

Waterford Waterway Management District Proposed Dredging Project Riparian Owner Survey

Center for Political Science and Public Policy Research

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Survey and Analysis completed summer/fall 2016

Introduction

The Waterford Waterway Management District (WWMD) contracted the Center for Political Science and Public Policy Research (CPSPPR) at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater to design and implement a survey of riparian owners' knowledge and attitudes regarding a proposed dredging project. The proposed project will be funded through various sources including assessments on riparian owners.

Riparian owners were informed within the survey instrument about the proposed dredging project and were provided with a website address for additional information. The intent of the survey was to provide the WWMD with a starting point for gauging riparian owner understanding of the proposed dredging project and to get a sense of the level of riparian owners' attitudes about funding support.

The following is a description of the survey administration and methodology as well as an analysis of survey findings.

Survey Registration and Distribution

A two-step process was implemented for survey registration and distribution in order to protect the integrity of the survey results. Riparian owners were invited to register for the WWMD Dredging Survey. The formal invitation came via a post card sent to all riparian owners informing them that they had the opportunity to register to receive the survey link through Friday, August 12, 2016. In addition, information about registration was disseminated through social media, traditional media, announcements at various events and one-on-one conversations. Those who preferred a paper copy of the survey were able to make that request.

All registrants were verified using multiple methods in an attempt to eliminate duplicate or inappropriate registrations. Each registrant was matched against the official list of riparian owners.¹ Duplicate registrations with the same e-mail address, of which there were many, were removed. The same may be said for duplicate registrations at the same physical address. There were some riparian owners who requested paper surveys and also registered online. Those duplicates were purged later in the process because paper surveys were reviewed after the close of the online survey.

The low number of riparian owners who registered by the original registration closing date of August 12, 2016 coupled with confusion among some riparian owners regarding the registration process lead to an extension of the registration deadline to August 26, 2016. This meant that registration continued while the survey was being disseminated. Generally, this does not represent best practice but was allowed in the interests of gaining the greatest number of respondents.

The multi-stage registrant review process did not allow for registrants to receive surveys immediately after registration. Instead, because registration continued past the original closing date, the survey was distributed in five “waves” (August 12, August 17, August 22, August 26 and August 29). In total, 372 surveys were e-mailed to registrants. Eighty five percent of those who received a link accessed the survey and at least partially completed it. A second review of responses determined that a small number of those who completed the survey were not in fact riparian owners and they were excluded from the analysis. Twenty seven people requested and received paper surveys. Not all paper surveys were returned and of those that were, a small number were altered so that it was not possible to verify the registrant and a few were from riparian owners who also completed the online version of the survey. In these instances the paper surveys were excluded from the analysis. Once this process was complete, there were 316 surveys included in the analysis presented in the following pages.²

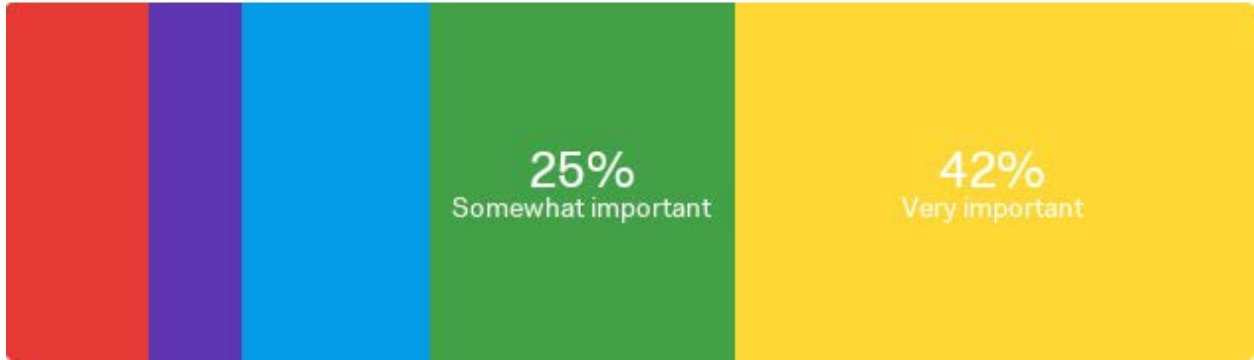
¹ Because the official list did not always include a Waterford address additional checks were put in place to verify the registrant including using GIS mapping to determine if the property address provided (1) was in fact a legitimate property address and (2) had clear water access.

² As the discussion above illustrates, great care was taken to ensure the integrity of the survey registration and distribution. It is important to note, however, that there is always the potential for a survey to be completed by someone who was not a part of the targeted population or who was able to submit multiple registrations even with the protections put in place.

Results

Waterway Usage. People enjoy the waterways for a variety of activities. Please indicate for each item the level of importance for your household.

Fishing



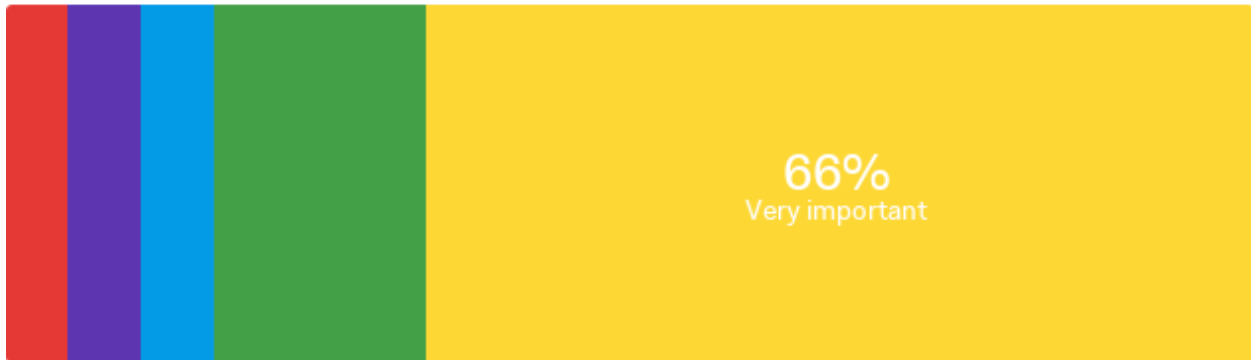
Hunting



Boating



Recreation (e.g. swimming, water skiing, tubing, etc.)



Enjoyment of nature/wildlife



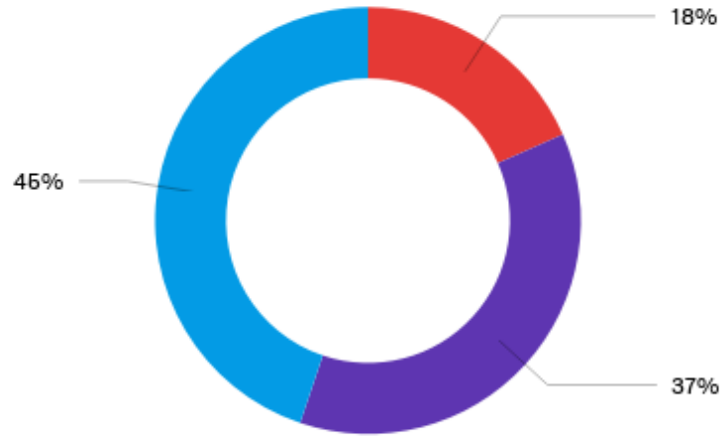
Other ways in which riparian owners enjoy the waterways:

Views/Aesthetics/Scenery	20%* (11)
Peace/Serenity/Relaxation	18% (10)
Canoeing/Kayaking/Water Skiing/Jet Ski/Scuba	18% (10)
Winter Sports	14% (8)
Bird Watching	7% (4)
Entertaining	5% (3)
Fishing/Ice Fishing	5% (3)

*Percentages are calculated using the total number of responses (56). Only those responses of three or greater within a category are included in the table.

The table above reports the most common responses from riparian owners who reported “other” uses of their properties and the waterways. Only those responses of three or greater in a category were included. As we can see from these data, riparian owners enjoy the scenery and the recreational opportunities the waterways afford. They also indicate a great appreciation for the wildlife, particularly bird watching, in the waterway areas. In addition to those responses listed in the table above, some owners also stated that they enjoy the waterways for: “paying less taxes”, “close to large cities”, “visiting restaurants”, “navigation of waterways”, “waterway health”, “safety”, and “PWC.”

Percent of respondents in each property tier.

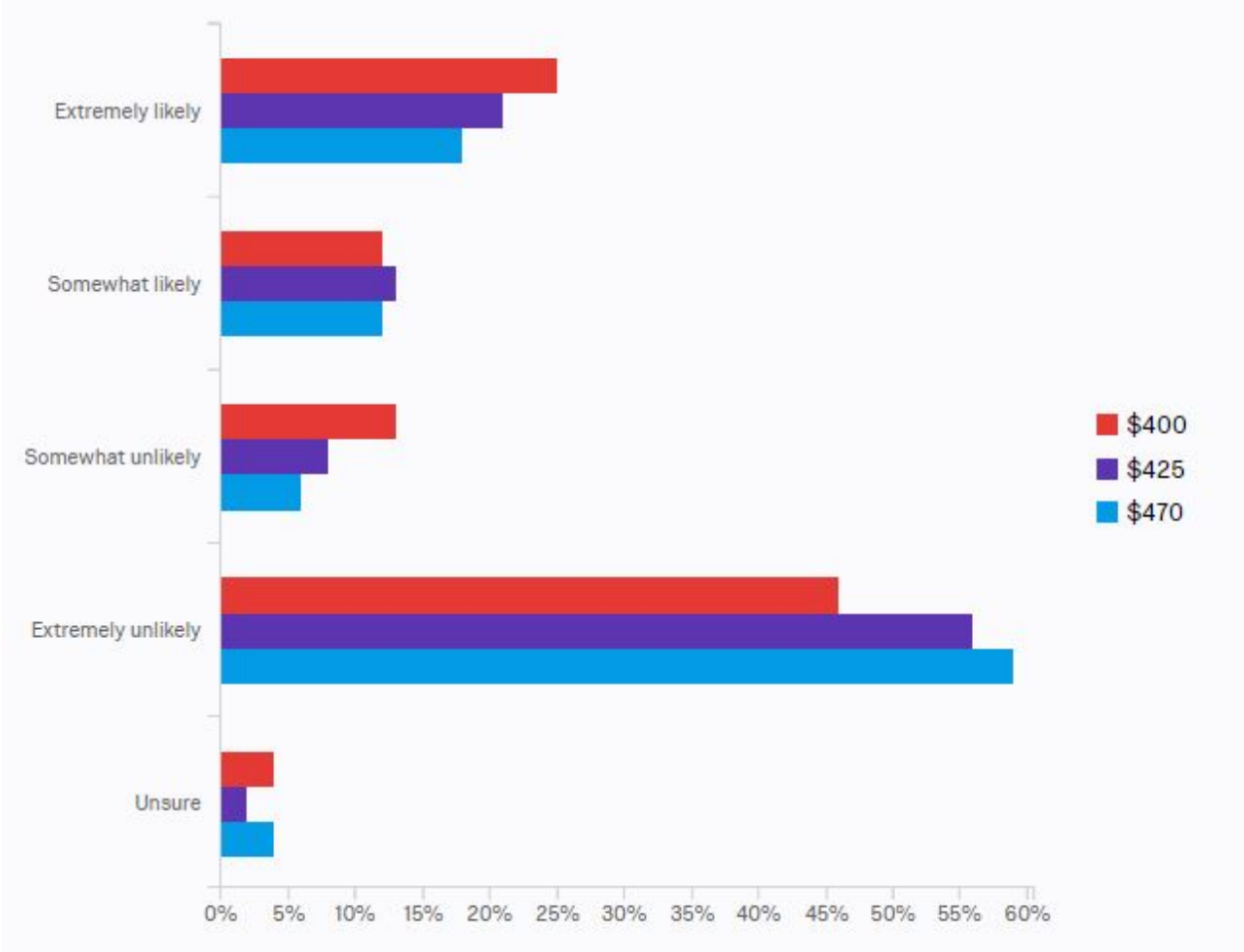


- Tier 1 - Properties on Tichigan Lake that are on clear water and do not have any dredging work required in front of their property.
- Tier 2 - Properties on the main channel with direct access to the proposed 100 ft navigational channel.
- Tier 3 - Properties in bays that require 50 ft or 25 ft navigational channels to provide access to the main channel. This includes, but is not limited to, all of Buena Lake, all of Conservancy Bay, and the portions of Tichigan Lake that require dredging work.

Willingness to Support the Dredging Project by Tier

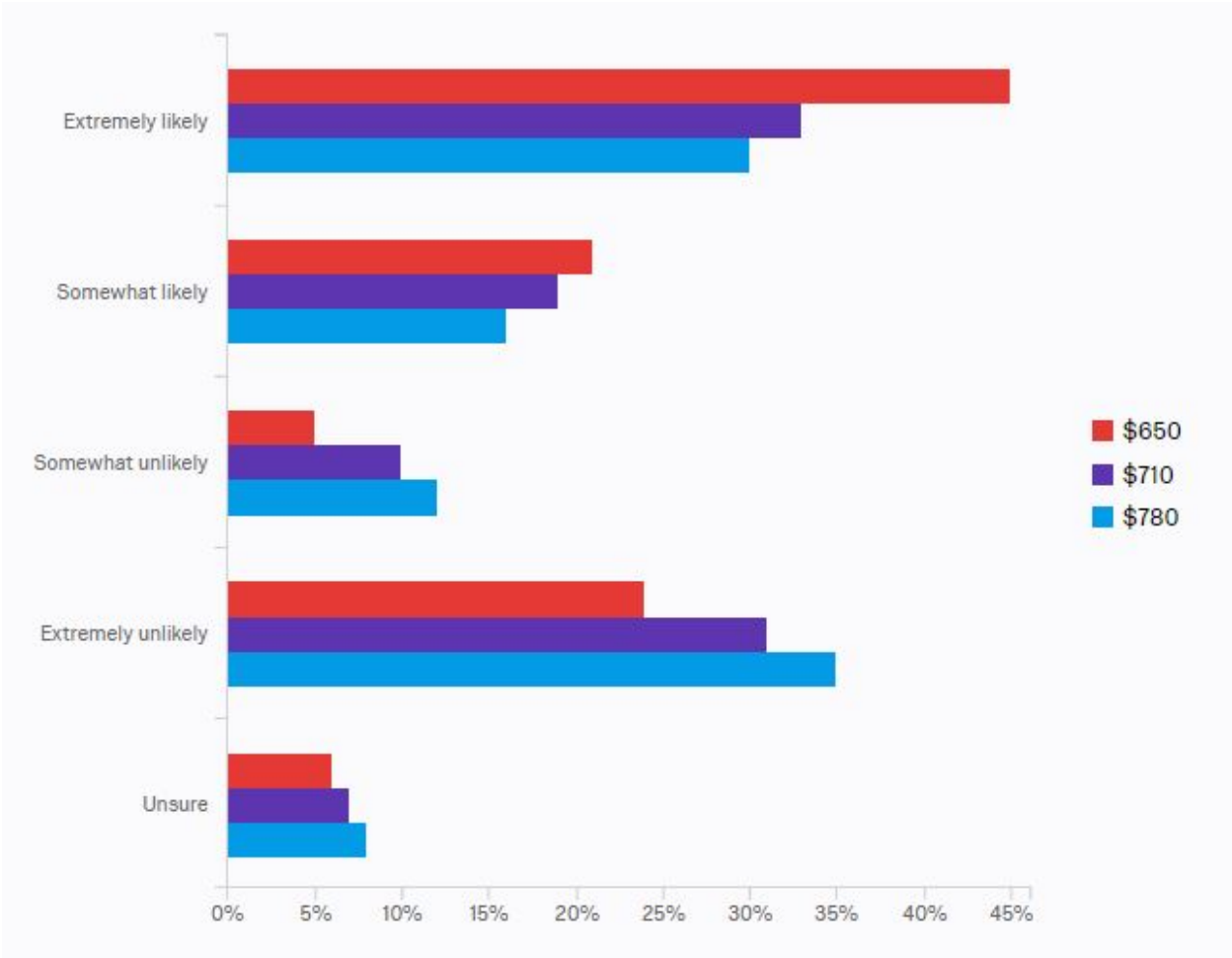
Tier 1.

Annual Contribution	Extremely likely		Somewhat likely		Somewhat unlikely		Extremely unlikely		Unsure		Total
\$400	25%	13	12%	6	13%	7	46%	24	4%	2	52
\$425	21%	10	13%	6	8%	4	56%	27	2%	1	48
\$470	18%	9	12%	6	6%	3	59%	29	4%	2	49



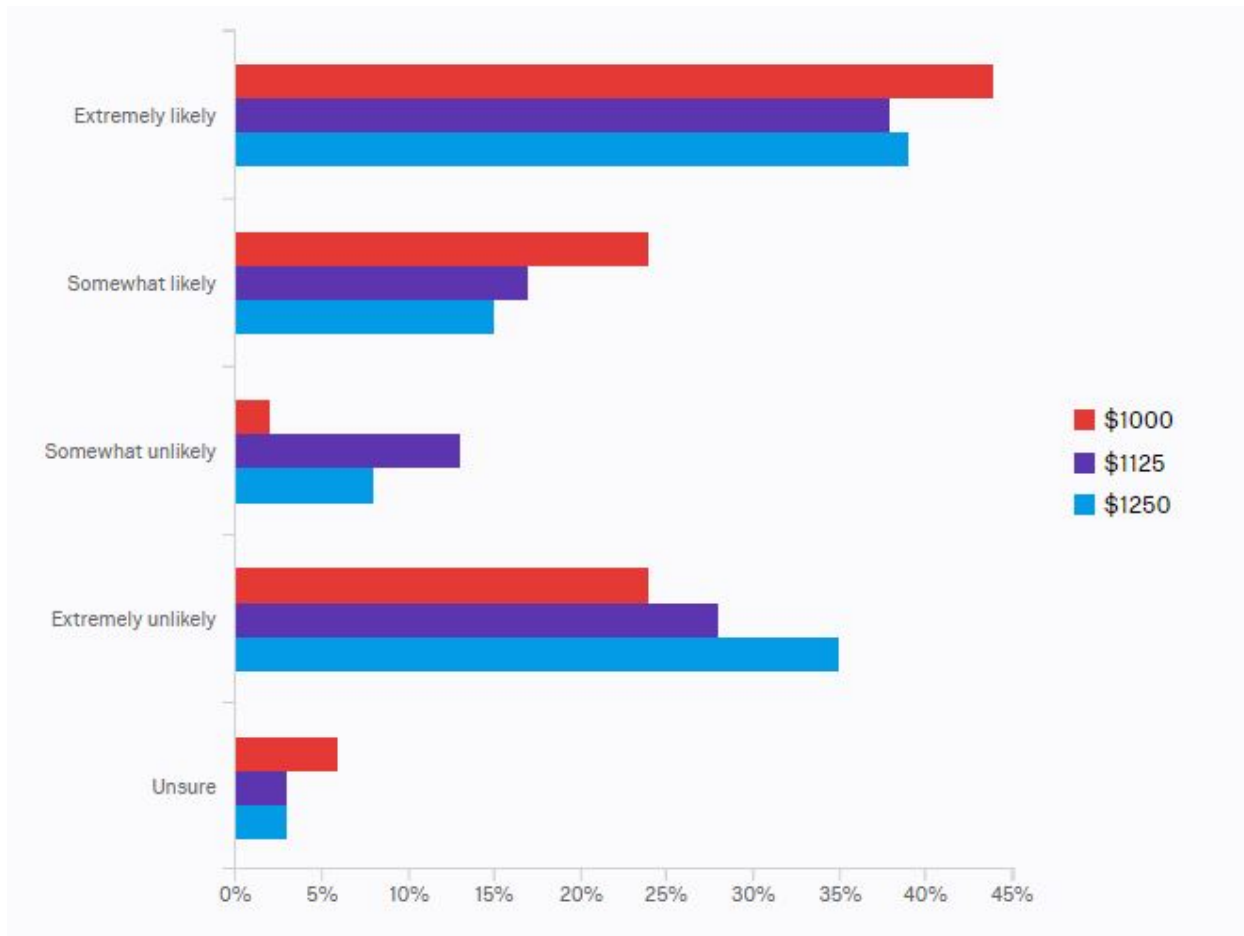
Tier 2.

Annual Contribution	Extremely likely		Somewhat likely		Somewhat unlikely		Extremely unlikely		Unsure		Total
\$650	45%	48	21%	22	5%	5	24%	25	6%	6	106
\$710	33%	34	19%	19	10%	10	31%	32	7%	7	102
\$780	30%	30	16%	16	12%	12	35%	35	8%	8	101

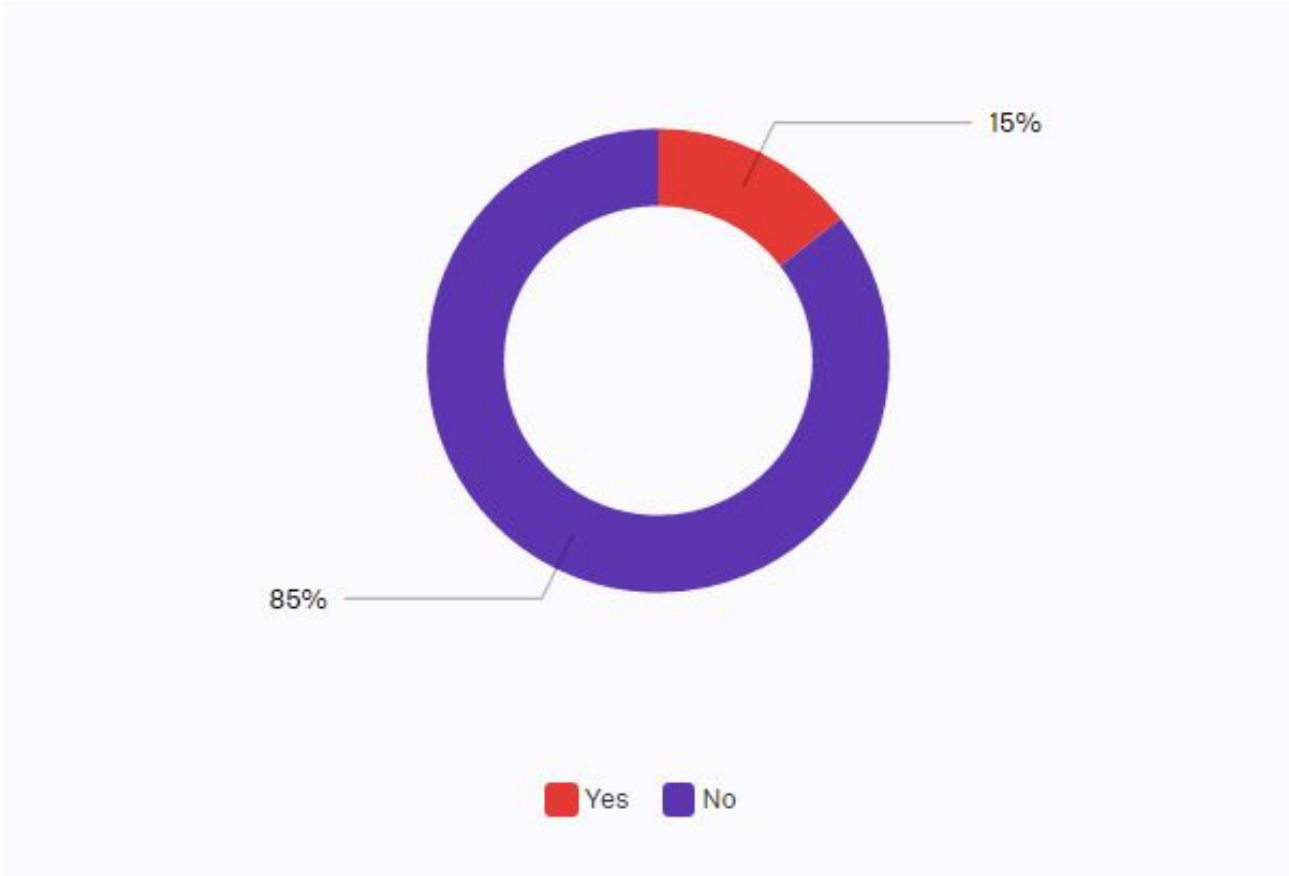


Tier 3.

Annual Contribution	Extremely likely		Somewhat likely		Somewhat unlikely		Extremely unlikely		Unsure		Total
\$1000	44%	56	24%	30	2%	3	24%	31	6%	7	127
\$1125	38%	48	17%	22	13%	17	28%	36	3%	4	127
\$1250	39%	49	15%	19	8%	10	35%	44	3%	4	126



Willingness to contribute additional funds to help those who may be unable to pay.



Riparian owners were also asked to respond to two open-ended questions:

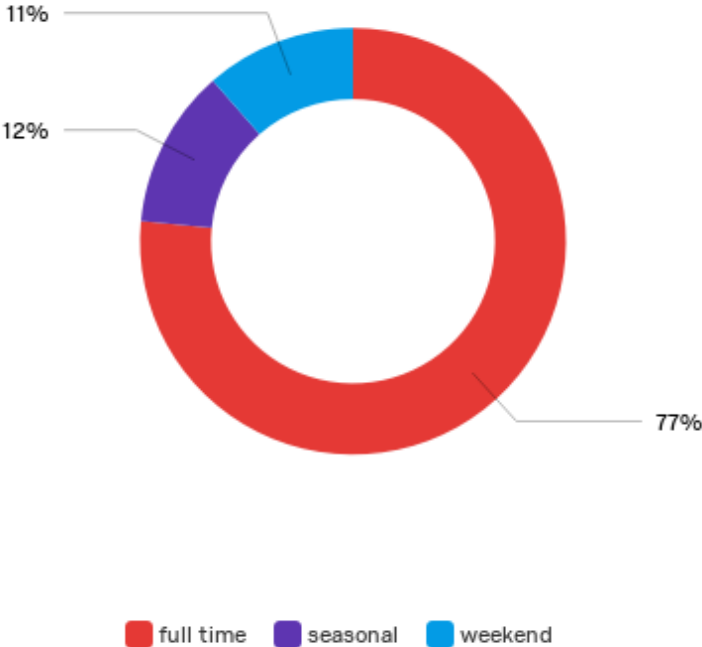
1. Is there any additional information that would help you understand the dredging project better? And
2. What is most important for the Waterford Waterway Management District (WWMD) to consider with respect to the dredging decision?

With respect to the first question, “additional information”, respondents indicated that they would like more information on how costs were calculated, what the depths will be in certain areas/why the depths have been established for some areas, whether or not this dredging project will fix the problem/s, and whether or not they anticipate having to dredge the waterways again (and how soon). Respondents also indicated that they would like more specific information about how the project will impact where their specific properties and water access. Many expressed concern about “silt” and inquired about how the “silt” issue is being, or will be, handled. Concern was also noted about the timeline and about the need for additional studies before committing to the project. Costs were also addressed and some stated that they did not understand why others in surrounding neighborhoods/communities who use the waterways were not being asked to contribute, while others indicated that they thought the project should be paid for by the state. Some also reported they would not contribute to the project whatsoever. Finally, several respondents stated that they did not need any additional information and a few even complimented the WWMD for the information it has provided.

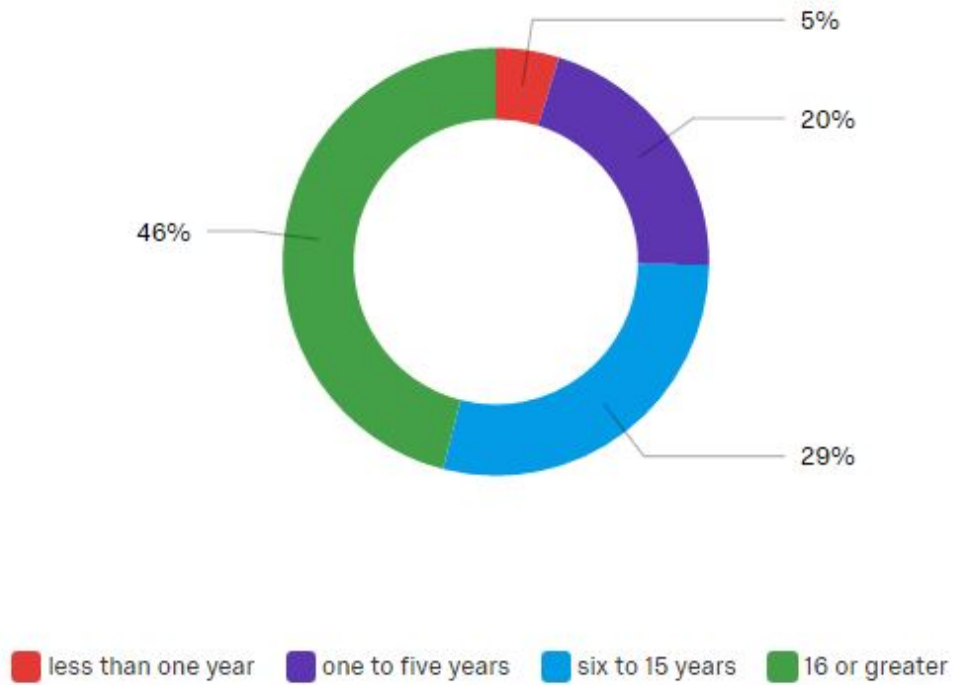
When asked what is “most important for WWMD to consider with respect to the dredging decision” riparian owners focused primarily on the project’s cost. These responses were often specific to a particular owner’s circumstances; however, some indicated concern about the cost on property owners with lower or fixed incomes. Others noted the impact the costs may have on property owners’ families in the future (e.g., older property owners with heirs who may inherit the property and assessments). Additionally, several respondents noted the importance of the dredging project on water quality, local vegetation, and local wildlife. Returning to responses about project costs, several respondents suggested that the WWMD explore applying for grants or other aid, while many also argued that the state should be responsible for funding the dredging project. As with the previous open-ended question, there were many pointed and specific answers that are difficult to quantify or summarize given their specificity.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

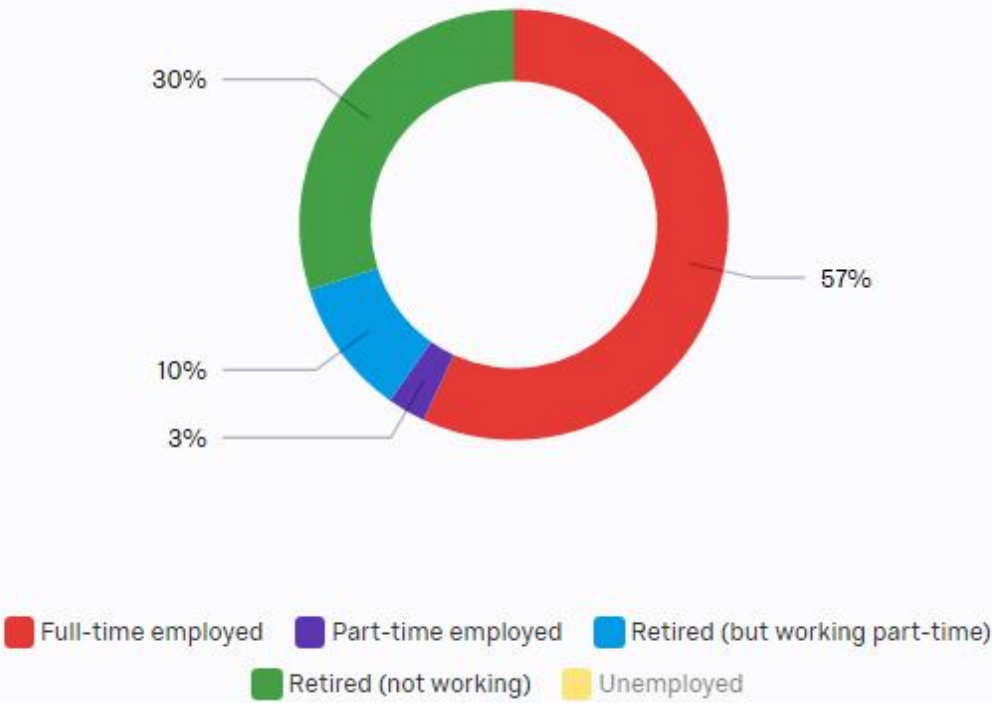
Which best describes the amount of time you spend at this property?



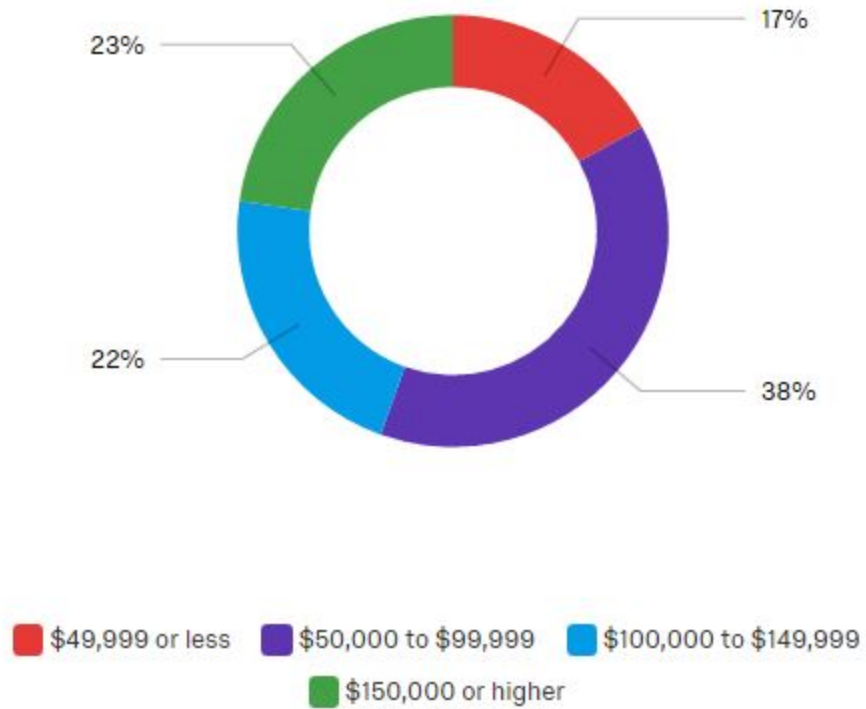
How long have you lived at this property?



Which of the following describes your employment status?



Which of the following best describes your total household income?



Which of the following best describes your age?

