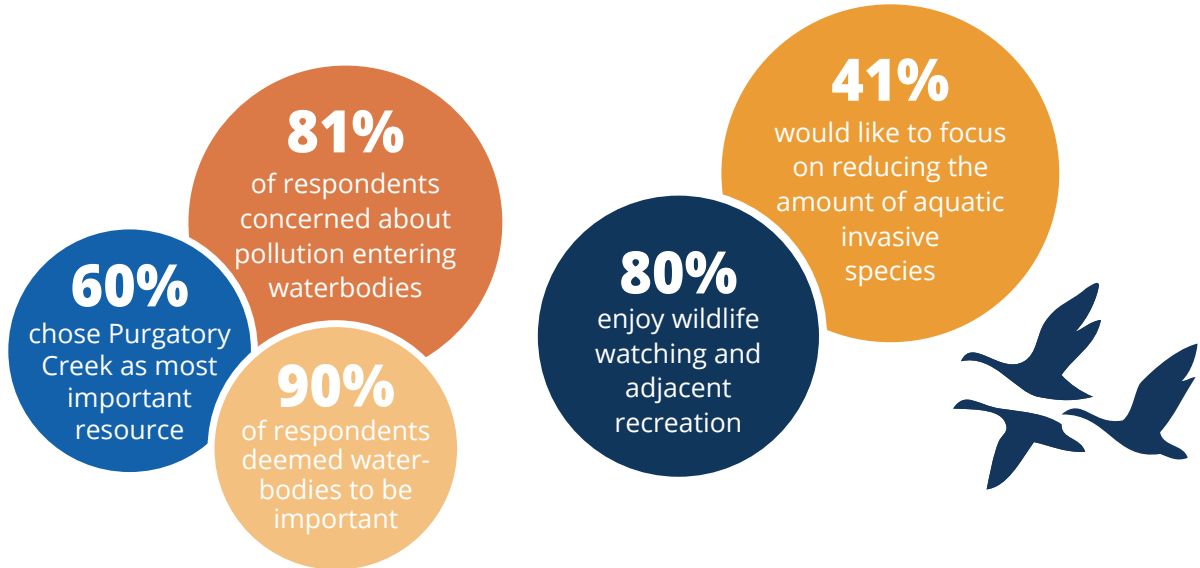


# COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

Prepared for the  
Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District



August 31, 2016

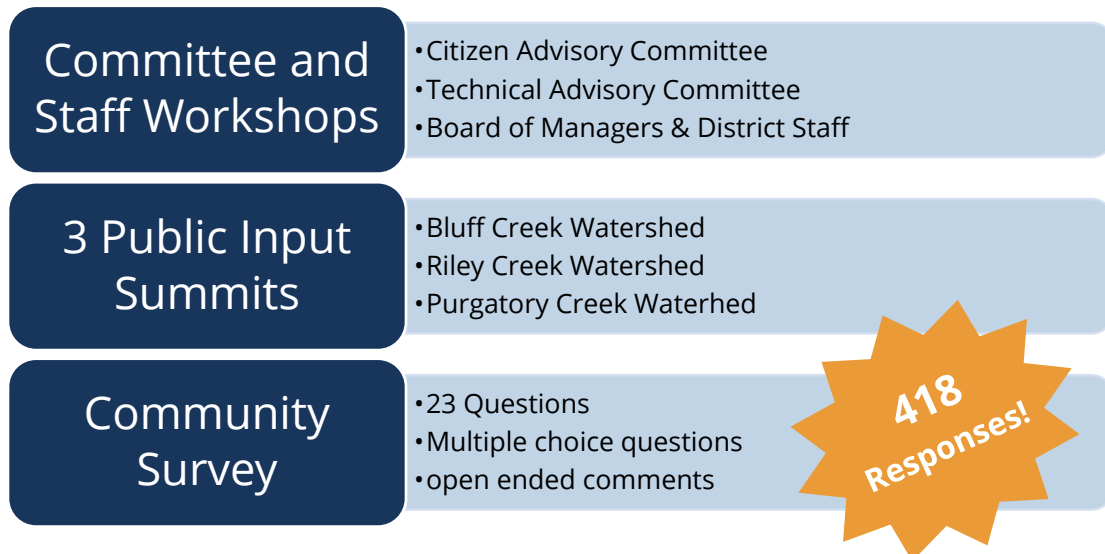
## We asked...you answered!

The Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District (RPBCWD) is updating its Watershed Management Plan. The Plan lays out the RPBCWD's approach to protect, manage, and restore water resources within the District, which includes the watersheds of Bluff Creek, Purgatory Creek, and Bluff Creek.

*The foundation of a great plan is great information.*

–Perry Forster,  
RPBCWD Manager

Recognizing that the foundation of a great plan is great information, the RPBCWD launched an extensive public engagement strategy to find out what is important to its stakeholders:



A 23 question, **Community Survey** survey hosted at the RPBCWD website from February 17, 2016 through June 10, 2016 was a major piece of the RPBCWD's public engagement strategy. The survey was promoted through marketing campaign including:

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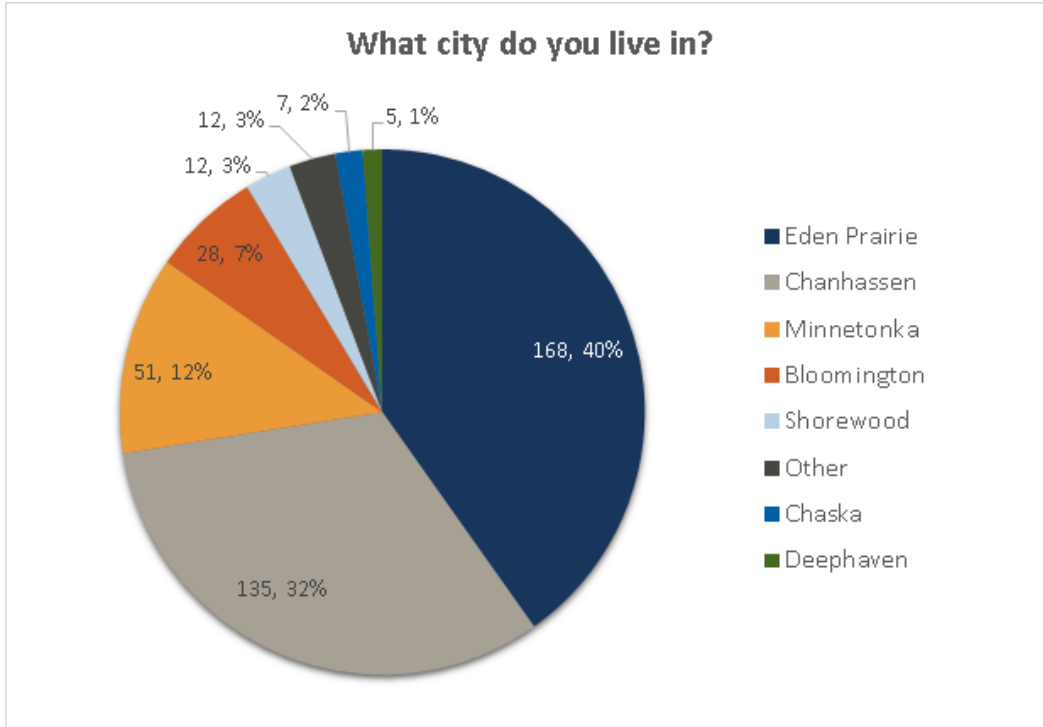
- Over 24,000** Newspaper inserts
- Advertising at **More than a Dozen Events**
- Eden Prairie News & Chanhassen Villager** Press Releases

Survey responses varied from general to detailed, critical to congratulatory. Most importantly, they provided honest and direct feedback from watershed stakeholders.

The RPBCWD Managers will use the results of the Community Survey and other stakeholder engagement activities to inform the goals, strategies, and actions included in the Plan. The following document summarizes the results of the Community Survey.

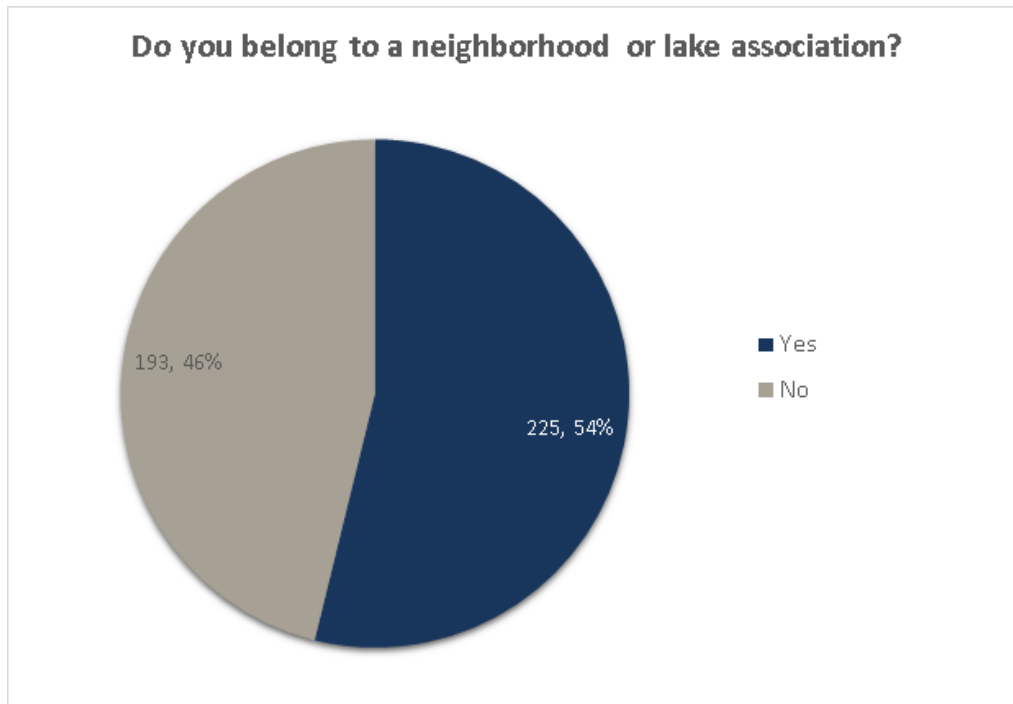
## Survey Results

### Question 1: What City do you live in? (418 responses)



About 40% of respondents live in Eden Prairie and 32% reside in Chanhassen. Overall, the distribution of survey respondents is consistent with the distribution of area within the District (37% Eden Prairie, 30% Chanhassen, 13% Minnetonka, 7% Bloomington, etc.). Twelve survey respondents identified “other” and provided 11 open ended responses. Those responses included: Victoria (6), Carver (1), Forest Lake (1), Golden Valley (1), Norwood Young America (1), and Richfield (1).

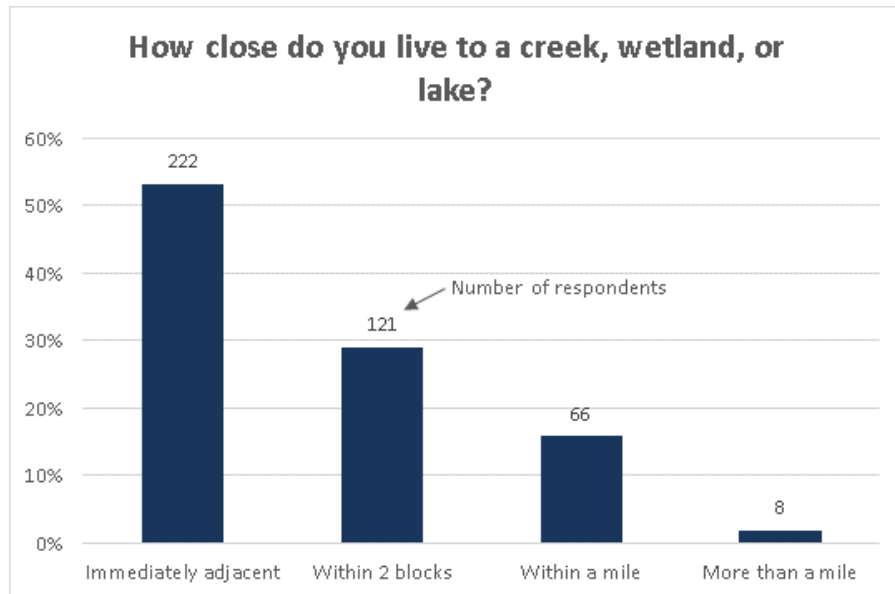
**Question 2:** Do you belong to a neighborhood or lake association? (418 responses)



Over half of the survey respondents are part of a neighborhood or lake association. The following associations were identified among those answering "Yes" to question 2 (note that not all those responding "Yes" identified the associate to which they belong):

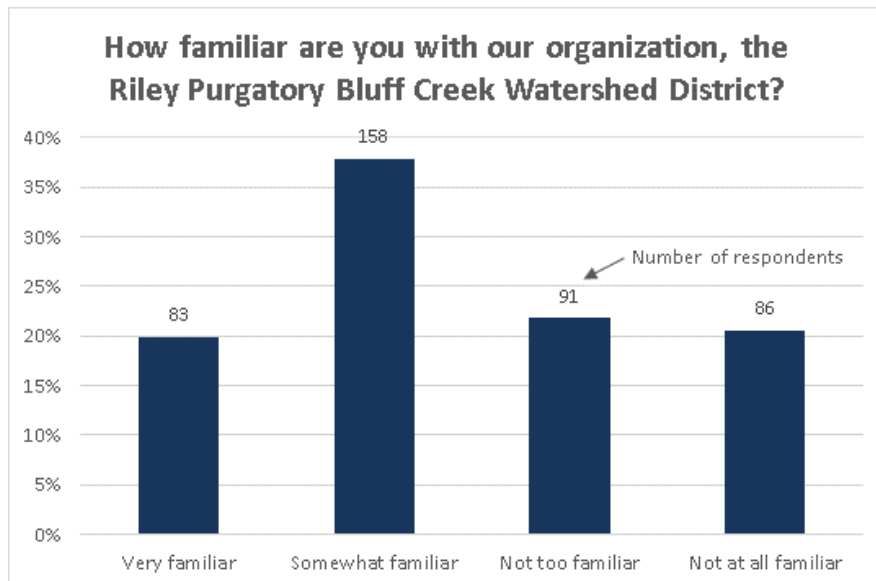
- Creek Knolls
- Duck Lake Association
- Duck Lake Estates
- Friends of Red Rock Lake
- Lake Lucy Homeowners Association
- Lotus Lake
- Minnesota Creekview Townhomes Association
- Wintergreen Home Owners Association

**Question 3:** How close to you live to a creek, wetland, or lake? (417 responses)



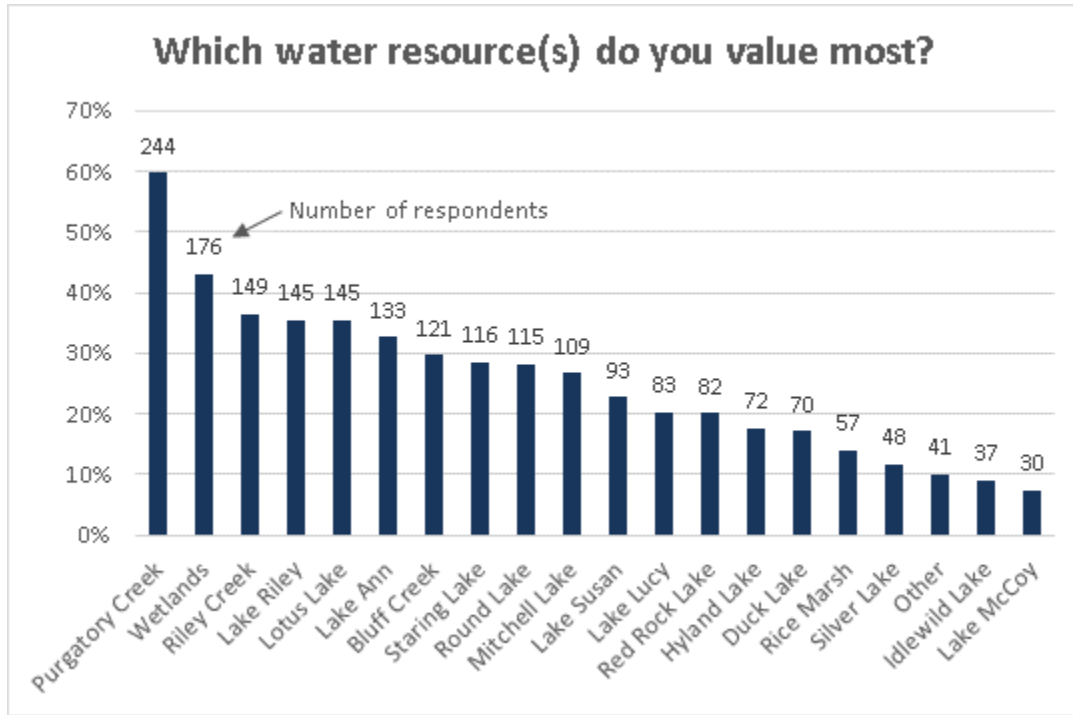
Over half the survey respondents live immediately adjacent to a waterbody and over three quarters live within 2 blocks. Only 2% of survey respondents (8) live more than a mile from a creek, wetland, or lake.

**Question 4:** How familiar are you with our organization, the Riley-Purgatory-Bluff Creek Watershed District? (418 responses)



Approximately 60% of the respondents indicated that they are very familiar or somewhat familiar with the District. About 20% of survey respondents were not at all familiar with the District.

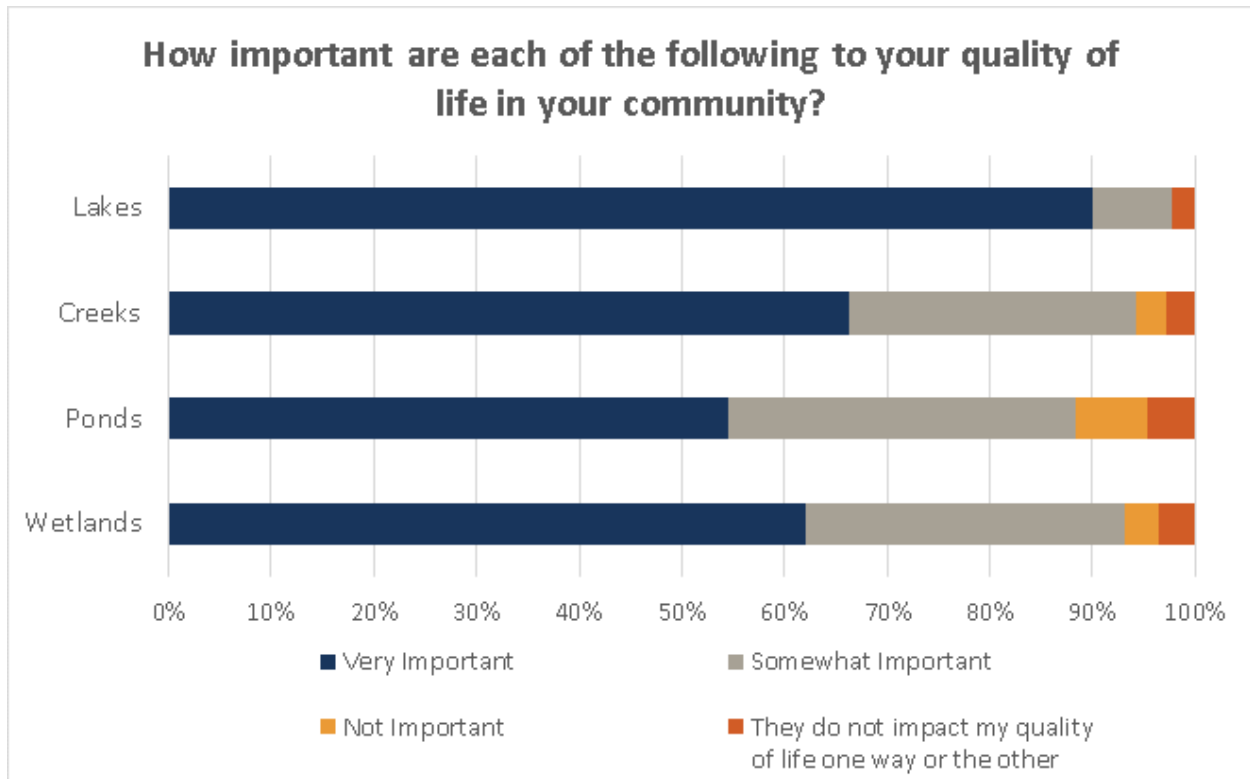
**Question 5:** Which water resources do you value most? (408 respondents, 2,066 selections)



Purgatory Creek was identified as the most highly valued resource and was identified by about 60% of survey respondents. Over 40% of respondents identified Wetlands as valuable. No other resources were identified as most valuable by more than 40% of survey respondents. Forty-one respondents provided an open-ended response. Of these, 9 responses indicated “all” District waterbodies are important. Several responses identified waterbodies outside or downstream of the District (e.g., Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota River). Other waterbodies in the District identified as most valued by more than one survey respondent include:

- Neill Lake (2)
- Woodbridge Marsh (2)

**Question 6:** How important are each of the following to your quality of life in your community? (403 responses)



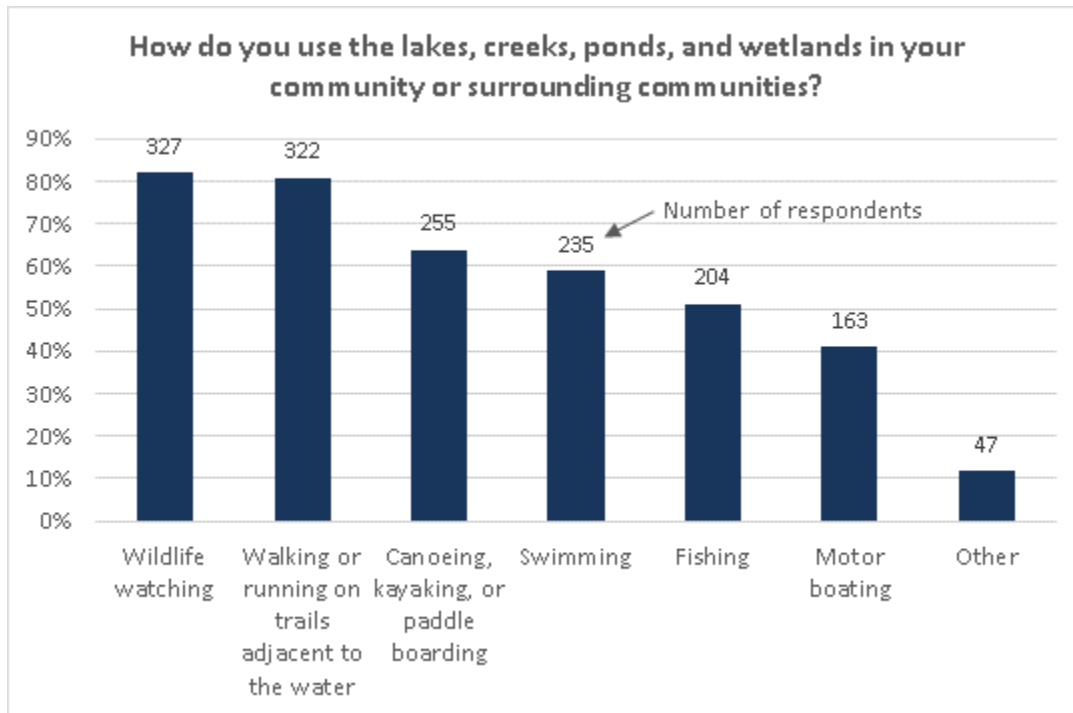
The majority of the 403 respondents considered each of the listed resources as very important. Nearly 90% of all respondents identified each waterbody type as somewhat or very important. Respondents generally considered lakes to be most important, followed by the creeks, wetlands, and ponds (all scoring similarly).

**Question 7:** For any of the water resources in Question 6, describe how they impact your life. (268 responses)

All responses to question 7 identified beneficial impacts (versus negative impacts like flooding). Most responses cited two or more beneficial impacts. The most common responses to question 7 cited the following beneficial impacts:

- Recreating in the water resources (e.g., boating, swimming)
- Recreating near the water resources (e.g., walking on trails)
- Ecological benefits (e.g., wildlife habitat)
- Overall quality of life (e.g., mental health)
- Aesthetics

**Question 8:** How do you use the lakes, creeks, ponds and wetlands in your community or surrounding communities? (399 respondents, 1,553 selections)

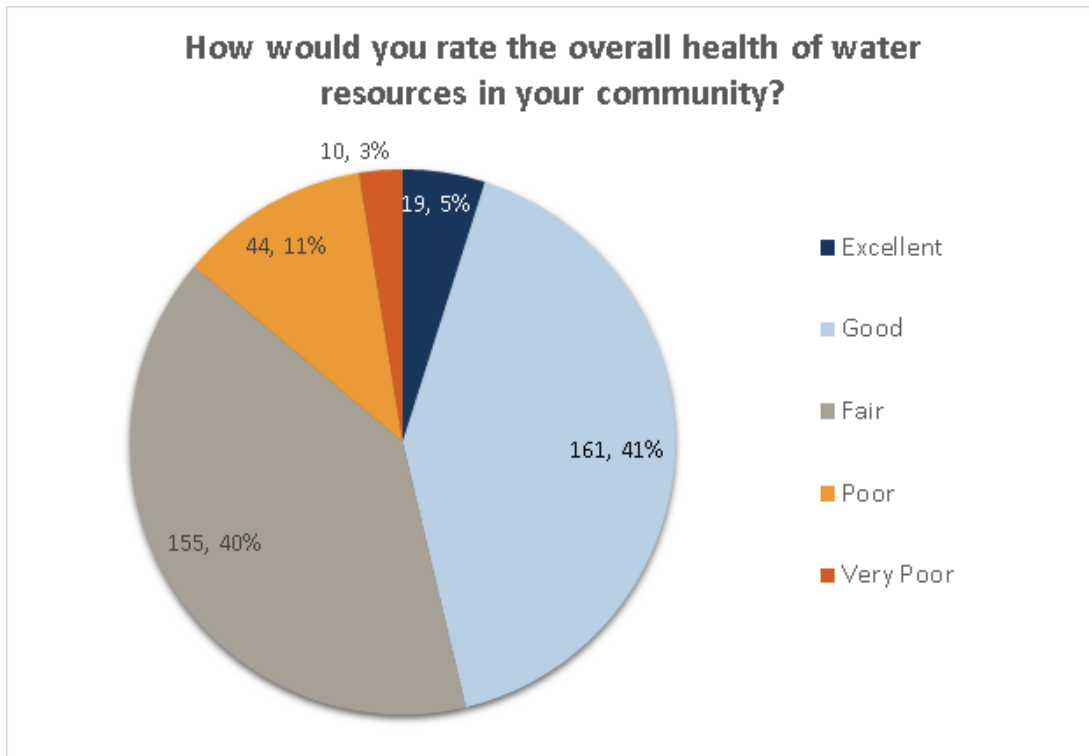


Wildlife watching and recreation adjacent to waterbodies were the most popular uses and were selected by about 80% of survey respondents. Other recreational activities such as boating, swimming, and fishing were each selected by more than half of the survey respondents. Other uses were identified by 121 survey respondents who provided 44 open-ended responses. Open-ended responses included:

- Winter activities (ice-skating, skiing, snowshoeing) (11)
- Biking (7)
- Sailing (7)
- Photography (3)
- Landscaping irrigation or water management system (2)



**Question 9:** How would you rate the overall health of the water resources in your community? (399 responses)



Nearly half (46%) of the survey respondents identified overall water resource health as good or excellent. Conversely, only 14% of survey respondents categorized overall water resource health as poor or very poor.

**Question 10:** Regarding your response to question 9, why do you believe the water resources currently have this quality? (308 responses)

Responses to question varied widely according to the varied opinions about overall water resource health. Many responses provided anecdotal information about the health of particular water resources but did not identify factors contributing to that condition.

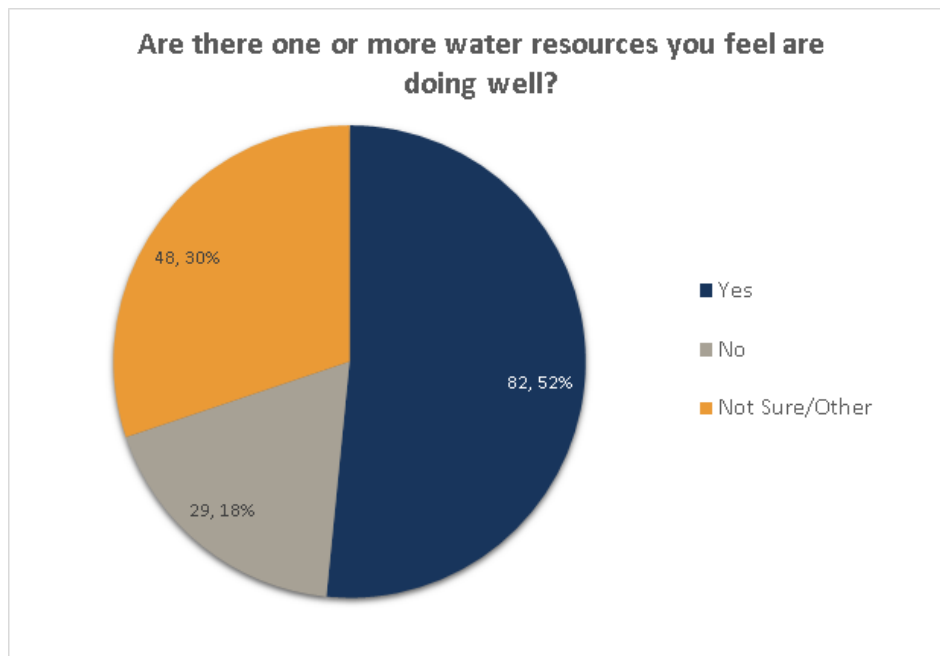
Positive factors (presumably from those citing good or excellent overall health) commonly identified in survey include:

- Resident good-housekeeping/best management practices
- Regulatory controls
- District and other government action to reduce pollution
- Engaged community/education
- Monitoring
- Prioritization (organizations and governments focus money and resources)

Negative factors (presumably from those citing poor or very poor overall health) commonly identified in survey include:

- Pollutants/nutrients in runoff stormwater runoff
- Chemicals/fertilizer from lawns
- Development without adequate treatment/buffers
- Green algae
- Invasive species
- Fish kills
- Weeds
- Erosion
- Lack of education/knowledge

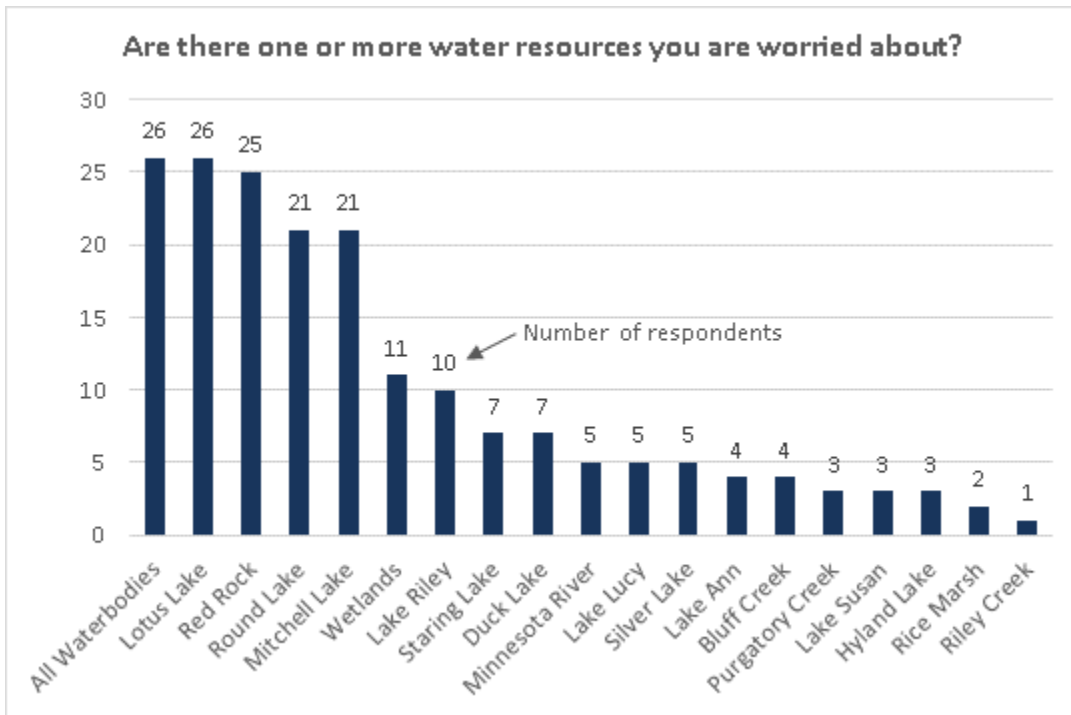
**Question 11:** Are there one or more water resources you feel are doing well? (159 responses)



Eighty-two of 159 respondents (about 50%) indicated that one or more water resources are doing well. About 20% of survey respondents stated that they did not know, or provided an intermediate responses (e.g., "they all need help"). Among the 82 positive responses, survey respondents identified specific water bodies thought to be doing well 59 times. Water bodies identified as doing well by three or more survey respondents included:

- Lake Ann (15)
- Lake Riley (6)
- Lotus Lake (5)
- Christmas Lake (5)
- Purgatory Creek (4)
- Staring Lake (3)

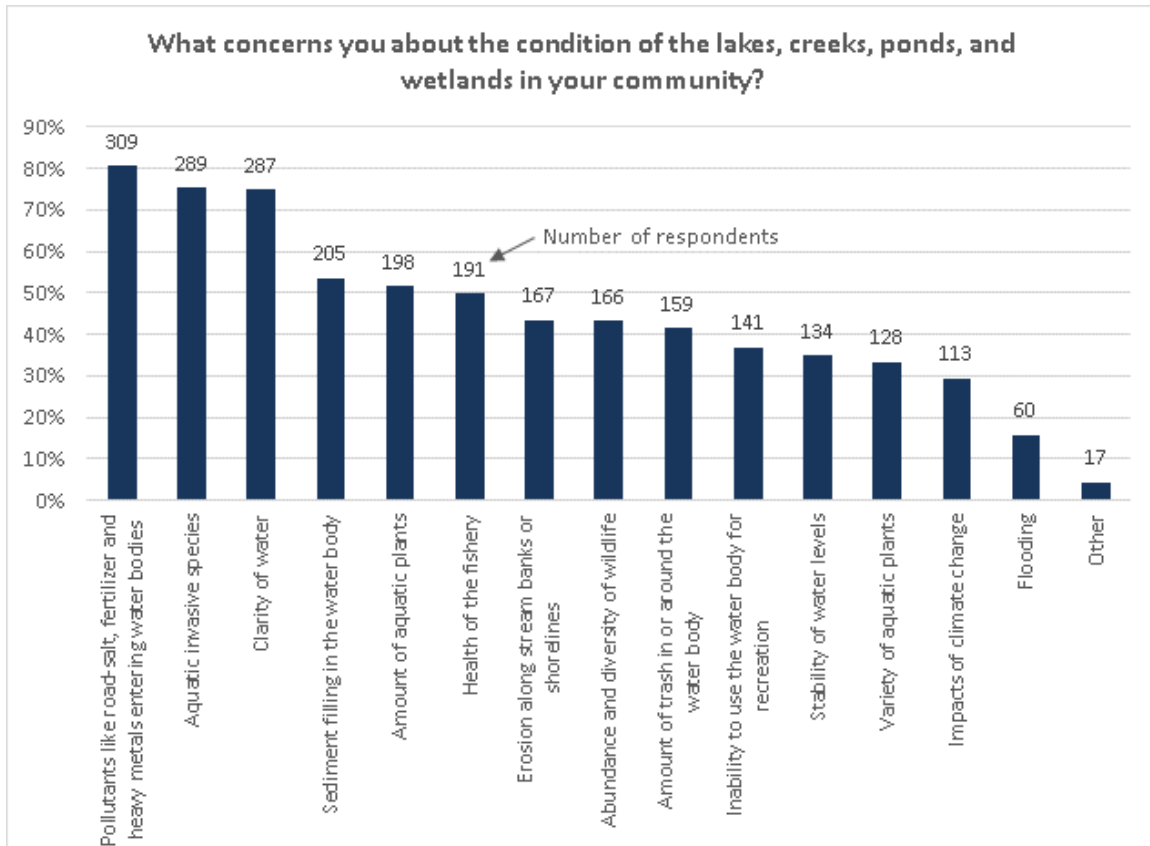
**Question 12:** Are there one or more water resources you are worried about (251 responses)



Of the 251 open-ended responses to question 12, 26 indicated that all waterbodies were a concern. Lotus Lake, Red Rock Lake, Round Lake, and Mitchell Lake were most commonly identified as water bodies of concern (each identified more than 20 times). Wetlands were specifically or generally identified 11 times. Relative to the lakes, fewer survey respondents were worried about the creeks. Several survey responses identified waterbodies outside of the District, including Lake Minnetonka (6), Normandale Lake (3), and Birch Island Lake (1). Responses to question 12 often referenced the following areas of concern:

- Invasive species
- Excessive vegetation
- Pollutant loading

**Question 13:** What concerns you about the condition of the lakes, creeks, ponds, and wetlands in your community? (384 respondents, 2,564 selections)



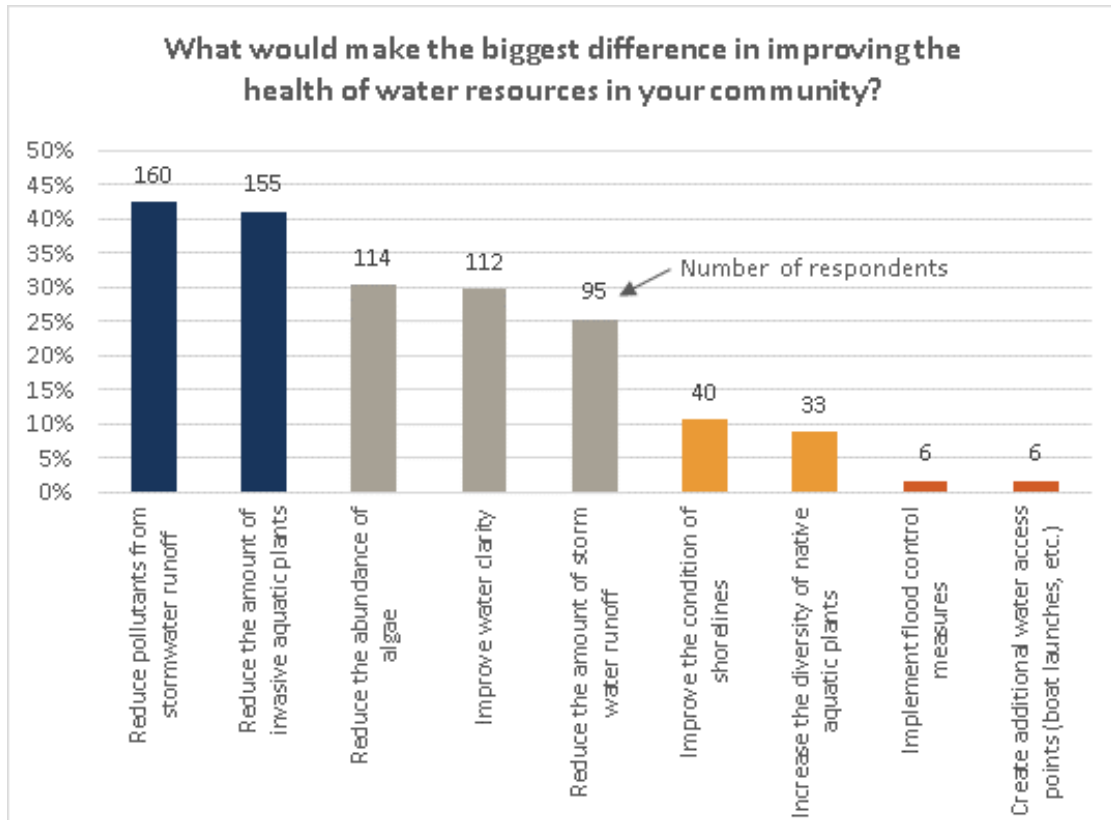
Three concerns were identified by over 70% of survey respondents, including:

1. Pollutant loading to water bodies (81% of respondents)
2. Aquatic invasive species (75% of respondents)
3. Clarity of water (75% of respondents)

Other concerns were selected by no more than 53% of survey respondents. Flooding was identified as a concern by only 16% of survey respondents. Several survey responses identified other concerns, including:

- Chemical impacts (e.g., mosquito control, AIS treatments) (4)
- Development close to waterbodies (3)
- Trash and debris (2)

**Question 14:** What would make the biggest difference in improving the health of water resources in your community (select 2)? (377 respondents, 721 selections)



Survey responses to question 14 generally split the nine options into four tiers of perceived improvement. The two actions identified as making the biggest improvement to water resources health include:

1. Reduce pollutants from stormwater (42% of respondents)
2. Reduce the amount of aquatic invasive species (41% of respondents)

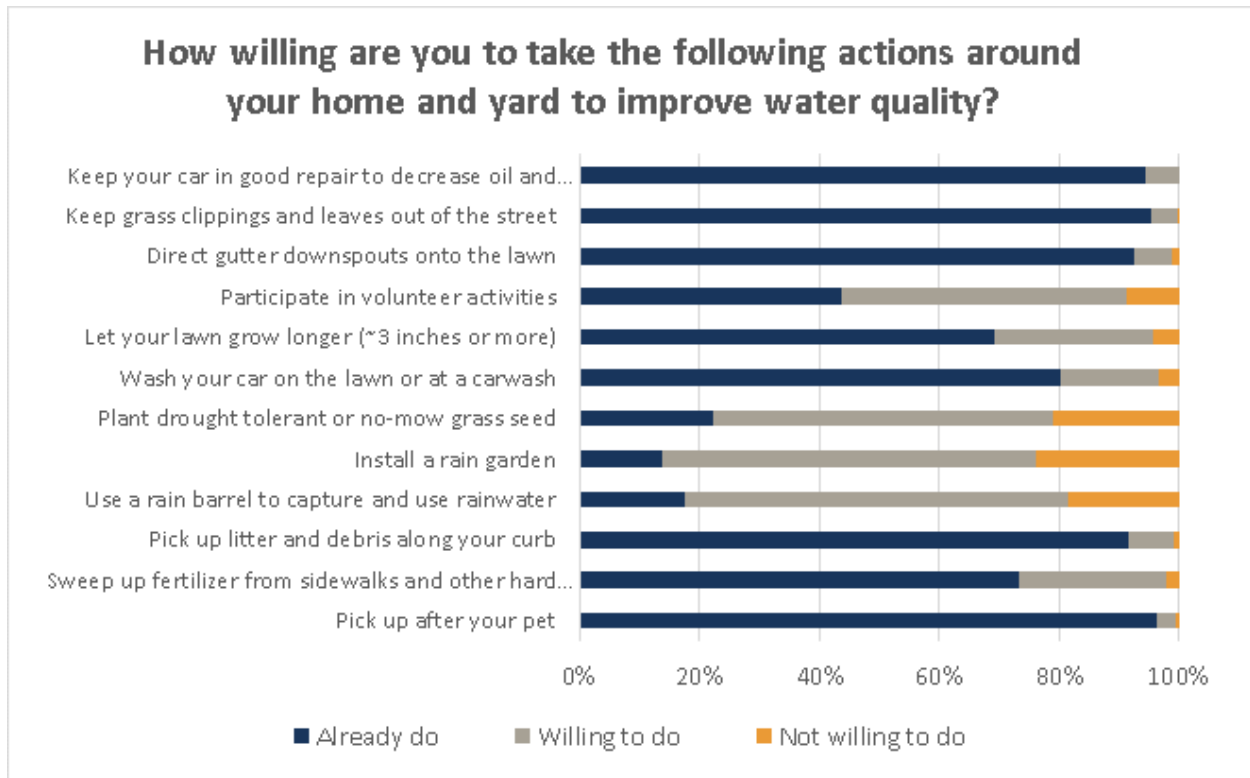
Three other actions were selected by between 25% and 30% of survey respondents, including:

3. Reduce the abundance of algae (30%)
4. Improve water clarity (30%)
5. Reduce the amount of stormwater runoff (25%)

Improving shoreline conditions and increasing the diversity of native aquatic plants were both selected by about 10% of survey respondents, and less than 2% of survey

respondents selected implementing flood control measures or creating additional water access points.

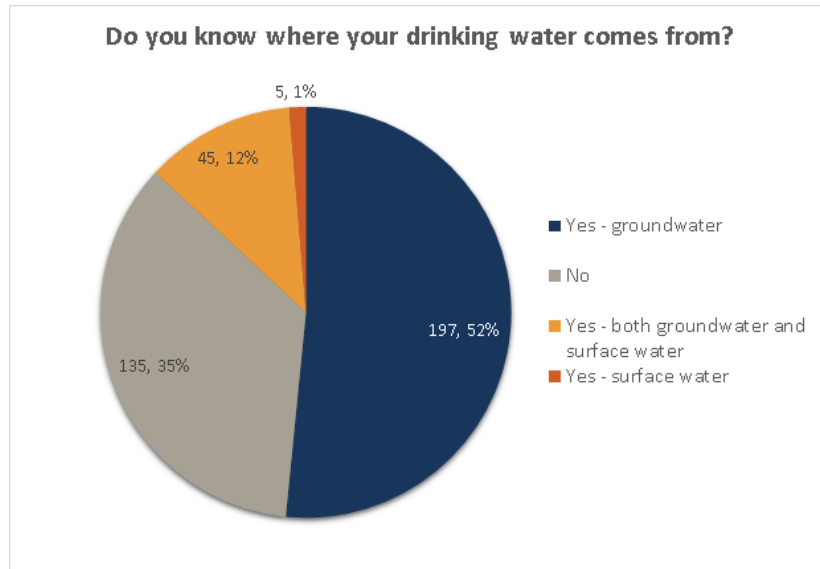
**Question 15:** How willing are you to take the following actions around your home and yard to improve water quality (214 to 375 responses, varying by action).



Responses to question 15 demonstrate that many survey respondents already exercise stormwater best management practices, and most were willing to participate in additional actions not already performed. Areas with significant potential for additional participation include:

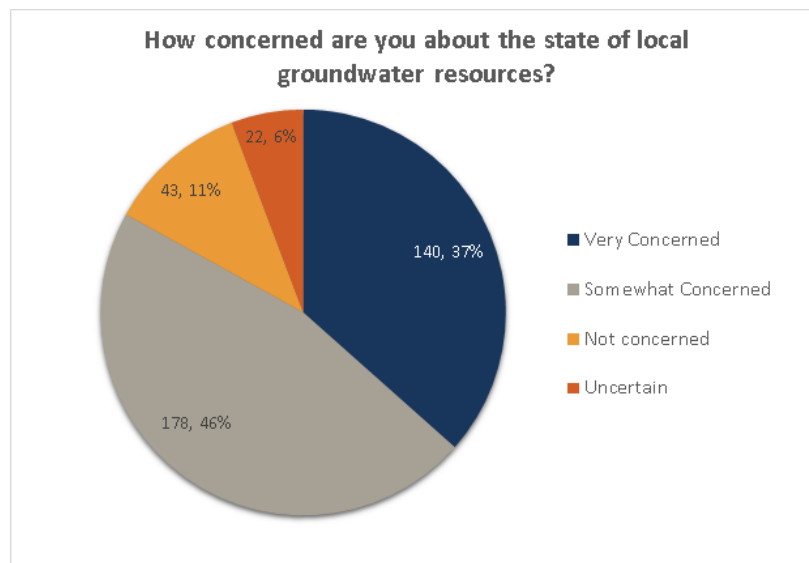
- Participating in volunteer activities
- Planting drought tolerant or no-mow grass seed
- Using a rain barrel to capture and use rainwater
- Installing a rain garden

**Question 16:** Do you know where your drinking water comes from? (382 responses)



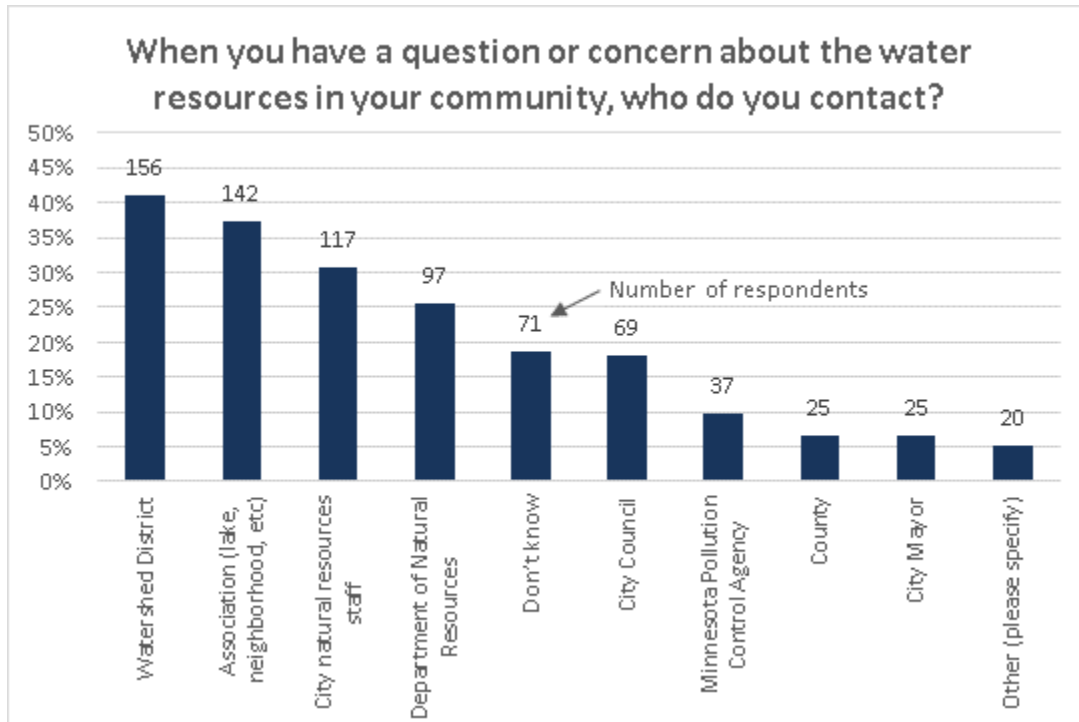
About two-thirds of survey respondents know where their drinking water comes from (most from groundwater). About 35% of survey respondents self-report that they do not know where their drinking water comes from.

**Question 17:** How concerned are you about the state of local groundwater resources? (383 responses)



Over 80% of survey respondents were very or somewhat concerned about groundwater resources. About 10% were not concerned.

**Question 18:** When you have a question or concern about water resources in your community, who do you contact? (380 respondents, 759 selections)

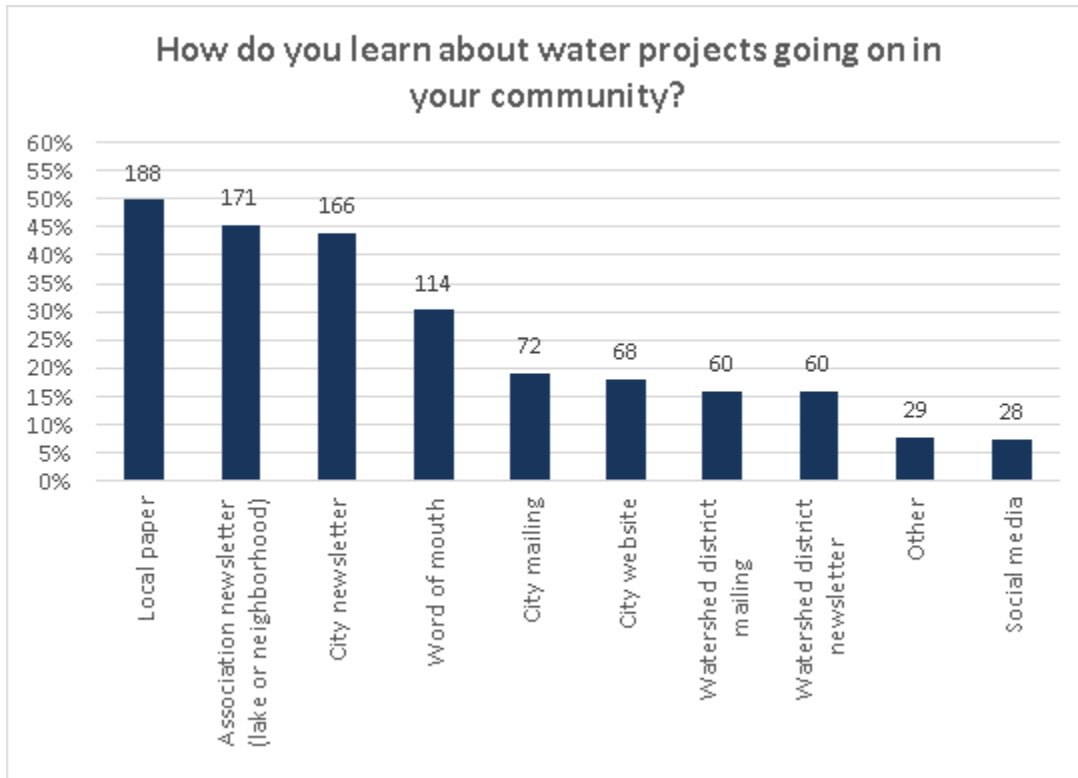


The District was the most popular source of information (41% of respondents), followed by neighborhood associations (37%) and city natural resources staff (31%). Nearly 20% of survey respondents did not know who to contact. Others identified among the open-ended responses include:

- City engineer or public works department
- City hall
- City website



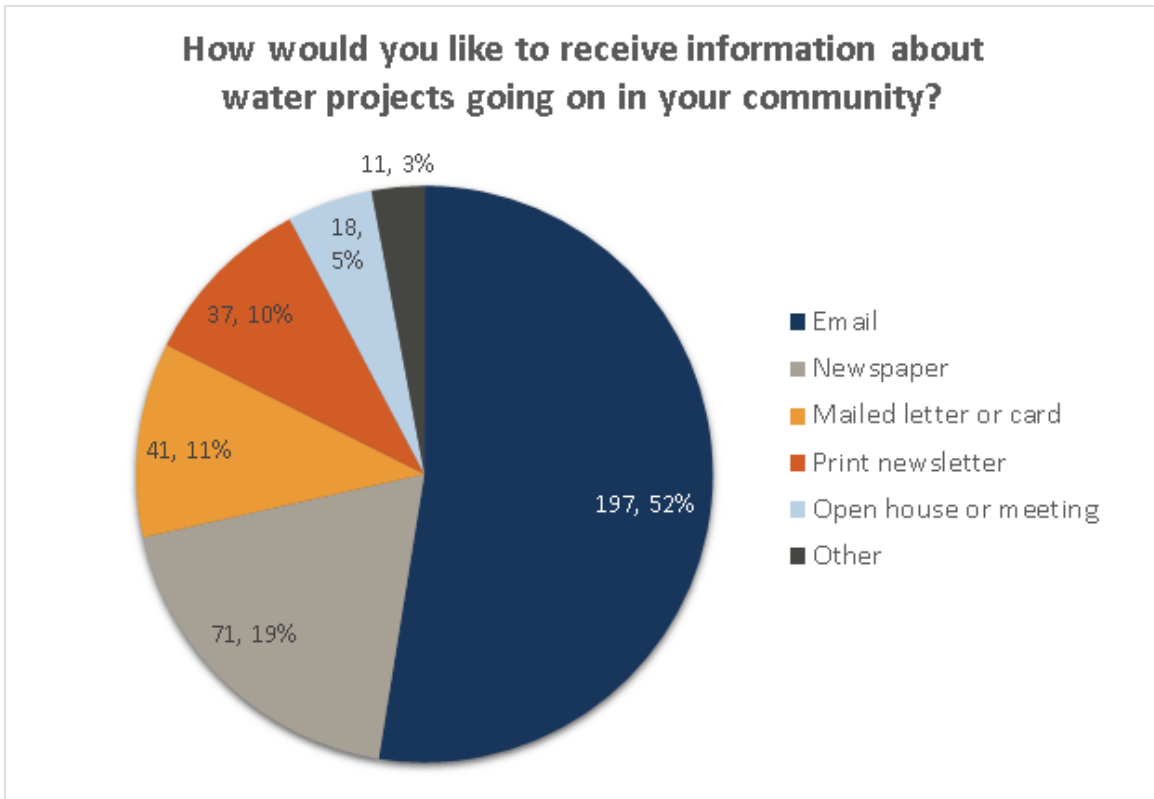
**Question 19:** How do you learn about water projects going on in your community? (377 respondents, 956 selections)



Nearly half of the survey respondents receive information about water projects from the local paper (50%), lake or neighborhood association newsletter (45%) or city newsletter (44%). Less than 20% of survey respondents learn about water projects from the District, and less than 10% from social media. Other sources identified in the open-ended responses to question 19 include:

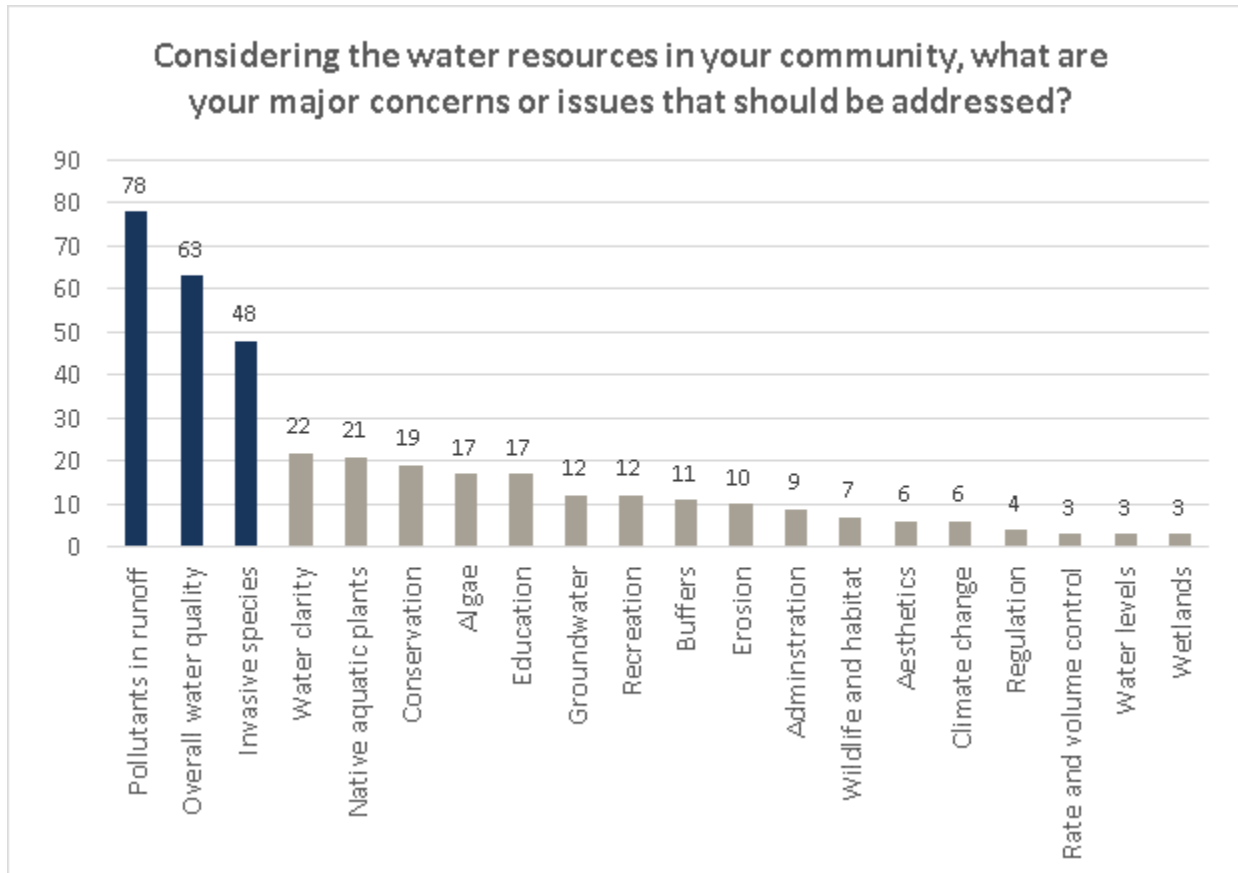
- District website
- District or city meetings
- Signage on trails or at a project site

**Question 20:** How would you like to receive information about water projects going on in your community? (375 responses)



Over half of survey respondents prefer to receive information via email, followed by newspaper (about 20%) and mailings (about 20%). Open-ended responses to question 20 cited the need for multiple communication methods, as well as the District website as a source of information.

**Question 21:** Considering the water resources in your community, what are your major issues or concerns that should be addressed? (260 responses)



Two-hundred sixty survey participants provided open-ended responses to question 21. Many responses identified multiple issues or concerns. A few responses noted that the participant’s concerns had been adequately recorded among the other questions. Some responses were more specific than others, citing particular water resources and/or District actions. The open-ended responses were categorized according to general topic areas. Responses with very specific concerns were included among the most appropriate general concern (e.g., water clarity in Round Lake was categorized as “water clarity”).

**Question 22:** What action should be taken to address these issues (see Question 21) and who should take these actions? (196 responses)

One-hundred ninety six survey participants provided open-ended responses to question 22. Responses varied from general actions (e.g., “city education”) to very specific actions (e.g., “ban dogs from Purgatory Park). Some actions were cited in several responses. The most frequently cited actions to address issues included:

- Continued and increased education for residents and business
- Continued or expanded enforcement of existing policy/regulation
- Monitoring of water quality
- District and/or city projects

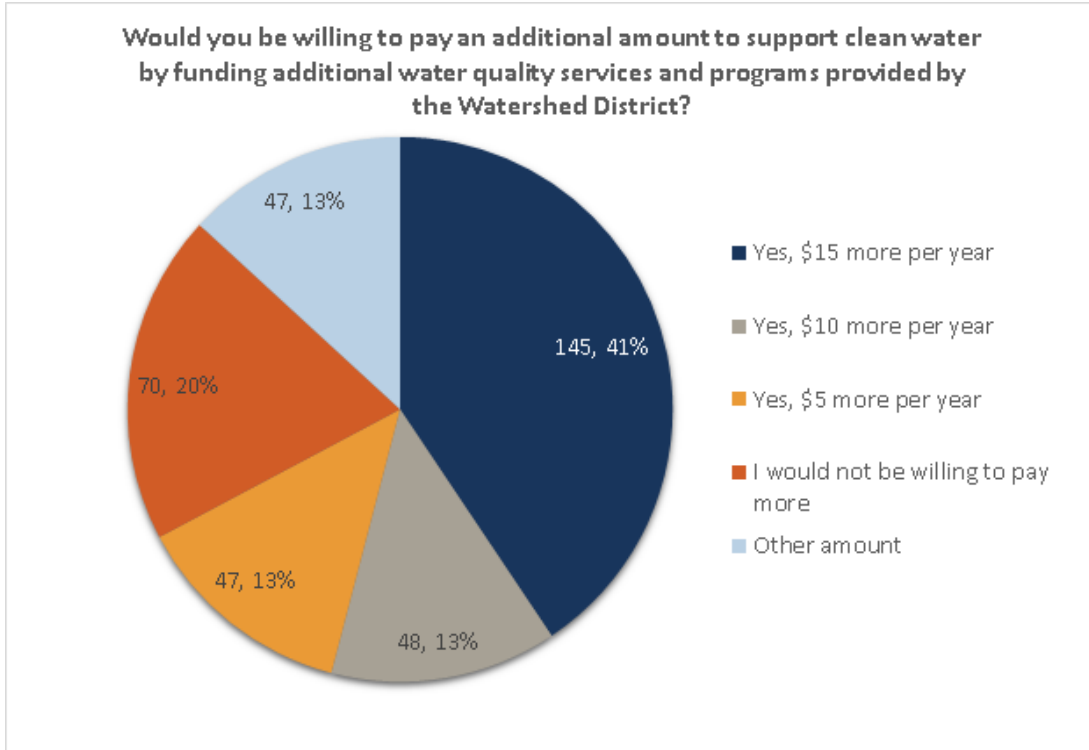
The topics of increased funding and inter-governmental cooperation were raised in several responses, but respondents were split among their support for these actions. While some cited a need for more cooperation among the District, cities, county, and state, others stated that overlapping responsibility for water resources from multiple units of government has led to inefficiency and “passing the buck.” Several responses indicated the need for increased funding to accomplish goals, but did not indicate where the funding should come from. Other responses stated that taxes are already excessive, and residents should not be asked to pay more.

Survey responses identified several parties as responsible for taking action, including:

- The District
- Cities
- Homeowner and lake associations
- State agencies
- Watershed residents

Several survey responses noted that the District should provide funding for lake associations and residents to take action to address issues.

**Question 23:** Would you be willing to pay an additional amount to support clean water by funding additional water quality services and programs provided by the Watershed District? (357 responses).



Responses to question 23 include 47 open-ended responses, of which 22 indicated a willingness to pay an additional amount. Including the open-ended responses, approximately 75% of survey respondents would be willing to pay some amount more. Several of the open-ended responses stated that respondents would be willing to pay more only to perform specific projects/benefits. A few open-ended responses indicated a desire for clearer accounting of District spending and prioritization.