

**COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEY REPORT**

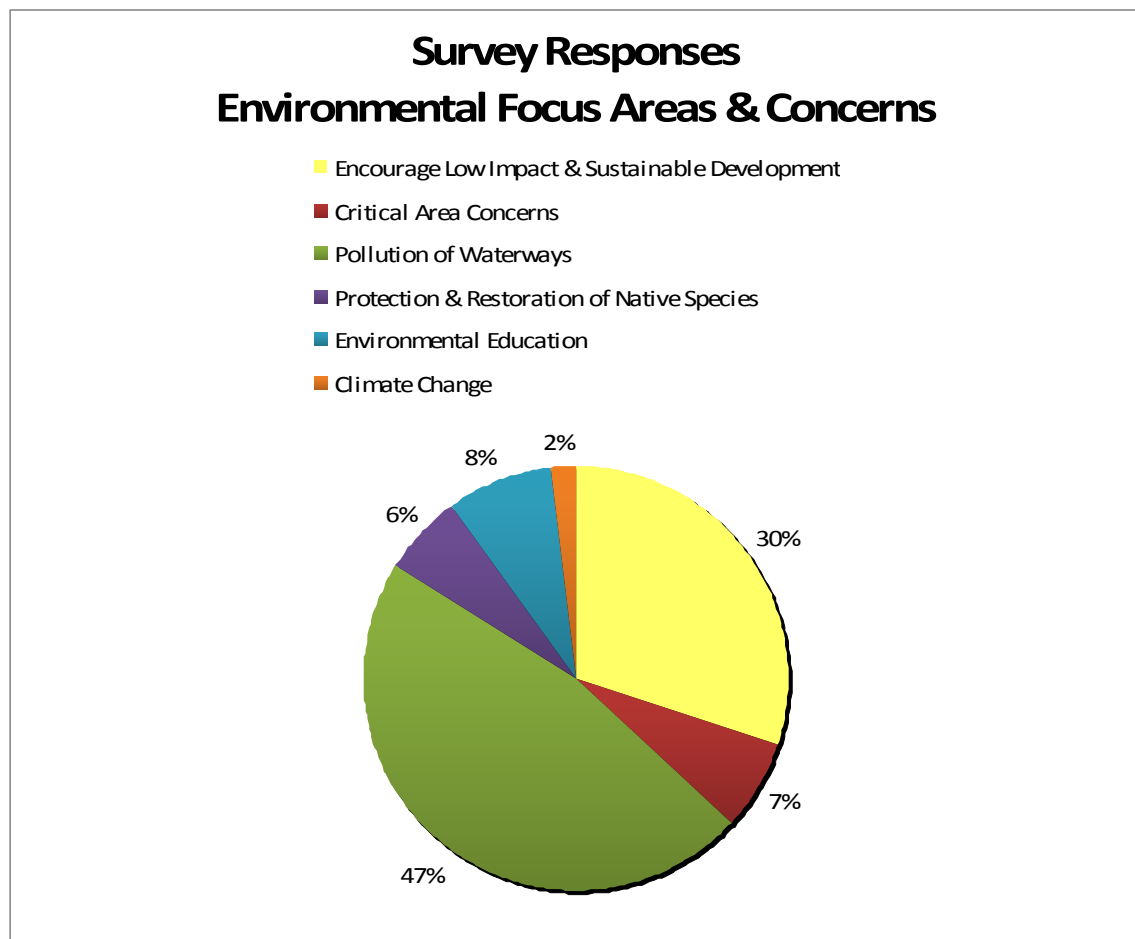
The St. Mary's County Commission on the Environment (COE) is a volunteer citizen board appointed to advise the Board of County Commissioners on environmental issues in the county. To be more effective in that role, the COE conducted a survey in 2008-2009 to identify major environmental concerns of organizations, businesses, and individuals. The purpose of the survey was twofold: one to solicit and categorize environmental concerns and the other to use the survey as a tool to begin organizing an environmental summit between interested organizations and businesses. The summit is planned for the fall of 2009.

The survey was distributed electronically to over fifty organizations and individuals. Responders were asked to indicate if their response was a consensus response on behalf of an organization, as an individual affiliated with an organization, or as an individual without an affiliation with an organization. Eighteen completed surveys were returned to the COE. Seven responses were consensus responses from organizations. Eight responses were from individuals affiliated with an organization or business. Three responses were from individuals without affiliations. The organizations and affiliations are listed in the following table:

**List of Organizations and Affiliations**

St. Mary's Soil Conservation District Loiederman Soltesz Associates & MNCBIA Southern Maryland Resource Conservation & Development Maryland-National Capital Building Association CCAN & Sierra Club Williamsburg Environmental Group, Inc. St. Mary's Planning Commission / RPD Task Force Summerseat Farm St. Mary's River Watershed Association Friends of Myrtle Point Green Southern Maryland Helicon Works, Architects Maryland League of Women Voters Potomac River Association Association of Southern Maryland Beekeepers
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Responders were asked to list their top three environmental concerns in Southern Maryland. Out of the completed surveys, fifty individual concerns were identified. Individual concerns fell into six broad categories: critical area concerns, climate change, pollution of waterways, environmental education, land use and sustainable development practices, and protection and restoration of native species. Tabulation of the responses within these categories resulted in the following chart.



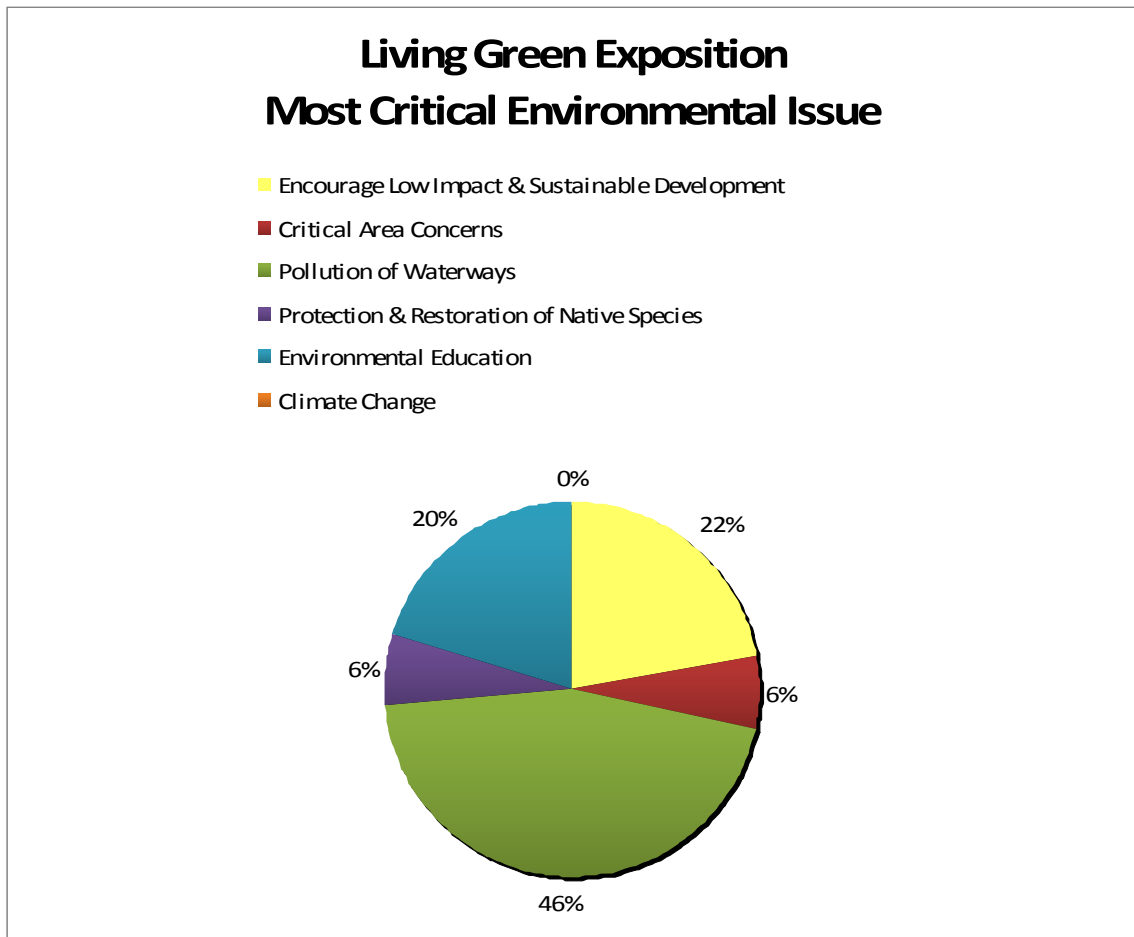
Pollution of the Waterways encompassed a number of water quality and environmental concerns. Chief among these were the impact of poor water quality on plants and animals, sedimentation and shoreline erosion, and inadequate stormwater management. Forty-seven percent of all concerns were related to water quality issues.

Thirty percent of the concerns centered on land use and land preservation. Most of the concerns in this category were generated around the need to better promote sustainable

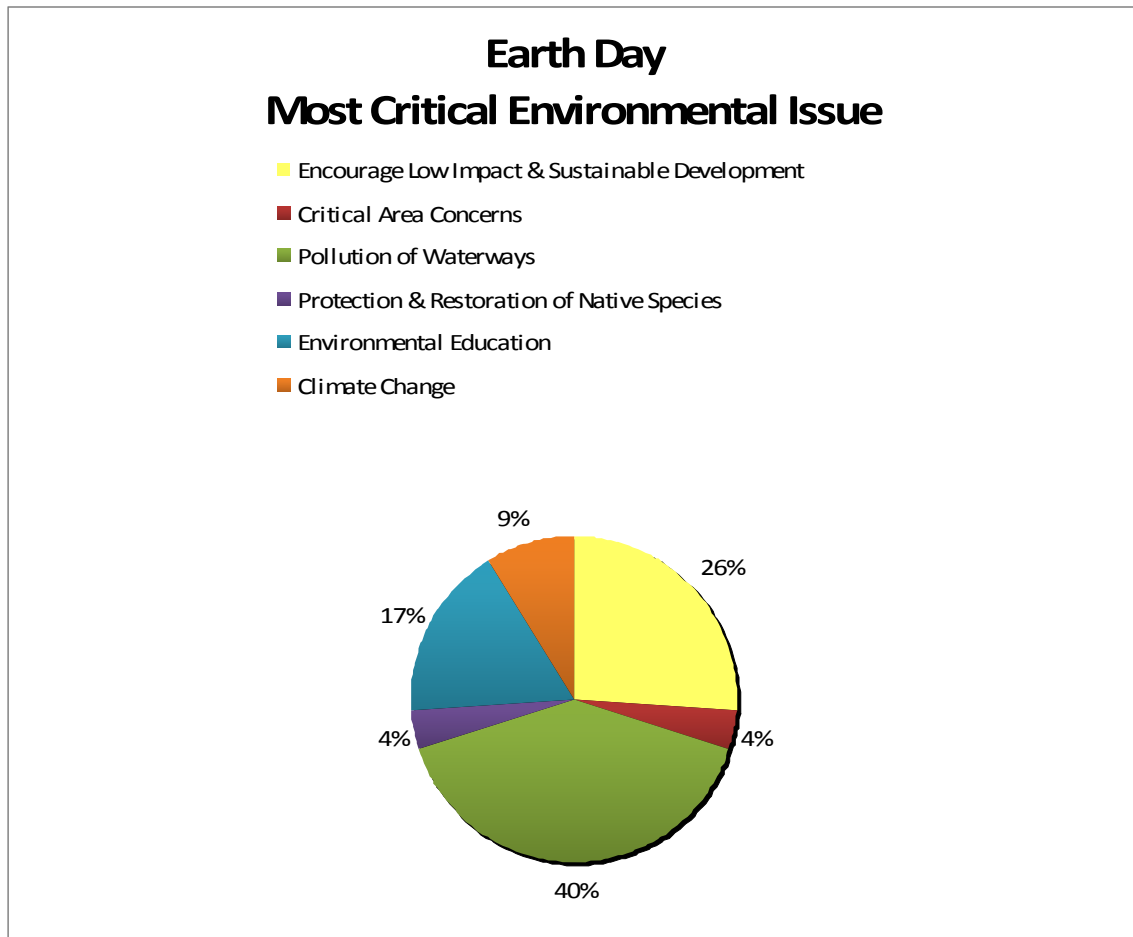
land practices such as low impact developments. Land preservation was a strategy endorsed by a number of responders.

Concerns were fairly evenly distributed among the remaining categories. More education on sustainable living and building practices was identified by several organizations and individuals.

Since tabulating the original survey results, the COE has used the survey results to engage the general public on how they would rank the six categories of environmental concerns. Starting at the Living Green Exposition, an event sponsored by the COE in March 2009, individuals were asked to “vote” on which of the six categories from the original survey they felt was the most critical environmental issue in St. Mary’s County. Sixty individuals voted. The highest percentages remained Pollution of Waterways and Encourage Low Impact and Sustainable Developments. Environmental Education received a significantly higher number of votes than indicated in the original survey.



On Earth Day in April 2009, a similar exercise was conducted by the COE with 23 individuals voting. The ranking of concerns and percentages were very similar to those from the participants in the Living Green Exposition.



As a result of these exercises the COE believes that Pollution of the Waterways and Encouraging Low Impact & Sustainable Development should be the focus of the Environmental Summit planned for October 2009. The event will be divided into two workshops with one session devoted to water quality issues and the second on land use and sustainable development practices. If you wish to learn more about the event or wish to participate, please follow the following link for more information:  
<http://www.greensomd.com/st-marys-county-commission-on-the-environment/>