



Public Spaces Commission

Community Forum

AGENDA

Ukiah Valley Conference Center ♦ 200 South School St. ♦ Ukiah, CA 95482

Virtual Meeting Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81764322746>

March 12, 2024 - 5:30 PM

1. ROLL CALL

Commissioners: Elora Babbini, Vicki Bitonti-Brown, Megan Parker, Casey Thompson, Joe Scriven, Steven Ratley

2. INTRODUCTIONS

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.a. Approval of Minutes from January 9th 2024 - Regular Meeting

Recommended Action: Approve the Minutes for the January 9th, 2024, Regular Meeting.

Attachments:

1. 2024-01-09 Minutes

4. STAFF MEMBER PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS

5. COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7. AUDIENCE COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

The Public Spaces Commission (PSC) welcomes input from the audience that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the PSC. In order for everyone to be heard, please limit your comments to three (3) minutes per person and not more than (10) minutes per subject. The Brown Act regulations do not allow action to be taken on audience comments.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.a. Development of the Ukiah Valley as an Outdoor Recreation Hub

Recommended Action: Receive a staff report and make comment.

Attachments:

1. Trail User Survey 2024

9. ADJOURNMENT

Please be advised that the City needs to be notified 72 hours in advance of a meeting if any specific accommodations or interpreter services are needed in order for you to attend. The City complies with ADA requirements and will attempt to reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities upon request. Materials related to an item on this Agenda submitted to the Public Spaces Commission after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection at the main entrance of the City of Ukiah Annex, located at 411 W. Clay St., Ukiah, CA 95482, not less than 72 hours prior to the meeting set forth on this agenda.



Public Spaces Commission

Regular Meeting

MINUTES

Civic Center Annex ♦ 411 West Clay St., Conf. RM #5 ♦ Ukiah, CA 95482

Virtual Meeting Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81764322746>

January 9, 2024 - 5:30 PM

1. ROLL CALL

Public Spaces Commission met at a Regular Meeting on January 9, 2024, having been legally noticed on January 5th, 2024. The meeting was held virtually at the following link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81764322746> and in person in the in Conference Room #5 at 411 W Clay St, Ukiah Ca 95482. The Commission called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Vicki Bitonti-Brown, Megan Parker, Casey Thompson, and Joe Scriven. **Commissioners Absent by Prearrangement:** Elora Babbini and Steven Ratley. **Staff Present:** Neil Davis, Community Services Director and Araceli Sandoval, Community Services Administrative Assistant.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

None Given.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Approval of the Minutes for the November 14th 2023 – Community Forum.

*Parker/Bitonti-Brown to approve the Minutes of November 14th, 2023, a Community Forum; as submitted. Motion **carried** by the following roll call vote: AYES: Bitonti-Brown, Parker, Thompson, Scriven. NOES: None. ABSENT: Babbini and Ratley. ABSTAIN: None.*

4. STAFF MEMBER PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS

a. Director's Report

Presenter: Neil Davis

Report was received.

5. COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

None Given.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None Given.

7. AUDIENCE COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None Given.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. Review, Update as Necessary, and Approve a 2024 Community Outreach Plan and Schedule

Presenter: Neil Davis

Public Comment: None Given.

*Parker/Thompson to approve the 2024 Community Outreach Plan and Schedule. Motion **carried** by the following roll call vote: AYES: Bitonti-Brown, Parker, Thompson, Scriven. NOES: None. ABSENT: Babbini and Ratley. ABSTAIN: None.*

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Araceli Sandoval, Public Spaces Commission Clerk

DRAFT

AGENDA SUMMARY REPORT



SUBJECT: Development of the Ukiah Valley as an Outdoor Recreation Hub

DEPARTMENT: Community Services

PREPARED BY: Neil Davis, Community Services Director

PRESENTER:

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1. Trail User Survey 2024

Summary: The Ukiah Valley has great potential for outdoor recreation but a lack of well maintained infrastructure is limiting the health, economic, and quality of life benefits it promises.

Background: The Ukiah Valley holds great potential for Outdoor Recreation. Outdoor recreation offers numerous economic, health, and quality of life benefits that contribute to individual well-being and societal prosperity. From stimulating local economies to promoting physical and mental health, engaging in outdoor activities has multifaceted advantages.

Economically, outdoor recreation plays a significant role in driving tourism and supporting local businesses. Tourists often visit areas renowned for their natural beauty and recreational opportunities, injecting money into accommodation, dining, and retail sectors. This influx of tourist spending creates jobs and generates revenue for communities, particularly in rural areas where outdoor attractions may be abundant. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation contributes over \$887 billion annually to the U.S. economy and supports millions of jobs nationwide .

Moreover, investments in outdoor recreational infrastructure, such as parks, trails, and recreational facilities, yield long-term economic returns by enhancing property values and attracting businesses and residents. Communities with well-maintained outdoor spaces are more attractive to potential investors and residents, leading to economic growth and increased tax revenues .

In terms of health benefits, outdoor recreation promotes physical activity and overall well-being. Engaging in activities like hiking, biking, or swimming not only improves cardiovascular health but also strengthens muscles and enhances flexibility. Regular exposure to natural environments has been linked to reduced stress levels, improved mood, and enhanced cognitive function. Studies have shown that spending time outdoors can alleviate symptoms of anxiety, depression, and attention deficit disorders .

Furthermore, outdoor recreation encourages social interaction and community cohesion. Participating in group activities such as team sports or nature clubs fosters a sense of belonging and strengthens interpersonal relationships. This social support network contributes to mental resilience and overall life satisfaction .

Quality of life is also enriched by outdoor recreation. Access to green spaces and natural environments enhances the aesthetic appeal of neighborhoods and provides opportunities for relaxation and leisure. Outdoor activities offer individuals an escape from the pressures of urban living, allowing them to reconnect with nature and recharge their batteries. Additionally, outdoor recreation promotes environmental stewardship by fostering a deeper appreciation for the natural world and encouraging sustainable behaviors .

In conclusion, outdoor recreation delivers a host of economic, health, and quality of life benefits that contribute to individual and societal well-being. By investing in outdoor infrastructure and promoting outdoor activities, communities can stimulate economic growth, improve public health, and enhance overall quality of life.

References:

1. Outdoor Industry Association. (2020). The Outdoor Recreation Economy. Retrieved from <https://outdoorindustry.org/resource/2020-outdoor-recreation-economic-report/>
2. Kaczynski, A. T., & Henderson, K. A. (2007). Environmental correlates of physical activity: A review of evidence about parks and recreation. *Leisure Sciences*, 29(4), 315-354.
3. Bratman, G. N., Hamilton, J. P., & Daily, G. C. (2012). The impacts of nature experience on human cognitive function and mental health. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1249(1), 118-136.
4. Pretty, J., Peacock, J., Sellens, M., & Griffin, M. (2005). The mental and physical health outcomes of green exercise. *International Journal of Environmental Health Research*, 15(5), 319-337.
5. Louv, R. (2005). *Last child in the woods: Saving our children from nature-deficit disorder*. Algonquin Books.

Discussion: The Ukiah Valley is a treasure trove of natural beauty with tremendous potential for outdoor recreation. Currently, the outdoor recreation infrastructure is limited and, in many cases, inadequately maintained.

The premier outdoor recreation spots in the Ukiah Valley include Lake Mendocino (US Army Corps of Engineers), Cow Mountain (Bureau of Land Management), Riverside Park (City of Ukiah), Low Gap Park (City of Ukiah and County of Mendocino), and Mill Creek Park (County of Mendocino). Additional opportunities for outdoor recreation exist at the City's Western Hills Watershed Protection Area and Landfill. Further possibilities exist with the development of fee-based uses of private property.

Outdoor recreation enthusiasts plan trips to outdoor recreation hubs often including multiple stops at smaller hubs on their way to the premier hubs where they choose to spend the bulk of their time. The competition to be seen by enthusiasts as one of these hubs is fierce with Northern California as a hot spot. From Santa Cruz to the Oregon border communities are investing in outdoor recreation infrastructure (primarily trails) with Santa Cruz, Lake Tahoe, Grass Valley and Folsom, Redding, and the Mendocino Coast emerging as desirable destinations for enthusiasts.

The Ukiah Valley is already attracting bicyclists for road bike and gravel bike riding. But for other activities such as mountain biking and camping, the options are too limited. While boating and fishing at Lake Mendocino can be excellent, unpredictable lake levels and poor maintenance of facilities limit the location's appeal.

The addition of trails on the western hills, particularly with an emphasis on feature-rich mountain bike trails, holds great opportunity for increased tourism and improved quality of life. In collaboration with the Ukiah Valley Trail Group, staff recently conducted a Trail User Survey (Attachment 1) to assess the interests of local trail users. Survey results suggest support for increased total miles of trails, improved maps and signs, and the inclusion of mountain bike-specific trails. Implementing these trail improvements should provide desirable quality of life benefits while making the Ukiah Valley a more desirable stop for outdoor recreation tourism.

Recommended Action: Receive a staff report and make comment.

Trail Use Survey

Wednesday, March 06, 2024

181

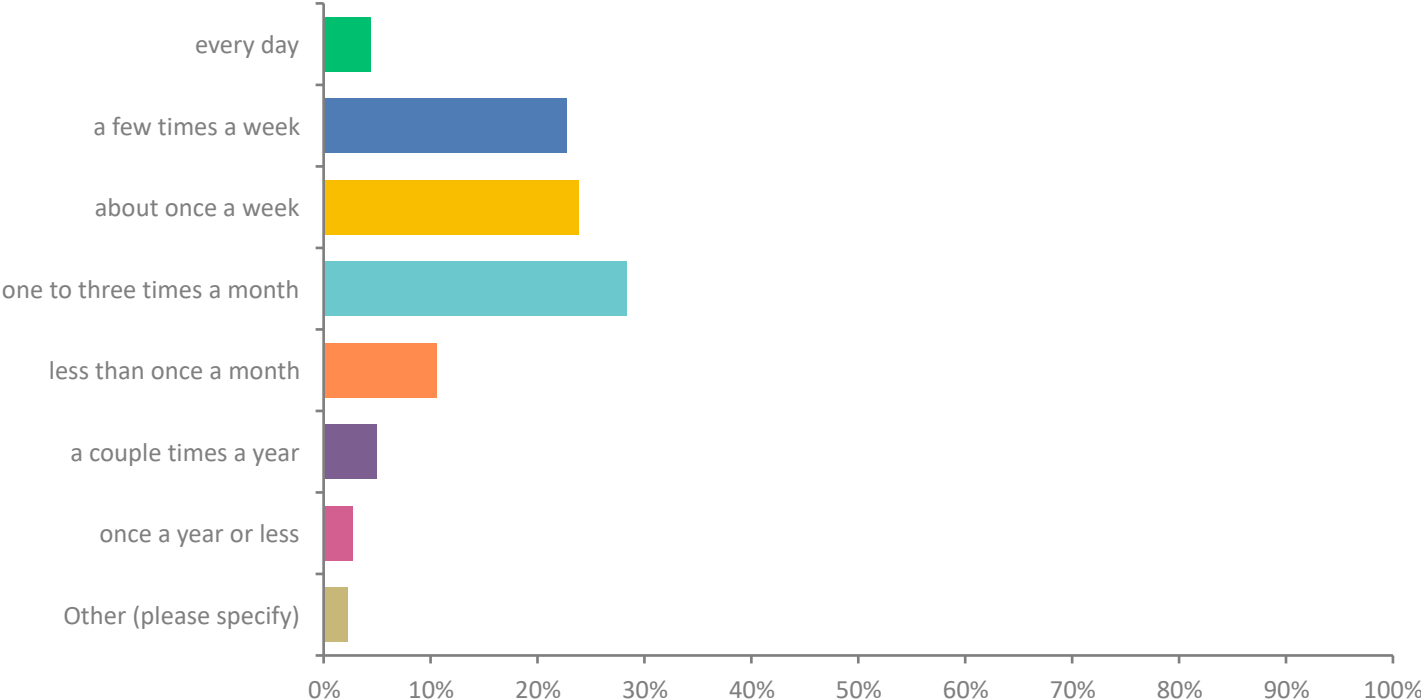
Total Responses

Date Created: Wednesday, February 14, 2024

Complete Responses: 181

Q1: I typically use Ukiah Valley trails (Low Gap Park, Lake Mendocino, Mill Creek Park, Cow Mountain) ...

Answered: 180 Skipped: 1



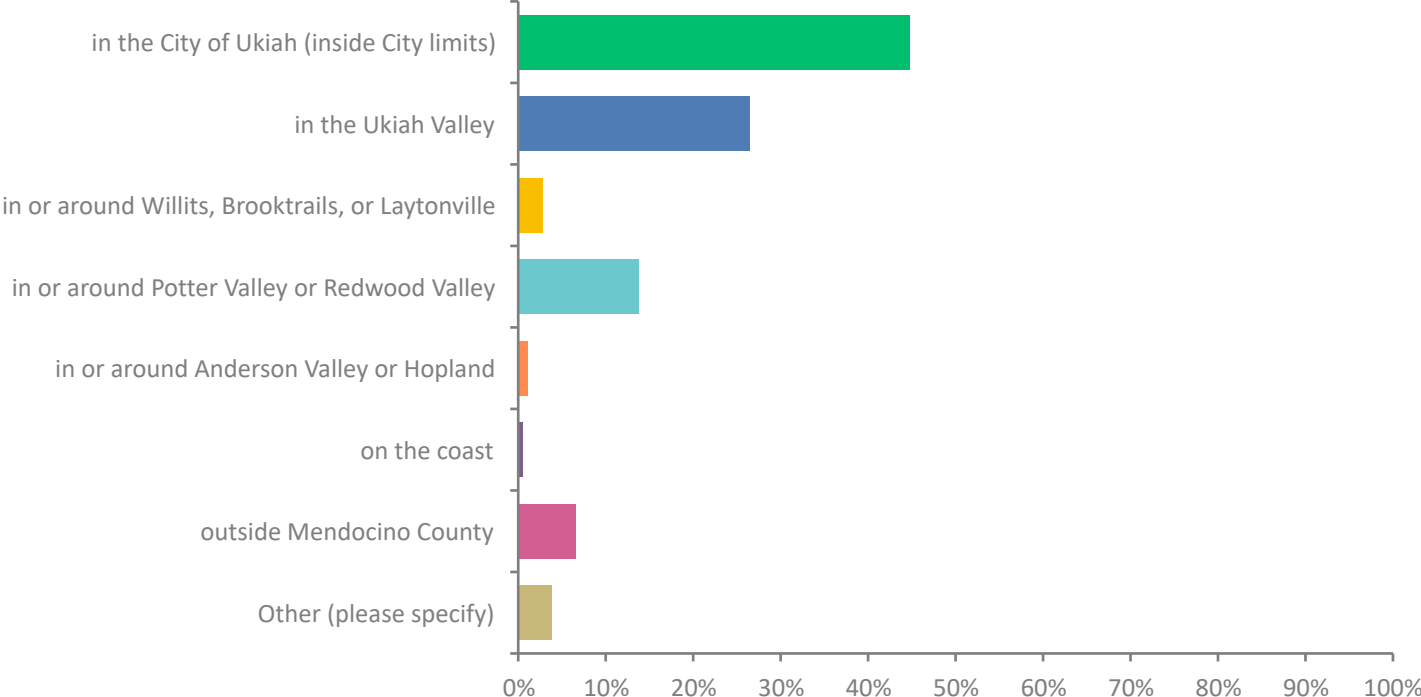
Q1: I typically use Ukiah Valley trails (Low Gap Park, Lake Mendocino, Mill Creek Park, Cow Mountain) ...

Answered: 180 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
every day	4.44%	8
a few times a week	22.78%	41
about once a week	23.89%	43
one to three times a month	28.33%	51
less than once a month	10.56%	19
a couple times a year	5.00%	9
once a year or less	2.78%	5
Other (please specify)	2.22%	4
TOTAL		180

Q2: I live

Answered: 181 Skipped: 0



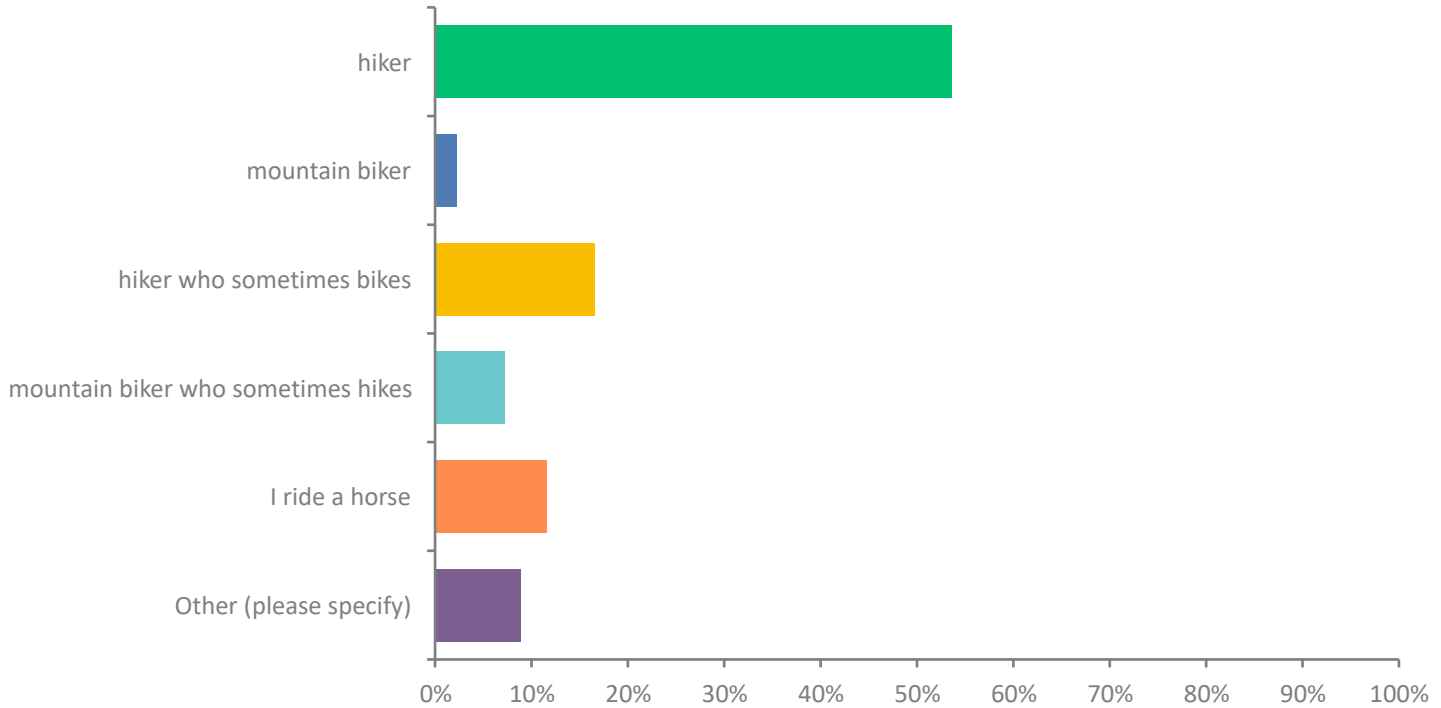
Q2: I live

Answered: 181 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
in the City of Ukiah (inside City limits)	44.75%	81
in the Ukiah Valley	26.52%	48
in or around Willits, Brooktrails, or Laytonville	2.76%	5
in or around Potter Valley or Redwood Valley	13.81%	25
in or around Anderson Valley or Hopland	1.10%	2
on the coast	0.55%	1
outside Mendocino County	6.63%	12
Other (please specify)	3.87%	7

Q3: I am a

Answered: 181 Skipped: 0



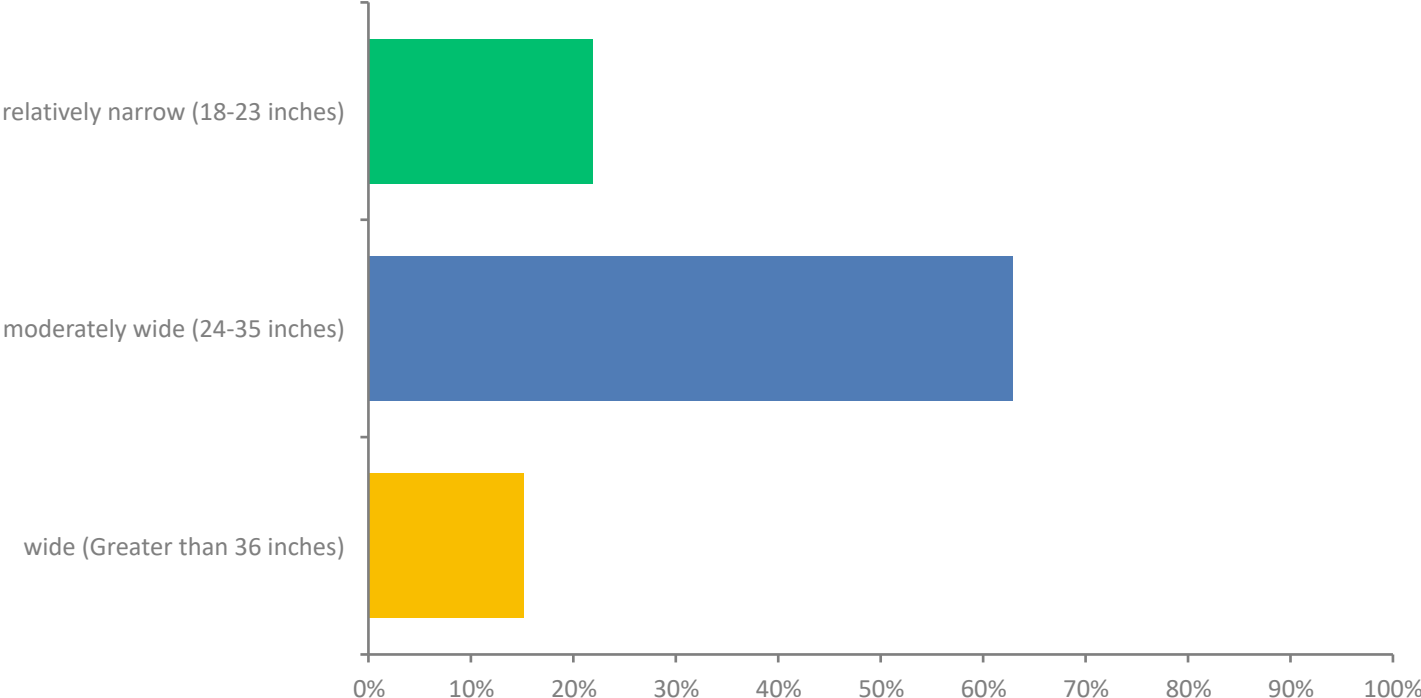
Q3: I am a

Answered: 181 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
hiker	53.59%	97
mountain biker	2.21%	4
hiker who sometimes bikes	16.57%	30
mountain biker who sometimes hikes	7.18%	13
I ride a horse	11.60%	21
Other (please specify)	8.84%	16
TOTAL		181

Q4: I prefer the trails I use to be

Answered: 178 Skipped: 3



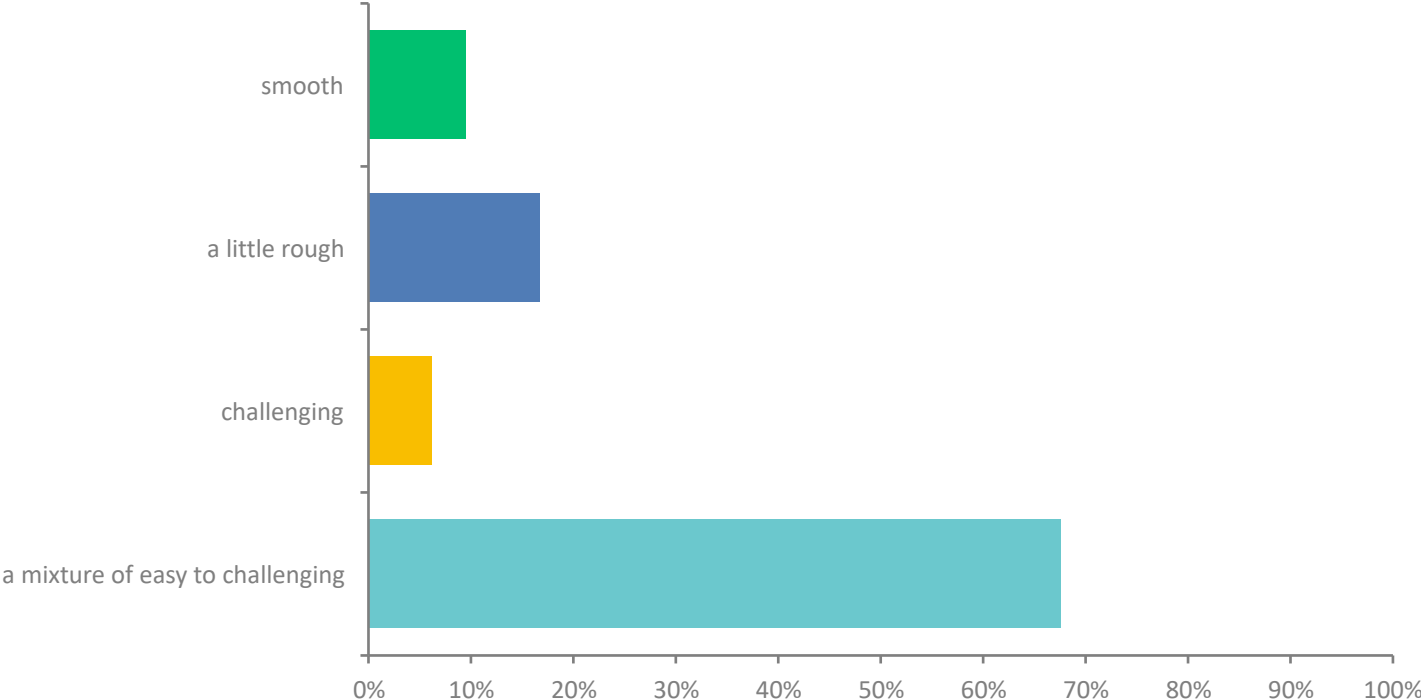
Q4: I prefer the trails I use to be

Answered: 178 Skipped: 3

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
relatively narrow (18-23 inches)	21.91%	39
moderately wide (24-35 inches)	62.92%	112
wide (Greater than 36 inches)	15.17%	27
TOTAL		178

Q5: I prefer the trails I use to be

Answered: 179 Skipped: 2



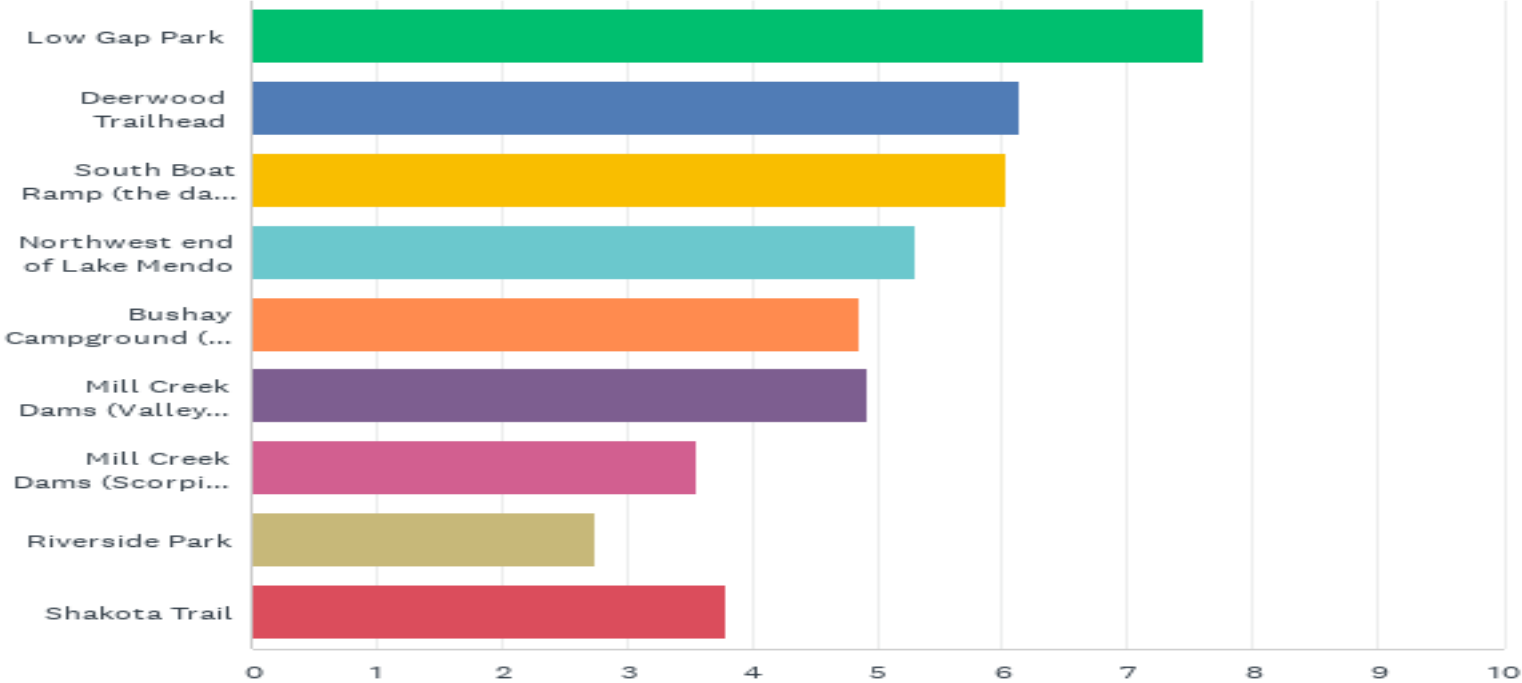
Q5: I prefer the trails I use to be

Answered: 179 Skipped: 2

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
smooth	9.50%	17
a little rough	16.76%	30
challenging	6.15%	11
a mixture of easy to challenging	67.60%	121
TOTAL		179

Q6: Rank the following trailheads in order of your preference

Answered: 174 Skipped: 7



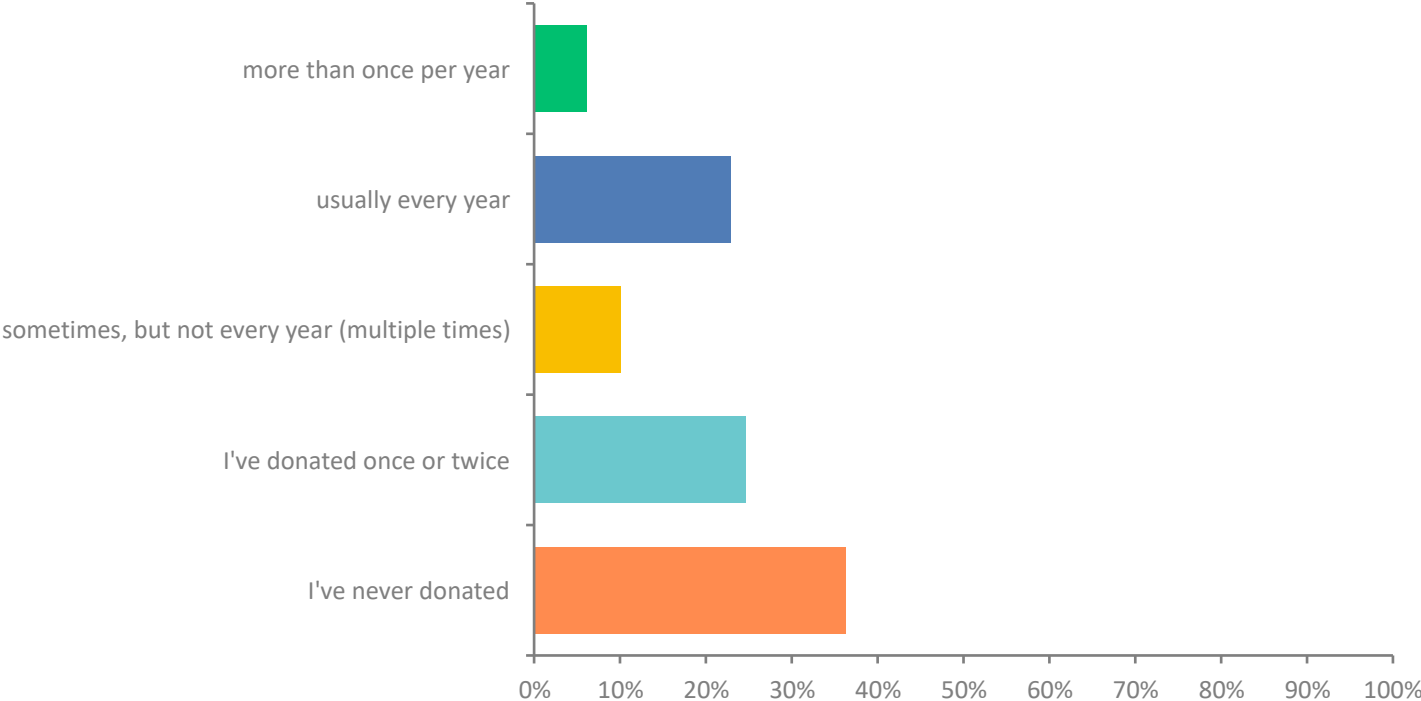
Q6: Rank the following trailheads in order of your preference

Answered: 174 Skipped: 7

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	TOTAL	SCORE
Low Gap Park	50.00% 87	15.52% 27	11.49% 20	8.62% 15	5.17% 9	6.32% 11	0.00% 0	1.15% 2	1.72% 3	174	7.61
Deerwood Trailhead	22.41% 39	14.37% 25	13.22% 23	11.49% 20	10.92% 19	12.07% 21	6.32% 11	5.17% 9	4.02% 7	174	6.14
South Boat Ramp (the dam at Lake Mendocino)	5.17% 9	25.86% 45	23.56% 41	13.22% 23	8.62% 15	6.90% 12	6.32% 11	5.17% 9	5.17% 9	174	6.03
Northwest end of Lake Mendocino	2.30% 4	8.62% 15	17.24% 30	22.41% 39	17.24% 30	14.94% 26	8.62% 15	4.60% 8	4.02% 7	174	5.30
Bushay Campground (Northeast Lake Mendocino)	8.05% 14	8.62% 15	6.32% 11	13.22% 23	19.54% 34	13.79% 24	13.22% 23	12.64% 22	4.60% 8	174	4.87
Mill Creek Dams (Valley View Trail)	5.17% 9	7.47% 13	12.64% 22	12.07% 21	9.20% 16	28.16% 49	17.82% 31	5.75% 10	1.72% 3	174	4.93
Mill Creek Dams (Scorpion Trail)	1.72% 3	5.17% 9	4.60% 8	5.75% 10	9.20% 16	6.32% 11	35.06% 61	25.29% 44	6.90% 12	174	3.57
Riverside Park	2.30% 4	3.45% 6	2.30% 4	4.02% 7	9.77% 17	4.60% 8	5.75% 10	34.48% 60	33.33% 58	174	2.75
Shakota Trail	2.87% 5	10.92% 19	8.62% 15	9.20% 16	10.34% 18	6.90% 12	6.90% 12	5.75% 10	38.51% 67	174	3.79

Q7: I donate to the Ukiah Valley Trail Group

Answered: 179 Skipped: 2



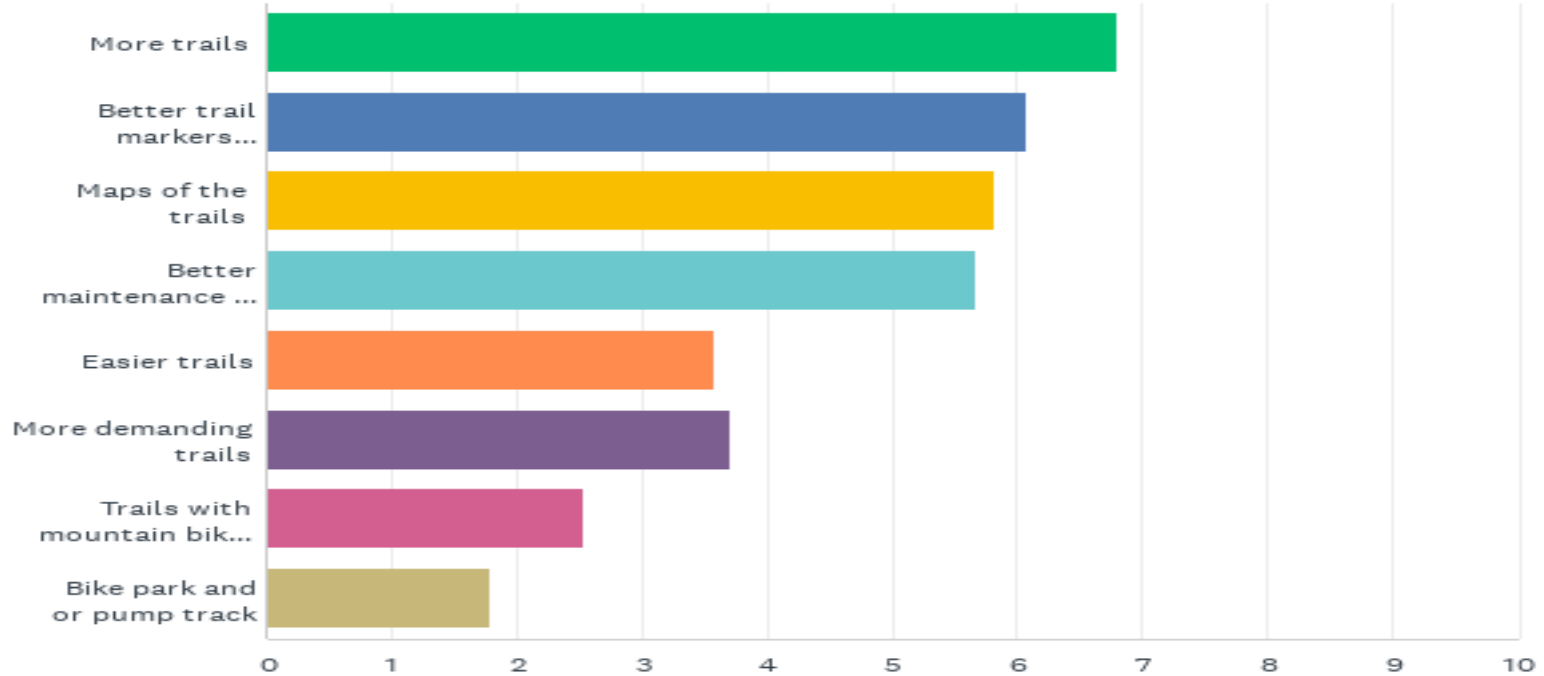
Q7: I donate to the Ukiah Valley Trail Group

Answered: 179 Skipped: 2

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
more than once per year	6.15%	11
usually every year	22.91%	41
sometimes, but not every year (multiple times)	10.06%	18
I've donated once or twice	24.58%	44
I've never donated	36.31%	65
TOTAL		179

Q8: I think the most important trail improvements needed in the Ukiah Valley are (in order of importance):

Answered: 169 Skipped: 12



Q8: I think the most important trail improvements needed in the Ukiah Valley are (in order of importance):

Answered: 169 Skipped: 12

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TOTAL	SCORE
More trails	48.52% 82	19.53% 33	11.24% 19	10.65% 18	7.10% 12	1.78% 3	0.59% 1	0.59% 1	169	6.81
Better trail markers (directional signage)	17.75% 30	26.04% 44	24.85% 42	15.38% 26	8.88% 15	6.51% 11	0.59% 1	0.00% 0	169	6.07
Maps of the trails	10.65% 18	23.08% 39	30.77% 52	20.71% 35	8.28% 14	2.96% 5	2.96% 5	0.59% 1	169	5.83
Better maintenance of existing trails	14.79% 25	18.93% 32	14.20% 24	34.91% 59	8.28% 14	6.51% 11	2.37% 4	0.00% 0	169	5.68
Easier trails	2.96% 5	1.78% 3	4.73% 8	5.33% 9	42.60% 72	22.49% 38	8.88% 15	11.24% 19	169	3.58
More demanding trails	0.59% 1	5.33% 9	10.65% 18	7.10% 12	16.57% 28	46.75% 79	10.06% 17	2.96% 5	169	3.71
Trails with mountain bike features	2.37% 4	4.14% 7	1.78% 3	4.14% 7	4.14% 7	7.69% 13	58.58% 99	17.16% 29	169	2.53
Bike park and or pump track	2.37% 4	1.18% 2	1.78% 3	1.78% 3	4.14% 7	5.33% 9	15.98% 27	67.46% 114	169	1.79

Q9: The City of Ukiah and the Ukiah Valley Trail Group (UVTG) have built over three miles of trails at Low Gap Park that are “hiking only.” I think it is reasonable for the City/UVTG to build at least one mile of mountain biking only trail.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, I agree	19.33%	29
Yes, but only as part of a larger project that builds more multi-use trails.	17.33%	26
No, I think all additional trail should be multi-use.	14.00%	21
No, I think we need more hiking-only trail	29.33%	44
No, there should be at least three miles of biking-only trail if we are going to continue to ban bikes at Low Gap.	20.0%	30
TOTAL		150