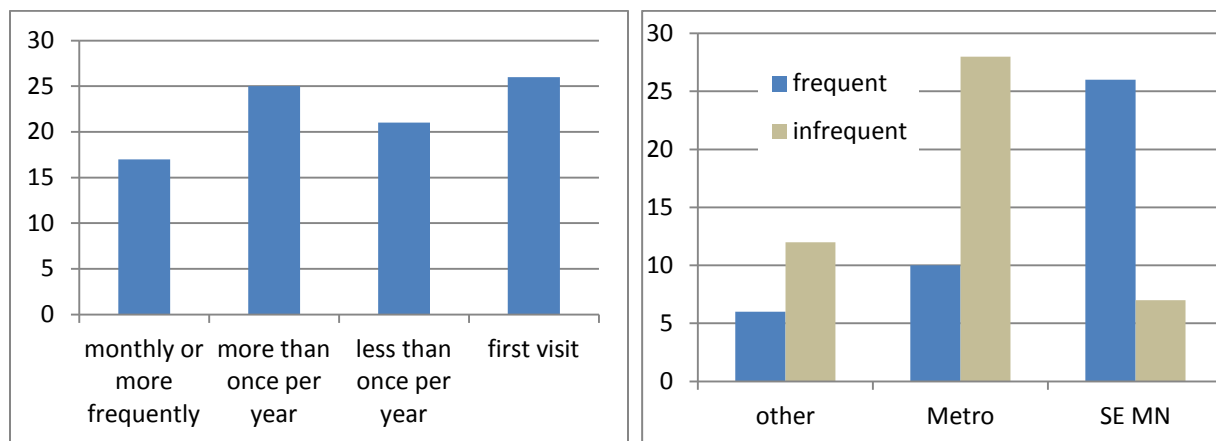


Summary of Findings – Whitewater State Park Visitor Survey

During two weekends in early September, 2011, volunteers serving on the Whitewater Watershed Joint Powers Board’s Farmer-Led Council distributed a one-page, legal size survey to visitors at Whitewater State Park. Ninety persons participated by filling out the survey. Of the ninety, 38 were from the Twin Cities Metro area, 34 from nearby counties in Minnesota, 13 from elsewhere in Minnesota, and five from out of state. Most of the respondents were city dwellers (84%).



Almost half of the respondents visit the park at least once per year, with those from neighboring counties significantly more likely to be frequent visitors. Of frequent visitors, 62% are from neighboring counties, while 60% of infrequent visitors are from the seven Metro area counties.



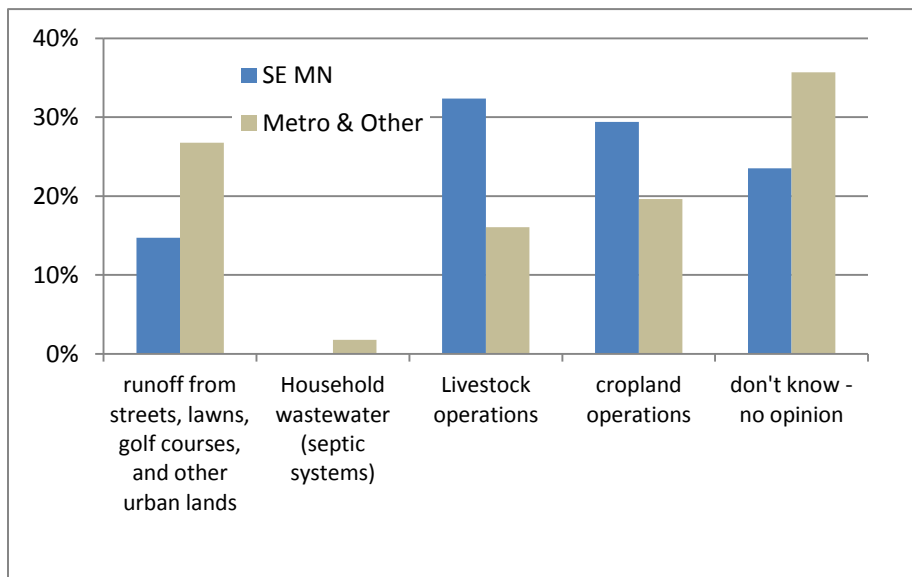
Nearly all (96%) of respondents indicated that they intended to participate in at least one of the four recreational activities asked about in the survey, with hiking or walking the most popular (83% participation). Overnight stays are much less likely among those from Southeastern Minnesota, at 38%, compared to 85% of those from more distant counties. Water quality was important to visitors in their choice of recreational destination, with 65% indicating they would be less likely to visit if water quality were to become significantly worse.

Along with residency outside the region, the frequency of visiting Whitewater State Park was significantly related to responses about water quality. Infrequent visitors (less than one visit per year) and those from outside the region were significantly more likely to answer “don’t know” or to leave questions blank than frequent visitors or visitors from nearby counties. Among those responding, there were other significant differences. Most of the respondents in both categories consider that stream water quality in the Whitewater watershed is excellent or good (88% of frequent visitors and 84% of infrequent visitors). However, 73% of frequent visitors (29 of 40; 2 missing) and 57% of infrequent

visitors (30 of 35, with 12 missing) indicated that water quality in streams is “occasionally,” “usually,” or “always” a problem in the Whitewater watershed. (Out of 75 respondents answering other than “don’t know,” two respondents consider it “always” to be a problem, four consider it “frequently” a problem, and 43 consider it “occasionally” a problem.) All infrequent and 97% of frequent visitors indicated that if streams are identified as impaired, “...efforts should be made to improve water quality.”

There was a high level of agreement as to sources of water quality problems. Over 90% of all respondents consider urban development and rural septic systems to be sometimes or usually harmful. Between 75% and 90% of respondents consider livestock operations (88% for frequent, 80% for infrequent visitors) and cropland operations (80% frequent visitors, 75% infrequent visitors) to be sometimes or usually harmful to water quality.

Visitors from outside the region were roughly twice as likely to attribute the source of water quality problems to “runoff from streets, lawns, golf courses, and other urban lands” than those from nearby counties, reflecting perhaps the nearby visitors’ greater familiarity with the rural character of the watershed. Visitors from nearby counties were correspondingly more likely to attribute the most common source of water quality problems to livestock operations or cropland operations.



The following pages provide the detailed responses for all respondents.

The results of the visitor survey are tabulated below.

Background

1. What is the zip code of your place of residence? **See map.**

Class	Count	Raw %	Adjusted ¹ %
Metro Area (Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, or Washington Counties)	38	42%	42%
Southeastern Minnesota (Fillmore, Goodhue, Mower, Olmsted, Wabasha, or Winona Counties)	34	38%	38%
Other Minnesota (includes one Rice and one Steele)	13	14%	14%
Outside Minnesota	5	6%	6%

2. What best describes the community you live in?

Class	Count	Raw %	Adjusted %
City (incorporated municipality)	74	82%	84%
Township (unincorporated area)	14	16%	16%
Other (please describe: named specific cities)	2	2%	

Recreation

1. How often do you visit the Whitewater watershed for any purpose? (check only one)

Class	Count	Raw %	Adjusted %
Monthly or more frequently	17	19%	19%
More than once per year	25	28%	28%
Less than once per year	21	23%	24%
This is my first visit	26	29%	29%
Missing	1	1%	

2. How long do you intend to stay in the Whitewater watershed for this visit?

Class	Count	Raw %	Adjusted %
Part or all of a day, not overnight	29	32%	33%
At least one overnight	58	64%	67%
Missing	3	3%	

3. While you are visiting in the Whitewater watershed, do you plan to (check all that apply)

Class	Count	Raw %	Adjusted %
Walk or hike?	75	83%	83%
Engage in bird-watching or similar activities?	41	46%	46%
Swim or wade in a stream, river, or pond? ²	37	41%	41%
Fish? ³	37	41%	41%

¹ Adjusted percentages exclude missing values or no answer and “don’t know” answers. All percentages are rounded.

² 17 also fish

³ 17 also swim or wade

Water Quality Issues

1. How would you rate the overall stream water quality in the Whitewater watershed?

Class	Count	Raw %	Adjusted %
Excellent	18	20%	23%
Good	51	57%	65%
Fair	10	11%	13%
Poor	1	1%	1%
No answer	11	12%	

2. If stream water quality were to become significantly worse (for example, dirty looking or smelly) than it is now, how would this affect the likelihood of your visiting the Whitewater watershed?

Class	Count	Raw %	Adjusted %
I would visit less often	58	64%	66%
I would visit more often	0	0%	0%
No change	30	33%	34%
No answer	2	2%	

3. If stream water quality were to become significantly better than it is now (for example, clearer), how would this affect the likelihood of your visiting the Whitewater watershed?

Class	Count	Raw %	Adjusted %
I would visit less often	5	6%	6%
I would visit more often	36	40%	41%
No change	47	52%	53%
No answer	2	2%	

4. To what extent do you consider the water quality of streams to be a problem in the Whitewater Watershed?

Class	Count	Raw %	Adjusted %
Never a problem	7	8%	9%
Rarely a problem	20	22%	26%
Occasionally a problem	43	48%	57%
Frequently a problem	4	4%	5%
Always a problem	2	2%	3%
No answer	14	16%	

5. What do you think is the most common source of water pollution in the Whitewater watershed?

Class	Count	Raw %	Adjusted %
Runoff from streets, lawns, golf courses, and other urban lands	20	22%	32%
Household wastewater (septic systems)	1	1%	2%
Livestock operations	20	22%	32%
Cropland operations	21	23%	34%
No answer	28	31%	

6. Do you know if any Whitewater watershed streams are "impaired?"

Class	Count	Raw %	Adjusted %
yes	10	11%	12%
no	70	78%	88%
No answer	10	11%	

7. If streams are impaired, do you think efforts should be made to improve water quality?

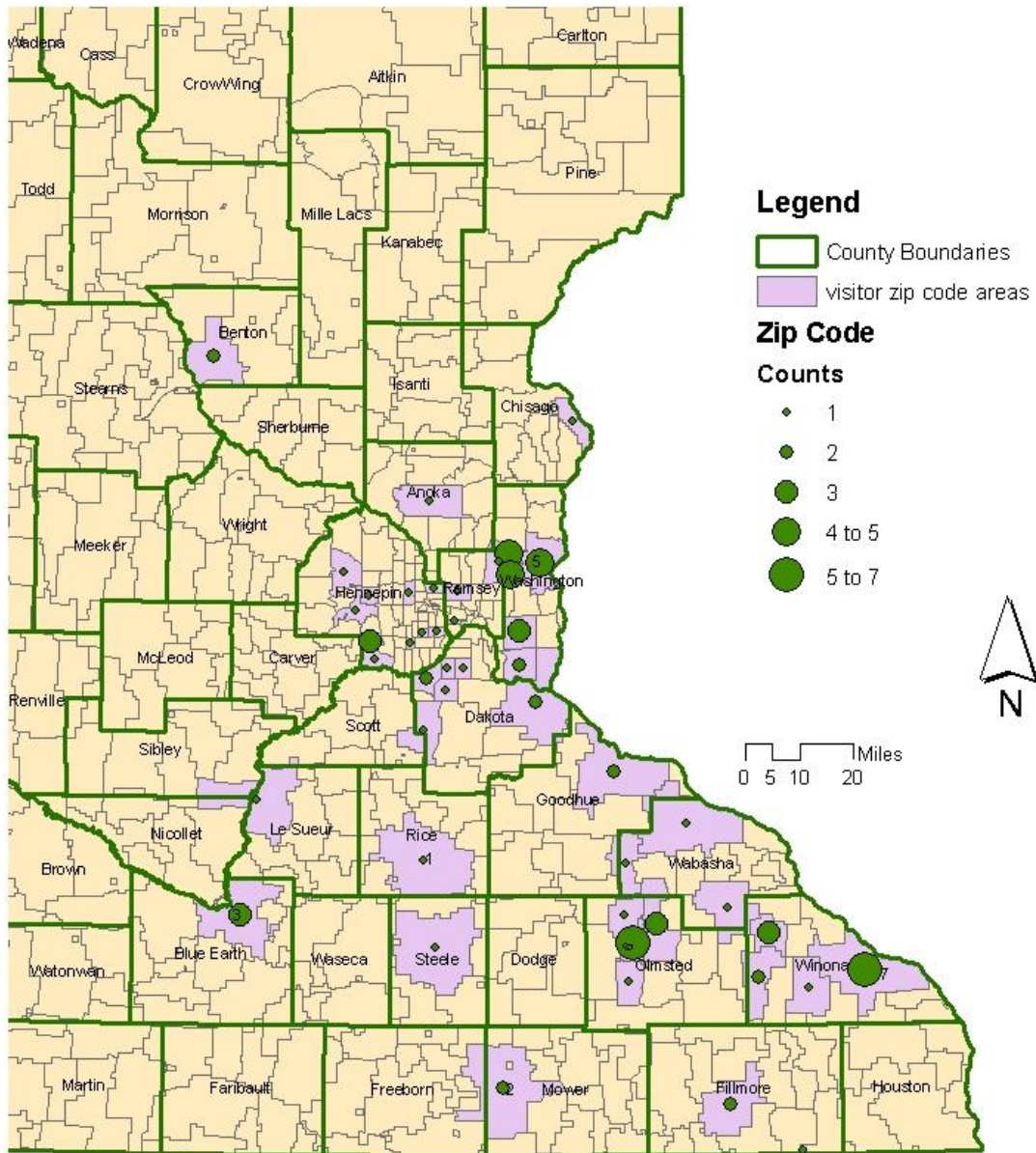
Class	Count	Raw %	Adjusted %
yes	78	87%	99%
no	1	1%	1%
No answer	11	12%	

8. In your opinion, how do these land uses/practices affect water quality? (check one per row)

Land uses/practices	Counts				
	Usually beneficial	Sometimes beneficial	Sometimes harmful	Usually harmful	No opinion or Missing
Forest or grassland	68	8	3	1	10
Cropland	8	10	46	18	8
Livestock production	6	7	44	24	9
Urban/suburban development	4	2	29	45	10
Rural septic systems	3	2	52	19	8
Road runoff (salt and sand)	3	1	31	45	10

Land uses/practices	Raw %				
	Usually beneficial	Sometimes beneficial	Sometimes harmful	Usually harmful	No opinion or Missing
Forest or grassland	76%	9%	3%	1%	4%
Cropland	9%	11%	51%	20%	3%
Livestock production	7%	8%	49%	27%	4%
Urban/suburban development	4%	2%	32%	50%	2%
Rural septic systems	3%	2%	58%	21%	9%
Road runoff (salt and sand)	3%	1%	34%	50%	4%

Land uses/practices	Adjusted %				
	Usually beneficial	Sometimes beneficial	Sometimes harmful	Usually harmful	No opinion or Missing
Forest or grassland	85%	10%	4%	1%	
Cropland	10%	12%	56%	22%	
Livestock production	7%	9%	54%	30%	
Urban/suburban development	5%	3%	36%	56%	
Rural septic systems	4%	3%	68%	25%	
Road runoff (salt and sand)	4%	1%	39%	56%	



Zip Codes of Residence for Visitor Survey

(five from outside Minnesota)