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LEAVE NO TRACE
RESIDENT &
VISITOR
SURVEY RESULTS

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RESIDENT AND VISITOR SURVEY RESULTS

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ABOUT THE SURVEY

PREFACE

This survey was intended to help Destination Door County (DDC) assess resident & visitor understanding of stewardship practices, awareness of the new DDC outdoor ethics guidelines, and the importance of outdoor recreation opportunities in Door County.

Feedback provided DDC with important insights around the efficacy of their ongoing efforts to promote responsible recreation in the county.

The survey took about 5-7 minutes to complete.



Summary

RESIDENT SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

371 residents of Door County took the survey titled, *Resident Survey Questions Regarding the Environment, the Outdoors and Recreation*. If an email was provided they were added to our sustainable/eco focused email list and also entered in for a chance to win a \$50 Door County Gift Certificate, 103 respondents supplied their email address. The survey was open for 24 days.

Overall, it is apparent that Door County's outdoors, environment and outdoor recreation are very important to the residents surveyed. 78% of respondents feel Door County should work to maintain and protect the outdoor spaces for enjoyment by the public, which is supported by 50%-60% of respondents saying their outdoor activity says a lot about them and why they choose to live in Door County.

Our baseline for the Door County Leave No Trace 7 Principles is 19% of residents surveyed have heard or seen information on them which provides room to improve on educating our residents on this specific program, along with other initiatives.

It is our plan to keep growing our resident email database to start building a relationship with our residents and to produce a survey similar to this bi-annually.

CONCERNS RESIDENTS HAVE

Door County is overcrowded. [No 'local' spots anymore](#). Hard for residents to use the outdoors in the summer. [DC lacks safe and accessible trails](#). Litter awareness. [No regulation on pesticide use - chemicals ending up in our waters](#). Air pollution from bigger cities. [Manure management with shallow soil and bedrock](#). Need protection for wild spaces and habitats. [Balance between environment and economics](#). Need more winter activities. [Roads and Hwys not safe for bikers](#). Water access a challenge. [Our infrastructure can not handle 2M people a year](#). Festival fever. [Parks at or over capacity all summer](#).

IDEAS FROM RESIDENTS

Have trails that connect the villages and towns. [County wide bike path or trail](#). Full time residents have free access to State Parks. [More public art in outdoor spaces](#). Educate Door County residents on the effects of climate change. [Look into Stillwater, MN - they value their access to the outdoors](#). Campaigns from DDC on respecting the land, residents and properties. [More pet friendly places](#). More public launches, including inland lakes. [Plastic bag charges at markets](#). No straw county. [Promote litter pick up](#). More kayak launch spots. [Better swimming areas that allow dogs](#). Children's Museum.

371

Residents in Door County took the survey and provided feedback

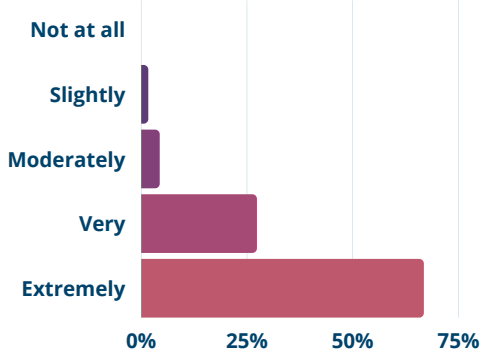
65%

Have not heard of the Door County Leave No Trace 7 Principles

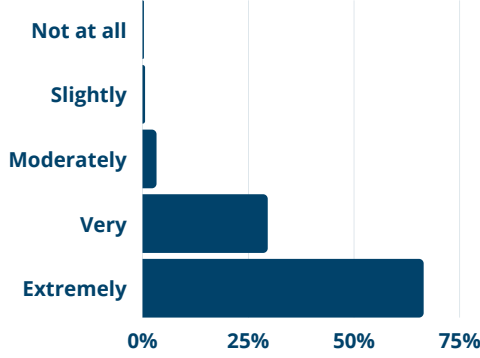
66%

Feel Door County's outdoors are extremely important to them

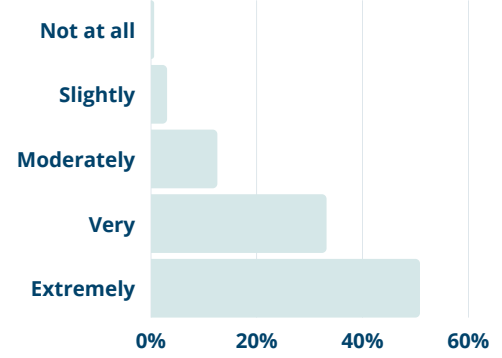
Q1:
How important is a healthy environment in Door County for you?



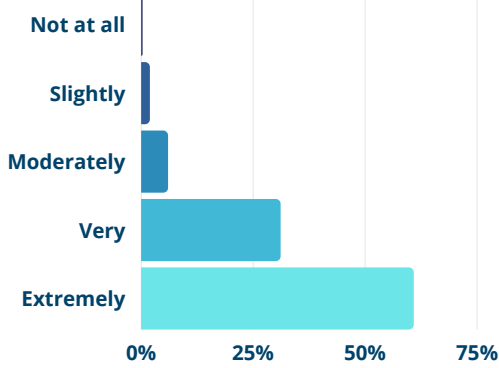
Q2:
How important are Door County's outdoors for you?



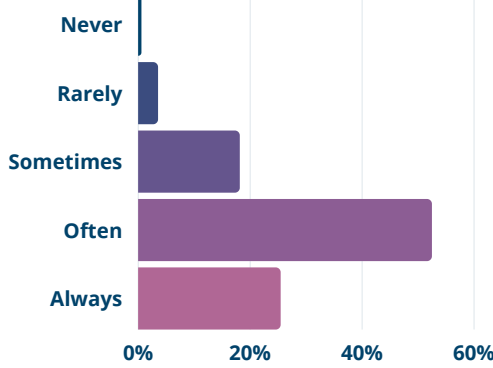
Q3:
How important is outdoor recreation for you?



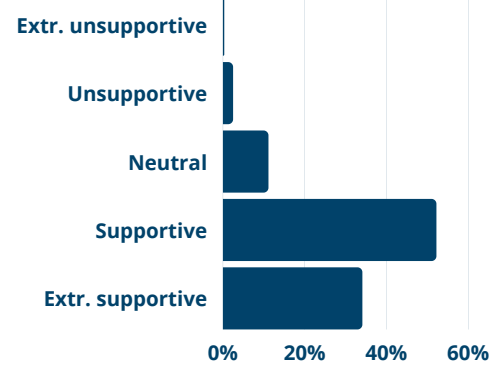
Q4:
How important is access to the outdoors for you?



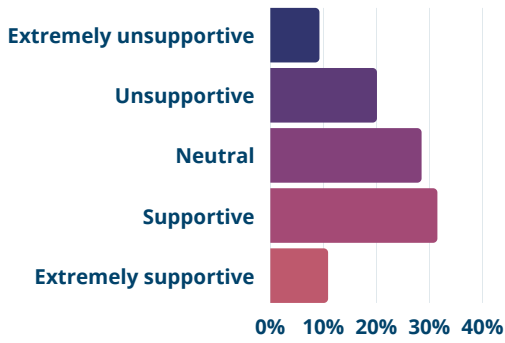
Q5:
How often do you participate in outdoor recreation?



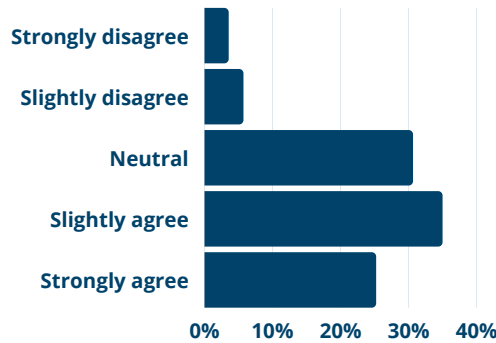
Q6:
How supportive are you to opening your community to tourists?



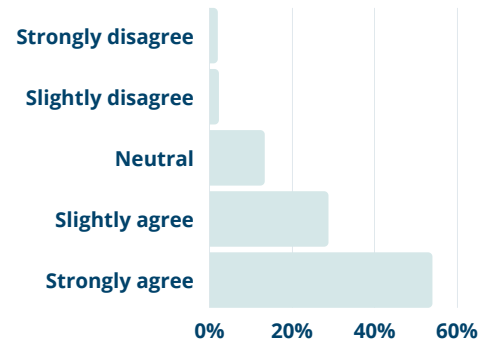
Q7:
How supportive are you to opening your community to tourists during the COVID pandemic?



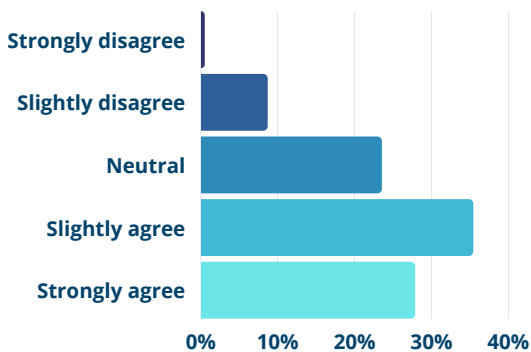
Q8:
My primary outdoor recreation activity says a lot about who I am.



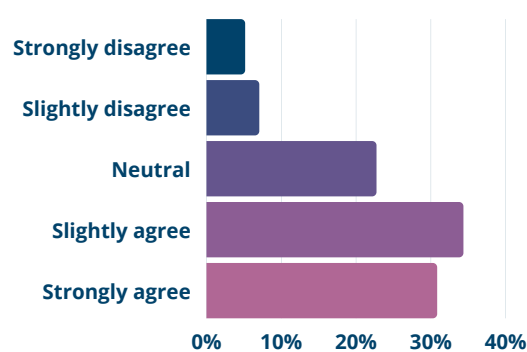
Q9:
My primary outdoor recreation activity is very important to me.



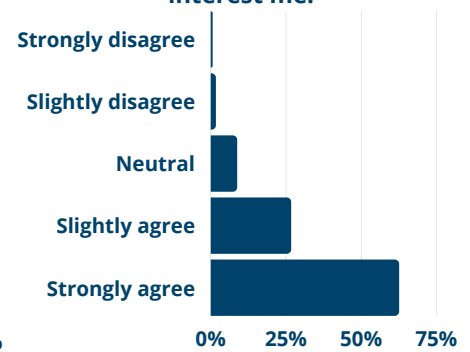
Q10:
My primary outdoor recreation activity is one of the most important things I do.



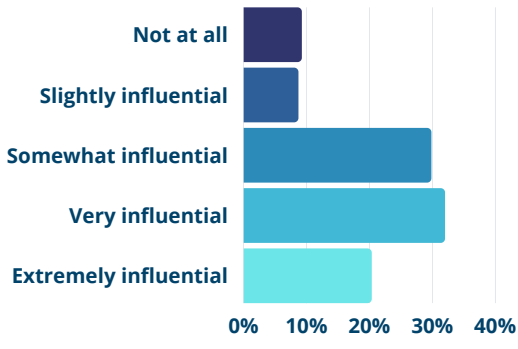
Q11:
My primary outdoor recreation activity plays a central role in my life.



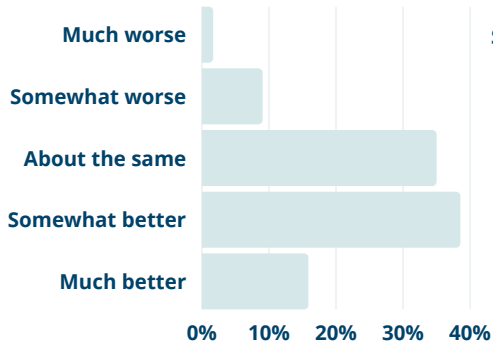
Q12:
Door County offers the kinds of recreational opportunities that interest me.



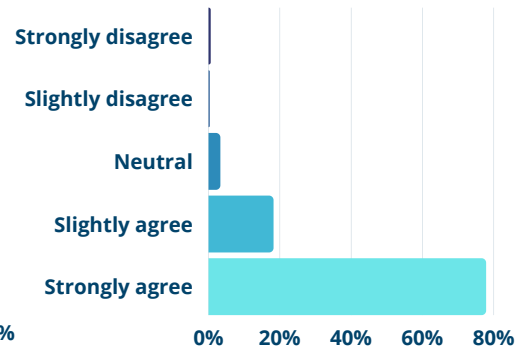
Q13:
In choosing a destination to travel to, do state or community efforts to ensure long term sustainability influence your decision?



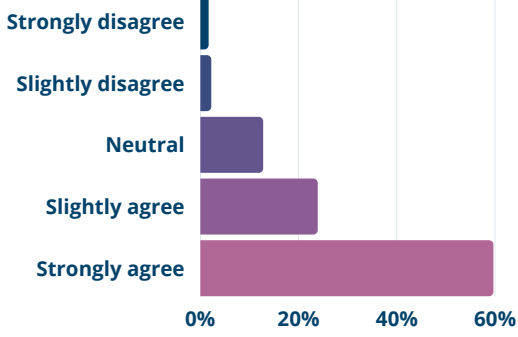
Q14:
How would you compare Door County to other states and counties you have traveled to in regard to the efforts made to embrace sustainable practices?



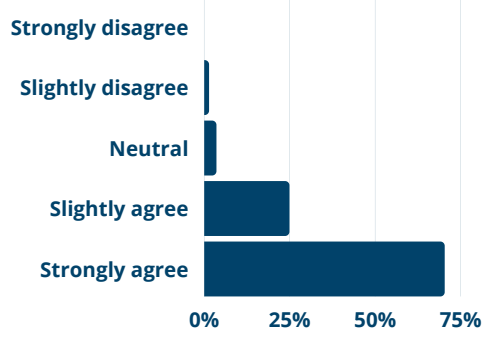
Q15:
Door County should work to maintain its outdoor spaces for enjoyment by the public.



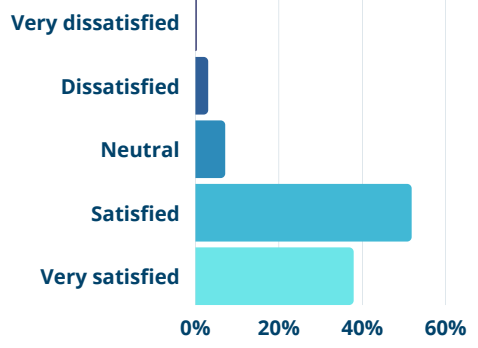
Q16:
Access to the outdoors is one of the reasons I live in Door County.



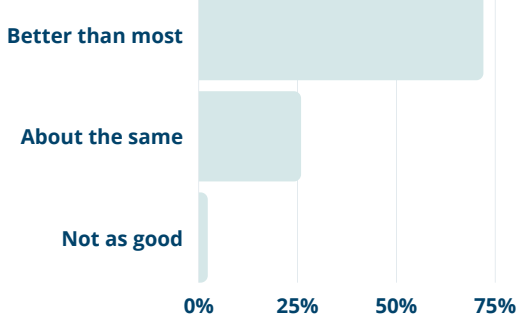
Q17:
I feel like I have good access to outdoor recreation opportunities in Door County.



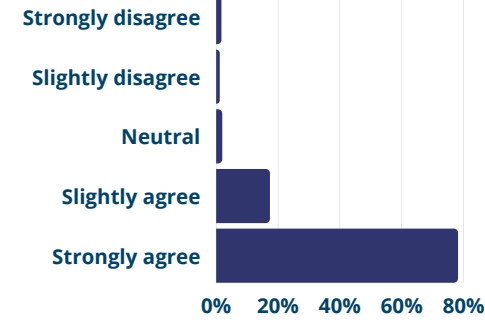
Q18:
Overall, how satisfied are you with the environment in Door County?



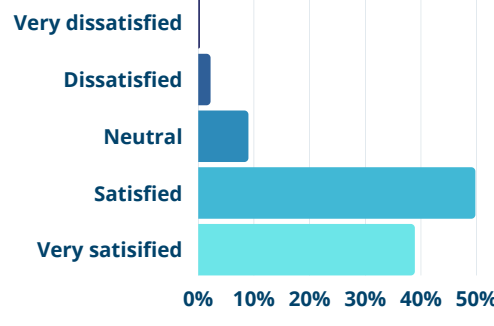
Q19:
Overall, would you say that Door County's environment is:



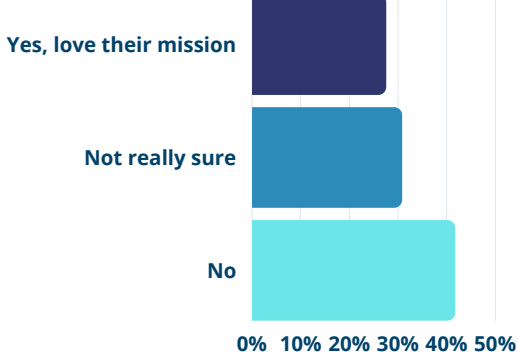
Q20:
Protection of Door County's environment is important to me.



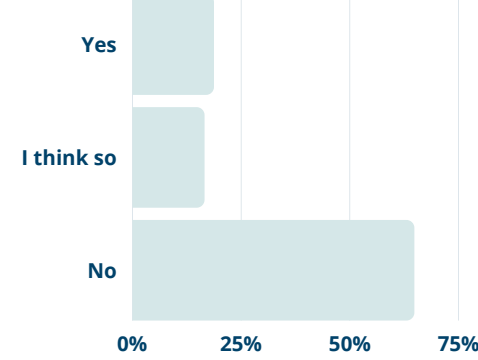
Q21:
Overall, how satisfied are you with access to recreational opportunities in Door County?



Q22:
Have you heard of Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics?



Q23:
Have you seen or heard of the Door County Leave No Trace 7 Principles?



Summary

VISITOR SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

4,733 persons from our visitor database took the survey titled, *Visitor Survey Questions Regarding the Environment, the Outdoors and Recreation in Door County*. If an email was provided they were added to our sustainable/eco focused email list and also entered in for a chance to win a \$50 Door County Gift Certificate, 3,892 respondents supplied their email address. The survey was open for 4 days.

Door County's outdoors, environment and outdoor recreation are important to the visitors surveyed. 83% of respondents feel Door County should work to maintain and protect the outdoor spaces for enjoyment by the public and 81% find it important to care for the land and water resources while visiting. There is excellent opportunity to educate the visitors on specific items Door County needs their help with while visiting.

Our baseline for the Door County Leave No Trace 7 Principles is 12% of visitors surveyed have heard or seen information on them which provides room to improve on educating our visitors on this specific program, along with other initiatives.

It is our plan to produce a survey similar to this bi-annually to gage the progress with educating our visitors.

CONCERNS VISITORS HAVE

Overdevelopment. [No trails for disabled persons](#). Lack of recycling receptacles. [Lack of garbage receptacles](#). Safety of bikers. [Beach erosion](#). Stacking of rocks on the shorelines. [Lodging and restaurants not following recycling practices](#). Air pollution. [Visitors not respecting the environment](#). Air quality issues. [Condo development out of control](#). Marinas not well run. [Confusion with recycling within Door County](#). Little to no access for limited mobility.

Overdevelopment was the most repeated concern listed.

IDEAS FROM VISITORS

Have trails that connect the villages and towns. [County wide bike path or trail](#). More pet friendly places. [More public launches, including inland lakes](#). More kayak launch spots. [More pet friendly options](#). Safer trails. [Children's museum](#). More public beaches or beach brochure. [Pickleball courts](#). No more, or limitation of, development. [Eco friendly lodging & restaurants](#). More options open year-round. [Wheelchair accessible outdoor activities](#). Advertising the free parks more. [More outdoor activities for 60 and older](#). Park and ride options. [Paved bike paths](#). More UTV/ATV trails.

4,733

Visitors took the survey that was open for 4 days and provided feedback .

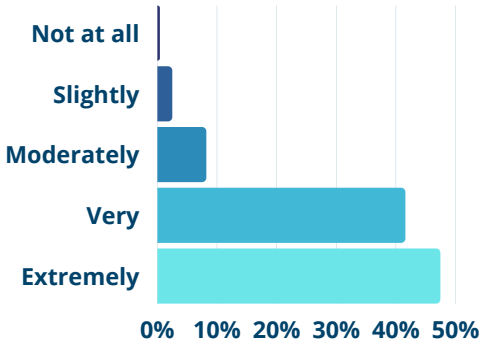
67%

Have not heard of the Door County Leave No Trace 7 Principles

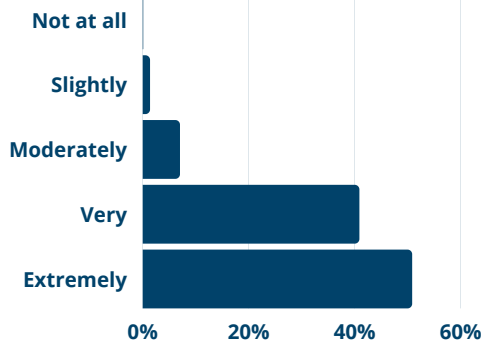
81%

Find it important to care for the land and water resources while visiting

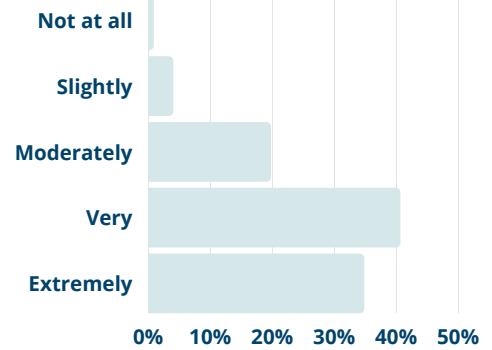
Q1:
How important to you is a healthy environment when visiting Door County?



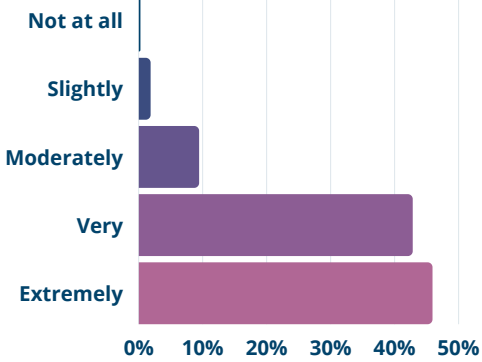
Q2:
How important are the outdoors when considering a trip to Door County?



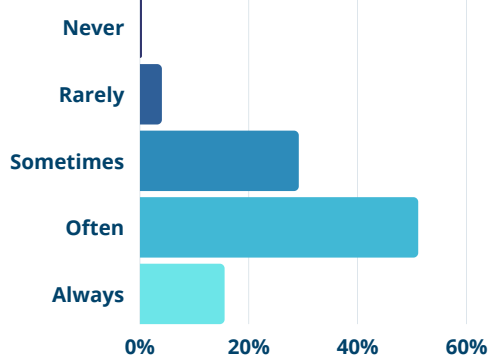
Q3:
How important to you is outdoor recreation when visiting Door County?



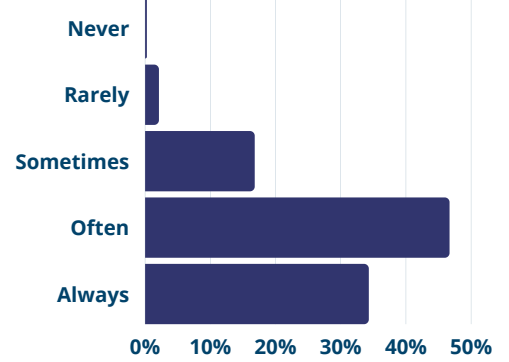
Q4:
How important is access to the outdoors in Door County for you?



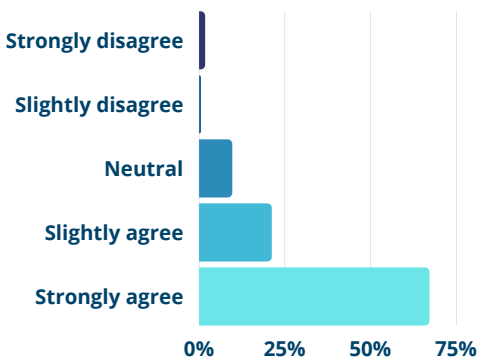
Q5:
How often do you participate in outdoor recreation at home?



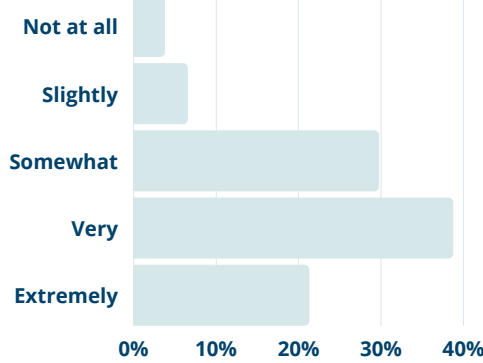
Q6:
How often do you participate in outdoor recreation on vacation?



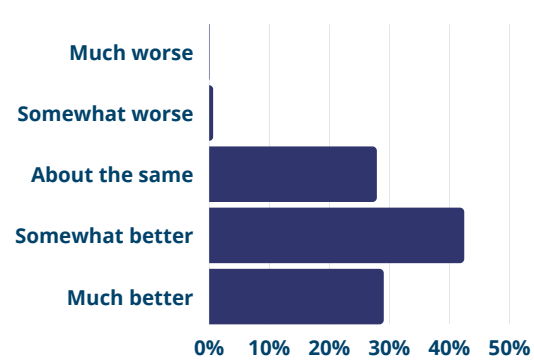
Q7:
Door County offers the kinds of outdoor recreational opportunities that interest me.



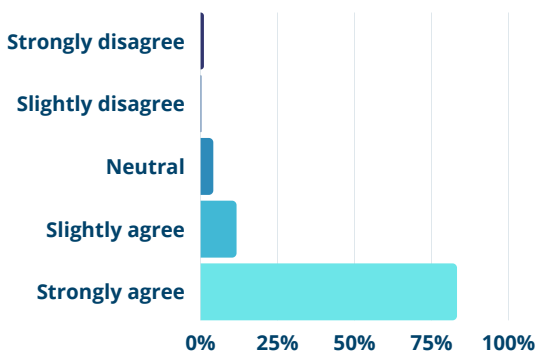
Q8:
In choosing a destination to travel to, do state or community efforts to ensure long term sustainability of natural environment influence your decision?



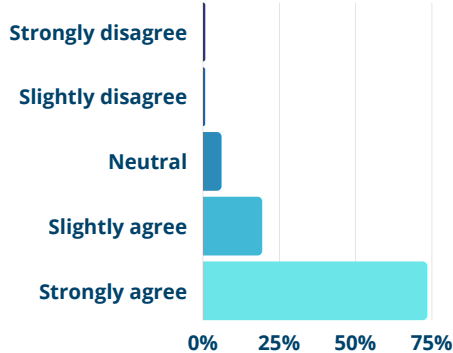
Q9:
How would you compare Door County to other states and counties you have traveled to in regard to the efforts made to embrace sustainable practices?



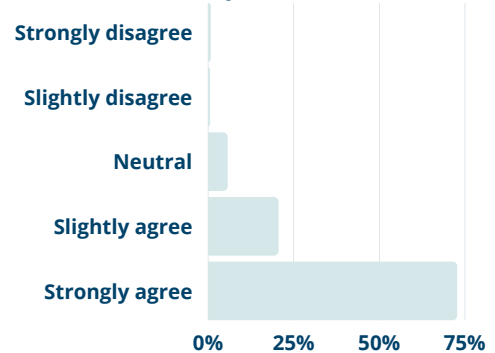
Q10:
Door County should work to maintain its outdoor spaces for enjoyment by the public.



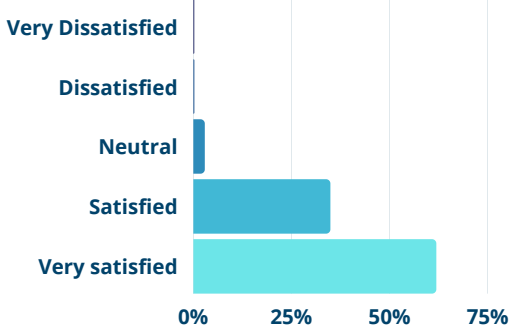
Q11:
Access to the outdoors is one of the reasons I visit Door County.



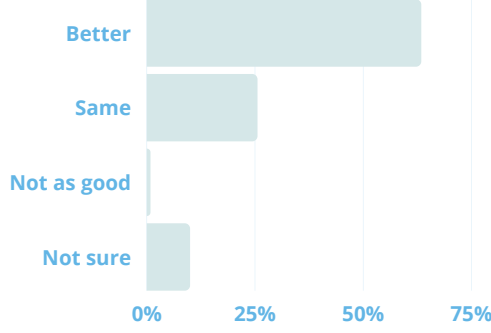
Q12:
I feel I have good access to outdoor recreational opportunities in Door County when I visit.



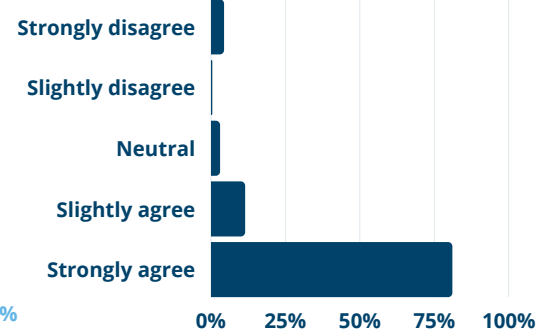
Q13:
Overall, how satisfied are you with the environment in Door County?



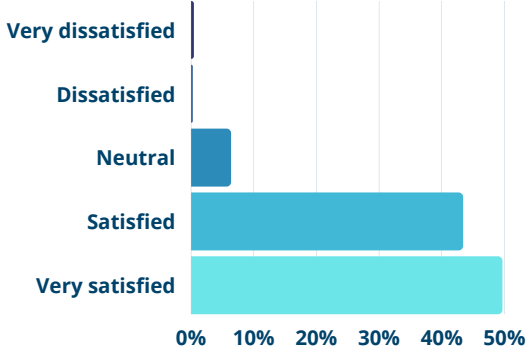
Q14:
Overall, would you say that Door County's environment is:



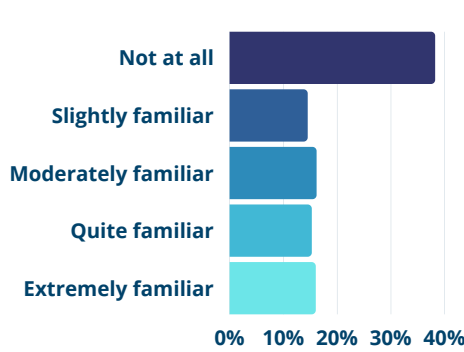
Q15:
While visiting Door County it is important to me that I care for the land and water resources.



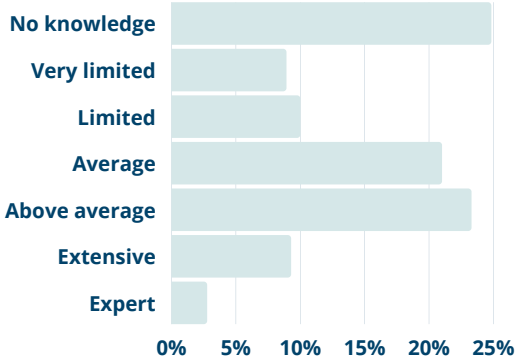
Q16:
Overall, how satisfied are you with access to recreational opportunities when you visit Door County?



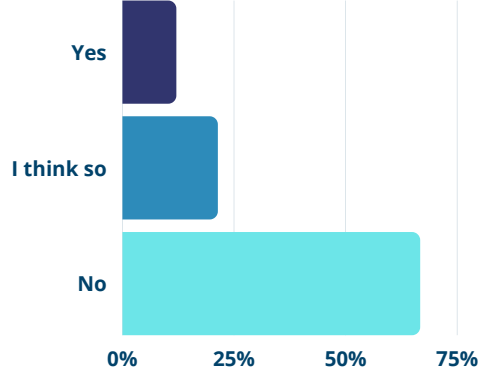
Q17:
How familiar are you with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics?



Q18:
How would you describe your current knowledge of "Leave No Trace" practices?



Q19:
Have you seen or heard of the Door County Leave No Trace 7 Principles?



Next Steps

PROPOSED

KNOWLEDGE OF PRINCIPLES

Based on the data collected from both the resident and visitor surveys, there were 28% of respondents familiar with Leave No Trace and 31% of respondents that had heard of the Door County Leave No Trace 7 Principles. This is our baseline when gauging our growth in educating both our residents and our visitors.

One way we will work to increase resident and visitor knowledge of both Leave No Trace and the Door County Leave No Trace 7 Principles is through our eco focused newsletter that will start to be sent out in April to both residents and visitors that signed up, and to visitors in our visitor focused emails.

Resident focused education will happen through avenues with Green Tier Legacy Communities, parks and recreational areas, toolkits that will launch in April with information for businesses on how to practice Leave No Trace, presentations to schools and other youth organizations, etc. A goal for resident knowledge of Leave No Trace and the Door County Leave No Trace 7 Principles in year 2022 could be 50% of respondents.

Visitor focused education will need to primarily happen before they get here through advertisement in our Destination Guides, newsletters and our social channels. Welcome Center staff throughout Door County will also be trained on how to talk about the Door County Leave No Trace 7 Principles to visitors. Additionally, businesses and organizations throughout the county will also be pushing out a unified message about how residents and visitors can Leave No Trace, by practicing our 7 principles.

SUPPORTING PROJECTS

It was very evident in the open ended question of both the resident and visitor surveys that we need a safe bike/pedestrian path in each Village, Town or City. Taking it a step further was the suggestion to create a county-wide bike/pedestrian loop that connects all the Villages, Towns and City in a safe manner.

Water access being a challenge was also mentioned in both survey results. Promoting the Water Sports & Boat Launches brochure would help educate and guide residents and visitors to an abundance of locations for their various needs. This will help spread people out allowing over crowded areas some reprieve.

Lastly, it was noted that garbage and recycling containers are 'lacking' in the county. Possibly do an assessment of what is offered and where. For those places that do not have containers, pushing the message of 'Pack it in, pack it out' would be helpful if getting a container at the location is not possible. It was also mentioned that lodging and restaurants could participate in a Leave No Trace state of mind with their products. DDC could evaluate the Travel Green Program and help businesses advertise all the good they are doing to make their patrons more aware of the steps they are taking to protect Door County, while encouraging others to join in.

Next Steps

CONTINUED

INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMING

It is important to note that Destination Door County's effort to promote the Door County Leave No Trace 7 Principles is a response to initial concerns about overtourism and protecting what we have - our natural beauty and environment. Before we could address overtourism, we needed to make sure we would not negatively impact Door County by spreading people out. As we spread residents and visitors out, they are going to be visiting places that many have not heard of or experienced before. These places are not used to heavy traffic. The 7 Principles will give us the framework to work with these unknown places and ensure that our efforts won't be detrimental to the organization or to the land, so they can be enjoyed for generations to come.

There are a few different avenues Destination Door County and its stakeholders can take to accomplish the suggestions listed above. One avenue is the partnership with Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. Through this partnership, DDC can explore how to help manage problem areas that Door County's natural spaces are encountering through specific messaging. Insufficient garbage and recycling receptacles, for example, is an issue we can help resolve through targeted messaging or by educating residents and visitors. Pairing the concern land managers have with a Door County Leave No Trace Principle will help educate people about what is expected of them.

Another avenue is our Care for Door County program. This program states that "Caring for what we love isn't just a feeling, it's an action...". Care for Door County will give Destination Door County and its stakeholders the ability to help with actionable steps related to the concerns and ideas expressed in the open-ended answers that may not be specific to Leave No Trace, and also to the concerns and ideas for the future. Care for Door County is a call to action to protect and care for the place we love, for those ready not just to feel, but to act. The first action step one can take is to sign the Door County Pledge which can be found at DoorCounty.com/pledge.

The final planned initiative, currently, is becoming a Certified Green Destination. This certification is about a 3 year process and will entail an extensive audit of the County. The plan is to conduct the audit by each municipality, leaving there to be 19 audits that can be broken down to county-wide steps, but also individual steps each municipality could make, if they choose, to be more sustainable. The audit looks at Destination Management, Culture and Tradition, Nature & Scenery, Social Well-Being, Environment & Climate and Business and Hospitality. More information on this will be available later this year.

