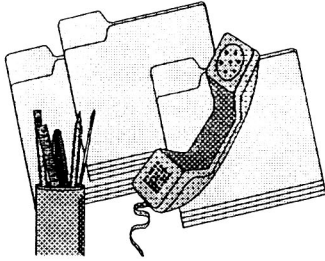


# Environmental Indicator Profile Sheet

	<p><b>Indicator Profile No. 17</b></p> <p><b>Public Attitude Surveys</b></p> <p>Category: <b>Social</b></p>	<p><b>Tools Used to Measure Indicator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct mail to public</li> <li>• Public workshops with citizens/citizen assoc.</li> <li>• Interviews with targeted audience</li> </ul>
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**Description:**  
 Public attitude surveys are directed at targeted groups to assess general awareness of key water quality problems and willingness to finance (via government spending) restoration efforts. A targeted group is solicited with a direct mailout, an interview or other mechanism of communication to gather information regarding an existing or potential program. The results of a survey are usually gathered into a summary report which may, for example, indicate that the public believes urban runoff to be the most significant source of pollution in the watershed or that funding for restoration efforts should be increased. This information is then used by decision makers in helping to formulate watershed management policy, develop restoration budgets and workplans, or implement stream restoration programs, for example.

- Utility of Indicator to Assess Stormwater Impacts:**
- Can be used to assess the public's perception of existing or proposed water quality programs (e.g., citizen volunteer monitoring, proposed waterbody restoration program, maintenance program implementation for BMP's, etc).
  - Can be used as a foundation for political action to stress the relative value the public places on a particular water quality issue.
  - Can be used as a mechanism for soliciting public or private funding for a particular water resource issue.
  - Can be a major component of a public educational program which incorporates results of surveys into future programs.
  - Helps managers develop more effective pollution prevention programs based on reported behaviors and targets scarce resources toward specific watersheds, population groups, or watershed interest groups.

- Advantages of Method:**
- Effective way to obtain information regarding citizen attitudes/concerns for a particular issue or set of issues.
  - Gives decision makers information on how proposed programs are likely to be received by the targeted audience.
  - Generally is relatively easy to interpret results and therefore can be an effective tool for non technical applications.

- Indicator Useful for Assessing:**
- \* Aquatic Integrity of:
    - Lakes
    - Streams
    - Estuaries
  - \* Land Use Impacts
  - \* Stormwater Mgmt Programs
  - \* Whole Watershed Quality
  - \* Industrial Sites
  - \* Municipal Programs

<i>Key:</i>	
<i>Very Useful</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<i>Mod. Useful</i>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Not Useful</i>	<input type="radio"/>

- Indicator Advantages**
- \* Geographic Range
  - \* Baseline Control
  - \* Reliable
  - \* Accuracy
  - \* Low cost
  - \* Repeatable
  - \* All Watershed Scale
  - \* Familiar to Practitioners
  - \* Easy to use & Low training

<i>Key</i>	
<i>Very Advantageous</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<i>Mod. Advantageous</i>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Not Advantageous</i>	<input type="radio"/>

**Cost**

See Table 3.3D

**Disadvantages of Method:**

- Results of survey are dependent on the number of people who respond and the degree of importance people place on water quality issues.
- Results can be dependent on the socioeconomic status of the community being surveyed and the relative importance water quality plays in people's lives.
- Results of survey can be skewed by the relative knowledge of the target audience. Survey practitioners must consider target audience's understanding of topic in formulating questionnaires and be prepared to follow up with future surveys.
- Language barriers and lack of phone or address information may result in missing key population groups.
- Does not directly measure changes occurring in the receiving water.

**Case Study: Blair, J., G. Slater, A. McLaughlin, 1994****The Chesapeake Bay Attitudes Survey**

*Chesapeake Bay Program, Communications Subcommittee, Final Report, April 28, 1994.*

The Survey Research Center at the University of Maryland at College Park conducted a survey of residents in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The goal of this study was to provide baseline data on the attitudes, behaviors, and opinions of residents about pollution, water quality, funding, and clean-up efforts in the Bay watershed. The survey was conducted from October 6, 1993 through January 27, 1994. A total of 2004 people were interviewed.

The study results indicated that 85% of all respondents were either very concerned or somewhat concerned about pollution in the Bay. This level of concern varied by distance from the Bay. Concern was greatest for people living closest to the Bay. Approximately one-third of the respondents thought that business and industry was the main cause of pollution in the Bay. About half of the respondents thought the Bay was more polluted today compared to ten years ago.

Seventy-eight percent of the respondents who reported being familiar with the Bay said that pollution had not interfered with any of the things they do for recreation on the Bay. Sixty-eight of these respondents thought that the water quality was unsafe for aquatic life; sixty percent thought water quality was unsafe for swimming, and fifty-three percent thought the water quality made seafood unsafe.

The major sources of pollution identified by respondents were business and industry, commercial shipping spills, recreational boating, landfills, construction, and farming. Sixty-one percent said efforts to clean-up the Bay were too little.

**Method References:**

- Direct Mail: Hampton Roads Municipal Communicators, 1992. *Environmental Attitudes Surveyed in Hampton Roads*, Hampton Roads Municipal Communicators
- Public Workshops: Hoffman, R.K., 1981. *The Public's Perspective on Nonpoint Sources. Nonpoint Pollution Control - Tools and Techniques for the Future*, Proceedings of a Technical Symposium, P 35-38
- Interviews with Target Audiences: Desvousges, W.H.; V.K. Smith, M.P. McGivney, 1983. *Comparison of Alternative Approaches for Estimating Recreation and Related Benefits of Water Quality Improvements*. Misc. Rep Ser. U.S. EPA. No. EPA/230/05-83/001