

Oregon Water Policy Survey



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The following are preliminary results for the 2010 Oregon Water Policy survey. The survey was sent to a random sample of 1,563 homes within the state of Oregon during the months of April and May of 2010. The purpose of the survey is to assess citizen attitudes and opinions toward water issues in Oregon. Responses to the survey will be used for research projects – such as a doctoral dissertation, published articles and conference presentations, as well as assist the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) in their water policy planning process. The response rate for the survey is as follows (two waves of mailings):

Sample Size: 1,563
 Surveys Returned: 793
 Response Rate: 50.7%

Note: Due to rounding, not all percentages add up to 100 percent.

SECTION 1

In this first section of the survey, we would like to ask you some questions regarding your knowledge of water issues in the state of Oregon. Please circle the number that most closely represents your view.

Q-1 In general, how well informed would you consider yourself to be concerning water issues in the state of Oregon?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| 1. Not informed | 15% |
| 2. Somewhat informed | 60% |
| 3. Informed | 21% |
| 4. Very Well informed | 3% |

Q-2 How often do you talk about issues related to water with your family, friends, or other acquaintances?

- | | |
|----------------|-----|
| 1. Never | 10% |
| 2. Hardly ever | 34% |
| 3. Sometimes | 46% |
| 4. Often | 10% |

Q-3 Overall, how much impact do you think people like you can have in making Oregon's water policy?

- | | |
|----------------------|-----|
| 1. No impact at all | 20% |
| 2. A small impact | 47% |
| 3. A moderate impact | 28% |
| 4. A big impact | 6% |

Q-4 *Currently*, I believe Oregon will have enough water for human and ecological needs.

- | | |
|----------------------|-----|
| 1. Strongly disagree | 3% |
| 2. Disagree | 16% |
| 3. Uncertain | 36% |
| 4. Agree | 33% |
| 5. Strongly agree | 12% |

Q-5 *In ten years*, I believe Oregon will have enough water for human and ecological needs.

- | | |
|----------------------|-----|
| 1. Strongly disagree | 6% |
| 2. Disagree | 20% |
| 3. Uncertain | 46% |
| 4. Agree | 20% |
| 5. Strongly agree | 8% |

Q-6 Listed below are a number of factors that potentially pose a risk to Oregon's water quality and quantity. On the left side of the page, please indicate if you believe the listed factor poses a serious risk, a moderate risk, a minor risk, or no risk at all to Oregon water. On the right hand side, indicate to what extent you believe these risks can be managed by humans. If you are uncertain about your response, please leave the item unmarked.

How much risk does the activity pose to Oregon's water quality and quantity?					To what extent can these risk be managed by humans?				
1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	
1. No risk					1. Not at all				
2. Minor risk					2. Slightly				
3. Moderate risk					3. Moderately				
4. Serious risk					4. A great deal				
1%	12%	35%	52%	a. Agricultural practices including use of pesticides, fertilizers and habitat destruction.	1%	3%	22%	75%	
3%	17%	35%	45%	b. Forestry practices including use of herbicides, fertilizers and habitat destruction.	1%	4%	24%	71%	
16%	33%	36%	15%	c. Hydro-electric dams	4%	12%	30%	55%	
3%	16%	37%	44%	d. Drought conditions decreasing flows and increasing temperatures in rivers.	27%	38%	24%	11%	
8%	20%	37%	36%	e. Climate change	28%	33%	27%	12%	
1%	19%	46%	34%	f. Oregon population growth	9%	27%	34%	31%	
7%	31%	45%	17%	g. Irrigation of agricultural lands	3%	12%	37%	48%	
7%	24%	31%	38%	h. Water privatization	3%	16%	21%	60%	
2%	16%	40%	42%	i. Industry	1%	9%	26%	63%	
24%	46%	21%	9%	j. Private wells	6%	20%	28%	47%	

Q-7 We would like to know which of the following information sources you currently use or would use to learn more about Oregon's water situation and policy. Please circle the number of the frequency of your use.

	Never	Infrequently	Frequently	Very Frequently
a. Television news programs and specials	8%	31%	42%	19%
b. Oregon Public Broadcasting	15%	34%	30%	22%
c. Radio programs	26%	38%	27%	10%
d. The <i>Oregonian</i> newspaper	38%	31%	19%	12%
e. Other local newspapers	25%	33%	26%	16%
f. Watershed Councils	60%	31%	7%	2%
g. Elected Officials	49%	38%	11%	2%
h. Recreation Groups	44%	37%	16%	3%
i. Universities and colleges	40%	41%	14%	5%
j. Oregon Water Resources Department	41%	40%	15%	4%
k. Environmental groups	33%	40%	21%	6%
l. Information available on the Internet	25%	35%	29%	12%

Q-8 In your opinion, what sector uses the most water in the state of Oregon? Please circle one.

1. Municipal (drinking water, lawn watering, etc...)	37%	4. Energy production	10%
2. Agriculture/Irrigation	32%	5. Fish and wildlife	3%
3. Industry	17%	6. Other	1%

Q-9 For the following terms, please indicate if you know what the term means, have heard of the term but don't know its meaning, or have not heard of the term at all.

	Have not heard of the term at all	Have heard of the term but don't know its meaning	Know what the term means
a. Watershed	2%	13%	85%
b. Water right	8%	16%	77%
c. Clean Water Act	3%	35%	62%
d. Nonpoint Source Pollution	57%	22%	20%
e. Prior Appropriation Doctrine	71%	19%	11%
f. Exempt well	44%	32%	25%
g. Greywater	20%	15%	65%
h. Hyporheic flow	71%	18%	11%
i. Snow water equivalent	18%	25%	57%
j. Aquifer storage and recovery	22%	28%	50%
k. Evapotranspiration	49%	23%	28%
l. Safe Drinking Water Act	11%	39%	50%
m. Catchment	44%	27%	29%

Q-10 From what you've read and heard, is there solid evidence that the average temperature on earth has been getting warmer over the past few decades, or not?

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes (go to Q-11) | 74% |
| 2. No (go to Q-12) | 17% |
| 3. Don't know (go to Q-12) | 9% |

Q-11 Do you believe that the earth is getting warmer...?

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Mostly because of human activity such as burning fossil fuels. | 58% |
| 2. Mostly because of natural patterns in the earth's environment. | 30% |
| 3. Don't know | 11% |

Q-12 On domestic policy issues, would you consider yourself to be?

1. Very Liberal	7%
2. Liberal	21%
3. Moderate	44%
4. Conservative	23%
5. Very Conservative	6%

SECTION 2

This section of the survey concerns your attitudes toward the environment and politics. Please circle the number that most closely represents your view.

Q-13 Listed below are statements about the relationship between humans and the environment. For each, please indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Neutral	Mildly Agree	Strongly Agree
a. The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset by human activities.	3%	13%	11%	34%	39%
b. Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs.	25%	30%	16%	25%	4%
c. We are approaching the limit of people the earth can support.	11%	15%	22%	22%	30%
d. The so-called "ecological crisis" facing humankind has been greatly exaggerated.	33%	20%	17%	16%	15%
e. Plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist.	5%	11%	16%	20%	48%
f. Humans were meant to rule over the rest of nature.	40%	17%	18%	12%	13%

Q-14 In Oregon, which sectors should receive priority use for water? Please circle the top three.

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|
| 1. Drinking water | First Choice | 4. Energy production | Fourth Choice |
| 2. Agriculture/Irrigation | Second Choice | 5. Industry | Fifth Choice |
| 3. Fish and wildlife | Third Choice | 6. Recreation | Sixth Choice |

SECTION 3

We now have a few concluding questions to check to see if our survey is representative of all types of people. We also have included a couple of questions concerning politics. Please remember that all answers are completely confidential.

Q-15 What is your current age in years? _____

Mean	56
Median	57
Mode	61
Standard Deviation	16

Q-16 Please indicate your gender?

- | | |
|-----------|-----|
| 1. Female | 50% |
| 2. Male | 50% |

Q-17 What level of education have you completed?

1. Grade School	1%	5. Some college	28%
2. Middle or junior high school	1%	6. College graduate	26%
3. High school	13%	7. Graduate school	25%
4. Vocational school	6%	8. Other _____	1%

Q-18 How long have you lived in Oregon? _____ (in years)

Mean	36
Median	35
Mode	40
Standard Deviation	22

Q-19 Which of the following best describes your current work situation?

1. Employed full time	45%	5. Retired	35%
2. Employed part time	9%	6. Student	2%
3. Not employed outside the home	2%	7. Other _____	4%
4. Unemployed	4%		

Q-20 Which category best describes your household income (before taxes) in 2009?

1. Less than \$10,000	4%
2. \$10,000 - \$14,999	4%
3. \$15,000 - \$24,999	11%
4. \$25,000 - \$34,999	11%
5. \$35,000 - \$49,999	15%
6. \$50,000 - \$74,999	24%
7. \$75,000 - \$99,999	10%
8. \$100,000 - \$149,999	13%
9. \$150,000 - \$199,999	3%
10. \$200,000 or more	5%

Public Attitudes Toward Water Use in Oregon

Results: Frequency Distributions



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The following are preliminary results for the 2010 Public Attitudes Toward Water Use in Oregon survey. The survey was sent to a random sample of 1,537 homes within the state of Oregon during the months of May and June of 2010. The purpose of the survey is to assess citizen attitudes and opinions toward water use in Oregon. Responses to the survey will be used for research projects – such as a doctoral dissertation, published articles and conference presentations, as well as assist the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) in their water policy planning process. The response rate for the survey is as follows (two waves of mailings):

Sample Size: 1,537
 Surveys Returned: 808
 Response Rate: 52.6%

Note: Due to rounding, not all percentages add up to 100 percent.

SECTION 1

In this first section of the survey we would like to ask you some general questions about your interests in, activities relating to and knowledge of water quantity issues in Oregon. Please circle the number that most closely represents your view.

Q-1 In general, how well informed would you consider yourself to be concerning water issues in the State of Oregon?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| 1. Not informed | 17% |
| 2. Somewhat informed | 59% |
| 3. Informed | 18% |
| 4. Very well informed | 5% |

Q-2 Do you feel water quantity (having enough water) is a problem in Oregon?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes, it is a problem (go to Q-3a) | 56% |
| 2. No, not a problem (go to Q-4) | 27% |
| 3. Don't know (go to Q-4) | 17% |

Q-3a What factors do you feel contribute to water scarcity in Oregon? (Circle all that apply.)

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 1. Climate change | 36% |
| 2. Commercial use | 47% |
| 3. Agriculture/irrigation | 35% |
| 4. Increasing population | 13% |
| 5. Residential use | 46% |

Q-3b How concerned are you that water scarcity (having enough water) will affect you personally?

1. Not concerned	11%
2. Slightly concerned	35%
3. Don't know	18%
4. Concerned	29%
5. Very Concerned	6%

Q-4 Do you know where your drinking water comes from?

1. City/municipal water	72%
2. Bottled water	2%
3. Domestic well	17%
4. Other _____	5%
5. Don't know	3%

Q-5 Overall, how much impact do you think you as an individual can have in conserving water in Oregon?

1. No impact	4%
2. Small impact	52%
3. Uncertain	9%
4. Moderate impact	26%
5. Big impact	9%

Q-6 We are interested in your personal participation in the following water activities during this last year. Please indicate if you have participated in any of these activities or not by circling the responses “yes” or “no”. If you did not participate in the activity, please indicate the possible reason(s) you did not.

	% Yes	% No		No Interest	Too costly	Takes too much time	One person makes little difference	Don't know
a. Use faucet aerators.	35	65	→	22%	9%	1%	9%	59%
b. Water plants deeply, less frequently.	17	83	→	27%	5%	12%	20%	36%
c. Water lawns early in the morning or late in the evening.	19	81	→	52%	9%	5%	18%	16%
d. Take shorter showers.	27	73	→	70%	1%	1%	18%	11%
e. Repair leaky faucets.	7	94	→	24%	14%	6%	40%	16%
f. Turn off water while hand washing dishes.	23	77	→	23%	1%	28%	20%	29%
g. Collect rain water in barrels or buckets.	91	9	→	46%	8%	15%	3%	29%
h. Plant native plants or drought tolerant plants, trees, etc.	44	56	→	51%	6%	4%	7%	33%
i. Turn off water while brushing teeth.	16	84	→	35%	1%	15%	23%	27%
j. Wash full load of laundry or dishes.	2	98	→	35%	2%	2%	44%	16%
k. Purchase water saving appliances (toilets, clothes, washer, etc.)	29	72	→	24%	43%	2%	10%	22%

Q-7 In your opinion, what are the most important water uses in Oregon. Please circle the top three.

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. Drinking water | First |
| 2. Irrigation | Second |
| 3. Wildlife (wetlands, watersheds, salmon) | Third |
| 4. Power generation | Fourth |
| 5. Commercial use | Fifth |
| 6. Recreation | Sixth |

Q-8 Should large-scale water users pay for the *amount* of water they use (the more they use, the more they pay)?

- | | |
|----------------------|-----|
| 1. Strongly Disagree | 5% |
| 2. Mildly Disagree | 3% |
| 3. Neutral | 13% |
| 4. Mildly Agree | 29% |
| 5. Strongly Agree | 50% |

Q-9 Should large-scale water users pay an annual *flat fee* for the use of water?

- | | |
|----------------------|-----|
| 1. Strongly Disagree | 41% |
| 2. Mildly Disagree | 19% |
| 3. Neutral | 24% |
| 4. Mildly Agree | 10% |
| 5. Strongly Agree | 6% |

Q-10 Would you personally support private water bottling facilities in Oregon if it benefits local economies?

- | | |
|---------------|-----|
| 1. No | 32% |
| 2. Yes | 39% |
| 3. Don't know | 30% |

SECTION 2

This section of the survey concerns your attitudes toward the environment and politics. Please circle the number that most closely represents your view.

Q-11 Listed below are statements about the relationship between humans and the environment. For each, please indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Neutral	Mildly Agree	Strongly Agree
a. The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset by human activities.	6%	9%	8%	33%	44%
b. Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs.	29%	32%	15%	16%	7%
c. We are approaching the limit of people the earth can support.	10%	13%	22%	26%	28%
d. The so-called "ecological crisis" facing humankind has been greatly exaggerated.	30%	25%	15%	17%	13%
e. Plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist.	7%	9%	12%	31%	42%
f. Humans were meant to rule over the rest of nature	34%	21%	18%	14%	13%

Q-12 From what you've read and heard, is there solid evidence that the average temperature on earth has been getting warmer over the past few decades, or not?

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| 1. Yes (go to Q-11) | 69% |
| 2. No (go to Q-12) | 20% |
| 3. Don't know (go to Q-12) | 10% |

Q-13 Do you believe that the earth is getting warmer...?

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Mostly because of human activity such as burning fossil fuels. | 55% |
| 2. Mostly because of natural patterns in the earth's environment. | 25% |
| 3. Don't know | 20% |

Q-14 On domestic policy issues, would you consider yourself to be?

- | | |
|----------------------|-----|
| 1. Very Liberal | 7% |
| 2. Liberal | 25% |
| 3. Moderate | 42% |
| 4. Conservative | 22% |
| 5. Very Conservative | 5% |

SECTION 3

We now have a few concluding questions to check to see if our survey is representative of all types of people. We also have included a couple of questions concerning politics. Please remember that all answers are completely confidential.

Q-15 What is your current age in years?_____

Mean	56.8
Median	57.0
Mode	56.0
Standard Deviation	15.6

Q-16 Please indicate your gender?

- | | |
|-----------|-----|
| 1. Female | 53% |
| 2. Male | 47% |

Q-17 What level of education have you completed?

1. Grade School	1%
2. Middle or junior high school	2%
3. High school	16%
4. Vocational school	4%
5. Some college	38%
6. College graduate	34%
7. Graduate school	7%

Q-18 How long have you lived in Oregon? _____ (in years)

Mean	35.6
Median	36.0
Mode	40.0
Standard Deviation	21.5

Q-19 Which of the following best describes your current work situation?

1. Employed full time	45%
2. Employed part time	10%
3. Not employed outside the home	2%
4. Unemployed	3%
5. Retired	35%
6. Student	2%
7. Other_____	3%

Q-20 Which category best describes your household income (before taxes) in 2009?

1. Less than \$10,000	5%
2. \$10,000 - \$14,999	6%
3. \$15,000 - \$24,999	10%
4. \$25,000 - \$34,999	12%
5. \$35,000 - \$49,999	16%
6. \$50,000 - \$74,999	19%
7. \$75,000 - \$99,999	12%
8. \$100,000 - \$149,999	13%
9. \$150,000 - \$199,999	4%
10. \$200,000 or more	3%