



BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL BUY-IN FOR HABITAT CONSERVATION PRACTICES

RESULTS FROM THE 2021 SURVEY

The Rights-of-Way Habitat Working Group (ROWHWG) received positive input and participation in response to its 2019 and 2020 online surveys, as well as the feedback obtained at the fall 2019 workshop that captured organization-level buy-in for habitat conservation practices across the energy and transportation sectors. An updated version of the survey was distributed to working group participants in 2021, which allows us to examine year-to-year trends and identify emerging needs and opportunities.

GENERAL SUPPORT FOR HABITAT PROGRAMS

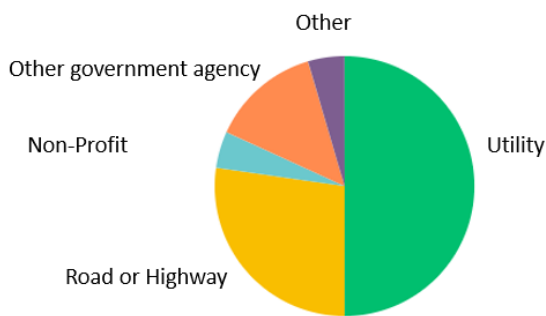


Figure 1: Industries of survey respondents.

When respondents were asked how their organization's support for habitat conservation had changed over the past year, most respondents answered that support was either "Increased" and "Unchanged."

Across all 22 respondents, the 2021 survey shows high levels of institutional buy-in and managerial support for habitat conservation in rights-of-way and other lands. The two most prevalent industries for survey respondents were 50% utility and 28% road or highway organizations.

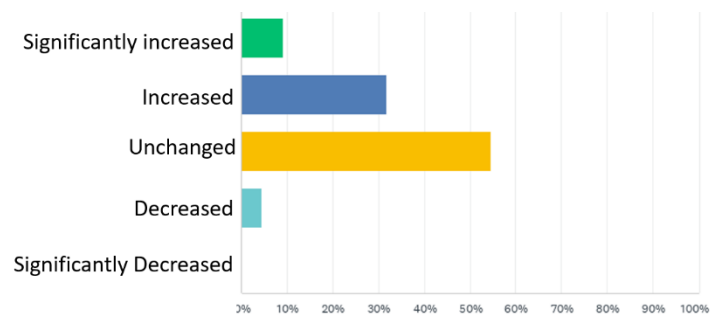


Figure 2: How has your organization's level of buy-in and managerial support for habitat conservation changed over the past year?

COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

In 2019 and 2020, survey respondents indicated that a cost-benefit analysis tool would be a helpful asset for articulating the value of rights-of-way as habitat, educating leaders at their organization, and influencing decision makers to support habitat conservation and Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) practices. While the creation of a cost-benefit tool remains important to the ROWHWG's participants, survey results show that few organizations have developed and deployed such a resource. As such, the ROWHWG is seeking better understand the following:

- What cost has your organization collected from vegetation management activities?
- Have you seen significant changes in costs when practicing IVM to create pollinator habitat over time compared to conventional practices?

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BARRIERS TO HABITAT

For participants of the ROWHWG, the benefits of habitat conservation are widely understood and embraced. To help support organizations increase implementation of pollinator-friendly practices on their rights-of-ways and other lands, the 2021 survey asked respondents to identify key barriers that prevented potential support of habitat conservation initiatives. The 2021 results were as follows (in descending order):

- Low priority compared to other operational needs
- Perceived higher cost or belief that habitat management will not provide an immediate return on investment
- Business as usual or a desire to manage vegetation as you always have
- Lack of awareness
- Concern about additional regulation (e.g., Endangered Species Act)
- Concern that the initiative will not be successful or well-received by the public, employees, or other stakeholders.
- Reduced budget or other operational impacts due to COVID-19
- No barriers
- Other (Please specify)

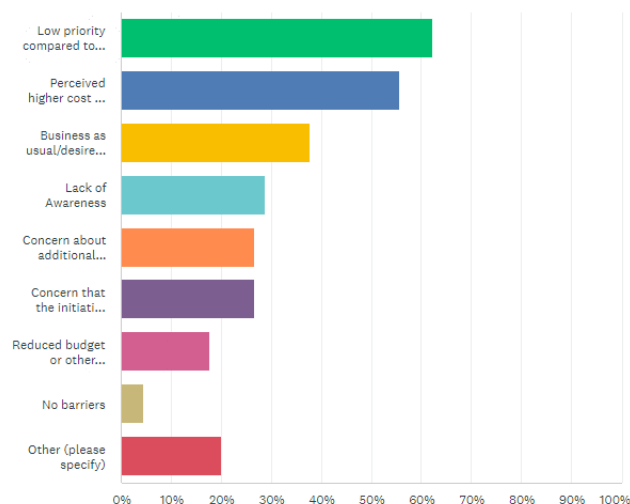


Figure 3: Barriers to habitat conservation.

ARTICULATING THE VALUE OF HABITAT

Survey respondents were asked to select the phrases they believed would be most effective in increasing institutional buy-in for habitat conservation and management support in their respective organization. The top-three results from 2021 were:

- 1 Integrating habitat practices into formal organizational policies, contracts, sustainability, biodiversity strategies, and/or public reporting (e.g., Environmental Social Governance indices)
- 2 Articulating how habitat management makes good business sense
- 3 Partnering with external leaders and influencers (e.g., conservation NGOs, government agencies, or other partners) on habitat initiatives

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Please let us know your thoughts regarding the 2021 survey results. The Building Buy-In discussion board will allow you to provide your feedback. [Click here to post on the discussion board.](#) Thank you for your continued support of the ROWHWG!

2021 ROWHWG SURVEY SPONSORED BY:

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