

# Your woodlands, your experiences: Results of the Woodland Owner Questionnaire

Survey results summarized by Jennifer Plowden

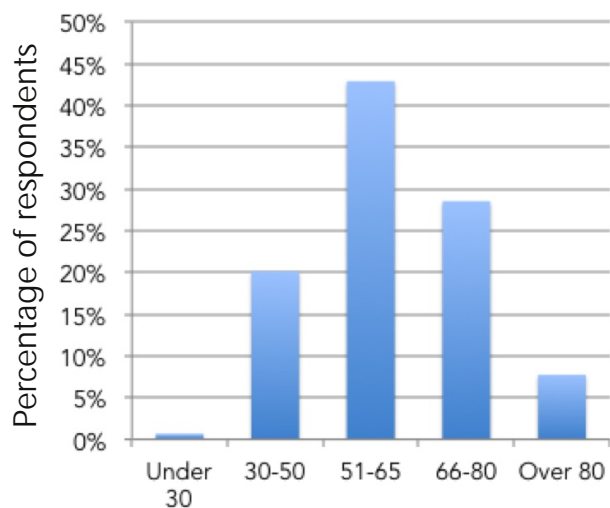
Family forest owners (individuals, families, and trusts owning 10-999 acres) own 68% of the forestland in Massachusetts<sup>1</sup>. These landowners make decisions about their properties every day and collectively determine the future of Massachusetts forests.

Massachusetts has several conservation programs and policies that aim to help landowners to conserve their forestland; however, it is not understood exactly how well these programs serve their missions. Understanding the knowledge and experiences of family forest owners is essential for assessing the effectiveness of these programs.

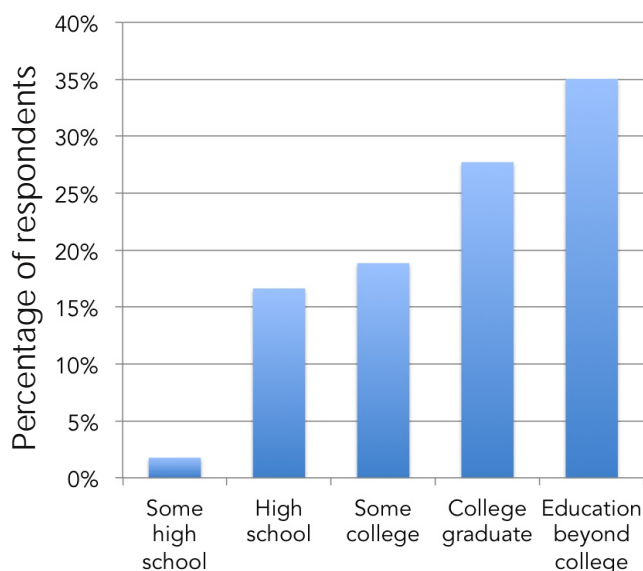
In order to learn about landowners' knowledge, familiarity and experience with these various conservation programs and policies, Boston University surveyed Massachusetts family forest owners in 2012. Mail surveys were sent to 1,231 randomly selected landowners. The people who received the survey included landowners with parcels larger than 10 acres in towns in eastern and central Massachusetts. 462 landowners (37.5% of those who received the survey) completed and returned the survey.

The survey asked the respondents about their forestland, as well as their knowledge, familiarity, and experience with four conservation programs and policies: Massachusetts' Chapter 61 current use program, conservation restrictions, timber harvesting, and estate planning. This report summarizes their responses.

## Who answered the survey?



Age



Education

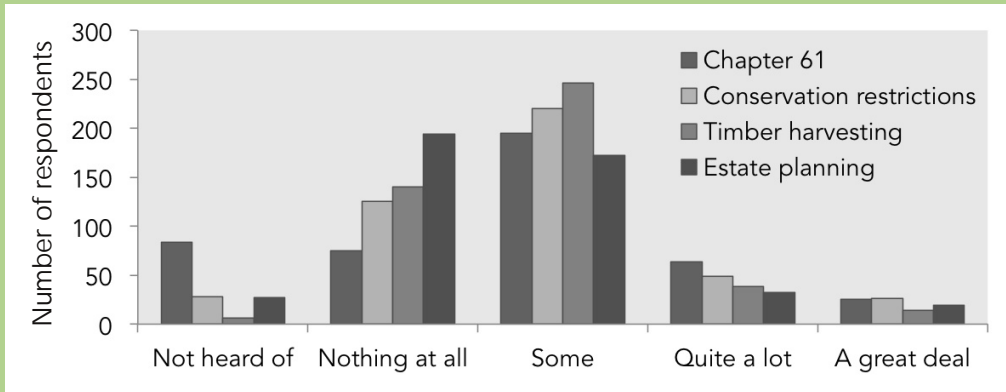
43% of the respondents were between 51-65 years old, while 1% and 8% of respondents were under 30 and over 80 years old, respectively.

35% of the respondents were educated beyond college, while 28% were college graduates and 17% were high school graduates.

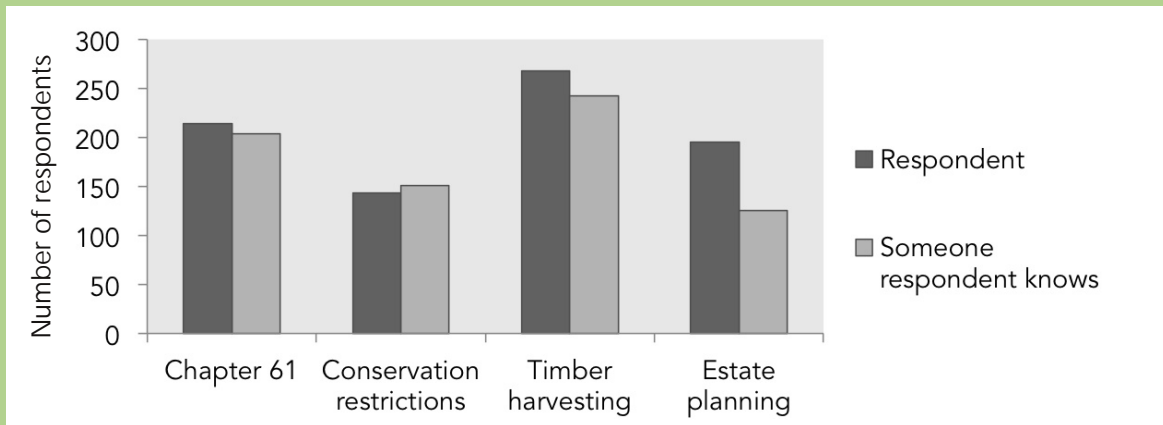


# Knowledge, familiarity & experience with conservation policies and programs

How much respondents said they knew about conservation tools:

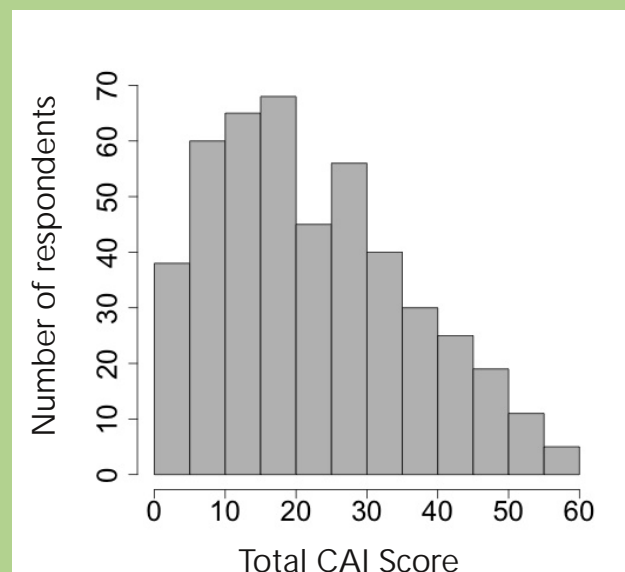


Respondents (or people respondents knew) that have experience with conservation tools:



## The Conservation Awareness Index (CAI Score)

We combined information about respondents' knowledge, familiarity & experience with the conservation programs and policies, to create an index of conservation awareness (CAI). The maximum possible score was 64, and the average score was 22.9 points. When the same survey was administered to a subpopulation of landowners trained to have exceptional conservation awareness, the average CAI score was 46.7 points<sup>2</sup>.



The relatively low CAI scores tell us that these conservation tools are not well-known or used. Future work should determine the extent to which these tools are addressing the needs of landowners and are effectively promoted.

Thank you to all of the landowners who completed the survey!

It is only with their generous help that our project could be successful.

For more information about any of these conservation programs and policies, turn to the MassWoods Forest Conservation Program run by the University of Massachusetts Extension: <http://mass.woods.net/>

For more information about this survey and related projects, please feel free to contact us or visit the project website:

<http://sites.bu.edu/cnh-project>

Jen Plowden and Anne Short, Boston University,  
Department of Earth & Environment  
685 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston MA 02215  
Phone: (617) 353-4352  
Email: [jplowden@bu.edu](mailto:jplowden@bu.edu) or [agshort@bu.edu](mailto:agshort@bu.edu)

<sup>1</sup>Forest Inventory and Analysis (2010). Live Aboveground Carbon Storage in U.S. Forests, by State, Subregion and Ownership Group. <http://www.fia.fs.fed.us/Forest%20Carbon/default.asp>

<sup>2</sup>Van Fleet TE, Kittredge DB, Butler BJ et al. (2012). Reimagining Family Forest Conservation: Estimating Landowner Awareness and Their Preparedness to Act with the Conservation Awareness Index. *Journal of Forestry* 110(4):207-215