

**Children in Nature Partnership
Summary of Baseline Surveys
DRAFT 12/15/08**

To assist the Community and Public Lands Workgroup of the Children in Nature Partnership the Chesapeake Bay Trust conducted a survey of its grantees to establish baseline levels for the many objectives contained in the Governor’s executive order. A summary of those results is included below. In addition, as part of a separate public opinion poll of 1000 Marylanders, CBT also collected some data on public support for outdoor learning relative to other pressing environmental issues. Preliminary results from that poll are also included in this summary.

Community and Public Lands Survey

Who took the survey?

The survey invitation was sent to the Chesapeake Bay Trust grantee database (approximately 3500 individuals). Additional invitations were also sent by workgroup members to various stakeholder groups relevant to each workgroup’s charge. 614 people responded to the invitations.

Every Maryland county and Baltimore City are represented in the results, with the majority of responses from the central Maryland region.

Self Reported Organization Focus	Response %	Self Reported Organization Focus	Response %
Education – Formal Pre-K-12	40.5%	Youth	14.1%
Education – Conservation, EE, Outdoor (non-formal)	37.5%	Community Service	10.9%
Environmental Protection	26.1%	Recreation	10.4%
Conservation	25.4%	Education – higher ed	7.7%
Government	16.4%	Parents, Business, Health, Religion, Law Enforcement	3% or less

What are they doing already?

- 55% of the respondents have constructed a schoolyard habitat and more than three quarters of them incorporate them into their instruction several times per year
- 80% of the respondents report they participate in non-schoolyard based “outdoor classroom experiences. (field experiences off campus) and the vast majority of those experiences are for grades 3-6.
- Over 90% of the respondents align schoolyard and other outdoor learning experiences with the science curriculum and about a third each align them with math, reading and social studies classes.
- Walking/hiking, wildlife viewing, picnicking and bicycling are valued most by respondents when visiting a state park
- 80% report use of trails (formal or informal) near their schools or communities to access open spaces, parks and other public natural areas.
- Nearly 75% of respondents report they are NOT evaluating the effectiveness of their environmental education programs.

What are the barriers to doing more?

Activity	# 1 barrier	#2 barrier	#3 barrier
Build and maintain schoolyard habitats	Maintenance issues	Inadequate funding	Time out of the classroom
Provide outdoor classroom experiences	Transportation	Time out of the classroom	Inadequate funding
Participate in PD to assist with teaching outdoors	Time out of the classroom	Inadequate funding	After work time commitment
Provide nature play spaces in community or at school	Child safety concerns	Public awareness of need for “nature play”	Supervision
Participation in youth conservation corps programs	Inadequate funding	Lack of community awareness of programs	Transportation
Visit and use state parks/public lands for play and/or learning	Transportation	Entrance Fees	Distance from home

Barriers related to inadequate funding, time out of the classroom and curriculum restrictions dominated the barriers in every category of activities.

Summary of Results from CBT Maryland Statewide Survey: Nov 20-30, 2008

Background

The survey explored attitudes and behaviors related to protecting the Bay and its tributaries, the public's concern for more general environmental issues, citizens' assessment of the best role for CBT that is consistent with its existing program and mission, and their reaction to several public policy questions. Respondents were *not* told that the survey was sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Trust or that it concerned environmental issues, so as not to bias their responses.

OpinionWorks interviewed 1,015 randomly-selected adult residents of Maryland by telephone November 20-30, 2008, yielding a margin of sampling error of no more than $\pm 3.1\%$ at the 95% confidence level. This means that, if every adult citizen of Maryland had been interviewed, the true results would fall within that range at least 95% of the time.

Strict sampling quotas were established for seven regions of the state, and the final sample was weighted to accurately reflect the distribution of Maryland's adult population for key indicators including race/ethnicity, age, and educational attainment, according to the latest estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Key findings from initial survey analysis relevant to Children in Nature

- Looking at Marylanders' environmental values, we tested 13 specific priorities that relate directly to the Bay or to environmental protection more generally. Leading the list is "making sure our schools prepare children to understand future environmental challenges," rated as "extremely" or "very important" by 85% of Marylanders. Almost four Marylanders in ten (38%) rate environmental education as "*extremely* important."
- Marylanders believe the State should foster green jobs, with 86% agreeing that "the State should invest more in training people for the green jobs of the future," 60% agreeing *strongly*.
- Despite living in close proximity to the Bay, Marylanders have relatively little contact with the water. Only 11% frequently fish or crab, only 8% frequently go boating, and 8% frequently swim in natural waters (excluding the ocean).
- One step removed from direct connections with water, Marylanders are quite a bit more likely to eat fish or seafood, with one-third (32%) doing so frequently. Beyond water, Marylanders are somewhat more likely to have outdoor experiences through gardening, hiking, biking, or bird watching.
- An impressive number of Marylanders (62%) say they frequently encourage children to play outside.

Environmental education for the State's children is a leading priority for Marylanders. In several ways throughout the survey, they indicate that children should be prepared to understand the environmental challenges of the future. This concern is also reflected in a broad public support for investments in green jobs and in the Trust's need to increase their EE grantmaking.

Breakdown of respondent's connection with natural resources

	Frequently	Occasionally	Total Yes	Rarely	Never	Not sure
Encourage kids to play outside	62%	13%	75%	4%	15%	6%
Eat fish/seafood	32%	33%	65%	15%	17%	2%
Garden	35%	22%	56%	10%	33%	1%
Hike	16%	22%	37%	15%	47%	*%
Bike	13%	22%	35%	16%	49%	*%
Bird watch	15%	14%	29%	11%	60%	*%
Fish/crab	11%	18%	28%	16%	56%	*%
Go boating	8%	18%	26%	19%	54%	*%
Swim	8%	18%	26%	18%	56%	*%
Hunt	5%	4%	10%	6%	84%	*%

Ranking of Relative Importance of Environmental Issues reported by respondents

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not too Important	Not at all Important	Not sure
Schools prepare children for future environmental challenges	38%	47%	9%	2%	2%	1%
Bay clean and healthy	36%	50%	11%	1%	1%	*%
Reducing air pollution	35%	49%	13%	1%	1%	1%
Recycling and reducing waste	32%	53%	12%	1%	1%	*%
Endangered species	29%	45%	18%	4%	3%	1%
Farmers better stewards	28%	50%	15%	3%	2%	2%
Communities greener	25%	48%	20%	4%	3%	1%
Restoring sensitive areas	25%	47%	19%	4%	3%	2%
Bringing back aquatic species	25%	43%	21%	4%	4%	2%
Slowing or stopping growth	20%	34%	27%	9%	6%	5%
Purchasing green products	18%	42%	28%	6%	4%	2%
Reducing your carbon footprint	17%	40%	21%	6%	6%	10%

