



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION SERIES

TIMELY INFORMATION

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A SURVEY OF THE PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS IN THE FLINT CREEK WATERSHED OF ALABAMA

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The following information was taken from a random survey of the general public living in the Flint Creek Watershed of Alabama which is made up of West Morgan, Northwest Cullman and East Lawrence Counties. Approximately 200 citizens were contacted by telephone and they provided the following responses to questions concerning the environment.

In summary of selected topics, most citizens believe that the current levels of environmental law enforcement are not strict enough, and 122 out of 202 respondents believe that we need more governmental regulation to protect our environment. The majority also believe that protecting the environment should be given priority, even at the risk of slowing down economic growth. A total of 169 out of 201 respondents stated that they were willing to pay higher prices for products so that industry could better protect the environment. Most respondents felt that government regulations to protect the environment should be set at the local or county level, and most felt that citizens' efforts to protect the environment are often very effective and that the environment would receive better protection if governmental agencies included local citizen's groups in the decision-making process.

When respondents were asked why they were not more actively involved with water quality problems in their community, the majority (69% or 139 out of 201) said that they were not sure where to start. Out of 201 respondents queried, 152 said that they had no formal education about the environment; however, 30 respondents said that they received environmental education in college, while 8 respondents received environmental education in high school. A total of 187 of the 202 respondents thought that there should be more opportunities to receive environmental education! According to the survey, the most used sources of environmental information are:

47%--newspapers

33%--television

14%--magazines

Of the 202 respondents that participated in the survey, 26 said that they had contacted their County Extension Agent during the last year, and 18 of these 26 respondents said that the information they received from the County Agent was very useful.

ALABAMA A&M AND AUBURN UNIVERSITIES, AND TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY, COUNTY GOVERNING BODIES AND USDA COOPERATING

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IN SUMMARY

The results of this survey indicate that the majority of our citizenry (93%) are seeking opportunities to enhance their environmental education. The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service can play a major role in fulfilling this need with environmental information currently available to the public, such as the Self*Environmental*Assistance program. This program will provide a starting point for those citizens seeking help. According to this survey, the most effective way to reach these people seeking environmental information is through newspaper articles.