



Public Perception of Threats to the Quality of Drinking Water in Rural North Carolina

by

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&

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Purpose

To explore what people already know, want to know, and how they want to get information about water quality issues

To compare findings based on demographic factors

To strengthen a research-based approach to community engagement

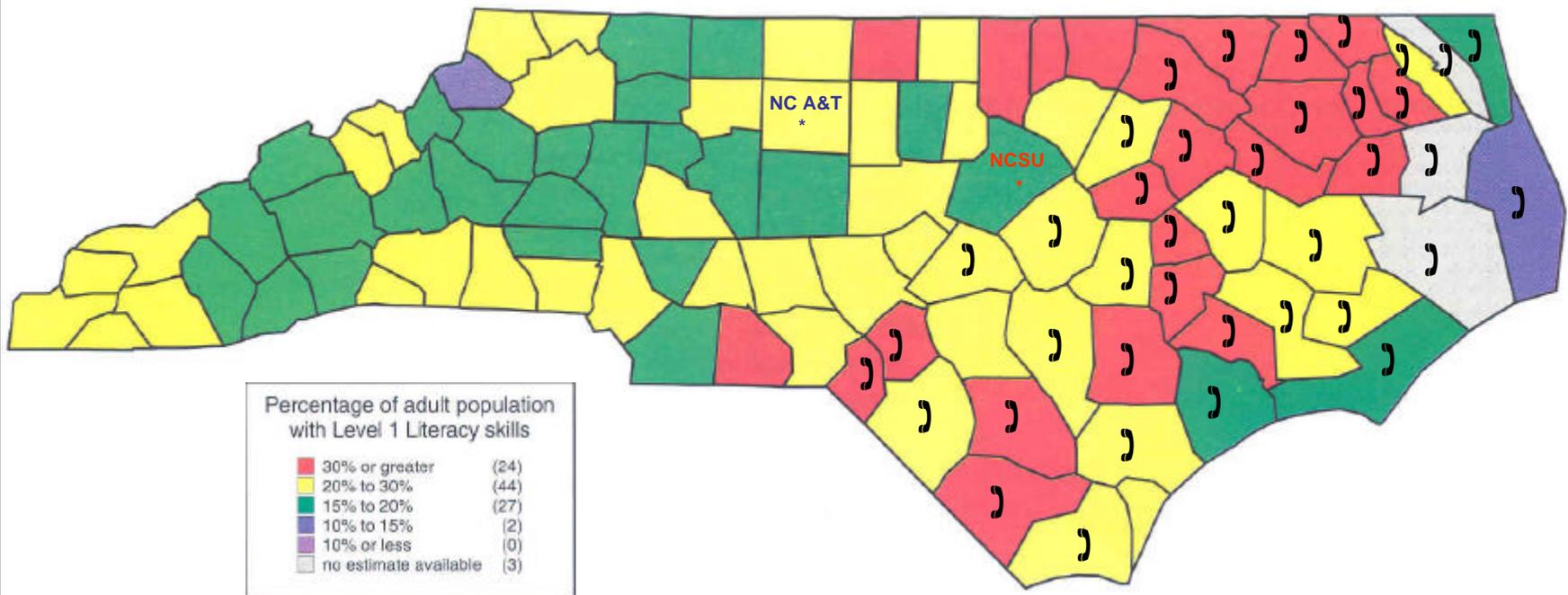


Method

Telephone survey started with 3100 randomly selected numbers
Survey conducted by the Applied Survey Research Laboratory
Actual telephone interview lasted 10 – 15 minutes
Final sample size = 250 people, age 18+



Counties Surveyed



Respondents lived in 39 rural Coastal Plain counties



Demographic Factors	Descriptors	n	Total
Gender	Females	160	250
	Males	90	
Young People	54.0 years of age and younger	120	250
Old People	54.1 years of age and over	130	
Low Income	<\$26,000 household income	94	250
High Income	>\$26,100 household income	156	
Low Level of Education	1 to 12 years of school	103	250
High Level of Education	Above high school	147	
Non-whites	African-, Latino-, Asian-, and Native-Americans	73	250
Whites	European-Americans	177	

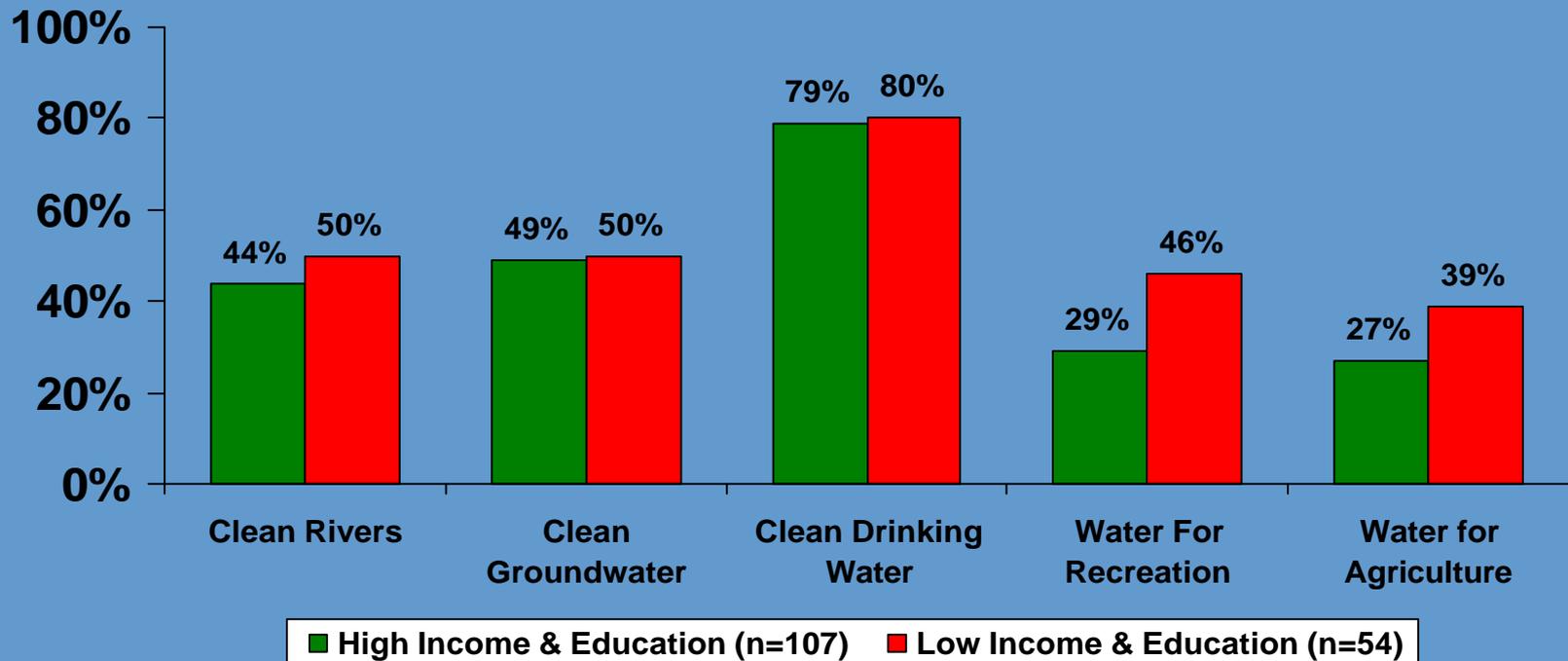


Have you received water quality information from any of the following?

Population Characteristic	High Income & High Education			Low Income & Low Education	
	No	Yes		No	Yes
Television Program	69%	31%	✓	74%	26%
Newspaper Article	46%	54%	✓	46%	54%
County Extension Center	72%	28%	✓	67%	33%
Public School system	88%	12%	✓	94%	6%
College/University	85%	15%	✓	96%	4%
Government Agency	76%	24%	✓	82%	18%
Environmental Group	76%	24%	✓	88%	12%
Sample Size	n=107			n=54	

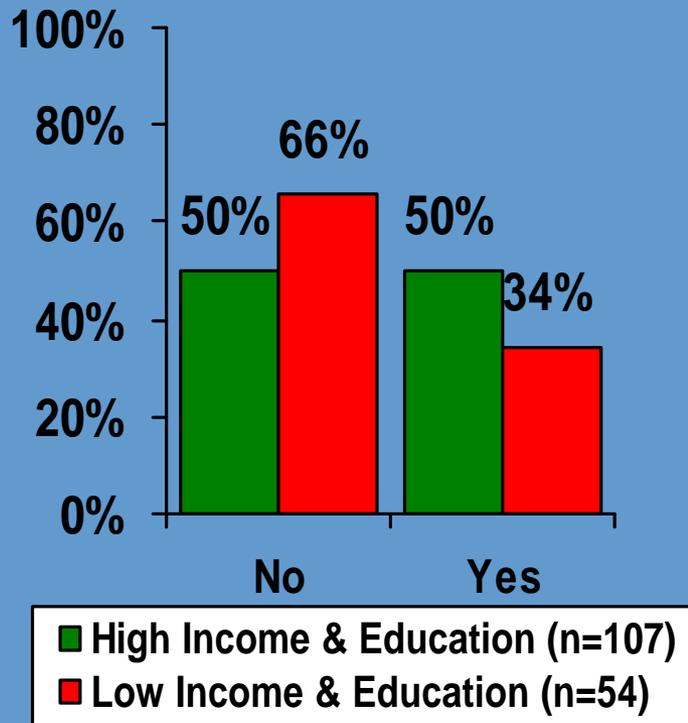


How important are the following water quality issues?



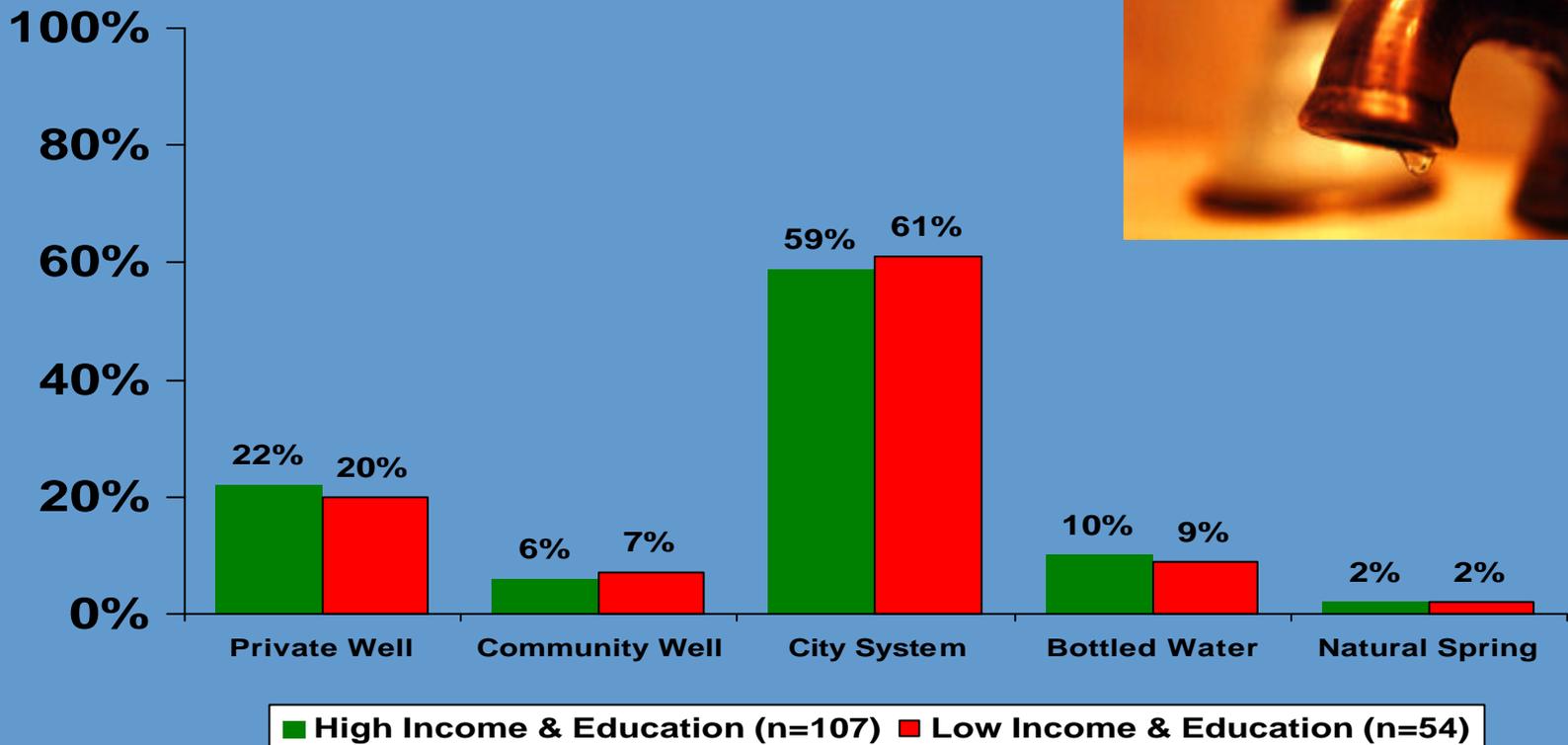


Do you know what a watershed is?



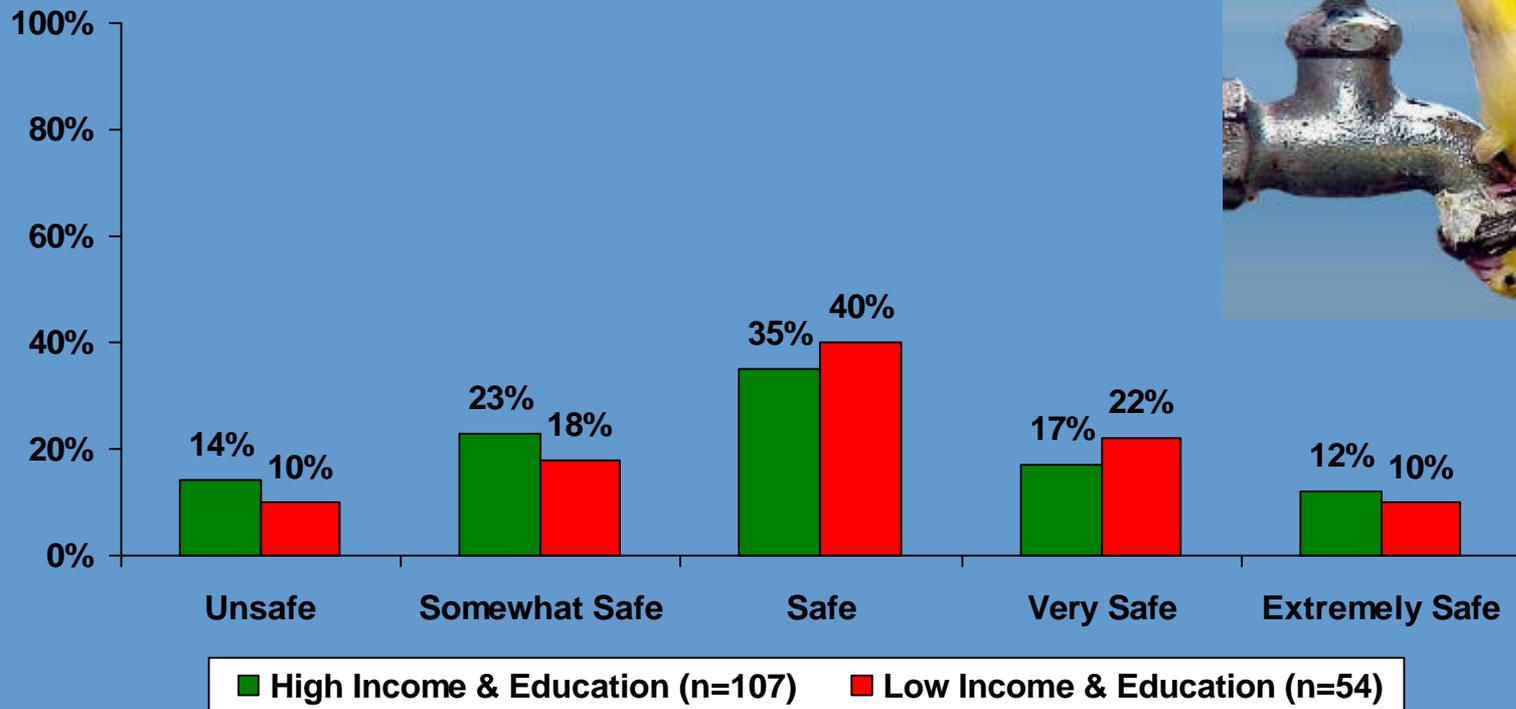


What is your major source of drinking water?



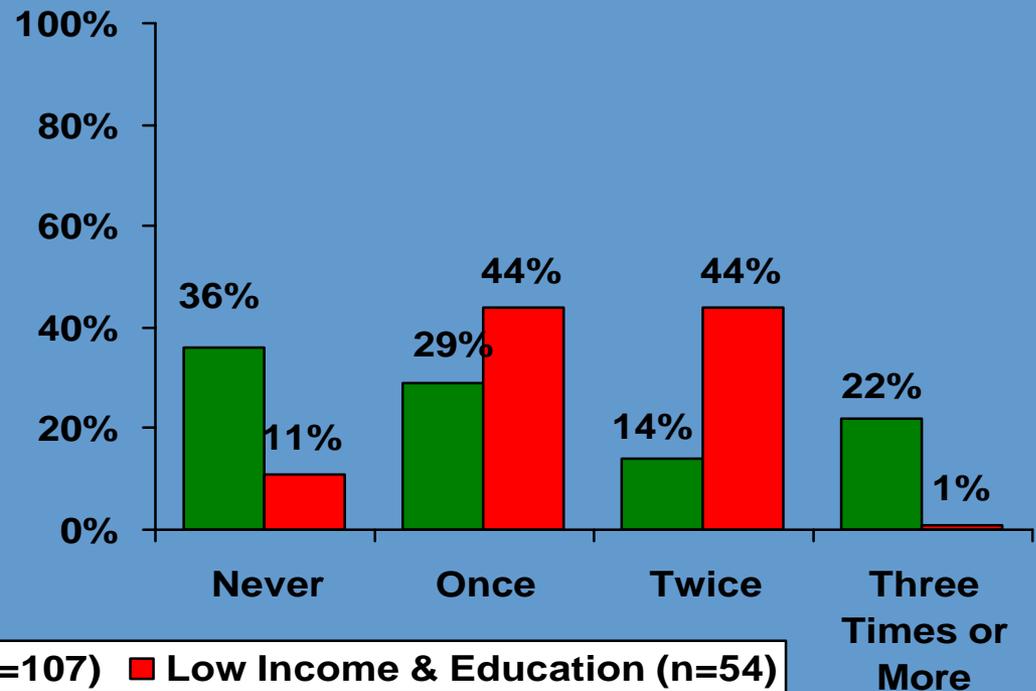


How safe is your home drinking water to drink?



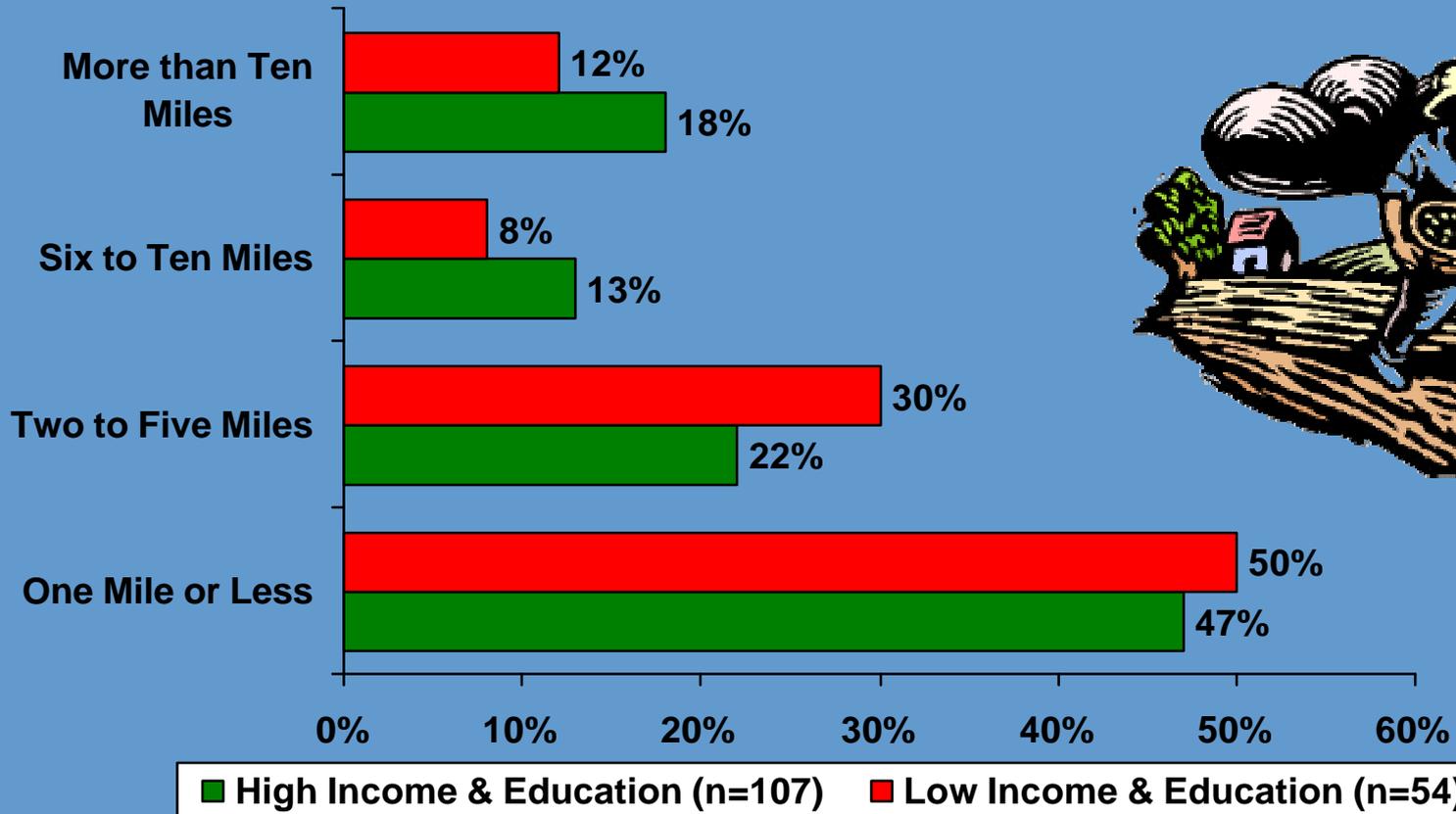


How often has your well water been tested within the last five years?





How close is the nearest farm to your home?





Would you like to learn more about the following water quality issues?

Population Characteristic	High Income & High Education			Low Income & Low Education	
	No	Yes		No	Yes
Animal Waste Management	64%	36%	?	53%	47%
Clean Drinking Water	27%	73%	✓	11%	89%
Sources of Pollution	31%	69%	✓	23%	77%
Watershed Management	43%	57%	✓	38%	63%
Use of Lawn/Farm Chemicals	37%	64%	✓	31%	69%
Sample Size	n=107			n=54	



Which of the following learning opportunities would you take advantage of to learn more about water quality?

Population Characteristic	High Income & High Education			Low Income & Low Education	
	No	Yes		No	Yes
Printed Fact Sheets	38%	62%	?	19%	81%
Website	33%	67%	?	72%	28%
Class/Workshop	71%	29%	✓	65%	35%
Newspaper/Magazine	14%	86%	✓	16%	84%
TV/Radio Broadcast	18%	82%	✓	10%	90%
Participate in Vol. Organization	66%	34%	✓	63%	38%
Sample Size	n=107			n=54	

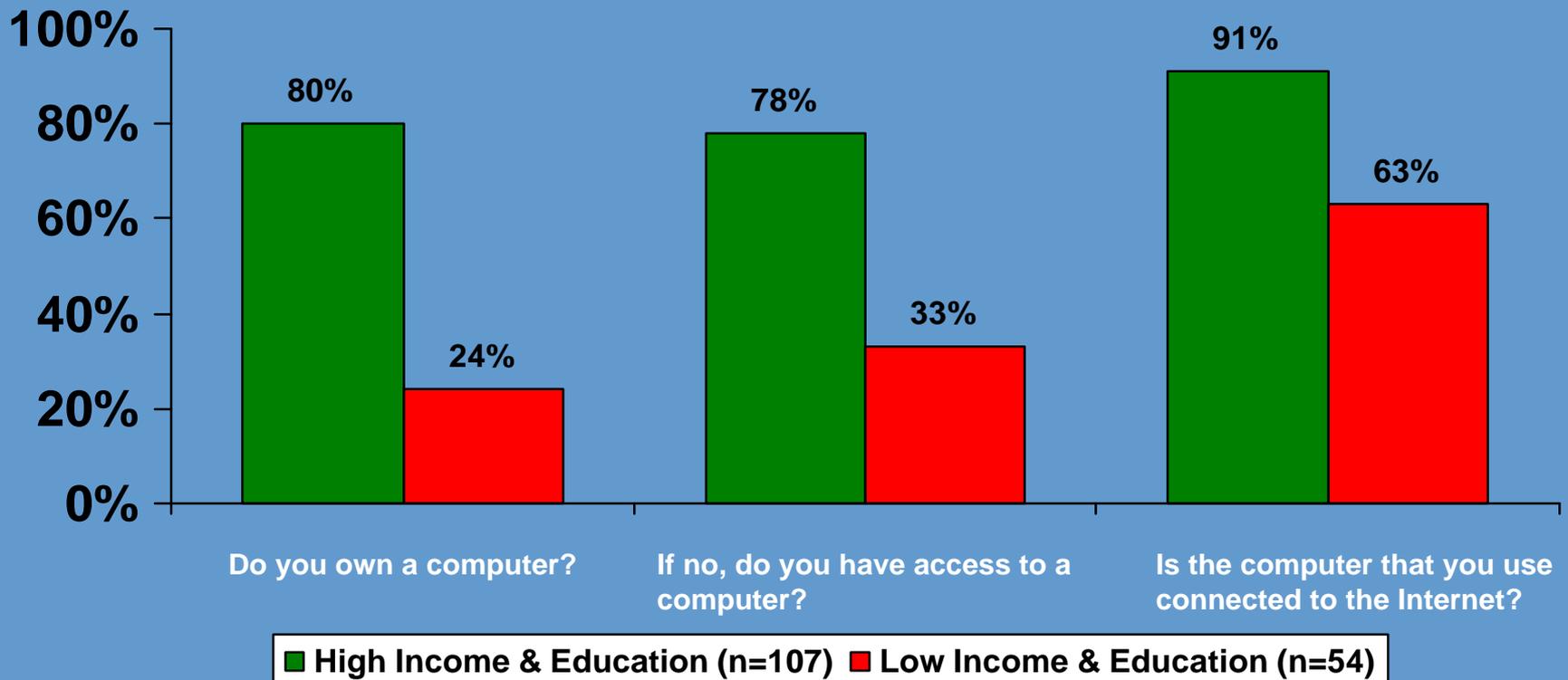


Which method would you prefer to use to offer opinions about water quality issues in your community?

Population Characteristic	High Income & High Education		Low Income & Low Education
Response	Extremely Important		Extremely Important
Mail Survey	42%	✓	53%
Telephone Survey	23%	✓	19%
Face-to-Face Survey	1%	✓	3%
Internet Survey	19%	?	6%
Focus Group	12%	✓	19%
Sample Size	n=107		n=54



The percentage of people answering “yes” to the following questions:





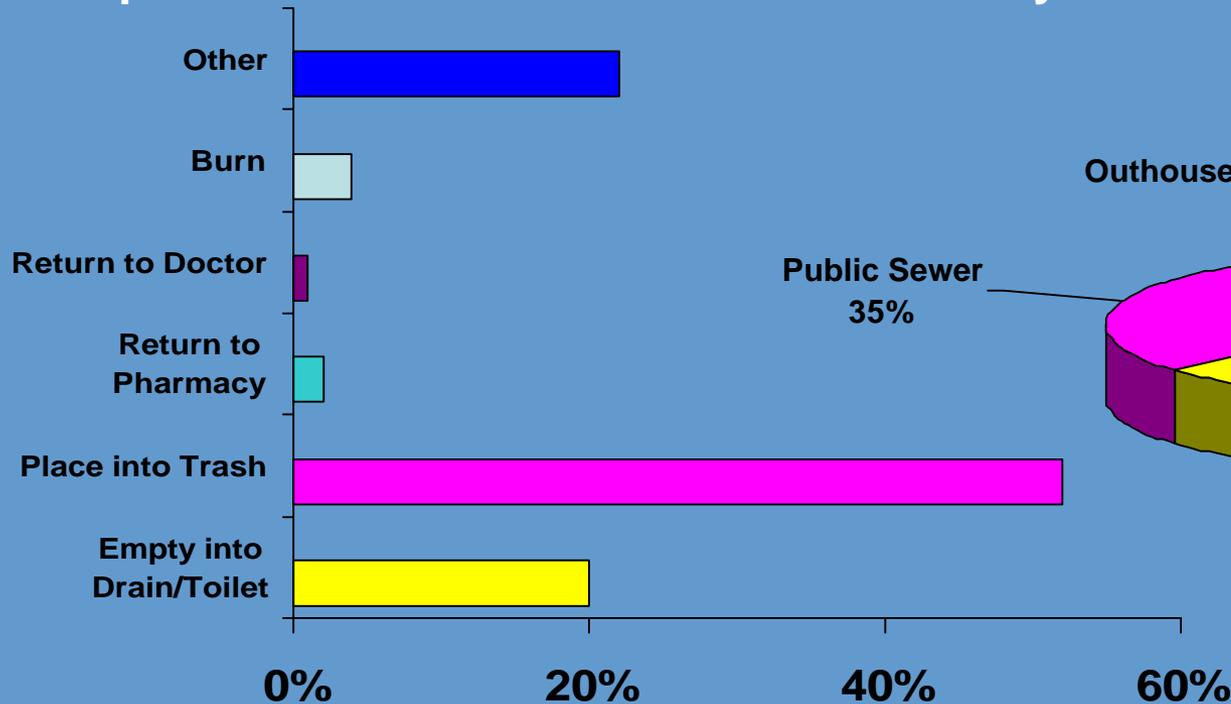
Where do we plan to go from here?

Population Statistics	Young People	Old People	Low Income	High Income	Low Education	High Education	Non-White	White
n=250	51%	49%	38%	62%	41%	59%	34%	66%
Sample Survey Questions								
Are the water quality issues in the survey important to you?	57%	43%	40%	60%	38%	62%	31%	69%
Do you perceive the sources of pollution listed to be a threat?	55%	45%	41%	59%	39%	61%	32%	68%
Would you like to learn more about the water quality issues?	52%	48%	38%	62%	45%	55%	37%	64%
Would you take advantage of opportunities to learn more?	57%	43%	35%	65%	41%	59%	34%	66%



An emerging issue?

How do you dispose of unwanted or expired medications?



What type of sewer system are you connected to?

