



Outreach: Terrestrial Invasive Species And Recreational Pathways

SUSAN BURKS
MNDNR INVASIVE SPP PROG COORD

Education Project



- Funded by USFS State & Private Forestry
- Describe current knowledge, attitudes and behaviors among Minnesota recreationists
- Establish baseline to measure future education success
- Develop education strategies to change public behaviors
- Focused on two pathways:
 - Soil & weed seeds spread along trails
 - Forest pests moved in firewood

Project Methodology

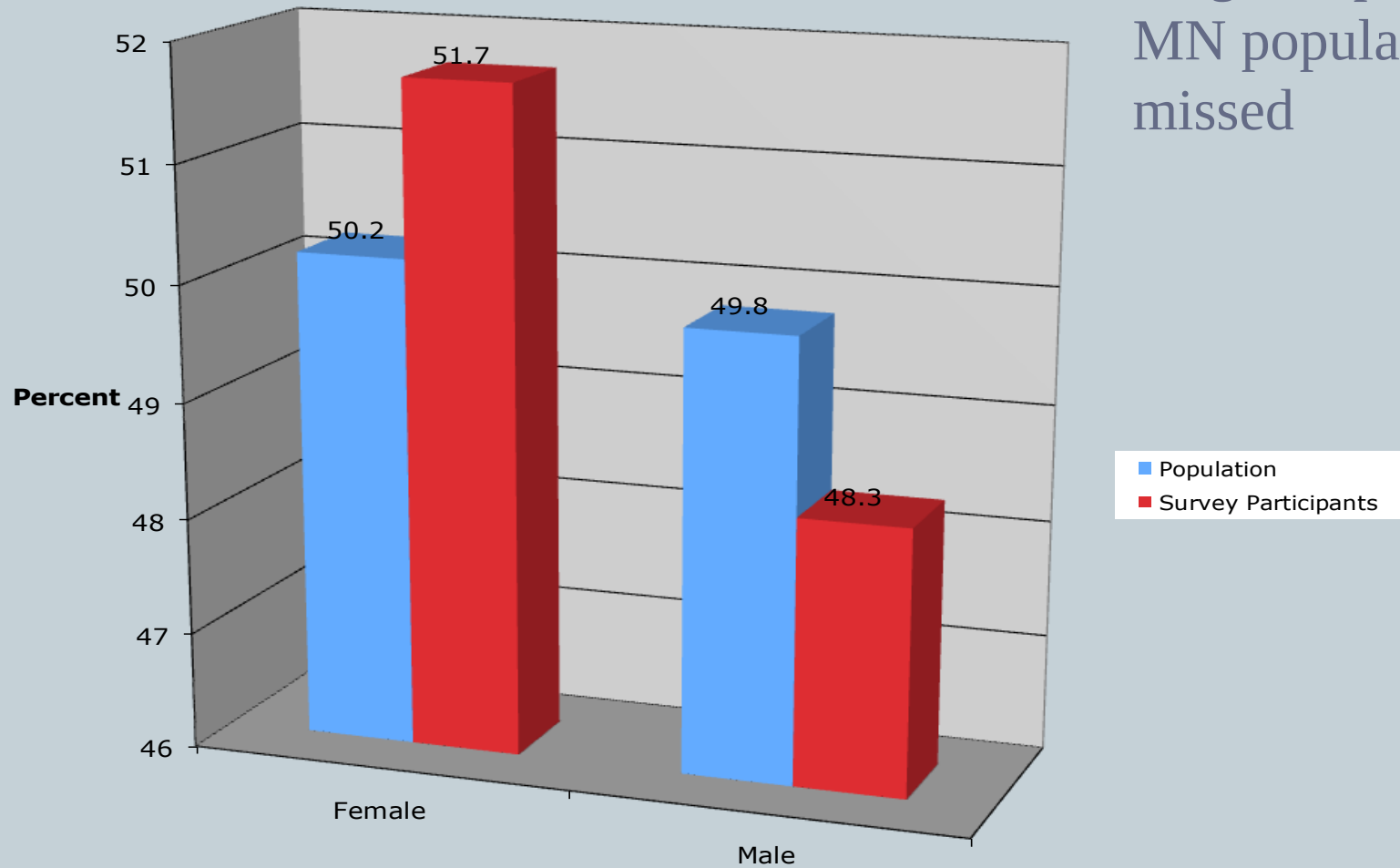


- Nine focus groups with 97 participants
- Survey of 1,201 Minnesotans
- Participants selected from database of visitors to MNDNR lands
- Hikers supplemented through outreach to North Country and Superior Hiking Clubs

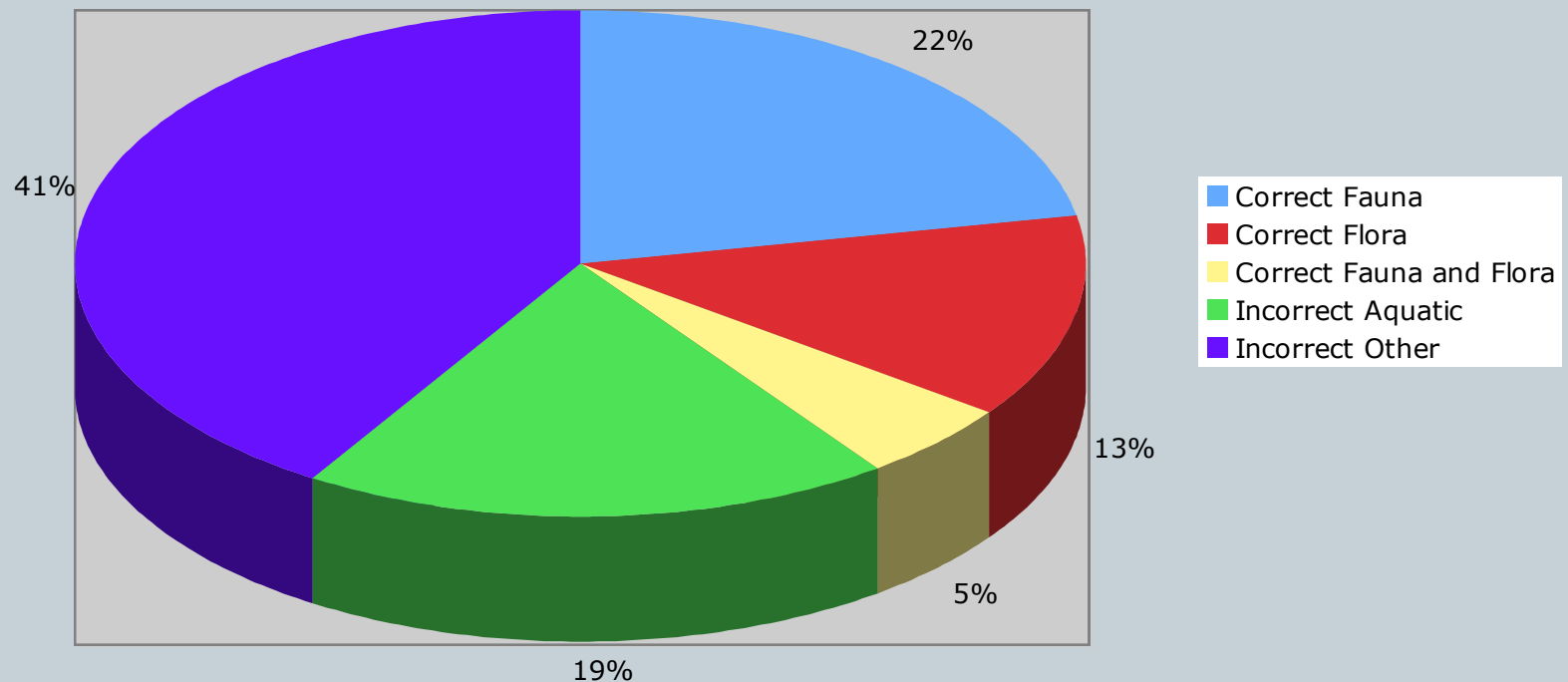
Gender



Target to parallel
MN population
missed



Species Described as “Invasive”

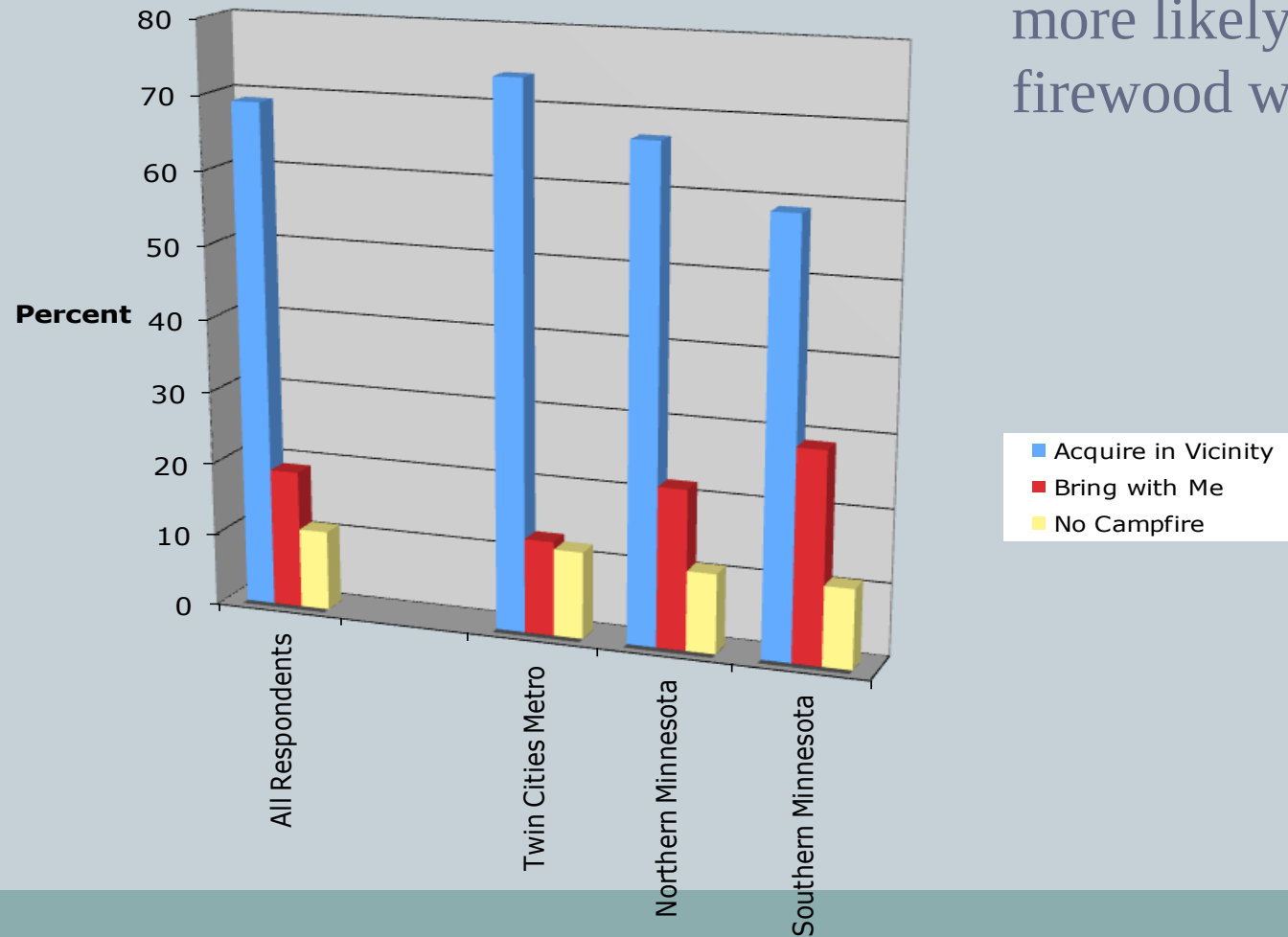


38% could name a species

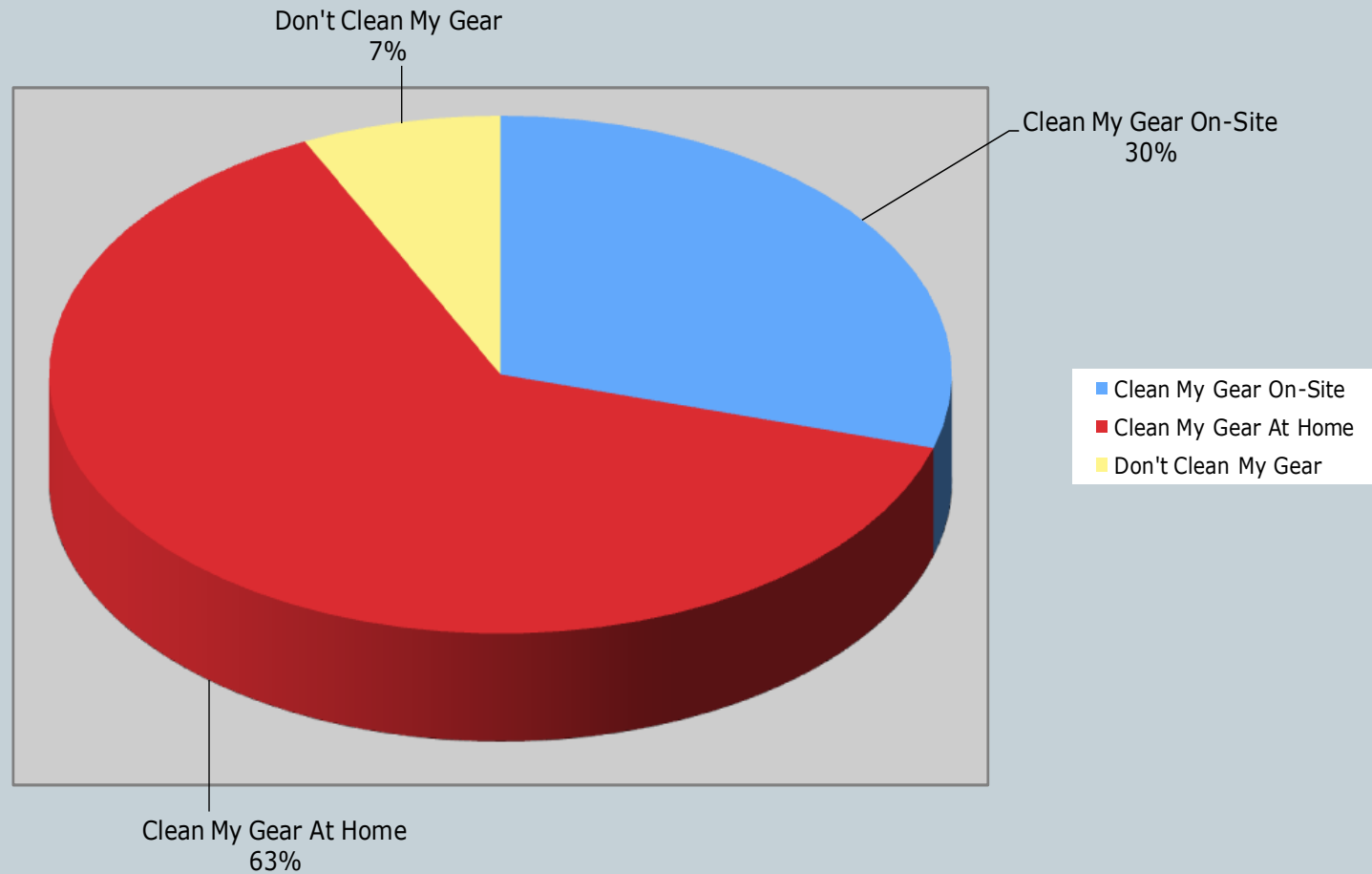
Firewood Behaviors



Southern recreationists
more likely to bring
firewood with them



Cleaning Their Gear

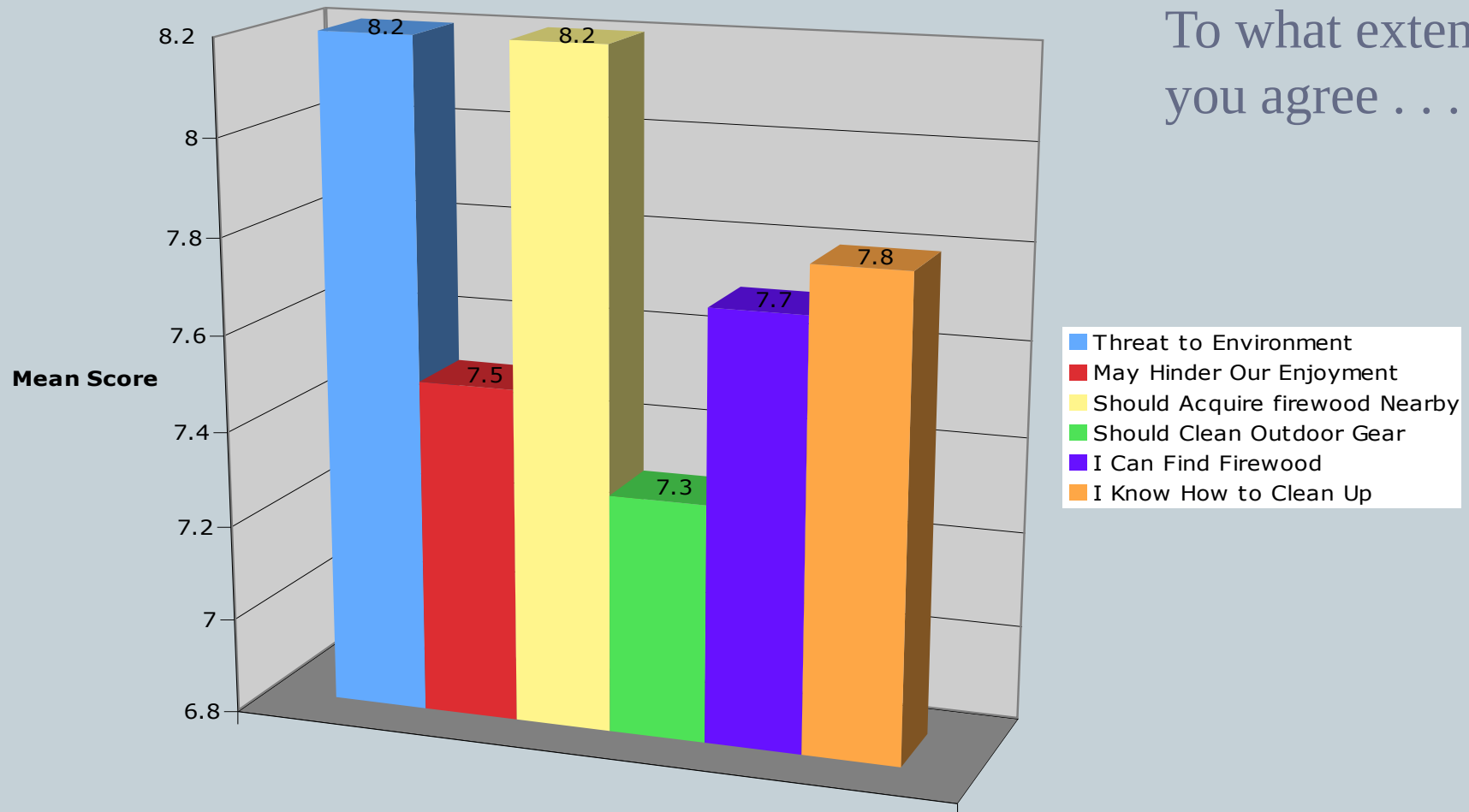


Most clean
their gear

Attitudinal Questions



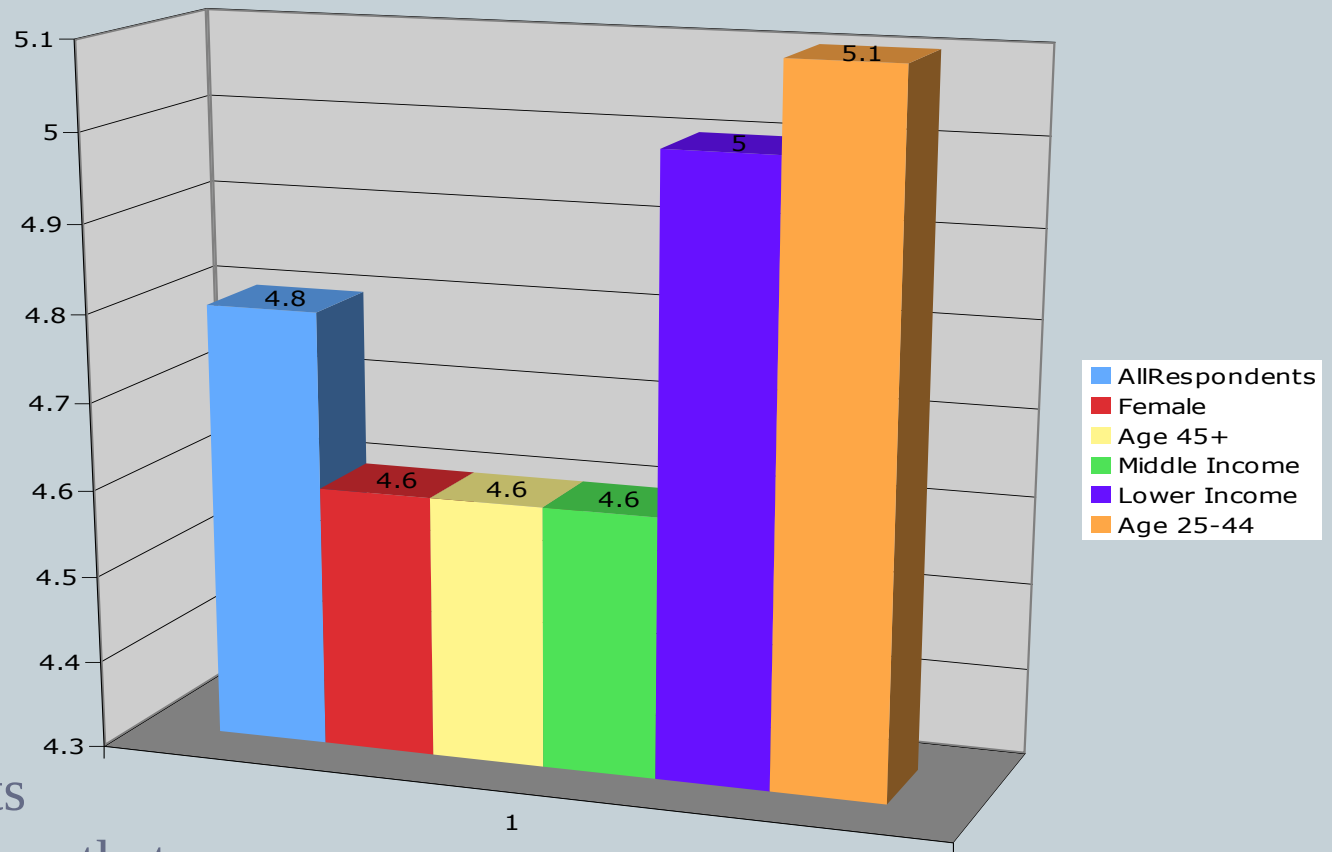
To what extent do
you agree . . . ?



Not How I Want to Spend My Time



5.4 "How much do you agree or disagree with this statement: Cleaning off my gear is not how I want to spend my time in the out of doors."



Young, lower
income respondents
most likely to believe that

Largest Differentials



- “Minnesotans should acquire firewood only in the vicinity of where they intend to burn it.”
 - 8.5 among higher income households
 - 7.6 among riders of motorized vehicles
- “I can find a good supply of firewood near where I intend to burn it.”
 - 8.0 in Twin Cities and among higher income households
 - 7.1 among southern Minnesota respondents

Younger Respondents



- More likely to bicycle, run, ride motorized vehicles
- More familiar with invasives
- More in agreement that one should acquire firewood, and that they know where to acquire firewood near where it will be burned
- More in agreement that “Cleaning off my gear is not how I want to spend my time in the outdoors.”
- More favorable to receiving information via the Internet

Region



- Metro Twin Cities respondents
 - Have higher household income
 - Less likely to ride horseback
 - More likely to acquire firewood near where it is burned
- Northern Minnesota respondents
 - Have lower household incomes
 - Less likely to camp
 - More likely to ride horseback and motorized vehicles
- Southern Minnesota respondents
 - More likely to camp
 - Less likely to acquire firewood, and less likely to know where to acquire firewood near where it is burned

Activity



- Horseback riders
 - Less familiar with invasive species
 - More likely to clean up at home
- Riders of motorized vehicles
 - Less familiar with invasive species (contrary to focus group indications)
 - Less likely to acquire firewood near where it will be burned



Summary and Analysis

INVASIVE SPECIES PROJECT

OCTOBER, 2010

Six Desired Beliefs



Many of the participants already share these beliefs

- Invasives are undesirable
- I may be helping to spread invasives
- I can stop invasives from spreading
- I am willing to do my part

But most of them do not know what to do

- I know what to do
- I have the resources to do it

Invasives Are Undesirable



- 79 percent agree or agree strongly that “Land-based invasive species present a serious threat to the health of the Minnesota environment.”
- 71 percent agree or agree strongly that “Land-based invasive species may hinder our ability to fully enjoy the outdoors, including such activities as camping, hiking and hunting.”

I May Be Helping to Spread Invasives



- 78 percent agree or agree strongly that “In order to prevent the spread of invasive species, Minnesotans should acquire firewood only in the vicinity of where it is going to be burned.”
- 64 percent agree or agree strongly that “In order to prevent the spread of invasive species, Minnesotans should clean their outdoor gear before taking it into the outdoors and again before taking it home.”

I Can Stop Invasives From Spreading, and I Know What to Do

- 69 percent disagree or disagree strongly that “What I do doesn’t matter because land-based invasive species are going to spread anyway.”
- 86 percent agree or agree strongly that “I can find a good supply of firewood near where I intend to burn it.”
- 74 percent agree or agree strongly that “I know how to clean up my outdoor gear and equipment to prevent the spread of invasive species.”

I Have the Resources to Do It



- 69 percent already “acquire firewood in the vicinity of where I’m going to burn it.”
- 91 percent already “clean my equipment and gear,” and 29 percent already do so “on-site, before leaving for another location.”
- 87 percent agree or agree strongly that they already “remove most of the mud and dirt” from their equipment and gear.
- 85 percent agree or agree strongly that they already “remove most of the plant matter and weed seeds” from their equipment and gear.

I Am Willing to Do My Part



- 41 percent disagree or disagree strongly that “Cleaning off my outdoor gear is not how I want to spend my time in the out of doors.”
- Another 25 percent responded in a neutral way to this same statement.
- 34 percent agree or agree strongly with this statement suggesting they may not be willing to do their part.

Not How I Want to Spend My Time



- Most often stated by non-motorized trail users
 - “(Cleaning up) takes the fun out of it. I want to relax and have fun.”
 - “It takes time, you have to think about it.”
 - “But I don’t want to think about it. I’m busy.”
 - “I’m not willing to take the time.”
 - “I’m having fun, and cleaning up isn’t fun.”
- Non-motorized trail users spend less time cleaning up today, and yet do not agree they are transporting soil, mud and plant matter.

Horseback Riders



- Horseback riders are among those least familiar with land-based invasive species
 - Surprising, because of exposure to hay certification
- Horseback riders are 62 percent female
- 43 percent also ride motorized vehicles
- They are most likely to clean up at home, rather than on-site
- They are slightly less likely to agree that “Minnesotans should clean their gear before taking it into the out of doors and again before taking it home”

Motorized Riders



- Motorized riders are among those least familiar with land-based invasive species
 - Among focus group participants they were better informed
- Motorized riders are 60 percent male
- They are among the least likely to acquire firewood near where it will be burned
- They are slightly less likely to agree that Minnesotans should acquire firewood near where they intend to burn it
 - They do not ride at state parks and have not been exposed to firewood restrictions
 - They have the capacity to transport firewood at a distance

Motorized Riders



- They are slightly less likely to agree that land-based invasive species may hinder their enjoyment of the outdoors
 - Yet, in focus groups, they were extremely concerned about the potential for trail closures
- They are slightly less likely to agree that “Minnesotans should clean their gear before taking it into the outdoors and again before taking it home”
 - Yet, they already do more cleaning up than other users!



Education Strategies

INVASIVE SPECIES PROJECT

OCTOBER, 2010

Two Primary Audiences



- The large majority (79%) make the more “environmentally-friendly” response to almost every question.
 - Yet 59% (including half of the environmentally friendly majority) agree that “Cleaning off my outdoor gear is not how I want to spend my time in the out of doors.”
- The minority (10 to 30%) who do not agree with various “desired beliefs.” They are defined by their attitudes, not by any demographic characteristics.
- To reduce risk of spread of invasive species, focus on majority first and then target reluctant audience.

Branding and Images



- Build on recognition and success of Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers program.
- Use stop sign image, but avoid icons that may discourage recreation.
- Enroll all partner agencies and organizations in utilizing brand and images when updating or developing new mats.



DRAFT/SAMPLE LOGO

Approaches For All Audiences



- Communicate the threat of invasive species in terms of their values and needs
 - Quality time with family
 - Connecting with nature
 - Legacy for their kids
 - Health and well-being
- Recognize those actions already being taken
 - Many already clean their gear
 - Many already buy their firewood where they burn it
- Highlight where groups and individuals are doing their part – build a positive social norm
 - Prevention works (it's not a lost cause)
 - Folks are not alone in making an effort
- Work with partner organizations to ensure consistent messaging and shared resources

Actions to Foster



Before you leave home:

- Make sure your belongings are free of mud and plant debris
- Pack cleaning tools and supplies for your trip (brush or broom, etc)
- Identify sources of local or certified firewood and certified weed-free hay
- Identify cleaning stations near your destination
- Buy local firewood, rather than hauling it. Clean your equipment to avoid moving mud and plant debris.

At your destination:

- Acquire & use local or certified firewood
- Acquire & use certified weed-free hay

Before you leave the trail or site:

- Inspect your pets and belongings; remove any mud or plant debris
- Dispose of plant debris and weed seeds in the trash
- Leave unused firewood onsite (don't take it home with you)

Suggested Products



- Brand and icon to go in all updated and new matls
- Signage at campgrounds, trail heads, parking areas, etc
- Brochure/pocket guide on terrestrial invasive species with clear list of what to do (see example of Friends from BWCA)
- Poster/display for retail outlets, fairs and club events
- Sample text to include in regulation booklets, grants, permits and contracts