



METHODOLOGY

The 2002 VT Wilderness Poll was conducted by the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont and sponsored by The Wilderness Society, Boston. The purpose of this survey was to obtain Vermonters' opinions on issues relevant to the use of the State's public lands, particularly the issue of federal wilderness designation in the Green Mountain National Forest. Design of the questionnaire was overseen by the Vermont Wilderness Association with consultation from the Center for Rural Studies.

This survey was conducted on weekdays from February 5th to the 16th, 2002, during the evening hours of 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Vermont households were contacted at random and survey respondents were selected randomly within participating households. Two samples were taken: a full statewide sample (Primary Sample) and a smaller sample of 43 towns in, adjacent to, and/or impacted by the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF Sample). This report contains the frequencies for both samples.

1. Sampling

The standard sample frame for telephone surveys at the Center for Rural Studies is Vermont households with registered voters and access to a telephone during the evening hours of 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. The 2002 VT Wilderness Poll operated within this frame. Telephone numbers were created randomly corresponding to the phone exchanges¹ used in Vermont for the Primary Sample. The GMNF Sample used known phone exchanges specific to the relevant towns. The sample target for the Primary Sample was a minimum of 400 completed surveys, corresponding to a confidence and margin of error of 95.0% \pm 5%. The sample target for the GMNF Sample was a minimum of 100 completed surveys, corresponding to a confidence and margin of error of 95.0% \pm 10%.

2. Margin of Error

A conservative estimate of the margin of error associated with the Primary Sample is \pm 5% with a confidence interval of 95.0%. This means that if the survey were to be redone, 95 percent of the time the resulting means would be the same within 5.0 percentage points for each particular question. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the number of households in Vermont is 240,634. A representative sample size for households in Vermont at a confidence rate of 95.0% \pm 5% is 385 to 400.

The GMNF sample's margin of error is 10%, and the confidence interval is the same at 95%. The higher margin of error was deemed acceptable due to time and cost constraints. A minimum representative sample size for households within the GMNF towns at that confidence rate is 100.

¹ The telephone exchange number is the first three digits after the area code. For this survey, any existing exchange within the 802 (Vermont) area code was used.



Thus, the target minimum samples of 400 and 100 were determined for the Primary and GMNF Samples, respectively. The margin of error associated with any given item in the survey increases as the sample sizes for individual questions are examined in greater detail, such as in the case of cross-tabulations.

3. Response

A preliminary sample of 3,192 telephone numbers was randomly selected for the Primary Sample. 798 numbers were selected for the smaller GMNF Sample. Table 1 below illustrates the results of the preliminary samples as calls were initially made, and Table 2 shows the outcomes of calls to eligible households.

Table 1 Outcomes of preliminary sample calls

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Primary Sample</i>	<i>GMNF Sample</i>
Not in Service/Disconnected	750	180
No Answer/Answering Machine/Line Busy	665	179
FAX/Cell Phone Number	129	34
Business Number	279	59
Ineligible Household (no registered voters)	38	15
Eligible Household (see Table 1.2)	1,331	331
Total Sample Selected	3,192	798

Table 2 Outcomes of Eligible Households

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Primary Sample</i>	<i>GMNF Sample</i>
Refused/Terminated	733	197
Call Back at Another Time	126	17
Completed	472	117

As Table 2 shows, 472 surveys were completed for the Primary Sample. This is well within the confidence interval and margin of error of 95.0% ± 5%.

117 surveys were completed for the GMNF Sample. However, 5 surveys were removed because it was known that the respondents lived in towns that were not in close enough proximity to the towns identified for the GMNF Sample. In Vermont, many towns share phone exchanges, and a few of the GMNF towns share exchanges with other towns that are not in close proximity to the Green Mountain National Forest. In the interests of time and maintaining an acceptable margin



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of error, respondents from towns that are directly adjacent to any of the GMNF towns were kept in the sample. Respondents in other towns were dropped out. The resulting number of completed surveys for the GMNF Sample is 112. This is well within the confidence and margin of error of 95.0% \pm 10%.

4. Frequency Analysis

For the purposes of this frequency report, the raw numerical data from both samples were uploaded into the SPSS statistical software package format for analysis. Open-ended text answers were uploaded into Microsoft Word and Excel to be coded. The operations performed on each particular piece of data are elaborated upon in the DEMOGRAPHICS and FREQUENCIES sections.



DEMOGRAPHICS

The purpose of this section is to compare the demographics of the two samples and to provide a brief commentary on their utility as representative samples of Vermont households. The frequencies of the demographic questions (Q 19 through Q 23) from the Wilderness Poll are included in this section. A few particular pieces of data are compared to Census data for Vermont.

Education

Q 19.

What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

	<i>Primary Sample</i>		<i>GMNF Sample</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Less than 9th Grade	8	1.7	2	1.8
9-12th Grade (no diploma)	49	10.5	8	7.2
High School Grad/GED	75	16.0	17	15.3
Some College (no degree)	77	16.5	26	23.4
Associates/Technical Degree	45	9.6	15	13.5
Bachelor's Degree	120	25.6	28	25.2
Post-Graduate/Professional Degree	94	20.1	15	13.5
Missing	4	0.8	1	0.9

Q 19 shows that the majority of respondents for both samples have attained a bachelor’s degree – roughly 25% for each. Respondents with post-graduate/professional degrees are the next highest group in the Primary Sample (20%), while those with some college experience but no degree comprise 23% of the GMNF Towns. The higher number of post-graduate/professional degrees in the Primary Sample may have to do with the fact that Burlington is not included in the GMNF Sample. It can be assumed that the close proximity of the many colleges and universities in the Greater Burlington area attracts a larger number of employees and students with higher education status.

Town Frequencies

Q 20.

In what town or city do you live?

The town data tables are too large for this section and can be accessed by opening Open-Ended.xls and clicking on the “Towns” tab on the lower left hand corner. See the RESPONSE section of METHODOLOGY above for commentary on the towns within the GMNF Sample.



County Frequencies

Q 21.

And in what county is that?

County	% of VT Households	Primary Completed		GMNF Completed	
	Rate	Rate	Freq.	Rate	Freq.
Addison	5.4%	8.0%	37	22.2%	24
Bennington	6.2%	5.0%	23	37.0%	40
Caledonia	4.8%	3.9%	18		
Chittenden	23.5%	28.5%	132		
Essex	1.1%	1.7%	8		
Franklin	7.0%	6.5%	30		
Grand Isle	1.1%	1.1%	5		
Lamoille	3.8%	3.5%	16		
Orange	4.5%	3.7%	17		
Orleans	4.3%	5.4%	25		
Rutland	10.7%	8.2%	38	26.9%	29
Washington	9.8%	6.9%	32	1.9%	2
Windham	7.6%	7.3%	34	7.4%	8
Windsor	10.0%	10.4%	48	4.6%	5
Missing	---	1.9%	9	3.6%	4

Table 2.1 comments on sampling between the counties. The numbers in the *% of VT Households* category are the percents of actual households for each county for the state, based on 2000 U.S. Census data. The data illustrates how representative of each county the Primary Sample is. The *Completed* rates and frequencies are to the right. The table shows that the most significant case of under-sampling in the Primary Sample is a difference of almost 3.0% for Washington County. The most significant case of over-sampling is by 5% for Chittenden County. This under and over-sampling is not crucial to the Primary Sample's utility as a representative sample of Vermont households. The primary purpose of this table is to inform the user.

The *% of VT Households* category is not a target for the GMNF Sample, but these numbers do show that only counties that contain GMNF towns were polled.



Age

Q 22.

In what year were you born?

Age was determined from the years given and then grouped into 5 roughly equal quintiles. Each sample has slightly different quintiles, thus there are two tables. Below the tables is commentary on the median age of the samples.

Q 22. Primary Sample

<i>Age Groups</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
18-38	96	20.6
39-46	103	22.2
47-53	90	19.4
54-62	87	18.7
63+	89	19.1
Missing	7	1.5

Q 22. GMNF Sample

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
18-34	20	18.5
35-43	22	20.4
44-51	23	21.3
52-61	21	19.4
62+	22	20.4
Missing	4	3.6

The median age of respondents in both samples is 49 years. This number is much higher than the median age of the State of Vermont at 37 years, according to the 2000 Census. It must be considered that Wilderness Poll respondents will naturally tend to be older than the state at large. The poll’s sampling frame consists of households with registered voters, which implies that no respondents will be under the age of 18, thus skewing the survey’s median age upward. The median age of Vermonters above 18 is 44. This number is much closer to the median age of the survey samples and more appropriate for comparison.

Gender Ratio

Like median age, the gender ratio is another piece of data that can speak to a survey’s ability to be representative of a given population. The table below shows that both samples’ respondents



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are roughly 52% female and 47% male. According to the 2000 Census, the population of Vermont is 51% female and 49% male. This results in a modest discrepancy of 1.3%. The higher ratio of females in the samples can be explained by the poll's survey method: research shows that females of the household are more likely to answer the phone in the evening hours, thus raising the probability that respondents will be female.

Q 23.

And finally, for our data records, would you please state your gender?

	<i>Primary Sample</i>		<i>GMNF Sample</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Female	247	52.3	58	51.8
Male	225	47.7	52	46.4
Missing	0	0.0	2	1.8