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Fall 9-19-2020

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RURAL YOUTH FUTURES: WINTER LAKES HIGH SCHOOL

SURVEY RESULTS • SUMMER 2020

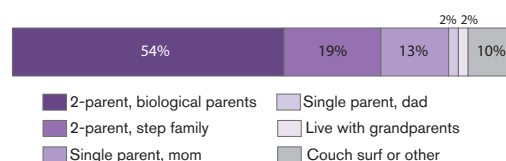
As rural communities face changes in local economies, populations, and workforce needs, what does the next generation of residents and workers value and want? That question was the motivation for the Rural Youth Futures project. Researchers and extension agents from several universities joined forces with local non-profits to find out what middle and high schoolers think in two forest-dependent regions: Coos County in Oregon and Piscataquis/Northern Somerset Counties in Maine. This is one in a series of fact sheets designed to present summary information to each participating school and county about the perceptions and aspirations of local youth.

APPROACH

With permission from the school principal, students in grades 7–12 at Winter Lakes High School were given a link to an anonymous, electronic survey in March 2019. Participation was voluntary. Winter Lakes High School had 300 students during 2018–2019, 68 of which took the survey for a participation rate of 23%. Every question was optional, so the number of responses varies by question. Fact sheets for all schools and each county are available online at: <http://ewp.uoregon.edu/RuralYouth>.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe the family structure you live with:



What level of education did your parents or guardians, whom you live with, complete?

Mom, dad, or guardian:



Second mom, dad, or guardian:



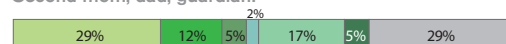
Legend for education levels:
 Did not finish high school (light brown)
 Finished high school (medium brown)
 Went to college, didn't graduate (dark brown)
 Graduated from college or more (darkest brown)
 Went to school, don't know how far (lightest brown)
 Don't know or N/A (grey)

Do your parents or guardians work for pay?

Mom, dad, or guardian:

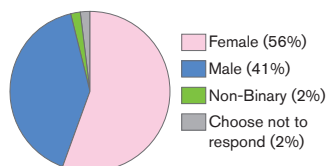


Second mom, dad, guardian:

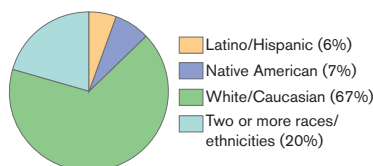


Legend for employment status:
 Yes, one full-time job (light green)
 Yes, one part-time job (medium green)
 Yes, multiple jobs (dark green)
 Not working now, but looking for a job (light blue)
 Does not have a job (medium blue)
 Retired (dark blue)
 Don't know or NA (grey)

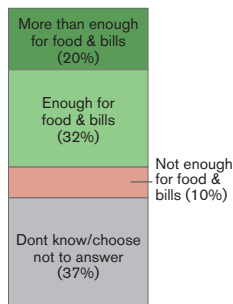
Gender that you identify as:



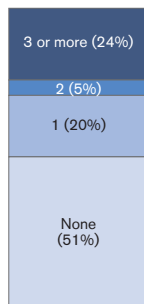
Category that best describes you:



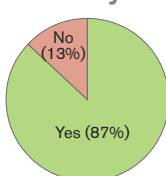
Perception of family finances:



School changes from moving in past 5 years:



Born in Coos County:

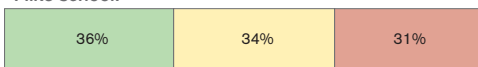


SCHOOL RESULTS

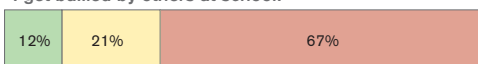
Schools in rural communities are critical. They bring families together, support civic interaction, and foster workforce development. Schools also influence youth aspirations for future education. To learn more about these things in Coos County Schools, we asked students to tell us about their school experience and future goals, what they felt were barriers to those goals, and the extracurricular activities they participated in.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?

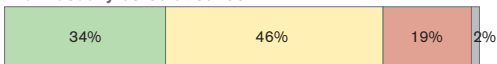
I like school:



I get bullied by others at school:

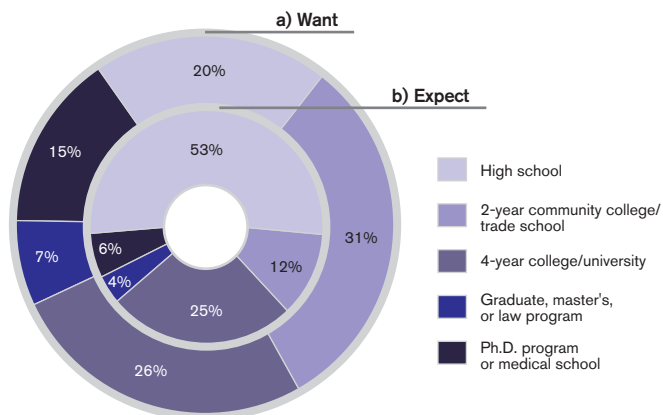


I am usually bored at school:



Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Don't know

What is the highest level of education that you a) want, and b) expect to complete?



What could prevent you from going as far in school as you would like?

TOP 5 BARRIERS



It costs too much (47%)



I need to work after school (22%)



I don't have good enough grades (16%)



I'm not smart enough (12%)



I need to take care of my family members (12%)

Which of the following activities have you participated in the last year?

TOP 5 ACTIVITIES



Community service or volunteering (32%)



Attend community events (29%)



I don't participate in activities (22%)

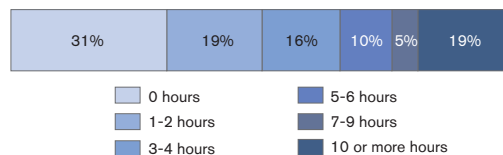


Sports team (21%)



After-school or summer program (18%)

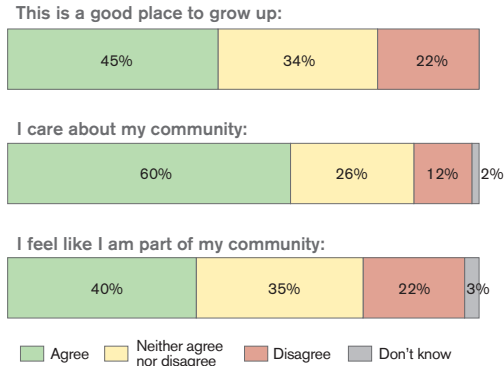
On average, how many hours per week do you spend participating in all the above activities combined?



COMMUNITY RESULTS

Increasing the number of young people and working families is a critical issue in many rural towns. Natural amenities and attachment to community can retain young people or attract in-migration. We asked students to tell us about their community to better understand what the community has to offer. We also asked them where they want to live in the future to see if there's an interest in living in these places among young people.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your community:



What would you like to see more of in your community?

TOP 5 WISHES



More indoor recreation (54%)



More shops and retail stores (54%)



More restaurants (50%)

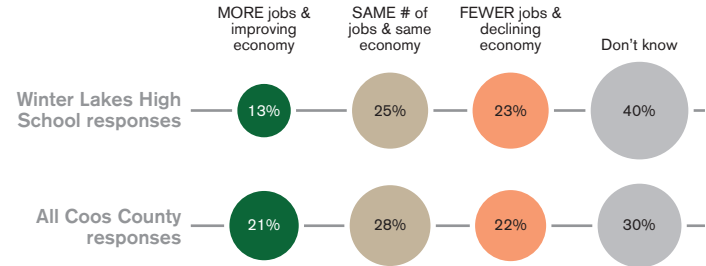


More outdoor recreation (44%)

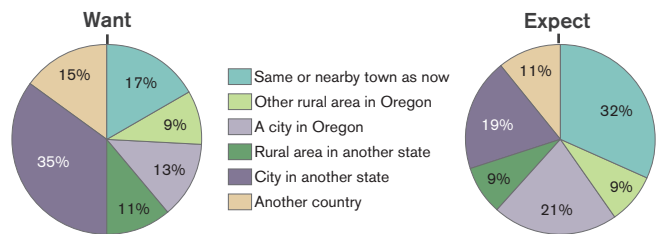


More arts and culture (44%)

Where do you see your community in the future in terms of jobs and the economy?



Where do you want to live and expect to live when you are 30 years old?



Do you think the following are important problems facing your community?

	Winter Lakes High School "yes" responses	All Coos County "yes" responses
Drug or alcohol abuse	82%	75%
Homelessness	77%	66%
People not having enough money	75%	69%
Not enough things to do in town	69%	74%
Not enough jobs	61%	55%
Not enough affordable or good housing	52%	48%
Lack of public transportation	51%	45%
Crime	43%	40%
Poor school quality	41%	40%
People moving away	30%	34%
Not enough healthcare or doctors	30%	33%
Not enough outdoor activities	23%	34%

YOUTH PROGRAMMING

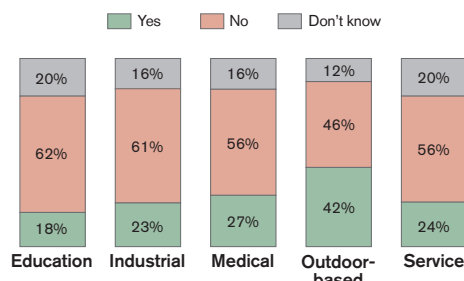
Youth today are the community's future labor force. How prepared they feel, and how willing they are to work in local industries, influences their success in the workforce. We asked students to tell us about their career plans, including what barriers they may face and what training support they need. Because the outdoors is so important to our community, we also asked them about outdoor recreation activities that they participated in.

What would be your dream job when you are 30?

For this question, students could type in any answer to the question of what their dream job would be. We wanted to get a sense of their ideal career aspirations. All responses were entered into a program that generated this word cloud, where the larger and darker an entry is, the more times it was mentioned by students. Some students didn't name a particular job, but described in general what they hoped they'd be doing.

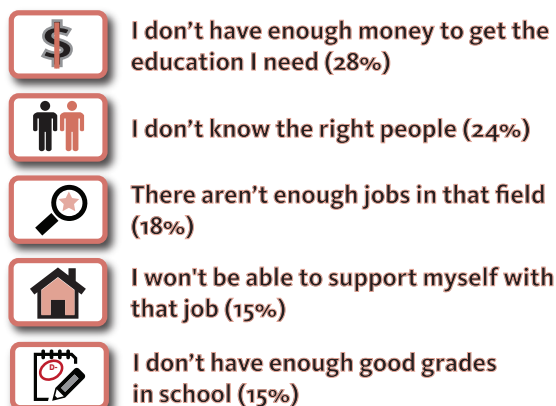


Would you want to work in one of the following industries in Coos County?



Do you think the following things will prevent you from getting the job you want?

TOP 5 BARRIERS

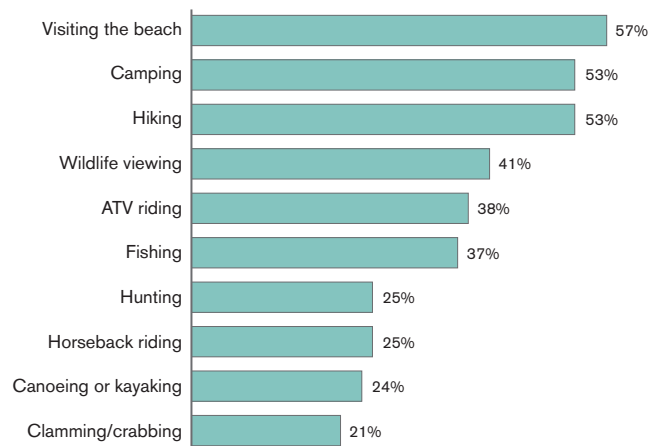


What sort of help would you like preparing for a job?

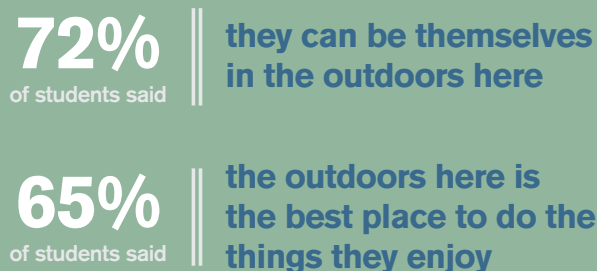
TOP 5 TRAINING NEEDS



Which of the following outdoor recreation activities have you done in the last year? (top ten):



Percentage of students who agree or strongly agree with statements about their attachment to the outdoors (top two):



The Rural Youth Futures project is funded by USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture grant #2017-67023-26240. Project partners include: University of Maine, the University of Oregon's Ecosystem Workforce Program, Coos Watershed Association (Oregon), the Appalachian Mountain Club (Maine), and Oregon State University. Header photo credit: Alexa Carleton, Coos Watershed Association.

For more information on the project, contact Mindy Crandall, Oregon State University, mindy.crandall@oregonstate.edu.