



# 2012 Recreational Activity Study for Becker County, Minnesota

Results of a June 2012 Survey of Becker County Residents

**Center for Social Research at North Dakota State University**

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## PREFACE

This report, entitled *2012 Recreational Activity Study for Becker County, Minnesota*, presents the results of a June 2012 generalizable survey of residents in Becker County, Minnesota.

The study was conducted by the Center for Social Research at North Dakota State University on behalf of Becker County. Additional funding for the project was provided by PartnerSHIP 4 Health of Becker, Clay, Otter Tail, and Wilkin counties.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

The purpose of this generalizable survey was to explore the attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of Becker County, Minnesota residents regarding active living, recreation, and motorized vehicle usage within the county. These data will assist county leaders in recreational planning while protecting natural resources and long-term sustainability of county-managed land.

## Study Design and Methodology

A generalizable survey was conducted of Becker County residents in June 2012. The survey instrument, developed in collaboration with the Becker County Recreational Advisory Committee (RAC) and PartnerSHIP 4 Health, was four pages in length and contained 19 questions (see Appendices).

The survey instrument was designed as a scannable mail survey that was sent to approximately 1,100 randomly selected households in Becker County. The sampling frame, provided by the county auditor, was a list of taxpayers in Becker County. Additional mailings were sent specifically to taxpayers whose address was the city of White Earth in an attempt to increase the response rate of Native Americans. Approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at North Dakota State University was obtained to ensure proper protocol was used and the rights of human subjects maintained. A total of 254 respondents completed and returned the survey for a response rate of 24 percent. This is a generalizable sample with a confidence level of 95 percent and an error rate of plus or minus 6 percent. The survey consisted of questions that focused on residents' usage of sidewalks and trails, usage of motorized vehicles, how often and where residents engage in recreational activity, recreational opportunities that would encourage active living, and demographic information.

Many of the survey questions asked respondents to rate the questions or issues by using a one to five scale (e.g., agreement, satisfaction, importance). The means, which represent an average of the responses, are reported graphically in the body of the report. Means allow us to determine a single measurement of where people stand on an issue and allow us to compare more easily across issues. They also help give a sense of relative agreement, satisfaction, etc., that assists us in priority setting. In cases where responses stand out, the actual frequency is mentioned in the narrative. The distributions of responses are presented in tabular form in the Appendices.

## Summary of Survey Results

### *Recreational Opportunities and Experiences*

Using a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being "not at all important" and 5 being "very important," respondents were asked to rate the level of importance of various warm weather, cold weather, and motorized recreational activities and experiences to Becker County. Respondents were also asked to indicate whether they or members of their family had participated in the activities within the past two years. The vast majority of respondents indicated they have participated in at least one of the 25 recreational activities listed in the past two years (96.5 percent); half participated in 13 or more (50.0 percent).

- Respondents indicated that fishing, walking, swimming, ice fishing/spearing, and touring/sightseeing are the most important recreational activities to Becker County (means range from 4.46 to 4.03). At least 71 percent of respondents said they, or members of their family, participated in these activities within the past two years.
- Respondents indicated that touring/sightseeing and water sports are the most important motorized activities (means=4.03 and 3.99, respectively). Approximately 80 percent of respondents said they or members of their family participated in these activities within the past two years.
- Among respondents who have participated in motorized activities, half said the locations where they participated are lakes, followed by 44 percent who said private land and 35 percent who said trails. Three percent said they had participated in motorized activities in wetland areas.

- At least 63 percent of respondents said they participate in recreational activities for fun, to spend time with family and friends, for relaxation, and for physical activity.
- The majority of respondents engage in recreational activities at least five times per season; one in five respondents are actively engaged (i.e., at least 20 activities per season).
- The most important factors that contribute to respondents' recreational experiences are natural resource protection, scenery and aesthetics, and the environmental impact (means range from 4.13 to 4.02).
- The majority of respondents said they are willing to travel at least 20 miles within Becker County to participate in recreational activities (65 percent); 18 percent said they would travel 60 or more miles.
- Becker County areas and amenities that respondents are most satisfied with are parks, picnic areas, and boat launches (means range from 3.66 to 3.62). Respondents are least satisfied with restrooms (mean=2.96).
- When asked for their reasons for dissatisfaction with Becker County areas and amenities, respondents said grooming and repairs are needed (49 percent) and cleaning is needed (43 percent).
- When asked whether Becker County should expand its park system, 59 percent said yes.
  - Reasons for expanding include: more and safer trails with which to walk, bike, run and rollerblade; expanding would draw more people; and there would be more options or places to visit.
  - Reasons for not expanding include: the county needs to keep up or maintain what they have, the county has enough, and the county shouldn't spend money.
- The vast majority of respondents have not experienced a conflict or interference while engaging in recreational activities in Becker County (86 percent).
  - Among those who have experienced a conflict, conflicts mentioned include: ATVs in prohibited areas and interference with fishing by jet skis and water skiers.

### *Walkable Communities*

- Respondents said their community is walkable (mean=3.76).
- Respondents are more likely to walk or bicycle to parks; neighborhood retail and restaurants; trails; the community recreation center; and the post office, public library, or city government office if those destinations were within 15 minutes of their home or place of work.
- Respondents have fairly high levels of agreement that increasing non-motorized transportation (i.e., bicycling and walking) is important for improving public health and the environment, as well as saving money (means range from 3.92 to 3.77).
- Respondents also have moderately high levels of agreement that Becker County, and cities and towns in Becker County, should commit to accommodating non-motorized transportation to the extent feasible on new and reconstructed county and municipal roads (mean=3.67).
- Respondents are neutral with respect to cities and towns in Becker County needing more bike racks and sidewalks (mean=3.24 and mean=3.13, respectively).

### *Demographics*

- Half of respondents are 45 to 64 years of age; 35 percent are 65 or older.
- The vast majority of respondents are white (96 percent).
- The majority of respondents have an annual household income of less than \$70,000 before taxes.
- One-fourth of respondents have children 18 years of age or younger.
- Nearly equal proportions of males and females completed the survey.

# SURVEY RESULTS

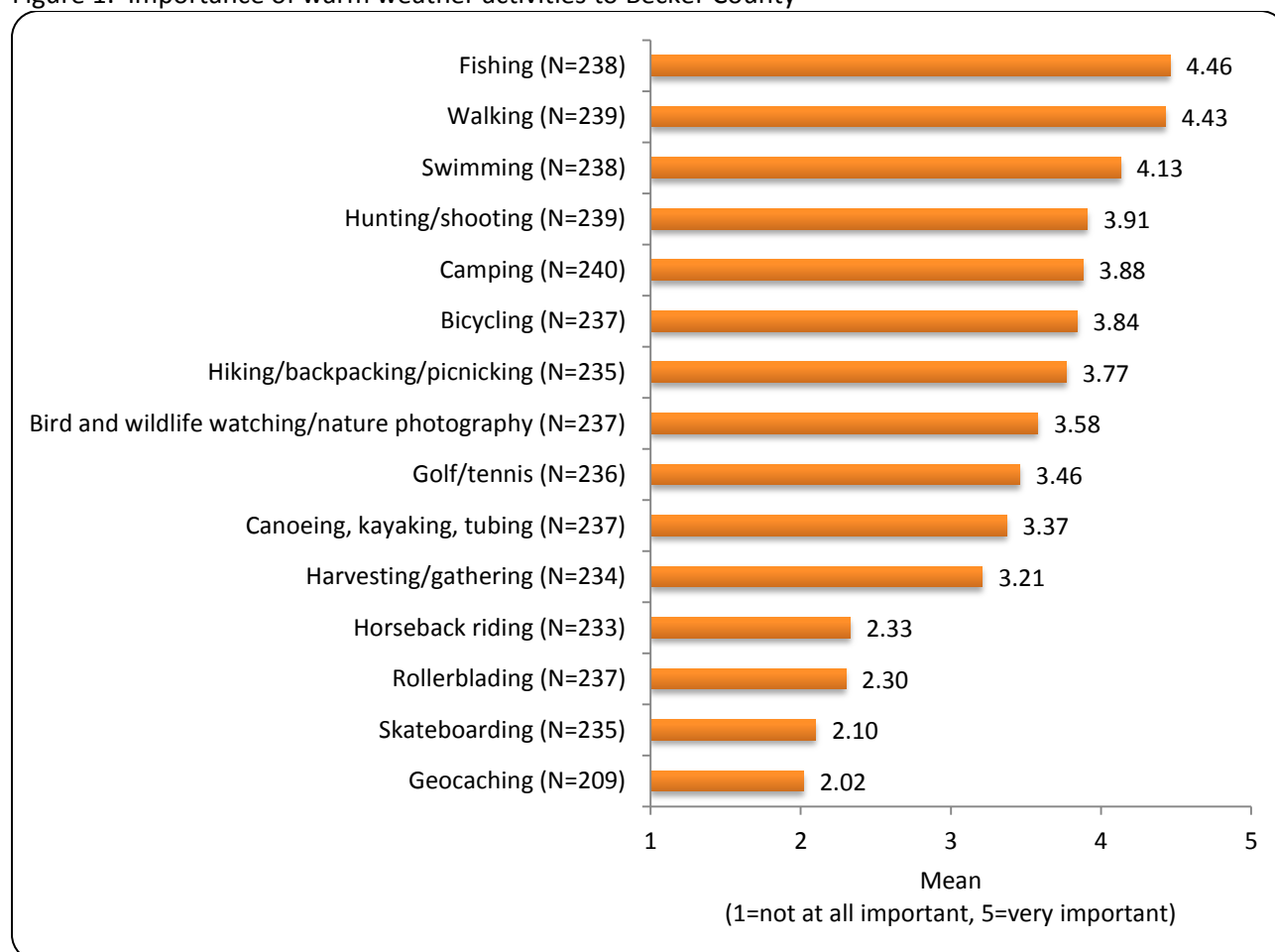
## Recreational Opportunities and Experiences

Using a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being “not at all important” and 5 being “very important,” respondents were asked to rate the level of importance of various activities to Becker County categorized by warm weather activities, cold weather activities, and motorized activities.

Overall, respondents reported warm weather activities are important to Becker County (*Figure 1, Appendix Table 1*).

- On average, respondents indicated that fishing and walking are very important to Becker County (mean=4.46 and 4.43, respectively); at least 66 percent said they are very important.
- Still considered moderately high in importance are the activities of swimming (mean=4.13), hunting and shooting (mean=3.91), camping (mean=3.88), bicycling (mean=3.84), and hiking, backpacking, and picnicking (mean=3.77).
- On average, geocaching was considered the least important to Becker County (mean=2.02), followed by skateboarding (mean=2.10), rollerblading (mean=2.30), and horseback riding (mean=2.33). It is important to note that geocaching is a relatively new sport with which not all respondents may be familiar.

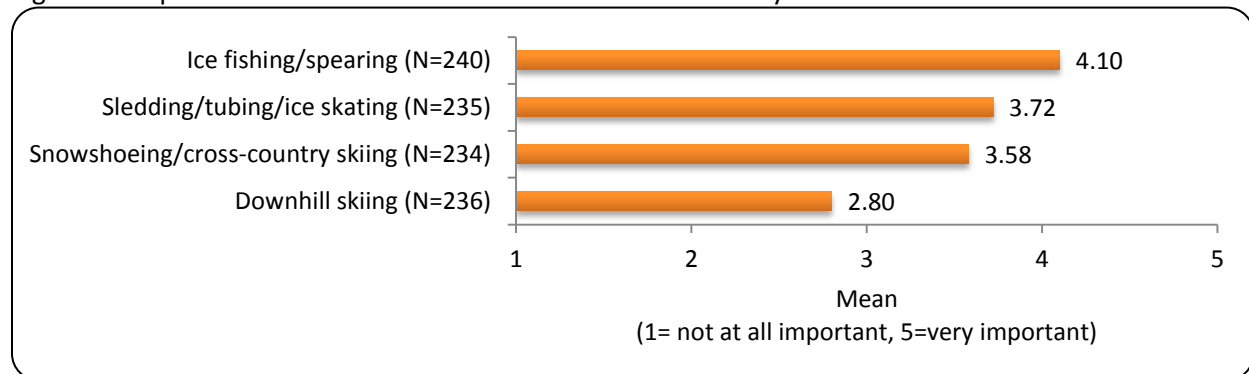
Figure 1. Importance of warm weather activities to Becker County



Overall, respondents reported that cold weather activities are important to Becker County (*Figure 2, Appendix Table 1*).

- On average, respondents indicated that ice fishing and spearing are of high importance to Becker County (mean=4.10); 55.4 percent said they were very important.
- On average, sledding, tubing, and ice skating (mean=3.72) and snowshoeing and cross-country skiing (mean=3.58) are of moderately high importance.
- Although still considered moderately important, on average, respondents indicated downhill skiing to be of least importance to Becker County (mean=2.80).

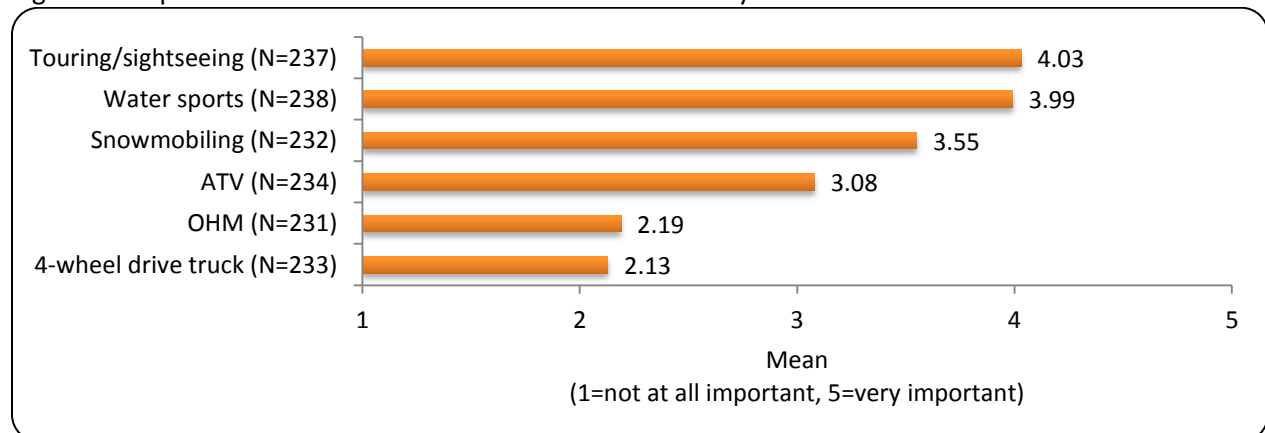
Figure 2. Importance of cold weather activities to Becker County



Overall, respondents reported that motorized recreational activities are moderately important to Becker County (*Figure 3, Appendix Table 1*).

- On average, respondents indicated that touring and sightseeing, as well as water sports, are of high importance to Becker County (mean=4.03 and mean=3.99, respectively); approximately half of respondents said they were very important.
- On average, respondents said that snowmobiling is moderately high in importance to the county (mean=3.55); ATV usage was moderately important (mean=3.08).
- On average, respondents indicated that off-highway motorcycles (OHM) and 4-wheel drive trucks are the least important to Becker County (mean=2.19 and mean=2.13, respectively).
- Other recreational opportunities and activities some respondents considered very important to Becker County are snowboarding, mountain biking, and craft shows or flea markets (*Appendix Table 2*).

Figure 3. Importance of motorized activities to Becker County

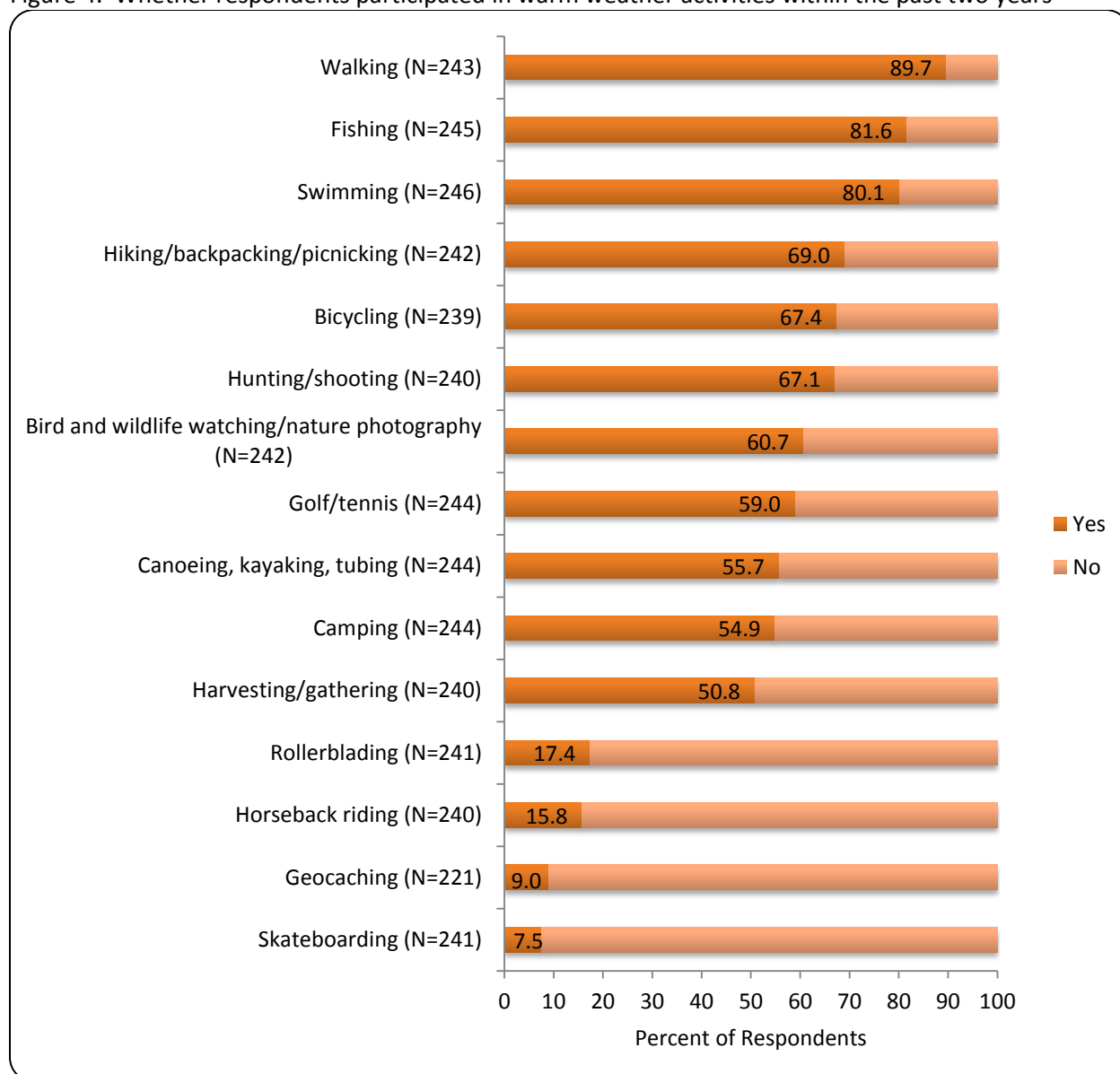


Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they or family members had participated in a variety of warm weather, cold weather, and motorized activities in the past two years. The vast majority of respondents indicated they have participated in at least one of the 25 recreational activities listed (96.5 percent); half participated in 13 or more (50.0 percent).

Overall, respondents reported a wide range of participation in warm weather activities within the past two years) (*Figure 4, Appendix Table 3*). The vast majority of respondents have participated in at least one of the 15 warm weather activities listed (94.5 percent); two-thirds participated in seven or more (67.7 percent).

- Within the past two years, the top three activities in which respondents participated are walking, fishing, and swimming (89.7 percent, 81.6 percent, and 80.1 percent, respectively).
- Two in three respondents participated in hiking, backpacking, and picnicking (69.0 percent), bicycling (67.4 percent), and in hunting and shooting (67.1 percent).
- Less than one in five respondents participated in rollerblading (17.4 percent) and horseback riding (15.8 percent); less than one in 10 participated in skateboarding (7.5 percent) or geocaching (9.0 percent).

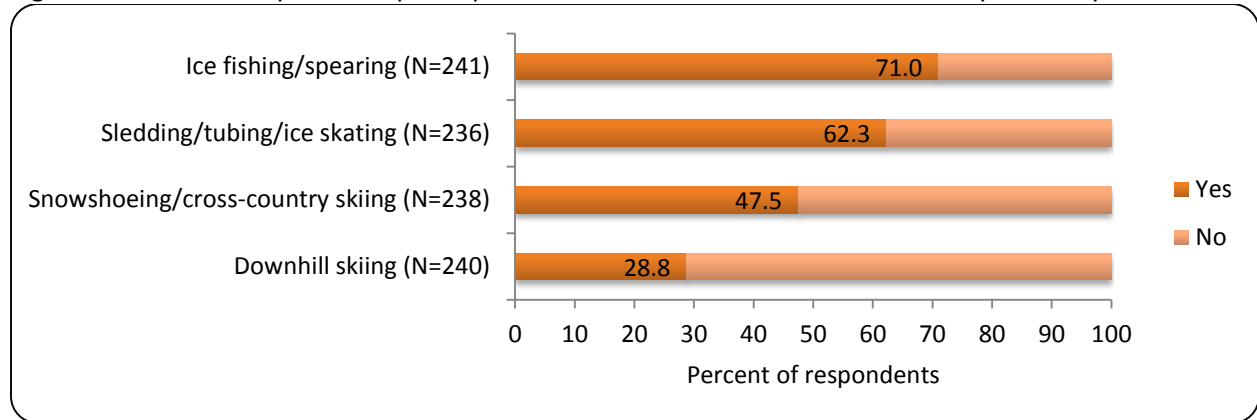
Figure 4. Whether respondents participated in warm weather activities within the past two years



Overall, respondents indicated a wide range of participation in cold weather activities within the last two years (*Figure 5, Appendix Table 3*). The large majority of respondents have participated in at least one of the four cold weather activities listed (82.7 percent); nearly one in five participated in all of these activities (18.5 percent).

- Three in four respondents participated in ice fishing or spearing (71.0 percent); three in five participated in sledding, tubing, or ice skating (62.3 percent).
- Nearly half of respondents participated in snowshoeing or cross-country skiing (47.5 percent); more than one-fourth participated in downhill skiing (28.8 percent).

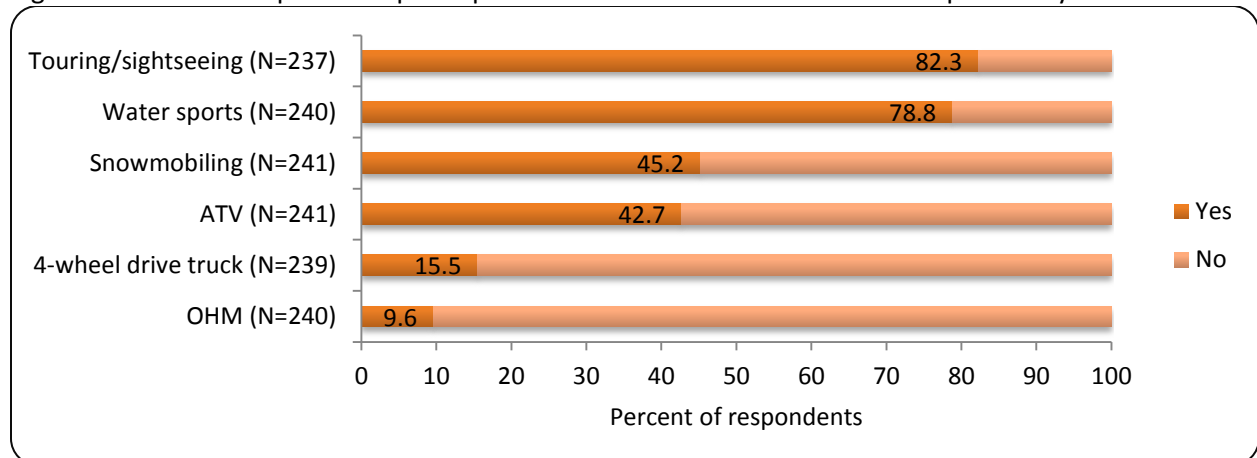
Figure 5. Whether respondents participated in cold weather activities within the past two years



Overall, respondents indicated a wide range of participation in motorized activities within the past two years (*Figure 6, Appendix Table 3*). The vast majority of respondents have participated in at least one of the six motorized activities listed (90.2 percent); half have participated in three or more (49.1 percent).

- The most popular motorized activities respondents participated in are touring or sightseeing and water sports (82.3 percent and 78.8 percent, respectively).
- Two in five respondents indicated participation in snowmobiling and ATVs (45.2 percent and 42.7 percent, respectively).
- One in 10 respondents indicated they have participated in off-highway motorcycling (9.6 percent).

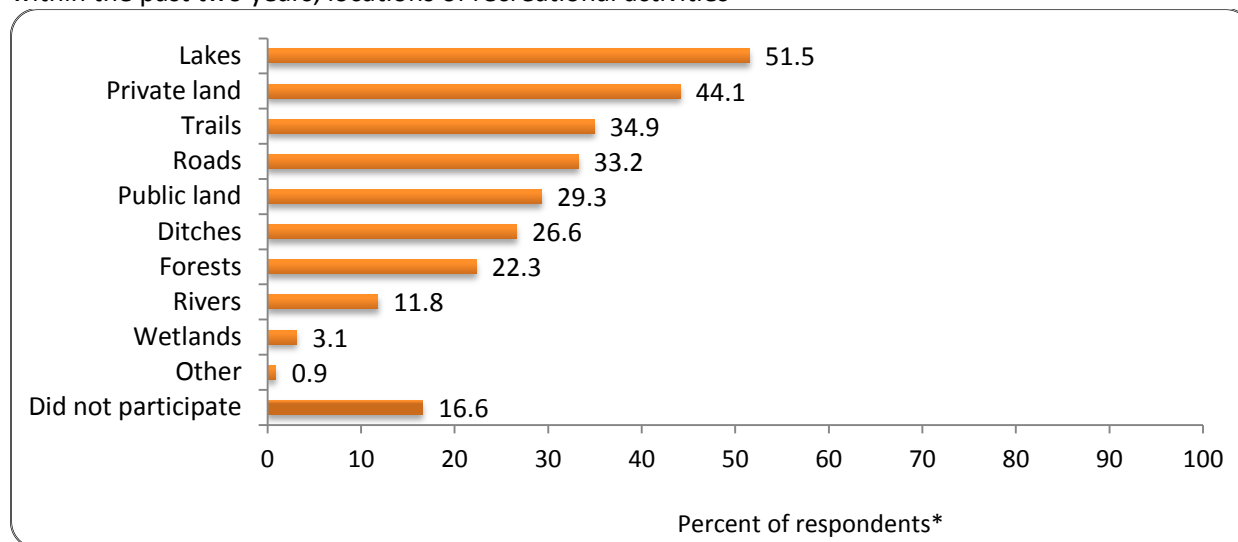
Figure 6. Whether respondents participated in motorized activities within the past two years



Respondents who indicated participation in motorized activities were asked to select where in Becker County their participation took place (*Figure 7, Appendix Table 4*).

- The most common responses to where respondents had participated in motorized recreational activities in Becker County are lakes (51.5 percent), private land (44.1 percent), trails (34.9 percent), and roads (33.2 percent).
- Three percent of respondents said they participated in motorized recreational activities in wetland areas (3.1 percent).

Figure 7. Among respondents who participated in MOTORIZED recreational activities in Becker County within the past two years, locations of recreational activities



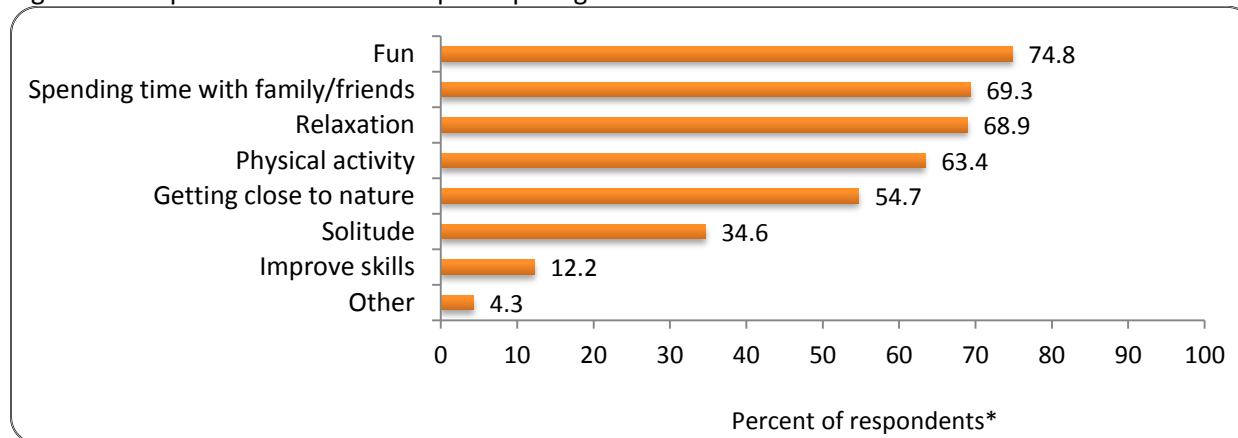
N=229

\*Percentages do not equal 100.0 due to multiple responses.

Respondents were asked to give their primary reasons for participation in recreational activities (*Figure 8, Appendix Table 5*).

- The top three reasons respondents gave for their participation in recreational activities are fun, spending time with family or friends, and relaxation (74.8 percent, 69.3 percent, and 68.9 percent, respectively).
- More than half of respondents said getting close to nature is a reason for their participation (54.7 percent).

Figure 8. Respondents' reasons for participating in recreational activities



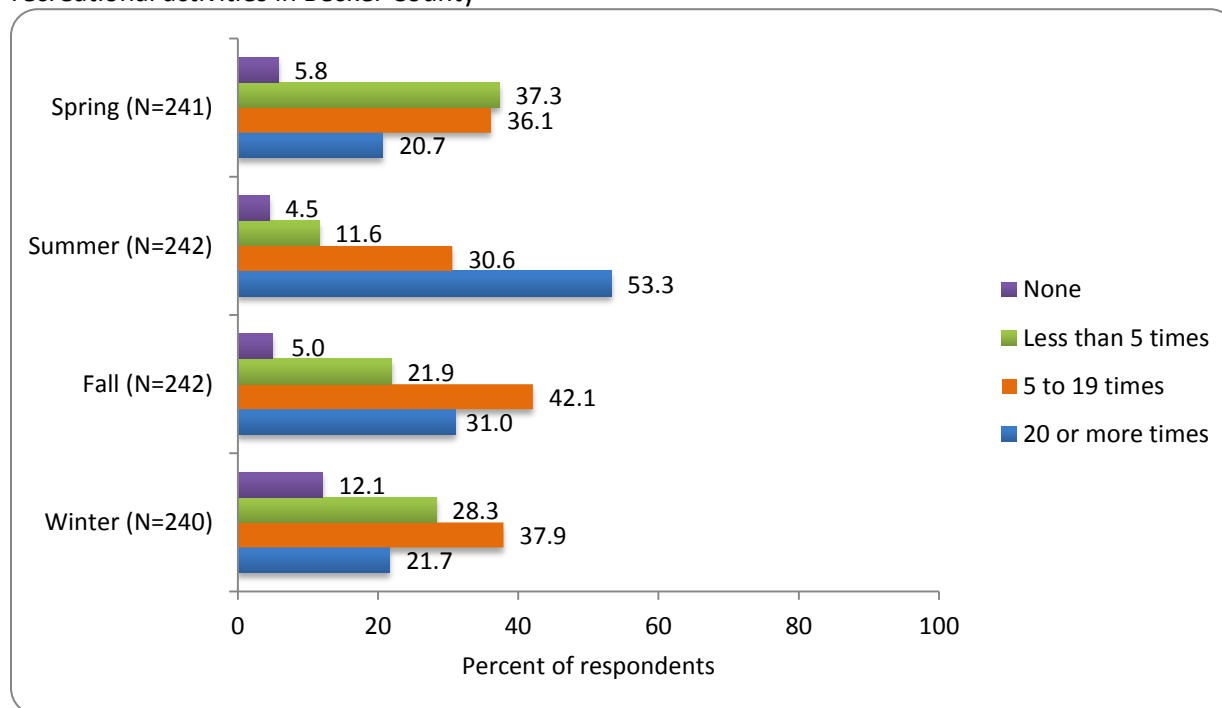
N=254

\*Percentages do not equal 100.0 due to multiple responses.

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of times, by season, they have engaged in recreational activities (Figure 9, Appendix Table 6).

- The majority of respondents said they engage in recreational activities at least five times per season; 56.8 percent in the spring, 83.9 percent in summer, 73.1 percent in the fall, and 59.6 percent in the winter.
- At least half of respondents are actively engaged (i.e., at least 20 times per season) in recreational activities in the summer (53.3 percent).
- At least one in five respondents are actively engaged in recreational activities throughout the year (i.e., at least 20 times per season).

Figure 9. Number of times, by season, respondents or members of their household engaged in recreational activities in Becker County



Respondents were asked to indicate how many times in the past two years they have visited specific recreational locations in Becker County (*Table 1*).

- The large majority of respondents indicated they have visited lakes and lake accesses at least once in the last two years (90.2 percent). Nearly half have visited these locations at least 20 times (46.1 percent).
- At least two-thirds of respondents had visited local parks, recreation areas, and preserves (79.9 percent), national wildlife refuges (76.2 percent), Itasca State Park (71.9 percent), and state and county forests (69.1 percent) at least once in the past two years.
- Rivers were utilized at least once in the past two years by 64.7 percent of respondents and 47.6 percent have visited wildlife management areas at least once.
- The Greenwater Scientific and Natural Area has been utilized at least once by 17.3 percent of respondents; 64.3 percent have not visited this area at all and 18.5 percent are not familiar with this location.

Table 1. Number of times, during last two years, respondents and members of their household visited recreational locations in Becker County

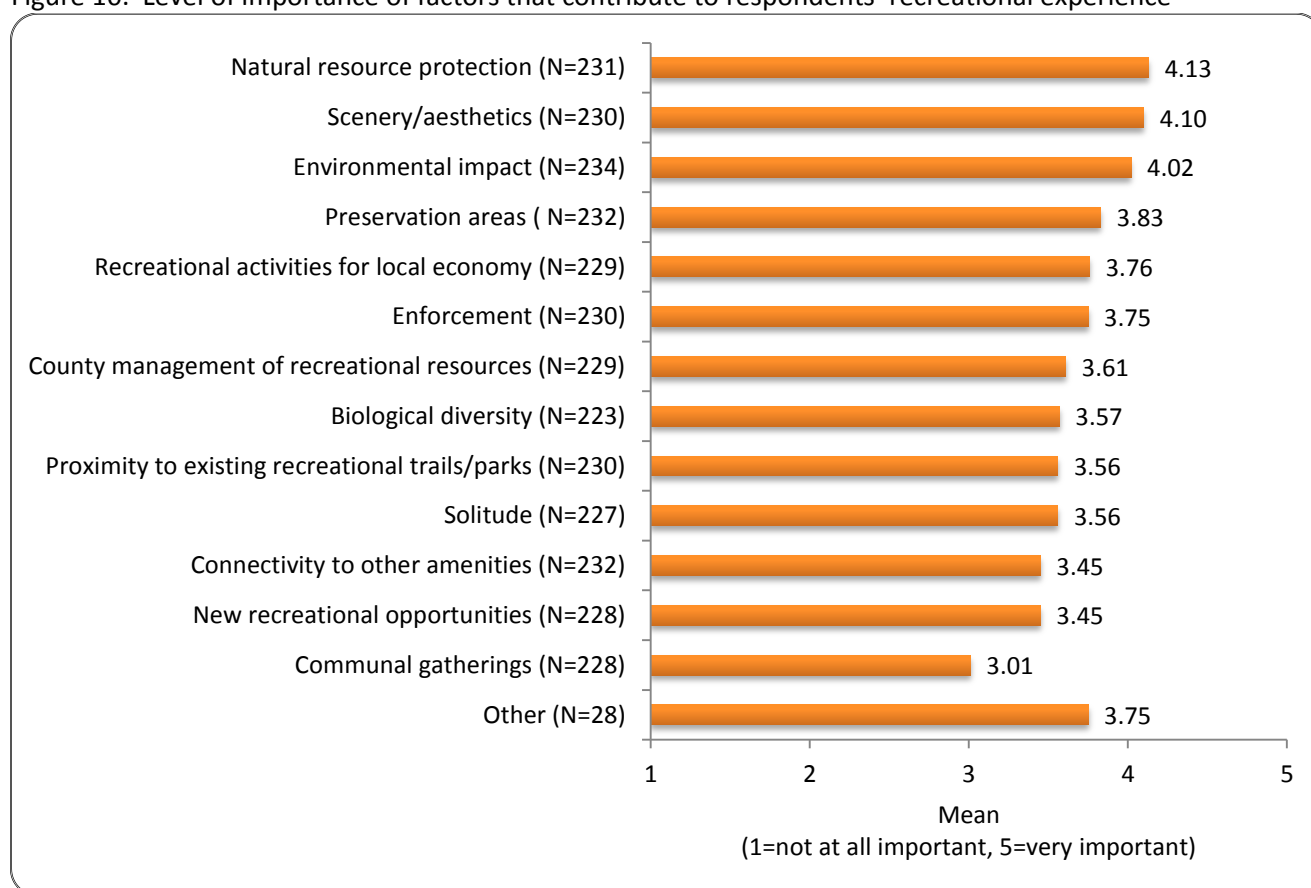
Recreational locations	Percent of respondents by number of visits					
	20 or more	5 to 19	Less than 5	None	Not familiar with location	Total
Lakes/Lake accesses (N=243)	46.1	27.2	16.9	9.5	0.4	100.1
State and county forests (i.e., Smokey Hills, Two Inlets, White Earth) (N=243)	11.1	18.5	39.5	28.4	2.5	100.0
Local parks, recreation areas, preserves (Dunton Locks, Sucker Creek, etc.) (N=239)	7.9	31.8	40.2	16.7	3.3	99.9
National wildlife refuges (i.e., Tamarac, Hamden Slough) (N=244)	7.4	26.2	42.6	22.5	1.2	99.9
Wildlife management areas (Callaway, Hubbel Pond, White Earth, etc.) (N=242)	5.8	11.2	30.6	47.9	4.5	100.0
Rivers (N=241)	4.1	16.6	44.0	34.0	1.2	99.9
Itasca State Park (N=242)	3.7	14.5	53.7	27.3	0.8	100.0
Greenwater Scientific and Natural Area (N=238)	1.3	5.5	10.5	64.3	18.5	100.1

Using a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being “not at all important” and 5 being “very important,” respondents were asked to rate the importance of several factors that contribute to their recreational experience (*Figure 10, Appendix Tables 7 and 8*).

Overall, the level of importance was moderately high for factors that contribute to respondents’ recreational experiences.

- On average, respondents indicated that natural resource protection, scenery and aesthetics, and environmental impact are the most important factors contributing to their recreational experience (mean=4.13, mean=4.10, and mean=4.02, respectively); at least 44 percent of respondents said they are very important.
- Respondents indicated “communal gatherings” as the least important (mean= 3.01).
- Respondents were asked about other factors that contribute to their recreational experiences. Clean facilities, swimming beaches, and maps and brochures are some factors that respondents mentioned.

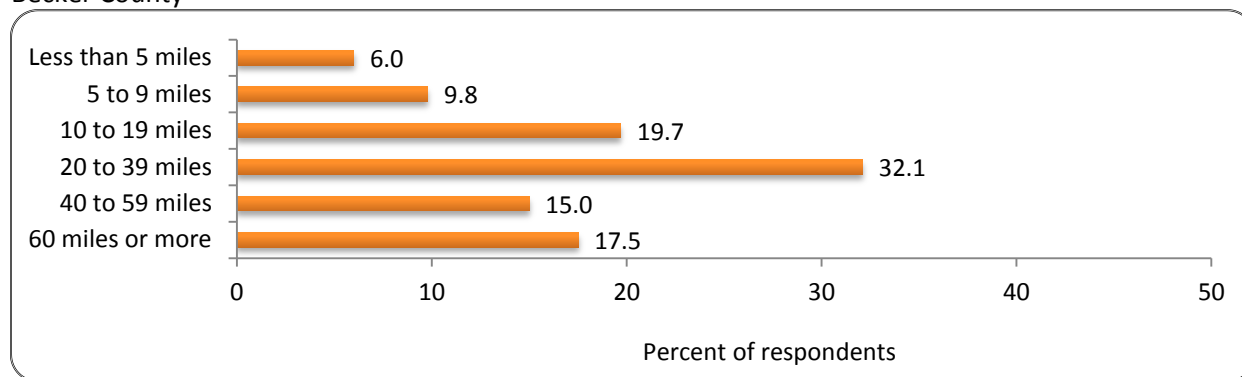
Figure 10. Level of importance of factors that contribute to respondents’ recreational experience



Respondents were asked how far they would travel within Becker County to engage in recreational activities (*Figure 11, Appendix Table 9*).

- Nearly two-thirds of respondents indicated they are willing to travel at least 20 miles to participate in recreational activities (64.6 percent); 17.5 percent said they are willing to travel 60 miles or more.
- Sixteen percent of respondents said they are willing to travel, at most, 9 miles (15.8 percent).

Figure 11. Number of miles respondents are willing to travel to engage in recreational activities in Becker County



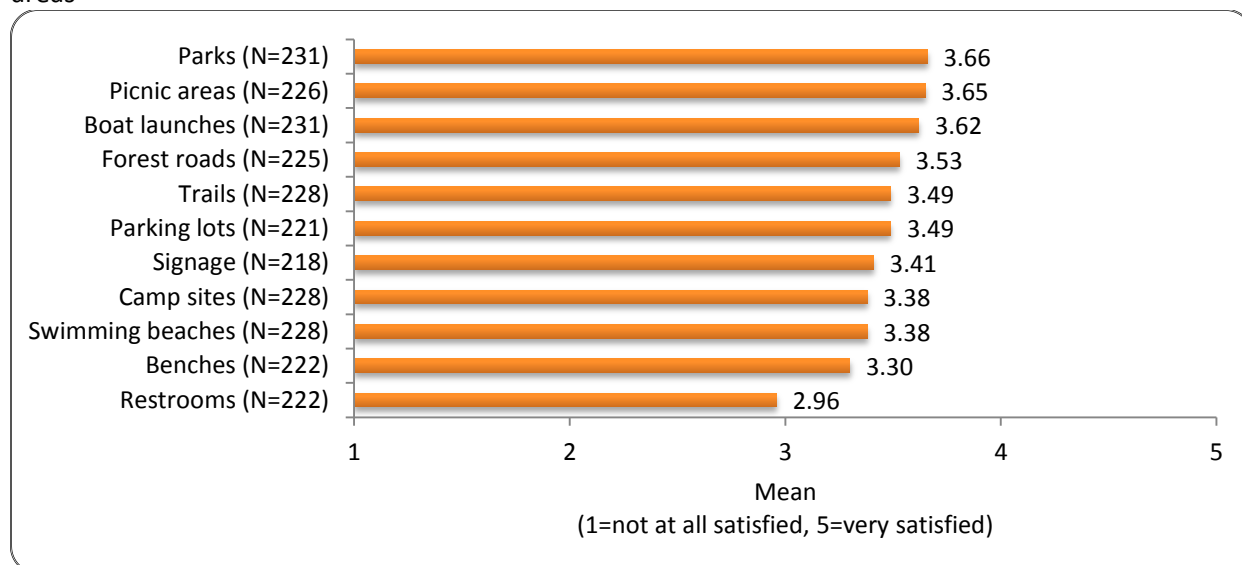
N=234

Using a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being “not at all satisfied” and 5 being “very satisfied,” respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with areas and amenities at county parks, lake accesses, and county-managed land within Becker County recreational areas (*Figure 12, Appendix Table 10*).

Overall, respondents have moderately high levels of satisfaction with recreational areas and amenities in Becker County.

- On average, respondents are most satisfied with parks (mean=3.66), picnic areas (mean=3.65), and boat launches (mean=3.62).
- Although still a moderate level of satisfaction, respondents are least satisfied with restrooms (mean=2.96)

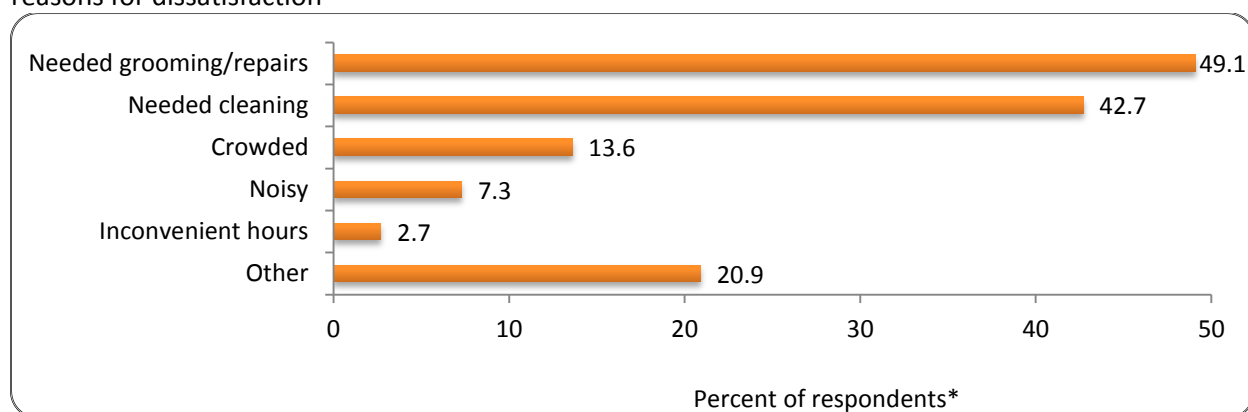
Figure 12. Respondents’ level of satisfaction with areas and amenities in Becker County recreational areas



Respondents who were not satisfied with one or more of the areas and amenities at county parks, lake accesses, or county-managed tax-forfeited land within Becker County (i.e., a “1” or “2” response on a previous question) were asked to give reasons for their dissatisfaction (*Figure 13, Appendix Table 11*).

- The top two reasons respondents gave for their dissatisfaction are that recreational areas and amenities need grooming and repairs (49.1 percent) and cleaning (42.7 percent).
- One in five respondents gave other reasons for their dissatisfaction (20.9 percent). Some respondents said more and better signage is needed as well as more restrooms.

Figure 13. Among respondents who were not satisfied with areas and amenities within Becker County, reasons for dissatisfaction



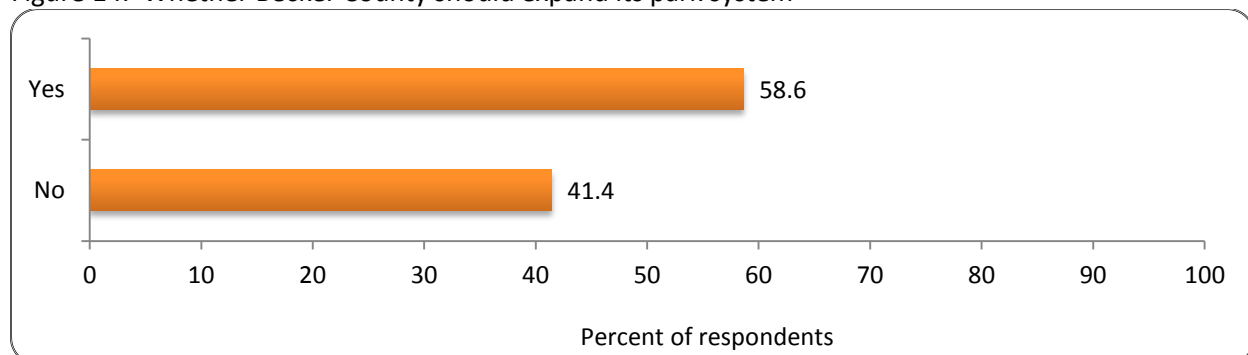
N=110

\*Percentages do not equal 100.0 due to multiple responses.

Respondents were asked whether Becker County should expand its park system (*Figure 14, Appendix Tables 12 – 14*).

- The majority of respondents indicated that Becker County should expand (58.6 percent).
- When asked to explain their response, the top five reasons respondents gave are:
  - More and safer biking, walking, running, and rollerblading trails
  - Expanding would draw more people
  - There would be more options or places to visit
  - The parks would get more use by expanding
  - Expanding would get people outdoors
- The top three reasons respondents gave for not expanding are:
  - The county needs to keep up or maintain what they have
  - The county has enough
  - The county shouldn't spend the money

Figure 14. Whether Becker County should expand its park system

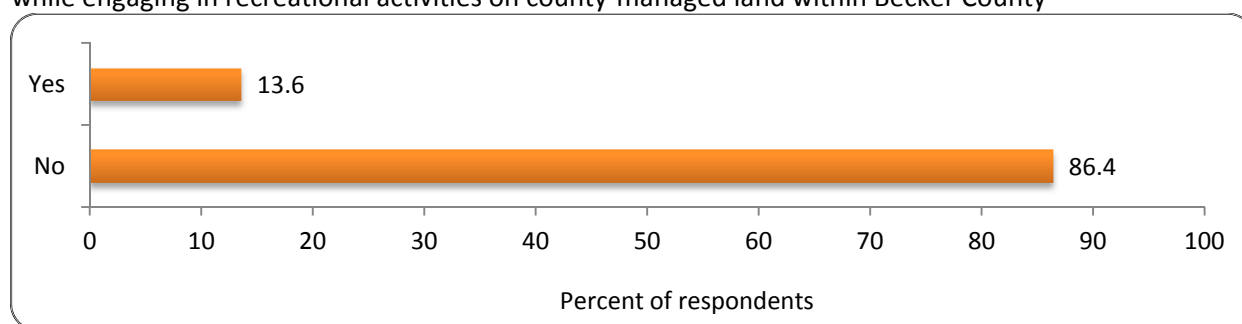


N=186

Respondents were asked whether they or a member of their household have experienced a conflict or interference while engaging in a recreational activity on county-managed land, and, if so, what the conflict was and the location where the conflict occurred (*Figure 15, Appendix Tables 15 – 17*).

- The vast majority of respondents have not experienced a conflict or interference (86.4 percent).
- Among those who have experienced a conflict, the top types of conflict respondents described are:
  - ATVs in prohibited areas, tearing up land, excess noise, and leaving trash
  - Jet skis and water skiing interfere with fishing
- Among those who experienced a conflict, the top three locations of the conflict are:
  - Dunton Locks
  - Two Inlets
  - Boat landings

Figure 15. Whether respondents, or members of their household, experienced a conflict or interference while engaging in recreational activities on county-managed land within Becker County



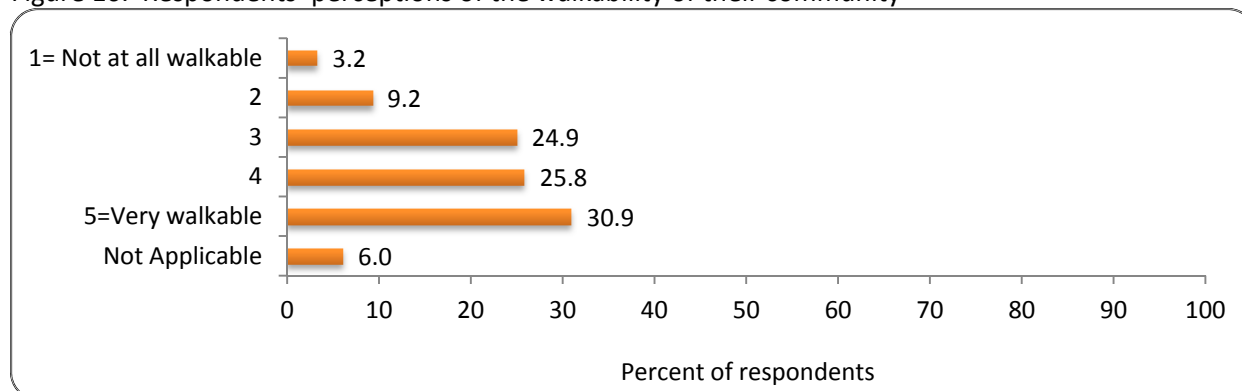
N=235

## Walkable Communities

Walkability is a measure of how friendly an area is to walking. Walkability has many health, environmental, and economic benefits. Factors influencing walkability include the presence or absence and quality of footpaths, sidewalks, or other pedestrian right-of-way, traffic and road conditions, land use patterns, building accessibility, and safety, among others. Using a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being “not at all walkable” and 5 being “very walkable,” respondents were asked to rate the walkability of their community (*Figure 16, Appendix Table 18*).

- On average, respondents indicated that their community is walkable (mean=3.76); 30.9 percent of respondents said their community is very walkable.

Figure 16. Respondents’ perceptions of the walkability of their community



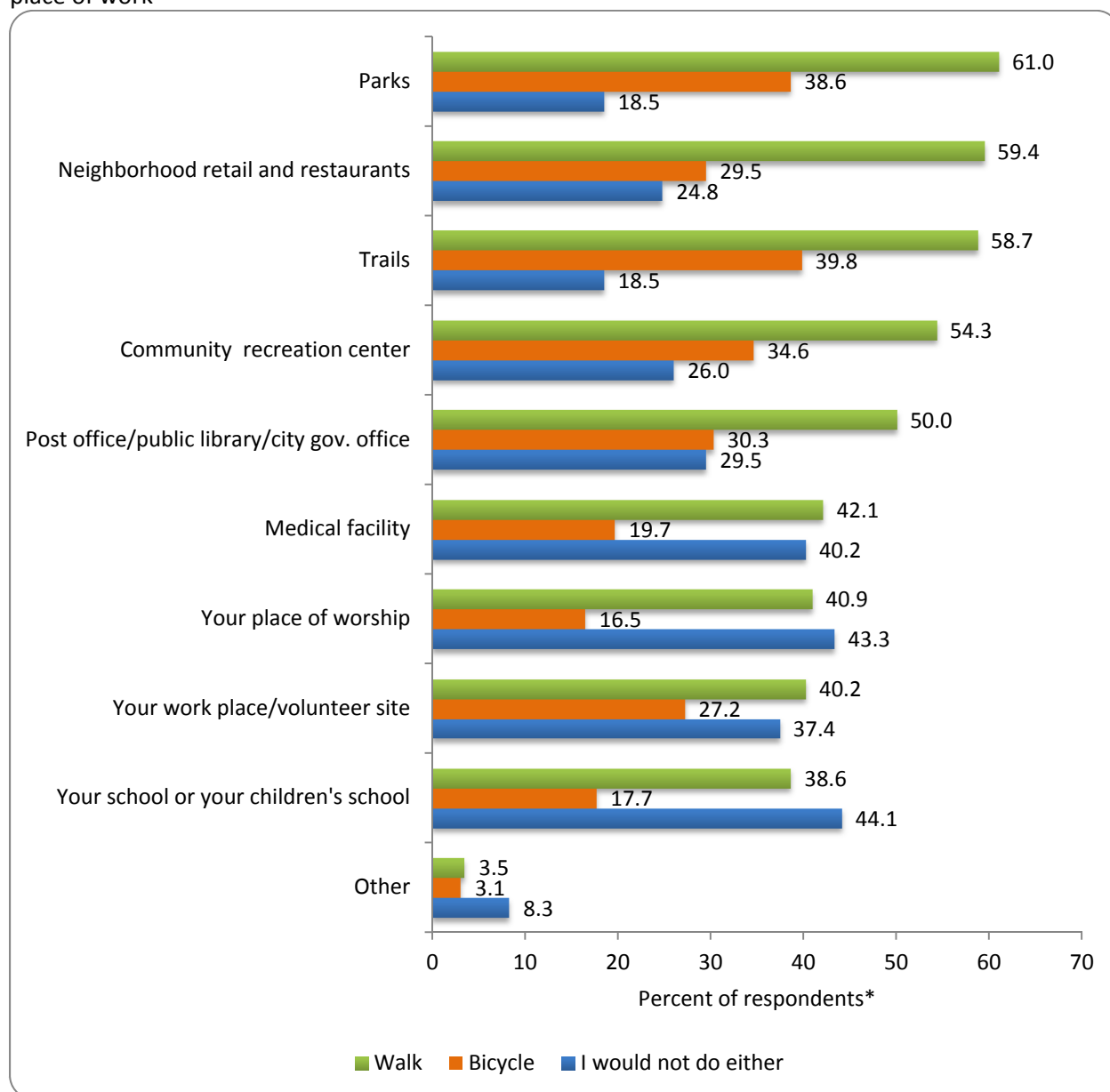
N=217

Mean=3.76

Respondents were asked to indicate if they would walk or bicycle to various destinations if they were within 15 minutes of their home or place of work. In general, respondents are more likely to walk than bicycle (*Figure 17, Appendix Table 19*).

- At least half of respondents indicated they would walk to parks (61.0 percent); neighborhood retail and restaurants (59.4 percent); trails (58.7 percent); community recreation centers (54.3 percent); or the post office, public library, and a city government office (50.0 percent).
- At least one in three respondents indicated they would bicycle to trails (39.8 percent), parks (38.6 percent), and a community recreation center (34.6 percent).
- Two in five respondents indicated they would not walk or bicycle to their school or their children's school (44.1 percent), their place of worship (43.3 percent), or their medical facility (40.2 percent).

Figure 17. Destinations respondents would walk or bicycle to if they were within 15 minutes of home or place of work



N=254

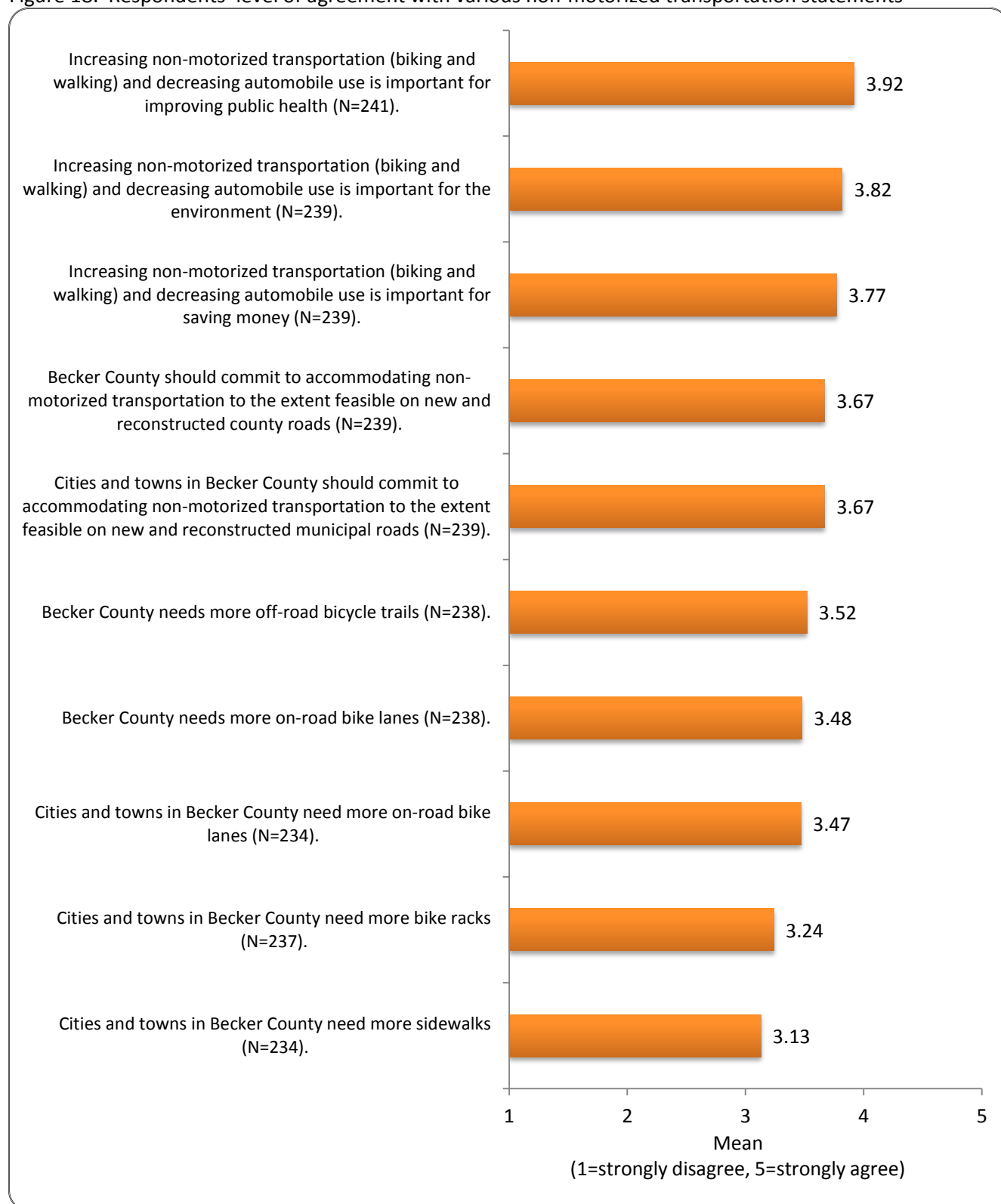
\*Percentages do not equal 100.0 due to multiple responses.

On a 1 to 5 scale, 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree,” respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with various statements with respect to non-motorized transportation (*Figure 18, Appendix Table 20*).

Overall, respondents had a moderately high level of agreement regarding the various statements about non-motorized transportation.

- On average, respondents agree the most that increasing non-motorized transportation and decreasing automobile use are important for improving public health, the environment, and saving money (mean=3.92, mean=3.82, and mean=3.77 respectively).
- On average, respondents have a moderately high level of agreement that Becker County should commit to accommodating non-motorized transportation on new and reconstructed county roads (mean=3.67), and that cities and towns in Becker County should commit to accommodating non-motorized transportation on new and reconstructed municipal roads (mean=3.67).
- Although still a moderate level of agreement, respondents agree the least that cities and towns in Becker County need more bike racks (mean=3.24) and sidewalks (mean=3.13).

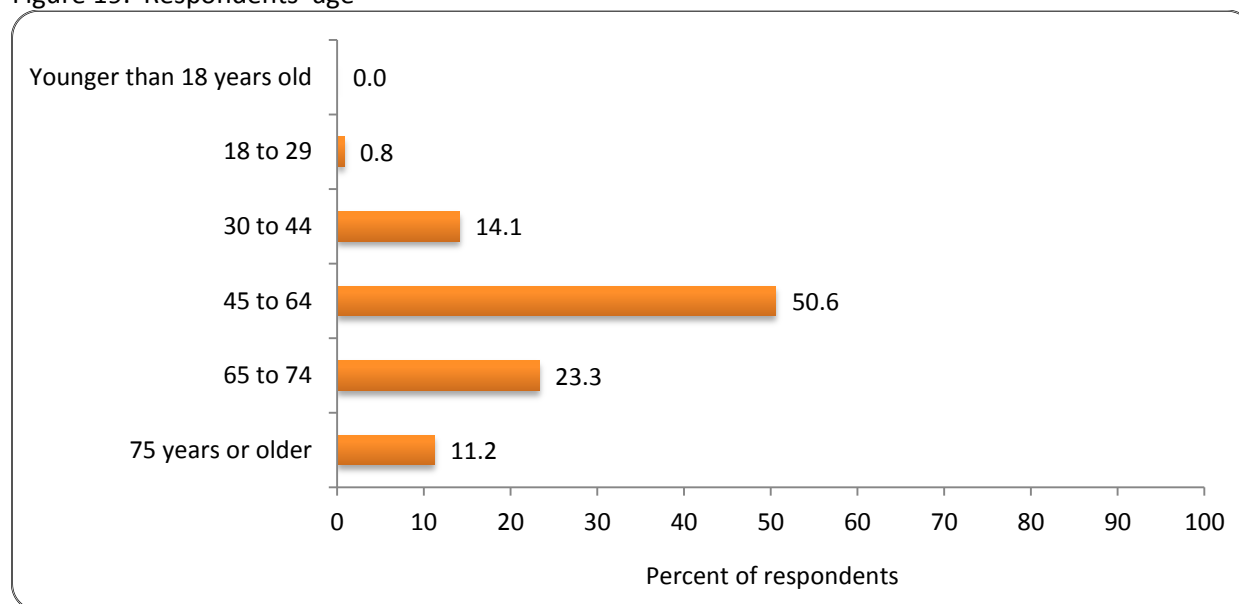
Figure 18. Respondents' level of agreement with various non-motorized transportation statements



## Demographic Information

- Half of respondents indicated they are 45 to 64 years of age (50.6 percent); 34.5 percent of respondents are 65 years or older (*Figure 19, Appendix Table 21*).

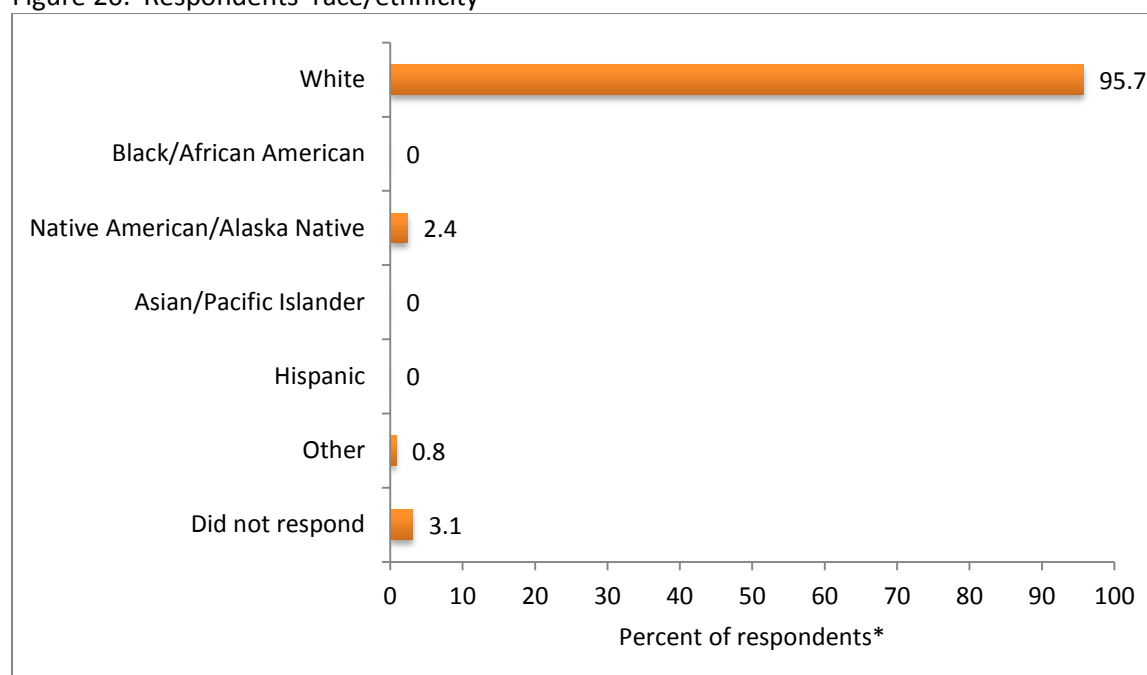
Figure 19. Respondents' age



N=249

- The vast majority of respondents are white (95.7 percent) (*Figure 20, Appendix Table 22*).

Figure 20. Respondents' race/ethnicity

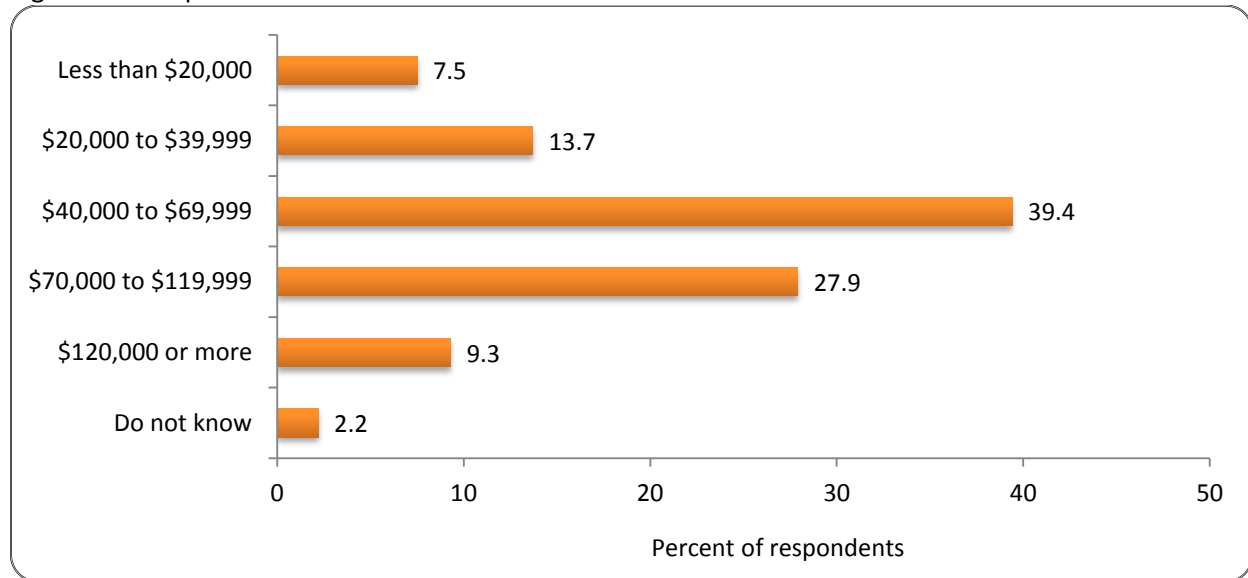


N=254

\*Percentages do not equal 100.0 due to multiple responses.

- The majority of respondents said their annual household income before taxes is less than \$70,000 (60.6 percent); 9.3 percent said their annual household income before taxes is \$120,000 or more (*Figure 21, Appendix Table 23*).

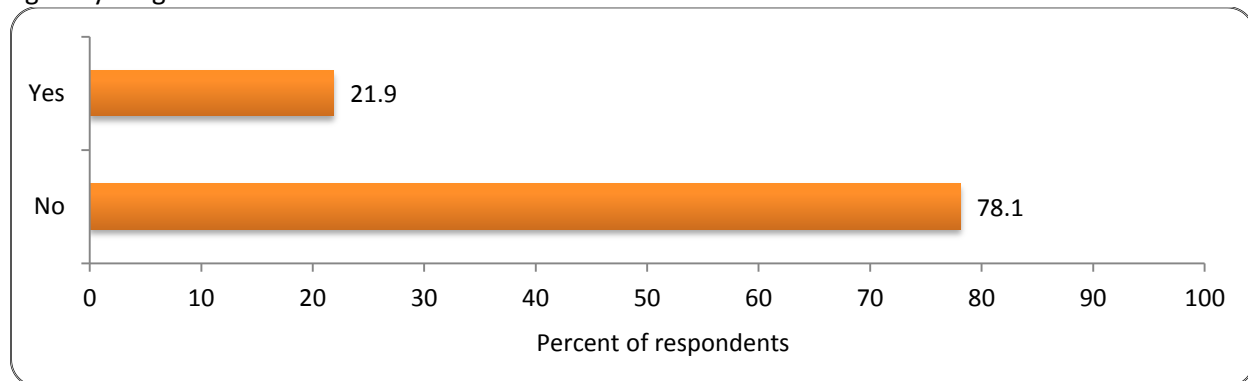
Figure 21. Respondents' annual household income before taxes



N=226

- The vast majority of respondents indicated they are not the parent or primary caregiver of a child or children 18 years of age or older (78.1 percent) (*Figure 22, Appendix Table 24*).

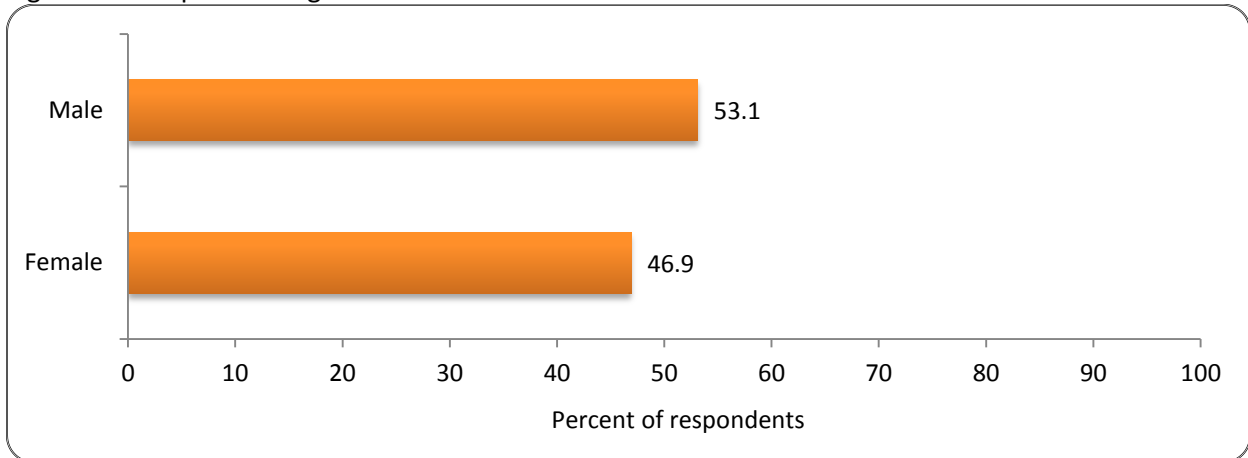
Figure 22. Whether respondents are the parent or primary caregiver of a child or children 18 years of age or younger



N=247

- The gender distribution among respondents is nearly evenly split; 53.1 percent are male (*Figure 23, Appendix Table 25*).

Figure 23. Respondents' gender



N=245

### Additional Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments or concerns relating to recreational activities in Becker County (*Appendix Table 26*).

- The most common theme that emerged in respondent comments is the desire for more and safer trails, specifically for biking, hiking, and walking.
- Another common theme that emerged is the need for specific trails, policy, and regulation for motorized vehicles, such as ATVs and OHVs.
- Slightly less common themes are improving and maintaining existing facilities and the need for more services and activities for senior citizens, handicapped persons, and children.

# APPENDICES

Appendix Table 1. Importance of activities to Becker County

Recreational Activities	Mean	Percent of respondents					Total
		Level of importance					
		(1=not at all important, 5=very important)					
		1	2	3	4	5	
Warm weather activities							
Canoeing, kayaking, tubing (N=237)	3.37	12.2	11.4	30.0	19.8	26.6	100.0
Swimming (N=238)	4.13	5.0	3.8	17.2	20.6	53.4	100.0
Bicycling (N=237)	3.84	8.0	5.9	23.2	19.8	43.0	99.9
Walking (N=239)	4.43	3.8	1.3	9.6	19.2	66.1	100.0
Horseback riding (N=233)	2.33	36.9	18.9	27.5	7.3	9.4	100.0
Fishing (N=238)	4.46	3.4	4.6	6.3	14.3	71.4	100.0
Hunting/shooting (N=239)	3.91	12.6	6.3	13.4	13.0	54.8	100.1
Harvesting/gathering (berries, mushrooms, etc.) (N=234)	3.21	14.5	14.5	27.4	22.2	21.4	100.0
Bird and wildlife watching/nature photography (N=237)	3.58	11.8	11.0	19.8	21.9	35.4	99.9
Geocaching (N=209)	2.02	45.9	19.6	24.9	5.3	4.3	100.0
Hiking/backpacking/picnicking (N=235)	3.77	7.2	6.4	24.7	25.1	36.6	100.0
Camping (N=240)	3.88	8.8	5.8	17.1	25.8	42.5	100.0
Rollerblading (N=237)	2.30	40.9	16.9	21.5	13.1	7.6	100.0
Skateboarding (N=235)	2.10	48.5	15.3	19.1	11.5	5.5	99.9
Golf/tennis (N=236)	3.46	18.6	3.8	22.5	23.3	31.8	100.0
Cold weather activities							
Downhill skiing (N=236)	2.80	26.7	14.4	26.3	17.8	14.8	100.0
Ice fishing/spearing (N=240)	4.10	6.3	7.1	12.9	18.3	55.4	100.0
Sledding/tubing/ice skating (N=235)	3.72	8.9	7.2	24.3	21.7	37.9	100.0
Snowshoeing/cross-country skiing (N=234)	3.58	12.0	10.7	20.5	20.9	35.9	100.0
Motorized activities							
Water sports (boating/jet skiing) (N=238)	3.99	10.1	6.7	9.7	21.0	52.5	100.0
ATV (all-terrain vehicles) (N=234)	3.08	26.1	10.7	19.7	16.7	26.9	100.1
OHM (off-highway motorcycles) (N=231)	2.19	44.6	16.9	22.1	7.8	8.7	100.1
4-wheel drive (off-road) truck (N=233)	2.13	47.2	18.5	17.6	7.3	9.4	100.0
Snowmobiling (N=232)	3.55	17.2	8.2	13.4	24.6	36.6	100.0
Touring/sightseeing (N=237)	4.03	6.3	4.2	18.1	22.8	48.5	99.9

Appendix Table 2. Other recreational activities

Responses	Number of responses
Snowboarding	2
Craft shows/flea market	2
Mountain biking	2
Camping with tent and RV	1
Car racing	1
Trapping	1
Year-round indoor swimming	1
Motorcycle	1
Sailing	1
Other	6

N=18

Appendix Table 3. Whether respondents participated in the various recreational activities within the past two years

Recreational Activities	Percent of respondents		
	Yes	No	Total
<b>Warm weather activities</b>			
Canoeing, kayaking, tubing (N=244)	55.7	44.3	100.0
Swimming (N=246)	80.1	19.9	100.0
Bicycling (N=239)	67.4	32.6	100.0
Walking (N=243)	89.7	10.3	100.0
Horseback riding (N=240)	15.8	84.2	100.0
Fishing (N=245)	81.6	18.4	100.0
Hunting/shooting (N=240)	67.1	32.9	100.0
Harvesting/gathering (berries, mushrooms, etc.) (N=240)	50.8	49.2	100.0
Bird and wildlife watching/nature photography (N=242)	60.7	39.3	100.0
Geocaching (N=221)	9.0	91.0	100.0
Hiking/backpacking/picnicking (N=242)	69.0	31.0	100.0
Camping (N=244)	54.9	45.1	100.0
Rollerblading (N=241)	17.4	82.6	100.0
Skateboarding (N=241)	7.5	92.5	100.0
Golf/tennis (N=244)	59.0	41.0	100.0
<b>Cold weather activities</b>			
Downhill skiing (N=240)	28.8	71.3	100.1
Ice fishing/spearing (N=241)	71.0	29.0	100.0
Sledding/tubing/ice skating (N=236)	62.3	37.7	100.0
Snowshoeing/cross-country skiing (N=238)	47.5	52.5	100.0
<b>Motorized activities</b>			
Water sports (boating/jet skiing) (N=240)	78.8	21.3	100.1
ATV (all-terrain vehicles) (N=241)	42.7	57.3	100.0
OHM (off-highway motorcycles) (N=240)	9.6	90.4	100.0
4-wheel drive (off-road) truck (N=239)	15.5	84.5	100.0
Snowmobiling (N=241)	45.2	54.8	100.0
Touring/sightseeing (N=237)	82.3	17.7	100.0

Appendix Table 4. Among respondents who participated in MOTORIZED recreational activities in Becker County within the past two years, locations of recreational activities

Locations	Percent of Respondents*
Private land	44.1
Lakes	51.5
Public land	29.3
Rivers	11.8
Trails	34.9
Wetlands	3.1
Roads	33.2
Forests	22.3
Ditches	26.6
Did not participate	16.6
Other:	0.9
<i>Boating</i>	
<i>County highways</i>	

N=229

\*Percentages do not equal 100.0 due to multiple responses.

Appendix Table 5. Respondents' reasons for participating in recreational activities

Reasons	Percent of Respondents
Improve skills	12.2
Physical activity	63.4
Relaxation	68.9
Solitude	34.6
Spending time with family/friends	69.3
Getting close to nature	54.7
Fun	74.8
Other:	4.3
<i>Hunt and fish for food (4)</i>	
<i>Excitement (1)</i>	
<i>Personal enjoyment (1)</i>	
<i>Socialize (1)</i>	
<i>Exercise (1)</i>	
<i>Competition (1)</i>	
<i>Escape noise and commotion (1)</i>	
<i>Lunch destination (1)</i>	
<i>Teach next generation (1)</i>	
<i>Farming (1)</i>	

N=254

\*Percentages do not equal 100.0 due to multiple responses.

Appendix Table 6. Number of times, by season, respondents or members of their household engaged in recreational activities in Becker County

Season	Number of times				
	None	Less than 5	5 to 19	20 or more	Total
Spring (March-May) (N=241)	5.8	37.3	36.1	20.7	99.9
Summer (June-August) (N=242)	4.5	11.6	30.6	53.3	100.0
Fall (September-November) (N=242)	5.0	21.9	42.1	31.0	100.0
Winter (December-February) (N=240)	12.1	28.3	37.9	21.7	100.0

Appendix Table 7. Level of importance of factors that contribute to respondents' recreational experience

Factors	Mean	Percent of respondents					Total
		Level of importance					
		(1=not at all important, 5=very important)					
		1	2	3	4	5	
a. Connectivity to other amenities (restaurants, bathrooms, etc.) (N=232)	3.45	11.6	7.8	29.7	25.9	25.0	100.0
b. Environmental impact (N=234)	4.02	5.6	4.3	19.2	24.8	46.2	100.1
c. Natural resource protection (N=231)	4.13	3.9	3.9	16.9	25.5	49.8	100.0
d. Recreational activities for local economy (N=229)	3.76	7.0	5.2	23.6	32.8	31.4	100.0
e. Proximity to existing recreational trails/parks (N=230)	3.56	7.8	9.1	27.0	31.7	24.3	99.9
f. New recreational opportunities (N=228)	3.45	10.5	11.0	23.2	33.3	21.9	99.9
g. Recreation management (N=229)	3.61	7.9	7.0	26.2	34.5	24.5	100.1
h. Scenery/aesthetics (N=230)	4.10	4.8	3.0	14.3	33.5	44.3	99.9
i. Preservation areas (N=232)	3.83	6.9	6.9	18.5	31.9	35.8	100.0
j. Biological diversity (N=223)	3.57	8.1	9.4	26.5	30.0	26.0	100.0
k. Solitude (N=227)	3.56	8.4	8.8	27.8	29.1	26.0	100.1
l. Communal gatherings (N=228)	3.01	14.0	16.2	36.0	21.9	11.8	99.9
m. Enforcement (N=230)	3.75	5.2	8.3	25.7	28.3	32.6	100.1
n. Other (N=28)	3.75	21.4	0.0	10.7	17.9	50.0	100.0

Appendix Table 8. Other factors that contribute to respondents' recreational experiences

Responses	Number of responses
Would like to see ATV trails	1
Viewing birds and wild animals	1
Clean facilities	1
Over enforcement drives people away	1
Swimming beaches	1
Stop giving permits for ski courses on lakes	1
Non-motorized recreations	1
Absolute access to all tax forfeited land	1
Getting away from ATV, snowmobile, jet ski commotion/damage	1
Keep true to nature, no motorized vehicles more than 15 mph	1
Maps and brochures (info)	1
Proximity to Cities	1
Reigning in OHVs and developing and enforcing a restrictive policy	1
Nothing needed at this time	1

N=14

Appendix Table 9. Number of miles respondents are willing to travel to engage in recreational activities in Becker County

Number of miles	Percent of Respondents
Less than 5 miles	6.0
5 to 9 miles	9.8
10 to 19 miles	19.7
20 to 39 miles	32.1
40 to 59 miles	15.0
60 miles or more	17.5

N=234

Appendix Table 10. Respondents' level of satisfaction with areas and amenities in Becker County recreational areas

Recreational areas								
Areas and amenities	Mean	Percent of respondents						Total
		Level of satisfaction						
		(1=not at all satisfied, 5=very satisfied)						
		1	2	3	4	5	Not applicable	
Areas								
Parks (N=231)	3.66	2.6	4.8	31.2	29.9	19.0	12.6	100.1
Trails (N=228)	3.49	3.9	8.3	26.8	25.4	14.9	20.6	99.9
Forest roads (N=225)	3.53	3.1	8.9	21.8	21.3	14.7	30.2	100.0
Boat launches (N=231)	3.62	4.3	8.2	20.3	31.6	18.6	16.9	99.9
Camp sites (N=228)	3.38	5.3	7.0	21.5	21.5	10.5	34.2	100.0
Picnic areas (N=226)	3.65	2.7	4.4	28.8	28.8	16.8	18.6	100.1
Swimming beaches (N=228)	3.38	5.3	12.3	28.1	21.9	16.2	16.2	100.0
Amenities								
Restrooms (N=222)	2.96	6.3	19.8	40.5	13.1	8.1	12.2	100.0
Benches (N=222)	3.30	2.7	14.0	35.1	23.4	10.8	14.0	100.0
Parking lots (N=221)	3.49	2.3	8.1	35.3	29.0	13.6	11.8	100.1
Signage (N=218)	3.41	2.8	10.6	33.0	30.3	10.6	12.8	100.1

Appendix Table 11. Among respondents who were not satisfied with areas and amenities within Becker County, reasons for dissatisfaction

Reasons	Percent of respondents*
Crowded	13.6
Needed cleaning	42.7
Noisy	7.3
Needed grooming/repairs	49.1
Inconvenient hours	2.7
Other:	20.9
<i>Not enough (7)</i>	
<i>Need more/better signage (5)</i>	
<i>Update/need more restrooms (4)</i>	
<i>Need an OHM/ATV trails/policy (3)</i>	
<i>Poorly managed tax-forfeited land without access to all tax payers (2)</i>	
<i>Unsafe bike trails (2)</i>	
<i>Weeds (2)</i>	
<i>Boat launches unprepared, hard to use (1)</i>	
<i>No maps, hard to find (1)</i>	
<i>Not user-friendly (1)</i>	
<i>Poor quality access (1)</i>	
<i>Too many motors on lake access (1)</i>	
<i>More camping (1)</i>	
<i>Room for improvement in general (1)</i>	

N=110

\*Percentages do not equal 100.0 due to multiple responses.

Appendix Table 12. Whether Becker County should expand its park system

Responses	Percent of respondents
Yes	58.6
No	41.4
Total	100.0

N=186

Appendix Table 13. Responses in favor of expanding parks system

Responses in favor of expansion	Number of responses
More/safer bike/walk/running/rollerblading trails (closer to home)	7
Draw people	5
More options/places to visit	5
More use	4
Gets people outdoors (including kids)	4
People love parks	3
More nice family parks	3
Accommodate tourists and residents	3
More quiet places for solitude/nature	3
Recreation/more people looking for recreation and nature areas every year	2
Economic development	2
Preservation for future	2
Quality of life	2
Better lake accesses (too shallow)	2
Need more campsites/tent camp sites for families	2
Park system used by all ages	1
Increase in population needs	1
So don't have to travel to enjoy a lake	1
Bigger parks for picnics	1
More ATV trails	1
Thin out crowds	1
Increase tax base	1
Large Fargo-Moorhead customer base going to Park Rapids	1
Get resource for locals	1
More job opportunities	1
More areas of interest for community business	1
No motorized activities	1
Chance to see more of the county	1
Depends on the land	1
More swimming beaches	1
Should have some county run campgrounds	1
Could use more areas	1
Transportation for senior citizens	1
Participate in Detroit Mountain renovation as county/regional park	1
We have the land	1
Some parks overcrowded	1
Parks good for many purposes and people	1
Do it as long as land has purposeful use	1
More smaller places throughout the county	1
More signed ATV only trails	1
Let people know what is available	1
Put forfeit land to use	1
There will be an increase in population	1
Expand in rural areas, not Detroit Lakes	1
Not sure	3

NOTE: 109 respondents indicated that Becker County should expand its park system.

Appendix Table 14. Responses opposing expanding parks system

Responses opposing expansion	Number of responses
Keep up/maintain/improve what we already have	22
We have enough	13
Shouldn't spend the money	13
Sell forfeited land	1
Depends on the land	1
Respondent does not use the parks	1
Too many people will wreck the area	1
Don't open Detroit Mountain	1
Beyond Detroit Lakes we don't exist	1
Stay near home	1
Cut what is not being used	1
Ski hill in Detroit Lakes would be nice	1
Laws must be enforced	1
Develop Detroit Lakes Mountain	1
Public should have access to forfeited land	1
Only if need is great enough	1
Parks aren't overcrowded	1
No more taxes	1
Fund more important things	1
It seems fine	1
No qualified, capable staff managing parks	1
No funding	1
More important essential services to fund	1
Unsure	2

NOTE: 77 people indicated that Becker County should not expand its park system.

Appendix Table 15. Whether respondents, or members of their household, experienced a conflict or interference while engaging in a recreational activity on county-managed land within Becker County

Responses	Percent of respondents
Yes	13.6
No	86.4
Total	100.0

N=235

Appendix Table 16. Among respondents who experienced a conflict or interference within Becker County, the type of conflict

Responses	Number of responses
ATVs in prohibited areas, tearing up land, excess noise/leaving trash	10
Jet skis/water skiing, interfere with fishing	3
Tribal land/tribes	2
Crowded camp areas, lake launches, public accesses	2
Low water level	2
Float planes	1
Rowdy, unsupervised teenagers	1
Dogs off leashes	1
Campground official appointed by Department of Natural Resources	1
Litter on lake access	1
Tracks on ski trails	1
Having to change deer hunting plans due to too many people	1
Warning ticket for jet ski but Department of Natural Resources officer was not helpful in explaining what was needed	1
Other hunters being careless	1
Not being able to use all of river	1
Other	1

NOTE: 32 respondents indicated they had experienced a conflict.

Appendix Table 17. Among respondents who experienced a conflict or interference within Becker County, the location

Responses	Number of responses
Dunton Locks	5
Two Inlets	3
Boat landings	3
White Earth Lake	2
Detroit Lake	2
Big Detroit	1
Snowmobile trails east of Many Point	1
Many Point Lake Area	1
Eagle Lake park/beach	1
Becker County Lake	1
Grantin Aid Trails	1
Tulaby Lake boat access	1
Smokey Hills	1
Hungryman campground	1
Toad Lake	1
Straight Lake	1
Mountainview	1
Tax forfeited hunting land	1
White Earth Reservation	1
Big Floyd Lake	1
Several lakes	1
County forest land east of Ice Cracking Lodge in wetland and off trail/road	1
Lake Sally	1
Snow ski and cross-country ski trails	1

Responses	Number of responses
Lake Melissa	1
Public access	1
Hubbel Pond	1
Ottertail River	1
County tax forfeit lands	1
Sandy Hills	1
Bad Medicine area	1
Highway 113 area	1
Snowmobile trail	1
Road ditches	1
No conflicts, just had to relocate, can happen anywhere	1

NOTE: 32 respondents indicated they had experienced a conflict.

Appendix Table 18. Respondents' perceptions of the walkability of their community

Responses	Percent of respondents
1=Not at all walkable	3.2
2	9.2
3	24.9
4	25.8
5=Very walkable	30.9
Not applicable	6.0
Total	100.0

N=217

Mean=3.76

Appendix Table 19. Destinations respondents would walk or bicycle to if they were within 15 minutes of home or place of work

Destinations	Percentage of respondents		
	Walk	Bicycle	I would not do either
Community recreation center	54.3	34.6	26.0
Neighborhood retail and restaurants	59.4	29.5	24.8
Post office/public library/city government office	50.0	30.3	29.5
Medical facility	42.1	19.7	40.2
Your work place/volunteer site	40.2	27.2	37.4
Your school or your children's school	38.6	17.7	44.1
Your place of worship	40.9	16.5	43.3
Parks	61.0	38.6	18.5
Trails	58.7	39.8	18.5
Other:	3.5	3.1	8.3
<i>Everywhere (2)</i>			
<i>Nature trails (2)</i>			
<i>Wildlife view areas (2)</i>			
<i>Neighborhood (2)</i>			
<i>Not applicable (2)</i>			
<i>Need on-road bicycle/walk paths (1)</i>			
<i>Would rather drive (1)</i>			
<i>No longer walk (1)</i>			
<i>Dunton Locks (1)</i>			
<i>Drive to sites then walk around them (1)</i>			
<i>Motorists mostly don't acknowledge rights of pedestrians (1)</i>			
<i>Lives 25 miles from town (1)</i>			

N=254

\*Percentages do not equal 100.0 due to multiple responses.

Appendix Table 20. Respondents' level of agreement with various non-motorized transportation statements

Statements	Mean	Percent of respondents					Total
		Level of agreement (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)					
		1	2	3	4	5	
Increasing non-motorized transportation (biking and walking) and decreasing automobile use is important for improving public health (N=241).	3.92	6.6	6.6	20.7	19.9	46.1	99.9
Increasing non-motorized transportation (biking and walking) and decreasing automobile use is important for the environment (N=239).	3.82	8.4	6.3	22.6	20.9	41.8	100.0
Increasing non-motorized transportation (biking and walking) and decreasing automobile use is important for saving money (N=239).	3.77	7.1	7.5	23.8	24.7	36.8	99.9
Becker County needs more off-road bicycle trails (N=238).	3.52	11.8	7.6	29.0	20.2	31.5	100.1
Becker County needs more on-road bike lanes (N=238).	3.48	14.7	9.7	21.0	22.3	32.4	100.1
Becker County should commit to accommodating non-motorized transportation to the extent feasible on new and reconstructed county roads (N=239).	3.67	10.0	7.9	20.1	28.5	33.5	100.0
Cities and towns in Becker County need more sidewalks (N=234).	3.13	16.2	16.2	25.2	23.1	19.2	99.9
Cities and towns in Becker County need more on-road bike lanes (N=234)	3.47	12.4	9.8	25.6	22.2	29.9	99.9
Cities and towns in Becker County need more bike racks (N=237).	3.24	13.9	10.1	32.1	25.7	18.1	99.9
Cities and towns in Becker County should commit to accommodating non-motorized transportation to the extent feasible on new and reconstructed municipal roads (N=239).	3.67	9.2	6.7	25.1	26.4	32.6	100.0

Appendix Table 21. Respondents' age

Age	Percent of respondents
Younger than 18 years old	0.0
18 to 29	0.8
30 to 44	14.1
45 to 64	50.6
65 to 74	23.3
75 years or older	11.2
Total	100.0

N=249

Appendix Table 22. Respondents' race/ethnicity

Race/ethnicity	Percent of respondents*
White	95.7
Black/African American	0.0
Native American/Alaska Native	2.4
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.0
Hispanic	0.0
Other	0.8
Did not respond	3.1

N=254

\*Percentages do not equal 100.0 due to multiple responses.

Appendix Table 23. Respondents' annual household income before taxes

Income	Percent of respondents
Less than \$20,000	7.5
\$20,000 to \$39,999	13.7
\$40,000 to \$69,999	39.4
\$70,000 to \$119,999	27.9
\$120,000 or more	9.3
Do not know	2.2
Total	100.0

N=226

Appendix Table 24. Whether respondents are the parent or primary caregiver of a child or children 18 years of age or younger

Responses	Percent of respondents
Yes	21.9
No	78.1
Total	100.0

N=247

Appendix Table 25. Respondents' gender

Responses	Percent of respondents
Male	53.1
Female	46.9
Total	100.0

N=245

Appendix Table 26. Respondents' comments or concerns regarding recreational activities in Becker County

Comments/concerns by theme	Number of responses
More and safer biking, dirt biking, hiking, and walking trails	10
Specific trails/policy and regulation for motorized vehicles like ATVs, OHVs	8
Areas need improvement, maintain and improve existing facilities	4
More services/activities for senior citizens, handicapped persons, and kids	4
More and better bike lanes in town	2
Ability to use golf carts on roads	2
Better boat launches and deeper, better boat ramps	2
The county should assist with Detroit Mountain project, Detroit Mountain recreational area is vital	2
Becker County is doing just fine	2
Good organized programs for kids	1
Need more places for kids to go without needing structure, supervision	1
Sell excess property to raise tax base and use funds to make recreational locations/opportunities first class	1
More access on Detroit Lake	1
More trails for easier access	1
More dog policies	1
Get all septic tanks checked and up to code	1
Keep large boats off of small lakes	1
Connect cities	1
Sell tax forfeited land	1
Turn tennis courts into pickleball courts	1
Want to be able to camp on a lake where you can actually catch fish and take short walks	1
Can't afford seasonal campsites	1
Fine people for jumping off the long-bridge	1
Increase and maintain camping opportunities	1
Greenwater lake access should be fixed	1
No Detroit Mountain	1
Not concerned with recreational opportunities	1
No more slalom water skiing course permits given	1
Public access to all tax forfeited land	1
Keep enough tax forfeited land to leave us land for future public recreation	1
More non-motorized recreational venues	1
Detroit Lakes is a great place to live	1
Stoplights need longer walk signal times	1
Too much traffic and noise	1
Hunting is more difficult due to ATVs being used	1
Clean up duck droppings at Detroit Lakes lakefront	1

Comments/concerns by theme	Number of responses
Clean public bathrooms more often	1
I am eligible to retire soon, so number of times I use amenities may increase	1
Too much hunting on public lands	1
We enjoy bicycling in the summer and snowmobiling in the winter	1
Be careful how much money we spend	1
Boat landings need toilet facility	1
Disabled, need public transportation in eastern Becker County	1
Many people would benefit from small paved walking paths with plenty of benches throughout the county (elderly, disabled)	1
Need public RV parks and recreation areas for travelers	1
Physically disabled, can't walk far or bike	1
Rural help-education: community kids; projects, canoe, kayak, walks, and bike rides: challenge with prizes	1
Undeveloped areas should be kept for solitude, nature/wildlife contemplative experiences	1
Recreational use should be reasonable with minimal impacts (put in the right place)	1
Enough quiet/animal watching places	1
Must begin/continue long-range urban planning	1
Move airport so not hemmed-in and creating a hazard	1
Protect wetlands	1
No more snowmobile trails	1
No more ATVs	1
Inspect Osage Beach – someone spread mothballs on the grass which are now in the water	1
Put trash barrels back on the beach – there's garbage blowing around that local residents must clean up	1

N=84



## BECKER COUNTY

County Administration  
915 Lake Avenue, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501  
218-846-7201  
[www.co.becker.mn.us](http://www.co.becker.mn.us)

## NDSU

Center for Social Research  
NDSU Dept. 8000  
PO BOX 6050  
Fargo, ND 58108-6050

701-231-1058

June 11, 2012

Dear Resident:

You are invited to take part in a short survey being given by the Becker County Recreational Advisory Committee (RAC). The goal of this survey is to gather opinions from residents, either full or part time, about recreational activities in Becker County. We want to learn where you and members of your household recreate. We also want to know if you are satisfied with current recreational activities and opportunities to walk and bike in Becker County.

Becker County and its Board of Directors is committed to improving outdoor recreational opportunities for residents. The County also cares for and protects county-administered land.

PartnerSHIP 4 Health is also sponsoring the survey. PartnerSHIP 4 Health is the Minnesota Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) of Becker, Clay, Otter Tail, and Wilkin counties. It brings communities together to encourage and support healthy lifestyles and to prevent chronic diseases among residents.

Becker County RAC has contracted with the Center for Social Research at North Dakota State University (NDSU) to conduct this research study. Your name was randomly chosen from a list of residents in Becker County. The survey is voluntary. You can skip any question you do not want to answer. You will not be identified and your answers are anonymous. The survey will take you about 15 minutes to complete. We have provided a postage-paid return envelope. Please return your survey to us by **Friday, June 29, 2012**. The results of this survey will be made available to the public this fall.

If you have any questions about the purpose of this project, contact Guy Fischer, Economic Development Authority Coordinator for Becker County, at 218-846-7316. If you have questions about the research study, contact Kay Schwarzwalter, Research Assistant at the Center for Social Research, at 701-231-1058. If you have questions about your rights as a human research participant or to report a problem with this study, contact NDSU's Human Research Protection Program at 701-231-8908.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry Knutson".

Larry Knutson, Chair  
Becker County Board  
915 Lake Avenue  
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gina Nolte".

Gina Nolte, Director  
PartnerSHIP 4 Health  
Clay County Public Health  
715 11th Street North, Suite 303  
Moorhead, MN 56560  
[www.partnerSHIP4Health.org](http://www.partnerSHIP4Health.org)



# Becker County Recreational Advisory Committee (RAC) Survey

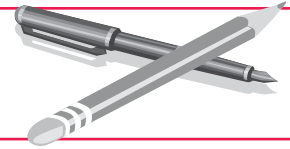
Becker County owns and manages more than 75,000 acres of tax-forfeited land and uses it for a variety of purposes for the public. The County also provides many recreational opportunities, including options for motorized vehicles. Becker County RAC is interested in gaining an understanding of the recreational needs, attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of people living in Becker County. As a resident of Becker County, either full or part time, please take a few moments to complete this important survey.

- Use a pencil or blue or black pen.
- Fill bubbles completely.
- Do not mark answers with Xs or ✓s.

Correct Mark:



Incorrect Marks:



## Recreational Opportunities and Experiences

Q1. Using a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being "not at all important" and 5 being "very important," please tell us how important each of the following activities are to the county and whether or not you or your family members have participated in them within the **past two years**.

Recreational Activities	(1=Not at all important; 5=Very important)					Have you participated?	
	Not at all important ← → Very important					Yes	No
<b>A. Warm weather activities</b>							
a. Canoeing, kayaking, tubing	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
b. Swimming	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
c. Bicycling	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
d. Walking	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
e. Horseback riding	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
f. Fishing	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
g. Hunting/shooting	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
h. Harvesting/gathering (berries, mushrooms, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
i. Bird and wildlife watching/nature photography	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
j. Geocaching	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
k. Hiking/backpacking/picnicking	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
l. Camping	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
m. Rollerblading	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
n. Skateboarding	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
o. Golf/tennis	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
<b>B. Cold weather activities</b>							
a. Downhill skiing	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
b. Ice fishing/spearing	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
c. Sledding/tubing/ice skating	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
d. Snowshoeing/cross-country skiing	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
<b>C. Motorized activities</b>							
a. Water sports (boating/jet skiing)	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
b. ATV (all-terrain vehicles)	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
c. OHM (off-highway motorcycles)	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
d. 4-wheel-drive (off-road) truck	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
e. Snowmobiling	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
f. Touring/sightseeing	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N
<b>D. Other</b> (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5	Y	N

Q2. If you participated in MOTORIZED recreational activities in Becker County within the past two years, where? (Choose all that apply).

- ☐ Private land   ☐ Public land   ☐ Trails   ☐ Roads   ☐ Ditches   ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Lakes   ☐ Rivers   ☐ Wetlands   ☐ Forests   ☐ Did not participate \_\_\_\_\_

Q3. What are the primary reasons you participate in recreational activities? (Choose all that apply).

- ☐ Improve skills   ☐ Relaxation   ☐ Spending time with family/friends   ☐ Fun  
☐ Physical activity   ☐ Solitude   ☐ Getting close to nature   ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q4. How many miles are you willing to travel in order to engage in recreational activities in Becker County?

- ☐ Less than 5 miles      ☐ 10 to 19 miles      ☐ 40 to 59 miles  
☐ 5 to 9 miles      ☐ 20 to 39 miles      ☐ 60 miles or more

Q5. How often, during each season, do you or members of your household engage in recreational activities in Becker County?

**Season**

**Number of times**

	None	Less than 5	5 to 19	20 or more
Spring (March-May)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Summer (June-August)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Fall (September-November)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Winter (December-February)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

Q6. Becker County is responsible for reviewing and making improvements to county parks, lake accesses, and county-managed tax-forfeited land. Using a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being "not at all satisfied" and 5 being "very satisfied," how satisfied have you been with the following areas and amenities in Becker County recreational areas?

**Areas**

Not at all  
satisfied

Very  
satisfied

Not  
applicable

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	N/A
a. Parks	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	N/A
b. Trails	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	N/A
c. Forest roads	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	N/A
d. Boat launches	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	N/A
e. Camp sites	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	N/A
f. Picnic areas	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	N/A
g. Swimming beaches	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	N/A

**Amenities**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	N/A
h. Restrooms	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	N/A
i. Benches	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	N/A
j. Parking lots	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	N/A
k. Signage	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	N/A

Q7. If you were not satisfied with the areas and amenities at county parks, lake accesses, or county-managed tax-forfeited land within Becker County, why not? (Choose all that apply).

- ☐ Crowded      ☐ Noisy      ☐ Inconvenient hours  
☐ Needed cleaning      ☐ Needed grooming/repairs      ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q8. Should Becker County expand its park system?

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      Q8a. Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

Q9. During the last two years, how often did you or members of your household visit each of the following recreational locations in Becker County?

**Locations**

**Number of times**

Not  
familiar  
with  
location

	None	Less than 5	5 to 19	20 or more	
a. Local parks, recreation areas, preserves (Dunton Locks, Sucker Creek, etc.)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
b. National wildlife refuges (i.e., Tamarac, Hamden Slough)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
c. Wildlife management areas (Callaway, Hubbel Pond, White Earth, etc.)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
d. State and county forests (i.e., Smokey Hills, Two Inlets, White Earth)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
e. Itasca State Park	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
f. Greenwater Scientific and Natural Area	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
g. Lakes/Lake accesses	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
h. Rivers	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

Q10. Becker County strives to create high-quality recreational experiences by ensuring the long-term sustainability of county-administered lands, by protecting natural resources, and by balancing recreational activities among all users. Using a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being "not at all important" and 5 being "very important," how important are each of the following factors in contributing to your recreational experience?

<u>Factors</u>	Not at all important				Very important
a. Connectivity to other amenities (restaurants, bathrooms, etc.)	①	②	③	④	⑤
b. Environmental impact	①	②	③	④	⑤
c. Natural resource protection	①	②	③	④	⑤
d. Recreational activities for local economy	①	②	③	④	⑤
e. Proximity to existing recreational trails/parks	①	②	③	④	⑤
f. New recreational opportunities	①	②	③	④	⑤
g. County management of recreational resources	①	②	③	④	⑤
h. Scenery/aesthetics	①	②	③	④	⑤
i. Preservation areas	①	②	③	④	⑤
j. Biological diversity	①	②	③	④	⑤
k. Solitude	①	②	③	④	⑤
l. Communal gatherings	①	②	③	④	⑤
m. Parks and Recreation ordinance enforcement	①	②	③	④	⑤
n. Other (specify) _____	①	②	③	④	⑤

Q11. Have you or members of your household ever experienced a conflict or interference while engaging in a recreational activity that diminishes the quality of your recreational experience on Becker county-managed land?

☐ Yes → 11a. If yes, what was the conflict or interference? \_\_\_\_\_

☐ No \_\_\_\_\_

11b. Where did the conflict or interference occur? \_\_\_\_\_

## Walkable Communities

Walkability is a measure of how friendly an area is to walking. Walkability has many health, environmental, and economic benefits. Factors influencing walkability include the presence or absence and quality of footpaths, sidewalks, or other pedestrian right-of-ways, traffic and road conditions, land use patterns, building accessibility, and safety, among others.

Q12. Using a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being "not at all walkable" and 5 being "very walkable," please tell us how walkable your community is.

Not at all walkable ← ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ → Very walkable Not applicable

Q13. Please tell us which of the following destinations you would walk or bicycle to if they were within 15 minutes of your home or place of work. (Choose all that apply for each mode).

<u>Destinations</u>	Walk	Bicycle	I would not do either
a. Community recreation center	①	②	③
b. Neighborhood retail and restaurants	①	②	③
c. Post office/public library/city government office	①	②	③
d. Medical facility	①	②	③
e. Your work place/volunteer site	①	②	③
f. Your school or your children's school	①	②	③
g. Your place of worship	①	②	③
h. Parks	①	②	③
i. Trails	①	②	③
j. Other (specify) _____	①	②	③

Q14. Using a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree," please tell us your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
a. Increasing non-motorized transportation (biking and walking) and decreasing automobile use is important for improving PUBLIC HEALTH.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Increasing non-motorized transportation (biking and walking) and decreasing automobile use is important for the ENVIRONMENT.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Increasing non-motorized transportation (biking and walking) and decreasing automobile use is important for SAVING MONEY.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Becker County needs more off-road bicycle trails.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Becker County needs more on-road bicycle lanes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Becker County should commit to accommodating non-motorized transportation to the extent feasible on new and reconstructed county roads.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Cities and towns in Becker County need more sidewalks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Cities and towns in Becker County need more on-road bicycle lanes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Cities and towns in Becker County need more bicycle racks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Cities and towns in Becker County should commit to accommodating non-motorized transportation to the extent feasible on new and reconstructed municipal roads.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Demographics - Please tell us about yourself.

Q15. What is your age?

- ☐ Younger than 18 years old
- ☐ 18 to 29
- ☐ 30 to 44
- ☐ 45 to 64
- ☐ 65 to 74
- ☐ 75 years or older

Q16. What best describes your race and ethnicity? (Choose all that apply).

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black/African American
- ☐ Native American/Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q17. What is your approximate annual household income before taxes?

- ☐ Less than \$20,000
- ☐ \$20,000 to \$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000 to \$69,999
- ☐ \$70,000 to \$119,999
- ☐ \$120,000 or more
- ☐ Do not know

Q18. Are you the parent or primary caregiver of a child or children 18 years of age or younger?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Q19. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Please provide any comments or concerns you may have about recreational activities in Becker County.

**Thank you!**