



MICHIGAN TRAILS ADVISORY COUNCIL (MTAC)

Meeting Minutes

Lansing, MI

Sept. 24, 2024

1 – 4:30 p.m.

Welcome – Roll Call

PRESENT FOR THE MICHIGAN TRAILS ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Brian Beauchamp, Chairperson
- Kenneth Hopper, Vice Chairperson
- Michael Maves (absent)
- Mark Losey
- Ryan Laporte
- Jason Aric Jones
- Richard Williamson (absent)
- Jenny Cook
- Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf
- Karen Middendorp
- Tavon Brooks

PRESENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) STAFF

Tim Novak, Annalisa Centofanti, Greg Kinser, Jill Sell, Paige Perry, Nicole Hunt, Blake Gingrich, Lee Maynard, Scott Slavin, Chris Stark, Cody Stevens, Ron Yesney, Rob Katona, Jessica Holley-Roehrs, Heather Durocher, Sage Hegdal, Michael Desnoyer, Jason Fleming

Meeting minutes

Meeting called to order at 1:08 p.m. by MTAC Chairperson, Brian Beauchamp.

Council and DNR staff introductions.

ACTION ITEMS

Motion was made to approve the July 10, 2024 meeting minutes by Ryan Laporte and seconded by Karen Middendorp, with all in favor. Motion carried.

Ryan Laporte requested to add agenda topic “Keweenaw Trails Project Update” under section VI as item (f).

Motion was made to approve the Sept. 24, 2024 amended agenda by Ryan Laporte and seconded by Karen Middendorp, with all in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

MSU EMERGENT RECREATION RESEARCH

Bob Dvorek (CMU) Bess Perry (MSU)

(see attached presentation)

Comments:

Jason Aric Jones

1. Focus on differentiating trail types and trail users (who is using what and when).
2. Emerging use of ebikes.

Mark Losey

1. Define the definition of a mountain bike.
2. Does this fall in line with the trails 10-year plan.
3. Need an analysis or study with the recent growth in Macomb County.

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf

1. Bring equestrians into the survey.
2. The Michigan Horse Trails Association incident report shows that most of the conflicts on equestrian trails are with bicycles.

Tavon Brooks

1. Understand why good trails work and bad trails are not used.

Jenny Cook

1. Horses are prey animals and will perceive a fast-riding bicyclist as a predator therefore trail etiquette is really important to include in surveys.

Brian Beauchamp

1. From a user standpoint how is trail etiquette perceived across the board for all trail users that are experiencing challenges.
2. Would like to know how user conflict can be reduced.
3. Curious about results being in the middle what trail design determines a good or bad experience, what is the difference.
4. Would like to hear more as the research progresses.

ORV SAFETY EDUCATION / SUPPORT VOTE

Bob Meyers, Chairperson, Off-road Vehicle Advisory Workgroup (ORVAW)

At the August ORVAW meeting Bob discussed a mandatory ORV education course for all users, citing that Utah has a model to review as an example. Utah's program is in the infant stages. Bob believes at least 30% of the violators simply do not know the laws. ORVAW is requesting support from MTAC on this and added that state representative support has already been received.

Tavon Brooks asked how the plan will be launched. For example, will it involve online training with a completion certificate or physical sticker. Bob Meyers stated a certificate can be printed or saved on a mobile device.

Ryan Laporte added that Wisconsin has a mandatory safety course in place and Bob should look at their model. Educated riders will respect the trails.

Karen Middendorp said there is not enough law enforcement in place now. Bob Meyers reminded the committee that a law was passed last year where county officers can complete an education course, which will allow them to patrol on snow and ORV trails. Bob added that Lake County has hired additional staff to patrol snow and ORV trails.

Tim Novak, DNR, mentioned that Lake County has a great partnership working together with DNR conservation officers. Other counties do not seem to be as connected.

Ryan Laporte suggested the DNR facilitate partnerships with local clubs and county sheriffs. Tim Novak will look into this.

Jason Aric Jones stated this is broader than just motorized trails and etiquette education should be available for all trail users.

Jenny Cook asked Bob to include education on how to pass trail users in the course. Bob is planning to work with the DNR before anything is put in place.

MOTION

Motion to support developing and implementing a mandatory ORV safety education course for all ORV trail users is made by Ryan Laporte and seconded by Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf, with all in favor. Motion carried.

THUNDER VALLEY PUBLIC MEETING / LUOD SUPPORT VOTE

Ron Yesney, DNR

A public meeting was held in Marquette with an attendance of approximately 35 people to discuss prohibiting bikes on the Thunder Valley Trail system. Most everyone expressed support to prohibit bicycles. Some in attendance stated this is an ideal trail to bring young horses that need more training.

Jason Aric Jones wanted to see this vetted in an open public.

Mark Losey asked if signs are ready to be posted pending the approval of the proposed LUOD.

Tim Novak stated the next step after MTAC's support will be to review and approve the LUOD by Parks and Recreation (PRD) Section Chiefs, then the DNR Division Chiefs. After those approvals are in place the LUOD will be introduced to the Natural Resource Council (NRC) at a public meeting for comment. The last step is to have the DNR Director approve and sign.

MOTION

Motion to support the Thunder Valley LUOD as written is made by Jason Aric Jones and seconded by Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf, with all in favor. Motion carried.

SNOWMOBILE LUOD / LUOD SUPPORT VOTE

Nicole Hunt, DNR

(see attached LUOD draft)

A Snowmobile LUOD has been drafted by the DNR citing restrictions on size of a snowmobile that will be allowed on state designated snowmobile trails. There is new equipment that is being fabricated and designated as a manufactured snowmobile, but the size of the equipment is not ideal for snow trails. The Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup (SAW) requested a LUOD to limit the size (48") of a snowmobile (by MI state law definition). SAW voted in support at the August 2024 meeting to move forward with this draft.

Ken Hopper if there is any data on these new manufactured wider machines. Karen Middendorp believes the machines are too new for any research or data to be available.

Tim Novak added that limiting the trail width safely allows two machines to safely pass each other and one machine to pass a groomer. However, the machines that are over 48" width are not safe for passing on trails.

MOTION

Motion to support the Snow LUOD as written by Ryan Laporte and seconded by Jason Aric Jones, with all in favor. Motion Carried.

DNR FINANCE REVIEW

Michael Desnoyer, DNR
(see attached presentation)

DNR TRAILS SURVEY RESULTS

Patty Janes (GVSU)
(see attached presentation)

Patty Janes would like the DNR and MTAC to provide further direction on how the data should be sliced.

Ryan Laporte would like to know what the DNR needs to identify from this survey to drive improvement. Tim Novak will need to take a deeper dive into the data to see where the commonalities are.

KEWEENAW LANDS

Ryan Laporte

The Keweenaw Heartlands Land Project has been delayed due to the governance on how the lands will be controlled/managed. All trails on the lands will receive permanent easements at the time the land will be transferred.

UPDATES

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Equine Trails Subcommittee (ETS)

Report attached.

Nonmotorized Advisory Workgroup (NAW)

Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup (SAW)

Report attached.

Off-Road Vehicle Advisory Workgroup (ORVAW)

Report attached.

Saw Equipment Workgroup

Karl Davenport

Three groomer tractors and ten drags were approved for purchase this fiscal year. Funds were limited due to lack of snow last season and low permit sales.

Nonmotorized Funding & Maintenance Workgroup

Report attached.

Nonmotorized Signage Workgroup

A workgroup has been established. The kickoff meeting is scheduled for October 21.

U.S. FOREST SERVICE (USFS)

Nick Edington, USFS

The Federal Forest Service is waiting for Congress to pass a budget before any funds can be determined and allocated, which is usually sometime around early to late Spring. Last year's operating budget was based off of 2022 and the hope is to have additional funds allocated to FY25. The USFS are experiencing some challenges due to being in financial limbo. Some projects will be stalled, and some staff has been released.

The USFS recently discovered established motorized trails found in Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area, which appear to be intentional. This is being investigated.

PREVAILING WAGE

Tim Novak, DNR

Still waiting for a formal response from the Attorney General's office.

EBIKE LAND USE ORDER (LUOD) UPDATE

Tim Novak, DNR

The Ebike LUOD was signed at the August NRC meeting and is now in effect. An ebike rack card and new signage has been developed, ordered, and will be placed on trails that are allow ebike use. Class II ebike permits can be obtained from the DNR which requires an application. The application is available online or at DNR offices.

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf suggested to add the rack card to the DNR ebike web page. Ryan Laporte added adding the rack card and signage on the ebike public web page as a media package, similar to ride right campaign.

RECREATION TRAILS PROGRAM (RTP) PROJECT FOLLOW-UP

Tim Novak, DNR

See attached report.

MTAC should expect the RTP projects for FY26 to be presented at the MTAC December 2024 meeting. This is a new process being implemented to promote more discussion and understanding for the projects selected. Karen Middendorp requested to add a column in the report reflecting the trail type use for each project. Ryan Laporte would like to see the projects that were considered and cut off the list prior to the discussion in December.

NATURAL SURFACE NONMOTORIZED TRAIL FUNDING

Jason Aric Jones

See attached proposal.

Jason is sharing a proposal asking for a higher percentage of the annual nonmotorized funding to go towards natural surface nonmotorized trails. Jason would like this proposal on the MTAC December agenda and discussed earlier in the meeting. This proposal will be presented to NAW and ETS prior to the December MTAC meeting.

2024 MEETINGS

- DEC. 10 (GRAYLING)

CLOSING/ROUND ROBIN

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned 5:22 p.m.

Switching Gears Towards Recreation



**How Mountain Biking and Emerging Recreation
Can Benefit Sustainable Management**

Dr. Bob Dvorak, Central Michigan University

Dr. Bess Perry, Michigan State University

About Us



- Visitor Use Management
- Human Dimensions of Wildlife and Natural Resources
- Editor-in-Chief:
International Journal of Wilderness



- Visitor Use Management
- Park-community Interface
- P&R Relevance, Sustainability, Collaborations, & Climate Change



CENTRAL
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Park Connections Lab



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Arctic National
Wildlife Refuge



Joshua Tree NP



Cumberland
Island NS



Boundary Waters
Canoe Area



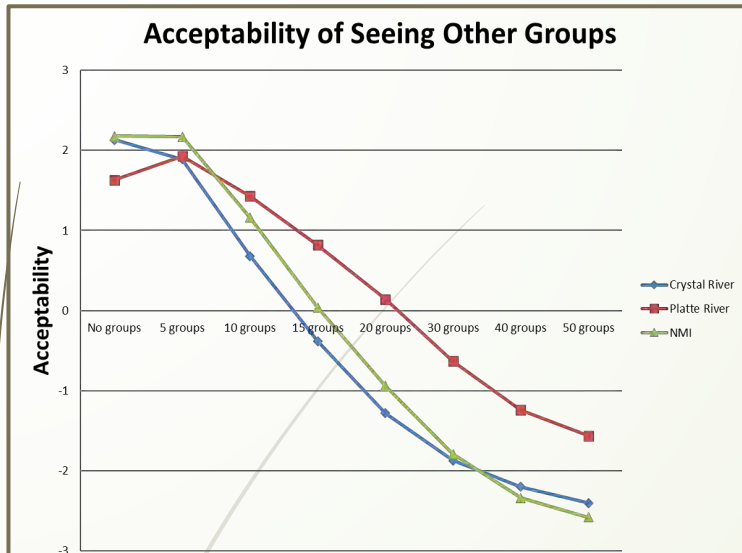
Vermont State
Parks



MDNR-Wildlife



Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore 2014-2024



- Demographics
- Expectations
- Crowding Measures
- Travel Patterns
- Park Conditions
- Place Attachment



Some other current trails research:

Huron-Manistee National Forests – Manistee River Trail Loop & Nordhouse Dunes
Huron Clinton Metroparks – trails & climate change

Your Current Experience

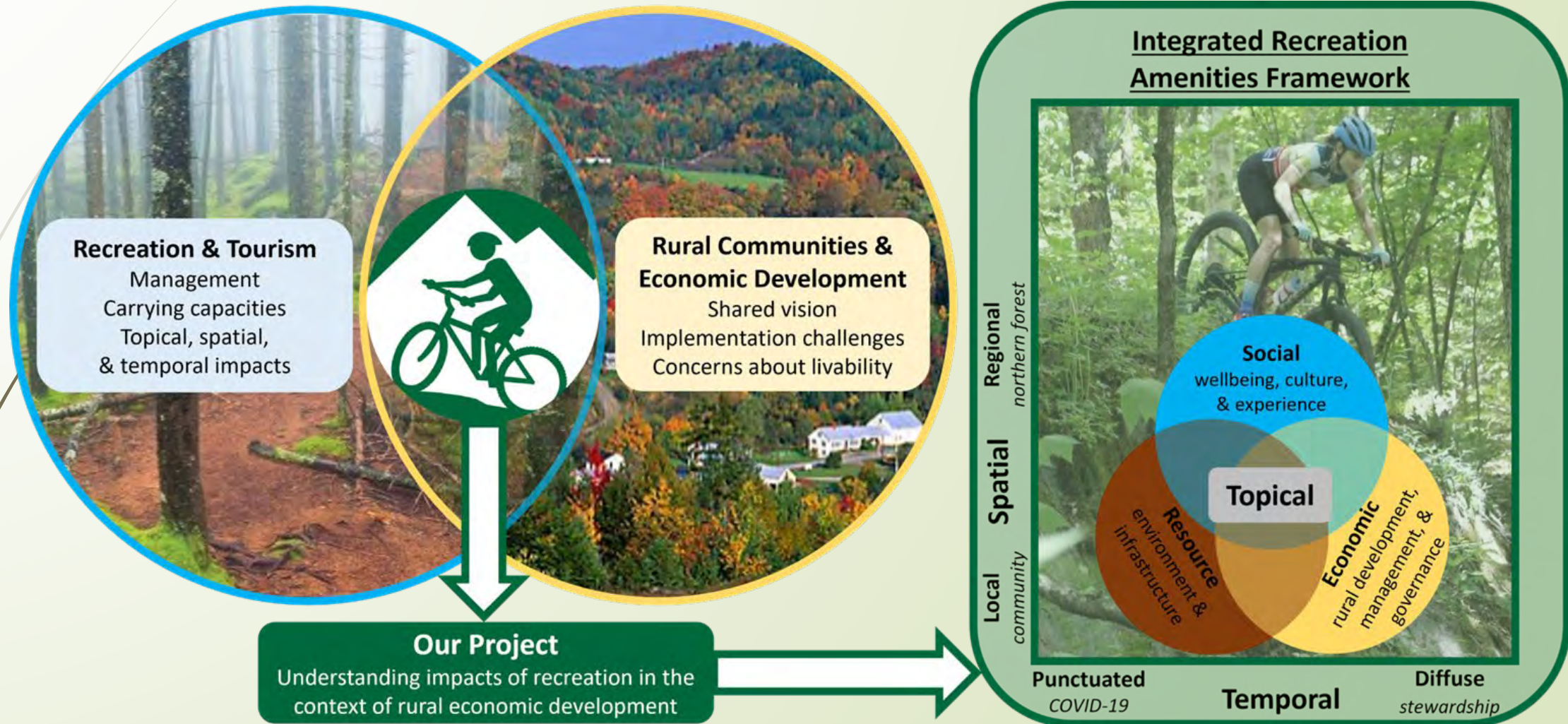
Rate Your Personal Experience with
Mountain Biking

1= very little to

6= significant experience



Program of Research



Case Study of Mountain Biking

What are the impacts and scales of impacts of mountain biking?

Lots of approaches...



Park Connections Lab



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
PLATTSBURGH



The University of Vermont

CMU
CENTRAL MICHIGAN
UNIVERSITY



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MAINE





MTB is popular but its impacts are unknown

- 🚲 Recent, nationwide increase in MTB trails use/demand
- 🚲 Opportunities accelerated during the pandemic & in rural communities with outdoor rec economies
- 🚲 Points of interest raised about stewardship models & an influx of “new” stewards
- 🚲 Surge in participation & development of infrastructure has had a range of impacts

Trail Pulse Survey – Michigan

What we know from a 2024 survey
611 Michiganders: recent natural surface trail users

28% MTBed in the past year,
18% consider themselves a MTBer

1 Not Familiar - 6 Extremely Familiar

1: 14%, 2: 18%, 3: 21%,
4: 21%, 5: 16%, 6: 11%
avg = 3.40

Support for MTB on favorite MI trails:
1 Strongly Oppose - 6 Strongly Support

1: 6%, 2: 8%, 3: 17%,
4: 24%, 5: 24%, 6: 21%
avg = 4.14



Trail Pulse Survey Themes

Recreation experience
Activities & frequencies
How meaningful to you
Effects & impacts of encounters
Attitudes & perceptions of mountain & e-bikes
Trail attachments & motivations
Conflicts & displacements
Engagement in local trail-related stewardship
Demographics



Approaches to Meet Different Scopes

To assist communities in awareness about, response to, and anticipation of:

The **broad** range of MTB social impacts that could potentially affect Northern Forest communities.

The **specific** MTB social impacts currently experienced by Northern Forest communities.

What is:

Documented globally
in academic articles?
Systematic Lit Review

Discussed nationally
on social media?
Social Media Analysis

Reported regionally
via news outlets?
Content Analysis

Experienced locally
by individuals?
Community Surveys



Engaging managers (like today!)

How to increase capacity with limited infrastructure?

What data can help allocate resources based on economic impact & need?

Does MTB foster positive health & wellbeing?

How can we better support MTB stewardship?

How can we thoughtfully examine conflicts?

How can we connect with new riders?


What are the changing user groups & preferences (e.g., e-MTBs)?

How can we collaborate with legislators, locals, & other user groups?

Join Us

CHAIN REACTIONS

a discussion on mountain biking, recreation, and associated impacts




April 8th
12-2 PM
via Zoom

JOIN
Jessica Leach-University of Maine
Kimberly Coleman-Fort Plattsburgh
Elizabeth Perry-Rutgers State University
Bob Dwyer-Central Michigan University

REGISTER
<https://online.zoom.us/j/960123456789>

CONTACT
Kate Mulholland
With any questions
kate.mulholland@maine.edu

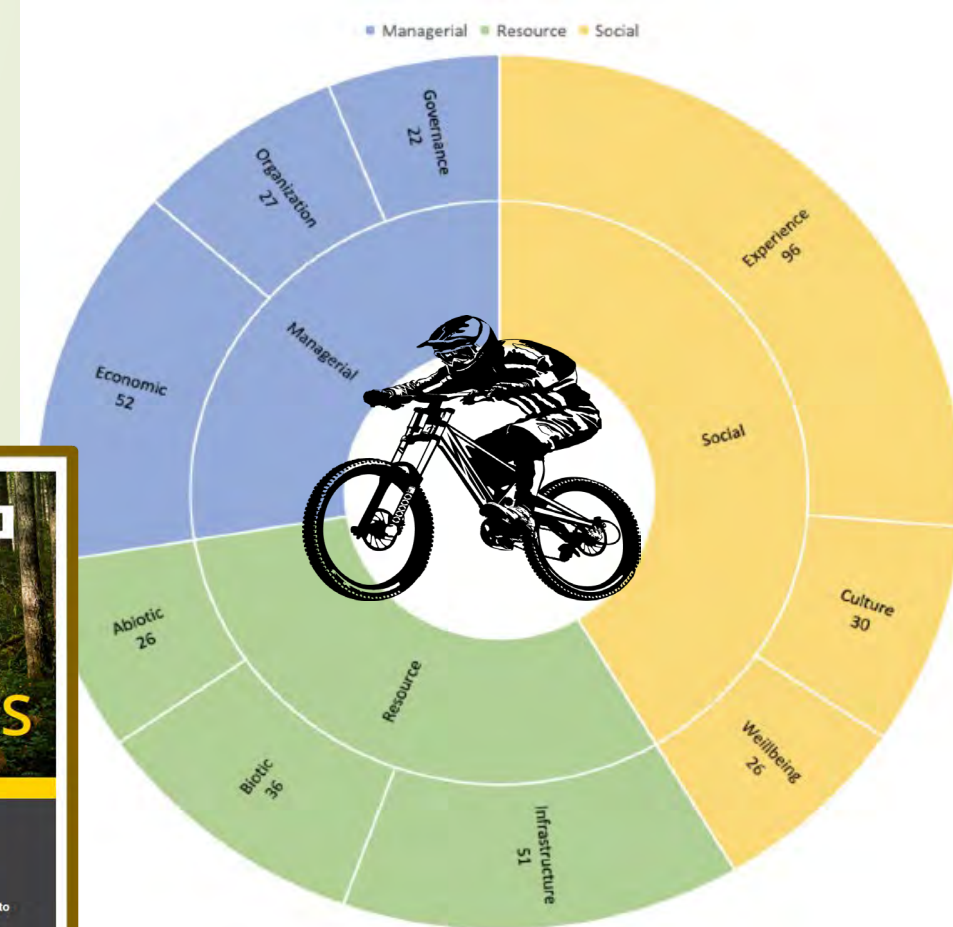
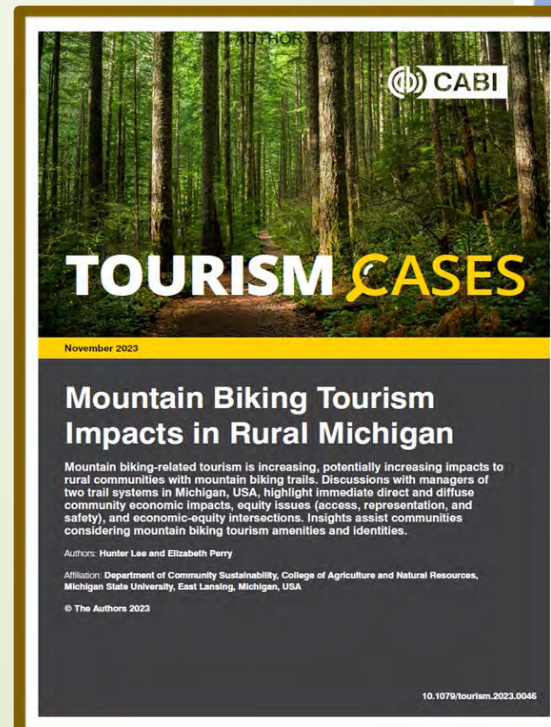


Impacts of Mountain Biking on Rural Michigan Communities

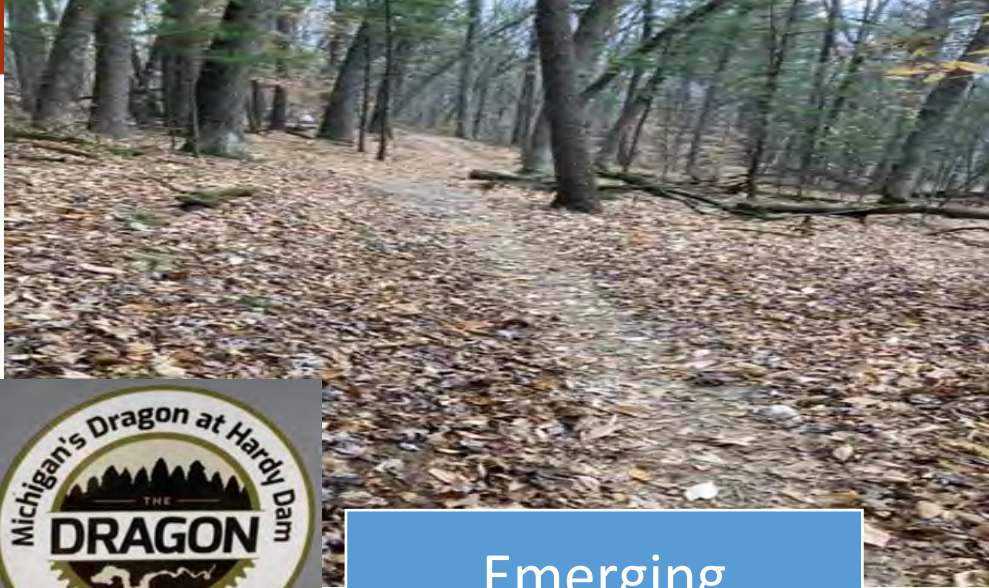
Systematic Literature Review:
Many different topics & scales to think about with “impacts”

What has been researched on MTB impacts globally?

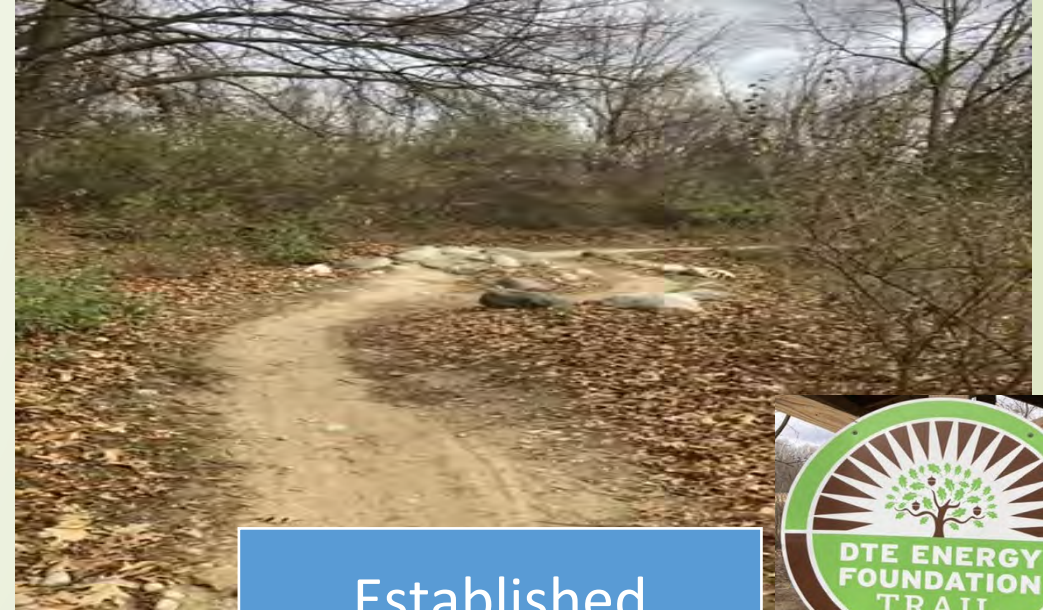
Spurred our inquiry:
Examine specific ways in which equity & economics are discussed/overlap by local communities



A Tale of Two Trails



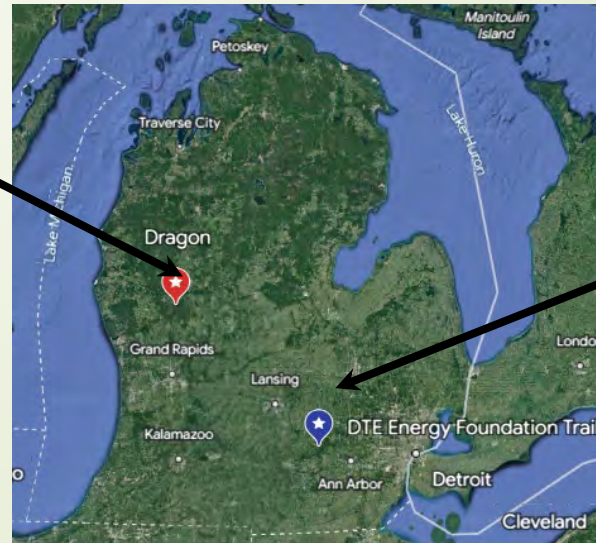
Emerging



Established



- Rural
- Lower visitation
- Difficulties with access
- Community led
- Multiple entrances & fees



- Urban proximate
- Very high visitation
- Clear & easy access
- Corporate sponsored
- One entrance & fee

Interviews, focus on economic & equity impacts



Discussion

Detailed knowledge about MTB impacts

- Participant emphasis & youth opps
- Community mainly economic, some wellbeing

Help inform sustainable community resource planning

- Importance of scenario planning

Understand how equity & economic impacts play a role

- Marginalization, but attempts to lessen
- Priority audiences are non-local

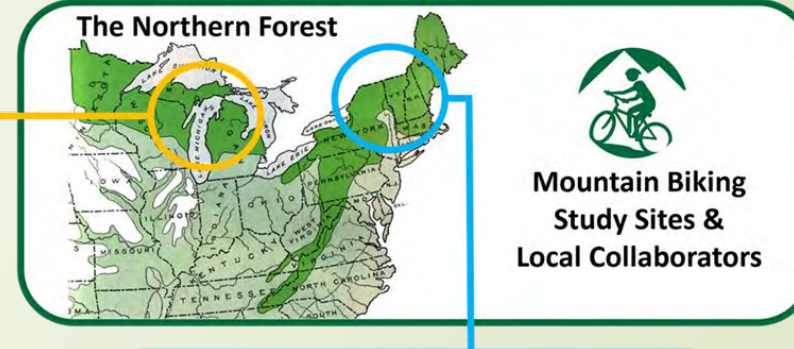
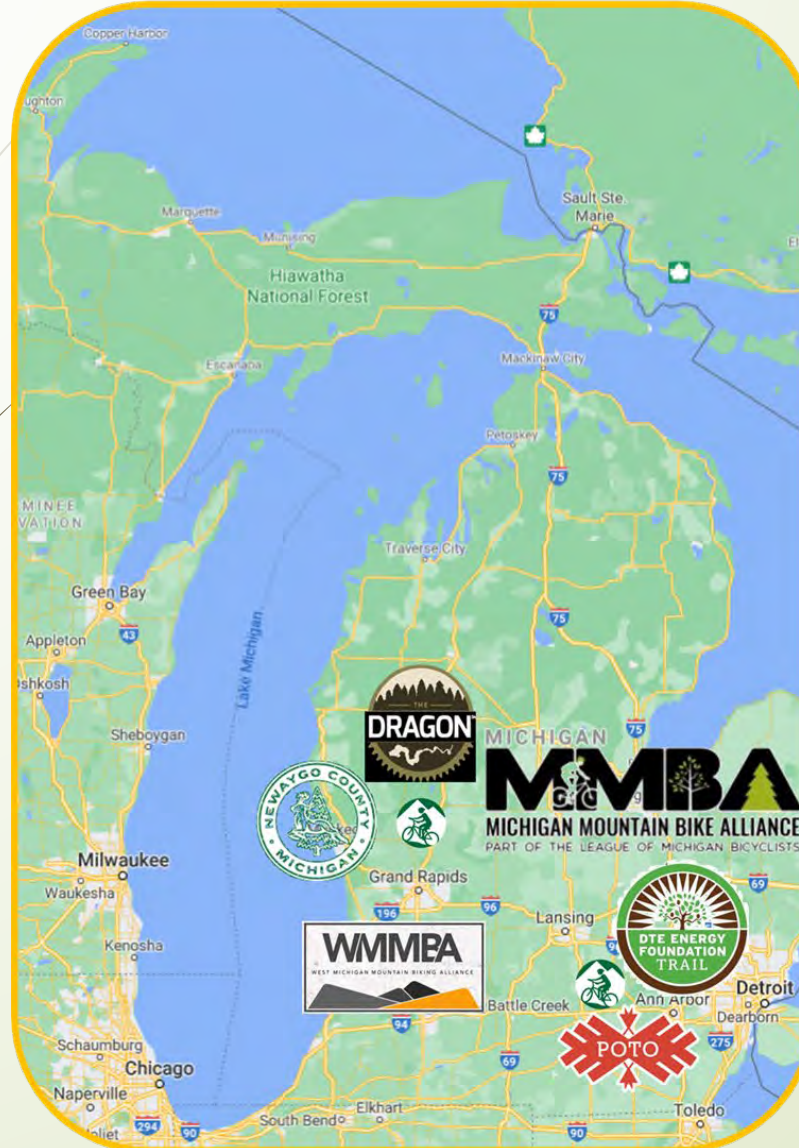
“There's always been that large push in this community to make sure we're preserving & utilizing this amazing landscape we have all around us.”



“But we need some more infrastructure, & we need more places for people to stay.”



USDA NIFA Grant – Switching Gears Contexts





Group Discussion



1. What tools and data are needed to help allocate resources and make informed decisions?
2. How can we thoughtfully examine conflicts?
3. How can we better educate current and new mountain bike riders?
4. How can we increase capacity with limited infrastructure?

In Closing - Contact Us



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MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

4.14 Certain state-owned lands, Chippewa county, entry, camping, snowmobile use, prohibited conduct.

Order 4.14 A person shall not do any of the following upon the described state-owned lands, Chippewa county:

4.27 Certain state-owned lands, Luce county, camping, snowmobiles, prohibited activities.

Order 4.27 (1) A person shall not camp in the parking lot near the mouth of the blind sucker river located in the NW¼ of the NW ¼ of section 4, T49N R11W, Luce county.

5.12 Certain state parks and recreation areas, requirements for use, certain conduct prohibited.

Order 5.12 The following conduct shall apply to use of Michigan SPs and RAs:

A snowmobile, including a historic snowmobile, as those terms are defined in Part 821 of PA 451 of 1994, that exceeds 48 inches between the centers of the spindles shall not operate on any lands open to snowmobile use.



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



DANIEL EICHINGER
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: November 11, 2022

MEMORANDUM TO THE DIRECTOR

Information: Natural Resources Commission

Subject: Department Administrated Lands and Facilities, Certain Conduct Prohibited
Land Use Order of the Director Amendment No. X of 2022

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, authorizes the Director to issue orders to implement land use rules.

Discussion and Background:

The Department of Natural Resources (Department) manages over 13,000 miles of motorized and non-motorized trails and pathways within its statewide trail system. The statewide trail system has been designed to accommodate a variety of public recreation uses and specifies the types of uses allowed on each trail segment. While the Department strives to provide a vast array of trails and pathways to accommodate the various trail users, management of the compatibility upon multi-use trails it not always possible. This proposed Land Use Order of the Director is being submitted to address one such incompatible trail use between equestrian and bicycle users.

During previous Equestrian Trail Subcommittee (ETS) meetings, it was expressed to the Department that user conflict was being observed on seven trails within the upper peninsula, those being Cedar River North, Headquarters Lake and Thunder Valley, and the norther lower peninsula, those being Big Oaks, Pigeon River Equestrian Trails, Shore-to-Shore and Tin Cup Springs. ETS requested the Department close these trails to bicycle use. After internal review of these trails with Department staff the following was determined:

- Cedar River North is recommended to be closed to bicycle use, except for the south loop of the trail which is immediately adjacent to the state forest campground.
- Headquarters Lake would not be recommended to be closed to bicycle use, since all but 0.4 miles is located on state forest roads.
- Thunder Valley is recommended to be closed to bicycle use, since this trail was designed to for equestrian use.
- Big Oaks would not be recommended closed to bicycle use, since all but approximately 0.25 miles of the trail is located on county or state forest roads.
- Pigeon River Equestrian Trails currently has a Land Use Order of the Director [4.34(4)] in place that specifies where equestrian access is authorized and where bicycle access is authorized. The only area of overlap between the users is on state forest roads.
- The Shore-to-Shore trail is currently not a state designated trail and its operation is conducted through an agreement with the Michigan Trail Riders Association. Restrictions on use of this trail would be difficult since a significant amount of the land where the trail is located is on roads or federal or private land. Restrictions could be

November 11, 2022

explored in the future after formal agreements are in place with the federal government and private landowners and the trail is on county or forest roads.

- Tin Cup Springs would be recommended to review possible closure to coincide with a future trail proposal. The trail has moved over the years due to timber cuts and not all areas of the trail have been maintained.

After developing internal Department recommendations to address the trail incompatibility issues, staff reviewed this information with the Equestrian Trail Subcommittee (ETS) on August 10, 2022. ETS supported a motion to approve the wording of the LUOD in support of the efforts of the Department.

Relevant Divisions have contributed to the preparation of this order. This item will appear on the Department's December calendar and may be eligible for approval on January 12, 2023.

Jared Duquette, Chief
Wildlife Division

David Shaw, Chief
Law Enforcement Division

Jeff Stampfly, Chief
Forest Resources Division

Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division

James Dexter, Chief
Fisheries Division

Shannon Lott
Natural Resources Deputy

LAND USE ORDERS OF THE DIRECTOR

Amendment No. X of 2022

By authority conferred on the Director of the Department of Natural Resources by Section 504 of the Natural Resources Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.504, and in accordance with R 299.921 to R 299.933, the Director of the Department of Natural Resources orders the following:

8.6 State-owned lands, conduct prohibited trails.

Order 8.6 A person shall not ride a bicycle or electric bicycle, as may be allowed pursuant to MCL 324.72105, on the trails not located upon a roadway of the following state-owned lands:

(1) Upper Peninsula.

(a) Cedar River North, except for the south loop adjacent to the state forest campground.

(b) Thunder Valley

This order shall be posted on or after the XXX day of XXX 2022.

Issued on this XXX day of XXX 2022.

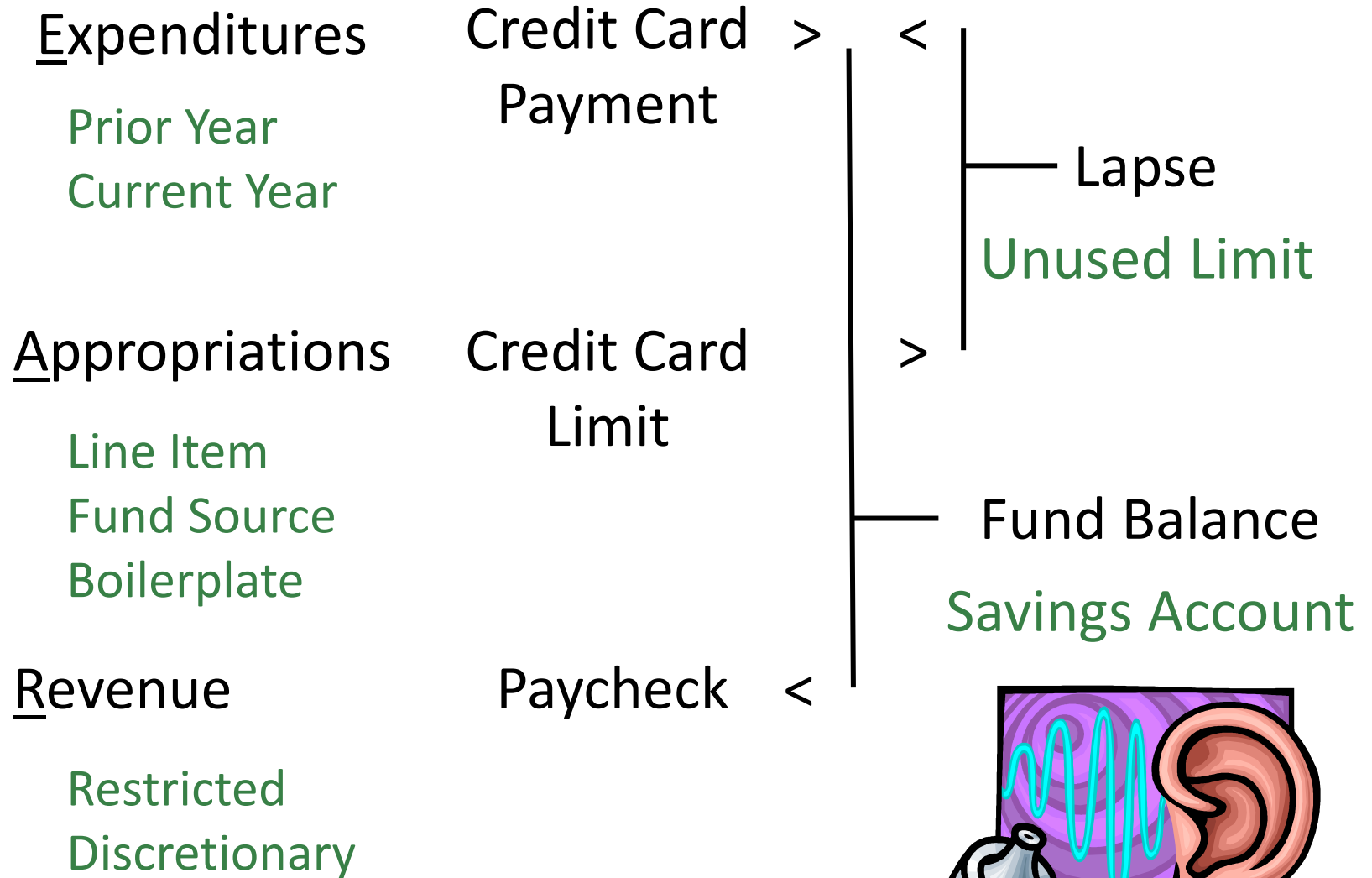
Daniel Eichinger
Director



Michigan Trails Advisory Council Budget Overview

Michael Desnoyer, Parks and Recreation
September 24, 2024







2024 Budget Development Process

2024 Budget Development Process Began

2022		
January	February	March
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December

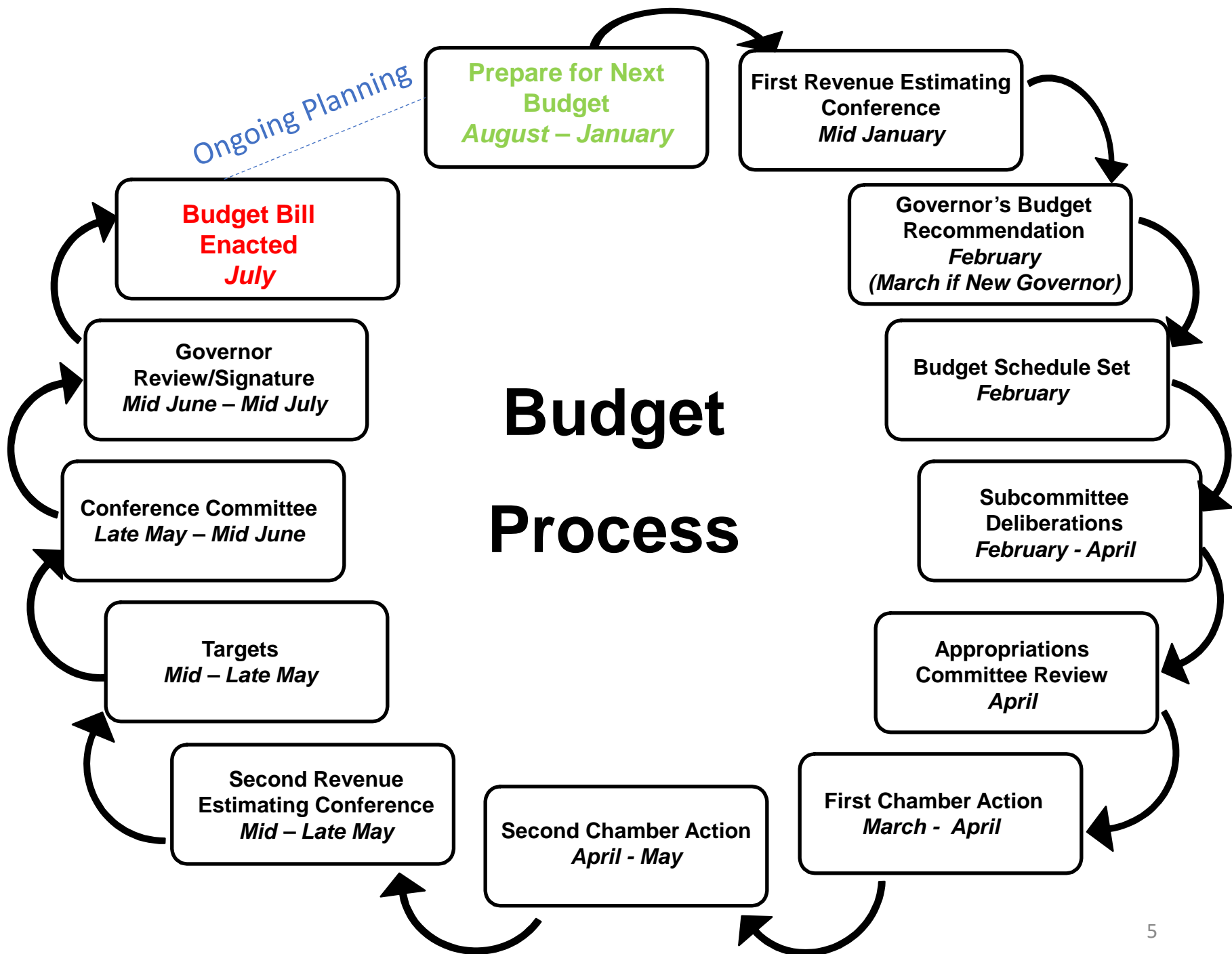
2024 Budget Began

2023		
January	February	March
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December



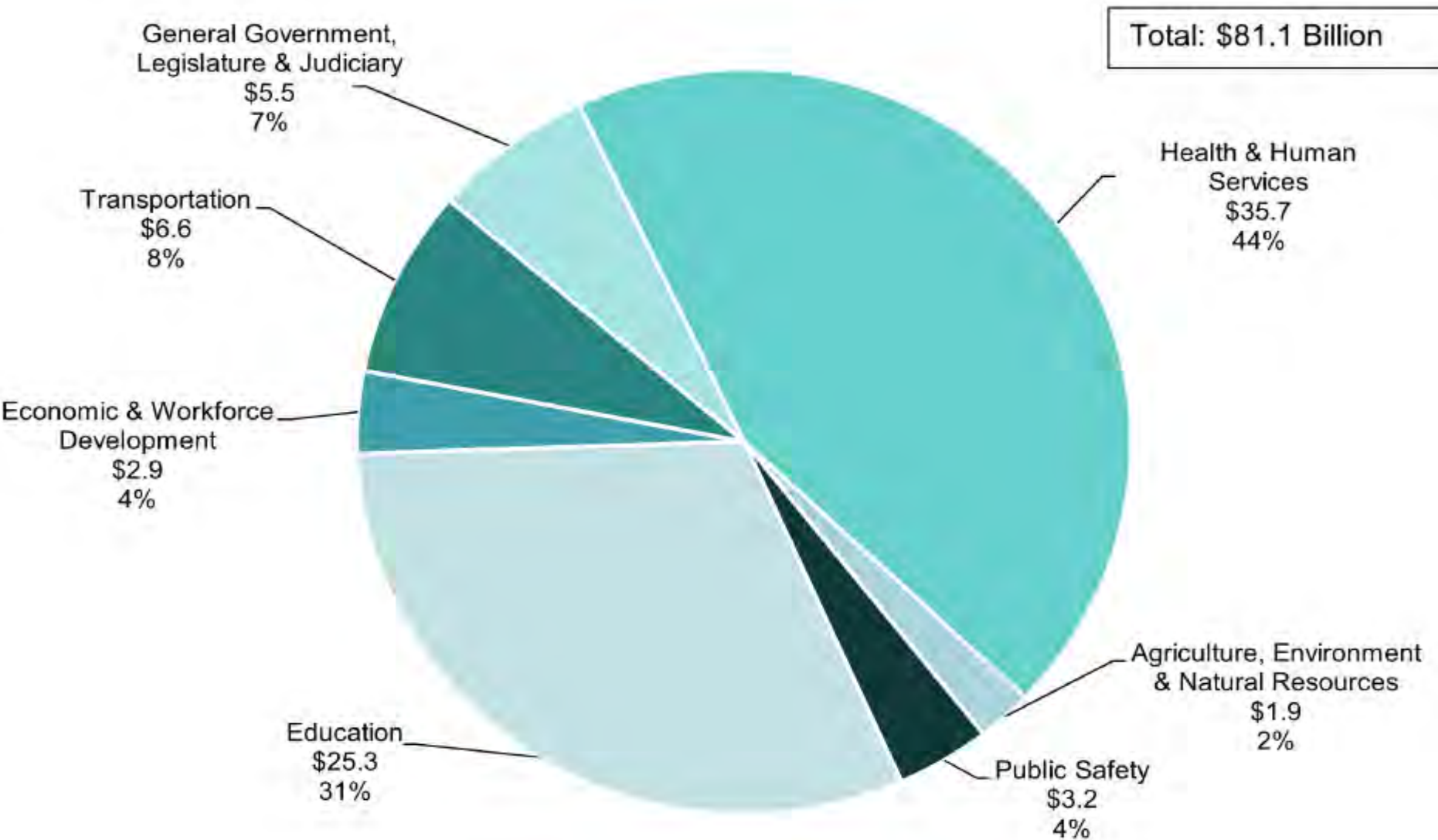
Budget Process

- Executive Budget Development
 - Governor's Office, State Budget Office, and Department Coordination
 - August – February
- Identify General Fund Reduction Options (When Required)
- Develop Investment Proposals
 - What are the **outcomes** of the investment?
 - How will the **public benefit**?
 - How much **money** is needed?
 - Who will **pay**?





FY 2024 State of Michigan Total Budget



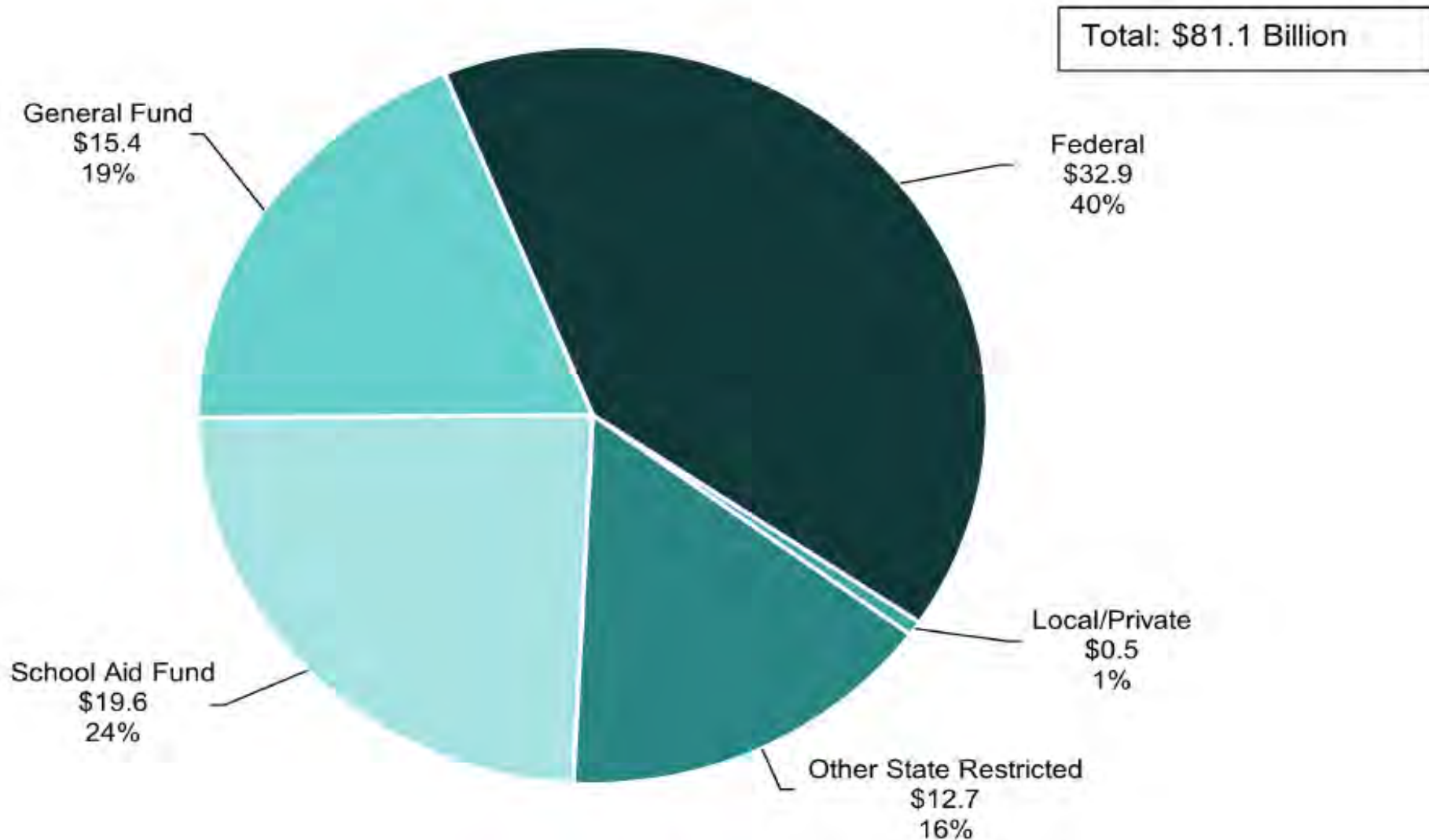


Funding Sources

- Discretionary
 - General Fund/General Purpose (GF/GP)
- Restricted
 - Federal Funds
 - State Funds
 - Private Funds
 - Interdepartmental Grants

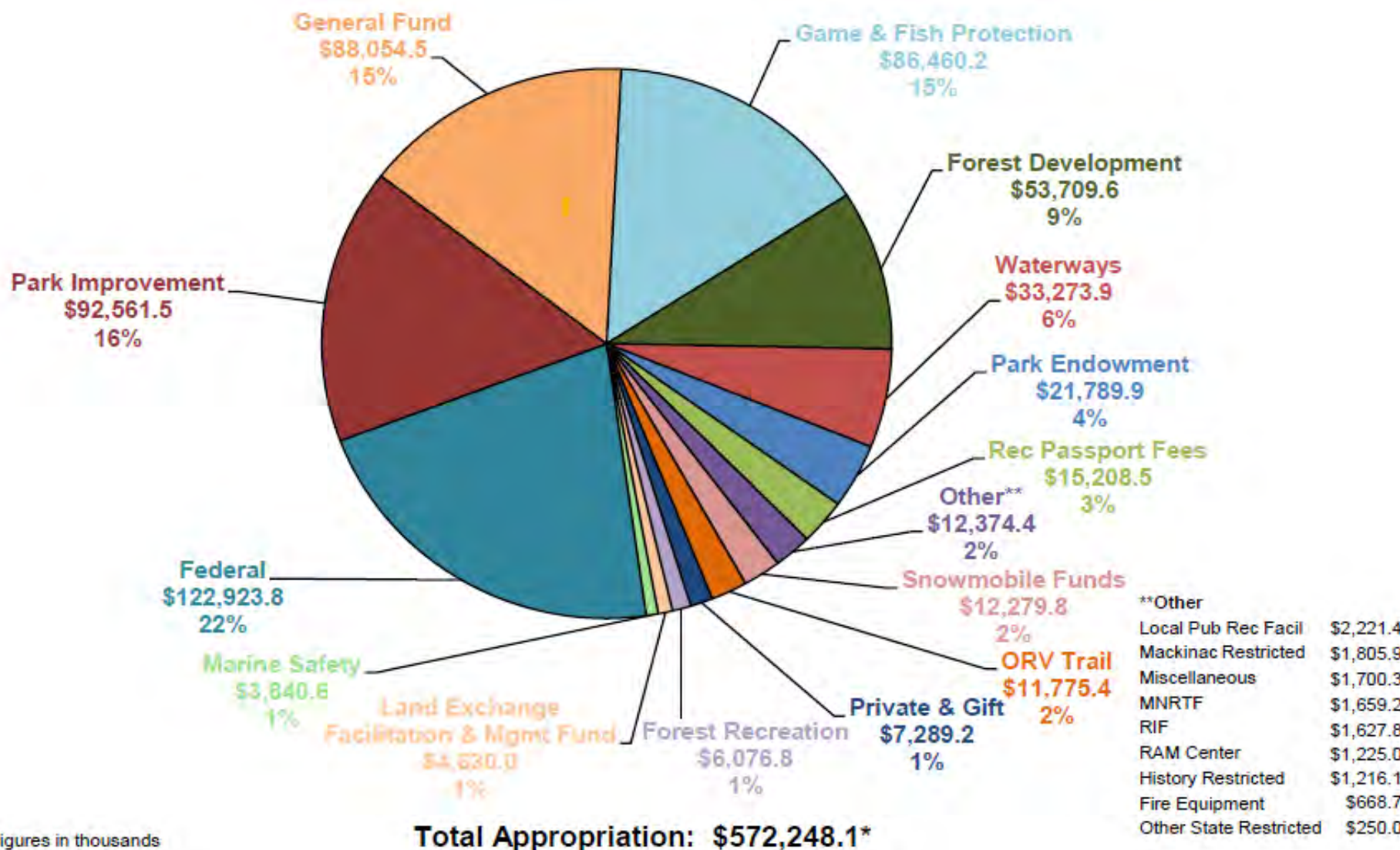


FY 2024 State of Michigan Total Budget by Fund Source





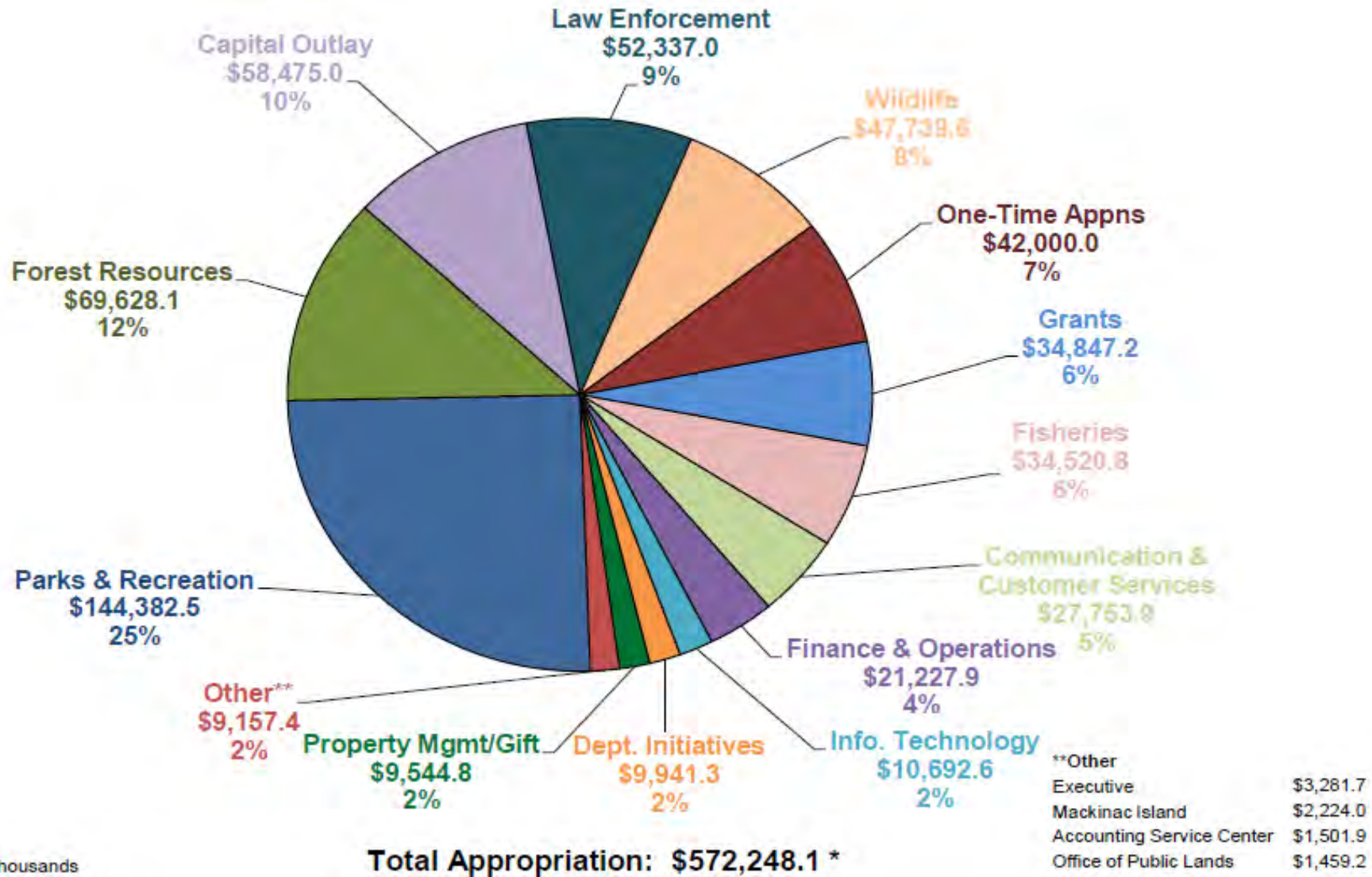
FY 2024 DNR Budget Funding Sources



*Note: Figures in thousands



FY 2024 DNR Budget Appropriation Categories



Note: Figures in thousands

Parks & Recreation Division FY 2024 Operating Appropriations

Total = \$144,382.5

\$ in Thousands

State Parks*

Park Improvement Fund – 84%

- Camping
- Recreational Passport
- Use Permits/Others

Park Endowment Fund – 11%

- Gas/Oil/Mineral Royalties
- Investment Earnings

General Fund – 3%

- Belle Isle Park
- Western Upper Peninsula

Others – 2%

State Forest Recreation & Trails Funding

Forest Recreation – 53%

- Camping Fees
- Recreational Passport

Snowmobile Trail Improvement – 18%

- Trail Stickers
- Permits
- Gas Tax

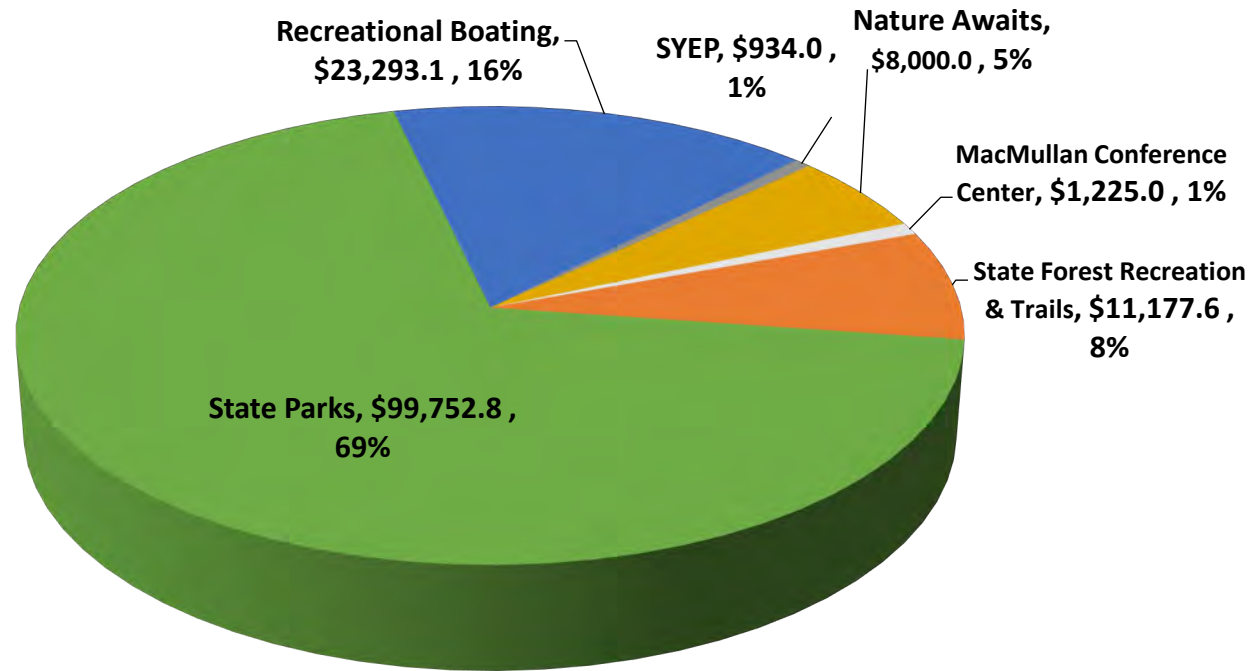
Off-Road Vehicle Trail Improvement – 17%

- Trail Stickers
- Permits

General Fund (used for non-motorized) – 7%

Recreation Improvement – 5%

- Gas Tax



Recreational Boating

Waterways – 93%

- Watercraft Registration
- Gas Tax
- User Fees (harbor reservations, boating access sites)

Federal – 7%

**Note: \$2.09 million of State Parks funding is allocated to Mackinac State Historic Parks*

Parks & Recreation Division

FY 2024 Capital Outlay, Grant, & One-Time Appropriations

Total = \$54,495.0

\$ in Thousands

State Forest Recreation & Trails

Snowmobile Trail Improvement – 38%

- Trail Stickers
- Permits
- Gas Tax

Off-Road Vehicle Trail Improvement – 30%

- Trail Stickers
- Permits

Federal National Recreation Trails – 19%

Recreation Improvement – 4%

- Gas Tax

Snowmobile Trail Easement – 3%

- Registrations Fees

General Fund – 3%

- Water Trails
- Non-motorized Trail Grants

Others– 3%

State Parks

Recreation Passport Fees – 67%

Park Endowment – 21%

- Gas/Oil/Mineral Royalties
- Investment Earnings

General Fund – 12%

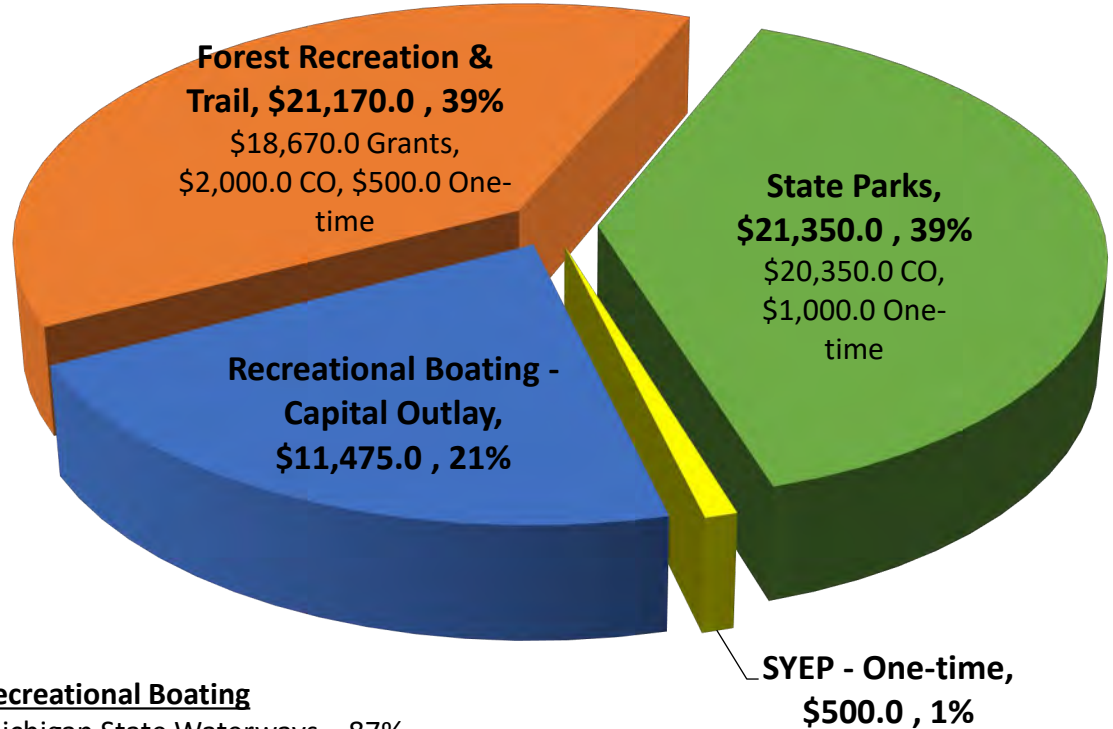
- Belle Isle Park - \$1,250,000
- Mackinac State Historic Parks - \$250,000
- Great Lakes Splash Pad - \$1,000,000

Recreational Boating

Michigan State Waterways – 87%

- Watercraft Registration
- Gas Tax
- User Fees (harbor reservations, boating access sites)

Federal – 13%





Trails Section Operating Budget

Source	Amount
Park Improvement Fund	\$255,400
General Fund - Forest Recreation	\$409,200
Forest Recreation Fund	\$ 35,200
Recreation Improvement Fund	\$ 90,500
ORV Trail Improvement Fund	\$855,500
Snowmobile Trail Improvement Fund	<u>\$806,700</u>
Total	\$2,452,500



Trails Section Operating Budget

Category	Amount
Payroll	\$1,765,700
Travel	\$ 83,800
Contractual Services	\$ 534,300
Equipment	\$ 15,000
Supplies and Material	\$ 50,000
Other Miscellaneous	<u>\$ 3,700</u>
Total	\$2,452,500



Questions?

Contact Information

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517-242-2194

TRAILS

Michigan



Patty Janes, Ph.D.
janesp@gvsu.edu



Intro

TODAY

- ▶▶ OVERVIEW TRAILS ONLY
- ▶▶ OVERVIEW DAY USE
- ▶▶ COLLECTING DATA
- ▶▶ TRAIL STORY
- ▶▶ TRAIL ACTION - SPLIT



The Michigan Department of Natural Resources would like to understand how trail visitors would define a QUALITY trail experience. Your insight will help us understand your needs before, during and after your trail visit so we can better serve you in the future.

1. Please select all of the ways you use trails in Michigan:

- ☐ Bike (hybrid)
- ☐ Bike (mountain)
- ☐ Bike (road)
- ☐ Hiking/walk/run
- ☐ Horse
- ☐ ORV/ATV
- ☐ Skateboard/longboard

TWO

Studies

▶▶ **TRAIL ONLY**
N = 5,427

▶▶ **DAY USE**
N = 11,498




Tell us about your day visit at a Michigan state park!

Last visit

1. When did you last visit a day-use area (areas open to the public during the day, not for camping) at a Michigan state park?


- ☐ In the past 12 months
- ☐ More than 12 months ago
- ☐ I don't remember

 Michigan Department of Natural Resources ✓
November 29, 2023 · 🌐

People use Michigan state parks for many reasons, and we would love to hear about your visit through a quick day-use visit survey.

Take the survey at <https://www.research.net/r/niceday>

Information received through this survey will help build better experiences for state park visitors across the state.



Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Welcome to the official Michigan Department of Natural Resources Facebook page!

DAY USE

Only

DAY USE N = 11,498

- ▶▶ Closed ended
- ▶▶ 2023/2024
- ▶▶ Non probability “snowball”
- ▶▶ Social media
- ▶▶ Issues...
 1. Not all day users
 2. Time at park - 12 hours or less
 3. Distance from home - 100 miles or less
 4. -6,848

FINDINGS

N = 4,782

56

18-94

80

PAST 12 MONTHS

100

PARKS
M=3.7 HRS

99

RETURNEES

72

FALL

71

>10

DAY USE *Only*

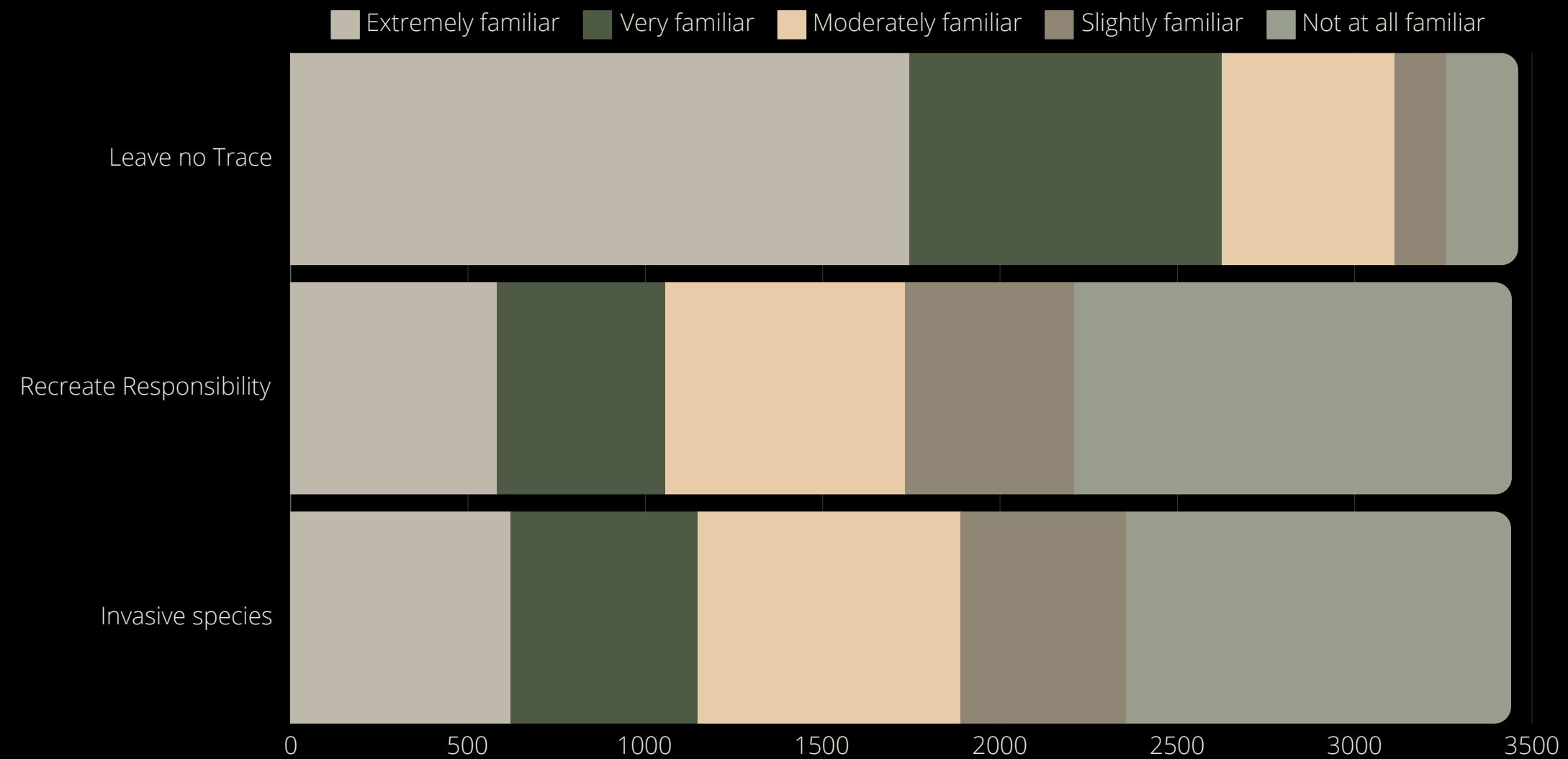
A photograph of three young people riding horses on a dirt trail. They are wearing cowboy hats and plaid shirts. The background shows trees and a fence. A large black circle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the number 688 in a light gray font.

688

TRAIL USERS

FINDINGS

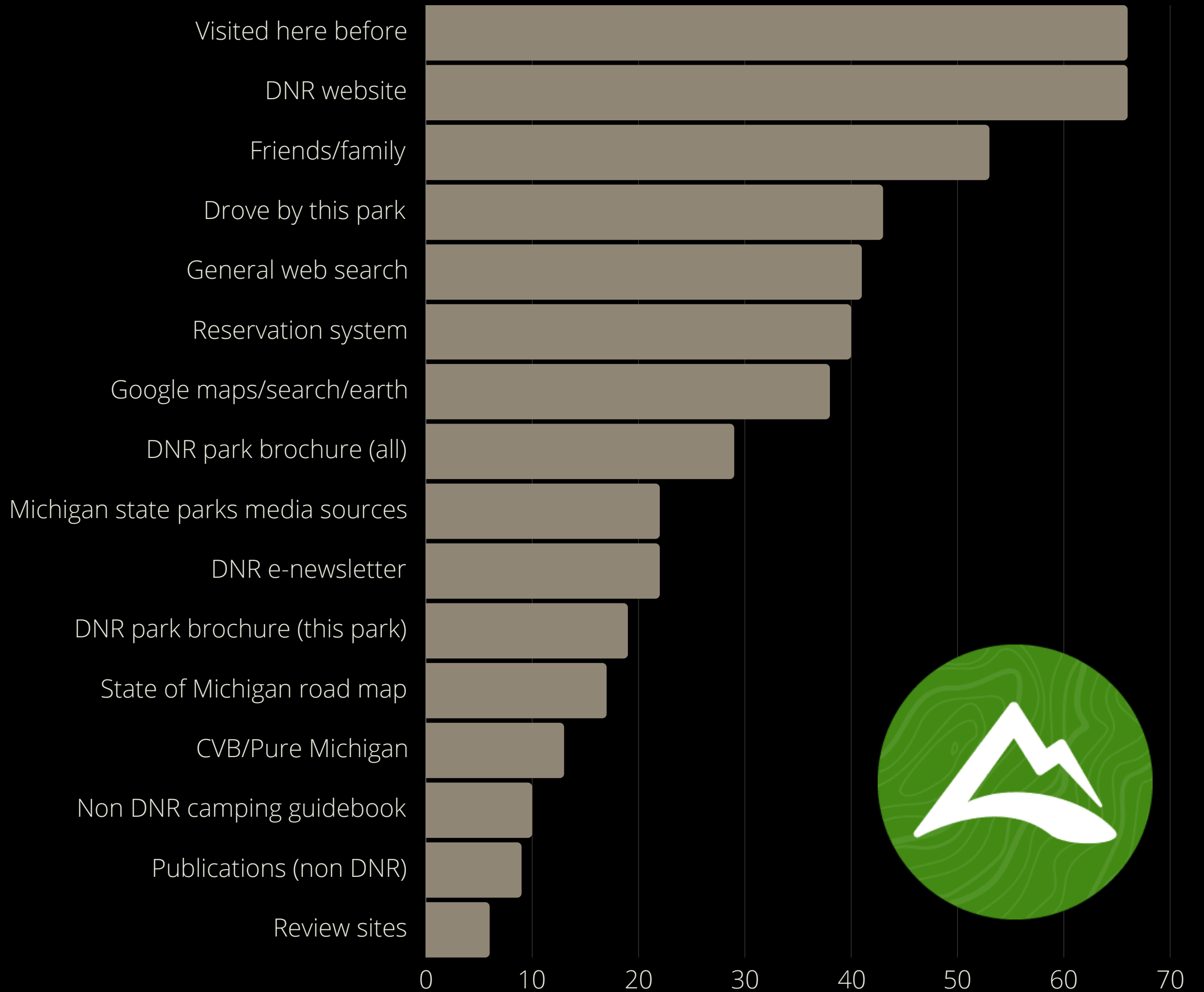
N = 4,782



DAY USE *fly*

DAY USE *Only* N = 4,782

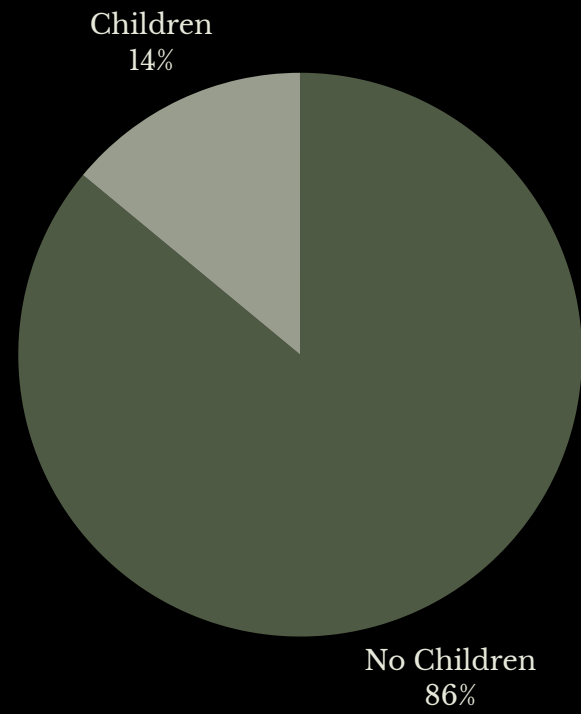
FINDINGS



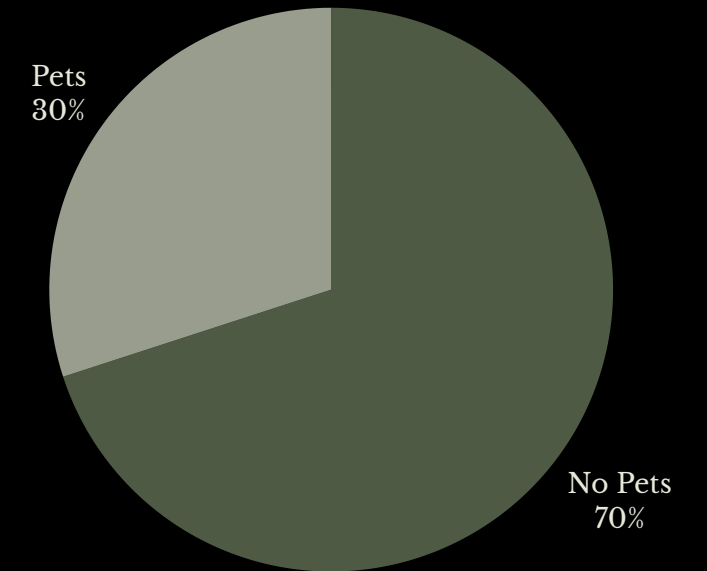
DAY USE *Only* N = 4,782

FINDINGS

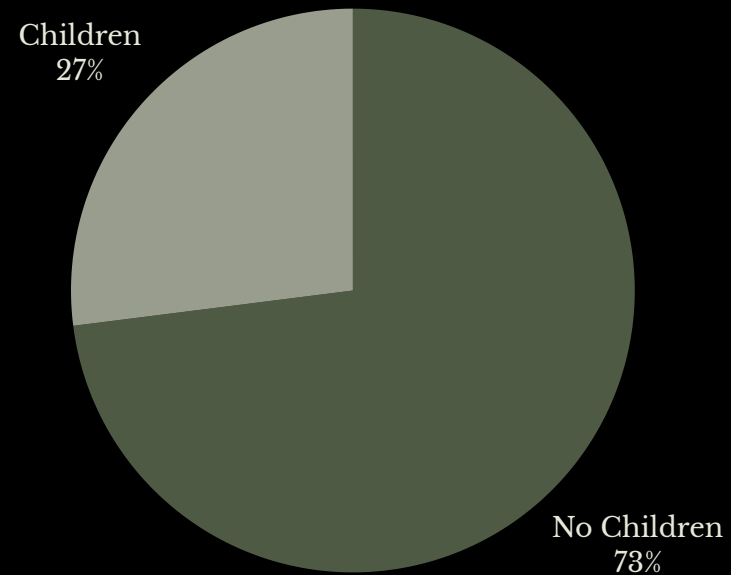
CHILDREN 5 AND UNDER



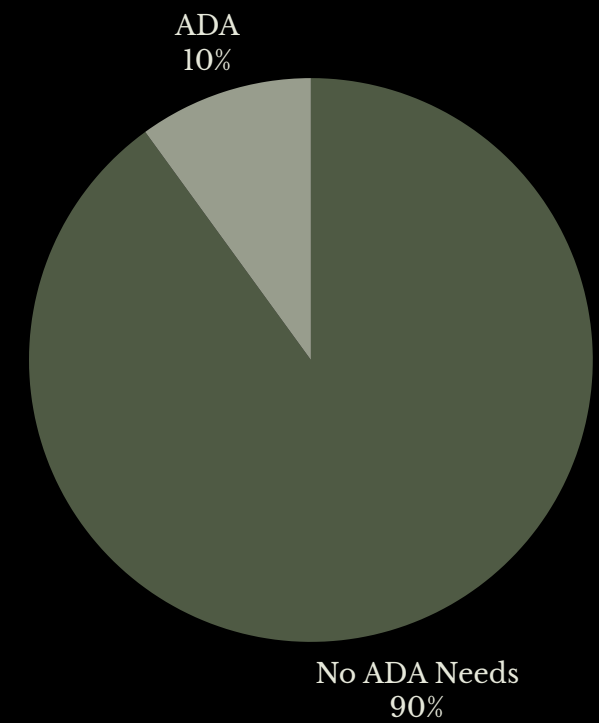
PETS



CHILDREN 6 - 18

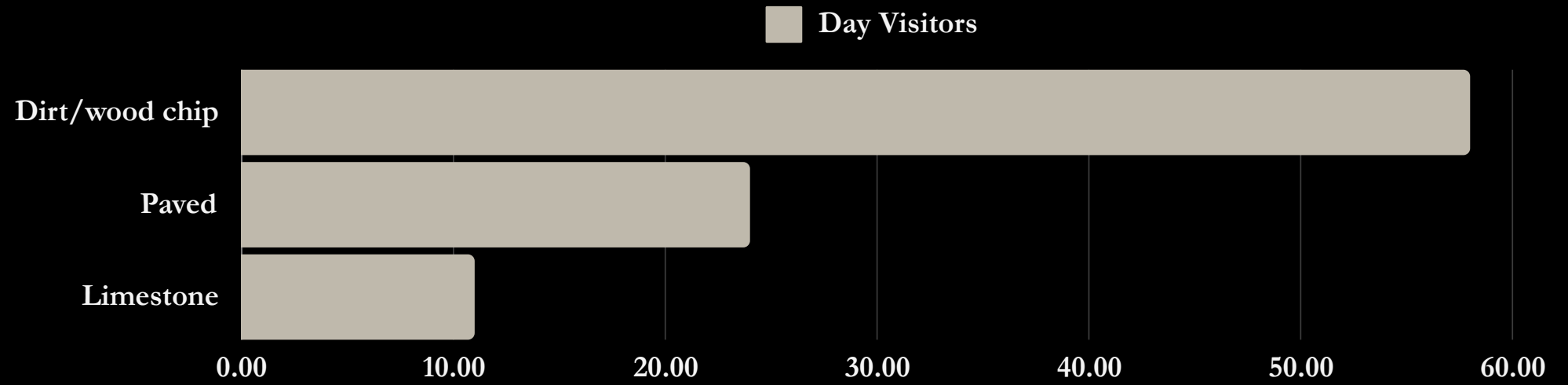
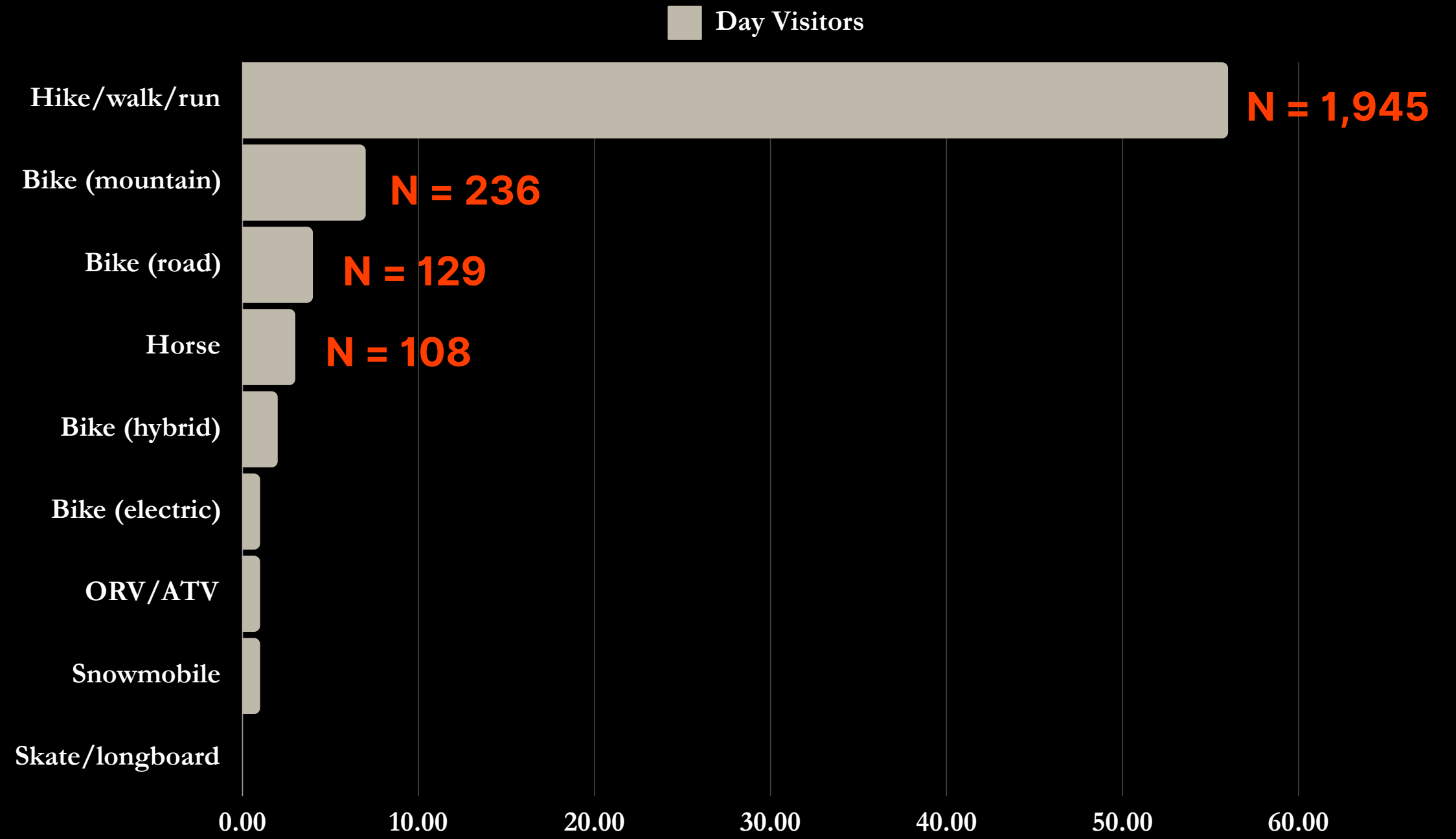


ADA



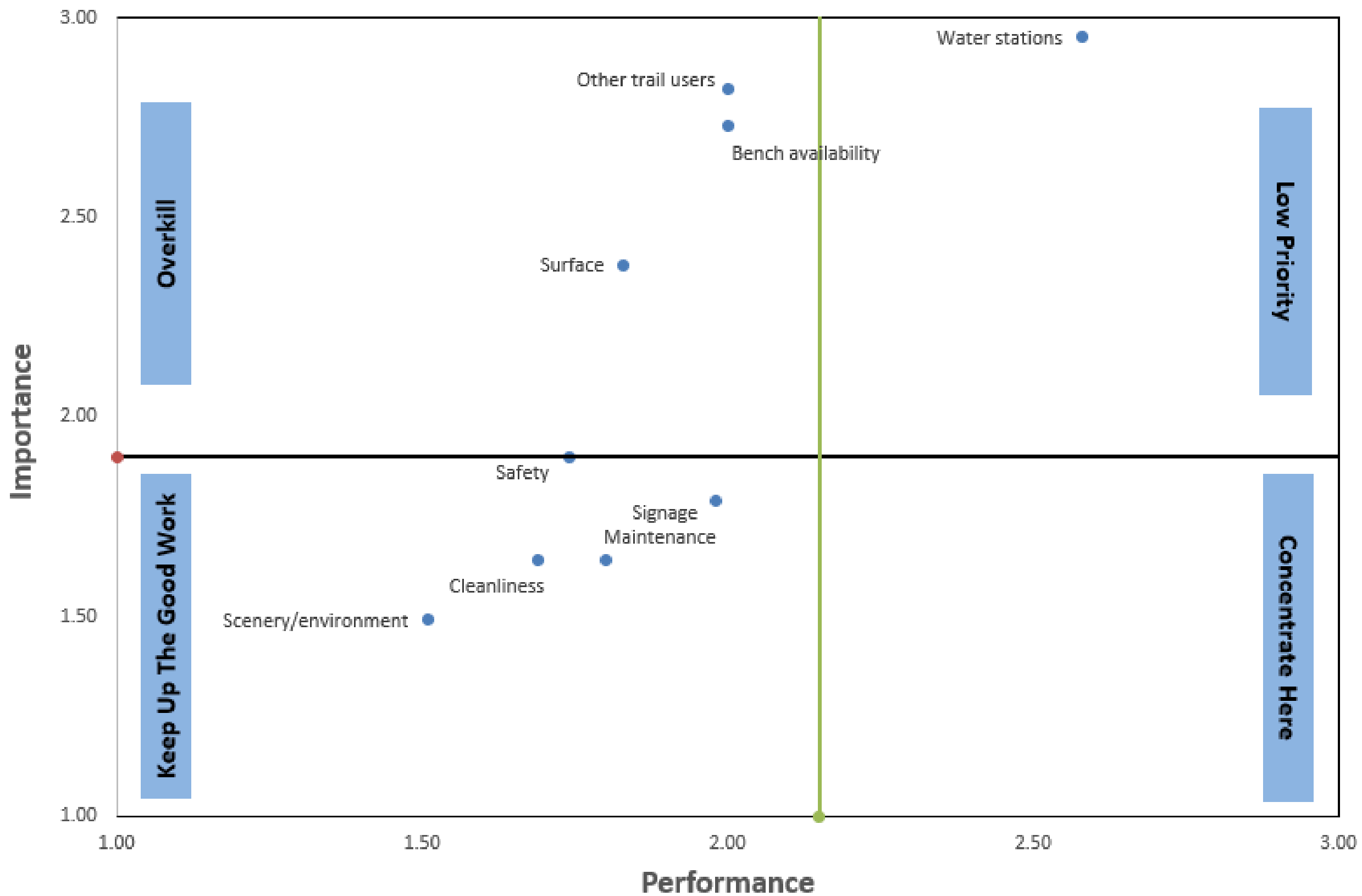
DAY USE *Only* **N = 4,782**


FINDBINGS



DAY USER 2023/2024 TRAILS Importance Performance Analysis IPA

n = 2,317



 Michigan Department of Natural Resources ✓
June 27 · 🌐

We want to know how YOU use and enjoy the more than 13,400 miles of state-designated trails in Michigan. If you've ever been out on a state trail, please take some time and fill out our survey at:
<https://midnr.info/TrailsExperienceSurvey>

We want to make trail experiences the best they can be, so let us know about your experiences and interests. Thank you and pass along to other folks who hike, walk, run, ride, ski or paddle throughout Michigan.



TRAILS

Only

TRAIL ONLY

N = 5,427

- ▶▶ Open ended
- ▶▶ May - August 2024
- ▶▶ Non probability "snowball"
- ▶▶ Social media, email blasts, digest article, and...

Tim Novak (He/Him/His)
State Trails Coordinator
Department of Natural Resources
Parks & Recreation Division
(517) 388-8347
<https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/places/state-trails>

[TAKE THE DNR 2024 TRAILS EXPERIENCE SURVEY!](https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/places/state-trails)



TRAILS *Only* FINDINGS

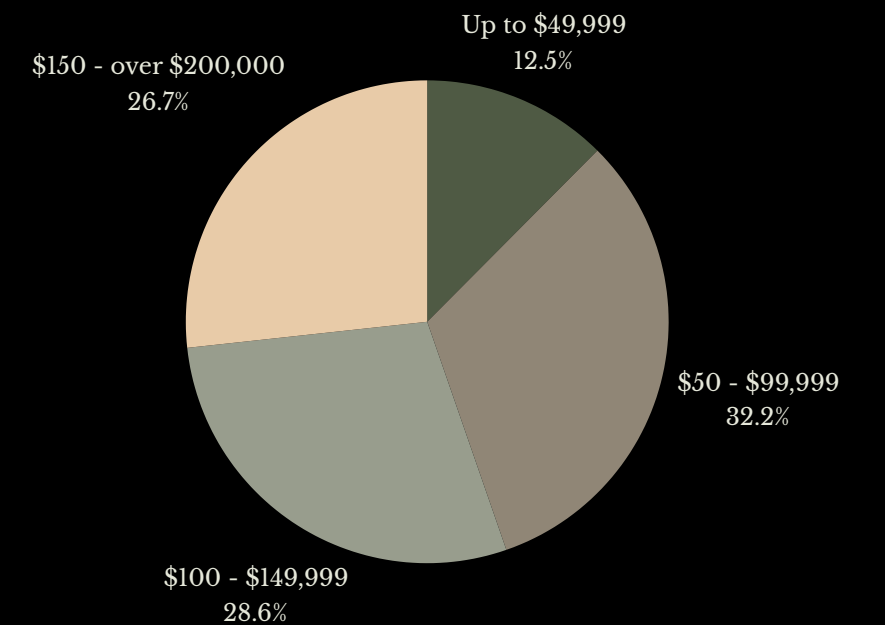
N = 5,427



18 - 89
-10



WHITE
CAUCASIAN



55% \$100K+

2. Based on how you **most use trails** (answer to the previous question), please complete the following sentences to define what you feel would be a quality trail experience:

Information about the trail would be found where?

Amenities at the trailhead include what?

Your surroundings look like what?

On the trail you would have access to what?

When you finish your trail experience, you like to what?

3. Still based on the type of trail you use most, in your own words how would you define a quality trail experience?

4. What information do you need to know about a trail before arrival?

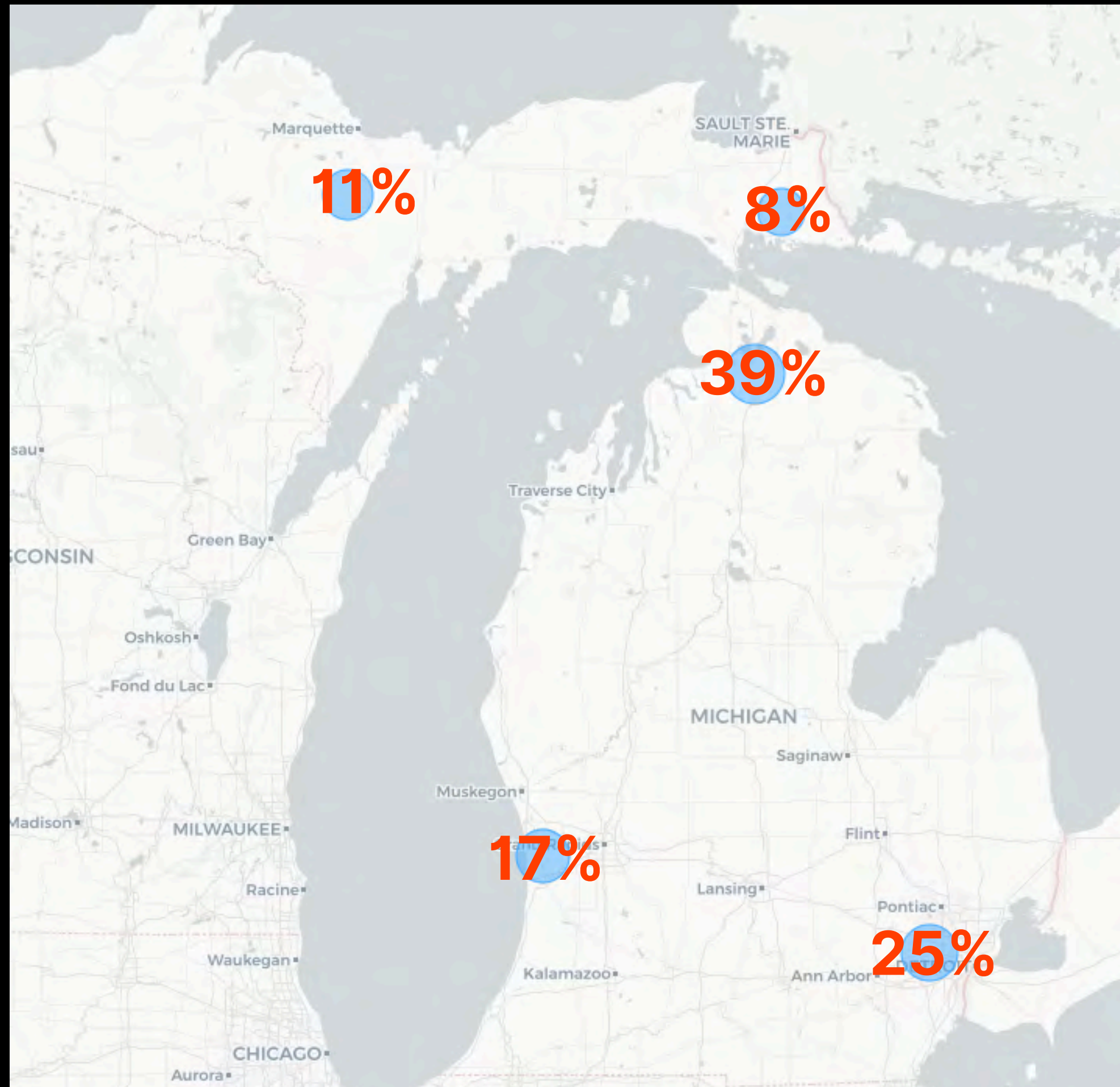
5. What do you use for trail maps?

6. When visiting trails, what (if any) assistive devices do you use to enjoy the experience (this could include track chairs, screen readers, translation services, etc.)?

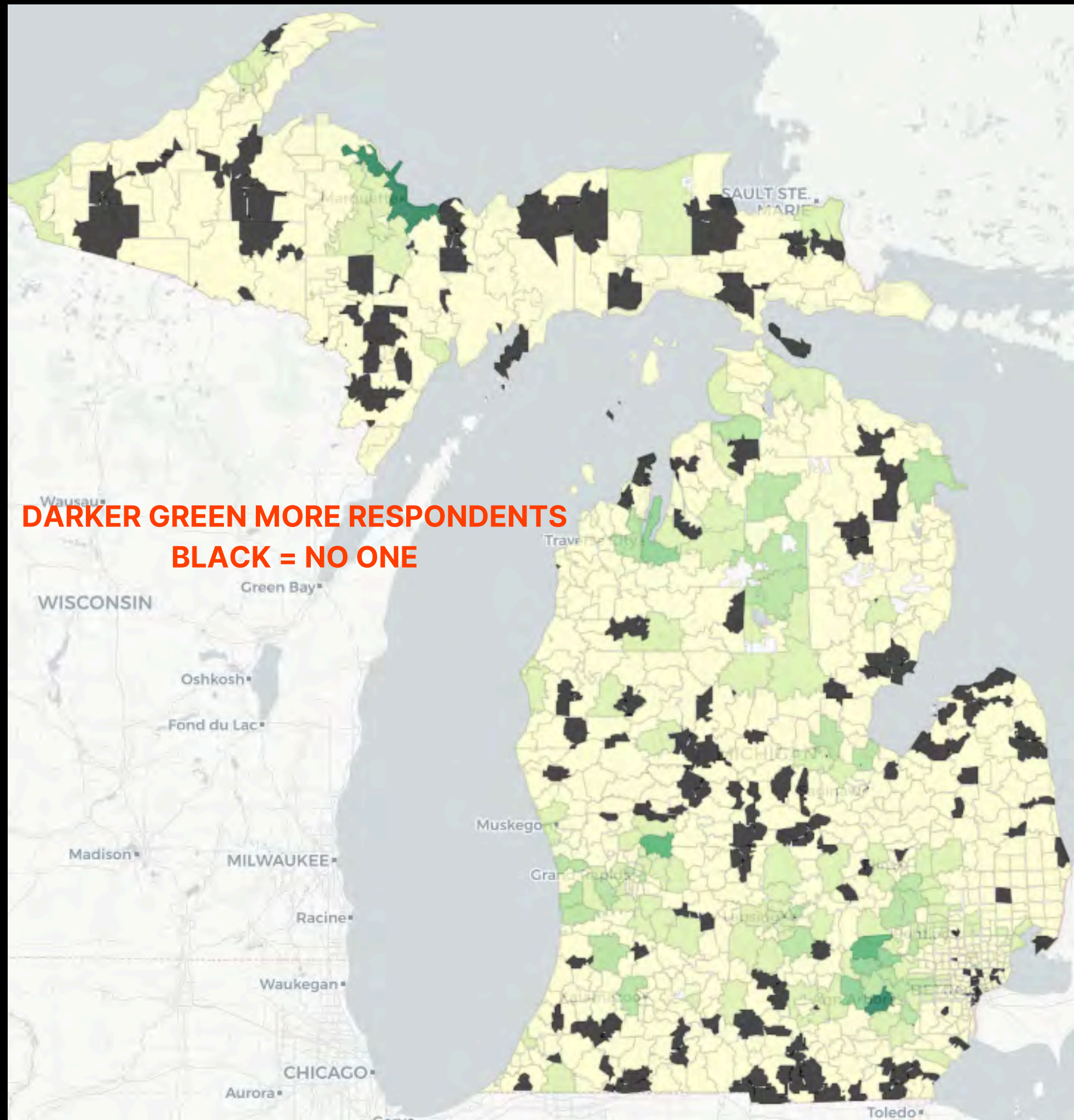
7. Please share any other thoughts you would want us to know about your feelings and opinions on trails in Michigan.

8. What is your age? (please share in a whole number - e.g. 49)

9. What is the zip or postal code for your primary home?

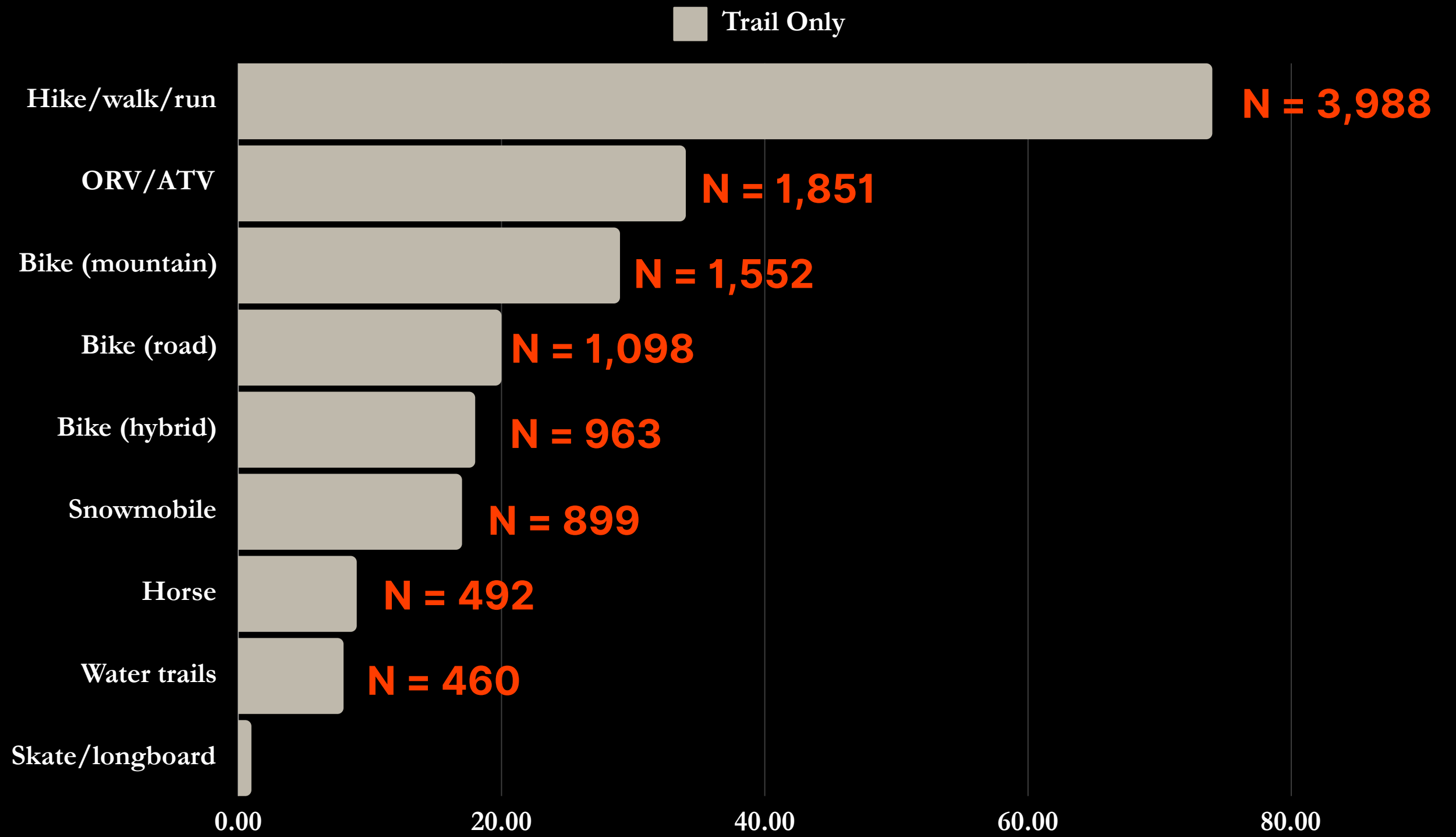


DARKER GREEN MORE RESPONDENTS
BLACK = NO ONE



DAY USE *Only* **N = 4,782**

FINDBINGS





TRAILS *Only* **OPEN ENDED**

N = 5,427

**TRAIL INFO WHERE
AMENITIES AT THE TRAILHEAD**

SURROUNDINGS DESIRED

ACCESS TO WHAT ON TRAIL

AFTER TRAIL USE

DEFINE A QUALITY TRAIL EXPERIENCE

TRAIL INFO DESIRED BEFORE

INFO FOR TRAIL MAPS

MTAC 3Q 2024 Equestrian Report

Equestrians are excited about the Michigan Shoreline Horseback Riding Season at Silver Lake State Park. With a capacity of 125 horses per day, almost all days of the first two weeks and most weekends are sold out. Over 2300 registrations have already been sold for the 2024 season indicating continued strong interest. We appreciate these opportunities. Due to possible cold winds/ice/sleet/snow, people hesitate to travel with horses in tow and to make reservations after November 15. If there are good weather conditions in the later part of November, more reservations are expected.



Photo credit: Lauren DeBoer Photography

Horseback riding is a beautiful way to connect with nature. Studies show when we are connected to nature, we feel better for many reasons. The sights, sounds, and smells are therapeutic for our physical and mental health. One of the most important reasons is because we are natural creatures, and our nervous systems runs best when we are connected to nature. Check out the many studies on benefits of nature listed in the Nature Awaits program. It would be wonderful if information about horses could be included in the **Nature Awaits program**. This would help teach all fourth graders and their families more about horses and help keep horseback riders safer on the trails.

<https://outdoorsallianceforkids.org/to-all-the-fourth-graders-in-michigan-nature-awaits/>

Profound benefits of horses for people:

According to Heart Math, studies show horses can hear/feel our heartbeats from at least four feet away. This helps explain why horses can read our emotions so well. This reminds us to remain calm around horses so we can help them stay calm.

The horse's heart is five times bigger than that of a human, so their heart field is larger and stronger compared to ours.

Horses also have a coherent heartbeat pattern which helps them recover quickly from stressful situations.

These factors help our hearts to beat a coherent heartbeat pattern also. When we have coherence our nervous system and other systems work harmoniously. This provides the ability to think clearly, to learn, to remember, to reason, and to make right decisions are significantly increased.

This may explain why so many people say, "I just feel so good when I'm around a horse."



<https://www.reclaimconnection.ca/post/what-is-heartmath-and-what-s-it-got-to-do-with-horses>

<https://coachingconcaballosnp.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/conexi%C3%B3n-crystal.jpg>

Fear of horses?

If you have hesitations to be around horses that is very normal. Many people have not had many opportunities to be around horses. Having a fear of horses means you are intelligent. You have good self-preservation skills and realize you need more information before you can feel confident around horses. Also, you respect the power, size, and strength of horses. When you are provided with information and experience safe encounters, you can have tools to understand horses and drive out fear.

Some basic horse info:

Horses, as prey animals, eat grass and drink water. Horses know we are predators. When we handle horses calmly and properly, they can feel safe and develop trust. Horses are honored to partner with us and are more confident when they have trust in their handler.

With eyes on the sides of their head, horses are always looking for danger and predators. We can help reassure them by remaining calm and using a calm voice around them.

Because horses are prey animals, with “flight” survival instincts, it’s important to stop, speak, and ask to pass people with horses on trails.

Horses will move away from pressure. So, if you want a horse to go to right, you tap them on their left side, and they will move to the right. In the rare case a horse steps on you, you can move them off your foot by pushing them on their side and they will move away.

The best way to handle a horse is to treat them how you would like to be treated, with respect.

Recent trail conflict causing injuries:

CORRALES, N.M. — Certain road signs are up in Corrales for a reason – there’s a good chance you could come across a horse in your daily commute.

When you do, there’s a certain way you should act to keep everyone safe.

Mike Raupp knows horses. He’s the co-founder of Loving Thunder in Corrales, where he has trained horses for decades. He works with his wife, Twuana, providing horse therapy for people with mental and physical challenges.

A leisurely ride off their Corrales property is pretty normal. But last week, when they were riding in a group of six just blocks from Loving Thunder, Raupp said their ride was anything but normal.

“All I heard was a whirring, ‘woo woo woo,’ and all of a sudden, Twuana’s horse tucked his butt in,” said Raupp.

Raupp says three of the six horses got spooked as a biker whizzed past. His wife's horse was spooked the worst.

"She went off on the right. He went down on his left. My horse went down, and I jumped off, and I went immediately to my wife, and she was face first in the dirt. The only thing that saved her nose and her face was wearing her helmet," Raupp said.

Nancy Freshour was at the back of the pack on her horse, Aspen.

"He went by us before I could yell 'Slow down!' He had passed six horses," said Freshour.

That's too fast, Freshour said.

"He broke every rule in the books. And then when he saw what had happened, he kept on trucking," Freshour said.

Twuana was in the dirt with at least five broken ribs.

"She can barely walk. She can't use her right hand very well. She can't even sign her own name," said Raupp. "She's going to be down for months and months and at \$25,000 right now, just for the hospital and all that, is beyond imagination."

Raupp says you should follow three simple steps when you see someone riding a horse:

- Stop
- Wait for a signal from the rider
- Move forward slowly

"You do not blow the doors off of somebody or blow the stirrups off of us and pass us like that, and hurt someone, a family member and almost kill them," said Raupp. "This person needs to come forward and admit what you did."

According to the chief of Corrales police, traffic laws do apply to bicyclists. That suspect could face reckless driving charges. It's a misdemeanor with possible penalties of up to a \$5,000 fine and 90 days in jail. https://www.kob.com/news/top-news/horse-riding-incident-with-bike-ignites-reminders-about-trail-etiquette/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR1vT2hBTexnOu9Yxc9AJrn__VB-T6_uJrInsP_RVUNHIV5xM4QXc9XTQ_aem_mpmLe5Dk-L0Vr9gM57kXeA

The Michigan Horse Trails Association has created an Incident Report Form to document incidents, help bring awareness of our risks, and to help improve recreation for everyone.

8/28/24, 8:59 PM **Michigan Horse Trails Association - Trail/Campground Incident Report Form**

16 responses

Pontiac Lake Rec - Dirt bikes on horse trail west side Pontiac Lake

Ortonville Rec - Evidence of substantial use of portions of the eq trail system by atvs/motorcycles

Bass River - Family (mom dad child) of bikers peddled past our 2 horses very fast, when we saw that they were not going to slow down, we got off the trail. The second time they passed, I said "just to let you know for next time, bikes are supposed to yield to horses. Not all horses are as calm as ours." We both smiled and wished each other a nice day. Then as the mom peddled away, she yelled back, "why don't you clean up your horse shit!" I said nothing.

White River - 2 separate incidents with a Side by side, they didn't know the rules approaching equestrians. I had to explain to them to slow to a stop and turn off the ignition.

Bass River - Child on bike had cut down some blossoming branches and were carrying them while peddling. Me and 3 other equestrians were standing just outside the equestrian staging area when she snuck up behind us. All horses spooked and were scared. She had no clue that it was her that was scaring the horses and kept peddling toward us. Fortunately, we all stayed on our horses.

Scheck's - Golf cart in camp

Scheck's - non-equestrian campers had ORV/ATV's in campground and using them.

Sleepy Hollow - Passed from behind by four bikes on horse trail and again in staging area, same group of bikes were on hike / bike trails and parts of horse trail in more than one area. The Two/ fat tires bikers were not peddling and two were regular bikes.

Waterloo - A man jogging on the switchback ran his shoulder (body checked) two of our horses off the trail while we are standing at the bottom. I had a timid rider on trail and we were debating on cutting the ride short and heading back or continuing on. Jogger had enough time to see us and decide on a different path. We encountered him on the top of the stitch back first and were in decent towards the bottom when he didn't move off to get up the trail. He continued and ran through our horses as we were heading down. Second

encounter was at the bottom where we had two riders who were rammed into to get us off the trail.

Bass River - I had started down the equestrian trail that goes south out of the parking lot. There is a bike trail that crosses shortly there after which had a large shrub blocking visibility on the on the east corner of the two trails crossing. I had no way to see the bike coming behind the shrub and because he never slowed up for the trail crossing, he never saw me approaching on the equestrian trail. He came out of the blind corner so fast and so close in front of me that my horse spooked badly, and I was dumped. I fortunately only sustained some extremely bad bruising. The really disappointing part was the bicyclist did not even stop to ask if I was injured or needed help. He just continued down the trail. I was not aware previously that there was such a thing as an incident report that could be filed so I never contacted DNR or anyone regarding this. It just recently came to my attention when I brought this up in a Facebook group in response to a different posting that these reports should be filed.

Hungerford - Met a jeep on trail 17. About halfway from trail 18. Asked jeep to stop so we could pass. They swore at us and sped by. It had a lit over lights. Blue and bright lights on at us. Then gunned it and backed off on muffler three times. Its narrow through there and not much room to get off the trail, also muddy. We got off the trail and then they passed and swore. F u. At us. Dangerous to our horses! We were unaware that they could be on that trail. Tracked them to where they entered on trail 19. And exited on 17 to the main road.

Waterloo - Runner came running up behind us. Didn't say anything scared the hell out of my horse. Runner was told to announce the self's coming up on horses. Run Fit race 8-11-24

Waterloo - These people were DELIGHTFUL. They asked to pass. They were fun. I liked seeing them and their cheering families. We met probably 45 runners. Everyone asked to pass or we asked to pass. All were so polite. I liked them and sharing the trail with them. Run Fit Race 8-11-24

Scheck's - Camped at Scheck's Trail camp for 2 weeks. Every weekend the watering hole at the river was completely clogged with kayakers and people on tubes. Many people pull their cars, trucks and trailers right up to the trail entrance leading to the water hole, so they don't have to carry their kayaks very far but make it very difficult and dangerous for horse and rider to navigate through all the traffic to get to the river. Once there, they are lined up along the beach and hang out for hours to party, making bonfires, playing loud music, smoking and being rambunctious in the water. All VERY DANGEROUS situations to try to get horses to the water. Many of the tubers and kayakers are coming from upstream, and not

through the camp, but see the beach and decide to hang out for hours before continuing their journey. It is very frustrating that the Scheck's People Camp is right around the corner, but they don't use it. We are not allowed in their camp with the horses, but they are allowed to take over our camps, clogging all the best camp sites for day use and loitering all day in our water holes. There was also a homeless person living in a tent right at the edge of the trail to the water hole. I reported this a week into camping there, but nothing was done about it and he was still there, with all his garbage strewn all over the site, when we finally left on 8-3-24. He is probably still there now. The horses have to walk by his tent to get to the water and if he was moving around inside it spooked them every time. It is very unsightly and uncomfortable to be around as a camper.

Bass River - Met a male bicyclist riding a white Cannondale mountain bike on the equestrian trail within Silver Creek Park at a fork in the trail. I told the bicyclist that he was not allowed on the trails. He said that he's been doing it for 35 years and then took off. I rode after him to try and get a picture but couldn't catch up to him in time.

Goose Creek - Tons of kayaks hanging out at the horse water crossing. Lots of vehicles parked there for launching the kayaks.

In Conclusion:

We love nature and safe trail access. Horses are our recreation and therapy.

We are vulnerable trail users. We are thankful for trail etiquette signage and education. Please "get the word out" and ask to pass people with horses.

In appreciation of horse friendly trails and campgrounds we work diligently with public land managers with more than \$750,000 annually in volunteer services and donated materials.

Meeting Notes August 2024

- Pinney Bridge is awaiting another update from the courts on using county roads.
- Pinney Bridge will stay on the SAW agenda for updates per a motion at the meeting.
- SAW members approved the LUOD for snowmobile use in state parks, presented by Jason Flemming
- Nicole Hunt is continuing to research an LUOD to restrict the use of wide over-snow vehicles being brought to the community - Sherpa.
- The prevailing wage is still being discussed with the AG and DNR (Tim Novak).
- Don Britton suggested limiting the horsepower of selected new equipment. A SAW committee member-only meeting has been scheduled to discuss this further.
- All SAW members may attend the Equipment Sub Committee meetings as they are not subject to Open Meetings act.
- Yearly equipment inspections- Is it time? By who? More discussion to follow.
- There has been no update on the die cost for imprinting the DNR logo on trail signs.
- Don Britton, Chair of the SAW committee, has announced his retirement, and two nominations have been submitted. At the December meeting, SAW members will recommend to MTAC a new chair of the committee.
- Miners Castle is still seeking a reroute acceptable to the Alger Road Commission. Partners on the National level, Congressmen, MI legislators, and area business owners have taken an active part in saving the trail's access to the National Park. DNR has sent a letter of opportunity to keep the trail open until a reroute has been acquired. As explained by DNR authorities, SAW and MISORVA have opposed using Trail Improvement funds of around 200,000.00 in trade for a 5-year lease agreement with the Alger County Road Commission.
- Public Comment - Joe Bartlett would like to see trail rollers added to the eligible equipment list, prompting another discussion of the current equipment we cannot purchase. Are we allowing clubs to purchase bigger horsepower than is needed for their trails?
- Public Comment - Joe Bartlett Joe would like the DNR to be the issuing party on-road use permits for the clubs. He feels that DNR may have better traction.

ORVAW Report

- A new trail connection in the works in the Wolverine chandler hill area.
- Call for education for ORV, the (I didn't know) issue is growing and education needs to become a focal point, legislation may be needed to make it mandatory which is supported by the group.
- Call for more social media, cooler stickers ect.. for the ride right program to help get the message out.
- ORV use ordinance has passed in the Chestonia Township/Jordan Valley area more information on what this will look like in the future.

9/23/24

Michael Maves

Non-Motorized Maintenance and Funding Subcommittee Report

MTAC meeting Q3 9/24/2024 – Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf

This subcommittee has been formed to tackle the maintenance and funding issues we have on our unimproved surface non-motorized trails in Michigan. We have had three meetings. The first two were brainstorming sessions to submit and summarize the issues this subcommittee should tackle. The third was a pared down meeting for Neal, Amy and Greg (optional for everyone else) to really dig into the goals of this subcommittee and to pull together all that both the volunteers and DNR see as necessary steps to move forward. The meeting in October will be pared down again so that Greg can submit his additions and then we'll see where we can go from there.

The direction of this subcommittee:

- Local level maintenance needs and efforts
- Trail repair/re-route needs
- Sustainable funding for non-motorized trail

Local level efforts will be identifying an efficient and consistent process by which to maintain our non-motorized trails in cooperation between volunteers and DNR. The trail repair and re-route needs will include creating a process by which to identify and use best practice for the larger scale improvements that are needed for the future sustainability of our trails. And efforts will be made to identify and secure sustainable funding sources for our non-motorized trails.

Trails District	Implementation	Phase	Trail Name	Project Name	Project Description	Estimated Cost	30/30/40 Designation	% of Funding
MULTI	ADMINISTRATION		Non-infrastructure	GIS Trail Infrastructure	Partnership between PRD and FRD to GIS railtrail infrastrcuture in LP and UP	\$ 250,000	Diversified	3%
SELP	MDOT CONSULTANT	PE	Paint Creek Trail	Paint Creek Trail Connector Bridge	New bridge to connect Bald Mountain Recreation Area to the Paint Creek Trail/Iron Belle Trail.	\$ 400,000	Non-motorized	4%
NWLP	MDOT CONSULTANT	PE	Shore to Shore Trail	Manistee River Bridge	Complete bridge replacement with new abutments and approach on each end.	\$ 2,000,000	Diversified	22%
SWLP	MDOT CONSULTANT	PE	CIS Trail	CIS Trail Repair and Resurfacing	Resurfacing of the entirety of the trail and replacements of 4 bridges.	\$ 3,000,000	Non-motorized	34%
CUP	MDOT CONSULTANT	PE	Days River Pathway	Days River Pathway	Approximately 10 miles of single track trail construction designed for mountain bike use.	\$ 750,000	Non-motorized	8%
CUP	MDOT CONSULTANT	PE	Gene's Pond Pathway	Gene's Pond Pathway Development	Construction of 1.75 mile accessible pathway with scenic overlooks adjacent to state forest campground located near Ralph in Dickinson County.	\$ 750,000	Non-motorized	8%
WUP	MDOT CONSULTANT	PE	Bergland to Sidnaw Rail Trail	Agate Bridge	Bridge repair and decking replacement.	\$ 1,250,000	Motorized	14%
CUP	MDOT CONSULTANT	PE	Roger's City Spur of the NEST	Swan River Bridge	Bridge repair and decking replacement.	\$ 500,000	Diversified	6%

TOTAL	\$ 8,900,000.00
Non-Motorized % Total (30%)	55% \$ 4,900,000
Motorized % Total (30%)	14% \$ 1,250,000
Diversified % Total (40%)	31% \$ 2,750,000