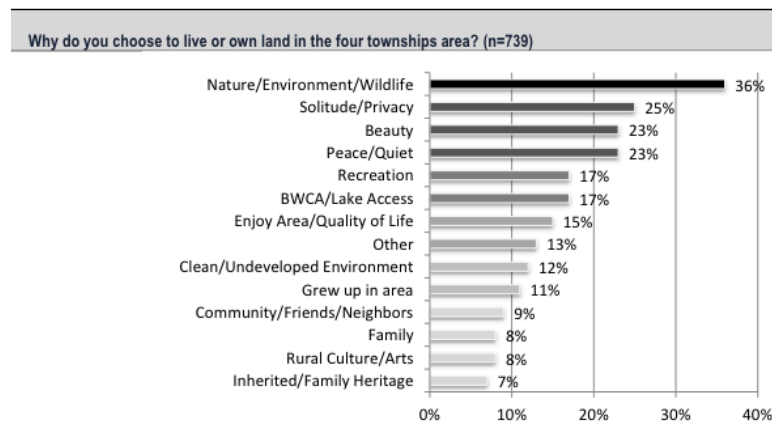




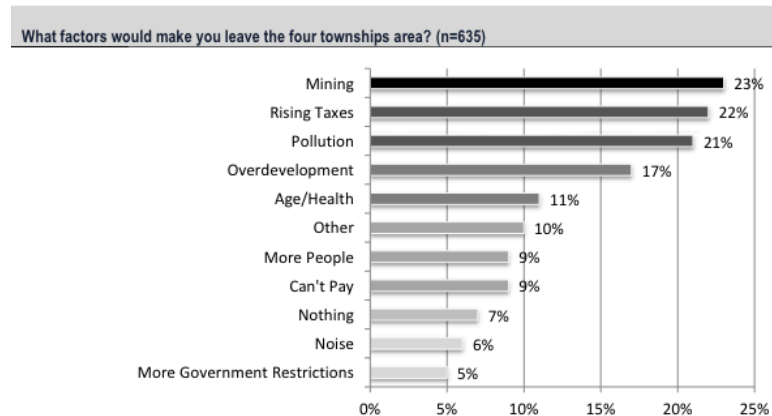
## Surveys Show: People Choose Ely for the Boundary Waters

Ely, Minnesota, is the gateway to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, America’s most popular wilderness. Ely’s stable, wilderness-based economy relies on the pristine water and unspoiled forests of the Boundary Waters. The region’s natural amenities attract more than tourists, and surveys of residents and property owners show the Boundary Waters’ important role in attracting, retaining and supporting local residents, property owners and local businesspeople.

In 2014, the Center for Small Towns & Data Services Center at the University of Minnesota, Morris, released a report on their survey of all property owners in the four townships surrounding Ely (Morse, Eagles Nest, Fall Lake, and Stony River).<sup>1</sup> In addition to examining the ownership trends within the four townships, the survey asked residents about what they valued about the region.



When asked, “Why do you choose to live or own land in the four townships area?” respondents overwhelmingly highlighted natural amenities (p. 44).

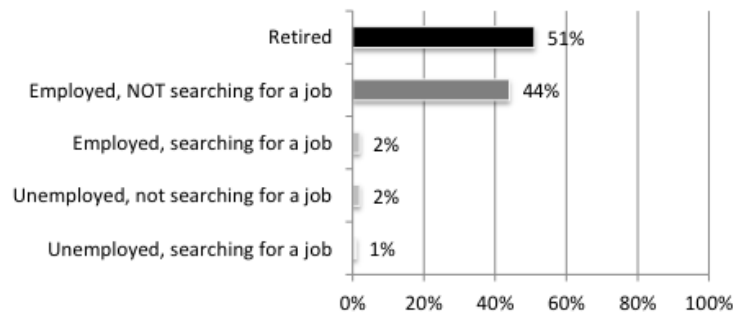


Conversely, when asked what would make them leave the four townships area, respondents chose “mining,” “pollution” and “overdevelopment” as the top three of four categories (p. 46). The report explains that most of the “mining” response came from those expressing potential negative consequences from mining.

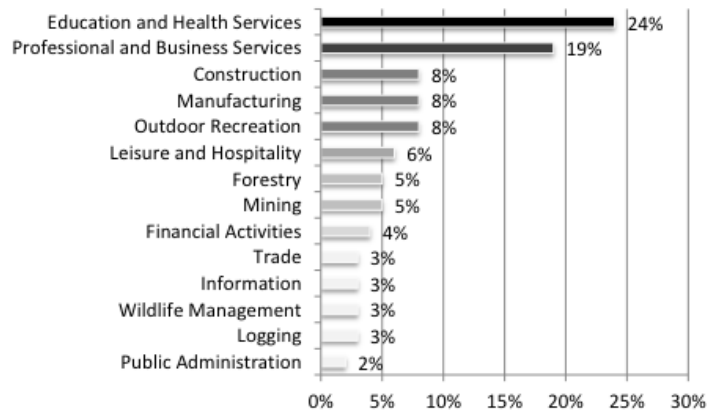
<sup>1</sup> Center for Small Towns & Data Services Center. 2014. The Four Townships Area Economic, Housing and Development Survey. University of Minnesota, Morris. Available: <http://www.morris.umn.edu/est/resources>. Accessed 13 February 2015.

Additionally, the survey shows incredibly low unemployment in the four-town region, as well as a reliance on education, health services, professional and business services, construction, manufacturing, and recreation to local employment (p. 28-29).

**What is your current employment status?**  
(n=832)



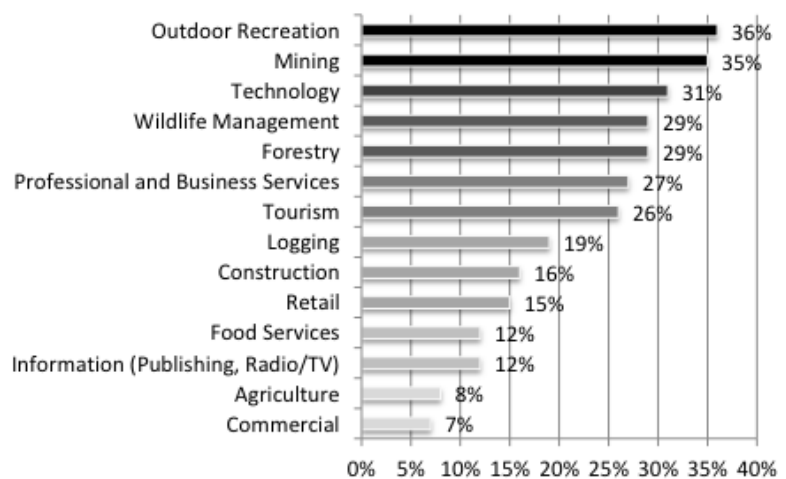
**If employed, in what industry do you currently work? Please check all that apply.** (n=374)



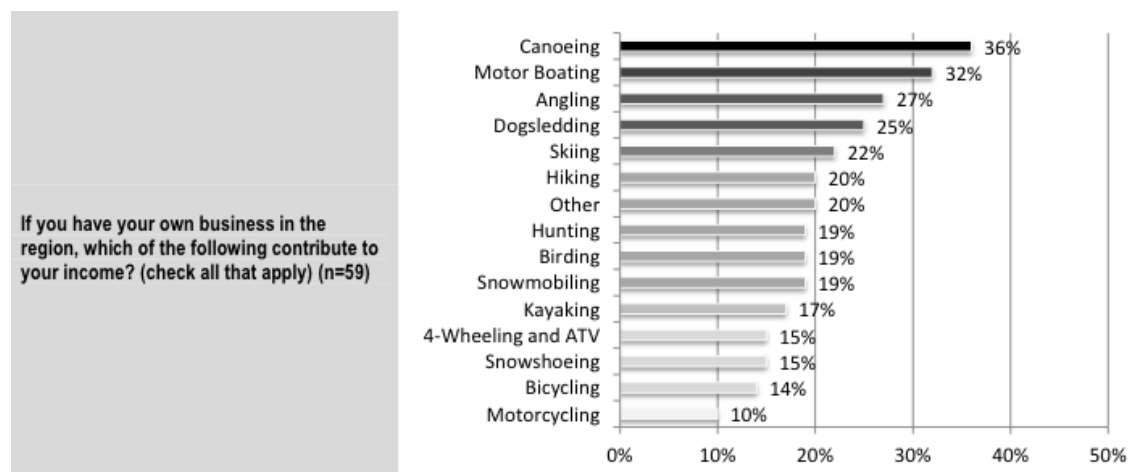
Thus, in the four township area that would be most negatively impacted by current sulfide-ore copper mining proposals, only 3% of respondents are currently looking for a job, and only 5% of the currently employed respondents work in mining.

Meanwhile, only 35% of respondents supported adding additional mining jobs in the region. Outdoor recreation jobs were more popular (36% respondents), and other non-mining jobs were close behind (p. 31):

**What types of jobs would you like to see or have expanded in the region? (Check all that apply)** (n=832)



Business-owners showed the importance of recreation and natural amenities to their incomes (p. 38):



When asked about what types of development they supported in the area, respondents chose all development types above mining and extraction development (p. 40):

	Support Development				An appropriate area for specified development (% checked)			
	Yes	No	No Opinion	No Answer	Developed	Lake shore	Non-lake Shore	No Opinion
<b>Non-Recreational Commercial Development in the local region. (n=832)</b>	59%	20%	14%	7%	69%	2%	32%	9%
<b>Are you in favor of recreational commercial development in the local region? (n=832)</b>	63%	14%	16%	7%	56%	20%	32%	17%
<b>Are you in favor of industrial (not including mining) development in the local region? (n=832)</b>	61%	21%	11%	7%	67%	1%	32%	11%
<b>Are you in favor of mining and extraction development in the local region? (n=832)</b>	45%	41%	9%	6%	37%	2%	42%	17%
<b>Are you in favor of residential development in the local region? (n=832)</b>	63%	14%	16%	8%	62%	21%	34%	17%

Of any type of proposed development in the survey, mining and extraction development had the most opposition (41% of respondents) and was less preferred to the other development types by nearly 15%. Additionally, 98% of respondents thought lakeshores were inappropriate areas for mining development.

In addition to the University of Minnesota, Morris, survey, the Minnesota Design Team visited Ely in October 2014.<sup>2</sup> They gathered 200 residents for a community visioning session to help guide Ely’s future. In response to the question, “What do you love most about your community?” the common response was, “Location near wilderness—Boundary Waters.” Additionally, residents surveyed saw “tech-based businesses via broadband internet” as Ely’s next economic opportunity, not mining.

When speaking for themselves, residents in the wilderness-edge communities of Northeastern Minnesota cite the Boundary Waters as a fundamental reason for why they live, work and remain in the region. Proposed sulfide-ore copper mining would threaten the region’s natural amenities and the wilderness-edge communities that rely on them.

<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Design Team. 2014. Minnesota Design Team 2014 Ely Visit Visioning Boards. Available <http://www.aia-mn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014-MDT-Ely-Vision-Board-Slideshow.pdf>. Accessed 13 February 2015.