

Your Views of the Wabash River



In the Winter of 2009, The Wabash River Enhancement Corporation and Purdue University conducted a fact-finding survey to collect information about local residents' perceptions and awareness of the Wabash River. The data collected will be used to help shape outreach efforts provided by the Wabash River Enhancement Corporation.

Eight hundred and fifty (850) residents in Tippecanoe County were selected for participation in this survey. Respondents could complete the questionnaire in two ways; by completing the survey on-line, or filling out and returning a paper copy of the survey. Two hundred fifty-seven (257) people chose to complete the paper copy of the survey and 56 people completed the survey online, yielding a 39.9% response rate.

Funded by Living Laboratories on the Wabash

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Section 1: Perception of the Wabash River

<i>Please mark the response that best reflects your opinion of the Wabash River:</i>	Strongly Agree 5 (%)	Agree 4 (%)	Neutral 3 (%)	Disagree 2 (%)	Strongly Disagree 1 (%)	Don't Know (%)	Mean (n)
The condition of the river has gotten so bad that I only feel safe looking at the water.	15.7	33.4	20.7	17.7	2.7	9.7	3.46 (299)
You can tell how unsafe the water in the river is because of how it looks and smells.	8.7	36.8	15.7	26.4	3.7	8.7	3.22 (299)
The condition of the river shows that local government is not taking responsibility.	12.3	28.0	28.3	18.7	3.0	9.7	3.31 (300)
The Wabash often has a strong, unpleasant odor.	9.4	24.4	28.4	20.7	2.7	14.4	3.20 (299)
The river is dirty and seems to be getting worse.	15.0	35.7	23.8	14.3	1.7	9.5	3.53 (294)
The river is a symbol of the region.	37.8	45.3	8.4	3.7	1.7	3.0	4.17 (296)
Walking along the river can be unpleasant with poison ivy and stinging nettle everywhere.	7.9	30.8	21.6	15.1	3.8	20.9	3.30 (292)
I like outdoor activities, but I don't recreate along the Wabash.	15.1	43.3	15.4	20.8	2.3	3.0	3.49 (298)
I feel unsafe when walking along the Wabash.	4.1	19.5	30.1	27.7	5.5	13.0	2.87 (292)
Some of the parks and trails near the Wabash are hangouts for people who make me feel uncomfortable.	11.2	32.9	21.0	11.2	1.7	22.0	3.52 (295)
Flooding should be controlled to minimize loss of crops and private property.	22.5	39.9	17.1	11.1	5.0	4.4	3.67 (298)
The river is a barrier that keeps the communities of Lafayette and West Lafayette separate.	5.4	20.5	18.1	39.3	14.4	2.3	2.62 (298)
The river is too big of a mess to fix without federal money.	10.1	24.0	24.3	24.3	4.4	12.8	3.13 (296)
Even if we clean the river, someone else will just trash it.	2.4	29.7	19.3	36.8	6.4	5.4	2.84 (296)
I don't spend much time thinking about the river.	10.0	44.7	22.7	18.7	3.3	0.7	3.40 (300)
I don't need to get involved because other people are taking care of the problems with the Wabash.	2.0	10.9	39.5	35.7	6.1	5.8	2.65 (294)
Cleaning up the Wabash is not as important as people are making it out to be.	1.7	6.8	18.9	48.6	18.2	5.7	2.20 (296)
I don't know a whole lot about what the river provides to our community or myself.	3.4	36.9	25.4	26.4	5.1	2.7	3.07 (295)
I don't know very much about the natural processes of the Wabash.	3.0	46.5	20.9	21.9	5.1	2.7	3.21 (297)
The Wabash isn't very scenic.	4.4	19.8	11.4	46.6	15.1	2.7	2.50 (298)
There is potential to make the river a more accessible place for recreation.	27.5	56.0	10.4	2.0	0.7	3.4	4.11 (298)
There is potential to make the river cleaner and healthier.	30.8	59.9	4.7	1.3	0.3	3.0	4.23 (299)

<i>Please mark the response that best reflects your opinion of the Wabash River:</i>	Strongly Agree 5 (%)	Agree 4 (%)	Neutral 3 (%)	Disagree 2 (%)	Strongly Disagree 1 (%)	Don't Know (%)	Mean (n)
The river has improved over the years with the pedestrian bridge and trails.	13.8	56.2	16.2	5.4	1.0	7.4	3.83 (297)
The river is the finest natural resource in the county.	11.5	34.1	32.4	11.5	0.3	10.1	3.50 (296)
Improvements in recent years have largely gone unnoticed by the public.	4.4	46.1	25.9	13.8	0.3	9.4	3.45 (297)
Improvements to the riverfront have helped bring people back downtown.	6.7	40.3	25.5	12.8	1.3	13.4	3.44 (298)
The river corridor provides important habitat for birds and other wildlife.	40.6	50.3	6.0	0.7	0	2.3	4.34 (298)
The river is important because it supports farming, industrial, and municipal processes.	18.9	47.3	19.9	4.7	0.7	8.4	3.86 (296)
The trails along the river provide an excellent setting for hiking or biking.	19.0	50.8	15.6	5.1	0	9.5	3.93 (295)
I like having a river in town.	28.1	53.9	14.9	1.7	0.7	1.0	4.09 (295)
The Wabash is important because it links us to the story of the interactions between native nations and European settlers.	21.3	46.3	22.6	5.4	1.7	5.4	3.82 (296)
The river is an essential asset for promoting our community's future economic prosperity.	15.6	37.3	26.8	7.8	2.7	9.8	3.61 (298)
Parks along the Wabash provide opportunities for children to play and interact with nature	20.5	57.6	11.1	5.4	0	5.4	3.99 (297)
I really wish there was a place to eat outside and enjoy the river.	25.9	41.5	25.5	3.7	0.3	3.1	3.92 (294)
Local funding to revitalize the river is a great investment in our future.	23.2	46.1	20.5	4.0	1.7	4.4	3.89 (297)
It is important for community members to take an active role in determining the future of the river.	26.4	51.8	17.1	1.3	1.0	2.3	4.04 (299)

Section 2: Getting Involved

There are new efforts underway to improve water quality in the Wabash River that require skills and involvement from a wide variety of community members. We are interested in learning about ways to include community members in these efforts. Your responses to this survey are confidential and you will not be contacted based on your responses.

In what ways could your involvement be useful to these projects? (Check all that apply) n=313

- 10.8% My educational background is relevant, n=34
- 9.2% My professional background is relevant, n=29
- 3.5% I have past experience with similar community projects, n=11
- 11.1% I have ideas, n=35
- 11.1% I have time to help, n=35
- 7.3% I have skills that would be appropriate, n=23 (please specify: see Appendix A)
- 27.2% I am interested in the issues, n=86
- 6.3% Other, n=20 (please specify: see Appendix B)

<i>How likely are you to participate in the following activities?</i>	Already do it 1 (%)	Very likely 2 (%)	Likely 3 (%)	Unlikely 4 (%)	Very Unlikely 5 (%)	Unsure, need info (%)	Mean (n)
Take steps to learn more about the Wabash River.	4.2	8.7	38.5	30.9	13.9	3.8	3.43 (288)
Visit a website to learn more about the Wabash.	2.1	14.5	40.0	27.9	13.8	1.7	3.38 (290)
Consider the Wabash an issue when voting	2.4	19.0	42.9	17.6	11.1	6.9	3.17 (289)
Make your concerns about the Wabash known to elected officials.	1.0	11.4	32.9	36.7	12.5	5.5	3.51 (289)
Attend formal meetings, conferences or presentations related to the Wabash.	1.7	5.9	17.3	46.0	22.5	6.6	3.87 (289)
Sign up for a mailing list (or email) to track the progress of Wabash restoration efforts.	0	12.4	26.2	36.6	19.3	5.5	3.66 (290)
Invest time to become more involved in the Wabash restoration.	0	6.2	19.2	47.6	18.2	8.9	3.85 (292)
Participate in Detrash the Wabash.	0.7	5.8	26.7	41.8	17.5	7.5	3.75 (292)
Participate in water quality monitoring.	0.7	4.5	14.5	51.0	23.1	6.2	3.97 (290)
Participate in informal meetings.	0.3	3.4	17.9	46.2	24.1	7.9	3.98 (290)
Contribute to or edit a newsletter or webpage.	0	1.7	9.3	51.6	33.9	3.5	4.22 (289)
Minimize your impact on water quality (for example, install a rain barrel or rain garden).	5.2	7.2	32.0	30.2	15.1	10.3	3.48 (291)
Install a public demonstration project on your property (for example, rain barrels or rain gardens)	0.7	3.8	16.6	45.3	26.0	7.6	4.00 (289)
Intervene if you see someone do something that impacts water quality (for example, pouring oil down the storm drain).	6.2	27.6	47.2	10.7	7.6	0.7	2.86 (290)
Make financial contributions.	0.3	3.8	23.8	42.4	22.8	6.9	3.90 (290)
Become a member of a local organization focused on the Wabash River.	0.7	3.8	12.4	47.8	24.1	11.3	4.02 (291)
Sign a petition in support of additional public funding for the Wabash River.	0.7	17.8	43.2	18.8	8.6	11.0	3.19 (292)
Recruit friends to participate in an activity that benefits the river.	0.3	5.6	25.4	43.9	18.5	6.3	3.80 (287)
Other (please specify: see Appendix A)	5.9	5.9	0	26.5	17.6	44.1	3.79 (34)

What would limit your involvement in activities to improve water quality in the Wabash River? (check all that apply) n=313

- 17.7% Lack of interest, n=57
- 49.1% No time, n=155
- 17.1% Nothing to contribute, n=54
- 9.8% Childcare responsibilities, n=31
- 2.5% Lack of transportation, n=8
- 37.0% Work schedule, n=117
- 38.0% Limited financial resources, n=120
- 19.6% Other n=62 (please specify: See appendix C)

<i>Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. I would get involved in activities to clean up the Wabash river if...</i>	Strongly Agree 5 (%)	Agree 4 (%)	Neutral 3 (%)	Disagree 2 (%)	Strongly Disagree 1 (%)	Don't Know (%)	Mean (n)
It's connected with the needs and interests of my friends and family.	4.6	42.5	34.3	9.3	3.9	5.4	3.37 (280)
It's connected with the needs and interests of my church.	3.2	20.9	44.8	15.5	9.0	6.5	2.93 (277)
It's connected to my paid work.	5.9	21.7	37.1	16.9	11.8	6.6	2.93 (272)
It's a worthwhile cause.	12.9	55.2	23.3	2.9	2.2	3.6	3.77 (279)
There's a need in the community.	9.7	51.8	28.8	3.6	2.2	4.0	3.66 (278)
It's an opportunity to help people.	8.3	49.3	31.3	4.3	2.5	4.3	3.59 (278)
It's an opportunity to learn something new.	7.9	47.0	33.0	5.7	2.2	4.3	3.55 (279)
It's an opportunity to be outside.	9.0	53.2	24.1	6.5	4.0	3.2	3.59 (278)
It's an opportunity to meet new people.	5.8	41.5	38.3	7.6	3.2	3.6	3.40 (277)
It's connected to my neighborhood association.	3.2	15.2	49.5	17.7	5.8	8.7	2.92 (277)
I had available time.	11.1	39.8	30.5	9.3	5.4	3.9	3.44 (279)
I read an article in the newspaper.	1.5	26.0	49.5	11.0	4.0	8.1	3.11 (273)
Other (please specify: see Appendix B)	13.8	0	44.8	0	10.3	31.0	3.10 (29)

Section 3: Views of the Natural World

<i>The following relates to your general feelings toward the natural world. For each statement, please tell us how much you agree.</i>	Strongly Agree 5 (%)	Agree 4 (%)	Neutral 3 (%)	Disagree 2 (%)	Strongly Disagree 1 (%)	Don't Know (%)	Mean (n)
We are approaching the limit of the number of people the earth can support.	14.2	29.9	18.4	21.5	5.2	10.8	3.30 (288)
Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs.	3.5	27.9	21.3	33.4	11.1	2.8	2.78 (287)
When humans interfere with nature it often produces disastrous consequences.	21.2	47.2	16.0	11.5	2.1	2.1	3.76 (288)
Human ingenuity will insure that we do NOT make the earth unlivable.	5.2	31.1	26.9	21.3	5.2	10.1	3.11 (286)
Humans are severely abusing the environment.	24.0	46.9	16.3	7.6	2.8	2.4	3.84 (288)
The earth has plenty of natural resources if we just learn how to develop them.	13.2	53.0	12.5	13.2	4.2	3.8	3.60 (287)
Plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist.	28.3	40.7	16.6	10.0	3.8	0.7	3.80 (290)
The balance of nature is strong enough to cope with the impacts of modern industrial nations.	1.7	8.7	20.9	45.3	14.3	9.1	2.32 (287)
Despite our special abilities humans are still subject to the laws of nature.	28.9	55.1	13.2	1.0	0.3	1.4	4.13 (287)
The so-called "ecological crisis" facing humankind has been greatly exaggerated.	5.6	12.9	26.1	33.8	14.3	7.3	2.59 (287)
The earth is like a spaceship with limited room and resources.	14.7	46.2	19.9	10.5	2.1	6.6	3.65 (286)
Humans were meant to rule over the rest of nature.	5.6	22.8	19.3	34.0	14.0	4.2	2.71 (285)
The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset.	18.1	54.7	16.0	7.3	1.0	2.8	3.84 (287)
Humans will eventually learn enough about how nature works to be able to control it.	1.8	19.3	27.0	35.8	8.4	7.7	3.68 (285)
If things continue on their present course, we will soon experience a major ecological catastrophe.	16.8	30.4	25.9	11.2	3.1	12.6	3.53 (286)

Please rank the following natural resources in terms of funding priorities for the state of Indiana.

	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	Mean (n)
Indiana lakes and reservoirs	31.9	22.2	24.1	15.6	6.2	2.42 (257)
State forests	19.8	23.3	21.7	18.6	16.7	2.89 (258)
Wabash River	19.5	21.8	22.1	24.0	12.6	2.89 (262)
State Parks	25.9	22.8	20.5	17.0	13.9	2.70 (259)
Lake Michigan shoreline	12.0	8.5	14.3	17.8	47.5	3.80 (259)

None of the above should be funding priorities: 7.3%, n=23

Section 4: Demographic Information

In what year were you born? **n=271**

Range=1916-1985

Mean=1952

What is your highest level of formal education?

n=290

- 4.1% Some high school
- 24.1% High school graduate or GED
- 19.7% Some college
- 8.3% 2 year degree
- 16.2% 4 year degree
- 25.2% Graduate degree
- 2.4% Other

Do you have children under the age of 18 living in your household? **n=290**

28.6% Yes

71.4% No

How would you describe your political affiliation?

n=286

- 16.5% Strong Republican
- 15.5% Leaning Republican
- 35.2% Neither Republican nor Democrat
- 13.4% Leaning Democrat
- 19.4% Strong Democrat

How would you describe your political orientation?

n=278

- 15.8% Strongly Conservative
- 31.3% Somewhat Conservative
- 30.6% Neither Conservative nor Liberal
- 16.9% Somewhat Liberal
- 5.4% Strongly Liberal

What is your gender? **n=291**

66.3% Male

33.7% Female

How many years total have you lived in Tippecanoe County? **n=283**

Range=1-86

Mean=33.18

What is your zip code? **n=278**

0.4% 19064

1.4% 47901

8.6% 47904

30.6% 47905

27.7% 47906

26.3% 47909

1.1% 47920

0.4% 47922

1.4% 47981

0.4% 47983

1.8% 47992

How would you describe the area where you live now? **n=288**

44.6% Inside city limits

26.7% Just outside city limits

4.1% Small Town

19.8% Rural

0.3% Don't know

What is the approximate distance from your residence to the Wabash River? **n=290**

4.1% Within ¼ mile (about 3 city blocks)

13.4% Between ¼ mile and 1 mile

60.3% Between 1 mile and 5 miles

20.3% More than 5 miles

1.7% Don't know

Are you now employed full-time, part-time, retired or not employed for pay? **n=290**

54.5% Employed full-time

6.9% Employed part-time

33.0% Retired

3.5% Seeking employment

2.1% Not seeking employment

What was your total household income for the last year, before taxes? **n=241**

8.3% \$0-\$19,999

16.2% \$20,000-\$39,999

22.4% \$40,000-\$59,999

15.4% \$60,000-\$79,999

9.5% \$80,000-\$99,999

23.2% >\$100,000

Appendix A:

Section 2: I have skills that would be appropriate (please specify)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	298	94.3	94.3	94.3
Archectur	1	.3	.3	94.6
boating equipment and experience	1	.3	.3	94.9
boy scout leader	1	.3	.3	95.3
clerk, typing, computer	1	.3	.3	95.6
Ecotoxicologist	1	.3	.3	95.9
Educational	1	.3	.3	96.2
Environmental Engineer	1	.3	.3	96.5
landowner, naturalist, biologist	1	.3	.3	96.8
living close to river	1	.3	.3	97.2
Longtime outdoor sports participant	1	.3	.3	97.5
place for kids to go	1	.3	.3	97.8
Spent much time along Wabash boating, fishing, hunting, and bird watching.	1	.3	.3	98.1
Spokesman	1	.3	.3	98.4
trail building	1	.3	.3	98.7
Urban planning	1	.3	.3	99.1
web building, public works	1	.3	.3	99.4
web design work	1	.3	.3	99.7
years on the river	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	313	100.0	100.0	

Section 2: How likely are you to participate in the following activities?-Other

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	310	98.2	98.1	98.1
Discourage commercial development and habitat destruction along the riverfront property	1	.3	.3	98.4
I am an old crippled foggey who has enough problems just functioning through each day	1	.3	.3	98.7
Improve fishing on the Wabash	1	.3	.3	99.1
invest in wetlands along wabash	1	.3	.3	99.4
N/A	1	.3	.3	99.7
willing to donate time and resources to make public access websites. Petitions and flyers if needed	1	.3	.3	100.0

Appendix B:

Section 2: In what ways could your involvement be useful to these projects? Other

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	296	93.7	93.7	93.7
bad health and age(81) a hinderance	1	.3	.3	94.0
Clean and stabilize water levels.	1	.3	.3	94.3
health	1	.3	.3	94.6
I do not have time.	1	.3	.3	94.9
I'm 86 so don't send anymore resmase?	1	.3	.3	95.3
interest - no time	1	.3	.3	95.6
just too old	1	.3	.3	95.9
Lifelong resident and fished on the Wabash as a boy.	1	.3	.3	96.2
my age	1	.3	.3	96.5
N/A	1	.3	.3	96.8
n/a	1	.3	.3	97.2
Need to adapt to boating and recreation	1	.3	.3	97.5
neutral	1	.3	.3	97.8
no time	2	.6	.6	98.4
not	1	.3	.3	98.7
not interested	1	.3	.3	99.1
not useful at all	1	.3	.3	99.4
Put a public boat ramp on north part of prophets town on Tippy river.	1	.3	.3	99.7
spend a lot of time on the wabash duck hunting	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	313	100.0	100.0	

Section 3: Reasons for involvement:

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	312	98.7	98.7	98.7
better health	1	.3	.3	99.1
It creates jobs	1	.3	.3	99.4
The industries responsible for the pollution were spear heading and funding the restoration. Not tax dollars.	1	.3	.3	99.7
There needs to be a public access fact website or forum, petitions or flyers to get community involved.	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	313	100.0	100.0	

Appendix C:

Section 3: Other limiting factors:

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	254	80.4	80.4	80.4
74 and physical problems	1	.3	.3	80.7
active in a number of community organizations - trying to lessen my involvement and spend more time with my family	1	.3	.3	81.0
actually too old to participate in any hard exercises	1	.3	.3	81.3
advanced age	1	.3	.3	81.6
age	1	.3	.3	82.0
Age - retired, general health	1	.3	.3	82.3
age & I'm female, I find my own residence a challenge	1	.3	.3	82.6
age & physical condition	1	.3	.3	82.9
age 81 yrs old	1	.3	.3	83.2
Age- I am eighty years old and can't cover all the bases anymore	1	.3	.3	83.5
age: 74	1	.3	.3	83.9
am handicapped and old.	1	.3	.3	84.2
At age 95 in a retirement village.	1	.3	.3	84.5
being 74 is definitely "limiting" plus medical problems...	1	.3	.3	84.8
government doesn't really care what the people think	1	.3	.3	85.1
health	6	1.9	1.9	87.0
Health and Age	1	.3	.3	87.3
health and physical limitations	1	.3	.3	87.7
health issues of my wife and myself	1	.3	.3	88.0
homebound with disabilities	1	.3	.3	88.3
I am visually impaired and therefore limited in my ability to participate but I'm still interested	1	.3	.3	88.6
I am way too busy	1	.3	.3	88.9
I had a stroke and don't get out anymore	1	.3	.3	89.2
I have too many other projects already.	1	.3	.3	89.6
I only get 20,000 mth. My address is:	1	.3	.3	89.9
I volunteer at hospital 3 day/wk and at the senior center	1	.3	.3	90.2

Inability to walk long periods of time and allergic to poison ivy. Fear of finding something dead!	1	.3	.3	90.5
my age	1	.3	.3	90.8
my age (92)	1	.3	.3	91.1
My health	1	.3	.3	91.5
not able to do much	1	.3	.3	91.8
not interested at this time	1	.3	.3	92.1
not physically able	1	.3	.3	92.4
other civic/charity needs more important	1	.3	.3	92.7
other recreational activities	1	.3	.3	93.0
physical disability	1	.3	.3	93.4
physical limitations	1	.3	.3	93.7
possibly help, need more INFO	1	.3	.3	94.0
retired	1	.3	.3	94.3
Retired	1	.3	.3	94.6
retired and focus on other activities, hobbies, and traveling	1	.3	.3	94.9
retired physically inactive	1	.3	.3	95.3
Run off needs to be dealt with all the way from the headwaters. Making a recreation area out of a mud hole is ridiculous.	1	.3	.3	95.6
school/family	1	.3	.3	95.9
senior and disabled	1	.3	.3	96.2
Since it is, in my opinion, a non-navigable stream it would be disqualified for federal funds. However, its large quantity of water does empty into a navigable stream federal authorities should be very concerned with the water quality of the Wabash.	1	.3	.3	96.5
spend a lot of time away	1	.3	.3	96.8
suspicion of the motives of the leaders	1	.3	.3	97.2
take care of husband who is ill	1	.3	.3	97.5
This will change. I retire in several years	1	.3	.3	97.8
too hard to walk since stroke	1	.3	.3	98.1
too OLD- do not walk good	1	.3	.3	98.4
very bad health	1	.3	.3	98.7
we are both in our late 70s and 80s so we have little interest in the river	1	.3	.3	99.1
we're both in our 80's!	1	.3	.3	99.4

When in town, I volunteer at my church and Caregiver Companion - I also travel to see family and am out of town quite a bit.	1	.3	.3	99.7
Wife's health. waiting on a lung transplant.	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	313	100.0	100.0	

Appendix D:

Section 3: I would get involved in activities to clean up the Wabash if... Other:

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	333	98.8	98.8	98.8
better health	1	.3	.3	99.1
It creates jobs	1	.3	.3	99.4
The industries responsible for the pollution were spear heading and funding the restoration. Not tax dollars.	1	.3	.3	99.7
There needs to be a public access fact website or forum, petitions or flyers to get community involved.	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	337	100.0	100.0	