

Storm Water Staff Survey
Iowa State University MS4
2004 Data

Introduction:

The following is a summary of data collected as part of a web based storm water staff survey. The purpose of the survey was to gain an understanding of existing staff knowledge on activities that impact storm water quality and of existing staff behaviors that relate to pollution prevention and good housekeeping. This survey was completed in accordance with Part II (A)(1) of the Iowa State University Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit issued by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

A set of survey questions was prepared by the Department of Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) at Iowa State University (ISU) and presented to the ISU community via the EH&S web page. The survey was then advertised during training sessions and in a number of campus publications. A total of 65 members of the campus community participated in the survey, which are disappointingly small numbers compared to a community of approximately 25,000 students and 5,000 staff. EH&S is unable to comment on the statistical significance of the data collected or as to the reasons participation was low. Answers to each question are presented in the order they were asked.

Survey Results:

- 1) The storm water drain in the street runs into the local creek.
(True – 52, False – 13)
- 2) The best way to clean up an oil spill is to scrub it with detergent and hose it off into the gutter.
(True – 3, False – 62)
- 3) Storm water from the gutters goes to the sewage treatment plant for treatment.
(True – 7, False – 58)
- 4) When it rains, the sewage system leaks and overflows into our local creek.
(True – 21, False – 44)
- 5) It is safe to swim at the beach after a rain event.
(True – 29, False – 36)
- 6) Washing your car at home uses more water than a commercial car wash.
(True – 38, False – 27)
- 7) Landscaping your yard can help reduce storm water runoff.
(True – 61, False – 4)
- 8) Sewer systems and storm water drain systems are the same.
(True – 3, False – 62)
- 9) What do you see as the underlying cause(s) of pollution in our local waterways?

Lack of education - people don't know how to protect the local waterways. (46)
Pollution prevention practices cost too much for businesses to afford. (15)
People don't really care what happens to the local environment. (24)
Environmental protection laws are not enforced by the federal or local government. (18)
Other (6)

Survey Results: (continued)

- 10) Do you know where the storm water drain from your place of employment goes?
(Yes – 18, No – 47)
- 11) For environmental reasons, do you re-use or recycle wastes instead of throwing them away?
(Yes – 42, No – 23)
- 12) Are you aware of current environmental legislation relating to water pollution?
(Yes – 23, No – 42)
- 13) Did you know it is illegal to dump wastewater or water containing soaps, paint, cleaning products, or grease and oil into streets or storm drains?
(Yes – 47, No- 18)
- 14) Did you know that storm drains do not remove pollutants and were designed for the specific purpose of draining water from sidewalks and streets?
(Yes – 57, No – 8)
- 15) Are you familiar with the Iowa State University Storm water Management Plan?
(Yes – 11, No – 54)
- 16) Do you do any of the following?
- Dump waste in storm drains? (3)
 - Keep yard clippings out of the street? (31)
 - Dispose of all household chemicals properly (by following package directions or calling your local public works department for proper disposal guidelines)? (35)
 - Sweep your driveway clean? (27)
 - Hose down your driveway? (14)

Conclusions:

Since this was an initial staff survey and there is no data to compare the results against, any analysis is purely speculative. It is encouraging to see that the majority of respondents understand that storm sewers are separate from sanitary sewers and that effluent is discharged to waterways untreated. It appears that few respondents knew that ISU has a storm water management plan, where ISU's storm water drains and about storm water legislation. These may be topics that can be addressed in future educational campaigns. Considering how many respondents consider "lack of education" the root cause of pollution, this may be the best plan.