

The Cheese Country Trail is a multiuse trail system that meanders through 48 miles of rural Wisconsin, from Monroe to Belmont and Mineral Point. It is open to motorized and non-motorized uses, including all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), utility terrain vehicles (UTVs), snowmobiles, off-road dirt bikes, mopeds, motorcycles, horses and horse-drawn conveyances, bicycles, and hikers.

Local stakeholder groups and Cooperative Extension collaborated to study the number, characteristics, and perceptions of Cheese Country Trail users, with the goal of improving users' trail experiences and helping local businesses and governments create tourism-related economic development strategies. During the 12-month study (Nov. 2010–Oct. 2011), 74 local volunteers spent more than 1,400 hours collecting data. They conducted a total of 683 two-hour trail observations and 730 face-to-face interviews.

This is one of three "Results at a Glance" fact sheets that highlight key information from the full report.

# Future directions

The Cheese Country Trail is a valuable economic, cultural, and recreational asset, bringing thousands of people to the area and injecting millions of dollars into local economies. ATV use is by far the most common activity on the trail (figure 1), and most trail users learn about the trail either from friends and family or online (figure 2).

The Cheese Country Trail study gathered information on numerous aspects of the trail and identified a few areas that can be further developed to improve the user experience and help trailside communities make the most of the trail.

## Congestion

During some weekends and holidays, the trail nears capacity. Intensive use areas should be developed to relieve this congestion and attract additional motorized recreational users to the area.

Figure 1. Type of trail use

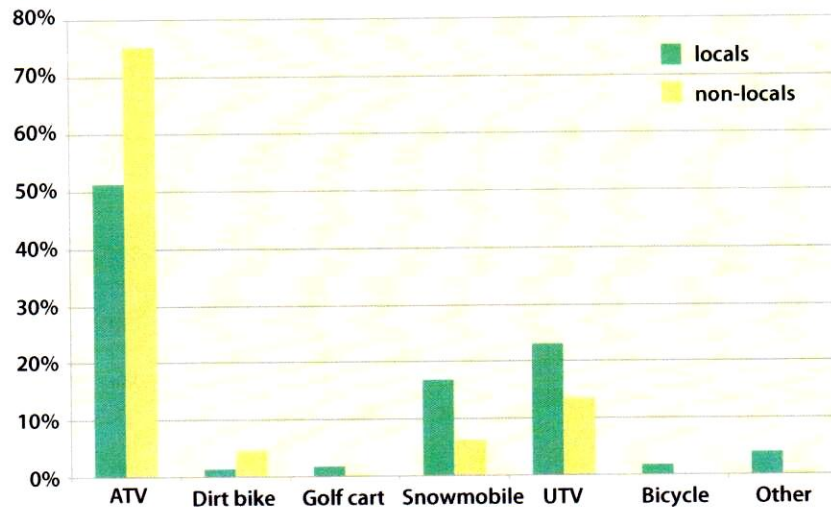
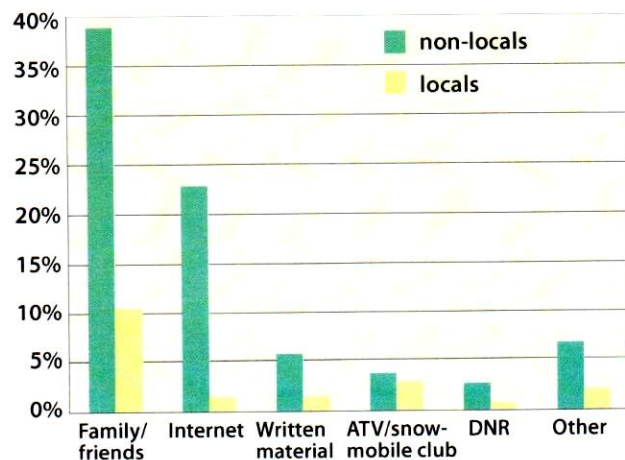


Figure 2. Where users learned of the Cheese Country Trail



### Safety

Trail users expressed concerns about safety, particularly speed and intoxicated operation of machines (figure 3). Additional patrols and signage would help address these concerns, along with the required use of headlights.

### Trail partners

The Tri-County Trails Commission is not organized or staffed to develop and carry out all suggestions from this study. Public and private organizations throughout the three-county region should form a partnership to benefit the trail.

### Revenue

Additional revenue is needed to enhance the trail experience for users. Funding is needed for grooming, maintenance, and signage, including directions to nearby community attractions and businesses off the trail (figures 4 and 5).

### Permit policy

The trail use permit policy for both in-state and out-of-state users needs to be simplified.

### Long-term planning

There is a genuine concern the trail will be eliminated if rail once again becomes operational in this area. Well-informed decisions will include an understanding of how important the trail is to the region's economy.

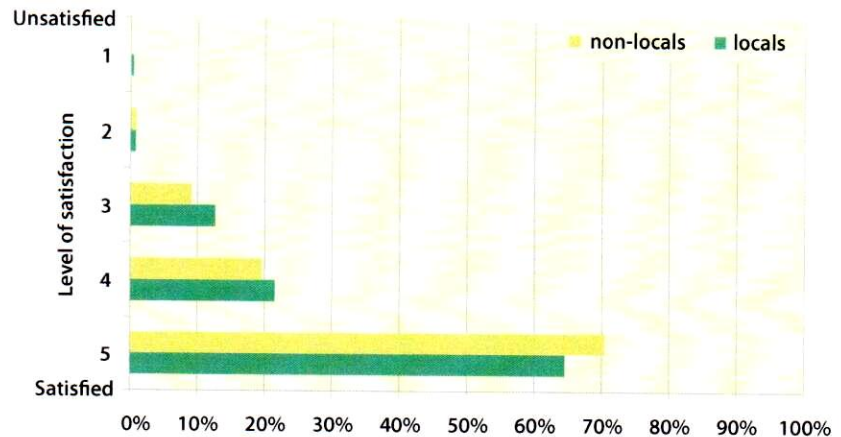
## For more information

To learn more about the Cheese Country Trail, visit the Tri-County Trails website: [www.tricountytrails.com](http://www.tricountytrails.com).

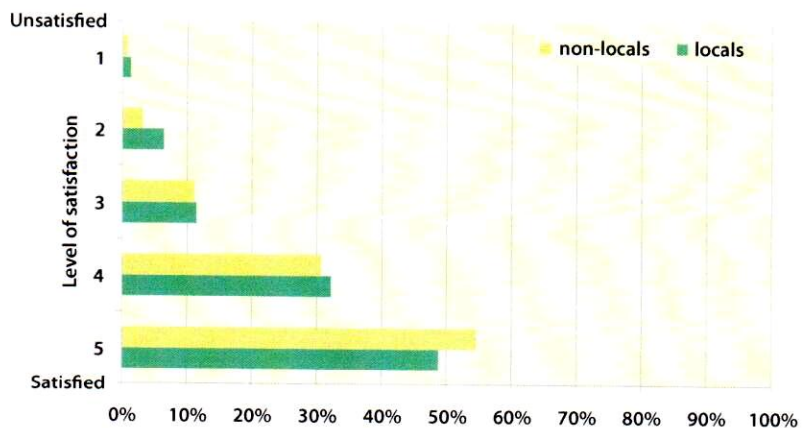
For more "Results at a Glance," see *Characteristics of Trail Users and Economic Impacts*.

The full report is available on the Green County UW-Extension website: <http://green.uwex.edu>.

**Figure 3. User satisfaction with trail safety**



**Figure 4. User satisfaction with trail grooming**



**Figure 5. User satisfaction with signage**

