

**Monroe County, WV Landowner Impact Report  
and EIS Scoping Recommendations**

**RE: Mountain Valley Pipeline (Docket PF 15-3-000)**



**Part I:  
Summary & EIS Recommendations**

**June 16, 2015**

Submitted via FERConline (Final copy to follow)

TO:

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary  
The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street NE, Room 1A  
Washington, DC 20426

FROM:

Save Monroe, Inc. and The Border Conservancy of Monroe County, WV

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# **Monroe County, WV Landowner Impact Report**

## **PART I: Summary & EIS Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

The Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) affects landowners along two possible corridors across Monroe County – the Original Proposed Corridor announced in October 2014 and the Alternate Route 110 proposed in February 2015.

Many landowners denied access for surveying to MVP. There had (and has) not yet been an official determination of public need (and therefore of potential applicability of eminent domain) – and in fact, there has not yet been an official application by the company filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Save Monroe and The Border Conservancy, two community organizations in Monroe County WV, are hereby submitting individual reports by landowners of possible impacts of the pipeline on their property and their lives. This information was gathered using a Landowner's Impact Form that was developed to help landowners identify features and issues relevant to the FERC's EIS assessment. While the priority in reporting property features is for landowners directly on the proposed routes, especially if they did not permit surveying by contractors of Mountain Valley Pipeline, other landowners living near the corridors and elsewhere in the county have also participated.

This Summary Report, which is available to the public, includes Key Findings and Scoping-Related Recommendations as well as Selected Charts and Graphs on EIS issues. The landowner reports are being submitted in a separate document to the FERC, with the request that they be treated as confidential information.

The collection, analysis and preparation of the information contained in these reports have been undertaken by volunteers from Save Monroe, Inc. and The Border Conservancy with the assistance of several other individuals including professional geologists, attorneys, cartographers, historians and evaluators.

The Monroe County landowners, however, are the true experts in knowledge of features of their property and culture. The strength of this project is that it gathers and begins to synthesize their information so that economic and community development decisions can be made in a responsible manner that considers both the individual landowner and the effects on neighboring lands, resources and culture.

No one report or set of data can present a full picture of the negative effects of the pipeline in Monroe County. It is our expectation that other organizations and individuals will be submitting information, and that Save Monroe, the Border Conservancy, Indian Creek Watershed Association and other organizations will continue to gather, evaluate, and submit data through the next several months.

## Scoping Recommendations Based on Key Findings

- **Assess the impact of pipeline construction and operation on both public and private water sources.** In the county overall, it has been estimated that 63% of households are served by PSDs and 37% use private sources. As reported by participating landowners, however, 80% use a well or spring as their primary source of drinking water, whereas only 20% have access to public water. The difference can partly be explained by the fact that the pipeline route tries to avoid more heavily populated areas. Clearly, protecting both sources is critical. Given Monroe County's karst terrain, water protection takes on special meaning.
- **Place high priority on identifying and protecting potentially affected springs, with special attention to the hydrogeology of Peters Mountain.** You can't drill another spring, and once destroyed, there is no mitigation. A high percentage of landowners (45%) report springs as providing at least one source of drinking water. For the three public service districts that serve the county, as well as the Sweet Springs Water bottling company, the springs of Peters Mountain are cause for special concern. However, springs are also an important water resource along other stretches of the proposed routes, including the Knobs, Little Mountain, and Ellisons Ridge.
- **Evaluate potential impacts on agricultural water uses, in addition to drinking water.** Irrigating crops and gardens was reported by 49% and watering livestock by 47% (with more than 60% of both activities reported in some areas); 37% reported fishing and 27% reported stocked fish ponds as a water use on their property. Nearly 70% reported relying on food that they raised to live within their means. Can MVP ensure uninterrupted access to sufficient clean water for these purposes?
- **Include project effects on agricultural businesses and activities in the scope of socio-economic environmental assessments.** Close to 60% rely on firewood from their property for heating; 39% have marketable timber. In addition to traditional farms and cattle-raising operations, several agriculturally based businesses would be affected. For example:
  - A mountain preserve operation, which features exotic game hunting, fishing, vacation cabins and availability for weddings, reunions, and special events, might have to close operations throughout the period of construction.
  - An apiary immediately adjacent to the original corridor currently has a healthy operation of 135 hives and 6 million bees. With bee die-offs across the country posing a threat to the country's food supply, this should signal special protection – not the prospect of eminent domain and “mitigation.”
  - Along the same pipeline corridor, 450 acres are under management as Organic Dairy Pastures. Near both routes, several landowners are producing and marketing organic farm products through the Monroe Farm Market, a local food initiative that serves customers in a 150-mile radius.

- **Document the presence of endangered species in both established and unexamined areas affected by the pipeline.** Landowners report James spiny mussel in South Potts Fork; Indiana bats in a cave near Greenville; evidence of American Bald Eagles nesting; and rare and endangered plant species.
- **Investigate the evidence of significant prehistoric activity.** Native American artifacts found on the property were reported by 37% of landowners; several report burial mounds or ceremonial artifacts — and that might be the tip of the iceberg. Many if not most farmers in the county have stories about overturning numerous arrowheads and other artifacts when they plowed. On June 10, a significant find of prehistoric artifacts from two distinct periods was discovered in a preliminary study on one property where the landowner was not initially aware of any artifacts. The findings warrant avoiding that route or conducting a substantive archeological evaluation before pipeline construction. A careful examination of potential sites all along the pipeline route should be undertaken.
- **Include the visual impact of the MVP project in the scope of the EIS.** The importance of the unbroken visual presence of Peters Mountain for residents of Monroe County cannot be overstated. The response to this question, and to the importance of the unspoiled views of the county's hills and farmland, prompted a near unanimous “strongly agree” rating by 98% and 99% of landowners respectively.
- **Recognize and address cultural attachment as a significant environmental and cultural issue in Monroe County.** The strength of cultural attachment in areas of Monroe County, WV was studied and established in the Record of Decision on a proposed American Electric Power 765 kV electric transmission line in 1995. The Draft EIS included a copy of the study of an area that closely matches that of the Alternate 110 pipeline route.

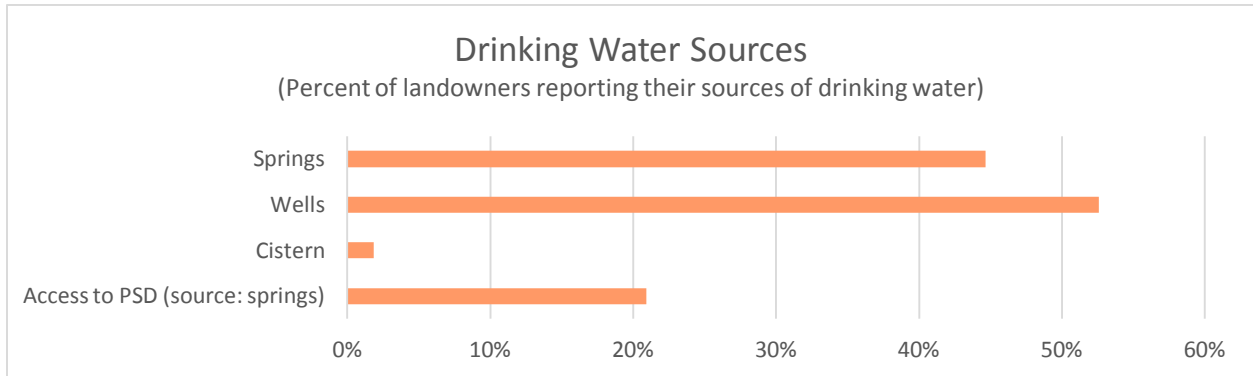
Questions related to cultural attachment in this survey elicited strong responses from landowners along both of the pipeline routes in Monroe County: 91% strongly agree or agree that their personal history and identity are closely tied to their land in Monroe County. Responses to several related questions, as well as the unprompted comments of landowners about the strength of their kinship ties to their property and the county, indicates that cultural attachment remains an important environmental and cultural factor — one that requires further investigation.

Open comments about what people value about their property in Monroe County prompted many answers of: Heritage, Family, Beauty, Abundant Water, Pristine Nature, Views, Peace, Mountains, Tranquility, and Diversity of Wildlife. There are clear concerns that these valued assets of Monroe County would be jeopardized by the MVP project.

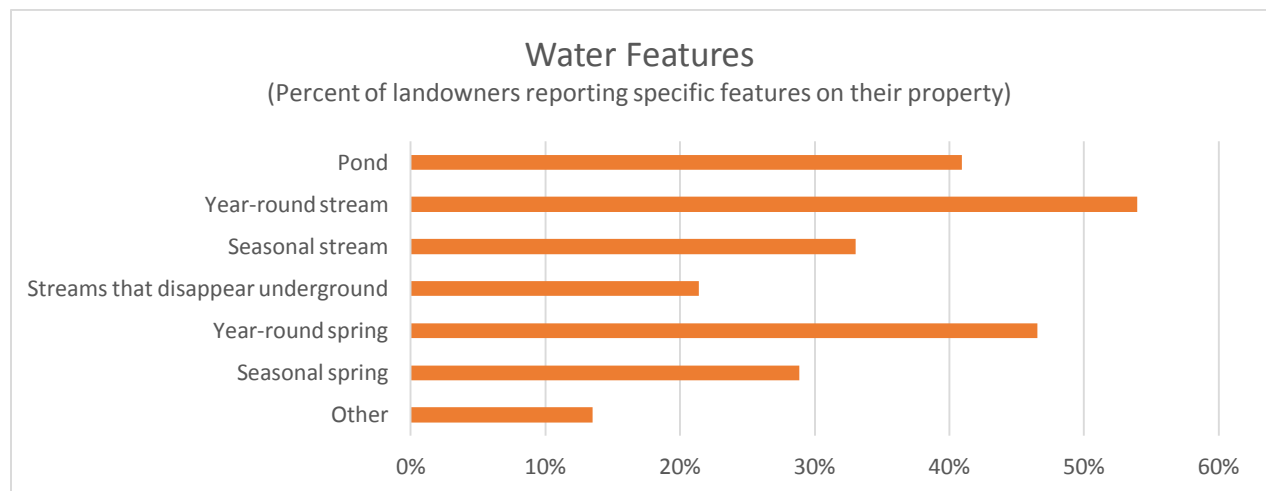
The Border Conservancy and Save Monroe will continue to collect and analyze data supporting the strong presence of Cultural Attachment and addressing other critical environmental issues for landowners on both routes.

## Selected Charts and Graphs on EIS issues

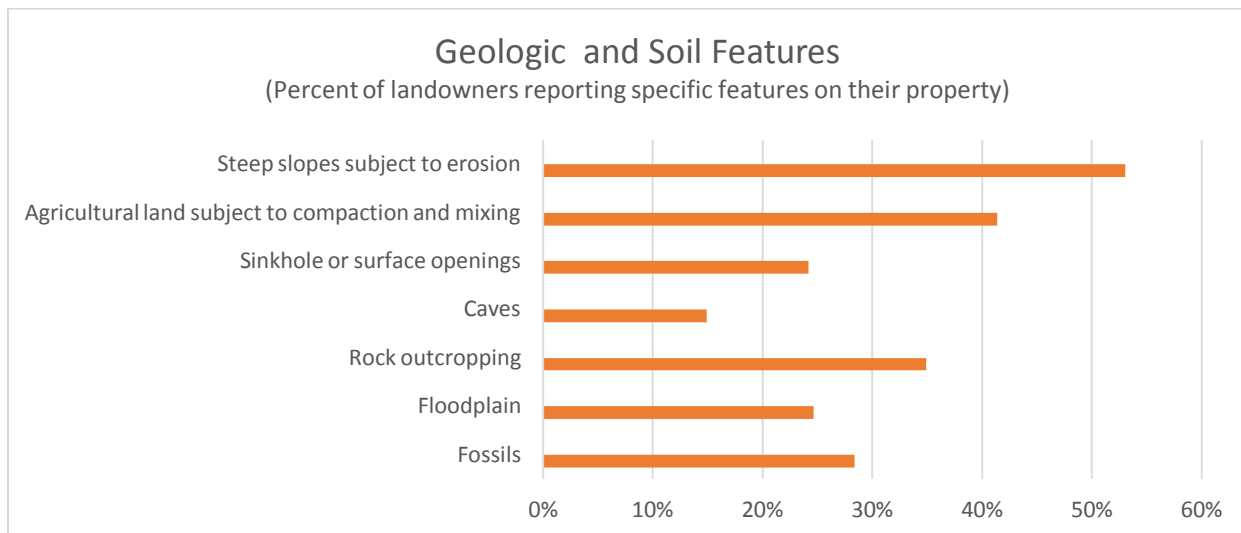
The following charts and graphs reflect the features reported by 214 landowners in Monroe County from April 23 through June 13, 2015. Most are located on or near the two proposed MVP routes (the original Proposed Corridor and the Alternate 110 Route). A Landowner/Community Reports Map (provided to the FERC with the individual landowner reports) shows reporting locations.



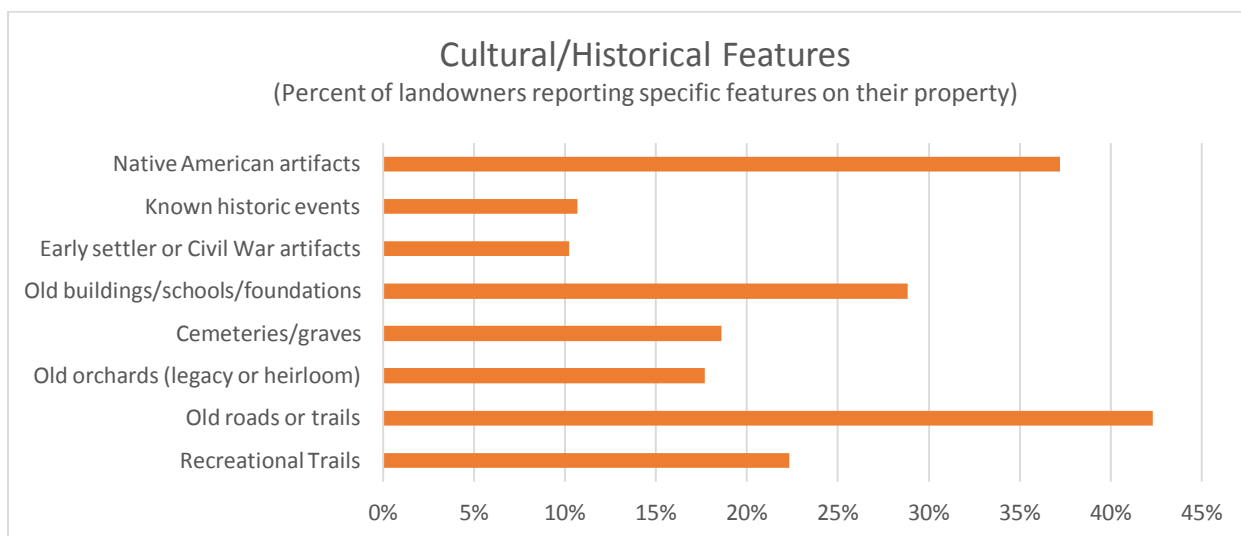
Landowners report their sources of drinking water (several landowners report more than one source). Note: water for all PSDs originates from springs they own on Peters Mountain. PSD springs and private springs account for 66% of the reported sources of drinking water. These data and other preliminary studies of Peters Mountain springs require a full hydro-geological study of the aquifers on Peters Mountain before a pipeline can be sited. The Border Conservancy, Save Monroe and Indian Creek Watershed Association will continue to gather information from landowners about their water sources and springs.



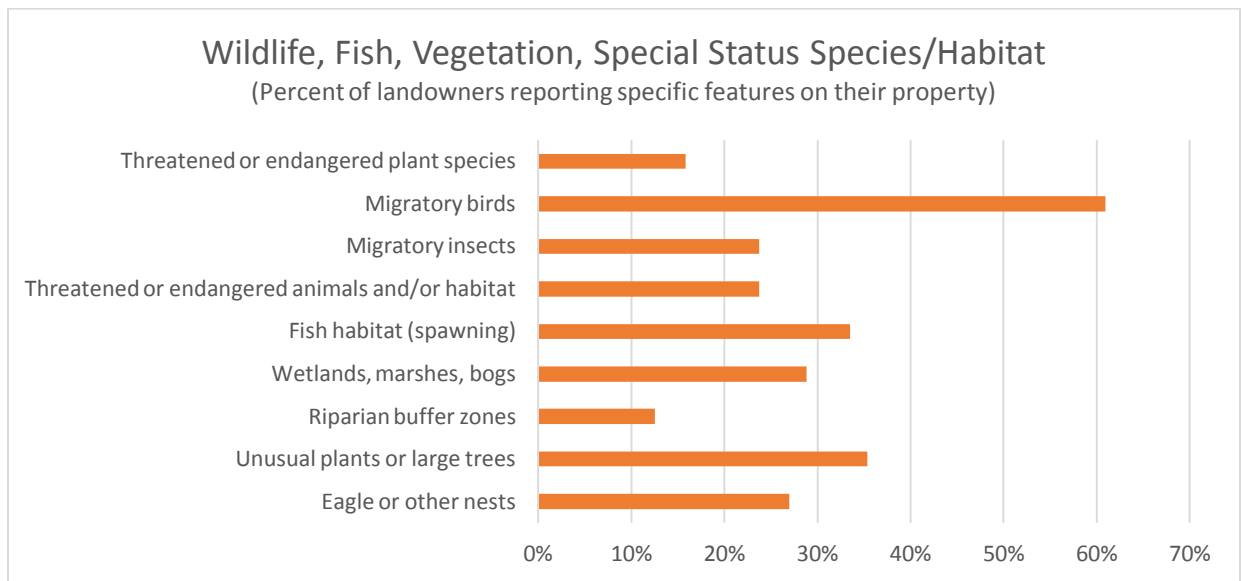
Landowners report a high incidence of water features on properties, and reliance on both public and private water sources. One of the most widely expressed concerns is that project impacts could affect domestic drinking water, agricultural uses and businesses.



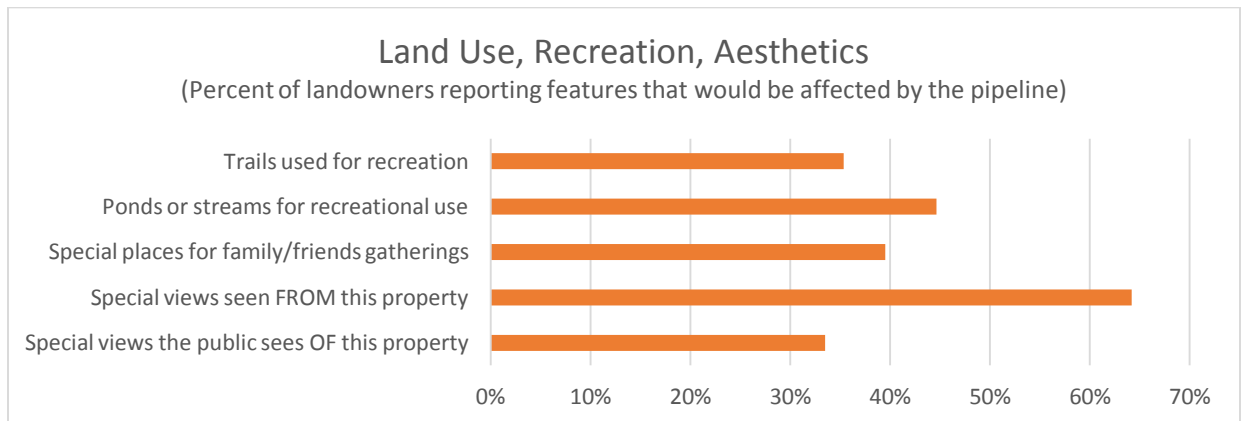
Pipeline construction would impact the county's steeply wooded ridges and working farmlands. Along much of the route, construction traffic and operations would take place on or near karst topography, potentially polluting ground and surface water. The pipeline would cross terrain that is steep and vulnerable to erosion, potentially causing pipeline slippage and fracture.



Given widespread reports of Native American artifacts, the scope should include further investigation of all potential corridor locations. Moreover, the presence of old buildings, schools, and agricultural activity indicates the need for protection of potential, but as yet unregistered historic landmarks and districts.



Not surprisingly, landowners affirmed the presence of endangered and threatened species and noted threats that the pipeline could cause to animal and plant habitat.



The pipeline could threaten or destroy landowners' ability to use their land for recreation. Monroe County landowners do not have access to entertainment or cultural venues except for their own private land (e.g. no movies, theaters, malls, or other socializing places).

## VISUAL IMPACT

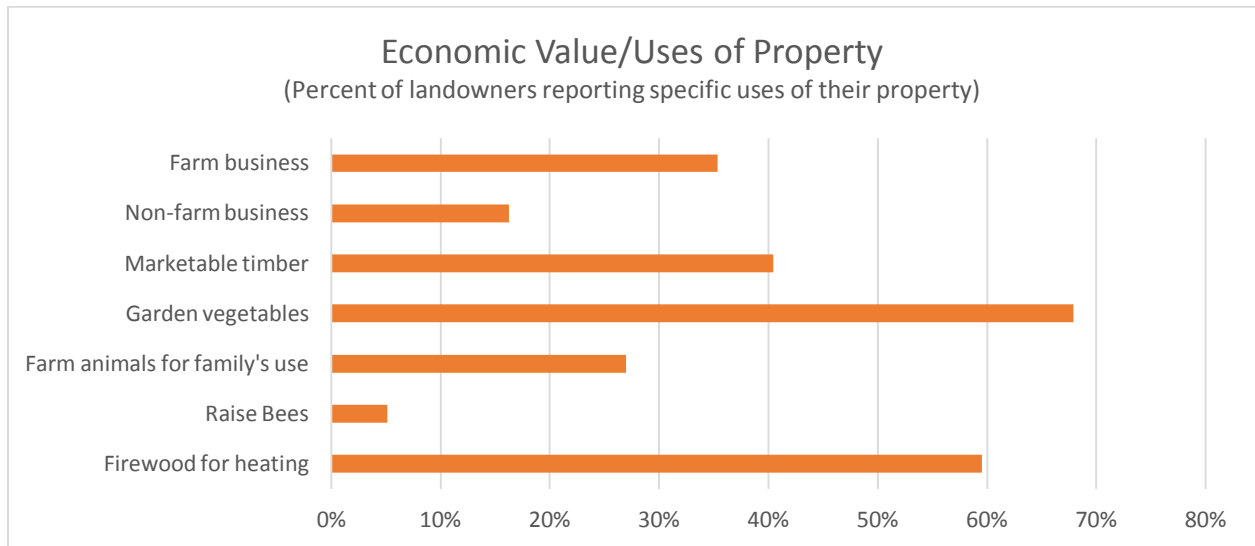
The potential visual impact of the pipeline would be felt by almost all landowners—either from their own property or in their travel through the county as demonstrated by the following data collected in response to the statement “The unbroken presence of Peters Mountain is important to me.”

Strongly Agree	98%
Agree	1%
Neutral	1%
Disagree	0%
Strongly Disagree	0%

Similarly, landowners responded to “the unspoiled views of the hills and farmland are important to me.”

Strongly Agree	99%
Agree	1%
Neutral	0%
Disagree	0%
Strongly Disagree	0%

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECTS:



The data reveals the potential for the pipeline to disrupt the economic livelihood of the landowners who depend on the county’s rich agricultural resources.

**Other Socio-Economic Effects:** Property in Monroe County has a greater value to the landowners than its monetary value as seen by their almost unanimous answer to the question, “Do you value your property more as a real estate investment or a place you want to live?” This is a clear indication of the potential socio-economic impact of the pipeline.

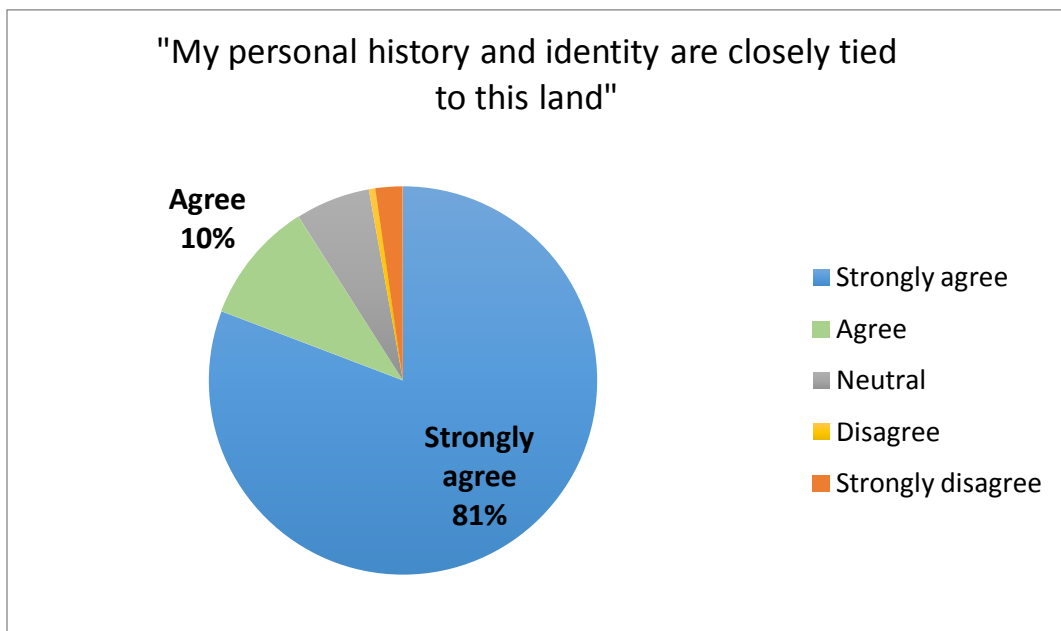
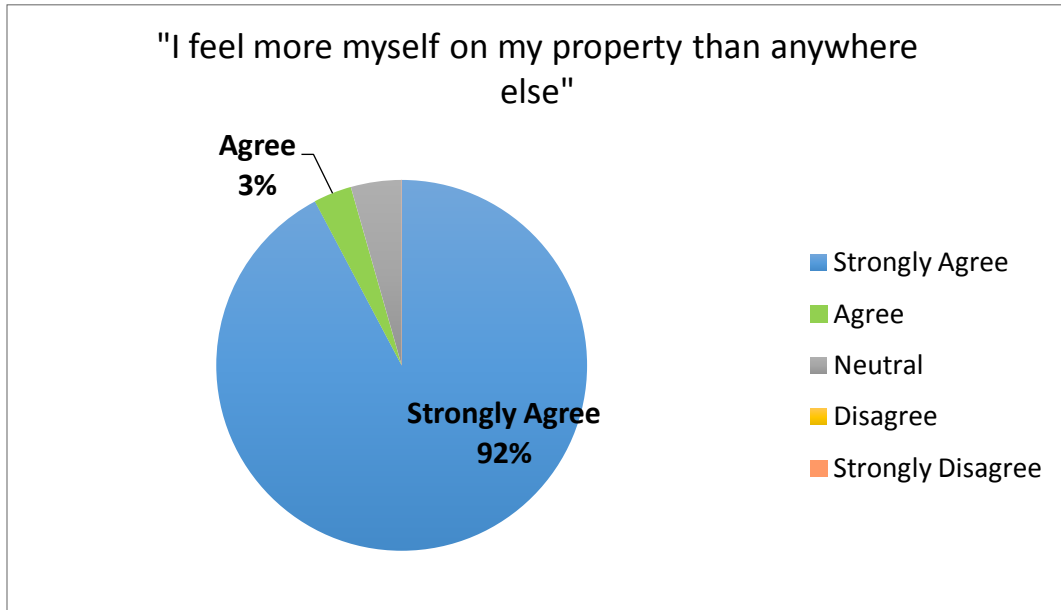
A place I want to live: 98.9%

A real estate investment: 1.1%

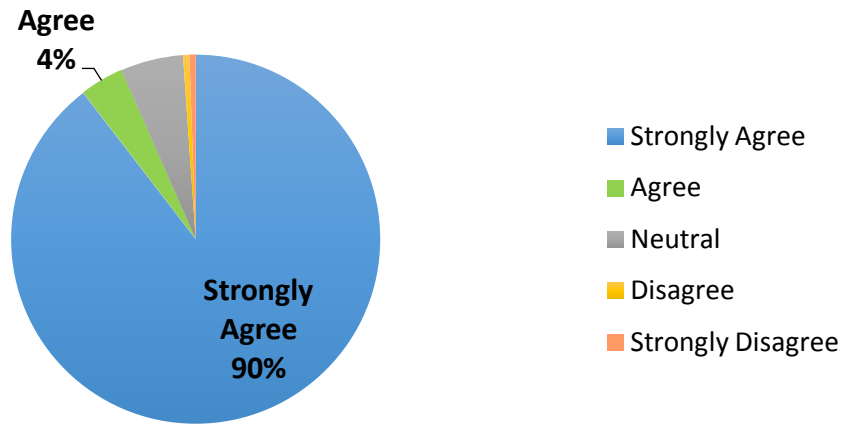


**CULTURAL ATTACHMENT:**

The degree of cultural attachment that landowner's feel to the place they live can only be assessed through analysis of data taken directly from landowner behavior and interviews. The Border Conservancy and Save Monroe will continue to submit data throughout the next several months to support the need for cultural attachment to be analyzed and acted upon as a significant issue in the siting of a pipeline through Monroe County. The following is a preliminary analysis of some of the factors in the data that we have collected so far:



"The history of my property or community is important to me"



The Border Conservancy and Save Monroe will be submitting additional data that analyzes landowner individual comments to support the inclusion of Cultural Attachment as a significant issue to be considered in the scope of the EIS.