

No Worries

Decision-maker and Public Attitudes about Water in Western North Carolina

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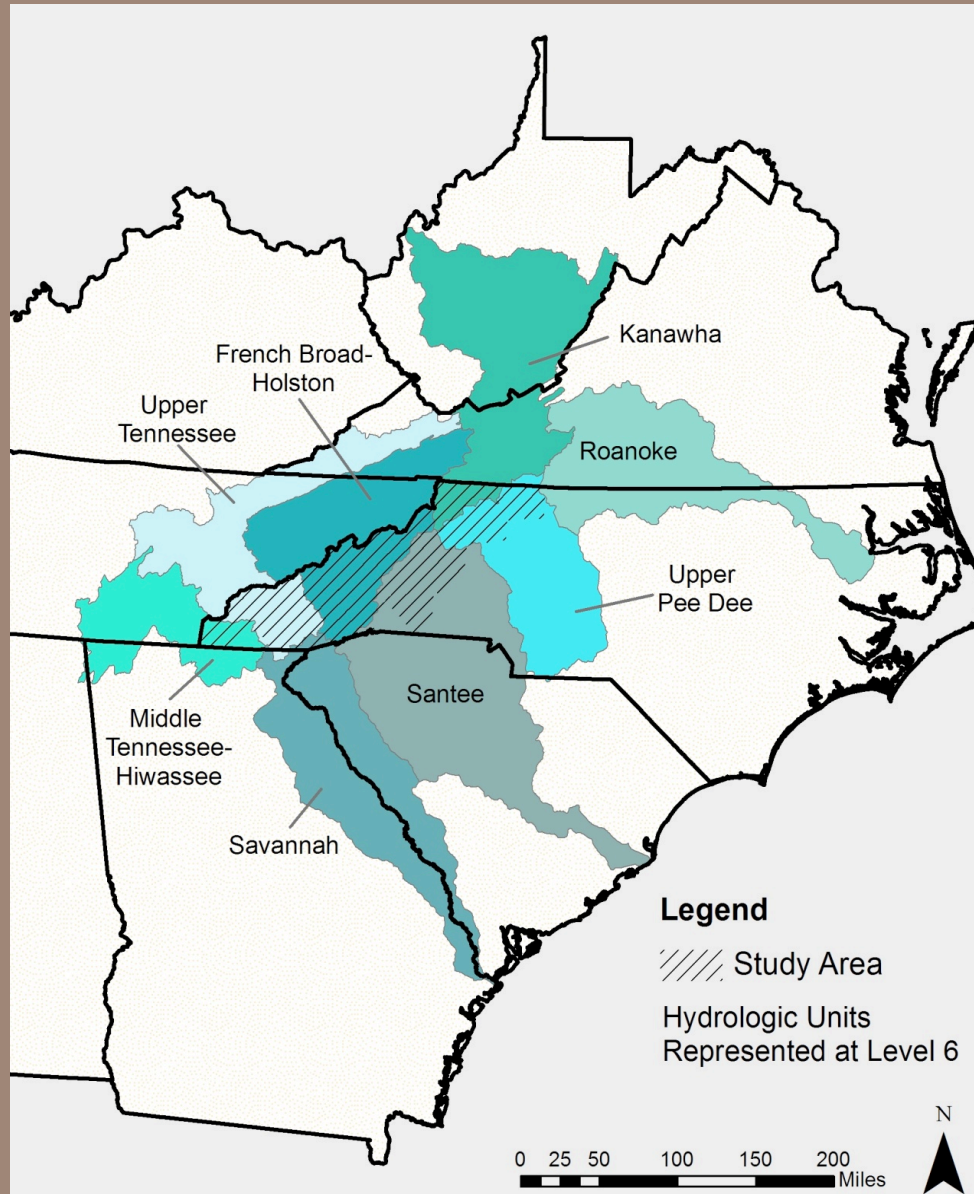
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GSA 2012

Study Area



22 North Carolina counties

8 river basins

50+ in/yr rain

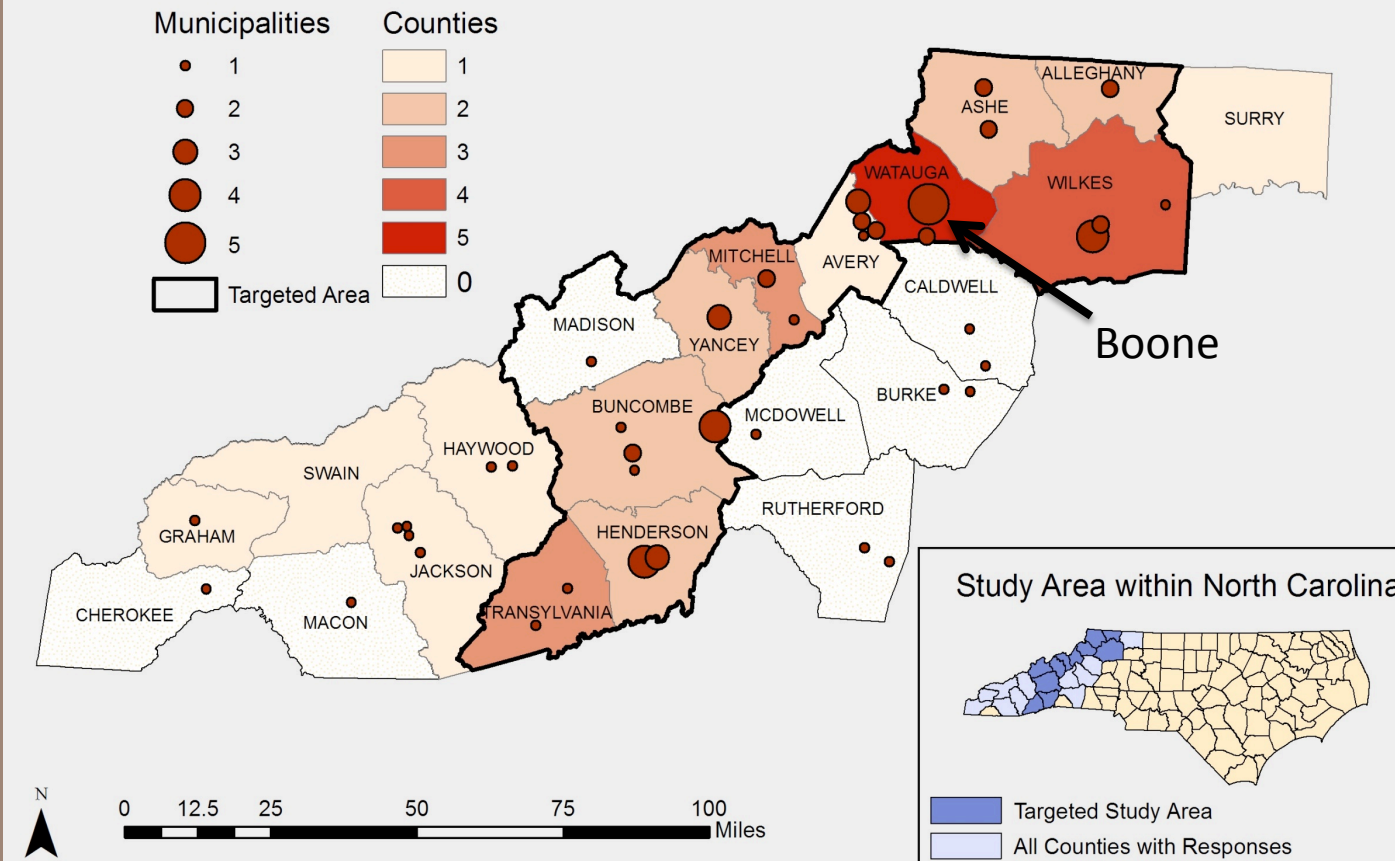
Population = ~1M

>10% growth 2000-2010

Key economic drivers =
tourism, recreation, ag

Methods

Number of Respondents Representing Each County or Municipality



Decision-makers:
Survey to
elected officials,
planners,
managers,
utility personnel

85 responses
10 interviews

Public test group:
Survey URL in
Boone water bill
128 responses

Results

Public

Low concern about water

Voluntary conservation
important

Limit growth to manage water

Forecast less water in the future

Decision-maker

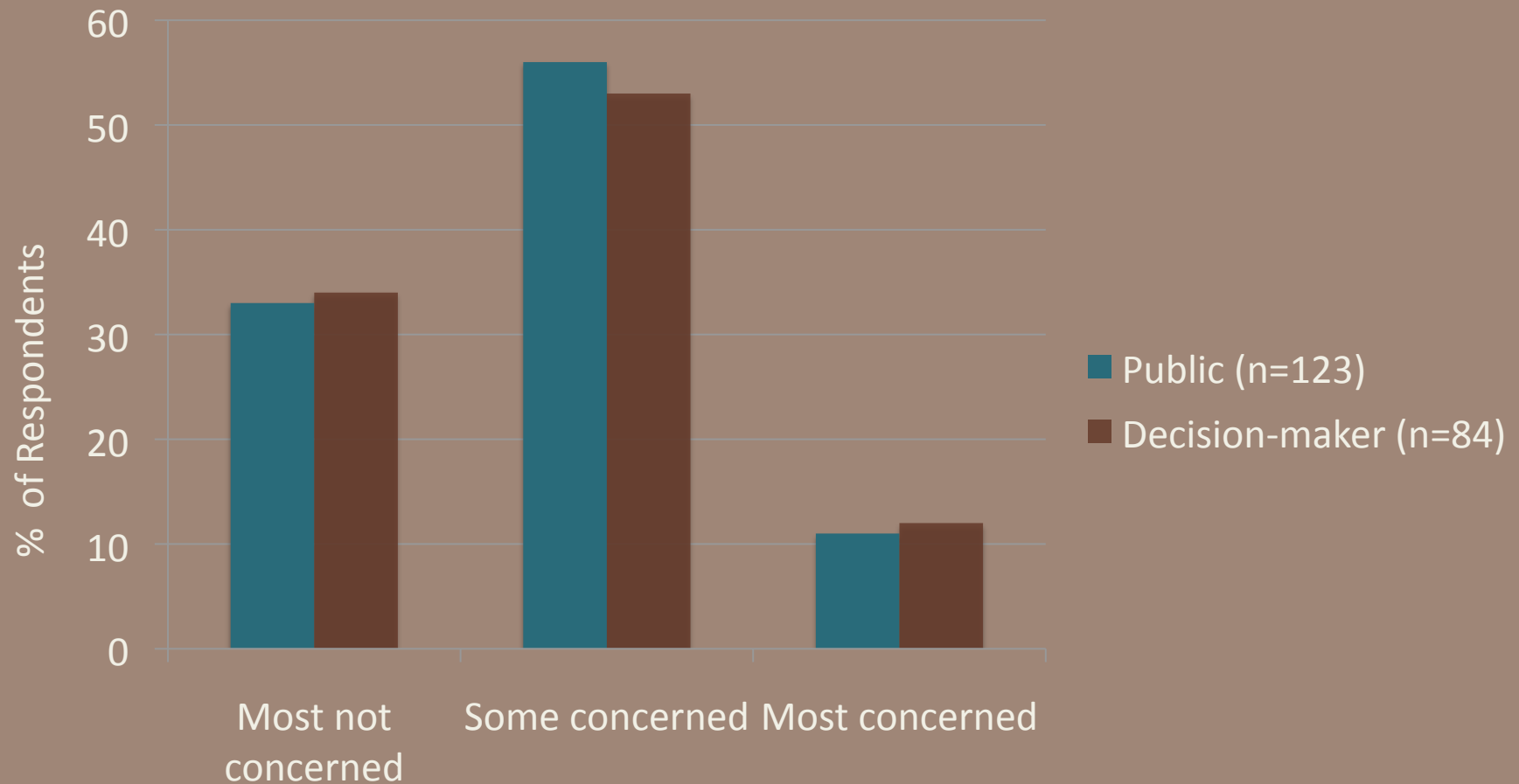
Low concern about water

Low conservation efforts

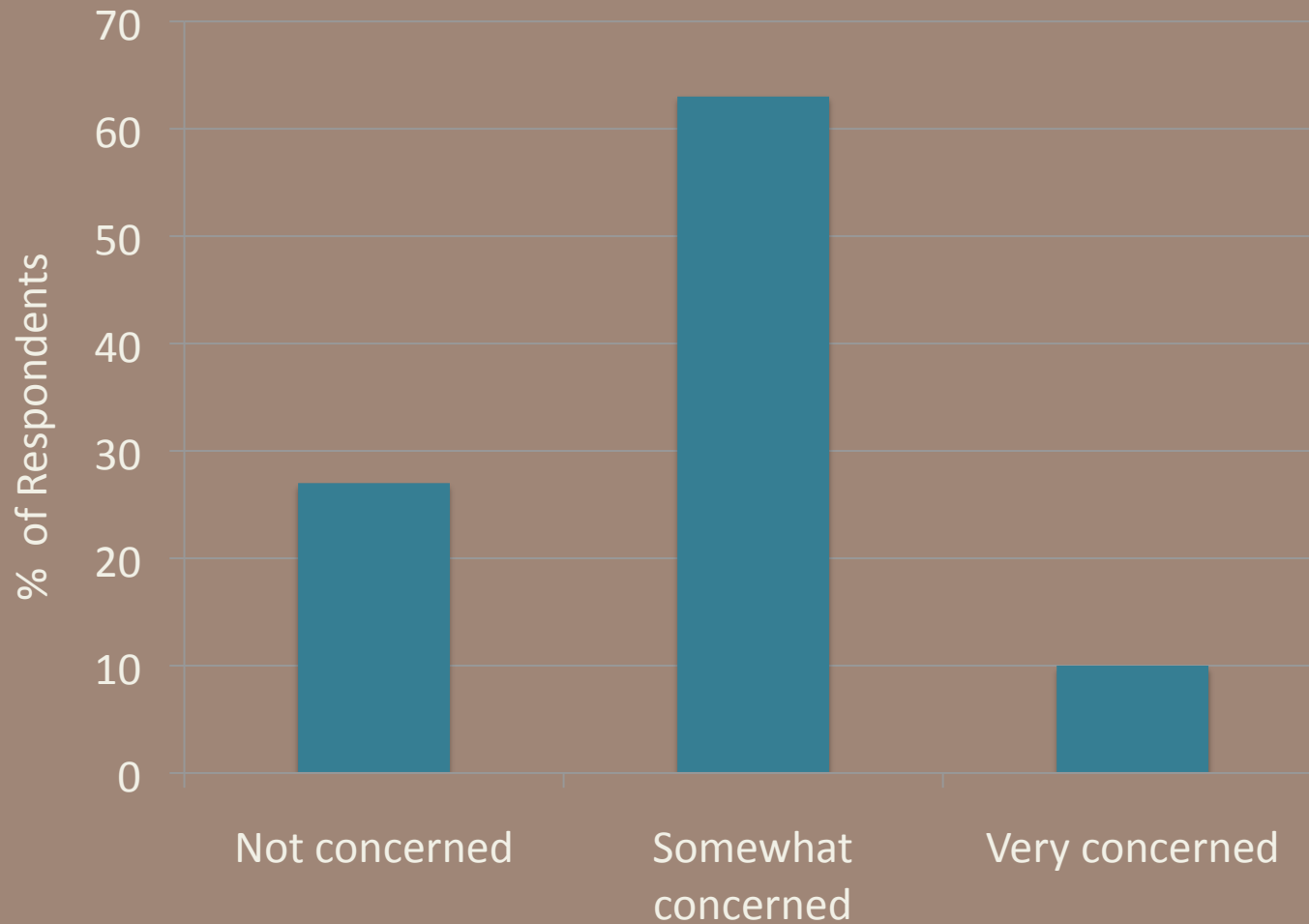
Growth = seek new source

Water supply = *NOT* hydrologic

In your community what is the level of concern over the future of your water supply?



What is your level of concern over the future of your household water supply? (public responses =121)



Public

82%

“I am personally
concerned about
water conservation”

“Household water
restrictions should be
voluntary, not mandatory”

50% agree

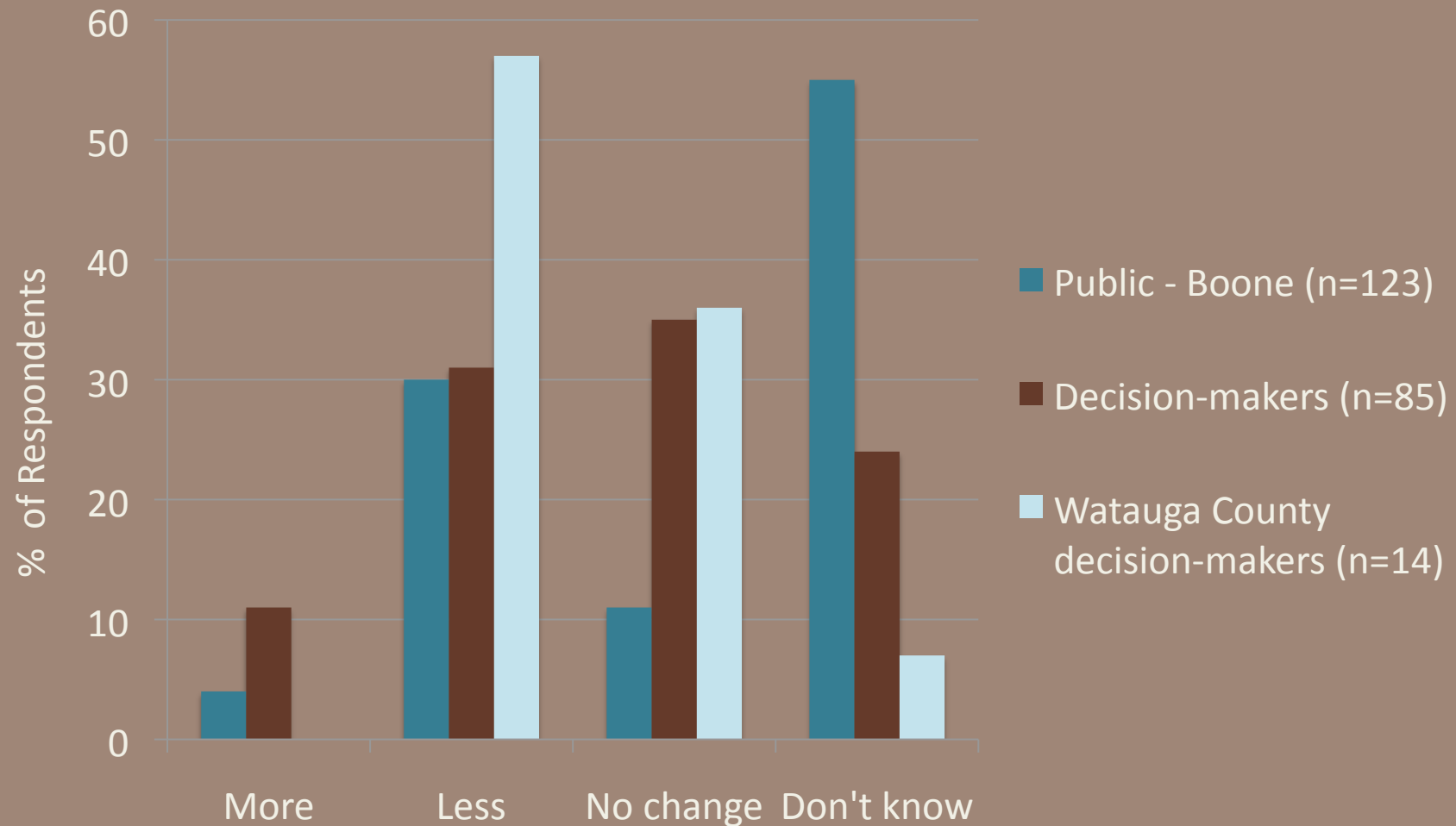
22 % neutral

27 % disagree

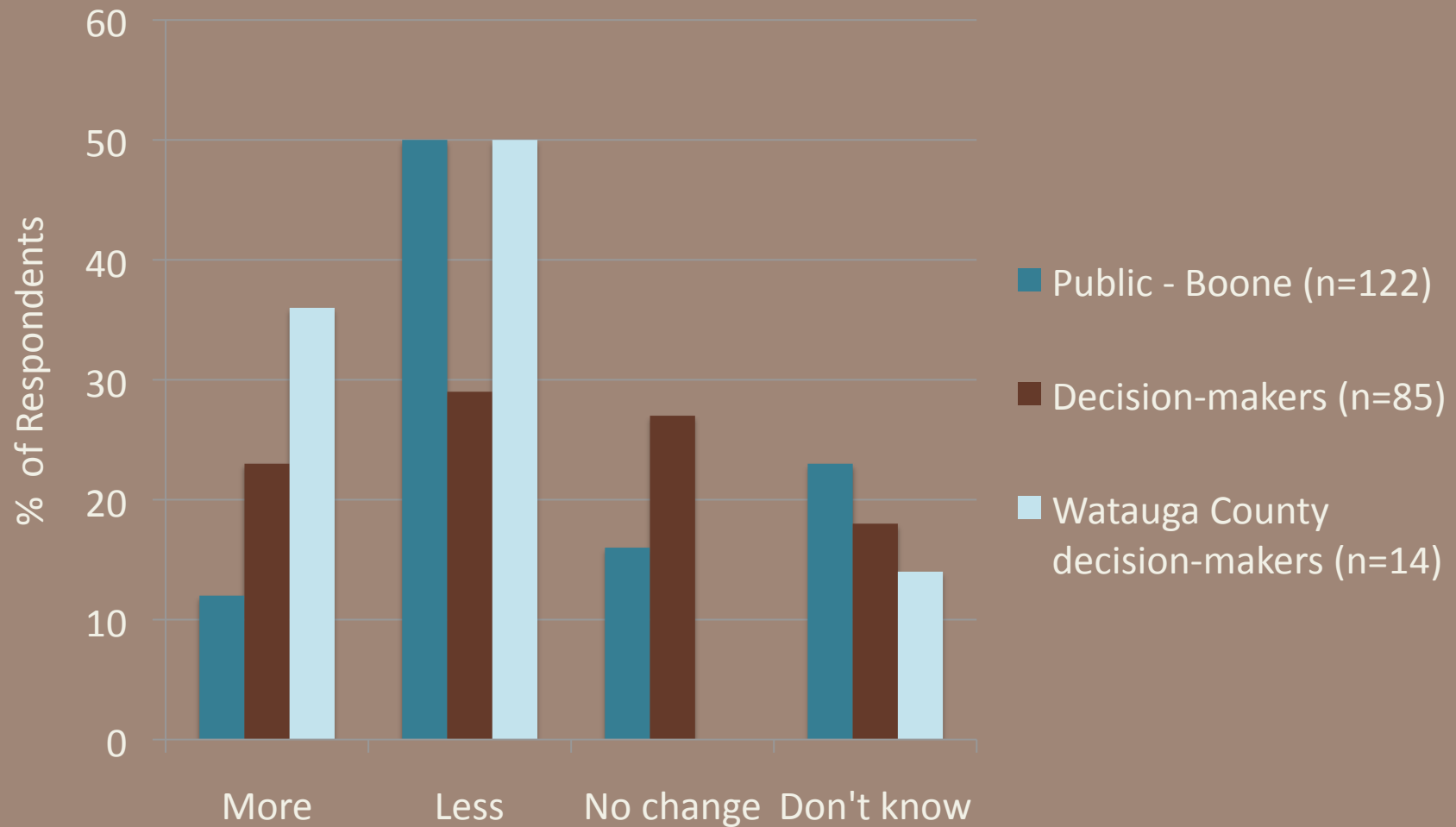
34%

Surveyed communities
with conservation plans
beyond drought
response

Has the amount of water available (e.g. well level, river level) to your community changed in the past 10 years? ($p=.000$)



Do you anticipate that the amount of water available (e.g. well level, river level) to your community will change in the next 10 years? ($p=.002$)



Public **65%** agree community growth should
be limited to manage scarce water

Concern that population growth
will reduce water availability

Public **10%** not at all concerned
28% very concerned

Decision-maker **31%** not at all concerned
12% very concerned

Growth means find a new source.....

Implications

Low level of concern = no need to acquire data, or
change status quo

Low level of concern = limited conservation efforts;
growth not a problem

Potential public support for conservation, limiting growth

When needed, tap new supply = what worked in past
will work in the future