

Bucksport NEXT Survey 04
RESULTS NARRATIVE
12/2/2015



Results are in for the fourth Bucksport NEXT Public Opinion Poll. To date, there have been about 100 responses to each question. People filled out the online and newspaper surveys as well as paper forms made available on Election Day. Most responders are from Bucksport, but some are from other towns and states.

On the first question regarding Silver Lake, the largest response (31%) wants the town to look into purchasing rights to assure stability for the water supply into the future. Substantial numbers also want the town to work with Orland (24%), help set up a volunteer lake association (22%) and work with the mill site owners (18%) on related issues. Commenters pointed out that dam owners are responsible by law and that the towns should play a bigger role in overseeing management of water in the lakes.

The second question asked about Bucksport's lakes. Responders indicated that Silver Lake is too valuable as a drinking water source to be put into jeopardy with more allowed uses (33%) and that other lakes should be opened to more use (24%). On the other hand, 19% of responders want the town to look into allowing swimming in Silver Lake and 17% would consider re-zoning its shores to allow closer development. Comments praised the town's recreation opportunities on the lake and suggested portable toilet facilities at the boat launch. One observation was that continued watershed conservation techniques could help avoid more expensive water treatment in the future.

On the third question, there is solid support (35%) for exploring a YMCA-type facility for indoor swimming and other activities. More recreational activities for youth (22%) and elderly (17%) also garnered consideration. Recreational ideas offered include building a water/splash park, an indoor skating arena, a gondola ride to cross the river, Town botanical gardens and buying the old mill fitness center. Others cautioned that money is tight and suggested more user fees for new activities.

Question four responses support promoting walking/bicycling as an important part of our community identity at 27%. This was followed by wanting the western Silver Lake trails completed (24%) and people indicating that recreational walking is an important, regular part of their lives (21%). More bicycling facilities were supported at 14%. The need for a sidewalk on Nicholson Avenue and a walkway connecting Ian's Playground on Elm Street to Central Street were suggested. Again, others called for fiscal restraint and the use of private investment and volunteer workers where appropriate.

That's my take on the poll results. See the actual questions, choices and response data for yourself at <http://tinyurl.com/BucksportNEXT-Poll1>. The surveys will be available to take online until we are done with the inventory phase of the Comp Plan. We will use the final results to help build the goals and objectives section.

Jef Fitzgerald, Comprehensive Plan Committee Chair