

Wharton State Forest Visitor and Vehicle Use Access Planning

2nd Public Meeting

8 February 2023



Wharton State Forest Visitor and Vehicle Use Access Planning

2nd Public Meeting - 8 February 2023

- Today's Meeting is Being Recorded
- Wharton State Forest Overview
- Summary of Survey Results
- Public Comment
- Next Steps



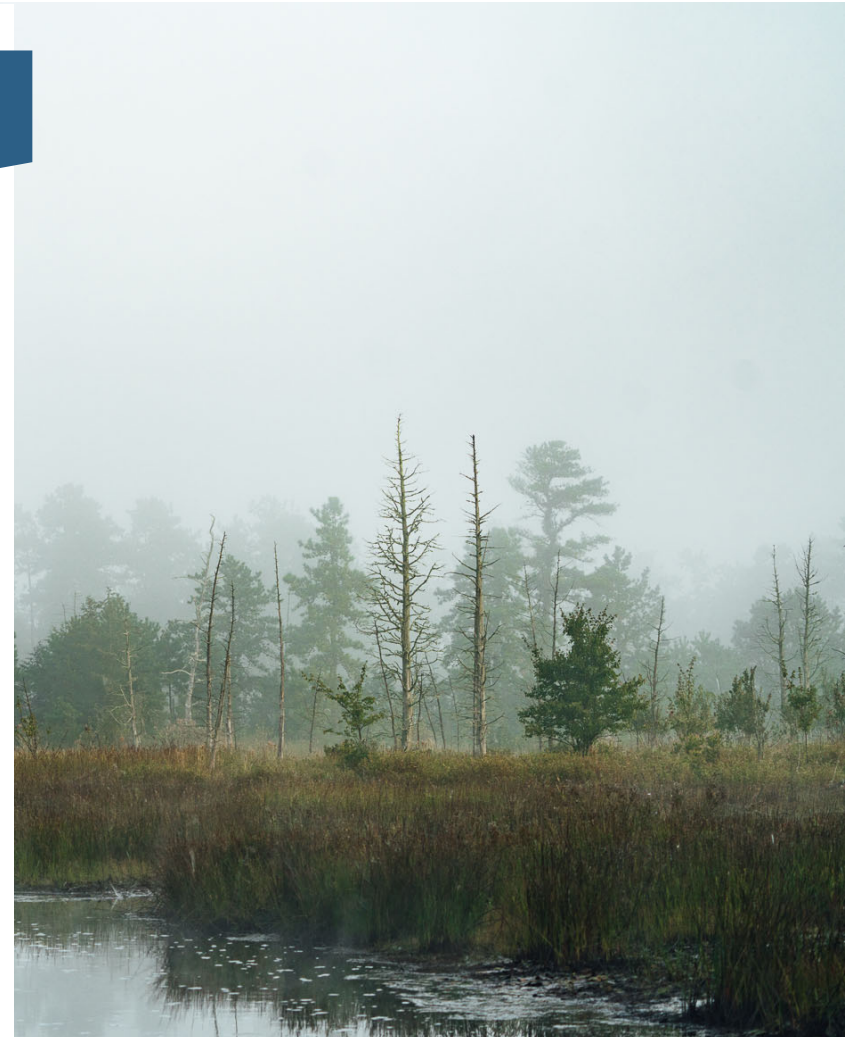
Wharton State Forest Overview

- 124,350 acres
- 800,000+ annual visitors
- 2 historic villages
- 9 campgrounds
- 1 swimming area
- 750 plant species



Visitor and Vehicle Use Survey

- First public meeting held September 27th, 2022
- Survey was conducted between September 28 and November 11, 2022
- 1,610 surveys were submitted online, by email and through traditional mail.
- Participants provided information about the activities they enjoy as well as how frequently they enjoy them.





Visitor and Vehicle Use Survey

- Survey will be used to enhance Wharton State Forest's map to clearly define designated safe and legal routes for vehicle usage, while protecting culturally and ecologically sensitive areas.
- These efforts to define safe and legal vehicle access routes on Wharton's improved and unimproved roads will serve as the model for protection of other state-managed lands throughout the Pinelands.

Visitor and Vehicle Use Survey

Create shapes to mark general areas. Click the plus sign (+) to add more than one site. (1)

2000

Draw the area on the map below.*

Find address or place

Can not find your location. Please check your browser to ensure that your location is shared.

Data © 2014 Google, Imagery © 2014 Google, Labels © 2014 Google, Terrain © 2014 Google, Streets © 2014 Google

Powered by Bing

No geometry captured yet.

Submit your input. Ⓞ

Do you confirm that this information you've provided is correct?*

- Demographic data – who are you?
 - How often do you visit and for which activities?
 - When do you visit?
 - Questions regarding Park Service rules and regulations.
 - What part of Wharton is important to you?
-
- Multiple choice Questions
 - Written Responses
 - Mark up a map
-
- Online, by email, by mail



Wharton State Forest

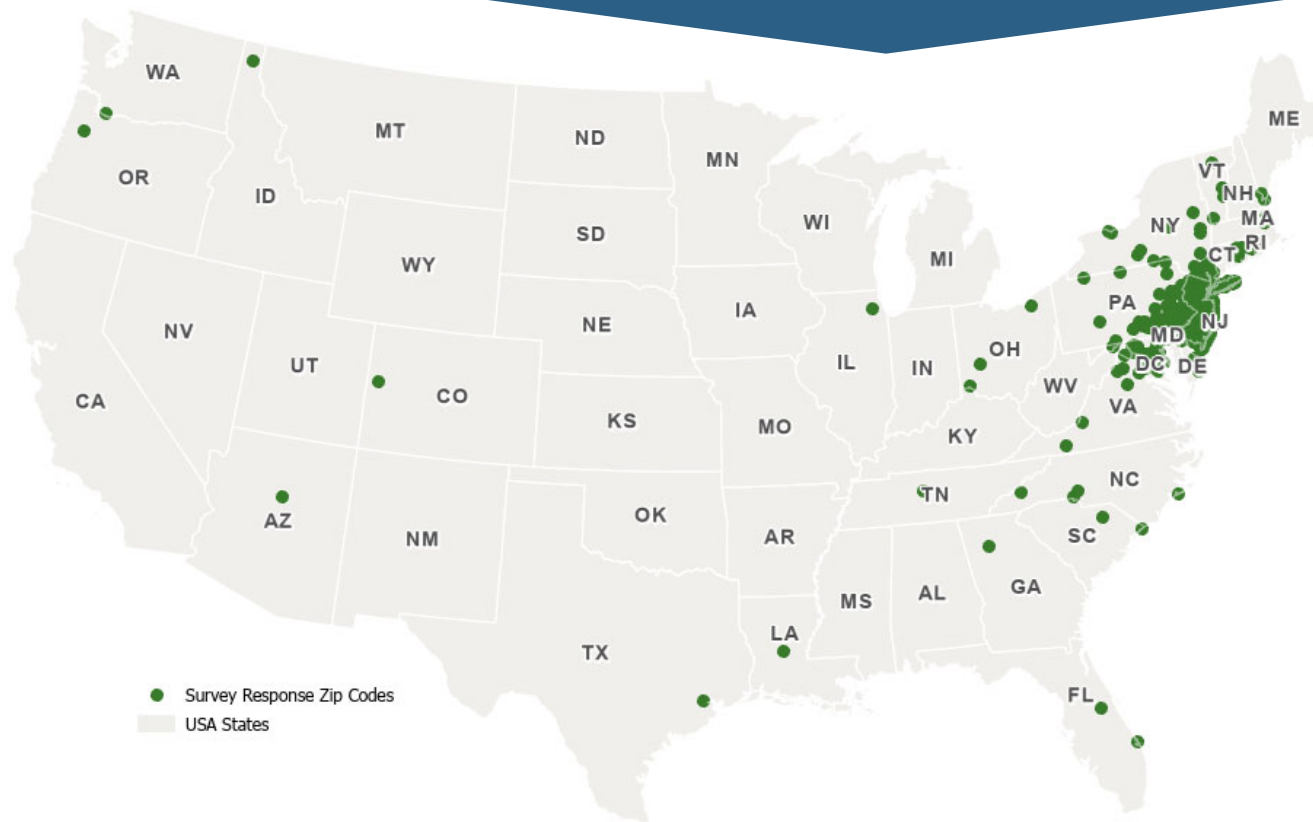
Visitor and Vehicle Use Virtual Public Meeting



Vehicle Access Permit Concept

- Recognize strong call for greater enforcement.
- Better defining and demarcating access is a step toward greater enforcement.
- In addition to signs, and increased awareness of what is open and off limits to driving, a permit would be helpful toward greater enforcement.
- Carefully considering permit cost, not a revenue generator.
- Considering permit fee waiver for those that possess a NJ hunting or fresh-water fishing license, for example.

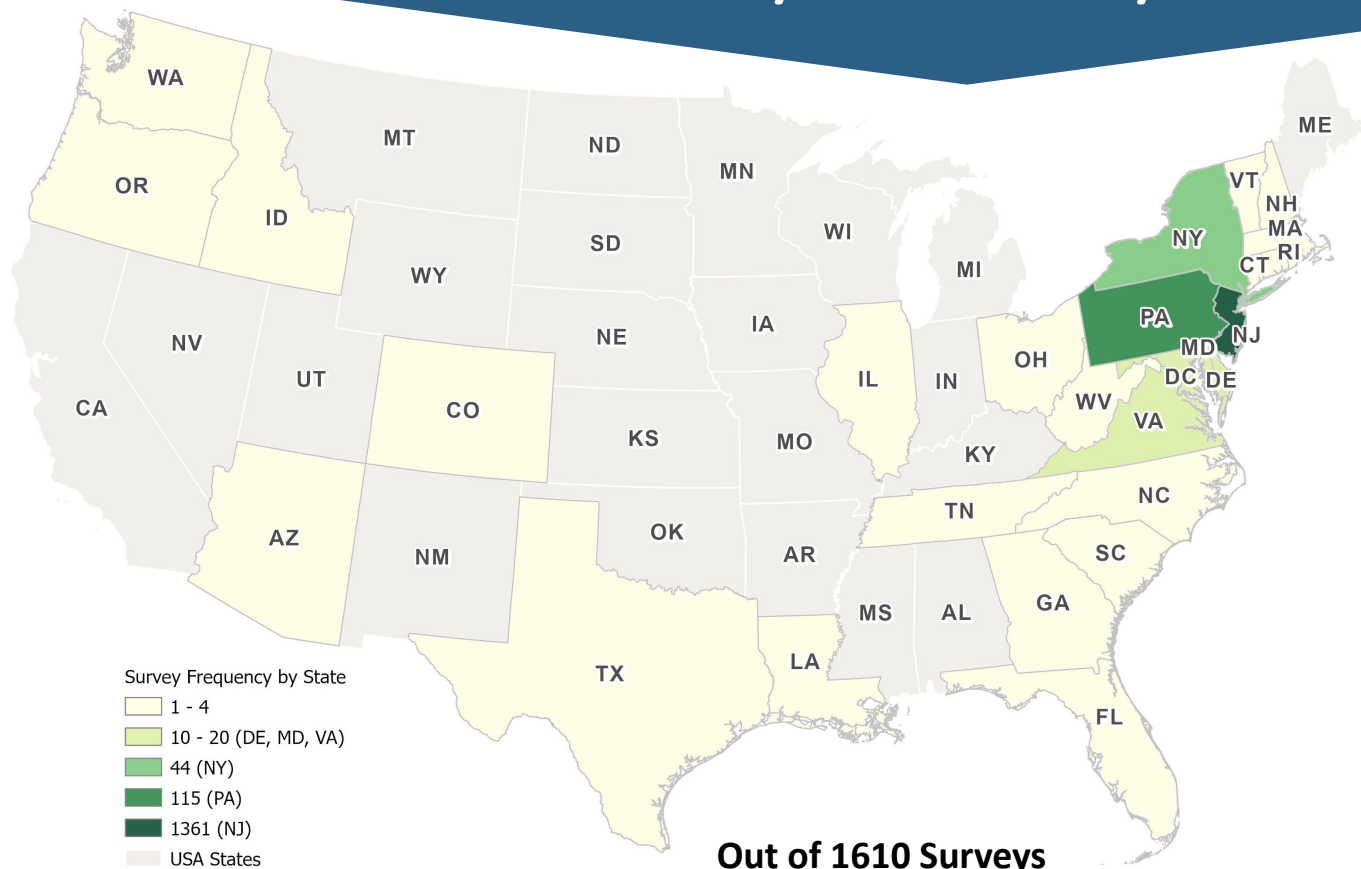
Mapped Zip Code Responses



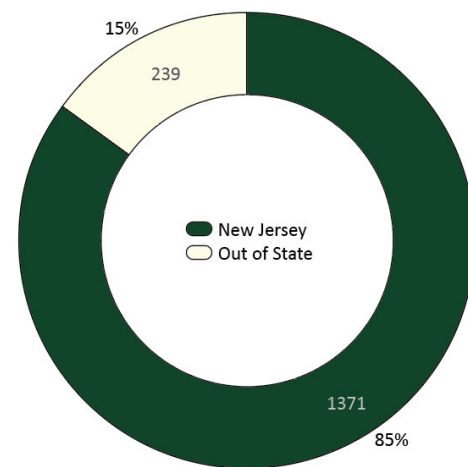
- **500** Zip Codes Total
- **301** Zip Codes in NJ
- **27** States
- Furthest zip code from Batsto Visitor Center was **97302 of Salem, Oregon.**

Out of 1610 Surveys

Survey Count by State



- 27 States
- 1371 New Jersey surveys
- 239 Out-of-State surveys



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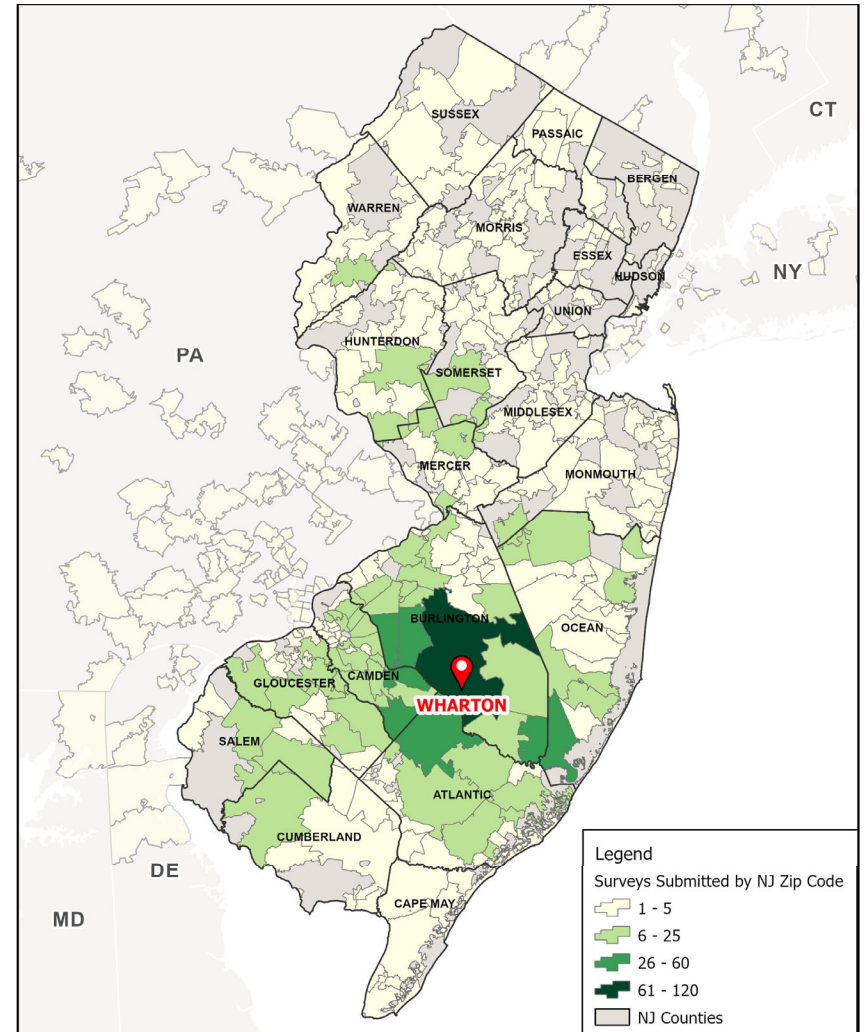
Surveys by NJ Zip Code

- **301** Zip Codes in NJ
- Responses from every county in NJ
- **Burlington County** had the most responses, with **08088** being the most frequently used zip code.

Top 5 Zip Code Frequencies

Zip Code	Municipalities	Frequency
08088	Indian Mills, Shamong, Southampton, Tabernacle, Vincentown	111
08055	Medford, Medford Lakes	58
08037	Ancora, Batsto, Braddock, Blue Anchor, Elm, Folsom, Hammonton, Mullica, Nesco, Rosedale, Sweetwater	56
08004	Atco, Waterford	48
08053	Evesboro, Evesham, Kresson, Marlton, Marlton Lakes, Pine Grove	31

Out of 1371 NJ Surveys



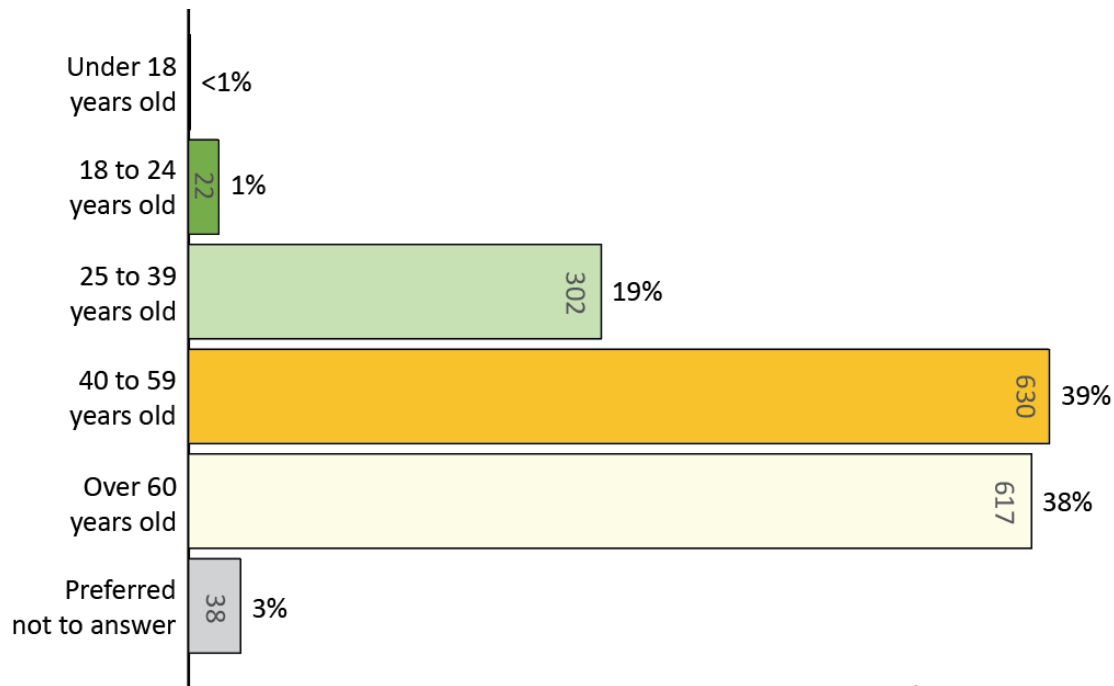
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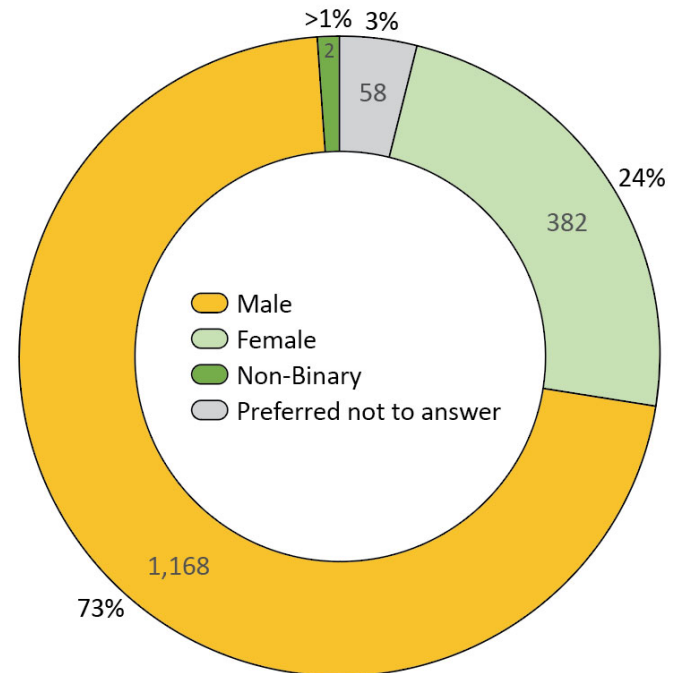
Demographics

Which age describes you?



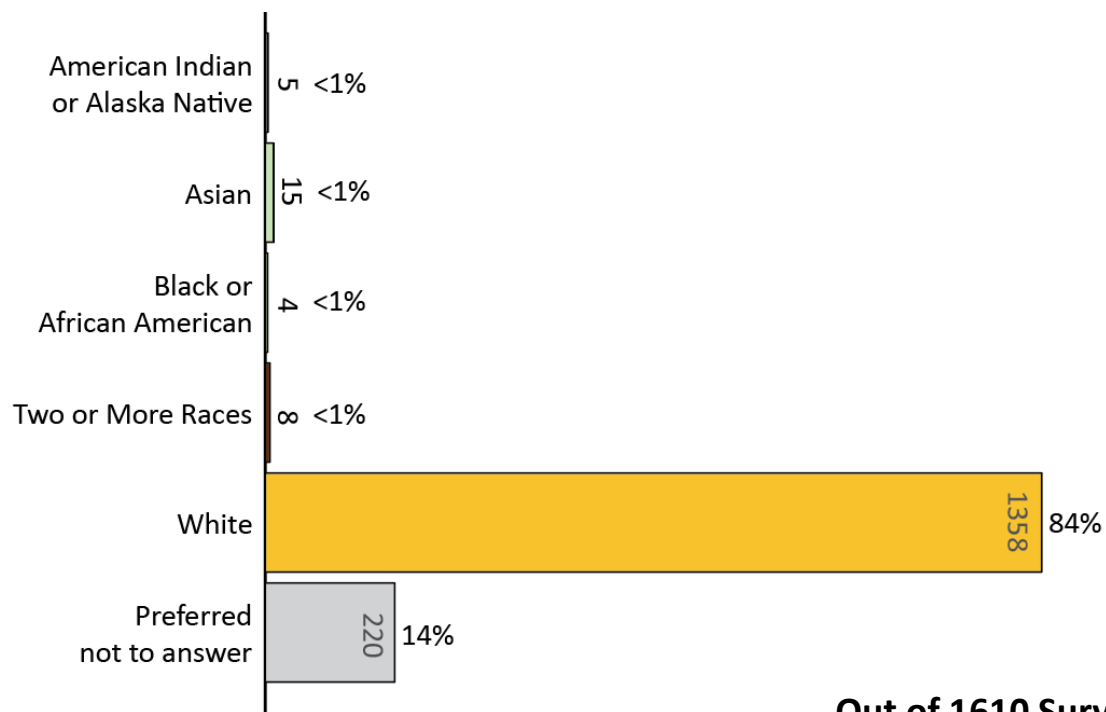
Out of 1610 Surveys

What is your gender?



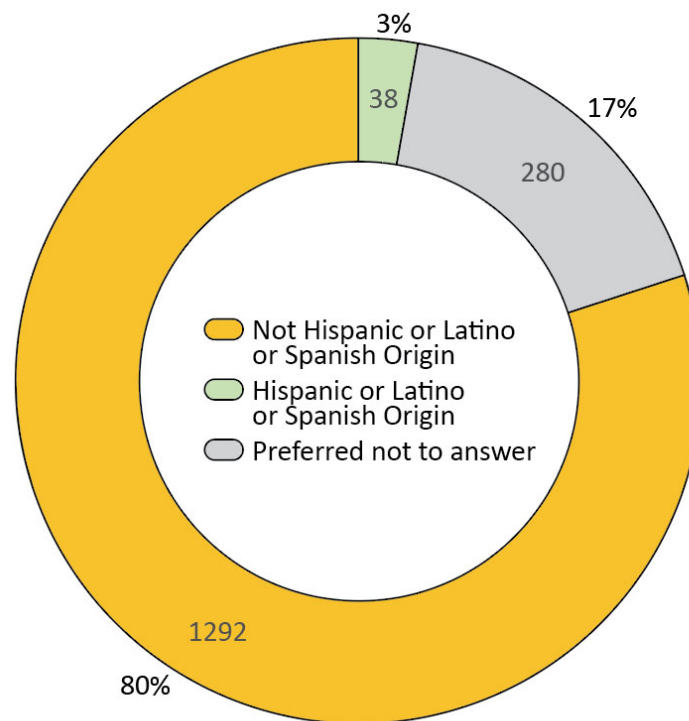
Demographics cont.

What is your race?

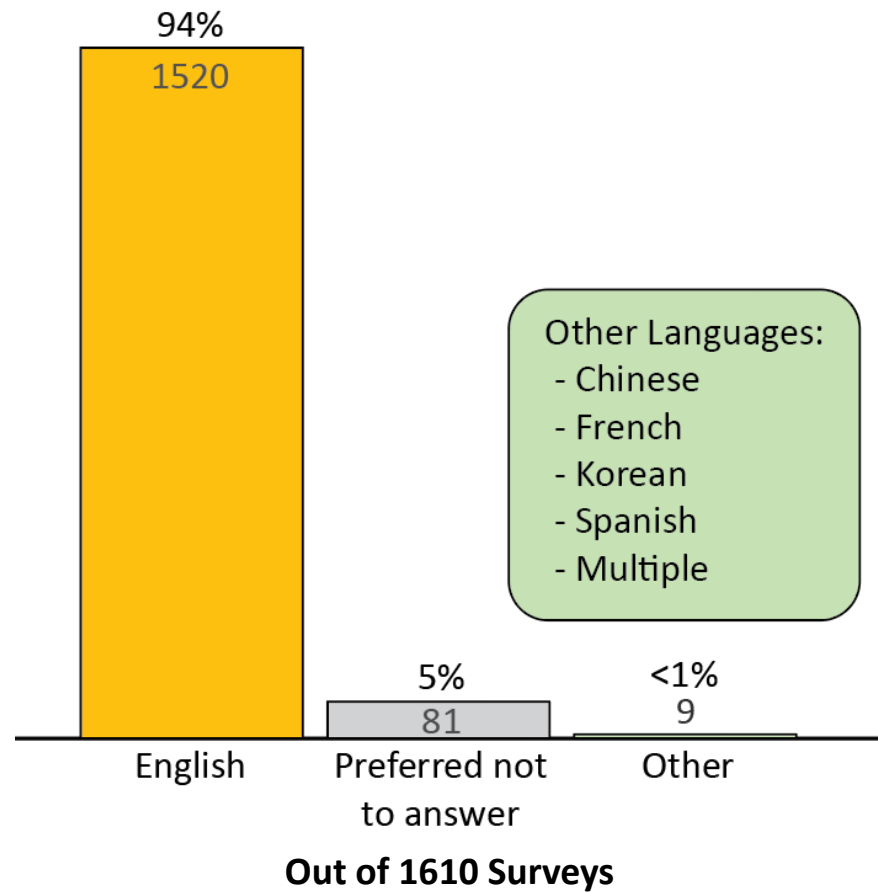


Out of 1610 Surveys

What is your ethnicity?



Is English the
primary
language
spoken in your
home?

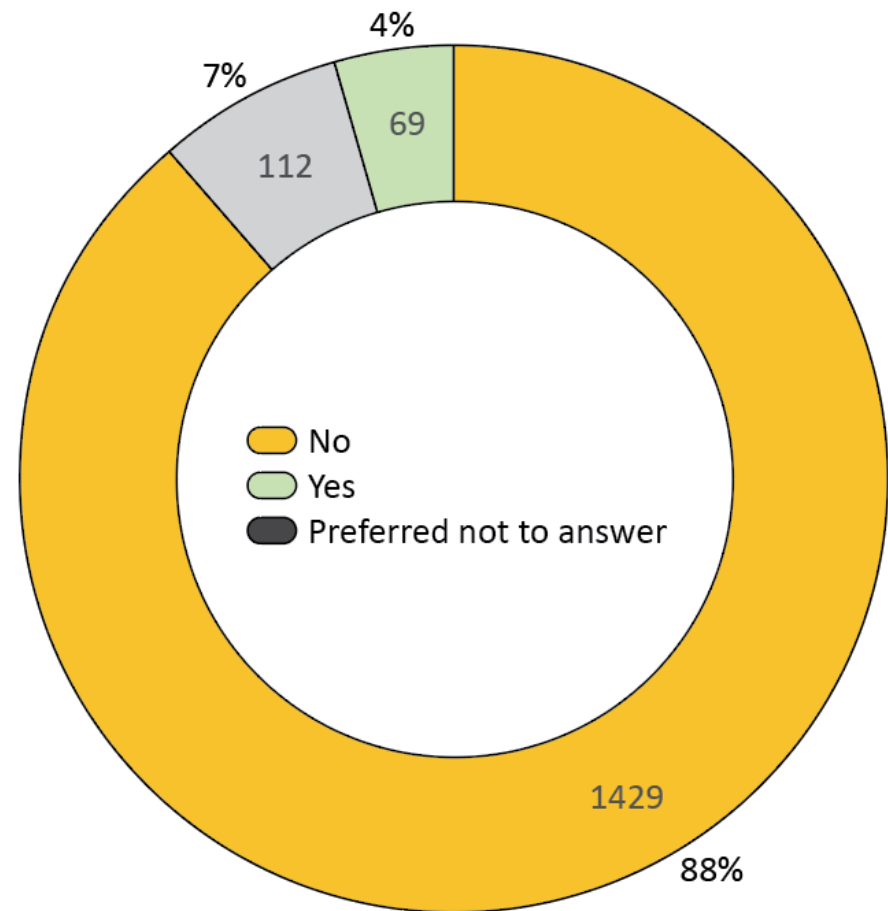


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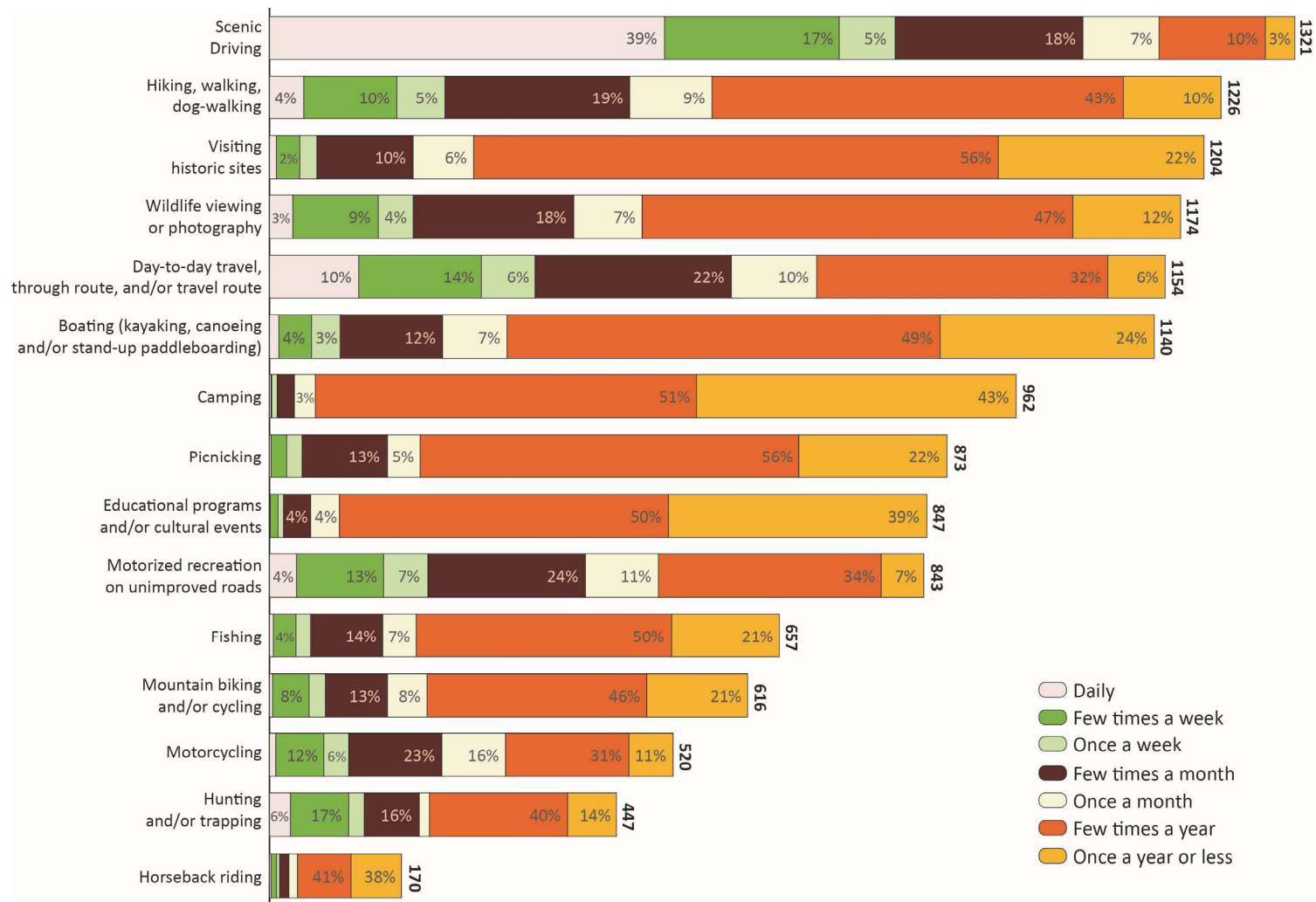


Do you have
a mobility
disability?



Out of 1610 Surveys

How often do you visit?



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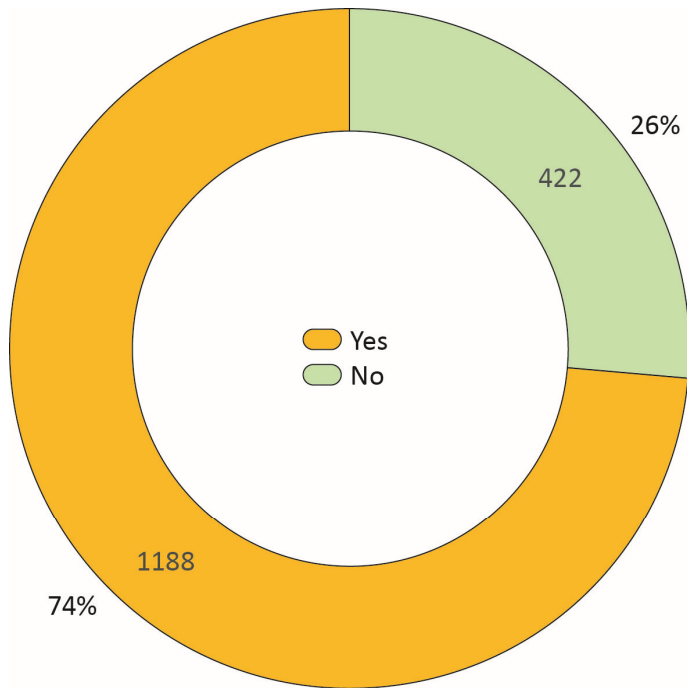
How often do you visit? (cont.)

- Other activities listed:

- Backpacking
- Birding
- Botany
- Cross Country Skiing
- Dog Training
- Enduros
- Exercise
- Forest Bathing/Meditation
- Geocaching
- Horseback riding events
- Relaxation/Stress Relief
- Scouts
- Sharing nature with children
- Stargazing
- Swimming
- Traditions
- Volunteering
- Work/research

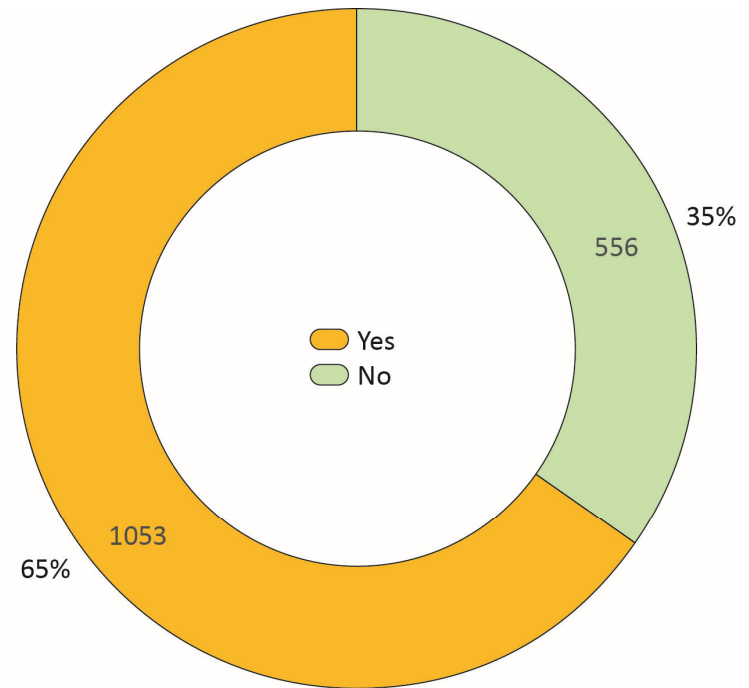
336 respondents selected “other”

Do you think the state's rules and regulations (N.J.A.C. 7:2-3.1) regarding the use of motorized vehicles ... easy to read and understand?



Out of 1610 Surveys

Should the DEP develop plans for responsible and sustainable access to State Park Service lands?



Out of 1609 Surveys
(one paper survey had no response)

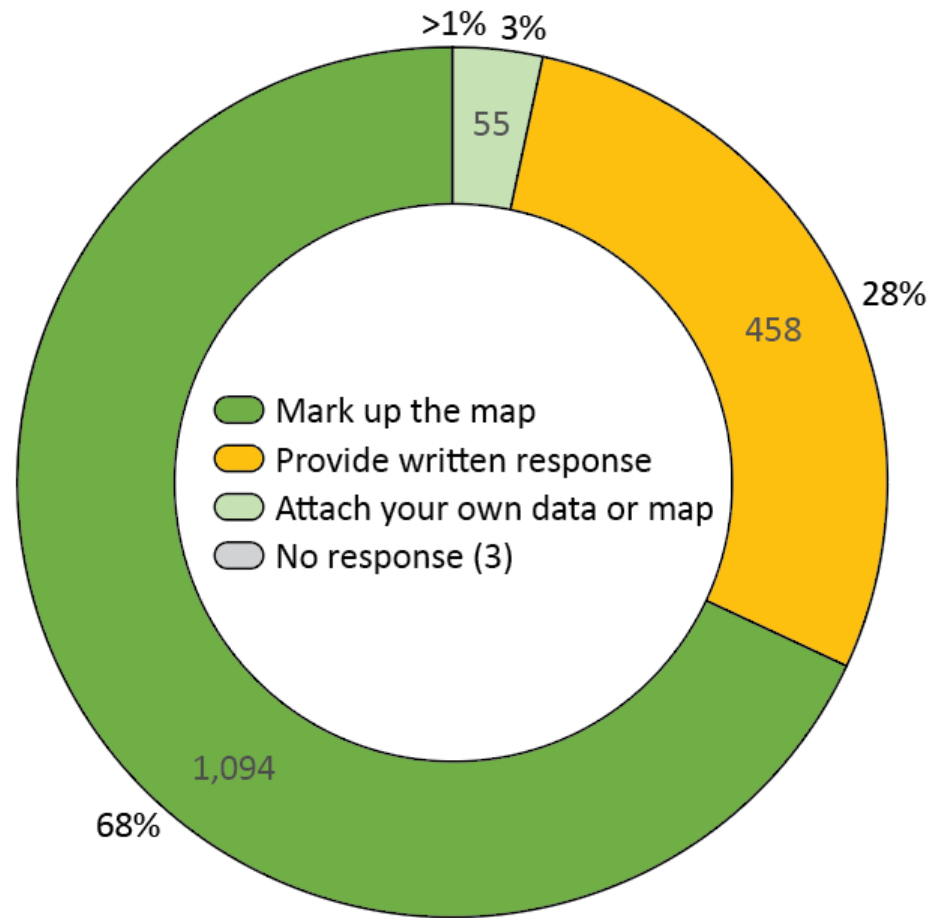


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How would you like to provide input on Wharton State Forest areas important to you?



Out of 1610 Surveys

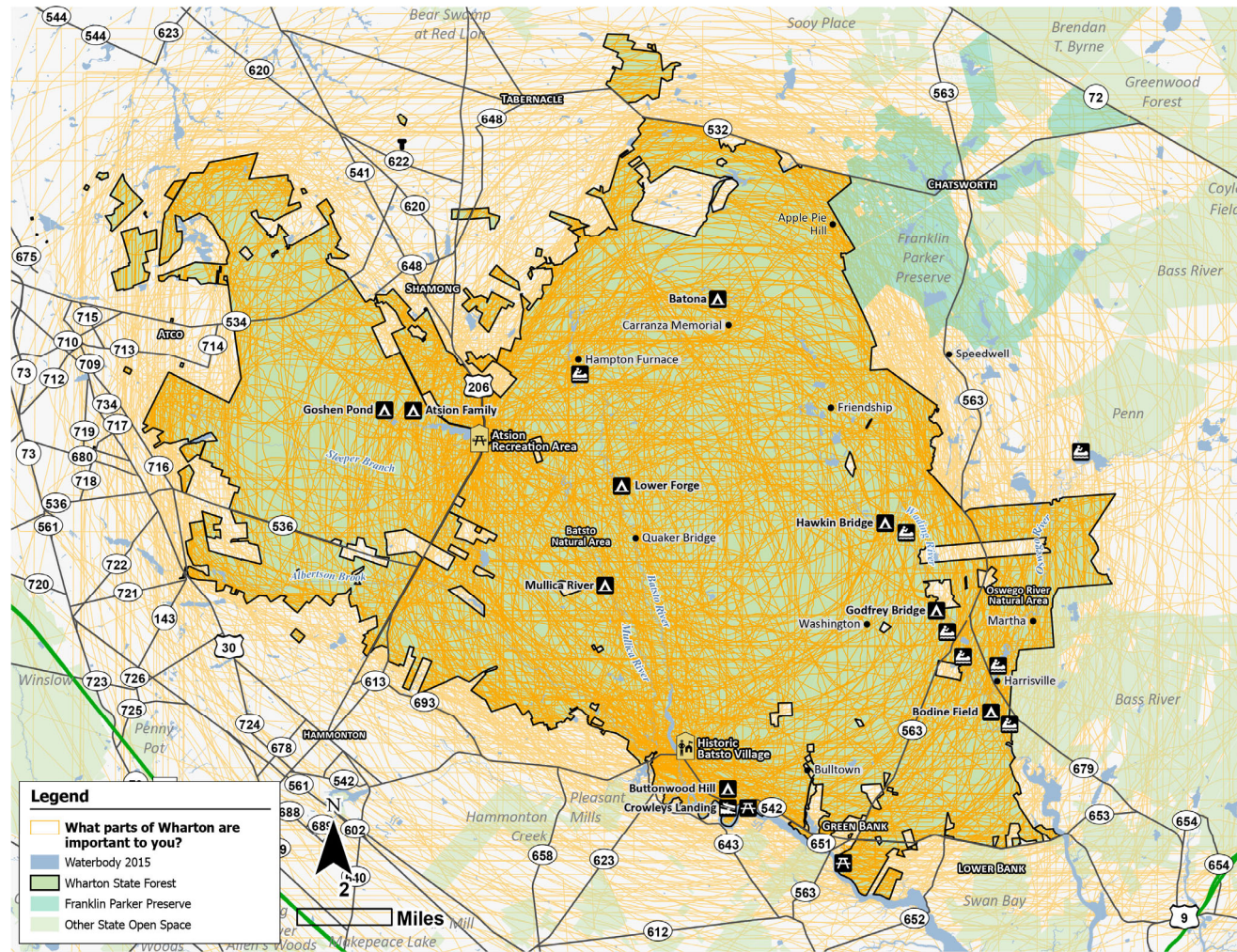
What parts of Wharton are important to you?

1,305 Total Areas Mapped (*additional 30 areas mapped were outside of Wharton*)

52,607 Acres Average Mapped Area

190 Mapped Areas Over 90,000 acres (*areas identifying all of Wharton*)

124,350 Total Acres in Wharton



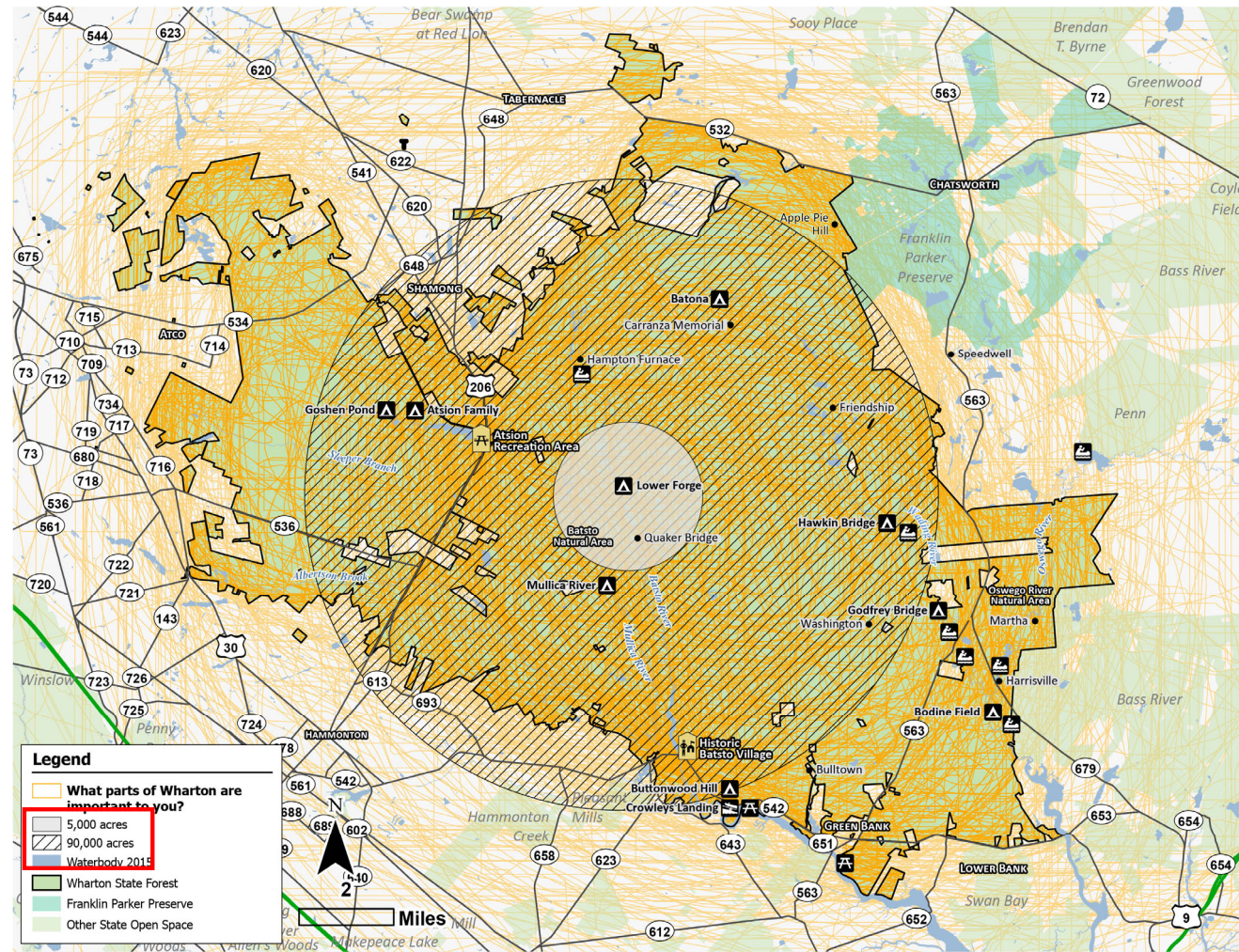
What parts of
Wharton are
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For Scale

1,305 Total Areas Mapped (*additional 30
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124,350 Total Acres in Wharton

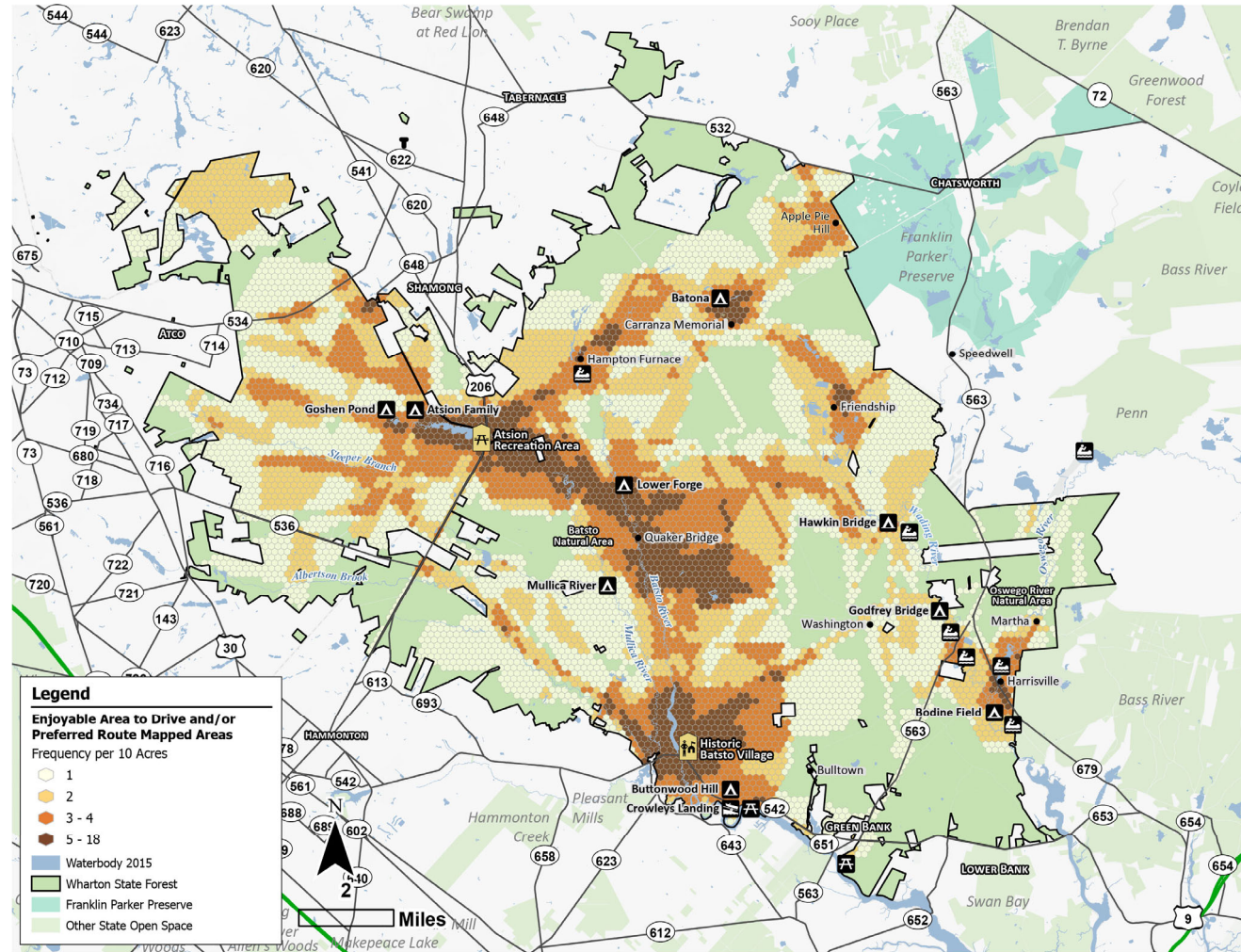


Enjoyable area to drive and/or preferred route (under 5,000 acres)

182 Areas Under 5,000 Acres

357 Areas Over 5,000 Acres

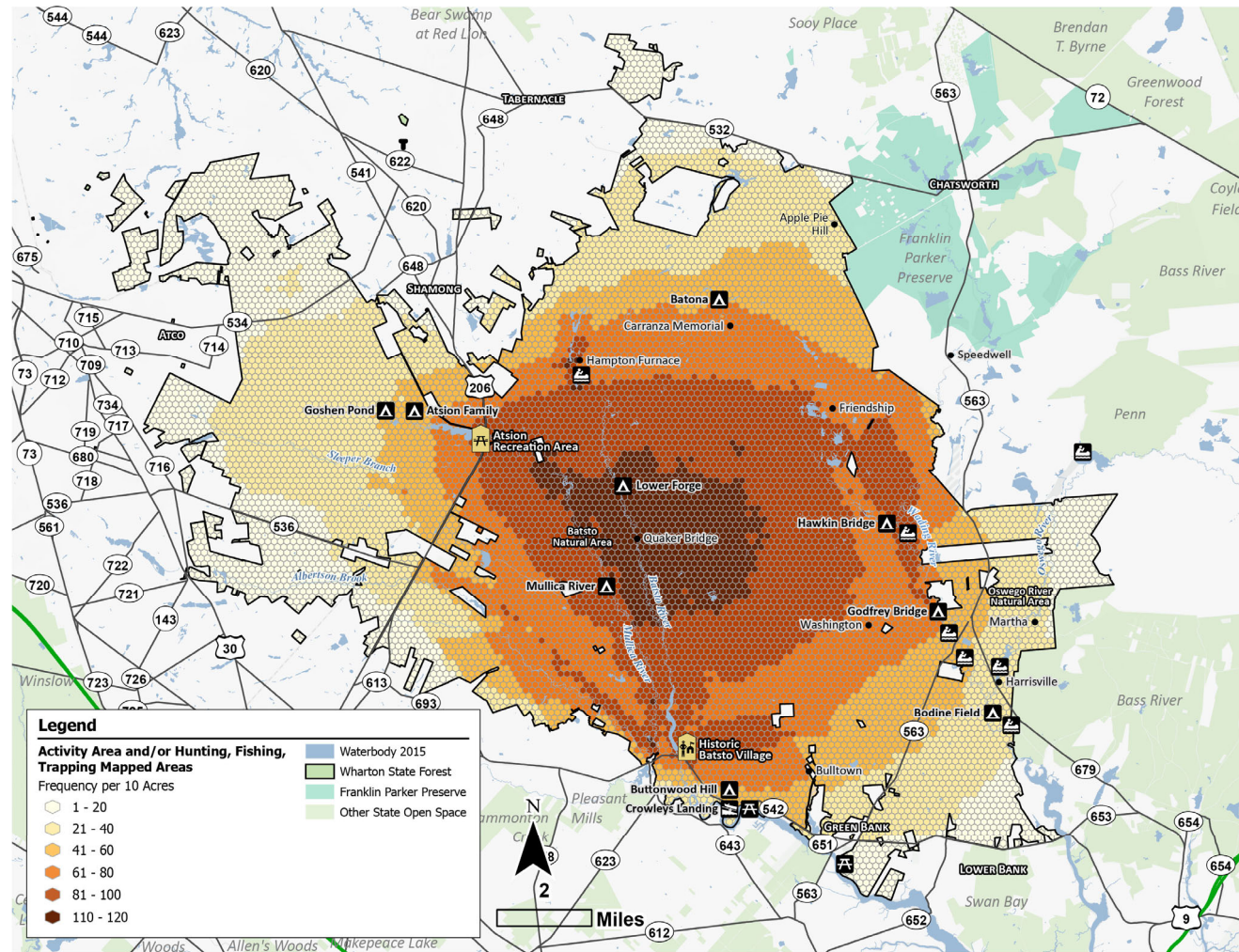
539 Total Areas



Good area for walking, hiking, biking, cycling, photography, etc. and/or fishing, trapping, hunting area

711 Total Areas

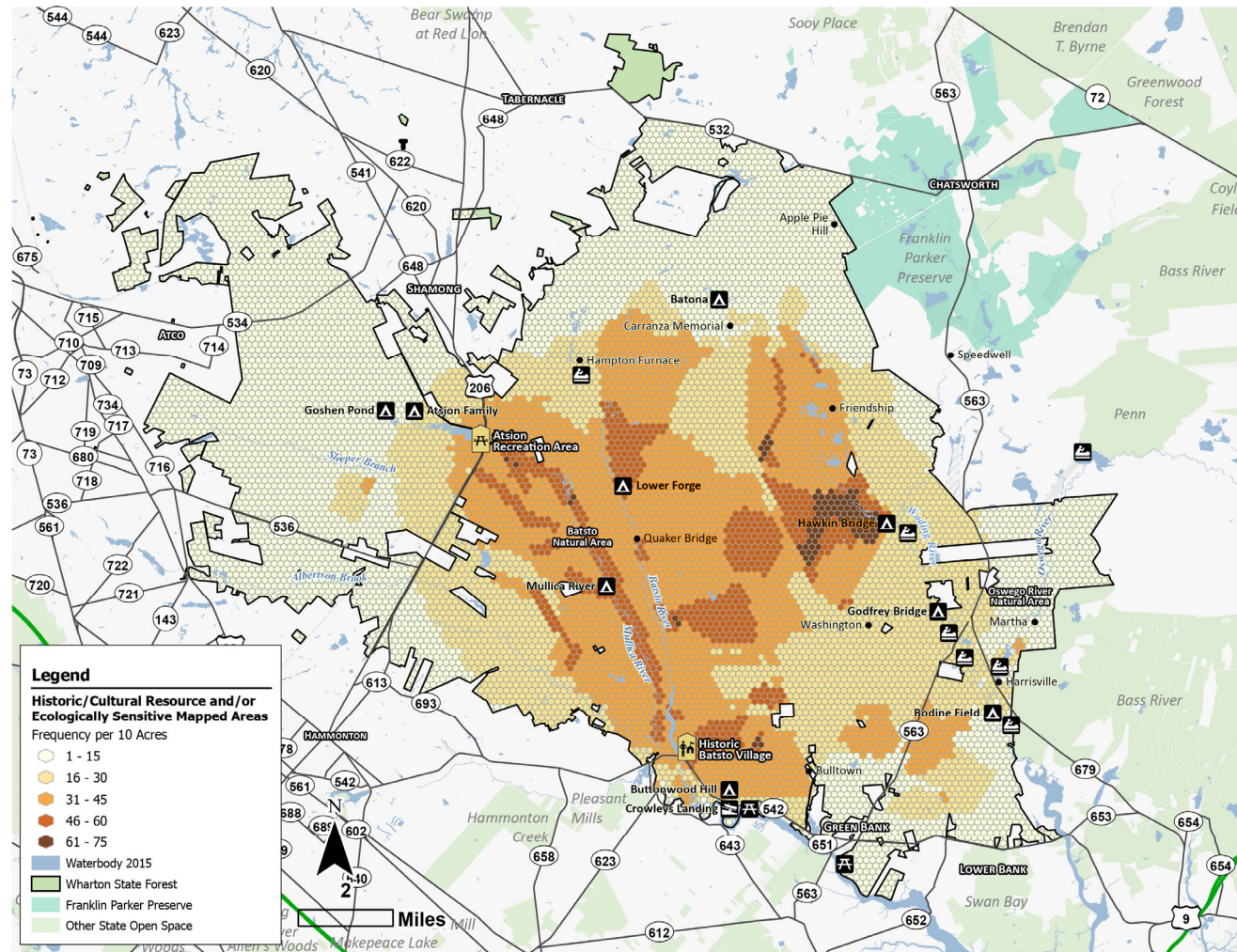
169 Areas Over 90,000 acres (Areas identifying all of Wharton)



Historic/cultural resource significant are and/or ecologically sensitive area

756 Total Areas

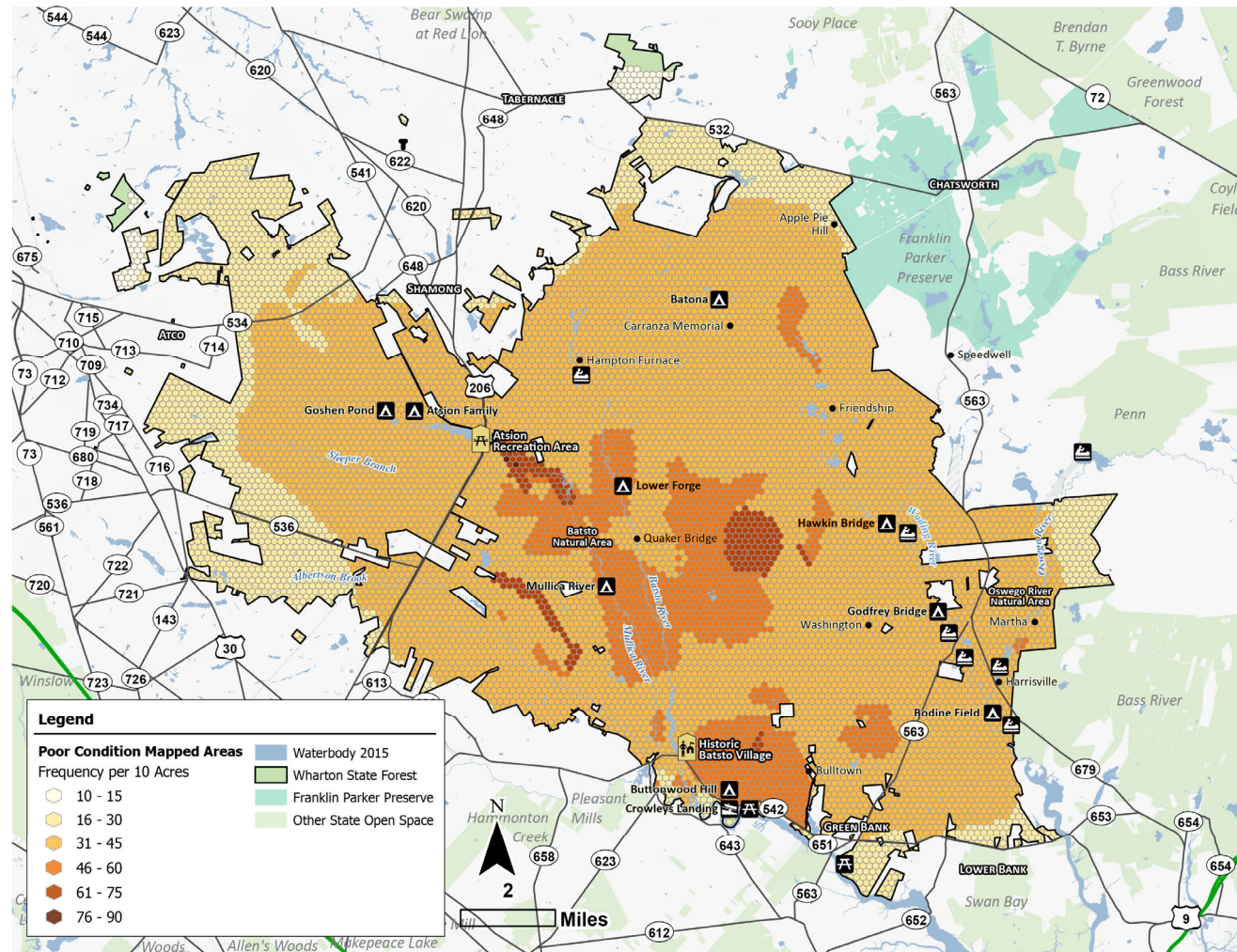
85 Areas Over 90,000 acres (Areas identifying all of Wharton)



Poor condition (ex. road or facility conditions)

336 Total Areas

35 Areas Over 90,000 acres (Areas
identifying all of Wharton)

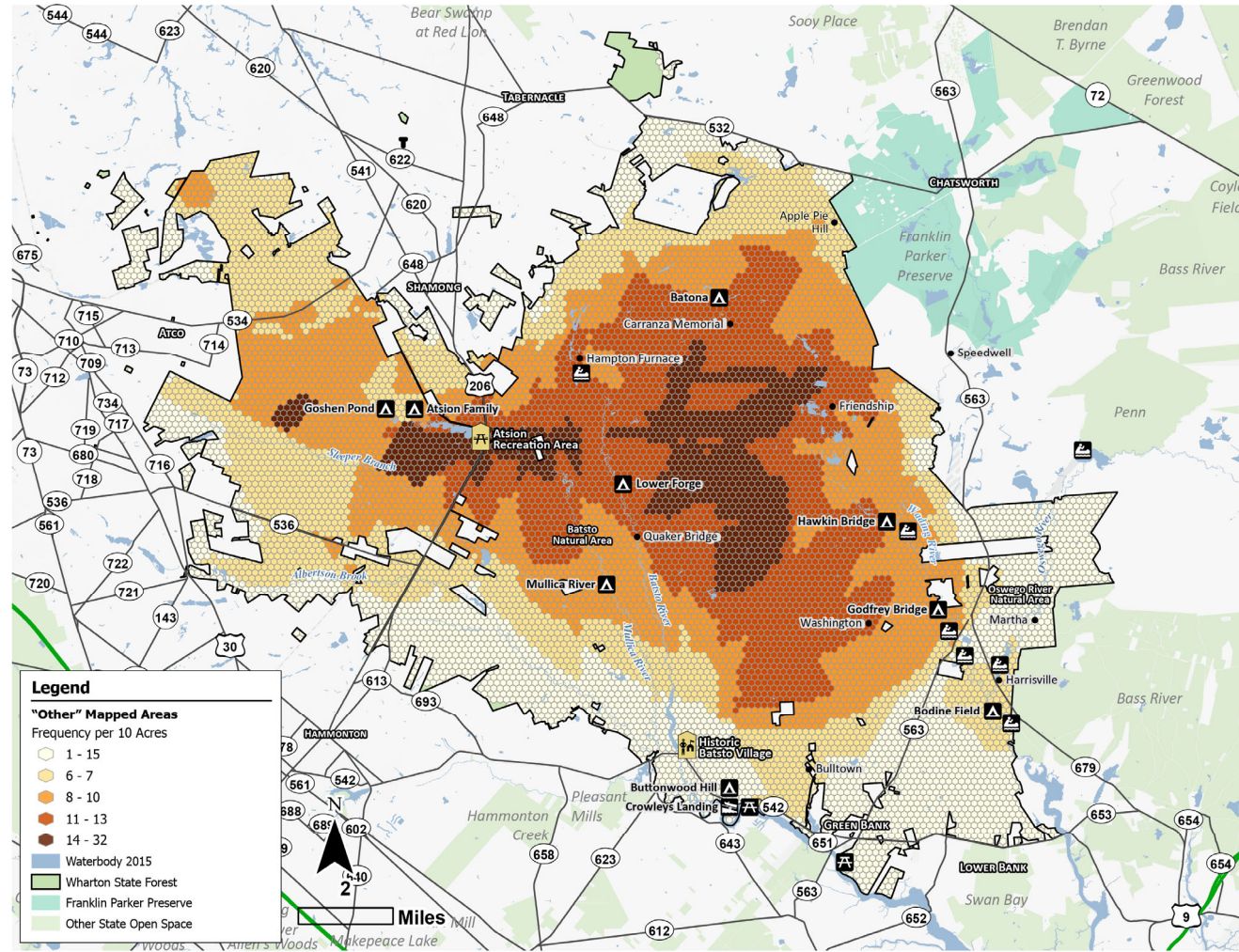


"Other"

137 Total Areas

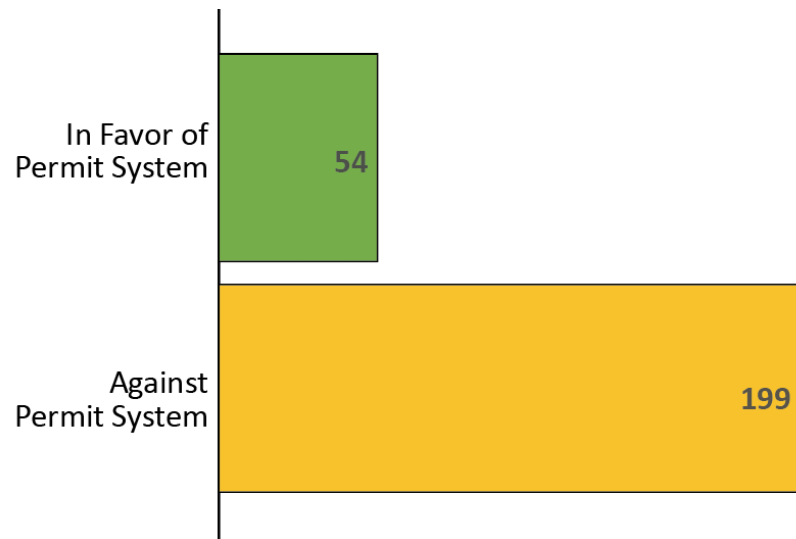
20 Areas Over 90,000 acres (Areas identifying all of Wharton)

"Other" Areas: Bird Watching, Camping, Emergency Vehicle/Mountain Biking/Motorcycling/Paddling/Private Property/Trail Access, Heavy Use Area, Horseback Riding, Scenic

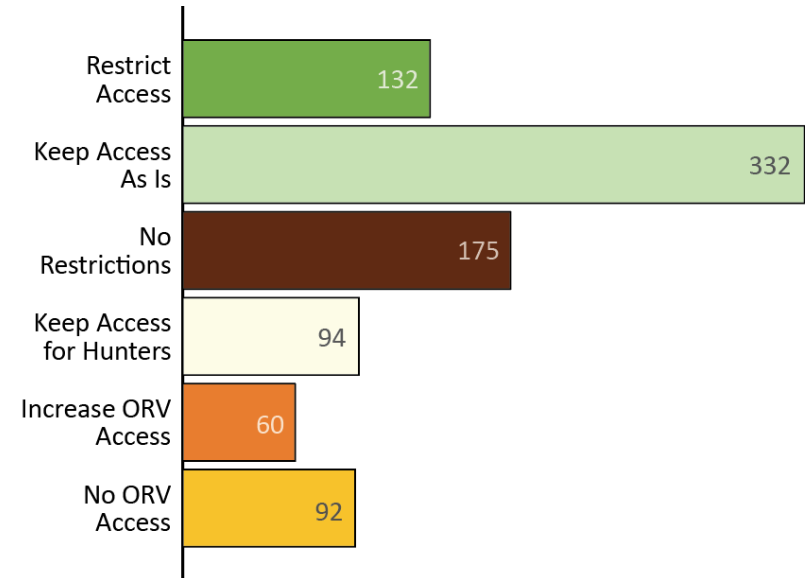


How could your concerns be addressed?

Permit Comments



Access Comments



Out of 1508 Written Responses



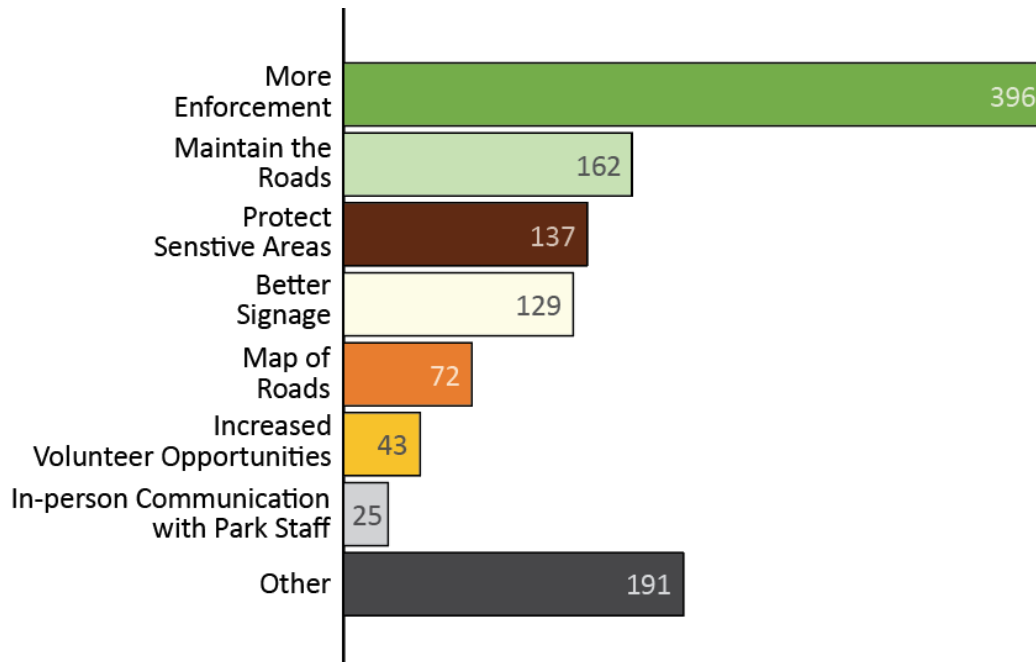
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How could your concerns be addressed? (cont.)

Out of 1508 Written Responses



Other Suggestions:

- Barriers
- Better reporting option
- Designated ORV area/trails
- Increase fines
- Management committees
- More parking
- More horseback riding trails
- Public education
- Refund permit holders who obey rules
- Stakeholder engagement

TOTAL WRITTEN RESPONSES

54 **FOR** a permit system

132 MORE enforcement

392 access RESTRICTED



day to
day travel
(1154)

Survey conducted from
Sept. 28 to Nov. 11, 2022

TOTAL SURVEYS SUBMITTED

- Most popular driving area identified from the data received was Atsion through Quaker Bridge to Batsto.

- Other less popular driving areas were also identified.

- Areas of known illegal off-road vehicle activity were not identified as important driving routes.

- 52,000 acres were highlighted by survey respondents on average.
- Smaller areas of concern were easier to interpret.

A donut chart with a green segment representing 74% and a yellow segment representing 26%. The green segment is labeled 'EASY TO READ AND UNDERSTAND' and the yellow segment is labeled 'MOTORIZED VEHICLE RULES AND REGS'. The text '74%' is prominently displayed in the center of the green segment. The background of the chart features a faint map of New Jersey.

Category	Percentage
EASY TO READ AND UNDERSTAND	74%
MOTORIZED VEHICLE RULES AND REGS	26%

A donut chart with a green section representing 65% and a yellow section representing 35%. The green section is labeled "65%" and "SHOULD DEVELOP PLANS FOR RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE ACCESS". The yellow section is labeled "35%" and "SHOULD NOT DEVELOP PLANS FOR RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE ACCESS". The background of the chart is a map of the Adirondack Park region.

Category	Percentage
Should develop plans for responsible and sustainable access	65%
Should not develop plans for responsible and sustainable access	35%

Public Comment Period

Rules

- Elected Officials offered comment first.
- Pre-registered comments called in order of registration.
- Keep comments concise, 2 minutes maximum.
- Be polite and courteous.
- When called on please unmute you microphone.
- Written comments can be made online at njparksandforests.org/wharton



2:00



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Next Steps

- Develop draft informational materials – signage, brochures, maps
- Further conceptualize possible permit
- Anticipate next public meeting late summer 2023
- njparksandforests.org/wharton

