

## **Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group mail-out survey**

A survey was mailed out to around 100 members and ex-members of the Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group. There were 50 respondents, and this is a summary of the results of that survey.

The survey asks questions relating to environmental concerns, information on environmental issues and support for our efforts to address environmental issues.

One caveat to these results, as with all surveys, is that the respondents are more likely than the average resident to be concerned with environmental issues. However, the results have been analyzed relative to each other rather than in absolute terms, which brings validity to the conclusions.

### **Conclusions**

These conclusions were drawn from analysis of the survey results and include some speculation about the reasons for those results. The raw survey results can be found later in this document.

### **Where people work**

Most of the respondents work in the immediate area. This may be because people who work in the area are more concerned with the health of the area, so they are more likely to join the watershed group and thus fill in the survey.

### **Important environmental issues**

After weighting very important, moderately important and mildly important with weightings of 9, 6 and 3 respectively, the issues can be placed in order of importance as follows:

- 1 Having Quality Drinking Water
- 2 Having healthy streams and rivers
- 3 Preventing stream degradation
- 4 Preventing soil erosion
- 5 Loss of biodiversity
- 6 Maintenance of forested areas
- 7 Healthy buffer zones
- 8 Algal growth in estuaries
- 9 Nitrate levels
- 10 Encouraging Land Use Strategies
- 11 Addressing climate change
- 12 Increasing eco-tourism attractions

Having quality drinking water is the single most important issue to respondents. Having healthy streams and rivers that are not degraded by soil erosion also gets strong support, whereas addressing climate change and eco-tourism, while still important, get less support. It appears that the issues that affect us more directly are the ones we care most about.

Nitrate levels seem to be of less concern than drinking water quality, which may be because of lack of public education about nitrates.

In general, concern is shown about all of these issues and I don't think it would be much of a stretch to say that the small number of 'not important' marks shows that all respondents are concerned about the broad problems in our environment.

Information that people want

We asked what information people would like to see supplied, which implies that the information is not out there yet. Water quality comes at the top of the list, closely followed by watershed improvement, fish and wildlife and land-use. Youth Education and Global Warming are lower priority, possibly because respondents feel they have enough information about these already.

What watershed groups should focus on

After weighting very important, moderately important and mildly important with weightings of 9, 6 and 3 respectively, the issues can be placed in order of importance as follows:

- 1 Water quality testing
- 2 Assisting with adequate buffer zones
- 3 Stream enhancement
- 4 Educating residents on watershed issues
- 5 Improve fish passage
- 6 Fish reintroduction
- 7 Dredging of silt filled ponds
- 8 Nature trail / Nature Park
- 9 Land acquisition for wildlife protection

The difference in marks between the top priority and the bottom priority was less than it was in the 'important environmental issues' question.

Our surface-water sampling and nitrate clinics are obviously important to respondents, followed by the work that our summer work-crews undertake.

Education tends to be something that gets cut when budgets are tight, but we should obviously try to put more resources into this area.

Fish and fish passage, although further down the list of priorities, are obviously important to many.

That most respondents (87%) see the issues that we are already tackling as very or moderately important is reassuring.

Support for community led watershed planning

90% of respondents support community led watershed planning. Perhaps the other 10% would rather see government led planning, but the figure is an endorsement of our past efforts and gives us good reason to continue along the path that we are following.

Would you volunteer?

That only 15% of respondents would have time to get involved in their local watershed group, and these are mostly members of our group already, reflects the fact that we have trouble getting people to come out to meetings unless we have a specific hot topic to discuss or present to them. In that we have 160 members, including 24 corporate members, community support is strong and we have the endorsement of the local community to continue with our activities on their behalf.

So, what's next?

People who live and work in the Hunter River watershed are concerned about the health of their watershed. The issues that affect these people directly, such as water quality, are also their prime concerns. However, all the issues we placed before them were considered important to some degree.

Although most don't have the time available to help out directly, the vast majority of these people support our community-led approach and they also view the issues that the watershed group is tackling as being important, which is good news.

We have incorporated these results into our Stewardship Plan, which is growing organically, and will take these conclusions into consideration when planning our next steps.

Thank you,

Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group  
RR2  
Hunter River  
PE C0A 1N0

## Raw survey results

What is your livelihood?

Other	34
Tourism	13
Farming	7
Fishing	1

In the Central Queens / Gulf Shore area, do you

Live	43
Work	30
Vacation	3

How important are these environmental issues to you and your family?

Having Quality Drinking Water

Very important	47
Moderately important	1
Mildly important	1

Having healthy streams and rivers

Very important	44
Moderately important	6

Preventing soil erosion

Very important	40
Moderately important	7
Mildly important	1

Loss of biodiversity

Very important	37
Moderately important	12

Preventing stream degradation

Very important	42
Moderately important	8

### Nitrate levels

Very important	27
Moderately important	15
Mildly important	5
Unknown issue	1

### Encouraging Land Use Strategies

Very important	28
Moderately important	11
Mildly important	10

### Maintenance of forested areas

Very important	30
Moderately important	16
Mildly important	3

### Healthy buffer zones

Very important	31
Moderately important	13
Mildly important	5

### Increasing eco-tourism attractions

Very important	13
Moderately important	18
Mildly important	13
Not important	3

### Algal growth in estuaries

Very important	30
Moderately important	11
Mildly important	6
Not important	1
Unknown issue	2

### Addressing climate change

Very important	23
Moderately important	14

Mildly important 12

What types of information would you like to see supplied in your community?

Water Quality	34
Watershed improvement	27
Fish and wildlife	24
Land use practices	23
Youth education	15
Global Warming	14
Other:	
Plans to dredge ponds and restore waterways	1
More emphasis on organic farming	1

What projects do you think the watershed group should focus on?

Water quality testing

Very important	28
Moderately important	14
Mildly important	3

Educating residents on watershed issues

Very important	25
Moderately important	16
Mildly important	6
Not important	1

Stream enhancement

Very important	28
Moderately important	14
Mildly important	6

Fish reintroduction

Very important	19
Moderately important	17
Mildly important	9

Nature trail / Nature Park

Very important	17
----------------	----

Moderately important	10
Mildly important	15
Not important	3
Unknown issue	1

Dredging of silt filled ponds

Very important	14
Moderately important	14
Mildly important	7
Not important	3
Unknown issue	6

Improve fish passage

Very important	18
Moderately important	20
Mildly important	6
Unknown issue	2

Assisting with adequate buffer zones

Very important	27
Moderately important	14
Mildly important	5
Not important	1

Land acquisition for wildlife protection

Very important	16
Moderately important	12
Mildly important	16
Not important	1

Do you support community led watershed planning and management in your community?

Yes	43
No	5

Would you have time to get involved in your local watershed group?

No	41
Yes	7

