



BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL BUY-IN FOR HABITAT CONSERVATION PRACTICES

RESULTS FROM THE 2023 SURVEY

The Rights-of-Way Habitat Working Group (ROWHWG) received positive input and participation in response to its 2019-2022 online surveys 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 2023, which allows us to examine year-to-year trends and identify emerging needs and opportunities.

GENERAL SUPPORT FOR HABITAT PROGRAMS

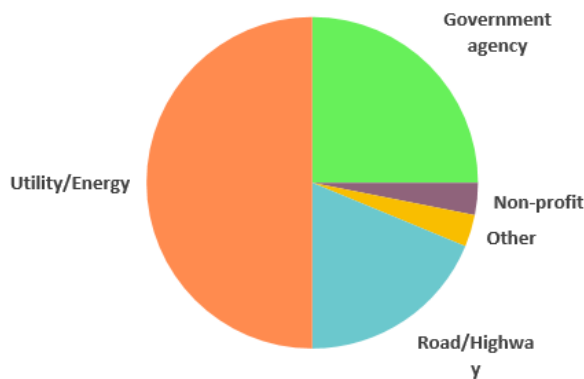


Figure 1: Respondents sorted by industry.

Across all 32 respondents, the 2023 survey shows high levels of institutional buy-in and managerial support for habitat conservation in rights-of-way and other lands. However, when survey results are filtered to show feedback from respondents who represent utility companies or departments of transportation (DOTs) only, support for habitat conservation drops.

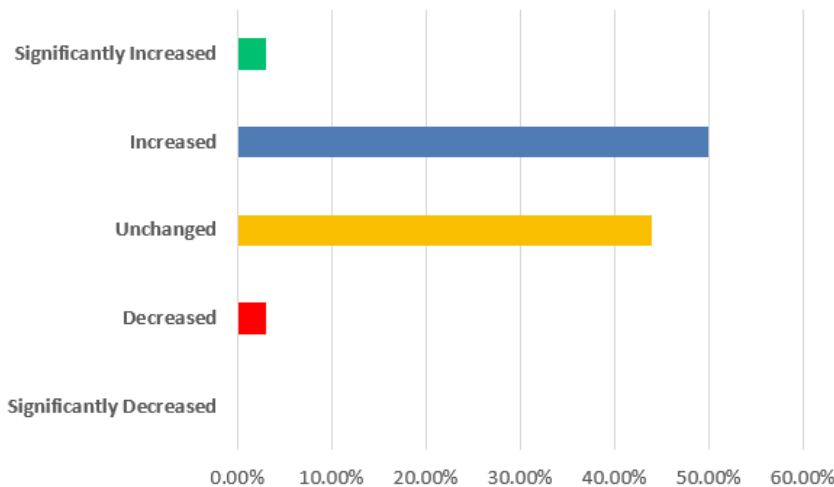


Figure 2: How has your organization's level of buy-in and managerial support for habitat conservation changed over the past year?

When asked how their organization's support for habitat conservation had changed over the past year, survey respondents returned responses mostly for "Increased" or "Unchanged."

Once additional input is received, the ROWHWG will work to better understand how support for habitat conservation has shifted. These questions will include:

- Which factors caused habitat conservation support to increase over the years?
- What factors resulted in support remaining stagnant?

ARTICULATING THE VALUE OF HABITAT

Respondents were asked to choose statements that represent how their organization has articulated the value of habitat management. Below are the top three statements chosen by respondents:

- 1 Proactively addressing regulatory compliance (e.g., Endangered Species Act)
- 2 Identifying the opportunities that habitat management will create (e.g. improved public relations, stewardship goals, sustainability reporting)
- 3 (Tie) Explaining how the benefits of habitat management outweigh the risks/Estimating upfront costs and long-term cost savings associated with habitat management

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 2023 survey asked respondents to identify key barriers that prevented potential support of habitat conservation initiatives. The 2023 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)

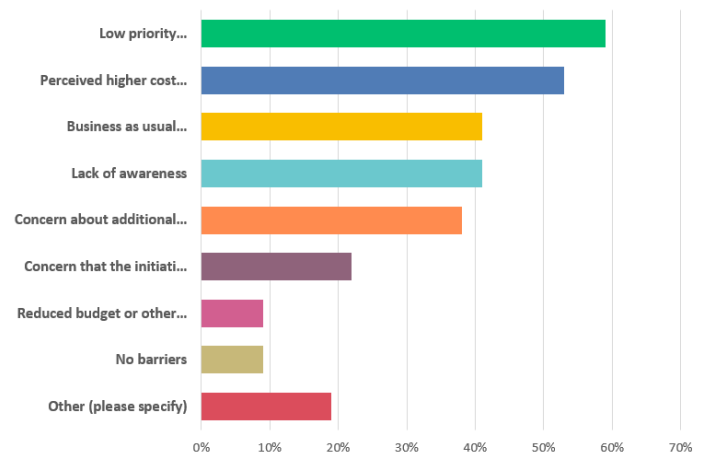


Figure 3: Barriers that prevent potential support of habitat conservation initiatives.

INCREASING INSTITUTIONAL BUY-IN

Survey respondents were asked to select phrases they believed would be most effective in increasing institutional buy-in for habitat conservation and management support. The top-three results from 2023 were:

- 1 Articulating how habitat management makes good business sense
- 2 (Tie) Demonstrating how existing vegetation management practices create and support habitat/Ensuring regulatory certainty by enrolling in voluntary conservation agreements (e.g. Monarch CCAA, Habitat Conservation Plans, Conservation Benefit Agreements, etc.)
- 3 External pressures from stakeholders, the public, and/or peer organizations



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2023 SURVEY (CON'T)

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Please let us know your thoughts regarding the 2023 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!

2023 ROWHWG SURVEY SPONSORED BY:

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