

Three Perspectives on the Vital Role of Organized Lake Groups

Dan Cibulka

*Water Resource Specialist, Sherburne SWCD
Board Member, Minnesota COLA
Ex-officio Member, Sherburne County COLA*

Jeff Forester

Executive Director, MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates

Dave Majkrzak

*President, Pelican Lakes Property Owners Association
Board Member, Otter Tail County COLA*



Presentation Outline

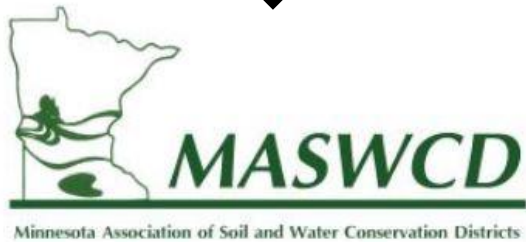
1. The LGU and Lake Group Connection – **Dan Cibulka**
 - *Example of SWCD – lake group connection, steps to organize a COLA*
2. Activities of Three Pelican Lake (Ottertail County) Groups – **Dave Majkrzak**
 - *Activities of an established lake organization, differences between organization types, and membership survey results*
3. Lake Association Activism – **Jeff Forester**
 - *Current and future roles of lake organizations, statewide*
4. Group Discussion: How can lake groups increase lake protection capacity in Minnesota?



Soil and Water Conservation Districts



Represents 3,000 conservation districts and ~17,000 staff nationwide
Maintains relationships with federal and state agencies
Promotes conservation of water and soil resources across the USA



Represents 89 conservation districts and ~450 staff statewide
Maintains relationships with federal and local agencies
Promotes conservation of water and soil resources across Minnesota



6 staff members with expertise in water resources, agriculture, forestry, etc.
Maintains relationships local and state agencies
Conservation delivery of water and soil resources across Sherburne County

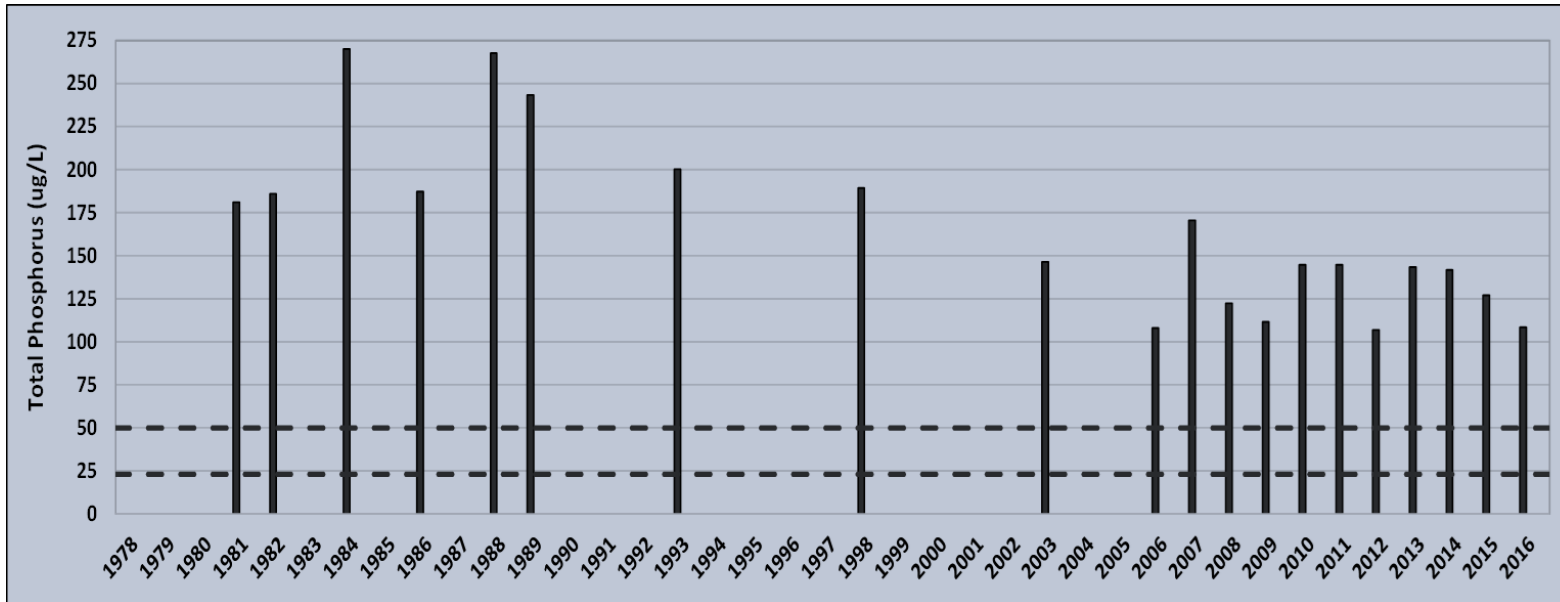
Conservation Delivery

- Dependent upon volunteer residents, public entities
- Technical and financial assistance (incentives)
- Levy state and federal programs
- Partnerships (NRCS, FSA, Pheasants Forever, FWS, etc.)
- Addressing local priorities
- Strategic planning and prioritizing



Volunteer Partnerships

- 78% of Minnesota is in private land ownership
 - Local needs require local expertise
 - Conservation is expensive! Cost-sharing is critical
- Minnesota is the land of 11,842 lakes
 - Water-based conservation comes in many forms



Partnerships resulting in long-term data collection to assist in management decision-making



Shoreline erosion control



Emerging Partnership – Sherburne County COLA

- Lake groups: Desire for greater effectiveness and networking
- SWCD: Greater engagement, outreach, monitoring and conservation delivery opportunities
- Outlined a scoping process:
 - Developed a Steering Committee
 - Task: identify preferred structure for Sherburne County COLA
 - Resources found in MN COLA, Freshwater Society

Thank you!



Minnesota Coalition of Lake Associations

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Steering Committee Findings

Sherburne County COLA Goals/Priorities

Efficiencies — taking advantage of services at a lower group-based price, such as chemical testing, monitoring, restoration, aquatic plant management, etc.

Education — COLA can engage in dispersing articles, links, other materials to member associations and advocacy of best management practice adoption

Capacity Building — COLA can actively seek to assist with recruitment, public relations, board development, and other activities

Information Sharing — sharing of best practices, AIS, funding opportunities, problem solving, newsletter and a directory of lake contacts

Political Influence — a united voice when needed, garner support of elected officials and increase their attention to waters related issues, build relationships with MN COLA, Freshwater Society, MN Lake and River Advocates and others

Sherburne County COLA today

Branding

- Logo, letterhead, taglines

Organizational Structure

- 501c3, dues, formality of organization, board insurance
- Working “Action Plan” document to coordinate efforts

Projects and Practices

- Education, political advocacy, increased volunteerism, resource directory



Priority No. 2: Organizational & Funding Structure		Work Group Lead: Chris	
		Exec. Comm. Liaison: Dan	
An organizational structure is needed to help the COLA function, define leadership responsibilities, and divide the work among members. The structure does not need to be too rigid or burdensome—it can be kept simple so long as it facilitates the accountable involvement of many, aids in time management, and to maintain energy for and commitment to the work at hand.			
People involved: Committees and/or task forces, officers, board members, SWCD, or others			
Person Leading	Action Plan	Timeline	Budget
	a. Elect board officers	DONE	\$0
	b. Determine a sub-committee or task force structure to advance and delegate out work	September of 2017	\$0
Chris	c. Establish draft by-laws	DONE	\$0
Chris	d. Establish working by-laws	February of 2018	\$0
	e. Establish consensus on dues	DONE	\$0

Dave Majkrzak

*President, Pelican Lakes Property Owners Association
Board Member, Otter Tail County COLA*



Pelican Lake Property Owners Association

PLPOA is a non-profit corporation established in 1933. Its stated purposes are to assist in providing:

- Superior water quality and quantity
- Environmental protection
- Water safety
- Preservation of wooded properties
- Fire and police protection
- Land use planning and zoning
- Sewage and garbage disposal
- Cooperation with other lakes
- Dealings with local, state and federal authorities

Pelican Lake Property Owners Association

Budget: \$70,000/year

Revenue source: \$50/year dues from members, advertising in directory, donations to fireworks and other special events.
850 members out of approximately 950 cabins (90 % membership rate)

35 member board, 6-9 member Ex-Committee (President, VP, Sec, Trea., Past Presidents)

Major projects/on-going activities

Social:

- Lake directory
- Spring meeting, annual meeting and appreciation dinner/drinks
- July 4th boat parade and \$22,000 fireworks.
- History Book

Lake Issues/Improvement/Protection:

- AIS concerns, members on County AIS Task Force, COLA, MNCOLA
- Support water testing, Lake Management Plan (PGOLID efforts)
- Spring clean-up
- Trying to stop the deliberant spread of non-native fish by MNDNR (muskie)

Government: State/County/Township:

- Work on Shoreline Development Rules changes/updates
- Land use planning and zoning
- Involved with recent efforts on additional RV park expansion
- Objected to 500 foot tall windmill proposal within 1.5 miles of shore

Pelican Group of Lakes Improvement District (LID)

PGOLID is a political subdivision created pursuant to state law by the Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners in 1993. Its stated purposes include:

- Implementing a water monitoring system
- Researching water quality issues
- Developing and implementing a comprehensive plan to eliminate water pollution
- Improving navigation
- Regulating water surface usage
- Maintaining the environmental quality of lakes and surrounding land

Pelican Group of Lakes Improvement District (LID)

Budget: \$120,000/year. Set at annual meeting. Projects over \$5000 must be approved by members.

Revenue sources: property tax applied by county, 500 feet from shoreline. (government grants). Typical property taxed about \$125/year.

Major projects/on-going activities:

- Water quality monitoring, hire ½ time Lake Coordinator, monitor inflows/outflows, Phosphorus and sediment loading.
- Lake Management Plan
- Septic system study, (identified old systems, volunteer (300) inspected 152, establish (35 %) failure rate, asked county to inspect units over 20 years old, 26.1 % abatement rate)
- Annual chemical treatment of Curly leaf pondweed, hand pull flowering rush in inflow river.
- Mosquito control program, tent caterpillar control is a by-product
- Renovation of the dam on Pelican River
- AIS inspections

Pelican Lake Community Foundation



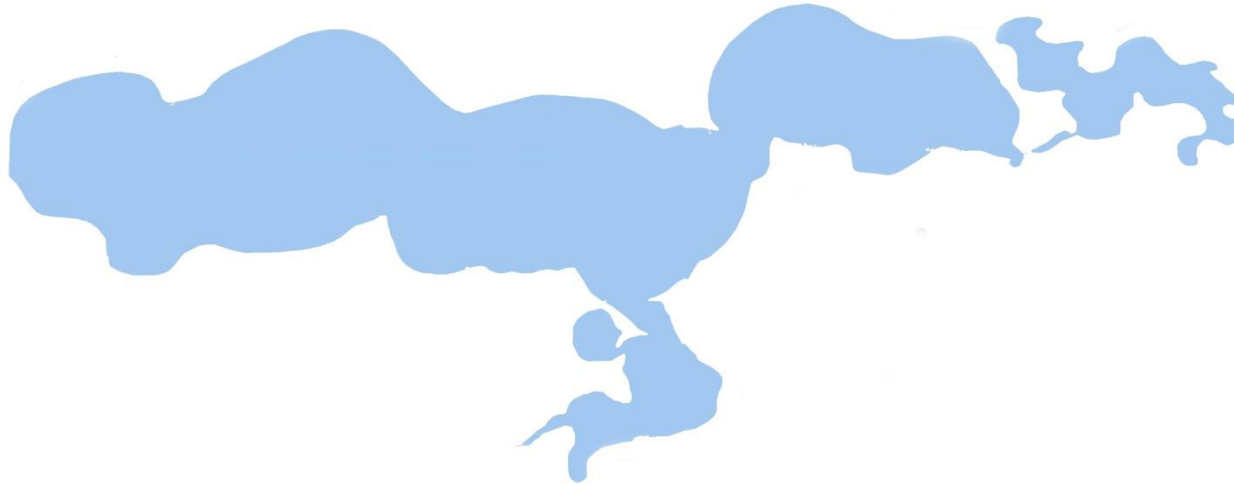
PLCF is a non-profit tax exemption foundation established in 2017. Its purpose is to:

- Promote and protect the ecological development of the Pelican Lake area through educational and recreational programs.

Revenue source: Tax exempt contributions, and fund raising.

Just getting started, expecting “tax exempt status” will encourage larger donations of land and dollars to support the long term protection of the lake ecosystem.

Pelican Group of Lakes Property Owners Survey, 2014-2017

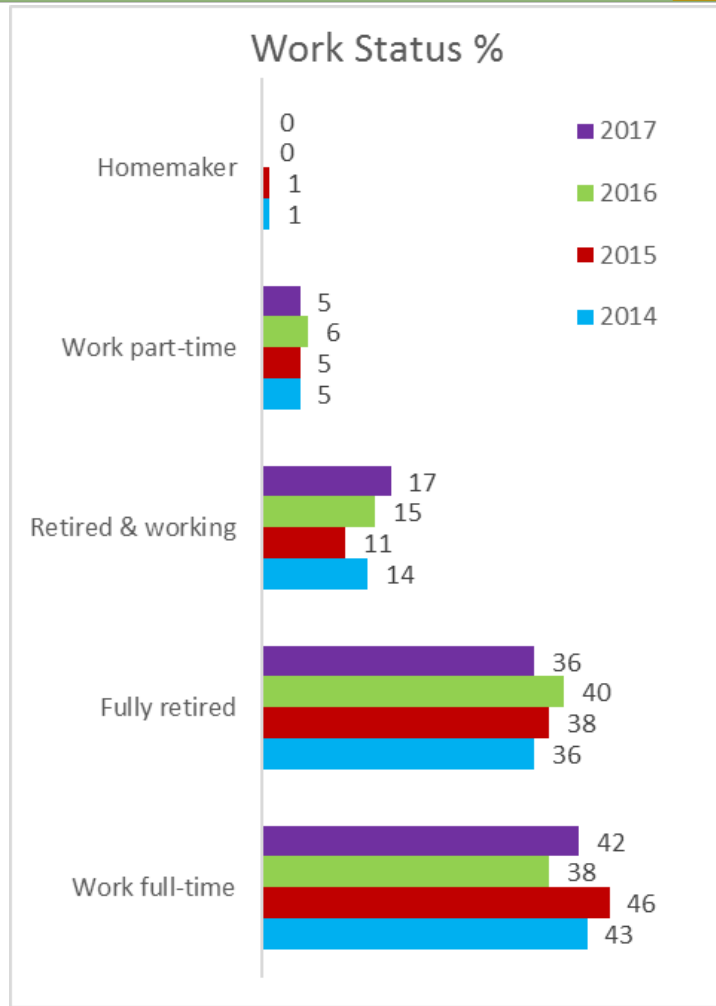
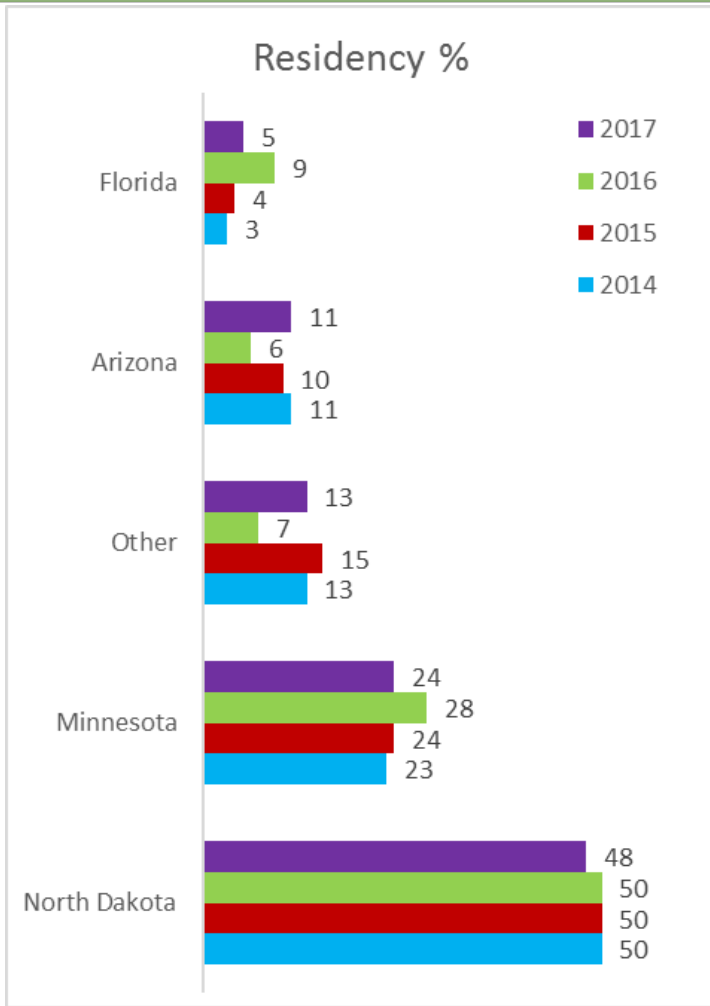
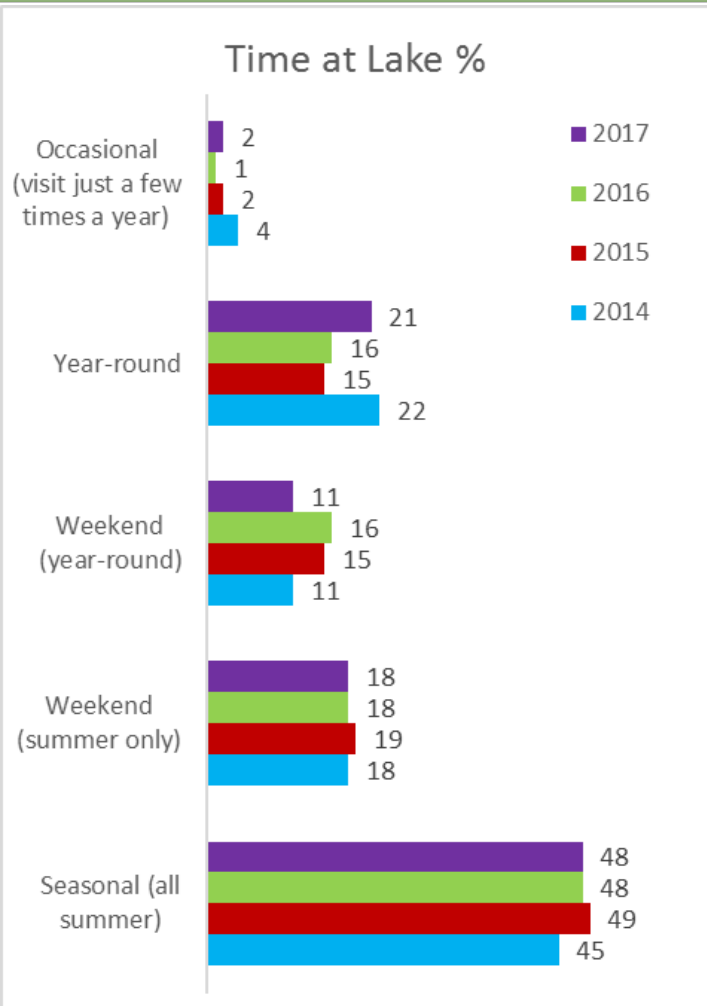


Survey Summary

- Pelican Group of Lakes property owners were surveyed in September of 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017
- The online survey was distributed via their email list
- There were 365 responses in 2017 (~36% of property owners)
- There were 222 responses in 2016 (~22% of property owners)
- There were 366 responses in 2015 (~ 37% of property owners)
- There were 260 responses in 2014 (~ 26% of property owners)
- PLPOA hopes to conduct this survey annually to track changes in Pelican Group of Lakes property owners



Survey Summary



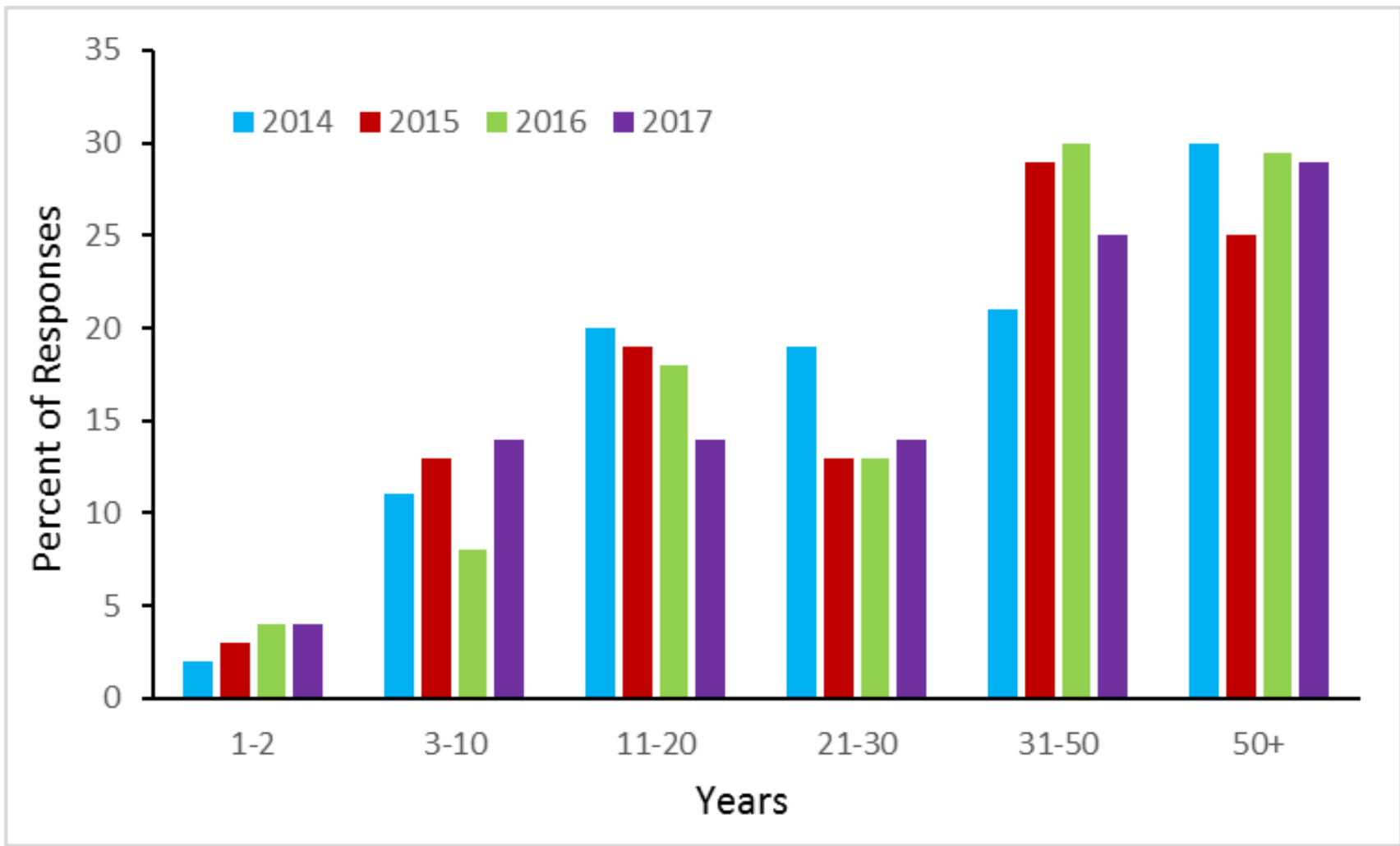
Q1. Which of the following best describes your lake residence status?

Q2: If you are not a year-round resident, where do you live when you're not at the lake

Q6: What is your job status?



Survey Summary

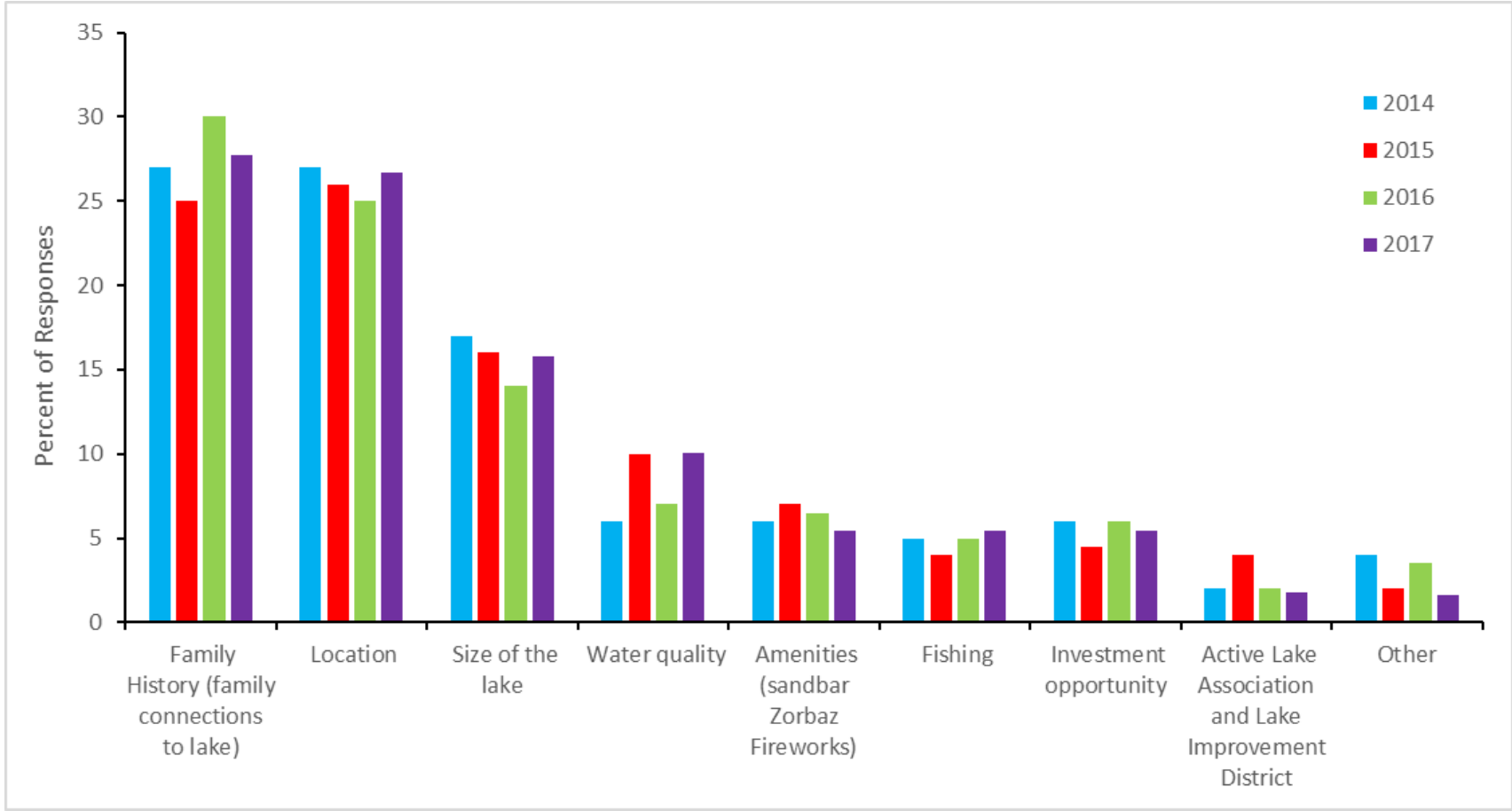


Over half of PLPOA residents have been coming to Pelican Lake for over 30 years

Q5: How many years have you owned property or been coming to the Pelican Group of Lakes"



Survey Summary



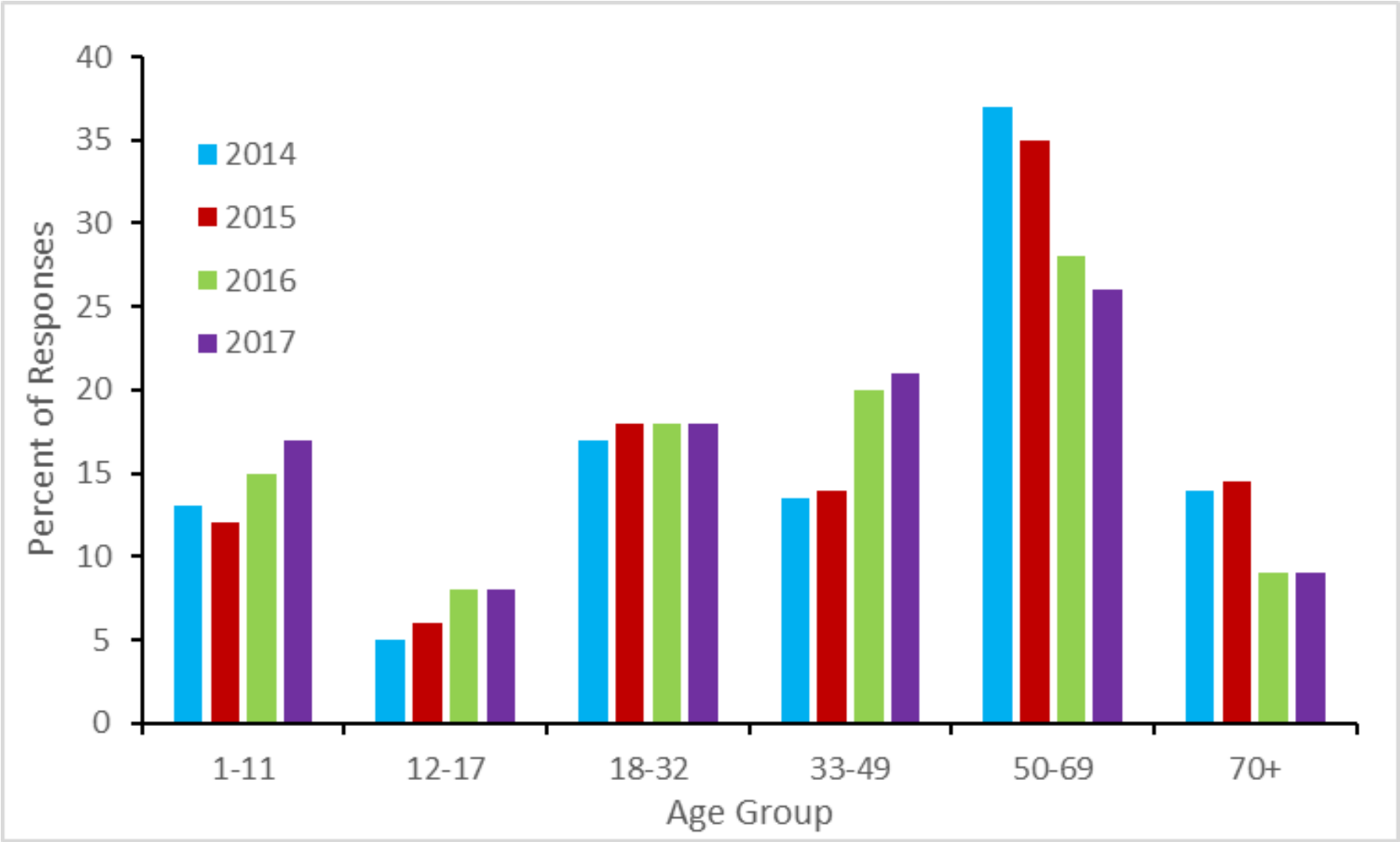
The top 3 reasons PLPOA residents chose Pelican Lake were:

- 1) Family History
- 2) Location
- 3) Size of Lake

Q4: Why did you decide to live on the Pelican Group of Lakes (choose your top 3 reasons)?



Survey Summary

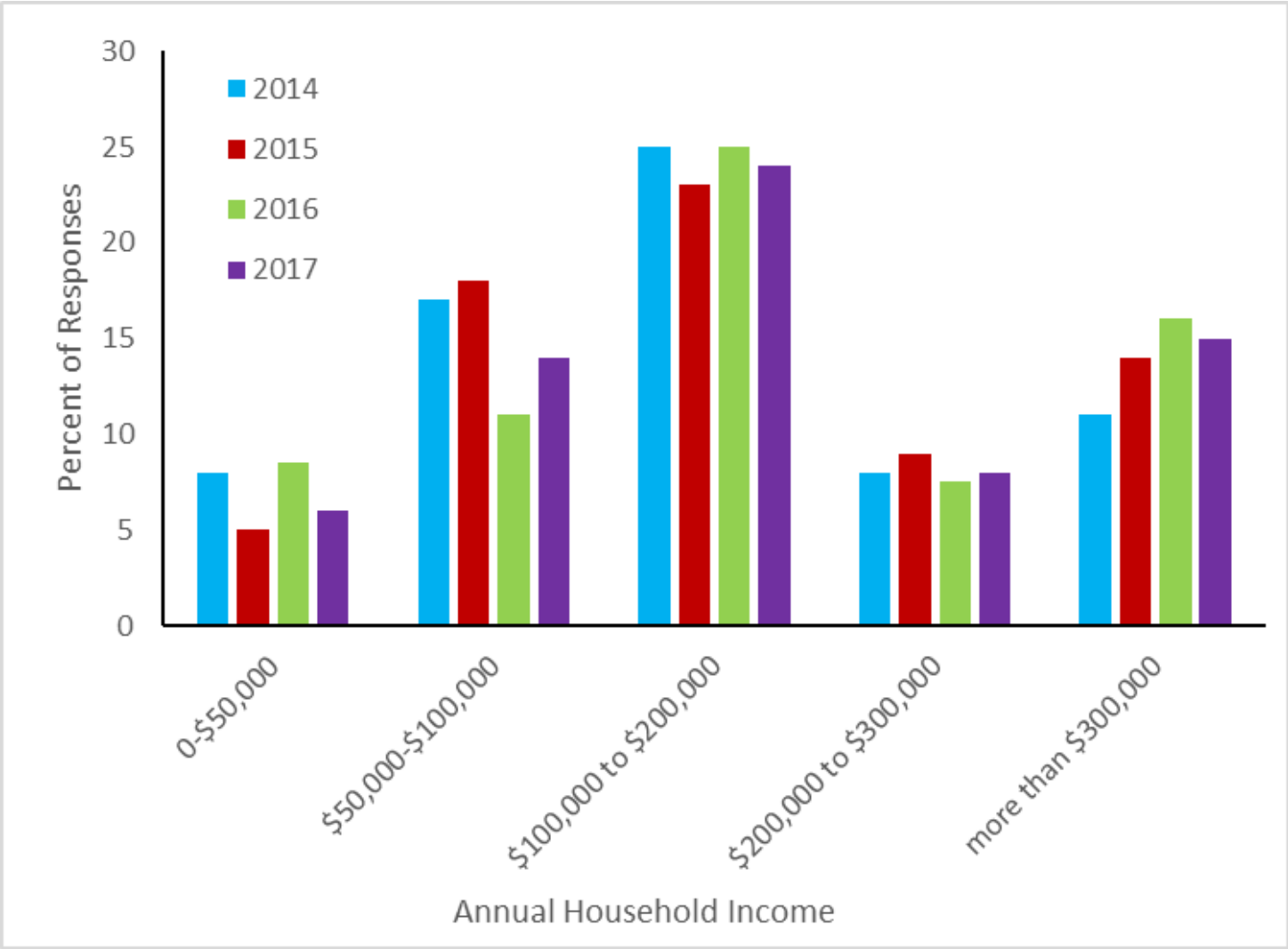


Half of PLPOA residents are over 50 years of age

Q10: Please list the number of your household members in each of the following age categories:



Survey Summary



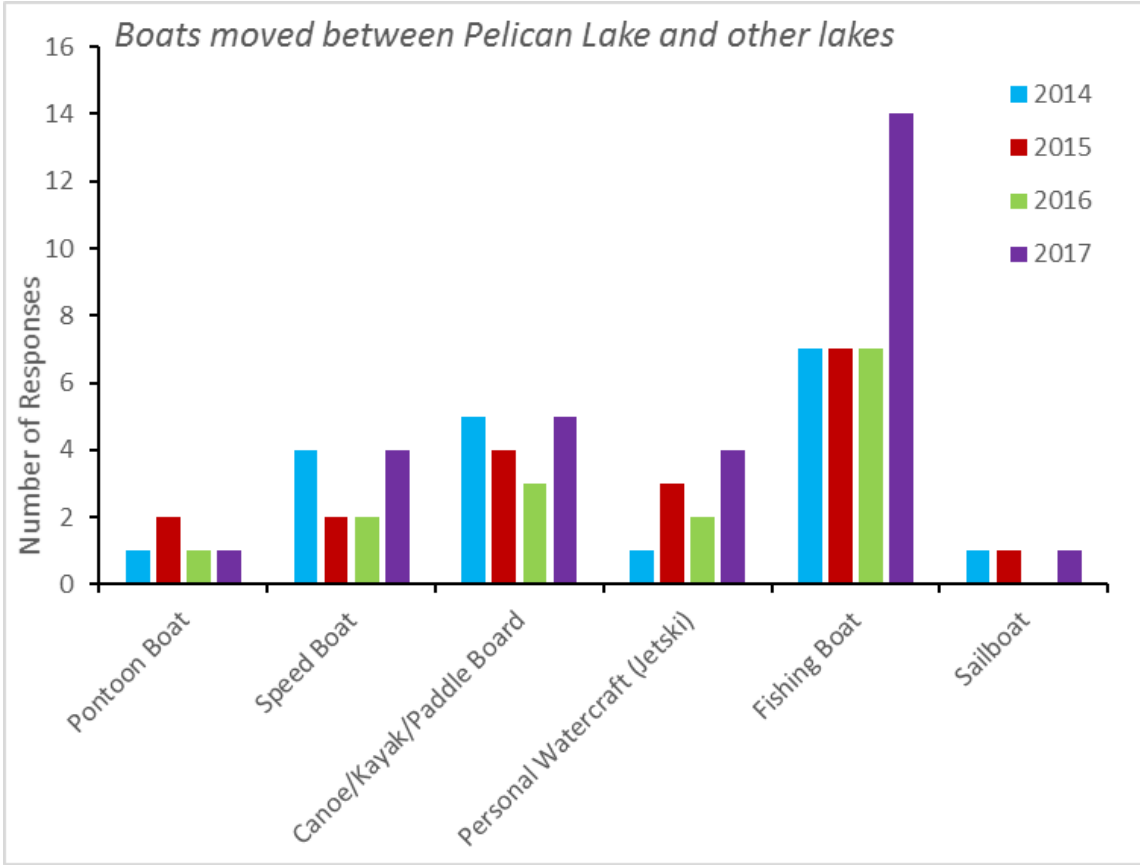
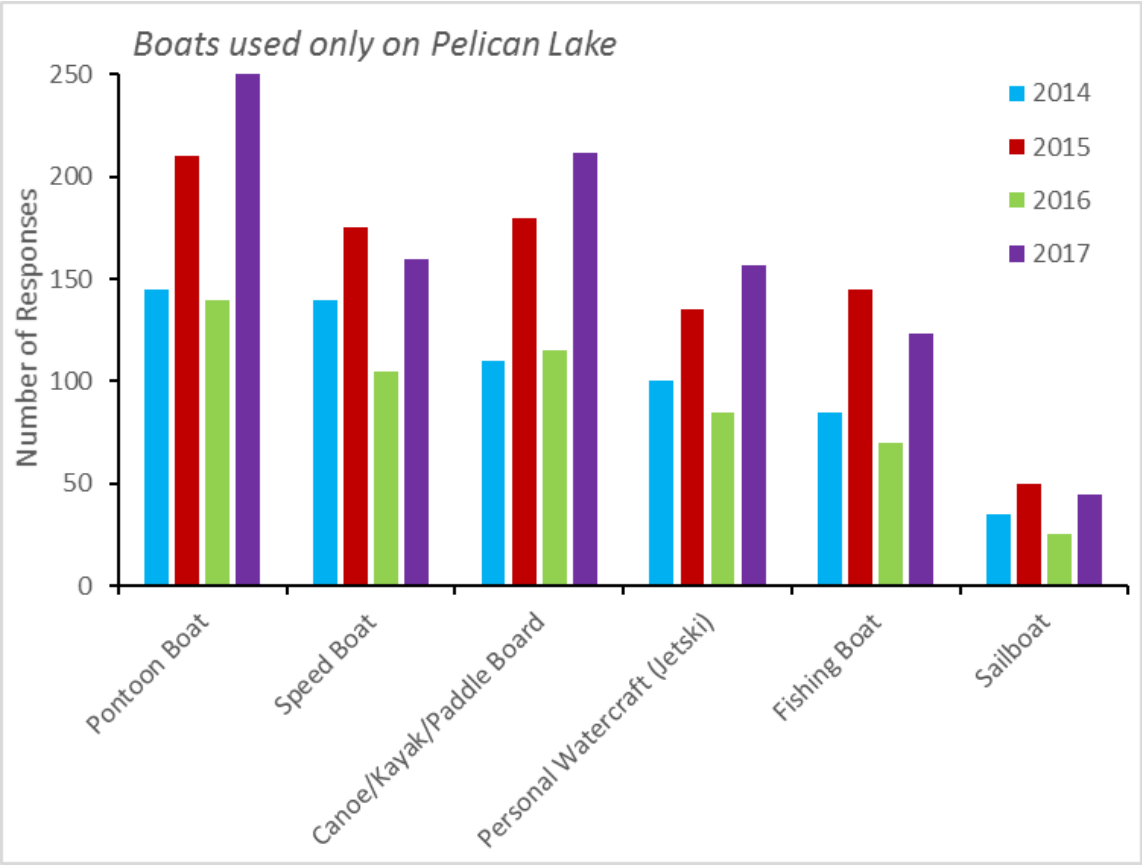
Q11: What is your total household income?"



The most common annual income reported for PLPOA residence was between \$100,000 and \$200,000*

**Approximately 33% of respondents selected "Prefer not to answer"*

Survey Summary

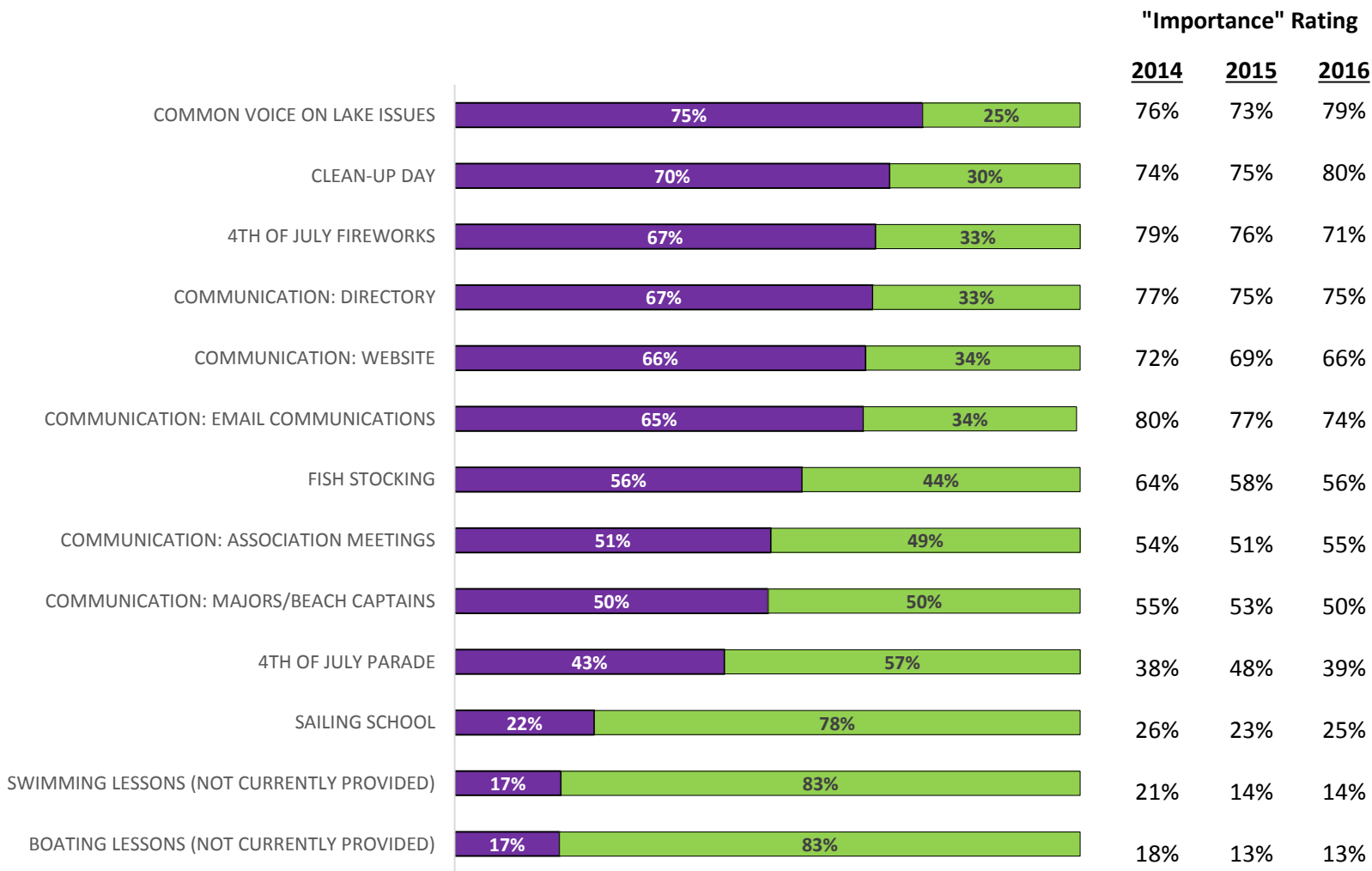


Most boats on Pelican Lake are only used on Pelican Lake

Q16: What type of watercraft do you use on the lake, and do you ever trailer it to other lakes"



Survey Summary



The most important service PLPOA provides is

“A Common Voice on Lake Issues”

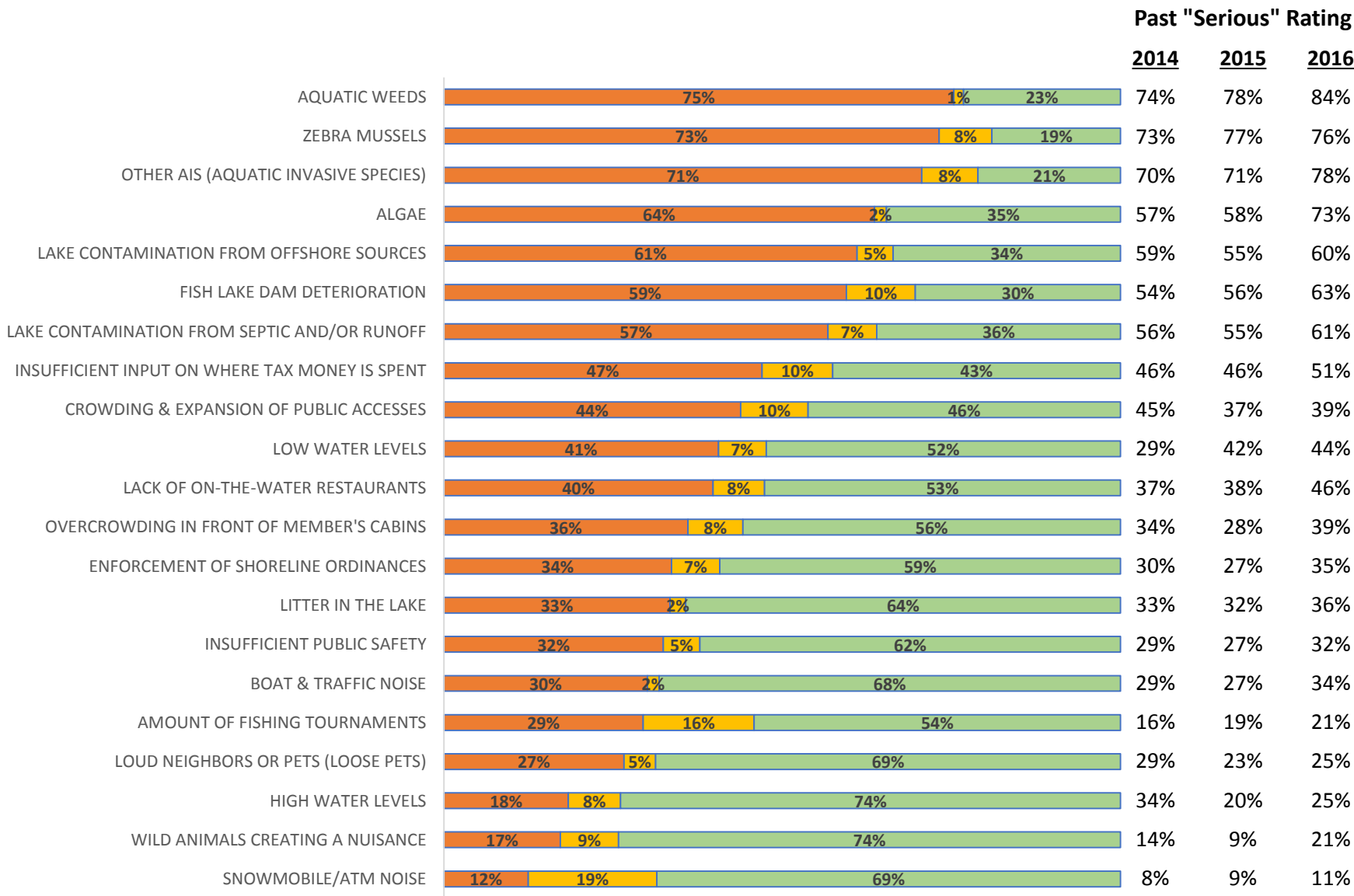
Q14: PLPOA currently supports or provides the following activities and services for Pelican Group of Lakes. We'd like you to rate them as to how important they are to you



Important = top 2 response categories

Less Important = bottom 3 response categories

Survey Summary



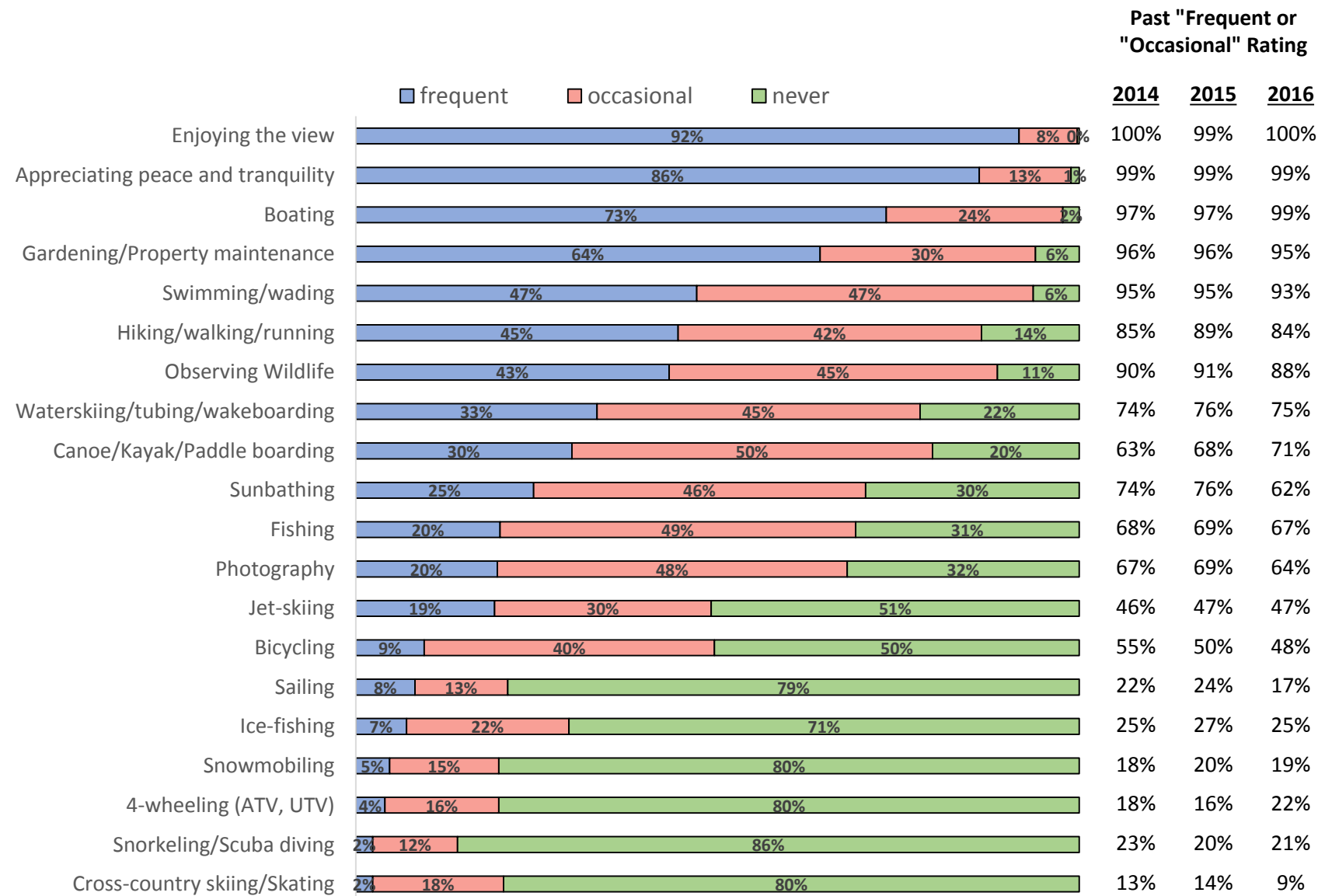
The most serious issues on Pelican Lake are aquatic weeds and invasive species

More Serious = top 2 response categories
No Opinion = middle response category
Less Serious = bottom 2 response categories

Q27. Rate your feelings about the seriousness of the following concerns which may be facing the Pelican Group of Lakes"



Survey Summary

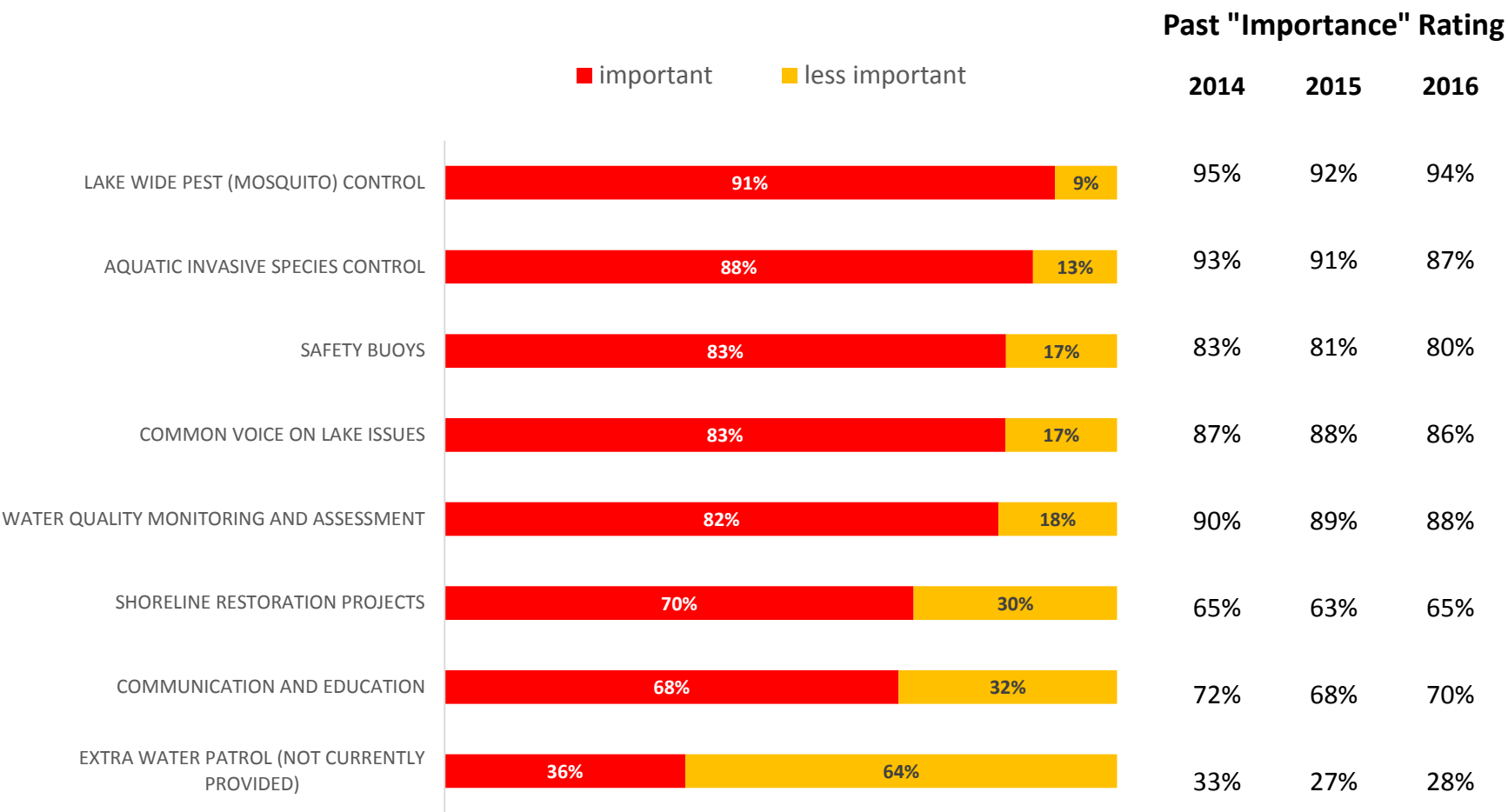


PLPOA residents like to enjoy the view and appreciate the peace and tranquility

Q28: Indicate the amount of time you spend doing the following activities at the lake



Survey Summary



The most important services that PGOLID provides are mosquito control and invasive species control

Q15: The Pelican Group of Lakes Improvement District (PGOLID) currently provides the following services for Pelican Group of Lakes. We'd like you to rate them as to how important they are to you"



Important = top 2 response categories
Less Important = bottom 3 response categories

New Questions in 2017

Do you think that moving water related pieces of equipment (dock, lift, raft) is a serious risk to the spread of AIS?



Are you aware that selling a water related piece of equipment (dock, lift, raft) requires cleaning and 21 day drying before it is reinstalled in another lake?



Do you think PLPOA is doing enough to stop AIS?



Do you think PGOLID is doing enough to stop AIS?



Do you think the county should increase the inspection, and dry down requirements, and require a larger fine for violators of this law?



Do you think the state is doing enough to stop Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)?



Do you think the County is doing enough to stop AIS?



Why Three Groups? Good question...

- Good cop/bad cop.....maybe good, bad and ugly??
- **Association:** “At will” group, no requirements to post meetings, provide input to general public. Flexible rules and operations. Members are “vested” with their \$50 membership dues, (and property ownership).
- **LID:** Tax and Spend legal authority, must follow state/county rules for open meeting laws etc. “unit of government”....
- **Foundation:** Must meet tax exempt status of 501 C3. Provides ability to own land and assets to be used to protect the resource for future generations.

Jeff Forester

*Executive Director, MN Lakes and Rivers
Advocates*



MN Lakes & Rivers Advocates



Protect Our Lake Legacy

www.mnlakesandrivers.org

Lake Associations – What Are They?

Organizations of community members contributing to the preservation of lakes through:

- Volunteerism
- Financial investments
- Education

Lake Associations in Minnesota

- Estimated 500+ across the state, over 100K estimated membership statewide.
- One of the largest volunteer bodies in MN.

However,

- Most of work goes unnoticed.
- Historic lack of communication between them, the public, and policy makers.

Lake Associations – A Huge Resource



Some Results from the Concordia College Study:

- Lake Associations have median annual budget of \$12,500 - \$6.25 Million in direct lake contributions,
- About \$400K annually for fish stocking,
- Lake Associations contribute about 1.2 million volunteer hours annually.

Collaborations

Ranked Order of Top 7 Organizations Worked With

- 1) DNR
- 2) County Government Units (County Commissioner, Emergency Management).
- 3) Soil Watershed Districts
- 4) Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates
- 5) Law Enforcement (Sheriff, Police)
- 6) City Government Units
- 7) Other State Governmental Units

Concerns with the DNR

“The Association and its membership have really stepped up to the AIS threat that we have for the other lakes. However, DNR continues to get in the way of providing help and guidance. We need active support from the legislature to fix the DNR. Protecting the natural resources should be the main goal of DNR rather than access.”

Concerns with Insufficient Support

“MN lakes are public waters and too much responsibility is shouldered by lake homeowners to attempt to adequately protect the lake's natural ecosystem. Even with more authority there would be insufficient volunteer hours to manage the granted authorities and lack of expertise to properly manage the project(s).”

Power Analysis – Resource Managers



Current State



Ideal State

- Lack of time, resources to get work done
 - Controversy
 - Working in Politically charged organization
 - Siloed efforts
- Partnerships
 - Public Support
 - Broad Constituency
 - Coordination and Communication between agencies/departments and institutions

Power Analysis – Associations



Current State



Ideal State

- Lack of time, resources to get work done
- Mounting problems
- Political power/No authority
- Bear costs of degraded lakes and management
- Lack of expertise

Partnerships

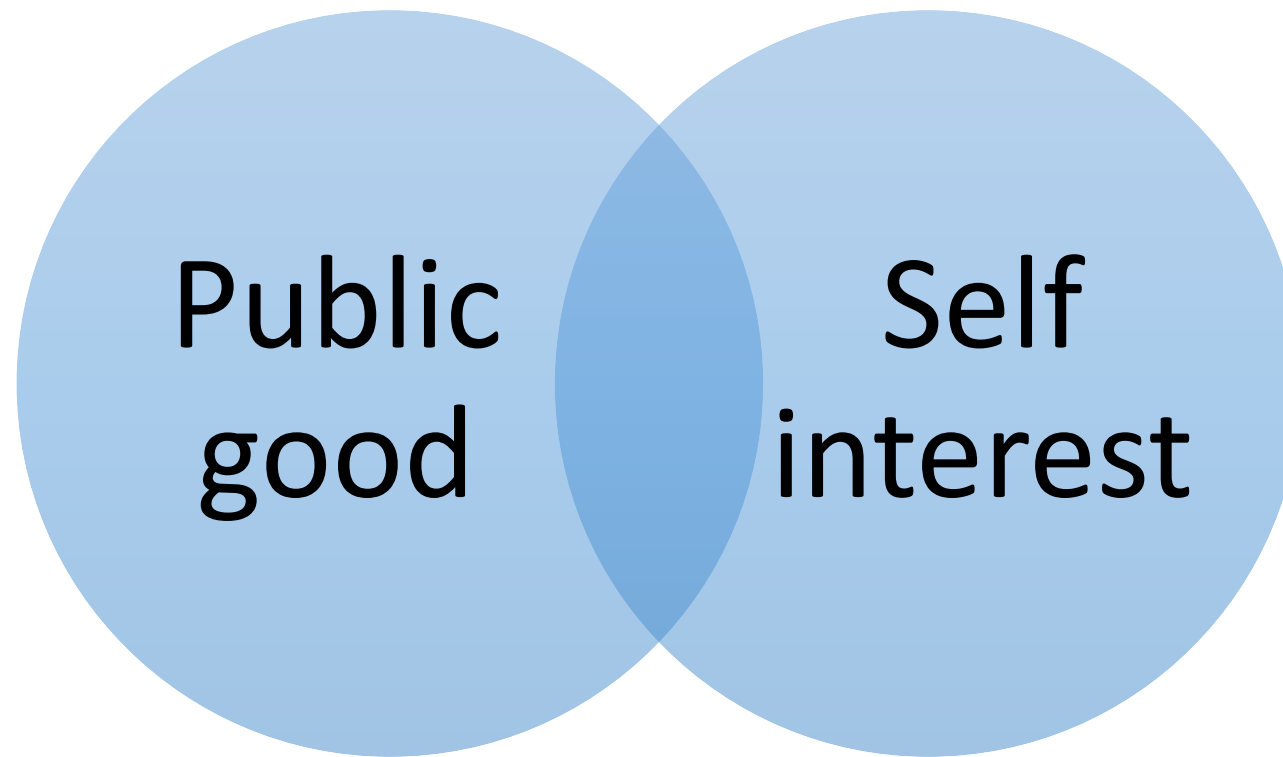
Progress achieving goals

Authority

Share costs/ liability

Capacity/training

Area Where Public Policy Is Made



Civic Governance Pilot Project

Purpose: Develop the civic imagination, leadership, and infrastructure needed to organize sustainable partnerships between government and community with the capacity to address complex public policy issues.

- **Civic:** The work of citizens. “Civic” is a qualifier that indicates that our work is framed in the tension between democratic principles and develops the capacity of the *populous* to govern for the good of the whole within that tension.
- **Govern:** To rule over by right of authority; to exercise a directing or restraining influence over; to guide; to define problems, contribute to solutions and act as a policy maker.
- **Policy:** Principled course of action. Policies provide a compass for governance; they are the result of taking bearing and setting direction. They provide the basis for rewards and sanctions. Policies require continual evaluation and feedback. Individuals and institutions have policies.
- **Agenda:** Plan for action. “We believe in this principled course of action (policy) and therefore we will do x, y and z (agenda).”

Civic Standards guide all decision-making



- All those impacted by the problem are stakeholders and help define the problem in light of civic principles and the realities of their situation.
- All stakeholders are accountable for contributing resources (leadership/time, knowledge, constituencies & dollars) to solve the problem.
- All stakeholders are engaged in decision-making and policy-making that contributes to the common good. (Civic leaders take primary responsibility to organize transparency and accountability in the process of governance.)
- All stakeholders implement policies grounded in civic principles in the places where they have the authority to act.

Working towards the ideal state



- Defines problems and jointly contributes resources for the public good - more work gets done.
- Builds civic infrastructure, improves trust, develops broad cross sector base.
- Organizes community support for work early, before it happens.
- Builds community support for water preservation/restoration efforts.
- Fills gaps between siloed departments, agencies, organizations, and public and organizes effort and resources between them.
- Provides way to hold partners accountable and manage tension between public good and self interest – manages controversy.

Roundtable Discussion



- Highlight successes in the room
- Question: How can lake organizations be more effective at achieving like goals?
 - What resources are available?
 - What are the barriers to success?
- What is one thing you would like to see change...
 - With your lake group?
 - With lake groups statewide?

Thank You!

Dan Cibulka

763-567-5369

dcibulka@sherburneswcd.org



Jeff Forester

612-961-6144

jeff@mnlakesandrivers.org



Dave Majkrzak

701-238-8406

davidmajkrzak@msn.com



Special thanks to:

FRESHWATER