

APPENDIX H

2004 SEMCOG Regional Public Education Survey

St. Clair County Subwatershed Major Survey Findings

The Regional Public Education survey was undertaken the summer of 2004. Following are results specific to the St. Clair County 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-nine (29%) of those surveyed thought water quality was improving (“somewhat better” or “much better”). Forty-two 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 (52%), swimming (51%) and picnicking (35%). Twenty percent (20%) of those surveyed indicated that they did not participate in activities in or near lakes and streams in the region during the past year.

66% 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; 34% did not.

35% of those surveyed indicated that their household had taken some type of action to protect water resources in the past two years; 54% 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

40% of those surveyed thought industrial discharge was the greatest contributor of pollution to lakes, rivers and streams. Sewage overflow was second (27%) followed by storm water runoff (20%) and wastewater treatment plant discharge (13%).

Twenty-six percent (26%) of those surveyed indicated that they “didn’t know” where stormwater goes after it enters a storm drain or roadside ditch. Forty-seven percent (47%) thought stormwater goes directly to lakes/streams *without* treatment; 17% thought it goes to a treatment plant, and 10% thought it goes to lakes/streams with treatment.

Twenty-six (26%) of those surveyed knew that they lived in a watershed. Ninety-four percent (94%) of those surveyed agreed with the statement that the quality of local streams where they live affects the Great Lakes and Lake St. Clair.

Sixty percent of the respondents indicated that they had not seen road signs identifying rivers or watersheds in their community.

Current Activities

Nearly one-fourth of those surveyed (24%) indicated that they typically wash their vehicles at home in the driveway. Most (73%) of those surveyed indicated that they use a car wash.

Thirty-six percent stated they did have a septic system. Of those who had a septic system, 72% said they had it checked or serviced in the past 3-5 years.

24% of those surveyed indicated that members of their household usually change motor oil, transmission fluid or radiator fluid for a vehicle at their home.

Over half (58%) 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; 19% of those surveyed indicated that their household typically disposes of household hazardous waste with their regular trash.

Over half (55%) 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.

Half (50%) of those surveyed indicated that their household uses fertilizers on their lawn seldom or never. One-fourth (25%) indicated they use fertilizer on their lawn once or twice per year.

The types of fertilizer that households were most likely to use on their lawn were: weed and feed (48%), seasonal varieties (26%), slow release nitrogen (22%), and low phosphorous (4%). Twenty-one (21%) of those surveyed did not know what type of fertilizer their household used.

The most common reason residents gave for selecting the type of fertilizer or pesticide they use was previous experience with a product (49%). While only 15% of the respondents who use fertilizer indicated that the safety of the environment was an important reason for selecting the type of fertilizer their household used, this choice was second along with price (17%).

Eighty-four percent (84%) of those surveyed indicated that their household does not use 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 (81%), (3) have their septic tank serviced (79%), (4) change car washing practices (78%), and (4) promptly pick up their pet's waste (66%). Residents were less willing to change lawn watering practices (65%).

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 a community newspaper (60%), television news (40%), major newspapers (40%), and municipal newsletter (31%).