



ARIZONA

STATE PARKS & TRAILS





Arizona Trails Plan 2020

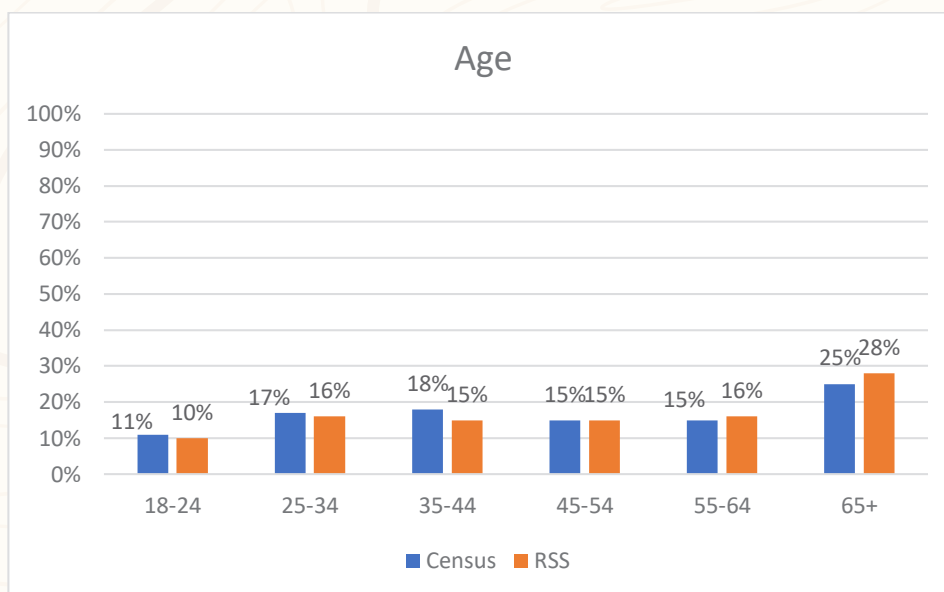
Pinal County Report

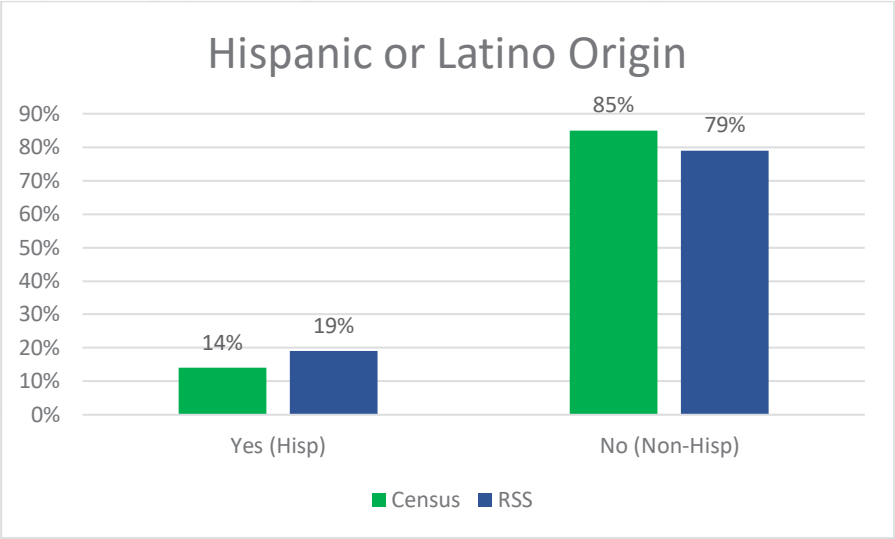
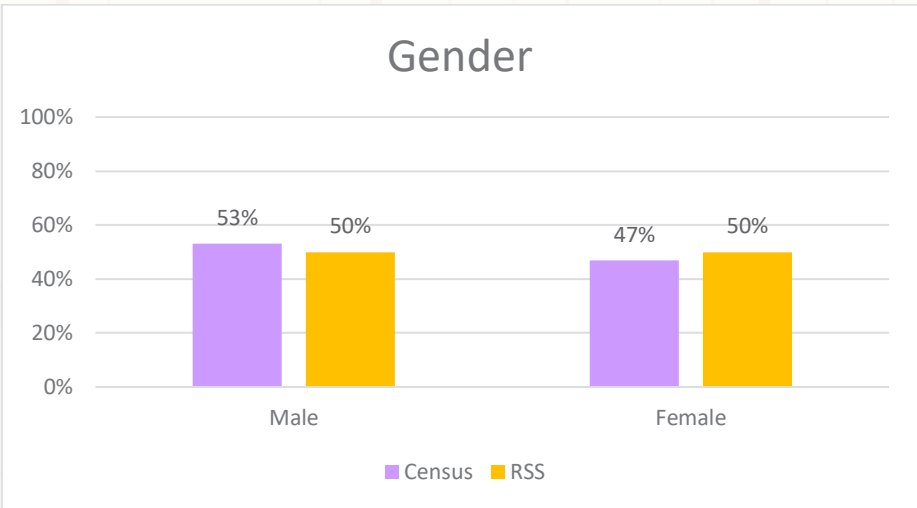
Introduction:

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 county or region level for Pinal County. 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.

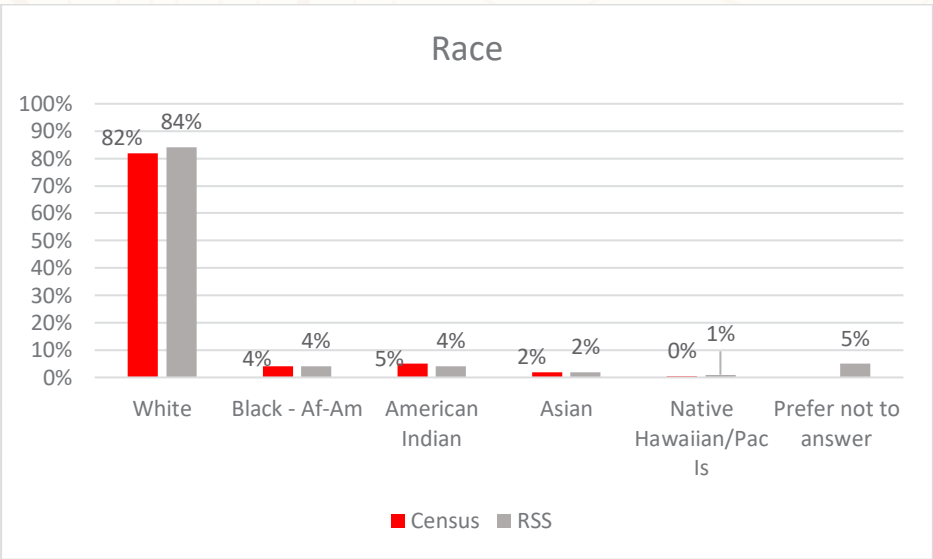
Demographics:

The figures below illustrate a comparison of the 2018 Pinal County Census data estimates with the demographic profile of 438 Pinal 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.





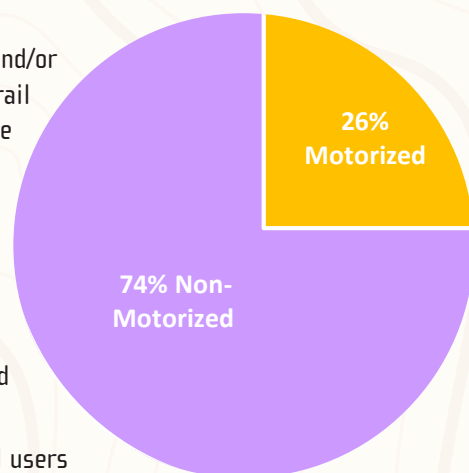
Note: Prefer not to answer responses not included in graph above (1-2%).



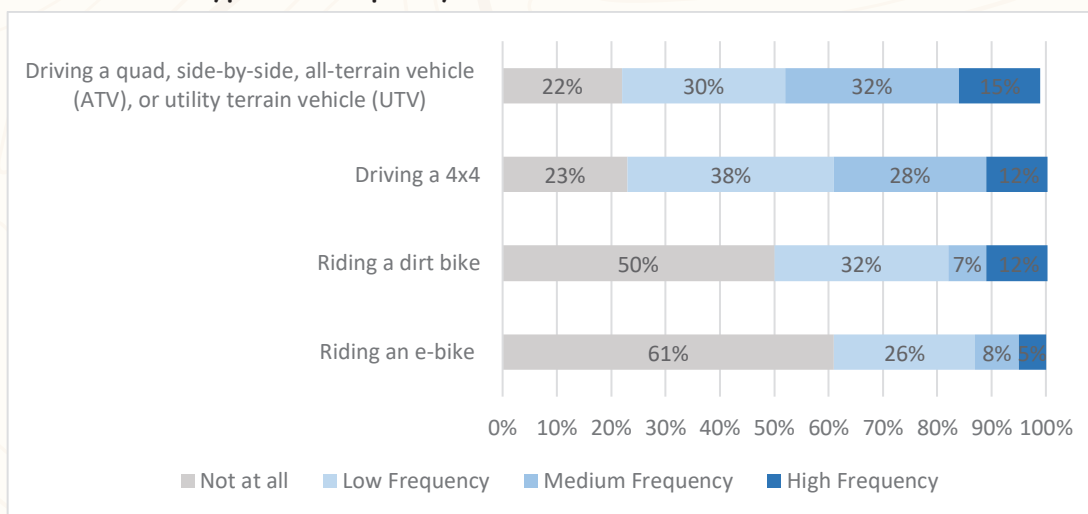
Pinal County User Profile:

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, kayakers, etc.) 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 Pinal County, more than one-half (54%) of residents reported participating in either motorized or non-motorized trail activities within the last 12 months. More than one-quarter of trail users (26%) had participated in motorized activities on trails, while 74% had engaged 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 (23%).

Please note that comparisons to the state plan must consider that county 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.



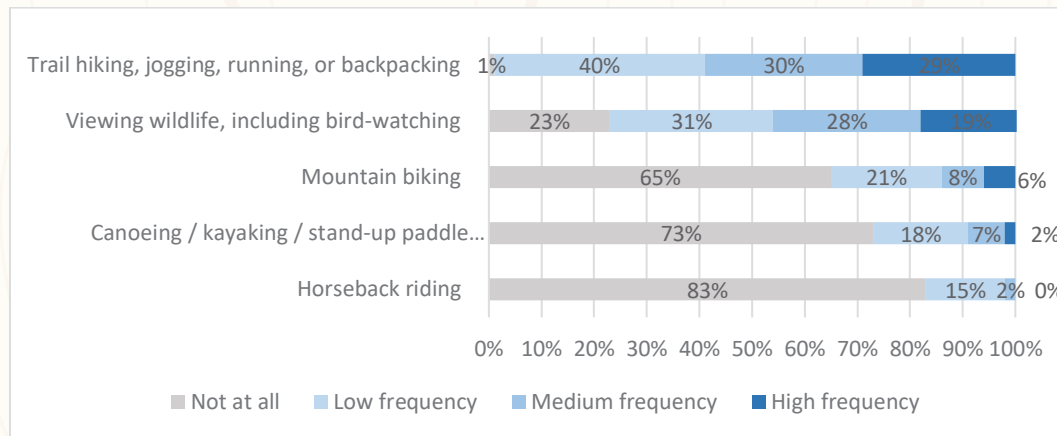
Motorized Use Type and Frequency



“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



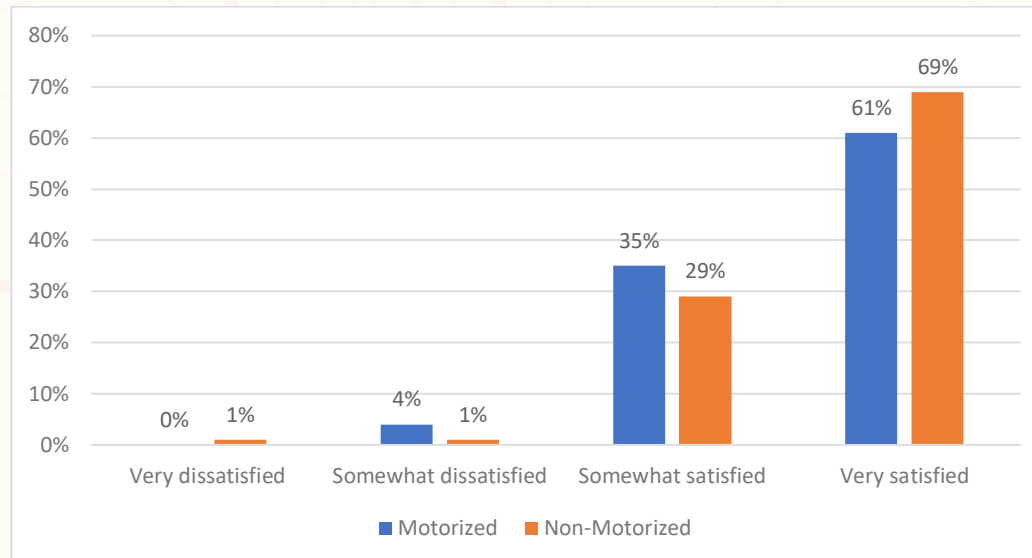
"During the past 12 months, how often have you used trails on public or private lands in Arizona for the following types of non-motorized recreational activities?"

The figures above are Pinal County's 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 and driving a 4x4 were the most popular motorized activities (only differing by 1% of user participation) in Pinal County within the 12 months prior to the survey. The former is the more popular and has the highest (15% of users) amount of "high frequency" users. Riding an e-bike was the least cited use type in the motorized category, but 39% of motorized users still used an e-bike at least once in the last year. This type of recreation is growing, so this number would be expected to 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 users not participating in one of them. Viewing wildlife is another popular non-motorized activity with 77% of users participating at least once a year, approximately 17% of respondents engaged in equestrian activities on trails and 27% in water trail use.

Satisfaction with Trails in Arizona

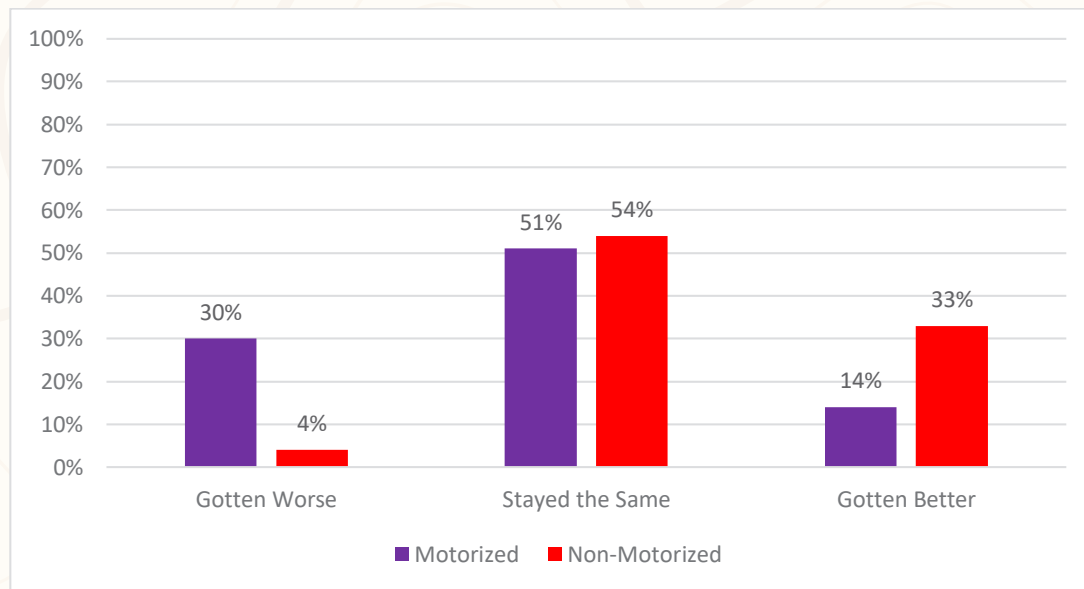


"In the past 5 years, has access to (non-motorized/ motorized) recreation gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse?"



The figure on the previous page depicts Pinal County's motorized and non-motorized trail users' satisfaction with the trails they use statewide (not just in Pinal County). Nearly all users of both types are either somewhat satisfied or very satisfied (96% of motorized and 98% of non-motorized).

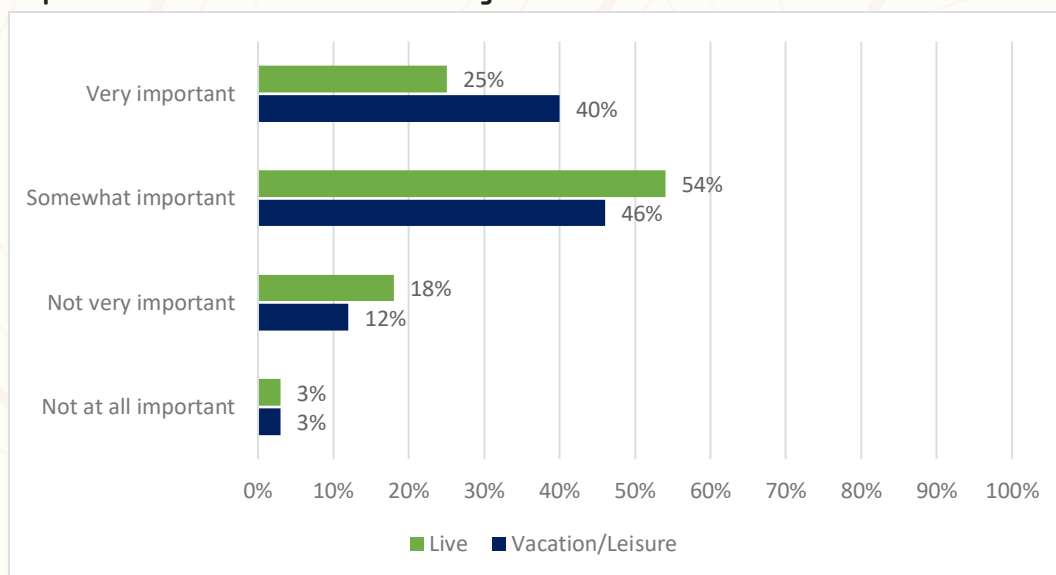
Access to Motorized and Non-Motorized Recreation



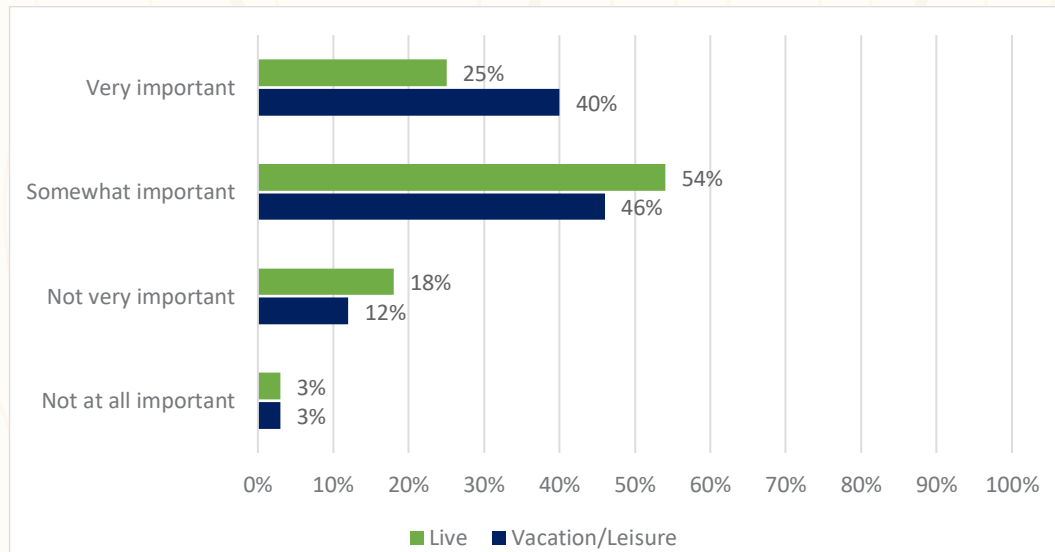
"Overall, how satisfied are you with (motorized/non-motorized) trails in Arizona?"

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 Pinal County. As seen above, 26% more motorized users perceive declining access to trails than non-motorized users, but nearly two-thirds or more of each group thought access stayed the same or improved. It is interesting to note that one-third (33%) of non-motorized users reported that trail access improved, whereas nearly three in 10 (30%) motorized users stated that trail access has gotten worse.

Importance of Trails in Leisure/Living Destinations - Motorized



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



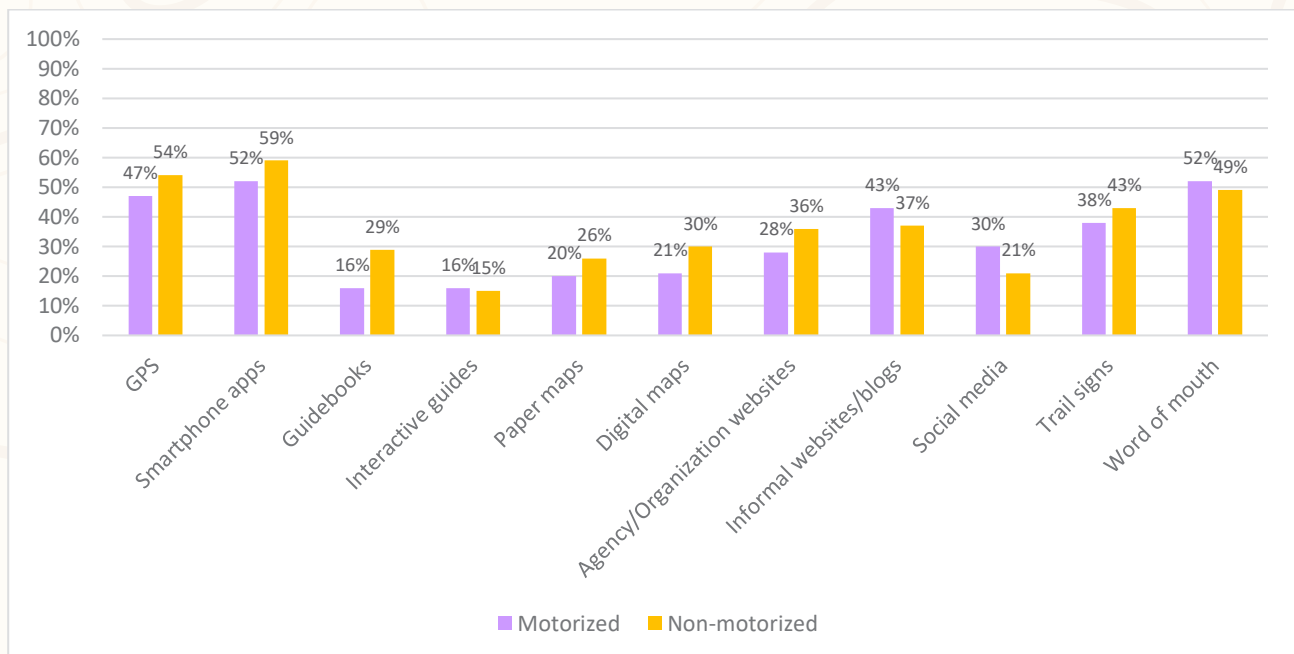
Navy Blue: "How important is it to have trails nearby when deciding where to live in AZ?"

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 Pinal County's 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 78% of motorized and non-motorized users find trails either very or somewhat important in deciding on where to live. Two out of five (40%) motorized and non-motorized users find trails "very important" in deciding where to spend vacation/leisure time. 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 nearby.

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How Trail Users Find Trails



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

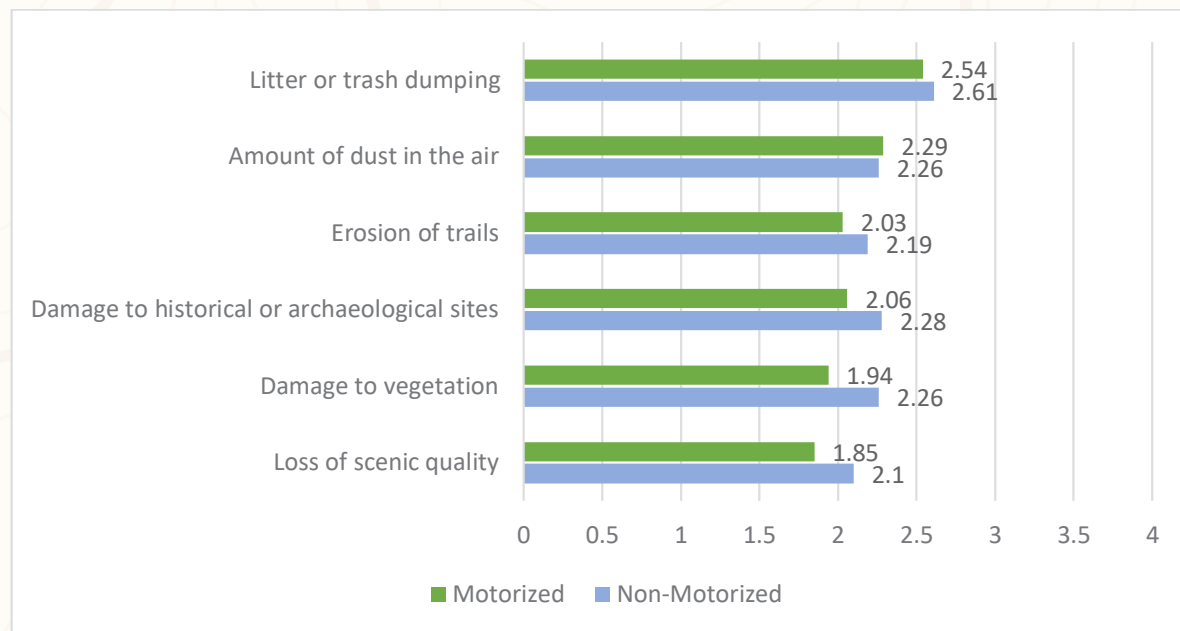


As seen on the previous page, both motorized and non-motorized users employ a host of tools to find and use trails. More than one-half (52%) of motorized users in Pinal County use smartphone apps and word of mouth. GPS is also popular with motorized users (47%). Nearly three out of five (59%) of non-motorized users rely on smartphone apps and other popular tools, such as GPS (54%), word of mouth (49%) and trail signs (43%). 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 Pinal County'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 social and environmental 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) importance to 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 county.

Environmental Concerns of Trail Users

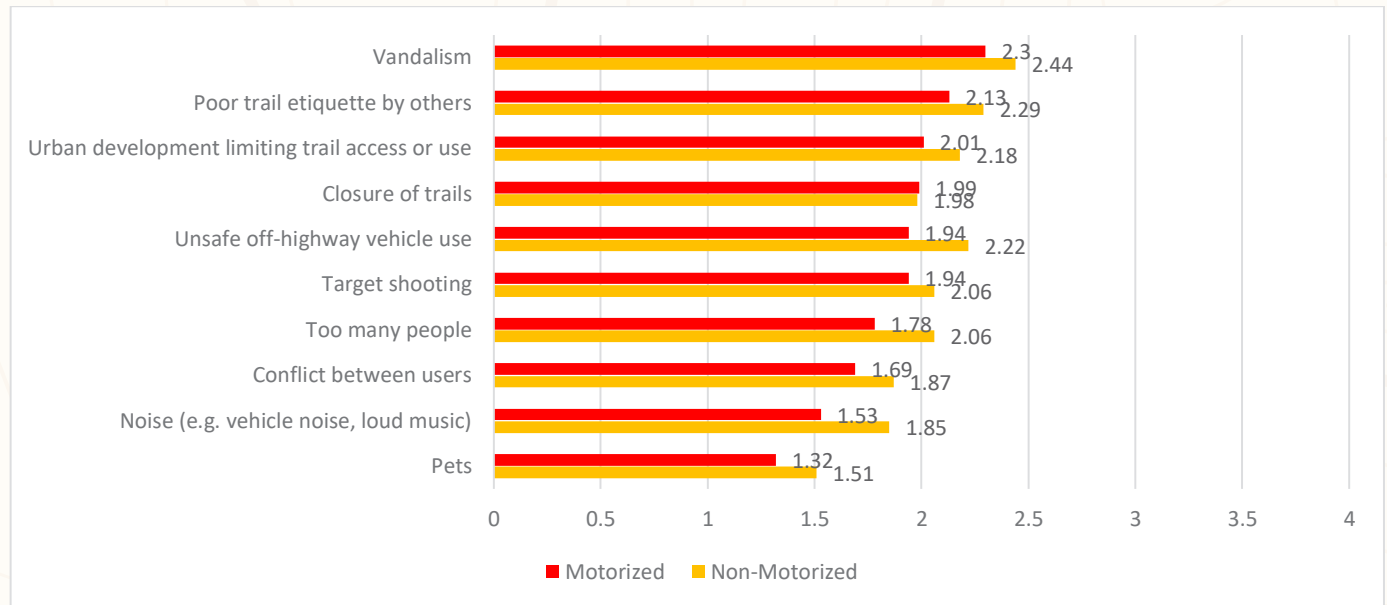


"Thinking about possible environmental and cultural conditions that might negatively affect your trail experience, how much of a problem is each of the following on the Arizona trails you use most for recreation activities?"

As seen above, the environmental concerns of both non-motorized and motorized trail users are similar for some of the rated issues. Mean ratings indicate that the number one concern for both groups is litter/trash dumping. The amount of dust in the air was also a concern for both groups (second-highest mean for motorized users, tie for third-highest mean for non-motorized users). However non-motorized users placed a higher importance on damage to historical or archaeological sites and vegetation (second and tie for third highest mean ratings respectively), while motorized users indicated that erosion of trails was one of their top 3 concerns. These concerns can be due to the differing nature of the type of recreation the user participates in. It is also important to note that non-motorized users had higher means on nearly every environmental concern (none of the means were below 2), indicating that this group perceives these issues to be more of a problem, on average than motorized users.



Social Concerns of Trail Users

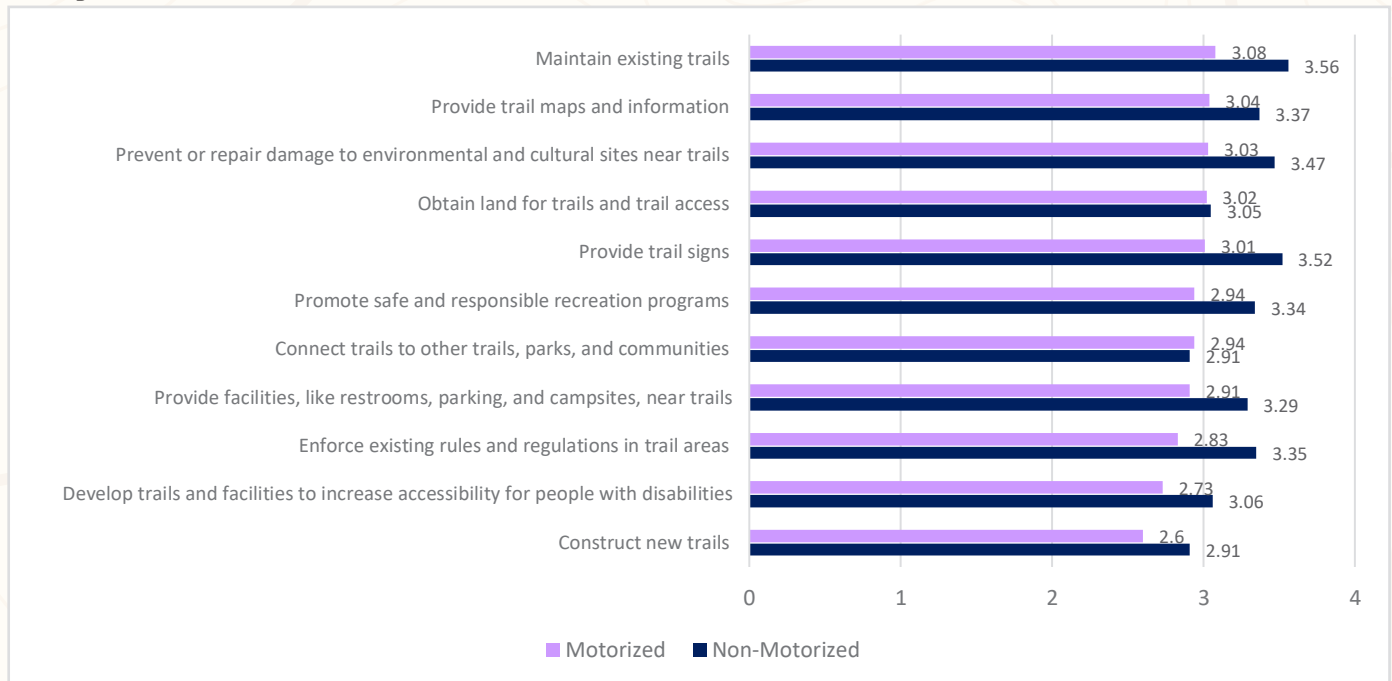


“Thinking about possible social conditions that might negatively affect your trail experience, how much of a problem is each of the following on the Arizona trails you use most for recreation activities?”

The above figure shows the mean rankings of social issues on trails by motorized and non-motorized users. An interesting finding related to these concerns, like the environmental concerns above, the means for non-motorized users are higher across all the issues than for motorized users, suggesting that the issues above received more responses at the top end of the scale (4=very important) than for motorized users. Both non-motorized and motorized users' highest mean among social concerns was vandalism. Both groups' second-highest mean rating concerned poor trail etiquette by others. However, user groups diverge on the third-highest mean rating – for non-motorized users unsafe off-highway vehicle use is one of the top three social concerns whereas for motorized users, urban development limiting trail access and use is a more pressing concern.



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. Once again, non-motorized users' mean ratings are all higher than the motorized group which is the same pattern of social and environmental concerns. The first and third highest mean ratings are the same across user groups, but groups differ on the issue with the second highest mean rating. Maintain existing trails is each group's top management priority. Providing trail signs has the second highest mean rating for non-motorized users' while providing trail maps and information has the second highest mean rating for motorized users. Although the method for providing information differs, both user types place importance on making more trail-related information available. Finally, preventing or repairing damage to environmental/cultural sites near trails is the third highest mean rating for both motorized and non-motorized users.

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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