



PRESERVATION PARKS
OF DELAWARE COUNTY

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2027

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PRESERVATION PARKS LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

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Glenn Marzluf
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LEADERSHIP TEAM

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Kyle Pace, *Park Operations Manager*
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Matt Simpson, *Senior Park Planner*
Casey Smith, *Outdoor Connections Manager*
Tyler Swartzlander, *Administrative Manager*
Dennis Welch, *Chief, Division of Park Police*

We extend our deepest thanks to all the staff members, dedicated volunteers, and members of our community who generously shared their time, experiences, and ideas throughout the stakeholder engagement process for Preservation Parks of Delaware County's Strategic Plan.

Your thoughtful input and perspectives have been invaluable in helping shape a vision that reflects the true spirit, needs, and hopes of our community. Whether you participated in a survey, focus group, or interview, your voice has played a vital role in guiding the future of our parks and natural spaces.

PREPARED BY:



INTRODUCTION

Preservation Parks of Delaware County collaborated with The Impact Group to develop a strategic plan grounded in robust stakeholder feedback. Recognizing the importance of diverse perspectives, The Impact Group led a multifaceted approach to gathering input from the community, staff, Board of Park Commissioners, key stakeholders, and the Preservation Parks Foundation. The stakeholder engagement process took place from September to December 2024.

Key components of the process were:

SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

An initial assessment of the Park District's current state identified key strengths to build upon and opportunities for continued growth and improvement.

Facilitated Focus Groups

We hosted seven focus groups representing a wide range of perspectives—including park staff, volunteers, and community members. These sessions encouraged open dialogue and helped us better understand the needs and aspirations of those we serve.

Staff and Community Surveys

Comprehensive surveys were distributed to staff and the community, soliciting quantitative and qualitative insights into experiences with the parks, expectations for the future, and areas for enhancement. Over 590 community and 32 staff members participated in the surveys.

One-On-One Interviews with Community Leaders

To better understand broader community priorities, 14 one-on-one interviews were conducted with local leaders across different sectors of the community. These conversations offered valuable context and helped align the plan with the county's evolving needs.

Stakeholder Feedback and Data Review

Feedback from all engagement methods was synthesized to identify recurring themes, community priorities, and strategic opportunities. This analysis served as the foundation for decision-making throughout the planning process.

Mission, Vision, and Core Values Review

Preservation Parks staff reaffirmed the mission, refined the vision, and revised the core values to ensure alignment with community input and the future direction of Preservation Parks.

Continued



Development of Strategic Goals and Objectives

Based on stakeholder feedback and data review, clear, actionable goals and objectives were developed. These priorities will guide the work in continuing to protect, preserve, and restore natural spaces, recognize the county's heritage, connect people to nature, and provide exceptional visitor experiences.

As a result, five strategic focus areas were identified to guide the organization's direction over the next several years:

- Sustainable and Strategic Growth
- Enhancing and Maintaining Parks and Services for Exceptional Visitor Experiences
- Cultivating a Thriving and Supported Workforce
- Diversifying Revenue Streams and Strengthening Financial Sustainability
- Enhancing Communication to Deepen Community Engagement and Support

These priorities reflect the shared vision of staff, partners, and the community to ensure Preservation Parks continues to serve as a treasured, forward-thinking park system for all.



MISSION, VISION & CORE VALUES

Preservation Parks staff thoughtfully reviewed and reaffirmed the mission, refined the vision, and revised the core values. This critical step ensures that the organization's foundation remains aligned with community needs, staff input, and the long-term goals of the Park District. The mission, vision, and values will guide decision-making and shape the direction of Preservation Parks for years to come.

MISSION

To protect and conserve the natural and historical features of Delaware County and to inspire outdoor exploration and learning.

VISION

Inspire care for our natural world and engage our community for a sustainable future.



CORE VALUES

These beliefs are more than guiding principles. They are commitments. Our staff agree to uphold these standards in how we treat one another, work together, and serve our community. These shared values create the foundation for a positive, respectful, and mission-driven workforce.

CONSERVATION & PRESERVATION

We honor our natural and cultural heritage by protecting, preserving, and restoring the resources entrusted to us. We balance public access with thoughtful stewardship to ensure future generations can experience Delaware County's beauty, biodiversity, and history.

COMMUNICATION

We cultivate a culture of open, honest, and respectful communication, ensuring that all voices are heard, ideas are valued, and information is shared clearly across all staff and with the public we serve. By staying connected, we work more effectively, build trust, and achieve our mission together.

INTEGRITY

We act honestly, professionally, and transparently in all we do, upholding the highest ethical standards as public employees. Whether in the field, in the office, or with the public, we lead with integrity because trust is the foundation of our work.

STEWARDSHIP

We serve as responsible stewards of the land, resources, and relationships placed in our care. Every decision we make—whether environmental, financial, or interpersonal—is guided by a deep commitment to sustainability, accountability, and trust.

SERVICE

We exist to serve the people of Delaware County with humility, dedication, and purpose. We deliver high-quality programs, safe and welcoming parks, and enriching experiences that invite all individuals to connect with nature and with each other.



STRATEGIC PLAN

SWOT SUMMARY

Insights from the Leadership Team and Board of Park Commissioners

The Preservation Parks Leadership Team recently conducted a visioning session and SWOT analysis to examine the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Leaders from across departments actively engaged in meaningful dialogue, offering valuable insights and expertise from their respective areas. The session reflected a strong, shared commitment to Preservation Parks' mission and vision, with a clear focus on conservation, preservation, continued stewardship of natural resources, and fostering a thriving, dedicated staff that proudly serves the community.

Strengths

- **Commitment to Excellence and Service:** A shared dedication to exceptional, mission-driven service across all areas.
- **Talented, Passionate Team:** Knowledgeable staff with low turnover and a strong workplace culture grounded in collaboration, purpose, and mutual respect.
- **High-Quality Facilities & Land Stewardship:** Safe, clean, and well-maintained spaces across more than 2,400 acres, with a strong emphasis on conservation and legacy.
- **Inclusive, Varied Programming:** A wide range of free, educational, and accessible programs for all ages and abilities that align with community wants, needs, and values.
- **Strong Community and Organizational Partnerships:** Collaborating with local groups, volunteers, and organizations strengthens impact and shared value.
- **Financial Responsibility:** Mindful allocation of resources ensures operational sustainability and trust.
- **Positive Public Perception:** Community members value the parks' amenities, programs, and natural beauty.

Weaknesses

- **Balancing Growth and Capacity:** Staffing levels must keep pace with expansion to avoid burnout and maintain quality service.
- **Need for Consistent Messaging:** The District's mission, identity, and core values need to be consistently articulated to align public and internal understanding.
- **Recognition & Feedback Culture:** A stronger focus on celebrating success, showing appreciation, and fostering open, productive communication.
- **Data-Informed Focus:** Opportunities exist to use data more effectively to focus on core strengths and guide decision-making.

Continued

Opportunities

- Broaden Community Engagement: Reach new and underserved audiences through targeted outreach, culturally inclusive programming, and improved physical and transit accessibility.
- Expand Partnerships and Program Innovation: Grow collaborations with local talent, higher education, and public agencies while enhancing adventure and wellness offerings.
- Strengthen volunteer and seasonal staff engagement.
- Support Staff Development and Well-Being: Invest in wellness, diversity initiatives, and leadership growth while promoting work-life balance.
- Leverage Technology and Digital Outreach: Strengthen online presence and communication by strategically using technology and social media, and strategically engage groups.

Threats

- Workforce Challenges: Delaware County housing costs, benefit competition, and declining interest in natural resource careers impact recruiting and retaining staff.
- Rising Costs and Limited Funding: Operational, land, and infrastructure costs are increasing.
- Land Preservation Amid Development Pressure: Balancing growth with the need to protect green space is increasingly complex.
- Volunteer Capacity: Adapting to the time constraints of younger generations while maintaining strong engagement across all ages.
- Communication Noise: Standing out in a saturated information environment requires refined messaging and storytelling.
- External Pressures: Navigating environmental issues, political shifts, and climate-related impacts on funding and park operations.

STRATEGIC PLAN

STAFF FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Staff feedback emphasized the District's strengths while offering thoughtful, forward-looking ideas to enhance internal communication, collaboration, and sustainable growth. Their passion, professionalism, and belief in the mission continue to serve as the foundation for Preservation Parks' success.

Vision for the Future

- Emphasized preservation as the core purpose of all park initiatives, ensuring natural spaces remain protected and prioritized.
- Envisioned a park system that safeguards land for current and future generations, promoting a lasting community legacy.
- Identified the need for staff expansion to sustain high-quality service and meet the demands of a growing system.
- Called for diversified funding strategies to ensure financial stability for operations, staffing, and long-term stewardship.
- Highlighted the importance of balancing rapid development with thoughtful, sustainable growth.

Organizational Strengths

- A strong, mission-driven culture where staff feel aligned with Preservation Parks' goals and values.
- A collaborative, team-oriented environment that fosters connection, mutual respect, and job satisfaction.
- Staff feel valued and supported and are committed to long-term careers with the organization, contributing to stability and continuity.
- Pride in delivering meaningful work that connects people with nature and strengthens the community.

Continued

Opportunities for Growth

- **Staffing and Capacity:** Concerns exist about staffing levels matching the growth in park acreage, programming, and maintenance needs.
- **Facilities and Infrastructure:** Improve facilities to support storage, equipment, education, and operational needs.
- **Internal Communication:** Desire for more consistent, transparent communication between departments and leadership, including regular meetings and updates.
- **Collaborative Culture:** A call for a more open, solution-oriented management style and transparent decision-making processes, inviting staff input.
- **Operational Flexibility:** Responsive systems that support daily adjustments due to weather or emergencies are needed.
- **Compensation and Benefits:** Interest in reviewing wages, paternity leave, and overall benefits to remain competitive and support staff well-being.
- **Trust and Transparency:** Staff expressed a need to feel heard and informed, and to build trust through clearer communication during organizational changes.

STRATEGIC PLAN

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

The focus groups centered on the community's passion for nature, conservation, and inclusive outdoor experiences. These insights will directly inform the strategic plan, allowing Preservation Parks to remain a valued and responsive resource for all.

What Community Stakeholders Value Most

- **Strategic Land Acquisition:** The Park District is widely recognized for its foresight in acquiring and preserving land in the face of rapid development.
- **Exceptional Trails and Maintenance:** Well-maintained, accessible trails are seen as a hallmark strength, providing county-wide connections and enriching outdoor experiences.
- **High-Quality Programming:** Community-centered, inclusive programs are valued for their educational and recreational impact.
- **Friendly and Skilled Staff:** Staff are praised for their professionalism, warmth, and dedication to the mission.
- **Conservation and Biodiversity:** Ongoing efforts to preserve natural habitats and promote biodiversity are deeply appreciated.
- **Effective Marketing & Community Presence:** Strong branding, communication, and successful funding efforts (including levies and grants) reflect organizational credibility.
- **Accessibility and Inclusivity:** Parks are seen as welcoming to all ages, abilities, and backgrounds, reinforcing equity in outdoor access.

Opportunities for Improvement

- **Connectivity and Land Use:** Prioritize linking parks through green corridors and maintain larger, meaningful natural spaces rather than fragmented parcels.
- **Natural Resource Protection:** Expand efforts to manage invasive species and protect waterways; invest in growing the Natural Resources Team.
- **Balanced Growth:** Align land acquisition with available funding and maintenance capacity to ensure long-term sustainability.
- **Stronger Partnerships:** Deepen collaboration with schools, libraries, senior centers, land trusts, and organizations like AmeriCorps and Stratford Ecological Center.
- **Volunteer Expansion:** Increase volunteer opportunities, particularly for stewardship projects like invasive species removal.
- **Facility Use and Prioritization:** Prioritize trails, restrooms, and passive-use amenities.

Continued

What the Parks Should KEEP Doing

- Building and expanding trails and trail connections, especially primitive and nature-focused paths.
- Concentrating on passive recreation like hiking and nature exploration, aligned with the District's conservation mission.
- Continuing to prioritize accessibility and inclusivity in both facilities and programming.
- Communicating with the community using diverse platforms and maintaining transparency in planning.

What the Parks Should START Doing

- Create programs for teens and students, including summer camps, internships, and partnerships with career centers.
- Develop outdoor learning curricula with teachers.
- Partner with Homeowners Associations and land banks for preservation.
- Enhance trail features and wayfinding, including stroller-friendly options and clearer maps.
- Ensure staffing levels and resource capacity supports program growth and operational needs.
- Reassess underused buildings and focus investments on high-need amenities.
- Improve community communication through targeted outreach, visible local engagement, educational partnerships, and regular public updates.

STRATEGIC PLAN

COMMUNITY LEADER INTERVIEWS

As part of the stakeholder engagement process for strategic planning, 14 community leaders participated in one-on-one interviews to share their perspectives on Preservation Parks' role, impact, and opportunities for the future.

Shared Aspirations

- Continue expanding parks and programming to meet county growth and community needs.
- Balance land acquisition with thoughtful, sustainable management.
- Explore the creation of a land trust for long-term preservation.
- Strengthen partnerships with schools, municipalities, and developers to align conservation with community development.
- Prioritize waterway access and protection through strategic collaboration.
- Position the parks as inclusive spaces for respite, recreation, and lifelong learning for all ages.
- Expand diverse funding sources to support future growth and maintenance.

Recognized Strengths

- Strong mission alignment and organizational reputation.
- High-quality facilities, trails, and maintenance.
- Successful land acquisition and preservation practices.
- Compelling community engagement and program offerings for all ages.
- Friendly, dedicated staff and leadership.
- Strong financial support through levies, grants, and the Preservation Parks Foundation.

Continued

Areas for Growth

- Strengthen the Preservation Parks Foundation by acquiring dedicated development staff.
- Improve public engagement and communication strategies, including clearer pathways for volunteering and giving.
- Expand and improve trail networks, signage, and underused facilities.
- Deepen school partnerships, especially for middle and high school engagement.
- Increase outreach to new residents and underserved communities.

Key Challenges

- Rising cost of land acquisition and the pace of development.
- Maintaining land preservation is a core focus amidst growth.
- Ensuring sustainable staffing and resources as the park system grows.
- Maintaining equity across the county in programming and park access.
- Developing strategic financial planning that supports long-term maintenance.
- Strengthening inter-agency partnerships and regional collaboration.

Recommendations to Consider

- Expand the Preservation Park Foundation's visibility and fundraising capacity.
- Increase outreach to the 55+ community, youth, and non-digital users.
- Launch a campaign to raise awareness of Park District offerings and impact.
- Continue communicating through multiple formats (social media, brochures, signage, community events).
- Promote volunteerism and education through deeper school and community ties.
- Collaborate with local leaders and media for broader community engagement.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

FROM SURVEYS

TOP THEMES FROM THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

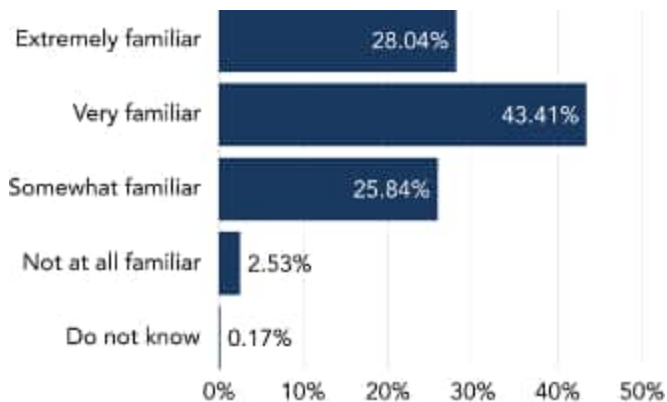
Hundreds of residents shared their perspectives, helping shape the future of the Park District. The results affirm the community's deep appreciation for the parks while offering clear direction for future priorities.

Complete survey results can be found in Appendix A.

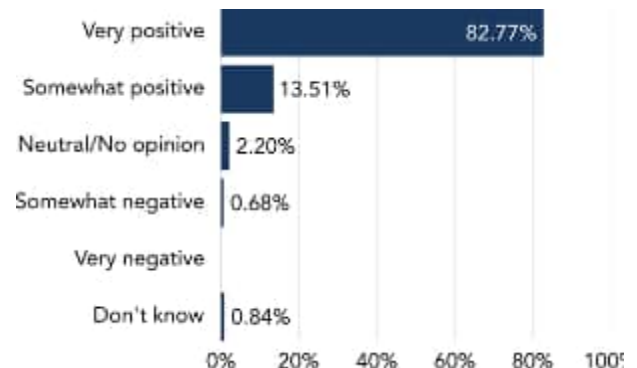
Widespread Support and Recognition

The community holds Preservation Parks in high regard, with most respondents expressing a very positive opinion and strong familiarity with the park system.

Q1 How familiar are you with Preservation Parks of Delaware County?



Q2 What is your opinion of Preservation Parks of Delaware County?

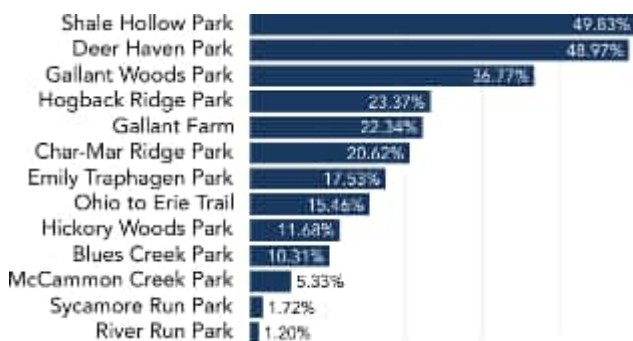


"We love preservation parks! We use the park EVERY day. Staff are always very friendly and knowledgeable. With the huge influx of development, we hope that you continue to purchase as much land as possible! Please consider purchasing and creating areas that are true nature preserves for wildlife only. We have included Preservation Parks in our estate planning. Keep up the great work!"

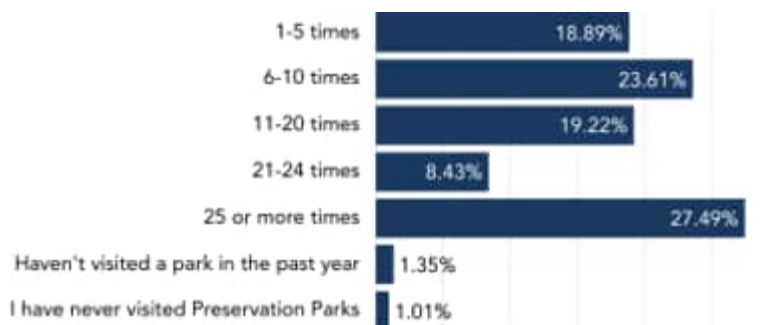
Frequent Park Use

Many households reported visiting the parks frequently—some 25 times or more in the past year—highlighting the role of parks in everyday life.

Q3 Which Preservation Parks locations do you visit the MOST frequently?



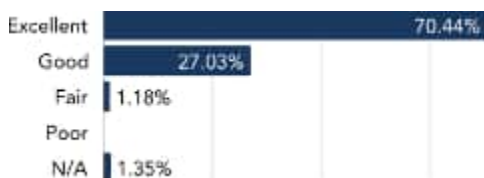
Q4 Approximately how many times have you or a member of your household visited Preservation Parks in the past year?



High Satisfaction with Maintenance

Parks are considered clean, safe, and well-maintained. Ongoing upkeep and improvements are considered worthy investments and strongly supported for future funding.

Q5 How would you rate the physical condition of the parks you have visited?

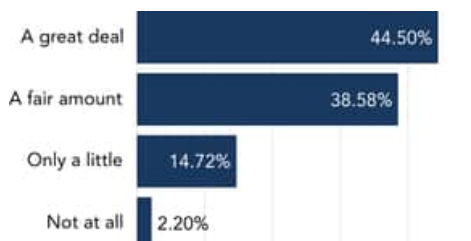


"We love the parks, the variety, and the ease of accessibility. Thank you!"

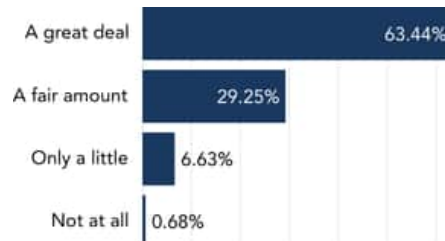
Mission to Protect Land is a Top Priority

The mission to protect and conserve natural and historical spaces resonates deeply. Land preservation, habitat restoration, and safeguarding open space are top community priorities.

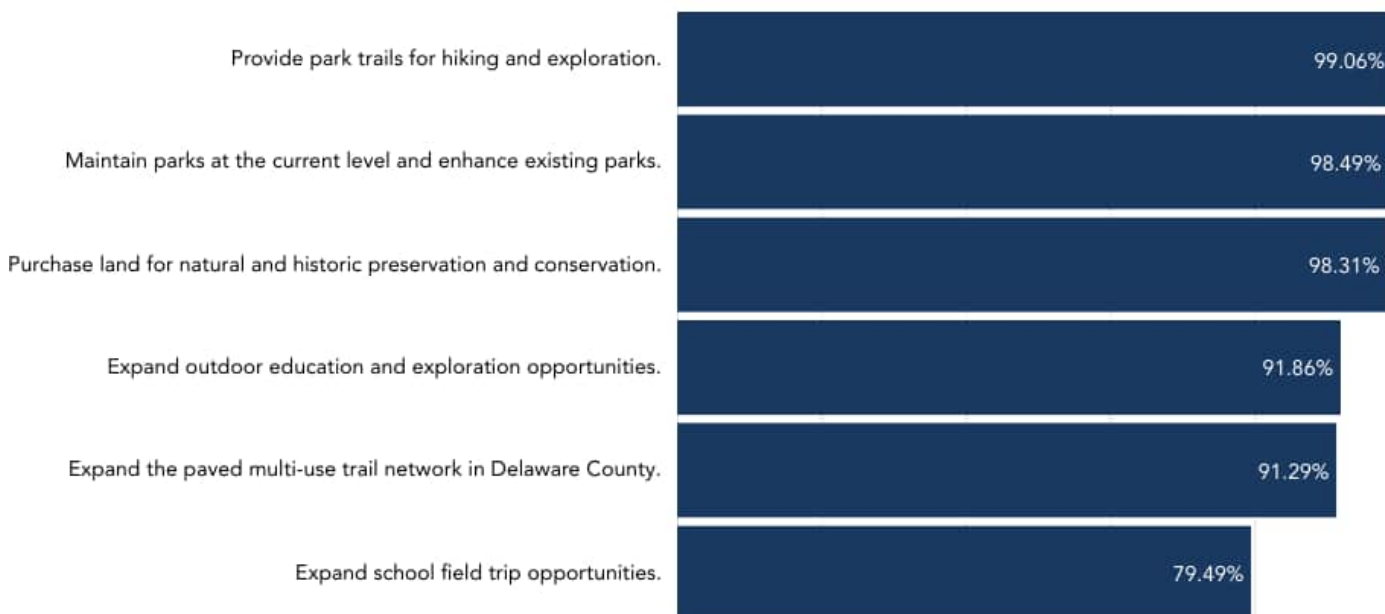
Q6A How much do you worry about pollution of rivers, lakes, and reservoirs?



Q6B How much do you worry about urban sprawl and loss of open spaces?



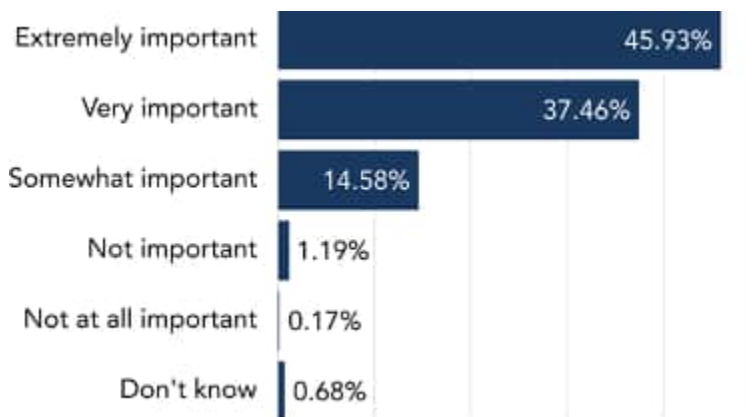
Q19 There are different ways to protect and conserve the natural and historical features of Delaware County and to inspire outdoor exploration and learning. Please rate how supportive you would be of each action Preservation Parks could take.



High Demand for Trails

Trails are among the most valued amenities. Residents prioritize primitive and paved trails for hiking, walking, and biking, and are willing to fund their expansion.

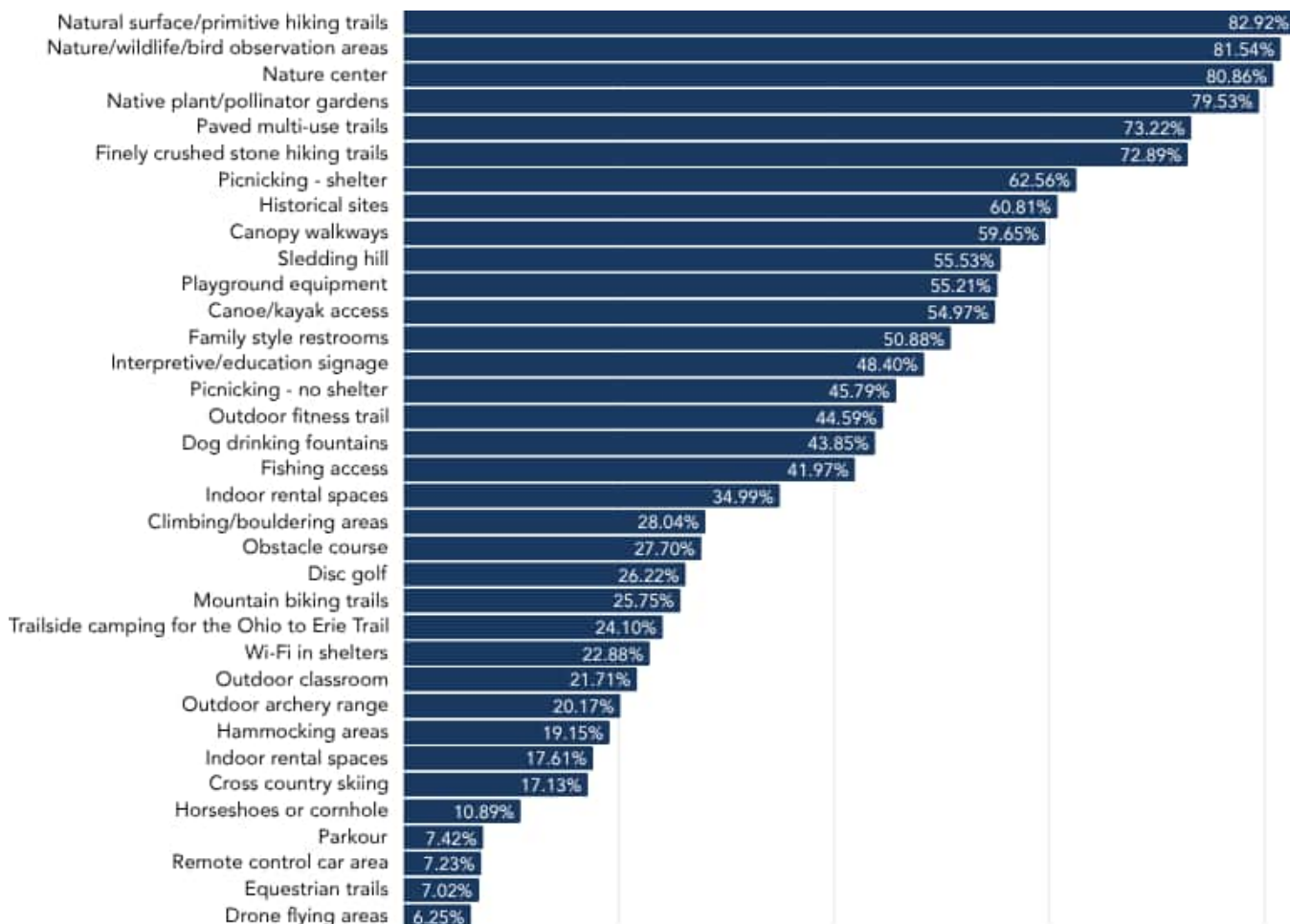
Q11 How important are parks and trails to the health and wellness of your household members?



Nature-Based Amenities

Community members expressed a strong need for nature-focused amenities such as a nature center, pollinator gardens, and wildlife observation areas.

Q12 Please indicate if you or anyone in your household has a need for any of the following types of facilities/amenities in Delaware County. ?



Diverse and Engaging Programming

Over half of households participated in a program or event in the past year. Nature programs, concerts, birdwatching, and educational experiences are in high demand.

"I am so grateful for Preservation Parks. When my son was young, we participated in many programs and self-guided nature activities. In the past year, I took a crochet class and it was fantastic! We also love the New Year's Day hike."

"My parents are now retired and recently moved to Delaware County. Golden Marathon Hikers, in partnership with SourcePoint, has been such a treat for them. It's so wonderful to hear their stories from hikes with other seniors."

"I feel there may be an opportunity to expand programs for teens/middle school age children or for families with children of that age. I'd love to participate in more programs with my 7th grader. Thank you for all that you do for our community!"

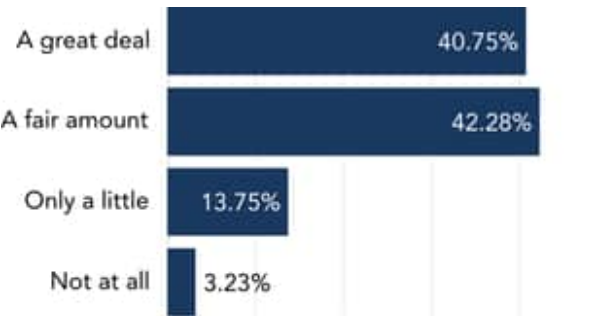
Health and Wellness Benefits

Residents value the parks as essential to physical and mental well-being. The connection between outdoor access and quality of life is a significant point of pride.

Q6C How much do you worry about mental health (depression, anxiety, stress, etc.)?



Q6D How much do you worry about physical health (obesity/diabetes, hypertension, etc.)?



GOAL 1

SUSTAINABLE AND STRATEGIC GROWTH

Preservation Parks will ensure sustainable growth by aligning land acquisition efforts with its mission, community needs, and available resources while fostering community awareness and engagement.



OBJECTIVES

1.1 Strategic Land Acquisition

- A. Strategically grow the Preservation Parks system by expanding existing parks and prioritizing the protection of high-quality natural and historical areas, critical watersheds, and areas that improve equitable access.
- B. Update the land acquisition strategy to include assessing potential future development costs (infrastructure and amenities) and long-term maintenance and operational costs and needs to ensure sustainability within current resource capacity.

1.2 Sustainable Growth

- A. Proactively assess and adjust staffing, equipment, and infrastructure to manage and maintain newly acquired land while preserving high service standards across all parks.
- B. Continue to integrate future capital and operational costs into the District's forecasting tools to prevent overextension of monetary resources and support high-quality service delivery.

1.3 Promote Community Awareness of New Acquisitions and Park Development

- A. Promote public awareness of new land acquisitions by highlighting their impact on the community, environment, and recreation and sharing the District's vision through targeted marketing and communication strategies.
- B. Communicate regular updates on construction timelines, project milestones, and upcoming park openings using various communication methods to keep the public informed and engaged.
- C. Increase internal and external communication regarding phased park development on existing properties to build awareness.

1.4 Mission-Driven Decision Making

- A. Ensure the mission remains central to land acquisition, park development, and District operations by reinforcing its importance in planning, communication and decision-making.

GOAL 2

ENHANCE AND MAINTAIN EXISTING PARKS AND SERVICES TO ENSURE EXCEPTIONAL VISITOR EXPERIENCES

Maintain and improve the quality of existing parks and services to deliver exceptional programming, safe visitor experiences, and sustainable investments that meet evolving community needs and align with Preservation Parks' mission.



OBJECTIVES

2.1 Strengthen Sustainable and Responsive Park Maintenance

- A. Strengthen the preventative maintenance program to improve asset management and long-term budget forecasting.
- B. Invest in durable, sustainable materials and high-quality equipment to reduce long-term costs and ensure fiscal responsibility and sustainability.

2.2 Allocate and Optimize Resources Strategically

- A. Use community engagement and data collection to help inform maintenance and improvement priorities, emphasizing safety, protection of assets, and equitable service across all parks.
- B. Establish a focused project inventory based on all park master plans to support readiness for grants, partnerships, and strategic growth.
- C. Continue to seek new and strengthen existing partnerships with community organizations and government entities to share resources and optimize the use of existing facilities to benefit the community.

2.3 Improve and Expand Signage and Wayfinding to Enhance Park Accessibility and Visibility

- A. Conduct a system-wide signage audit to identify outdated, duplicated, or unclear signs and create a signage replacement plan with defined lifespans, materials, and timelines.
- B. Enhance trail navigation and emergency response by improving wayfinding signage, including consistent implementation of locator signs.
- C. Expand roadway directional signage to improve public access and awareness of park locations.
- D. Continue to develop and install engaging and accessible interpretive signage at key locations to provide consistent, high-quality educational content about nature, conservation, and local history.
- E. Explore flexible and sustainable signage options for kiosks and other locations that allow quicker updates of maps and park information.

2.4 Strengthen Programs, Grow Partnerships, and Inspire Connections

- A. Continue cultivating partnerships with schools and community organizations to expand and diversify programming that aligns with the District's mission and responds to local needs.
- B. Target a specific grade level to increase educational impact and develop engaging field trips and in school programs that meet state curriculum standards.
- C. Design inclusive, affordable, and engaging programs for families and individuals that foster a connection to nature and increase access to outdoor learning opportunities.
- D. Analyze participation data, community demographics, and feedback to refine program offerings, remove participation barriers, and focus resources on high-impact priorities.
- E. Expand self-guided experiences that empower all visitors to explore and learn at their own pace and ability.

GOAL 3

CULTIVATE A THRIVING AND SUPPORTED WORKFORCE TO ENSURE OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Cultivate a thriving and supported workforce to drive operational excellence and sustainable growth through staff development, intentional communication, and strategic staffing.



OBJECTIVES

3.1 Assess and Strategically Plan Staffing Needs

- A. Continuously assess staffing levels across all departments to identify capacity and service delivery gaps. Include frontline staff in this process to ensure needs and ideas are accurately captured.
- B. Develop a multi-year staffing plan aligned with projected park growth, operational demands, required skill sets, and budget constraints.
- C. Continue to strategically engage volunteers in meaningful roles that support Park District initiatives.

3.2 Evaluate Employee Compensation and Benefits, and Increase Staff Awareness

- A. Conduct a total compensation survey to evaluate salary competitiveness and employee benefits and provide recommendations for improvements.
- B. Develop a multi-channel communication plan to raise awareness about the full value of the employee benefits package.

3.3 Strengthen Internal Communication, Collaboration, and Transparency

- A. Establish clear workflows, project timelines, and expectations to improve interdepartmental communication. This includes involving all relevant departments in new projects from the start.
- B. Foster open communication between staff and administration, create clear channels for feedback, address concerns, ensure diverse perspectives, and promote a culture of respect and transparency.
- C. Create opportunities for peer-to-peer learning between departments to improve efficiency and the understanding of each team's role and responsibilities.

3.4 Support Professional Development and Leadership Growth

- A. Implement comprehensive succession planning to develop future Park District leaders.
- B. Support individual career development through access to training, certifications, and other professional growth opportunities.

3.5 Explore and Strengthen Employee Wellness Initiatives

- A. Conduct an employee interest survey to identify areas of interest for a future wellness plan.
- B. Use employee input to research and explore feasible wellness options that support physical, mental, and emotional well-being across all staff roles and locations.

GOAL 4

DIVERSIFY REVENUE STREAMS AND BUILD FUTURE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Preservation Parks recognizes that diversifying funding and building financial support is crucial for managing its growth while fulfilling its mission to protect natural spaces and provide enriching experiences for the community.



OBJECTIVES

4.1 Strengthen the Preservation Parks Foundation

- A. Communicate the value of the Preservation Parks Foundation to the public, staff, and volunteers, through promotion on the Park District website, print materials, programs, and community events.
- B. Recruit a dedicated fundraiser or development professional to lead and coordinate fundraising efforts for Preservation Parks and the Foundation.
- C. Develop and implement a comprehensive fundraising strategy in partnership with the Foundation to support Preservation Parks long-term sustainability.
- D. Identify and prioritize fundraising opportunities to support strategic initiatives, programs, and capital projects.

4.2 Enhance Financial Sustainability with Strategic Fee Structures

- A. Complete a cost analysis of programs, rentals, and amenities to evaluate operating costs and determine when it is appropriate to subsidize or implement cost recovery.
- B. Based on cost analysis findings, identify and explore new or alternative revenue streams to support underfunded programs and ensure financial sustainability.

4.3 Pursue Grant and/or Sponsorship Funding

- A. Continuously explore and collaborate across departments on new grant opportunities while proactively pursuing known and reliable funding sources.
- B. Streamline opportunities for sponsorships with local businesses and organizations that align with the mission and values of Preservation Parks.

4.4 Build Future Financial Support

- A. Develop strategic messaging to communicate the value of tax dollars invested in Preservation Parks. Highlight the District's use of grants, partnerships, and private funding to maximize its impact and how these revenue streams help stretch tax dollars.
- B. Engage community leaders, stakeholders, staff, and residents to promote transparency, communicate financial stewardship, and build trust through regular updates and opportunities for feedback.

GOAL 5

ENHANCE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES TO FOSTER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Preservation Parks recognizes the importance of clear, consistent, and creative communication to maintain public trust, foster meaningful community engagement, and demonstrate the value of its mission and work.



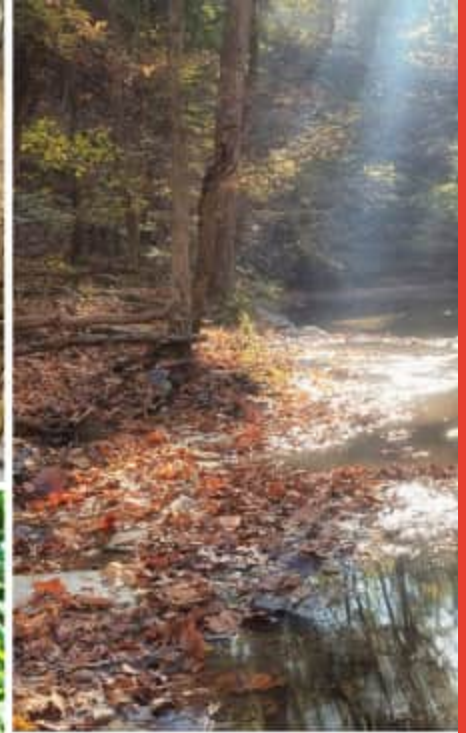
OBJECTIVES

5.1 Strengthen Brand Identity and Visibility

- A. Update the strategic marketing plan to include fine-tuning the social media strategy, strengthening digital and print deliverables, revising brand standards to include park logo signage, partnering with local schools and organizations, building and strengthening relationships with new and traditional media outlets, and using creative outreach campaigns to reach targeted age groups and demographics.
- B. Enhance brand visibility and attract new audiences by using compelling, theme-driven content that reveals the behind-the-scenes care, creativity, and expertise that showcase the quality of the District's parks and programs.
- C. Explore and lay the groundwork to create Park District merchandise that promotes brand identity and visibility; ready to launch promptly if research is favorable.
- D. Continue to target new Delaware County residents through print and digital channels.

5.2 Enhance Communication and Public Engagement

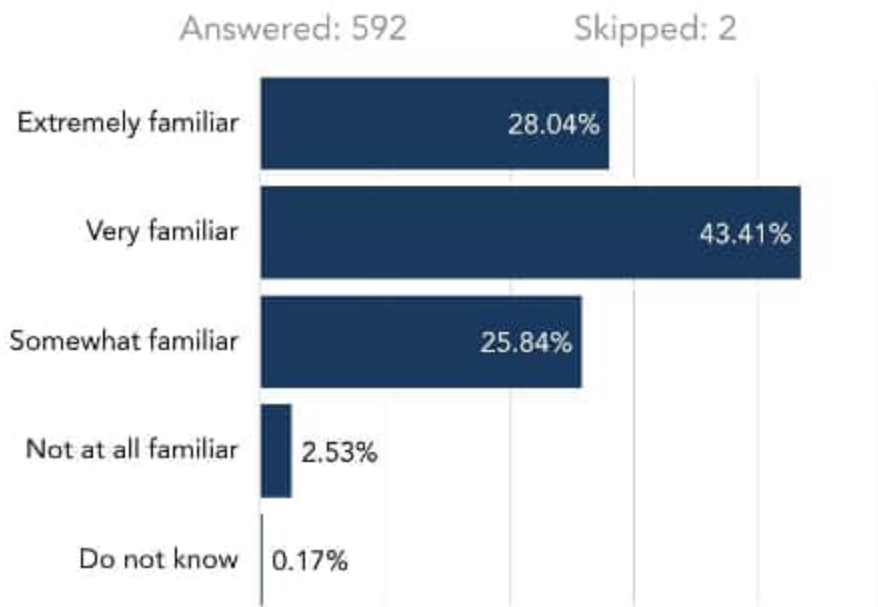
- A. Deepen engagement with current followers and local community members by sharing inspiring park stories, promoting upcoming events, and driving participation in programs across digital platforms.
- B. Identify and support volunteer ambassadors interested in telling the Preservation Parks story.
- C. Strengthen relationships with schools, community organizations, government agencies, libraries, and local businesses to increase Park District awareness and participation in programs and events.
- D. Maintain a dual approach to communication—continuing to offer digital content while ensuring printed brochures and program guides are available at key locations to reach non-digital users.



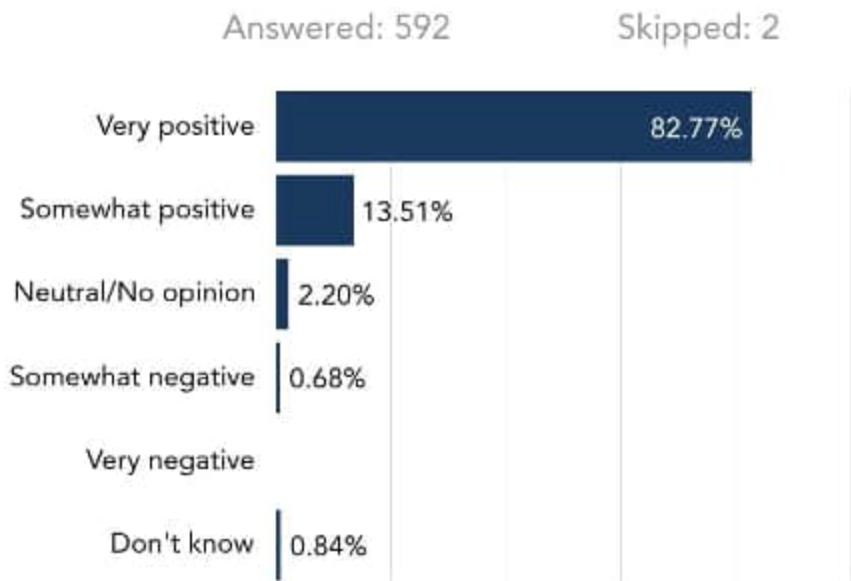
Community Survey Results

FALL/WINTER 2024
APPENDIX A

Q1 How familiar are you with Preservation Parks of Delaware County?

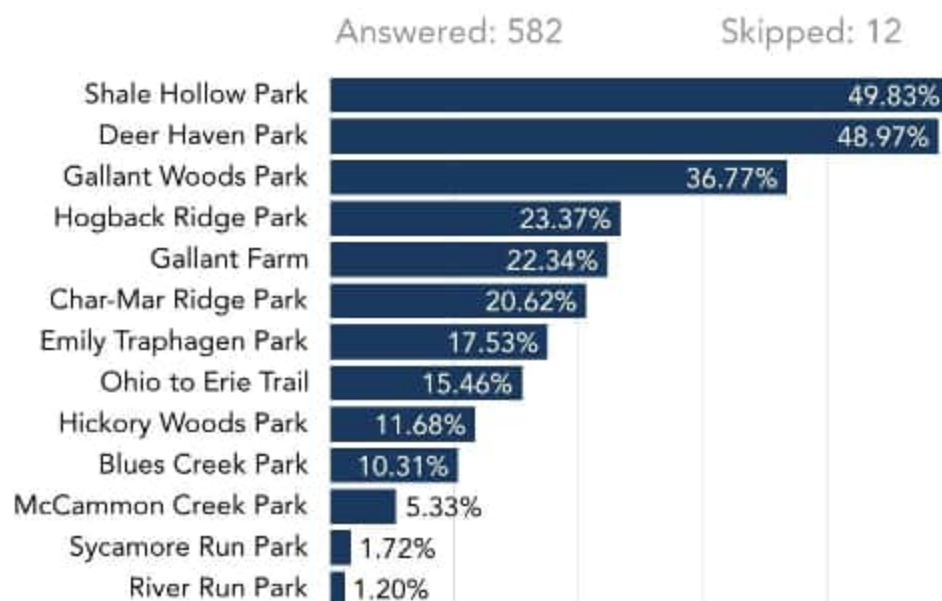


Q2 What is your opinion of Preservation Parks of Delaware County?

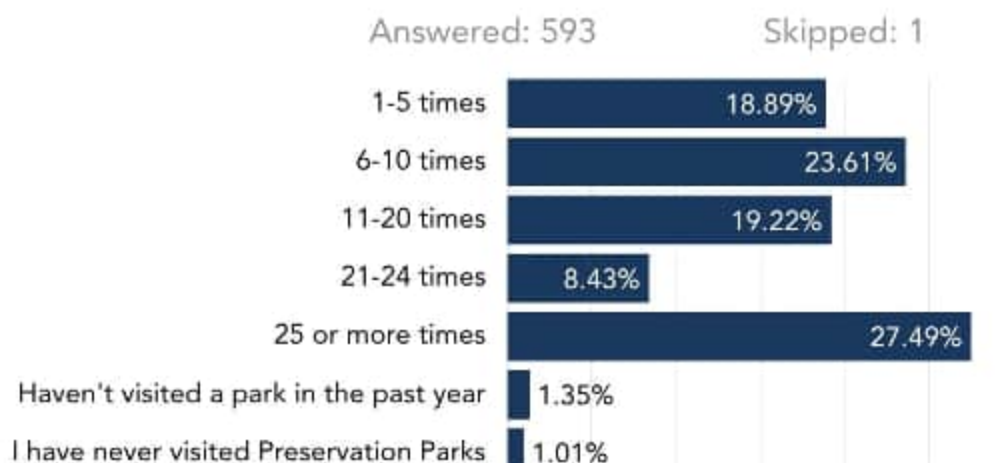


Q3 Which Preservation Parks locations do you visit the MOST frequently?

(Please select all that apply)



Q4 Approximately how many times have you or a member of your household visited Preservation Parks in the past year?



Q5 Overall, how would you rate the physical condition of the parks you have visited?



Q6 Below is a list of environmental and health concerns.
How much do you worry about each of the following?

Answered: 591

Skipped: 3

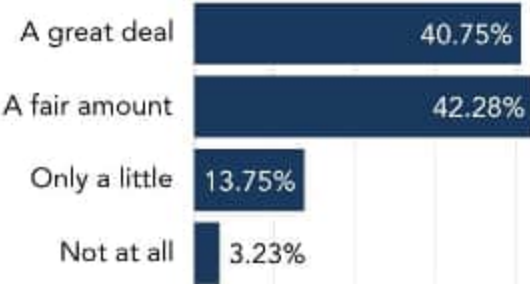
Pollution of rivers, lakes, and reservoirs:



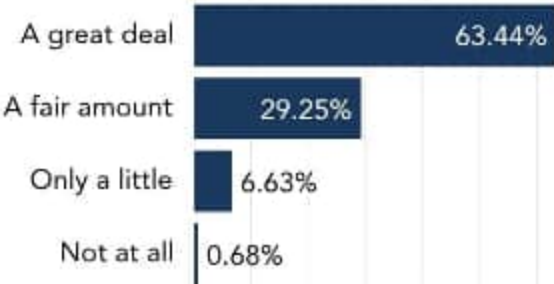
Mental Health (depression, anxiety, stress, etc.):



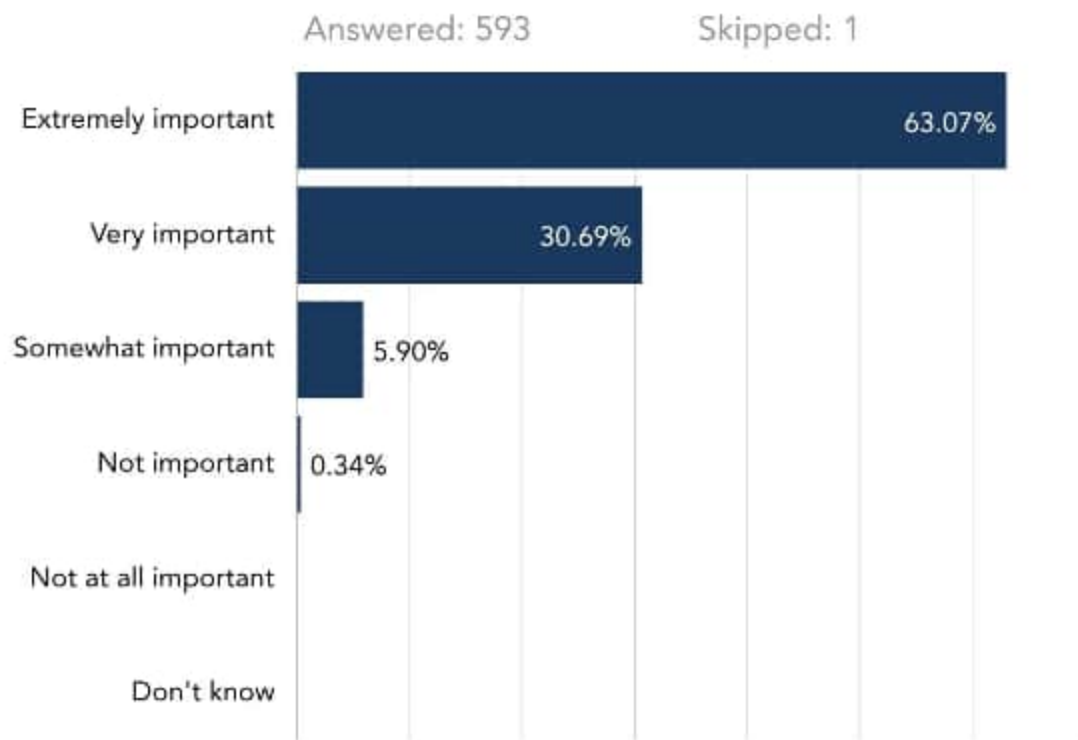
Physical Health (obesity/diabetes, hypertension, etc.):



Urban sprawl and loss of open spaces:

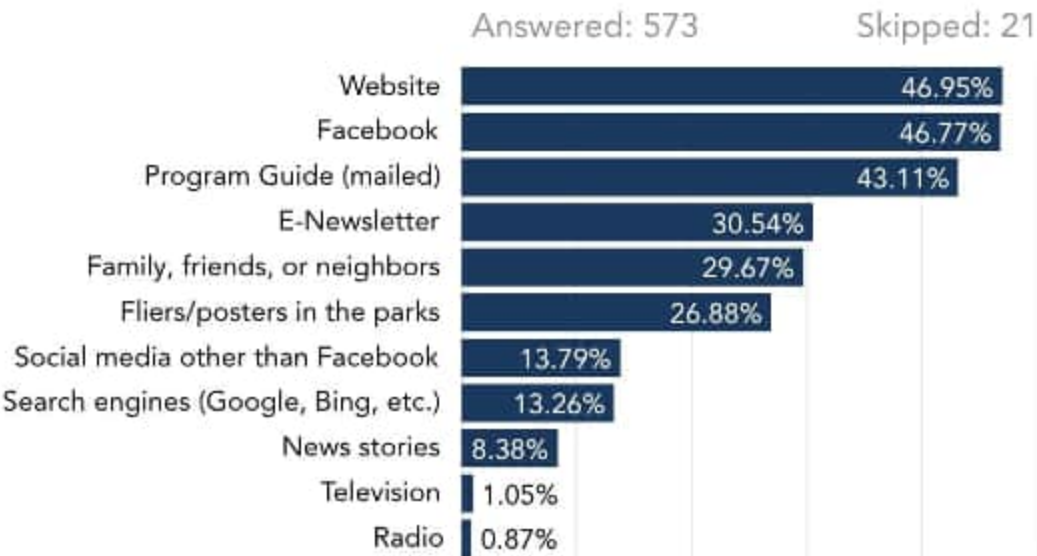


Q7 Preservation Parks’ mission is "to protect and conserve the natural and historical features of Delaware County and to inspire outdoor exploration and learning." How important is this mission to you?



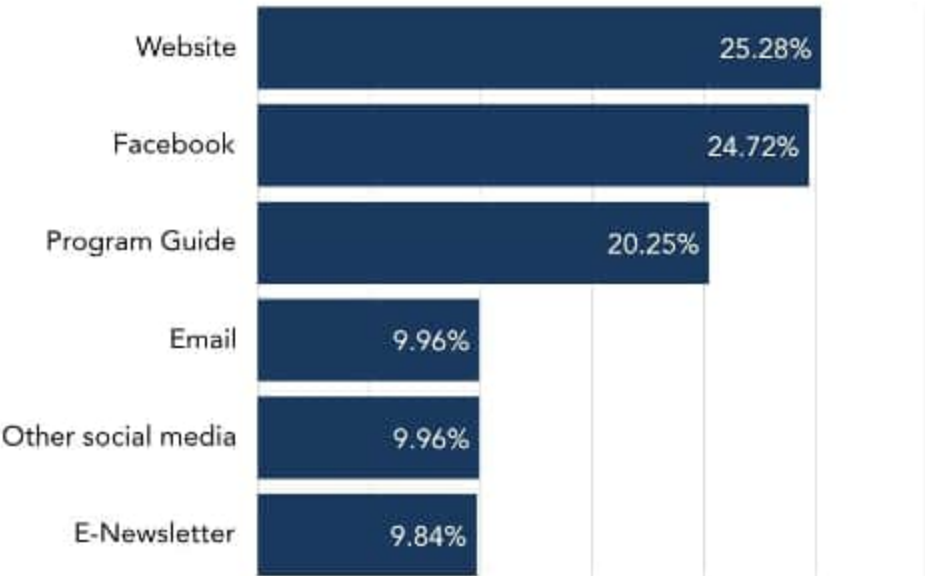
Q8 Please indicate how you learn about Preservation Parks programs and activities.

(Please select all that apply)



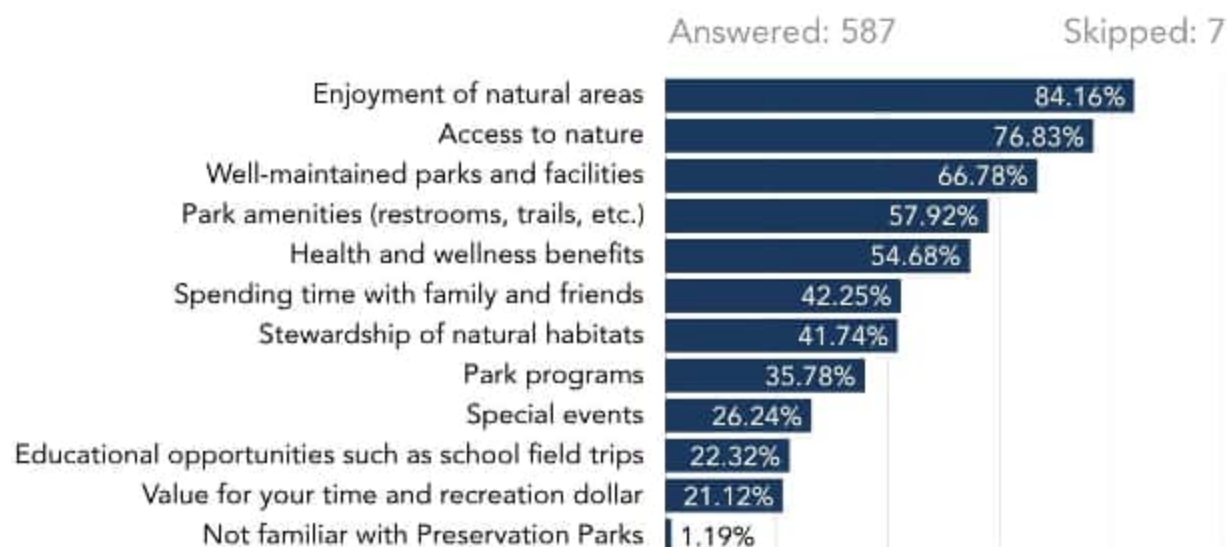
Q9 Which ways in Question #8 are your MOST preferred means of learning about Preservation Parks?

(NOTE: Results indicate the number of people choosing this as their 1st, 2nd, or 3rd choice.)



Q10 If you were promoting Preservation Parks to a family member or friend, which of the following would be part of this promotion?

(Please select all that apply)



Q10 If you were promoting Preservation Parks to a family member or friend, which of the following would be part of this promotion? (Other)

Other Responses Include:

- Dog friendly
- Gallant Farm
- Presence of park rangers and security personnel
- Birdwatching
- Location/proximity to home
- Educational programs
- Fishing
- Multi-use trails
- Geocaching
- Winter 100

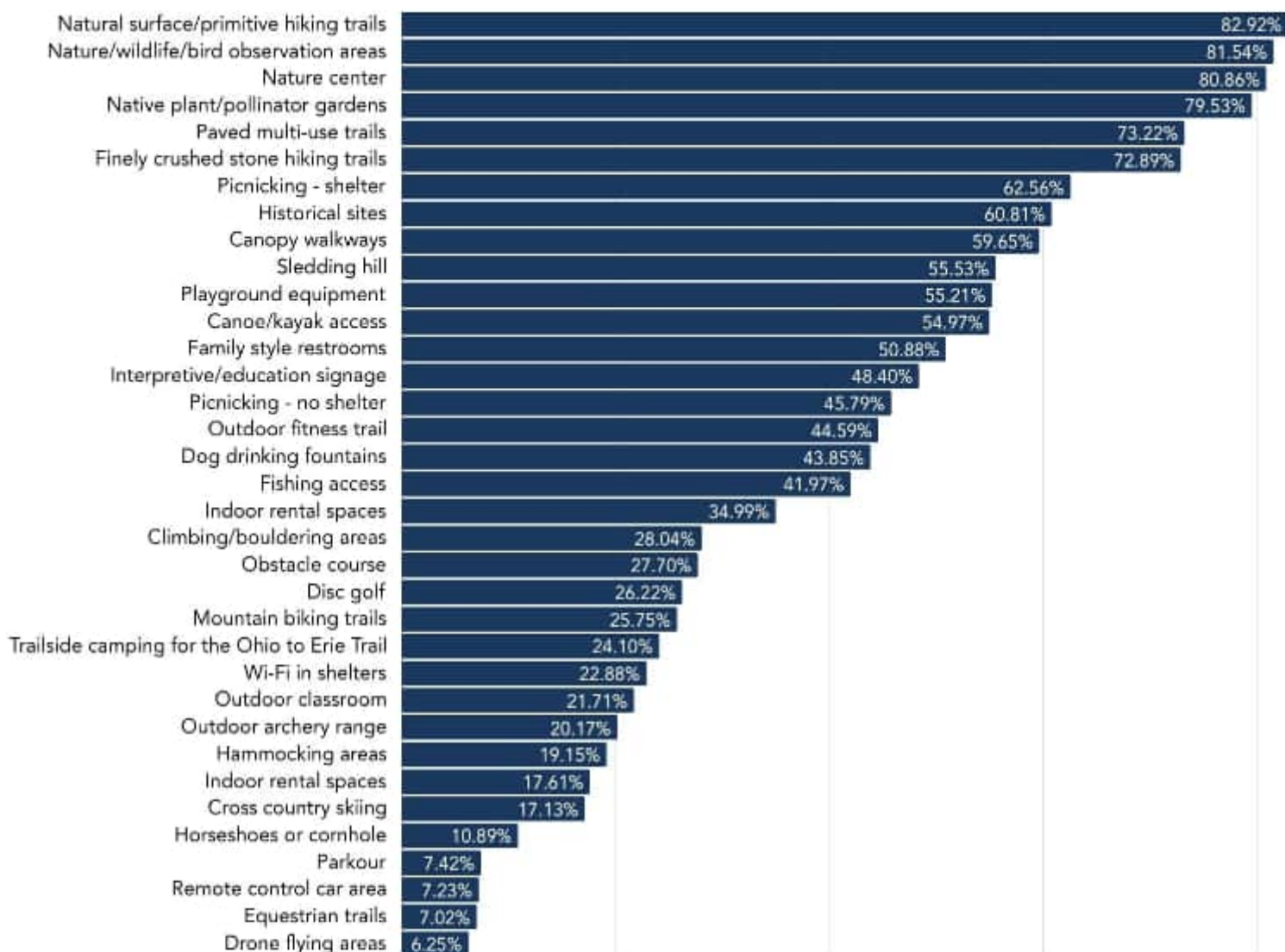
Q11 How important are parks and trails to the health and wellness of your household members?



Q12 Please indicate if you or anyone in your household has a need for any of the following types of facilities/amenities in Delaware County.

Answered: 559

Skipped: 35



Q12 How well does it meet your needs?

Answered: 559

Skipped: 35

	Met	Partially Met	Not Met	N/A
Nature/wildlife/bird observation areas	70.65%	24.28%	1.09%	3.99%
Finely crushed stone hiking trails	69.48%	24.26%	1.47%	4.78%
Nature center	69.26%	21.48%	3.33%	5.93%
Natural surface/primitive hiking trails	66.55%	26.21%	4.83%	2.41%
Picnicking- shelter	65.64%	21.54%	4.10%	8.72%
Picnicking- No shelter	59.72%	19.42%	3.60%	17.27%
Native plant/pollinator gardens	58.82%	32.72%	1.84%	6.62%
Playground equipment (swings, slides, etc.)	51.47%	28.40%	8.88%	11.24%
Interpretive/education signage	50.60%	31.33%	1.20%	16.87%
Family style restrooms	49.43%	27.59%	9.20%	13.79%
Paved multi-use trails (biking, walking, rollerblading)	45.08%	32.38%	15.16%	7.38%
Sledding hill	44.97%	31.95%	10.06%	13.02%
Fishing access	39.33%	36.00%	7.33%	17.33%
Outdoor fitness trail	37.68%	28.26%	15.22%	18.84%
Historical sites	34.43%	47.54%	7.10%	10.93%
Canoe/kayak access	34.34%	36.96%	14.78%	13.91%
Dog drinking fountains	30.34%	34.48%	15.86%	19.31%
Canopy walkways (bridge/walkway in the tree canopy)	28.02%	14.01%	44.44%	13.53%
Indoor rental spaces for business meetings	23.17%	19.51%	8.54%	48.78%
Indoor rental spaces for social gatherings	21.74%	31.30%	20.87%	26.09%
Outdoor classroom	21.62%	27.03%	9.46%	41.89%
Disc golf	21.10%	24.77%	21.10%	33.03%
Mountain biking trails	21.00%	21.00%	20.00%	38.00%
Hammocking areas	20.22%	24.72%	17.98%	37.08%
Horseshoes or cornhole	15.16%	18.18%	16.67%	50.00%
Drone flying areas	14.82%	9.26%	7.41%	68.52%
Wi-Fi in shelters	12.98%	15.58%	28.57%	42.86%
Cross country skiing	12.36%	19.10%	25.84%	42.70%
Climbing/bouldering areas	12.30%	15.57%	40.16%	31.97%
Obstacle course	10.28%	21.50%	35.51%	32.71%
Trailside camping for the Ohio to Erie Trail	7.95%	7.95%	31.82%	52.27%
Equestrian trails	7.14%	8.93%	12.50%	71.43%
Outdoor archery range/course	5.95%	13.10%	39.29%	41.67%
Remote control car area	3.50%	7.02%	19.30%	70.18%
Parkour	3.38%	6.78%	22.03%	67.80%

Q13 Which four types of facilities/amenities from Question #12 are MOST important to your household?

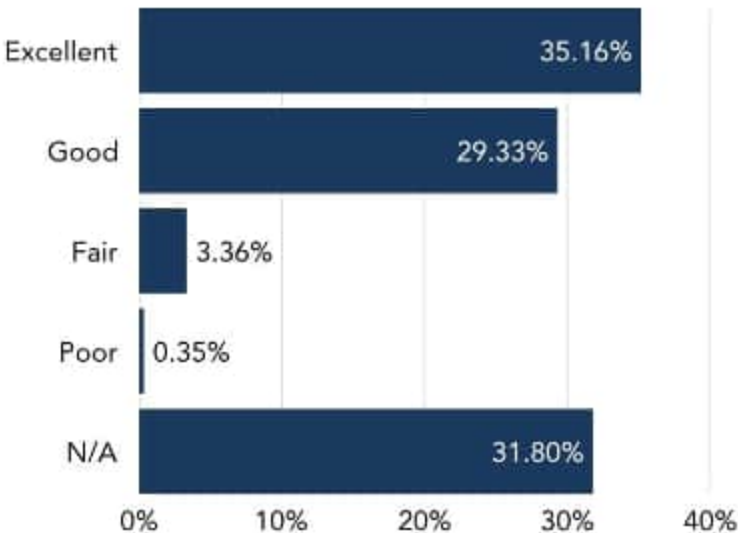
Results:

- 1.Hiking/walking trails
- 2.Natural areas/Natural play areas
- 3.Nature center
- 4.Playground

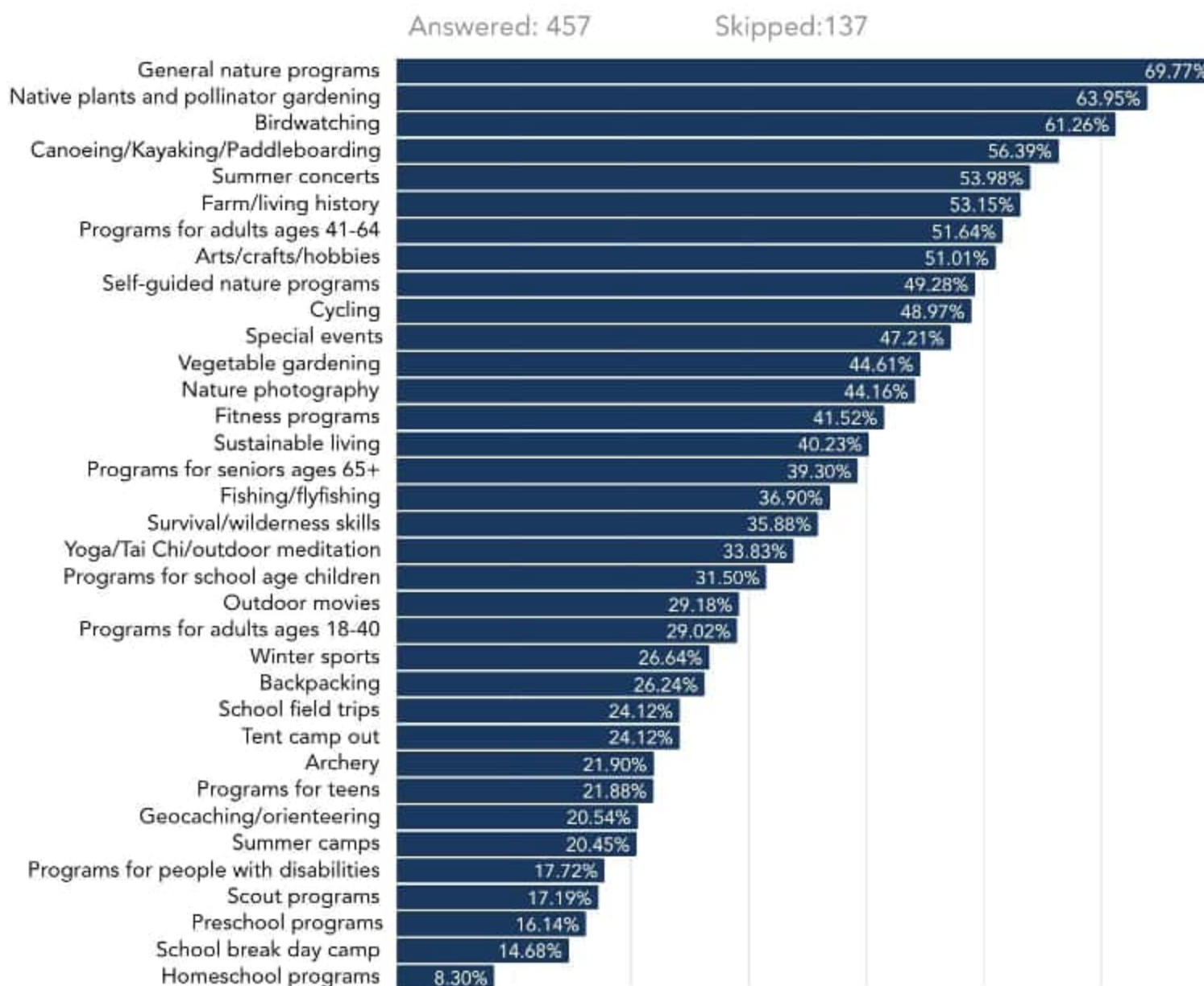
Q14 Have you or any person(s) in your household participated in any programs, activities, or events offered by Preservation Parks in the last year?



Q15 How would you rate the overall quality of the programs, activities, or events offered by Preservation Parks that you or your household members have participated in?



Q16 Please indicate if you or anyone in your household has a need for or participates in any of the following programs in Delaware County either with Preservation Parks or a different organization in the county.



Q16 How well does it meet your needs?

Answered: 457

Skipped: 137

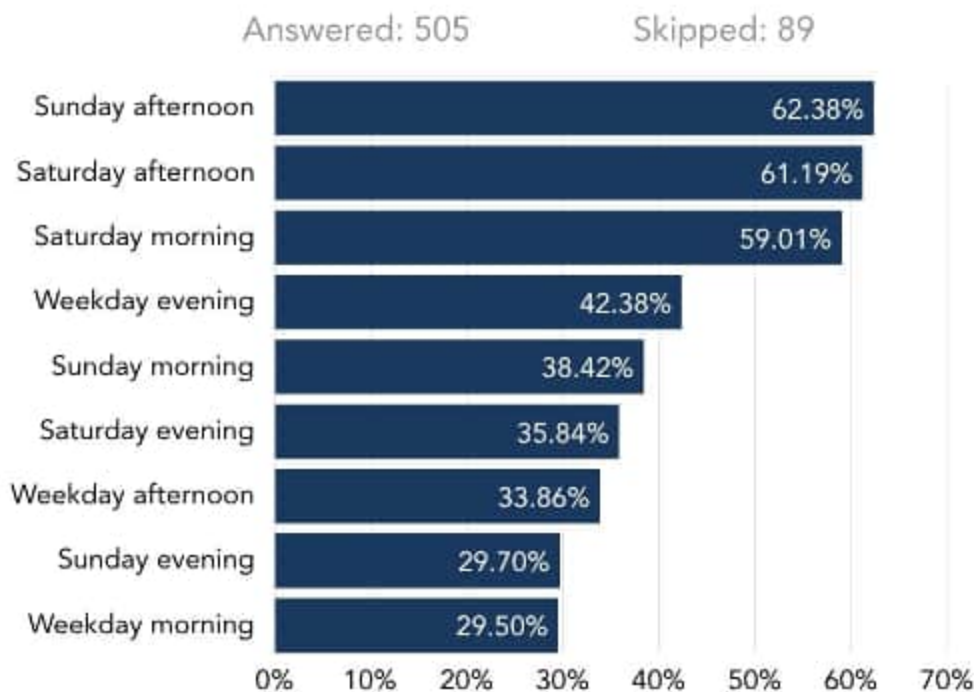
	Met	Partially Met	Not Met	N/A
Hiking	79.91%	16.59%	2.18%	1.31%
Birdwatching	69.66%	20.00%	2.76%	7.59%
Self-guided nature programs (Letterbox, Little Adventurers, Storybook Trail)	69.15%	16.82%	2.80%	11.21%
Farm/living history	68.11%	19.83%	2.59%	9.48%
General nature programs	63.45%	26.90%	4.83%	4.83%
Nature photography	59.30%	18.60%	11.63%	10.47%
Special events (Trick or Treat Trail, Adventure Run, Earth Day etc.)	58.76%	21.65%	4.12%	15.46%
Summer concerts	57.63%	22.88%	8.47%	11.02%
Native plants and pollinator gardening	52.24%	35.07%	5.22%	7.46%
Cycling	44.17%	35.00%	10.83%	15.83%
School field trips	38.98%	20.34%	5.08%	35.59%
Arts/crafts/hobbies	36.94%	37.84%	12.61%	12.61%
Fishing/flyfishing	36.59%	30.49%	10.98%	21.95%
Canoeing/kayaking/paddleboarding	34.61%	35.38%	17.69%	12.31%
Programs for adults ages 41-64	31.92%	44.68%	10.64%	12.77%
Outdoor movies	30.77%	26.15%	18.46%	24.62%
Programs for school-age children (Kindergarten-grade 5)	30.14%	34.25%	5.48%	30.14%
Fitness programs	27.96%	39.78%	9.68%	22.58%
Programs for seniors ages 65+	27.17%	35.87%	18.48%	18.48%
Programs for adults ages 18-40	23.81%	38.10%	12.70%	25.40%
Tent camp out	23.72%	10.17%	28.81%	37.29%
Preschool programs (ages 5 and under)	22.64%	18.87%	3.77%	54.72%
Geocaching/orienteering	20.69%	24.14%	5.17%	50.00%
Vegetable Gardening	20.48%	36.14%	27.71%	15.66%
Scout programs	19.61%	17.65%	11.76%	50.98%
Yoga/Tai Chi/outdoor meditation	18.84%	26.09%	27.54%	27.54%
Archery	18.03%	24.59%	11.48%	45.90%
Summer camps	14.82%	18.52%	20.37%	46.30%
Homeschool programs	13.96%	11.63%	4.65%	69.77%
Programs for teens	13.12%	32.79%	16.39%	37.70%
Backpacking	18.76%	18.75%	31.25%	31.25%
Winter sports (snowboarding, cross-country skiing etc.)	12.50%	32.81%	28.13%	26.56%
Programs for people with disabilities	9.80%	21.57%	27.45%	41.18%
School break day camp	9.31%	16.28%	16.28%	58.14%
Sustainable living	6.41%	46.15%	33.33%	14.10%

Q17 Which of the four (4) types of programs in question #16 (previous question) are most important to you?

- Hiking
- Bird Watching
- Native Plants
- General Nature Programs
- Special Events, including Concerts

Q18 What are the best days/times of the week for you to participate in programs?

(Please select all that all that apply)

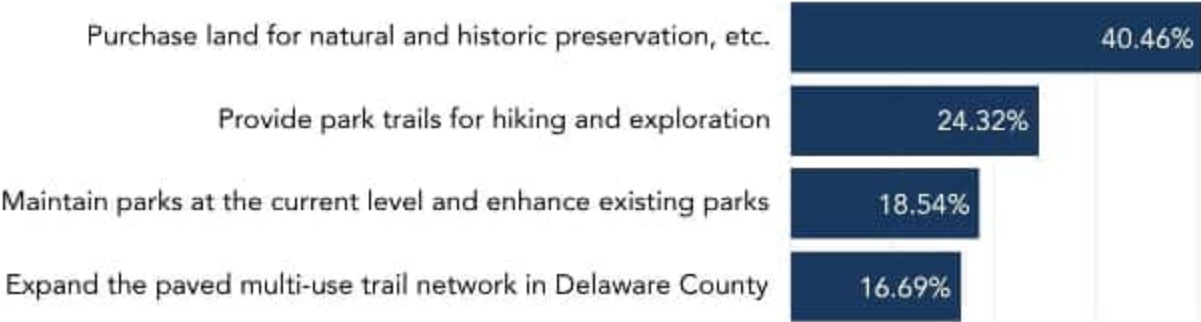


Q19 There are different ways to protect and conserve the natural and historic features of Delaware County and to inspire outdoor exploration and learning. Please rate how supportive you would be of each action Preservation Parks could take?

Answered: 536 Skipped: 58

	Supportive	Not Supportive	Don't Know
Provide park trails for hiking and exploration.	99.06%	0.38%	0.56%
Maintain parks at the current level and enhance existing parks.	98.49%	0.57%	0.94%
Purchase land for natural and historic preservation, conservation, and restoration of habitats for public enjoyment.	98.31%	0.94%	1.50%
Expand outdoor education and exploration opportunities.	91.86%	3.29%	4.84%
Expand the paved multi-use trail network in Delaware County.	91.29%	4.92%	3.79%
Expand school field trip opportunities.	79.49%	5.47%	15.04%

Q20 Which three actions in Q19 (previous question) are you **MOST** willing to fund with your tax dollars?



Q21-23 The Preservation Parks Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) organization dedicated to financially supporting Park District projects and programs.

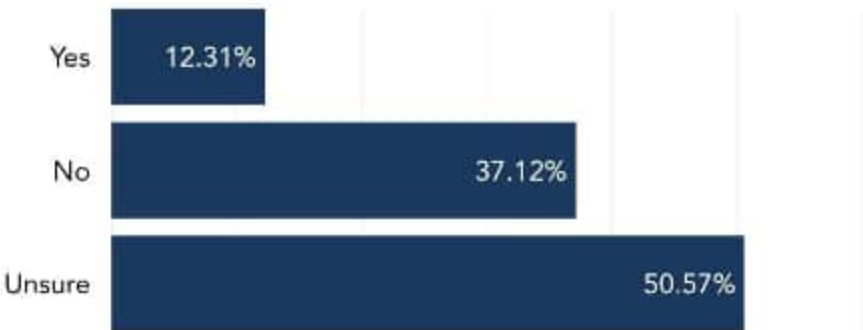
Answered: 526

Skipped: 68

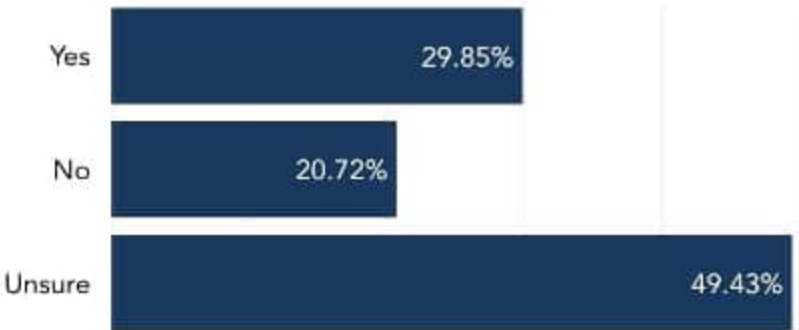
Q21: Are you aware of the Preservation Parks Foundation?



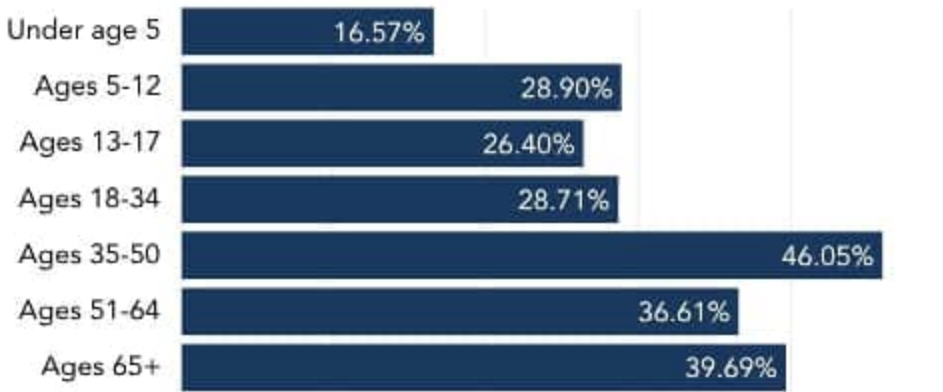
Q22: Do you have an interest in giving philanthropically through the Preservation Parks Foundation?



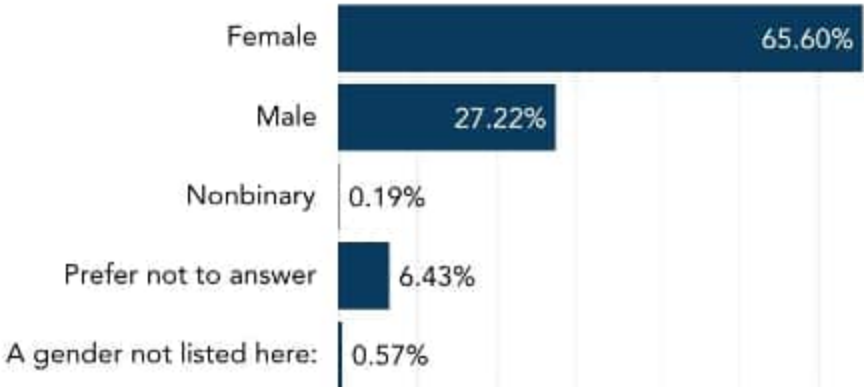
Q23: If the Preservation Parks Foundation had a membership opportunity, would you be interested?



Q24 Counting yourself, how many people are in your household?
Please put the number of household members in each age group.



Q25 What is your gender?



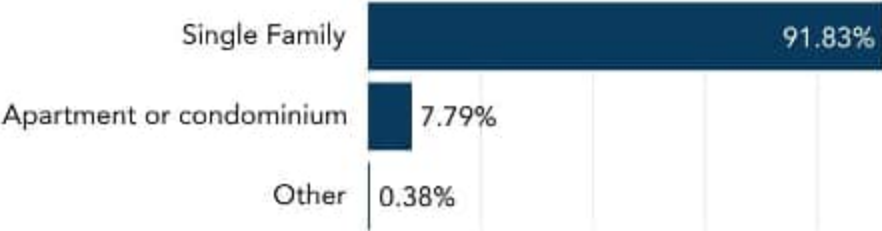
Q26 Please check all of the following that describe your race/ethnicity.



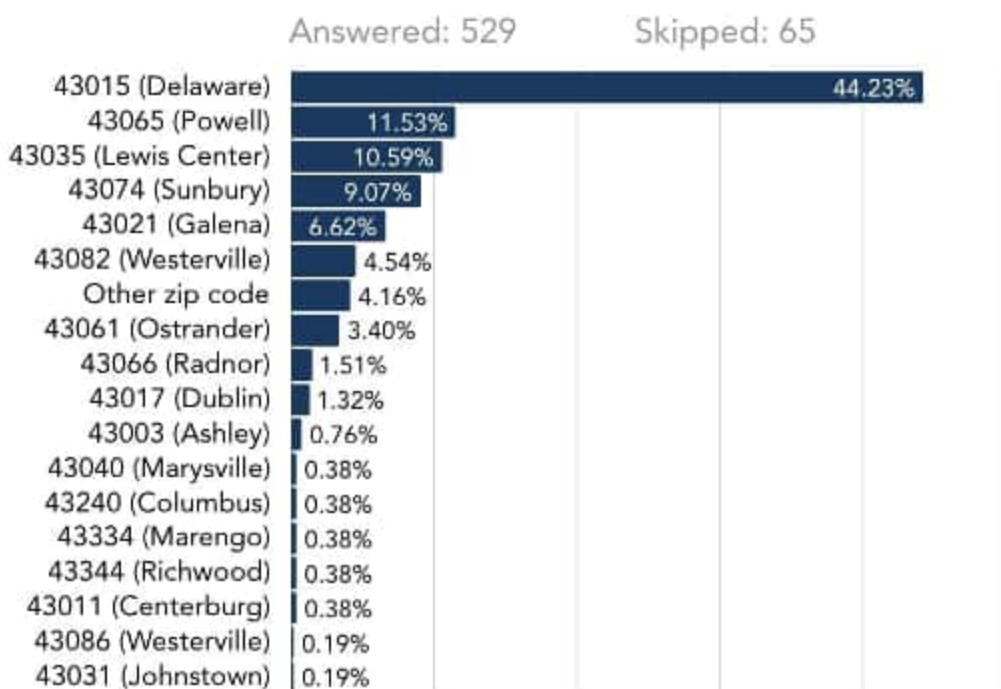
Q27 What is your household income?



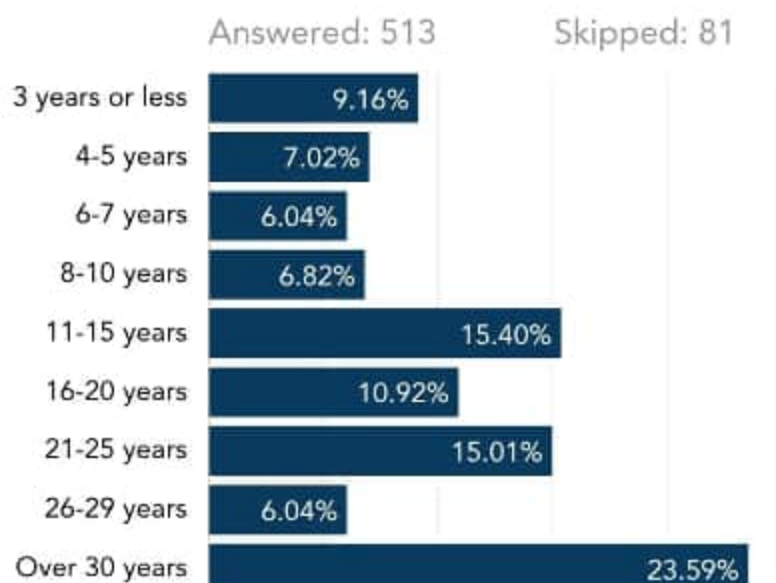
Q28 Which of the following describes your home?



Q29 What is your zip code?



Q30 How many years have you lived in Delaware County?



Q31 We are interested in your feedback. Please feel free to provide any other information that you would like to share with us.

Summary of Feedback:

Park Expansion: Continue land acquisition and expand trails while balancing sustainable management of existing properties.

Community Engagement: Enhance outreach to new residents, schools, and underrepresented groups through partnerships and targeted programs.

Program Diversity: Maintain popular programs while reintroducing past activities and exploring new opportunities, such as wildlife education and winter events.

Volunteer and Staff Support: Expand volunteer roles and increase staff to meet growing park needs while fostering internal collaboration.

Natural Preservation: Focus on habitat conservation, invasive species management, and protecting natural resources like rivers and wetlands.

Park Safety and Maintenance: Ensure well-maintained, safe trails and facilities with accessibility and privacy considerations.

Communication and Awareness: Improve marketing, signage, and community outreach to promote park activities and their value.

Conservation Identity: Emphasize Preservation Parks' mission of environmental education and low impact recreation over development.

Foundation Growth and Funding: Strengthen the Preservation Parks Foundation, seek diverse funding sources, and maintain free or low-cost programs.

Survey Feedback: Simplify future surveys and share results to increase participation and build public trust.



PRESERVATION PARKS OF DELAWARE COUNTY

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Prepared by:



*Adopted by Board of Park Commissioners,
July 15, 2025*