



Communicating with Connecticut Woodland Owners about Forests & Climate

Mary Tyrrell, formerly, Director, Sustaining Family Forests Initiative
at of the Yale School of the Environment
May 21, 2020

Basics of Woodland Owner Communication

- Know your audience
 - What's important to them?
 - What do they know and believe about [REDACTED], as it relates to their woodland?
 - What gets their attention?
- Consistent messages – avoid confusion
- Persistent outreach/communication – this is a long game

Know Your Audience

*Understanding Connecticut Woodland Owners
A report on the Attitudes, Values and Challenges of Connecticut's
Family Woodland Owners*

Mary L. Tyrrell, Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, March 2015

Connecticut Woodland Owners Attitudinal Groups based on reasons for owning woodland

Woodland
Retreat

63%



Supplemental
Income

10%



Working the
Land

12%



Uninvolved

15%



Sustaining Family Forests Initiative, Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively

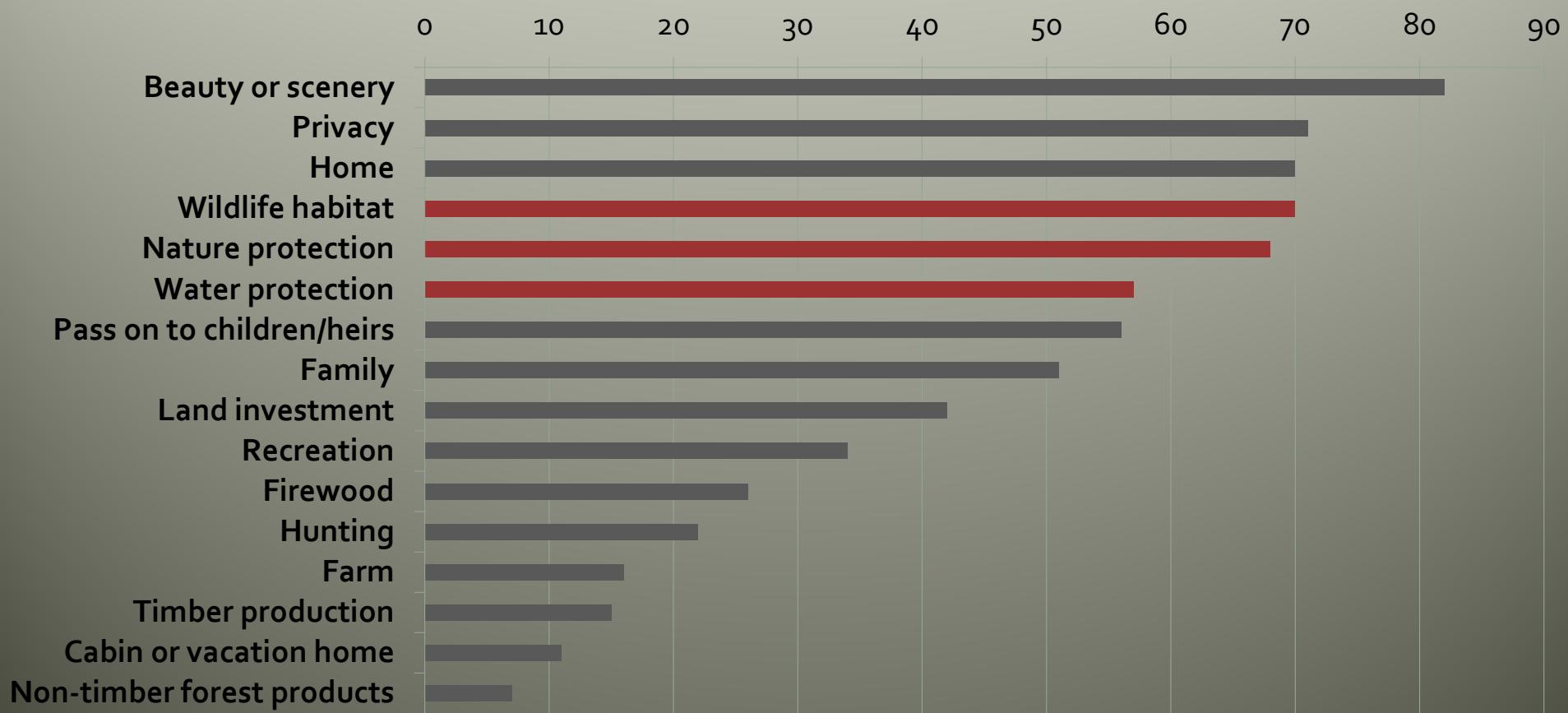
Values and Lifestyles – Connecticut Woodland Owners

- Strong conservation ethic
- Lifestyle values rank very high
- Recreation, especially hiking
- Nature and biodiversity



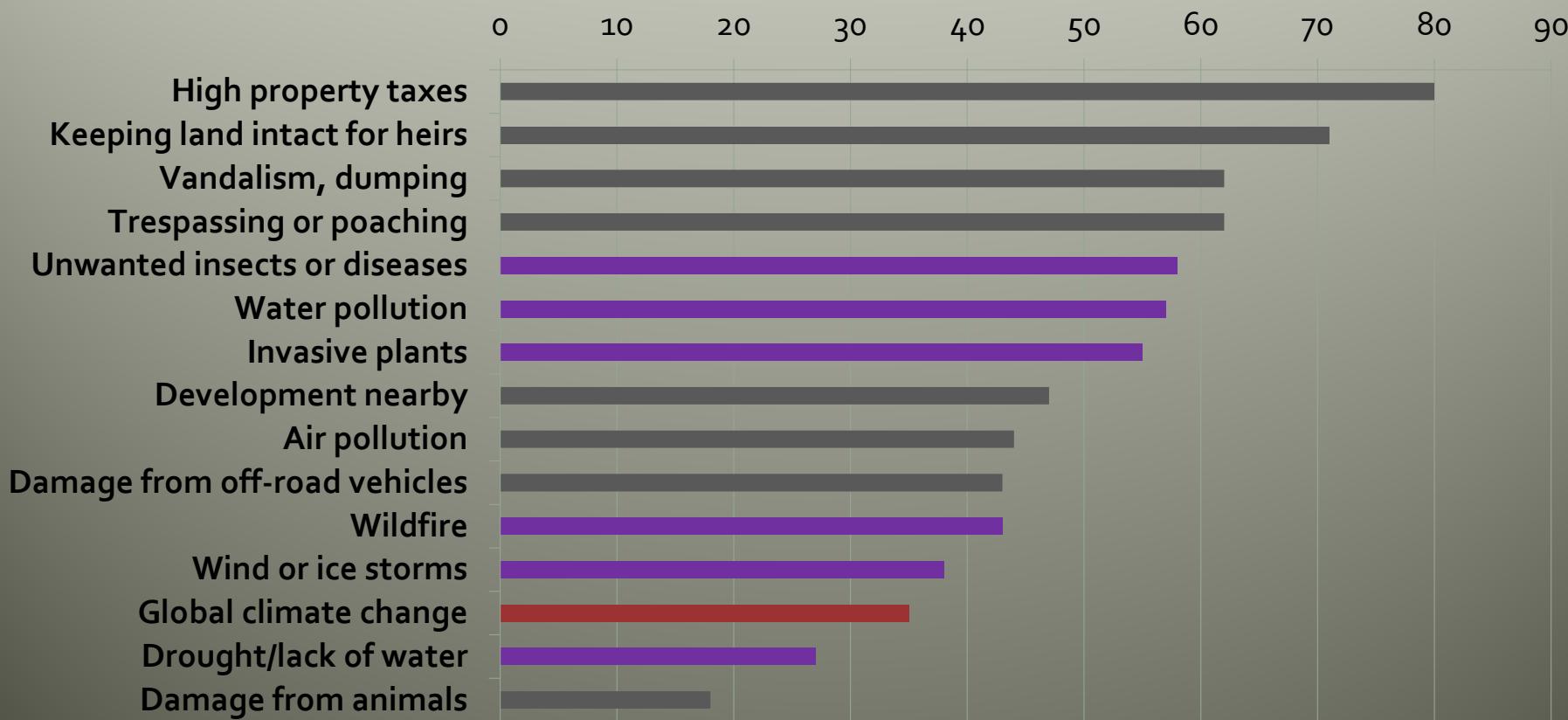
Connecticut Woodland Owners - Reasons for Owning (NWOS 2013)

% of Owners who Rated “Important” or “Very Important”



Connecticut Woodland Owners - Concerns for Their Land (NWOS 2013)

% of Owners who Rated “Concerned” or “Greatly Concerned”



Concerns about their Woodland

	CT	MA	MA	NE	US
	2013	2013	2018	2018	2018
Climate change	35%	43%	56%	48%	40%
Drought	27%	30%	41%	40%	44%
Invasive plants	55%	50%	58%	53%	49%
Insects/diseases	58%	60%	64%	73%	66%
Wind/ice storms	38%	51%	39%	44%	41%

National Woodland Owners Survey 2013 and 2018 (Preliminary Results)

Research on forest owners and climate change – not much

Two very limited qualitative studies (Pacific Northwest and Alaska, 2013; Finland 2018)

- Uncertain about what is causing observed changes
- Unsure about potential future impacts of climate change on their woodlands
- Uncertain about who/what information to trust

- Willing to take advice from professionals
- Advice to manage for resiliency makes sense

Basics of Woodland Owner Communication

Know your audience

- What's important to them?
- What do they know and believe about **climate change**, as it relates to their woodland?
- What gets their attention?

Know your audience

What's important to them?

Healthy woodlands

Beauty

Wildlife

Scenery

Nature protection/conservation

Privacy

Water protection

Home

Legacy

Know Your Audience

What do they know and believe about climate change, as it relates to their woodland? (listen; discuss)

What gets their attention?

- Changes they are seeing on their land
- Changing weather patterns
- Extreme events (insect outbreaks, storms)
- Information they get from trusted sources

Advice for Communicating about Climate Change

From The Land Trust Alliance

- Lead with politically neutral messages about conserving natural resources
- Focus on local climate change impacts and responses, rather than causes
- Find trusted people to deliver messages
- Avoid technical/scientific jargon

Advice for communication with landowners

- Focus on managing woodlands for resiliency – landowners care about keeping their woods healthy
- Promote the use of professionals – foresters, wildlife specialists
- Take advantage of events (extreme weather, new insects) to communicate about forests and climate
- Encourage routine monitoring – give landowners practical information about what to look for and what to do if/when they see changes

AND

Provide continual education for professionals on managing forests for climate change

Basics of Woodland Owner Communication

Consistent messages – avoid confusion

Persistent outreach/communication – this is a long game

For Further Information



Available on Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively website <https://www.engaginglandowners.org/guide>