**Valuing Farmland Preservation and Natural Area Conservation**

**Preliminary questions:**

* Which of the cities below do you live closest to?
  + Columbus, Ohio
  + Worcester, Massachusetts
  + Grand Rapids, Michigan
  + Danbury, Connecticut
  + New Haven, Connecticut

Introduction and Survey Instructions

Thank you for taking this survey about local food and conservation of nature and farmland. The survey has three sections.

**Section One**

In Section One, you will be presented with background information and descriptions of a possible project to protect nature or farmland outside of the city near you.

**Section Two**

In Section Two, you will be asked to choose whether you would support potential conservation projects that have different features. Your answers to these questions will help researchers, city and regional planners, and conservation groups understand what features of a conservation and local food project you would like the most.

**Section Three**

Section Three includes some short questions about you so that we can understand what factors affect people’s opinions about conservation and local food.

Remember that all of your answers areanonymous.

This project is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The researchers are at public universities committed to informing public policy and resource management. The researchers have a plan to share what they learn from this survey directly with USDA, The Nature Conservancy, the American Farmland Trust, and local non-profit groups in your area that are actively working on nature and farmland conservation. Answer the survey as accurately as you can because those organizations may use information from this study to inform their future decisions about protection of nature and farmland in your area.

**Section 1: Information**

When the economy gets back to normal, there will again be pressure to put more roads and buildings on the open land around the city of Columbus. That development would take away natural areas and farms in your landscape, turning them into housing and roads.

Land conservation groups are active in your region. If it seems like people like you in the area would value more conservation, those groups can partner with city and regional planners to use tax revenues to protect more areas of land from development in the rural areas outside Columbus.

Conservation groups like The Nature Conservancy could protect natural areas with trees and small ponds. Such areas could be set up to provide new opportunities for local people to fish and gather food like berries to eat. Sponsors could also work with the American Farmland Trust or use the Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program to protect farmland from being turned into housing and commercial areas. As part of farmland protection, those farms could increase the amount of food they produce for sale locally.

**We are interested in what kind of protected area you would like, if any**. In each of the questions in the next section, we will describe a possible conservation project. You will say whether or not you would vote to support a referendum for a one-year increase in sales taxes in your area to pay for it.

**In all of these questions, assume that if the conservation project happens, these things are true:**

* The project would have a couple of different areas spread out around the city rather than one big protected area.
* The protected areas could be either farmland or nature.
* There would be a picnic area and paved paths in all protected areas so people from the community could visit and walk or bike through them.
* At most 240 acres worth of lands would be protected in total. To get an idea of how much land that is, it would take six chunks of 40 acres to make 240 acres. An area of 40 acres is about the size of 30 football fields.
* The protected areas might increase the number of meals of local food available to people in and near the city.
* The protected areas are not large enough to affect food or housing prices in the area.

Potential conservation projects have several **features that vary** among the project scenarios you will be asked to consider:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Acres of nature** | **How many acres of natural areas are protected from development by the project**   * Such protected natural areas would have trees and small ponds * Each square in the scenario description indicates 40 acres. |
| **Acres of farmland** | **How many acres of farmland are protected from development by the project**   * Such farmland would be kept in active farming status. * Each square in the scenario description indicates 40 acres. |
| **Meals from protected nature each week**    **= 2 people’s meals available each week** | **How many meals of food from protected nature you would be able to gather for your household each week in summer.**   * Protected natural areas could be set up so local people would have access to food from them during the summer (May through August). * Such areas might have blueberry and raspberry bushes from which anyone could freely pick, and fishing holes where everyone is allowed to catch fish to eat at no charge beyond having a fishing license. * You could only expect to be able to gather a few meals’ worth of this food each week (if you wanted it) because supply would be limited. * There might be no such local food if the natural areas are not set up to have things like fish or edible fruit |
| **Meals from protected farms each week**  **= 2 people’s meals available each week** | **How many meals of food from protected farms you would be able to buy for your household each week in summer.**   * Protected farms could be set up to run so local people would have access to food from them during the summer (May through August). * Such farms might produce eggs and grow fruit and vegetables (like strawberries, tomatoes, and carrots) that is available for purchase at stands at the farm. The prices of that food would be similar to a regular grocery store. * You could only expect to be able to buy a few meals’ worth of this food each week (if you wanted it) because supply would be limited. * There might be no such local food if protected farmland produces only commodity crops that are sold into the national food supply. |
| **Distance** | **Distance of protected areas from your home**   * There are many different sites that could be chosen for protection. * The nearest protected lands might be close to your home or many miles away from where you live. |
| **Cost to your household**  $ | **The amount of money your household will have to pay next year to support the project.**   * The money to pay for this project will come from a one-year increase in sales taxes. * This will affect you through an increased cost of things you regularly buy in stores. |

**No conservation project:** If there is no conservation project, then there will be no new protected nature or farmland where you could visit, walk, or bike; no new local food from nature or farms, and no cost to your household.

**Section 2: Choice Questions**

In this section you will be asked a set of six choice questions. In each question you will see a conservation project option and a no-conservation (no project) option that you can choose from. Please read all the features of the conservation option and then check the box that represents your choice for each question.

If you don’t like the conservation project option then choose the box “no project" - that means no project is done, and the current situation will continue.

For the purposes of these choice questions, remember you should assume that every possible conservation project would have the following features:

* The project would have one or more areas of protected land, spread out near your city rather than one big protected area.
* There would be a picnic area and paved paths so people from the community could visit and walk or bike around.
* You will pay more money in sales taxes for one year to help pay for the project.
* The project will **not** affect food or housing prices in the area.

Each potential restoration project you are about to see involves a monetary cost to your household if the project is implemented, but the “No Project” option does not. Remember that the money your household would have to pay for this restoration project could be used on other things.

**Choice Question 1**

Suppose Option A is the **only** conservation project you could choose. Would you choose it over the current situation? Please read **all** the features of the option and then **check the box that represents your choice**. If you do not like option A, please choose the box marked “No project” which is Option B.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Acres of nature** | **Acres of farmland** | **Meals from nature** | **Meals from farms** | **Distance from you** | **Cost to you** |  | **I would choose** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Option A: Project** | **0 acres** | **120 acres** | **0 meals each week** | **12 meals each week** | **40 miles** | **$50** |  | ** A** |
| **Option B: No Project** | There is no new protected area | | | | | **$0** |  | ** B** |

**Certainty Question**

On a scale of 0-10, how certain are you that you would pick the option you just chose if this was a real vote?

🞎 0 – Not at all --- 🞎 10 – Completely

**Choice Question 2**

Suppose Option A is the **only** conservation project you could choose. Would you choose it over the current situation? Please read **all** the features of the option and then **check the box that represents your choice**. If you do not like option A, please choose the box marked “No project” which is Option B.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Acres of nature** | **Acres of farmland** | **Meals from nature** | **Meals from farms** | **Distance from you** | **Cost to you** |  | **I would choose** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Option A: Project** | **120 acres** | **0 acres** | **12 meals each week** | **0 meals each week** | **10 miles** | **$12** |  | ** A** |
| **Option B: No Project** | There is no new protected area | | | | | **$0** |  | ** B** |

**Choice Question 3**

Suppose Option A is the **only** conservation project you could choose. Would you choose it over the current situation? Please read **all** the features of the option and then **check the box that represents your choice**. If you do not like option A, please choose the box marked “No project” which is Option B.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Acres of nature** | **Acres of farmland** | **Meals from nature** | **Meals from farms** | **Distance from you** | **Cost to you** |  | **I would choose** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Option A: Project** | **40 acres** | **120 acres** | **2 meals each week** | **6 meals each week** | **20 miles** | **$24** |  | ** A** |
| **Option B: No Project** | There is no new protected area | | | | | **$0** |  | ** B** |

**Choice Question 4**

Suppose Option A is the **only** conservation project you could choose. Would you choose it over the current situation? Please read **all** the features of the option and then **check the box that represents your choice**. If you do not like option A, please choose the box marked “No project” which is Option B.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Acres of nature** | **Acres of farmland** | **Meals from nature** | **Meals from farms** | **Distance from you** | **Cost to you** |  | **I would choose** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Option A: Project** | **80 acres** | **80 acres** | **2 meals each week** | **2 meals each week** | **40 miles** | **$50** |  | ** A** |
| **Option B: No Project** | There is no new protected area | | | | | **$0** |  | ** B** |

**Choice Question 5**

Suppose Option A is the **only** conservation project you could choose. Would you choose it over the current situation? Please read **all** the features of the option and then **check the box that represents your choice**. If you do not like option A, please choose the box marked “No project” which is Option B.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Acres of nature** | **Acres of farmland** | **Meals from nature** | **Meals from farms** | **Distance from you** | **Cost to you** |  | **I would choose** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Option A: Project** | **80 acres** | **80 acres** | **6 meals each week** | **6 meals each week** | **10 miles** | **$50** |  | ** A** |
| **Option B: No Project** |  | There is no new protected area | | | | **$0** |  | ** B** |

**Choice Question 6**

Suppose Option A is the **only** conservation project you could choose. Would you choose it over the current situation? Please read **all** the features of the option and then **check the box that represents your choice**. If you do not like option A, please choose the box marked “No project” which is Option B.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Acres of nature** | **Acres of farmland** | **Meals from nature** | **Meals from farms** | **Distance from you** | **Cost to you** |  | **I would choose** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Option A: Project** | **40 acres** | **40 acres** | **2 meals each week** | **6 meals each week** | **40 miles** | **$50** |  | ** A** |
| **Option B: No Project** |  | There is no new protected area | | | | **$0** |  | ** B** |

[If “No Project” is selected 3 or more times, display the following question]

* Why did you choose the “No Project” option? Select all that apply.
  + The project is not worth the cost.
  + I cannot afford to pay that much to support the project.
  + It is unfair to expect me to pay for the project.
  + I am opposed to paying for new public projects.
  + The project should be funded by existing government funds.
  + Taxes in my area are already too high.
  + Other (Please describe):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* How likely do you think it is that city and regional officials and non-profit conservation organizations will consider the results of the choices you made in this survey when making decisions about future conservation projects?
* Extremely unlikely
* Somewhat likely
* Neither likely nor unlikely
* Somewhat likely
* Extremely likely
* How likely do you think it is that you would have to pay the specified increase in sales tax if any of the proposed conservation project was put in place?
* Extremely unlikely
* Somewhat unlikely
* Neither likely nor unlikely
* Somewhat likely
* Extremely likely
* How much attention did you pay to each attribute while making your choices?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | None | Not much | Some | A lot |
| Acres of nature |  |  |  |  |
| Acres of farmland |  |  |  |  |
| Local food from nature |  |  |  |  |
| Local food from farms |  |  |  |  |
| Distance from you |  |  |  |  |
| Cost to your household |  |  |  |  |

**Section 3: Additional questions**

* How do you most often travel around town (to work, school, shopping, etc.)? Check no more than two.
* Drive or ride in a car
* Walk
* Bicycle
* Bus
* Train
* Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Do you or someone in your household own a car?
* Yes
* No
* In the last year, how often did you visit a natural area for fun or relaxation? Pick the option that fits best.
* Never
* About once a month
* About once every other week
* About once every week
* More than one time every week
* In the past 7 days, if there have been times when you did not have enough food or money to buy food, how many days has your household had to:
* Rely on less expensive foods, even if you like them less? \_\_\_\_\_
* Borrow food, or rely on help from a friend or relative? \_\_\_\_\_
* Limit portion size at mealtimes? \_\_\_\_\_
* Restrict consumption by adults in order for small children to eat? \_\_\_\_\_
* Reduce number of meals eaten in a day? \_\_\_\_\_
* Do you own your home?
* Yes
* No
* Do you, or your family, farm or do work related to agriculture?
* Yes
* No
* People get food from many different places. Think about the food you had at home during the last month. Please indicate how much of that food came from each of the following kinds of places. The total should add up to 100 percent  
   Percent
* Large grocery store \_\_\_\_\_
* Food bank \_\_\_\_\_
* Small food store \_\_\_\_\_
* Friends, family, people in your community \_\_\_\_\_
* Farmer’s market \_\_\_\_\_
* My own garden \_\_\_\_\_
* Fished, hunted, gathered free fruit or nuts in public spaces \_\_\_\_\_

[If bottom % is not zero] During the last month, about how many times did you do each of the following activities to get food?

* Fishing for food to eat \_\_\_\_
* Hunting for food to eat \_\_\_\_
* Gathering free fruit or nuts in public spaces to eat \_\_\_\_
* Select all the categories that describe your employment status currently:
* Employed full time
* Employed part time
* Self-employed
* Student full time
* Student part time
* Recent graduate
* Retired
* Unemployed
* Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* What is your age? (Please check the appropriate box)
* 18 – 24 years
* 25 – 34 years
* 35 – 44 years
* 45 – 54 years
* 55 – 64 years
* 65+ years
* Please select the one category that best describes the highest level of education you have completed.
* Some high school
* High school degree (or equivalent)
* Associate’s degree
* Bachelor’s degree
* Graduate or professional degree
* How many people (including yourself) live in your household? \_\_\_\_
* How many children under 18 live in your household? \_\_\_
* How often would you say you go fishing in general, either for fun or to get food to eat?
  + Never
  + Sometimes
  + Very often
* How many years have you lived in or near this city?
* 0 to 5 years
* 5 to 10 years
* 10 to 20 years
* 20 to 30 years
* More than 30 years

For the last section of questions, think about how the COVID-19 pandemic affected you during the time of March 2020 to March 2021.

* Did your visits to nature areas change because of COVID-19? Check one.
* Yes, I have visited nature areas **more** because of COVID-19
* Yes, I have visited nature areas **less** because of COVID-19
* No, my visits to nature areas **have not changed** because of COVID-19
* Did you ever consider yourself at high risk of serious illness if you were to get COVID-19?
* Yes
* No
* How was your experience of getting food changed by the COVID-19 pandemic? (check **each** that applies):
* Not affected
* I sometimes had a little trouble getting the food I wanted
* I sometimes had a lot of trouble getting the food I wanted because things ran out
* I sometimes had a lot of trouble getting the food I wanted because I was worried about getting sick at the store
* I sometimes had a lot of trouble getting food because of money limitations
* How much did you limit your time in places close to other people because of COVID-19? Check one.
* Not at all
* A little bit
* A fair amount
* A lot
* During the recession caused by COVID-19, how were you and your household affected financially? Check each that applies:
* Not much at all
* Lost money in the stock market
* Gained money in the stock market
* Monthly income went down
* Did the social distancing and related economic shutdown due to COVID-19 affected your employment status?
* Yes
* No

If yes, please identify the impacts COVID-19 had on you:

* Reduced my hours of employment
* Temporarily unemployed/furloughed
* Laid off from my previous position
* Stopped attending school
* Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* What zip code do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Please select the race with which you most identify.
* White
* Black or African American
* American Indian or Alaska Native
* Asian
* Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
* Other
* Identify with multiple racial groups
* Prefer not to answer
* Do you identify as Hispanic or Latino?
* Yes
* No
* What is your gender?
* Male
* Female
* Other
* Think about your household’s total income (before tax) in 2020. What category did it fall into?
* Less than $25,000 per year
* $25,000 - $34,999 per year
* $35,000 - $49,999 per year
* $50,000 - $74,999 per year
* $75,000 - $99,999 per year
* $100,000 - $149,999 per year
* $150,000 - $199,999 per year
* More than $200,000 per year