

Trail Ambassador Volunteer Program Data Analysis Report 2019



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Trail Ambassador Program Overview:

The Trail Ambassador (TA) Program was established in 2019 as a pilot program to increase community awareness and collect community health data. The goal of this project is to empower volunteer teams to engage with trail users on popular trailheads to increase visibility of Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT), raise funds for annual trails appeal and trail projects, increase membership, and collect data for grant reporting purposes.

The TA Program was first introduced during the Volunteer Orientation on February 23, 2019. Volunteers selected which Programs they would like to become involved in, and those who marked Trail Ambassadors were contacted for an additional volunteer training. During this training, volunteers learned the roles and responsibilities expected of them as Ambassadors. TA teams were formed for each trailhead, and a Leader was chosen who was responsible for picking up the booth materials and guiding their TA Team.

Three site locations, Cascade Canal/Orene Wetherall (CC/OW), Litton and Alan Thiesen Trails, were selected for this pilot program due to their connection with BYLT; sites were also selected to maximize visibility at each of the trailheads. The intention was to set up the Ambassador booth so as to attract the attention of trail users and motor vehicle travelers along the nearby roadways. The 2019 TA season spanned from May to October, with teams on the trailhead once a month, typically during the first or second Saturday of the month. TA teams, visited CC/OW trail six times and Alan Thiesen and Litton Trails five times throughout the 2019 season; volunteers dedicated 138.5 hours to the 2019 TA season.

Cascade Canal/Orene Wetherall Trail:

Cascade Canal is located between trailheads on Gracie Road and Red Dog Road in Nevada City, CA. At 3,200 feet in elevation, this 4.5 mile trail meanders through land owned by Nevada Irrigation District, Bureau of Land Management and private residential owners. The length of the trail, beautiful vista points, and serene forest setting makes this a popular destination for hikers, runners and mountain bikers. BYLT holds Trail Easements on this trail and actively maintains it with the assistance of dedicated Trail Adopters. Permitted uses of this trail are foot and bike only, no motorized vehicles, and dogs on leash.

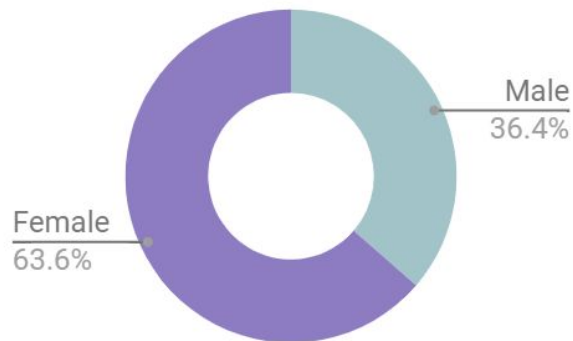
Orene Wetherall Trail is located off of Cascade Canal Trail, about ¼ mile in from the Gracie Road Trailhead. This trail is located on BYLT's Woodpecker Wildlife Preserve, a 28 acre parcel that was established as a public Preserve in 1999. This trail is 0.6 miles one way, and the elevation change is 280 feet which is ideal for trail users who seek to add some intensity to their excursion along Cascade Canal Trail. Permitted uses of this trail are foot and bike only, no motorized vehicles, and dogs on leash.

TAs set up a small table at the Cascade Canal Trailhead off Gracie Road. The volunteers observed 256 trail users, 78% of which were hiking (199 people), 17% were running (43 people) and 5% were biking (14 people). Of the total number of dogs observed on the trail (69 dogs), 65% were on leash (45 dogs) and 35% were off leash (24 dogs). TAs at CC/OW Trail spoke with 140 of the total 256 trail users they observed at the trailhead, an Engagement Rate of 55%.

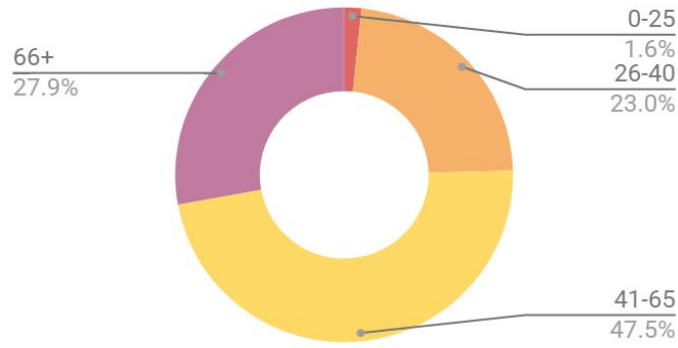
Table 1: Data for Cascade Canal/Orene Wetherall Trail. Data was collected by Trail Ambassadors over a period of six days spanning from March to October in 2019.

Cascade Canal/ Orene Wetherall Trail Data							
Date	3/30	6/1	6/8	7/13	9/7	10/4	TOTALS
Total Number of People Seen on the Trail	53	40	39	43	30	51	256
Hikers	47	38	26	36	25	27	199
Runners	6	2	4	5	3	23	43
Bikers	0	0	9	2	2	1	14
Equestrians	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Number of Dogs	13	7	12	14	13	10	69
On Leash	6	5	7	10	8	9	45
Off Leash	7	2	5	4	5	1	24
Total Number of People Spoken To	34	32	17	15	24	18	140
Total Number of Surveys Conducted	24	0	8	8	15	6	61
Returning Trail Users	11	0	7	9	0	47	74
New Trail Users	1	0	4	0	0	2	7
Families	5	0	1	0	1	4	11
Are you a member?	2	1	1	3	0	0	7
Donations	\$0	\$0	\$11.00	\$7.00	\$25	\$12	\$55

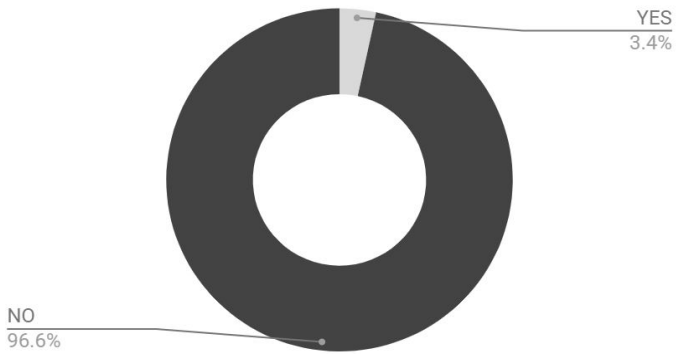
Community Health Survey Data Charts for Cascade Canal/Orene Wetherall Trail:



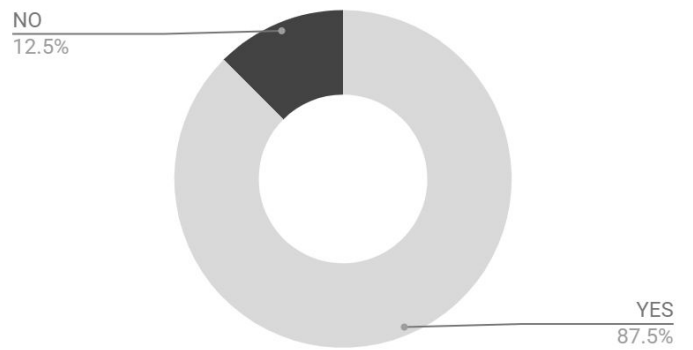
Age Group



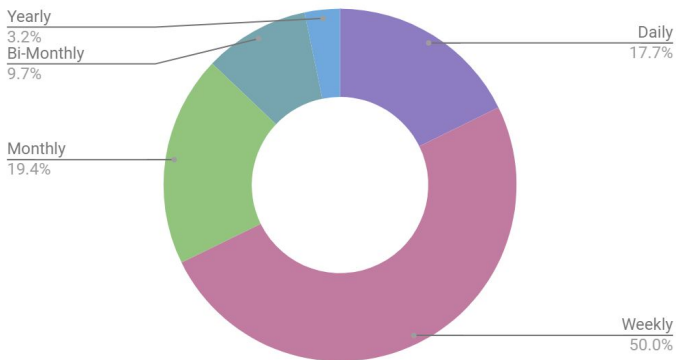
Is this your first time on a recreational trail?



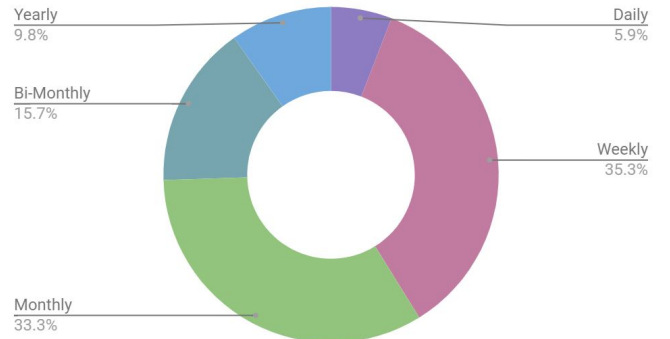
Have you heard of BYLT before today?



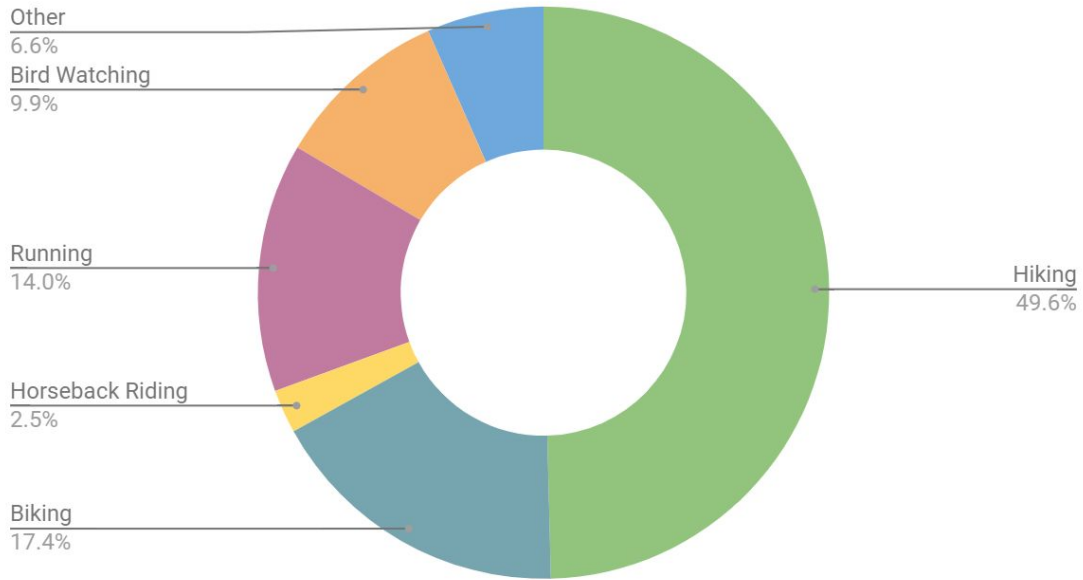
How often do you recreate on trails in Nevada County?



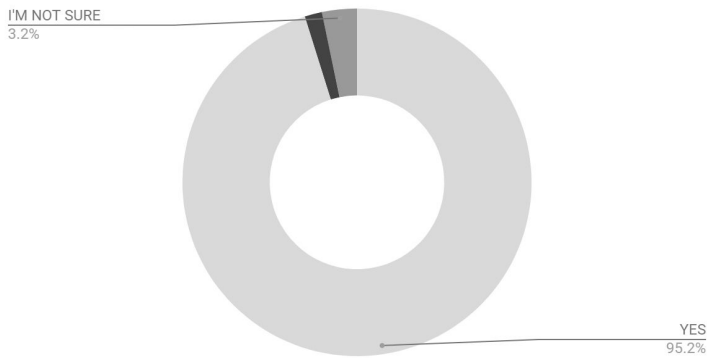
How often do you recreate on trails in other areas?



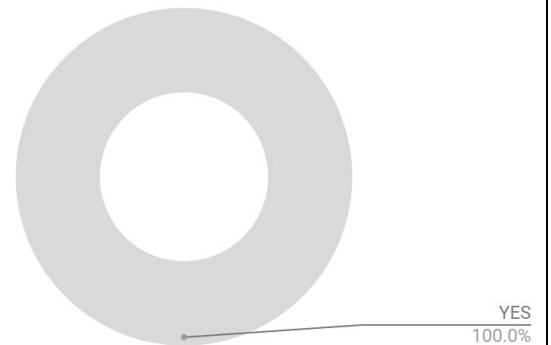
What are some of your favorite trail activities to participate in?



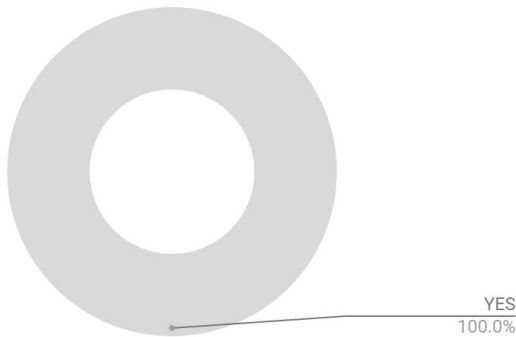
Would you say your health has improved since you've been recreating outdoors?



Would you recommend for others to recreate outdoors?



Do you think trails are an important aspect of increasing community health?



How important are trails to you?

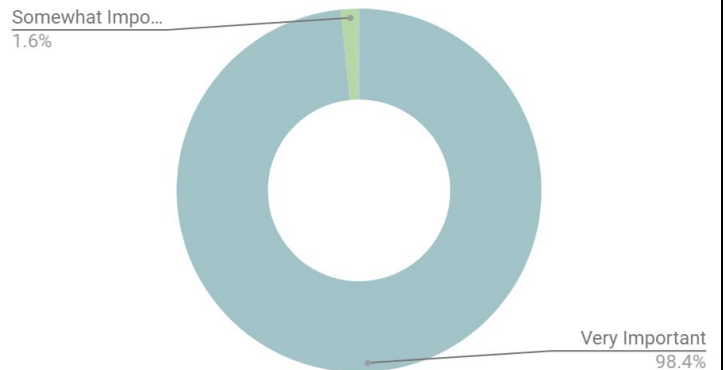


Table 2: Raw Community Health Data for Cascade Canal/Orene Wetherall Trail.

Cascade Canal/ Orene Wetherall Trail Community Health Raw Data	
Male	20
Female	35
	Age Group
0-25	1
26-40	14
41-65	29
66+	17
	Is this your first time on a recreational trail?
YES	2
NO	57
	Have you heard of BYLT before today?
YES	49
NO	7
	How often do you recreate on trails in Nevada County?
Daily	11
Weekly	31
Monthly	12
Bi-Monthly	6
Yearly	2
	How often do you recreate on trails in other areas?
Daily	3
Weekly	18
Monthly	17
Bi-Monthly	8
Yearly	5
	What are some of your favorite trail activities to participate in?
Hiking	60
Biking	21
Horseback Riding	3
Running	17
Bird Watching	12
Other	8
	Snowshoeing, Dog Walking, Camping
	Would you say your health has improved since you've been recreating outdoors?
YES	59
NO	1
I'M NOT SURE	2
	Would you recommend for others to recreate outdoors?
YES	62

NO	0
Do you think trails are an important aspect of increasing community health?	
YES	62
NO	0
I'M NOT SURE	0
How important are trails to you?	
Very Important	61
Somewhat Important	1
Neutral	0
Somewhat Unimportant	0
Very Unimportant	0

Alan Thiesen Trail:

Alan Thiesen Trail is located on the corner of Dog Bar Road and Alta Sierra Drive in Grass Valley, CA. This 1 mile loop trail, which has a total elevation change of 160 feet, is a popular destination for residents of the Alta Sierra housing community and surrounding areas. Alan Thiesen Trail was built on BYLT’s Adam Ryan Preserve, established in 1999, to provide nature access and recreation opportunities for residents of southern Nevada County. Adam Ryan Preserve sits on 37 acres of conserved open space, and boasts a quite mixed-conifer and oak forest. BYLT actively stewards the conserved open space and maintains the trail with the assistance of dedicated Trail Adopters. Permitted uses of this trail are foot and bike only, no motorized vehicles, and dogs on leash.

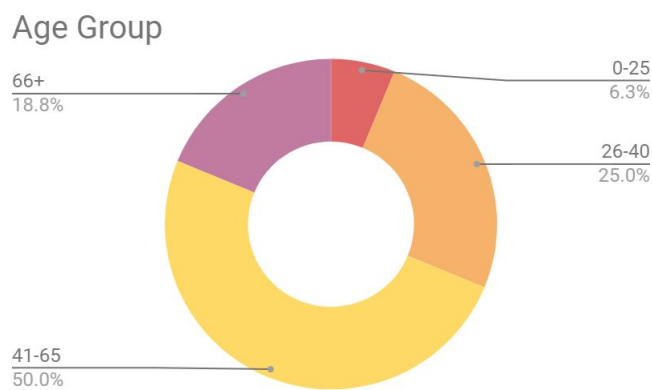
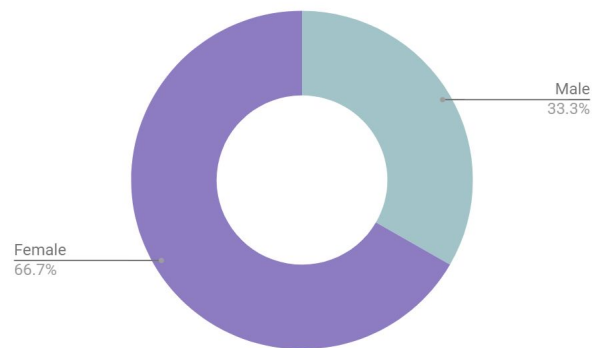
TAs set up a small table at the Alan Thiesen Trailhead. The volunteers observed 99 trail users, 92% of which were hiking (91 people), 7% were running (7 people) and 1% were biking (1 person). Of the total number of dogs observed on the trail (56 dogs), 95% were on leash (53 dogs) and 5% were off leash (3 dogs). TAs at Alan Thiesen Trail spoke with 80 of the total 99 trail users they observed at the trailhead, an Engagement Rate of 81%.

Table 3: Data for Alan Thiesen Trail. Data was collected by Trail Ambassadors over a period of five days spanning from March to October in 2019.

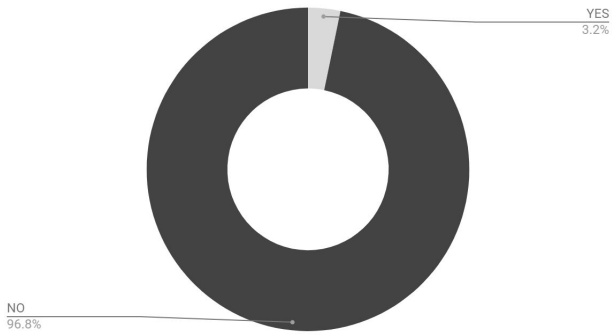
Alan Thiesen Trail Data							
Date	3/30	4/13	6/1	6/8	8/10	TOTALS	
Total Number of People Seen on the Trail	27	26	13	19	14	99	
Hikers	27	25	10	16	13	91	
Runners	0	1	3	3	0	7	
Bikers	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Equestrians	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total Number of Dogs	15	17	5	12	7	56	
On Leash	15	15	4	12	7	53	

Off Leash	0	2	1	0	0	3
Total Number of People Spoken To	20	25	8	13	14	80
Total Number of Surveys Conducted	10	11	0	10	1	32
Returning Trail Users	15	24	11	12	14	76
New Trail Users	0	1	2	1	0	4
Families	3	4	0	2	0	9
Are you a member?	1	0	0	0	0	1
Donations	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

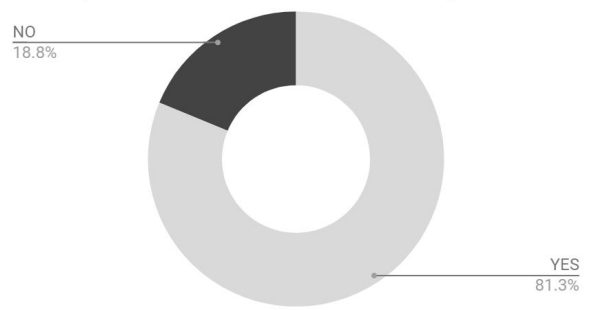
Community Health Survey Data Charts for Alan Thiesen Trail:



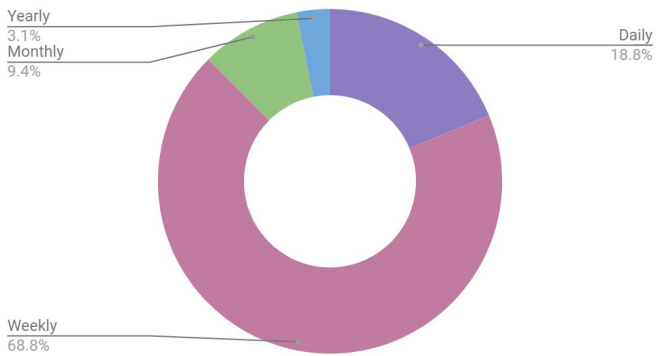
Is this your first time on a recreational trail?



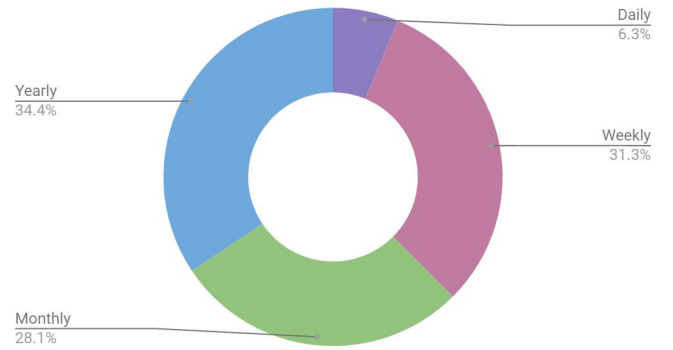
Have you heard of BYLT before today?



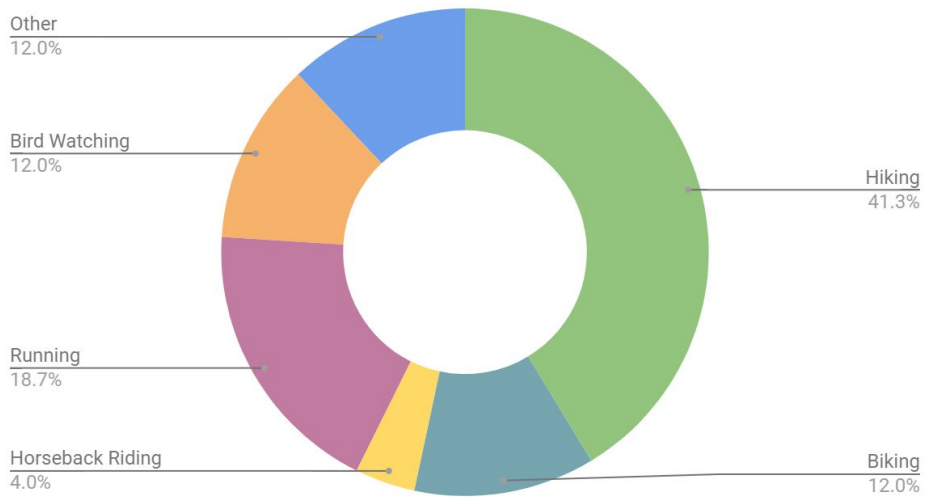
How often do you recreate on trails in Nevada County?



How often do you recreate on trails in other areas?



What are some of your favorite trail activities to participate in?



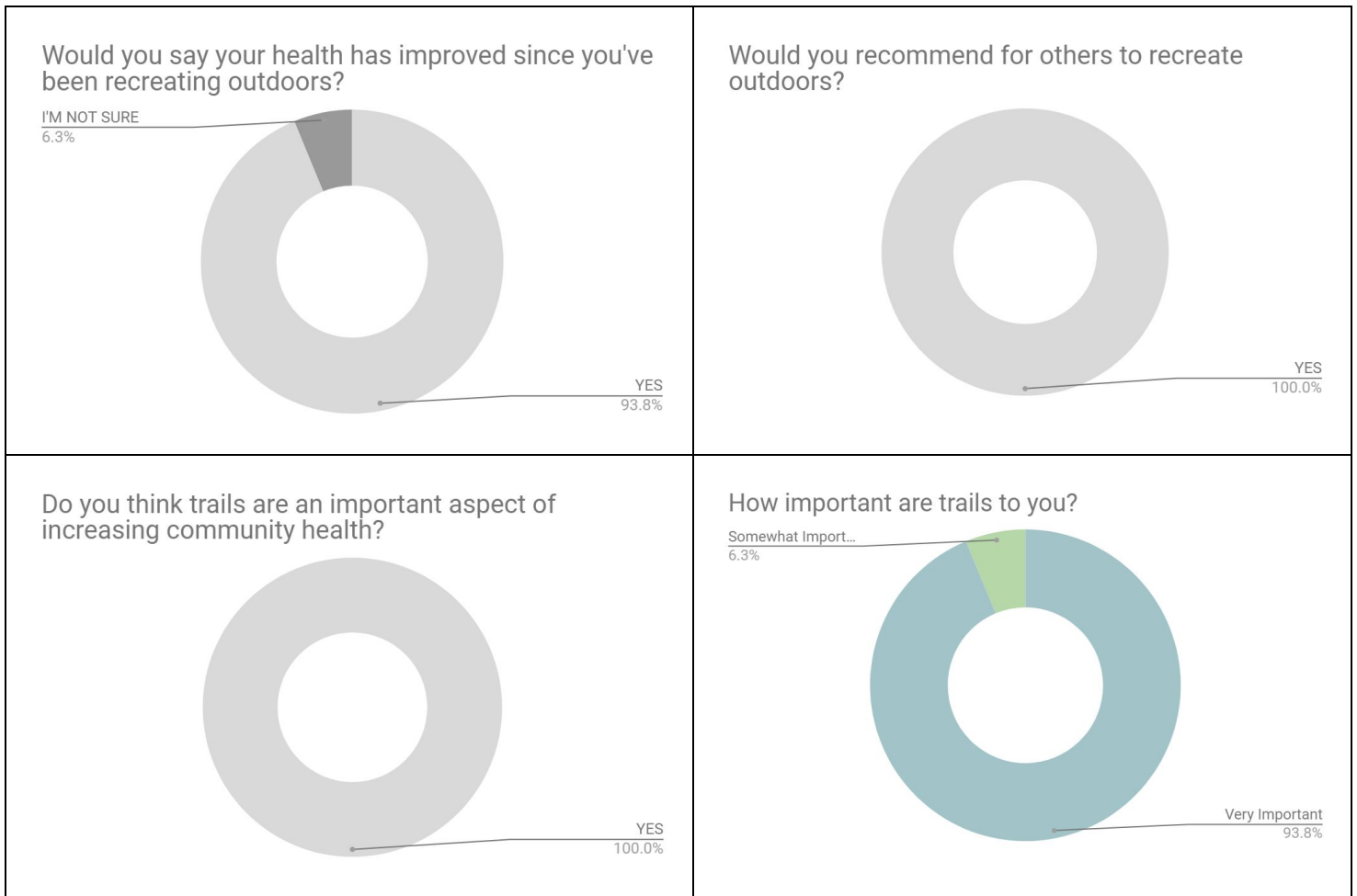


Table 4: Raw Community Health Data for Alan Thiesen Trail.

Alan Thiesen Trail Community Health Raw Data	
Male	10
Female	20
Age Group	
0-25	2
26-40	8
41-65	16
66+	6
Is this your first time on a recreational trail?	
YES	1
NO	30
Have you heard of BYLT before today?	
YES	26

NO	6
How often do you recreate on trails in Nevada County?	
Daily	6
Weekly	22
Monthly	3
Bi-Monthly	0
Yearly	1
How often do you recreate on trails in other areas?	
Daily	2
Weekly	10
Monthly	9
Bi-Monthly	0
Yearly	11
What are some of your favorite trail activities to participate in?	
Hiking	31
Biking	9
Horseback Riding	3
Running	14
Bird Watching	9
Other	9
Camping, Dog Walking, Rollerskating	
Would you say your health has improved since you've been recreating outdoors?	
YES	30
NO	0
I'M NOT SURE	2
Would you recommend for others to recreate outdoors?	
YES	31
NO	0
Do you think trails are an important aspect of increasing community health?	
YES	31
NO	0
I'M NOT SURE	0
How important are trails to you?	
Very Important	30
Somewhat Important	2
Neutral	0
Somewhat Unimportant	0
Very Unimportant	0

Litton Trail:

Litton Trail is located in downtown Grass Valley, CA. A paved section of trail spans .5 miles between Hughes Road and Sierra College Drive. The trail continues for another 1.5 miles, looping around Sierra College and connecting up to Eskaton Village, an assisted living community located off of Ridge Road. The Litton Trail is a popular destination for trail users due to the ideal location near many schools and businesses, ease of access for low-mobility trail users, and the escapism associated with a trail located in a green belt in an otherwise semi-urban area. The trail is also popular because of its rolling hills and flat sections, it has a total elevation change of 131 feet.

BYLT holds trail easements on certain sections of the trail and actively manages these sections with the aid of volunteer Trail Adopters. BYLT’s community partners Neighborhood Center for the Arts, a disability arts resource center, and Briar Patch Food Co-Op are located nearby and the trail is often frequented by staff and patrons of these establishments. Additionally, Litton Trail was a targeted TA destination because it is the focus for trail projects in 2020. The paved section of the trail has greatly deteriorated since its creation over a decade ago; potholes and rough pavement now impede recreational quality of the Litton Trail. BYLT sought to raise funding for the trail during the annual Open Spaces & Wild Places Fundraising Gala and Awards. Guests generously donated \$9,650 towards this specific trail project. BYLT is still seeking \$18,000 to match the City of Grass Valley’s contribution of \$30,000 to repave the Litton Trail section between Sierra College Drive and Hughes Road. Alongside the Gala’s Fund-A-Need pledge, TAs encouraged donations directly from trail users, which would be utilized to improve the recreational quality of the trail.

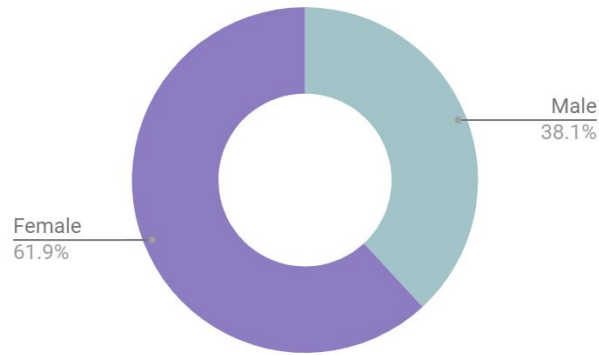
TAs set up a small table at the Litton Trailhead on the paved section off of Sierra College Drive. The volunteers observed 101 trail users; 71% of which were hiking (72 people). 10% were running (10 people) and 2% were biking (2 people). Of the total number of dogs observed on the trail (19 dogs), 89% were on leash (17 dogs) and 11% were off leash (2 dogs). TAs at Litton Trail spoke with 40 of the total 101 trail users they observed at the trailhead, an Engagement Rate of 40%.

Table 5: Data for Litton Trail. Data was collected by Trail Ambassadors over a period of five days spanning from May to October in 2019.

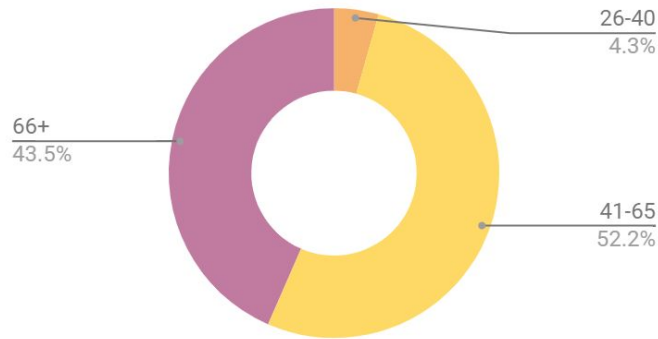
Litton Trail Data							
Date	5/4	6/8	8/10	9/7	10/5	TOTALS	
Total Number of People Seen on the Trail	16	34	26	8	17	101	
Hikers	11	34	21	6	0	72	
Runners	5	0	4	1	0	10	
Bikers	0	0	1	1	0	2	
Equestrians	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total Number of Dogs	2	7	6	1	3	19	
On Leash	2	5	6	1	3	17	
Off Leash	0	2	0	0	0	2	
Total Number of People Spoken To	7	6	4	7	16	40	
Total Number of Surveys Conducted	5	7	0	7	6	25	
Returning Trail Users	4	31	4	7	8	54	

New Trail Users	1	1	0	0	0	2
Families	0	0	1	0	0	1
Are you a member?	1	1	0	0	2	4
Donations	\$0	\$0	\$5.00	\$0	\$0	\$5

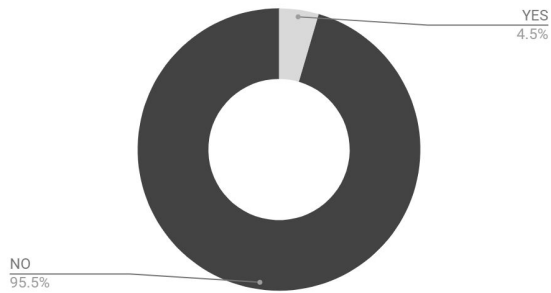
Community Health Survey Data Charts for Litton Trail:



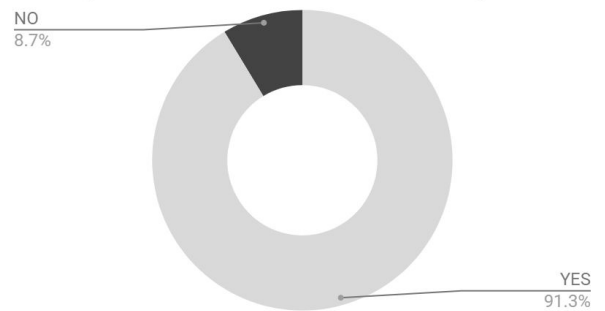
Age Group



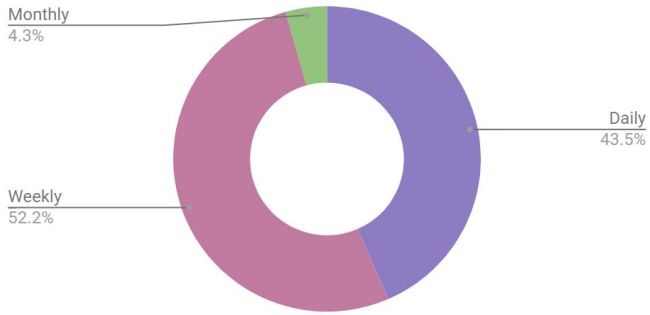
Is this your first time on a recreational trail?



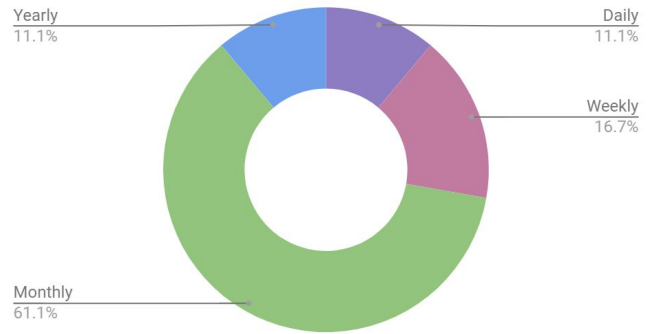
Have you heard of BYLT before today?



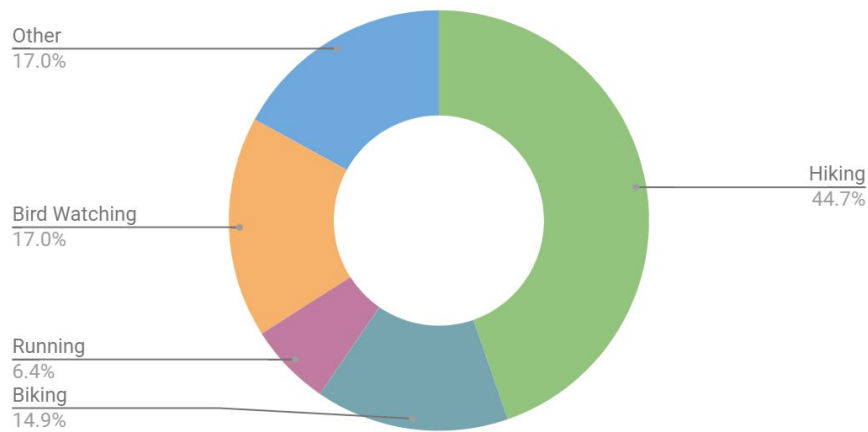
How often do you recreate on trails in Nevada County?



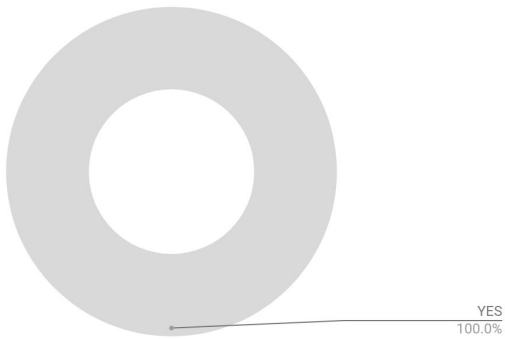
How often do you recreate on trails in other areas?



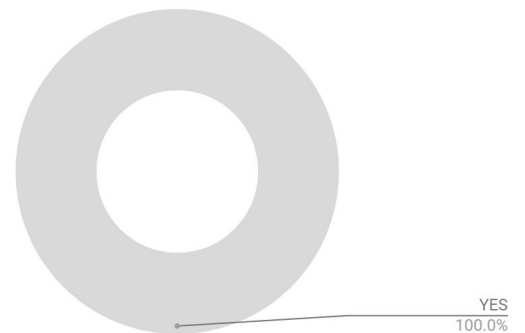
What are some of your favorite trail activities to participate in?



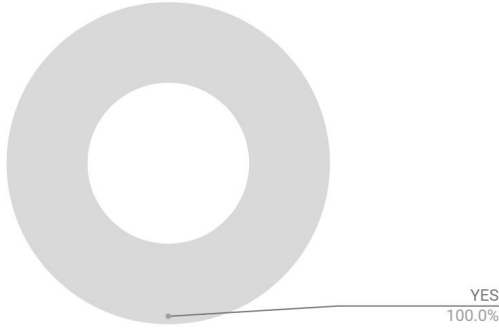
Would you say your health has improved since you've been recreating outdoors?



Would you recommend for others to recreate outdoors?



Would you recommend for others to recreate outdoors?



How important are trails to you?

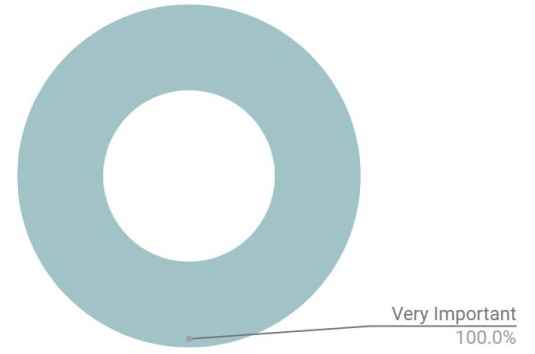


Table 6: Raw Community Health Data for Litton Trail.

Litton Trail Community Health Raw Data	
Male	8
Female	13
Age Group	
0-25	0
26-40	1
41-65	12
66+	10
Is this your first time on a recreational trail?	
YES	1
NO	21
Have you heard of BYLT before today?	
YES	21
NO	2
How often do you recreate on trails in Nevada County?	
Daily	10
Weekly	12
Monthly	1
Bi-Monthly	0
Yearly	0
How often do you recreate on trails in other areas?	
Daily	2
Weekly	3
Monthly	11
Bi-Monthly	0
Yearly	2
What are some of your favorite trail activities to participate in?	
Hiking	21

Biking	7
Horseback Riding	0
Running	3
Bird Watching	8
Other	8
Would you say your health has improved since you've been recreating outdoors?	
YES	22
NO	0
I'M NOT SURE	0
Would you recommend for others to recreate outdoors?	
YES	23
NO	0
Do you think trails are an important aspect of increasing community health?	
YES	22
NO	0
I'M NOT SURE	0
How important are trails to you?	
Very Important	22
Somewhat Important	0
Neutral	0
Somewhat Unimportant	0
Very Unimportant	0

Summary of Trail Data for the 2019 Trail Ambassador Season:

Throughout the 2019 TA season, on CC/OW, Alan Thiesen and Litton Trails, volunteers observed a total of 456 trail users; 79% of which were hiking (362 people). 13% were running (60 people) and 4% were biking (17 people). No equestrians were observed on any of the trails. Of the total number of dogs observed on the trails (144 dogs), 80% were on leash (115 dogs) and 20% were off leash (29 dogs). TAs spoke with 260 of the total 456 trail users they observed at the trailheads, an Engagement Rate of 57%. TAs connected with 13 new trail users, 21 families, 12 BYLT members, and collected \$60 in donations across all three trails.

Collecting this trail data is very important to BYLT because it enables staff to have a better understanding of how the trail is used, and informs maintenance decisions. TAs report if they have seen any illegal activity or unauthorized trail usage. Only one instance of unauthorized trail usage, a motorized scooter, was observed on the Litton Trail. Additionally, the number of dogs observed on and off leash number makes the case for installing additional dog waste stations with trash cans, signage, and allocating more dollars to trail maintenance. High numbers of dogs off leash impact other trail users and decrease environmental and aesthetic quality of the trails.

While this data is important for establishing a starting point for future TA seasons, and is as accurate as possible, it is important to note that the data does not necessarily precisely reflect trail users on these three

trailheads. Inconsistency in data is a result of several factors. Firstly, TA teams were not consistent at each trailhead for every shift. Therefore, the same people were not collecting the data every time, and some volunteers were more diligent at keeping an accurate data sheet than others. Secondly, TA shifts were only scheduled for three hours, from 9:30am- 12:30pm and then from 9:00am-12:00pm, approximately once a month. This limited sample size greatly detracted from the overall data collection possibility out on the trails. So, the data collected in this report basically reflects mid-morning to early afternoon trail users during the first Saturday of the month. Increased data collection is a possibility in the future, but will require more oversight initially from BYLT staff and a greater organization of the TA volunteer program.

Table 7: Compiled trail data from CC/OW, Alan Thiesen, and Litton Trails throughout the 2019 TA season.

Compiled 2019 Trail Ambassador Data	
Date	TOTALS
Total Number of People Seen on the Trails	456
Hikers	362
Runners	60
Bikers	17
Equestrians	0
Total Number of Dogs	144
On Leash	115
Off Leash	29
Total Number of People Spoken To	260
Total Number of Surveys Conducted	118
Returning Trail Users	204
New Trail Users	13
Families	21
Are you a member?	12
Donations	\$60

Community Health Surveys:

The focus for all TA shifts except one, which was dedicated to soliciting donations for the 2019 Trails Appeal, were to collect community health data (see Appendix B). According to an article on Rasmussen College’s website “Community health is a medical specialty that focuses on the physical and mental well-being of the people in a specific geographic region. This important subsection of public health includes initiatives to help community members maintain and improve their health” (www.rasmussen.edu). Community health is an important factor for BYLT to consider due to their role as an outdoor recreation provider in Nevada County. BYLT actively builds and maintains over 45 miles of recreational trails, many of which are used daily by local residents. This community dependency on trails increases BYLT’s responsibility to continue providing excellent outdoor experiences.

The community health survey was created by BYLT staff to collect information on how trail users are engaging with the trail, if they are aware of BYLT’s role in outdoor recreation, and their subjective

response to their own health, and perceived community health. This data is not only utilized to better understand how trail users are interacting on the trails and the benefits received by recreating outdoors, but it is also used practically for reports to the Sierra Health Foundation, which recently granted funding to BYLT. From the Sierra Health Foundation’s email newsletter: “Bear Yuba Land Trust received a 2018 Responsive Grants Program \$15,000 award for trail management and outdoor programming to improve the health and quality of life of individuals and families in Nevada County by maintaining and growing trail management and outdoor programming through a Trails Master Plan. The plan includes maintaining more than 45 miles of urban and rural trails that connect people to schools, churches, shopping centers and other locations of social interest, and creating opportunities for people to experience the health and social benefits of being outside”.

Suggestions for the 2020 Trail Ambassador Season:

The 2019 TA season was successful considering this is a newly established volunteer program. BYLT intentionally began small to test public reception and feasibility of the program. The volunteers who dedicated time to this program have demonstrated the power of having Ambassadors out in the community to represent BYLT at popular trailheads.

For the 2020 TA season, expanding the sphere of influence would greatly contribute to BYLT’s role and responsibility of being a recreational steward in the community. By scheduling a fuller TA calendar and expanding to additional BYLT-managed trails, such as the newly created Wolf Creek Trail and the Deer Creek Tribute Trail, volunteers would be able to connect with a wider range of trail users and get a better representation of how local trails are utilized. This increased visibility would enable volunteers to increase membership and merchandise sales at the trailheads, dedicate more time towards raising funding for trails projects through the Trails Appeal and overall create a lasting awareness of BYLT in the community. Eventually, the goals for this program are to empower more volunteer TA Leaders to take their teams out on the trailheads with minimal oversight from BYLT staff. Updating the Community Health Survey questions will also serve to collect more useable information that can be applied to future grant funding or community outreach opportunities.

Appendix A- Trail Ambassador Data Form



Trail: _____ **Date:** _____

Total Number of People Seen on the Trail: _____

Hikers: _____

Runners: _____

Bikers: _____

Equestrians: _____

Total Number of Dogs: _____

On Leash: _____

Off Leash: _____

Total Number of People Spoken To: _____

Total Number of Surveys Conducted: _____

Returning Trail Users: _____

New Trail Users: _____

Families: _____

Are you a Member? _____

Comments:

Community Health Survey:

	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Age Group	0-25 26-40 41-65 66+
Is this your first time on a recreational trail?	YES NO
Have you heard about Bear Yuba Land Trust before today?	YES NO
How often do you recreate on trails in Nevada County?	Daily Weekly Monthly Bi-Monthly Yearly
How often do you recreate on trails in other areas?	Daily Weekly Monthly Bi-Monthly Yearly
What are some of your favorite trail activities to participate in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Hiking <input type="checkbox"/> Biking <input type="checkbox"/> Horseback Riding <input type="checkbox"/> Running <input type="checkbox"/> Bird Watching <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Would you say that your health has improved since you've been recreating outdoors?	YES NO I'M NOT SURE
Would you recommend for others to recreate outdoors?	YES NO
Do you think trails are an important aspect of increasing community health?	YES NO I'M NOT SURE
How important are trails to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Important <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Important <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Unimportant <input type="checkbox"/> Very Unimportant