

Metro Opt In – Natural Areas Survey

Davis, Hibbitts, & Midghall, Inc. (DHM Research) in partnership with Opt In and Metro, conducted an online survey with Opt In members to better understand what they value most about regional natural areas. Metro will use this information to guide decision-making on natural area priorities and investments. Note that the member profile of the Opt In panel is not yet representative of the region, and is skewed toward those older in age, higher educational attainment, located in Multnomah County, and Democrats.

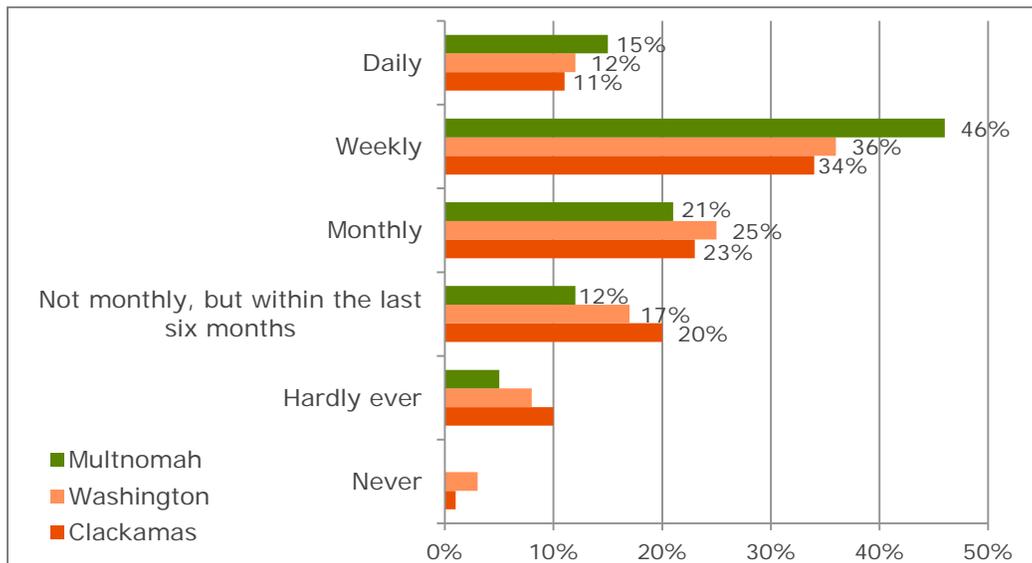
Research Design: Between May 10 and 22, 2012, Opt In members were invited to participate in the natural areas survey. A total of 3,492 members participated in the survey, approximately 31% of the panel.

More than 9 in 10 members in all three counties said regional parks, trails, and natural areas were important to them (Q2).

Overall, women felt stronger than men that investing in our natural areas was important. These results are similar to past scientific research on regional natural areas.

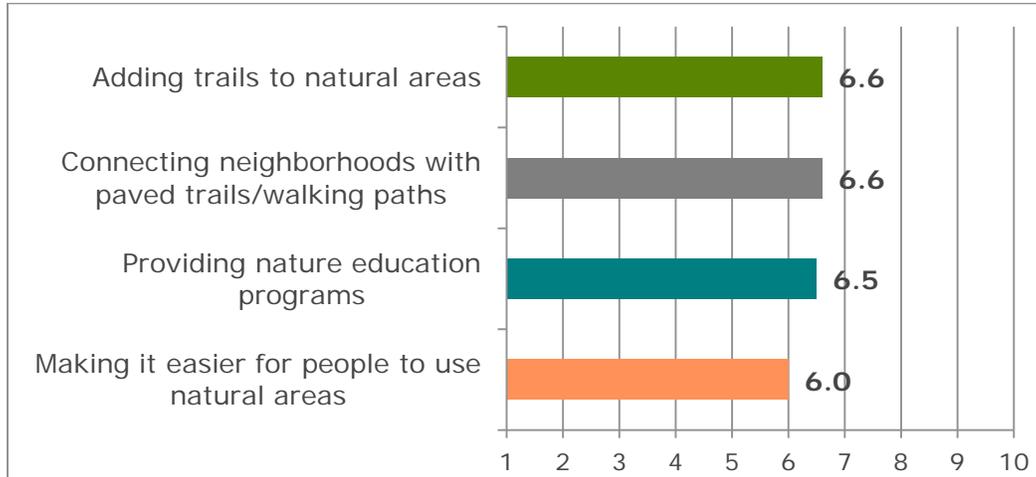
Members actively visit natural areas in the region (Q3).

Half of all members visit parks or use trails daily or weekly. Another two in ten visit at least monthly. Younger and Multnomah County members use natural areas more frequently.



When asked to prioritize preserving the quality of natural areas or increasing access, eight in ten (average across all three counties: 79%) prioritized preserving the quality of natural areas (Q5-6). Similarly, members prioritized water quality for habitat, and using volunteers for maintenance and restoration over other options.

When dedicating tax dollars to increase access to nature, adding trails (mean rating: 6.6) and neighborhood connectivity to natural areas (mean rating: 6.6) were rated the most important (Q12-15). When asked specifically about trail-related actions, connecting longer paths without gaps was chosen most from a list of trail-related projects.

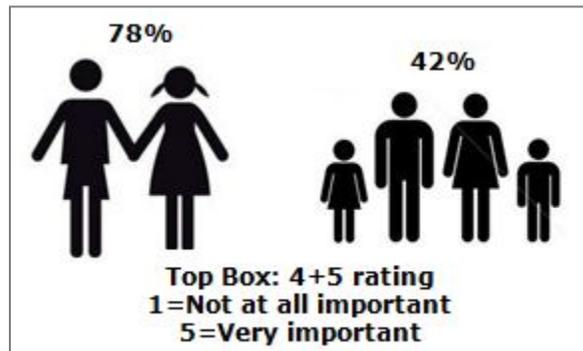


Specific to preservation, seven in ten members across all three counties rated controlling invasive weeds highest (Q16-20). Those with household incomes of less than \$50K felt more strongly about prioritizing preservation in general over other options in other questions.

"We need to educate people about natural areas so they understand how and why these areas should be preserved. [Also important] we need to manage invasive species!"

Nature education programs for children came first (Q22-23).

More than seven in ten in all three counties (Multnomah: 85%; Washington: 75%; Clackamas: 73%) ranked providing nature education for school-aged children higher than providing opportunities for families and adults.



When members were asked to budget \$100 on different restoration efforts, a third of their money (average of all three counties: \$32.50) went to general maintenance to keep parks safe and enjoyable for visitors (Q24).

Next was preserving and improving fish and wildlife habitat.



“Access to nature should be equitable. Low-income areas should have trails and parks, not just higher income areas.”

1 | INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY/ANNOTATED QUESTIONNAIRE

Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM Research) conducted an online survey among Opt In members to assess their opinions about and priorities for natural areas in the region.

Opt In Member Methodology: Between May 10 and 22, 2012, DHM Research emailed Opt In members living the Tri-County region - a total of 11,421 people when the survey was launched. A total of 3,497 members participated in the survey, approximately 31% of members who were invited to take the survey.

The survey was hosted on an independent and secure DHM server and available to respondents 24 hours a day. In gathering responses, DHM employed quality control measures including pre-testing and monitoring the online survey to identify potential browser issues.

STATEMENT OF LIMITATIONS

The member profile of the Opt In panel is not yet representative of the region. It is skewed older in age, toward higher additional attainment, Multnomah County, and Democrats (the current demographic breakout of the panel compared to the region can be found at <http://www.optinpanel.org/index.php/work>). Surveys with respondents are not scientifically valid sampling of the region's population. This type of online research is a form of public engagement and is not statistically reliable.

DHM Research: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. has been providing opinion research and consultation throughout the Pacific Northwest and other regions for over three decades. The firm is non-partisan and independent and specializes in research projects to support public policy making. www.dhmresearch.com

2| ANNOTATED QUESTIONNAIRE

Opt In Natural Area's Survey
May 2012; Opt In Members, N=3492
DHM Research

**indicates question from telephone survey*

*** indicates revised question from telephone survey*

INTRODUCTION

Two voter-approved bond measures have protected thousands of acres of natural areas in the tri-county metropolitan area. Legally the bonds could only be used to acquire land, not to restore it or preserve it.

Now, decision makers must make choices about how much and how best to invest in projects to take care of the land purchased with the bonds. They also must weigh the need to preserve and restore fish and wildlife habitat with giving people opportunities to enjoy these special places.

This survey is designed to learn more about your priorities for natural area management and access to nature.

The results will be provided to the Metro Council and to a 15 to 20 member advisory panel of business and community leaders that will be making recommendations about natural area management priorities.

1. Are things in the Tri-County area headed in the right direction, or are they generally off on the wrong track?

Response Category	Multnomah N=2187	Washington N=860	Clackamas N=445
Right direction	53%	47%	44%
Wrong track	10%	18%	23%
Don't know	37%	35%	33%

2. **All in all, how important to you personally is having parks, trails, and natural areas in the Tri-County area:*

Response Category	Multnomah N=2187	Washington N=860	Clackamas N=445
Very important	84%	72%	70%
Somewhat important	13%	22%	21%
Not too important	2%	5%	6%
Not at all important	1%	2%	3%
Don't know	0%	0%	0%

3. *How often do you visit parks, natural areas or use trails?

Response Category	Multnomah N=2187	Washington N=860	Clackamas N=445
Daily	15%	12%	11%
Weekly	46%	36%	34%
Monthly	21%	25%	23%
Not monthly, but within the last six months	12%	17%	20%
Hardly ever	5%	8%	10%
Never	0%	3%	1%
Don't know	0%	0%	0%

4. **(Optional; Open Ended)** In your opinion, what is the most important thing we need to do to preserve our natural areas?

At this time, what priority level would you give to:

Response Category	Urgent	High	Medium	Low	Don't know
5. *Preserving the quality of our natural areas in the Tri-County region, including their wildlife, fish, rivers and streams					
Multnomah N=2187	39%	47%	11%	3%	0%
Washington N=860	28%	47%	19%	5%	0%
Clackamas N=445	31%	44%	18%	8%	0%
6. *Increasing people's access to natural areas for activities like hiking, biking, walking, and other recreation					
Multnomah N=2187	10%	43%	36%	11%	0%
Washington N=860	9%	41%	38%	12%	0%
Clackamas N=445	10%	41%	33%	16%	0%

(Split A) Here are some ways natural areas and parks in the region can be maintained, restored and cared for. Knowing that tax dollars are limited, how important it is to use dedicated tax dollars for each of these activities? Use a 1=not at all important to 10=very important scale. **(Randomize)**

Response Category	Mean	Top 8+9+10	Don't know
7. * Ensuring water quality in regional streams is good enough for salmon and other native fish			
Multnomah N=1077	8.7	80%	0%
Washington N=442	8.0	66%	1%
Clackamas N=226	8.2	72%	0%
8. *Restoring and protecting wildlife habitat			
Multnomah N=1077	8.4	75%	0%
Washington N=442	7.6	60%	0%
Clackamas N=226	7.7	63%	1%
9. *Removing invasive weeds and plants that threaten the health of natural areas and choke out plants that wildlife use for food and shelter			
Multnomah N=1077	8.3	72%	1%
Washington N=442	7.8	64%	0%
Clackamas N=226	7.8	67%	0%
10. Involving volunteers in park maintenance and habitat restoration projects			
Multnomah N=1077	8.2	70%	1%
Washington N=442	8.3	72%	2%
Clackamas N=226	8.4	75%	1%
11. Taking care of the visitor facilities we already have such as maintaining restrooms, picnic shelters, boat ramps, hiking trails, etc.			
Multnomah N=1077	7.7	60%	0%
Washington N=442	7.8	62%	0%
Clackamas N=226	7.9	65%	0%

(Split B) Here are some ways people can have more access to nature close to home. Knowing that tax dollars are limited, how important it is to use dedicated tax dollars for each of these activities? Use a 1=not at all important to 10=very important scale.

(Randomize)

Response Category	Mean	Top 8+9+10	Don't know
12. *Making it easier for people to visit local natural areas by adding parking, restrooms, and basic visitor information			
Multnomah N=1110	5.7	25%	0%
Washington N=418	6.1	35%	0%
Clackamas N=219	6.2	35%	0%
13. *Providing nature education programs in natural areas to the public and school-aged children			
Multnomah N=1110	7.0	49%	1%
Washington N=418	6.4	41%	0%
Clackamas N=219	6.1	35%	0%
14. * Adding trails to natural areas for walking, hiking, biking, and other activities			
Multnomah N=1110	6.6	40%	1%
Washington N=418	6.9	52%	0%
Clackamas N=219	6.4	41%	0%
15. *Connecting more neighborhoods to natural areas with paved trails and walking paths.			
Multnomah N=1110	6.8	48%	0%
Washington N=418	6.9	50%	0%
Clackamas N=219	6.2	43%	0%

There are many different actions we can take to preserve our natural areas. To help prioritize restoration projects, please indicate how much of a priority you would give to addressing each of these issues: Urgent, high, medium, or low. They all may seem important, but knowing that money is tight, please try not to use urgent for each of them.

(Randomize)

Response Category	Urgent	High	Medium	Low	Don't know
16. Control invasive weeds that can smother and kill trees					
Multnomah N=2187	30%	42%	22%	4%	1%
Washington N=860	26%	41%	26%	7%	1%
Clackamas N=445	29%	39%	24%	8%	0%
17. Protect rare, slow-growing Oregon white oak trees from dying by being overshadowed by fast-growing trees					
Multnomah N=2187	14%	31%	39%	11%	5%
Washington N=860	10%	29%	36%	21%	4%
Clackamas N=445	13%	27%	37%	21%	2%
18. Plant trees and shrubs along streams to cool the water for fish					
Multnomah N=2187	17%	41%	32%	8%	2%
Washington N=860	12%	35%	35%	15%	3%
Clackamas N=445	12%	37%	35%	14%	1%
19. Restore wetlands and floodplains to control flooding and provide habitat for birds and amphibians					

Response Category	Urgent	High	Medium	Low	Don't know
Multnomah N=2187	26%	43%	23%	6%	2%
Washington N=860	21%	39%	25%	14%	1%
Clackamas N=445	21%	40%	26%	13%	0%
20. Add native shrubs and wildflowers to improve habitat for bees and butterflies					
Multnomah N=2187	15%	35%	37%	11%	2%
Washington N=860	12%	28%	40%	19%	1%
Clackamas N=445	12%	31%	38%	19%	0%

Decision makers also are evaluating different options for making biking and walking trails—like the Springwater Corridor, Wildwood Trail, and Fanno Creek Trail-- more inviting and useful for people.

21. While it's clear that a variety of different projects are needed in different places, please select one thing from the following list of six trail-related actions that would be most likely to cause you to use trails more often. **(Randomize)**

Response Category	Multnomah N=2187	Washington N=860	Clackamas N=445
Paths located closer to where I live	10%	12%	12%
Paths I can safely reach without needing to drive to them	27%	18%	18%
Paths connected to destinations like shopping, and employment centers	9%	9%	9%
Longer paths (several miles) without gaps between sections	22%	26%	23%
Paths connected my neighborhood to natural areas or parks.	22%	20%	20%
Don't have interest in using them more often	7%	12%	16%
Don't know	3%	3%	4%

Many park providers sponsor natural area trips and education programs about nature. Given limited resources, how important is each of the following?

Response Category	Mean	Top 4+5	Don't know
22. School-aged children take part in nature education programs like field trips to local natural areas or Outdoor School			
Multnomah N=2187	4.4	85%	1%
Washington N=860	4.1	75%	0%
Clackamas N=445	4.1	73%	0%
23. Families and adults have opportunities to take part in nature education programs like a walk with a naturalist or natural area tour			
Multnomah N=2187	3.3	43%	1%
Washington N=860	3.2	39%	0%
Clackamas N=445	3.2	42%	1%

In previous questions you were asked about access to nature and recreation vs. preservation and restoration; and you were asked about your priorities for both. You also provided your views about trails and education.

Because money is limited, we'd also like to understand how you would prioritize among all of these different issues.

24. If you had \$100 for restoration and maintenance at Metro's parks and natural areas, how would you spend it? (Randomize)

Response Category (Mean)	Multnomah N=2187	Washington N=860	Clackamas N=445
General maintenance to keep parks safe and enjoyable for visitors	\$30.20	\$33.60	\$33.70
Preserving and improving fish and wildlife habitat and water quality	\$28.00	\$26.00	\$25.50
Controlling invasive weeds that choke out native plants that wildlife use for food and shelter	\$23.90	\$23.40	\$24.20
Teaching people to care for nature with education and volunteer programs for children and adults	\$17.90	\$17.10	\$16.50
Total	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00

25. Do you have any additional comments about any of the questions asked in this survey or about natural areas in the region? **(Open, provide text box)**

Finally, here are a few resources if you'd like to learn more about natural resources:

An interactive map of our region's protected natural areas.

An in-depth report about Metro's 15,000 acres of parks and natural area portfolio

Up to date news and information about Metro's natural areas

Demographics

Age

Response Category	Multnomah N=2187	Washington N=860	Clackamas N=445
18-24	2%	1%	2%
25-34	20%	11%	7%
35-54	43%	40%	35%
55-64	22%	29%	33%
65+	12%	19%	24%

Gender

Response Category	Multnomah N=2187	Washington N=860	Clackamas N=445
Male	48%	52%	53%
Female	52%	48%	47%

County

Response Category	Total N=3492
Multnomah	63%
Washington	25%
Clackamas	13%

When it comes to politics, do you consider yourself more of a Democrat, more of a Republican, or more of an Independent or a member of another party?

Response Category	Multnomah N=2187	Washington N=860	Clackamas N=445
More of a Democrat	63%	48%	44%
More of a Republican	6%	17%	24%
More of an Independent/Other	28%	30%	29%
No answer	3%	5%	3%

What is the highest level of education you have had the opportunity to complete?

Response Category	Multnomah N=2187	Washington N=860	Clackamas N=445
8 th grade or less	0%	0%	0%
Some high school	0%	0%	0%
High school graduate	1%	2%	2%
Some college/community college/2-yr degree	15%	20%	22%
College degree/4-yr degree	36%	36%	35%
Post graduate	44%	35%	38%
No answer	3%	8%	3%

Ethnicity

Response Category	Multnomah N=2187	Washington N=860	Clackamas N=445
African	0%	0%	0%
American Indian/Native American	2%	1%	3%
Asian or Pacific Islander	2%	2%	2%
Black/African American	1%	0%	0%
Hispanic/Latino	3%	1%	1%
Slavic	1%	1%	1%
White/Caucasian	88%	84%	86%
Middle Eastern/North African	0%	0%	0%
Two or more races	1%	1%	1%
Other	1%	1%	1%
Refused	6%	11%	9%

Just your best guess, what is your household income before taxes?

Response Category	Multnomah N=2187	Washington N=860	Clackamas N=445
Less than \$10k	3%	2%	1%
\$10k-\$14,999	2%	1%	1%
\$15k-\$24,999	4%	2%	3%
\$25k-\$34,999	6%	3%	4%
\$35k-\$49,999	10%	5%	7%
\$50k-\$74,999	16%	14%	16%
\$75k-\$99,999	11%	12%	11%
\$100k-\$149,999	13%	16%	17%
\$150k-\$199,999	3%	5%	6%
\$200k or more	3%	3%	4%
Refused	28%	38%	32%