

2019 MARYLAND LAND TRUST CENSUS

Maryland Environmental Trust periodically surveys Maryland's local land trust community with a 5 year census – the “Land Trust Needs Assessment Survey.” Census responses are used to take pulse of Maryland's local land trusts, assess needs and identify challenges. Also, the survey is an opportunity for MET to re-evaluate its Assistance Program to ensure its external services to land trust partners are relevant, timely and align with MET's internal priorities.

The first Land Trust Needs Assessment Survey was completed in 2009. Maryland Environmental Trust retained limited data from the 2009 survey. During the 2014, thirty-four Maryland local land trusts were asked to complete the survey. Of these land trusts, 68% participated (twenty-three land trusts). These responses were used to shape the types of tools, program direction, and event content for MET for the past 5 years.

Stewardship was a reoccurring theme among participants in 2014. Responses were used to develop meeting content and new tools focused on monitoring as well as other stewardship challenges. After several years, these monitoring tools have been developed into what is now LOCATE, a Salesforce-based database and LANDlink (developed in partnership with the Chesapeake Conservancy) a digital monitoring toolset.

The template for the 2019 Land Trust Needs Assessment Survey changed dramatically. The 2014 template was an all-inclusive ‘Needs Assessments’ questionnaire that consisted of a wide range of questions, which included multiple open-ended questions as well as operational and programmatic elements. Participants noted that the survey was too comprehensive and asked MET to shorten the survey.

MET's 2019 Land Trust Needs Assessment Survey template was shortened and modelled after the Land Trust Alliance's 5 year census. In addition to the shortening the survey, MET also conducted 16 partner interviews with a subset of Maryland's local land trusts. The interview group consisted of more active land trust partners. Of the 16 land trusts, 14 co-hold easements with Maryland Environmental Trust. The groups interviewed represent 17 counties and Baltimore City (one land trust works throughout the state of Maryland.) and consisted of 4 all-volunteer land trusts and 12 land trust with a range of staff. See the 2019 Maryland Land Trust Interview Summary for additional details.

Forty-two Maryland local land trusts were asked to complete the 2019 census. Of these local land trusts, 71% participated (thirty land trusts). This is a three percent increase from 2014 census.

Year	Total Asked	Land Trust who Participated	Responses
2014	34	23	68%
2019	42	30	71%

Of the thirty participants, 19 co-hold easements with Maryland Environmental Trust (five co-holding land trusts chose not to participate in the 2019 census). Census participants represent every county and Baltimore City in Maryland except for Garrett County.

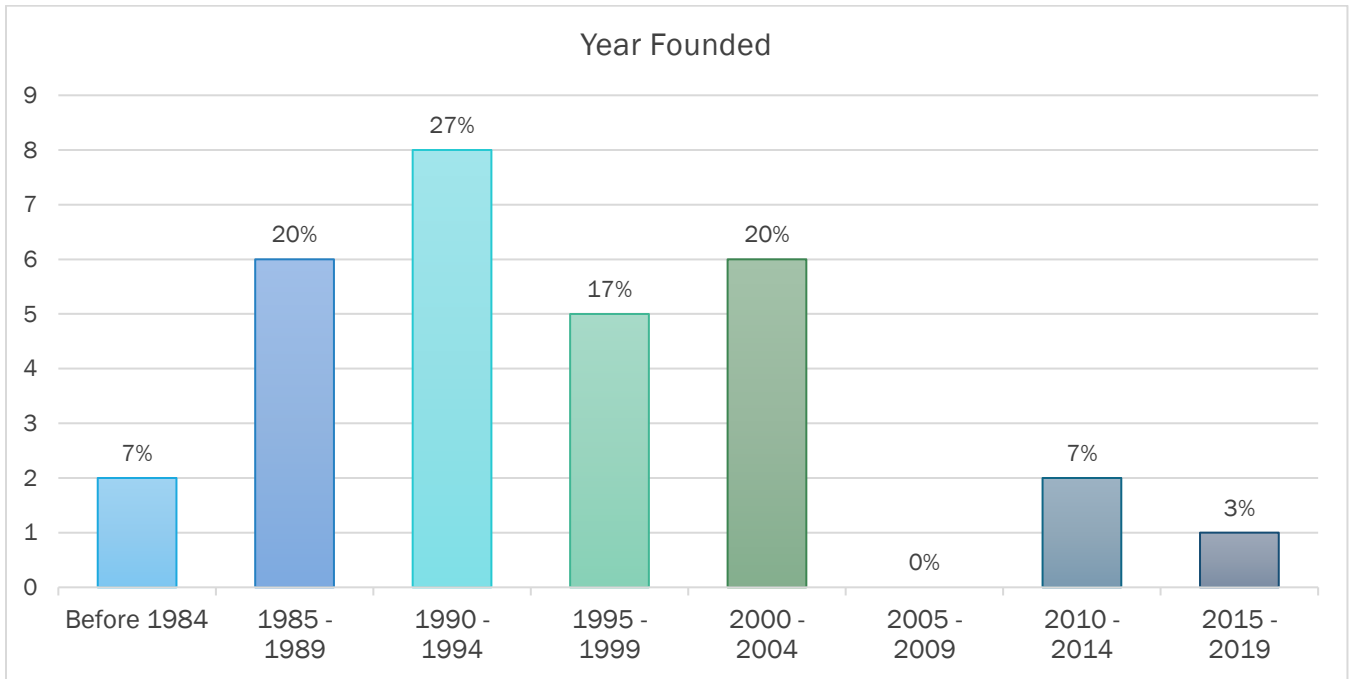
Note: Percentages throughout this census report may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

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BEGINNINGS

What year was your land trust founded?



Answered 30
Skipped 0

27% of Maryland's local land trusts were founded before the year 1990. 44% land trusts were founded in Maryland between 1990 and 2000; and the remaining 30% of land trusts were founded after 2000.

SERVICE AREA

Does your land trust's service area include...

	Yes	No	Total
Urban areas	47% (9)	53% (10)	19
Suburban areas	86% (19)	14% (3)	22
Rural areas	78% (18)	22% (5)	23

Answered 24
Skipped 6

For the state of Maryland, please check all of the counties in which your land trust operates.

Answer Choices		Responses		Answer Choices		Responses	
Allegany		3%	(1)	Harford		10%	(3)
Anne Arundel		17%	(5)	Howard		7%	(2)
Baltimore		20%	(6)	Kent		3%	(1)
Baltimore City		7%	(2)	Montgomery		13%	(4)
Calvert		10%	(3)	Prince George's		13%	(4)
Caroline		3%	(1)	Queen Anne's		3%	(1)
Carroll		10%	(3)	St. Mary's		10%	(3)
Cecil		7%	(2)	Somerset		3%	(1)
Charles		10%	(3)	Talbot		3%	(1)
Dorchester		3%	(1)	Washington		10%	(3)
Frederick		10%	(3)	Wicomico		3%	(1)
Garrett		0%	(0)	Worcester		3%	(1)

Answered 30
Skipped 0

How important is it to your land trust to protect each of the following types of land:

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
Important natural areas or wildlife habitats	0% (0)	4% (1)	21% (5)	13% (3)	63% (15)
Water quality, including wetlands	0% (0)	8% (2)	8% (2)	213% (5)	63% (15)
Working farms	8% (2)	13% (3)	17% (4)	21% (5)	42% (10)
Working forestland	4% (1)	21% (5)	17% (4)	21% (5)	38% (9)
Recreation lands	8% (2)	25% (6)	38% (9)	13% (3)	17% (4)
Historic or cultural resources	0% (0)	13% (3)	25% (6)	30% (7)	33% (8)
Urban parks and gardens	46% (11)	13% (3)	21% (5)	4% (1)	17% (4)
Scenic views or landscapes	0.00% (0)	13% (3)	4% (1)	46% (11)	38% (9)

Answered 24
Skipped 6

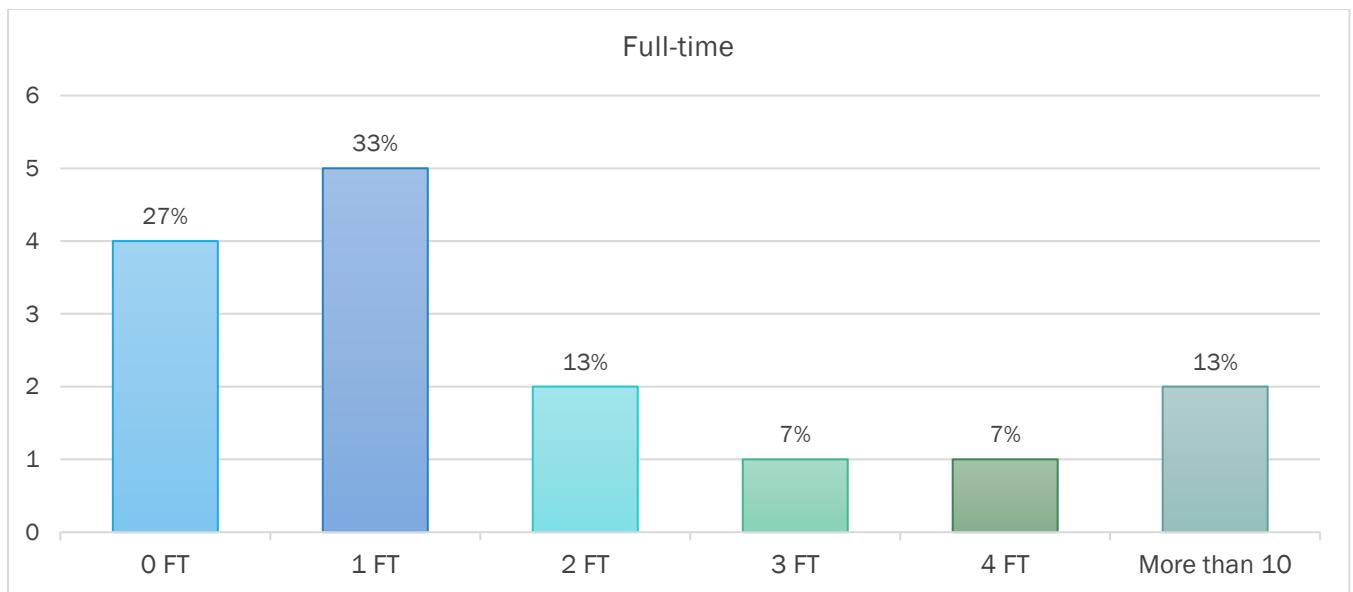
STAFFING AND BUDGET

A land trust may be run by paid employees, contractors/consultants, volunteers, or a combination of these. Not including contractors or consultants, did your land trust employ paid staff during 2018?

Answer Choices	Questions Logic	Responses	
Yes	Go to next question	50%	(15)
No	Skip to question 6	50%	(15)

Answered 30
Skipped 0

Not including contractors or consultants, how many of your land trust's paid employees work full-time?



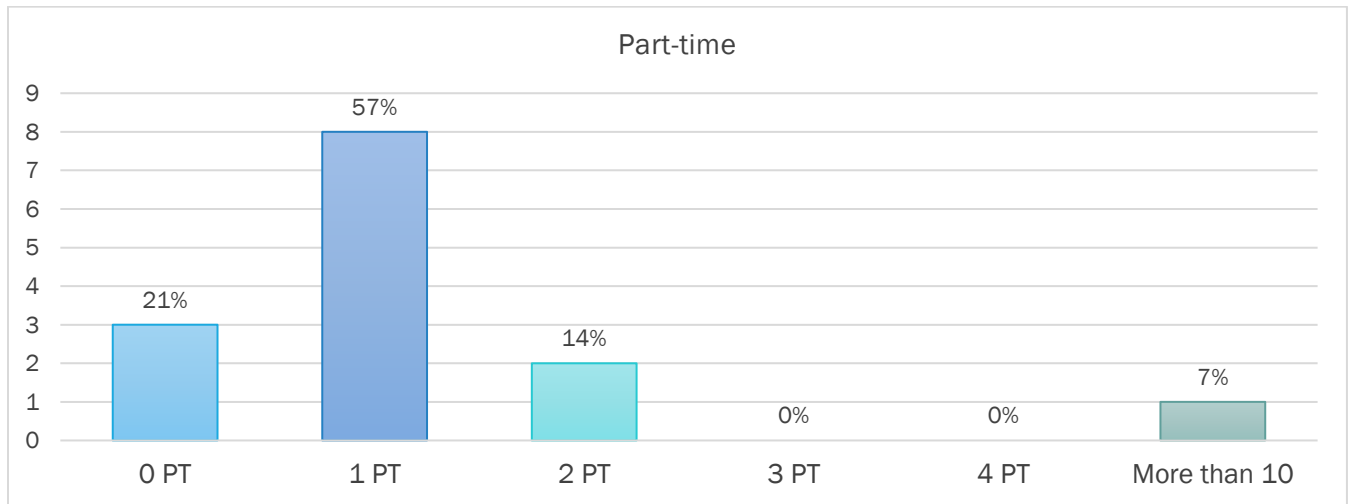
Answered 15
Skipped 15

Mean answer: 3*

*Four land trusts noted full-time paid staff of 3 or greater staff; four land trusts have no full time staff; and seven land trusts answered that only 1 or 2 of their paid permanent staff work full-time.

Of the thirty participants, half said they employ paid staff (4 of these 15 land trusts do not employ a full time staff person) during 2018. The remaining fifteen land trusts indicated that they did not employ paid staff in 2018. This means that only 11 of the 30 land trusts have one or more, permanent and full time paid staff.

Not including contractors or consultants, how many of your land trust's paid employees work part-time?

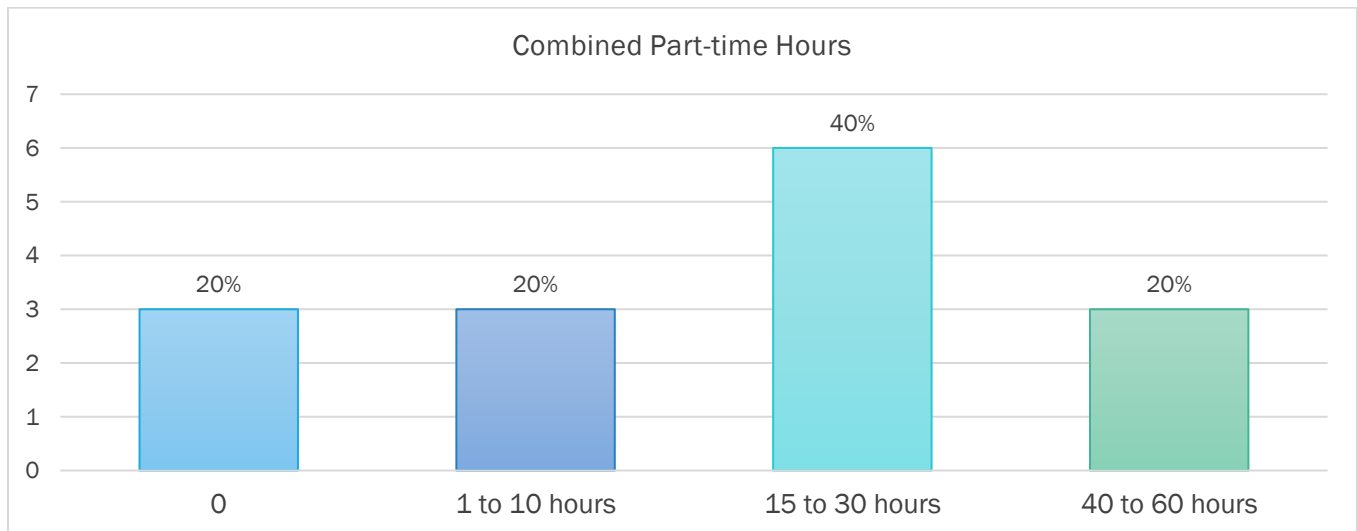


Answered 14
Skipped 16

Mean answer: 1.6*

*Three land trusts noted part-time paid staff of 2 or greater staff and twelve land trusts answered that 0-1 of their paid employees work part-time.

On average, how many hours combined do your part-time employees work per week?

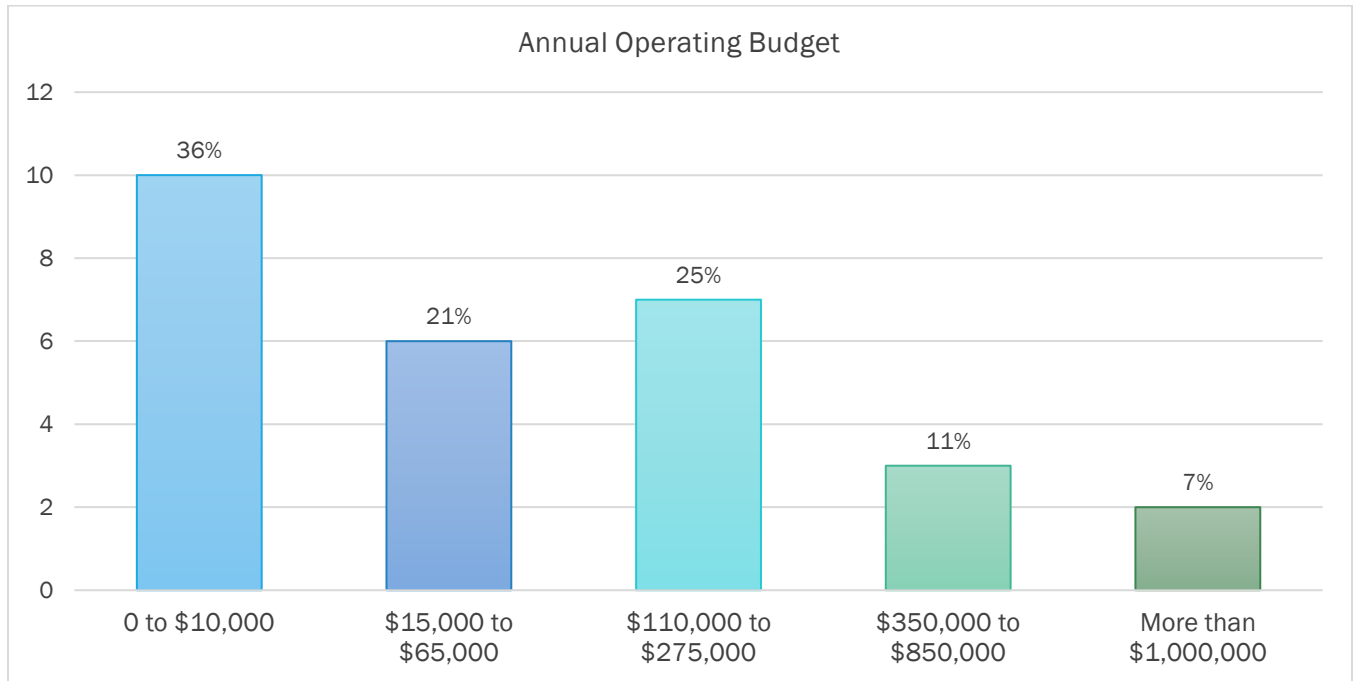


Answered 15
Skipped 16

Mean answer: 20.3*

*Four land trusts answered 30 or more hours per week and the remaining eleven land trusts answered 0-20 hours

The annual operating budget is the projected income and expenses during one fiscal year for an organization’s entire operations. For your land trust’s most recent fiscal year ending in 2018, how much was the annual operating budget of your land trust?



Answered 28
Skipped 2

Land trusts often set aside funds designated for certain uses. These funds may be called endowments, dedicated funding, reserves or other similar names. For each of the following purposes, approximately how much did your land trust have in designated funding, as of December 31, 2018.

Answer Choices	Average Number	Total Number	Responses
Monitoring and stewardship only	32,615	424,000	57% (13)
Legal defense and enforcement only	25,804	335,452	57% (13)
Or if you have a combined fund for monitoring, stewardship and legal defense:	86,245	1,552,402	78% (18)

Answered 23*
Skipped 7

*23 Land Trusts responded to this questions. 8 land trust answered they had no designated funds for any of the categories listed. 10 have combined monitoring, stewardship and legal defense funds. 3 have either a monitoring and steward fund only or a legal defense fund only (but not both). 2 land trusts have separate dedicated funds for both the monitoring and stewardship fund and the legal defense fund.

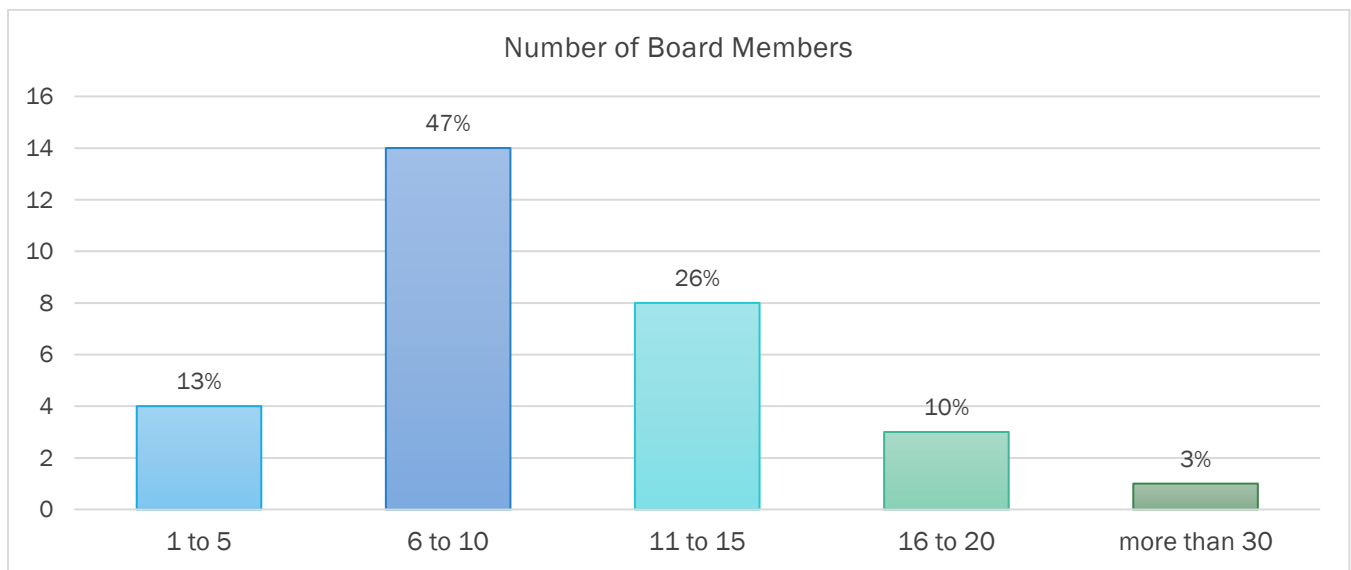
For each of the following purposes, approximately how much did your land trust have in designated funding, as of December 31, 2018.

Answer Choices	Average Number	Total Number	Responses
Land acquisition	\$114,731	\$2,409,343	38% (21)
Operating reserve	\$127,601	\$2,934,826	75% (23)
Others	\$16,464	\$197,570	8% (12)

Answered 25
Skipped 5

BOARD LEADERSHIP

As of December 31, 2018, how many people were on your land trust's board of directors?

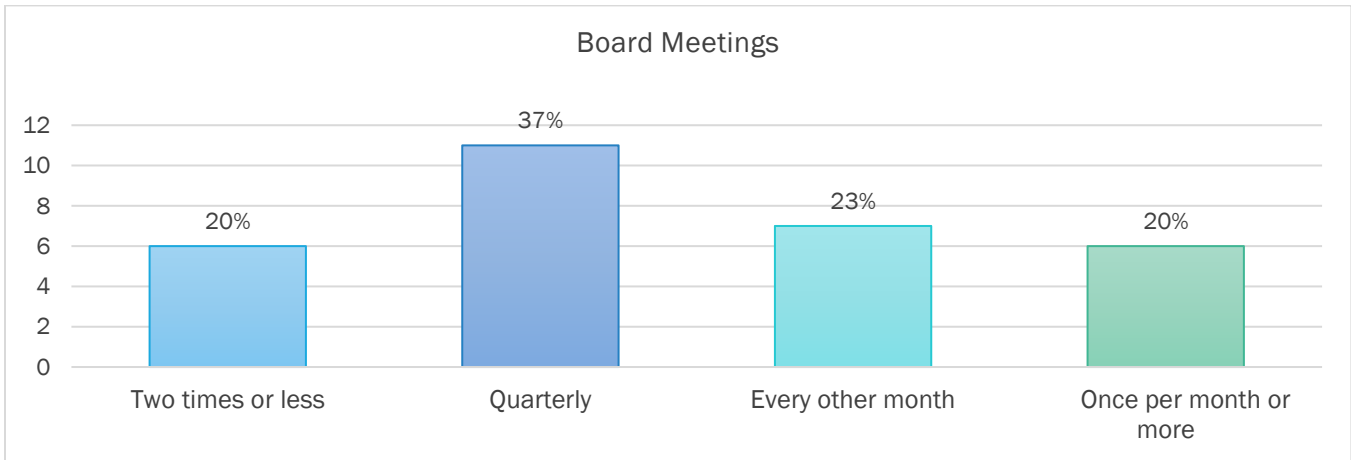


Answered 30
Skipped 0

Mean answer: 10.9

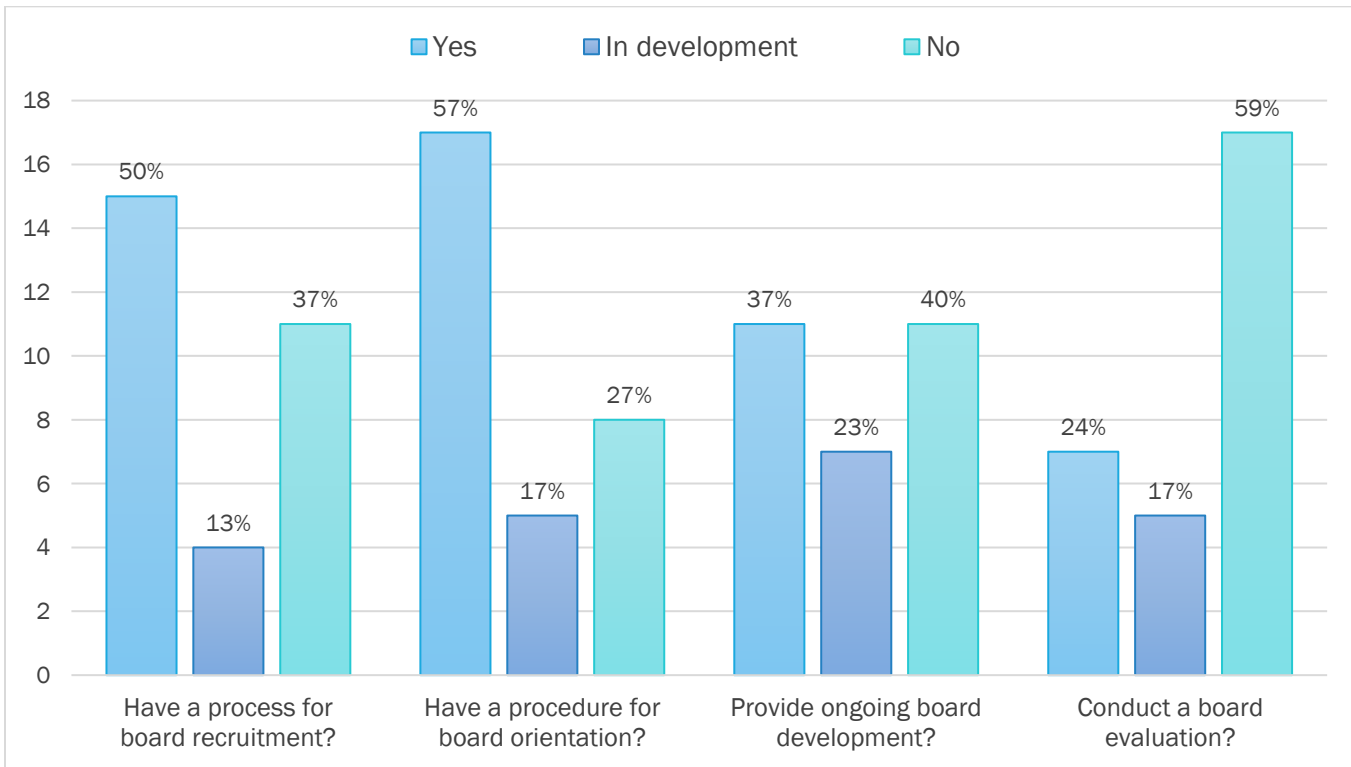
*Fifteen land trust answered that less than 10 members served on their board, while fifteen land trusts replied that their board was made up of 10 or more members.

Approximately how often did your board of directors meet in 2018?



Answered 30
Skipped 0

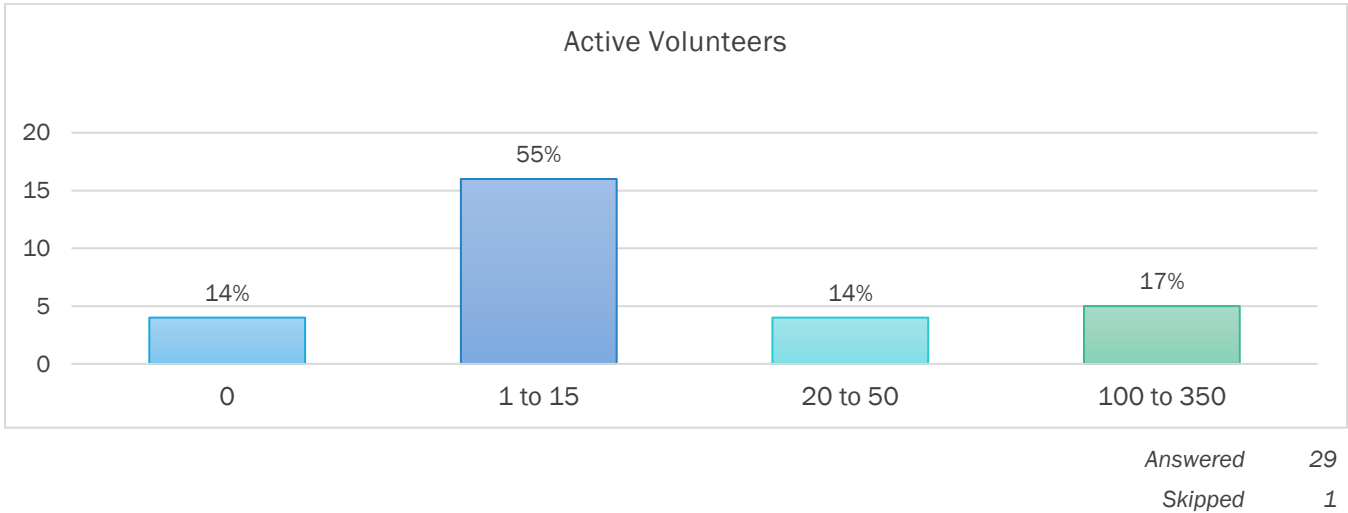
Does your land trust have the following in place with reference to your board of directors?



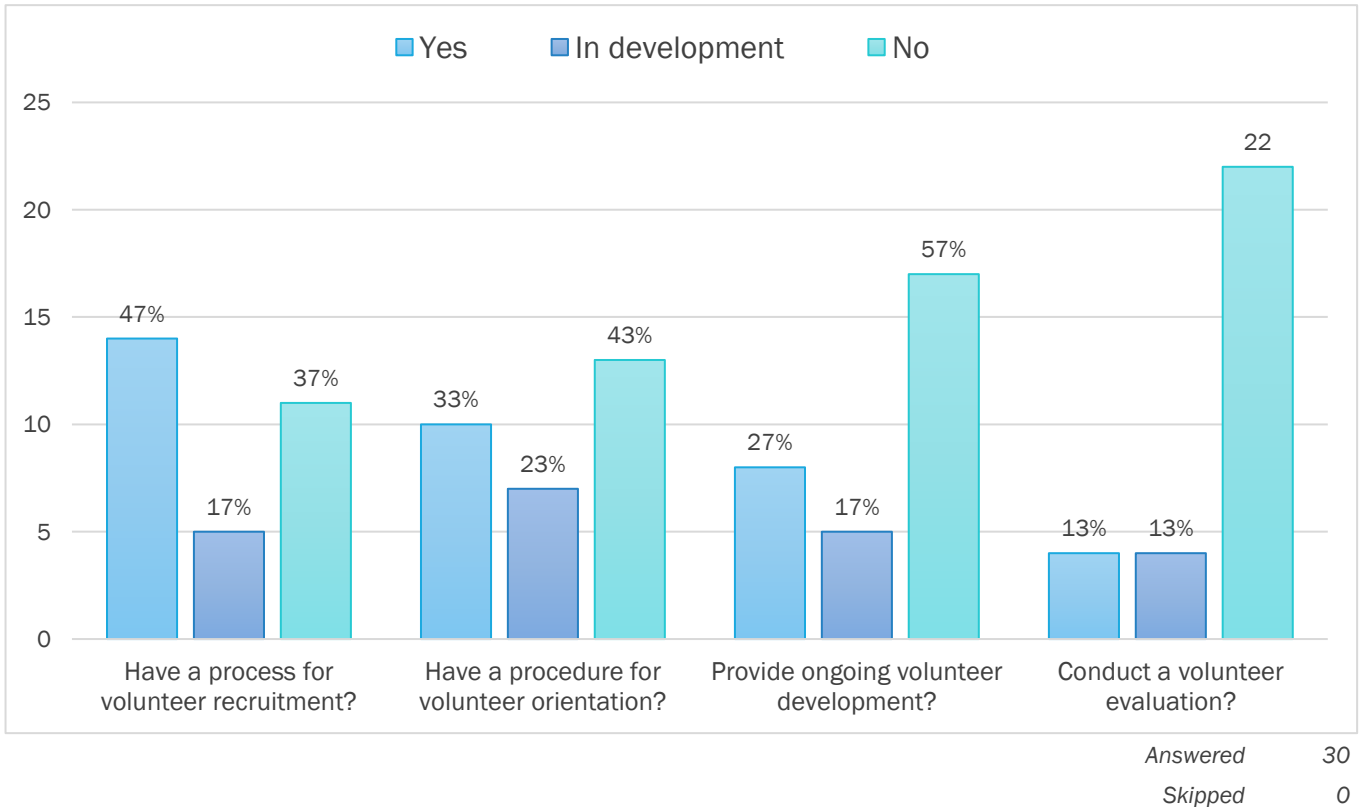
Answered 30
Skipped 0

VOLUNTEERS

Not including board members, approximately how many active volunteers did your land trust have during the past year?



Does your land trust have the following in place with reference to your volunteers?



PROTECTED LANDS

The next set of questions is about the total cumulative number of acres of land your land trust protected in Maryland as of December 31, 2018 — in other words, from your land trust’s founding through the end of 2018.

Answer Choices	Average Number	Total Number	Responses
Number of acres owned	147	3,078	88% (21)
Number of acres under easement	3,672	88,136	100% (24)
Number of acres acquired and conveyed to government or public agencies	519	10,901	88% (21)
Number of acres acquired and conveyed to another entity	0	0	65% (17)
Number of acres protected by other means	305	5,488	69% (18)

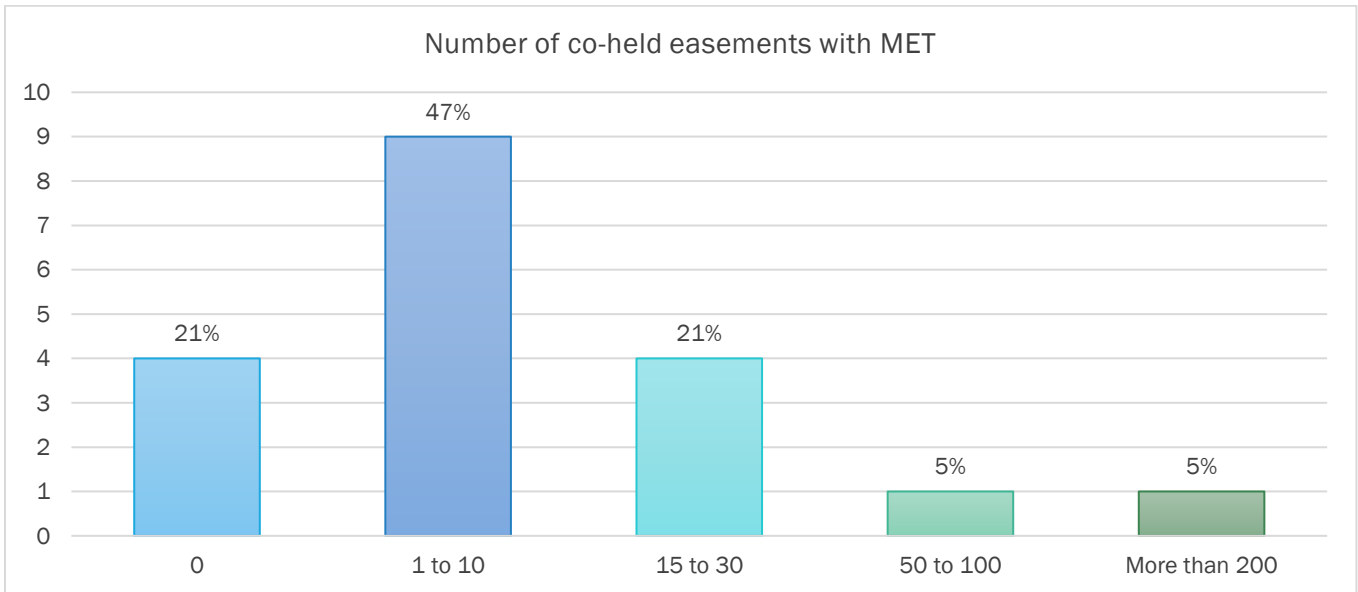
Answered 24
Skipped 6

As of December 31, 2018, please record the number of properties owned and the number of conservation easements held by your land trust in Maryland:

Answer Choices	Average Number	Total Number	Responses
Number of properties owned	16	328	91% (20)
Number of conservation easements	43	949	100% (22)
Number of new conservation easements added in 2018	1	23	95% (21)

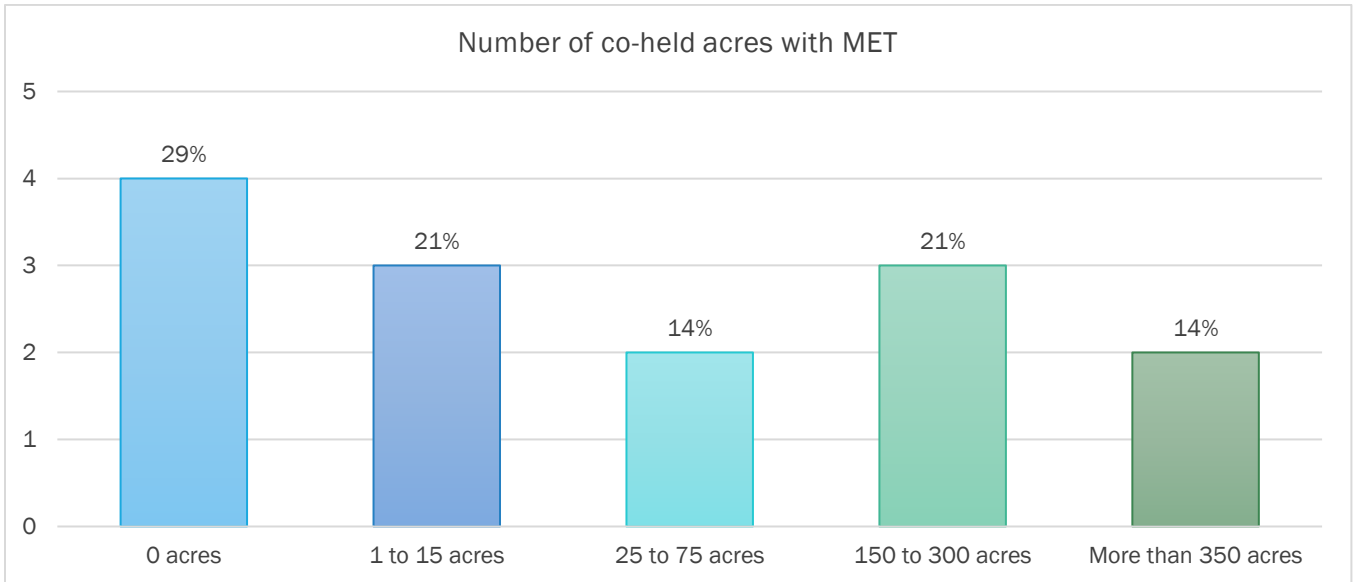
Answered 22
Skipped 8

How many of your easements are co-held with MET? (Please enter the number of easements)



Answered 19
Skipped 11

Approximately how many acres of your easements are co-held with MET? (Please enter the number of acres)



Answered 14
Skipped 16

Please answer the following regarding public access allowed by your land trust during 2018.

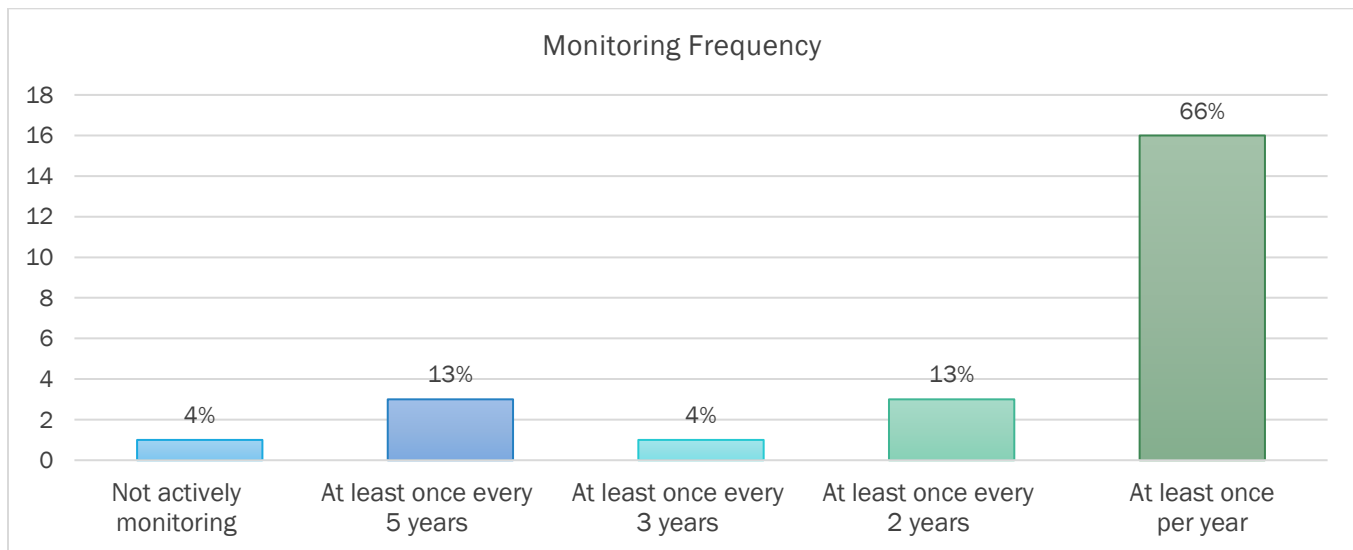
Answer Choices	Average Number	Total Number	Responses
Number of acres owned with public access	115	2,184	95% (19)
Number of properties owned with public access	17	320	95% (19)
Number of acres of easements with public access	227	4,532	100% (20)
Number of easements with public access	2	36	100% (20)
Approximate total number of visitors to your land trust's properties	3,056	48,900	80% (16)

Answered 20

Skipped 10

STEWARDSHIP

On average, how often does your land trust monitor its easements and other holdings?

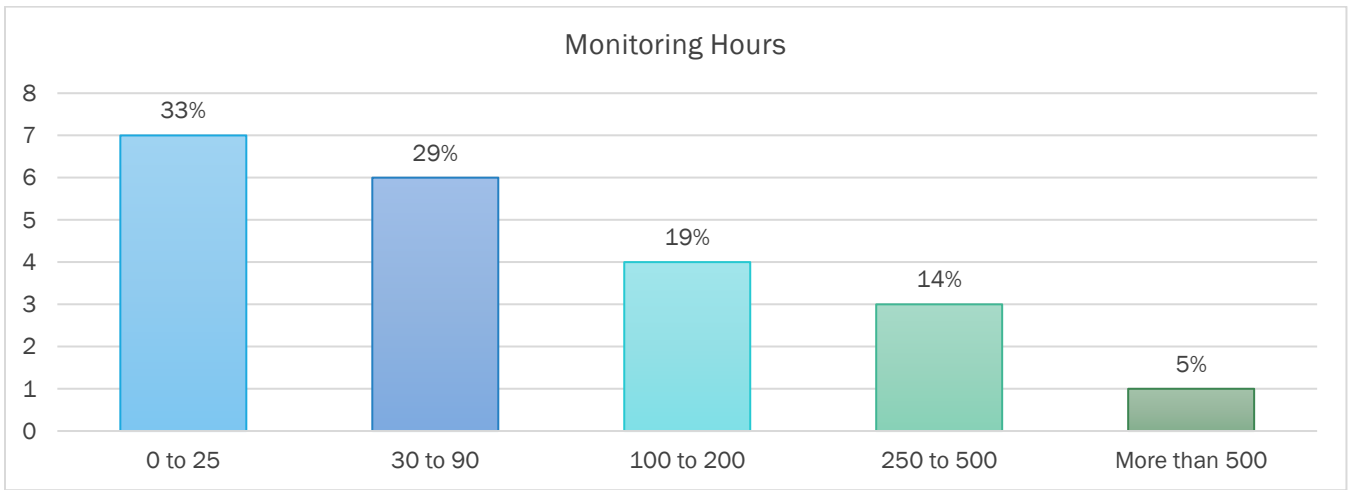


Answered 24*

Skipped 6

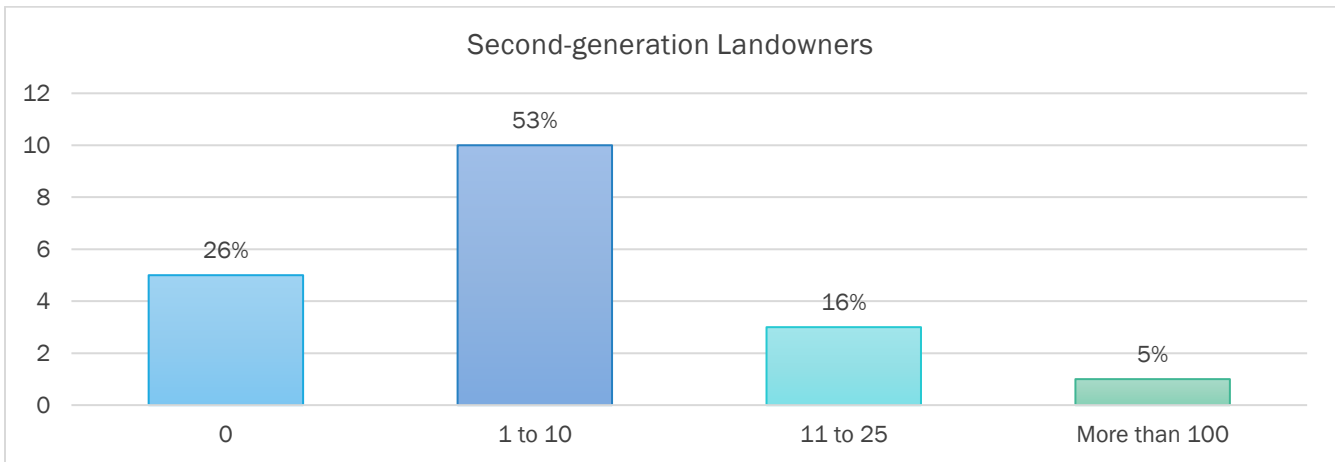
*24 Land trust answered this question, including 14 land trusts that co-hold easements with MET. Of those 14 land trusts that co-hold easements with MET, 10 stated that their organization monitors easements and other holding at least once per year. The other 4 co-holders monitor on a different frequency (ranging from every 2 to 5 years). 10 of the 24 land trusts who answered this questions do not co-hold easements with MET. Further, 6 land trusts stated they monitor their easements at least once per year and the other 4 monitor at a different frequency.

Approximately how many hours per year does your land trust spend on monitoring your easements and other holdings? (Please include staff, contractor and volunteer hours)



Answered 21
Skipped 9

During the past year, how many of the conservation easements held by your land trust were on properties owned by someone other than the original conservation easement grantor? (Please enter the number of easements)



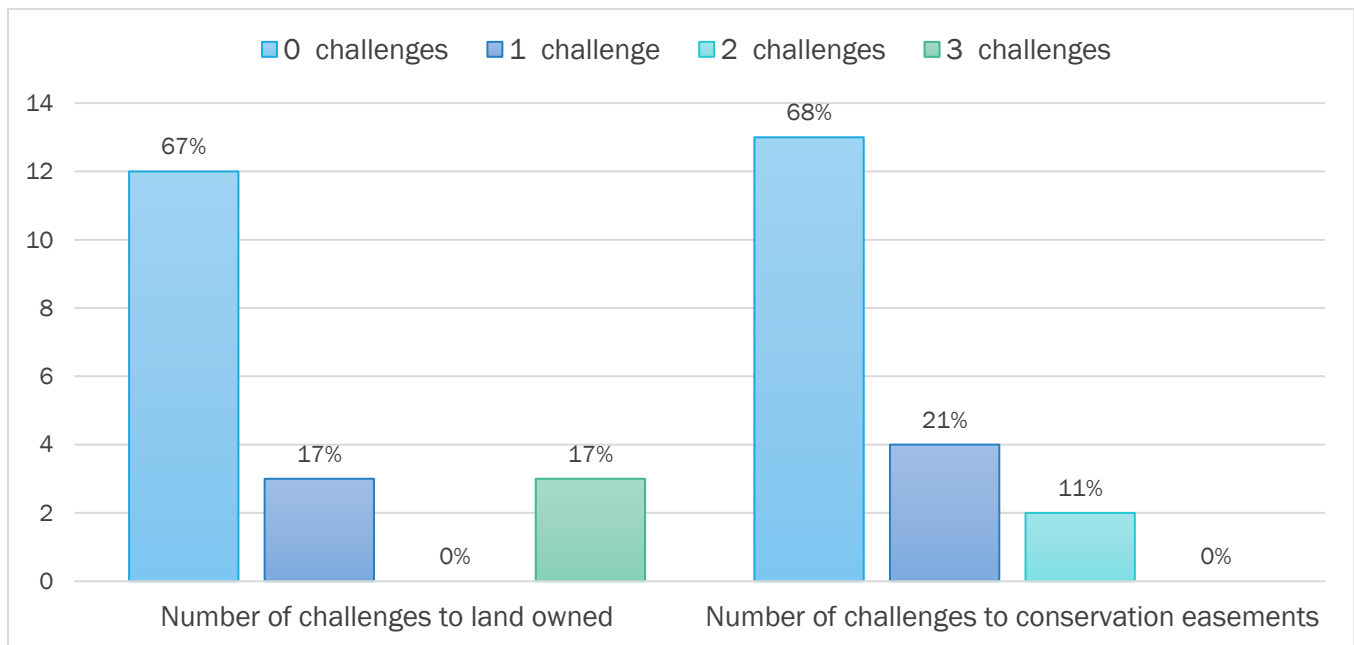
Answered 19
Skipped 11

During the past year, how many conservation easement amendments did your land trust complete?

Amendments	Responses
0	95% (18)
1	5% (1)
<i>Answered</i> 19	
<i>Skipped</i> 11	

This question is about challenges to land owned and under easement. These may include violations, condemnations, trespass, enforcement, defense or landowner actions of any type or size.

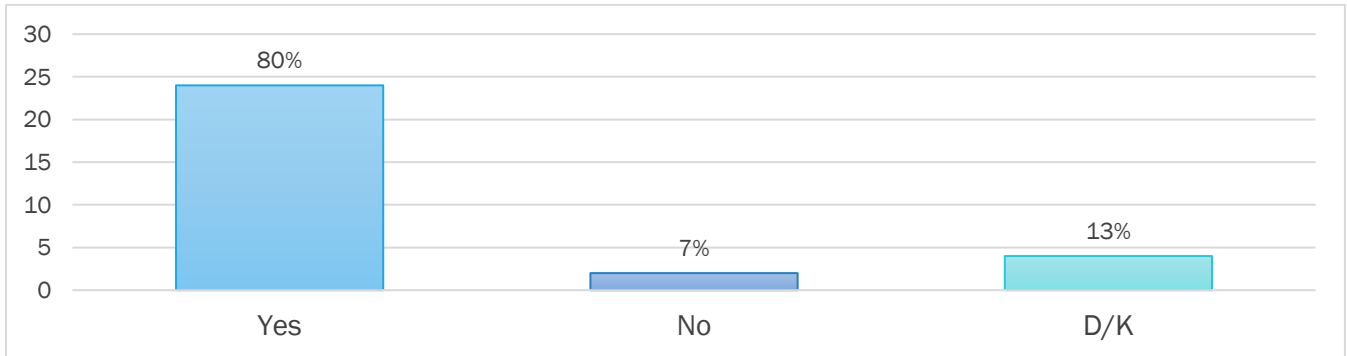
Using this broad definition, how many challenges did your land trust experience during the past year, that is, from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018?



Answered 21
Skipped 9

RECORDS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Does your organization have a current cooperative agreement with MET, signed after November 1, 2010?

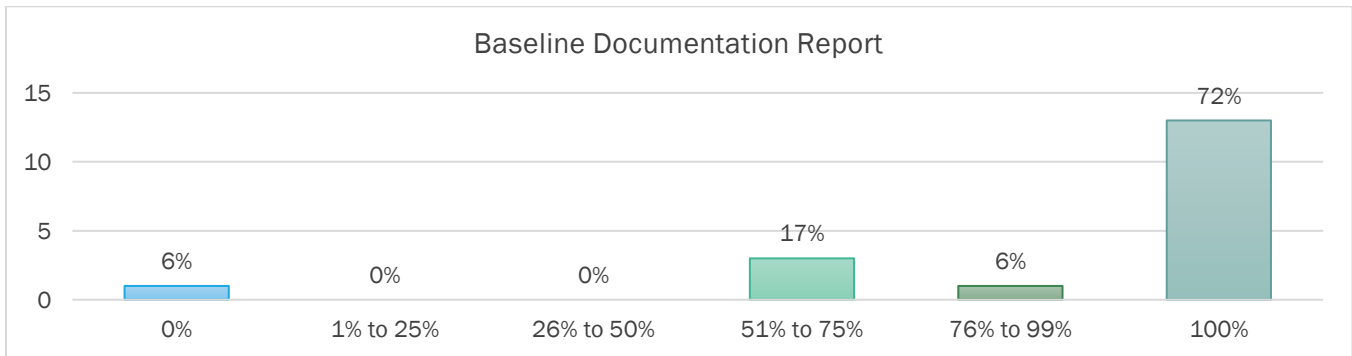


Answered 30*
Skipped 0

*Upon further review, of the 30 land trusts who participated in the 2019 census, 23 have signed the most recent edition of MET's Cooperative Agreement (revised 2010) and 7 have not signed the current version of MET's Cooperative Agreement

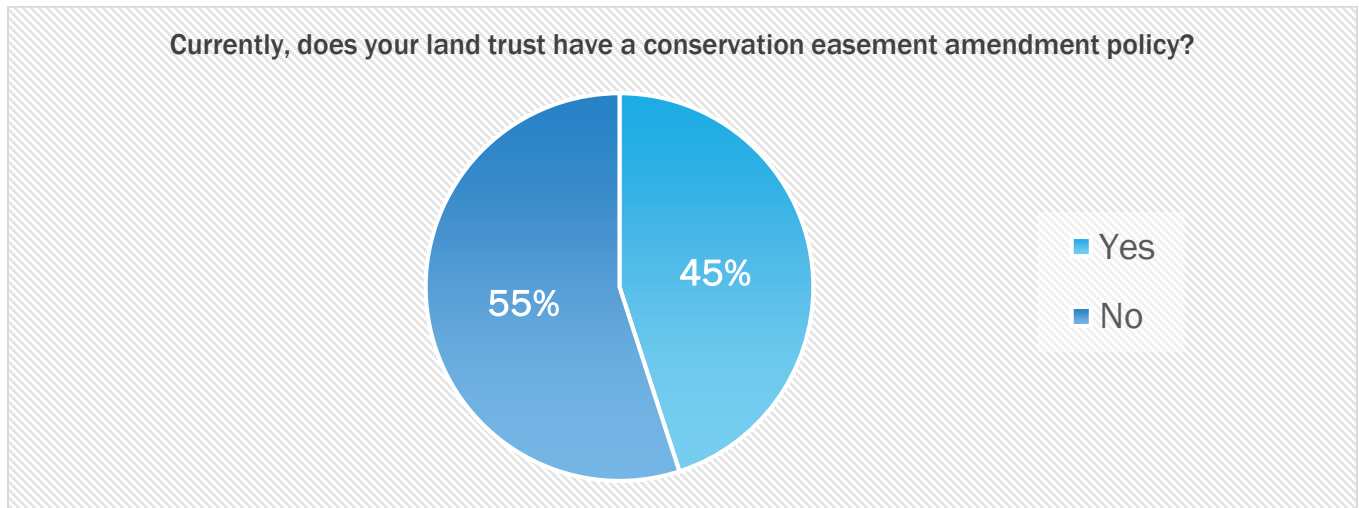
A baseline documentation report documents the conservation values of the conserved property, and describes the existing conditions of all the property's features that are relevant to the conservation easement. It is critical for establishing the condition of the property as of the date the easement was granted, and is the basis for future monitoring and enforcement.

Currently, what percentage of your land trust's conservation easements have a baseline documentation report?



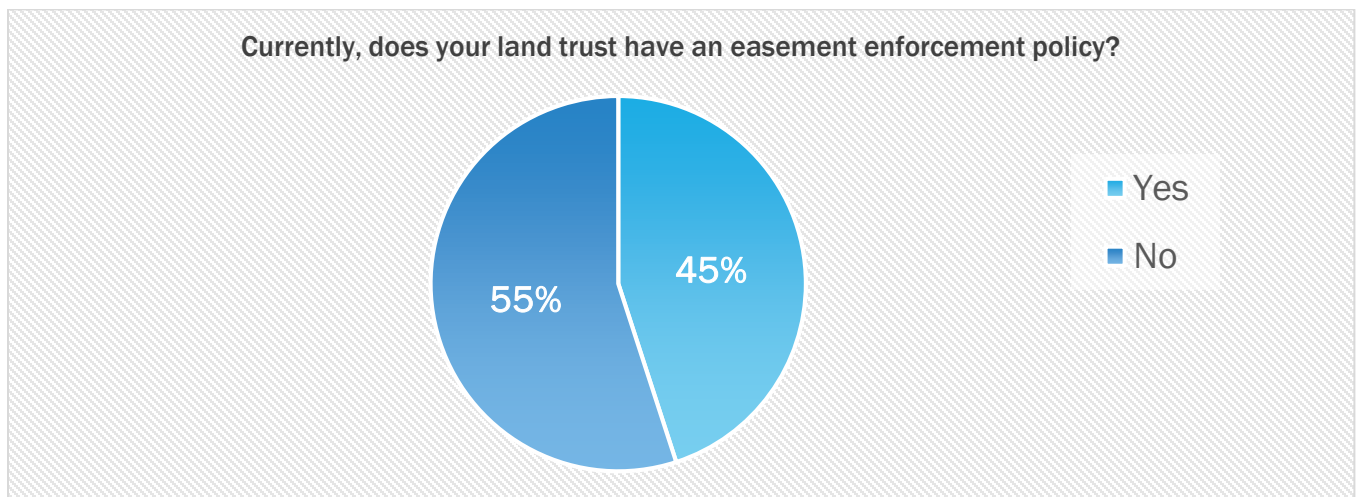
Answered 18
Skipped 12

A conservation easement amendment policy is a written policy or procedure guiding amendment requests that: includes a prohibition against private inurement and impermissible private benefit; requires compliance with the land trust’s conflict of interest policy; requires compliance with any funding requirements; addresses the role of the board; and contains a requirement that all amendments result in either a positive or not less than neutral conservation outcome and are consistent with the organization’s mission.



Answered 20
Skipped 10

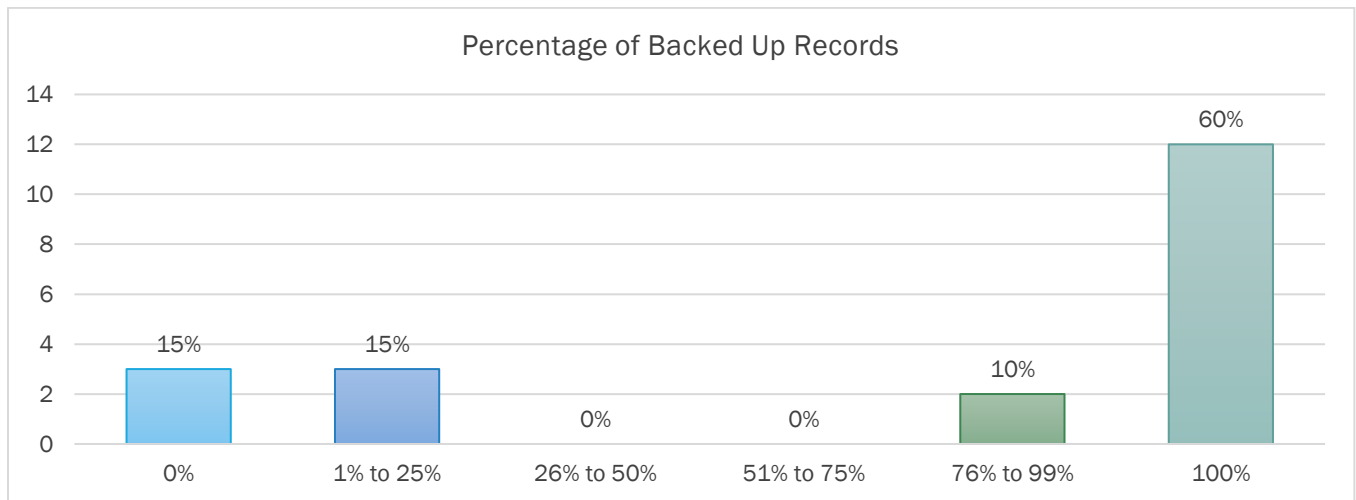
An easement enforcement policy is a written policy or procedure detailing how the land trust will respond to a potential violation of an easement, including the role of all parties involved (such as board members, volunteers, staff and partners) in any enforcement action.



Answered 20
Skipped 10

Noting that the Land Trust Standards and Practices require steps to ensure sound transactions including that a land trust create and keep copies of essential documents (property and organizational records) in a manner such that both originals and copies are not destroyed in a single calamity.

Approximately what percentage of your land trust’s essential conservation easement and organizational records are currently backed up?

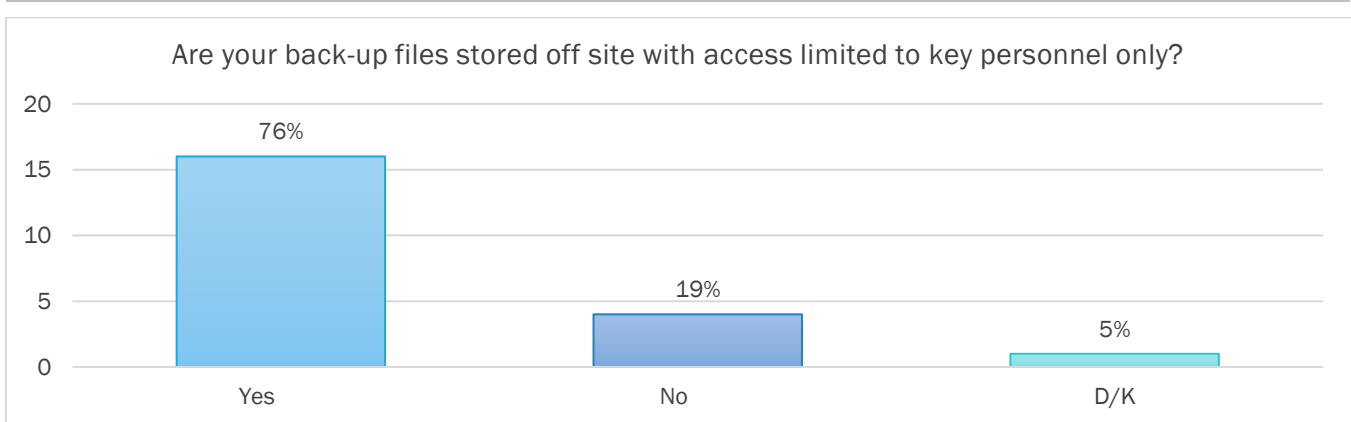


Answered 20
Skipped 10

How does your land trust back up your essential conservation easement and organizational records?

Answer Choices	Responses
Digital copies on an external hard drive, cloud, etc.	32% (7)
Paper copies in a separate file	5% (1)
A combination of the above	55% (12)
None of the above	9% (2)

Answered 22
Skipped 8



Answered 21
Skipped 9

Does your land trust have deeds with boundary descriptions (metes and bounds) for all land holdings, including easement, fee, deed restriction, assists, etc.?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes, we have all of them	54% (13)
Yes, but some descriptions are unclear or incomplete	29% (7)
No	17% (4)

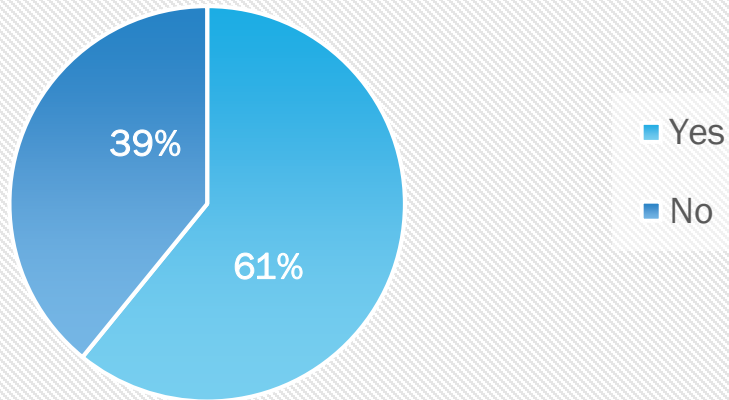
Answered 24
Skipped 6

What type of parcel level data does your land trust have for your land holdings (choose any/all applicable)?

Answer Choices	Responses
Spreadsheet or database with map and parcel numbers (from SDAT)	76% (16)
Spreadsheet or database with tax account ID numbers (from SDAT)	57% (12)
Shapefile(s) of parcel boundaries (i.e. GIS data)	24% (5)
KML file(s) of parcel boundaries (i.e. GIS data)	5% (1)
Geodatabase(s) of parcel boundaries (i.e. GIS data)	24% (5)
Survey plats with metes and bounds information	62% (13)
CAD files (computer aided design) of parcel boundaries	14% (3)

Answered 21
Skipped 9

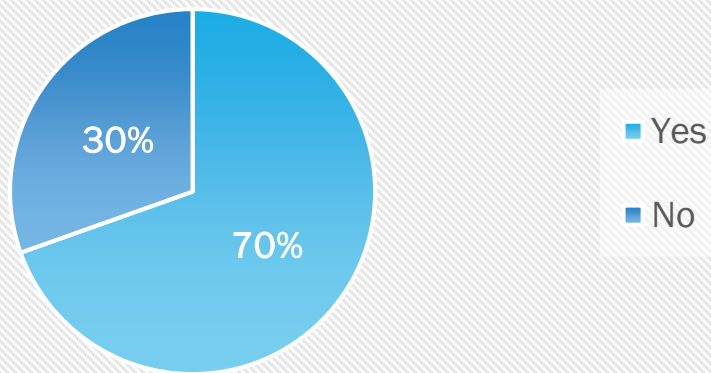
During the past year, did your land trust have any written project selection criteria to guide it in acquiring land or conservation easements?



Answered 24
Skipped 6

The next section is about strategic conservation during the past year, that is, from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018. Strategic conservation is the process by which a land trust identifies, prioritizes, pursues and protects those specific tracts of land that will most effectively and efficiently achieve the land trust's mission.

During the past year, did your land trust have a strategic conservation plan that lists or maps priority areas for conservation?



Answered 23
Skipped 7

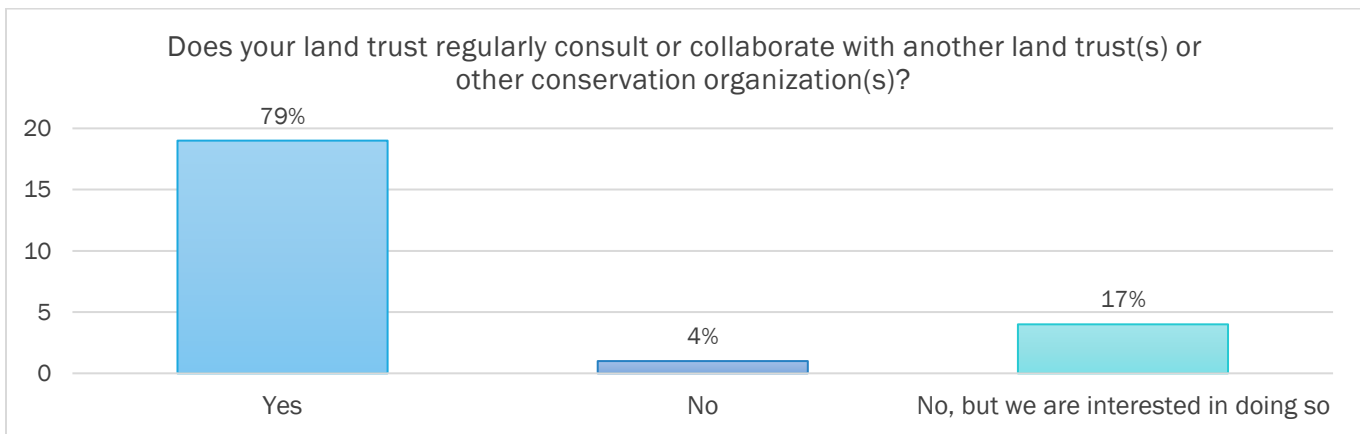
PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Currently, does your land trust?

	Yes	No
Acquire land to own?	46% (11)	5% (13)
Acquire conservation easements via purchase?	46% (11)	54% (13)
Acquire donated conservation easements?	83% (20)	17% (4)
Assist others with land transactions?	58% (14)	42% (10)
Assist others with consulting or technical services for a fee?	13% (3)	88% (21)
Provide environmental education/programs?	58% (14)	42% (10)
Practice land or conservation easement stewardship?	92% (22)	8% (2)
Provide outdoor recreation opportunities?	50% (12)	50% (12)
Advocate on land conservation issues at the local, state or national level?	100% (24)	0% (0)
Participate in a regional collaboration or land trust partnership?	70% (16)	33% (8)

Answered 24

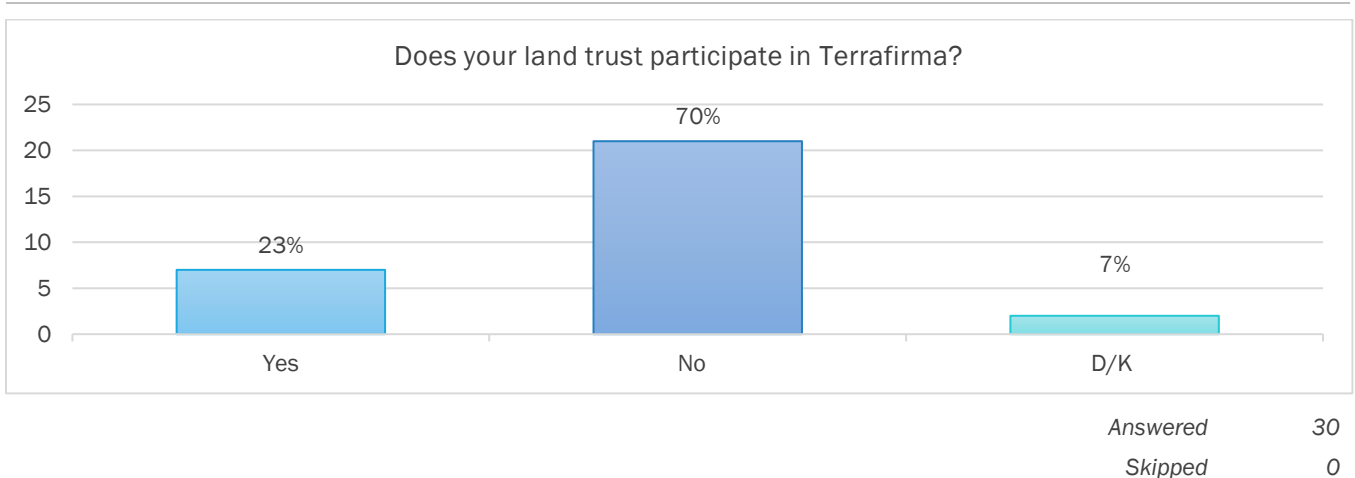
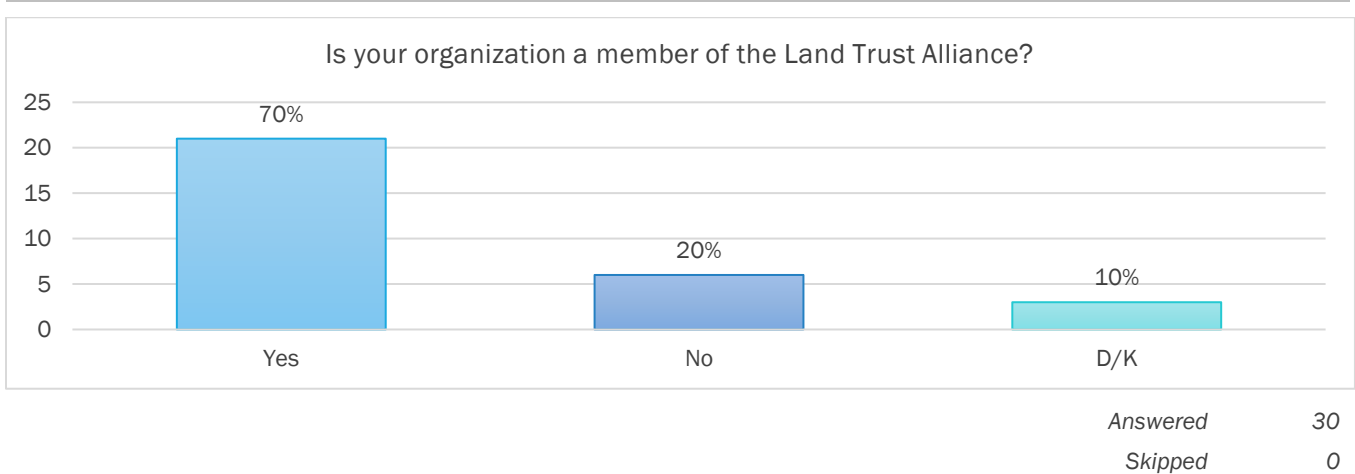
Skipped 6



Answered 24

Skipped 6

By far, the most mentioned collaborator was another Maryland land trust (this category includes Maryland Environmental Trust). Larger regional or national land trusts partners were also noted, but to a lesser extent. Riverkeepers and Watershed Organizations were mentioned as collaborators/consultants by multiple land trusts in multiple counties. Very local to larger national non-profits were also highlighted as regular collaborators/consultants (this category includes the Land Trust Alliance). Local to federal government partners were noted (including local Soil Conservation District offices; National Park Service; US Fish and Wildlife Service; USDA/NRCS).



Accreditation is available to all U.S.-based 501(c)(3) and quasi-governmental organizations that actively acquire and/or steward conservation land or conservation easements; have been incorporated (or formed as a trust) for at least two years; and have completed at least two direct land or easement acquisition projects. Which best describes your land trust’s current status or plans?

Answer Choices	Responses	
We are accredited	22%	(5)
We are a registered applicant	4%	(1)
We are preparing to apply for land trust accreditation and plan to register	39%	(9)
We are not planning to apply for land trust accreditation.	30%	(7)
We are not eligible to apply for accreditation	4%	(1)

Answered 22
Skipped 7

Which state or local government programs and incentives are important to your land trust?

	Have used or benefitted from		Interested or potentially important		Not interested		Total
Funding from a state or local ballot measure	22%	(4)	6%	(11)	17%	(3)	18
Program Open Space	45%	(10)	50%	(11)	5%	(1)	22
Rural Legacy, MALPF, state and local side funding	59%	(13)	18%	(4)	23%	(5)	22
Grant funding from MET	71%	(15)	24%	(5)	5%	(1)	21
Conservation easement tax credit	57%	(12)	43%	(9)	0%	(0)	21
Next Generation Farmers	5%	(1)	64%	(14)	32%	(7)	22
Mitigation funding of any kind	35%	(7)	40%	(8)	25%	(5)	20
					<i>Answered</i>		24
					<i>Skipped</i>		6

Which federal government programs and incentives are important to your land trust?

	Have used or benefitted from		Interested or potentially important		N/A		Total
Enhanced federal income tax deduction for easement donations	64%	(14)	18%	(4)	18%	(4)	22
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ALE or WRE)	19%	(4)	43%	(9)	38%	(8)	21
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)	10%	(2)	57%	(12)	33%	(7)	21
Forest Legacy Program (FLP)	5%	(1)	57%	(12)	38%	(8)	21
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	5%	(1)	60%	(12)	35%	(7)	20
North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)	5%	(1)	57%	(12)	38%	(8)	21
Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program (REPI)	19%	(4)	38%	(8)	43%	(9)	21
					<i>Answered</i>		22
					<i>Skipped</i>		8