



Bayfield Peninsula Silent Sports Trails: A Community and Economic Impact Study 2025



Big Ravine – Pine Bluff Trail

Photo courtesy of TJoseph Media



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THE SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER (SRC)

The Survey Research Center (SRC) is a research organization at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls in River Falls, Wisconsin. Since 1990, the SRC has provided statistically sound, low-cost information gathering services for academics, local units of government, non-profit groups, school districts, and other organizations. The SRC conducts surveys on a wide variety of topics including customer satisfaction, resident experience, business climate, equity and inclusion, labor needs, etc.

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PART I: ECONOMIC IMPACT OF BAYFIELD PENINSULA TRAILS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To estimate the economic value generated by Bayfield Peninsula trails in Bayfield County, an Intercept Survey was launched in September 2024 and data collection concluded at the end of September 2025. Trail counter data from 11 trails was used to estimate an average annual visitorship of 17,679 unique trips by visitor groups. Based on this estimated visitorship, a minimum sample size of 377 responses was needed to develop statistically valid estimates. A total of 721 responses were received, leading to a margin of error of 3.5%.

Throughout this report, respondents are referred to as trail users, community members, or simply as respondents. Trail users include Bayfield Peninsula residents and visitors to the area. Community members are those who live in the Bayfield Peninsula.

Key findings of the study are as follows:

Attributes of Trail Users

- Half (50%) of all trail users visit in groups of two and almost one-third (30%) visit in groups of three or more.
- Over one-quarter (27%) of trail users are seniors (65+) and 14% are younger than 35 years.
- Over one-quarter (28%) of trail users have household incomes of under \$75,000.
- About three-quarters of trail users do not have a primary residence in the Bayfield Peninsula.
- Just under one-quarter (22%) of trail users reside in a zip code in the Bayfield Peninsula, followed by 17% who reside in the Greater Minneapolis-St. Paul region and 16% who reside in Northern & Central Wisconsin.

Impact of Trails on Visitorship of Bayfield Peninsula

- Over half (54%) of trail users visit the Bayfield Peninsula primarily due to the trails. Trails are responsible for attracting about 63% of trail users to the Bayfield Peninsula, including 54% of whom visit primarily due to trails and 9% who would not have visited if the trails did not exist.
- One-third (34%) of trail users lengthen their stay due to the trails and 43% of these trail users add 2 or more days to their trip.

Experience with Trails

- Almost three-quarters (73%) of trail users visit multiple trails in Bayfield Peninsula during their trip, including 55% who visit 3 or more trails.
- Well over half (61%) of trail users visit the Bayfield Peninsula trails at least twice a year. About 12% visit 8 or more times.

- Trail users are highly satisfied with the trails. Over three-quarters (77%) are very likely to return to the Bayfield Peninsula based on their experience with the trails. Only 3% are at all unlikely to return.

Overnight Accommodations

- A vast majority (84%) of trail users who do not reside in the Bayfield Peninsula stay overnight during their trip. About two-thirds (66%) of these trail users spend at least 3 nights in the Bayfield Peninsula.
- The three most popular accommodations include cabin/house rental (29%), hotel/motel/resort (26%), and camping/RV (22%).

Activities that Trail Users Participate In

- The most popular activities trail users participate in in the Bayfield Peninsula include hiking/trail running (93%), swimming/beach (33%), kayaking (21%), canoeing (21%), and paddleboarding (21%).

Economic Impact of Trails

- On average, out-of-area trail users spend about \$620 per trip and about \$219 per day in the Bayfield Peninsula. This spending can be directly attributed to the Bayfield Peninsula trails. Lodging, food, and groceries are the top three spending categories.
- On an annual basis, the trails generate a total of \$3.4 million in new spending in Bayfield County. The economic value of this spending is over \$3.5 million. In addition, the trails support 33 jobs per year in Bayfield County and are responsible for \$829,000 per year in wages, salaries, and other labor income.
- The top three industries in Bayfield County that receive the largest economic impact from the trails include hotels & motels (including casino hotels), full-service restaurants, and amusement & recreation.

PURPOSE AND METHODS

To estimate the economic value generated by Bayfield Peninsula trails in Bayfield County, the Survey Research Center (SRC) partnered with the Bayfield Area Trails Committee to conduct an Intercept Survey of trail users. The survey allowed us to identify the primary component needed for the economic impact analysis: spending in each category (e.g. grocery, accommodation, entertainment) by out-of-area trail users (or visitors) that can be attributed to the Bayfield Peninsula trails. It also allowed us to determine the dynamics of how trail users utilize the trails, the demographic attributes of the trail users, and the qualitative value of trails to the trail users.

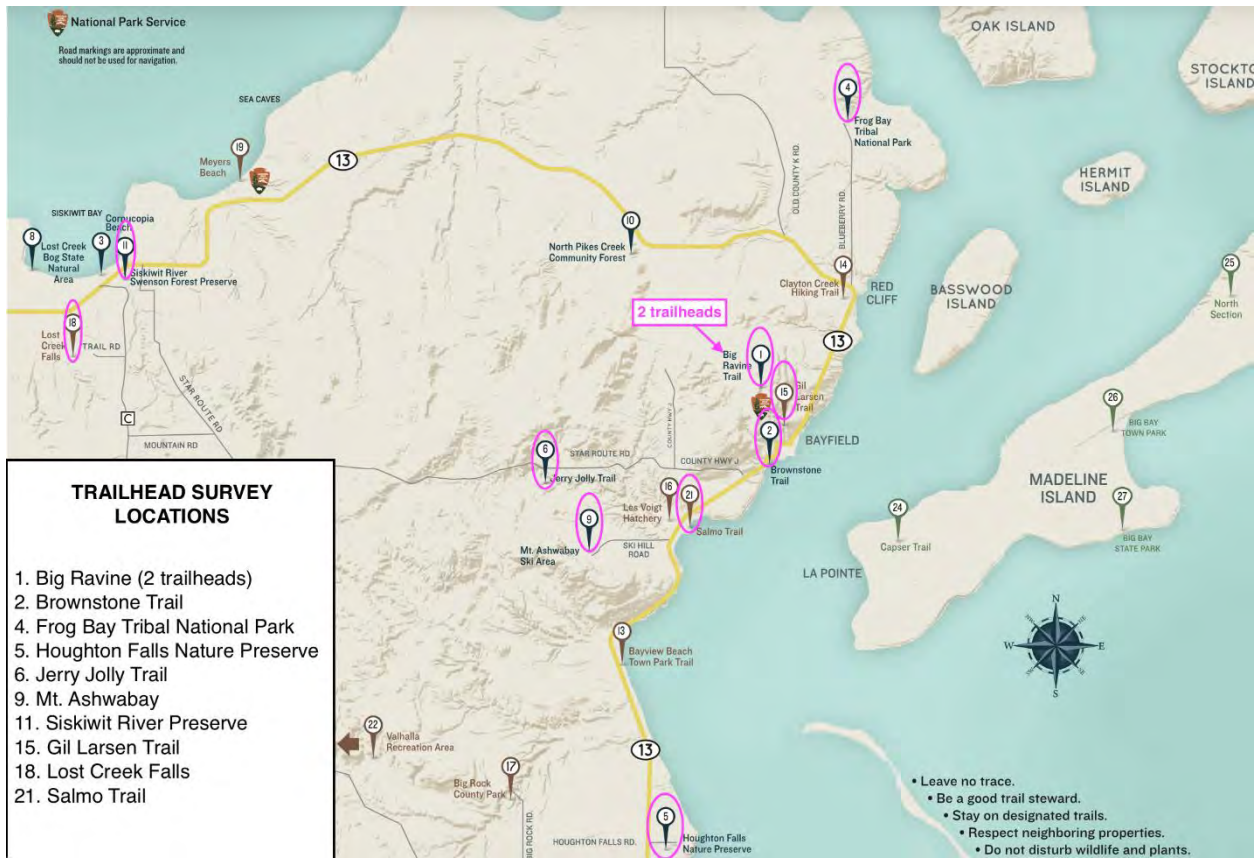
The Intercept Survey was launched in September 2024 and data collection concluded at the end of September 2025. Trail counter data from 11 trails was used to estimate an average annual visitorship of 17,679 unique trips by user groups (see map on next page)¹. Based on this estimated visitorship, a minimum sample size of 377 responses was needed to develop statistically valid estimates. A total of **721** responses were received, leading to a margin of error of **3.5%**. Because the actual sample size exceeded the minimum sample size needed, the economic impact estimates we present in this report are highly accurate and represent the Bayfield Peninsula trail visitors well.

The survey was implemented by volunteers at various trailheads who intercepted trail users and requested them to complete a survey. Table 1 below shows the total number of responses recorded at each trail. The volunteers enumerated the survey on electronic tablets and responses were recorded in a database maintained by the SRC. Volunteer hours were distributed proportionately throughout the data collection months to account for seasonality and ensure that adequate data is collected on each trail for the economic impact analysis. Volunteers were managed by the Bayfield Area Trails committee and staff.

Table 1. Number of Surveys Conducted by Trail		
Region	Frequency	Percentage
Houghton Falls	159	22%
Lost Creek Falls	131	18%
Siskiwit River Preserve	111	15%
Mt. Ashwabay	67	9%
Frog Bay Tribal Park	63	9%
Big Ravine - Gil Larsen	53	7%
Brownstone	49	7%
Salmo Trail	33	5%
Big Ravine - North Ravine & Headwaters	26	4%
Jerry Jolly Trails	18	3%
Big Ravine - Hilltop	9	1%
Total	719²	100%

¹ The trail counter data for each trail is shown in Table A1 in the Appendix at the end of this report.

² The sum of responses by trail (719) does not match the total number of responses because no trail data was available for 2 surveys.



ATTRIBUTES OF TRAIL USERS

The Intercept Survey asked about whether the trail user had a primary residence in the Bayfield Peninsula, the number of individuals in the group, and the age and the household income of the respondent.

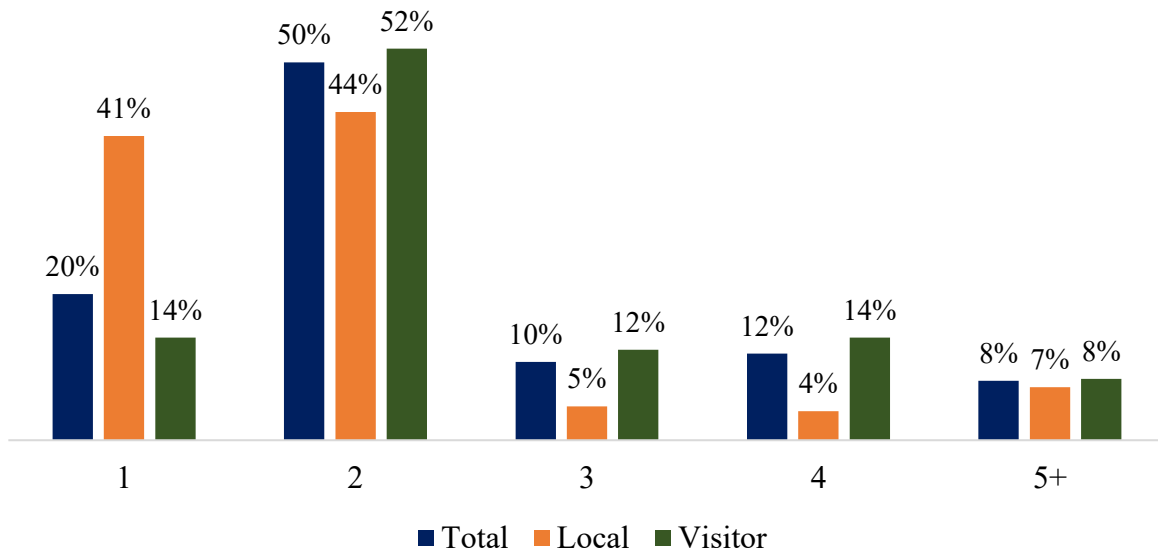
Group Size of Trail Users

Figure 1 shows the number of individuals in trail user groups. The blue bars represent the proportion of the overall sample (local residents and visitors) that falls within each category, the orange bars represent local residents only, and the green bars represent visitors only. The proportion of the overall sample (blue bars) is, therefore, the weighted average of the proportion of local residents and visitors.

Of the total groups of trail users (blue bars), about 20% trail users intercepted visited the trails alone, and half (50%) visited in groups of 2. Slightly under one-third (30%) of all trail users make the trip in groups of 3 or more. Only a small proportion (8%) of groups include 5 or more individuals.

When comparing local trail users to visitors, Figure 1 shows that visitors are much more likely to visit in larger groups than local residents. Only about 14% of visitors visit alone, and 52% visit in groups of two. In contrast, 41% of local residents visit alone and 44% visit in groups of two. A likely reason for this result is that visitors are more likely to travel long distances in larger groups than area residents.

Figure 1. Size of Visitor Group

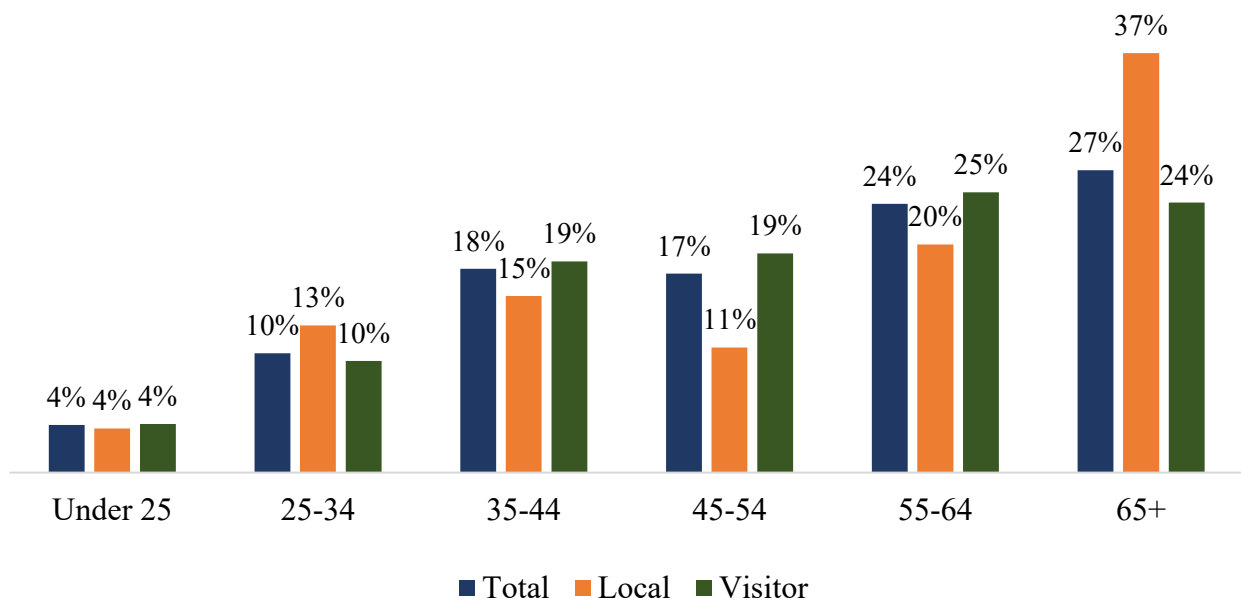


Age Distribution

Figure 2 shows that the overall age distribution of trail users skews towards older individuals relative to residents of Bayfield County. An overwhelming majority (96%) of trail users in the sample are over 25 years of age. In contrast, the Wisconsin Department of Administration Demographic Services (2023) reports that only 86% of Bayfield County residents are older than 25. Senior residents (65+) are somewhat underrepresented in the sample (27% compared to 31% in Bayfield County), likely due to the physical nature of the outdoor activities — such as hiking, swimming, and kayaking — that trail users participate in in the Bayfield Peninsula.

In addition, while a similar proportion of both local trail users and visitors are under the age of 25 and there are only small differences across most other age categories (e.g. 68% of local residents are 45 years or older compared to 67% of visitors), a much larger proportion of local trail users are seniors (65+). This is not a surprising result because older individuals are much less likely to travel long distances for recreation. Seniors who reside within the Bayfield Peninsula, therefore, have much greater access to the local trails relative to those who have to travel long distances to visit the trails.

Figure 2. Age Distribution of Trail Users

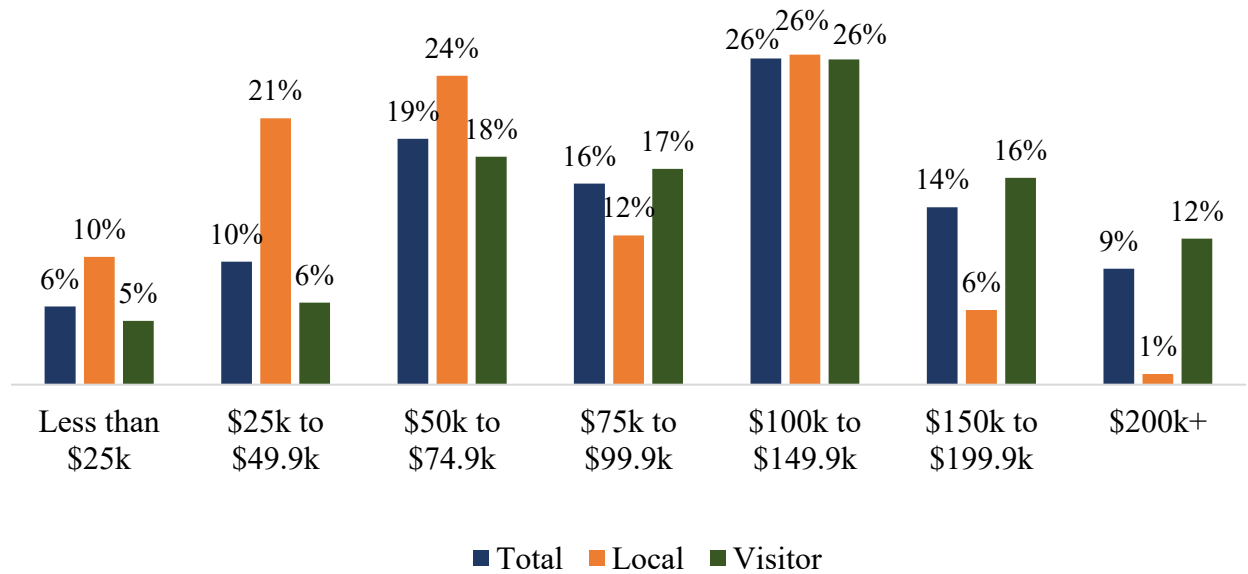


Household Income

Figure 3 shows the distribution of annual household income of trail users to Bayfield Peninsula trails. Trail users in the overall sample are much more likely to have higher household incomes than residents of Bayfield County. The median household income in Bayfield County was \$69,609 in 2023 (US Census Bureau, 2024). That is, 50% of residents had household incomes below \$69,609 and 50% had household incomes greater than or equal to that amount. As shown in Figure 3, 65% of trail users have household incomes of \$75,000 or higher.

Comparing local residents to visitors, however, shows that visitors tend to have higher household incomes across the income distribution. Only 45% of local residents reported household incomes of \$75,000 or higher compared to 71% of visitors who reported the same. In addition, only 7% of local residents have household incomes above \$150,000 compared to 28% of visitors.

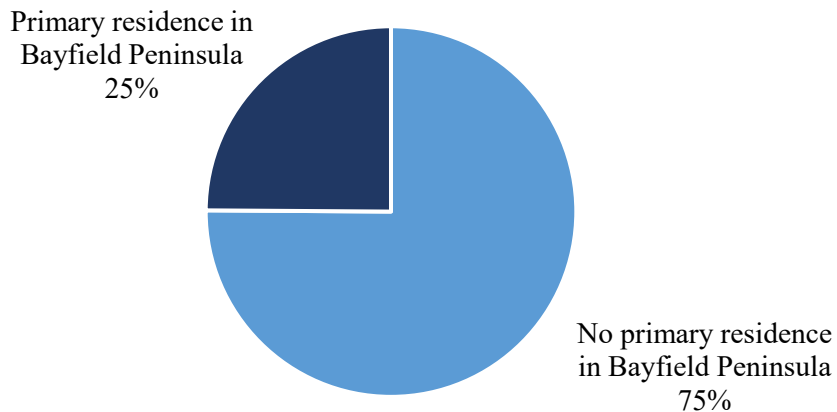
Figure 3. Household Income of Trail Users



Primary Residence in Bayfield Peninsula

Figure 4 shows that a large majority of trail users (75%) do not have primary residence in the Bayfield Peninsula. That is, they visit from outside of the region and are responsible for bringing new spending to the area.

Figure 4. Trail Users with a Primary Residence in Bayfield Peninsula



Regions in Which Trail Users Reside

Trail users were asked to provide the zip codes of their residence. Table 2 below shows that, consistent with the results of Figure 4, about one-quarter of trail users reside in the Bayfield Peninsula. The minor discrepancy between the results of Table 1 and Figure 4 is likely due to the fact that the boundaries of the Bayfield Peninsula are not contiguous to the constituent zip codes. Note that regions with 1% or fewer trail users were lumped into the All Other Regions category.

Region	Frequency	Percentage
Bayfield Peninsula	156	22%
Greater Minneapolis–St. Paul	119	17%
Northern & Central Wisconsin	119	16%
Milwaukee Area	54	8%
Madison Area	34	5%
Chicago Area	33	5%
Western Wisconsin	31	4%
Duluth Area	29	4%
Minnesota Outside the Twin Cities	27	4%
Southern & Eastern U.S.	16	2%
Southern & Mountain West	16	2%
All other regions	65	9%

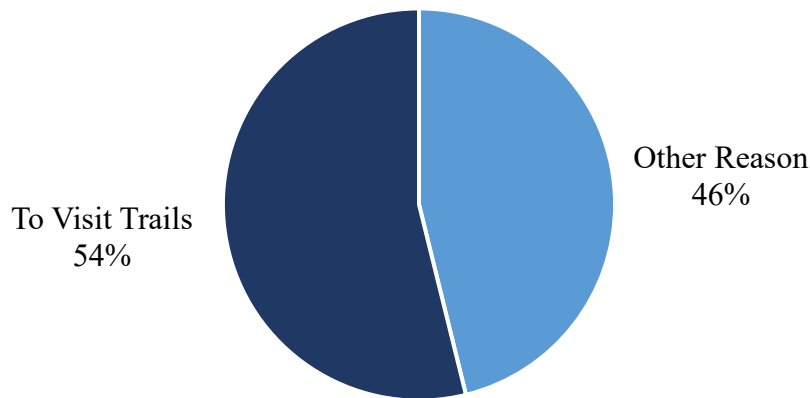
IMPACT OF TRAILS ON VISITORSHIP TO BAYFIELD PENINSULA

Trail users who reside outside the Bayfield Peninsula (or visitors) were asked to indicate whether trails were the primary reason they chose to visit the Bayfield Peninsula, the extent to which trails impacted their likelihood of visiting, and the number of days trails extended their trip.

Primary Purpose of Trip

Figure 5 shows that over half (54%) of visitors visited the Bayfield Peninsula primarily due to trails. That is, they would not have visited the Bayfield Peninsula if the trails did not exist.

Figure 5. Primary Reason of Trip to Bayfield Peninsula



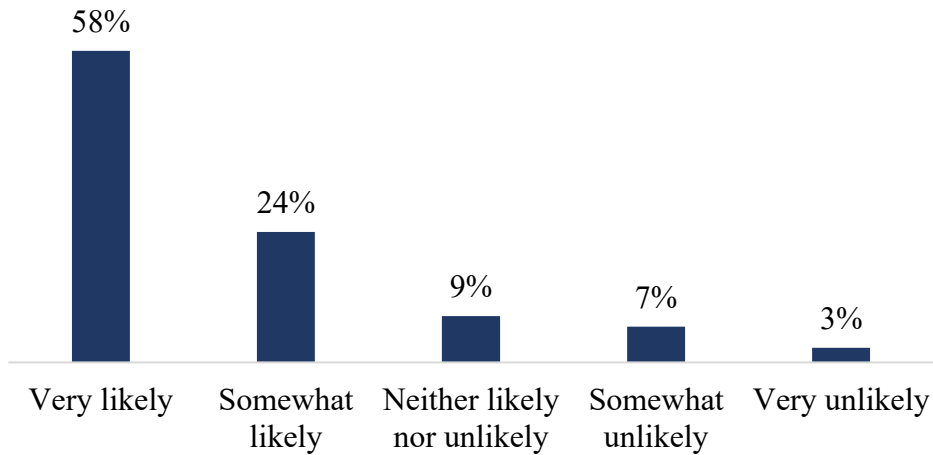
Impact of Trails on Likelihood of Visiting Bayfield Peninsula

Visitors who indicated that trails were not the primary reason they chose to visit the Bayfield Peninsula were asked to indicate their likelihood of making the trip if the trails did not exist. Figure 6 (on the next page) summarizes the results.

About 58% of these visitors indicated that it was “very likely” that they would have still made the trip even if the trails did not exist. Another 24% selected “somewhat likely”. For the remaining 19% of visitors, the trip was less than somewhat likely if the trails did not exist, implying that the trails are responsible for inducing 19% of visitors to visit the Bayfield Peninsula even though trails were not the primary reason for the visit.

A back-of-the-envelope calculation shows that trails are responsible for attracting about 63% of trail users to the Bayfield Peninsula. These include 54% of visitors who visited primarily due to trails (Figure 5) and 9% of those for whom trails were not the primary reason who would not have visited if the trails did not exist (i.e. 19% of 46%).

Figure 6. Likelihood of Visiting Area if Trails Did Not Exist



Impact of Trails on Length of Stay

The survey asked visitors if having access to the trails lengthened their stay in the Bayfield Peninsula. Figure 7 below shows that about one-third (34%) indicated that the trails did lengthen their stay.

Visitors who stated that trails had lengthened their stay were asked to indicate the number of days the trails added to their trip. Figure 8 (on the next page) shows that 57% of visitors added one more day to their trip to visit the trails. In addition, well over one-quarter of visitors (28%) lengthened their stay in the Bayfield Peninsula by 3 or more days due to the trails.

Figure 7. Whether Trails Lengthened Visitor Stay

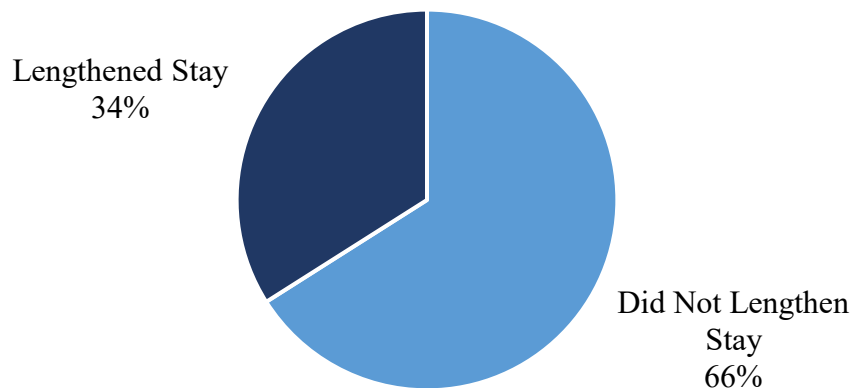
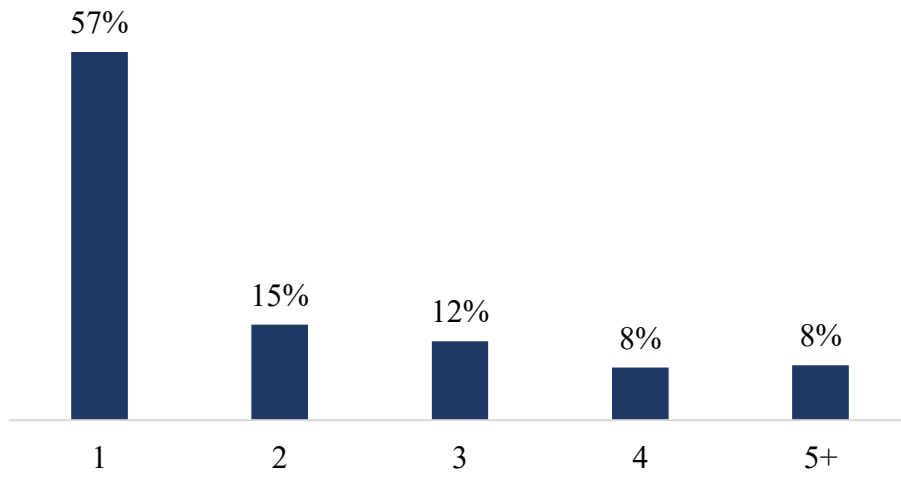


Figure 8. Number of Days Trails Lengthened Stay



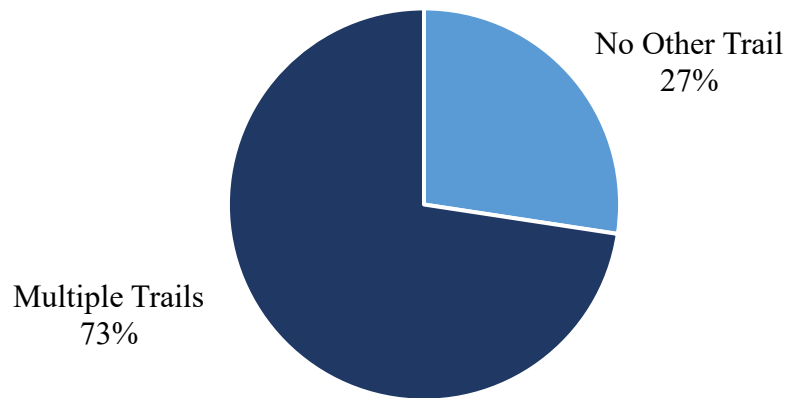
EXPERIENCE WITH TRAILS

Visitors were asked to share if they visited any other trails during this visit, if they had visited Bayfield Peninsula trails in the past year, and if their experience with the trails would lead them to return to the area.

Other Trail Locations Visited

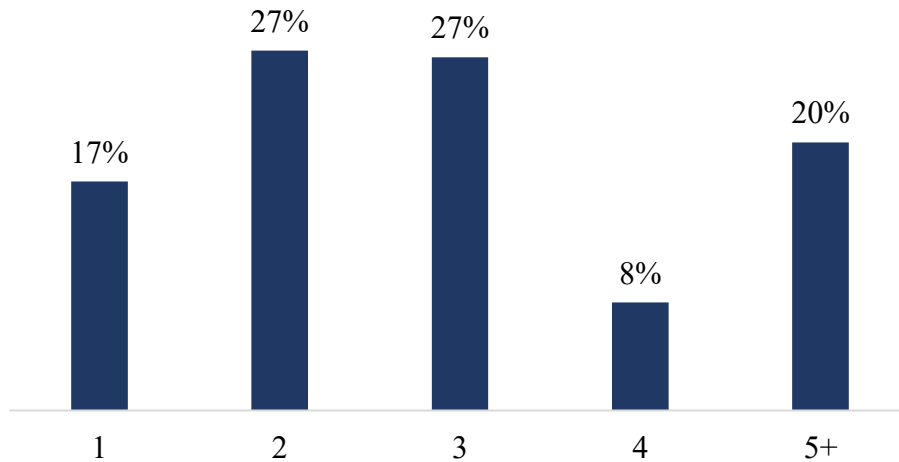
Figure 9 shows that almost three-quarters (73%) of visitors visit multiple trails during their visit to the Bayfield Peninsula.

Figure 9. Visitors Who Visit Multiple Trails



In addition, Figure 10 below shows that well over half (55%) of these visitors visit 3 or more trails during the visit.

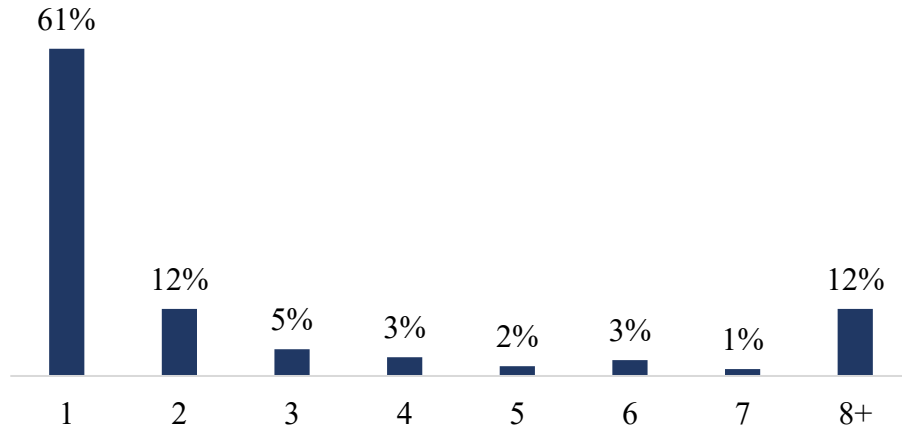
Figure 10. Number of Other Trails Visitors Visit



Visits to Bayfield Peninsula Trails in Past Year

Visitors were asked to indicate how many times in the past 12 months they visited Bayfield Peninsula trails, including their current visit. Figure 11 shows that about 39% of trail users visited Bayfield Peninsula trails at least once in the past year, including over one-quarter (27%) who visited 3 or more times.

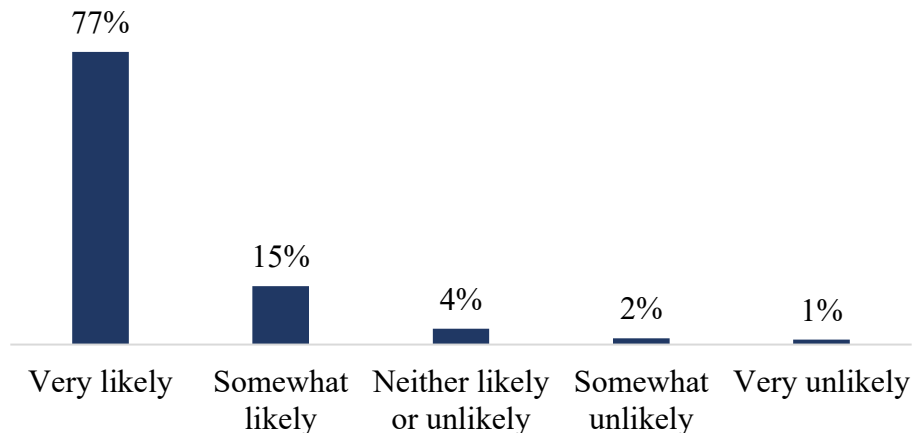
Figure 11. Number of Times Trail Users Visited Trails in the Past 12 Months



Satisfaction with Bayfield Peninsula Trails

Trail users were asked to specify their likelihood of returning to the Bayfield Peninsula based on the trail experience on their current trip. Figure 12 shows that trail users are highly satisfied with their trail experience. Over three quarters (77%) stated that they are very likely to return. A trivial proportion of trail users expressed dissatisfaction by selecting “somewhat unlikely” (2%) or “very unlikely” (1%).

Figure 12. Likelihood of Returning to Bayfield Peninsula Trails



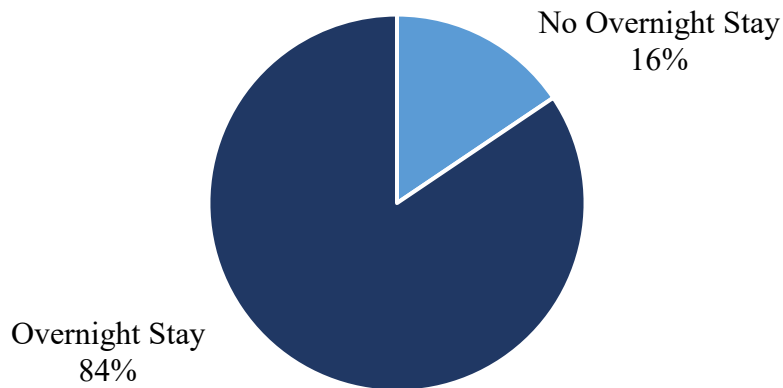
OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS

Visitors were asked if they plan to stay overnight during their trip, the number of nights they will stay, and the accommodations they will use.

Likelihood of Staying Overnight

Figure 13 shows that about 84% of visitors stay overnight in the Bayfield Peninsula during their visit. This implies that a large majority of visitors travel a significant distance to visit the Bayfield Peninsula.

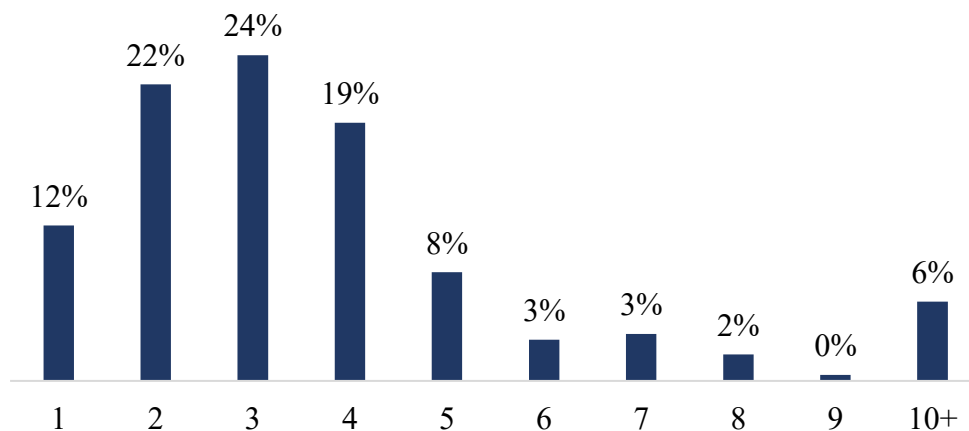
Figure 13. Whether Visitors Stay Overnight



Number of Nights Spent

Figure 14 shows that about two-thirds (66%) of visitors with overnight stays spend at least 3 nights in the Bayfield Peninsula, including almost one-quarter (23%) who spend at least 5 nights. Only one-third of visitors (33%) have short-term stays of 1 or 2 nights.

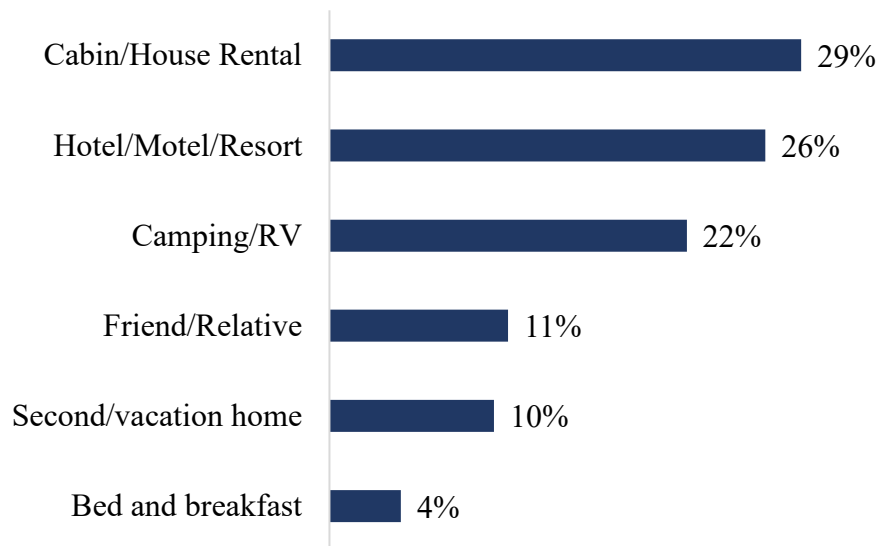
Figure 14. Number of Nights Visitors Spend in the Area



Types of Accommodation

Figure 15 shows the types of accommodations that visitors use when they stay overnight in the Bayfield Peninsula. Respondents were allowed to specify multiple accommodations for this question. The most popular accommodations are cabin/house rental and hotel/motel/resort, each used by more than one quarter of visitors. About one-in-five visitors also use camping/RV as their overnight accommodation. The rest of the options shown in Figure 15 were selected by only few visitors.

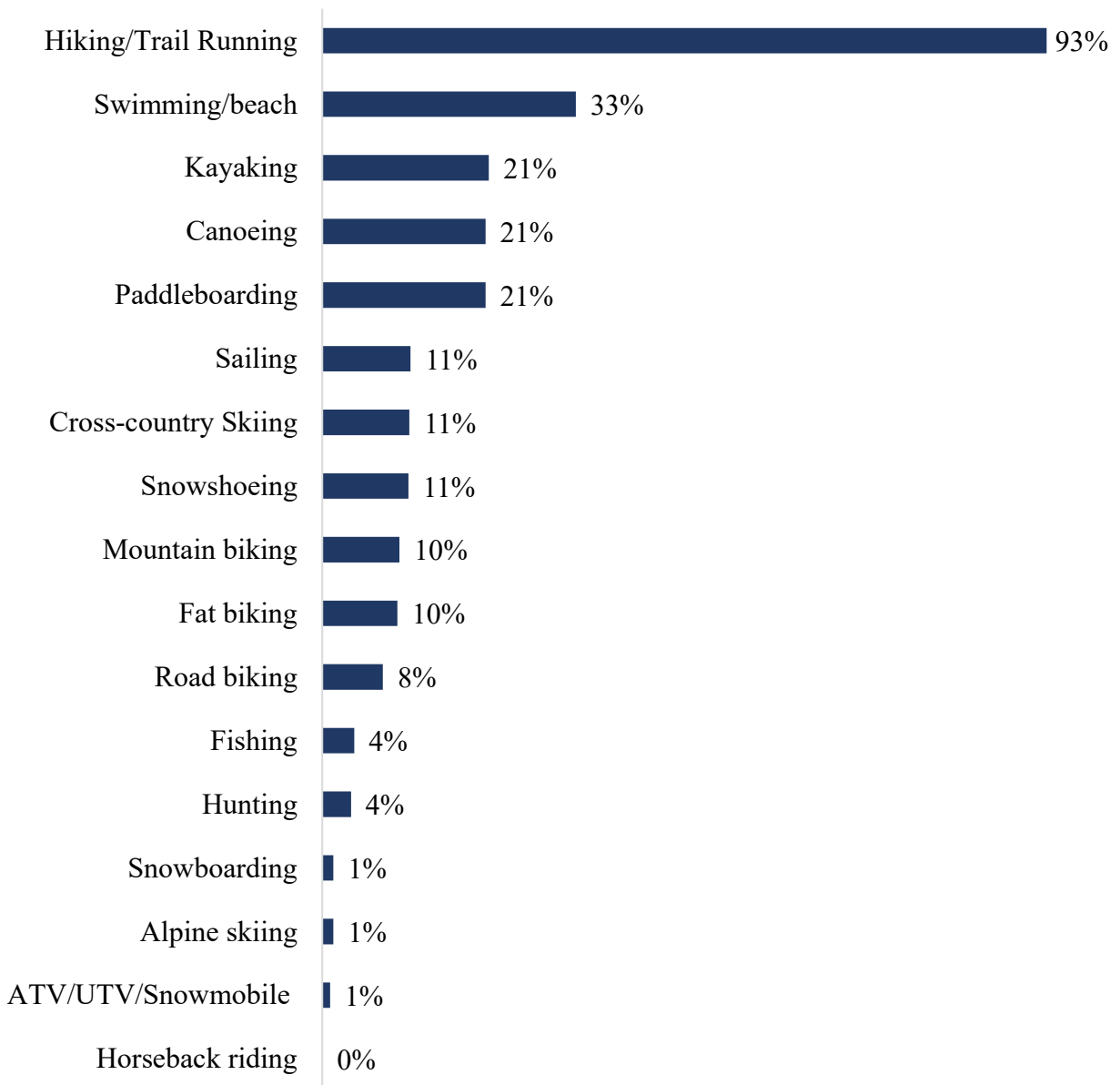
Figure 15. Types of Accommodations Used by Visitors



ACTIVITIES THAT TRAIL USERS PARTICIPATE IN

All trail users were asked to specify the top three activities that they participated in or plan to participate in during their trip. Figure 16 below summarizes the results. Hiking/trail running is by far the most popular activity. This is not a surprising result since hiking is one of the most widely accessible activities the survey asked about. Significant proportions of trail users also selected swimming/beach (33%), kayaking (21%), canoeing (21%), and paddleboarding (21%). Notably, all winter-exclusive activities, such as skiing and snowshoeing, were selected by only about one-in-ten or fewer trail users, implying that the Bayfield Peninsula trails attract most trail users during warm-weather months.

Figure 16. Activities in Bayfield Peninsula that Trail Users Participate In



ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

In this section, we present the estimates of the economic impact analysis. We first present spending in the Bayfield Peninsula that can be attributed to trails. We then present the overarching estimates of the economic impact of trails on Bayfield County.

Spending Induced by Trails by Category

To quantify the economic impact of trails, we consider only those trail users who reside outside of the region. These visitors represent new dollars invested in the local economy, in contrast with spending conducted by local residents which is simply a reallocation of spending from one area of the local economy to another. For example, the funds that a local resident uses to purchase a mountain bike in the area are those that would have likely been spent in another part of the local economy. Thus, these funds do not stimulate economic growth as would funds that were earned elsewhere and spent in the Bayfield Peninsula.

Table 3 shows the spending from visitors that can be attributed to the Bayfield Peninsula trails. The intercept survey asked visitors to list by spending for each category shown in Table 1. The survey also asked these visitors to specify the spending that would have occurred even if they did not visit the Bayfield Peninsula trails. This amount was subtracted from the overall spending to determine the spending that can be directly attributed to the Bayfield Peninsula trails.

Table 3 shows the spending for each category per trip and per day. On average, each trip generates a total of \$620 in spending in the Bayfield Peninsula. For reference, the average duration of a trip is 3.5 nights. The largest expense for each trip is lodging, averaging \$272 per trip, followed by food (\$126). The miscellaneous categories include items that are not included in other categories, such as ferry rides. On average, visitors spend about \$219 per day in the Bayfield Peninsula due to the Bayfield Peninsula trails.

Table 3. Trail-Induced Spending by Trail Users Who Reside Outside the Bayfield Peninsula				
	Spending per Trip		Spending per Day	
	<u>Average</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
Lodging	\$272	\$5,000	\$98	\$2,000
Food	\$126	\$3,000	\$45	\$1,000
Groceries	\$45	\$5,050	\$15	\$1,683
Entertainment	\$32	\$800	\$11	\$200
Shopping	\$44	\$1,000	\$14	\$250
Gas	\$29	\$500	\$11	\$225
Biking	\$5	\$750	\$3	\$750
Boating	\$10	\$1,200	\$3	\$300
Other Recreation	\$9	\$1,127	\$3	\$376
Miscellaneous	\$47	\$6,000	\$15	\$1,500
	\$620		\$219	

Total Economic Impact on Bayfield County

The economic value of the Bayfield Peninsula trails was estimated using IMPLAN Input-Output Modeling software. The underlying assumption behind IMPLAN's modeling is that in a given economy, all industries and households are linked as the value of new spending flows from one party to another. As a result, each dollar spent in the Bayfield Peninsula supports a host of additional economic activities across the supply chains in the region. This is known as the "multiplier effect". Another important concept used in IMPLAN modeling is "leakage". Leakages represent visitor spending dollars that do not circulate through the Bayfield Peninsula's economy and thus reduce the overall economic impact of that spending. For example, if a local restaurant uses visitor spending to source ingredients from outside of the Bayfield Peninsula, these dollars will leak out of the local economy immediately. IMPLAN's model allows us to incorporate multipliers and leakages to estimate the overall economic impact of spending induced by the Bayfield Peninsula trails.

As stated in the Purpose and Methods section, trail counter data shows an average annual visitorship of 17,679 unique trips by visitor groups. Because 75% of these trips were conducted by trail users who reside outside the Bayfield Peninsula (Figure 4), we can infer that 13,260 trips are conducted by these visitors each year. Paired with the spending by category shown in Table 3, we estimate that trips by visitors generate a total of **\$3.4 million** in new spending injected into the local economy. This estimate represents spending without the multiplier effect and leakages. That is, this is not the true economic impact of the trails.

Tables 4 shows the results from the IMPLAN model. The overall economic impact of the Bayfield Peninsula trails can be disaggregated into direct, indirect, and induced effects. *Direct effects* relate to the initial effects from visitor spending in Bayfield County. Each dollar spent at a local business by visitors goes towards wages and salaries for employees, procurement of inputs, and state and local taxes within that industry. *Indirect effects* incorporate the multiplier effect and track the economic value of the dollar as it flows through the supply chain. These can be considered spillover effects to other industries. *Induced effects* also incorporate the multiplier effect and are second-order effects that capture how the wages and salaries of employees are spent in the local economy. For example, if a trail visitor spends \$98 per night for a hotel room, the direct effect would include the wages and salaries of the hotel's employees, the indirect effect would include the linens purchased by the hotel from a supplier, and the induced effect would include the rent paid by hotel employees for their housing.

The overall economic impact per year generated by Bayfield Peninsula trails includes:

1. Employment: 33 full-time equivalent jobs.
2. Labor Income: \$828,994 in wages, salaries, and benefits for business employees and income received by self-employed individuals and unincorporated business owners.
3. Value Added: \$1,761,348 in added value from transforming intermediate inputs (e.g. energy, materials, contract services) into the final output. It includes employee compensation, net income (or profit), and taxes.

4. Output: \$3,539,504 in total output (or value of production). In other words, if all Bayfield Peninsula trails were to close, Bayfield County would lose over \$3.5 million in economic value per year.

Table 4. Economic Impacts of Bayfield Peninsula Trails by Type of Impact				
Impact Type	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output
Direct	28	\$674,671	\$1,415,846	\$2,759,130
Indirect	4	\$113,212	\$218,656	\$560,734
Induced	1	\$41,110	\$126,847	\$219,639
<i>Total Effect</i>	33	\$828,994	\$1,761,348	\$3,539,504

Table 5 shows the top 10 industries by output that are impacted by the Bayfield Peninsula trails. Altogether, the top 10 industries account for the vast majority of the overall economic impact of the Bayfield Peninsula trails. The accommodation industry (Hotels & motels) is impacted most, with Bayfield Peninsula trails being responsible for 12 jobs and over \$1.5 million in output for this industry. The Full-service restaurants industry receives the second largest impact, with 9 jobs and over \$0.74 million in output per year attributable to the trails. The third largest impact is on the Other amusement and recreation industry which includes a diverse set of recreational establishments such as kayaking, biking, boating, Lake Superior excursions, ferry, skiing, etc. The Bayfield Peninsula trails generate about 3 jobs and \$0.25 million in output for this industry.

Table 5. Top 10 Industries by Economic Impact on Output				
Impact Type	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output
Hotels & motels, including casino hotels	12	\$361,673	\$846,669	\$1,567,507
Full-service restaurants	9	\$175,880	\$324,164	\$742,966
Other amusement and recreation	3	\$87,691	\$152,890	\$254,169
Owner-occupied housing	0	\$0	\$51,873	\$60,521
All other food and drinking places	1	\$25,857	\$40,051	\$81,605
Retail - Miscellaneous store retailers	3	\$21,598	\$36,433	\$109,924
Retail - Food and beverage stores	1	\$16,697	\$30,863	\$45,047
Banking	0.1	\$11,469	\$28,109	\$43,151
Other Real Estate	1	\$3,230	\$23,688	\$137,995
Retail - Gasoline stores	0.3	\$11,543	\$21,418	\$33,823
<i>Total Impacts on Top 10 Industries</i>	30	\$715,638	\$1,556,159	\$3,076,708

PART II: PERSPECTIVES OF BAYFIELD PENINSULA TRAIL USERS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Bayfield Peninsula Trail User Survey was to understand how trails are used and the facilities and amenities that trails users would like to see on the trails. The SRC invited 765 Bayfield Peninsula trail users to complete the Bayfield Peninsula Trail User Survey through direct email. A total of 207 trail users completed the survey.

Key findings of the study are as follows:

Overall Satisfaction

- More than nine-in-ten (94%) trail users said they were “satisfied” (38%) or “very satisfied” (56%) with the Bayfield Peninsula trails.
- Regarding level of agreement with the statement, “The Bayfield Peninsula trails contribute to the overall experience of the region,” almost all trail users (98%) “agreed” (16%) or “strongly agreed” (82%).

Trail Awareness and Activities

- The majority of trail users (74%) are aware of Bayfield Peninsula trails because they have a primary or secondary residence in the area, and 51% are aware of the trails through word of mouth from friends and family.
- The most popular activity trail users participate in at any location or on the Bayfield Peninsula trails is hiking or backpacking, with 90% of trail users participating in this activity at any location and 92% participating in it on Bayfield Peninsula trails. Walking/dog walking came in 2nd place (77% anywhere, 65% Bayfield Peninsula trails).

Trail Usage Patterns

- The majority of trail users (66%) visit the Bayfield Peninsula trails “weekly” (49%) or “monthly” (17%).
- About 72% of trail users said that the Bayfield Peninsula is the primary location where they go for trail-related activities.
- Distance/living too far away, as identified by 83% of respondents, is the most popular reason why the Bayfield Peninsula is not where trail users primarily go for trail-related activities.

- Connectivity between trails (55%), Less crowded trails (32%), and More convenient location (28%) are the top three factors likely to increase trail users' frequency of visiting Bayfield Peninsula trails each year.
- When asked which Bayfield Peninsula trail respondents visit most frequently, Big Ravine Network (20%) narrowly edged out Mt Ashwabay (19%) for the top spot.
- Hiking/backpacking and Walking/dog walking trails are the most desired trail types in the Bayfield Peninsula trail system, as 66% of trail users indicated they would like to see more Hiking or backpacking trails, and 43% indicated they would like to see more Walking/dog walking trails.

Trail Attributes, Characteristics, and Area Amenities

- Nearly half (49%) of trail users indicated that Bayfield Peninsula trails are better than other trails visited in Wisconsin, 40% stated they are better than other trails visited in the Midwest, and 33% indicated they are better than other trails visited in the rest of the U.S.
- Two-in-ten or more trail users indicated that Disruptions from logging in the area (29%) and Accessibility issues (20%) are “moderate problems” or “major problems” on the Bayfield Peninsula trails.
- The majority of trail users find the following trail characteristics to be “important” or “very important” to them: Quiet, natural surroundings (95%), No motorized vehicles (89%), Seeing wildlife and birds (86%), Points of interest (81%), Variety of trails (78%), and Lack of crowds (73%).
- Although the proportion that identified these amenities as “important” or “very important” is small, Cell service (28%), Hike-in/bike-in/ski-in camping/shelters (15%), and Hotels, motels, and B&Bs (13%) are the top three most important amenities to trail users when deciding which trails to visit.

Open-Ended Comments

- A total of 107 written responses were received and analyzed, and major themes include appreciation/thanks (40% of all comments), trail connectivity (12%), well-maintained and excellent trails (10%), additional trails (6%), improved signage (5%), extend existing trails (5%), infrastructure improvements (3%), and crowding concerns (3%).

PURPOSE AND METHODS

The goal of the 2025 Bayfield Peninsula Trail User Survey was to understand how the trails are used and what types of facilities/amenities trail users would like to see on the trails. The SRC collaborated with members of the Bayfield Area Trails Committee to design the survey, which was distributed through direct email to a list of trail user email addresses provided by the Bayfield Area Trails Committee and emails collected through the intercept survey.

The SRC invited 765 trail users to complete the survey online. The survey was launched on October 15, 2025, and was live for 15 days. Three email reminders were sent to non-respondents, the first on October 21, the second on October 24, and the third on October 28, 2025. The survey was closed on October 29, 2025. By the end of the data collection period, a total of **207** complete (or near-complete) responses were collected, for a response rate of about 27%.

In the following report, where appropriate we present responses sorted by ranking (or popularity). For questions that require respondents to “select all that apply,” responses are ranked based on a decreasing level of selection, that is from the highest level of selection to the lowest level of selection.

In addition to constructing estimates and rankings for the overall sample, we also assessed the statistical significance of differences between trail users in the following demographic groups and their counterparts:

- Female: respondents who identify as “female” relative to identifying as “male,” “non-binary,” or “other.” Female respondents constitute 48% of the sample. Females are compared to other genders because females tend to be underrepresented.
- Senior: respondents who report their age as 65 years or older. Fifty percent (50%) of all respondents in the survey sample are seniors.
- Lower-Income: respondents who have an annual household income of less than \$75,000. About 32% of respondents have an annual household income of less than \$75,000. For reference, the median household income in Bayfield County is \$69,609 (2023 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey). Lower-income respondents are compared to higher income respondents because lower-income respondents tend to be underrepresented.

These demographic groups were selected for marketing relevance and for potential differences of opinions/priorities across each group.

We also present results based on their statistical significance. Statistical significance allows greater confidence that the result represents the true perception of respondents and was not obtained by “chance.” A commonly used standard for statistical significance, and the one used in this report, is 5%, which indicates there is a 5 in 100 probability that the difference between the two groups are actually the same (that is, there is no statistical difference between the two). Importantly, the size of the difference between two groups is not always proportional to statistical significance; there may be differences that are smaller but are still statistically significant and differences that are large and not statistically significant. This is largely due to sample size and variability: a higher

sample size and/or low variability in responses leads to a higher likelihood of statistical significance.

Throughout the report, statistically significant estimates are noted in **bold** font, and can be interpreted as the difference between demographic groups in the proportion of respondents who selected a certain response. Estimates with a positive sign represent a positive difference and those with a negative sign represent a negative difference between demographic subgroups.

Throughout the report, we present the following sets of results:

- Summary of responses to the survey question in a table or a graph.
- A table of differences between responses by respondents in the demographic subgroups described above, with statistically significant differences shown in **bold** font. These tables have titles that are shaded blue.

TRAIL USER SATISFACTION

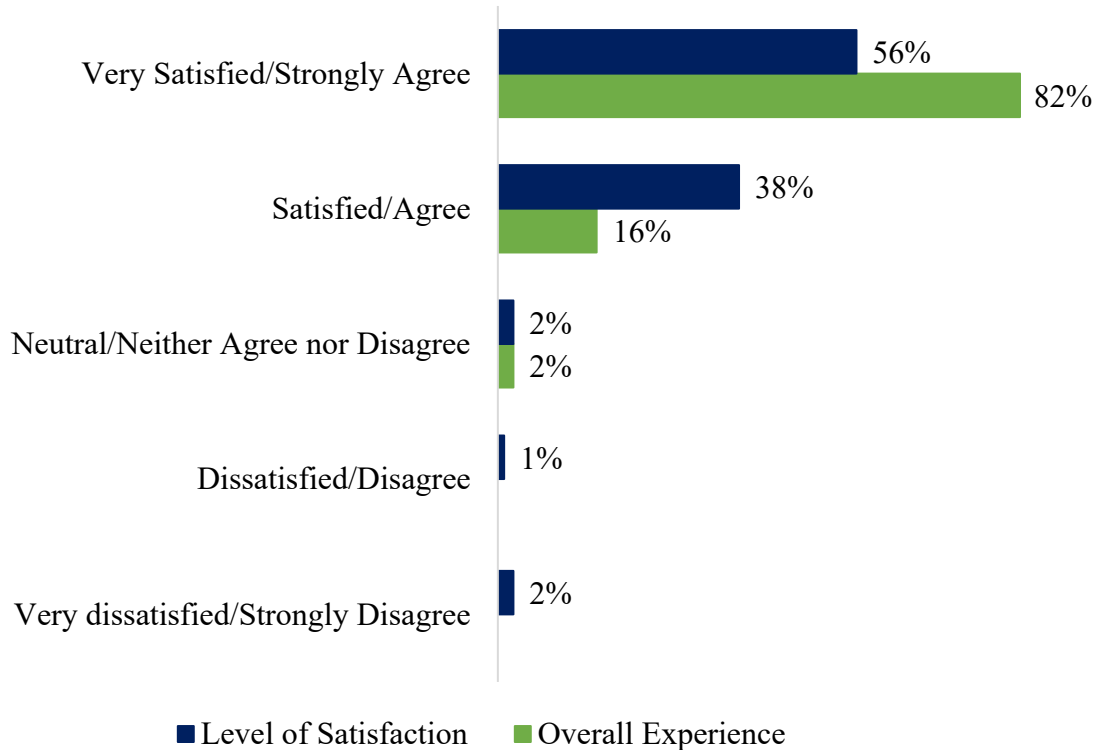
Overall trail user assessment of the Bayfield Peninsula trails was measured in two ways in the survey.

- Trail users' levels of satisfaction with the trails.
- The trails' contributions to their overall experience of the region.

Figure 1 summarizes trail users' levels of satisfaction with the Bayfield Peninsula trails (blue bars) and levels of agreement with the statement, "The Bayfield Peninsula trails contribute to the overall experience of the region" (green bars). More than nine-in-ten (94%) said they were "satisfied" (38%) or "very satisfied" (56%) with the Bayfield Peninsula trails. Two percent (2%) said they were "neutral/had no opinion," 1% were "unsatisfied" and 2% were "very unsatisfied."

Regarding levels of agreement with the statement, "The Bayfield Peninsula trails contribute to the overall experience of the region," almost all trail users (98%) said they "agree" (16%) or "strongly agree" (82%). Two percent (2%) said they "neither agree nor disagree" and no respondents said they "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with the statement. Results indicate that nearly all (large majority) are satisfied with the trails and agree that the trails contribute to the overall experience of the region.

Figure 1. Overall Satisfaction and Experience of the Region



Overall Satisfaction and Experience of the Region by Demographic Group

Trail users in demographic groups differ in their responses to the two measures of overall satisfaction. Statistically significant results are indicated using **bold** numbers. Lower-income trail users (<\$75k household income) are significantly more likely (**16%**) to state that they are “very satisfied” with the Bayfield Peninsula trails than higher income trail users (see Table 4.3).

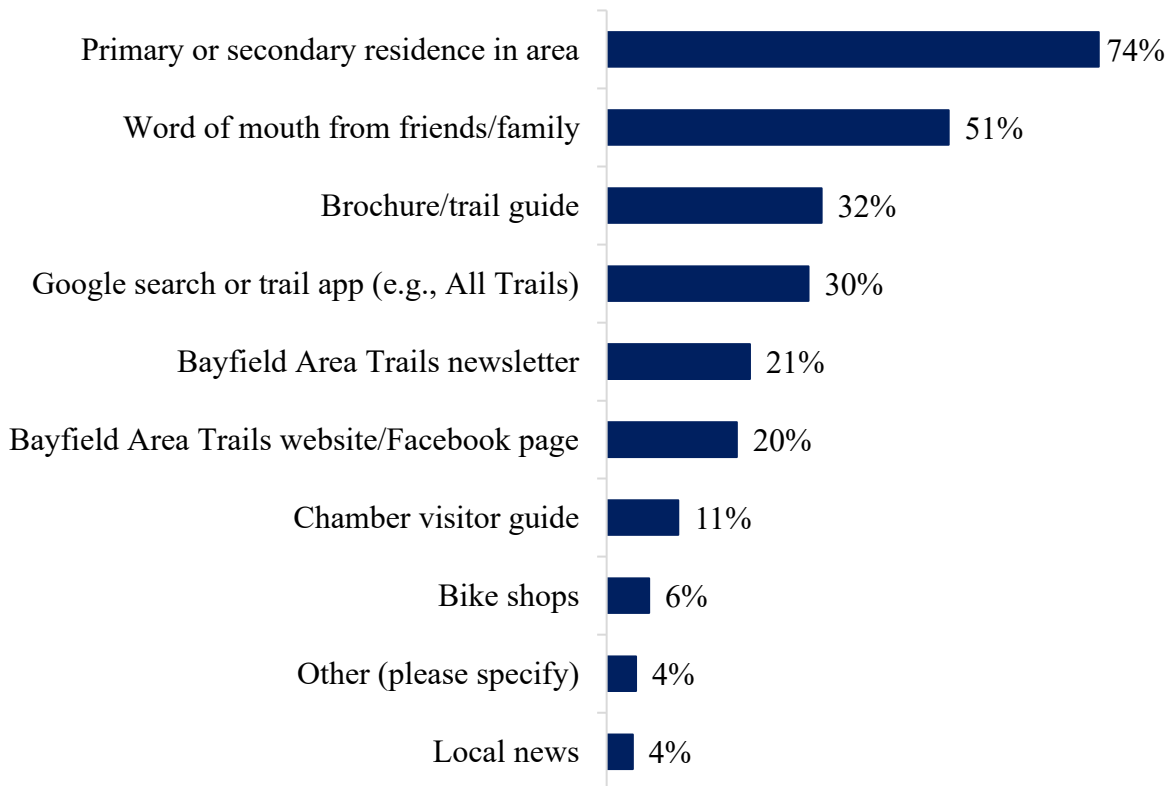
TRAIL AWARENESS AND ACTIVITIES

Awareness of Bayfield Peninsula Trails

Trail users were asked to indicate which sources they have used to learn about the Bayfield Peninsula trails. They were instructed to select all that apply from a list of 9 sources, plus an “Other” response option. Figure 2 shows that the majority (74%) are aware of the trails because they have a Primary or secondary residence in the area. About 51% are aware of the trails through Word of mouth from friends and family, and at least 30% are aware of the trails from Brochures/trail guides (32%) and a Google search or trail app (30%). About two-in-ten are aware of the trails from the Bayfield Area Trails newsletter (21%) and Bayfield Area Trails website/Facebook page (20%). About one-in-ten are aware of the trails from the Chamber visitor guide (11%), while 6% identified Bike shops, 4% identified something else (“Other”), and 4% identified the Local news as utilized sources.

The results show that full-time or part-time residential status and word of mouth from friends/family are the most popular sources trail users have used to learn about the trails.

Figure 2. Sources Used to Learn About Bayfield Peninsula Trails



Sources Used to Learn About Bayfield Peninsula Trails by Demographic Group

Trail users in demographic groups differ in sources used to learn about the Bayfield Peninsula trails. Statistically significant results are indicated using **bold** numbers. Those who are seniors (65+) are significantly more likely to use Word of mouth from friends/family (**15%**), the Bayfield Area Trails newsletter (**17%**), and the Bayfield Area Trails website/Facebook page (**12%**) to learn about the trails and are significantly less likely to use a Google search or trail app (**-18%**) to learn about the trails than are younger trail users (see Table 3.1).

Participation in Trail-Related Activities

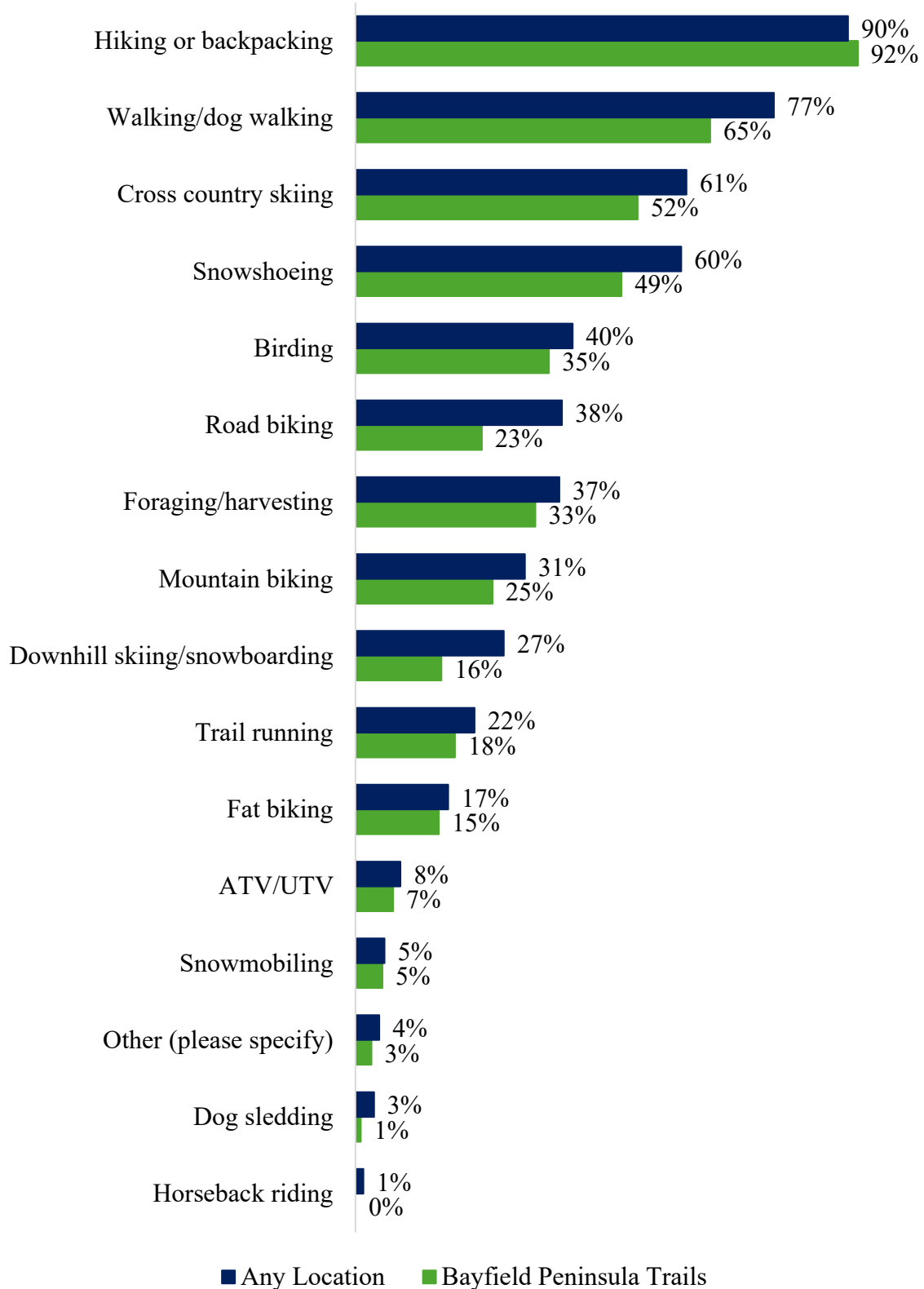
Figure 3 (on the next page) indicates which activities trail users participate in at any location (blue bars) and on Bayfield Peninsula trails (green bars) in an average year. A list of 15 activities was provided, along with an “Other” response choice where trail users were invited to add a text-entry response.

Hiking or backpacking was the most popular activity, with 90% reporting they participate in this activity at any location, and 92% reporting they participate in this activity on the Bayfield Peninsula (BP) trails. More than three-fourths (77%) reported participating in Walking/dog walking at any location, and 65% reported participating in this activity on the BP trails. Rounding out the next three most popular activities are Cross country skiing (61% anywhere, 52% BP trails), Snowshoeing (60% anywhere, 49% BP trails), and Birding (40% anywhere, 35% BP trails).

Less than four-in-ten reported that they participate in Road biking (38% anywhere, 23% BP trails), Foraging/harvesting (37% anywhere, 33% BP trails), Mountain biking (31% anywhere, 25% BP trails), Downhill skiing/snowboarding (27% anywhere, 16% BP trails), Trail running (22% anywhere, 18% BP trails), and Fat biking (17% anywhere, 15% BP trails).

Less than one-in-ten reported that they participate in ATV/UTV riding (8% anywhere, 7% BP trails), Snowmobiling (5% anywhere, 5% BP trails), Dog sledding (3% anywhere, 1% BP trails), and Horseback riding (1% anywhere, 0% BP trails). “Other” was selected by 4% and 3% of respondents (any location and BP trails, respectively).

Figure 3. Participation in Activities at Any Location and on the Bayfield Peninsula Trails



Participation in Activities at “Any Location” by Demographic Group

Trail users in demographic groups differ in activities participated in at any location in an average year. Among statistically significant results shown in **bold** numbers,

- Trail users who are female are more likely to indicate they participate in Downhill skiing/snowboarding at any location (**14%**) than are trail users of other genders (see Table 2.1).
- Trail users who are seniors (65+) are less likely to indicate they participate in Trail running (-**26%**), Walking/dog walking (-**14%**), Mountain biking (-**19%**), and Downhill skiing/snowboarding (-**18%**) and are more likely to indicate they participate in Birding (**19%**) at any location than are younger trail users (see Table 3.1).

Participation in Activities on the “Bayfield Peninsula Trails” by Demographic Group

Respondents in demographic groups differ in activities participated in on the Bayfield Peninsula trails in an average year. Among statistically significant results shown in **bold** numbers,

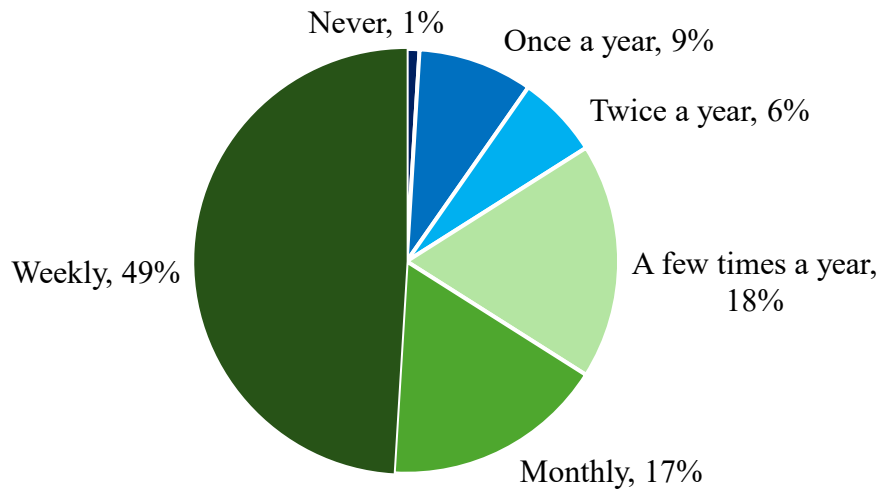
- Bayfield Peninsula trails users who are seniors (65+) are less likely to indicate they participate in Trail running (-**17%**) and Mountain biking (-**15%**) and more likely to indicate they participate in Birding (**19%**) on the Bayfield Peninsula trails than younger Bayfield Peninsula trail users (see Table 3.2).
- Lower-income Bayfield Peninsula trail users (<\$75k household income) are less likely to indicate they participate in Snowmobiling (-**8%**) on the Bayfield Peninsula trails than are higher income Bayfield Peninsula trail users (see Table 4.2).

TRAIL USAGE PATTERNS

Frequency of Visiting Bayfield Peninsula Trails

Trail users were asked to indicate how many times a year, on average, they visit the Bayfield Peninsula trails. Two-thirds (66%) stated they visit the trails “weekly” (49%) or “monthly” (17%). Eighteen percent (18%) stated they visit the trails “a few times a year,” 6% visit “twice a year,” 9% visit “once a year,” and 1% stated they “never” visit the trails. The results indicate that a majority of trail users visit the Bayfield Peninsula trails quite frequently in a given year.

Figure 4. Frequency of Visiting Bayfield Peninsula Trails in a Year



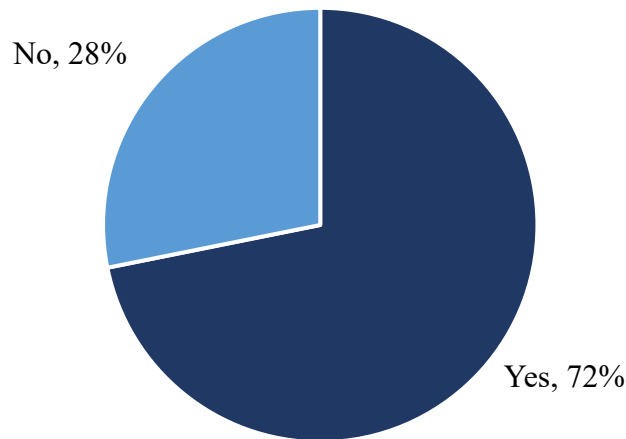
Frequency of Visiting Bayfield Peninsula Trails by Demographic Group

There are no statistically significant differences by group, which suggests that trail users who are female, seniors, and lower income, visit the Bayfield Peninsula trails as frequently as their counterparts.

Primary Location for Trail-Related Activities

When asked if Bayfield Peninsula is where they primarily go for trail-related activities, the majority (72%) of trail users said “yes” (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Is Bayfield Peninsula the Primary Location Where You Go for Trail-Related Activities?



Primary Location for Trail-Related Activities by Demographic Group

There are no statistically significant differences by group, which suggests that trail users who are female, seniors, and lower income, are just as likely to say the Bayfield Peninsula is their primary location for trail-related activities as trail users of other genders, age, and income.

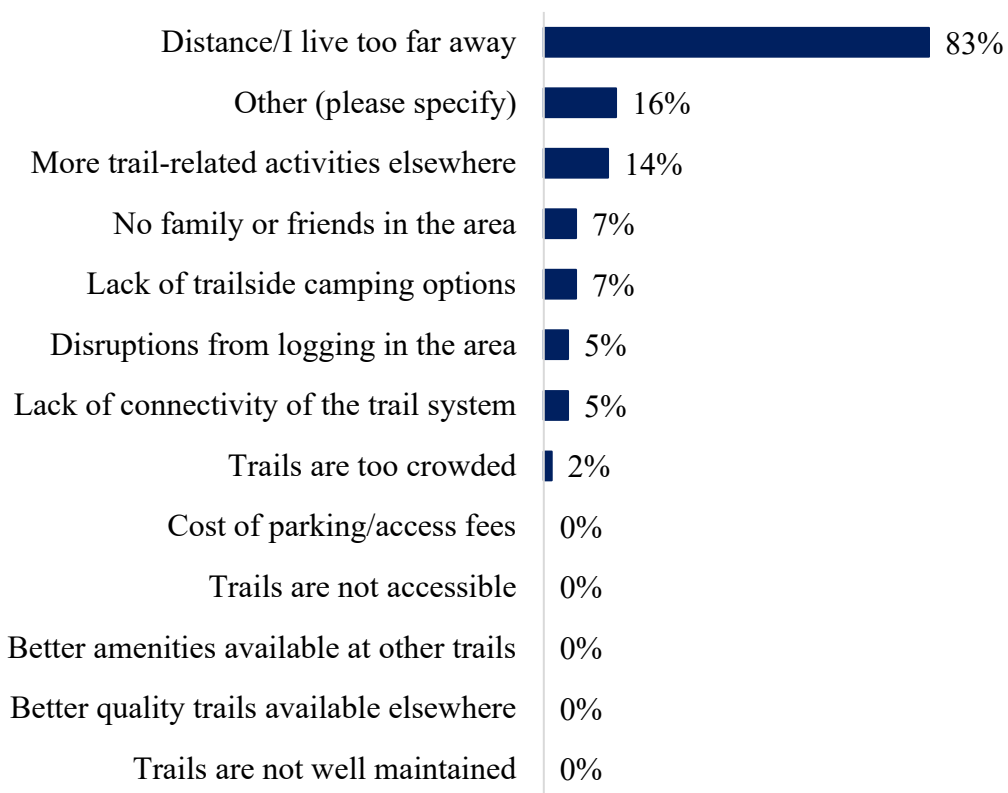
In a follow-up question, those who answered “no” were asked why the Bayfield Peninsula is not the primary location where they go to for trail-related activities. They were instructed to select all that apply from a list of 12 reasons plus an “Other” response option. The most popular reason, by a large margin, is “Distance/I live too far away,” selected by 83% of respondents (Figure 6 on the next page). In a distant 2nd place, “Other” was selected by 9 individuals, and text-entry responses centered on the enjoyment of visiting a variety of places. Text-entry responses included:

- *First time to the area this year.*
- *Enjoy the variety of visiting many places.*
- *Enjoy northern Wisconsin and Michigan’s upper peninsula.*
- *Enjoy visiting other areas.*
- *Utilize other trail systems equally.*
- *I have other things to do.*
- *I work on the NCNST.*

- *I live in a beautiful area with great trails already.*
- *I do more trail hiking while traveling.*

More than one-in-ten (14%) said there are More trail-related activities elsewhere. Less than one-in-ten selected the following response choices: No family/friends in the area (7%), Lack of trailside camping options (7%), Disruptions from logging in the area (5%), Lack of connectivity of the trail system (5%), and Trails are too crowded (2%). No one selected the remaining response choices. These results reveal that distance from the Bayfield Peninsula is by far the most common reason for it not being the primary location for trail users’ trail-related activities.

Figure 6. Reasons the Bayfield Peninsula is Not The Primary Location for Trail-Related Activities



Why Bayfield Peninsula is Not the Primary Location for Trail-Related Activities by Demographic Group

There are no statistically significant differences by group, which suggests that trail users who are female, seniors, and lower income, provide the same reasons for the Bayfield Peninsula not being their primary location for trail-related activities as their counterparts.

Factors Likely to Increase Frequency of Visiting Bayfield Peninsula Trails

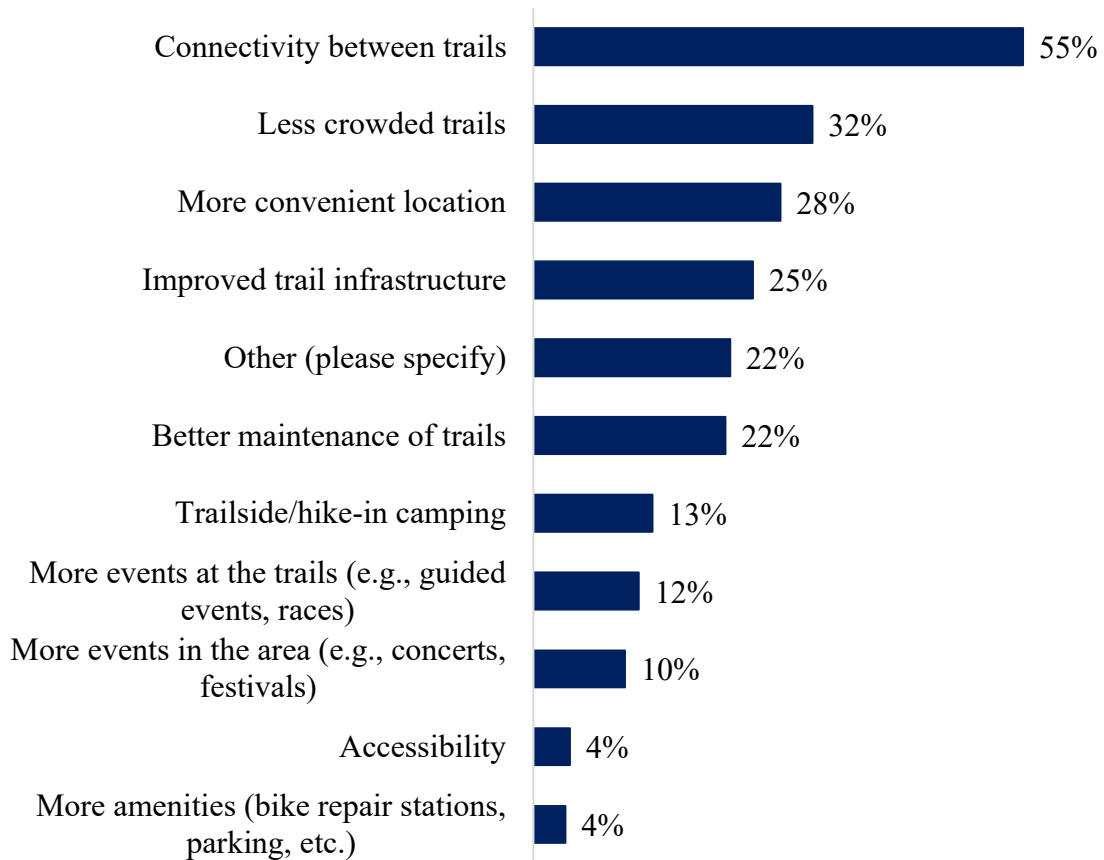
Trail users were asked to identify the top three factors that are likely to increase the number of times they visit the Bayfield Peninsula trails each year. They were provided with a list of 10 response choices, along with an “Other” choice where they could provide a text-entry response. As shown in Figure 7 (on the next page), the largest proportion of trail users (55%) selected Connectivity between trails by a margin of 23 percentage points over the 2nd most popular response, which was Less crowded trails (32%). More than two-in-ten trail users selected More convenient location (28%), Improved trail infrastructure (25%), Better maintenance of trails (22%) and “Other” (22%).

All 43 individuals who selected the “Other” option provided a text-entry response. A wide variety of responses were provided, and the most popular responses included “If I lived closer” (16% of 43), “If there were more trails” (i.e., dog sledding, snowshoeing, mountain biking, dog-friendly trails) (16% of 43), “If I had more available free time” (14% of 43), “If there was less infrastructure” (i.e., keep trails natural, fewer boardwalks at Lost Creek, minimize clear cutting around trails)” (9% of 43), and “If there was more infrastructure” (i.e., benches, restrooms, trails not washed out) (9% of 43). The remaining 8 “Other” text-entry responses included:

- *Fire Tower Road Trail Network.*
- *Better signage at trailheads.*
- *Fix the Brownstone trail.*
- *Mosquitos.*
- *If there were more things to do in the area.*
- *I have a second home in area.*
- *More scenic trails.*
- *Be younger in age.*

About one-in-ten or fewer selected Trailside/hike-in camping (13%), More events at the trails (12%), More events in the area (10%), Accessibility (4%), and More amenities (4%). These results suggest that connectivity between trails would do the most to increase trail users’ frequency of visiting the Bayfield Peninsula trails each year.

Figure 7. Top Three Factors Likely to Increase Frequency of Visiting Bayfield Peninsula Trails Each Year



Factors Likely to Increase Frequency of Visiting Bayfield Peninsula Trails by Demographic Group

Trail users in demographic groups differ in the top three factors likely to increase their frequency of visiting Bayfield Peninsula trails each year. Among statistically significant results shown in **bold** numbers,

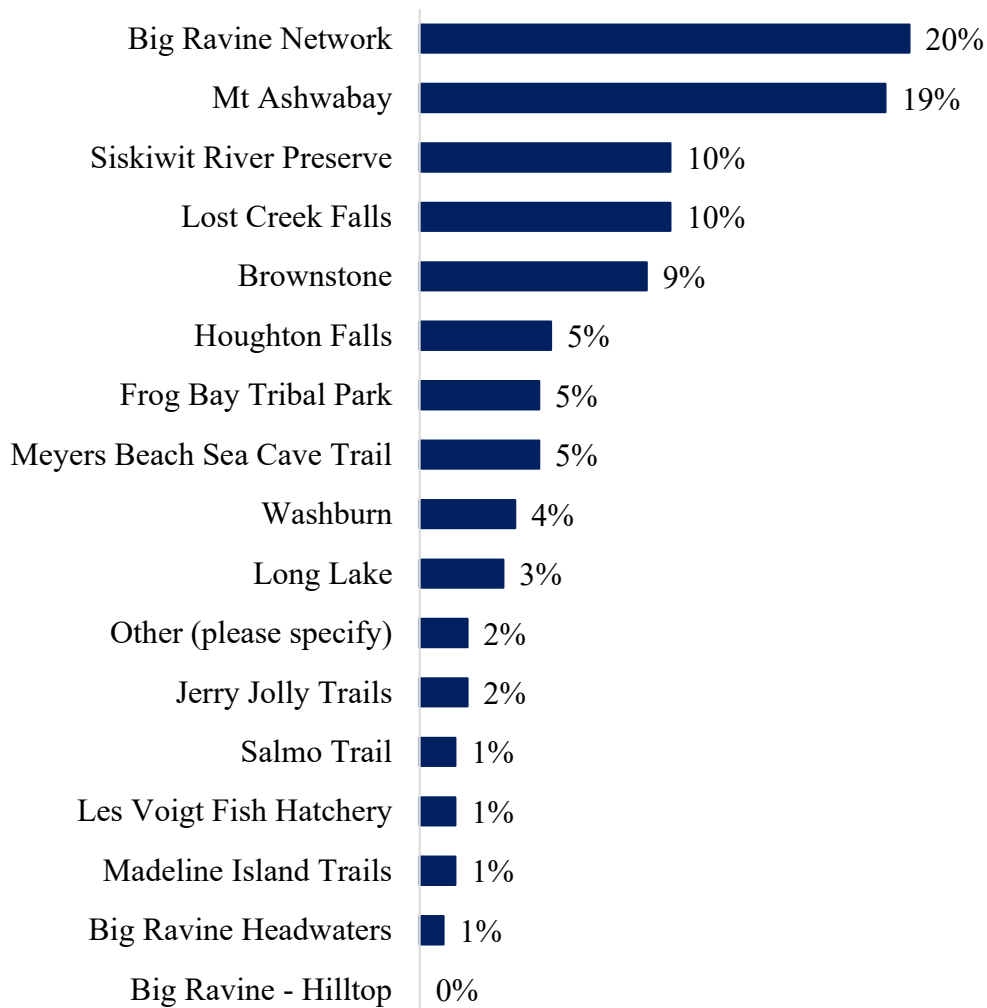
- Female trail users are more likely to say Less crowded trails (**23%**) would likely increase their frequency of visiting Bayfield Peninsula trails each year than are trail users of other genders (see Table 2.3).
- Trail users who are seniors (65+) are less likely to say Trailside/hike-in camping (**-12%**) would likely increase their frequency of visiting Bayfield Peninsula trails each year compared to younger trail users (see Table 3.3).

Bayfield Peninsula Trails Visited Most Frequently

When asked which Bayfield Peninsula trail they visit most frequently, Big Ravine Network (20%) narrowly edged out Mt Ashwabay (19%) for the top spot, as shown in Figure 8. Both Siskiwit River Preserve and Lost Creek Falls were selected by 10% of trail users, and 9% selected Brownstone. Each of the following trails were selected by 5% of trail users: Houghton Falls, Frog Bay Tribal Park, and Meyers Beach Sea Cave Trail. Less than 5% of trail users selected the remaining trails. Four trail users selected “Other” and provided a text-entry response. Two of the 4 “Other” responses specified the Valhalla trail, one individual said, “waterfall trails,” and another individual said they “could not remember.”

While not one individual trail was selected by the majority of trail users, Big Ravine Network and Mt Ashwabay, when combined, were selected by nearly one-in-four (39%) trail users. This shows that these two trails, along with Siskiwit River Preserve, Lost Creek Falls, and Brownstone are collectively visited most frequently by more than two-thirds (68%) of trail users.

Figure 8. Bayfield Peninsula Trails Visited Most Frequently



Desired Trail Types in the Bayfield Peninsula Trail System

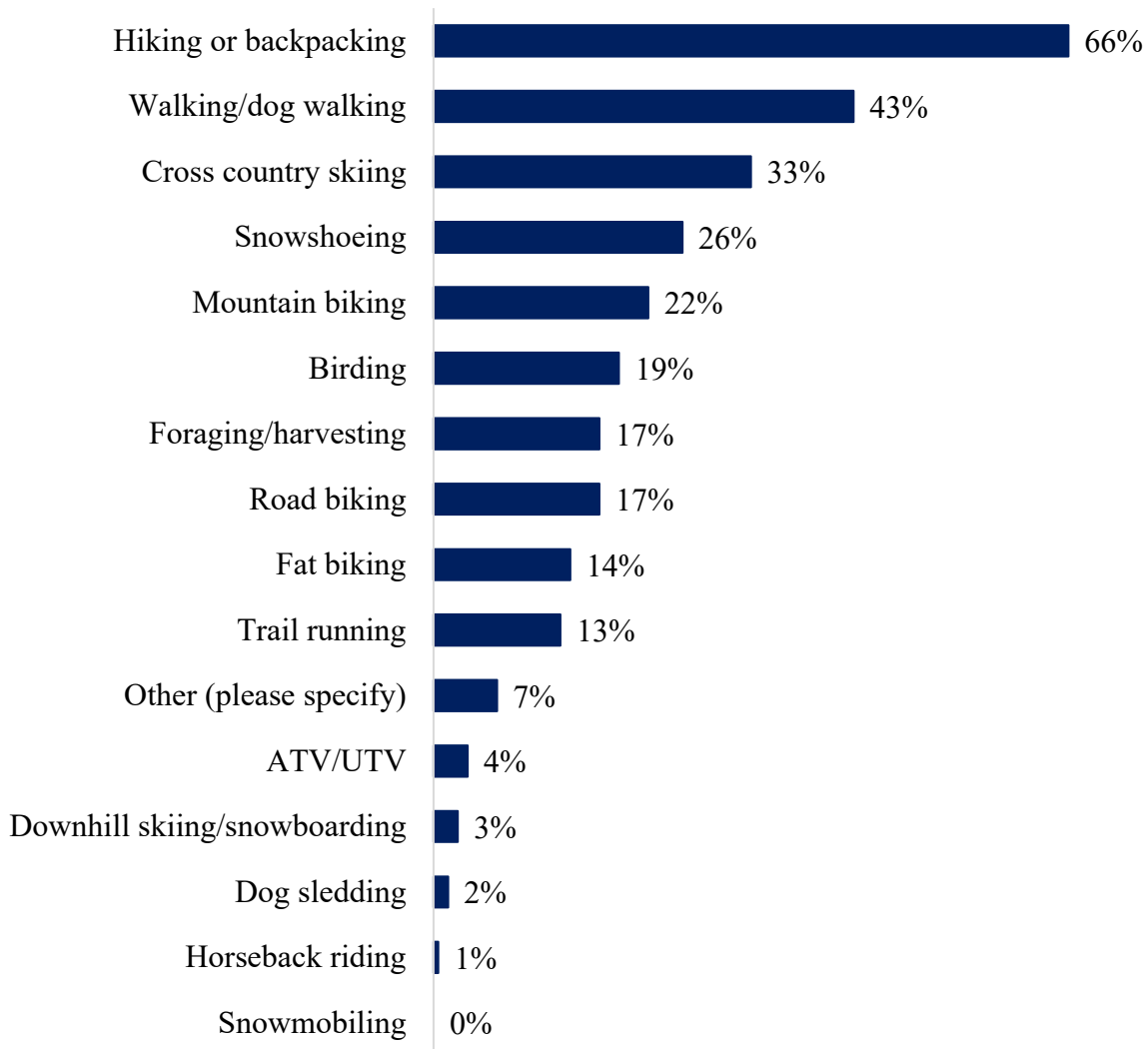
Figure 9 (on the next page) summarizes results for a question that asked what types of trails trail users would like to see more of in the Bayfield Peninsula trail system. Trail users were provided with 15 answer options, along with an “Other” option where they could provide a text-entry response. They were instructed to select all that apply.

Two-thirds (66%) of trail users indicated they would like to see more Hiking or backpacking trails, 43% indicated they would like to see more Walking/dog walking trails, and 33% indicated they would like to see more Cross-country skiing trails.

About one-in-four trail users indicated they would like to see more Snowshoeing (26%) and Mountain biking (22%) trails. Less than two-in-ten would like to see more of the following types of trails: Birding (19%), Foraging/harvesting (17%), Road biking (17%), Fat biking (14%), Trail running (13%), Other (7%), ATV/UTV riding (4%), Downhill skiing/snowboarding (3%), Dog sledding (2%), and Horseback riding (1%). No one selected Snowmobiling trails.

All 13 trail users who selected “Other” provided a text-entry response. Five respondents (38% of 13 responses) said the Current trails are good as is. Four respondents (31% of 13) said they would like to see More paved and non-paved bike trails. Two respondents (15% of 13) said they would like to see More non-motorized trails. One respondent said they would like to see More scenic overlook trails (8% of 13) and another respondent said they would like to see More trails in general (8% of 13).

Figure 9. Desired Trail Types in the Bayfield Peninsula Trail System



Desired Trail Types in the Bayfield Peninsula Trail System by Demographic Group

Trail users in demographic groups differ in the trail types they would like to see more of in the Bayfield Peninsula trail system. Among statistically significant results shown in **bold** numbers,

- Female trail users are more likely to say they would like to see more Walking/dog walking trails (**14%**) in the Bayfield Peninsula trail system than are trail users of other genders (see Table 2.3).
- Trail users who are seniors (65+) are less likely to say they would like to see more Trail running (**-14%**), Fat biking (**-10%**), and Mountain biking (**-16%**) trails in the Bayfield Peninsula trail system compared to younger trail users (see Table 3.3).
- Lower-income trail users (<\$75k household income) are less likely to say they would like to see more Road biking trails (**-15%**) in the Bayfield Peninsula trail system than higher income trail users (see Table 4.3).

TRAIL ATTRIBUTES, CHARACTERISTICS, AND AREA AMENITIES

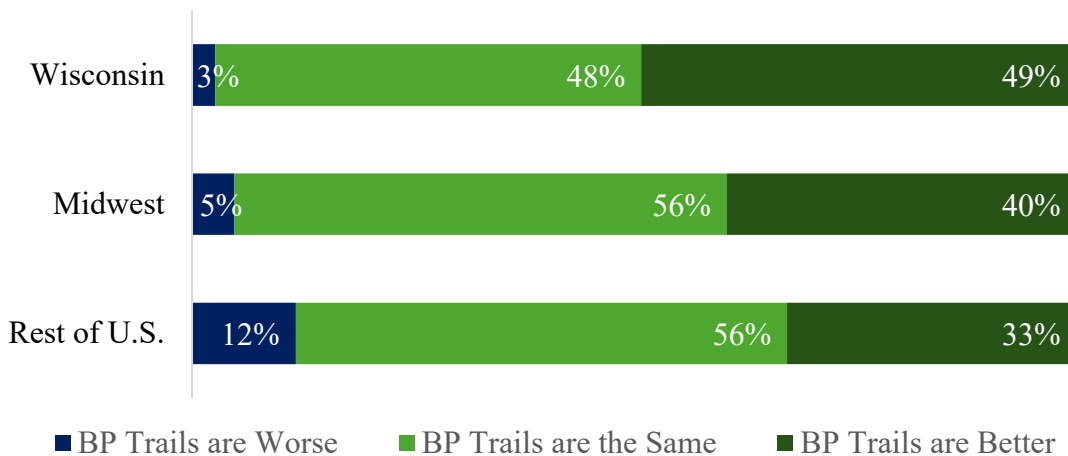
Comparison of Bayfield Peninsula Trails to Other Visited Trails

Trail users were asked how Bayfield Peninsula trails compare to other trails they have visited in Wisconsin, the Midwest, and the rest of the United States. Answer options included “BP trails are better,” “BP trails are the same,” “BP trails are worse,” and “not applicable.” The “not applicable” responses are excluded from the analysis.

As shown in Figure 10, nearly half (49%) of trail users indicated that Bayfield Peninsula trails are better than other trails visited in Wisconsin, 48% indicated that they are the same, and 3% indicated they are worse than other trails visited in Wisconsin. Four-in-ten (40%) trail users indicated that Bayfield Peninsula trails are better than other trails visited in the Midwest, while 56% said they are the same, and 5% said they are worse than other trails visited in the Midwest. One-third (33%) of trail users indicated that Bayfield Peninsula trails are better than other trails visited in the rest of the U.S., 56% indicated that they are the same, and 12% said they are worse than other trails visited in the rest of the U.S.

These results suggest that trail users’ opinions of Bayfield Peninsula trails become less favorable as the geographic scope of the comparison trails widens beyond the state of Wisconsin.

Figure 10. How Bayfield Peninsula Trails Compare to Other Visited Trails



How Bayfield Peninsula Trails Compare to Other Visited Trails by Demographic Group

There are no statistically significant differences by group, which suggests that trail users who are female, seniors, and lower income, provide the same assessment of Bayfield Peninsula trails compared to other trails visited as their counterparts.

Potential Problems on Bayfield Peninsula Trails

Given that some attributes have been identified as problems with other trail systems, trail users were asked how much of a problem 12 attributes are on the Bayfield Peninsula trails. They were also provided an “Other” option where they could provide a text-entry response. Five answer options were provided, including “not a problem,” “minor problem,” “moderate problem,” “major problem,” and “no opinion.” The “no opinion” responses are excluded from the analysis.

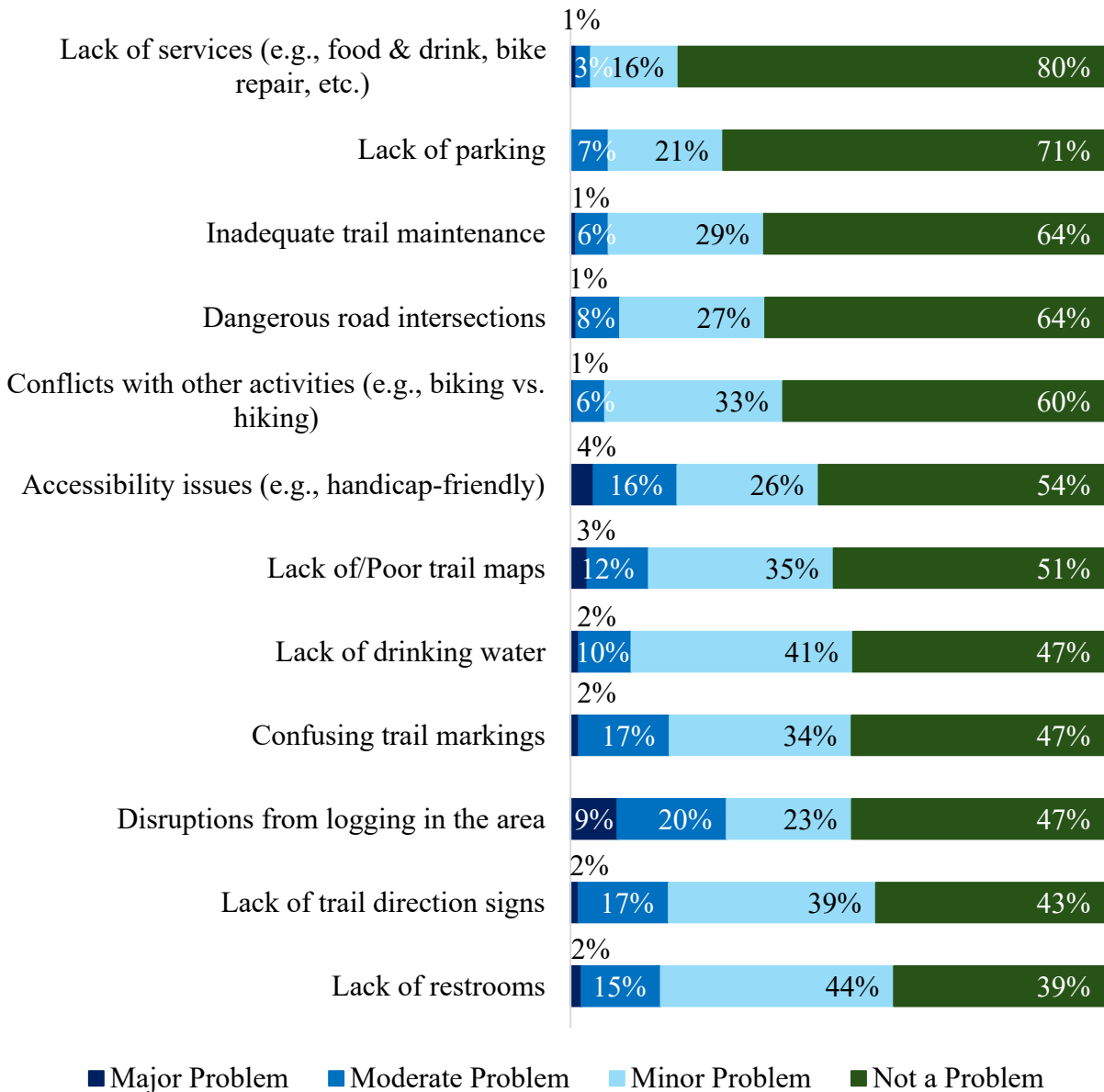
Figure 11 (on the next page) shows the attributes in descending order of the percentage of respondents who selected “not a problem” for each attribute. About **seven-in-ten or more** trail users said Lack of services (80%) and Lack of parking (71%) are “not a problem” on the Bayfield Peninsula trails. **Six-in-ten or more** trail users said Inadequate trail maintenance (64%), Dangerous road intersections (64%), and Conflicts with other activities (60%) are “not a problem” on the Bayfield Peninsula trails.

More than five-in-ten said Accessibility issues (54%) and Lack of/Poor trail maps (51%) are “not a problem” on the Bayfield Peninsula trails. **Less than five-in-ten** said Lack of drinking water (47%), Confusing trail markings (47%), Disruptions from logging in the area (47%), Lack of trail direction signs (43%), and Lack of restrooms (39%) are “not a problem” on the Bayfield Peninsula trails.

Fifteen respondents selected “Other” and provided a text-entry response. Two respondents brought up the Level of trail difficulty, with one individual saying, “the trails are less difficult than other trails in the Midwest.” Two respondents mentioned Trail connectivity, 2 said the Trails are slippery and washed out, and another 2 respondents said ATVs/UTVs are a problem on the Bayfield Peninsula trails.

These results suggest that for most trail users, these attributes are either “not a problem” or are a “minor problem” on the Bayfield Peninsula trails.

Figure 11. Magnitude of Potential Problems on Bayfield Peninsula Trails



Potential Problems on Bayfield Peninsula Trails by Demographic Group

Trail users in demographic groups differ in their assessment of potential problems on the Bayfield Peninsula trails. Among statistically significant results shown in **bold** numbers,

- Female trail users are more likely to say the Lack of trail maps/Poor trail maps (**16%**) is a “moderate problem” or “major problem” on the Bayfield Peninsula trails than are trail users of other genders (see Table 2.4).

- Lower income trail users (<\$75k household income) are more likely to say the Dangerous road intersections (**11%**) are a “moderate problem” or “major problem” on the Bayfield Peninsula trails than are higher income trail users (see Table 4.4).

Importance of Trail Characteristics

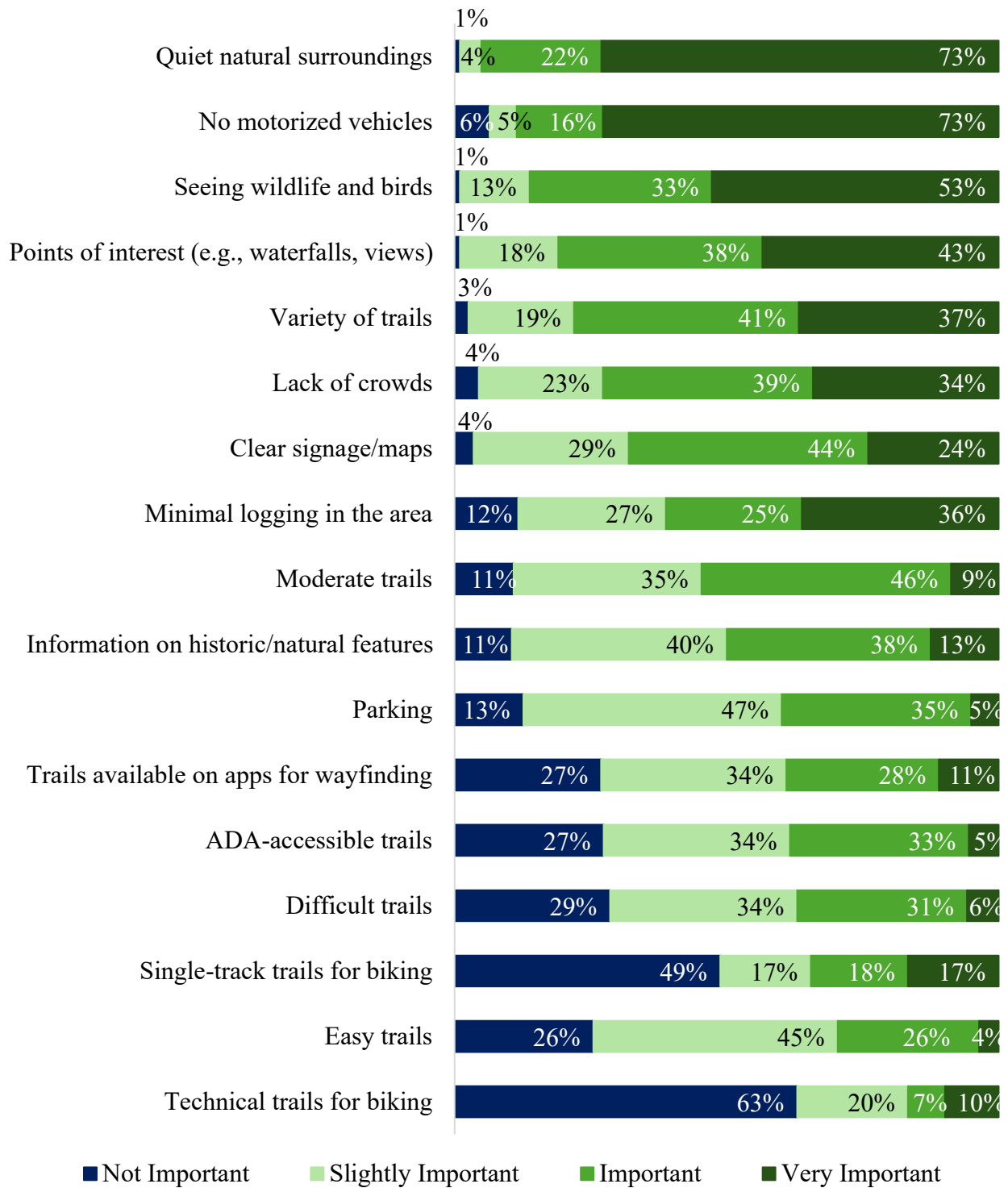
Trail users were asked how important 17 trail characteristics are to them, along with an “Other” option where they could provide a text-entry response. Answer options included “not important,” “slightly important,” “important,” “very important,” and “no opinion.” The “no opinion” responses are excluded from the analysis. Figure 12 (on the next page) displays the characteristics in descending order of the percentage of trail users who selected “important” or “very important” for each characteristic.

The importance of trail characteristics can be categorized in the following way:

- Trail characteristics that **more than seven-in-ten** trail users indicated are “important” or “very important” include Quiet, natural surroundings (95%), No motorized vehicles (89%), Seeing wildlife and birds (86%), Points of interest (81%), Variety of trails (78%), and Lack of crowds (73%).
- Trail characteristics that **more than half** of trail users indicated are “important” or “very important” include Clear signage/maps (68%), Minimal logging in the area (61%), Moderate trails (55%), and Information on historic/natural features (51%).
- Trail characteristics that **more than one-third** of trail users indicated are “important” or “very important” include Parking (40%), Trails available on apps for wayfinding (39%), ADA-accessible trails (38%), Difficult trails (37%), and Single-track trails for biking (35%).
- Trail characteristics that **less than one-third** of trail users indicated are “important” or “very important” include Easy trails (30%) and Technical trails for biking (17%).

These results suggest that trail users find quiet, varied, scenic trails with wildlife sightings to be the most important to them.

Figure 12. Importance of Trail Characteristics



Importance of Trail Characteristics by Demographic Group

Trail users in demographic groups differ in their assessment of trail characteristics. Among statistically significant results shown in **bold** numbers,

- Female trail users are less likely to say Points of interest (**-12%**) are “important” or “very important” and more likely to say Variety of trails (**13%**), ADA-accessible trails (**17%**), Clear signage/maps (**18%**), Trails available on apps for wayfinding (**15%**), and Minimal logging in the area (**25%**) are “important” or “very important” trail characteristics to them than are trail users of other genders (see Tables 2.4 and 2.5).
- Senior (65+) trail users are less likely to say Single-track trails for biking (**-23%**), Technical trails for biking (**-20%**), Difficult trails (**-17%**), and Variety of trails (**-18%**) are “important” or “very important” trail characteristics to them than are younger trail users (see Tables 3.4 and 3.5).
- Lower income trail users (<\$75k household income) are less likely to say Single track trails for biking (**-17%**) and Trails available on apps for wayfinding (**-18%**) are “important” or “very important” trail characteristics to them than are higher income trail users (see Tables 4.4 and 4.5).

Importance of Amenities When Deciding Which Trails to Visit

Trail users were asked how important 11 amenities are to them, when deciding which trails to visit. In addition, they were offered an “Other” option where they could provide a text-entry response. Answer options included “not important,” “slightly important,” “important,” “very important,” and “no opinion.” The “no opinion” responses are excluded from the analysis. Figure 13 on the next page displays the amenities in descending order of the percentage of trail users who selected “important” or “very important” for each amenity.

Based on the responses, the importance of amenities when deciding which trails to visit can be categorized in the following way:

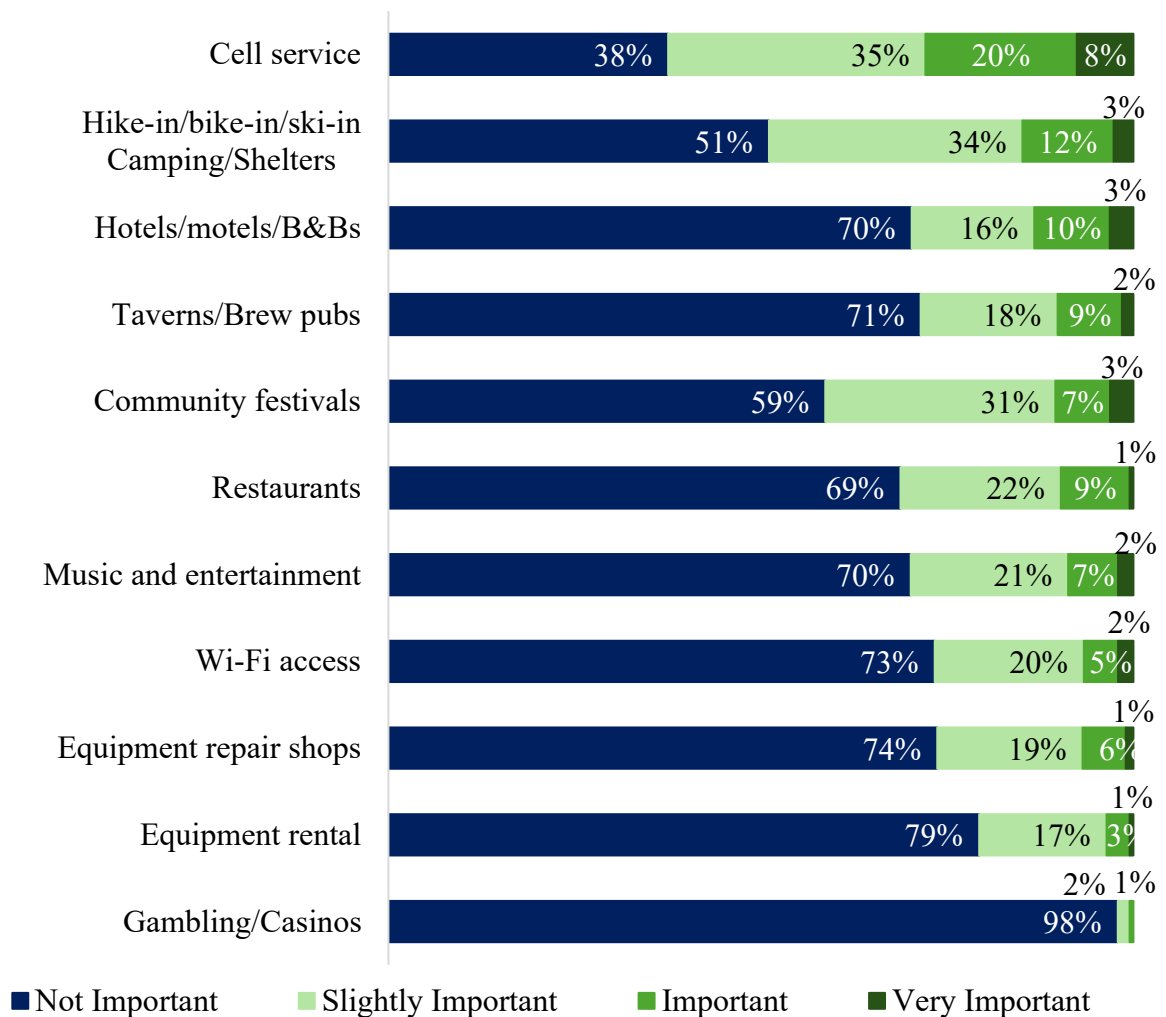
- Amenities that **one-in-ten or more** trail users indicated are “important” or “very important” include Cell service (28%), Hike-in/bike-in/ski-in camping/shelters (15%), Hotels/motels/B&Bs (13%), Taverns/brew pubs (11%), Community festivals (10%), and Restaurants (10%).
- Amenities that **less than one-in-ten** trail users indicated are “important” or “very important” include Music and entertainment (9%), Wi-Fi access (7%), Equipment repair shops (7%), Equipment rental (4%), and Gambling/casinos (1%).

Although the proportion that identified these amenities as “important” or “very important” is small (i.e., $\leq 28\%$), Cell service, Hike-in/bike-in/ski-in camping/shelters, and Hotels/motels/B&Bs are the top three most important amenities to trail users when deciding which trails to visit. Most of the amenities listed are “not important” to the majority of respondents when deciding which trails to visit. Six respondents selected “Other” and provided a text-entry response. Two respondents

mentioned the need for restrooms. One individual mentioned each of the following, for a total of 4 more text-entry responses:

- *Snowshoeing.*
- *The experience of the trails, vistas, maintenance of the trails, etc. It needs to be fun. I also like looped trails instead of out and back.*
- *Forbid unleashed dogs.*
- *Wilderness and quiet, and respect for wildlife.*

Figure 13. Importance of Amenities When Deciding Which Trails to Visit



Importance of Amenities When Deciding Which Trails to Visit by Demographic Group

Trail users in demographic groups differ in their assessment of amenities when deciding which trails to visit. Among statistically significant differences shown in **bold** numbers,

- Female trail users are more likely to say that Cell service (**17%**) is “important” or “very important” when deciding which trails to visit than are trail users of other genders (see Table 2.5).
- Seniors (65+) are less likely to say that Taverns/brew pubs (**-10%**), Community festivals (**-10%**), and Hike-in/bike-in/ski-in camping/shelters (**-11%**) are “important” or “very important” when deciding which trails to visit than are younger trail users (see Table 3.5).
- Lower income trail users (<\$75k household income) are less likely to say Hotels/motels/B&Bs (**-14%**) are “important” or “very important” when deciding which trails to visit than are higher income trail users (see Table 4.5).

OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS SUMMARY

Trail users were asked if there was anything else they would like to say about their experience at the Bayfield Peninsula trails. A total of 107 written responses were received and analyzed, and the table below shows the common themes that emerged. Note that the frequencies and percentages shown in the table refer to the number of trail users who commented on a topic. That is, if a respondent commented on multiple topics the comment is counted in the tally of each topic, not just the primary topic that the respondent commented on. A full list of categorized comments is available in the section “Open-Ended Comments” found at the end of this report.

Topic	Frequency	Percentage
Appreciation/Thanks	52	40%
Trail Connectivity	16	12%
Well-Maintained/Excellent Trails	13	10%
Additional Trails	8	6%
Improved Signage	7	5%
Extend Existing Trails	6	5%
Infrastructure Improvements	4	3%
Crowding Concerns	4	3%

Appreciation/Thanks (40%)

About 40% of trail users, or 52 comments, included appreciation for the work done by the organization, volunteers, and leadership. Bayfield Peninsula trails are described as beautiful, excellent, and “a treasure.” Frequent thanks and compliments included, “keep up the good work,” and “great job.” The trails are considered an asset for the community and visitors, enhancing users’ quality of life (i.e., mental well-being, exercise), attracting tourists, and supporting local economies. Users want to keep the trails natural, quiet, and non-commercial, and many expressed a desire to protect wildlife and preserve the ecosystem. Visitors and residents described the trails as integral to their outdoor experiences.

Trail Connectivity (12%)

About 12% of trail users, or 16 comments, emphasized the desire for expanded connectivity among trails and communities. Suggestions included connecting existing trails (e.g., Pileated Woodpecker Trail, Fire Tower Road Trails) and linking towns such as Bayfield, Red Cliff, Washburn, Ashland, and Cornucopia. Trail users are interested in the creation of bike-friendly routes that minimize road travel and allow safe cycling between communities. They are also interested in enhancing year-round usability for activities like hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing, while appreciating current loops and links to businesses (e.g., fruit orchards, Ashwabay). Trail users would like to see paths improved along busy roads, and advocate for regional trail networks to boost recreation and economic impact.

Well-Maintained/Excellent Trails (10%)

About 10% of trail users, or 13 comments, expressed appreciation for the Bayfield Area Trails and the work done by volunteers and private landowners. Trails are considered well-maintained, clean, accessible, and a valuable community asset. There is a desire for continued maintenance and expansion, with emphasis on preserving trail quality, safety, and peacefulness.

Additional Trails (6%)

About 6% of trail users, or 8 comments, requested paved bike trails, more and longer non-motorized trails for hiking, a new trail from Elm Street in Cornucopia to Siskiwit Falls, beginner-friendly mountain biking trails, gravel/back-road biking options (not just single-track), additional snowshoeing trails, a trail through the kettles, and expanded trail systems beyond current options.

Improved Signage (5%)

A total of 7 comments involved requests for improved signage, including clear rules for keeping dogs leashed and why it matters, improved trail maps, rules for e-bike riders (e.g., speed permitted, staying on correct side, alerting walkers of their presence), information on where horseback riding is permitted, and additional signage on the Brownstone bypass to improve safety.

Extend Existing Trails (5%)

A total of 6 comments included a desire to extend existing trails. According to some, current trails are often short, wide, and easy. Creating longer, more advanced hiking trails would be appreciated. One trail user suggested extending the Gil Larsen Trail beyond the current "end of trail" sign to add mileage in a scenic area.

Infrastructure Improvements (3%)

A total of 4 comments included a request for infrastructure improvements. Trail users requested additional and higher benches to accommodate the elderly, car camping spaces, the addition of steps from the Iron Bridge to the Ravine Trail, and the addition of a tin roof over the platform on the Big Ravine Trail that is used as an outdoor classroom.

Crowding Concerns (3%)

A total of 4 comments related to trail crowding concerns. Trail users value the trails for their quiet, uncrowded nature and are concerned that further development (such as adding restrooms) will attract more visitors, diminishing this benefit. While improvements are appreciated, they fear increased tourism will lead to overcrowding, loss of solitude, and damage to natural infrastructure. They question how to balance trail enhancements with maintaining manageable visitor numbers.

DEMOGRAPHIC ATTRIBUTES

Table 1 summarizes the demographic attributes of the Bayfield Peninsula Trail User Survey sample and select demographic attributes obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) for the County of Bayfield. Note that not all Bayfield Peninsula Trail User Survey statistics are directly comparable to the ACS data due to a difference in response categories between the survey and the ACS. Therefore, some differences discussed below are based on the SRC's best estimate of the comparability between the two datasets.

Gender

About 48% of trail users identified their gender as female, while 50% identified as male. The rest of the trail users selected "non-binary" (2%). The ACS data for Bayfield County shows that the population of the county is 49% female and 51% male (the ACS does not include other gender categories). The Trail User Survey sample represented the genders well.

Age

According to the ACS estimates, the Trail User Survey sample underrepresented trail users 18 to 34 and 55 to 64 years of age and overrepresented trail users 65 years of age or older. The Trail User Survey sample represented 35 to 54-year-olds well.

Children in Household

About 78% of trail users do not have any children in the household. This may include trail users who do not have children or do have children who do not live in the same household as them (e.g., seniors). Nonetheless, they comprise a large proportion of the survey sample. The ACS data for Bayfield County shows that 80% of households do not have children, which shows that the Trail User Survey sample slightly underrepresented households with no children.

Household Income

According to the ACS, the median household income in Bayfield County is \$69,609 (in 2023 dollars). That is, 50% of Bayfield County residents have annual household incomes below \$69,609 and 50% have incomes above that number. The Trail User Survey underrepresented lower income households (<\$75k household income) and overrepresented higher income households (≥\$75k).

Table 1. Demographic Attributes of Bayfield Peninsula Trail User Survey Respondents

Gender	Count	Male	Female	Non-Binary	Prefer not say	Prefer self-describe		
BP Trail Users	197	50%	48%	2%	0%	0%		
Bayfield County (18+)	13,691	51%	49%	-	-	-		
Age	Count	18 – 24	25 – 34	35 – 44	45 – 54	55 – 64	65+	
BP Trail Users	206	1%	6%	12%	14%	17%	50%	
Bayfield County (18+)	13,691	7%	10%	12%	14%	22%	36%	
Children in Household	Count	0	1	2	3	4+		
BP Trail Users	147	78%	9%	10%	3%	1%		
Bayfield County	7,462	80%		-20%				
Household Income	Count	Under \$25K	\$25K - \$49.9K	\$50K - \$74.9K	\$75K - \$99.9K	\$100K- \$149.9K	\$150K- \$200K	>\$200K
BP Trail Users	172	6%	13%	13%	22%	25%	12%	9%
Bayfield County	7,462	14%	19%	20%	16%	17%	8%	5%

Note: Survey categories have been aligned to conform to U.S. Census classifications.

SURVEY RESULTS BY DEMOGRAPHIC ATTRIBUTES

Notes: Rounded figures in tables may lead to slight discrepancies in the calculated differences. Blank cells indicate too few responses to run statistical tests.

Female vs. Other Genders

Table 2.1. Difference between Female and Other Genders				
Variable	Indicator	Female	Other Genders	Difference
Learn About Bayfield Peninsula Trails				
Primary or Secondary Residence in Area	% Selected	71%	76%	-5%
Word of Mouth from Friends/Family	% Selected	52%	51%	1%
Bayfield Area Trails Newsletter	% Selected	18%	25%	-7%
Bayfield Area Trails Website/Facebook Page	% Selected	20%	19%	1%
Local News	% Selected	3%	4%	-1%
Bike Shops	% Selected	3%	9%	-6%
Brochure/Trail Guide	% Selected	31%	34%	-3%
Google Search or Trail App	% Selected	31%	30%	1%
Chamber Visitor Guide	% Selected	11%	11%	0%
Participate in Activities at Any Location				
Hiking or Backpacking	% Selected	90%	91%	-1%
Trail Running	% Selected	24%	20%	4%
Horseback Riding	% Selected	3%	0%	3%
Snowshoeing	% Selected	63%	56%	7%
Birding	% Selected	42%	37%	5%
Walking/Dog Walking	% Selected	78%	76%	2%
ATV/UTV	% Selected	5%	11%	-6%
Fat Biking	% Selected	15%	20%	-5%
Road Biking	% Selected	37%	40%	-3%
Mountain Biking	% Selected	28%	33%	-4%
Snowmobiling	% Selected	3%	7%	-4%
Downhill Skiing/Snowboarding	% Selected	35%	21%	14%
Cross Country Skiing	% Selected	62%	59%	3%
Dog Sledding	% Selected	6%	1%	5%
Foraging/Harvesting	% Selected	36%	39%	-3%

Table 2.2. Difference between Female and Other Genders				
Variable	Indicator	Female	Other Genders	Difference
Participate in Activities on Bayfield Peninsula Trails				
Hiking or Backpacking	% Selected	90%	92%	-2%
Trail Running	% Selected	21%	16%	6%
Horseback Riding	% Selected	-	-	-
Snowshoeing	% Selected	53%	44%	9%
Birding	% Selected	36%	35%	1%
Walking/Dog Walking	% Selected	71%	58%	12%
ATV/UTV	% Selected	4%	9%	-5%
Fat Biking	% Selected	13%	17%	-5%
Road Biking	% Selected	22%	24%	-2%
Mountain Biking	% Selected	21%	28%	-7%
Snowmobiling	% Selected	4%	6%	-1%
Downhill Skiing/Snowboarding	% Selected	19%	13%	6%
Cross Country Skiing	% Selected	53%	49%	4%
Dog Sledding	% Selected	2%	0%	2%
Foraging/Harvesting	% Selected	30%	36%	-6%
Trail-Related Activities				
Frequency of Visiting Bayfield Pen. Trails	% Weekly	51%	48%	2%
Bayfield Peninsula Primary Location	% Yes	73%	72%	1%
Why Bayfield Peninsula is Not Primary Location for Trail-Related Activities				
Distance/I Live Too Far Away	% Selected	77%	87%	-10%
Trails are Not Well Maintained	% Selected	-	-	-
Better Quality Trails Available Elsewhere	% Selected	-	-	-
Better Amenities Available at Other Trails	% Selected	-	-	-
Trails are Not Accessible	% Selected	-	-	-
Lack of Connectivity of Trail System	% Selected	0%	10%	-10%
Lack of Trailside Camping Options	% Selected	0%	10%	-10%
Disruptions from Logging in the Area	% Selected	4%	7%	-3%
Cost of Parking/Access Fees	% Selected	-	-	-
Trails are Too Crowded	% Selected	4%	0%	4%
No Family or Friends in the Area	% Selected	4%	10%	-6%
More Trail-Related Activities Elsewhere	% Selected	15%	10%	6%

Table 2.3. Difference between Female and Other Genders				
Variable	Indicator	Female	Other Genders	Difference
Top-Three Factors to Increase Visitation of Bayfield Peninsula Trails				
More Convenient Location	% Selected	22%	30%	-8%
Better Maintenance of Trails	% Selected	19%	22%	-3%
Improved Trail Infrastructure	% Selected	23%	23%	0%
More Amenities	% Selected	1%	5%	-4%
Trailside/Hike-In Camping	% Selected	8%	15%	-7%
Accessibility	% Selected	4%	4%	1%
Less Crowded Trails	% Selected	42%	19%	23%
More Events at the Trails	% Selected	12%	11%	1%
More Events in the Area	% Selected	8%	10%	-2%
Connectivity Between Trails	% Selected	55%	50%	5%
Desired Trail Types Would Like to See More of in Bayfield Peninsula Trail System				
Hiking or Backpacking	% Selected	58%	67%	-9%
Trail Running	% Selected	16%	10%	6%
Horseback Riding	% Selected	1%	0%	1%
Snowshoeing	% Selected	27%	22%	6%
Birding	% Selected	17%	20%	-3%
Walking/Dog Walking	% Selected	50%	36%	14%
ATV/UTV	% Selected	3%	4%	-1%
Fat Biking	% Selected	11%	16%	-6%
Road Biking	% Selected	18%	16%	2%
Mountain Biking	% Selected	16%	26%	-11%
Snowmobiling	% Selected	-	-	-
Downhill Skiing/Snowboarding	% Selected	3%	2%	1%
Cross Country Skiing	% Selected	28%	35%	-6%
Dog Sledding	% Selected	2%	1%	1%
Foraging/Harvesting	% Selected	15%	18%	-3%
Satisfaction Indicators				
Overall Satisfaction with Bayfield Pen. Trails	% Very Satisfied	58%	55%	3%
Bayfield Pen. Trails Contribute to the Overall Experience of the Region	% Strongly Agree	82%	82%	0%
How Bayfield Peninsula Trails Compare to Other Trails Visited in...				
Wisconsin	% BP Trails Better	49%	49%	0%
Midwest	% BP Trails Better	33%	45%	-12%
Rest of the U.S.	% BP Trails Better	28%	37%	-9%

Table 2.4. Difference between Female and Other Genders				
Variable	Indicator	Female	Other Genders	Difference
Magnitude of Potential Problems on Bayfield Peninsula Trails				
Conflicts with Other Activities	% Moderate + Major	7%	6%	1%
Dangerous Road Intersections	% Moderate + Major	7%	11%	-4%
Lack of Restrooms	% Moderate + Major	18%	15%	3%
Lack of Drinking Water	% Moderate + Major	13%	11%	2%
Lack of Trail Direction Signs	% Moderate + Major	23%	14%	9%
Confusing Trail Markings	% Moderate + Major	23%	15%	8%
Lack of Services	% Moderate + Major	6%	2%	4%
Lack of/Poor Trail Maps	% Moderate + Major	24%	8%	16%
Inadequate Trail Maintenance	% Moderate + Major	8%	7%	1%
Lack of Parking	% Moderate + Major	4%	9%	-5%
Accessibility Issues	% Moderate + Major	23%	18%	5%
Disruptions from Logging in the Area	% Moderate + Major	36%	25%	11%
Importance of Trail Characteristics				
Single Track Trails for Biking	% Important + Very Important	34%	36%	-2%
Technical Trails for Biking	% Important + Very Important	16%	17%	-1%
Quiet Natural Surroundings	% Important + Very Important	96%	95%	1%
Seeing Wildlife and Birds	% Important + Very Important	89%	83%	6%
Points of Interest	% Important + Very Important	74%	86%	-12%
No Motorized Vehicles	% Important + Very Important	92%	86%	6%
Parking	% Important + Very Important	42%	39%	3%
Lack of Crowds	% Important + Very Important	77%	69%	8%
Information on Historic/Natural Features	% Important + Very Important	50%	50%	0%
Easy Trails	% Important + Very Important	32%	28%	4%
Moderate Trails	% Important + Very Important	61%	50%	11%
Difficult Trails	% Important + Very Important	39%	36%	3%

Table 2.5. Difference between Female and Other Genders				
Variable	Indicator	Female	Other Genders	Difference
Importance of Trail Characteristics (continued)				
Variety of Trails	% Important + Very Important	85%	72%	13%
ADA-Accessible Trails	% Important + Very Important	48%	30%	17%
Clear Signage/Maps	% Important + Very Important	77%	60%	18%
Trails Available on Apps for Wayfinding	% Important + Very Important	47%	32%	15%
Minimal Logging in the Area	% Important + Very Important	75%	50%	25%
Importance of Amenities When Deciding Which Trails to Visit				
Restaurants	% Important + Very Important	9%	10%	-1%
Taverns/Brew Pubs	% Important + Very Important	10%	10%	0%
Equipment Rental	% Important + Very Important	5%	3%	2%
Equipment Repair Shops	% Important + Very Important	7%	7%	0%
Music and Entertainment	% Important + Very Important	8%	9%	-1%
Hotels/Motels/B&Bs	% Important + Very Important	15%	13%	2%
Cell Service	% Important + Very Important	37%	21%	17%
Wi-Fi Access	% Important + Very Important	10%	4%	7%
Gambling/Casinos	% Important + Very Important	0%	1%	-1%
Community Festivals	% Important + Very Important	6%	14%	-8%
Hike-in/Bike-in/Ski-in Camping/Shelters	% Important + Very Important	19%	12%	7%

Seniors vs. Younger Trail Users

Table 3.1. Difference between Seniors and Younger Trail Users				
Variable	Indicator	Seniors	Younger Users	Difference
Learn About Bayfield Peninsula Trails				
Primary or Secondary Residence in Area	% Selected	76%	71%	5%
Word of Mouth from Friends/Family	% Selected	58%	44%	15%
Bayfield Area Trails Newsletter	% Selected	30%	13%	17%
Bayfield Area Trails Website/Facebook Page	% Selected	25%	14%	12%
Local News	% Selected	4%	4%	0%
Bike Shops	% Selected	4%	9%	-5%
Brochure/Trail Guide	% Selected	36%	28%	8%
Google Search or Trail App	% Selected	21%	39%	-18%
Chamber Visitor Guide	% Selected	14%	8%	6%
Participate in Activities at Any Location				
Hiking or Backpacking	% Selected	90%	90%	0%
Trail Running	% Selected	9%	35%	-26%
Horseback Riding	% Selected	0%	3%	-3%
Snowshoeing	% Selected	66%	53%	13%
Birding	% Selected	50%	30%	19%
Walking/Dog Walking	% Selected	70%	84%	-14%
ATV/UTV	% Selected	8%	9%	-1%
Fat Biking	% Selected	15%	20%	-6%
Road Biking	% Selected	40%	37%	3%
Mountain Biking	% Selected	21%	41%	-19%
Snowmobiling	% Selected	3%	8%	-5%
Downhill Skiing/Snowboarding	% Selected	18%	36%	-18%
Cross Country Skiing	% Selected	58%	63%	-5%
Dog Sledding	% Selected	2%	5%	-3%
Foraging/Harvesting	% Selected	32%	43%	-11%

Table 3.2. Difference between Seniors and Younger Trail Users				
Variable	Indicator	Seniors	Younger Users	Difference
Participate in Activities on Bayfield Peninsula Trails				
Hiking or Backpacking	% Selected	91%	90%	1%
Trail Running	% Selected	10%	26%	-17%
Horseback Riding	% Selected	-	-	-
Snowshoeing	% Selected	50%	47%	3%
Birding	% Selected	45%	25%	19%
Walking/Dog Walking	% Selected	62%	66%	-4%
ATV/UTV	% Selected	8%	6%	2%
Fat Biking	% Selected	11%	19%	-9%
Road Biking	% Selected	22%	23%	-1%
Mountain Biking	% Selected	17%	32%	-15%
Snowmobiling	% Selected	4%	6%	-2%
Downhill Skiing/Snowboarding	% Selected	13%	18%	-6%
Cross Country Skiing	% Selected	52%	50%	3%
Dog Sledding	% Selected	1%	1%	0%
Foraging/Harvesting	% Selected	26%	39%	-13%
Trail-Related Activities				
Frequency of Visiting Bayfield Pen. Trails	% Weekly	48%	51%	-3%
Bayfield Peninsula Primary Location	% Yes	77%	67%	10%
Why Bayfield Peninsula is Not Primary Location for Trail-Related Activities				
Distance/I Live Too Far Away	% Selected	75%	88%	-13%
Trails are Not Well Maintained	% Selected	-	-	-
Better Quality Trails Available Elsewhere	% Selected	-	-	-
Better Amenities Available at Other Trails	% Selected	-	-	-
Trails are Not Accessible	% Selected	-	-	-
Lack of Connectivity of Trail System	% Selected	0%	9%	-9%
Lack of Trailside Camping Options	% Selected	4%	9%	-5%
Disruptions from Logging in the Area	% Selected	8%	3%	5%
Cost of Parking/Access Fees	% Selected	-	-	-
Trails are Too Crowded	% Selected	0%	3%	-3%
No Family or Friends in the Area	% Selected	13%	3%	10%
More Trail-Related Activities Elsewhere	% Selected	21%	9%	12%

Table 3.3. Difference between Seniors and Younger Trail Users				
Variable	Indicator	Seniors	Younger Users	Difference
Top-Three Factors to Increase Visitation of Bayfield Peninsula Trails				
More Convenient Location	% Selected	27%	25%	2%
Better Maintenance of Trails	% Selected	19%	21%	-2%
Improved Trail Infrastructure	% Selected	25%	21%	4%
More Amenities	% Selected	4%	3%	1%
Trailside/Hike-In Camping	% Selected	7%	18%	-12%
Accessibility	% Selected	5%	3%	2%
Less Crowded Trails	% Selected	25%	34%	-9%
More Events at the Trails	% Selected	12%	11%	1%
More Events in the Area	% Selected	9%	11%	-2%
Connectivity Between Trails	% Selected	49%	55%	-7%
Desired Trail Types Would Like to See More of in Bayfield Peninsula Trail System				
Hiking or Backpacking	% Selected	60%	66%	-6%
Trail Running	% Selected	6%	19%	-14%
Horseback Riding	% Selected	0%	1%	-1%
Snowshoeing	% Selected	26%	23%	3%
Birding	% Selected	22%	15%	8%
Walking/Dog Walking	% Selected	46%	38%	8%
ATV/UTV	% Selected	3%	4%	-1%
Fat Biking	% Selected	9%	18%	-10%
Road Biking	% Selected	18%	15%	4%
Mountain Biking	% Selected	14%	29%	-16%
Snowmobiling	% Selected	-	-	-
Downhill Skiing/Snowboarding	% Selected	2%	3%	-1%
Cross Country Skiing	% Selected	28%	35%	-7%
Dog Sledding	% Selected	1%	2%	-1%
Foraging/Harvesting	% Selected	13%	20%	-8%
Satisfaction Indicators				
Overall Satisfaction with Bayfield Pen. Trails	% Very Satisfied	59%	53%	6%
Bayfield Pen. Trails Contribute to the Overall Experience of the Region	% Strongly Agree	80%	85%	-5%
How Bayfield Peninsula Trails Compare to Other Trails Visited in...				
Wisconsin	% BP Trails Better	42%	56%	-14%
Midwest	% BP Trails Better	37%	42%	-4%
Rest of the U.S.	% BP Trails Better	32%	33%	-1%

Table 3.4. Difference between Seniors and Younger Trail Users				
Variable	Indicator	Seniors	Younger Users	Difference
Magnitude of Potential Problems on Bayfield Peninsula Trails				
Conflicts with Other Activities	% Moderate + Major	8%	5%	2%
Dangerous Road Intersections	% Moderate + Major	7%	12%	-5%
Lack of Restrooms	% Moderate + Major	18%	16%	2%
Lack of Drinking Water	% Moderate + Major	15%	8%	7%
Lack of Trail Direction Signs	% Moderate + Major	20%	17%	3%
Confusing Trail Markings	% Moderate + Major	20%	17%	3%
Lack of Services	% Moderate + Major	4%	3%	1%
Lack of/Poor Trail Maps	% Moderate + Major	16%	13%	3%
Inadequate Trail Maintenance	% Moderate + Major	4%	10%	-6%
Lack of Parking	% Moderate + Major	4%	10%	-6%
Accessibility Issues	% Moderate + Major	24%	17%	7%
Disruptions from Logging in the Area	% Moderate + Major	28%	30%	-2%
Importance of Trail Characteristics				
Single Track Trails for Biking	% Important + Very Important	23%	46%	-23%
Technical Trails for Biking	% Important + Very Important	6%	27%	-20%
Quiet Natural Surroundings	% Important + Very Important	95%	95%	0%
Seeing Wildlife and Birds	% Important + Very Important	87%	85%	2%
Points of Interest	% Important + Very Important	83%	79%	3%
No Motorized Vehicles	% Important + Very Important	93%	84%	9%
Parking	% Important + Very Important	43%	36%	7%
Lack of Crowds	% Important + Very Important	77%	69%	8%
Information on Historic/Natural Features	% Important + Very Important	51%	50%	1%
Easy Trails	% Important + Very Important	35%	25%	10%
Moderate Trails	% Important + Very Important	55%	55%	0%
Difficult Trails	% Important + Very Important	28%	45%	-17%

Table 3.5. Difference between Seniors and Younger Trail Users				
Variable	Indicator	Seniors	Younger Users	Difference
Importance of Trail Characteristics (continued)				
Variety of Trails	% Important + Very Important	69%	87%	-18%
ADA-Accessible Trails	% Important + Very Important	39%	38%	1%
Clear Signage/Maps	% Important + Very Important	72%	64%	8%
Trails Available on Apps for Wayfinding	% Important + Very Important	40%	38%	2%
Minimal Logging in the Area	% Important + Very Important	60%	63%	-3%
Importance of Amenities When Deciding Which Trails to Visit				
Restaurants	% Important + Very Important	9%	10%	-1%
Taverns/Brew Pubs	% Important + Very Important	5%	15%	-10%
Equipment Rental	% Important + Very Important	4%	3%	1%
Equipment Repair Shops	% Important + Very Important	6%	7%	-1%
Music and Entertainment	% Important + Very Important	7%	10%	-3%
Hotels/Motels/B&Bs	% Important + Very Important	11%	16%	-5%
Cell Service	% Important + Very Important	32%	23%	9%
Wi-Fi Access	% Important + Very Important	6%	7%	-1%
Gambling/Casinos	% Important + Very Important	0%	1%	-1%
Community Festivals	% Important + Very Important	5%	15%	-10%
Hike-in/Bike-in/Ski-in Camping/Shelters	% Important + Very Important	10%	20%	-11%

Lower vs. Higher Income Households

Table 4.1. Difference between Lower Income and Higher Income Households				
Variable	Indicator	Lower Income	Higher Income	Difference
Learn About Bayfield Peninsula Trails				
Primary or Secondary Residence in Area	% Selected	78%	71%	7%
Word of Mouth from Friends/Family	% Selected	60%	49%	11%
Bayfield Area Trails Newsletter	% Selected	18%	22%	-4%
Bayfield Area Trails Website/Facebook Page	% Selected	15%	22%	-8%
Local News	% Selected	4%	3%	0%
Bike Shops	% Selected	6%	7%	-1%
Brochure/Trail Guide	% Selected	35%	29%	6%
Google Search or Trail App	% Selected	24%	34%	-11%
Chamber Visitor Guide	% Selected	16%	8%	9%
Participate in Activities at Any Location				
Hiking or Backpacking	% Selected	95%	90%	5%
Trail Running	% Selected	24%	26%	-2%
Horseback Riding	% Selected	2%	2%	0%
Snowshoeing	% Selected	65%	58%	7%
Birding	% Selected	36%	39%	-3%
Walking/Dog Walking	% Selected	71%	82%	-11%
ATV/UTV	% Selected	6%	7%	-1%
Fat Biking	% Selected	18%	17%	1%
Road Biking	% Selected	36%	39%	-3%
Mountain Biking	% Selected	33%	30%	3%
Snowmobiling	% Selected	2%	7%	-5%
Downhill Skiing/Snowboarding	% Selected	24%	33%	-9%
Cross Country Skiing	% Selected	62%	64%	-2%
Dog Sledding	% Selected	2%	5%	-3%
Foraging/Harvesting	% Selected	42%	35%	7%

Table 4.2. Difference between Lower Income and Higher Income Households				
Variable	Indicator	Lower Income	Higher Income	Difference
Participate in Activities on Bayfield Peninsula Trails				
Hiking or Backpacking	% Selected	93%	90%	3%
Trail Running	% Selected	22%	20%	2%
Horseback Riding	% Selected	-	-	-
Snowshoeing	% Selected	47%	49%	-1%
Birding	% Selected	36%	32%	4%
Walking/Dog Walking	% Selected	67%	65%	2%
ATV/UTV	% Selected	4%	6%	-2%
Fat Biking	% Selected	15%	15%	0%
Road Biking	% Selected	24%	21%	3%
Mountain Biking	% Selected	26%	24%	2%
Snowmobiling	% Selected	0%	8%	-8%
Downhill Skiing/Snowboarding	% Selected	13%	18%	-5%
Cross Country Skiing	% Selected	53%	52%	1%
Dog Sledding	% Selected	0%	2%	-2%
Foraging/Harvesting	% Selected	36%	29%	7%
Trail-Related Activities				
Frequency of Visiting Bayfield Pen. Trails	% Weekly	51%	49%	2%
Bayfield Peninsula Primary Location	% Yes	78%	65%	13%
Why Bayfield Peninsula is Not Primary Location for Trail-Related Activities				
Distance/I Live Too Far Away	% Selected	67%	88%	-21%
Trails are Not Well Maintained	% Selected	-	-	-
Better Quality Trails Available Elsewhere	% Selected	-	-	-
Better Amenities Available at Other Trails	% Selected	-	-	-
Trails are Not Accessible	% Selected	-	-	-
Lack of Connectivity of Trail System	% Selected	17%	2%	14%
Lack of Trailside Camping Options	% Selected	8%	7%	1%
Disruptions from Logging in the Area	% Selected	8%	5%	4%
Cost of Parking/Access Fees	% Selected	-	-	-
Trails are Too Crowded	% Selected	0%	2%	-2%
No Family or Friends in the Area	% Selected	8%	7%	1%
More Trail-Related Activities Elsewhere	% Selected	25%	12%	13%

Table 4.3. Difference between Lower Income and Higher Income Households				
Variable	Indicator	Lower Income	Higher Income	Difference
Top-Three Factors to Increase Visitation of Bayfield Peninsula Trails				
More Convenient Location	% Selected	29%	25%	4%
Better Maintenance of Trails	% Selected	27%	17%	10%
Improved Trail Infrastructure	% Selected	18%	24%	-6%
More Amenities	% Selected	5%	3%	2%
Trailside/Hike-In Camping	% Selected	20%	13%	7%
Accessibility	% Selected	7%	3%	5%
Less Crowded Trails	% Selected	33%	27%	5%
More Events at the Trails	% Selected	13%	13%	0%
More Events in the Area	% Selected	7%	10%	-3%
Connectivity Between Trails	% Selected	62%	52%	10%
Desired Trail Types Would Like to See More of in Bayfield Peninsula Trail System				
Hiking or Backpacking	% Selected	76%	62%	15%
Trail Running	% Selected	18%	10%	8%
Horseback Riding	% Selected	0%	1%	-1%
Snowshoeing	% Selected	31%	24%	7%
Birding	% Selected	18%	17%	1%
Walking/Dog Walking	% Selected	46%	42%	4%
ATV/UTV	% Selected	0%	3%	-3%
Fat Biking	% Selected	9%	15%	-5%
Road Biking	% Selected	7%	22%	-15%
Mountain Biking	% Selected	18%	25%	-7%
Snowmobiling	% Selected	-	-	-
Downhill Skiing/Snowboarding	% Selected	2%	3%	-2%
Cross Country Skiing	% Selected	36%	32%	5%
Dog Sledding	% Selected	0%	3%	-3%
Foraging/Harvesting	% Selected	22%	12%	10%
Satisfaction Indicators				
Overall Satisfaction with Bayfield Pen. Trails	% Very Satisfied	69%	53%	16%
Bayfield Pen. Trails Contribute to the Overall Experience of the Region	% Strongly Agree	78%	85%	-7%
How Bayfield Peninsula Trails Compare to Other Trails Visited in...				
Wisconsin	% BP Trails Better	52%	52%	0%
Midwest	% BP Trails Better	36%	42%	-6%
Rest of the U.S.	% BP Trails Better	26%	33%	-8%

Table 4.4. Difference between Lower Income and Higher Income Households				
Variable	Indicator	Lower Income	Higher Income	Difference
Magnitude of Potential Problems on Bayfield Peninsula Trails				
Conflicts with Other Activities	% Moderate + Major	4%	4%	0%
Dangerous Road Intersections	% Moderate + Major	16%	6%	11%
Lack of Restrooms	% Moderate + Major	14%	21%	-7%
Lack of Drinking Water	% Moderate + Major	17%	10%	7%
Lack of Trail Direction Signs	% Moderate + Major	16%	17%	-1%
Confusing Trail Markings	% Moderate + Major	16%	19%	-3%
Lack of Services	% Moderate + Major	2%	5%	-2%
Lack of/Poor Trail Maps	% Moderate + Major	10%	18%	-8%
Inadequate Trail Maintenance	% Moderate + Major	10%	5%	5%
Lack of Parking	% Moderate + Major	6%	9%	-3%
Accessibility Issues	% Moderate + Major	17%	22%	-5%
Disruptions from Logging in the Area	% Moderate + Major	28%	30%	-3%
Importance of Trail Characteristics				
Single Track Trails for Biking	% Important + Very Important	24%	41%	-17%
Technical Trails for Biking	% Important + Very Important	18%	17%	1%
Quiet Natural Surroundings	% Important + Very Important	96%	97%	0%
Seeing Wildlife and Birds	% Important + Very Important	89%	85%	4%
Points of Interest	% Important + Very Important	80%	81%	-1%
No Motorized Vehicles	% Important + Very Important	94%	89%	6%
Parking	% Important + Very Important	31%	44%	-13%
Lack of Crowds	% Important + Very Important	79%	72%	8%
Information on Historic/Natural Features	% Important + Very Important	51%	51%	0%
Easy Trails	% Important + Very Important	26%	29%	-3%
Moderate Trails	% Important + Very Important	49%	59%	-10%
Difficult Trails	% Important + Very Important	42%	35%	7%

Table 4.5. Difference between Lower Income and Higher Income Households				
Variable	Indicator	Lower Income	Higher Income	Difference
Importance of Trail Characteristics (continued)				
Variety of Trails	% Important + Very Important	80%	78%	1%
ADA-Accessible Trails	% Important + Very Important	39%	37%	2%
Clear Signage/Maps	% Important + Very Important	69%	70%	0%
Trails Available on Apps for Wayfinding	% Important + Very Important	26%	44%	-18%
Minimal Logging in the Area	% Important + Very Important	68%	60%	8%
Importance of Amenities When Deciding Which Trails to Visit				
Restaurants	% Important + Very Important	6%	13%	-7%
Taverns/Brew Pubs	% Important + Very Important	6%	13%	-7%
Equipment Rental	% Important + Very Important	6%	4%	2%
Equipment Repair Shops	% Important + Very Important	6%	7%	-1%
Music and Entertainment	% Important + Very Important	4%	12%	-8%
Hotels/Motels/B&Bs	% Important + Very Important	6%	20%	-14%
Cell Service	% Important + Very Important	21%	30%	-9%
Wi-Fi Access	% Important + Very Important	6%	9%	-3%
Gambling/Casinos	% Important + Very Important	0%	1%	-1%
Community Festivals	% Important + Very Important	4%	13%	-9%
Hike-in/Bike-in/Ski-in Camping/Shelters	% Important + Very Important	10%	21%	-11%

OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS

Appreciation/Thanks

All is good. Leave it alone.

Always a pleasure. Protect these spaces for wildlife. Encourage respect for these spaces.

I appreciate your work! Having an organization to maintain/promote local trails is a good thing. Perhaps some linkage/coordination with other trails in surrounding area (North Country trail, etc.) would be helpful.

BAT has done a great job developing trails and getting community involved. Keep up the great work.

Beautiful locations!

Being 77 years old, my needs are much different from most of you vacationers. I'd assume, however, our stays on the Bayfield peninsula are always filled with a new experience or two. Keep up the good work and "they will come."

Excellent trails. I look forward to more of them.

Excellent work on the trails in our area! Thank you!

Good job and thank you.

Great job! Keep it up. I really appreciate the community support we have for the trails in the Bayfield peninsula. I wish Bayfield zoning was easier to deal with on these issues.

Great trail! We usually go to Duluth area, but this was a beautiful area, definitely more rustic, but we enjoyed our visit.

Hiking adds to my experience; it makes me excited to return.

I can't imagine visiting Bayfield without having access to walking trails that go to the water and through the woods. It's our favorite part of visiting Bayfield and without it we would not want to visit.

I go to the trails for exercise, fresh air, to clear my mind and refresh my soul.

I love the non-commercial, low-key vibe. Especially non-commercial. I don't mind that the trails are not perfect. It would be nice to learn more about the history of the area including geological history. Actually, I'd like a book but online is okay too (I'm getting sick of reading my phone all the time.)

I love them, and I am blessed to be here.

I love them. They add to my dog's and I quality of life.

I'm very grateful for the work you're doing. Keep Bayfield County quiet!

It has been a huge blessing to our area to have more trail development in recent years. Our area holds a wealth of natural resources that have been highlighted more through consistent trail development and increased public awareness of that access.

It's one of our main destinations for activities outdoors. We don't specifically live close by but are in the area. If we lived closer, we would use the area even more.

Just a thank you. We live in Iron County and love visiting and camping in Bayfield County when the opportunity arises.

Keep as is - it's great.

Keep up the good work.

Keep up the great work! Thank you and I appreciate you.

Love Bayfield, the Islands and all of the trails! Keep up the great work and keep Bayfield and the APIS as wild as possible.

Love the trails. Thanks for working on them.

Other users are always friendly and courteous.

Our trail systems are a treasure! Year-round waste management in the big ravine would help with litter.

I really love that over the many decades (four generations of family) of coming to the Peninsula that conservation has been strongly regarded as a priority. It is a very delicate ecosystem that needs our protection. More cell towers may not be the key but maybe offering Garmin satellite phone rentals at the ranger stations/or gas stations for emergency calling or encouraging/educating people how to be safe bringing their own water and snacks and satellite phones for emergencies. Thank you for all you do. We look forward to seeing the eagles and other unique wildlife, wildflowers, and the crystal-clear lake next spring. Thank you again!

Thank you for all you do for our beloved trails!!

Thank you for all you do to create great trail experiences in the area!

Thank you for all you do to offer us safe, enjoyable trail experiences right here at home!

Thank you.

The Bayfield area trails provide a source to experience the peninsula's natural beauty. They offer access and guidance through the terrain at no cost that would not be forthcoming from other sources.

The Bayfield Peninsula trails are an incredible asset to our community--one of the reasons I choose to live here. I'm particularly enthusiastic about the trails because they are quiet--except for the consoling and soothing sounds of the natural world. Can't there be one quiet place? Let it be here... Thank you so very much for the great leadership, the partnerships, and the incredible volunteers who make the Bayfield Peninsula trails possible.

The Bayfield Peninsula area is a gem in northern Wisconsin.

The presence of trails on the peninsula was a primary factor why we chose to move to Washburn from Ashland.

The Ravine trails have brought me hours of beautiful hikes I look forward to daily hikes, and I enjoy all four seasons. The communication regarding the trails is excellent. Thank you to all of the volunteers and the leadership that have dedicated their time and talent to our trails.

The trails are GREAT!

These are really nice trails, and they make living here much more fun.

They are appreciated!

They are FABULOUS! Thank you!!!

They're great! Keep up the great work!

We felt that the area was well kept and enjoyable to visit.

We have some of the best trails in the region, and they are a huge asset for our community. They provide opportunities for residents and also bring visitors that help sustain our local economies. Bayfield County staff have been resistant to public input and have been actively hostile regarding maintaining aesthetic value of natural trails. Logging plans threaten some of our most valuable trail assets and efforts to raise these concerns have fallen on deaf

ears. I hope that the county brings everyone to the table to work together to build a plan that honors the amazing assets that these trails represent.

We live in Bayfield County to be outdoors in/along its woodlands & waterways. It has great diversity and little crowding. We treasure quiet times -- with the large exception of frequent, noisy ATVs on the roadways we live and travel on.

We live over 4 hours away from Bayfield. This past summer we booked an Airbnb and stayed for the entire month of July—booked again for July 2026. Number one reason is Big Top! And as we LOVE to hike, we look for trails. Have done at least half of the trails listed on your map.

We love them!

Trail Connectivity

Bayfield Area Trails are wonderful. Expanding them to include more diverse natural settings that connect to the current trails would be an improvement.

Connect the Pileated Trail.

Connecting paths between Red Cliff and Bayfield, Bayfield and Washburn would be a nice addition.

Connecting trail systems would be fantastic. And it would be great to be able to ride a bike from Bayfield to Washburn, to Ashland, or even to Corny, without having to ride along the road. or with very minimal road travel.

I love having the options we do around the Peninsula. I'm excited to see more options start and grow from the towns to the more remote trails. Bozeman, MT and Missoula, MT have both done a good job building trails into the community planning and connecting downtown to their National Forest trails - would love to see more of this on the Peninsula.

I love that the trails connect to loops, each other and businesses like the apple orchards and Ashwabay. As a year-round resident I also like the fact that I can use the trails for exercise and getting to Bayfield without having to drive. The xc trails at Ashwabay are phenomenal because of their grooming and forest aesthetics.

I would like to see more connectivity, so that, for instance, I can mountain bike from Bayfield to Ashwabay. Or for instance, I would love to mountain bike from Hatchery to Ashwabay. Or hike from Howl Adventure center to Bayfield (right now to walk back from Howl to Bayfield, one needs to walk along Hwy 13 or go through Blue Wing Bay.) The new trails that lead from the Ravine to the top of Fire Tower Hill are great! And the trail to the Winery is also great. Thanks for all you are doing!!

Love the trails! I would like to see the development of the Fire Tower Road trails and more trails connecting the different farms in the Bayfield Fruit Loop.

Northern Bayfield County trails lack connection to area towns and other systems to connect/link with. Hard paved trails are severely lacking along busy roadways.

Thank you for all of your trail advocacy in our region. It is amazing what Bayfield Area Trails has been able to accomplish. One additional comment to reiterate: I would be very interested in improving the bicycle path connectivity between towns in Bayfield/Ashland, similar to what is available in Vilas County. I know so many people that have a similar dream for our region. I don't know if Bayfield County Trails could have a voice in this type of trail advocacy, but I would be happy to help in exploring this effort!

There is tremendous potential to connect our bay area communities with a trail network. It could facilitate and drive major economic impact, plus it is so much more fun to travel between our communities off of the highway. Bayfield area trails should be the leader in this endeavor.

Well-Maintained/Excellent Trails

I had a great time, thought the trails were well maintained and fun to hike.

I am so impressed by the trail conditions of Bayfield Area Trails, and by the fact that most of the work is done by volunteers. I love being able to walk with my dog (leashed) on wooded trails. I like having a designated parking area - free except one lot in city of Bayfield. And I appreciate the private landowners who have granted trail easements across their property.

I'm always amazed at how little to no garbage there is on the trails. Locals know what they have and take great care of the trails.

Thank you for taking care of the trails.

Thank you for the work you all do to make our trails accessible and keep them beautiful.

Thanks for the trails and the people that keep them interesting and safe.

The trails and the maintenance of the trails has been exceptional, and they are a pleasure to experience. Suggestion: Adding steps on the curve of the trail from the Iron Bridge down to Ravine trail.

We love the trails and value all the hard work that is put in to making them what they are!

You've done an excellent job with area trails. Keep up the good work! A connecting trail between Valhalla and Ashwabay would be great!

Additional Trails

I find it interesting that the survey has not included the Valhalla trail system. I go there often. Also, I have traveled to other counties in Wisconsin and other states to ride their wonderful, paved bike trails. Bayfield county has none and with increased traffic on many of the roads, people avoid riding.

I would like to see more and longer, non-motorized trails, especially for hiking. I would like to see more young people volunteering on trail projects.

I would love to see a trail from Elm Street in Corny to Siskiwit Falls. I know the land is already county owned! Thanks.

More beginner friendly mountain biking trails.

More biking that is not single-track mountain biking but gravel or back roads or trails. Thanks.

More snowshoeing trails please!

We have a great number, but I wish there were a few more trails and/or systems. When you go daily, it's just choosing between Long Lake, Pikes Creek, Ashwabay and the ravine. Although, beggars can't be choosers! Thank you!

I would love a trail through the kettles.

Improved Signage

Any trails we have been on have been enjoyable; we just are finding e-bikes are starting to be an issue; operators are going too fast and not following the "rules", if you will, of properly operating on the correct side of the trail and letting individuals who are hiking/walking that they may be coming up behind them.

I'd love to see better signage discouraging horseback riding where appropriate. This is the single largest issue that disrupts enjoyment of the trails in my opinion. Also, walking and dog walking are unequivocally not the same and shouldn't be lumped together in research gathering. I walk at least weekly, it's my most important outdoor activity year-round but it is not dog walking and frankly when I encounter off-leash dogs, I find it very uncomfortable. As you decide where to allocate resources and effort, you would be better served not to group the two together. A dog friendly trail will absolutely attract some people and absolutely discourage others. And thank you for all you do! Attention to the trails in this area is phenomenal and it is SO appreciated. It makes the world a better place, keep up the amazing work. Thank you again.

It is important that all dogs are under owner's control.

Improve signing.

Maybe signage explaining the reasons for the need to keep dogs on leash would help. Every dog owner seems to think that their dog is so magical ("he's friendly", as the dog runs at me or at wildlife) that no rules could possibly apply to it.

The Brownstone Bypass is dangerous for hiking and biking; people do not drive 25 mph. More signage for drivers and pavement markings would help.

Unfortunately, my knee went out last spring so I'm looking for flat areas to take the dog for a walk. I live here but have one heck of a time figuring out where the trails start and end. There are signs in some places, but they are often not positioned well. In other words, if you're looking at a map while facing north, the map should show north at the top. I am a bit dyslexic but if I lose "north" in my brain, I am simply lost, and maps mean nothing.

Extend Existing Trails

The Gil Larsen trail would be served to increase the miles of trail beyond the sign that says "End of Trail" is a beautiful area. Also, on the Big Ravine trail there is a platform with seating that would benefit from a tin roof for the children that gather there during the school days as the Ravine is an outdoor classroom. I am speaking about the platform near the base of the school trail.

Keep creating trails for hiking. I would love to see longer, more advanced hiking trails.

Keep some of them a little bit "off the map" for locals; there's been a significant increase in tourism and some of our favorite places have gotten really crowded. Longer trails or more trail connectivity is desirable for drawing a different kind of hiker to the area.

The trails are nice, but often too short. Longer trails or better connections between them would be a great addition to the trails.

Too many short, wide, easy trails.

Crowding Concerns

I personally do not want the trails to become more developed because that always brings in more people. I want to be in the woods with nature, not more people. Restrooms always mean more people come! Let's keep a few trails hidden for us locals to enjoy!

One of the best parts of the trails is that they are not crowded. As you continue to improve them, which is great by the way, I am concerned more and more people will visit and then take away a major benefit: clear trails that are quiet where you can be in nature but NOT with everybody else. How can you keep the improving the trails and keep the number of visitors manageable, so people aren't simply hiking in a line with a bunch of people they don't know? That's a difficult question for sure.

Some trails have so many tourists that I am not able to enjoy the trails in my backyard due to being overly crowded at peak tourist times in the year.

Tourism traffic has been chaotic and damaging to some of the natural infrastructure.

Complete Trails Under Construction

Finish the fish hatchery trail!

Generally, it is well maintained. My only complaint is the disruption of the Brownstone Trail going from the Marinas into Bayfield. Both biking and hiking.

I would like to see that Brownstone detour to the highway resolved soon!

Infrastructure Improvements

More and higher benches for the elderly.

More inexpensive car camping spots with few amenities that are County or City run.

Miscellaneous

Cell phone service is important only for emergencies.

I live here year-round and am greatly disturbed by the UTV/ATV, snowmobile, and plane traffic speeding by and above my home. If tourists (or locals) want shopping and restaurants, then Minneapolis, Chicago, New York, and even Madison is the place for them. This is one of the few areas left for Wildlife and the observation and enjoyment of the (relatively) Natural World. Tourism is a poison and motorized tourism (ATV/UTV, snowmobile, plane, and boat) is a plague.

I'm concerned about the future beauty of some trails as I know they are slated for logging. This concerns me greatly!

Keep trail maps updated.

Need easier and better viewing of the waterfalls. They are awesome to observe.

Trash containers at trailheads would be helpful.

We hit Bayfield once a year. Stay at Grunkeys, hit the music festival (usually Big Top). Hit the bars and restaurants and do some shopping. Hiking is our only recreational activity. Love to hike trails with view or point of interest like waterfalls. We are from Dubuque, Iowa. Lots of hiking options in our area, but Bayfield is special. The area is beautiful. We love Bayfield.

Some of them require just a little bit of maintenance due to washouts and flooding.

We loved the options from more difficult trails to more paved style options! We wish there would have been information on the Chamber site and maps suggesting food stops close by to bring snacks or sack lunches to the trails, as once you get to them, there isn't much around. Such beautiful places to eat at the parks and we didn't know that ahead of time. Or maybe we're just inexperienced hikers/site seekers!

It would be great to have ability to hike most of day and find lodging near trail for multi-day trip. Perhaps around the Peninsula. Also, I greatly prefer loop trails vs. linear.

PART III: PERSPECTIVES OF BAYFIELD PENINSULA COMMUNITY MEMBERS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Bayfield Peninsula Community Survey was to understand how community members use the Bayfield Peninsula trails and the impact the trails have on the community. The SRC invited a random sample of 2,411 households in the community to complete the Bayfield Peninsula Community Survey through direct email. A total of 295 community members completed the survey.

Key findings of the study are as follows:

Overall Satisfaction

- Nearly eight-in-ten (78%) community members said they were “satisfied” (48%) or “very satisfied” (30%) with the Bayfield Peninsula trails.

Residential Status

- Most community members (95%) reside in the Bayfield Peninsula. In fact, 90% have a primary residence in the Bayfield Peninsula, 2% have a secondary residence, and 3% have both a primary and secondary residence.
- Nearly half of community members (48%) are long time-residents, reporting that they have resided in the Bayfield Peninsula for more than 20 years.
- The natural beauty of the area and Lake Superior were “moderately important” or “very important” in most community members’ (96%) decision to have their residence in the Bayfield Peninsula.

Trail Usage Patterns

- Of those who indicated they participate in trail-related activities, a large majority (92%) participate in them within the Bayfield Peninsula as opposed to outside of the Bayfield Peninsula (8%).
- A majority (59%) of community members said they visit the Bayfield Peninsula trails “weekly” (32%) or “monthly” (27%) in an average year.
- The top two most popular activities enjoyed by community members in an average year on the Bayfield Peninsula trails are Hiking/backpacking (73%) and Walking/dog walking (68%).

- When asked which Bayfield Peninsula trail community members' visit most frequently, Mt Ashwabay was the most popular (18%) followed by Washburn (14%), Houghton Falls (11%), and Big Ravine Network (11%).
- Hiking/backpacking and Walking/dog walking trails are the most desired trail types in the Bayfield Peninsula Trail system, as 64% of community members indicated they would like to see more Hiking or backpacking trails, and 42% indicated they would like to see more Walking/dog walking trails.

Trail Characteristics, Issues, Facilities, and Amenities

- The majority of community members agree that the trails and trail-related activities have a positive effect on them as individuals and on the community at large. Most agree that the trails Enhance their quality of life (82%), are Part of the community's culture (76%), and are Utilized regularly by themselves (74%) and others in the community (78%).
- According to community members, the top issues/amenities that need improvement at the Bayfield Peninsula trails are Information on the naturally significant features of the trails (35%), Connectivity between trails (34%), Restrooms (30%), and Maintenance and/or cleanup (30%).
- The most desired new facilities/amenities on the Bayfield Peninsula trails are Community gathering spaces (43%), Camping (34%), Restaurants/cafes (28%), and ADA accessibility (26%).

Open-Ended Comments

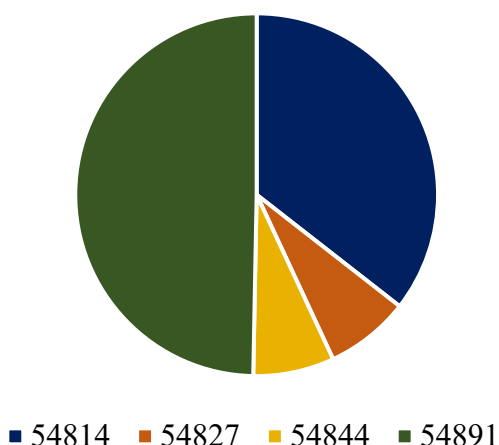
- A total of 128 written responses were received and analyzed, and major themes include appreciation/thanks (37% of all comments), additional trails (9%), trail connectivity (9%), preserve and protect nature (8%), trail maintenance (6%), ATVs/UTVs and snowmobiles (6%), infrastructure improvements (6%), and trail maps/signage (4%).

PURPOSE AND METHODS

The goal of the 2025 Bayfield Peninsula Community Survey was to understand how community members use their local trails and the impact the trails have on the community. The SRC collaborated with members of the Bayfield Area Trails Committee to design the survey. Survey participants were randomly selected from the population of residents of the Bayfield Peninsula.

The SRC invited 2,411 community members to complete the survey online. The survey was launched on October 23, 2025, and was live for 12 days. Two email reminders were sent to non-respondents, the first on October 28, and the second on October 31, 2025. The survey was closed on November 4, 2025. By the end of the data collection period, a total of **295** complete (or near-complete) responses were collected, for a response rate of about 12%. The figure below shows the geographic distribution of the respondents. As expected, more populous zip codes have a higher proportion of respondents in the sample.

Zip Codes of Respondents



Bayfield County has a population of 13,691 residents that are 18 years of age or older. Given an estimated 13,691 adults, 374 responses were needed to construct statistically reliable estimates. For statistical reliability, we used the standard of 5% margin of error, that is, if the survey was repeated 20 times, only once would the average response deviate by greater than 5% from the estimates in this report. The actual overall response rate (295 responses) did not reach the desired minimum sample size needed, however, the margin of error of the survey estimates (5.6%) does not significantly differ from the statistical standard of 5% margin of error. This means that the reader can have reasonable confidence that the results discussed in this report accurately reflect the views of its community members.

In the following analysis, where appropriate we present responses sorted by ranking (or popularity). For questions that require respondents to “select all that apply,” responses are ranked based on a decreasing level of selection, that is from the highest level of selection to the lowest level of selection. A summary of responses to each survey question are displayed in a table or graph.

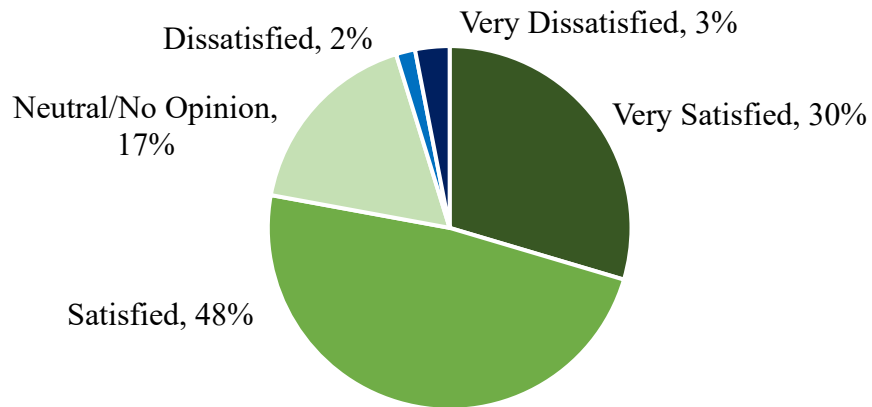
OVERALL SATISFACTION

Overall Satisfaction with Bayfield Peninsula Trails

Community members' satisfaction with the Bayfield Peninsula trails was measured by asking the question, "Overall, how satisfied are you with the Bayfield Peninsula trails?" As shown in Figure 1, community members were provided with five answer options, including "very satisfied," "satisfied," "neutral/no opinion," "dissatisfied," and "very dissatisfied."

Nearly eight-in-ten (78%) community members said they were "satisfied" (48%) or "very satisfied" (30%) with the Bayfield Peninsula trails. Seventeen percent were "neutral/had no opinion," 2% were "dissatisfied," and 3% were "very dissatisfied." Overall, the results indicate that Bayfield Peninsula community members are highly satisfied with the local trail system.

Figure 1. Overall Satisfaction with Bayfield Peninsula Trails



RESIDENTIAL STATUS

Residential Status and Length of Residency

Community members were asked whether they have a primary and/or secondary residence in the Bayfield Peninsula, and if so, the length of their residency. As shown in Figure 2, most respondents (95%) are residents. In fact, 90% of respondents have a primary residence in the Bayfield Peninsula, 2% have a secondary residence, and 3% have both a primary and secondary residence. Five percent (5%) said they don't live in the Bayfield Peninsula.

Figure 2. Residential Status in the Bayfield Peninsula

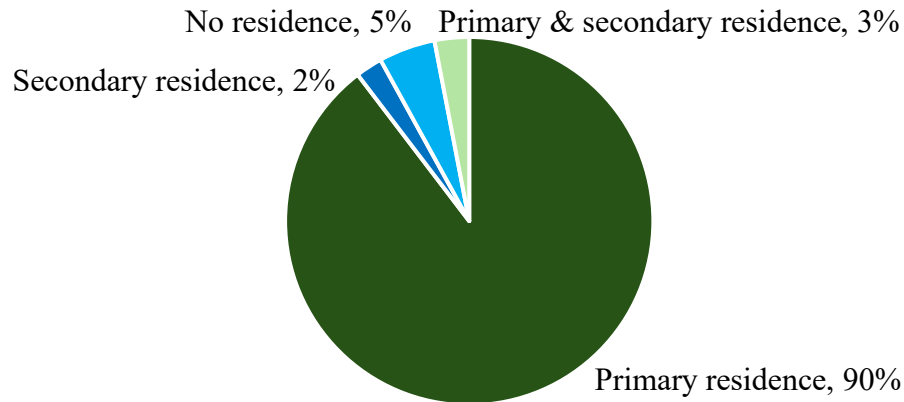
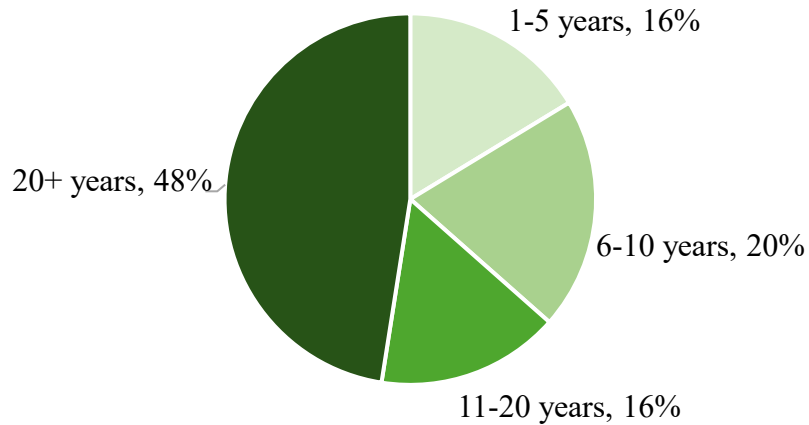


Figure 3 shows community members' length of residence. Nearly half of community members (48%) are long-time residents, reporting that they have resided in the Bayfield Peninsula for more than 20 years. Sixteen percent (16%) reported being residents for 11 to 20 years, 20% reported being residents for 6 to 10 years, and 16% reported being residents for five years or less.

Figure 3. Length of Residence in the Bayfield Peninsula



Why Residents Choose to Live in Bayfield Peninsula

Community members were asked about the importance of 11 factors in their decision to have their residence (primary or secondary) in the Bayfield Peninsula. Answer options included “not at all important,” “slightly important,” “moderately important,” “very important,” and “not applicable.” The “not applicable” responses are excluded from the analysis. Figure 4 on the next page shows the factors in descending order of the percentage of respondents who selected “moderately important” or “very important” for each factor. The ranking was based on a weighting system that assigned the highest weight to the “very important” response, the second highest weight to the “moderately important” response, and so on.

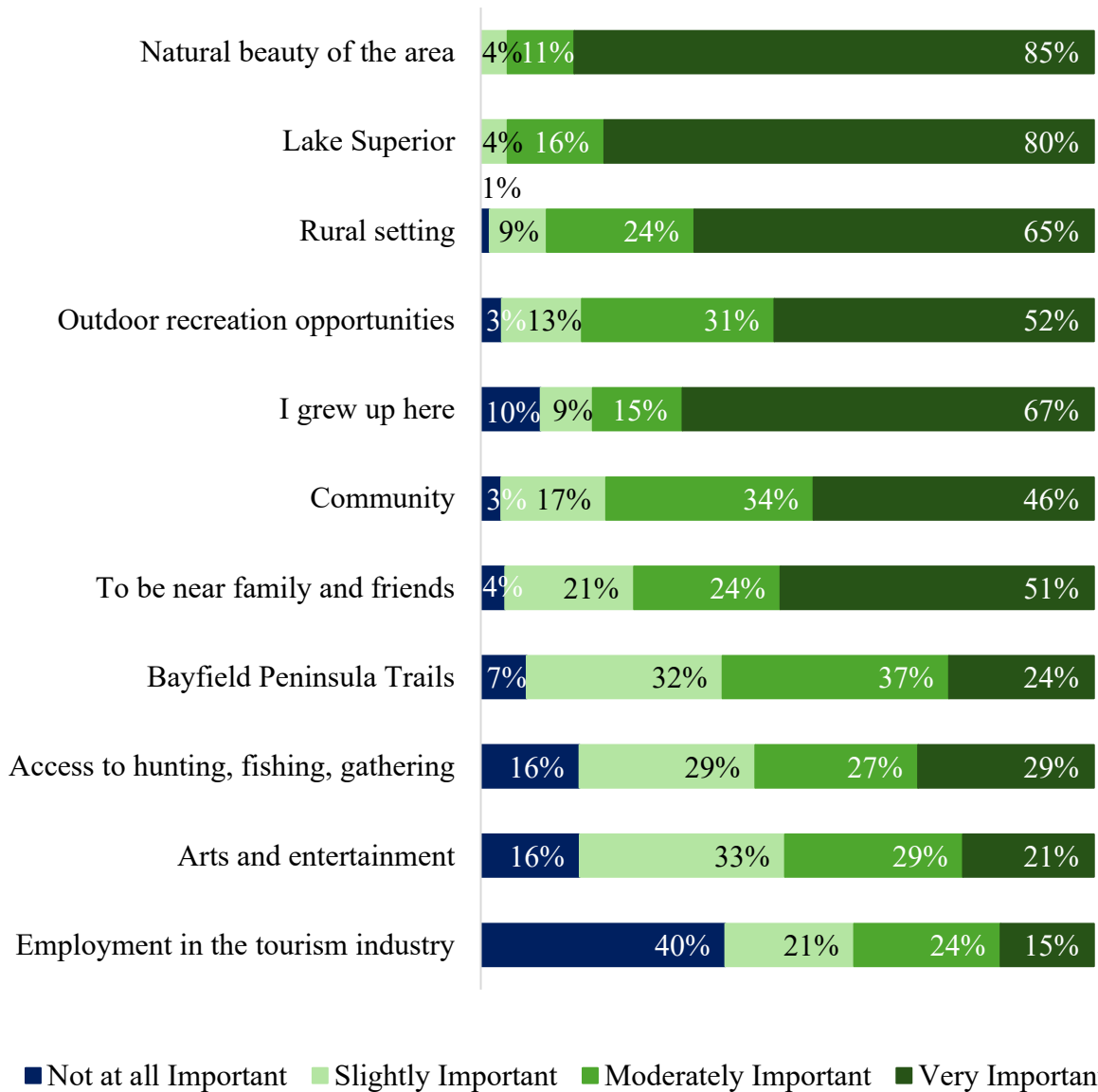
Ninety-six percent (96%) reported that the Natural beauty of the area and Lake Superior were “moderately important” (11% and 16%, respectively) or “very important” (85% and 80%, respectively) in their decision to have their residence in the Bayfield Peninsula.

Eight-in-ten or more reported that the Rural setting (89%), Outdoor recreational opportunities (84%), Growing up in the area (82%), and the Community (80%) were either “moderately important” or “very important” in their decision to have their residence in the Bayfield Peninsula.

Half or more indicated that Being near family and friends (75%), the Bayfield Peninsula Trails (61%), having Access to hunting, fishing, and gathering (55%), and Arts and entertainment (50%) were either “moderately important” or “very important” in their decision to have their residence in the Bayfield Peninsula.

Employment in the tourism industry was least important, with 24% indicating it was “moderately important” and 15% indicating it was “very important” in their decision to have their residence in the Bayfield Peninsula. These results suggest that most community members are drawn to reside in the area because of the natural beauty, Lake Superior, rural setting, recreational opportunities, community, and having grown up in the area. Notably, well over half of the community members stated that the trails were at least “moderately important” in their decision to live in the Bayfield Peninsula.

Figure 4. Importance of Factors in Decision to Have Residence in Bayfield Peninsula

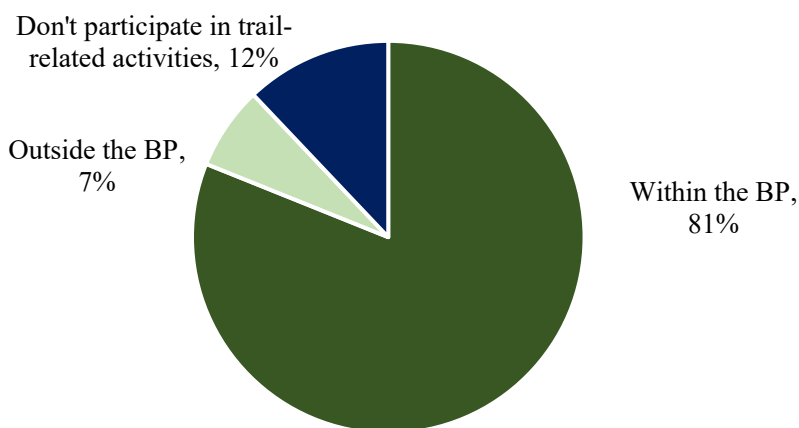


TRAIL USAGE PATTERNS

Location of Most Trail-Related Activities

Community members were asked to indicate where they participate in trail-related activities the most, in an average year. Figure 5 shows that 81% most often participate in trail-related activities within the Bayfield Peninsula, while 7% most often participate in these activities outside of the Bayfield Peninsula. More than one-in-ten (12%) indicated they do not participate in trail-related activities. These results show that of those who participate in trail-related activities, a large majority (92%) participate within the Bayfield Peninsula as opposed to outside of the Bayfield Peninsula (8%).

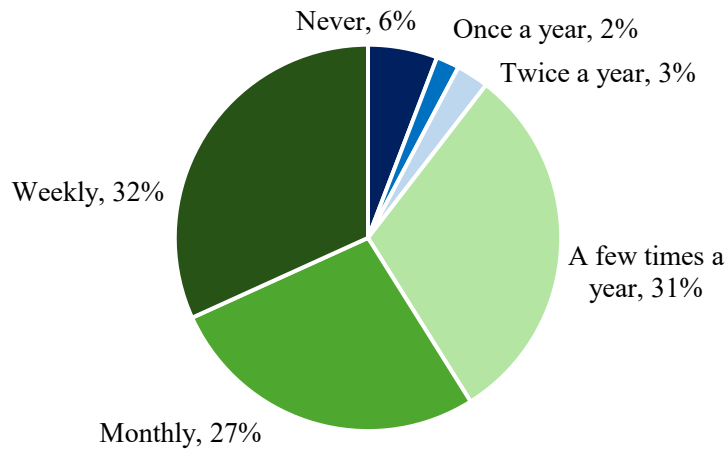
Figure 5. Most Frequently Visited Location of Trail-Related Activities in an Average Year



Frequency of Visiting Bayfield Peninsula Trails

When asked how frequently, in an average year, they participate in trail-related recreational or volunteer activities at the trails in Bayfield Peninsula, nearly six-in-ten (59%) community members indicated they do so “weekly” (32%) or “monthly” (27%), while 31% do so “a few times a year” (see Figure 6 on the next page). Three percent (3%) stated “twice a year,” 2% stated “once a year,” and 6% said they “never” participate in trail-related recreational or volunteer activities at the trails in Bayfield Peninsula. These findings indicate that a slight majority (59%) of community members visit the trails frequently (i.e., “weekly” or “monthly”) in an average year.

Figure 6. Frequency of Visiting Bayfield Peninsula Trails in a Year



Participation in Activities on Bayfield Peninsula Trails

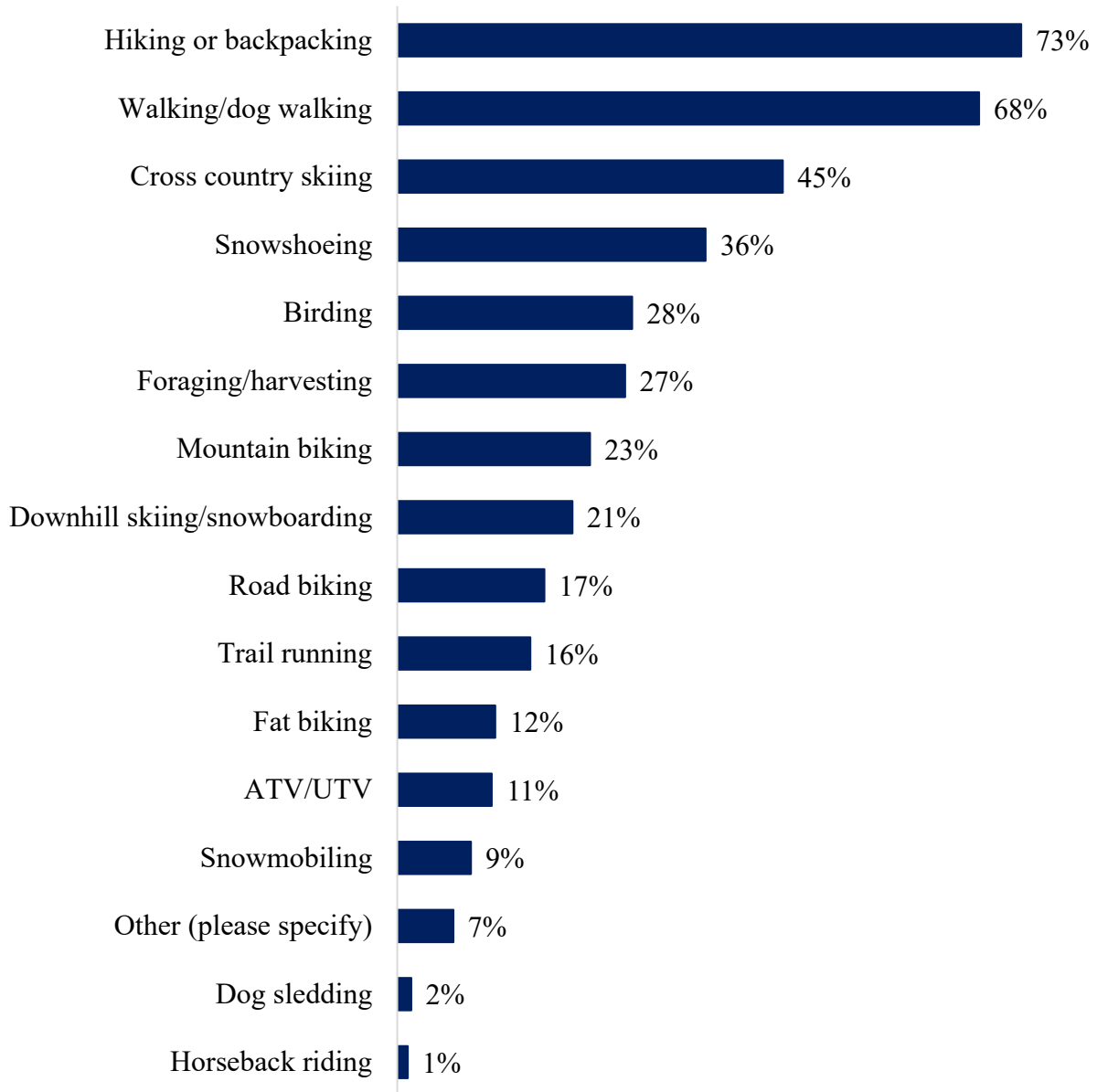
Figure 7 (on the next page) shows which activities community members participate in on the Bayfield Peninsula trails in an average year. A list of 15 activities was provided, along with an “Other” response choice, where community members were invited to add a text-entry response.

The top two most popular activities, as indicated by more than two-thirds of community members, were Hiking or backpacking (73%) and Walking/dog walking (68%) on the Bayfield Peninsula trails. More than one-third reported that they participate in Cross country skiing (45%) and Snowshoeing (36%).

More than one-in-five community members reported that they participate in Birding (28%), Foraging or harvesting (27%), Mountain biking (23%), and Downhill skiing/snowboarding (21%) on the Bayfield Peninsula trails. Less than 20% indicated that they participate in Road biking (17%), Trail running (16%), Fat biking (12%), and ATV/UTV riding (11%) on the Bayfield Peninsula trails.

Less than one-in-ten community members reported that they participate in Snowmobiling (9%), “Other” (7%), Dog sledding (2%), and Horseback riding (1%) on the Bayfield Peninsula trails. All 16 respondents who selected “Other” provided a text-entry response. Six individuals, or 38% of all “Other” responses specified the activity as Hunting.

Figure 7. Participation in Activities on the Bayfield Peninsula Trails



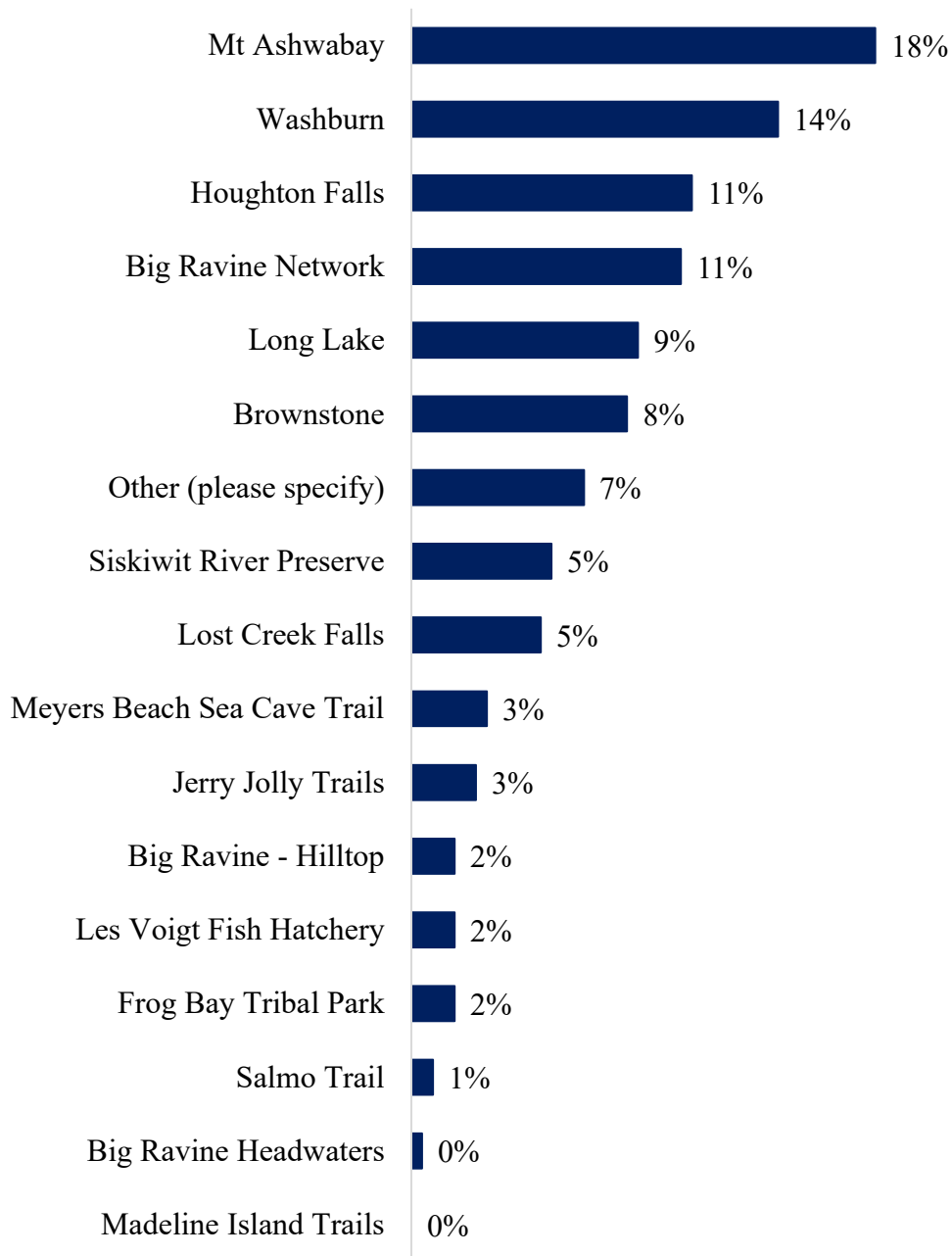
Bayfield Peninsula Trail Visited Most Frequently

When asked which Bayfield Peninsula trail they visit most frequently, Mt Ashwabay was the most popular (selected by 18% of respondents), followed by Washburn (14%), Houghton Falls (11%), and Big Ravine Network (11%), as shown in Figure 8 on the next page. Fewer than 10% of community members selected the following trails: Long Lake (9%), Brownstone (8%), “Other” (7%), Siskiwit River Preserve (5%), Lost Creek Falls (5%), Meyers Beach Sea Cave Trail (3%), Jerry Jolly Trails (3%), Big Ravine-Hilltop (2%), Les Voigt Fish Hatchery (2%), Frog Bay Tribal Park (2%), Salmo Trail (1%), and Big Ravine Headwaters (0.4% or 1 individual). No one selected Madeline Island Trails.

Sixteen community members selected “Other” and provided a text-entry response. Five of the 16 “Other” responses specified the Valhalla Trail.

While not one individual trail was selected by the majority of community members, Mt Ashwabay and Washburn, when combined, were selected by nearly one-third (32%) of community members. This shows that these two trails, along with Houghton Falls and Big Ravine Network, are collectively visited most frequently by more than half (54%) of community members.

Figure 8. Bayfield Peninsula Trail Visited Most Frequently



Desired Trail Types in the Bayfield Peninsula Trail System

Figure 9 (on the next page) summarizes results for a question that asked what types of trails community members would like to see more of in the Bayfield Peninsula trail system. Community members were provided with 15 answer options, along with an “Other” response option where they could provide a text-entry response. They were instructed to select all that apply.

The two most popular trail types community members would like to see more of include Hiking or backpacking (64%) and Walking/dog walking (42%). Nearly one-third (32%) would like to see more Cross country skiing trails.

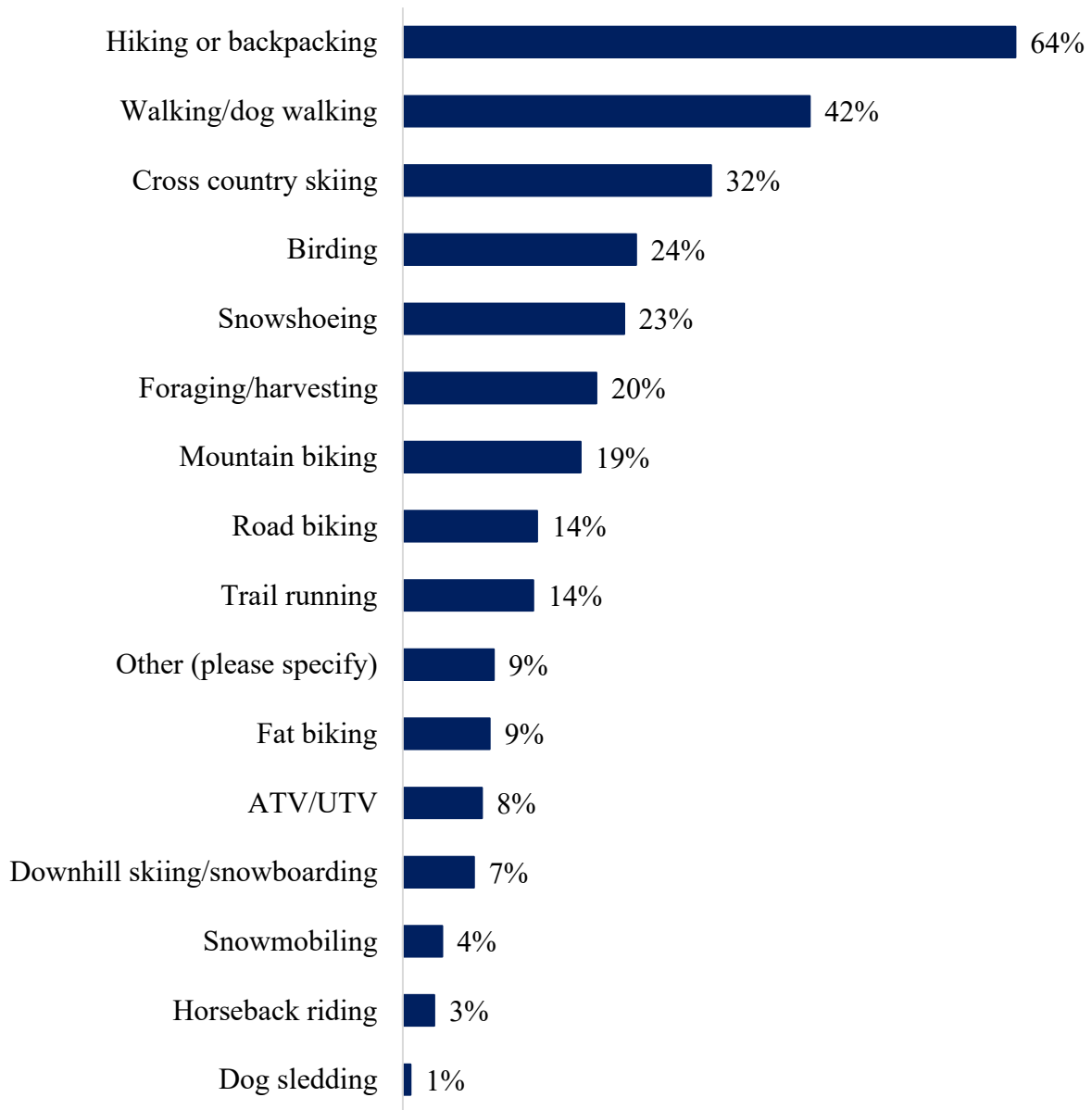
Two-in-ten or more indicated they would like to see more Birding (24%), Snowshoeing (23%), and Foraging/harvesting (20%) trails. Less than two-in-ten would like to see more of the following types of trails: Mountain biking (19%), Road biking (14%), Trail running (14%), “Other” (9%), Fat biking (9%), ATV/UTV riding (8%), Downhill skiing/snowboarding (7%), Snowmobiling (4%), Horseback riding (3%), and Dog sledding (1%).

All of the 23 community members who selected “Other” provided a text-entry response. Four respondents (17% of 23) said they would like to see more Trails connecting towns. Three respondents (13% of 23) said they would like to see more Biking trails, and another 3 respondents (13% of 23) said they would like to see more Handicapped accessible trails. Two respondents (9% of 23) said they would like to see more Hunting trails, and another 2 respondents (9% of 23) said “none, no more trails are needed.” Each of the 9 remaining text-entry responses were provided by one individual:

- *Swimming.*
- *Scientific research.*
- *Back country skiing.*
- *Nature trails.*
- *Off-highway motorcycling.*
- *Open fenced area for dogs off leash.*
- *Information about nature.*
- *Maintain existing trails.*
- *All of the above.*

These results suggest that trails focused on hiking, backpacking, walking, and dog walking are desired by the greatest number of community members.

Figure 9. Desired Trail Types in the Bayfield Peninsula Trail System



TRAIL CHARACTERISTICS, ISSUES, FACILITIES, AND AMENITIES

Impact of Bayfield Peninsula Trails on the Community

Presented with a five-point “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” response scale, community members were asked to identify their level of agreement with 12 statements regarding the impact the Bayfield Peninsula trails have on them as individuals and on the community at large. Figure 10 on the next page shows the statements in descending order of the percentage of community members who selected “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” for each statement.

Statements that about three-fourths or more either “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” with include:

- *The trails in the area enhance my quality of life* (19% somewhat agree, 63% strongly agree).
- *The people in my community utilize the trails on a regular basis* (37% somewhat agree, 41% strongly agree).
- *The trails are part of my community’s culture and way of life* (34% somewhat agree, 42% strongly agree).
- *I utilize the trails on a regular basis* (22% somewhat agree, 52% strongly agree).

Statements that more than seven-in-ten either “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” with include:

- *The trails generate a lot of tourism in the area* (44% somewhat agree, 29% strongly agree).
- *The tourism generated by the trails is mostly positive* (35% somewhat agree, 36% strongly agree).

Statements that about half or more either “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” with include:

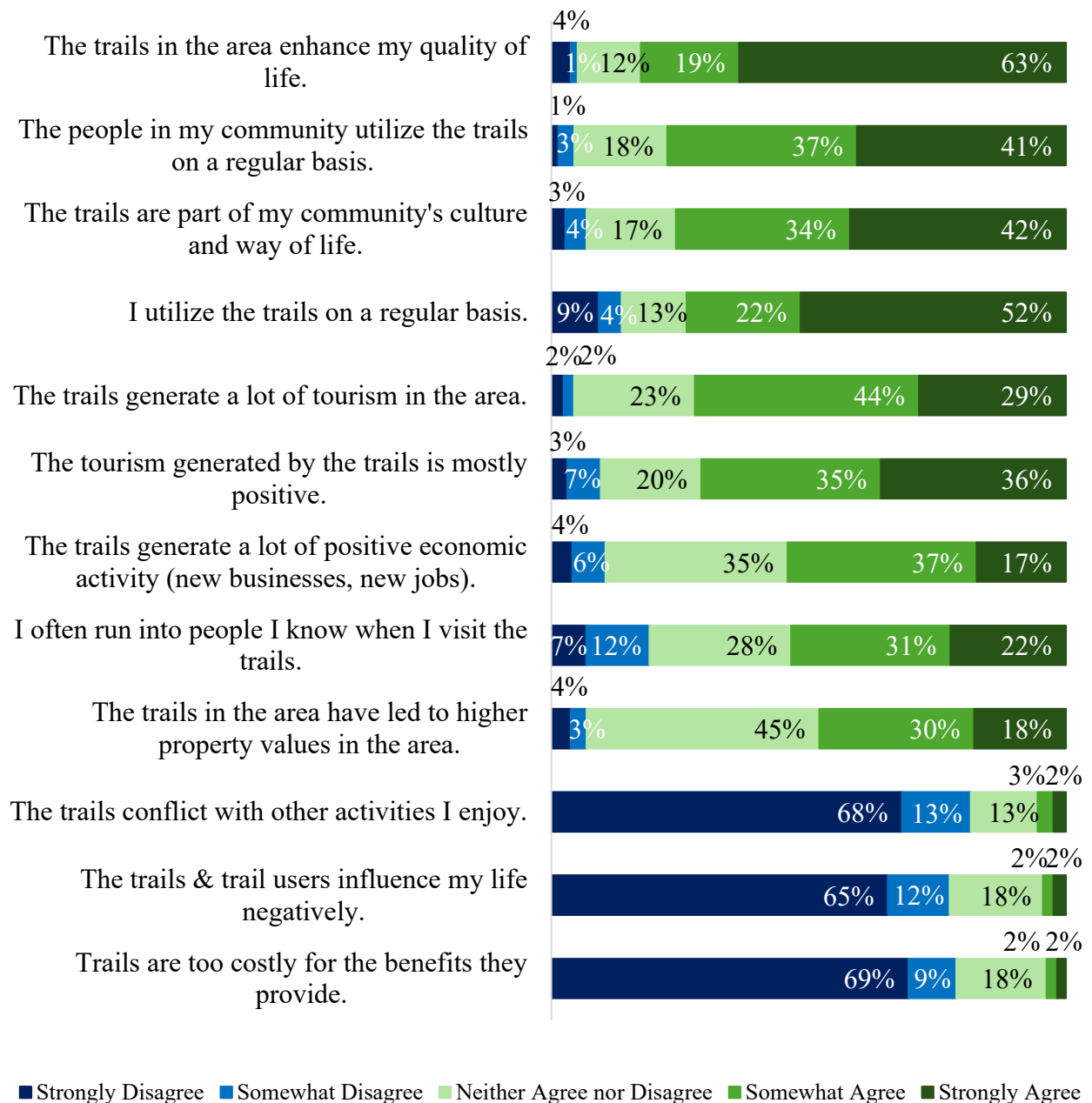
- *The trails generate a lot of positive economic activity (e.g., new businesses, new jobs)* (37% somewhat agree, 17% strongly agree).
- *I often run into people I know when I visit the trails* (31% somewhat agree, 22% strongly agree).
- *The trails in the area have led to higher property values in the area* (30% somewhat agree, 18% strongly agree).

Statements that five percent or fewer either “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” with include:

- *The trails conflict with other activities I enjoy* (3% somewhat agree, 2% strongly agree).
- *The trails & trail users influence my life negatively* (2% somewhat agree, 2% strongly agree).
- *Trails are too costly for the benefits they provide* (2% somewhat agree, 2% strongly agree).

These results suggest that the majority of community members agree that the trails and trail-related activities have a positive effect on them as individuals and on the community at large. Most agree that the trails enhance their quality of life, are part of the community’s culture, and are utilized regularly by themselves and others in the community. Although not as strongly, but still reflect the majority, community members agree that the trails generate a lot of tourism in the area, and that the tourism generated by the trails is mostly positive.

Figure 10. Level of Agreement with Statements Regarding Trails and Trail-Related Activities



Issues and Amenities that Need Improvement at the Bayfield Peninsula Trails

Community members were asked to identify the top three issues/amenities that need to be improved at the Bayfield Peninsula trails. Beyond being able to select the response, “I have never visited the Bayfield Peninsula trails,” they were presented with a list of 11 potential issues/amenities and an “Other” response choice with the opportunity to provide a text-entry responses. The “I have never visited the Bayfield Peninsula trails” responses are excluded from the analysis.

Three-in-ten or more community members identified the following issues/amenities that need to be improved at the Bayfield Peninsula trails: Information on the naturally significant features of the trails (35%), Connectivity between trails (34%), Restrooms (30%), and Maintenance and/or cleanup (e.g., boardwalk, bridges, water drainage, etc.) (see Figure 11 on the next page).

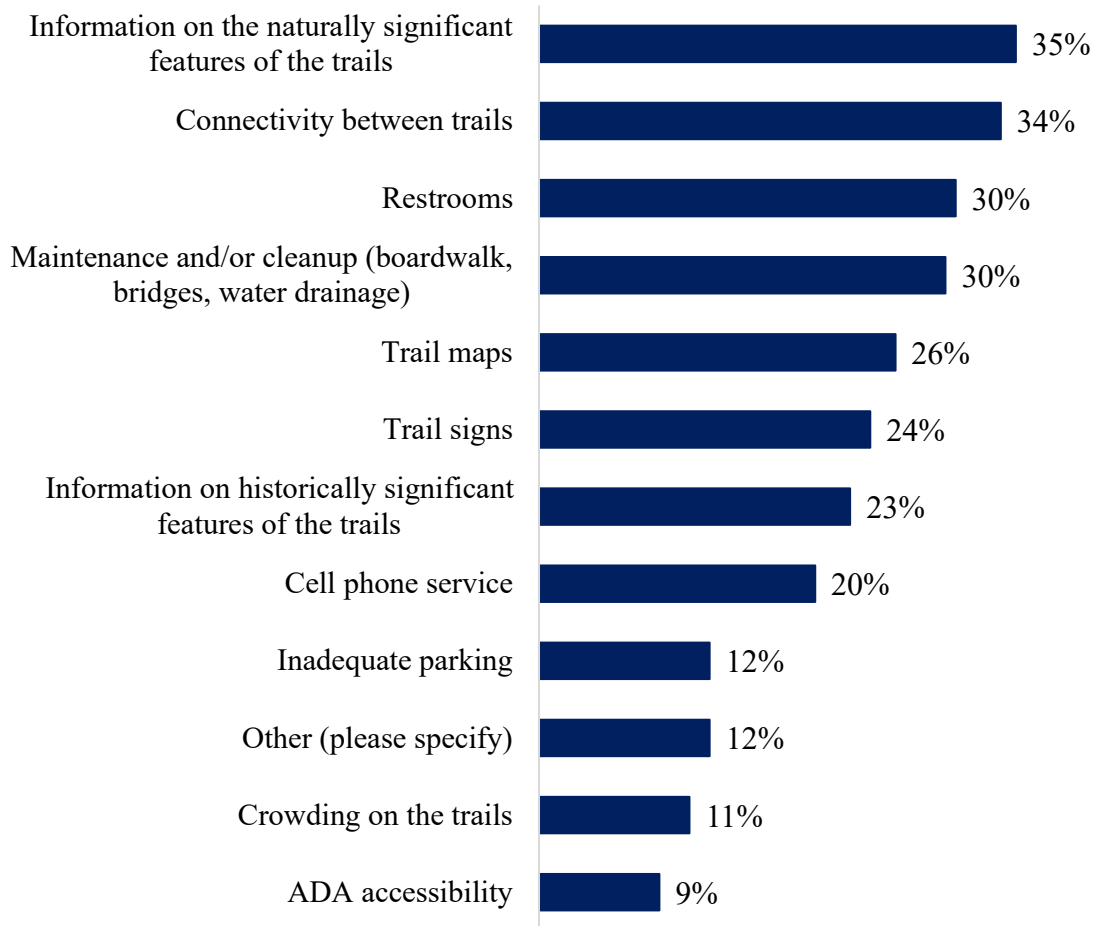
Two-in ten or more community members identified Trail maps (26%), Trail signs (24%), Information on historically significant features of the trails (23%), and Cell phone service (20%) as issues/amenities that need improvement.

About one-in-ten or more community members identified Inadequate parking (12%), “Other” (12%), Crowding on the trails (11%), and ADA accessibility (9%) as issues/amenities that need to be improved.

All 34 individuals who selected “Other” provided a text-entry response. Ten (29% of 34) said Additional trails are needed (i.e., groomed fat bike trails, back country skiing trails, loop trails, bike commuting/paved bike trails, off-leash dog trails), 4 said Nature needs to be preserved and protected (12% of 34), and another 4 specified Trail maintenance needed (i.e., Brownstone Trail, Forest Service Trails, Nordic ski trails (Valhalla) need grooming) (12% of 34). Three people stated that the Existence of the trails need to be advertised (9% of 34), 2 people said Longer & more challenging trails are needed (6% of 34), and another 2 people said Information on preventing the spread of invasive species needs to be shared (6% of 34).

These results indicate that the top issues/amenities that need improvement at the Bayfield Peninsula trails are Information on the naturally significant features of the trails, Connectivity between trails, Restrooms, and Maintenance and/or cleanup (boardwalk, bridges, water drainage, etc.).

Figure 11. Top Three Issues/Amenities that Need Improvement at the Bayfield Peninsula Trails



Desired Facilities and Amenities on the Bayfield Peninsula Trails

Community members were asked to identify the top three new facilities and amenities they would like to see on the Bayfield Peninsula trails. Beyond being able to select the response, “I have never visited the Bayfield Peninsula trails,” they were presented with a list of 9 potential facilities/amenities and an “Other” response choice with the opportunity to provide a text-entry responses. The “I have never visited the Bayfield Peninsula trails” responses are excluded from the analysis.

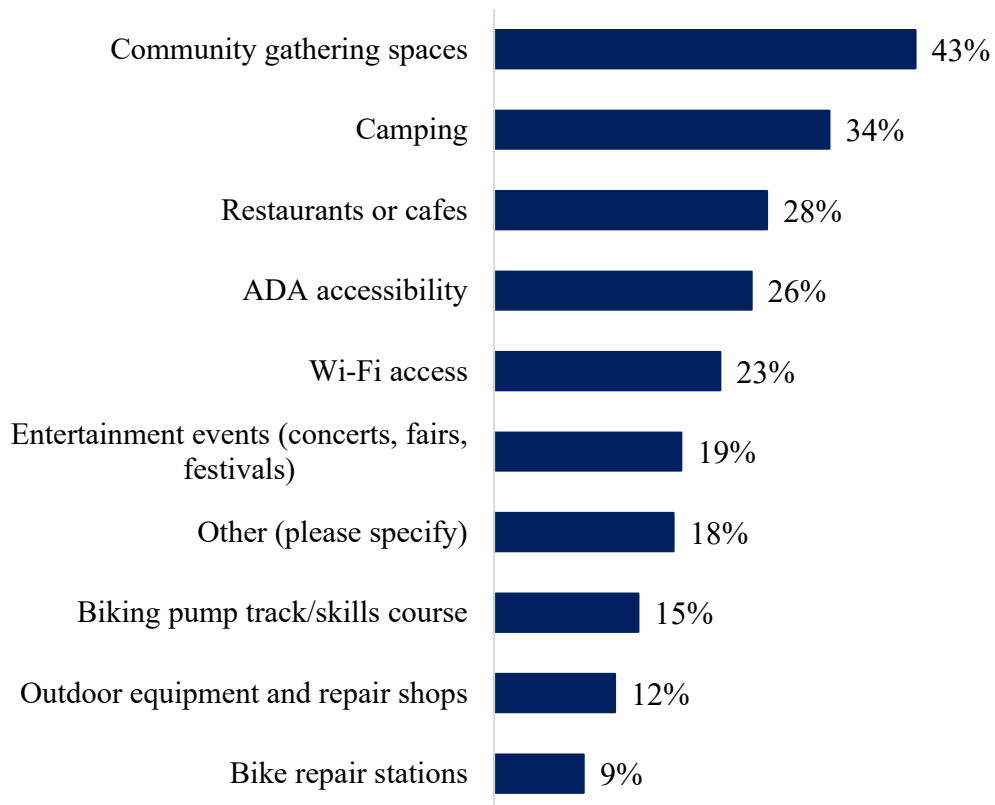
More than one-third of community members identified Community gathering spaces (43%) and Camping (34%) as new facilities/amenities they would like to see on the Bayfield Peninsula trails (see Figure 12 on the next page).

More than two-in-ten community members identified Restaurants or cafes (28%), ADA accessibility (26%), and Wi-Fi access (23%) as new facilities/amenities they would like to see on the Bayfield Peninsula trails.

Less than two-in-ten community members identified Entertainment events (e.g., concerts, fairs, festivals, etc.) (19%), “Other” (18%), Biking pump track/skills course (15%), Outdoor equipment and repair shops (12%), and Bike repair stations (9%) as new facilities/amenities they would like to see on the Bayfield Peninsula trails. All 46 individuals who selected “Other” provided a text-entry response. Sixteen (35% of 46) said that No new facilities/amenities are desired, 6 people said they would like to see Additional trails (13% of 46), 6 people said they would like to see Nature preserved and protected (13% of 46), 2 people said they would like to see more Public restrooms (4% of 46), and 2 people said they would like to see more Trash cans (4% of 46).

These results signify that the most desired new facilities/amenities on the Bayfield Peninsula trails are Community gathering spaces, Camping, Restaurants or cafes, and ADA accessibility.

Figure 12. Top Three New Desired Facilities/Amenities on the Bayfield Peninsula Trails



OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS SUMMARY

Community members were asked if there was anything else they would like to say about their experience at the Bayfield Peninsula trails. A total of 128 written responses were received and analyzed, and the table below shows the common themes that emerged. Note that the frequencies and percentages shown in the table refer to the number of community members who commented on a topic. That is, if a respondent commented on multiple topics the comment is counted in the tally of each topic, not just the primary topic that the respondent commented on. A full list of categorized comments is available in the section “Open-Ended Comments” found at the end of this report.

Topic	Frequency	Percentage
Appreciation/Thanks	60	37%
Additional Trails	15	9%
Trail Connectivity	14	9%
Preserve and Protect Nature	13	8%
Trail Maintenance	10	6%
ATV/UTVs and Snowmobiles	10	6%
Infrastructure Improvements	9	6%
Trail Maps/Signage	6	4%

Appreciation/Thanks (37%)

About 37% of community members, or 60 comments, expressed appreciation for the Bayfield Peninsula trail system as a cornerstone of community life, providing recreation, and health & cultural benefits. The trails are praised for their accessibility, diversity, and high-quality maintenance, playing a role in physical fitness, mental well-being, and family friendly activities. Respondents said the trails also contribute to the area’s economic vitality and sense of identity, attracting new residents and supporting tourism. Feedback emphasized the importance of preserving public access, continuing thoughtful improvements, and maintaining the natural beauty that makes the trails a treasured resource. Overall, the trails enhance respondents’ quality of life and reflect the community’s commitment to sustainability and outdoor recreation.

Additional Trails (9%)

About 9% of community members, or 15 comments, advocated for creating more trails, especially non-motorized options like hiking, mountain biking, and cross-country skiing. Respondents emphasized preserving natural beauty while enhancing accessibility and connectivity. Specific suggestions included trails through kettles and waterfront access, a loop trail near Meyers Beach for safer winter use, expansion of the Fish Hatchery and Pike’s Creek Trail Systems, affordable cross-country skiing trails as alternatives to Mt Ashwabay, and hiking-only trails in Moquah Barrens.

Trail Connectivity (9%)

About 9% of community members, or 14 comments, emphasized the desire for the trails to focus on connectivity, accessibility, and community engagement. Respondents are interested in creating a safe, connected trail network across the Bayfield Peninsula, including separated bike routes along major highways and longer trails linking towns like Washburn, Ashland, and Bayfield. They are also interested in improved trail diversity (e.g., technical mountain biking trails, inter-urban singletrack/doubletrack trails accessible from communities, expansion of existing trails, such as Gil Larsen, Fish Hatchery, National Lakeshore), sustainable maintenance, and amenities that enhance tourism, such as destination points and dog-friendly areas.

Preserve and Protect Nature (8%)

About 8% of community members, or 13 comments, indicated they want to protect flora and fauna, honor Indigenous culture through educational signage, and foster environmental awareness for all generations. They expressed a desire to maintain a rustic and wild trail system, prioritizing hiking and non-motorized use, with minimal infrastructure to maintain the sense of solitude and connection to nature.

Trail Maintenance (6%)

While approximately 6% of community members, or 10 comments, expressed appreciation for the trails, they identified the following trail maintenance deficiencies: Long Lake Trail's boardwalk on the west end has been broken for months, Washburn Trail surfaces are uneven, Houghton Falls Nature Preserve has a large fallen poplar blocking access, restrooms at trailheads are sometimes closed, and the Valhalla ski trails and parking lot are under prolonged construction and grooming quality has declined.

ATVs/UTVs and Snowmobiles (6%)

About 6% of community members, or 10 comments, expressed concern about noise, trespassing, and rule violations associated with ATV, UTV, and snowmobile usage near residential properties and public trails. They recommended stricter regulation, increased enforcement, and prioritization of non-motorized trail development.

Infrastructure Improvements (6%)

Areas for improvement were mentioned by approximately 6% of community members, or 9 comments. Respondents mentioned there is a need for well-maintained restrooms at trailheads, lookouts (e.g., Meyers Beach), and along trails, as current facilities are sometimes closed. The placement of additional trash cans at key locations could help reduce litter and maintain cleanliness. Overgrown vegetation and inadequate upkeep around Long Lake were mentioned as well. Additional benches along walking trails could provide trail users with more resting opportunities.

Trail Maps/Signage (4%)

While appreciation was expressed for the trails, about 4% of community members, or 6 comments, indicated that more directional maps/signs would improve the user's experience. One respondent suggested installing an outdoor display board of area trail maps in the town center. Another individual said Valhalla's C Loop is poorly marked near Highway C, and another individual suggested a single map of all Bayfield Peninsula trails (beyond online) be available.

DEMOGRAPHIC ATTRIBUTES

Table 1 summarizes the demographic attributes of the Bayfield Peninsula Community Survey sample and select demographic attributes obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) for the County of Bayfield. Note that the Bayfield Community Survey children in household statistics are not directly comparable to the ACS data due to a difference in response categories between the survey and ACS. Still, the SRC was able to compare the presence of children in the household between the two surveys.

Age

According to the ACS estimates, the Community Survey sample underrepresented community members 18 to 34 and 55 to 64 years of age and overrepresented community members 35 to 54 and 65 years of age or older.

Children in Household

About 66% of Community Survey respondents do not have children in the household. This may include community members who do not have children or do have children who do not live in the same household as them (e.g., seniors). Nonetheless, they comprise two-thirds of the survey sample. The ACS data for Bayfield County shows that 80% of households do not have children, which shows that the Community Survey sample underrepresented households with no children.

Age	Count	18 – 24	25 – 34	35 – 44	45 – 54	55 – 64	65+
Community Survey	294	1%	6%	17%	15%	19%	42%
Bayfield County (18+)	13,691	7%	10%	12%	14%	22%	36%
Children in Household	Count	0	1	2	3	4+	
Community Survey	229	66%	12%	15%	5%	3%	
Bayfield County	7,462	80%		-20%-			

OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS

Appreciation/Thanks

A terrific amenity for friends and family when they visit us.

I appreciate having the trails.

As a Professor and Director of the Wolf Research Team at Northland College, I have used the trails and backwoods roads extensively.

As I age and become less active. I personally use the trails less but visiting children/grandchildren use them extensively and have grown to love them as much as I have.

I am a physician in the area. Realistically, without the trails we have, I would likely not be in this area. They are an important draw to many people that move to this area.

I am impressed how well the trails are maintained.

I am satisfied with the ongoing improvements of all trails in the area.

I am so appreciative of the trails in this area. They help me stay healthy and fit. Thank you so much for your dedication!

I believe trails for silent sports and motorized sports are both very important to the area (the culture, the community aspect, the economic impact etc.).

I completed this survey with my adult son's use in mind. He has autism and mental health challenges, and the Bayfield Peninsula trails provide him with over-the-top "forest bathing" to improve his sense of safety and happiness and helps him maintain healthy weight and blood pressure. I am so grateful for this. He was born at the old Washburn Hospital and is a lifelong Bayfield County resident. We are so fortunate to live in such a beautiful community.

I love and appreciate all the outdoor recreational activities provided/funded by the community. It is a great opportunity to explore the resources we love and cherish.

I love living here - in part - because of these trails and the excellent opportunities for exercise that they provide.

I love them!!

I think the trails are a fantastic resource and wish our family had even more time to enjoy them. I don't think an increase in amenities (bike repair, cafes, etc.) is necessary. If we can commit to keeping them well cared for, they will continue to provide tremendous value to residents and visitors alike.

It is vital to keep the trails open for the public, otherwise it will be privately owned, and we can't access it anymore.

It is a great network! Incremental thoughtful growth is the way to go - not dramatic expansion.

It is great to have so many trails to choose from--short, medium and long.

Kate Kitchell is a force of nature.

Keep up the efforts to improve.

Keep up the great work. I love being able to take my kids on easy skill level hikes to see natural features in the Bayfield Peninsula. I appreciate the signs and educational opportunities.

Lots of people in Washburn also use the waterfront trail. It wasn't mentioned here. Also, the trail from the baseball fields to Houghton Point. I walk this 3-4x per week when I don't want to drive.

Love the trail system here. Keep up the good work and continue investing!

Love the trails. Thank you for all the work to make them available.

Love them.

Love these important resources and future planning.

My family loves the trails and the diversity in scenery they provide. We use them at least monthly but sometimes as much as weekly. We have found that it can be difficult to use the Washburn trail as a running trail because other people will walk their dogs off leash. My husband has almost been attacked a couple times, which is very unfortunate because we use the trails regularly.

My partner and I are very appreciative of the trails and the level of maintenance throughout the years. We were mostly unaware of the large number of trails when we chose to move here, therefore, we experience all these great trails as a surprise bonus of sorts. Here's a BIG THANKS to all those that work on the trails and their management.

I very much appreciate what this county has to offer regarding outdoor activities.

Over the past 25 years I have watched the northern Bayfield County trail system evolve in a way that is both smart and representative of who we are as a community.

Overall, the Bayfield Peninsula has an abundance of natural resources, and the trail system provides excellent access to enjoy this natural beauty.

Thank you for all your hard work. We would love to have waterfront access trails as well!

Thank you for selecting me to do this survey; it gave me a sense of community.

Thank you for the opportunity to share!

Thanks for all the work on trails.

Thanks for your efforts!

The trail systems are a huge asset for those living in or visiting the community! Thank you for all your work!

The trails have improved and expanded so much because of BAT - thanks so much.

They are good for mental health - we need more opportunities to get outdoors. Also incorporating the local schools in trail activities is important.

They are great.

They are worth preserving! Being outdoors is MEDICINE. Thank you for your efforts.

They're beautiful and fun.

They're wonderful!! We are very lucky to have such a dedicated collection of volunteers & leaders to develop & keep these trails in great shape!

Truly enhance the quality of life.

We appreciate improvements the country & other organizations have made to trails & markings over the years. Being able to enjoy the beauty that is outdoors is important to us.

We love the trails and are very grateful to have them.

We treasure these trails. Thank you for working to protect them.

When my adult daughter visits, she uses all the trails and met one researcher this summer. I built and maintained my own 1-mile trail so if I don't want to drive I can hike here.

You guys do an awesome job -- thank you!!

You provide a great service to the community!

Your organization does a GREAT job! We're lucky to have you!

Additional Trails

A trail through the kettles would be boss!

Don't forget water trails that lead to scenic spots.

I advocate for more trails and more protected forest areas.

I think bringing non-motorized trails (specifically mountain biking) bring visitors to the area that complement and enhance the local experience and don't pollute the local environment with noise, look at many small towns in the UP for example. It has positively changed the economy of many of those old mining towns. Motorized vehicles and trails bring visitors that are a nuisance to the local population with noise, alcohol related driving in said vehicles and destruction on roads that they use in between trails.

I would like to see a hiking only trail in the Moquah Barrens area. I would like hiking trails to be kept as wild as possible. Too many maps/historical placards/observation areas and boardwalks take away from experiencing the beauty of natural areas.

Keep creating and maintaining trails. Create longer and more challenging trails for hiking.

More trails are needed.

More XC trails that are less expensive than Ashwabab would be great. I don't like, or trust, their new management, or the Ashwabab Board.

There should be more hiker friendly trails and less ATV-type trails.

We need more hiking trails!

I would like more of them and to have them all connect!

Trail Connectivity

As both a bike and car commuter I would really value safe biking routes that are direct and reliable for traveling purposes but do not put bikers only feet away from highway traffic. I live in the town of Washburn and would more regularly bike to the city of Washburn and Cornucopia if there was a safer option to biking on the shoulder of highway C. Having bike routes along highway C and 13 that are separated from vehicle traffic would be really great. Direct and safe bike routes connecting towns on the peninsula and Ashland would be awesome. Also, I think there is a big demand for off leash dog trails. Maybe this would look like a very large fenced-in natural area/dog park like Minneapolis or some spots in Denver. Or maybe just some existing trails labelled as "off leash" friendly. In Europe there are many bike paths that connect small towns and breweries/wineries much in the way that snowmobile trails connect bars. I think it would be a great tourism draw to have bike safe trails connecting places like these, farms with onsite food/refreshments, etc.

Our area snowmobile/UTV trails are amazing but are unsafe/not for silent sport use and it would be incredible to have a similar level of connectivity for non-motorized use. Thank you.

Development of trails and access points to them would be helpful to know and have access to for locals and tourists. Building this network is very encouraging!!!

I enjoy the trails we have and am thankful for them. I would love to see a focus on inter-urban singletrack/double track trails that are directly accessible from the community. We currently do not have any truly technical black diamond-level trails in the area, and I would like to see a focus on bringing those types of trails into our existing systems. A focus on long term solutions for maintenance issues rather than band-aid fixes that require constant attention and energy from already small and limited volunteer pools. More community building events.

I walk the Gil Larsen trail every morning and love it. I would love it if it went all the way to Meyers-Olson Road. Love this trail.

I would love to see a loop/ secondary trail put in on the National Lakeshore trail (Meyer's beach) where it goes closer to the inland boundary. This would have less ups/downs, would be safer in the winter, and could even serve as a cross-country ski or mountain biking trail. I also love the Fish Hatchery trail system and would like to see that expanded and more of a system that runs along Pikes Creek. That is a beautiful area. I'm interested in volunteering to build trails but am not sure who to contact. What ever happened to putting in a walking trails to Pratt's Peak?

Increase the connectivity from one trail system to the next.

It would be great to connect more longer easy bike trails.

My top request is connectivity. I live in Washburn and would like to take a trail to both Ashland and Bayfield.

The Bayfield Peninsula trail system you refer to is made up of small little trails here and there around the Peninsula and some of your questions regarding amenities and facilities, I would like to see would make no sense at most any of these locations. It's not like these trails are connected or for that matter are even close to one another.

Trail connectivity, longer trails (e.g. can I hike all the way to Cornucopia!), and "destinations" at strategic points on trails (cafe in the woods anyone!) ... would really make the trail system shine and provide more visibility of and engagement with the trails.

We love the current mountain bike/fat bike trails and cross country/downhill trails. We would love to see a trail system created to connect communities like Washburn and Bayfield or Washburn and Ashland in a way that will bring people to the area to recreate through things like e-biking or walking/hiking. This would expand on current opportunities and bring more people to the region. Something similar to the trails near Minocqua. They have

a great website with things to do here: <https://www.minocqua.org/things-to-do/outdoor-activities/hiking-and-biking/>

We love the trails! A connecting trail from Red Cliff to the Brownstone would be amazing. Preferably, along the shoreline, at least for a portion.

Work towards connecting trails into a more comprehensive network. Unify "ownership" of trails with MOUs between private, non-profit, and governmental organizations so they are able to be standardized and accessed with a single pass. Don't force an "either/or" type discussion between disciplines/trail uses. We need everything (hiking, snowshoeing, dog sledding, mountain biking, hunting, horses, snowmobiles, ATVs, etc.), just not on the same trail, so create space for individual disciplines.

Preserve and Protect Nature

Express the significance and necessity of protecting our fauna and flora to all who access the trails. Create signs and landmarks that can be used as educational tools to teach those unaware of the cultural significance of the peninsula. Incorporate Ojibwemowin in signage.

It's great that attention is being given to this; and I hope that the rural/remote, unspoiled nature/quality of our area isn't commercialized & spoiled by overuse. [Lake Superior (& the Apostles) Not for Sale].

Land Back!

More education for children (and adults too!) regarding the "natural" world and how our choices affect the environment.

The Peninsula's scenic/natural/recreational qualities are such that we need not promote unnatural, mass (LCD [motorized & industry commodified]) trail use and economic development at the expense of the quality of life for the area's residents and wildlife (animal & plant). Growth is not needed here. Our existing tax base and services are sufficient or already overdeveloped. If a business is failing here, it probably does not belong here or provides deficient service. I might be willing to support a small sales tax increase to pay for better maintenance of new and existing natural trail use and access.

The rewards of our remote location rest within the quiet emptiness of the county. Please don't cater to some imaginary cadre of tourists by adding unnecessary garbage to the trail systems. Their value isn't in the numbers that utilize them but in their remove from the nagging emptiness of signage and pointless amenities.

There are enough trails and keep them rustic.

There is a balance between being overdone and just right with public land. I feel like less is more, usually.

They should be preserved and expanded for the preservation and enjoyment of nature. I despise those who primarily view all elements of the world as an economic exercise and feel the same about any argument for/against trails that bases its primary justification on economic variables. Some things transcend a price tag.

Tom Tiffany's work to get the Lakeshore designated a National Park would be environmentally devastating to the area. We do not have the infrastructure. Every group up here is against it and has written to him, but he ignores our concerns and is pushing ahead regardless.

Trail Maintenance

Chequamegon National Forest has done a lousy job of keeping up the trail around Long Lake. All I hear are excuses, yet they have the audacity to charge you money to visit. I can't remember the last time I visited, and the bathrooms actually were open.

I don't want anything done with the trail systems like adding camping or gathering spots on the trails. These trails are for people to enjoy walking with family, friends and pets. Not to have a party! We need to work on keeping the trails kept up with better gravel or maybe even black topped. The trail in Washburn is a frequent for me and my spouse twice a day and there has been a handful of times we almost messed up our ankles from the poor ground.

I walk Houghton Falls Nature Preserve 4 times a week. It needs garbage cans and better trail maintenance. Right now, there is a large fallen poplar blocking the trail near the lake.

I'd like to see repairs to the Brownstone Trail. Improved regular maintenance of Whiting Rd, given the increasing traffic due to mountain biking use on Mt Ashwababay. One map of all the Bayfield Peninsula Trail system. Or does that already exist besides online? Ideally with additionally small maps of all the trails and some information about them.

Keep up the trails. I love them and hope we have more access to the forests and along the lakeshore for everyone to explore the outdoors motor-free.

Infrastructure Improvements

Bathroom at lookout at Meyers Beach would be great!

Bathrooms along the trails would be greatly appreciated by everyone.

I miss the boardwalk at Long Lake. As I age, I won't be able to make the loop unless the boardwalk is replaced.

I would like to see places to dispose trash and nice restrooms. Most restrooms are filthy and not well maintained.

*I'm finding that the stairs made with the small boulders are better than the ones made from wood.
Less buildup.*

Very satisfied with our trail system. Walking trails could use more benches to stop and rest on.

We think they are beautifully done, diverse, and a real plus for the peninsula. Maybe some sitting benches with backs here and there (like Salmo) would be appreciated. Some trails could use a bit more cutting back at times, but overall, not a big deal.

ATVs/UTVs and Snowmobiles

All is good except for the loud snowmobile trail that goes behind our house. I don't object at all to snowmobiles, just the people that feel they must exercise their rights to be loud and obnoxious by replacing the stock exhaust with a loud pipe. also am really sick of the snowmobiles not staying on the trails and riding off the trail through our property. They literally are ruining the opportunity for everyone. im giving them this year as a test and if they are off trail I will close our property and force a trail move.

Frustrated with UTVs not following speed rules and the level of noise that they generate.

I hate the increasing prevalence of side by sides and snowmobiling.

Long Lake and Valhalla have become noisy due to ATV trails cutting so close to the non-motorized trails. It's really a shame that the peace and quiet of those trails have been destroyed. I'd like to see more non-motorized trails be put in on public land for hiking and trail running where there won't be smell and sound from ATVs.

Is there no one to tell these outsiders to slow down a give tickets out for loud exhaust pipes and for speeding 99% of them couldn't pass a sobriety test?

Silent sports only. Stop the spread of ATVs.

Too much pandering to ATV/UTV, lack of law enforcement.

We don't need more motorized trails; there are plenty already and they dominate the rest of the state already.

Stop all the animus towards power sports.

Trail Maps/Signage

I think it would be good to have an area trail map(s) on an outside display board in the center of town.

Jody Road kettle holes trails could be better marked, but I haven't been out there in a couple years. I live in Cornucopia so I'm not really on the peninsula.

Mt Ashwabay and Valhalla have the best lengthy trails (the Nordic trails for hiking in the summer). I've gotten somewhat lost at Valhalla doing the C loop; it's poorly marked when coming back toward Hwy C and parking.

Some trail systems, such as Valhalla, I have not come across a readable trail map that includes overlays of all types of trails, such as cc skiing and ATV on the same map.

We love the pristine trails! More signs along the trails for guidance would be helpful. We hiked the Jerry Jolly trail a few weeks ago and constantly had to use the map on all trails for guidance which took a bit of enjoyment away from our hike. I felt that a few simple signs along the way would have been helpful.

Complete Trails Under Construction

Loss of the on-grade Brownstone Trail has had a significant impact on usage. It's huge loss to the community.

To me the art of maintaining safety while enhancing the trails for best access and broad-based enjoyment is a delicate balance of primary significance. I would love to see the Fish Hatchery trail system finished, even if not on the original scale of intent. So sad about the conflict of humans that Mother Nature had to step in to stop the fighting with the washout!

Valhalla ski trails and parking seems to continually be under construction, and the cross-country ski grooming has been terrible the past couple of years. Long Lake hiking trail is in terrible condition and should get the boardwalk on the west end fixed. It's been out for months, and the Forest Service seems to be doing nothing about it.

We need more trails built by the DNR in the northern part. It's a shame the Wally Polk Trail is STILL not open and it's a shame the NW snowmobile trail is completely on a plowed road. Bayfield County needs to get with the times and wake up.

Concerns About Logging in the Area

I don't think that logging the Ashwabay trails makes economic sense at this point. I am pro-forestry. However, at this point, the Ashwabay land is just far more economically valuable than recreation land only. In addition, right now federal forests are about to be over-logged in an unsustainable way. We need county land to become a buffer so we may need to rethink county forestry in general.

I noted this before in my response to an earlier question, but I do think it is worth repeating. The county has NO consideration for trails in their logging/forestry plans. We have seen it, for example, at the Raspberry trail and Ashwabay trails. I understand that forestry/logging practices generate \$ for the county's budget. However, the endless cycle and rotation of logging should consider the other \$ value some of these properties offer. I would love for BAT and the landmark conservancy to push for and ensure logging restriction with similar

stipulations they have with private landowners (or at the very least some more selective cutting and trail buffers) on land that they “conserve” by transferring to county ownership! In these areas where there is trail investment the trees are worth more \$ (as well as offer other far more important values) in the ground!

We love and appreciate these trails. They bring economic support to our local businesses. Concerned about logging lands that would impact these areas. I’m not opposed to all logging, but a balance with both uses feels important.

Listen to Public Input

Adjacent property owners or those across whose property’s trails run should be consulted and give approval before new trails are developed.

The biggest concern is creating trails without enough local input. It is so important to value the people that grew up here and use the county forest. While it is important to have public trails so more people can enjoy nature and thus want to protect it, it’s also important to value the original users of the land here and not disrupt generations of use by inviting tourists that do not always leave the land in pristine condition.

Crowding Concerns

Crowding is the biggest concern.

Dislike condescending, patronizing and elitist attitude of many users toward area residents.

Unleashed Dogs

Loose dogs on trails are a major problem.

Signs to remind people to keep their dogs on leashes could be helpful.

Miscellaneous

Even if restaurants aren't ON the trails themselves, providing ways to access them would allow recreation users to support small businesses more easily.

The trail at Beaver Hollow is accessible to everyone. Other area trails should focus on accessibility as the average age of the Bayfield area population increases.

Why don't you confirm e-mail addresses with members?

Need better phone service up here. In case of emergencies - it could be a disaster if you can't call for help. Build more towers!!

PART IV: APPENDIX

Table A1 shows trail counter data for each trail in the Bayfield Peninsula. Data for the Les Voight Hatchery is not available due to trail closure for most of the data collection period. Trail data is based on the number of individuals who visited the trail, and does not incorporate the size of the visitor group or the likelihood that one trail user may have visited the same trail multiple times during the data collection period. The SRC utilized survey responses on group size and number of trails visited per year to make an inference about total visitorship of the Bayfield Peninsula trails.

Table A1. Trail Counter Data (2024-2025)	
Trail	Count
Brownstone	27,602
Houghton Falls	16,694
Mt Ashwabay	16,469
Frog Bay Tribal Park	12,998
Big Ravine – Gil Larson	11,562
Lost Creek Falls	10,242
Siskiwit River Preserve	6,302
Salmo Trail	6,214
Big Ravine - Hilltop	3,629
Big Ravine – North Ravine & Headwaters	3,537
Jerry Jolly Trails	1,328