

# Outcomes-Focused Management Focus Group Report

## BLM Kingman Field Office

2020 - 2021



## Public Lands Recreation Research Partnership Report #14<sub>T</sub>.

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## Introduction

In February of 2020 members of the Public Lands Recreation Research Partnership (PLRRP) conducted a series of three focus groups (61 participants) regarding recreational outcomes and experiences on Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-managed lands near Kingman, AZ. Later an additional two “digital” focus groups were conducted online using Adobe Connect software in a webinar format to reach those (8 additional participants) that were unable to participate in the initial focus groups or other focus groups planned, but canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing safety protocols. The study focused on the Special Recreation Management Areas and surrounding landscapes which prioritize recreation in their management objectives. This data was collected as part of an effort to understand the current management situation in the landscape as well as the public’s desires for recreational benefits and outcomes. Such data collection is essential in preparation for the upcoming revision of the Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) managed lands in the Kingman Field Office which covers 2.4 million acres in northwestern Arizona. The field office manages nine wilderness areas, the largest wild burro population in the country, and ecosystems from desert to ponderosa pine forests and nearly every ecosystem in between. This study was done in tandem with an outcome-focused recreational survey study conducted by members of the PLRRP team and their local partners. A significant advantage of employing a mixed methodology study (heterogeneous in-person/digital focus groups and surveys combined) to establish a recreational baseline is because it can provide a mix of local voices – which can include local users as well as relevant non-visitor stakeholders (e.g., displaced users, the business community, elected officials) – and those of current visitors. This combination of perspectives offers a richer and more complete picture of public preferences for recreational management of lands, and is a source of data that can contribute significantly to successful planning and management of public lands, such as those in the BLM Kingman Field Office area.

## Methodology

A mixed methodology focus group was employed to establish a recreational experience baseline. This focus group method combined the use of audience polling to record individual responses anonymously with engagement of participants in open dialogue. This mixed methodology attempts to capture both a complete set of responses to fixed questions from each participant via the polling, and also a rich set of notes that document the group dialog and provide both context and depth to the polling responses. Either approach used alone could leave an incomplete picture of the broad and deep relationships people have with the landscape, so a mixed methodology is the preferred approach to capture as much input as possible when establishing a baseline to understand the recreational demands and desires of the public for this area.

During both the in-person focus groups and the digital focus groups, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions, as well as survey-type questions recorded on handouts provided (or in the digital platform), in a 90-minute discussion that focused on their relationship to these public lands and their preferences for recreational settings, experiences, and outcomes related to these lands. The in-person focus group data was recorded on handouts given to each participant (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the handout). During the focus groups, the open dialogue comments were documented by consortium researchers taking notes on flipcharts. The digital responses were captured in the Adobe Connect software polling platform as well as notes and a chat feature where participants could record their responses to open-ended questions.

The focus group script covered several of the major elements needed in planning for recreation on public lands, including preferences for outcomes and experiences; the role of Kingman Field Office managed lands in the larger regional recreational setting; management priorities; and the services needed to support the recreation experience. Additional questions encouraged participants to express their preferences for management practices, including the BLM's engagement with the public during its planning process. Finally, participants were asked to reflect on the values that make the area a good place to live or visit, and the impact of public lands on that vision. The script contained 21 questions, 6 of which were open-ended, and 14 presented choices from an array of prepared responses that were used to poll the audience and were recorded on the handouts. All questions with prepared responses included an "other" option, offering space for written-in additions to the fixed lists, so that participants were not constrained by the prepared responses.

Participants were allowed to remain anonymous, but their responses were tracked and collated by the use of the handouts they filled out and turned in. Their participation in the study and in answering every question was voluntary. Participants were reminded that they were free to participate or not as they wished, but that if they did speak up or write something down it would be taken as their consent to participate in the study.

Outreach to populate the focus groups included:

- Direct outreach to partners and key stakeholders (including local activity-oriented groups, such as 4x4, hiking, and biking clubs, cooperating agencies, local government entities, local stewardship/conservation groups, etc.)
- Press releases in local newspapers
- Flyers (put up at community centers, biking, running, and outdoor gear stores, etc.)
- Flyers emailed to key stakeholders, partners and recreation user groups who were asked to disseminate the information to their members and constituents

The technique of audience polling, with data gathered by handout to record responses, allows each participant the opportunity to weigh in on every area of the research. This is important because it helps avoid a wide variety of social setting dynamics that arise in traditional focus group settings, such as only hearing from extroverted participants who dominate a conversation. Polling also minimizes undue influence of peer settings in small communities. If, for example, an individual is worried about the repercussions of mentioning their responses aloud in a focus group within their community, they are likely to withhold their response or provide one that is less accurate. However, if they can anonymously record their preferences, they may feel more liberated to express their true opinion. Audience polling using written responses on handouts preserves participants' anonymity and maintains the ability to link all of their answers together for the purposes of analysis. This is different from traditional focus groups, in which one might be able to link comments and preferences back to a particular focus group, but unless the group was small and homogenous, it would be difficult to determine findings such as preferences of individuals regarding a particular variable, or how those preferences might interact with other preferences (e.g., if a person is seeking solitude, do they choose particular activities or settings to achieve that outcome?).

It is important to note the limitations of using this data. Because sampling of participants was not random, it would be inappropriate to suggest this analysis is generalizable to the preferences of the entire population that might be interested in recreating on these lands. This report of focus group findings does not attempt to do this. However, effort was made to hear from a broad sample of groups who have a connection to the landscape, including both locals and visitors, who were willing to spend 90 minutes participating in the conversation.

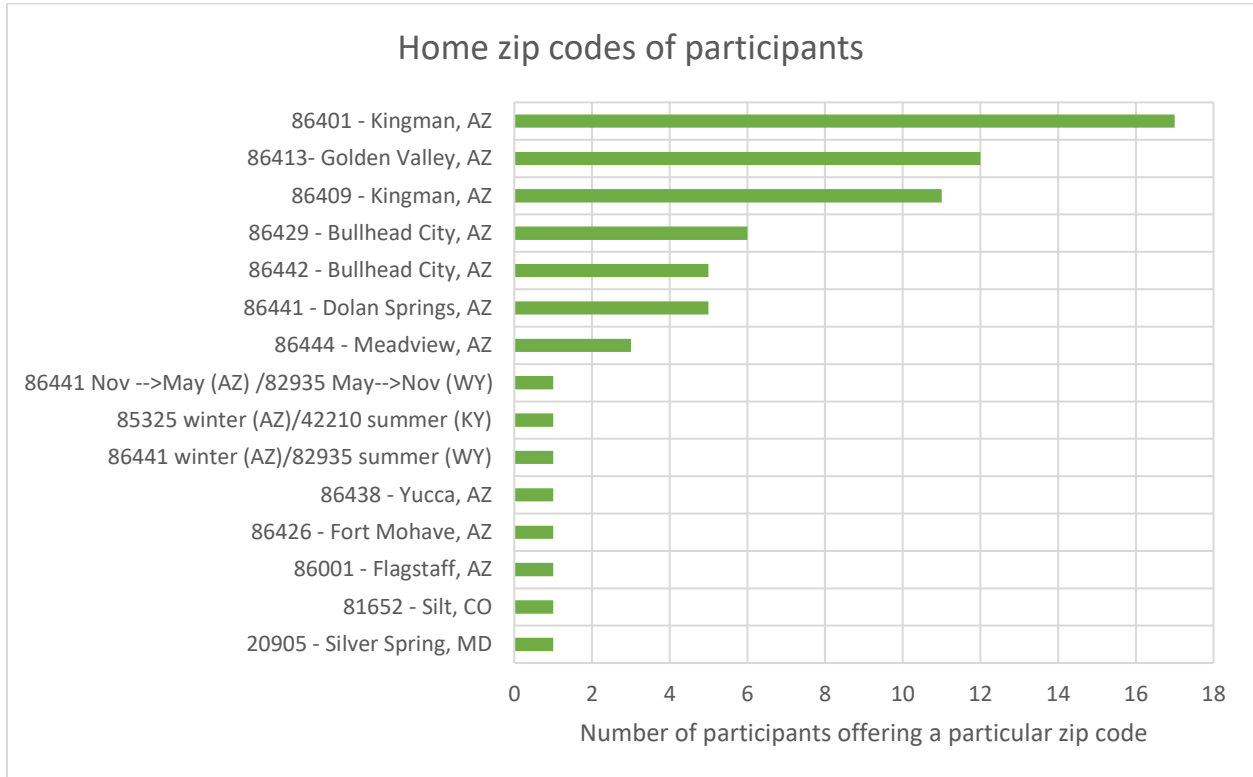
## Demographics

Three in-person focus groups were conducted in February 2020 at the BLM Kingman Field Office before federal COVID-19 protocols prohibited in-person meetings for the remainder of the study. 61 members of the public participated in one of the three in-person focus groups. Two additional "digital" focus groups were offered through an on-line format in the summer of 2020 and the Spring of 2021 in order to complete the focus group study. An additional 8 members of the public participated in the digital focus groups. The total number of participants in the study was 69. Initially, the participants were asked to provide their home zip code in order to determine their proximity to public lands in the Kingman Field Office where they recreate. As the graph in figure 1 below indicates, the vast majority of participants are residents (at least part time) in the area of northwestern Arizona where the field office lands are located. The public lands are a part of their "backyard" and most participants indicated they were frequent visitors to those public lands. It should be noted that while this is not a representative sample of all visitors to public lands in the Kingman Field Office, the data in this



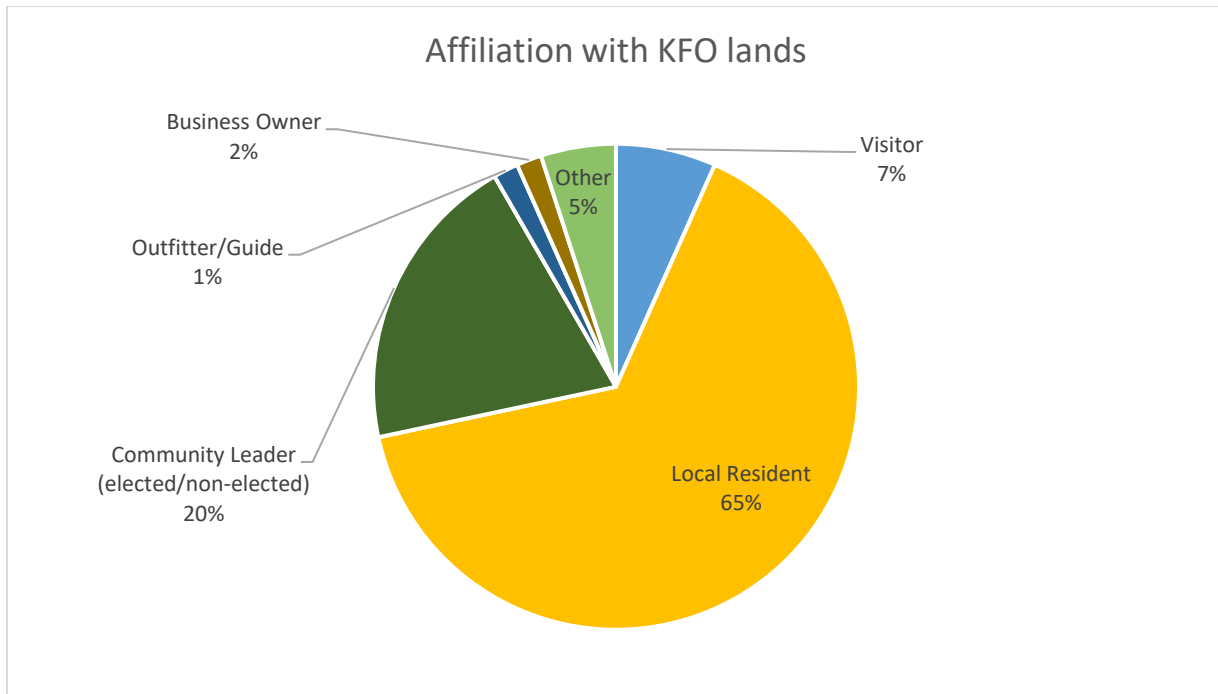
study offers a view of the variety of perspectives on recreation held by the populations living in and around the public lands managed by the BLM Kingman Field Office.

Figure 1- Home zip codes of participants



Next, participants were asked to identify their primary affiliation to the landscape from a menu of alternatives. Although each participant might wear many “hats” when interacting with these public lands, they were asked to select one affiliation (role) as a lens through which they would consider the questions in the rest of the study. The results in Figure 2 below show that almost two-thirds of the participants offered the perspective of a local resident. An additional 20% identified as community leaders, either elected or unelected, and less than 10% identified as a visitor to the public lands. In almost every list of options in this study, participants are given the option to choose “other” if the other options don’t accurately capture what they wanted to select. Although the percentage of participants selecting the “other” option is usually quite low, an advantage of the focus group methodology is the ability to capture those “other” responses. Participants were asked on all questions that they selected the “other” option to indicate in writing on their handout what they meant by that selection. Several selected other in addition to selecting “community leader” or “local resident” and indicated in their written comments that they were working with the agency as a partner from a non-profit “user” group or in two cases, another resource management agency at the state level. Two participants selecting “other” identified their preferred activities to explain their selection.

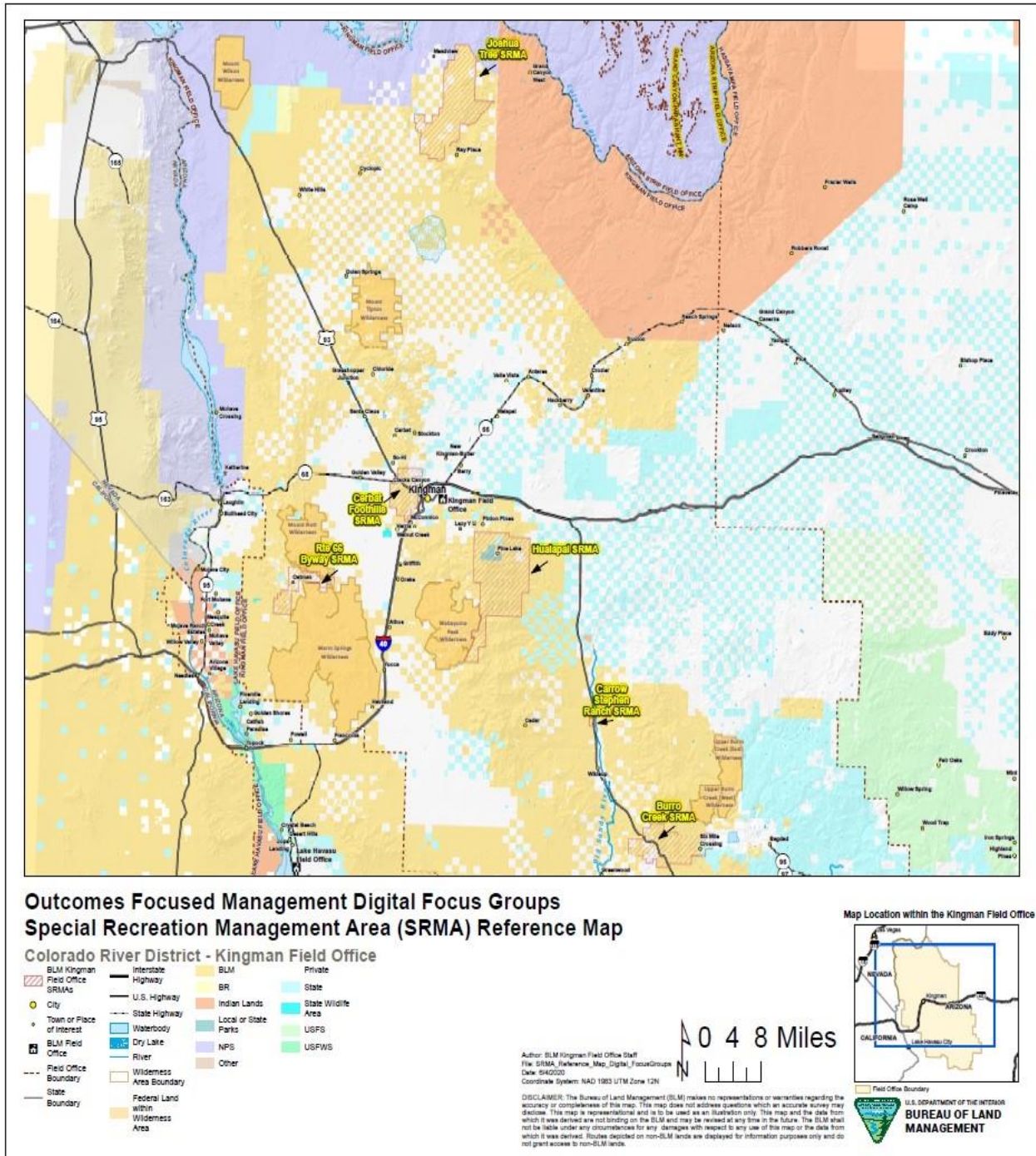
Figure 2- Participant affiliation with BLM Kingman Field Office lands



### Location of Recreation

As the map in Figure 3 shows, the area of northwestern Arizona along the Colorado River where the 2.1 million acres of surface area managed by the BLM Kingman Field Office is located, is also the location of other BLM managed landscapes as well as landscapes managed by a variety of other local, state and federal land agencies as well as private land.

Figure 3- Map of BLM Kingman Field Office and surrounding public lands

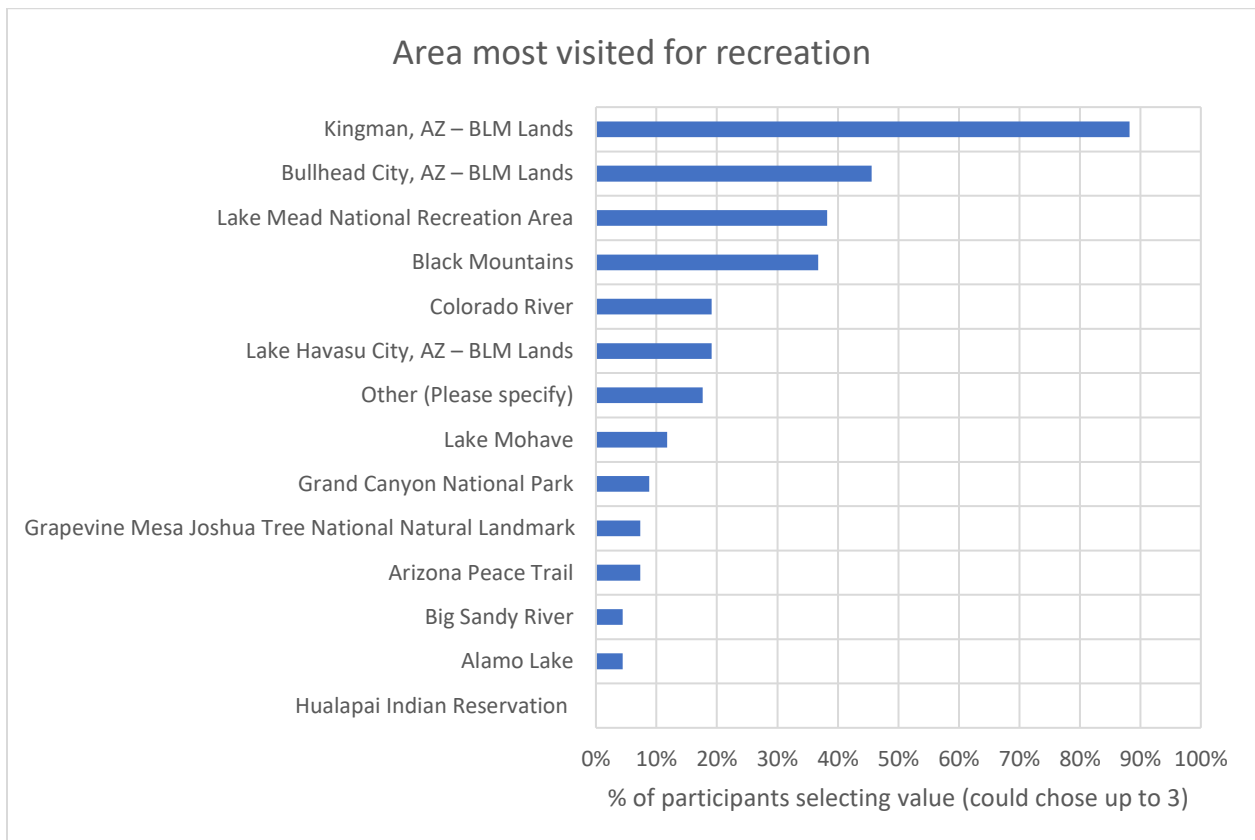


Most frequented recreation sites in area

The Resource Management Plan for the Kingman Field Office is likely to have an impact on the recreation and characteristics of these landscapes as well, and guiding policy on those lands can have an effect on the BLM managed lands in the Kingman Field Office. It is also the case that when people recreate in the area, they often frequent more than one management jurisdiction,

sometimes on the same trip, sometimes over multiple trips. Participants were asked to identify the areas that they frequent most often when recreating in the region. They were asked to select up to three choices from a list.<sup>4</sup> As one might expect in a focus group targeting BLM lands in the Kingman Field Office, that location was selected by almost 90% of the participants. Other BLM lands in the area were also popular destinations for recreation.

Figure 4- Most frequently visited public lands in area



#### Division of Landscape into 5 study areas

Because the Kingman Field Office covers over 2 million acres of public lands with a diverse set of ecosystems and recreational opportunities, it is important that specific comments and selections in this study can be associated with particular places in the landscape rather than generally covering the entire study area. The Field Office was divided into 33 zones for the purposes of analysis by the BLM recreation staff in the office. Each participant was asked to select a zone as a focus of their responses to the questions and discussion in the focus group study. Many of the participants objected to having to choose only a single zone as their focus because they used multiple zones, or they disagreed about the way the zones were divided.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 1 for a complete list of all options participants could select on this or any other question raised in the focus groups.

Some offered two or three zones in their written comments next to that question on the handout<sup>5</sup>. In order to facilitate this report, and to capture these multizone responses, the zones were clustered into five study areas that surround the five Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA) already identified in the current Resource Management Plan and its amendments. These study areas and their zone assignments are found below in Table 1, and correspond to the study areas and zone division used in the survey study of the same area by the Public Lands Recreation Research Partnership in 2020<sup>6</sup>. A Special Recreation Management Area is defined in the BLM Recreation and Visitor Services Policy Planning Manual (H-8320-1) as, “an administrative unit where existing or proposed recreation opportunities and RSCs are recognized for their unique value, importance, and/or distinctiveness, especially as compared to other areas used for recreation.” (H-8320-1, I-7, F1b). The handbook further indicates that within an SRMA, recreation and visitor services are “recognized and the predominant land use planning focus, where specific recreation opportunities and resource setting characteristics are managed and protected on a long-term basis.” (H-8320-1, I-7, F1b(1)). The boundaries of each SRMA fall in the larger zone cluster study area sharing its name, but some of the areas of each of the study areas remains adjacent to, but outside the formally identified SRMAs. The maps in Figures 5-9 below show the study areas and the SRMAs they contain. Although recreation takes place across most BLM managed land in the field office, this study (and the OFM survey research) concentrate the focus on the SRMA areas because of the specific need to develop outcome-focused management objectives for those landscapes.

*Table 1- Study Areas*

<b>Study Area/SRMA name</b>	<b>Study Area Abbreviation</b>	<b>Zones assigned to study area</b>	<b>Number of participants selecting one or more zones in study area</b>
<b>Burro Creek Area</b>	BC	1-8	4
<b>Cerbat Foothills Area</b>	CF	13-14, 19-21	13
<b>Joshua Tree/Grand wash Cliffs Area</b>	JT/GWC	22-33	16
<b>Historic Route 66/ Black Mountains Area</b>	HR66/BM	15-18	19
<b>Hualapai Mountains</b>	HM	9-12	14

<sup>5</sup> All identified multiple zone responses were contained in one of the single larger study areas. No multiple zone responses crossed more than one study area.

<sup>6</sup> See (Insert citation for Kingman Survey Report here) for additional recreation data on the BLM Kingman Field Office collected by the Public Lands Recreation Research Partnership. The survey and focus group studies of this area are intended to be complimentary approaches to data collection that, together, provide a more comprehensive understanding of the public’s desired outcomes for recreation on the landscape.

Figure 5- Map of Burro Creek (BC) Study Area

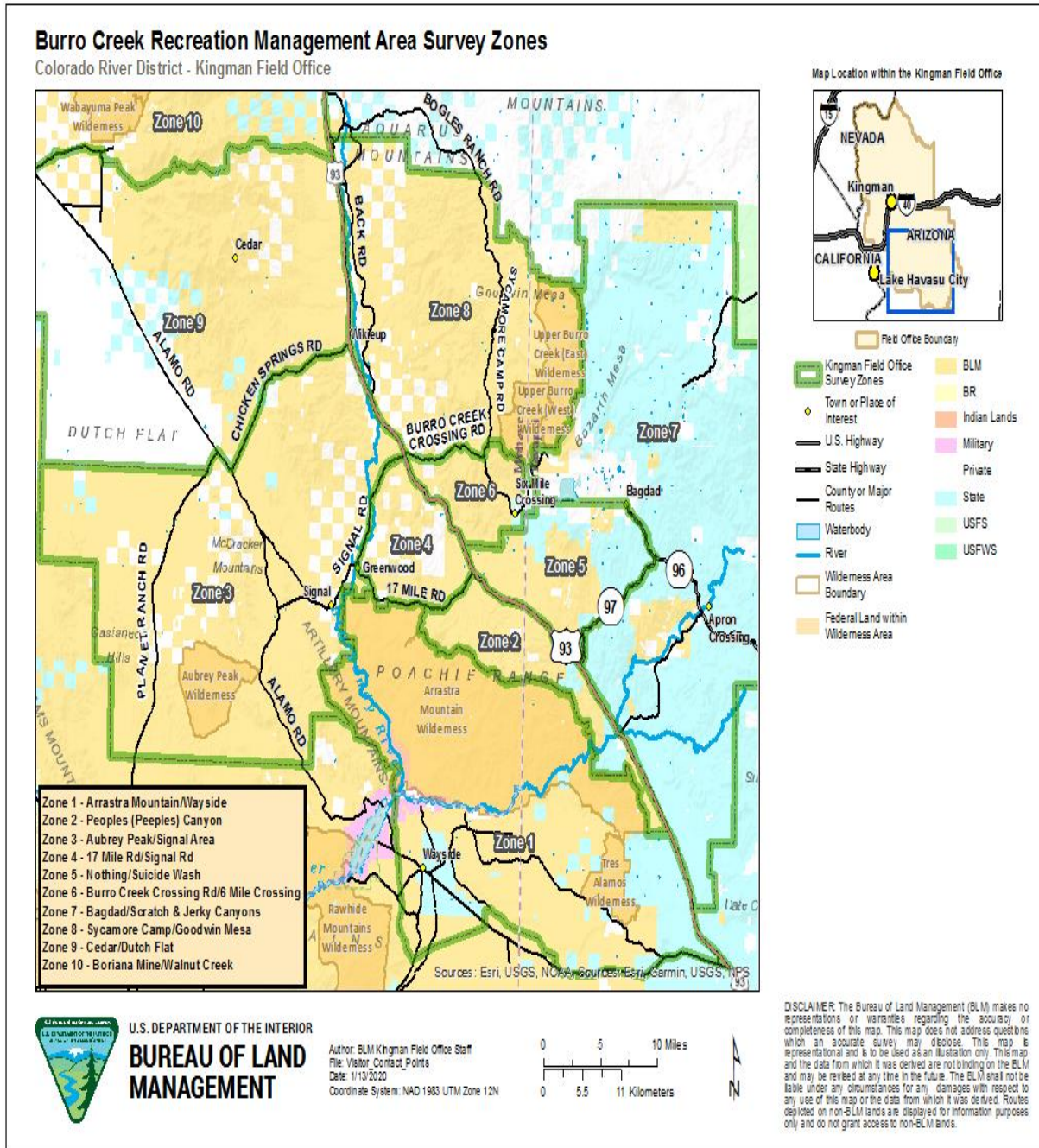


Figure 6- Map of Cerbat Foothills (CF) Study Area

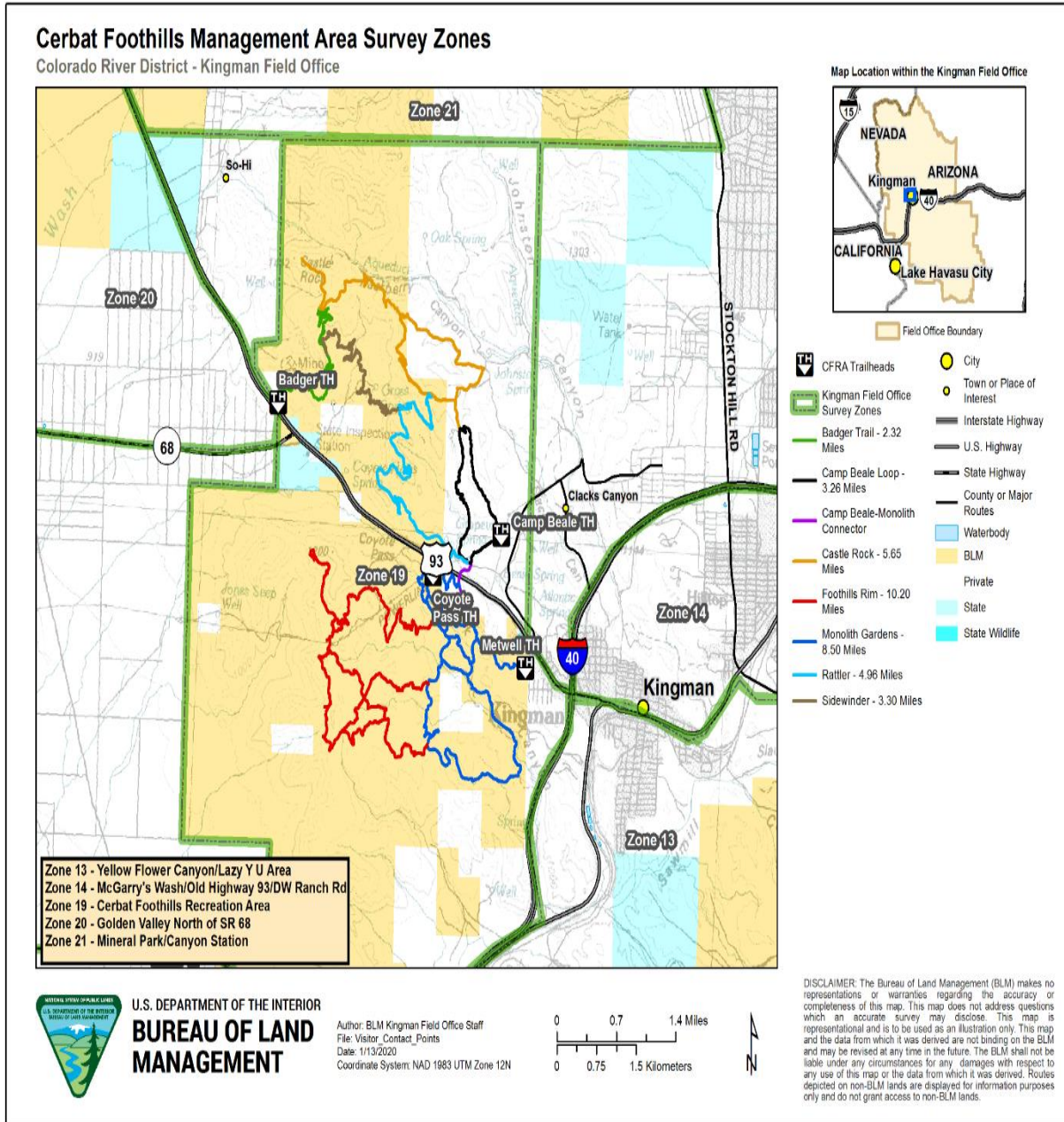


Figure 7- Map of Joshua Tree/ Grand Wash Cliffs (JT/GWC) Study Area

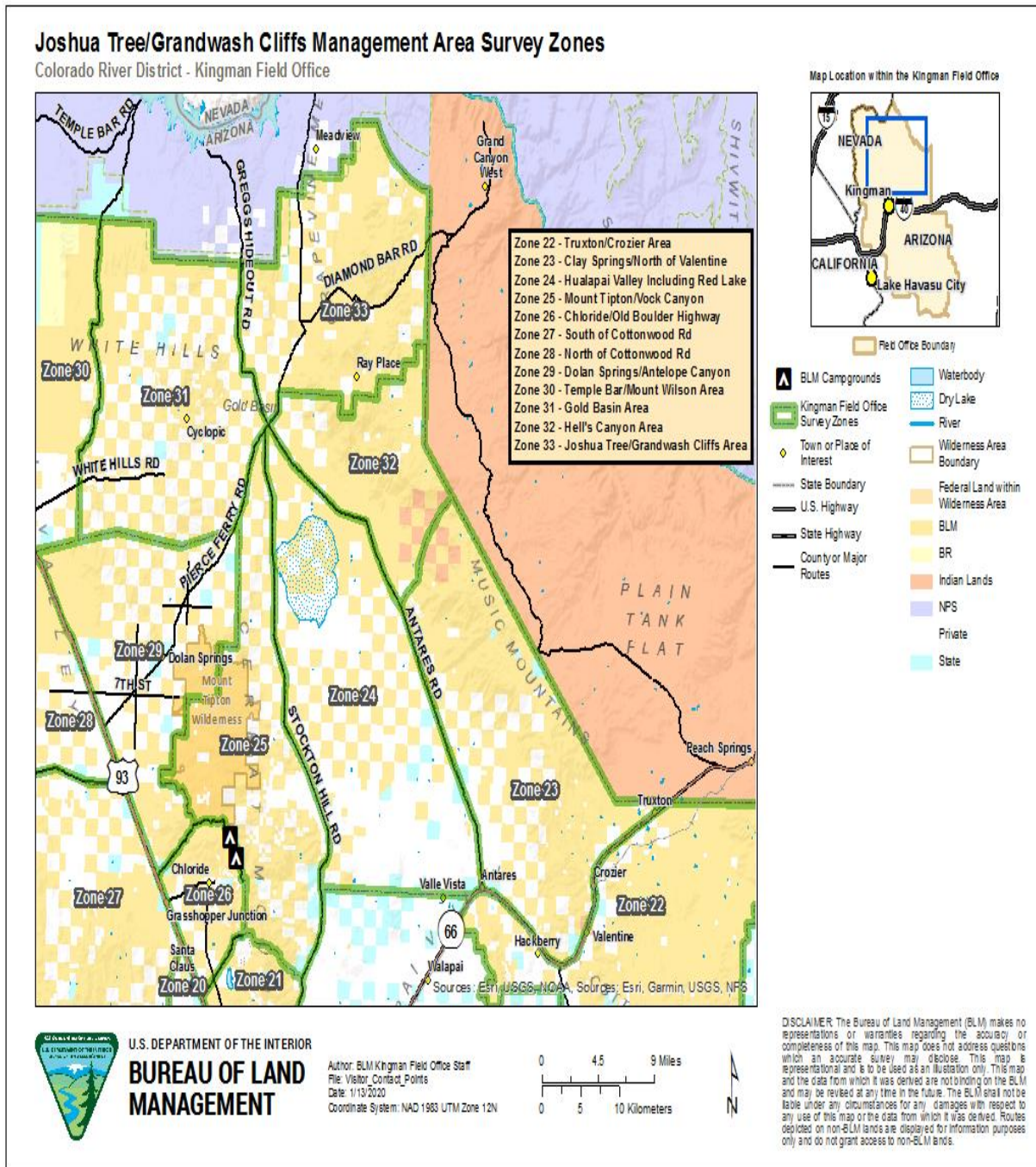




Figure 8- Map of Historic Route 66/ Black Mountain (HR66/BM) Study Area

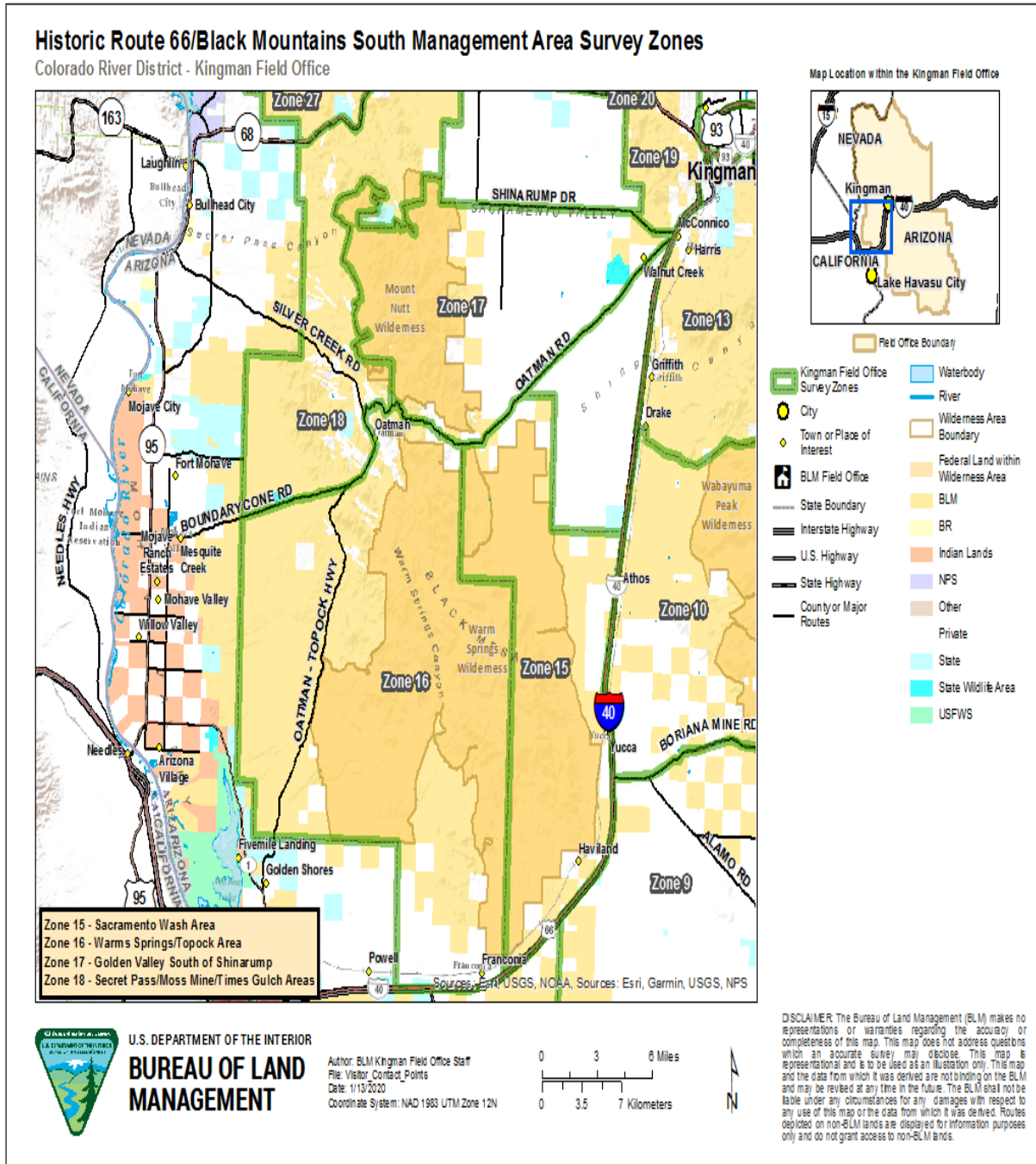


Figure 9- Map of Hualapai Mountains (HM) Study Area

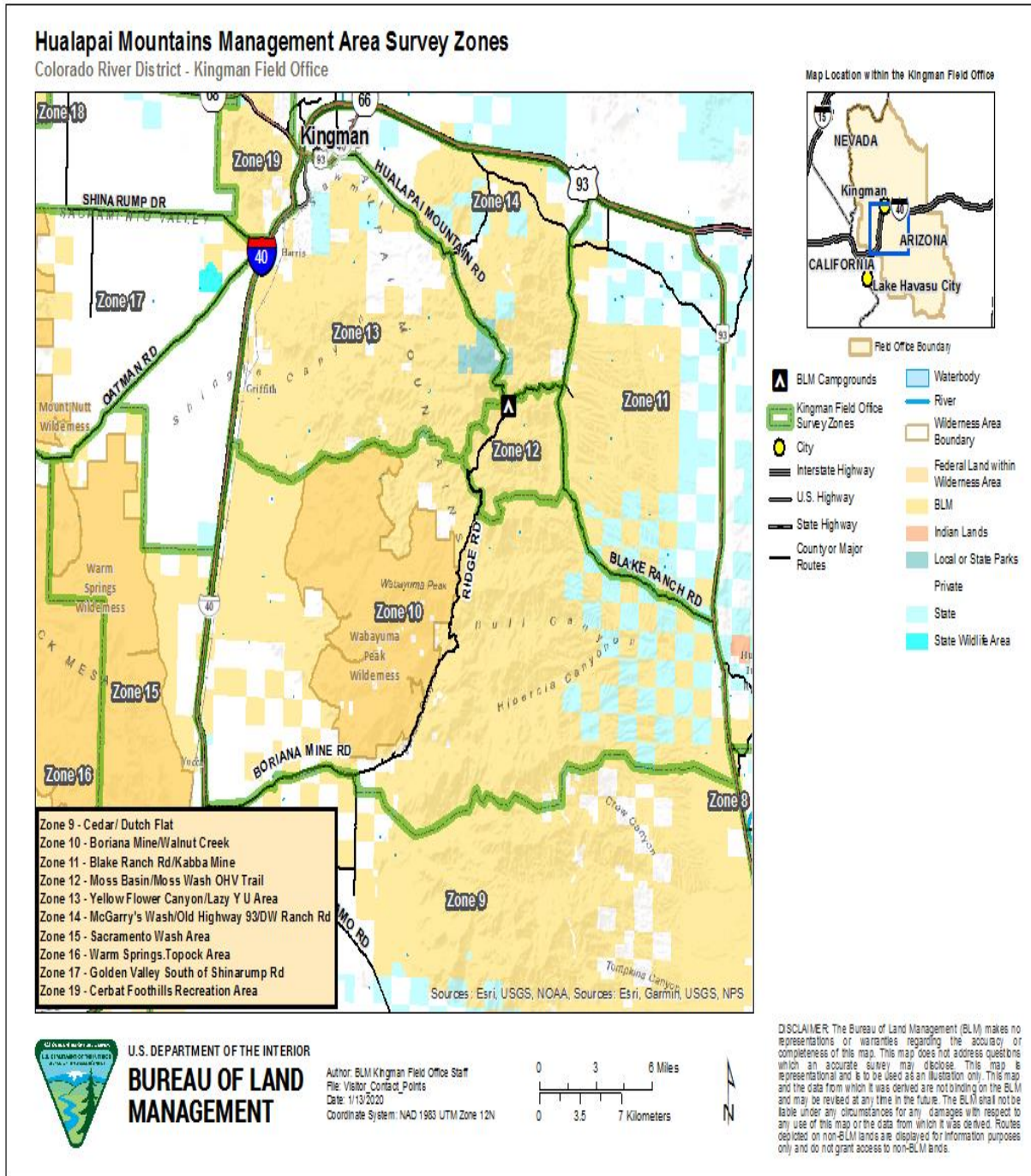
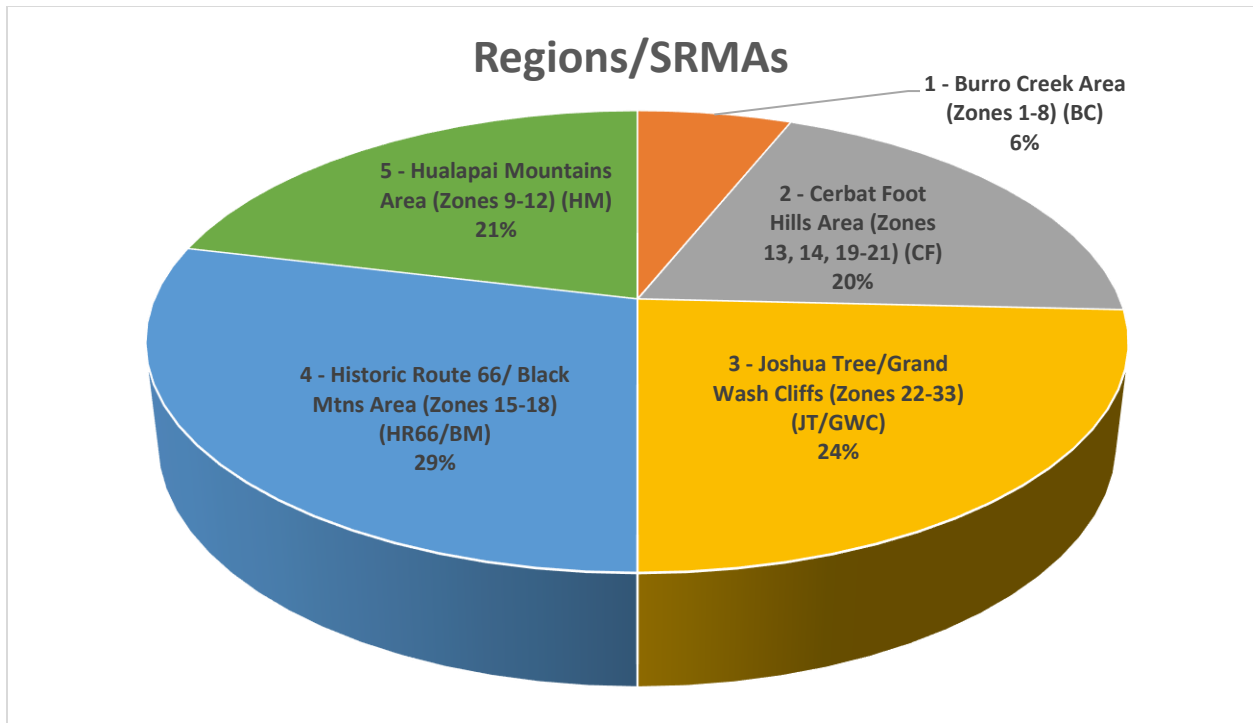


Figure 10- Percentage of participants selecting a particular study area



### Recreational Outcome Preferences

Once participants identified locations on the landscape they wanted to focus on, they were asked a series of questions about their recreational preferences in the landscape. The Outcomes-Focused Management (OFM) approach, adopted nationally by the BLM in its planning guide, OFM requires land managers to consider not only the recreational activities taking place on the land, but more importantly to also consider the goals (outcomes) that visitors and community members have for recreation in the landscape. Following this OFM approach, land managers should consider first the experiences and desired outcomes from recreation before focusing on the landscape settings and services needed to achieve these desired ends.

### Special

Initially, the participants of the focus groups were asked to talk about what makes particular lands managed by the BLM Kingman Field Office that they have identified “special” places from their perspective. Participants were given a list of 20 qualities that are often identified as special characteristics of public lands according to past research. In each of the lists found in the handouts, the final option is always “other” which allows participants to identify in writing the qualities that are important to them.

Their responses to this and every additional question have been associated with the particular study area their selected zone(s) in order to facilitate place-based management objectives. These responses have been displayed in five graphs for each question such as the Figures 11-15 below that which show the percentage of participants in that study area selecting a particular characteristic as one of the characteristics that make the area a special place to them. Participants were asked to focus their selections on the characteristics that really matter to them by limiting their choices to five or fewer for the first two questions in this section, and three or fewer for the rest of the questions in this section. Only the characteristics selected by at least one participant for a specific study area are listed in each figure, thus the lists will differ slightly. This is the case for all data displayed for the remainder of the report. Although all areas highlight the scenic beauty, and the chance to engage in recreation activities they enjoy, there is a greater emphasis on the wildness, the rugged and remote character in some areas than in others. Likewise, some areas emphasize the dynamics of time with family and friends, and a “back yard” character to the landscape more than those characteristics were selected in other areas. Those that selected “other” in the CF area indicated physical activity and birds as well as accessibility and plenty of parking. Another set of participants commented on the opportunities for dispersed camping in the CF area. Diverse terrain and geology were noted in the JT/GWC area.

Figure 11- Special Qualities: BC

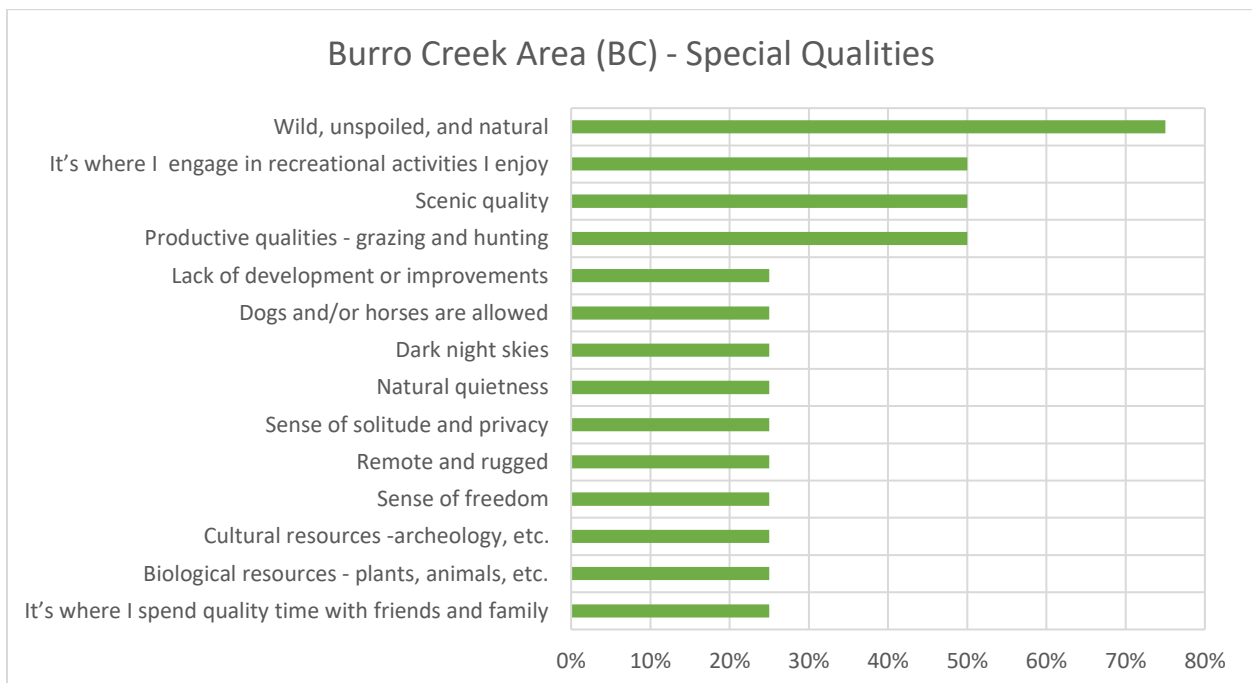


Figure 12- Special Qualities: CF

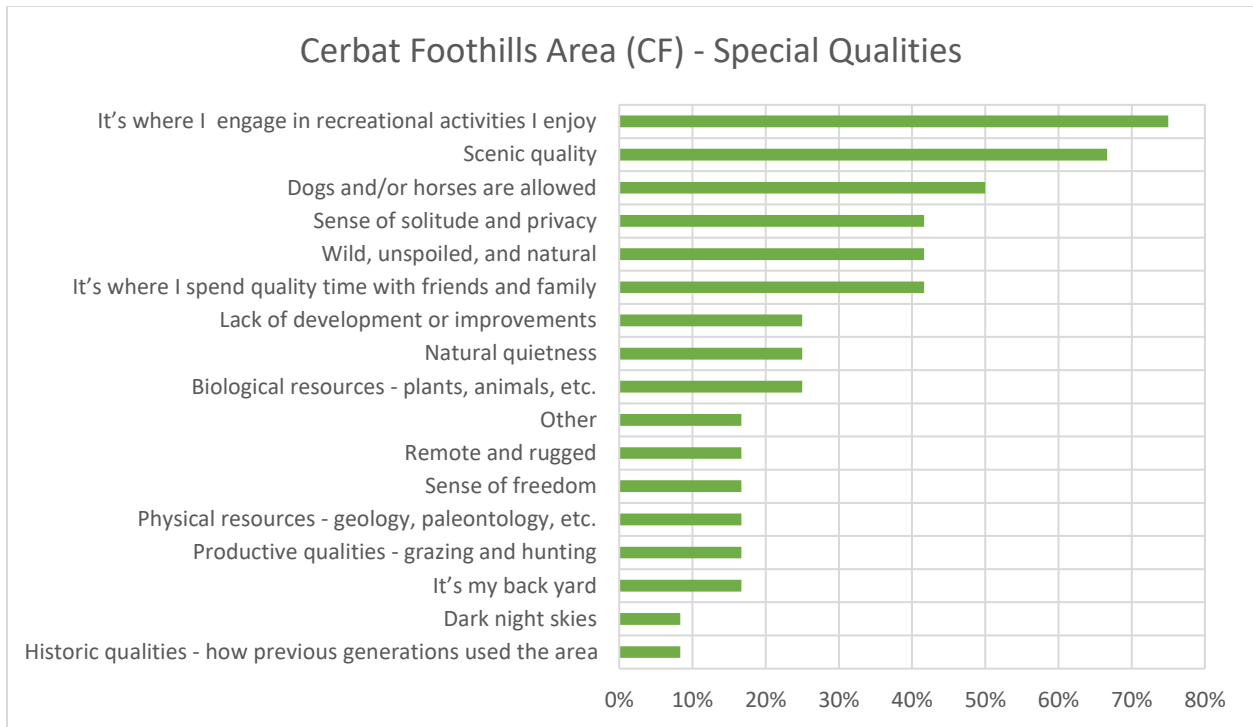


Figure 13- Special Qualities: JT/GWC

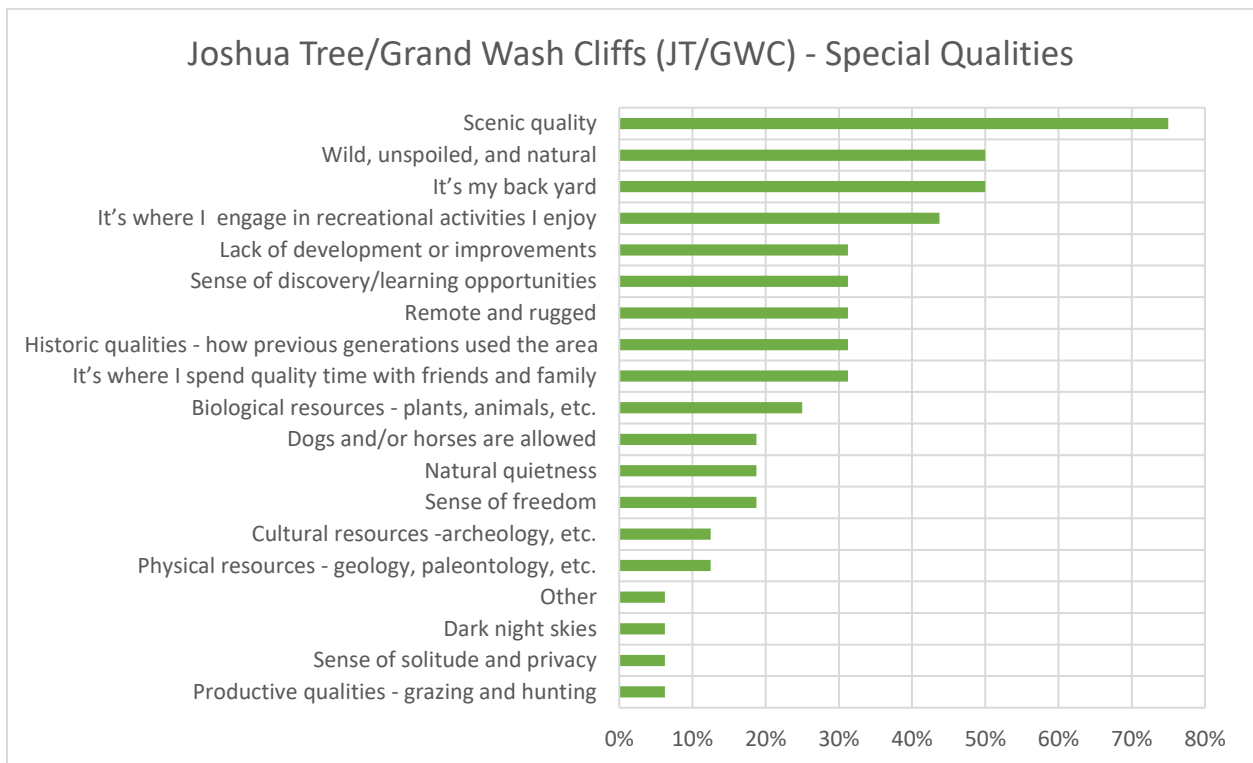


Figure 14- Special Qualities: HR66/BM

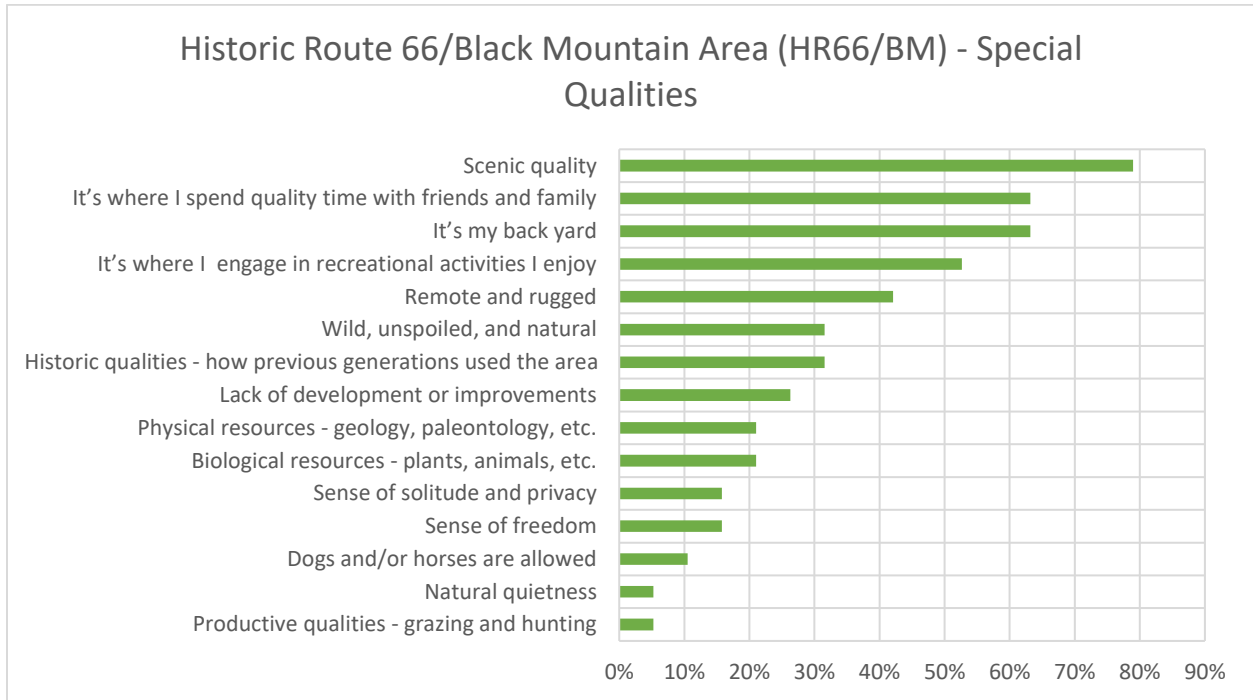
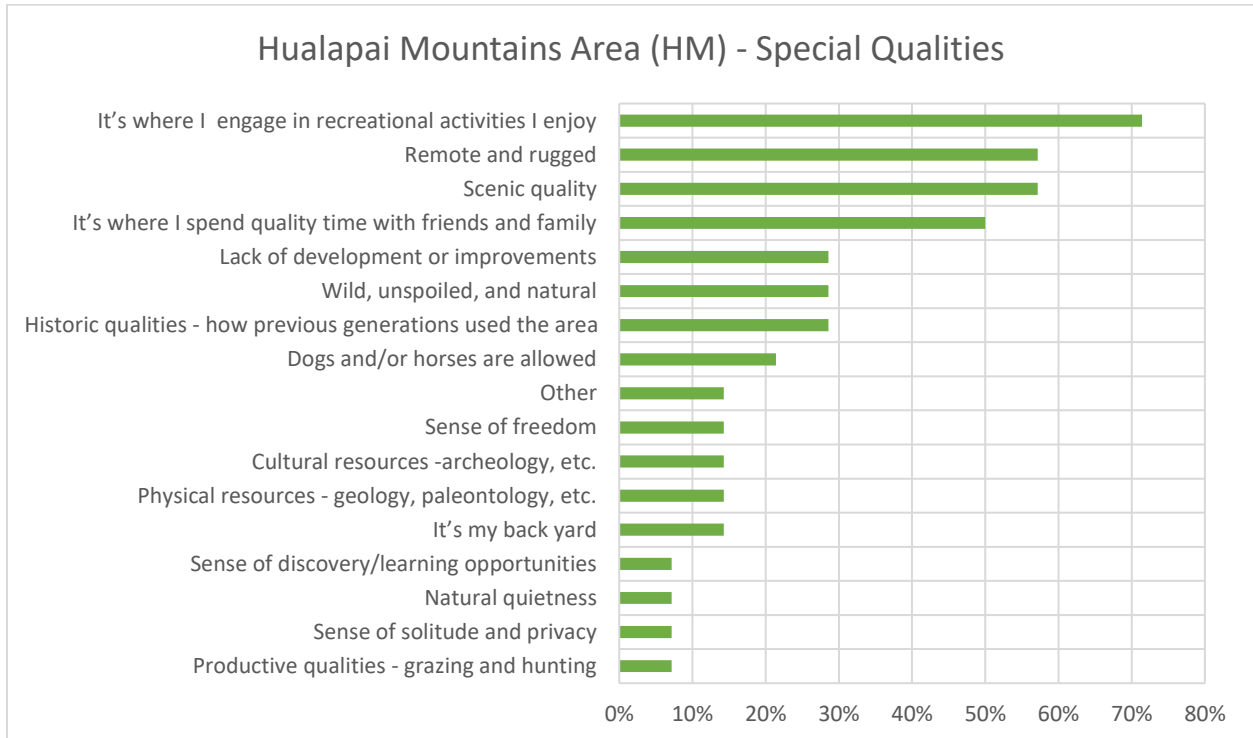


Figure 15- Special Qualities: HM



## Diminish

Next, participants were asked to talk about what might diminish the specialness of places managed by the BLM in the Kingman Field Office that they had identified as their area of focus. They were given a list of 20 qualities that often are identified as diminishing special characteristics of public lands according to past research. Figures 16-21 show the percentage of participants in each study area that selected that quality. Typical of most focus group studies on public lands, the participants in this study selected “vandalism, litter, graffiti and human waste” as the most common issue affecting the specialness of the place. Access issues and crowding concerns are selected often in most of the areas. Some areas have concerns that are selected less often in other areas such as artificial light or noise issues. Most also identified residential development as an issue, but no one selected that issue in the Burro Creek area, for example. One of the participants that selected “other” in the JT/GWC area indicated ADA access trails lack information about the history and culture of the area.

Figure 16- Diminish Specialness: BC

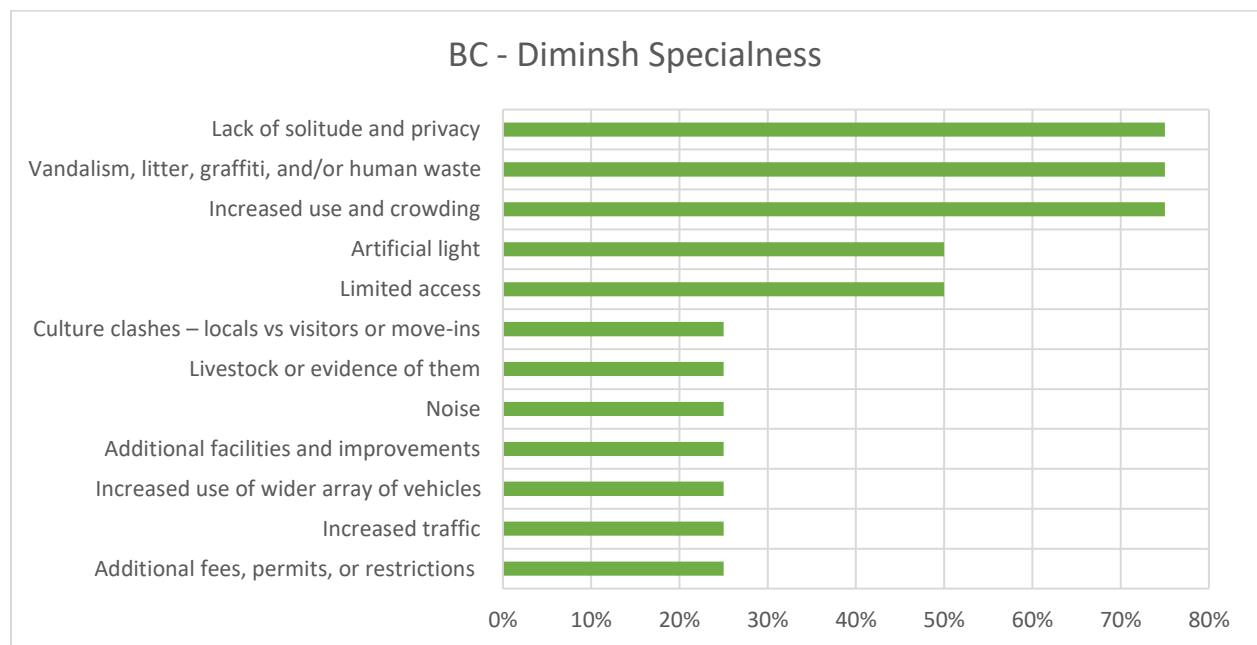


Figure 17- Diminish Specialness: CF

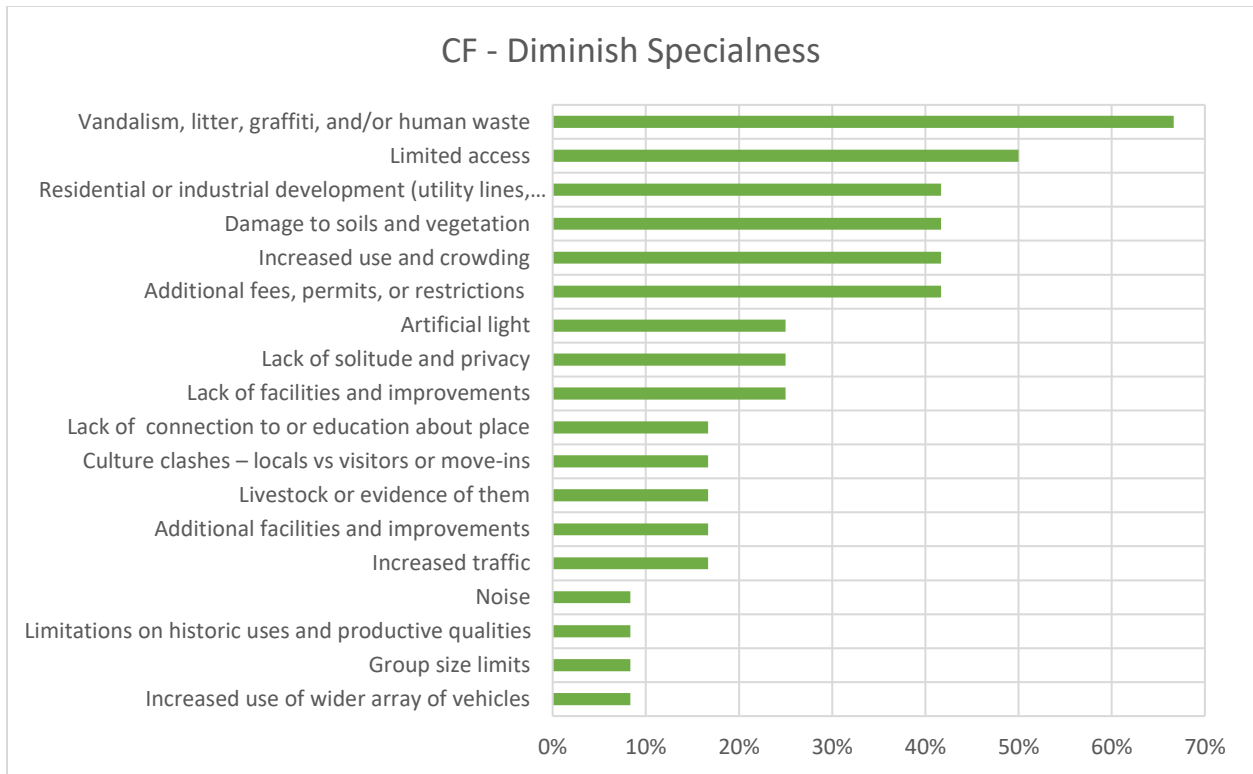


Figure 18- Diminish Specialness: JT/GWC

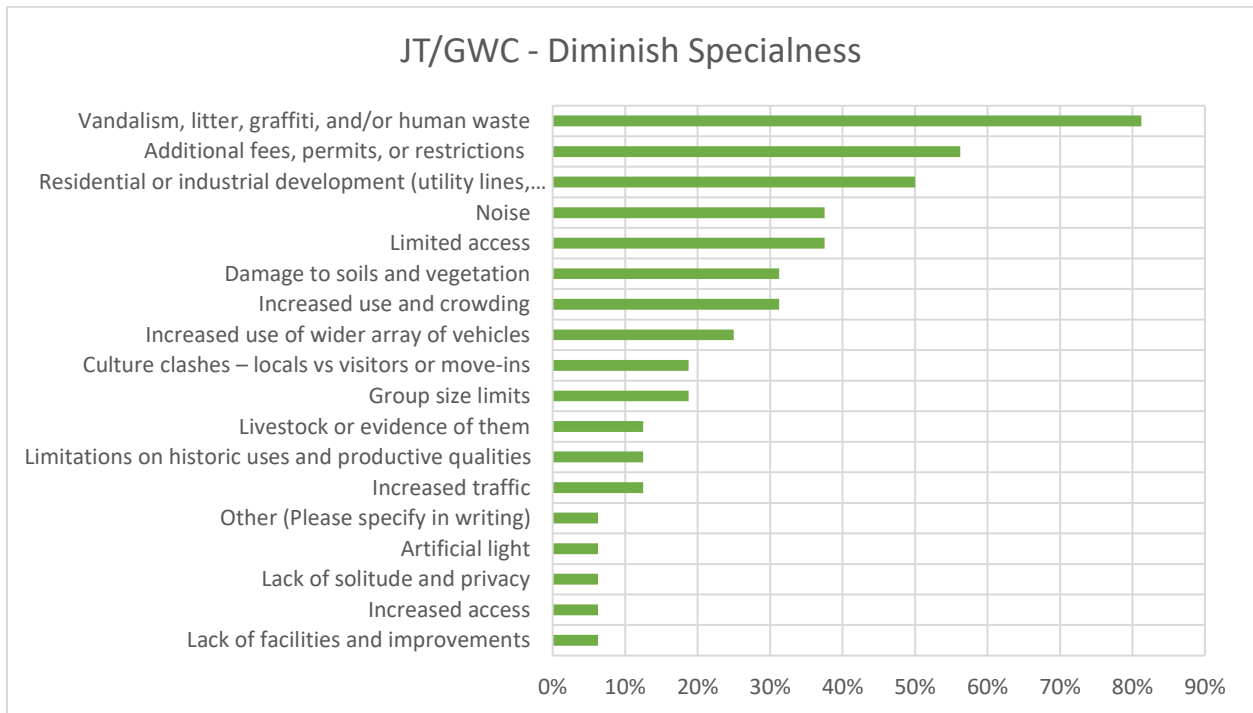




Figure 19- Diminish Specialness: HR66/BM

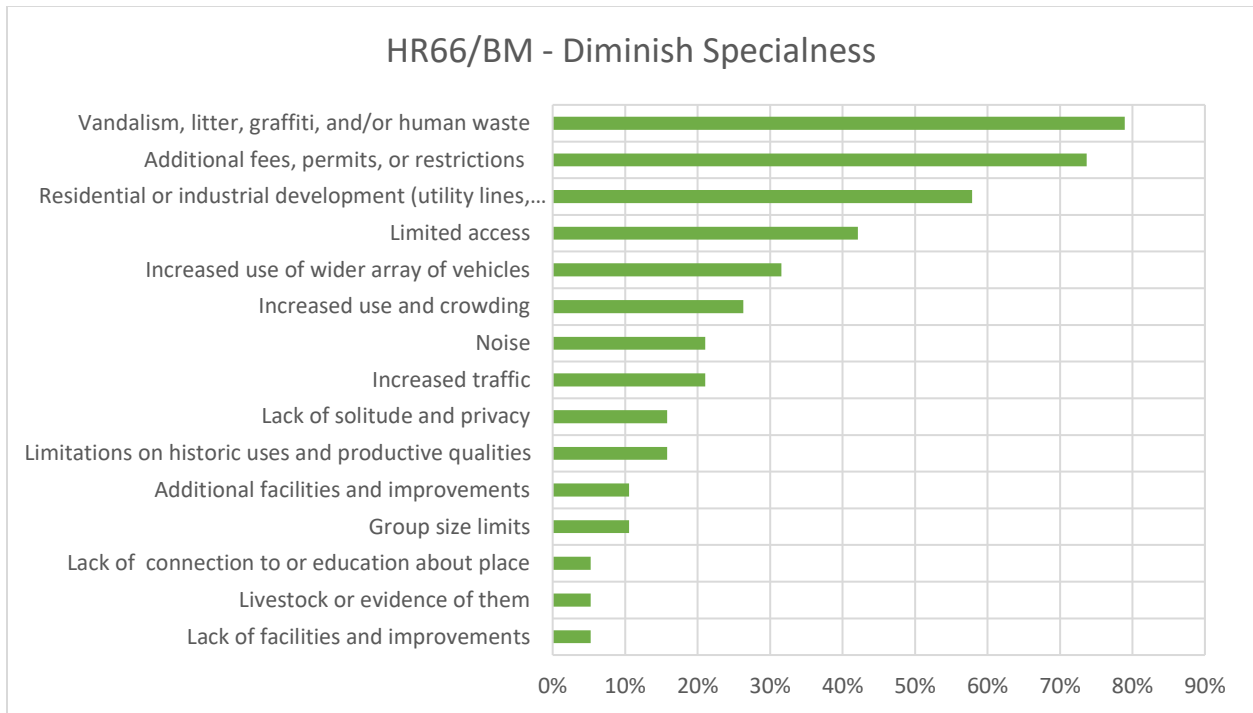
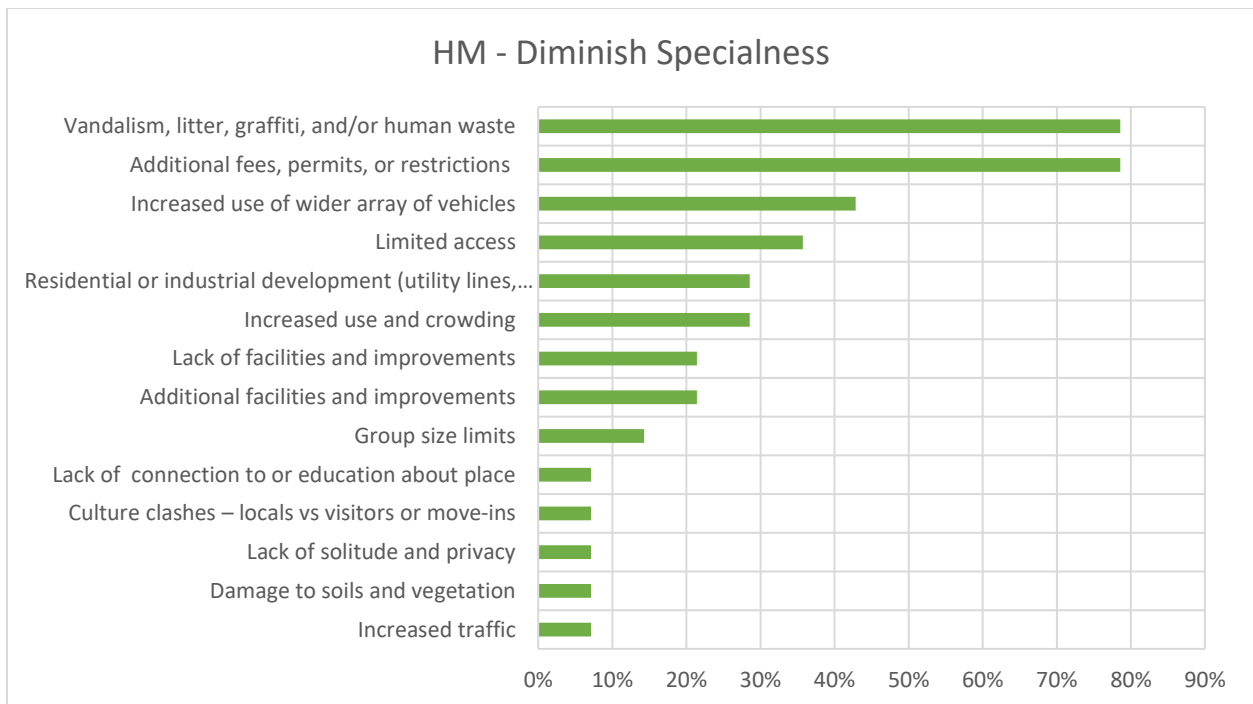


Figure 20- Diminish Specialness: HM



### Interest and Expectations

Research has indicated that people visit public lands to achieve a variety of beneficial outcomes and experiences for themselves, their communities, and the environment, while at the same

time trying to avoid adverse outcomes and experiences. Because these interests and expectations can vary depending on the trip, participants were asked to identify their top three interests and expectations from a list developed over several years of research on public lands across the western United States. Participants were given a series of sentences that might be spoken by someone considering the value of recreation on the landscape and they were asked to select up to three statements that most accurately reflect their own interests and expectations for recreation in the area. **Error! Reference source not found.**21-25 below shows the percentage of participants selecting a particular statement of expectation. Complete wording for each statement can be found in the focus group handout in Appendix 1. Every area selected “natural landscapes” as the primary expectation, but other frequently selected values did fluctuate from area to area. “Family and friends” was one of the top expectations in several areas, but hardly selected in an area such as Joshua Tree/Grand Wash Cliffs area (JTGWC). “Tranquil Escapes” was a popular selection for some of the areas, and less so in others. “Economic well-being of the community” while rarely selected in any area, was entirely absent in some of the areas. “Stewardship and Care-taking” was selected by at least 25% of the participants for every area except Cerbat Foothills area.

Figure 21- Interests and Expectations: BC

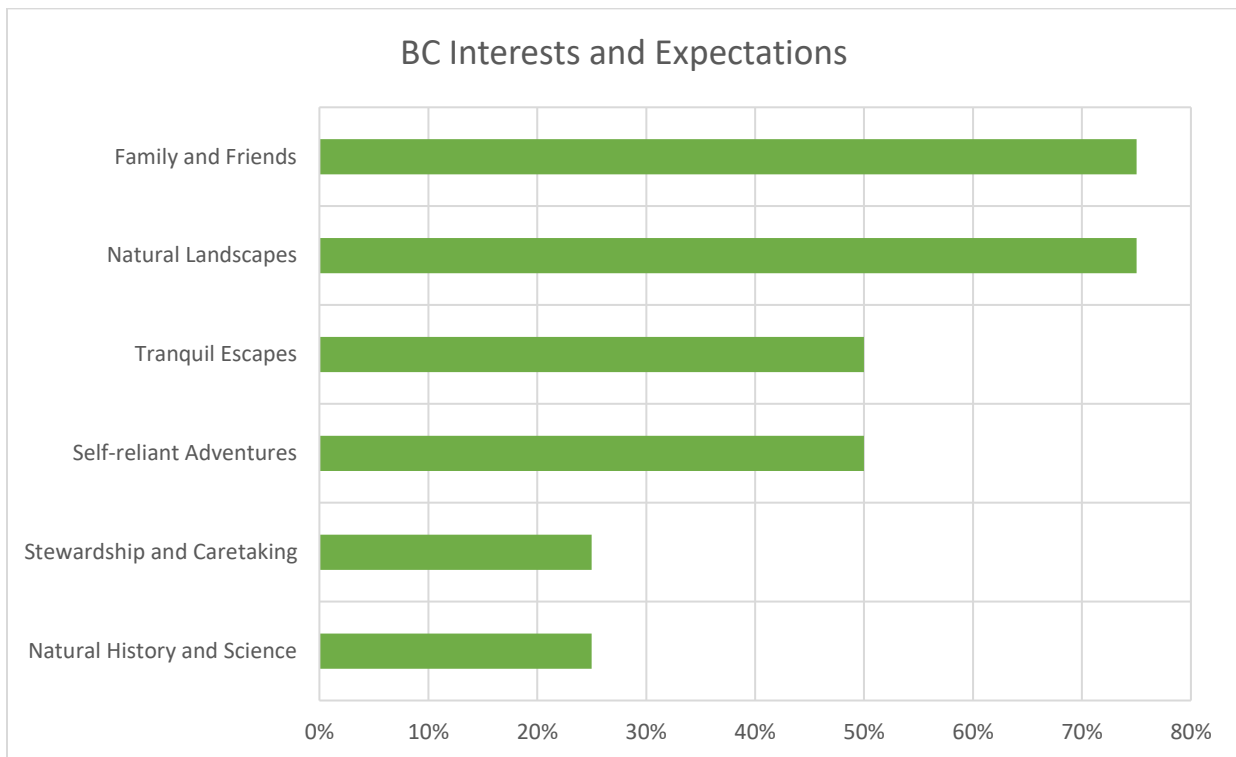


Figure 22- Interests and Expectations: CF

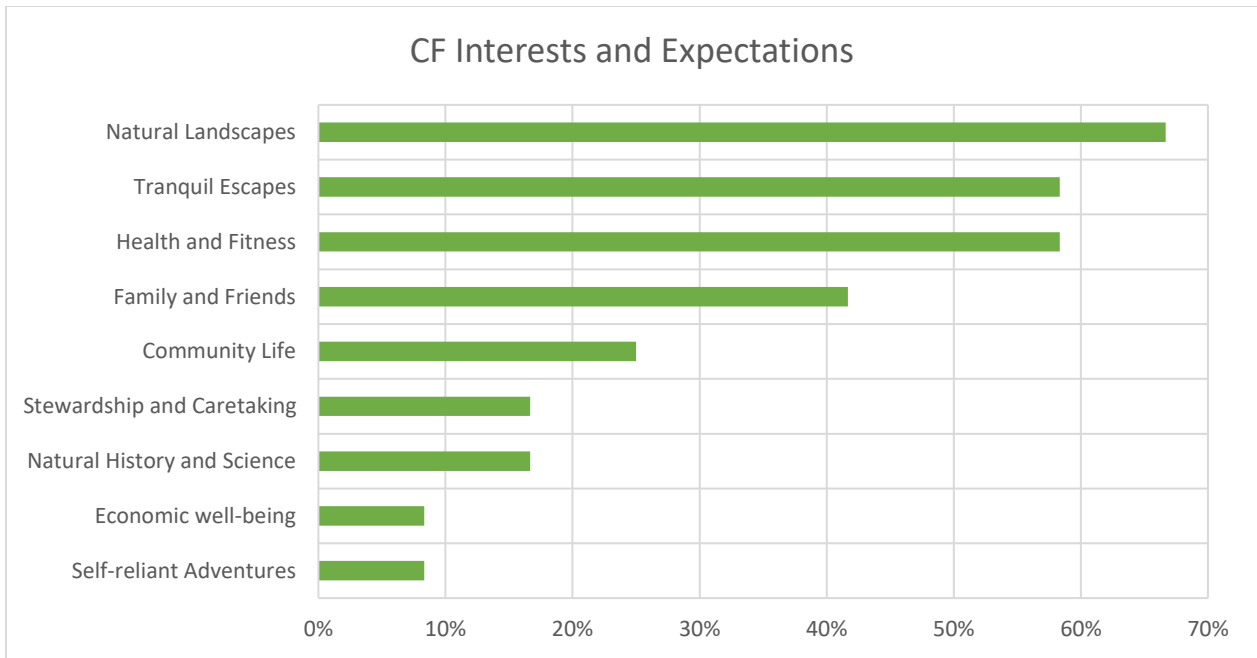


Figure 23- Interests and Expectations: JT/GWC

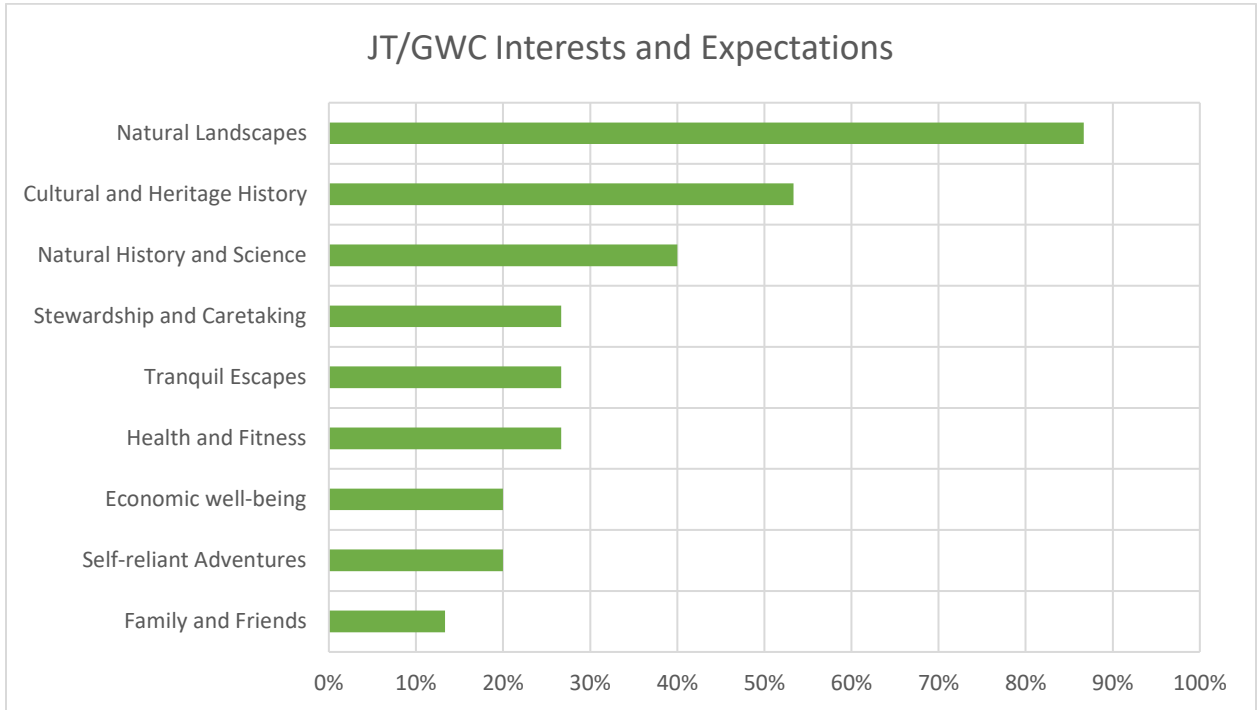


Figure 24- Interests and Expectations: HR66/BM

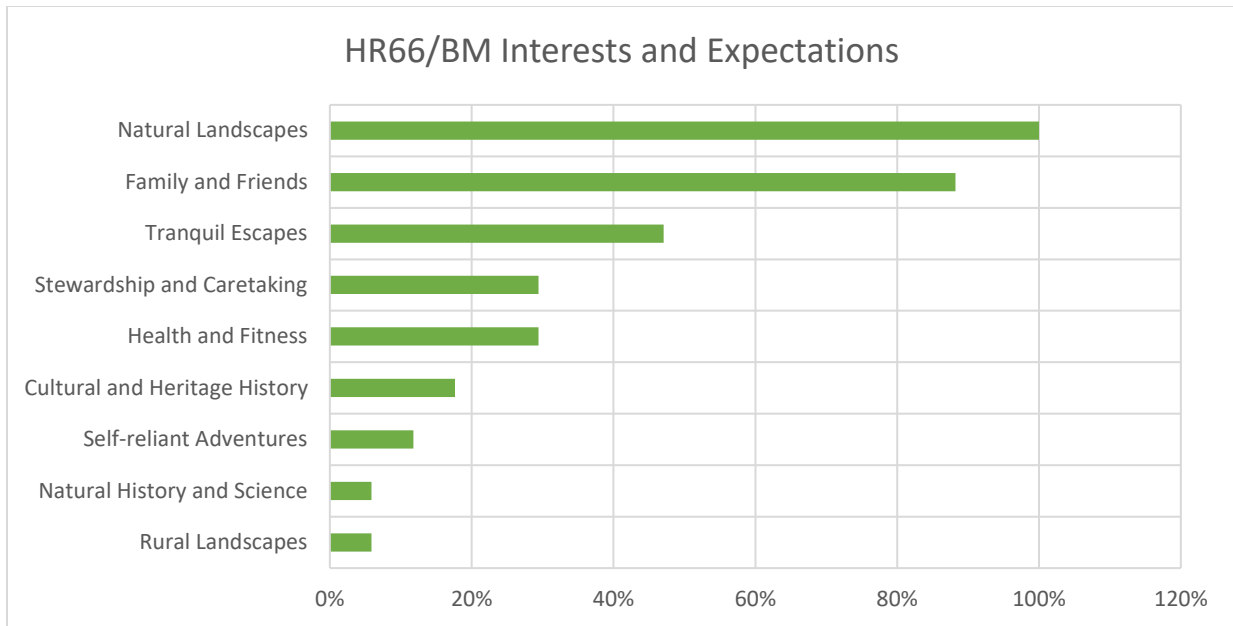
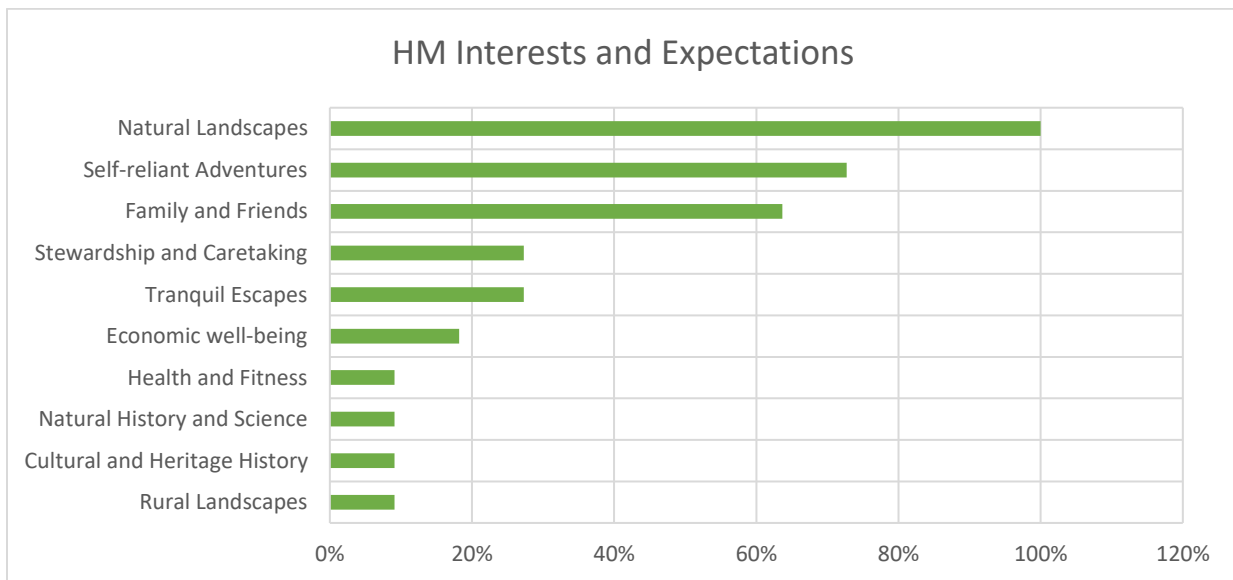


Figure 25- Interests and Expectations: HM



When asked if their last visit to the landscape met their expectations, or whether they were surprised by anything, most indicated they were satisfied with the landscape relative to their expectations, or that they were pleasantly surprised by some condition they found there. Although several noted an increase in recreation as a result of COVID (especially in the digital focus groups that took place after lock downs were in place), they seemed to be pleasantly surprised by the diversity in the increased numbers of recreationists, and appreciated the

opportunity to share public lands with people who might not visit them as frequently. A couple noted that the crowding changed the experience for them, and not entirely in a positive manner, but they agreed about the importance of having these recreation resources for people during the pandemic. Several participants noted disappointment at trash, litter and broken bottles in the HR66/BM area. Recent trash in that area seems to be a real problem for the participants offering comments. Others commented on the erosion and damage to the roads in the HM area. There were also a few comments about trash and damage to signs in the HM area.

### Activities

After considering their expectations and desired outcomes when recreating in the selected area, participants were asked which activities they engaged in most often when visiting public lands in the area. Because many visitors to public lands combine several activities during any particular visit, participants were allowed to select up to three activities they engage in most often in the area. The responses are recorded below in **Error! Reference source not found..** The activities question really shows marked differences in how each area is used. In several of the areas, the most frequent selections were for motorized activities, but that is distinctly not the case in the CF and BC areas, although car camping is still popular in both of those areas. Scenic driving is another popular activity in the JT/GWC, HR66/BM and HM areas, and less so in the CF area. It is not even selected in the BC area.

Figure 26- Activities: BC

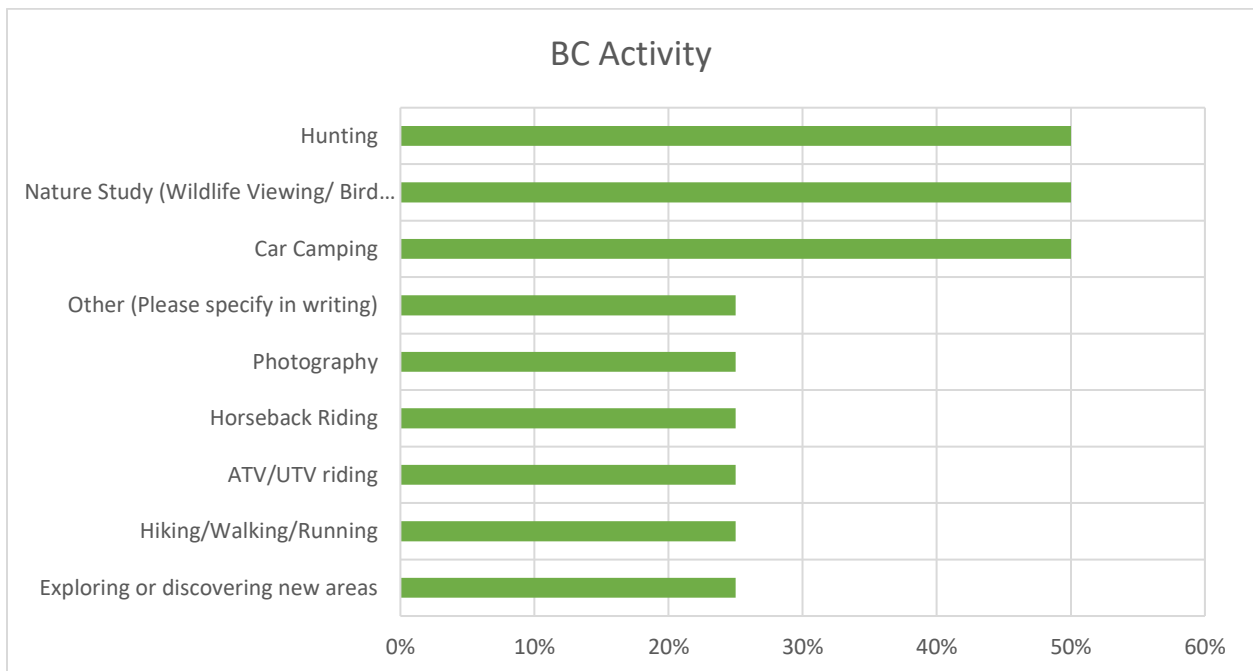


Figure 27- Activities: CF

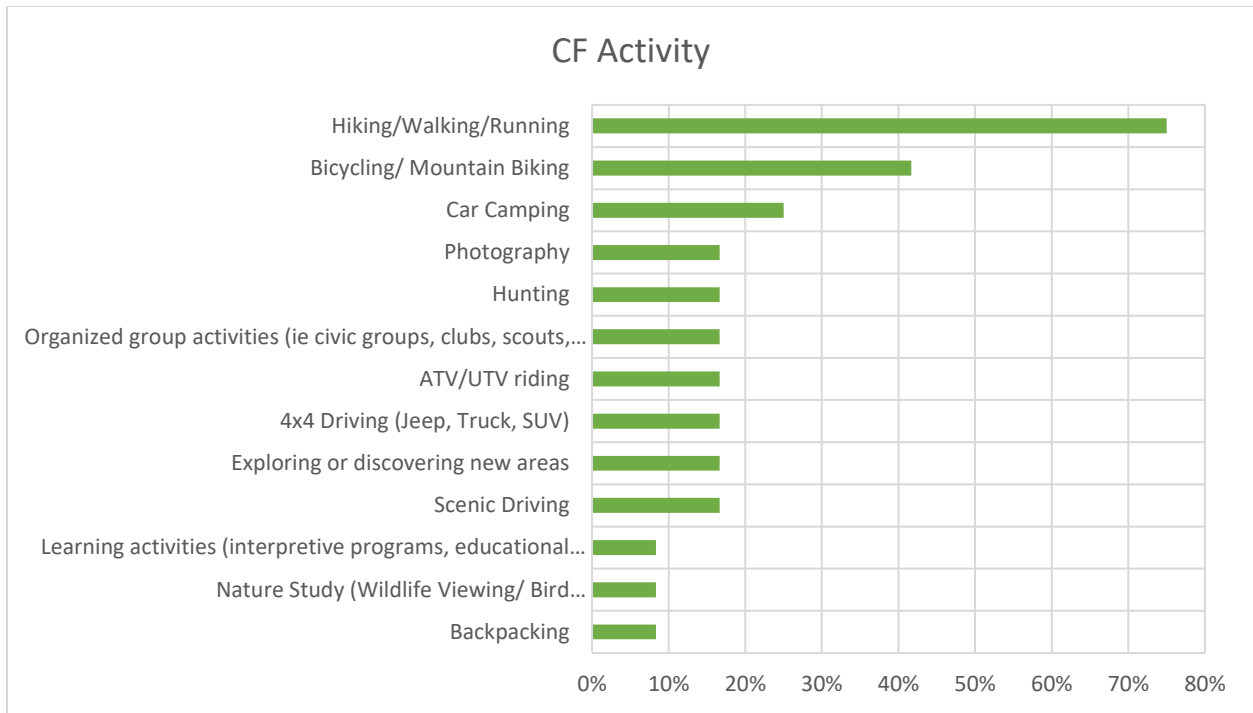


Figure 28- Activities: JT/GWC

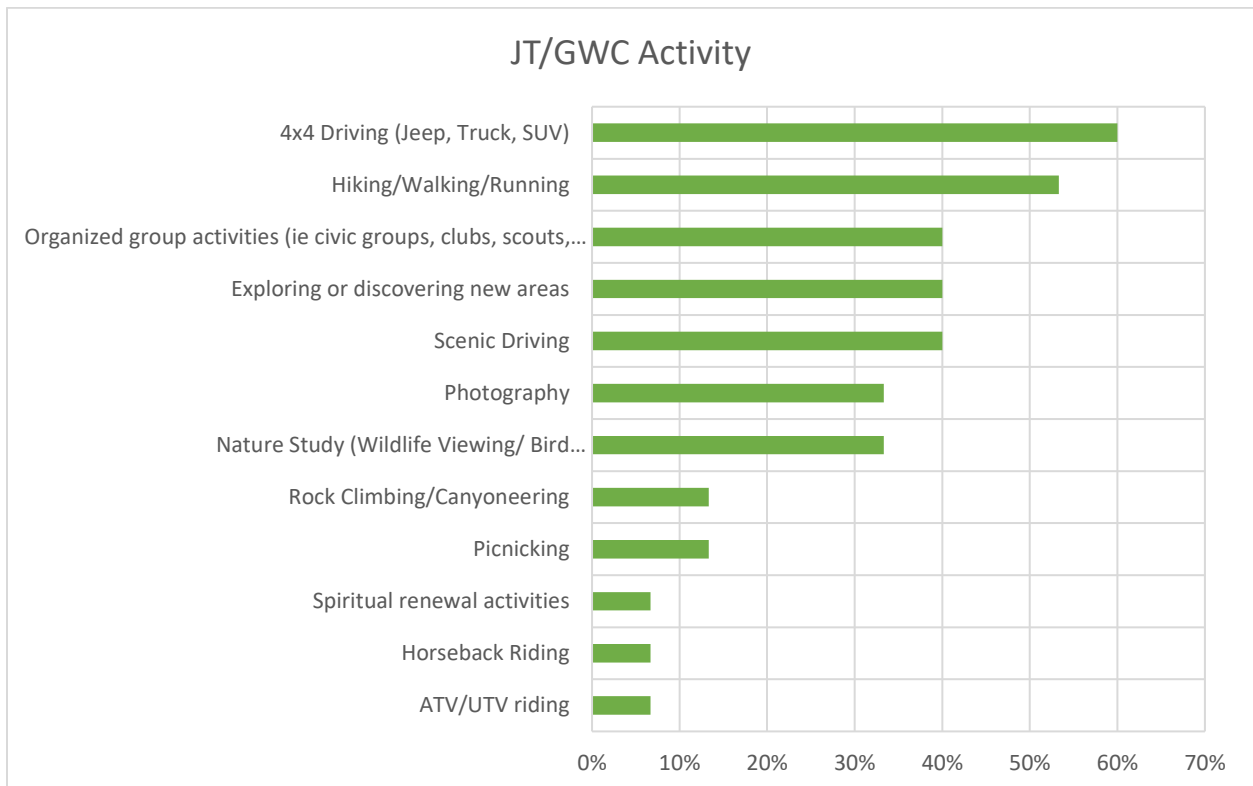


Figure 29- Activities: HR66/BM

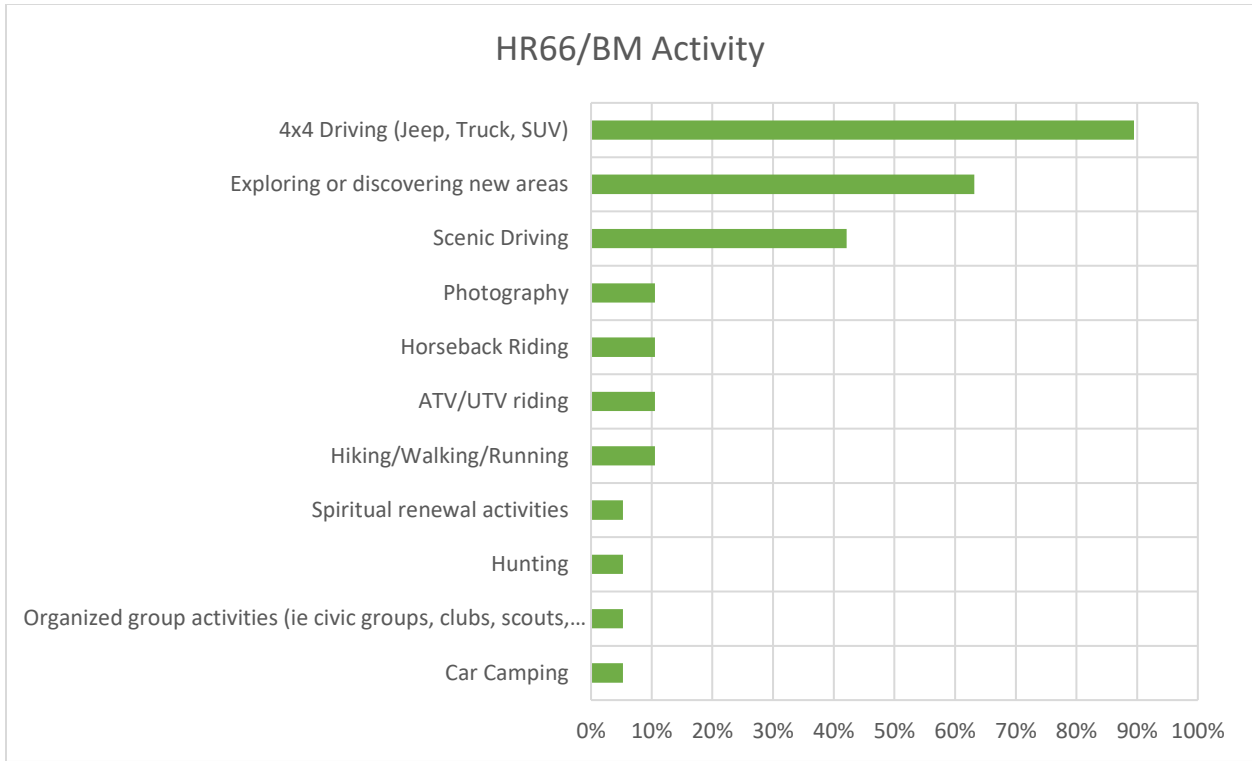
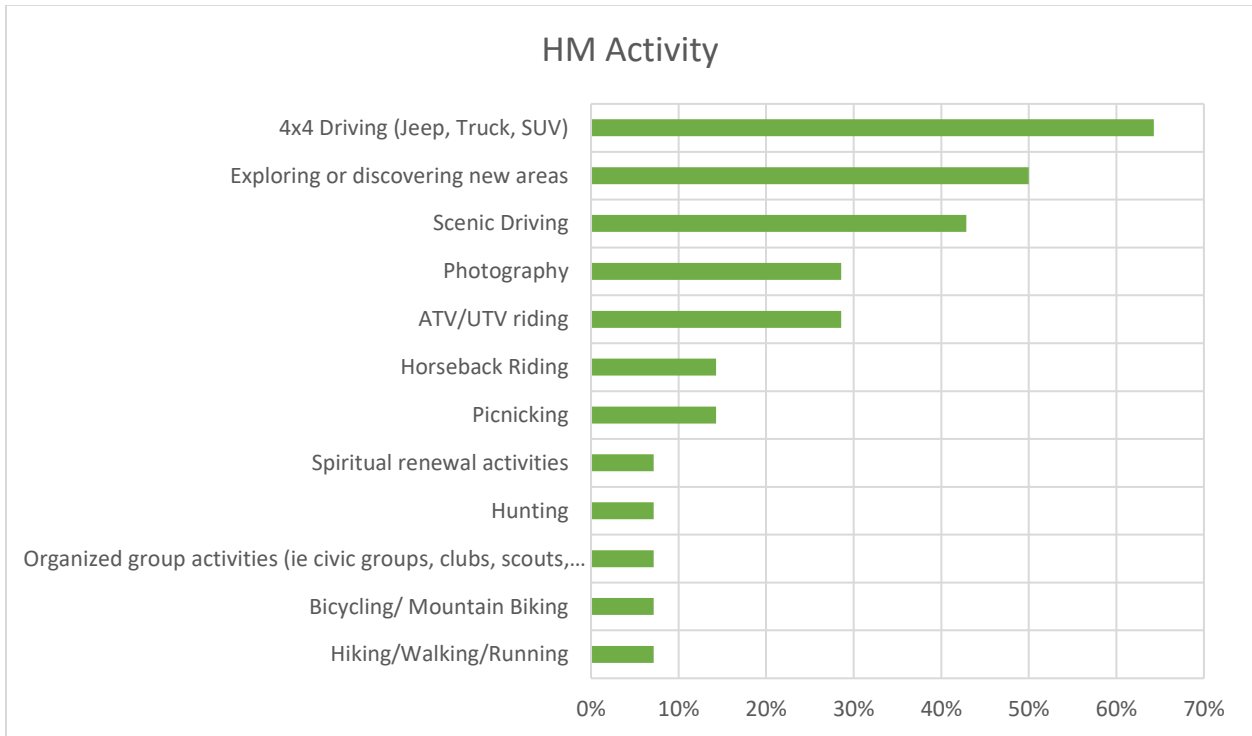


Figure 30- Activities: HM



## Benefits from Public Land Recreation in the Kingman Field Office Area

Participants were asked to respond to a series of listed potential benefits of outdoor recreation by indicating which ones were most desirable to them. They were shown three different lists of between 19 and 11 different benefits, each corresponding roughly to the categories of personal benefits, household benefits, and community benefits. Each participant was asked to select up to three benefits from each list as a way of focusing on those they think are most important for their recreational experience on this area's public lands. The study of benefits that the individual or their community gains from recreation on public lands has become one of the principal tools that the BLM and other land agencies use in managing landscapes for outdoor recreation<sup>7</sup>. The results of all responses to the lists of personal, household, and community benefits are recorded **Error! Reference source not found.** in Figures 31-45. Responses are broken out according to the level of benefit (personal, household or community and environmental) as well as the study area they are associated with based on the study area selected by the participant that offered the benefits answers. A careful reading of the following charts will highlight important distinctions between the areas in each of the categories of benefits.

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<sup>7</sup> A sampling of the relevant laws, regulations, and guidelines regarding the role of benefits in planning for outdoor recreation would include: The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) (43 U.S.C. 1701 et. seq.), which governs the overall management of public lands including recreation values (Sec. 102(a), 202, etc.); the Outdoor Recreation Act of 1963 (16 U.S.C. 4601-1), which promotes and coordinates the development of programs for outdoor recreation; the Federal Lands Recreation and Enhancement Act of 2004 (16 U.S.C. 6804), which regulates recreation fees and allocation; as well as the BLM Handbook 8320 – Planning for Recreation and Visitor Services (Public), which went into effect 2011. This final document specifically highlights outcomes-focused management (formally known as benefits-based management) as the standard approach for BLM recreation planning.



## Personal Benefits

Figure 31- Personal Benefits from recreation: BC

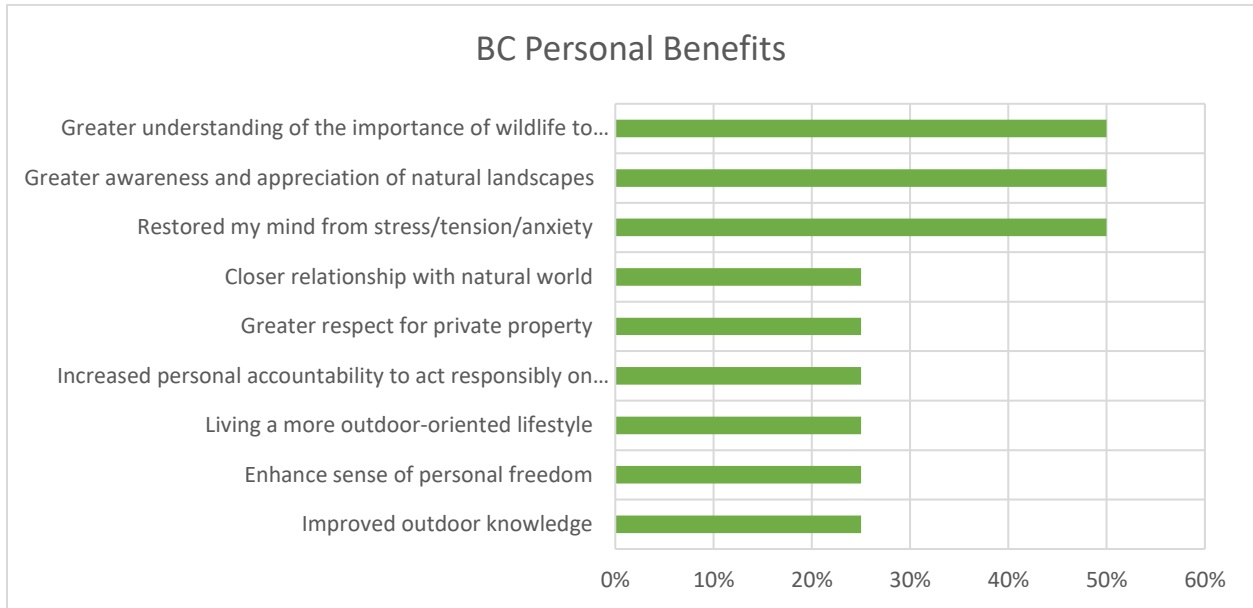


Figure 32- Personal Benefits from recreation: CF

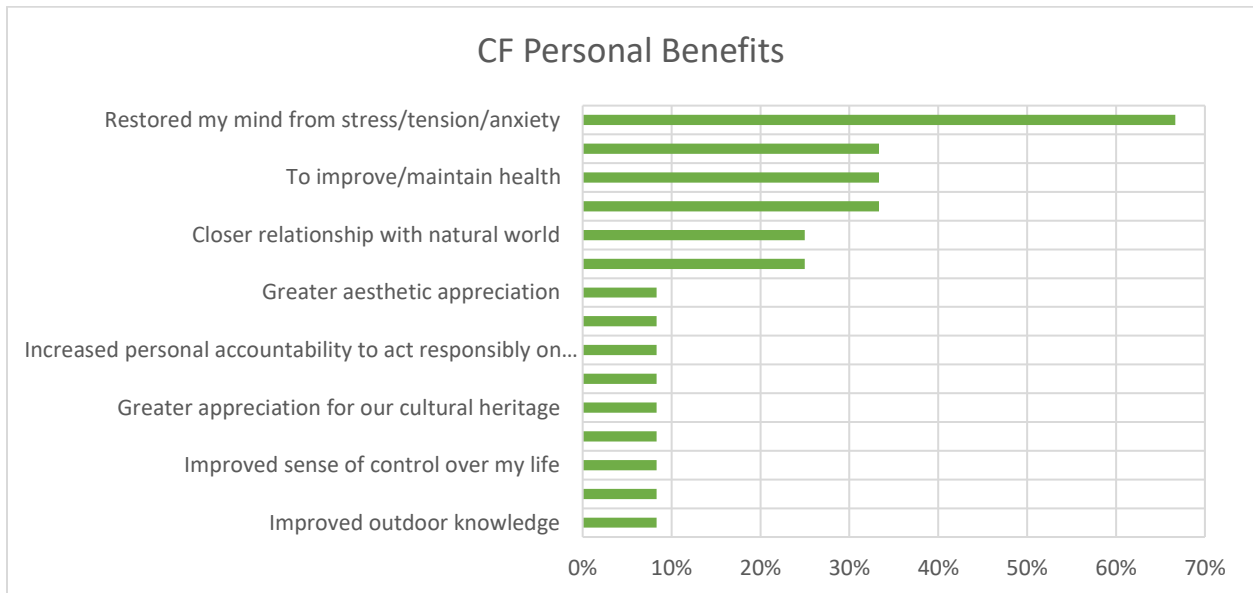


Figure 33- Personal Benefits from recreation: JT/GWC

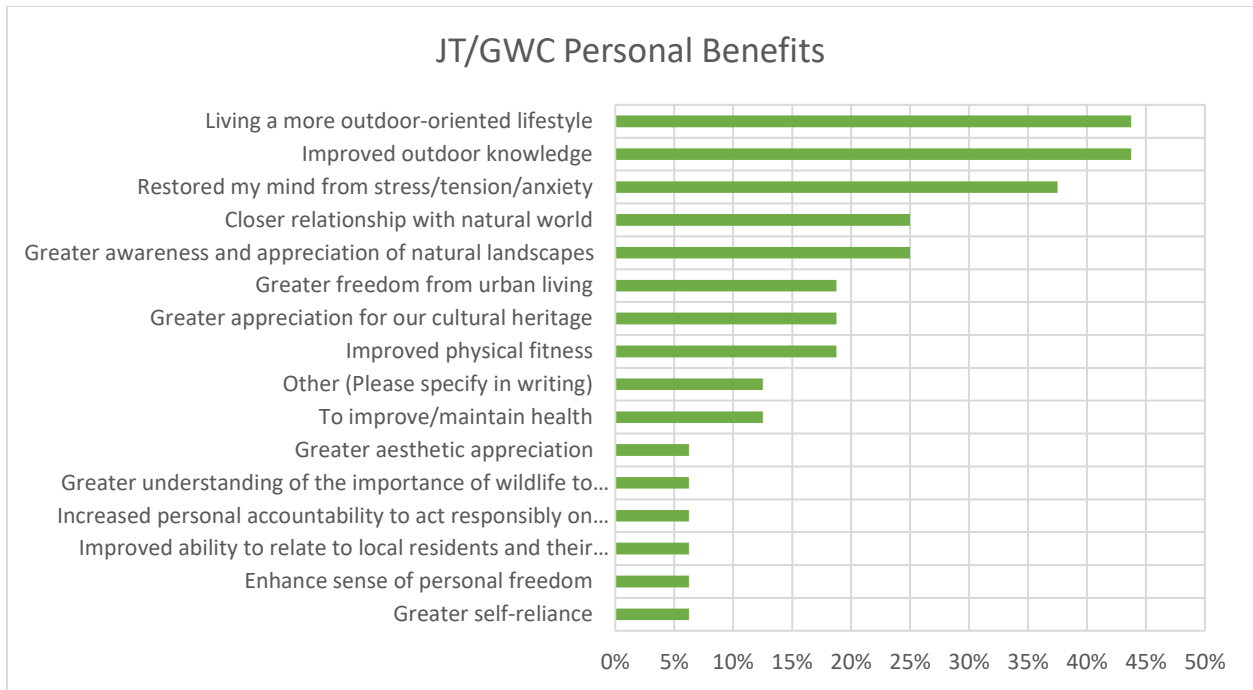


Figure 34- Personal Benefits from recreation: HR66/BM

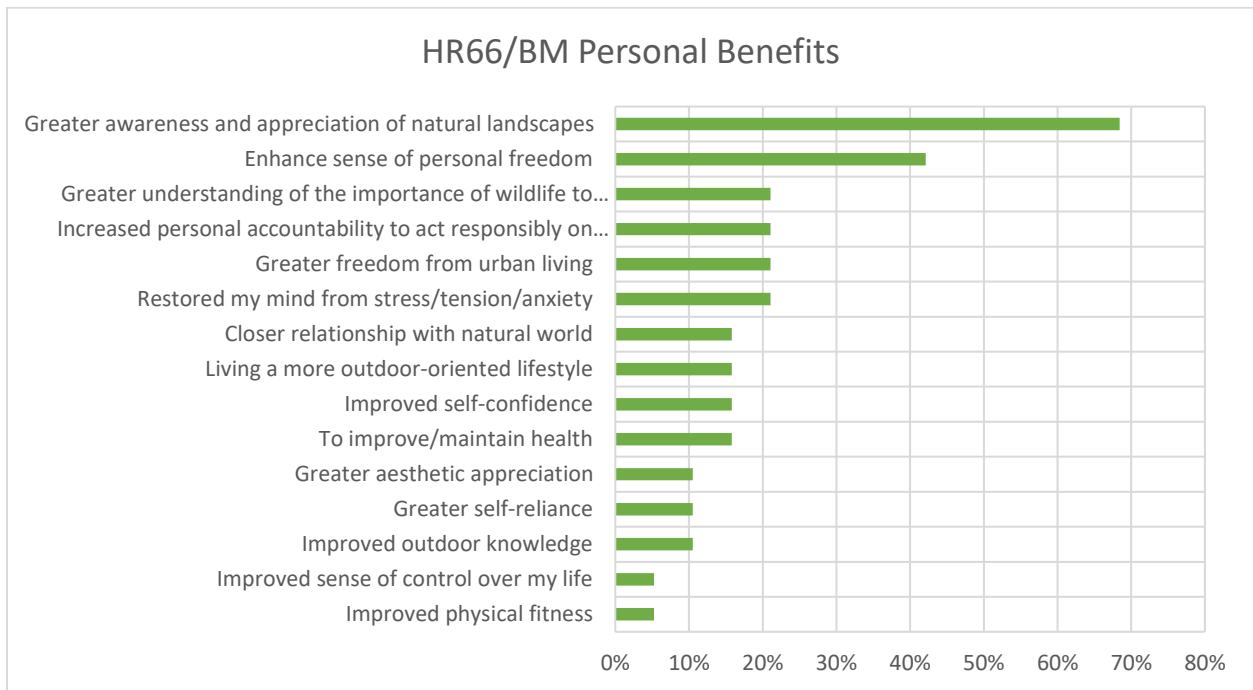
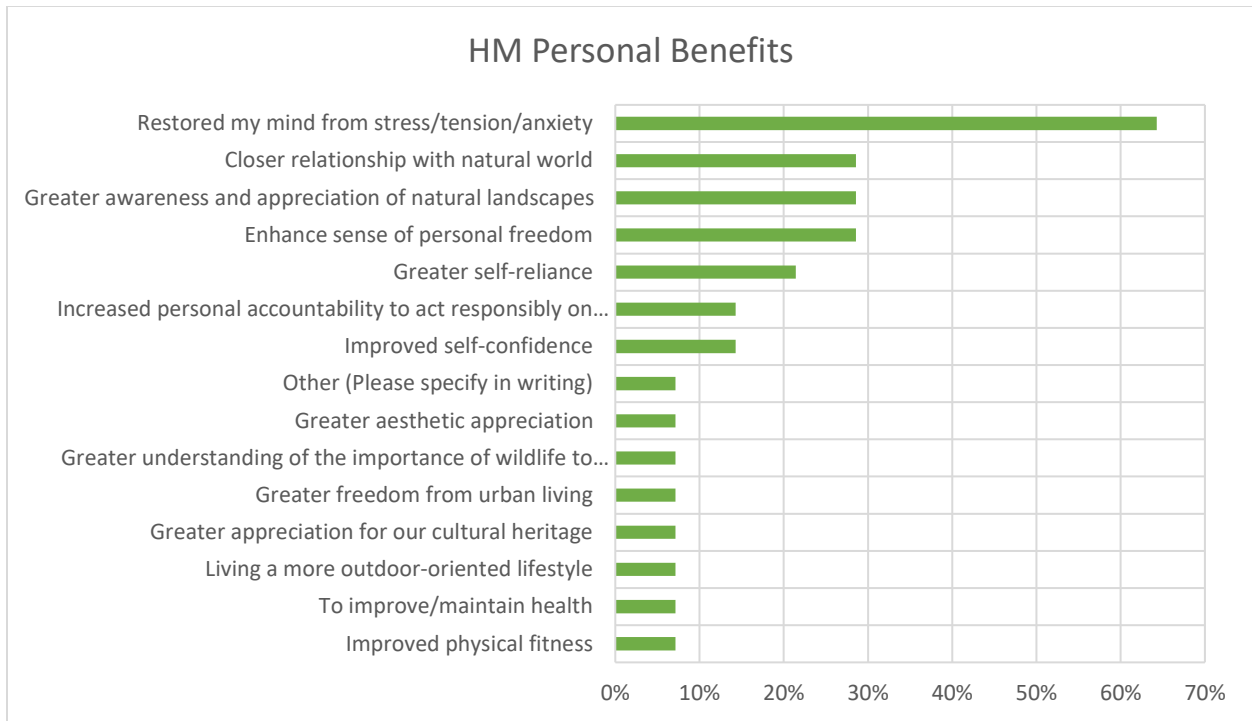


Figure 35- Personal Benefits from recreation: HM



### Household Benefits

The benefits of recreating on public lands are not limited to the individuals who happens to recreate there, they also accrue for families of those engaged in recreation (BLM, 2014; National Park Service, 2011). Although several of the options to select were similar, the conversation around these benefits indicated the close tie between the landscape and a person’s quality of life, particularly family life that is enhanced and supported through outdoor recreation. Experiences are often limited to the time of the recreation, while benefits often last long after the recreation is done and can be obtained by people even if they themselves were not the ones recreating. In fact, most of the household, community and environmental benefits are accrued by individuals who are not direct participants in the recreation. This is an important aspect of outdoor recreation and is not well understood by members of the public when they think about why they recreate in an area. A common response to these “broader” benefits categories and options was to agree that they seem obvious once they were mentioned, but they were not generally considered prior to the conversation even if they were acquired by the individual recreator and their larger community. It is worth noting that “improved health” was a highly desirable benefit for participants in the CF, JT/GWS and HM areas selected by nearly half of all the participants in those areas, while it was selected by only a few in the HR66/BM area and by no one in the BC area.

Figure 36- Household Benefits from recreation: BC

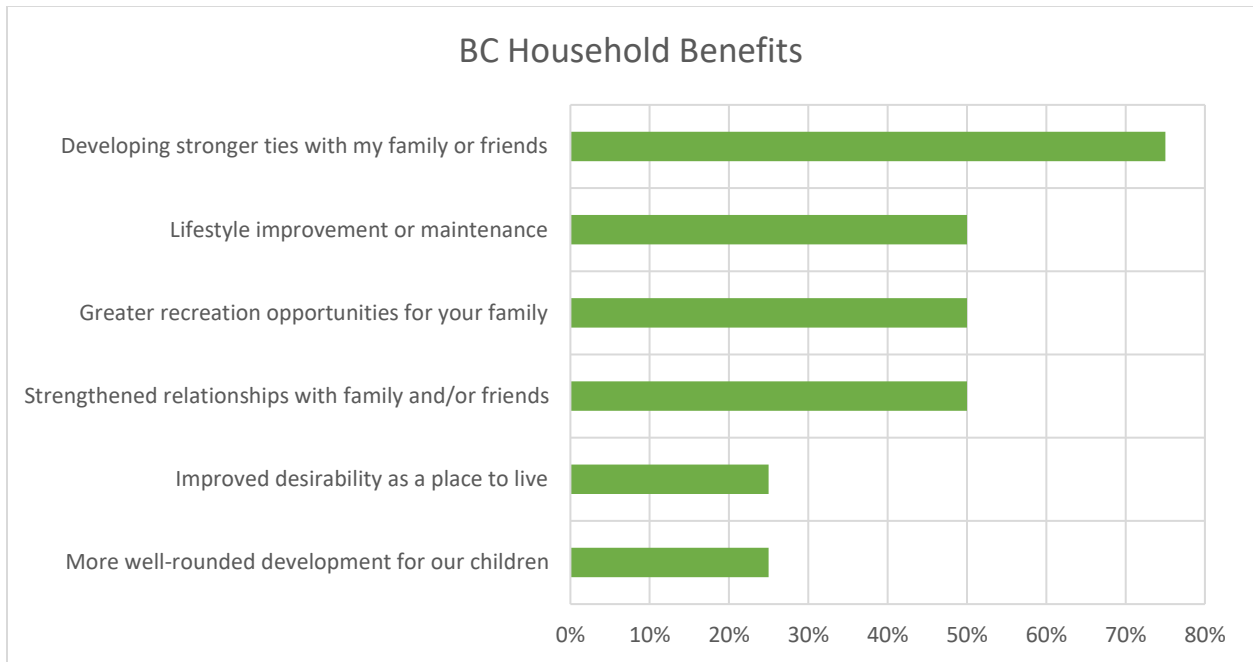


Figure 37- Household Benefits from Recreation: CF

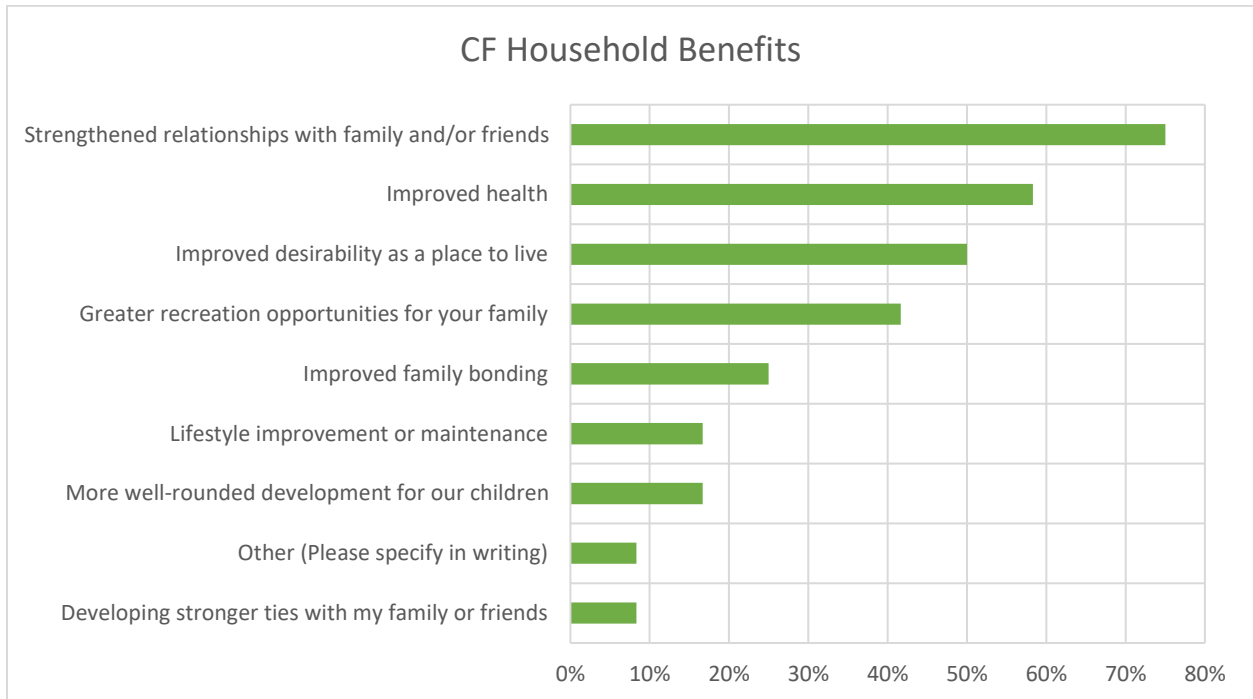


Figure 38- Household Benefits from recreation: JT/GWC

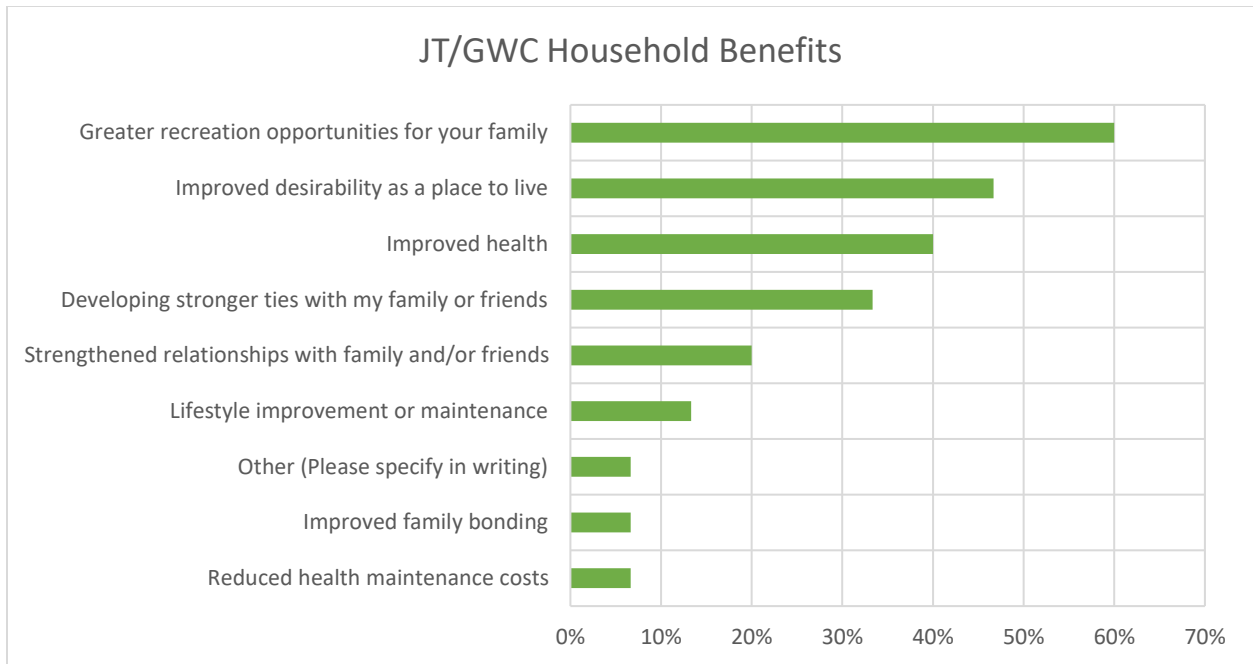


Figure 39- Household Benefits from recreation: HR66/BM

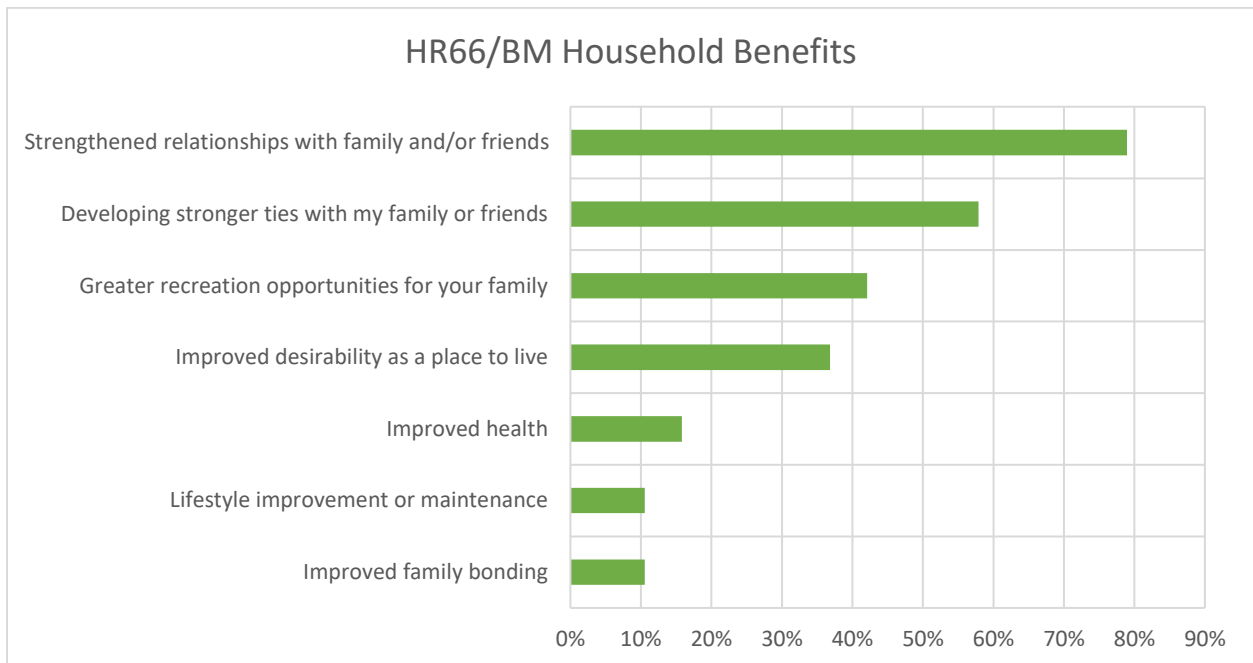
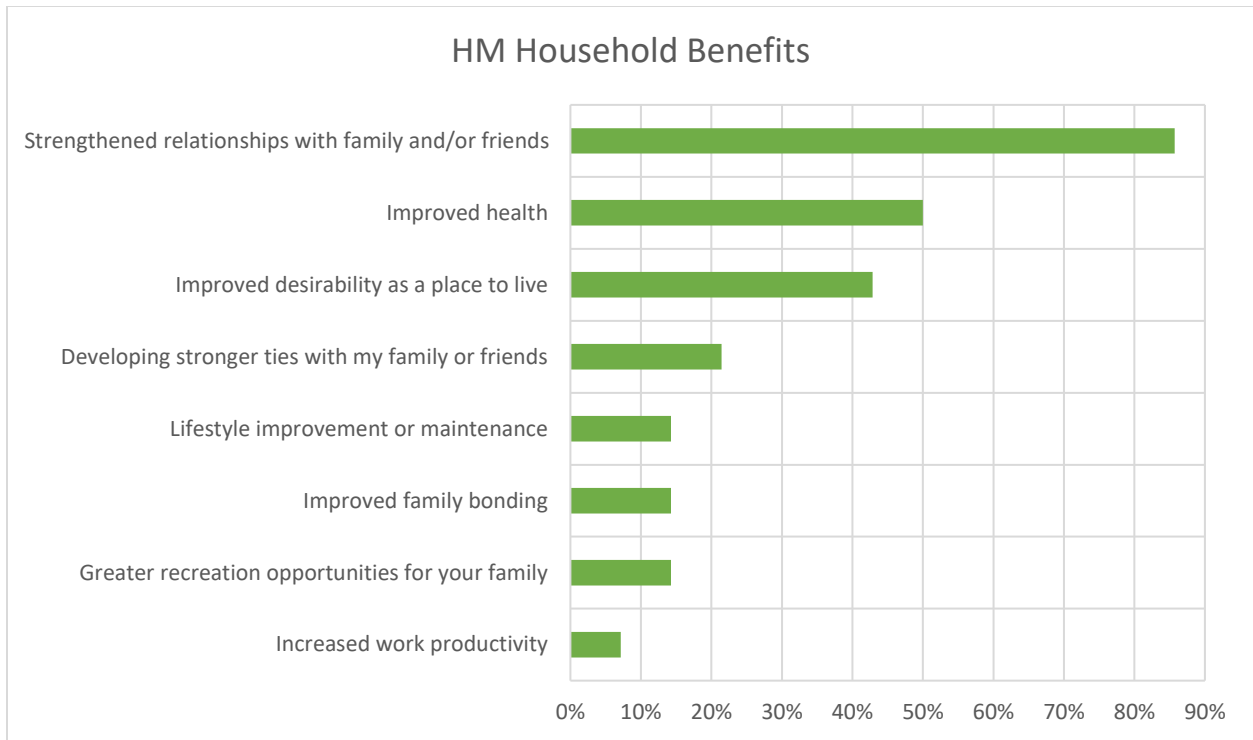


Figure 40- Household Benefits from recreation: HM



### Community and Environmental Benefits

Finally, participants were asked about benefits realized for the community or the environment from their recreation on public lands. This was a harder category for them to initially identify, but once they thought about the opportunities for benefit, a good discussion developed around these “side-effects” of individual recreation on public lands in the areas around their community.

Figure 41- Community and Environmental Benefits from recreation: BC

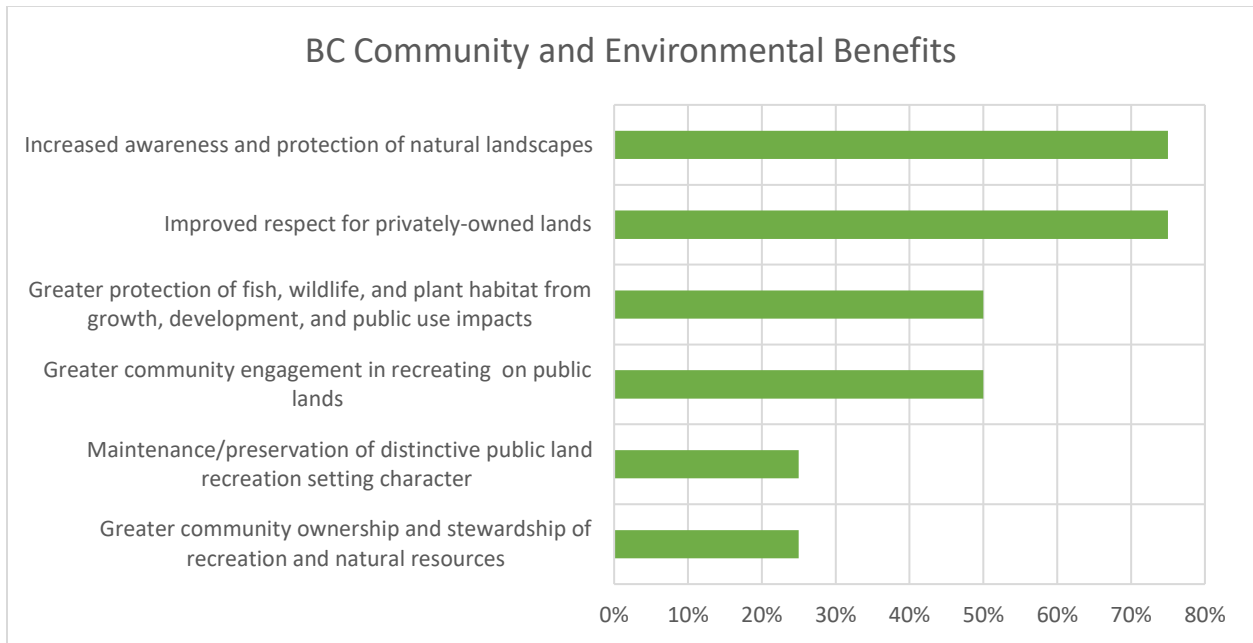


Figure 42- Community and Environmental Benefits from recreation: CF

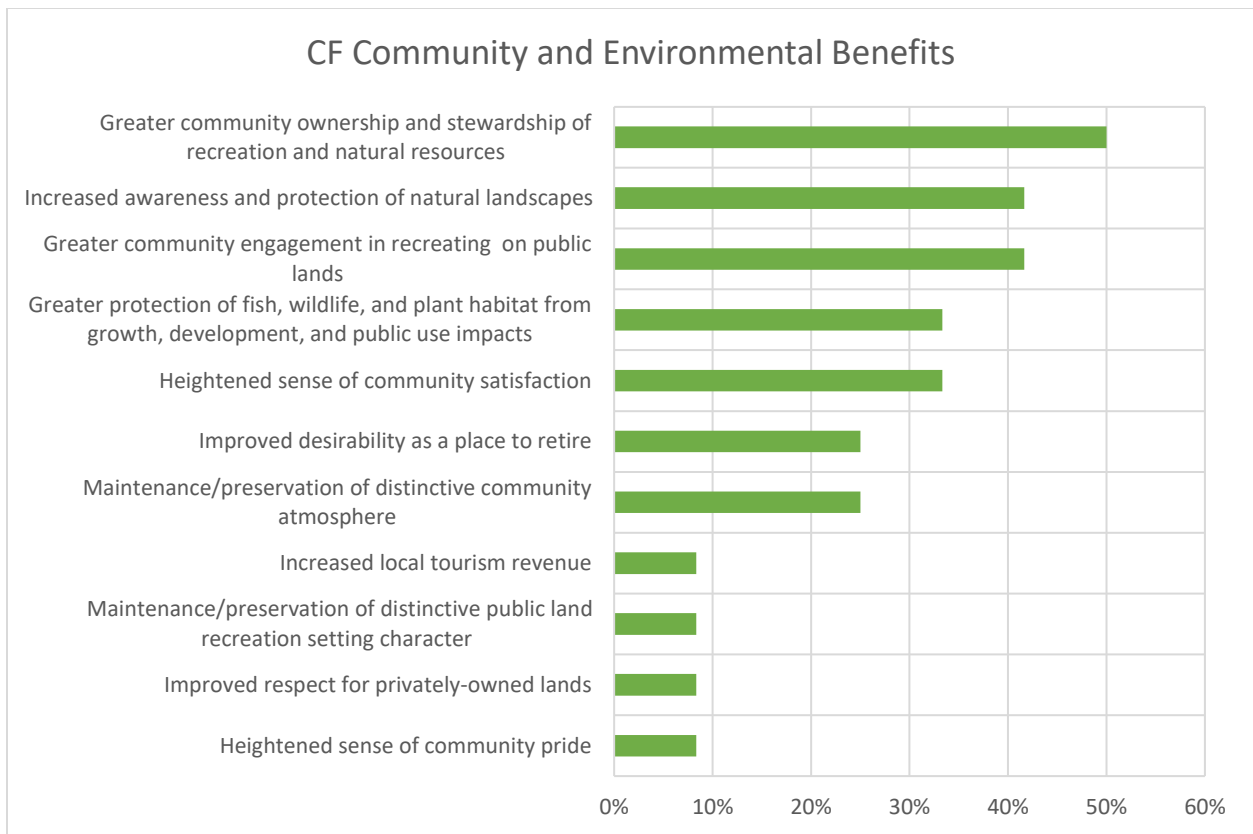


Figure 43- Community and Environmental Benefits from recreation: JT/GWC

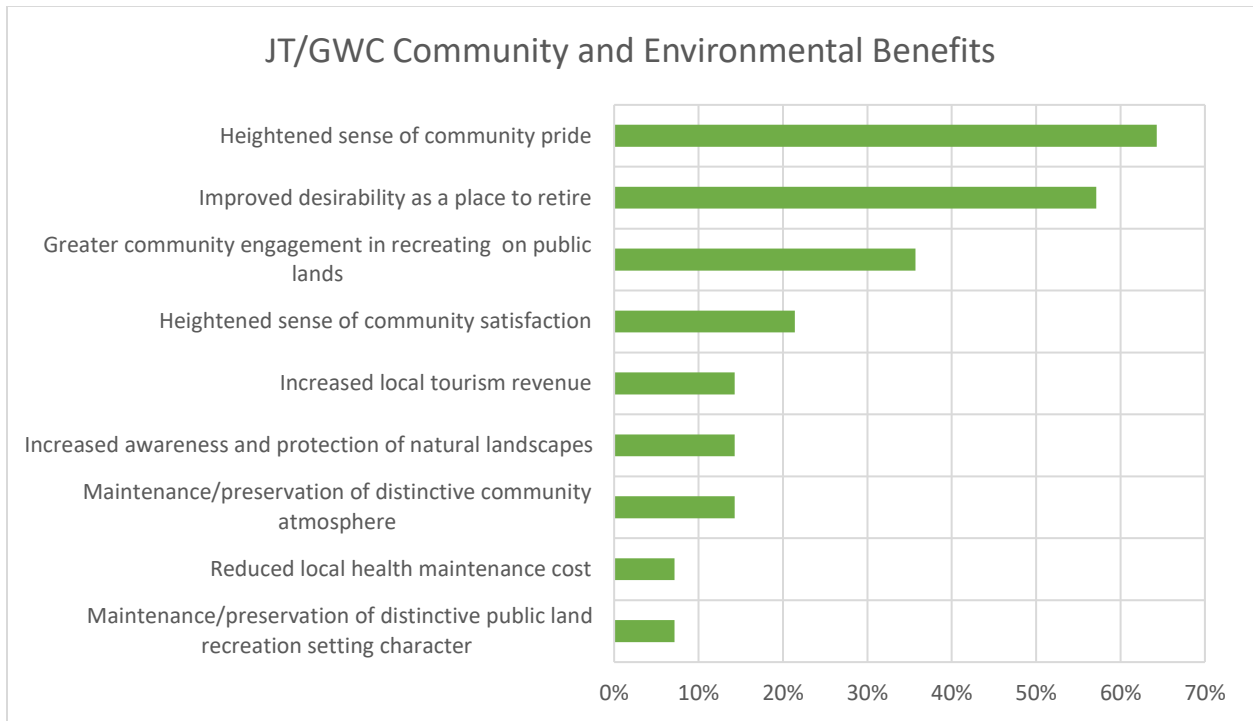


Figure 44- Community and Environmental Benefits from recreation: HR66/BM

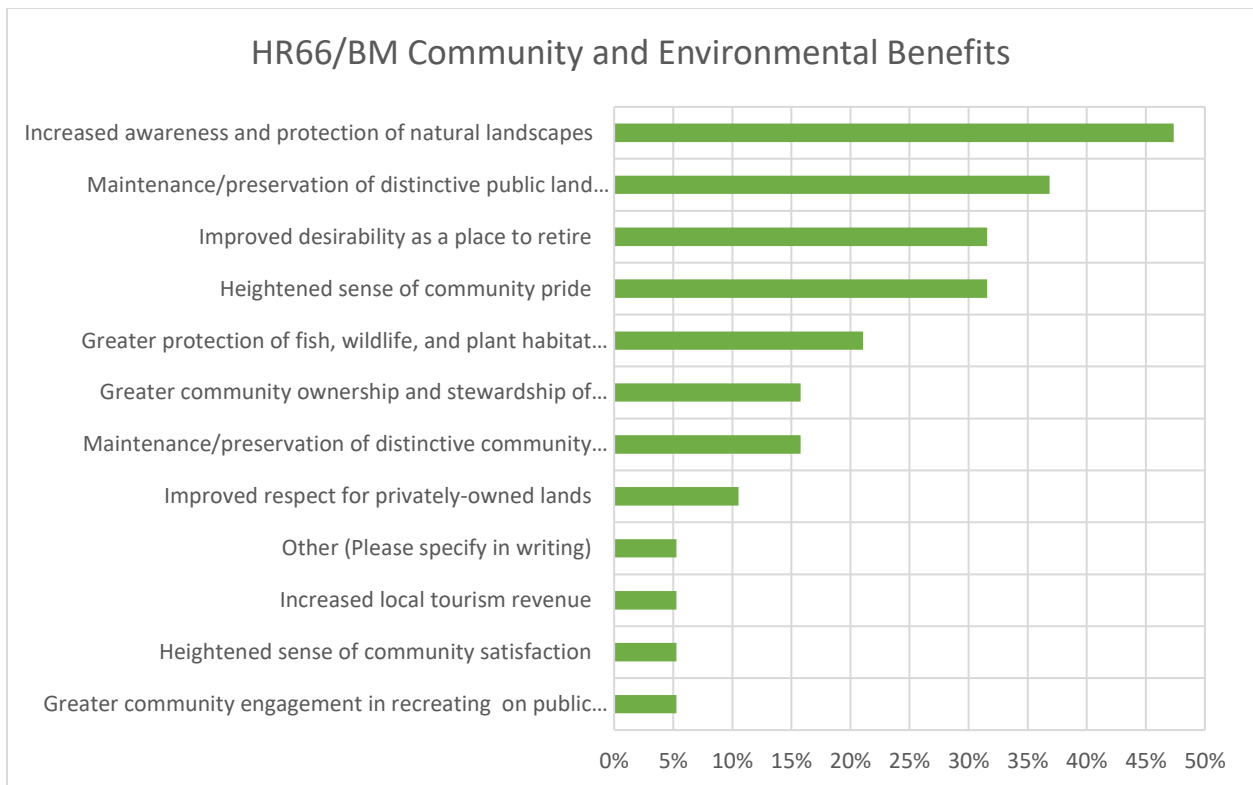
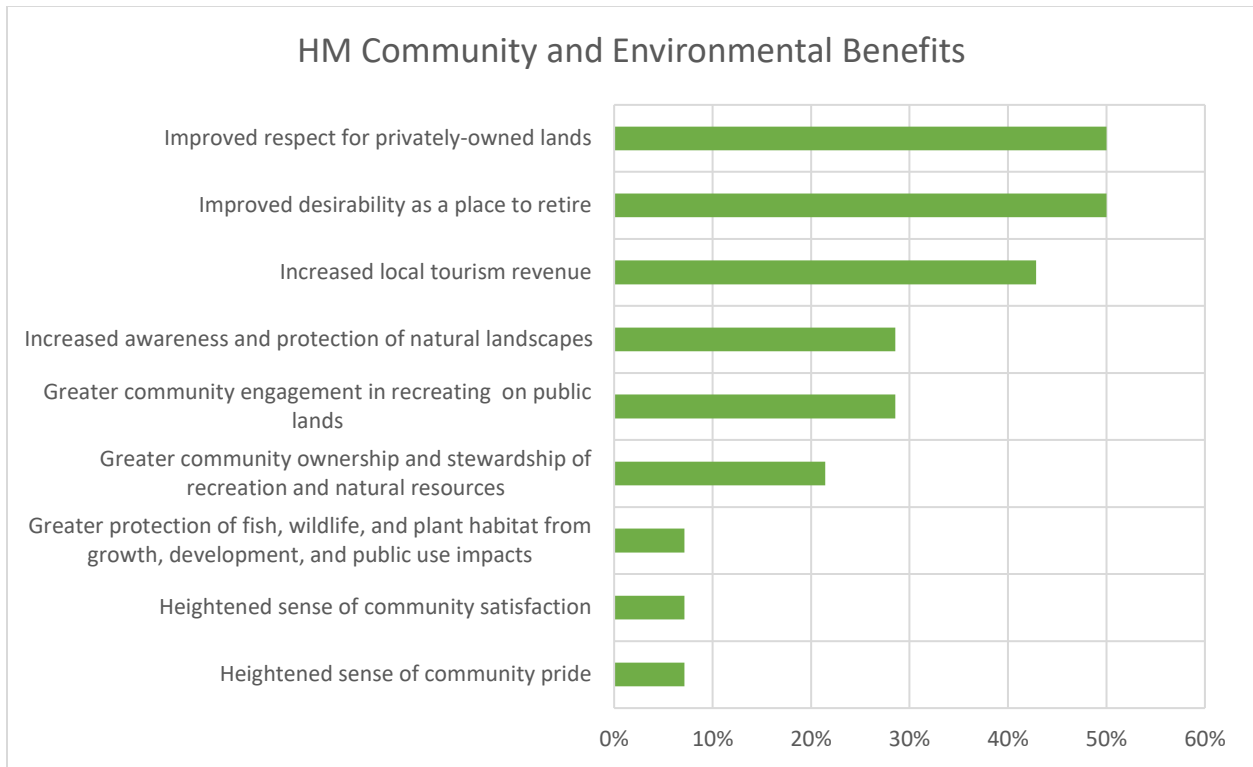




Figure 45- Community and Environmental Benefits from recreation: HM



### Changes in the Landscape

Participants were asked about their perception of change in use in the area over the last five years, and whether those changes had made the conditions of the landscape better or worse. The majority of participants in every area identified an increase of use in their areas. The effects seem to be most pronounced in the BC and CF areas and least in the JT/GWC area. The graph in Figure 46 below shows the relative change in each area over the last 5 years as perceived by the participants in the study. The participants were asked a follow up question on how the change they indicated as affected the resources in that area. Again, the impact is most pronounced and has led to an overall worsening of conditions in the BC and CF areas, and less so, or even positive change in the HM and JT/GWC areas of the study. Participants were asked to elaborate on why the change in use had the impact (positive or negative) that they identified. The notes on that discussion can be found in Appendix 3 for the in-person focus groups. Written comments on the handouts indicated the increased use has led to trash and crowding issues and a loss of solitude which have worsened the experience. However, some indicated the increased use provided an opportunity to share the landscape and the history of the area with other visitors who might not be as familiar with the area.

Figure 46- Perceived change in use over the last 5 years

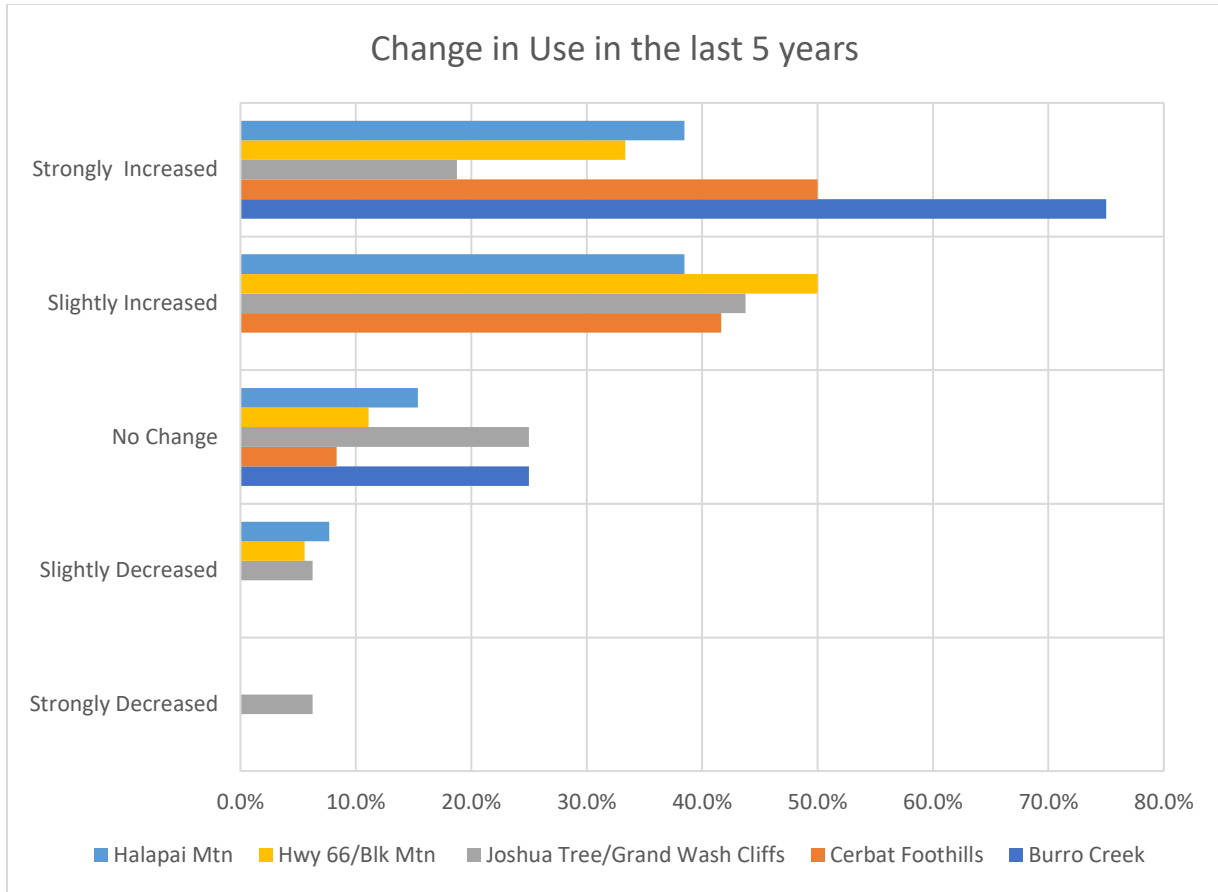
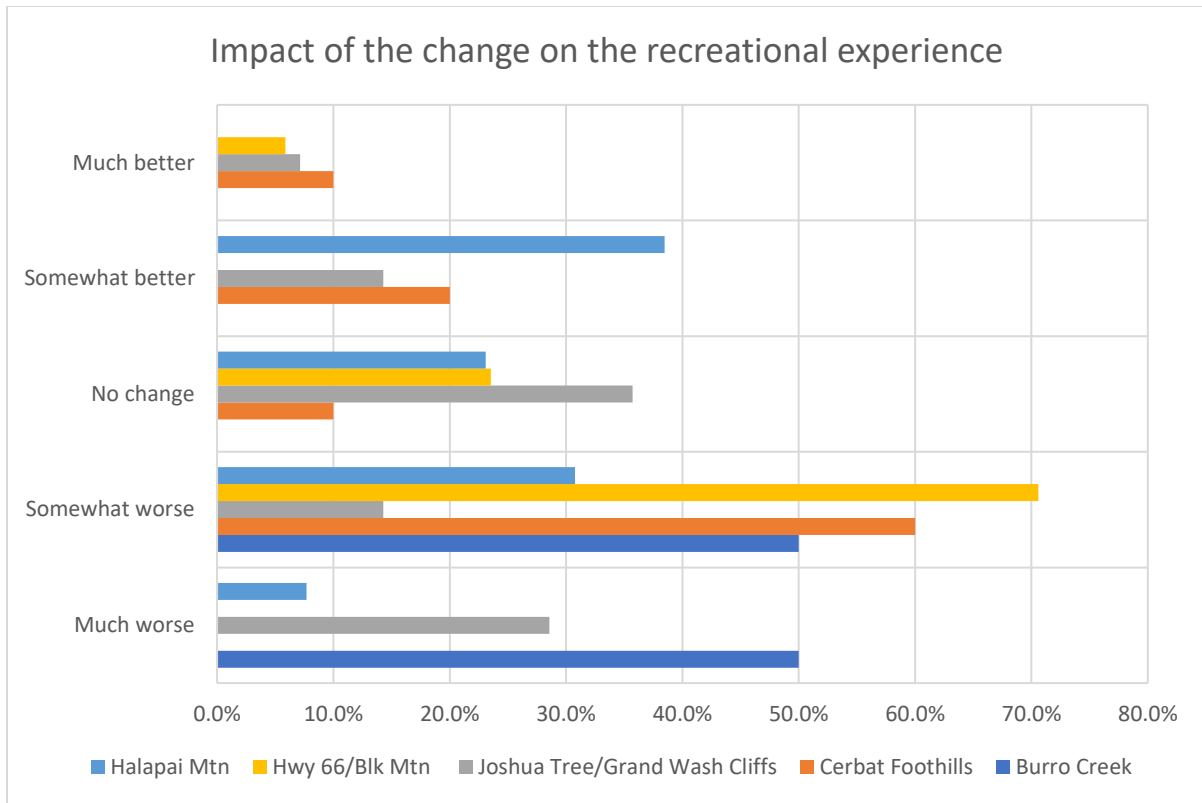


Figure 47- Impact of use change on resource



### Information and Services

An important aspect of a successful outdoor recreation experience is quality information used in preparation for the outing, and a variety of services that support those experiences. Participants were asked to identify all sources of information and services they rely on. The graphs in the next ten figures below display the results and popularity of these information sources and services the participants rely on to be successful in their recreation in the area.

Figure 48- Information: BC

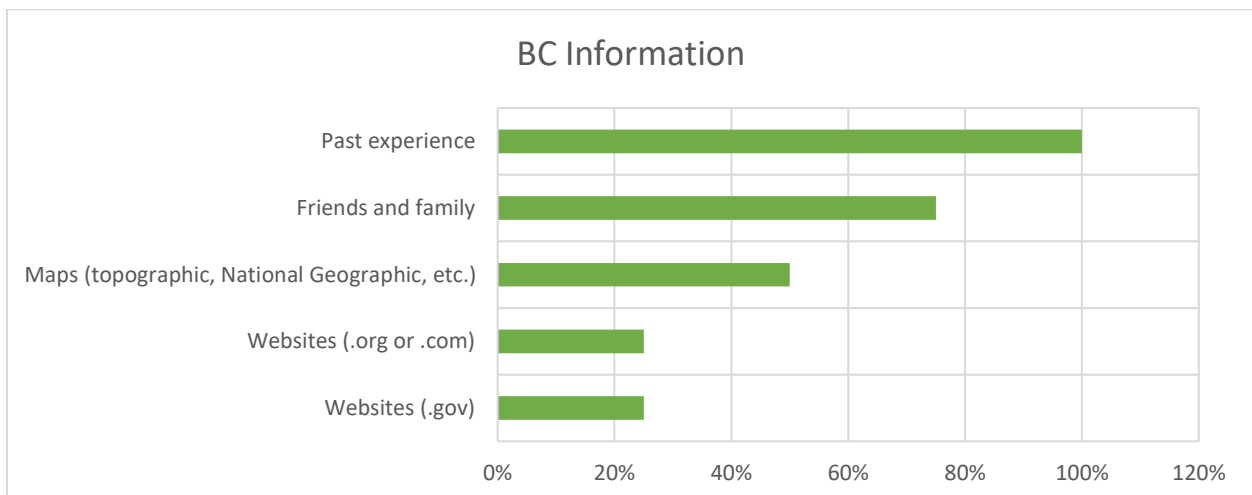


Figure 49- Information: CF

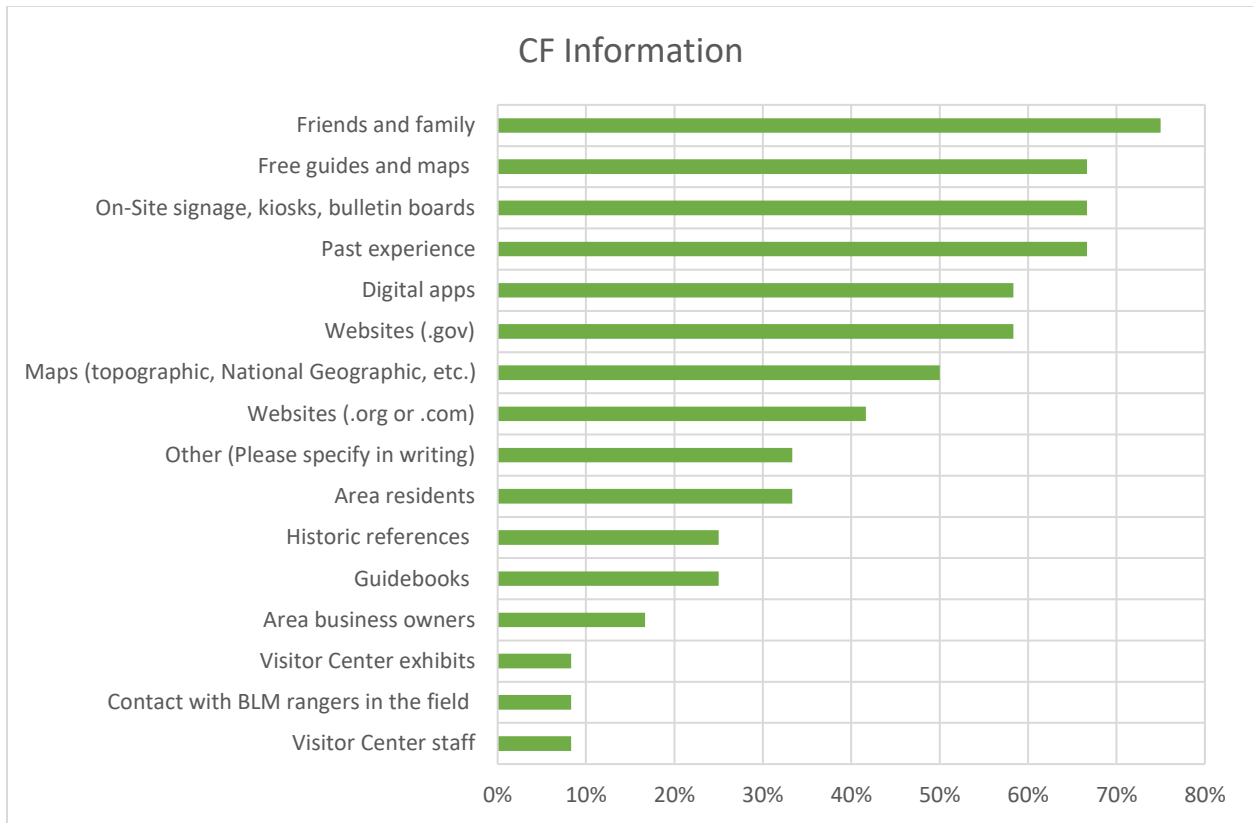


Figure 50- Information: JT/GWC

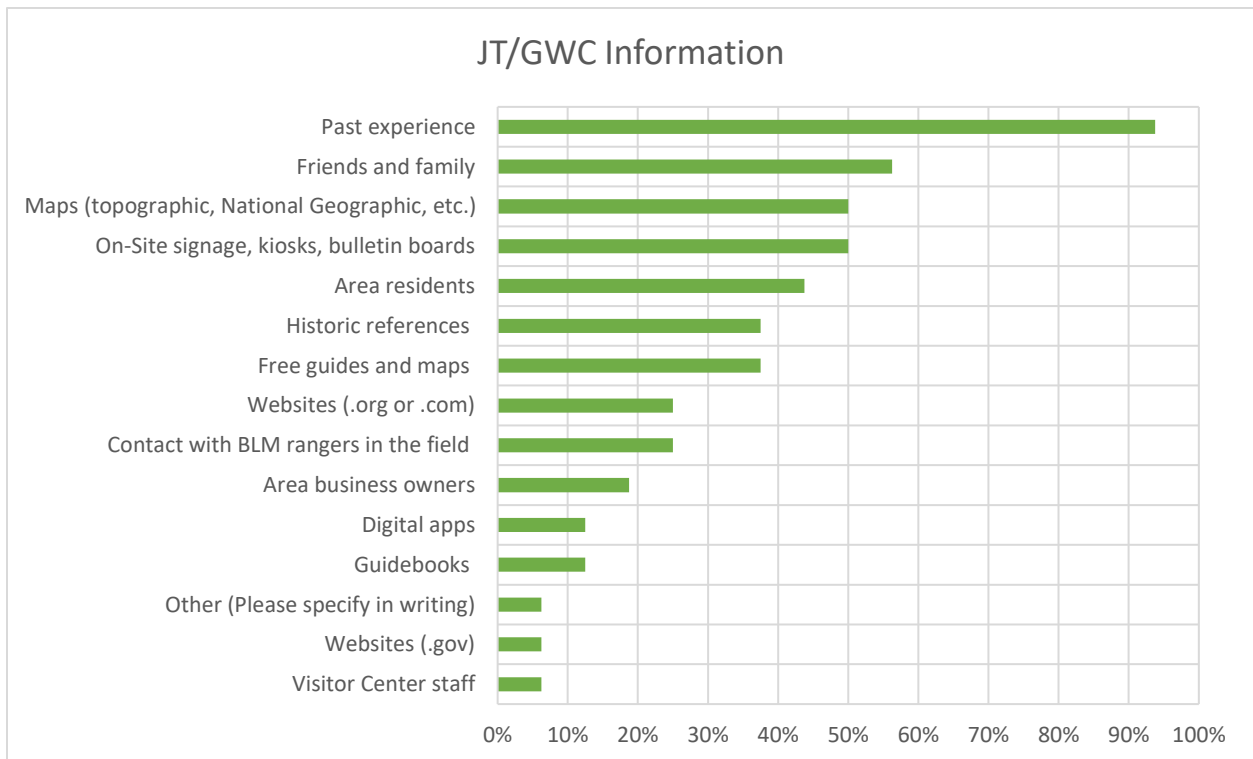


Figure 51- Information: HR66/BM

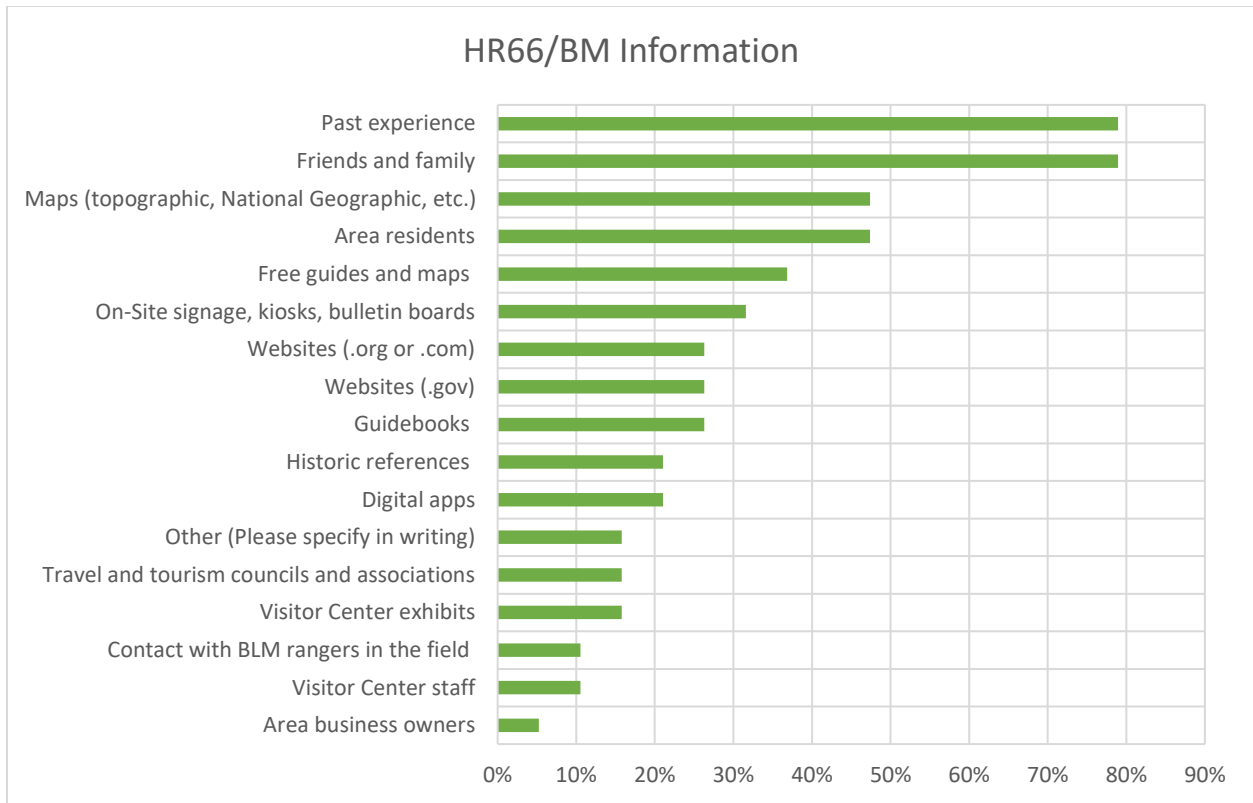


Figure 52- Information: HM

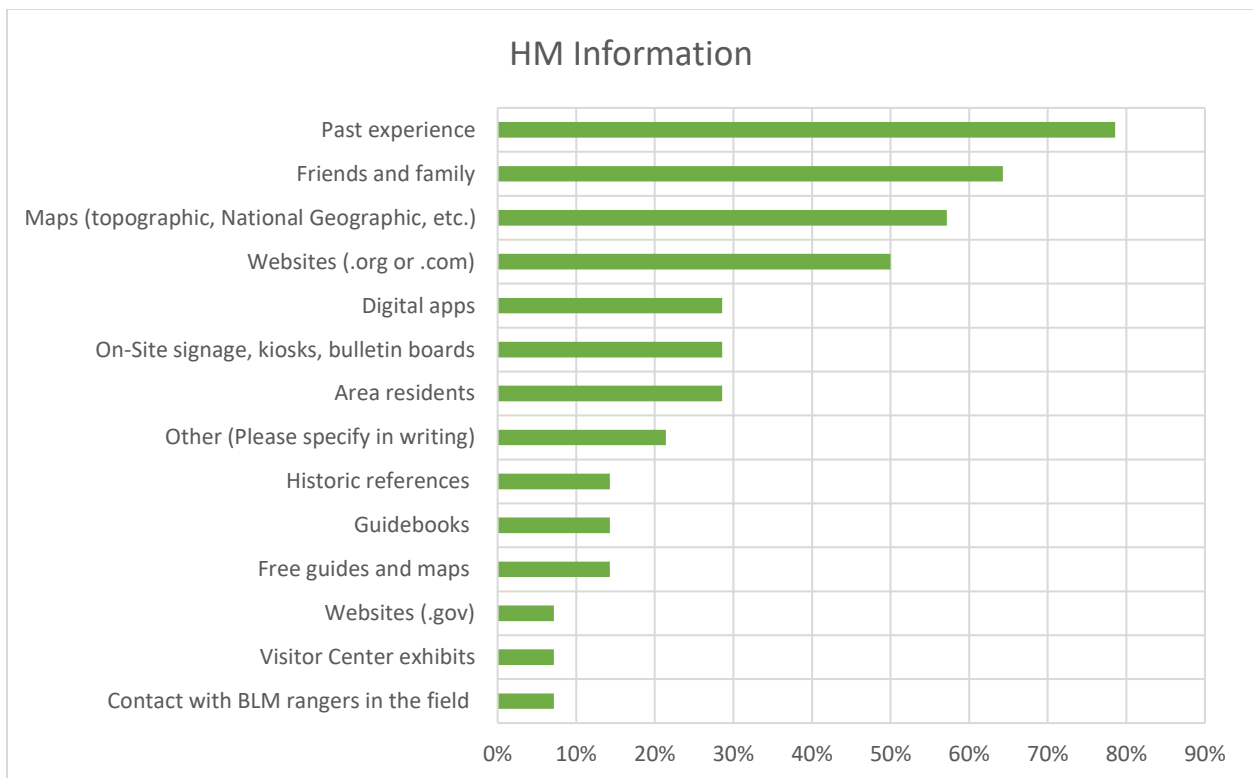


Figure 53- Services needed for recreation: BC

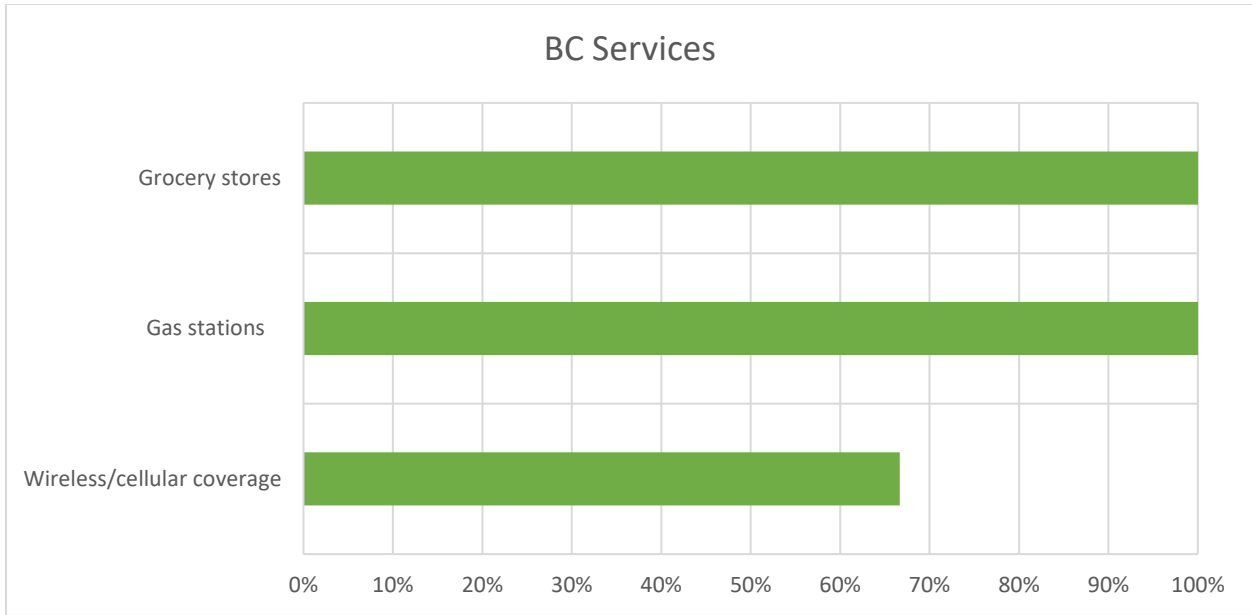


Figure 54- Services needed for recreation: CF

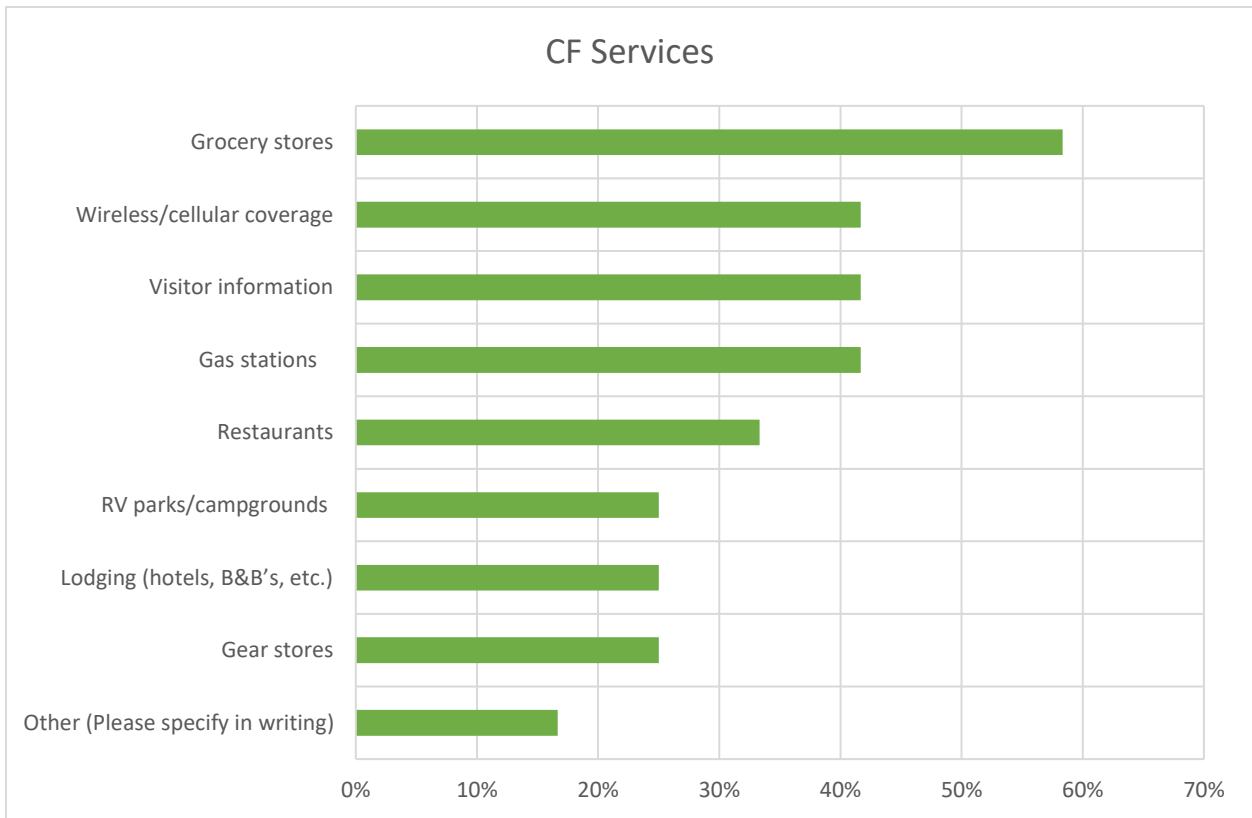


Figure 55- Services needed for recreation: JT/GWC

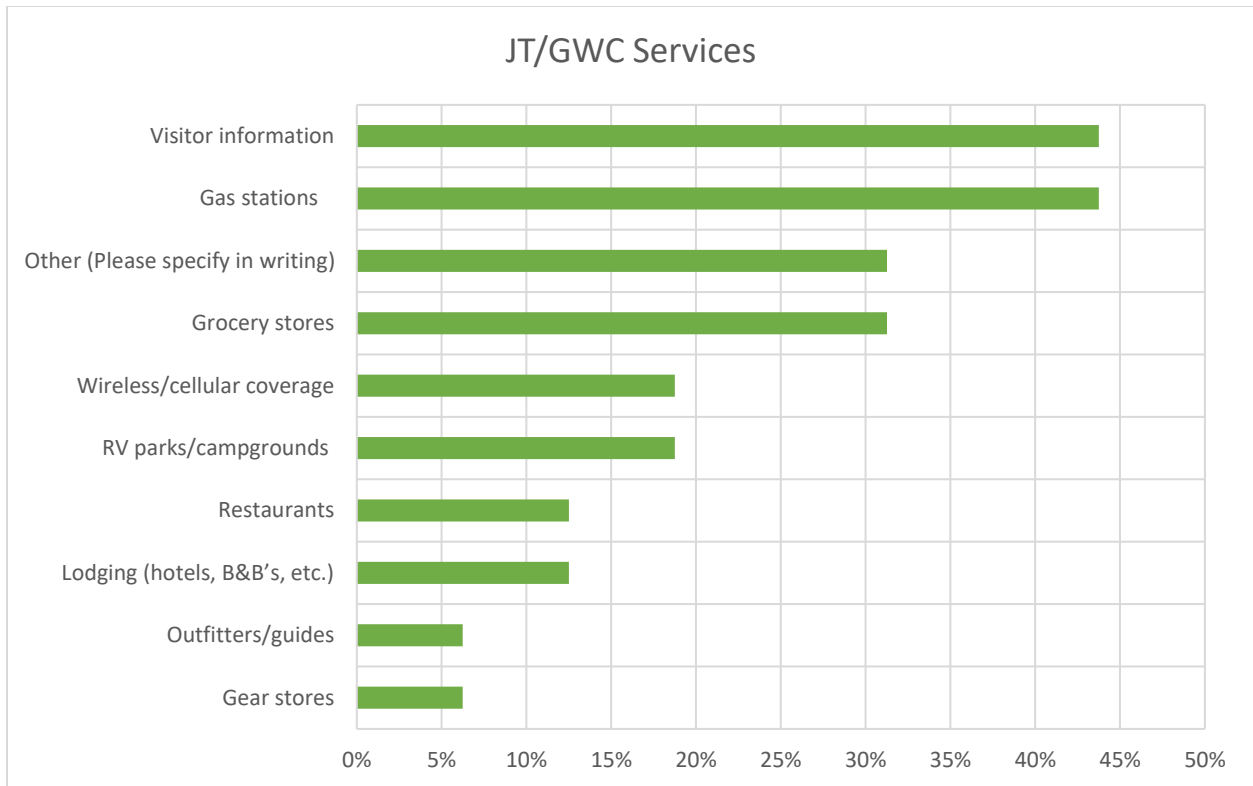


Figure 56- Services needed for recreation: HR66/BM

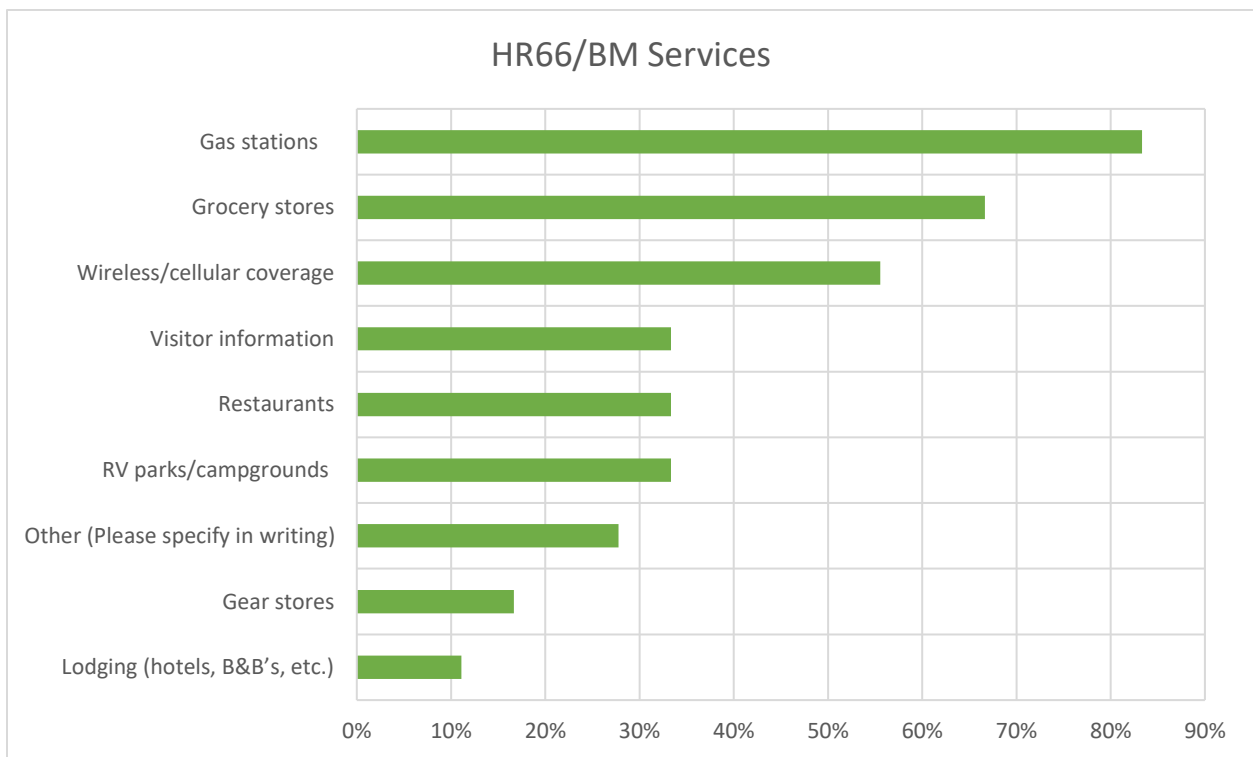
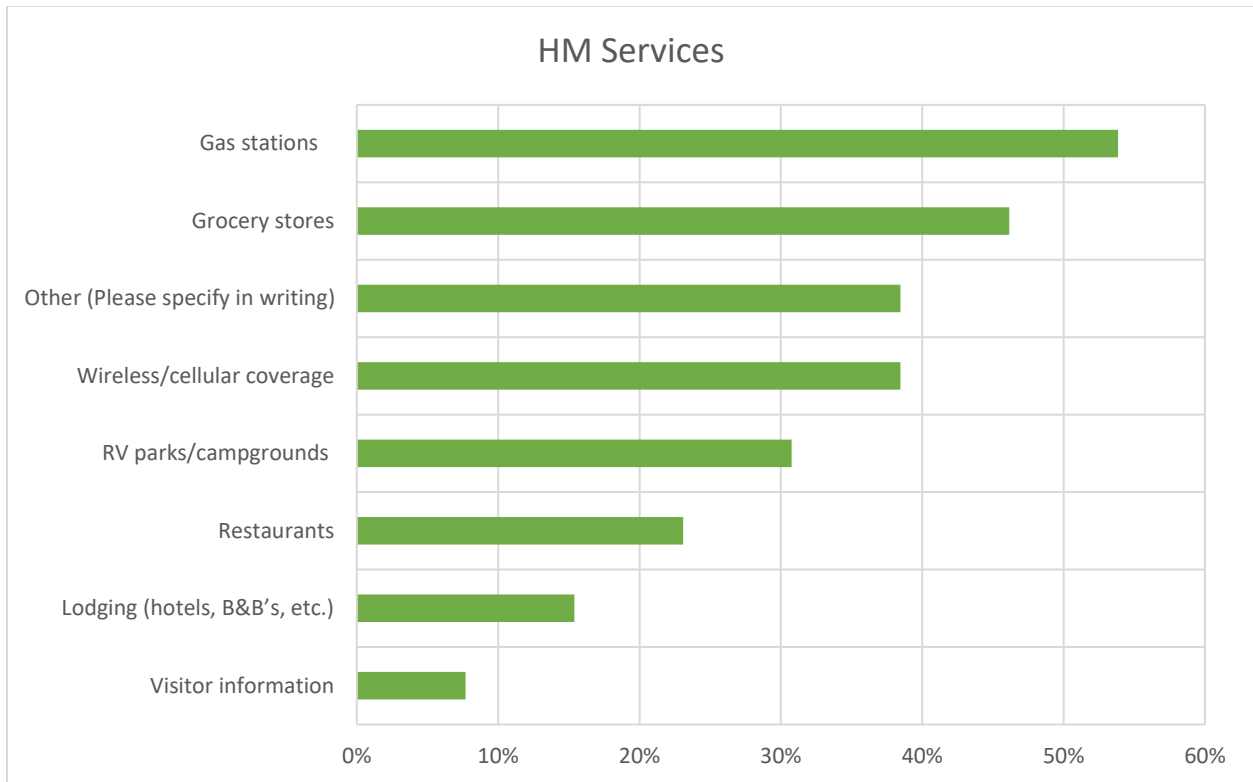


Figure 57- Services needed for recreation: HM



### Community Quality of Life and Effects of Public Lands on That Quality

An important part of the planning process for any public lands is trying to understand what the local community's vision of itself is, and how public lands might fit into and enhance that vision. In order to better understand how these two fit together, participants were first asked to describe the characteristics of their community that they think contribute to the desirability of living in or visiting Kingman or surrounding communities in northwestern Arizona. Then they were asked to describe how the surrounding public lands contributed to that community vision. Written responses to this, and all other open-ended questions given throughout the focus groups, are recorded in Appendix 2.

### Management Priorities and Improvements

Toward the end of the focus group, participants were given a series of open-ended questions to both discuss as a whole group (see Appendix 3 for themes of spoken responses recorded on flip charts during in-person focus groups) and respond to anonymously by writing on the handout

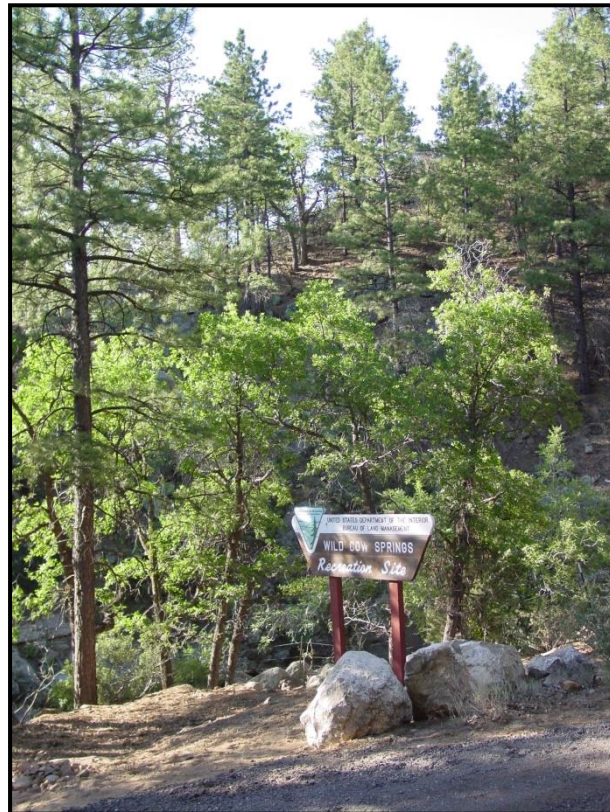


provided to them (see Appendix 2 for complete written responses). The written responses to each of these open-ended questions were coded for themes observed within the response, which were then organized by the number of comments touching on that particular theme. Participants often have difficulty drawing clear distinctions between management priorities and improvements needed. Although there were two questions on management (priorities and improvements), both of these questions tap the participants' desired directions for management of the landscape. Land managers can determine which of these desires expressed is an objective and which is an actionable item.

## Conclusions

# Kingman Field Office

## Recreation Focus Group Study



**Tim Casey, PhD and Randy Virden, PhD**

**BLM Public Land Recreation Research Partnership**

**2020**

***Contact Information: [tcasey@coloradomesa.edu](mailto:tcasey@coloradomesa.edu)***

## **Participants:**

- ✓ **Listen, contribute, and stay focused on the subject at hand**
- ✓ **Feel free to keep or change your opinions in response to what you hear**
- ✓ **Respect others' right to share their thoughts; do not interrupt**
- ✓ **The moderator will stop anyone who attempts to block another's views**
- ✓ **Feel free to get up, obtain refreshments, or visit the restroom**
- ✓ **Do not engage in separate, private discussions**
- ✓ **Remember, participation is voluntary on all questions**
- ✓ **Must sign an informed consent form to continue with the study**

## **Topic Area 1: Demographics and Characteristics**

1. What is your home zip code? Or country (if you are not a US resident)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Which of the following choices best describes your association with lands managed by the BLM Kingman FO?
  - a. Visitor
  - b. Local Resident
  - c. Community Leader (elected/non-elected)
  - d. Outfitter/Guide
  - e. Business Owner
  - f. Other

## Topic Area 2: Location

3. When choosing where to recreate in this region, where do you spend the most time? (Chose up to 3)
- a. Kingman, AZ – BLM Lands
  - b. Lake Havasu City, AZ – BLM Lands
  - c. Bullhead City, AZ – BLM Lands
  - d. Lake Mead National Recreation Area
  - e. Black Mountains
  - f. Arizona Peace Trail
  - g. Alamo Lake
  - h. Grapevine Mesa Joshua Tree National Natural Landmark
  - i. Lake Mohave
  - j. Hualapai Indian Reservation
  - k. Grand Canyon National Park
  - l. Colorado River
  - m. Big Sandy River
  - n. Other (Please specify)

4. The recreational managers of the area have divided the landscape into several Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA) (labeled on map on the wall), please indicate which SRMA you would like to tell us more about. (Choose one and unless we tell you otherwise, assume that SRMA as a focus when answering future questions)
- a. Burro Creek SRMA
  - b. Hualapai Mountains SRMA
  - c. Cerbat Foothills Recreation Area SRMA
  - d. Joshua Tree/Grand Wash Cliffs SRMA
  - e. Historic Route 66 SRMA
5. For the purposes of facilitating this conversation, these SRMAs have been further divided into zones (also labeled on maps up on the walls around the room). Please take a moment to study the map of the SRMA you selected in question 4, then chose a zone you would like to tell us more about and write the number of that zone (as labeled on the map) in the space below. (Choose one and unless we tell you otherwise, assume that zone in the SRMA you identified as a focus when answering future questions).

ZONE \_\_\_\_\_

### Topic Area 3: Special Places - Settings

6. What are the qualities of area you chose that make it a special place for you?  
(Choose up to 5)

- a. It's my back yard
- b. It's where I spend quality time with friends and family
- c. Historic qualities - how previous generations used the area
- d. Productive qualities - grazing and hunting
- e. Biological resources - plants, animals, etc.
- f. Physical resources - geology, paleontology, etc.
- g. Cultural resources - archeology, etc.
- h. Scenic quality
- i. Spiritual and/or religious qualities
- j. Sense of freedom
- k. Wild, unspoiled, and natural
- l. Remote and rugged
- m. Sense of solitude and privacy
- n. Natural quietness
- o. Dark night skies
- p. Sense of discovery/learning opportunities
- q. Dogs and/or horses are allowed
- r. Lack of development or improvements
- s. It's where I engage in recreational activities I enjoy
- t. Other (Please specify in writing)

7. What could diminish the specialness of that place for you (Choose up to 5)

- a. Additional fees, permits, or restrictions
- b. Increased use and crowding
- c. Increased traffic
- d. Increased use of wider array of vehicles
- e. Group size limits
- f. Limitations on historic uses and productive qualities
- g. Additional facilities and improvements
- h. Lack of facilities and improvements
- i. Increased access
- j. Limited access
- k. Vandalism, litter, graffiti, and/or human waste
- l. Damage to soils and vegetation
- m. Lack of solitude and privacy
- n. Noise
- o. Artificial light
- p. Livestock or evidence of them
- q. Culture clashes – locals vs. visitors or long time locals vs. move-ins
- r. Lack of connection to or education about place
- s. Residential or industrial development (utility lines, pipelines, etc.)
- t. Other (Please specify in writing)

#### **Topic Area 4: Change**

8. At the place you identified earlier, has use increased or decreased in the last five (5) years?
- a. Strongly Decreased
  - b. Slightly Decreased
  - c. No Change
  - d. Slightly Increased
  - e. Strongly Increased

9. If use at that this place has changed in the last five (5) years, has it been for the better or worse? Why did you choose as you did?
- Much worse
  - Somewhat worse
  - No change
  - Somewhat better
  - Much better

### **Topic Area 5: Outcomes, Interests and Expectations**

10. When you go to your area of interest, which of these phrases best captures your interests and expectations for going there? (Choose up to 3)
- To experience and appreciate the beauty and wonders of Natural Landscapes
  - To experience Rural Landscapes where people live closely connected to the land
  - To experience and learn about/connect with Cultural & Heritage History of the area
  - To experience and learn about Natural History & Science of the area
  - To improve my Health & Fitness
  - To experience a Self-Reliant Adventure in the outdoors
  - Tranquil Escapes - to get away from the hustle and bustle of daily life
  - To have time outdoors to be with Family and Friends or share it with other generations
  - It contributes to the richness of Community Life in the area
  - It enhance the Economic well-being of myself or the local community
  - To give back to the land by engaging in Stewardship & Caretaking activities
11. Did your last recreational outing in the recreation area that you identified earlier meet your expectations? Why or why not? Did anything surprise you?



12. When visiting the recreation zone you identified earlier, which of the following personal benefits are most important to you? (Chose up to 3)

- a. Restored my mind from stress/tension/anxiety
- b. Improved physical fitness
- c. To improve/maintain health
- d. Improved outdoor knowledge
- e. Greater self-reliance
- f. Enhance sense of personal freedom
- g. Improved sense of control over my life
- h. Improved self-confidence
- i. Living a more outdoor-oriented lifestyle
- j. Restored my body from fatigue
- k. Greater appreciation for our cultural heritage
- l. Greater awareness and appreciation of natural landscapes
- m. Greater freedom from urban living
- n. Improved ability to relate to local residents and their culture
- o. Increased personal accountability to act responsibly on public lands
- p. Greater respect for private property
- q. Closer relationship with natural world
- r. Greater understanding of the importance of wildlife to my quality of life
- s. Greater aesthetic appreciation
- t. Other (Please specify in writing)

13. When visiting the recreation zone you identified earlier, which of the following household and relational benefits are most important to you? (Chose up to 3)

- a. Strengthened relationships with family and/or friends
- b. Improved health
- c. Greater recreation opportunities for your family
- d. Reduced health maintenance costs
- e. Improved family bonding
- f. More well-rounded development for our children
- g. Improved parenting skills
- h. Improved desirability as a place to live
- i. Increased work productivity
- j. Lifestyle improvement or maintenance
- k. Developing stronger ties with my family or friends
- l. Other (Please specify in writing)

14. When visiting the recreation zone you identified earlier, which of the following community and environmental benefits are most important to you?

(Chose up to 3)

- a. Greater community engagement in recreating on public lands
- b. Maintenance/preservation of distinctive community atmosphere
- c. Heightened sense of community pride
- d. Improved desirability as a place to retire
- e. Heightened sense of community satisfaction
- f. Improved respect for privately-owned lands
- g. Increased awareness and protection of natural landscapes
- h. Greater community ownership and stewardship of recreation and natural resources
- i. Greater protection of fish, wildlife, and plant habitat from growth, development, and public use impacts
- j. Maintenance/preservation of distinctive public land recreation setting character
- k. Increased local work productivity
- l. Increased local tourism revenue
- m. Reduced local health maintenance cost
- n. Other (Please specify in writing)

## Topic Area 6: Activities

15. When visiting the zone you have been focusing on, what activities do you engage in most often? (Choose up to 3)
- a. Scenic Driving
  - b. Exploring or discovering new areas
  - c. Hiking/Walking/Running
  - d. Backpacking
  - e. Car Camping
  - f. Picnicking
  - g. Rock Climbing/Canyoneering
  - h. Nature Study (Wildlife Viewing/ Bird Watching/Geology/Plants)
  - i. 4x4 Driving (Jeep, Truck, SUV)
  - j. ATV/UTV riding
  - k. Bicycling/ Mountain Biking
  - l. Horseback Riding
  - m. Organized group activities (i.e. civic groups, clubs, scouts, church, etc.) including historic reenactments
  - n. Ranching activities
  - o. Hunting
  - p. Photography
  - q. Learning activities (interpretive programs, educational outings, etc.)
  - r. Art/Writing activities
  - s. Spiritual renewal activities
  - t. Other (Please specify in writing)

## Topic Area 7: Services

16. Which sources of information do you depend upon to plan your recreation in the recreation zone you identified earlier? (Choose all that apply)

- a. Friends and family
- b. Past experience
- c. Area business owners
- d. Area residents
- e. Visitor Center staff
- f. Contact with BLM rangers in the field
- g. Visitor Center exhibits
- h. On-Site signage, kiosks, bulletin boards
- i. Travel and tourism councils and associations
- j. Free guides and maps
- k. Guidebooks
- l. Websites (.gov)
- m. Websites (.org or .com)
- n. Digital apps
- o. Historic references
- p. Maps (topographic, National Geographic, etc.)
- q. Other (Please specify in writing)

17. What services do you depend on to have a successful recreational experience? (Choose all that apply.)

- a. Gas stations
- b. Gear stores
- c. Grocery stores
- d. Lodging (hotels, B&B's, etc.)
- e. Outfitters/guides
- f. RV parks/campgrounds
- g. Restaurants
- h. Visitor information
- i. Wireless/cellular coverage
- j. Other (Please specify in writing)

### **Topic Area 8: Management**

18.If you were the public lands manager for a day and could set management priorities for the BLM lands you have been considering here, what would your priorities be?

19.As you think about this area, what is/are the most important improvements(s) that recreation managers could make to enhance your visits in the future?

### **Topic Area 9: Community Vision**

20.What are the things you like about living in or visiting this community?

21.How do public lands in the area affect the quality of life issues you just described?

## Appendix 2 – Written Comments from Open-ended Questions

### Q18 and Q19 – Management Priorities and Improvements needed

- Need maps for BLM areas (digital maps and web-based maps)
- Educate people about litter – organized clean ups with community members
- Cities/counties need to offer “free trash” dumping sites so folks won’t dump on public lands – work with cities
- Manage access – keep trails open
- Mapping information on how to get to sites/areas (trail info)
- Very little online information/maps for hiking (need more than numbers)
- Different public lands (BLM/NPS/city etc.) need one on-line site for everything in the region.
- Work with local groups to set up tours of public lands, events to educate public about resource
- Need easements across private land for public access
- On-line maps with overlay maps of ownership (available now) – need to be more available for the public.
- QR codes on interpretive signs/kiosks
- Parking areas need place for equestrian and OHV trailer parking. Also bathrooms and trash cans for litter.
- Partner with prisons or local clubs to clean up trash
- Organize groups for stewardship
- Zone 19 - More equestrian parking at monolith TH and Coyote pass TH
- Update maps and make them accessible
- Put equestrian sign-in sheet at trail head, not ¼ mile into trail so we have to climb off horse to sign
- More novice/beginner friendly trails for mountain bikes
- Work with search and rescue groups to get their maps.
- Maps – for safety put route numbers on maps
- Paper maps
- Uniform maps for the area (include BLM, USFS, NPS, State and other lands)
- Expansion of mine will close trails – stop that closure
- Do not need graded roads
- Rest rooms at more popular areas
- (Secret Pass) westbound signage on Mt. secret pass (?) wilderness area
- Don't close trails-mark if they need repair
- Provide info about condition of trail
- Stage Coach Trail is now landlocked- work to provide access (easements for access)
- Open-up corridors through wilderness area (e.g. Secret Pass)
- Develop more relationships with community user groups
- Equestrians do not want E-bikes on trails
- Do not increase the number of roads
- Update the printed maps with trail numbers

- Make GPS tracks available for download
- Interpretive signs on trails: Secret Pass, Sleeping Princess, Moss Wash
- Need directional signs at intersections
- Free maps at trailheads
- Taking designated trails-consolidate to one number (each name=one number)
- Get QRs for each trail with bar codes
- Slightly wider trails would be welcomed. Other than that, keep it the same.
- Preserving existing access to public lands.
- Preservation of Natural and Cultural Resources... HANDS DOWN!
- For such a desert landscape I think my priorities would be to have a better conscious about controlling livestock and monitoring what aspects those have on the landscape.
- Clear information and signage on motorized vehicle access. And get rid of the feral burros destroying wildlife habitat
- Way too many FERAL Burros out there, roads need to maintain roads!
- reduce the burros animals overrunning area
- Remove all burros outside designated Herd Management Areas (HMAs) and reduce numbers within HMAs to the mandated Acceptable Management Level (AML), which is being vastly exceeded on all AZ HMAs
- Have BLM Rangers physically visit and check all the camps to ensure that those that have trash and litter are dealt with! Have a greater law enforcement presence out there.
- prosecute littering

**Q20 – What do you like about living in or visiting the community?**

- Freedom to carry concealed weapon
- Beauty of desert
- Geography
- Cultural history
- Proximity to other areas and diverse opportunities (e.g. Vegas, Flagstaff, Phoenix, river, etc.)
- Air quality – healthy place to live
- Camaraderie/ social networks focused on public lands
- Fewer people
- Ride a horse forever
- Few restrictions
- Freedom
- Diverse cultural and historical sites in area
- Weather
- Less traffic
- Natural beauty/scenery
- BLM office willing to work with you
- Good for working with groups
- Law enforcement officers are nice people
- Abundant access of trails
- history and culture of the area



- friendliness
- lack of traffic and smog
- dark night skies
- weather/climate
- public lands surrounding community
- many "natural amenities" in area (also gambling)
- Outdoor recreation is a valuable concern for members of the community
- I moved here 2 weeks ago from the east coast. I love living here because of the outdoor recreation opportunities
- The opportunity to live proximate to and recreate on public lands along with folks who value them also
- weather, friends, wildlife and outdoor opportunities!
- its the center of going in any direction and not too extreme heat

**Q21 – How do BLM public lands affect community values?**

- Keep wild and scenic landscapes open to us (also historic sites)
- Availability of public lands
- Less stress
- Outside way of life – lifestyle
- Clean air
- Easy to get to – close by, accessible
- Gives wildlife habitat – maintain their natural environment
- Diversity of activities.
- Less Stress/Slower
- Gets us outdoors
- Provide a sense of freedom and challenge
- opportunity for solitude
- Most important factor there is
- Having access to such vast places, and all the opportunities that exist definitely affect the quality of life. Large amount of opportunities to have multiple aspects of recreational experiences
- They are central to why I live here and critical to our local economies.
- Public lands are VITAL to this community and the people that live here! Open space is here; needed and for the most part, appreciated!
- raising my kids showing them other options less civilized

## Appendix 3 - Kingman BLM Recreation In-Person Focus Group Flip Chart Notes 2020

Focus group 1: 10:00 am 2/28/2020 N=25

Q3: Land relationship

- Need for maps/information when traveling in landscape
- Need for guide for marker numbers

Q 9: Changes – better or worse

- 29- Dolan Springs/Antelope Canyon – no information available on it
- 20 – Sleeping Princess – too much OHV congestion – causing folks to go off trail
- 9 and 10 – Increased use leads to more demands for facilities (safer)
- 18- Worse because of traffic – visitors don't have "right" vehicles – less respect for resources – historic wagon road in wilderness area. Should not have been designated with road there, but needed 5000-acre parcel, so ignored road – (bladed) road. Blade in wilderness.
- 19 and 20 – more visitors, but trails have been improved to handle them
- 5 – trash is an issue with truckers near the trailhead, once in the zone, it is beautiful.
- 13 and 14 – use is sane, but geology is changing – erosion is harming trail – needs to be marked – trail is not passable – need to be signed - #7128.

Q 11: Surprises and expectations

- 19 – Influx of RV campers and trash – Foothill Rim Area
- 30 – Road closures – new signs – Big Wash – "no motorized vehicles"

Q 18 and 19: Manager for a day – priorities and improvements

- Need maps for BLM areas (digital maps and web-based maps)
- Educate people about litter – organized clean ups with community members
- Cities/counties need to offer "free trash" dumping sites so folks won't dump on public lands – work with cities
- Manage access – keep trails open
- Mapping information on how to get to sites/areas (trail info)
- Very little online information/maps for hiking (need more than numbers)
- Different public lands (BLM/NPS/city etc) need one on-line site for everything in the region.
- Work with local groups to set up tours of public lands, events to educate public about resource
- Need easements across private land for public access
- On-line maps with overlay maps of ownership (available now) – need to be more available for the public.
- QR codes on interpretive signs/kiosks

- Parking areas need place for equestrian and OHV trailer parking. Also bathrooms and trash cans for litter.

Q 20: What do you like about community?

- Freedom to carry concealed weapon
- Beauty of desert
- Geography
- Cultural history
- Proximity to other areas and diverse opportunities (e.g. Vegas, Flagstaff, Phoenix, river, etc.)
- Air quality – healthy place to live
- Camaraderie/ social networks focused on public lands

Q 21: How do public lands effect community values?

- Keep wild and scenic landscapes open to us (also historic sites)
- Availability of public lands

Focus Group 2: 6 pm 2/28/2020 N=8

Q3: Landscape relationship

- I use them all...
- Depends on the time of year (winter, summer)
- BLM open lands near my house (Golden Valley)
- Mountains in the summer, river routes in the winter, Cerbat in either season
- I joined multiple user group clubs to run with and explore the area.

Q 9: Change better or worse

- W – more trash and dumping
- W – people destroy old landmarks – historical sites
- W – people are shooting informational signs
- W – it's not the clubs, it's the visitors
- B – trails improved because of more users – signage, physically defined

Q 11 – Expectations/surprises

- Always meets
- 16/18 – no, more trash in the area
- 17 – Tons of glass – target shooting
- Dumping on public lands just down the street from the dump (landfill)

Q 18-19 – Manager for the day – priorities and improvements

- Partner with prisons or local clubs to clean up trash
- Organize groups for stewardship
- Zone 19 - More equestrian parking at monolith TH and Coyote pass TH
- Update maps and make them accessible
- Put equestrian sign-in sheet at trail head, not ¼ mile into trail so we have to climb off horse to sign
- More novice/beginner friendly trails for mountain bikes
- Work with search and rescue groups to get their maps.
- Maps – for safety put route numbers on maps
- Paper maps
- Uniform maps for the area (include BLM, USFS, NPS, State and other lands)
- Expansion of mine will close trails – stop that closure
- Do not need graded roads
- Rest rooms at more popular areas
- (Secret Pass) westbound signage on Mt. secret pass (?) wilderness area

Q 20: Community Values

- Fewer people
- Ride a horse forever
- Few restrictions
- Freedom
- Diverse cultural and historical sites in area
- Weather
- Less traffic
- Natural beauty/scenery
- BLM office willing to work with you
  - Good for working with groups
  - Law enforcement officers are nice people

Q21: Public lands effect on values

- Less stress
- Outside way of life – lifestyle
- Clean air
- Easy to get to – close by, accessible
- Gives wildlife habitat – maintain their natural environment
- Diversity of activities

Focus Group #3 – 2/29/2020 N=28

Q3 – Landscape relationships

- Seasonal variation – high country in the warmer summers and low elevations in the winters
- State trust lands are a challenge I often ignore them
- No real issues on BLM lands from Parker to Kingman
- Areas depend on activities – they work fairly well together
- The labels on the landscape are somewhat meaningless in terms of paying attention to when I am in one rather than the other
- Private property is an issue.

Q9 – Better or Worse and why?

- Z12 – Worse – increased use – weekend traffic is too busy
- Z11 – Worse – rain/erosion has damaged trails
- Z13&14 – Worse – too much litter and trash and dumping
- Z12 – Worse – User conflict – side X side block trails maybe consider one way routes
- Z22&23 – Better – New roads up by Valentine have opened up area for public access

Q11 – Any surprises the last time out on landscape?

- Z12 – Remote trails still had snow/ice – beautiful
- Z18 – poppies are also out
- Z18 – trails have erosion

Q 18 & 19 - Manager for a day – priorities and improvements

- Update the printed maps with trail numbers
- Make GPS tracks available for download
- Interpretive signs on trails (Secret Pass, Sleeping Princess, and Moss Wash)
- Need directional signs at intersections
- Free maps at trailheads
- Taking designated trails – consolidate to one number
- Get QRs for each trail with pdf (?) codes
- Z33 – do not increase the number of roads
- Don't close trails – mark them if they need repair
- Provide information about the condition of the trail at the trailhead
- Stagecoach Trail is now land-locked – work to provide access (easements for access)
- Open up corridors through Wilderness Areas (Secret Pass)
- Develop more relationships with community user groups
- Equestrians do not want e-bikes on trails

Q20 – Community values – Why do you live here?

- Abundance of trails
- History and culture of the area
- Friendliness of people
- Lack of traffic/smog
- Dark night skies
- Weather and climate
- Public lands surrounding the community
- Many natural amenities in area (also gambling close)

Q 21 – How do public lands affect these community values?

- Less stress / slower pace of life
- Gets us outdoors
- Provides a sense of freedom and challenge
- Opportunities for solitude