

Survey of Public Priorities as a Guide for Future Sustainable Investment Strategies in the Four Northern Forest States

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Abstract

Researchers completed 1,221 telephone surveys in February, 2008, with >300 complete responses from each of the four Northern Forest states: New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. The premise of the overall study was to understand the priorities of Northern Forest communities as the basis of a vision for the economic, social, and environmental well-being of Northern Forest residents.

The telephone survey followed up on a 2006-07 written survey that involved facilitated discussions with focus groups drawn from communities in Tug Hill and the Adirondack Park in New York State (Cox et al. 2007). We designed the surveys to better understand the choices Northern Forest residents would make if investment funds were available to help stimulate a sustainable economic and environmental future. Furthermore, we sought to determine if community-level, “bottom up” choices would be similar to region-wide, “top-down” ones?

We now have a wealth of data to inform future regional and community planning for a sustainable future for the Northern Forest. The results could enable policy makers at all levels to understand the differing community and regional investment priorities and to help guide investment decisions at the community, state and regional levels. Results indicate that it would be unwise to make ‘top down’ decisions about sustainability investments without looking at the detailed survey results.

Introduction & Background

On May 22, 2008, Congress enacted the 2008 Farm Bill legislation, officially called the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008. One of the many provisions of this new Farm Bill was an act that puts into place the basic elements of what had been known for several recent years as the Michaud Bill, named after Maine Democratic Congressman Michael Michaud.

In the U.S. House of Representatives Congressman Michaud had sponsored legislation beginning in 2004 that would, among its several provisions, bring additional federal resources to the Northern Forest counties. The bill proposed creating a regional

economic development commission for the four states, similar to the Appalachian Regional Commission; would develop a sustainable regional economic development strategy; and would be authorized to disburse an additional \$40 million a year for five years to the participating states and counties for projects that are consistent with the overall strategy. His bill received strong support from the whole Northern Forest Congressional delegation; companion legislation was introduced in the U.S. Senate. As enacted in the 2008 Farm Bill, some of the details have changed, for example, annual funding proposed is \$30 million for 10 years.

Meanwhile a preliminary effort was funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce to stimulate economic development planning in the four-state Northern Forest region. The Northern Forest Center (NFC) was awarded a grant of \$800,000 by the U.S. Department of Commerce, matched by a similar amount from the four states, to work with representatives from the four states and their respective governor's offices to develop a regional economic adjustment strategy. The NFC completed this strategy document, "Growing Community Wealth: A Blueprint for Action", in July 2008. It makes ten recommendations for near-term action, one of which makes suggestions for new federal investments in a variety of programs dealing with energy security, climate change mitigation and clean water, and proposes creating a national model for other rural regions working to sustain their natural and cultural assets while succeeding in a 21st century economy. The strategy lists a host of likely federal funding sources available for sustainable community programs and proposes moving quickly to start to capture funding appropriations in federal fiscal year 2010.

Implicit in both of these federal-level efforts – the 2008 Farm Bill and Northern Forest Center strategy – is that decisions about investment for a sustainable future in the Northern Forest will be made with a "top down" approach. Beneficial as this could be for a region hard pressed by a changing global economy, it was apparent that these planning efforts might well benefit from information about sustainable investment priorities coming from the communities upwards – a "bottom up" approach. To further this end, researchers from the University of Vermont (UVM) and the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF), aided by NGOs active in the region as well as a private survey research company, undertook a two-part study funded by the Northeast States Research Cooperative (NSRC).

The premise of the overall study was to understand the ideas and priorities of local communities, the North Country region of New York State, and the four-state Northern Forest region as the basis of a vision for the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the Northern Forest. This vision for the future will give a voice to residents in prioritizing regional, state, and federal funding and investment in community resources, as well as a basis of comparison as to how well regional planners and interest groups represent the ideas and priorities of local communities. The research questions that this two-part study sought to answer were as follows: 1) If new and additional investment funds were available to help stimulate a sustainable economic and environmental future for your community what choices would you make?, and 2) Would the community level "bottom-up" investment choices be similar to or different than region-wide or "top-down" choices?

During the first part of the study, Cox et al. (2007) conducted facilitated discussions with focus groups drawn from communities in Tug Hill and the Adirondack

Park. Focus group participants were asked to think about their respective communities one generation ahead, about 30 years in the future. Based on the focus group discussions, Cox et al. (2007) developed a written survey that was mailed and e-mailed to the focus group participants and interested participants in the three neighboring Northern Forest states: Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.

At the completion of the first project results were presented to the participants of the focus groups and to members of the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) in November, 2006. At this meeting it was suggested that the survey instrument developed in the project to date – an eight-page questionnaire with 47 questions and presenting 50 investment project choices -- should be adapted for a much broader telephone survey of people all across the Northern Forest, that is, to enlarge the sample and make sure it was representative of the full demographic composition of the human communities in the four-state Northern Forest region.

In July 2007, NSRC awarded a second grant to SUNY ESF and UVM to follow up on the first initiative and conduct this broad-based telephone survey. This was completed, with 1,221 completed interviews finalized in February, 2008. This report summarizes the results of the telephone survey, highlights the investment choices and compares the telephone survey results to the first focus group/written questionnaire survey in 15 broad categories.

Methods

A prime objective of the telephone survey was to obtain a representative sample of the resident households within the Northern Forest areas of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York. Given those geographic constraints, the challenge was to identify the zip code areas that are wholly or partially within the Northern Forest boundary so that telephone survey research could be directed at only those households that are located within those zip codes.

We identified the counties in each of the four Northern Forest states that had a majority of their area within the boundary of the Northern Forest as it is defined by the Northern Forest Lands Council study, NSRC, the Northern Forest Center and Northern Forest Alliance. We used ArcGIS 9.2 (ESRI 2006) to compile and overlay the Northern Forest boundary with the County, Town, and Zip Code boundaries for the study area.

We selected all zip codes with 60% or more forest cover (NLCD 2001) and also zip codes that were surrounded by zip codes all having 60% or greater forest cover. That allowed us to include some small zip code areas that comprised mainly villages in the middle of forested areas, and had less than 60% forest cover because they are developed village areas.

We then picked a target sample for each state and agreed on 300 completed questionnaires per state. With a total sample size of 1,200 for all four states, the confidence interval for the results derived from the entire sample would be plus or minus (+/-) three percent (3%), for a 95% confidence interval of six percent (6%). Depending on the response rates within a given question, the confidence interval could be as low as five percent. With 300 respondents for each state, a state by state comparative analysis would have a confidence interval of +/- six percent, for a 95% confidence interval of 12 percent. For analysis that drills down through two or more variables, such as examining

an attitude variable by geographic area as well as by age, the confidence interval very likely will exceed 12 percent.

We developed a target sample for each county within the four Northern Forest states, apportioning the 300 questionnaires per state among counties based on the population size of each county. That apportionment yielded sample targets that the telephone survey staff were requested – but not required – to meet. In keeping with the goal of the research, we wanted to gather information from year-round residents as much as possible. To ensure that a household contacted to complete a telephone survey was in fact located within the Northern Forest area of a particular state and that the household was the primary residence for the family, we incorporated screening questions at the beginning of the questionnaire and would end the call with households that did not meet the screening criteria.

We developed a telephone survey-compatible version of the written questionnaire that was used in the first part of the study (Cox et al. 2007). The written version had some complexities in a few questions that were difficult to replicate in the telephone survey setting and some questions had to be eliminated so that the questionnaire could be completed within a 15-minute call.

The telephone survey instrument was tested on February 6, 2008 and the telephone survey data collection commenced on February 7, 2008. The average completion time for the survey was 13 minutes, making it somewhat lengthy for a telephone survey; however, the target response of 1,200 completed surveys from the Northern Forest area in each of the four states was reached within two weeks, on February 20, 2008.

Results

We completed 1,221 surveys comprised of over 300 respondent households in each of the four North Forest states. In addition, apportionment of the survey responses among the individual Northern Forest counties within each states was close to our target (Figure 1).

We were able to reach a wider demographic group with the telephone survey than the focus-group-driven written survey. Notably, we had wider representation from all four Northern Forest states (Figure 2), a wider spread of years of residence in the Northern Forest (Figure 3), more evenly-distributed age structure (Figure 4), a wider range of the number of children in the household (Figure 5), and more even distribution of education levels (Figure 6) and household income (Figure 7). Responses were split nearly evenly between males and females (49.8% male, 50.2% female); 30.2% of the respondents owned forest or farm land in the Northern Forest region besides the land for their home and immediate surroundings.

The survey questions were split into four sections. The first set of questions asked the respondents' level of agreement with an opinion statement (Table 1). For example, "A strong rural identity is a community quality that is very important to me," to which 29.98% strongly agreed, 56.76% agreed, 5.73% neither agreed nor disagreed, 5.65% disagreed, 0.16% strongly disagreed, and 1.72% either didn't know, had no opinion, or refused to answer the question.

The second section of questions were originally developed in the written survey as two contrasting opinion statements and the respondent would mark where they stood on a scale of 1-9 where complete agreement with one opinion was ranked a 1 and complete agreement with the contrasting opinion was ranked 9. This was impossible to replicate with the telephone survey, so we chose one statement and asked for the respondent's level of agreement with that one statement, making the second section of questions very similar to the first set (Table 2).

The third section of the survey asked respondents, "If new Federal Funding is allocated for projects in the Northern Forest, for which of the following would you support using that money?" (See Table 3) There were five categories: social and cultural programs (examples include projects supporting museums, historic sites, performance halls, and interpretive signage), environmental protection projects (examples include projects supporting water source protection, wildlife habitat provision, and ecological restoration), human development activities (examples include projects supporting job training, education, and human health), physical infrastructure improvements (examples include projects supporting roads and highways, telecommunications, water and sewer, and electricity generation and delivery), and economic development activities (examples include projects supporting regional tourism planning, recruitment of new industries, and business services). We then asked the respondent which of the five public investment categories was most important (Figure 8); 31.61% of respondents ranked environmental protection projects as most important followed by economic development activities (29.81%), physical infrastructure improvements (14.99%), human development activities (14.17%), and finally social and cultural programs (4.42%). 5% of the respondents didn't know, had no opinion, or refused to answer the question. (This form of question and response was comparable to the focus group format, in which participants allocated percentage points to the five categories.)

The last section of questions put forth specific public investment ideas and asked the respondent to decide if the investment project was very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important (Table 4). For example, we asked if the respondent thought it was important to "upgrade public water and sewer systems," to which 37.67% said it was very important, 37.43 said it was somewhat important, 14.74% said it was not very important, and 4.34 said it was not at all important, while 5.81% had no opinion.

Discussion

The telephone survey of 1,221 residents in all four states of the Northern Forest confirmed and largely supported the results from the first survey. As in the first survey, respondents agreed overwhelmingly that a strong rural identity is important. People agreed, two to one, that if current environmental trends continue, 'we can expect a diminishing quality of life'. Respondents largely agreed that the current trend of the Northern Forest economy seems to be low wage, service sector, seasonal jobs. They agreed overwhelmingly that the local economy needs to become more diverse, that new businesses should be compatible with the rural quality of life and should be compatible with the natural environment.

There were two new lines of questioning inserted into the telephone survey at the request of the U.S. Forest Service. One addressed the importance of the forested landscape and the other focused on community resilience. Respondents agreed almost totally (96%) that 'the forest surrounding my community is important to me'; however, in response to follow-up questions, they largely disagreed that their respective livelihoods depend on forestry or agriculture, recreation or tourism. We interpreted this to mean that, though they live in a forested landscape, their economic lives are disconnected to a large degree from the forest itself. Along that same line of questioning, respondents disagreed two to one that recreation and tourism rather than timber production or agriculture should be the foundation of the local economy. (It should be noted that this contradicts recent trends -- forest and farm jobs have declined sharply, while tourism and recreation jobs have increased

Respondents were almost evenly split on their assessment of their community resilience (that is, the community can adjust easily and quickly to major changes), with 45% agreeing and 40% disagreeing. These responses reflect the varying circumstances in each community.

When asked to select which of the five public investment categories was most important, the responses favored environmental protection first, followed by economic development, physical infrastructure, human development and social and cultural programs. If, however we look at each category separately and compare them by how many people "strongly support" that category (a different way of asking the question), then environmental protection projects still come first as an investment category, however, this is now followed by human development activities, then physical infrastructure improvements, economic development and last, social and cultural programs. When combining the "strongly support" and "support" responses together, the order of preference places human development projects first, then physical infrastructure, environmental protection, economic development and lastly, social and cultural programs (Table 3).

This is different in some respects from the results of the first survey, in which physical infrastructure needs were rated the highest, followed by economic development, environmental protection, and human development. It is notable that social and cultural projects were ranked fifth in importance by the respondents participating in both surveys.

Investment priorities differ slightly by gender, state, age, education and income. Women tend to choose human development and environmental investment categories as most important. Men choose environmental and economic investment. There were no big variations from state to state, but New York and Maine put slightly more emphasis on economic investment, and Vermont and New Hampshire put more emphasis on environmental investments. Investment category percent allocations for the two age groupings in the middle -- 35 to 49 and 50 to 64 -- are very similar; however, for the young age group, 18 to 34, they have the biggest percentage allocated to environmental protection and the smallest to economic development.

Interest in investment in the human development category diminishes with age, from 20.7% for the 18-34 age group, to 10.7% for the 65+ age group. Investments in the environment and physical infrastructure grow with education level; interest in social and cultural program investments diminishes with education level. The importance placed on investment categories is about the same between people in different income categories,

except for investment in physical infrastructure, which increases steadily from lower to higher income brackets, from 10% to 26.8%. The importance of environmental investment diminishes with years lived in the Northern Forest region, whereas investment preferences in economic development and physical infrastructure increase.

Top specific investment projects are for job training activities designed to attract and retain youth and providing services for youth. Next on the priority list come: protecting water quality, maintaining rural character, expanding health care services and raising the minimum wage. In the first survey the following infrastructure projects were rated highly – expanding wireless communications, high speed internet and improving the electrical systems. But in the telephone survey these projects came much lower down on the priority list. Lowest priority investment on both surveys was conserving more land by public acquisition and by purchasing conservation easements.

The telephone survey confirmed what we learned from the first part of the study, that maintaining and nurturing a strong rural character is crucial to the future but respondents were split on what this means for the future with regard to ‘staying the same’ or being different.

From the first survey we learned that there is overwhelming support (90% agreed) for “education as the top priority towards building a prosperous economy” and this is reinforced in the second survey by their choices for top investment priorities – that is, for job training and retaining youth in their communities and providing services for young people. (Given the overwhelming support for education in the first survey we did not ask this question again directly in the second survey). However, the following investments were low on the priority lists and met with some major variations among the groups: investment in colleges and universities and investment in technical schools.

In both surveys respondents had a fairly negative view of the future if the current array of trends continues over the next 30 years. Quality of life is going down, according to the respondents. Residents are not happy with the current trends of the Northern Forest economy and see an economy dominated by low wage, service sector seasonal jobs.

With respect to specific projects, it is safe to say that the priorities do vary by group and location so that, for example, concern for expanded emergency and general health care capacity differs from one community to another in the Adirondack Park, so planners should take great care as they assess local needs. Similarly, expanding services for youth varies; support for improving the electrical systems also varies across the communities; expanding and improving cell phone service varies across the region and the same goes for high speed internet access. There are big differences in this priority even in the Adirondack Park. However, on one project investment they all agreed – the least favorite investments are in public acquisition of forest land, including conservation easements. This was true in both the first and second survey results. Again, it shows that we must pay close attention to the different priorities in the different communities and at the different scales across the four states of the Northern Forest.

Conclusions

We now have a wealth of survey data to inform future regional and community planning for a sustainable future for the four Northern Forest states. The results of this

research are intended to enable policy makers at all levels to understand the differing community and regional investment priorities and to help guide and influence investment decisions at the community, state and regional levels.

The results of our telephone survey confirmed much of the information from the first more detailed survey, showing that respondents overwhelmingly want to retain the rural character of their communities and favor economic development but not at the expense of environment. Almost all of the phone survey respondents agreed that the forest surrounding their communities was important, but largely disagreed that their livelihoods depended on forests, farms, recreation or tourism, implying that economic lives of Northern Forest residents are disconnected from the forest itself.

Top investment categories in the telephone survey were environmental protection, followed by economic development, physical infrastructure, human development and social and cultural programs. This is different in some respects from the results of the first survey, in which physical infrastructure needs were rated more highly. Specific investment projects that garnered much support in the telephone survey included job training activities designed to attract and retain youth and providing services for youth. Other well-supported projects included protecting water quality, maintaining rural character, expanding health care services and raising the minimum wage.

While in the first survey infrastructure projects like expanding wireless communications, high speed internet and improving the electrical systems were highly rated, these projects came much lower down on the priority list in the telephone survey. Lowest priority investment on both surveys was conserving more land by public acquisition and by purchasing conservation easements.

We would sum up with these points:

- There was continuity between the first and second survey results, even though the demographics differed.
- There were many similarities in the responses from the focus group survey participants as compared to the responses in the telephone survey of randomly selected households.
- The main difference in findings between the two sets of surveys of most interest to local and regional planners is the selection of public investment priorities. The main priority of the randomly selected households in the telephone survey was human development activities, followed by physical infrastructure improvements and environmental protection projects (See Table 3) . The focus group participant responses felt even stronger about physical infrastructure improvements by ranking that as their first priority, and they also agreed that environmental protection projects should be the third priority. The two groups of survey respondents parted ways at that point, with the focus group participants ranking economic development activities as their second priority, while human development activities did not even make their list of top three priorities for the Northern Forest region.
- The telephone survey found fairly solid continuity of opinions and preferences across all four of the Northern Forest states.
- We would like to contribute these survey results to future discussions of regional economic development, for example, to the regional economic commission that would be created under the provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill.

- We would also offer these results to the four state governors, congressional offices, and others active in planning for the future, such as ANCA, Common Ground Alliance, the Adirondack Park Agency (APA), Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages (AATV), and to the Adirondack Research Consortium (ARC) as the basis for possible research topics.
- The surveys produced many additional comments which should be explored for their insights.
- We would like to make these data available on an open source web site.
- We should assess existing local, state, federal and private programs and resources that address the issues discussed in the survey results, and where needed, suggest new or modified programs that do help communities as they envision and strive for a productive and sustainable future.
- We would like to select some key issues that emerged from the surveys for further investigation; for example, education/retaining youth in rural communities is a top priority, so also is creating a more diverse economy and providing economic growth which does not come at the expense of the natural environment.
- One observation is that survey respondents want a rural lifestyle in the future yet seem somewhat indifferent to the role of forestry (and farming), the essence of a rural quality of life. This apparent disconnect in thinking could be explored further.
- Retaining youth in these rural communities is a major concern and has strong support as an investment idea, by providing job training designed to attract and retain them and by expanding services for youth. This is an issue common to much of rural New York and other states. Finding some common solutions would be a major step forward for rural communities everywhere.

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Questions about the Research and NSRC?

The survey is part of a research project financed by the federally-funded Northeastern States Research Cooperative (NSRC) and conducted by SUNY ESF and UVM. If you have questions about the study and the survey, please direct them to Graham L. Cox (e-mail to glcox@audubon.org) or to Jon D. Erickson (jon.erickson@uvm.edu) at the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources at UVM. Participating in the research design, in conducting the focus group discussions and in the survey analyses were Dr. William F. Porter and Ms. Anne M. Woods of the Adirondack Ecological Center, SUNY ESF in Newcomb, NY.) Questions about the telephone survey design should be directed to Tim Holmes, Holmes & Associates, P.O. Box 295, Saranac Lake, NY 12983, 518-891-6525, holmes@adirondackresearch.com.

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Table 1 – Opinions of all survey respondents ($n = 1,221$). Original question numbers given parenthetically.

Statement	Percent Responses					Don't know/ No opinion/ Refused
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
If current environmental trends in my community continue, we can expect a diminishing quality of life. (Qb1)	15.81	40.54	9.09	29.24	2.21	3.11
My local economy needs to become more diverse, with a greater variety of businesses and employers. (Qb2)	31.78	51.19	5.65	9.34	0.82	1.23
The forest surrounding my community is important to me. (Qb3)	46.44	50.37	1.15	1.06	0.08	0.90
My community is resilient, that is, we can adjust easily and quickly to major changes. (Qb4)	5.00	40.54	10.73	33.91	6.31	3.52
New businesses in our community should be compatible with our rural quality of life. (Qb5)	27.60	60.11	4.18	5.90	0.74	1.47
A strong rural identity is a community quality that is very important to me. (Qb6)	29.98	56.76	5.73	5.65	0.16	1.72
The current trend of the Northern Forest economy seems to be low wage, service sector, seasonal jobs. (Qb7)	20.23	54.38	8.03	11.14	1.06	5.16
New businesses in our community should be compatible with the natural environment. (Qb8)	30.38	57.08	4.26	6.14	0.57	1.56
My livelihood depends on forestry or agriculture. (Qb9)	6.96	20.97	8.68	48.32	11.63	3.44
My livelihood depends on recreation or tourism. (Qb10)	6.96	22.28	7.53	48.81	10.89	3.52

Table 2 – Opinions of all survey respondents ($n = 1,221$). Original question numbers given parenthetically.

Statement	Percent Responses					Don't know/ No opinion/ Refused
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Second home owners are an important part of our communities, contributing positively to both our economy and culture. (Qc1)	10.89	58.56	8.93	16.38	2.62	2.62
Economic growth and creating jobs should be the top priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent. (Qc2)	3.52	25.63	7.21	47.75	13.19	2.70
Region-wide development planning should establish the standard and overall vision that governs local planning. (Qc3)	7.70	55.20	10.16	18.43	2.21	6.31
Poverty is a fact of life in rural, seasonal economies, and its reduction should not be a top priority of government. (Qc4)	4.83	23.26	6.63	46.60	15.15	3.52
Forest health should be better protected through strengthened regulations on private forest land. (Qc5)	11.79	47.58	8.76	23.34	4.59	3.93
Providing affordable housing is critical to stable, multi-generational communities and will require greater government involvement. (Qc6)	17.61	46.11	7.78	22.69	3.44	2.38
It should be left to private business interests to bring new jobs and diverse business opportunities to our communities. (Qc7)	7.13	46.76	10.89	29.07	3.52	2.62
There is a strong future for local farms and farm products in our local economy. (Qc8)	10.57	44.88	5.90	32.19	3.52	2.95
Property taxes in our community are excessive and should be reduced through cutting back government services if need be. (Qc9)	16.38	37.26	9.09	29.65	4.50	3.11
Businesses within my community should be locally-owned rather than national chains. (Qc10)	18.67	43.00	14.50	19.33	1.39	3.11
The foundation of my local economy should be recreation and tourism rather than timber production or agriculture. (Qc11)	3.69	21.62	17.53	48.16	5.73	3.28

Table 3 – Opinions of all survey respondents ($n = 1,221$). Original question numbers given parenthetically.

Statement	Percent Responses				
	Strongly Support	Support	Oppose	Strongly Oppose	No opinion
Social and cultural programs (Qd1)	20.48	52.58	17.44	3.03	6.47
Environmental protection projects (Qe2).	44.55	41.44	7.21	2.87	3.93
Human development activities (Qd3).	39.31	51.68	5.16	1.06	2.78
Physical infrastructure improvements (Qd4).	38.90	49.96	5.98	1.56	3.60
Economic development activities (Qd5).	25.96	55.20	11.22	2.21	5.41

Table 4 – Opinions of all survey respondents (*n* = 1,221). Original question numbers given parenthetically.

Statement	Percent Responses				
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not at all Important	No opinion
Expand services for youth. (Qe1)	43.90	38.57	8.03	2.46	7.04
Regulate housing and other development in environmentally sensitive areas (Qe2).	41.69	38.49	9.50	6.06	4.26
Protect water quality through watershed-wide management activities (Qe3).	60.85	30.06	3.52	1.80	3.77
Conserve more land in the Northern Forest through public acquisition (Qe4).	32.35	33.99	15.32	11.55	6.80
Provide job training activities designed to attract and retain our local youth (Qe5).	61.67	29.98	4.42	0.90	3.03
Support raising the minimum wage to help boost local incomes (Qe6).	53.56	29.16	8.85	5.24	3.19
Expand emergency and general health care capacity in our communities (Qe7).	50.61	34.89	7.78	2.46	4.26
Upgrade public water and sewer systems (Qe8).	37.67	37.43	14.74	4.34	5.81
Expand and improve wireless communication services (Qe9).	37.43	35.79	15.48	6.96	4.34
Expand and improve high speed internet access (Qe9b).	32.10	33.66	19.90	8.93	5.41
Improve the electrical system to reduce outages (Qe10).	36.53	34.97	18.43	4.75	5.32
Promote value-added manufacturing based on forest and farm products (Qe11).	37.43	45.13	7.13	3.11	7.21
Invest in better management of our public forest lands (Qe12).	40.21	42.18	8.11	4.10	5.41
Maintain the rural character of your community (Qe13).	55.12	35.46	5.08	1.39	2.95

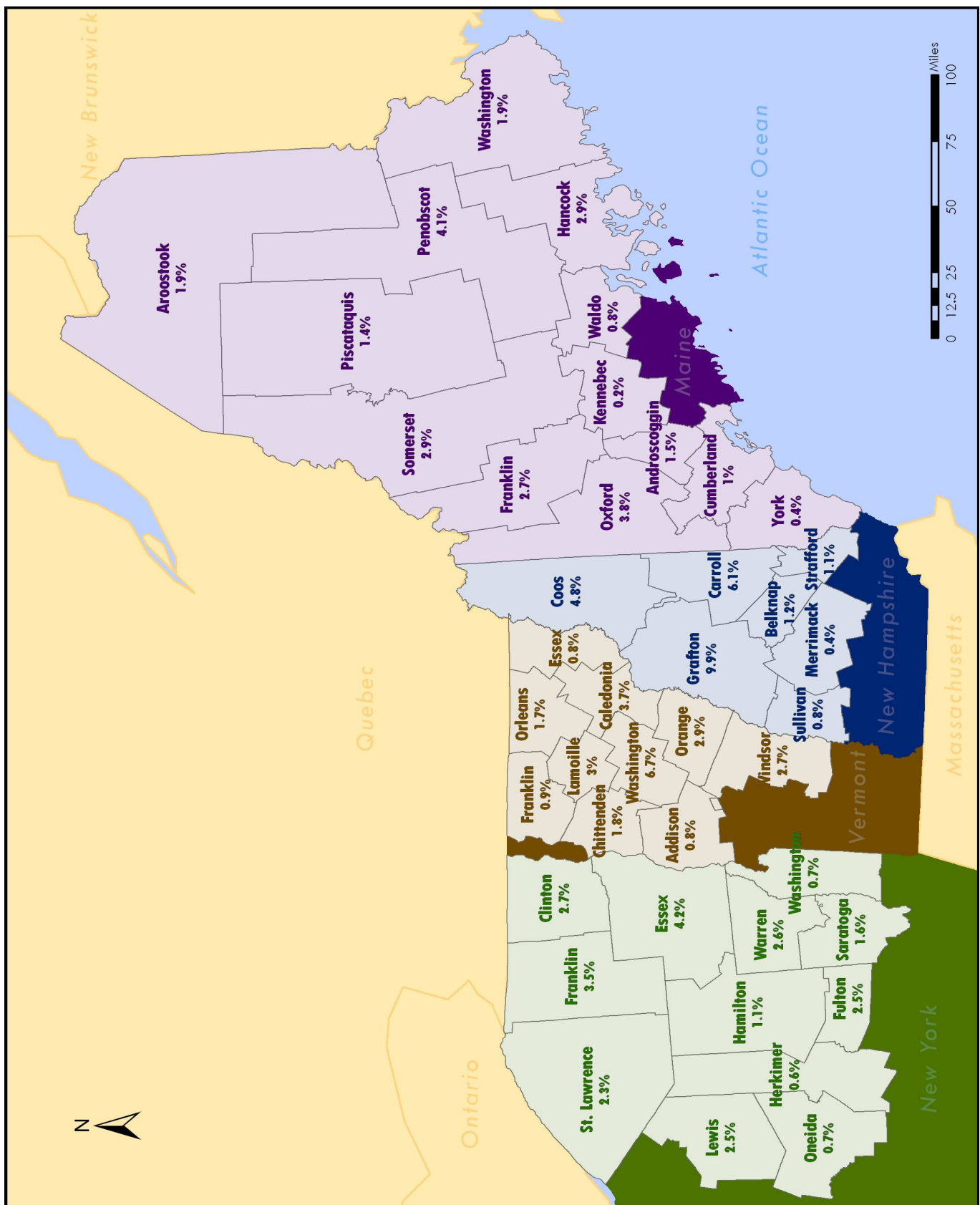


Figure 1. Percent of telephone survey responses from each Northern Forest county (# of responses in each county/# of total responses).

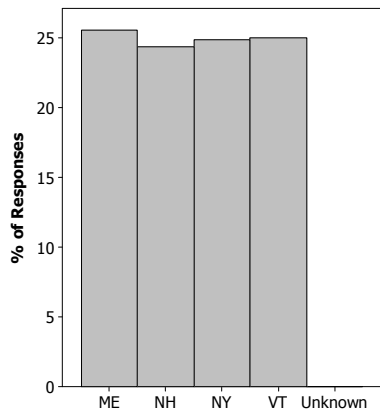


Figure 2. State of residence.

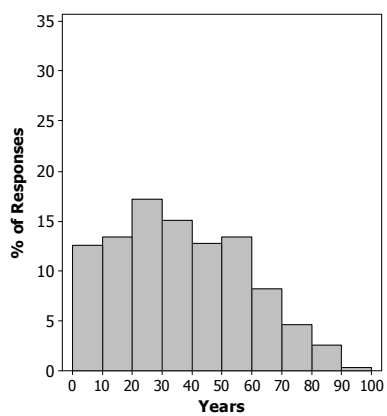


Figure 3. Years of residence in Northern Forest.

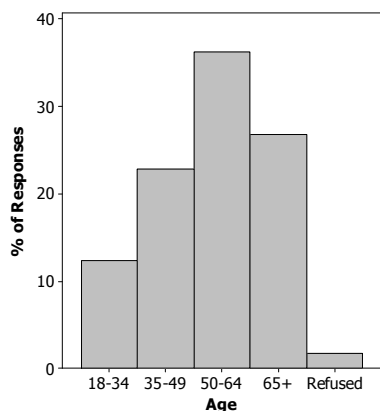


Figure 4. Age.

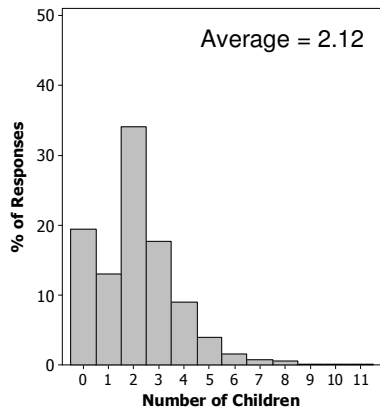


Figure 5. Children

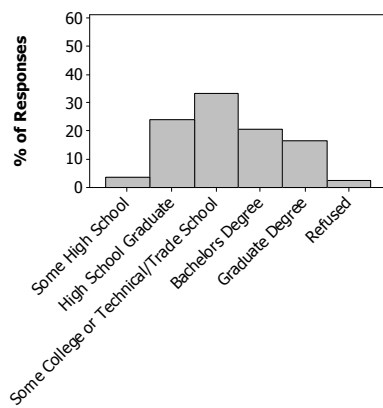


Figure 6. Level of education.

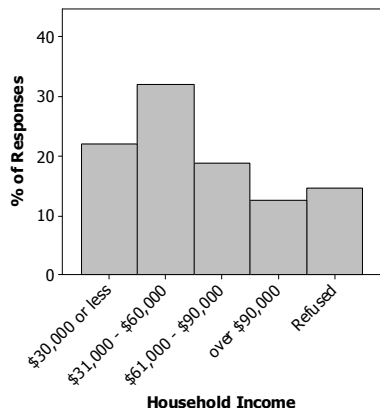


Figure 7. Household income (all sources of income before tax).

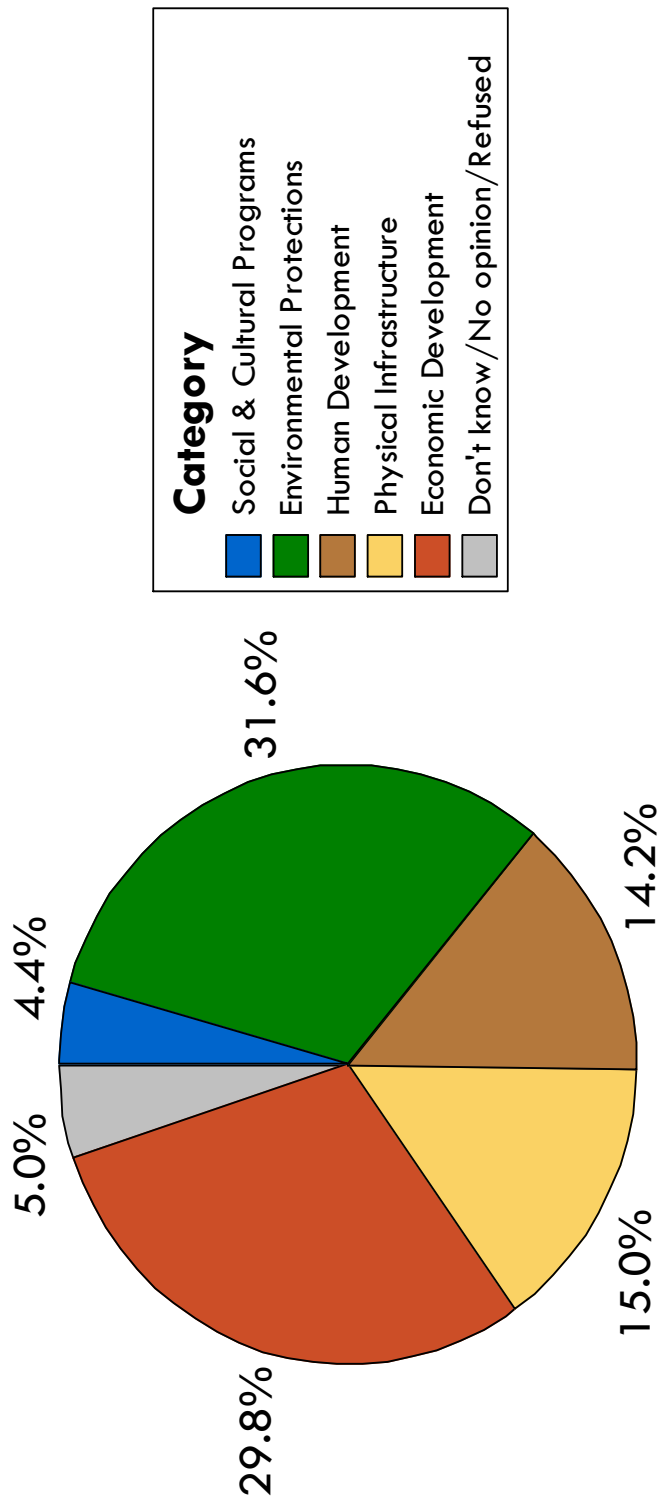


Figure 8. Which of the following 5 public investment categories would you say is most important?