



ARIZONA

STATE PARKS & TRAILS





Arizona Trails Plan 2020

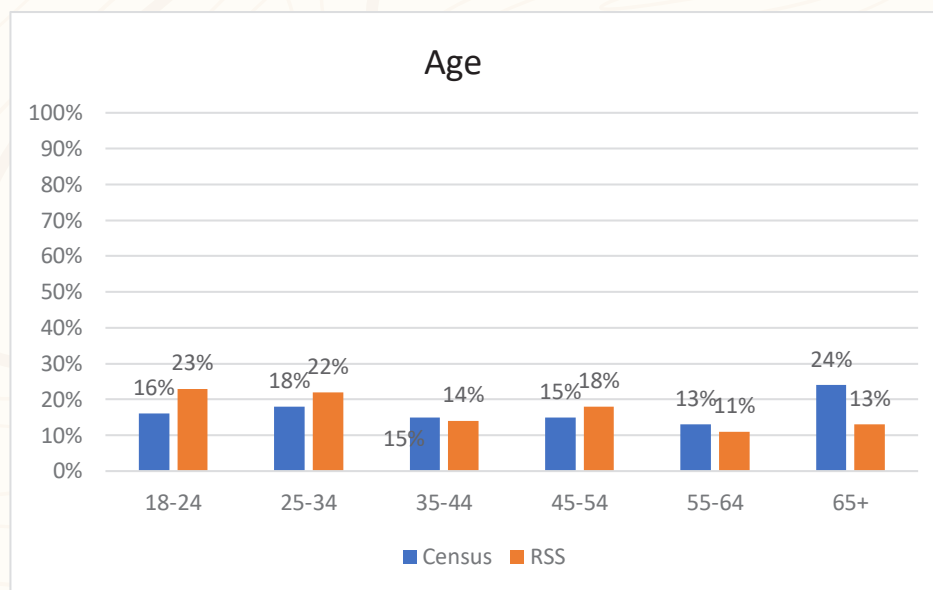
Yuma County Report

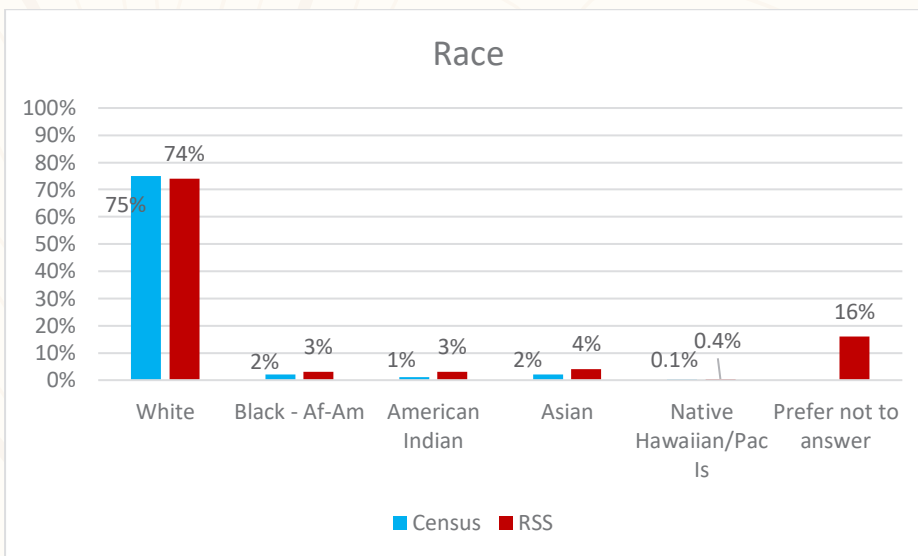
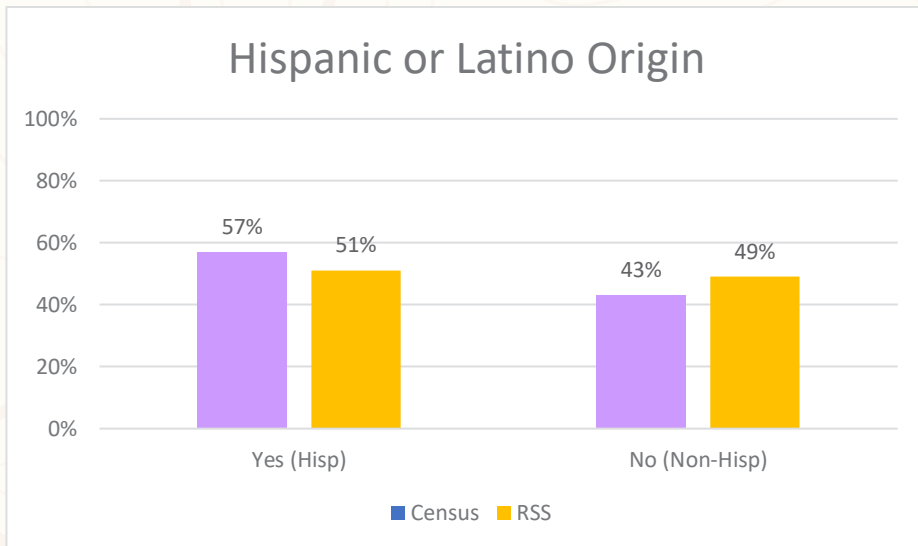
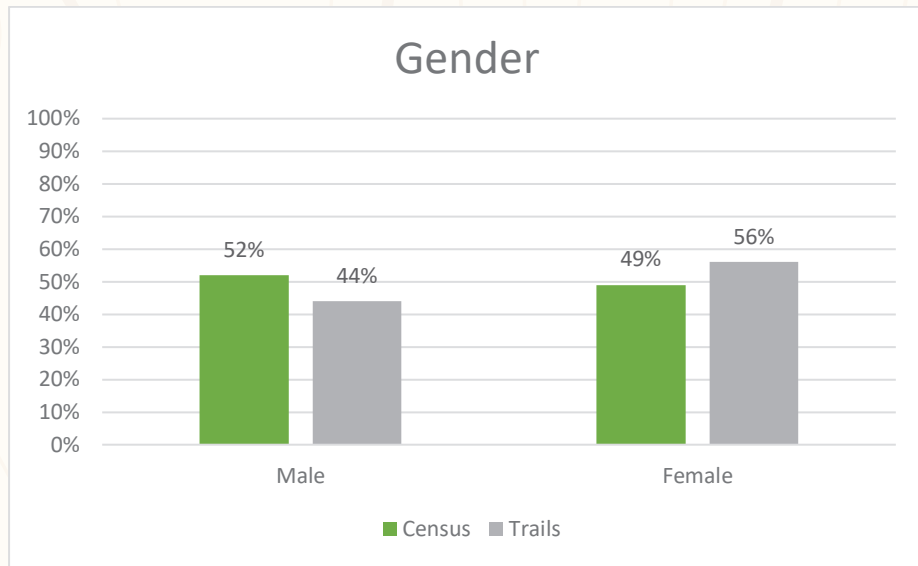
Introduction:

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 level for Yuma 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 Yuma County Census data estimates with the demographic profile of 411 Yuma 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.

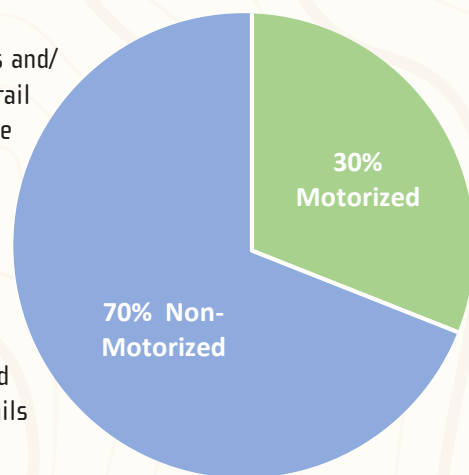




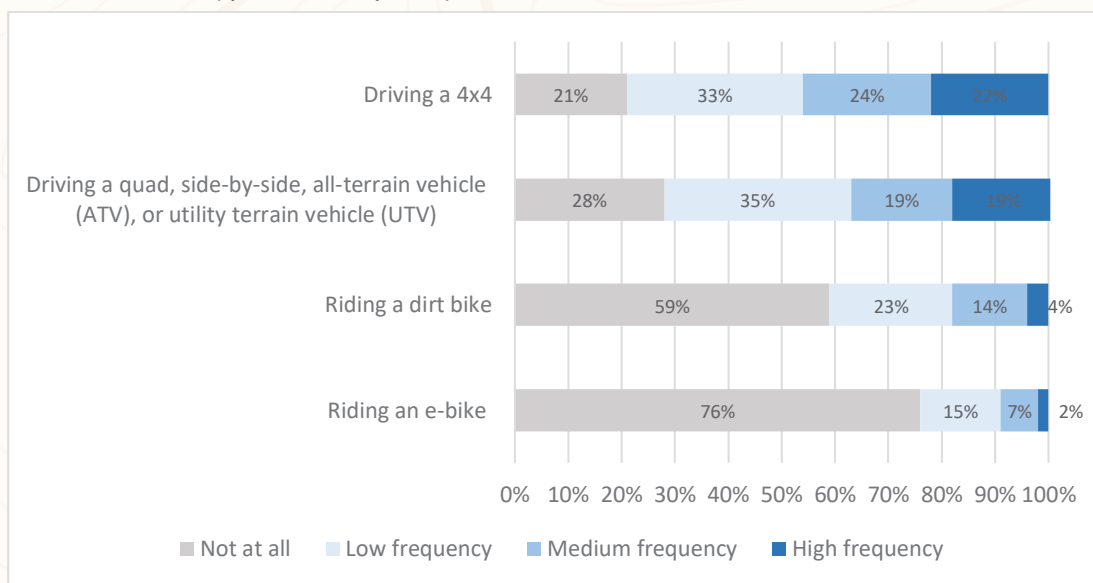
Yuma County User Profile:

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 RSS for Yuma County, three out of five (60%) survey respondents reported participating in either motorized or non-motorized trail activities within the last 12 months. Three in 10 of the trail using survey respondents (30%) reported engaging in motorized activities on trails within the last 12 months (30% of trail users) and 70% participated in non-motorized activities. Two out of five (40%) survey respondents were categorized as non-users. They 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 (17%).

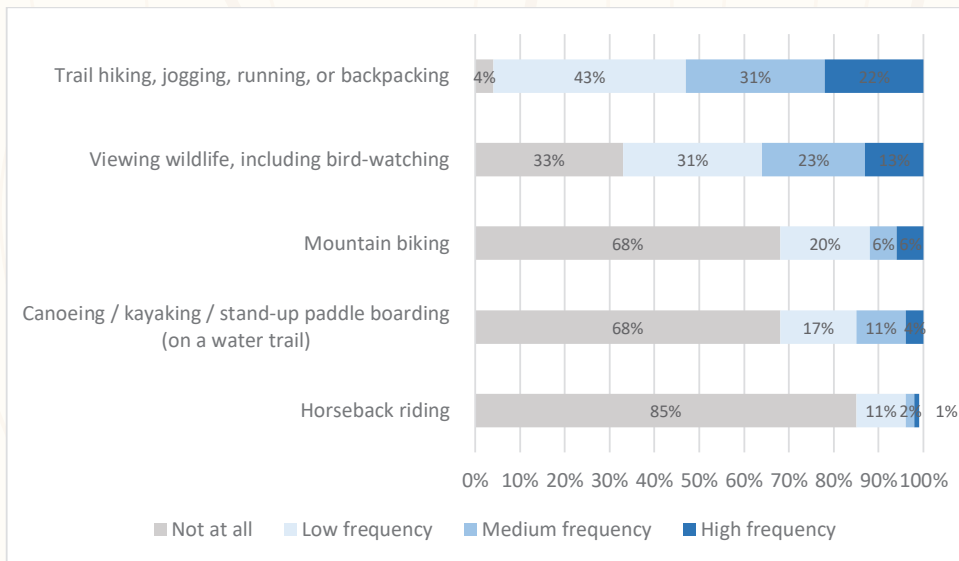
Please note that comparisons to the state plan must consider that county reports include all users (any respondent who spent any time within the last 12 months on motorized or non-motorized trail activities), whereas the state trails plan focuses on “core” users. “Core” respondents reported their trail 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



Non-Motorized Use Type and Frequency



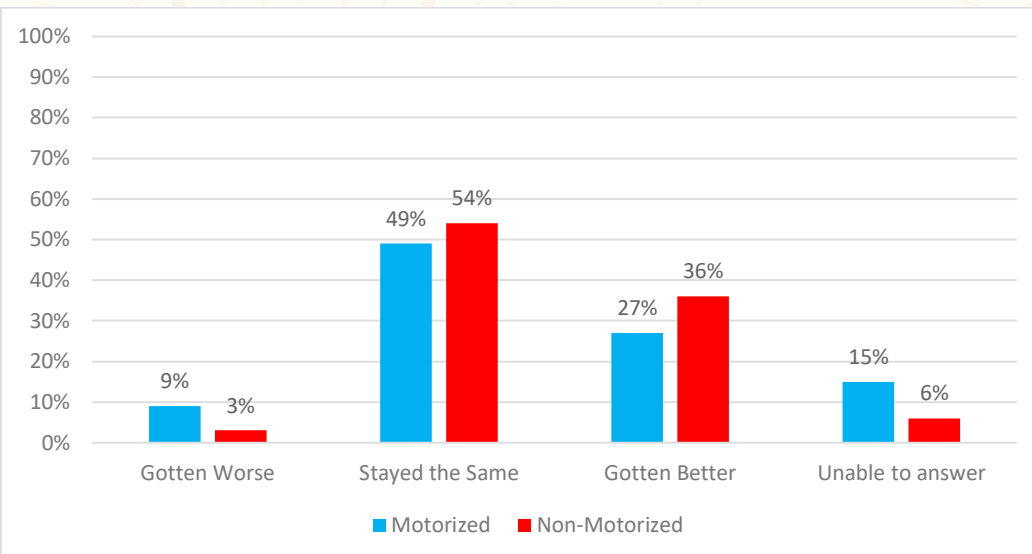
“During the past 12 months, how often have you used trails on public or private lands in Arizona for the following types of non-motorized recreational activities?”

The figures above are Yuma 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 4x4 was the most popular motorized activity with 79% of motorized users participating in this category at least once a year and 22% of use classified as high frequency. Riding an e-bike was the least cited use type in the motorized category, but 24% 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.

Trail hiking, jogging, running or backpacking are by far the most popular non-motorized activities with only 4% of non-motorized users not participating in one of them. Viewing wildlife is another popular non-motorized activity with two-thirds of non-motorized users (67%) participating at least once a year. Nearly one-third of respondents (32%) engaged in mountain biking or non-motorized activities on water trails, while 14% participated in equestrian activities at least once a year.

Access to Motorized and Non-motorized Recreation

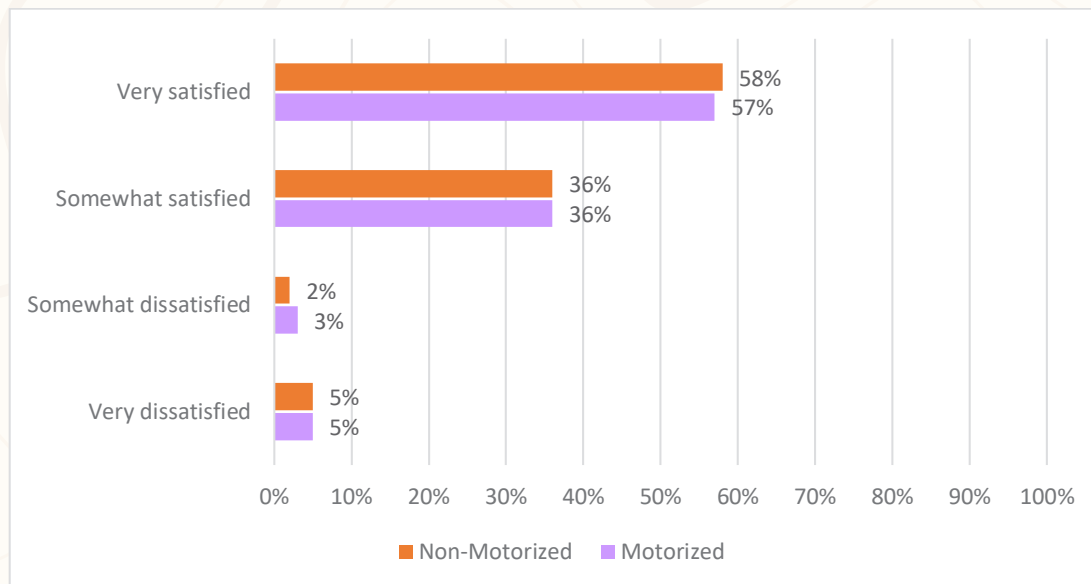


“In the past 5 years, has access to (non-motorized/ motorized) recreation gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse?”



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, not just trails in Yuma County. As seen above, 6% more motorized users perceive declining access to trails than non-motorized users, but 76% of motorized and 90% of non-motorized believed that access has either stayed the same or gotten better in the last five years.

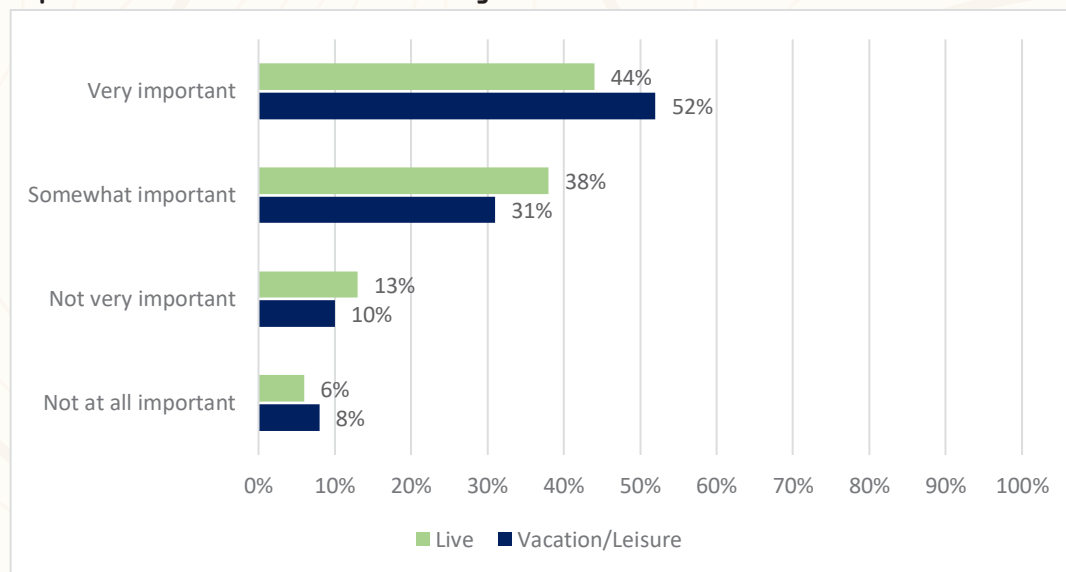
Satisfaction with Trails in Arizona



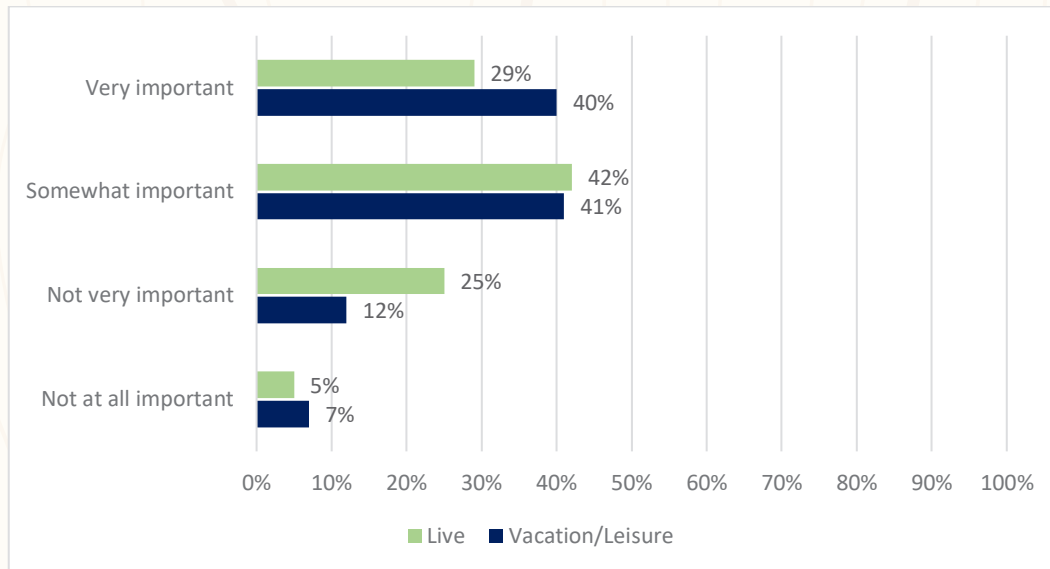
"Overall, how satisfied are you with (motorized/non-motorized) trails in Arizona?"

The figure above depicts Yuma County's motorized and non-motorized trail users' satisfaction with the trails they use statewide. It is interesting to note that survey respondents from Yuma County who engage in motorized activities rate their satisfaction very similarly to respondents who participated in non-motorized activities. Nearly all users of both types are either somewhat satisfied or very satisfied (94% of non-motorized and 93% of motorized).

Importance of Trails in Leisure/Living Destinations - Motorized



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



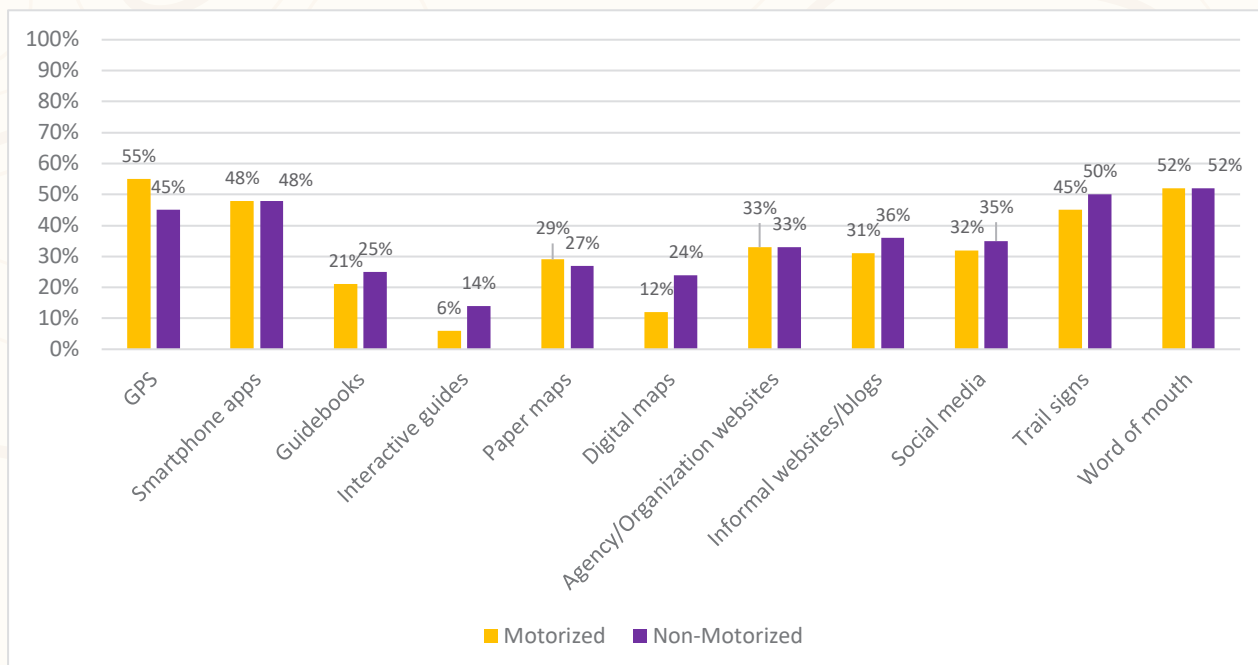
Navy Blue: "How important is it to have trails nearby when deciding where to live in AZ?"

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 Yuma 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. More motorized users than non-motorized users (82% and 71%, respectively) place higher importance (somewhat or very important) on living near trails but the groups are almost equal (83% versus 81%) when looking at the importance (somewhat or very important) of trails in vacation or leisure destinations. It is also interesting to note that more of both types of respondents rated having trails nearby for a vacation or leisure trip as very important, whereas having trails nearby to a residence was more likely to be considered somewhat important, especially for motorized users.

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How Trail Users Find Trails



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

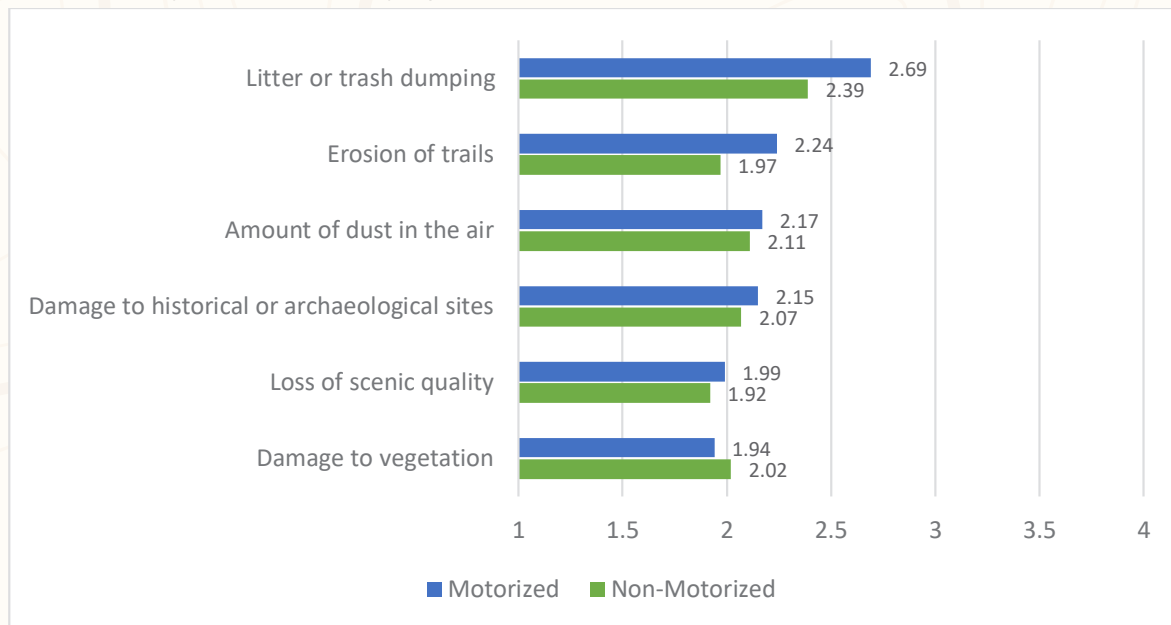


As seen on the previous page, both motorized and non-motorized users use a host of tools to find and use trails. Motorized users in Yuma County most often use GPS (55%), followed by word of mouth (52%) and smartphone apps (48%). Non-motorized users (54% of those surveyed) rely most heavily on word of mouth and other popular tools a little less such as trail signs (50%), smartphone apps (48%) and GPS (45%). 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 Yuma 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 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) means 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 county.

Environmental Concerns of Trail Users

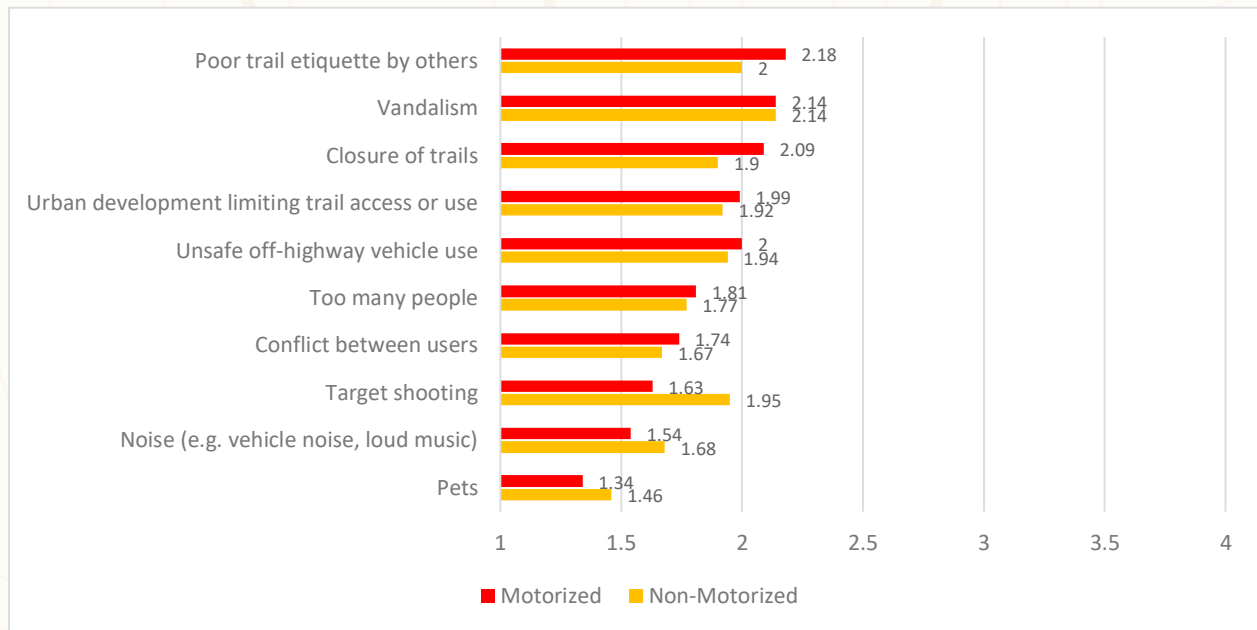


"Thinking about possible environmental and cultural conditions that might negatively affect your trail experience, how much of a problem is each of the following on the Arizona trails you use most for recreation activities?"

As seen above, the environmental concerns of both non-motorized and motorized trail users are somewhat similar. It is interesting to note that the only issue that has a mean above the mid-point of the scale is litter or trash dumping for motorized users ($M=2.69$). The other mean ratings are relatively low indicating that the issues above are not perceived as serious problems on average by Yuma trail users. Motorized and non-motorized trail users agree that the environmental issue with the highest mean rating is litter/trash dumping. Motorized users ranked almost every issue higher than non-motorized users suggesting that motorized users see many of these issues as more of a problem, on average than non-motorized users. While erosion of trails is motorized users' second-highest mean, the second highest mean for non-motorized users is amount of dust in the air. This is the third highest mean rating for motorized users. Damage to historical or archaeological sites was the third highest mean for non-motorized users.



Social Concerns of Trail Users

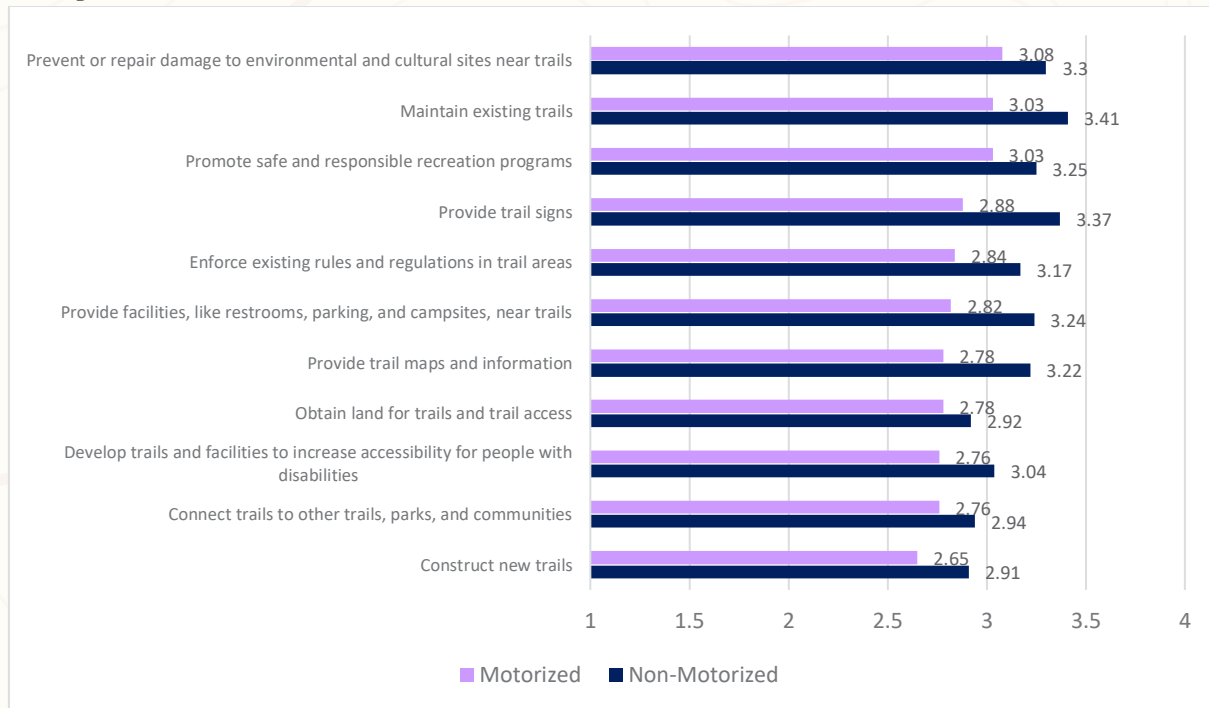


“Thinking about possible social conditions that might negatively affect your trail experience, how much of a problem is each of the following on the Arizona trails you use most for recreation activities?”

The above figure shows the rankings based on means of social issues on trails by motorized and non-motorized users. Again, mean ratings of the social issues above tend to be below the scale midpoint indicating that trail users in Yuma do not perceive the above issues as serious problems, on average. Motorized users' top social concern is poor trail etiquette by others while non-motorized users' top concern is vandalism. Both groups mean ratings indicate that the other group's top concern is their second highest concern. Target shooting is the third-highest concern for non-motorized users, while closure of trails is a the third highest concern for motorized users.



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 which indicates non-motorized users attribute more importance to the issues, on average than motorized users. Also, unlike the environmental and social issues in the previous graphs, all of the trail management issues in the graph above were rated above the mid-point of the scale, indicating that Yuma residents find all of the trail issues above to be relatively important. While maintain existing trails is non-motorized users' top management priority mean, preventing and repairing damage to environmental and cultural sites near trails is motorized users' highest mean. The second highest mean for non-motorized users is provide trail signs, whereas motorized users rank maintain existing trails as number two. The third highest means of the groups differed as well – prevent or repair damage to environmental and cultural sites near trails for non-motorized users and promote safe and responsible recreation programs for motorized users. The findings above illustrate Yuma trail users' preference that land managers maintain existing trails and provide access to information that encourages responsible trail use and minimizes resource damage.

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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