



Combined Downriver Inter-Municipality Committee
SEMCOG Survey Results

Downriver Major Survey Findings

The Regional Public Education survey was undertaken the summer of 2004. Following are results specific for the Downriver Subwatershed.

Perceptions and Value of Water Resources

Residents were asked to rate the quality of water in lakes, rivers, and streams in the community where they live. Twenty-six percent of those surveyed thought water quality was improving (“somewhat better” or “much better”). Twenty-eight percent reported that they thought water quality was getting worse (“somewhat worse” or “much worse”).

The activities that households were most likely to have done in or near lakes and streams in the region during the past year were: hiking/walking (43%) and boating (40%). About one-fourth (24%) of those surveyed indicated that they did not participate in activities in or near lakes and streams in the region during the past year.

57% of those surveyed thought the way they cared for their lawn and home affects the quality of water in lakes and streams in the community where they live; 30% did not.

28% of those surveyed indicated that their household had taken some type of action to protect water resources in the past two years; 61% had not, and 11% indicated that they “didn’t know” if they had done anything that would have helped protect water resources.

Connection of Stormwater Runoff and Water Resources

Fifty-one percent of those surveyed thought industrial discharge was the greatest contributor of pollution to lakes, rivers and streams. Sewage overflows was second (23%), followed by stormwater runoff (17%), and wastewater treatment plant discharges (9%).

Forty-five percent of those surveyed indicated that they “didn’t know” where stormwater goes after it enters a storm drain or roadside ditch.

Only 15% of those surveyed knew that they lived in a watershed.

More than three-fourths (78%) of those surveyed agreed with the statement that the quality of local streams where they live affects the Great Lakes and Lake St. Clair.

Seventy-seven (77%) percent of the respondents indicated that they had not seen road signs identifying rivers or watersheds in their community.

Current Activities

Thirty percent of those surveyed indicated that they typically wash their vehicles at home in the driveway. Most (67%) of those surveyed indicated that they use a car wash.

Twenty-one percent of those surveyed indicated that members of their household usually change motor oil, transmission fluid or radiator fluid for a vehicle at their home.

Sixty-six percent of those surveyed indicated that their household uses a community collection site to dispose of household hazardous waste, such as old oil, fluids from vehicles, batteries, and pesticides; 18% of those surveyed indicated that their household typically disposes of household hazardous wastes with their regular trash.

Fifty-one percent of those surveyed who were not using a community collection site for household hazardous waste indicated that the reason they did not use a community collection site was because they did not know where one was located.

Thirty-three percent of those surveyed indicated that their household seldom uses fertilizers on their lawn. Twenty-nine (29%) indicated they use fertilizer on their lawn at least once a year.

The types of fertilizer that households were most likely to use on their lawn were: weed and feed (41%), seasonal varieties (22%), slow release nitrogen (17%), and low phosphorous (9%).

The most common reason residents gave for selecting the type of fertilizer or pesticide they use was previous experience with a product (38%).

Twenty-two percent of those surveyed indicated that their household uses a lawn service for fertilizer and/or pesticide applications.

Willingness to Take Action to Help Reduce Pollution of Streams and Lakes.

Residents were asked how willing they would be to perform various actions to help reduce pollution in lakes and streams. Residents were most willing to (1) dispose of hazardous waste at a community collection day (82%), (2) sweep excess fertilizer/grass clippings into their lawn (82%), and (3) change car care practices (77%). Residents were somewhat less willing to change lawn watering practices (64%).

Best Ways to Inform Residents About Ways to Protect Lakes and Streams.

The top four ways residents preferred to receive information about what they can do to protect lakes and streams were from community newspaper (45%), television news (43%), major newspapers (40%), and municipal newsletter (28%).