

# County Open-Space Protection Efforts

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A Survey of the Current State  
of Open-Space Protection Efforts  
by America's Counties

Karen Mumford  
Margaret Myszewski

Prepared in cooperation with  
The National Association of Counties



Carl Vinson Institute of Government  
The University of Georgia

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# NATIONAL SURVEY OF COUNTY OPEN SPACE PROTECTION EFFORTS

## Introduction

Loss of open space is of growing concern among citizens and governmental officials across the United States. In some communities conversion of land to residential, commercial, and industrial uses is outstripping the capacity of state and local government to preserve some of these lands as open space. This is of particular importance given the benefits communities derive from open space, including recreation, habitat for wildlife, and water quality protection. While states have an interest in land-use planning and growth management activities in their jurisdictions, local governments are responsible for implementing land-use policies related to development and protection of open space. This authority is established through planning and zoning enabling legislation and Home Rule authority.

Many studies have been conducted on state-level efforts to protect open space; however, little is known about county-level efforts. The National Survey of County Open Space Protection Efforts, sponsored by the National Association of Counties and the National Center for the Study of Counties at the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia, is the first nationwide survey of county-level open space protection efforts. The survey was designed to examine the various tools and strategies employed by counties to protect open space and to consider some of the challenges facing counties as they engage in these efforts. The preliminary findings presented below provide the first broad picture of county-level open space protection efforts. Additionally, these findings may be of use to policy makers and land-use planners involved in or expanding county-level efforts to protect open space.

## Methodology

A mail and web-based survey instrument was developed and disseminated by the National Center for the Study of Counties at the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia, in collaboration with the National Association of Counties. The survey instrument was pre-tested by county planners and administrators and refined prior to dissemination. Mail surveys were sent out to county planners in all counties where contact information was available. (see appendix A for a copy of the survey) County planners were asked to complete and return the mail version of the survey or logon to a website maintained by the Carl Vinson Institute to complete a web-based version of the survey.

In October, 2003, 1,298 surveys were sent out to county planners in all states except Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont where land-use policies are not implemented by county governments. One month after the original mailing, a reminder postcard was sent to all survey recipients. Surveys were collected through January, 2004.

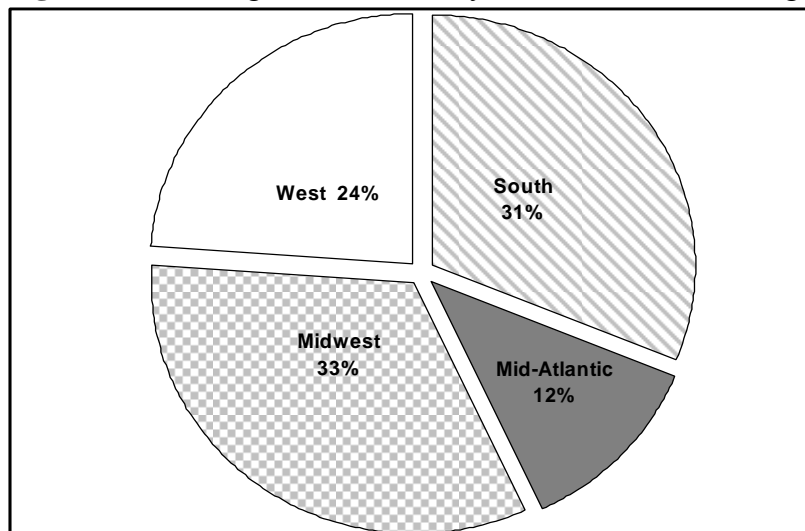
Planners were asked a variety of questions including: types and the amounts of open space lands protected within their counties over the last 10 years; revenue sources and tools used to acquire or create open space; barriers faced by counties in their efforts to acquire or create open space; and anticipated future open space protection efforts. For the purposes of the survey, open space was defined as parks, fish and wildlife habitat, trails, greenspace and greenways, agricultural lands, environmentally sensitive lands, and natural areas such as stream corridors, forests, wetlands, and deserts. Under this definition, open space includes both public and privately held lands that may or may not be permanently protected.

### Survey Results

Of the 2,993 counties in the study area, surveys were sent to a total of 1,298 counties, or 43 percent. A total of 544 surveys were returned, resulting in a 42 percent response rate. Surveys were received from all states included in the survey area except Oklahoma. To examine whether open space protection efforts varied across regions of the country, states were classified into four geographic regions: Mid-Atlantic, South, Midwest, and West (see appendix B for lists of responding states by region and responding counties by state).

Of the 544 surveys returned, the highest percentage of responses came from the Midwest region (33 percent) while the lowest percentage returned came from the Mid-Atlantic region (12 percent) (Figure 1). The lower percentage of responding counties from the Mid-Atlantic region is, in part, due to the relatively lower number of counties located in this region compared to other areas of the country (see appendix C for response rate within regions)

**Figure 1.** Percentage of Total Surveys Returned for Each Region

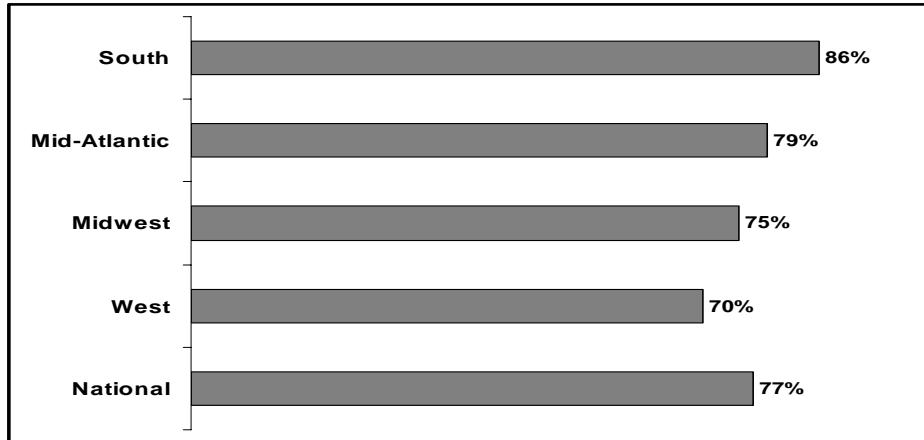


### Open Space Loss

When asked whether loss of open space was a concern for residents in their county, three quarters of survey respondents answered “yes” (Figure 2).

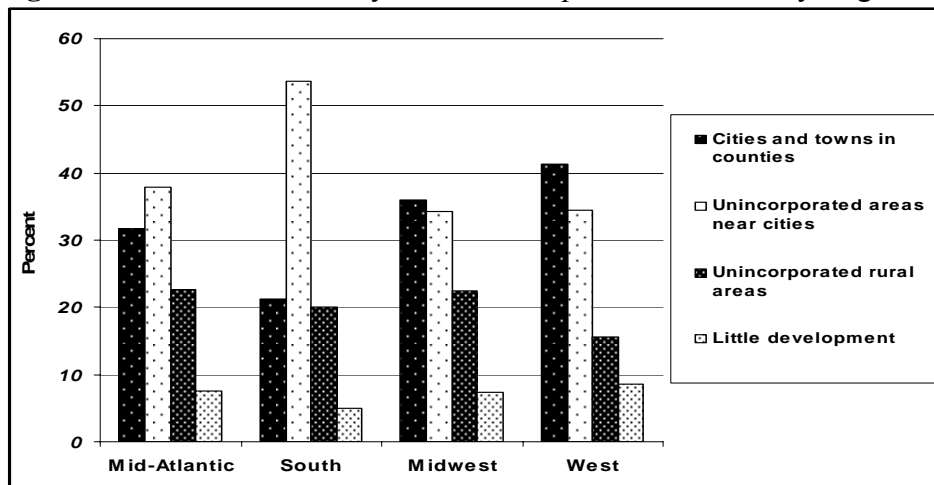
Concern over loss of open space varied slightly by region with more respondents in the South (86 percent) indicating concern by their county residents than those in the Mid-Atlantic (79 percent), Midwestern (75 percent), or Western (70 percent) states.

**Figure 2. Concern About Open Space Loss by Region**



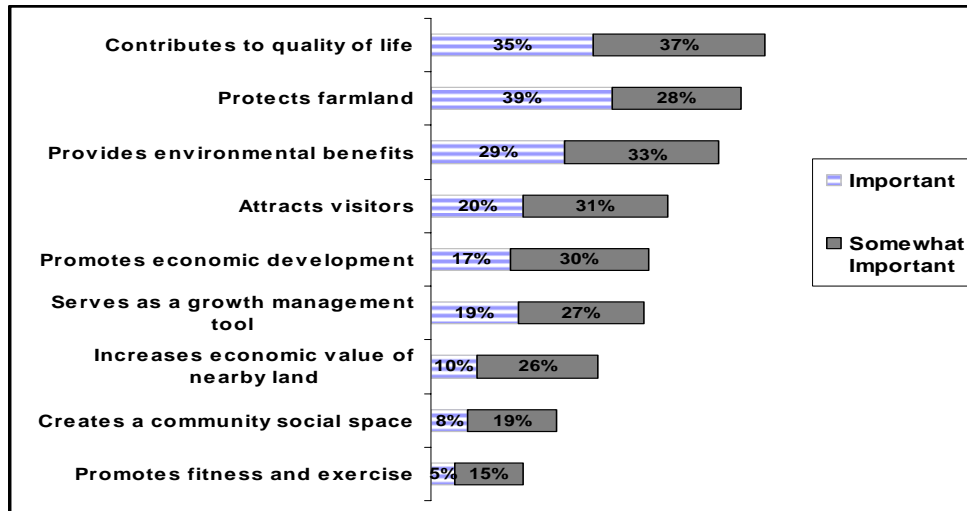
Concern about loss of open space was not contingent on where development was taking place in the county. When asked where land development activities were occurring within their counties, 41 percent of all respondents indicated that land development was happening within *unincorporated* areas near cities and towns while approximately 32 percent indicated that development activities were occurring within incorporated *cities and towns* in their counties. The majority of counties in the South (54 percent) and a large portion of the Mid-Atlantic states (38 percent) reported that most of the land development activities were occurring in unincorporated areas of the county near cities and towns (Figure 3). However, the highest percentage of counties in the West and Midwest reported that most of the land development activities within their counties were occurring within cities and towns.

**Figure 3. Location of County Land Development Activities by Region**



Respondents were asked to identify reasons why open space should be protected in their communities. According to survey results, over 60 percent of the respondents indicated that quality of life, protection of farmland, and environmental benefits were important or somewhat important reasons for protecting open space (Figure 4). In addition, respondents indicated that open space protection was important for economic reasons, including attracting visitors to their communities, and promoting economic development.

**Figure 4. Reasons for Protecting Open Space**

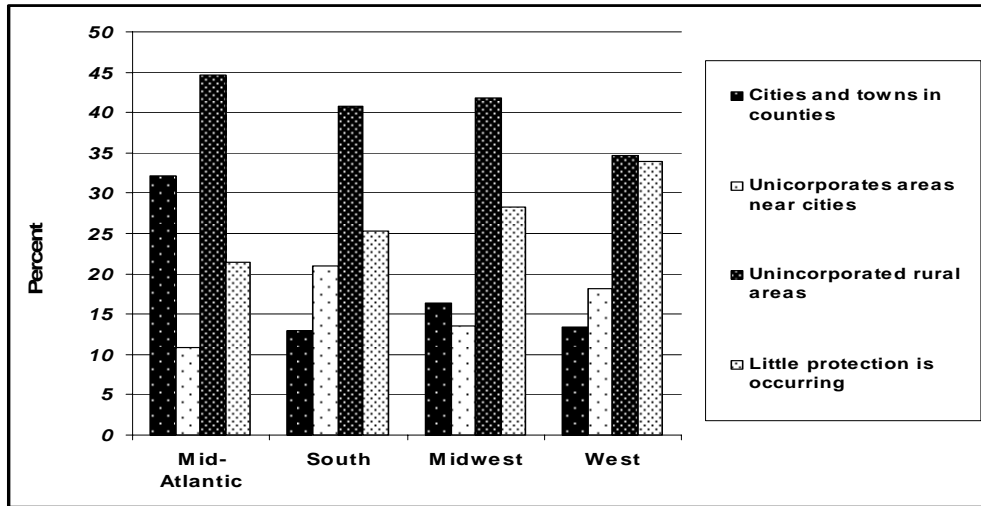


Protecting farmland was cited by the majority of respondents in the Mid-Atlantic states (82 percent), the West (73 percent), and the Midwest (70 percent) as an important or somewhat important reason to preserve open space, while the largest number of respondents in the South (79 percent) considered quality of life to be important or somewhat important. The South was the only region where more than half of the respondents reported growth management as an important or somewhat important reason for protecting open space. Fitness and exercise had the lowest level of importance in all four regions.

Where is Open Space Being Protected?

Although respondents indicated that most of the development activity in their counties was occurring in unincorporated areas near cities and towns, most (40 percent), indicated that land protection and acquisition efforts were occurring in *unincorporated rural areas* of the county. This may be related to cheaper land prices or the availability of large undeveloped tracts of land. Further study is needed to understand why land protection and acquisition is occurring in rural areas where land development pressures are not as strong. Protection and acquisition activities in rural areas were consistent across all regions (Figure 5). Over one-third of western respondents indicated that little land protection or acquisition was occurring in their counties.

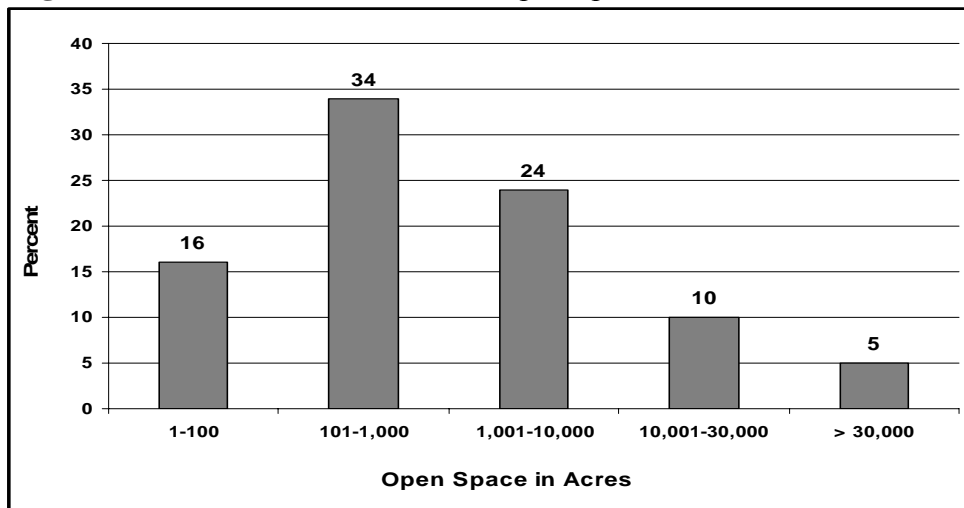
**Figure 5.** Location of County Land Protection and Acquisition Efforts by Region



When asked whether their county had participated in efforts to protect or acquire open space within the last ten years, 92 percent of respondents from the Mid-Atlantic states indicated that they had engaged in such efforts whereas 72 percent from the South, 67 percent from the Midwest and 66 percent of counties from the West had engaged in such activities.

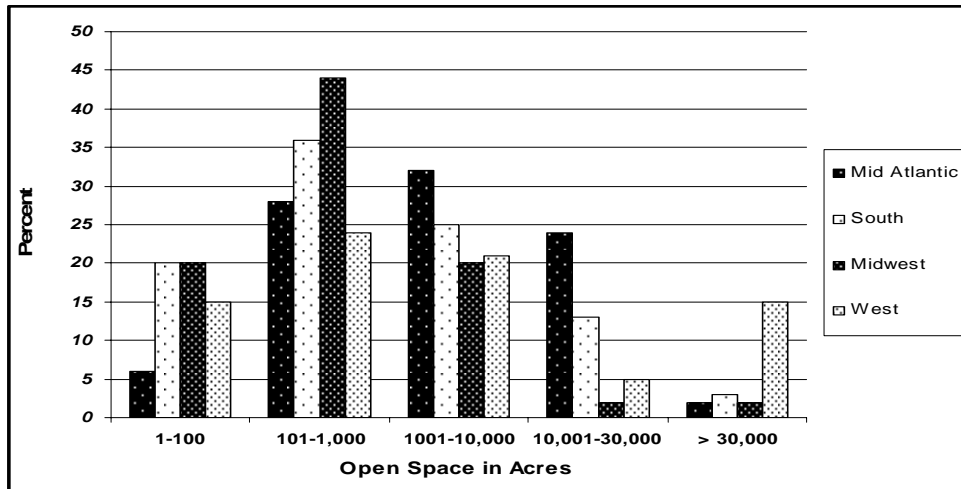
The largest number of respondents reported protecting between 101 - 1,000 acres of open space, while the second highest number of respondents protected between 1,001 – 10,000 acres of open space in the last ten years (Figure 6). The majority of counties in all regions reported that, of the open space they protected, over 75 percent was permanently protected.

**Figure 6.** Acres of Land Protected as Open Space Over the Last 10 Years



Regionally, the largest group of respondents in the Mid-Atlantic states (32 percent) reported that between 1,001 – 10,000 acres of open space was protected in their county, while counties in the Midwest (44 percent), South (36 percent), and West (24 percent), indicated that between 101 – 1,000 acres of open space was protected (Figure 7). Notably, over 30,000 acres of open space was protected in 15 percent of Western counties over the last ten years.

**Figure 7. Protected Open Space by Region: 1994-2004**



Respondents were asked to indicate the types of lands that had been protected over the last ten years. Lands most frequently identified as protected included stream corridors (70 percent), natural areas and wildlife preserves (67 percent), farming and agricultural land (58 percent), trails (52 percent), and neighborhood parks (40 percent). For counties in the South, Midwest, and West, stream corridors and natural areas or wildlife preserves were most frequently identified as types of protected lands (Table 1). For the Mid-Atlantic states, farming and agricultural lands and natural areas or wildlife preserves were most frequently protected. It is interesting to note that natural areas or wildlife preserves, stream corridors, and trails were among the most frequently identified types of protected lands in each region.

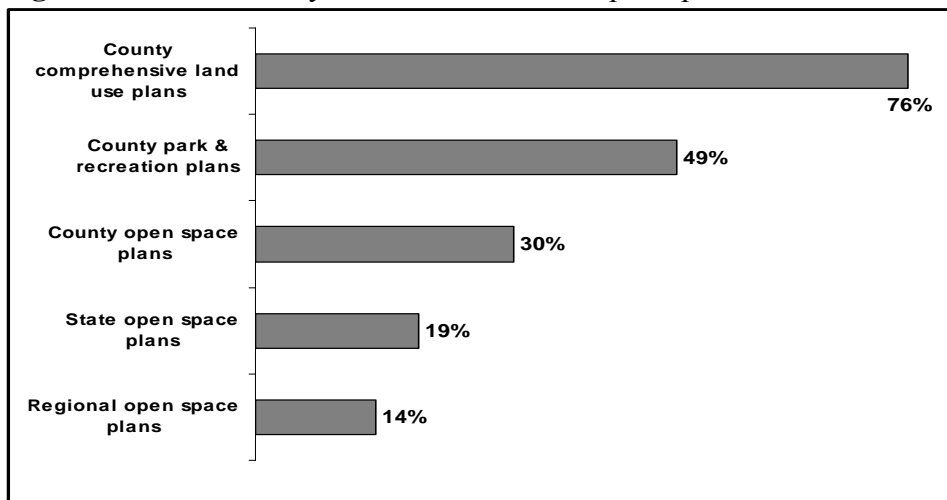
**Table 1. Types of Open Space Most Frequently Protected or Acquired by Region**

Mid-Atlantic	South	Midwest	West
Farming and agricultural lands	Stream corridors	Natural areas or wildlife preserves	Stream corridors
Natural areas or wildlife preserves	Natural areas or wildlife preserves	Stream corridors	Natural areas or wildlife preserves
Stream corridors	Neighborhood parks	Trails	Farming and agricultural lands
Trails	Ballfields or courts	Farming and agricultural lands	Trails
Ballfields or courts	Trails	Neighborhood parks	Neighborhood parks

## How Are Counties Protecting Open Space?

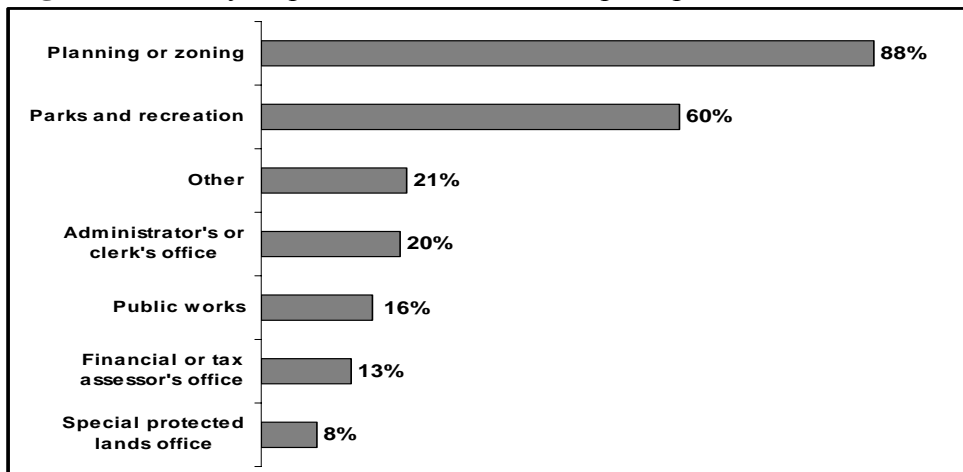
Open space protection policies are often articulated through state or county plans. State governments differ in their land-use policies relative to the types of planning they require or allow local governments to carry out. For example, some states have coordinated state agency planning while others mandate local government to draw up and implement their own land-use plans. When asked what types of plans were used to aid in protecting open space, respondents from counties in all regions of the country indicated that county comprehensive land-use plans were the most commonly used plans to protect open space (Figure 8). This is followed by county parks & recreation plans, county green space plans, state open space plans, and multi-county or regional open space plans.

**Figure 8.** Plans Used by Counties to Protect Open Space



Respondents were then asked which county government departments or agencies were responsible for open space protection. Nationally, county planning and zoning departments were most commonly identified as being involved in open space protection efforts, followed by parks and recreation departments (Figure 9).

**Figure 9.** County Departments Involved in Open Space Protection

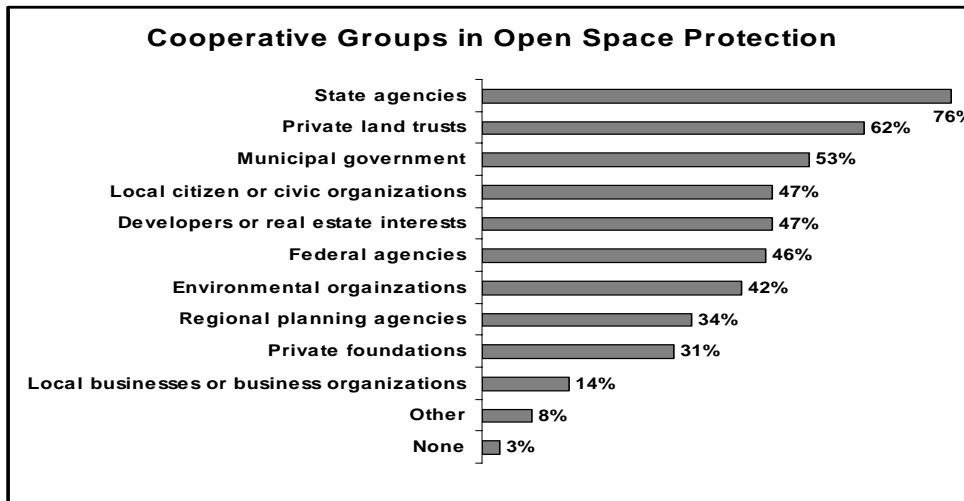


Other departments or agencies listed by counties as being involved in open space efforts include:

- Conservation committees
- Agriculture advisory boards
- Farmland preservation committees
- Farmland preservation boards
- Forest preserve districts
- Highway departments

Open space protection is a complex process involving many stakeholders with differing concerns. To determine whether counties are working with multiple parties, respondents were asked if they cooperated with other federal, state, and municipal agencies as well as with non-governmental groups such as land developers and local citizen organizations. Survey results show that the vast majority of counties (97 percent) cooperate with some group outside of county government to protect open space. The most popular groups were state agencies, private land trusts, and municipal governments (Figure 10).

**Figure 10. Cooperative Groups in Open Space Protection**



Although the majority of counties in all areas of the country reported cooperating with state agencies, as Table 2 shows, there were some regional differences in the groups with which counties most commonly cooperated.

**Table 2. Top Three Groups Counties Most often Cooperated With by Region**

Mid-Atlantic	South	Midwest	West <sup>1</sup>
State agencies	State agencies	State agencies	State agencies
Municipal governments	Private land trusts	Private land trusts	Private land trusts
Private land trusts	Local citizens groups	Municipal governments	Federal agencies Developers

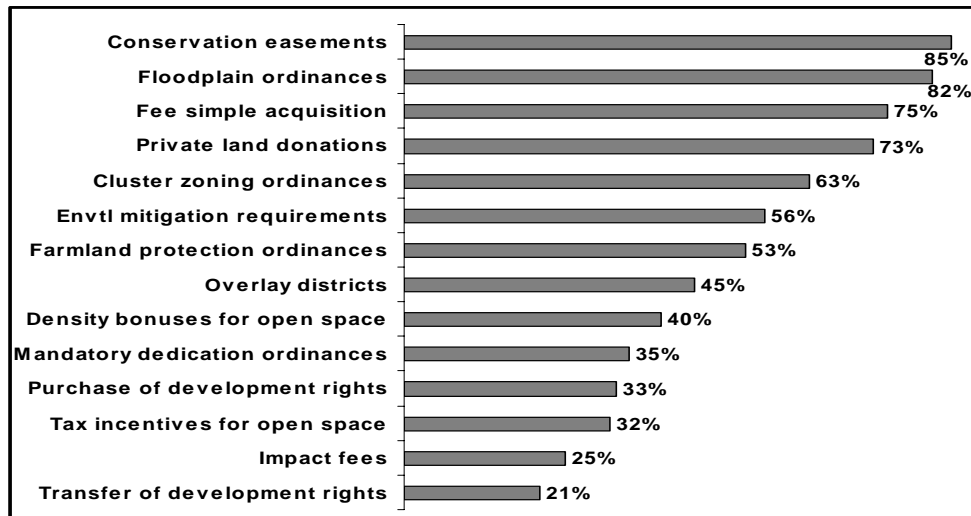
1. Four sources are included for the West due to identical response rates

Regionally, only in the Mid-Atlantic states did more than half of responding counties report cooperating with environmental groups (61 percent). About half of the respondents from the West (59 percent), South (50 percent), and Midwest (46 percent), cooperated with developers or real estate interests, while only one quarter of respondents from the Mid-Atlantic states (24 percent) reported doing so. The West was the only region where over half of the respondents (60 percent) said they worked with federal agencies, while half or nearly half of respondents from all four regions said they commonly cooperated with local citizen groups. Other groups with which counties cooperated include:

- Agricultural preservation boards
- Agricultural extension
- Conservation districts
- Agricultural producer groups
- Farm Bureau
- Homeowner associations
- Local property tax funded open space and trails office
- Regional water management districts
- Scenic byway committees
- Tribal government

Many methods have been developed to provide varying degrees of open space protection. When asked what land use tools were most often used by counties to protect open space, the most popular tools included conservation easements, floodplain ordinances, fee simple acquisition, and private land donations (Figure 11). More than half of all respondents also reported using cluster zoning ordinances, environmental mitigation requirements, and farmland protection ordinances. Transfer of development rights was the least commonly used tool.

**Figure 11.** Tools Used by Counties for Open Space Protection



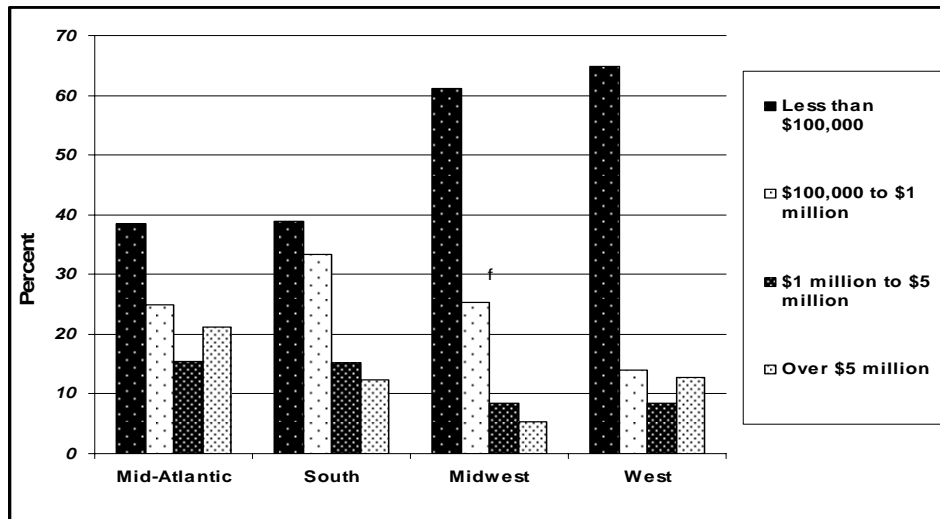
Regionally, there was wide variation in the use of these tools (Table 3). For example, density bonuses for open space were reported as being used by 53 percent of respondents in Western counties, but only 24 percent of counties in the Mid-Atlantic states reported using them. Seventy-five percent of counties in the Mid-Atlantic states used farmland protection ordinances to protect open space, while only 29 percent of counties in the South did. Similarly, 75 percent of counties in the Mid-Atlantic states protected open space through the purchase of development rights, while only 20 percent of Midwestern counties did. Finally, Western counties were twice as likely to use tax incentives (53 percent) and mandatory dedication ordinances (41 percent) than were counties from the Mid-Atlantic states (22 percent and 18 percent, respectively).

**Table 3. Top Four Commonly Used Open Space Protection Tools by Region**

Mid-Atlantic	South	Midwest	West
Conservation easements	Fee simple acquisition	Floodplain ordinances	Conservation easements
Fee simple acquisition	Conservation easements	Conservation easements	Floodplain ordinances
Farmland protection ordinances	Floodplain ordinances	Private land donations	Cluster zoning ordinances
Purchase of development rights	Private land donations	Fee simple acquisition	Environmental mitigation requirements

Respondents were then asked to indicate the amount of county funding expended to acquire or protect open space during the last five years. The majority of counties in all four regions reported spending less than \$100,000 (Figure 12). Over one third of the respondents from Southern counties indicated expenditures between \$100,000 and \$1 million while over 21 percent from the Mid-Atlantic states reported spending over \$5 million over the last five years to protect open space.

**Figure 12. Open Space Protection Expenditures Over the Last Five Years**



Counties used a variety of revenue sources to support the acquisition of open space, including county budget appropriations, general obligation bonds, a dedicated portion of the property tax, impact fees, state funds, federal funds, and private sources. When asked to indicate the primary source of funds used to acquire open space, state funds (31

percent), county budget appropriations (23 percent) and private sources (11 percent) were the most frequently identified sources among all respondents. Respondents from Mid-Atlantic, Midwestern, and Western counties indicated state revenues as the top source of funds for open space acquisition while county budget appropriations were identified as the top source of funds for respondents from the South (Table 4).

**Table 4. Top Three Funding Sources Used to Acquire Open Space by Region**

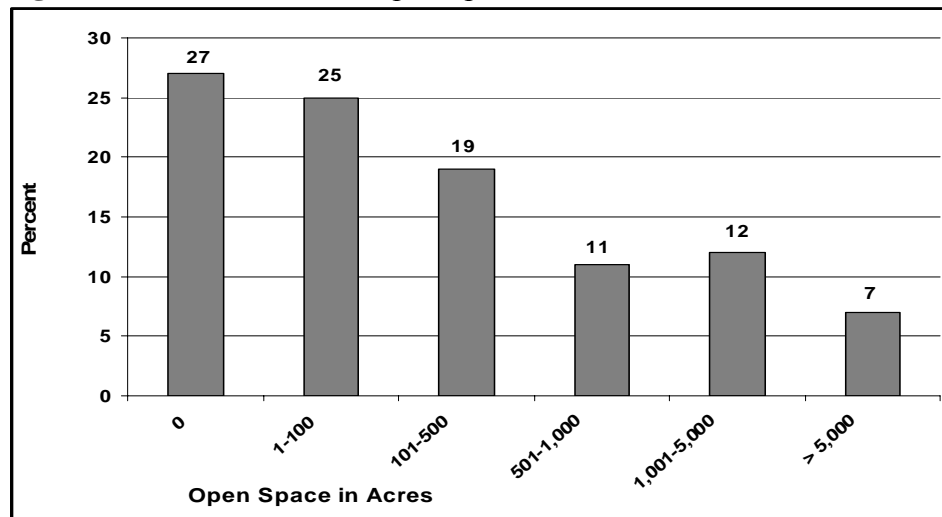
Mid-Atlantic	South	Midwest	West <sup>1</sup>
State funds	County budget appropriations	State funds	State funds
Dedicated portion of property tax	State funds	County budget appropriations	Federal funds
County budget appropriations	Federal funds	Private sources	County budget appropriations; Private sources

<sup>1</sup> Four sources are included for the West due to identical response rates

### Future Open Space Efforts

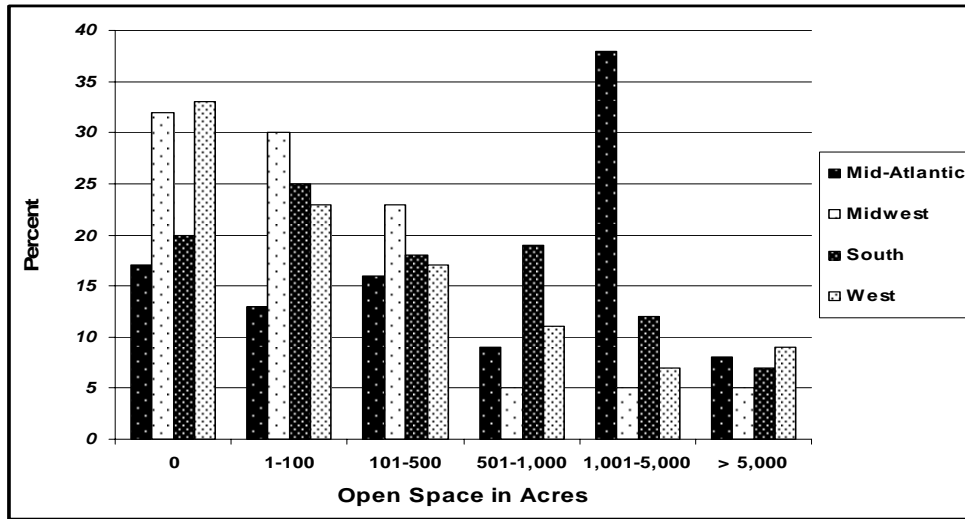
When respondents were asked to indicate the number of acres anticipated to be protected over the next five years, about one quarter of respondents indicated that they would protect either no additional acres, or 100 acres or less (Figure 13). Only seven percent indicated they planned to protect more than 5,000 acres.

**Figure 13. Future Protected Open Space**



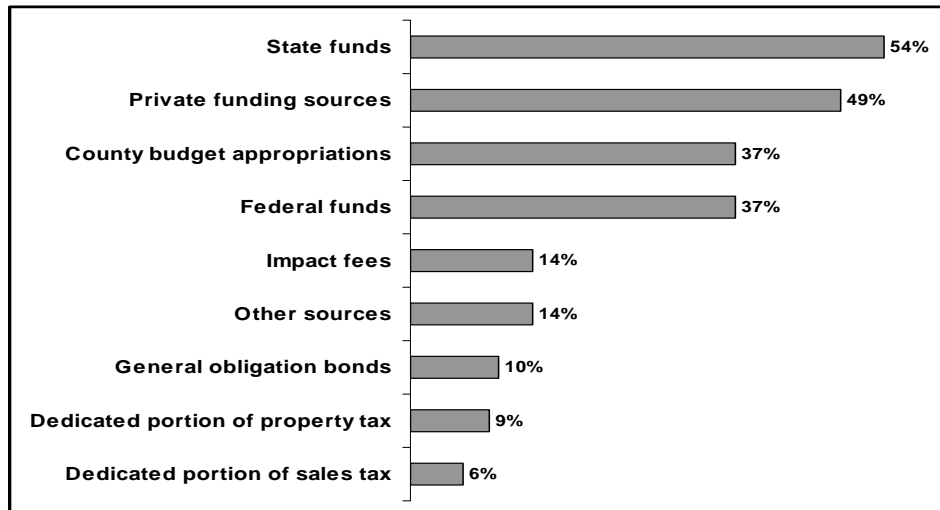
The level of anticipated open space protection efforts varied considerably by region (Figure 14). The highest percentage of counties in the West (33 percent) and the Midwest (32 percent) expected to protect no new open space in the next five years, while counties in the South (24 percent) expected to protect between 1 - 100 acres of open space, and those from the Mid-Atlantic states (38 percent) expected to protect between 1,001 – 5,000 acres of open space in the next five years. Less than ten percent of counties in all regions expected to protect more than 5,000 acres of open space in the next five years.

**Figure 14.** Future Open Space Protection by Region



Respondent estimates of future open space protection may have been based on future funding expectations. When asked to identify sources of funds likely to be used to support future open space acquisition, the majority of respondents from all regions identified state funds as the top funding source for future open space acquisition efforts (Figure 15).

**Figure 15.** Anticipated Funding Sources for Future Open Space Protection



An equal number of counties in the Midwest (47 percent) reported state funds and private sources would be relied upon to acquire open space in the future. A majority of respondents from the West (50 percent) identified private sources as the top future funding source while a majority of respondents from the Mid-Atlantic states (82 percent) and the South (63 percent) indicated state funds as the top future revenue source. A diversity of additional funding sources was listed by survey respondents including:

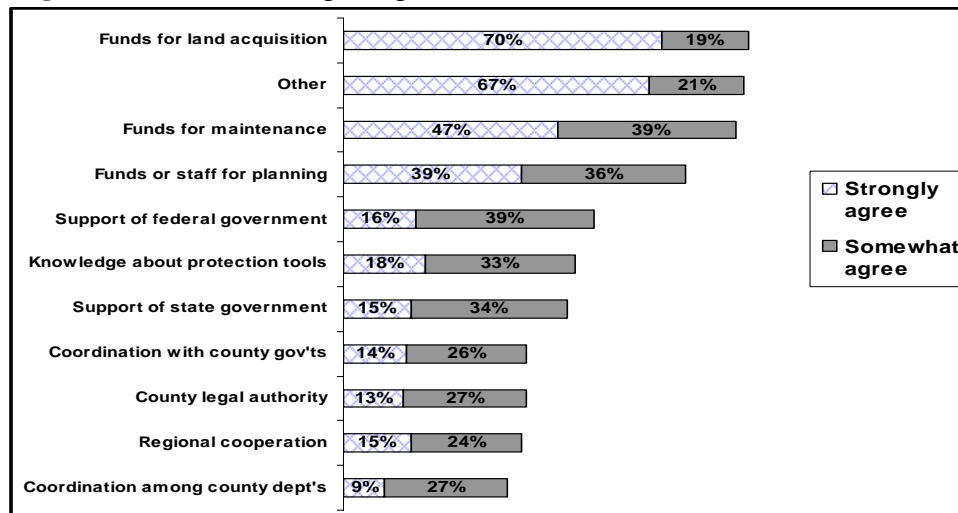
- Forest revenues

- Open space trust funds
- Development tax
- Landfill closure funds
- Watershed funds
- Parkland fees

Given the importance of funding to open space protection efforts, it is not surprising that the majority of respondents perceived the biggest barriers to open space protection as being financial (Figure 16). Lack of funds for land acquisition, maintenance, and planning or planning staff were the most commonly identified barriers to open space protection reported. Lack of support from federal and state governments as well as incomplete knowledge of protection tools were cited by about half of respondents. Other barriers included:

- High percentage of federal and state owned land in county
- Lack of growth/development in county
- No political leadership
- No public demand
- Strong property rights feeling in county
- Increasing land values

**Figure 16.** Barriers to Open Space Protection



Respondents from all four regions indicated that lack of funds for land, staff and maintenance were the biggest barriers to open space protection. Slightly more than half of respondents in the Midwest (56 percent) and the South (52 percent) reported lack of knowledge about protection tools as being a barrier to open space protection efforts. In addition, lack of support or involvement by state government was seen as a barrier by more than half of all respondents in the South (56 percent) and the Midwest (51 percent). Respondents from the Midwest (56 percent) and the South (64 percent) also cited lack of support by the federal government as a barrier to open space protection efforts.

## Conclusion

The National Survey of County Open Space Protection Efforts presents the first broad look at county-level efforts to protect open space. The results from this survey suggest that counties are engaged in open space protection activities that involve multiple types of lands, and a breadth of protection tools and funding resources. Key findings include:

- Citizens across the nation are concerned about loss of open space in their communities.
- Part of this concern, in part, is based on the benefits associated with open space protection including quality of life benefits as well as environmental and economic benefits.
- To protect open space, and take into account the perspectives and needs of a wide variety of stakeholder groups, counties cooperate with a wide variety of organizations outside of county government, including municipalities, state agencies, and private land trusts and citizens groups.
- In order to protect open space, counties use a wide variety of tools and strategies likely to reflect the local needs of particular regions and communities.
- Despite the recognition of the importance of open space protection and the progress counties have made in this area, counties still face barriers to protection related to lack of both financial and human resources.
- These survey results indicate that counties need assistance to expand resources for acquisition, planning, and maintenance of open space, to increase understanding of land protection tools and strategies, and to help garner support from federal and state levels of government as well as from private organizations.

**Appendix A**

**COUNTY OPEN SPACE SURVEY FORM**

**Directions:**

As you proceed with the following questionnaire on county level efforts to acquire or protect open space, please respond based on your perspective as a public official and representative of your county.

1. Please name the county and state in which you work.

County \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

2. Is loss of open space a concern to residents in your county?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

3. Approximately what percent of your county's land area is owned by:

	<10%	11-25	26-50%	51%-75%	>75%	Don't know
Federal gov't	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State gov't	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. In your county, where are most of the land development activities currently occurring? (Please select only one.)

- Cities and towns
- Unincorporated areas of the county near cities and towns
- Unincorporated rural areas of the county
- Little land development activity is occurring

5. In your county, where are most of the efforts to acquire or protect open space currently occurring? (Please select only one.)

- Cities and towns
- Unincorporated areas of the county near cities and towns
- Unincorporated rural areas of the county
- Little open space development activity is occurring

6. Does your county use any of the following types of plans to acquire or protect open space?

- |   | Yes                   | No                    | Don't know            |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| County comprehensive land use, general or master plan   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| County open space or green space plan                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Multi-county or regional open space or green space plan | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| State open space or green space plan                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
7. Within the last 10 years, has your county participated in any efforts to plan, acquire, or protect open space?
- Yes
  - No → Please skip to #16
  - Not Sure → Please skip to #16

### Protection Efforts

You have indicated that your county is either currently involved in acquiring or protecting open space or has been involved in such endeavors in the past. We would like to know more about these efforts.

8. Please indicate the county offices or departments that are involved in efforts to plan, develop, acquire, or protect open space. (Please select all that apply.)
- Public works
  - Planning or zoning
  - Parks and recreation
  - Administrator's or clerk's office
  - Financial or tax assessor's office
  - Special protected lands or open space office
  - Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 9a. Within the last 10 years, approximately how many total acres of land in your county have actually been protected or acquired as public open space:
- 0 → Please skip to #16
  - 101-1,000
  - 1,001-10,000
  - 10,001-30,000
  - 30,001 or more
  - Don't know
- 9b. Of these acres that were acquired or protected as open space, what percentage was permanently protected?

- 0
- 1-25%
- 26-50%
- 51-75%
- Over 75%

10. Within the past 10 years, what types of open space were acquired or protected in your county? (Please select all that apply.)

- Farming and agricultural lands
- Stream corridors (lands along streams and rivers)
- Historic landscapes (battlefields, etc.)
- Hiking, biking, or horseback trails
- Neighborhood parks
- Natural areas or wildlife preserves
- Playgrounds for children
- Ball fields or courts (i.e., soccer or basketball)
- Town squares and village greens
- Golf courses
- Open fields for picnicking and unstructured play
- Dog parks
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Which of the following groups does your county government cooperate with to acquire or protect open space? (Please select all that apply.)

- Private land trusts
- Municipal government
- Regional planning and development agencies or councils
- State agencies
- Federal agencies
- Local citizen organizations or civic organizations
- Private foundations
- Local businesses or business organizations
- Environmental organizations
- Developers or real estate interests
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- None

12. Which of the following tools or strategies has your county actually used to acquire or protect open space?

	Used in My county	Not used in My county	Don't Know
Fee simple acquisition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Density bonuses for open space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Cluster zoning ordinances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Floodplain ordinances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environmental mitigation requirements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Farmland protection ordinances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overlay districts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conservation easements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transfer of development rights	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Purchase of development rights	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impact fees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tax incentives for open space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private land donations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mandatory dedication ordinances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. Over the last five years, approximately what amount of county funds was expended to acquire or protect open space?
- Less than \$100,000
  - Between \$100,000 and \$1,000,000
  - Between \$1,000,000 and \$5,000,000
  - Greater than \$5,000,000
14. What revenue sources does your county use to fund open space land acquisition? (Please select all that apply.)
- Private sources (i.e., foundations, trusts, or individuals)
  - State funds
  - Federal funds
  - County budget appropriations
  - General obligation bonds
  - Dedicated portion of the sales tax
  - Dedicated portion of the property tax
  - Impact fees
  - Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  - None → Please skip to # 16
15. Please select the primary source of revenue your county uses to acquire open space. (Select only one.)
- Private sources (i.e., foundations, trusts, or individuals)
  - State funds
  - Federal funds
  - County budget appropriations
  - General obligation bonds
  - Dedicated portion of the sales tax
  - Dedicated portion of the property tax
  - Impact fees

- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Future Efforts**

16. Within the next five years, how many acres of open space do you anticipate your county will acquire or protect?
- None
  - 1-100 acres
  - 101-500 acres
  - 501-1,000 acres
  - 1,001-5,000 acres
  - More than 5,000 acres
17. What revenue sources do you anticipate using to fund acquisition of future open space? (Please select all that apply.)
- Private sources (i.e., foundations, trusts, or individuals)
  - State funds
  - Federal funds
  - County budget appropriations
  - General obligation bonds
  - Dedicated portion of the sales tax
  - Dedicated portion of the property tax
  - Impact fees
  - Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Support and Capacity**

We would now like to ask you a few questions about support for open space in your county and barriers to protecting open spaces.

18. How important are the following reasons for maintaining open space to the residents in your county? (1 = Unimportant, 5 = Important)
- |  | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Protects farmland                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Promotes fitness and exercise                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Attracts visitors and tourists                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Promotes economic development                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Increases the economic value of adjacent lands | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Serves as a growth management tool             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Creates a community social space               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Contributes to quality of life                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Provides environmental benefits                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

19. Please state how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements. In my county, barriers to acquiring or creating open space include a lack of. . .

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
County legal authority	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Funds for land acquisition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Funds for maintenance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowledge about use of protection tools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coordination among county departments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cooperation among municipalities in your county	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multi-county or regional cooperation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support or involvement of state government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support or involvement of federal government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Demographics

Finally, we would like to ask you a few questions about yourself. All responses will be kept confidential.

20. What is your job title? \_\_\_\_\_
21. In what county department or office do you work? \_\_\_\_\_
22. How many years have you spent in your current position? \_\_\_\_\_
23. How many years have you spent working for local government? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### LIST OF PARTICIPATING STATES BY NATIONAL REGION

<b>Mid-Atlantic</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>Midwest</b>	<b>West</b>
New Jersey	Alabama	Illinois	Alaska
New York	Arkansas	Indiana	Arizona
Pennsylvania	Delaware	Iowa	California
	Florida	Kansas	Colorado
	Georgia	Michigan	Hawaii
	Kentucky	Minnesota	Idaho
	Louisiana	Missouri	Montana
	Maryland	Nebraska	Nevada
	Mississippi	North Dakota	New Mexico
	North Carolina	Ohio	Oregon
	South Carolina	South Dakota	Utah
	Tennessee	Wisconsin	Washington
	Texas		Wyoming
	Virginia		
	West Virginia		

## LIST OF RESPONDING COUNTIES BY NATIONAL REGION

### MID-ATLANTIC

#### **New Jersey**

Atlantic County  
Bergen County  
Cumberland County  
Gloucester County  
Mercer County  
Monmouth County  
Morris County  
Ocean County  
Passaic County  
Sussex County  
Warren County

Wayne County  
Westchester County  
Yates County

#### **Pennsylvania**

Adams County  
Bardford County  
Butler County  
Cambria County  
Chester County  
Crawford County  
Cumberland County  
Delaware County  
Erie County  
Franklin County  
Greene County  
Huntingdon County  
Jefferson County  
Lehigh County  
Luzerne County  
Lycoming County  
McKean County  
Mercer County  
Monroe County  
Northumberland County  
Philadelphia County  
Pike County  
Snyder County  
Susquehanna County  
Union County  
Venango County  
Warren County  
Westmoreland County  
Wyoming County

#### **New York**

Cayuga County  
Chemung County  
Clinton County  
Columbia County  
Cortland County  
Dutchess County  
Essex County  
Genesee County  
Jefferson County  
Madison County  
Montgomery County  
Niagara County  
Orange County  
Otsego County  
Putnam County  
Rockland County  
St. Lawrence County  
Saratoga County  
Schoharie County  
Steuben County  
Suffolk County  
Ulster County  
Warren County

SOUTH

**Alabama**

Baldwin County  
Jefferson County  
Madison County  
Pickens County

**Arkansas**

Saline County

**Delaware**

New Castle County

**Florida**

Alachua County  
Bradford County  
Broward County  
Citrus County  
Clay County  
Duval County  
Flagler County  
Franklin County  
Gadsden County  
Hamilton County  
Hardee County  
Highlands County  
Indian River County  
Jackson County  
Lake County  
Lee County  
Madison County  
Manatee County  
Martin County  
Nassau County  
Osceola County  
Pasco County  
Polk County  
St. Lucie County  
Seminole County  
Volusia County  
Wakulla County

**Georgia**

Bartow County  
Bulloch County  
Carroll County  
Chattahoochee County  
Cherokee County  
Cobb County  
Columbia County  
Coweta County  
Dawson County  
DeKalb County  
Fayette County  
Greene County  
Hall County  
Henry County  
Houston County  
Lee County  
McDuffie County  
Madison County  
Peach County  
Pickens County  
Putnam County  
Richmond County  
Rockdale County  
Sumter County  
Tattnall County  
Taylor County  
Tift County  
Troup County  
Ware County  
Whitfield County

**Kentucky**

Boone County  
Campbell County  
Jessamine County  
Marshall County  
Shelby County  
Washington County

**Louisiana**

St. Tammany Parish  
Terrebonne Parish

**Maryland**

Caroline County  
Carroll County  
Cecil County  
Garrett County  
Harford County  
Howard County  
Kent County  
Talbot County  
Wicomico County  
Worcester County

**Mississippi**

DeSoto County  
Forrest County  
Harrison County  
Hinds County  
Lamar County  
Madison County  
Tunica County

**North Carolina**

Ashe County  
Brunswick County  
Burke County  
Cabarrus County  
Carteret County  
Craven County  
Cumberland County  
Dare County  
Davidson County  
Davie County  
Guilford County  
Harnett County  
Johnston County  
Lenoir County  
Mecklenburg County  
Nash County

New Hanover County  
Polk County  
Rowan County  
Stanly County  
Stokes County  
Transylvania County  
Watauga County  
Wayne County  
Wilkes County

**South Carolina**

Aiken County  
Anderson County  
Darlington County  
Dorchester County  
Greenville County  
Horry County  
Lexington County  
Spartanburg County  
Sumter County

**Tennessee**

Blount County  
Bradley County  
Franklin County  
Loudon County  
Rutherford County  
Sullivan County  
Tipton County  
Williamson County  
Wilson County

**Texas**

Cameron County  
Comal County  
Grayson County  
Travis County

## **Virginia**

Accomack County  
Albemarle County  
Amelia County  
Bedford County  
Botetourt County  
Campbell County  
Chesterfield County  
Clarke County  
Cumberland County  
Dinwiddie County  
Fairfax County  
Giles County  
Goochland County  
Greene County  
Greensville County  
Halifax  
Highland County  
James City County  
Lancaster County  
Montgomery County  
Nottoway County  
Orange County  
Prince William County  
Rockbridge County  
Shenandoah County  
Smyth County  
Southampton County  
Westmoreland  
Wise County  
York County

## **West Virginia**

Kanawha County  
Monongalia County

MIDWEST

**Illinois**

Carroll County  
Clinton County  
Cook County  
DeKalb County  
Henry County  
Kane County  
Kankakee County  
Lake County  
Lee County  
McHenry County  
Morgan County  
Ogle County  
Whiteside County  
Will County

**Indiana**

Adams County  
Allen County  
Benton County  
Brown County  
Dearborn County  
Delaware County  
Grant County  
Hamilton County  
Harrison County  
Howard County  
Huntington County  
Jackson County  
Jay County  
Jennings County  
Johnson County  
Kosciusko County  
Marion County  
Marshall County  
Monroe County  
Randolph County  
St. Joseph County  
Spencer County  
Steuben County  
Tippecanoe County  
Union County

Vanderburgh County  
Vermillion County  
Wabash County  
Warren County

**Iowa**

Buena Vista County  
Butler County  
Carroll County  
Cerro Gordo County  
Clay County  
Clinton County  
Hancock County  
Harrison County  
Johnson County  
Linn County  
Webster County

**Kansas**

Butler County  
Crawford County  
Ford County  
Harvey County  
Jefferson County  
Johnson County  
Leavenworth County  
Pottawatomie County  
Saline County

## **Michigan**

Barry County  
Calhoun County  
Charlevoix County  
Eaton County  
Leelanau County  
Luce County  
Manistee County  
Missaukee County  
Otsego County  
Ottawa County

## **Minnesota**

Aikin County  
Beltrami County  
Benton County  
Carlton County  
Carver County  
Chisago County  
Clay County  
Cottonwood County  
Douglas County  
Houston County  
Itasca County  
Lake of the Woods County  
Lyon County  
Meeker County  
Nicollet County  
Norman County  
Olmsted County  
Otter Tail County  
Redwood County  
Renville County  
Rice County  
Scott County  
Sherburne County  
Stearns County

## **Missouri**

Boone County  
Clay County  
Cole County  
Greene County

Jefferson County  
Maries County  
Platte County  
St. Charles County

## **Nebraska**

Antelope County  
Buffalo County  
Dodge County  
Douglas County  
Gage County  
Keith County  
Keya Paha County  
Lancaster County  
Lincoln County  
Merrick County  
Polk County  
Scotts Bluff County  
Seward County  
Stanton County  
Washington County

## **North Dakota**

Cass County

**Ohio**

Ashland County  
Ashtabula County  
Athens County  
Butler County  
Champaign County  
Clermont County  
Cuyahoga County  
Fairfield County  
Fulton County  
Geauga County  
Henry County  
Jefferson County  
Lake County  
Mahoning County  
Medina County  
Ottawa County  
Pickaway County  
Shelby County  
Trumbull County  
Van Wert County  
Warren County  
Wayne County  
Wood County

Fond du Lac County  
Green Lake County  
Juneau County  
La Crosse County  
Marinette County  
Oconto County  
Outagamie County  
Ozaukee County  
Pierce County  
Polk County  
Portage County  
Rusk County  
St. Croix County  
Sauk County  
Taylor County  
Trempealeau County  
Washington County  
Waukesha County  
Waushara County  
Winnebago County  
Wood County

**South Dakota**

Brown County  
Fall River County  
Grant County  
Hutchinson County  
Lawrence County  
Pennington County  
Stanley County  
Yankton County

**Wisconsin**

Adams County  
Brown County  
Burnett County  
Calumet County  
Clark County  
Dodge County  
Door County

WEST

**Alaska**

Fairbanks North Star Borough  
Ketchikan Gateway Borough  
Sitka Borough  
Yakutat Borough

**Arizona**

Apache County  
Cochise County  
Coconino County  
Graham County  
Mohave County  
Navajo County  
Pima  
Santa Cruz County  
Yavapai County

**California**

Alpine County  
Calaveras County  
Humboldt County  
Inyo County  
Kings County  
Los Angeles County  
Merced County  
Modoc County  
Nevada County  
San Benito County  
San Diego County  
San Mateo County  
Santa Clara County  
Solano County  
Sutter County  
Tehama County  
Ventura County

**Colorado**

Archuleta County  
Chaffee County  
Fremont County

Garfield County  
Gilpin County  
Gunnison County  
Lake County  
Larimer County  
Mesa County  
Montrose County  
Morgan County  
Ouray County  
Pitkin County  
Pueblo County  
Rio Grande County  
Routt County  
San Miguel County  
Sedgwick County  
Teller County  
Weld County

**Hawaii**

Honolulu County

**Idaho**

Ada County  
Bannock County  
Boise County  
Canyon County  
Franklin County  
Fremont County  
Gem County  
Latah County  
Lewis County  
Nez Perce County  
Washington County

**Montana**

Cascade County  
Flathead County  
Gallatin County  
Lake County  
Lewis and Clark County  
Lincoln County  
Powell County  
Ravalli County  
Sanders County  
Sheridan County  
Sweet Grass County  
Teton County

**Nevada**

Churchill County  
Clark County  
Lyon County  
Nye County  
Washoe County  
Carson City County

**New Mexico**

Bernalillo County  
Luna County  
Mora County  
Rio Arriba County  
Santa Fe County  
Valencia County

**Oregon**

Baker County  
Clackamas County  
Crook County  
Douglas County  
Hood River County  
Lane County  
Lincoln County  
Polk County  
Tillamook County  
Umatilla County  
Union County

Wallowa County  
Wasco County  
Washington County

**Utah**

Cache County  
Carbon County  
Grand County  
Salt Lake County  
Tooele County  
Uintah County  
Utah County  
Wasatch County  
Washington County  
Weber County

**Washington**

Benton County  
Columbia County  
Grays Harbor County  
Kitsap County  
Lewis County  
Mason County  
Pacific County  
Pierce County  
Skamania County  
Stevens County  
Wahkiakum County  
Whitman County

**Wyoming**

Albany County  
Fremont County  
Goshen County  
Johnson County  
Laramie County  
Lincoln County  
Park County  
Uinta County

## Appendix C

### RESPONSE RATE BY REGION

The table below shows the survey response rate by region. The response rate within each region varied minimally. The Mid-Atlantic region had the highest response rate of 49 percent, while the South had the lowest rate of response rate of 38 percent.

#### Survey Response by Region

<b>Region</b>	<b>Total Number Of Counties In Region</b>	<b>Total Number Of Surveys Sent</b>	<b>Percentage Of Counties Receiving Surveys</b>	<b>Total Number Of Responses</b>	<b>Regional Response Rate</b>
Mid-Atlantic	150	135	90%	66	49%
South	1346	437	32%	168	38%
Midwest	1053	420	40%	180	43%
West	444	306	69%	130	42%

## THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF COUNTIES

The new National Center for the Study of Counties is a focal point for the study of practical issues important to county government. It brings together research and outreach activities relating to counties, their governance, and public policy issues of significance to county governments not only in Georgia but nationwide.

The University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government is addressing the changing needs of counties through creation of a National Center for the Study of Counties. This new initiative is the nation's first university-based center of its kind in the United States.