

Summary of Macatawa Watershed Surveys

June 30, 2011



2000 Resident Survey

Survey Size: 523 residents (telephone)

- *Urban, suburban, city neighborhood: 66%*
- *Agricultural residential: 12%*
- *Rural residential: 22%*

Focus Areas: Issues related to water use, behaviors regarding surface water quality, and opinions about policies designed to ensure water quality.

Biggest Take Home Message: Watershed education programs would be useful, behavioral goals and objectives to improve water quality should be identified, initiatives to improve water quality would be met with support from citizens, and further research into citizens' view of funding is suggested.

2001 Resident Survey

Survey Size: 493 residents (telephone)

Demographic breakdown not available

Focus Area: Issues related to storm water, water use, behaviors regarding surface water quality and opinions about policies designed to ensure water quality

Biggest Take Home Message: Change will come slowly and with concerted effort, there exists a high need to educate the citizenry – awareness is low, a decrease in lawn fertilization will be met with large resistance from the public.

2003 Resident Survey

Survey Size: 502 residents (telephone)

- *Urban: 23.7%*
- *Suburban: 55%*
- *Rural/agricultural: 21.3%*

Focus Area: Knowledge of watershed issues, household beliefs, characteristics and behaviors related to water quality, and willingness to adopt behaviors that improve water quality.

Biggest Take Home Message: Frequency of application of lawn fertilizers decreased, yet willingness to reduce lawn fertilization is met with the greatest resistance. High level of willingness to participate in behaviors that will improve water quality. Bacterial contamination was issue of greatest importance.

2003 Storm Water Survey

Survey Size: 20 local government officials (email and telephone)

Focus Area: Reducing phosphorus, informing the community, implementing best management practices, sustaining long-term progress, and cooperation and partnerships.

Biggest Take Home Message: Progress is being made in the areas of reducing phosphorus, informing the community, and implementing BMP's. Less success related to sustaining long-term progress, cooperation and partnerships. More progress needs to

be made in the residential areas. Need more awareness of the Macatawa Watershed Project.

2007 Resident Survey

Survey Size: 483 (telephone)

- *Urban: 24.8%*
- *Suburban: 52.1%*
- *Rural/agricultural: 23.1%*

Focus Area: Knowledge of watershed issues, household beliefs, characteristics and behaviors related to water quality, and willingness to adopt behaviors that improve water quality.

Biggest Take Home Message: The issues that residents viewed as the most important were bacterial contamination, followed by soil erosion and flooding. Frequency of application of lawn fertilizers increased almost back to the point of 2001. The issue of lawn fertilization remains an important long-term concern for the watershed stakeholders to address.

2010 Storm Water Survey

Survey Size: 20 local government officials (email and telephone)

Focus Area: Reducing phosphorus, informing the community, implementing best management practices, sustaining long-term progress, and cooperation and partnerships.

Biggest Take Home Message: A majority of respondents have seen improvement in effectiveness and progressiveness with storm water education, compliance with requirements, decreased storm water run-off, and involvement with regulations, although much is yet to be done. They expressed concern about the cooperation of property owners around Lake Mac and the need for further education. There is a high concern for quality and quantity of storm water entering the system.

2010 Agricultural Survey

Survey Size: 150 respondents (30% rate of return)
(Written Survey - 1 completed it by phone and 4 completed the online version of the survey)

Focus Area: Collecting baseline social indicators data from agricultural landowners in the Macatawa watershed to inform planning and implementation activities.

Biggest Take Home Message: Almost 90% of farmers know the rain that runs off of their farms goes into a surrounding water body. About 50% of respondents report using buffer strips and conservation tillage. 87% of respondents say they agree or strongly agree that it is their personal responsibility to help protect water quality.

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