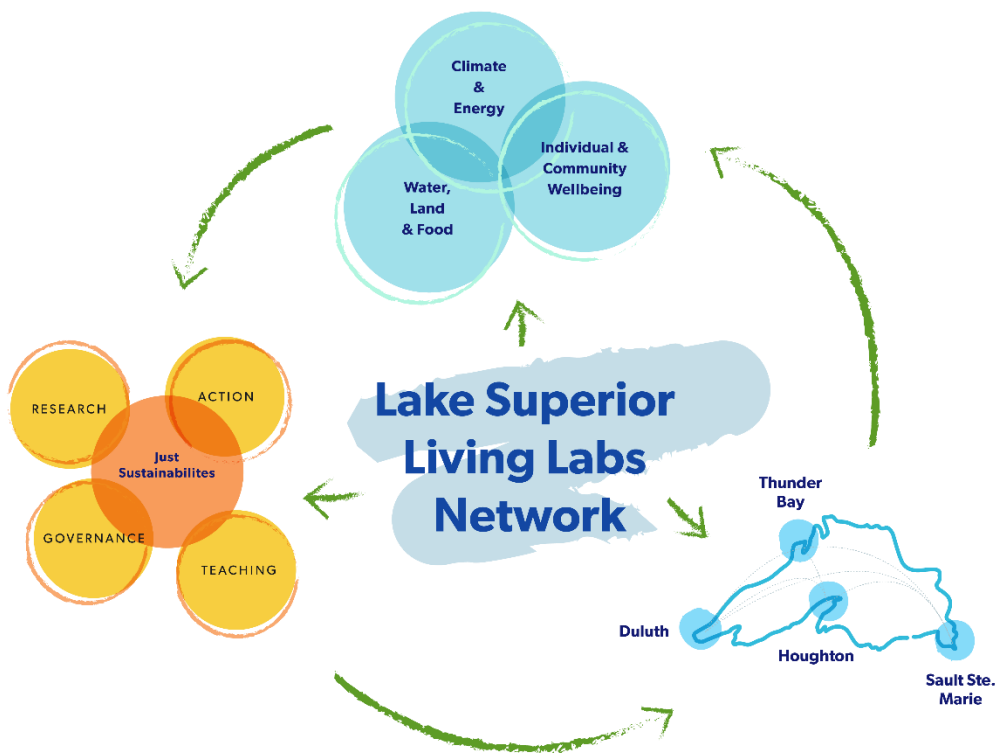




## Year 2 Survey Report

Nov 10, 2021



For information about this report or the Lake Superior Living Labs Network project contact [superiorlivinglabs@gmail.com](mailto:superiorlivinglabs@gmail.com) or go to [www.livinglabsnetwork.org](http://www.livinglabsnetwork.org).



## **Introduction**

In 2019, the Lake Superior Living Labs Network (LSLLN) launched our first survey that ran from November 2019 to January 2020. The intention of the survey was to better understand the work happening among the different organizations and groups, to explore ways to support existing work, and to develop new collaborative projects across the Lake Superior watershed. An invitation to participate in the survey was sent to 43 participants and 38 individuals completed the survey (88% completion rate). The summary of that survey can be found in the [LSLLN Annual Report 2019-2020](#).

In 2021, the LSLLN launched our second survey that ran from April 2021 to June 2021. The main intention of this survey was to collect information from new participants who had joined the LSLLN since January 2020, and to understand how their work expanded the existing network. A second intention was to collect information about the impact of the LSLLN on participants, namely how they engage with the LSLLN, benefits to participating, and suggestions for improvements. Information about the strength of relationships was also collected with the intention of creating a network map. This information is not included here but will be shared in the near future. An invitation to participate in the survey was sent to 51 participants and 37 individuals completed the survey (72% completion rate).

## **Overall Summary**

LSLLN participants expressed that:

- 1) They were engaging with the LSLLN and that there were benefits that followed from their engagement;
- 2) They were excited to see the LSLLN continue to grow and develop;
- 3) They feel more connected to the LSLLN when there are more events and activities to become involved with;
- 3) They had many ideas about how the LSLLN could strengthen and expand event and activity offerings that could help to build relationships, allow for learning from others, and encourage collaboration across sectors, disciplines, and places.

## **Engagement with LSLLN**

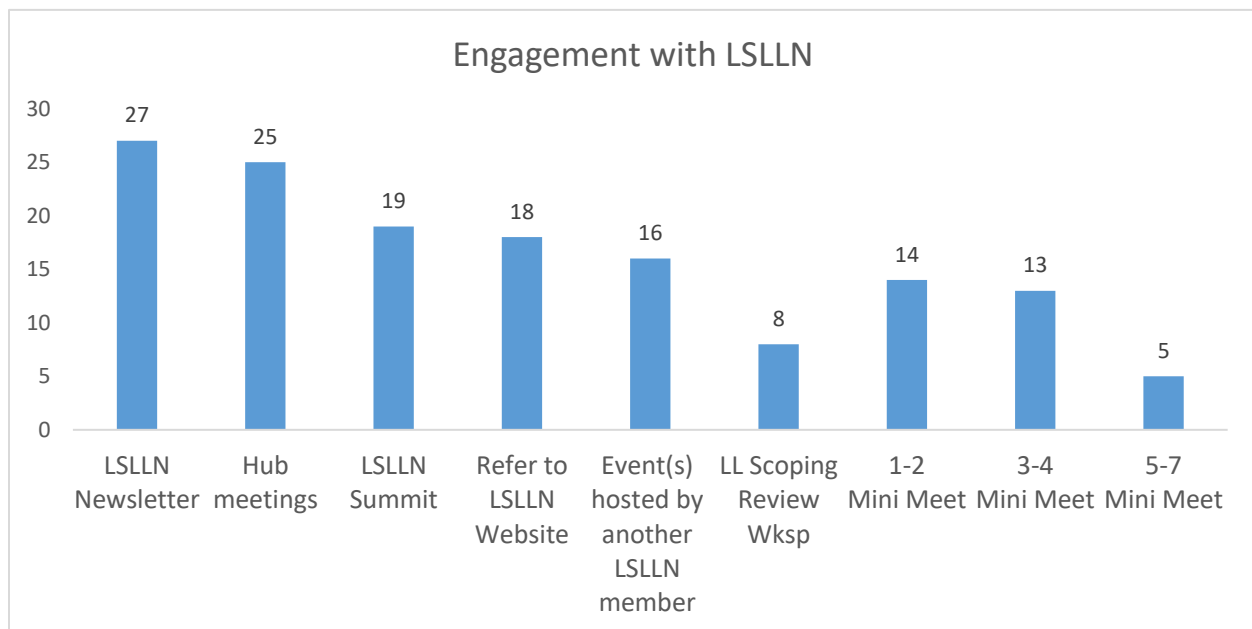
From the survey, 33 of 37 participants were engaged in more than two mechanisms of engagement (e.g., newsletter, attending webinars, participating in Mini Meet-Ups).

Participants chose to engage in the LSLLN for several reasons:

- They are committed to supporting the LSLLN;
- They want to build relationships and collaborations;
- They want to learn more about the LSLLN, particular topics, and others working across the Lake Superior Watershed;
- They want to be involved in professional development.

Participants also identified several limits to engaging with the LSLLN including:

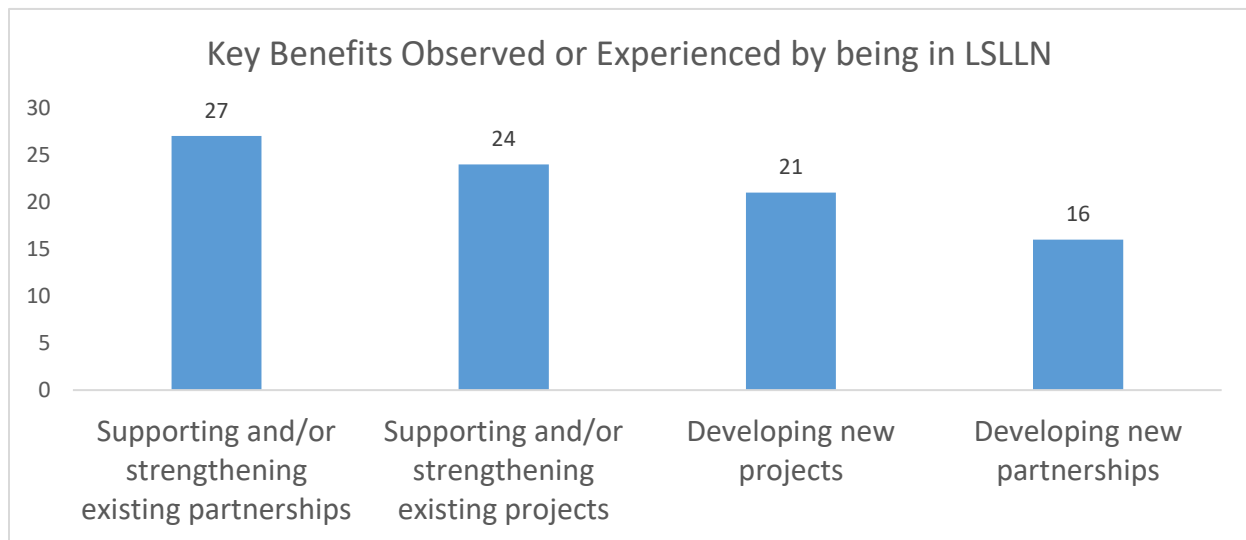
- Lack of time and capacity;
- Difficulty participating in meetings and events virtually (e.g., Zoom fatigue);
- The covid-19 pandemic added more challenges and increased time commitments to both work and personal life (e.g. parenting/schooling from home) and LSLLN was the first commitment to be cut;
- The topics were not relevant;
- Reduced interest in the LSLLN now than two years ago



### **Benefits to LSLLN Participation**

The following were some of the key benefits identified by participating in the LSLLN:

- Supporting and strengthening partnerships and projects
  - Community Networking and Connections
  - Relationship Building
  - Cross-Sector Collaboration
- Developing new projects and partnerships
- Learning about innovative solutions
- Providing inspiration
- Legitimizing sustainability – focused research and action
- Increased access to funding opportunities (and successful applications)



## Suggestions for LSLLN

The following were suggestions for the LSLLN moving forward:

- Engage more with issues of justice, equity, and just sustainabilities
  - Consider how LSLLN might engage more directly in activism
- Continue to develop the LSLLN's core identity and communicate that out
- Hold regular meetings in each of the hubs because they incentivize more engagement
- Host more workshops and events
  - Foster relationship building (and strengthening)
  - More opportunities for interaction
  - Meet together in person (when possible)
  - Include storytelling, art, meditation
  - Provide more professional development
  - Share best practices
  - Continue sharing examples of living labs work
- Foster relationships
  - Existing relationships
  - Bring in more folks
- Continue to record events as a way to encourage broader engagement