



ARIZONA

STATE PARKS & TRAILS

ARIZONA TRAILS 2020

LA PAZ and MOHAVE COUNTY REPORT





Arizona Trails Plan 2020

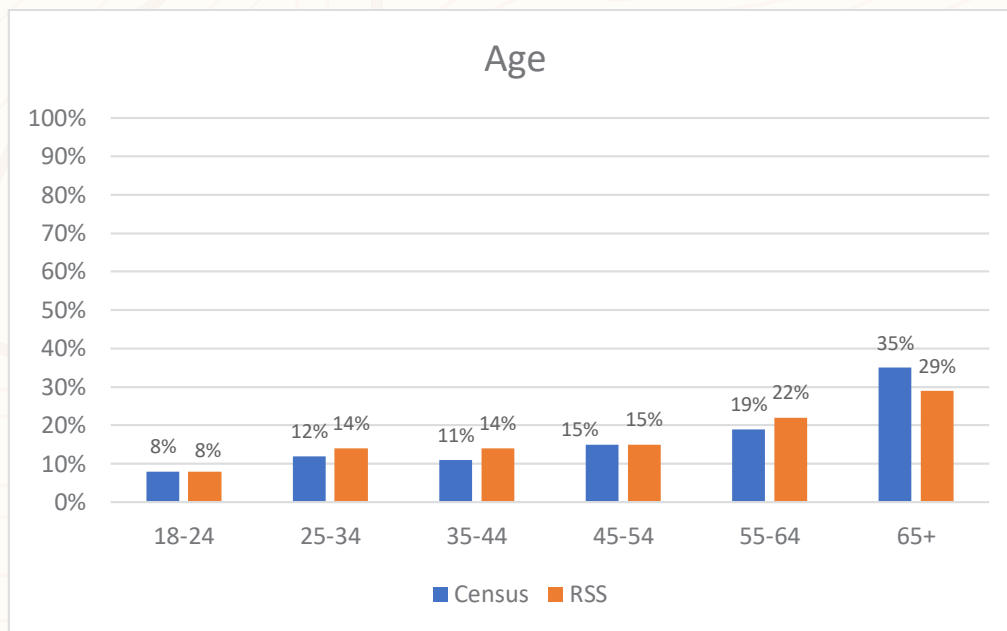
La Paz and Mohave County Report

Introduction:

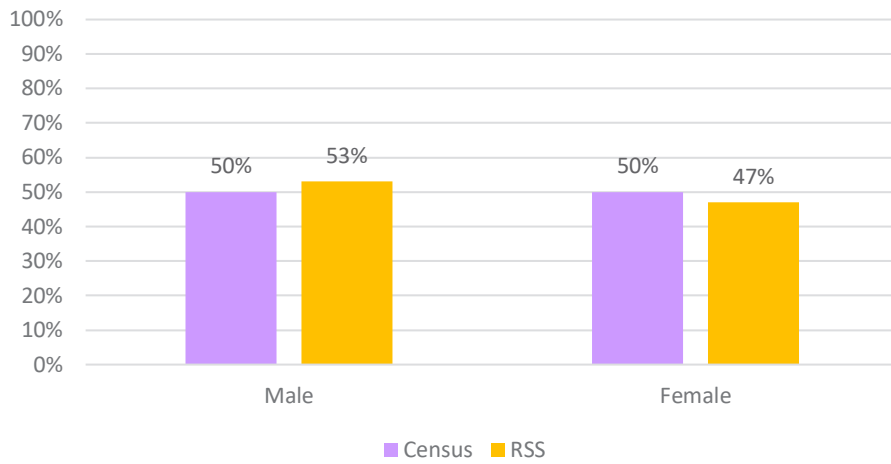
Arizona State Parks and Trails, in partnership with Partners in Brainstorm, conducted a statewide random sample survey (RSS) that is representative of the Arizona population at the state and county or region levels. This survey informs the Arizona Trails 2020 Plan, which is completed every five years 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 county or region level for La Paz and Mohave 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:

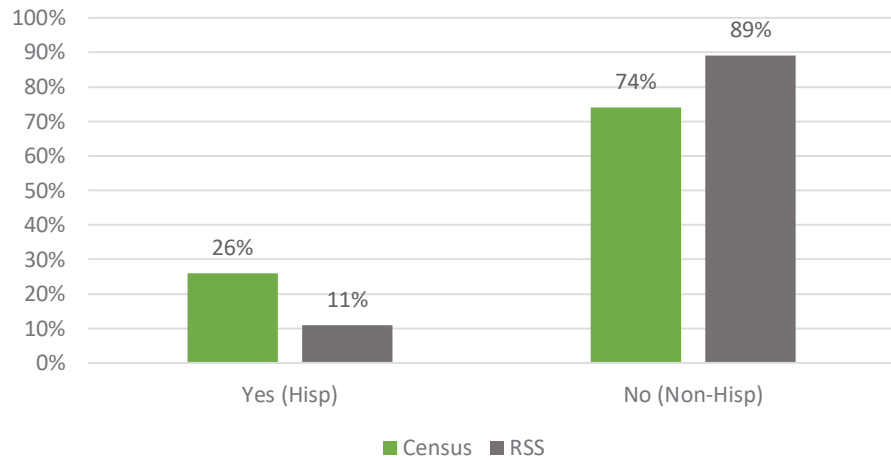
The figures below illustrate a comparison of the 2018 La Paz and Mohave counties' Census data estimates with the demographic profile of 396 La Paz/Mohave County RSS respondents (including motorized, non-motorized and non-users). Data were weighted on two demographic variables: gender and Hispanic origin to better represent the proportion of these groups relative to state and county populations.



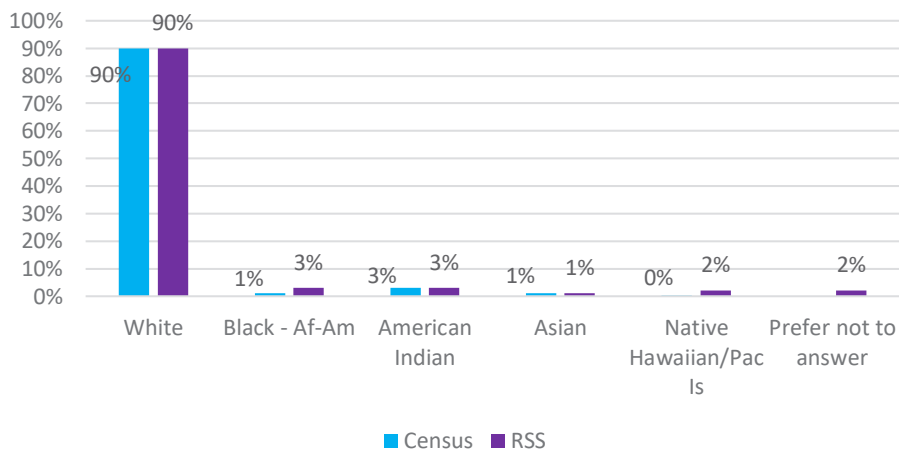
Gender



Hispanic or Latino Origin

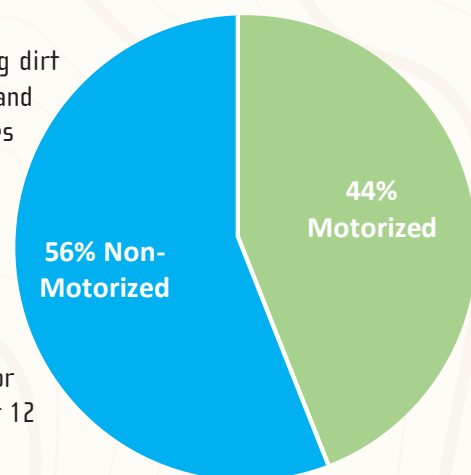


Race



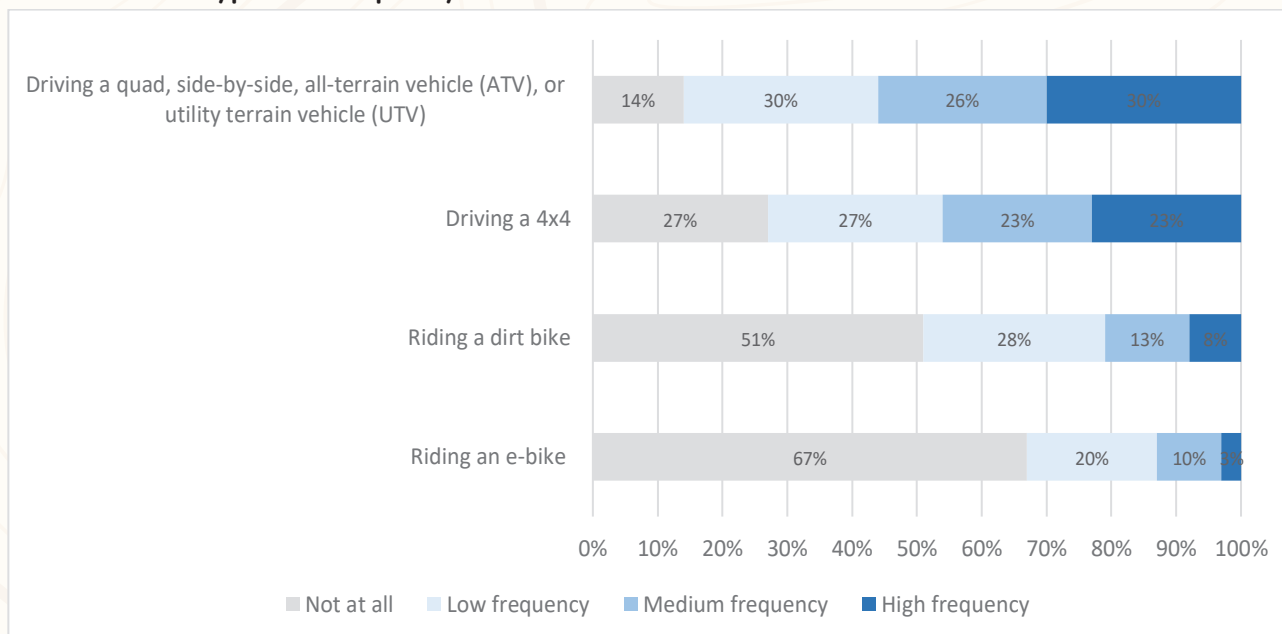
La Paz and Mohave County User Profile:

The figures in this report are separated by motorized (such as driving ATVs, 4x4s, riding dirt bikes and/or e-bikes) and non-motorized (such as hiking, mountain biking, riding horses and kayaking) 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 La Paz and Mohave counties, nearly six out of ten residents (59%) reported participating in either motorized or non-motorized trail activities within the last 12 months. Of these trail users, more than two out of five (44%) reported engaging in motorized activities, and more than one-half (56%) participated in non-motorized activities. Survey respondents categorized as non-users either had never used trails for motorized or non-motorized activities in Arizona (23% of sample) or had not used trails within the last 12 months (19%).



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.

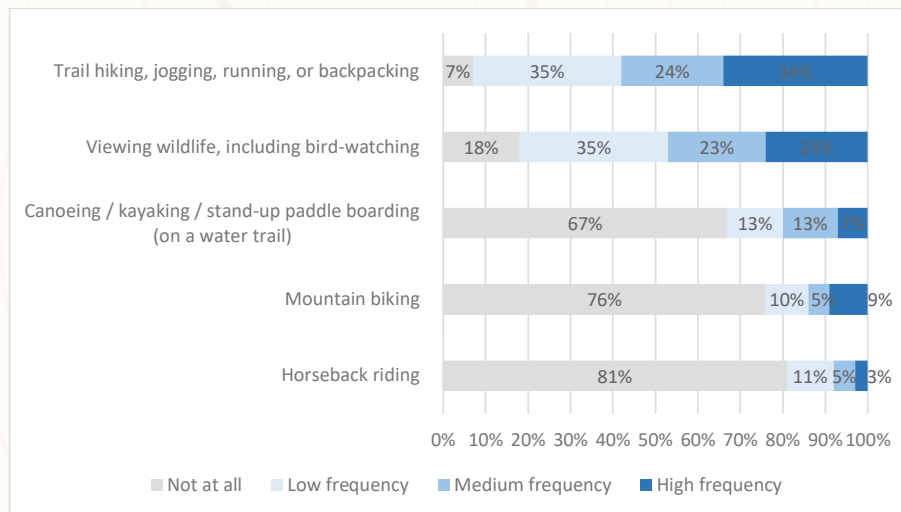
Motorized Use Type and Frequency



“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



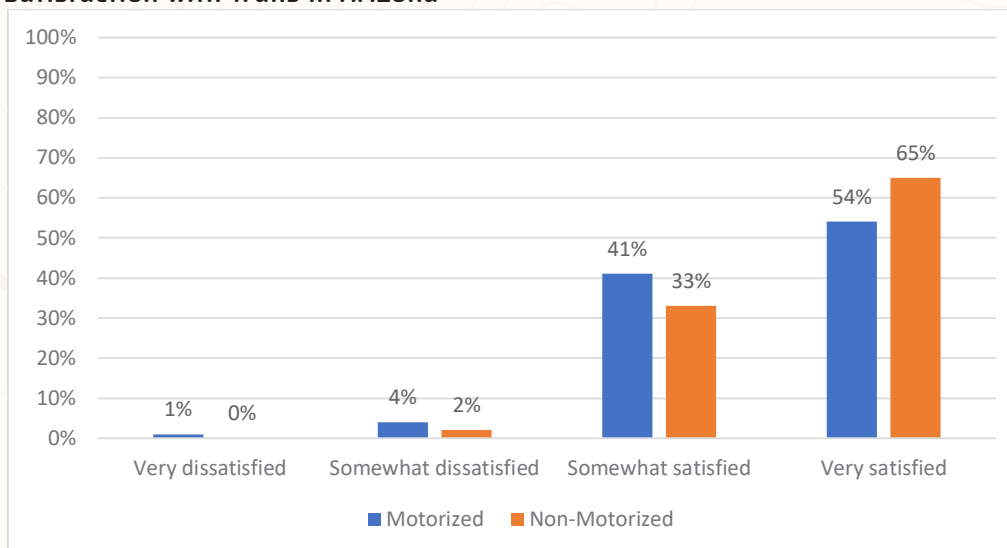
"During the past 12 months, how often have you used trails on public or private lands in Arizona for the following types of non-motorized recreational activities?"

The figures above are the La Paz and Mohave 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 86% of motorized users participating in one or more of these activities at least once during the past year, while more than eight out of 10 reported driving a 4x4 on trails. Almost one-half of motorized trail users rode a dirt bike and riding an e-bike was the least cited activity in the motorized category, but one-third of respondents who participated in motorized trail recreation (33%) 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 7% of non-motorized users not participating in one of these activities in the past year. Viewing wildlife is another popular non-motorized activity, with more than eight out of ten (82%) non-motorized trail users participating. Further, one-third of non-motorized trail users (33%) reported canoeing, kayaking or using a stand-up paddle board, less than one-quarter (24%) reported mountain biking and nearly two out of 10 (19%) users engaged in equestrian activities on trails.

Satisfaction with Trails in Arizona

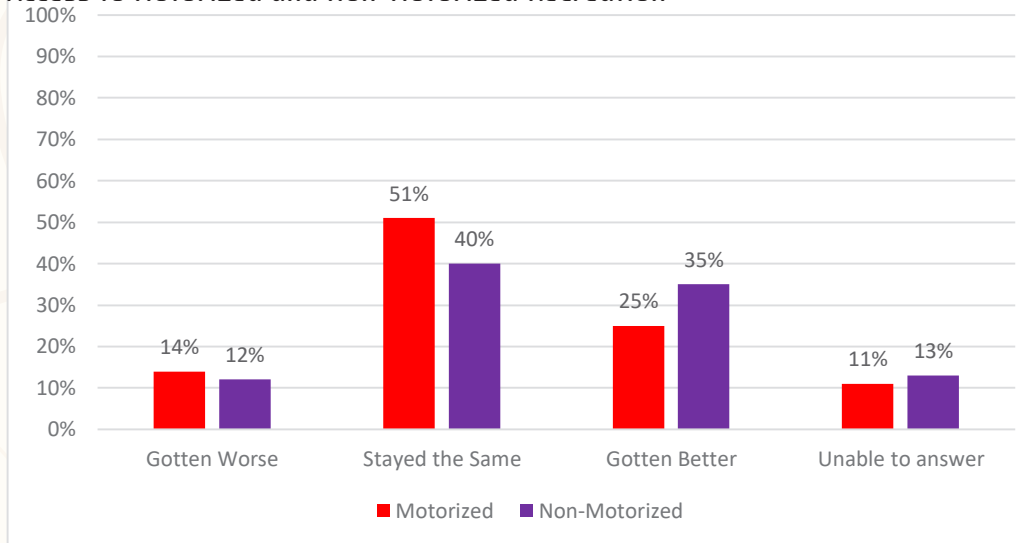


"Overall, how satisfied are you with (motorized/non-motorized) trails in Arizona?"



The figure on the previous page depicts La Paz and Mohave counties' motorized and non-motorized trail users' satisfaction with the trails they use statewide. Nearly all users of both types are either somewhat satisfied or very satisfied (95% of motorized and 98% of non-motorized).

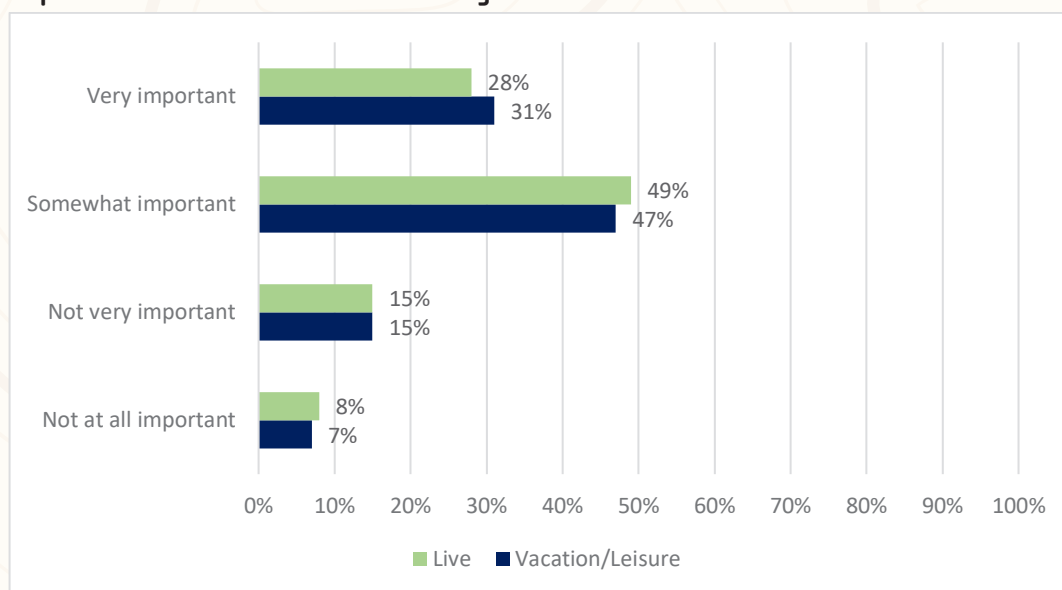
Access to Motorized and Non-Motorized Recreation



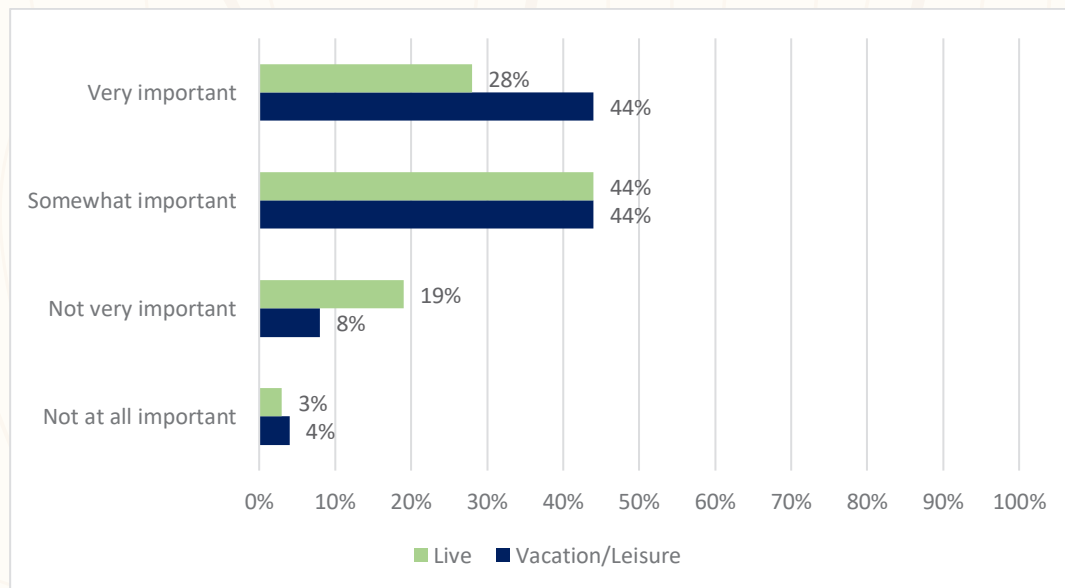
"In the past 5 years, has access to (non-motorized/motorized) recreation gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse?"

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, only 2% more motorized users perceive declining access to trails than non-motorized users, but at least a quarter of each group thought that access has improved, while a majority of users of both types of trails reported that access to trails has stayed the same.

Importance of Trails in Leisure/Living Destinations - Motorized



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



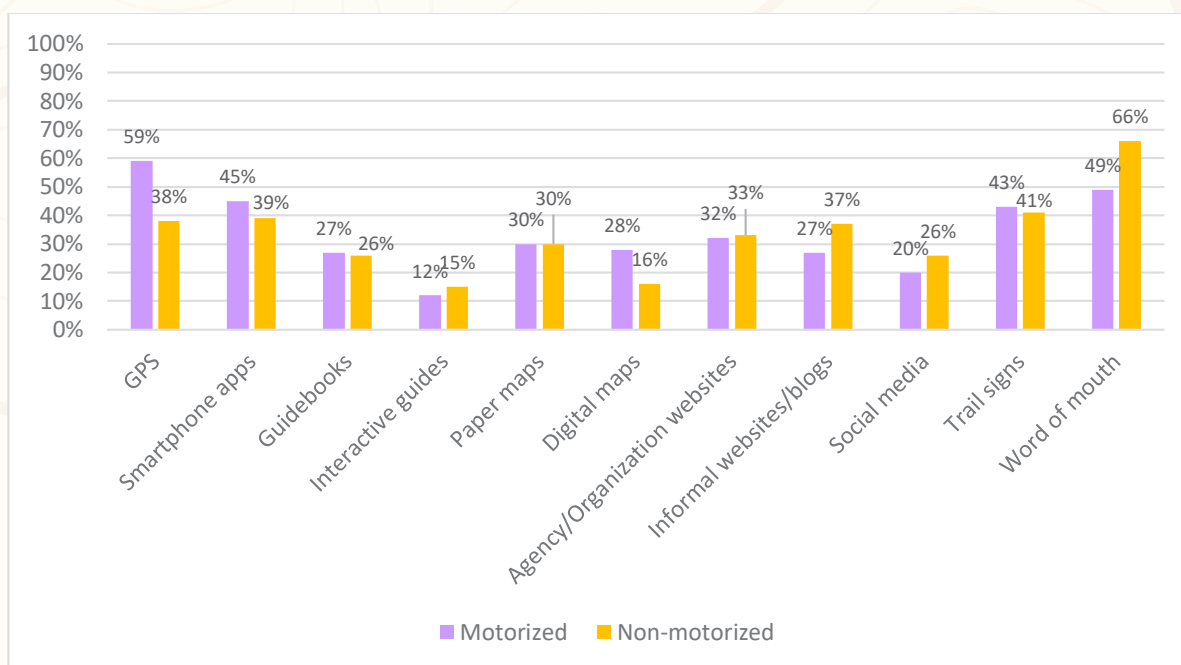
Navy Blue: "How important is it to have trails nearby when deciding where to live in AZ?"

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

The figures above depict all of the La Paz and Mohave counties' users' (both motorized and non-motorized) views on the importance of trails when deciding on a place to live or travel to for leisure in Arizona. The data shows that trails are an important factor in making these decisions because approximately three-quarters (77% of motorized users and 72% of non-motorized users) find trails either somewhat or very important when deciding where to live. For motorized users, 78% of this group and 88% 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.

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How Trail Users Find Trails



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

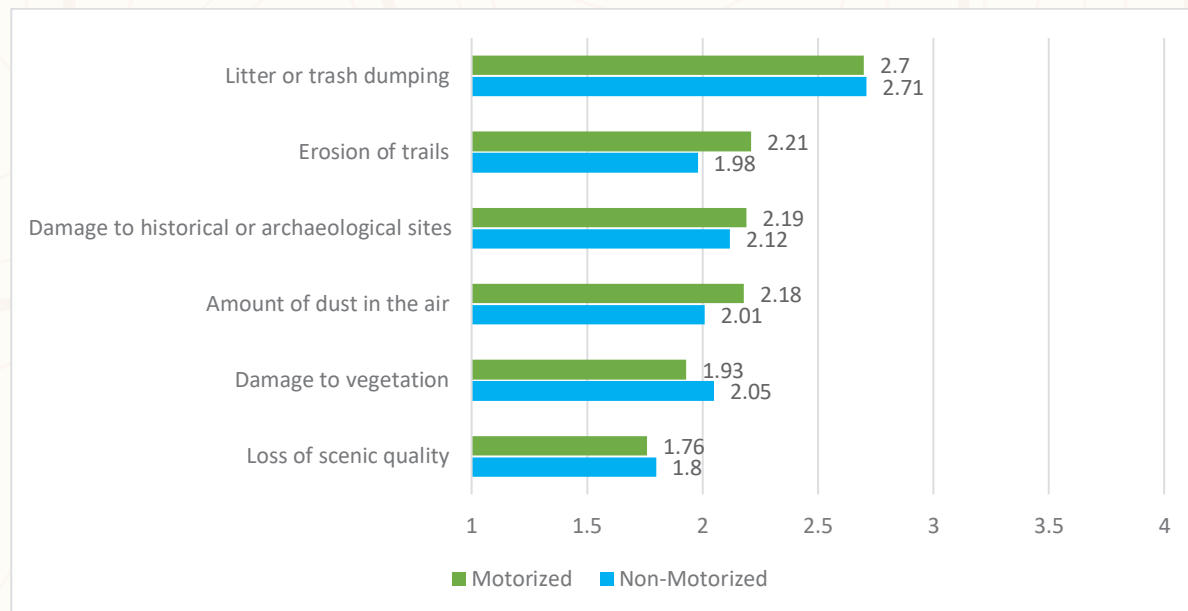


As seen above, both motorized and non-motorized users use a host of tools to find and use trails. Motorized users in the La Paz and Mohave region most often use GPS (59%), followed by other popular tools, word of mouth (49%) and smartphone apps (45%). Two-thirds of non-motorized users surveyed rely on word of mouth (66%) and other popular tools a little less such as trail signs (41%) and smartphone apps (39%). 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 La Paz/Mohave County region's 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

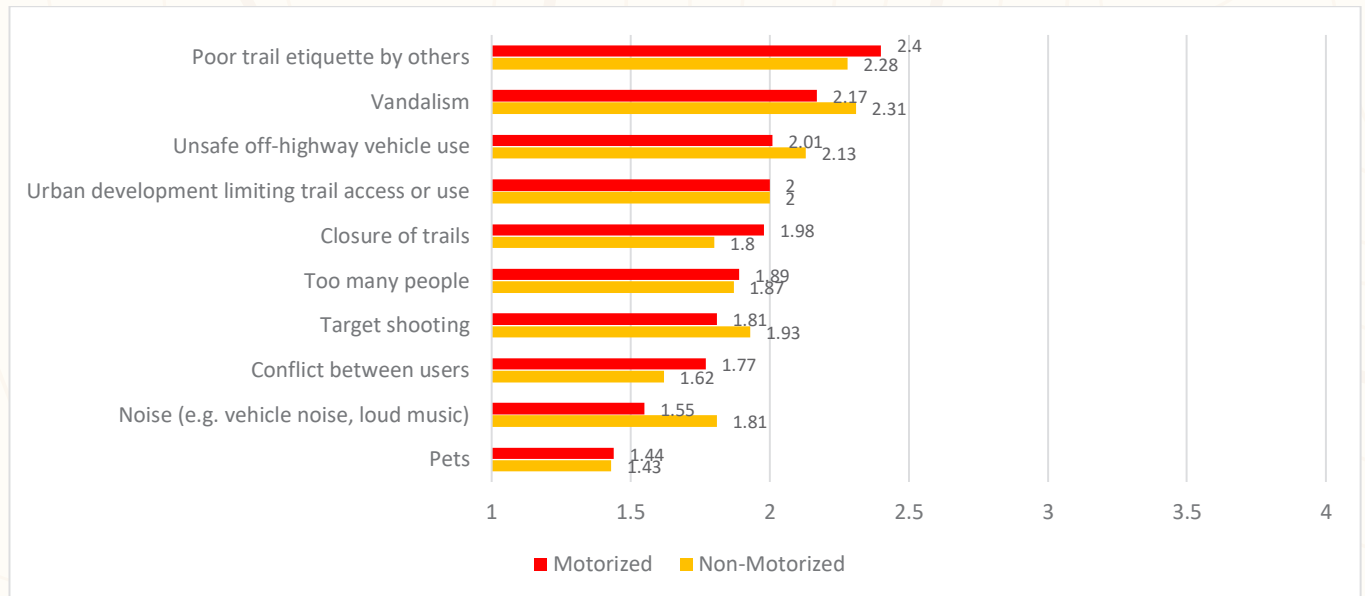


"Thinking about possible environmental and cultural conditions that might negatively affect your trail experience, how much of a problem is each of the following on the Arizona trails you use most for recreation activities?"

As seen above, the environmental concerns of both non-motorized and motorized trail users are very similar. Mean ratings indicate that the number one concern for both groups is litter/trash dumping. After this, mean ratings differ with damage to historical or archaeological sites claims the second highest mean for non-motorized users and erosion of trails claims this place for motorized users. Third highest mean for motorized users is damage to historical and archaeological sites, while damage vegetation has the third-highest mean rating for non-motorized users



Social Concerns of Trail Users

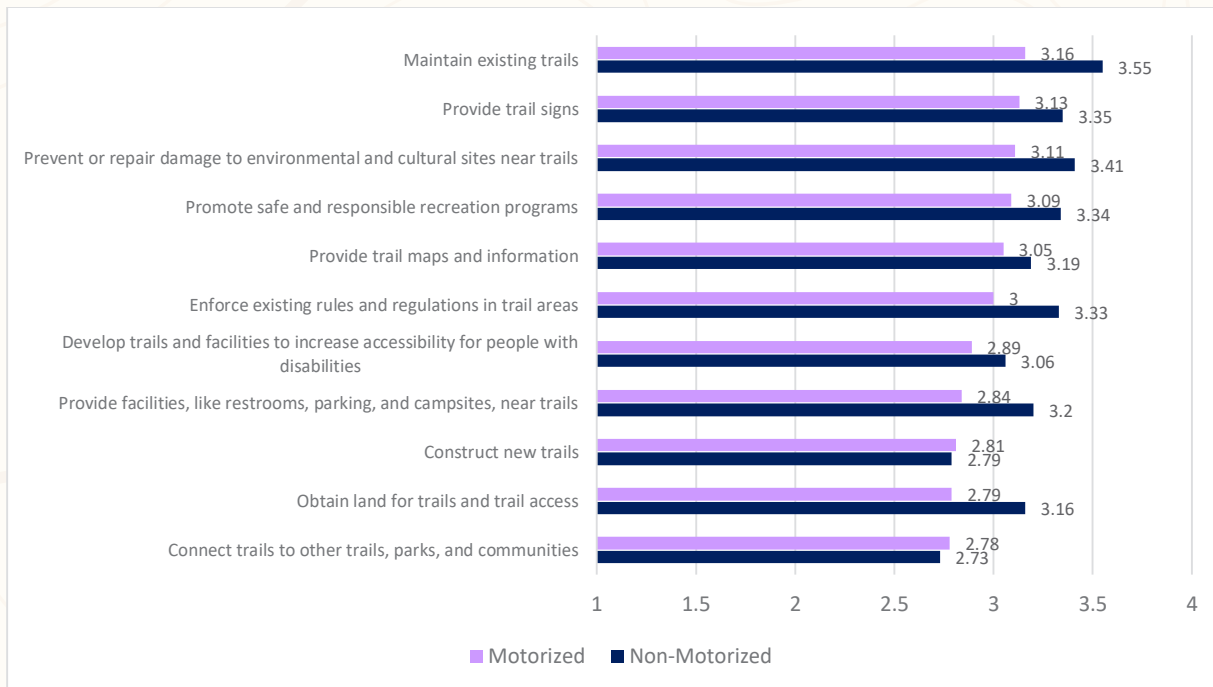


“Thinking about possible social conditions that might negatively affect your trail experience, how much of a problem is each of the following on the Arizona trails you use most for recreation activities?”

The above figure shows the mean rankings of social issues on trails by motorized and non-motorized users. Mean ratings indicate that motorized and non-motorized users share the top three concerns, but not necessarily in the same order. Non-motorized users' top social concern is vandalism while motorized users' top concern is poor trail etiquette by others. Both groups mean ratings indicate that the other group's top concern is their second highest concern. Unsafe off-highway vehicle use had the third highest mean for non-motorized users and motorized users alike.



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 almost all higher than the motorized group, indicating that non-motorized users attribute a higher level of importance to the issues above than motorized users, on average. While maintain existing trails is each group's top management priority mean, the groups differ after that. They do have the same second and third highest means, though in a different order. For non-motorized users, prevent or repair damage to environmental or cultural sites near trails is the second highest and provide trail signs is the third highest, and for motorized it is the opposite.

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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