



Project Impacts

NSRC-FUNDED RESEARCH FINAL REPORT

Survey of Public Priorities as a Guide for Future Sustainable Investment Strategies

PROJECT AWARD YEAR AND TITLE:
2007

Survey of Public Priorities as a Guide for Future Sustainable Investment Strategies

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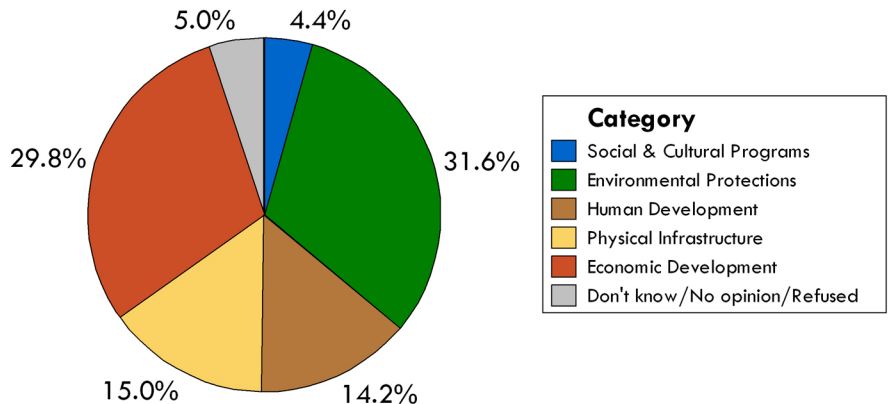
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Residents in New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine choose their highest priority public investment category in a 2007 telephone survey.



For a previous NSRC project (Theme 1 2004), researchers asked community members in the Adirondack Park and Tug Hill region of New York's North Country to envision public investments that would help achieve their vision for a sustainable future. A follow-up written survey provided investment priorities from more than 100 participants throughout the Northern Forest region of New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.

In this current project, researchers expanded the survey with 1,221 telephone interviews with residents in the four states. Phone respondents overwhelmingly want to retain the rural character of their communities and favor economic development but not at the expense of the environment. Almost all respondents agree that the forest surrounding their communities is important but largely disagree that their livelihoods depend on forests, which implies that economic lives of residents may be disconnected from the forest.

Investment priorities by category are fairly consistent across the region, with subtle differences among states, generations, gender, and income and education levels. Top investment priorities are environmental protection, followed by economic development, physical infrastructure, human development, and, lastly, social and cultural programs. However, in the first survey, physical infrastructure needs (expanding wireless communications and high speed internet) were rated more highly. Investment priorities by specific project differ more significantly across the region. The lowest specific priority investment in both surveys is conserving more land by public acquisition and by purchasing conservation easements. Findings will inform future regional and community planning for a sustainable future for the four Northern Forest states.