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Perception of Water Quality in the U.S.

Zhihua Hu*, Lois Wright Morton
Iowa State University
*zhihuahu@iastate.edu

Abstract:

Almost 40,000 U.S. streams, lakes, rivers, and wetlands are classified as impaired from nonpoint source pollution from urban and agricultural lands. A critical part in the strategy to solve water quality problems is to increase individual citizens' awareness of the problems and involve their efforts. Study of people's perception of their water quality, what they see as important in the use of water, and what they identify as the major polluting sources therefore provides important information for projects of participatory approaches to solve water problems. Using a water quality survey conducted in thirty one states in the U.S. this study focuses on identifying the differences and uniqueness of states in terms of its residents' perceptions and beliefs about water. Results show that people in different states tend to have different perceptions about their water quality as well as different priorities for their water use. In addition, the major water pollution factors identified by residents in different states also tend to vary.

Impact Statement:

The surveys and findings are used by agencies, universities, and public policy decision making nationally and at the individual state level to create more responsive water programs.

Category: Human Dimensions

Type of Presentation: Poster Presentation