Fremont County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Community Engagement Survey Results



437 responses · Survey open August 10–28, 2026

Prepared by Envision Inc., for Fremont County Emergency Management and local fire protection districts

At a glance

Four numbers frame Fremont Wildfire Survey results

437

residents responded, roughly 50/50 rural and town or near town respondents.

85%

are at least moderately concerned about a wildfire near their home

22%

believe their county and community are prepared for a wildfire

99%

agree actions should be taken to mitigate wildfire risk — no one disagreed

The core tension: residents are worried and overwhelmingly support mitigation, but few feel the county and community are ready.

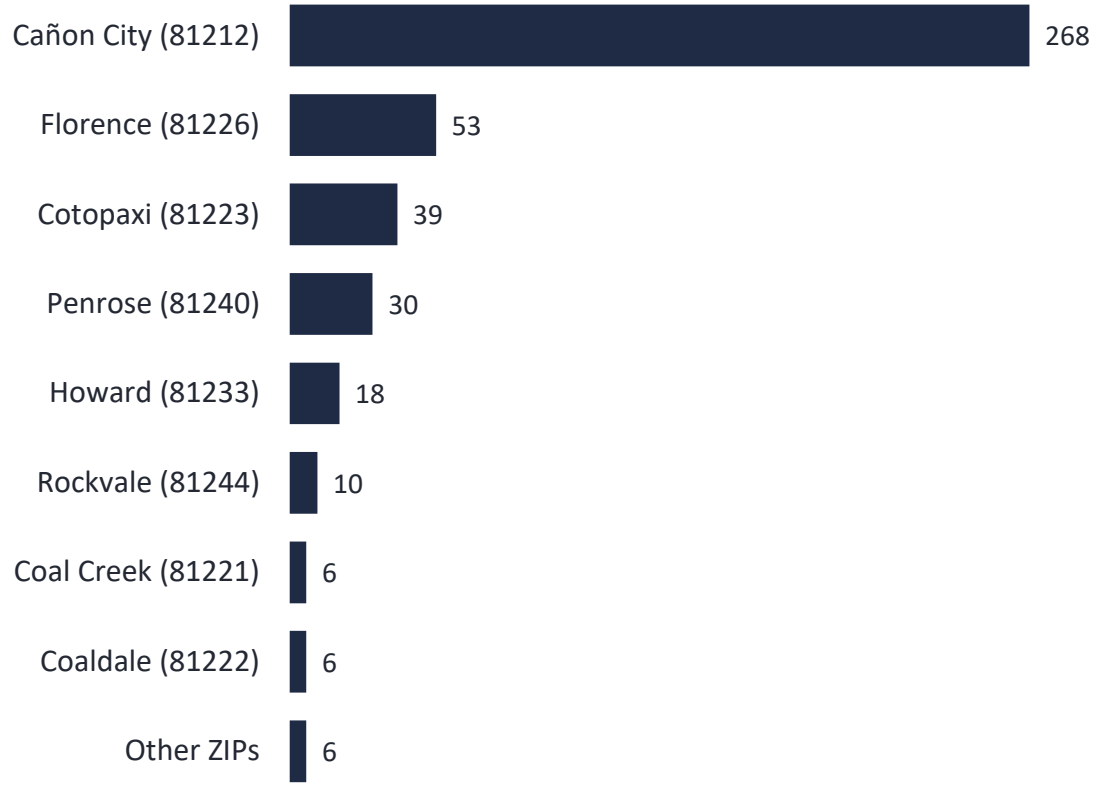
Percentages use question-level respondents: concern n=437, preparedness n=436, mitigation n=436.

Q2·4

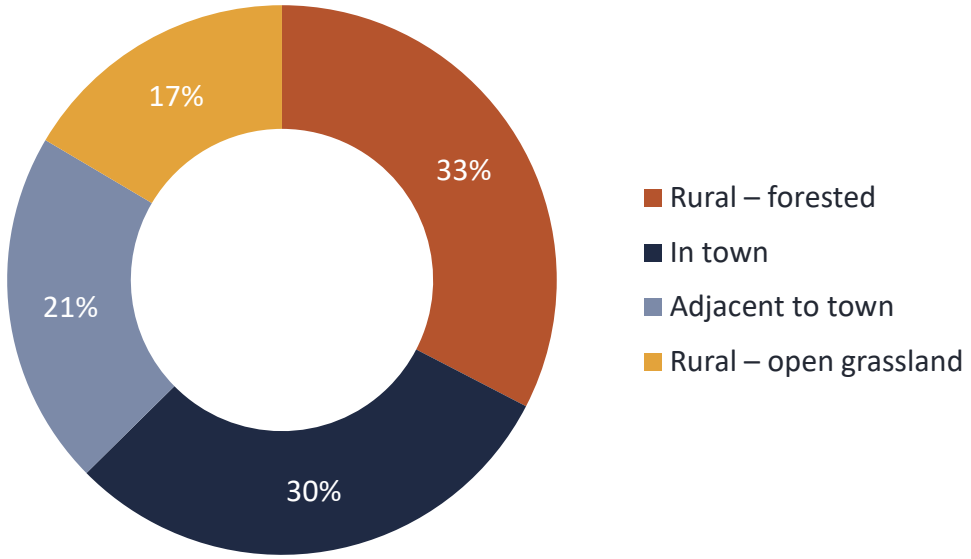
Who responded

Where respondents live, by ZIP code and type of residence

Respondents by ZIP code



Type of residence



ZIP code: all 437 answered; 436 entries were valid ZIP codes (ZIP+4 grouped to 5 digits). Residence type n=436. Half of respondents (49%) live in rural areas.

Q5

Most felt last year's fires — mainly through smoke

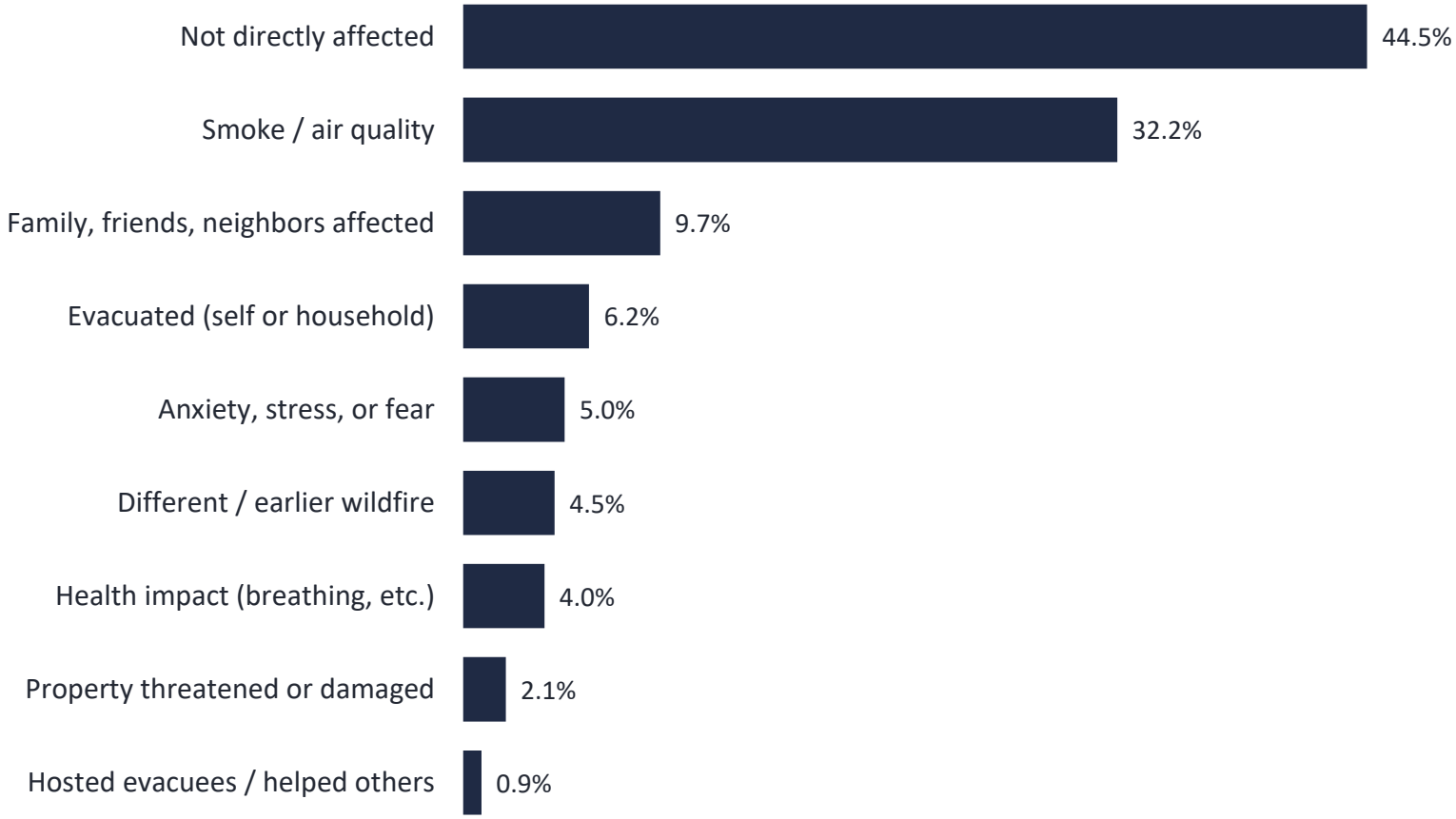
Were you affected by the Aspen Acres or any other wildfire in the past year?

55%

described some kind of impact from a wildfire in the past year

32%

specifically cited smoke or air quality — the most common impact by far

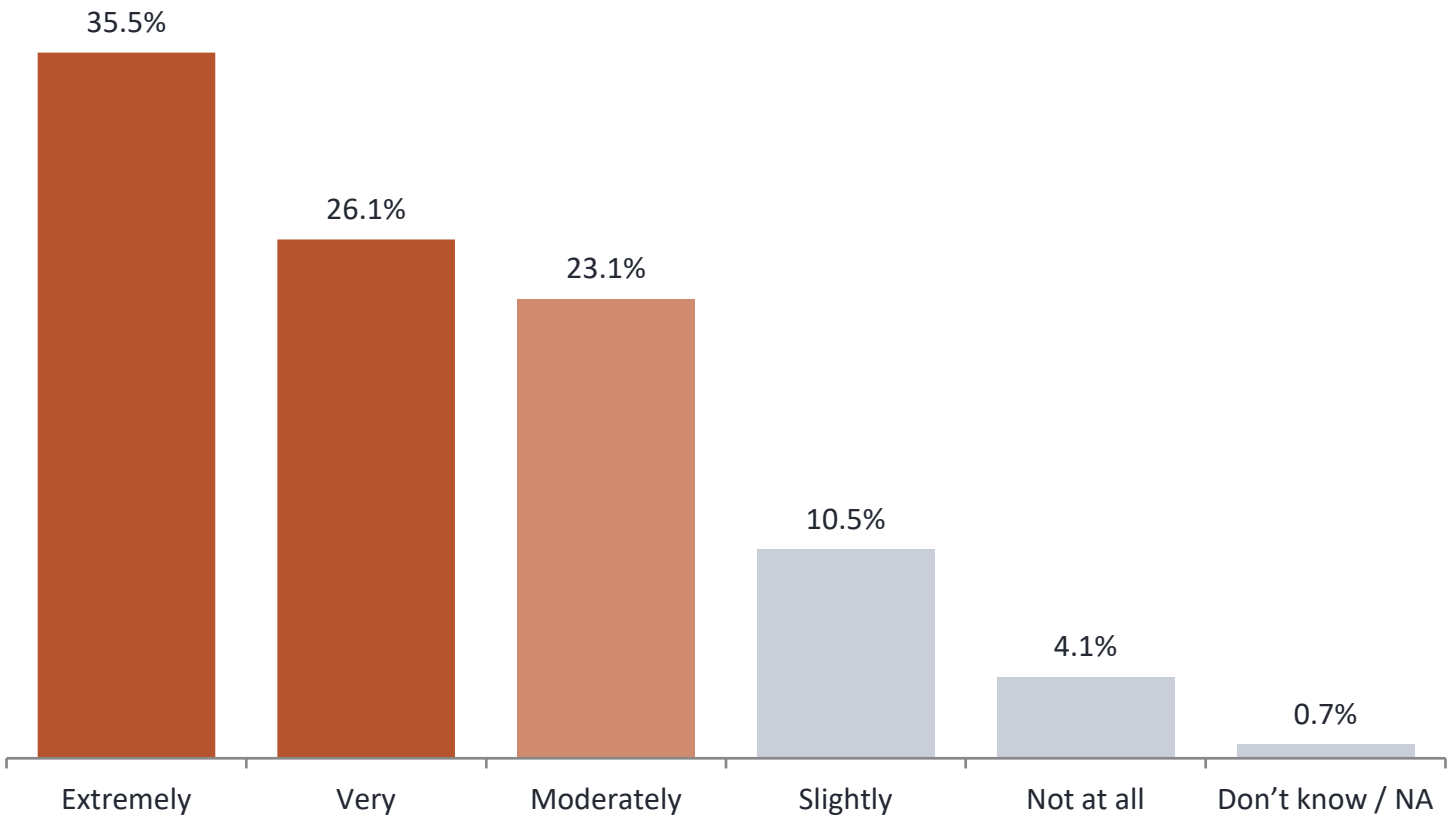


n=422 substantive open-ended responses. Themes coded from response text and not mutually exclusive, so totals exceed 100%.

Q7

Concern is high — more than a third are extremely concerned

How concerned are you about a future wildfire near your residence?



62%

are extremely or very concerned

85%

are at least moderately concerned; only 4% are not concerned at all

n=437. Three respondents chose “Don’t know / NA” and added a comment.

Q14

Near-unanimous support for mitigation

I believe actions should be taken to mitigate wildfire risk.

99%

agree or strongly agree

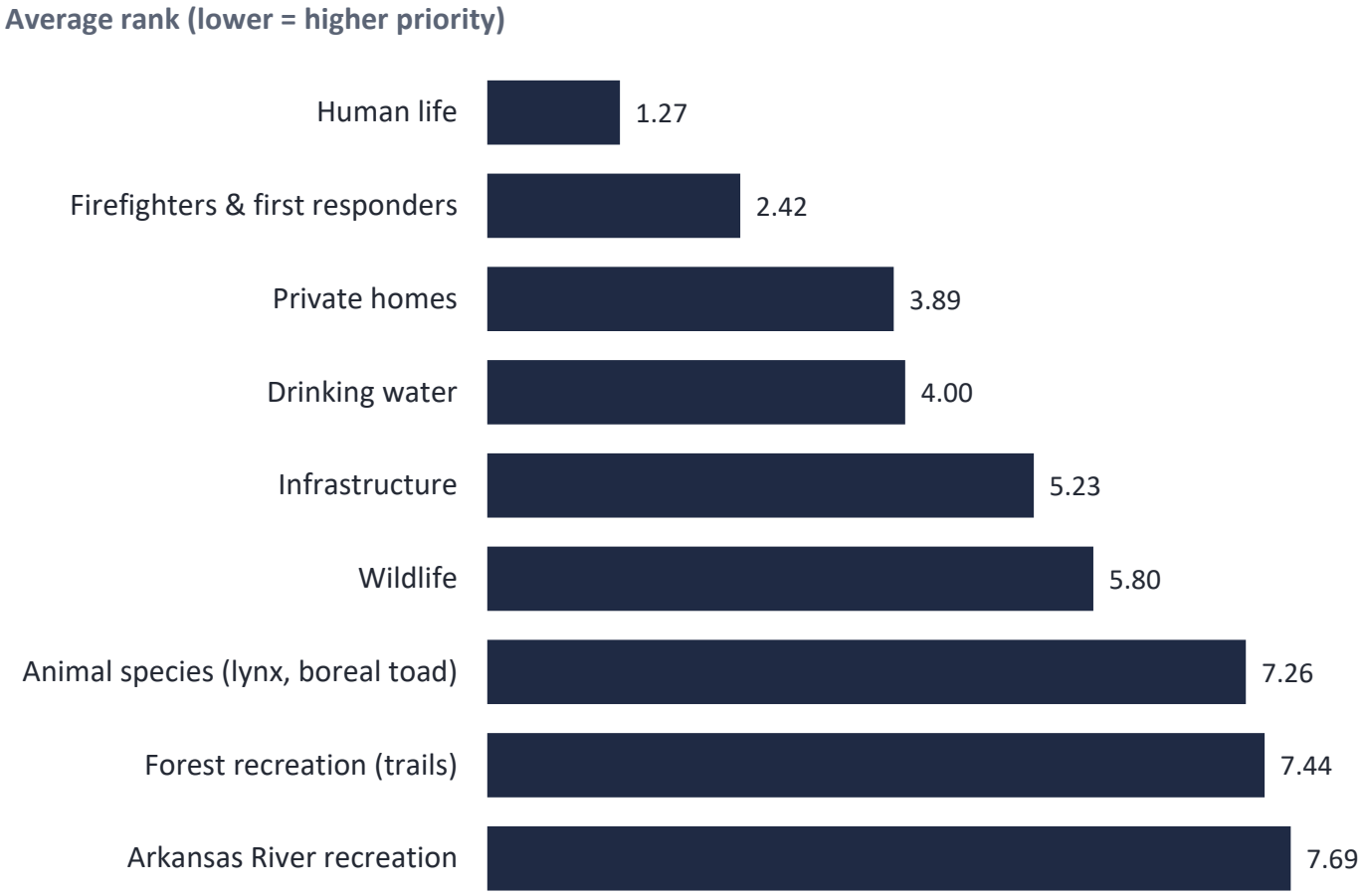
78.7%	Strongly agree
20.0%	Agree
1.4%	Neutral
0%	Disagree or strongly disagree

n=436. Not a single respondent disagreed. 251 respondents explained their answer.

Q8·9

Protect people first: human life ranked #1 by 82%

How important is it to protect the following from wildfire? (ranked 1 = most important to 9)



Clear hierarchy
Lives, then homes and water, then infrastructure and wildlife. Protected wildlife species and recreation rank last.

Others to protect (Q9)
49 respondents added values not on the list — most often pets and livestock (20%), followed by agriculture and ranching (14%).

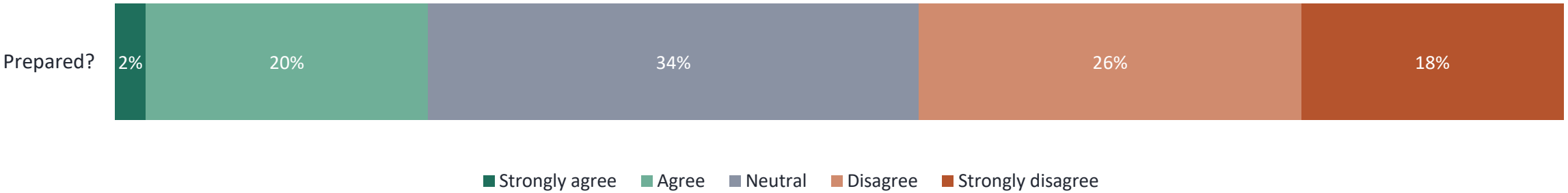
Recommendation to add Agricultural Infrastructure (headgates, ditches) as a top 2/3 priority

Q8 n=436; human life ranked #1 by 81.7%, first responders by 14.4%. Q9 n=49 open-ended responses.

Q10

Only 1 in 5 believe the county is prepared

I believe my county and local community/subdivision are prepared for a wildfire.



22%

agree or strongly agree

34%

are neutral — unsure either way

45%

disagree or strongly disagree

n=436.

Q10

Only 1 in 5 believe the county is prepared

Gaps focus on 5 themes

24%

Concern about lack of action to cut/clear/ mitigate standing dead trees and debris (fuel)

9%

Desire for more Centralized Wildfire Resilience Planning and Coordination

8%

Underfunded/understaffed Fire Departments

5%

Desire for more evacuation planning, education on evacuation readiness

3%

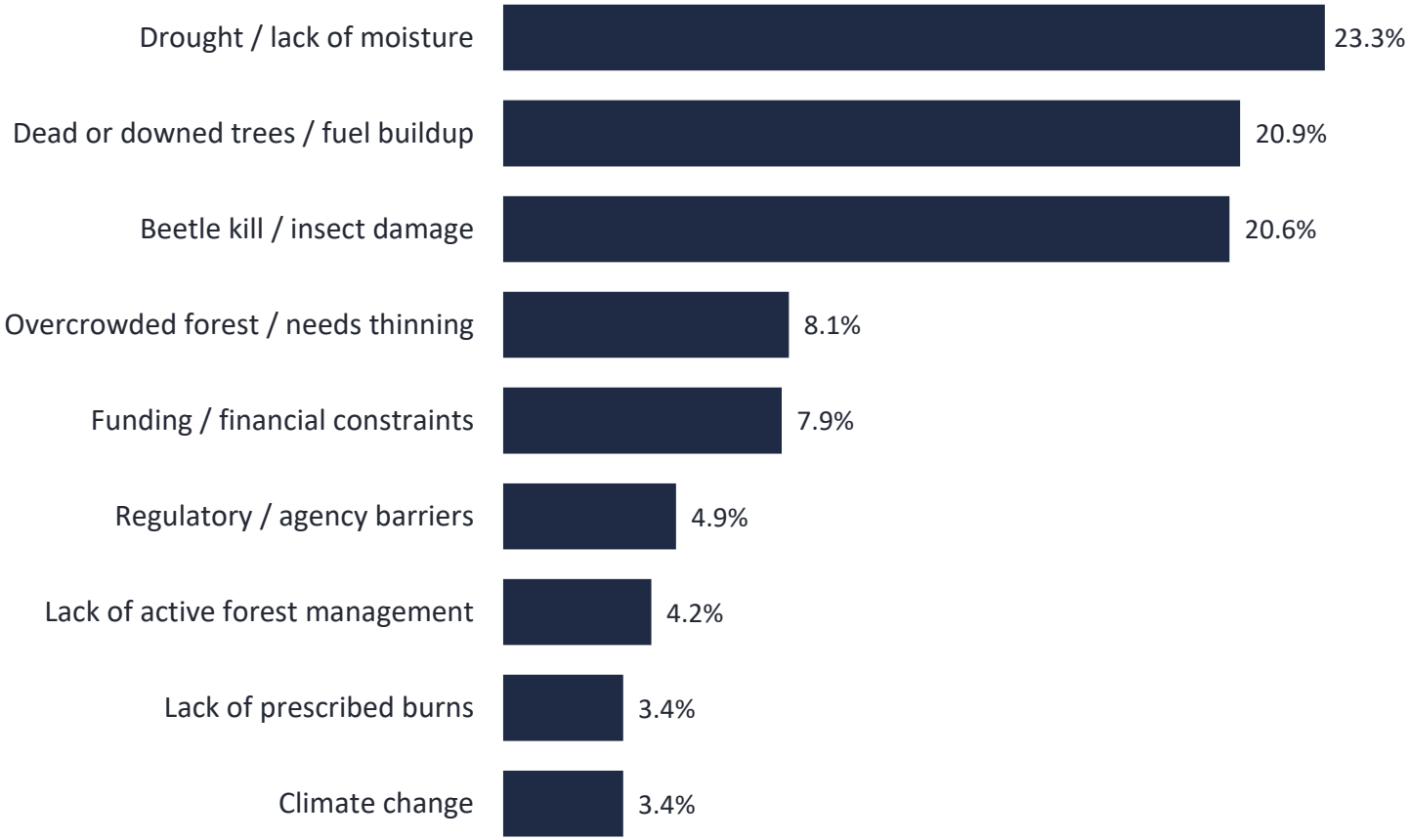
Concern about one way in-out roads and evacuation

n=436.

Q6

Forest Health - Drought, dead fuel, and beetle kill top concerns

What do you think is the greatest challenge to the health of Fremont County forests?



A linked story, not three separate problems

Respondents often describe drought and beetle kill as the cause of the standing and downed dead timber they see as the main fuel-load problem.

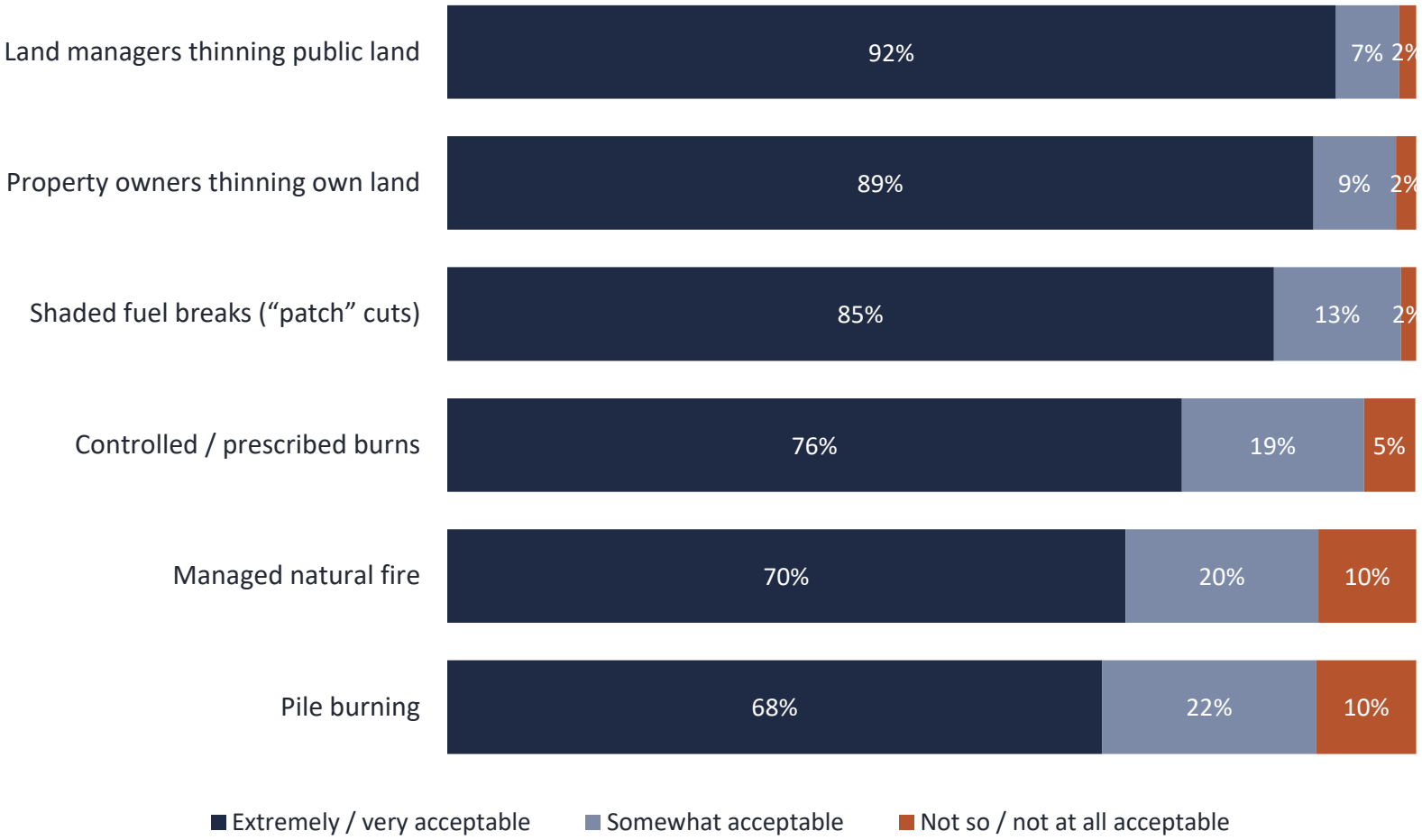
A smaller group points to what gets in the way: funding, agency rules, and too little active management.

n=407 open-ended responses. Themes not mutually exclusive. Themes under 3% not shown.

Q15

Thinning is the most accepted tool; fire-based methods trail

How acceptable are the following approaches to address wildfire threat? (sorted by % extremely/very acceptable)



Every approach is majority-acceptable

Mechanical thinning of trees earns 85–92% top-two support. Burning-based methods still at or near two-thirds public support, but 1 in 10 object to pile burning and managed natural fire.

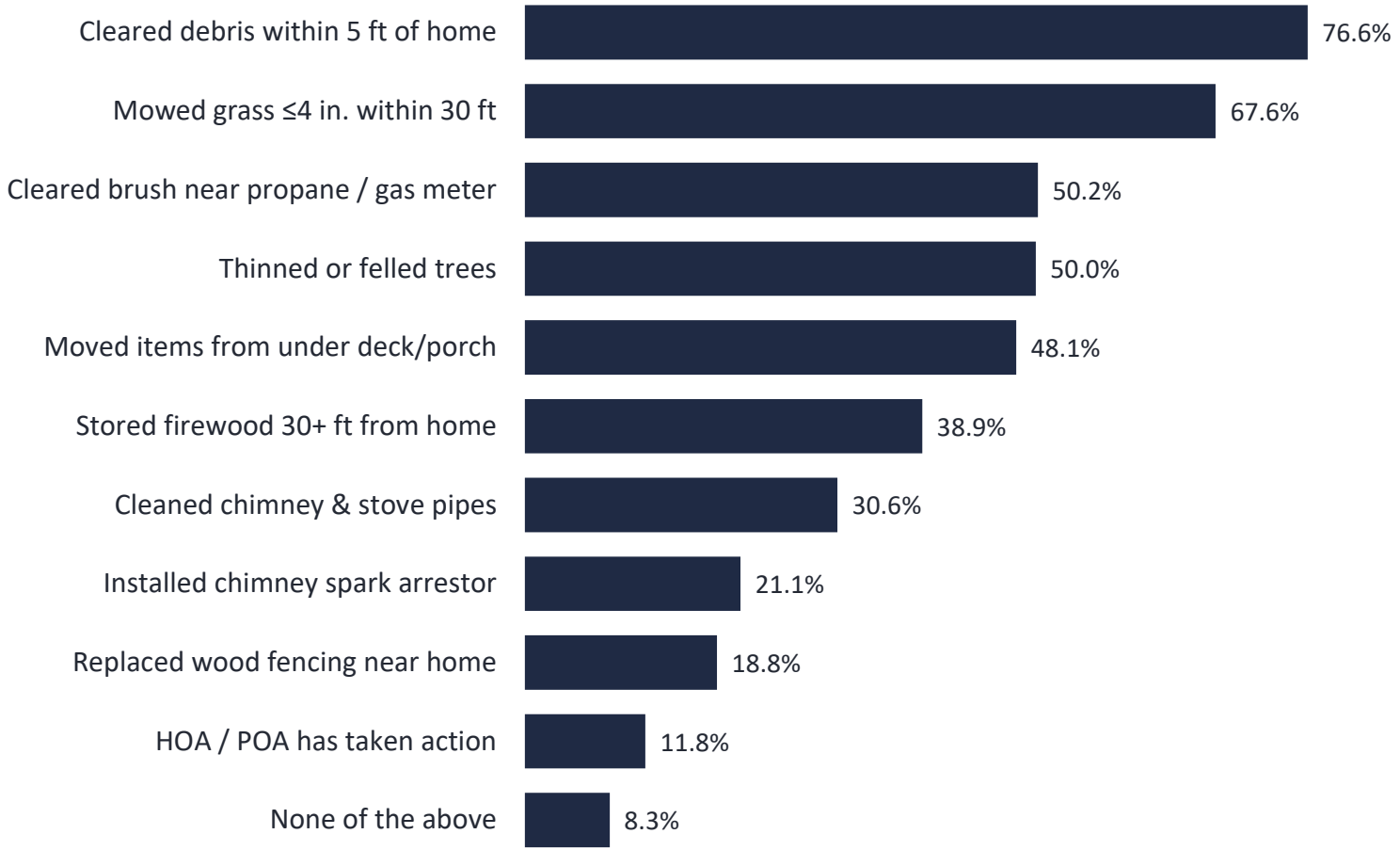
Burn programs may need more public education up front.

n=436 (426–434 per approach).

Q16

Easy home-ignition steps are common; hardening lags

Which wildfire-preparedness activities have you completed at your primary residence?



4.1

activities completed on average, out of 10 listed

8%

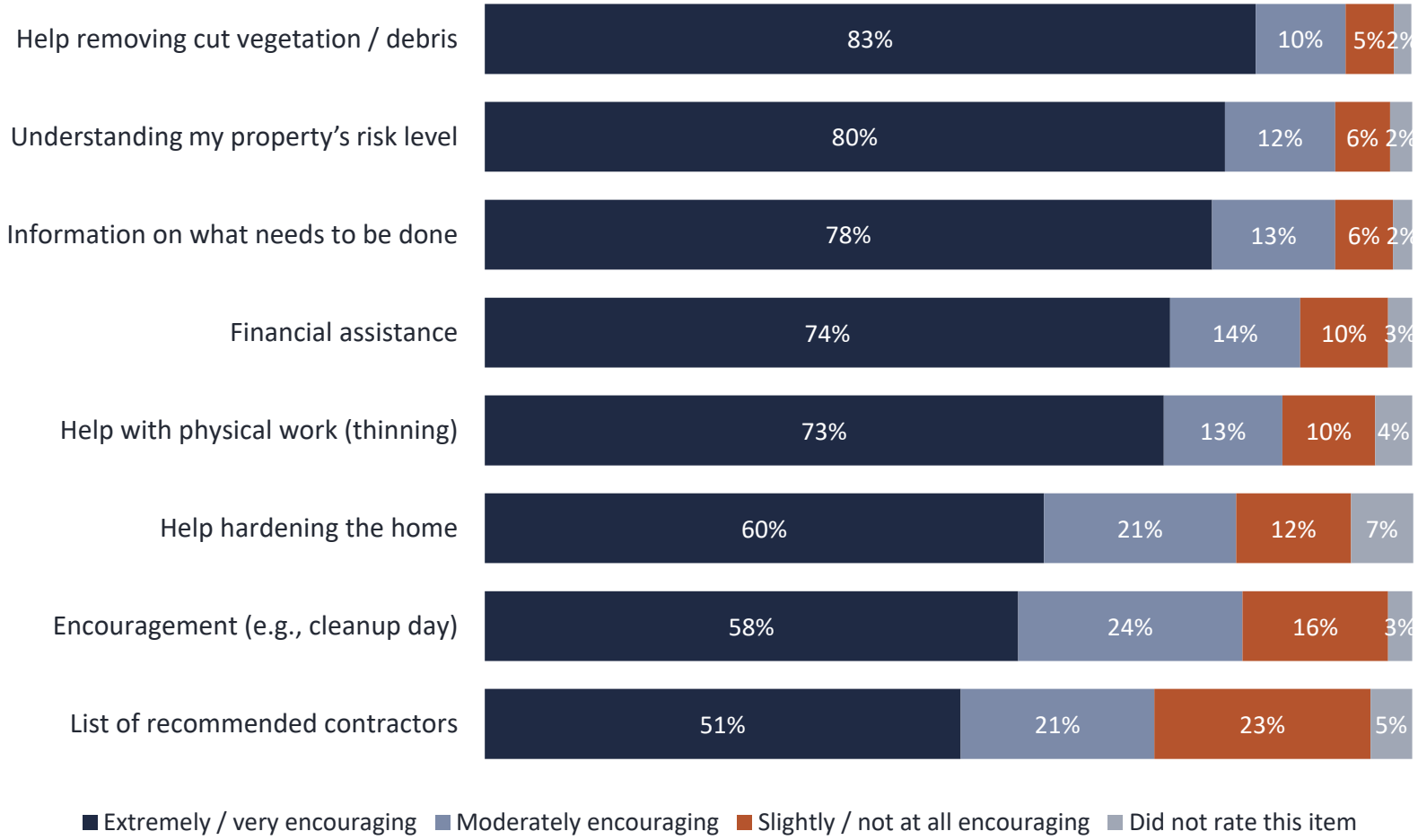
have done none of the listed activities

n=432. Multiple selections allowed; percentages total more than 100%.

Q17

What would motivate action: hauling help and risk information

How much would the following encourage you to reduce wildfire risk on your property? (sorted by % extremely/very encouraging)



Practical help beats encouragement

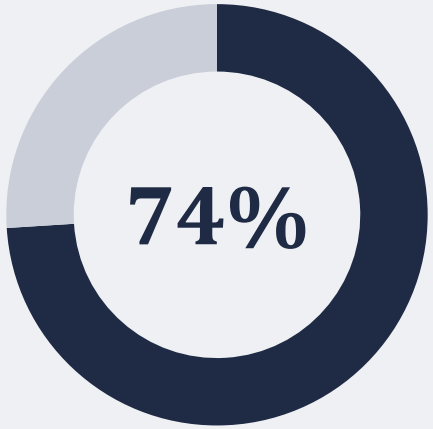
County dumpsters and chippers top the list (83%), followed by property-specific risk information (80%) and clear guidance (78%).

A contractor list is the least motivating option — nearly 1 in 4 say it would do little.

n=421. All percentages use 421 as the denominator, matching SurveyMonkey's reporting; some respondents skipped individual items.

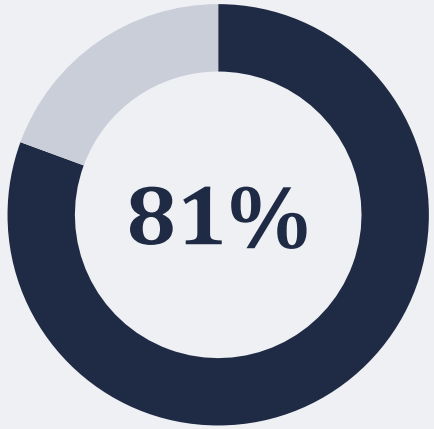
Q12·13·18

Evacuation Readiness Gaps
Alerts and evacuation plans strong, with a gap to close



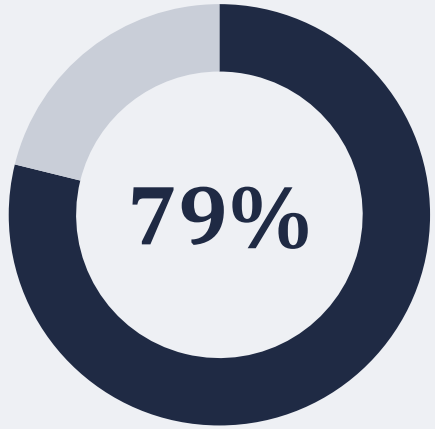
Confident they can get timely, reliable wildfire information

Q12 · n=435



Signed up for Everbridge emergency alerts

Q13 · n=433



Have an evacuation plan

Q18 · n=433

Roughly 1 in 4 residents not confident they would get timely information, and about 1 in 5 has not signed up for alerts or made an evacuation plan.

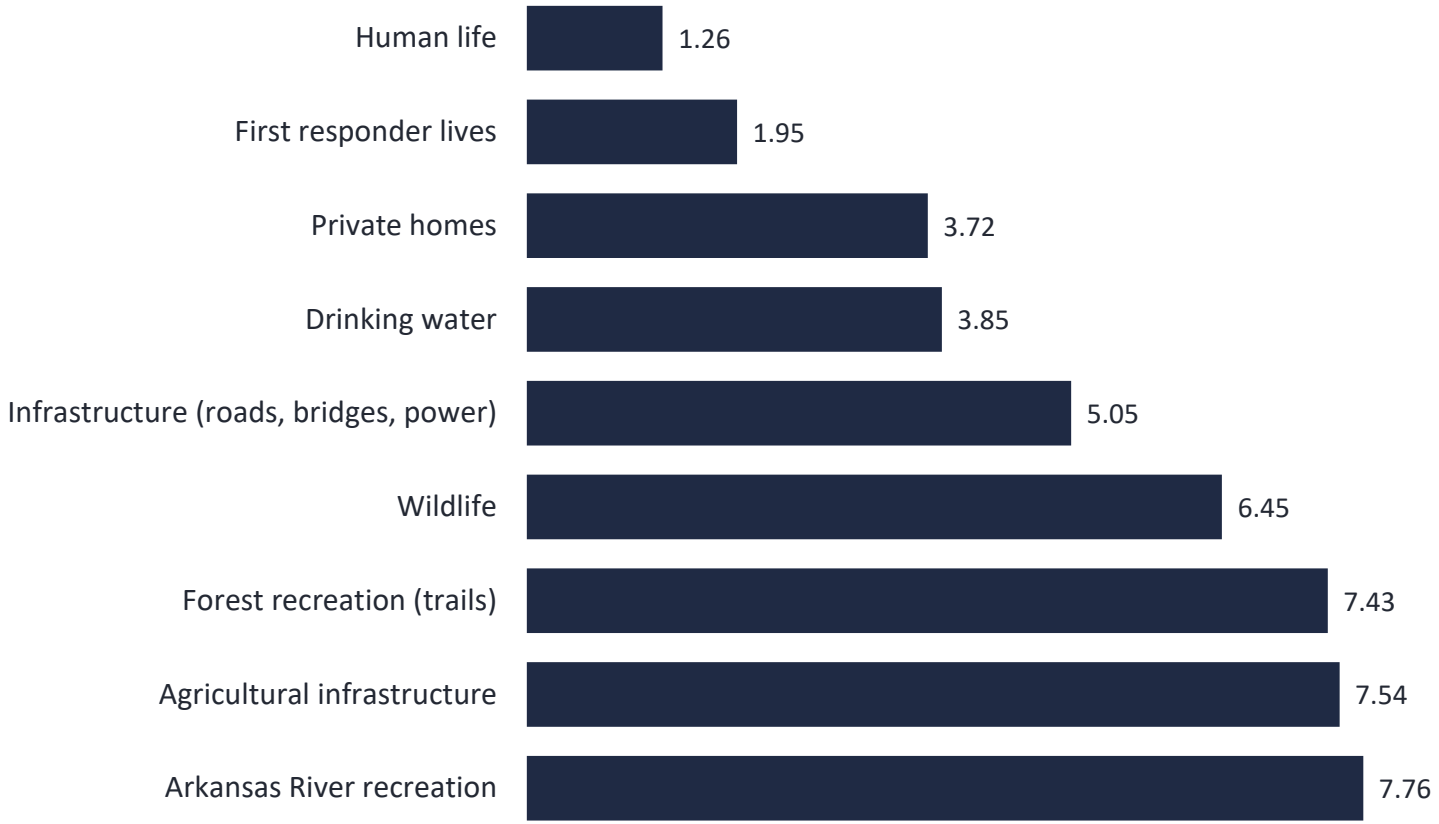
*Note: OEM data indicate 32,137 residents are signed up for Everbridge alerts in Fremont and Custer Counties, or **69%** of the adult population. Survey respondents are likely more engaged community members, and results may over-estimate community preparedness/action.*

Q19

Post-fire flooding: the same people-first priorities

How important is it to protect the following from post-wildfire flooding and debris flows? (ranked 1–9)

Average rank (lower = higher priority)



82%

ranked human life #1

1.95

average rank for first responder lives — a higher priority than in the wildfire ranking (2.42)

n=357. Fewer respondents completed this ranking than Q8 (n=436).

What this means for the CWPP

1

A mandate to act

99% support mitigation and every approach tested is majority-acceptable, led by thinning on public and private land. Pair prescribed and pile burning with communication.

2

Close the confidence gap
Increase wildfire resilience

Only 22% think the county is prepared. Visible plans, coordinated action and focused work to mitigate fuels in top priority areas could address top concerns.

3

Accelerate Private Land Preparedness
Remove practical barriers

To accelerate mitigation on private lands, debris removal, property risk assessments, and hands-on help motivate residents more than encouragement or education. Many ask for a central location to dispose of slash. Roadside thinning on one way in/out roads may provide early wins.

4

Accelerate Private Land Preparedness
Target the lagging steps

Structural steps like spark arrestors and non-combustible fencing, plus HOA/POA action, are the least-completed measures.

5

Help residents prepare for evacuation

Based on OEM and survey data, about 35% lack alert sign-up or an evacuation plan;
Added communication on county evacuation planning may build confidence.

6

Build Capacity

Limited capacity to take action is a known risk and respondents express concern about fire department capacity. The CWPP should include a collaborative and systematic plan to build capacity as possible.

What ‘s next

1

Increase Fire Resilience CWPP Update Planned

Leadership by County OEM & fire departments to fund and advance CWPP update in 2027, under Upper Arkansas Forest Health Pros with facilitation by Envision.

2

Evacuation Preparedness

Developed evacuation zones using GIS connected to Everbridge to improve evacuation response and communication.

3

Accelerate Private Land Preparedness 1099 Funding

County is working to increase funding-per-acre that landowners can attain for mitigation work under the NRCS program.

4

Community Advisory Board

Improved communications and collaboration with the creation of a Cañon City Resiliency Board.

5

Accelerate Private Land Preparedness Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator

Funded and filled a new position under ARWC to support community preparedness programs such as education and chipping.

6

Hazard Mitigation Plan in progress

Identifies the key hazards in the county.

Discussion
Key takeaways?
Any surprises?
CWPP Discussion
Other next steps to address concern

- Share survey this week
  - In PR with hotlink
  - ties to Envision's website
  - By Email to participants
  - + County share?

Others?

