

# CHAPTER 1

## The Surveys

The introductory chapter of this SCORP examined some of the changes Indiana has undergone since publication of the 2021-2025 SCORP and looked briefly at some of the state and national trends that affect how we use and provide outdoor recreation in Indiana. This chapter looks at the backbone of this SCORP: the surveys administered by third-party surveyors, the methods used, and the results.

There's a difference between Indiana's SCORPs and those created by other states. How is the Indiana SCORP different?

1. We actually try to directly "count" (via local government self-reported data) the supply of public outdoor recreation acreage, both by county and by level of government.
2. We hire objective, unbiased, professional third-party surveyors to do our surveys.
3. We ask members of the public what preferences they have for outdoor recreation activities, as well as gather opinions and ideas from professional outdoor recreation providers.

What do these differences mean for this SCORP? This SCORP looks at what public outdoor recreation acreage actually exists, both geographically and by cumulative "type" of acreage, so that readers can cross-compare themselves against their peers in multiple ways. The way we survey both the public and out-

door recreation professionals allows the Indiana DNR to look at what real people actually want to do, as well as how real recreation professionals provide those activities. We also look at the needs and challenges faced by both groups. The Indiana SCORP has always been a multi-purpose informational touchstone—for researchers looking for data on recreation preferences, for park professionals writing park plans or strategic documents, for local government leaders seeking to compare their community against local and regional competition, and even for interested members of the public who want to know what activities their friends and neighbors enjoy doing while visiting public outdoor recreation sites.

Once again, this SCORP was created using three main surveys:

- The Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey
  - Asks the public about their outdoor recreation activities and frequency of use
- The Local Parks and Recreation Provider Survey
  - Asks professional and nonprofit local outdoor recreation providers about their challenges, issues, and solutions
- The Trail User Survey
  - Asks the public about how they use one of our most popular amenities

## THE OUTDOOR RECREATION PARTICIPATION SURVEY

### Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey methods:

- The survey took place from February 2022 through December 2023.
- The completed respondent database consists of 6,203 valid respondents.
- The survey used a paper intercept questionnaire.
- The questionnaire contained 18 regular questions and one large, multipart question containing 28 separate recreational activity categories.
- The estimated time needed to take the survey was eight to 10 minutes.
- Paper survey results were manually entered into the database post-survey.
- Respondents were chosen on a next-available basis.
- People younger than age 17 were not discouraged from taking the survey, but were not actively recruited.
- The survey was conducted at county fairs, libraries, and other public locations throughout the state.

### Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey demographic results:

- Respondents were 52.9% female, 47.1% male.
- The average age of respondents was 42.5 years.
- Every county in Indiana was represented in the data.
- 60.4% of survey respondents were married, 20.0% were single (never married), and 7.7% were single (divorced).
- 75.9% of respondents reported themselves as White, 12.7% as Black, 7.1% as Hispanic/Latino, and 1.6% as multi-racial. [Results all somewhat comparable to current U.S. Census estimated demographic data for Indiana]
- 71.9% of respondents stated that they had between two and four family members living in their household.
- 54.86% of respondents reported having no persons younger than age 18 living in their household.



## Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey results:

NOTE: In the last several SCORP Participation surveys, by public request, DNR reported Mountain Biking separately from all other reported bicycle-related activities. This time there was no significant difference in adding or subtracting Mountain Biking from the main Bicycling data: neither change made any difference to Bicycling's place in the data, so this SCORP will only report the Bicycling data with Mountain Biking separately (in 46th place).

- The top three reasons why respondents participate in outdoor recreation were:
  1. To be with family and friends . . . 44%
  2. Mental health . . . . . 39.5%
  3. Physical health . . . . . 37%
 (Multiple answers were allowed for this question.)

For four previous SCORP cycles, Indiana SCORPs have explored public outdoor recreation user's participation and preferences in several ways, including by asking survey participant outdoor recreation users what their "favorite" public outdoor recreation activities are, as well as what activities they actually do (and how often). Keep in mind that a user's "favorite" outdoor recreation activity isn't always something that they can actually do very often, and what they do most often isn't always their favorite activity. For this reason, the SCORP participation survey looks at this data both ways.

- The top 10 "favorite" outdoor recreation activities described by respondents were:
  1. Walking, Running, Jogging
  2. Camping/RV Camping
  3. Boating, Wakeboarding, Sailing, Tubing, Jet Skiing, Water Skiing
  4. Swimming, Snorkeling, Diving, Scuba, Splash Pad
  5. Fishing
  6. Golf
  7. Bicycling (All) (adding or removing Mountain Biking made no change)
  8. Gardening, Landscaping, Yard Work
  9. Fairs, Festivals, Concerts
  10. Parks and Playgrounds

- The No. 1 "favorite" outdoor recreation activity, "Walking, Running, Jogging," was more than 10 times more popular than the No. 10 activity, "Parks and Playgrounds", and almost twice as popular as the No. 2 "favorite" activity, "Camping/RV Camping".
- The top 10 outdoor recreation activities respondents did more than **once per week** were:
  1. Walking, Running, Jogging
  2. Gardening, Landscaping, Yard Work
  3. Relaxation/Spiritual Renewal
  4. Bird/Wildlife Watching
  5. Outdoor Pool Swimming
  6. Bicycle Touring (Road, Touring, Casual, etc.)
  7. Attending Outdoor Spectator Sports (Baseball, Football, etc.)
  8. Health Related Activities (Yoga, Tai Chi, Pilates, etc.)
  9. Playground use
  10. Family/Friends/Group Outdoor Gatherings/Reunions
- The top 10 outdoor recreation activities respondents did only **once per month** were:
  1. Visiting Parks, Wilderness, or Primitive Areas
  2. Family/Friends/Group Outdoor Gatherings/Reunions
  3. Attending Outdoor Fairs/Festivals
  4. Picnicking
  5. Attending Outdoor Concerts, Plays, etc.
  6. Visiting Farms, Wineries, Agricultural Venues, etc.
  7. Attending Outdoor Spectator Sports (Baseball, Football, etc.)
  8. Visiting Historic Sites, Interpretive Centers
  9. Camping (all types)
  10. Playground Use
- The top 10 outdoor recreation activities respondents did only **once per year** were:
  1. Fall Foliage Viewing
  2. Winter Sports (All Skiing, Snowboarding, Sledging, etc.)
  3. Visiting Historic Sites, Interpretive Centers
  4. Camping (all types)
  5. Canoeing/Kayaking/Rowing (Boat) Water Paddle Sports
  6. Attending Outdoor Concerts, Plays, etc.
  7. Visiting Farms, Wineries, Agricultural Venues, etc.

8. Picnicking
  9. Horseback Riding (all types)
  10. Family/Friends/Group Outdoor Gatherings/ Reunions
- The top methods of travel used to reach the outdoor recreation activity they participated in the most were:
    1. Car/Truck . . . . . 67.6%
    2. Walk/Jog/Run . . 24.9%
    3. Bike . . . . . 5.8%
    4. Other . . . . . 5.5%
    5. Motorcycle . . . . . 2.5%
    6. Horseback . . . . . 1.4%
 (Multiple answers were allowed for this question.)
  - Asked in which county in Indiana they most often participated in outdoor recreation activities, the respondents most commonly cited the counties with the highest population. This may indicate that people recreate outdoors most often close to where they live.
  - Asked how much money they were willing to spend per year on their favorite outdoor recreation activity (including cost of equipment, training, travel, etc.), respondents said:
    1. Less than \$100. . . . . 21.7%
    2. \$101-\$250 . . . . . 19.2%
    3. \$251-\$500 . . . . . 17.3%
    4. \$501-\$750 . . . . . 9.7%
    5. \$751-\$1,000. . . . . 7.7%
    6. Over \$1,001 . . . . . 24.4%
  - The reported average spending per year for their “favorite” outdoor recreation activity was: \$1,111.
  - Asked what primary sources for funding the *development of new* outdoor recreation facilities (after first pursuing all federal funds, grants, and donations), respondents preferred:
    1. State general taxes . . . . . 34.5%
    2. Facility Use Fee . . . . . 18.4%
    3. Local taxes. . . . . 16.6%
    4. Land development fees/requirements 11.5%
    5. State tax on recreation equipment . . . 10.4%
    6. None. . . . . 9.9%
    7. Other . . . . . 7.1%
    8. Local bond issue . . . . . 4.3%
 (Multiple answers were allowed for this question.)
  - Asked what primary sources for funding the *operations/maintenance of existing* outdoor recreation facilities (after first pursuing all federal funds, grants, and donations), respondents preferred:
    1. State general taxes . . . . . 28.8%
    2. Facility Use Fee . . . . . 27.5%
    3. Local taxes. . . . . 17.0%
    4. State tax on recreation equipment . . . 12.1%
    5. None. . . . . 10.6%
    6. Other . . . . . 8.2%
 (Multiple answers were allowed for this question.)
  - Asked how far they were willing to travel one way to participate in their favorite outdoor recreation activity, respondents said:
    1. 0-5 miles . . . . . 6.8%
    2. 6-10 miles . . . . . 6.1%
    3. 11-15 miles . . . . . 5.5%
    4. 16-25 miles . . . . . 9.8%
    5. 26-35 miles . . . . . 6.9%
    6. 36-50 miles . . . . . 16.4%
    7. 51-75 miles . . . . . 12.4%
    8. 76-100 miles. . . . . 9.7%
    9. More than 100 miles . . . . . 26.4%
  - The main reason given why respondents **did not** participate in outdoor recreation activities more often was:
    1. None, I participate as much as I want to. 47.2%
    2. Personal barriers, no time, no motivation, lack of skills, physical, mental or emotional health, etc. . . . . 25.6%
    3. Cost barriers, lack of money/economic factors 8.8%
    4. Social barriers, no one to participate with, family conflict, responsibilities to others, etc. .8.1%
    5. No recreation facilities close to my home . 7.5%
    6. Structural barriers, poor setting/physical environment, lack of facilities or programs, transportation, safety, etc. . . . . 4.5%
    7. Disability-related access prevents me from participating as much as I would like . . . 4.3%
    8. Customs, cultural barriers, etc. . . . . 0.9%
 (Multiple answers were allowed for this question.)
  - Asked if they or any of their immediate family have any type of physical or intellectual disability that prevents them from participating in outdoor recreation activities, 16.1% said yes, and 83.9% said no (comparable to current U.S. Census statistical estimates on the percentage of Indiana residents with a disability).
  - Respondents who answered “yes” to the previous question reported having the following type(s) of

disability:

1. Walking ..... 58.5%
2. Lifting ..... 25.3%
3. Bending ..... 28.1%
4. Other ..... 22.6%
5. Breathing ..... 24.3%
6. Hearing ..... 11.8%
7. Seeing ..... 7.9%

(Multiple answers were allowed for this question.)

## THE LOCAL PARK AND RECREATION PROVIDER STUDY

Local Park and Recreation Provider Study methods:

- Individual survey respondents were invited via email, from a DNR statewide list of over 850 public parks and recreation providers.
- After an initial email invitation, reminder emails were sent to nonrespondents at one-week to 10-day intervals.
- Potential respondents from the initial list were also emailed an invitation to participate in the survey from the SCORP planning staff at DNR.
- The survey used an online survey with a ZIP code question to group responses by region.
- The main questionnaire was approximately 29 questions long, followed by an optional set demographic questions.
- The estimated time needed to take the online survey was 20 minutes.
- Survey results were entered into a survey database and tabulated.
- The survey took place from October 2022 through March 2023.
- The completed database consists of 153 respondents representing the entire state.

Which units of government provide park and/or recreation in your community?

- 88% reported that their community had municipal-provided park and recreation facilities.
- 37% reported that their community had county-provided park and recreation facilities.
- 20% reported that their community had township-provided park and recreation facilities.
- 9% reported that their community had “other” organizations or groups that provided park and recreation facilities.

Respondents Roles Among Local Park and Recreation Departments:

- 33% are employees of municipal park departments.
- 16% are employees of “other” units of local government. (e.g., Council, Street, Public Works).
- 16% are municipal park board members.
- 12% are volunteers or members of an organization related to parks, recreation, and/or trails.
- 11% are employees of county parks departments.
- 9% are “Friends of” or similar nonprofit/nongovernmental management group members.
- 7% are trail organization board members.
- 6% report none of the options apply.
- 4% are county park board members.
- 4% are township park board members.
- 1% are employees of township park departments.
- 1% are employees of trail organizations.



**NOTE:** Respondents could choose one or more responses to these questions, if applicable.

Table 1.1 **Number of Years Served in Current Position**

Years served in Current Position	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
0-5	53	34.6%
6-10	30	19.6%
11-15	13	8.5%
16-20	11	7.2%
More than 20	15	9.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>79.7%</b>

NOTE: 31 of the 153 total respondents are not represented in this table, which is 20.3%.

Table 1.2 **Total Number of Years Served in Parks and Recreation**

Total Years Served	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
0-5	38	24.2%
6-10	16	10.5%
11-15	15	9.8%
16-20	12	7.8%
More than 20	39	26.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>78.4%</b>

NOTE: 33 of the 153 total respondents are not represented in this table, which represents about 21.6% of respondents. Respondents reported the average total years served in parks and recreation was 31.8 years, the median was 12.0, and the mode (most reported number) was 10 years.

Table 1.3 **Reported Gender of Respondents**

Gender	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Woman	48	31%
Man	47	31%
Transgender	1	1%
Prefer not to answer	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>63%</b>

NOTE: 56 of the 153 total respondents are not represented in this table.

Table 1.4 **Reported Age of Respondents**

Age	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
20 - 40	18	12%
41 - 60	47	31%
61 - 80	30	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>62%</b>

NOTE: 58 of the 153 total respondents are not represented in this table. The youngest was 22 and oldest was 79. The mean age was 53.6 years.

### Communities Served By the Respondents

The following tables are based on open ended survey questions, so the groupings of responses below may not follow a set or even scale but are simply gathered into ranges based on the responses.



Table 1.5 Users Served as Reported by Respondents

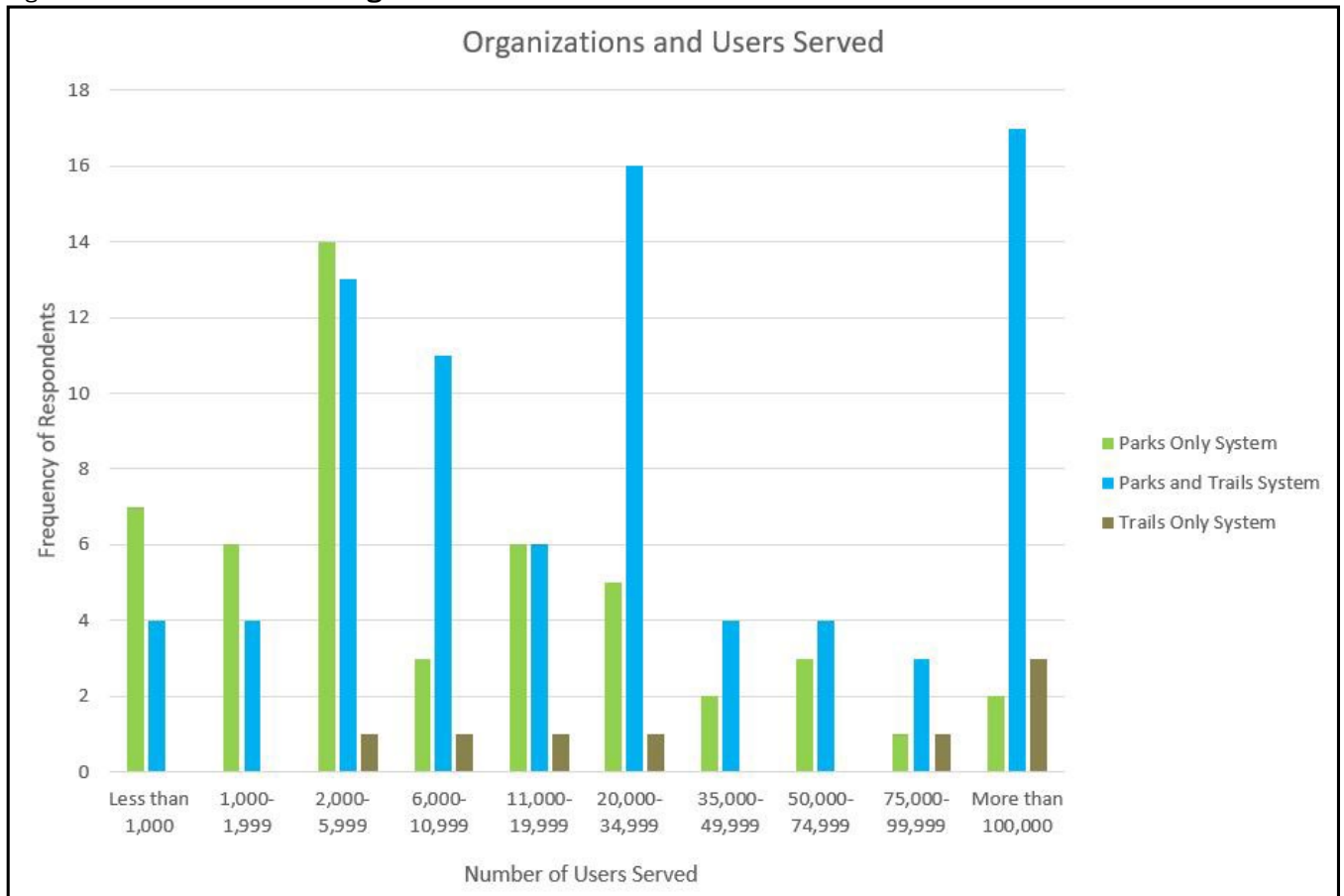
Number of Users Served Annually	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Less than 1,000	12	8%
1,000 - 1,999	10	7%
2,000 - 5,999	28	18%
6,000 - 10,999	15	10%
11,000 - 19,999	13	9%
20,000 - 34,999	22	14%
35,000 - 49,999	6	4%
50,000 - 74,999	7	5%
75,000 - 99,999	5	3%
more than 100,000	22	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>92%</b>

NOTE: 13 of the 153 total respondents are not represented in this table.

Methods to count visitor attendance included: attendance at events or programs; car counts; visitor center counts; gate admissions; registrations; spot counts and estimates; rentals; parking fees; vehicle and trail counters; and attendance at pools, golf courses, and other activities.

From the below graph, correlations can be made when analyzing the data between the types of organizations and number of users served. In smaller communities, “parks only systems” are more common. Conversely, in larger communities, there are far more “parks and trails systems” offered. It should also be noted that although “trail only systems” have a low frequency of respondents, trail only systems may serve multiple communities, as in the case of the Cardinal Greenway, which spans several counties.

Figure 1.1 Crosstabulation of Organizations and Users Served



### Types of Resources Managed by the Respondents

Table 1.6 Type of Organization

Type of Organization	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Parks Only	51	33%
Parks and Trails	83	54%
Trails Only	8	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>93%</b>

NOTE: 11 of the 153 total respondents are not represented in this table.

This was the first survey where we tried to add trail organizations to the leaders. We were glad to have some respond. Also, in the first question of the survey about roles in organizations, we saw respondents indicating their involvement in trails in other ways, as well as volunteer and friends of group roles.

Table 1.7 Total Acres Managed

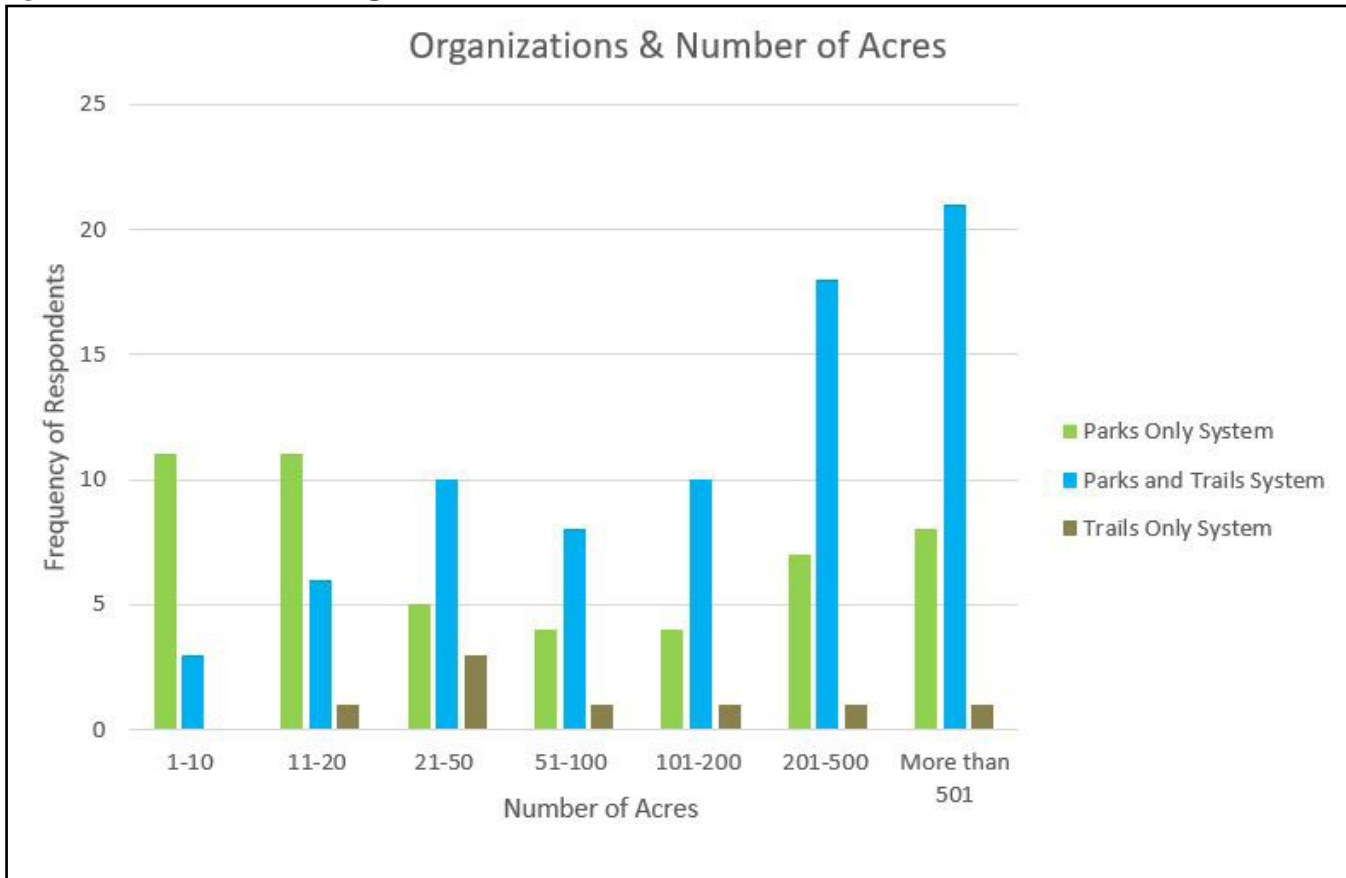
Number of Acres	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1 - 10	14	9%
11 - 20	18	12%
21 - 50	18	12%
51 - 100	13	9%
101 - 200	15	10%
201 - 500	26	17%
More than 500	30	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>88%</b>

NOTE: 19 of the 153 total respondents are not represented in this table.

Typical of Indiana, some communities have few acres while others have large park systems. The distribution would not approximate a normal distribution.

From the graph below, we can see the correlations between the types of organizations and the number of acres managed. Properties with fewer

Figure 1.2 Crosstabulation of Organizations and Number of Acres



acres indicate having more “parks only systems” (e.g., city parks with a playground but no trails). Organizations that offer “parks and trails” combined tend to have more acres in the hundreds. “Trails only” organizations tend to be measured in miles, though some trail organizations manage small parks, (such as Cardinal Greenways, which manages Craddock Wetlands near the White River Trail in our town).

More than 4,200 miles of trails are offered throughout the entire state, many of which span counties, such as the Cardinal Greenway, Nickel Plate Trail, Monon Trail and Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. Trails are managed by local, state, federal and non-profit organizations.

Low-frequency trends in “trails only systems” can be seen in all the above crosstabulation graphs. Many of the “trail only systems” offered throughout the state are managed by smaller entities (e.g., non-profit organizations). “Trail only systems” can also span across many counties, and their total reach may not be fully accounted for by individual providers.

Table 1.8 **Total Miles of Trails Managed**

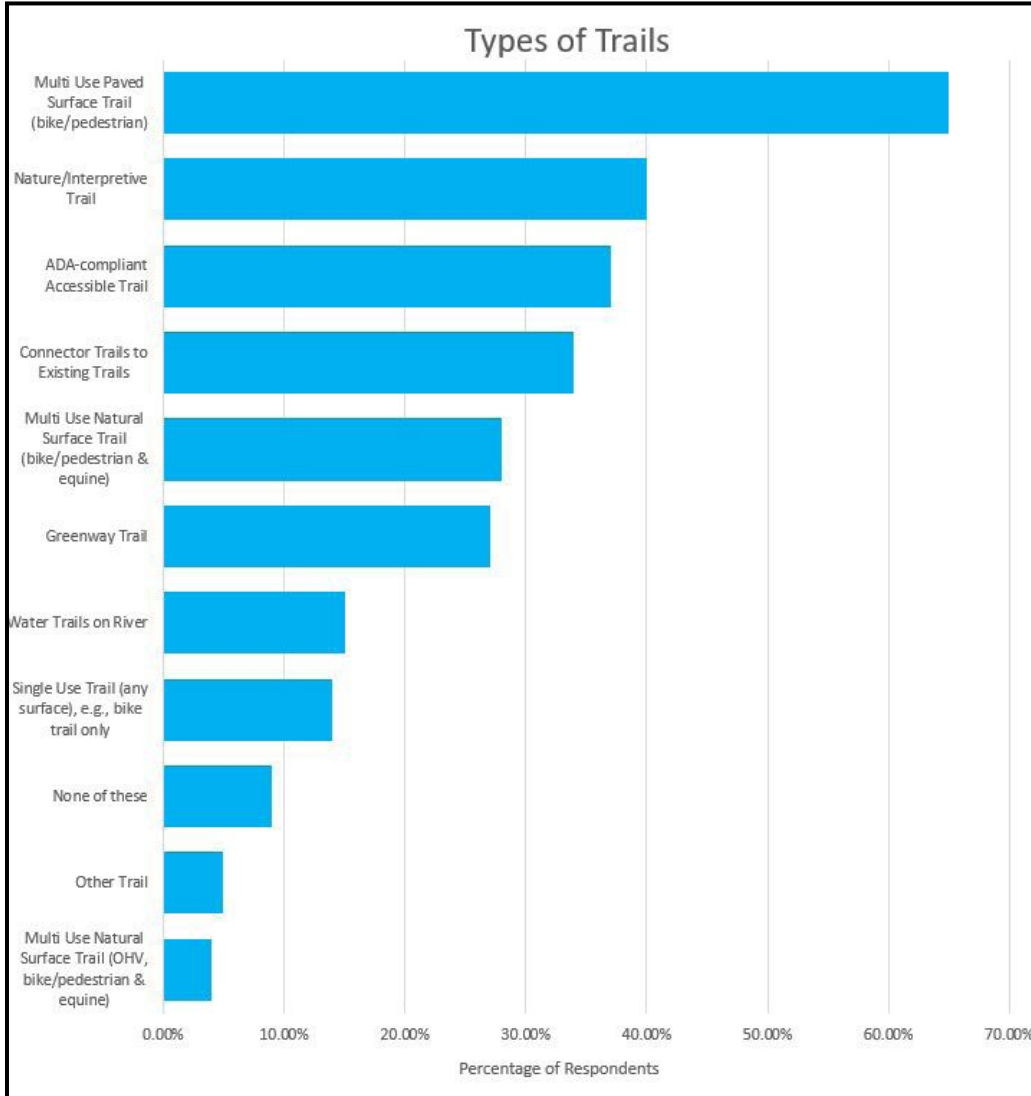
Miles of Trails	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1 - 5	24	16%
6 - 10	19	12%
11 - 20	13	9%
21 - 30	15	10%
31 - 50	5	3%
51 - 70	2	1%
71 - 100	2	1%
More than 100	4	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>55%</b>

NOTE: 69 of the 153 total respondents are not represented in this table.

Figure 1.3 **Crosstabulation of Organizations and Miles of Trails**



Figure 1.4 **Types of Trails Offered**



The most popular responses were multiuse paved trail (N = 99); interpretive trail (N = 61) and ADA-compliant accessible trail (N = 57).

NOTE: Respondents could choose one or more responses if applicable.

Table 1.9 **Types of Trails Offered**

Types of Trails	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Multi Use Paved Surface Trail (bike/pedestrian)	99	65%
Nature/Interpretive Trail	61	40%
ADA-compliant Accessible Trail	57	37%
Connector Trails to Existing Trails	52	34%
Multi Use Natural Surface Trail (bike/pedestrian & equine)	42	28%
Greenway Trail	41	27%
Water Trails on River	23	15%
Single Use Trail (any surface), e.g., bike trail only	22	14%
None of these	14	9%
“Other” Trail	7	5%
Multi Use Natural Surface Trail (OHV, bike/pedestrian & equine)	6	4%

Table 1.10 Preventative Maintenance as Reported by Respondents

Use of Preventative Maintenance	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	117	77%
No	17	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>88%</b>

NOTE: 19 of the 153 total respondents are not represented in this table.

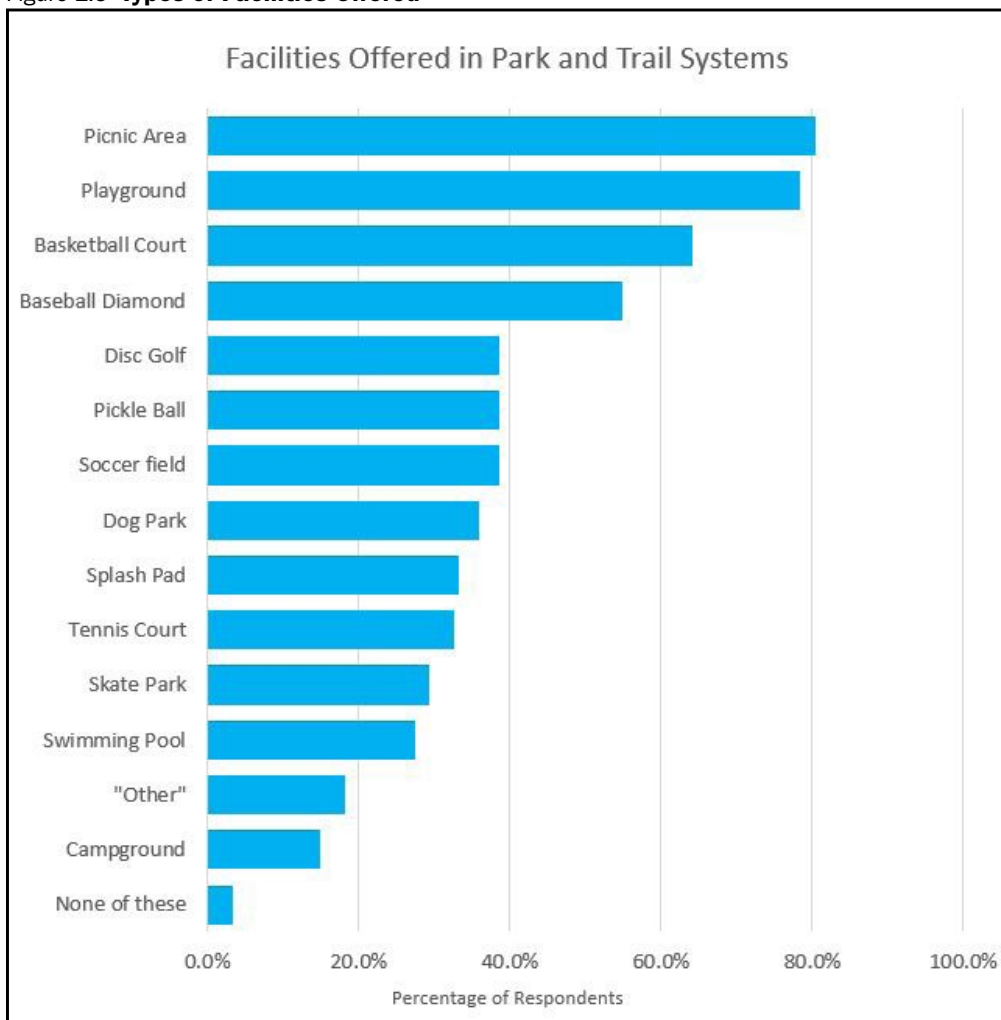
Respondents who answered “yes” were asked to provide examples of the preventative maintenance they implement on their properties. Many responses included buildings, facilities and road maintenance; servicing equipment; routine inspections; trail and lawn maintenance; removal of invasive species; trimming and pruning; weed treatments; and removal of dead/dying plants and trees.

### Facilities and Activities

Respondents who answered “other” were asked to provide examples of the types of facilities they offer. Many responses included athletic fields and courts for volleyball, softball, golf, “drone zones,” and archery; areas for group activities like horseshoe and cornhole; amphitheatres, stages and indoor theaters; festival areas; boat launches and marinas; community gardens; nature preserves; botanical and animal conservatories; community centers and shelters; recreation centers; nature centers; and horse stalls.

A table of frequencies is provided on the next page.

Figure 1.5 Types of Facilities Offered



NOTE: Respondents could choose one or more responses if applicable.

Table 1.11 **Types of Facilities Offered**

Types of Facilities	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Picnic Area	123	80%
Playground	120	78%
Basketball Court	98	64%
Baseball Diamond	84	55%
Disc Golf	59	39%
Pickle Ball	59	39%
Soccer field	59	39%
Dog Park	55	36%
Splash Pad	51	33%
Tennis Court	50	33%
Skate Park	45	29%
Swimming Pool	42	28%
“Other”	28	18%
Campground	23	15%
“None”	5	3%

NOTE: Respondents could choose one or more responses if applicable.

Table 1.12 **Special Events**

Host Special Events	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	117	75%
No	12	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>84%</b>

NOTE: 24 of the 153 total respondents are not represented in this table.

Respondents who answered “yes” were asked to provide examples of special events their organization hosts. Many responses included park and river clean-ups; native plant sales; volunteering events; fundraising; educational events for people of all ages; boy and girl scout events; community events with local first responders; holiday festivals and parades; cultural and heritage festivals; car shows; music festivals, dances and movies; arts and craft fairs; petting zoos; flea markets; farmers markets; cook offs and pitch ins; athletic lessons and tournaments; marathons and triathlons; community bike rides; fishing

tournaments; boat races; reunions, parties and weddings; conferences; and historical reenactments.

Asked how often respondents host special events:

Table 1.13 **Frequency of Special Events**

Frequency of Special Events	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Once a week	6	4%
More than once a week	8	5%
More than once a month	23	15%
Once a month	10	7%
Once a season (Fall, Summer, etc.)	27	18%
More than once a season	19	12%
Once a year	15	10%
Other	8	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>76%</b>

NOTE: 37 of 153 total respondents are not represented in this table.

Respondents who answered “other” reported hosting events at irregular times throughout the year.

Asked if respondents offer recreational programs for the public:

Table 1.14 **Public Recreational Programs**

Offer Public Recreation Programs	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	76	50%
No	53	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>84%</b>

NOTE: 24 of the 153 total respondents are not represented in this table.

Respondents who answered “yes” were asked to provide examples of special events their organization hosts and how often. Many responses included guided nature hikes; educational events for school kids; athletic leagues for all ages; fitness and wellness classes for all ages; fishing programs; and summer camps. Many of the recreational programs listed were offered either weekly, monthly, seasonally, etc.

## Budgets, Funding and Partnerships

Table 1.15 **2021-2022 Estimated Operations & Maintenance Budgets**

Operating Budgets Reported	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
0 - 10,000	10	6%
10,800 - 30,000	8	5%
35,000 - 60,000	6	4%
63,000 - 100,000	6	4%
106,800 - 500,000	30	20%
520,000 - 980,000	15	10%
1,000,000 - 2,000,000	16	11%
2,100,000 - 5,000,000	11	7%
6,000,000 - 39,000,000	8	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>72%</b>

NOTE: 43 of the total 153 total respondents are not represented in this table.

The mode (most reported budget number) was \$400,000. These figures may be skewed because the survey sample does not fully capture the number of small park systems across Indiana: at least half of all Indiana park systems are small systems from small, revenue-challenged communities. Many small town park systems have no full time staff or active boards that could answer this survey.

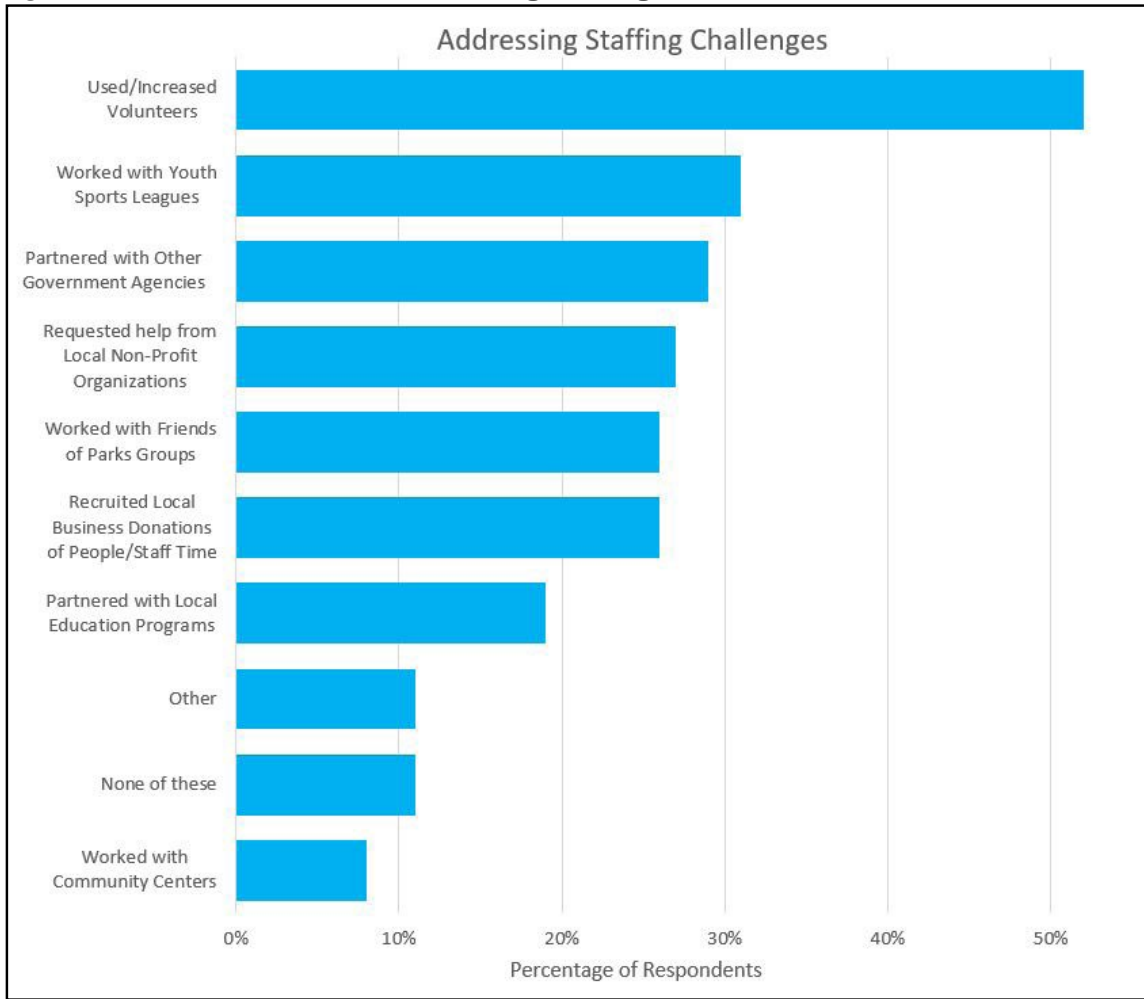
Asked about changes in their yearly budgets since 2021, respondents reported:

- 66% reported an increase.
- 11% reported a decrease.
- 23% reported no change.



## Staffing

Figure 1.6 Measures Taken to Address Staffing Challenges



Respondents who answered “other” were asked to provide examples of how they have addressed staffing challenges. Many responses reported increased wages and benefits; recruitment and retention efforts and incentives; marketing tactics; student involvement; and correctional facility involvement.

(The graph above and the table below display the same data results.)

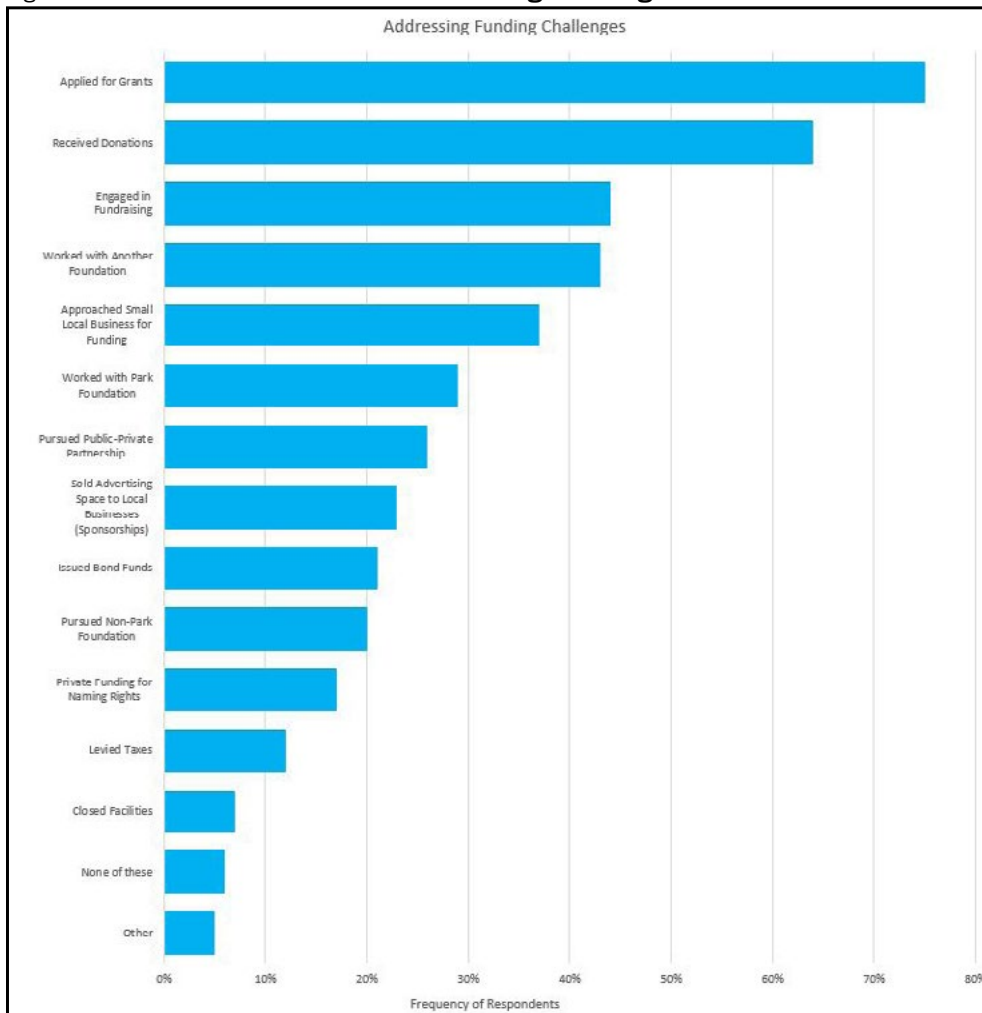
Table 1.16 Measures to Address Staffing Challenges

Addressing Staffing Challenges	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Used/Increased Volunteers	79	52%
Worked with Youth Sports Leagues	47	31%
Partnered with Other Government Agencies	44	29%
Requested help from Local Nonprofit Organizations	41	27%
Worked with Friends of Parks Groups	39	26%
Recruited Local Business Donations of People/Staff Time	39	26%
Partnered with Local Education Programs	29	19%
Other	17	11%
None of these	16	11%
Worked with Community Centers	12	8%

NOTE: Respondents could choose one or more responses if applicable.

## Funding

Figure 1.7 Measures Taken to Address Funding Challenges



(The graph and Table 17 display the same data results.)

Table 1.17 Measures to Address Funding Challenges

Addressing Funding Challenges	Frequency of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Applied for Grants	114	75%
Received Donations	98	64%
Engaged in Fundraising	67	44%
Worked with Another Foundation	66	43%
Approached Small Local Business for Funding	56	37%
Worked with Park Foundation	45	29%
Pursued Public-Private Partnership	39	26%
Sold Advertising Space to Local Businesses (Sponsorships)	35	23%
Issued Bond Funds	32	21%
Pursued Non-Park Foundation	30	20%
Private Funding for Naming Rights	26	17%
Levied Taxes	19	12%
Closed Facilities	10	7%
None of these	9	6%
Other	7	5%

NOTE: Respondents could choose multiple responses.

Respondents who answered “other” were asked to provide examples of how they have addressed staffing challenges. Many responses reported using volunteers; support organizations; town-county partnerships; and leasing land.

Respondents also reported collaborating with the following organizations:

- 25% with nonprofit providers (e.g., YMCA).
- 20% with school systems providing recreation.
- 20% reported “none of these”.
- 11% with health organizations or hospitals.
- 11% with historical societies.
- 9% with state properties.
- 3% with federal properties.

In addition to funding and/or staffing challenges, respondents reported critical issues to be addressed in their parks and trails systems. Many of the issues reported were aging infrastructure and equipment; vandalism and security; developing master plans; membership; improving land management practices; improving ADA-compliance; land acquisition and expansion; trail expansion; and greater support from local governments.

## THE TRAILS USER SURVEY

### Trails User Survey Methods:

- The survey used a paper intercept questionnaire.
- The questionnaire was 20 questions long.
- The estimated time needed to take the survey was between three and six minutes.
- Paper survey results were manually entered into the database post-survey.
- Respondents were chosen on a next-available basis.
- People under the age of 17 were not discouraged from taking the survey, but they also were not actively recruited.
- The survey was conducted at county fairs, libraries and other public locations throughout the state.
- The survey took place from February 2022 through November of 2022.
- The completed database consists of 1,089 respondents, representing every county in the state.

### Trails User Survey demographic results:

- 46.6% of respondents were male, and 53.4% were female.
- Average age of respondents was 43.
- 77% of respondents were white (non-Hispanic), 11.8% Black/African-American and 5.3% Hispanic (Demographics of responses roughly track with statewide data according to 2020 U.S. Census estimates).
- Every county statewide across Indiana was proportionally represented in the data.

### Trails User Survey results:

- Walking/Running/Jogging is the trail activity most participated in. The general public is three to four times more likely to use trails for walking/running/jogging than for most other activities.
- More than 80% of respondents use trails for walking sometime during the year.
- The top five trail activities respondents did more than once per week were:
  1. Walking, Running, Jogging
  2. Bicycle Touring (Road, Touring, Casual, etc.) {TIED with Alternative Transportation}
  3. Using Trails for Alternative Transportation {TIED with Bicycle Touring}
  4. Off-Road Vehicle Riding (Motorcycle, 4-Wheeler, UTV, Jeep, etc.)
  5. Hiking/Backpacking
- The top five trail activities respondents did at least once per month were:
  1. Walking, Running, Jogging
  2. Hiking/Backpacking
  3. Bicycle Touring (Road, Touring, Casual, etc.)
  4. Using Trails for Alternative Transportation
  5. Canoeing/Kayaking on water trails or blueways
- The top five trail activities respondents did at least once per year were:
  1. Canoeing/Kayaking on water trails or blueways
  2. Hiking/Backpacking
  3. Walking, Running, Jogging
  4. Horseback Riding
  5. Bicycle Touring (Road, Touring, Casual, etc.)
- The top three reasons why respondents used trails were:
  1. Pleasure, relaxation, recreation . . . . . (92.2%)
  2. Health/Physical training . . . . . (70.8%)
  3. Family or social outing . . . . . (69.4%)

- Asked what trail activity they would like to participate in at least 12 times per year in the future, respondents said:
  1. Walking/running/jogging . . . . . (76.6%)
  2. Hiking/backpacking . . . . . (47.5%)
  3. Bicycle touring (casual, touring or both)(39.1%)
  4. Canoeing/kayaking on water trails. . . (36.0%)
 (Multiple responses were allowed.)
- 72% of respondents said there was a trail within 5 miles or 10 minutes of their home.
- 42% selected native soil as their preferred trail surface, 32% prefer asphalt, 17% had no preference for trail surface type, and 9% preferred wood chips.
- 83% of those who had an opinion said that they either strongly or somewhat agreed that trail connectivity should be an important part of a community's infrastructure (up from 81% in the last SCORP).
- Respondents believed that trail connectivity was extremely important for:
  1. Personal Health. . . . . (62.4%)
  2. Community Health . . . . . (60.8%)
  3. Environmental Health . . . . . (49.2%)
  4. Community Economic Development . (36.3%)
 (Multiple responses were allowed)
- Word of mouth was the top way that respondents found out about trail opportunities. Signage at parks was 2nd; Trail websites was 3rd; Community Media was 4th.
- Asked why they do not use trails as much as they would like;
  1. Personal barriers (no time, no motivation, lack of skills, physical /mental/emotional health, ability level, etc.) were cited by 41.8% of respondents.
  2. 32% of respondents said they participated as much as they wanted to.
  3. 15.0% of respondents said that social barriers (no one to participate with, family conflicts, responsibility to others, etc.) limited their use.
  4. 14.3% of respondents said that there were no trails close to their home.
  5. 10.0% of respondents said that structural barriers (safety, transportation, poor setting, physical environment, etc.) limited their use.
- Respondents who reported being limited in participating in trail activities by health factors cited issues with walking as their most common limitation. Breathing issues were the second most cited limitation.
- 34.5% of respondents stated that there were no improvements that would increase their use of trails, 28.7% would like to see better trail surfaces, and another 21.8% would like increased personal safety measures.
- 36% of respondents are only willing to spend less than \$100 annually on trail activities; 34% are willing to spend between \$100 and \$500; 12% are willing to spend between \$501 and \$1,000.
- Asked the distance trail users are willing to travel (one way) to participate in trail activities;
  1. 15.2% said 0-5 miles.
  2. 13.8% said more than 100 miles.
  3. 12.0% said 36-50 miles.
  4. 11.6% said 26-35 miles.
  5. 11.3% said 51-75 miles.
- Asked what primary sources for funding the *development of new trails*, (after first pursuing all federal funds, grants, and donations) respondents preferred:
  1. State general taxes. . . . . 31.4%
  2. Local taxes. . . . . 17.6%
  3. None. . . . . 16.4%
  4. Trail use fee . . . . . 15.6%
  5. Land development fees . . . . . 12.9%
  6. State tax on recreation equipment . . . . 9.1%
  7. Other . . . . . 5.9%
  8. Local bond issue. . . . . 4.5%
 (Multiple responses were allowed)
- Asked what primary sources for funding the *operations/maintenance of existing trails*, (after first pursuing all federal funds, grants, and donations) respondents preferred:
  1. State general taxes 29.8%
  2. Local taxes. . . . . 21.4%
  3. Trail use fee . . . . . 19.6%
  4. None. . . . . 15.7%
  5. State tax on recreation equipment . . . 14.1%
  6. Other . . . . . 7.3%
 (Multiple responses were allowed)

• Respondents were asked how much they would be willing to pay for an annual trail fee if money was spent in their local area to help support trail up-keep and new trail development. Their responses were:

1. Less than \$5: ..... 30.5%
2. \$5.00 - \$9.99 ..... 24.7%
3. \$10.00 - \$14.99 .....17.5%
4. \$15.00 - \$19.99 ..... 10.1%
5. \$20.00 or more .....17.2%

• Respondents were asked how well the current supply of trails in Indiana met their needs in specific ways:

	<b>Supply is more than enough</b>	<b>Supply is just right</b>	<b>Supply is OK for now but needs to be increased in the future</b>	<b>Supply does not meet my needs</b>	<b>Uncertain, don't know current supply</b>	<b>Don't use</b>
Using trails for alternative transportation routes	52-4.8%	98-9.0%	199-18.2%	143-13.1%	117-10.7%	482-44.2%
Walking/running/jogging	126-11.5%	296-27.1%	310-28.4%	89-8.2%	75-6.9%	195-17.9%
Hiking/backpacking	73-6.7%	218-20.0%	247-22.6%	111-10.2%	107-9.8%	335-30.7%
Bicycle touring (casual, tour or both)	66-6.1%	176-16.1%	241-22.1%	102-9.3%	89-8.2%	417-38.2%
Mountain bike riding	38-3.5%	91-8.3%	119-10.9%	87-8.0%	121-11.1%	635-58.2%
In-line skating	27-2.5%	69-6.3%	72-6.6%	48-4.4%	121-11.1%	754-69.1%
Cross country skiing	25-2.3%	47-4.3%	64-5.9%	51-4.7%	140-12.8%	764-70.0%
Snowmobiling	21-1.9%	49-4.5%	61-5.6%	53-4.9%	145-13.3%	762-69.8%
Off road vehicle riding (motorcycle, 4-wheel, ATV, etc.)	25-2.3%	65-6.0%	108-9.9%	72-6.6%	138-12.6%	683-62.6%
Canoeing/kayaking on water trails or blueways	45-4.1%	157-14.4%	194-17.8%	81-7.4%	137-12.6%	477-43.7%
Horseback riding	35-3.2%	73-6.7%	94-8.6%	64-5.9%	137-12.6%	688-63.0%

The next chapter will compare and contrast these datasets with selected research from outside sources. Emergent themes and trends as well as the limitations of the surveys will be discussed.



