



ARIZONA

STATE PARKS & TRAILS





Arizona Trails Plan 2020

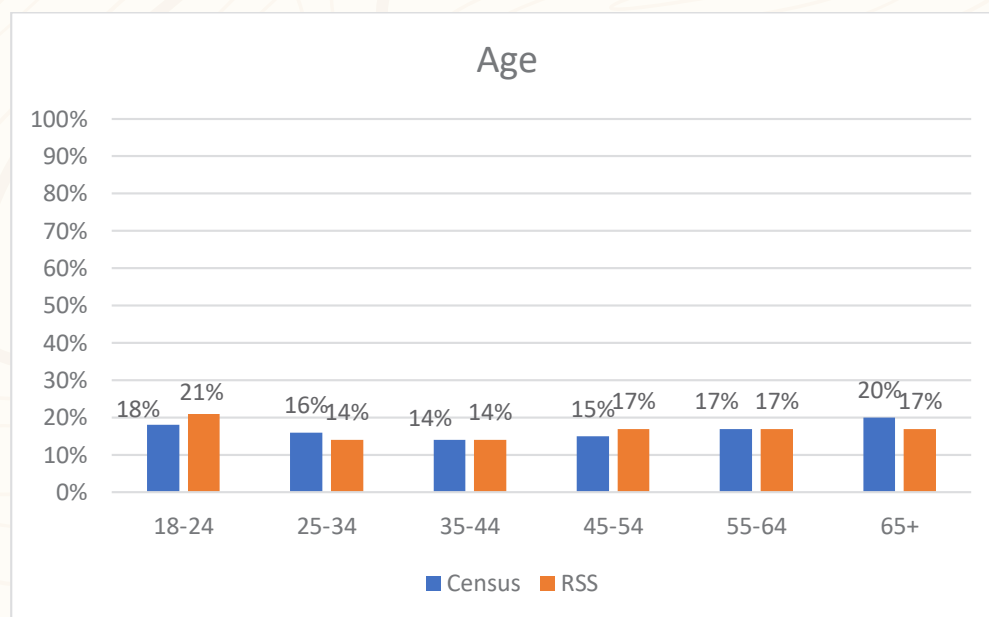
Apache, Coconino, Gila, and Navajo County Report

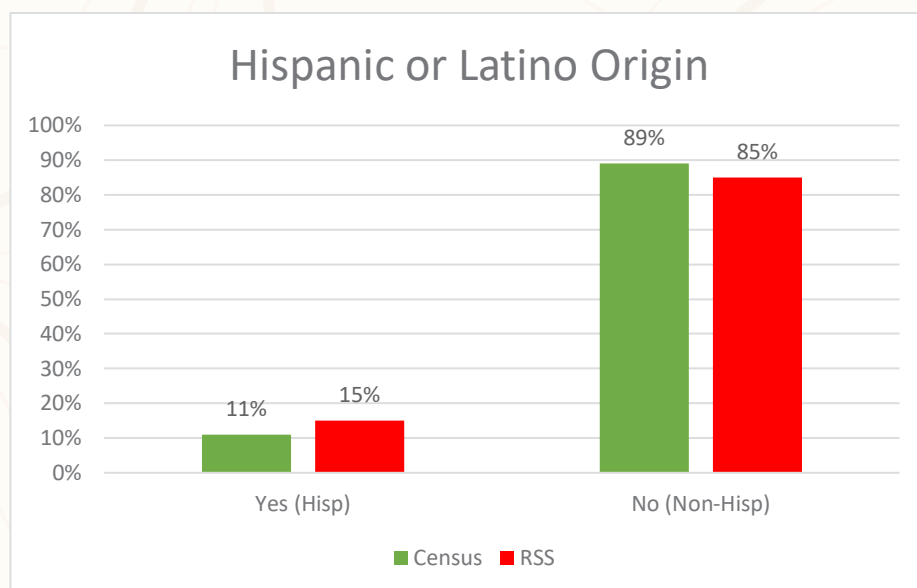
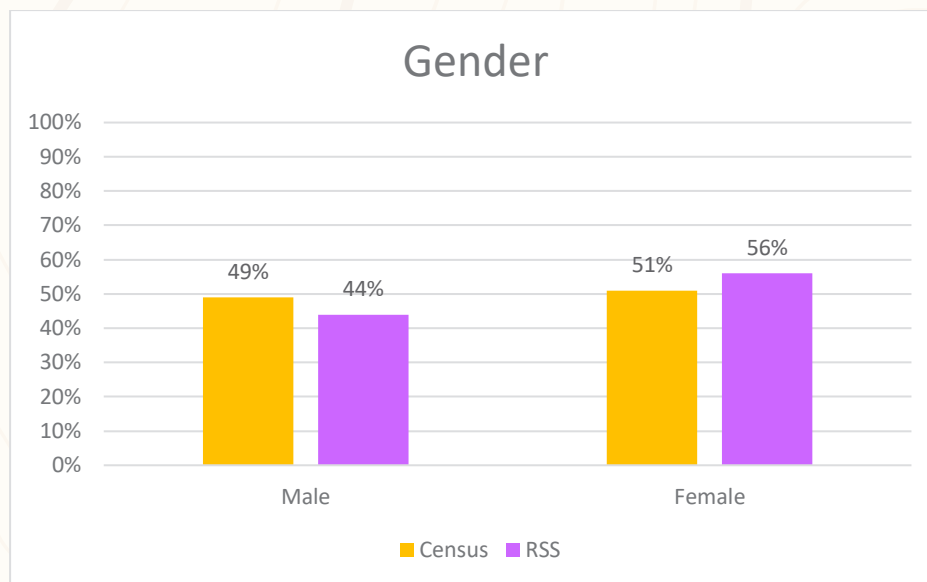
Introduction:

Arizona State Parks and Trails, in partnership with Partners in Brainstorm, conducted a statewide random sample survey (RSS) that is representative of the Arizona population at the state and county or regional levels. This survey informs the Arizona Trails 2020 Plan, which is completed every five years per statute (A.R.S. § 41-511.22 and A.R.S. § 41-511.04 [20]). This is an opportunity to understand the use, concerns and priorities of Arizona's motorized and non-motorized trail users. These data, in conjunction with two other surveys and qualitative material formed the basis of the Plan, which provides analyses at the state level. This supplementary document contains analyses at the regional level for Apache, Coconino, Gila and Navajo counties. The following information may be used to inform recreation planning efforts, recreation initiatives and requests for additional funding to support trail opportunities and infrastructure renewal.

Demographics:

The figures below illustrate a comparison of the 2018 Apache, Coconino, Gila and Navajo Counties' Census data estimates with the demographic profile of 697 Apache, Coconino, Gila and Navajo County RSS respondents (including motorized, non-motorized and non-users). Data were weighted on two demographic variables: gender and Hispanic origin to better represent the proportion of these groups relative to state and county populations.

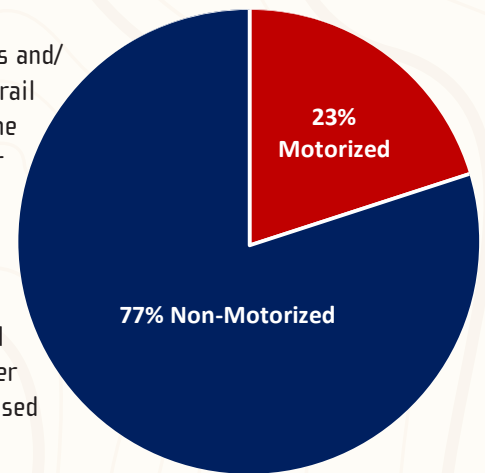




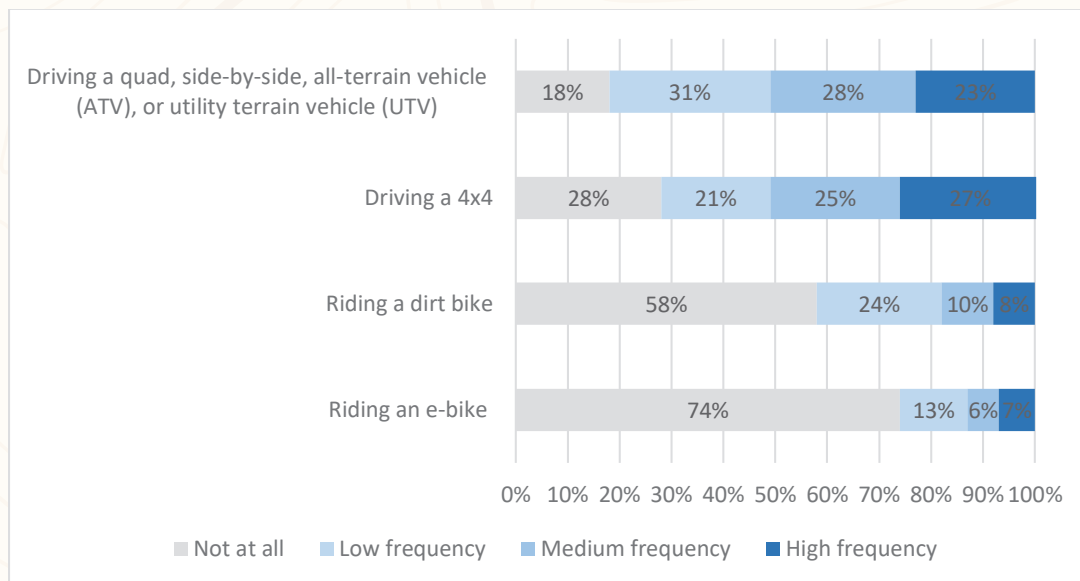
Apache, Coconino, Gila and Navajo County User Profile:

The figures in this report are separated by motorized (such as driving ATVs, 4x4s, dirt bikes and/or e-bikes) and non-motorized (such as hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians and kayakers) trail users. Data below has been rounded to the nearest percentile. For the figures in the rest of the report, data are shown as all trail users (motorized and non-motorized users combined) or all users of a specific type (all motorized users or all non-motorized users). In the R55 for Apache, Coconino, Gila and Navajo counties, more than seven out of 10 residents surveyed (72%) reported participating in either motorized or non-motorized trail activities within the last 12 months. Nearly one-quarter (23%) of trail users reported engaging in motorized activities on trails within the last 12 months and more than three-quarters (77%) participated in non-motorized activities. Survey respondents categorized as non-users either had never used trails for motorized or non-motorized activities in Arizona (14% of sample) or had not used trails within the last 12 months (14%).

Please note that comparisons to the state plan must consider that regional reports include all users (any respondent who spent any time within the last 12 months on motorized or non-motorized trail activities), whereas the state trails plan focuses on “core” users. “Core” respondents reported their trail use was primarily motorized or non-motorized (defined as half or more of their time spent on trails is spent on motorized/non-motorized types of activities). This strategy could not be employed in county or region reports due to smaller cell sizes.



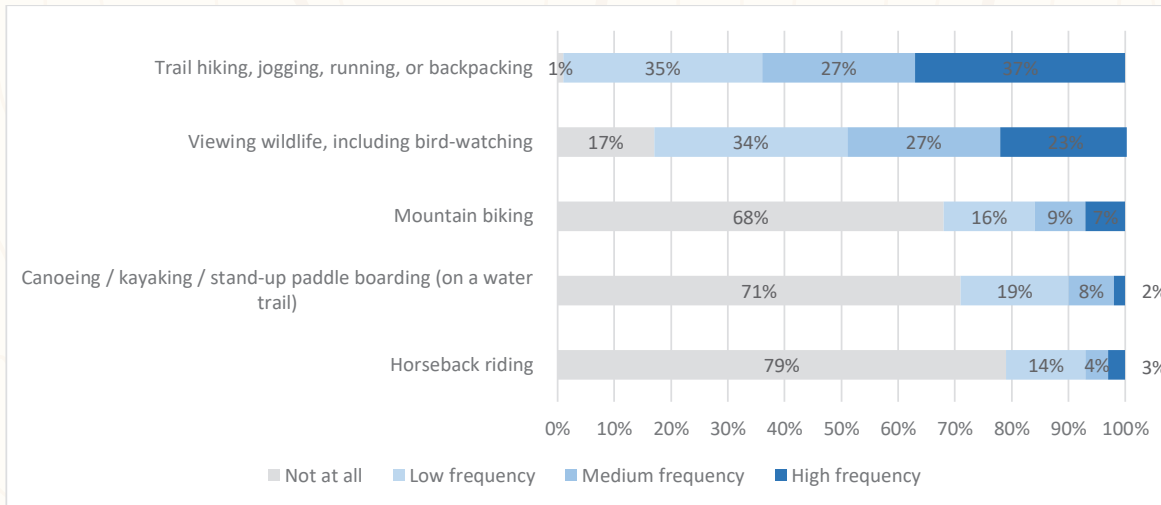
Motorized Use Type and Frequency



“During the past 12 months, how often have you used trails on public or private lands in Arizona for the following types of motorized recreational activities?”



Non-Motorized Use Type and Frequency



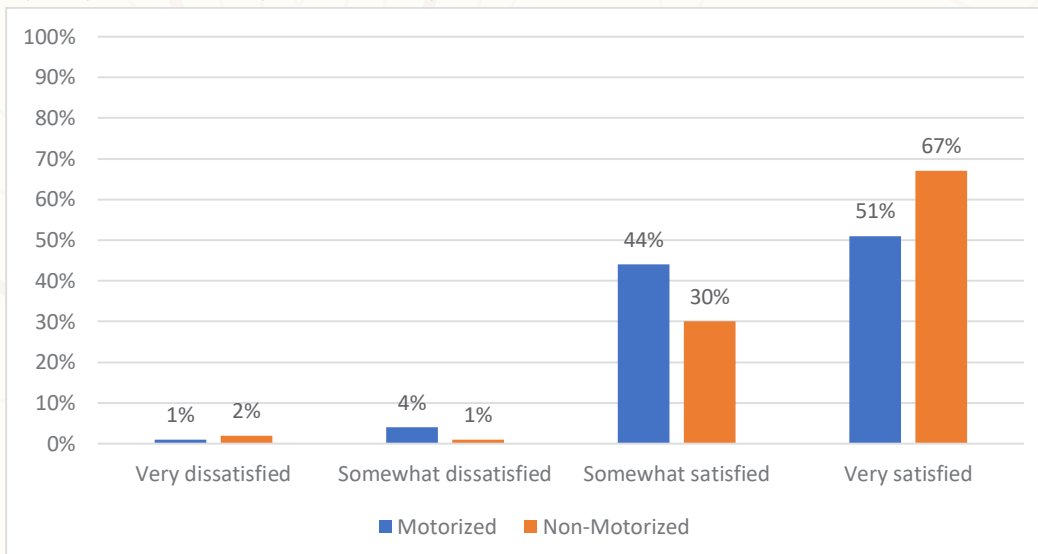
"During the past 12 months, how often have you used trails on public or private lands in Arizona for the following types of non-motorized recreational activities?"

The figures above illustrate the residents of the region consisting of Apache, Coconino, Gila and Navajo counties motorized and non-motorized trail use within the last 12 months by type and frequency of activities. High frequency contains the responses: "More often than once a week," "Once a week" and "Every few weeks." Medium frequency contains the responses: "Once a month" and "Every couple of months" and low frequency contains the responses "A few times" and "Once." The "Not at all" category depicts the percent of respondents who reported that they had not participated in a particular activity within the last 12 months.

As seen in the figures above, driving a quad, side-by-side, ATV or UTV was the most popular motorized activity with 82% of motorized users participating in this category at least once a year. Nearly three-quarters of motorized users (73%) reportedly drove a 4x4 on trails at least once during the last 12 months. Riding an e-bike was the least cited use type in the motorized category, but more than one-quarter (26%) of motorized users still used an e-bike at least once in the last year. This type of recreation is growing, so this number may increase in the coming years. In addition, definitions of e-bike use as motorized or non-motorized and permissions to use e-bikes on trails will likely continue to be a hot topic for land managing agencies and users.

Hiking, jogging, backpacking and running are by far the most popular non-motorized activities with only 1% of non-motorized trail users not participating in one of them, and more than one-third (37%) participating in these activities with a high frequency. Viewing wildlife is another popular non-motorized activity, with nearly 85% participating at least once in the last 12 months. Approximately 20-30% of survey respondents who participated in non-motorized activities mountain biked, used a water trail or rode a horse on a trail at least once during the last 12 months.

Satisfaction with Trails in Arizona

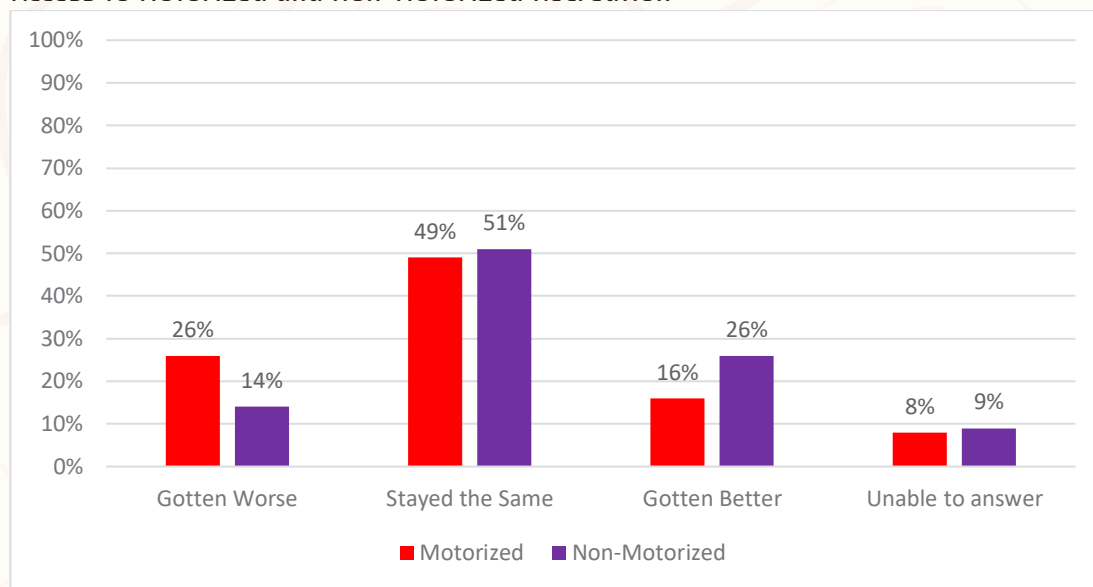


"Overall, how satisfied are you with (motorized/non-motorized) trails in Arizona?"



The figure on the previous page depicts residents of Apache, Coconino, Gila, and Navajo counties motorized and non-motorized trail users' satisfaction with the trails they use statewide. Nearly all users of both types of trail recreation are either somewhat satisfied or very satisfied (95% of motorized and 97% of non-motorized).

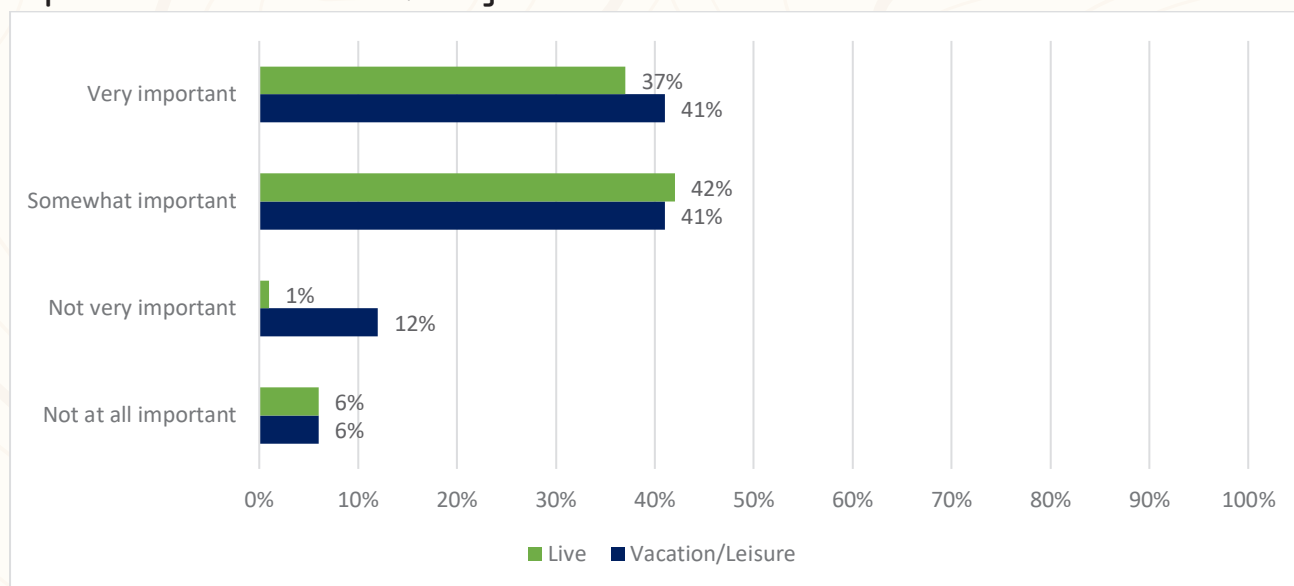
Access to Motorized and Non-Motorized Recreation



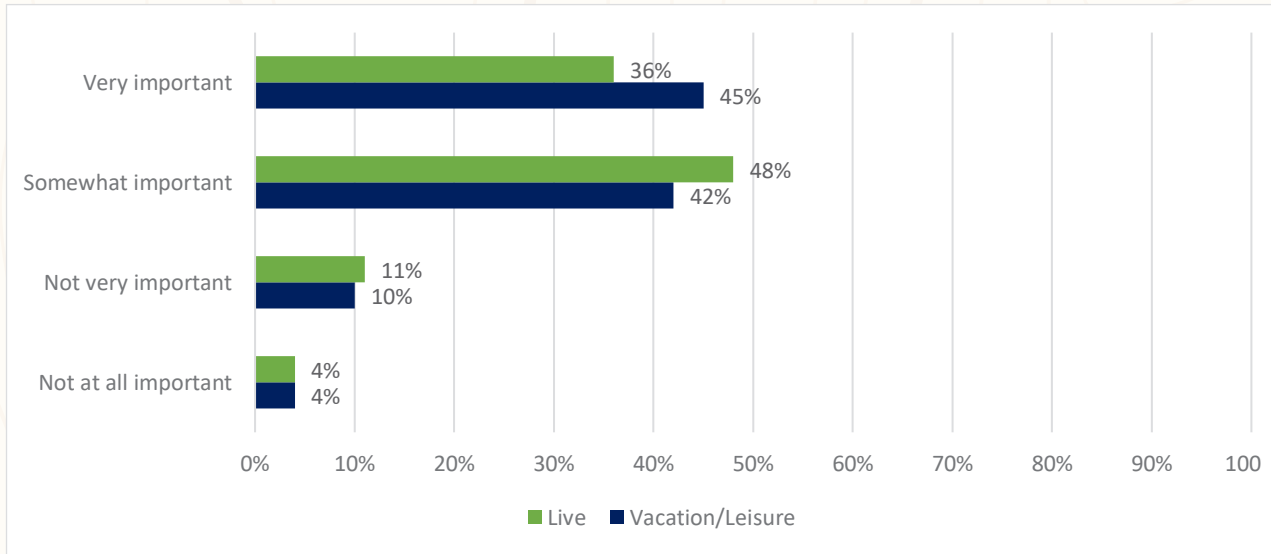
"In the past 5 years, has access to (non-motorized/motorized) recreation gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse?"

Each trail user surveyed was asked if they thought access to the trail type that they use has declined, stayed the same or improved. Access refers to trails in the entire state that the respondent uses, not just trails in this region. As seen above, 12% more motorized users perceive declining access to trails when compared to non-motorized users, while 10% more non-motorized users report that access to trails has improved in the last five years when compared to motorized users. Finally, nearly one-half of both motorized (49%) and non-motorized users (51%) stated that access to trails has remained the same during the last five years.

Importance of Trails in Leisure/Living Destinations - Motorized



Importance of Trails in Leisure/Living Destinations - Non-Motorized

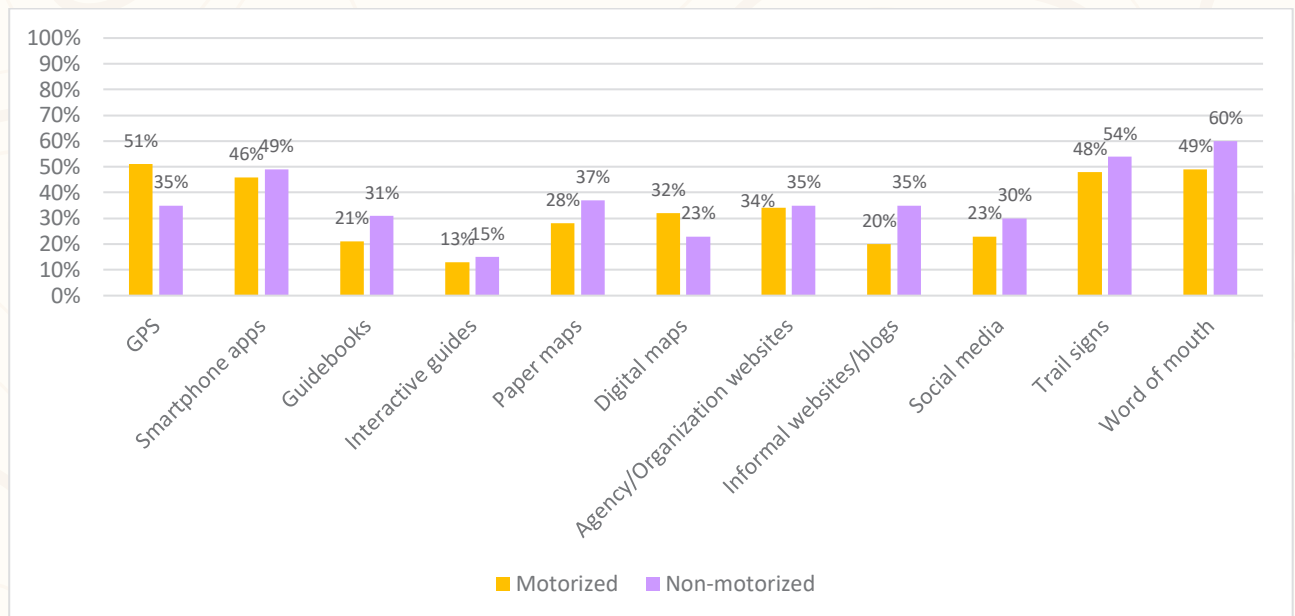


Navy Blue: "How important is it to have trails nearby when deciding where to live in AZ?"

Green: "How important is it to have trails nearby when choosing a destination for vacation or leisure travel in AZ?"

The data shows that trails are an important factor in making these decisions because 79% of motorized users and 84% of non-motorized users find the presence of trails either somewhat or very important in the decision about where to live. For motorized users, 82% of this group and 87% of non-motorized users think the same of trail availability in leisure/travel decisions. This means that a large majority of trail users use trail availability as a factor when making these types of decisions, with a slightly higher importance on vacation/leisure destinations having trails close by.

How Trail Users Find Trails



"Which of the following tools do you use to find and use trails in Arizona?"

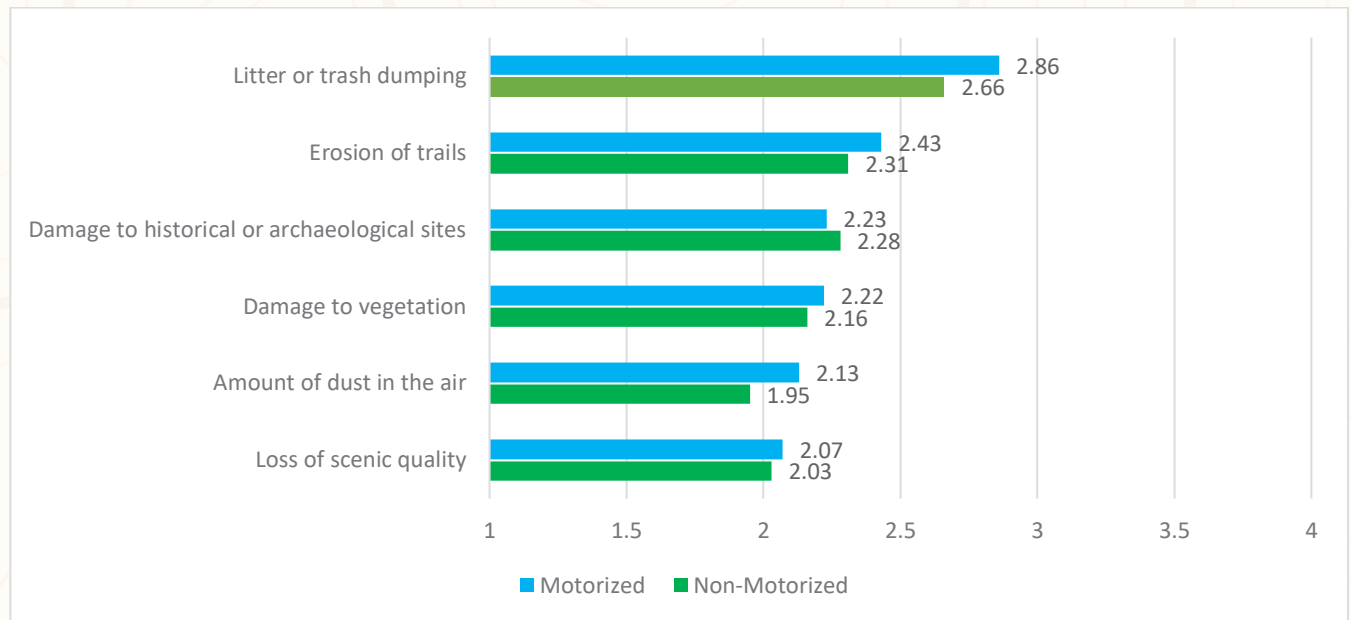


As seen on the previous page, both motorized and non-motorized users use a host of tools to find and use trails. Motorized users in the Apache, Coconino, Gila and Navajo counties most often use GPS (51%), followed by other popular tools of word of mouth (49%), trail signs (48%) and smartphone apps (46%). Non-motorized users rely heavily on word of mouth (60%) and other popular tools a little less such as trail signs (54%) and smartphone apps (49%). This information can help understand users in order to reach them on platforms that they frequently use.

User Concerns and Management Priorities:

The next three figures compare all of the Apache, Coconino, Gila and Navajo County counties motorized and non-motorized trail users' mean ratings of trail-related issues on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 equals "not a problem" to 4 equals a "serious problem" for environmental and social concerns and 1 equals "not important" to 4 equals "very important" for trail management priorities. The concerns and priorities are in order from highest (top of figure) to lowest (bottom of figure) mean ratings for motorized users. Finally, because the number of respondents in a given category continues to decrease as the original sample is divided into subgroups, please note that findings below may not reflect a sufficient number of cases to make a statement that is generalizable to the experiences of all users within the region.

Environmental Concerns of Trail Users

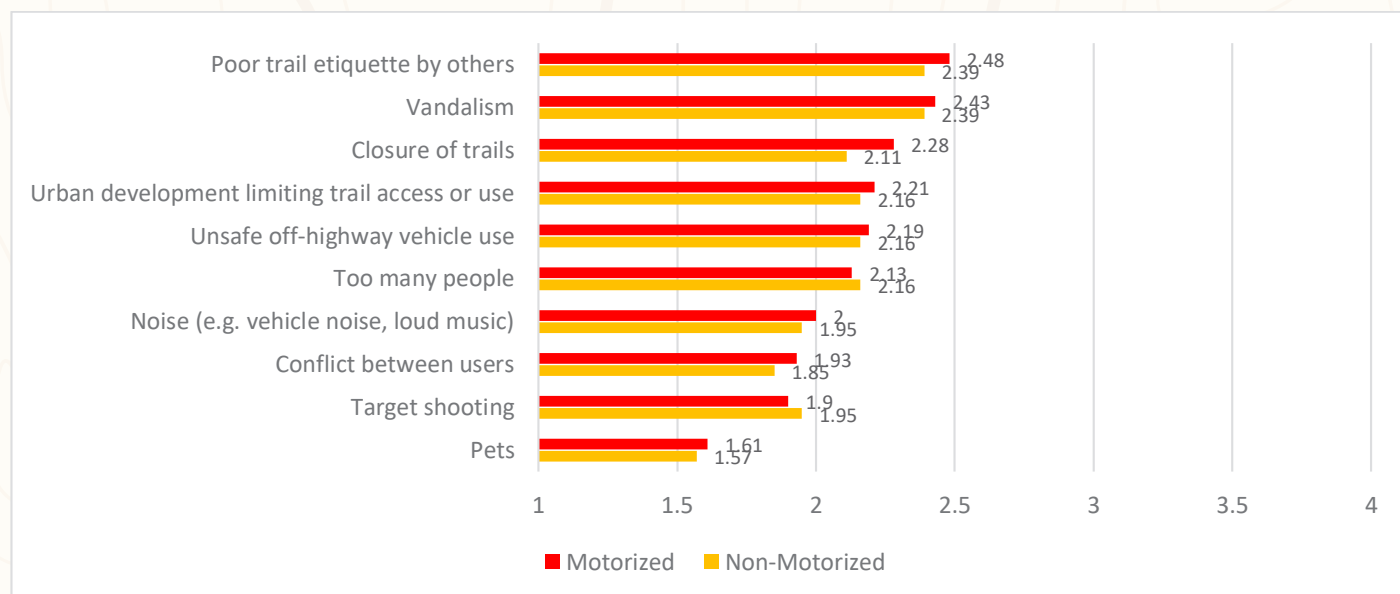


"Thinking about possible environmental and cultural conditions that might negatively affect your trail experience, how much of a problem is each of the following on the Arizona trails you use most for recreation activities?"

As seen above, the environmental concerns of both non-motorized and motorized trail users are very similar, with both groups agreeing on the top three issues. Mean ratings indicate that the number one concern for both groups is litter/trash dumping by far, second highest is erosion of trails and third highest is damage to historical or archaeological sites. One interesting observation is that motorized users' mean ratings are mostly slightly higher than the non-motorized group, implying motorized users perceive these issues to be more of a problem than non-motorized users on average



Social Concerns of Trail Users

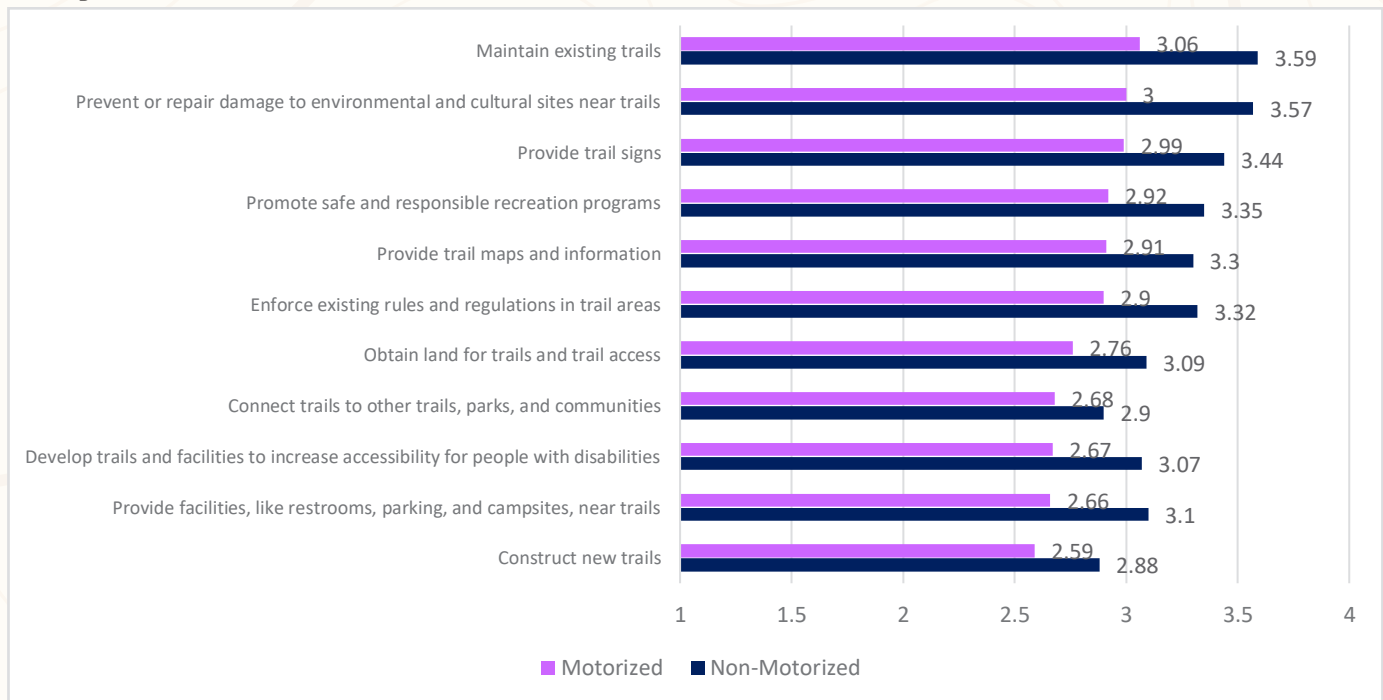


"Thinking about possible social conditions that might negatively affect your trail experience, how much of a problem is each of the following on the Arizona trails you use most for recreation activities?"

The above figure shows the mean rankings of social issues on trails by motorized and non-motorized users. Non-motorized users' top social concern based on mean rankings is a tie between poor trail etiquette by others and vandalism while motorized users' top concern is poor trail etiquette by others closely followed by vandalism. There is a three-way tie for the second highest mean for non-motorized users – urban development limiting trail access or use, unsafe off-highway vehicle use and too many people. For both motorized and non-motorized users the issue with the third highest mean is closure of trails.



Management Priorities of Trails Users



"How important to you are the following trail management priorities?"

The above figure depicts the management priorities of each user group. Non-motorized users' mean ratings are all higher than the motorized group, indicating that they attribute a higher level of importance to the issues than motorized users. The groups have the same top three highest means. The top three rated concerns are 1) maintain existing trails, 2) prevent or repair damage to environmental and cultural sites near trails and 3) provide trail signs.

The findings above can help counties and regions to plan, seek and allocate resources for motorized and non-motorized trail recreation. However, it must be noted that the data for this plan was collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is likely to have impacted the incidence of recreation participation on trails within the state. The information from this and the statewide plan may then be used as a baseline for future studies to identify impacts of COVID-19 on trail-related recreation.





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