

PUBLIC COMMENT FORMS

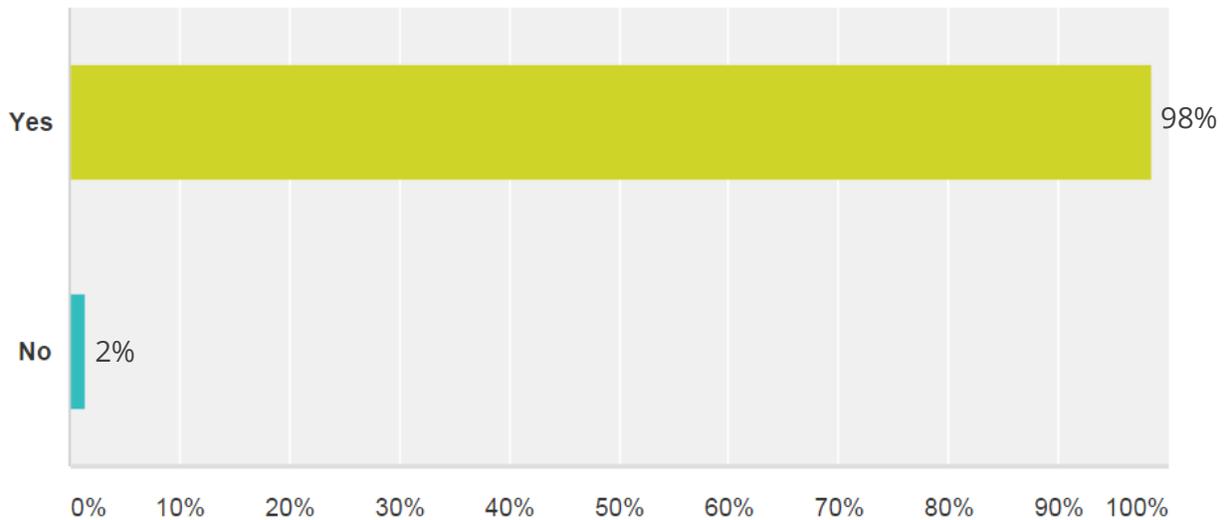
The public comment form was active between January 2015 and October 2015. It was available online through the project website and in hardcopy at each of the Open Space Plan meetings, presentations, and public workshops described throughout this chapter. People throughout Northwest Arkansas were encouraged to fill-out these forms through the mass-email lists of project committee members and stakeholders, through social media (Facebook), and traditional media (newspaper articles and press releases).

There were a total of **818 respondents** to the public comment form. Although not statistically valid, the results that follow still reflect the voices of 100s of Northwest Arkansas residents who have an interest in the region’s open spaces. Summary responses are displayed below; for full results, please contact the NWARPC.



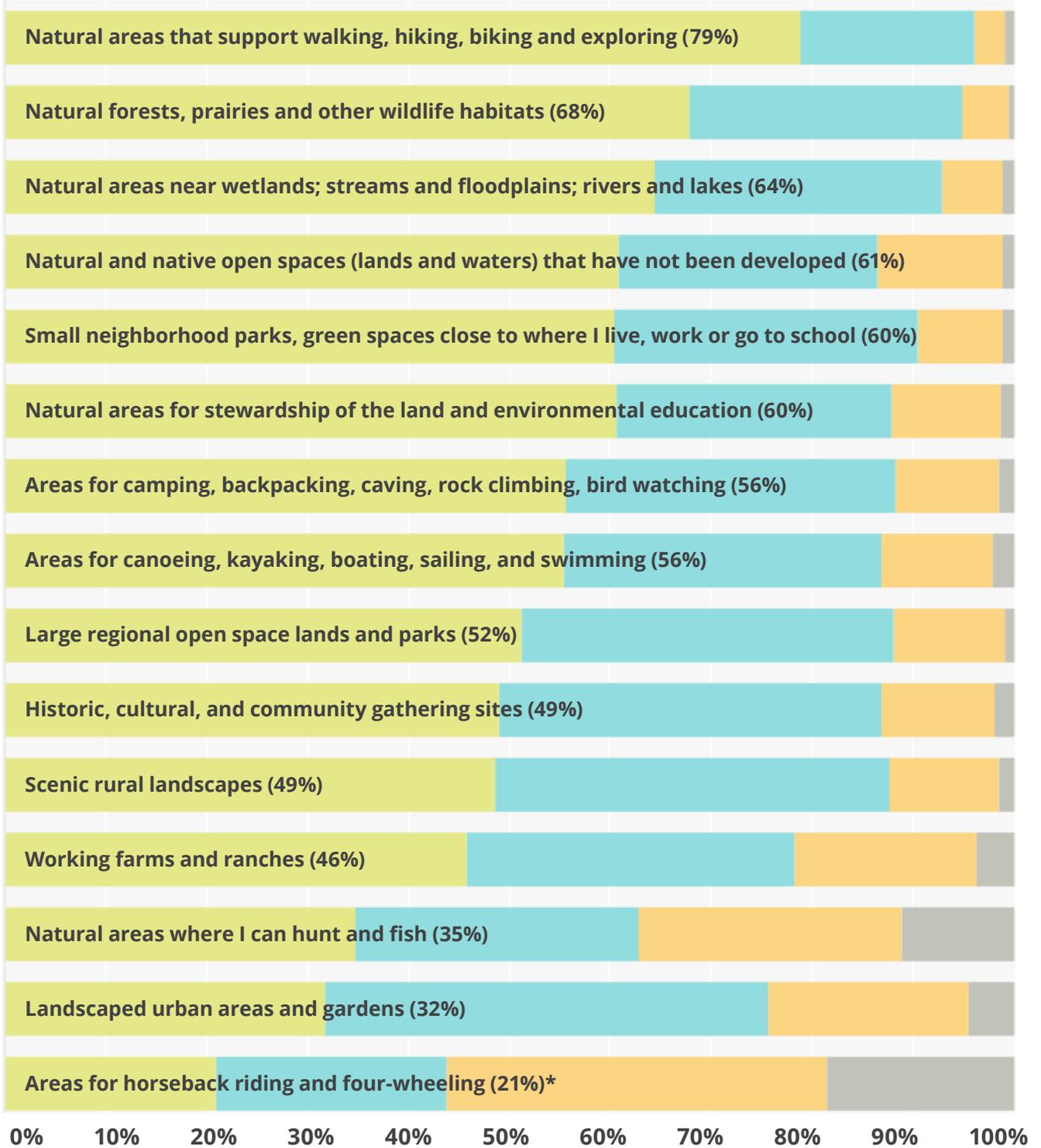
Public workshop participants in Siloam Springs fill out the public comment form.

In general, do you support the idea of communities in Northwest Arkansas working together to protect certain open spaces as described [on opposite page]?



Of the following examples, what do you feel is important in terms of open space in Northwest Arkansas? (percentages labeled below are for the “very important” category)

Very Important **Important** **Neutral** **Not Important**



**Future comment forms should not group horseback riding and four-wheeling, as the two activities differ in terms of the types of open space where they can take place.*



In the previous question, some people selected 'other' and entered a response (sample responses below).

- Horse areas and horse trails
- Dark skies for stargazing
- Rocky bluffs
- Birding areas
- Dog parks
- Golfing
- Trails, sidewalks, and mountain biking singletrack
- Designated recreational areas for sports and programs
- Historic and cultural site preservation (barns, buildings, cemetery care)
- Honey bee and butterfly habitat/pollination spaces and gardens
- Community gathering sites/pocket parks in urban areas
- Areas accessible to all abilities
- Urban farms and community gardens

What in your opinion defines the character of Northwest Arkansas? (sample responses below)

"The natural areas that allow for people to get outdoors with their families."

"Independent minded, resourceful, hard working, friendly, progressive, gritty."

"The people, the natural beauty, the many churches, the high employment and the wonder of it all!"

"I moved here from out of state, and the thing I really loved about NW Arkansas was all of the natural parks and nature preserves. Even in some of the more developed city areas attention has been paid to provide beautiful park spaces and that is REALLY important to keep cities beautiful."

"Beautiful natural landscapes, small rural communities, close communities"

"NW Arkansas is a beautiful area. We have many tourist attractions and educational as well as, business opportunities. I would like to see more opportunity for these ventures in smaller town areas and not just the I-49 corridor. We have wonderful citizens in the area and the more attractive and family and business friendly our area is, all the better."

"I think it is incredibly important to have attractions for single, young professionals as well as the numerous families with young children. That will help attract and retain young talent and ensure there isn't a 'brain drain.'"

"One of the reasons that I moved my family to NWA was because of the immense outdoor opportunities presented by these natural landscapes. I know I can go a short distance in any direction and find outdoor opportunities to enjoy; hiking, kayaking, biking, caving, national forest exploration, camping (camp site & national forest). I love the natural beauty of NWA, I'd do anything to protect it."

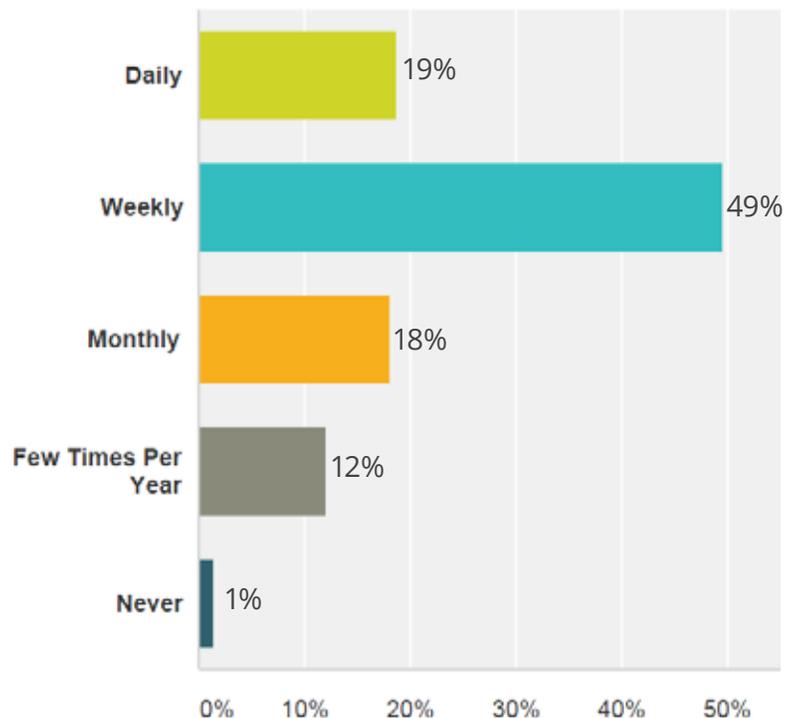
"Natural and Beautiful"

"A growing community that values its land and resources."

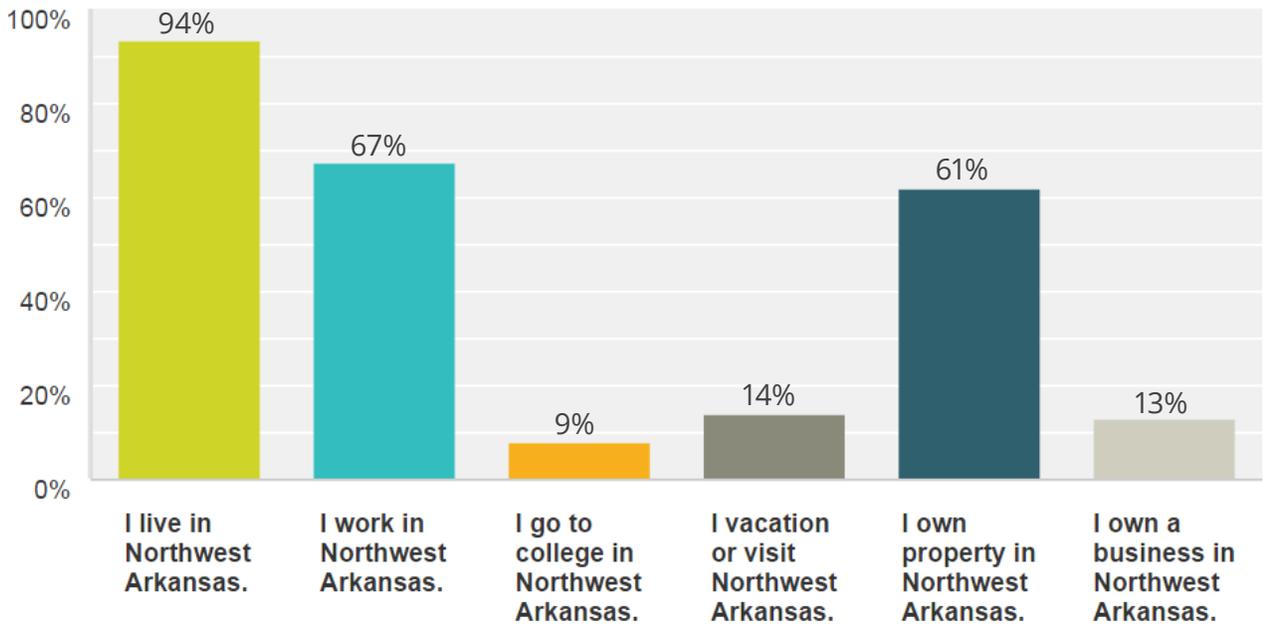
"We should use the lessons learned from areas that had their growth spurts decades before we did. Preserve nature now, so we don't have to fix that later."

"Big city amenities, hometown America feel, rural spaces close and abundant."

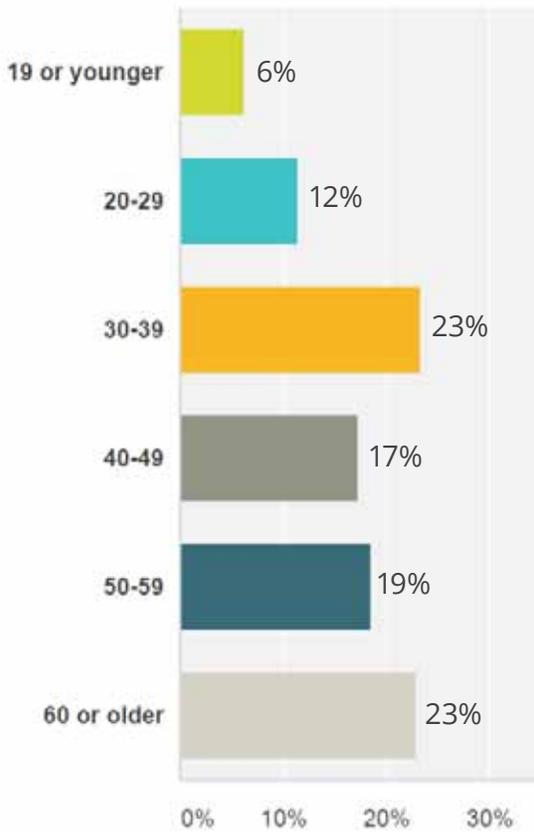
How frequently do you use public parks and open space?



What is your connection to Northwest Arkansas? (Select all that apply)



What is your age?



What is your gender?

- Female (53%)
- Male (47%)

Do you have children under the age of 19?

- No (64%)
- Yes (36%)

If yes, what ages? (select all that apply)

- Ages 0-4 (38%)
- Ages 5-11 (44%)
- Ages 11-15 (35%)
- Ages 16-18 (24%)



Are there other comments you would like to share about the Open Space Plan initiative?

(sample responses below)

"As a resident of the area, I'm pleased that we have the foresight to plan NOW and not wait on this very important topic."

"Despite the huge growth in the last 15 or so years, this area has been able to retain its "natural" feel. That's what draws people here. So we need to find ways to keep it that way."

"I think this is one of the best ideas that government officials have come up with in a long time. It is also great that you are reaching out to the citizens of the area."

"I believe this initiative is so, so important. We've lived here 9 years and seen the area change dramatically. Too little thought is being given to preserving the natural landscape -- for wildlife, and simply for humans to enjoy....I worry that we will end up looking like a homogenized Anytown, USA."

"It is important that we retain open spaces in the midst of our growth, not become like many of the bigger cities in America who have lost that. It makes our area inviting to us and to others."

"Save the farms, orchards, etc. not just "wilderness" areas. Save places that will affect people's daily routines, not just what they do on the weekends."

"Glad it is being looked into before it is too late...Once they're gone they are very difficult to recover, take the opportunity to obtain open space."

"Open space, parks, hiking trails, campsites, are very important for the future of the state and the people who live here. It is heartbreaking to see all the farmland becoming subdivisions with no planning of trees and green spaces and parks."

"I grew up in NW Arkansas and I'm worried about the effects of unrestrained development and population growth on the landscape, streams, the environment in general, historic sites, farming life, and quality of life....I am especially concerned about increased runoff and flooding from additional pavement, loss of forest and other vegetation, and the loss of wetlands due to development, and the degradation of stream quality and biodiversity."

"I hope that what rural farming areas we have left will be protected from being turned into commercial/industrial zones."

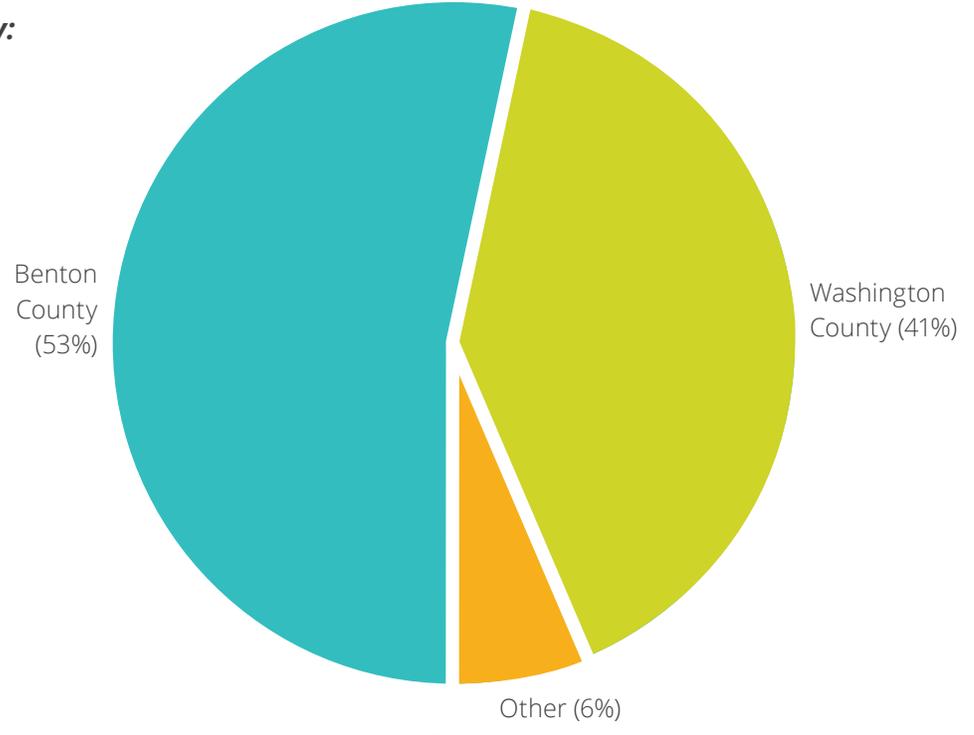
"We need to make sure that green space is also kept as wild, natural space and that public green spaces and parks are not all manicured."

"Don't forget us out here in the rural areas."

"To preserve as much of the natural beauty of NWA, I hope the planning commissions are encouraging the re-purposing of existing buildings/ building sites and incorporating natural areas into the planning of new developments."

In what town/city/community do you live?

Results by County:



Results by City:

