

GPREDLine Survey Results:

Where Do You Get Your Research Information?



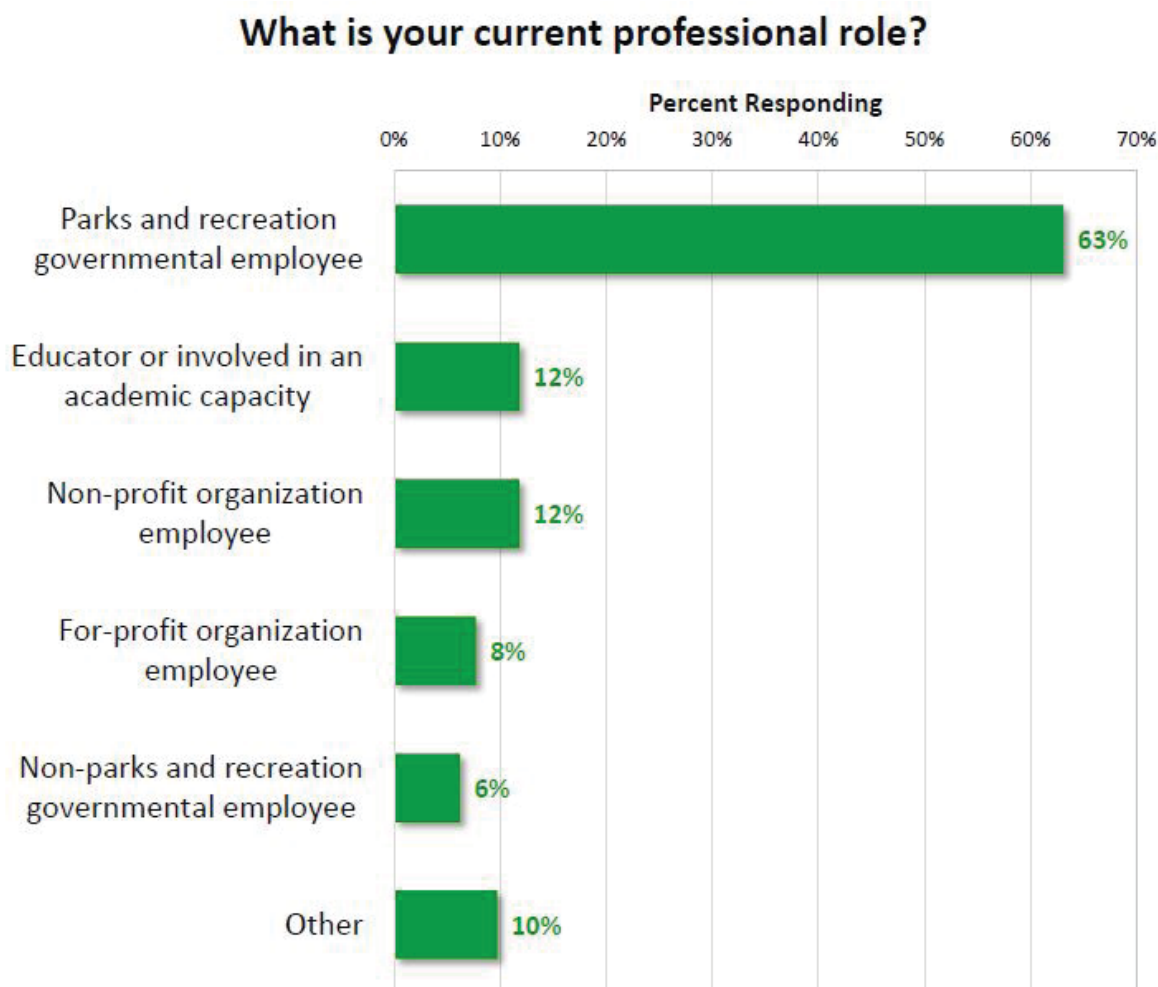
Introduction

This report summarizes results from a brief online survey conducted by GP RED during the summer of 2014 as a part of the REDLine Survey Initiative. This study examined research resources and data accessibility across a variety of professional employment positions. Preferred sources for information, conference attendance, satisfaction with quality and availability of research, and comments and suggestions on professional research are evaluated. The results provide insight and understanding regarding commonly-used professional research sources and identify potential areas for improvement to further enhance accessibility and quality.

GP RED is committed to providing Research, Education, and Development (RED) for health, recreation, and land management agencies and professionals, filling the gaps between academia, associations, and practice. GP RED maintains a national email list of over 7,000 allied practitioners and academic professionals in a variety of related disciplines, and responses from that list were the basis for the following results. The survey was administered as a pro bono service for GP RED by RRC Associates. Suggestions for future REDLine Surveys can be sent to info@GPRED.org. The following information is distributed as a public service as part of our role as a 501(c)(3) non-profit public charity, so feel free to share and distribute the information, with appropriate credits. © 2014 GP RED, All rights reserved.

Respondent Employment

Among the 202 total respondents, a majority (63 percent) were parks and recreation governmental employees. An additional 12 percent were educators, 12 percent were non-profit employees, 8 percent were for-profit employees, and 6 percent were non-parks and recreation governmental employees.

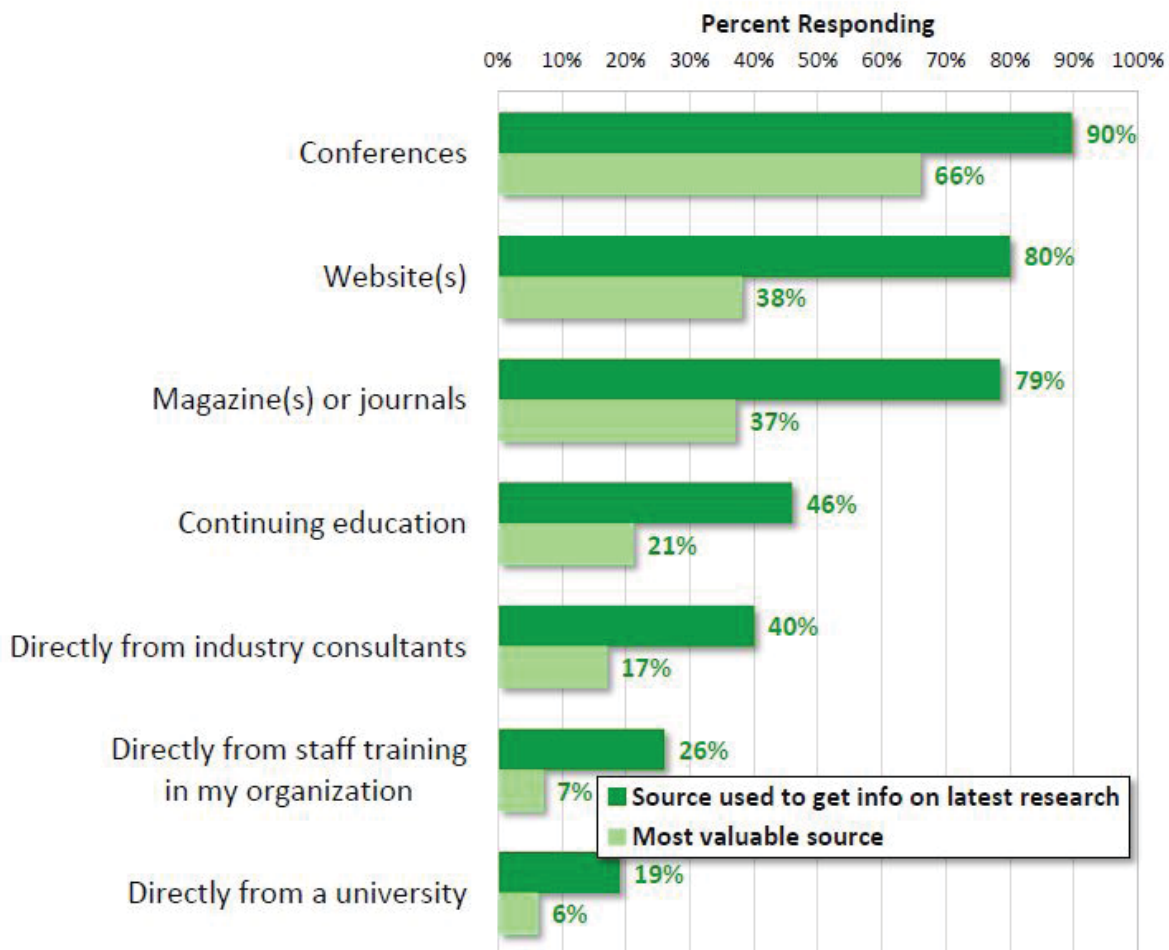


Source: GP REDLine Survey, Summer 2014, RRC Associates.

Obtaining Information

Respondents were questioned about the sources they use to learn about the latest research as well as the two sources they feel are “most valuable.” Responses to both questions followed a similar hierarchy. Top sources used to gain new information include conferences (90 percent), website(s) (80 percent), and magazine(s)/journals (79 percent). In a parallel finding, respondents listed conferences (66%), website(s) (38 percent), and magazine(s)/journals (37 percent) as their most valuable sources.

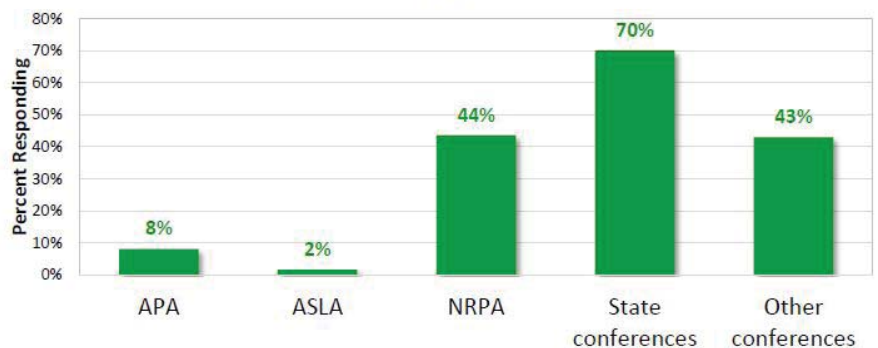
Sources Used to Find Latest Research and Most Valuable Sources



Source: GP REDLine Survey, Summer 2014, RRC Associates.

Which conferences have you attended in the past 24 months?

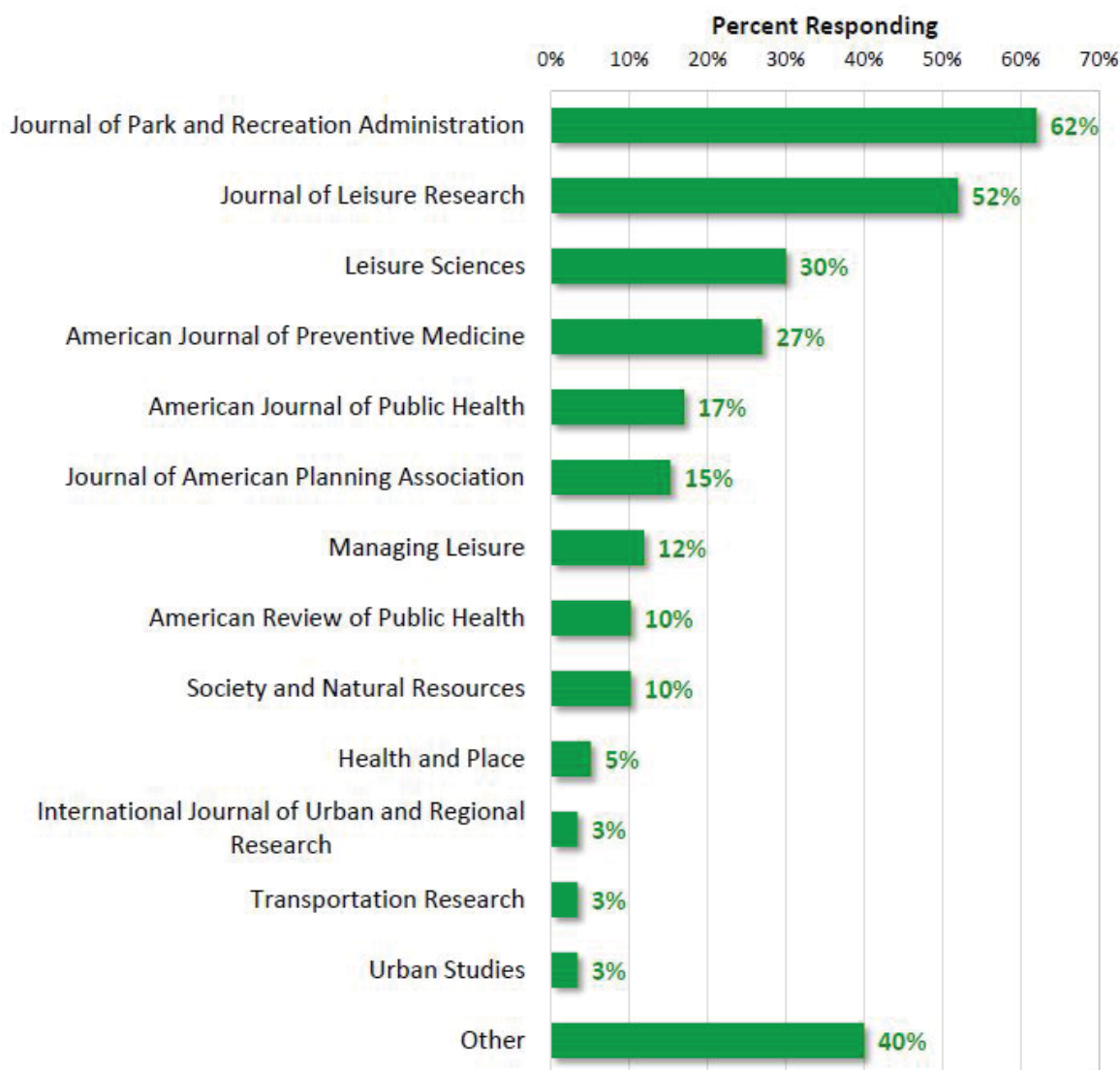
Respondents were asked about conference attendance in the past two years. Most respondents attended a state conference (70 percent), followed by an NRPA conference (44 percent), or some other conference (43 percent).



Source: GP REDLine Survey, Summer 2014, RRC Associates.

The most frequently cited peer-reviewed journals included the Journal of Park and Recreation Administration (62 percent) and the Journal of Leisure Research; these results were likely influenced by the high percentage of respondents employed in the parks and recreation industry. A fairly high proportion of respondents also indicated that they use “other” sources (40 percent). Respondents were further probed to identify these additional sources, and popular “other” sources noted in open-ended comments include parks and recreation publications (e.g; Parks & Recreation Magazine, Recreation Management, California Parks & Recreation, Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals), environmentally-focused publications (US Forest Service, Sustainability, Environmental Practice, Ecology & Society, etc.), and sports management or healthy living publications (Athletic Business, American Therapeutic Recreation Association, etc.).

Peer-Reviewed Journals Used



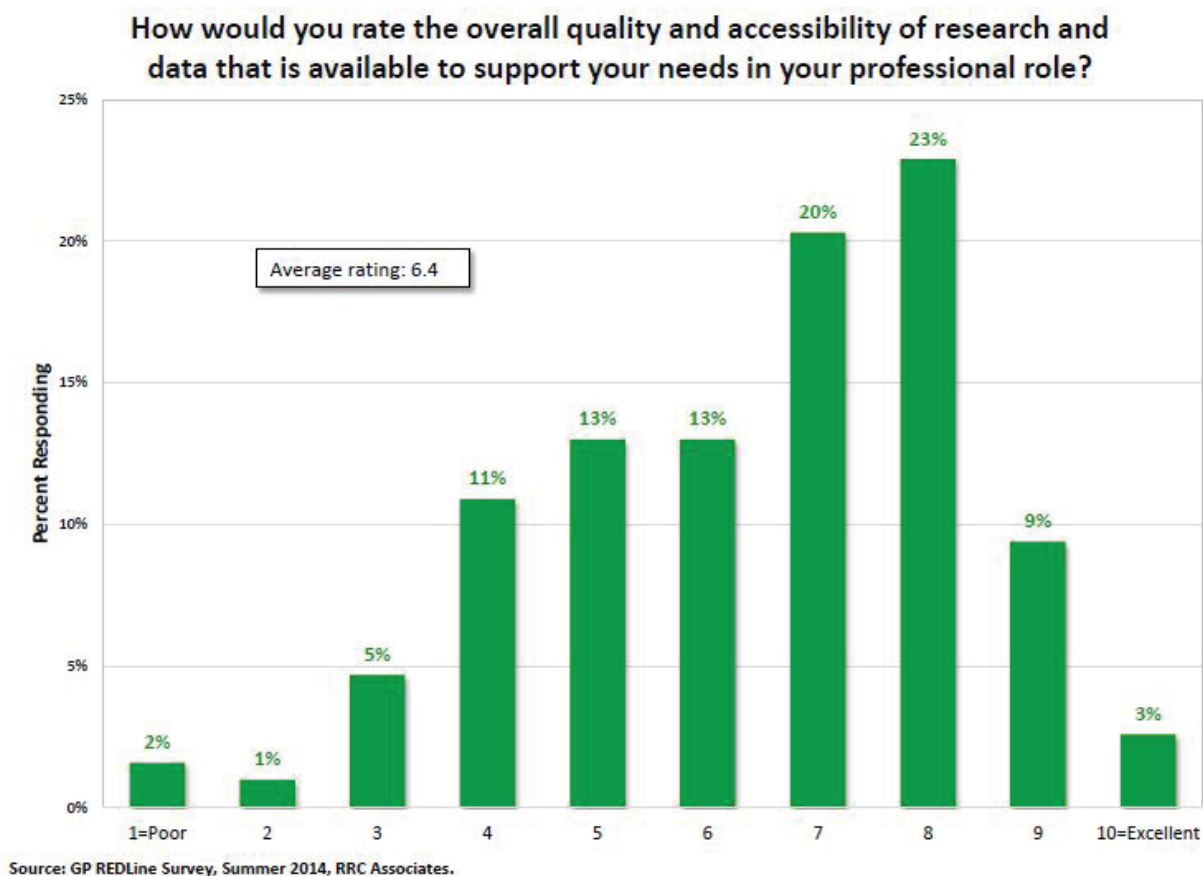
Source: GP REDLine Survey, Summer 2014, RRC Associates.

Respondents were also asked to list the websites they utilize for information on recreation, health, and land planning. The most frequently mentioned websites included:

- NRPA (National Park and Recreation Association)
- CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Google/Google Scholar
- State and local parks and recreation websites
- TPL (Trust for Public Land)
- ASLA (American Society of Landscape Architects)
- APA (American Planning Association)

Quality/Accessibility of Professional Research

On a 10-point scale, where 1 means “poor” and 10 means “excellent”, respondents were asked to rate the quality and accessibility of current research that is professionally relevant. Overall, satisfaction was relatively positive, with an average rating of 6.4. Over half of respondents gave a rating of 7 or higher (55 percent). However, only 3 percent rated the quality and accessibility of research to support their needs as “excellent.”



Finally, in an open-ended question, respondents expressed their comments about the quality and accessibility of professional research. Consistent with the fact that relatively few respondents rated research resources at the highest end of the 10 point scale, open ended comments suggest that improvements can be made to enhance the accessibility of research in their field. Suggestions include creating a global database for journal articles, making articles more user-friendly, and decreasing the price of scholarly articles. Following is a list of selected verbatim comments:

- “I definitely try to read all relevant (recreation) articles and research studies, whether presented in a webinar, journal article or other. I would love to have a ‘research based’ source to peruse on a regular and consistent basis.”
- “I work in a University so I have great access to publications and conference information. It is my perception that many ‘professionals’ do not make good use of existing literature. There is a need to bridge the gap between rigorous academic work and professional practice.”

- *"It would be helpful for more 'how to' information to be available so lay-people had a better roadmap for success and not so much data to analyze."*
- *"No single repository for recreation. NRPA is not adequate. Others are narrow or topic specific."*
- *"Peer reviewed journals are only available while I'm in school – otherwise they are too expensive."*
- *"Research journals are not well promoted and are too costly."*
- *"Several websites also provide good updates on current research. Most provide linkage to original materials. Of particular value is the website for the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals."*
- *"Sometimes the research is difficult to find and/or adapt to our community."*
- *"The lack of journals creates a large backlog of accepted articles and due to the minimal number of outlets, many potential papers are not published perhaps due to the selective nature of the few outlets."*
- *"The research often is global in nature and not specific to my agency's needs...International research does not inform my work..."*

C. Chris Cares is the Founding Partner of RRC Associates, and current President of the Operating Board of Directors for GP RED. Chris has a Masters in City Planning from Harvard, and possesses a strong background in planning, along with practical applications of research and survey techniques, especially for application for parks, recreation, open space, trails, and tourism related topics for local and state governmental agencies. Chris can be reached at Chris@RRCAssociates.com.

