



# **ISSUES RELATED TO HUNTING ACCESS IN THE UNITED STATES**

## **WASHINGTON STATE RESULTS**

**Responsive Management  
and the  
National Shooting Sports Foundation**

**Conducted under Multi-State Conservation Grant CT M-8-R  
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**2009**

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The views contained in this report do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Although numerous people assisted with this project, any errors, omissions, or typographical mistakes in the report are the sole responsibility of Responsive Management.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study is to better understand issues related to hunting access. Research indicates that difficulty with access to lands for hunting has become a constraint to recruiting and retaining sportsmen. Adequate access to land is one of the fundamental issues affecting the future of hunting today, but it is, fortunately, an issue over which agencies and organizations have some influence.

This project entailed a nationwide survey of hunters that included detailed questions about access to hunting lands. The study identifies and quantifies an array of access issues that hunters face today, and it provides in-depth baseline data with which to compare conditions in the future. The study is based on a nationwide survey and individual state surveys that assessed the effectiveness of access programs and acquired data for future programs, and the results can help guide the future use of funding for access programs.

The overall project entailed analyzing data obtained from a series of focus groups conducted in 2008 (which were also used in developing the survey instrument), a nationwide telephone survey with an oversampling in 16 states where a variety of access programs are currently under way, 16 state reports for those oversampled states, and a final national report of the results with recommendations for implementing effective access programs. This report discusses the Washington survey only. Specific aspects of the research methodology for the Washington survey are discussed below.

For the survey, telephones were selected as the preferred sampling medium because of the near universality of telephone ownership. Additionally, telephone surveys, relative to mail or Internet surveys, allow for more scientific sampling and data collection, provide higher quality data, obtain higher response rates, are more timely, and are more cost-effective. Telephone surveys also have fewer negative effects on the environment than do mail surveys because of reduced use of paper and reduced energy consumption for delivering and returning the questionnaires. The telephone survey questionnaire was developed cooperatively by Responsive Management, the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), and the Washington Department of Fish and

Wildlife (WDFW). The survey questionnaire was reviewed by numerous university professors and staff with knowledge of surveying methods, as well as many fish and wildlife agency personnel with knowledge of hunting access issues. The questionnaire included some “screening” questions; those who had *not* hunted at least once in the past 5 years were not interviewed.

The survey instrument included questions about the following hunting programs that are used in Washington State (descriptions of the programs are included as Appendix A):

- The Open Fields program
- The Conservation Reserve Program
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Waterfowl Production Areas
- The wheretohunt.org website
- The huntinfo.com website
- The huntandshoot.org website
- The Feel Free to Hunt program
- The Register to Hunt program
- The Hunt by Written Permission program
- The Landowner Hunting Permit program
- The GoHunt GIS Mapping System
- Washington’s Quality Hunting Areas
- The Accessing Washington’s Outdoors program
- The Disabled Hunter Road Access Entry program

To ensure that the researchers would know which species were associated with various results, the survey asked respondents to answer most questions about the species *they primarily hunt*. In these questions, QPL inserted the respondent’s primary species name into the question so that answers would be specific to a particular species. Keep in mind that the many questions, such as ratings of access, are specific to a particular species rather than being about hunting overall.

Interviews were conducted Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Saturday from noon to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., local time. The survey was conducted in April 2009. Responsive Management obtained a total of 806 completed interviews.

The software used for data collection was Questionnaire Programming Language. The analysis of data was performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) as well as proprietary software developed by Responsive Management.

## **SPECIES HUNTED, HUNTING AVIDITY, AND TRENDS IN HUNTING PARTICIPATION**

- The majority of Washington State licensed hunters primarily hunted some type of deer (50%) in the past 12 months, followed in popularity by elk (25%), waterfowl (9%), and upland game birds (7%).
- The survey asked about the typical number of days that hunters hunt in Washington State annually: the median is 14 days.
- Hunters in the survey were asked to indicate how long they have been hunting. Responses are well-distributed among the number of years; the mean is 30.4 years.
- Hunters in the survey were asked to indicate how many of the past 5 years they had hunted. The large majority of those hunters (80%) are quite avid, having hunted all 5 of the past 5 years.

## **LOCATIONS OF HUNTING ACTIVITIES**

- Hunters in Washington State more often hunt their primary species on public land (52% hunt on public land mostly, and 74% do so at least half the time) than private land (25% hunt on private land mostly, and 47% do so at least half the time).
  - Two questions asked those who hunt their primary species mostly on private land about the ownership of that land. In looking at the combined results of these two questions, the most popular type of private land for hunting, *among those who hunt mostly on private land*, is private land owned by a friend or family member (46%), followed by corporate land (23%), self-owned land (15%), and land owned by an acquaintance (15%).
- Another question has implications regarding how much hunters need to find access to hunting lands. Hunters more commonly say that they mostly hunt their primary species on the same land each year (62%) than say that they hunt it on different lands each year (6%).

- The survey asked hunters to indicate how far they typically travel from home to hunt their primary species: the median distance is 60 miles.
  - Another question explored the modes of transportation that hunters use to access the land on which they hunt: 89% use a car or truck (by far the top mode), distantly followed by walking (26%) and ATV (6%). Note that hunters could name more than one mode.

### **FACTORS CONSIDERED IN CHOOSING LANDS ON WHICH TO HUNT**

- The survey asked 11 questions about the importance of various factors in hunters' decisions regarding where to hunt their primary species (shown in Text Box 1 below). For each factor, they were asked if it was *very* important, *somewhat* important, or *not at all* important. The results of the series of questions were then ranked.
  - Four factors stand out markedly more important than the rest in the ranking by the percentage saying the factor is *very* important: that the land is *not* crowded with other sportsmen (73% say this is *very* important), that they are familiar with the land (53%), that the land is easy to access by foot (48%), and that the land is public land (39%).
  - A couple more factors are shown to be important in looking at the ranking by *very* or *somewhat* important in addition to the factors mentioned above. Those additional factors that are important include that the land is easy to access by car/truck, that the land is close to home, and that the land has well-maintained roads.

#### **TEXT BOX 1**

##### **Factors in hunters' decisions regarding where to hunt that were asked about in the survey:**

- That the land is public land
- That the land is private land
- That the land is owned by someone the respondent knows personally
- That the land is familiar to the respondent
- That the land is close to the respondent's home
- That the land is easy to access by foot
- That the land is easy to access by car or truck
- That the land is not crowded with other sportsmen
- That the land has well-maintained roads
- That the respondent can use ATVs or off-road vehicles
- That the land allows hunting with dogs

- After the series of questions discussed above, the survey asked hunters if there are any other factors that are important in their decision making regarding where to hunt. Two additional

factors were commonly mentioned: that the land has plenty of game/quality habitat and that favorable regulations apply to the particular area.

## CONSTRAINTS TO HUNTING PARTICIPATION

- A direct question asked hunters whether lack of hunting access had caused them *not* to hunt a particular species as much as they would have liked in the past 5 years. A majority of them (58%) agreed that it had done so. In follow-up, the top-named access problems were private land being posted and road closures (the two reasons that were markedly more important than the rest), more distantly followed by huntable land being blocked by private land, public land being closed by an agency, and simply lack of land on which to hunt.
  - In follow-up, hunters were asked to name the species that they had not hunted as much as they would have liked because of access problems. The top-named species is deer (46% among those who agreed to the above question), closely followed by elk (45%), and then distantly followed by upland game birds (20%), waterfowl (13%), black bear (9%), and wild turkey (6%). Note that hunters could name more than one species on this question.
  
- The survey asked a series of 25 questions about possible hunting access constraints (shown in Text Box 2 on the following page). For each possible constraint, the survey asked hunters if it had been, over the past 5 years, a *major* problem, a *moderate* problem, a *minor* problem, or *not at all* a problem. The results of the series of questions were then ranked.
  - The potential constraints that had the highest percentage of hunters saying that the constraint was a *major* problem were the cost of gas (37%), finding previously open private land posted (28%), not being able to find the landowner to ask permission (26%), not being sure of the boundaries of huntable land (24%), finding previously open private land closed because a club now leases it (24%), and private land blocking access to public land for hunting (24%). All of these had about a quarter or more of respondents saying it was a *major* problem.
  - A ranking was also produced of the percentage giving a rating of *major*, *moderate*, or *minor* problem. The six problems above were again at or near the top, along with finding previously open land sold and posted by the new landowner, housing and other developments making land not huntable, less land to hunt on because of land-use changes, less land on which to hunt because of development, and road closures. All of these had approximately half or more saying it was a *major*, *moderate*, or *minor* problem.

**TEXT BOX 2****Possible constraints to hunting access that were asked about in the survey:**

Road closures  
 Less land on which to hunt  
 Less land on which to hunt because the land use has changed  
 Less land on which to hunt due to private land ownership changes  
 Not having enough information about where to hunt  
 The information about where to hunt being inaccurate  
 Not having ATV access in general  
 Not being able to retrieve the hunt harvest because of ATV restrictions  
 Having maps that show huntable land but being unable to locate that land on the ground  
 Being unable to locate a road or other access route to huntable land  
 Not being sure of the boundaries of huntable land  
 Having to travel too far to hunt  
 Being denied permission to hunt on somebody else's land  
 Not being able to find the landowner to ask permission  
 Finding previously open private land posted or closed by the landowner  
 Finding previously open private land sold and posted or closed by the new landowner  
 Finding previously open private land closed because a club has now leased it  
 Private land blocking access to public land for hunting  
 Poor maintenance of roads or trails  
 The cost of gas  
 Not being able to find a good place to park the vehicle  
 Not being able to find a place to launch a boat  
 Housing or other development making land not huntable  
 Information from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife being out of date  
 Access or leasing fees being expensive

- A follow-up question to one of the questions within the aforementioned series asked those who indicated that road closures had been a problem to indicate how the road had been closed. Most commonly, the road was closed by a gate, although a few indicated that the road was closed by a “No trespassing” sign posted by a landowner or was closed by lack of maintenance (e.g., downed trees not cut out of the way, gullies).
  - Most commonly, the road closures were perceived to be permanent rather than seasonal/temporary.
  - Another follow-up question asked for the location/type of the closed road. Most commonly, the roads were public—National Forest roads, BLM roads, or other public roads.
  
- Another follow-up question within the above series was asked of those who indicated that not being able to retrieve their harvest because of ATV restrictions had been a problem (20%

indicated that this was a problem). The follow-up question asked if they agreed or disagreed that not being able to retrieve game with an ATV had caused them to hunt less than they would otherwise have liked to do, 37% agree (7% of hunters overall), while 63% disagree.

- A final follow-up question within the above series was asked of those who indicated that private land blocking access to public land had been a problem. The follow-up question asked how much of a problem was *intentional* blocking of public land by a private landowner, and 88% of those respondents indicated that private landowners *intentionally* blocking access was a problem.
- After the above series of questions, the survey then presented hunters a list of 16 problems with actions hunters may have had to take because of the problem (e.g., leaving a hunt area because of crowding from other recreationists). The list of problems is shown in Text Box 3 on the following page. For each possible problem, the survey asked hunters if it had been, over the past 5 years, a *major* problem, a *moderate* problem, a *minor* problem, or *not at all* a problem. The results of the series of questions were then ranked.
  - In looking at the ranking by the percentage saying the problem was *major*, *moderate*, or *minor*, the top problems are leaving an area because of crowding from other hunters (71%), leaving an area because the respondent felt unsafe because of other hunters (51%), leaving an area because of crowding from other recreationists (46%), not going on a hunt or changing locations because of access problems (44%), leaving an area because of the irresponsible behavior of other hunters (41%), and being confused by a state agency map that was hard to follow (37%)—all with at least one-third saying it had been a problem. As a whole, the results suggest that access itself is not as great a problem as is access to *uncrowded* lands—four of the top six relate to other people being on the land on which the hunter wanted to hunt.

**TEXT BOX 3****Possible problems regarding hunting access that were asked about in the survey:**

Not going on a hunt or changing locations because of access problems  
Not going on a hunt or changing locations because the respondent felt that a leasing fee was too expensive  
Not going on a hunt or changing locations because map information was wrong  
Not going on a hunt or changing locations because access for those with disabilities was not available  
Leaving an area because of crowding from other hunters  
Leaving an area because of crowding from other recreationists  
Leaving an area because respondent felt unsafe because of other hunters  
Leaving an area because of the irresponsible behavior of other hunters  
Not being sure whether he/she was on private or public land  
Not being sure whose land he/she was on  
Not hunting somewhere because of ATV restrictions  
Not hunting somewhere because ATV use is allowed or not restricted  
Being in an area where he/she was not sure which hunting regulations applied  
Being confused by a state agency map that was hard to follow  
Discontinuing a hunting club membership because he/she felt the fees were too expensive  
Trying to join a hunting club that was already full

- The survey asked hunters a series of 10 questions about factors that may or may not influence access to hunting land in Washington in general, regardless of whether their own participation is affected by it (shown in Text Box 4 on the following page). For each factor, the survey asked hunters if they think it is a *major* problem, a *moderate* problem, a *minor* problem, or *not at all* a problem. The results of the series of questions were then ranked.
- In looking at the ranking by the percentages saying the factor is a *major*, a *moderate*, or a *minor* problem, 6 of the 10 factors have a majority saying it is a problem: housing and commercial development (69%), poor management or allocation of uses of public land (62%), public or private land tracts being broken up when sold or leased (61%), private land posted or closed because the landowner is specifically concerned about liability (57%), lack of or unclear signs marking public hunting lands (52%), and closures of public land by government agencies (51%).

**TEXT BOX 4****Factors that may or may not influence hunting access that were asked about in the survey:**

Poor management or allocation of uses of public land  
Lack of or unclear signs marking public hunting lands  
Restrictions on public land  
Closures of public land by government agencies  
Not enough access to public lands for those with disabilities  
Housing and commercial development  
Gas and oil extraction on public lands  
Public or private land tracts being broken up when sold or leased  
Private land posted or closed because the landowner is specifically concerned about liability  
Management of land for purposes other than hunting, such as timber cutting

- When asked in an open-ended question if there were any things that had taken away from their enjoyment of hunting in Washington, even if those things did not prevent them from actually going, hunters most commonly named some type of access problem (28%) and/or a regulation-related answer, such as season timing (22%). Note that the analysis subdivided the “access-related problems” category into specific access problems as subsets of access-related problems overall. Primary among those access problems are crowding from other hunters, crowding in general, road closures, and the posting of private land.

**RATINGS OF ACCESS TO HUNTING LANDS IN WASHINGTON**

- A basic question asked hunters to rate access to hunting land in Washington overall. They are about evenly split: 51% give a rating of excellent or good, and 48% give a rating of fair or poor. Note that the moderate answers (good and fair) far exceed the extreme answers (excellent and poor).
- In a related question, ratings of the WDFW’s management of access to hunting lands is evenly split: 46% give an excellent or good rating, and 46% give a fair or poor rating. Note that “good” ratings far exceed “excellent” ratings, while “fair” and “poor” ratings are more evenly split.
- The ratings of access were crosstabulated by species primarily hunted to see if any differences among respondents emerged. Positive ratings in this context are those in the top half of the scale (excellent or good), and negative ratings are those in the lower half (fair or

poor). Access ratings are markedly more positive among waterfowl hunters (67% give a rating of excellent or good) and elk hunters (61%). They are about evenly split among hunters of white-tailed deer and black-tailed deer. They are markedly more negative among hunters of mule deer (only 38% give an excellent or good rating) and upland game birds (36%).

- Those who hunted their primary species on public land at least half the time were asked to rate access to public lands in Washington. Excellent and good ratings (63% give one of the two responses) exceed fair and poor ratings (37%).
  - Top reasons for rating public land access as fair or poor are road closures, a simple lack of land on which to hunt, and public land being blocked by private land.
- Those who hunted their primary species mostly on private land were asked to rate access to private land in Washington. Most commonly, they give a rating of fair (46%), and fair and poor combined account for 69% of those respondents. Meanwhile, 23% give a rating of excellent or good.
  - The most common reason for giving a fair or poor rating to private land access is the land being posted.

### **FACTORS THAT MAY POSITIVELY AFFECT ACCESS**

- The survey asked 15 questions about things that would make hunting access easier (shown in Text Box 5 on the following page). For each item, the survey asked hunters if it would be *very* effective, *somewhat* effective, or *not at all* effective at making it easier to access land on which to hunt. The results of the series of questions were then ranked.
  - In looking at the ranking by the percentage saying that the items would be *very* effective at making access easier, 7 of the 15 items stand out—each with at least 60% saying it would be *very* effective: having signs that clearly mark boundaries of huntable land (77%), a Washington state agency acquiring more land for hunting (71%), having a list of landowners with telephone numbers where the respondent could call to ask to hunt on their land (69%), having paper maps of hunting lands for their primary species (65%), having timely information about any road closures (65%), having easements or

designated public sections of leased and private lands preserved for public hunting (63%), and having up-to-date information on a website showing lands where hunting is allowed (62%).

**TEXT BOX 5****Things that might make hunting access easier that were asked about in the survey:**

- Having a list of landowners with telephone numbers where the respondent could call to ask to hunt on their land
- Having signs that clearly mark boundaries of huntable land
- Having up-to-date information on a website showing lands where hunting is allowed
- Having paper maps of hunting lands
- Having maps of hunting lands on a website
- Being able to find hunting lands using GPS
- Having timely information about any road closures
- Having more ATV access
- Having more lands with ATV restrictions
- Being able to pay a user fee to hunt restricted public land
- Being able to pay a user fee to hunt private land
- Being able to pay extra to increase the chances of getting a license issued through a lottery
- A Washington state agency acquiring more land for hunting
- Having easements or public “rights-of-way” on private land to access adjacent public land
- Having easements or designated public sections of leased and private lands preserved for public hunting

**POTENTIAL REASONS THAT LANDOWNERS MAY CLOSE THEIR LAND TO HUNTING**

➤ The survey asked eight questions about possible reasons that landowners may close their land to public hunting (shown in Text Box 6 on the following page). For each possible reason, the survey asked hunters if they think it is a *very important* reason, a *somewhat important* reason, or a *not at all* important reason that landowners close their land to the public for hunting.

The results of the series of questions were then ranked.

- Three items stand out above the rest in the ranking by the percentage saying the reasons are *very important*, all related to misuse of the land: property damage caused by hunters (excluding litter) (76% say this is a *very important* reason that landowners close their land), irresponsible shooting, alcohol use, or similar behavior by hunters (75%), and litter (75%). In a middle tier are liability concerns (54%) and the landowner wanting to allow only personal/family use of the land (48%).

**TEXT BOX 6****Possible reasons that landowners may close their land to public hunting that were asked about in the survey:**

- Liability concerns
- Irresponsible shooting, drinking alcohol, or similar behavior by hunters (excluding property damage or litter)
- Property damage caused by other hunters (excluding litter)
- Litter
- Land being too crowded
- The landowner wanting to allow only personal or family use of the land
- The landowner not making enough money from hunters
- The landowner not receiving enough compensation or incentives from the state

- The large majority of hunters (75%) think that a program that provides landowners with compensation or incentives for opening their lands to the public for hunting would be *very* or *somewhat* effective at improving hunting access in Washington.
- The overwhelming majority of hunters (91%) are *not* aware of any laws in Washington that reduce the liability of landowners who open their lands to the public for hunting; meanwhile, 6% are aware of such laws.
  - In a related question, the large majority of Washington hunters (85%) support laws to reduce landowner liability for landowners who open their lands to the public for hunting; only 3% oppose (the remainder give neutral answers).
  - Another related question found that a large majority of hunters (82%) think that legislation reducing landowner liability would be *very* or *somewhat* effective at improving hunter access to private lands in Washington; only 4% think it would *not* be at all effective.
  - Finally, the large majority of hunters (66%) agree that legislation reducing landowner liability would significantly increase the number of landowners who would open their lands to the public for hunting.

**PARTICIPATION IN AND USE OF VARIOUS PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES**

- The survey asked about 14 programs in Washington that pertain to hunting access (some state programs and some national programs). The programs about which the survey asked are shown in Text Box 7 below.
- A basic line of questioning asked hunters about their awareness of the various programs, and 6 of the 14 programs had awareness levels of 30% or higher: the Disabled Hunter Road Access Entry program (51% were *very* or *somewhat* aware of it), the Conservation Reserve Program (39%), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas or WPAs (38%), the Hunt by Written Permission program (37%), the Landowner Hunting Permit program (35%), and the Feel Free to Hunt program (30%). All other programs have awareness levels of about 20% or lower.
  - Another series of questions asked hunters about their use of or participation in the 14 access programs. Those programs with the highest rates of use/participation are the Feel Free to Hunt program (13%), the Conservation Reserve Program (11%), the Hunt by Written Permission program (11%), the GoHunt GIS Mapping System (9%), and the Disabled Hunter Road Access Entry program (8%).

**TEXT BOX 7****Hunting access programs that were asked about in the survey:**

The Open Fields program  
The Conservation Reserve Program  
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas or WPAs  
The wheretohunt.org website  
The huntinfo.com website  
The huntandshoot.org website  
The Feel Free to Hunt program  
The Register to Hunt program  
The Hunt by Written Permission program  
The Landowner Hunting Permit program  
The GoHunt GIS Mapping System  
Washington's Quality Hunting Areas  
The Accessing Washington's Outdoors program  
The Disabled Hunter Road Access Entry program

- For each program of which a hunter was aware, the survey asked him/her to rate it at making hunting access easier.
  - The programs with the highest percentages of hunters giving an excellent or good rating, all at more than 40%, are the Feel Free to Hunt program (48%), the Open Fields program (47%), the GoHunt GIS Mapping System (47%), the Conservation Reserve Program (43%), the Register to Hunt program (43%), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas (41%).
- The survey included a very specific question about use of private lands enrolled in any walk-in access program in Washington. A quarter of hunters (25%) hunt their primary species often or sometimes on such lands. On the other hand, the majority (56%) never do so.

#### **SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED IN DECIDING WHERE TO HUNT**

- In the broadest question about sources of information, hunters were asked in an open-ended question where they got information on places to hunt and hunting access in Washington. The most popular source is friends/family/word of mouth (65%), by far the top answer. Other notable answers include the Internet (15%) and pamphlets/brochures (9%).
- The survey asked hunters if they had visited the websites of four agencies (the WDFW, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management). The majority of hunters in Washington had visited the WDFW site (53%). Lower amounts (from 15% to 20%) had visited the other sites. (Note that visitation to the site may *not* have been regarding access.)
  - Follow-up questions asked hunters to rate the usefulness of the websites' information on places to hunt and hunting access in planning hunting trips (although some may not have been looking for access information). Ratings are mostly positive: the WDFW site, the Bureau of Land Management site, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service site all had a majority of site visitors rating its access information as excellent or good.

- The survey asked six questions about actions that hunters may take in deciding where to hunt (shown in Text Box 8 below). For each action, the survey asked hunters if they always, sometimes, rarely, or never do it when deciding where to hunt. The results of the series of questions were then ranked.
- About two-thirds or more of hunters always or sometimes do two things in deciding where to hunt: 73% scout or physically look for a place, and 65% ask a friend or family member where to hunt. Additionally, half of hunters (50%) use paper maps to find a place.
  - At the low end of the ranking, less than a fifth of hunters knock on a landowner's door to ask permission (18%), use GPS (14%), or research available lands on the Internet (11%).

**TEXT BOX 8**

**Actions hunters may take in deciding where to hunt that were asked about in the survey:**

- Ask a friend or family member where to hunt
- Knock on a landowner's door to ask permission to hunt
- Use paper maps to find a place to hunt
- Use GPS to locate hunting land
- Find available hunting lands on the Internet
- Scout or physically look for land on which to hunt

- Within the above series of questions was a question asking how often hunters scout or physically look for land on which to hunt. In follow-up, they were asked how many days they typically spend scouting for hunting locations. The median number of days they typically spend annually scouting for hunting land is 5 days, among those who scout for land.

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## **INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study is to better understand issues related to hunting access. Research indicates that difficulty with access to lands for hunting has become not just a point of frustration, but a very real barrier to recruiting and retaining sportsmen. Adequate access to land is one of the most fundamental issues affecting the future of hunting today. Indeed, access is the *most* important factor associated with hunting participation that is not a time-related or demographic factor<sup>1</sup>—in other words, the most important factor over which agencies and organizations can have an important influence.

While hunting is an important historic, social, and cultural activity in the United States, it is also important to the economy and to conservation. Hunters are avid conservationists who donate more money to wildlife conservation, per capita, than do non-hunters or the general population as a whole in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Their hunting license fees and the excise taxes they pay on sporting goods and ammunition fund state fish and wildlife agency activities and provide Federal Aid monies. Hunters also contribute large amounts of money to the economy through the pursuit of their sport. In fact, hunters spend several billion dollars on their sport annually.<sup>3</sup>

However, participation in hunting is declining. Research shows that there has been a general decline in hunting participation for the past two decades.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, much research has been devoted to assessing the decline in hunting participation and hunting dissatisfaction. One reason that hunters increasingly report as a cause of dissatisfaction is poor hunting access. Access problems negatively affect hunters by taking away from their enjoyment of hunting and/or causing them to hunt less often. Previous research has shown that access is a leading reason for hunter dissatisfaction, and that not enough available hunting access is a significant factor that influences hunters' decisions to stop hunting.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Responsive Management/National Shooting Sports Foundation. 2008. *The Future of Hunting and the Shooting Sports: Research-Based Recruitment and Retention Strategies*. Produced for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Grant Agreement CT-M-6-0. Harrisonburg, Virginia.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/U.S. Census Bureau. 2007. *2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*. Washington, D.C.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

In addition to an in-depth look at hunting access issues at the national and regional levels to obtain baseline data, this project assesses the success of many initiatives and programs related to access that have already been implemented. This assessment identifies which programs and program elements are most effective, and which are not, by assessing a sample of states (in addition to the nationwide survey). This includes the following 16 states: Alabama, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

By acquiring baseline data on access issues and assessing the effectiveness of programs designed to improve hunting access, this project provides research-based information to assist in efforts to reduce hunting access conflicts and improve and increase access to lands for hunting. This research also helps to more effectively utilize the millions of dollars of future funding for implementing access programs by indicating which programs and program elements are having the greatest impact and by providing data to guide and increase the success of the efforts of new and current programs.

There is an important need for this project because 1) access to lands for hunting has become a very real barrier to hunter recruitment and retention; 2) previous studies have shown that access is a leading reason for hunter dissatisfaction and that not enough available hunting access is a significant factor that influences hunters' decision to stop hunting; 3) most previous studies were conducted on a state-by-state basis rather than a regional or national basis and are not comparable across states; 4) the effectiveness of numerous initiatives and programs related to access that have already been implemented on the ground needs to be evaluated; and 5) the results will help to ensure the most effective utilization of funding for access programs in the future. In short, there is a strong need for information and strategies upon which to build hunting programs that create, improve, and facilitate access to lands for hunting, which will ultimately positively affect hunting participation as well.

This project entailed a nationwide survey of hunters to accomplish several major objectives. The study identified and quantified the full array of access issues that hunters face today, and it provided in-depth baseline data with which to compare conditions in the future at a national

level. In addition, the study included individual state surveys to assess the effectiveness of access programs currently in place in 16 states and acquired data for future programs, and the results can help guide the future use of funding for access programs.

The overall project entailed analyzing data obtained from a series of focus groups conducted in 2008 (which were also used in developing the survey instrument), a nationwide telephone survey with an oversampling in 16 states where access programs are currently under way, 16 state reports for those oversampled states, and a final national report of the results with recommendations for implementing effective access programs. This report discusses the Washington survey only. Specific aspects of the research methodology for the Washington survey are discussed below.

For this survey, telephones were selected as the preferred sampling medium because of the near universality of telephone ownership among Washington hunters. Additionally, telephone surveys, relative to mail or Internet surveys, allow for more scientific sampling and data collection, provide higher quality data, obtain higher response rates, are more timely, and are more cost-effective. Telephone surveys also have fewer negative effects on the environment than do mail surveys because of reduced use of paper and reduced energy consumption for delivering and returning the questionnaires. A central polling site at the Responsive Management office allowed for rigorous quality control over the interviews and data collection. Responsive Management maintains its own in-house telephone interviewing facilities. These facilities are staffed by interviewers with experience conducting computer-assisted telephone interviews on the subjects of natural resources and outdoor recreation.

To ensure the integrity of the telephone survey data, Responsive Management has interviewers who have been trained according to the standards established by the Council of American Survey Research Organizations. Methods of instruction included lecture and role-playing. The Survey Center Managers and other professional staff conducted project briefings with the interviewers prior to the administration of this survey. Interviewers were instructed on type of study, study goals and objectives, handling of survey questions, interview length, termination points and qualifiers for participation, interviewer instructions within the survey instrument, reading of the

survey instrument, skip patterns, and probing and clarifying techniques necessary for specific questions on the survey instrument. The Survey Center Managers and statisticians monitored the data collection, including monitoring of the actual telephone interviews without the interviewers' knowledge, to evaluate the performance of each interviewer and ensure the integrity of the data.

The telephone survey questionnaire was developed cooperatively by Responsive Management, the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), and the participating state agencies and organizations represented in the listing on the acknowledgments page, including the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). The survey questionnaire was reviewed by numerous university professors and staff with knowledge of surveying methods, as well as many fish and wildlife agency personnel with knowledge of hunting access issues. Responsive Management conducted a pre-test of the questionnaire to ensure proper wording, flow, and logic in the survey. The questionnaire included some "screener" questions; those who had *not* hunted at least once in the past 5 years were not interviewed.

The survey instrument included questions about the following hunting access programs that are used in Washington State (descriptions of the programs are included as Appendix A):

- The Open Fields program
- The Conservation Reserve Program
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas
- The wheretohunt.org website
- The huntinfo.com website
- The huntandshoot.org website
- The Feel Free to Hunt program
- The Register to Hunt program
- The Hunt by Written Permission program
- The Landowner Hunting Permit program
- The GoHunt GIS Mapping System
- Washington's Quality Hunting Areas
- The Accessing Washington's Outdoors program
- The Disabled Hunter Road Access Entry program

The sample was of hunting license holders representative of hunters in Washington overall. The sample was obtained from the WDFW.

Interviews were conducted Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Saturday from noon to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., local time. A five-callback design was used to maintain the representativeness of the sample, to avoid bias toward people easy to reach by telephone, and to provide an equal opportunity for all to participate. When a respondent could not be reached on the first call, subsequent calls were placed on different days of the week and at different times of the day. Responsive Management obtained a total of 806 completed interviews with Washington licensed hunters.

The software used for data collection was Questionnaire Programming Language (QPL). The survey data were entered into the computer as each interview was being conducted, eliminating manual data entry after the completion of the survey and the concomitant data entry errors that may occur with manual data entry. The survey instrument was programmed so that QPL branched, coded, and substituted phrases in the survey based on previous responses to ensure the integrity and consistency of the data collection.

Because the survey contained a large number of questions, and no single respondent could feasibly go through all the questions that would apply to him/her, some questions were asked only of a randomized portion of the sample. In other places, only certain respondents received some questions because the questions applied only to specific respondents (e.g., only those who were aware of a given program were asked to rate its effectiveness).

After the surveys were obtained by the interviewers, the Survey Center Managers and/or statisticians checked each completed survey to ensure clarity and completeness. The analysis of data was performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) as well as proprietary software developed by Responsive Management.

In examining the results, it is important to be aware that the questionnaire included several types of questions:

- Open-ended questions are those in which no answer set is read to the respondents; rather, they can respond with anything that comes to mind from the question.
- Closed-ended questions have an answer set from which to choose.

- Some questions allow only a single response, while other questions allow respondents to give more than one response or choose all that apply. Those that allow more than a single response are indicated on the graphs with the label, “Multiple Responses Allowed.”
- Many closed-ended questions (but not all) are in a scale, such as excellent-good-fair-poor.
- Many questions are part of a series, and the results are primarily intended to be examined relative to the other questions in that series (although results of the questions individually can also be valuable).

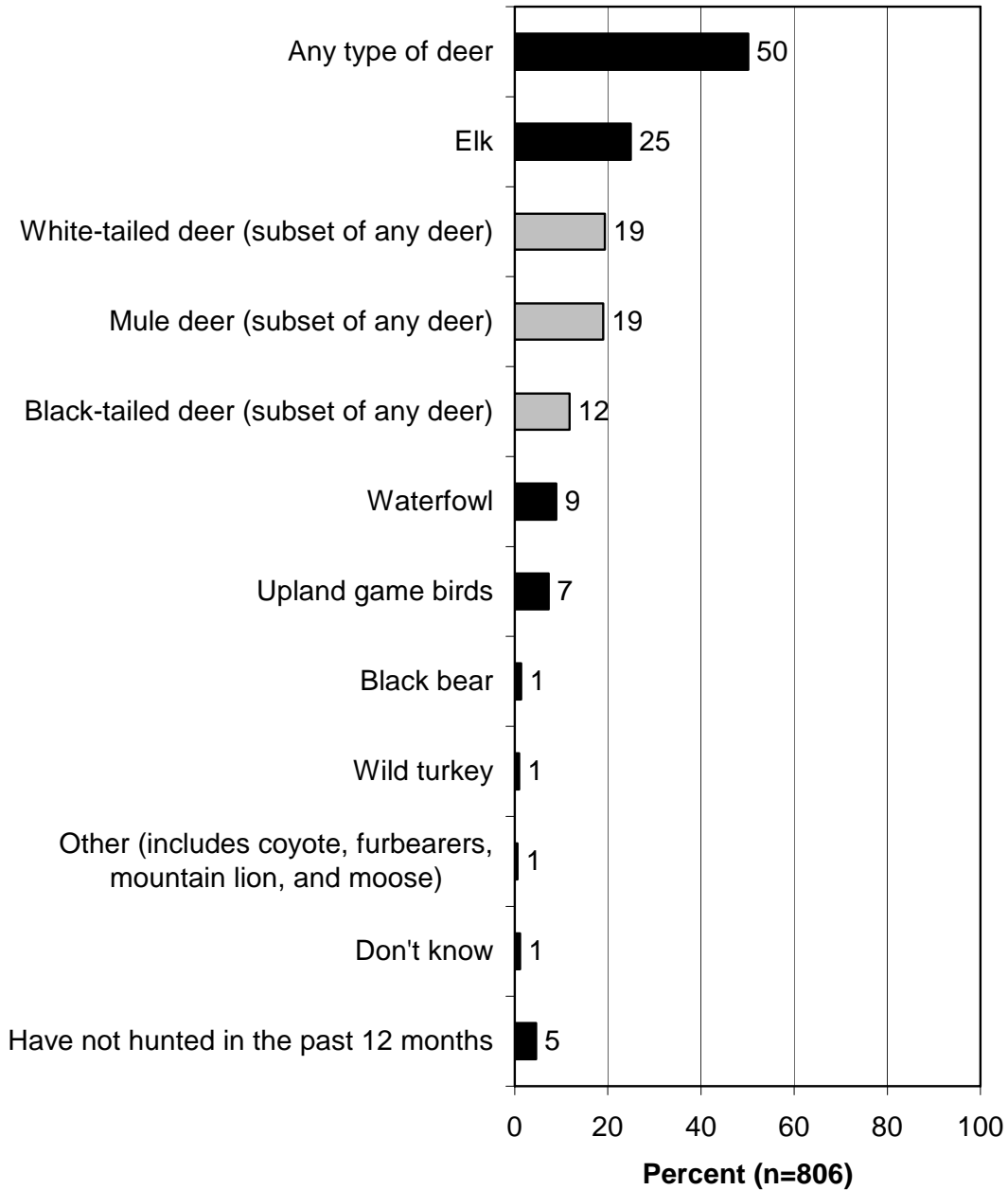
The research team sought to learn about access problems of hunters, but conjectured that hunting access problems could vary from species to species. To ensure that the researchers would know which species were associated with various results, the survey asked respondents to answer most questions about the species *they primarily hunt*. For applicable questions, QPL inserted the respondent’s primary species name into the question. For instance, Question 55 would have been “Overall, how would you rate access to hunting lands in Washington for hunting mule deer?” for those who primarily hunt mule deer, and it would have been “Overall, how would you rate access to hunting lands in Washington for hunting waterfowl?” for those who primarily hunt waterfowl. In the graphs, the questions show where the species name would be automatically inserted into the question by the QPL program. For instance, the graph for Question 55 is shown as “Overall, how would you rate access to hunting lands in Washington for hunting (species)?”

Occasionally, results may not sum to exactly 100% because of rounding. Additionally, rounding on the graphs may cause apparent discrepancies of 1 percentage point between the graphs and the reported results of combined responses (e.g., when “strongly support” and “moderately support” are summed to determine the total percentage in support).

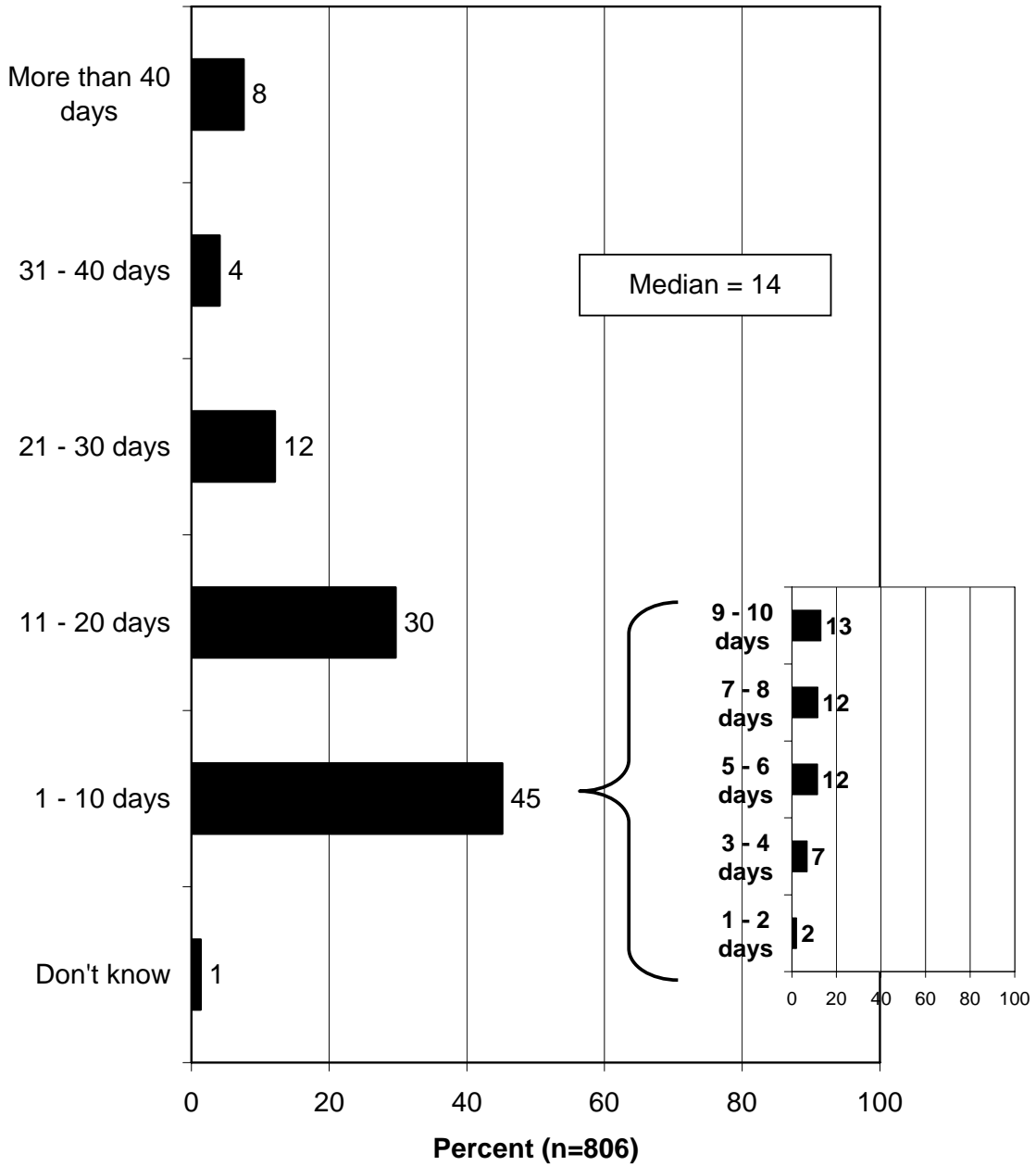
## **SPECIES HUNTED, HUNTING AVIDITY, AND TRENDS IN HUNTING PARTICIPATION**

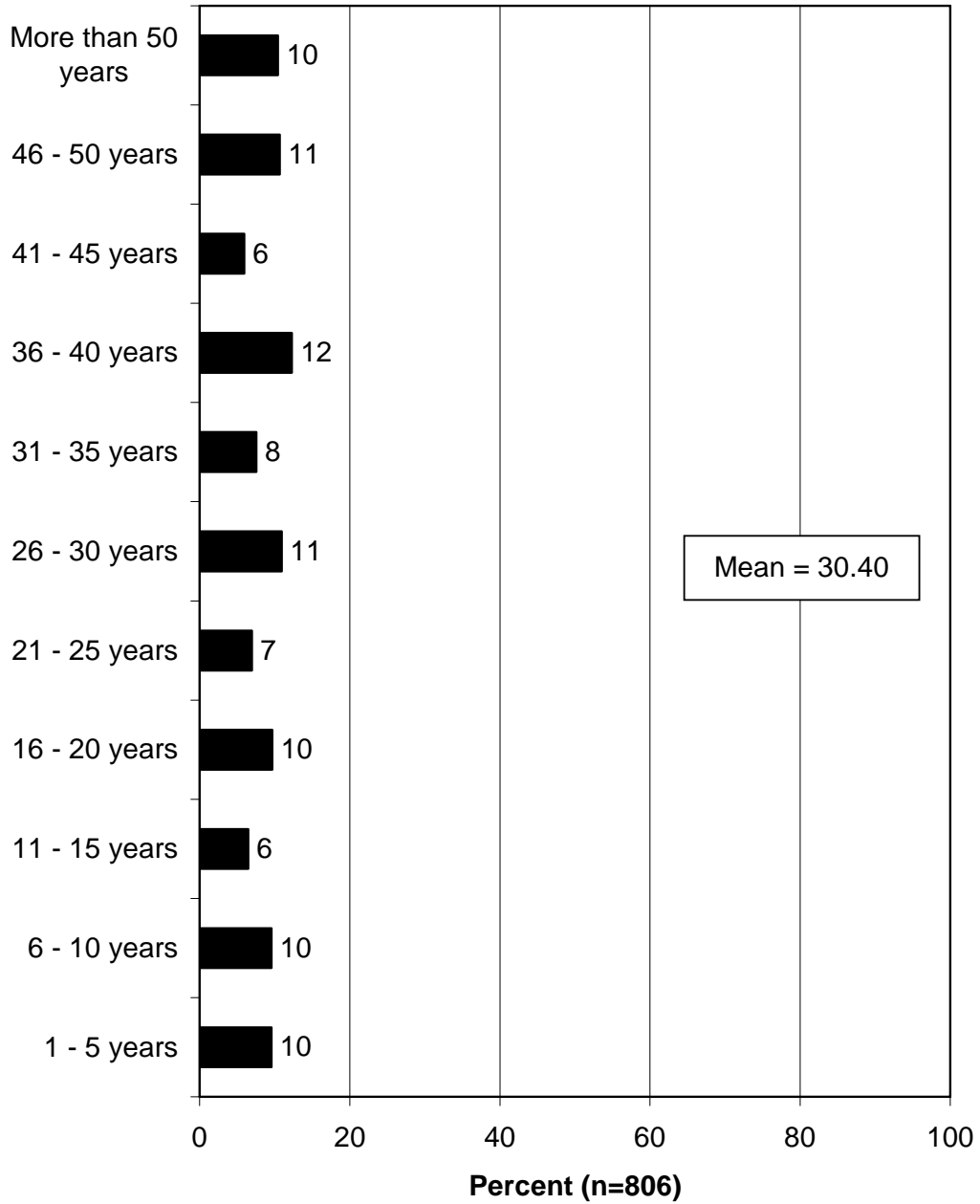
- The majority of Washington State licensed hunters primarily hunted some type of deer (50%) in the past 12 months, followed in popularity by elk (25%), waterfowl (9%), and upland game birds (7%). Note that the question asked respondents to name the *single* species they *primarily* hunt, not all species they hunt.
  - (The 50% who hunted deer consists of the sum of the following: 19% hunted white-tailed deer, 19% hunted mule deer, and 12% hunted black-tailed deer.)
  
- A graph shows the typical number of days that hunters hunt in Washington State annually. The median is 14 days.
  
- Hunters in the survey were asked to indicate how long they have been hunting. Responses are well-distributed among the number of years, as shown in the graph; the mean is 30.4 years.
  
- Hunters in the survey were asked to indicate how many of the past 5 years they had hunted. The large majority of those hunters (80%) are quite avid, having hunted all 5 of the past 5 years.

**Q23. What *single* species did you primarily hunt in Washington in the past 12 months?**

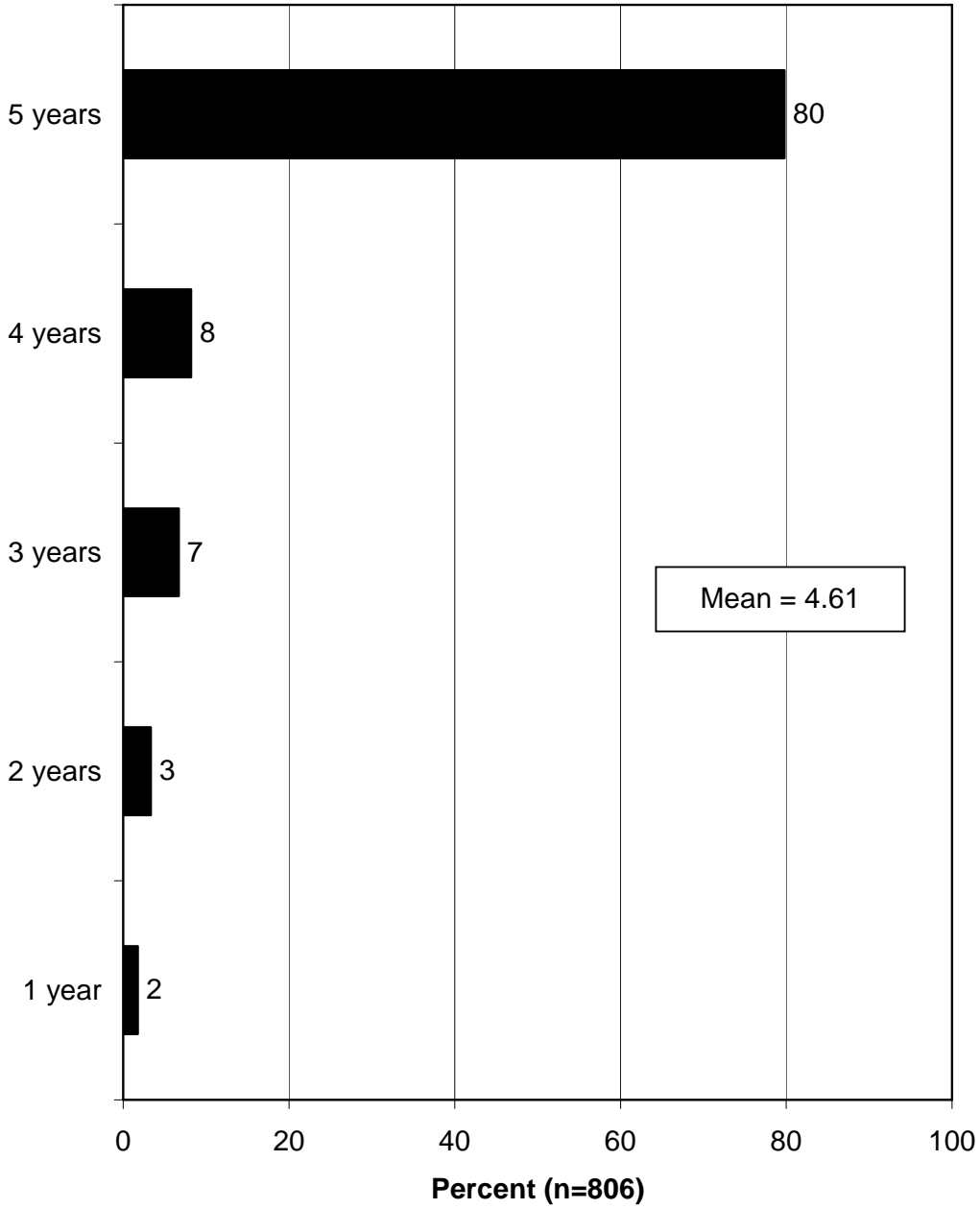


### Q26. About how many days do you usually hunt each year in Washington?



**Q15. How many years have you hunted?**

**Q19. How many of the past 5 years have you hunted in Washington?**



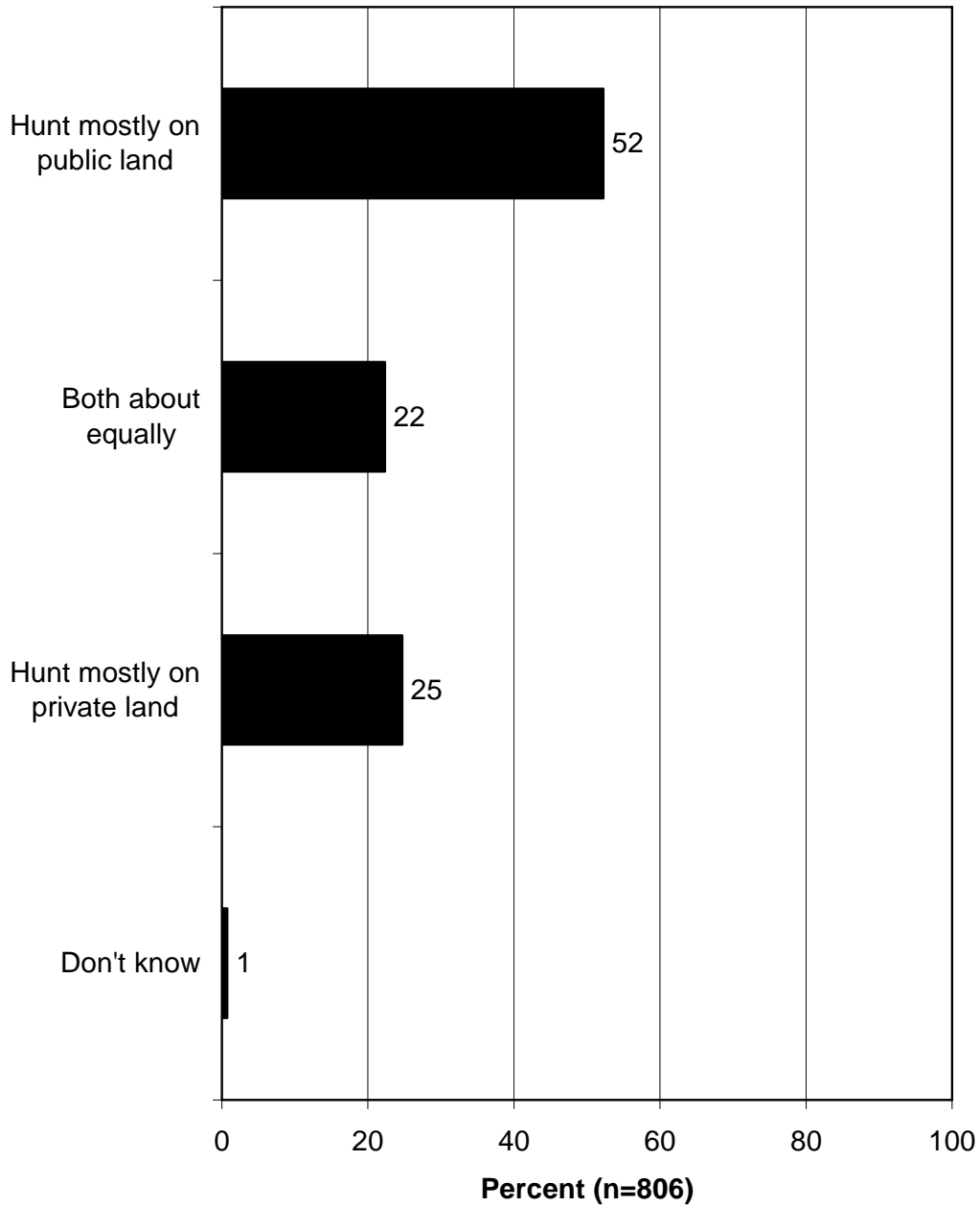
## LOCATIONS OF HUNTING ACTIVITIES

- Hunters in Washington State more often hunt their primary species on public land (52% hunt on public land mostly, and 74% do so at least half the time) than private land (25% hunt on private land mostly, and 47% do so at least half the time).
  - A crosstabulation found that elk hunters have the greatest propensity to hunt mostly on public land, followed by hunters of mule deer, waterfowl, and upland game birds. On the other hand, those with the greatest propensity to hunt mostly on private land are white-tailed deer hunters. Overall, these differences on this question are statistically significant.
  - Two questions asked those who hunt their primary species mostly on private land about the ownership of that land. In looking at the combined results of these two questions, the most popular type of private land for hunting, *among those who hunt mostly on private land*, is private land owned by a friend or family member (46%), followed by corporate land (23%), self-owned land (15%), and land owned by an acquaintance (15%).
  
- Another question has implications regarding how much hunters need to find access to hunting lands. Hunters more commonly say that they mostly hunt their primary species on the same land each year (62%) than say that they hunt it on different lands each year (6%).
  
- In a crosstabulation of hunting on public/private land and hunting on the same/different lands (the questions discussed above), the sample could be divided into 9 groups (as shown in the matrix on the following page), with the largest portion being those who primarily hunt on public/same lands (32.5%), followed by private/same (19.3%). For this analysis, those who answered “don’t know” on either question were excluded. (For readability, the data presented in the matrix below are also shown in a graph, with the size of the bars representing their proportion of the whole sample. A final presentation shows the data in a multi-colored histogram.)

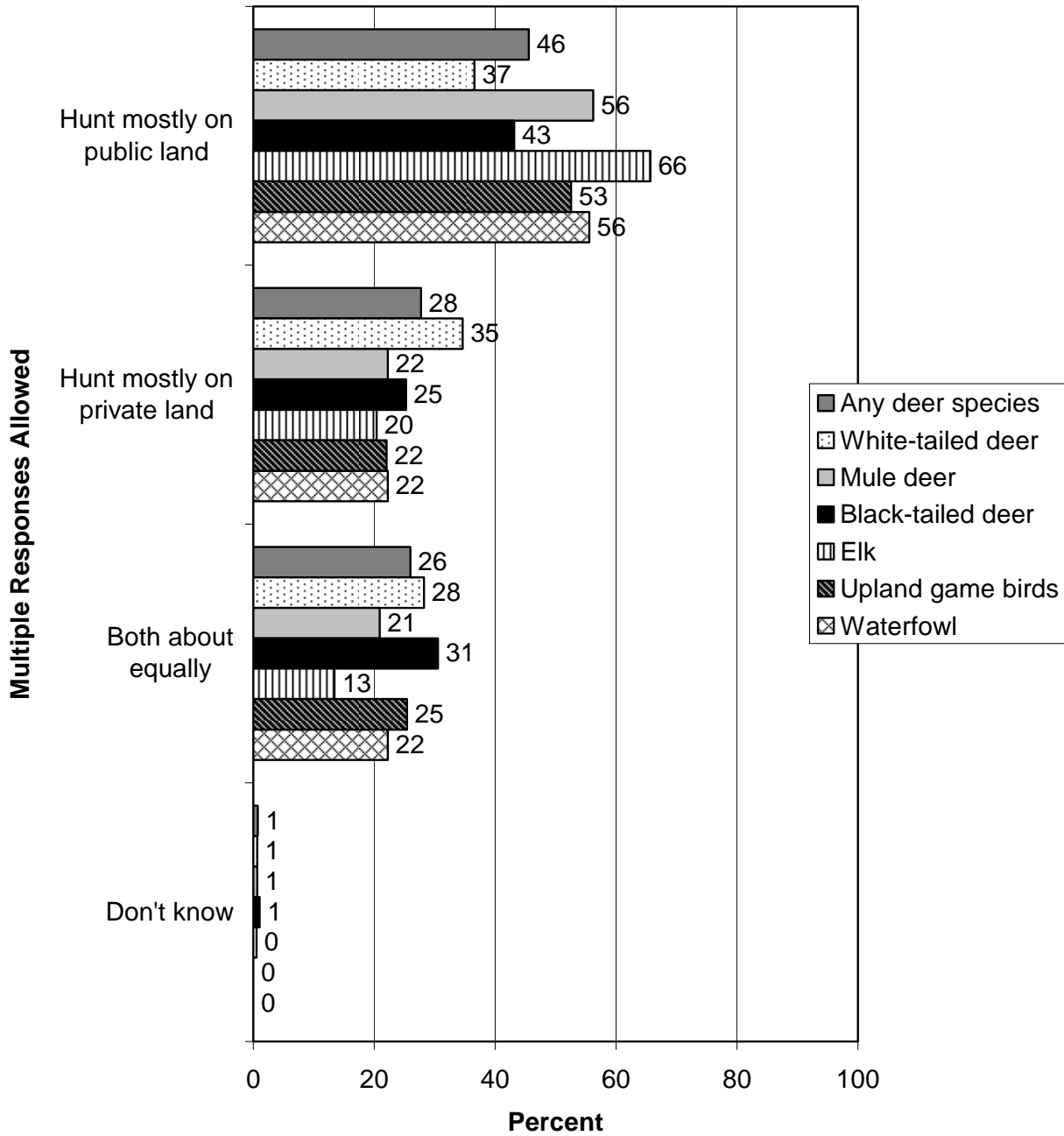
	<b>Hunts mostly on <i>public</i> land (52.6%)</b>	<b>Hunts public and private lands both about <i>equally</i> (22.6%)</b>	<b>Hunts mostly on <i>private</i> land (24.7%)</b>
<b>Hunts mostly on the <i>same</i> land each year (62.4%)</b>	Public/Same 32.5%	Both/Same 10.6%	Private/Same 19.3%
<b>Hunts same and different lands both about <i>equally</i> (31.9%)</b>	Public/Both 16.8%	Both/Both 10.4%	Private/Both 4.6%
<b>Hunts mostly on <i>different</i> lands each year (5.7%)</b>	Public/Different 3.3%	Both/Different 1.6%	Private/Different 0.8%

- The survey asked hunters to indicate how far they typically travel from home to hunt their primary species: 33% travel no more than 30 miles to do so; however, nearly the same percentage (32%) travel more than 100 miles. The median distance is 60 miles.
  - Another question explored the modes of transportation that hunters use to access the land on which they hunt: 89% use a car or truck (by far the top mode), distantly followed by walking (26%) and ATV (6%). Note that hunters could name more than one mode.

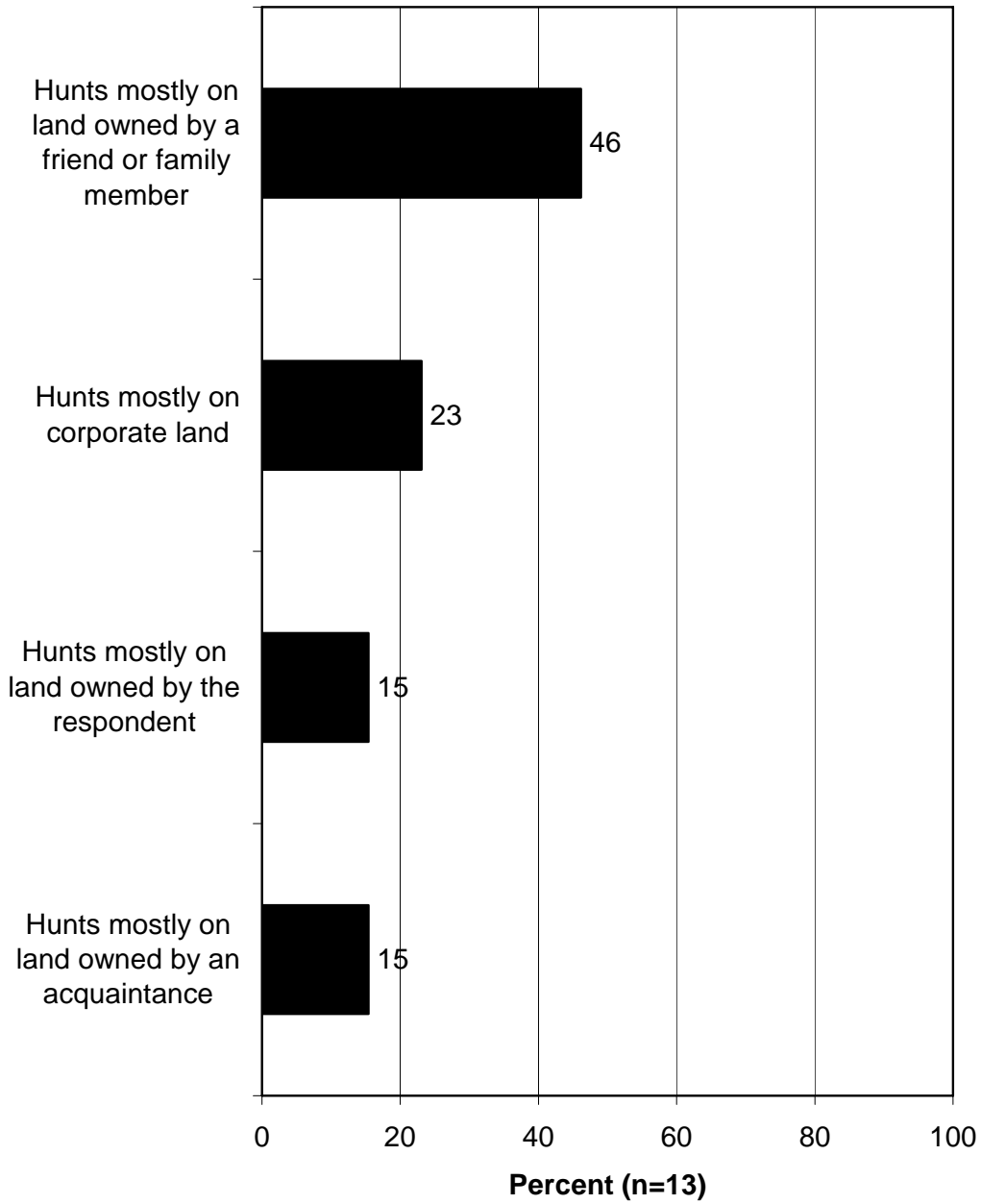
**Q58. For (species) hunting, would you say you hunt mostly on public land, mostly on private land, or on both about equally, in Washington?**



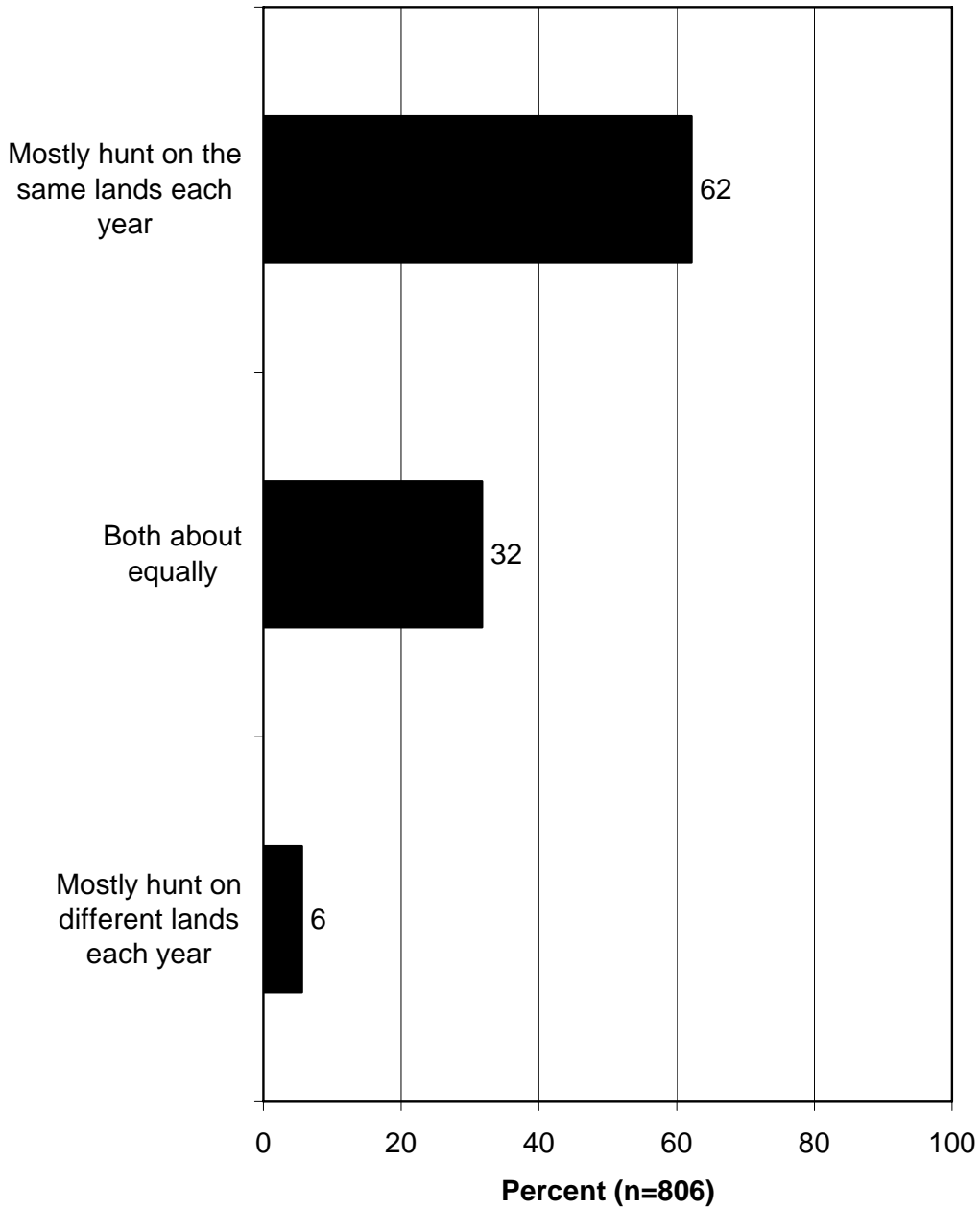
**Q58. For (species) hunting, would you say you hunt mostly on public land, mostly on private land, or on both about equally, in Washington?**



**Q78/79. Hunts mostly on... (Among those who hunted their primary species mostly on private lands.)**

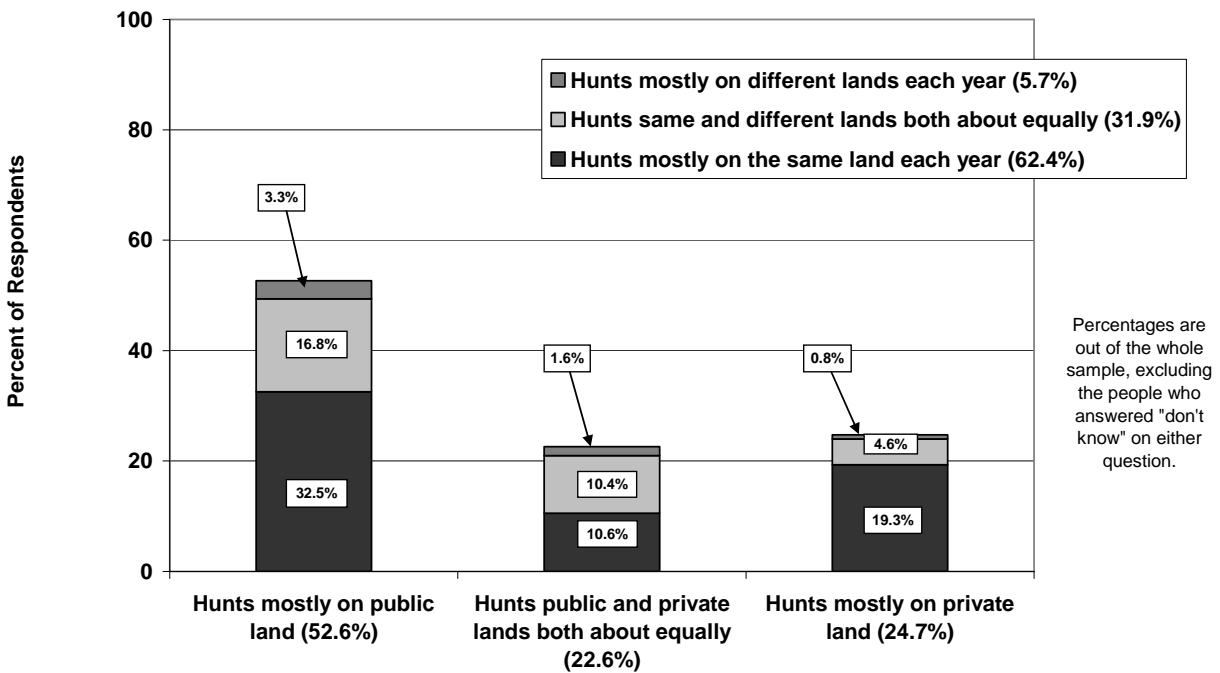


**Q57. When hunting in Washington for (species), do you mostly hunt on the same lands each year, mostly hunt on different lands each year, or both about equally?**



- The graph below shows a combination of Question 57 (hunts on same or different lands) and Question 58 (hunts on public or private lands).

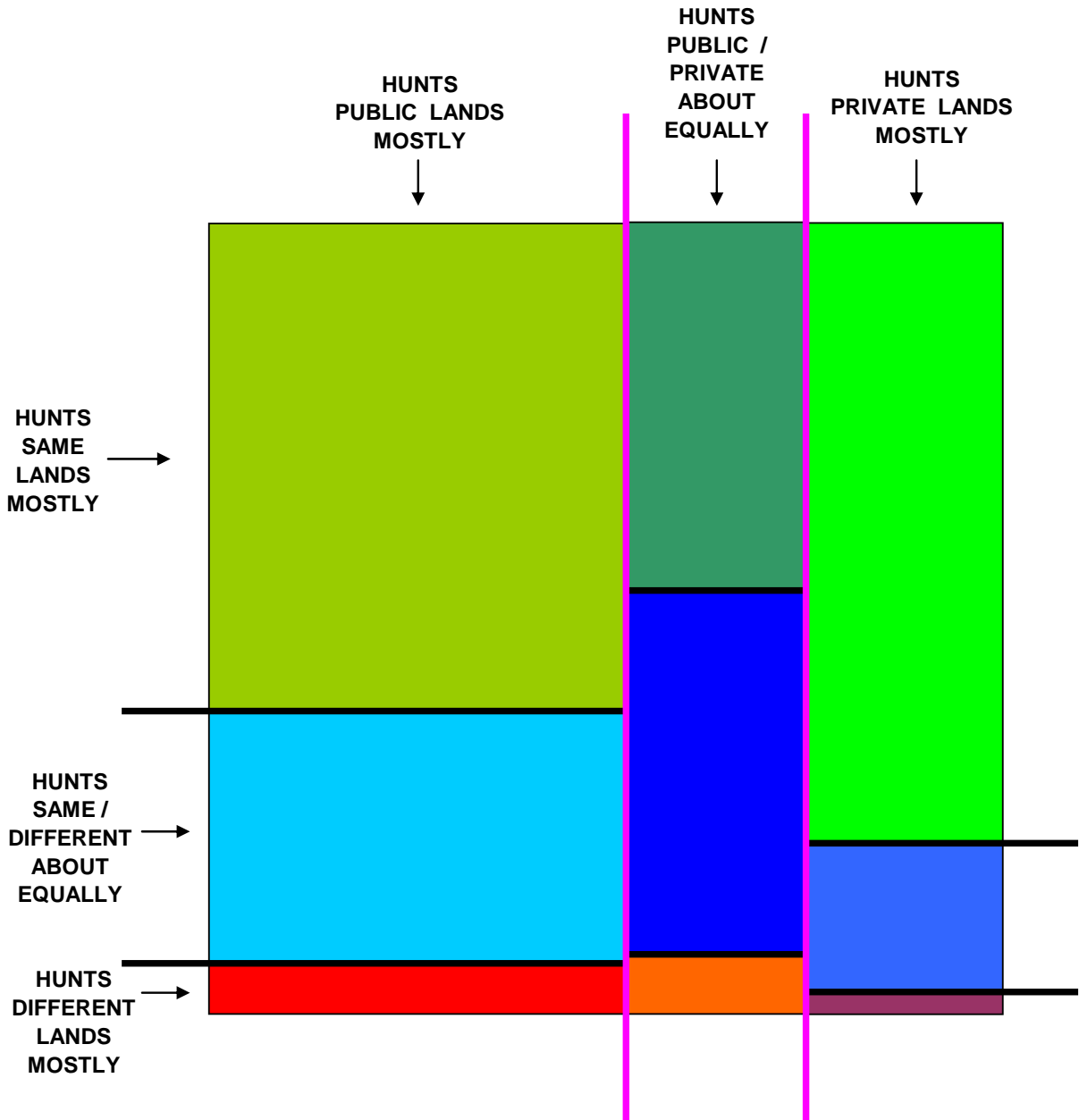
**Q57/58. Hunting on public versus private lands and hunting on same versus different lands.**












The data presented above are also shown on the following page in a histogram. The proportions of the square represent the proportions of hunters who hunt on the various types of land on which hunters go hunting (hunt on public/private lands and hunt on the same/different lands). Note that the histogram is best viewed in color.

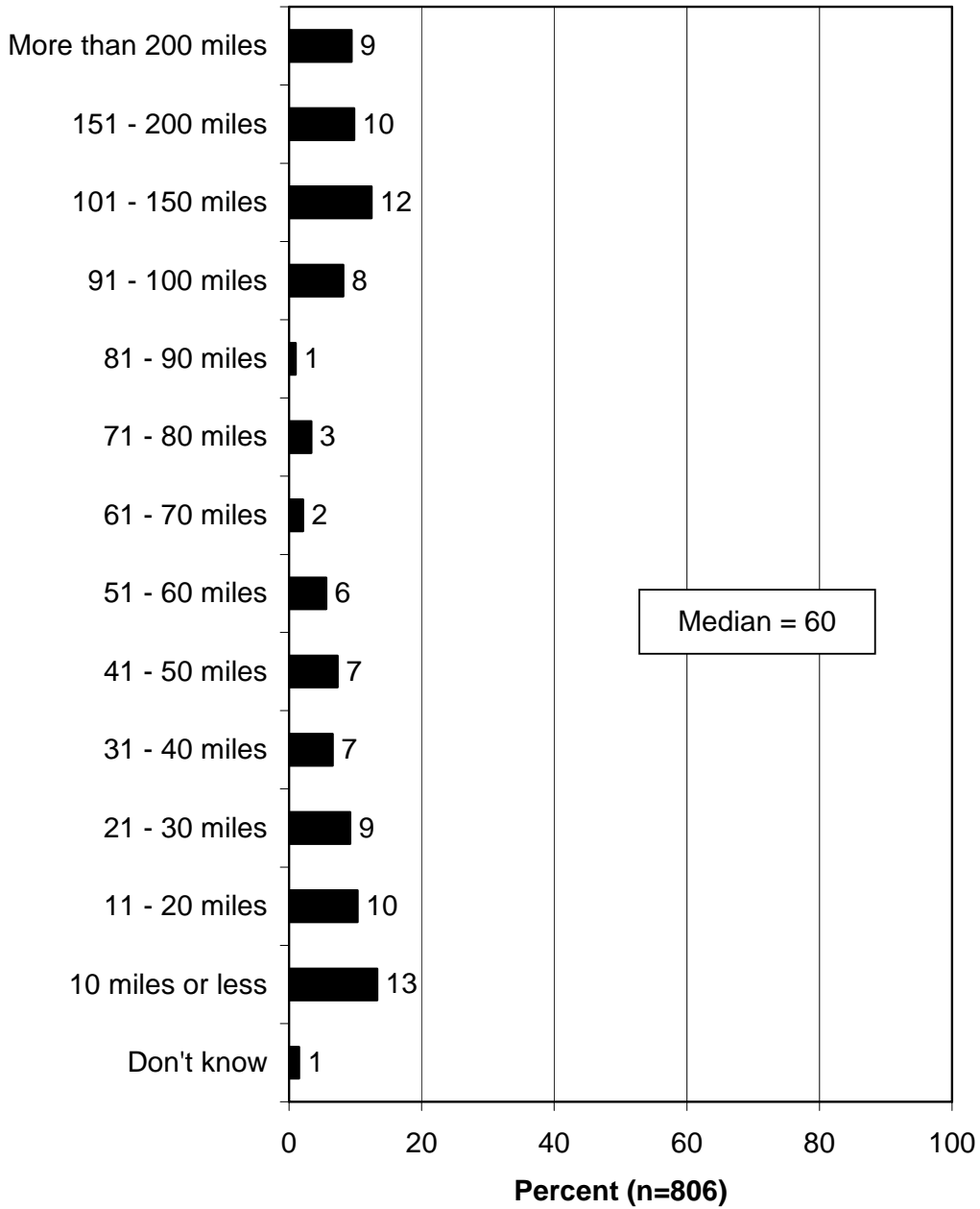
The histogram shows the predominance of hunters hunting on lands with which they are familiar. Public lands also are shown to account for much of the hunters' favored locales.

### Hunting on Public/Private Lands and Same/Different Lands

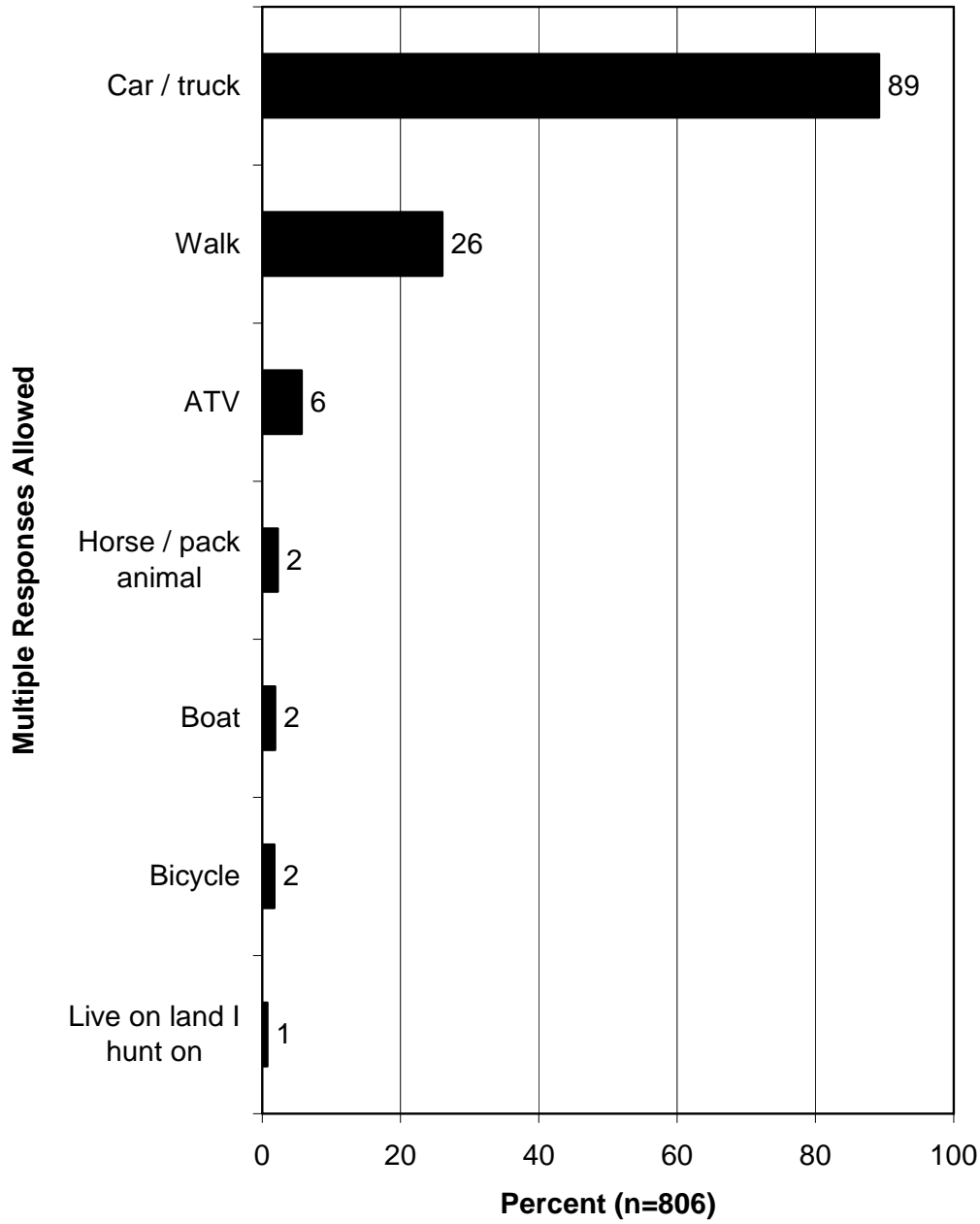


	Public / Same		Both / Same		Private / Same
	Public / Both		Both / Both		Private / Both
	Public / Different		Both / Different		Private / Different

**Q85. How far do you usually travel from home, one way, in miles, to hunt in Washington?**



**Q89. Which modes of transportation do you use to access the land you hunt on?**



## FACTORS CONSIDERED IN CHOOSING LANDS ON WHICH TO HUNT

- The survey asked 11 questions about the importance of various factors in hunters' decisions regarding where to hunt their primary species (shown in Text Box 1 below). For each factor, they were asked if it was *very* important, *somewhat* important, or *not at all* important. Note that the starting point in going through the list in each interview was randomized. The results of the series of questions were then ranked.
  - Four factors stand out markedly more important than the rest in the ranking by the percentage saying the factor is *very* important: that the land is *not* crowded with other sportsmen (73% say this is *very* important), that they are familiar with the land (53%), that the land is easy to access by foot (48%), and that the land is public land (39%).
  - A couple more factors are shown to be important in looking at the ranking by *very* or *somewhat* important in addition to the factors mentioned above. Those additional factors that are important include that the land is easy to access by car/truck, that the land is close to home, and that the land has well-maintained roads.
  - A final graph shows the ranking by the percentage saying the factors are not at all important.

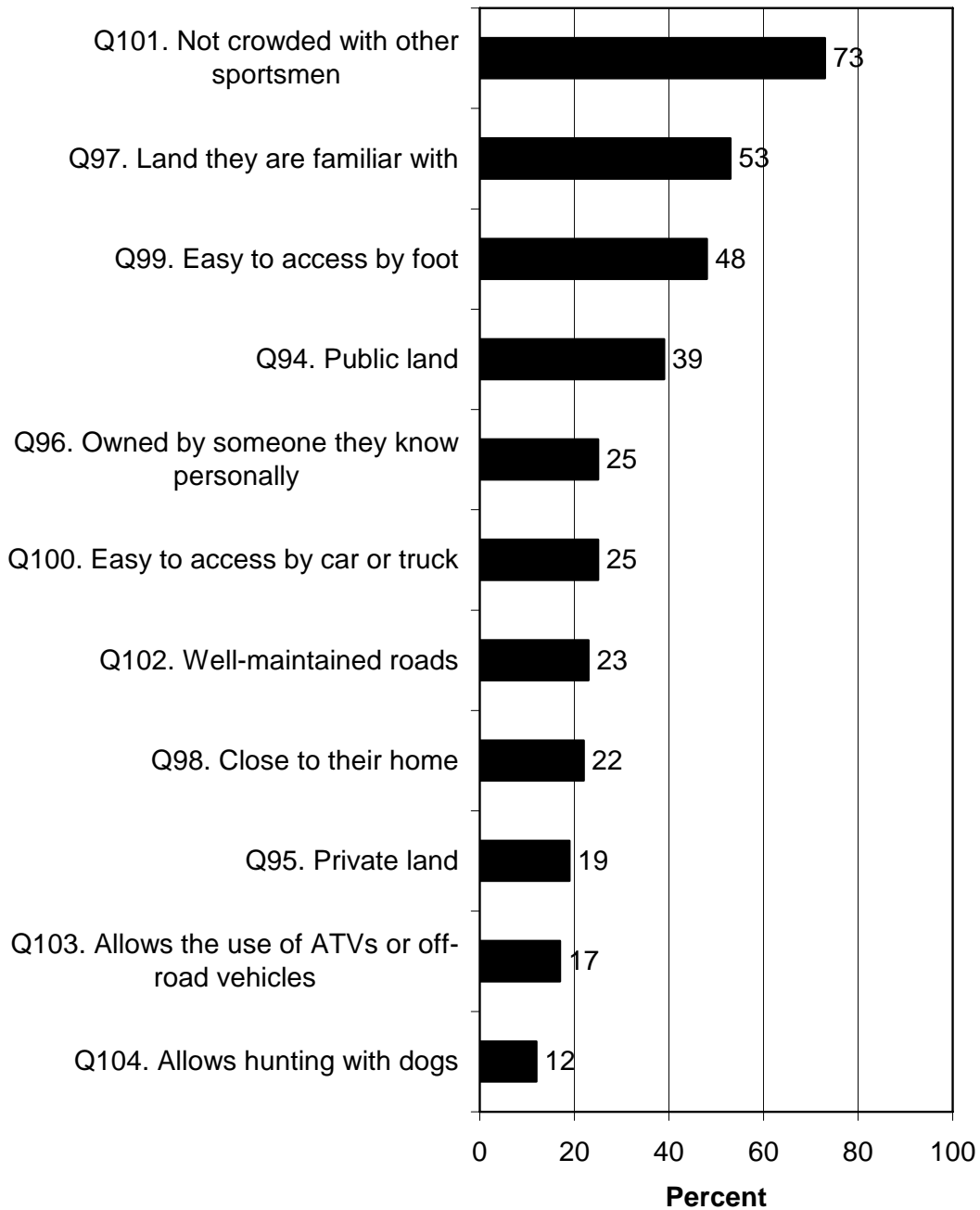
### TEXT BOX 1

#### Factors in hunters' decisions regarding where to hunt that were asked about in the survey:

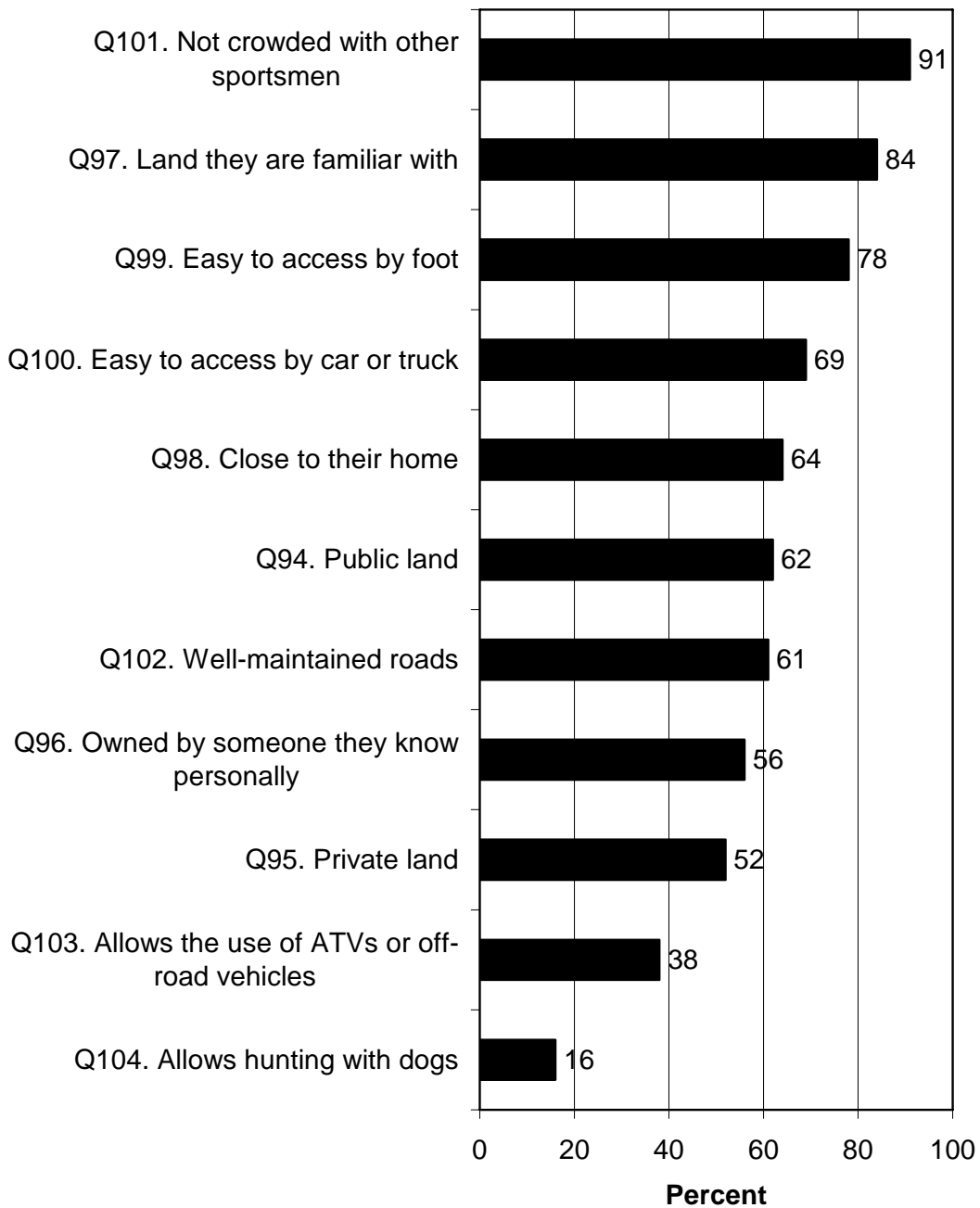
- That the land is public land
- That the land is private land
- That the land is owned by someone the respondent knows personally
- That the land is familiar to the respondent
- That the land is close to the respondent's home
- That the land is easy to access by foot
- That the land is easy to access by car or truck
- That the land is not crowded with other sportsmen
- That the land has well-maintained roads
- That the respondent can use ATVs or off-road vehicles
- That the land allows hunting with dogs

- After the series of questions discussed above, the survey asked hunters if there are any other factors that are important in their decision making regarding where to hunt. Two additional factors were commonly mentioned: that the land has plenty of game/quality habitat and that favorable regulations apply to the particular area.

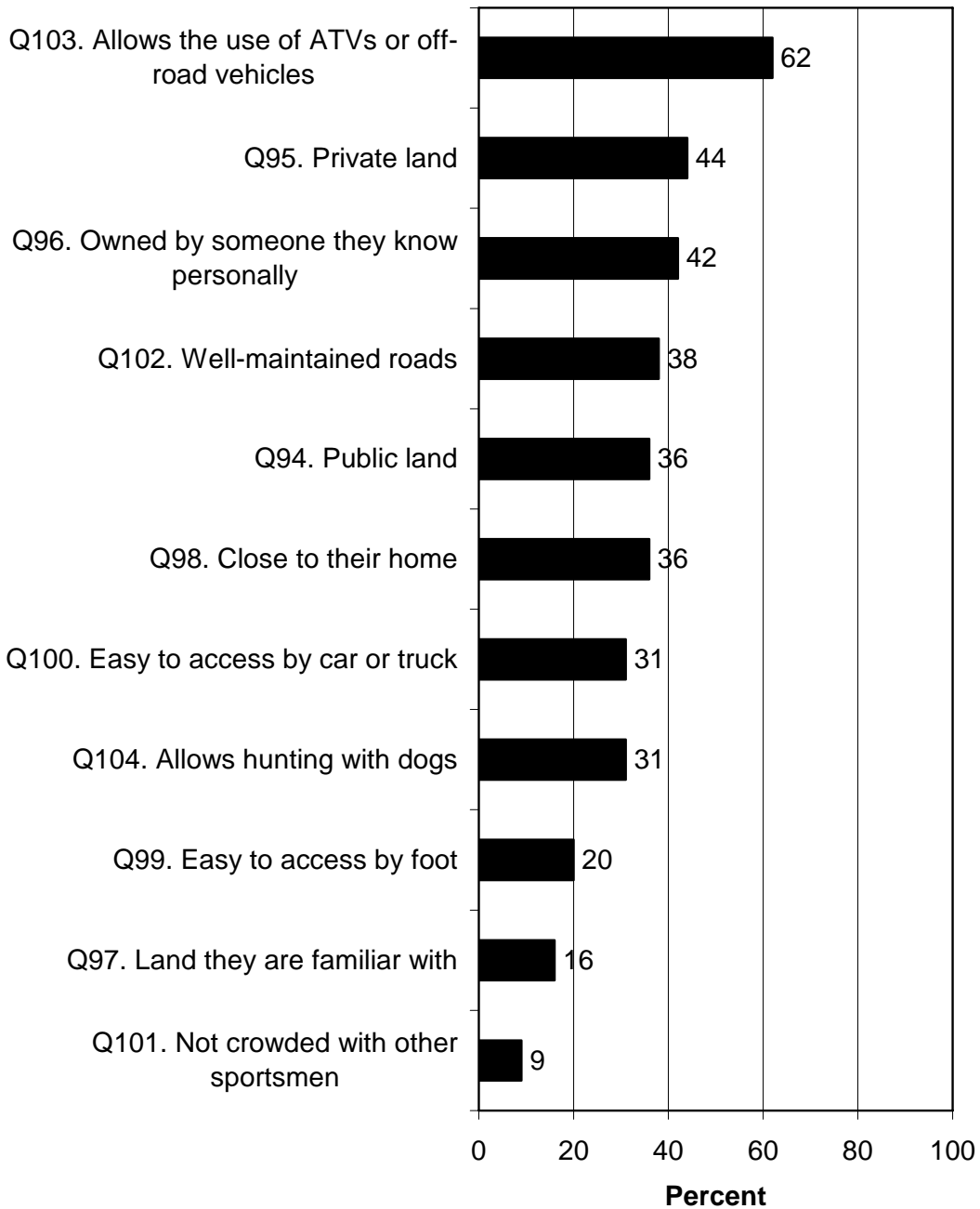
**Percent who indicated that the following are very important when deciding where to hunt their primary species in Washington.**



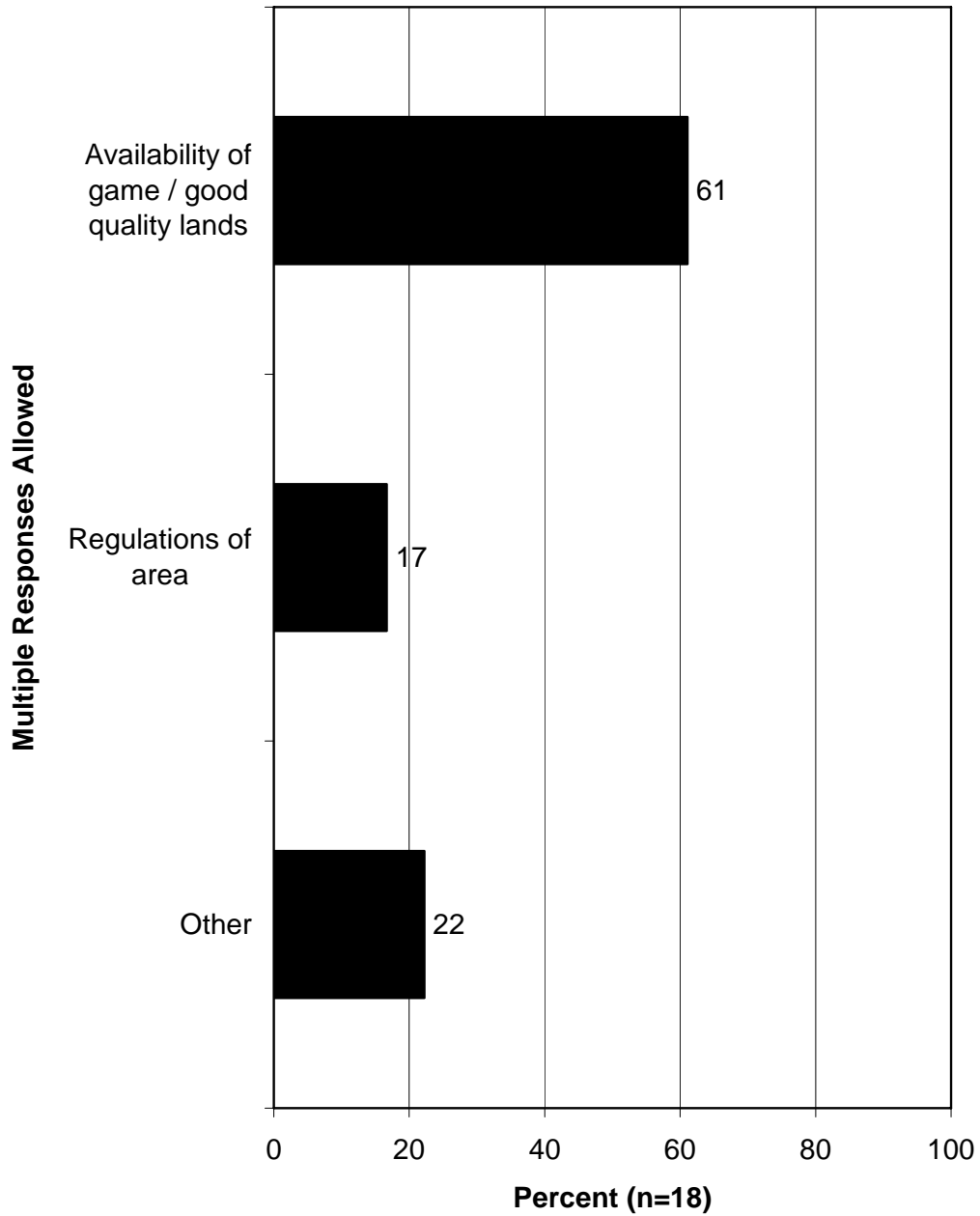
**Percent who indicated that the following are very or somewhat important when deciding where to hunt their primary species in Washington.**



**Percent who indicated that the following are not important at all when deciding where to hunt their primary species in Washington.**



**Q106. What other factors are important to you when deciding where to hunt? (Asked of those who said that there are other factors that are important to them when deciding where to hunt.)**



## CONSTRAINTS TO HUNTING PARTICIPATION

- A direct question asked hunters whether lack of hunting access had caused them *not* to hunt a particular species as much as they would have liked in the past 5 years. A majority of them (58%) agreed that it had done so. In follow-up, the top-named access problems were private land being posted and road closures (the two reasons that were markedly more important than the rest), more distantly followed by huntable land being blocked by private land, public land being closed by an agency, and simply lack of land on which to hunt.
  - A crosstabulation showed that upland game bird hunters were the most likely to agree that lack of access had caused them *not* to hunt any species as much as they would have liked in the past 5 years. (Note that the species that they wanted to hunt but did not hunt is not necessarily an upland game bird; the crosstabulation was run by the primary species they hunted.) Overall, these differences are statistically significant.
  - In follow-up, hunters were asked to name the species that they had not hunted as much as they would have liked because of access problems. The top-named species is deer (46% among those who agreed to the above question), closely followed by elk (45%), and then distantly followed by upland game birds (20%), waterfowl (13%), black bear (9%), and wild turkey (6%). Note that hunters could name more than one species on this question.
  
- The survey asked a series of 25 questions about possible hunting access constraints (shown in Text Box 2 on the following page). For each possible constraint, the survey asked hunters if it had been, over the past 5 years, a *major* problem, a *moderate* problem, a *minor* problem, or *not at all* a problem. The starting point in going through the list in each interview was randomized. The results of the series of questions were then ranked.
  - The potential constraints that had the highest percentage of hunters saying that the constraint was a *major* problem were the cost of gas (37%), finding previously open private land posted (28%), not being able to find the landowner to ask permission (26%), not being sure of the boundaries of huntable land (24%), finding previously open private land closed because a club now leases it (24%), and private land blocking access to public land for hunting (24%). All of these had about a quarter or more of respondents saying it was a *major* problem.

- A ranking was also produced of the percentage giving a rating of *major*, *moderate*, or *minor* problem. The six problems above were again at or near the top, along with finding previously open land sold and posted by the new landowner, housing and other developments making land not huntable, less land to hunt on because of land-use changes, less land on which to hunt because of development, and road closures. All of these had approximately half or more saying it was a *major*, *moderate*, or *minor* problem, as shown on the graph.
- A third graph in this series is shown consisting of the ranking by the percentage saying the constraint was not a problem at all.

#### **TEXT BOX 2**

##### **Possible constraints to hunting access that were asked about in the survey:**

Road closures  
 Less land on which to hunt  
 Less land on which to hunt because the land use has changed  
 Less land on which to hunt due to private land ownership changes  
 Not having enough information about where to hunt  
 The information about where to hunt being inaccurate  
 Not having ATV access in general  
 Not being able to retrieve the hunt harvest because of ATV restrictions  
 Having maps that show huntable land but being unable to locate that land on the ground  
 Being unable to locate a road or other access route to huntable land  
 Not being sure of the boundaries of huntable land  
 Having to travel too far to hunt  
 Being denied permission to hunt on somebody else's land  
 Not being able to find the landowner to ask permission  
 Finding previously open private land posted or closed by the landowner  
 Finding previously open private land sold and posted or closed by the new landowner  
 Finding previously open private land closed because a club has now leased it  
 Private land blocking access to public land for hunting  
 Poor maintenance of roads or trails  
 The cost of gas  
 Not being able to find a good place to park the vehicle  
 Not being able to find a place to launch a boat  
 Housing or other development making land not huntable  
 Information from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife being out of date  
 Access or leasing fees being expensive

- A follow-up question to one of the questions within the aforementioned series asked those who indicated that road closures had been a problem to indicate how the road had been closed. Most commonly, the road was closed by a gate, although a few indicated that the

road was closed by a “No trespassing” sign posted by a landowner or was closed by lack of maintenance (e.g., downed trees not cut out of the way, gullies).

- Most commonly, the road closures were perceived to be permanent rather than seasonal/temporary.
  - Another follow-up question asked for the location/type of the closed road. Most commonly, the roads were public—National Forest roads, BLM roads, or other public roads.
- Another follow-up question within the above series was asked of those who indicated that not being able to retrieve their harvest because of ATV restrictions had been a problem (20% indicated that this was a problem). The follow-up question asked if they agreed or disagreed that not being able to retrieve game with an ATV had caused them to hunt less than they would otherwise have liked to do, and 37% agree (7% of hunters overall), while 63% disagree. This suggests that ATV restrictions are *not* an important problem to the overwhelming majority of hunters, as only 20% indicated that ATV restrictions on retrieving game had been a problem, and, further, only 7% of hunters hunted less than they would otherwise because of ATV restrictions.
- A final follow-up question within the above series was asked of those who indicated that private land blocking access to public land had been a problem. The follow-up question asked how much of a problem was *intentional* blocking of public land by a private landowner, and 88% of those respondents indicated that private landowners *intentionally* blocking access was a problem.
- After the above series of questions, the survey then presented hunters a list of 16 problems with actions hunters may have had to take because of the problem (e.g., leaving a hunt area because of crowding from other recreationists). The list of problems is shown in Text Box 3 on the following page. For each possible problem, the survey asked hunters if it had been,

over the past 5 years, a *major* problem, a *moderate* problem, a *minor* problem, or *not at all* a problem. The results of the series of questions were then ranked.

- In looking at the ranking by the percentage saying the problem was *major*, *moderate*, or *minor*, the top problems are leaving an area because of crowding from other hunters (71%), leaving an area because the respondent felt unsafe because of other hunters (51%), leaving an area because of crowding from other recreationists (46%), not going on a hunt or changing locations because of access problems (44%), leaving an area because of the irresponsible behavior of other hunters (41%), and being confused by a state agency map that was hard to follow (37%)—all with at least one-third saying it had been a problem. As a whole, the results suggest that access itself is not as great a problem as is access to *uncrowded* lands—four of the top six problems relate to other people being on the land on which the hunter wanted to hunt.
- Also shown is the graph in this series showing the ranking by the percentage saying the given item had been a *major* problem, as well as the ranking by the percentage saying the given item had been *not* a problem at all.

### TEXT BOX 3

#### Possible problems regarding hunting access that were asked about in the survey:

Not going on a hunt or changing locations because of access problems  
 Not going on a hunt or changing locations because the respondent felt that a leasing fee was too expensive  
 Not going on a hunt or changing locations because map information was wrong  
 Not going on a hunt or changing locations because access for those with disabilities was not available  
 Leaving an area because of crowding from other hunters  
 Leaving an area because of crowding from other recreationists  
 Leaving an area because respondent felt unsafe because of other hunters  
 Leaving an area because of the irresponsible behavior of other hunters  
 Not being sure whether he/she was on private or public land  
 Not being sure whose land he/she was on  
 Not hunting somewhere because of ATV restrictions  
 Not hunting somewhere because ATV use is allowed or not restricted  
 Being in an area where he/she was not sure which hunting regulations applied  
 Being confused by a state agency map that was hard to follow  
 Discontinuing a hunting club membership because he/she felt the fees were too expensive  
 Trying to join a hunting club that was already full

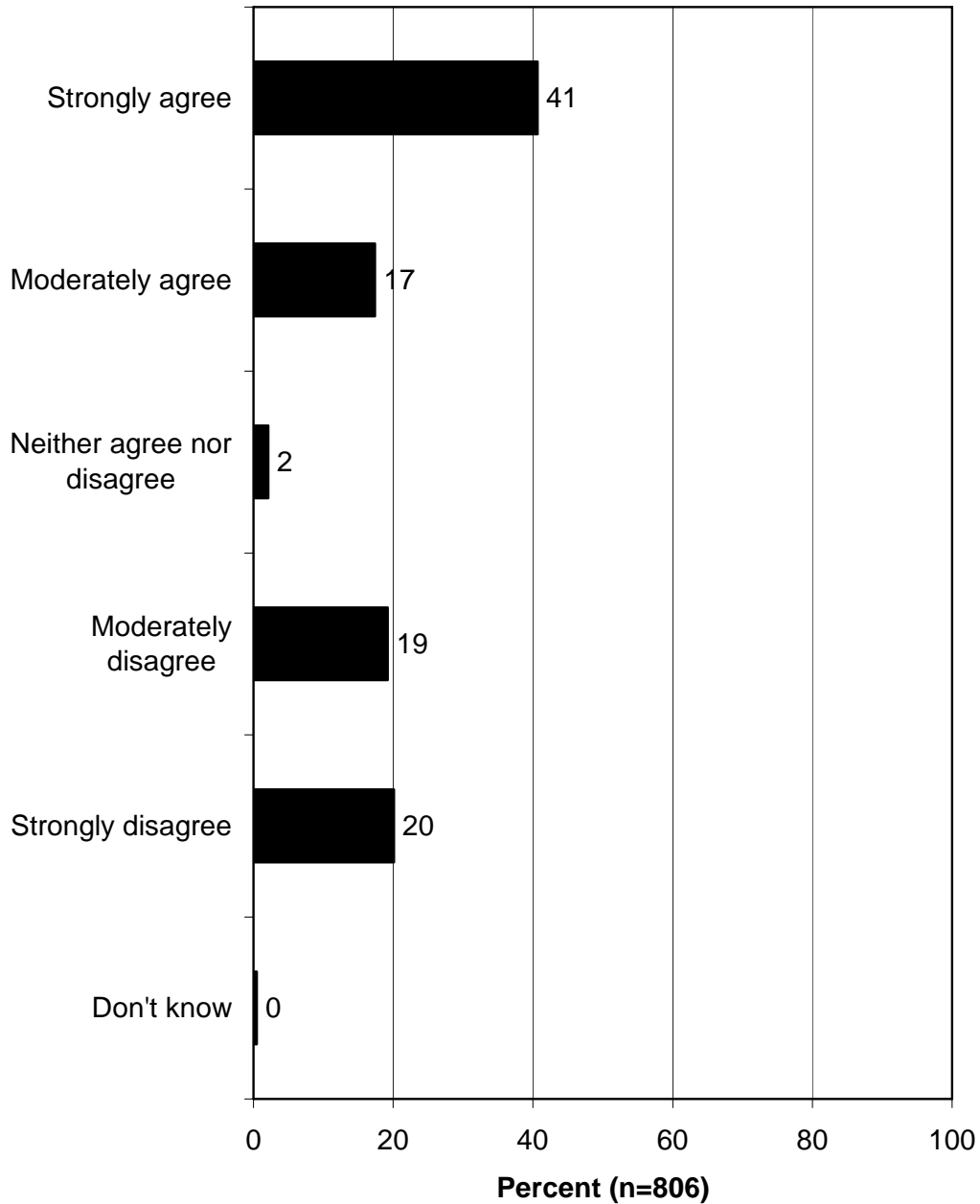
- The survey asked hunters a series of 10 questions about factors that may or may not influence access to hunting land in Washington in general, regardless of whether their own participation is affected by it (shown in Text Box 4 below). For each factor, the survey asked hunters if they think it is a *major* problem, a *moderate* problem, a *minor* problem, or *not at all* a problem. The starting point in going through the list in each interview was randomized. The results of the series of questions were then ranked.
- In looking at the ranking by the percentages saying the factor is a *major*, a *moderate*, or a *minor* problem, 6 of the 10 factors have a majority saying it is a problem: housing and commercial development (69%), poor management or allocation of uses of public land (62%), public or private land tracts being broken up when sold or leased (61%), private land posted or closed because the landowner is specifically concerned about liability (57%), lack of or unclear signs marking public hunting lands (52%), and closures of public land by government agencies (51%).
  - Also shown is the graph in this series showing the ranking by the percentage saying the given factor is a *major* problem, as well as the ranking by the percentage saying the given factor is *not* a problem at all.

**TEXT BOX 4****Factors that may or may not influence hunting access that were asked about in the survey:**

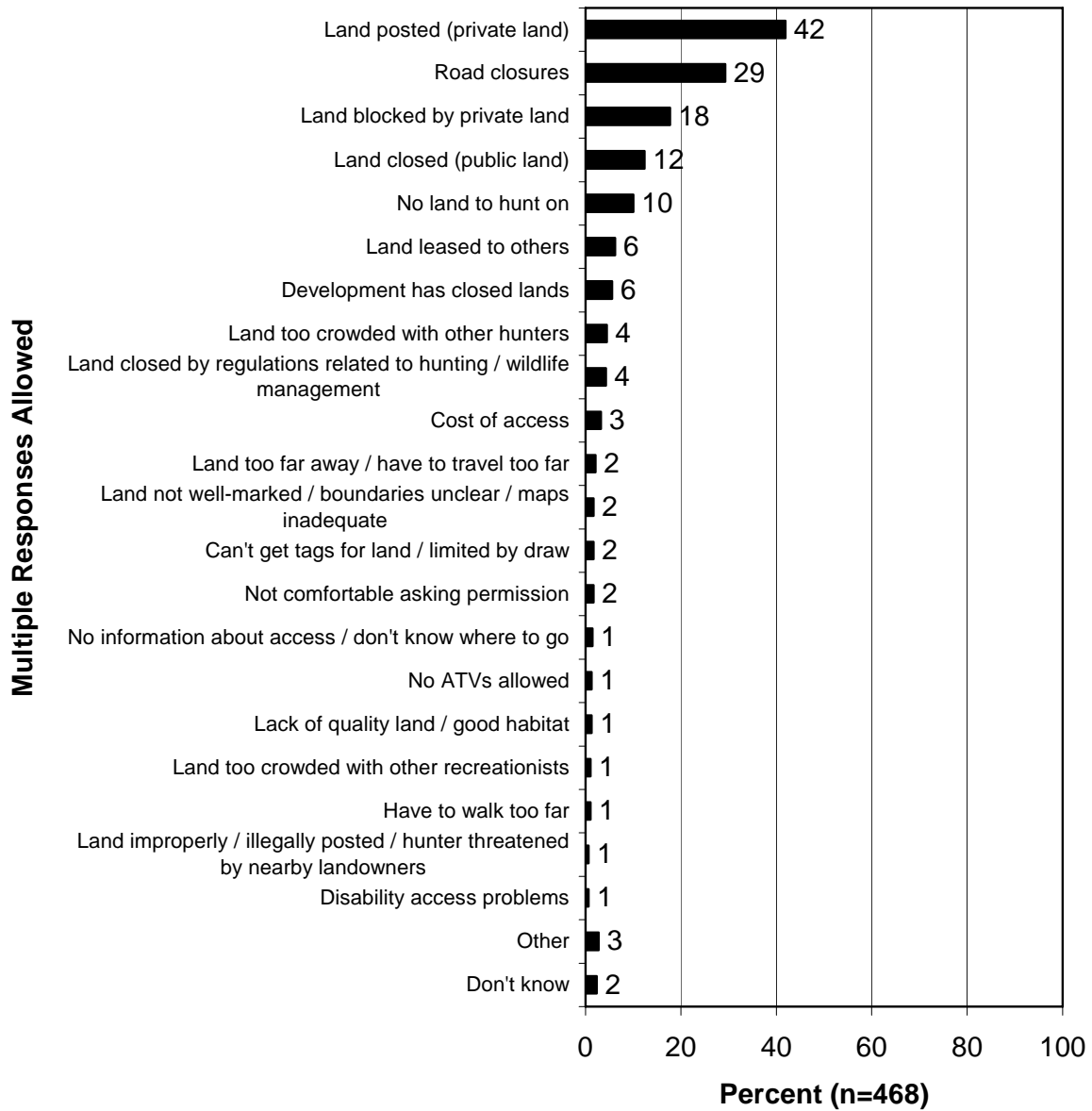
Poor management or allocation of uses of public land  
Lack of or unclear signs marking public hunting lands  
Restrictions on public land  
Closures of public land by government agencies  
Not enough access to public lands for those with disabilities  
Housing and commercial development  
Gas and oil extraction on public lands  
Public or private land tracts being broken up when sold or leased  
Private land posted or closed because the landowner is specifically concerned about liability  
Management of land for purposes other than hunting, such as timber cutting

- When asked in an open-ended question if there were any things that had taken away from their enjoyment of hunting in Washington, even if those things did not prevent them from actually going, hunters most commonly named some type of access problem (28%) and/or a regulation-related answer, such as season timing (22%). Note that the graph breaks down the “access-related problems” category into specific access problems as subsets of access-related problems overall. Primary among those access problems are crowding from other hunters, crowding in general, road closures, and the posting of private land.

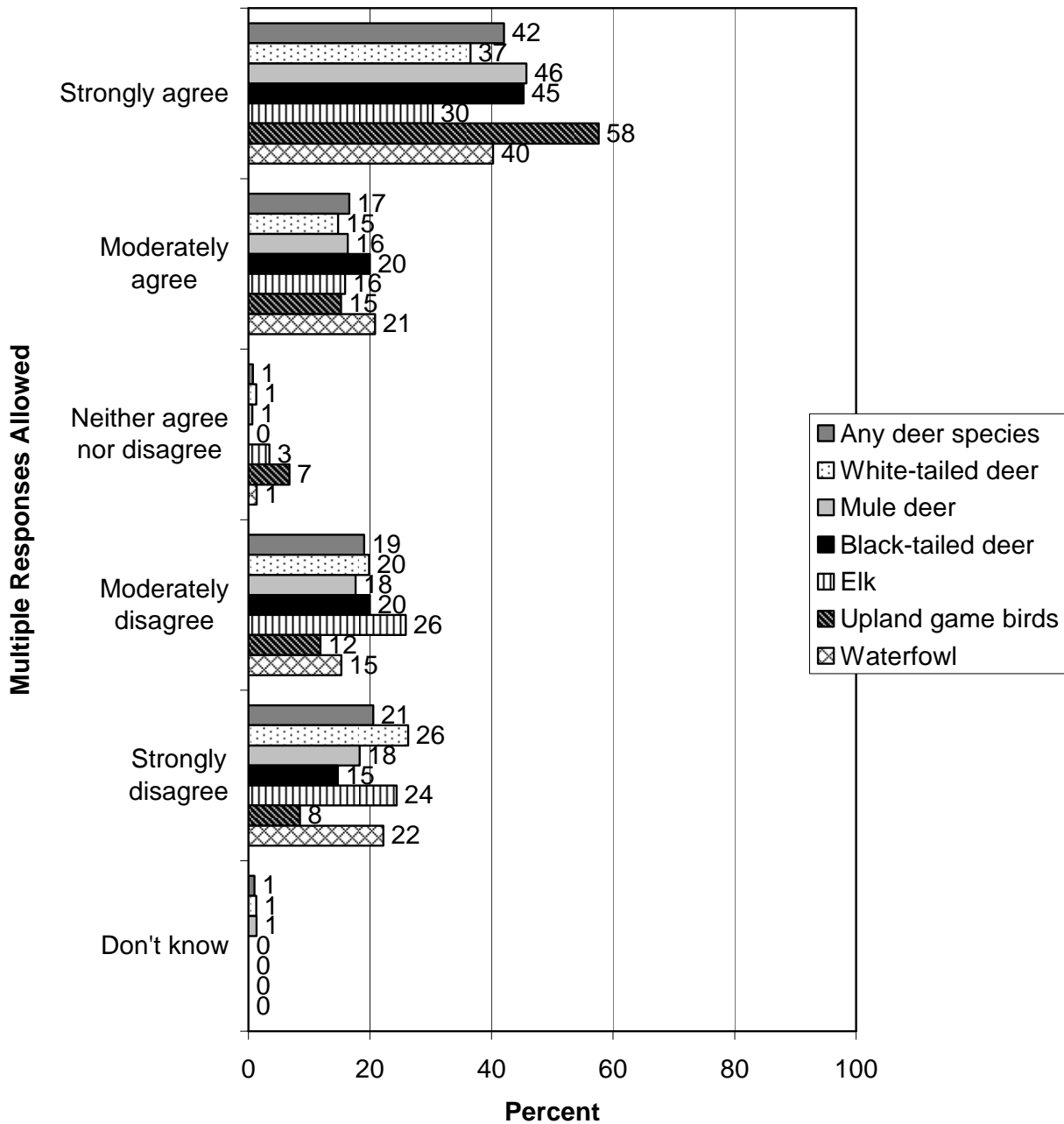
**Q40. Do you agree or disagree that a lack of access to hunting lands in Washington has caused you to not hunt any species as much as you would have liked in the past 5 years?**



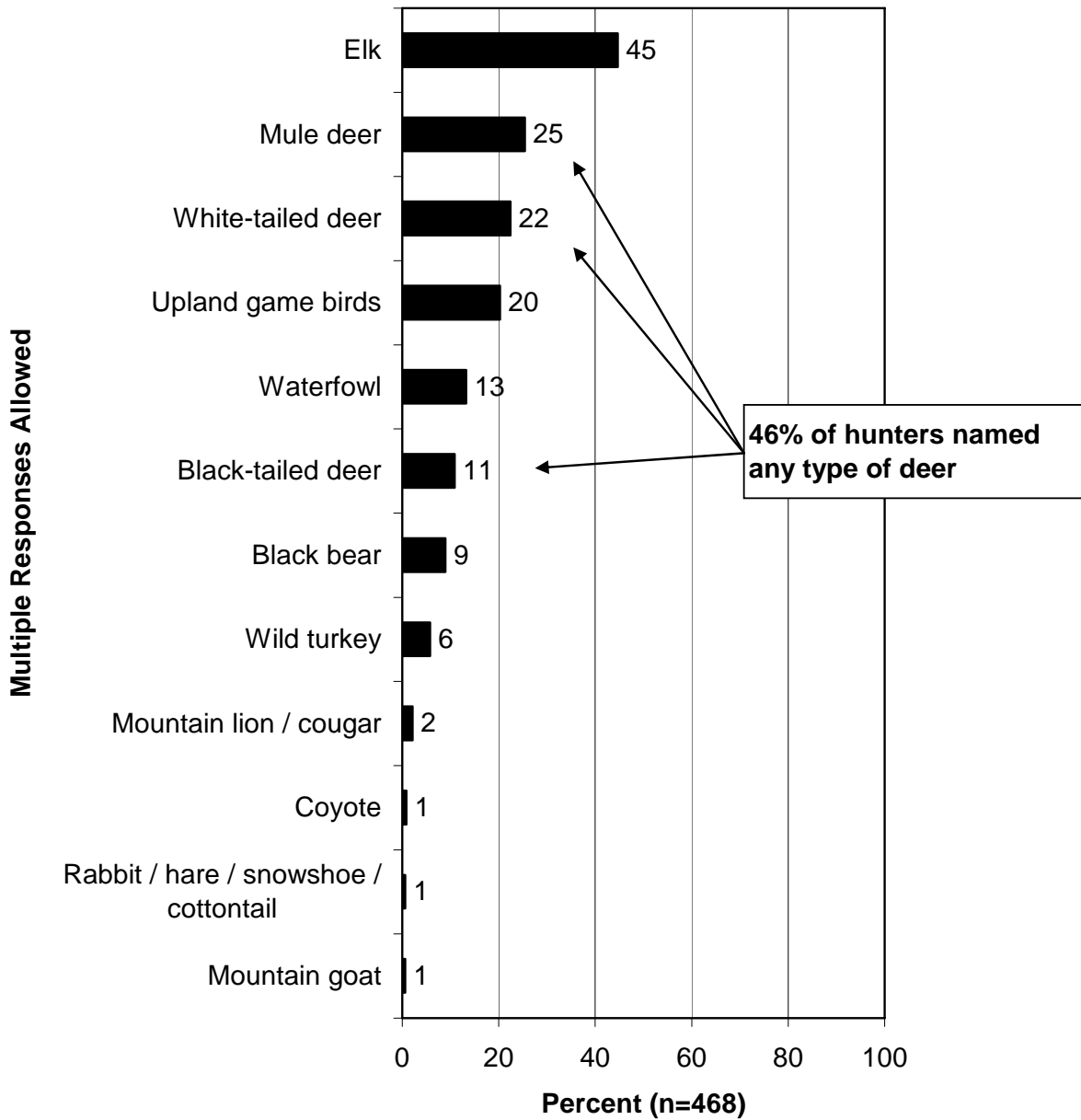
**Q48. What are the specific access problems that have caused you not to hunt this/these species as much as you would have liked? (Asked of those who agree that lack of access to hunting lands in Washington has caused them not to hunt a species as much as they would have liked in the past 5 years.)**



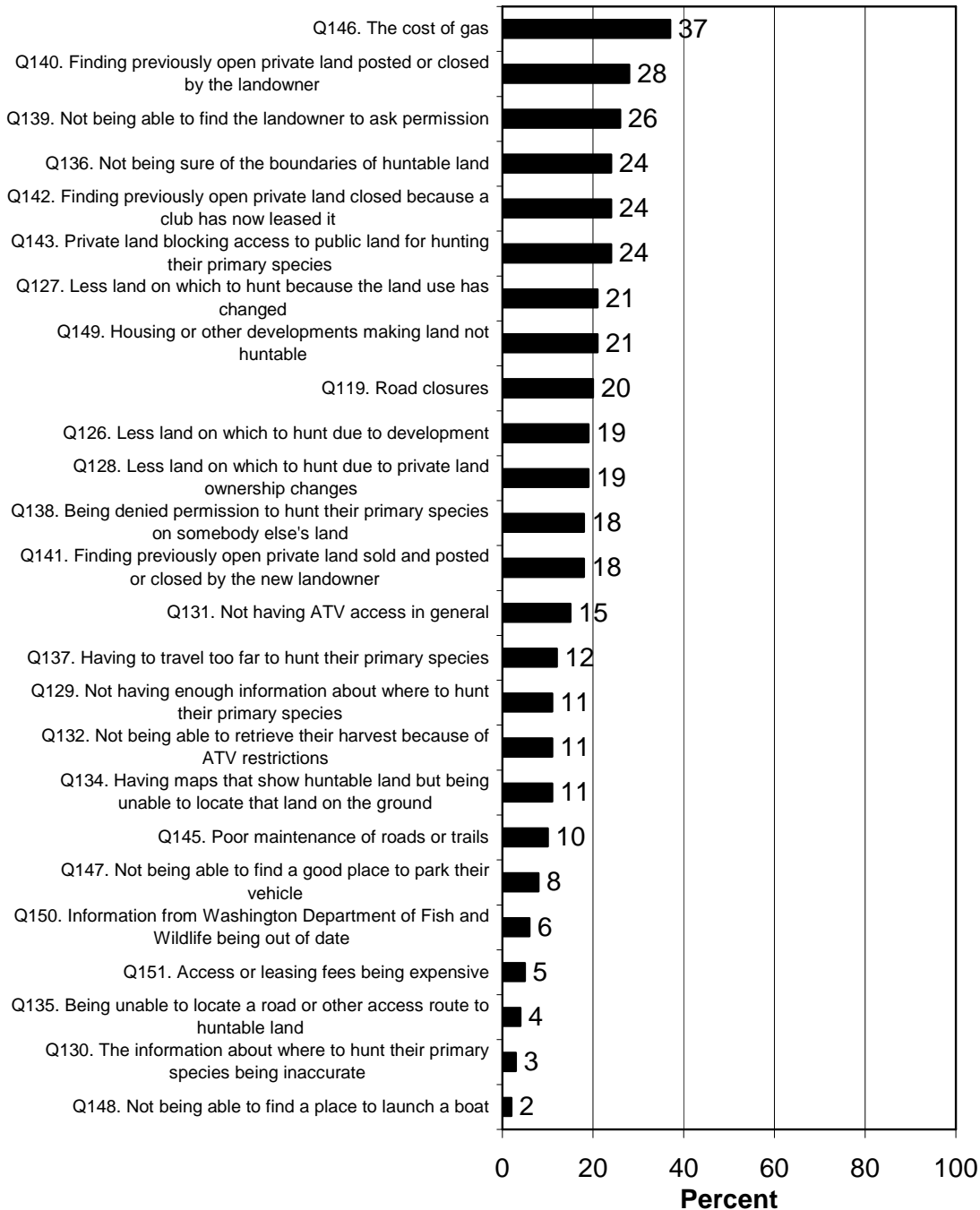
**Q40. Do you agree or disagree that a lack of access to hunting lands in Washington has caused you to not hunt any species as much as you would have liked in the past 5 years?**



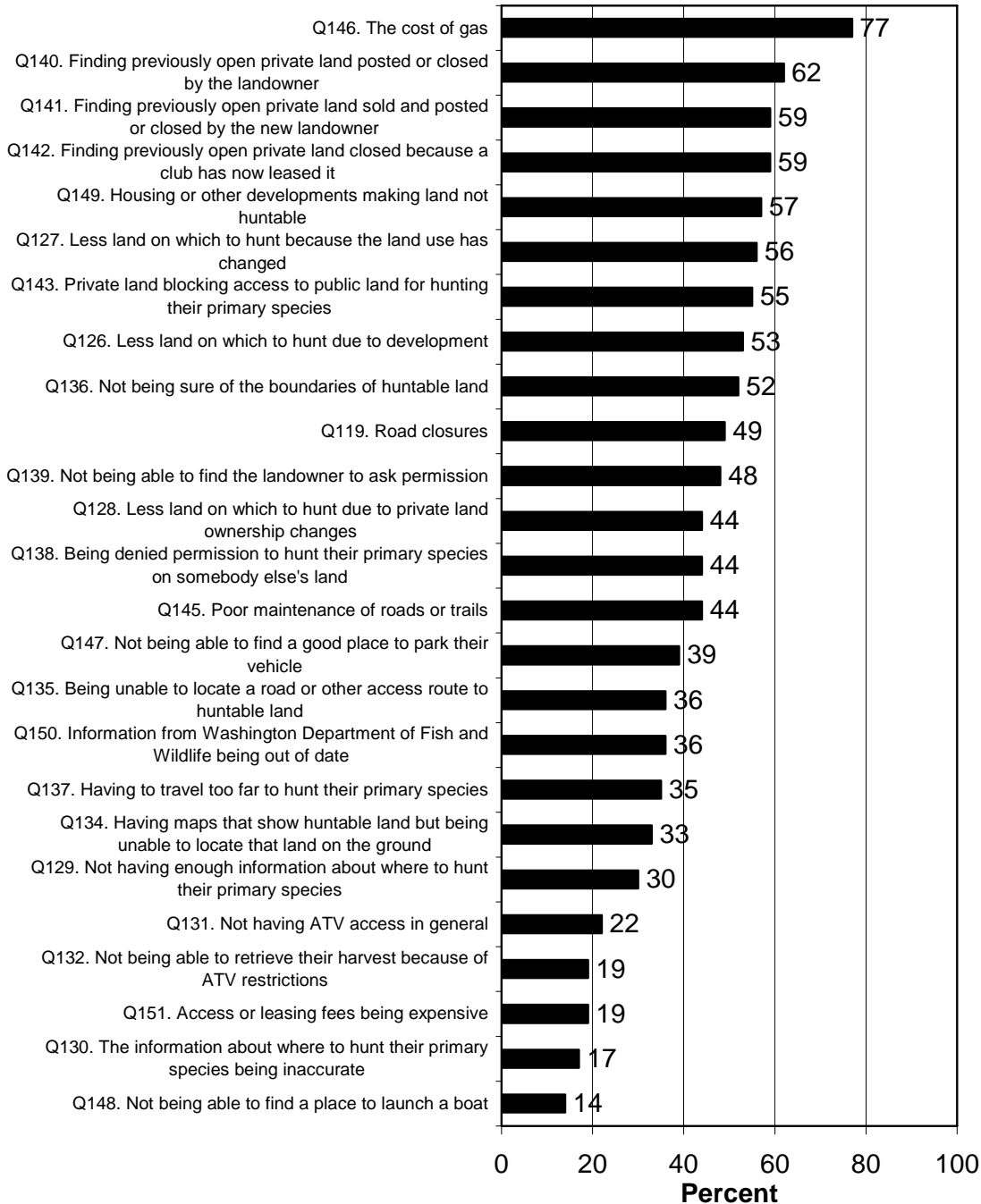
**Q43. What species have you not hunted as much as you would have liked as a result of access problems? (Asked of those who agree that lack of access to hunting lands in Washington has caused them not to hunt a species as much as they would have liked in the past 5 years.)**



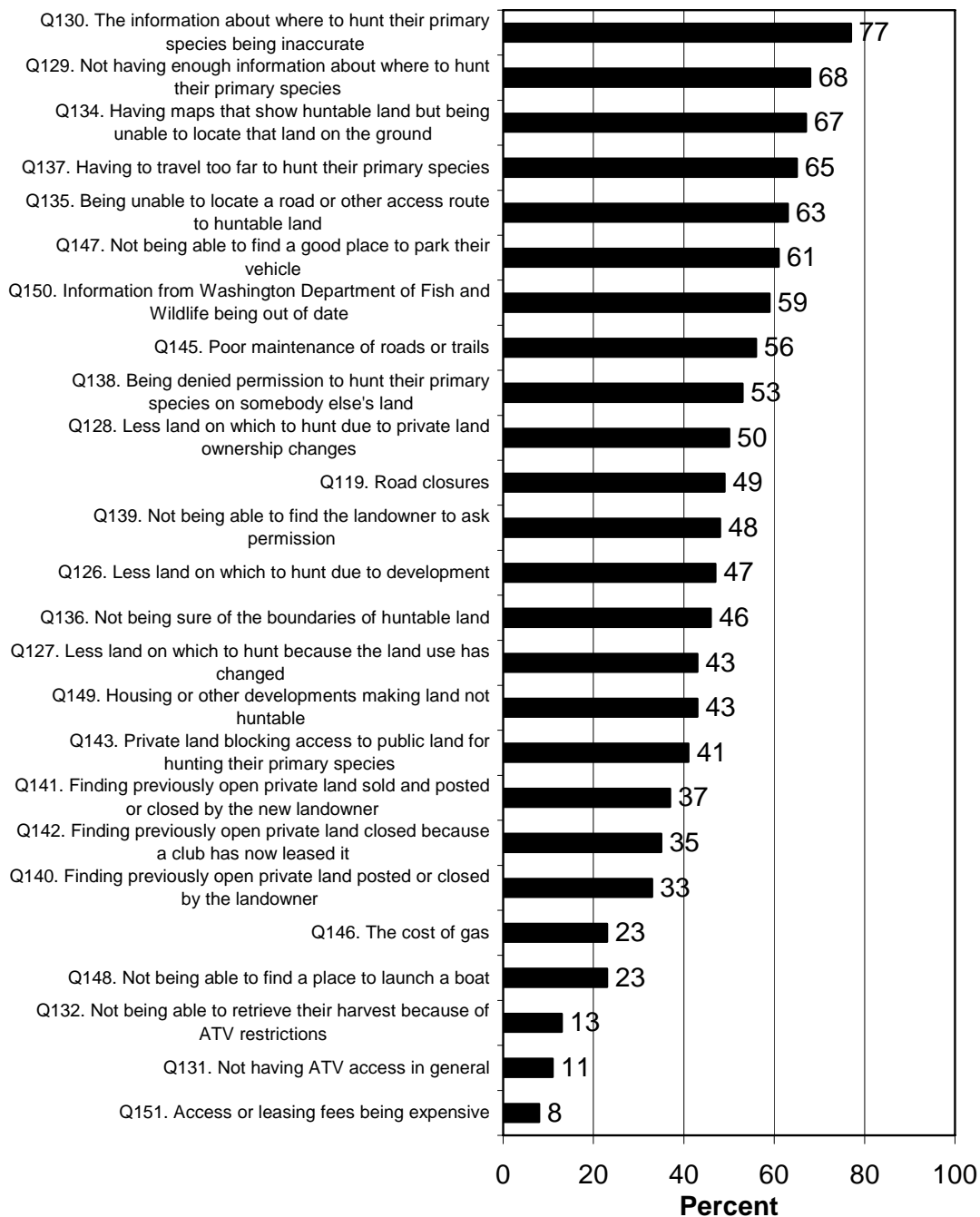
**Percent who indicated that the following hunting access problems have been a major problem in the past 5 years when hunting for their primary species in Washington.**



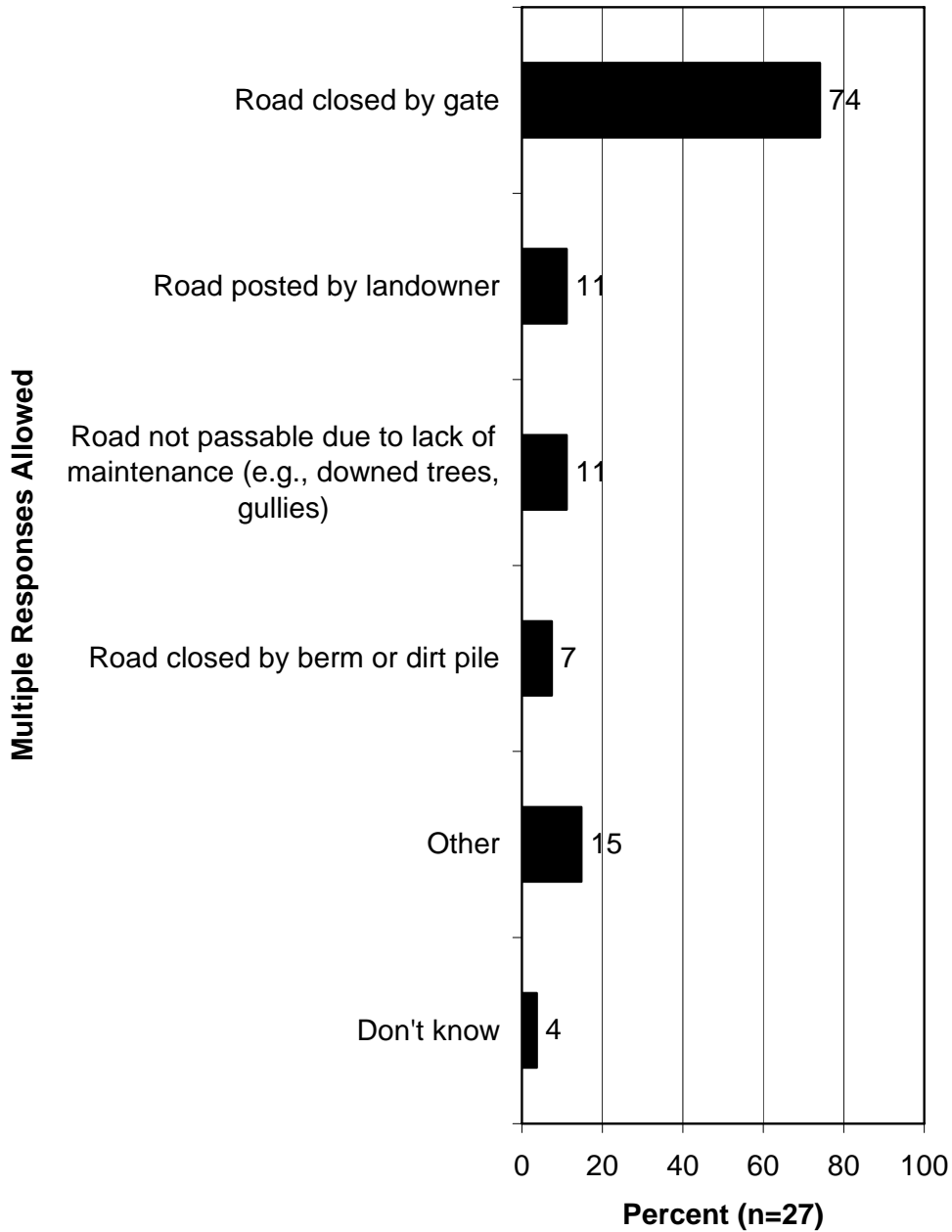
**Percent who indicated that the following hunting access problems have been a major, moderate, or minor problem in the past 5 years when hunting for their primary species in Washington.**



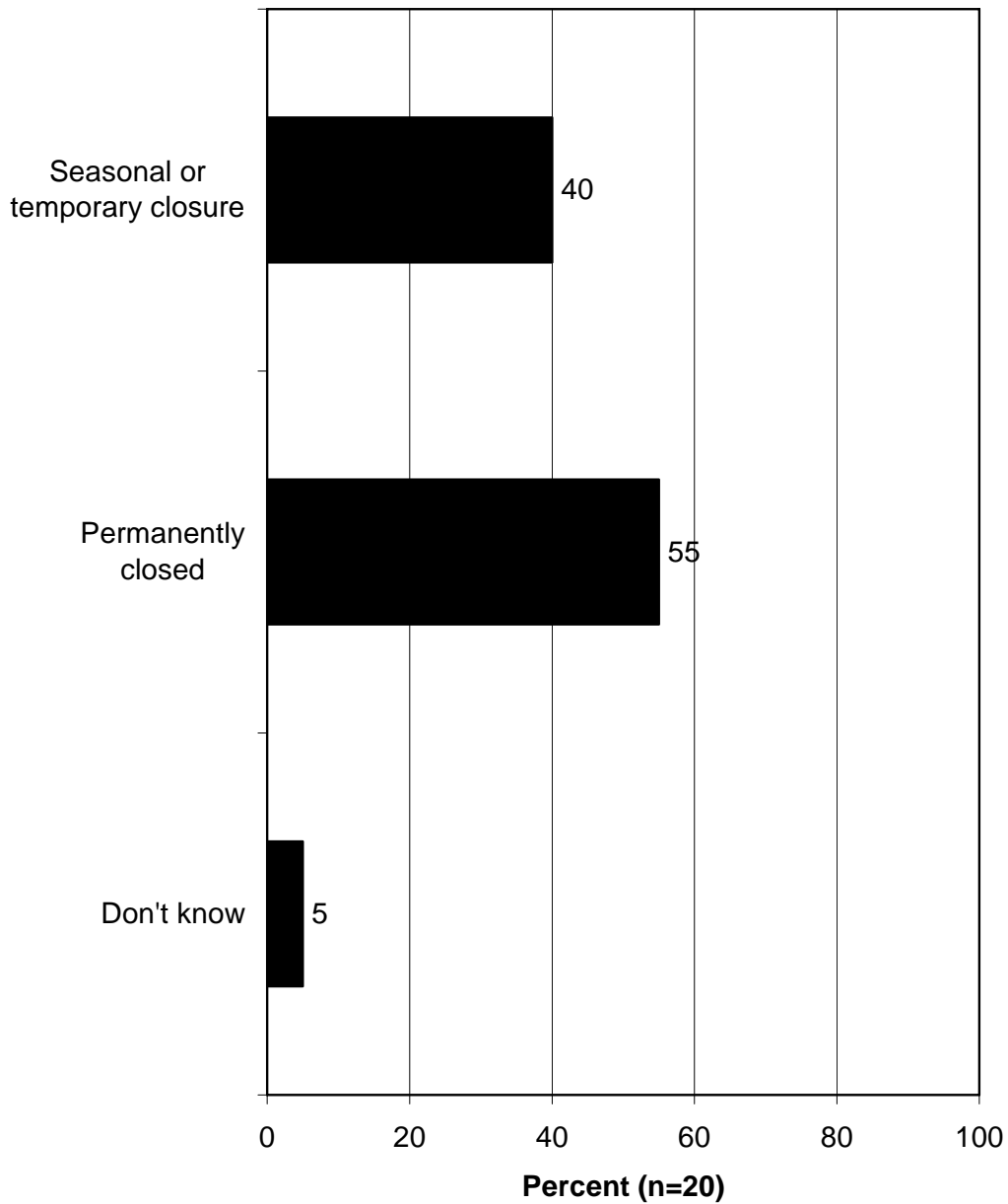
**Percent who indicated that the following hunting access problems have not been a problem at all in the past 5 years when hunting for their primary species in Washington.**



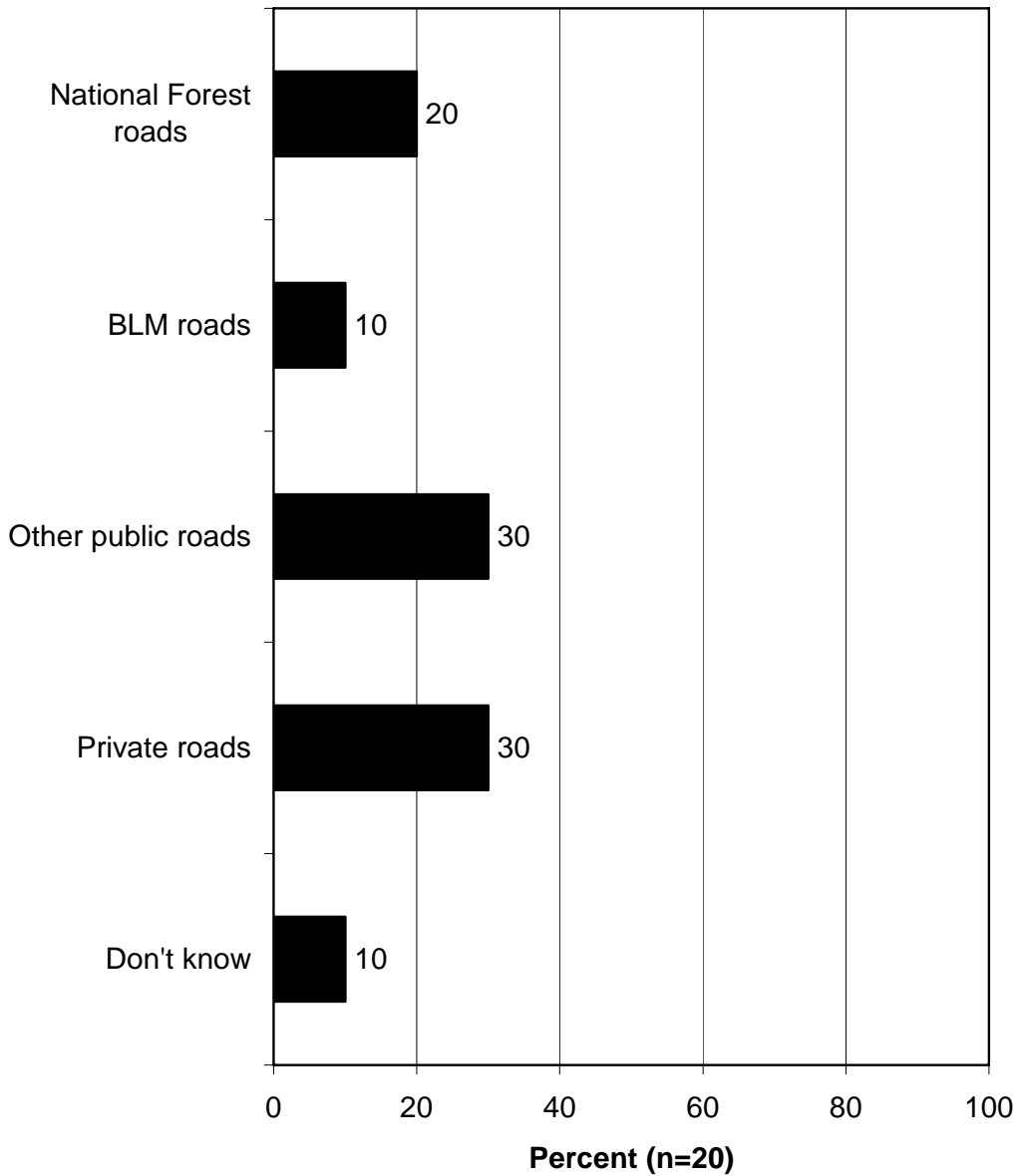
**Q122. How were the roads closed? (Asked of those who said road closures have been a problem when they were hunting their primary species.)**



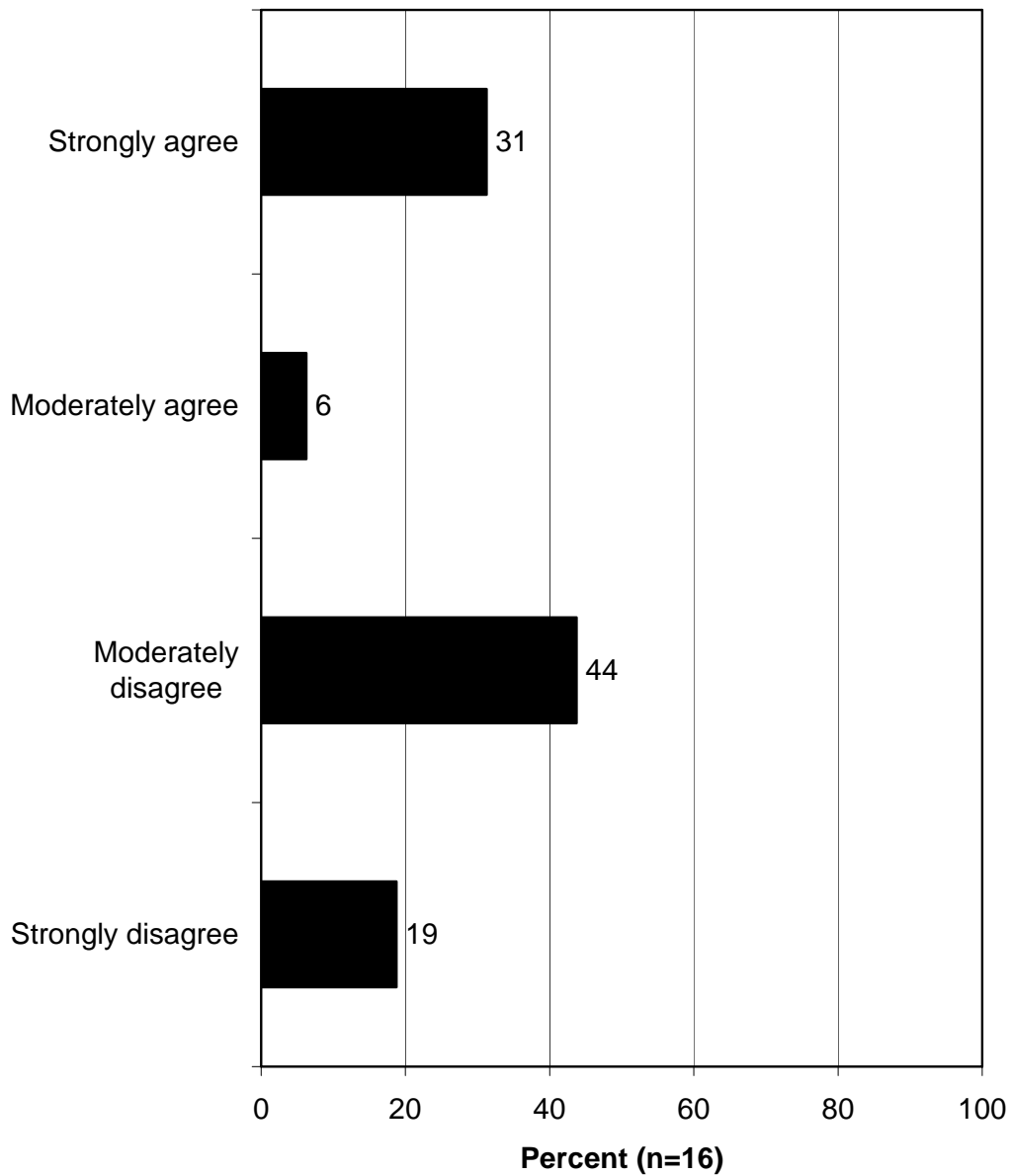
**Q124. Was this a seasonal or temporary closure, or was it permanently closed? (Asked of those who said road closures have been a problem when they were hunting their primary species and who said the road was closed by a gate.)**



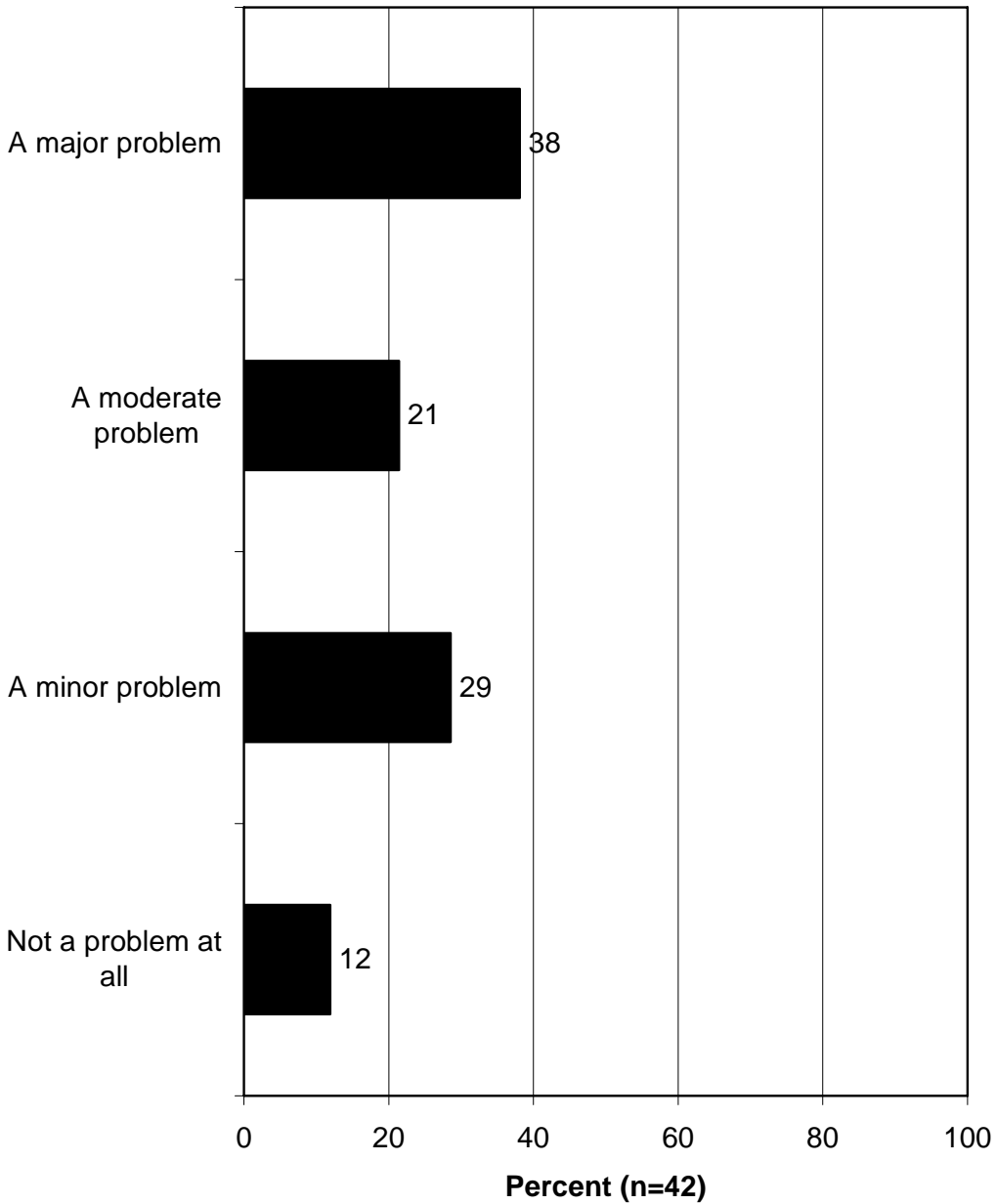
**Q125. Were the closed roads National Forest roads, BLM roads, other public roads, or private roads? (Asked of those who said road closures have been a problem when they were hunting their primary species and who said the road was closed by a gate.)**



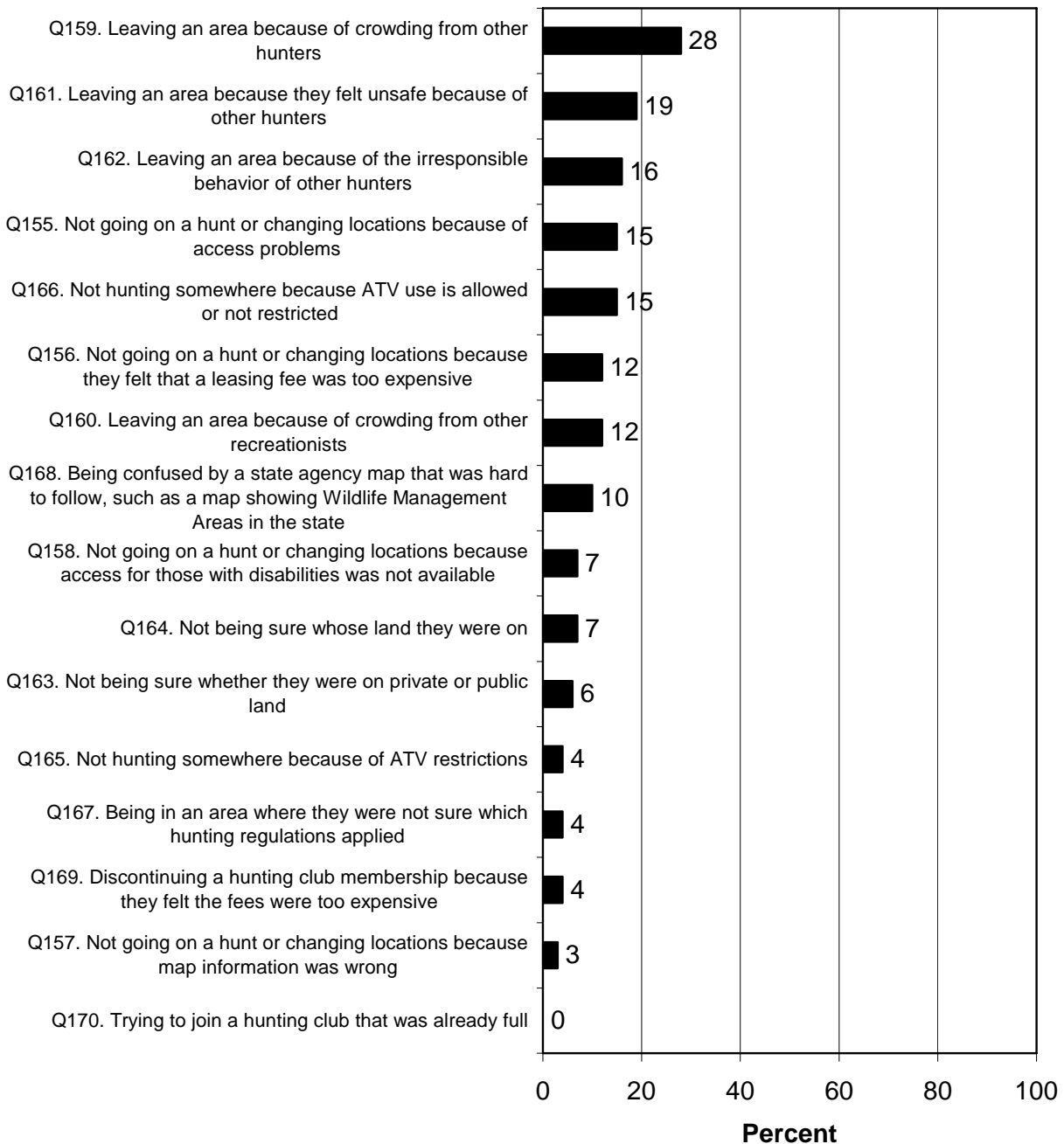
**Q133. Do you agree or disagree that not being able to retrieve your harvest with an ATV has caused you to hunt less in the past 5 years? (Asked of those who said that not being able to retrieve their harvest because of ATV restrictions has been a problem when they were hunting their primary species.)**



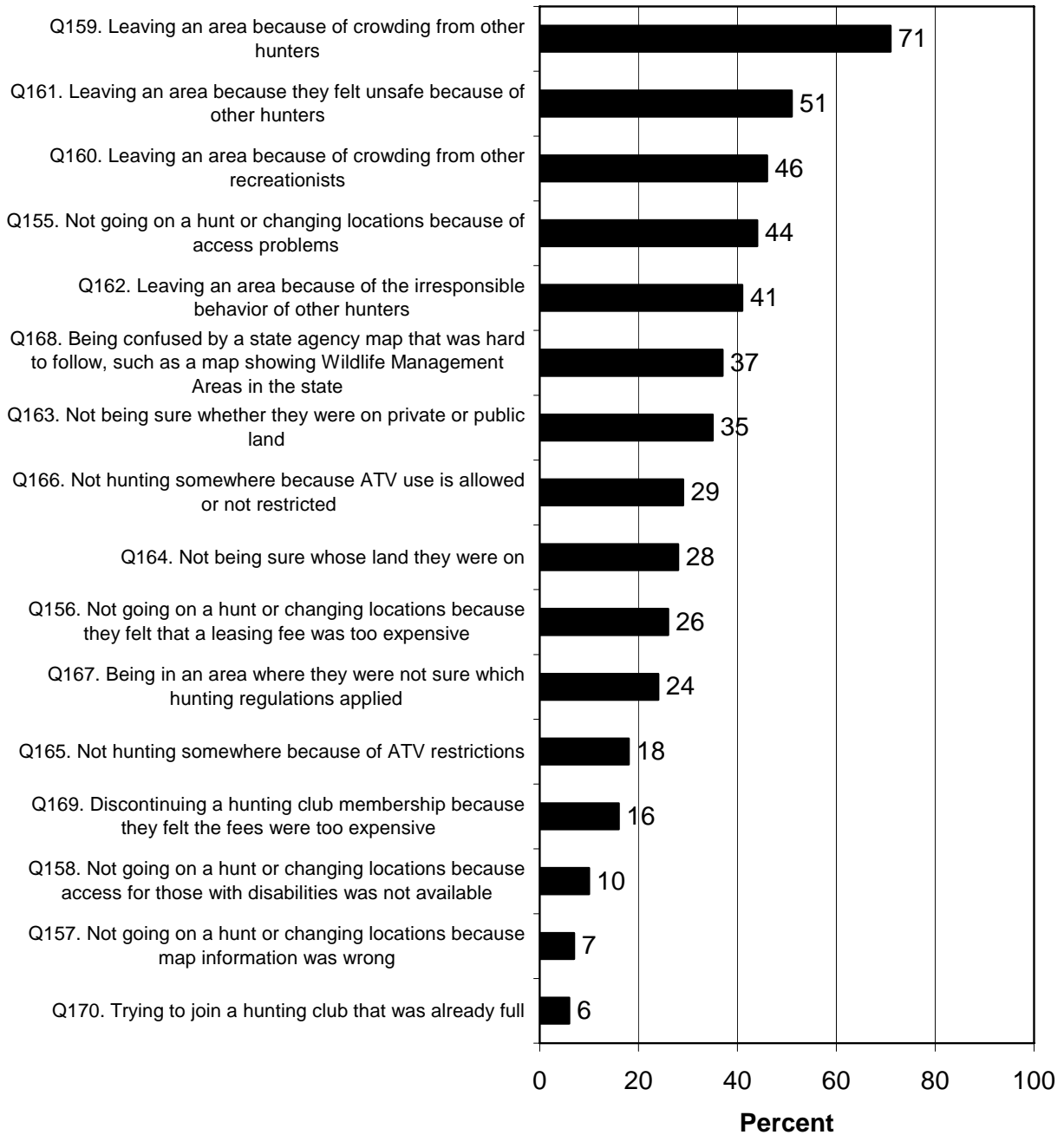
**Q144. How much of a problem were landowners intentionally blocking or making it difficult to physically access public land? (Asked of those who said that private land blocking access to public land has been a problem when they were hunting their primary species.)**



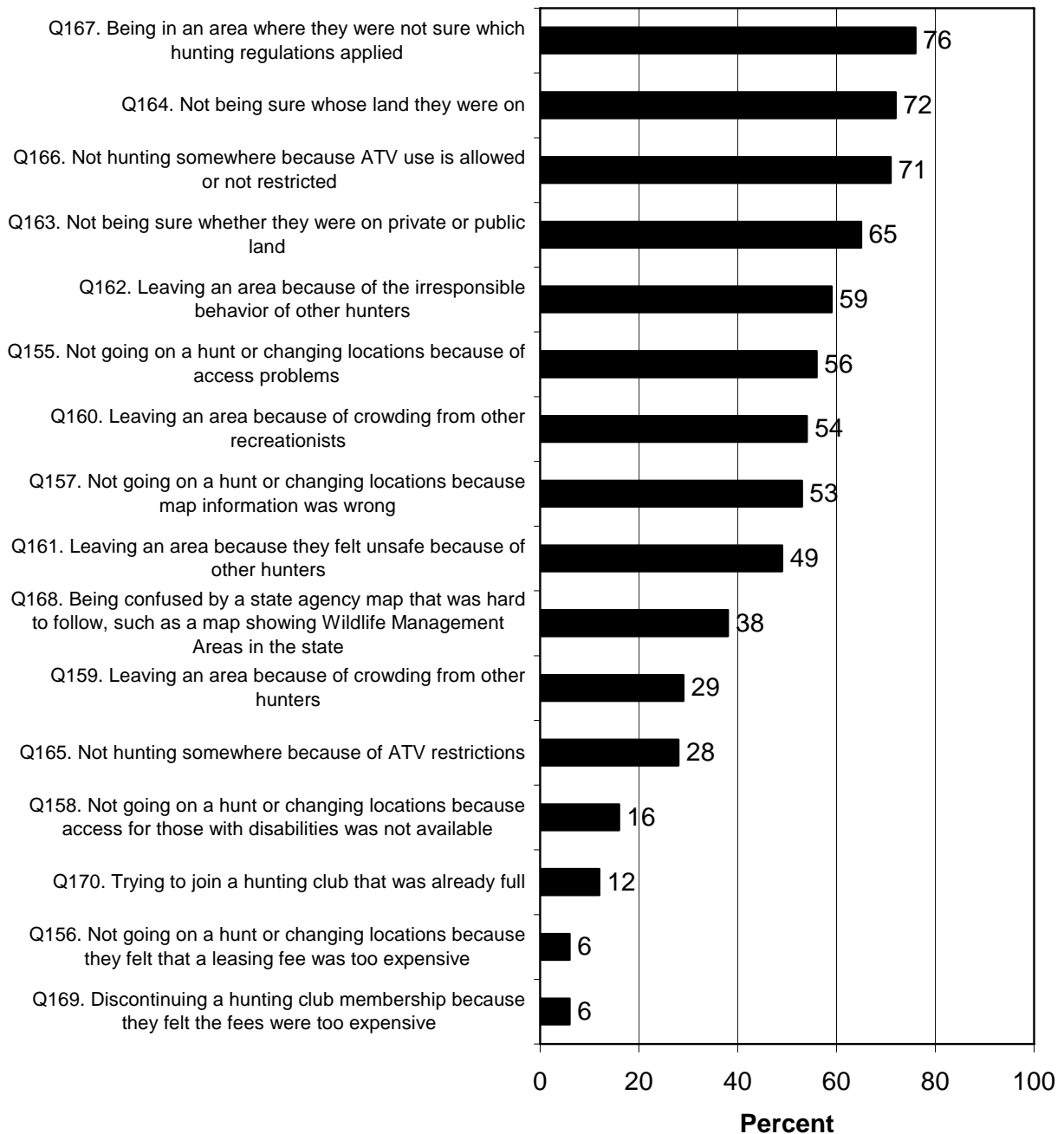
**Percent who indicated that the following have been  
a major problem in the past 5 years when hunting  
for their primary species in Washington.**



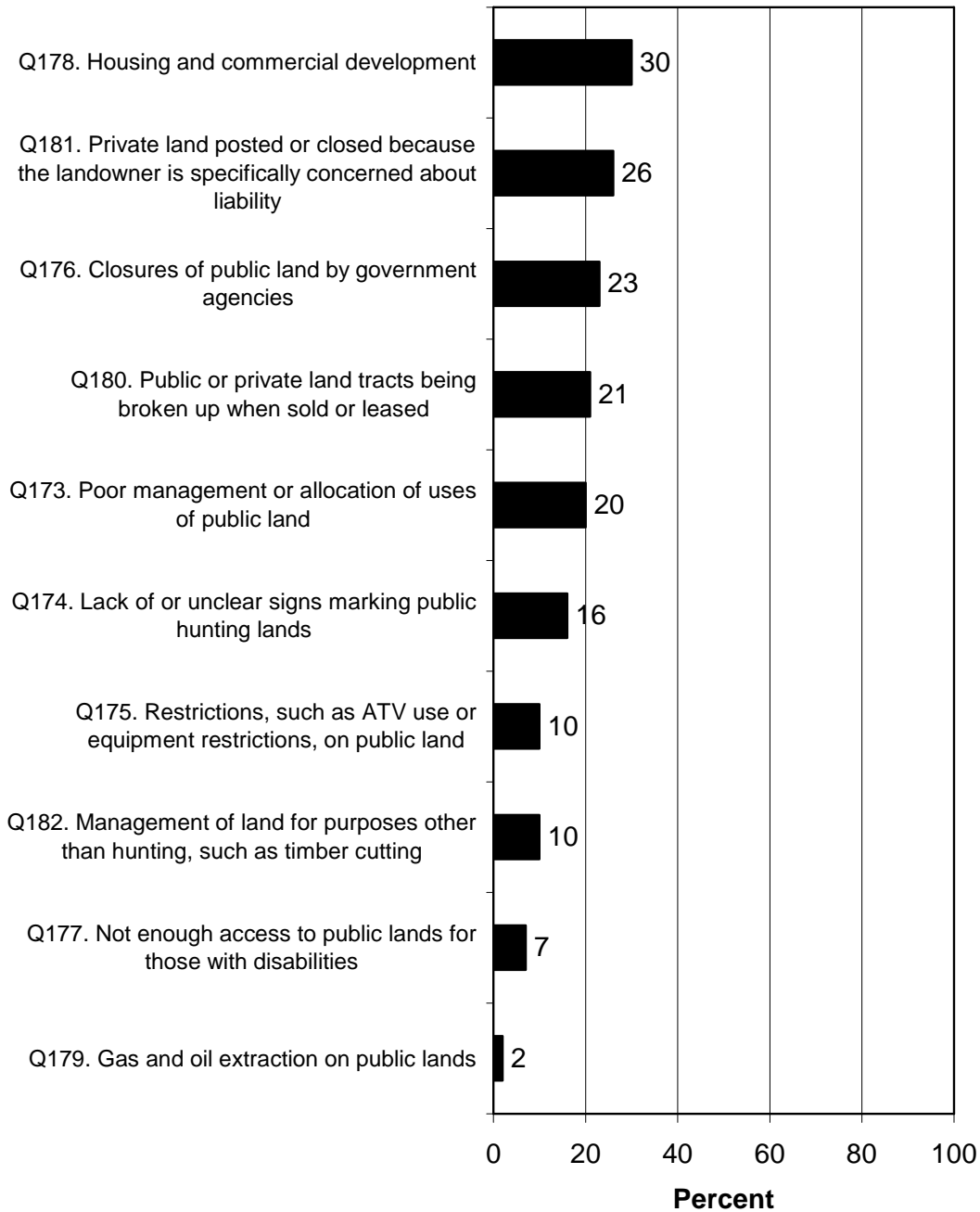
**Percent who indicated that the following have been a major, moderate, or minor problem in the past 5 years when hunting for their primary species in Washington.**



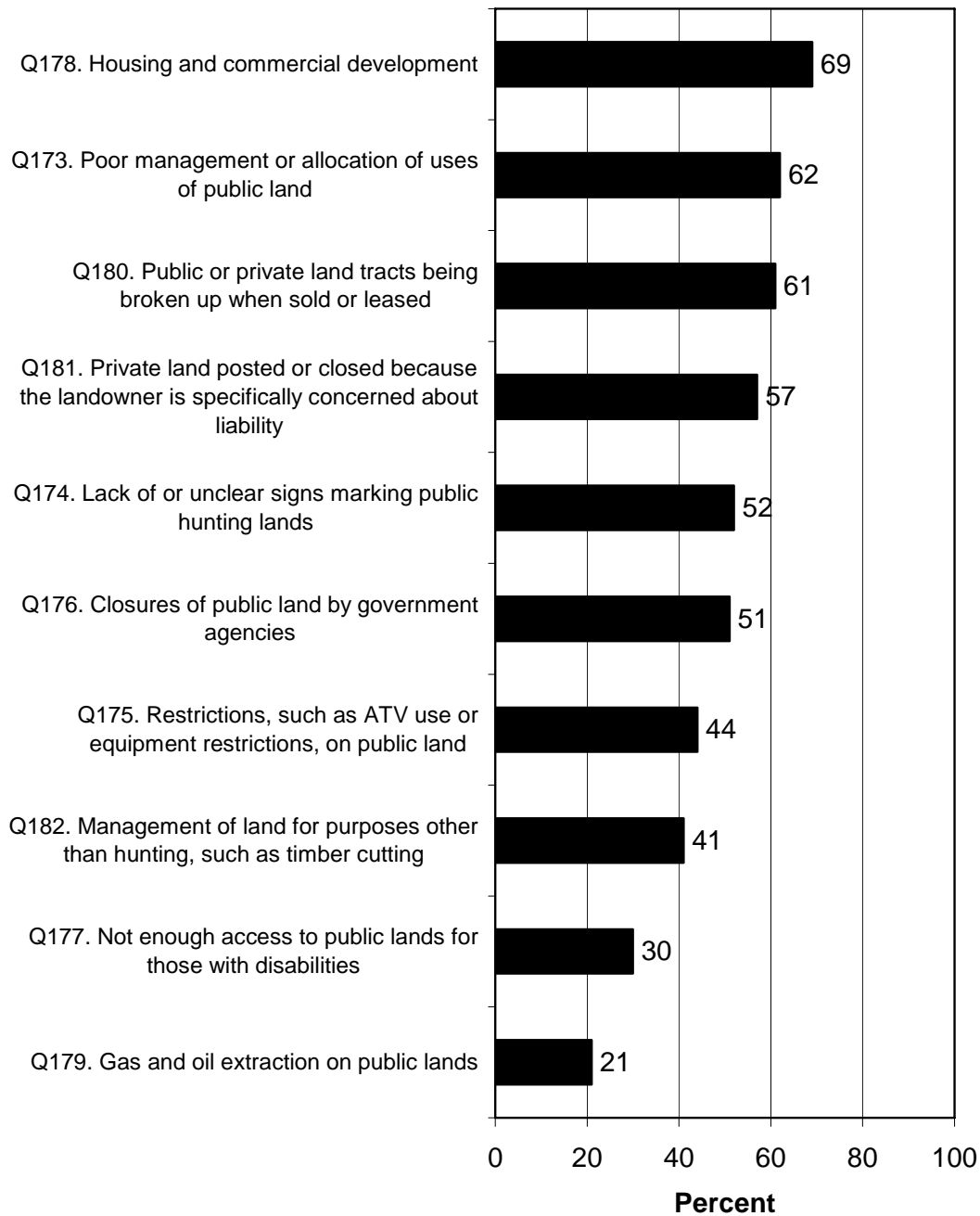
**Percent who indicated that the following have not been a problem at all in the past 5 years when hunting for their primary species in Washington.**



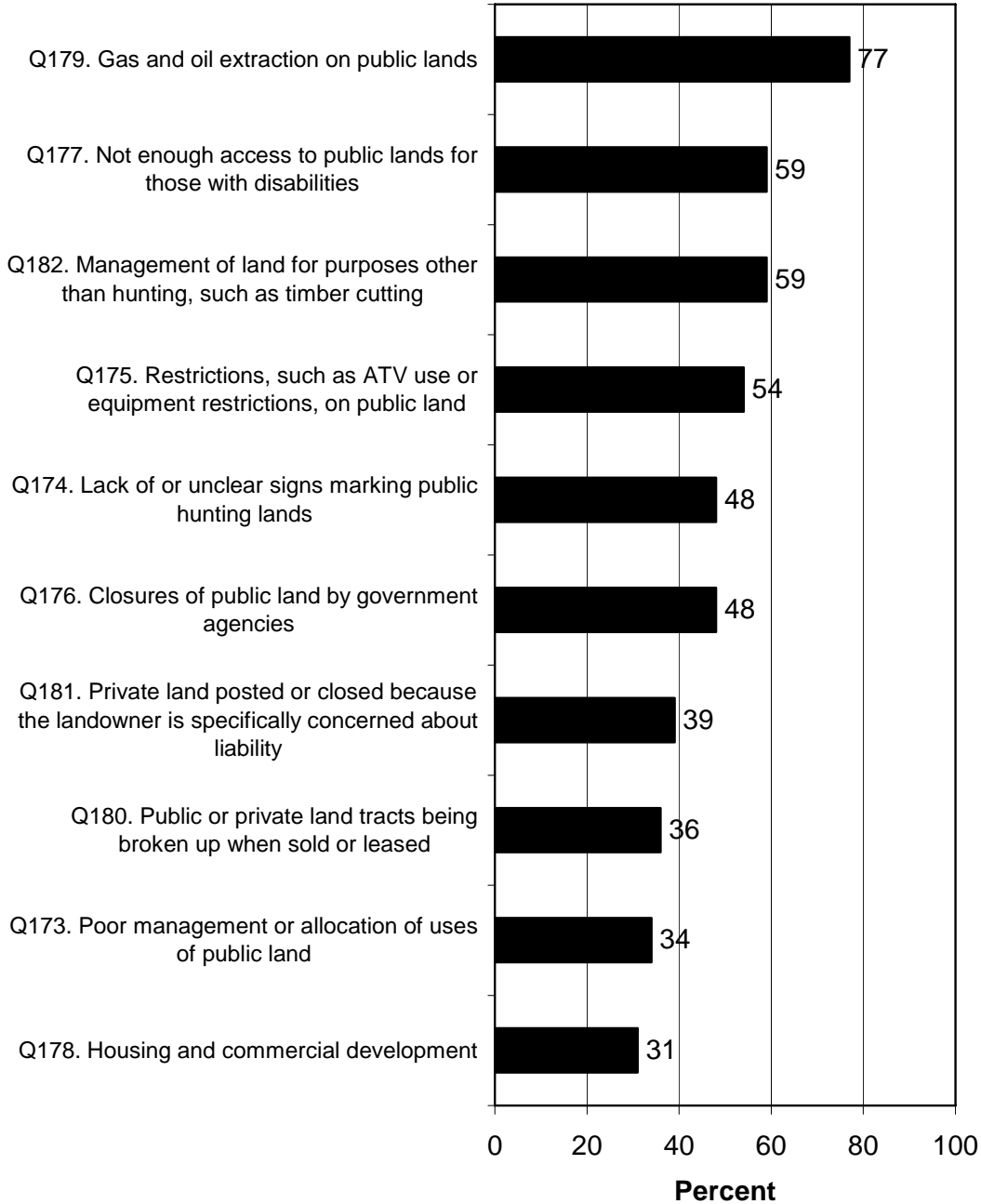
**Percent who indicated that the following factors that may or may not influence access to hunting land in Washington are major problems in general.**



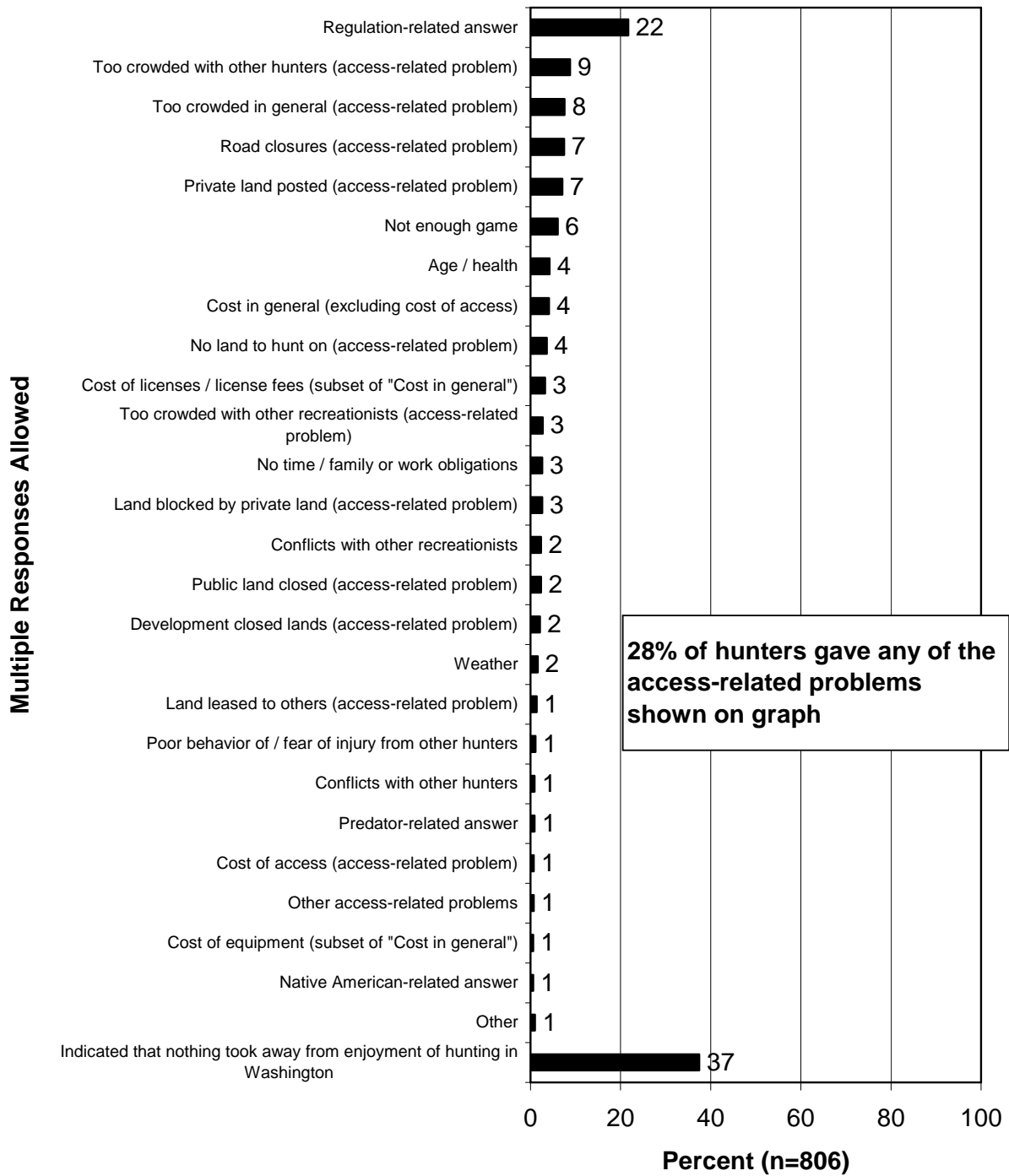
**Percent who indicated that the following factors that may or may not influence access to hunting land in Washington are major, moderate, or minor problems in general.**



**Percent who indicated that the following factors that may or may not influence access to hunting land in Washington are not problems at all in general.**



### Q31/34/38. What takes away from your enjoyment of hunting in Washington?

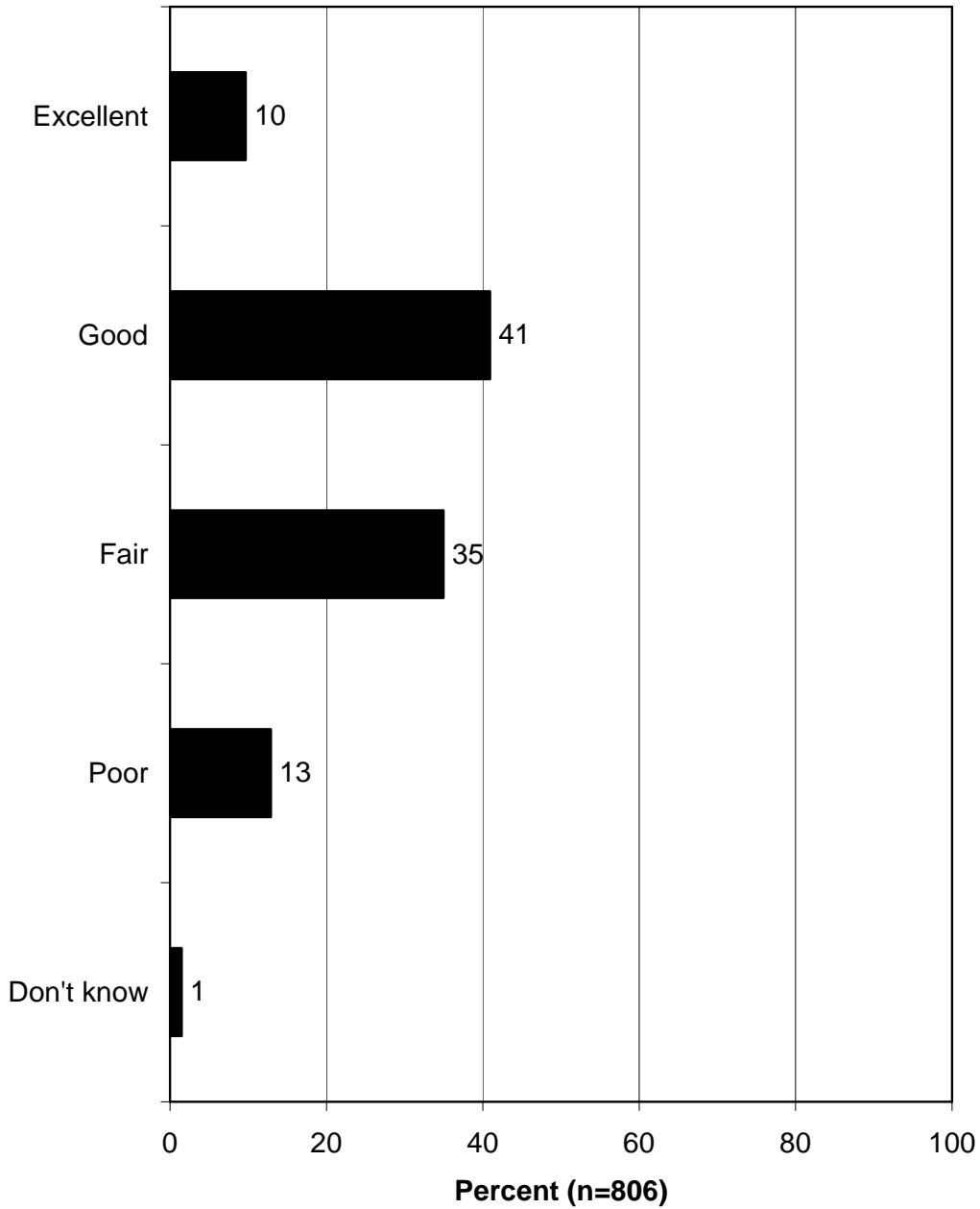


## RATINGS OF ACCESS TO HUNTING LANDS IN WASHINGTON

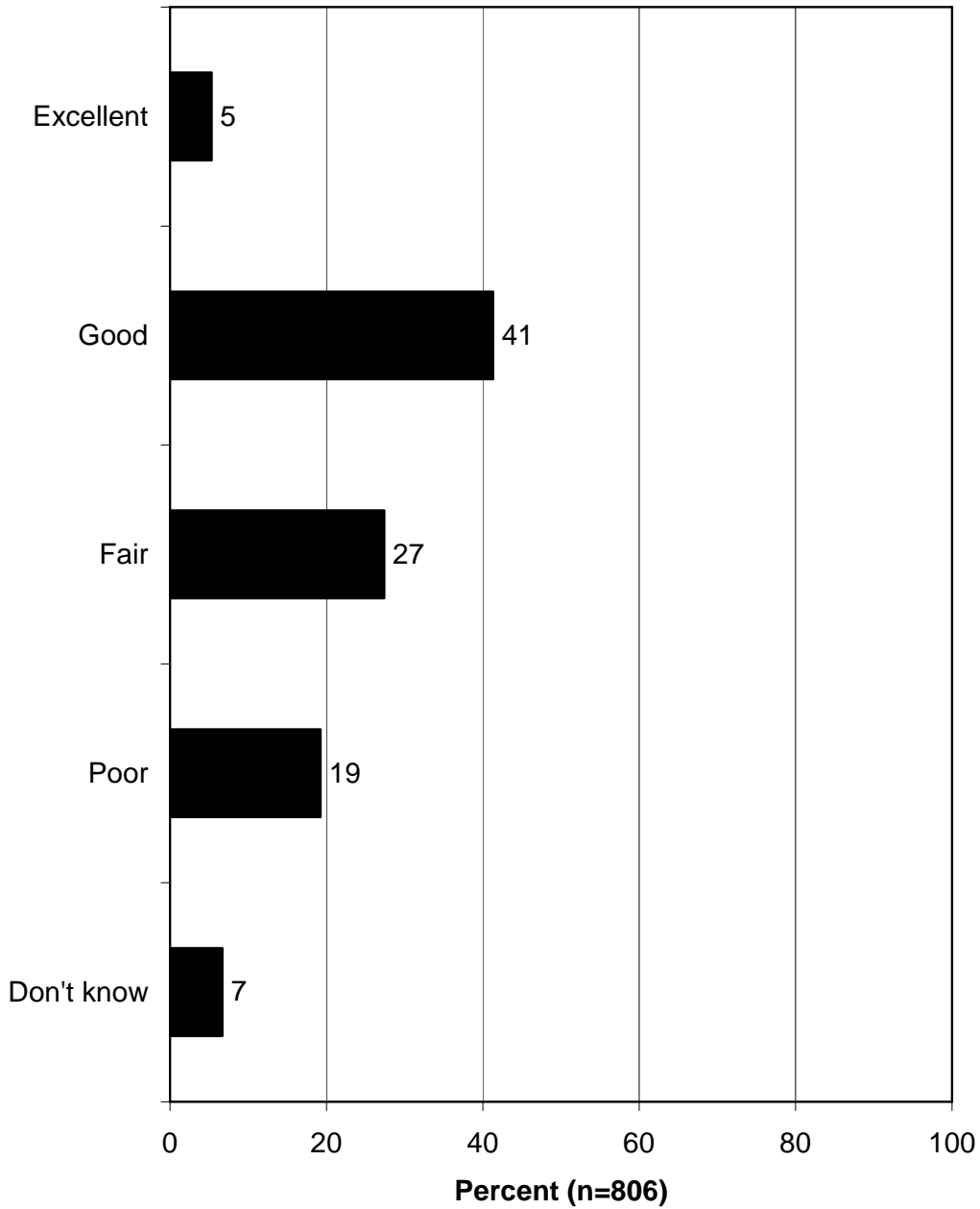
- A basic question asked hunters to rate access to hunting land in Washington overall. They are about evenly split: 51% give a rating of excellent or good, and 48% give a rating of fair or poor. Note that the moderate answers (good and fair) far exceed the extreme answers (excellent and poor).
  - In a related question, ratings of the WDFW's management of access to hunting lands is evenly split: 46% give an excellent or good rating, and 46% give a fair or poor rating. Note that "good" ratings far exceed "excellent" ratings, while "fair" and "poor" ratings are more evenly split.
  
- The ratings of access were crosstabulated by various other questions to see if any differences among respondents emerged. Positive ratings in this context are those in the top half of the scale (excellent or good), and negative ratings are those in the lower half (fair or poor).
  - In the crosstabulation by number of years of hunting experience, ratings are about the same, and the slight differences are *not* statistically significant.
  - Access ratings are markedly more positive among waterfowl hunters (67% give a rating of excellent or good) and elk hunters (61%). They are about evenly split among hunters of white-tailed deer and black-tailed deer. They are markedly more negative among hunters of mule deer (only 38% give an excellent or good rating) and upland game birds (36%). Overall, these differences on this question are statistically significant.
  - The question about ratings of the WDFW's *management* of access to hunting lands was also crosstabulated by primary species hunted. Waterfowl hunters are the most likely to give an excellent or good rating to the WDFW's management of hunting access; hunters of upland game birds and mule deer are the least likely to give an excellent or good rating. Overall, these differences on this question are statistically significant.
  - Those hunters who hunt mostly on different lands each year (rather than the same lands each year) or hunt same/different lands about equally are more likely to give access a negative rating compared to those who mostly hunt the same lands each year. Overall, these differences are statistically significant.

- Access ratings are not greatly different when crosstabulated by hunting mostly on public land, mostly on private land, or both about equally. The slight differences that exist, however, are statistically significant.
  - There was a slight correlation to usually driving the median distance or less to hunt and giving positive ratings. Those who usually traveled shorter distances gave better ratings than did those who usually traveled farther. Overall, these differences are statistically significant.
- Those who hunted their primary species on public land at least half the time were asked to rate access to public lands in Washington. Excellent and good ratings (63% give one of the two responses) exceed fair and poor ratings (37%).
- Top reasons for rating public land access as fair or poor are road closures, a simple lack of land on which to hunt, and public land being blocked by private land.
- Those who hunted their primary species mostly on private land were asked to rate access to private land in Washington. Most commonly, they give a rating of fair (46%), and fair and poor combined account for 69% of those respondents. Meanwhile, 23% give a rating of excellent or good.
- The most common reason for giving a fair or poor rating to private land access is the land being posted.

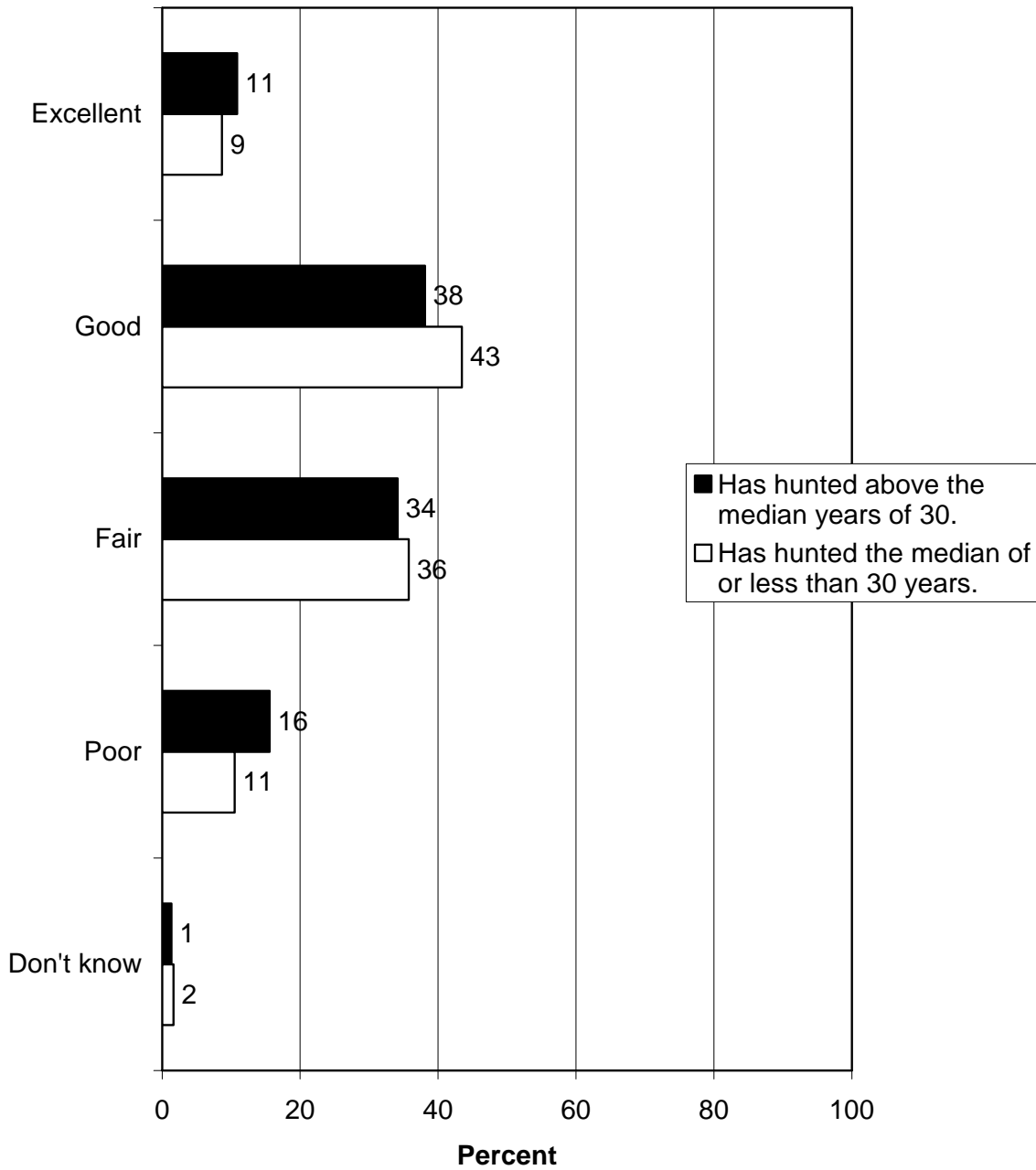
**Q55. Overall, how would you rate access to hunting lands in Washington for hunting (species)?**



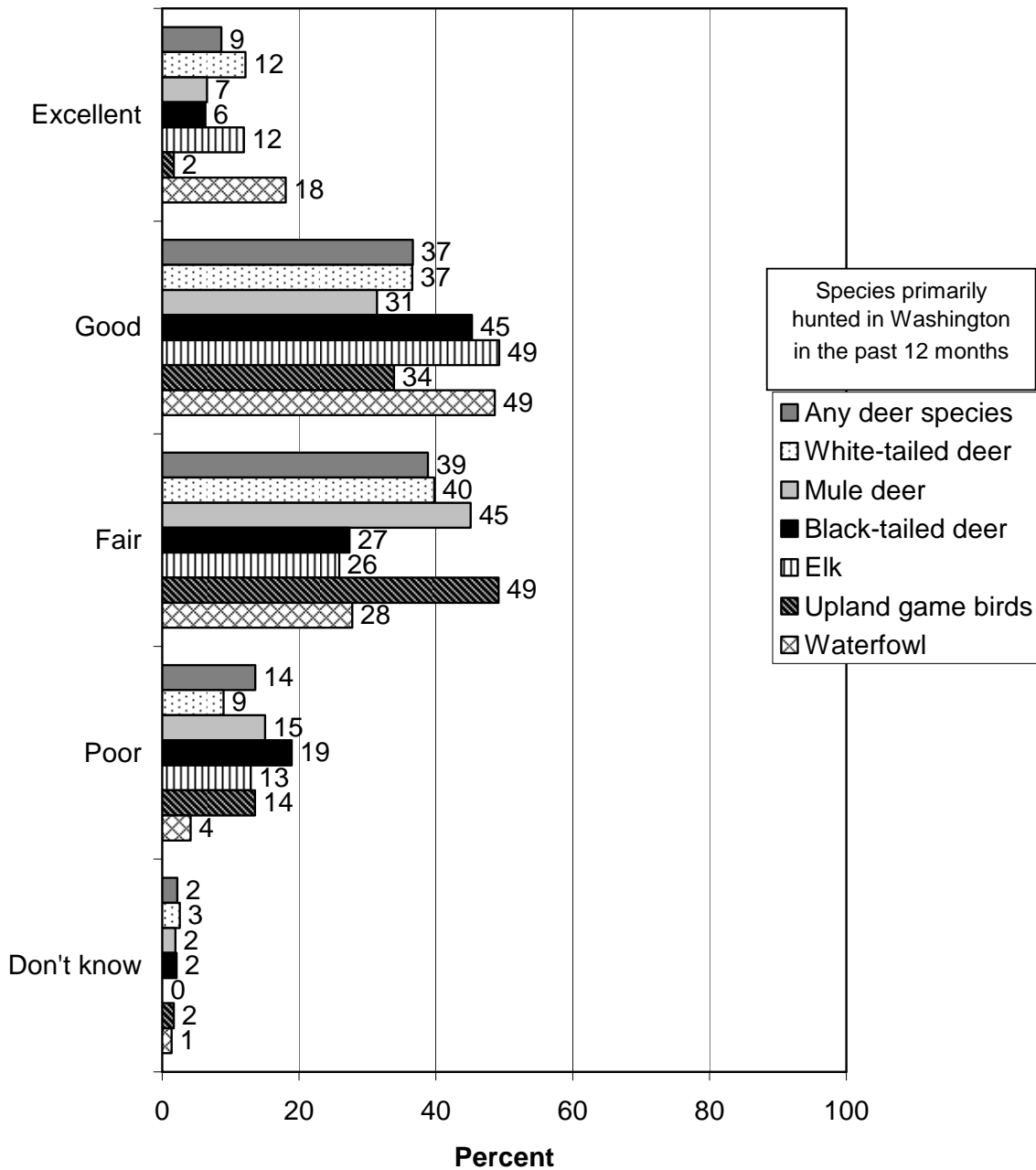
**Q56. How would you rate the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's management of access to hunting lands in Washington for hunting (species)?**



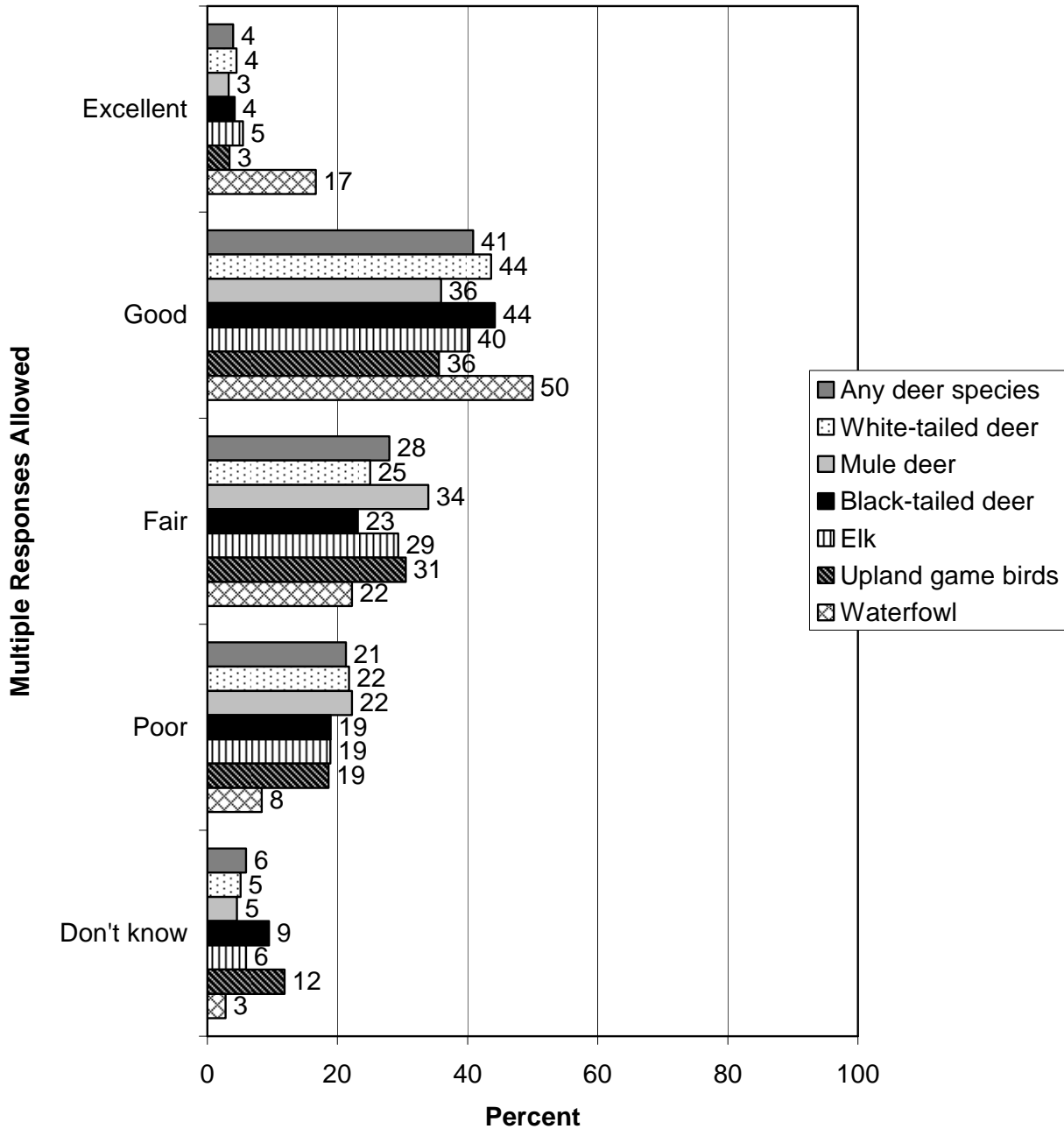
**Q55. Overall, how would you rate access to hunting lands in Washington for hunting (species)?**



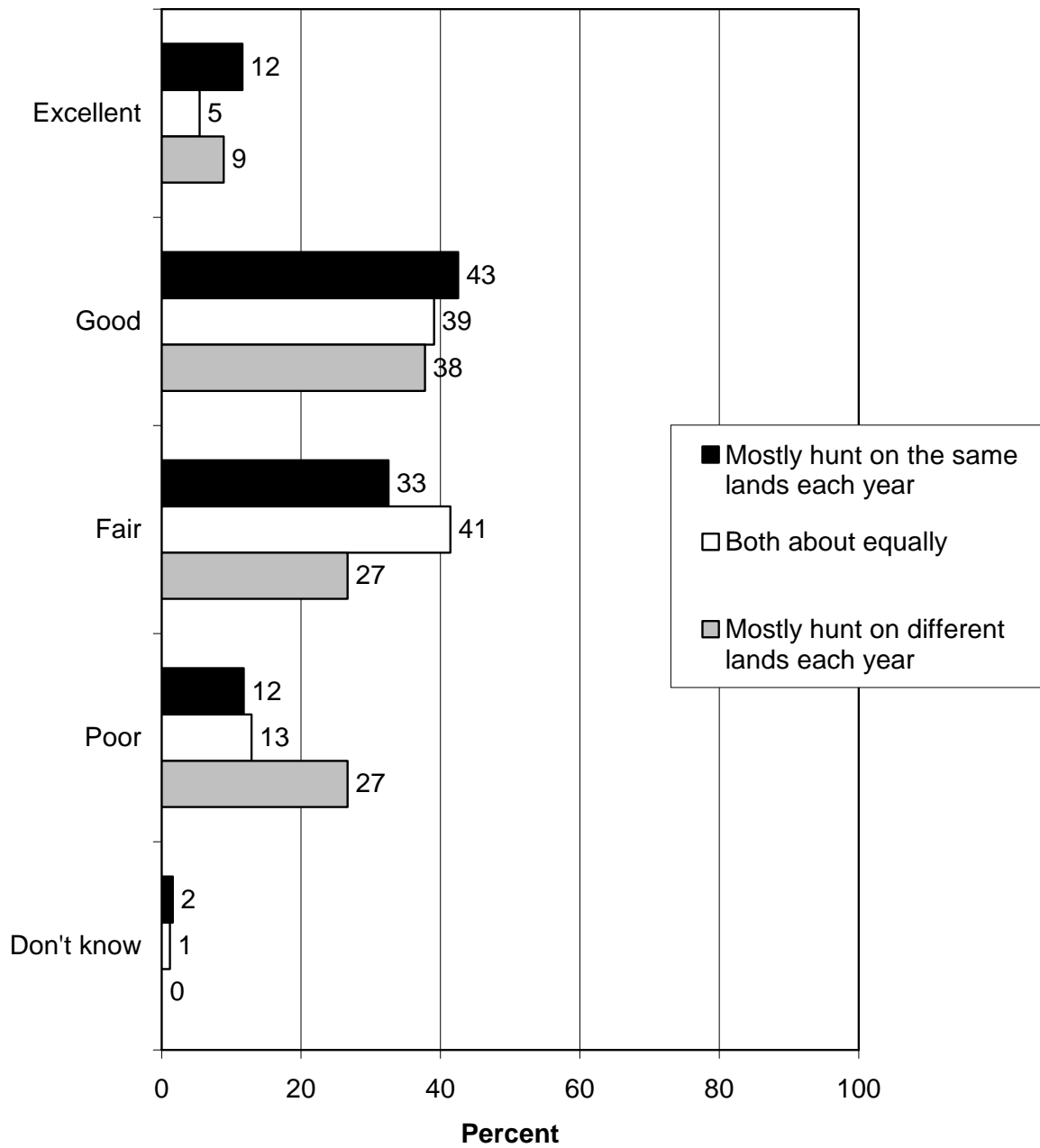
**Q55. Overall, how would you rate access to hunting lands in Washington for hunting (species)?**



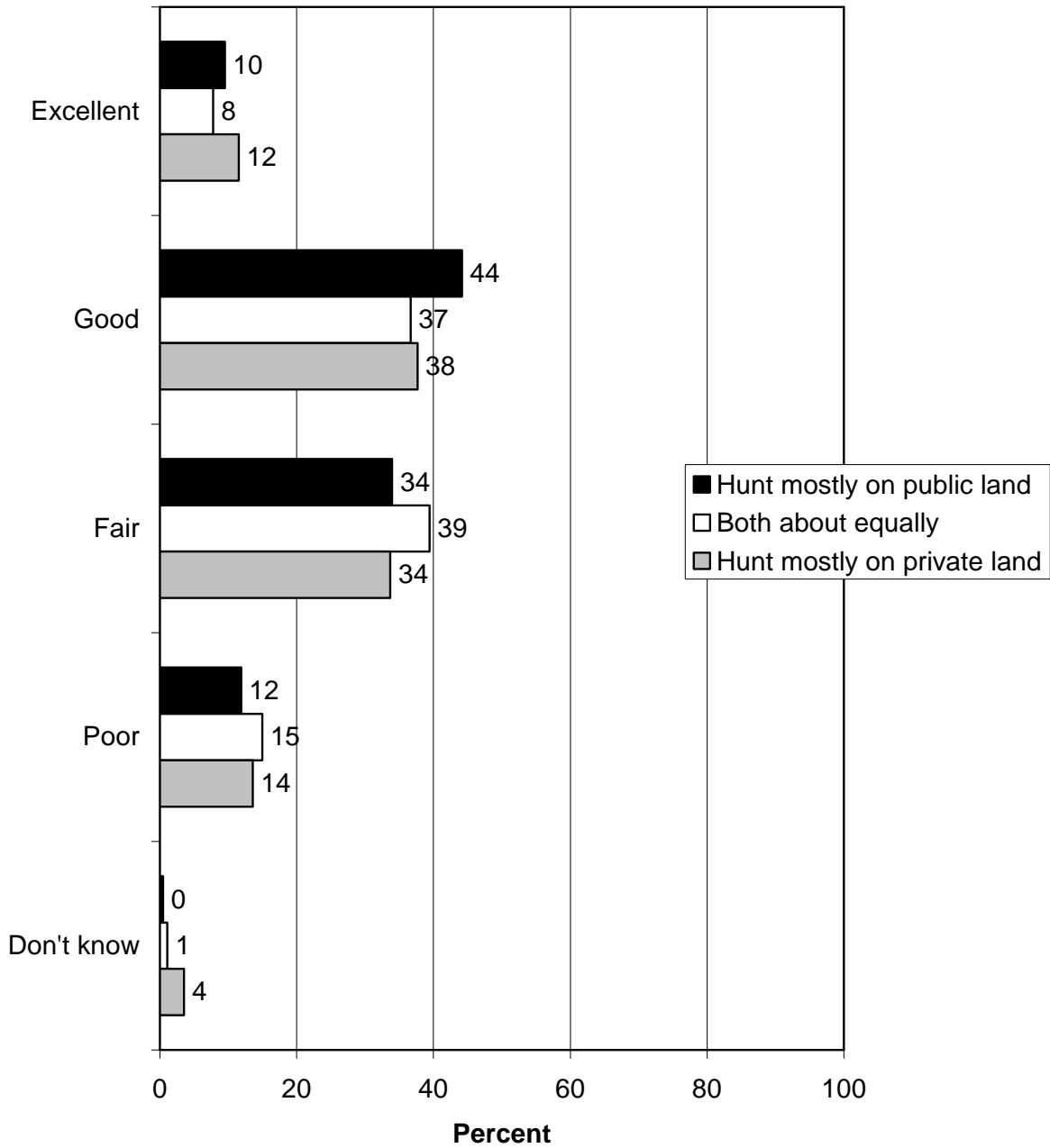
**Q56. How would you rate the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's management of access to hunting lands in Washington for hunting (species)?**



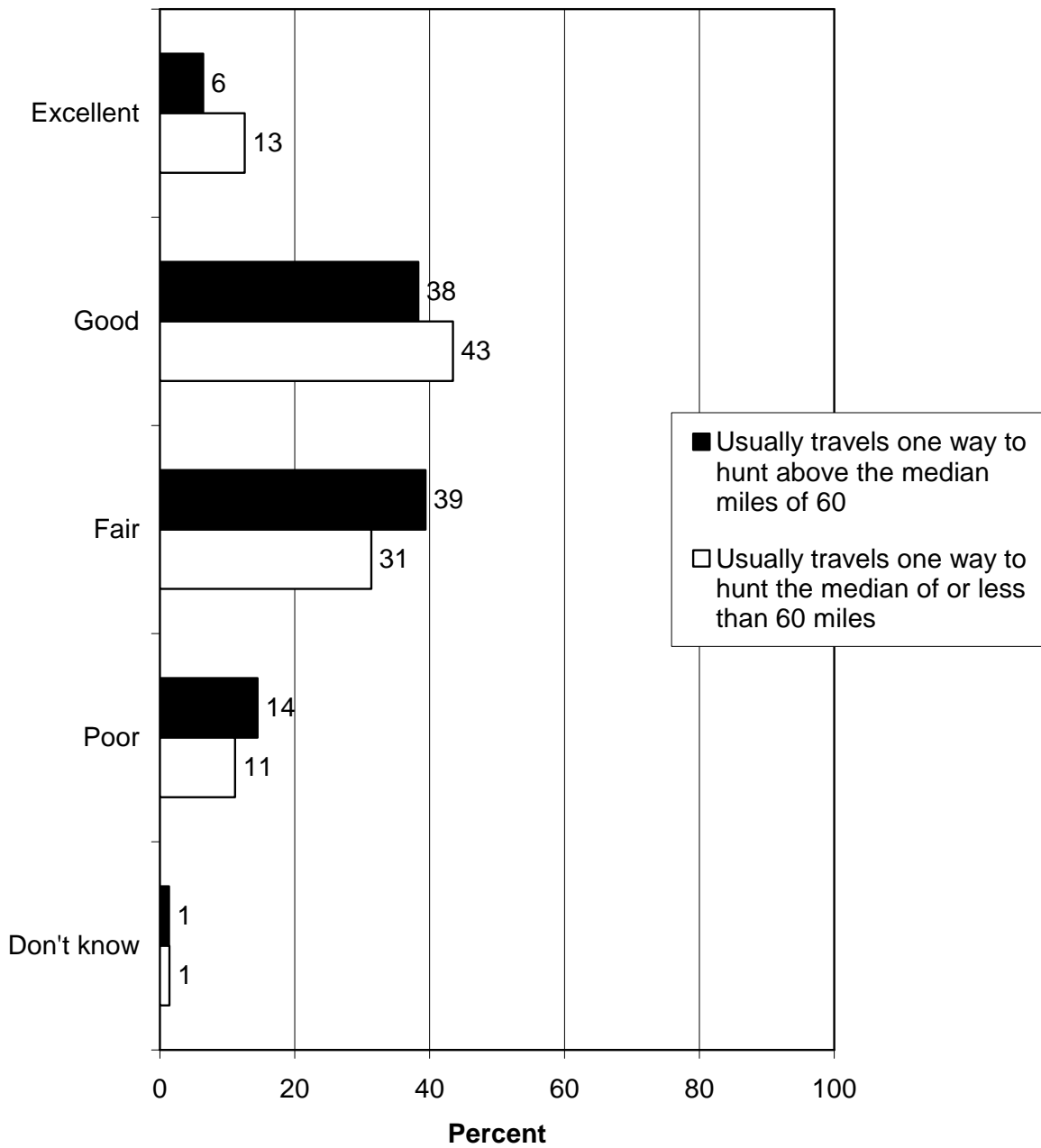
**Q55. Overall, how would you rate access to hunting lands in Washington for hunting (species)?**



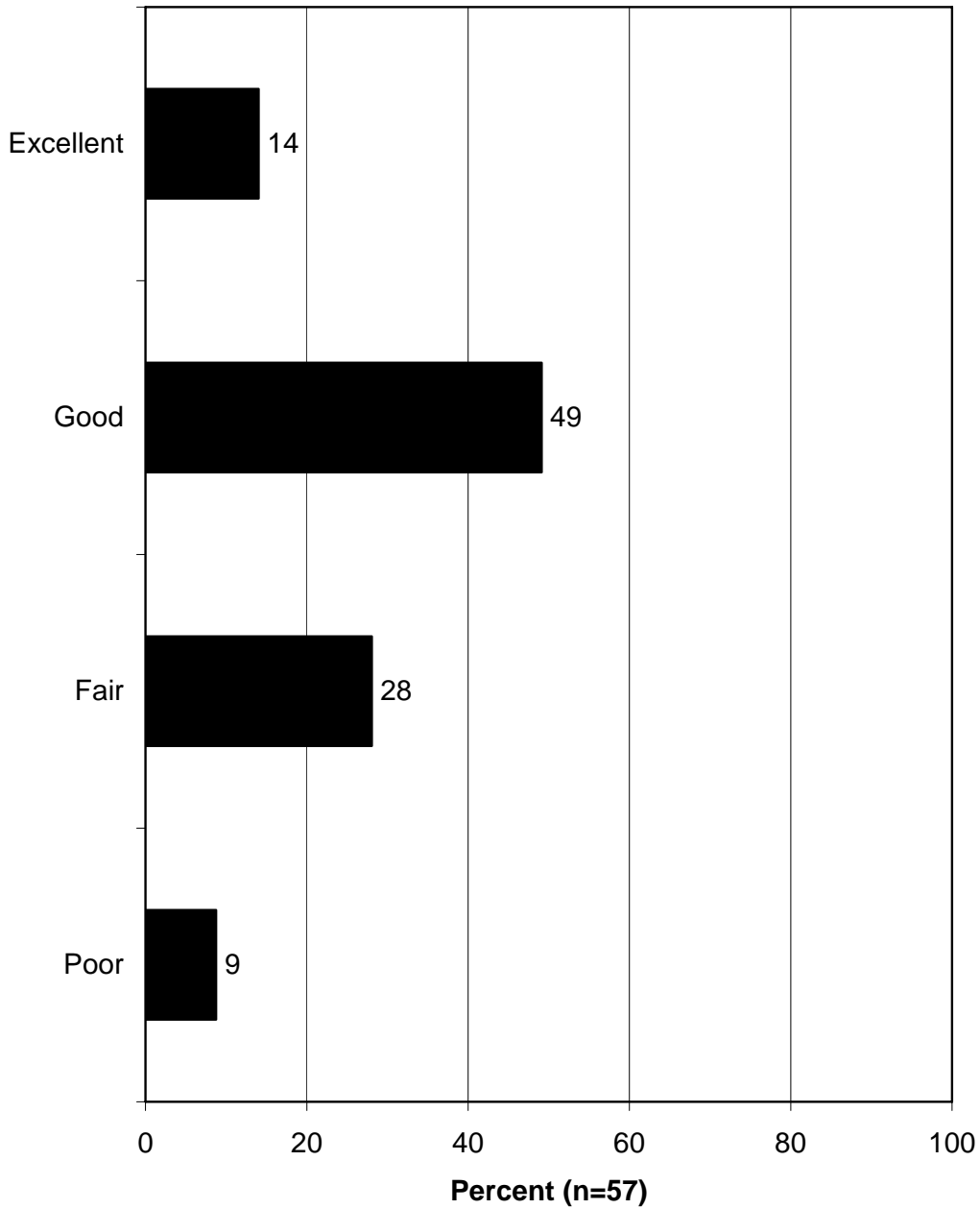
**Q55. Overall, how would you rate access to hunting lands in Washington for hunting (species)?**



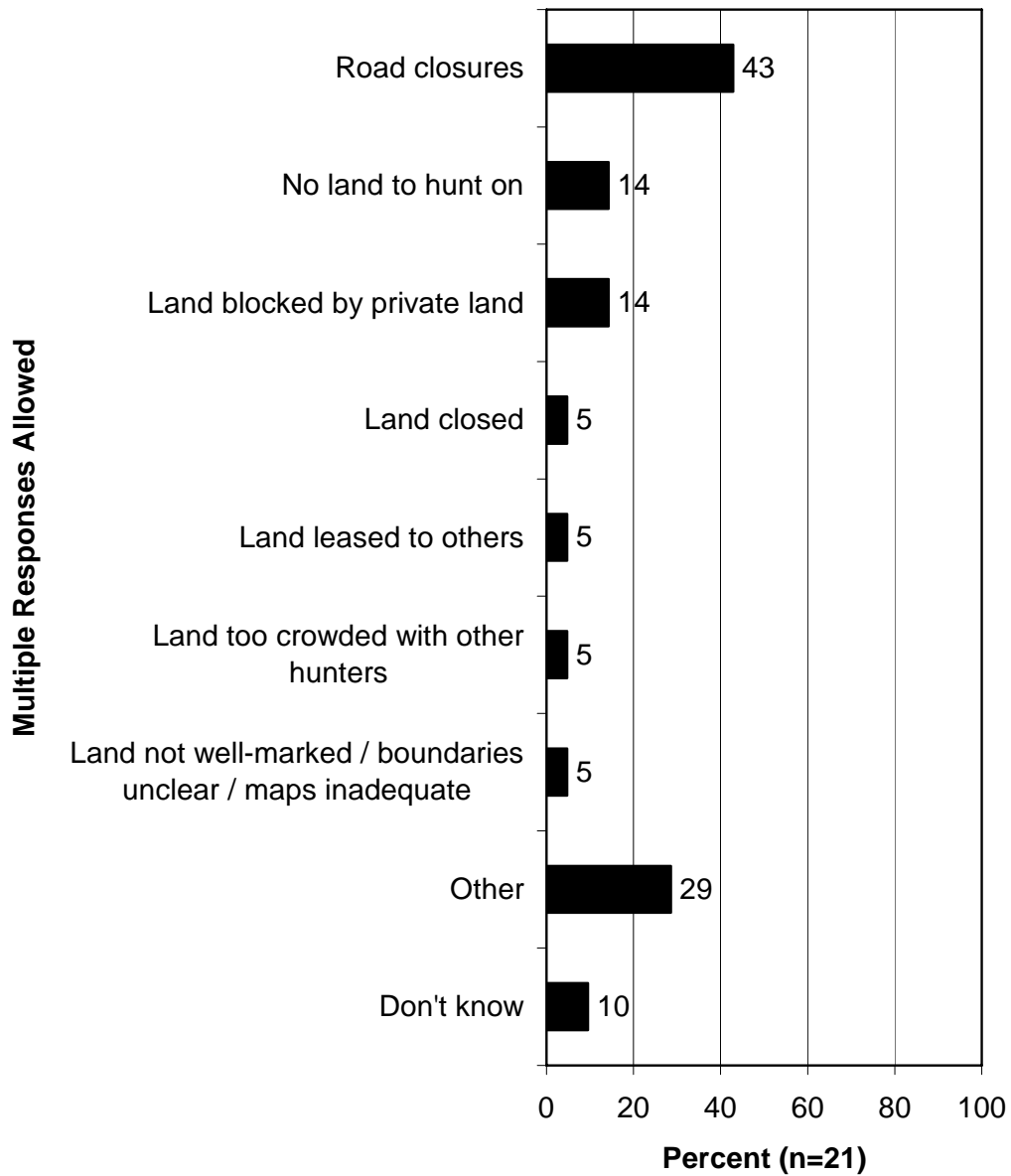
**Q55. Overall, how would you rate access to hunting lands in Washington for hunting (species)?**



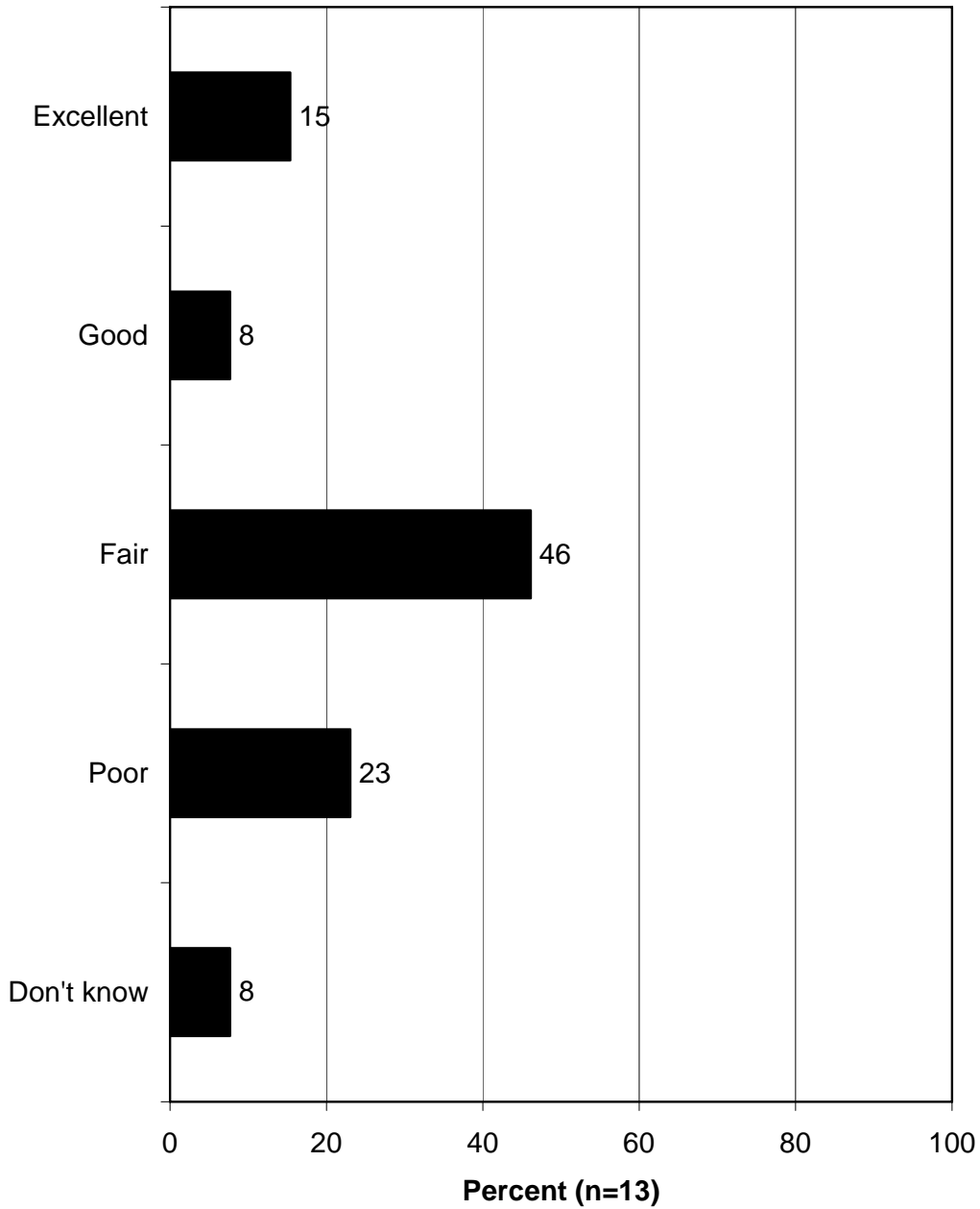
**Q63. How would you rate access to *public* lands for hunting (species) in Washington? (Asked of those who hunted their primary species on public lands at least half the time.)**



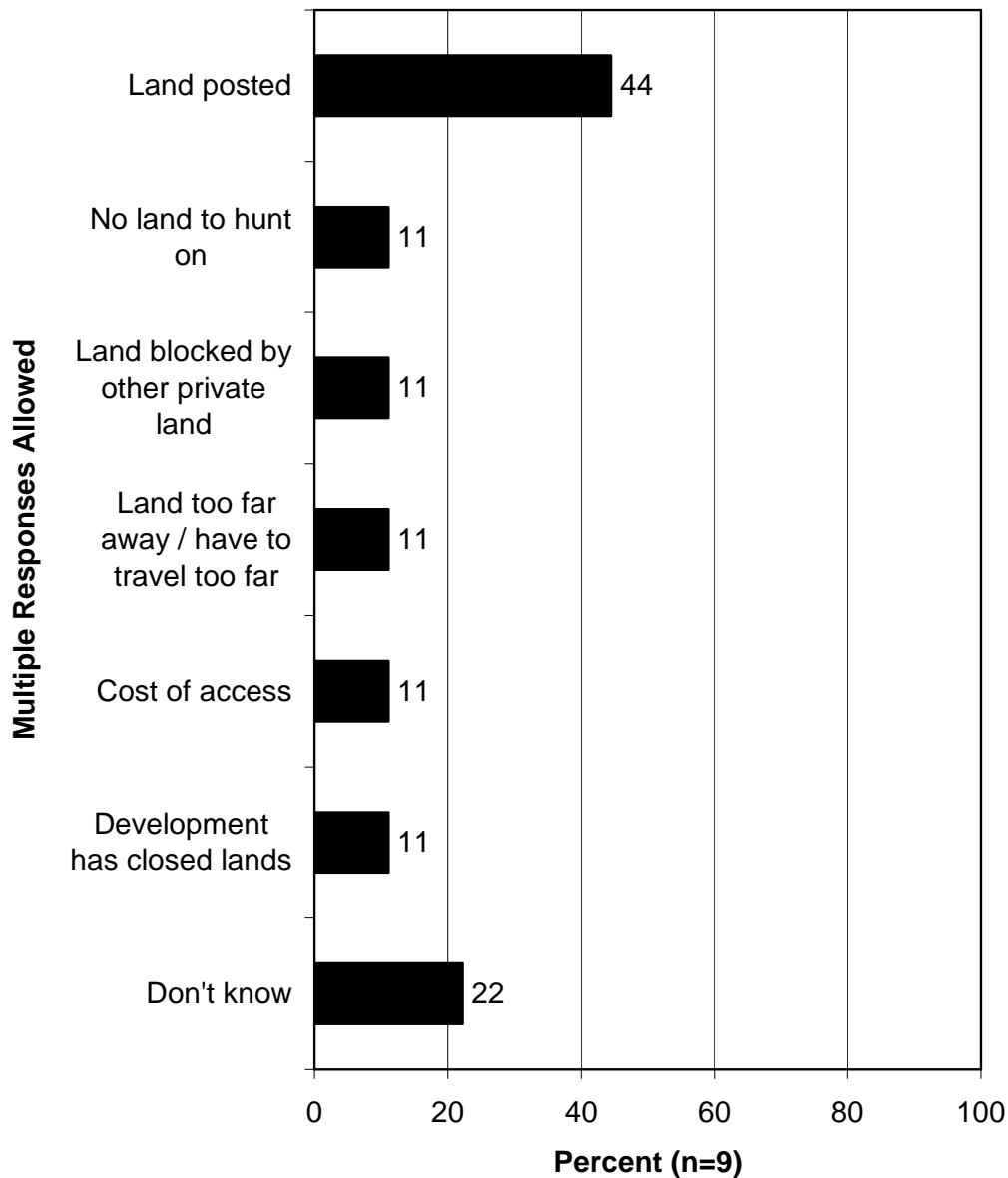
**Q66. What are the specific reasons you rate access to public land to hunt on in Washington as (fair/poor)? (Asked of those who hunted their primary species on public lands at least half the time and rated the access to public land as fair or poor.)**



**Q69. How would you rate access to *private* lands for hunting (species) in Washington? (Asked of those who hunted their primary species mostly on private lands.)**



**Q72. What are the specific reasons you rate access to private land to hunt on in Washington as (fair or poor)? (Asked of those who hunted their primary species mostly on private lands and who rated the access to private land as fair or poor.)**



## FACTORS THAT MAY POSITIVELY AFFECT ACCESS

- The survey asked 15 questions about things that would make hunting access easier (shown in Text Box 5 below). For each item, the survey asked hunters if it would be *very* effective, *somewhat* effective, or *not at all* effective at making it easier to access land on which to hunt. The starting point in going through the list in each interview was randomized. The results of the series of questions were then ranked.
- In looking at the ranking by the percentage saying that the items would be *very* effective at making access easier, 7 of the 15 items stand out—each with at least 60% saying it would be *very* effective: having signs that clearly mark boundaries of huntable land (77%), a Washington state agency acquiring more land for hunting (71%), having a list of landowners with telephone numbers where the respondent could call to ask to hunt on their land (69%), having paper maps of hunting lands for their primary species (65%), having timely information about any road closures (65%), having easements or designated public sections of leased and private lands preserved for public hunting (63%), and having up-to-date information on a website showing lands where hunting is allowed (62%).
  - Those same 7 items are at the top of the ranking by percentage saying it would be *very* or *somewhat* effective, albeit in a slightly different order.
  - A third graph in this series is shown consisting of the ranking by the percentage saying the item would be not at all effective at making access easier.

### TEXT BOX 5

#### Things that might make hunting access easier that were asked about in the survey:

Having a list of landowners with telephone numbers where the respondent could call to ask to hunt on their land

Having signs that clearly mark boundaries of huntable land

Having up-to-date information on a website showing lands where hunting is allowed

Having paper maps of hunting lands

Having maps of hunting lands on a website

Being able to find hunting lands using GPS

Having timely information about any road closures

Having more ATV access

Having more lands with ATV restrictions

Being able to pay a user fee to hunt restricted public land

Being able to pay a user fee to hunt private land

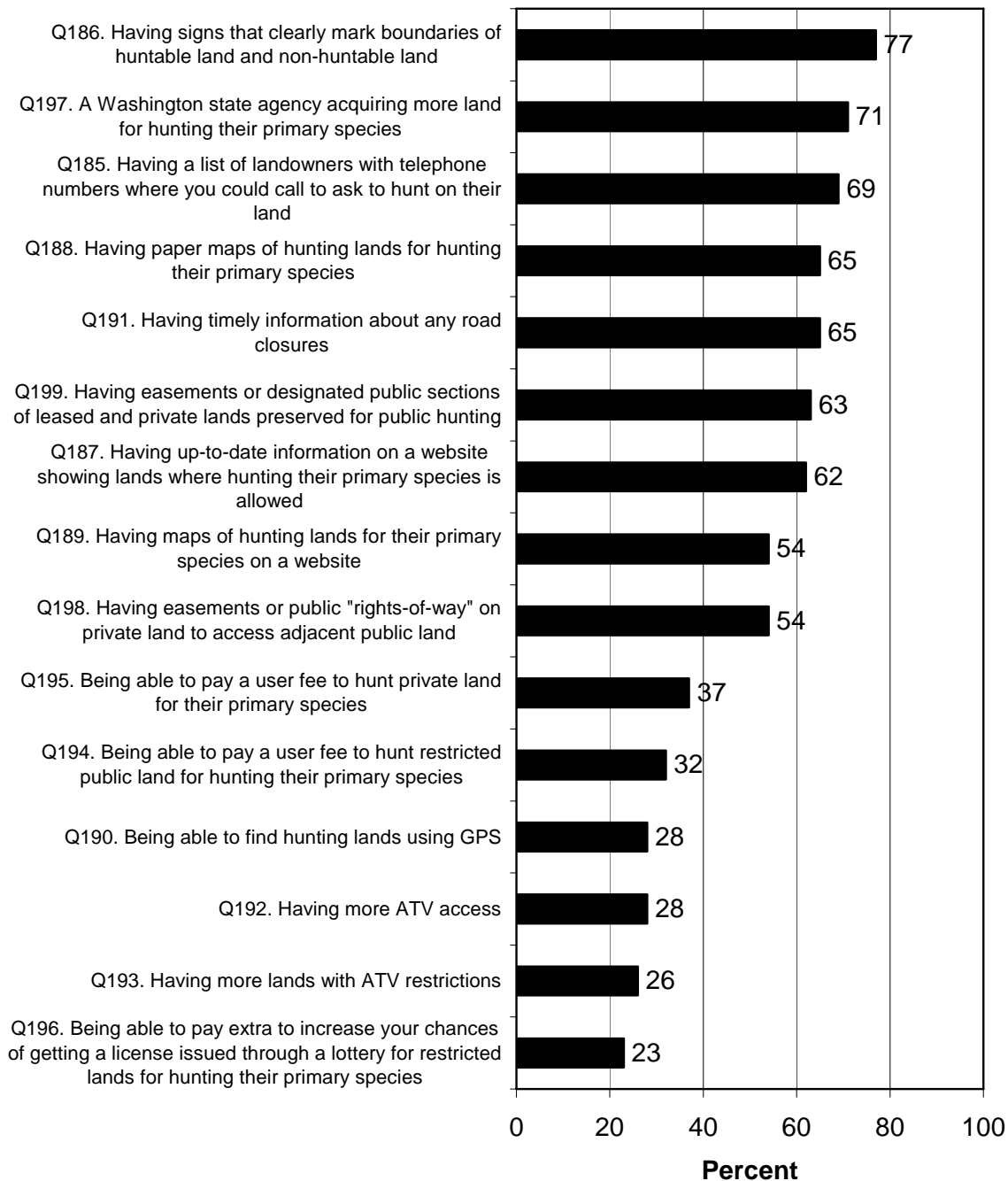
Being able to pay extra to increase the chances of getting a license issued through a lottery

A Washington state agency acquiring more land for hunting

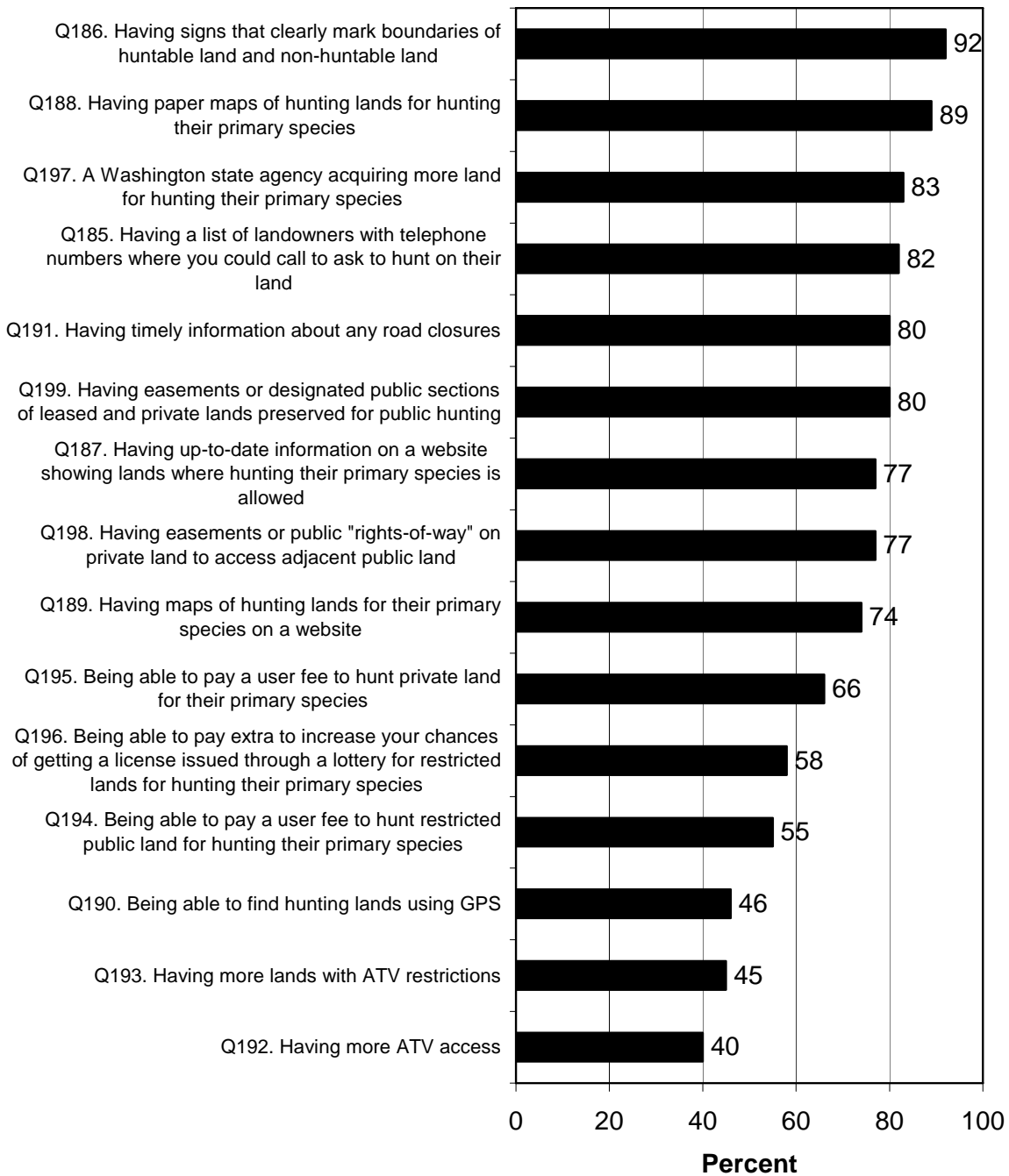
Having easements or public “rights-of-way” on private land to access adjacent public land

Having easements or designated public sections of leased and private lands preserved for public hunting

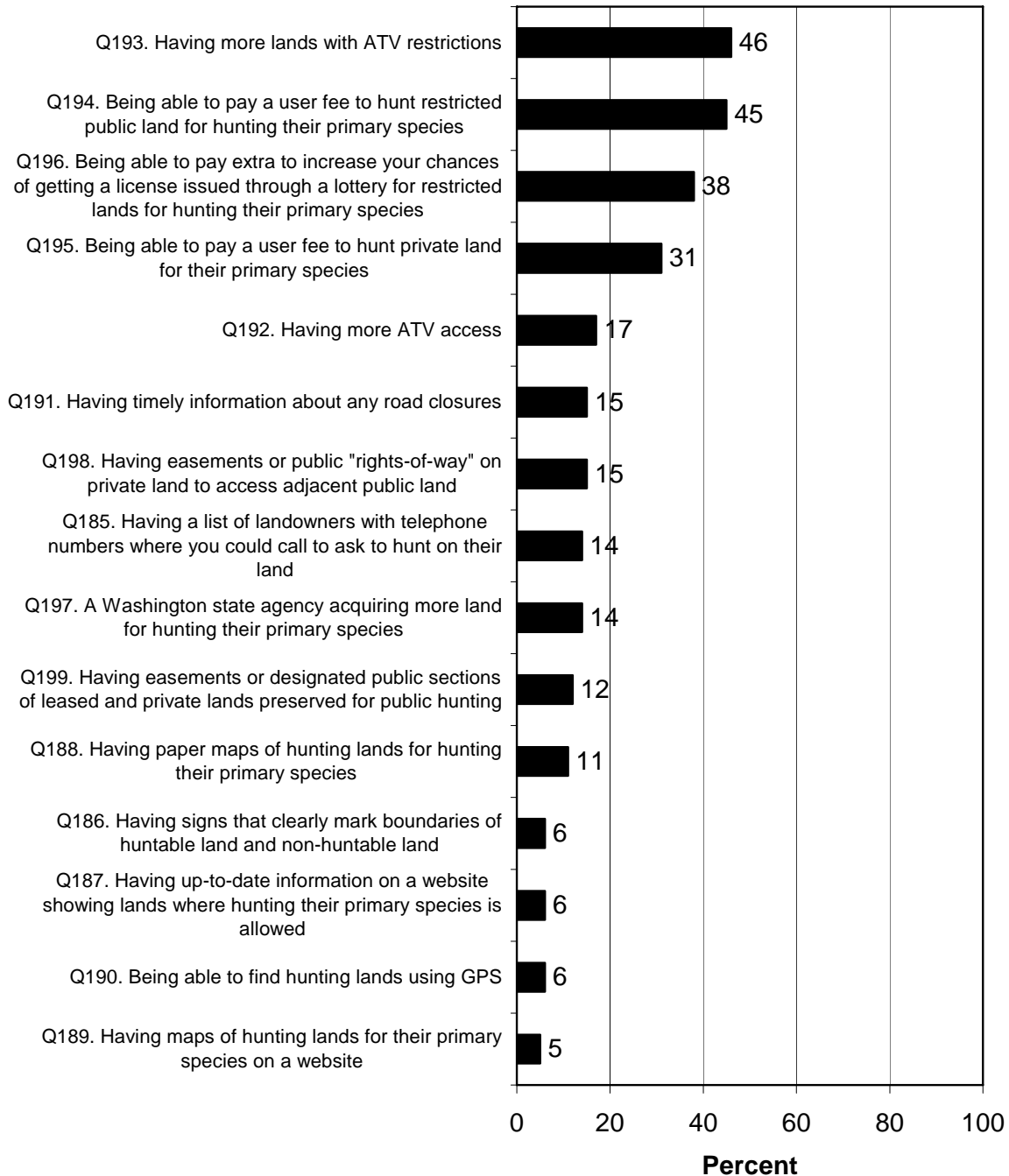
**Percent who indicated that the following would be very effective at making it easier for them to access land to hunt their primary species, including lands they don't currently hunt.**



**Percent who indicated that the following would be very or somewhat effective at making it easier for them to access land to hunt their primary species, including lands they don't currently hunt.**



**Percent who indicated that the following would not be effective at all at making it easier for them to access land to hunt their primary species, including lands they don't currently hunt.**



## POTENTIAL REASONS THAT LANDOWNERS MAY CLOSE THEIR LAND TO HUNTING

- The survey asked eight questions about possible reasons that landowners may close their land to public hunting (shown in Text Box 6 below). For each possible reason, the survey asked hunters if they think it is a *very important* reason, a *somewhat important* reason, or a *not at all* important reason that landowners close their land to the public for hunting. The starting point in going through the list in each interview was randomized. The results of the series of questions were then ranked.
- Three items stand out above the rest in the ranking by the percentage saying the reasons are *very important*, all related to misuse of the land: property damage caused by hunters (excluding litter) (76% say this is a *very important* reason that landowners close their land), irresponsible shooting, alcohol use, or similar behavior by hunters (75%), and litter (75%). In a middle tier are liability concerns (54%) and the landowner wanting to allow only personal/family use of the land (48%).
  - The results of the ranking by *very* or *somewhat* important are similar to the above ranking.
  - A third graph in this series is shown consisting of the ranking by the percentage saying the reason is not at all important.

### TEXT BOX 6

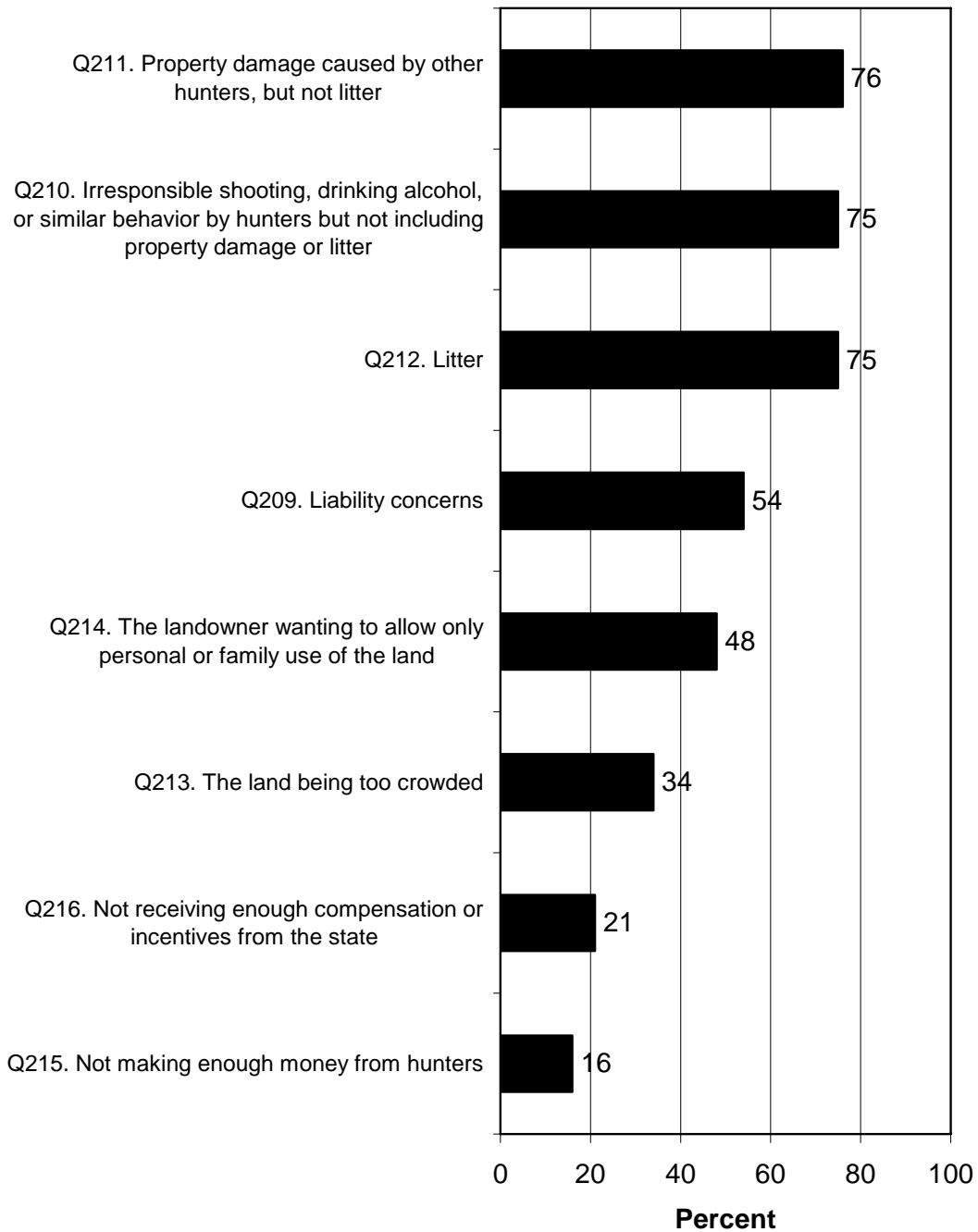
**Possible reasons that landowners may close their land to public hunting that were asked about in the survey:**

- Liability concerns
- Irresponsible shooting, drinking alcohol, or similar behavior by hunters (excluding property damage or litter)
- Property damage caused by other hunters (excluding litter)
- Litter
- Land being too crowded
- The landowner wanting to allow only personal or family use of the land
- The landowner not making enough money from hunters
- The landowner not receiving enough compensation or incentives from the state

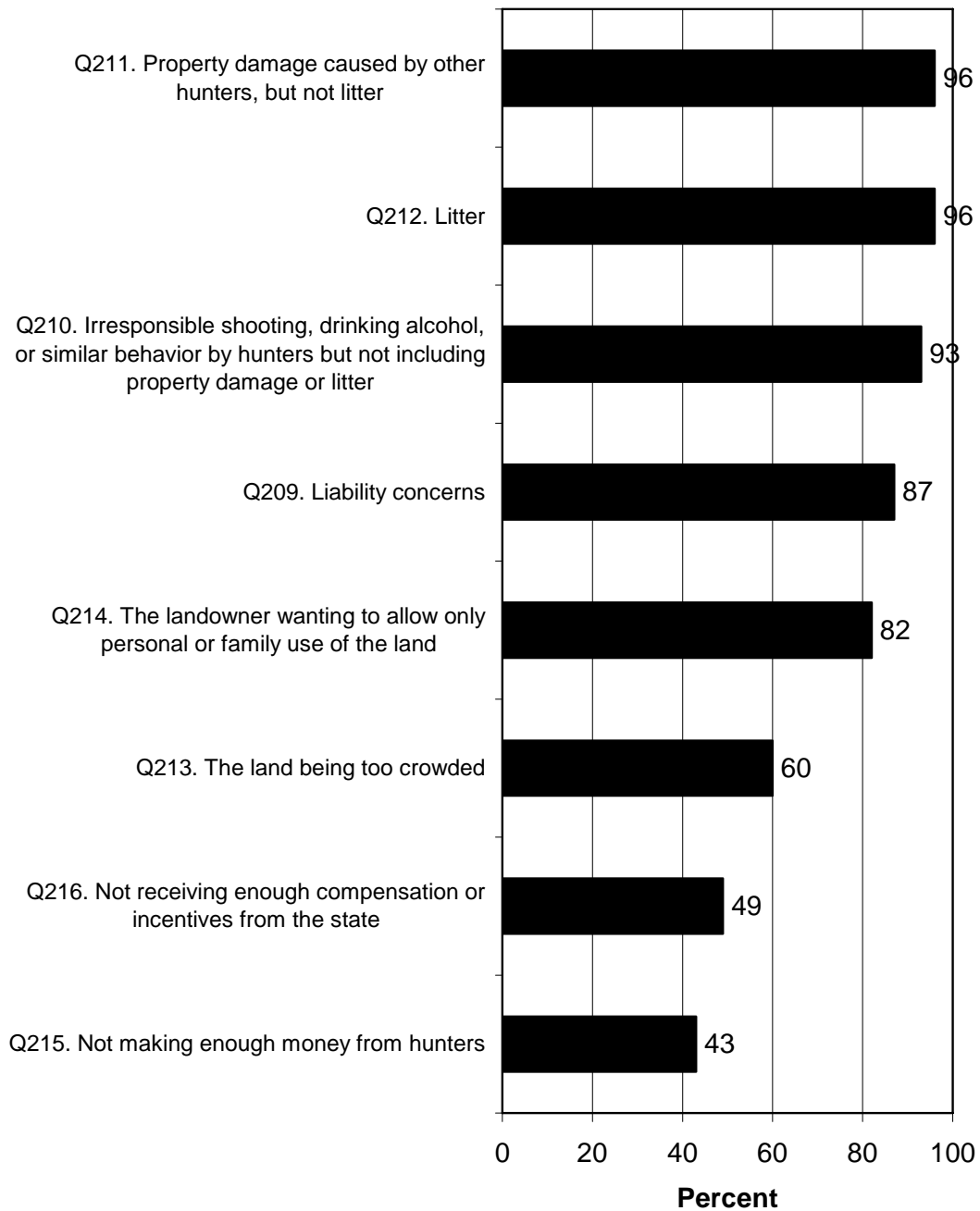
- The large majority of hunters (75%) think that a program that provides landowners with compensation or incentives for opening their lands to the public for hunting would be *very* or *somewhat* effective at improving hunting access in Washington.

- The overwhelming majority of hunters (91%) are *not* aware of any laws in Washington that reduce the liability of landowners who open their lands to the public for hunting; meanwhile, 6% are aware of such laws.
  - In a related question, the large majority of Washington hunters (85%) support laws to reduce landowner liability for landowners who open their lands to the public for hunting; only 3% oppose (the remainder give neutral answers).
  - Another related question found that a large majority of hunters (82%) think that legislation reducing landowner liability would be *very* or *somewhat* effective at improving hunter access to private lands in Washington; only 4% think it would *not* be at all effective.
  - Finally, the large majority of hunters (66%) agree that legislation reducing landowner liability would significantly increase the number of landowners who would open their lands to the public for hunting.

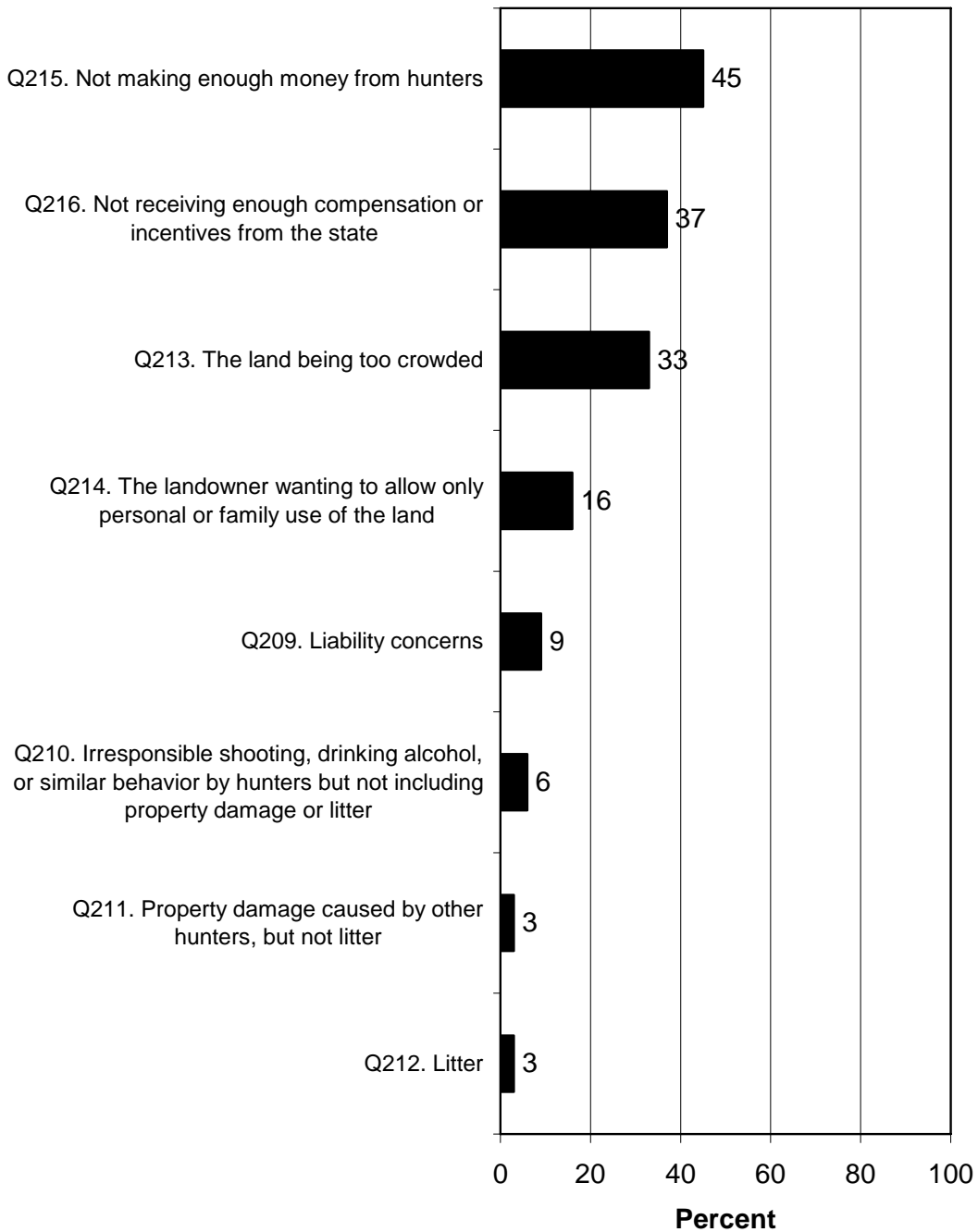
**Percent who think the following reasons are very important to landowners in Washington who close their lands to the public for hunting.**



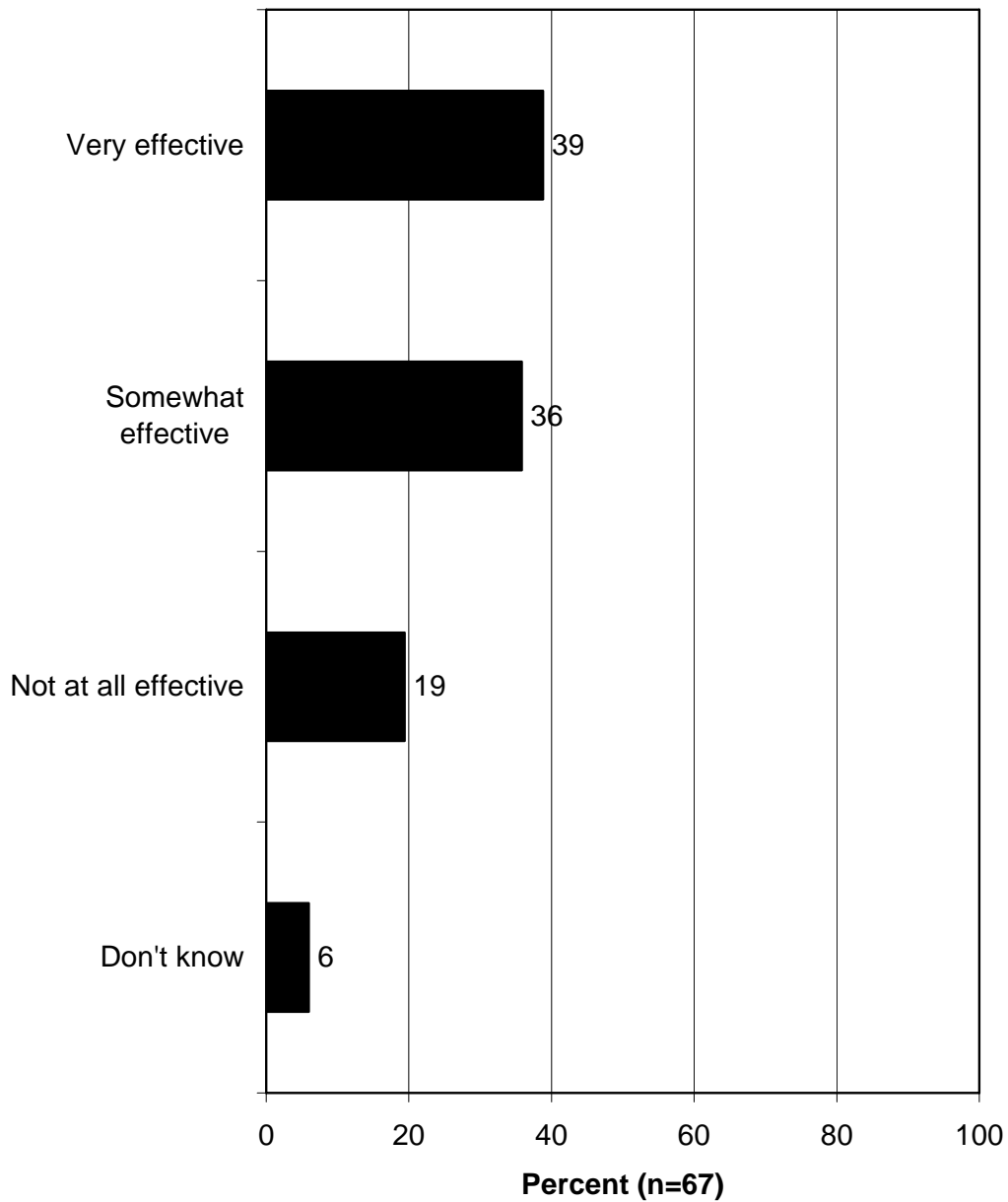
**Percent who think the following reasons are very or somewhat important to landowners in Washington who close their lands to the public for hunting.**



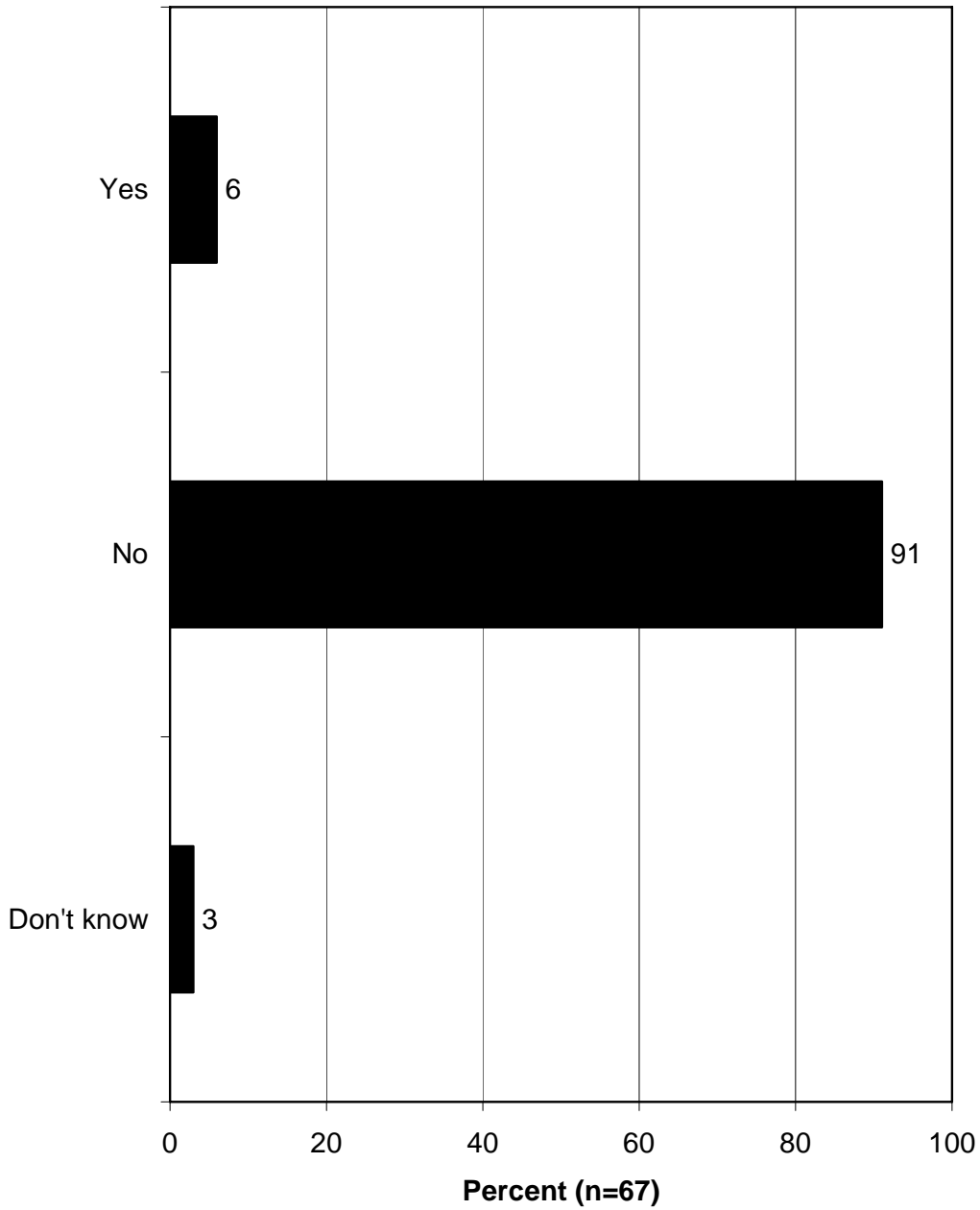
**Percent who think the following reasons are not important at all to landowners in Washington who close their lands to the public for hunting.**



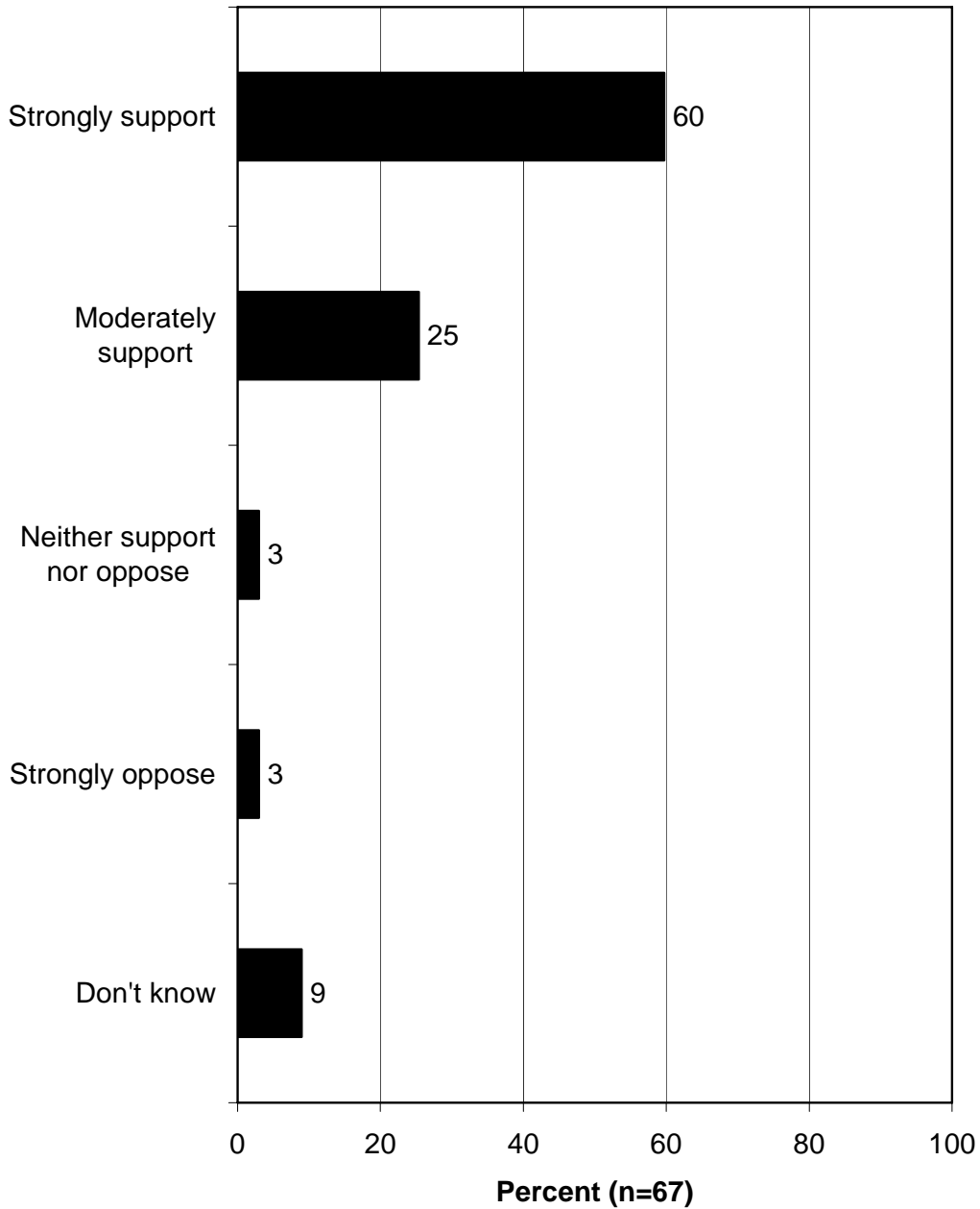
**Q217. In your opinion, how effective do you think a program providing landowners compensation or incentives for opening their lands to the public for hunting would be at improving hunting access to private lands in Washington?**



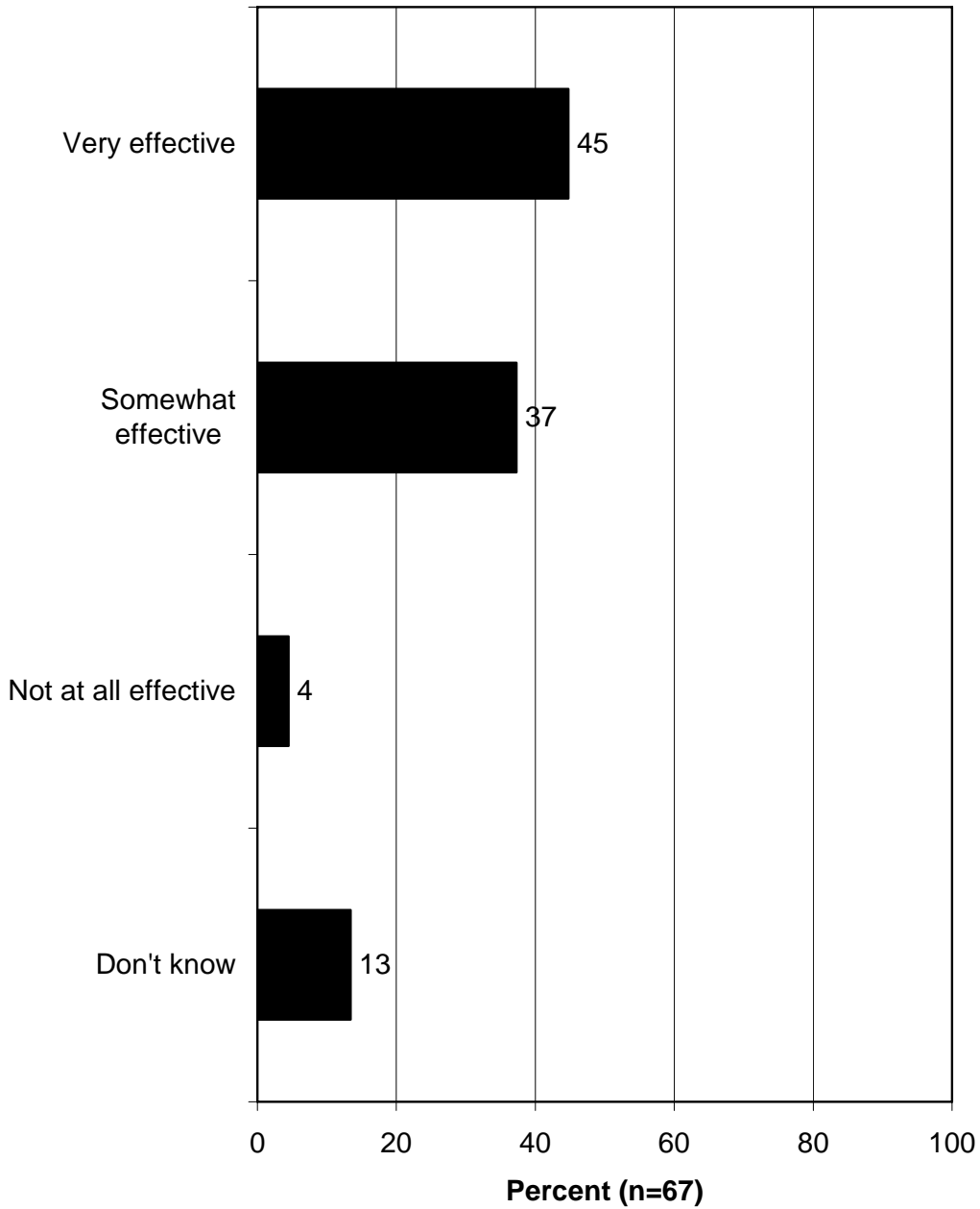
**Q218. Are you aware of any laws in Washington that reduce landowner liability for landowners who open their lands to the public for hunting?**



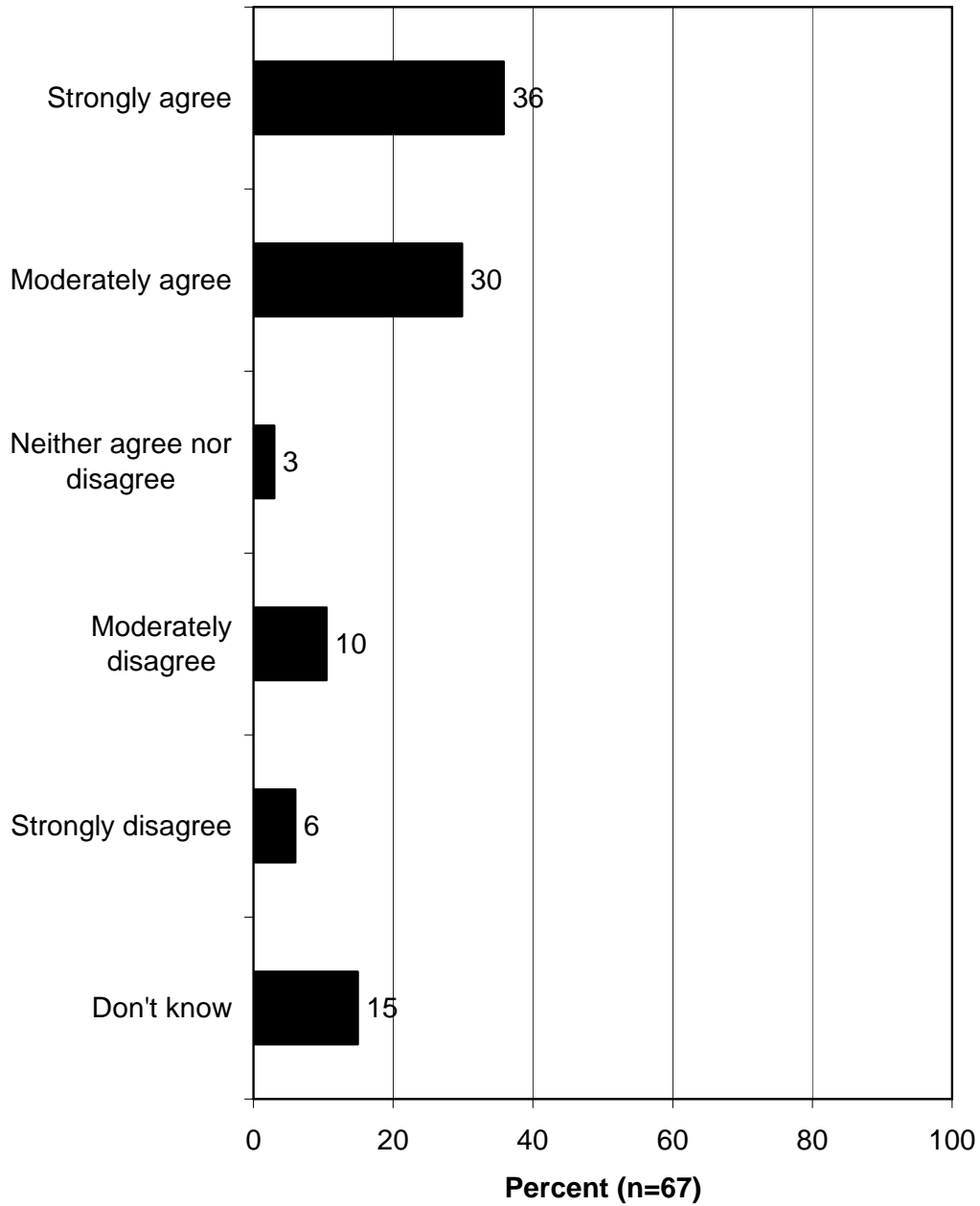
**Q219. Do you support or oppose Washington laws to reduce landowner liability for landowners who open their lands to the public for hunting?**



**Q220. In your opinion, how effective do you think legislation reducing landowner liability is or would be at improving hunting access to private lands in Washington?**



**Q224. Do you agree or disagree that legislation reducing landowner liability would significantly increase the number of landowners who open their lands to the public for hunting?**



## PARTICIPATION IN AND USE OF VARIOUS PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

- The survey asked about 14 programs in Washington that pertain to hunting access (some state programs and some national programs). The programs about which the survey asked are shown in Text Box 7 below.
  - A basic line of questioning asked hunters about their awareness of the various programs, and 6 of the 14 programs had awareness levels of 30% or higher: the Disabled Hunter Road Access Entry program (51% were *very* or *somewhat* aware of it), the Conservation Reserve Program (39%), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas or WPAs (38%), the Hunt by Written Permission program (37%), the Landowner Hunting Permit program (35%), and the Feel Free to Hunt program (30%). All other programs have awareness levels of 21% or lower.
  - Another series of questions asked hunters about their use of or participation in the 14 access programs. Those programs with the highest rates of use/participation are the Feel Free to Hunt program (13%), the Conservation Reserve Program (11%), the Hunt by Written Permission program (11%), the GoHunt GIS Mapping System (9%), and the Disabled Hunter Road Access Entry program (8%).

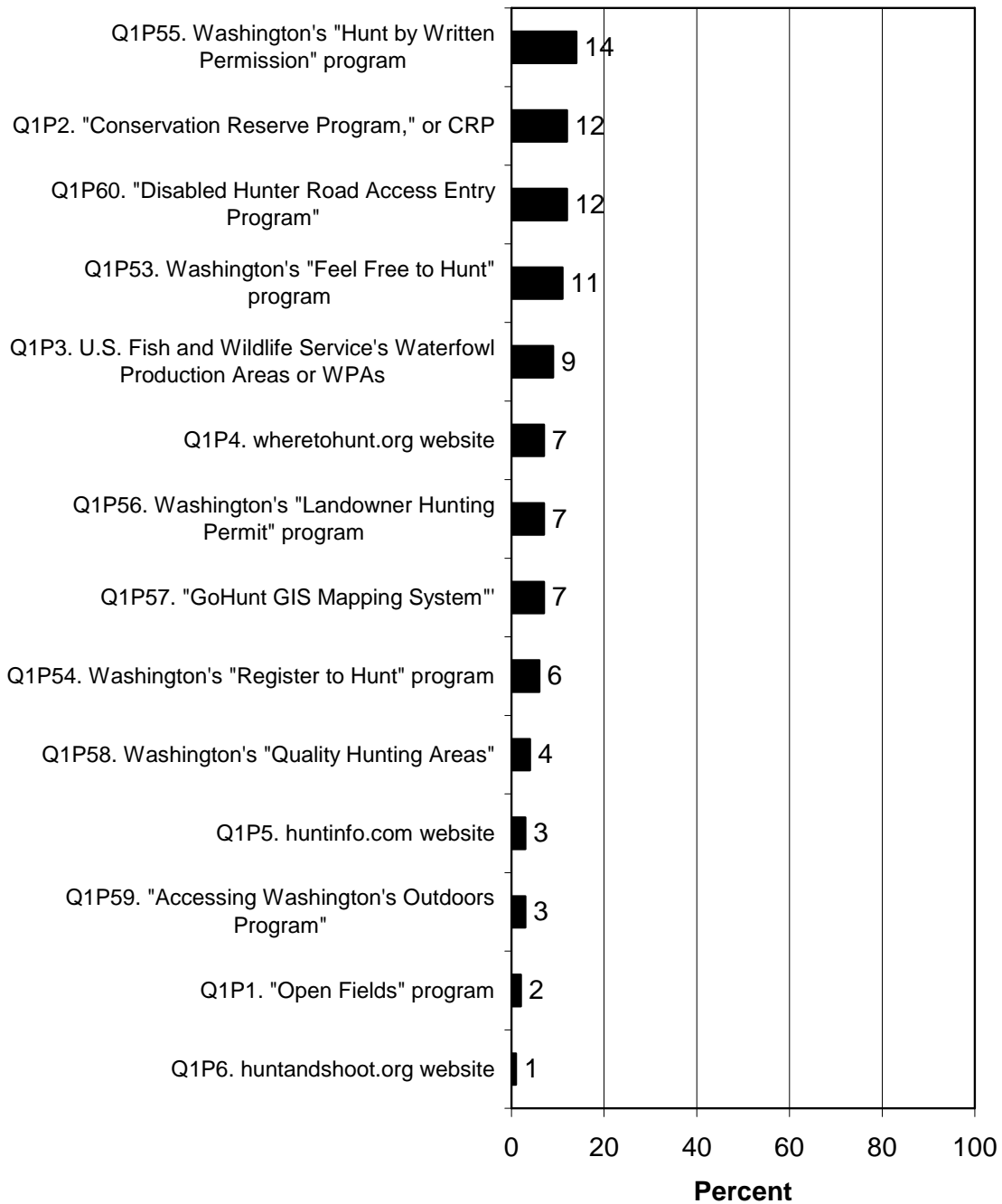
### TEXT BOX 7

#### Hunting access programs that were asked about in the survey:

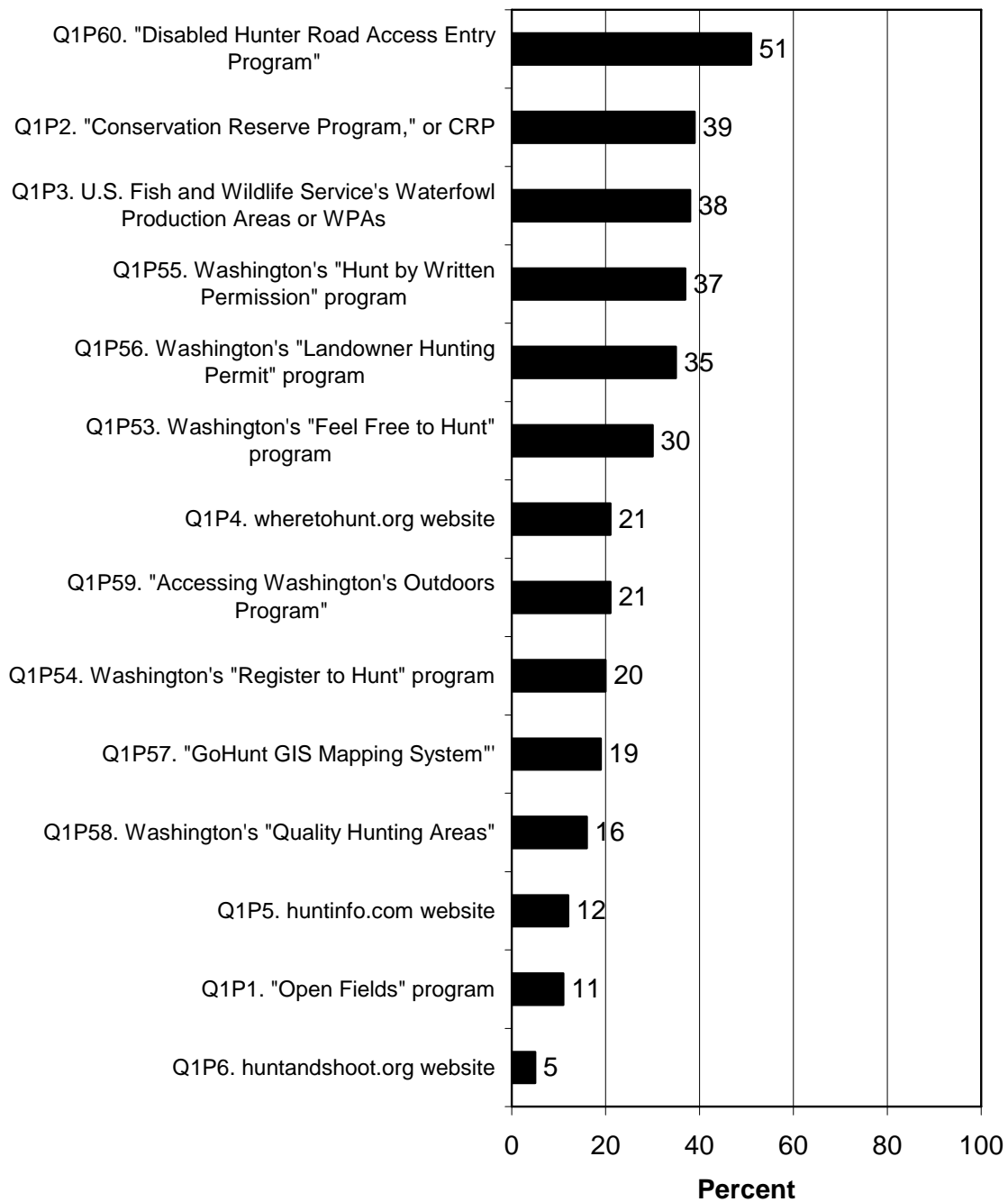
The Open Fields program  
The Conservation Reserve Program  
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas or WPAs  
The wheretohunt.org website  
The huntinfo.com website  
The huntandshoot.org website  
The Feel Free to Hunt program  
The Register to Hunt program  
The Hunt by Written Permission program  
The Landowner Hunting Permit program  
The GoHunt GIS Mapping System  
Washington's Quality Hunting Areas  
The Accessing Washington's Outdoors program  
The Disabled Hunter Road Access Entry program

- For each program of which a hunter was aware, the survey asked him/her to rate it at making hunting access easier.
  - The programs with the highest percentages of hunters giving an *excellent* or *good* rating, all at more than 40%, are the Feel Free to Hunt program (48%), the Open Fields program (47%), the GoHunt GIS Mapping System (47%), the Conservation Reserve Program (43%), the Register to Hunt program (43%), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas (41%).
  - The graphs for this series of questions also include the percentages giving a rating of *excellent*, giving a rating of *fair* or *poor* combined, and giving a rating of *poor*.
  - Follow-up questions asked hunters to indicate why they thought the programs deserved ratings of excellent (for those they rated excellent) or why they did not rate it higher (for those they rated as good, fair, or poor). These graphs are shown.
  - Finally, for each program, the survey asked those who used it to indicate if they thought there was anything that would make the program more effective. These graphs are shown.
  
- The survey included a very specific question about use of private lands enrolled in any Walk-In Access program in Washington. A quarter of hunters (25%) hunt their primary species *often* or *sometimes* on such lands. On the other hand, the majority (56%) *never* do so.

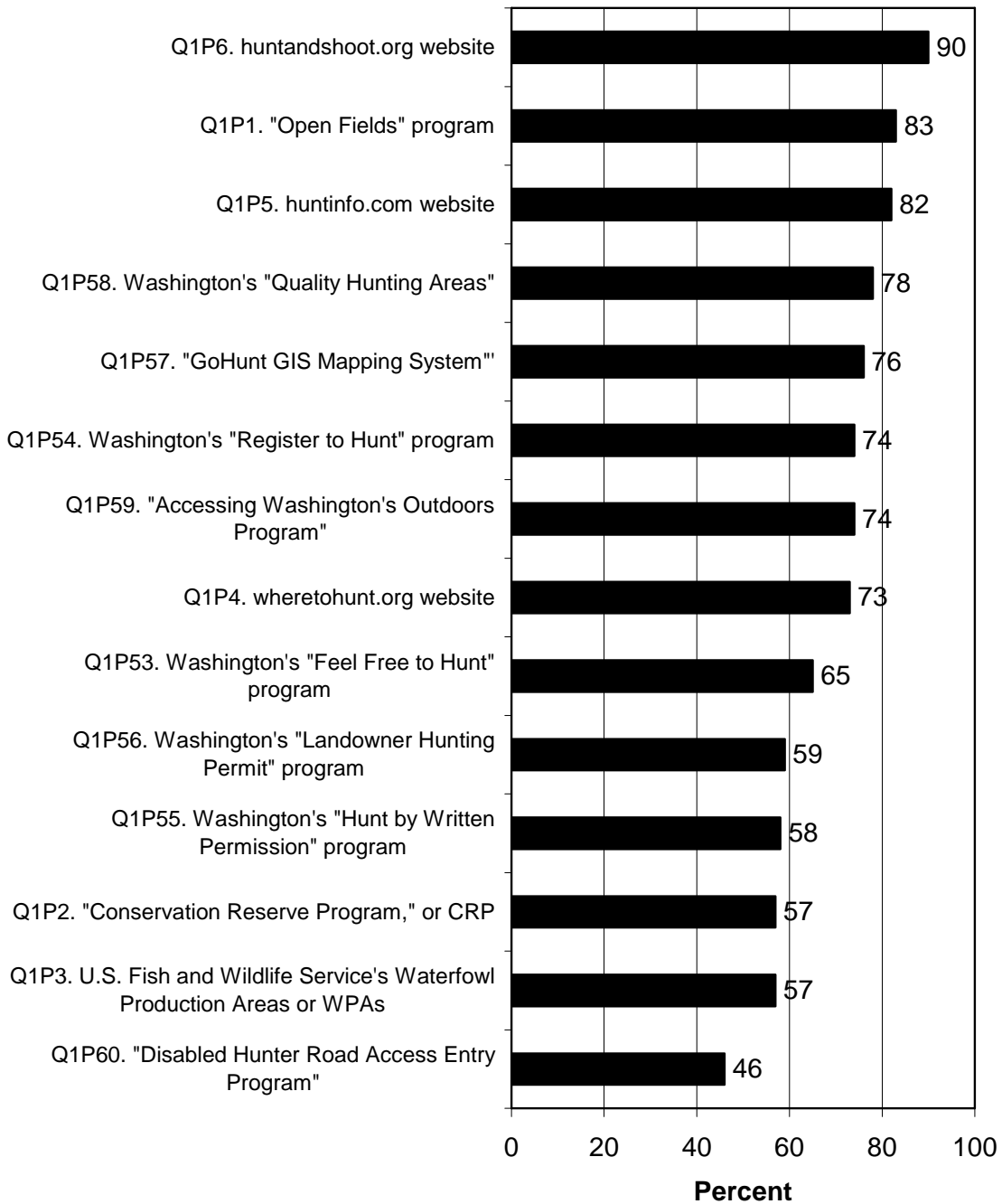
### Percent who are very aware of the following hunting-related programs and resources.



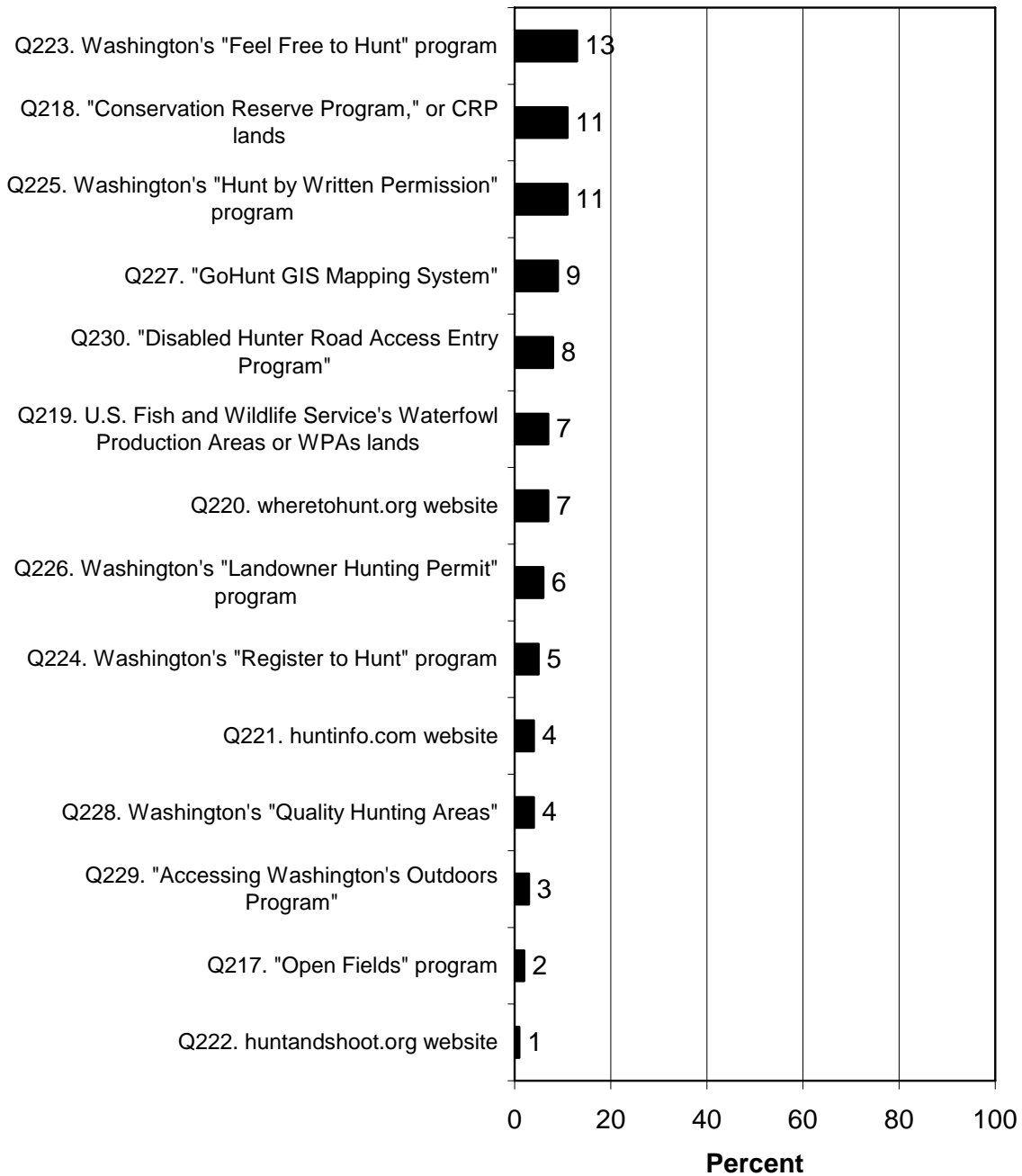
**Percent who are very or somewhat aware of the following hunting-related programs and resources.**



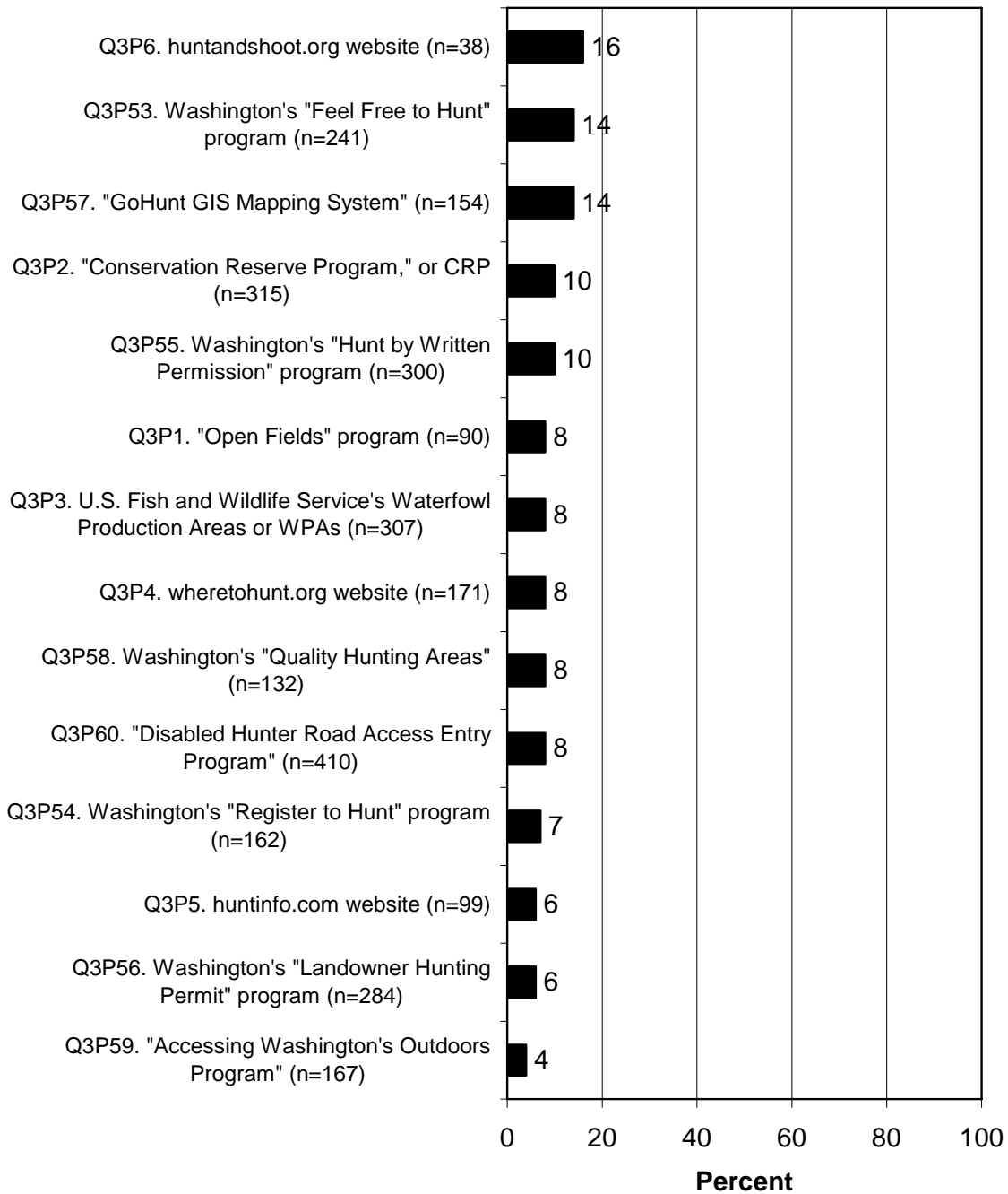
**Percent who are not at all aware of the following hunting-related programs and resources.**



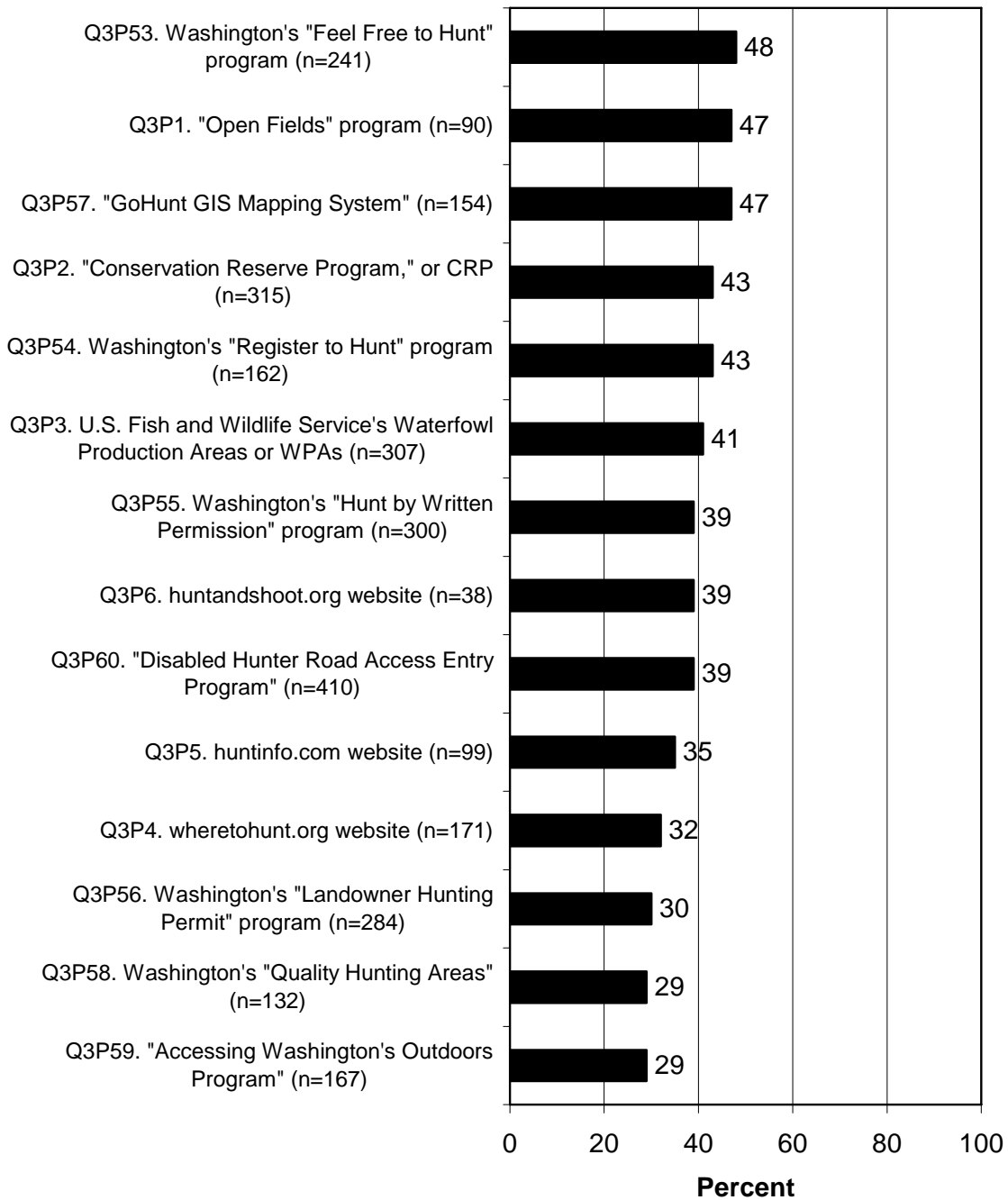
**Percent who have used or participated in the following programs in the past 5 years. (Those who were unaware of the program were considered to have not used it.)**



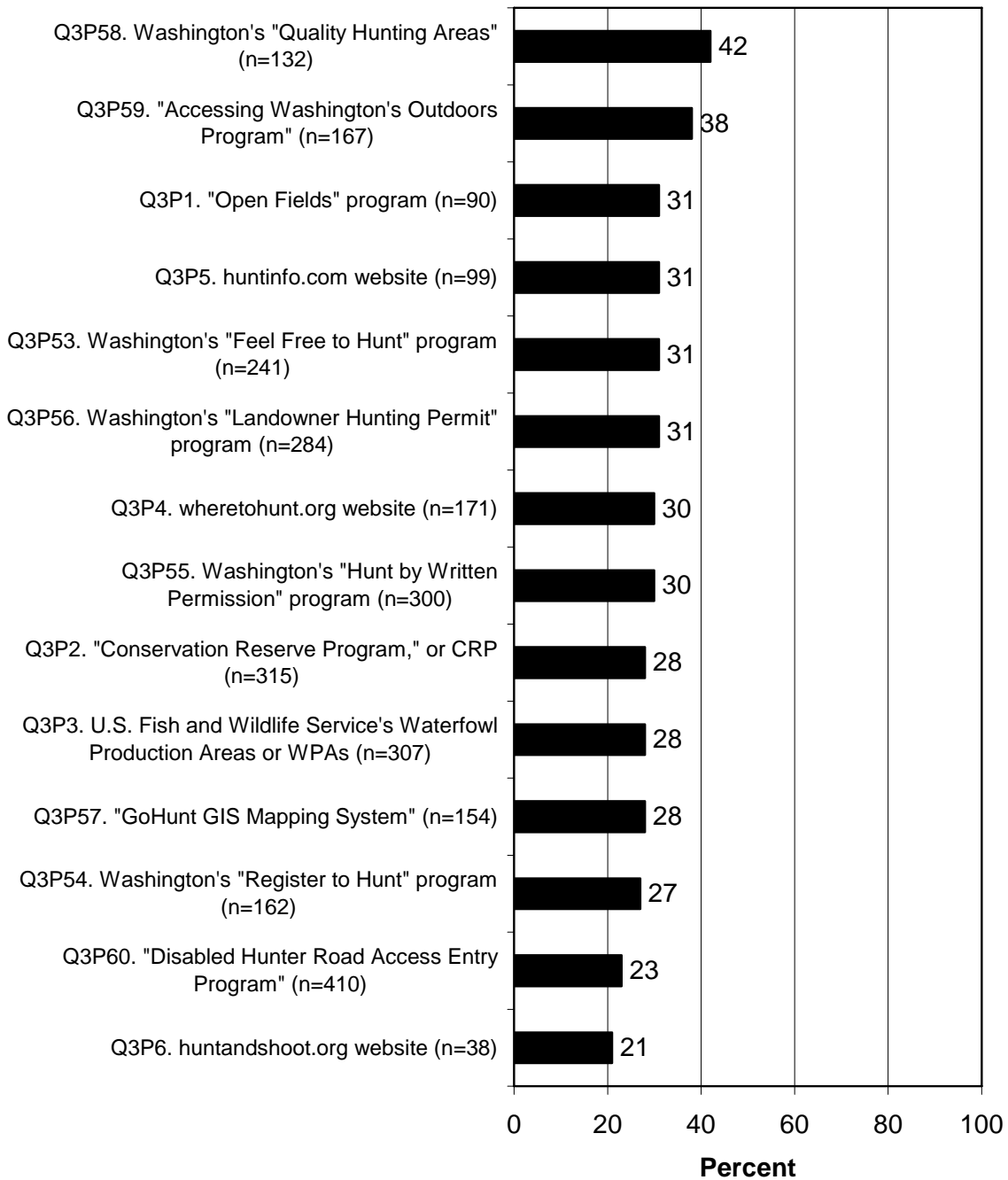
**Percent who rated the following programs and resources of which they were aware as excellent.**



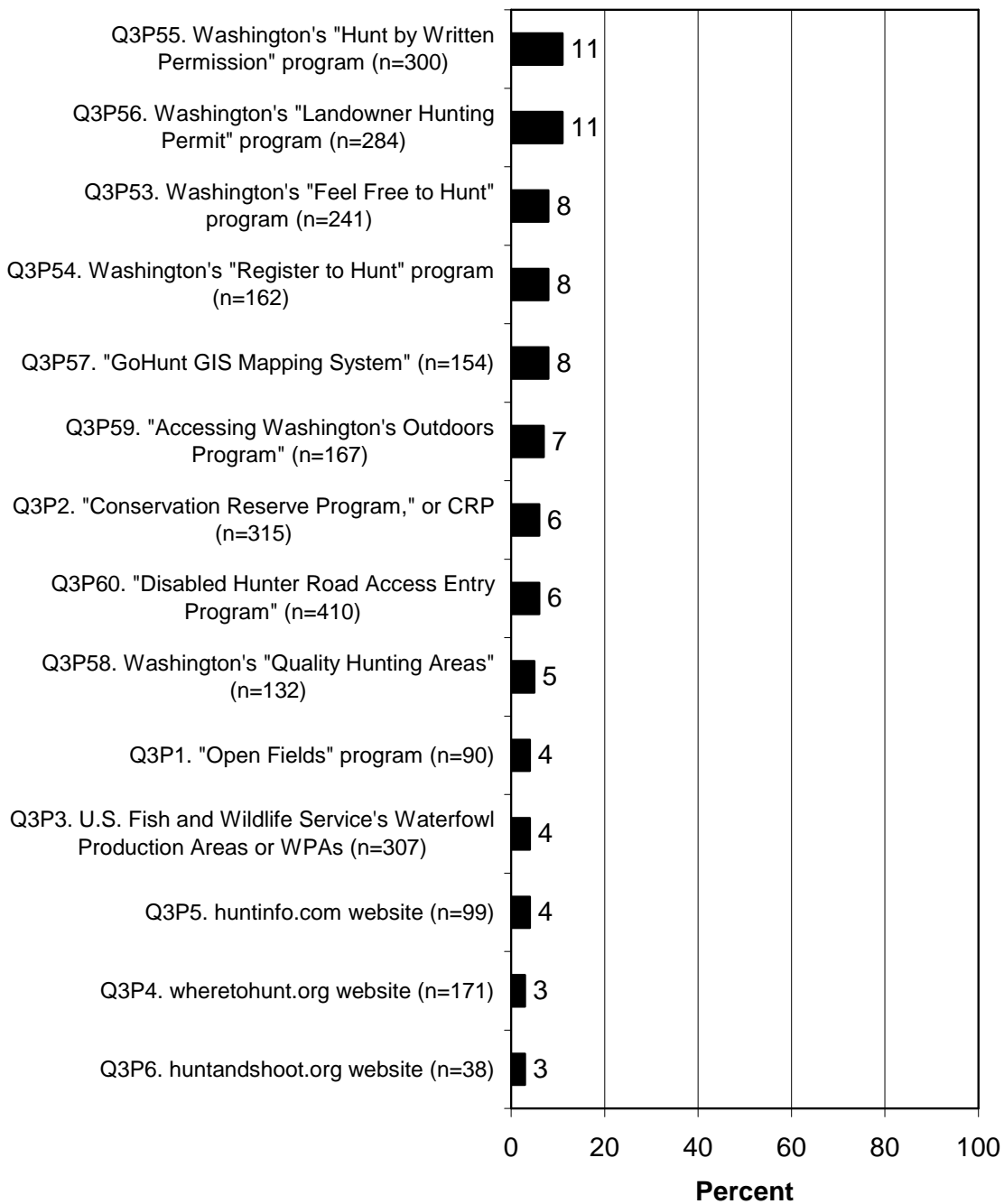
**Percent who rated the following programs and resources of which they were aware as excellent or good.**



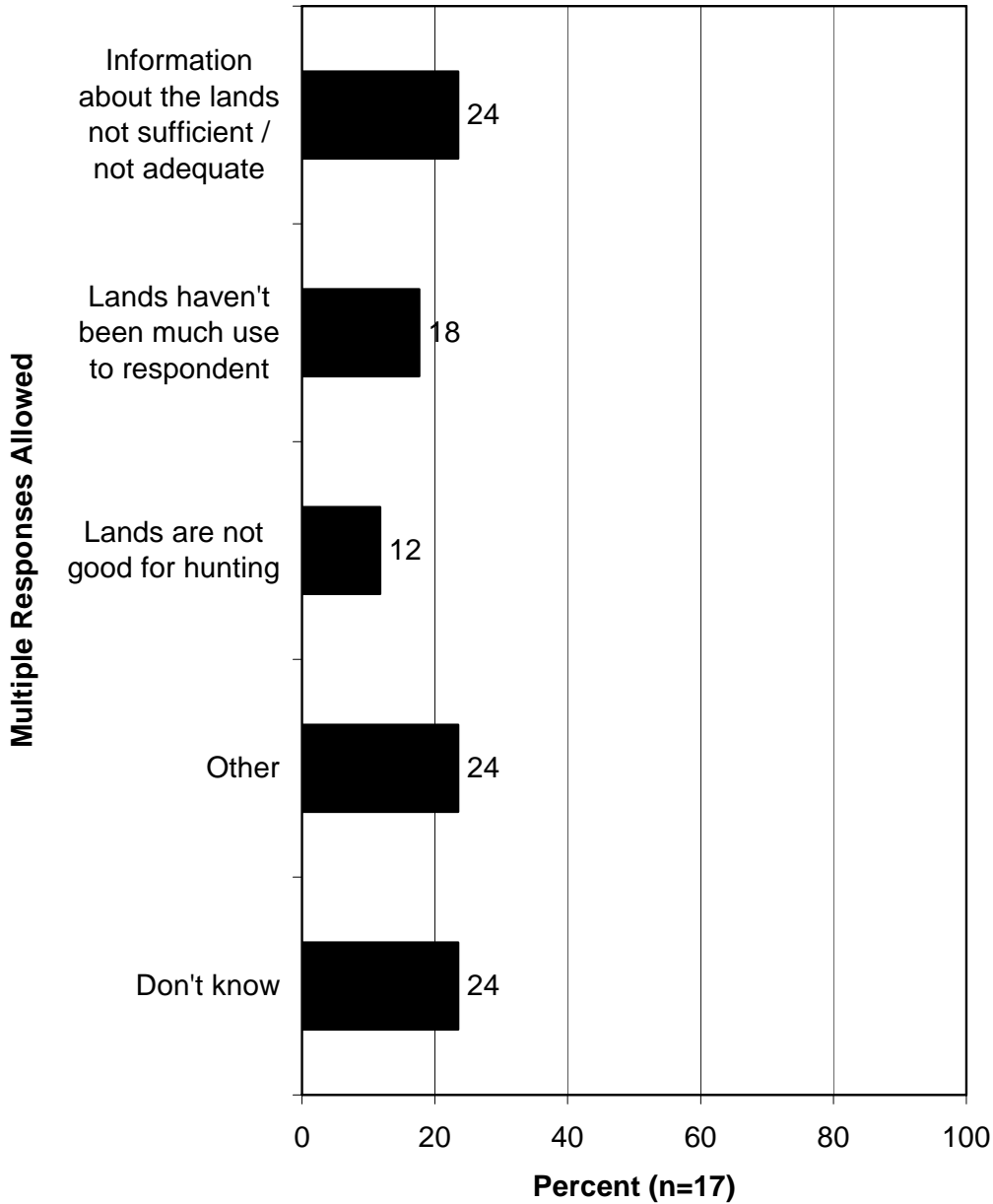
**Percent who rated the following programs and resources of which they were aware as fair or poor.**



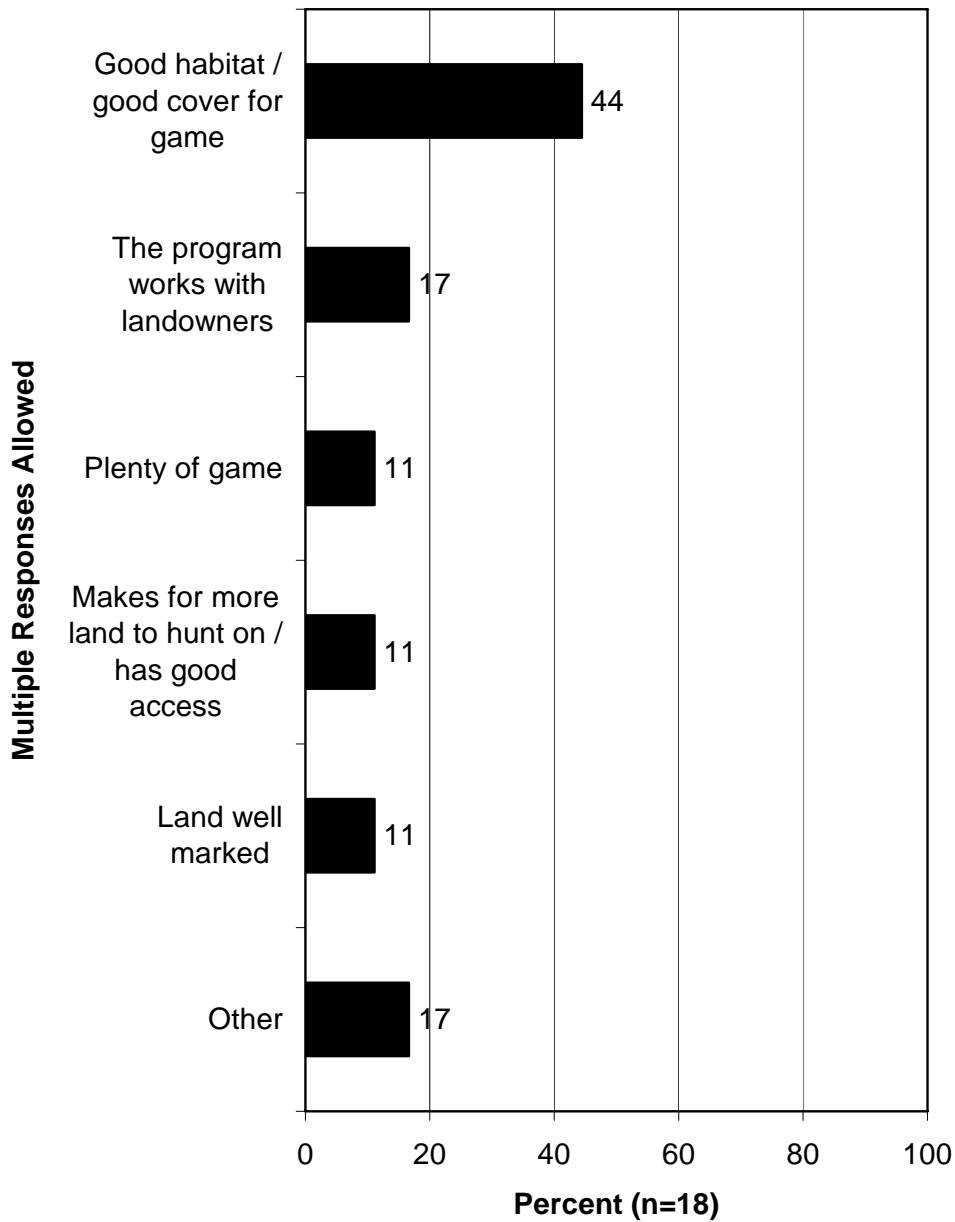
**Percent who rated the following programs and resources of which they were aware as poor.**



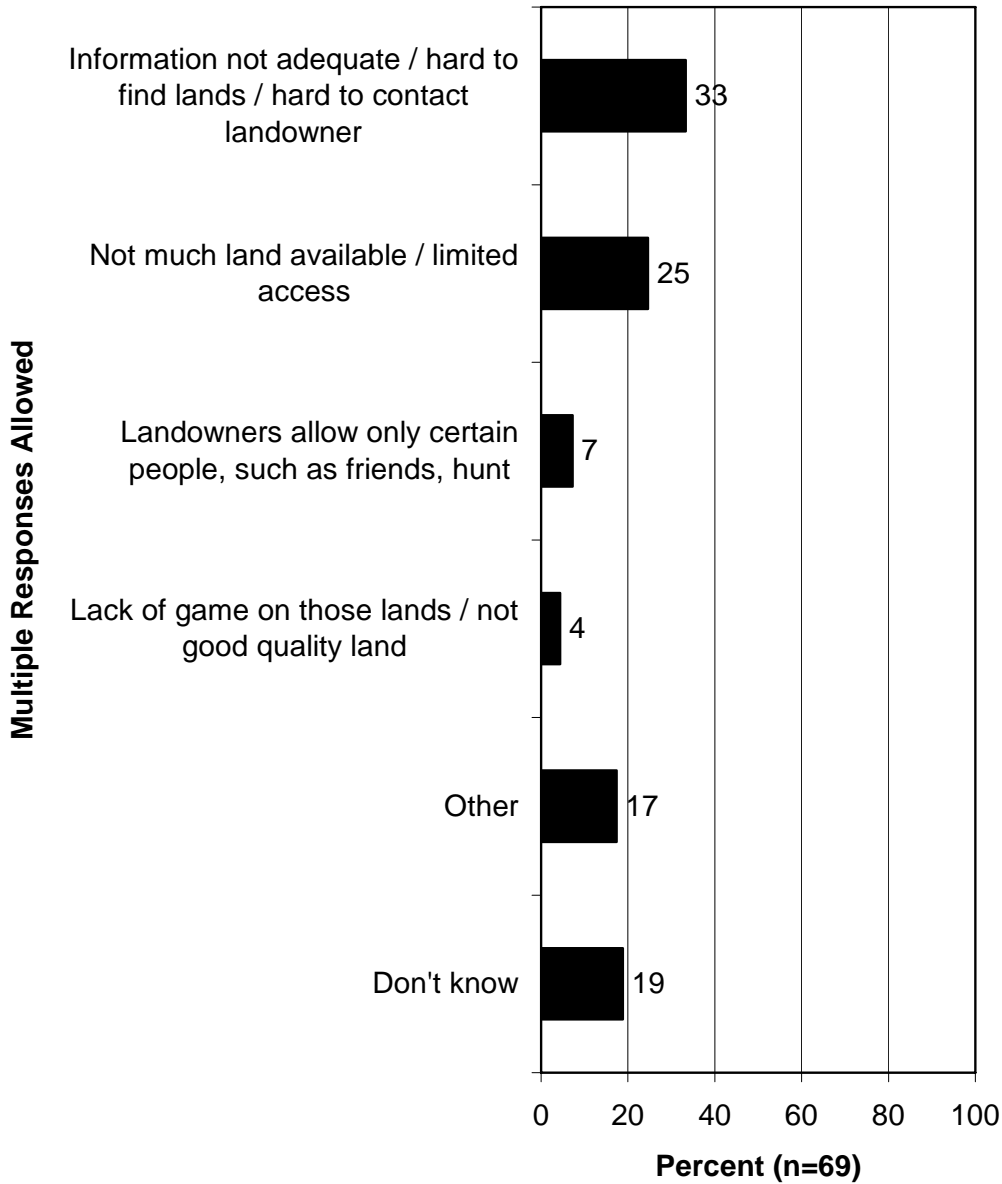
**Q4P1. You rated the "Open Fields" program as good, fair, or poor at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the program not deserve a higher rating? (Asked of those who used the program and rated it good, fair, or poor.)**



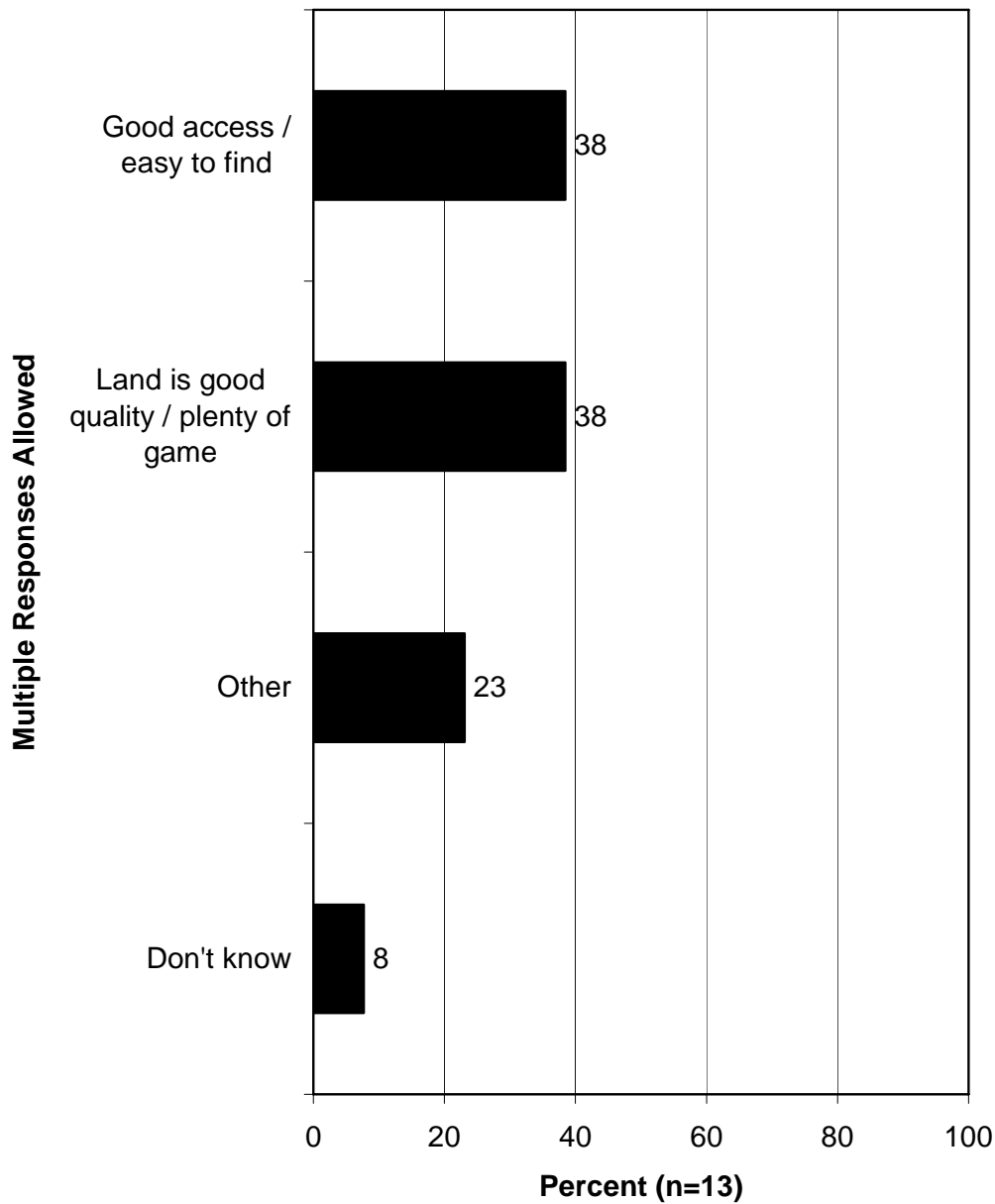
**Q4P2. You rated the "Conservation Reserve Program" as excellent at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the program deserve an excellent rating? (Asked of those who used the program and rated it excellent.)**



**Q4P2. You rated the "Conservation Reserve Program" as good, fair, or poor at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the program not deserve a higher rating? (Asked of those who used the program and rated it good, fair, or poor.)**



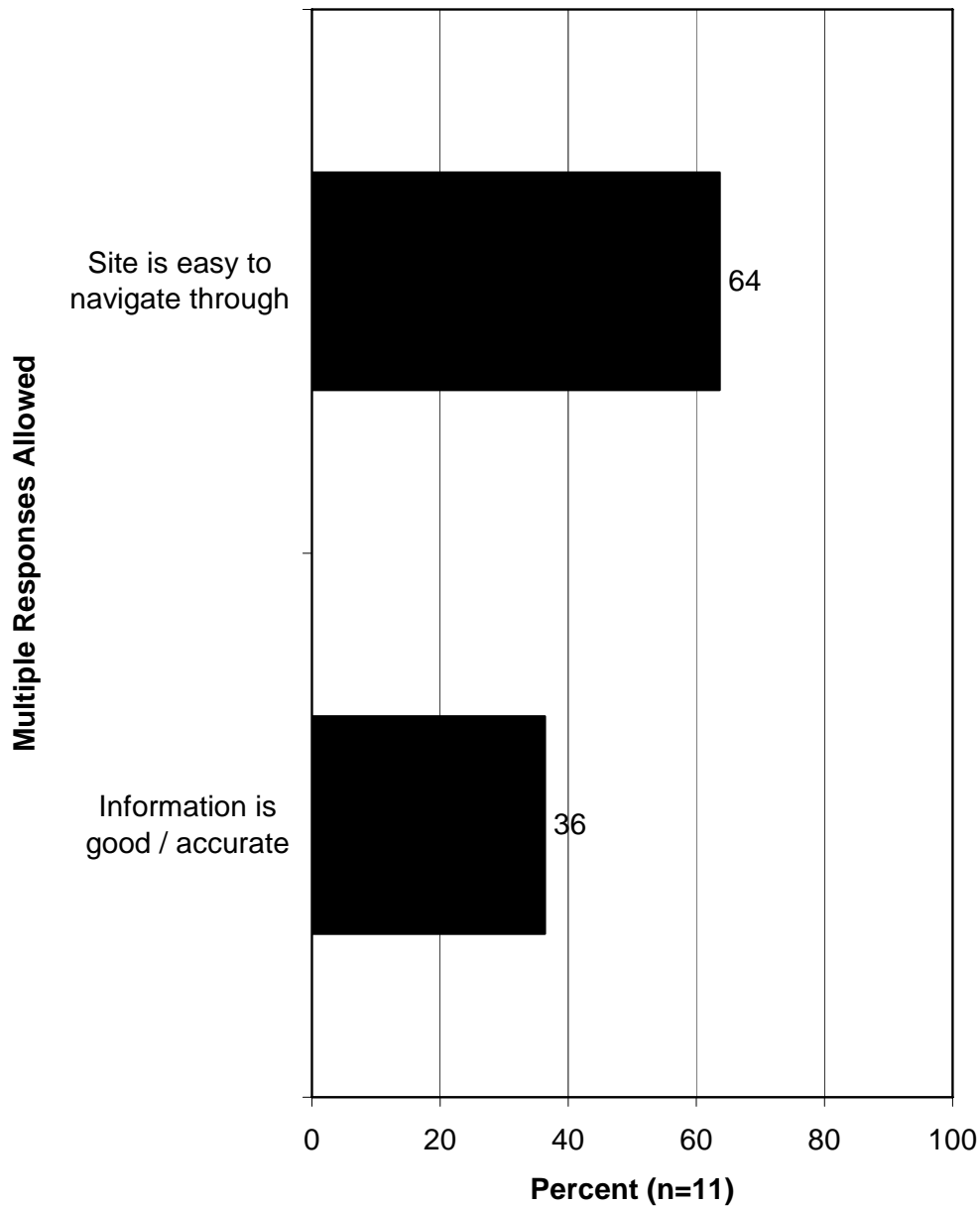
**Q4P3. You rated the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas program as excellent at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the program deserve an excellent rating? (Asked of those who used the program and rated it excellent.)**



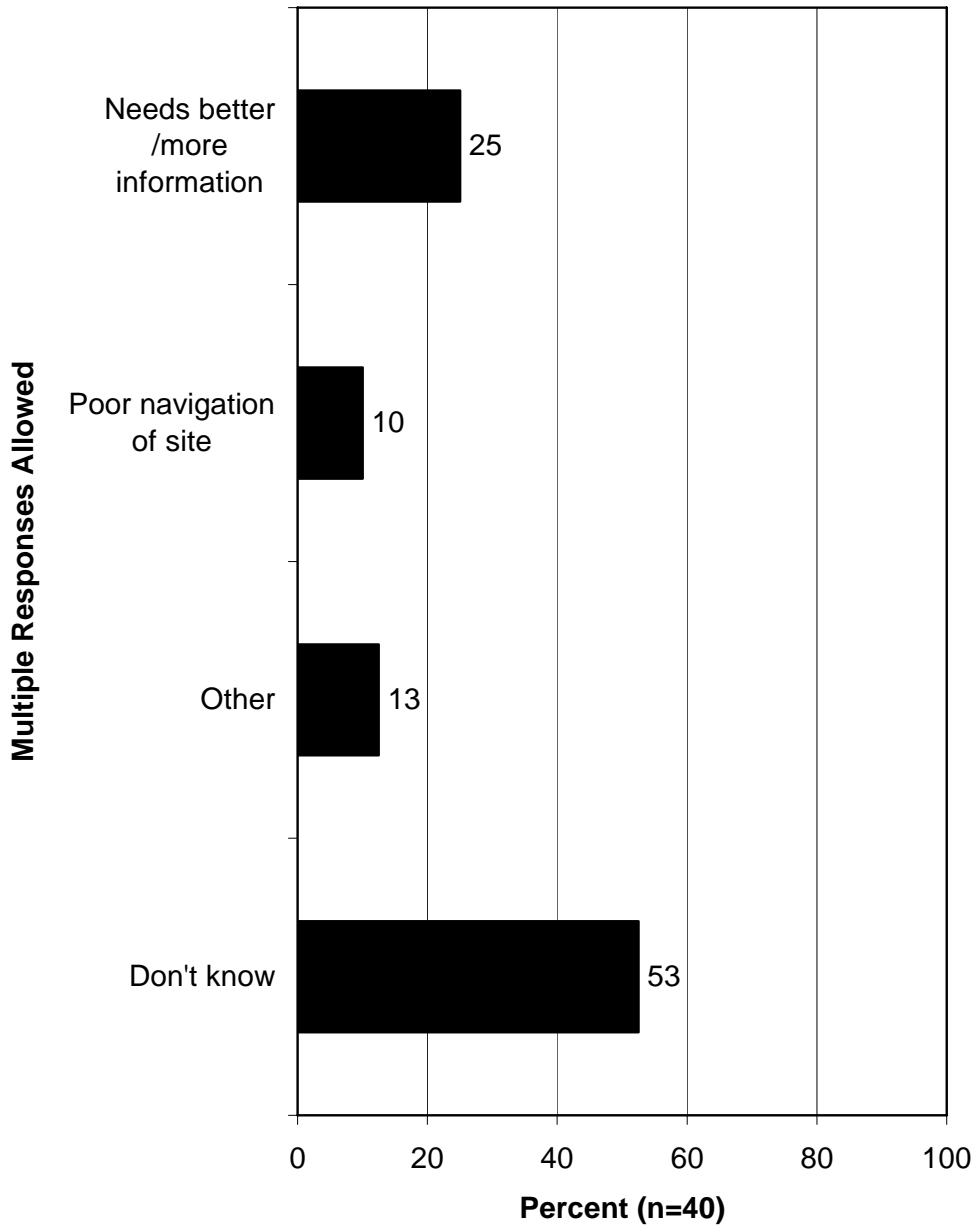
**Q4P3. You rated the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas program as good, fair, or poor at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the program not deserve a higher rating? (Asked of those who used the program and rated it good, fair, or poor.)**



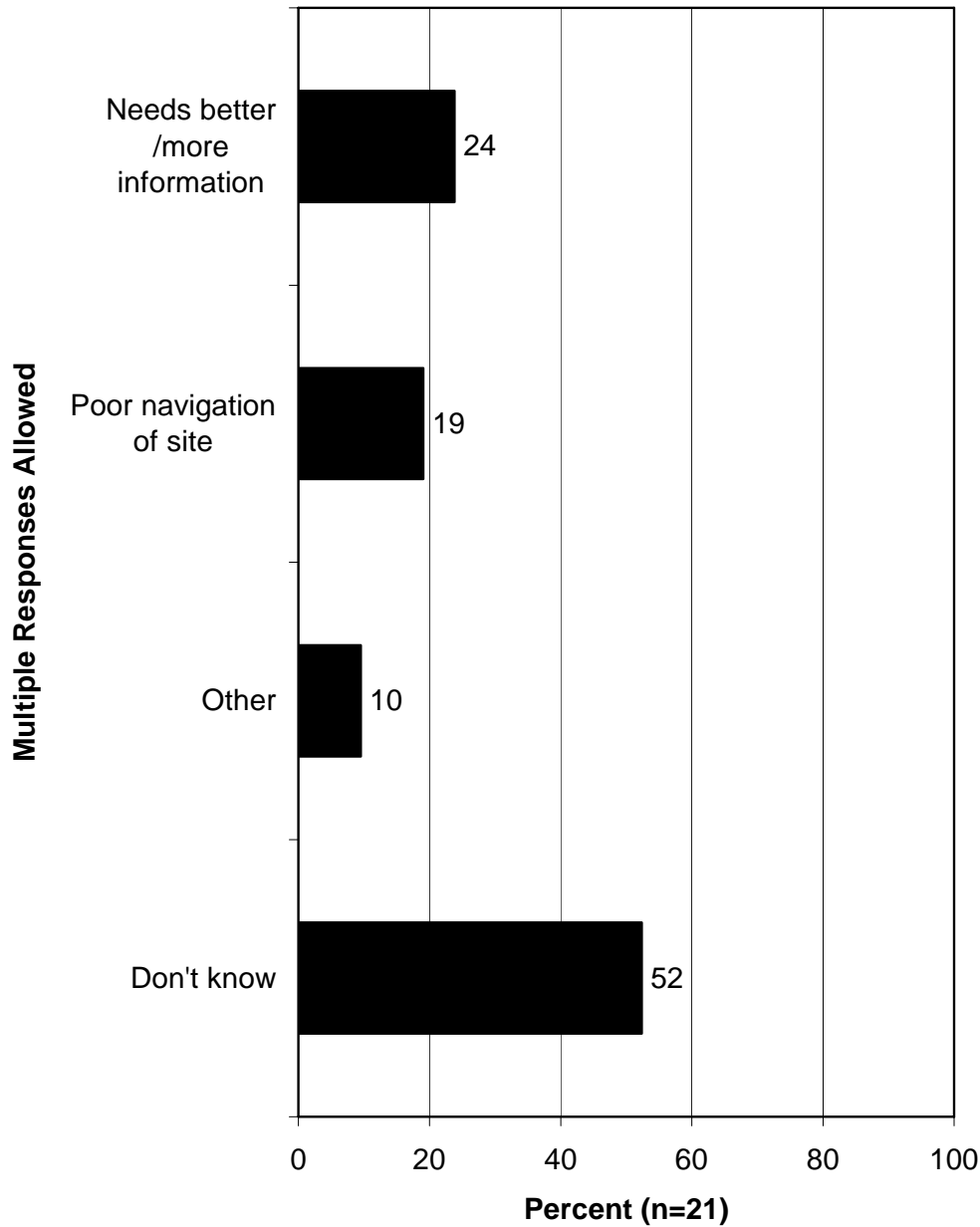
**Q4P4. You rated the wheretohunt.org website as excellent at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the resource deserve an excellent rating? (Asked of those who used the website and rated it excellent.)**



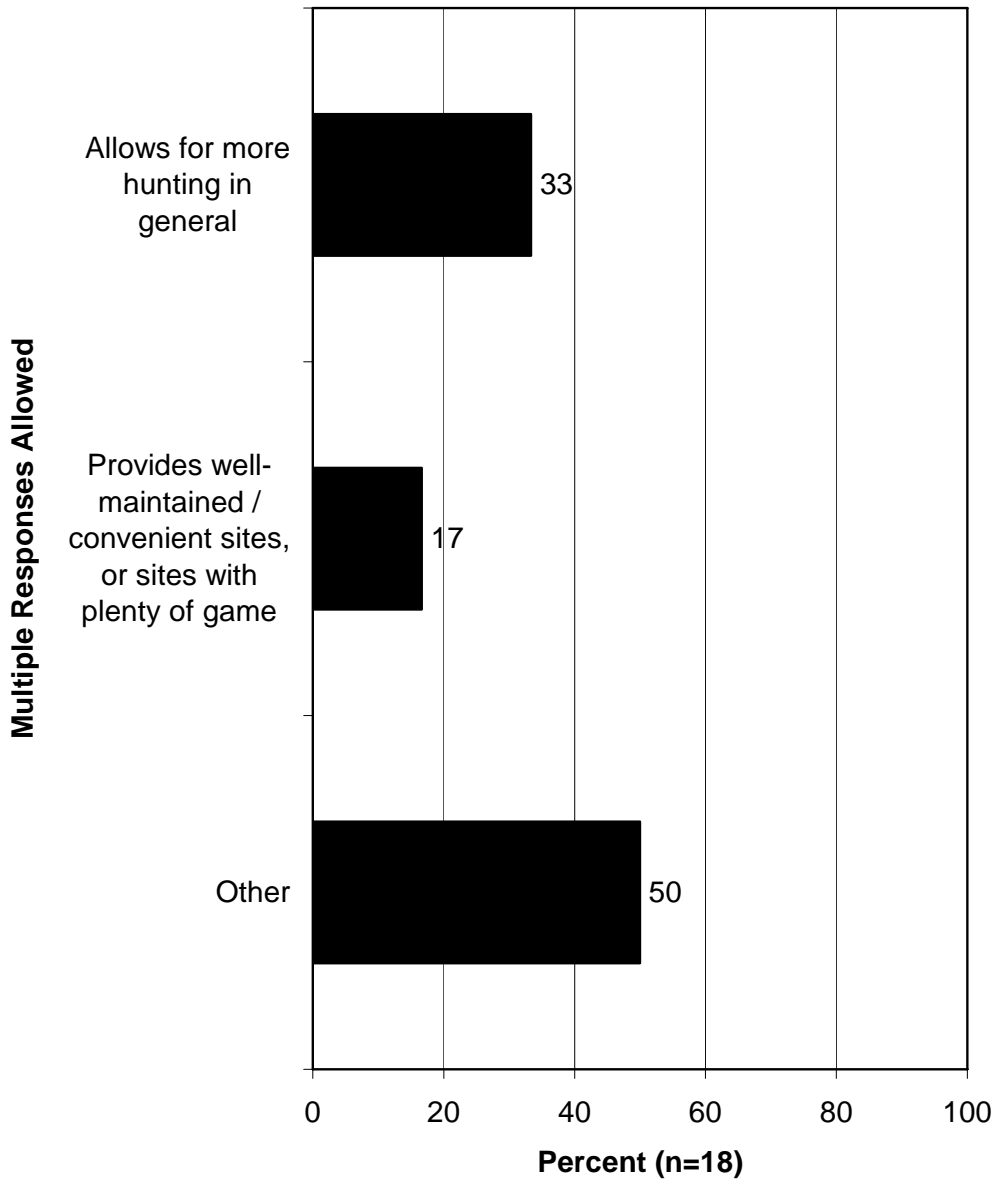
**Q4P4. You rated the wheretohunt.org website as good, fair, or poor at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the resource not deserve a higher rating? (Asked of those who used the website and rated it good, fair, or poor.)**



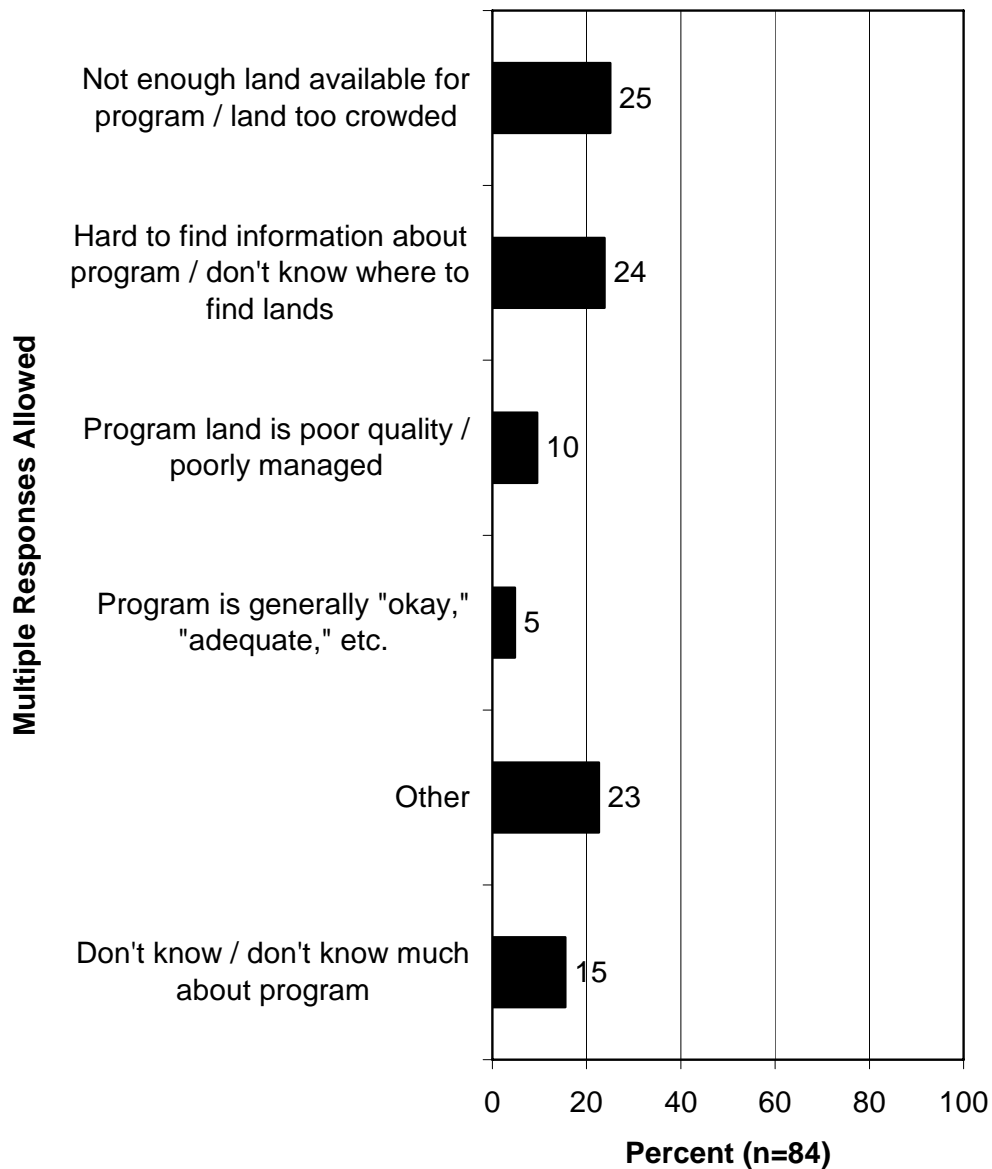
**Q4P5. You rated the huntinfo.com website as good, fair, or poor at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the resource not deserve a higher rating? (Asked of those who used the website and rated it good, fair, or poor.)**



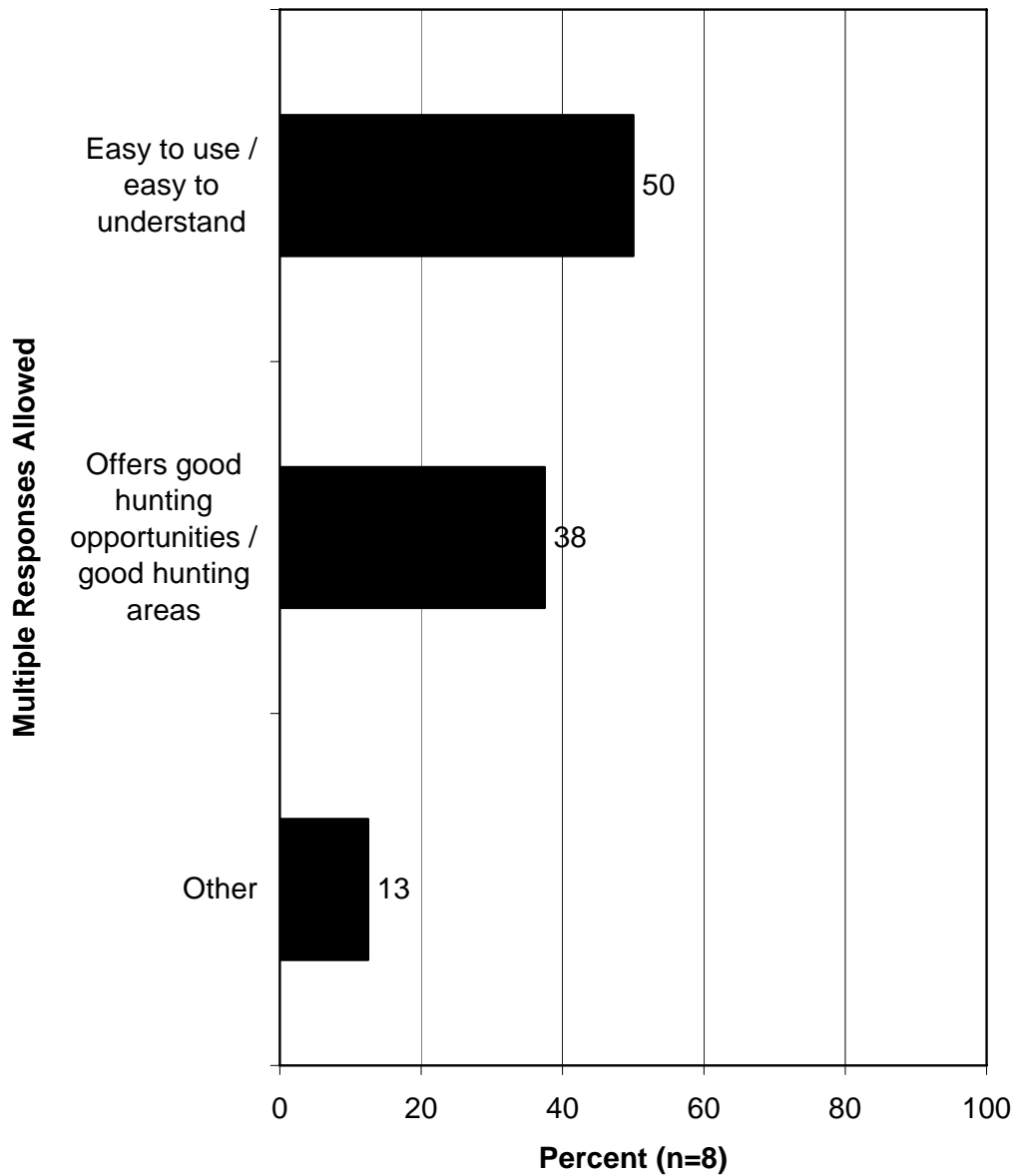
**Q4P53. You rated Washington's "Feel Free to Hunt" program as excellent at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the program deserve an excellent rating? (Asked of those who used the program and rated it excellent.)**



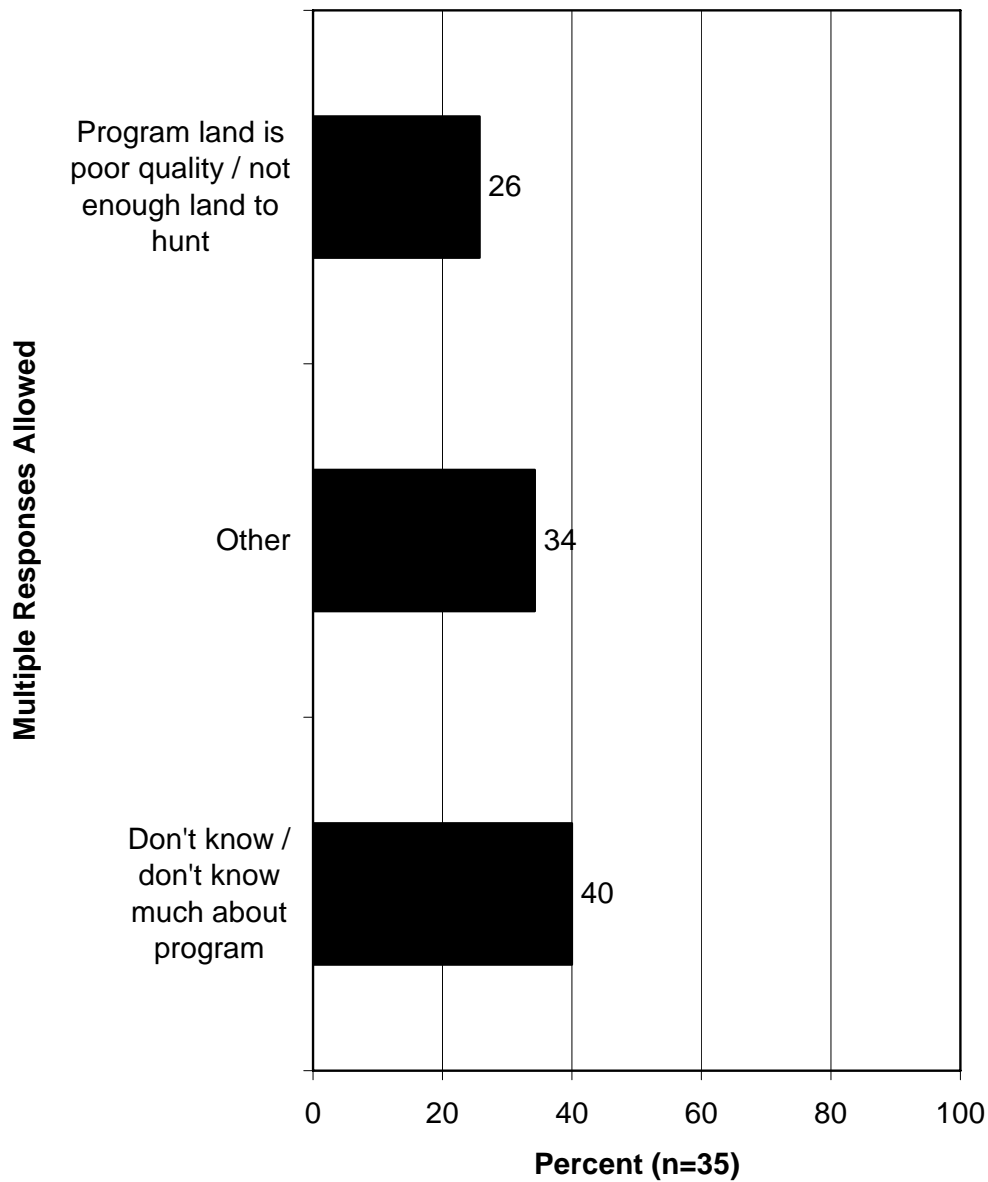
**Q4P53. You rated Washington's "Feel Free to Hunt" program as good, fair, or poor at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the program not deserve a higher rating? (Asked of those who used the program and rated it good, fair, or poor.)**



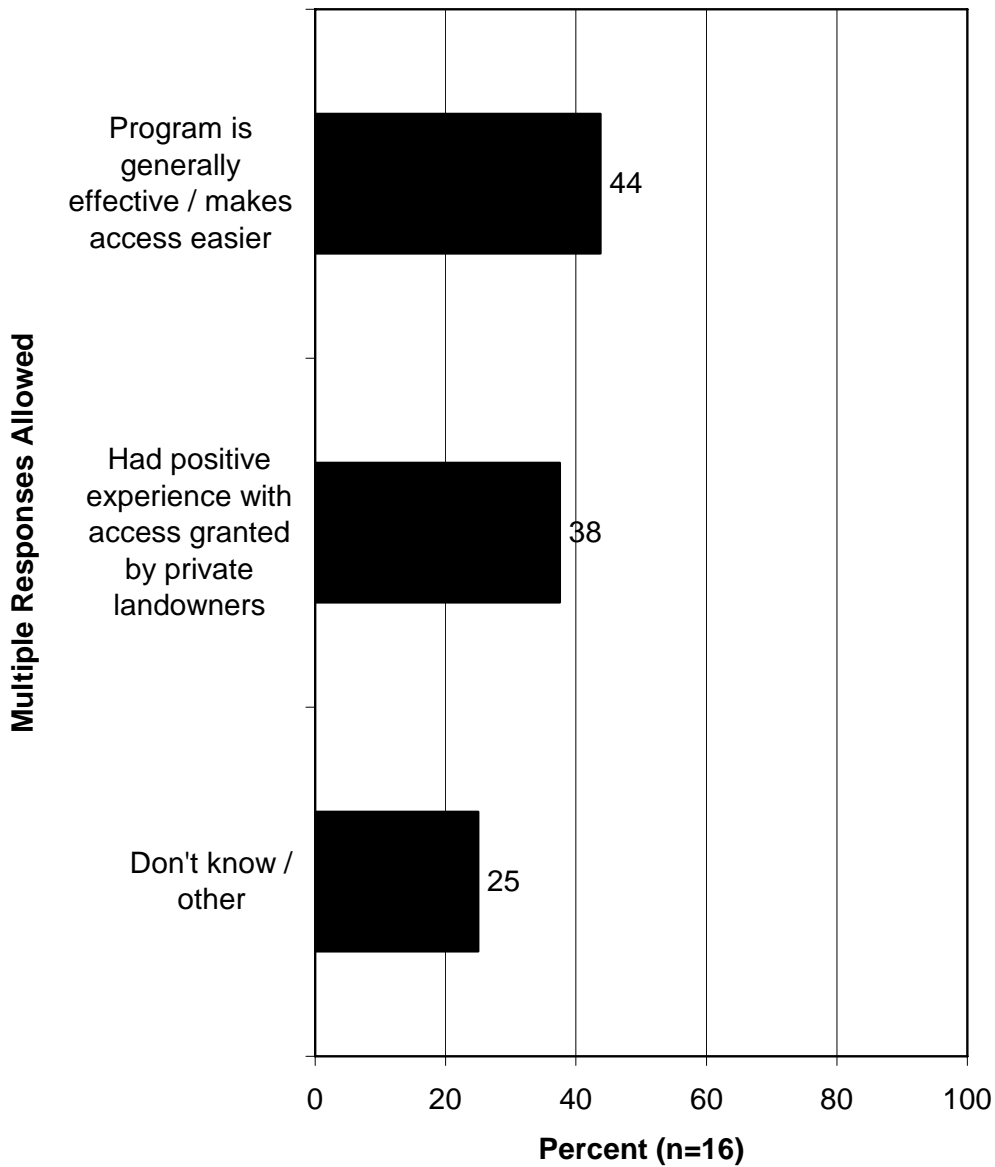
**Q4P54. You rated Washington's "Register to Hunt" program as excellent at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the program deserve an excellent rating? (Asked of those who used the program and rated it excellent.)**



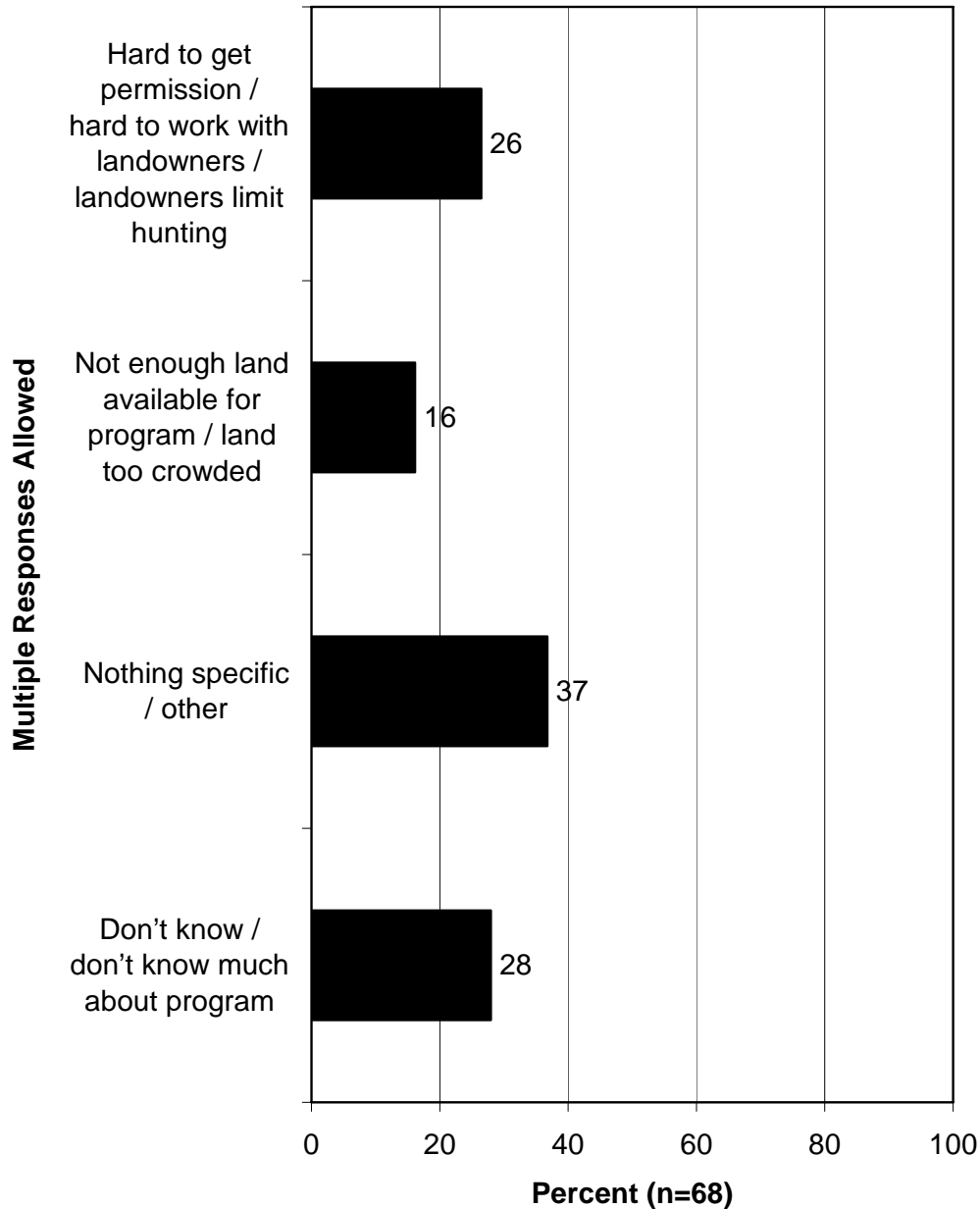
**Q4P54. You rated Washington's "Register to Hunt" program as good, fair, or poor at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the program not deserve a higher rating? (Asked of those who used the program and rated it good, fair, or poor.)**



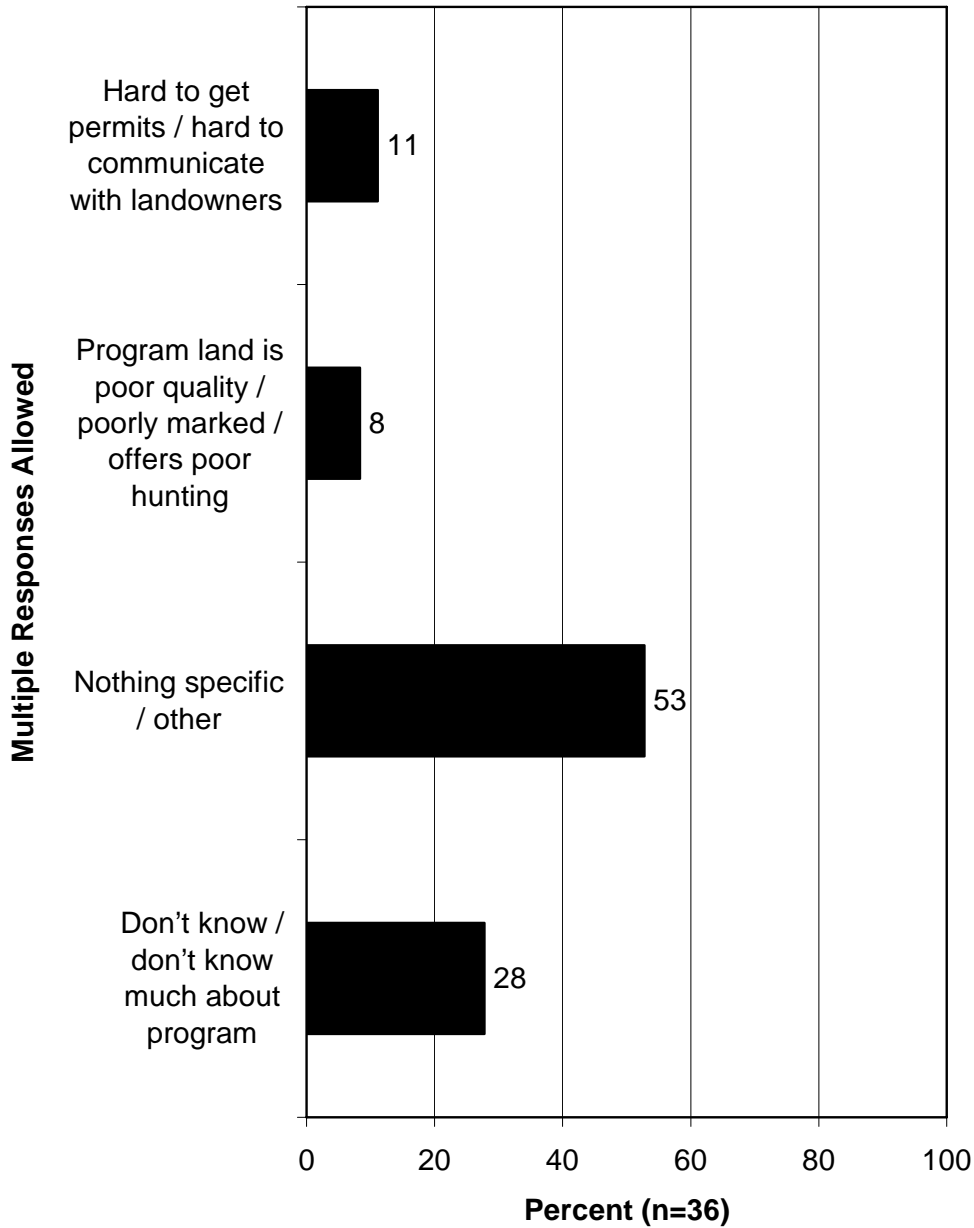
**Q4P55. You rated Washington's "Hunt by Written Permission" program excellent at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the program deserve an excellent rating? (Asked of those who used the program and rated it excellent.)**



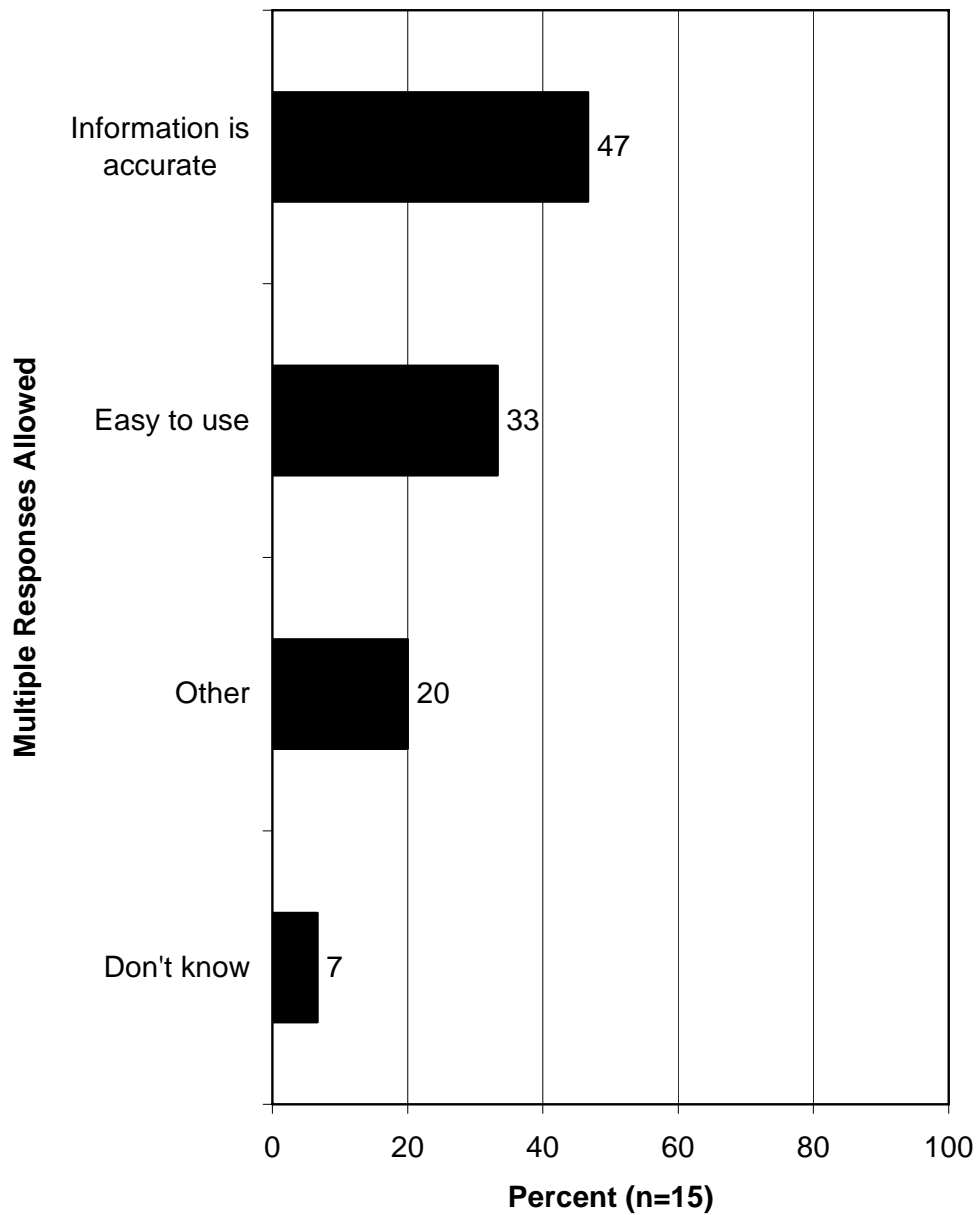
**Q4P55. You rated Washington's "Hunt by Written Permission" program as good, fair, or poor at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the program not deserve a higher rating? (Asked of those who used the program and rated it good, fair, or poor.)**



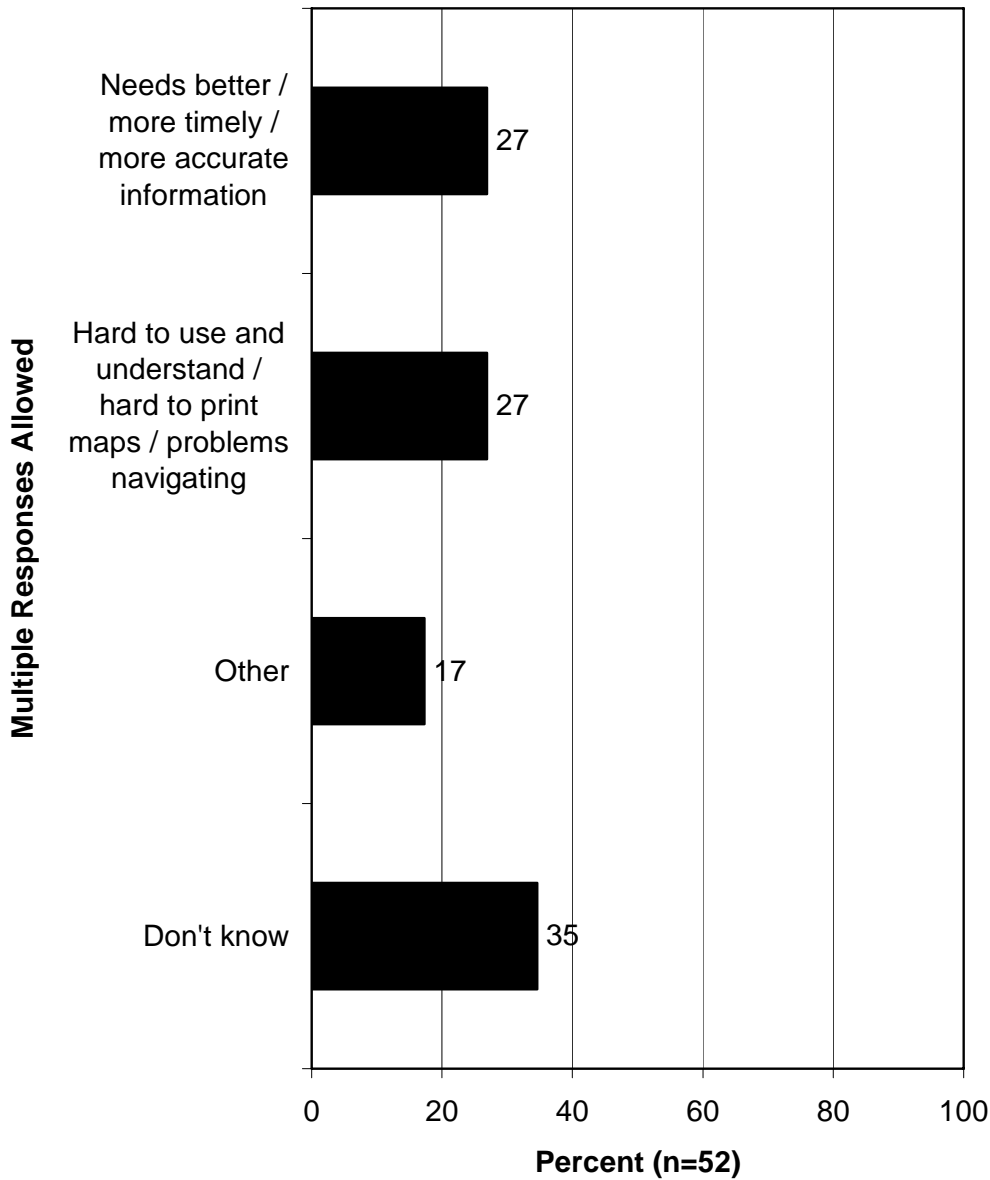
**Q4P56. You rated Washington's "Landowner Hunting Permit" program as good, fair, or poor at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the program not deserve a higher rating? (Asked of those who used the program and rated it good, fair, or poor.)**



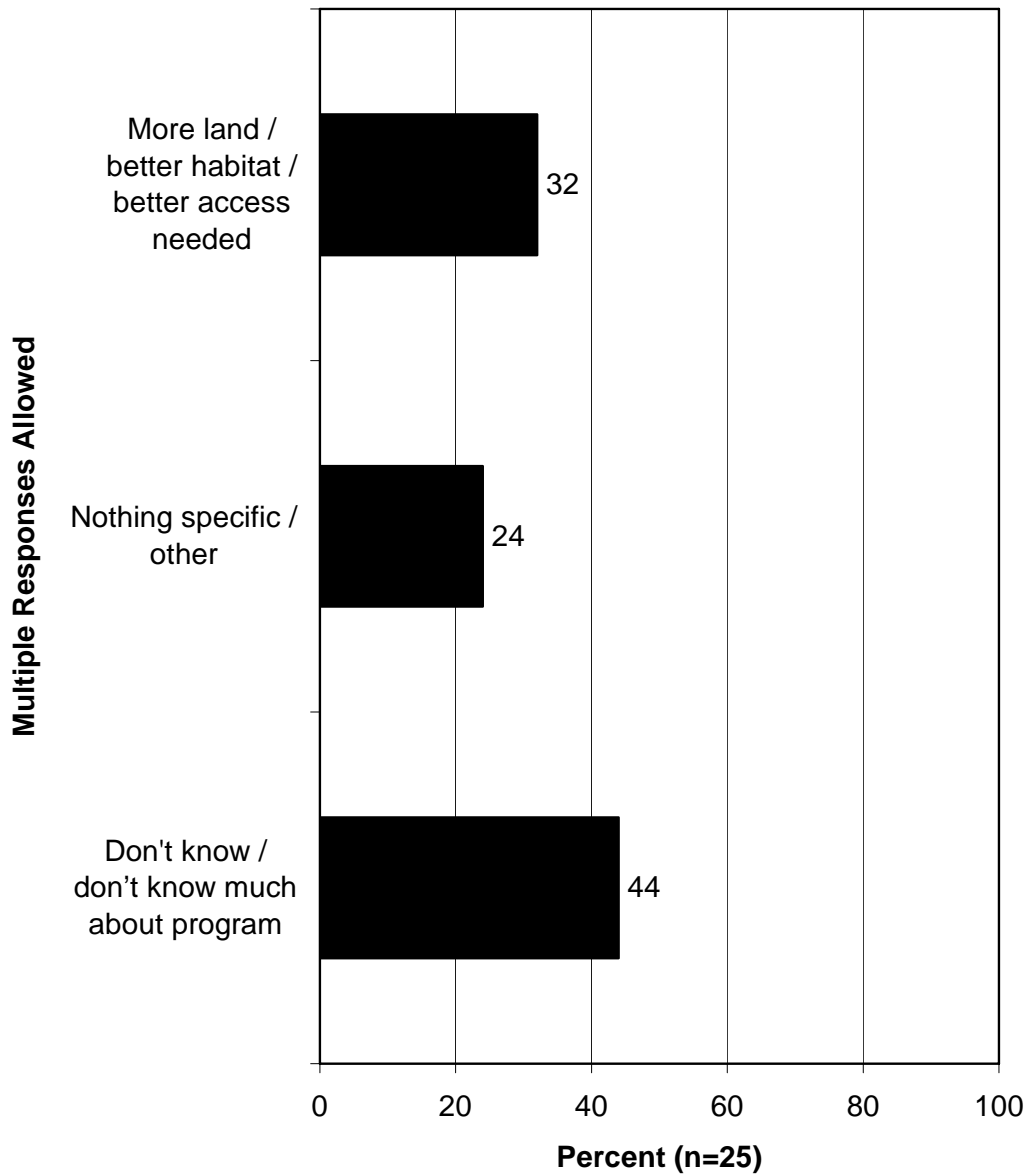
**Q4P57. You rated the "GoHunt GIS Mapping System" as excellent at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the resource deserve an excellent rating? (Asked of those who used the system and rated it excellent.)**



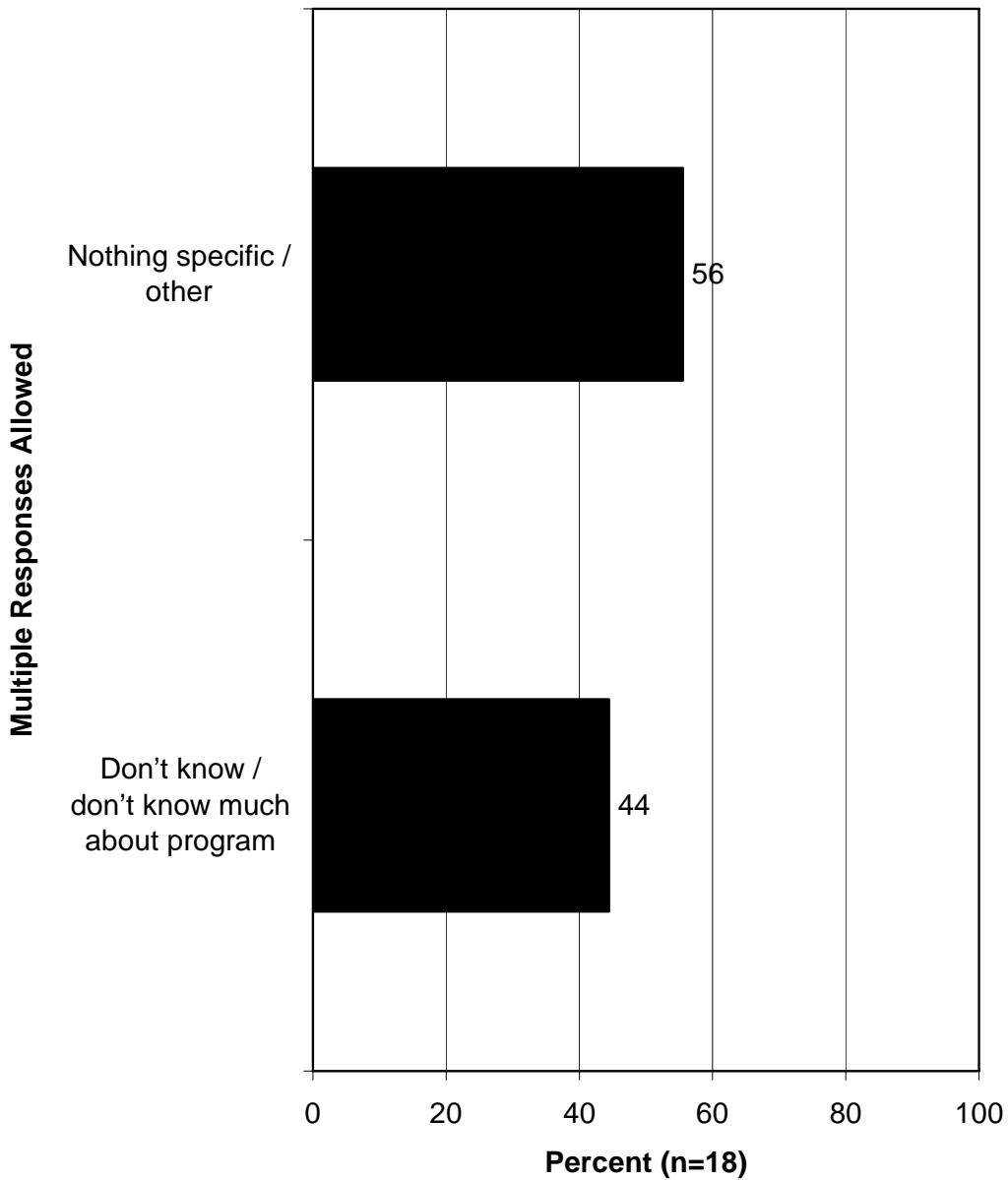
**Q4P57. You rated the "GoHunt GIS Mapping System" as good, fair, or poor at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the resource not deserve a higher rating? (Asked of those who used the system and rated it good, fair, or poor.)**



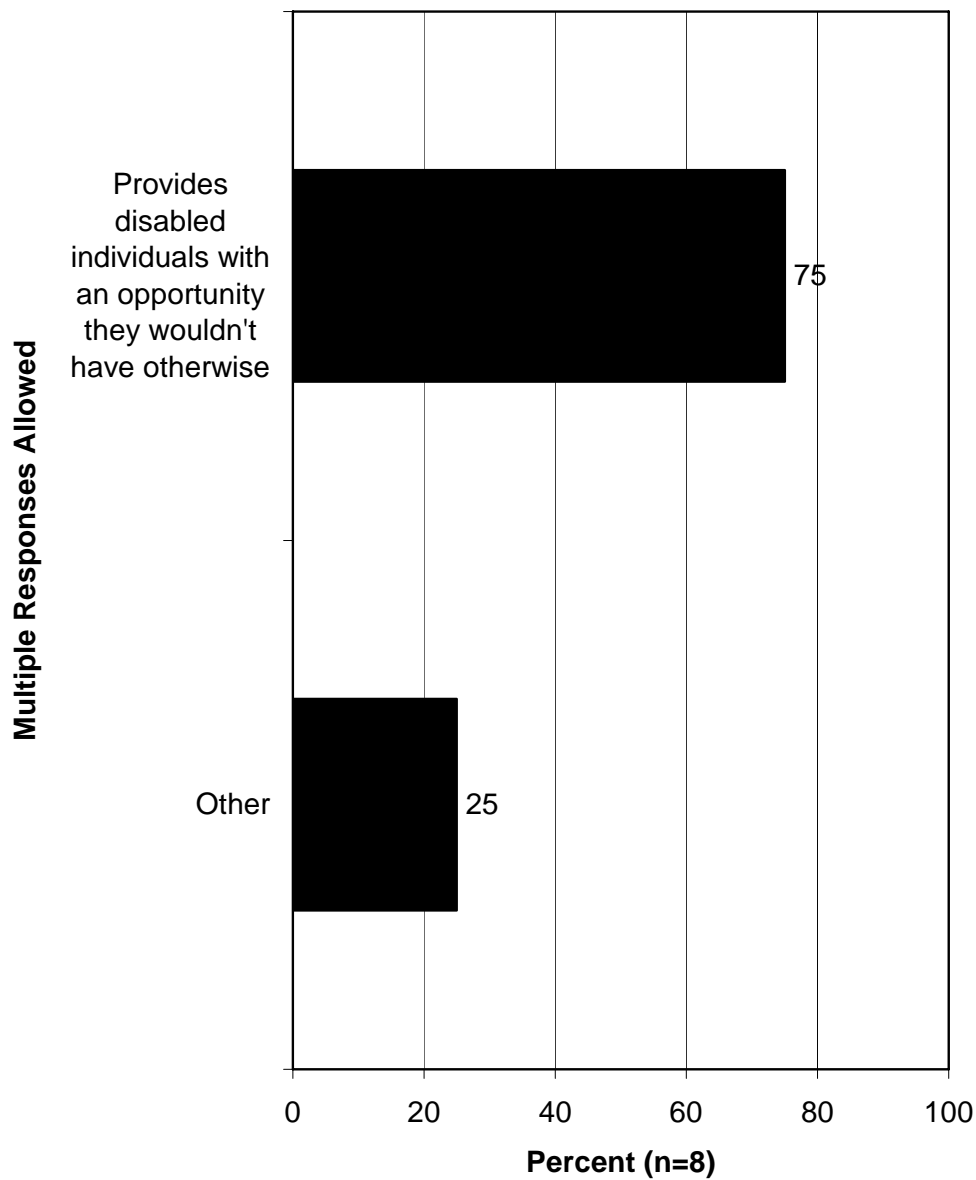
**Q4P58. You rated Washington's "Quality Hunting Areas" as good, fair, or poor at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the resource not deserve a higher rating? (Asked of those who used the program and rated it good, fair, or poor.)**



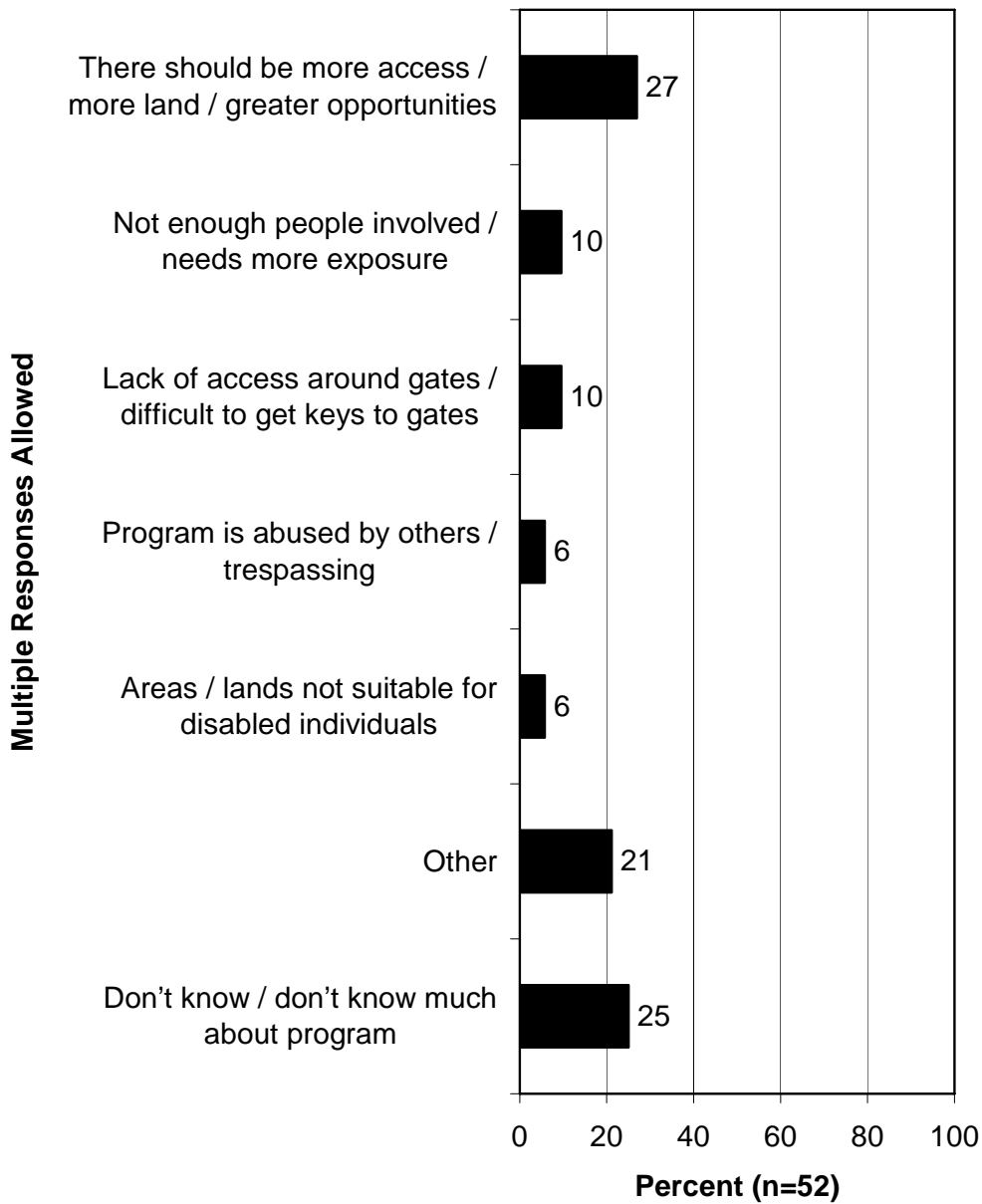
**Q4P59. You rated the "Accessing Washington's Outdoors" program as good, fair, or poor at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the program not deserve a higher rating? (Asked of those who used the program and rated it good, fair, or poor.)**



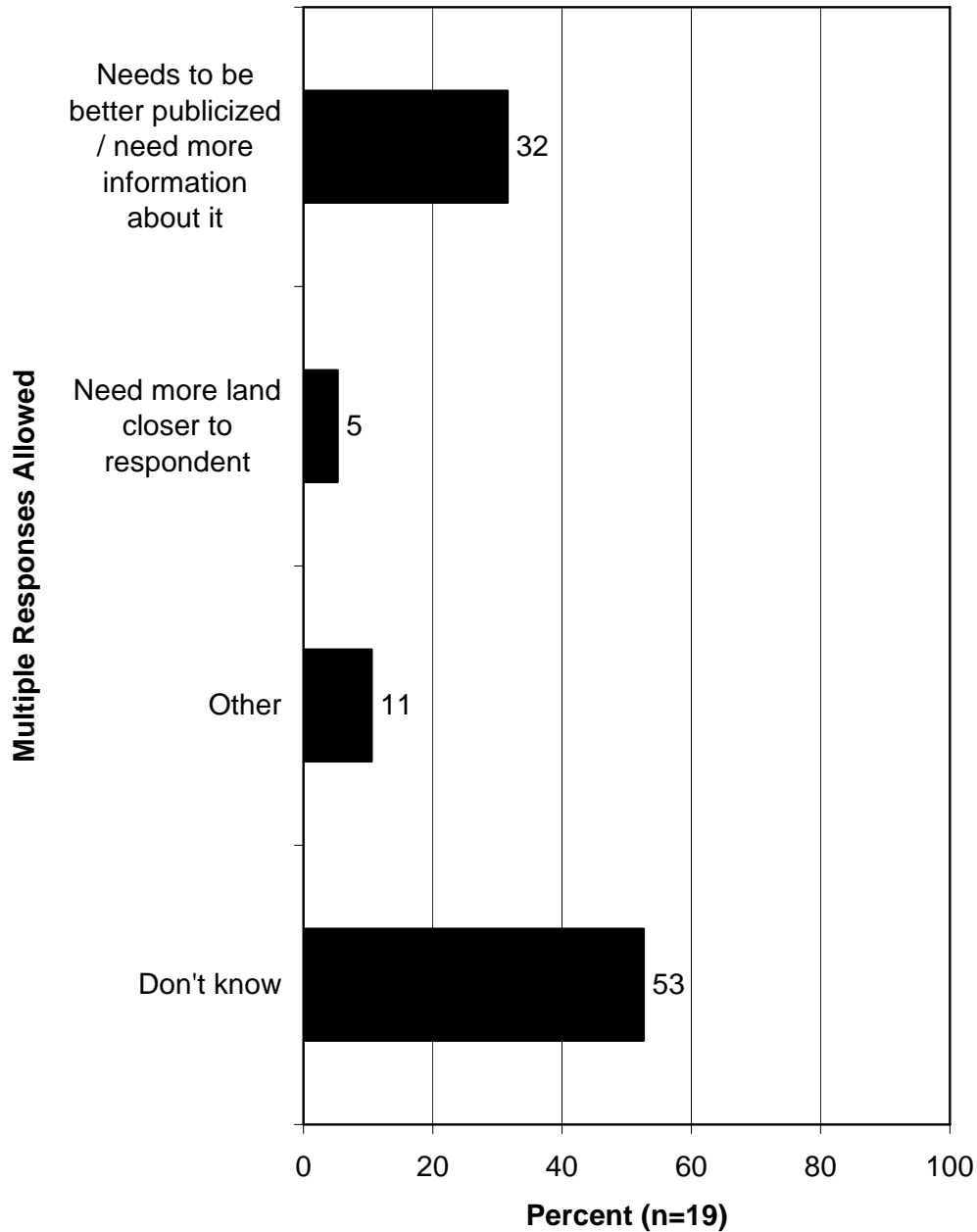
**Q4P60. You rated the "Disabled Hunter Road Access Entry" program as excellent at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the program deserve an excellent rating? (Asked of those who used the program and rated it excellent.)**



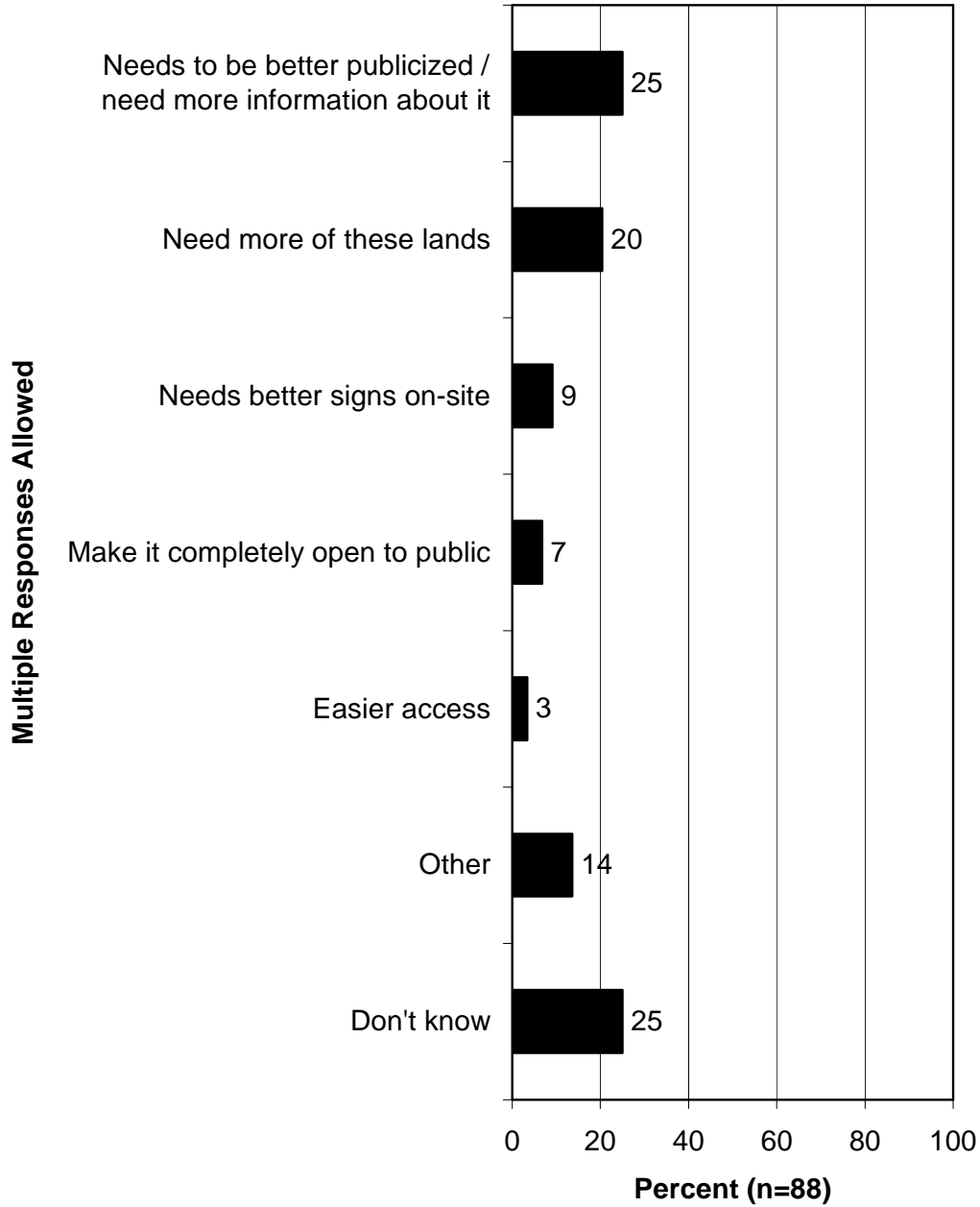
**Q4P60. You rated the "Disabled Hunter Road Access Entry" program as good, fair, or poor at making hunting access easier. In your opinion, what makes the program not deserve a higher rating? (Asked of those who used the program and rated it good, fair, or poor.)**



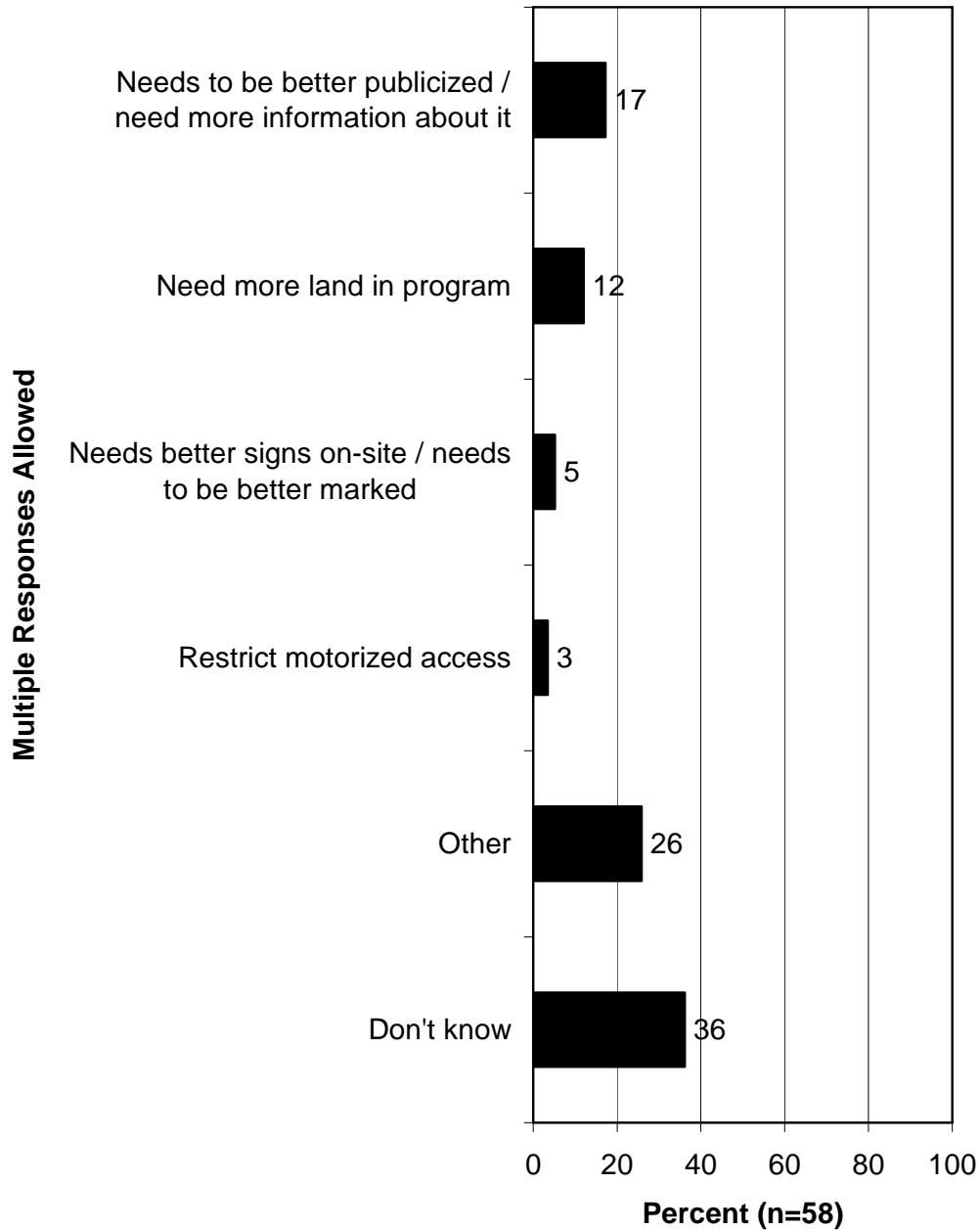
**Q5P1. In your opinion, what would make the "Open Fields" program more effective at making hunting access easier? (Asked of those who used the program.)**



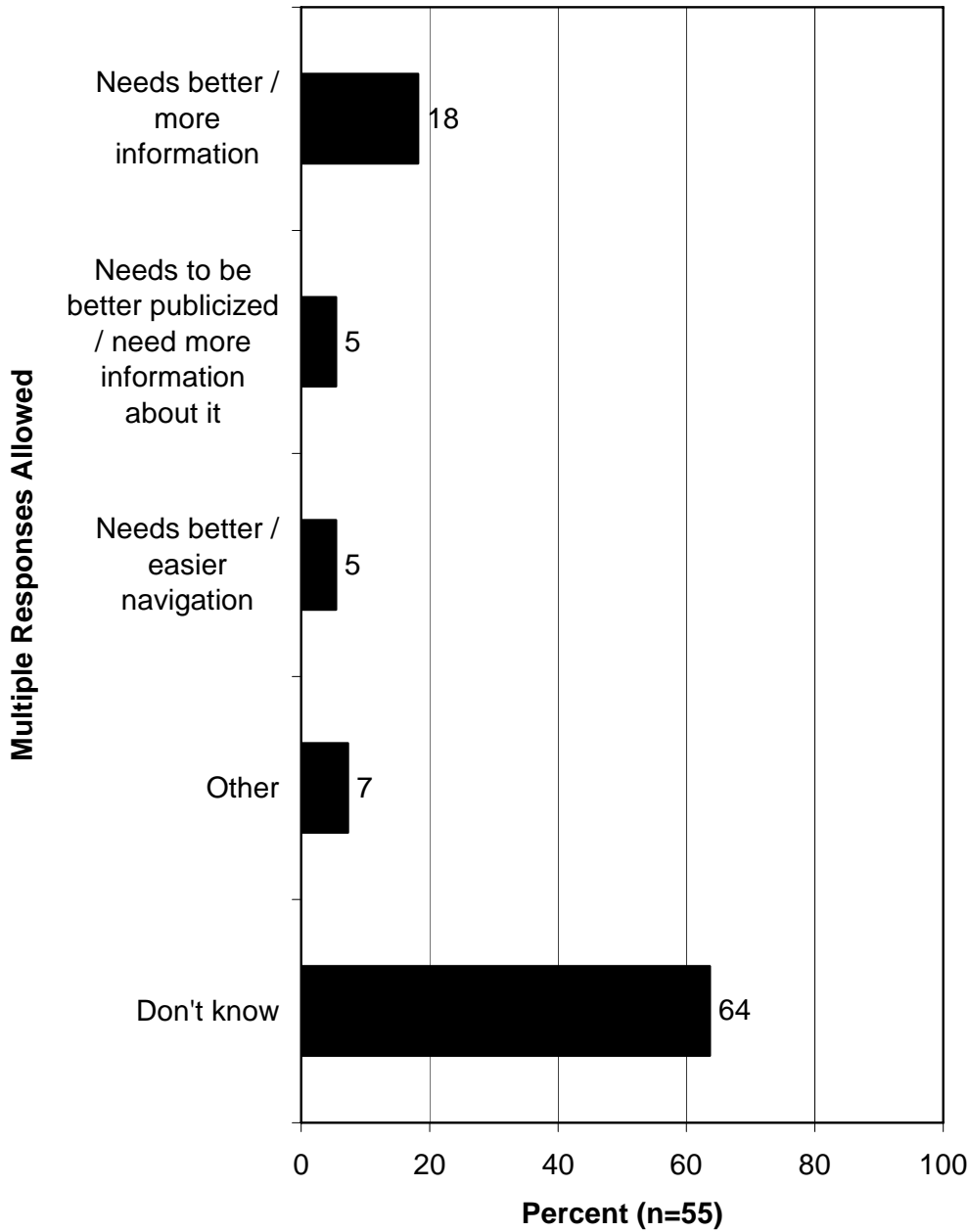
**Q5P2. In your opinion, what would make the "Conservation Reserve Program" more effective at making hunting access easier? (Asked of those who used the program.)**



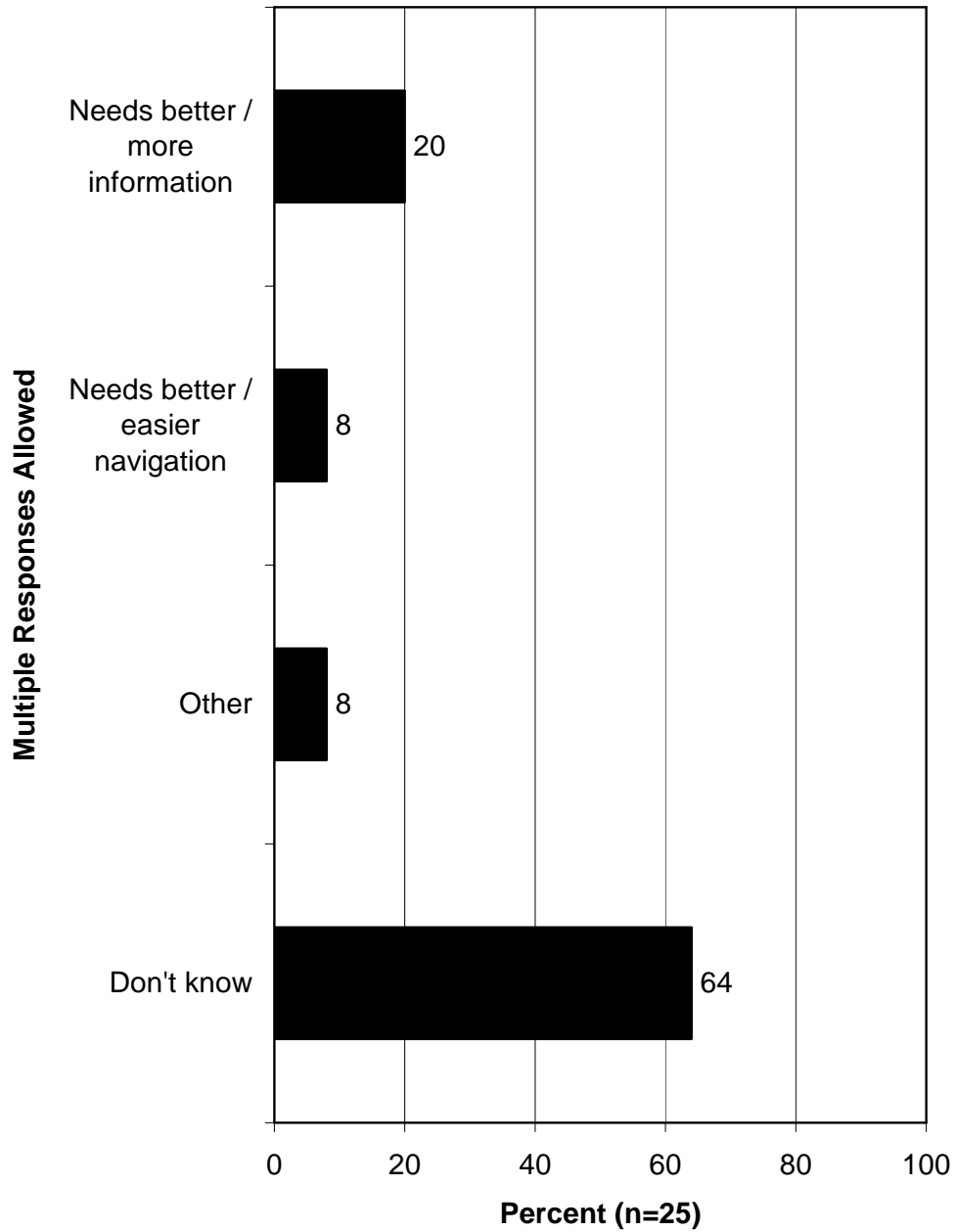
**Q5P3. In your opinion, what would make the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas more effective at making hunting access easier? (Asked of those who used WPAs.)**



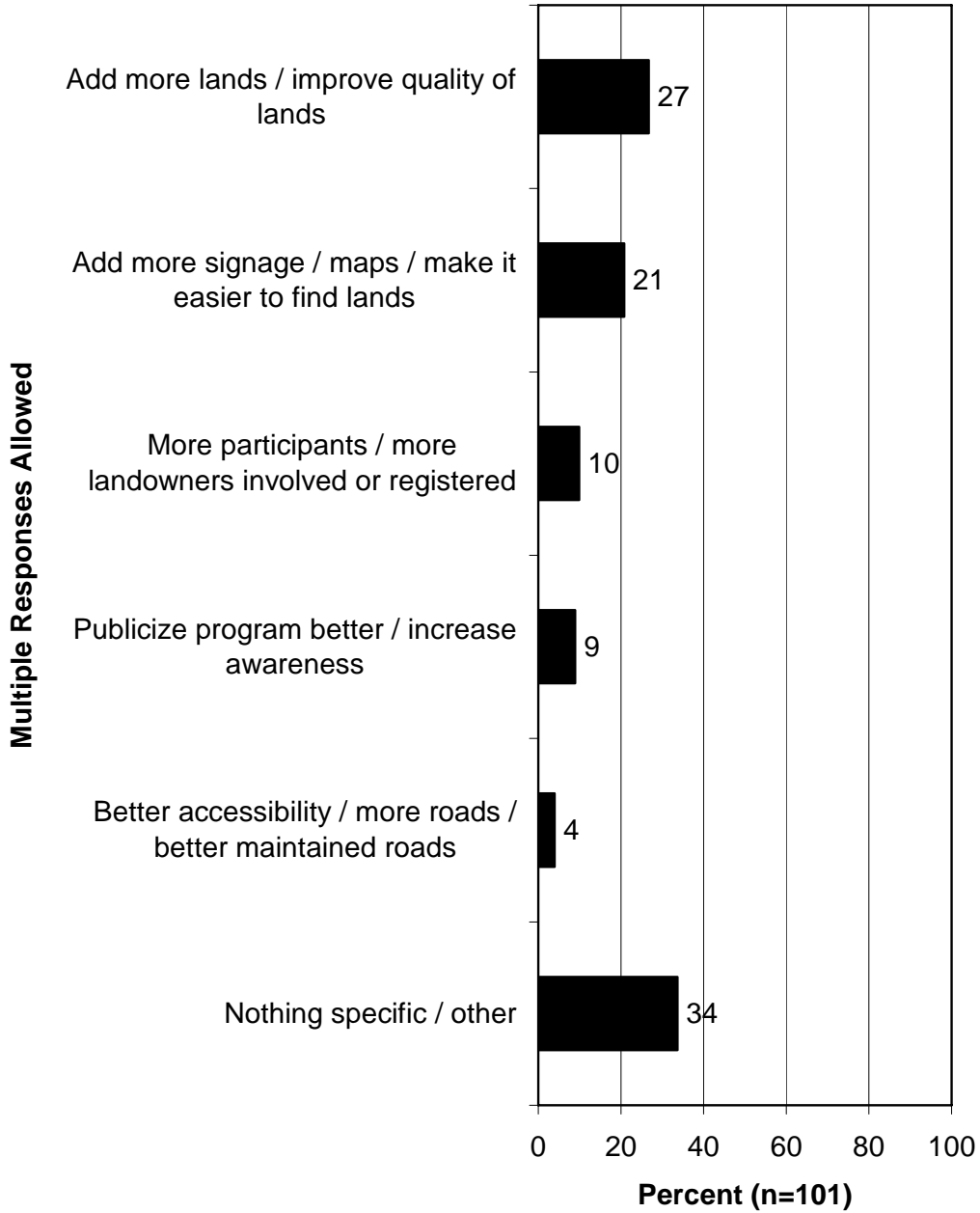
**Q5P4. In your opinion, what would make the wheretohunt.org website more effective at making hunting access easier? (Asked of those who used the website.)**



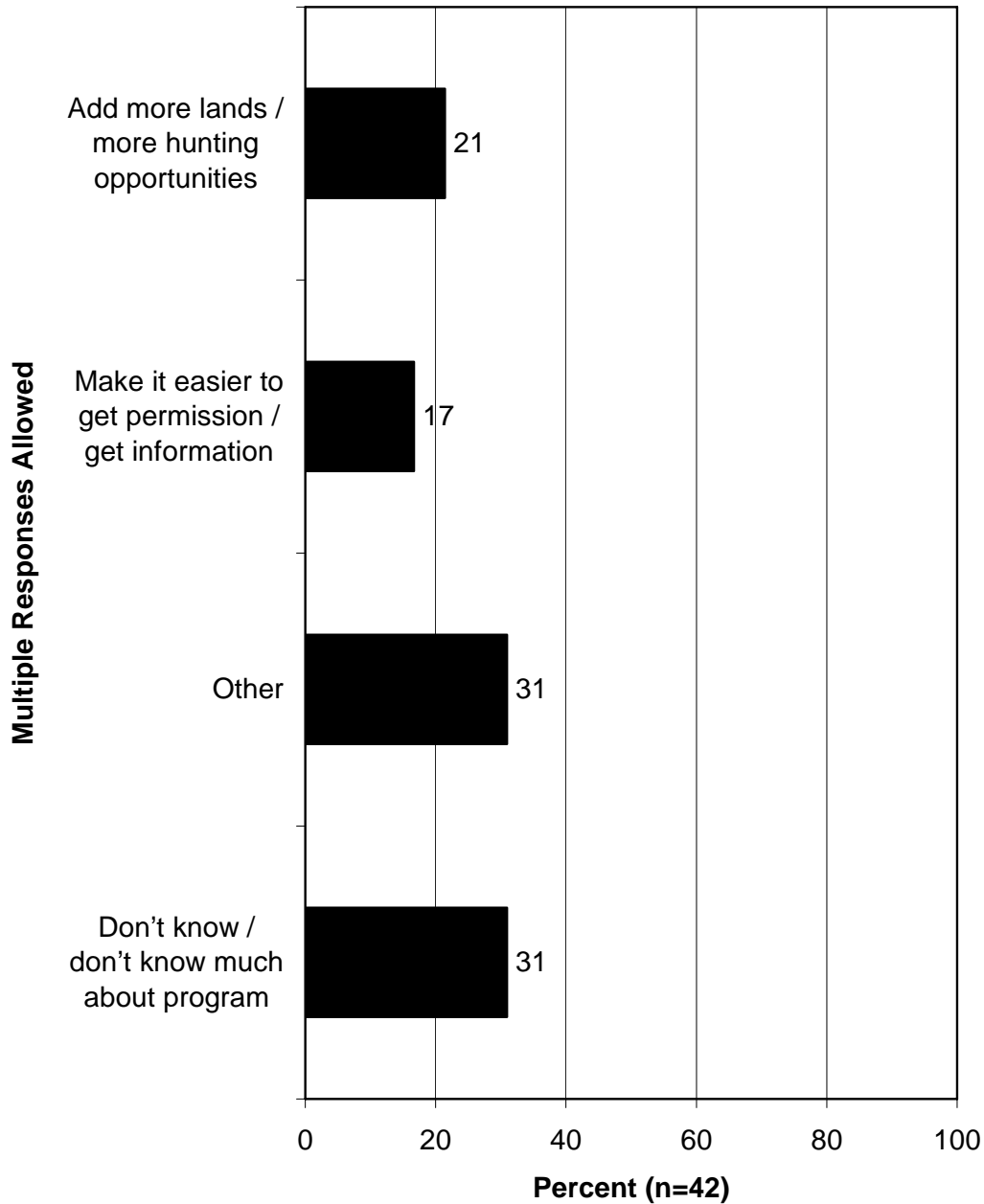
**Q5P5. In your opinion, what would make the huntinfo.com website more effective at making hunting access easier? (Asked of those who used the website.)**



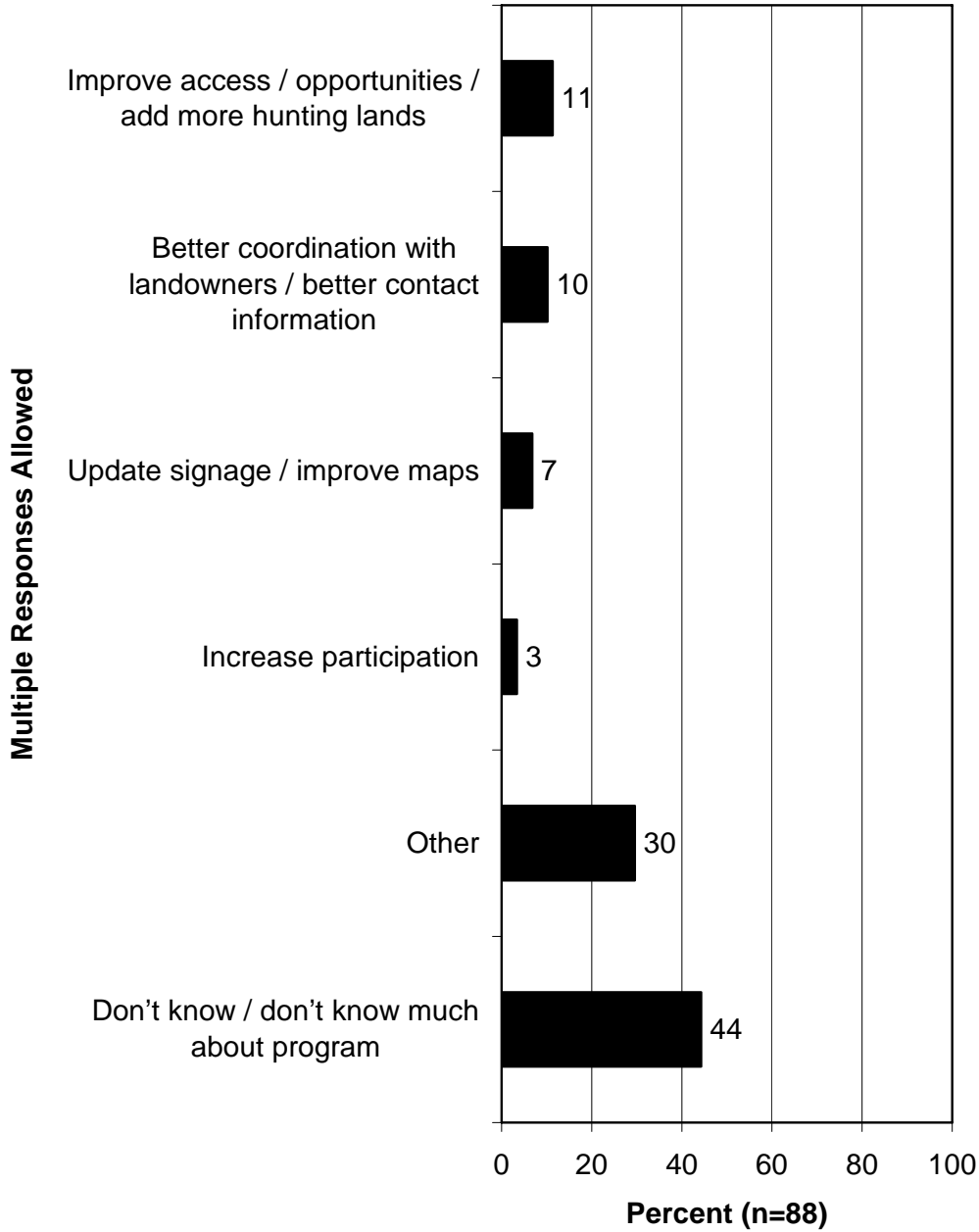
**Q5P53. In your opinion, what would make Washington's "Feel Free to Hunt" program more effective at making hunting access easier? (Asked of those who used the program.)**



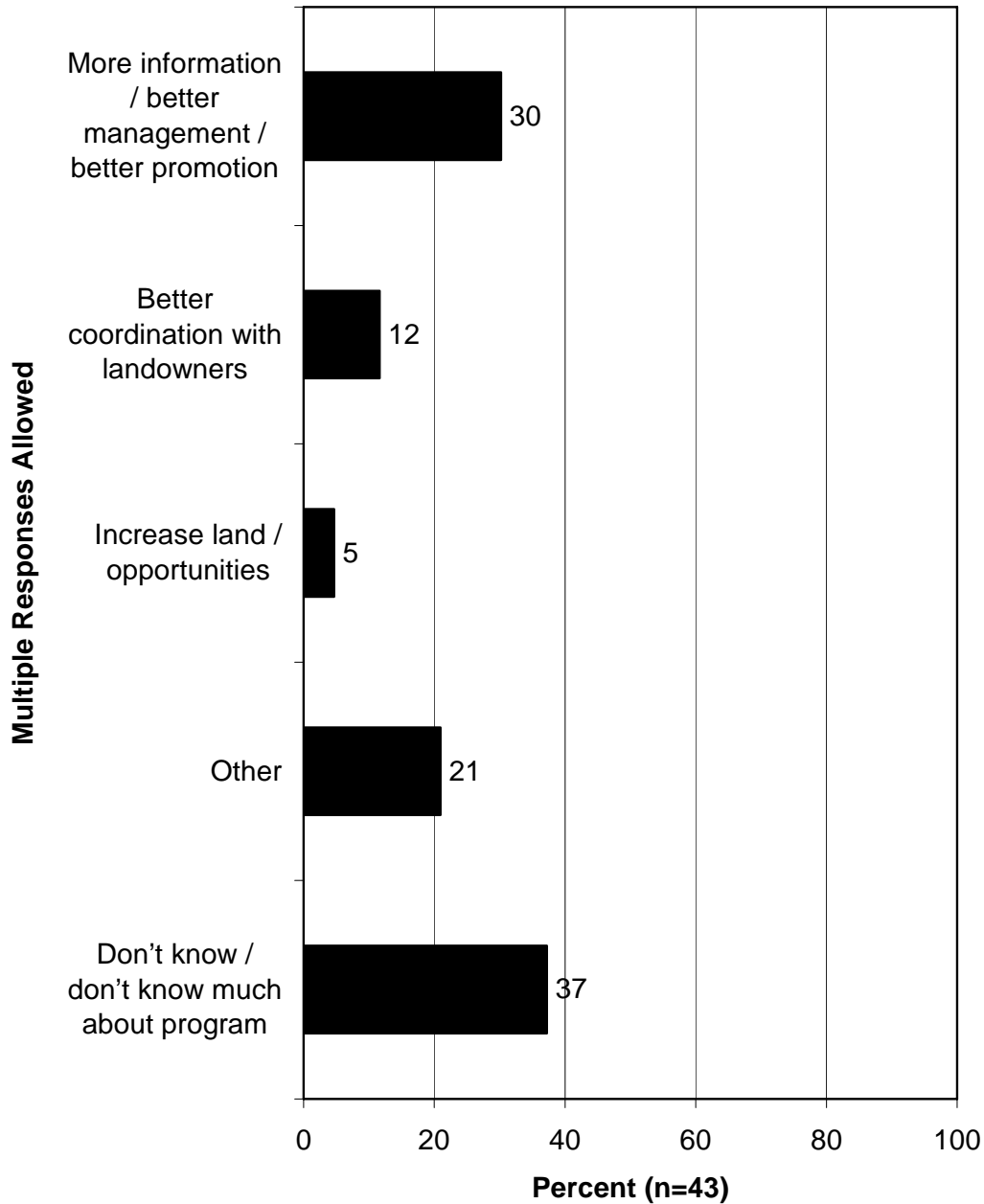
**Q5P54. In your opinion, what would make Washington's "Register to Hunt" program more effective at making hunting access easier? (Asked of those who used the program.)**



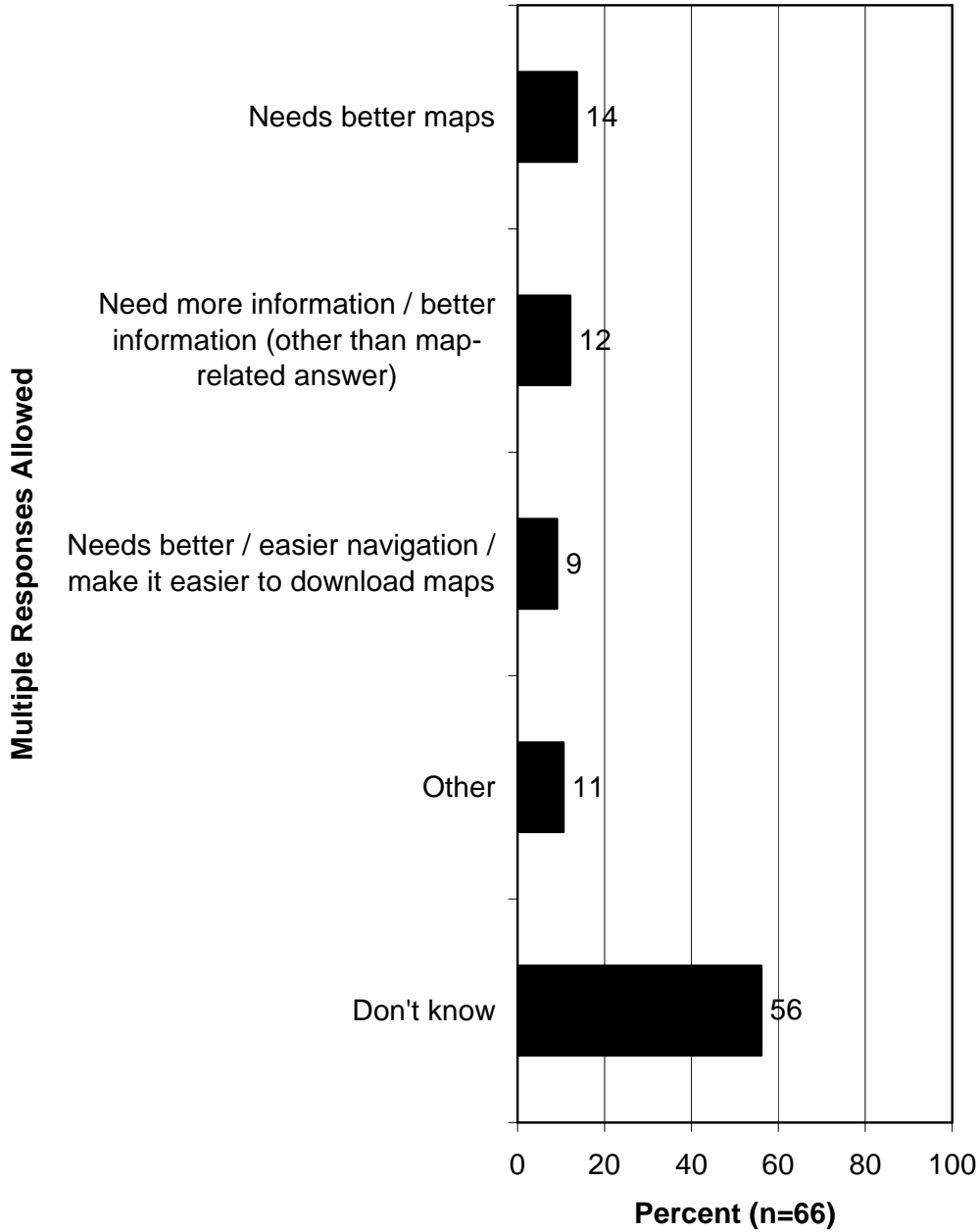
**Q5P55. In your opinion, what would make Washington's "Hunt by Written Permission" program more effective at making hunting access easier? (Asked of those who used the program.)**



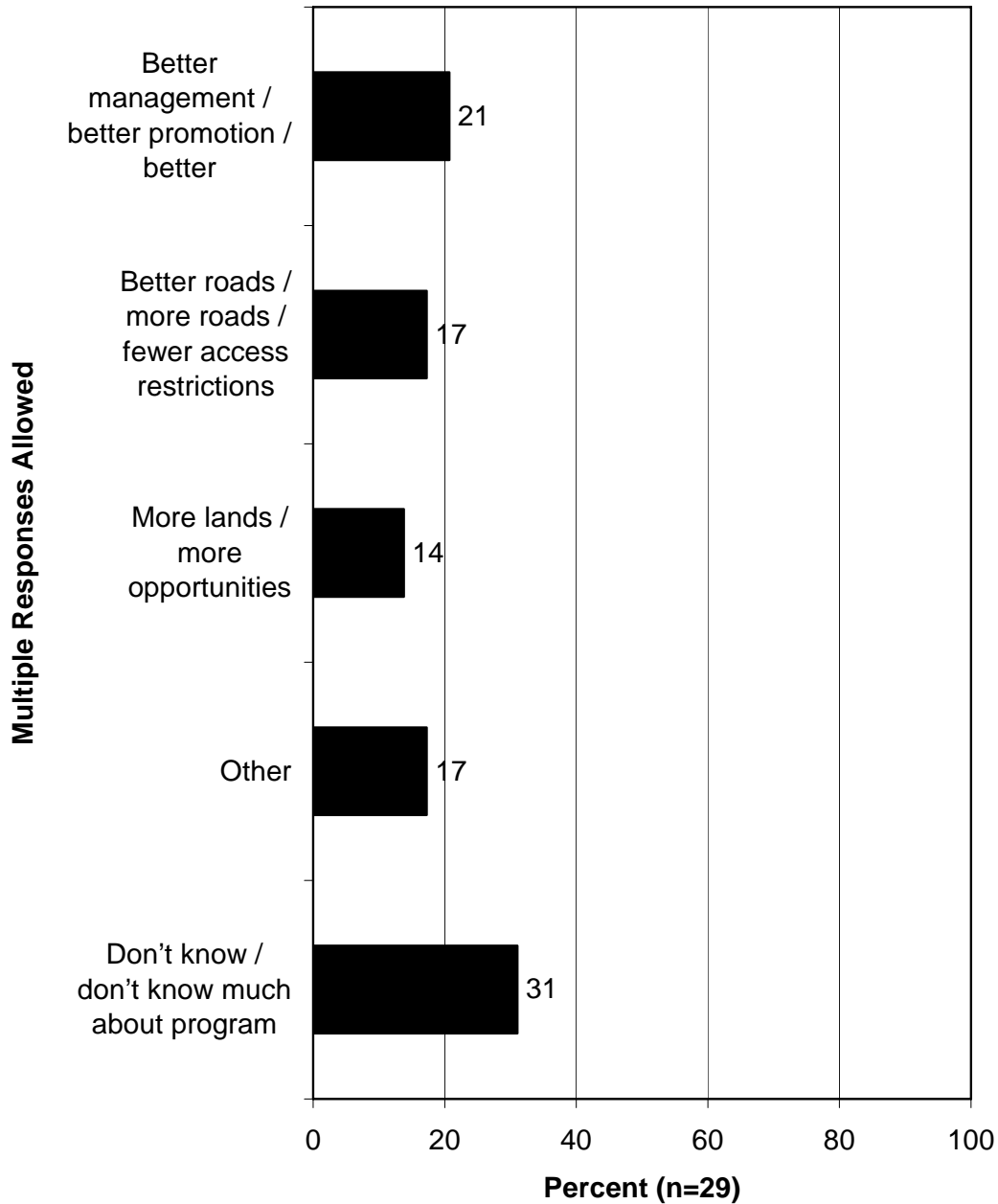
**Q5P56. In your opinion, what would make Washington's "Landowner Hunting Permit" program more effective at making hunting access easier? (Asked of those who used the program.)**



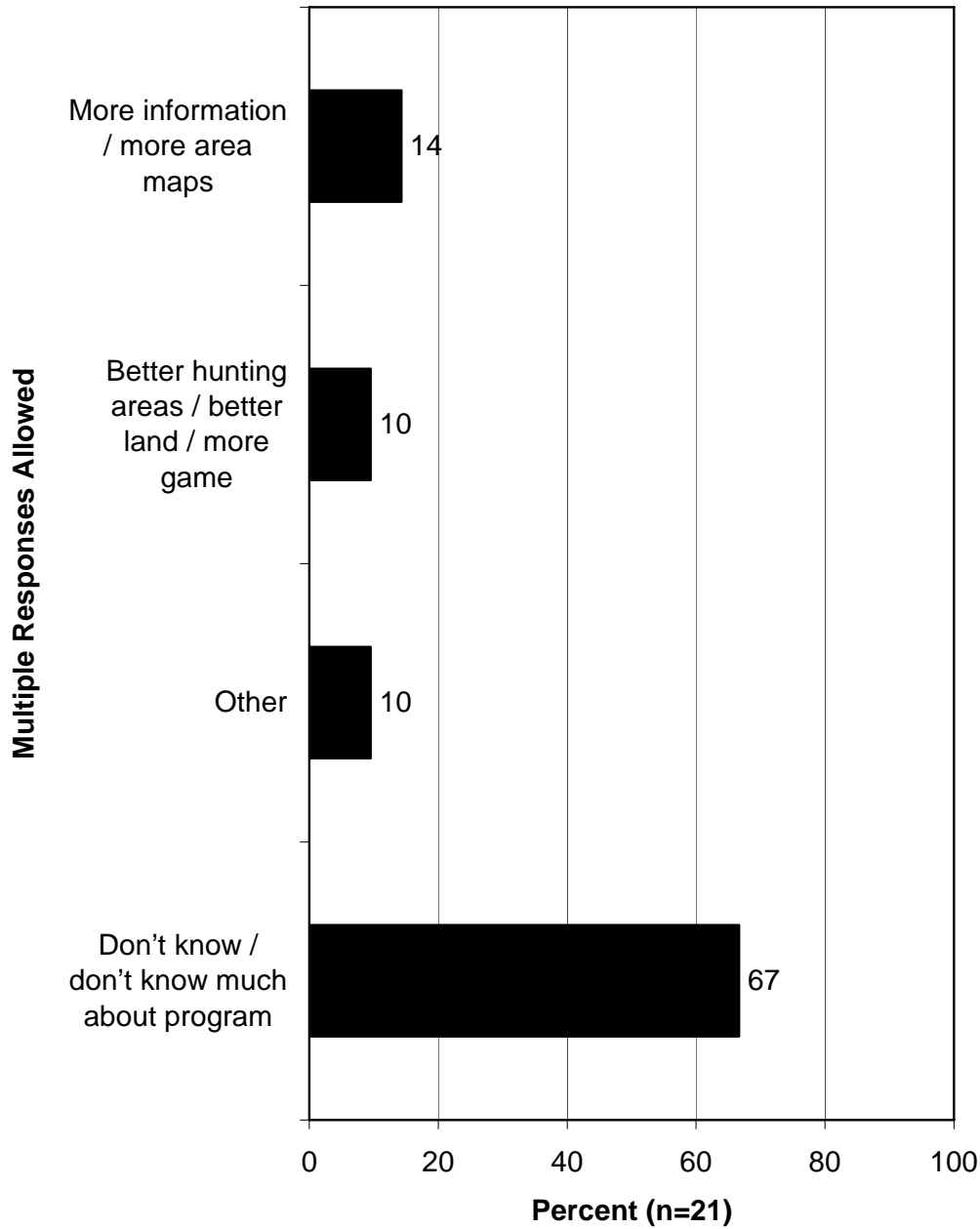
**Q5P57. In your opinion, what would make the "GoHunt GIS Mapping System" more effective at making hunting access easier? (Asked of those who used the system.)**



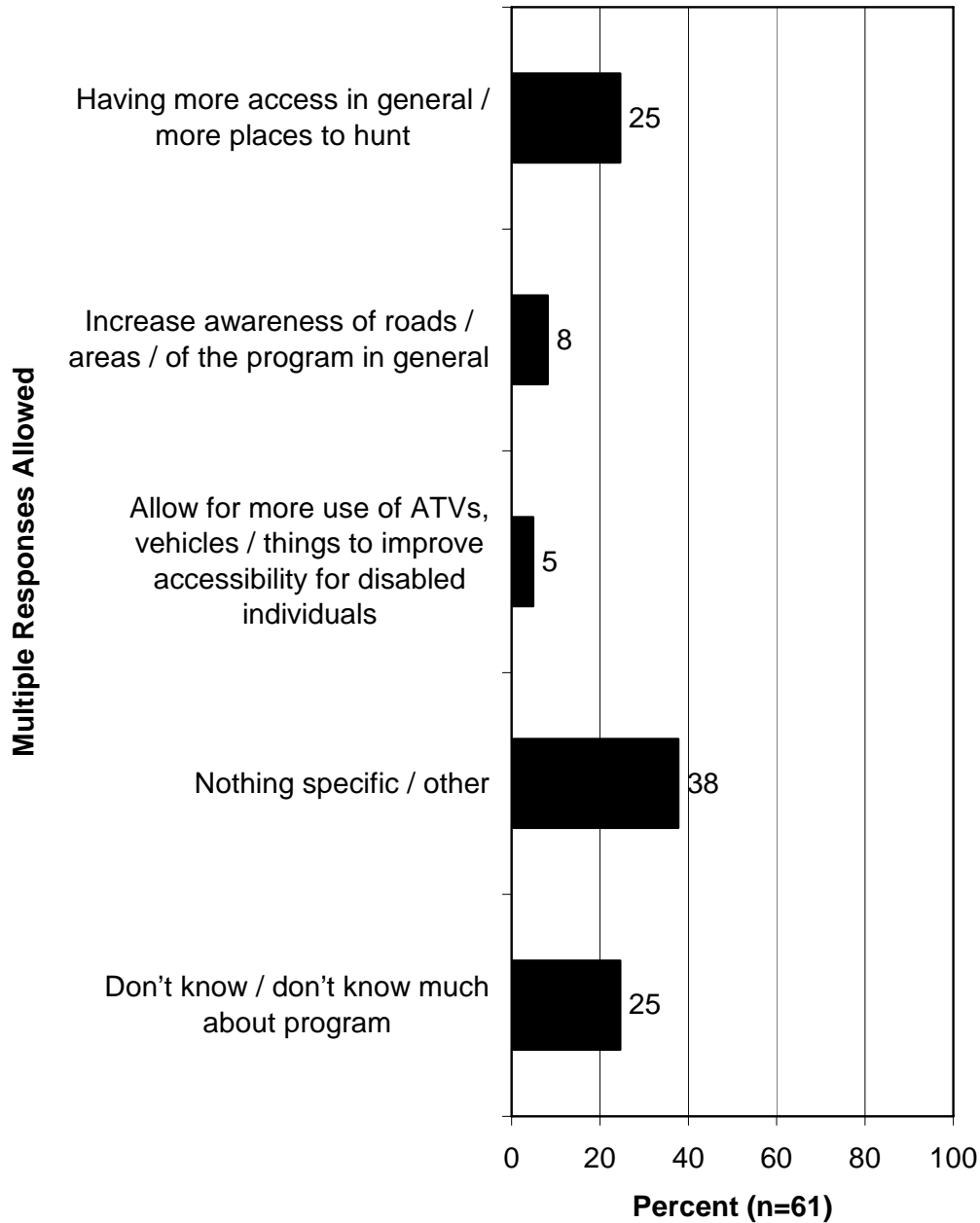
**Q5P58. In your opinion, what would make Washington's "Quality Hunting Areas" more effective at making hunting access easier? (Asked of those who used the areas.)**



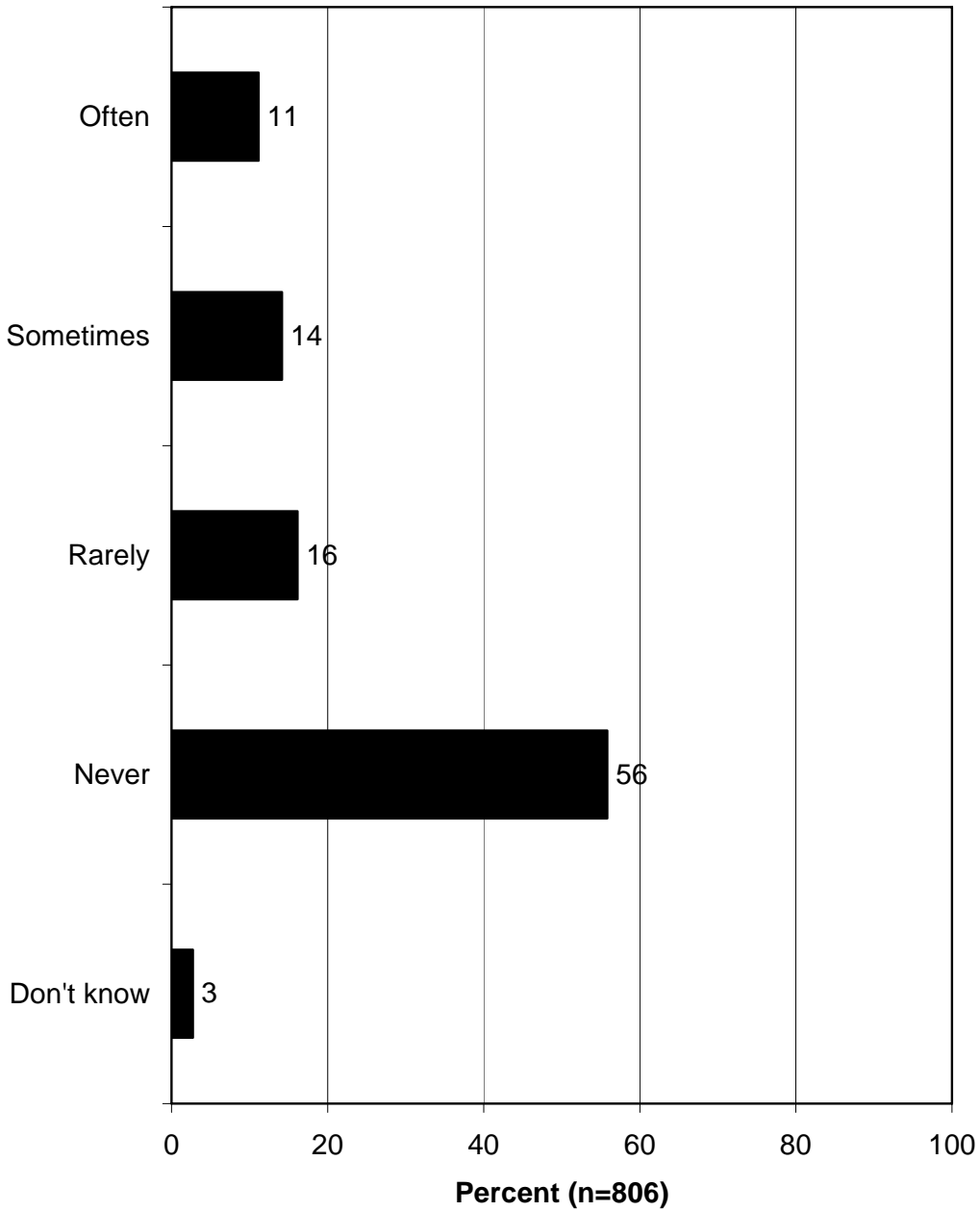
**Q5P59. In your opinion, what would make the "Accessing Washington's Outdoors" program more effective at making hunting access easier? (Asked of those who used the program.)**



**Q5P60. In your opinion, what would make the "Disabled Hunter Road Access Entry" program more effective at making hunting access easier? (Asked of those who used the program.)**



**Q59. How often do you hunt for (species) on private lands enrolled in a Walk-In Access program or a state-run private land access program in Washington?**



## SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED IN DECIDING WHERE TO HUNT

- In the broadest question about sources of information, hunters were asked in an open-ended question where they got information on places to hunt and hunting access in Washington. The most popular source is friends/family/word of mouth (65%), by far the top answer. Other notable answers include the Internet (15%) and pamphlets/brochures (9%).
  - In follow-up, hunters are split in rating the accuracy of the information they receive: while 48% say it is *very* accurate, 43% say it is only *somewhat* accurate. Obviously, this latter group has found enough inaccuracies to *not* rate it *very* accurate.
  
- The survey asked hunters if they had visited the websites of four agencies (the WDFW, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management). The majority of hunters in Washington had visited the WDFW site (53%). Lower amounts (from 15% to 20%) had visited the other sites.
  - Follow-up questions asked hunters to rate the usefulness of the websites' information on places to hunt and hunting access in planning hunting trips. Ratings are mostly positive: the WDFW site, the Bureau of Land Management site, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service site all had a majority of site visitors rating its access information as excellent or good.
  
- The survey asked six questions about actions that hunters may take in deciding where to hunt (shown in Text Box 8 on the following page). For each action, the survey asked hunters if they always, sometimes, rarely, or never do it when deciding where to hunt. The starting point in going through the list in each interview was randomized. The results of the series of questions were then ranked.
  - About two-thirds or more of hunters *always* or *sometimes* do two things in deciding where to hunt: 73% scout or physically look for a place, and 65% ask a friend or family member where to hunt. Additionally, half of hunters (50%) use paper maps to find a place.
  - At the low end of the ranking, less than a fifth of hunters knock on a landowner's door to ask permission (18%), use GPS (14%), or research available lands on the Internet (11%).

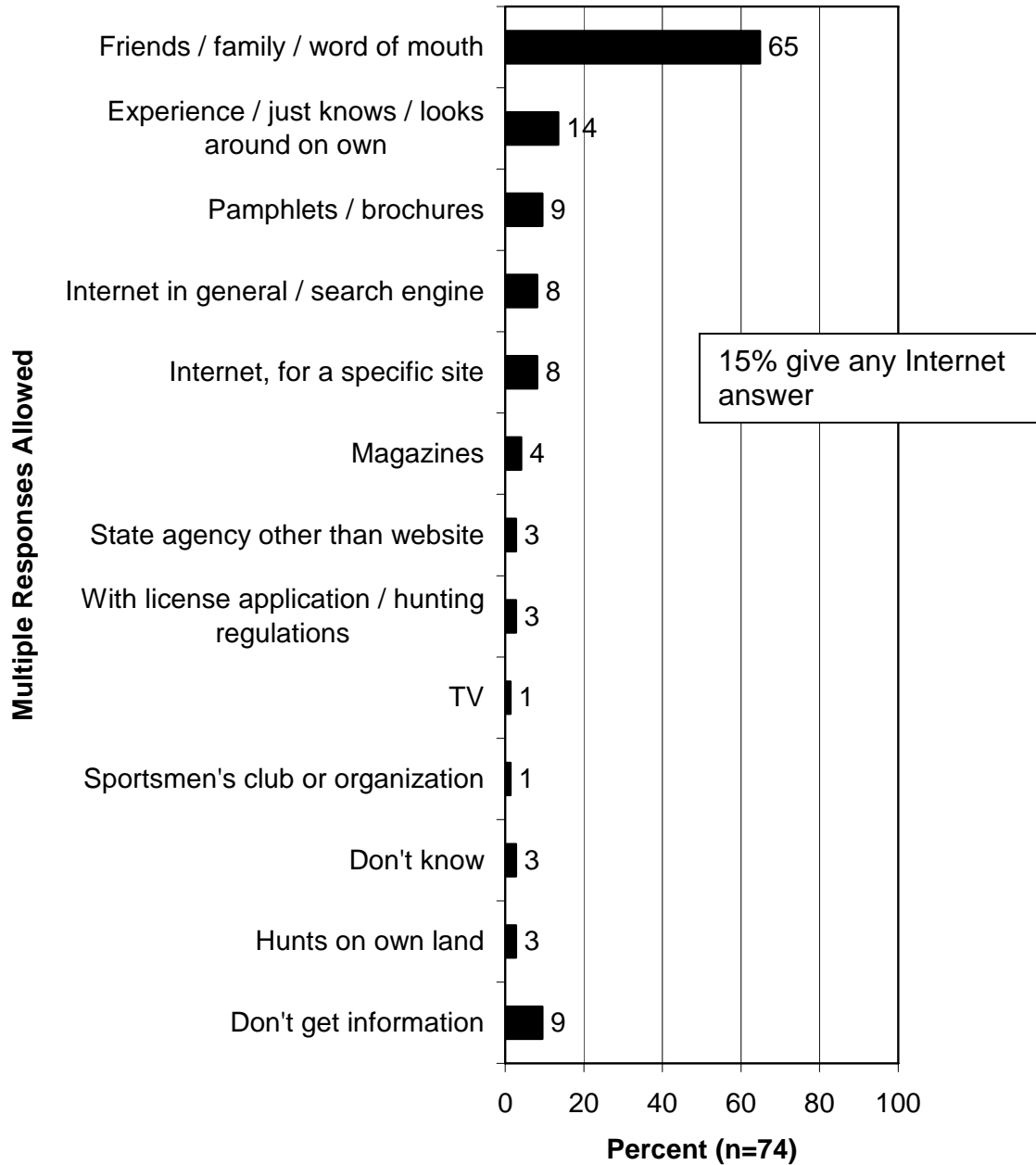
**TEXT BOX 8**

**Actions hunters may take in deciding where to hunt that were asked about in the survey:**

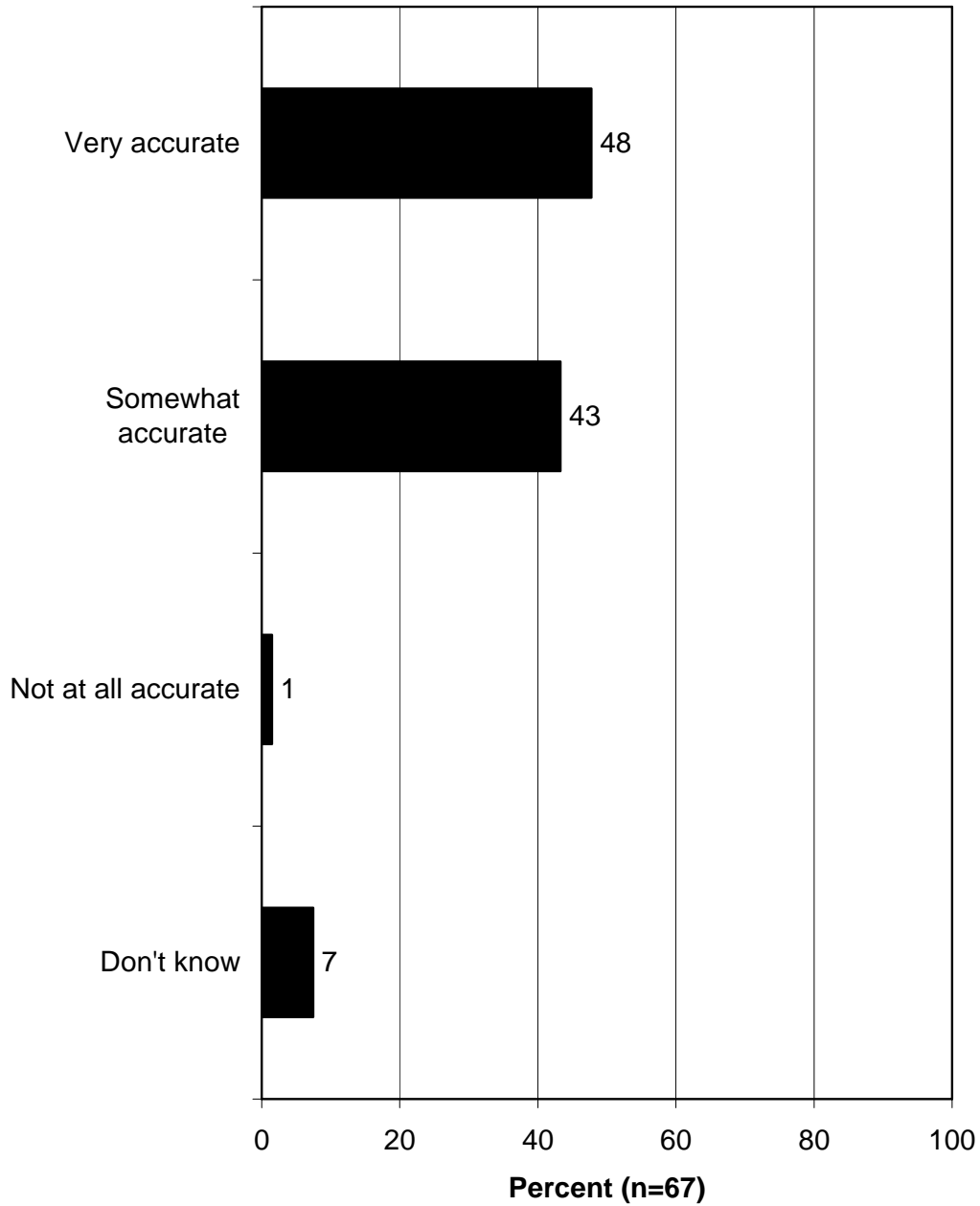
- Ask a friend or family member where to hunt
- Knock on a landowner's door to ask permission to hunt
- Use paper maps to find a place to hunt
- Use GPS to locate hunting land
- Find available hunting lands on the Internet
- Scout or physically look for land on which to hunt

- Within the above series of questions was a question asking how often hunters scout or physically look for land on which to hunt. In follow-up, they were asked how many days they typically spend scouting for hunting locations. The median number of days they typically spend annually scouting for hunting land is 5 days, among those who scout for land.

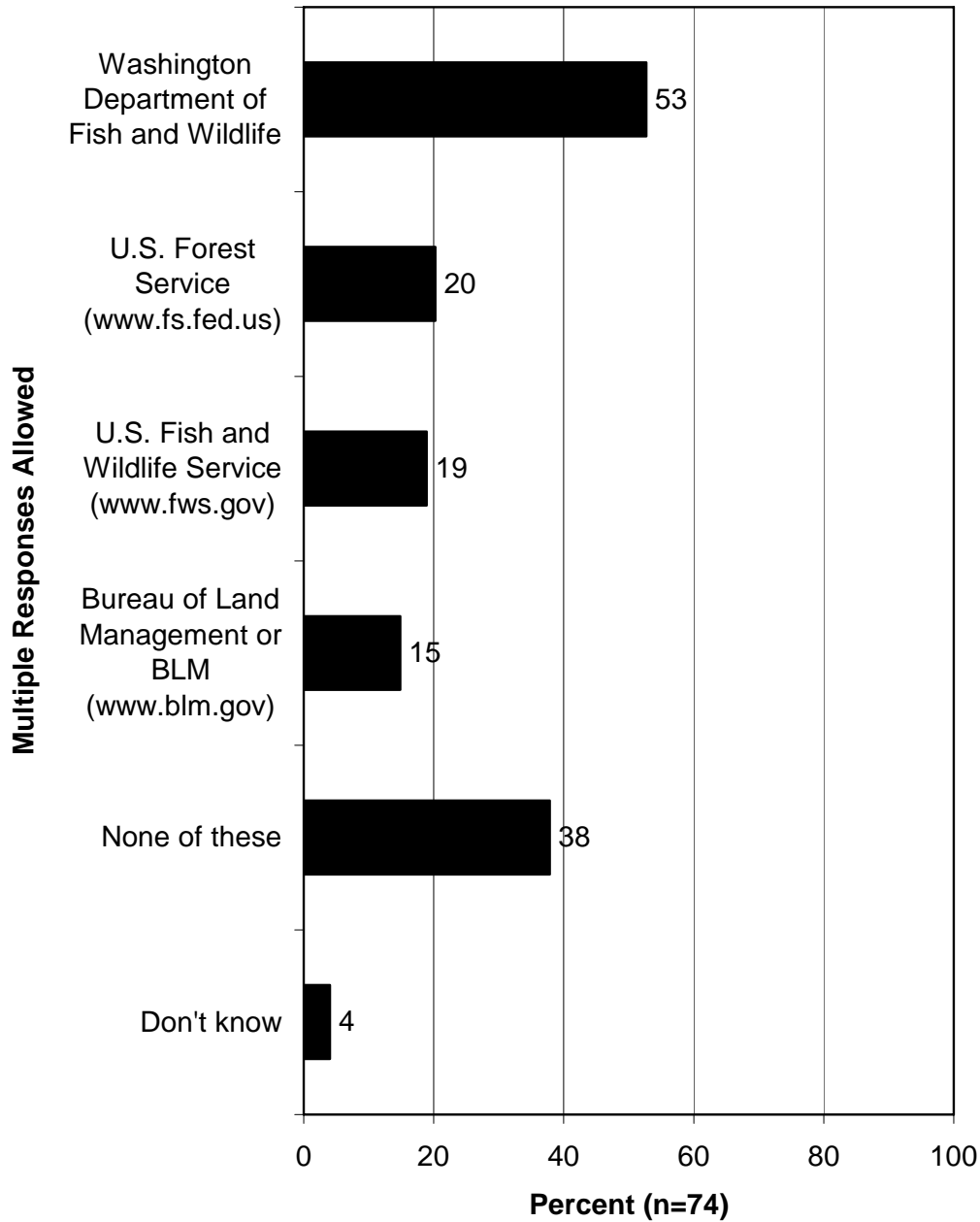
### Q227. Where do you get information on places to hunt and hunting access in Washington?



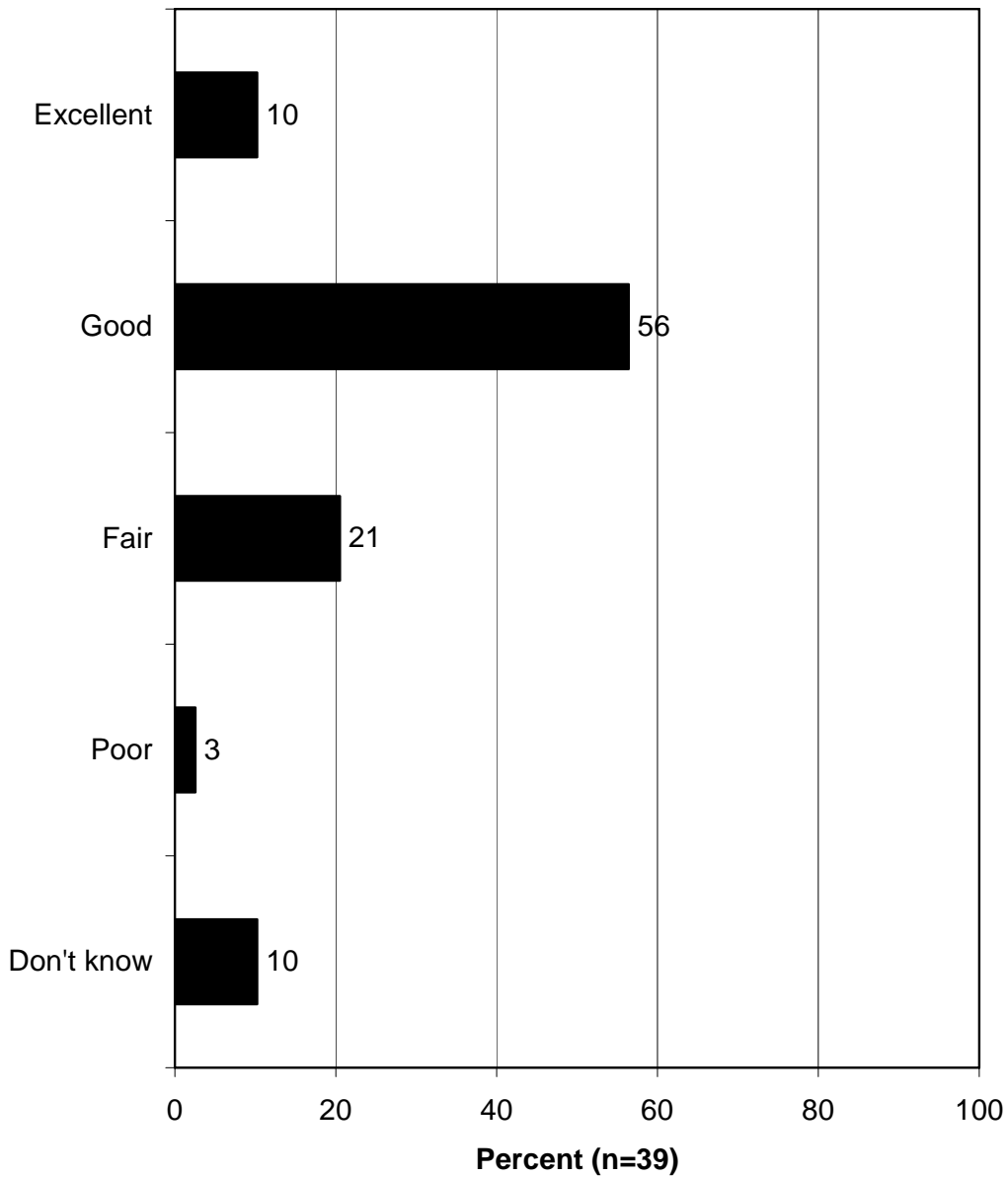
**Q229. In general, how accurate is the information you typically receive?**



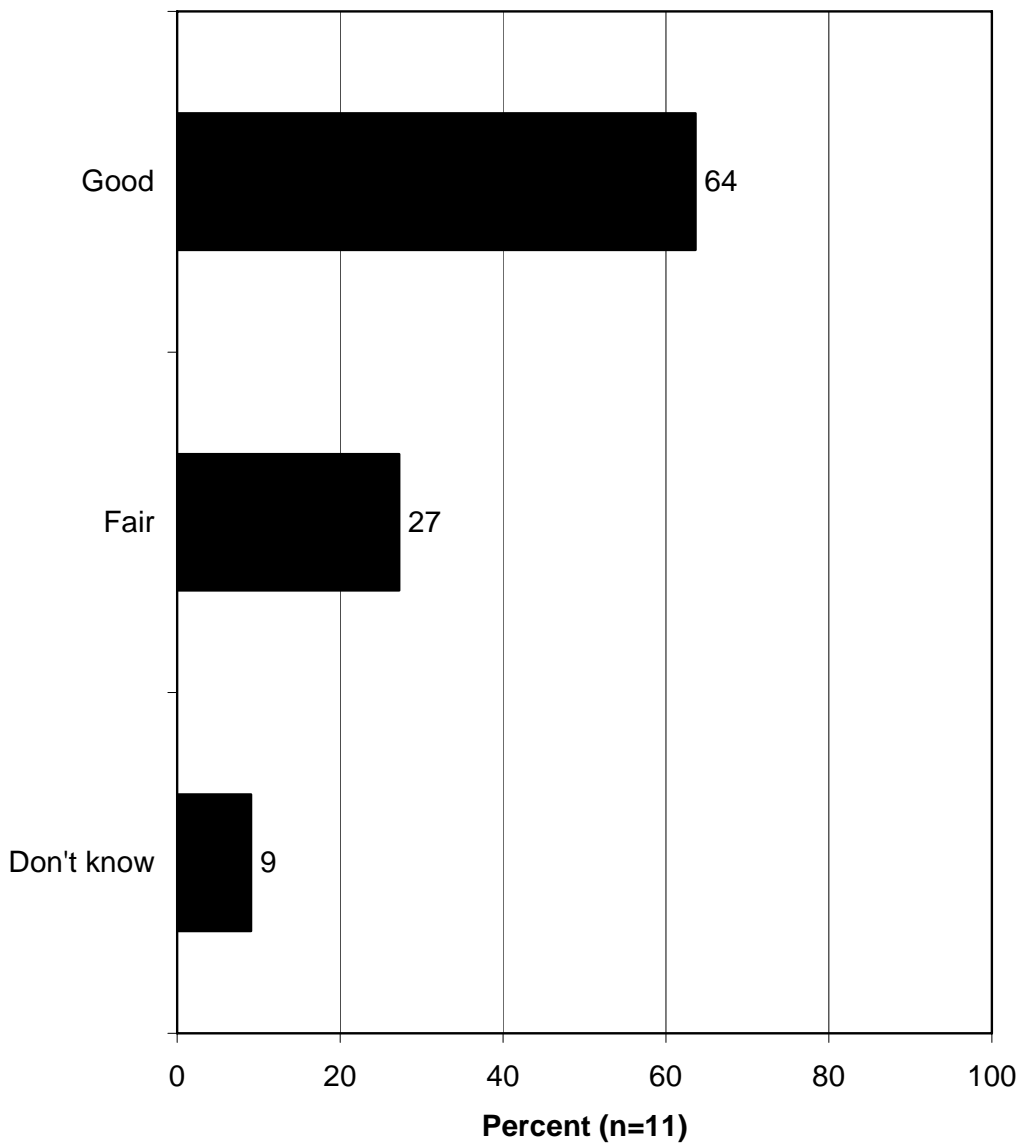
**Q232. Please tell me if you have visited any of the following websites to look for information on places to hunt and hunting access?**



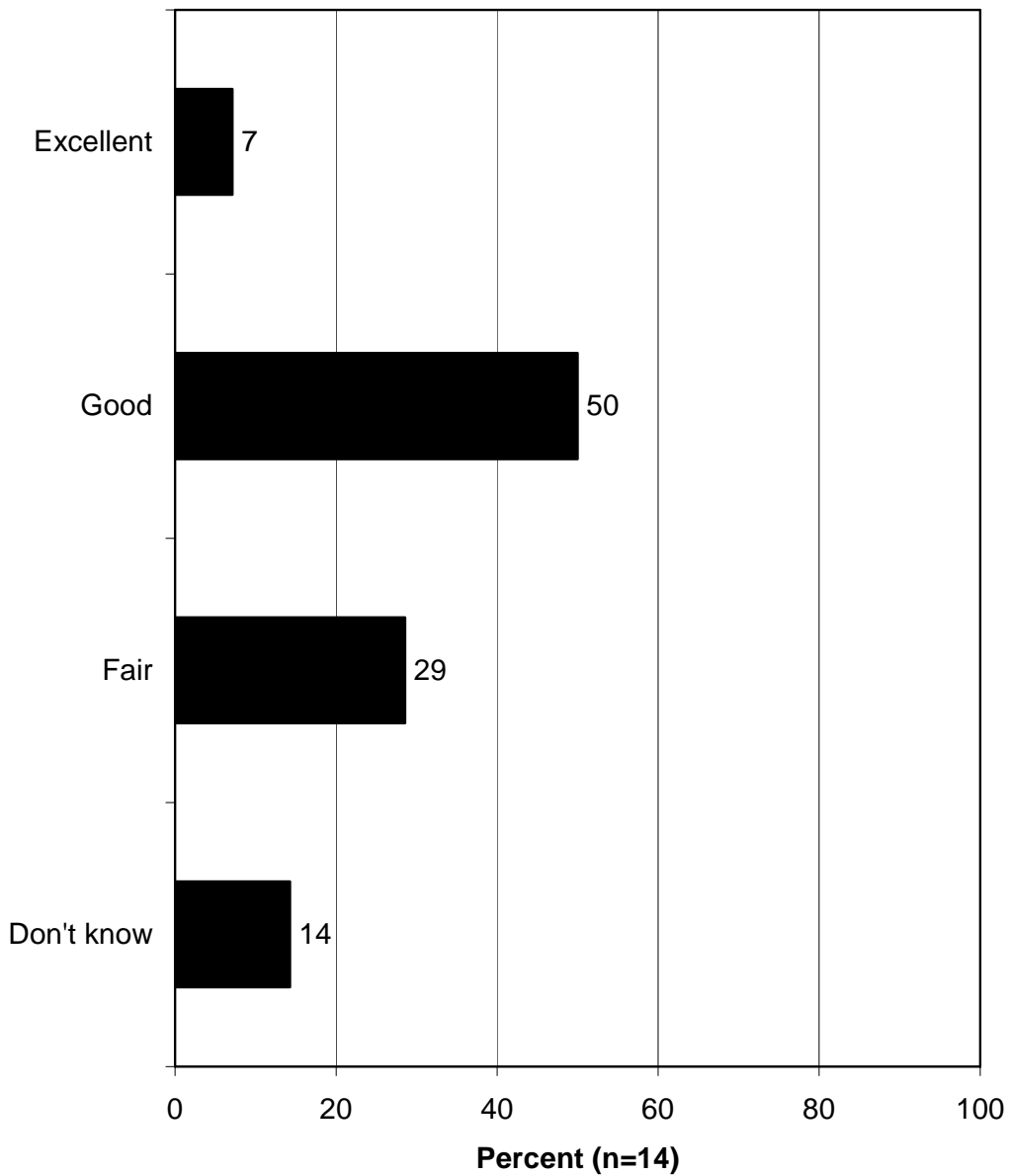
**Q233. How would you rate the usefulness of the information on places to hunt and hunting access on Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's website to you personally in planning your hunting trips in Washington? (Asked of those who used the website to look for information on places to hunt and hunting access.)**



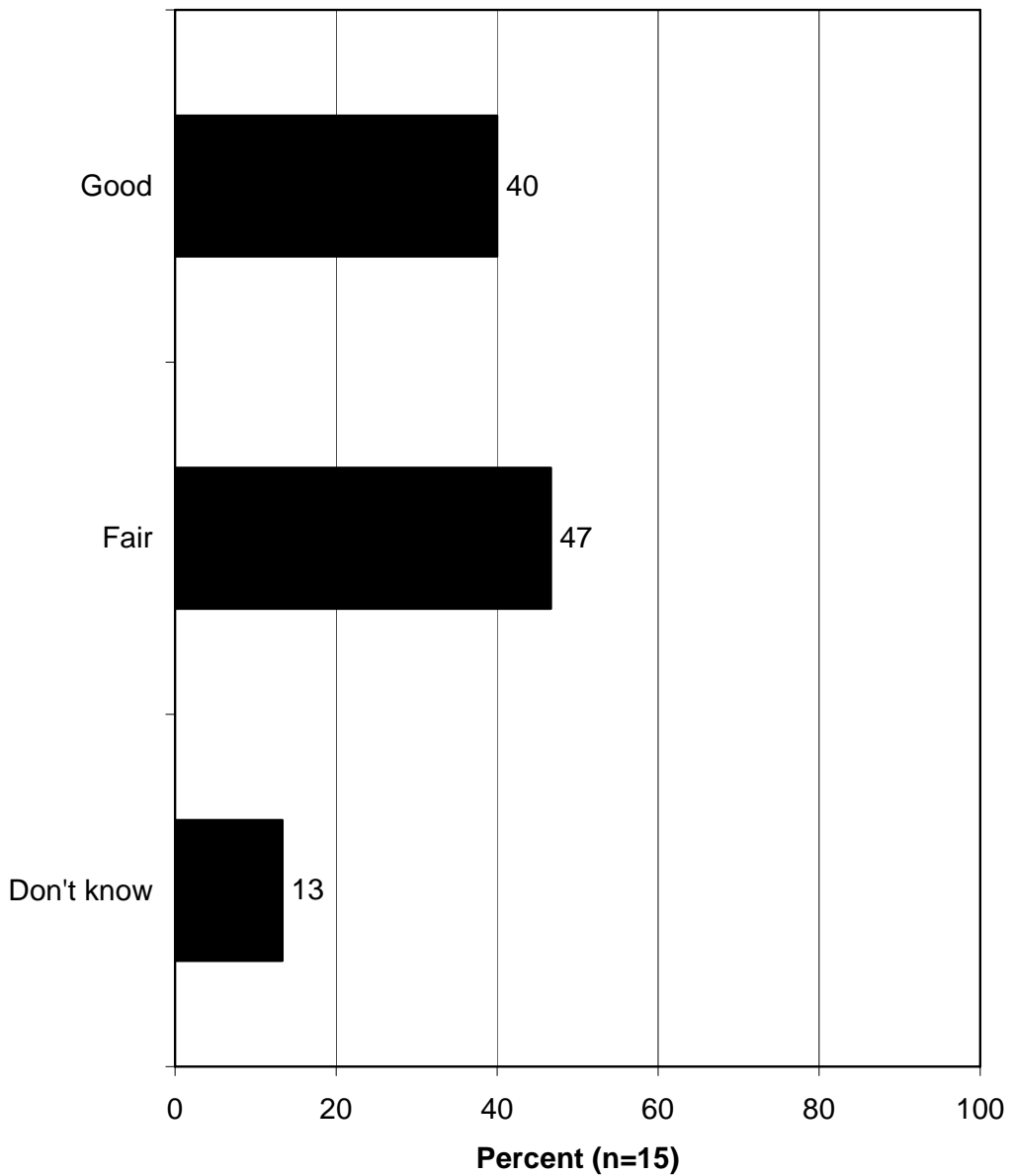
**Q234. How would you rate the usefulness of the information on places to hunt and hunting access on the Bureau of Land Management or BLM website ([www.blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov)) to you personally in planning your hunting trips in Washington? (Asked of those who used the website to look for information on places to hunt and hunting access.)**



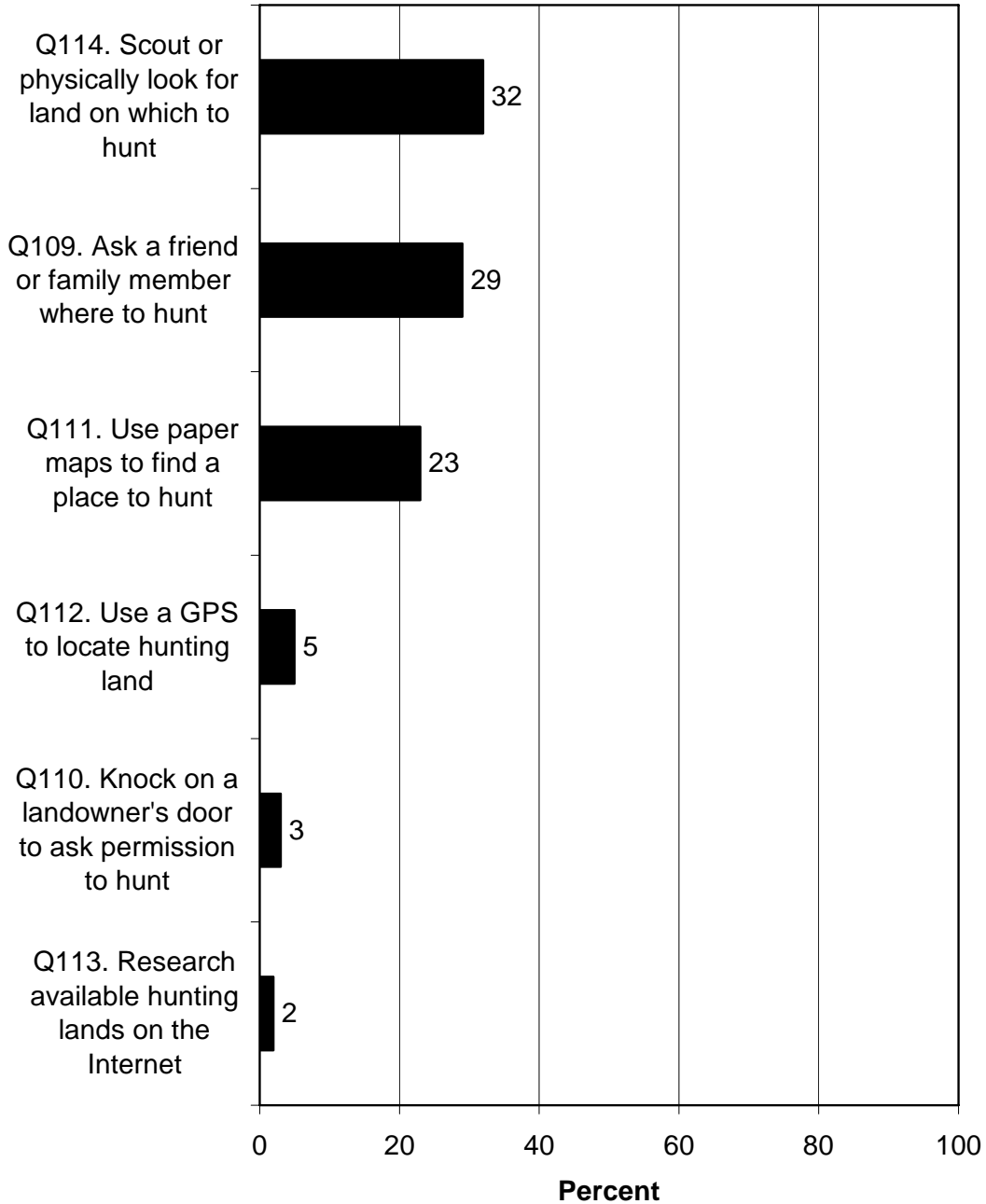
**Q235. How would you rate the usefulness of the information on places to hunt and hunting access on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website ([www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)) to you personally in planning your hunting trips in Washington? (Asked of those who used the website to look for information on places to hunt and hunting access.)**



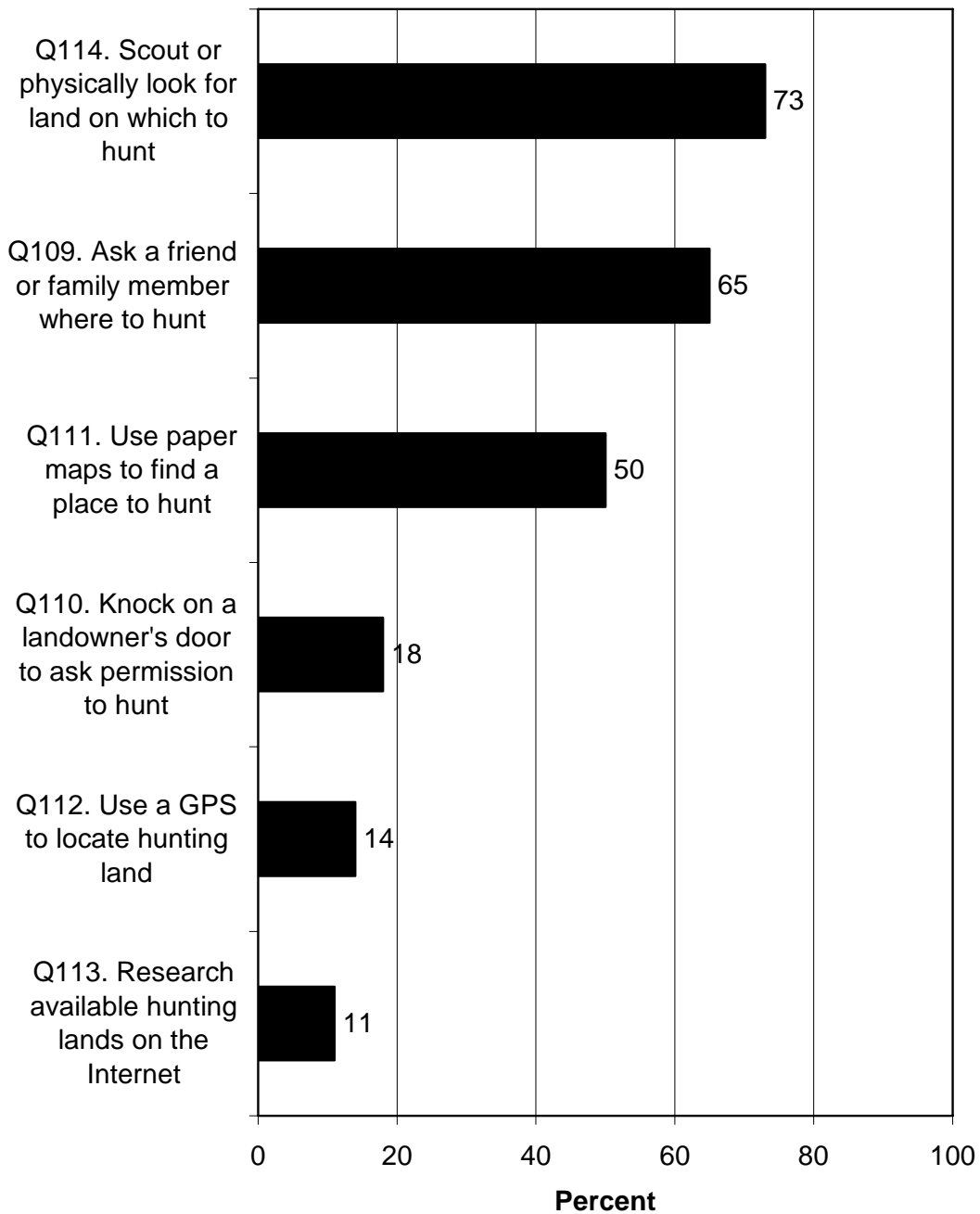
**Q236. How would you rate the usefulness of the information on places to hunt and hunting access on the U.S. Forest Service website to you personally in planning your hunting trips in Washington? (Asked of those who used the website to look for information on places to hunt and hunting access.)**



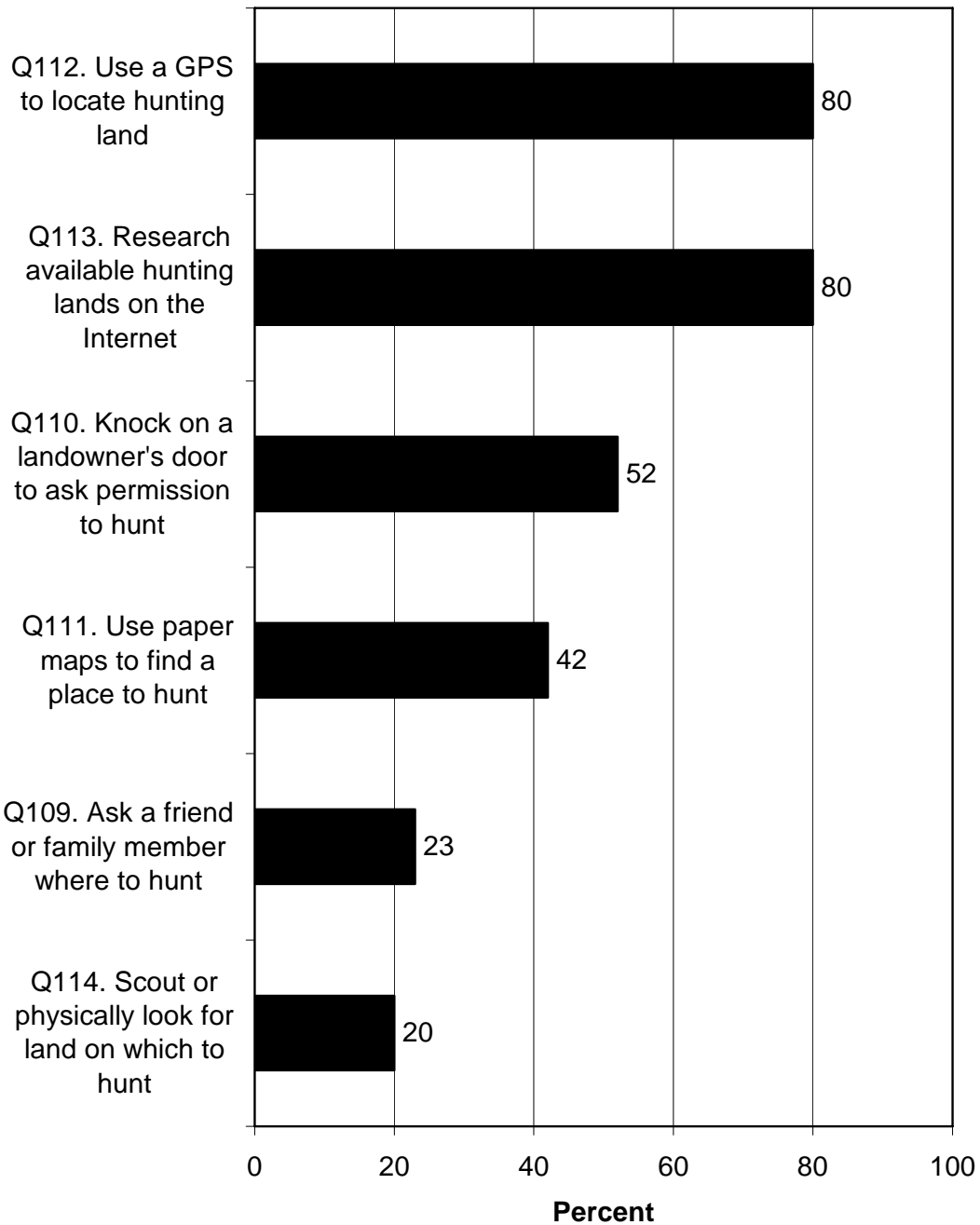
**Percent who always do the following when deciding where to hunt their primary species in Washington.**



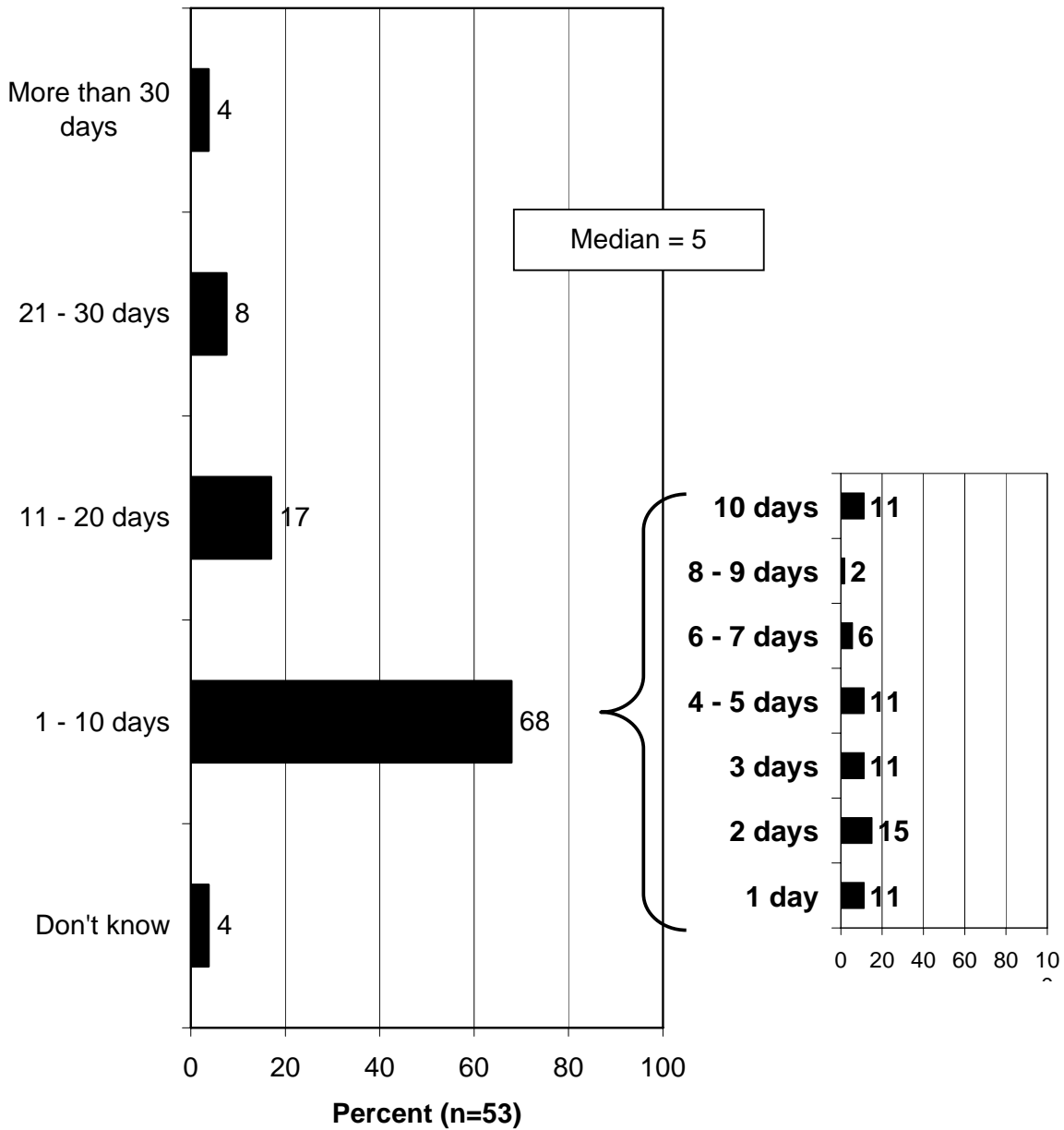
**Percent who always or sometimes do the following  
when deciding where to hunt their primary species  
in Washington.**



**Percent who never do the following when deciding where to hunt their primary species in Washington.**



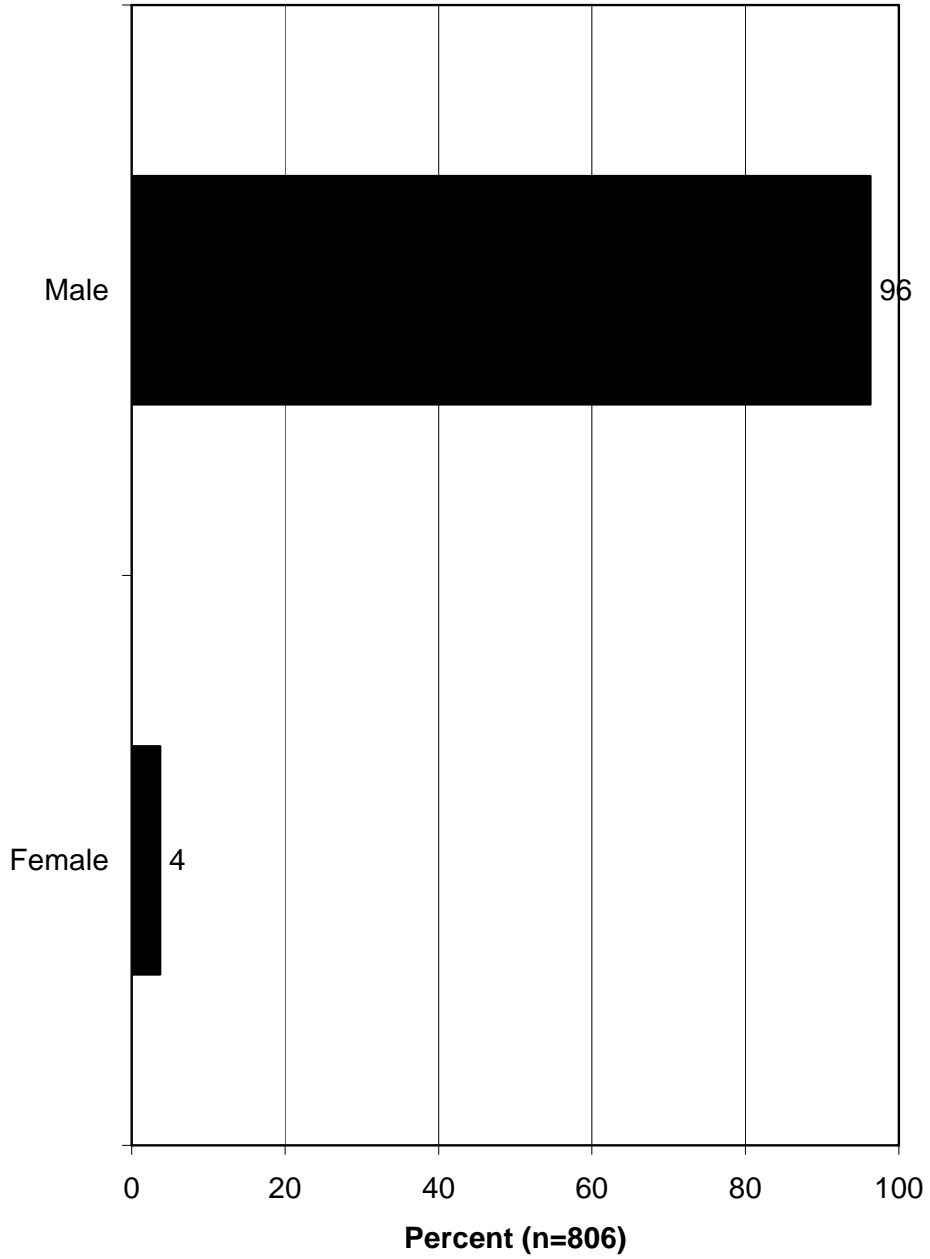
**Q115. About how many days do you usually scout for land on which to hunt the primary species you hunt most for in the past 12 months each year in Washington? (Asked of those who scout or physically look for land on which to hunt when deciding where to hunt this species.)**



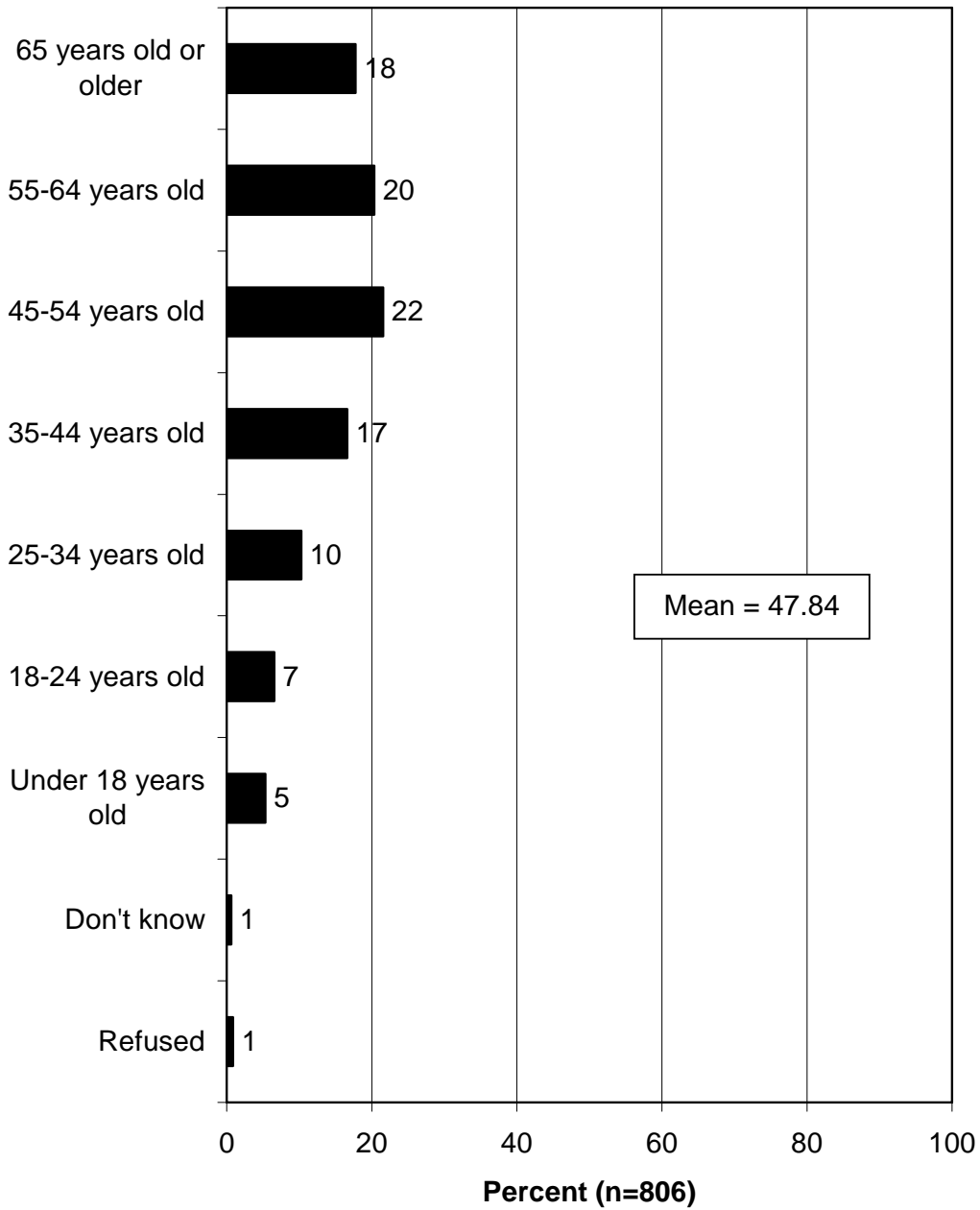
## **DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

- Most Washington hunters in the survey are male (96%).
  
- The ages of Washington hunters are shown, which follow a bell-curve skewed to the older age groups. The mean age is 47.8 years old.
  
- The number of years of residency in Washington is shown, with the answers well-distributed. While 21% have lived in Washington for 20 years or less, at the other end 26% have lived in Washington for more than 50 years.
  
- Hunters in the survey are predominantly from a rural area (44%) or a small city/town (27%). Nonetheless, 27% are from a large city/urban area or a suburban area.
  
- Educational levels are shown: 61% of Washington hunters have some college or trade school coursework (with or without a degree), and 35% have at least an Associate's or trade school degree, with or without a higher degree.

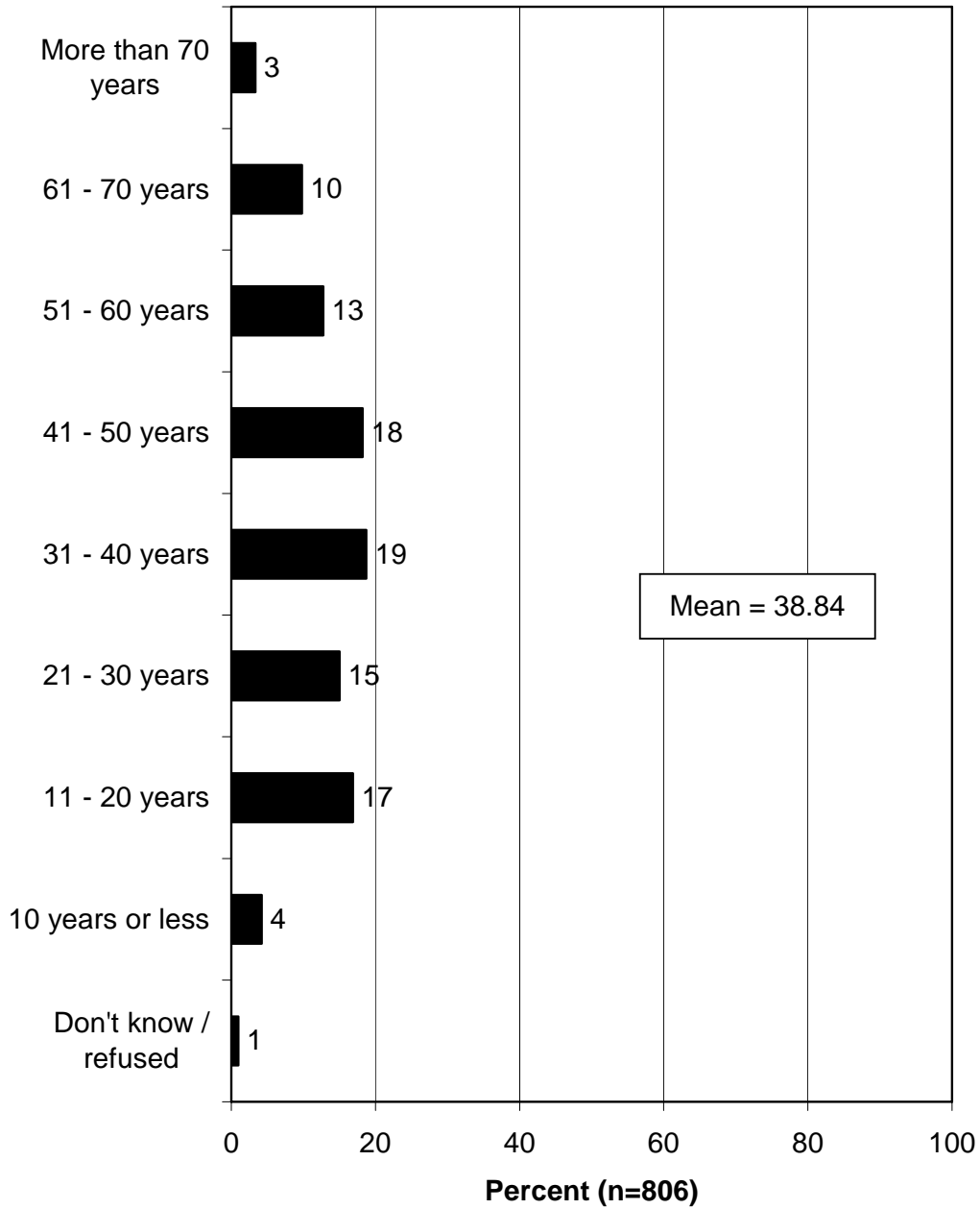
**Q248. Respondent's gender (observed, not asked, by interviewer).**



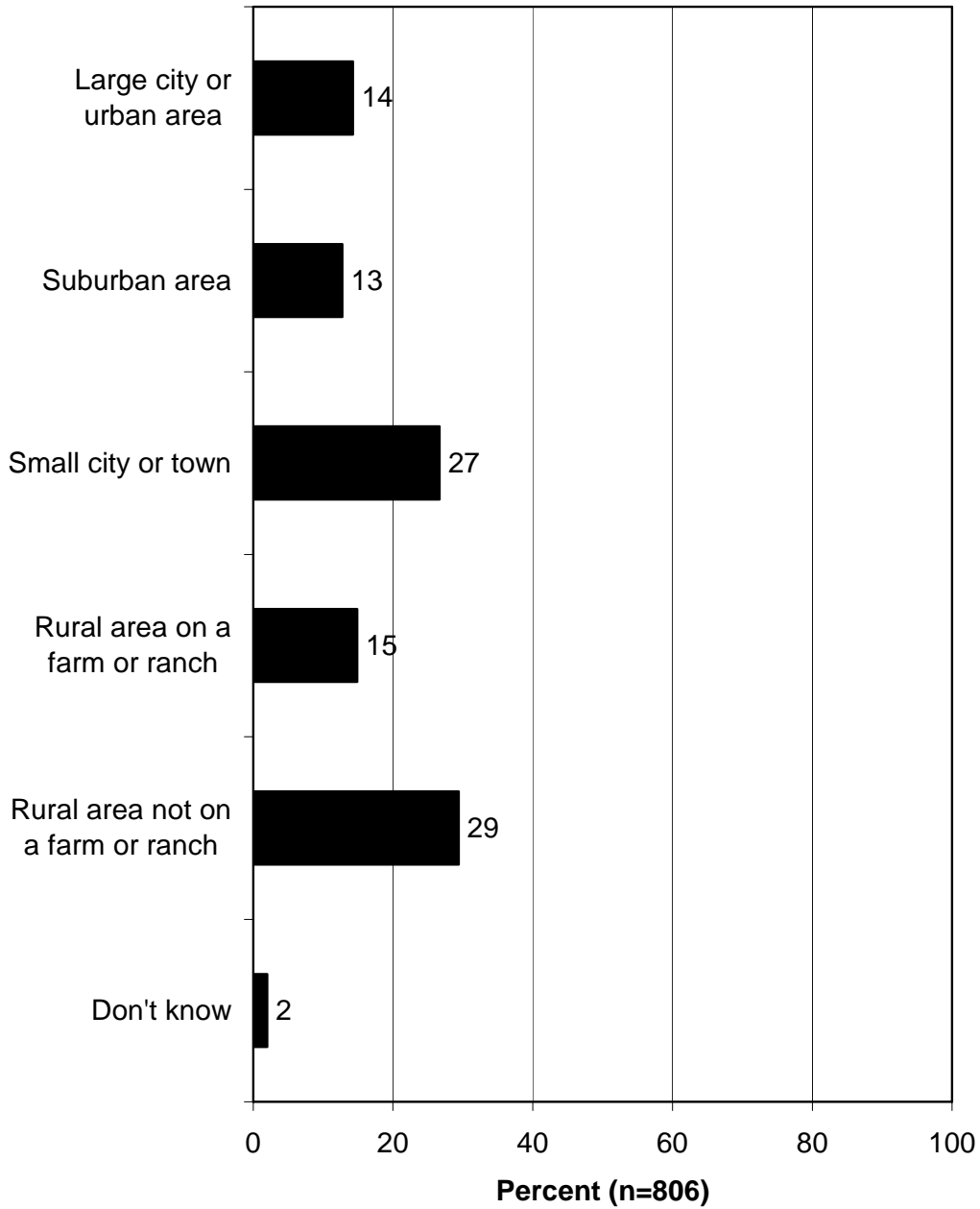
### Q242. Respondent's age.



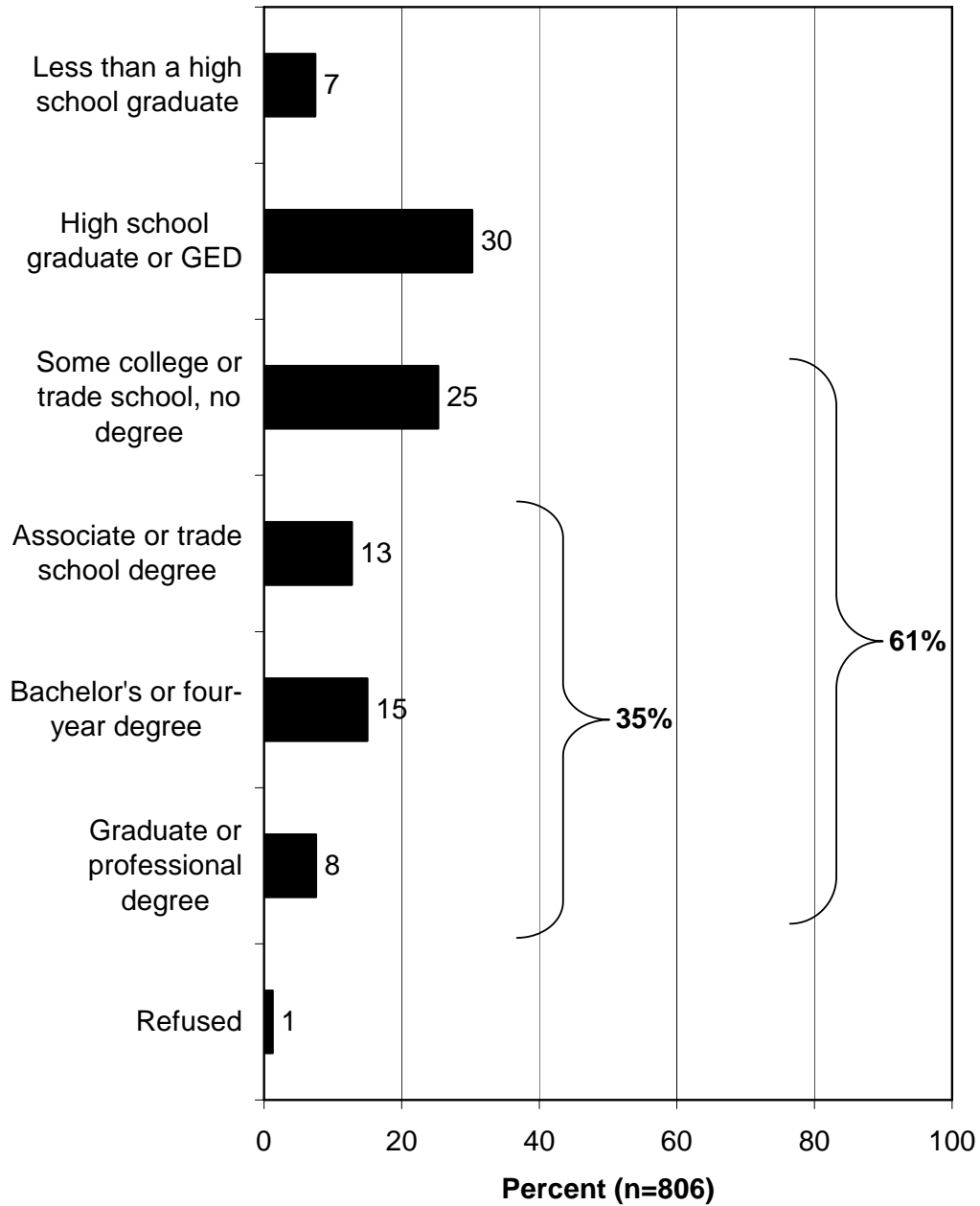
### Q238. How many years have you been a resident of Washington?



**Q240. Which of the following statements best describes where you currently live?**



**Q241. Which of the following statements best describes the highest level of formal education you have completed?**



## **APPENDIX A: DESCRIPTIONS OF HUNTING ACCESS PROGRAMS USED IN WASHINGTON**

### **Open Fields**

This national program provides incentives to landowners to allow public access for hunting. It is essentially a funding source to help states implement existing programs and/or develop new ones. In exchange for opening their lands for hunting, the state pays landowners a modest fee.

### **Conservation Reserve Program**

The CRP, which is a federal program, pays farmers to take agricultural lands out of production to achieve conservation objectives, including reduced soil erosion and provision of wildlife habitat. The program targets four habitat types in Washington State: Roosevelt elk habitat on the Olympic Peninsula; shrubsteppe in parts of Grant, Lincoln and Okanogan Counties; Palouse prairie in Whitman County, and field edges along irrigated cropland in Adams, Franklin and Grant Counties. This program is purely a habitat enhancement program rather than an access program—there are no requirements that landowners provide access; nevertheless, hunters may use these lands subject to landowners' permission.

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs)**

WPAs, which are a subset of the lands in the National Wildlife Refuge System, are public lands purchased by the federal government for the purpose of increasing the production of migratory birds, particularly waterfowl. These areas preserve wetlands and grasslands critical to migratory birds including waterfowl. Funding for the acquisition of these areas comes from sales of the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps (colloquially called "Duck Stamps"). WPAs are open to hunting and fishing.

### **Wheretohunt.org website / Huntinfo.org website**

Both of these addresses are for the same site. This website is maintained by the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). The site provides links to all state hunting agencies.

### **Huntandshoot.org website**

This site, also maintained by the NSSF, has links to the above sites. This site also includes a listing, state-by-state, of various hunting (and shooting) programs available in that state.

### **Feel Free To Hunt**

The Feel Free To Hunt program is a voluntary public/private partnership under which the WDFW reaches agreements with private landowners who are willing to allow hunting on their land. The landowner then allows people to go into an area without receiving further permission from the landowner. Land in the program is indicated by signs.

### **Register to Hunt**

In the Register to Hunt program, private landowners grant permission for hunters to hunt on their lands through an agreement with the WDFW. The program features a centralized parking area with a requirement to sign in and sign out.

### **Hunt by Written Permission**

Similar to the above two programs, this access program allows landowners to receive signs from WDFW and put them up. Hunters then contact the landowners to get written permission for hunting on their lands.

**Landowner Hunting Permit**

Landowner Hunting Permits are issued by WDFW to individuals or corporations that provide a hunting opportunity for the public which otherwise would not exist and/or that helps resolve crop damage problems. Those receiving Landowner Hunting Permits make provisions for public benefit and participation, with a general hunting season opportunity being encouraged, as well as special accommodation for hunters with disabilities, youth, senior, and Advanced Hunter Education designated Master Hunters.

**GoHunt GIS Mapping System**

This program entails an Internet application created by the WDFW to provide hunters with multi-layered maps displaying game management unit boundaries, deer and elk management areas, pheasant-release sites, and Private Lands Hunting Opportunities, as well as roads, topographical features and county lines. In addition, harvest statistics and hunting regulations are available by specific locale and species.

**Quality Hunting Areas**

Quality Hunting Areas are established by the WDFW to provide a large acreage with high quality habitat and low pressure. These areas require special management emphasis and have tailored seasons. Quality Hunting Areas are created for the overall benefit of species management, not to serve individual hunters.

**Accessing Washington's Outdoors Program**

This program provides disabled individuals with hunting access to lands behind locked gates. Hunters must have a Disabled Hunter Permit (as well as permits from the land managers) in order to access hunting areas behind locked gates on the roads that are normally open only to walk-ins. Most sites in the program are selected for the quality experience they provide and are available because of agreements with many different land managers.

**Disabled Hunter Road Access Entry Program**

The Road Access Entry Program is a permit draw program open to hunters with disabilities. In addition to the road access entry permit received from the Department, those drawn for an area may also be issued a permit by the landowner/manager allowing them to drive a motor vehicle into a closed or gated area where other hunters are not allowed to drive a motor vehicle.

## **ABOUT RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT**

Responsive Management is a nationally recognized public opinion and attitude survey research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues. Its mission is to help natural resource and outdoor recreation agencies and organizations better understand and work with their constituents, customers, and the public.

Utilizing its in-house, full-service, computer-assisted telephone and mail survey center with 45 professional interviewers, Responsive Management has conducted more than 1,000 telephone surveys, mail surveys, personal interviews, and focus groups, as well as numerous marketing and communications plans, need assessments, and program evaluations on natural resource and outdoor recreation issues.

Clients include most of the federal and state natural resource, outdoor recreation, and environmental agencies, and most of the top conservation organizations. Responsive Management also collects attitude and opinion data for many of the nation's top universities, including the University of Southern California, Virginia Tech, Colorado State University, Auburn, Texas Tech, the University of California—Davis, Michigan State University, the University of Florida, North Carolina State University, Penn State, West Virginia University, and others.

Among the wide range of work Responsive Management has completed during the past 20 years are studies on how the general population values natural resources and outdoor recreation, and their opinions on and attitudes toward an array of natural resource-related issues. Responsive Management has conducted dozens of studies of selected groups of outdoor recreationists, including anglers, boaters, hunters, wildlife watchers, birdwatchers, park visitors, historic site visitors, hikers, and campers, as well as selected groups within the general population, such as landowners, farmers, urban and rural residents, women, senior citizens, children, Hispanics, Asians, and African-Americans. Responsive Management has conducted studies on environmental education, endangered species, waterfowl, wetlands, water quality, and the reintroduction of numerous species such as wolves, grizzly bears, the California condor, and the Florida panther.

Responsive Management has conducted research on numerous natural resource ballot initiatives and referenda and helped agencies and organizations find alternative funding and increase their memberships and donations. Responsive Management has conducted major agency and organizational program needs assessments and helped develop more effective programs based upon a solid foundation of fact. Responsive Management has developed websites for natural resource organizations, conducted training workshops on the human dimensions of natural resources, and presented numerous studies each year in presentations and as keynote speakers at major natural resource, outdoor recreation, conservation, and environmental conferences and meetings.

Responsive Management has conducted research on public attitudes toward natural resources and outdoor recreation in almost every state in the United States, as well as in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Japan. Responsive Management routinely conducts surveys in Spanish and has also conducted surveys and focus groups in Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese.

Responsive Management's research has been featured in most of the nation's major media, including CNN, ESPN, *The Washington Times*, *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and on the front pages of *The Washington Post* and *USA Today*.

Visit the Responsive Management website at:

**[www.responsivemanagement.com](http://www.responsivemanagement.com)**