

# **LOCAL OUTDOOR RECREATION SURVEY MANUAL**



**To be Used in Applications to the  
Land & Water Conservation Fund Program**

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## Introduction

Montana offers its citizens a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities, from wilderness preserves to neighborhood parks. Local governments (towns, cities, counties, school districts, Indian tribes) can play an important role by offering their residents access to local facilities. Understanding what recreation opportunities local citizens need is a necessary first step in fulfilling this role. These needs might be for programs, lands, or facilities.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) assists local governments in meeting their needs by coordinating Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants. The LWCF provides federal dollars on a 50/50 matching basis to states and their political subdivisions for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation projects. When a local government makes an application for an LWCF grant, part of the application requires an assessment of local outdoor recreation needs. The population segment assessed is determined by the boundaries of the political subdivision applying for the grant. This local needs assessment is intended to aid the state in making wise decisions in the disbursement of LWCF funds.

How are local governments supposed to determine their needs? Needs assessments often utilize the opinions of local leaders and other concerned citizens. However, these assessments are often subjective in nature, and can be overly influenced by the more vocal or visible participants. Instead, resident needs can be assessed in a much more objective manner by directly asking the local citizens what their outdoor recreation needs are. This manual is intended to facilitate this process in a manner that meets the requirements for LWCF grants.

The recommended process involves selecting local households, contacting them by telephone, and inquiring about their outdoor recreational needs. These needs can then be tabulated and documented. Each step in this process must be done carefully to ensure that the results objectively reflect the needs of the area. Because this process involves telephone interviews, it assumes that most of the households in the area have telephones. If this is not the case, the survey instrument and sampling procedure may be modified for personal delivery and self-administration.

This survey instrument is the minimum required by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. The survey instrument may be modified by adding questions or additional detail to existing questions to more thoroughly explore local issues. However, modifications to it by local governments must be approved in writing by FWP. Printing modified survey instruments is a local responsibility.

## Selecting Local Households

Whom should we ask? One answer to this question might be to ask everyone in the area what the outdoor recreation needs are. The result would be a "census" of all the residents. Obviously, the resources needed to complete such a survey, especially in large communities, render this option impractical. A reasonable alternative is to "sample" the population of households in the area; in other words, interview a fraction of the households that are representative of the population of the area as a whole. Arriving at a sample that is representative involves minimizing "bias," or influences that tend to make the sample different from the rest of the population of the area. This is generally accomplished through the interjection of "randomness" into the sampling procedure. Randomness reduces bias by ensuring that all households have an equal chance of being included in the sample.

How many households do we need to sample? The exact number depends on your objectives. You are generally interested in determining proportions, in other words, the percentage of households who participate in a certain activity or have a certain opinion. Because outdoor recreation needs vary, you need to contact enough households so the full range of needs are represented, and not allow any one household to overly influence our results. For example, if you only contacted ten households, and three of them said they participated in hangliding, it would be unreasonable to assume that 30% of the area's households engage in this activity.

Thus, it is unlikely that the proportion you arrive at from the sample of households is exactly the true proportion. However, based on probability theory one may delineate a confidence interval and predict, with a degree of confidence, the true proportion lays within this interval. For instance, according to this theory (and using the previous example and formula), you can be 90% confident that the true proportion of hanggliders is between 6% and 54% ( $30\% \pm 24\%$ ); not a very robust estimate. If 1,000 households had been sampled and 30% had been hanggliders, then you could be 90% confident the true proportion of hanggliders is between 28% and 32% ( $30\% \pm 2\%$ ). Hence, a large sample gives more accurate information than a small one. However, this must be balanced by the real-world sampling constraints faced by most local governments.

For the purposes of your recreation-needs survey, a sample size of 200 households is adequate. This size will allow you to be at least 80% confident that the true proportion lies within 5% on either side of the proportion you estimate. This sample size is acceptable for this confidence level regardless of the population of the community.

How do we select these 200 households? Because it is recommended that the survey be conducted over a telephone, you need to randomly select telephone numbers to call. Some telephone listings are no longer valid; some residents will prefer not to participate in the survey; and some numbers are for households outside the local government's

boundaries. Thus, you will need to select approximately 300 non-commercial telephone numbers to arrive at a final sample size of 200.

**Step 1** – Get the telephone numbers in your area. If the area does not have a separate section in the telephone book (i.e., the listings are combined with other areas), identify the telephone prefixes for your area. Include all telephone prefixes that cover residential numbers for your area.

**Step 2** – Estimate the total number of household telephone listings in the entire area. This can be done by estimating the number of non-commercial telephone listings on an "average page" of your area's listings (if combined with other communities estimate only the number of listings with local prefixes) and multiplying by the number of pages in your area's section.

**Step 3** – Select a proportion of listings from each page that equals the number of telephone numbers needed divided by the total number of household listings estimated in the area. For example, if you need telephone numbers for 300 households, and there are 2,100 non-commercial listings, select every seventh ( $300/2,100 = 1/7$ ) non-commercial listing on each page. If there are fewer than 300 households within the area, every number should be selected.

It is important that these numbers be selected randomly to reduce bias. Because telephone numbers are listed by last name, there is the possibility that in some areas, large numbers of ethnic groups are clustered together. Thus, it is important to follow the selection proportion throughout the area's telephone listings. Do this even if the required number of telephone numbers (300) is surpassed. Otherwise, groups of households whose needs might be significantly different from others might be eliminated. Remember, 300 is the approximate minimum number of telephone numbers needed to arrive at a final sample of 200 households. More than 300 is fine. Less than 300 might require that the telephone listings be entered again and additional numbers randomly selected.

**Step 4** – Write these numbers down on small pieces of paper and mix them together in a container. If these steps have been done correctly, each household in the community has had an equal chance of having its telephone number in that container.

### **The Inquiry**

The recommended survey instrument is a telephone interview (see Appendix A). The person interviewed should be the "head-of-household" who can answer questions about their household's recreation needs.

The interview begins with an inquiry into the activities members of the respondent's household participated in during the last 12 months within the area. Many of the

activities listed may not be currently available within the service area being surveyed. For instance, an area might not currently have opportunities for golfing because it has no golf course. However, it is important to present a full range of possible activities because, in the next question, respondents are asked to indicate which activities they would like to participate in but for some reason don't. Respondents are then asked to indicate the barriers to their participation. Preceding these questions with a full range of activities allows the respondent to become aware of what activities are possible.

Also addressed in the survey is the adequacy of the area's outdoor recreation opportunities. This is accomplished by focusing on activities the household feels are in need of additional facilities or opportunities, the distribution of active vs. passive opportunities, need for specific outdoor recreation facilities, and opportunities for children, the elderly and the handicapped.

The respondents are then asked to express what they feel is the most important outdoor recreation issue facing the area and the State of Montana. The interview ends with a few questions that are useful in describing the household and the respondent.

At least 200 surveys should be reproduced so that there is a copy for each household that is interviewed. The responses should be recorded directly on the survey.

Agency staff or other interested persons can do the interviewing. All interviewers should be thoroughly familiar with the interview. An interviewer should practice interviewing with others before contacting the public.

The best time to call is when most people are home, usually during the evening hours. If there is no answer, or the heads-of-households are not at home, try again at another time. At least three attempts at contact should be made. The number of households that decline to participate in the survey should be noted. This number should include households only, and not include disconnected numbers, businesses or other commercial listings contacted by accident.

### **Public Awareness**

Conducting a telephone survey in today's world is becoming increasingly difficult. Modern technology now allows users to identify and block calls originating from strangers. Therefore, to increase cooperation in the survey, it is imperative that local governments conduct a public awareness campaign to alert residents that an outdoor-recreation survey will be performed. The important part of the message is to explain how the information will be used (to apply for an outdoor recreation grant). This should help increase participation. Publicity can be accomplished in a number of ways, such as through public service announcements in local schools and churches; by short notices in newsletters, posters, and fliers; and through ads in local newspapers, on radio, and TV.

## Data Tabulation

Although computers have established themselves as an important element of modern life, many local governments do not have access to the statistical packages commonly used for data analysis. Luckily, the data gathered from this needs assessment are neither complicated, nor large, and can be easily handled without a computer with the aid of a simple calculator.

As was mentioned earlier, you are primarily concerned with proportions. For instance, the proportion of households that played softball within your area. Thus, for each question, we need to know how many respondents gave each answer. This number, divided by the total number of interviews, is that proportion. For example, if 30 of the households played softball, and we contacted a total of 200 residents, the  $30/200 = 15\%$  of the population participated in softball.

Appendix B contains forms that will assist you in tabulating the results. Each form has examples that illustrate how they are to be used.

The questions in the survey are one of two types: “Forced Choice” or “Open Ended.” In the first type (forced choice) the respondent is presented with a variety of answers to choose from. Forced-choice questions have answers that are pre-categorized (Question 4). Open-ended questions allow the respondent to answer in a less restrained manner. In some instances, the most common responses have been anticipated, and categories have been developed (see last part of Question 2). In other cases, none or only some of the answers have been anticipated (Questions 3 & 5).

The responses to these questions need to be categorized and tabulated in forms that allow for this procedure. Some of the questions will have responses that require careful content analysis to accurately accomplish this task.

When these tabulation forms have been completed, the outdoor recreation needs of your community's residents have been assessed. Copies can be included with your applications for LWCF Grants.



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Motor boating                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Playground activities                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming in lake, pond, river or stream | <input type="checkbox"/> Lawn games such as croquet or volleyball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming in a pool                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness course activities                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water-skiing                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Target shooting                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ice skating                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snowmobiling                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-country skiing                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Downhill skiing                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Windsurfing                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snowboarding                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Frisbee Golf (Folf)                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Track & Field                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Rock Climbing                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Motocross                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Rock collecting                          |

Are there any other outdoor recreational activities that you or another member of your household participated in within the limits of \_\_\_\_\_ (local gov't.) that I didn't mention?

(check one)

- No--Go to Question 2
- Yes--Which ones? Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

2. One area of particular concern relates to the present supply of outdoor recreational opportunities in \_\_\_\_\_ (local gov't). Are there certain kinds of outdoor recreational activities that you, or a member of your household, would like to participate in, but cannot, in \_\_\_\_\_ (local gov't)?

(check one)

- No--Go to Question 3
- |   |          |                             |
|---|----------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes--Which ones? | Activity | Major Reason<br>(see codes) |
|   | _____    | _____                       |
|   | _____    | _____                       |
|   | _____    | _____                       |
|   | _____    | _____                       |

What is the MAJOR REASON you don't (state activity) as often as you would like to in \_\_\_\_\_ (local gov't)? (Leave open-ended and fill in ONE reason code next to each activity).

Reason Codes

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- 1 Lack of money

- 2 Lack of time
- 3 Lack of facilities
- 4 Lack of personal equipment
- 5 Lack of safety
- 6 Lack of skill
- 7 Lack of information
- 8 Lack of landscape features (no lakes, no hiking trails, etc.)
- 9 Lack of physical capability (age, health, etc.)
- 10 Lack of other participants
- 11 Lack of child care
- 12 Too crowded at existing areas
- 13 Other reason

3. We're interested in your feelings about the adequacy of outdoor recreation facilities in \_\_\_\_\_ (local gov't). Which ONE outdoor recreation activity do you feel is in the greatest need of additional facilities or opportunities for your household's enjoyment? \_\_\_\_\_

4. So far, our survey has concentrated on the more active types of recreational pursuits. Do you feel that any additional parks in \_\_\_\_\_ (local gov't) should be: (Read the list and circle one)

- a. Used mostly for active recreation
- b. Mostly for passive, non-active recreation
- c. Evenly distributed between the two
- d. Don't know.

5. Many local governments offer several types of recreation sites for public use, such as swimming pools, sports playing fields, playgrounds, neighborhood parks, open spaces and so on. If additional funds become available, which kind of outdoor recreation area would your household prefer? (Leave open-ended and check only ONE).

- \_\_\_ Swimming pool
- \_\_\_ Playgrounds
- \_\_\_ Tot lots
- \_\_\_ Open space
- \_\_\_ Parks
- \_\_\_ Skateboard facility
- \_\_\_ OHV area
- \_\_\_ Jogging path
- \_\_\_ Bicycle path
- \_\_\_ Ice skating rink

- Tennis courts
- Basketball courts
- Picnic areas
- Golf course
- Sports playing fields (specify type) \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you feel there are adequate outdoor recreation opportunities in \_\_\_\_\_ local gov't) for children, the elderly and people with disabilities?

- Yes--Go to Question 7
- Don't Know--Go to Question 7
- No--What type of additional opportunities would you say are needed?

(Leave open-ended and check those mentioned).

- |  |                                  |   |
|--|----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Elderly | <input type="checkbox"/> Handicapped          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playgrounds                     |                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Better access        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tot lots                        |                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Wheel chair trails   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming pools                  |                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Trails for the blind |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wading pools                    |                                  | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parks                           |                                  | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sports playing fields (specify) |                                  | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)                 |                                  | _____   |

7. What do you feel is the MOST IMPORTANT OUTDOOR RECREATION PROBLEM OR CONCERN facing:

a. (Local gov't) today? \_\_\_\_\_

b. The State of Montana? \_\_\_\_\_

8. To finish up, we need to know some things about you to help us understand your needs better.

a. How many people are in your household, including yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

b. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

c. Sex: (should be obvious)  Male  Female

d. Do you live within the official boundaries of (local gov't.)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

Those are all the questions I have. Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in the survey--we appreciate your willingness to help.

**PART B**  
**Data Tabulation Forms**

**Summary Information**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NAME

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Name of PERSON IN CHARGE of Survey:

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SURVEY DATES:

From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated number of HOUSEHOLDS IN COMMUNITY:

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Number of HOUSEHOLDS SURVEYED:

\_\_\_\_\_ = X

Number of HOUSEHOLDS THAT DECLINED TO PARTICIPATE:

\_\_\_\_\_ = Y

RESPONSE RATE =  $X / (X + Y) =$  \_\_\_\_\_

Example: If X = 198 and Y = 72,

then  $X / (X + Y) = 198 / (198 + 72) = 0.73 = 73\%$

**Question 1 = Participation Rates**

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<b>Activity</b>	<b>Tally</b>	<b>Rate = Tally / X</b>
Jogging		
Horseback riding		
Bicycling		
Walking for pleasure		
Nature study or bird watching		
Picnicking		
Camping		
Backpacking		
Off road 4x 4 driving		
Off road motorcycling		
Fishing		
Hunting		
Swimming in a lake, pond, river or stream		
Swimming in a pool		
Water-skiing		
Motorboating		
Windsurfing		
Sailing		
Canoeing		
<b>(X = Total tallies)</b>		

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<b>Example: bird watching</b>	<b>IIIIIIII</b>	<b>8/198 = 0.04</b>
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**Question 1 = Participation Rates (continued)**

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<b>Activity</b>	<b>Tally</b>	<b>Rate = Tally / X</b>
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Kayaking		
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Rafting		
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Football or soccer		
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Golf		
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Baseball or softball		
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Tennis		
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Basketball		
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Lawn games such as croquet or volleyball		
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Playground activities		
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Rodeo activities		
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Target shooting		
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Ice skating		
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Snowmobiling		
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Cross country skiing		
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Downhill skiing		
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Soccer		
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Mountain biking		
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Off road ATV driving		
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Snowboarding		
Track & field		
<b>(X = Total tallies)</b>		
<b>Example: bird watching</b>	<b>       </b>	<b>8/198 = 0.04</b>

**Question 1 = Participation Rates (continued)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Tally</b>	<b>Rate = Tally / X</b>
Motocross		
Skateboarding		
In-line skating (rollerblading)		
BMX Biking		
Hiking		
Frisbee Golf (Folf)		
Rock Climbing		
Rock Collecting		
Fitness course activities		
<b>(X = Total tallies)</b>		
<b>Example: bird watching</b>	<b>       </b>	<b>8/198 = 0.04</b>

**Question 2 – Non-Participation Activities and Reasons**

Don't Participate?	Tally	Proportion = Tally / X
No		
Yes		
TOTAL		

**Example:**

**Activity: Golf**

**Activity:**

Reason Codes	Tally	Prop. = Tally / X	Reason Codes	Tally	Prop. = Tally / X
01	III	3 / 198 = .015	01		
02	II	2 / 198 = .010	02		
03			03		
04	I	1 / 198 = .005	04		
05			05		
06	IIII	4 / 198 = .020	06		
07			07		
08			08		
09			09		
10			10		
11			11		
12	IIIIII	6 / 198 = .030	12		
13	II	2 / 198 = .010	13		
TOTAL		18 / 198 = .091	TOTAL		

Total = X     1.00 = 100%

**Reason Codes**

- |   |                     |    |                               |
|---|---------------------|----|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Lack of money       | 8  | Lack of landscape features    |
| 2 | Lack of time        | 9  | Lack of physical capability   |
| 3 | Lack of facilities  | 10 | Lack of other participants    |
| 4 | Lack of equipment   | 11 | Lack of child care            |
| 5 | Lack of safety      | 12 | Too crowded at existing areas |
| 6 | Lack of skill       | 13 | Other reason                  |
| 7 | Lack of information |    |                               |

**Question 2 – Non-Participation Activities and Reasons (continued)**

<b>Activity:</b>			<b>Activity:</b>		
<b>Reason Codes</b>	<b>Tally</b>	<b>Prop. = Tally / X</b>	<b>Reason Codes</b>	<b>Tally</b>	<b>Prop. = Tally / X</b>
01			01		
02			02		
03			03		
04			04		
05			05		
06			06		
07			07		
08			08		
09			09		
10			10		
11			11		
12			12		
13			13		





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Jogging Paths

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Bicycle Paths

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Ice Skating Rinks

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Tennis Courts

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Basketball Courts

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Picnic Areas

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Golf Courses

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Skateboarding Facility

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OHV Area

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**Example: Bridle Path**

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**4 / 198 = .020**

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**Question 6 – Opportunities for Children, the Elderly, or People with a Disability**

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<b>Adequate?</b>	<b>Tally</b>	<b>Proportion = Tally / X</b>
Yes		
Don't Know		
No		
TOTAL		
If NO, then		
Children		
Elderly		
People with a Disability		

<b>Type</b>	<b>Tally</b>	<b>Proportion = Tally / X</b>
Playgrounds		
Tot Lots		
Swimming Pools		
Wading Pools		
Parks		
Better Accessibility		
Wheel Chair Trails		
Trails for the Blind		





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**Example: River Access**

IIIIIIII

**8 / 198 = .040**

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**Question 8a – Size of Household**

Sizes: (Example: 3, 1, 6, 4, 4, 2)

Summation of Sizes: \_\_\_\_\_ = A

(Example: 3 + 1 + 6 + 4 + 4 + 2 = 20)

Mean Household Size = A / Number of Households = \_\_\_\_\_

(Example: 20 / 6 = 3.3)

**Question 8b – Age of Respondent**

Ages: (Example: 31, 45, 21, 52, 19, 73)

Summation of Ages: \_\_\_\_\_ = B

(Example: 31 + 45 + 21 + 52 + 19 + 73 = 241)

Mean Respondent Age = B / Number of Persons = \_\_\_\_\_

(Example: 241 / 6 = 40.2)

**Question 8a – Sex of Respondent**

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Sex

Tally

Proportion = Tally / X

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Male

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Female

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TOTAL

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**(Total = X)**

**1.00 = 100%**

Jeffrey E. Frost and Stephen F. McCool, School of Forestry, University of Montana, originally developed this survey in 1985 for Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.