

# Parker Pond Headland Visitor Survey Findings



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Kennebec Land Trust Summer Intern 2021



## Introduction:

Kennebec Land Trust's (KLT) 142-acre Parker Pond Headland Preserve (PPH) in Fayette, Maine, features a rocky shoreline, an old-growth hemlock stand, granite ledges, and a 2.5-mile loop trail with a water access point.

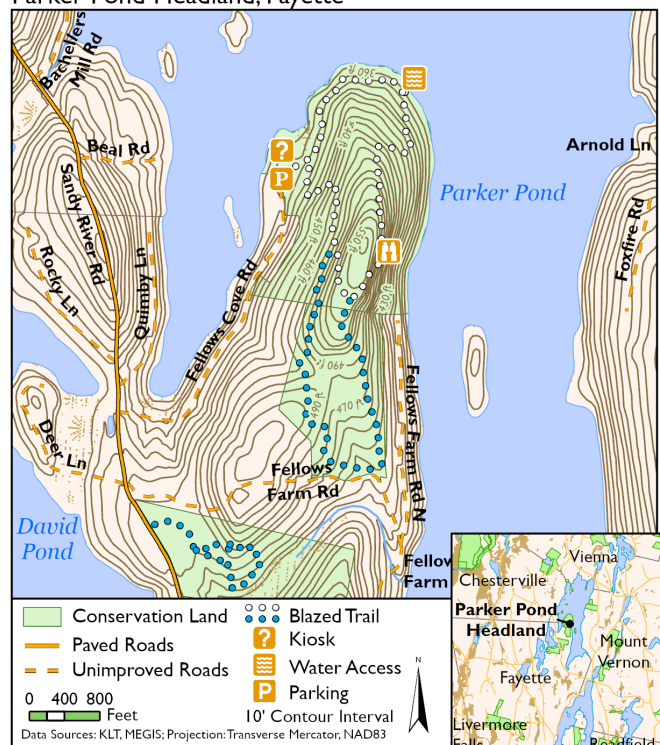
The property and trails have been increasing in popularity, drawing more foot and vehicle traffic to the area, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021. Some Fellows Cove Road residents have expressed concerns about traffic on the road and overcrowding in the trailhead parking lot.

With the increase in popularity of the PPH trails, the current limited size of the parking lot can create access and parking challenges on holiday and prime weather weekends.



*KLT PPH Parking Lot*

Parker Pond Headland, Fayette



To understand how we can best serve visitors and still keep the parking lot from overflowing, I designed a survey that asks trail users about their visitation patterns and experiences. To be conducted in the summer and fall of 2021 with the help of KLT volunteers and staff, the survey is intended to help find effective ways to communicate with visitors about preserve guidelines, as well as to evaluate the need for and potential efficacy of adding a second parking lot on the Fellows Farm Road.

## Survey Questions:

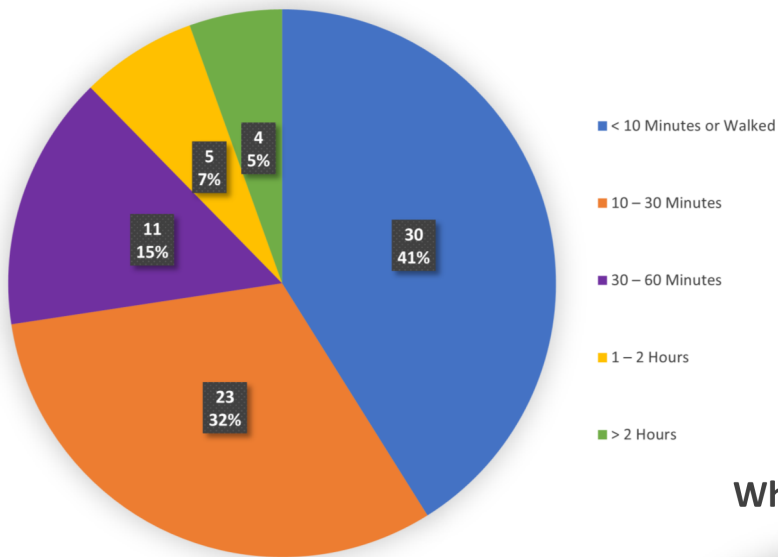
1. Where do you live?
2. How far did you drive to get here?
3. How did you find out about this trail?
4. How often do you visit?
5. What time of year do you visit?
6. What trail do you intend / did you hike?
7. If the Parker Point Headland (PPH) parking lot was full what would you do?
8. Do you know who owns this trail?



There have been 74 responses (and counting), with 18 responses on Survey Monkey, and 56 surveys conducted in person.

**Key Results:** The following data labels indicate the number of people per answer along with the percentage value.

### How Far Did You Drive To Get Here

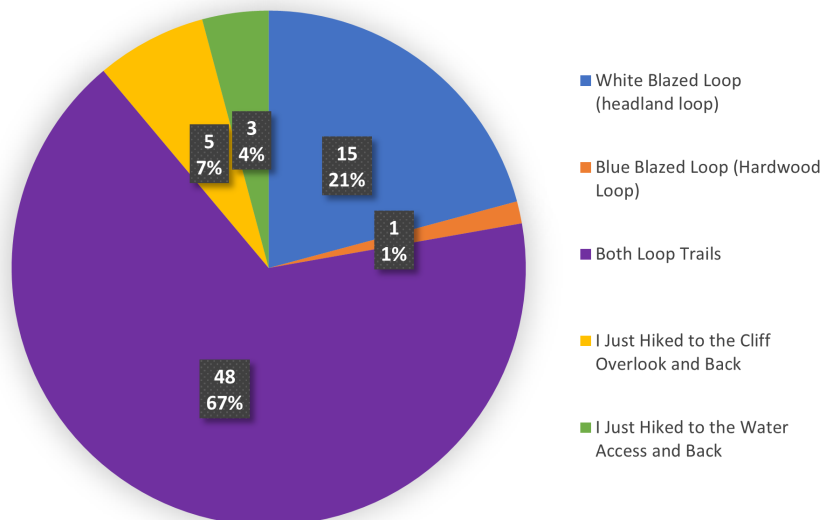


The Figure to the left shows that 41% of the people who answered the survey traveled less than 10 minutes to get to the trailhead. We also have 32% of visitors driving just 10-30 minutes to get to the trailhead.

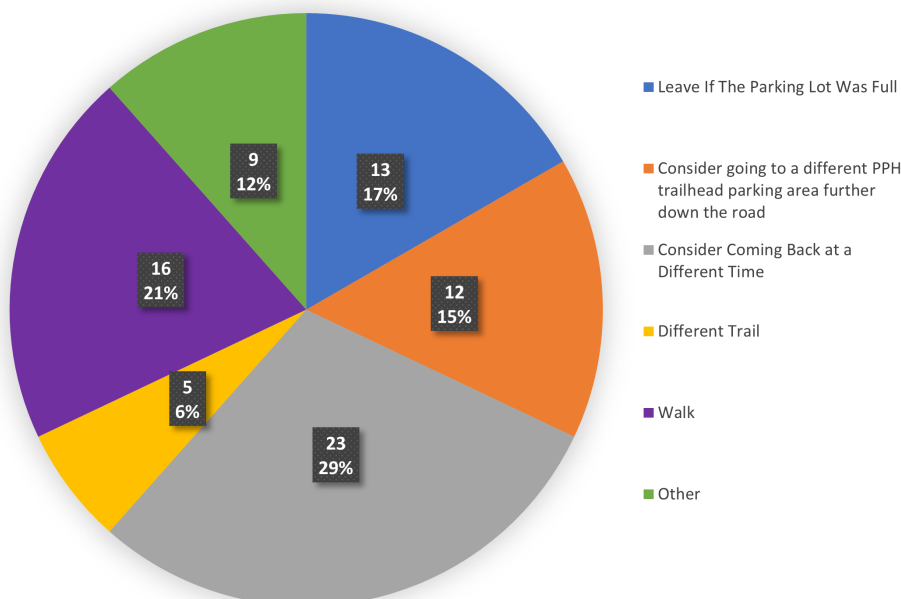
In other words, a high percentage of visitors live along Fellows Cove Road or very nearby.

The Figure to the right shows the vast majority (67%) of visitors hike both the white and blue-blazed trails.

### What Trail Do You Intend / Did You Hike

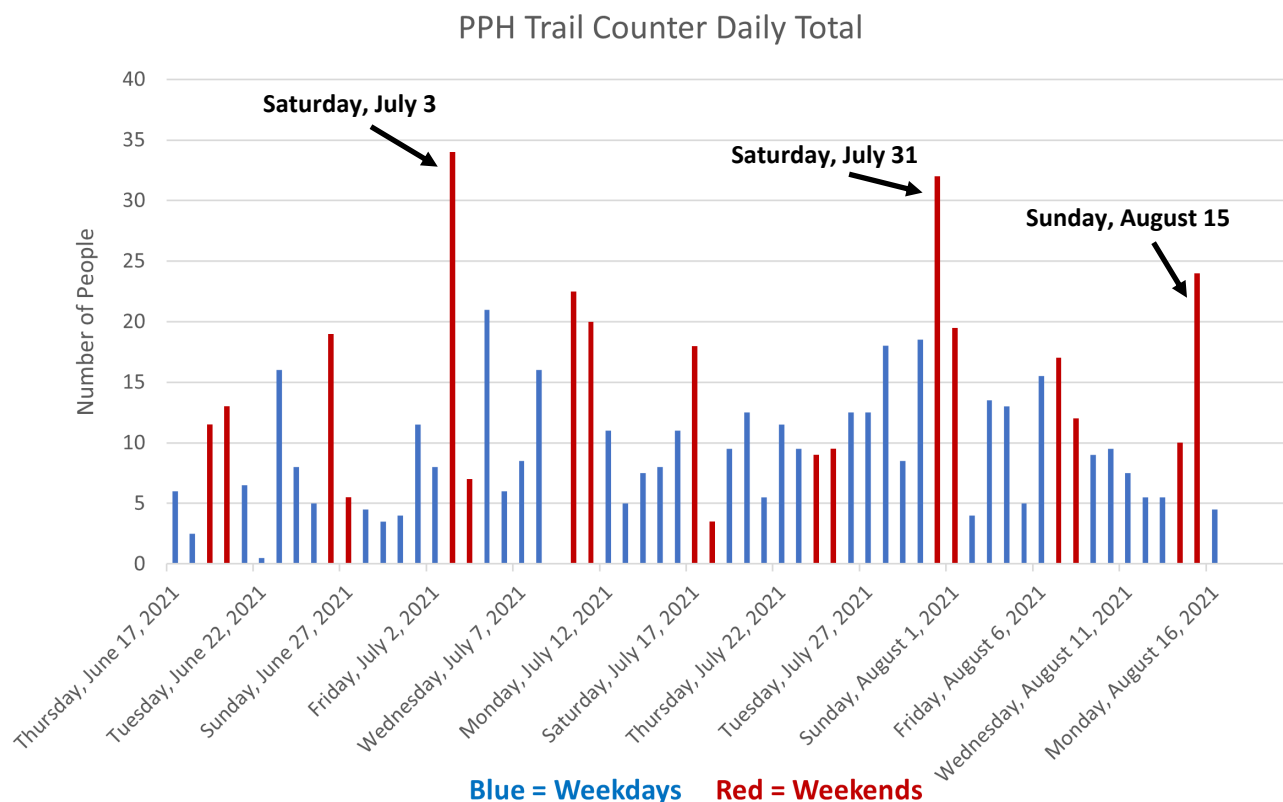


### If The Parker Point Headland (PPH) Parking Lot Was Full What Would You Do?



The Figure to the left shows combined, over half of the visitors surveyed (52%) said they'd either go to a different trailhead, come back a different time or just leave if the parking lot was full.

### ***Key Results:***



The Figure above showing trail counter data revealed a large number of visitors on Saturday, July 3, over July 4 weekend which is not unexpected. Saturday, July 31 and Sunday, August 15 both nice weather days also attracted a high number of visitors. Other than those specific days, it is uncommon to find many visitors simultaneously. Often visitation is spread out fairly evenly throughout the morning, afternoon, and early evening.

### ***Key Takeaways:***

- A very high percentage (73%) of PPH visitors live along Fellows Cove Road or nearby within 30 minutes.
- Visitors from farther away (30-60 minutes or greater) don't visit the trail as often as local people do. The surveys show that the closer a visitor lives to the PPH trailhead, the more likely they are to return more frequently.
- The majority of visitors (67%) are hiking both the blue and white-blazed trail, which would allow KLT to evaluate the potential of adding an additional parking lot on Fellows Farm Road.
- The survey results also indicate that the largest single category of visitors (20%) find out about the trail through the KLT website. However, 41% of visitors find out from various combined forms of word of mouth, from family and friends, or by living on the road.

### ***Potential Solutions:***

- Redesigning the current parking area to allow for a more efficient parking arrangement and additional parking spaces. A higher capacity would potentially reduce the number of times overflow and turnarounds occur.
- Designating parking spaces and a turnaround area with signage.
- Evaluating the potential for building an additional parking lot along the Fellows Farm Road and connecting that parking area to the blue-blazed trail.

### ***Conclusion:***

The public is using the existing public access at PPH and would benefit from more trail access to Parker Pond. The popularity of PPH is a great example of the fact that we need to protect more areas for public access.



*Andrew Czwakiel, KLT Summer Intern  
Surveying at the Parker Pond Headland  
Summer 2021*

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\*This study is ongoing and will continue into the fall of 2021.



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