Survey Says...Your Neighbors Are In!

They just need a little help!

Francesca King Watershed Stewards Academy
Steve Raabe OpinionWorks
WSA envisions every community in Anne Arundel County actively engaged to ensure a healthy environment for all.

Our mission is to train and mobilize community leaders to drive change for sustainable landscapes and clean waters.
Since WSA started in 2009...

- Trained over 300 Watershed Stewards
- Who have planted more than 202,500 native plants and trees
- And engaged over 205,000 residents
But there’s a gap...

- Just how much are Stewards influencing their communities?
- Are residents changing their individual behaviors?
Steve Raabe
President, Opinionworks LLC
All-around Friend of WSA
OpinionWorks Credentials

- Measure perceptions, attitudes
- Surveys, focus groups, in-depth interviews
- Seek engagement, behavior change

**Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program**
- Behavior change related to marine debris

**The Baltimore Sun**
- Elections and issues polling since 2007

**Chesapeake Bay Program**
- Development of a Baywide indicator of stewardship behavior

**University of Richmond**
- Brand assessment among prospective students

**The Recycling Partnership**
- National consumer research on response to recycling prompts and tools

**University of Connecticut Sea Grant Extension**
- Behavioral and attitudes study in Long Island Sound watershed

**William Penn Foundation**
- Assessing equitable access to the trails and parks in Greater Philadelphia

**Los Angeles County, California**
- Evaluation of media campaign encouraging proper disposal of batteries
Inspiring Action, Fostering Stewardship

Thousands of Chesapeake Bay watershed residents were surveyed about their stewardship behaviors that impact the Bay’s health.

Learn about the survey

What Is Chesapeake Behavior Change?

Chesapeake Behavior Change is a resource to help organizations apply the Stewardship Index Survey results to their work to ultimately increase the number of residents taking on-the-ground action to protect and restore the Bay. Explore the site to learn about the survey, its findings, and how to use...
Why does this matter?

We’re connected to communities

- How do they perceive us?
- How can we support Stewards?
Planting trees

Planting native plants
Survey Method

- **Representative Countywide Sample**
  - 411 interviews
  - Online sampling using consumer panels
  - Representative of County’s population

- **WSA Distribution**
  - 893 interviews
  - Online through lists and social media
  - Not representative of County, but a good sampling of WSA’s constituents

- **Fielded Sept 24-Nov 11, 2022**
Focus Groups

Kathy Flament, Moderator

- 4 Groups
  A. <45 and somewhat likely to plant
  B. North, West, South County and less likely to plant
  C. Have a Steward in their community and know it!
  D. Have a Steward but don’t know it

- Open-Ended Listening
  - Virtual small group
  - Facilitated by a friendly moderator
  - No wrong answers!
  - Patient exploration of the “why”
Before we launch into the results, any questions?
Impact of Knowing a Master Watershed Steward: Likelihood of Planting Native Plants

In the next 5 years how likely are you to plant native plants in your community or at your home? (5=Very likely, 4=Likely, 3=Somewhat likely, 2=Not very likely, 1=Not at all likely)
Impact of Knowing a Master Watershed Steward: Likelihood of Planting a Tree

Know a Watershed Steward
- Very likely (5): 57%
- Likely (4): 27%

Do not know a Watershed Steward
- Likely (4): 9%
- Not very likely (2): 10%

In the next 5 years how likely are you to plant a tree(s)?
(5=Very likely, 4=Likely, 3=Somewhat likely, 2=Not very likely, 1=Not at all likely)
59% Have planted a tree

74% If they know a Steward
The Help People Need to Plant Native Plants

Knowing which plants are native: 62%
A listing of where to buy native plants in my area: 44%
Knowing why native plants are important: 30%
Financial assistance: 28%
Garden design assistance: 26%
Installation assistance: 16%

What would help you to plant native plants? Choose up to 3.
The Help People Need to Plant Trees

- Someone to identify what kind of trees are right for my property: 44%
- Planting assistance: 36%
- Learning how to plant trees: 31%
- Financial assistance: 27%
- A listing of where to buy trees in my area: 24%
- Knowing why trees are important: 16%

What would help you to plant trees? Choose up to 3.
Has Your Master Watershed Steward Made a Difference?

- 40%: A big difference
- 35%: Some difference
- 25%: Have not noticed/Don't know

In your opinion, has your Watershed Steward made a positive difference in your community?
Reactions?
Let’s explore the results of the focus groups
We began with asking about their connection to nature - it’s strong!

Alert
Energized
Peaceful
Relieves stress
Freeing
Positive memories
Associations with loved ones
Here’s what we tested...
What natives are right for my yard?

Online Garden Design Tool

Black Eyed Susan  Columbine  Aster

Viburnum  Sumac  River Birch

Typical Mix – 90 square feet
Part Sun, dry soils
(contained in 14.5 x 9 foot area)
And they loved it!

“Very helpful. It takes away that kind of stress of thinking about how you lay out the plants”

“It’s very individualized to the situation that I have in my yard or I have in the community space. I could then work it out on this website - that'd be exciting!”
NATIVE PLANT
PURPLE CHOCOLATE BERRY
(ARONIA PRUNIFOLIA)

INVASIVE PLANT
HEAVENLY BAMBOO
(NANDINA DOMESTICA)
They loved that too!
One person even asked for it before we showed them...

“That's exactly what I want. I don't know the difference. I would be sold on always getting the native if it shows a comparison like that.”
What natives are right for my yard?

A Garden Bundle

*The bundle includes:*

- **20 native plants** (specific plant species and number are in the instructions) that will grow well in your yard conditions
- a suggested **design layout** with planting and **care instructions**

*Plants are included at wholesale prices. Bundles can be ordered for different site conditions (sun/ shade, wet/dry)*
"Yeah, take my money."

“I absolutely love this. It takes all the guesswork out for me.”

**Improvements:**
- A la Carte - ability to swap out
- Price points
- Expected growth (height, spread)
And then we asked about Stewards...
When they already knew a Steward, they were big fans!

If they didn’t know WSA or Stewards existed, they were excited to find out!!
We asked about where they’d want to meet a Steward

At the right time:
In-the-moment expertise at Home Depot, Lowes
At the right place...

- Farmers Market
- Parks, nature preserves
- Libraries
- Community plantings
- Educational events for families
Translation?
Can you think of any ways you could apply that in your community?
So how do we help Stewards help their neighbors?
Steward Survey Highlights: What Would Help You Lead Action?

- Design support
- Help engaging my community
- Resources:
  - guides, templates, digital materials
  - Site prep

And of course....more time!
How do we build on this potential?

We’ll be doing focus groups with Stewards next month to uncover things like...

- What do Stewards need?
- What do Stewards think of what residents want?
NEXT STEPS

April
- Steward Focus Groups

May-June
- Tool & Strategy Development

Summer/Fall
- Test it Out!
Big Takeaways
Your neighbors got on board - quickly!

Motivators:
- Make a difference
- Good for the environment
- Support pollinators
- Bring butterflies
- Clean up the water
- A better future for children

Needs:
- Make it easy
- Be where they are
- Share what matters:
  - Price, color, size
We Need To

- Increase Visibility
- Refine how we talk about our offerings
- More support and resources
Let’s talk about it!
Thank you!!