at least \$75,000 household income were satisfied or very satisfied with **trail safety** (vs. 66% of those with <\$75,000 household income).
- Eighty-three percent of respondents with at least \$75,000 household income were satisfied or very satisfied with the **grooming of public trails** (vs. 58% of those with <\$75,000 household income).

2015/2019 Comparisons. 2019 respondents had much higher satisfaction levels for trail grooming and lower satisfaction levels for trail safety than 2015 respondents; these two differences are statistically significant (Table 11).

<b>Table 11. Satisfaction with Trail Elements: Very Satisfied + Satisfied Responses</b> <i>Comparison of 2015-2019 Survey Results</i>		
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2015</b>
Trail Access and Parking	94%	96%
Trail Signage	89%	88%
Trail Safety	79%	86%
Grooming of Public Trails	73%	59%

Overall Experience on the Trail System. Respondents were asked to rate their overall experience on the Jackson County Trail System (Figure 9). Excellent and good ratings were identical at 47%. Very few respondents rated the trail system fair (5%) or poor (1%).

**Figure 9. Overall Experience on Jackson County Trails System**



Demographic Comparisons.

- Respondents with higher levels of household income (\$75,000+) rated the trail system higher (58% rated the trail system “excellent” vs. 26% of respondents with less than \$75,000 household income). Since those from higher income households gave higher ratings to all four factors in in Figure 8, this result is not surprising.

2015/2019 Comparisons. The question described in Figure 9 was not included in the 2015 survey, so comparisons are not possible.

## Open Ended Comments About Jackson County ATV/UTV Trail Experience

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments they would like to make regarding their ATV/UTV experience in Jackson County. The 30 written comments were grouped into specific topics by the SRC and are summarized in Table 12.

Comments related to trail grooming were the most frequently written comments (37%). A few respondents expressed concern about the speed used and the size/width of vehicles on the trails. Respondents wrote positive comments about the trail system, although a few respondents emphasized the need for better/more signage.

Examples of respondent comments shared with intercept survey volunteers:

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Grooming	11	37%
Speed, Width, and Size	5	17%
Positive Sentiments	4	13%
Signage	4	13%
Registration	2	7%
Usage - General	2	7%
Multiple Topics	1	3%
Miscellaneous	1	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

*“Keep mud spots. Wet trails, one dry weekend if you can.”*

*“I would like to see enforcement on speed and vehicle width.”*

*“Please get beacons on your groomer so it notifies us that you are there.”*

*“Was surprised at number of park lots. Trails were great. Dusty sure, but great.”*

*“Signs that say, turn lights on.”*

*“Going from \$35 every 2 years to \$50 every year could make me change my mind about owning any ATV. Right now, I own 2 ATVs.”*

*“Nice when they send renewals out all online.”*

The complete list of responses is included in Appendix A, Question 11.

## Conclusions

*It is important to bear in mind that two unforeseen factors affected this study considerably. Due to spring flooding, the number of surveys completed fell far short of the goal set for 2019. To compensate, the study team decided to collect additional data during the early part of the 2020 riding season. However, when intercepts were set to resume in the 2020 trail season, the COVID-19 pandemic precluded additional interviews. Because bad weather and the coronavirus necessitated a significant deviation from the anticipated number of intercepts collected, 2019 results may differ from what would have been obtained in “normal” circumstances. Given that caveat:*

- Survey respondents report high levels of satisfaction with their experience using the Jackson County trail network and a high proportion are repeat visitors.
- The trail network attracts trail users from other areas of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and Iowa and the primary reason for being in the area, according to a majority of respondents, is to ride these trails or other trails in the area.
- The average number of ATVs being used per group was 2.4. The average number of UTVs being used per group was 2.3. The average group size was 6.3 participants.
- Respondents’ trail preferences were split. Fifty-four percent favored both natural and gravel equally; 34% favored a natural surface, and 12% favored gravel.

### **Comparing Results Over Time**

Asking the same questions at different points in time provides a way to report changes in the overall views and opinions of Jackson County trail users regarding the topics addressed in the survey. The SRC determined, when possible, if response patterns varied at statistically significant levels when comparing the 2019 trail study results to the 2015 study which focused on the economic impact of users of the Jackson County Trail network. Since the two surveys had somewhat different purposes, not all questions are directly comparable. Given this qualifier and the challenging issues discussed earlier (bad weather and COVID-19),

- The percentage of survey participants who have ridden on Jackson County trails before were similar for both 2015 (81%) and 2019 participants (80%).
- The average number of times respondents reported riding Jackson County trails annually decreased slightly in 2019 (4.6 in 2019 vs. 5.2 in 2015).
- The average number of ATVs in survey participants’ groups in both survey years are similar (2.4 in 2019 and 2.3 in 2015). The number of UTVs survey participants’ groups in 2019 is higher than in 2015 (2.3 in 2019 vs. 1.6 in 2015).
- The mean (average) group size in 2015 was 5.0 participants and 6.3 in 2019.
- When compared to 2015 respondents, 2019 respondents had much higher satisfaction levels for trail grooming and lower satisfaction levels for trail safety.

## Appendix A – Jackson County ATV/UTV Trail Study Survey, 2019 Comments

Q1: In which lot did you park prior to getting on the trail today? “Other” responses (73 Responses)

- Comfort Inn (10x)
- Doc’s Bunkhouse (9x)
- Parkland Village Campground (9x)
- Millston (7x)
- Black River Falls (6x)
- AmericInn (5x)
- Hotel/Motel (5x)
- Cabin (4x)
- Russell Memorial Park and Campground (3x)
- Home (2x)
- Neillsville (2x)
- Casino
- Drove in
- Hatfield Cottage
- Hwy 10
- Left from driveway
- Lodge
- New Miner
- North Settlement
- Rode in
- SureStay Plus Hotel
- Wildcat

Q3: What is the primary reason for your trip to this area? “Other” responses (3 Responses)

- Camping
- Family camp
- Lunch

Q6: Have you ridden on Jackson County trails before? **If yes, how many times during the past 12 months?**

- |           |           |   |
|-----------|-----------|---|
| • 1 (13x) | • 7       | • 1 week (2x)   |
| • 2 (23x) | • 10 (3x) | • 1996-2019 (response was not included in calculations) |
| • 3 (5x)  | • 12 (2x) | • 20+   |
| • 4 (6x)  | • 18      | • Every Sunday  |
| • 5 (4x)  | • 20      |   |
| • 6 (8x)  | • 30 (2x) |   |

Q8: How many people are on the trails with you today? **(if 7+, please fill in the number)**

- |           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| • 7 (4x)  | • 12 (7x) | • 19 (3x) |
| • 8 (4x)  | • 13      | • 20      |
| • 9       | • 14      |           |
| • 10 (2x) | • 16      |           |



Q11: Do you have any additional comments about your ATV/UTV experience in Jackson County? (30 Responses)

*Grooming (11 Comments)*

- Don't narrow corners to smaller width & put logs in puddles. Creates dangerous blind corners.
- Dug out west of inter. 994 to the right of safer spot.
- Keep grooming (nice work).
- Keep mud spots. Wet trails, one dry weekend if you can.
- Leave mud holes alone.
- Much, much gravel, need more mud.
- Not so much gravel.
- Storm damage otherwise very pleased.
- The wet sand is why we kept coming back here. Usually we come 5 times a year but now we have to go farther north.
- They were groomed much better than Clark County.
- Too much gravel, it makes race tracks out of the trails, dust get so bad it can make it unsafe; lights should be mandatory.

*Speed, Width, and Size (5 Comments)*

- Limit width (2x)
- I would like to see enforcement on speed and vehicle width.
- Add size restrictions or widen trails so you can pass safely.
- I think there needs to be a size restriction on trails and in some spots need to widen out for passing people.

*Positive Sentiments (4 Comments)*

- Thank you for the trails. We have a lot of fun.
- Thanks for allowing non res to ride.
- Very nice and will be back.
- Was surprised at number of park lots. Trails were great. Dusty sure, but great.

*Signage (4 Comments)*

- Better signage.
- Need speed limit signs.
- Signs that say turn lights on.
- Trail signage - ugh!

*Registration (2 Comments)*

- Going from \$35 every 2 years to \$50 every year could make me change my mind about owning any ATV. Right now, I own 2 ATVs.
- Nice when they send renewals out all online.

*Usage – General (2 Comments)*

- I support all ATV/UTV use to use road access for here to there.
- Some riders are not courteous at all! They fly by us!

*Multiple Topics (1 Comment)*

- Get a hold of Collett Communication and please get beacons on your groomer so it notifies us that you are there.

*Miscellaneous (1 Comment)*

- It's called ALL TERRAIN vehicles.

Q12: What is your home zip code?

- 55156
- 50435
- 50475
- 50579 (3x)
- 50651
- 50702
- 52002
- 52049
- 52133
- 52134
- 52136
- 52144
- 52404
- 53038
- 53049
- 53066
- 53072
- 53080
- 53091
- 53094
- 53103
- 53105
- 53119
- 53150
- 53156
- 53158
- 53179
- 53181 (3x)
- 53189
- 53402
- 53520
- 53531
- 53536
- 53538 (2x)
- 53565
- 53583
- 53590
- 53593
- 53704
- 53804
- 53811 (5x)
- 53901
- 53913 (2x)
- 53915
- 53930
- 53950
- 53954
- 53959
- 53964 (2x)
- 53965 (2x)
- 54436
- 54456 (3x)
- 54494
- 54615
- 54636
- 54642
- 54646 (2x)
- 54653
- 54656
- 54660
- 54666
- 54701
- 54720
- 54736
- 54739
- 54743
- 54754
- 54868
- 54904
- 54935
- 54937
- 55112
- 55303
- 55327
- 55337
- 55443
- 55901
- 55929
- 55977
- 56031 (2x)
- 56251
- 60047
- 60095
- 60115
- 60175
- 60531
- 60548
- 61006 (2x)
- 61019
- 61072
- 61115
- 61356
- 62231
- 72714
- 72858

## Appendix B – Quantitative Summary of Responses by Question

### Jackson County ATV/UTV Trail Study Survey, 2019

*n* = 113

The information provided on the first page of Appendix B contains summaries of the remarks made by volunteer interviewers regarding the time, date, and location of the intercepts, as well as the gender of the participant and the type and number of vehicles the participant was using on the trail system.

Time of Day	Observations	Percentage
8 - 11:59am – morning	26	25%
12:00 - 4:59pm – afternoon	63	60%
5:00pm - 8:59pm evening	16	15%
9:00pm - 12:00am late evening	0	0%

Month of Intercept	Observations	Percentage
June	1	1%
July	34	30%
August	36	32%
September	42	37%

Location	Observations	Percentage
Dilly's Hatfield	36	34%
Pray	17	16%
Black River Falls	15	14%
Bev's	13	12%
East/East Arbutus/Lake Arbutus	11	10%
Cenex Oasis	3	3%
Millston	2	2%
American Inn	2	2%
Columbia	1	1%
Best Western	1	1%
Mocha Mouse	1	1%
177	1	1%
Parkland Village	1	1%
Mugs	1	1%

Gender	Observations	Percentage
Male	67	66%
Female	35	34%

Equipment Type	#of Vehicles	Count	Average
ATV	113	47	2.4
UTV	115	49	2.3
Other Vehicles	11	5	2.2

**1. In which lot did you park prior to getting on the trail today?**

1%	Hatfield Pines	0%	7th Street
13%	East Arbutus	3%	Hwy 12
1%	Clay School	5%	Settlement Road
4%	Highway 54	1%	Bartell Road
1%	Airport Rd.	70%	Other <i>See Appendix A</i>

**2. On which trails did you ride today (Trail Number)?**

50%	Ott Memorial Trail (9)	59%	Pray Trail (7)
38%	Bell Mound Trail (94)	33%	City Point Trail (54)
30%	Oak Ridge Trail (6)	34%	Wildcat Loop (4)

**3. What is the primary reason for your trip to this area? (Mark •one)**

67%	To ride this and/or other trails in the area
0%	To attend a special event/festival
23%	On a leisure trip in area
1%	Visiting family and friends in the area
0%	On business or meeting in area
4%	I live here
5%	Other <i>See Appendix A</i>

**4. How satisfied are you with ...**

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	No Opinion
Trail signage	2%	2%	7%	31%	58%	0%
Grooming of public trails	4%	1%	22%	33%	39%	1%
Trail safety	2%	1%	18%	30%	48%	2%
Trail access & parking	2%	0%	4%	27%	64%	3%

**5. Are you: a member of:**

a)	the Wisconsin ATV Association	Yes	9%	No	91%
b)	an official ATV club	Yes	15%	No	85%

**6. Have you ridden on Jackson County trails before?**

20% No

80% Yes - How many times during the past 12 months?        **AVG/MEAN 4.6 times**

**7. Overall, how would you rate your experience on the Jackson County Trail System?**

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
47%	47%	5%	1%

**8. How many people are on the trails with you today? (if 7+, please fill in the number)**

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	___#	
4%	9%	18%	14%	21%	8%	4%	23%	<b>AVG/MEAN 6.3 people</b>

**9. When riding your ATV/UTV, do you prefer a natural or a graveled surface?**

Natural	Gravel	I like both equally
34%	12%	54%

**10. The current annual cost to register UTV's and ATV's is \$30.00 for Wisconsin residents and \$35.00 for non-residents. Many public trail managers estimate that in order to maintain a natural/native soil surfaced trail system, the cost of a resident registration might have to increase to \$50.00 per year and the cost of a non-resident trail pass would have to increase to \$60.00 per year. How would such an increase most likely affect your use of public trail systems in Wisconsin?**

69% The increase would not impact my use of the Wisconsin Public Trail System

23% I would continue to use the Wisconsin Public Trail System, but come less often

8% I would stop using the Wisconsin Public Trail System altogether

**11. Do you have any additional comments about your ATV/UTV experience in Jackson County? See Appendix A**

**12. What is your home zip code? See Appendix A**

**13. What is your age?**

18 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45-54	55 - 64	65+
2%	12%	17%	32%	26%	11%

**14. What is the highest level of schooling you've completed?**

1%	Some high school	25%	2-year/tech college degree
34%	High school/GED	14%	4-year college degree
19%	Some college/tech	7%	Grad/Professional degree

**15. Which of these categories best describes your annual household income?**

0%	Under \$25,000	20%	\$100,000 - \$149,999
12%	\$25,000 - \$49,999	13%	Over \$150,000
23%	50,000 - \$74,999	12%	Prefer not to answer
22%	\$75,000 - \$99,999		

**16. Follow-up Information**

a. Would you like to receive future emails about recreational opportunities in Jackson County?

Yes 28% No 72%

b. When the study is finished, would you like results emailed to you? Yes 22% No 78%

c. If yes to either 17 a or b, email address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C – Intercept Instruction Sheet

### Jackson County ATV Trails Intercept Survey - Instructions

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#### INTERCEPT INTERVIEWING INSTRUCTIONS

- One common strategy when conducting intercept surveys is to approach every third, every fifth, etc., person. This helps avoid any unintentional sampling bias.
- Each interviewer should have copies of the survey, a clipboard, and several black pens.
- Interviewers should wear identification, such as a nametag.
- Individuals should always be approached in a friendly and professional manner.
- It is optimal for the interviewer to fill out the survey with the respondent. (i.e., no self-administering).
- Respondents should not fill out a survey and bring it back. It is **not** an option for respondents to take the survey with them to complete and return it via mail at a later date.
- Only one survey should be completed by a member of an immediate group. For example, if a couple is approached together, only one person should complete the survey for the couple.
- The survey should be completed by adults 18 years of age or older.
- For this survey, the best time to solicit survey responses is typically in the afternoon, once participants have had time to travel on the ATV trails and may have a better idea of their daily expenditures.  
***Standard Introduction/request for interview: Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ . I am working with the County Forestry and Parks Department and Black River Area Chamber to Commerce. We're conducting short interviews with ATV trail users. Your answers will help us know how we might meet the needs of ATV trail users more effectively. Your participation is voluntary but would be greatly appreciated. Your responses will be anonymous and confidential, contain no identifiable information, and none of your responses will be associated with you individually. Would you have a few minutes to answer a series of questions about your trail use today? If the individual declines, thank them anyway.***
- Ideally, each person asked will agree to complete the survey. The reality, however, is that some people will refuse to participate. The best advice for securing an interview is to be friendly in your approach and to answer any questions they may have before deciding to participate in the survey. The two main purposes of the survey are to estimate the economic impact of trail visitors on the area economy and to gather feedback about the visitor's experience on the trails in order to make improvements.
- You will need to use the trail map provided to you to identify the trail segments traveled by each participant.
- Completed surveys should be given to the Jackson County Forestry and Parks Department.