

Natural Resource Managers' Perceptions of Trust in New England (USA)

Jessica E. Leahy, Ph.D.

Katelyn Hartford

School of Forest Resources

University of Maine

Orono, Maine USA



Introduction

- Natural resource conflicts abound
- Challenging jobs balancing ecological, social, and economic goals
- Integrating public input into natural resource decision-making



Introduction

- National Park Service
 - Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, MI
 - Ozark National Scenic Riverways, MO
 - Niobrara National Scenic River, NE
 - Voyageurs National Park, MN
- USDA Forest Service
 - Hiawatha National Forest, MI
 - Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, IL
 - Mark Twain National Forest, MO
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 - Kaskaskia Watershed, IL
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, MN



Dorothy Anderson
University of Minnesota



Mae Davenport
Southern Illinois University



Jessica Leahy
University of Maine



Introduction

- Davenport, M., Anderson, D., Leahy, J., and Jakes, P. 2007. “Reflections from USDA Forest Service Employees on Institutional Constraints to Engaging and Serving their Local Communities.” *Journal of Forestry*. 105(1): 43-48.

Agency level constraints

Diminished resources

Centralized power structure

Focus on accountability

Unit level constraints

Traditional public involvement techniques

Technical jargon

Increased departmentalism

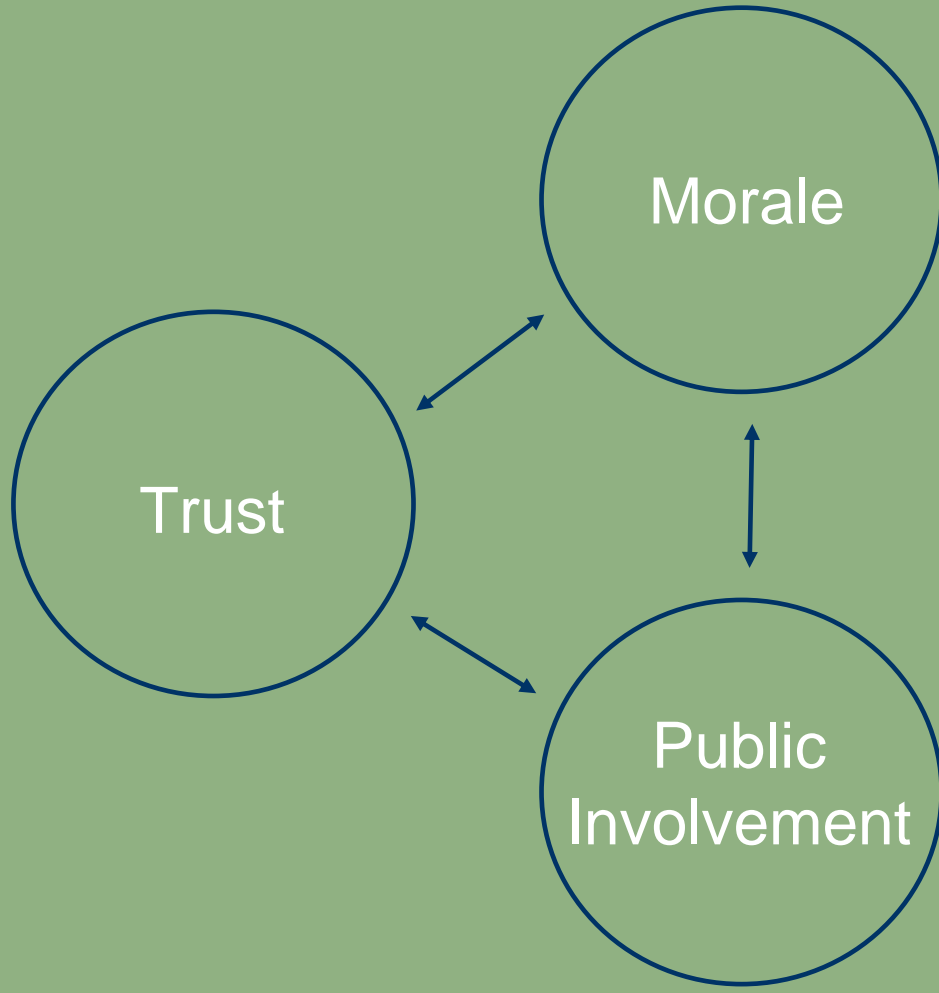
Personal level constraints

Staff turnover

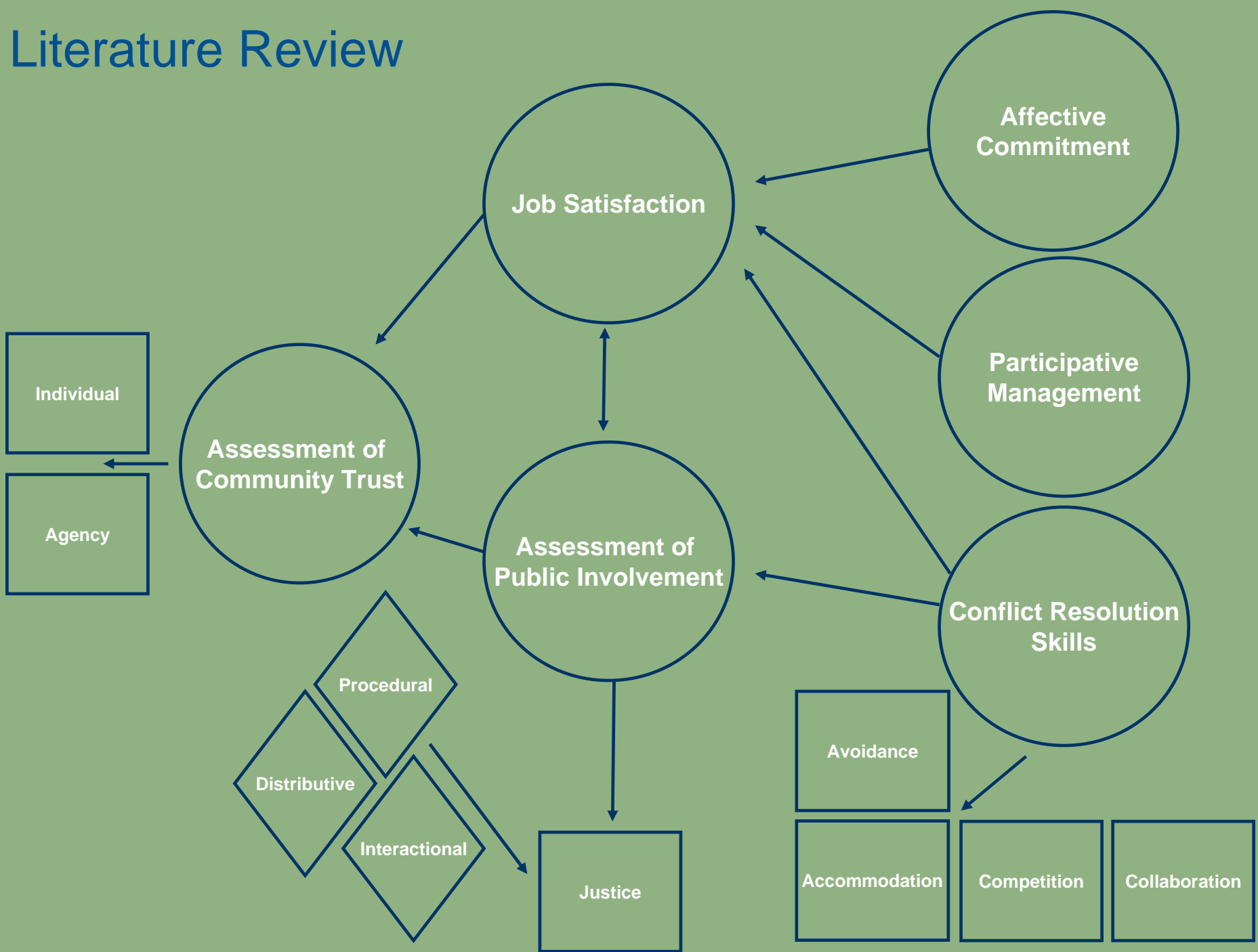
Long-distance commuting



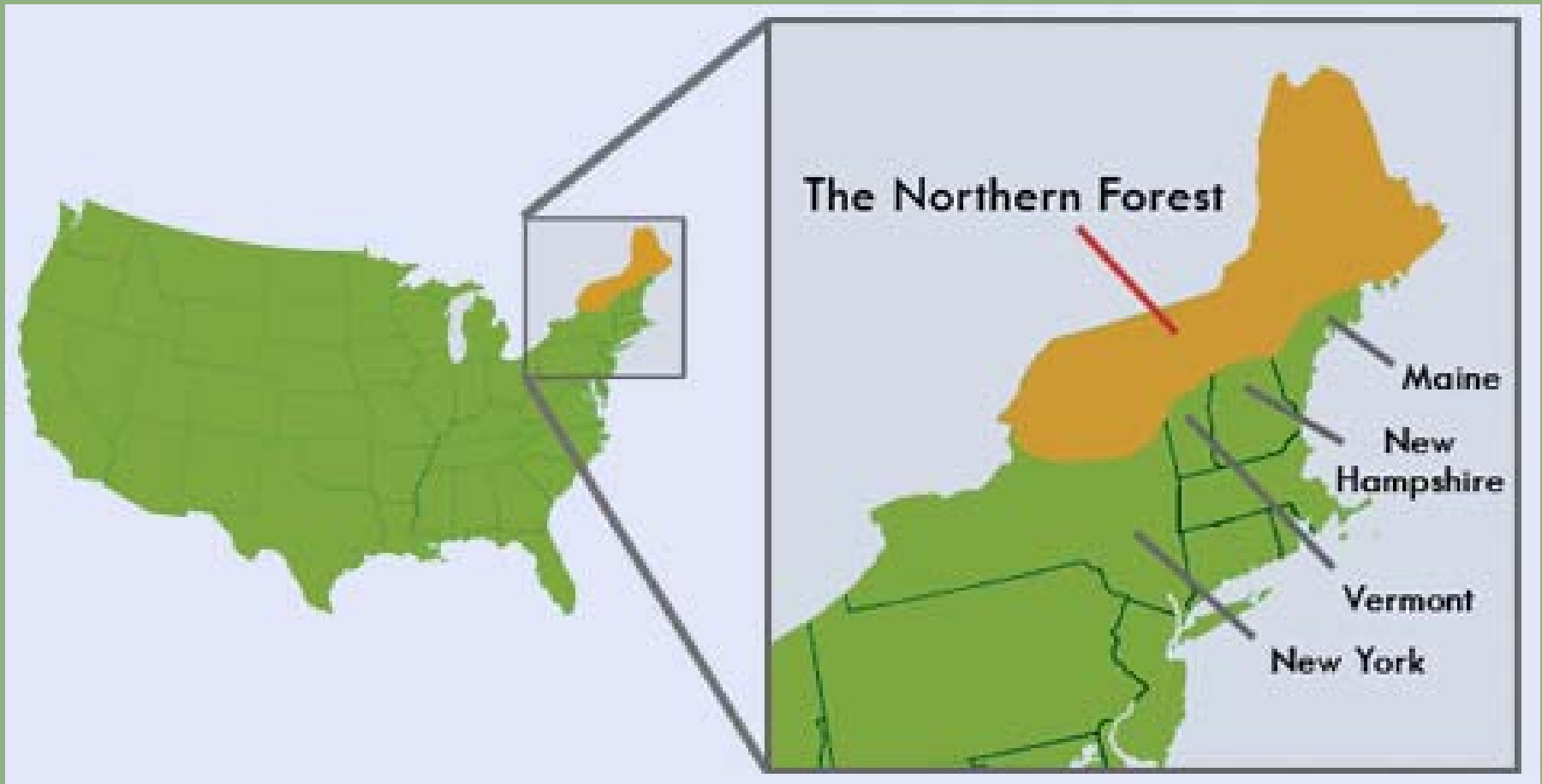
Introduction



Literature Review



Methods



Methods

- Agency Participation
 - Maine
 - Department of Conservation
 - Department of Environmental Protection
 - Department of Marine Resources
 - New Hampshire
 - Division of Forests and Lands
 - Department of Environmental Services
 - Vermont
 - Natural Resources Board
 - Department of Forests, Parks, & Recreation
 - Federal
 - White Mountain National Forest



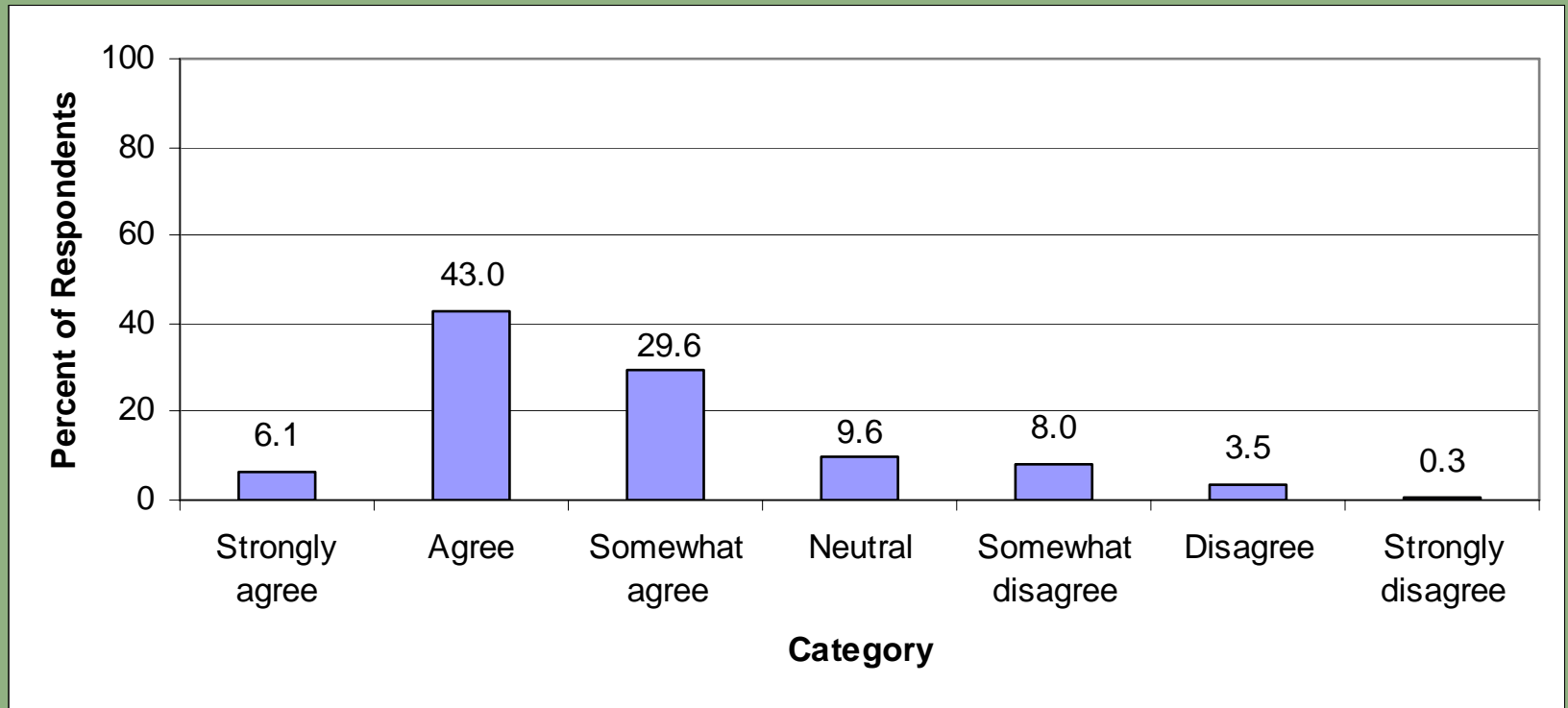
Methods

- Survey Design
- Survey Administration
- Response Rate
- Preliminary Data Analysis



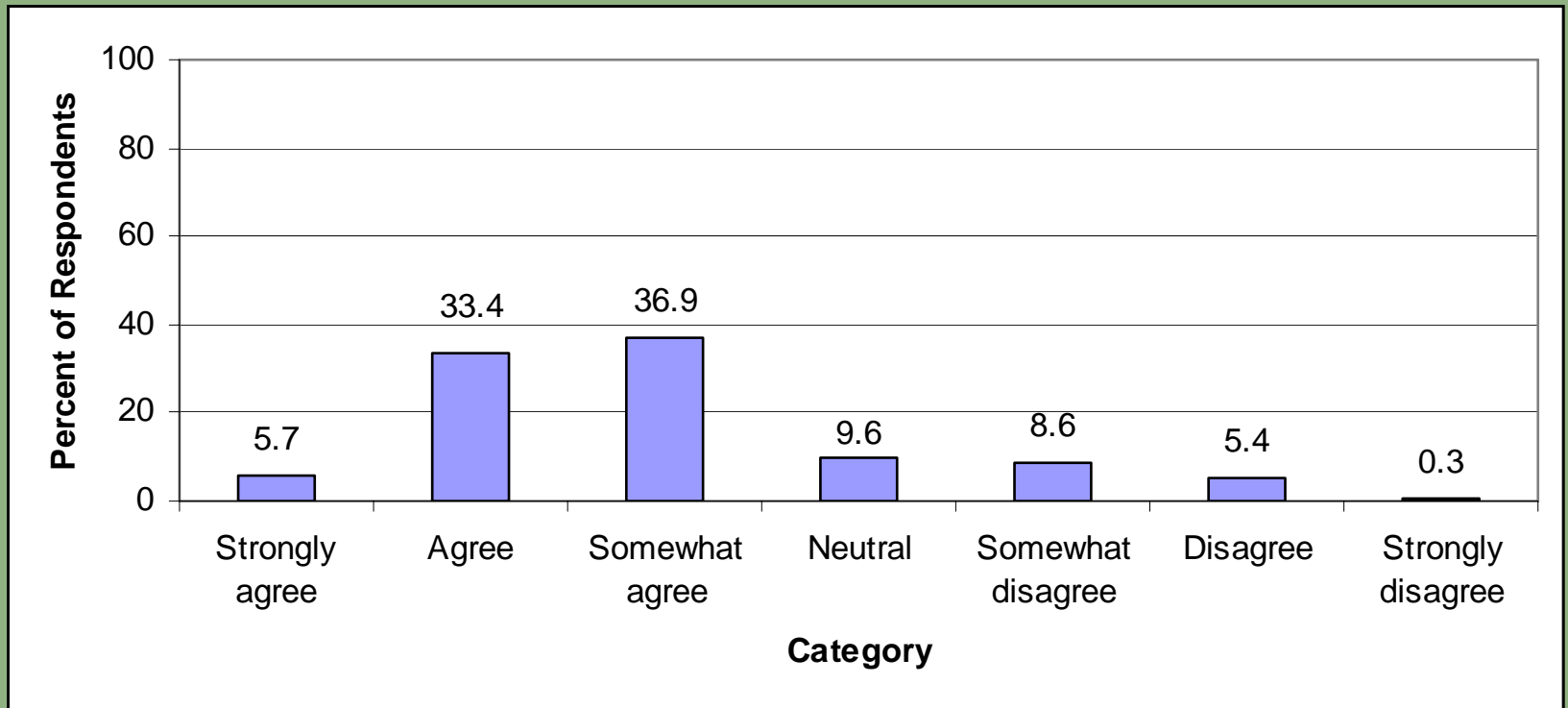
Preliminary Results

- The public is *satisfied* with my agency's performance managing natural resources.



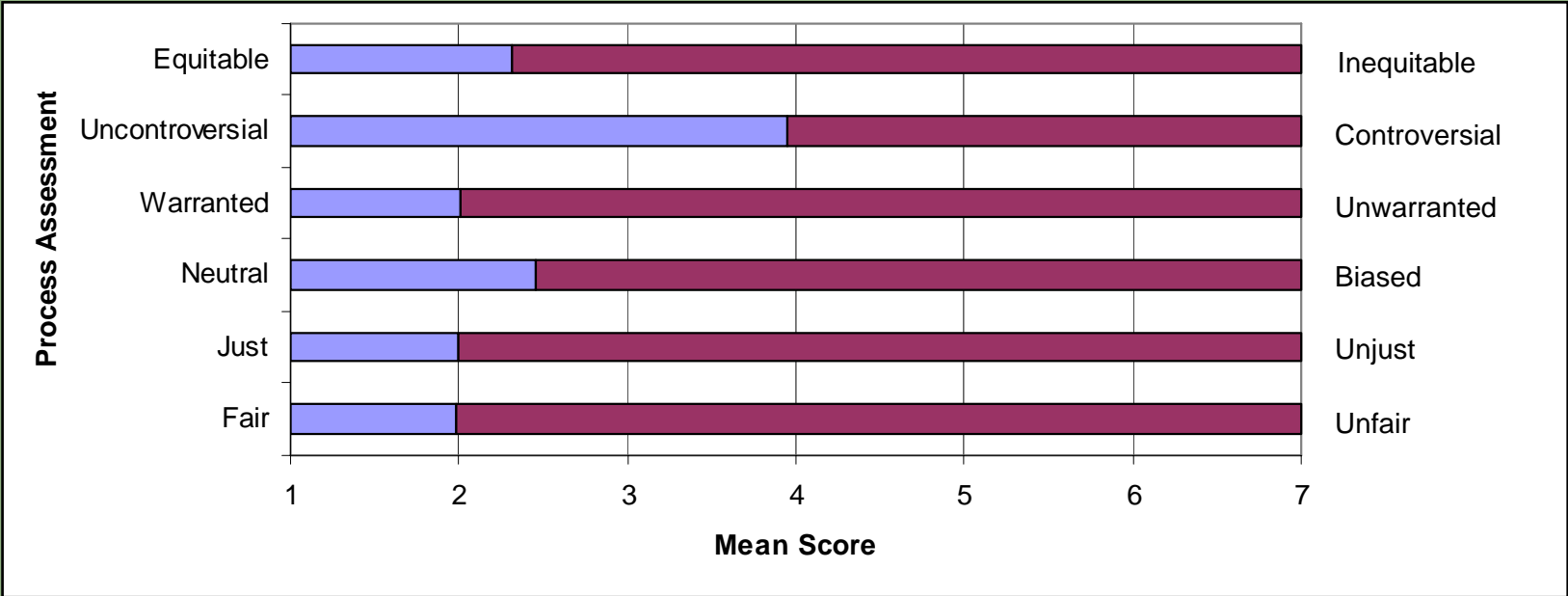
Preliminary Results

- The public *trusts* my agency's decisions and actions about how to manage natural resources.



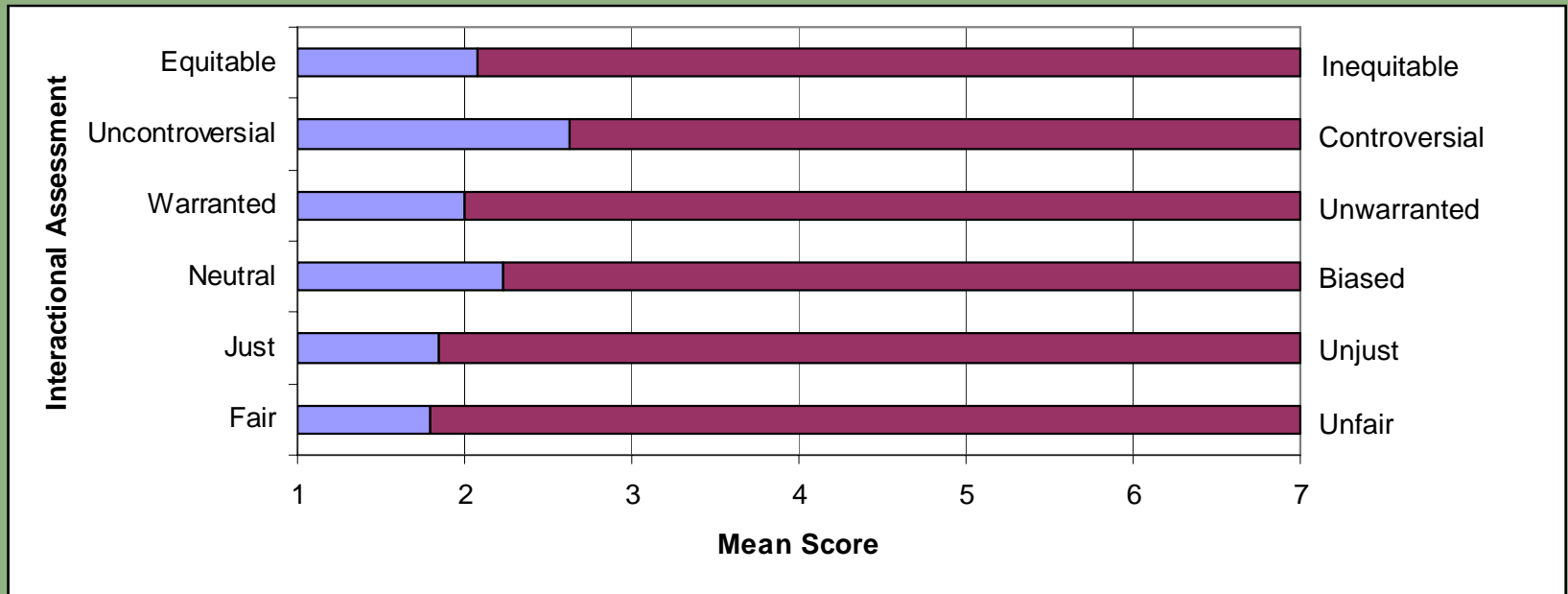
Preliminary Results

- The *process* used in my agency's last public involvement effort was:



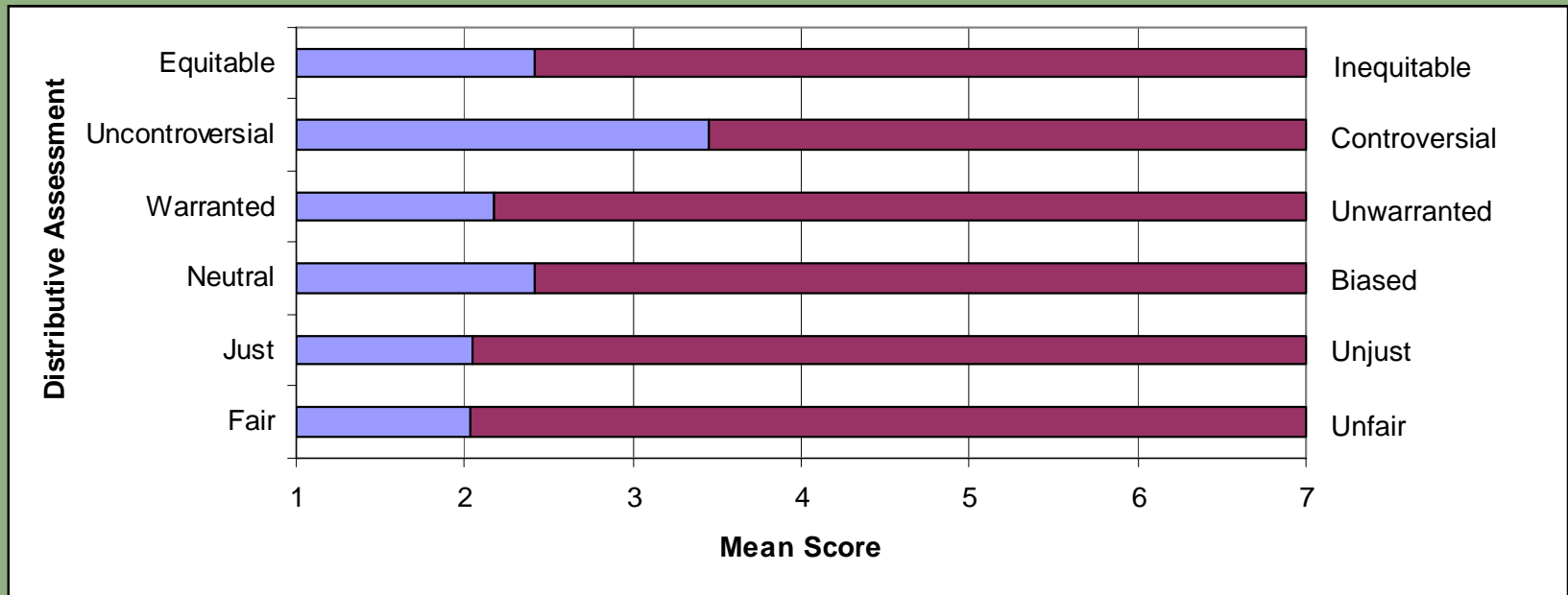
Preliminary Results

- In its last public involvement effort, my agency *treated the public* in a way that was:



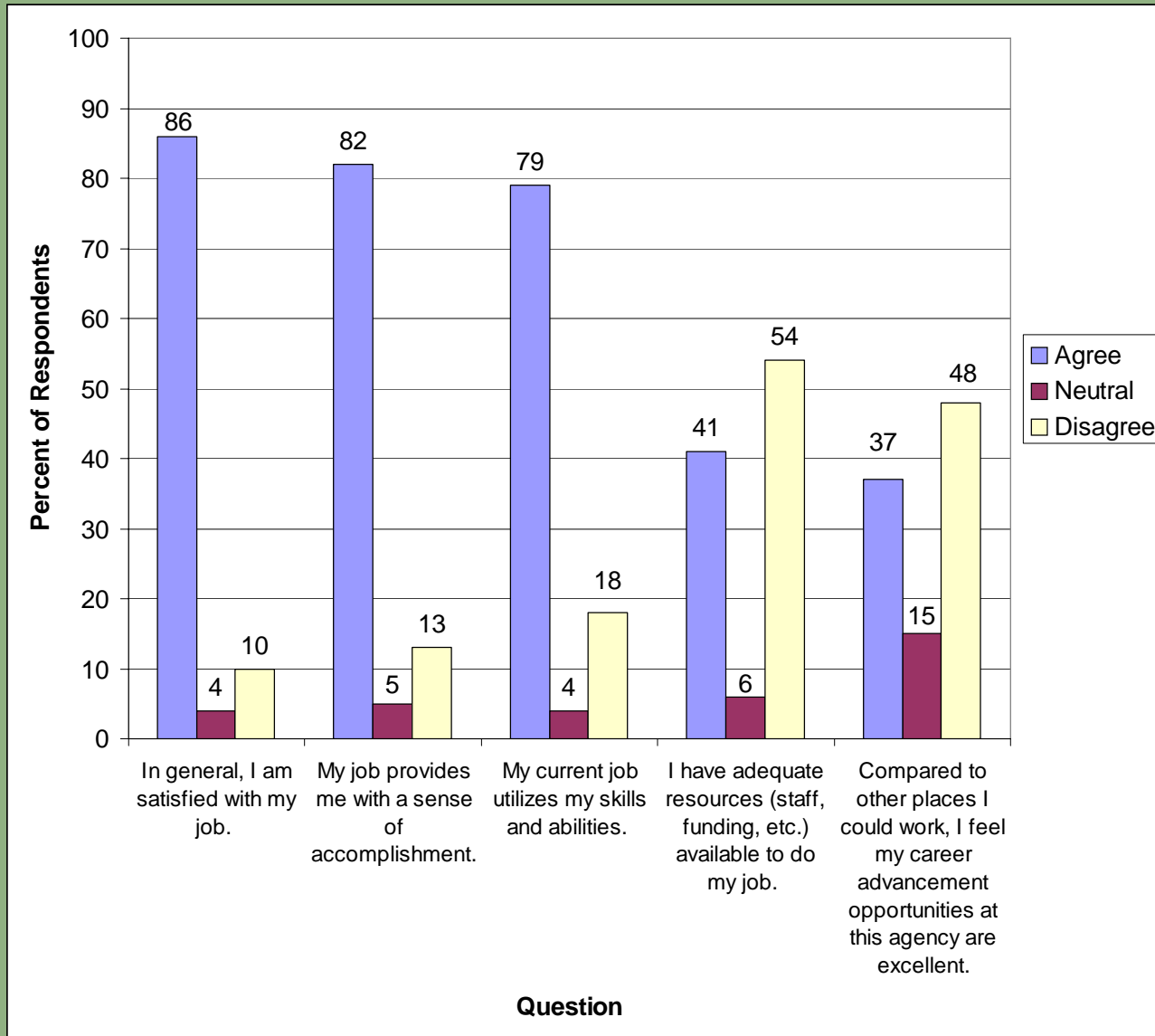
Preliminary Results

- The *outcome* of my agency's last public involvement effort was:



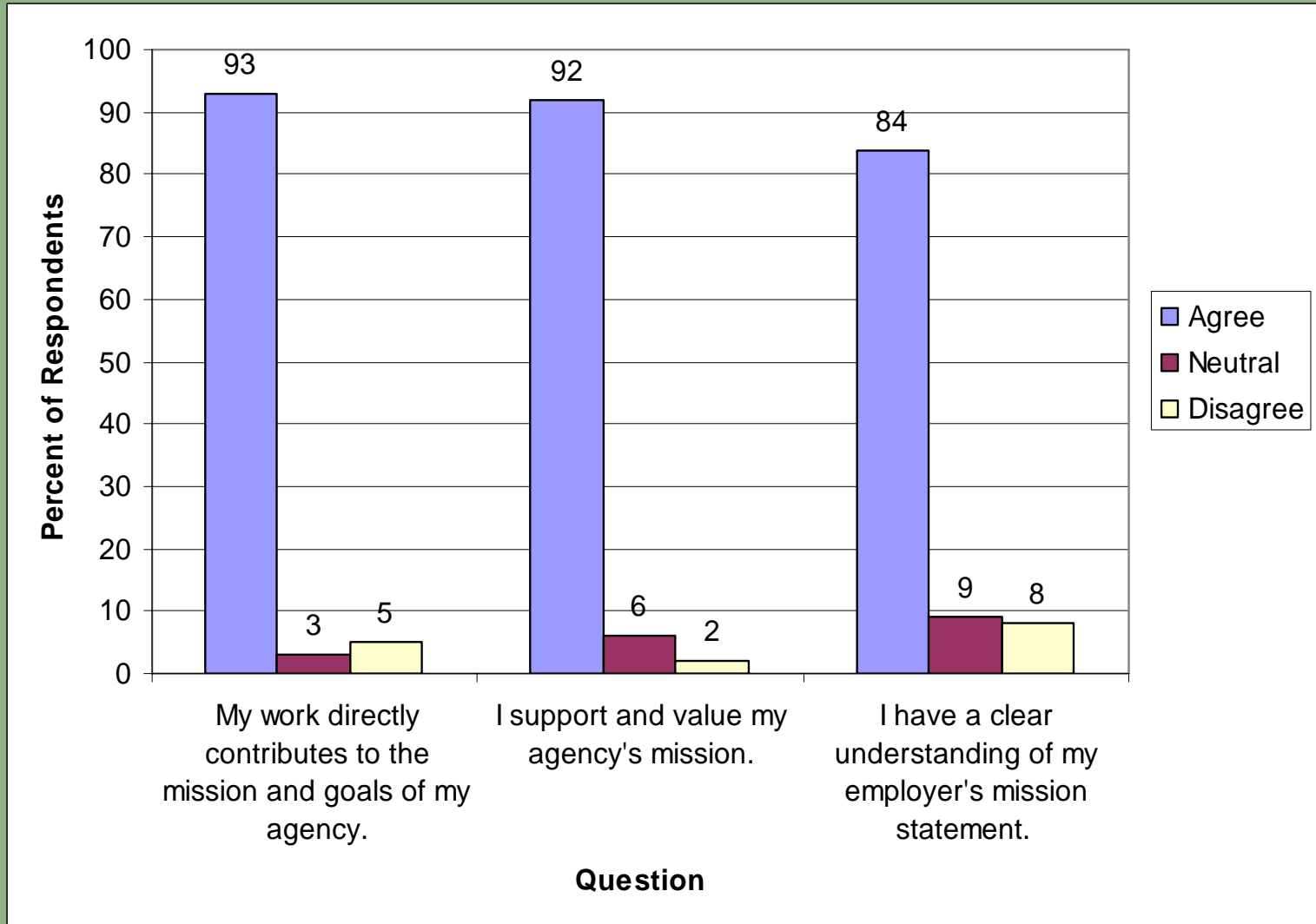
Preliminary Results

- Job Satisfaction:



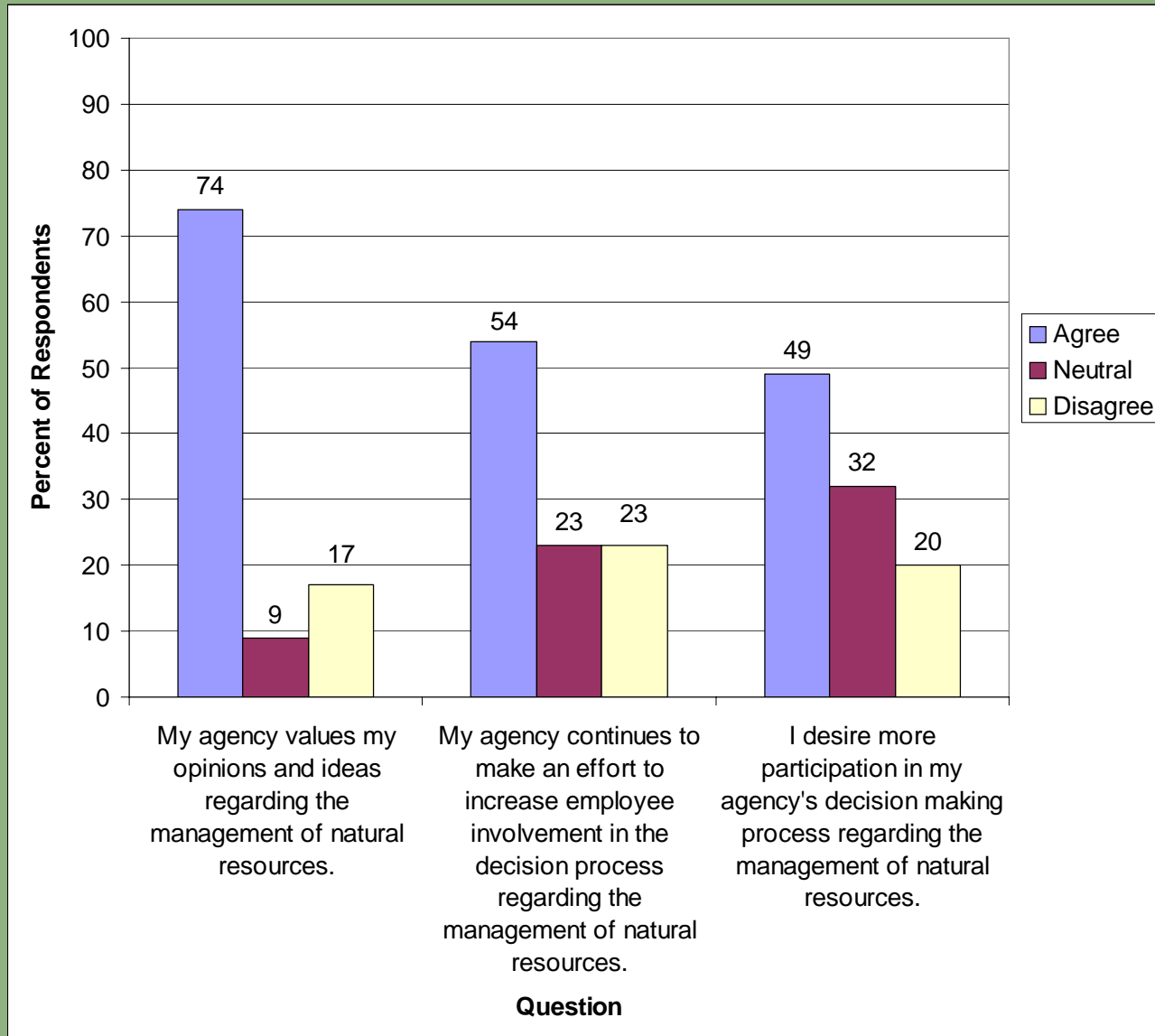
Preliminary Results

- Affective Commitment:



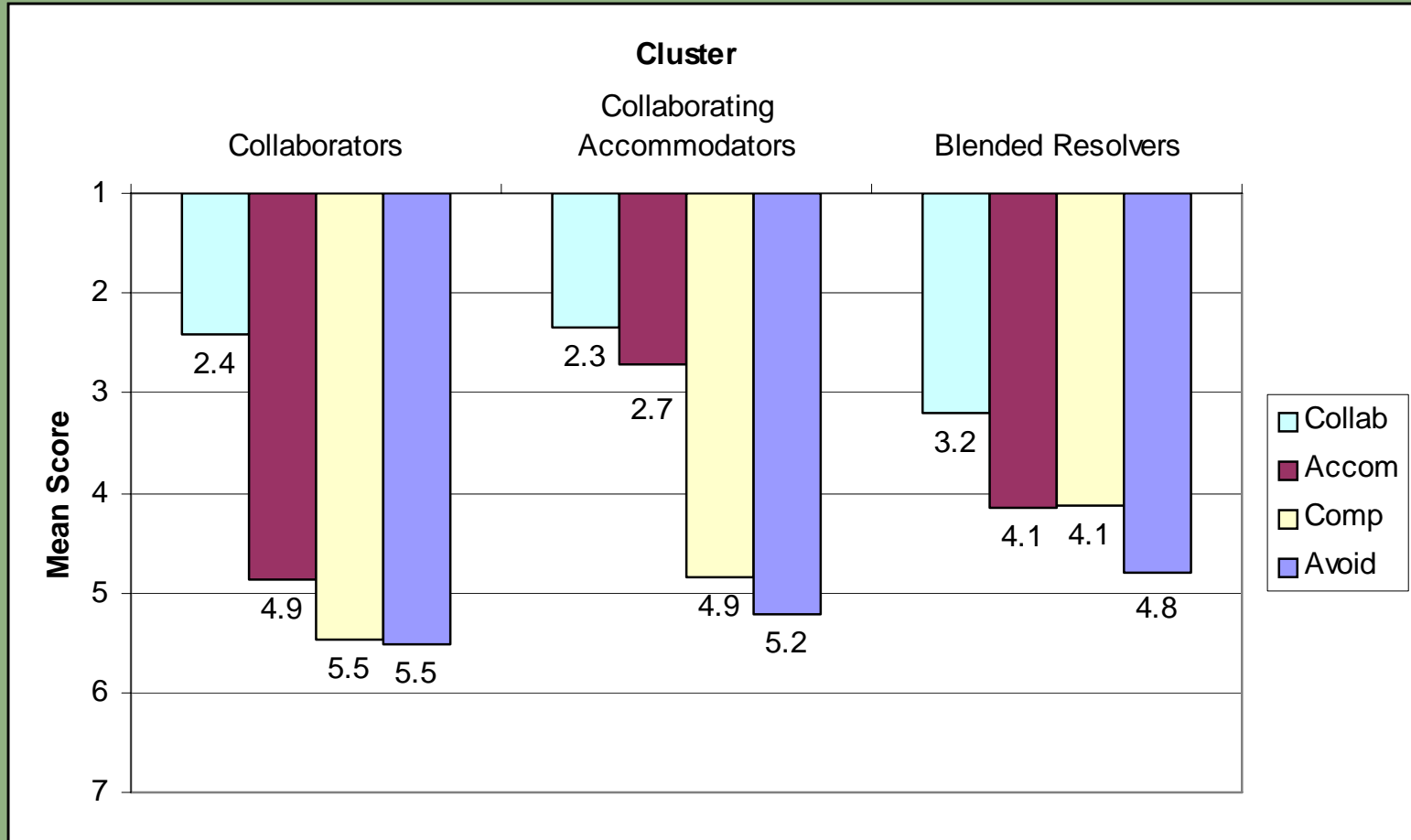
Preliminary Results

- Participative Management:



Preliminary Results

- Conflict Resolution Skills:



Preliminary Results

- Comments – Job Satisfaction:
 - “The inability to improve public cooperation has led to dissatisfaction with my job.” (Maine Department of Environmental Protection)
 - “A consistently applied, open public involvement process and science based management decisions would certainly improve my job satisfaction and would improve public opinion of the work that we as ANR employees are responsible for.” (Vermont Agency of Natural Resources)
 - “Most of the poor morale comes from staff observing decisions being made for political reasons by the politically appointed leadership. These decisions often over rule strong science presented by the staff....Basically the Bureau is doing a better than average job in the field managing its natural resources compared to other landowners. That is why I believe we do not lose more staff because they believe in what we are doing.” (Maine Department of Conservation)



Preliminary Results

- Comments – Public Involvement:
 - “I am unhappy here, because I am a team player and everyone seems to be out for themselves in this agency. I cannot trust that my fellow employees will support me when I try to support the laws, regulations and policies of the Department. Politics has invaded the agency's actions too much, and so the public doesn't trust our efforts.” (Maine Department of Marine Resources)
 - “We don't value the public participation process enough to provide training and support to explore new, more effective techniques. We have many employees who are uncomfortable with the public and still tend to think ‘we know best.’” (White Mountain National Forest)
 - “We really need to have some better public relations training and public outreach programs that better explain our program goals and how we conduct business. Most of the conflicts that I have had to deal with comes from misinformation and half truths about our program...none of this going to happen with our existing staff and budget limitations.” (Maine Department of Marine Resources)



Discussion & Conclusions

- Upcoming Plans
- Initial Implications
 - Clear Communication
 - Reward Structure
 - Education & Training



Questions and Suggestions?

Jessica Leahy
219 Nutting Hall
School of Forest Resources
University of Maine
Orono, ME 04468 USA
Phone: (207) 581-2834
Fax: (207) 581-2875
E-mail: jessica_leahy@umit.maine.edu

