



USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference

[Rio Grande Decision Makers Rank Urban Water Conservation Strategies](#)

In 2004, Rio Grande Basin municipal decision makers were surveyed as to their views on the most preferred and feasible strategies for persuading residents in the Rio Grande area to adopt water conservation practices.

In the survey, elected city officials and water managers in the Rio Grande Basin of Texas and New Mexico were asked to rank 15 possible water conservation options. They were also asked to rate barriers to water conservation in their community.

The survey was mailed to elected city officials and appointed city staff in cities with populations of more than 5,000. Surveys were sent to 239 addresses at city council or business addresses in 22 cities in Texas and in 8 cities in New Mexico. Responses were sent in from all 8 cities in New Mexico and 19 of the 22 cities in Texas.

All 15 strategies were considered viable for their communities. The most preferred and feasible strategies put the responsibility of conservation on voluntary efforts by homeowners. The least favored strategies put a greater obligation on cities to pass ordinances, increase prices or offer rebates.

Respondents also rated the importance of barriers to water conservation programs. The three most important barriers were economic: loss of revenue, cost to implement and increased price of water.

Preference-Feasibility Analysis

In this study, a preference-feasibility analysis (P-FA) was used to measure acceptance of water conservation strategies. The preference dimension is based on a respondent's perception of the positive value or usefulness of conservation programs—for example, cost, savings, community perceptions or cultural acceptability.

The feasibility option reflects the respondents' perceptions about hindrances or aids to implementation, such as costs, disruption or community aversion to a strategy.

By combining both ratings, decision makers may identify programs that are considered reasonable for a community and those that may require more substantial effort to gain acceptance.

Author: Valeen Silvy

Coauthor(s): Ronald Kaiser, Professor, Texas A&M University Bruce Lesikar, Professor & Extension Specialist, Texas A&M University

