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INSTITUTE FOR  
**TOURISM & RECREATION RESEARCH**  
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

# The Montana Expression 2015: Bicycling

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MT Expression Research Report 2015-5

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6/3/2015



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## Introduction

Each quarter the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) interviews Montana residents on current issues related to travel, tourism or recreation within the state. These “snapshots” express views, attitudes, behaviors, and feelings of Montana residents about topics under the purview of ITRR.

## Purpose

The purpose of these snapshots is to provide the views and opinions of the Montana population. These are not just the views of a loud minority. Instead it is the MONTANA expression, a representation of the voice of the population.

## Methods

Data are collected by a dedicated group of trained surveyors who ask a few questions to Montanans as they fill up their vehicle with fuel at gas stations or who stop at rest areas around the state. ITRR has permission from over 100 gas stations to talk to residents in the amount of time it takes them to fill their gas tank. During the year, any Montanan who stops at gas stations or rest areas has an opportunity to be surveyed about the topic at hand, and thus the MONTANA expression is born. The respondent data is weighted to represent the county of residence and gender from the census thus providing a representative sample reflecting the geographic population and gender of the state as shown in the map below.

Percentage of Total Population by County: 2013



Source: United States Census Bureau, ACS 5-YR (2009-2013) Population Estimates

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 StatePlane Montana FIPS 2500  
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic

Cartographer: Brian Battaglia

## **Survey design**

Surveys are designed by ITRR personnel and loaded on the iPads of nine to eleven surveyors located around the state. The surveys are short by design (due to the amount of time available) and generally do not exceed 12 questions. When additional data is desired, surveyors hand the resident a slip of paper with a link to an on-line questionnaire that can be completed at a later date.

## **Limitations**

These studies are limited to Montana residents 18 and older who either drive or are passengers in vehicles.

## **Response rate**

Response rates for this type of data collection range between 94 to 97 percent.

## The Montana Expression 2015 Bicycling Results

The topic for quarter 1, 2015, was bicycling. According to various research entities and articles around the world, bicycling is on the rise as a form of commuting, recreation, and tourism (Runyan, 2013). In a recent study by ITRR about bicycle tourism in Montana, the economic impact throughout the state included small towns and rural areas (Nickerson et.al., 2013). Recently more and more headlines are claiming that “Cycling is the new golf” (Business Insider, 2015). With this added interest in bicycling, ITRR asked Montana residents their views of and participation in bicycling.

Residents were asked 12 questions including: their familiarity of Montana’s bicycling laws, their view of the safety level of bicycling on Montana’s highways, their frequency of bicycling, and the type of bicycling activities they have done in the past year (where applicable).

For this study, 8,435 Montana residents answered the survey between January 2 and March 31, 2015. The age range was 19-94 with a mean age of 45.7 years. Females were 49% and males 51% of the response. Figures 1-5 represent the population in total. This provides the overview of resident responses to the questions.

Figure 1: Familiarity with Montana Bicycling Laws (N=8,435)

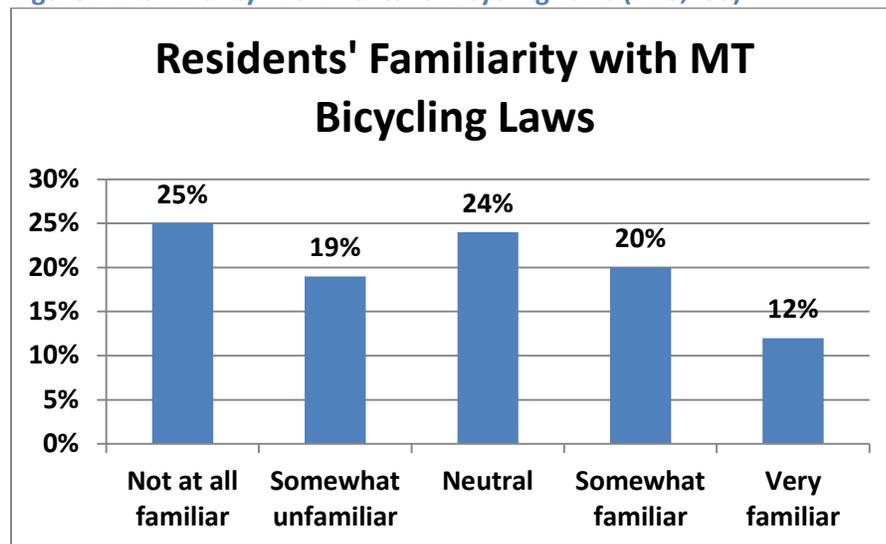


Figure 2: Safety on Montana Highways (N=8,435)

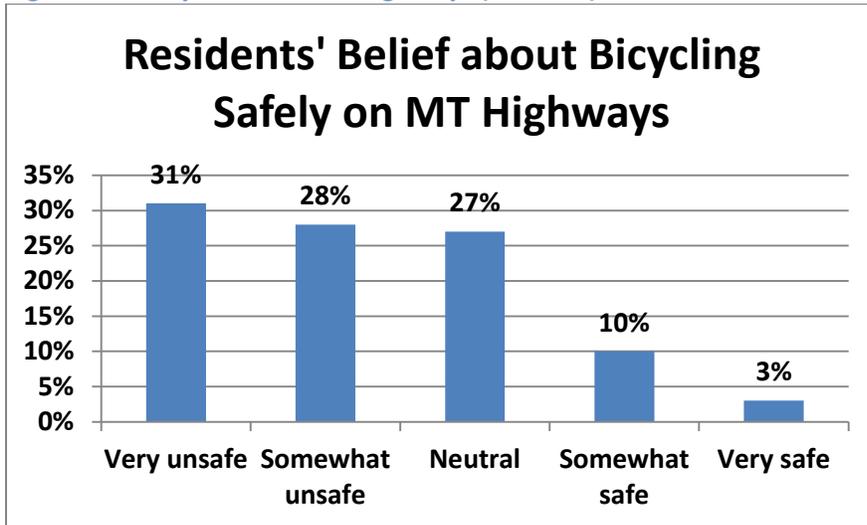


Figure 3: Bicycle Participation in past 12 Months (N=8,435)

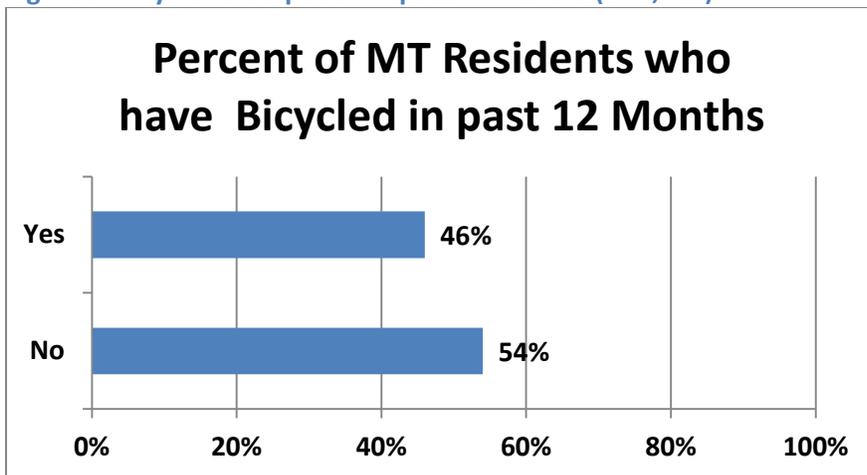


Figure 4: Bicycling by Season (n=3,880)

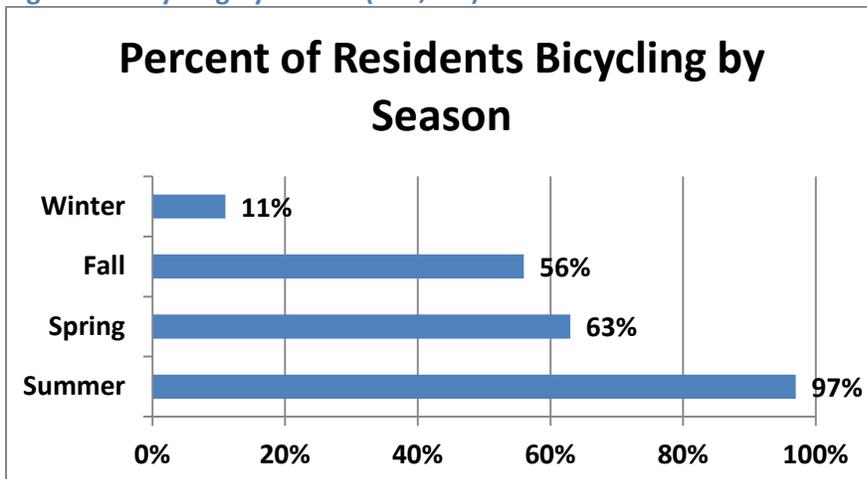
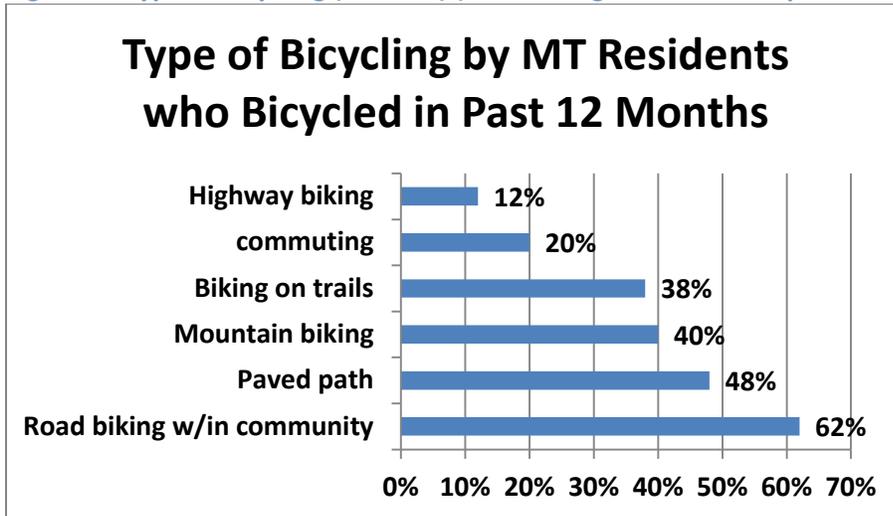


Figure 5: Type of Bicycling (n=3,880) (Commuting needs to be capitalized- I could not link to data)



In summary, (Figure 5).

Finally, data was looked at in two additional ways: 1) Responses by gender; and 2) Responses by age.

Significant differences in gender responses included the following:

- Significantly more females bicycled on roads in communities
- Significantly more males bicycled on highways
- Significantly more males mountain biked
- Significantly more females bicycled on paved paths
- Significantly more males bicycled in the winter season
- Significantly more males bicycled in the fall season

Significant differences in age categories included the following:

- Significantly higher percent of younger respondents had bicycled in the past 12 months
- The 18-29 and 30-39 age groups were more likely to indicate commuting by bicycle
- The percent of respondents in the 60-69 and 70+ ages group were more likely to indicate road biking than the percent in the younger groups
- Younger respondents (under 50 years of age) were more likely to mountain bike
- The percent of respondents in the 60-69 and 70+ ages group were more likely to bicycle in the fall than the percent in the younger groups
- The 18-29 year olds were least familiar with Montana bicycle laws

## Appendix A: Comments to surveyors about bicycling

**Note: These comments reflect only 3 percent of the population who were surveyed. Use with caution.**

You wouldn't find me on them (highways),

You guys are trying to turn this into boulder, aren't you?

Would like to see more paths and trails

Would like to see more bikes on the road

Won't let my kid ride bike one mile to school

Why do we build paths from nowhere to nowhere?

Where bicycle accommodations are made, they're not always used

What's the objective? Making all Montana highways safe for bicycling? That's totally unaffordable!

Western Montana is great for biking, eastern Montana is terrible

We need bike paths! Should be in drivers education program

Want more bike paths

Wants bike path from Kalispell to wfish on farm to market rd

Used to commute to Missoula from Lolo on bike

Unsure of highway safety

Unsure of highway safety

Unsafe. I mountain bike because of unsafe roads

Unsafe. Too much road rage

Two lane highways are totally unsafe. I wouldn't ride on them for anything, especially hwy 200.

Too many ride on wrong side of road

Too many cyclists on the road. Road paid by our fuel taxes, and they act like they own roads.

Too many bicyclists refuse to follow the law: ride against traffic; fail to stop at lights, signs;

This guy is working on creating bicycle safety videos

I do downhill off of a ski chair lift

They shouldn't be on the 2 lanes at all!

They shouldn't be on the road!

They should have to get a license to ride on the roads and the highways, just like we have to have a license

They need to stay on the bike paths and off the roadways. They think they own the goddamn roads!!!

They (bicycles) shouldn't be allowed on roads!!!

There should be a bicycle path along every highway.

The god damn bicyclists should stay off the roads until they pay for them. I do. They don't.

Strong supporter of further development of bicycle infrastructure

Spring meadow sp needs to allow cycles on paved path around lake. Maybe separate lanes.

Sounds like the survey is for a bicycle company!

Some roads bicyclists shouldn't be on because there's no shoulder and the road is too narrow.

So the purpose of this is so government can ask for more money; I see what this is really about!

Shouldn't ride on 93

---

Should be more bicycle trails

---

Should be law when doing road construction... Put in bike lanes

---

Separate bike paths are the best and safest ways for bicyclists to follow highways.

---

Seems confusing county to county and city to city what the rules are or what is acceptable for behavior

---

Safety of highways is a bicyclist behavior problem not an infrastructure issue. 2 abreast, dark clot

---

Safety is an issue mostly due to drivers' awareness of bicycles

---

Safety depends on the mentality of the bicyclist. Some just take up the whole lane. Pretty stupid.

---

Safety depends on bicyclist

---

Safety declines as the day progresses

---

Safe because of low traffic volume

---

Roads will become more dangerous if speed limit is raised.

---

Roads are safe. It's the way the bicyclists use them that is unsafe.

---

Roads are narrow.

---

Road rage. Car tried to hit me, I was following rules

---

Road bikes should be outlawed

---

Riding season based on lack of mosquitoes

---

Rides on gravel roads near her home

---

Rides on gravel roads by home

---

Rides in fields

---

Hate all bicyclists, should be banned from all roads in all states

---

need more bike paths especially over bridges

---

Cyclists in flathead are rude

---

U of MT are commies. Cyclists are rude idiots

---

Prohibit bikes on roads without shoulders

---

Prohibit bikes on roads with no shoulders

---

Paved paths need to be further from the road to keep little ones safe

---

Owens a bicycle shop; recommends new MT bicycling map - w/shoulder width, traffic levels, etc.

---

Only rode bike to test drive it after assembling it for his granddaughter.

---

Often the shoulder is too small. When it is large, it is interrupted by rumble strip, or unmaintained

---

Not safe to bike from Columbia Falls to Hungry Horse. Too narrow by river

---

No idea to the safety question

---

New highways are quite safe, older highways are very unsafe

---

Need wider shoulders on hwys

---

Need wider shoulders on Flathead hwys

---

Need to plow bike path from Hungry Horse to glacier park in winter

---

Need shoulders on whitefish stage road for cyclists

---

Need shoulders on 93 north of Whitefish to increase bikers safety

---

Need safe bike path in Columbia Falls

---

Need rails to trails between Great Falls & Helena

---

Need paved paths for bikes in Libby

---

Need paved path through Whitefish

---

Need more shoulders or bike paths

---

Need more shoulders for cyclists

---

Need more shoulders & bike paths

---

Need more rec trails

---

Need more paved paths

---

Need more paved biking paths in Flathead

---

Need more paths that get bicyclists off the roads for safety.

---

Need more driver awareness of cyclists rights & more connectivity of existing bike paths

---

Need more dirt trails.

---

Need more commuter bike paths in Flathead

---

Need more commuter bike paths in Flathead

---

Need more bike trails

---

Need more bike paths. Roads are unsafe

---

Need more bike paths cyclists should pay for paths

---

Need more bike paths

---

Need dedicated bike paths or lanes in Flathead city

---

Need bike trails that parallel the hwys

---

Need bike paths in Libby

---

Need bike paths for safety

---

Need bike path from Whitefish towards Eureka

---

Need bike path to link Kalispell to Whitefish

---

Need bike path on hwy 40 between Columbia Falls & Whitefish

---

Need bike path on 37 eureka to Rexford

---

Need bike path north of Whitefish to eureka

---

Need bike path in Troy

---

Need bicycle lanes on hwys

---

Need bicycle lanes

---

Need better drivers Education for teens & awareness campaign of laws for adults

---

Need a trail out to Wadsworth pond. Mountain bike trails where motorcycles aren't allowed

---

Narrow roadways make them unsafe.

---

MT should promote more biking

---

Motorists in MT very rude to cyclists

---

More biking lanes.

---

Montana has opportunity can have largest paved paths in USA, but it doesn't. Just too unsafe

---

Many bikers don't obey the traffic laws

---

Make questions specific geographically because safety varies by roads and cyclist density

---

Make MT more bike friendly

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Make laws feasible

---

Limited safety in part to roads, and in part to drivers

---

Lack of shoulders is very dangerous"

---

Keep them bicyclists out of my way, will you?

---

Just got his bike

---

It's not the bicyclists. It's the idiots out driving on the roads!

---

It's dangerous

---

Interested in purpose of the survey. Doing it to petition congress?

---

In general, I'd like to see more bike/ped trails in all MT cities. It would make them so much safer.

---

If the cyclists are safe, the roads are

---

I'd ride more if roads had shoulders - ones safe enough for bicyclists.

---

I wouldn't do it (ride on a Montana highway)!

---

I wish there were more places to ride safely

---

I wish the bicyclists had somewhere else to ride. They shouldn't be on the roads. We shouldn't pay.

---

I pay a shit load of taxes to drive this thing on the road! They don't pay squat! Tip them all off the road

---

I know you're trying to get me to say we should spend more money for bikes. Damn them!

---

I know that the bicyclists have no interest in following the rules!

---

I just go by the fact that I'm bigger than them, and they better get out of my way!

---

I have always wanted to ride my bike from Lewistown to Great Falls, but I don't know how safe it would be

---

I hope this means we will get more and better bicycle trails.

---

I hope the purpose of this survey is to get more bicycle lanes and other safety improvements!

---

I hate sharing the road with bicyclists. They're supposed to follow all the laws but none of them do.

---

I hate bicyclists on the road!

---

I hate 'em (bicyclists)!!!

---

I got my license when I turned 15, and I've never walked or bicycled again.

---

I dread seeing bicyclists on the road!

---

I bicycled in California for many years. Bicycling in Montana is much safer!

---

Husband was struck on great falls street; injuries required shoulder replacement. Need safer roads.

---

Hunting on bike

---

Helena city comm spends more time on bike paths than things we really need like roads and garbage

---

Hit by car on bicycle in Helena

---

Highways with little or no shoulder are scary. Highways w cycling events are dangerous.

---

Highways are so narrow that I slow down and go into the other lane to pass them.

---

Would like to see them licensed so they can help pay for the new bike paths in Missoula

---

Does bmx bicycling

---

Does downhill from a ski lift

---

Hasn't left Bitterroot Valley and says his perspective is limited to the path along the hwy

---

Has only ridden on sidewalks, says cyclists should be limited to paths - banned from streets

---

Gravel roads only place he rode

---

Use gas tax to build bike paths

---

Glad to see biking trails

---

Get the bike trails

---

Need a free high school course on motorist/cyclist safety. Drivers ed

---

Finish trail along hwy 89

---

Every road built should be required to have a parallel people path built, too - for bicyclists & pedestrians

---

Need Elementary school education on bicycle safety and laws

---

Educate the bicyclists on what they're supposed to do!

---

Don't support spending tax funds on bike lanes

---

Don't want bikes on hwys

---

Don't think bicycles should be on 2 lane highways

---

Do away with sidewalks and create larger bike/pedestrian lanes on road surface, maintained by city

---

Didn't know how safe highways are for bikes

---

Cyclists would be safer riding on the left

---

Cyclists should stay off Whitefish stage road

---

Cyclists should stay off hwys without shoulders. Laws favor cyclists too much

---

Cyclists should ride single file

---

Cyclists should pay registration fees and have insurance

---

Cyclists should have to register & pay for their trails

---

Cyclists should have licenses & pay road tax

---

Cyclists should bear expense of dedicated paths

---

Cyclists should be paying road use tax

---

Cyclists need to ride single file

---

Cyclists need to ride single file

---

Cyclists need to respect the laws. Not ride 4 abreast

---

Cyclists need to obey the laws

---

Cyclists need to obey the law

---

Cyclists don't ride safely

---

Cyclists don't belong on hwys because they don't pay taxes for the roads.

---

drives logging trucks and views bicyclists as hazardous

---

Bmx biking only

---

Bmx bicycling

---

BMX - did not have a category for BMX

---

Biking with kids

---

Bikes shouldn't be on the highways!

---

Bikes shouldn't be in high traffic areas

---

---

Bikes should pay tax

---

Bikes should pay a road tax

---

Bikes should be licensed.

---

Bikes should be banned on roads without 3 ft shoulders

---

Bikes on highways are suicide. Ban them!!!

---

Bikes get in my way

---

Bikes don't belong outside of urban areas

---

Bikes don't belong on the roads!

---

Bikes don't belong on roads, and they should be banned from them!

---

Bikers should respect the rules of the road

---

Bicyclists should pay to ride on the road like cars do

---

Bicyclists need to obey the laws

---

Bicyclists shouldn't be on the roads without bike paths

---

Bicyclists should not be on 2 lane highways without flag car

---

Bicyclists should not be allowed on the hwys

---

Bicyclists should have to pay to use the road. Too dangerous to have them on the highway.

---

Bicyclists should have license and pay road tax

---

Bicyclists should be required to buy permit to use highways

---

Bicyclists need to follow the laws

---

Bicyclists have too any rights

---

Bicyclists and motorists are both at fault of not always adhering the rules of the road

---

Bicycling is inherently dangerous - by the nature of mixing bicycles and motor vehicles on road.

---

Bicycles should not be on 2 lane highways

---

Bicycles just aren't safe on the roads. If they're on the road, vehicles will run into them.

---

Bicycles have no place being on the roads!

---

Bicycles endanger drivers and themselves more than roads do

---

Bicycles don't belong on the streets!

---

Bicycles don't belong on the roads. It makes the roads unsafe for bicyclists and drivers!

---

Bicycles don't belong on roads!

---

Bicycles don't belong on the highways

---

Bicycle hunting

---

Bicyclists don't follow the law. They always seem to be riding against traffic!

---

I don't want my answer used to raise my taxes.

---

Avid rider

---

Avid bicyclist who wants more respect from motorists on the road

---

As someone in law enforcement for 16 years, I'm upset that there doesn't seem to be any enforcement!

---

rides on a gravel road by her home

---

has done bmx biking

---

BMX biking

---

2 coworkers seriously injured in Bozeman

---

## Appendix B: References

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