

2024 Maine Land Trust Census

Maine Land Conservation Conference · April 30, 2025

Hall Collaborations · Stern Consulting International



What do these data tell us
about the future of land
conservation in *Maine*?

2024 Census

- 63 Questions
- 74/84 Land Trusts responded
2019: 76/84 respondents
2015: 72/90 respondents
- View the complete Census Report soon at mltn.org

Acres
Conserved by
Maine Land
Trusts

718,463

Total acres of fee land conserved

2,217,902

Total acres of conservation easements

2,936,365

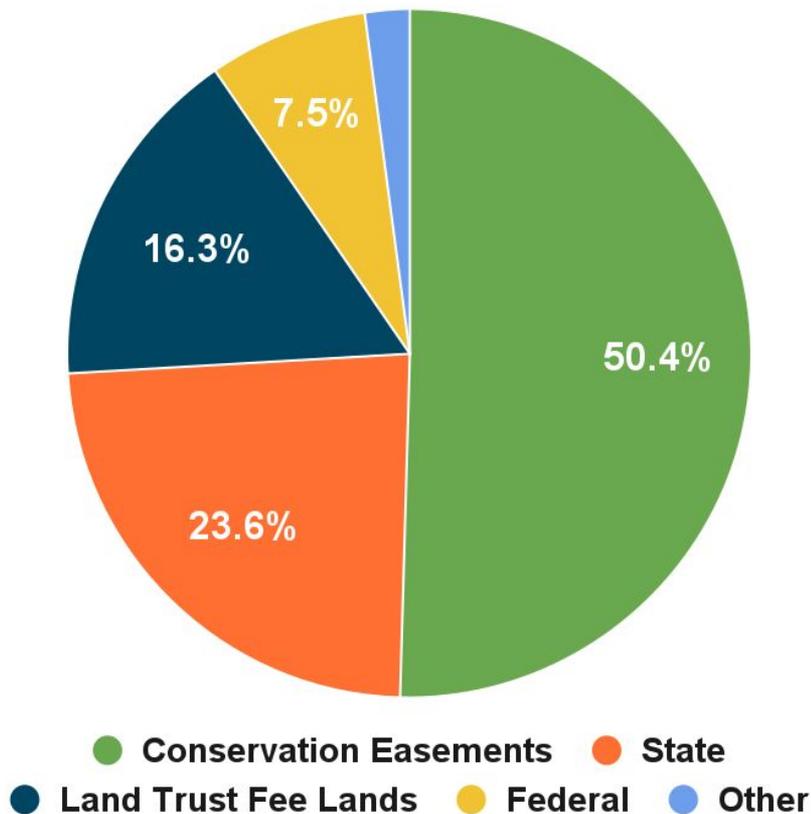
Total acres conserved

Land Trust Conserved Acres 2015 – 2024



22.2% of
Maine's
19,847,680
Acres of Land
Conserved

4.4 Million Acres Conserved in Maine

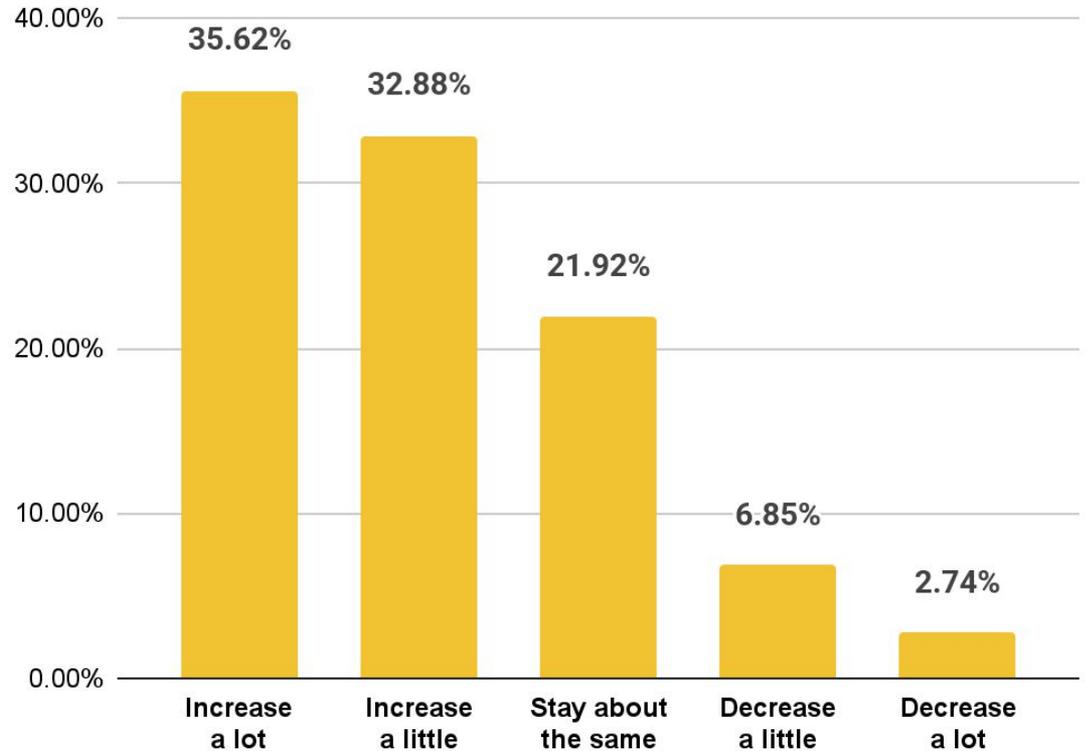


New England Acres Conserved by State

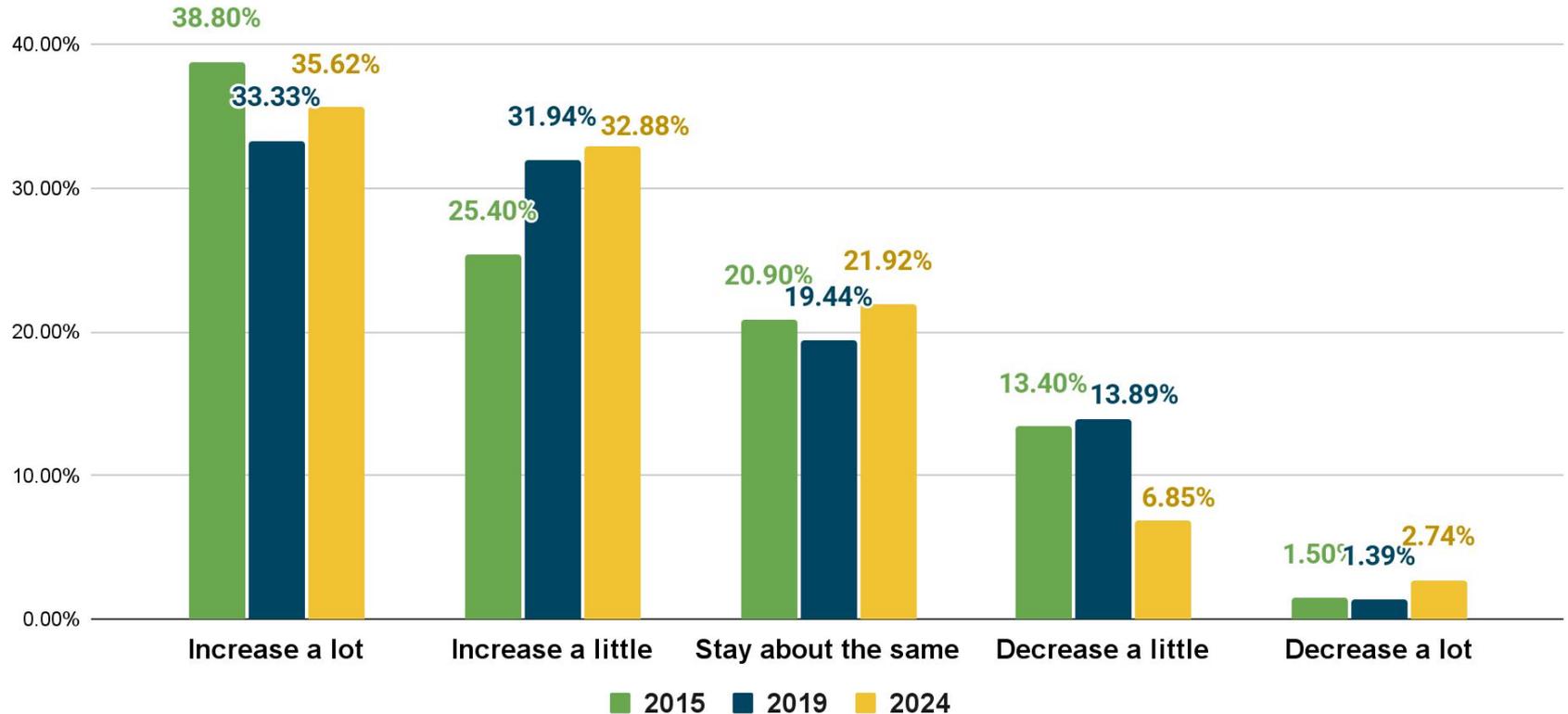
STATE	PERCENT OF LAND	CONSERVED
New Hampshire	35.1%	2,009,985
Massachusetts	29.1%	1,453,232
Vermont	28.6%	1,687,534
Rhode Island	25.9%	171,588
Maine	22.2%	4,389,364
Connecticut	20.0%	618,513

Land Acquisition

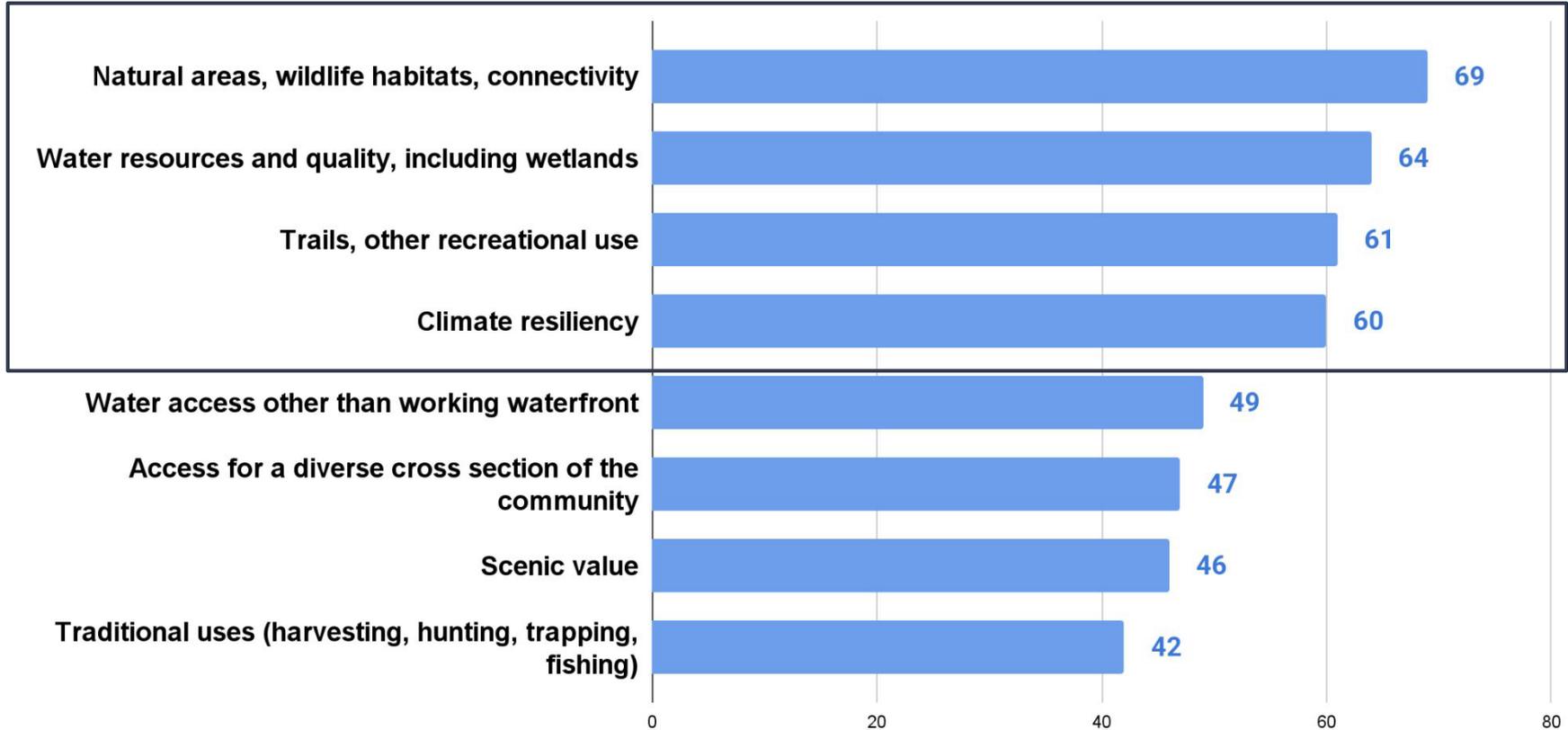
2024 Expectations for Future Land Acquisition Action



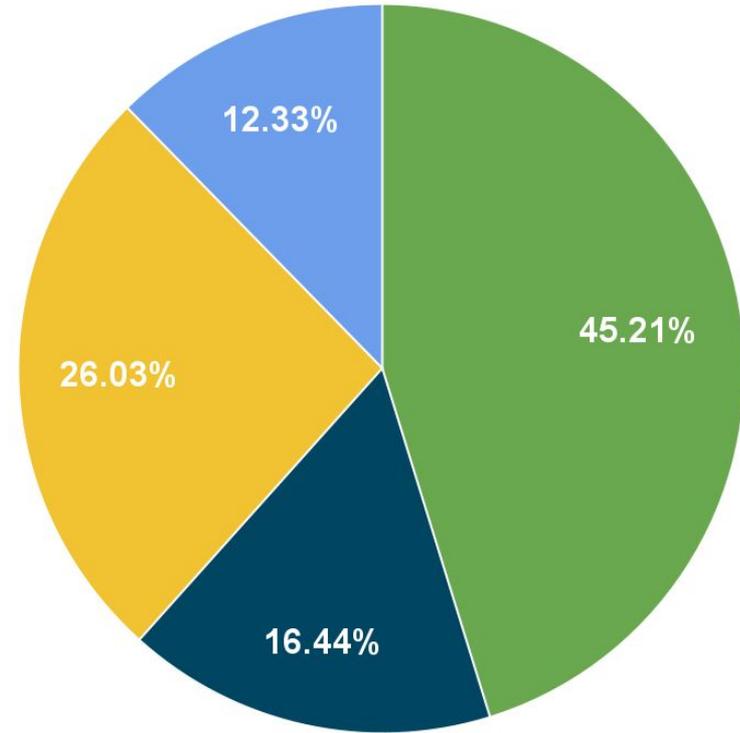
Expectations for Land Acquisition, 2015 – 2024



Protection Priorities 2024

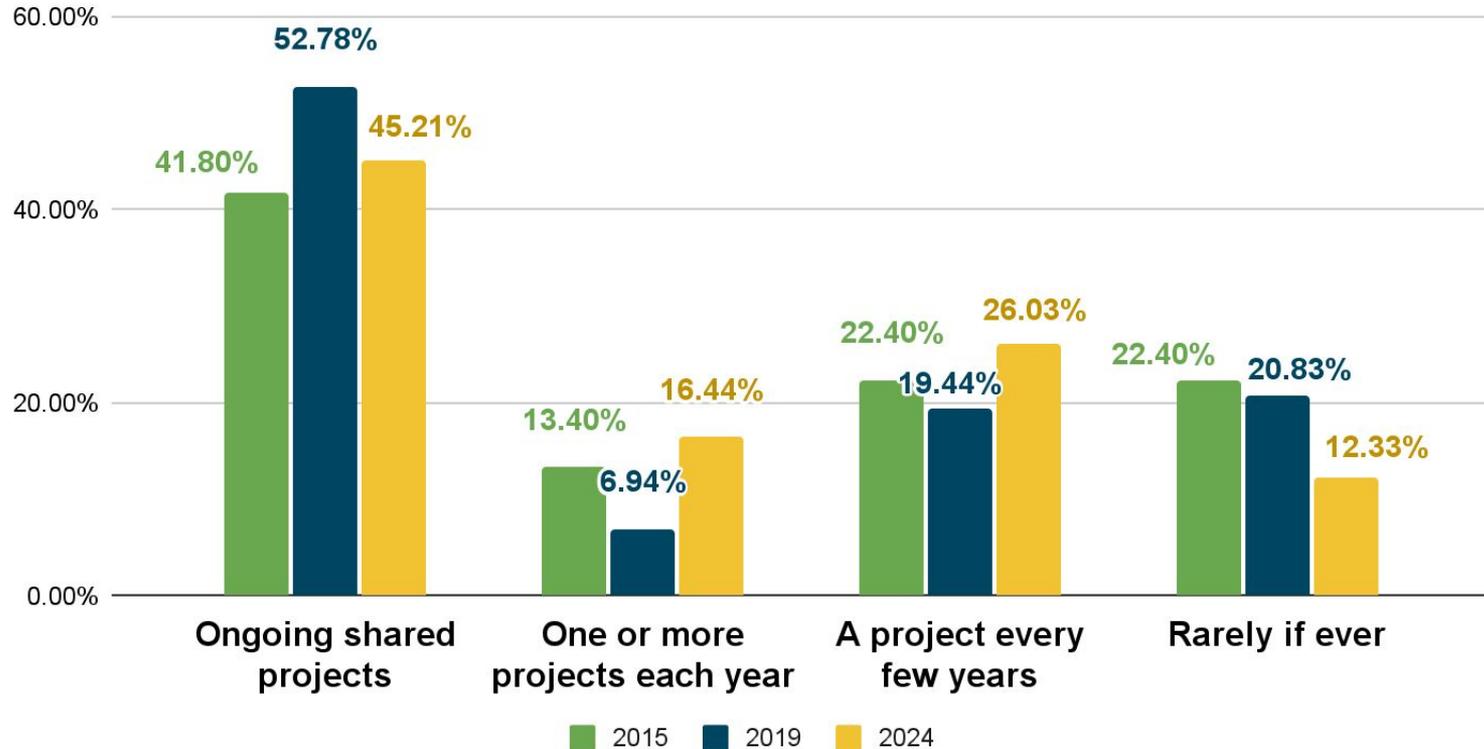


Work on Joint Land Protection Goals 2024



- Ongoing shared projects
- One or more projects each year
- A project every few years
- Rarely if ever

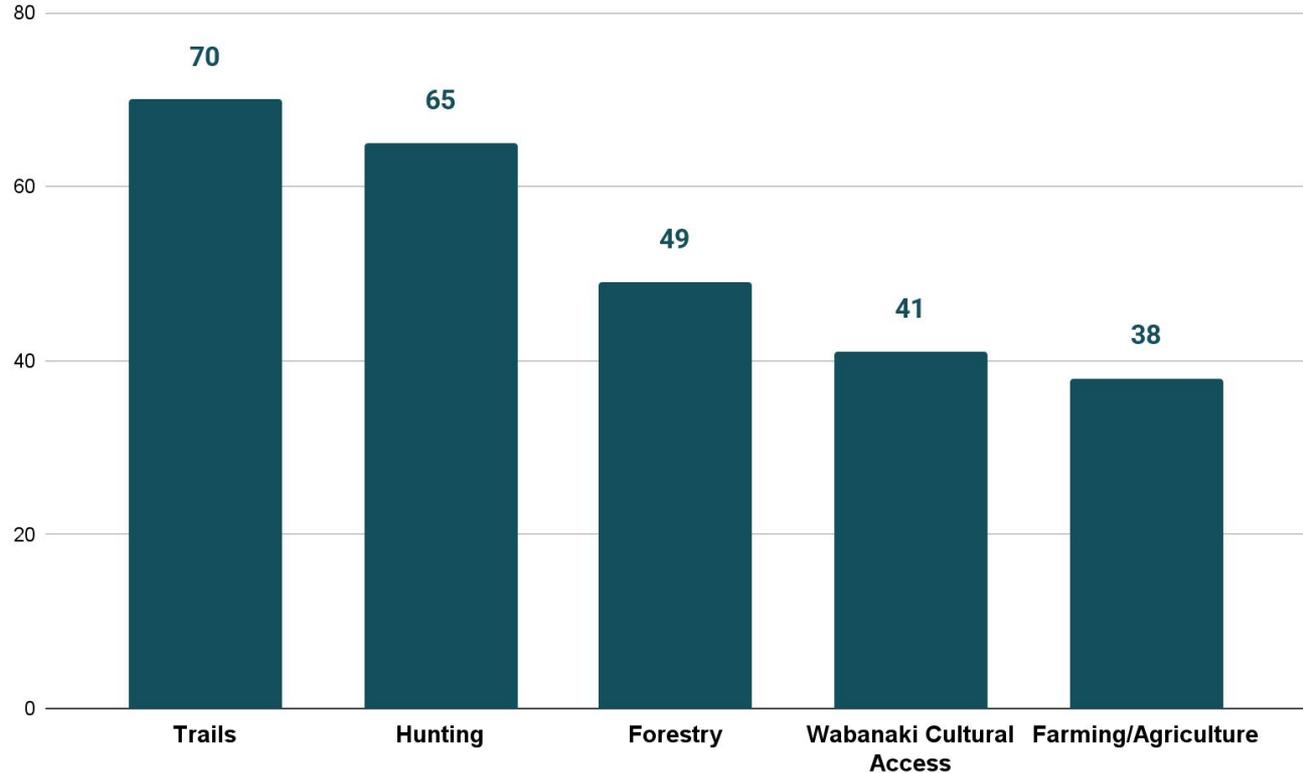
Joint Projects 2015 – 2024



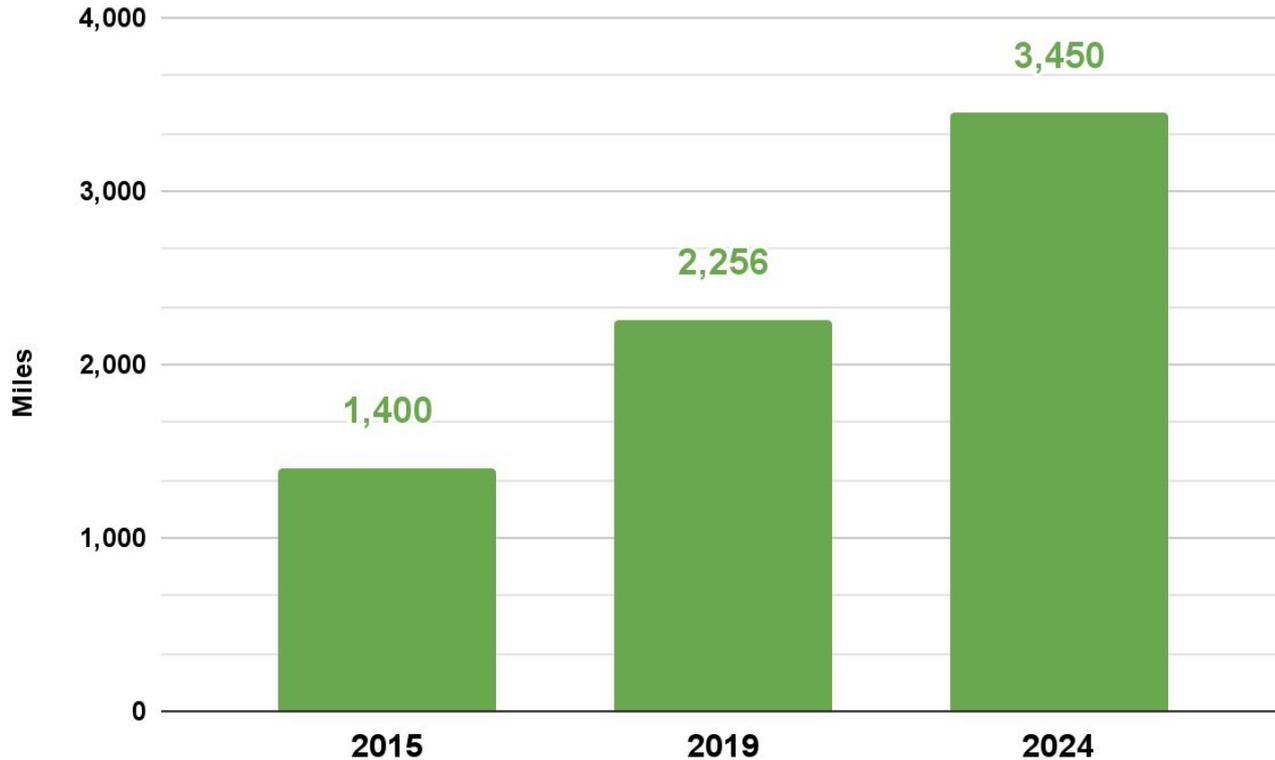
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Land Usage 2024

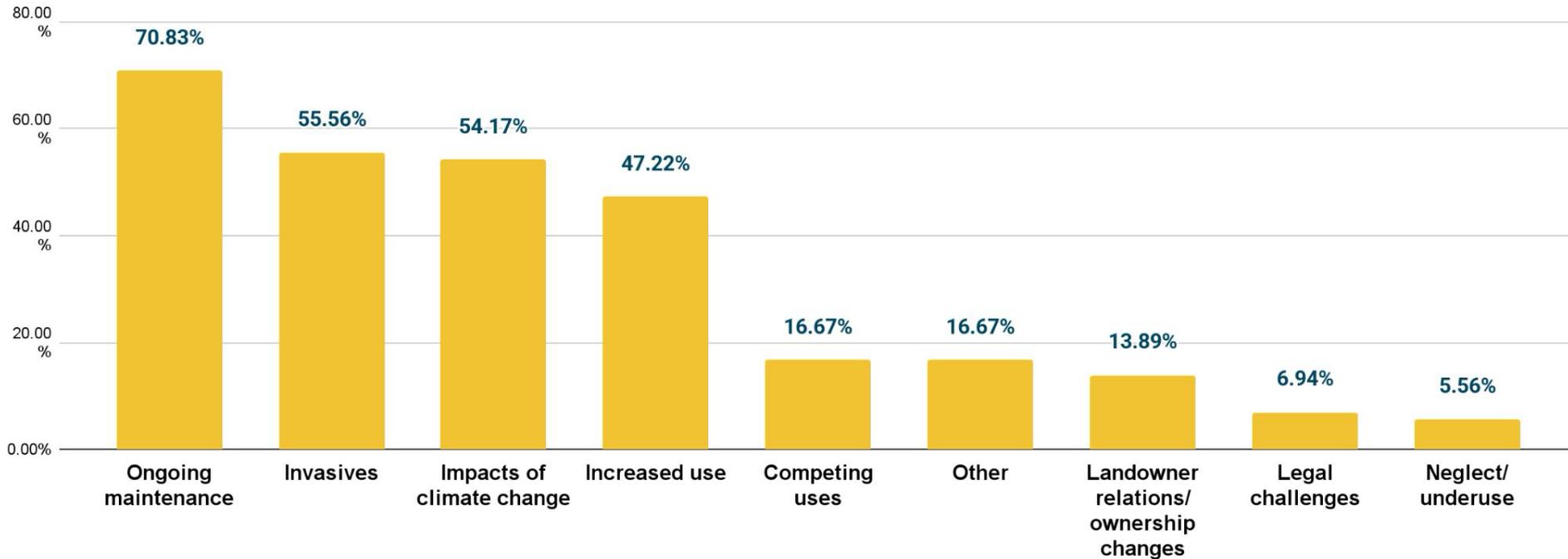
Number of Land Trusts Allowing Each Activity on at Least One Property



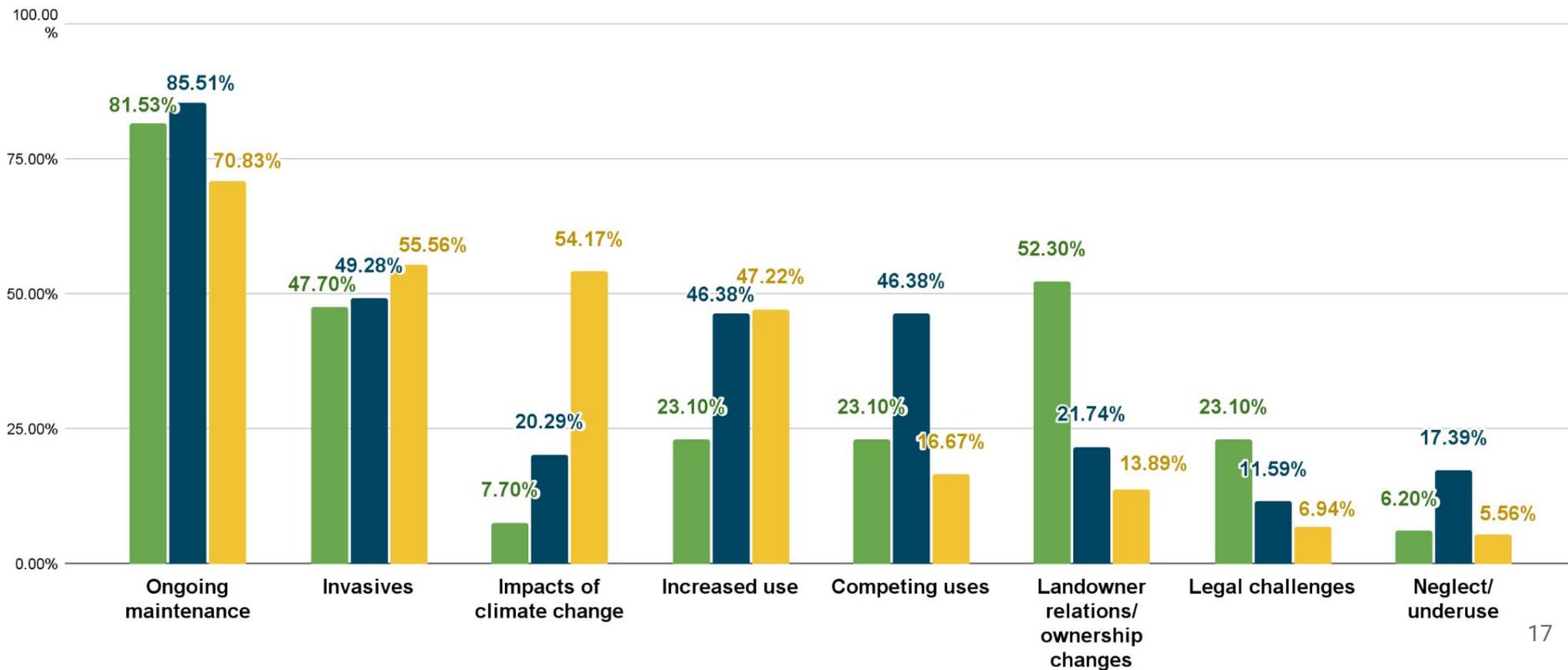
Total Miles of Land Trust Trails 2015 – 2024



Stewardship Concerns 2024



Stewardship Concerns 2015-2024



Stewardship Concerns

“The primary challenge that is an umbrella to all other fee property challenges is having enough capacity—staff, volunteer, and financial—to manage all the conservation land.”

“A licensed forester has documented that some of our forests are no longer regenerating due to overwhelming infestations of invasive plants. We have almost no resources to address this issue at scale.”

Climate Change Effects

“We are concerned about the erosion of our islands and waterfront properties, the rise in sea level and storm surge, the rising water temperature and the effects they will have on our lighthouse and beach.”

“A central focus of our land stewardship efforts is invasive species management. Invasives are spreading due to shorter winters, higher rains, and climate change.”

Conservation Easement Violations 2024

CE Violations by Party

N = 30 Trusts with 61 total
violations

44.26%

Abutter or 3rd party

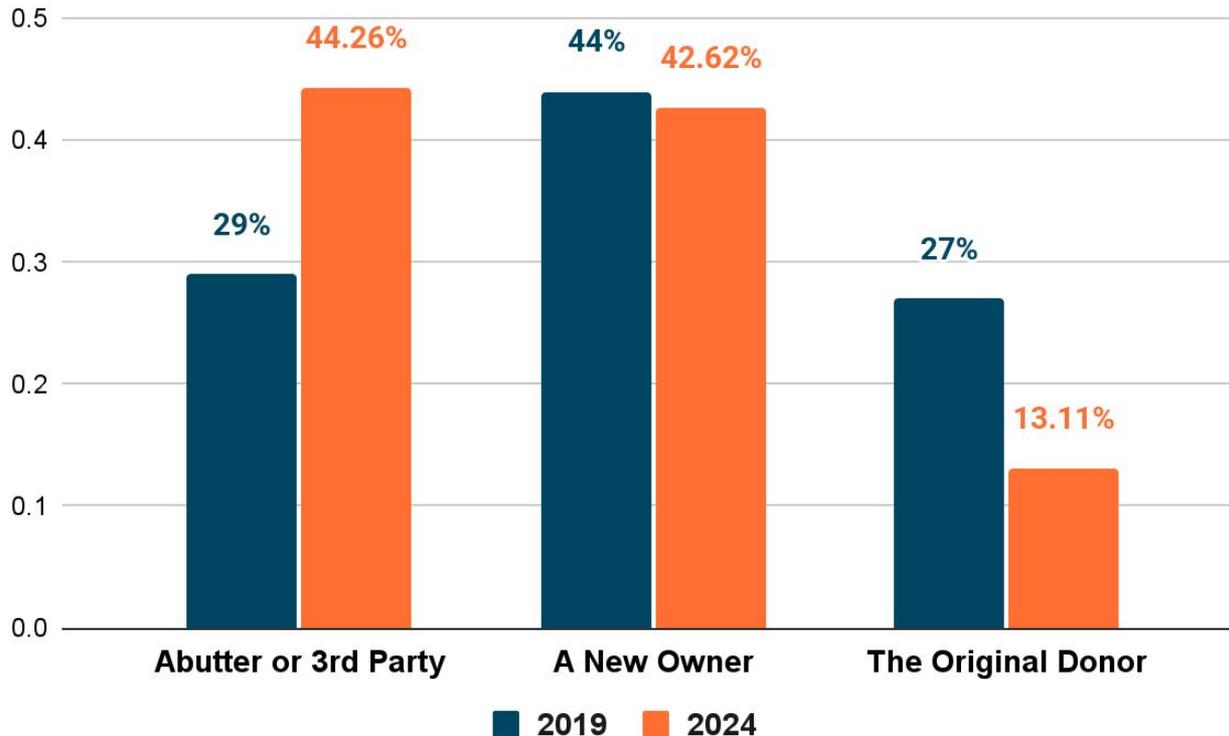
42.62%

A new owner

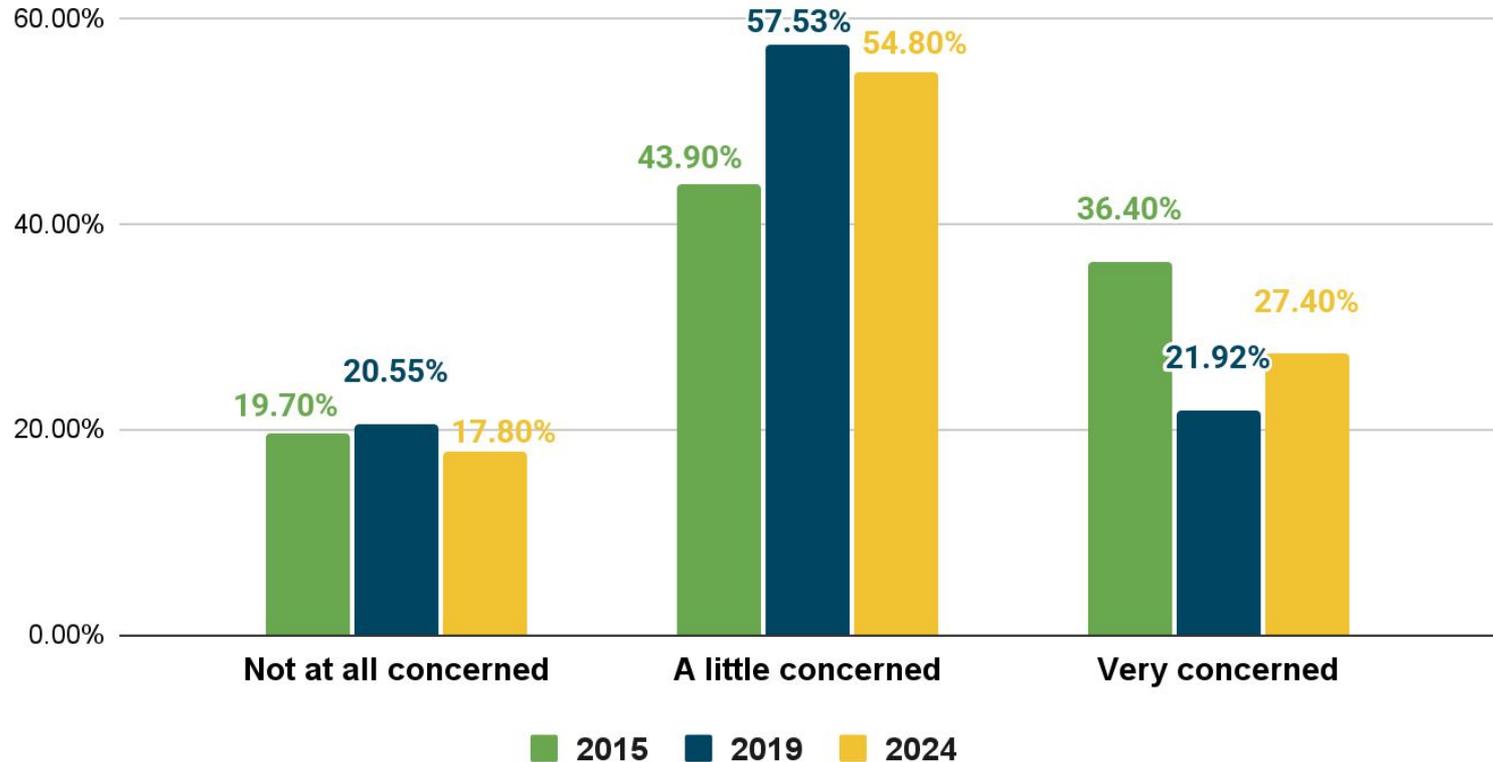
13.11%

The original donor

30 Trusts Report 61 Easement Violations 2024



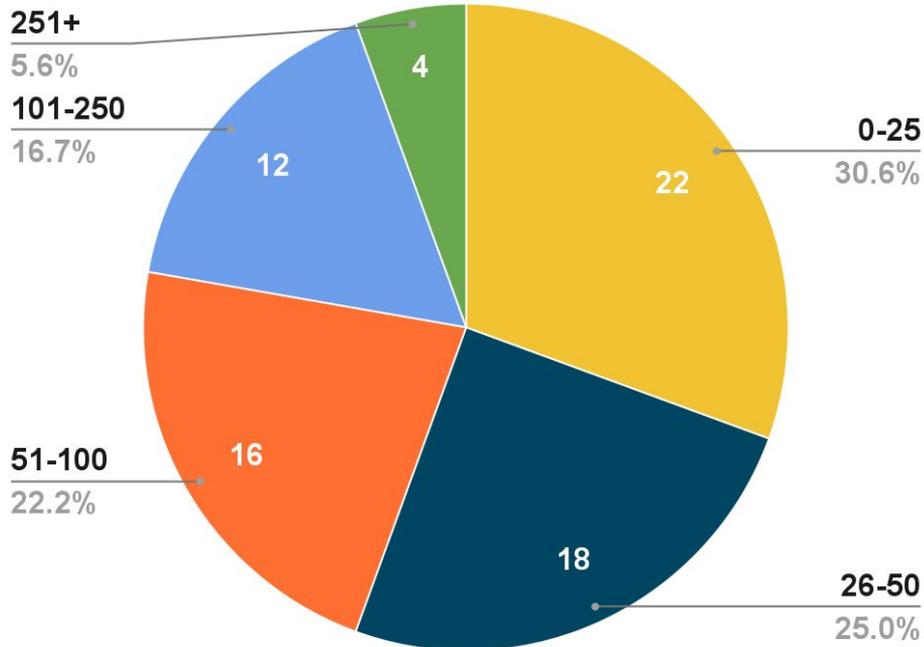
Concern for Stewardship Funding 2015 – 2024



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Volunteers

Distribution of Land Trusts by Number of Volunteers



Over
6,500
Volunteers Reported in 2024

6,000
approximated in 2019

4,000
approximated in 2015

Board Member Ages 2015 – 2024

	2015 CENSUS	2019 CENSUS	2024 CENSUS
Avg % ≤ 39 years old	10%	10%	11%
Avg % 40-64 years old	50%	46%	40%
Avg % ≥ 65 years old	40%	44%	48%

Board Strengths & Concerns

N = 73

What is your Board's greatest strength?

- Commitment and Dedication to Mission (25)
- Knowledge, Skills, & Expertise (16)
- Community Connections & Representation (11)
- Active engagement of the working board (10)

What is the biggest concern?

- Recruitment Challenges (15)
- Financial and Fundraising Concerns (15)
- Board/Volunteer Engagement and Workload Distribution (14)
- Board-to-Staff Transition Growing Pains (11)

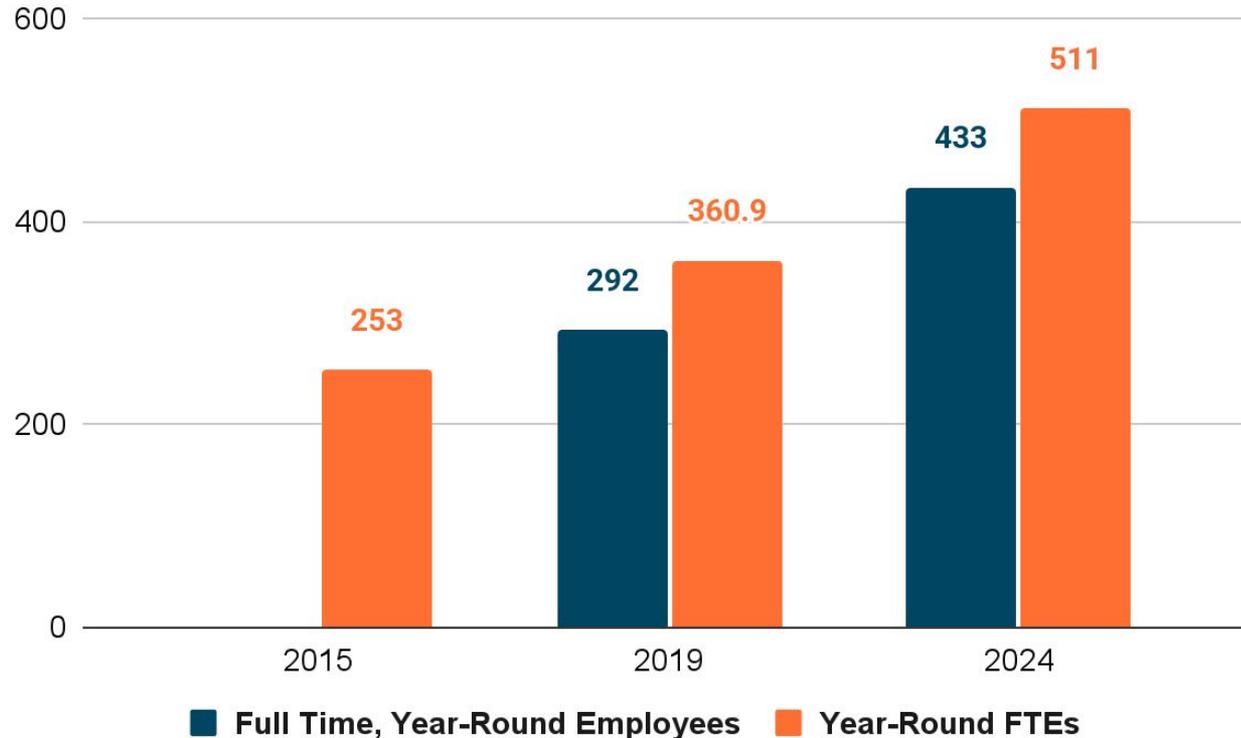
Board Strengths

“The volunteer initiative from the board is truly impressive. Many board members devote hundreds of hours of time per year to make the land trust work.”

“Members bring a diversity of professional backgrounds and offer powerful collective wisdom in decision-making.”

“Our board often has differences of opinion but they are always resolved through productive discussion and mutual respect.”

Total Year-Round Land Trust Staff 2015 – 2024



Staff Distribution 2015 – 2024

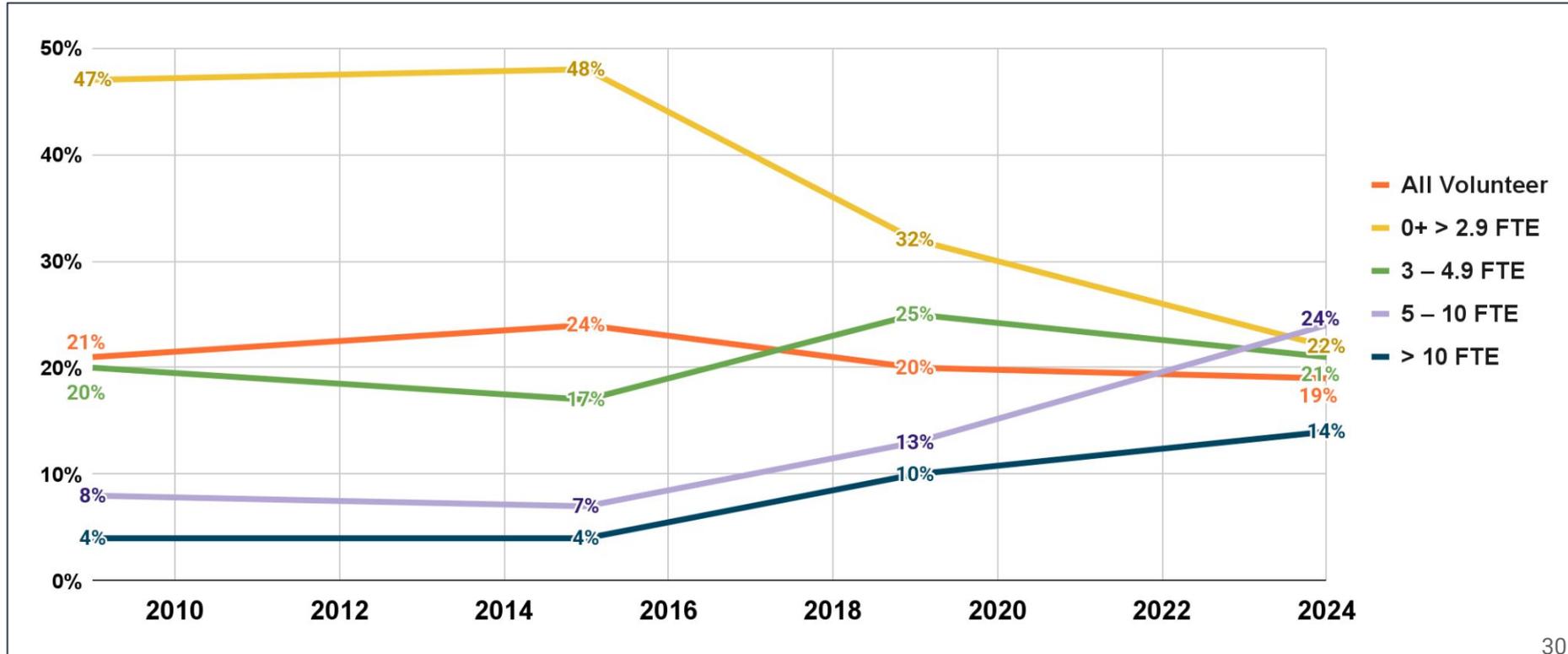
	2015	2019	2024
All Volunteer	24%	20%	19%
0+ > 2.9 FTE	48%	32%	22%
3 – 4.9 FTE	17%	25%	21%
5 – 10 FTE	7%	13%	24%
> 10 FTE	4%	10%	14%

Full- and Part-Time Year-Round FTEs

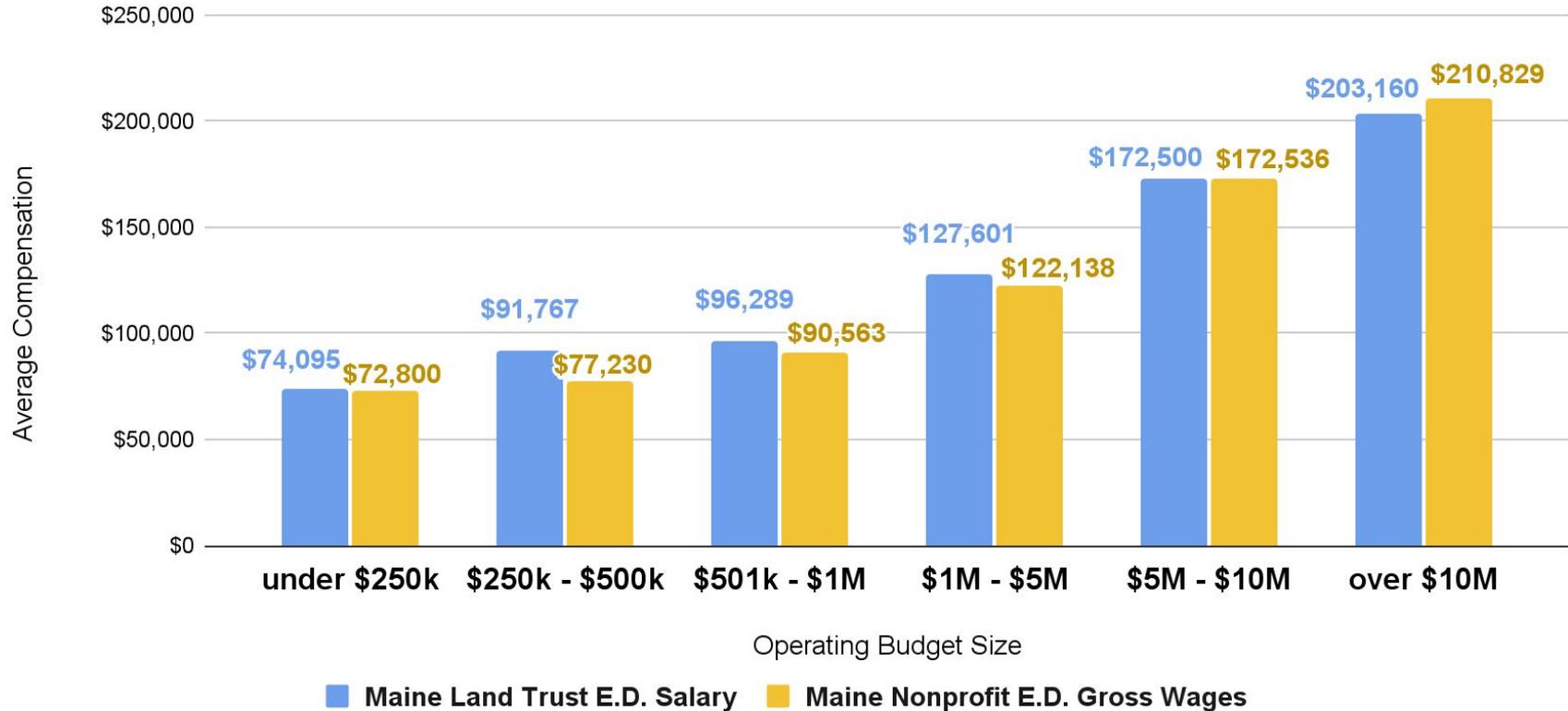
2015: 360

2024: 511

Transition in Staff Distribution 2009 – 2024



Average E.D. Salary by Operating Budget



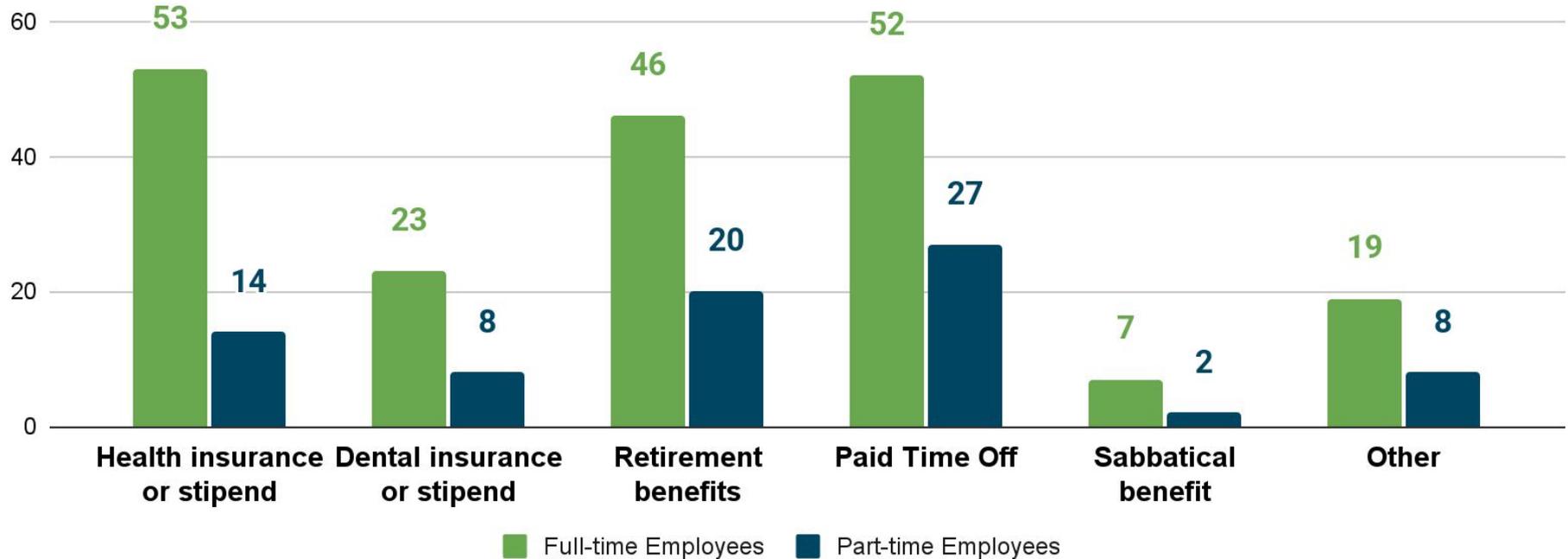
Stewardship Staff Salaries, Statewide 2024

STEWARDSHIP POSITION	MEDIAN	AVERAGE	RANGE
Director (22)	\$62,000	\$66,858	\$42,786 - \$144,000
Assistant/Associate Director (4)	\$82,043	\$80,866	\$55,000 - \$104,378
Manager/Coordinator (22)	\$53,895	\$56,556	\$45,000 - \$77,644
Land Steward (17)	\$53,000	\$53,493	\$41,000 - \$65,000
Other (3)	\$51,833	\$51,833	\$47,000 - \$60,000

Development Staff Salaries, Statewide 2024

DEVELOPMENT POSITION	MEDIAN	AVERAGE	RANGE
Director (22)	\$75,000	\$86,416	\$50,000 - \$173,059
Manager/Coordinator (16)	\$58,113	\$64,344	\$44,000 - \$110,000
Admin/Assistant (6)	\$49,000	\$46,926	\$37,000 - \$53,500

Employee Benefits 2024



Staffing Challenges

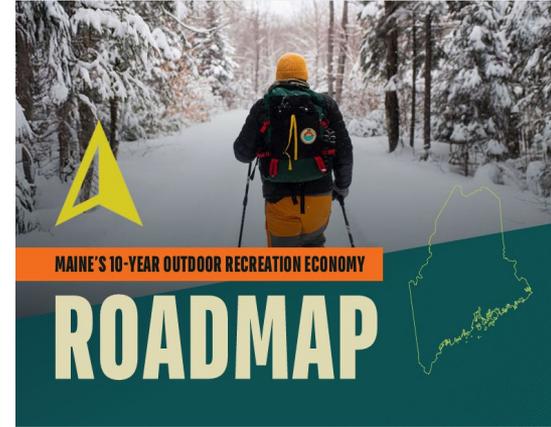
What are your organization's greatest challenges in attracting and retaining qualified staff?

- Funding Competitive Salaries (26)
- Housing Availability/Cost and Cost of Living (20)
- Ability to Offer Benefits (16)

“The rapidly increasing costs associated with living within commuting distance of [our trust] juxtaposed against median state salaries for land conservation professionals pose a significant challenge.”

Maine's Outdoor Recreation Economy Roadmap

January 2025



“While Maine is in the top ten states for outdoor recreation economy employment, the sector struggles to attract and retain talent due to relatively low compensation, seasonality, workforce housing challenges, and a lack of awareness of career pathways, education, and training opportunities.”

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Funds
Raised for
Land
Protection
in Last Five Years

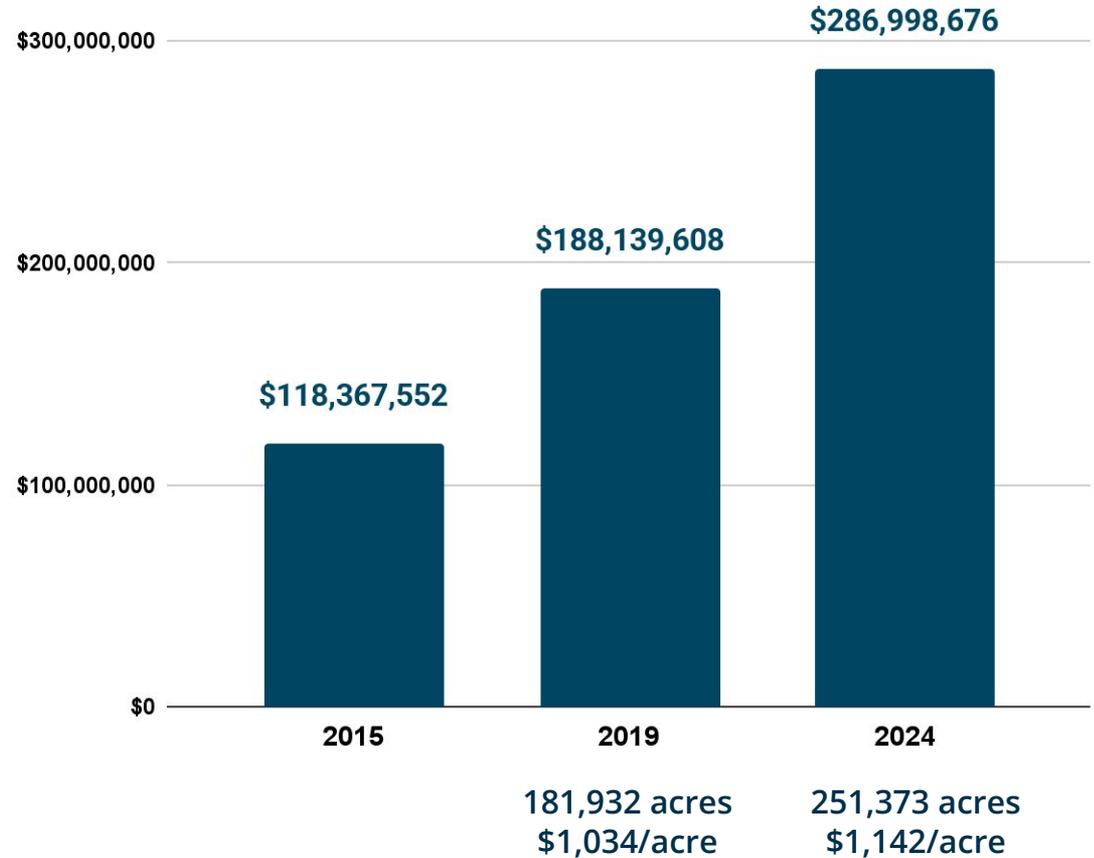
2020 – 2024

Total: \$286,998,676

Median: \$1,270,804

Funds Raised for Land Protection 2015 – 2024

Reported 5-year Totals



Funds Raised for Land Protection in Last Five Years

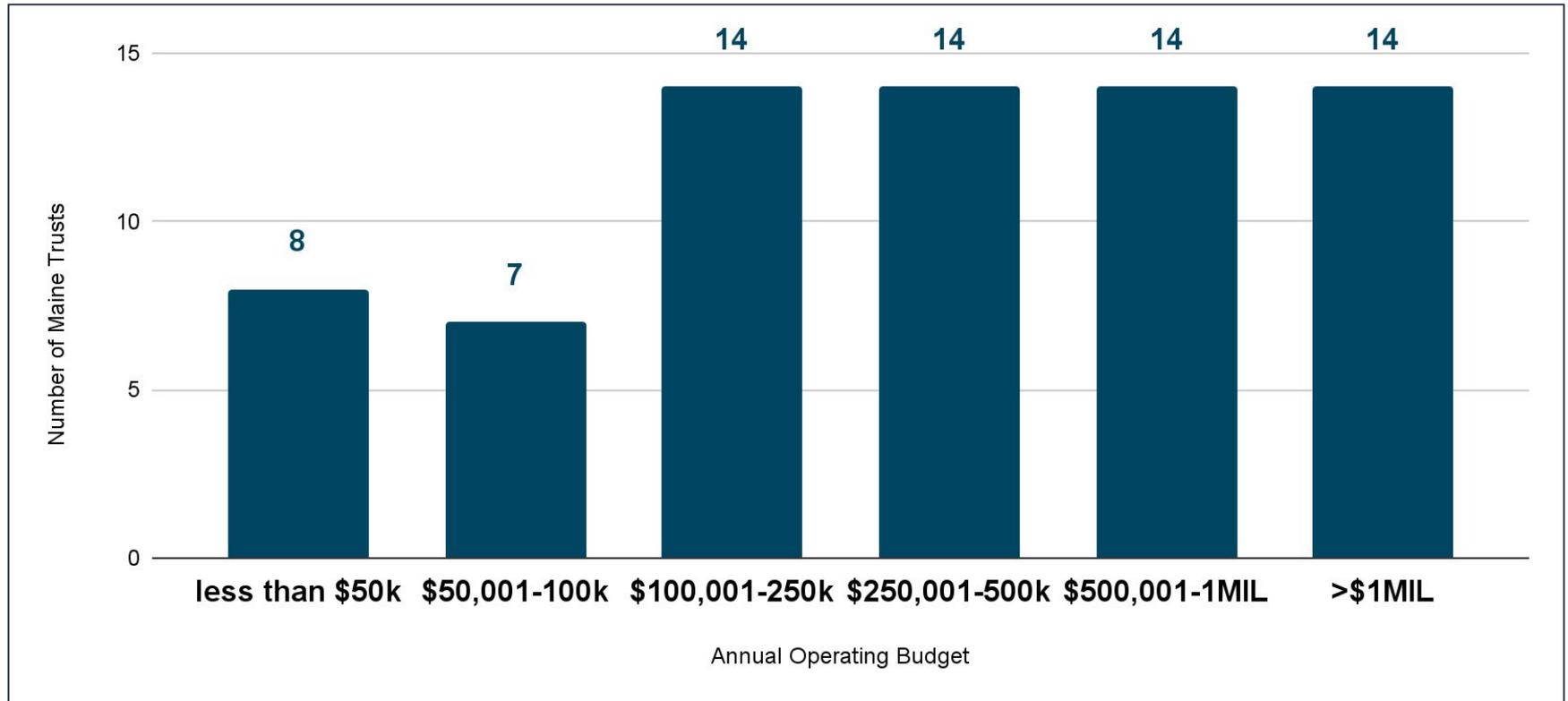
Distribution by
Amount Raised

AMOUNT RAISED	2024
\$1,000 - \$100,000	4
\$100,001 - \$500,000	8
\$500,001 - \$1MIL	12
\$1MIL - \$5MIL	22
MORE THAN \$5MIL	9

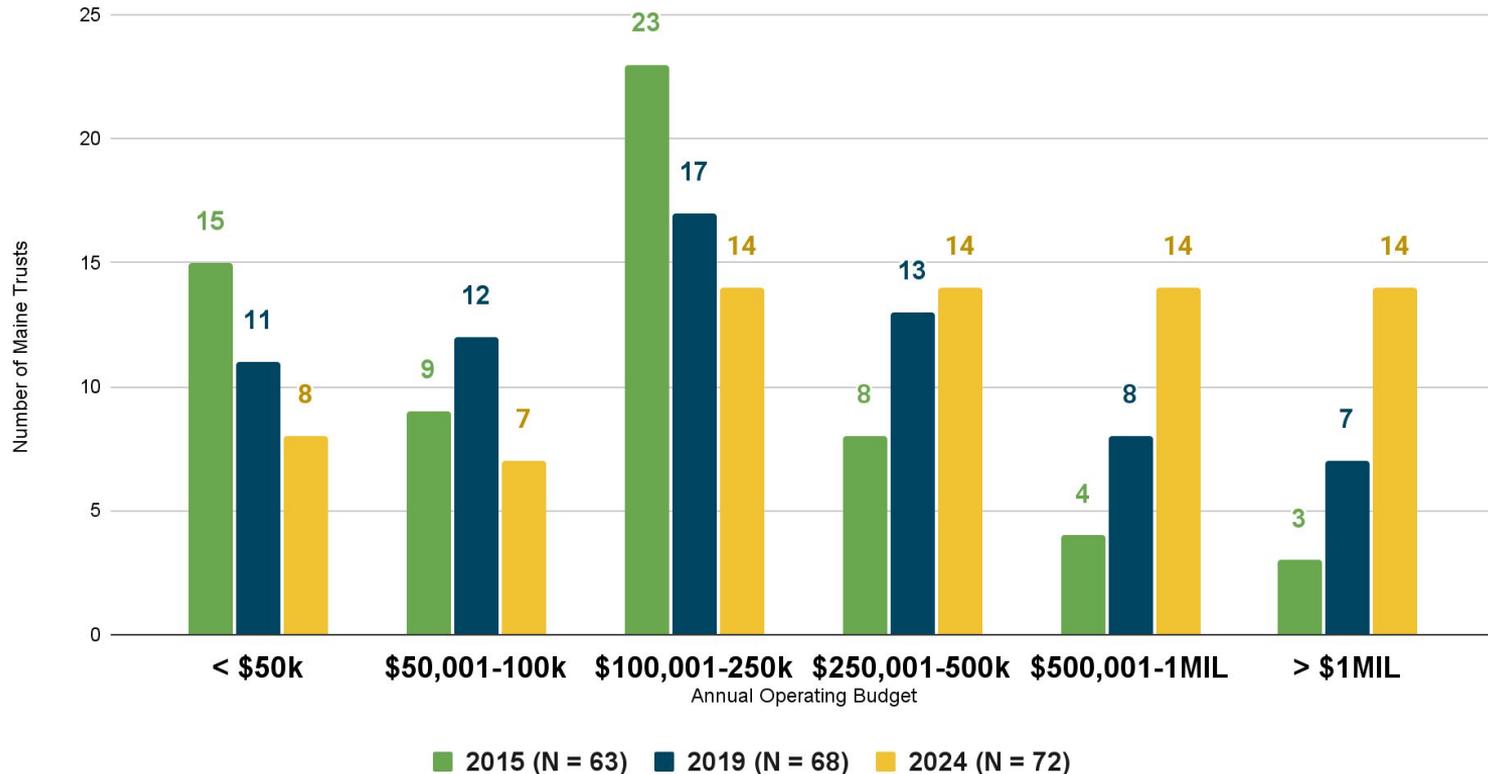
Tax Options 2024

TAX OPTION	# OF TRUSTS	ACRES
Enroll in the Tree Growth current use tax program	26	425,848
Receive property tax exemption and make payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT)	24	153,582
Enroll in the Open Space current use tax program	22	65,458
Receive property tax exemption and do not make payments in lieu of taxes	49	64,452
Make full tax payments	20	8,675
Enroll in the Farmland current use tax program	5	453

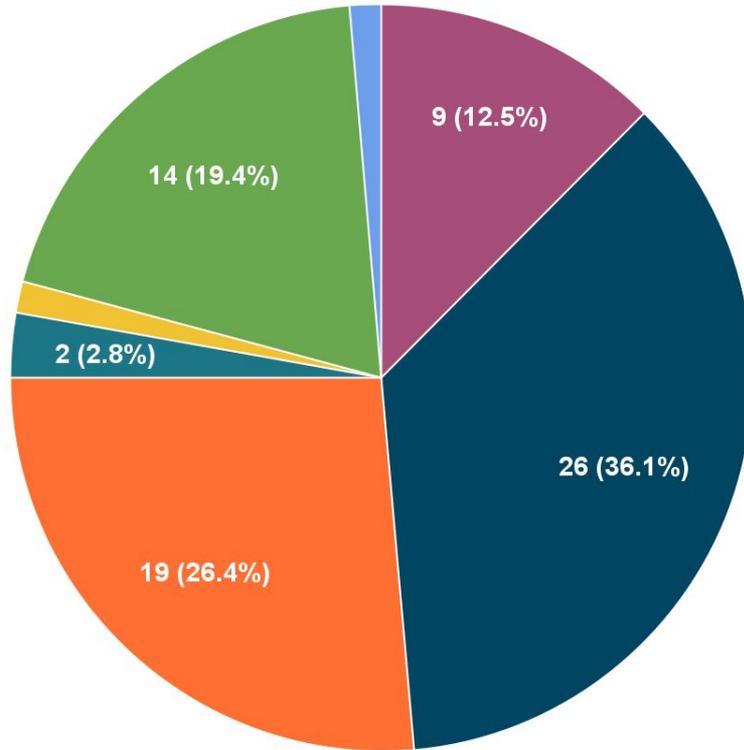
Land Trust Size by Operating Budget 2024



Land Trust by Operating Budget 2015 – 2024



Approaches to Fundraising

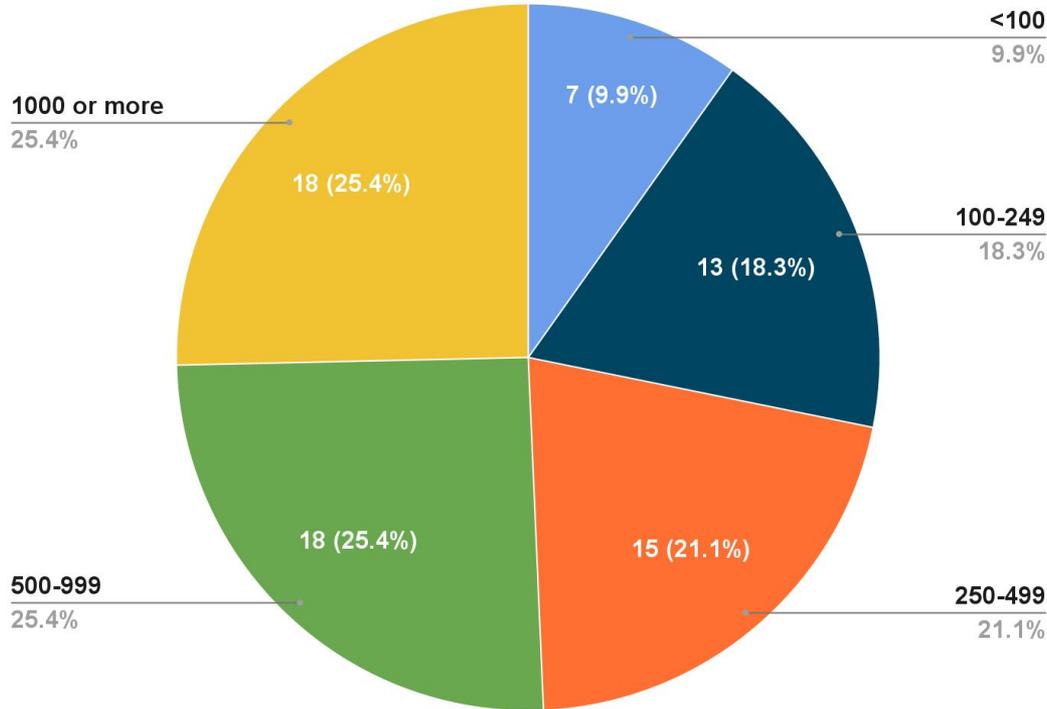


- Staff led with extensive Board support
- Staff led with moderate Board support
- Staff led with minimal Board support
- Board led with extensive staff support
- Board led with moderate staff support
- Board led with minimal or no staff support
- Other (please specify)

Community Financial Support

Distribution of Land Trusts by Household Support

N = 71



500

Median number
of households

62,148

Total reported households

10.5%

of all Maine households (estimated)
11% in 2019

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