

COLORADO *NPS* CONNECTION

News About Nonpoint Source Issues

Summer 2002

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Surprising survey findings put water pollution ahead of other environmental issues

By Colorado Water Protection Project Staff

Results of a survey by the Colorado Water Protection Project earlier this year had one unexpected finding and some encouraging news.

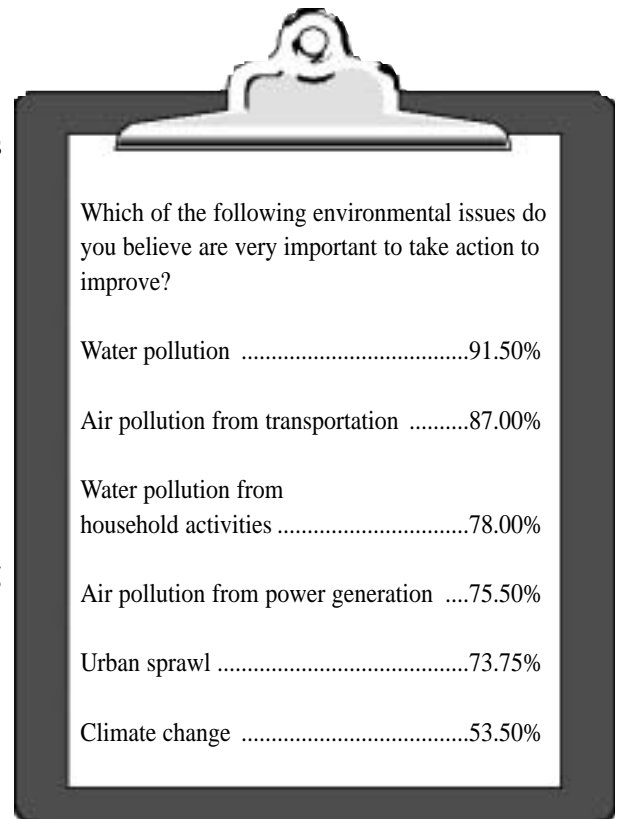
We were surprised at how high the issue of water pollution is on the public's radar screen – even higher than urban sprawl and other hot environmental topics. It is particularly interesting since the survey was conducted before the recent wildland fires and the resultant media attention on water quality impacts.

Respondents believe that it's very important to take action to improve water pollution. In fact, 91 percent placed it at the top of a list that included urban sprawl, air pollution and climate change.

“This is an important finding for people trying to do public education and outreach because it demonstrates the public's concern about water quality,” according to Cynthia Peterson, CWPP project manager. “We need to provide people

with information so they can make choices in their daily lives that support the values that the survey showed.”

The random telephone poll was conducted the first half of January when 400 Colorado residents took part in the 10-minute survey. The CWPP, formed five years ago to educate residents about ways they can help protect the state's water



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quality, commissioned the survey to help determine if nonpoint source educational messages are getting across.

One of the pieces of encouraging news to come out of the survey is that a majority of respondents (52%) understood that water that runs off yards and streets flows into local streams, rivers, lakes and reservoirs without being treated. "If Coloradans know that there is no treatment of polluted runoff before it enters water bodies, they are less likely to dump such items as motor oil down storm drains or overuse lawn and garden products," Peterson said.

When compared to the CWPP's similar 1998 survey, 2002 respondents were more aware that polluted runoff 1) is a problem in their communities, 2) may be caused by household activities and 3) reduces their quality of life.

When questioned about specific activities, 2002 respondents were most likely to identify automobile products such as oil and antifreeze as contributors to

"household generated polluted runoff" and least likely to identify pet waste.

Because the CWPP continues to get its messages out through various advertising and public relations campaigns, we wanted to know the best methods of reaching the public. Respondents were given a list of 17 ways to receive information.

Other NPS educational projects may find it useful to know that two categories topped the list, news articles in local newspapers and features on local television news. They were closely followed by advertisements in local newspapers and on television.

Who took part in the survey? Seventy-seven percent lived in single-family dwellings, 48 percent were in the 31 to 50 age group, 45 percent had at least an undergraduate degree and a quarter of respondents lived in households with an annual income of more than \$75,000. Of the 400 respondents, 220, or 55 percent, were female.

To view the entire survey, please visit www.ourwater.org and click on the "2002 Survey of Residents' Awareness and Understanding of Polluted Runoff."

Resources for Protecting Colorado's Water

Free Interactive CD-ROM

Colorado Water Protection Project



An interactive CD designed to provide information and educational resources to interested individuals, associations, educators, gardeners, landscapers, city planners and the media throughout Colorado.

**For information or to order
e-mail info@ourwater.org
or call (303) 861-5195.**

The Colorado NPS Connection newsletter is also online at www.ourwater.org.

To receive the newsletter via e-mail, or for an e-mail reminder that a new issue is available to view on the Web, please send your name, e-mail address and preference to info@ourwater.org.

WE WANT TO KNOW!
Colorado NPS Connection Survey



Overall, how informative do you find the Colorado NPS Connection?

- Very Informative Moderately Informative Not at all Informative

Which features have been most interesting to you? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feature stories on people involved in NPS issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Applications of NPS technologies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stories featuring 319 projects throughout the state | <input type="checkbox"/> Colorado 319 grant process information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conference reports | <input type="checkbox"/> Upcoming events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information about federal programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Information about <i>other</i> Colorado issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NPS resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please list) _____ |

Has the Colorado NPS Connection been well balanced in terms of technical vs. nontechnical information? (check one)

- It has been well balanced Needs more technical information Needs more nontechnical information

Do you have any suggestions for feature stories or ways to improve the newsletter?

If you receive the newsletter in hard copy via the mail, would you like to receive it instead:

- In e-mail form **OR** As an e-mail reminder to visit the newsletter Web site

If so, please provide your:

Name _____

Organization _____

E-mail address _____

Do you know of others who would like to receive the newsletter? If so, please provide their name, address and/or e-mail address.

For more information, contact Cynthia Peterson, Colorado NPS Connection editor at (303) 861-5195 or cynthia@ourwater.org.

Directions: Please fax this survey to (303) 837-9917. Or fold this form in half, tape at top, add a stamp and mail to the Colorado Water Protection Project. *THANK YOU!*



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The Colorado NPS Connection provides timely information about nonpoint source issues to interested groups, agencies and individuals. It does not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the League of Women Voters of Colorado Education Fund or project funders. Articles for publication may be submitted via e-mail to info@ourwater.org for consideration.

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Save These Dates

10th National Nonpoint Source Monitoring Workshop

Monitoring and Modeling from the Peaks to the Prairies

September 8-12, 2002

Beaver Run Resort, Breckenridge, CO

Session Topics include:

- Stream Restoration
- Inactive Mine Remediation
- NPS Modeling
- BMP Implementation and Evaluation in Agriculture, Silviculture and Urban/Construction
- TMDL Development
- Public Information/Education

For more information: www.ctic.purdue.edu/NPSWorkshop.html

2002 South Platte Forum

October 23 and 24, 2002

Raintree Plaza, Longmont, CO

Topics will include:

- Integrating Habitat Protection with Agricultural Production
- Colorado's Climate Changes
- Fouling Your Nest
- Redefining Beneficial Use of the South Platte Basin
- Protecting Our Future

Registration - \$85 before Oct. 1, \$100 late registration

To register or for more information contact Jennifer Brown at (970) 213-1618, e-mail southplatte1@yahoo.com, or visit <http://southplatteforum.colostate.edu>

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Be an advertiser in the *Colorado NPS Connection*

With a circulation of 1,750

Advertising rates are:

Small - 2" x 3" (business card size)

One issue \$40

Four issues \$120

Large - 4" x 3"

One issue \$65

Four issues \$200

For more information, contact
Cynthia Peterson at (303) 861-5195 or
cynthia@ourwater.org.

Nonpoint source pollution limits fish consumption

By Cynthia Peterson

There are 11 fish consumption advisories in effect in Colorado. These advisories are issued to protect people from possible health risks due to eating fish contaminated by chemical pollutants. They may recommend that people limit or avoid eating certain species of fish caught from certain water bodies. These advisories cover 12% of the lake acres in the state. No advisories have been issued for Colorado rivers.

High mercury levels in tested fish trigger most fish consumption advisories in Colorado. According to Steve Gruber, of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, it is believed that the sources of mercury in these fish tend to be nonpoint source in nature. Mercury is released from coal-fired power plants, mining, industrial facilities, medical and dental facilities as well as originating from natural sources. To complicate matters, some sources of mercury contamination in Colorado may be in other states or even other continents. Since mercury chemistry is complicated—bacteria transform mercury into methylmercury, which is easily ingested by fish—more work needs to be done to accurately ascertain sources in particular water bodies.

Mercury and other chemicals responsible for fish consumption advisories tend to bioaccumulate, so that levels of these contaminants may increase as they move up the food chain. So, even low concentrations of these chemicals in water bodies can lead to dangerously high levels of contamination in the larger fish that are typically consumed. In addition, they affect children and fetuses to a greater extent than adults. Thus, fish consumption advisories may apply to selected populations such as pregnant women and children.

Elevated mercury levels in fish tissue also can trigger regulatory action. In some instances, fish consumption advisories are the basis for developing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). TMDLs are developed for water bodies that do not meet applicable water quality standards. Development of TMDLs starts a process of identifying pollution sources and the necessary reductions to meet the standards.

To address the mercury deposition issue in Colorado, the pollution prevention program at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment is proposing an "environmental problem-solving" program of coordinated education and outreach. The program would target consumers of mercury-bearing products as well as manufacturers of the products. The proposed program would be based upon a risk communication approach and would include public health and environmental information. Areas to be addressed by the program include problem characterization, mercury-containing medical devices, mercury from thermostats and a pilot program to remove mercury switches from junk automobiles prior to recycling.

Additional information about fish advisories can be obtained on EPA's 2001 National Listing of Fish and Wildlife Advisories Web site (www.epa.gov/water-science/fish). It lists information about advisories throughout the United States, including the species and size of fish, the chemical contaminant, location and surface area of the water body, the population subject to the advisory and local contacts.

For more information about fish consumption advisories in Colorado, contact Bob McConnell of the Water Quality Control Division at 303-692-3578. For information about the mercury education and outreach program contact Mark McMillan of the Air Quality Control Division at 303-692-3140.





Colorado Nonpoint Source Forum

Restoring Impaired Waters... Tools for Tomorrow

Oct. 29-30, 2002, Antlers Adams Mark Hotel, Colorado Springs

Keynote Perspectives

Justice Gregory Hobbs, Jr., Colo. State Supreme Court

Jim Valliant, Retired Extension Specialist

Tom Pointon, Arkansas Valley Producer

Forum Sessions



Agriculture, Silviculture, Urban, Construction, and Mining Tools

Individual sessions to address a multitude of tools specific to each category. Speakers include Rich Bell, Jay Windell, Reagan Waskom, Russ Clayshulte, Brent Mecham, Bruce Stover, and Paul Krabacher.



Successful Watershed Strategies

A look at proven success stories and strategies to improve your own success. Watersheds highlighted include Big Thompson, Owl Mountain, Rio Blanco, Uncompahgre Valley, James Creek and Willow Creek.



Tools Available to Restore Impaired Waters

Academic, research and regulatory perspectives. Speakers include Robert Sakata and John Stednick.



The Sediment Dilemma— Is it just muddy water?

Sediment measurements and impacts. Speakers include Bob McConnell and John Woodling.



Communicating with Your Public

Community outreach ideas and programs. Speakers include Cynthia Peterson, Mark Phelan, Julie Pearson and Lisa Ross.



Grant Proposals That Get Noticed

Learn the keys to writing successful grant proposals. Speakers include Kim Larson and Randy Ristau.

Hall of Fame Award Presentations

Many individuals and organizations contribute to the success of the Colorado Nonpoint Source Program. The Nonpoint Source Hall of Fame acknowledges those who lead through the example of hard work and dedication. Individual, Organization and Project awards will be presented by Robert Sakata, Chair, Water Quality Control Commission, and J. David Holm, Director, Water Quality Control Division.

Networking Session

A networking session will be held from 5—6:30 p.m., Tues., Oct. 29. It will provide an opportunity to meet with the experts, mingle with colleagues, trade ideas, and view exhibits. We hope you'll attend.

For information contact Laurie Fisher at 303-692-3570 or laurie.fisher@state.co.us



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RESOURCES

The Watershed Project Management Guide

By Thomas E. Davenport
Lewis Publishers/CRC Press, August
2002, www.crcpress.com

This book presents a four-phase approach to watershed management based on a collaborative process that responds to common needs and goals.

The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference

By Malcolm Gladwell
Back Bay Books, January 2002.

This book explores "tipping points" when social changes become social epidemics.