

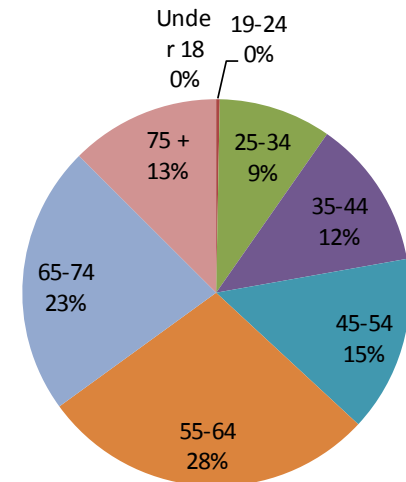
2012 Kalkaska County Recreation Questionnaire Results Report

Kalkaska County released a Recreation Questionnaire in November 2012, as part of the County's recreation plan update, in order to better understand the community's preferences around parks and recreation. The questionnaire was not designed as a scientifically valid random-sample survey. Rather, the intent was to provide the opportunity for as many residents, property owners, and visitors to participate in the survey as possible. To this end, a total of 7,947 surveys were mailed the week of November 21 to all addresses in Kalkaska County; surveys were also made available online, and were handed out at grocery stores and other locations in Kalkaska County. Recipients were asked to return their surveys by December 21. 341 surveys were returned.

Based on answers provided in questions 8-10, which asked for basic demographic information, nearly all survey respondents were County residents (98%). Most respondents were over the age of 45 (79%), with the largest demographic between the ages of 55-64 (28% of respondents), while 36% were age 65 or older. There were no responses from individuals under the age of 18, and only one response from an individual between the ages of 19-24.

This report summarizes survey results in order to determine areas of community priority and consensus. A large number of written comments were received. Written comments are summarized for each question in this report; complete survey results and percentages, along with written comments are available in Appendix A.

Age of Respondents



Results Overview

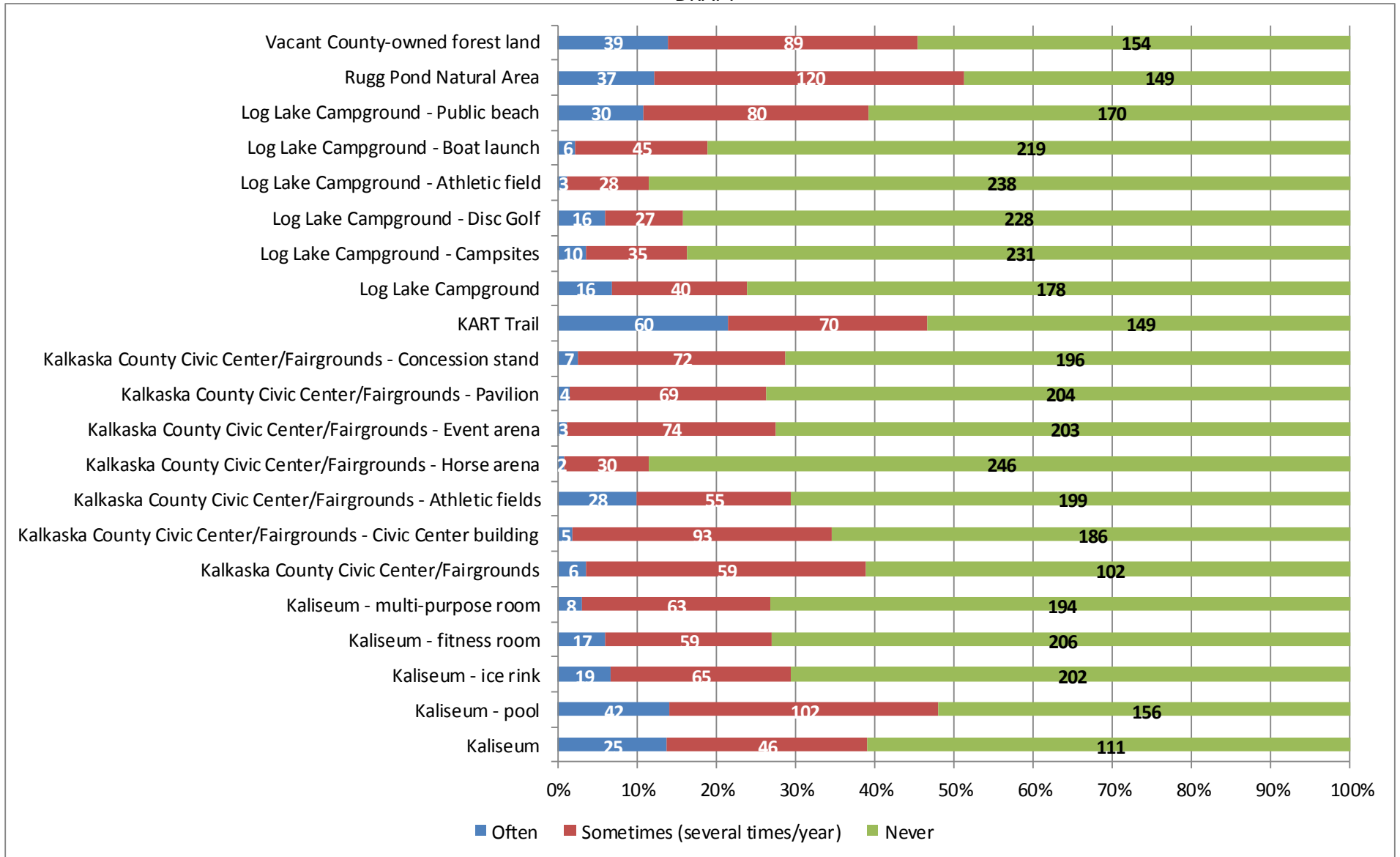
Survey responses identified several consistent issue areas or areas of agreement, identified below, along with focus areas for each County park:

- Grants were identified as the most popular funding mechanism for recreation activities or improvements, with nearly 90% of respondents indicating that they would support grants for these activities.
- The KART Trail received high levels of positive responses relative to its importance and potential improvements or expansions. Comments regarding the KART Trail were consistently positive and supportive.
- The library had the highest numbers and percentages of positive responses relative to importance and expansion, with 80% indicating that it is an important recreation opportunity and 72% answering that they would like to see it expanded. Additionally, a large number of comments were provided on the library. The majority of comments expressed interest or support for a library expansion, or reinforced the importance of the library.
- As one of the County's largest and more frequently used recreation facilities, the Kaliseum was a focal point for many comments. About 39% of

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respondents use the facility “often” or “sometimes, and about the same percentage—40% of total respondents—indicated that they are satisfied with the facility. However, usage rates and satisfaction levels vary for the different facilities within the Kaliseum. Higher usage and satisfaction rates were identified for the pool, while the multi-purpose room received the lowest satisfaction rates. 159 comments provided suggestions for improvements, with a focus on maintenance, improvements to the fitness room, and multi-purpose room.

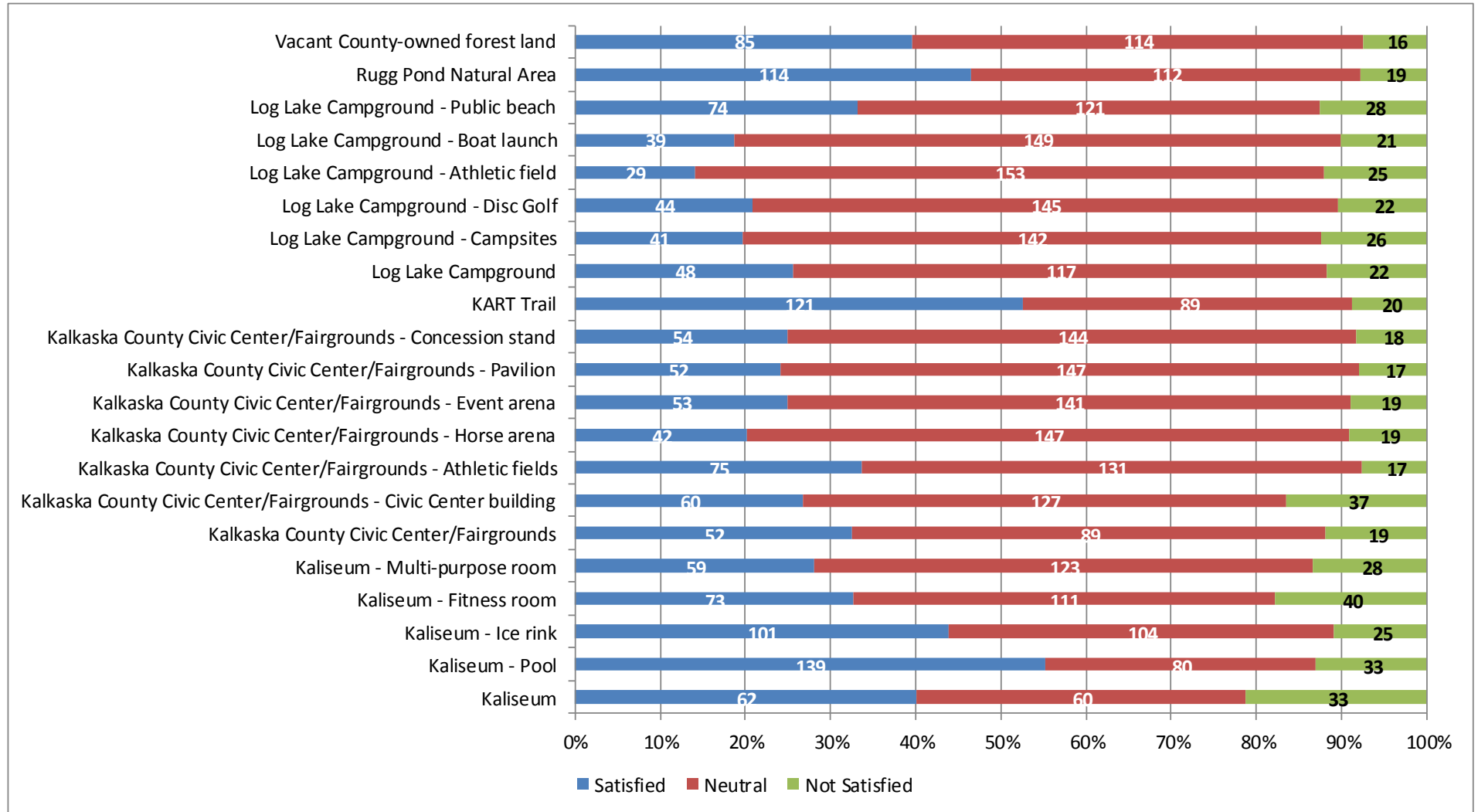
- Rugg Pond Natural Area was identified as one of the most-used parks in the County, with over half of respondents indicating that they use the park “often” or sometimes.” About 47% of respondents were satisfied with Rugg Pond Natural Area, and many comments indicated that users of the park would like to see it to stay more or less unchanged, with some suggestions relative to enhancing or extending trails.
- Large percentages of respondents (over 80%) indicated that they “never” use Log Lake facilities, with corresponding percentages of respondents that were “neutral” regarding their satisfaction with these facilities. Comments included a number of accolades on recent improvements as well as some concerns regarding the condition and management of the facility.
- Significant percentages of respondents indicated that they “never” use Civic Center facilities; corresponding rates of respondents answered that they were “neutral” when asked whether they were satisfied with the facilities. Comments focused on suggested general improvements as well as suggested improvements regarding the cleanliness and condition of the Civic Center building. Many respondents indicated that they would like to see the facility used more often.
- The library ranked highest in question #5, which asked what recreation opportunities were important. Following the library, “natural area parks and trails were ranked highest. Trails were also frequently noted in comments, with some general comments suggesting trail expansions or connections and other suggestions relative to specific trail segments. Trails also ranked highly in question #6, which asked for opinions on new or expanded recreation opportunities. Over half of respondents answered that they would like to see new or expanded natural area parks or trails (58.6%), regional or community trail connections (56.5%), and non-motorized trails (55%).
- The library again ranked highest in question #6, which asked what new or expanded recreation opportunities participants would like to see in Kalkaska County. Following the library, “performing arts events and venues” was the highest ranking recreation choice in question #6. “Community festivals” also ranked high, with 58.4% responding they would like to see new or expanded festivals.
- Maintenance or cleanliness, along with general improvements, were cited in a number of comments for several facilities. “Improvements to existing parks” ranked highly in both questions #5 and #6, which asked about importance of and new/expanded recreation opportunities.



Question 2. How often do you use each of the following County parks and recreation facilities?

Rugg Pond Natural Area, the Kaliseum pool, the KART Trail, and vacant County-owned land are the parks most used by respondents, with the highest numbers of respondents indicating that they used these facilities “often” or sometimes.” The KART Trail was identified as being used “often” more than other parks, followed by the Kaliseum pool and vacant County-owned forest land. Over 80% of respondents indicated that they “never” use the horse arena or the Log Lake athletic fields, disc golf course, campsites, and boat launch.

Comments largely identified specifics on usage of the parks, i.e. the time of year or specific events at which respondents used the identified facilities (see Appendix).



Question 3. How satisfied are you with each of the following County parks and recreation facilities?

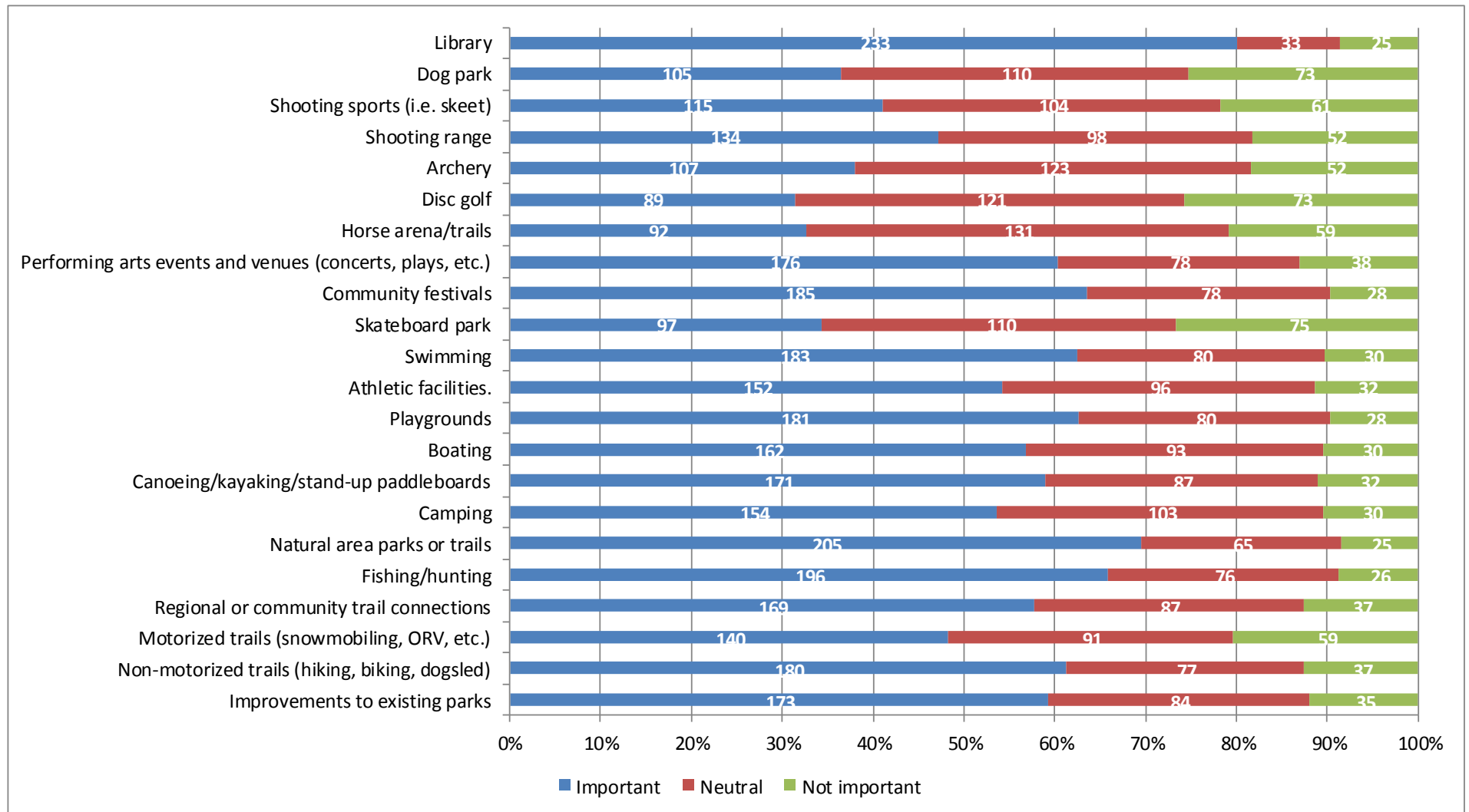
Over half of respondents indicated that they are “satisfied” with the Kaliseum pool (54.8%) and the KART Trail (53.5%). The highest levels of dissatisfactions were with the Kaliseum in general (21.4%), the Kaliseum fitness room (18.2%) and the Civic Center Building (16.8%). Large percentages of “neutral” responses in this section likely reflect the levels of use at each facility as indicated in Question 2.

76 comments provided specifics on satisfaction levels. Comments reflected concern with the cleanliness or condition of the Civic Center building, and suggested improvements to the athletic fields at the Civic Center. Several comments on the Kaliseum reflected concerns regarding the cleanliness of the facility, and suggested improvements to the restrooms and locker rooms; additional Kaliseum comments discussed the size of the pool and interest in a competition size swimming pool. Respondents also identified a number of general improvements for Log Lake facilities. A number of comments also reflected dissatisfaction with use of tax dollars for maintaining recreation facilities.

Question 4. What improvements would you like to see at each of the following recreation facilities?

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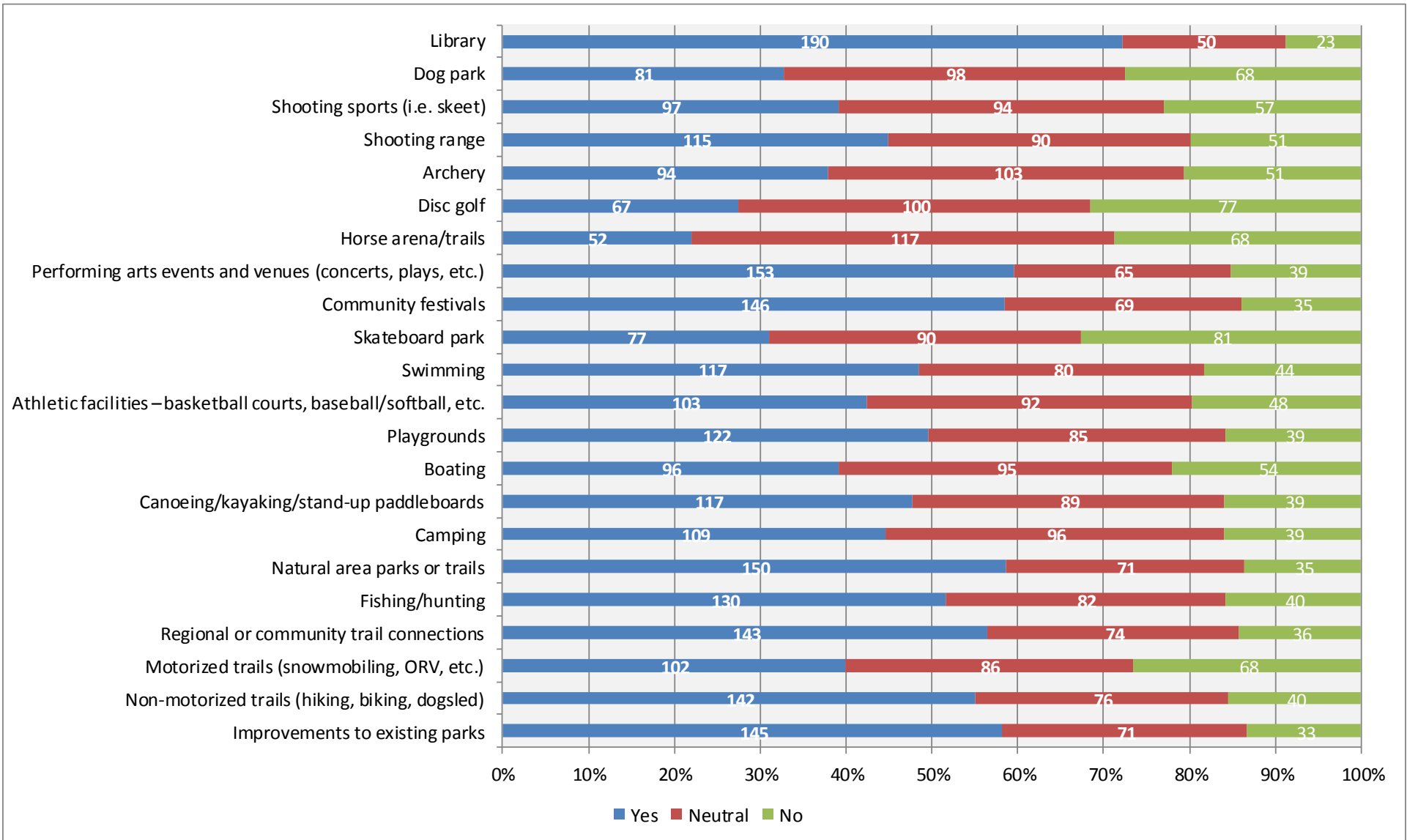
Kaliseum	Civic Center	KART Trail	Log Lake Campground	Rugg Pond Natural Area	Vacant County-owned forest land	General Comments
<p>Wonderful/Beautiful/Enjoy as is (5)</p> <p>Close/get rid of it (5)</p> <p>Professional management company (2)</p> <p>More kid/teen activities (3)</p> <p>General maintenance/cleanliness (7)</p> <p>More diverse, additional classes (8)</p> <p>Added/quality activities (5)</p> <p>Taxes (5)</p> <p>Lower in-county membership fees (5)</p> <p>Bathrooms (2)</p> <p>Year-round ice</p> <p>Lights/sound barriers in ice rink</p> <p>Pickleball improvements—more space, reservations (3)</p> <p><u>Pool</u></p> <p>Pool temperature (6)</p> <p>Size (competition size)</p> <p>Pool walls (2)</p> <p>Cleaning (7)</p> <p>More open swim hours (2)</p> <p>General updates/improvements (5)</p> <p><u>Fitness Room</u></p> <p>Cleanliness (7)</p> <p>New weights/equipment (4)</p> <p>General updates</p> <p>Multi-purpose Room</p> <p>Finish the multi-purpose room (2)</p> <p>Locker rooms</p> <p>General improvements—locker doors, toilet stall doors, showers, hair/swimsuit dryers, etc (11)</p> <p>Cleanliness (7)</p>	<p>Lighting—ball fields, parking (5)</p> <p>Maintenance (18)</p> <p>General updates/remodel (10)</p> <p>Run down/condition (6)</p> <p>More activities/frequent use (9)</p> <p>Open year round (2)</p> <p>Landscaping (2)</p> <p>Promotion (2)</p> <p>Bathrooms</p>	<p>Expansion/trail connections—TART, Rugg Pond, forest, other communities, Seven Bridges (14)</p> <p>Wonderful/love it (14)</p> <p>Lighting (6)</p> <p>Bathroom</p> <p>Drinking fountains</p> <p>Amenities—mile markers, trash cans/dog waste bags, benches (7)</p> <p>Winter maintenance (5)</p> <p>Promotion (3)</p> <p>Exercise stops</p> <p>Planned walking/running events</p> <p>Irrigation/landscaping (4)</p> <p>User-based funding</p> <p>TART administration</p> <p>Closed</p> <p>Business/volunteer maintenance and acknowledgement (2)</p> <p>Maintenance/grooming/paving (8)</p>	<p>Water/cable/wi-fi hoo</p> <p>Teen hang out</p> <p>Well-maintained (2)</p> <p>Management (2)</p> <p>Maintenance (4)</p> <p>New disc golf baskets</p> <p>Better marking for disc golf (3)</p> <p>Trees/landscaping (2)</p> <p>Safety/drugs/behavior (3)</p> <p>Pavilions –general improvements</p> <p>Replace tables</p> <p>Eliminate/close (2)</p> <p>Privatize</p> <p>Fees</p> <p>Swim area improvements (2)</p> <p>Promotion (3)</p> <p>Great recent improvements (2)</p> <p>Beach overcrowded</p> <p>OK/Good (6)</p> <p>General improvements (3)</p> <p>No tax money</p> <p>Fees (2)</p> <p>Irrigation</p> <p>No smoking on beach</p> <p>More restrooms (2)</p> <p>Improve athletic field (2)</p>	<p>Promotion (3)</p> <p>Paved/expanded trails (5)</p> <p>OK/Love it/Beautiful (9)</p> <p>Dock (2)</p> <p>Picnic tables/sitting area/benches/grills (8)</p> <p>Fine the way it is (6)</p> <p>Improved access on South Shore property</p> <p>Restrooms (4)</p> <p>Draining/remove dam (2)</p> <p>Privatize</p> <p>Study for physical... Accessibility</p> <p>Deepen pond (3)</p> <p>Don't know where this is (5)</p>	<p>Promote/list location (6)</p> <p>More trails (7)</p> <p>Sign/mark for usage (4)</p> <p>Beautiful</p> <p>Don't change (4)</p> <p>Plant maple</p> <p>Stop cutting the trees (2)</p> <p>Archery/shooting range</p> <p>Garbage cans/picnic tables</p> <p>Library (4)</p> <p>Sell it</p>	<p>Promote recreational facilities (2)</p> <p>Groomed x-country skiing trails</p> <p>Lower taxes (3)</p> <p>Animal shelter</p> <p>Fix roads first (2)</p> <p>Trail from Kalkaska to Log Lake</p> <p>New library</p> <p>All need to be kept up</p> <p>Small raise in taxes, fees</p> <p>Snowmobile trail connectors</p> <p>Taxpayers can't afford improvements/maintenance</p> <p>Public tennis courts</p> <p>Land maintenance</p> <p>Revenue from events could help sustain centers</p>



Question 5. How important are each of the following recreation opportunities in Kalkaska County?

When asked how important various recreation facilities were to respondents, the *library* received the most positive responses (79.8%), followed by *natural area parks or trails* (69.8%), *fishing and hunting* (65.3%), *swimming* (61.9%), and *non-motorized trails* (61%). *Skateboard park* had the highest percentage of “not important” responses, with 27.8% indicating that this opportunity was not important, followed by *disc golf* (25.8%) and *dog park* (25.4%).

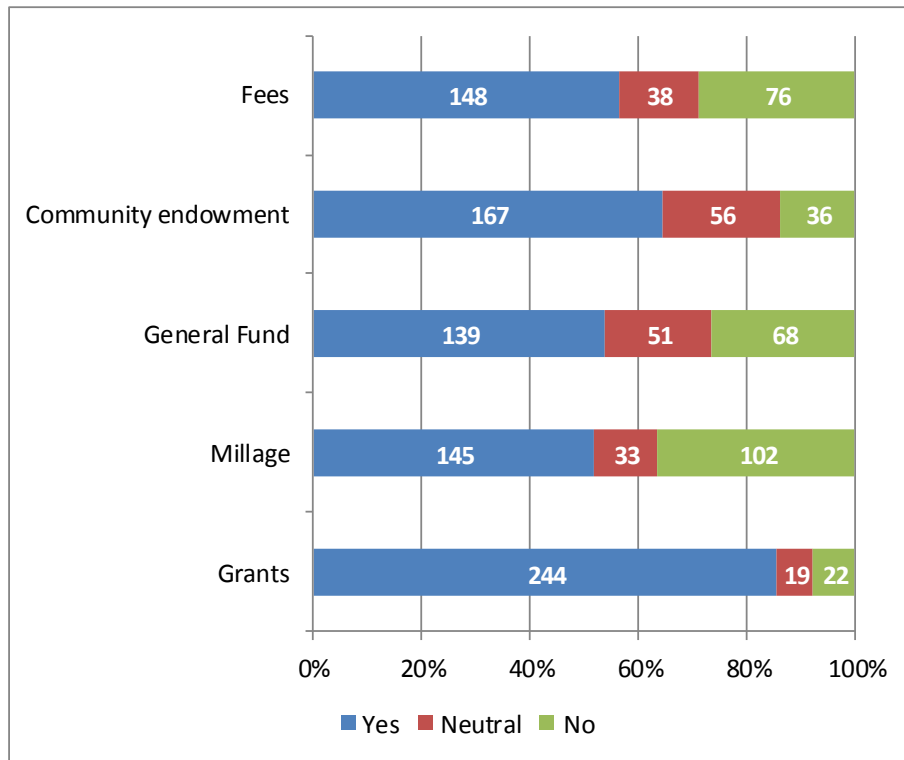
16 comments focused on the *library*, primarily on the need for expansion or its importance, with some concerns or questions regarding location and size. Expanded *trails*, and/or the importance of trails, was identified in 8 comments. Respondents also identified *dog parks* (6), *skate parks* (3), and *shooting ranges* (3) as suggested or important recreation additions. The importance of recreation opportunities to tourism, community development, and families was stressed by several respondents (5), and comments were also made by respondents (3) reflecting concern over taxes.



Question 6. What new or expanded recreation opportunities would you like to see in Kalkaska County?

The *library* received the most positive responses (72.2%), followed by *performing arts events and venues* (59.3%), *natural area parks or trails* (58.9%), *improvements to existing parks* (58.1%), *community festivals* (58.1%), *regional or community trail connections* (56.6%), and *non-motorized trails* (55.1%). *Skateboard park* (33.2%), *disc golf* (32.1%), and *horse arena/trails* (30.3%) received the highest levels of negative responses in this section.

Comments reinforced the interest in the *library*, with 10 respondents indicating their support for an expansion. Five comments identified interest in expansions or improvements to *trails*, while four responses proposed a *shooting range*. Accessibility was identified as a need in 3 comments. *Dog parks* were addressed in 6 comments, with 3 supportive and 3 opposed comments.



Question 6. What types of funding would you support?

The majority of respondents (85.4%) indicated that they would support grant funding for recreation improvements or activities. 63.9% answered affirmatively to the use of a community endowment as a funding source, and 56.6% indicated that they would support fees for recreation improvements. Just over half of respondents would support use of the general fund or a millage (53.5% and 51.4%, respectively) for recreation.

Eighteen comments elaborated on the use of fees for recreation, with eleven respondents expressing support for fees if possible, reasonable, and/or with consideration given to taxes paid. Five additional comments identified concern that fees may discourage low-income families from using County facilities.

Ten comments reflected opposition to new taxes or a millage, while four indicated that they may support a millage depending on the size or request, or support for the concept of additional taxes for tourists. Three comments opposed use of the general fund.

Fundraisers, donations, and community events were proposed as additional funding sources for recreation activities, while two comments suggested privatizing recreation opportunities. Several comments (3) indicated support for any funding sources. Additional comments addressed issues including quality of life, concern over jobs, and suggestions for privatization.

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General Comments

146 general comments were received. Recurring issues or themes are identified and categorized below; see Appendix for complete written comments.

Trails	Kaliseum/Civic Centre	General Parks Comments	Library	Miscellaneous
<p>Need more connections for ATV/Snowmobiles (5)</p> <p>Volunteer need expansion (3)</p> <p>Maintenance/improvements of trails (6)</p> <p>KART trail is great (2)</p> <p>Where is KART trail?</p>	<p>Needs Air conditioning (2)</p> <p>Wasting taxes (3)</p> <p>Maintenance (2)</p> <p>Likes fitness center (3)</p> <p>Professional management company (2)</p> <p>Entrance fee is expensive (3)</p> <p>Pool (4)</p> <p>Fairgrounds are underused (3)</p>	<p>Want a dog park (3)</p> <p>Important to the County (3)</p> <p>Disc golf (2)</p> <p>Keep them clean (2)</p> <p>Skate park</p> <p>Needs improvements (4)</p> <p>Volunteer (2)</p> <p>Vagrant behavior issues</p> <p>Important assets (2)</p> <p>Promotion of recreation assets</p> <p>Hours need to be set and enforced (3)</p>	<p>Need new building (8)</p> <p>Libraries are important (4)</p> <p>Under-funded</p> <p>No new building</p> <p>Improve existing building (3)</p>	<p>County government should not be spending (5)</p> <p>No new taxes (6)</p> <p>Enjoys recreation in Kalkaska County (9)</p> <p>Concerns with access by the elderly (4)</p> <p>Improve Festivals (4)</p> <p>Gun clubs/shooting ranges (4)</p> <p>Revitalize downtown (7)</p>