



It starts with Scouts.

# Reimagining our Adventures:

## A New Vision for Scouts Canada's Camps

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ALL STAKEHOLDER SURVEY RESULTS

JUNE 2020

# Respondent Demographics Summary

- The survey was open from May 21–June 22, 2020.
- There were **4,710 total responses** from **all 20 Councils**, with Voyageur having the most (426) and PEI having the fewest (9).
- Respondents were mainly SC volunteers (**Scouter ~60%**) and **parents (~30%)**.
- Among Scouters, **respondents' tenure was evenly distributed**, although not correlated to actual SC volunteer demographics; Scouters with <5 years experience were the largest cohort (30%), followed by 20+ years (25%), 5–10 years (23%) and 10–20 years (20%).
- **Youth only** accounted for **3% of respondents**; new approaches will need to be identified to engage youth.
- The largest number of respondents associated themselves with **Troop (30%), followed by Pack (25%) and Colony (20%)**.
- **94% of respondents** had visited a SC camp/property in **the past 3 years**.

# General Attitude Towards Initiative

**Trust**—there were a significant portion of respondents who felt that Scouts Canada ‘had already made up its mind’ to sell all the properties, and that this process was disingenuous—there is a clear lack of trust that needs to be built through this process to reinforce Scouts Canada's commitment to working transparently with members.

**Tradition**—many respondents spoke to the importance of Scouting's traditions and expressed concerns that this initiative would result in Scouting ‘resorts’. Respondents want camps to maintain their Scouting character in terms of being rustic/basic, the types of activities offered, the properties themselves, etc.—their fear that this initiative isn’t placing enough emphasis on these traditions, without which we’ll lose the ‘essence of Scouting’.

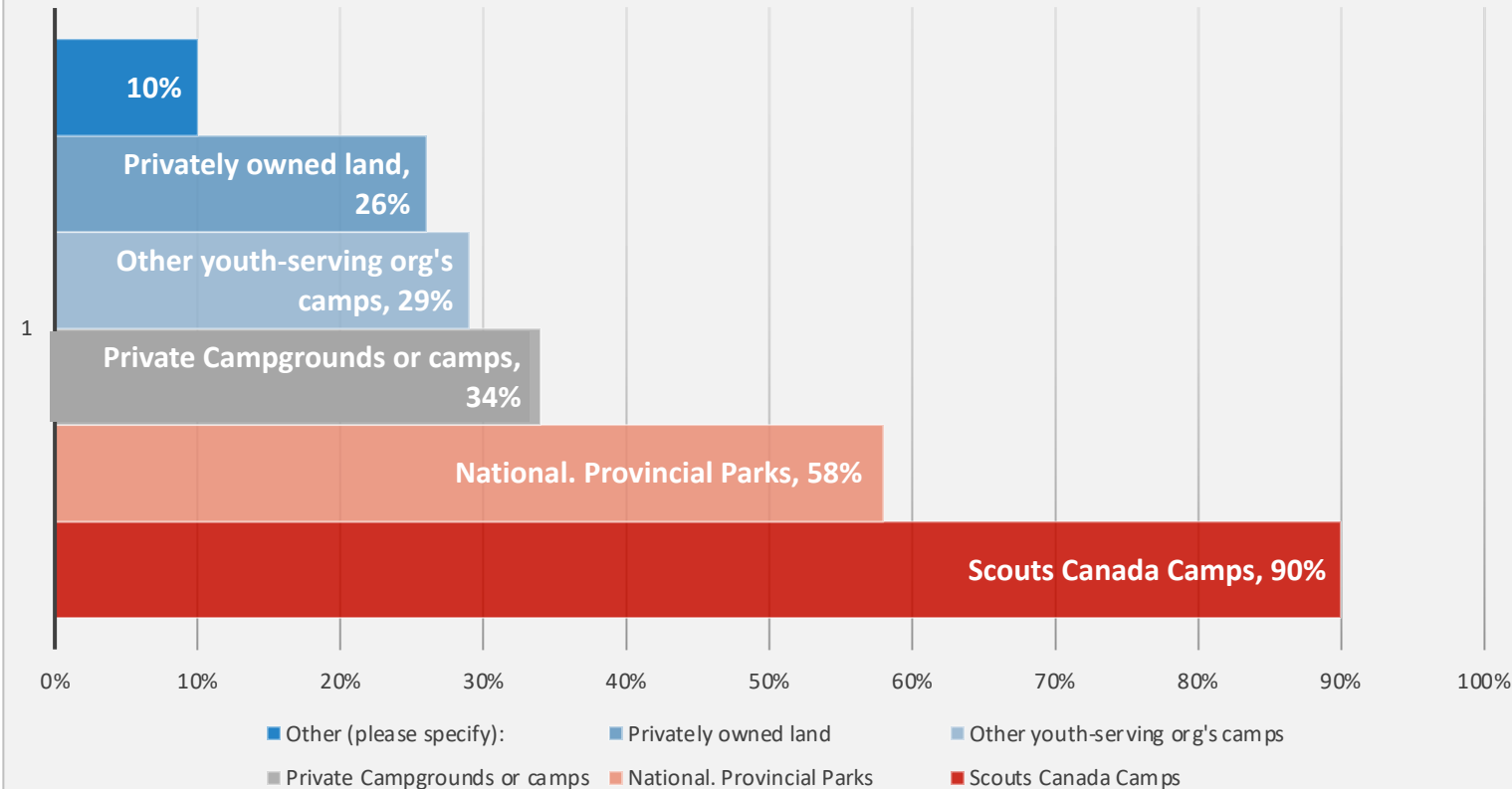
**Modernization**—there was a very strong recognition among all respondents that Scouts Canada’s Camps need to be modernized, improved and then properly operated/maintained; there were however, very different perspectives on what those improvements should look like.

# Summary: Key Observations

- **Facilities**—there are significant differences in the needs of different Sections; the strongest correlations were between Colony & Pack and Company & Crew.
- **Natural features**—all Sections were looking for the same two things: forest and lake.
- **Program**—there is a lot of interest in ‘traditional’ Scouting activities; strong interest in camp-facilitated offsite activities through partners.
- **Transportation**—especially in Colony & Pack, a majority of respondents are unwilling to travel > 60 minutes, however, facilitated transportation extends the radius.
- **Support**—there is a strong desire for increased online support for selecting, booking and planning trips to our camps.
- **Cost**—there are large regional differences in the typical cost of a weekend camp; there is also a strong sentiment that SC’s camps currently don’t offer ‘value for cost’.



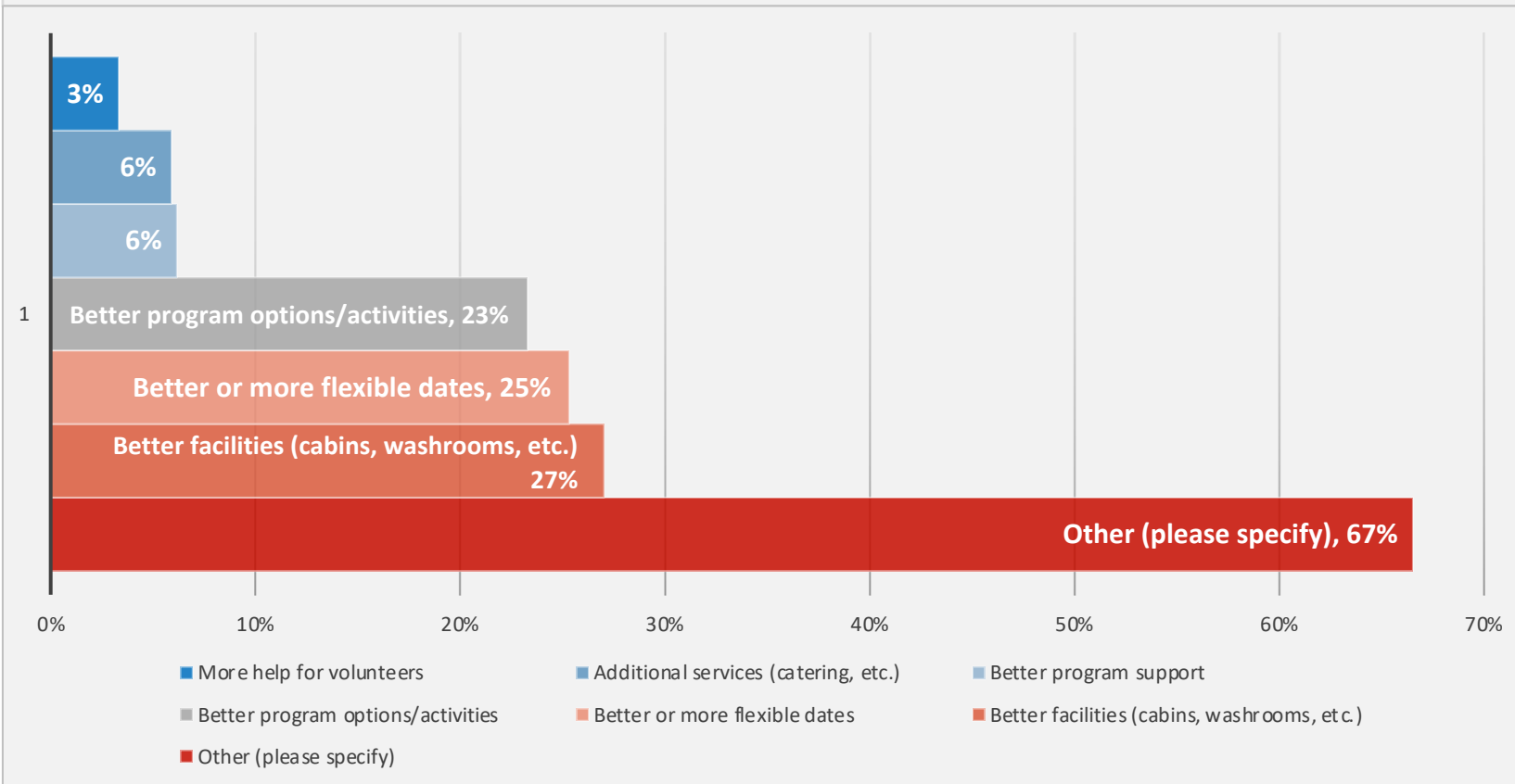
## When taking youth camping, what types of properties have you visited?



**Scouts Canada's Camps are the most common destination** for respondents, followed by Nat/Prov. Parks. Many of the 'Other' comments spoke the unique needs of Beaver Colonies, and their preferences for 'sleepovers' rather than camps in most months.

**Other:** Crown Land; Church Camp; Community Hall; Museum

## When you have camped at a location that is not a Scouts Canada property, why have you chosen the location?



There was a lot of variety in the reasons why respondents chose not to use a Scouts Canada Camp; noticeable **difference between Sections** which highlights their unique needs.

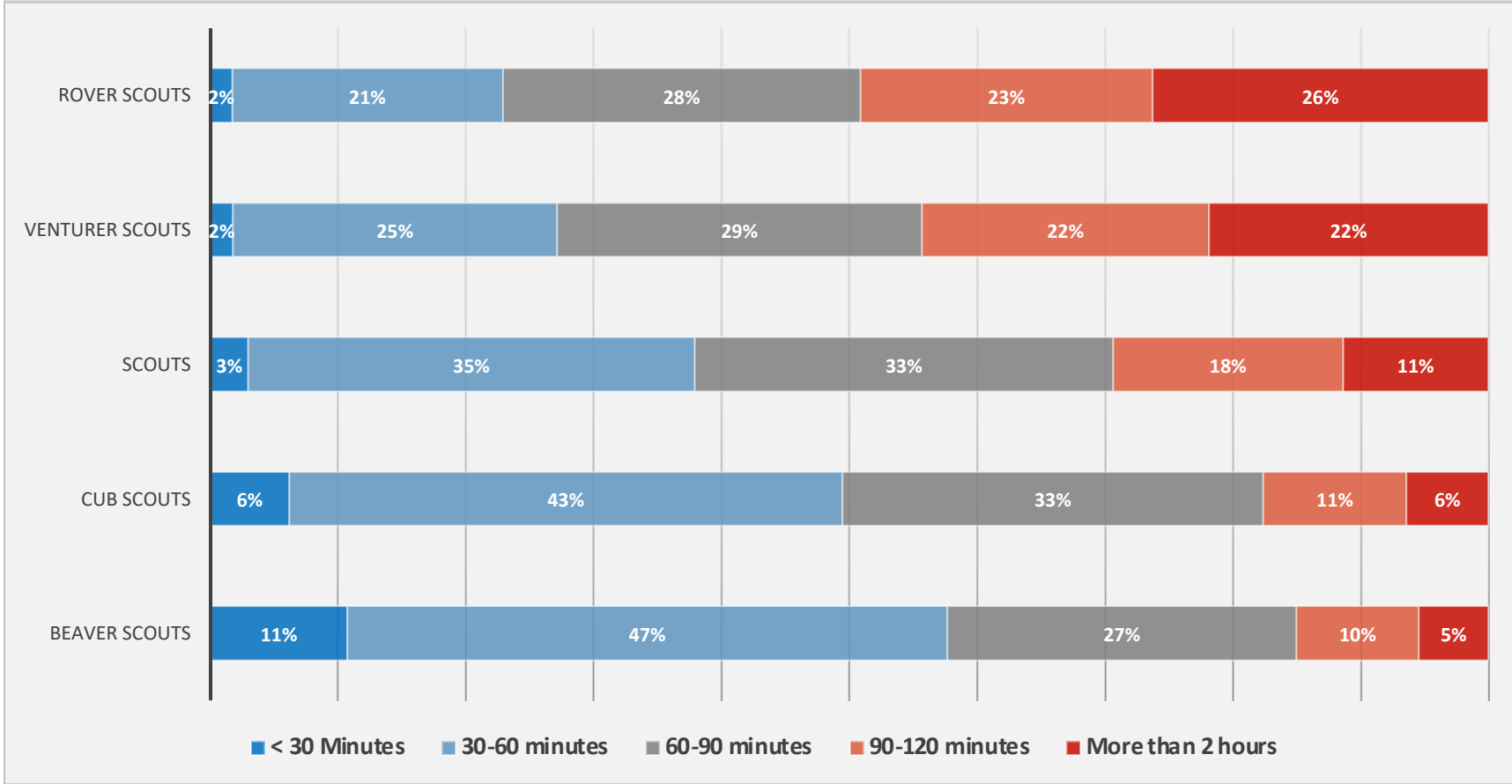
**Other:** Location / Closer to Home; Cost; Activities/Program; Variety; Facilities; Availability; Wilderness; Canoe trip

# Location Summary: Travel Time & Natural Features

- There is a clear trend that **older Sections are willing to travel further** from their community; likely correlated to the youth/parents' comfort being away from home.
- **In Colony/Pack**, it's clear that Sections will not travel >90 minutes for a weekend camp and would prefer to **travel <60 minutes**. **Atlantic Canada** showed a preference the shortest travel times—13% across all Sections wanting to **travel <30 minutes**.
- If **transportation to/from camp were provided**, all Sections would be willing to travel farther for a weekend camp, compared to parent-provided transportation. Sections also indicated that they'd be willing to pay extra for camp-facilitated transportation.
- If the camp is longer than 5 days, however, Sections are willing to travel much further, even if parents are providing the transportation; **75% of Senior Sections would travel more than 2 hours for a camp 5 days or longer**.
- Across all demographics, respondents are looking to **camp near a forested area and a lake**.

# LOCATION

When looking for a location to take youth camping for a weekend, how far from your community is your Section willing to travel?



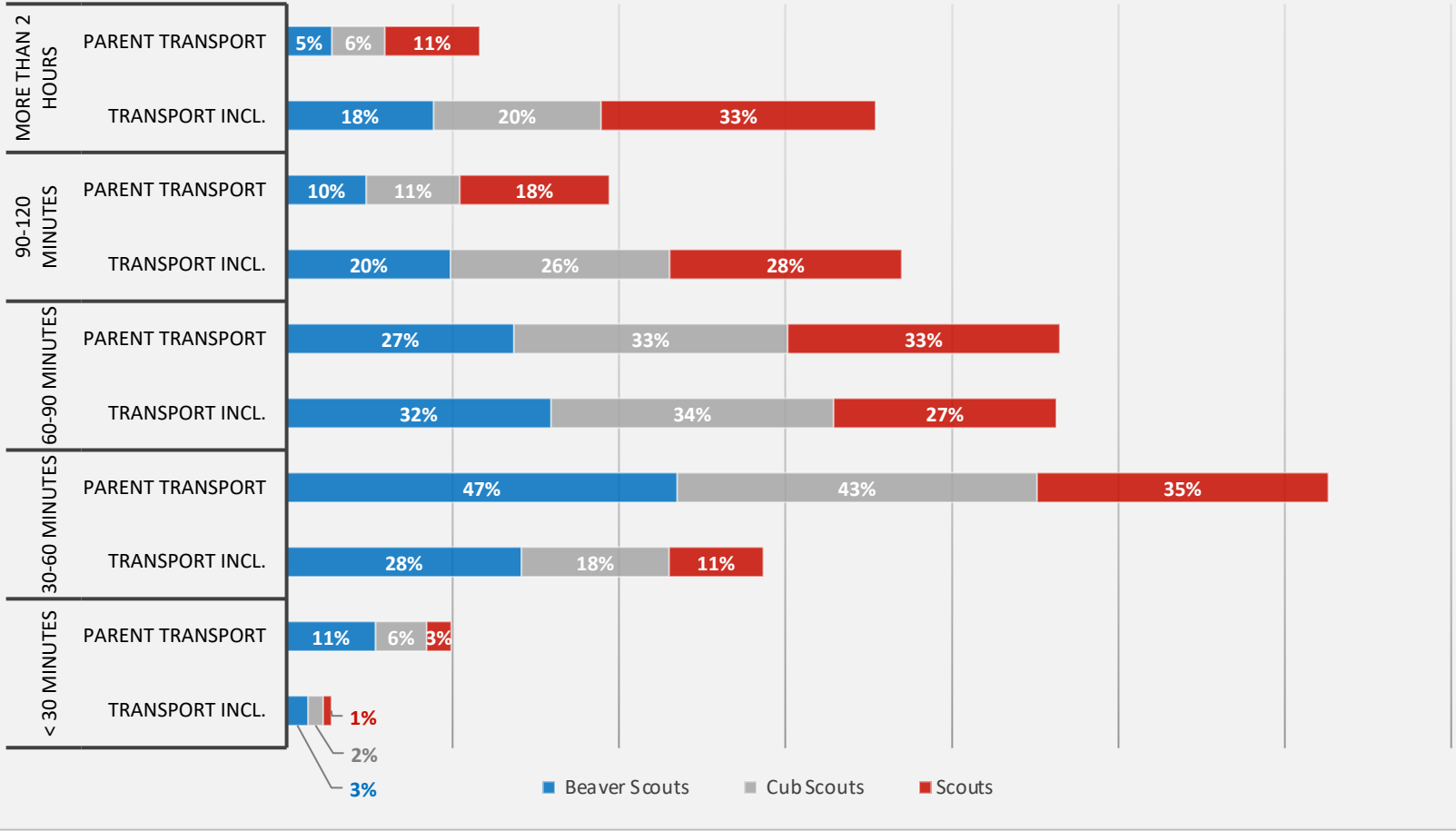
There is a clear trend that **older Sections are willing to travel further** from their community; likely correlated to the youth/parents' comfort being away from home. In the **younger Sections**, it's clear that Sections will not travel >90 minutes for a weekend camp and would **prefer to travel <60 minutes**.





# LOCATION

Distance Sections are willing to travel: Parent-provided Transportation VS. Camp-provided Transportation



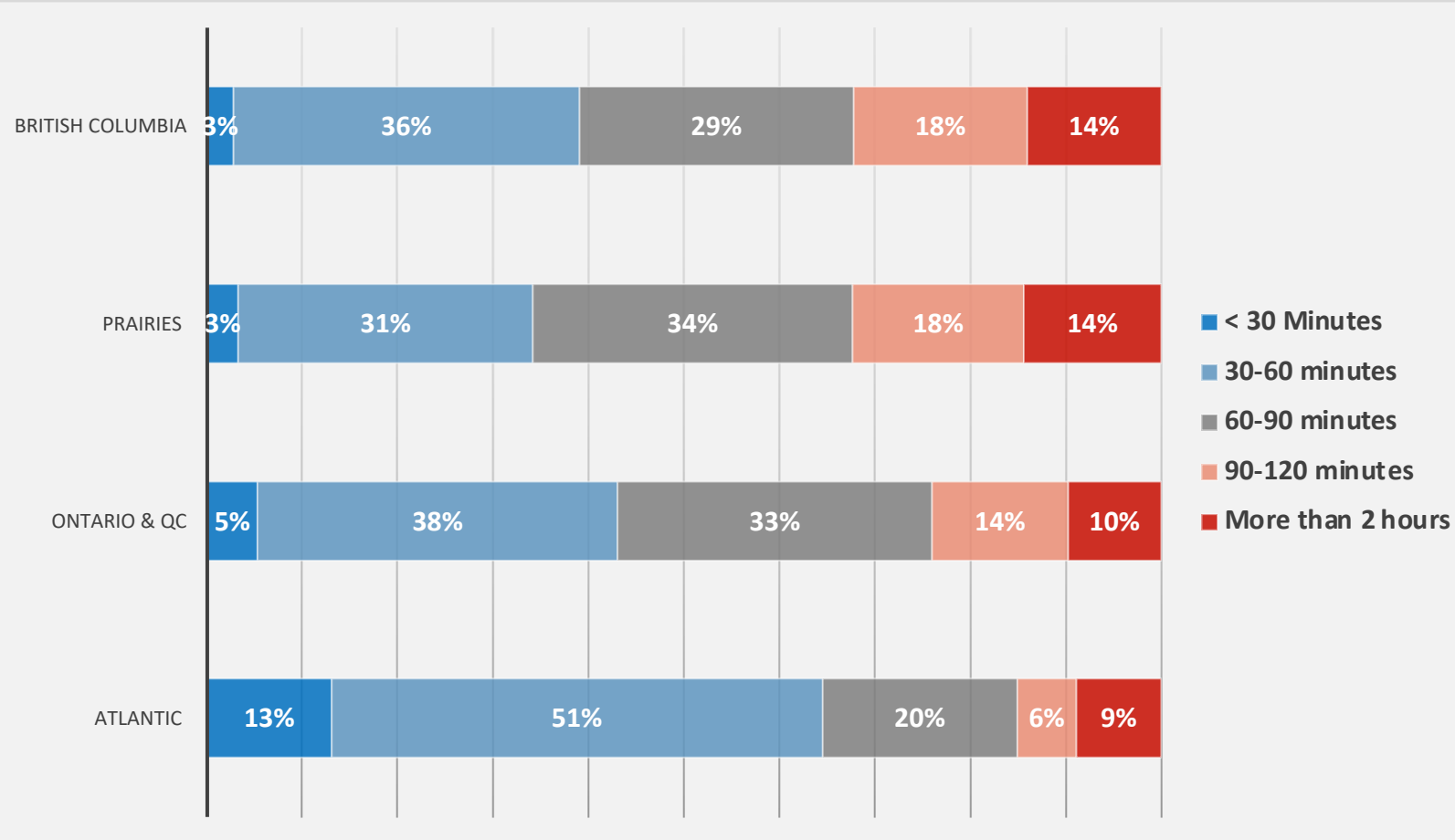
Across all Sections, if transportation to/from camp were provided, Sections would be willing to travel farther for a weekend camp, compared to parent provided transportation.

If the camp is longer than 5 days, however, Sections are willing to travel much further, even if parents are providing the transportation; **75% of Senior Sections** would travel more than 2 hours for a camp 5 days or longer.



# LOCATION

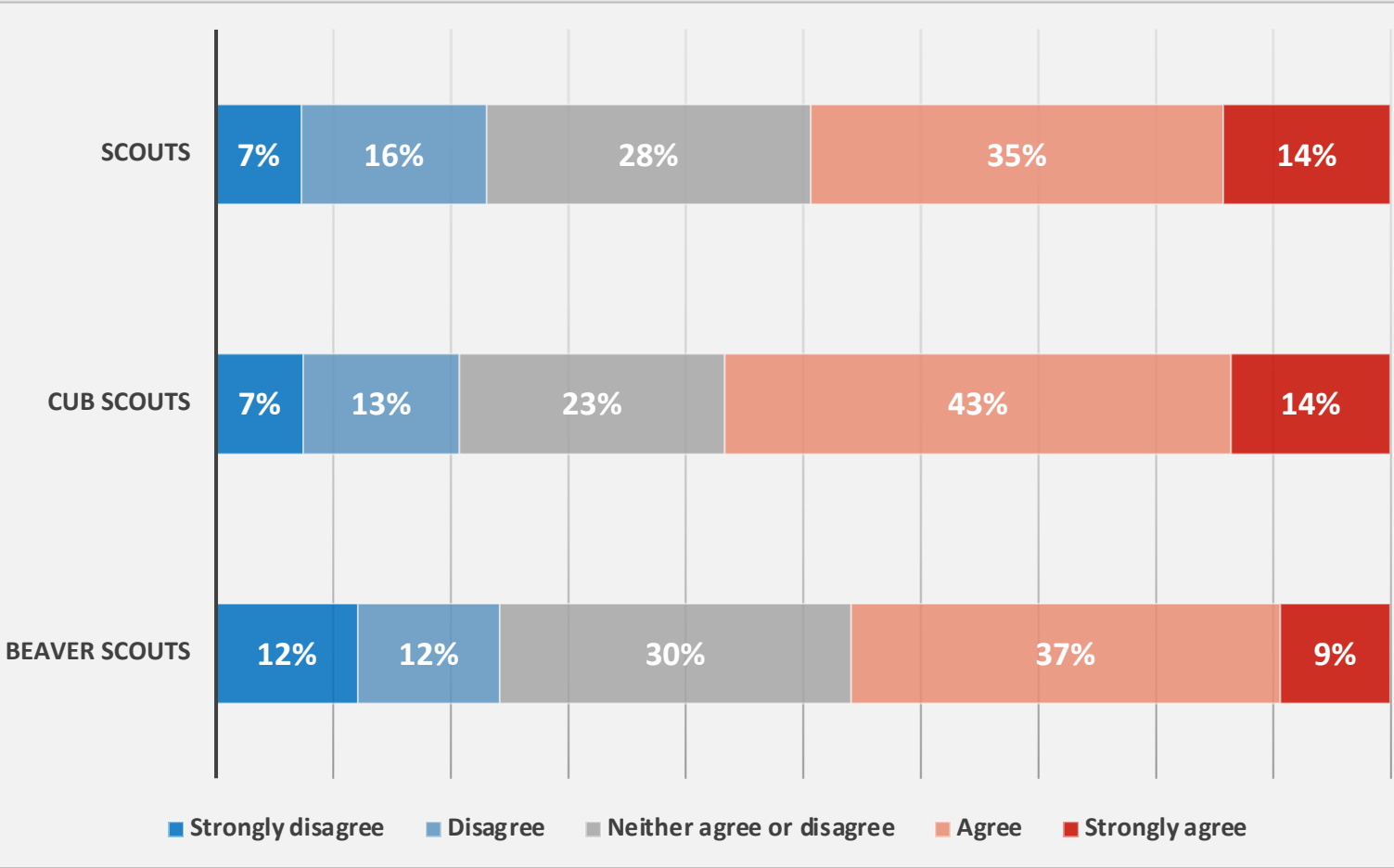
When looking for a location to take youth camping for a weekend, how far from your community is your Section willing to travel? Regional Breakdown



**Atlantic Canada** shows a preference for much shorter travel times than the other regions; **+10%** for wanting to travel <30 minutes.

# LOCATION

My Section would be interested in camp-facilitated transportation to the camp property, either included in the cost or as an extra cost

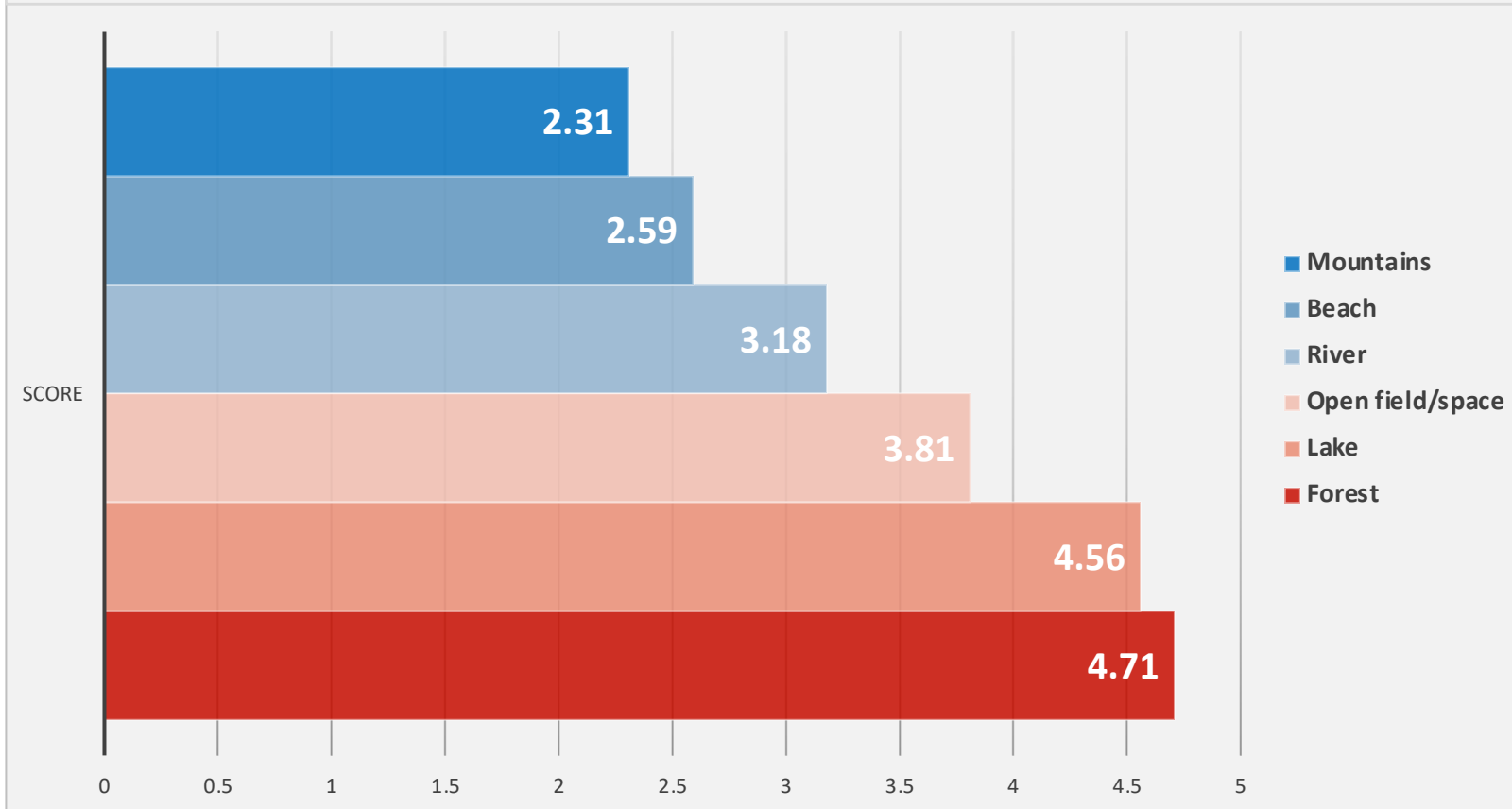


**Colony, Pack and Troop** each responded favourably—about **50%** agreeing for each Section—when asked whether they would be **willing to pay for transportation** to/from camp.



# LOCATION

When looking for a location to take youth camping, please rank the following natural features of the property in order of importance to you:



Across all demographics, regions, Sections, etc., members are looking to **camp near a forested area and a lake.**

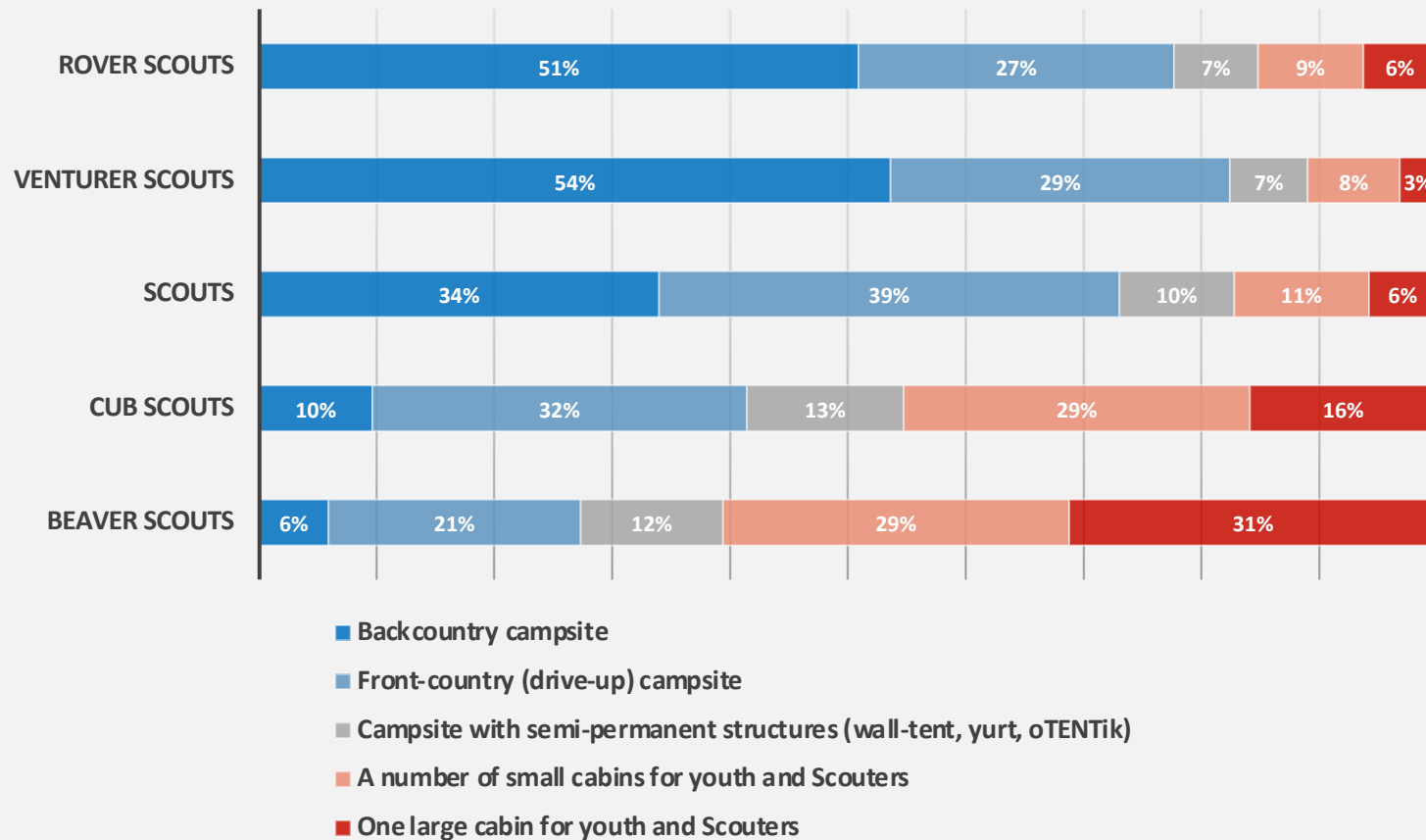
**Open field/Space** was a consistent, number 3 for members.

# Accommodation Summary: Cabins, Campsites, Kitchen, etc.

- Clear trend around the type of accommodations each Section is looking for, with Colony/Pack generally wanting **some sort of structure** and the older Section preferring campsites. Many comments spoke to the **seasonal difference** in accommodation preferences.
- Junior and Senior Sections have **different needs** with regard to campsites, which evolve with the youths' independence in each Section.
- All Sections have generally **similar cabin feature** preferences.
- Across all demographics, Sections indicated a very strong preference for **their own dedicated space**, while still wanting the opportunity to socialize with other Sections.
- **Colony, Pack & Troop** all typically use some sort of **permanent structure for their kitchen** while at camp, with **Colony** typically using a **fully functional kitchen**.
- Very clear that **cell-service is the most important service** across all demographics; **electricity, flush toilets and bunk beds** are consistently rated as next most important across all Sections, however the level of importance decreases as youth progress.

# ACCOMMODATION

When looking for a location to take youth camping, what is your preferred type of accommodation?



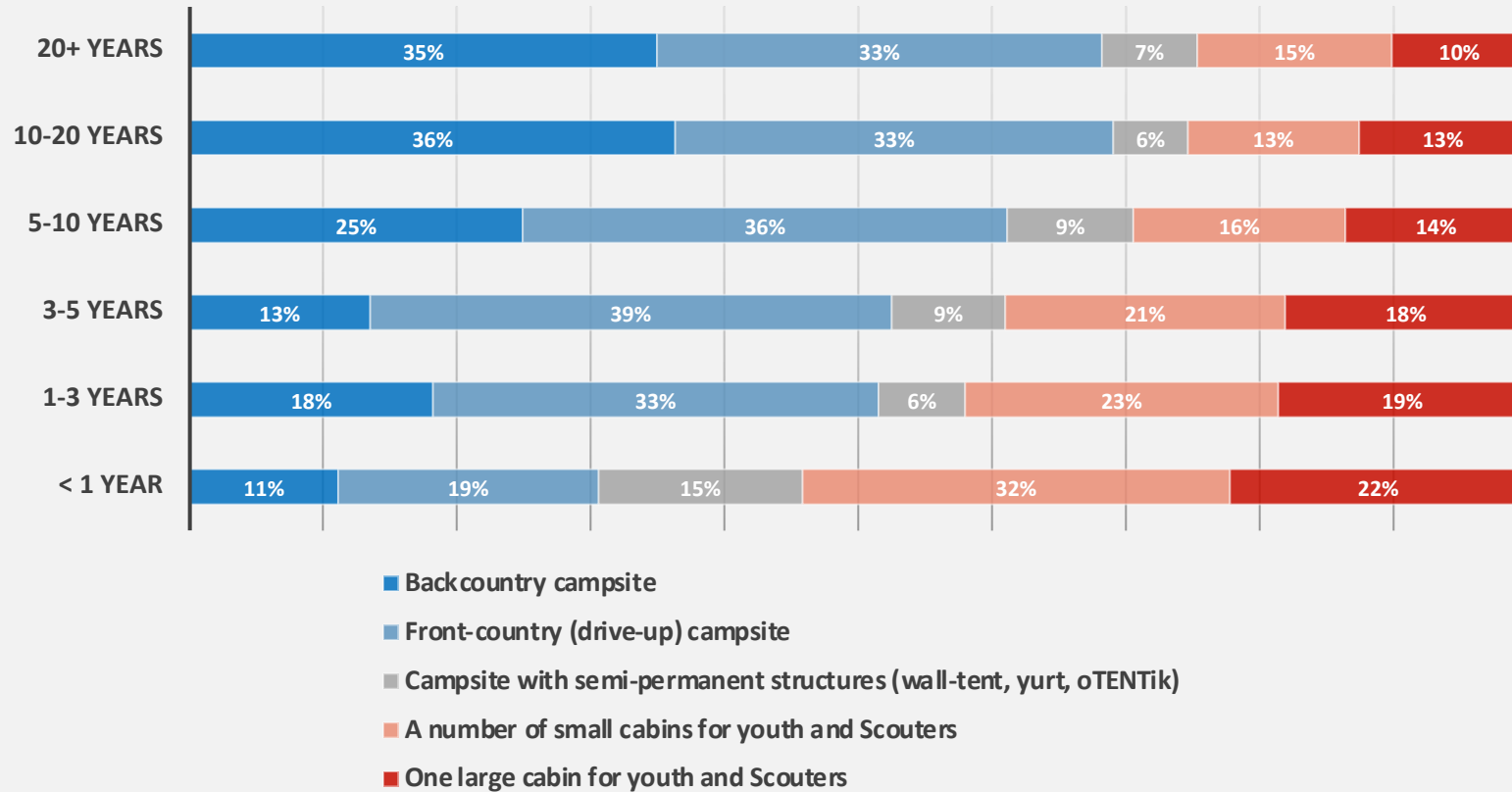
Clear trend around the **type of accommodations** each Section is looking for, with Colony/Pack generally wanting some sort of structure and the older Section preferring campsites.

Many comments spoke to the **seasonal difference** in accommodation preferences; how each Section uses **cabins vs campsites** at different times of the year will need to be explored further.



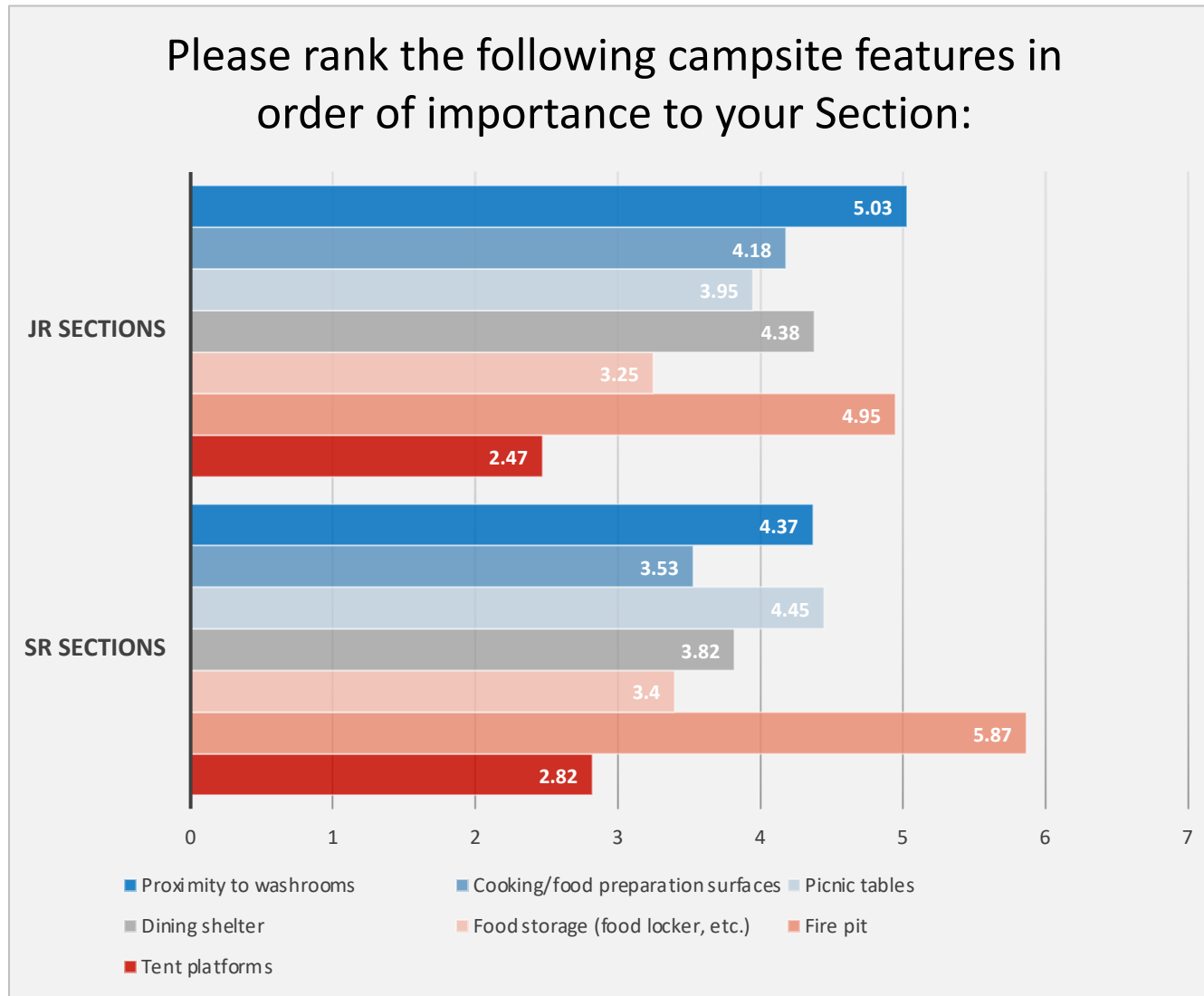
# ACCOMMODATION

When looking for a location to take youth camping, what is your preferred type of accommodation? (by volunteer tenure)



**Scouters in their first few years** with Scouts Canada tend to prefer **more permanent structure**, which is likely correlated to new volunteers joining at the younger sections as well.

# ACCOMMODATION

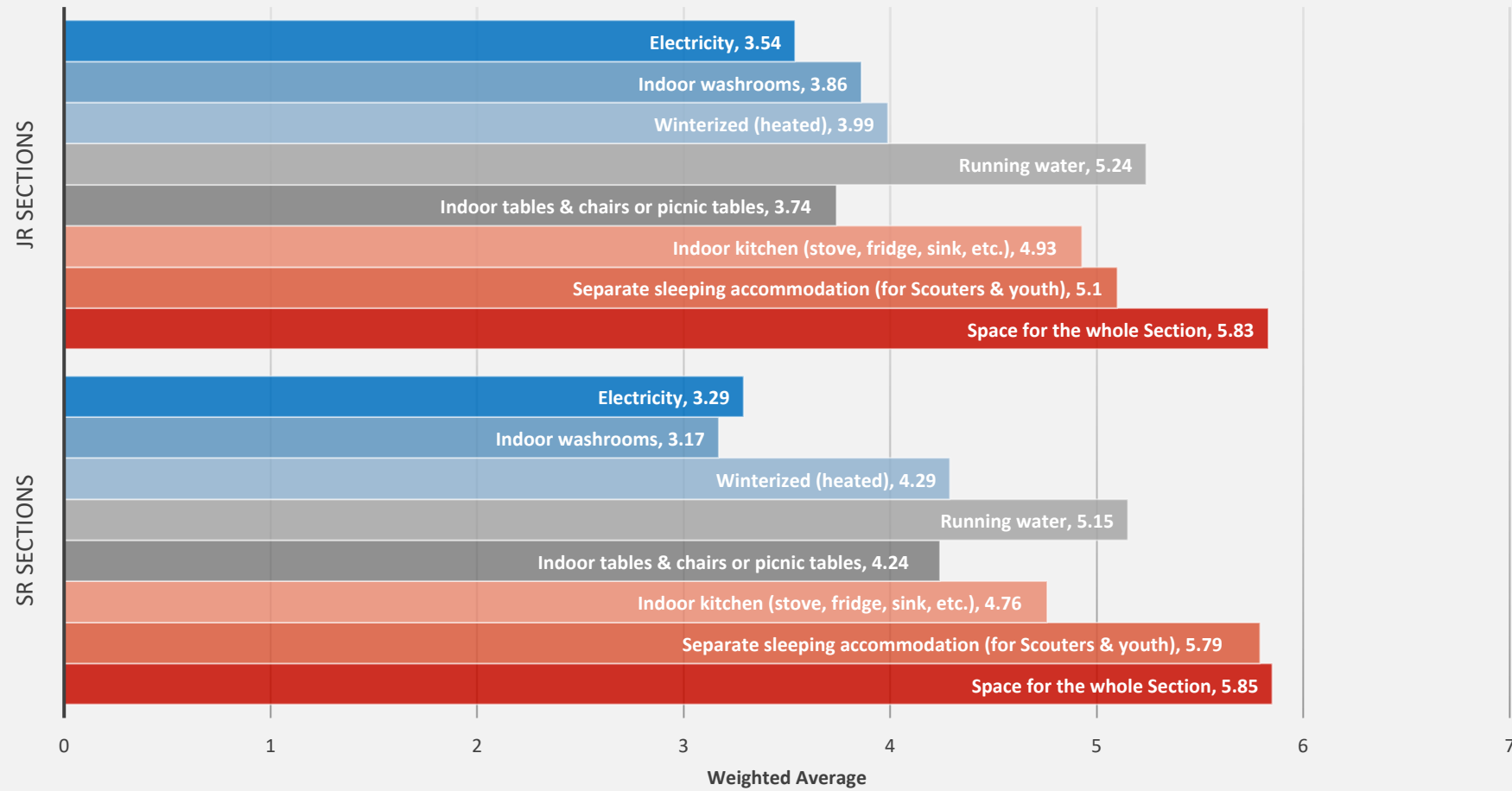


**Junior and Senior Sections** have **different needs** with regard to campsites, which evolve with the youths' independence in each Section.

- Younger Sections prefer a **dining shelter for Section meals**, while older Sections need plenty of **picnic tables for Patrol cooking**.
- Older Sections often need a **firepit for program-related activities**, which is why they prioritize them.

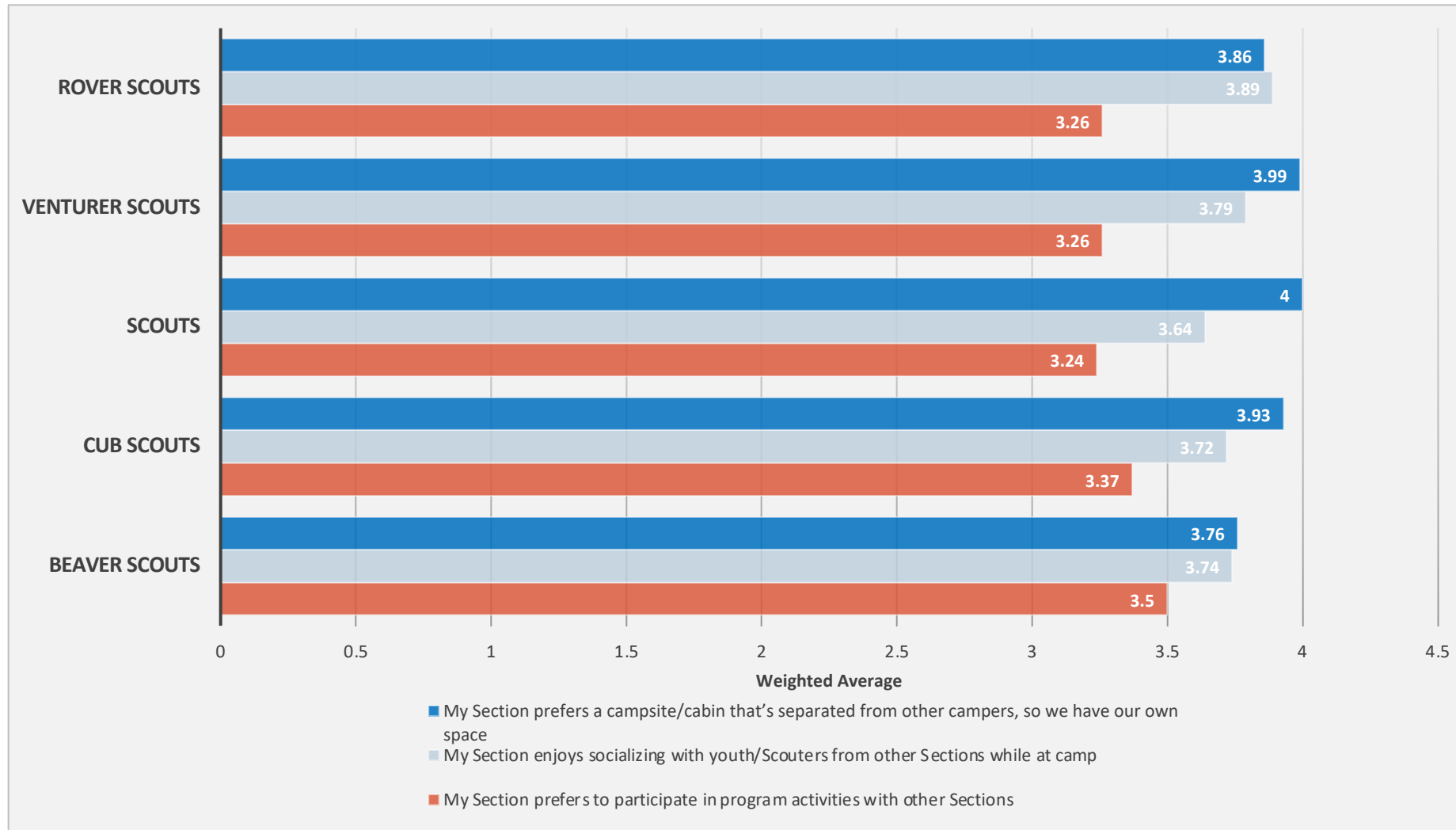
# ACCOMMODATION

Please rank the following cabin features in order of importance to your Section (1 being most important):



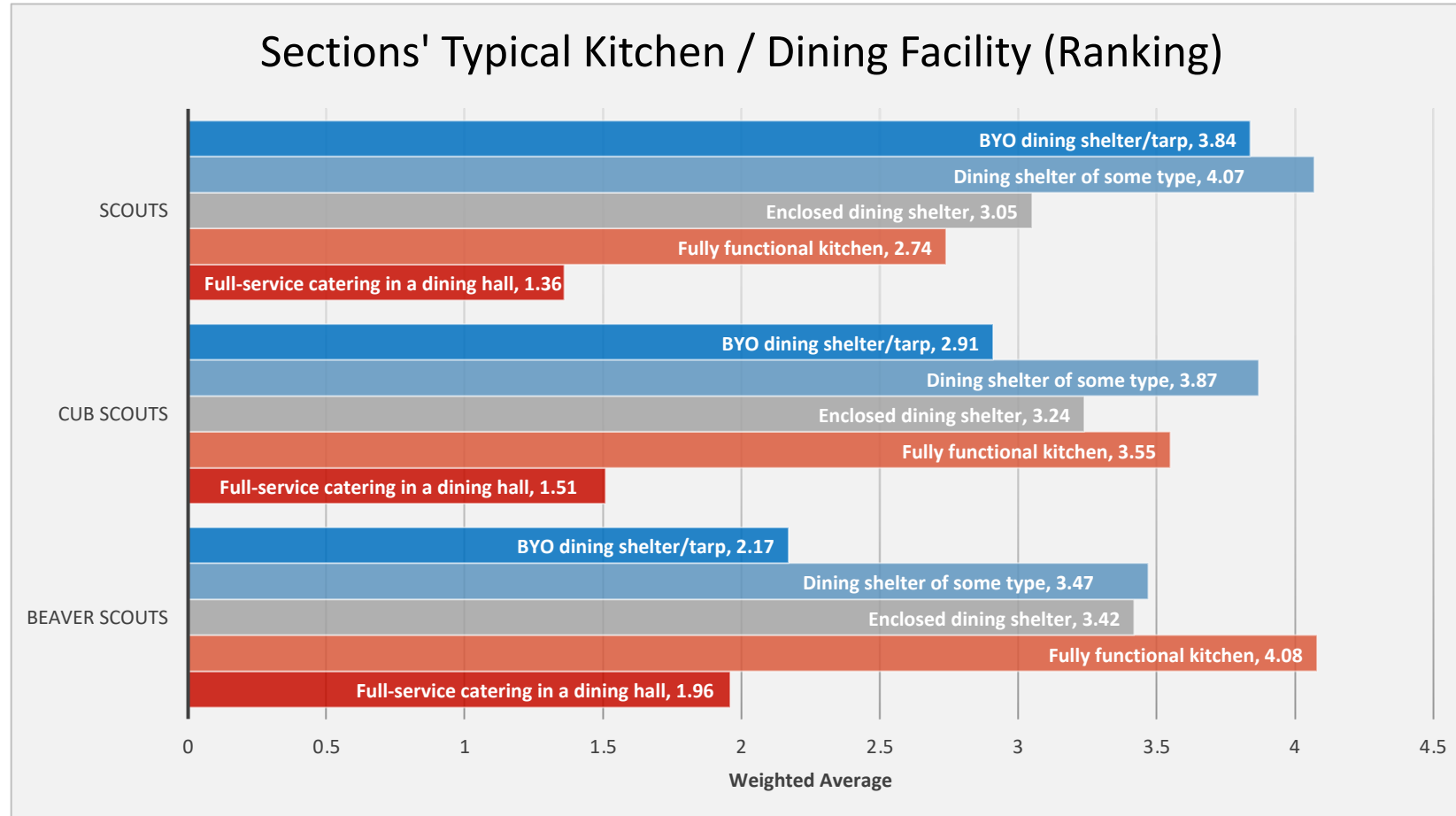
**Generally similar preferences between the Jr. and Sr. Sections.** These two cohorts have opposite usage seasons for cabins—which is why it's logical **Sr. Sections would rate Winterization higher.**

# ACCOMMODATION



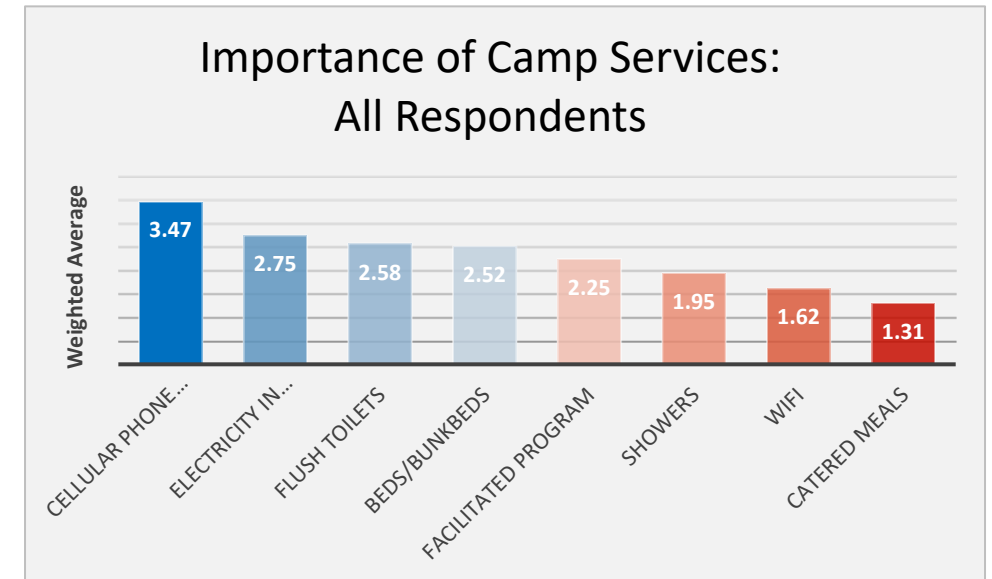
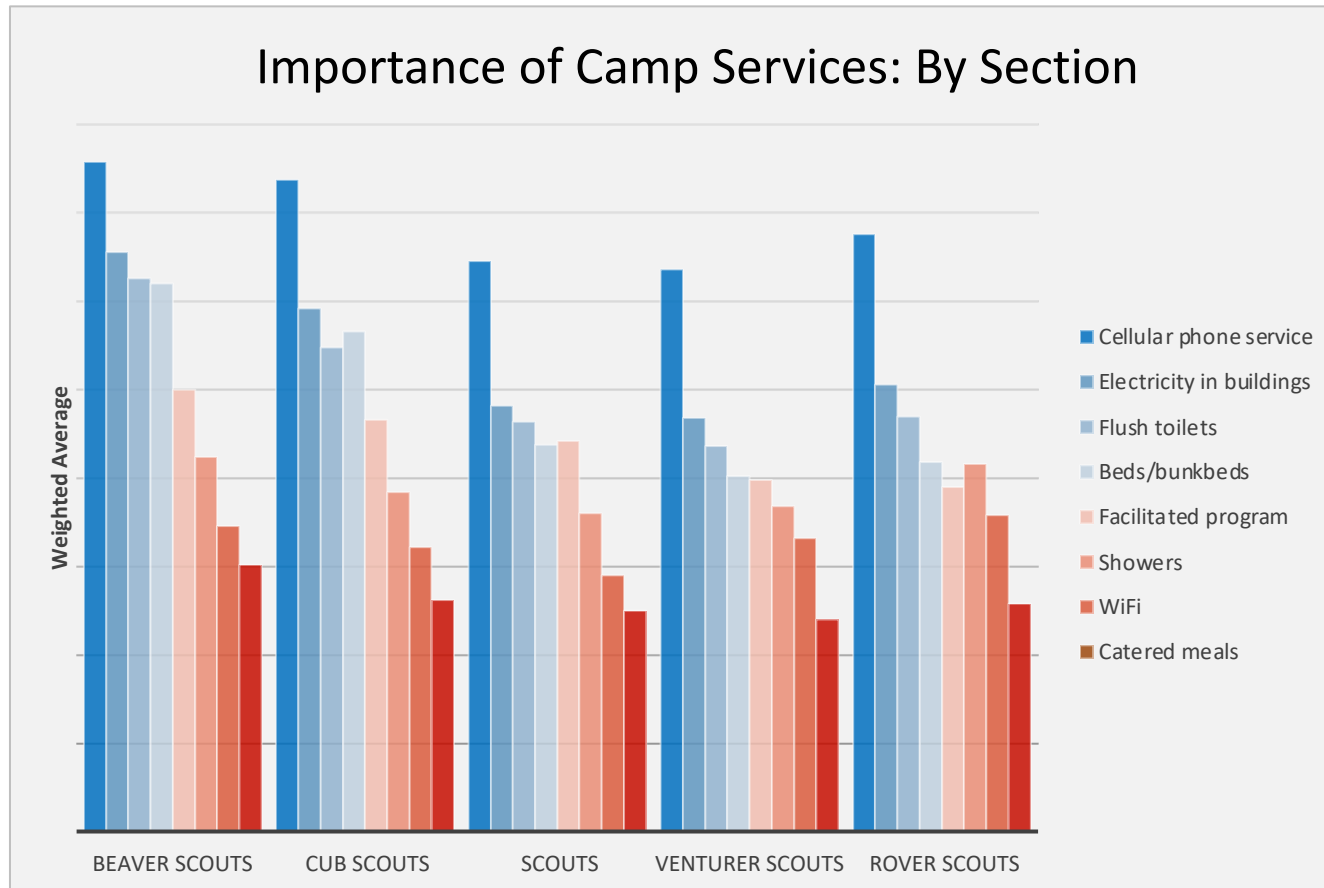
Across all demographics, Sections indicated a very strong preference **for their own dedicated space**, while still wanting the opportunity to socialize with other Sections.

# ACCOMMODATION



Colony, Pack & Troop all typically use some sort of **permanent structure for their kitchen** while at camp, with Colony typically using a fully functional kitchen. Very interesting that across all 3 Sections, Dining Hall ranks last—unsure of whether that's due to availability, cost or lack of interest.

# ACCOMMODATION



Very clear that **cell-service** is the most important service across all demographics (and Wifi is irrelevant). **Electricity, flush toilets and bunk beds** are consistently rated as next most important across all Sections, however the level of importance drops off with each older Section.

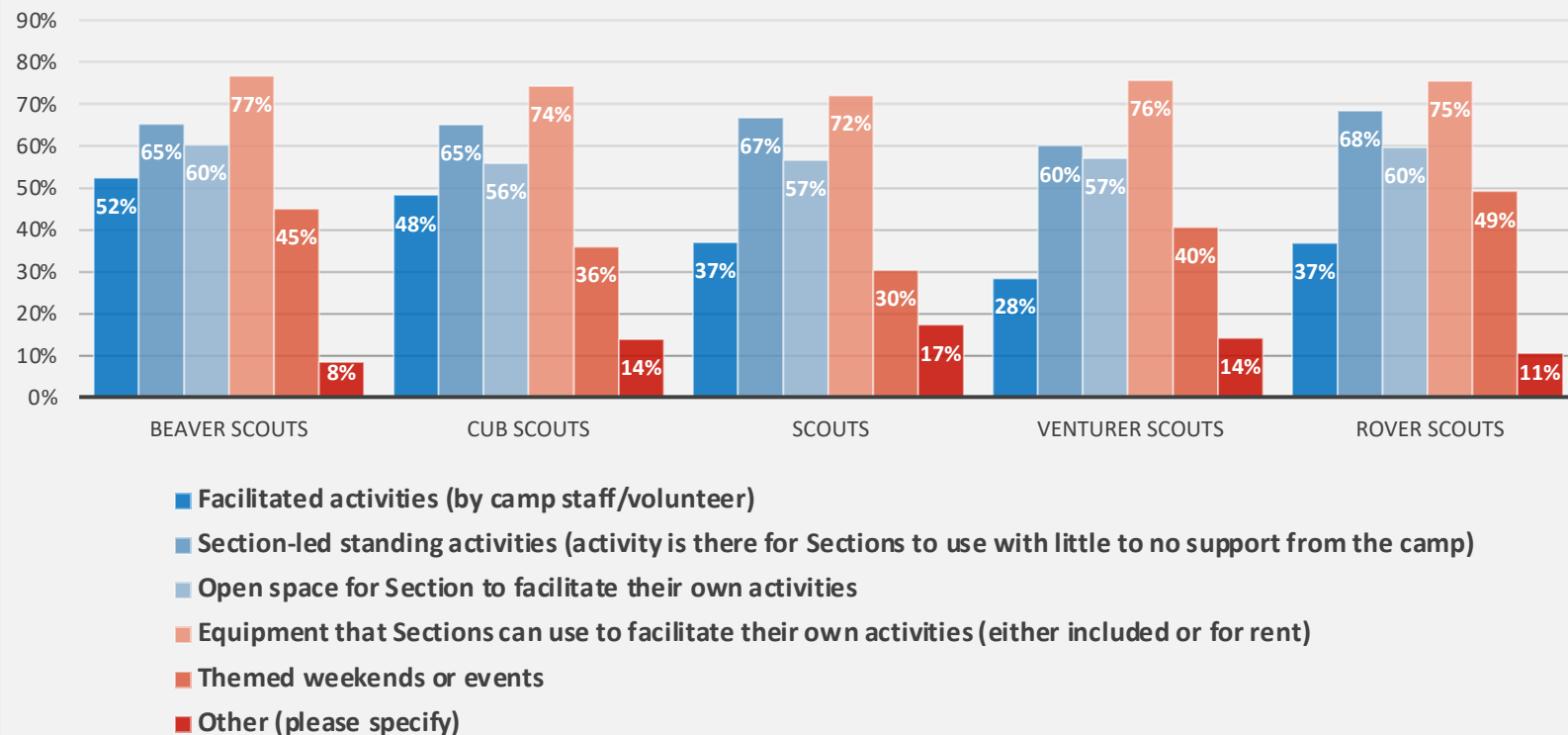


# Program Summary: Equipment, Facilities and Support

- Sections are looking for activities, equipment or facilities that they can book and use for their Section.
- Clear that Scouters want **more digital support** for their Sections, in order to support their adventures at Scouts Canada properties.
- **All Sections enjoy central campfires**, which is an iconic Scouting tradition that continues to have a role in our programs.
- Especially in the older Sections, there is interest **in using Scouts Canada properties as a base camp** for other offsite adventures in the area.
- Mainly older Sections currently participating in summer adventures; they're looking for **unique/backcountry adventures and jamborees**. A common theme across all Sections was the **ability of Scouters to get vacation time** to participate in summer adventures.
- Sections are motivated to choose a Scouts Canada property based on very traditional Scouting activities: canoeing, hiking, archery, etc.; **many of the most popular activities require either a lake or forest**, which is consistent with respondents' nature features preferences.

# PROGRAM

What type of program support and facilities would lead your Section to go camping more frequently? (Check all that apply)

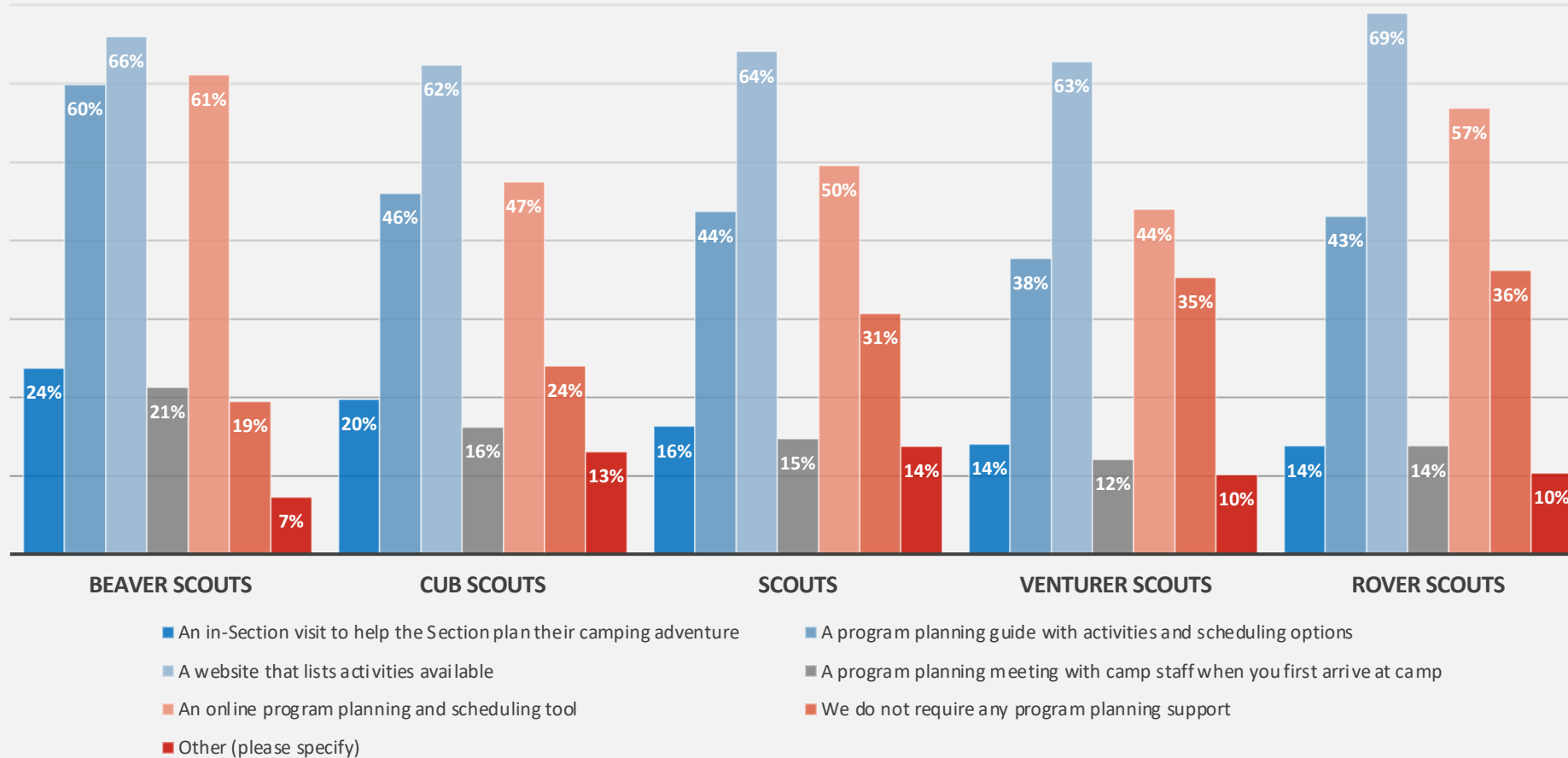


**Other:** Safety-support (lifeguard, climbing instructor, range master, etc.); Transportation; Outdoor Adventure Skill support

Sections are looking for activities, equipment or facilities that they can book and use for their Section. **Younger Sections** have more interest in **facilitated-activities** but in a separate question **older Sections** showed a lot of interest in **off-site third-party activities** organized by the camp.

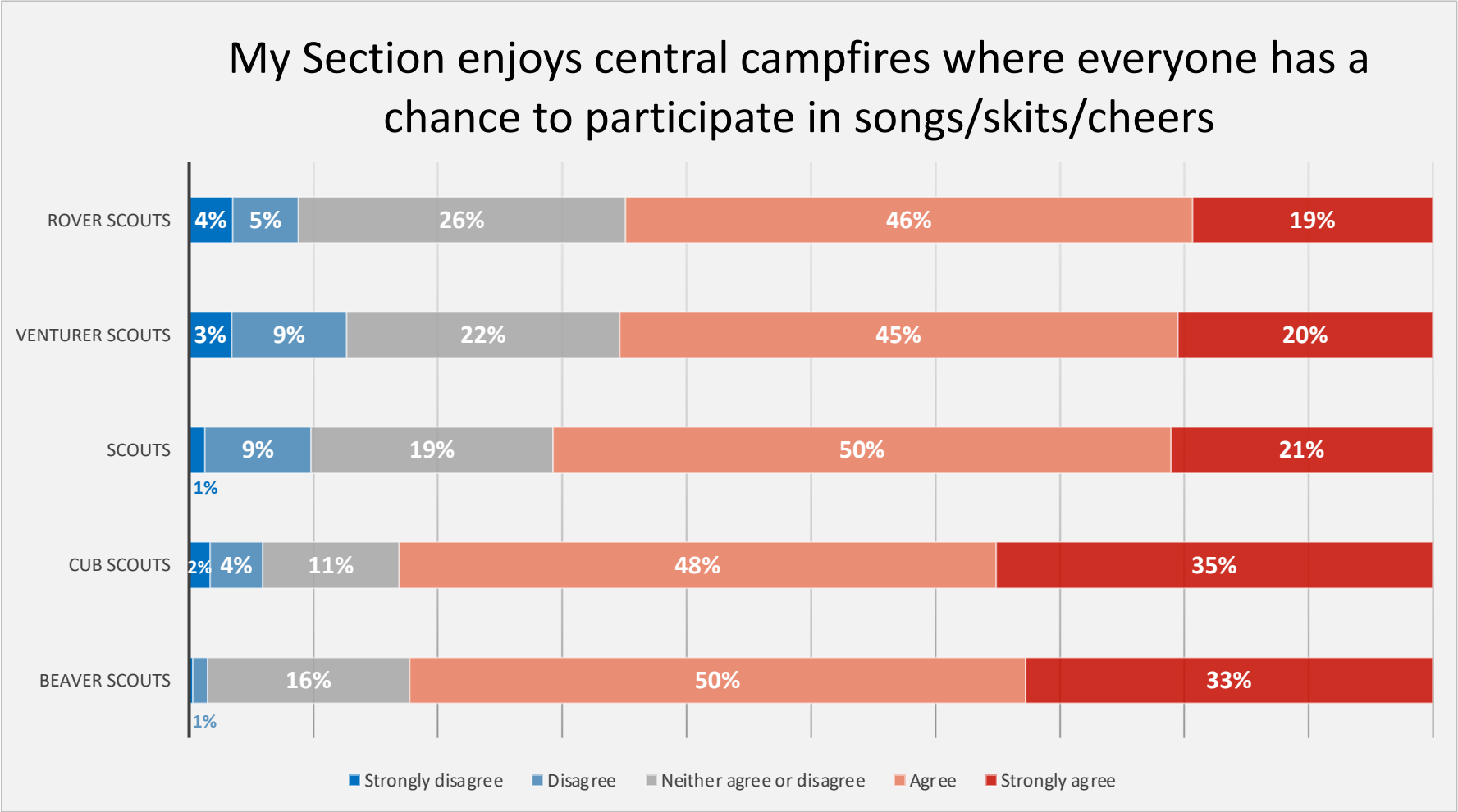
# PROGRAM

What type of program planning support would lead your Section to use a Scouts Canada property more frequently?



Clear that Scouters want **more digital support** for their Sections, in order to support their adventures at Scouts Canada properties.

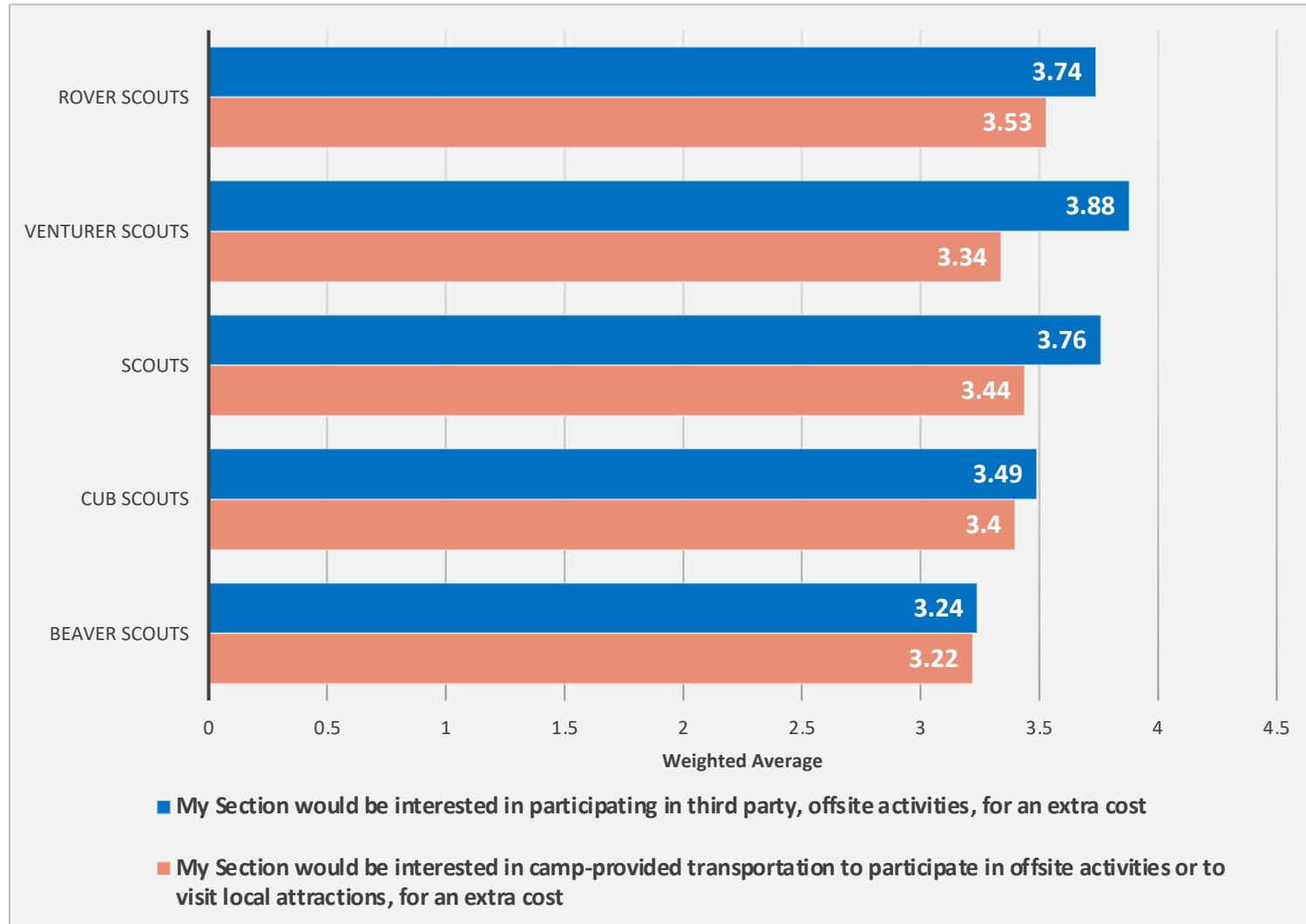
# PROGRAM



All Sections enjoy **central campfires**, which is a an iconic Scouting tradition that continues to have a role in our programs—they do however require **unique spaces** to accommodate the activity safely.

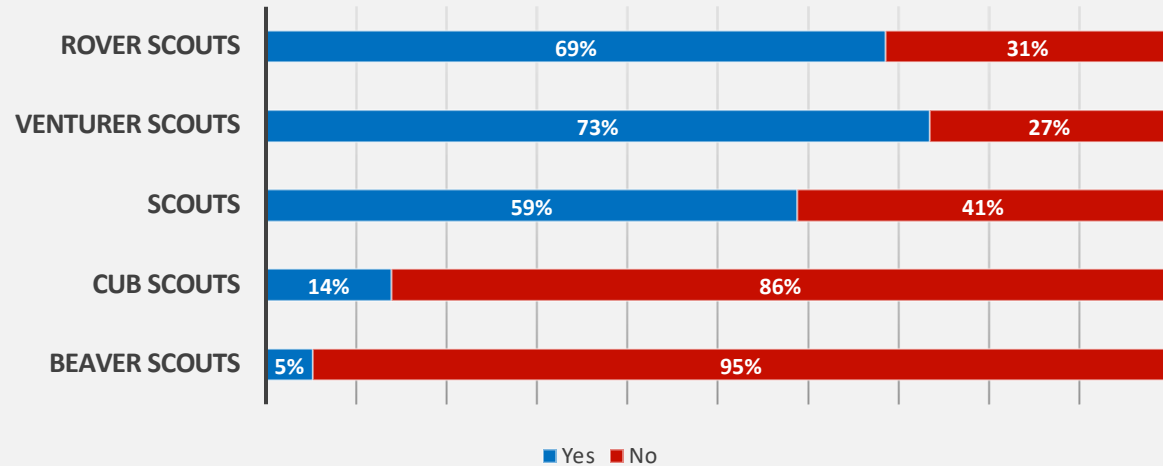


# PROGRAM

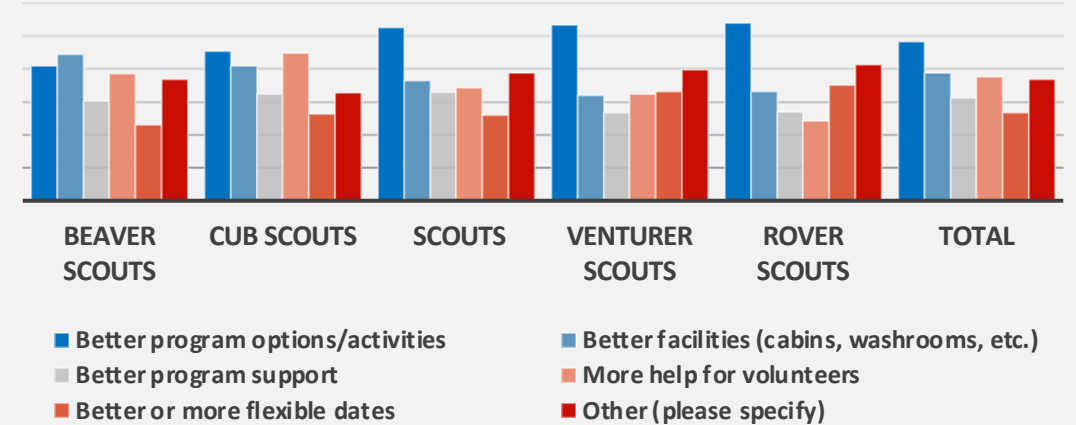


Especially in the older Sections, there is interest in using **Scouts Canada properties as a base camp** for other adventures in the area.

In the past three years, has your Section participated in a camping experience lasting more than 5 days?



What would encourage your Section to participate in camping experiences lasting more than 5 days (i.e. summer camp)?



**Other:** Scouter vacation time / work, Cost/price/value, Jamborees, Family vacations, Unique experience/adventure, Backcountry (canoe/hiking/etc.) trip

## Summer Camp:

Mainly **older Sections** currently participating in summer adventures; they're looking for **unique/backcountry adventures and jamborees**.

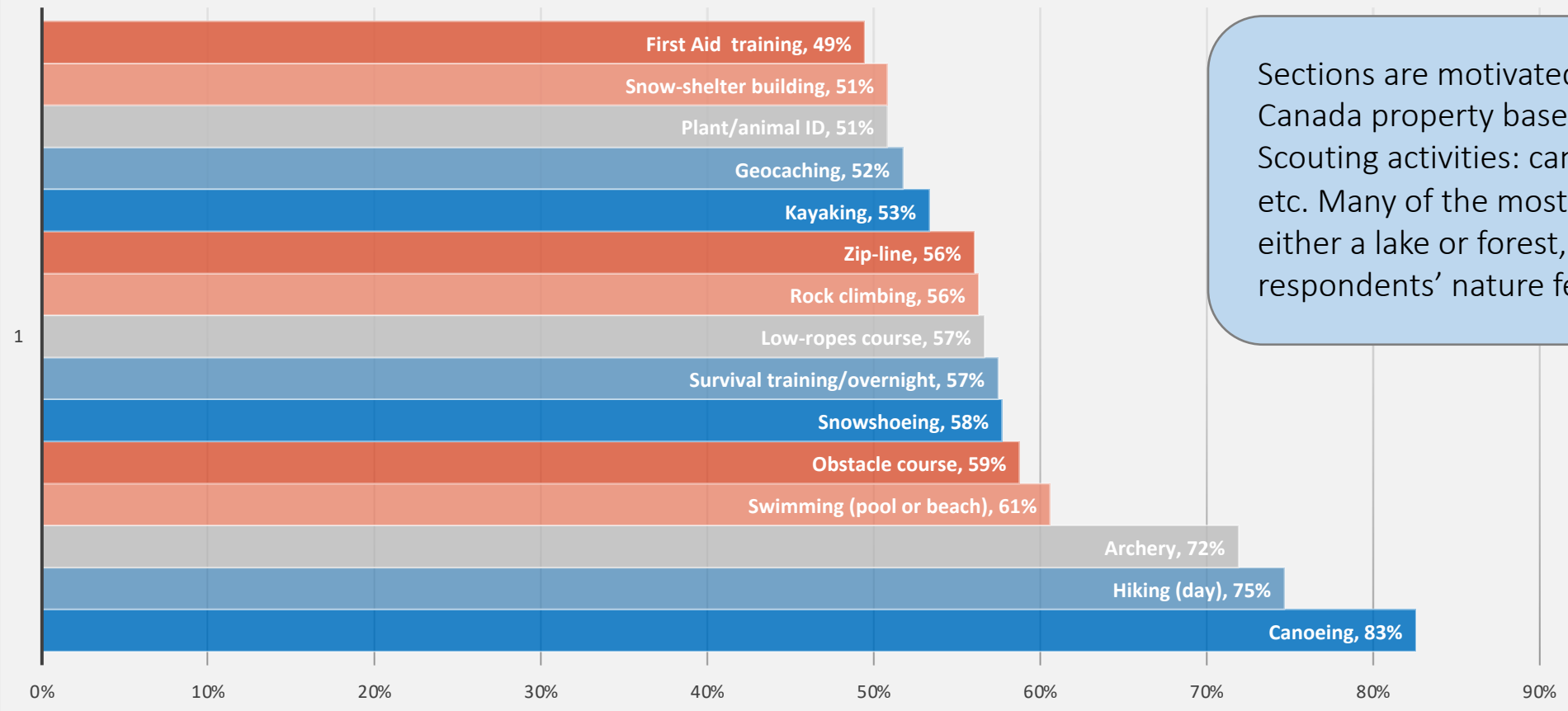
**Jr Sections** do not have a high participation rate currently; participation could be encouraged with more **traditional summer camp offerings** (cabins/dining hall/facilitated programs).

A common theme across all Sections was the **ability of Scouters to get vacation time** to participate in the adventures—a blended Section Scouter & Camp Staff approach could be explored in the Junior Sections.



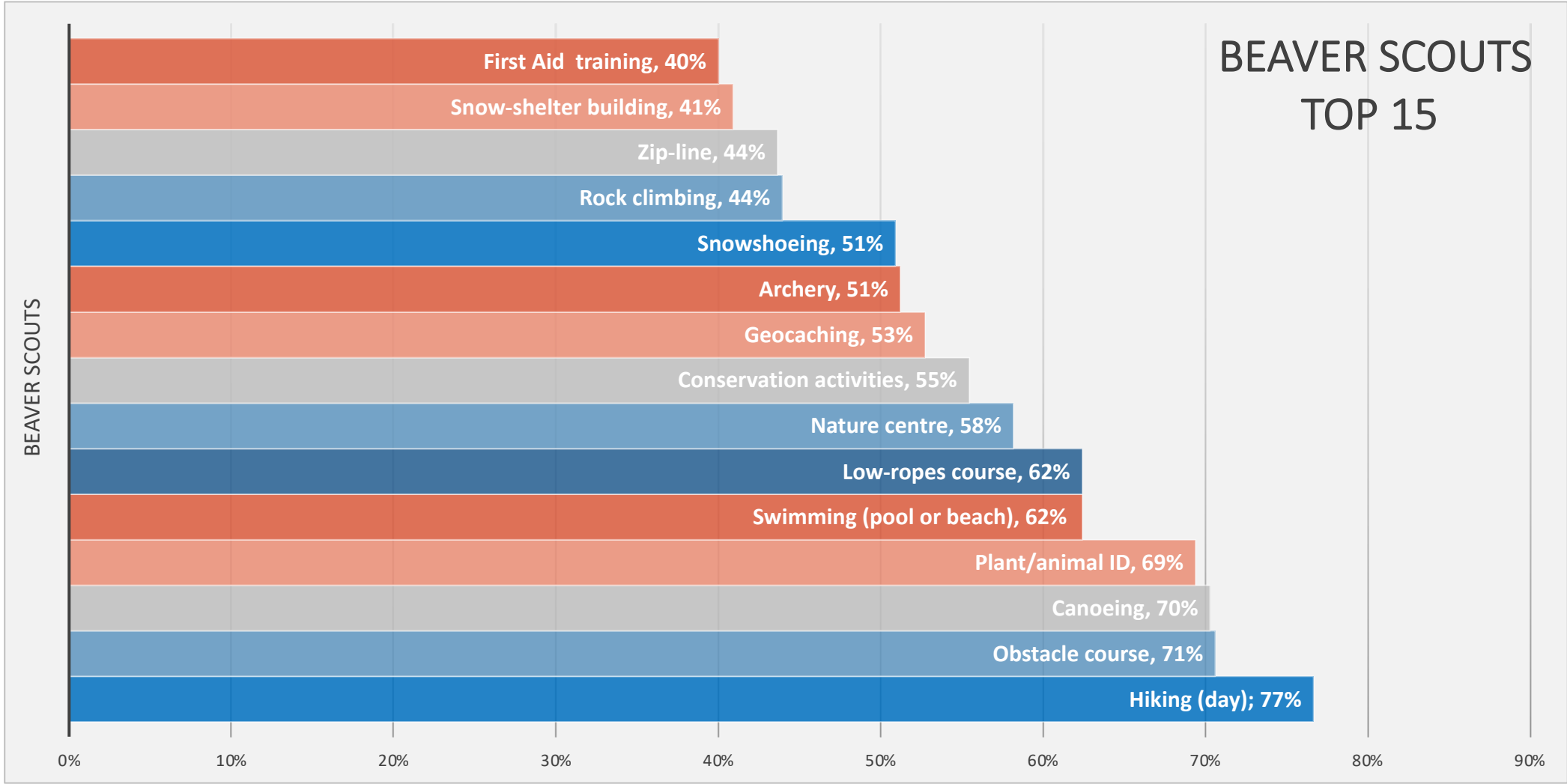
# PROGRAM

Which of the following activities would lead you to choose a Scouts Canada property over another camp property? (check all that apply):  
**(Top 15—all demographics)**

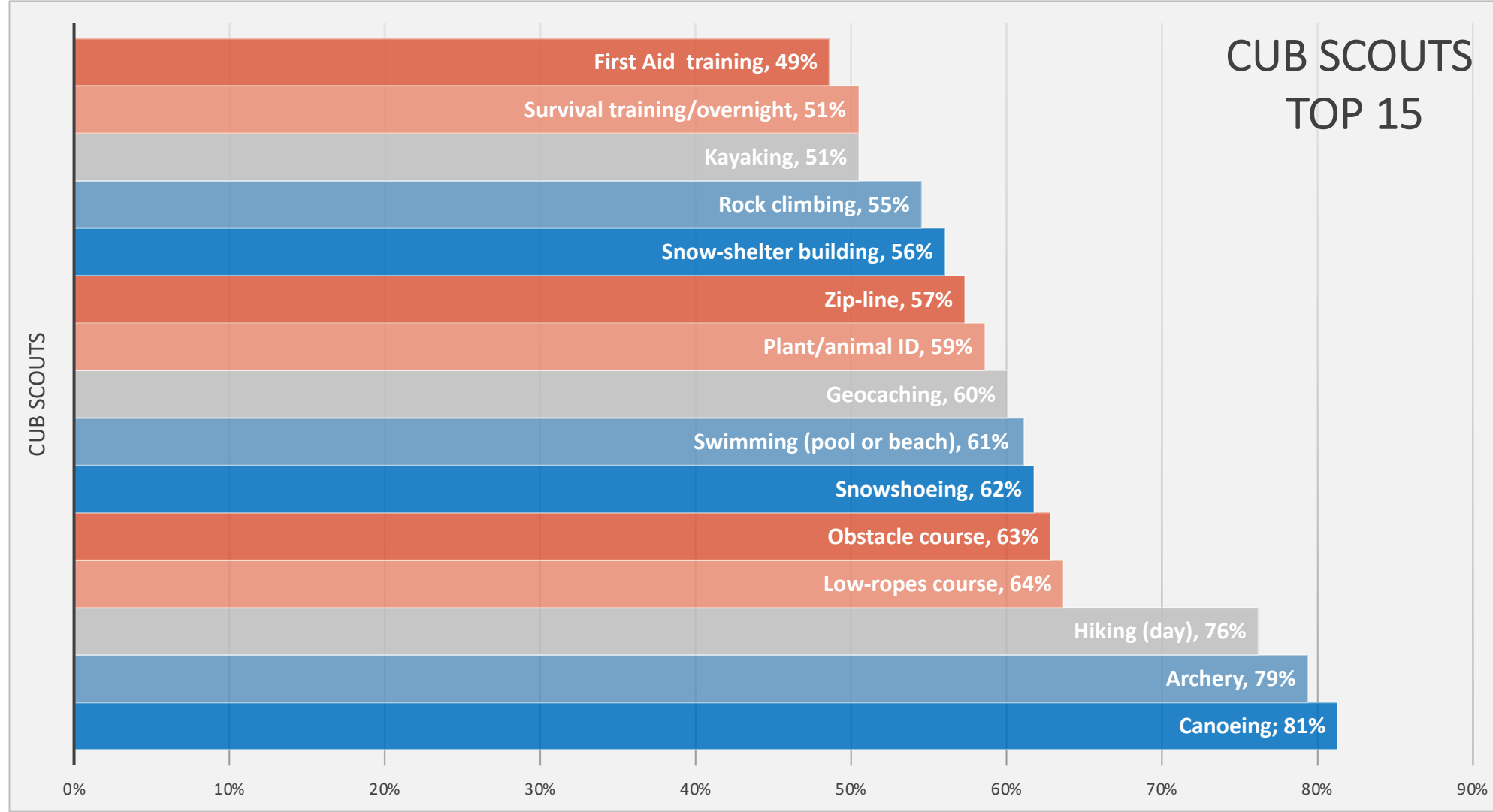


Sections are motivated to choose a Scouts Canada property based on very traditional Scouting activities: canoeing, hiking, archery, etc. Many of the most popular activities require either a lake or forest, which is consistent with respondents' nature features preferences.

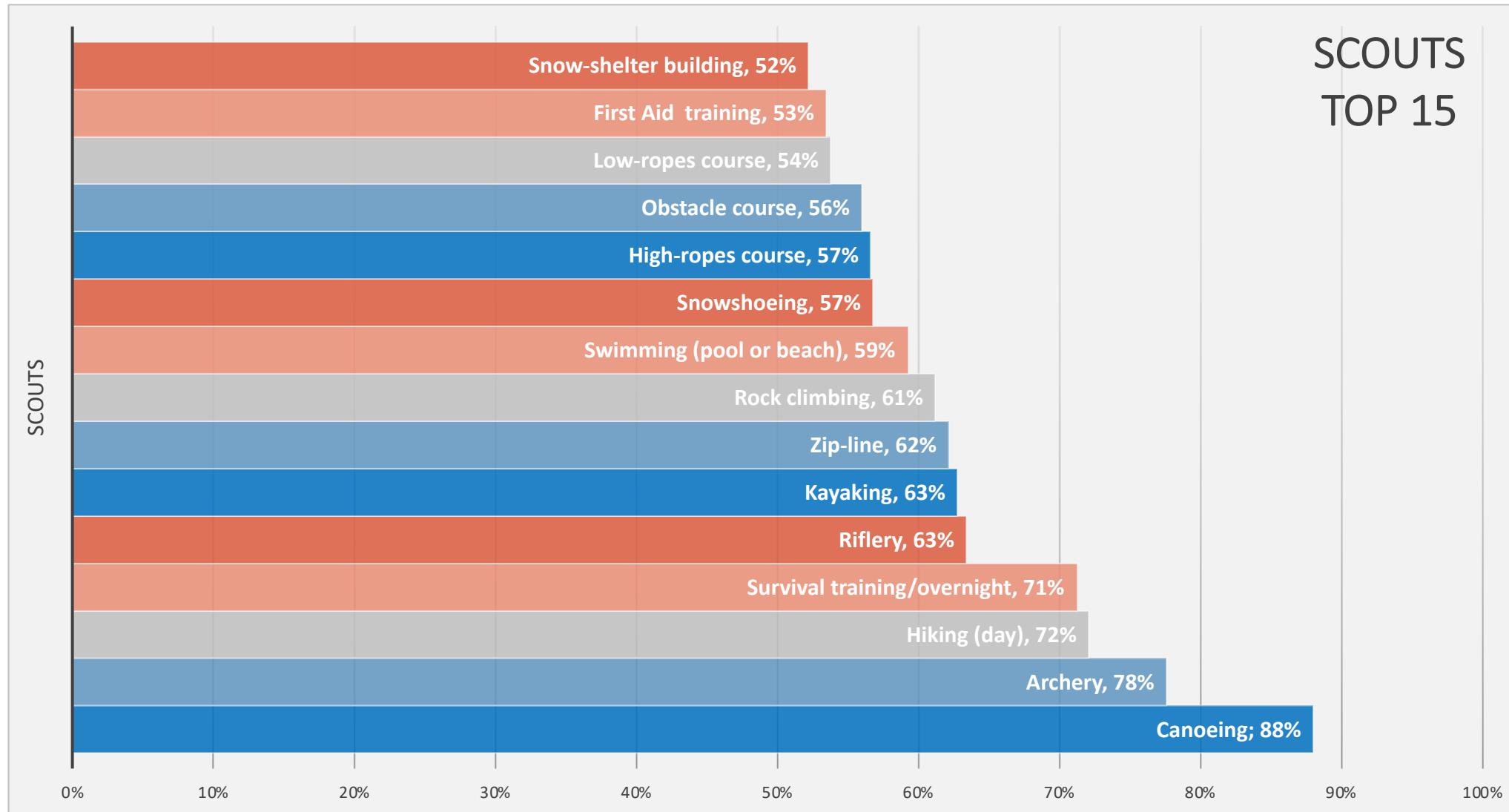
# PROGRAM



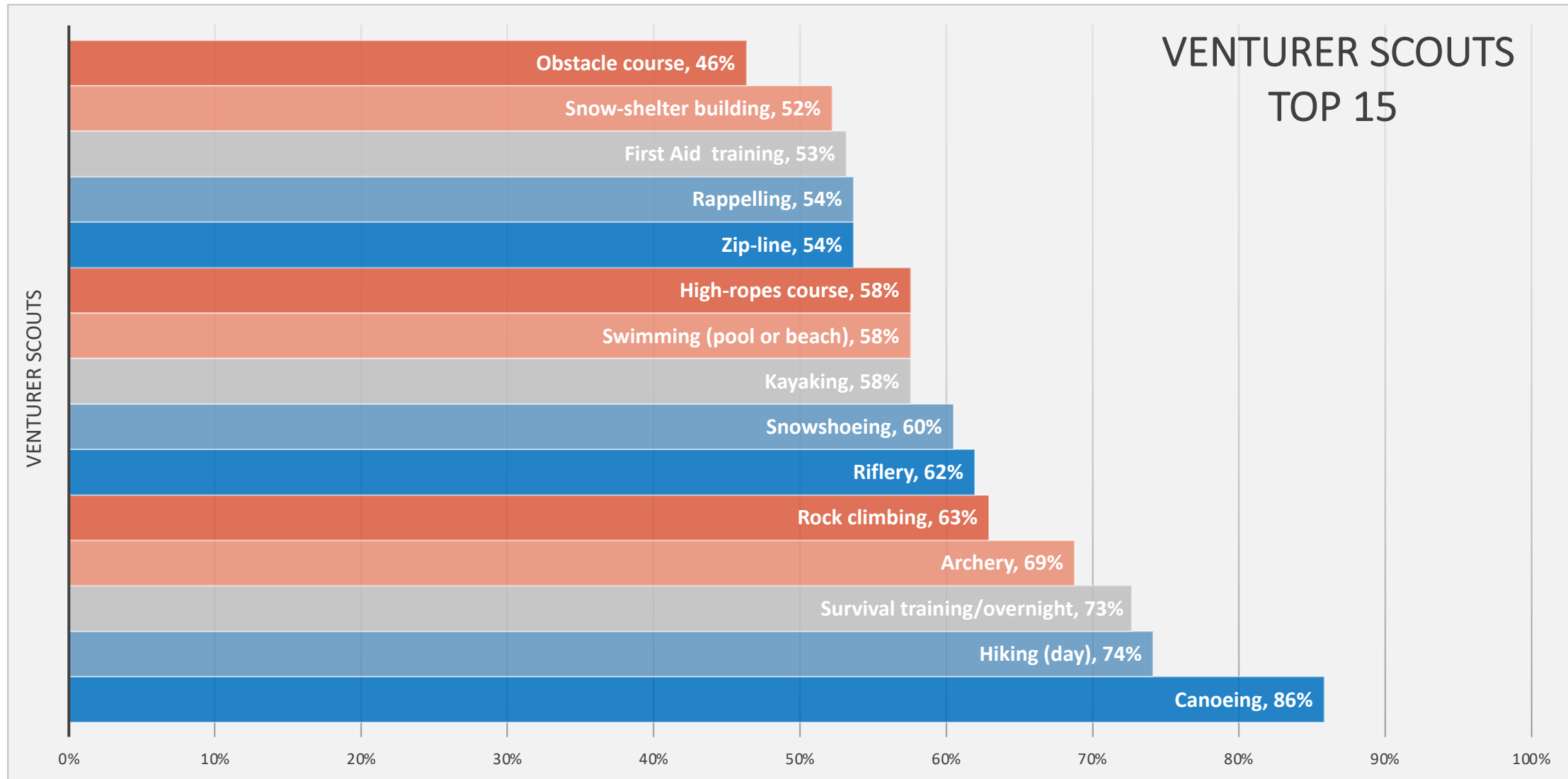
# PROGRAM



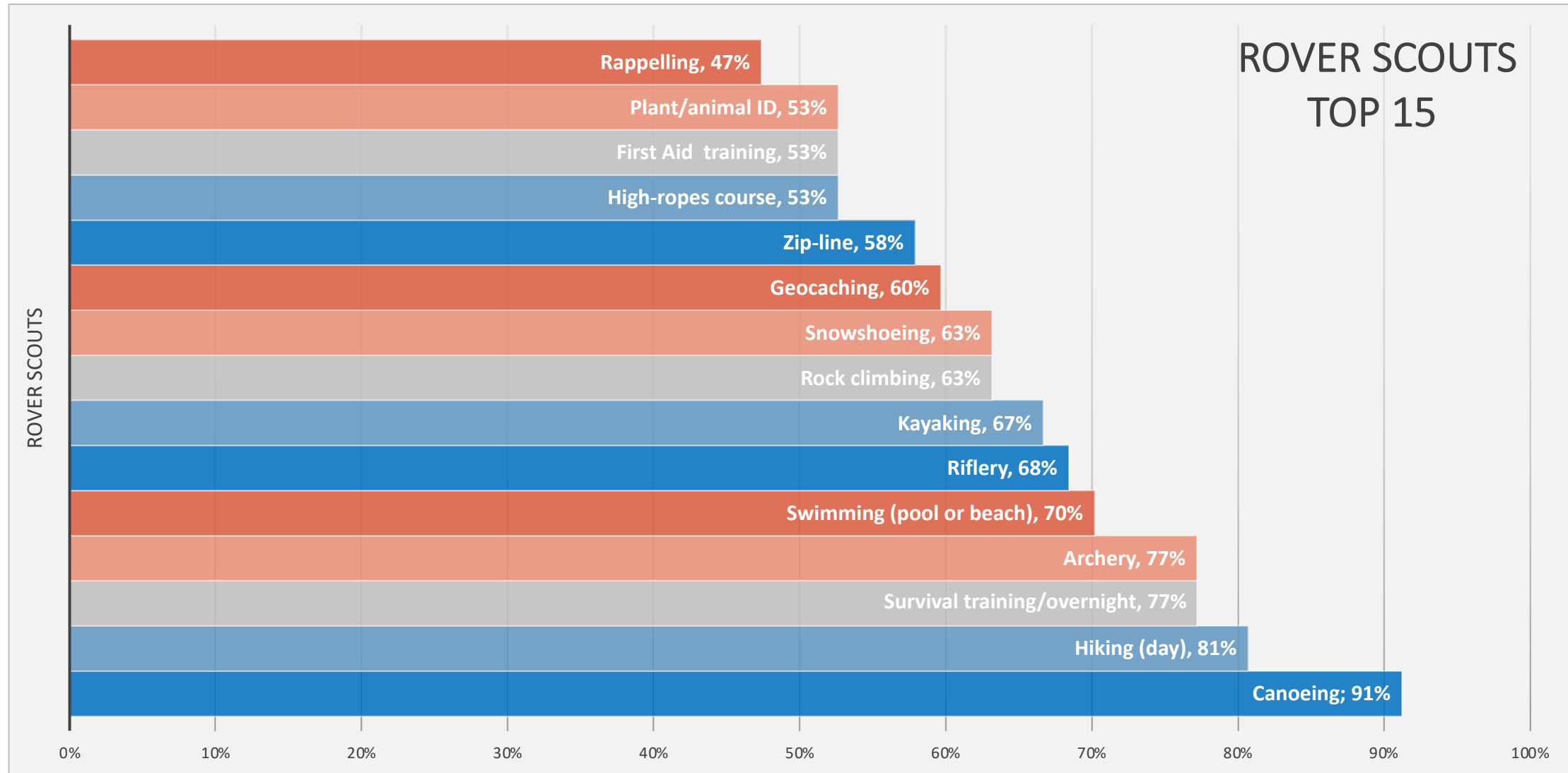
# PROGRAM



# PROGRAM



# PROGRAM





# Cost Summary: Typical Cost, Cost-structure, etc.

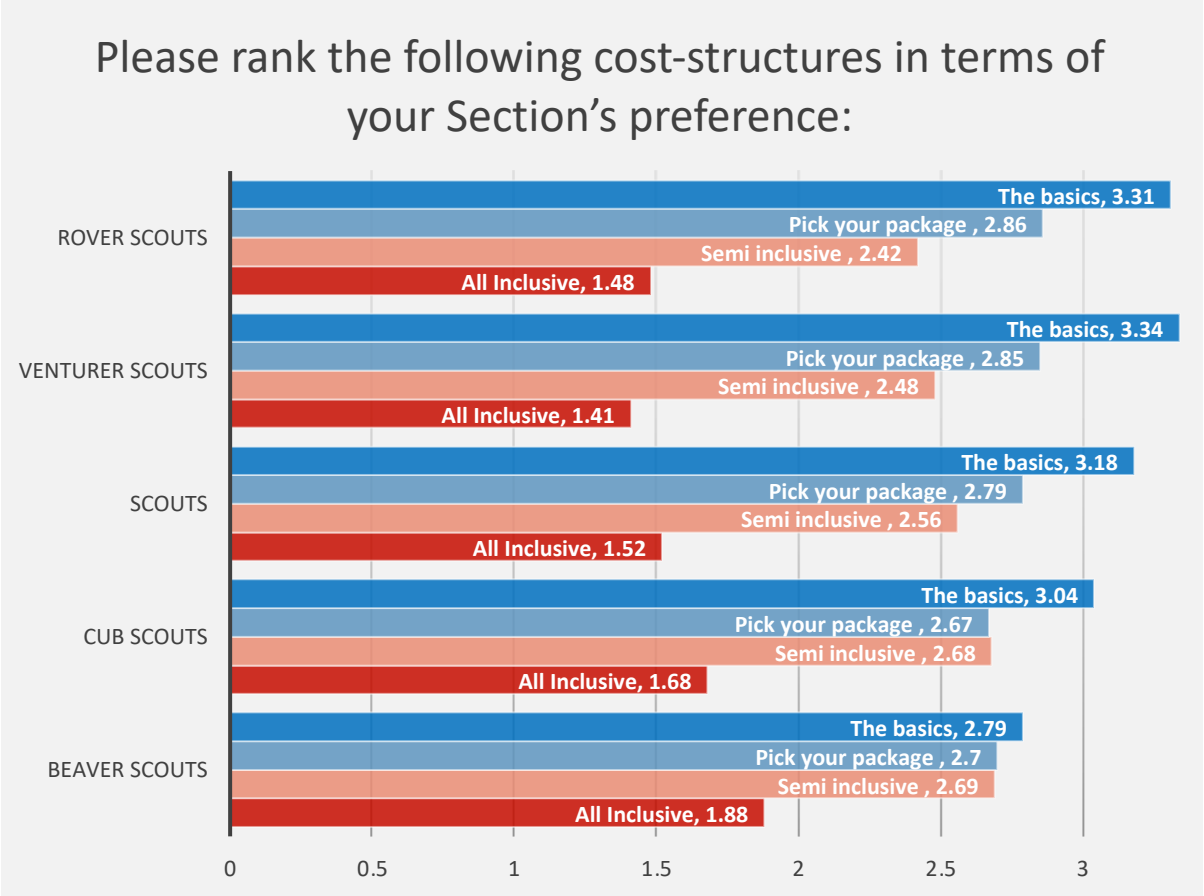
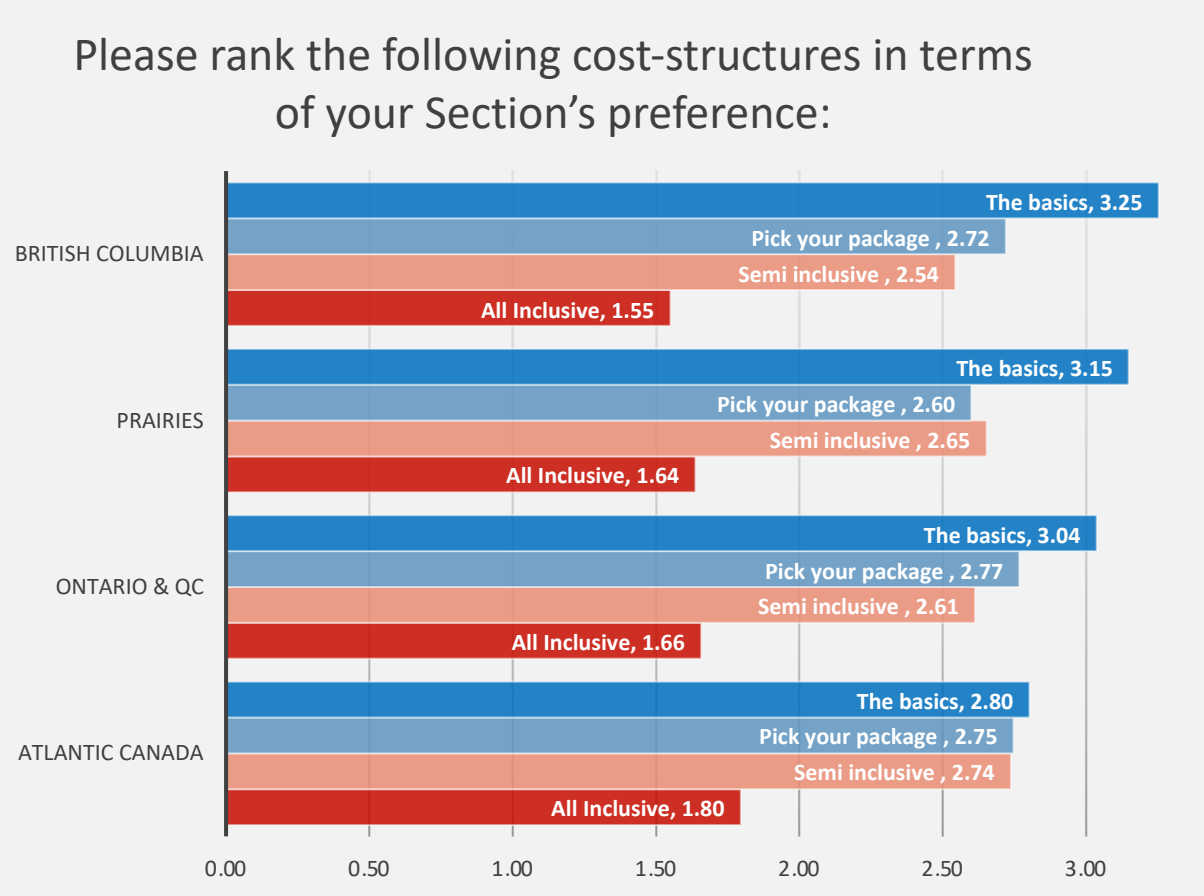
Across all demographics, Sections' preference was for **'The Basics'; Semi-inclusive/Pick-Your-Own** were a close 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>.

Regionally, Atlantic Canada spends less than the other regions for each of their weekend camps. Looking at the results within each region, there is **a lot of variance between Councils**.

Although the amount Sections spend on a weekend camp does gradually increase as the youth get older, consistent across all Sections **~75% of camps are <\$50 per person**.

Across all Sections there is **a willingness to pay extra for many traditional Scouting activities**. This provides insight into which activities would be most sought after in a Pick-Your-Own package.

# COST

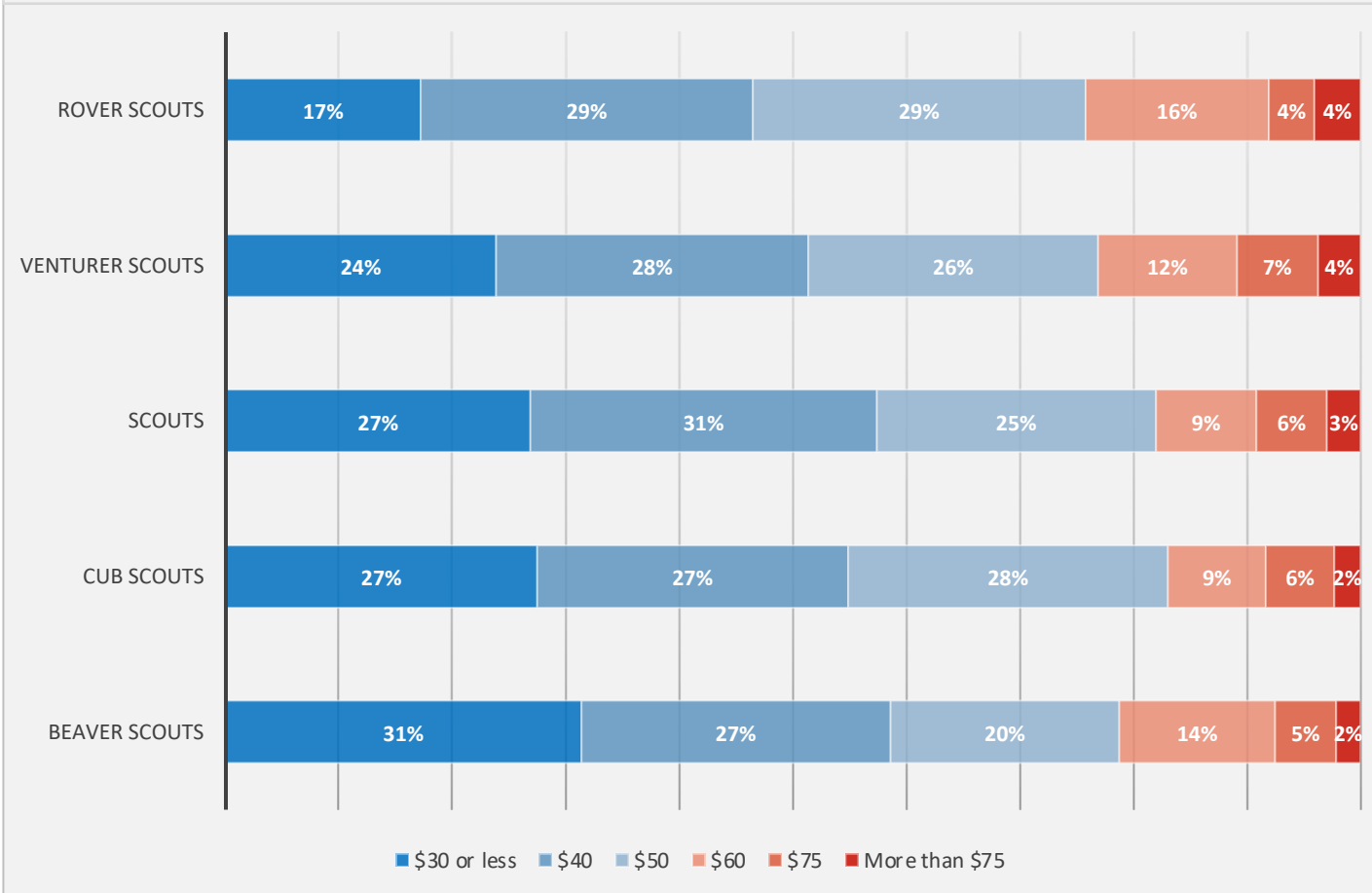


Across all demographics, Sections' preference was for **'The Basics'**. **Semi-inclusive** and **Pick-your-own** were not far behind; more insight is needed into how the packages could be structured, and what should be included in basics vs other packages.



# COST

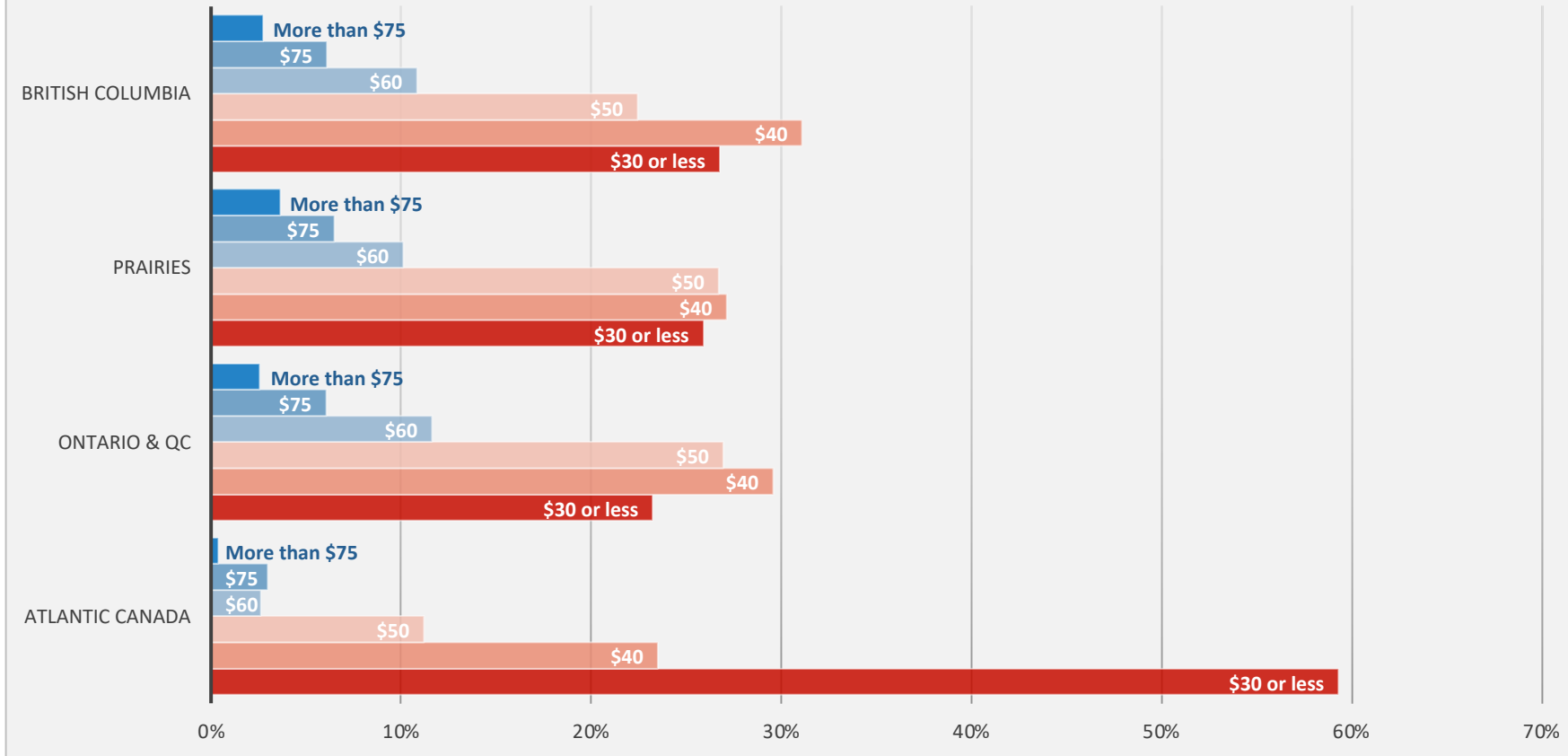
When your Section plans a weekend camping adventure, what is the typical cost per person that you would spend (including all costs: food, travel, accommodations, activities, etc.)?



Although the amount Sections spend on a weekend camp does gradually increase as the youth get older, it's consistently about **75% of camps are <\$50.**

# COST

When your Section plans a weekend camping adventure, what is the typical cost per person that you would spend (including all costs: food, travel, accommodations, activities, etc.)?



Regionally, Atlantic Canada spends less than the other regions for each of their weekend camps.

Looking at the results within each region, there is **a lot of variance between Councils**.

**Across all Sections** there is a **willingness to pay extra for many traditional Scouting activities**. This provides insight into which activities would be most sought after if we were to look at a semi-inclusive cost-structure.

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**Q: In a pay-for-use camping model, which are the **top three activities** that youth in your Section would be interested in for an additional fee?**

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**Colony #1 choice**

- Canoeing
- Archery
- Rock Climbing
- Swimming
- Horseback Riding
- Kayaking
- Nature
- Boating/Sailing
- Obstacle / Low-ropes Course

**Pack #1 choice**

- Canoeing
- Rock Climbing
- Archery
- Kayaking
- Zip Line
- Horseback Riding
- Boating/Sailing
- High-ropes Course
- Water Activities

**Troop #1 choice**

- Canoeing
- Archery
- Rifle-range
- Kayaking
- Rock Climbing
- Zip Line
- White-water Rafting
- Horseback Riding
- Sailing
- Water Activities
- Scuba

**Company & Crew  
#1 choice**

- Canoeing
- Archery
- Rifle-range
- Kayaking
- Rock Climbing
- White-water Rafting
- Zip line
- High Ropes
- Horseback Riding

# Final Thoughts Summary *(open-ended final question)*

- Lots of concern about camps becoming too 'resort-like' and losing the essence of Scouting.
- Many respondents feel that 'SC has already made up their mind' and that this process is disingenuous.
- A lot of comments about camps being in poor locations—either too far away or not having the natural features their Section is looking for.
- There is a strong recognition of the fact that our camps need to be updated/modernized/cleaned/etc.
- Many respondents were concerned about cost—currently feel that SC camps are over-priced for the services or value that's received. Feeling is that fees should remain similar but the value for those fees needs to be dramatically increased.
- There is a strong desire for more online resources to support visiting a SC camp: online booking, online program information, online program booking, etc.
- There were an oddly high number of comments about Camp Staff (both employee and volunteer) and their lack of customer service.
- Many Scouters called out the fact that camps seemed to be 'disconnected' from the core program, in that they do not support Outdoor Adventure Skills or other aspects of the Canadian Path.
- Many self-identified Sr. Section Scouters, say that they do not use SC camps because their youth are looking for varied, backcountry adventures. Many say that some SC resources should be deployed to help members facilitate these types of trips.

# Select Constructive Comments—Parents

“A lot of kids don’t end up going because they have no way to get to camps. This is the main reason they don’t go. Going to camps often involves parents driving several hours into backcountry in the dark. Not all parents feel safe doing this. Would be willing to pay for safe, well-organized transportation.”

“As a parent, reading through this I didn't even realize that many of the activities listed were possibilities for my child. We'd love to see our section go camping as much as possible. Thank you for your service and support to youth in Canada!”

“You may consider that the answers to some of the questions are going to be inadvertently biased by our current offering—and thus choices as Scouters we have to make—rather than what we'd like if we had the facilities to choose from.”

“Distance is key. Ideally within 1.5-hour drive. We would prefer a Scouts camp with facilitated activities to make it easier to plan. Shelter is key. Cabins for Beavers and some new campers too. Make it easy. Planning is overwhelming, so make it easy please.”

“I like the idea of investing in more equipment and higher end infrastructure at camps. Hopefully, the cost will get kids excited to join and increase enrolment.”

“I love this initiative. Scouts has done a great job adapting and being relevant. The volunteer leaders I've met are fantastic. I love the idea of a longer camp, and the opportunity to expose kids to new, less common skills that most volunteers can't teach/don't have the equipment for.”

# Select Constructive Comments—Scouters

“If you can provide good cost-benefit ratio, it will make it more appealing to use Scouts Canada camps. Also there are so many rules about first aid and lifeguards etc. You would do well to provide qualified people along with the equipment and programs. Make it easier for us to provide the opportunities to do the Outdoor Adventure Skills etc so we don't need to buy, store, and transport equipment.”

“Though I've already indicated this, I really think outfitting, guiding (backcountry staff support) and providing shuttle service could make a world of difference to the quality of adventures Scouts Canada's camps could facilitate for senior Sections. Camps near large provincial parks, national parks and vast Crown land could offer a wide variety of backcountry experiences, and people wouldn't get tired of visiting the camp if it's just the starting point to exploring new places.”

“We need a mix of wilderness camps and full-service camps. Many Scouters today lack the experience and knowledge to offer wilderness camps or canoe trips. Only a few Scout camps are promoted or made available for use.”

“Also, need to more readily have knowledge of other scout properties across the country that can be booked and used. Until recently, I had no idea what was available in other provinces. SC needs to do better at marketing and promoting camp properties. If people don't know they exist, how can they be used??”

“As for improving the existing camps, I don't know what to say when so many of them are landlocked, flat former farms and the like.”



# Select Constructive Comments—Scouters

“Heated washrooms should be available year-round. If you run a co-ed program, you need to ensure that young women have the facilities they need. As well, those new to Scouting find it very stressful to use a Kybo for the first time. They should always have an option. Camps should have charging stations. Groups get a key to a secure box, where they can plug in phones, flashlights, etc for charging. UK camps have grocery delivery. Why is this not an option? Secure sites....why can anyone drive into a property? Better drop off areas/plans. Parents arrive in the dark, with no idea where to go, even if you have printed them out a camp map. Very difficult to manage youth at the campsite and parking area when you have 2 Scouters.”

“Scouts Campsites usually have expensive fees for the poorly maintained facilities. It is now to the point to obtain value we need to go elsewhere. Shame as it would be better to get more campers it so there are more funds to maintain the camps. The low value from Scout campsites means it is a better choice to choose an external facility. This sends the wrong message. If you want to make our campsite profit centre then you need to invest in them. Don't make us choose an external facility.”

“Adventure Bases should have expertise and facilities to introduce Outdoor activities and skills and a network of satellite locations for advanced learning e.g. Canoe trips, scuba trips, rafting, climbing/hiking mountain adventures, etc.”

“...cabin cleanup services at cost (spending almost half day of Scouter to clean up the kitchen on the last day instead of running program for youth currently...)”

“Currently available camps in S. Ontario —with major urban areas—have no access to water-lamentable!”



It starts with Scouts.

# Next Step: Targeted Focus-Groups & Surveys

(Section-specific, Scouting  
and Non-Scouting Parents)





## Topics for Exploration

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### LOCATION:

- How do Sections plan to **use the forest/lake** in their program?
- Younger Sections want **camps that are close to their communities**; how close is too close? If they're in or on the perimeter of an urban centre, could they double as a weeknight activity centre for Sections?
- Sections are interested in **camp-facilitated transportation**—what do they envision that looking like?

### ACCOMMODATIONS:

- How do each Section's accommodation/kitchen needs **change with the seasons**?
- We have a better understanding of how Sections camp now, based on current offerings—what would their **ideal cabin/campsite** look like?
- Explore what Scouts Canada can do to offer/facilitate **backcountry experiences**.



## Topics for Exploration

### PROGRAM:

- Sections want more **online camp/program planning support**—what does that support look like and how does it differ between Sections?
- How can we better **integrate the Canadian Path** into the camp experience (OAS, youth-led, etc.)?
- Which types of **program experts** (lifeguards, climbing instructors, etc.) would Sections value the most and how does that differ between Sections?
- How can we provide **more support to older Sections**, to encourage their participation in backcountry and third-party adventures?

### COST:

- What would Sections like to see included in a **base-cost, versus pay** incrementally for?
- How does **transportation** factor into the cost, and what is the value that Sections/parents place on having it provided?
- What types of **third-party adventures** are Sections interested in, and what is the price range for those adventures at each Section?