

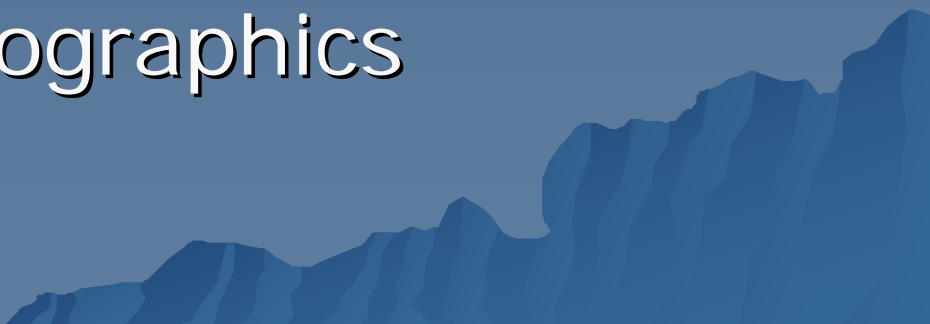
BLM Paleontology Permitting Process Survey Results

Social Research Laboratory

Northern Arizona University



Presentation Outline

1. Methodology
 2. General Permitting Process
 3. Comparing SLSC Permits and Excavation Permits
 4. Permit Claims and Space Issues
 5. Repositories
 6. Qualitative Feedback
 7. Respondent Demographics
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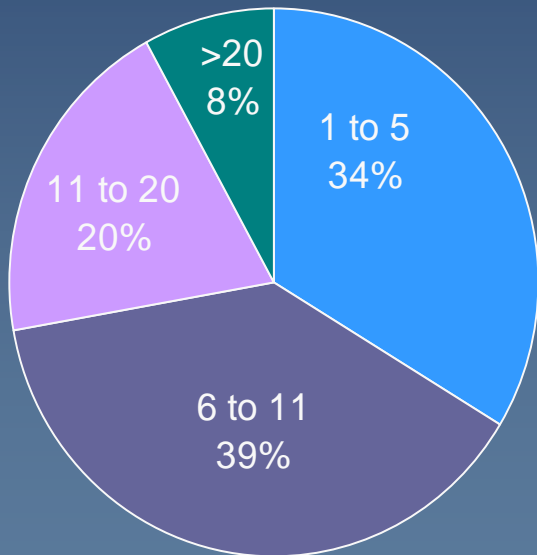
Methodology

- ◆ 65 paleontologists participated (68% response rate)
- ◆ 15-30 minute phone survey/ interview
- ◆ BLM provided contact info for individuals who have applied for and obtained permits within the last 2 years
- ◆ Results are representative and generalizable with a +/-5% margin of error

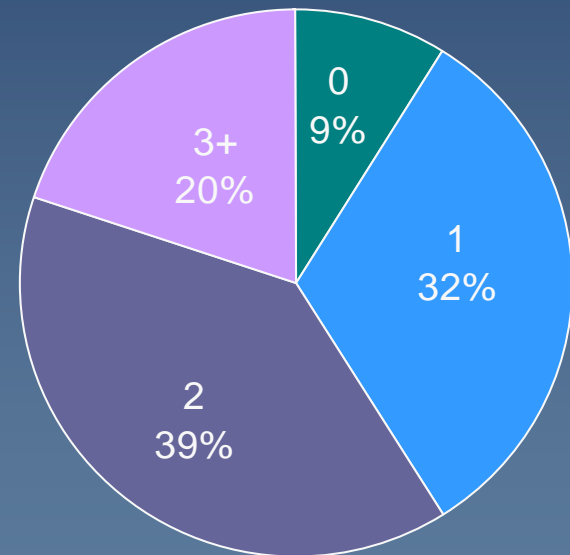
General Permitting Process

Number of BLM Permits

Number of Paleo Permit Applications Ever Submitted

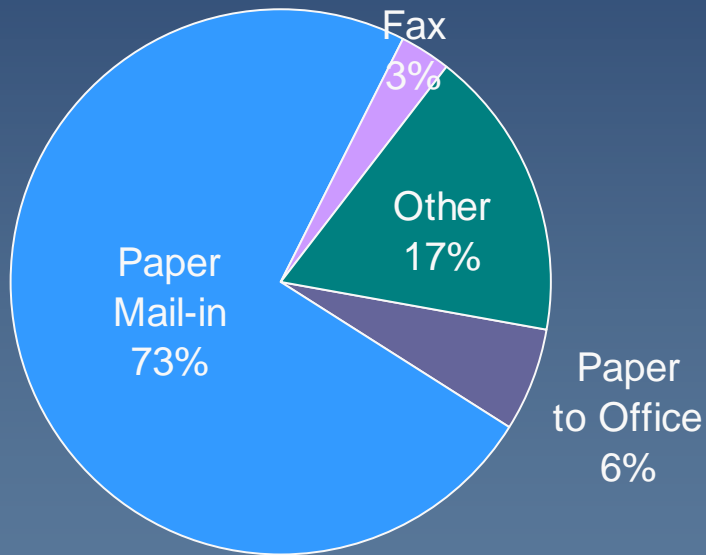


Number of Paleo Permit Applications Submitted in Past 2 Years

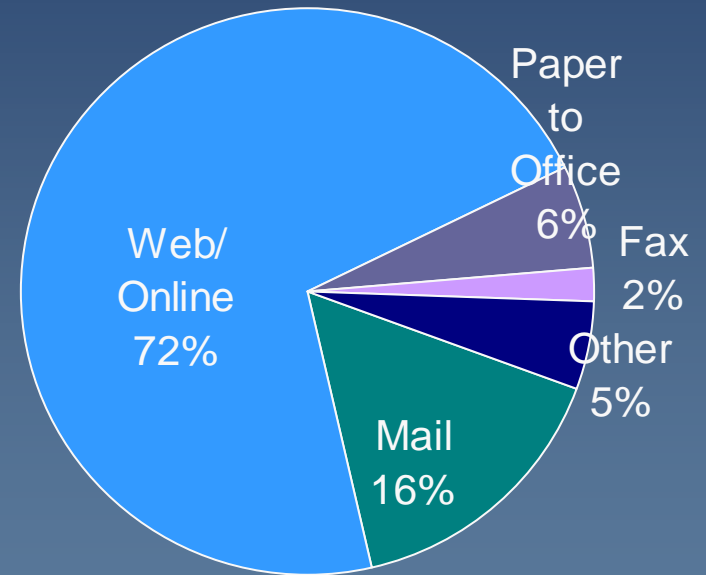


Method of Submission

How did you submit your most recent paleo permit application?



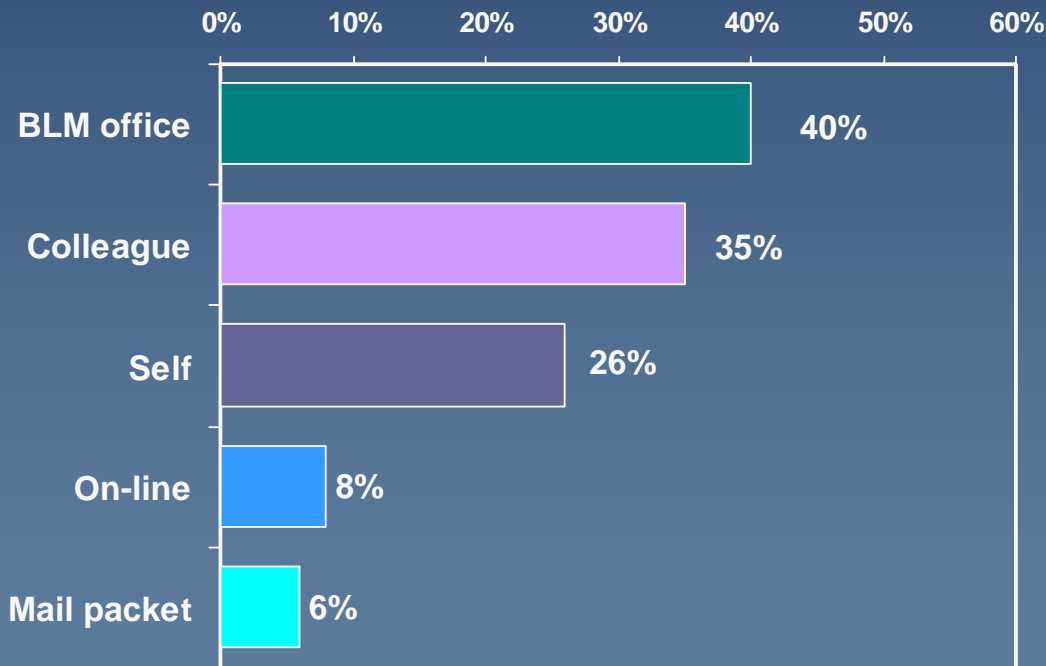
In the future, what is the best method for submitting permit applications?



Majority prefer electronic submissions in the future

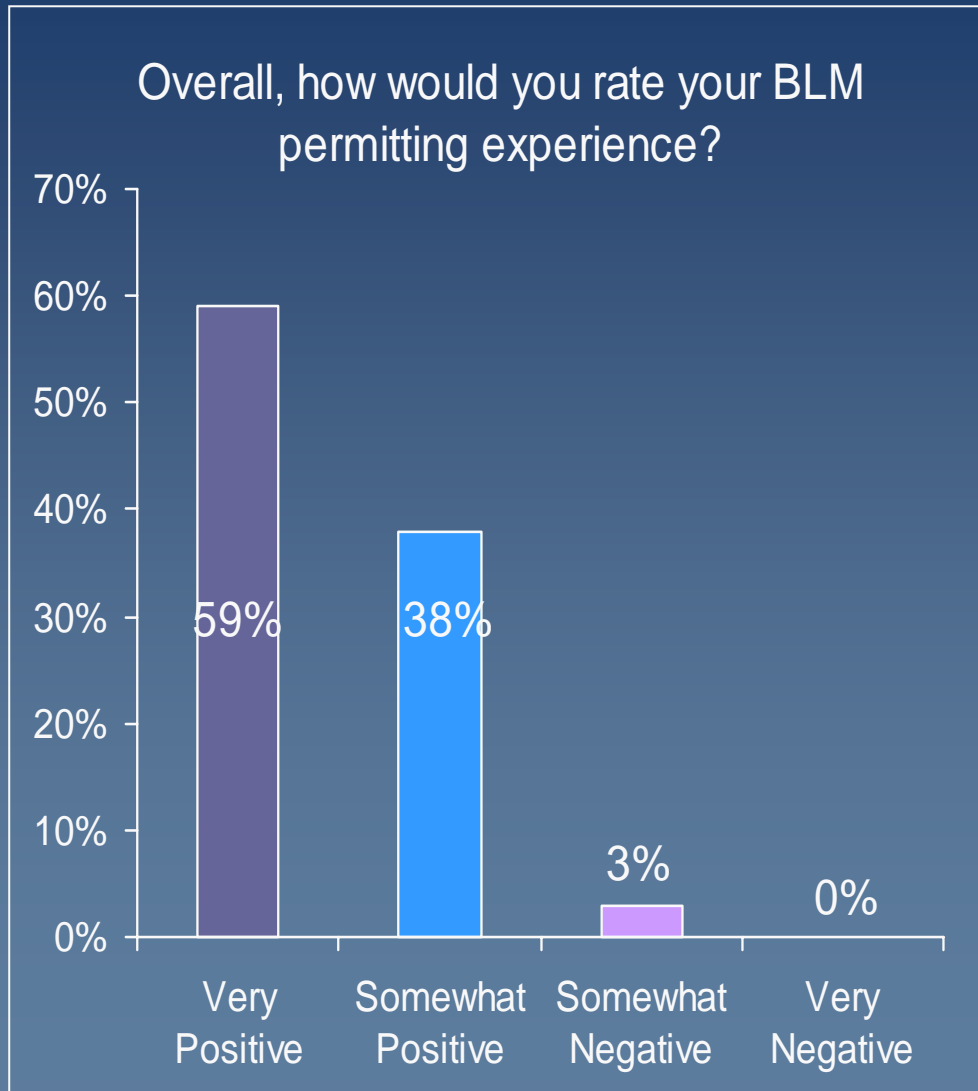
Learning to Complete Application

How did you first learn to complete a permit application?



*Total does not equal 100%, respondents could choose more than one method of learning

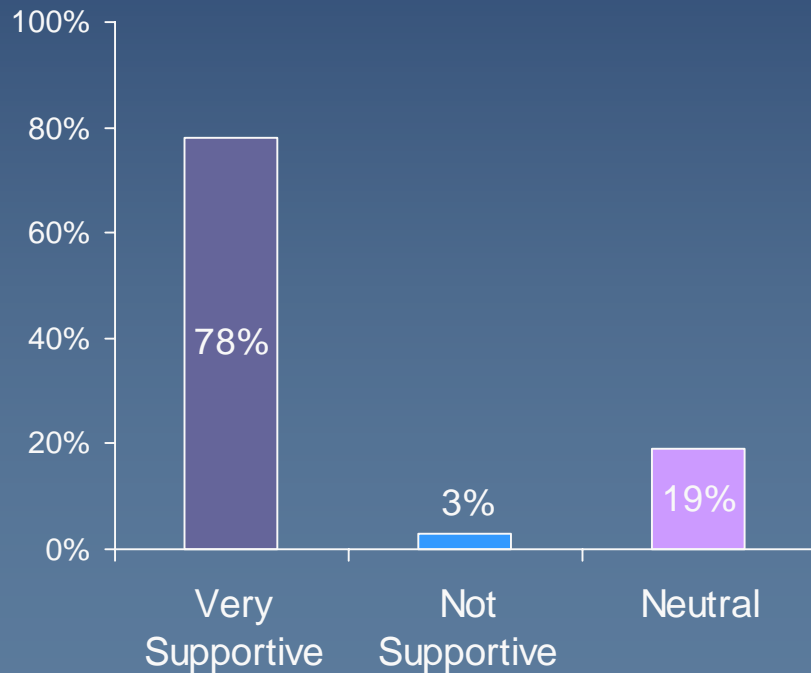
Overall Permitting Experience



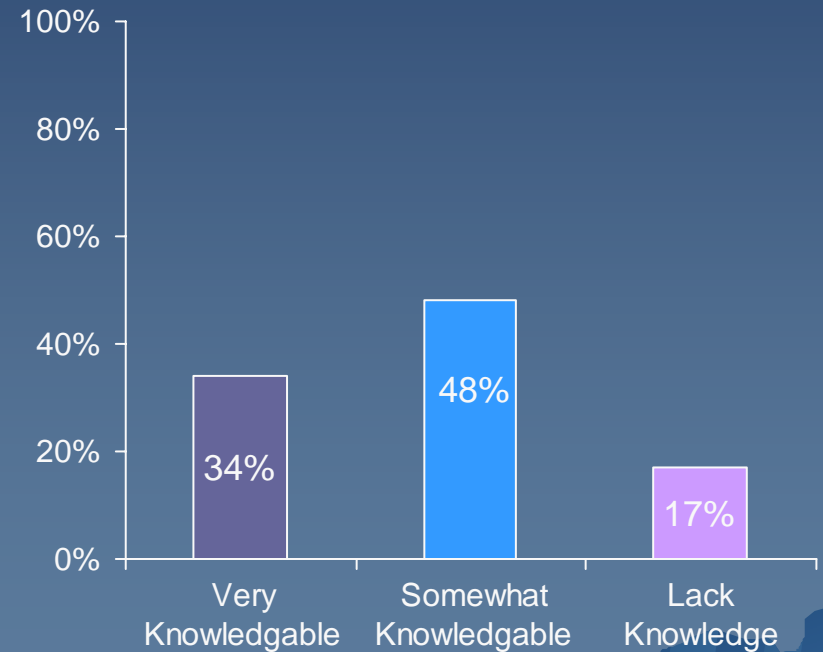
- ◆ 97% of respondents rated their permitting experience as “very positive” or “somewhat positive.”

BLM and Paleontology

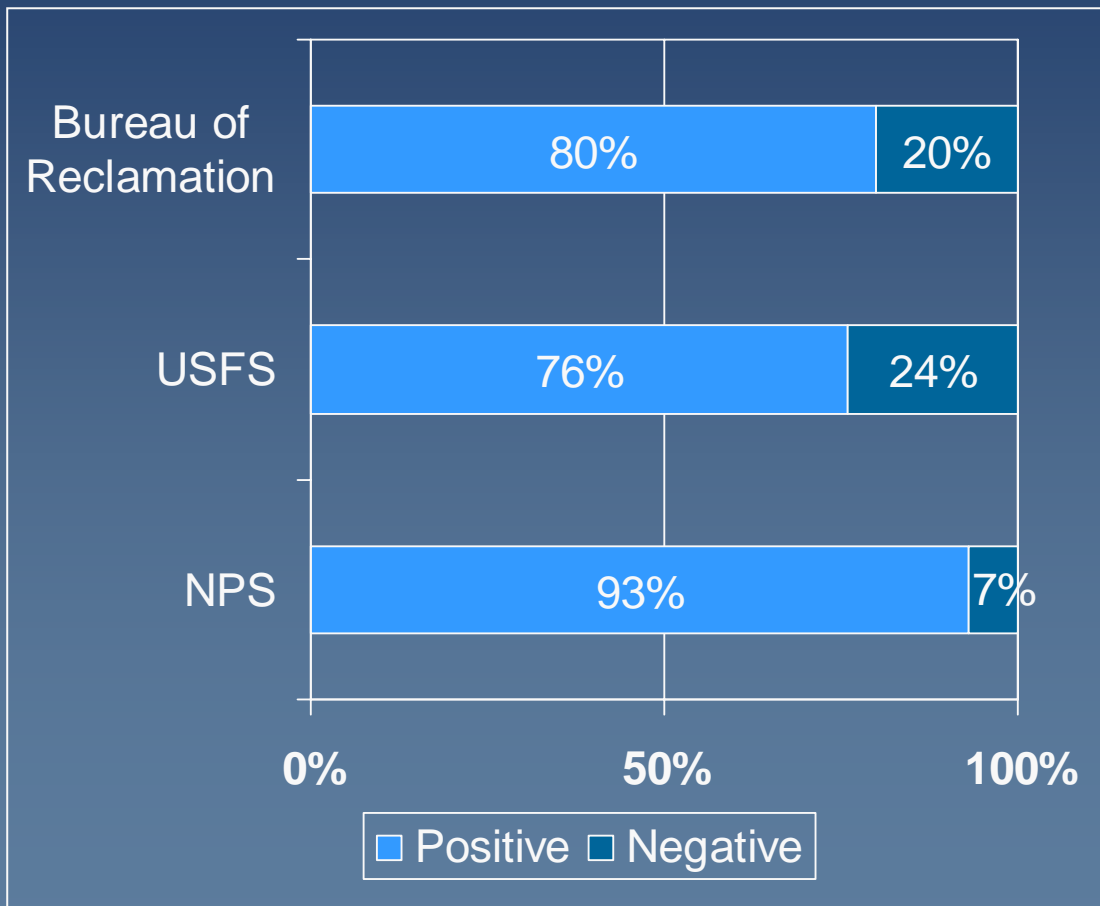
How supportive is BLM toward paleontology?



How knowledgeable are BLM staff about paleontology?



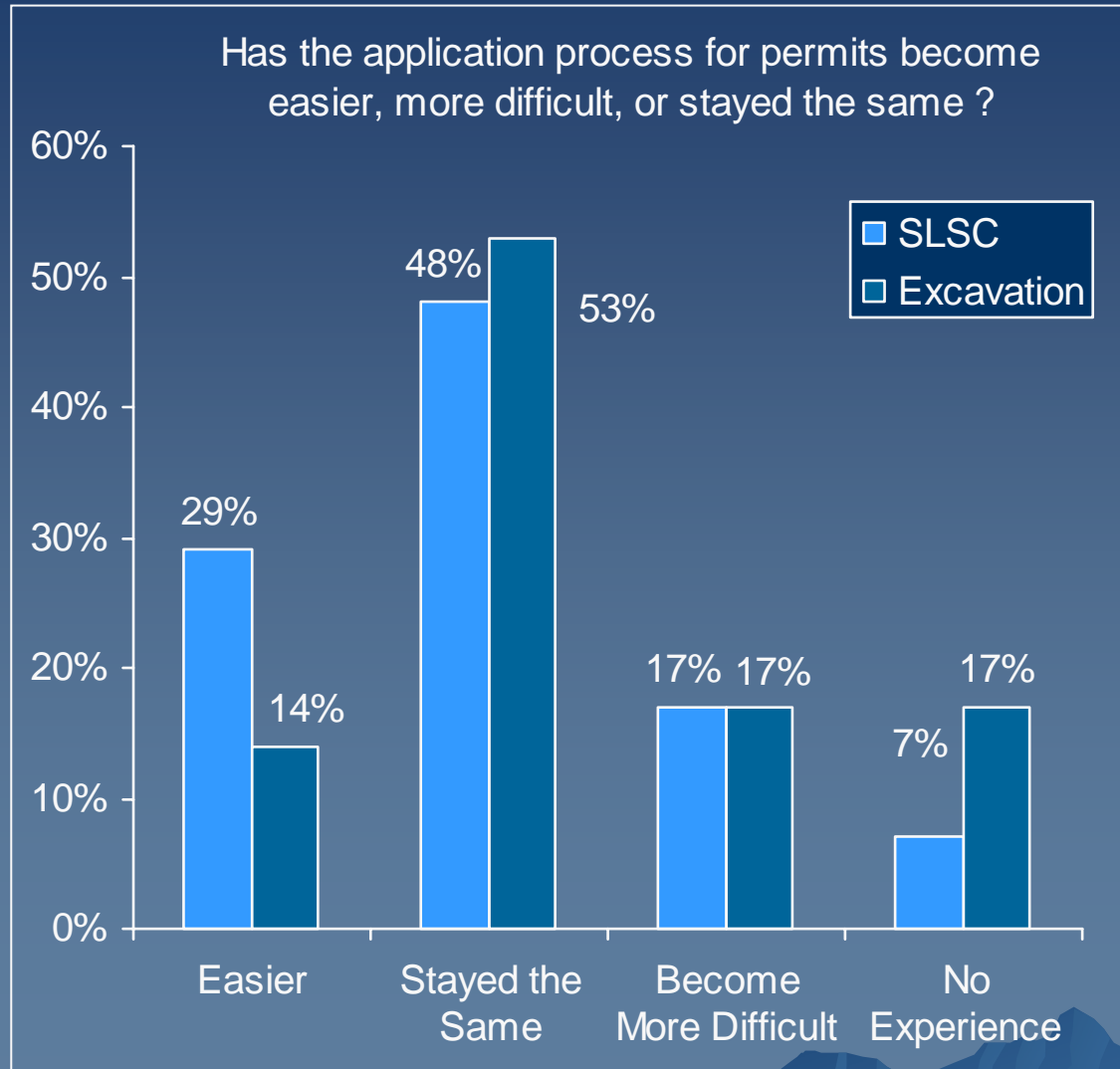
Paleontology permits experience across Federal Agencies



- ◆ 48% of respondents applied for permits with other federal land management agencies.

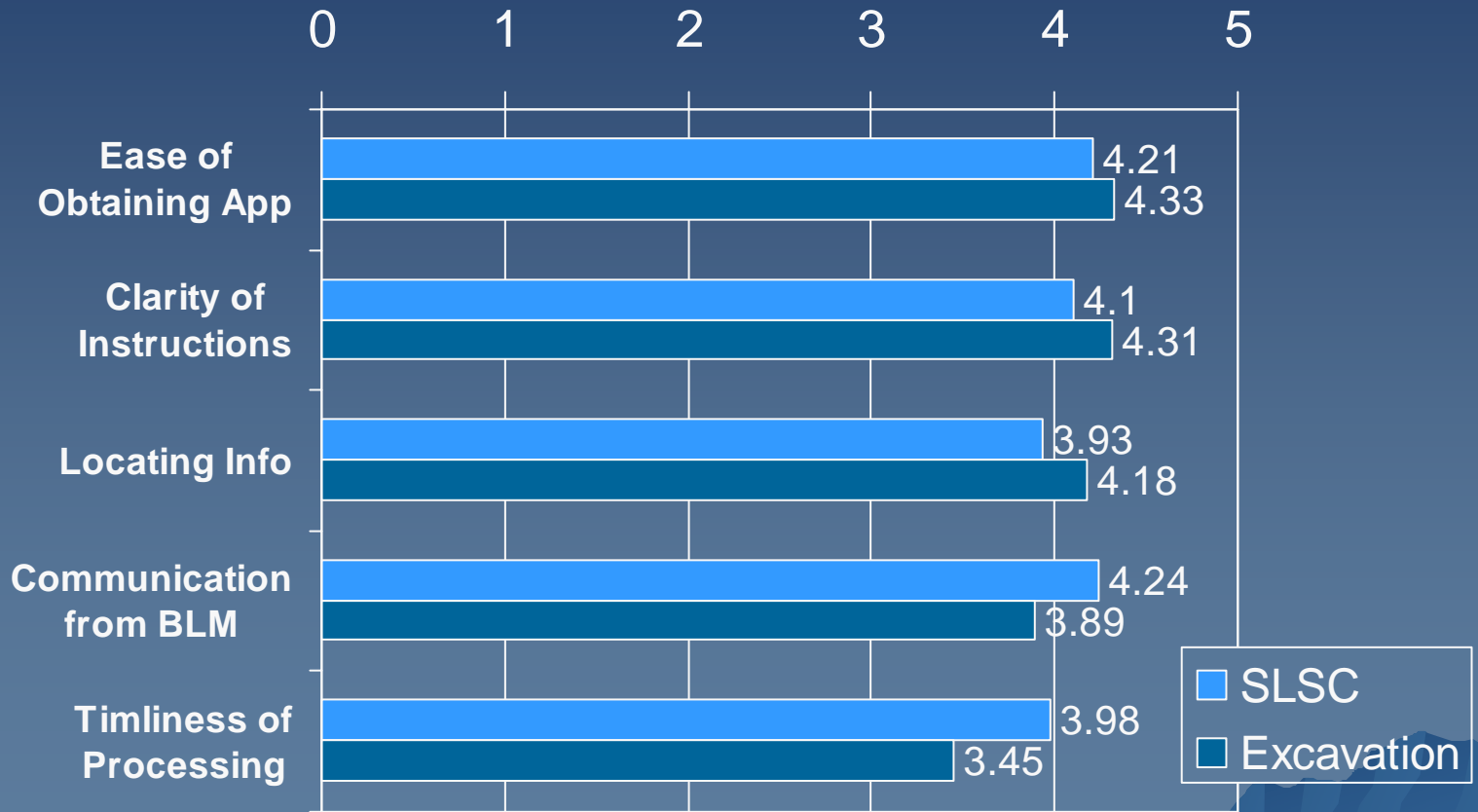
Comparing SLSC Permits and Excavation Permits

Permitting Process by Permit Type



Average Ratings of Permitting Process

On a Scale of 1 to 5, How Would You Rate...



Average Permit Processing Time

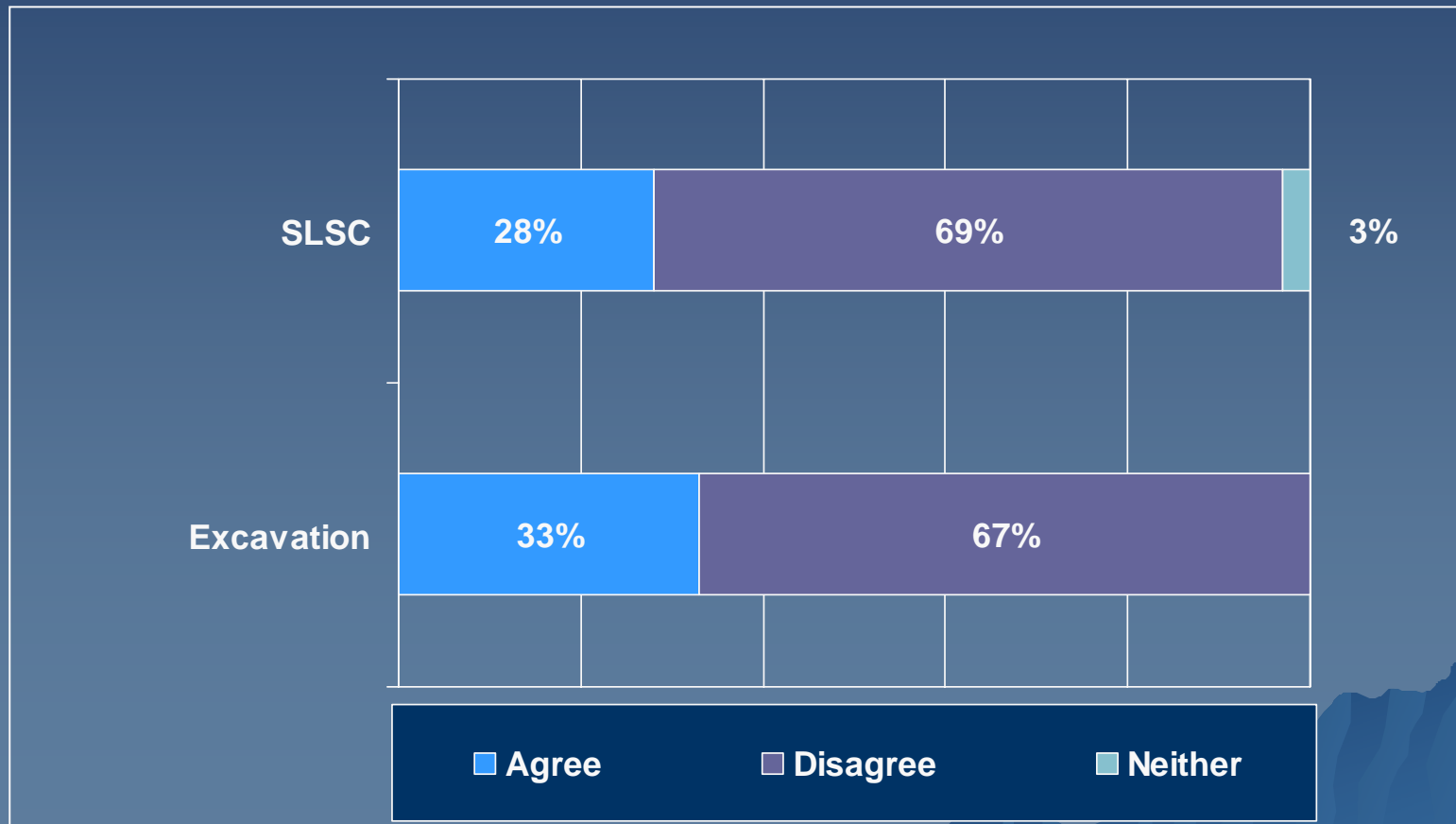
SLSC Permits

- ◆ 48% of respondents wait a month or less for applications to be processed.
- ◆ Average wait time was just **under 2 months**.

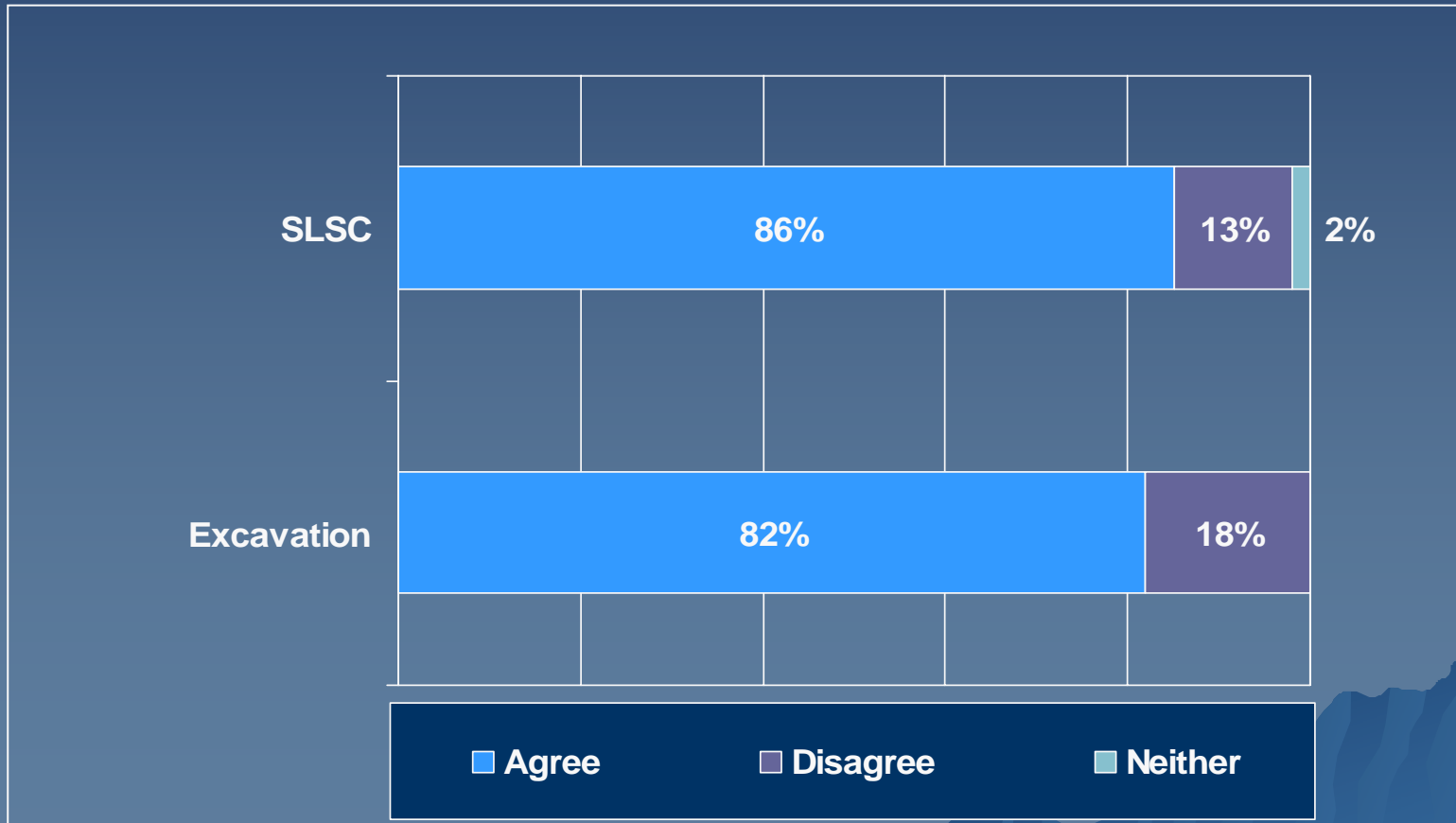
Excavation Permits

- ◆ 42% of respondents wait a month or less for applications to be processed.
- ◆ Average wait time was just **over 2 months**.

The Permit Application Process Is More Difficult than It Needs to Be - Do You Agree or Disagree?

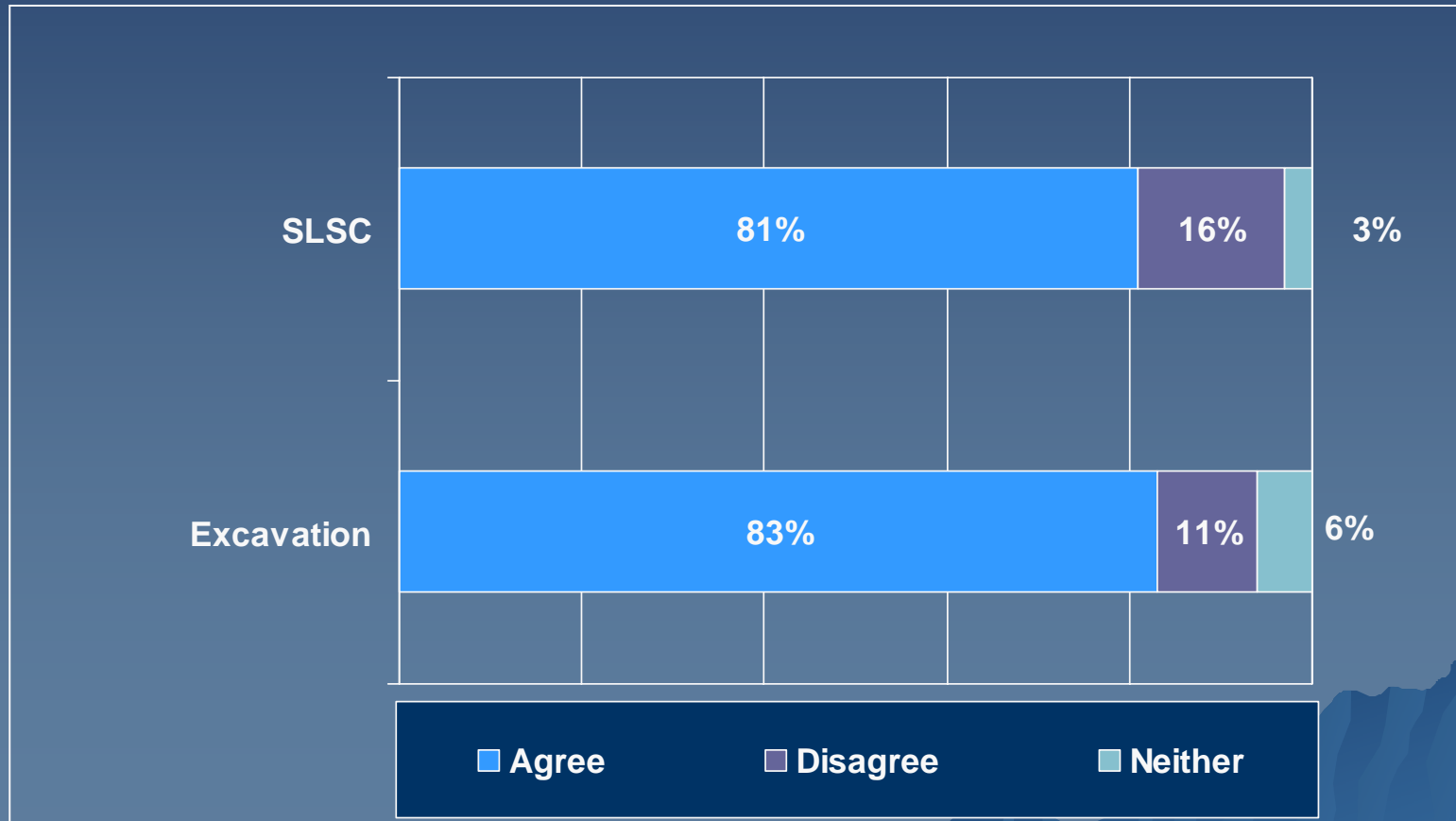


Permit Applications Are Processed in a Fair and Unbiased Way. Do You Agree or Disagree?

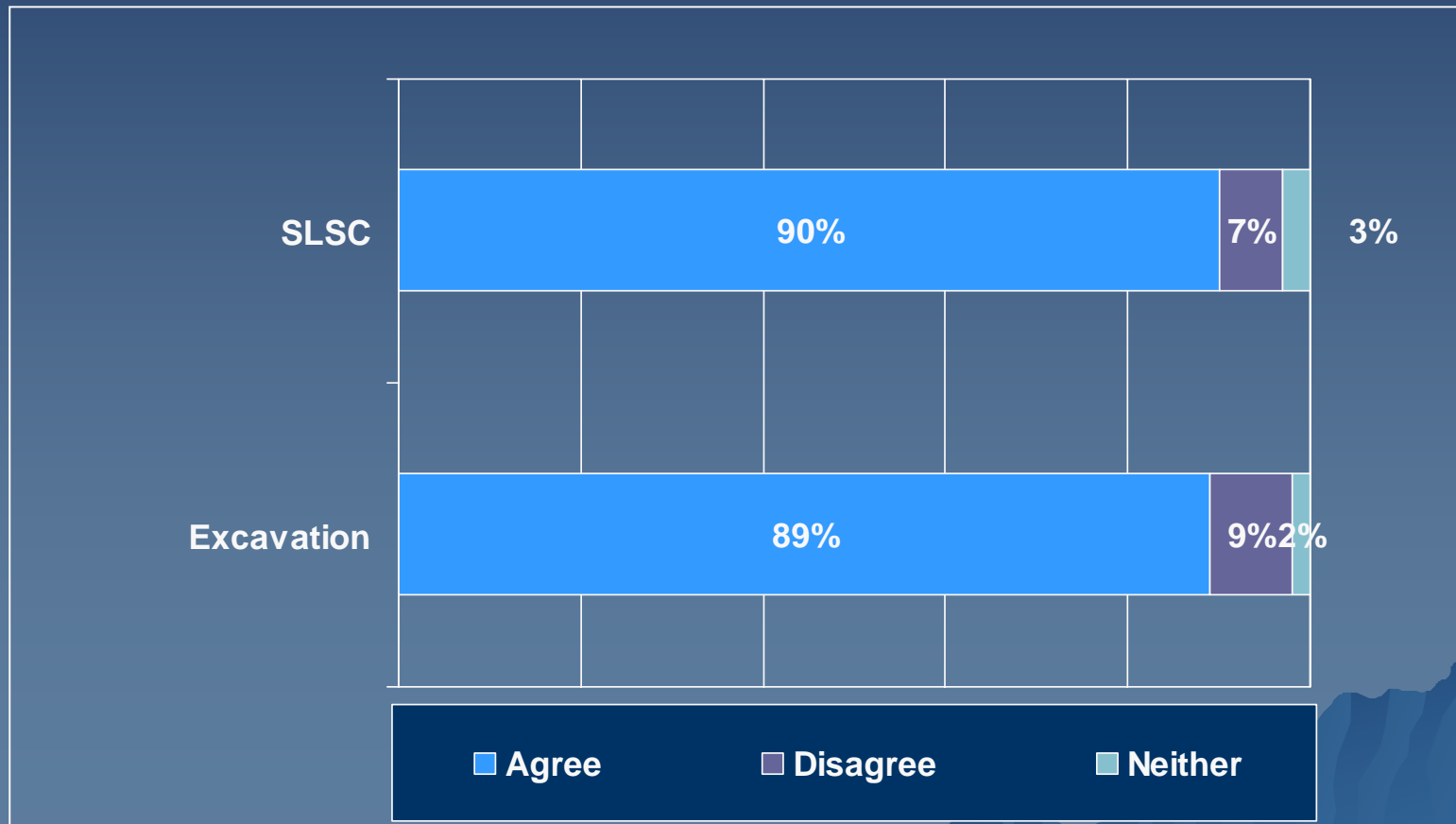


Reporting Requirements Are Clear and Understandable.

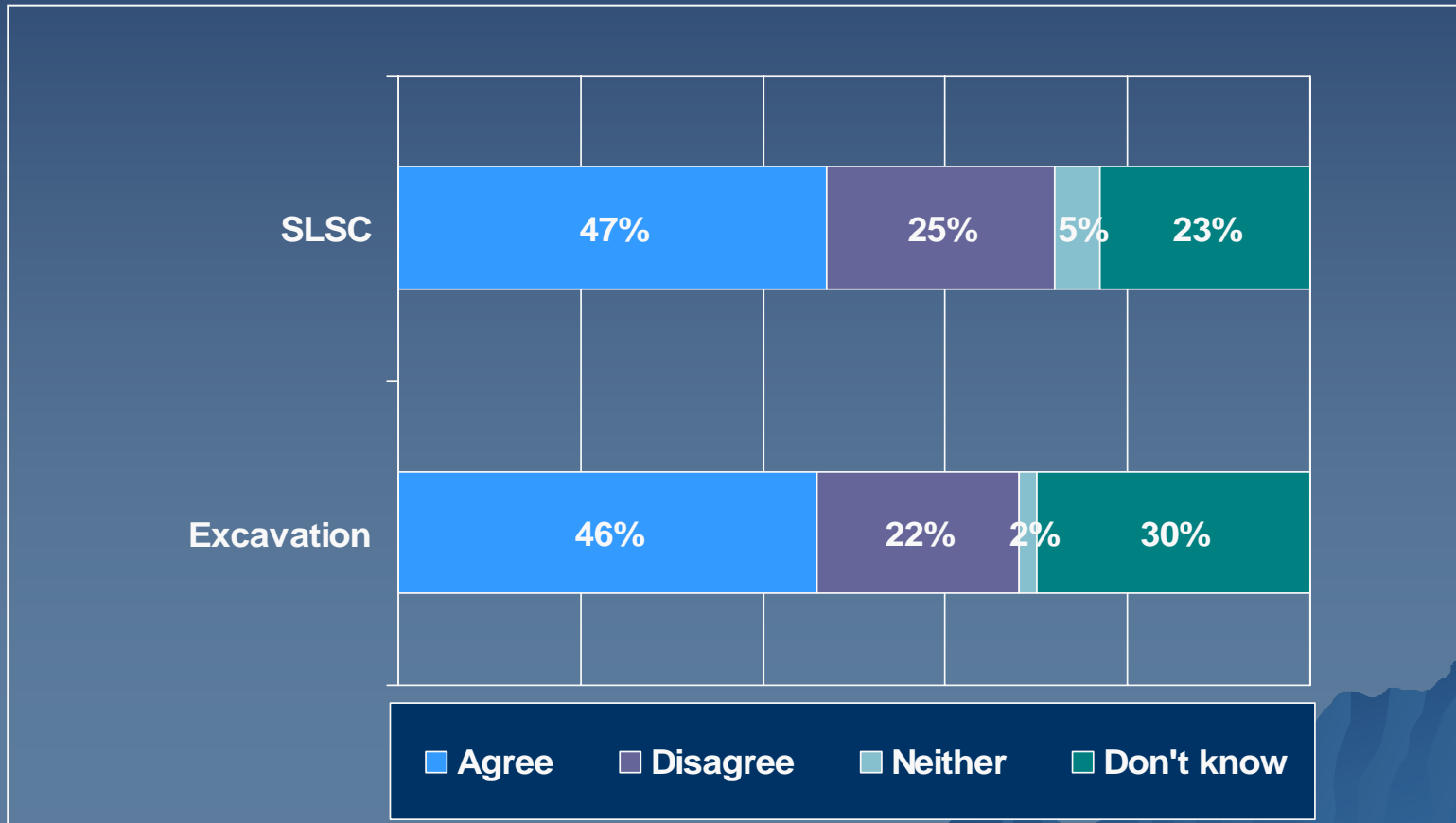
Do You Agree or Disagree?



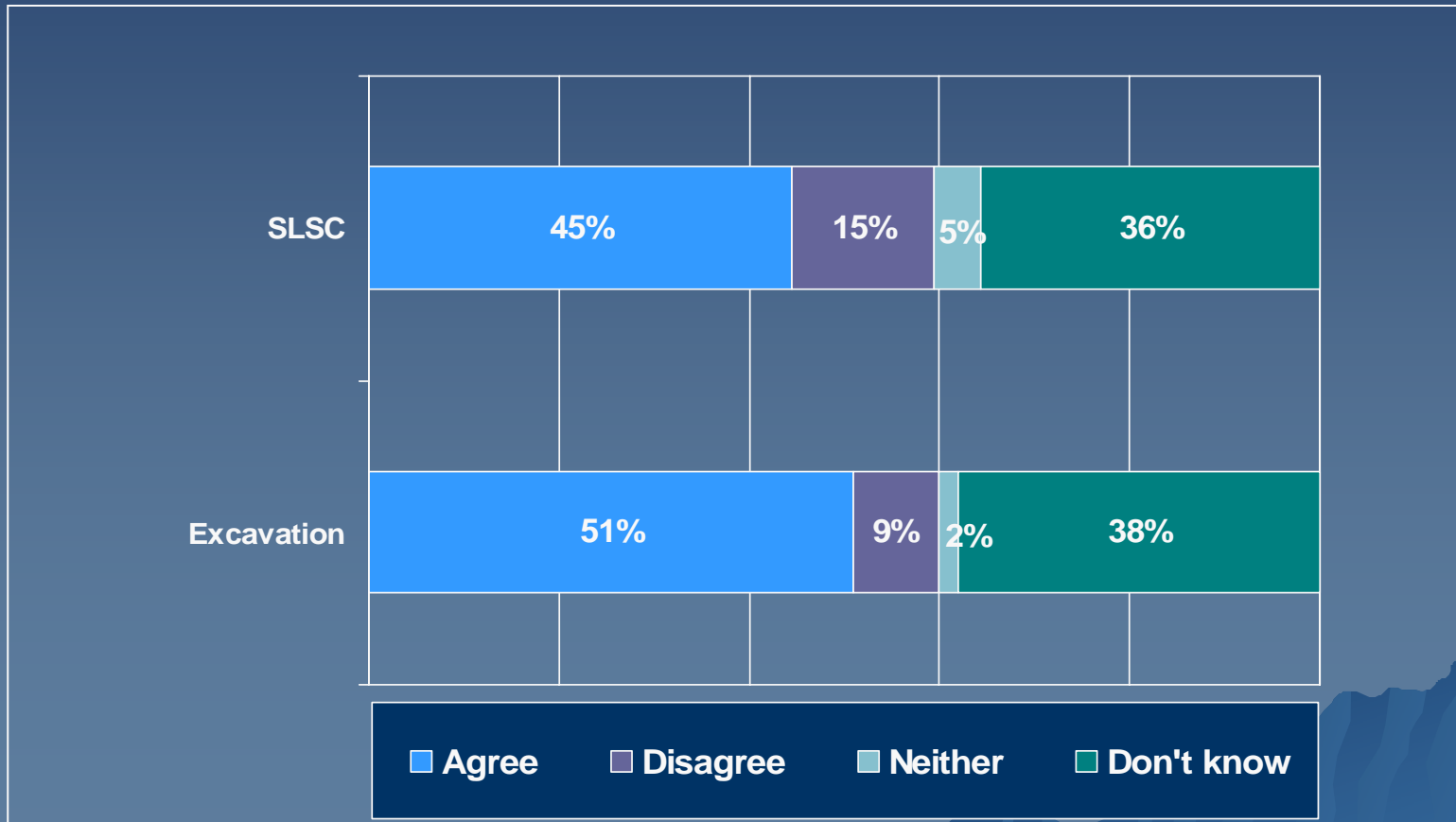
Reporting Requirements Provide a Workable Timeframe. Do You Agree or Disagree?



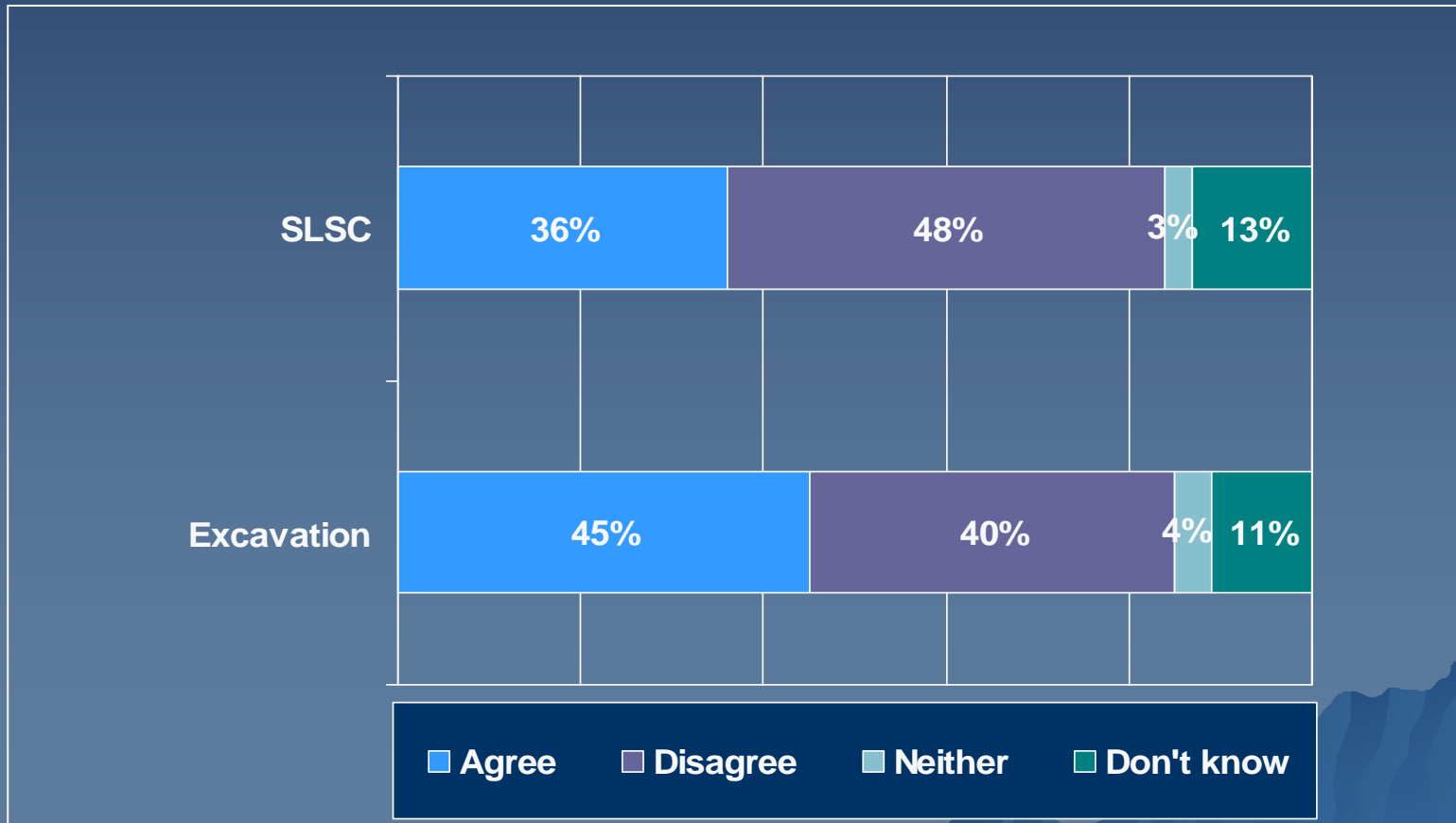
Reporting Requirements are Standard Across BLM Offices. Do You Agree or Disagree?



Reports are Read by BLM Staff. Do You Agree or Disagree?



Reports Authors are Provided Feedback from BLM Staff. Do You Agree or Disagree?



In summary, a majority of respondents say...

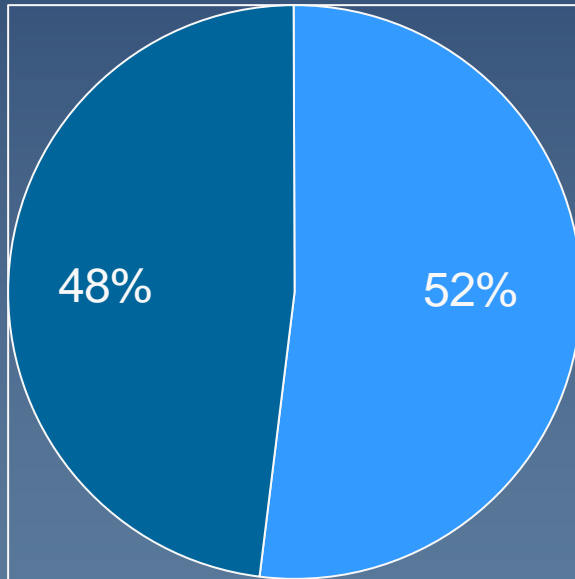
Agree

Disagree

- ✓ Permitting process is more difficult than it needs to be.
- ✓ Permit applications are processed in a fair and unbiased way.
- ✓ Reporting requirements are clear & understandable.
- ✓ There's a workable timeframe for reporting.
- ✓ Reporting requirements are standard & consistent across BLM offices.
- ✓ Reports are read & reviewed by BLM staff.
- ✓ ✓ Authors are provided feedback by BLM staff on Excavation reports but less on SLSC reports.

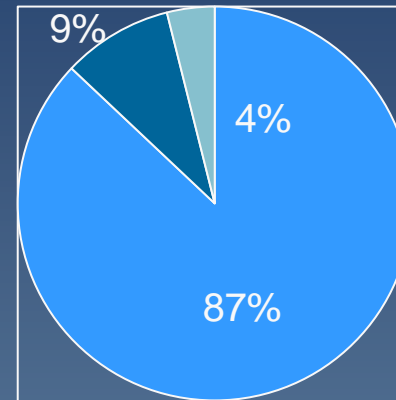
Differences Between SLSC and Excavation Permit Processing

Are there differences in processing SLSC and Excavation Permits?



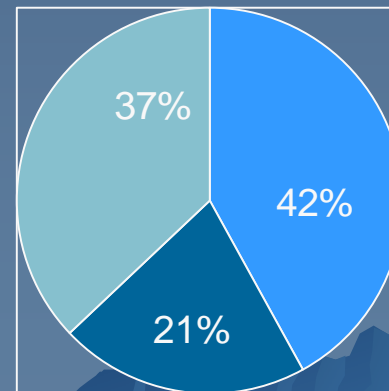
■ Yes ■ No

{If yes} Which Permit gets processed more quickly? N=34



■ SLSC
■ Excavation
■ Neither/Same

{If yes} Which Permit gets processed more objectively? N=34

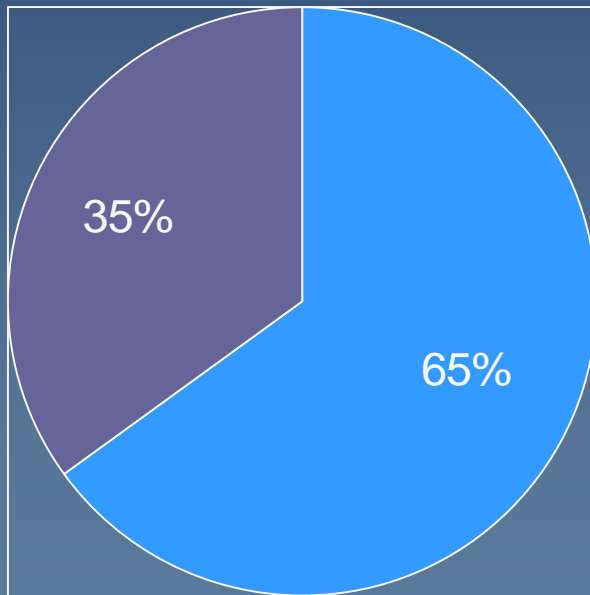


■ SLSC
■ Excavation
■ Neither/Same

Permit Claims and Space Issues

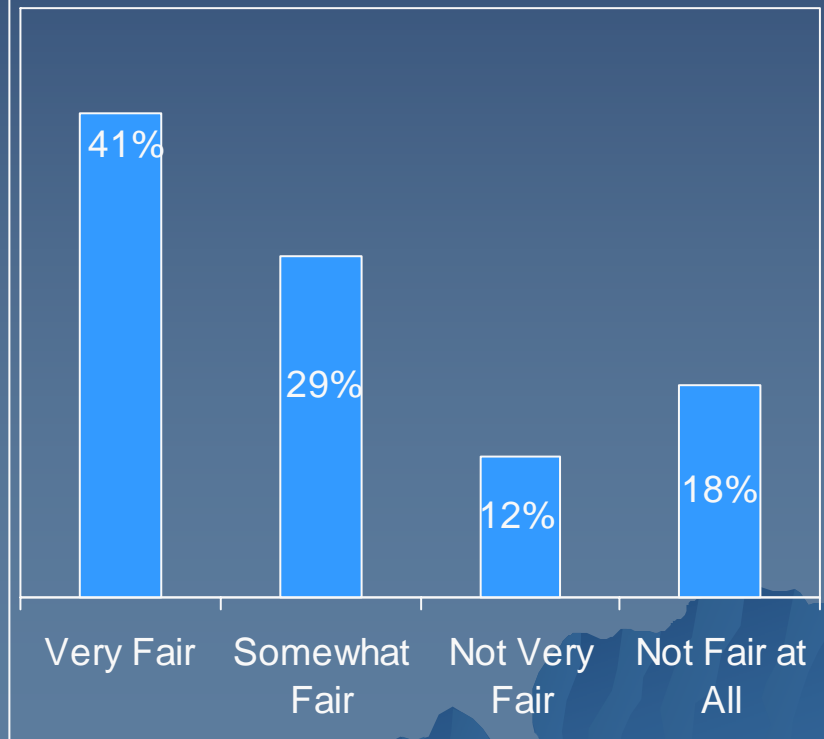
Permit Claims and Space Issues

Have you ever experienced other paleontologists receiving permits to work on lands in close proximity to where you were working?



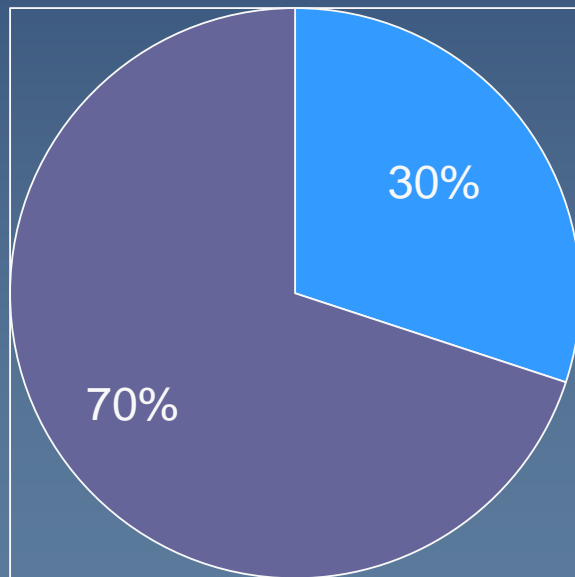
■ Yes ■ No

How would you rate the process by which excavation permits for the same area were awarded?



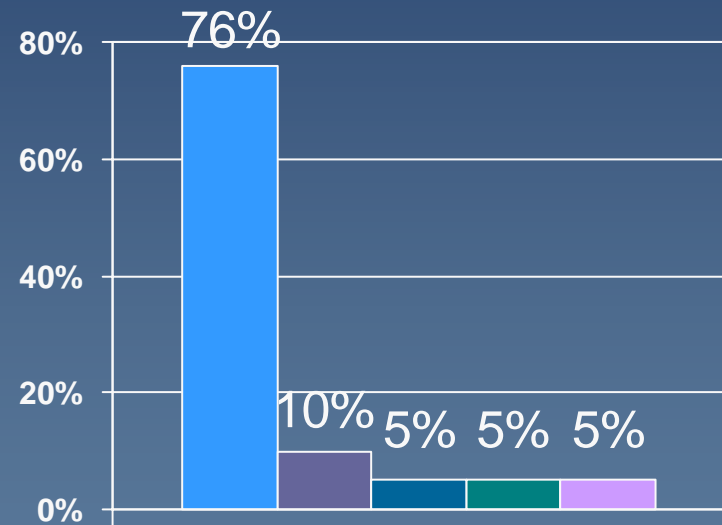
Disputes and Resolution

Did you experience any problems working with excavation permit holders on a location with more than one permit?



■ Yes ■ No

In the future, should claim disputes be resolved by...?

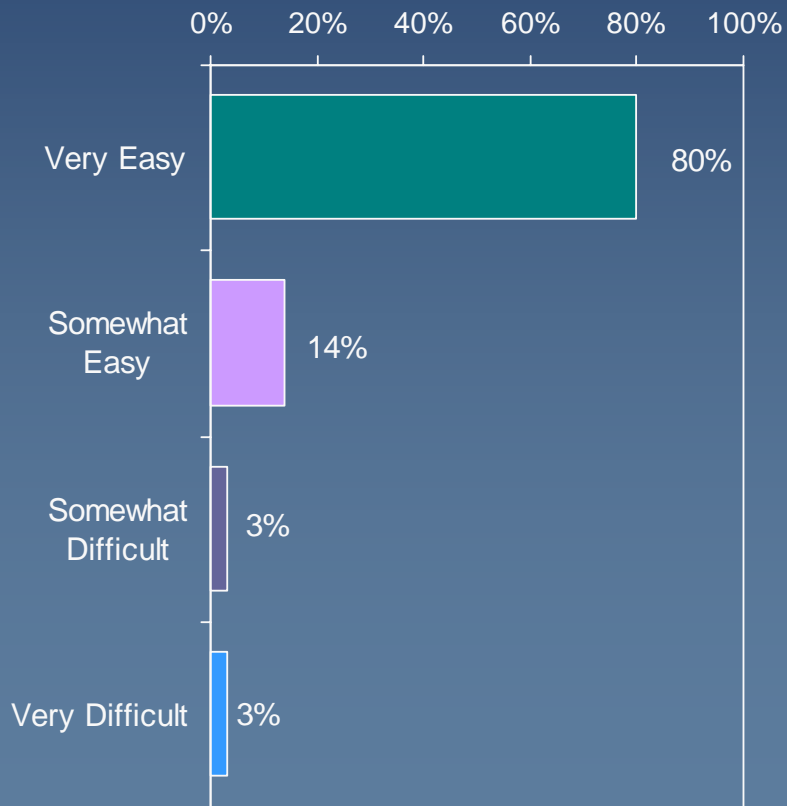


■ BLM Staff & Permittees
■ Permittees
■ BLM Staff
■ A Team of Paleos
■ Other

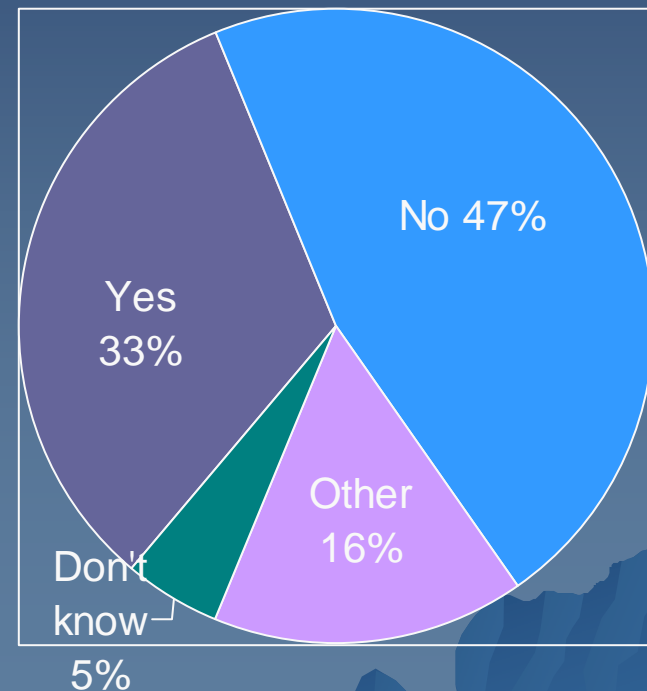
Repositories

Availability of Repositories

How Difficult Has It Been to Find Repositories for Collections?

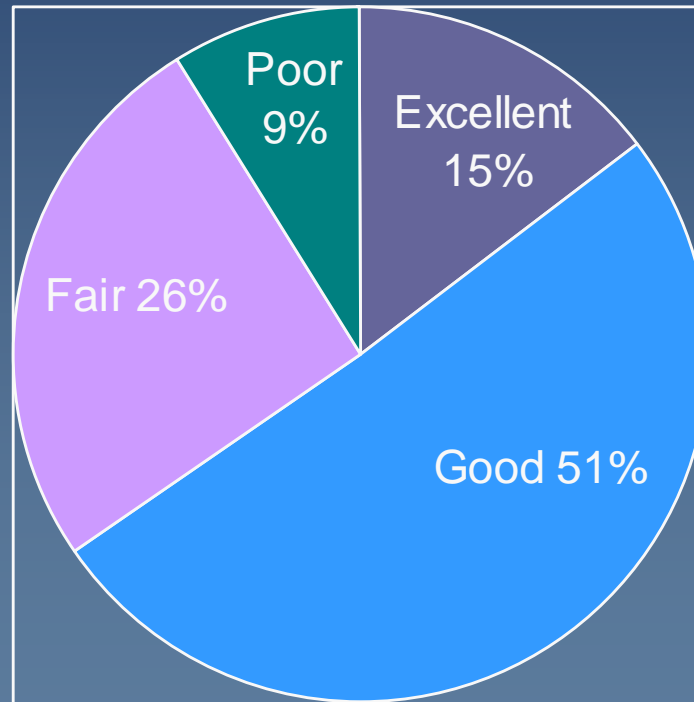


Should BLM Create More Repositories for the Work of Paleontologists?



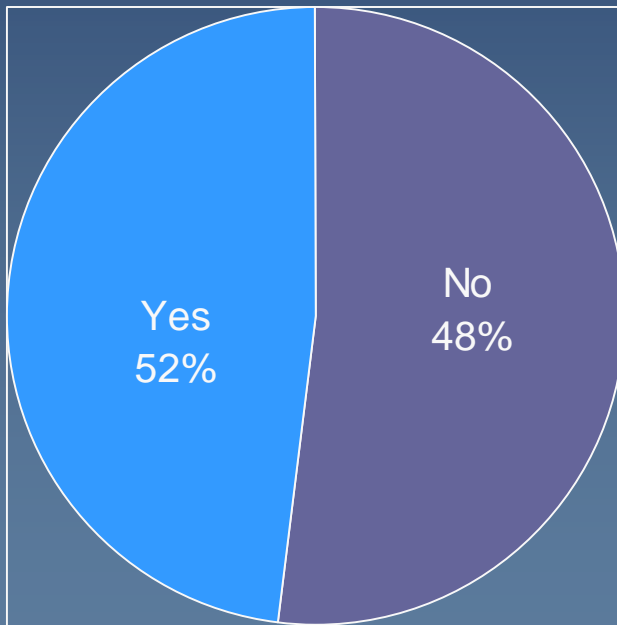
BLM Evaluation of Repositories

Do you think BLM does an excellent, good, fair or poor job of evaluating repositories?



Feedback to BLM

Have you ever provided feedback to BLM regarding the paleo permitting process?



Of those who have provided feedback...

- ◆ 74% in person
- ◆ 27% electronically
- ◆ 53% via telephone
- ◆ 27% in letter form
- ◆ Most (50%) provided feedback to both local and state BLM offices

Qualitative Feedback: Comments and Suggestions

Qualitative Data Supplements Quantitative Information

- ◆ Respondents explained their answers.
- ◆ Respondents described experiences in-depth.
- ◆ Overall, respondents rated the BLM permitting process favorably, yet expressed concerns and provided suggestions for improvement.

Interpreting Qualitative Data

- ◆ Qualitative data uncovers recurrent themes.
- ◆ While there was no consensus among respondents, many had similar concerns and suggestions.
- ◆ The experiences highlighted here were shared by a number of respondents but not all.

Comments About Permitting Experience

Respondents' experiences with permitting process varied greatly between states, field offices, personnel, and over time.

“It depends on the field office and the situation.”

“My experience varied from state to state.”

“The experience with the local field officer is critical.”

Many respondents stressed the BLM permitting process has improved throughout the years.

“I've had a positive experience since the 1960s.”

“The permitting process has changed over time.”

Some respondents had a very positive experience with BLM permitting. They said “keep up the good work.”

“Things are timely and working well now. It doesn’t need to change.”

“I wouldn’t change anything.”

“They’re doing a good job.”

Many respondents enjoyed their interactions with BLM personnel.

“BLM people are very helpful. I’ve had a positive experience.”

“My interactions with personnel have been wonderful.”

**Respondents
Expressed
Concerns About...**

The distribution of permits is unfair and inequitable. Some stated that some BLM offices show favoritism; permitting process is marred by personality conflicts & political biases.

“It is inequitable in some states. In others it’s not.”

“Who you are depends on how quickly your application gets processed.”

“There are problems with personalities. The process is biased because each person does it differently.”

“There are a lot of personalities that come into play and grudges. Misguided criteria are unevenly applied.”

Some paleontologists don't have to follow rules; BLM rewards those who don't follow rules

“It's frustrating because it feels like we are being punished for following the rules, because of the time it takes to get a permit.”

“Non-permit researchers have more leeway while permit applications are highly regulated.”

Multiple paleontologists receiving excavation permits for same land

“Giving permits to dig to more than one person is asinine.”

“My experience with the BLM has been wonderful except for the duplication of permits.”

Perception of differential treatment based on degree

“They’re biased in favor of someone with a Ph.D or someone they know.”

“Qualifications are unduly restrictive and disallow qualified researchers into the field.”

“Restricting excavation permits to those with Ph.D’s is ludicrous. There are people with Ph.D’s who should not be doing the work and those without Ph.D’s who have the experience and qualifications to do the work .”

“University people and private consultants are not held up to the same standards .
Consultants are asked more questions and the process takes longer.”

Lack of paleontologists on staff at local and state field offices

“I wish more BLM staff knew more about paleontology.”

“They’re very supportive of letting paleontologist do the work but there’s not enough paleontologists on staff.”

Paleontology gets “shortchanged” but often only because of BLM’s staff and budget deficiencies

“The BLM offices don’t have the resources that should be devoted to paleontology. They’re overworked.”



Suggestions for Improving Permitting Process

Reduce favoritism and political bias at field office level

“Right now it is unevenly handled and biased with convoluted and inconsistent criteria. BLM must work to change that.”

“ If they have a director of the permitting process, they should be fair to all people and not subject to political biases and involved in controversies which were reported. They should be fair and above politics.”

“The official giving the permits has too much discretion and can be biased.”

Increase consistency between BLM offices

“More consistency from state to state, region to region.”

“It really depends on who they put in charge of paleontology.”

“Equitability- be the same in every district and every state.”

Reexamine system of repositories

“A lot of museums don't have adequate space to house materials.”

“There's not enough room at the university; the BLM should store them.”

“It was prestigious to be a repository; now it's a logistical nightmare.”

“Many repositories cannot afford to handle the collections properly.”

Have at least one paleontologist on staff at field offices

“All state offices should have a paleontologists employed.”

“I wish more staff had better knowledge of paleontology.”

“Hire more paleontologists. BLM is short on expertise with archaeologists in charge of permitting process.”

“Giving more control to offices with paleontologists on staff would improve the process.”

Allow only one permittee per excavation site

“Make it so they’re not biased. Or more importantly, one institution per site.”

“Ensure one group of researchers is not given a permit to work in the same area as other researchers.”

Improve communication and cooperation between BLM offices, paleontologists and repositories

“We need better communication between different entities involved- repositories and researcher/consultant.”

“Facilitate and maintain open lines of communication between BLM staff and permittees.”

“The whole issue comes down to cooperation. Working with people instead of working for political gain. Both sides need to cooperate.”

“Too often problems arise because BLM has not communicated with researchers and those with overlapping permits.”

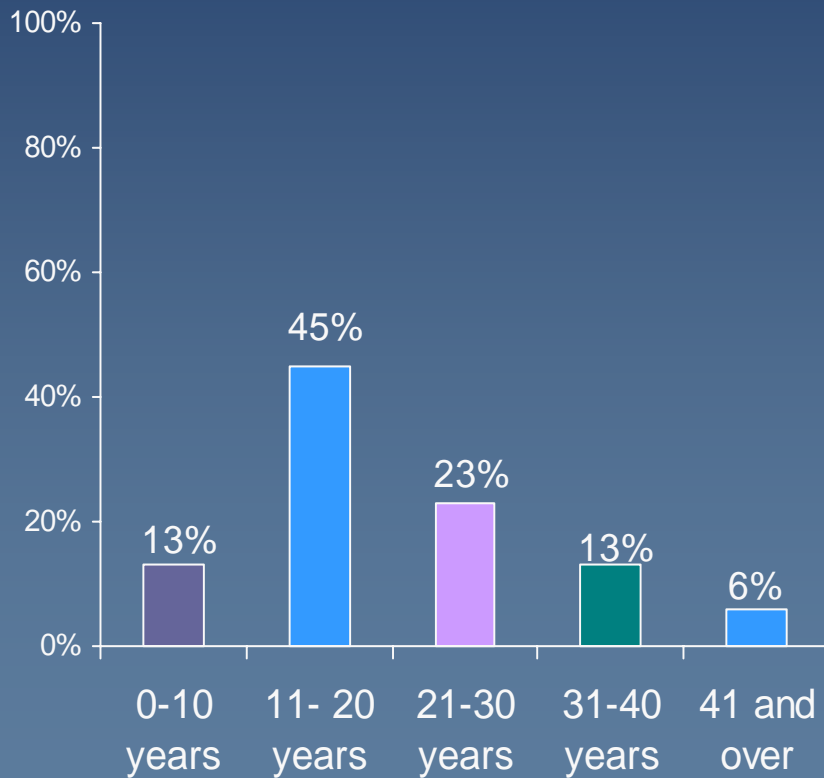
Streamline application process and reporting requirements

- Streamline renewal process
- Create long-term permits
- Clarify application instructions and reporting requirements
- Develop on-line application process and electronic reporting
- More immediate feedback

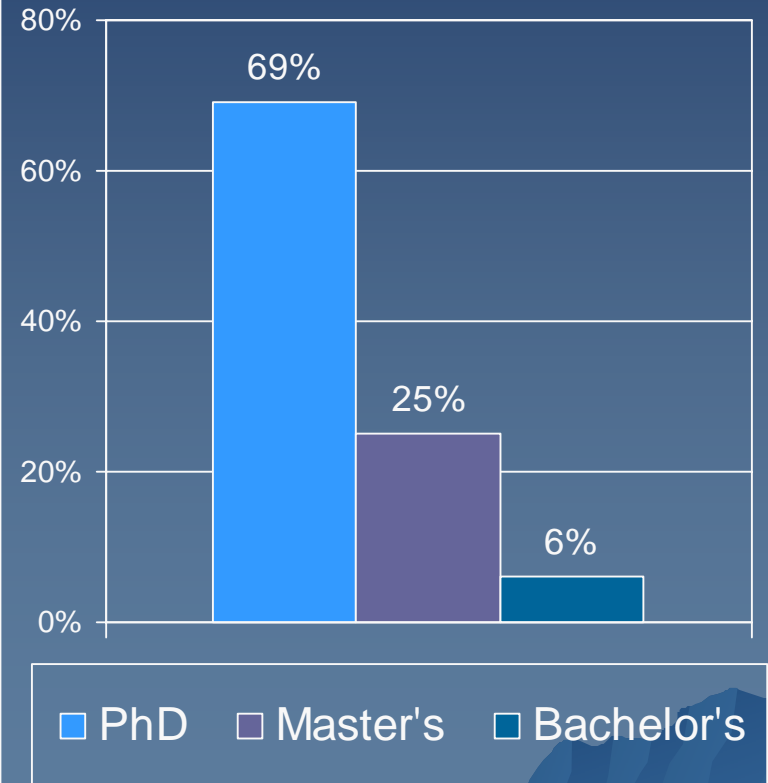
Respondent Demographics

Respondent Demographics

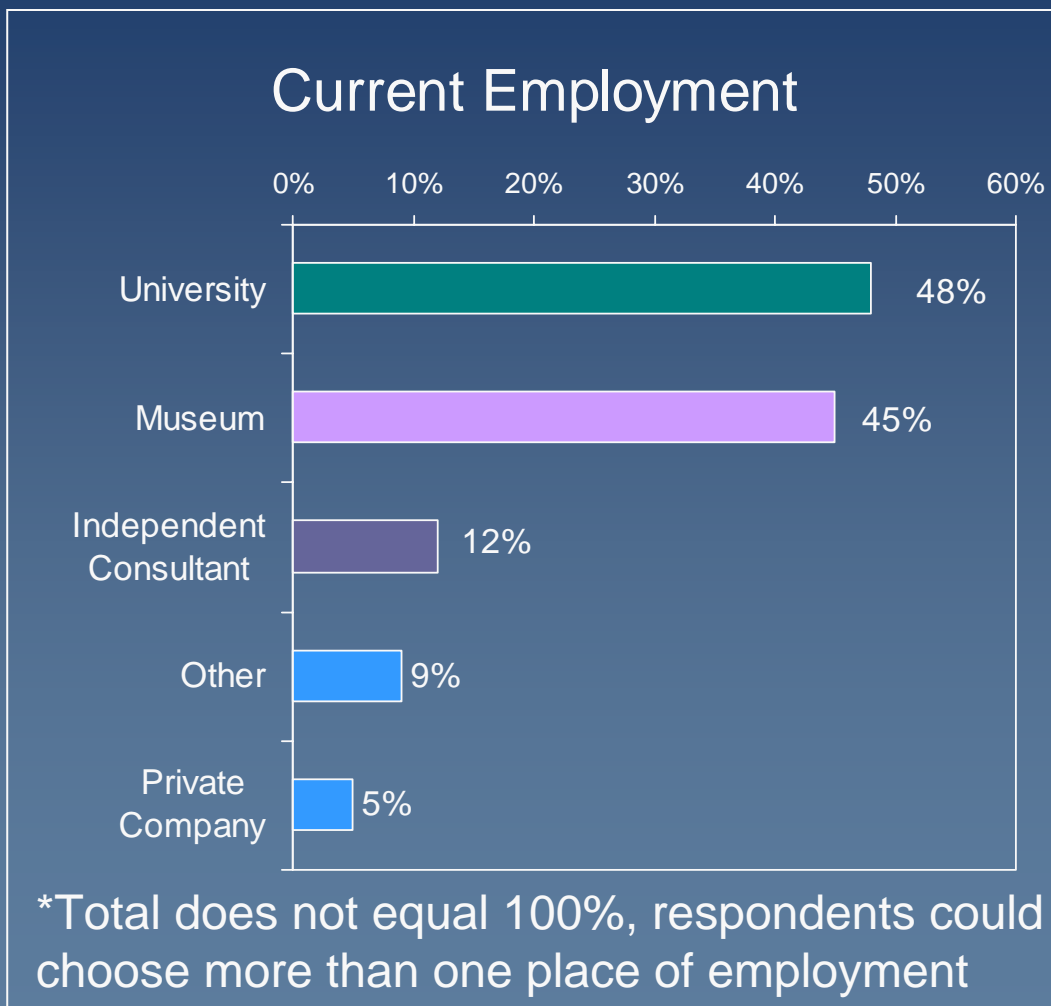
Years working as a Paleontologist



Highest Degree Earned



Respondent Demographics

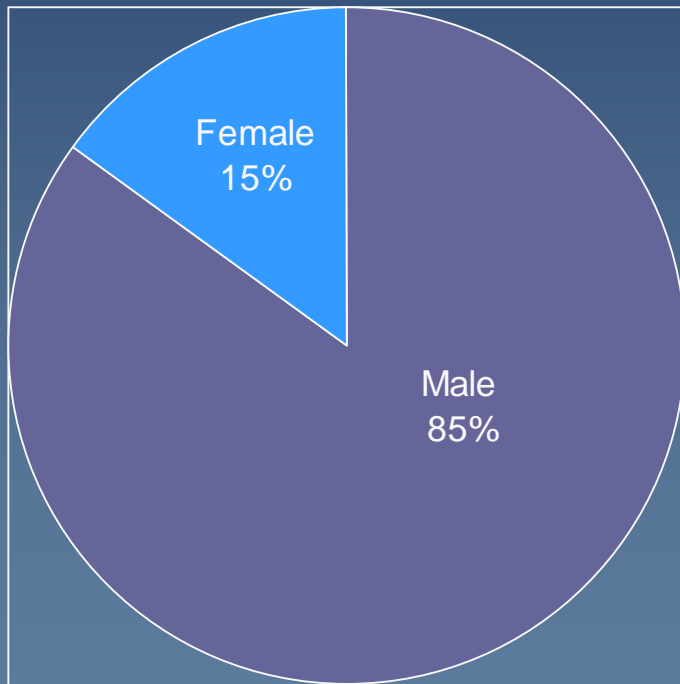


◆ 48% of respondents were university employees.

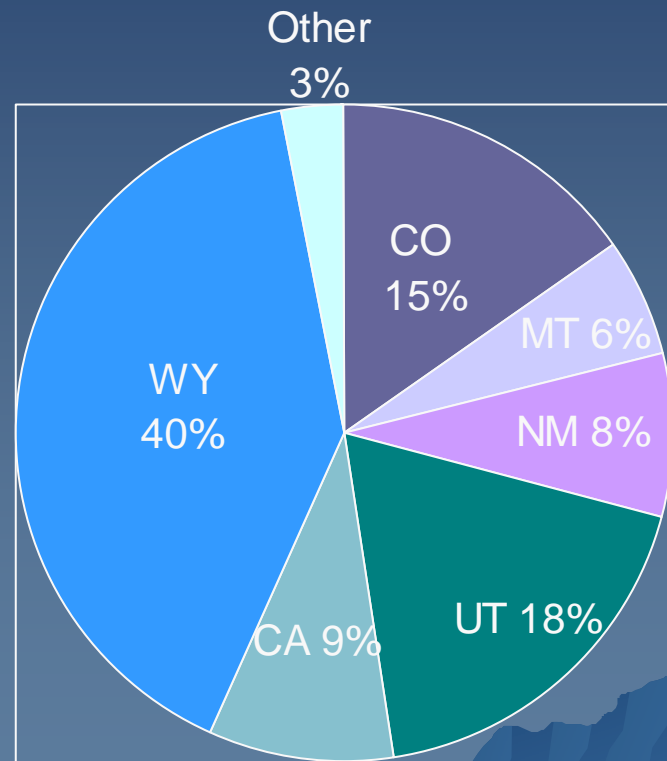
◆ 45% of respondents were museum employees.

Respondent Demographics

Gender of Respondents



Which state do you do most of your paleontology work?



BLM Paleontology Study Permitting Process Survey

Social Research Laboratory
Northern Arizona University

