Hollister Ranch Coastal Access Program: Planning Process

The Hollister Ranch Coastal Access Program (HRCAP) is a multi-agency effort to develop a shared vision for future public access to the coast at Hollister Ranch. The planning process includes comprehensive stakeholder and community engagement, an opportunities and constraints analysis, a list of potential recommendations, and the development of regulatory and operational requirements to implement the access program.

Phase 1 Outreach Summary

The first phase of stakeholder and community engagement consisted of stakeholder interviews, two surveys, and a public workshop. This phase was focused on understanding the public's interest for increasing public access to public beaches along the coast of Hollister Ranch, as well as their perceived benefits, concerns, and possible opportunities for an access program.

Phase 1 Outreach Timeline

Stakeholder Interviews

Prior to general public stakeholder engagement, interviews were conducted in December of 2019 with representatives, residents, and operations managers of Hollister Ranch, concerned non-profit organizations representing coastal access, social equity, and environmental concerns, the Native American Chumash community, and local government. These interviews were conducted by a facilitator, are considered confidential, and are not summarized in this document.

Survey 1

Survey 1 asked about 1) desired coastal experiences, 2) the importance of program objectives such as addressing environmental, cultural, and private property concerns, and 3) the importance of stakeholder consensus for the final program.

Survey 1 was distributed via an opt-in listserv that included members of the public who had previously contacted California Coastal Commission or the State Coastal Conservancy regarding Hollister Ranch, identified stakeholders from special stakeholder groups, and Santa Barbara County officials. Survey 1 was also distributed to the State Coastal

Conservancy's email contact list. Survey 1 resulted in 602 responses. Full survey results are provided in Appendix 1 of this document.

Public Workshop #1

The first public workshop was an in-person "World Café" event held at the Goleta Valley Community Center in Santa Barbara County and was attended by approximately 175 stakeholders. The World Café format – which is designed to look and feel like a social event with small groups of 6 - 8 people seated at tables - benefits collaborative decision-making in that it gives guidance and control of conversation to stakeholder attendees. Individuals were asked to switch tables and groups between each of 3 prompting questions asked by the event facilitator, so that a different mixture of viewpoints was present for each question at each table.

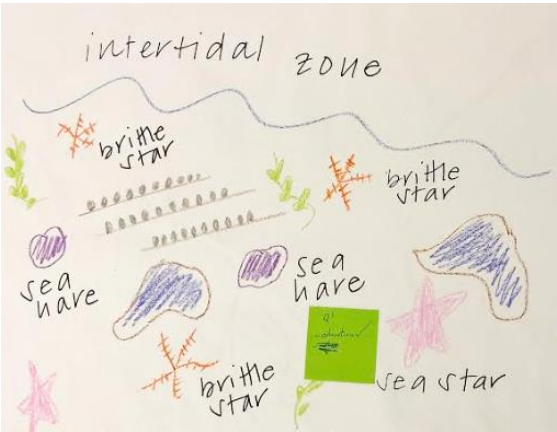
The 3 prompting questions were asked as follows:

1. Thinking about the potential benefits of increased coastal access through Hollister Ranch, what is the first benefit that comes to mind?
2. Thinking about the potential concerns of increased coastal access through Hollister Ranch, what is a concern that comes to mind for you?
3. Based on both the potential benefits and concerns you have heard so far, can you think of an activity or opportunity that would work well for increased coastal access through Hollister Ranch?

After the last question, attendees were asked to participate in a visualization exercise with their table groups. This visualization exercise involved sketching or writing on a large piece of paper their answers to Question 3. Table groups were given the chance to present their sketches to all in attendance.

Recordkeeping for World Cafe Workshop was conducted in three ways. First, attendees were asked to write their short answers to each question on an index card, which were used in the discussion then collected by consultant staff, categorized, and displayed by category on a wall in the venue during the event. Secondly, an assigned table scribe notated the

conversations while also helping to clarify the prompting question if needed. Thirdly, the final sketches from the visualization exercise were collected and categorized by theme after the event.



Survey 2

Ideas about benefits, concerns, and opportunities that were generated at the World Café workshop were carried into Survey 2, which opened on April 29, 2020 and closed on May 22, 2020. Survey 2 was distributed via the same method as Survey 1, via an opt-in listserv and to the Coastal Conservancy's full email list. Full survey results are provided in Appendix 2 of this document.

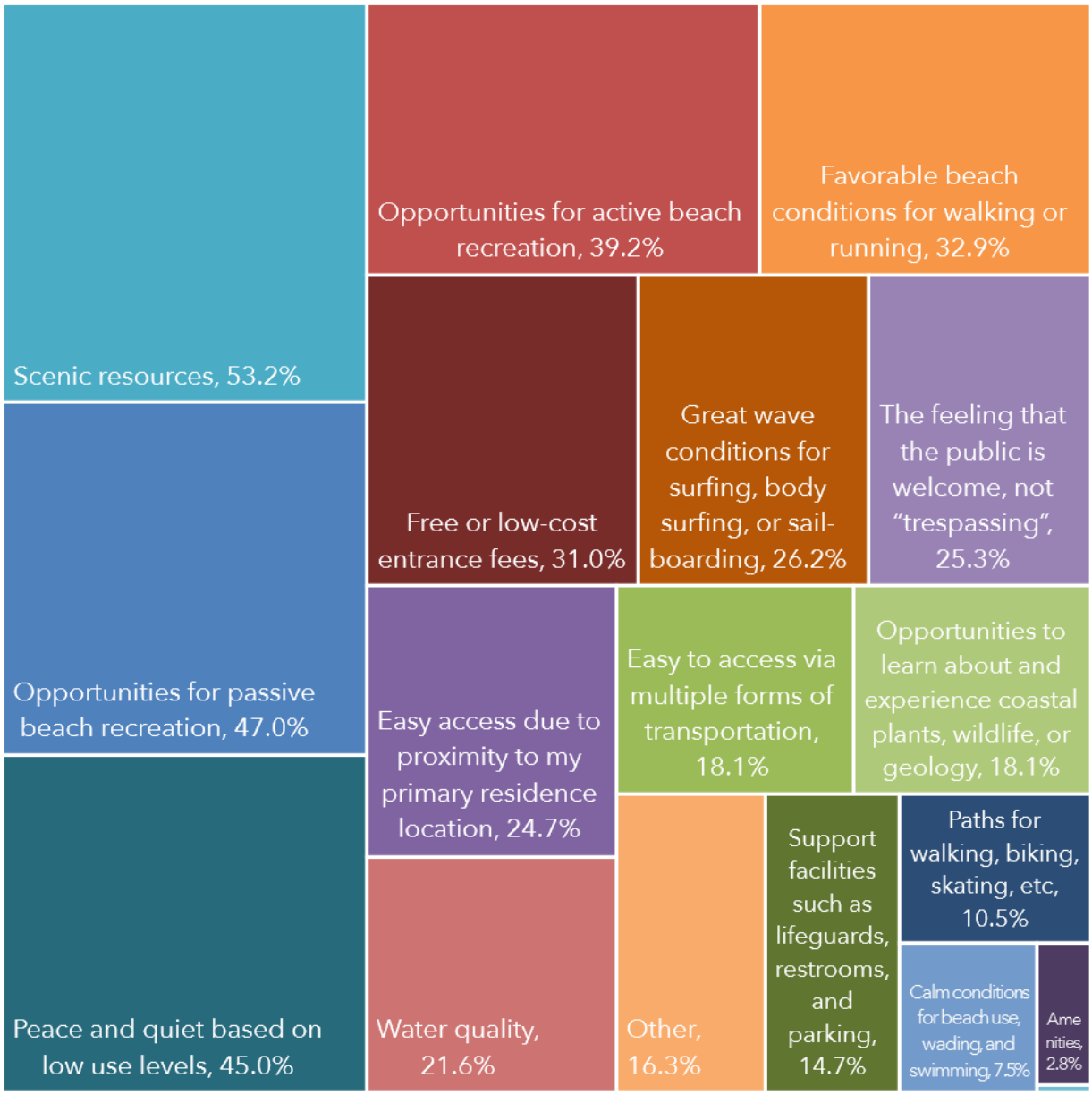
Survey 2 also judged beach user sentiment by asking a two-part question: What is your favorite beach along the California coast? What are the reasons that make that beach one you like to visit? The responses are summarized in the figures below and highlight the familiarity of Survey 2 respondents with Santa Barbara County beaches as well as their inclination for passive beach uses. Note: As presented in this section, these results are out of sequence and so will also be included in sequence as part of Appendix 2.

HRCAP Survey 2, Question 7: What is your favorite beach along the California coast?

Larger text indicates beaches that are more popular among Survey 2 respondents. The top ten most popular beaches identified are in Santa Barbara County.

HRCAP Survey 2, Question 8: What are the reasons that make that beach one you like to visit?

The top 3 reasons identified are scenic resources (53.2%), opportunities for passive beach recreation (47.0%), and peace and quiet based on low use levels (45.0%).



Data Summary Process

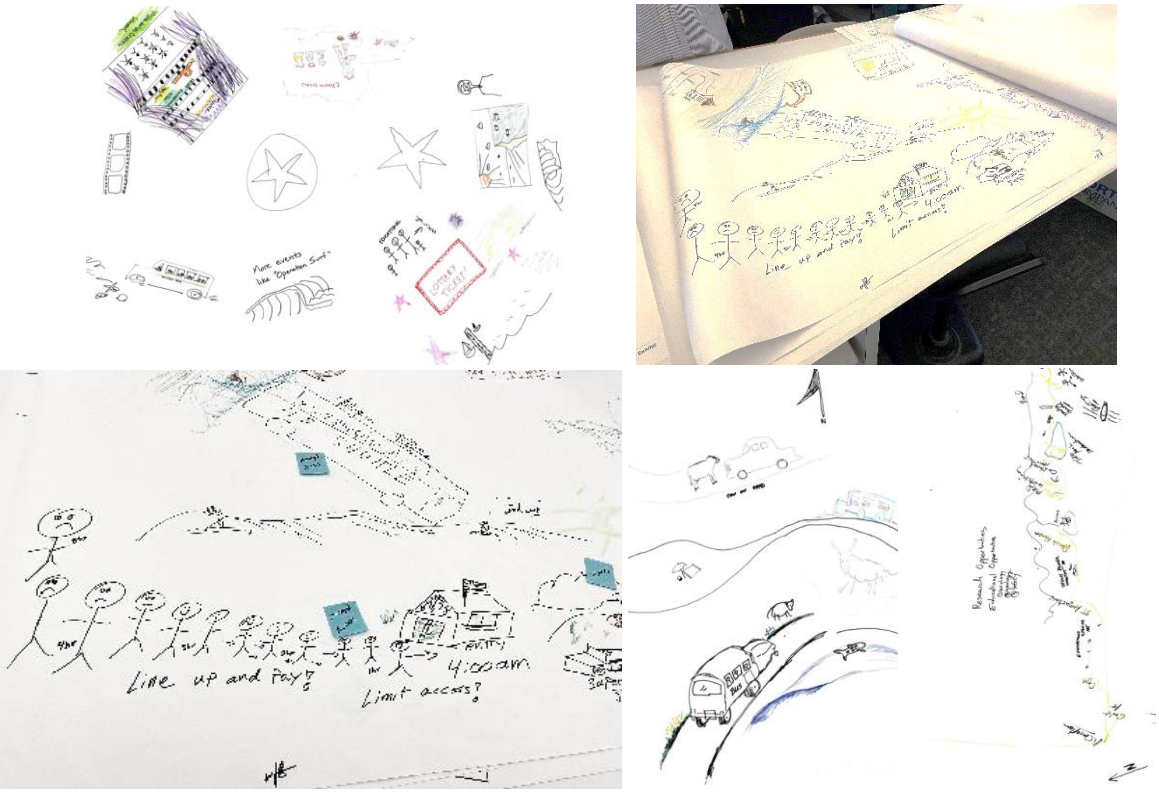
Full results from Survey 1 are reported in Appendix 1 of this document, and results from Survey 2 are reported in Appendix 2.

Results from Survey 1, the World Café Workshop, and Survey 2 were aggregated and categorized based on consultant and State staff input.

Data categorization helps:

1. Identify and quantify common themes across Phase 1 outreach efforts.
2. Understand the sketches from the visualization exercise (World Café Workshop).
3. Match answers with their intended question. For example, responses of "Impact to the environment" to Question 1 at the Work Café Workshop (potential benefits) would be categorized as an answer for Question 2 (concerns).
4. Prevent data omission. Every response is counted.

Data categorization is an interpretation of multiple-choice survey questions, open-ended survey responses, and sketches in order to make it easier to analyze thousands of pieces of input. Below are examples of sketches that were categorized.



Responses from the following outreach steps were categorized for the following analysis of major themes.

1. Survey 1, Question 4, "Which of the following types of experiences and activities are you hoping to participate in with new coastal access?" Categorization included open-end responses under "Other".
2. World Café Workshop (index cards, scribe notes, group sketches)

Responses were placed into one of the following categories and subcategories.

1. Interests and benefits
2. Concerns
3. Opportunities
4. Subcategories for interests and benefits, concerns, and opportunities, such as (*lists are not exhaustive):*
    a. Access related to:
        i. A coastal hike and/or bike trail
        ii. Cultural uses for Native American Chumash community
        iii. Social and environmental equity
        iv. Programs like docent-led tours
    b. Education related to:
        i. Cultural history
        ii. Environmental impact
        iii. Coastal safety
        iv. Research opportunities
    c. Experience & Recreation related to:
        i. Biking, hiking, and walking
        ii. Surfing and windsurfing
        iii. Kayaking and boating
        iv. Natural setting and solitude
        v. SCUBA diving & snorkeling
    d. Safety related to:
        i. Coastal threats like tide, waves, wind, steep bluff, and bluff erosion
        ii. Access to and response of emergency services
        iii. Flame sources and wildfire
        iv. Road conditions on Hollister Ranch Road
        v. Railroad crossings

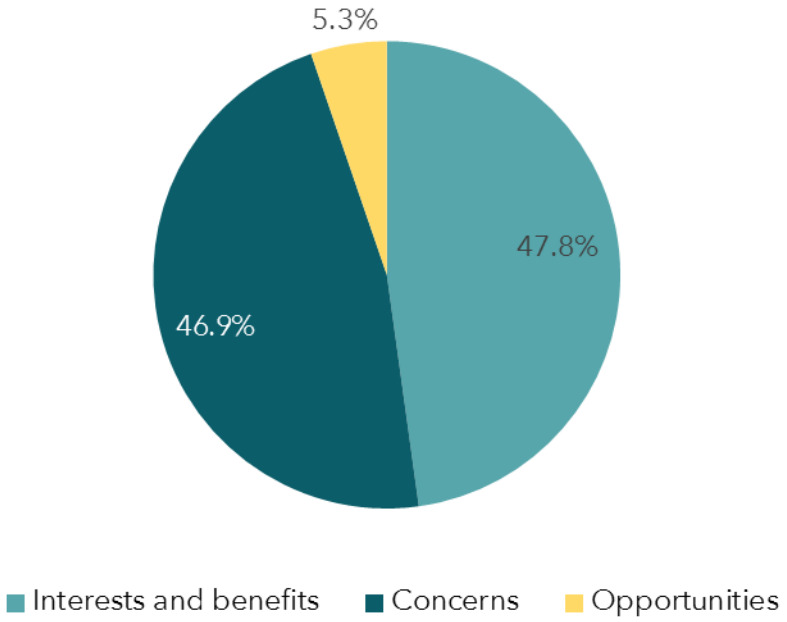
Open-ended responses under "Other" were placed in the appropriate category and subcategory.

Phase 1 Outreach Results: Overview

Phase 1 Outreach – not including the initial interviews – resulted in 10,348 unique data points. A data point is a response recorded in a survey (one answer to one question), an index note, a scribe note from Questions 1 – 3 at World Café Workshop, or a sketch (or part of a sketch) from the visualization exercise in World Cafe Workshop. All data points were categorized for summary in this section.

After categorization, these responses were split evenly between Interests and Benefits (47.8%) and Concerns (46.9%). Responses categorized as Opportunities were 5.3% of the total.

Categorization of Phase 1 Outreach Responses



Results for Phase 1 Outreach will be reported in the following sections for the most common interests and benefits, as well as the most common concerns for increased access to public beaches adjacent to Hollister Ranch, as determined by the percentage share of total responses. Details will be provided for the top responses in these categories. Opportunities will be quantified by general theme. Opportunities reported here are not to be construed as final or feasible solutions for providing increased public access to public beaches adjacent to Hollister Ranch.

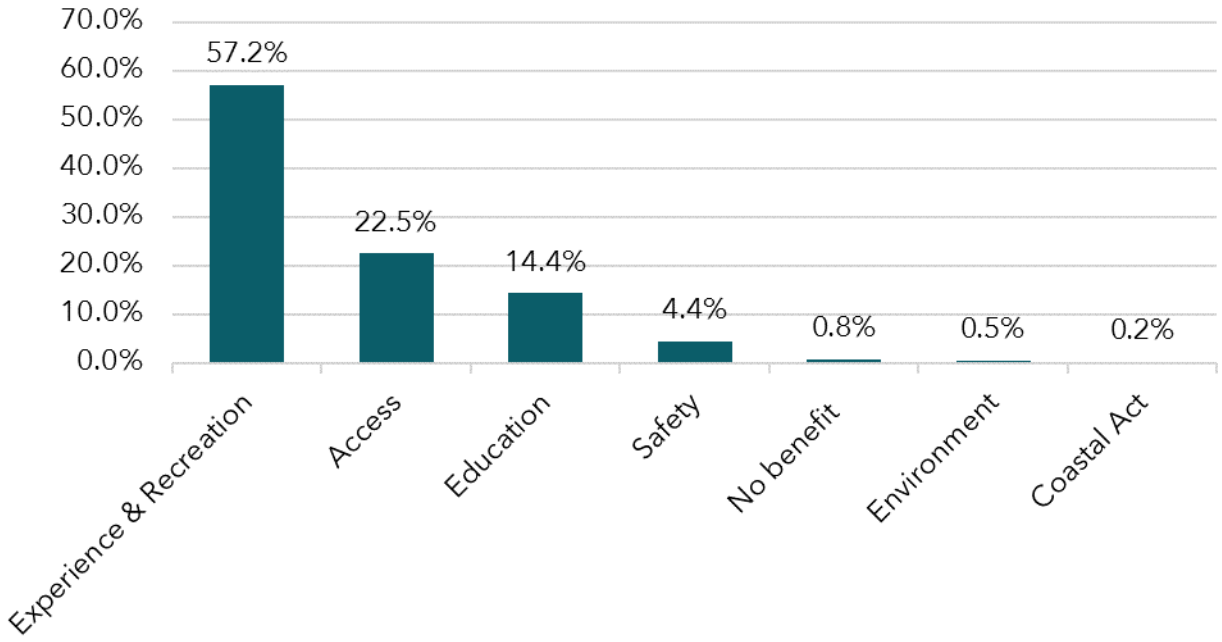
Phase 1 Outreach Results: Interests and Benefits

The three most common interests and benefits about increased access to public beaches adjacent to Hollister Ranch were related to:

- Experiences and recreation (57.2%)
- General support for increased coastal access (22.5%),
- Educational opportunities (14.4%).

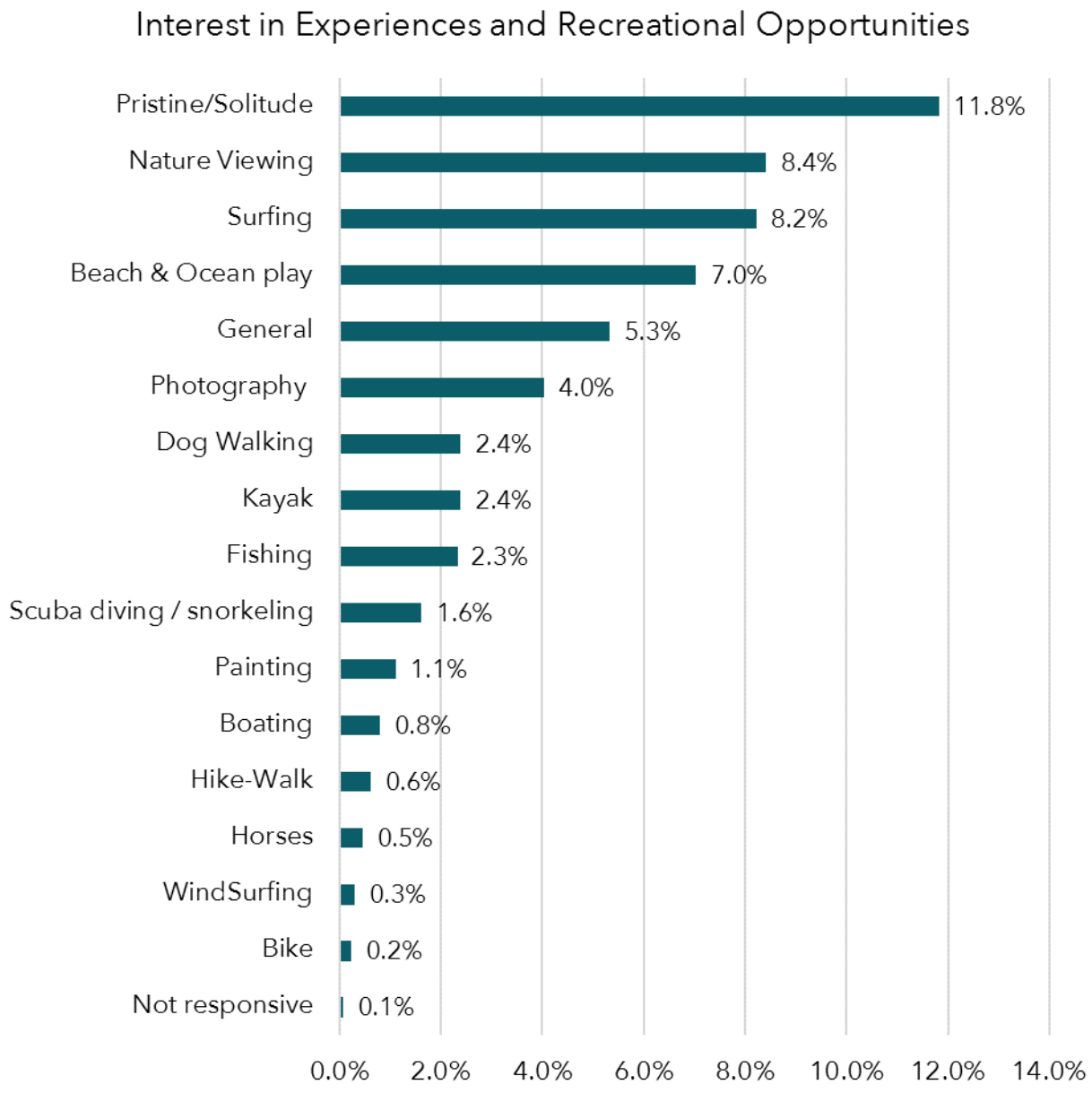
The three most common interests and benefits comprise 94.0% of interests- and benefits-related responses and are provided in more detail on Pages 10 to 12.

Summary of Interests and Benefits



Interests and Benefits – Experiences and Recreational Opportunities Detail

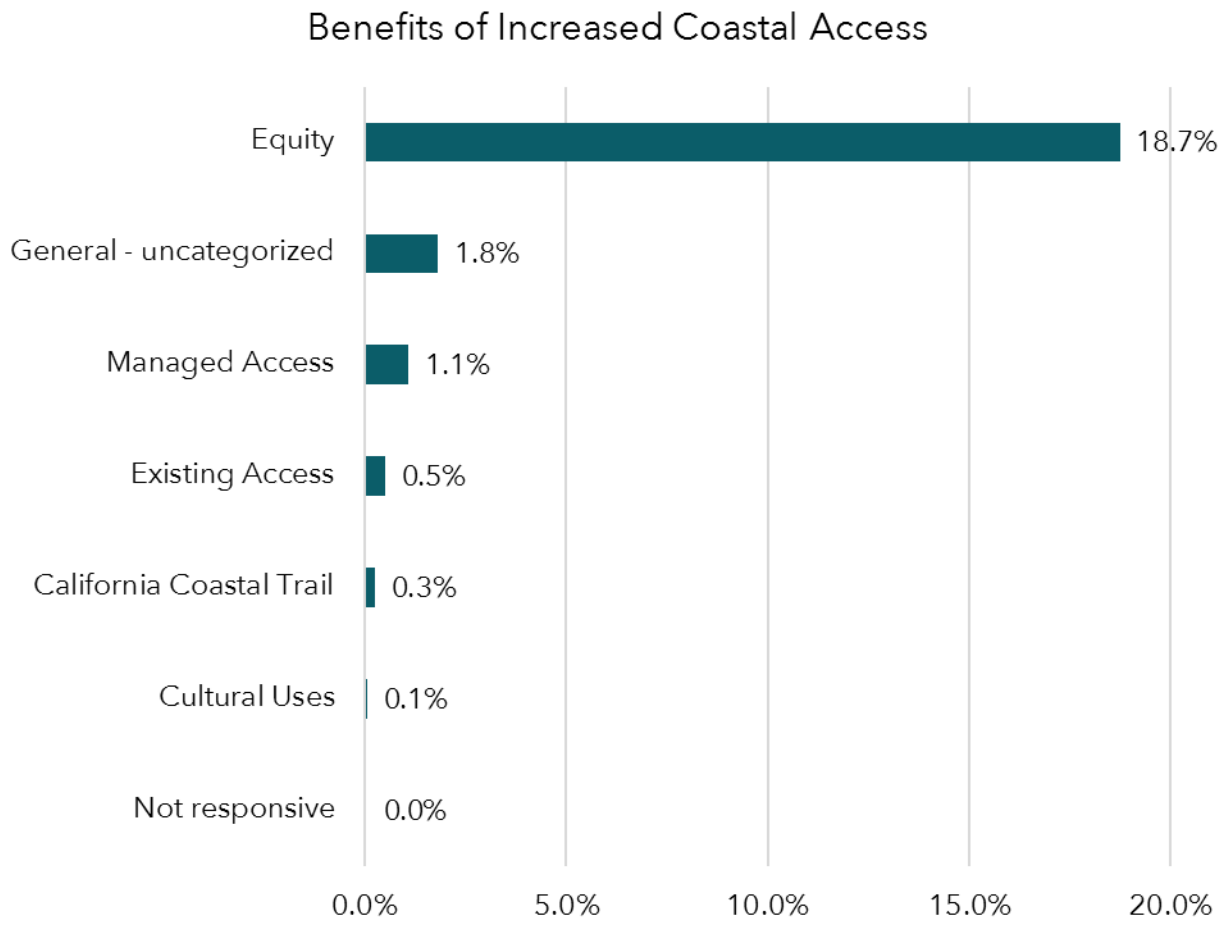
Experiences and recreational opportunities at beaches adjacent to Hollister Ranch received the most responses in Phase 1 Outreach events (2,827 responses, 57.2% of total). The ranking of desired experiences and recreational opportunities is shown below as a percentage of total responses categorized as "Interests and Benefits" (4,948 responses).



Interests and Benefits – Increased Coastal Access Detail

Coastal access was the second-most common benefit and interest identified in Phase 1 Outreach. *Equity* was identified in 83.4% of access-related responses. The identified benefits of increased coastal access are shown below as a percentage of total responses categorized as "Interests and Benefits" (4,948 responses). Most of these responses were in Survey 2, Question 4, which reads: "Please select up to three (3) benefits with which you most agree."

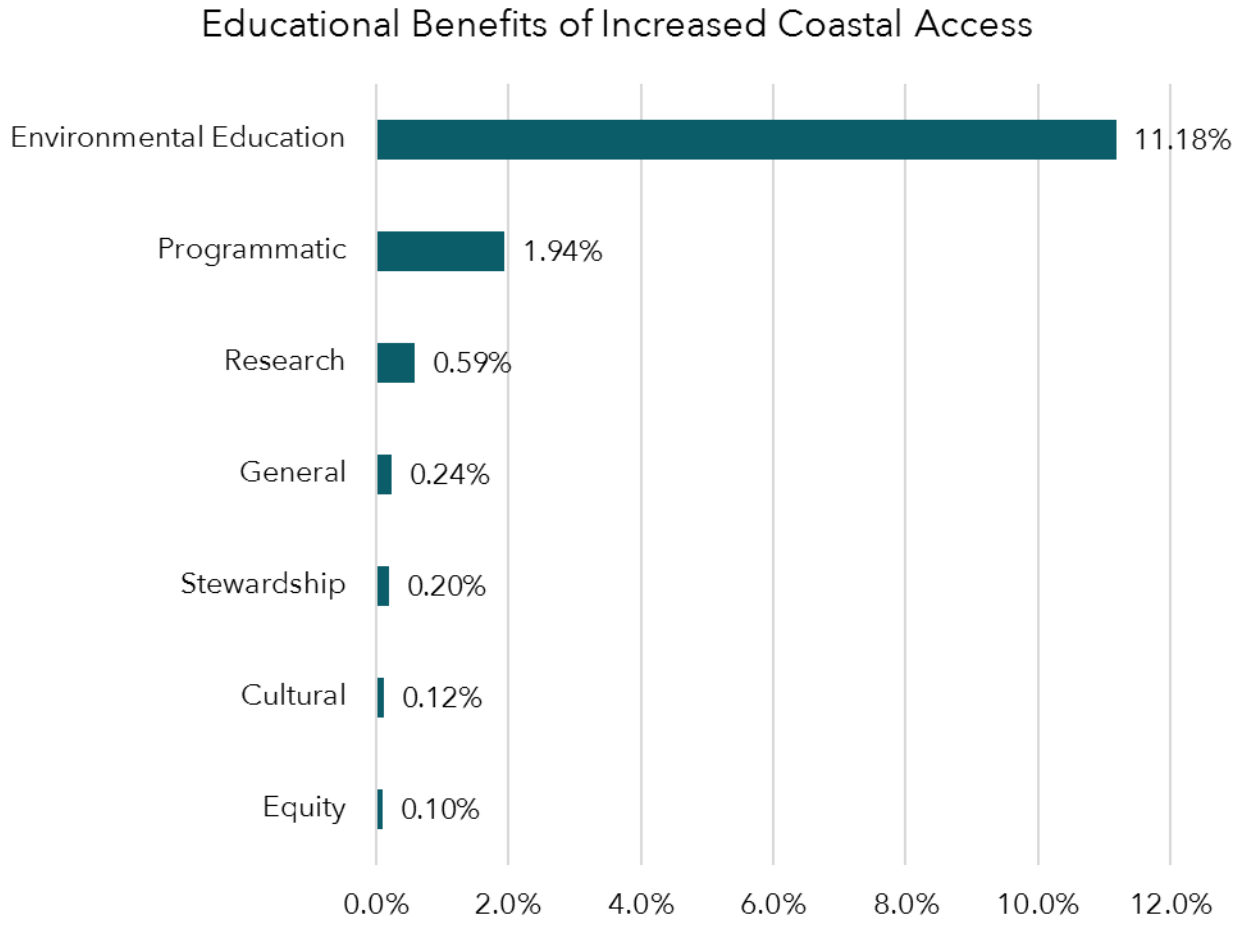
- Benefit 1: Enable everyone to experience the scenic and natural resources found along this portion of the coast.
- Benefit 6: Improve social and environmental equity by providing access to public coastal resources.



Interests and Benefits – Educational Benefits Detail

Education was the third-most common benefit and interest identified in Phase 1 Outreach. The identified benefits of and interest in education as part of increased coastal access are shown below as a percentage of total responses categorized as "Interests and Benefits" (4,948 responses). Most responses that identified equity as a benefit were in Survey 2, Question 4, which reads: "Please select up to three (3) benefits with which you most agree."

- Benefit 3: Increase opportunities for coastal recreation and environmental education experiences for school groups, non-profit and community-based organizations, or other organized groups.



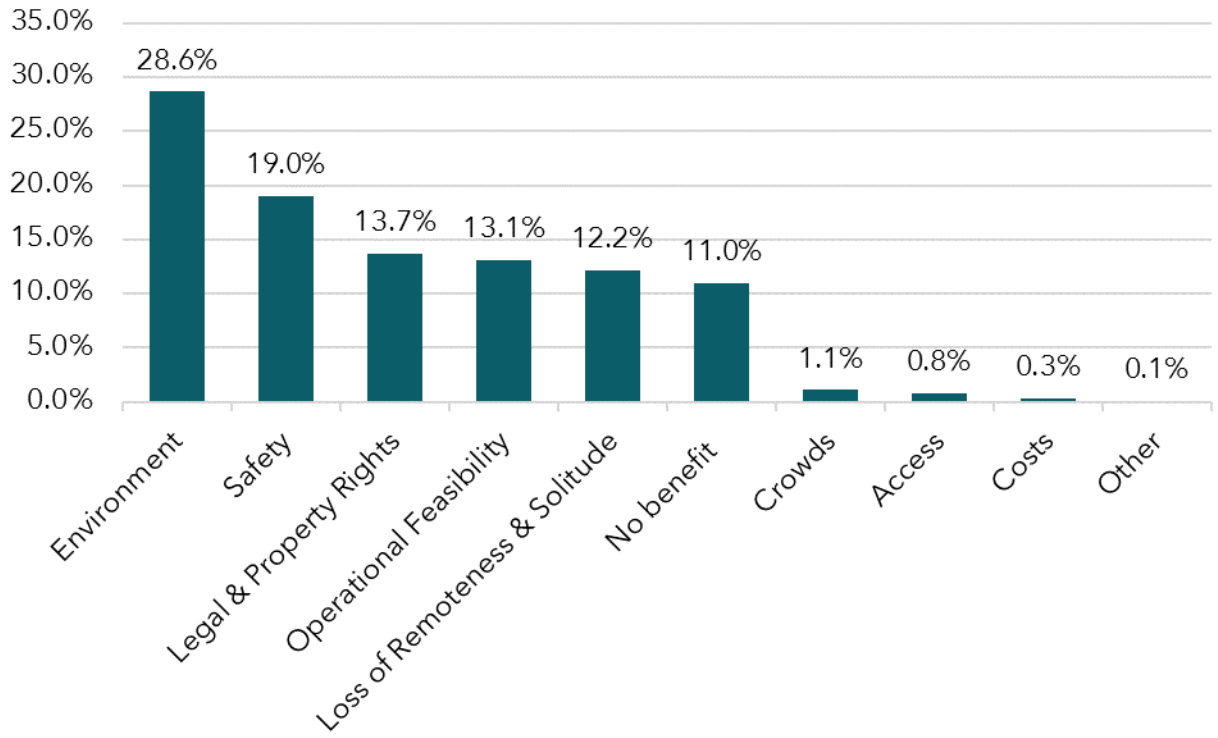
Phase 1 Outreach Results: Concerns

The five most common concerns about increased access to public beaches adjacent to Hollister Ranch were:

- Environmental impact (28.6%)
- Safety (19.0%)
- Legal and property rights (13.7%)
- Operational feasibility of an access program (13.1%)
- Loss of remoteness and solitude (12.2%).

These five most common concerns comprise 86.6% of total concerns-related responses. For brevity, only the three most common concerns are provided on Pages 13 to 15.

Summary of Concerns



Environmental concerns: The 28.6% of responses related to environmental impacts involve: coastal resources like tide pools and the intertidal zone; endangered and sensitive species like the snowy plover and monarch butterfly; general ecosystem health; impact of dogs, leashed and unleashed; damage to native flora and fauna; and decreased air quality and greenhouse gas emissions from increased vehicle traffic.

Safety concerns: The 19.0% of responses were primarily related to Survey 2, Question 5, which reads: "Please select up to three (3) concerns with which you most agree."

- Personal safety of visitors and Ranch residents.

Other safety concerns involve: cattle and agriculture, fire, vehicles on and the condition of Hollister Ranch Road, coastal dangers like tides and waves, emergency services, the train and railroad, and homeowners.

Legal and property rights were the third-most identified concern in Phase 1 Outreach, with 13.7% of concern-related responses.

Most responses that identified legal and property rights as a concern were in Survey 2, Question 5, which reads: "Please select up to three (3) concerns with which you most agree."

- Respecting property owner rights and privacy.

Other comments categorized under legal and property rights concerns constitute less than 2% of total responses and involve: trespassing, easements over private land, and private roads.

Phase 1 Outreach Results: Opportunities

Opportunities reported here are not to be construed as final or feasible solutions for providing increased public access to public beaches adjacent to Hollister Ranch.

Opportunities for a coastal access program emerged in Phase 1 outreach responses in the form of suggestions for access through:

- Guided tours and docents, 18.9% of responses
- General support for managed access to limit impacts to private property and the environment, 16.0%
- Programmatic features like school trips, clubs, and non-profits, 12.7%
- A permit or reservation system to limit the capacity and timing of access, 10.1%
- A trail supporting bicycle and pedestrian uses, 8.1%
- Limiting time, access area, or amenities, 7.0%
- Shuttle system, 5.7%
- An orientation process, including a video, 2.6%

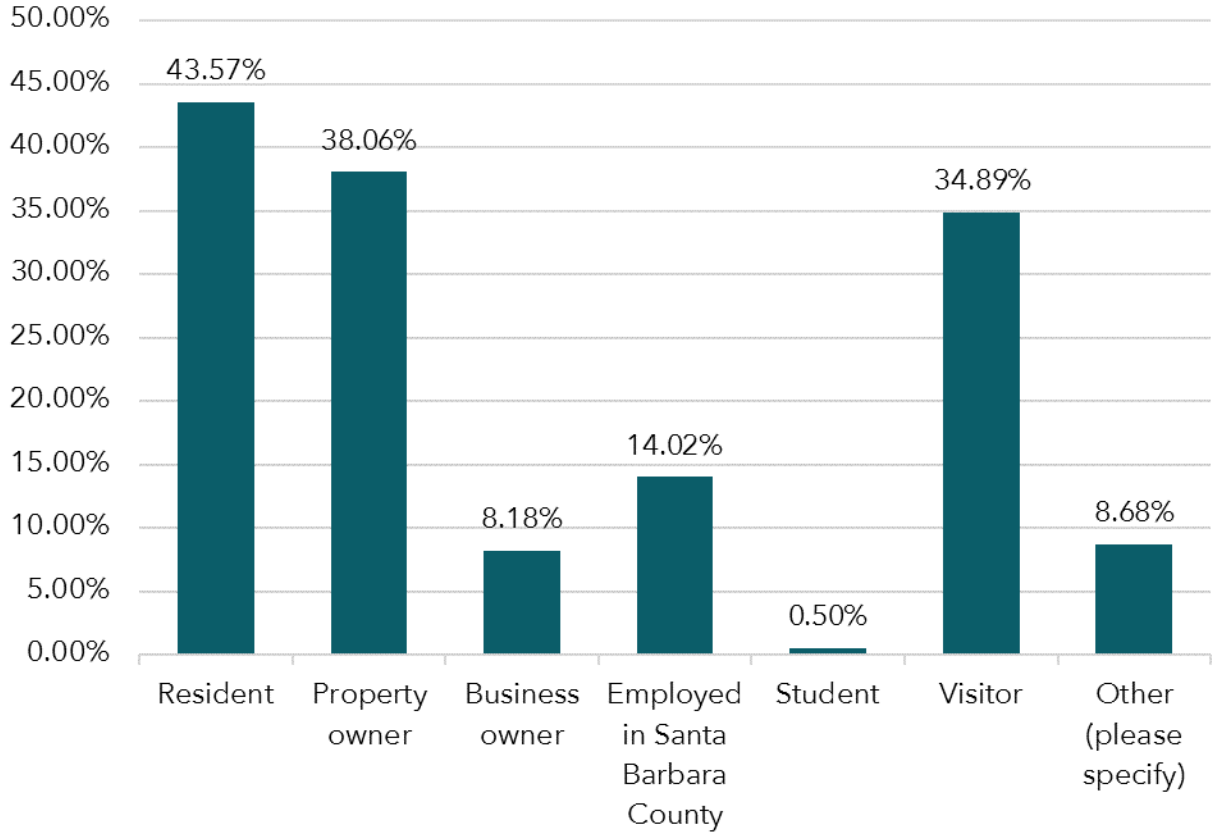
Other responses categorized as opportunities that constitute less than 1% of total responses were: environmental education, boat-in access, improvements to Gaviota State Park, a lottery system, access through the train, fees and fee structure, and interpretive trails.

Appendix 1: Survey 1 Results

Appendix 1 reports results from Survey 1 as a standalone questionnaire, not summarized with all of Phase 1 Outreach results as in the sections above.

Survey 1 was open from January 31 to March 31, 2020 and received 602 responses.

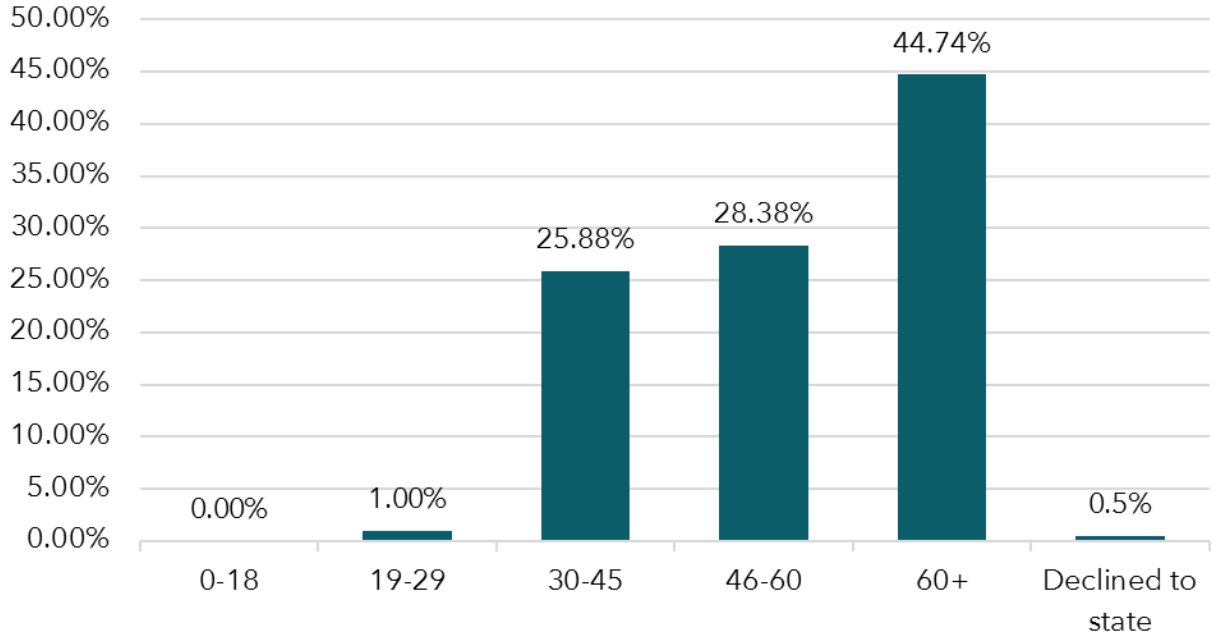
Question 1: How would you best describe your status in Santa Barbara County?



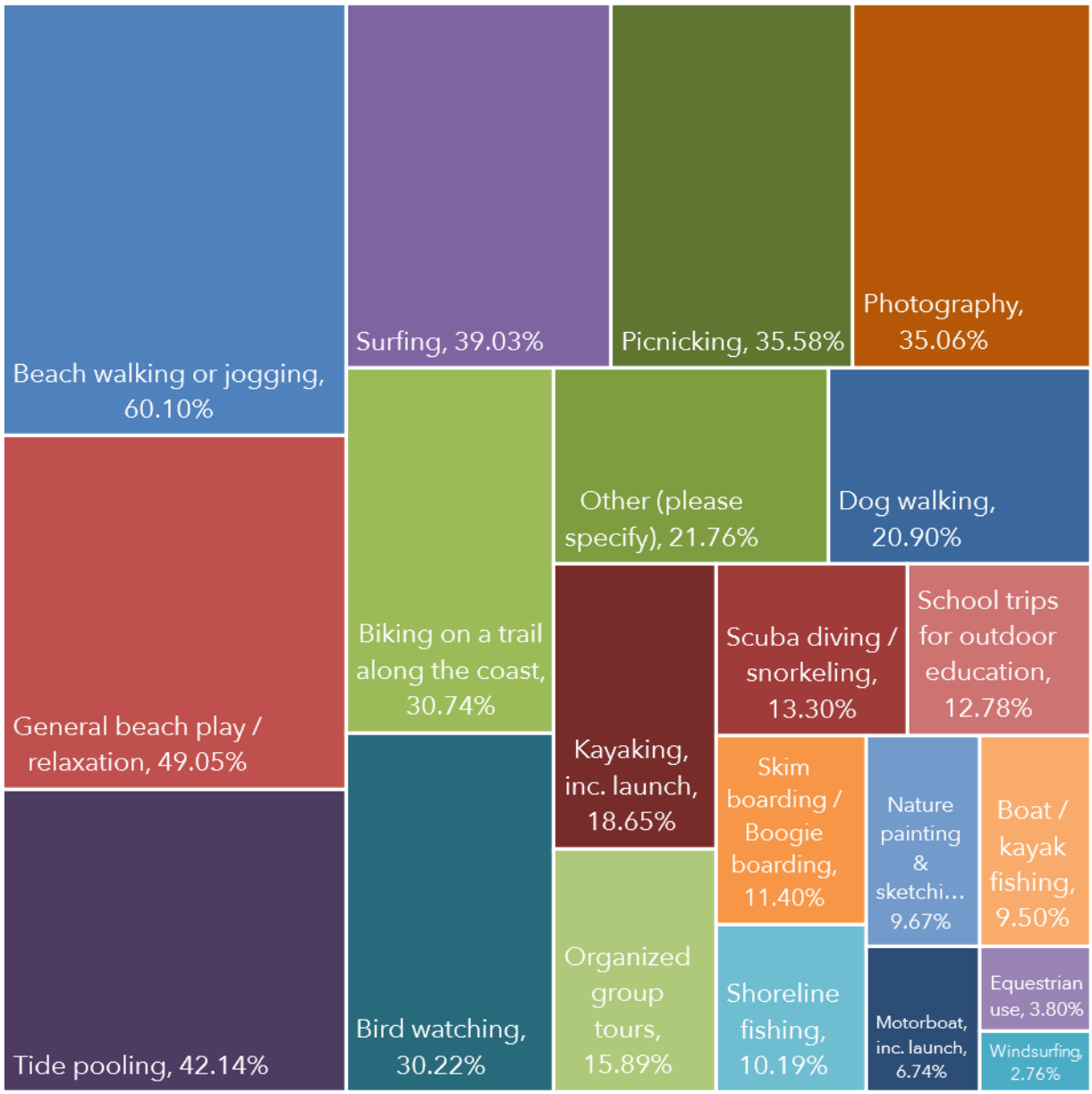
Question 2: What is your home zip code?

Other countries and U.S. states with Survey 1 respondents (52 of 602 total respondents): Arizona, Australia, Austria, Colorado, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, New Zealand, Ohio, U.S. Virgin Islands, Wisconsin.

Question 3: Which of the following groups includes your age?

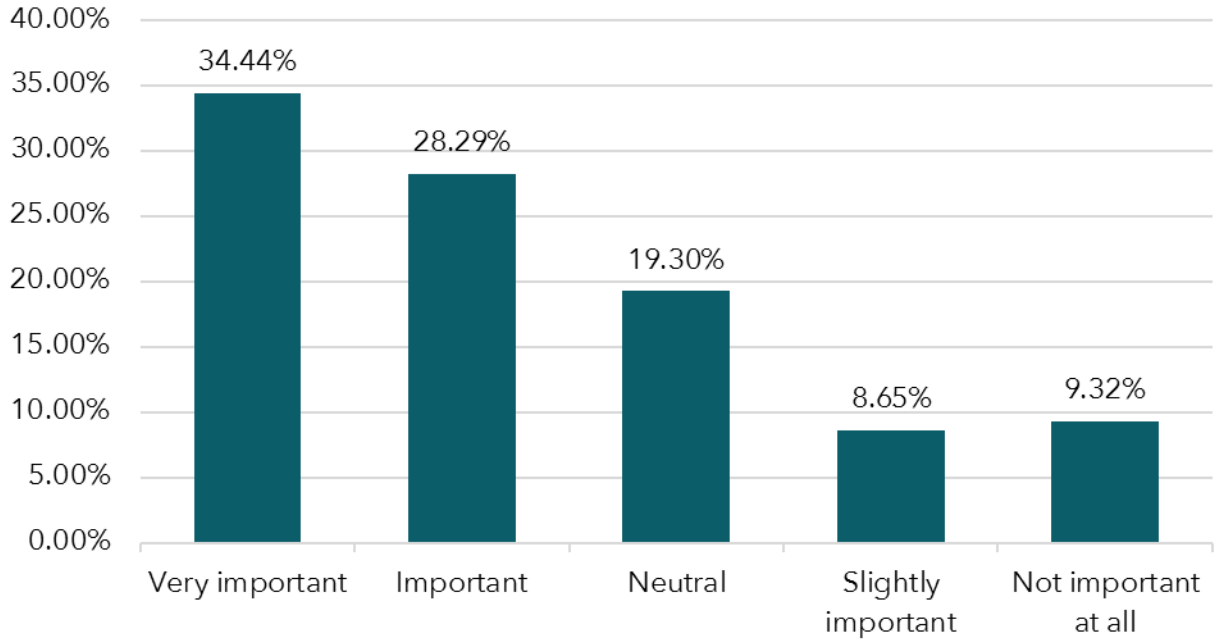


Question 4: Which of the following types of experiences and activities are you hoping to participate in with new coastal access?



Question 5: The HRCAP seeks to achieve public access that considers a diversity of stakeholders' interests, private landowner rights, environmental and cultural resources, equitability, and feasibility. Please choose the three objectives that are most important to you.

Question 6: How important is reaching consensus among stakeholders for a public access program?

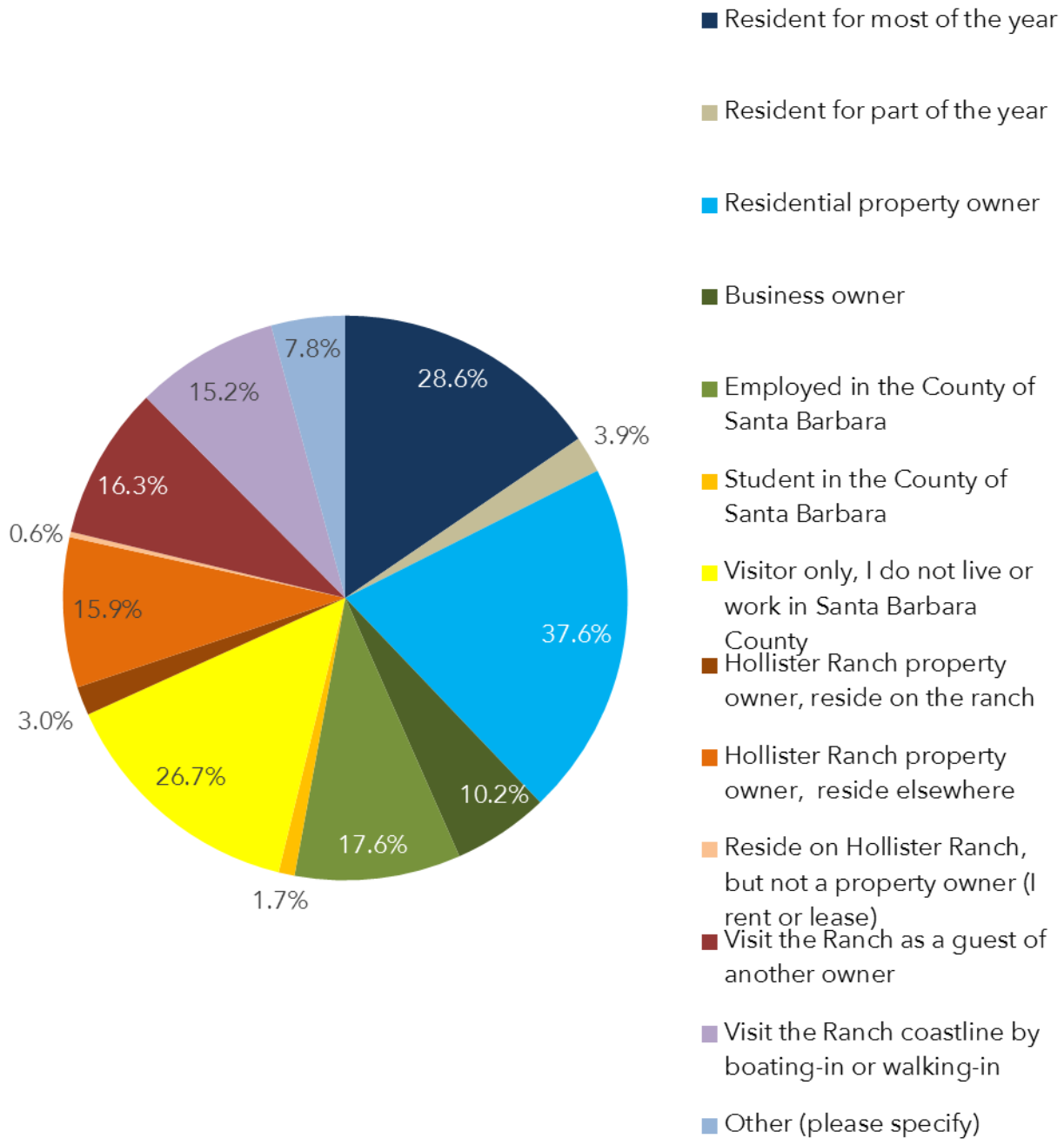


Appendix 2: Survey 2 Results

Appendix 2 reports results from Survey 2 as a standalone questionnaire, not summarized with all of Phase 1 Outreach results as in the sections above.

Survey 2 was open from April 29 to May 22, 2020 and received 1,415 responses.

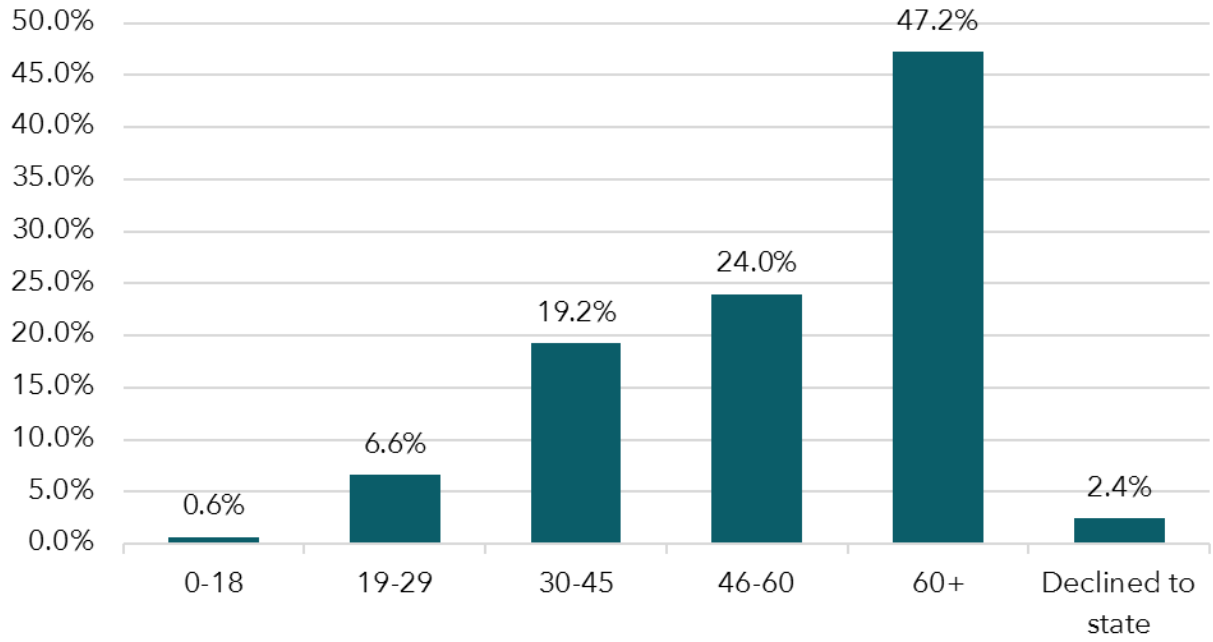
Question 1: How would you best describe your status in Santa Barbara County?



Question 2: What is your home zip code?

Other countries and U.S. states with Survey 2 respondents (90 of 1,425 total respondents): Arizona, Arkansas, Australia, Colorado, Florida, France, Hawaii, Idaho, Kentucky, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Sweden, Texas, U.S. Virgin Islands, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

Question 3: Which of the following groups includes your age?



Question 4:

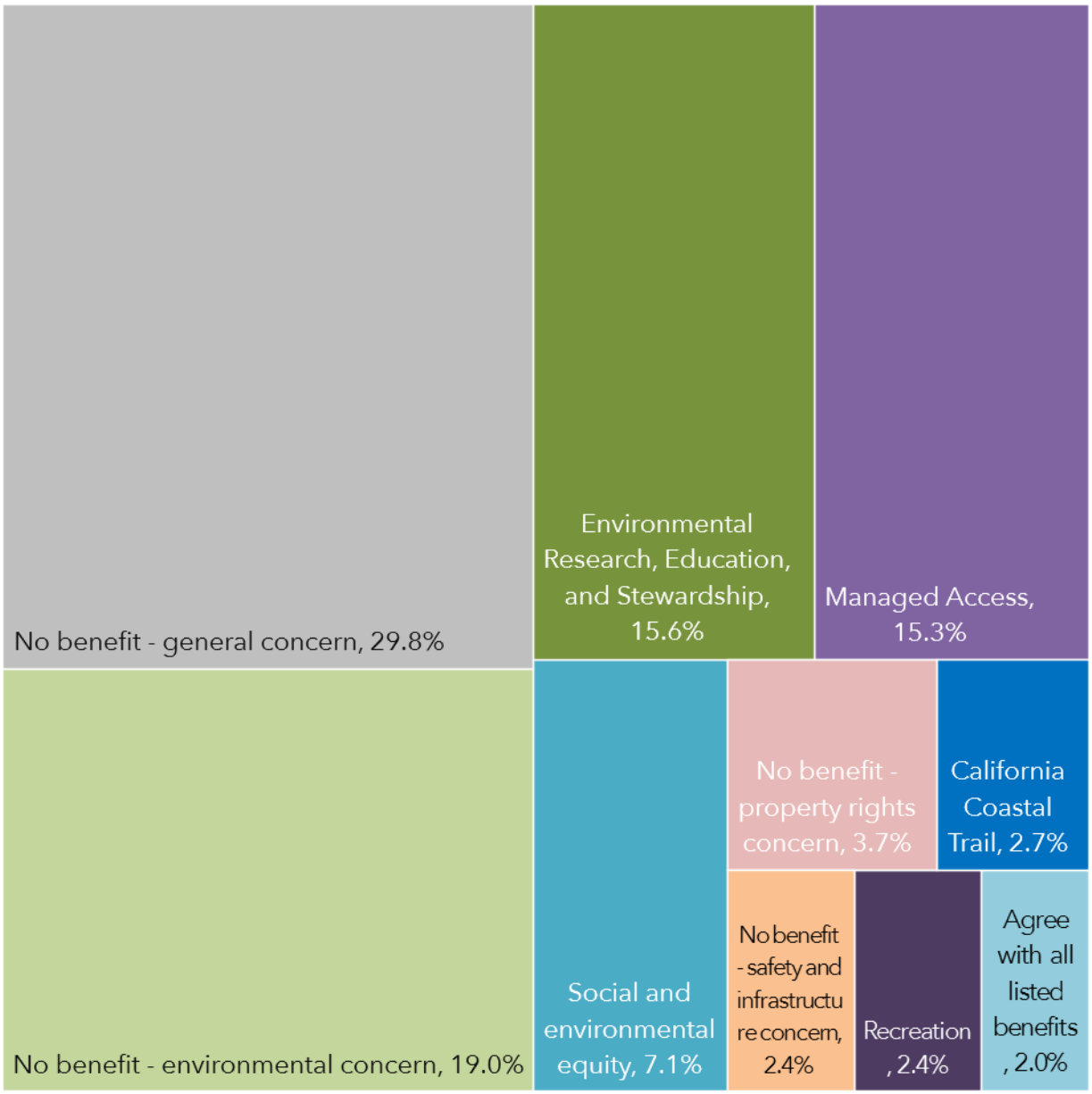
The following list of potential benefits from increased coastal access to the Hollister Ranch coastline is derived from the stakeholder input from HRCAP Survey 1 and the workshop held in Goleta on February 20th.

Please select up to three (3) benefits with which you most agree. You may also list any number of additional benefits under "Other."

Question 4, open-ended "Other" responses to:

What are some potential benefits with which you most agree?

Note: Open-ended responses about "benefits" were grouped into the categories below. The "No benefit" categories were counted as Concerns in the overall Phase 1 outreach summary. The "No benefit - general concern" category represents responses with many concerns, or a concern that did not fit the other primary categories.



Question 5:

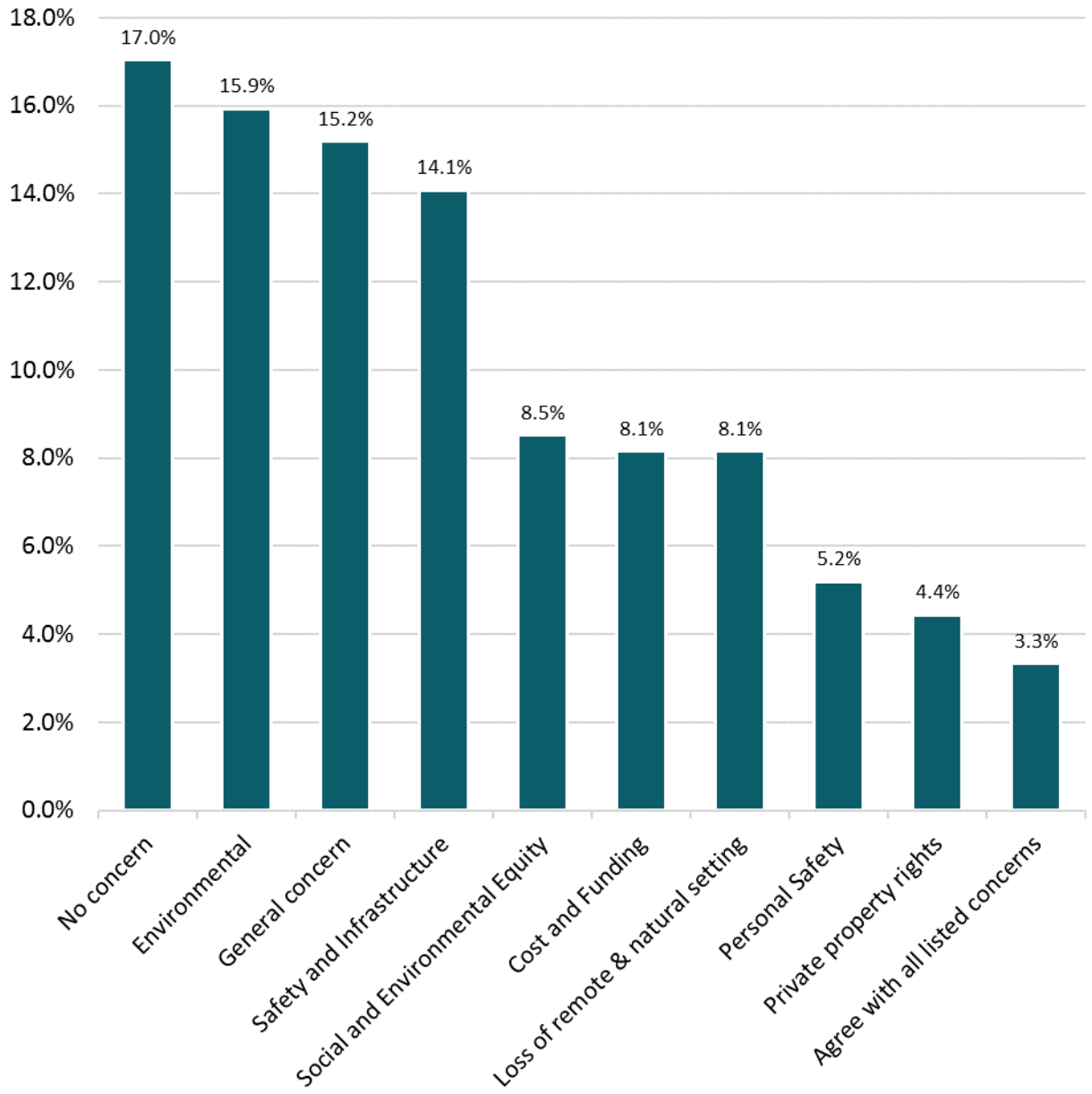
The following list of concerns related to increased coastal access to the Hollister Ranch coastline is derived from the stakeholder input from HRCAP Survey 1 and the workshop held in Goleta on February 20th.

Please select up to three (3) concerns with which you most agree. You may also list any number of additional concerns under "Other."

Question 5, open-ended "Other" responses to:

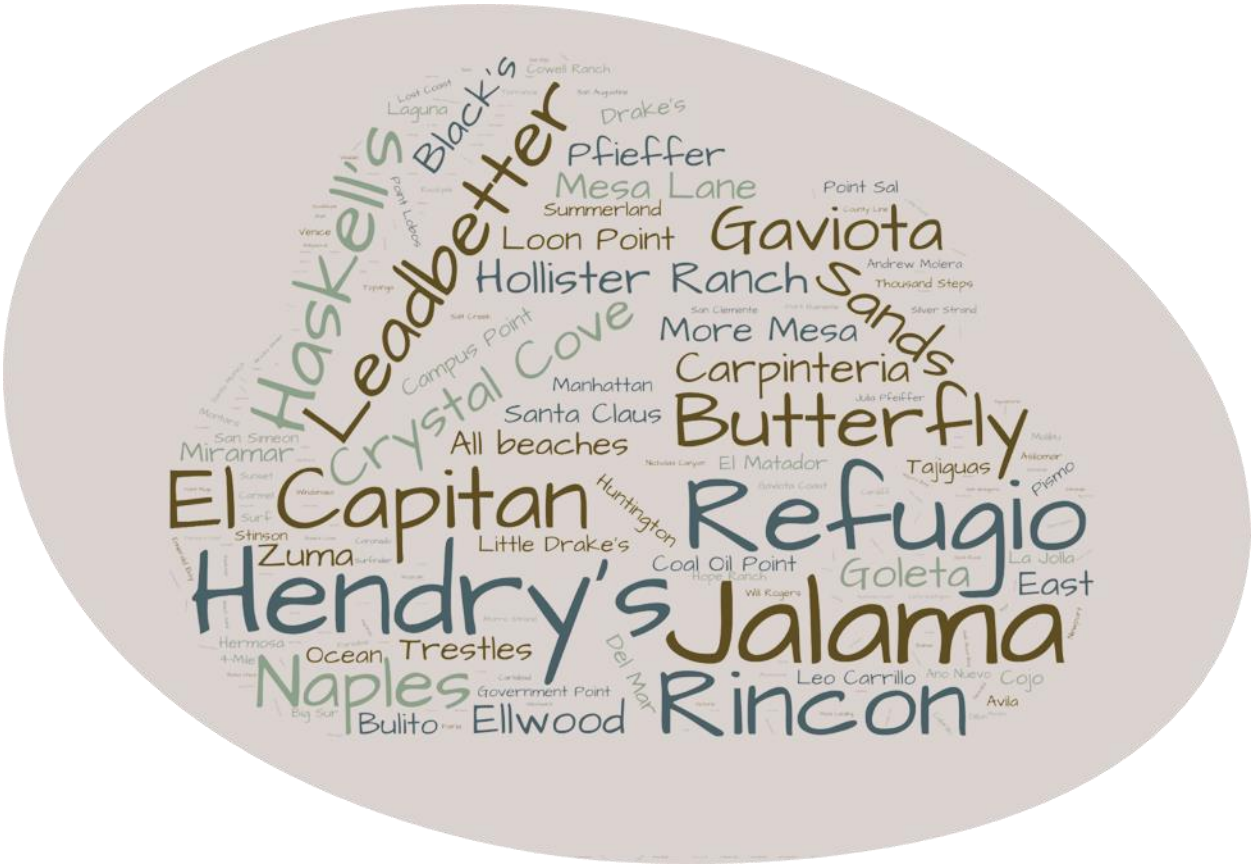
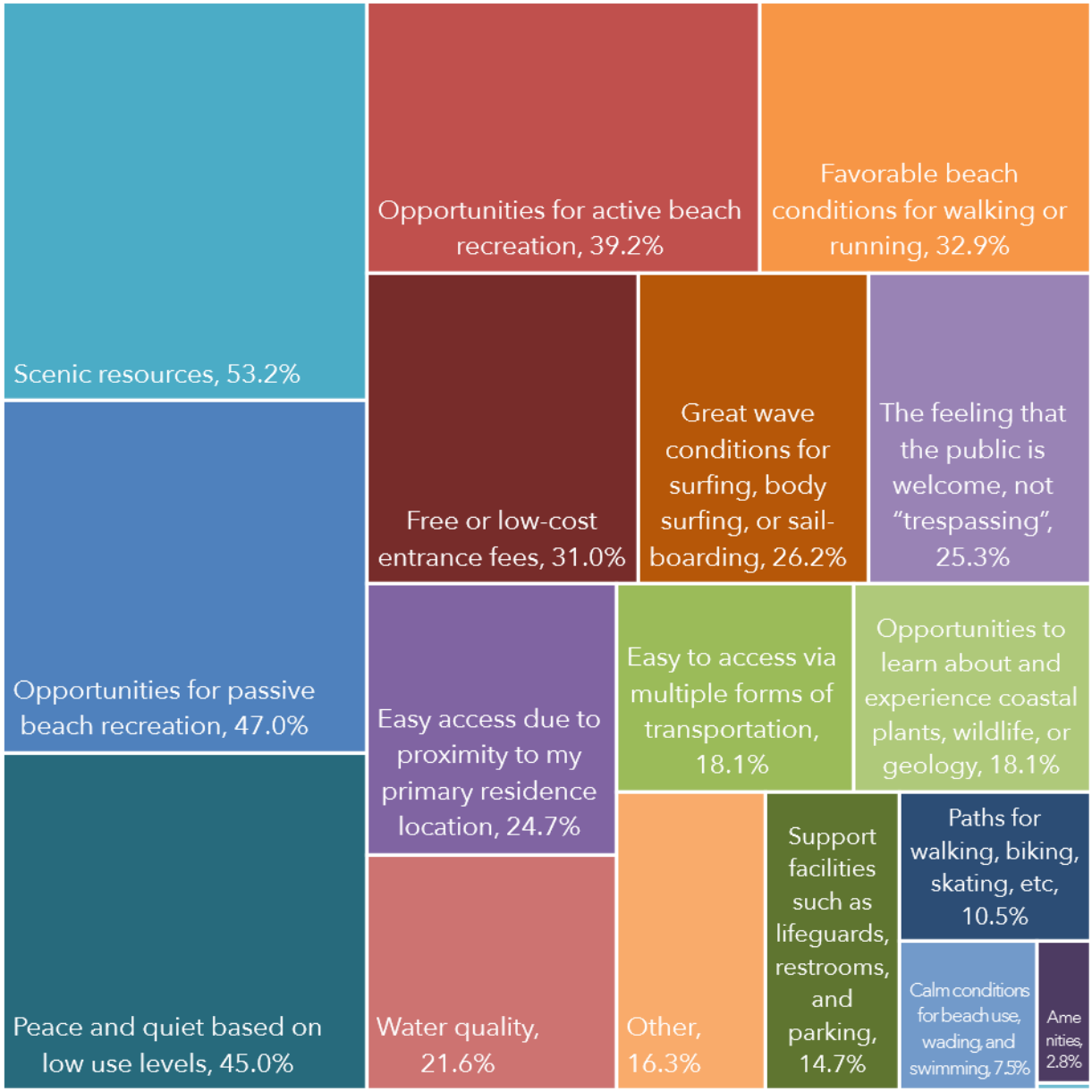
What are some potential concerns with which you most agree?

Note: Open-ended responses about "concerns" were grouped into the categories below. The "No concern" categories were counted as Benefits in the overall Phase 1 outreach summary. The "General concern" category represents responses with many concerns, or a concern that did not fit the other primary categories.



Question 6: Given the benefits and challenges identified above, please select up to five (5) opportunities that you believe would work well for increased coastal access through Hollister Ranch. This list is derived from the most frequent answers provided by participants during the February 20th stakeholder workshop in Goleta.

Question 7: What is your favorite beach along the California coast?



Question 8: Think of the beach you just mentioned. Select up to five (5) reasons that make that beach one you like to visit.