



VERMONT MOUNTAIN BIKE ASSOC.
SINCE  1997

VMBA 2019/20 Member Survey Results

The Vermont mountain biking community is represented by a diverse and committed outdoor family, united by the amazing work of 28 chapters. The combination of chapters, trail day volunteers and a network of gracious landowners serve as the foundation of every rider's experience in Vermont.

When referencing this data, the Association respectfully requests that, "VMBA Member Survey. (2020). Retrieved from vmba.org" be cited – (VMBA, 2020) in text. Thank you.

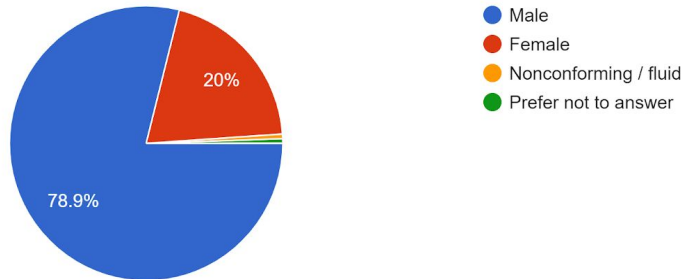
There are a few topics addressed at the end of this document that everyone is encouraged to read.

The Sample

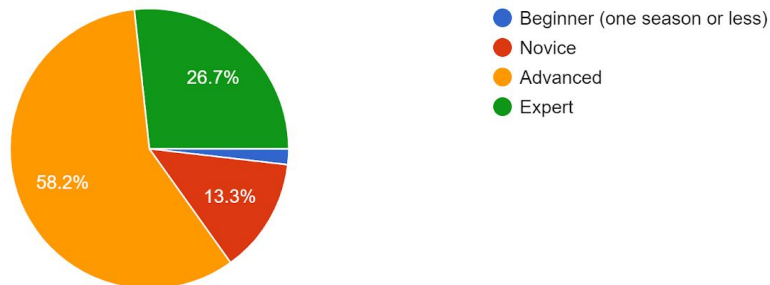
- n = 550

Demographic Breakdown

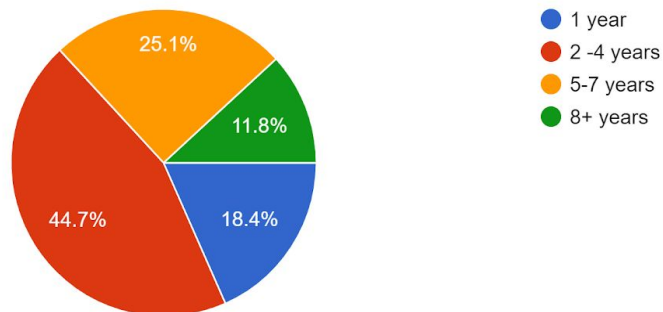
- Gender representation:



- Ride level

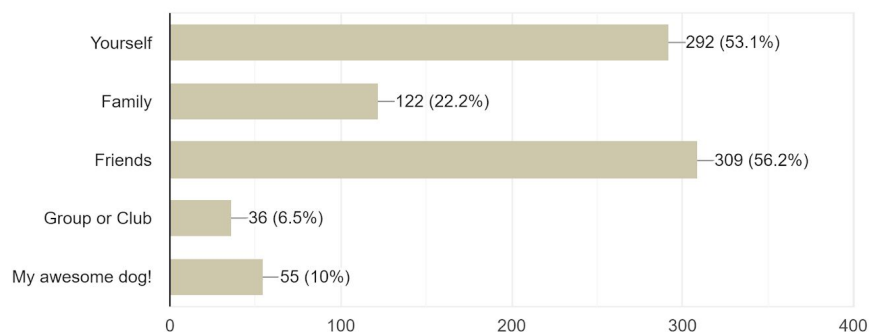


- Membership history:

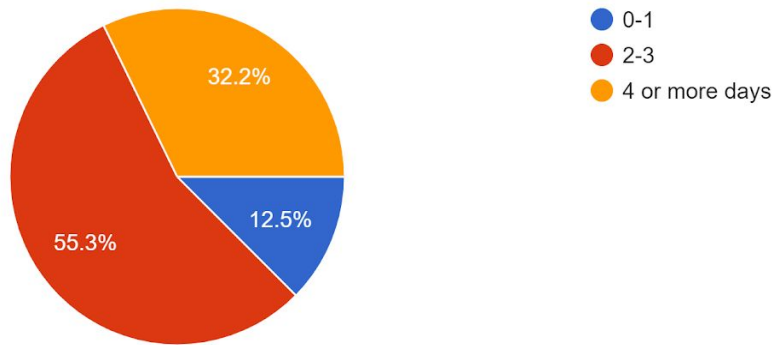


- I ride most often with:

Respondents could choose multiple answers

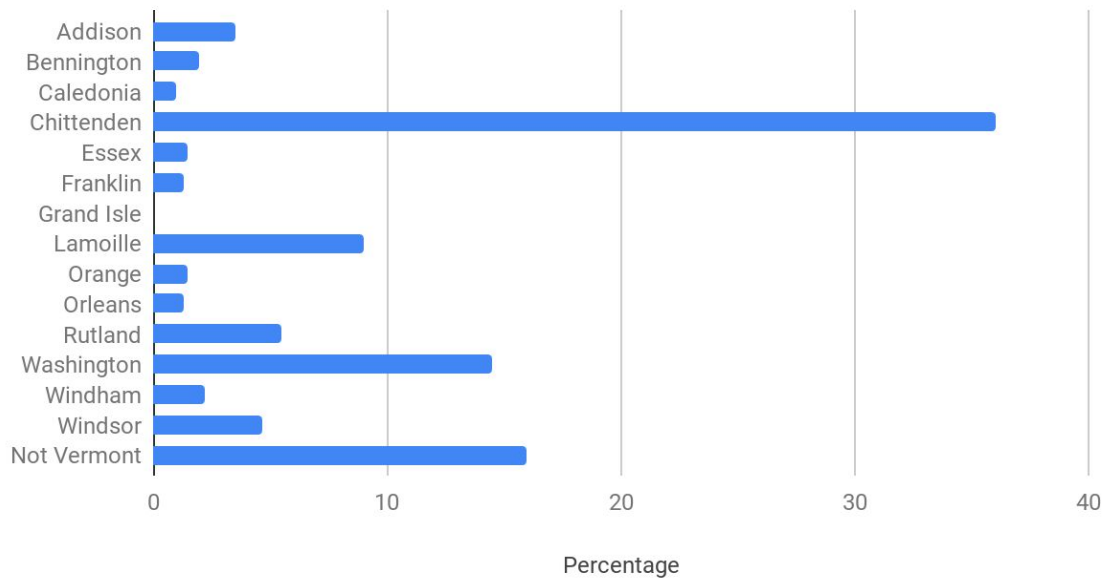


- Riders per week on average:

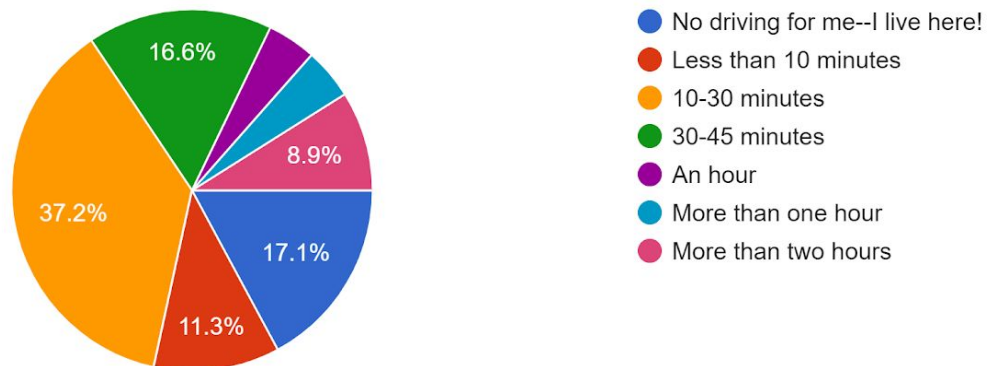


- County of residence

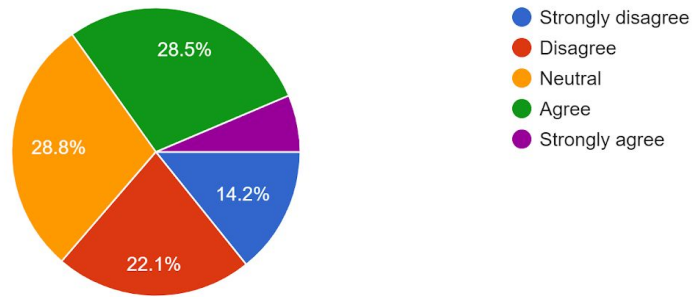
County



- How far do you drive to ride on average



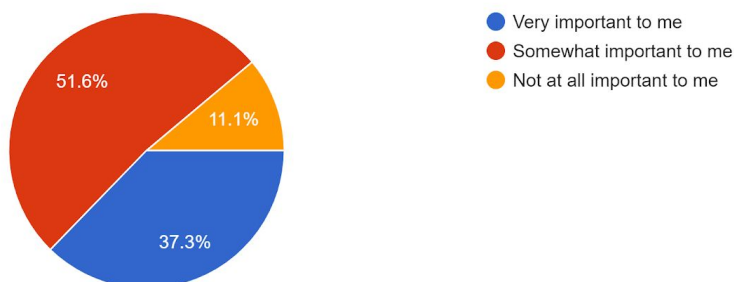
- I sometimes feel intimidated or a little anxious when riders I don't know well invite me to ride with them



Member Benefits

The member benefits program has been a staple incentive of membership for the last seven years, and is a wonderful opportunity for the VT business community to partner with the association and you.

The member benefits are important to me:



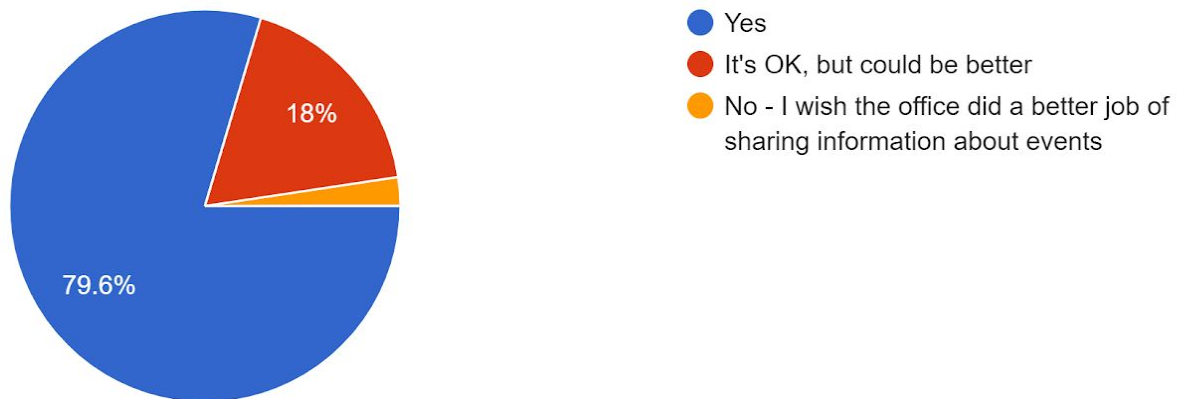
There were a number of popular benefits among the membership. The highest rated benefits in 2019, in no particular order, were as follows:

- The downhill passes
 - Outdoor Gear Exchange
 - Earls
 - Ranch Camp
 - Waterbury Sports
 - Skirack
 - Bike Express
-

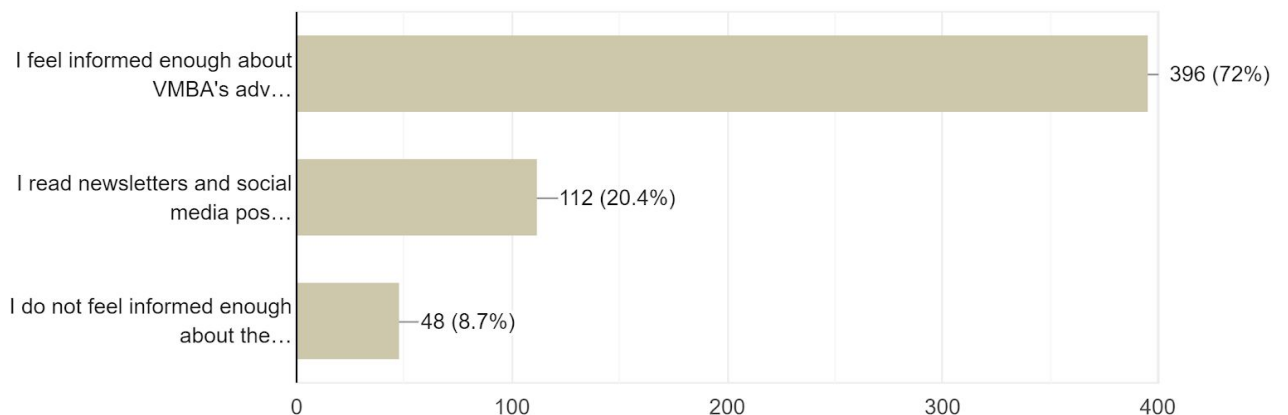
Office Communications

The sample indicated the office generally does a solid job of communication, but there is room for improvement. Increasing the frequency and amount of content shared through educational outreach is a high priority in 2020.

The VMBA office communicates enough about events



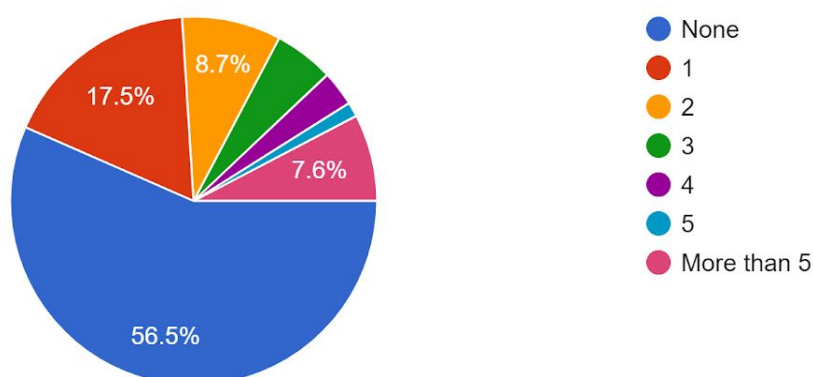
Which statement best indicates your understanding of VMBA's advocacy efforts?



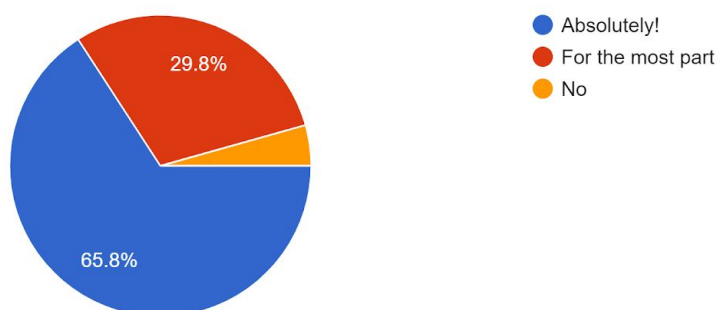
VMBA Chapters

Vermont's amazing landowners and chapters are the backbone of Vermont riding experiences. Every rider owes a tremendous level of gratitude to both of these groups. Chapter membership is a wonderful opportunity to stay up to date on news, learn about trails, and learn about the ways we all can participate in shaping the future of riding in VT – starting with trail-day participation.

Number of trail-days attended in 2019:



Are you satisfied with the trail work of your local chapter?

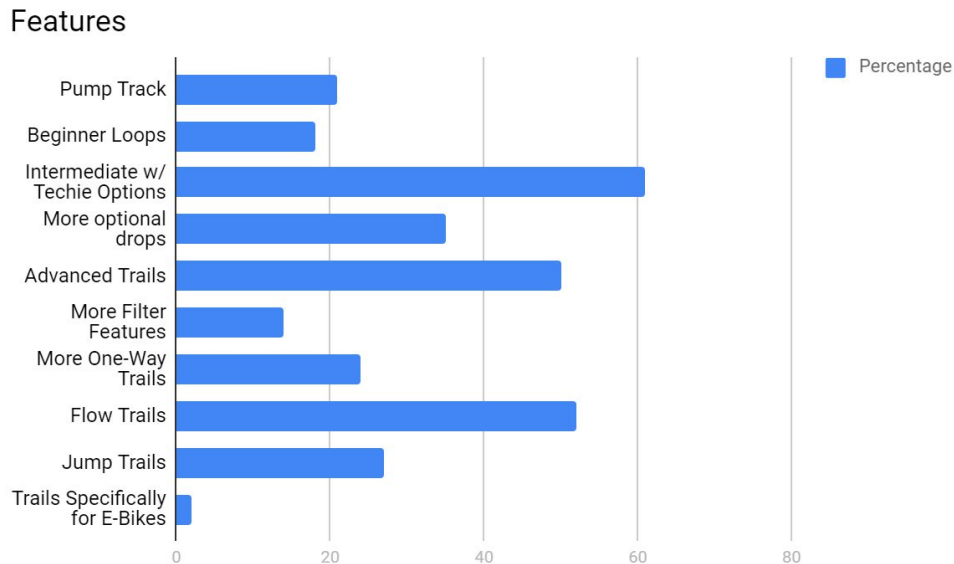


What type of scheduled group rides do you think chapters should host more regularly?

Respondents could choose multiple answers

- No drop – everyone is invited – 43%
- Women's only rides – 26%
- Intermediate – everyone is invited – 38%
- LGBTQ+ rides – 8%
- Family rides – 20%
- Advanced rides – 27%
- Trail tour rides – 45%
- Seasoned riders (over 60) – 12%
- Adaptive rides – 9%
- Night rides – 27%
- Skills clinics – 45%
- Trailside bike repair clinics – 25%
- More bike demos – 34%

What types of trail features would like to see your chapter build more of in the near future?
Respondents could choose multiple answers



There were a few outliers, but the most commonly shared reasons for riders not joining:

- I don't know (bar far the most commonly shared reason)
- Lazy (a very close second)
- All of my riding friends are already members
- Don't live in Vermont
- Cost
- Unfamiliar with the organization
- Unclear as to why they should join

Our purchasing patterns and a few factors that influence them

How likely are you to spend money at the following location prior to or after riding:

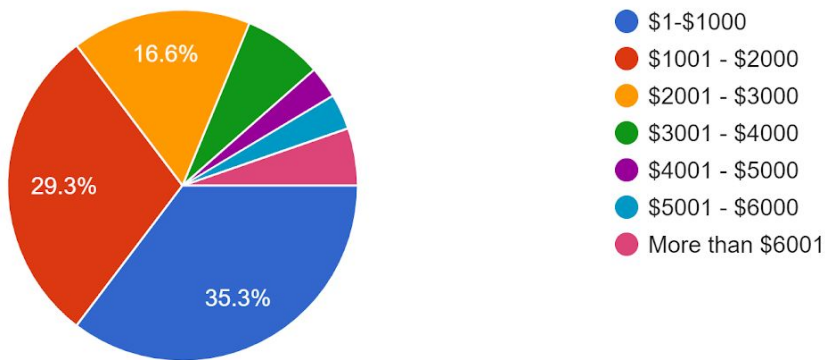
- Campground
 - Very likely – 8%
 - Likely – 17%
 - Not likely – 48%
 - Never – 27%
- Hotel or AirBnB
 - Very likely – 6%
 - Likely – 15%
 - Not likely – 42%
 - Never – 28%
- Grocery store
 - Very likely – 30%
 - Likely – 46%
 - Not likely – 18%
 - Never – 5%
- Country store
 - Very likely – 43%
 - Likely – 43%
 - Not likely – 10%
 - Never – 3%
- Bike shop
 - Very likely – 21%
 - Likely – 46%
 - Not likely – 30%
 - Never – 2%
- Coffee shop
 - Very likely – 26%
 - Likely – 38%
 - Not likely – 26%
 - Never – 8%
- Restaurant
 - Very likely – 31%
 - Likely – 45%
 - Not likely – 18%
 - Never – 5%

When purchasing MTB products and services, to what extent do the following impact your decision:

- Loyalty to my local shop
 - Significantly – 57%
 - Somewhat – 38%
 - Not at all – 5%
- Online vs local shop prices
 - Significantly – 21%

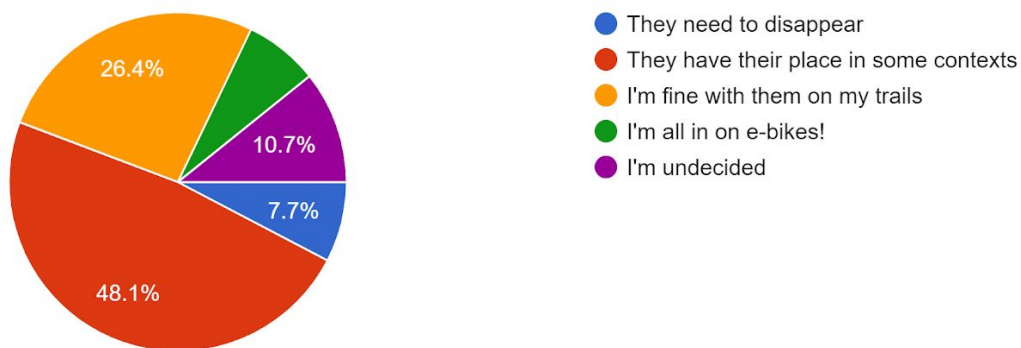
- Somewhat – 62%
- Not at all – 16%
- Where my friends shop
 - Significantly – 7%
 - Somewhat – 39%
 - Not at all – 53%
- Brand preference
 - Significantly – 33%
 - Somewhat – 52%
 - Not at all – 14%
- Expert advice
 - Significantly – 51%
 - Somewhat – 42%
 - Not at all – 6%

On average, how much do we spend on riding each year – not including gas, flights or lodging?



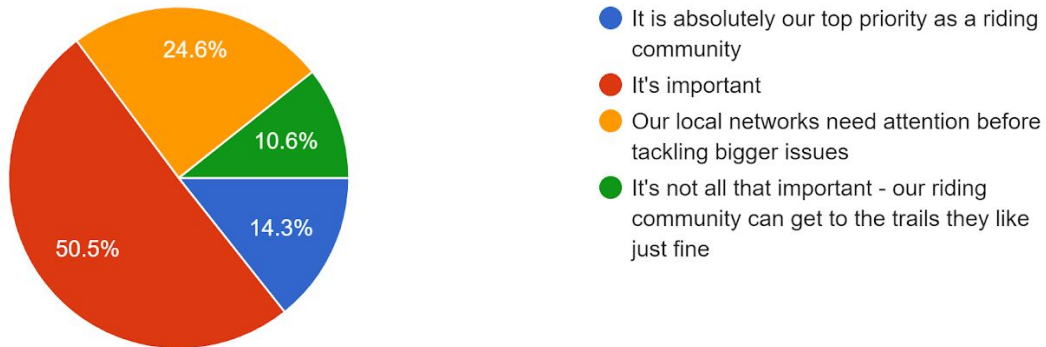
E-bikes

Which best describes your disposition to e-bikes:

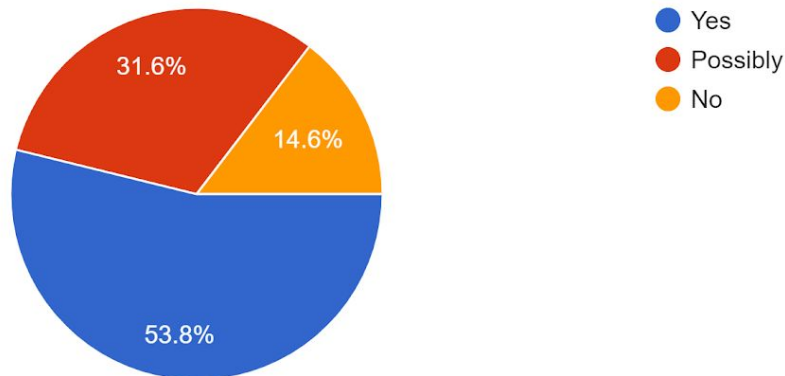


Connectivity

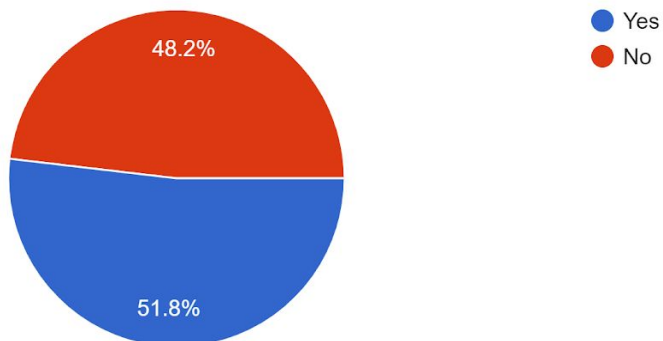
How important is it that we work towards connectivity:



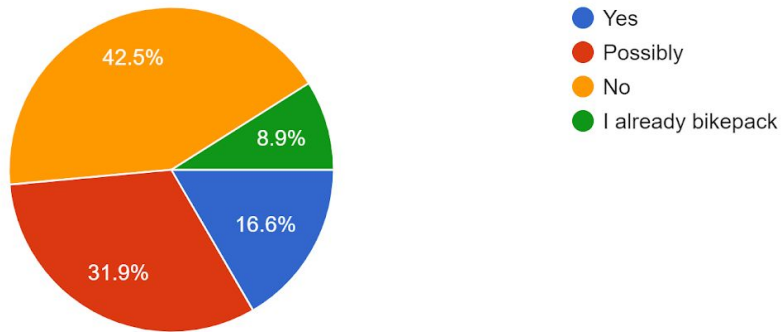
Would you be excited to stay at a backcountry hut as part of your riding experiences:



If you don't already, have you considered bikepacking:



Would you consider attending a beginner bikepacking clinic in 2020:



Summary

There are a number of take-a-ways for the office and chapters.

- 79% of the sample identifying as male is a clear signal that remaining focused on building an inclusive and welcoming community must be a high priority in 2020 and beyond. It is understood that gender is one of many forms of diversity – bike choice, riding abilities, fear, socioeconomic position, etc. are all critical to our understanding of each other
- The office will work towards doing a better job and sharing news and being more specific about advocacy progress
- Chapters have a list of trail features and guided ride types to consider installing for members
- The office needs to do a better job working with local partners to share more about who VMBA is and why joining supports chapters, landowners and every rider in Vermont
- E-bikes are an opportunity to strengthen our empathy skills and make new friends – not divide our community over bike choice. It is understood that e-bikes will likely require new network management techniques

Our Community Partners

- Mountain biking continues to be a significant economic driver for *businesses of all types* as seen in the extent to which members incorporate local grocery stores, coffee shops, bike shops, and country stores into their riding routines.
 - It is a goal of VMBA to create and steward a statewide outdoor-minded business culture that focuses on supporting trail volunteerism as a core business strategy – see the VMBA [Naming Grants Program](#)
- 95% of respondents are significantly or somewhat influenced by loyalty to local shops when making purchases. Our local bike shops have always and will continue to play a key role in our riding community

Members

- Are represented by all levels of riding
- Generally, appreciate and use the member benefits
- 88% have joined since the new VMBA statewide model launched seven years ago
- Over 50% travel between 11 and 45 minutes to ride, which means add-ons will continue to grow in '20 – 100% of add-on revenue goes to chapters
- Connectivity is important to 65% of the sample
- 86% would be interested utilizing a backcountry hut as part of their riding experience

VMBA Finances

There are still those out there that are eager to announce that “VMBA takes half.” In reality, this has never been the case. It is true that at the time of registering for membership, 50% of the revenue goes to the chapter. However, the remaining 50% pays for the administrative benefits that every chapter is plugged into and needs. 91% of the balance, after paying for the administrative platform, went to chapters in trail grants. In collaboration with the chapters, the office manages the entire statewide administrative platform with one part-time position – this is about as efficient as it can get. More bandwidth is needed to support long-range planning, permitting assistance, future growth etc.

Further, the chapters installed “the cap” in 2014. The cap is \$13,000 and is met when the 50% that is retained equals \$13,000 – or roughly 272 individual members and 136 families. When the cap is met, chapters receive 89% of membership revenue. Over 20% of VMBA membership are “post-cap” members. As more chapters meet the cap, the administrative load in the office increases.

In addition to the Trail Grant the office generated \$42,500 in Naming Grants AND the VMBA model generated another \$47,000 in add-on revenue in 2019 (100% of add-ons go to the chapters).

Beyond membership, the Association plays a key role in advocating for riding in Vermont, which is at an all-time level of intensity in 2019-2020. VMBA’s work with groups in Montpelier to protect private landowners from undue regulation. Ensuring that riders have a place to ride is a big deal as the survey data shows. In addition to keeping us healthy and connected as a riding community, bike shops, local grocery and country stores, coffee shops and restaurants – all benefit from mountain biking.

Vermont’s volunteer driven outdoor opportunities play a big role in every industry ranging from the trades, marketing, finance, real estate, technology and engineering fields. Trails have been a key part of attracting and retaining top level talent in Vermont.

Next steps are to keep advocating for long-range expansion planning and protecting private landowners – both things state leadership can help us achieve. The office staff is working on these issues every day.

Thank you for taking the time to read the 2019 member survey results.