

New Hampshire Conservation Attitude Survey Highlights Report

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The Survey Center

University of New Hampshire

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Survey Center

The UNH Survey Center is an independent, non-partisan academic survey research organization and a division of the UNH College of Liberal Arts.

The Survey Center conducts telephone, mail, e-mail, Internet, and intercept surveys, as well as focus groups and other qualitative research for university researchers, government agencies, public non-profit organizations, private businesses, and media clients.

Our senior staff have over 40 years experience in designing and conducting custom research on a broad range of political, social, health care, and other public policy issues.

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Executive Summary

The University of New Hampshire Survey Center conducted a survey for the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the Trust for Public Land (TPL). The specific areas of interest are attitudes about conservation issues and funding in New Hampshire. A survey of five hundred and five (505) likely 2012 New Hampshire voters was conducted by telephone between June 22 and July 3, 2012. The margin of sampling error for the survey is +/- 4.4%. (See Technical Report below for a more detailed description of survey methods.) The following figures display survey results, detailed tabular results can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B contains the open-ended responses and Appendix C contains the survey instrument.

The major findings of this survey include:

- New Hampshire voters almost unanimously support investing in land conservation efforts.
- More than three quarters of New Hampshire voters (81%) think the State of New Hampshire should spend public funds for land conservation.

Importance of Land Conservation

- Most New Hampshire voters (86%) say preserving land for water quality protection is a very important part of land conservation, 81% say preserving forest land and working forests is very important, followed by preserving wildlife habitat (79%), preserving farmland (73%), preserving historic and cultural sites (62%), preserving land for recreation (62%), and improving and expanding state parks (49%). **(Figure 1)**
- Nearly all New Hampshire voters (97%) agree (76% strongly agree and 21% somewhat agree) that we must invest in land conservation to protect New Hampshire's quality of life for future generations, 95% agree that protecting land, water, and wildlife in New Hampshire is critical to our tourist industry and helps create jobs, 94% agree that we need to make sure our farms are protected from development to provide sources of locally-grown food, 90% agree that some of our forests and farm lands are being lost to development, and we should take steps to preserve them, 45% agree that protecting land as open space takes land off the tax rolls and prevents residential and commercial development, which could raise property taxes, 23% agree that the legislature has to make hard choices in these tough times, and we just can't afford land conservation right now, and 11% agree that New Hampshire has more than enough forests, farms, and open space, and we do not need to do any more to protect them. **(Figure 2)**
 - Support for investing in land conservation is bipartisan among New Hampshire voters.

Figure 1: Importance of Land Conservation

“Let’s turn to the subject of land conservation in New Hampshire. I’m going to read you a list of several aspects of land conservation. For each of these, please tell me if it is ... very important ... somewhat important ... not very important ... or, not important at all to you.”

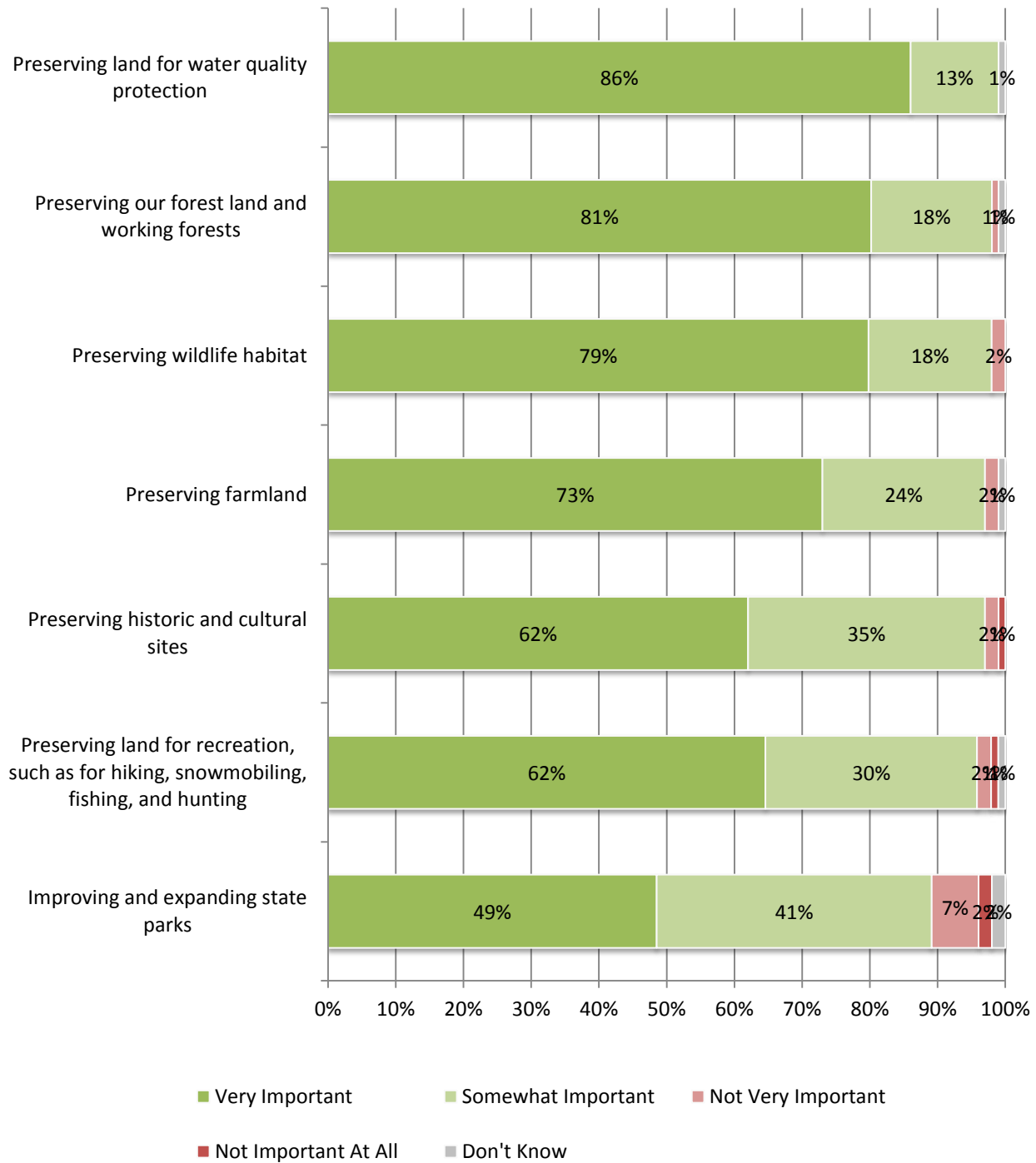
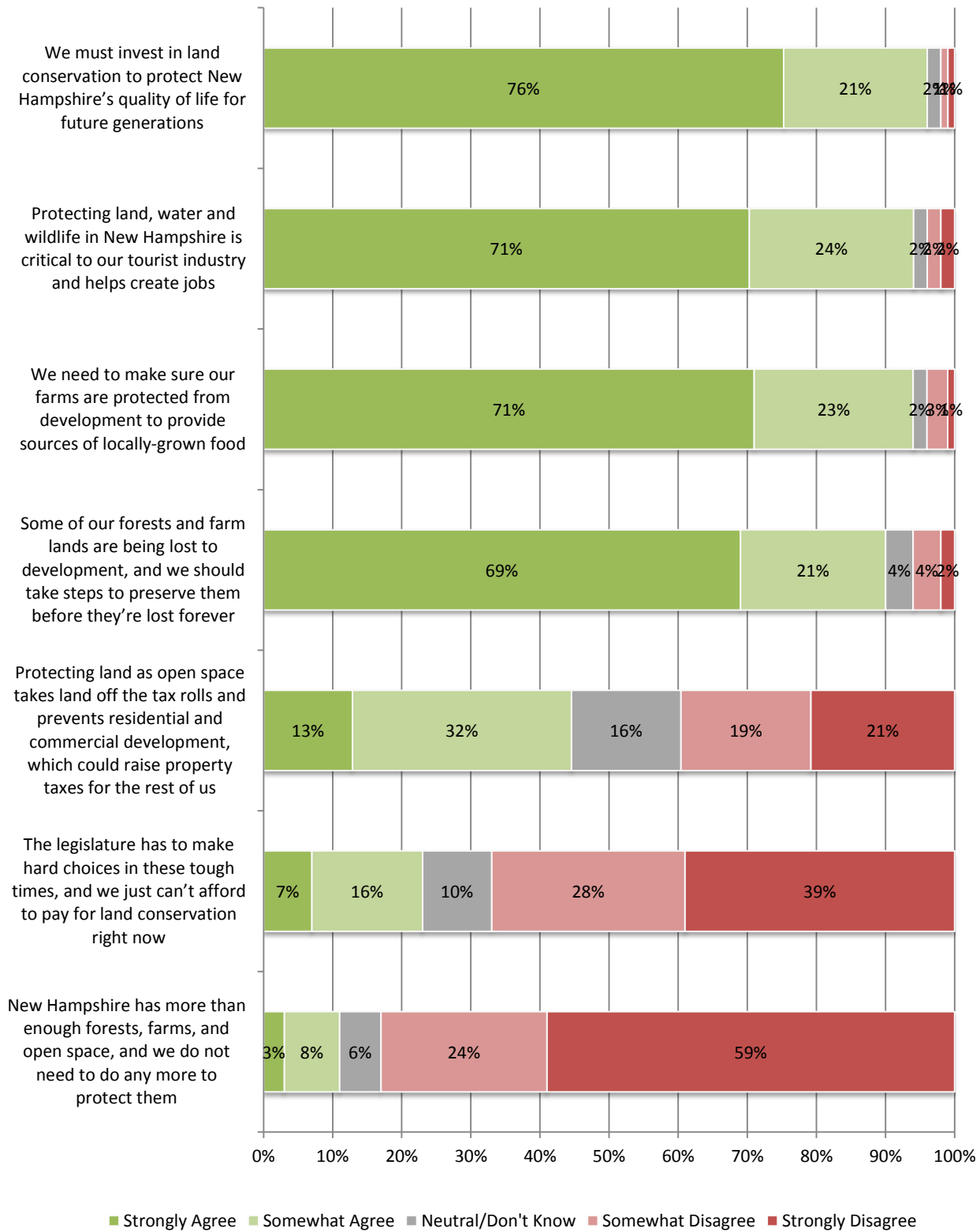


Figure 2: Agreement on Land Conservation Concepts



Public Funding for Conservation and L-CHIP

- Almost half of New Hampshire voters (44%) strongly agree that the state of New Hampshire should spend public funds for land conservation efforts, 37% somewhat agree, 7% somewhat disagree, 6% strongly disagree, and 6% are neutral or don't know. **(Figure 3)**
- More than a third of New Hampshire voters (37%) strongly agree that the state of New Hampshire should spend public funds for the preservation of historic buildings and landmarks, 44% somewhat agree, 9% somewhat disagree, 4% strongly disagree, and 6% are neutral or don't know. **(Figure 3)**
- When given a description of the L-CHIP program, 66% of New Hampshire voters have a favorable opinion of it, 3% unfavorable, 3% neither favorable nor unfavorable, and 28% don't know enough about it to say. **(Figure 4)**
- Two-thirds of New Hampshire voters (65%) strongly disapprove of using L-CHIP funds for other purposes in the state budget, 14% somewhat disapprove, 6% somewhat approve, 2% strongly approve, 4% are neutral, and 9% don't know. **(Figure 5)**
- Four out of five New Hampshire voters (83%) say L-CHIP should only be used for land conservation purposes, 9% say it should be available to help balance the state budget, and 8% don't know. **(Figure 6)**

Figure 3: Public Funding For...

"Would you say you agree or disagree that the state of New Hampshire should spend public funds for land conservation/historic preservation?"

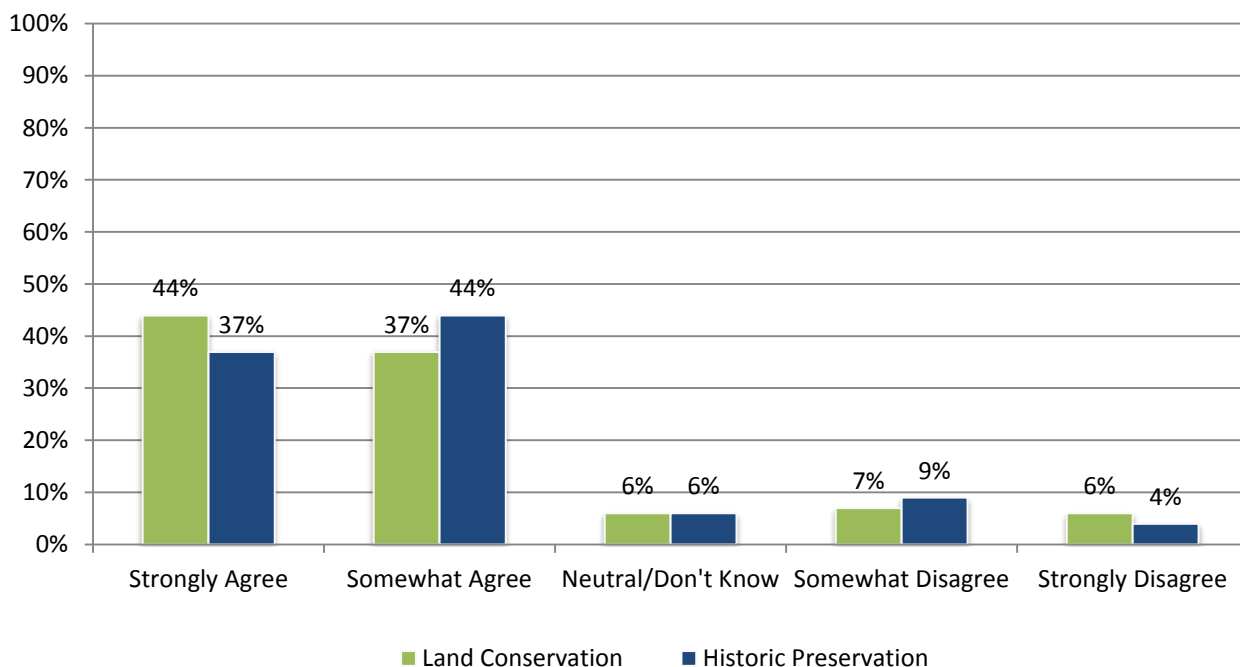


Figure 4: Overall Favorability Of L-CHIP

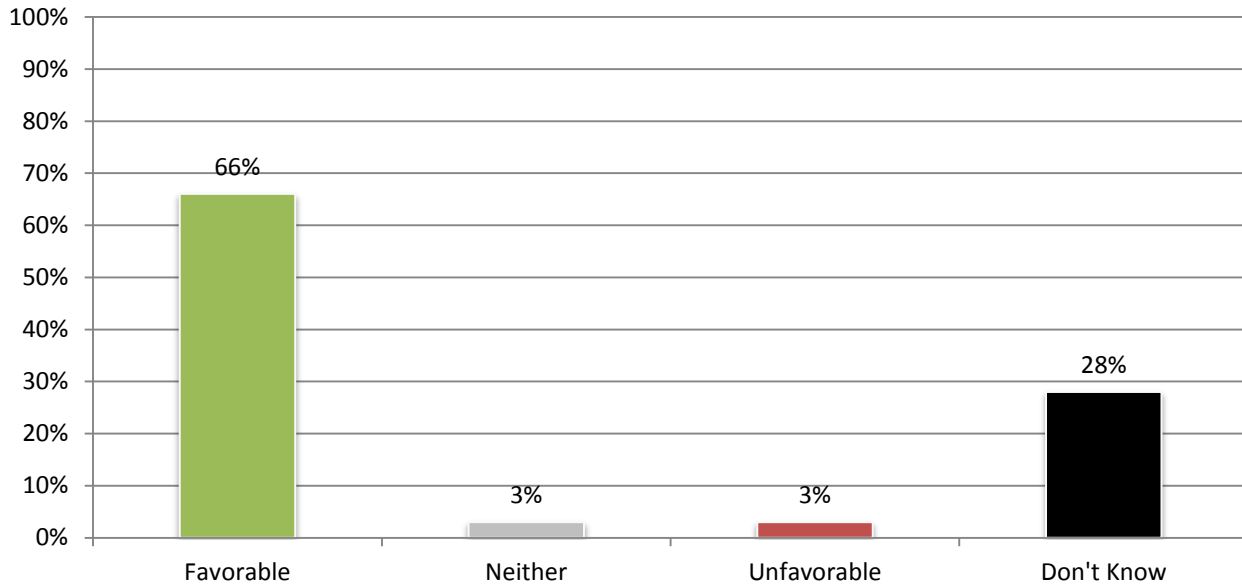


Figure 4a: Favorability of L-CHIP Among Key Demographics

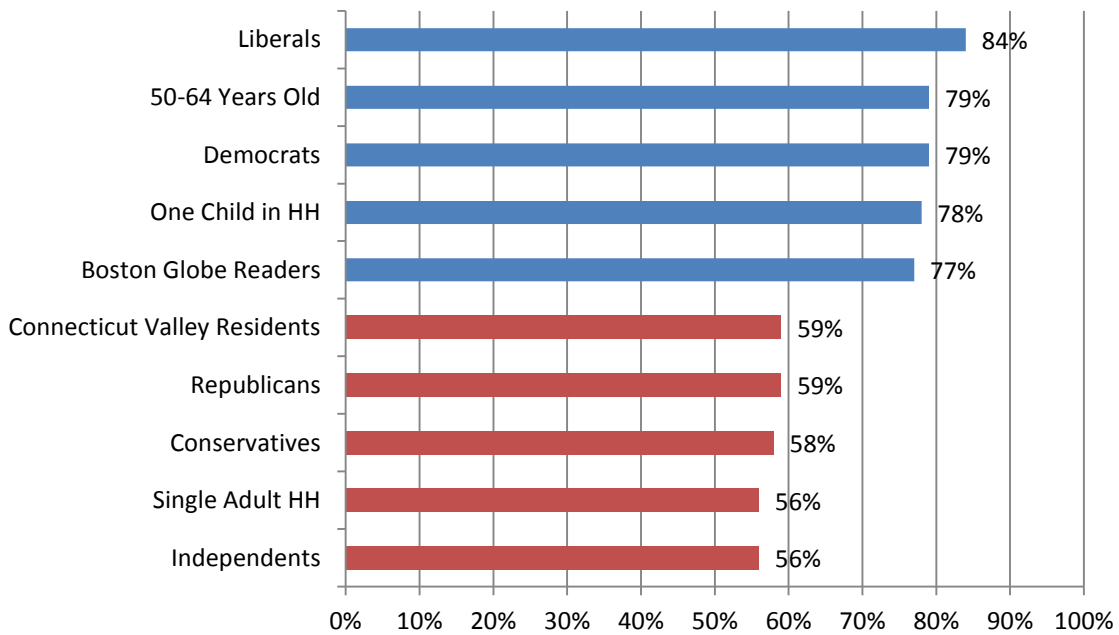


Figure 5: Approve / Disapprove of Using L-CHIP For Other Purposes

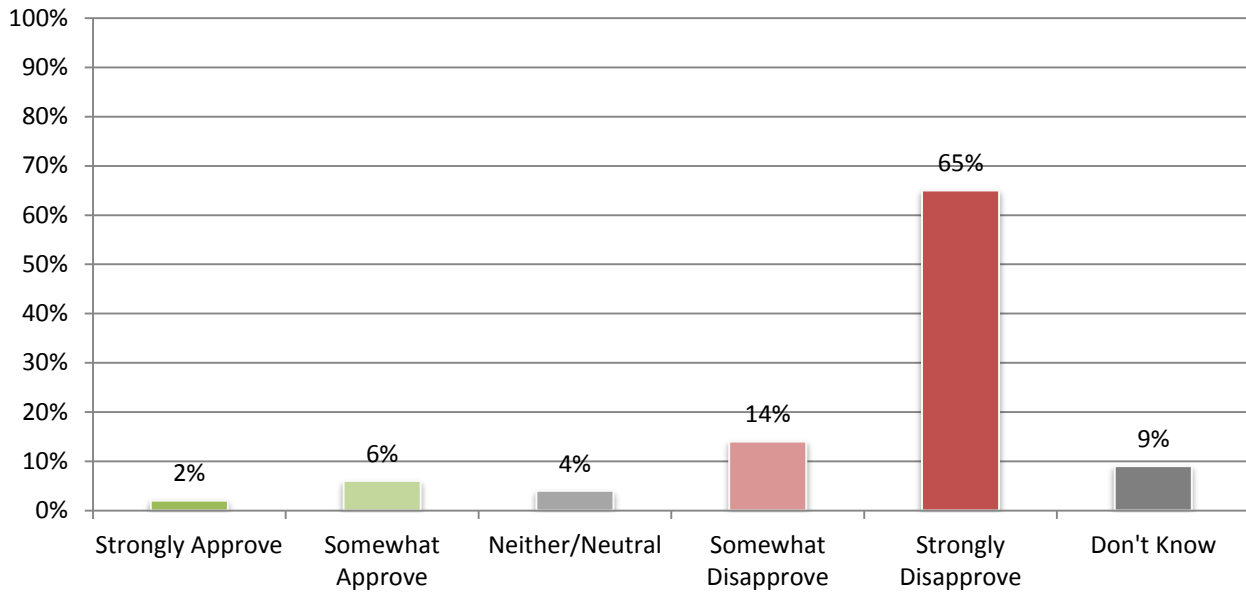
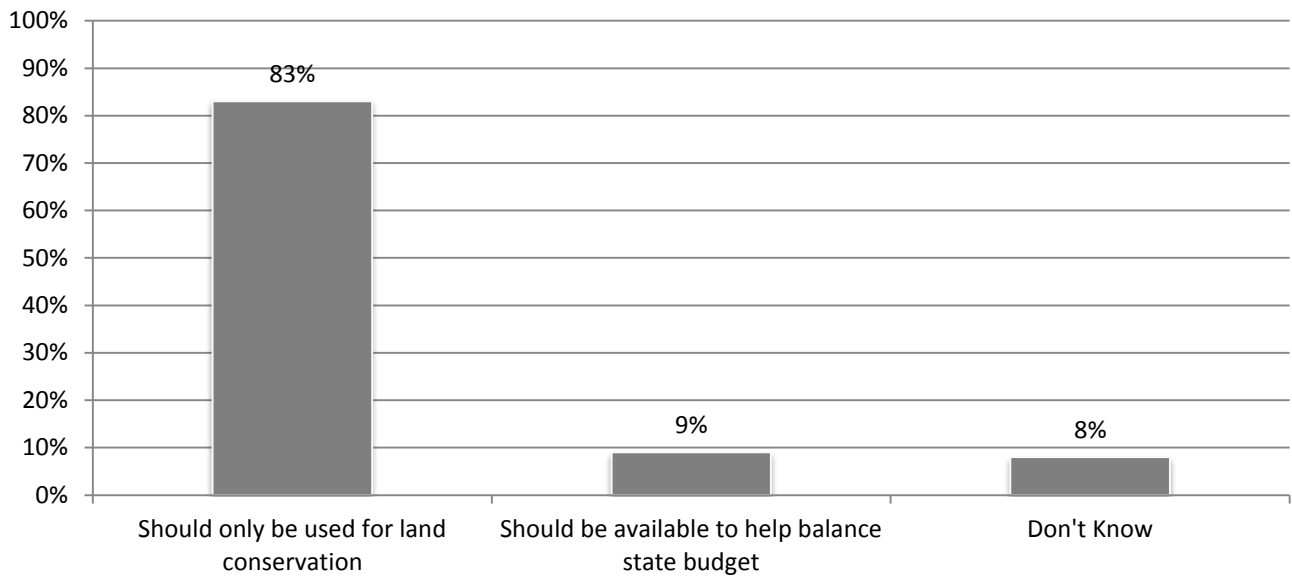


Figure 6: How Should L-CHIP Be Used?



The Current Use Program

- One in five New Hampshire voters (21%) are very familiar with the Current Use Program, 30% are somewhat familiar with it, 13% not very familiar, 35% not familiar at all, and 1% don't know. **(Figure 7)**
- Two in five New Hampshire voters (43%) strongly support the Current Use Law, 21% somewhat support it, 4% somewhat oppose it, 3% strongly oppose it, 2% are neutral, and 28% don't know. **(Figure 8)**

Figure 7: Familiarity with Current Use Program

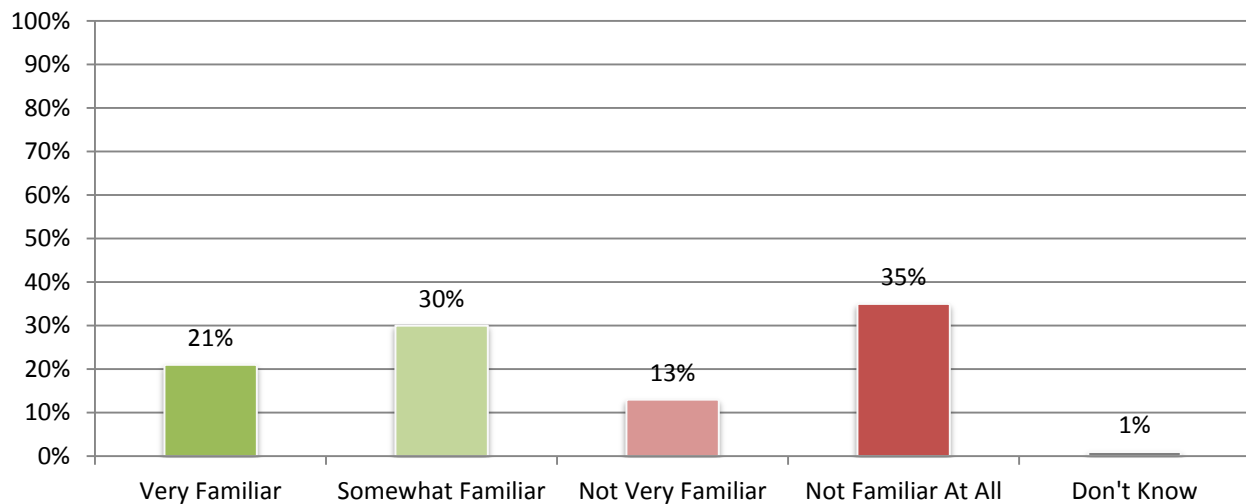
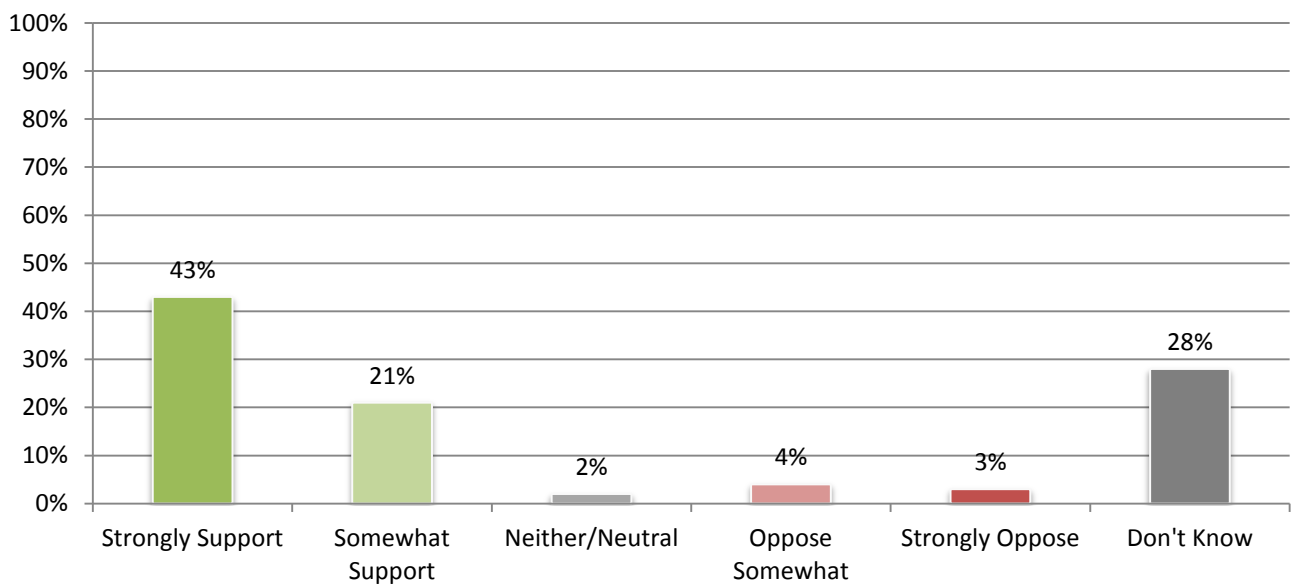


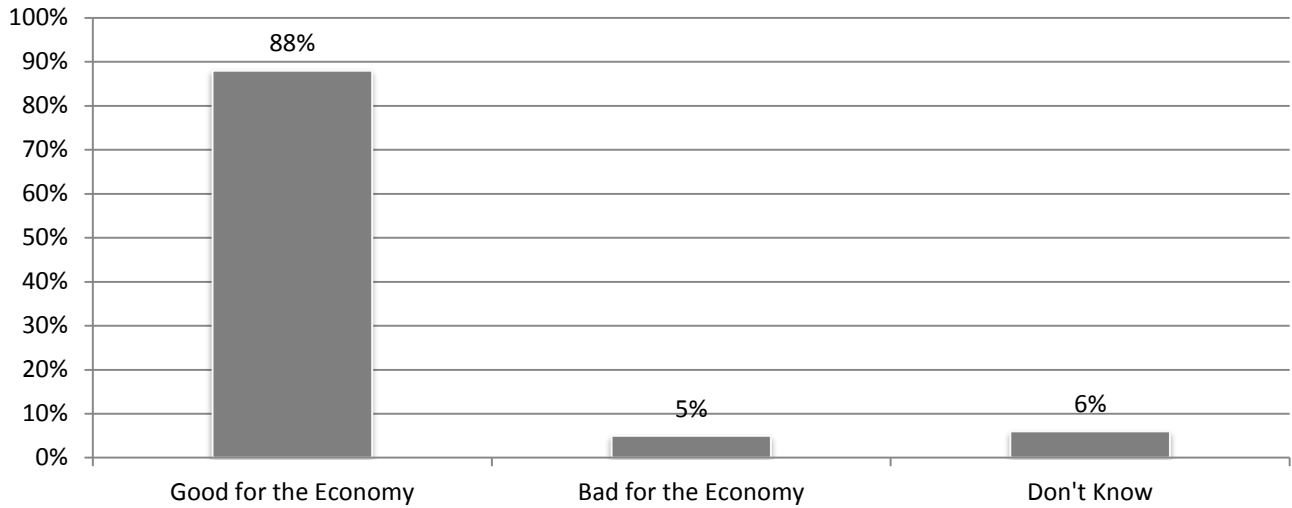
Figure 8: Support for Current Use Law



Conservation's Effect on the Economy

- Most New Hampshire voters (88%) believe that conserving land is good for the economy because of its benefits to tourism and jobs in agriculture, recreation, and forestry, 5% believe conserving land is bad for the economy because it takes land off the tax rolls, stops economic development, and incurs costs to taxpayers, and 6% don't know. **(Figure 9)**

Figure 9: Conservation's Effect on the Economy



TECHNICAL REPORT

How the Sample Was Selected

The SPNHF Conservation Funding Survey was a survey of randomly selected likely November 2012 voters in the state of New Hampshire via landline and cell phones. This survey was conducted using a procedure called Random Digit Dialing (RDD) which is described below.

A sample of households in the area was selected by a procedure known as random digit dialing. The way this works is as follows. First, with the aid of the computer, one of the three-digit telephone exchanges that are currently used in the area (e.g., 772) is randomly selected. The computer then randomly selects one of the "working blocks"--the first two of the last four numbers in a telephone number (e.g., 64)--and attaches it to the randomly selected exchange. Finally, the computer program then generates a two-digit random number between 00 and 99 (e.g., 57) which is attached to the previously selected prefix (772), and the previously selected working block (64) resulting in a complete telephone number -- i.e., 772-6457. This procedure is then repeated numerous times by the computer to generate more random numbers, so that we have a sufficient quantity to conduct the survey. The end result is that each household in the area in which there is a telephone has an equally likely chance of being selected into the sample.

The random sample used in the SPNHF Conservation Funding Survey was purchased from Survey Sampling International (SSI), Shelton, CT. SSI screens each selected telephone number to eliminate non-working numbers, disconnected numbers, and business numbers to improve the efficiency of the sample, reducing the amount of time interviewers spend calling non-usable numbers.

Each of these randomly generated telephone numbers is called by one of our interviewers from a centrally supervised facility at the UNH Survey Center. If the number called is found not to be a residential one, it is discarded and another random number is called. (Approximately forty-five percent of the numbers were discarded because they are found to be businesses, institutions, or not assigned.) If it is a residential number, the interviewer then randomly selects a member of the household by asking to speak with the adult currently living in the household who has had the most recent birthday. This selection process ensures that every adult (18 years of age or older) in the household has an equally likely chance of being included in the survey. No substitutions are allowed. If, for example, the randomly selected adult is not at home when the household is first contacted, the interviewer cannot substitute by selecting someone else who just happens to be there at the time. Instead, he or she must make an appointment to call back when the randomly selected adult is at home. In this way, respondent selection bias is minimized.

When the Interviewing Was Done

New Hampshire voters in the SPNHF Conservation Funding Survey were interviewed between June 22 and July 3, 2012. Each selected respondent was called by a professional UNH Survey Center interviewer from a centrally supervised facility at the UNH Survey Center. Telephone calls during the field period were made between 9:00 AM and 9:00 PM.

Response Rates

Interviews were completed with 505 randomly selected voters in New Hampshire from a sample of 7876 randomly selected landline and cell phone numbers. Using American Association for Public Opinion (AAPOR) Response Rate 4, the response rate for the Spring 2012 Granite State Poll was 26% percent. The formula to calculate standard AAPOR response rate is:

$$\frac{I}{((I+P) + (R+NC+O) + e(UH+UO))}$$

I=Complete Interviews, **P**=Partial Interviews, **R**=Refusal and break off, **NC**=Non Contact, **O**=Other, **e**=estimated portion of cases of unknown eligibility that are eligible, **UH**=Unknown household, **UO**=Unknown other.

Weighting of Data

The data have been weighted to account for known biases of telephone surveys. The data in the Granite State Poll are weighted by the number of adults and telephone lines within households to equalize the chances that any one adult would be selected for inclusion. The data are also weighted by respondent sex, and region of the state.

Sampling Error

The SPNHF Conservation Funding Survey, like all surveys, is subject to sampling error due to the fact that all residents in the area were not interviewed. For those questions asked of five hundred (500) or so respondents, the error is +/-4.4%. For those questions where fewer than 500 persons responded, the sampling error can be calculated as follows:

$$\text{Sampling error} = \pm (1.96) \sqrt{\frac{P(1-P)}{N}}$$

Where **P** is the percentage of responses in the answer category being evaluated and **N** is the total number of persons answering the particular question.

For example, suppose you had the following distribution of answers to the question, "Should the state spend more money on road repair even if that means higher taxes?" Assume 1,000 respondents answered the question as follows:

YES	- 47%
NO	- 48%
DON'T KNOW	- 5%

The sampling error for the "YES" percentage of 47% would be

$$\pm (1.96) \sqrt{\frac{(47)(53)}{1,000}} = \pm 3.1\%$$

for the "NO" percentage of 48% it would be

$$\pm (1.96) \sqrt{\frac{(48)(52)}{1,000}} = \pm 3.1\%$$

and for the "DON'T KNOW" percentage of 5% it would be

$$\pm (1.96) \sqrt{\frac{(5)(95)}{1,000}} = \pm 1.4\%$$

In this case we would expect the true population figures to be within the following ranges:

YES	43.9% - 50.1% (i.e., 47% +/-3.1%)
NO	44.9% - 51.1% (i.e., 48% +/-3.1%)
DON'T KNOW	3.6% - 6.4% (i.e., 5% +/-1.4%)

