



# DALLAS COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2022

November 14, 2017



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# INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is a process of looking into the future and identifying trends and issues against which an organization can align priorities. It is about understanding the challenges, trends, and issues; understanding who are the key beneficiaries and what they need; and determining the most effective and efficient way possible to achieve the mission. A good strategy drives focus, accountability, and results.

The purpose of this strategic plan is to:

- Identify opportunities and challenges facing the Dallas County Conservation Board
- Determine public satisfaction and knowledge of existing programs and facilities
- Determine public priorities for programming and facilities
- Identify marketing options including key messages and themes
- Develop goals and short-term, mid-term, and long-term objectives
- Identify evaluation metrics for each of the objectives
- Determine an implementation process and an appropriate update cycle for the plan

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# BACKGROUND

## DALLAS COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD MISSION

“To protect, preserve, and enhance our natural resources by providing opportunities to improve the public’s quality of life through environmental education, ecosystem management, outdoor recreation, and historic preservation.”

Iowa's County Conservation Board system began in 1955. The people of Dallas County voted to authorize a County Conservation Board in 1962, with the purpose of acquiring and developing county parks, preserves, forests, wildlife, and other conservation resources, and to provide environmental programming to cultivate citizenship and conservation ethic. The Conservation Board sets policy and oversees the activities of the staff. County Conservation Boards are governed by Chapter 350 of the Iowa Code. Board members are elected by residents of the county to serve for a term of five years.

### **2017 Dallas County Conservation Board:**

Nancy DeLong, Chairman  
Glen Vondra, Vice-Chairman  
Jim Miller, Secretary/Treasurer  
Mark Powell  
Lorinda Inman

### **Dallas County Conservation Board Staff:**

Mike Wallace, Executive Director  
Justin Smith, Deputy Director/Biologist  
Sherry James, Administrative Assistant  
Chris Adkins, Environmental Education Coordinator/ Naturalist  
Pete Malmburg, Museum Curator / Historical & Cultural Resources Coordinator  
Curt Cable, Natural Resource Manager, Forest Park  
Greg Sieck, Natural Resource Manager, Kuehn Conservation Area  
Cindy Blobaum, Naturalist  
Mike Havlik, Naturalist  
Jim Brauckman, Natural Resource Technician  
Doug Menz, Natural Resource Technician  
Chris Fitch, Office Assistant  
Mike Murphy, Seasonal Natural Resource Technician

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# PLANNING PROCESS

A series of meetings were held with the Strategic Plan Committee (SPC), made up of Board members, volunteers, and staff. The first meeting, held on April 4, 2017 at Forest Park Museum in Perry, Iowa, identified the following strengths and weaknesses during a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis activity:

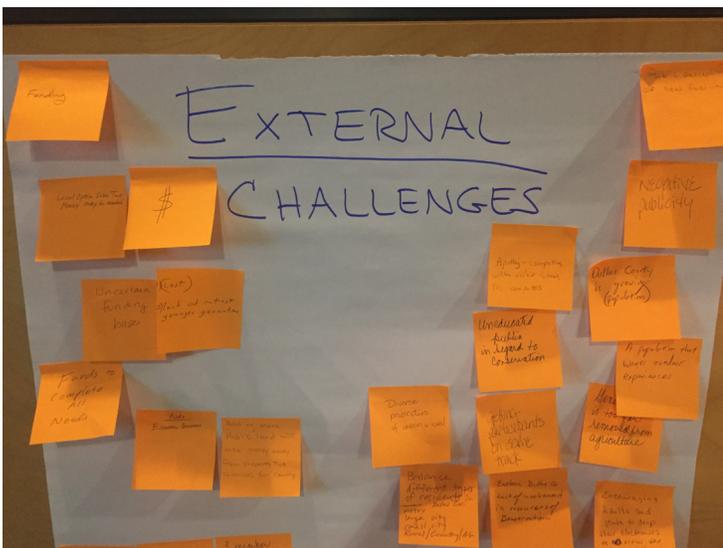


## Strengths and Opportunities

- Environmental and nature education programs
- Opportunity for water trails
- Number and usage of multi-purpose and hiking trails
- Community support
- Marketing materials
- Leadership, dedicated staff
- Public demand
- Accessibility

## Weaknesses and Threats

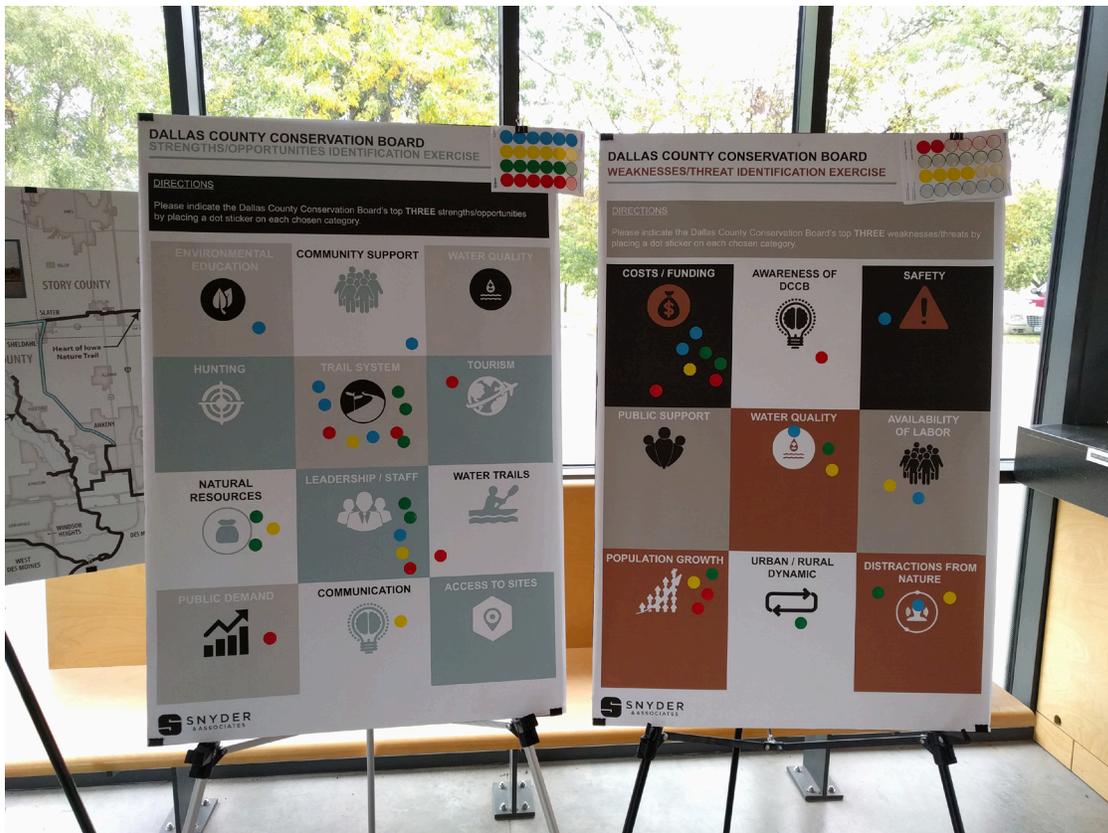
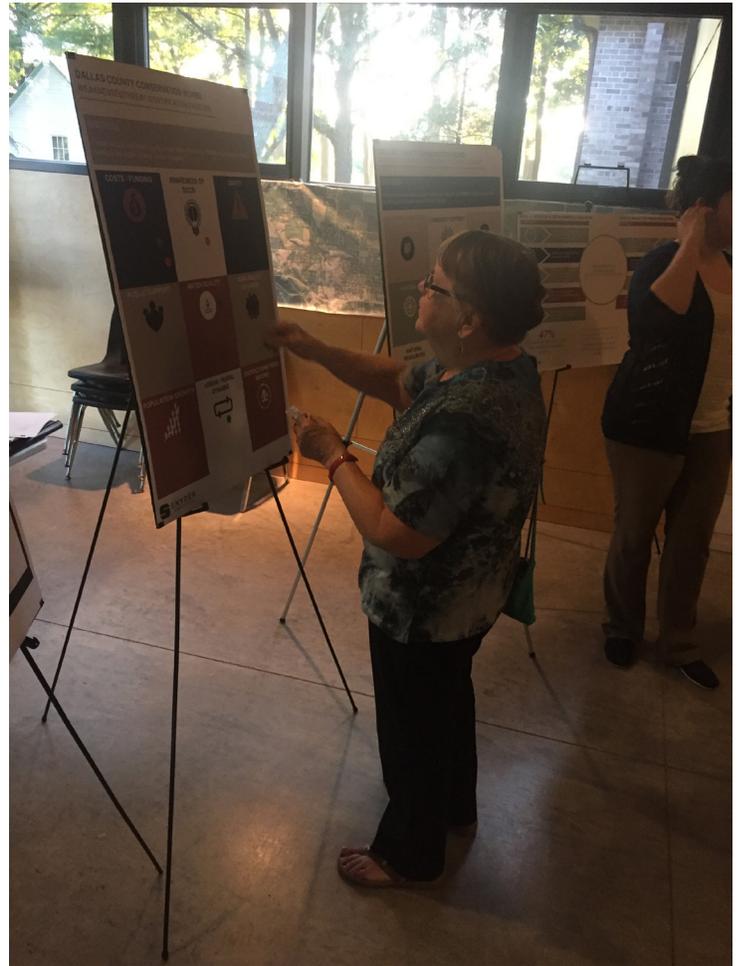
- Costs and funding sources
- Retiring leadership, workload burden for staff
- Politics
- Lack of support or resources for water quality initiatives
- Low volunteerism, burnout of existing volunteers
- Safety (lowhead dams and liability concerns)
- Population growth and sprawl in the eastern portion of the county (western Des Moines Metro area)
- Negative public perception
- Urban-rural dynamics
- Distractions from nature



The second meeting of the SPC was held on August 7, 2017 at the Forest Park Museum in Perry, Iowa. Consultants from Snyder & Associates presented the results of the community survey, a draft of goals and objectives, suggestions for a marketing plan, and recommendations for implementation.

A public workshop was held immediately following the second SPC meeting to give the public one more opportunity for input. The consultants provided boards identifying the goals and objectives, as well as strengths and weaknesses. Attendees were encouraged to place up to three stickers on what they identified as the three most important strengths and weaknesses for the Dallas County Conservation Board to address when implementing this Strategic Plan. The boards and comment sheets were placed in the entrance of the Dallas County Conservation Board offices until September 18th.

Agendas and minutes from these meetings can be found in Appendix C of this plan.



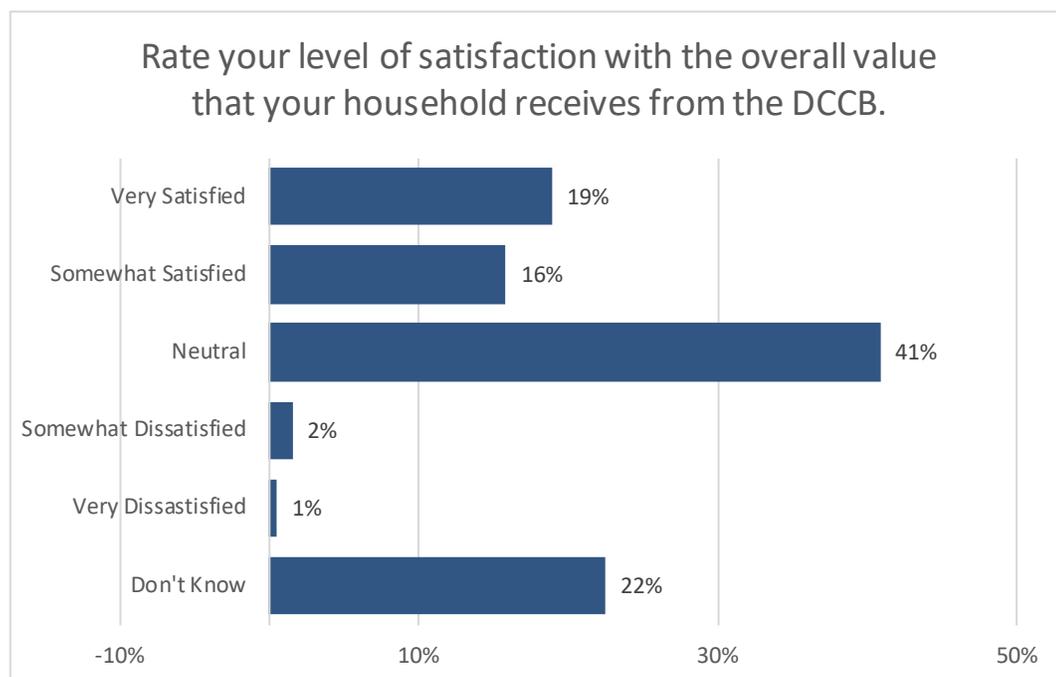
# Public Survey Information and Results

The Dallas County Conservation Board (DCCB) commissioned a public opinion survey administered by ETC Institute. The goal was to obtain completed surveys from at least 300 residents. A total of 403 completed surveys were returned. To ensure a randomized sample, addresses of respondents were matched to the mailing address list. Responses were considered from only the group of respondents whose address matched the mailing list.

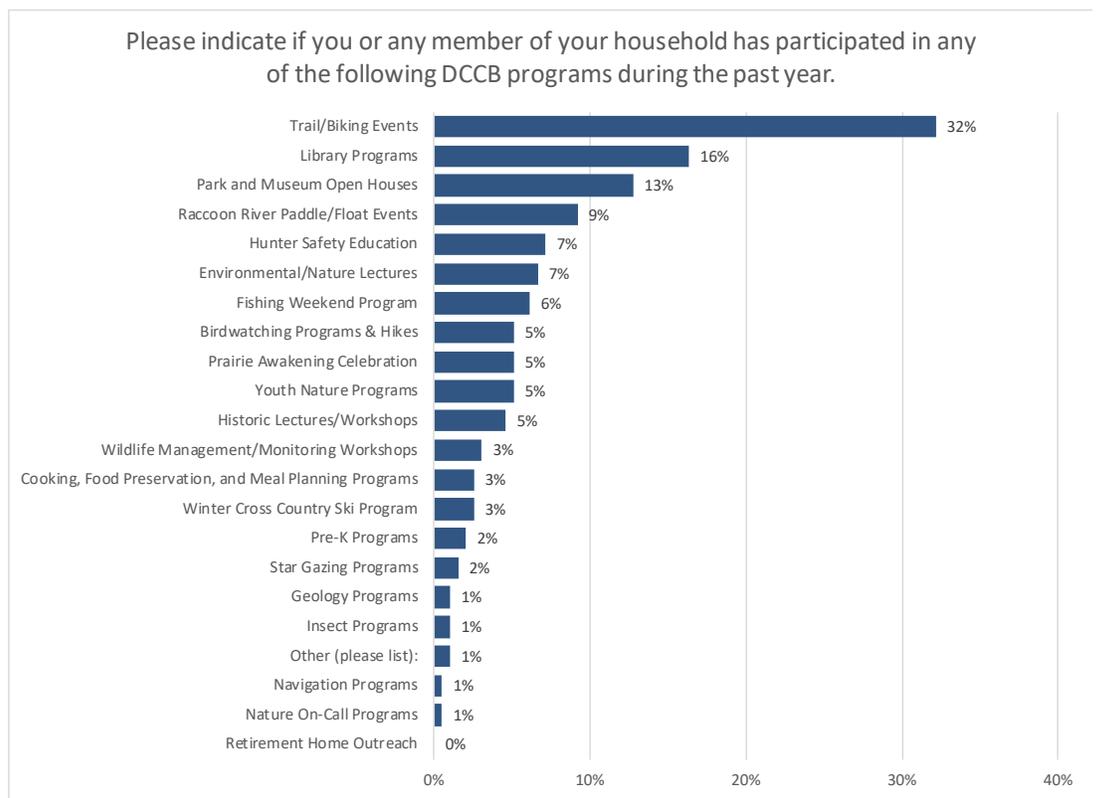
This section summarizes the pertinent information. The complete results can be found in the appendices.

## RESULTS

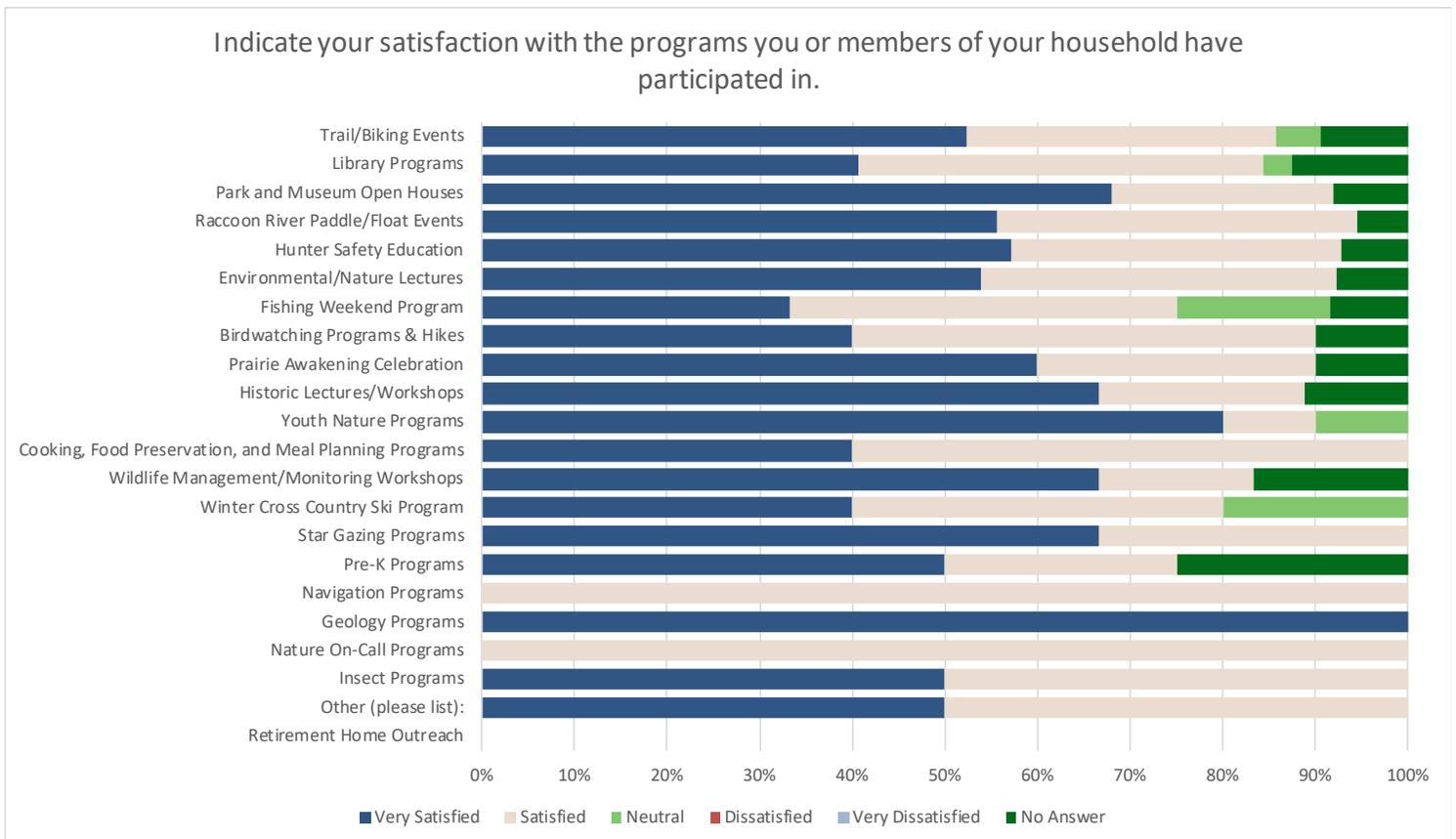
Only 49 percent of the survey respondents indicated they were aware of the DCCB. The results were then further refined to analyze the responses of the 196 residents who are aware of the DCCB. Of those respondents, 35 percent were somewhat or very satisfied with the overall value their household receives. These results are inconclusive due to the 41 percent who responded “neutral,” and the 22 percent who answered “don’t know.”



Respondents were asked about which programs members of their household had participated in during the past year. Trail/Biking Events were by far the most-attended programs, with double the amount of participating households than Library Programs. The divide may be even larger, as the survey did not clearly distinguish between library-sponsored programming and DCCB programming at local libraries.

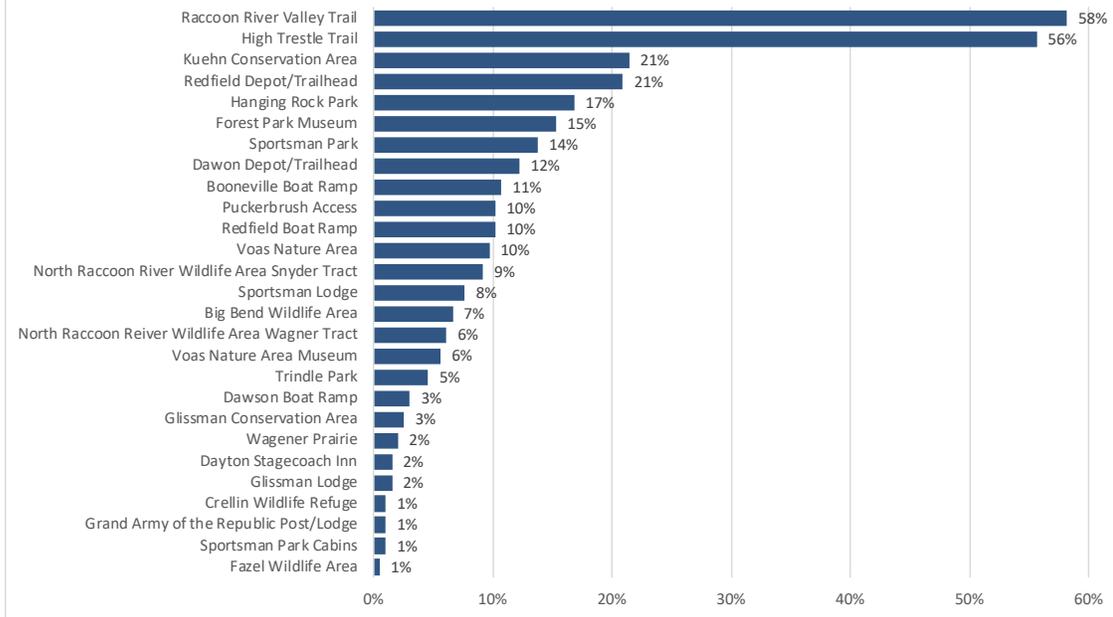


No respondents were dissatisfied with the programs in which their household participated, though 10 to 20 percent responded “neutral” or did not provide a rating of these programs.



Please indicate if you or any member of your household has used or visited any of the following parks, museums, facilities, wildlife areas, or historical sites during the past year.

(Aware of DCCB, n=196)

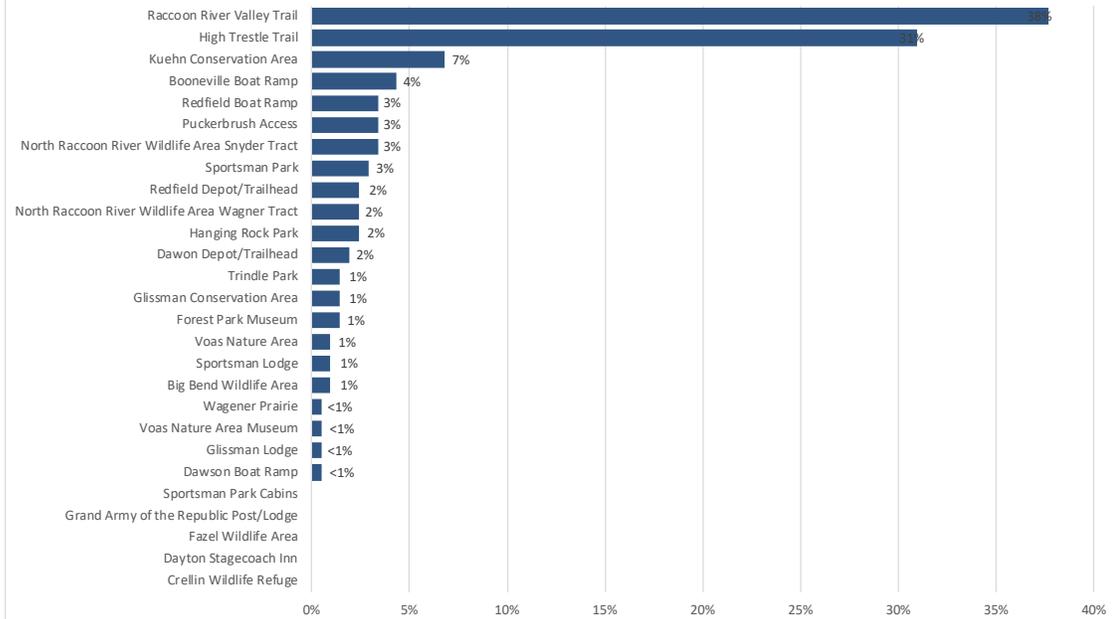


Unsurprisingly, the two most-visited areas provided by the DCCB were the Raccoon River Valley Trail and the High Trestle Trail. The next most-visited areas were Kuehn Conservation Area and the Redfield Depot/Trailhead, with less than half the visitation rate of the major trails.

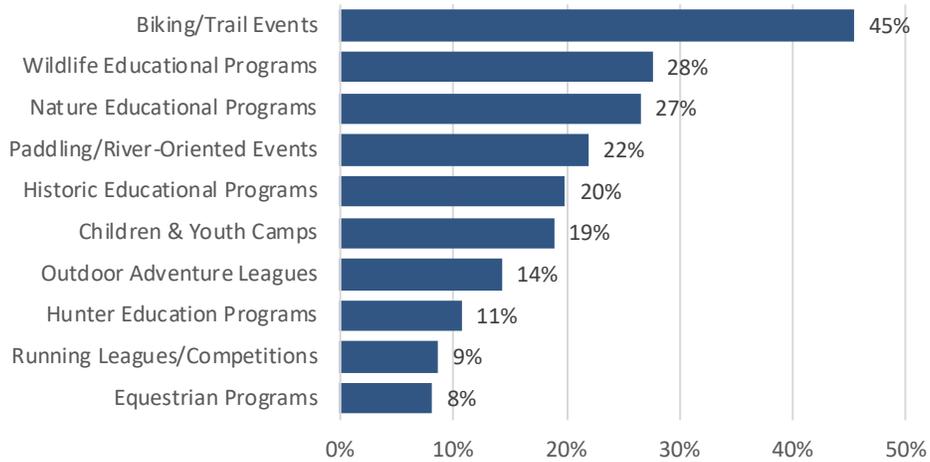
The top three most-visited locations does not change among the survey respondents who were not aware of the DCCB, though the percentage of respondents for each was significantly less.

Please indicate if you or any member of your household has used or visited any of the following parks, museums, facilities, wildlife areas, or historical sites during the past year.

(Not Aware of DCCB, n=207)



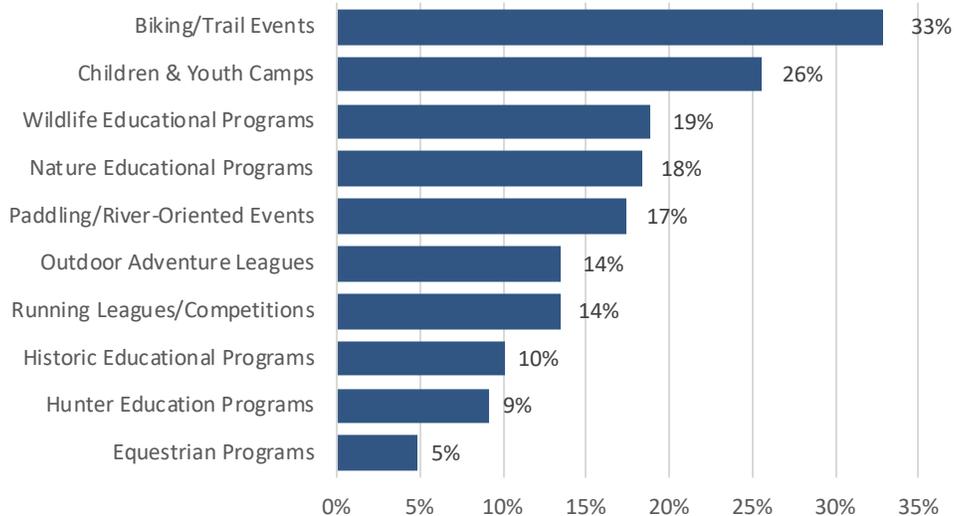
Please indicate if you or any member of your household has a need for each type of program listed.  
(Aware of DCCB, n=196)



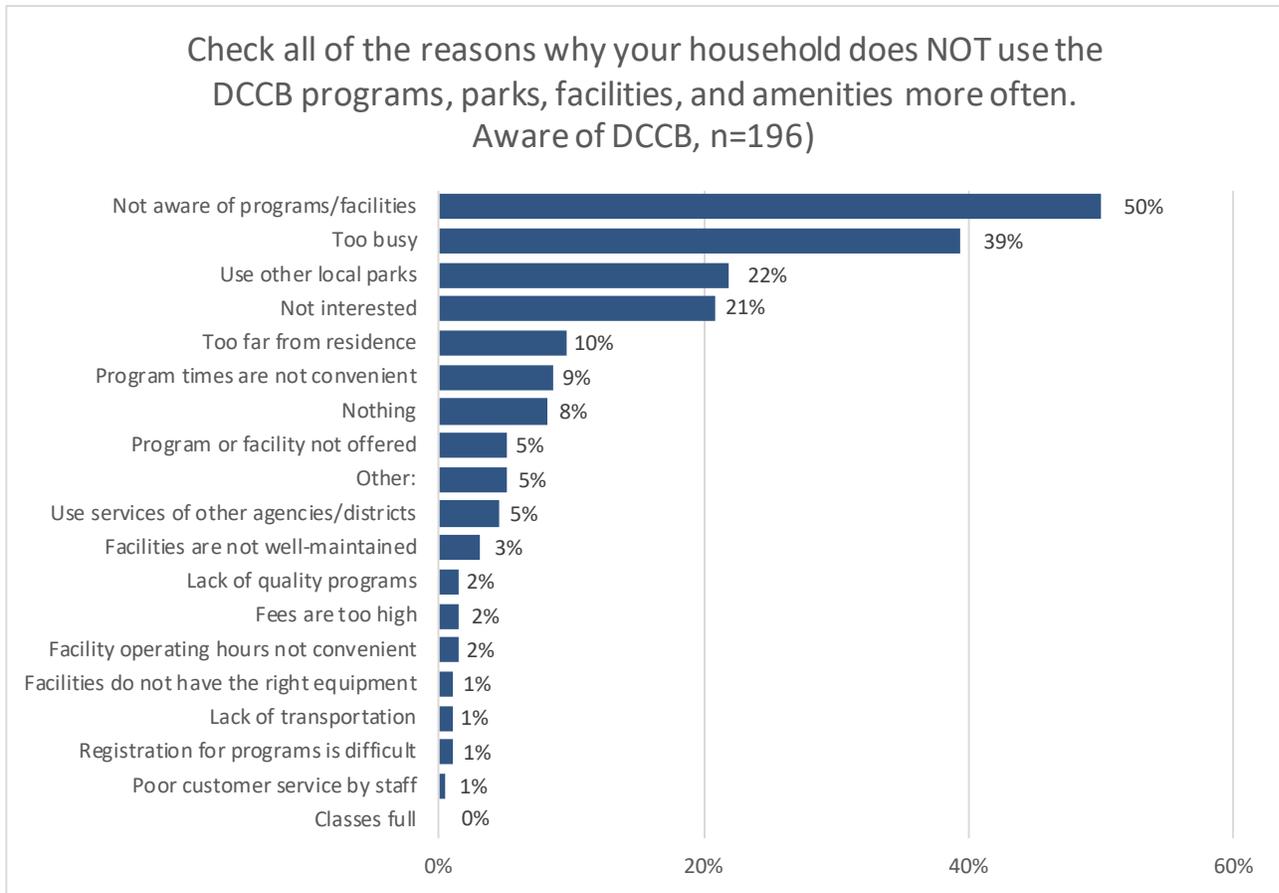
For those who are aware of the DCCB, the top programming needs are Biking/Trail Events, Wildlife Educational Programs, and Nature Educational Programs.

Those who were not aware of the DCCB, the top programming needs are Biking/Trail Events, Children & Youth Camps, and Wildlife Educational Programs. Nature Educational programs also scored highly with this group. However, their need for children and youth camps was much higher than that of the respondents who are aware of the DCCB, who rated it as one of their bottom five programming needs.

Please indicate if you or any member of your household has a need for each type of program listed.  
(Not aware of DCCB, n=207)



The Dallas County Conservation Board faces two significant barriers to overcome in order to increase visitation and participation numbers for their facilities and programs. Of the more than 400 respondents to the survey, 51% were not aware of the DCCB. Of the 49% that were aware of the organization, half do not participate in programs or visit facilities because they are not aware of the programs or facilities. This indicates a need for increased marketing and promotion, which will be discussed later in this document.



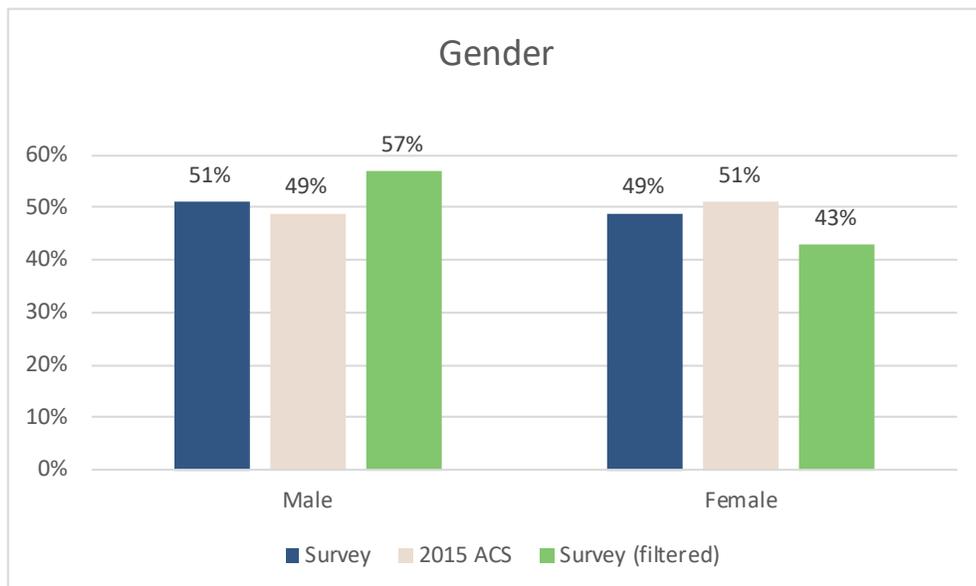
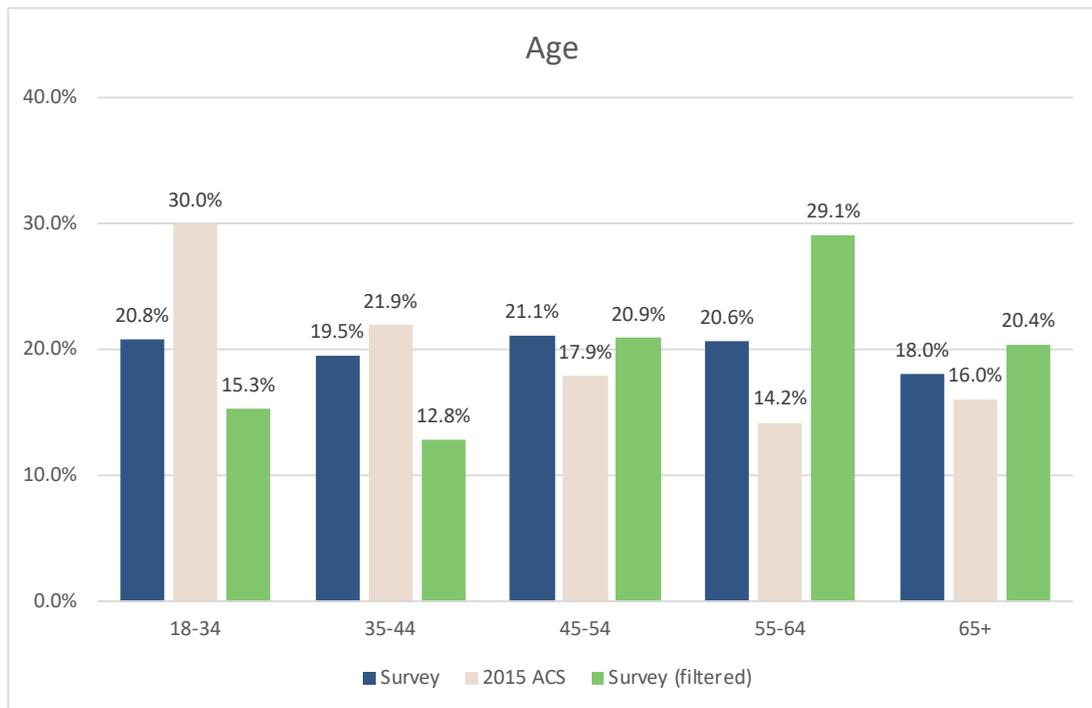
For those that do participate in DCCB programs and visit the facilities, the reasons indicated for doing so were the “location of the program/facility” and “reasonable fees.” The quality of the programs and facilities also scored highly on this question.

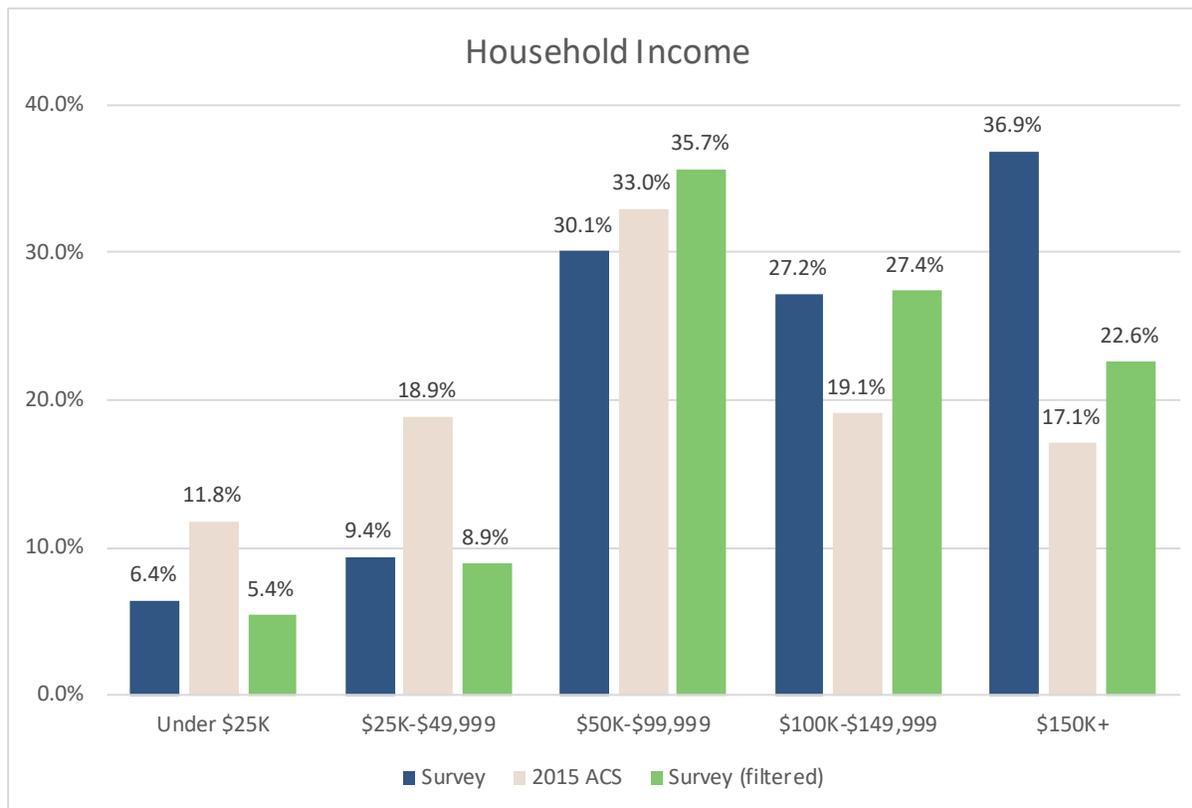
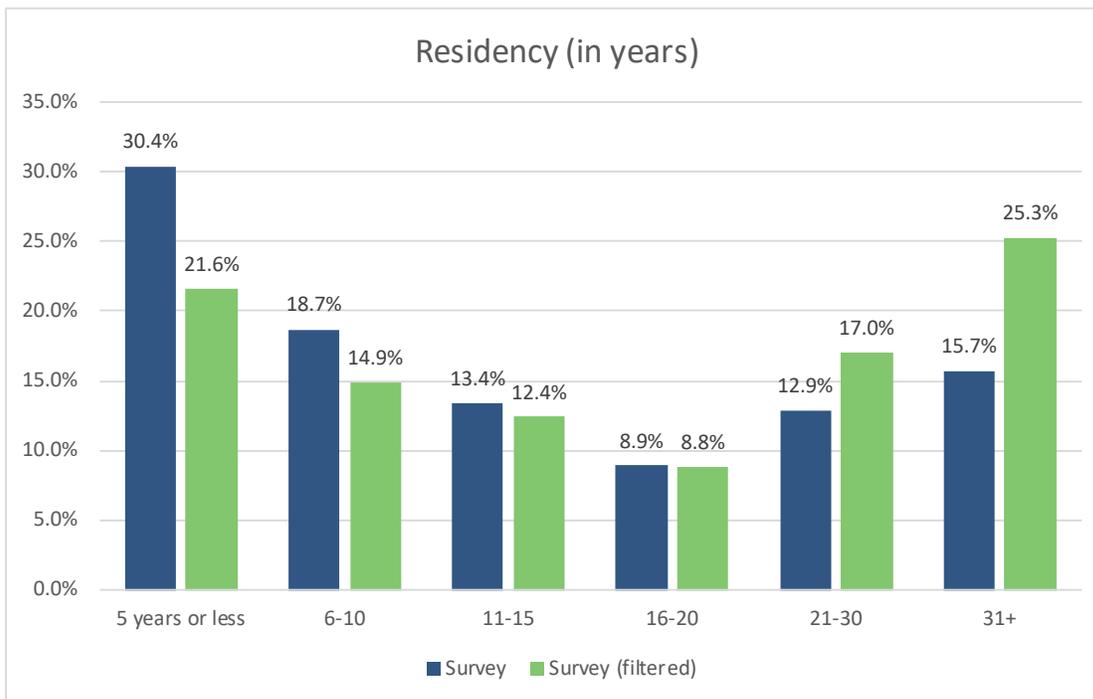
Additional concerns identified in the survey regarding how residents receive information are covered in the Marketing section of this plan.

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# DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographics of the survey respondents are shown below, comparing the full survey results to the survey results that were filtered to only include those who were aware of the DCCB, as well as the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year population estimates for Dallas County.

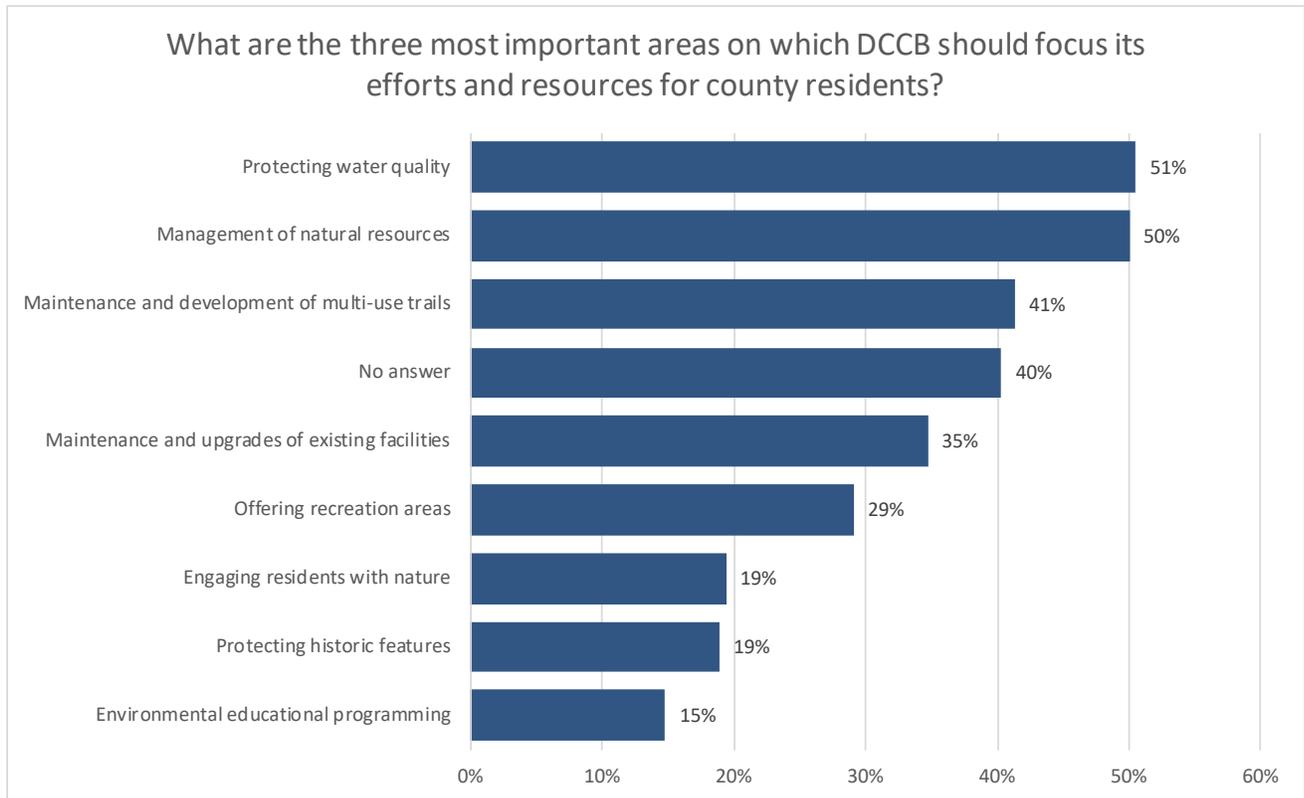




The demographic comparisons show that older populations were oversampled while younger populations were undersampled, compared to the U.S. Census ACS estimates. Similarly, higher incomes were significantly oversampled, while low-income groups were seriously undersampled. There is no federal data available comparing the length of residency of people within the county, but both the full survey results and filtered results show a lack of representation from those who have lived in the county for between 11 and 30 years. This may be a constraint of the returned surveys, or it may be due to the recent population growth bringing new residents into what was once an aging county.

# PRIORITY INVESTMENT AREAS

According to the survey, the top three investment needs are protecting water quality, management of natural resources, and the maintenance and development of multi-use trails.



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# GOALS & STRATEGIES

Based on the results from the survey, and the meetings with the Strategic Plan Committee, four goals were developed to guide the Dallas County Conservation Board over the next five years. Each goal has a set of strategies to facilitate achievement, and examples of evaluation techniques are included for measurement and tracking progress.



## GOAL 1

Increase local awareness of & support for the Dallas County Conservation Board



## GOAL 2

Increase recreational and environmental tourism



## GOAL 3

Continue to improve upon ecological management and environmental education effort



## GOAL 4

Continue to enhance the quality of parks and recreational opportunities

The goals are divided into two categories: Strategic Marketing, and Environment and Ecology.

## Strategic Marketing

The Strategic Marketing goals are designed to increase program attendance and facility visits through local, regional, and statewide marketing campaigns.

These goals are largely based on the survey results. Fifty-one percent of survey respondents were not aware of the Dallas County Conservation Board. Of the remaining 49% of respondents, half do not participate in programs or visit facilities due to a lack of awareness. Many of these objectives are met by the Marketing Suggestions later on in this plan.

Strategies for meeting this goals are in the following tables.

 <p><b>GOAL 1</b></p> <p>Increase local awareness of and support for the Dallas County Conservation Board</p>	Increase social media presence
	Create a social media posting schedule
	Engage users through personalized responses and encouragement
	Use available analytical tools to measure the reach and engagement of social media posts
	Use social media analytics to determine posting content and frequency
	Create an easy and accessible subscription process to sign up for printed and online newsletters
	Encourage and incorporate online and in-person feedback

 <p><b>GOAL 2</b></p> <p>Increase recreational and environmental tourism</p>	Develop a statewide audience through the Travel Iowa annual guide and website, statewide magazines, and other publications
	Advertise in statewide publications
	Take advantage of the Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau website (Catch CM), and the Greater Des Moines Partnership
	Create incentives to promote regional tourism
	Provide visitor and tourism brochures to Iowa Welcome Centers
	Monitor sites like Trip Advisor and Google Reviews to look for and respond to feedback

## Environment and Ecology

The Environment and Ecology goals are aimed toward service delivery, by focusing on continuing to provide quality programs and public spaces, as well as being a resource for Dallas County residents.

Many of the following strategies are a continuation of services and programs already provided by the Dallas County Conservation Board and staff, and address the changing nature of funding, politics, and demographics within the county.

 <p><b>GOAL 3</b></p> <p>Continue to improve upon ecological management and environmental education efforts</p>	Use Land Acquisition Plan to increase the acreage of public lands and conservation easements
	Update Land Acquisition Plan and map as needed
	Assess the need to make parks and open space programming more culturally accessible through the introduction of multilingual materials and signs
	Be a resource for landowners for ecological management information

 <p><b>GOAL 4</b></p> <p>Continue to enhance the quality of parks and recreational opportunities</p>	Annually update the Capital Improvement Plan to balance maintenance needs and new construction
	Continue to utilize grant opportunities to maximize investment
	Continue to promote and foster partnerships for maintenance and fundraising
	Continue to provide high-quality facilities, spaces, and programming

## Evaluation

Evaluation of the goals and objectives is critical to measuring short-term and long-term success of this plan. Perhaps the easiest way to track changes over time is to implement a table or spreadsheet that includes the evaluation metric, the specific measure for that metric, and a way to look at the changes (or lack thereof) over time.

Below is an example table that shows various metrics and measures for each goal, which are color-coded by each goal, and the contain cells for each of the five calendar years covered by this plan.

	Evaluation Metric	Measure	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Goal 1	Create Twitter & Instagram Accounts	Complete					
	Follow social media posting schedule	Trend Analysis					
	Measure post engagement	Trend Analysis					
	Track reach & engagement on a weekly/monthly basis	Trend Analysis					
	Determine popular social media post content	Trend Analysis					
	Respond to online feedback	Yes/No					
	Track printed newsletter subscribers	Total #					
	Track e-newsletter subscribers	Total #					
	Track feedback/comments	Total #					
Positive/Negative							

	Evaluation Metric	Measure	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Goal 2	Travel Iowa seasonal blog post	Yes/No					
	Travel Iowa blog post votes	Total #					
	Track mentions of DCCB sites/facilities on Travel Iowa	Total #					
	Biannual article in <i>Our Iowa Magazine</i>	Yes/No					
	Seasonal photo contribution in <i>Our Iowa Maga</i>	Yes/No					
	Track incentives utilized	Total #					
	Track facility/site visits during advertisement periods	Total #					
	Track number of brochures requested by Welcome Centers/CVBs	Total #					
	Encourage visitors to leave feedback online	Yes/No					
	Respond to online feedback	Yes/No					
	Track online comments	Total #					
		Positive/Negative					

	Evaluation Metric	Measure	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Goal 3	Track total land acquisitions	# Acres					
	Track High Priority land acquisitions	# Acres					
	Track Medium Priority land acquisitions	# Acres					
	Update Land Acquisition Map	Yes/No					
	Administer post-program surveys	Yes/No					
	Analyze surveys	Positive/Negative					
	Track landowners assisted	Total #					
	Track types of landowner assistance provided	Prairie/Buffer Seeds					
		Ecological Management Info					
	Track population and demographic changes	Percentage					
Total #							

	Evaluation Metric	Measure	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Goal 4	Track maintenance expenditures per site/facility	Budget Dollars					
		Budget %					
	Track new construction expenditures per site/facility Track annual grant funding	Budget Dollars					
		Budget %					
	Track volunteer hours	Total Hours					
	Track number of volunteers	Total #					
	Track community fundraising	Dollars					
	Track feedback/comments	Total #					
		Positive/Negative					

Some measure like "Complete/To Do" are items that can be taken care of once and do not need to be addressed in the future, like setting up a new social media account. Others track numbers over time, like the number of subscribers to the quarterly Conservation Board newsletter or the total expenditures annually. Another measure may look for trends that take a more subjective analysis, like whether user comments on social media pages are becoming more positive or negative over time.

It is up to the staff of the Dallas County Conservation Board to decide whether it is more beneficial to perform evaluations based on the calendar year or the fiscal year. However, the objectives of the plan should be evaluated at least once per year, at the same time every year, to see whether the plan is being implemented and whether any adjustments to the plan or the implementation technique should be changed.

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# MARKETING

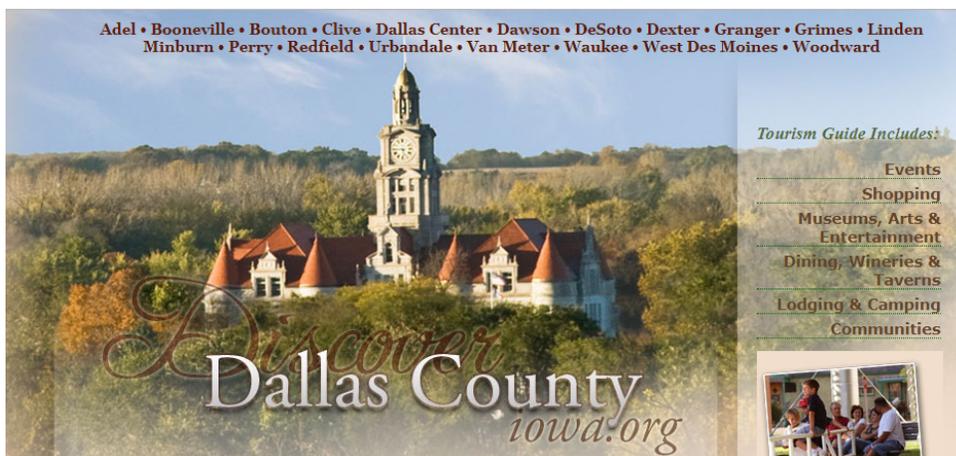
A key component of raising awareness about the Dallas County Conservation Board, its programs, and its facilities, is an effective marketing plan. The marketing plan was developed as an objective to Goals 1 and 2 of this Strategic Plan.

Currently the largest barrier to parks and facility usage and program participation is that of the 196 respondents who are aware of the DCCB, 50% are not aware of the programs or facilities. The lack of local awareness correlates to a potentially significant number of prospective tourists and visitors who do not come to DCCB facilities and programs due to a lack of regional and statewide awareness.

## Existing Marketing



MyCountyParks.com, the online resource information and reservations system for county parks across Iowa.



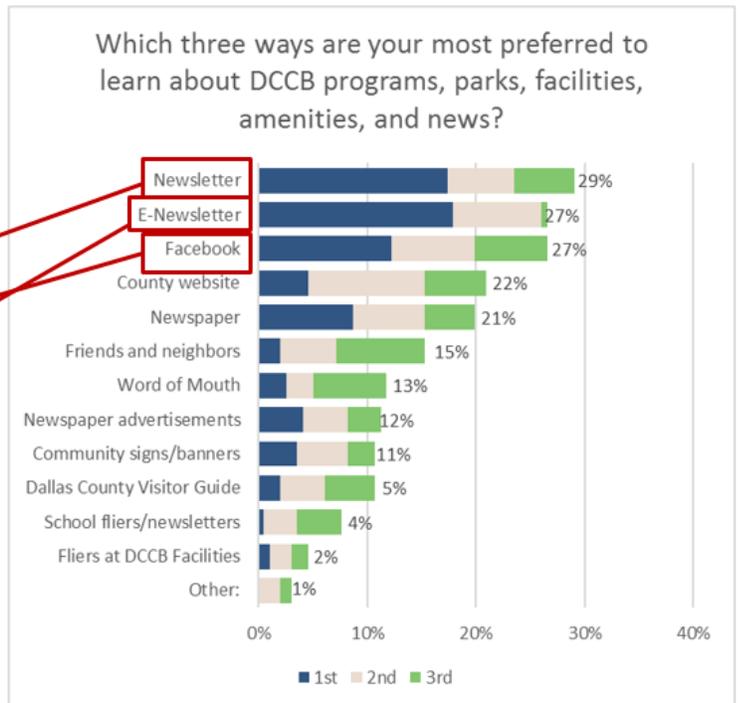
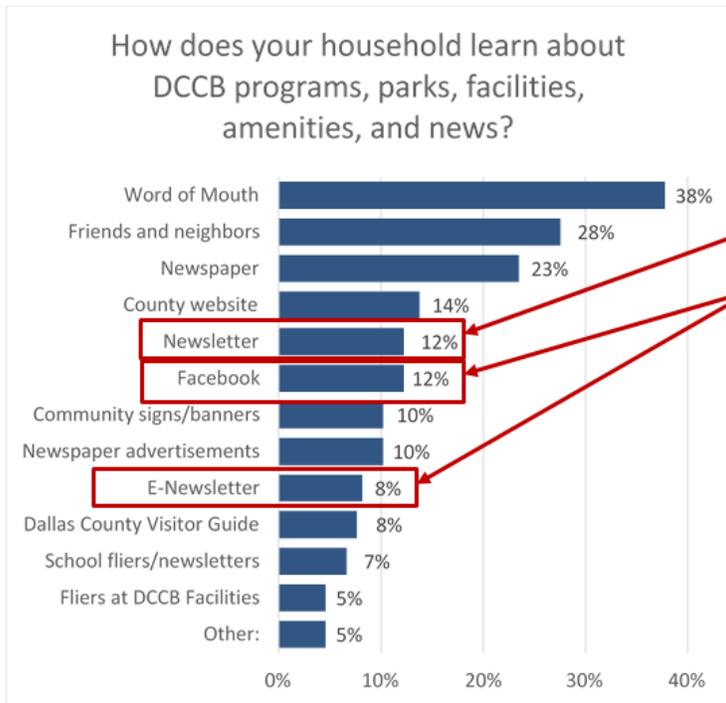
DiscoverDallasCountyIowa.org, an online and printed tourism guide for governments and organizations in Dallas County. This guide is printed annually by a volunteer group, and is currently available in Iowa Visitors Centers.



The website for the Dallas County government has a page specifically for information regarding the Conservation Board and staff. This page is updated by staff on a regular basis.

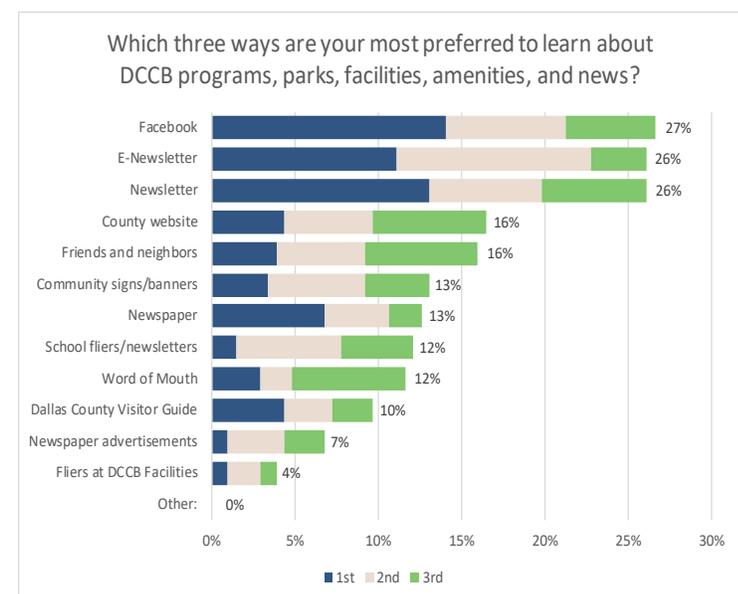
## Local Marketing Suggestions

The citizen survey asked questions about how households do and would like to hear about DCCB programs, parks, facilities, amenities, and news. The differences in the results to these two questions were stark when the answers were filtered to only include respondents who were aware of the DCCB.



The graphs show that the top three choices preferred for message delivery are not how residents are currently hearing about the organization, its programs, facilities, or news. Nearly 30% of residents would prefer a printed newsletter, yet only 12% are reached that way. E-newsletters and Facebook both received a preference rating totaling 27%, yet they are currently used to reach 8% and 12% of respondents, respectively.

When filtered to show only those who were not aware of the DCCB, the top four communication preferences remained the same, and at a similar rate.



For more information, or to subscribe to our newsletter, please contact us.

**Dallas County Conservation Board**  
14581 K Ave.  
Perry, Iowa 50220  
515-465-3577  
FAX 515-465-3579  
Office Hours: M-F 8:00am - 4:30pm  
Email: [conservation@dallascountyiowa.gov](mailto:conservation@dallascountyiowa.gov)

Source: <http://www.co.dallas.ia.us/department-services/conservation>

## Dallas County Conservation Board Newsletter

Subscribe to the Dallas County Conservation Board

\* Required

Your Name \*

Your answer

What type of newsletter would you like to subscribe to? \*

- Mailed newsletter (provide mailing address and telephone number)
- Online/E-Newsletter (provide email address and telephone number)

Mailing Address

Your answer

Email Address

Your answer

Telephone Number

Your answer

SUBMIT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

Source: [forms.google.com](https://forms.google.com)

## Newsletter and E-Newsletter

Currently, the DCCB produces a seasonal newsletter. To subscribe to the newsletter, residents must write, call, or email to the Dallas County Conservation Board, according to the website.

However, the Newsletter webpage does not indicate whether interested parties are signing up for a mailed newsletter or an E-newsletter. The website also does not specify the information required to subscribe—which would save subscribers time, especially if they are mailing, emailing, or calling after-hours.

It would be beneficial to users to have an easy way to sign up to receive either a mailed or online newsletter. A simple Google Form is a quick, easy, and free way to accomplish this. Form responses are saved in a spreadsheet that can be downloaded by staff into a Microsoft Excel file for easy maintenance, or kept in the Google Spreadsheet for constant access.

Once necessary change identified during the public input workshop was to have a newsletters sent from a generic conservation board email address. Currently the newsletter comes from the address of the person sending the email, which can be confusing to recipients and potentially create a problem with email spam filters when that person changes.

## Facebook

Another easy and free way to reach current and prospective visitors is to engage them through Facebook. The Dallas County Conservation Board already has a Facebook page, with new posts at least every few days. However, there is opportunity for more engagement with those who post reviews and comments. Whether critical or flattering, as many comments and reviews as possible should be met with a response from the site administrator(s) to acknowledge and connect to users. Responses from the official page should be personable as well as informational—even posts reminding visitors about regulations or announcing closing and cancellations can be crafted to be charming and visually appealing.

Constant monitoring of visitor posts can let staff know if there are issues that may need to be addressed, and/or if there are things that they are doing well.

Facebook has a lot of potential for driving page views through user-created events like photo contests and scavenger hunts. The navigation bar can also be formatted to be a one-stop site for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and general news. For the most part, the only limitations of marketing on Facebook are the imaginations of the staff administering the page. Create DCCB-specific hashtags and encourage visitors to use them—extending the reach of social media posts.

The guiding philosophy for Facebook marketing and engagement is “like, comment, share.” The more people who like, comment, and share your content, the more likely it is to show up on the newsfeeds of Facebook users who do not follow the page, but have friends who do. One of the best ways to increase the likes, comments, and shares for Facebook posts is to add graphics and photos that draw visitors to the post through curiosity or amazement. Visitors are also drawn to pictures that show people—which allows them to visualize themselves or their families in that situation and creates more interest.



The screenshot shows the navigation menu for the Dallas County Conservation Board Facebook page. On the left, there is a profile picture featuring a deer, a bird, and a sun over a landscape, with the text "DALLAS COUNTY CONSERVATION" below it. Below the profile picture is the page name "Dallas County Conservation Board". A vertical list of navigation options includes: Home, About, Photos, Reviews, Events, Videos, Posts (highlighted in white), and Community. At the bottom of this list is a green button that says "Create a Page". On the right side of the page, there is a secondary menu with the following options: Home, About, Current Projects, Twitter (highlighted in yellow), YouTube (highlighted in yellow), Instagram feed (highlighted in yellow), Photos, Events, Videos, Reviews, Posts, and Community.

Facebook can be a single stop for information and engagement by adding links to other social media sites on the menu.

*Image Source:  
facebook.com/*



The screenshot shows a Facebook post from the "Hartman Reserve Nature Center" dated July 21 at 4:36pm. The post text reads: "Paddle in the Park is cancelled for tonight due to the impending thunderstorms! See everyone in 2 weeks!". Below the text is a photograph of the character Stitch from Disney's "Lilo & Stitch" standing in the rain. At the bottom of the post, there are three interaction buttons: "Like", "Comment", and "Share".

## Regional and Statewide Marketing Suggestions

Regional marketing techniques differ in their delivery methods. Unfortunately, it is difficult to come to conclusions through a local survey, but there are some successful examples that can be borrowed from similar organizations.

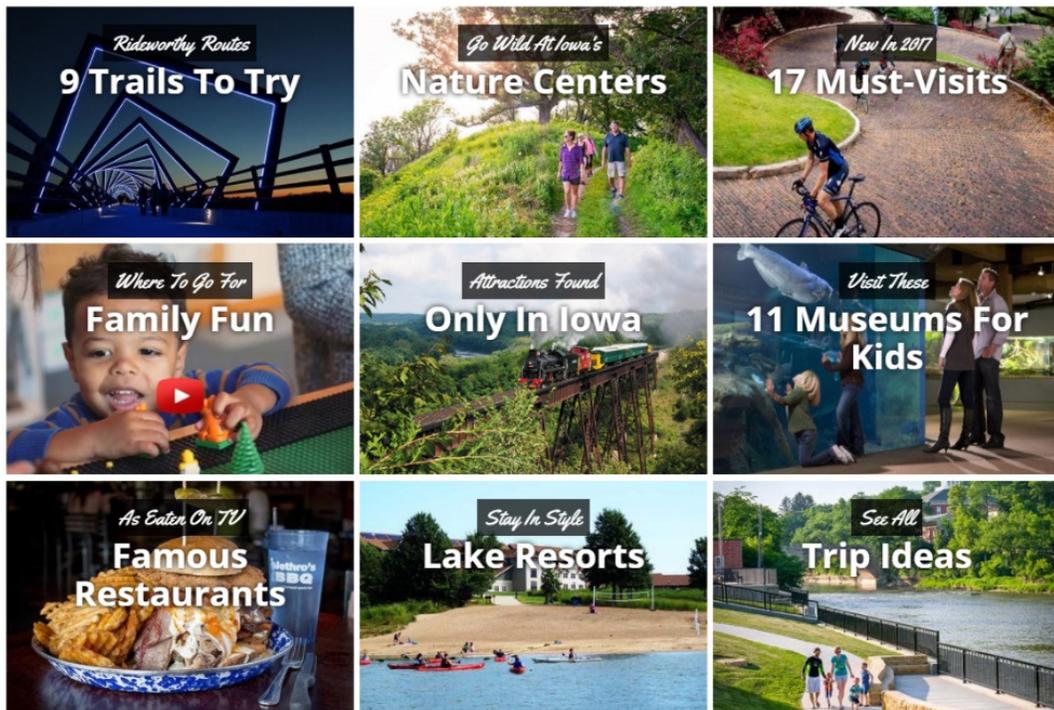
### Travel Iowa

Travel Iowa is a travel and tourism website and guide developed and managed by the Iowa Tourism Office of the Iowa Economic Development Authority.



A free, annual guide is produced that highlights tourism destinations throughout Iowa. Iowa residents and visitors can request a print copy be mailed to them, and the guide is also available at Convention and Visitors Bureaus throughout the state, and some Iowa DOT rest stops. A digital copy is also available online, and site visitors can sign up for a periodic email newsletter that fits their indicated interests.

The website offers a plethora of options for garnering attention to DCCB facilities and programs. Site visitors can search for attractions by region, county, or city. The Travel Iowa Blog is a great resource. Users sign up for a free account and publish original blog posts, which then are voted upon by site visitors. Blog posts on the site cover programs and facts related to The Great Outdoors, and other County Conservation Boards have posted events to the blog in the past to expand their audience and participant pool.



Source: [traveliowa.com](http://traveliowa.com)

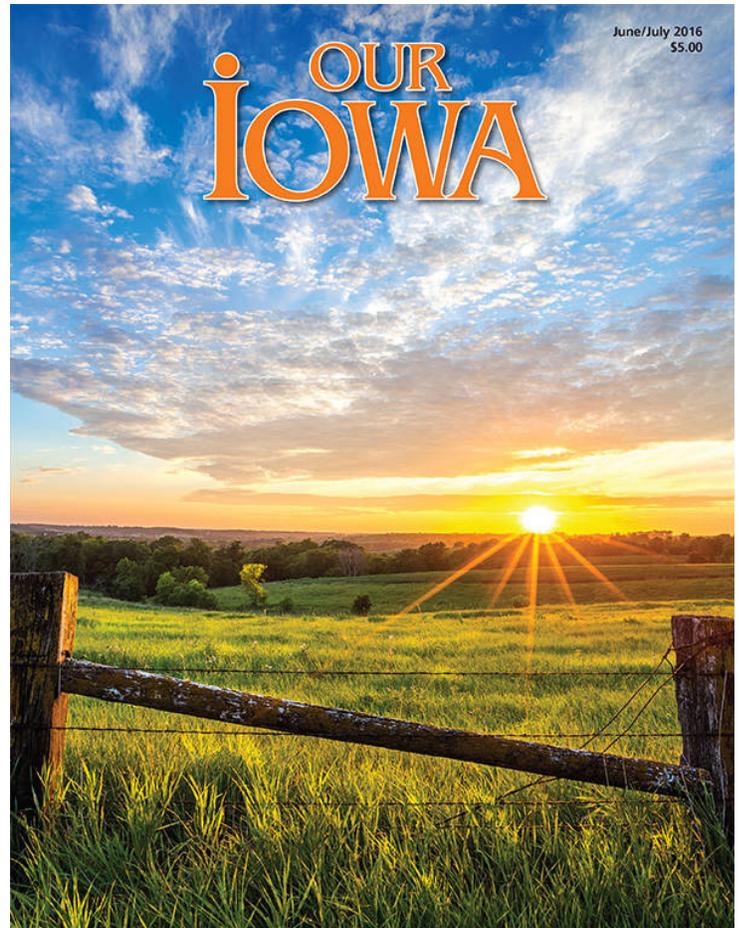
## Statewide Publications

Our Iowa Magazine is produced in Ames that bills itself as “The magazine written by lowans... for lowans.” An annual subscription for the bi-monthly magazine is \$19.98, and there is also space for advertising. The editors regularly post on the Travel Iowa Blog.

Getting published is fairly easy. According to the website, “Basically, we’re looking for any items or photos that help explain why Iowa is such a great place to live. This could be something as simple as a knee-slapper joke or tall tale you heard at the barbershop—just jot it down and send it to us.”

Organizations also have the opportunity to advertise in the magazine. To drive ad views, the magazine has a couple of unique methods. Advertisers have the option of paying for a portion of their ads in products and services that are given to readers of each issue. For example, the DCCB could provide a night's stay in a cabin. The prizes are awarded by the magazine through the “Lucky I” contest. A miniature version of the “I” in the Our Iowa logo is hidden in three ads of each issue. When a reader finds all three “I”s, they send a note or postcard describing the locations. The magazine then draws names for the prizes. The “I”s are well hidden to drive ad views and reader engagement. Over 6,000 contest entries are received for every issue. Advertising is limited to no more than 25% of each issue—making each ad more visible to readers.

Six issues are printed each year on a bimonthly basis.



Source: [ouriowamagazine.com](http://ouriowamagazine.com)

# CATCH DES MOINES

[catchdesmoines.com](http://catchdesmoines.com)

Source: [catchdesmoines.com](http://catchdesmoines.com)



Source: [traveliowa.com](http://traveliowa.com)

## Catch Des Moines and Other Convention and Visitors Bureaus

The Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau produces the Catch Des Moines website and visitors guide. The bureau covers communities in Polk County and Dallas County, and even includes attractions in Marion and Jasper Counties. Getting information about the DCCB, its programs, and facilities into this guide increases the regional audience throughout and beyond the Des Moines Metro area.

Visitors can request a Fun Pass that includes savings to local attractions and events. The DCCB could create an incentive to include in the Fun Pass to drive regional visits, such as “reserve two nights at a campground, get one night free,” or “\$2 off an annual Raccoon River Valley Trail permit.”

## Iowa Welcome Centers

The Iowa DOT owns four Welcome Centers and partners with 14 others. In addition to maps of the state, state, regional, and local visitors guides are often available in these Welcome Centers. Partnering with the DOT and the private Welcome Centers to place brochures has the potential to boost tourist visits. Having advertisements and/or stories in regional and statewide brochures additionally increases the number of prospective tourists reached. The Discover Dallas County brochure is already located in some Welcome Centers.

State-operated Welcome Centers are located in:

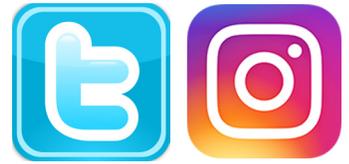
Davis City	Underwood
Sergeant Bluff	Wilton

Partnering Welcome Centers are located in:

Arnolds Park	Elk Horn	Nashua
Bloomfield	Elkader	Northwood
Burlington	Emmetsburg	Percival
Council Bluffs	Lamoni	Sioux City
Dubuque	Missouri Valley	

## Other Online Resources

Other online resources include the social media networks Twitter and Instagram. While Facebook generally brings in more views from adults, Instagram is currently one of the more popular social networks for youth. This is not a difficult hurdle to overcome, though, as Instagram is owned by Facebook, and provides seamless integration by allowing users to post Instagram photos to Facebook and Twitter with a few extra clicks.



Sources: [twitter.com](https://twitter.com)  
[instagram.com](https://instagram.com)

Other resources for reviews include TripAdvisor and Google Reviews. Instead of passively waiting for people to leave reviews on these sites, actively encourage visitors to do so. Acknowledging reviewers who leave comments, whether positive or negative, boosts public perception of the Dallas County Conservation Board, staff, and facilities, by showing that the reviewers are being listened to. If there is a complaint, try to address it through a comment, or encourage the reviewer to call or email a specific staff member who has the resources and authority to remedy their concern.



**tripadvisor**<sup>®</sup>  
Source: [tripadvisor.com](https://tripadvisor.com)

When someone visits a DCCB facility, encourage them to follow the official social media page, and leave a review online to bolster your internet presence and increase search engine results. A couple of ways to do this is to have the information printed in brochures available on-site, and by having feedback cards for visitors to fill out with comments and their contact information. A follow-up email or letter could go a long way toward making visitors feel heard and appreciated, and provides another opportunity to encourage online feedback.



Source: [southjersey-techies.net](https://southjersey-techies.net)

# Messaging Calendar

A messaging calendar is an easy way to keep track of the types of messages that should be sent to reach specific audiences. An effective calendar can be broken up into these four main parts:

Messages                      Message Medium                      Dates                      Audience

Each message can be further refined into categories such as “Immediate”, “Intermediate”, and “Long-Term” messages.

Immediate messages cover issues that may be considered “breaking news,” like last-minute program cancellations and/or emergency closures of facilities. These are often targeted toward a local audience, unless a major tourist event is occurring, and are best communicated through faster channels like social media, websites, and email.

Intermediate messages may cover news and issues like upcoming projects, project updates, and highlighting staff, volunteers, and/or programs.

Below is an example marketing calendar that organizes messages by the communication medium, ideal posting schedule, and divided between local and regional/statewide outreach.

	Message	Dates	Message Medium & Audience															
			Newsletter	E-Newsletter	Email/Text Alerts	Social Media	DCCB Website	Travel Iowa	Statewide Magazines/CVBs	Newspaper	Community Signs/Banners	County Visitor Guide	School Fliers	Brochures	Permanent Signs	Fliers at DCCB Facilities		
Immediate	Emergency Closures	As-needed																
	Program Cancellations	As-needed																
Intermediate	Grants	As-needed																
	Fundraising Drives	As-needed																
	Programs & Special Events	Seasonal																
	Projects	As-needed																
	Highlight Staff/Volunteers	Monthly																
Long-Term	Highlight Program Success	Monthly																
	LNT / Conservation Principles	Annual																
	Trail Etiquette	Annual																
	Outdoor Skills & Safety	Seasonal																
	Locations and Attractions	Annual																
	Nature facts	Seasonal																
	Benefits of Conservation	Annual																
	Benefits of Outdoor Recreation	Annual																
	Economic Development	Annual																

Local  
Regional/Statewide

Similarly, a social media posting schedule can help staff by pre-determining the content and scheduling of messages on a weekly or monthly basis. Topics can be related to popular social media trends like “Throwback Thursday” (#tbt)—which offers a great opportunity to continue educating followers about the fascinating history of Dallas County, major events like Prairie Awakening, or seasonal themes. An example schedule, with some generic and Dallas County-specific topics is shown below. Both the marketing calendar and the posting schedule are easily adapted to the needs and constraints of staff, and easily modified when changes are required.

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram
<b>Monday</b>	Upcoming/Weekly Programming	Daily Programming	Weekend Update
<b>Tuesday</b>	Trail Tuesday	Daily Programming	Trail Tuesday
<b>Wednesday</b>	Natural Wonders Wednesday	Daily Programming	Natural Wonders Wednesday
<b>Thursday</b>	Throwback Thursday / History	Daily Programming	Throwback Thursday / History
<b>Friday</b>	Weekend Activity Suggestions	Daily Programming	Program Photos
<b>Saturday</b>			
<b>Sunday</b>			
<b>January</b>	What to Expect in the New Year		Snow Activities
<b>February</b>	Love Nature		Love Nature
<b>March</b>	Trail Etiquette, RRVT Trail Pass	Trail Etiquette, RRVT Trail Pass	Spring Blooms
<b>April</b>	Ephemeral Scavenger Hunt		Ephemeral Scavenger Hunt
<b>May</b>	Multiuse Trails		Baby Wildlife
<b>June</b>	Summer Activities		Camping
<b>July</b>	Outdoor Safety	Outdoor Safety	Water Activities
<b>August</b>	Back to School		Staff Preparing for School Programs
<b>September</b>	Prairie Awakening		Prairie Awakening
<b>October</b>	Scare Away Pollutants/Invasives		Fall Colors
<b>November</b>	Thankful for Our Environment		Holiday History
<b>December</b>	Winter Activities		Winter Wonders

## Marketing Themes

Three themes emerged during the public involvement phases of this Strategic Plan. These themes can be used to develop marketing content with the goal of increasing public and political support for the mission and work of the Board and its staff.

The growing trend toward urbanization and suburban sprawl is leaving people with fewer opportunities to experience natural environments, especially in a state that ranks near the bottom in the total amount of publicly owned lands. Emphasizing the wide-ranging benefits of the work done by the Dallas County Conservation Board and staff is a necessary component of increasing public support, use, and environmental tourism.

### *The Benefits of Conservation*

One of the problems identified by the community survey was that a significant number of people in Dallas County are not aware of the Conservation Board, and of those that know about the organization there is a lack of awareness about its mission and purpose. The idea of what constitutes “conservation,” and the importance of partaking in conservation activities may be lost in this confusion.

Conserve2Enhance, a program of the University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center, identifies four main, interconnected categories of benefits related to water conservation.<sup>1</sup>

- **Flowing Rivers** – As humans put more pressure on water resources, less water is left to support aquatic and riparian species. Maintaining instream water levels within stable stream-banks supports the species that depend on the water, and provide humans with water, activities, and picturesque scenery.
- **Recreation** – Conserve2Enhance emphasizes the importance of water in recreation activities—either as the basis for activities like canoeing, or as an integral part of an ecosystem that supports other activities like hiking and camping. Easy access to a variety of recreational opportunities becomes an important deciding factor for tourists, families, and potential new residents.
- **Streamside Vegetation and Habitat** – Riparian vegetation not only improves water quality by acting as a natural pollutant filtration system, but they are also sources of food and shelter to the species that rely on them. Maintaining instream water resources that support riparian areas is vital to the health of the ecosystem.
- **Aquifer Recharge** – Human pressure on aquifers can lead to a drop in the local water table, and a related drop in surface water levels. Targeting groundwater recharge may increase surface water to a healthy level and help recharge the aquifer with clean water.

Related to these categories are more general benefits of biodiversity management, such as:

- Increased hunting and fishing opportunities, which can be integrated as part of a sound population ecology management program
- Increased variety of outdoor and nature-based activities like hiking, canoeing, nature photography, and birding
- Flood risk reduction through ecosystem services management
- Improvement in community health through access to nature

## *The Benefits of Outdoor Activities*

A study by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that the average American child spends an estimated 4 to 7 minutes per day engaging in unstructured outdoor play, and an estimated 7 hours in front of an electronic screen.<sup>2</sup> Increased childhood exposure to outdoor activities and natural settings have been shown to:

- Decrease ADHD symptoms
- Improve creativity, problem solving, focus, and self-discipline
- Reduce stress and aggression
- Increase overall happiness and promote emotional development
- Decrease weight-related health issues
- Increase student performance in school
- Develop stronger immune systems<sup>3,4</sup>

Numerous studies have also alluded to the restorative benefits of natural environments on adult physical and mental health, including:

- Healthier, stronger immune systems
- Decreased symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Longer attention spans
- Decreased recovery times from illness and injury
- Improved palliative care and decreased progression of symptoms in dementia and Alzheimer's patients<sup>5,6</sup>

## *Economic Benefits*

The economic benefits of conservation programs are closely tied to the other benefits already identified in this section. While it is incredibly difficult to put an exact dollar amount on conservation efforts, the availability of recreational opportunities and access to natural spaces is a common economic development tool used to draw the young professional demographic to places like the Pacific Northwest and the Mountain West. While the DCCB operates on a much smaller scale and within a different regional ecosystem, the idea correlates—young professionals and families are increasingly drawn to places with available open spaces,<sup>7</sup> and businesses and economic development organizations use that availability as a recruiting tool. Growing areas like Boulder, Denver, Seattle, and even Minneapolis have capitalized on the easy access to nature to bring young talent to the area.

Emphasizing opportunities for recreation is also a great tool for tourism. Increasing the number of visitors to parks, trails, and other facilities boosts the sales tax and hotel/motel tax revenue for the County and its cities. A study into the economic benefits of outdoor activities in Iowa, performed by the Iowa State Extension, estimated that the nearly 13,000 estimated trips on the Raccoon River Valley Trail in 2011 created an associated \$1.1 million in direct spending to Iowa—which could create more economic development through multiplier effects. County park-related spending in Dallas County alone was estimated to be more than \$12 million in 2011.<sup>8</sup>

Proximity to county or state parks has also been shown to have a positive impact of up to 20% on property values, leading to more opportunities in property tax revenue through assessment increases.<sup>9,10</sup>

# IMPLEMENTATION

Just as important as the suggestions laid out in this plan are the steps taken toward implementing the plan. This section provides recommendations for putting this strategic plan into action.

In order to lessen the staff time required for developing marketing content, the Dallas County Conservation Board could create a system for volunteers to submit articles for consideration. The process might be designed to allow the Board to consider submissions as part of regular meetings. Another option may be to ask well-respected members of the conservation, historical preservation, and nature interpretation communities to act as occasional guest columnists.

Implementing this plan requires consistent tracking of activities, spending, and progress toward meeting the objectives outlined for each of the four goals. This information should be analyzed on an annual basis to update the plan. The DCCB should choose a regular meeting at which they will examine the information collected throughout the year, and use the results and recommendations from staff to assess and update this Strategic Plan. An ideal time to update the plan would be at the end of the calendar year, at which time the results can be used to inform the budget process for the upcoming fiscal year.

Annually evaluating and updating the plan also provides an opportunity to determine whether significant process is being made and a new plan should be written prior to the end of the 5-year time horizon, whether everything is on schedule, or whether there are opportunities for improvement or a need to change goals, objectives, or approaches. A plan of action for the upcoming year is then more easily developed.

Some of the suggestions put forth in this plan could potentially be time-intensive for staff to implement. Considering the time constraints staff already face, options for alleviating some of the burdens were explored during the development of this plan. One such option is partnering with local colleges and universities to offer social media and management internships in return for college credit. It is becoming immensely important for college students and graduate school students to have substantive internships prior to entering the workforce. Social media-based work is highly beneficial to business and marketing students, and today's post-secondary students grew up with online networking and have instinctive knowledge regarding current usage trends and effective marketing techniques. Business students may be better suited for monitoring and evaluation. Students studying education and/or natural resources management may be helpful in program development and delivery. History students may be interested in assisting with studying and promoting the historical piece of the DCCB's mission. The possibilities are endless with the number of internship-seeking students in Central Iowa, their varied interests and expertise, and the needs of the Conservation Board staff.

Hiring a part-time intern may be time-intensive at the beginning, but as time goes on and more interns complete time in the office or the field, routines and expectations are developed and institutionalized, and ideally less staff supervision is required. Internships are also an effective way to develop a volunteer base and potential future staff. There is always the possibility that this type of program will not work out, but having a firm work plan in place prior to hiring an intern eliminates some of the transitional struggles that might otherwise occur.

Developing partnerships with local businesses, regional tourism and economic development groups, and government organizations is also helpful for program delivery and marketing. It may be as simple as cross-listing the DCCB website and Facebook page on a City's official website, or developing resource-sharing relationships. The more places information can be found, the more opportunities for that information to spread by word of mouth and web searches (often referred to as Search Engine Optimization (SEO) marketing). Partnerships could also be cultivated with outdoor-based businesses and organizations like REI, Sportsman's Warehouse, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, or a local fishing club to utilize DCCB facilities for events, and/or sponsorship and assistance for DCCB events.

This plan is largely designed around facilitating increased awareness of the Dallas County Conservation Board, its properties, and its programs. As the majority of the trail system in rural Dallas County is constructed, the future beyond this plan may shift the focus away from awareness and marketing to historical and ecological preservation and recreational management. Ideally, with the rapid increase in the southeast portion of the county and an increased visibility and awareness of the Conservation Board, more financial resources will be available in the future for implementation of current and future goals and objectives.

## SOURCES:

<sup>1</sup> <https://conserve2enhance.org/conservation-benefits>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Advocacy/Children-in-Nature.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.childrenandnature.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/CNNHealthBenefitsSynthesisMarch2010FINALAS.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.fws.gov/international/pdf/education-parents-get-kids-outdoors.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4204431/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.alz.org/library/downloads/designenviron\\_rl2014.pdf](https://www.alz.org/library/downloads/designenviron_rl2014.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4962185/>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.card.iastate.edu/research/resource-and-environmental/items/DNR-AmenityRevised\\_9-25-12.pdf](https://www.card.iastate.edu/research/resource-and-environmental/items/DNR-AmenityRevised_9-25-12.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.actrees.org/files/Research/parks\\_on\\_property\\_values.pdf](http://www.actrees.org/files/Research/parks_on_property_values.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> John L. Crompton. 2005. "The impact of parks on property values: empirical evidence from the past two decades in the United States." *Managing Leisure* 10(4), 203-218.

Vector images courtesy of vecteezy.com

# APPENDIX A

Community Survey  
Full Results



# APPENDIX B

Community Survey  
Filtered Results



# Dallas County Conservation Board Survey

*...helping organizations make better decisions since 1982*

Findings Report

**Submitted to the Dallas County Conservation Board**

ETC Institute  
725 W. Frontier Lane,  
Olathe, Kansas  
66061

**June 2017**





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# Dallas County Conservation Board Survey

## Executive Summary

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### Overview

ETC Institute administered a needs assessment survey for the Dallas County Conservation Board during the spring of 2017. The survey was administered as part of the Dallas County Conservation Board's development of a Strategic Plan that will guide the future of parks, museums, conservation areas, and recreational opportunities over the next 10 years. The statistically valid survey will help the Dallas County Conservation Board gauge satisfaction with current programs and facilities, and identify public priorities for conservation activities and programming in Dallas County.

### Methodology

ETC Institute mailed a survey packet to a random sample of households. Each survey packet contained a cover letter, a copy of the survey, and a postage-paid return envelope. Residents who received the survey were given the option of returning the survey by mail or completing it on-line at [www.DallasCountyIowaSurvey.org](http://www.DallasCountyIowaSurvey.org).

Ten days after the surveys were mailed, ETC Institute sent emails and placed phone calls to the households that received the survey to encourage participation. The emails contained a link to the on-line version of the survey to make it easy for residents to complete the survey. To prevent people who were not residents of Dallas County from participating, everyone who completed the survey on-line was required to enter their home address prior to submitting the survey. ETC Institute then matched the addresses that were entered on-line with the addresses that were originally selected for the random sample. If the address from a survey completed on-line did not match one of the addresses selected for the sample, the on-line survey was not counted.

The goal was to obtain completed surveys from at least 300 residents. The goal was exceeded with a total of 403 residents completing the survey. The overall results for the sample of 403 households have a precision of at least +/-4.9% at the 95% level of confidence.

This report contains the following:

- Charts showing the overall results of the survey (Section 1)
- Tabular data showing the overall results for all questions on the survey (Section 4)
- A copy of the survey instrument (Section 5)

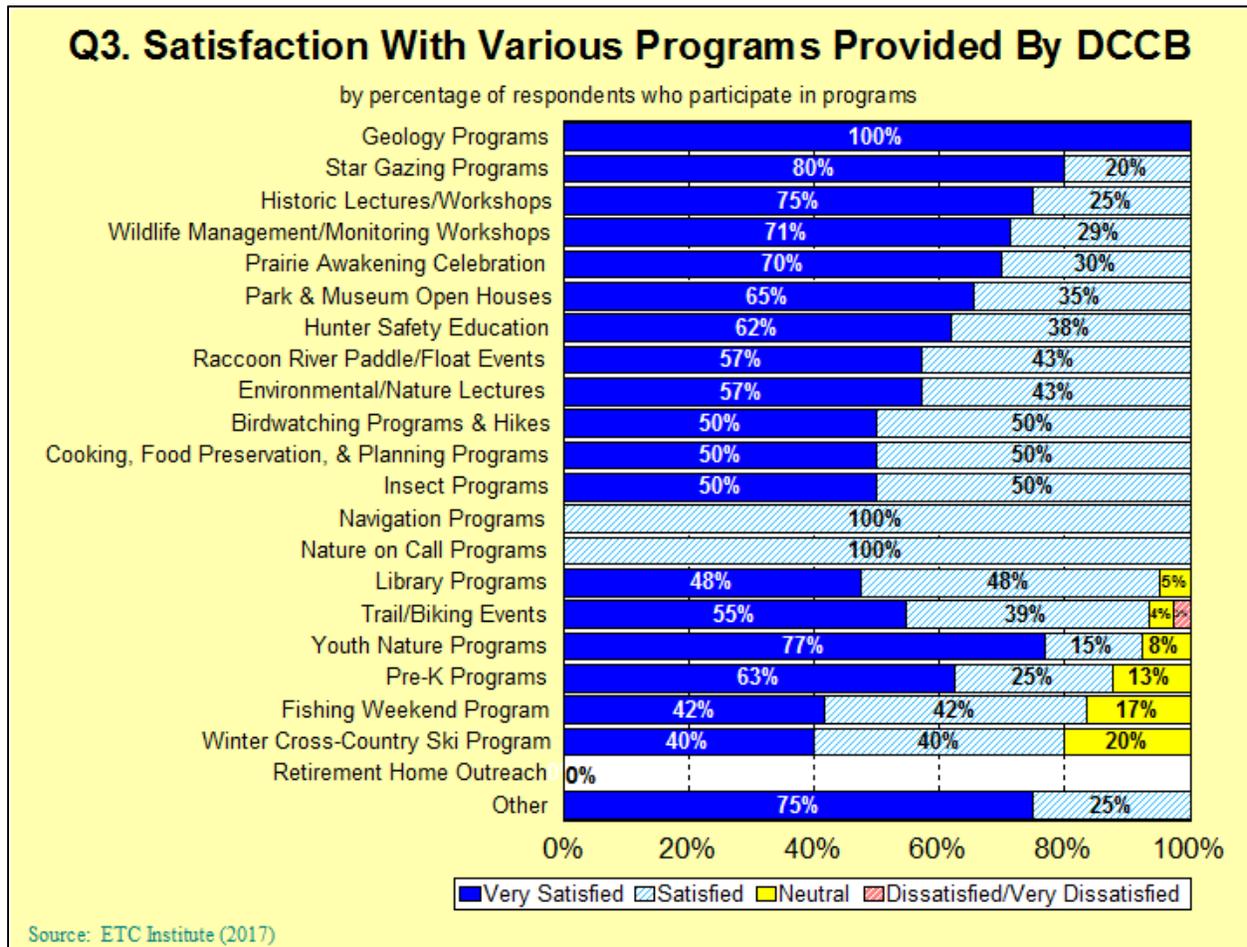
The major findings of the survey are summarized on the following pages.

## Overall Satisfaction and Reasons for Use

Overall, 44% of respondents were either “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with the overall value their household receives from the Dallas County Conservation Board. Fifty-three percent (53%) of respondents indicated they were “neutral”, 2% were “somewhat dissatisfied”, and 1% were “very dissatisfied”. Forty-nine percent (49%) of respondents indicated they are aware of the Dallas County Conservation Board. Seventy percent (70%) of respondents indicated they use programs, parks, facilities, and amenities offered by the Dallas County Conservation Board because of the location of the program or facility, 47% of respondents indicated it was because of the reasonable fees, and 40% indicated it was due to the quality of the program or facility.

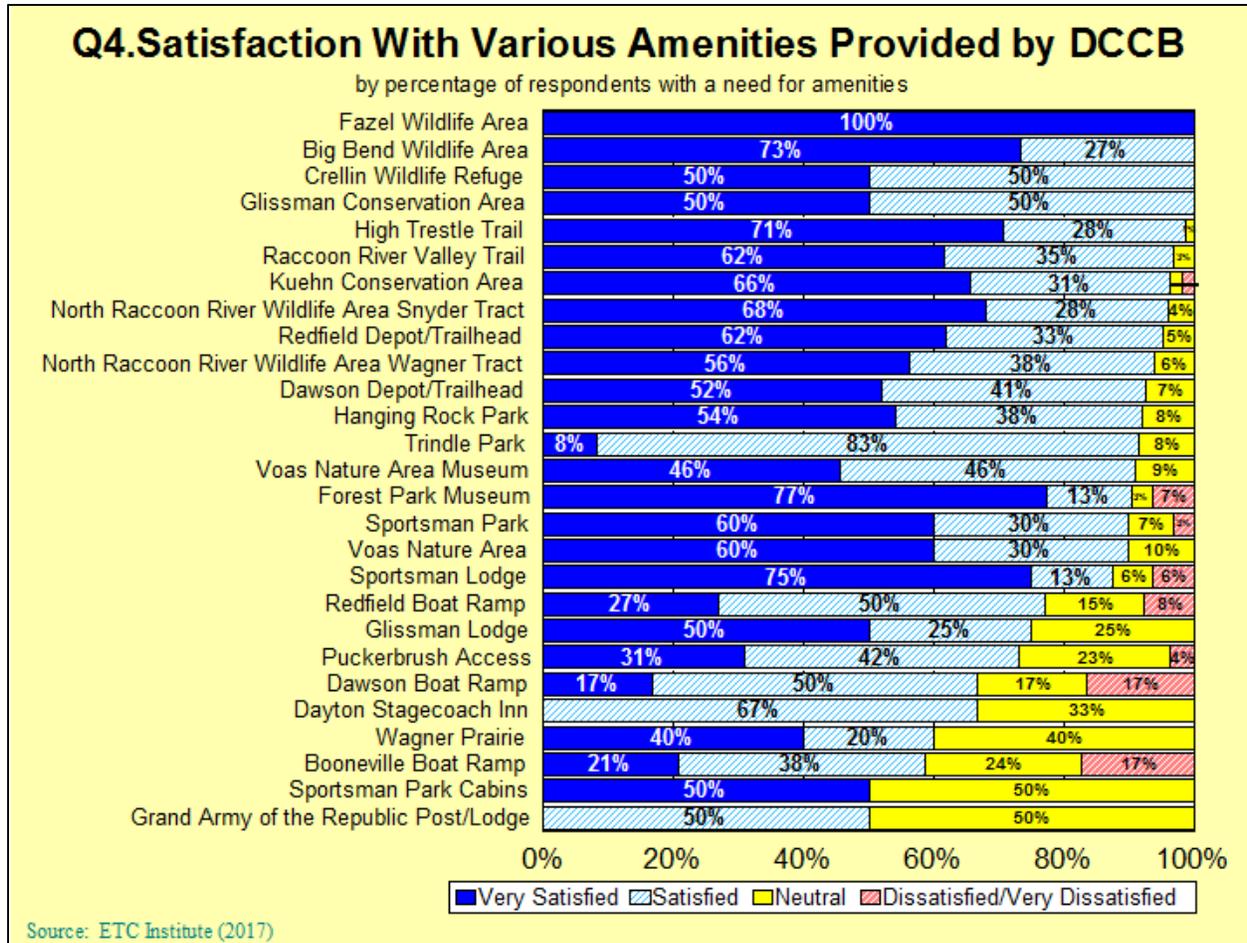
## Program Participation and Ratings

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their household has participated in 22 different programs. If their household had participated in the program they were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the program. The most participated in programs include: trail/biking events (21%), library programs (18%), and park and museum open houses (7%). Only one of the programs which respondents had participated in received any “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” ratings. Only 3% of respondents who indicated they had participated in trail/biking events gave a negative rating. The other 21 programs either received positive or neutral ratings. The chart below shows the rating for all 22 programs.



## Amenity Use and Ratings

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their household has used 27 different amenities. If their household has used the amenity they were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the amenity. The most used amenities include: Raccoon River Valley Trail (48%), High Trestle Trail (43%), and Kuehn Conservation Area (14%). Only seven of the amenities which respondents had used received any “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” ratings. Fazel Wildlife Area, Big Bend Wildlife Area, Crellin Wildlife Refuge, and Glissman Conservation Area all received 100% positive ratings.



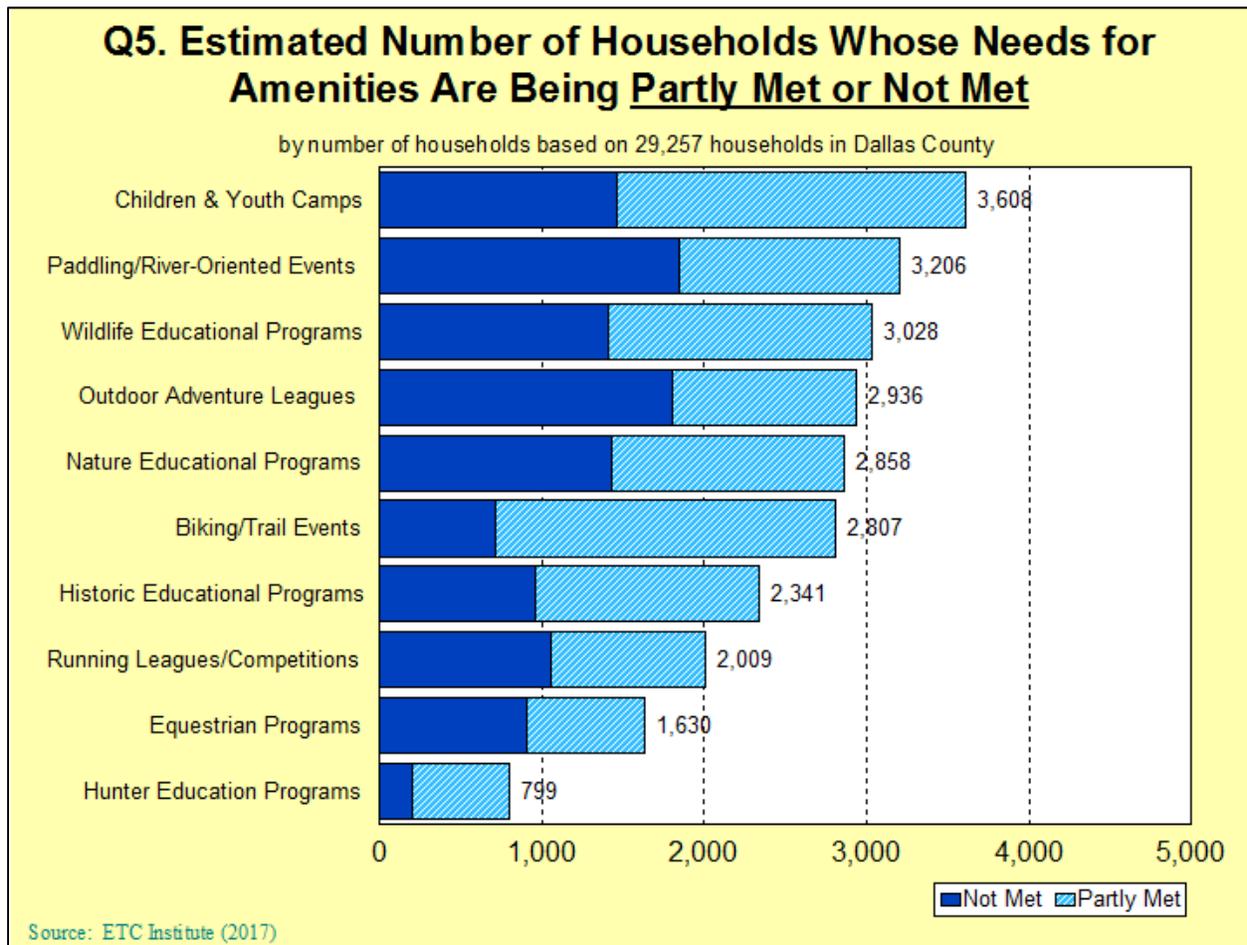
## Barriers to Park, Facility and Program Usage

Respondents were asked from a list of 17 potential reasons to identify what prevents them from using Dallas County Conservation Board programs, parks, facilities, and amenities more often. The top three reasons selected were: lack of awareness regarding programs/facilities (62%), too busy (33%), and not interested (25%).

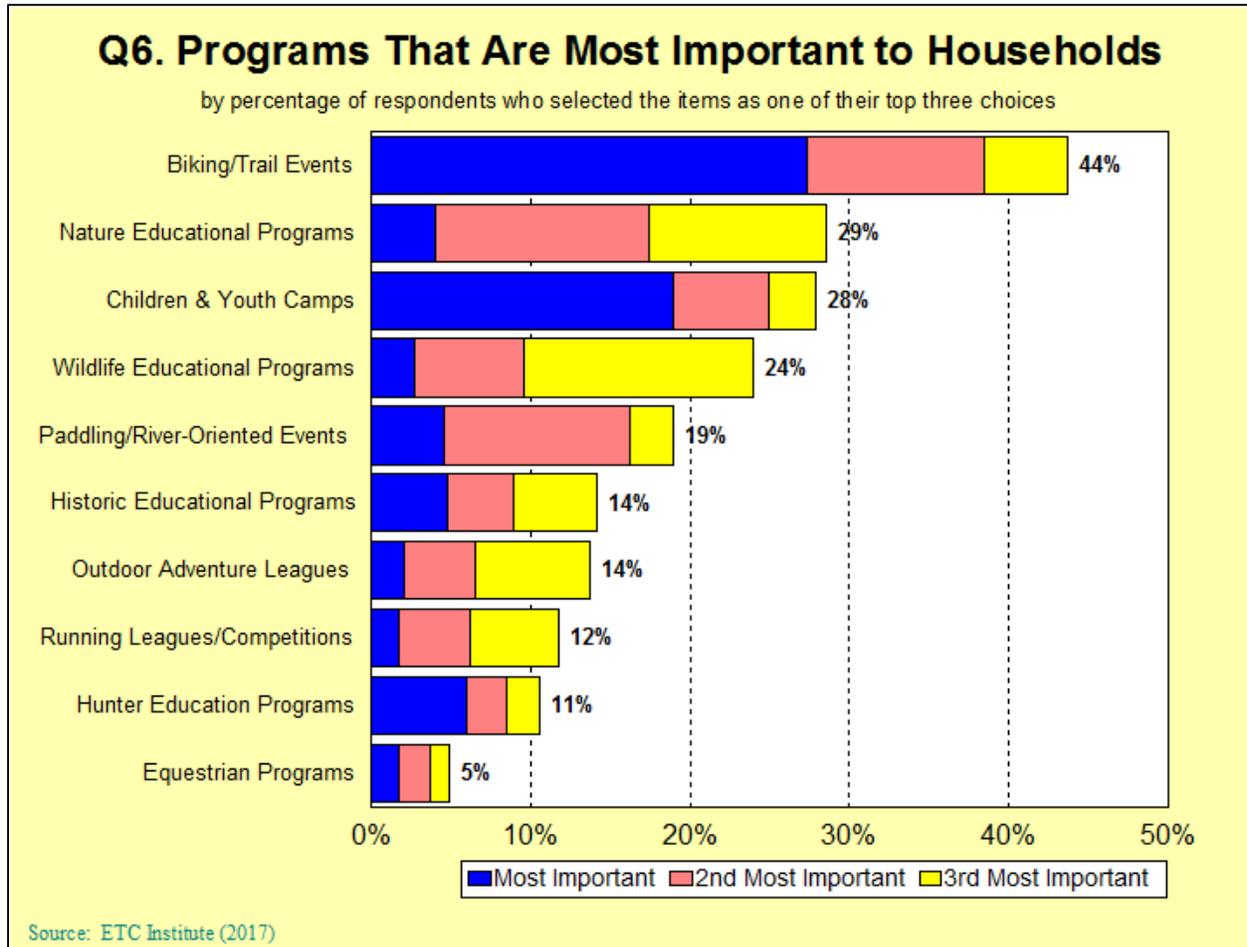
## Programming Needs and Priorities

**Programming Needs.** Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 10 recreational programs and rate how well their needs for each program were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had “unmet” needs for each program.

The four programs with the highest percentage of households that had needs were: biking/trail events (39%), wildlife education programs (23%), children and youth camps (22%), and nature educational programs (22%). In addition to having some of the highest total need, two programs, children and youth camps and wildlife educational programs, also were among the top three highest unmet need among the 10 programming-related areas that were assessed. ETC Institute estimates a total of 3,608 households have unmet needs for children and youth camps and 3,028 households have unmet needs for wildlife educational programs. The estimated number of households that have unmet needs for each of the 10 programs that were assessed is shown in the chart below.



**Program Importance.** In addition to assessing the needs for each program, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents place on each program. Based on the sum of respondents’ top three choices, the three most important programs to residents were: biking/trail events (44%), nature educational programs (29%), and children and youth camps (28%). The percentage of residents who selected each program as one of their top three choices is shown in the chart below.



## Additional Findings

Forty-four percent (44%) of respondents indicated they use word of mouth to learn about Dallas County Conservation Board programs, parks, facilities, amenities, and news. Thirty-three percent (33%) get information from friends and neighbors and 23% use the newspaper. The most preferred methods for learning about Dallas County Conservation Board programs, parks, facilities, amenities, and news are: the newsletter, Facebook, E-newsletter, and the County website.

The three items which received the highest level of priority from respondents, based on the sum of their top four choices include: upgrade existing neighborhood parks, playgrounds, shelters, etc. (37%), further develop Brazos River Park (30%, and develop additional walking and biking trails within parks.

Respondents were asked to indicate which three areas are most important for the Dallas County Conservation Board to focus its efforts and resources. Based on the sum of respondent's top three choices the items that are most important to respondents include: protecting water quality (55%), management of natural resources (48%), and the maintenance or development of multi-use trails (45%).

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

When analyzing the amenities offered by the Dallas County Conservation Board children and youth camps was among the top items that respondent households have a need for and had the highest level of unmet need. Children and youth camps was also the third most important program to households. Focusing on children and youth camps within the district would provide the greatest benefit for the largest number of residents within Dallas County. In order to ensure that the Dallas County Conservation Board continues to meet the needs and expectations of the community, ETC Institute recommends that they sustain and/or improve the performance in areas that were identified as having high levels of unmet need within the County.

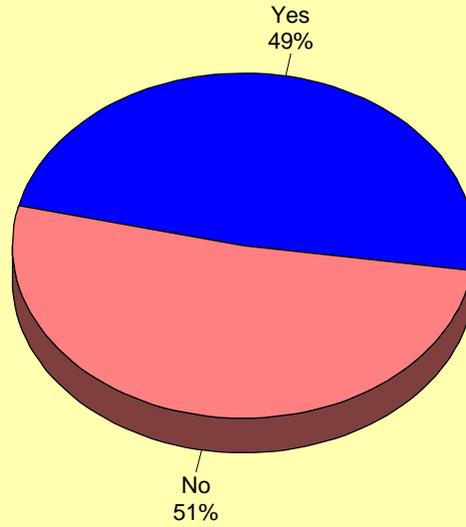
# Section 1

## *Charts and Graphs*

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### Q1. Are You Aware of the Dallas County Conservation Board (DCCB)?

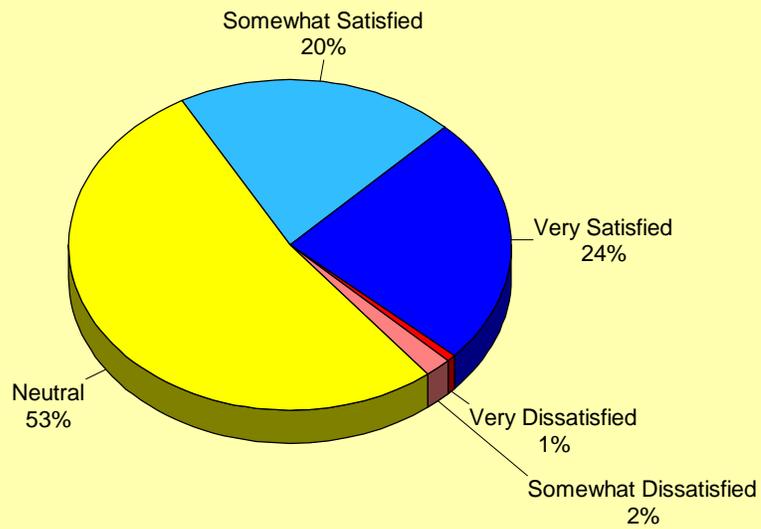
by percentage of respondents



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q2. Level of Satisfaction with the Overall Value Households Receive From the DCCB

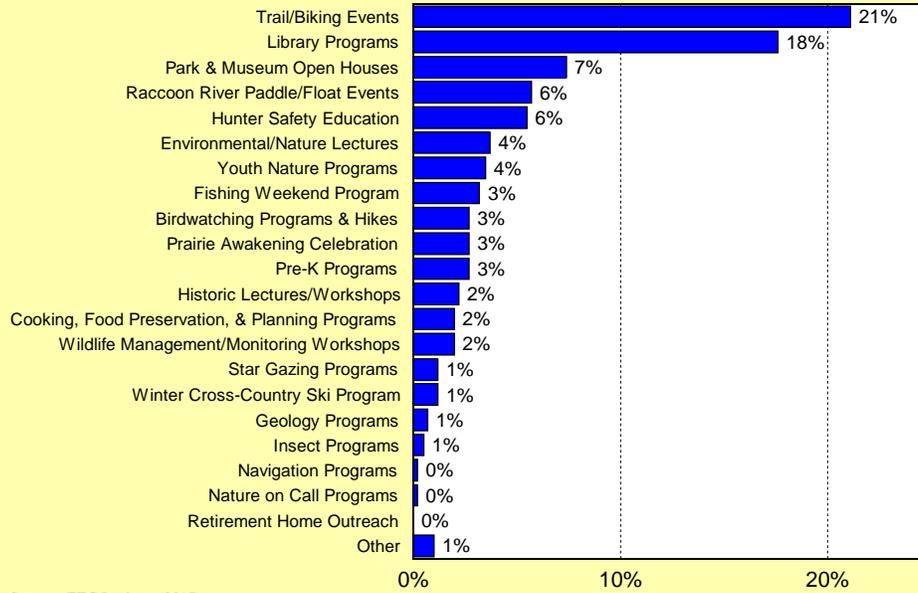
by percentage of respondents



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q3. Programs That Respondent Households Have Participated In

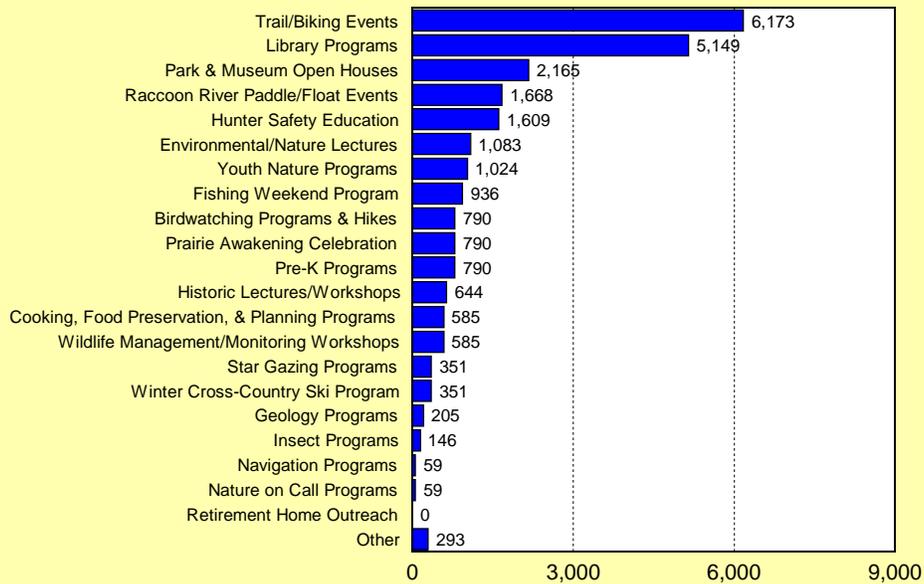
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q3. Estimated Number of Households That Participate in Various Programs

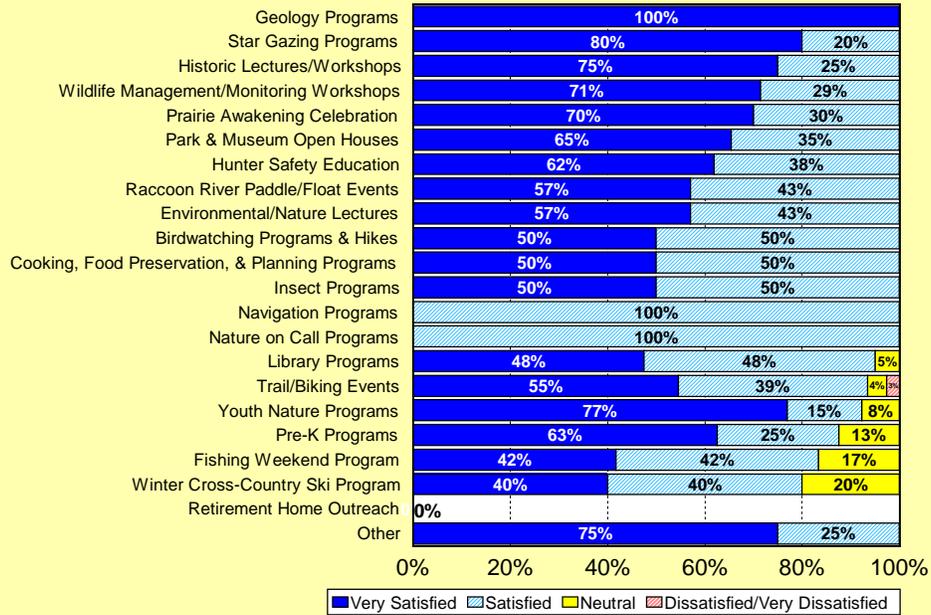
by number of households based on 29,257 households in Dallas County



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q3. Satisfaction With Various Programs Provided By DCCB

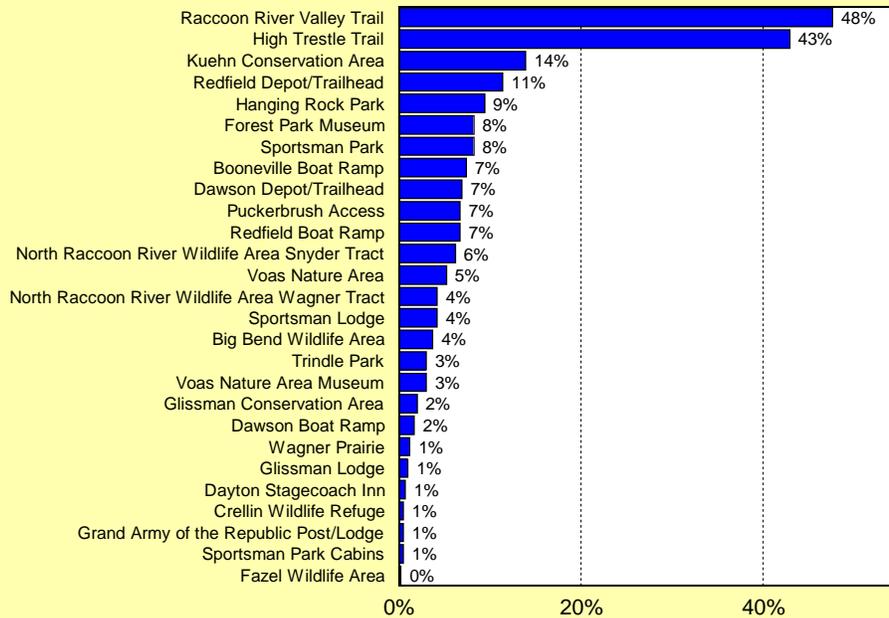
by percentage of respondents who participate in programs



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q4. Amenities Respondent Households Have Used or Visited

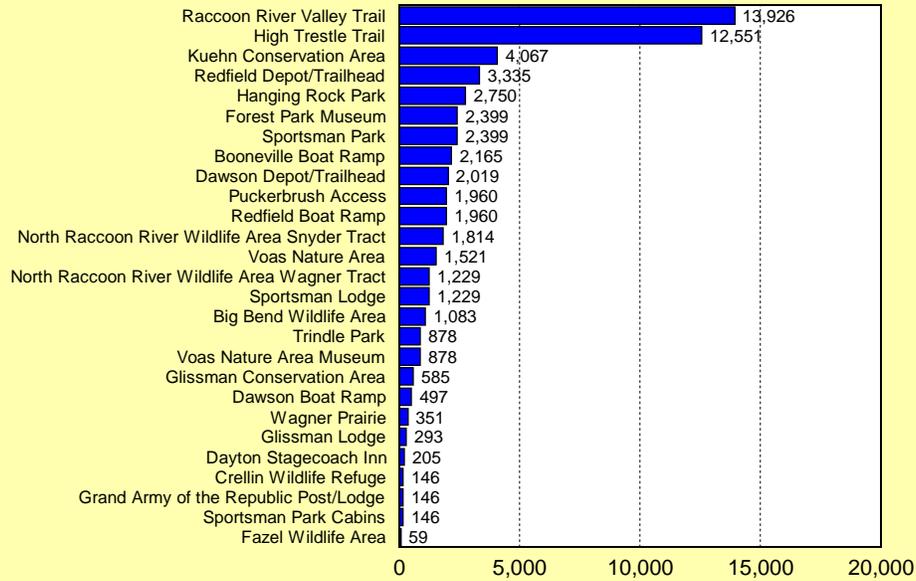
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q4. Estimated Number of Households That Have a Need for Various Amenities

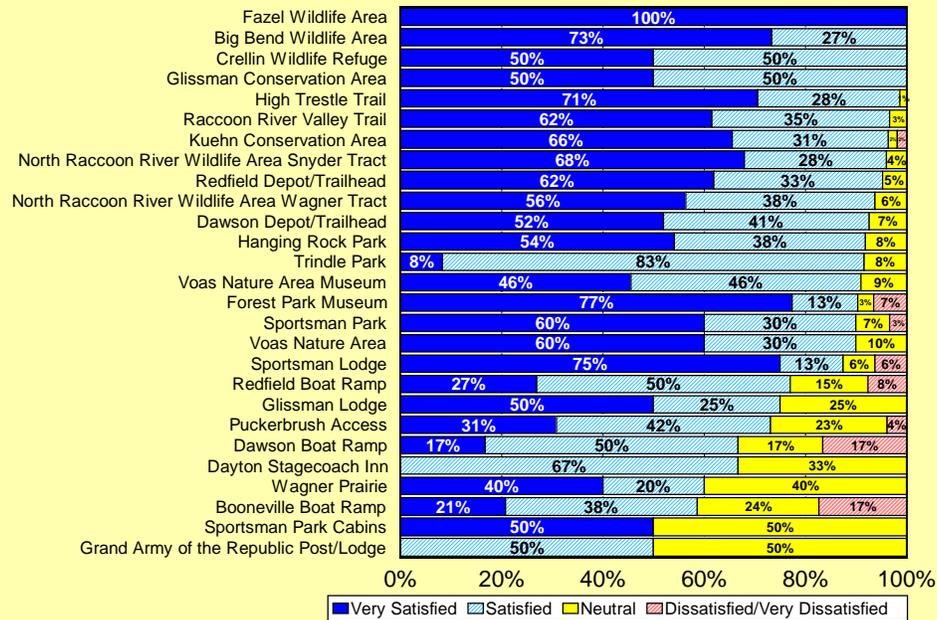
by number of households based on 29,257 households in Dallas County



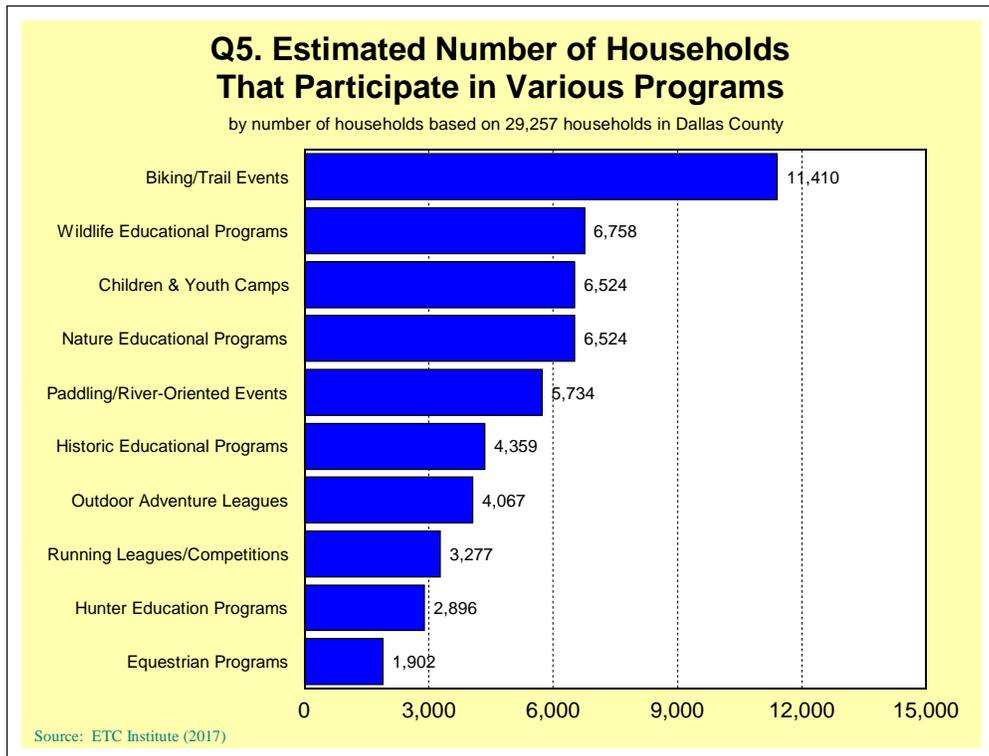
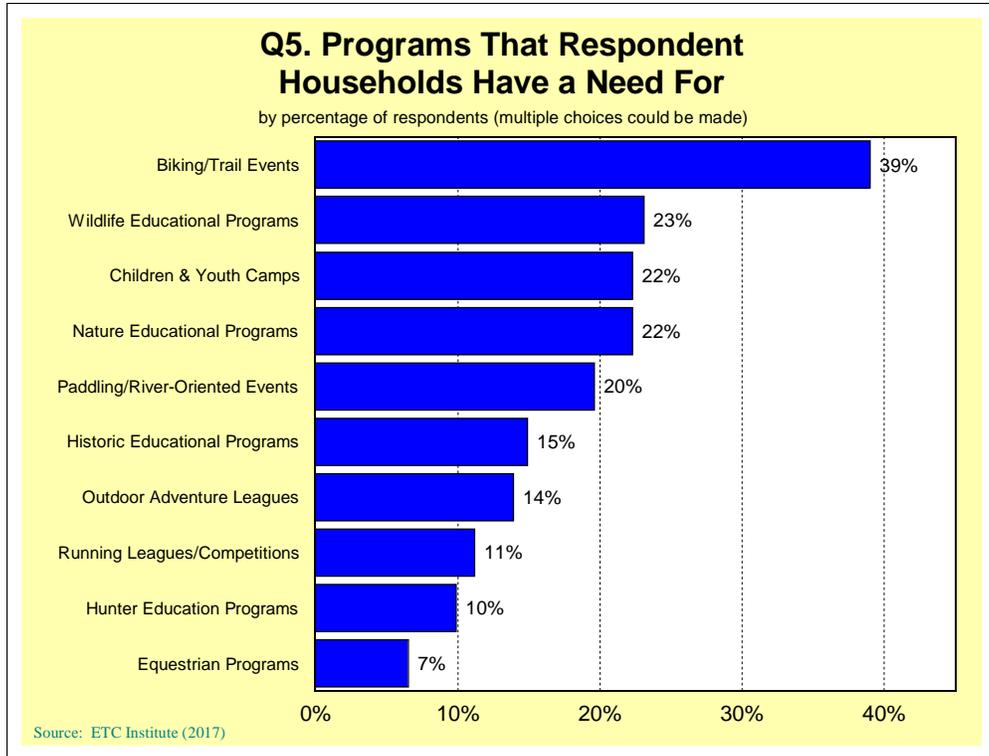
Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q4.Satisfaction With Various Amenities Provided by DCCB

by percentage of respondents with a need for amenities

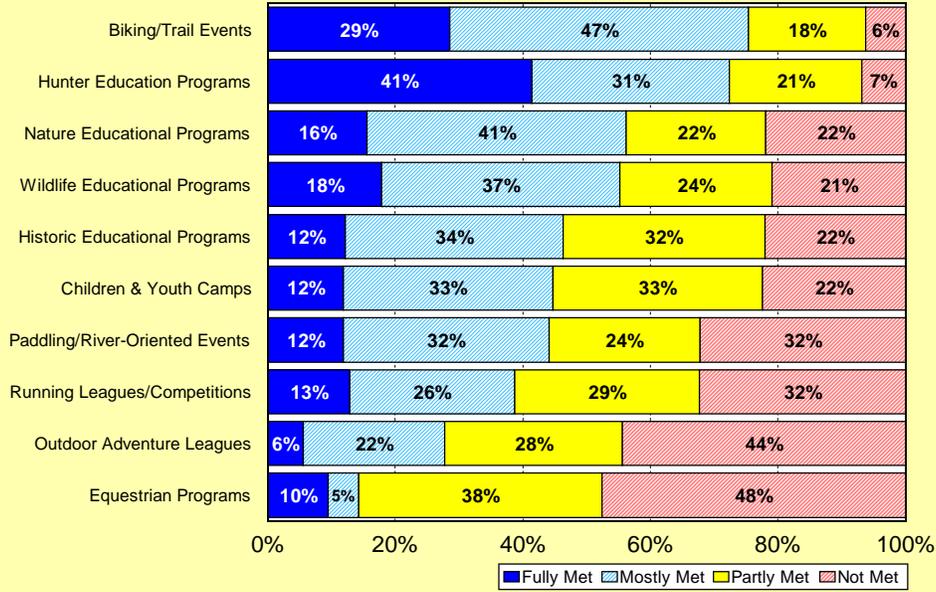


Source: ETC Institute (2017)



### Q5.How Well Various Programs Meet the Needs of Respondent Households

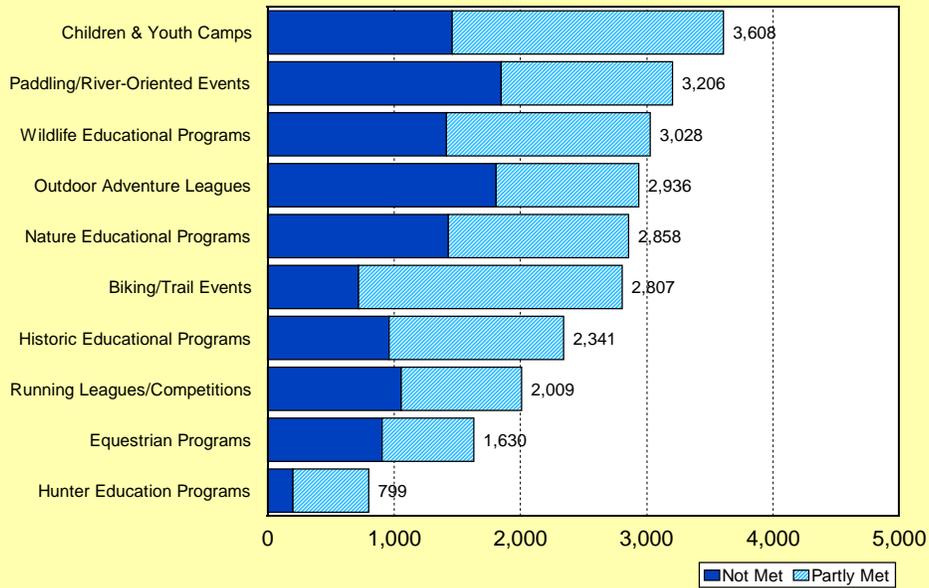
by percentage of respondents with a need for programs



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q5. Estimated Number of Households Whose Needs for Amenities Are Being Partly Met or Not Met

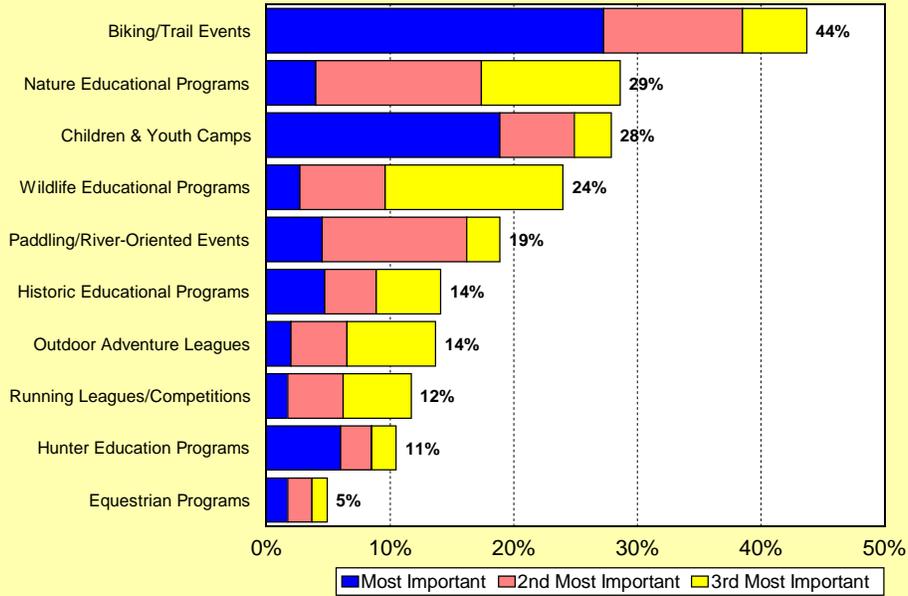
by number of households based on 29,257 households in Dallas County



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q6. Programs That Are Most Important to Households

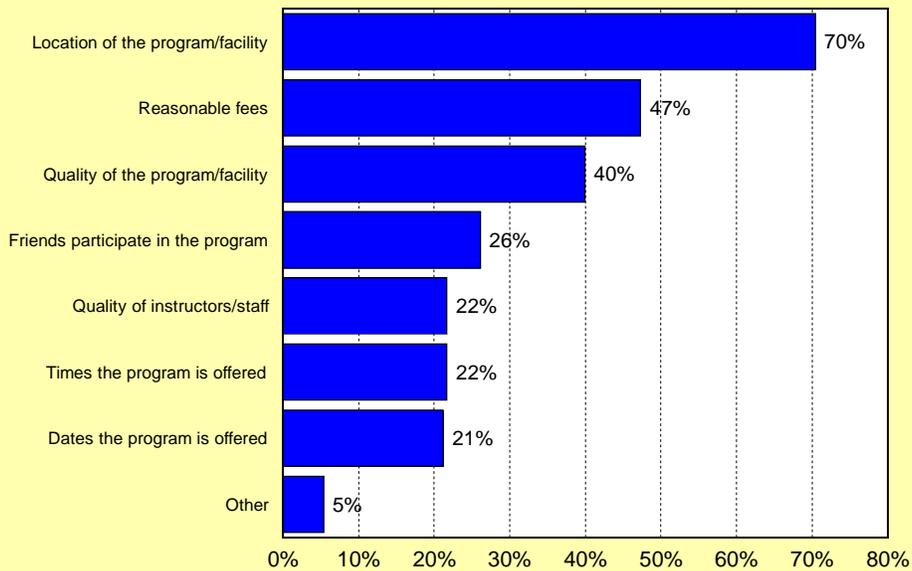
by percentage of respondents who selected the items as one of their top three choices



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q7. Reasons Households Do Use DCCB Programs, Parks, Facilities & Amenities

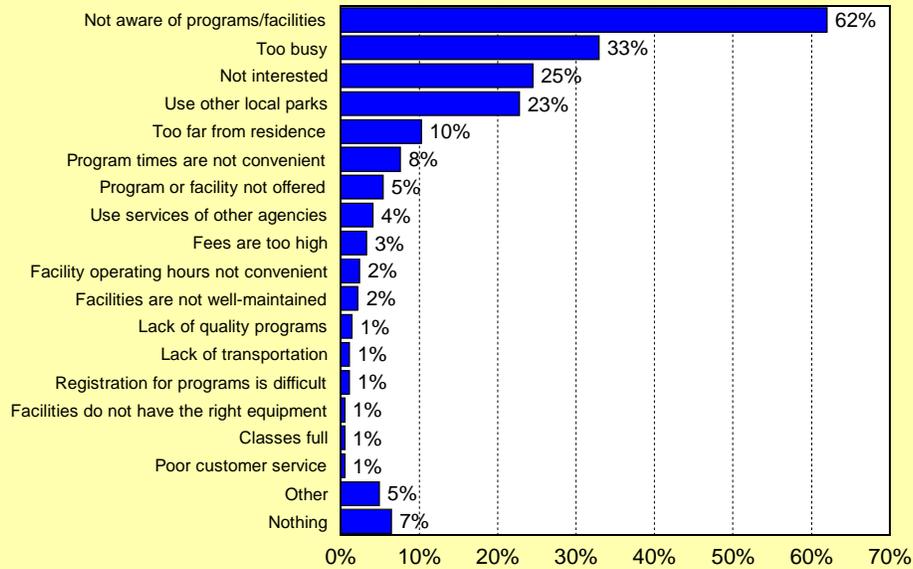
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q8. Reasons Households Do Not Use the DCCB Programs, Parks, Facilities, and Amenities More Often

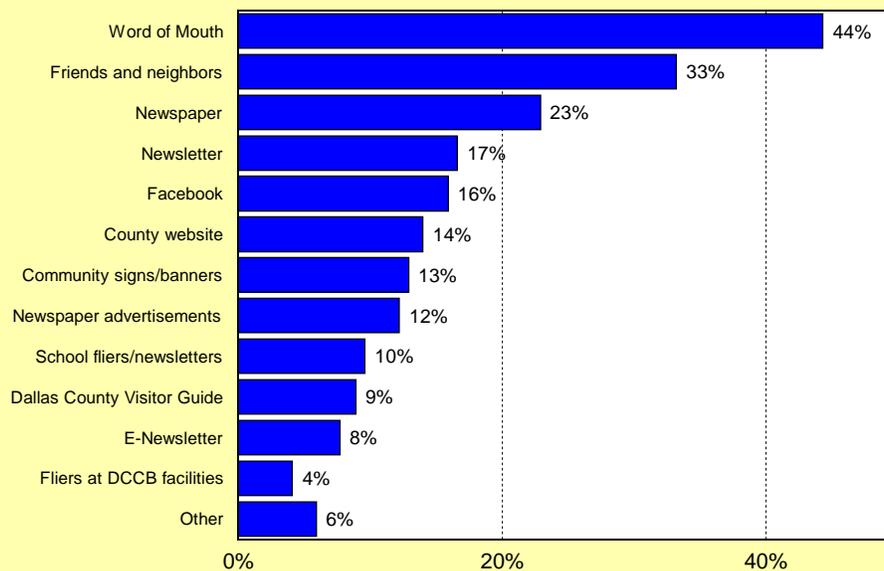
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q9. How Respondent Households Learn About DCCB Programs, Parks, Facilities, Amenities, and News?

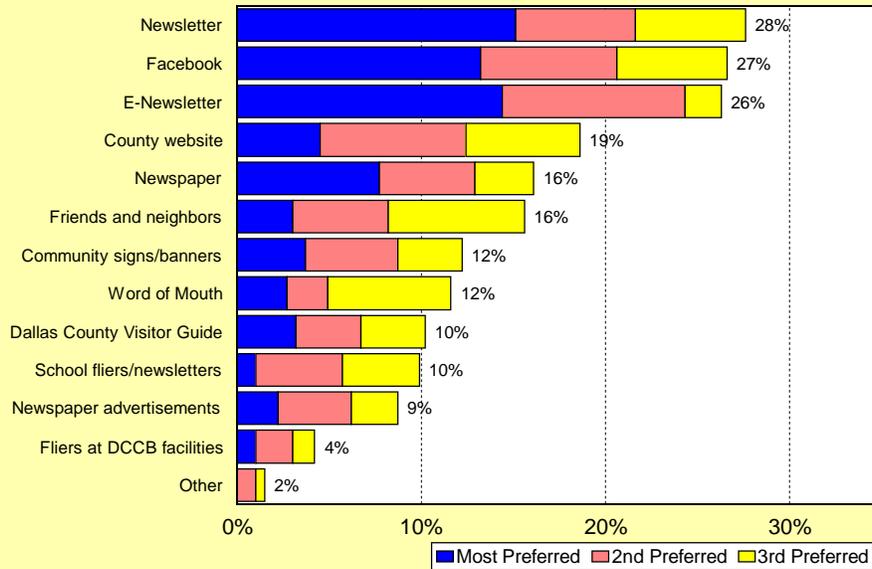
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q10. Most Preferred To Learn About DCCB Programs, Parks, Facilities, Amenities, and News

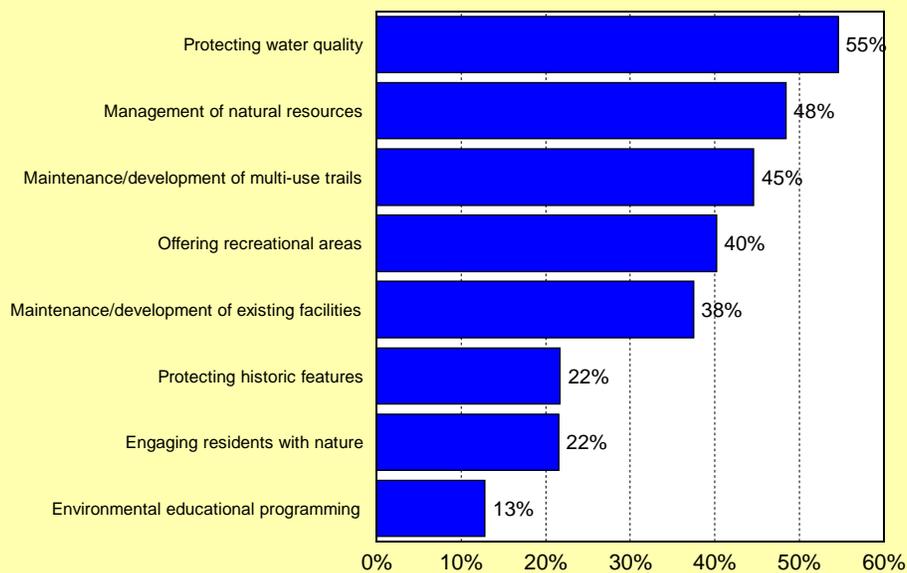
by percentage of respondents who selected the items as one of their top three choices



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q11. Most Important Areas on Which DCCB Should Focus its Efforts and Resources For County Residents

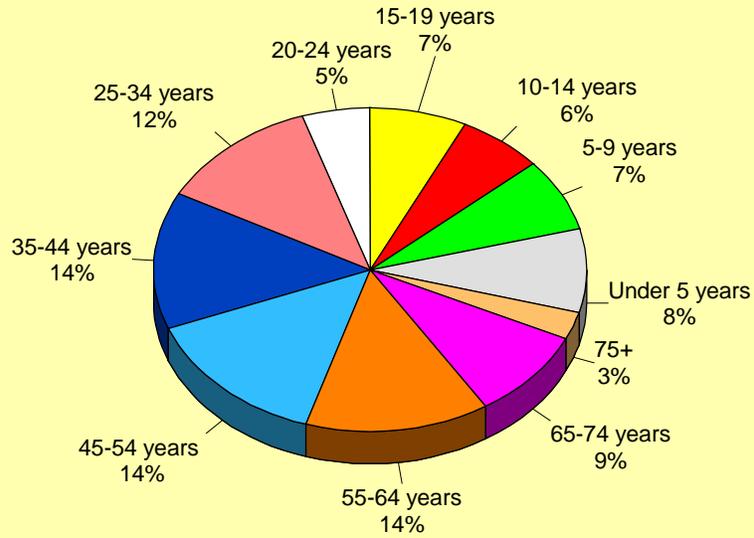
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q12. Demographics: Ages of People in Household

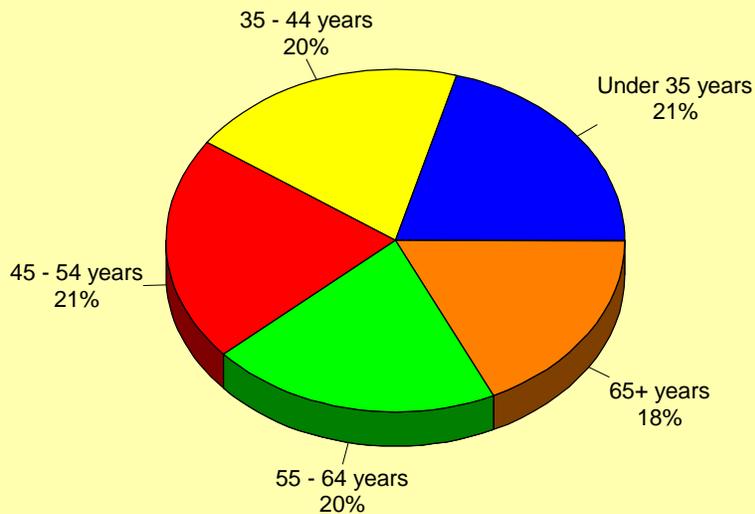
by percentage of household occupants



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q13. Demographics: What is your age?

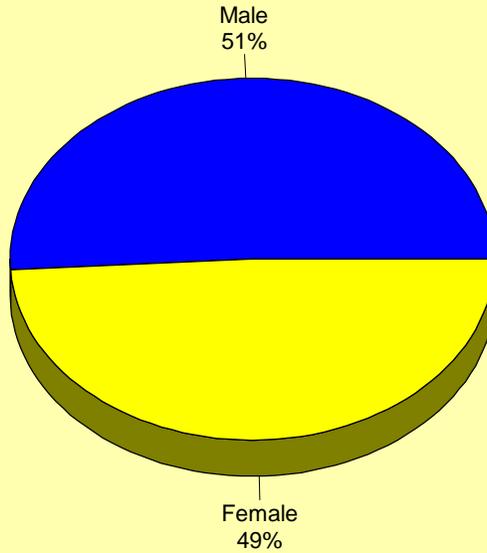
by percentage of respondents



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q14. Demographics: What is your gender?

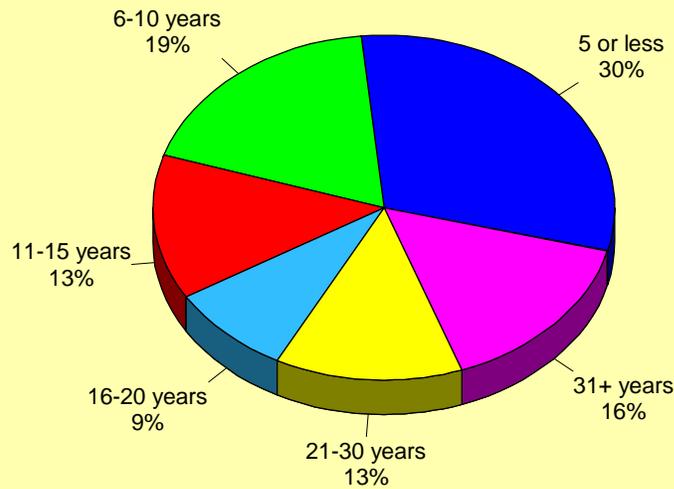
by percentage of respondents



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q15. Demographics: How long have you lived in Dallas County?

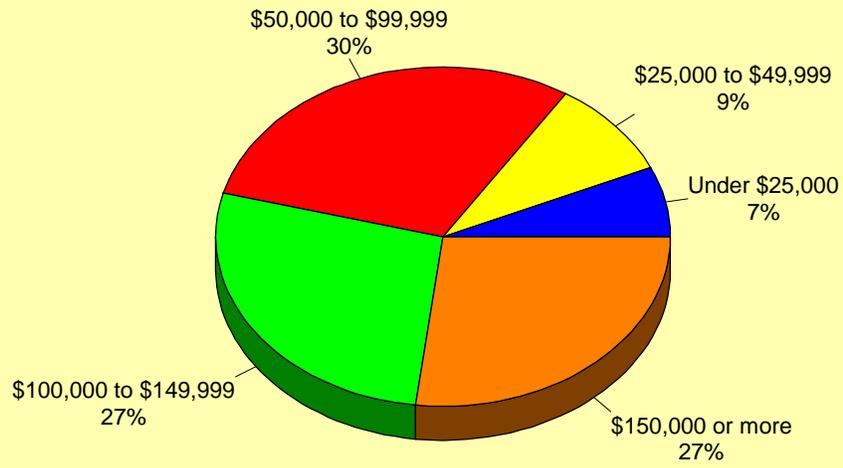
by percentage of respondents



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

### Q16. Demographics: What is your household income?

by percentage of respondents



Source: ETC Institute (2017)

## **Section 2**

### ***Tabular Data***

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**Q1. Are you aware of the Dallas County Conservation Board (DCCB)?**

<u>Q1. Are you aware of the Dallas County Conservation Board (DCCB)</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	196	48.6 %
No	207	51.4 %
Total	403	100.0 %

**Q2. (If YES to Question 1) Please rate your level of satisfaction with the overall value that your household receives from the DCCB.**

Q2. Your level of satisfaction with overall value your household receives from DCCB	Number	Percent
Very Satisfied	37	18.9 %
Somewhat Satisfied	31	15.8 %
Neutral	80	40.8 %
Somewhat Dissatisfied	3	1.5 %
Very Dissatisfied	1	0.5 %
Don't Know	44	22.4 %
Total	196	100.0 %

**WITHOUT DON'T KNOW**

**Q2. (If YES to Question 1) Please rate your level of satisfaction with the overall value that your household receives from the DCCB. (without "don't know")**

Q2. Your level of satisfaction with overall value your household receives from DCCB	Number	Percent
Very Satisfied	37	24.3 %
Somewhat Satisfied	31	20.4 %
Neutral	80	52.6 %
Somewhat Dissatisfied	3	2.0 %
Very Dissatisfied	1	0.7 %
Total	152	100.0 %

**Q3. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD has participated in any of the following DCCB programs during the past year.**

(N=403)

	Yes	No
Q3a. Hunter Safety Education	5.5%	94.5%
Q3b. Birdwatching Programs & Hikes	2.7%	97.3%
Q3c. Raccoon River Paddle/Float Events	5.7%	94.3%
Q3d. Navigation Programs	0.2%	99.8%
Q3e. Cooking, Food Preservation, & Meal Planning Programs	2.0%	98.0%
Q3f. Environmental/Nature Lectures	3.7%	96.3%
Q3g. Geology Programs	0.7%	99.3%
Q3h. Prairie Awakening Celebration	2.7%	97.3%
Q3i. Library Programs	17.6%	82.4%
Q3j. Wildlife Management/Monitoring Workshops	2.0%	98.0%
Q3k. Nature On-Call Programs	0.2%	99.8%
Q3l. Fishing Weekend Program	3.2%	96.8%
Q3m. Park & Museum Open Houses	7.4%	92.6%
Q3n. Historic Lectures/Workshops	2.2%	97.8%
Q3o. Star Gazing Programs	1.2%	98.8%
Q3p. Winter Cross-Country Ski Program	1.2%	98.8%
Q3q. Trail/Biking Events	21.1%	78.9%
Q3r. Insect Programs	0.5%	99.5%
Q3s. Youth Nature Programs	3.5%	96.5%
Q3t. Pre-K Programs	2.7%	97.3%

**Q3. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD has participated in any of the following DCCB programs during the past year.**

	Yes	No
Q3u. Retirement Home Outreach	0.0%	100.0%
Q3v. Other	1.0%	99.0%

**Q3. If "YES," please indicate how you would rate your satisfaction with the programs.**

(N=183)

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied
Q3a. Hunter Safety Education	61.9%	38.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Q3b. Birdwatching Programs & Hikes	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q3c. Raccoon River Paddle/Float Events	57.1%	42.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Q3d. Navigation Programs	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q3e. Cooking, Food Preservation, & Meal Planning Programs	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q3f. Environmental/Nature Lectures	57.1%	42.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Q3g. Geology Programs	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q3h. Prairie Awakening Celebration	70.0%	30.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q3i. Library Programs	47.5%	47.5%	4.9%	0.0%
Q3j. Wildlife Management/Monitoring Workshops	71.4%	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Q3k. Nature On-Call Programs	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q3l. Fishing Weekend Program	41.7%	41.7%	16.7%	0.0%
Q3m. Park & Museum Open Houses	65.4%	34.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Q3n. Historic Lectures/Workshops	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q3o. Star Gazing Programs	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q3p. Winter Cross-Country Ski Program	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Q3q. Trail/Biking Events	54.5%	39.0%	3.9%	2.6%
Q3r. Insect Programs	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q3s. Youth Nature Programs	76.9%	15.4%	7.7%	0.0%
Q3t. Pre-K Programs	62.5%	25.0%	12.5%	0.0%

**Q3. If "YES," please indicate how you would rate your satisfaction with the programs.**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied
Q3u. Retirement Home Outreach	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q3v. Other	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%

**Q3. Other**

Q3v. Other	Number	Percent
walking trails	1	25.0 %
Monarch tagging	1	25.0 %
Archery	1	25.0 %
<u>Bike trails</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>25.0 %</u>
Total	4	100.0 %

**Q4. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD has used or visited any of the following parks, museums, facilities, wildlife areas, or historical sites during the past year**

(N=403)

	Yes	No
Q4a. Big Bend Wildlife Area	3.7%	96.3%
Q4b. Booneville Boat Ramp	7.4%	92.6%
Q4c. Crellin Wildlife Refuge	0.5%	99.5%
Q4d. Dawson Boat Ramp	1.7%	98.3%
Q4e. Dawson Depot/Trailhead	6.9%	93.1%
Q4f. Dayton Stagecoach Inn	0.7%	99.3%
Q4g. Fazel Wildlife Area	0.2%	99.8%
Q4h. Forest Park Museum	8.2%	91.8%
Q4i. Glissman Conservation Area	2.0%	98.0%
Q4j. Glissman Lodge	1.0%	99.0%
Q4k. Grand Army of the Republic Post/ Lodge	0.5%	99.5%
Q4l. Hanging Rock Park	9.4%	90.6%
Q4m. High Trestle Trail	42.9%	57.1%
Q4n. Kuehn Conservation Area	13.9%	86.1%
Q4o. North Raccoon River Wildlife Area Snyder Tract	6.2%	93.8%
Q4p. North Raccoon River Wildlife Area Wagner Tract	4.2%	95.8%
Q4q. Puckerbrush Access	6.7%	93.3%
Q4r. Raccoon River Valley Trail	47.6%	52.4%
Q4s. Redfield Boat Ramp	6.7%	93.3%
Q4t. Redfield Depot/Trailhead	11.4%	88.6%

**Q4. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD has used or visited any of the following parks, museums, facilities, wildlife areas, or historical sites during the past year**

	Yes	No
Q4u. Sportsman Park	8.2%	91.8%
Q4v. Sportsman Lodge	4.2%	95.8%
Q4w. Sportsman Park Cabins	0.5%	99.5%
Q4x. Trindle Park	3.0%	97.0%
Q4y. Voas Nature Area	5.2%	94.8%
Q4-1. Voas Nature Area Museum	3.0%	97.0%
Q4-2. Wagner Prairie	1.2%	98.8%

**Q4. If "YES," please indicate how you would rate your satisfaction with the parks and recreation amenities.**

(N=275)

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Q4a. Big Bend Wildlife Area	73.3%	26.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4b. Booneville Boat Ramp	20.7%	37.9%	24.1%	13.8%	3.4%
Q4c. Crellin Wildlife Refuge	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4d. Dawson Boat Ramp	16.7%	50.0%	16.7%	0.0%	16.7%
Q4e. Dawson Depot/Trailhead	51.9%	40.7%	7.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4f. Dayton Stagecoach Inn	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4g. Fazel Wildlife Area	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4h. Forest Park Museum	77.4%	12.9%	3.2%	6.5%	0.0%
Q4i. Glissman Conservation Area	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4j. Glissman Lodge	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4k. Grand Army of the Republic Post/ Lodge	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4l. Hanging Rock Park	54.1%	37.8%	8.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4m. High Trestle Trail	70.6%	28.1%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4n. Kuehn Conservation Area	65.5%	30.9%	1.8%	1.8%	0.0%
Q4o. North Raccoon River Wildlife Area Snyder Tract	68.0%	28.0%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4p. North Raccoon River Wildlife Area Wagner Tract	56.3%	37.5%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4q. Puckerbrush Access	30.8%	42.3%	23.1%	0.0%	3.8%
Q4r. Raccoon River Valley Trail	61.5%	35.2%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4s. Redfield Boat Ramp	26.9%	50.0%	15.4%	3.8%	3.8%
Q4t. Redfield Depot/Trailhead	61.9%	33.3%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%

**Q4. If "YES," please indicate how you would rate your satisfaction with the parks and recreation amenities.**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Q4u. Sportsman Park	60.0%	30.0%	6.7%	3.3%	0.0%
Q4v. Sportsman Lodge	75.0%	12.5%	6.3%	6.3%	0.0%
Q4w. Sportsman Park Cabins	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4x. Trindle Park	8.3%	83.3%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4y. Voas Nature Area	60.0%	30.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4-1. Voas Nature Area Museum	45.5%	45.5%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Q4-2. Wagner Prairie	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%

**Q5. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD has a need for each type of program listed below**

(N=403)

	Yes	No
Q5a. Children & Youth Camps	22.3%	77.7%
Q5b. Hunter Education Programs	9.9%	90.1%
Q5c. Running Leagues/Competitions	11.2%	88.8%
Q5d. Paddling/River-Oriented Events	19.6%	80.4%
Q5e. Biking/Trail Events	39.0%	61.0%
Q5f. Outdoor Adventure Leagues	13.9%	86.1%
Q5g. Equestrian Programs	6.5%	93.5%
Q5h. Historic Educational Programs	14.9%	85.1%
Q5i. Nature Educational Programs	22.3%	77.7%
Q5j. Wildlife Educational Programs	23.1%	76.9%

**Q5. If "YES," please answer the question to the right of the program regarding "How Well Are Your Needs Being Met."**

(N=245)

	Fully Met	Mostly Met	Partly Met	Not Met
Q5a. Children & Youth Camps	11.9%	32.8%	32.8%	22.4%
Q5b. Hunter Education Programs	41.4%	31.0%	20.7%	6.9%
Q5c. Running Leagues/Competitions	12.9%	25.8%	29.0%	32.3%
Q5d. Paddling/River-Oriented Events	11.9%	32.2%	23.7%	32.2%
Q5e. Biking/Trail Events	28.6%	46.8%	18.3%	6.3%
Q5f. Outdoor Adventure Leagues	5.6%	22.2%	27.8%	44.4%
Q5g. Equestrian Programs	9.5%	4.8%	38.1%	47.6%
Q5h. Historic Educational Programs	12.2%	34.1%	31.7%	22.0%
Q5i. Nature Educational Programs	15.6%	40.6%	21.9%	21.9%
Q5j. Wildlife Educational Programs	17.9%	37.3%	23.9%	20.9%

**Q6. Which THREE of the programs/activities listed in Question 5 do you think are MOST IMPORTANT to members of your household?**

<u>Q6. Top choice</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Children & Youth Camps	76	18.9 %
Hunter Education Programs	24	6.0 %
Running Leagues/Competitions	7	1.7 %
Paddling/River-Oriented Events	18	4.5 %
Biking/Trail Events	110	27.3 %
Outdoor Adventure Leagues	8	2.0 %
Equestrian Programs	7	1.7 %
Historic Educational Programs	19	4.7 %
Nature Educational Programs	16	4.0 %
Wildlife Educational Programs	11	2.7 %
None chosen	107	26.6 %
Total	403	100.0 %

**Q6. Which THREE of the programs/activities listed in Question 5 do you think are MOST IMPORTANT to members of your household?**

<u>Q6. 2nd choice</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Children & Youth Camps	24	6.0 %
Hunter Education Programs	10	2.5 %
Running Leagues/Competitions	18	4.5 %
Paddling/River-Oriented Events	47	11.7 %
Biking/Trail Events	45	11.2 %
Outdoor Adventure Leagues	18	4.5 %
Equestrian Programs	8	2.0 %
Historic Educational Programs	17	4.2 %
Nature Educational Programs	54	13.4 %
Wildlife Educational Programs	28	6.9 %
None chosen	134	33.3 %
Total	403	100.0 %

**Q6. Which THREE of the programs/activities listed in Question 5 do you think are MOST IMPORTANT to members of your household?**

Q6. 3rd choice	Number	Percent
Children & Youth Camps	12	3.0 %
Hunter Education Programs	8	2.0 %
Running Leagues/Competitions	22	5.5 %
Paddling/River-Oriented Events	11	2.7 %
Biking/Trail Events	21	5.2 %
Outdoor Adventure Leagues	29	7.2 %
Equestrian Programs	5	1.2 %
Historic Educational Programs	21	5.2 %
Nature Educational Programs	45	11.2 %
Wildlife Educational Programs	58	14.4 %
None chosen	171	42.4 %
Total	403	100.0 %

**Q6. Which THREE of the programs/activities listed in Question 5 do you think are MOST IMPORTANT to members of your household? (top 3)**

Q6. Sum of top 3 choices	Number	Percent
Children & Youth Camps	112	27.8 %
Hunter Education Programs	42	10.4 %
Running Leagues/Competitions	47	11.7 %
Paddling/River-Oriented Events	76	18.9 %
Biking/Trail Events	176	43.7 %
Outdoor Adventure Leagues	55	13.6 %
Equestrian Programs	20	5.0 %
Historic Educational Programs	57	14.1 %
Nature Educational Programs	115	28.5 %
Wildlife Educational Programs	97	24.1 %
None chosen	107	26.6 %
Total	904	

**Q7. From the following list, check ALL the reasons why your household uses the DCCB programs, parks, facilities, and amenities.**

Q7. Reasons why your household uses DCCB programs, parks, facilities & amenities	Number	Percent
Quality of instructors/staff	44	21.7 %
Quality of program/facility	81	39.9 %
Times program is offered	44	21.7 %
Dates program is offered	43	21.2 %
Location of program/facility	143	70.4 %
Reasonable fees	96	47.3 %
Friends participate in program	53	26.1 %
Other	11	5.4 %
Total	515	

**Q7. Other**

Q7. Other	Number	Percent
Interest	1	11.1 %
We have not used any-didn't even know most of them existed	1	11.1 %
not sure	1	11.1 %
Depends on our needs and schedules	1	11.1 %
RRVT is great	1	11.1 %
We have not yet used anything	1	11.1 %
School program	1	11.1 %
Convenient	1	11.1 %
Education and entertainment	1	11.1 %
Total	9	100.0 %

**Q8. From the following list, check ALL the reasons why your household does NOT use the DCCB programs, parks, facilities, and amenities more often.**

Q8. Reasons why your household does not use DCCB programs, parks, facilities & amenities more often	Number	Percent
Use other local parks	84	22.8 %
Program or facility not offered	20	5.4 %
Facilities do not have right equipment	2	0.5 %
Use services of other agencies/districts	15	4.1 %
Lack of quality programs	5	1.4 %
Too far from residence	38	10.3 %
Classes full	2	0.5 %
Fees are too high	12	3.3 %
Program times are not convenient	28	7.6 %
Facilities are not well-maintained	8	2.2 %
Poor customer service by staff	2	0.5 %
Too busy	121	32.9 %
Not interested	90	24.5 %
Facility operating hours not convenient	9	2.4 %
Lack of transportation	4	1.1 %
Registration for programs is difficult	4	1.1 %
Not aware of programs/facilities	228	62.0 %
Other	18	4.9 %
Nothing	24	6.5 %
Total	714	

**WITHOUT NOTHING****Q8. From the following list, check ALL the reasons why your household does NOT use the DCCB programs, parks, facilities, and amenities more often. (without "nothing")**

Q8. Reasons why your household does not use  
DCCB programs, parks, facilities & amenities more  
often

	Number	Percent
Use other local parks	84	24.4 %
Program or facility not offered	20	5.8 %
Facilities do not have right equipment	2	0.6 %
Use services of other agencies/districts	15	4.4 %
Lack of quality programs	5	1.5 %
Too far from residence	38	11.0 %
Classes full	2	0.6 %
Fees are too high	12	3.5 %
Program times are not convenient	27	7.8 %
Facilities are not well-maintained	8	2.3 %
Poor customer service by staff	2	0.6 %
Too busy	118	34.3 %
Not interested	87	25.3 %
Facility operating hours not convenient	9	2.6 %
Lack of transportation	4	1.2 %
Registration for programs is difficult	4	1.2 %
Not aware of programs/facilities	228	66.3 %
Other	18	5.2 %
Total	683	

**Q8. Other**

<u>Q8. Other</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Maintain the trail so that it's a smooth and safe transition of point to point	1	5.6 %
Iowa Fire Museum is not on the list	1	5.6 %
I don't know anything about programs or where they are located	1	5.6 %
I know they are offered but don't know when	1	5.6 %
bad management of Island Park, not nice to customers	1	5.6 %
age	1	5.6 %
Not equipped for special needs children	1	5.6 %
I do not know the schedule	1	5.6 %
New in town	1	5.6 %
Outdated and poor conditions	1	5.6 %
Boy Scout facilities	1	5.6 %
Disabled and caregiver	1	5.6 %
New to area	1	5.6 %
Need more programs for 3 year olds and younger	1	5.6 %
Just moved here	1	5.6 %
Walking	1	5.6 %
Kids are not old enough	1	5.6 %
<u>Bike trails near our home</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5.6 %</u>
Total	18	100.0 %

**Q9. How does your household learn about DCCB programs, parks, facilities, amenities, and news?**

Q9. How does your household learn about DCCB programs, parks, facilities, amenities, & news	Number	Percent
Newsletter	45	16.6 %
Newspaper	62	22.9 %
E-Newsletter	21	7.7 %
Word of mouth	120	44.3 %
Fliers at DCCB facilities	11	4.1 %
Community signs/banners	35	12.9 %
Newspaper advertisements	33	12.2 %
Friends & neighbors	90	33.2 %
School fliers/newsletters	26	9.6 %
County website	38	14.0 %
Facebook	43	15.9 %
Dallas County Visitor Guide	24	8.9 %
Other	16	5.9 %
Total	564	

**Q9. Other**

Q9. Other	Number	Percent
Radio	3	18.8 %
It would be nice to hear about some of these parks and events	1	6.3 %
Chat sheet	1	6.3 %
other people or word of mouth	1	6.3 %
Library	1	6.3 %
I have never heard of it	1	6.3 %
Would like information on any and all location	1	6.3 %
TV ads	1	6.3 %
Drove by, seen the signs	1	6.3 %
Just don't hear anything about this waste of money	1	6.3 %
Not aware of programs	1	6.3 %
Limited awareness	1	6.3 %
This survey	1	6.3 %
Total	16	100.0 %

**Q10. Which THREE of the ways listed in Question 9 are your MOST PREFERRED to learn about DCCB programs, parks, facilities, amenities, and news?**

Q10. Top choice	Number	Percent
Newsletter	61	15.1 %
Newspaper	31	7.7 %
E-Newsletter	58	14.4 %
Word of mouth	11	2.7 %
Fliers at DCCB facilities	4	1.0 %
Community signs/banners	15	3.7 %
Newspaper advertisements	9	2.2 %
Friends & neighbors	12	3.0 %
School fliers/newsletters	4	1.0 %
County website	18	4.5 %
Facebook	53	13.2 %
Dallas County Visitor Guide	13	3.2 %
None chosen	114	28.3 %
Total	403	100.0 %

**Q10. Which THREE of the ways listed in Question 9 are your MOST PREFERRED to learn about DCCB programs, parks, facilities, amenities, and news?**

Q10. 2nd choice	Number	Percent
Newsletter	26	6.5 %
Newspaper	21	5.2 %
E-Newsletter	40	9.9 %
Word of mouth	9	2.2 %
Fliers at DCCB facilities	8	2.0 %
Community signs/banners	20	5.0 %
Newspaper advertisements	16	4.0 %
Friends & neighbors	21	5.2 %
School fliers/newsletters	19	4.7 %
County website	32	7.9 %
Facebook	30	7.4 %
Dallas County Visitor Guide	14	3.5 %
Other	4	1.0 %
None chosen	143	35.5 %
Total	403	100.0 %

**Q10. Which THREE of the ways listed in Question 9 are your MOST PREFERRED to learn about DCCB programs, parks, facilities, amenities, and news?**

Q10. 3rd choice	Number	Percent
Newsletter	24	6.0 %
Newspaper	13	3.2 %
E-Newsletter	8	2.0 %
Word of mouth	27	6.7 %
Fliers at DCCB facilities	5	1.2 %
Community signs/banners	14	3.5 %
Newspaper advertisements	10	2.5 %
Friends & neighbors	30	7.4 %
School fliers/newsletters	17	4.2 %
County website	25	6.2 %
Facebook	24	6.0 %
Dallas County Visitor Guide	14	3.5 %
Other	2	0.5 %
None chosen	190	47.1 %
Total	403	100.0 %

**Q10. Which THREE of the ways listed in Question 9 are your MOST PREFERRED to learn about DCCB programs, parks, facilities, amenities, and news? (top 3)**

Q10. Sum of top 3 choices	Number	Percent
Newsletter	111	27.5 %
Newspaper	65	16.1 %
E-Newsletter	106	26.3 %
Word of mouth	47	11.7 %
Fliers at DCCB facilities	17	4.2 %
Community signs/banners	49	12.2 %
Newspaper advertisements	35	8.7 %
Friends & neighbors	63	15.6 %
School fliers/newsletters	40	9.9 %
County website	75	18.6 %
Facebook	107	26.6 %
Dallas County Visitor Guide	41	10.2 %
Other	6	1.5 %
None chosen	114	28.3 %
Total	876	

**Q11. What are the THREE MOST IMPORTANT areas on which DCCB should focus its efforts and resources for county residents?**

Q11. What are the most important areas on which DCCB should focus its efforts & resources for

County residents	Number	Percent
Management of natural resources	178	48.4 %
Protecting water quality	201	54.6 %
Engaging residents with nature	79	21.5 %
Environmental educational programming	47	12.8 %
Protecting historic features	80	21.7 %
Offering recreational areas	148	40.2 %
Maintenance & development of multi-use trails	164	44.6 %
Maintenance & upgrades of existing facilities	138	37.5 %
Total	1035	

**Q12. Counting yourself, how many people in your household are:**

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Sum</u>
number	2.9	1140
Under age 5	0.2	93
Ages 5-9	0.2	84
Ages 10-14	0.2	74
Ages 15-19	0.2	82
Ages 20-24	0.1	56
Ages 25-34	0.4	141
Ages 35-44	0.4	154
Ages 45-54	0.4	165
Ages 55-64	0.4	155
Ages 65-74	0.3	105
Ages 75+	0.1	31

**Q13. What is your age?**

<u>Q13. Your age</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
18-34	82	20.3 %
35-44	77	19.1 %
45-54	83	20.6 %
55-64	81	20.1 %
65+	71	17.6 %
Not provided	9	2.2 %
Total	403	100.0 %

**WITHOUT NOT PROVIDED****Q13. What is your age? (without "not provided")**

<u>Q13. Your age</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
18-34	82	20.8 %
35-44	77	19.5 %
45-54	83	21.1 %
55-64	81	20.6 %
65+	71	18.0 %
Total	394	100.0 %

**Q14. Your gender:**

<u>Q14. Your gender</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Male	204	50.6 %
Female	197	48.9 %
Not provided	2	0.5 %
Total	403	100.0 %

**WITHOUT NOT PROVIDED****Q14. Your gender: (without "not provided")**

<u>Q14. Your gender</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Male	204	50.9 %
Female	197	49.1 %
Total	401	100.0 %

**Q15. How long have you lived in Dallas County?**

<u>Q15. How long have you lived in Dallas County</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
5 or less	120	30.4 %
6 to 10	74	18.7 %
11 to 15	53	13.4 %
16 to 20	35	8.9 %
21 to 30	51	12.9 %
31+	62	15.7 %
Total	395	100.0 %

**Q16. What is your household income?**

<u>Q16. Your household income</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Under \$25K	22	5.5 %
\$25K-\$49,999	32	7.9 %
\$50K-\$99,999	103	25.6 %
\$100K-\$149,999	93	23.1 %
\$150K+	92	22.8 %
Not provided	61	15.1 %
Total	403	100.0 %

**WITHOUT NOT PROVIDED****Q16. What is your household income? (without "not provided")**

<u>Q16. Your household income</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Under \$25K	22	6.4 %
\$25K-\$49,999	32	9.4 %
\$50K-\$99,999	103	30.1 %
\$100K-\$149,999	93	27.2 %
\$150K+	92	26.9 %
Total	342	100.0 %

## **Section 3**

# ***Survey Instrument***

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## Dallas County Conservation Board

Forest Park Museum  
14581 K Avenue  
Perry, Iowa 50220

**Mike Wallace, Director**

Administrative Office: 515-465-3577

Fax: 515-465-3579

E-mail: [Conservation@dallascountyiowa.gov](mailto:Conservation@dallascountyiowa.gov)

[www.dallascountyiowa.gov/conservation](http://www.dallascountyiowa.gov/conservation)

Dear Dallas County Resident:

***Your response to the enclosed survey is extremely important...***

The Dallas County Conservation Board is developing a Strategic Plan that will guide the future of parks, museums, conservation areas, and recreational opportunities in our County over the next 10 years. Public input is crucial to the development of this Strategic Plan.

The Dallas County Conservation Board is conducting a statistically-significant public survey to gauge satisfaction with our current programs and facilities, and identify public priorities for conservation activities and programming in Dallas County. Your household is one of a limited number selected at random to receive this survey, so we hope that you will be able to participate.

***We appreciate your time...***

We realize that this survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, but each question is important. The time you invest in completing this survey will help the Dallas County Conservation Board make decisions about the future direction of conservation in our County. Because of your input, we will have an approach and a plan that reflects the priorities of our residents.

***Please complete and return your survey within the next two weeks...***

We have selected ETC Institute, an independent consulting company, as our partner to administer this survey. They will compile the data received and present the results to the Dallas County Conservation Board. **Your responses will remain confidential.** Please return your completed survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope addressed to ETC Institute, 725 W. Frontier Circle, Olathe, KS 66061. If you would prefer to take the survey online, the address is [www.dallascountyiowasurvey.org](http://www.dallascountyiowasurvey.org)

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mike Wallace at 515-465-3577 or [mike.wallace@dallascountyiowa.gov](mailto:mike.wallace@dallascountyiowa.gov). Thank you for participating in this important survey for our County so we can make decisions that will positively impact the lives of our residents. Please take this opportunity to let your voice be heard!

Sincerely,

Mike Wallace  
Director  
Dallas County Conservation Board

### Members of the Board

# Dallas County Conservation Board (DCCB) Survey

Your input is an important part of the Dallas County Conservation Board's ongoing efforts to provide quality parks and recreation services that the citizens of Dallas County need and value. This survey will take only 10-12 minutes to complete. When you are finished, please return your survey in the enclosed postage-paid, return-reply envelope. Thank you for your valuable input!

**1. Are you aware of the Dallas County Conservation Board (DCCB)?**

- \_\_\_\_ (1) Yes [Answer Question 2]
- \_\_\_\_ (2) No [Go to Question 3]

**2. Rate your level of satisfaction with the overall value that your household receives from the DCCB.**

- \_\_\_\_ (5) Very Satisfied
- \_\_\_\_ (4) Somewhat Satisfied
- \_\_\_\_ (3) Neutral
- \_\_\_\_ (2) Somewhat Dissatisfied
- \_\_\_\_ (1) Very Dissatisfied
- \_\_\_\_ (9) Don't Know

**3. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD has participated in any of the following DCCB programs during the past year by circling YES or NO to the right of each type of program.**

**If "YES", please indicate how you would rate your satisfaction with the programs by circling the corresponding number to the right of the program.**

Type of program	Have you participated in this program?		If YES you participate, how would you rate your satisfaction with the program?				
	Yes	No	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
01. Hunter Safety Education	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
02. Birdwatching Programs & Hikes	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
03. Raccoon River Paddle/Float Events	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
04. Navigation Programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
05. Cooking, Food Preservation, and Meal Planning Programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
06. Environmental/Nature Lectures	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
07. Geology Programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
08. Prairie Awakening Celebration	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
09. Library Programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
10. Wildlife Management/Monitoring Workshops	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
11. Nature on-call programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
12. Fishing Weekend Program	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
13. Park and Museum Open Houses	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
14. Historic Lectures/Workshops	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
15. Star Gazing Programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
16. Winter Cross-Country Ski Program	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
17. Trail/Biking Events	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
18. Insect Programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
19. Youth Nature Programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
20. Pre-K Programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
21. Retirement Home Outreach	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
22. Other (please list): _____	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1

**4. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD has used or visited any of the following parks, museums, facilities, wildlife areas, or historical sites during the past year by circling YES or NO to the right of each type of amenity.**

**If "YES", please indicate how you would rate your satisfaction with the parks and recreation amenities by circling the corresponding number to the right of the facility.**

Type of amenity	Have you used or visited this amenity?		If YES you use, how would you rate your satisfaction with the amenity?				
	Yes	No	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
01. Big Bend Wildlife Area	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
02. Booneville Boat Ramp	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
03. Crellin Wildlife Refuge	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
04. Dawson Boat Ramp	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
05. Dawson Depot/Trailhead	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
06. Dayton Stagecoach Inn	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
07. Fazel Wildlife Area	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
08. Forest Park Museum	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
09. Glissman Conservation Area	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
10. Glissman Lodge	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
11. Grand Army of the Republic Post/Lodge	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
12. Hanging Rock Park	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
13. High Trestle Trail	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
14. Kuehn Conservation Area	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
15. North Raccoon River Wildlife Area Snyder Tract	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
16. North Raccoon River Wildlife Area Wagner Tract	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
17. Puckerbrush Access	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
18. Raccoon River Valley Trail	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
19. Redfield Boat Ramp	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
20. Redfield Depot/Trailhead	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
21. Sportsman Park	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
22. Sportsman Lodge	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
23. Sportsman Park Cabins	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
24. Trindle Park	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
25. Voas Nature Area	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
26. Voas Nature Area Museum	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
27. Wagner Prairie	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1

5. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD has a need for each type of program listed below by circling YES or NO to the right of each type of program.

If "YES," please answer the question to the right of the program regarding "How Well Are Your Needs Being Met." If NO, please go to the next type of program.

Type of Program		Do you have a need for this program?		If you have a need, how well are your needs being met?			
				Fully Met	Mostly Met	Partly Met	Not Met
01.	Children & Youth Camps	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
02.	Hunter Education Programs	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
03.	Running Leagues/Competitions	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
04.	Paddling/River-Oriented Events	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
05.	Biking/Trail Events	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
06.	Outdoor Adventure Leagues	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
07.	Equestrian Programs	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
08.	Historic Educational Programs	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
09.	Nature Educational Programs	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
10.	Wildlife Educational Programs	Yes	No	4	3	2	1

6. Which THREE of the programs/activities listed in Question 5 do you think are MOST IMPORTANT to members of your household? Write your top choices in sequence of importance (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup>) below using the numbers from the list in Question 5. If you do not think any of these are important, circle "NONE".

1<sup>st</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ NONE

7. From the following list, check ALL the reasons why your household uses the DCCB programs, parks, facilities, and amenities. (Check all that apply)

- (01) Quality of instructors/staff
- (02) Quality of the program/facility
- (03) Times the program is offered
- (04) Dates the program is offered
- (05) Location of the program/facility
- (06) Reasonable fees
- (07) Friends participate in the program
- (08) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8. From the following list, check ALL the reasons why your household does NOT use the DCCB programs, parks, facilities, and amenities more often. (Check all that apply)

- (01) Use other local parks
- (02) Program or facility not offered
- (03) Facilities do not have the right equipment
- (04) Use services of other agencies/districts
- (05) Lack of quality programs
- (06) Too far from residence
- (07) Classes full
- (08) Fees are too high
- (09) Program times are not convenient
- (10) Facilities are not well-maintained
- (11) Poor customer service by staff
- (12) Too busy
- (13) Not interested
- (14) Facility operating hours not convenient
- (15) Lack of transportation
- (16) Registration for programs is difficult
- (17) Not aware of programs/facilities
- (18) Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- (19) Nothing

**9. How does your household learn about DCCB programs, parks, facilities, amenities, and news?**

(Check all that apply)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) Newsletter                | <input type="checkbox"/> (08) Friends and neighbors       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) Newspaper                 | <input type="checkbox"/> (09) School fliers/newsletters   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (03) E-Newsletter              | <input type="checkbox"/> (10) County website              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (04) Word of Mouth             | <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Facebook                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (05) Fliers at DCCB facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> (12) Dallas County Visitor Guide |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (06) Community signs/banners   | <input type="checkbox"/> (13) Other: _____                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (07) Newspaper advertisements  |   |

**10. Which THREE of the ways listed in Question #9 are your MOST PREFERRED to learn about DCCB programs, parks, facilities, amenities, and news? [Using the numbers in Question #9 above, please write in the numbers below for your 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> choices, or circle 'NONE'.]**

1<sup>st</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ NONE

**11. What are the THREE MOST IMPORTANT areas on which DCCB should focus its efforts and resources for county residents? (Check three)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) Management of natural resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> (06) Offering recreational areas                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) Protecting water quality              | <input type="checkbox"/> (07) Maintenance and development of multi-use trails |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (03) Engaging residents with nature        | <input type="checkbox"/> (08) Maintenance and upgrades of existing facilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (04) Environmental educational programming |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (05) Protecting historic features          |   |

**12. Counting yourself, how many people in your household are:**

- |                    |                   |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Under age 5: _____ | Ages 20-24: _____ | Ages 55-64: _____ |
| Ages 5-9: _____    | Ages 25-34: _____ | Ages 65-74: _____ |
| Ages 10-14: _____  | Ages 35-44: _____ | Ages 75+: _____   |
| Ages 15-19: _____  | Ages 45-54: _____ |                   |

**13. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_ years old**

**14. Your gender: \_\_\_\_\_ (01) Male \_\_\_\_\_ (02) Female**

**15. How long have you lived in Dallas County? \_\_\_\_\_ years**

**16. What is your household income?**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) Under \$25,000    | <input type="checkbox"/> (03) \$50,000-\$99,999   | <input type="checkbox"/> (05) \$150,000 or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) \$25,000-\$49,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> (04) \$100,000-\$149,999 |   |

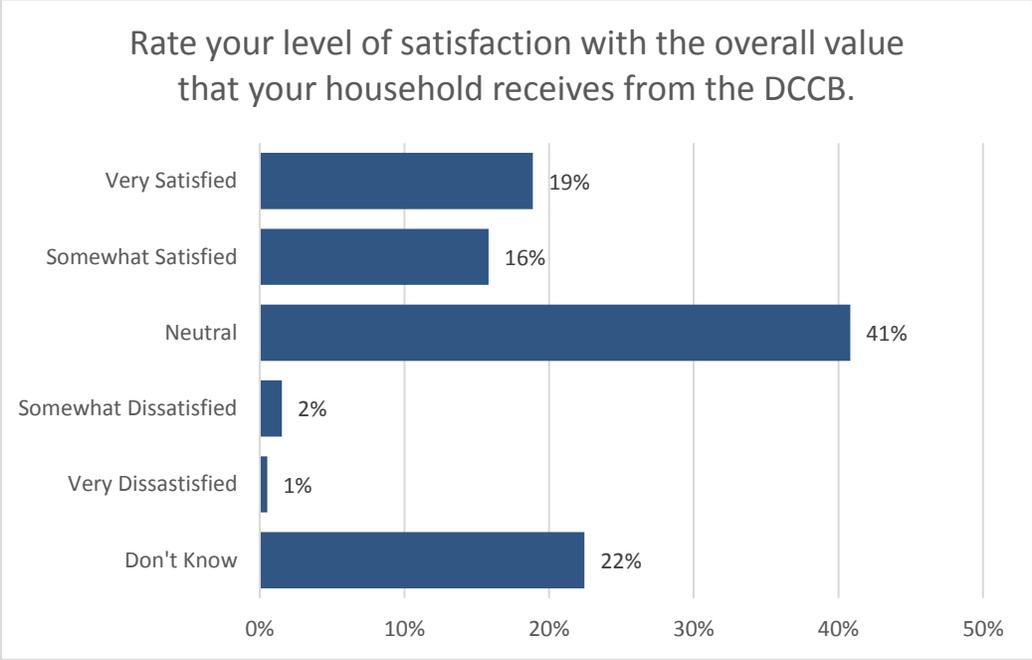
**This concludes the survey. Thank you for your time!**

Please return your completed survey in the enclosed postage paid envelope addressed to:  
ETC Institute, 725 W. Frontier Circle, Olathe, KS 66061

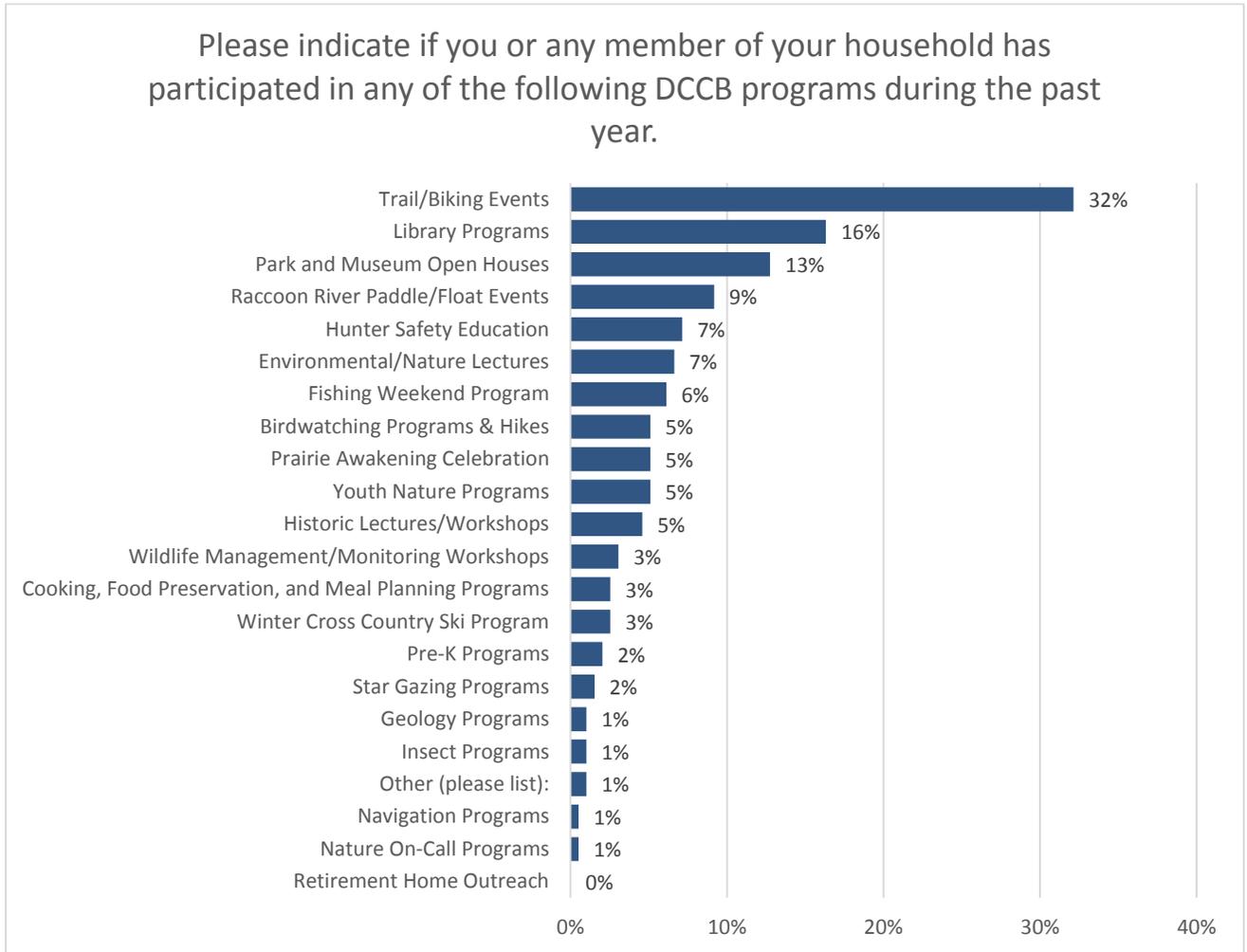
Your response will remain completely confidential. The address information printed to the right will ONLY be used to help identify areas with special interests. Thank you!

All results have been filtered to only include answers from respondents who have heard of the Dallas County Conservation Board (n=196).

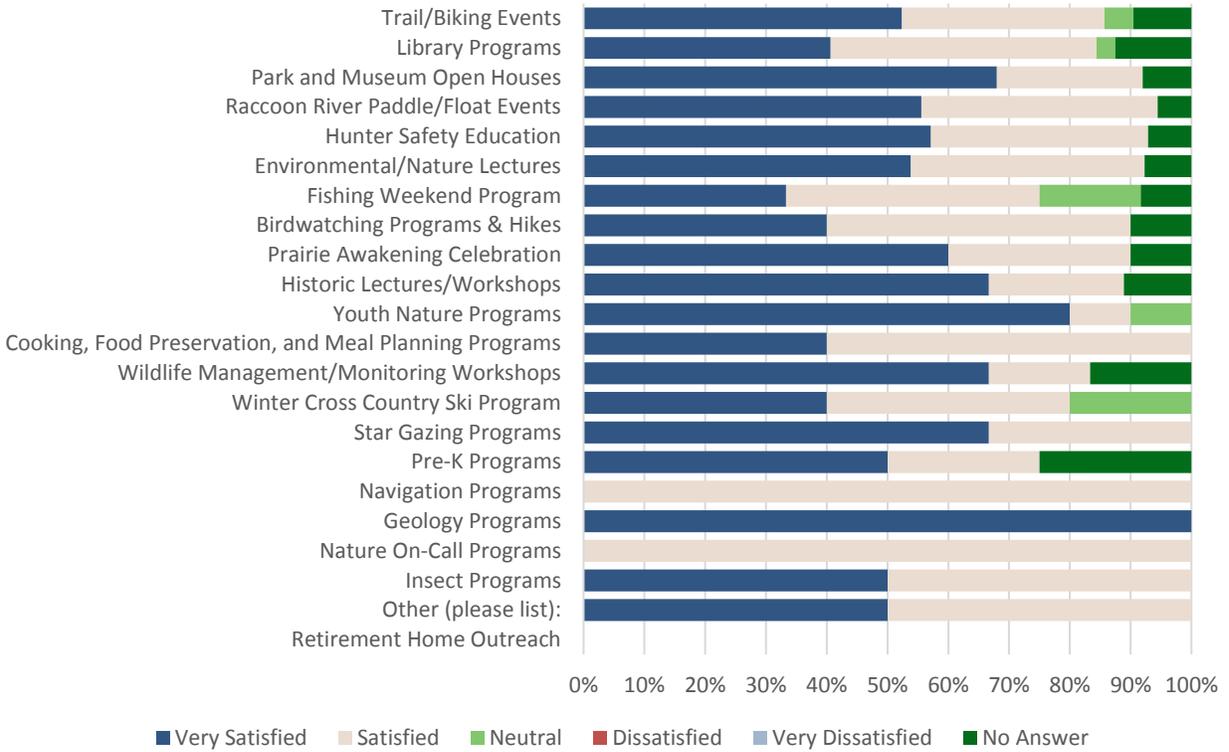
Question 2:



Question 3:

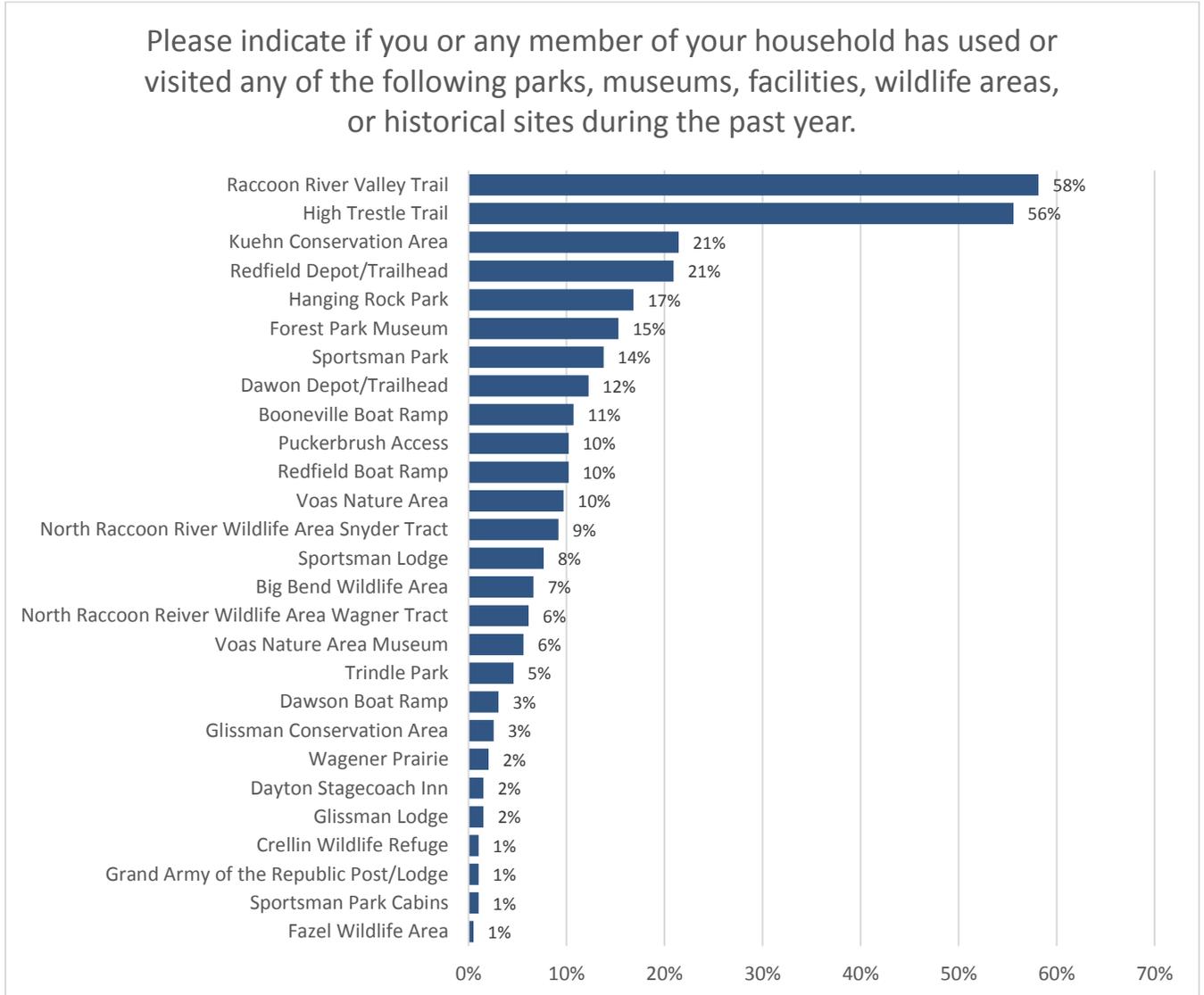


Indicate your satisfaction with the programs you or members of your household have participated in.



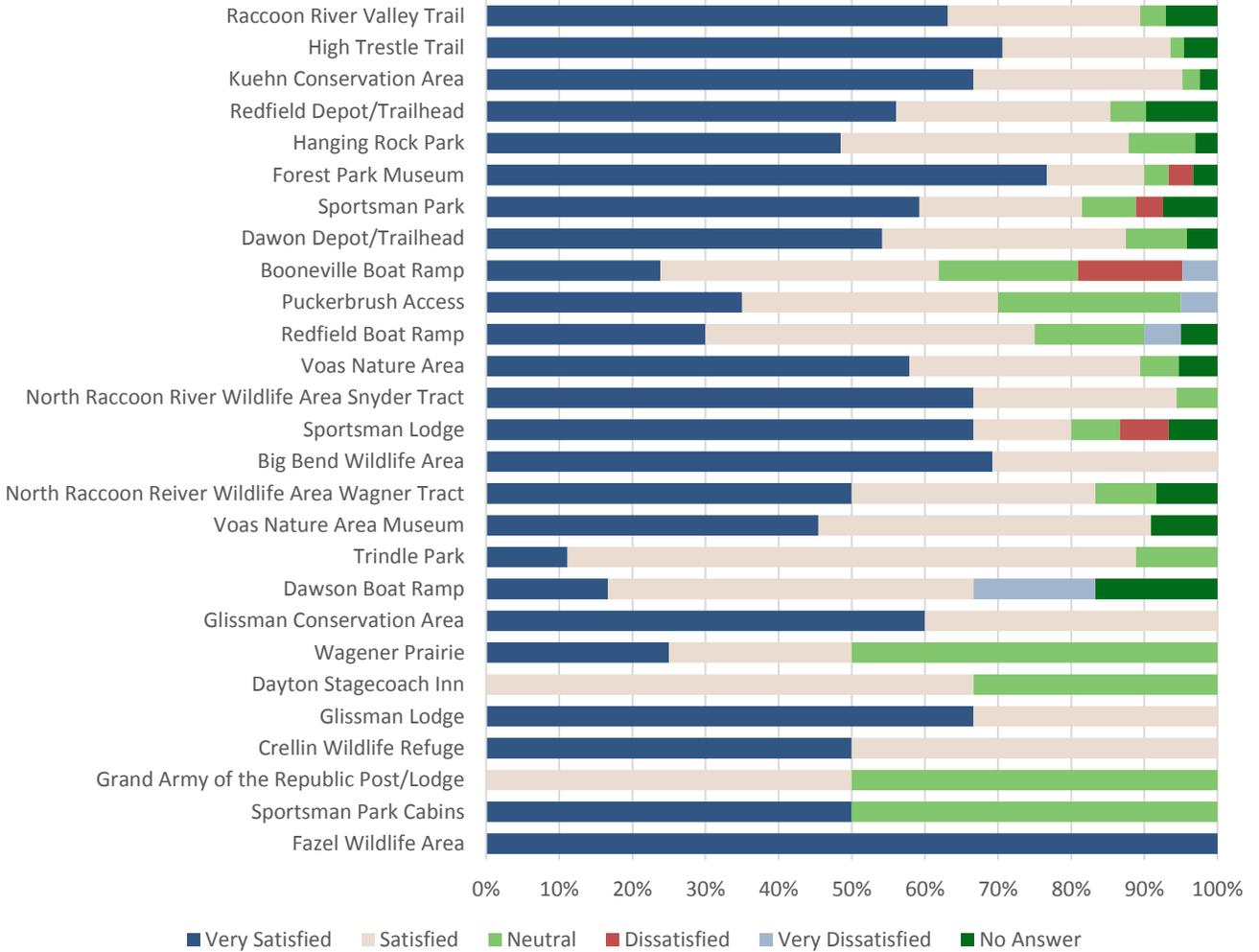
	<b>Very Satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	<b>No Answer</b>
Hunter Safety Education	57%	36%	0%	0%	0%	7%
Birdwatching Programs & Hikes	40%	50%	0%	0%	0%	10%
Raccoon River Paddle/Float Events	56%	39%	0%	0%	0%	6%
Navigation Programs	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Cooking, Food Preservation, and Meal Planning Programs	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Environmental/Nature Lectures	54%	38%	0%	0%	0%	8%
Geology Programs	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Prairie Awakening Celebration	60%	30%	0%	0%	0%	10%
Library Programs	41%	44%	3%	0%	0%	13%
Wildlife Management/Monitoring Workshops	67%	17%	0%	0%	0%	17%
Nature On-Call Programs	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Fishing Weekend Program	33%	42%	17%	0%	0%	8%
Park and Museum Open Houses	68%	24%	0%	0%	0%	8%
Historic Lectures/Workshops	67%	22%	0%	0%	0%	11%
Star Gazing Programs	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Winter Cross Country Ski Program	40%	40%	20%	0%	0%	0%
Trail/Biking Events	52%	33%	5%	0%	0%	10%
Insect Programs	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Youth Nature Programs	80%	10%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Pre-K Programs	50%	25%	0%	0%	0%	25%
Retirement Home Outreach	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other (please list):	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Question 4:



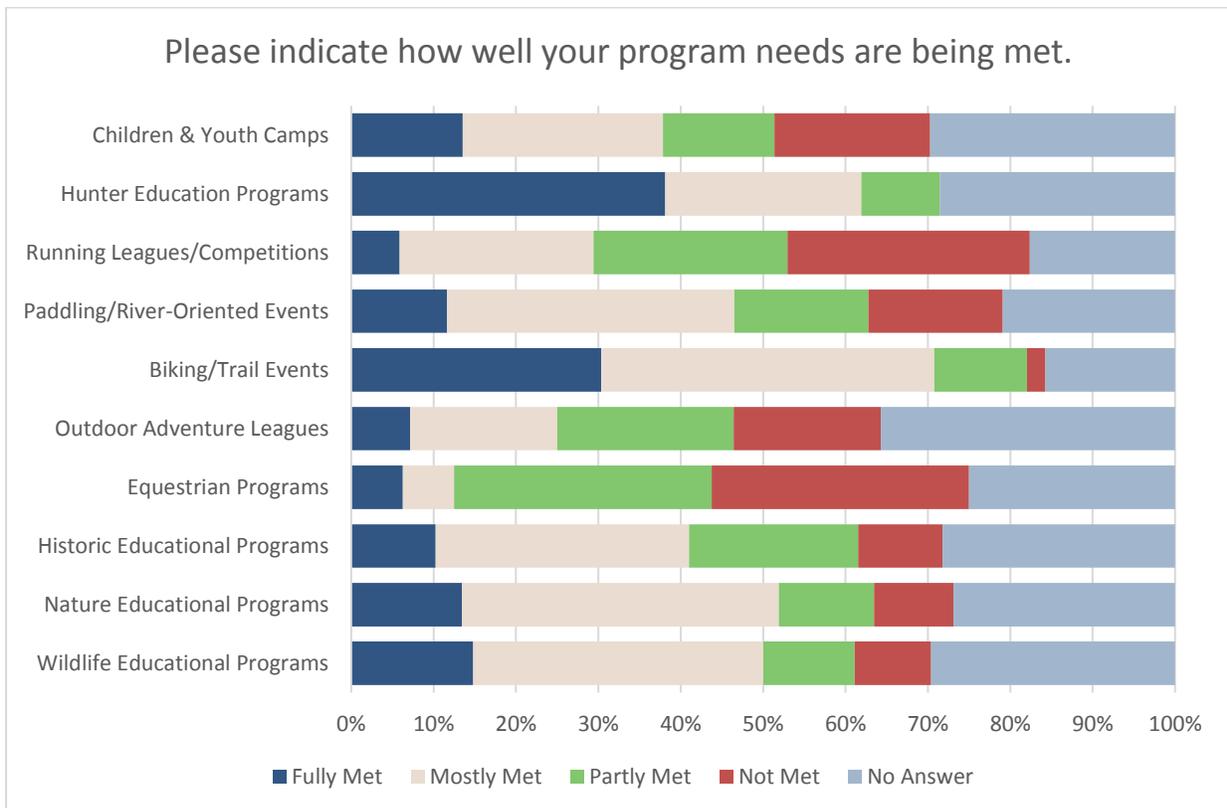
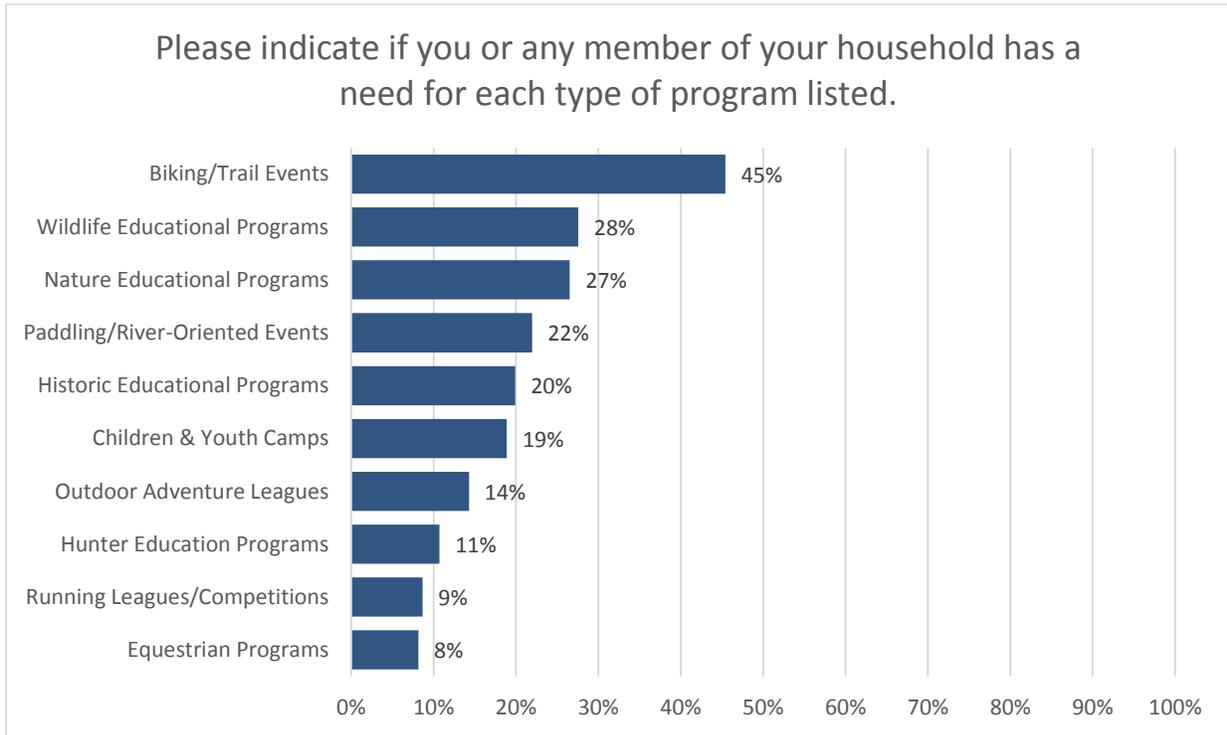
The majority of respondents who are aware of the DCCB were satisfied or very satisfied with these facilities. These respondents were most dissatisfied with the Booneville Boat Ramp, which showed four of 21 visitors had a negative view of the facility.

Please indicate how you would rate your satisfaction with the parks and recreation amenities you or members of your household have visited in the past year.



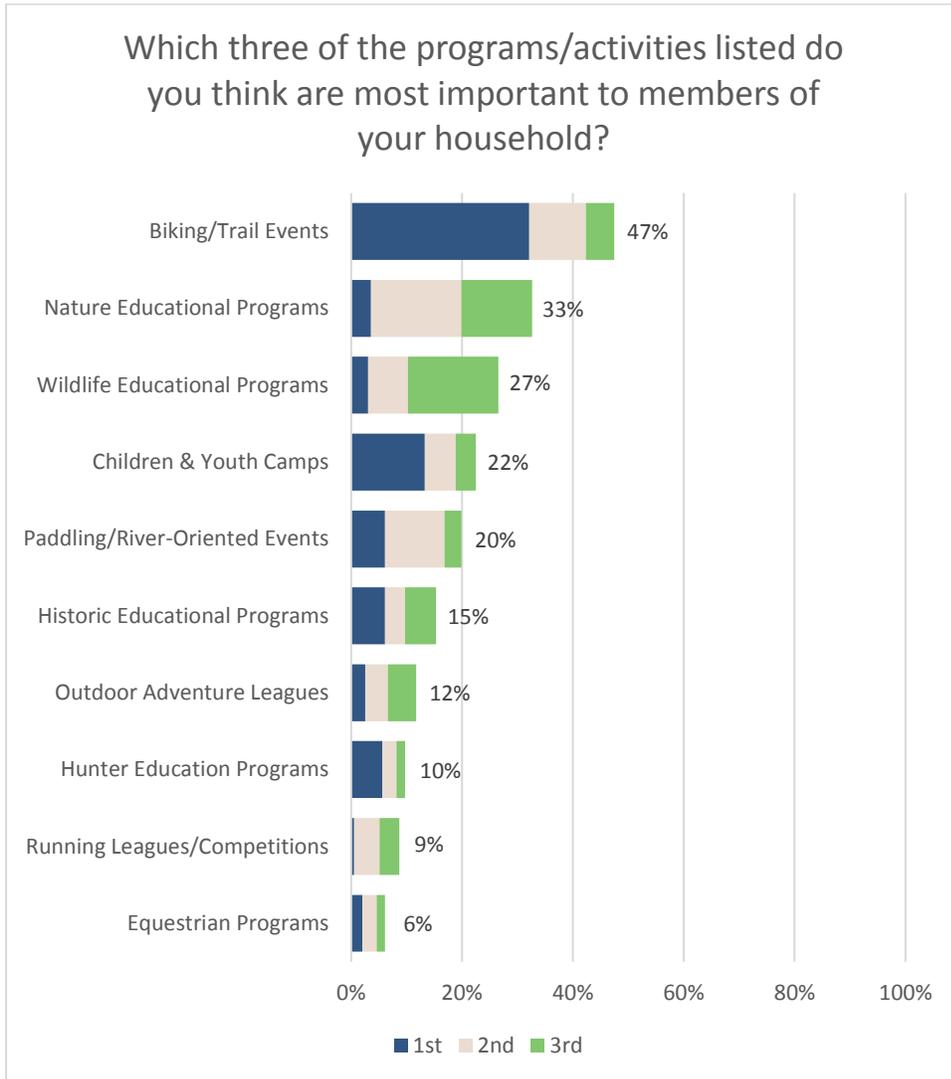
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	No Answer
Big Bend Wildlife Area	69%	31%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Booneville Boat Ramp	24%	38%	19%	14%	5%	0%
Crellin Wildlife Refuge	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Dawson Boat Ramp	17%	50%	0%	0%	17%	17%
Dawon Depot/Trailhead	54%	33%	8%	0%	0%	4%
Dayton Stagecoach Inn	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%
Fazel Wildlife Area	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Forest Park Museum	77%	13%	3%	3%	0%	3%
Glissman Conservation Area	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Glissman Lodge	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Grand Army of the Republic Post/Lodge	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Hanging Rock Park	48%	39%	9%	0%	0%	3%
High Trestle Trail	71%	23%	2%	0%	0%	5%
Kuehn Conservation Area	67%	29%	2%	0%	0%	2%
North Raccoon River Wildlife Area Snyder Tract	67%	28%	6%	0%	0%	0%
North Raccoon Reiver Wildlife Area Wagner Tract	50%	33%	8%	0%	0%	8%
Puckerbrush Access	35%	35%	25%	0%	5%	0%
Raccoon River Valley Trail	63%	26%	4%	0%	0%	7%
Redfield Boat Ramp	30%	45%	15%	0%	5%	5%
Redfield Depot/Trailhead	56%	29%	5%	0%	0%	10%
Sportsman Park	59%	22%	7%	4%	0%	7%
Sportsman Lodge	67%	13%	7%	7%	0%	7%
Sportsman Park Cabins	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Trindle Park	11%	78%	11%	0%	0%	0%
Voas Nature Area	58%	32%	5%	0%	0%	5%
Voas Nature Area Museum	45%	45%	0%	0%	0%	9%
Wagener Prairie	25%	25%	50%	0%	0%	0%

Question 5:



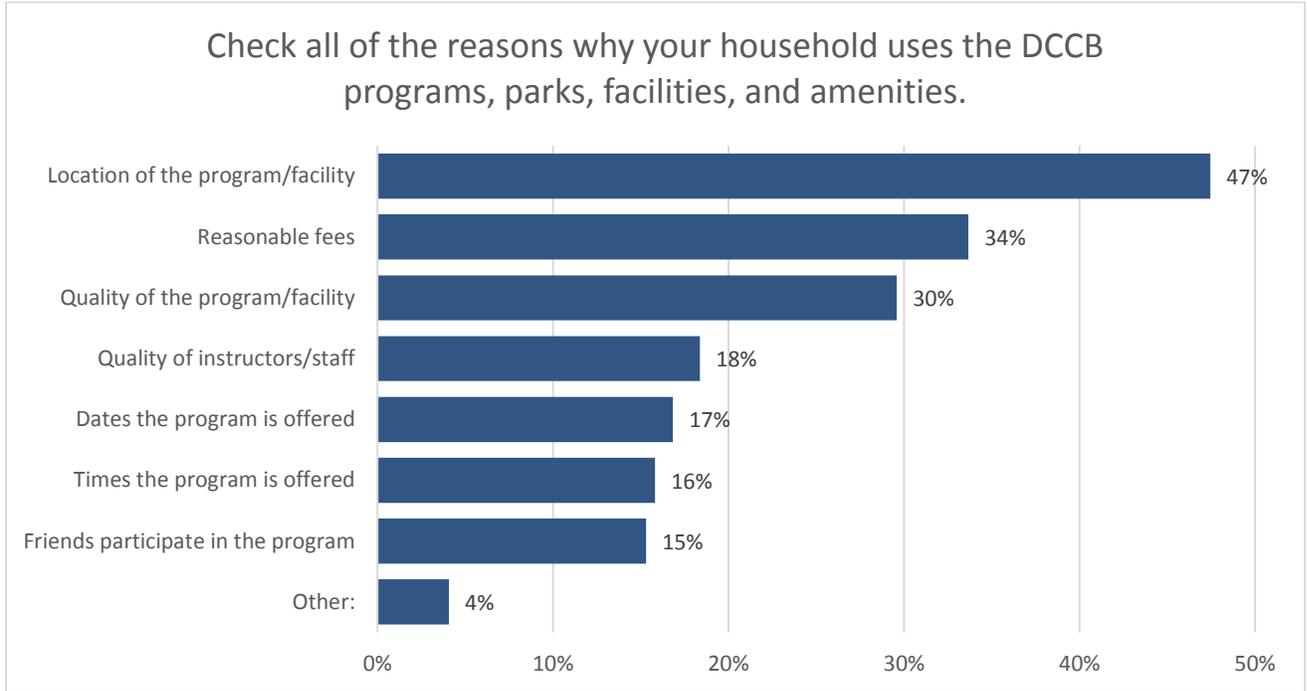
	<b>Fully Met</b>	<b>Mostly Met</b>	<b>Partly Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>No Answer</b>
Children & Youth Camps	14%	24%	14%	19%	30%
Hunter Education Programs	38%	24%	10%	0%	29%
Running Leagues/Competitions	6%	24%	24%	29%	18%
Paddling/River-Oriented Events	12%	35%	16%	16%	21%
Biking/Trail Events	30%	40%	11%	2%	16%
Outdoor Adventure Leagues	7%	18%	21%	18%	36%
Equestrian Programs	6%	6%	31%	31%	25%
Historic Educational Programs	10%	31%	21%	10%	28%
Nature Educational Programs	13%	38%	12%	10%	27%
Wildlife Educational Programs	15%	35%	11%	9%	30%

Question 6:

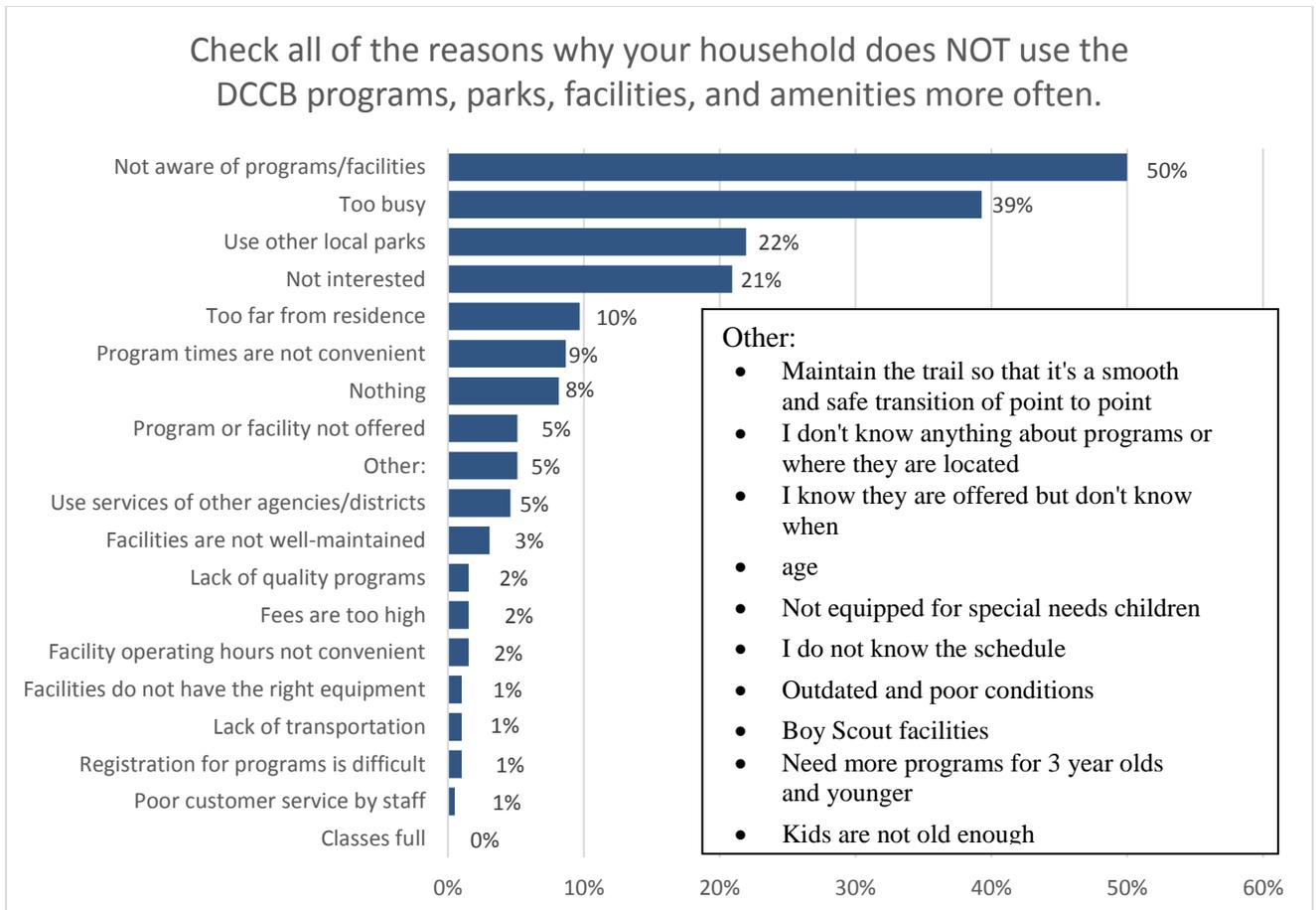


	1st	2nd	3rd
Children & Youth Camps	13%	6%	4%
Hunter Education Programs	6%	3%	2%
Running Leagues/Competitions	1%	5%	4%
Paddling/River-Oriented Events	6%	11%	3%
Biking/Trail Events	32%	10%	5%
Outdoor Adventure Leagues	3%	4%	5%
Equestrian Programs	2%	3%	2%
Historic Educational Programs	6%	4%	6%
Nature Educational Programs	4%	16%	13%
Wildlife Educational Programs	3%	7%	16%

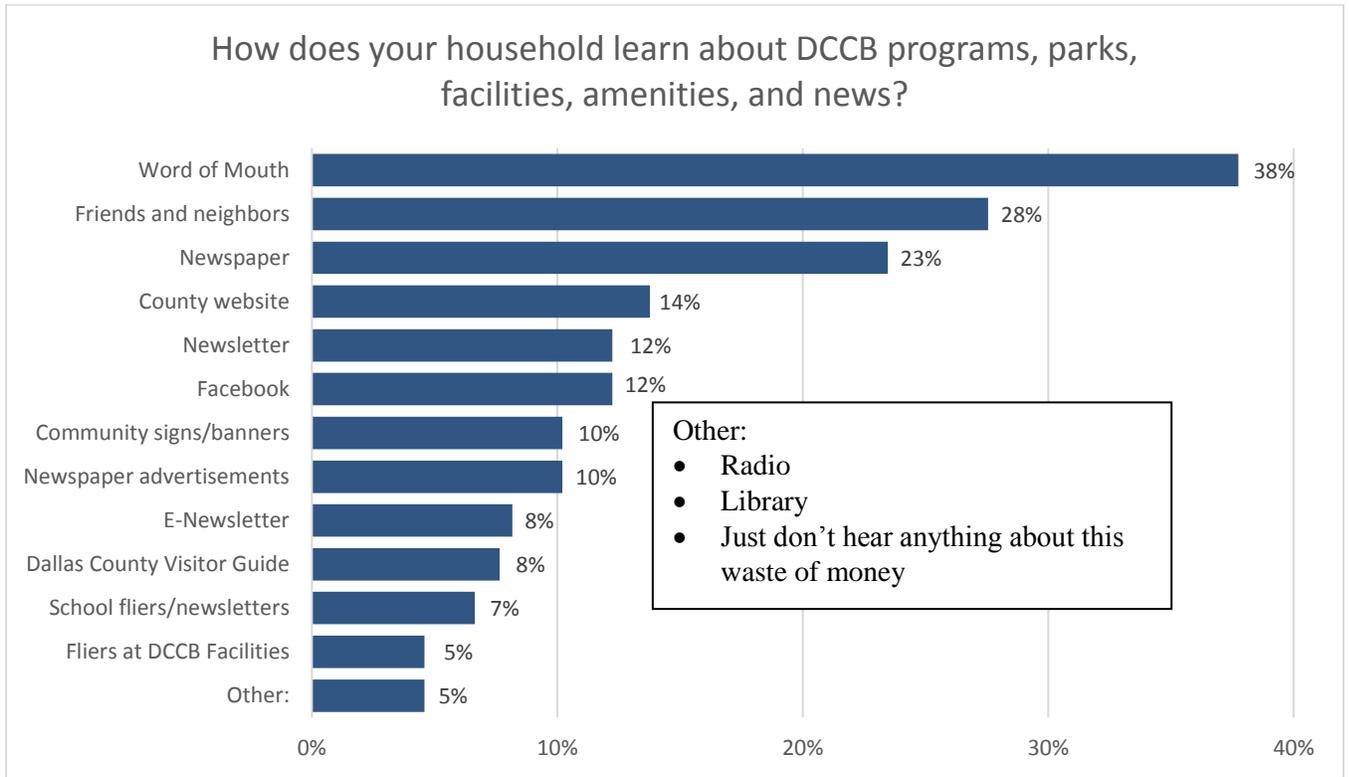
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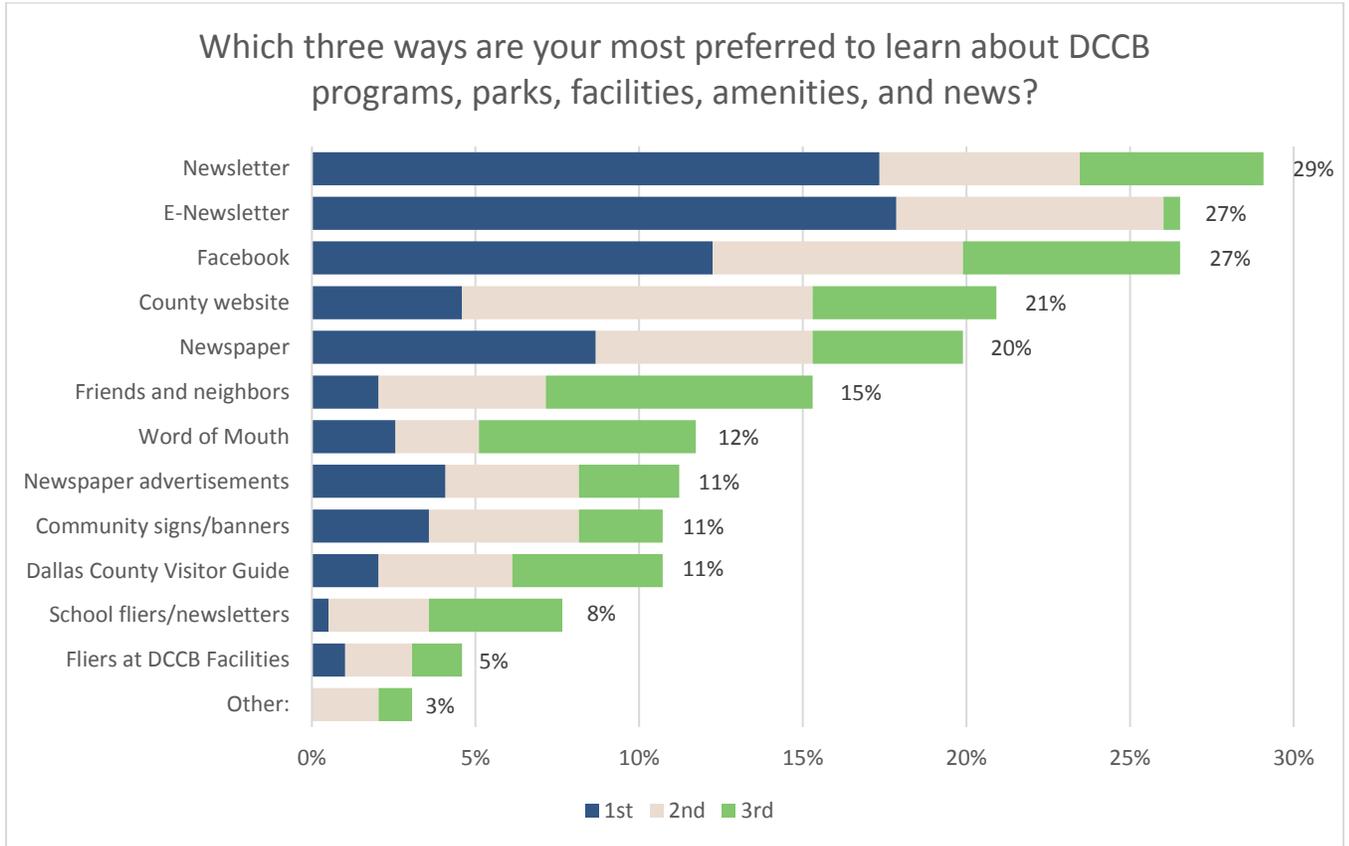
Question 8:



Question 9:

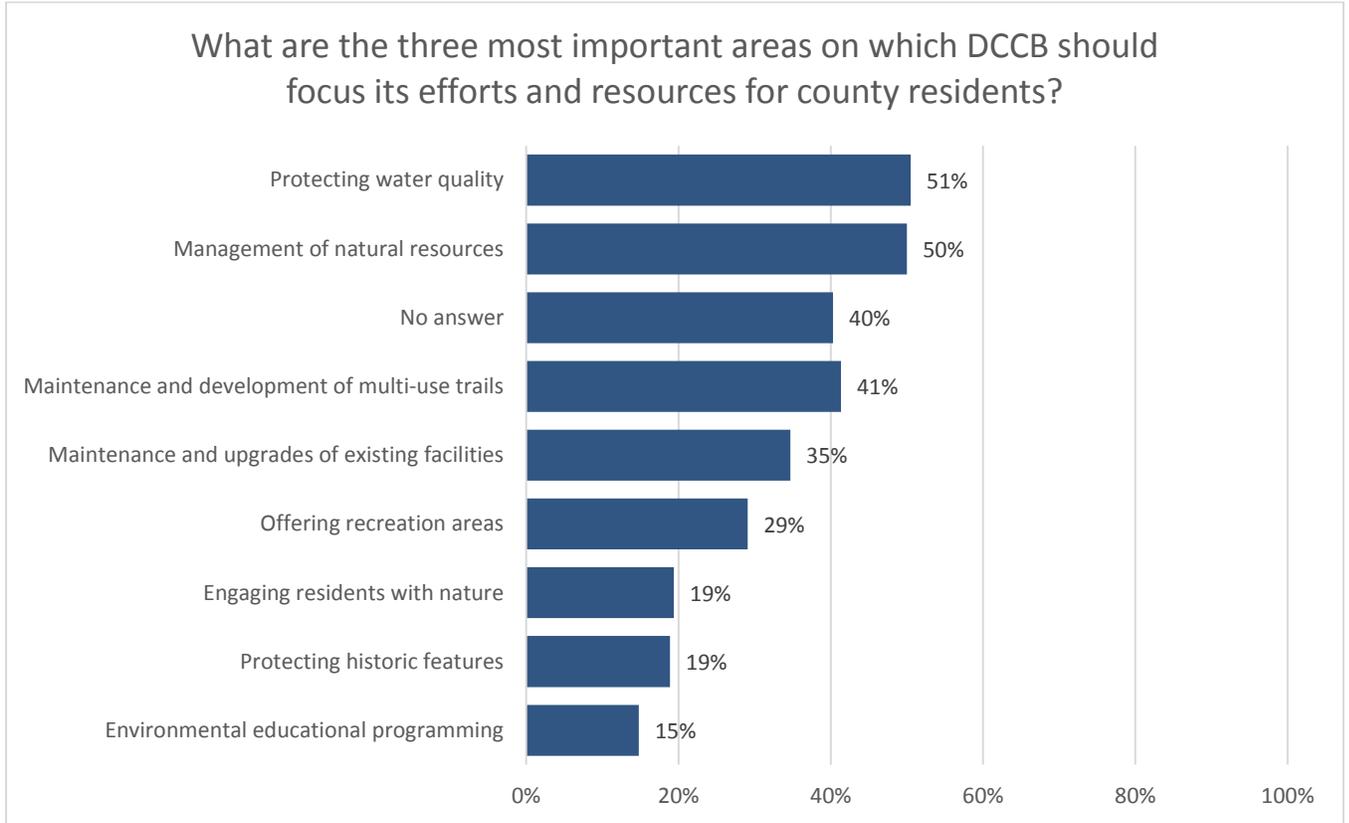


Question 10:

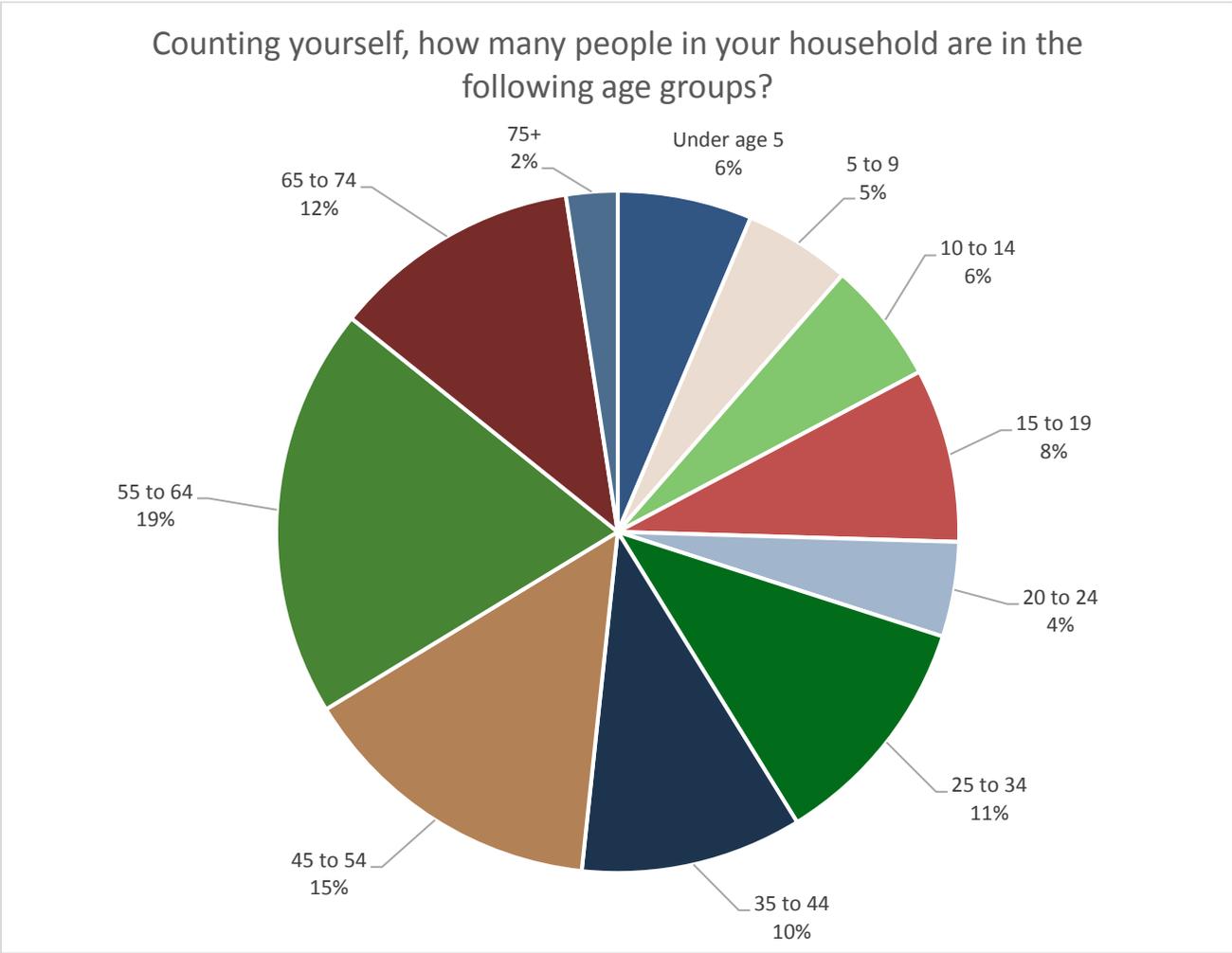


	1st	2nd	3rd
Newsletter	17%	6%	6%
Newspaper	18%	8%	1%
E-Newsletter	12%	8%	7%
Word of Mouth	5%	11%	6%
Fliers at DCCB Facilities	9%	7%	5%
Community signs/banners	2%	5%	8%
Newspaper advertisements	3%	3%	7%
Friends and neighbors	4%	4%	3%
School fliers/newsletters	4%	5%	3%
County website	2%	4%	5%
Facebook	1%	3%	4%
Dallas County Visitor Guide	1%	2%	2%
Other:	0%	2%	1%

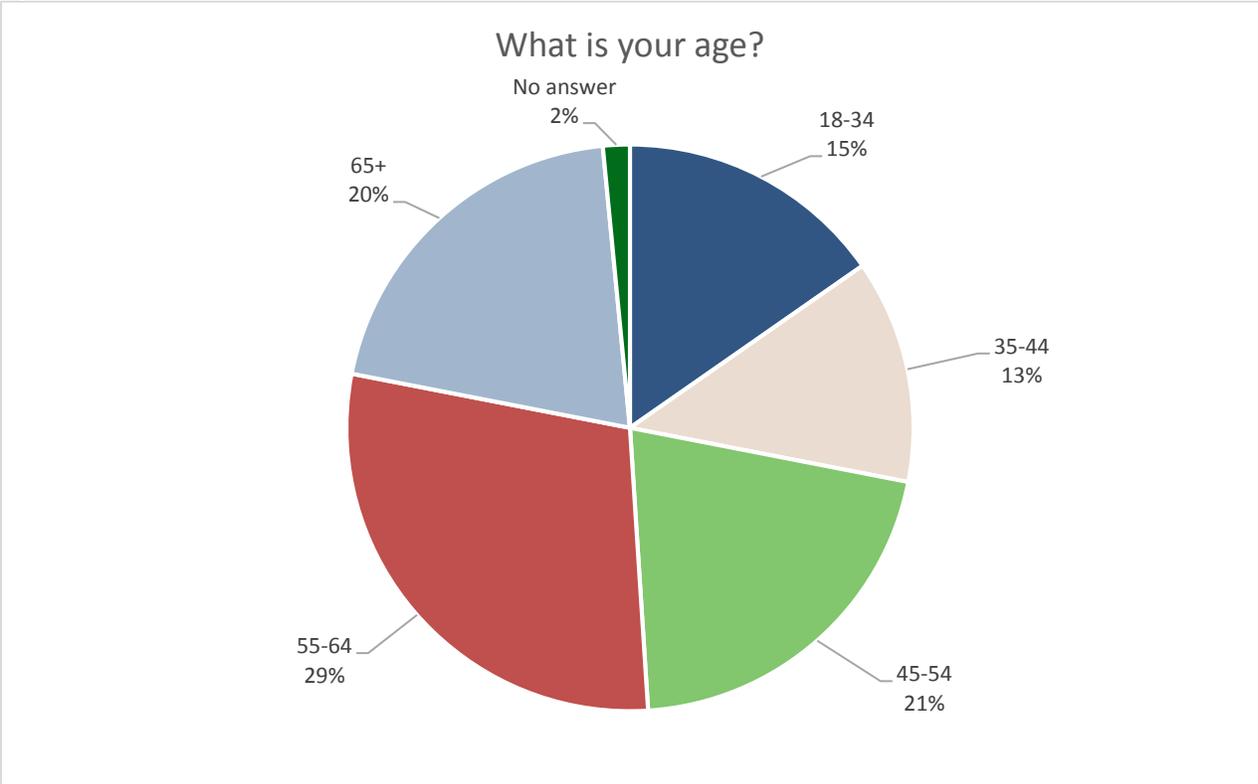
Question 11:



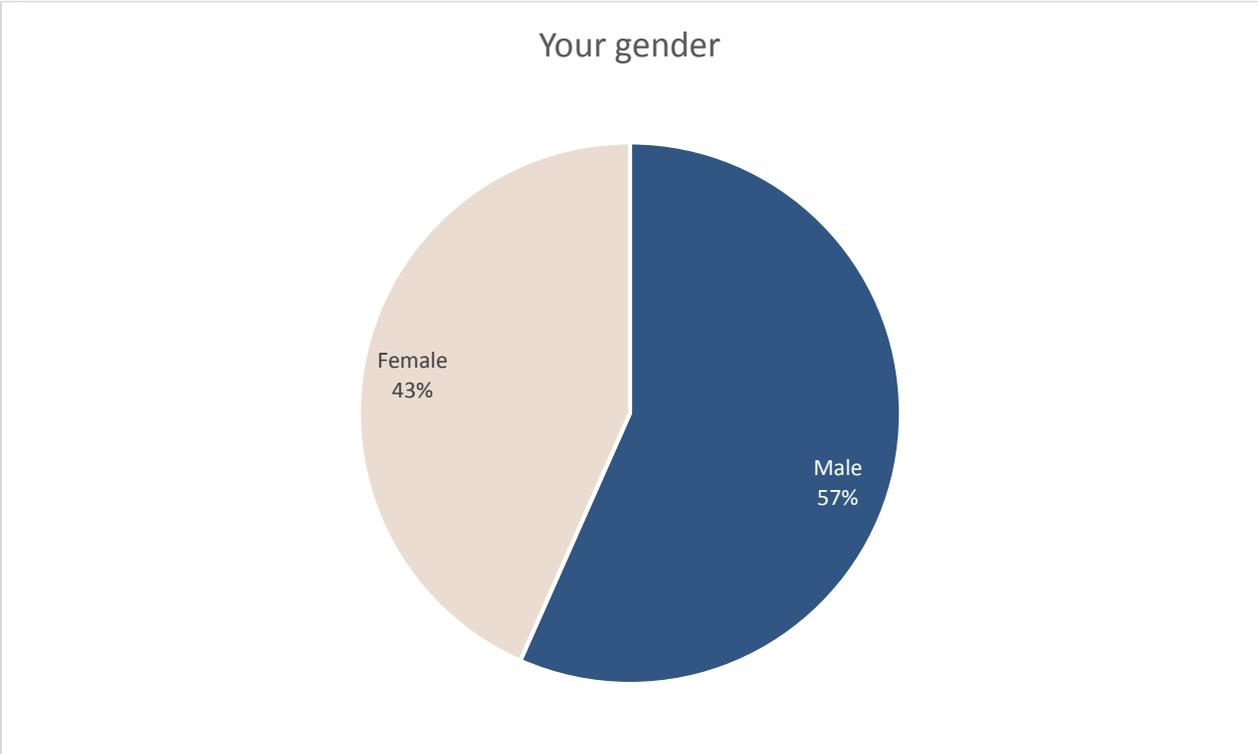
Question 12:



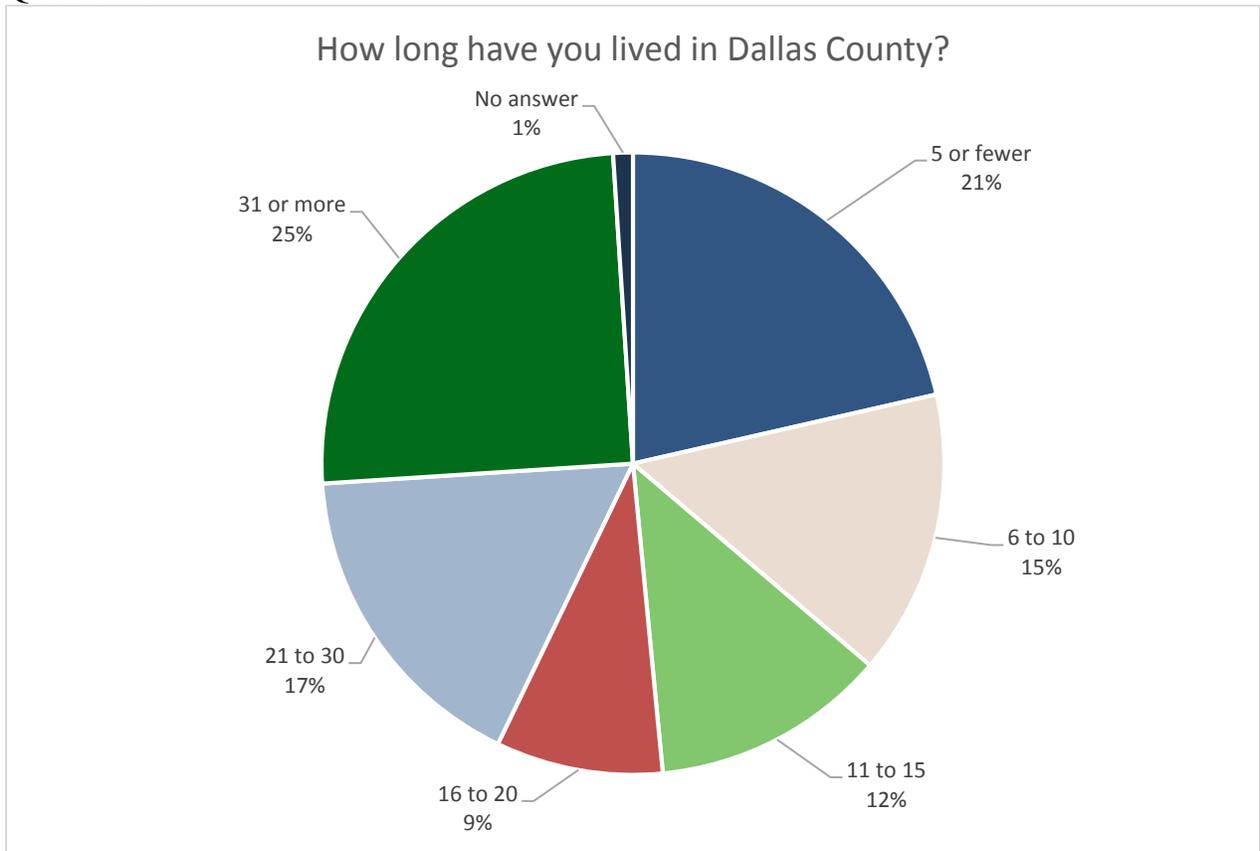
Question 13:



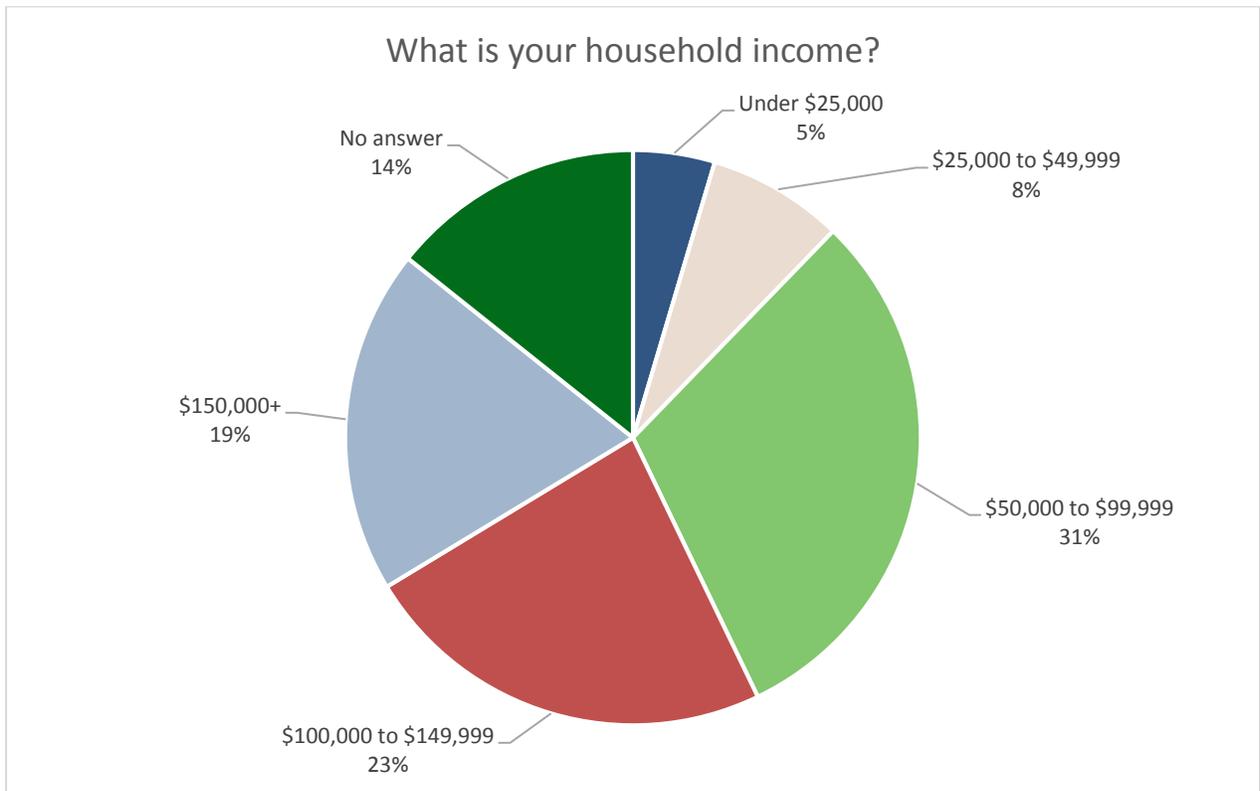
Question 14:



Question 15:



Question 16:





# APPENDIX C

Meeting Agendas  
& Minutes

**DALLAS COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**SPC MEETING #1 AGENDA**  
FOREST PARK MUSEUM  
April 4, 2017  
7-9 PM

- I. INTRODUCTIONS
- II. PROJECT OVERVIEW
  - A. Project Objectives
  - B. Schedule
- III. DISCUSSION ITEMS
  - A. Headline Activity
  - B. Key Opportunities
  - C. Key Challenges
- IV. REVIEW DRAFT SURVEY QUESTIONS
- V. WRAP-UP & NEXT MEETING

## Meeting Notes

Mike Wallace, Director, Dallas County Conservation Board

**To:** Strategic Plan Committee Members **Date:** 04/21/2017

Mindy Moore, AICP

**From:** Jennifer Wiltgen, AICP

**Project :** Dallas County Conservation Board Strategic Plan **Project #:** 117.0206

**Re:** SPC Meeting #1

A Strategic Plan Committee meeting was held on April 4, 2017 at 7:00 pm for the above-referenced project. The following were in attendance:

Name	Meeting #1 April 4, 2017
Mike Wallace	X
Pete Malmburg	X
Curt Cable	X
Justin Smith	X
Cindy Blobaum	X
Beth Shields	X
Mike Delaney	
Sean Hick	X
Matt Jermier	
Scott Seeley	X
Dan Wilhelmi	X
Jean Tool	X
Ajay Winter	X
Julie Bailey	X
Kelly Canfield	X
Kathy Lenz	X
Sharon Wiese	X
Forrest Ridgeway	X
Lorinda Inman	X

### I. INTRODUCTIONS

Members of the committee introduced themselves, their experience, and their connections to the Dallas County Conservation Board. About a third of the members included Dallas County

Conservation Board staff or board members. Some members were retired from various community positions in the County or work with government or not-for-profit organizations related to conservation. Most of the committee members were Dallas County residents and were representative of different geographic areas across the County. All had contact with Dallas County Conservation Board programs, facilities, and trails.

## II. PROJECT OVERVIEW

- A. Jennifer began with a discussion of what strategic planning means and how the strategic plan would guide Dallas County Conservation Board’s efforts moving forward. She provided an overview of the project objectives.
- B. Jennifer briefly went over the project schedule and target dates for milestones and completion.
- C. Jennifer provided the mission statement, which had been revised in the past year. The mission statement identifies four focus areas for County Conservation: Environmental Education, Ecosystem Management, Outdoor Recreation, and Historic Preservation. The question of whether the previous strategic plan would be discussed came up and Jennifer responded that the previous strategic plan would be considered during the development of the new strategic plan.

## III. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Headline Activity - Jennifer led the “What’s the Headline?” activity. Committee members got into groups and brainstormed headlines for Dallas County Conservation Board and what they wanted to see as outcomes for the plan. The results of this activity are included in the table below. The committee decided which of the four mission statement focus areas the headline impacted.

Headlines	Environmental Education	Ecosystem Management	Outdoor Recreation	Historic Preservation
DCCB Unveils Kuehn Conservation Learning Center and Museum/Gallery at Forest Park	x		x	x
Water Recreation Created – Elimination of Low-Head Dams		x	x	
Water!!!! Dallas County’s Rivers Run Clean	x	x	x	
2020 Olympics in Dallas County (Or Maybe a Triathlon)			x	
Longest Trail System in the Universe Completed			x	
400 Acres Addition to Big Bend Wildlife Area	~x	x	x	
Dallas County Builds on Environmental Education for Youth and Adults	x			
Dallas County Works for Facility Improvements Including a Nature Center	x			x
Dallas County Works on Trail Updates Including Connectors, Enhanced Rest Stops with Natural Areas and Environmental Education	x	x	x	
Dallas County Conservation and Farmers Create Innovative Protection Programs	x	x		
DCCB Reaches 5000 Acre Milestone	x	x	x	x
DCCB Wins Healthy Iowans Award with Use of New Trail System			x	

- B. Key Opportunities - The group brainstormed key opportunities/strengths that Dallas County Conservation Board could capitalize on to achieve its goals.
- C. Key Challenges - The group brainstormed key challenges/issues that could derail or deter the Dallas County Conservation Board from achieving its goals.
- D. Internal vs. External Challenges and Opportunities - After the brainstorming exercise, the committee categorized the challenges and opportunities by whether they were “internal” vs. “external” meaning internal to the organization, and external to the organization. Below are the results of these exercises.

<b>Opportunities/Strengths</b>	
<b>Internal</b>	<b>External</b>
<p><b>ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education programs</li> <li>• Environmental education programs</li> <li>• Excellent environmental educators</li> <li>• Kuehn Conservation area for enhanced environmental education opportunities</li> <li>• Continue to grow programs in school</li> <li>• Existing relationship with schools</li> <li>• Educational resources to bring schools to the outdoors</li> </ul> <p><b>HUNTING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established hunting areas</li> </ul> <p><b>WATER TRAILS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established water trails</li> <li>• Water trail                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create opportunities for canoe/kayak regatta</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>LAND TRAILS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trails                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Volunteer opportunity, adopt-a-trail</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Strong trail network, HTT &amp; RRVT</li> <li>• Terrific bike trail</li> <li>• Expand trail system</li> <li>• Bike trail connecting towns</li> <li>• Existing bike trail system</li> <li>• Trails go through most of the county (after final connector)</li> <li>• Mike Wallace – ability to finish connector</li> </ul>	<p><b>WATER QUALITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing awareness of need for water quality improvements</li> <li>• Public interest in clean water</li> <li>• Raccoon river system throughout County</li> <li>• Opportunity: Raccoon River Trail</li> <li>• River system and waterways</li> <li>• Clean rivers make for better fishing &amp; wildlife sightings</li> <li>• Potential to improve Dallas County waterways</li> </ul> <p><b>TOURISM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism opportunities</li> <li>• Trail connector brings visitors and revenue into Dallas County</li> </ul> <p><b>COMMUNITY SUPPORT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide support of natural resource tax</li> <li>• Community support</li> <li>• Community involvement</li> <li>• Some strong supporters</li> <li>• Volunteer network</li> <li>• Stine Seed’s resources and wealth and support of DCCB</li> <li>• Affluent citizens</li> </ul> <p><b>TRAIL USAGE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active biking groups</li> <li>• Bike trail – heavy usage</li> </ul> <p><b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best farmland in the world</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park trails</li> <li>• Great infrastructure – trail and buildings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural resources</li> <li>• Beauty of Dallas County</li> <li>• Extensive history in Dallas County with museums in many communities</li> </ul>
<p><b>MARKETING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great recreation guide</li> <li>• Increasing use of web based media</li> <li>• Pretty good signage for parks and trails</li> <li>• Good outreach with county, schools, and public</li> </ul>	<p><b>PUBLIC DEMAND</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School public interest in nature</li> <li>• Growing county will demand more recreational activities</li> <li>• Demand for services resources - trails, WMA’s programs, etc.</li> <li>• Large non-rural population near metro in need of outdoor exposure and historical teaching</li> <li>• A population that wants outdoor experiences</li> <li>• Dallas County is growing in population</li> <li>• Urban areas growing fast</li> </ul>
<p><b>LEADERSHIP/STAFF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperative leadership</li> <li>• Enthusiastic leadership</li> <li>• Ability to manage facilities well – Voas</li> <li>• Great staff and volunteers</li> <li>• Strong staff</li> <li>• Existing trail staff and equipment</li> <li>• Staff – the naturalists, historian, biologist and bird expert</li> <li>• Strong network of knowledgeable employees and volunteers</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACCESSIBILITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good accessibility to areas in most parts of the county</li> <li>• Access to urban environment and rural</li> </ul>

<b>Challenges/Issues</b>	
<b>Internal</b>	<b>External</b>
<p><b>COSTS/FUNDING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding - including to spread the word about programming</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Lack of funding</li> <li>• Limited funding/resources</li> <li>• Budget cuts</li> <li>• Budget cuts</li> <li>• Cost associated with trail connectors, water clean up</li> <li>• Additional private donors may be needed</li> </ul> <p><b>LEADERSHIP/STAFF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dallas County Conservation Foundation strengthened</li> <li>• Mike Wallace retiring</li> <li>• Shortfall of employees when adding new</li> </ul>	<p><b>COSTS/FUNDING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Money</li> <li>• Money</li> <li>• Funds to complete all needs</li> <li>• Uncertain funding base</li> <li>• Risks - Economic downturn</li> <li>• Local option sales tax money may be needed</li> </ul> <p><b>POLITICS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Politics</li> <li>• Three member Board of Supervisors</li> <li>• Lack of leadership or political buy-in or support</li> <li>• Adding more public land will take money away from property tax revenues for county</li> <li>• Lack of statewide natural resource protection</li> </ul> <p><b>WATER QUALITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality in rivers</li> </ul>

<p>facilities and property</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff to maintain facilities and trails and to staff the museums</li><li>• Lack of staff</li><li>• Limited staff</li></ul> <p><b>VOLUNTEERS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Getting volunteers</li><li>• Volunteers and staffing to get things done</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Water quality</li></ul> <p><b>SAFETY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dangerous dams with potential to be a positive</li><li>• Unwanted liabilities</li></ul> <p><b>POPULATION GROWTH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Population explosion</li><li>• Dallas County is growing in population</li><li>• Increased competition for land acquisition</li><li>• Lots of farm land taken out of projection due to increase in population</li></ul> <p><b>PUBLIC PERCEPTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No public willing to make hard changes</li><li>• Public perception of new facilities</li><li>• Negative publicity</li></ul> <p><b>URBAN/RURAL DYNAMIC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Balance different types of residents in Dallas County<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Metro, larger city, smaller city, rural, country, ag</li></ul></li><li>• Urban growth and sprawl</li><li>• Potential taking away areas due to sprawl</li><li>• Diverse priorities of urban vs rural</li><li>• Eastern Dallas County lack of involvement in resources of conservation.</li><li>• Getting participants on same track</li></ul> <p><b>DISTRACTIONS FROM NATURE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of interest from younger generation</li><li>• Encouraging adults and youth to drop their electronics to view the great outdoors</li><li>• General population is too far removed from agriculture</li><li>• Apathy – competing with video games, TV, computers</li><li>• Uneducated public in regard to conservation</li></ul>
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E. Discussion - After reviewing some of the items brainstormed by the committee, Jennifer and Mindy discussed some of the preliminary results and asked the committee to discuss what they had written in more detail.

- One committee member mentioned that the excellence of the staff and their ability to work with the school children as an opportunity. They also mentioned the strong relationship with schools as an opportunity/strength as well as a challenge. The strong relationship is a challenge largely due to the large number of schools who each want to have particular activities in their school.
  - The urban/rural dynamic of the County was also noted as a challenge. Mostly in the context of the major population centers in Waukee and West Des Moines not wanting to drive further west to where natural areas are to participate in activities. There are so many activities already in those communities that not as many people are willing to drive out west. The metro communities were also discussed as a strength/opportunity due to the tax revenue that they generate. It was mentioned that people from the metro areas should be educated on the benefits of rural areas.
  - Stine Seed has done a tremendous job of preserving land/farmland and is a major donator to the Dallas County Conservation Board and it was seen as strength that they are a good steward of natural resources.
  - When discussing challenges, funding was mentioned multiple times. This falls under both Internal and External Challenges. The internal challenges relate to making the most of the limited funds and the work associated with seeking grants, donations, etc. The external challenges relate to the decision-making of outside agencies (e.g. Board of Supervisors, grant review boards, donation providers, etc.) and the potential changes in the economy and tax base.
  - The fact that there are only three County Board of Supervisor members was identified as a challenge.
  - Water quality and lack of statewide natural resource protection were also discussed as challenges.
  - Finally, public perception of facilities when the public sees the County putting up nice buildings it can create a negative perception about spending money.
- F. Target Clients/Consumer Discussion - The committee was asked about the different clients/consumer groups and below are the results of that discussion.
- Current Clients/Consumers:
    - i. Trail users – coming from all over, including some unfamiliar with the area
    - ii. School children
      1. Ages K-6
      2. School districts: Waukee, Dallas Center-Grimes, ADM (Adel/DeSoto/Minburn), WCV (West Central Valley), Granger
    - iii. Families
    - iv. Middle age/early retirement age couples
    - v. Hunters and anglers
    - vi. Hikers
    - vii. Paddlers
    - viii. Farmers

- ix. Adjacent counties
  - x. Visitors – brochures at Iowa Welcome Center
  - xi. Businesses, partners, RRVTA
- Missing or Unreached Clients/Consumers:
    - i. Young kids – PreK
    - ii. Older people
    - iii. More farmers
    - iv. Different cultures

#### **IV. REVIEW DRAFT SURVEY QUESTIONS**

- A. Jennifer reviewed the survey developed by ETC Institute with the group and discussed their suggestions/modifications.
  - Staff discussed that some of the sub-groups for facilities and natural resource areas could be condensed and/or grouped differently.
  - The open ended questions on the survey were discussed as being difficult to analyze and it was suggested that they be removed or condensed into other questions.

#### **V. WRAP-UP & NEXT MEETING**

- A. Jennifer and Mindy wrapped up the meeting and set the next meeting tentatively for the end of July.
- B. The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:10 pm.

**DALLAS COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD STRATEGIC PLAN  
SPC MEETING #2 AGENDA**

FOREST PARK MUSEUM

August 7, 2017

5:30-6:30 PM

I. INTRODUCTIONS

II. PRESENTATION

- A. Survey results
- B. Investments
- C. Goals
- D. Objectives
- E. Evaluation
- F. Marketing Suggestions

III. DISCUSSION

IV. ADJOURN

Public Meeting to follow from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

## Meeting Minutes

<b>To:</b>	Mike Wallace, Executive Director	<b>Date:</b>	August 9, 2017
<b>From:</b>	Mindy Moore, AICP Lauren Dietz, Planner		
<b>Project:</b>	Dallas County Conservation Board Strategic Plan	<b>Project #:</b>	117.0206
<b>Re:</b>	SPC Workshop #2		

A Strategic Planning Committee workshop was held on August 7, 2017 for the Dallas County Strategic Plan project. The following were in attendance:

<b>Meeting #2 - August 7, 2017</b>	
<b>Name</b>	
Mike Wallace	x
Pete Malmburg	x
Curt Cable	x
Justin Smith	x
Cindy Blobaum	
Beth Shields	x
Mike Delaney	x
Sean Hick	
Matt Jermier	
Scott Seeley	
Dan Wilhelmi	
Jean Tool	x
Ajay Winter	
Julie Bailey	
Kelly Canfield	
Kathy Lenz	
Sharon Wiese	x
Forrest Ridgeway	
Lorinda Inman	x

### I. INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting began at 5:36 pm. Mindy introduced herself and Snyder's new planner Lauren Dietz, who has taken over project responsibilities from Jennifer Wiltgen. The committee members introduced themselves.

## II. PRESENTATION

Lauren presented the plan information to date, which included survey results, investment priorities, goals and objectives/strategies, evaluation techniques, marketing suggestions, and guidance for implementation and updates.

The marketing suggestions featured websites and social media, and focused on cost-effective options that do not further burden staff.

## III. DISCUSSION

Mike Wallace asked the group if they had ideas of how much of an impact the Dallas County Conservation Board can have on water quality. Mike Delaney indicated that it would be best to partner with neighboring jurisdictions in the watershed, as the DNR is signaling a shift of the Iowater program (<http://www.iowadnr.gov/test/Environmental-Protection/Water-Quality/Water-Monitoring/Volunteer-Water-Monitoring>) to County Conservation Boards for water quality management. Funding was a concern among the group, which supported the suggestion for intergovernmental cooperation. Lauren mentioned loan and investment opportunities through the State Revolving Fund (<http://www.iowasrf.com/>).

In terms of gaining public support for water quality projects, Mike Delaney spoke of a national program encouraging people to take and post a selfie of themselves in their favorite stream to promote a connection to water resources. Lauren brought up the idea of using before/after visual aids to show changes over time for targeted areas to build a sense of urgency.

Concerns were raised about changes in the local Convention and Visitors Bureau and the difficulties with staffing the organization, as well as with budget constraints after a major cut to Dallas County Conservation Board staff in 2012. Pete compared pre-2012 marketing and community-based outreach to current budget and staff availability. The group was also concerned with unpredictable fluctuations in volunteerism over time.

Mike Delaney spoke of the importance of the Raccoon River Valley Trail, and having themed travel itineraries that visitors could follow. He also introduced the idea of promoting Airbnb as an overnight option for unexpected situations in the smaller towns along the trail. Mike Wallace mentioned the difficulty of multi-day tourism, as the trailheads do not have overnight parking. Creating a program for registering overnight vehicles may be an option to consider.

Mindy and Lauren spoke of corporate partnerships, using the example of Polk County Conservation and INHF partnering with REI to provide incentives for volunteerism on National Trails Day in June. REI also hosts many outdoors classes and trips, some of which could be held at DCCB facilities. Other possibilities brought up included Scheels, Dick's Sporting Goods, and Bass Pro Shops.

Lauren emphasized the importance of partnering with organizations to combine education and volunteerism. She spoke of an experience in Girl Scouts in which she attended a prairie education program at Hartman Reserve, which included helping staff re-seed the prairie. Candidates for Girl Scout Gold Awards and Boy Scout Eagle Scout Awards are great resources for small to medium sized projects in DCCB-owned areas.

#### **IV. ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:50 pm.