

Blackfeet Nation Agriculture Resource Management Plan (ARMP) O’Komi (Your Voice) Survey Data Analysis

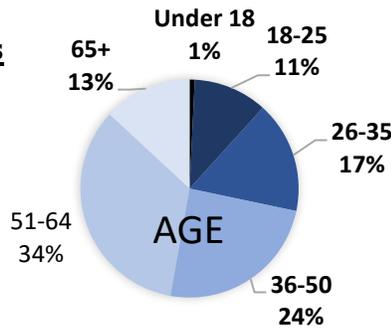
(Final Descriptive Statistics Report by Thedra Bird Rattler; Final Comparative Statistics Report by Kristal Jones, CLLC)

Summary by Gabe Oppler, CLLC

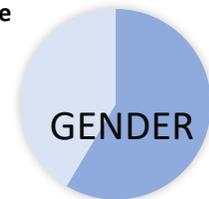
Introduction: Demographics

Age:

Under 18: 5 (1%)
 18-25: 72 (11%)
 26-35: 109 (17%)
 36-50: 161 (25%)
 51-64: 224 (34%)
 65+: 86 (13%)
 Total: 657 (100%)



Female
41%

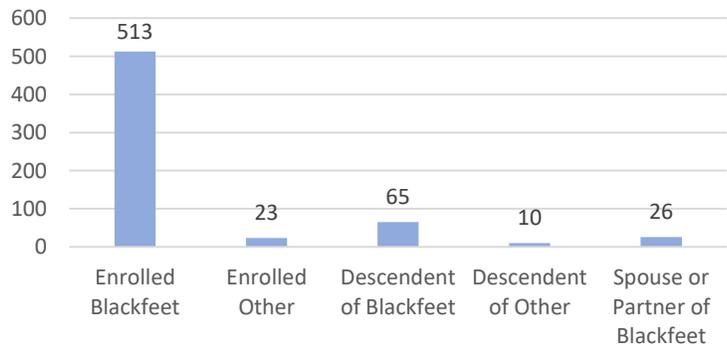


Male
59%

Gender:

Female 385 (59%)
 Male 272 (41%)
 Total 657 (100%)

TRIBAL STATUS



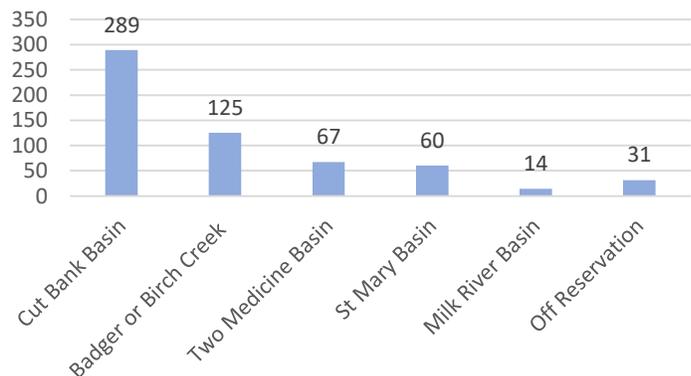
Tribal Status:

Enrolled Blackfeet: 513 (79%)
 Enrolled Other: 23 (4%)
 Descendent of Blackfeet: 65 (10%)
 Descendent of Other: 10 (2%)
 Spouse or Partner of Enrolled Blackfeet: 26 (4%)
 Other: 16 (2%)
 Total: 653 (100%)

Community (Watershed) Residence:

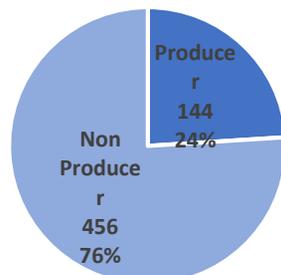
Cut Bank Basin: 289 (49%)
 Badger or Birch Creek: 125 (21%)
 Two Medicine Basin: 67 (11%)
 St. Mary Basin: 60 (10%)
 Milk River Basin: 14 (2%)
 Off Reservation: 31 (5%)
 Total: 586 (100%)

WATERSHED RESIDENCE



Agricultural Producer:

No 456 (76%)
 Yes 144 (24%)
 Total 600 (100%)



Section 1. Land Use, Conservation and Bison

Land use and conservation is a major area of discussion in Blackfeet Nation. The O’Komi Survey sought to identify areas of agreement as well as points of contention in this realm. While recognizing that there exist competing values for land, the O’Komi Survey results suggest that Blackfeet Nation is generally interested in land use and eager to participate in discussions and decision-making processes.

The majority of O’Komi Survey respondents self-describe as knowledgeable about conservation (70%), but voice a desire for more robust conservation education programming on the reservation (93% believe education programming is important to conservation efforts and 90% would like to learn more about conservation efforts on Blackfeet Nation).

Responses show a widespread appreciation for the land, especially as a source of traditional knowledge and cultural significance (80% use the land for traditional subsistence purposes or cultural purposes and 90% believe areas should be valued and protected by tribal policy for traditional land uses).

Policies could be improved or updated to help mitigate some of the most pressing land use problems; according to respondents, the top three problems facing Blackfeet Nation land management are: 1. Tribal policy (32%) 2. Overgrazing (29%) 3. Off-reservation cattle (15%)

Bison emerged as a particularly important topic, as the vast majority of respondents agreed that bison are especially important to Blackfeet People and are an important symbol of Blackfeet history and culture. With regards to specific bison-related policy proposals, attitudes varied. Individuals with more direct experience with buffalo, through their livelihood activities or based on where they live, were more critical of current buffalo management on the reservation. Individuals whose livelihood relies more on access to land were less likely to agree that more trust land should be designated as bison habitat, while those individuals who have more connection to tradition were more likely to support habitat designation. Young people, too, were among the groups most likely to support designation of bison habitat. Importantly, individuals who have traditional connections to the land in general and to the specific areas where increased bison habitat was proposed (i.e. Chief Mountain; Badger-Two Medicine area), were more supportive of those habitat increases.

Key takeaways:

Conservation Teaching and Learning:



- Vast majority believe schools on the Blackfeet Nation should design an agricultural and natural resources curriculum (95% agree or strongly agree)
- Vast majority believe BCC should offer natural resources / ag degrees (96% agree or strongly agree)

Traditional Land Use and Conservation:

- Vast majority of respondents believe traditional and/or cultural native plants (especially berries (*Miinnii*), sweetgrass (*supatsimo*), sage (*kak sii mii*), peppermint (*ka' ki tsi mo*), and sweet pine (*katoysis*) should be protected (95% agree or strongly agree).
- Respondents primarily use Blackfeet water sources for personal and recreational use (34% and 30% respectively). 16% use Blackfeet water for ceremonial purposes and 16% for agriculture.
- Vast majority of respondents believe conservation and preservation of native lands will create jobs and nature-based economic opportunities (87% agree or strongly agree).
- Most respondents support voluntary conservation easements of the reservation (77% agree or strongly agree).
- Most respondents support keeping any land that is now native grassland and restricting any breaking up or farming of that land (81% agree or strongly agree).
- Most respondents support a tribally created conservation area (77% agree or strongly agree) and only 4% disagree or strongly disagree.

Land Tenure

- The majority of respondents support making tribal policy that does NOT allow the purchase of tribal lands by outside interests (79% agree or strongly agree).
- Slightly less than half of respondents own or have family that own or manage land for agricultural purposes (48%). However, 57% of those families who no longer own or manage land for agriculture did at one time in past generations do so.

Policy, Governance, and Participation

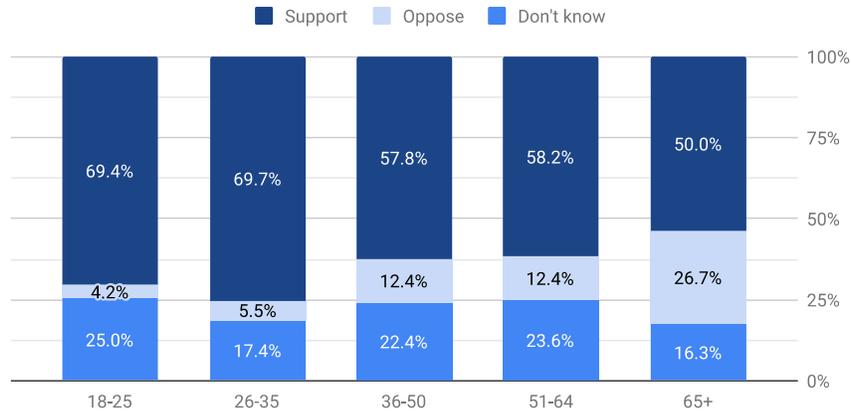
- 65% of respondents believe the Open Range Ordinance should be changed
- Overall, respondents believe wildlife is managed more responsibly than horses (22% disagree or strongly disagree that wildlife is managed responsibly; 61% disagree or strongly disagree that horses are managed responsibly)

Bison

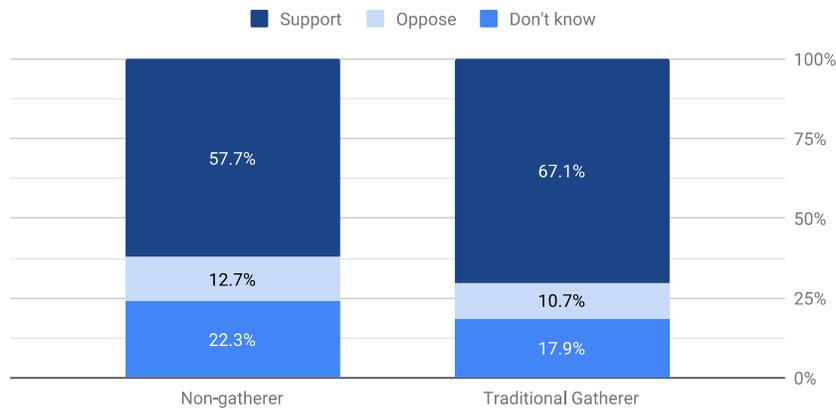
- The vast majority of respondents agree that Bison are especially important to Blackfeet People and are an important symbol of Blackfeet history and culture (86% agree or strongly agree)

Should trust land be designated as Bison habitat?

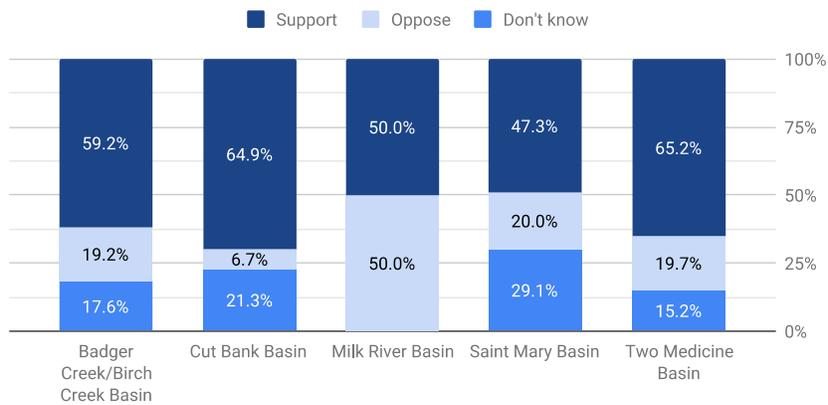
Age Breakdown



Traditional Connection to Land



Watershed



Young generations, traditional gatherers, and residents of the Cut Bank Basin are most supportive of bison habitat designation.

Section 2. Agriculture and Production

The O’Komi Survey identified slightly under half (48%) of all respondents as producers (farmers and ranchers having annual sales of at least \$1000). Most of these producers own small-scale family operations and supplement their farm/ranch income from other sources. Of note, the majority of producers (85%) voiced support for the creation of a Blackfeet Agriculture Department as well as management plans for agricultural emergencies and drought management (73% and 71% of respondents, respectively).

Key takeaways:

- 69% of farms or ranches have been in operation greater than 30 years
- 79% are small family ranches with less than \$100,000 gross annual income
- 36% of producers are in the NRCS program or have used NRCS technical services in the past.
- 27% of producers currently irrigate their operation, and a further 12% don’t but would like to in the future
- The majority of producers (farmers and ranchers) would like to implement solar power in their operation (80% yes)
- Most producers believe there is a predator problem on their operation (65% yes)
 - The majority of respondents report a domestic animal killed by a wild animal in the past 10 years.
 - 32% grizzly bear
 - 24% coyote
 - 16% feral stray dogs
 - 15% wolf
 - 12% mountain lion
 - However, only 23% of surveyed producers signed up for the predator control that was offered
- 82% say that they would apply for resources to mitigate livestock loss, provide assistance for hay and other resources that follow an emergency, if identified by the ARMP.

Section 3. Food

Access to affordable, nutritious food is a fundamental human right. In Blackfeet Nation, there exists a need for greater access to high-quality food. In the O’Komi Survey, 68% of all respondents did not believe that sufficient healthy fresh food options are readily available on the reservation. This number was higher among individuals whose day-to-day lives are based in the reservation, and lower among those individuals who might have access to resources outside of the reservation. Furthermore, those who have access to fewer resources (non-producers, women, those who live further from population centers) are more likely to experience hunger than those with access to more resources. Although subsidized food programs exist, the amount to which individuals take advantage of the programs varies: individuals with less stable livelihoods or households are more likely to access food programs than those with more stability. Despite these areas of concern, most survey respondents (82%) voiced a strong interest in creating a more food sovereign nation and creating new sources of local, fresh food.

Key takeaways:

- 80% of respondents would consider growing their own garden if they had the education and help in establishing one.
- Most respondents would purchase Blackfeet-produced food products even if they were a little more expensive (63% agree or strongly agree).
- Most respondents would like to see the Blackfeet Nation develop its own beef packing plant (83% yes, 12% don’t know but want to learn) or bison/buffalo farm & packing plant (84% yes, 12% don’t know but want to learn).
- Most of respondents would like to see the Blackfeet Nation develop its own Blackfeet Agricultural Co-op, or are open to the idea (87% yes, 7% don’t know but want to learn).
- Most respondents would be interested in using a community kitchen (52% yes, 26% don’t know but want to learn). Individuals who have some connection to the land or water, as well as middle-age individuals are more likely to know someone who would be interested in utilizing a community kitchen, possibly because these individuals know others like themselves who are interested and able to engage in food preparation.

