

Butte County's second Public Opinion Survey on Storm Water Management was mailed out to 210 County property owners in early November 2007. Only property owners that reside within the Chico Urbanized MS4 NPDES Phase II Permit area were mailed a survey. A total of 51 of the 210 surveys were returned, representing a 24 percent return rate.

The survey recipients were selected using Geographical Information System (GIS) software to randomly select county parcel owners within the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II permit area. The parcels selected were located throughout the NPDES Phase II permit area so a representation of all areas within the permit area would be included. The 2 page survey contained 30 questions and 8 demographic requests for information about the survey recipient.

Some of the second survey results are described below:

- Water pollution was listed as the most serious environmental issue (31%), then urban growth (25%), followed by global warming (20%).
- 73% of those surveyed knew there is a creek or other water body near their home.
- Of those 73% that knew there is a creek or other water body near their home, 16% thought the water was very clean, 35% believed the water was somewhat clean, 18% thought the water was somewhat dirty and 24% did not answer the question.
- 63% of those surveyed had not seen any water in the gutters or storm drains during dry weather periods while 35% had seen water in the gutters or storm drains during dry weather periods.
- Of those 35% that had seen water in the gutters or storm drains during dry weather periods, 31% said it was from over-watering of a lawn, 25% said it was from cleaning driveways or sidewalks with a hose and 25% said it was from car washing activities.
- 84% of those surveyed had used a pesticide or weed killer in the past year. Of those 84% - 70% said they had nothing left to dispose of when they were done using it, 28% said they stored it for future use, and 30% stated they took left over material to a household hazardous waste collection center for disposal.
- In regards to pet ownership, 63% stated they did not have a pet at home that was taken for walks. 37% stated they did have a pet they took for walks. Of that 37% that had a pet at home that was taken for walks, 79% stated they bagged and put their pet waste into the trash while 16% stated they would just leave their pet waste were their pet left it.
- 98% of those surveyed stated they had a lawn area to take care of. 47% placed their yard waste into a curbside green waste container for pickup, 27% stated they composted it, and 8% stated their gardener would take it away. No one stated they would hose it away into the street or gutter.
- 80% stated they did not change their own vehicle's oil at home in the last year. Of the 20% that did change their own oil, 100% responded that they took their old used oil to a household waste collection event/center curbside collection location.
- Of the respondents that stated they own a car, truck, boat or trailer, 37% stated they wash it in the driveway, 29% used a car wash, and 10% washed it on the lawn. No one answered they washed their car in the street.
- Approximately one half of those that replied to the survey stated they knew they had storm drains in their neighborhood (49%), while 37% stated they did not have any storm drains in their neighborhood, and 14% stated they did not know if there were any storm drains in their neighborhood.
- 41% of respondents stated their storm drainage system worked very well, 41% stated it worked somewhat well, 4% stated it doesn't work well at all and 14% did not answer.
- When asked to respond to the following statement – Our communities storm drain and sewer systems share the same underground pipe system – 45% did not know if they did or not, 45% disagreed with the statement and 4% agreed.
- When asked to respond to the following statement – Water and other substances that flow through the storm drains go to a treatment plant to be processed to remove pollutants – 31% stated they did not know, 45% disagreed with the statement and 16% agreed.

- When asked about getting more information on how to help reduce storm water pollution – 26% stated they would be most willing to go to a website for information, 34% would rather read a brochure, 16% would call a '800' number, 17% would visit an informational booth at a community event and 3% would do nothing as they were not interested.
- Residents were asked if they would be willing to pay an additional amount on their property taxes to ensure water quality – 51% responded that they would pay no additional taxes, 24% would pay \$10.00 a year in taxes, 4% stated they would pay \$25.00 a year in new taxes, 12% would pay \$50.00 and 6% would pay more than \$75.00 a year in additional taxes. 4% of those surveyed did not respond to this question.
- When asked if they had heard or seen any storm water pollution related messages, 59% responded that they had not, 12% did not know, 29% stated they had.

From the first survey results over 91% of respondents had not heard or remembered hearing any stormwater related messages through the media. The second survey results show that approximately 30% of those that responded had heard some type of storm water pollution message within the last year. This reflects a 30% increase in respondents that have heard a stormwater message in the past year. Only 45 percent of those that responded to the second survey stated they would be willing to pay a small amount of additional property taxes to ensure water quality, this is down from 54% from the first survey. When asked if the storm drains and sewer systems share the same underground pipes, 49% believed that they did or that they did not know if they did or not, while 45% knew the storm drains and sewer systems did not share the same underground pipes. The first survey showed that only 36% knew the storm drains and sewer pipes do not share same underground pipe system. When asked if storm water flows through the storm drains and goes to a treatment facility to be processed to remove pollutants, nearly half knew that storm water is not processed at a treatment plant, up from only one third from the first survey. Only one-half of the respondents from both surveys knew if their neighborhoods have storm drains. Most people do not change their own vehicle's oil at home, but those that do, 100% dispose of their used oil at an appropriate oil recycling facility. 84% of those surveyed have used pesticides and weed killers on their property in the last year and those users either use up all the chemicals when they use, it store it for future use, or take it to a household hazardous waste collection center. Three out of four survey respondents knew that there is a creek, stream, or other water body near their home. The second survey showed that water pollution was the most serious environmental issue, replacing urban growth that was listed as the most serious environmental issue in the first survey.

The increased awareness of storm water pollution messages heard through local media outreach and the increased knowledge that storm water is not treated before entering our waterways show that the public education element of the local Storm Water Management Program has been effective. Also the increase in the percentage of respondents that stated water pollution is the most serious environmental issue shows that storm water pollution is an important issue on the minds of Butte County residents.

Public education activities will continue and will include storm drain inlet marking, public service announcements and other media messages on storm water pollution. Butte County will continue to partner with the City of Chico in providing public education and outreach activities on storm water pollution. For more information on Butte County's Storm Water Management Program contact Tom Blixt, Butte County Department of Public Works, 7 County Center Drive, Oroville, CA 95965, (530) 538-7266 or visit this website:

<http://www.buttecounty.net/publicworks/stormwater/stormwater.html>