STRATHCONA COUNTY

2021 June SCOOP Mixed Topic Survey: Creeks and Waterways

Research Results

Report Prepared by Phil Kreisel, Ph.D.
Communications

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I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In June 2021, Strathcona County conducted an online survey as part of its Strathcona County Online Opinion Panel (SCOOP) initiative. This project, entitled *the Mixed Topic Survey*, consisted of different survey areas whereby only a limited number of questions were asked within one or more topic areas and was exclusive to residents who signed up to be part of SCOOP. The June 2021 mixed topic survey consisted of three distinct topic areas: Creeks and waterways in Strathcona County, returning to in-person engagement, and Strathcona County's preschool programs.

This report presents results pertaining to creeks and waterways in Strathcona County. Obtaining primary data from residents directly will provide Strathcona County departments with information and enable County officials to make decisions that accurately reflect the perspectives and attitudes of residents. This report will provide a comprehensive review of all steps undertaken in the development and implementation of the survey, as well as a detailed summary of the results. The results from this study were prepared by Phil Kreisel, Ph.D. (Communications); SPSS was used for the data analysis.

A review of the methodology associated in the development and implementation of this survey can be found in the next section of this report.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. The Questionnaire

The questions used in this study were new, using questions that were submitted by department representatives from Planning and Development Services. The survey was then created, reviewed and modified where necessary by members of Survey Central for wording, question ordering and general understanding. This included a final check of the content by FOIP[1] prior to the release of the survey to the public.

B. Sampling Design and Data Collection Procedure

The sample frame used in this study consisted of 576 people who did one or more parts of the June 2021 survey. All participants were drawn from people who had previously signed up to be part of SCOOP, Strathcona County's online opinion panel. Overall, 74% of the participants lived in the urban area, 23.4% came from rural parts of Strathcona County, and the remaining 2.6% worked in Strathcona County but did not live there.

Although poll-based data is derived from people who decide to participate, were not randomly selected and have access to the online poll, the margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is ± 4.1%, 19 times out of 20.[2]

During the fielding of the survey, respondents had the option to skip a section if they felt that the topic had no relevance to them.

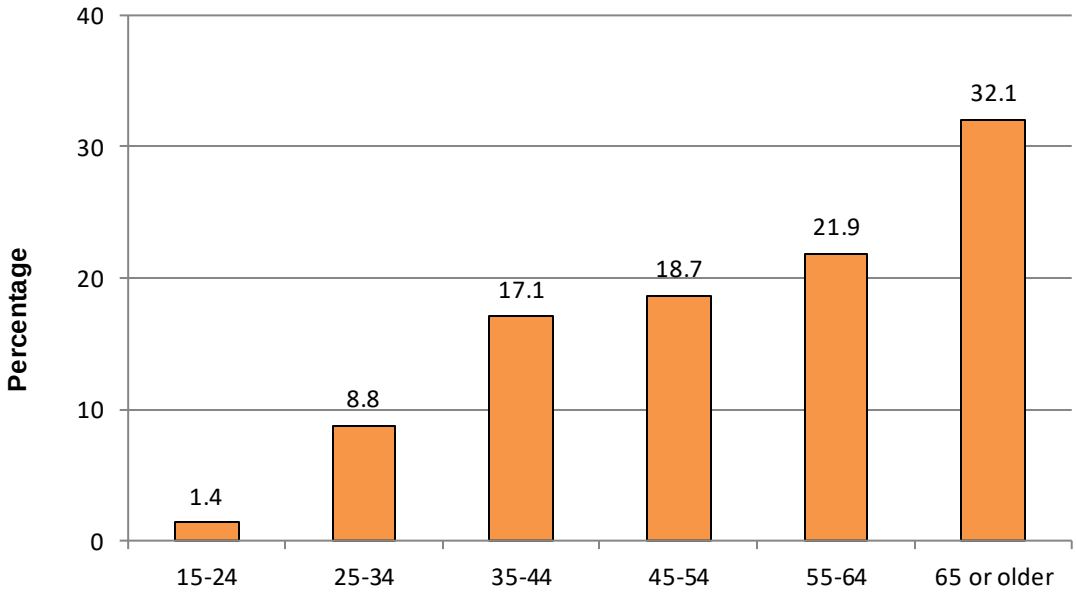
As seen in Figure 1, most of the respondents who participated in the survey are over the age of 44, with 25.9% of the participants between the

[1] FOIP stands for Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy and was reviewed by selected members from Strathcona County's Legislation and Legal Department (LLS).

[2] The ± 4.1% is the *margin of error* associated with this study and refers to the potential percentage spread that exists within answers to questions. This means that an answer could be up to 4.1% higher or lower than what is reported. Please note, however, that the data was gathered though an online survey and no controls were undertaken to make this a random sample.

age of 25 and 44. Only a very small percentage of participants were under 25. Overall, 58.7% of participants were female while 41.3% were male.

FIGURE 1
Age of Respondents



III. SURVEY RESULTS

A. Awareness

Respondents were asked if they would like to answer a series of questions about creeks and waterways in Strathcona County. Overall, 88.5% of the participants opted to answer questions from this topic.

Initially, respondents were asked about their familiarity with 8 creeks/creek systems in Strathcona County. The overall results are summarized in Table 1 below. Taking the combined percentages of very and moderately aware together, Mill Creek and Point-Aux-Pins Creek were the most recognizable of all the systems in Strathcona County, followed by Oldman Creek as a distant third. Most residents were only slightly aware (at best) of the remaining creek systems.

Table 1
Awareness of creeks in Strathcona County[3]

	Very aware	Moderately aware	Slightly aware	Not at all aware
Mill Creek	21.8%	27.2%	30.4%	20.6%
Point-Aux-Pins Creek	11.5%	16.7%	24.9%	46.8%
Oldman Creek	9.0%	11.6%	22.5%	56.9%
Astotin Creek	4.9%	7.1%	23.7%	64.4%
Ross Creek	4.3%	7.0%	18.5%	70.2%
Fulton Creek	3.6%	6.8%	25.0%	64.6%
Hastings Creek	2.9%	4.6%	22.5%	70.0%
Irvine Creek	1.2%	3.0%	7.6%	88.2%

A breakdown of creek awareness by where respondents lived is shown n Table 2. People living in the rural areas were more aware of Point-Aux-Pins Creek and Ross Creek than those living in the urban area. Awareness levels for the remaining creeks was similar regardless of where people lived.

[3] Percentages in this table add up to 100% by rows for each creek named in the table.

Table 2
Awareness of creeks in Strathcona County
Urban/rural comparisons[4]

	Urban	Rural
Mill Creek		
Very aware	22.3%	19.2%
Moderately aware	26.9%	28.8%
Slightly aware	29.4%	33.7%
Not at all aware	21.4%	18.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%
Point-Aux-Pins Creek		
Very aware	9.2%	17.8%
Moderately aware	14.6%	20.8%
Slightly aware	24.8%	25.7%
Not at all aware	51.3%	35.6%
Oldman		
Very aware	7.7%	12.0%
Moderately aware	12.5%	7.0%
Slightly aware	19.9%	32.0%
Not at all aware	59.9%	49.0%
Astotin Creek		
Very aware	4.6%	4.2%
Moderately aware	4.9%	12.5%
Slightly aware	22.0%	27.1%
Not at all aware	68.5%	56.3%
Ross Creek		
Very aware	2.6%	9.0%
Moderately aware	4.6%	13.0%
Slightly aware	16.7%	24.0%
Not at all aware	76.1%	54.0%

[4] The awareness percentages for each creek (e.g. *Mill Creek*) add up to 100% by column for each geographic area and creek. The percentage totals for urban and rural responses is shown for Mill Creek.

Table 2 (Continued)

	Urban	Rural
Fulton Creek		
Very aware	3.3%	4.0%
Moderately aware	6.3%	8.1%
Slightly aware	23.4%	30.3%
Not at all aware	67.0%	57.6%
Hastings Creek		
Very aware	2.3%	4.2%
Moderately aware	4.5%	4.2%
Slightly aware	20.8%	27.1%
Not at all aware	72.4%	64.6%
Irvine Creek		
Vert Aware	0.3%	3.2%
Moderately aware	3.0%	2.2%
Slightly aware	7.3%	8.6%
Not at all aware	89.4%	86.0%

Respondents were then asked if they knew that all creeks in Strathcona County drain into the North Saskatchewan River. Overall, 58.5% knew about this while the remaining 41.5% did not. There were no differences seen between urban and rural residents.

All respondents were then informed in the survey that the North Saskatchewan River is the source of drinking water for the County. They were then asked whether they would change their behaviour of water use because of this knowledge. As seen in Figure 2, almost 40% were unlikely to change any of their behaviors with respect to water use as they are already doing everything to conserve water. However, just over 26% indicated that they were either very likely or somewhat likely to alter their use of water due to the knowledge imparted on them in the survey.

A further analysis by urban/rural location in Figure 3 revealed that a higher percentage of people in the urban area were more likely to change their behaviors compared to those living in rural parts of Strathcona County.

FIGURE 2
Likelihood of change of behaviors with water use

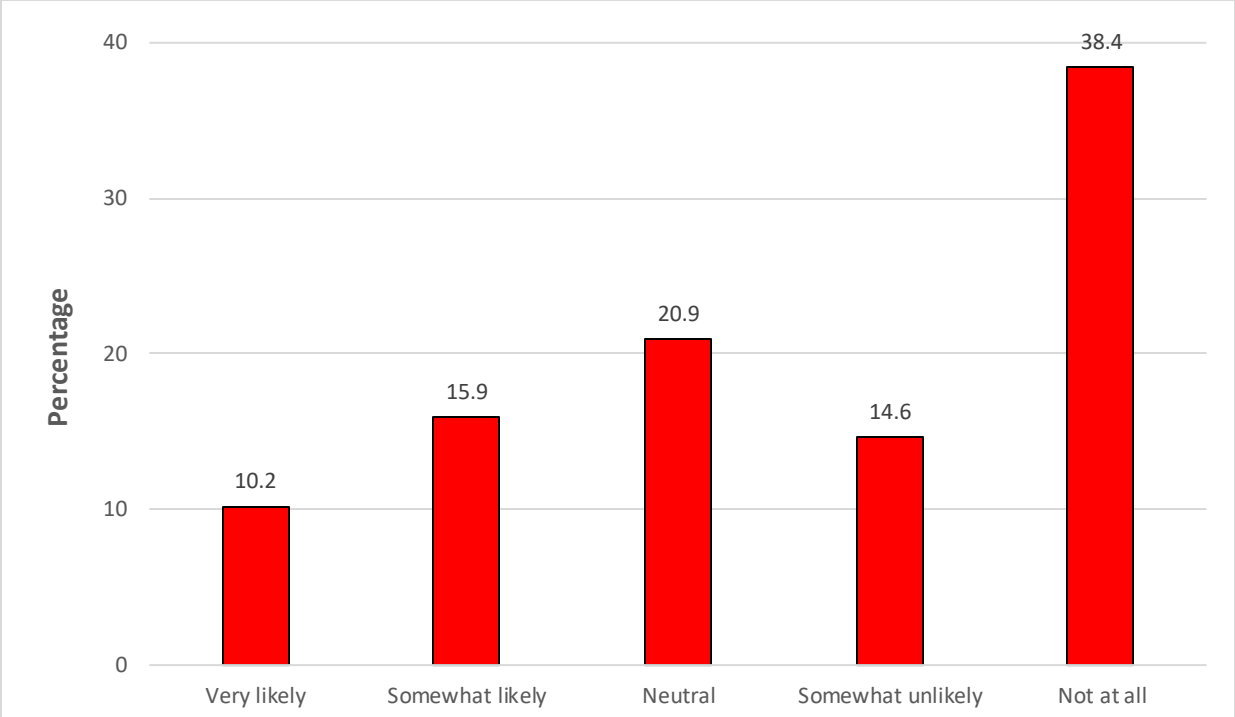
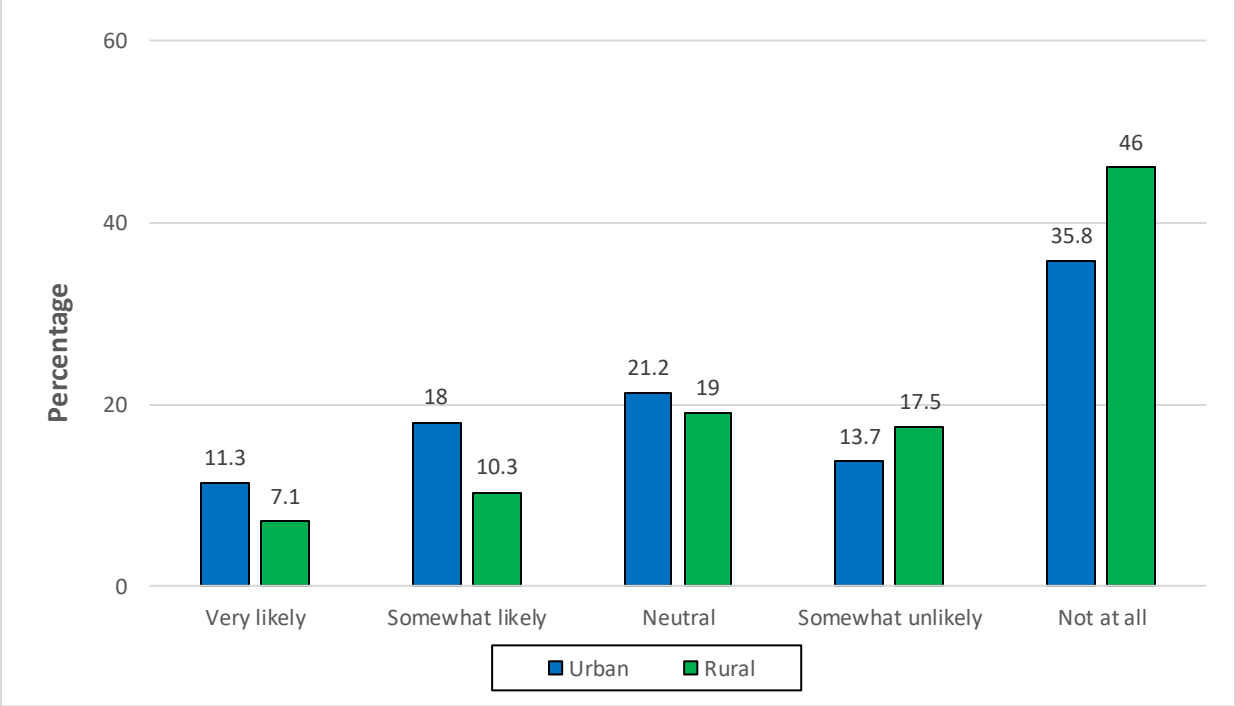


FIGURE 3
Likelihood of change of behaviors with water use – Urban/Rural



Respondents were also asked to indicate their familiarity with particular digital applications. It can be seen from Table 3 that most residents, regardless of where they lived, had no familiarity with any digital applications. The application ebird was the most recognizable.

Table 3
Awareness of digital applications[5]

	Very aware	Moderately aware	Slightly aware	Not at all aware
Naturelynx	1.6%	1.6%	4.3%	92.5%
I-naturalist	2.5%	3.2%	7.0%	87.3%
ebird	4.0%	3.8%	8.7%	83.4%
Other programs	4.5%	1.0%	1.4%	93.1%

Other programs mentioned by a few of the respondents included *Merlin Bird, Plant Snap, PlantNet, EddMaps, WildTrax, iBird, Ihunter, BirdNet, ABWeedSpot* and *Audubon*.

Respondents were then asked about their awareness of particular organziations. It can be seen from Table 4 that the Beaver Hills Biosphere and the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance were the most familiar to respondents. There were no differences in awareness based on where people lived, though familarity with the Beaver Hills Biosphere was higher among rural residents (55.8% very/somewhat familiar) compared to urban (45.4%).

Table 4
Awareness of particular organizations[6]

	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not very aware	Unaware
Creek Watch	0.8%	4.8%	6.5%	88.0%
Lake Watch	1.5%	6.5%	8.5%	83.6%
Cows and Fish	3.5%	7.2%	5.2%	84.1%
Beaver Hills Biosphere	13.9%	34.8%	16.8%	34.5%
North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance	8.8%	33.3%	18.8%	39.0%

[5] Percentages in this table add up to 100% by rows for each digital application named in the table.

[6] Percentages in this table add up to 100% by rows for each digital application named in the table.

The last question asked in this section of the mixed topic report was what people thought of when they heard the term "Resiliency" in relation to creeks and waterways. Based on a list[7] that was presented in the survey, the following trends were found:

- 84.4% - The natural area can repair itself and recover from the impacts of things like flooding and drought.
- 31.5% - There is more variety of plants and wildlife in the area.
- 22.2% - More natural spaces versus more engineered.
- 7.6% - I have no idea what this term means relative to creeks and waterways.
- 4.0% - I have never heard this term before, so I don't know.

[7] Respondents could choose more than one item in the list if they wished.