

Oyster River Forest/Spruce Hole Bog *Friday Updates* Questionnaire Findings*

Data collected November 2022; 78 responses

Question	Response
1. Durham resident?	88% were residents
2. # of people in group?	88% had 1 to 2 people per group; 12% had 3 to 4 people per group
3. Ages of people in group?	57% were ≥65 years old, 16% were 55-64, 22% were 45-54 and 22% were under 18 years old.**
4. Why have you chosen to visit ORF-SHB?	Top 3 vote-getters were: Natural environment (84%), location (84%), and proximity to home (77%).** Next 3 were quality of trails (76%), not crowded (73%) and open space (48%).**
5. What activities do you do?	Walking/hiking (94%), XC ski & snowshoeing (43%) and pet-walking (37%).**
6. How often do you visit?	4% of people visit daily, 11% visit one to three times a week, 34% visit one to three times a month, and 46% visit several times a year.
7. When do you visit?	Most popular is weekday afternoons (59%), followed by weekday mornings (54%), weekend afternoons (51%), and weekend mornings (48%).**
8. How many hours do you spend each visit?	Most (79%) spend 1-2 hours per visit.
9. Which seasons do you visit?	Spring and fall are more popular (90%) than summer and winter (78%).**
10. What improvements are needed?	The biggest vote-getter was none, at 48%. Next 3 vote-getters were more boardwalks over sensitive areas (30%), more trail markers (14%) and more information at intersections (14%).**
11. Have you always found a parking space at ORF-SHB?	78% yes, 5% no, and 17% not applicable (walk to property). (many of these folks wait until someone leaves).
12. How do you access ORF-SHB?	73% by car, 14% via bike, and 42% on foot.**
13. How did you find out about ORF-SHB?	Word-of-mouth (64%), town website (40%) and kiosk (38%).
14. What other town properties do you visit?	Wagon Hill is the predominant property (89%), with Doe Farm (76%), Thompson Forest (71%), Jackson Landing (69%), Longmarsh (54%) and Packers Falls (53%) also popular. **

What we learned:

People of all ages enjoy the ORF-SHB for its natural environment, location, and proximity to home. They come to walk, X ski, snowshoe and pet-walk, at all times of day and all seasons of the year. Most feel no improvements are needed; suggestions for improvements include boardwalks over sensitive areas and more trail markers, especially at intersections. Finding parking is not an issue, perhaps because 42% of the respondents access the property on foot. Trail counter data (see below) revealed that 61% of people enter the ORF from the Packers Falls side while 39% of people enter from the College Woods side.

Recommendations:

- 1) As a much-loved spot, continue to monitor ORF-SHB for erosion/overuse.

- 2) Provide additional educational materials and clarify trail signage. This includes revising existing trail signs, educating users about the SHB sensitive ecosystem, clarifying *why* hunting is allowed, and articulating where (and why) dogs need to be leashed at SHB.

Number of visitors to the ORF/SHB:

Three trail counters were installed on trails in the ORF/SHB, from Feb 12-Mar 19, 2023. Counter location and data obtained were:

Trail	Counter Location	Busiest Times	Busiest Days	Ave # people (range)
Oyster River Trail (entering ORF from the south)	Just north of Spruce Woods Connector	10-11 AM, 1-4 PM	Sun and Mon	33 (23-46)
Oyster River Trail (entering ORF from the north)	At boundary of ORF and College Woods	10-11 AM, 2-4 PM	Sat and Sun	21 (14-30)
Spruce Hole Bog Loop Trail	Near intersection of Spruce Hole Bog Connector and Spruce Hole Bog Loop Trail	10-11 AM, 3-4 PM	Sun and Mon	40 (23-62)

*Raw analysis data resides in the Durham Town Hall files

**Respondents could choose more than one response.