



Big Sky Watershed Corps Evaluation Project

Natural Resource Planning and Protection Survey Pre-survey Results

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1. Introduction

The Big Sky Watershed Corps (BSWC) is an AmeriCorps program implemented through a partnership between the Montana Conservation Corps, the Montana Watershed Coordination Council, and the Montana Association of Conservation Districts. Individual Corps members are paired with water resource-related organizations and agencies, called host-sites, to promote professional development and increase the operating capacity of host-sites to achieve their missions and/or purpose. The overarching purpose of the survey results presented here is to document how, if at all, Corps members influence their host-site's capacity to implement hands on restoration work as well as create new or deepen existing relationships with host-site partners and collaborators.

This project also seeks to understand the priorities and concerns of natural resource-related agencies and organizations throughout the state. We are interested in how water resource professionals perceive the importance of stakeholder group inclusion in decision-making, collaboration, and experimentation and monitoring. Finally, we are interested in what role, if any, Corps members play in assisting water resource organizations and agencies with these efforts.

We seek to understand these topics by collecting data via two rounds of surveys and semi-structured interviews throughout the year 2021 to understand overall impact of Corps members on host-site capacity as compared with non-host sites. The pre-survey occurred during the first half of Corps members' tenure at their host-site. The post-survey will be administered after Corp members' term of service concludes. This report contains an overview of our data collection methods and the data collected from the pre-survey.

2. Data Collection and Analysis

BSWC members typically serve with watershed groups, natural resource-oriented organizations and agencies, and Conservation Districts throughout the state. Our target audience for this survey was current BSWC supervisors as well as senior employees and district administrators of every watershed group and Conservation District in the state of Montana. Contact information for these populations were gathered from three primary sources: 1) the Montana Conservation Corps host-site supervisor directory, 2) the Montana Watershed Coordination Council Watershed Directories¹, and 3) the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation's Conservation District Directory² (N=140). The survey was developed by Montana State University (MSU) researchers in collaboration with Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) staff. We piloted the survey in April 2021 and made minor adjustments. The initial survey invitation and three survey reminders were sent via email using Qualtrics software in April-May 2021. Non-respondents were contacted via telephone in late May 2021 and asked to participate.

This survey received approval from Montana State University's Institutional Review Board (AG033031-EX). Survey data was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26. In the following sections, we use descriptive statistics to report the first-round survey data.

¹ *Watershed Directories*. (n.d.). Montana Watershed Coordination Council.
<https://www.mtwatersheds.org/watershed-directory/page/2/>

² *Conservation District Directory*. (2019). Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.
<http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/docs/cd-new/2019CD.Directory.Less.pdf>

3. Results

We sent the survey to 140 individual email addresses and received 79 responses, giving us a response rate of 56%. We count all surveys with one or more complete questions as a response.

3.1 Respondent Role

TABLE 1 ORGANIZATION/AGENCY TYPE

“What type of organization/agency do you work for?” (n=79)		
	Frequency	Percent
Non-governmental organization	31	39.2%
Conservation district	27	34.2%
Local government	9	11.4%
Federal government	3	3.8%
State government	3	3.8%
Tribal government/agency/organization	1	1.3%
Private, for-profit organization	1	1.3%
Other (please specify) *	4	5.1%

*See Table 2.

TABLE 2 ORGANIZATION/AGENCY TYPE - OTHER

“What type of organization/agency do you work for?” Other (please specify) write-in answers, (n=4)
Collaborative of watershed groups
Forest collaborative
Leader, unpaid, watershed
University

TABLE 3 JOB TITLE

“Which best describes your job title?” (n=79)		
	Frequency	Percent
District administrator	21	26.6%
Executive director	16	20.3%
Project or program manager	13	16.5%
Board chair	6	7.6%
Project or program coordinator	6	7.6%
Watershed coordinator	6	7.6%
Conservation/natural resource specialist	4	5.1%
Board member	1	1.3%
Water quality specialist	1	1.3%
President	0	0%
Secretary/treasurer	0	0%
Other (please specify) *	5	6.3%

*See Table 4.

TABLE 4 JOB TITLE - OTHER

“Which best describes your job title?” Other (please specify) write-in answers, (n=5)
Co-chair of the members
Conservation programs manager
Environmental education manager
Resource Conservationist/Department Head
Sales Agent

TABLE 5 YEARS EMPLOYED/IN CURRENT ROLE

“Please indicate how many years you have been:” *			
	Mean	Range	n
At current place of employment	9.4	0.5 - 60	77
In current role	6.9	0.5 - 35	79

*Participants were asked to round to the nearest half-year.

3.2 Organization/Agency Metrics

TABLE 6 ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET

“What is your organization/agency’s annual operating budget?” (n=78)		
	Frequency	Percent
\$0 - \$49,999	24	30.8%
\$50,000 - \$99,999	12	15.4%
\$100,000 - \$249,999	14	17.9%
\$250,000 - \$499,999	10	12.8%
\$500,000 - \$999,999	3	3.8%
\$1,000,000 - \$1,999,999	5	6.4%
\$2M+	3	3.8%
Unsure/don’t know	7	9.0%

TABLE 7 LARGE GRANTS

“Was your organization/agency awarded any large grants (\$10,000 and over) during your last fiscal year?” (n=79)		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	54	68.4%
No	22	27.8%
Unsure/don’t Know	3	3.8%

TABLE 8 NUMBER OF STAFF

“Please indicate the number of staff currently employed at your organization/agency:”					
	Mean	Median	Mode	Range	n
Full-time (30+ hours per week)	14.5	1.0	0	0 - 700	77
Part-time (less than 30 hours per week)	1.4	1.0	0	0 - 20	73
Big Sky Watershed Corps member(s)	<1.0	0	0	0 - 3	75
Paid interns/temporary employees (not including BSWC members)	<1.0	0	0	0 - 10	74
Unpaid interns/temporary employees (not including BSWC members)	<1.0	0	0	0 - 9	71

TABLE 9 EVER HOSTED BSWC MEMBER

“Has your organization/agency ever hosted a Big Sky Watershed Corps member? (not including 2021)” * (n=44)		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	19	43.1%
No	21	47.7%
Unsure/don't know	4	9.0%

*Participants were offered this question if they indicated they do not currently host a BSWC member, see Table 8.

TABLE 10 YEARS AS HOST-SITE

“How many years did your organization/agency host a Big Sky Watershed Corps member?” * (n=17)	
Mean	2.71
Range	1-8

*Participants were offered this question only if they answered “yes” to ever hosting a BSWC member, see Table 9.

TABLE 11 SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

“Which of the following social media platforms are utilized by your organization/agency? (check all that apply)” (n=77)		
	Frequency	Percent
Facebook	59	36.6%
Instagram	37	22.9%
YouTube	29	18.0%
Twitter	13	8.0%
None	12	7.4%
Other (please specify) *	11	6.8%

*See Table 13.

TABLE 12 SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM - MULTIPLE

“Which of the following social media platforms are utilized by your organization/agency? (check all that apply)” (n=77)		
Respondents who indicated they use...	Frequency	Percent
More than 1 platform	44	57.1%
More than 2 platforms	25	32.4%
More than 3 platforms	10	12.9%
More than 4 platforms	2	2.5%

TABLE 13 OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

“Which of the following social media platforms are utilized by your organization/agency?” Other (please specify) write-in answers, (n=11)	
	Frequency
Website/webpage	6
LinkedIn	2
Local newspaper	1
Pinterest	1
[Name of parent organization]* national performs their own outreach	1

*Identifying information removed to protect respondent anonymity

FIGURE 1 SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS - BAR GRAPH

Figure 1 shows the number of respondents who selected each social media platform, represented in the bar graph. The percentage of people who selected one or more social media platforms are represented in the table.

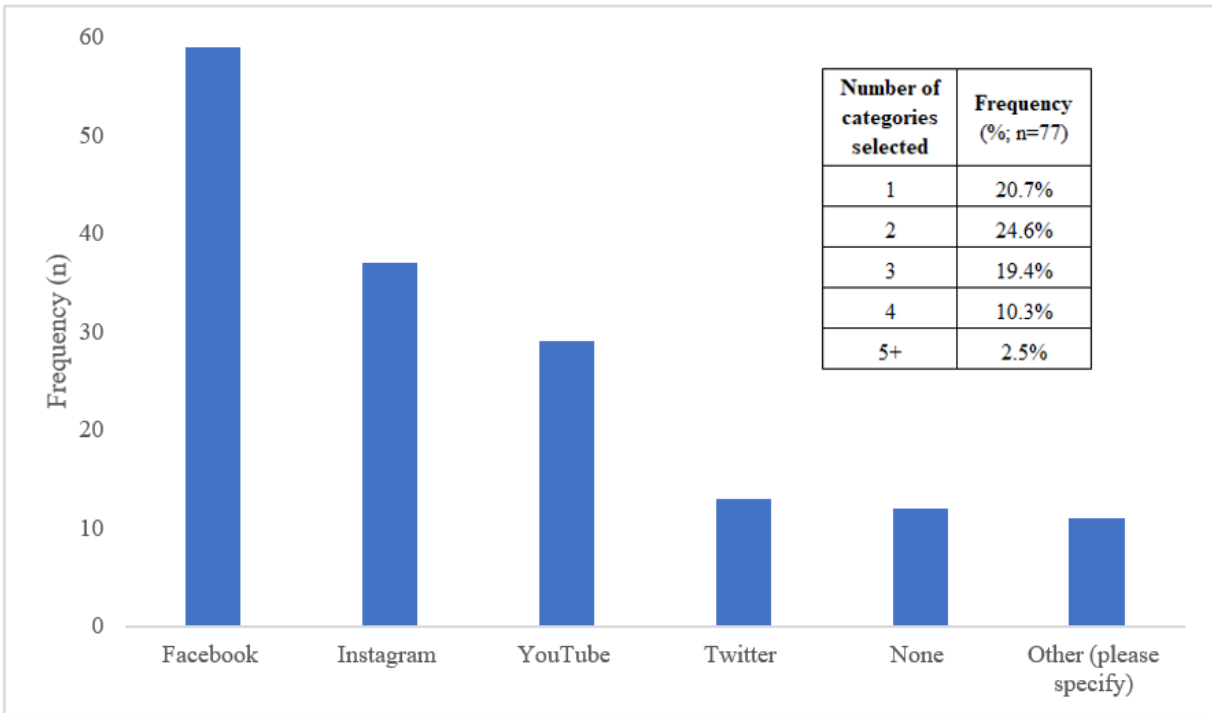


TABLE 14 NEWSLETTER

“Does your organization/agency send out a newsletter via email or mail?” (n=78)		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	55	70.5%
No	23	29.5%

TABLE 15 MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

“Does your organization/agency have a membership program? (e.g., a program where individuals, families, or businesses make a yearly donation or a pay a fee to become a member of your organization)” (n=78)		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	17	21.8%
No	61	78.2%

TABLE 16 MEMBERS ENROLLED

“About how many members are currently enrolled? (please enter a whole number)” * (n=17)	
Mean	22,568
Median	100
Range	17 - 380,000

*Participants were offered this question only if they answered “yes” to hosting a membership program, see Table 15.

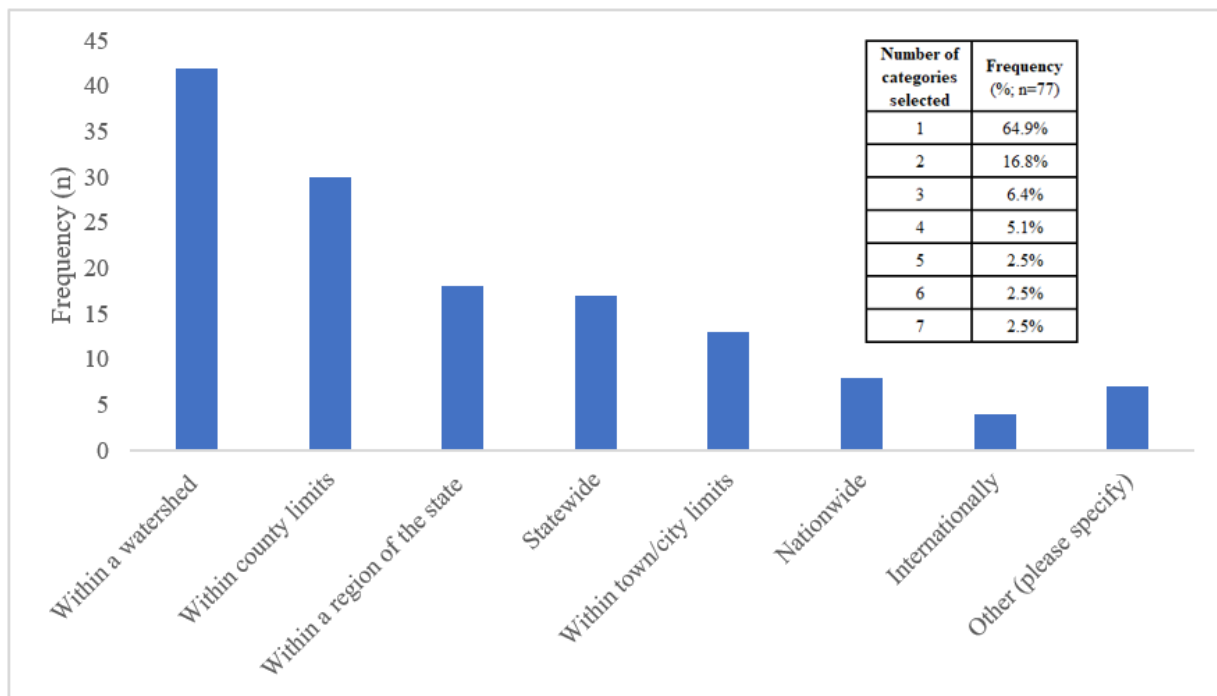
TABLE 17 SCALE

“At what scale(s) does your organization/agency primarily work? (check all that apply)” (n=77)		
	Frequency	Percent
Within a watershed (e.g., Flathead, Madison, Gallatin, Powder River, etc.)	42	54.5%
Within county limits	30	38.9%
Within a region of the state (e.g., East Montana, West Montana, etc.)	18	23.3%
Statewide	17	22.0%
Within town/city limits	13	16.8%
Nationwide	8	10.3%
Internationally	4	5.1%
Other (please specify)*	7	9.0%

*The write-in answers for this question are not included in this report to preserve the anonymity of respondents.

FIGURE 2 SCALE – BAR GRAPH

Figure 2 shows the number of respondents who selected each scale, represented in the bar graph. The percentage of people who selected one or more scales are represented in the table.



3.3 Concerns, Priorities, and Activities

TABLE 18 ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

“What are the top three environmental concerns that your organization/agency currently works on? Select up to three concerns, please use the “other” options if you do not see your primary concerns listed.” (n=77)		
	Frequency	Percent
Erosion of streambanks	27	35.0%
Noxious weeds	24	31.1%
Degradation of fish and/or wildlife habitat	22	28.5%
Drought	17	22.0%
Excess nutrients in water bodies	14	18.1%
High sediment loading in streams/rivers	13	16.8%
Aquatic invasive species	11	14.2%
Temperature of streams/rivers	9	11.6%
Encroachment of urban/suburban development into undeveloped areas	9	11.6%
Flooding	6	7.7%
Pollution via excess garbage/waste	3	3.8%
Pollution via resource extraction activities	3	3.8%
Other (please specify) *	39	50.6%
Other (please specify) *	21	27.2%
Other (please specify) *	2	2.5%

*See Table 19.

TABLE 19 ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS - OTHER

“What are the top three environmental concerns that your organization/agency currently works on? Select up to three concerns, please use the “other” options if you do not see your primary concerns listed.” Other (please specify) write-in answers, (n=62) *	
	Frequency
310 permits	1
All negative impacts on streams and lakes	1
Aquifer studies	1
Climate change/climate change resilience	4
Connecting watershed conservation partners	1
Environmental/nature education	2
Fire mitigation/fire resilient ecosystems	2
Forest expansion	1
Forest health	2
Fuels mitigation	1
Groundwater quality and quantity	1
Habit fragmentation	1
Health of aquatic species	1
HELC	1
Irrigation efficiency	2
Invasive woody plants	1
Loss of agricultural lands	1
Loss/restoration of fish/wildlife habitat	3
Materials economy	1
Nature deficient disorder	1
Pollinators/pollinator habitat	2
Ranch economics	1
Rangeland health/sustainability	3
Recreation	2
Riparian conservation	1
Salmon and bison restoration	1
Science literacy	1
Septic leakage	1
Small acreage landowner education	1
Soil health	6
Stormwater	1
Water quality	2
Water quantity	1
Watershed organization capacity/funding	3
Wildland urban interface	1
Wildlife-human conflict prevention/reduction	4
Zero waste infrastructure	1
Survey comment**	1

*Clarifying information provided with the responses is omitted for brevity.

**One participant wrote a comment pertaining to the survey question.

TABLE 20 PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

“Which programs or initiatives have been a priority for your organization/agency over the past 12 months? (check all that apply)” (n=76) *		
	Frequency	Percent
Building collaborative networks/initiatives	53	69.7%
Providing landowner assistance/education	46	60.5%
Educating adults about environmental practices	43	56.5%
Educating kindergarten-12 th grade students about environmental practices	42	55.2%
Restoring or maintaining riparian areas	38	50.0%
Stabilizing river/streambanks	35	46.0%
Creating planning documents	29	38.1%
Collecting water quality data	27	35.5%
Restoring fish and/or wildlife habitat	27	35.5%
Collecting natural resource or conservation-related data (not including water quality data)	26	34.2%
Delivering professional development/workshop opportunities	22	28.9%
Collecting stream/river flow data	21	27.6%
Monitoring noxious weeds	20	26.3%
Mitigating noxious weeds	19	25.0%
Enforcing government policies	18	23.6%
Administering grants to other organizations	17	22.3%
Encouraging civic engagement (e.g., voting yes or no on bills, contacting elected officials, etc.)	16	21.0%
Administering grants to landowners	15	19.7%
Monitoring aquatic invasive species	14	18.4%
Mitigating aquatic invasive species	9	11.8%
Recycling/waste management	4	5.2%
Administering grants to students	2	2.6%

*Following this question respondents were asked to list any other programs or initiatives that were not included on this list, see their responses in Appendix A.

TABLE 21 MAINTAIN/RESTORE RIPARIAN AREAS

“Does your organization/agency maintain or restore riparian areas?” (n=77)		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	42	54.5%
No	33	42.9%
Unsure/don't know	2	2.6%

TABLE 22 MILES OF RIPARIAN AREA MAINTAINED/RESTORED

“To the best of your knowledge, how many miles of riparian area were maintained or restored by your organization/agency in each of the following years? If you do not track this information or you do not know, please select the corresponding answer choice for each year and leave the text entry box blank.” *					
	Miles Maintained/restored			We do/did not track this information	Unsure/don't know
	n	Mean	Range	Frequency	
2019	17	4.4	0-25	9	12
2020	18	6.0	0-50	9	11
2021 (anticipated)	20	5.6	0-50	7	11

*Participants were offered this question only if they answered “yes” to maintaining or restoring riparian areas, see Table 21.

TABLE 23 VOLUNTEERS

“Does your organization/agency work with volunteers?” (n=76)		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	59	77.6%
No	15	19.7%
Unsure/don't know	2	2.6%

TABLE 24 HOW MANY VOLUNTEERS DONATED TIME

“To the best of your knowledge, how many volunteers worked with your organization/agency in each of the following years? Please include all volunteers who donated one hour or more of their time. If you do not track this information or you do not know, please select the corresponding answer choice for each year and leave the text entry box blank.” *					
	Volunteers			We do/did not track this information	Unsure/don't know
	n	Mean	Range	Frequency	
2019	35	40.5	0 - 166	8	16
2020	40	34.3	0 - 180	7	11
2021 (anticipated)	40	44.4	0 - 200	6	13

*Participants were offered this question only if they answered “yes” to working with volunteers, see Table 23.

TABLE 25 EDUCATION EVENTS		
“Does your organization/agency host in-person or online education events?” (n=76)		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	63	82.9%
No	12	15.8%
Unsure/don't know	1	1.3%

TABLE 26 How Many Education Events

“To the best of your knowledge, please indicate how many in-person or online education events your organization/agency hosted in the following years. If you do not track this information or you do not know, please select the corresponding answer choice for each year and leave the text entry box blank.” *					
		In-person or online education events		We did/do not track this information	
		n	Mean	Range	Frequency
2019	46	7.0	0 - 58	3	8
2020	50	2.7	0 - 33	3	5
2021	48	7.6	0 - 75	3	6

*Participants were offered this question only if they answered “yes” to hosting in-person or online education events, see Table 25.

TABLE 27 How Many Individuals Attended Events

“To the best of your knowledge, please indicate how many individuals attended your organization/agency's in-person or online education events in the following years. If you do not track this information or you do not know, please select the corresponding answer choice for each year and leave the text entry box blank.”					
		Individuals that attended in-person or online education events		We did/do not track this information	
		n	Mean	Range	Frequency
2019	40	323.9	10 - 4,000	6	10
2020	41	138.1	0 - 3,000	8	8
2021	42	292.3	0 - 4,000	6	8

*Participants were offered this question only if they answered “yes” to hosting in-person or online education events, see Table 25.

TABLE 28 PLANNING DOCUMENTS

“Please choose the statement that best indicates the status of each of the following planning documents related to your organization/agency:”						
		We do not have this plan	We have this plan, but we do not use it	We use this plan	We are currently developing this plan for the first time	We have used this plan in the past, and are currently revising it
	n	Percent				
Forest Restoration Plan	66	80.3%	6.1%	7.6%	0%	6.1%
Strategic Plan	72	18.1%	5.6%	51.4%	6.9%	18.1%
Total Maximum Daily Load Plan	68	66.2%	8.8%	22.1%	1.5%	1.5%
Watershed Restoration Plan	68	50.0%	5.9%	29.4%	8.8%	5.9%
Other plan not listed (please specify)*	22	4.9%	1.2%	18.5%	1.2%	1.2%

*See Table 29.

TABLE 29 OTHER PLANS NOT LISTED

“Please choose the statement that best indicates the status of each of the following planning documents related to your organization/agency:” Other (please specify) write-in answers, (n=22) *						
	We do not have this plan	We have this plan, but we do not use it	We use this plan	We are currently developing this plan for the first time	We have used this plan in the past, and are currently revising it	No statement selected
Frequency						
AIS Strategic Plan			1			
Annual operations plan			1			
Annual plan of work			1			
Annual work plan			1			
Bylaws			1			
Community readiness assessment			1			
County land use plan		1				
Drought outreach plan			1			
Drought plan				1		
Drought plan			1			
Inform, involve, and educate plan			1			
Local working group priorities					1	
Long range plan			1			
Many PERs			1			
Sampling and analysis plan			1			
<<Name of river>> River plan			1			
Stormwater management plan			1			
Watershed priority projects plan						1
Watershed stewardship plan			1			

*Though 22 respondents selected “other,” only 19 provided the name of a plan.

3.4 Stakeholder Engagement

TABLE 30 COLLABORATION/INFORMATION SHARING PRIORITIES

“Please consider the level of priority of each item in the table below for your organization/agency. Make your selection based off of what is a current priority for your organization/agency.”							
	n	Not a priority (0)	Low priority (1)	Medium priority (2)	High priority (3)	Mean*	Standard Deviation*
	Frequency (%)						
Collaborating with other organizations/agencies	74	1.4	1.4	17.6	79.7	2.79	0.44
Sharing information with the public	74	1.4	1.4	17.6	79.7	2.79	0.44
Sharing information with other organizations/agencies	73	1.4	2.7	21.9	74.0	2.72	0.51
Incorporating stakeholder observations and requests into decision-making	72	4.2	12.5	36.1	47.2	2.36	0.70
Educating community members about environmental problems	73	1.4	16.4	41.1	41.1	2.25	0.72
Using published scientific data to make restoration and improvement decisions	71	4.2	22.5	28.2	45.1	2.24	0.81
Empowering resource users to become leaders in environmental stewardship	72	4.2	20.8	34.7	40.3	2.20	0.77
Experimenting with different techniques to meet organization/agency goals	72	6.9	23.6	41.7	27.8	2.04	0.74
Using volunteer collected data to make restoration and improvement decisions	71	14.1	29.6	35.2	21.1	1.90	0.76
Mediating conflict between stakeholders (through formal or informal processes)	71	26.8	28.2	32.4	12.7	1.79	0.72
Incorporating climate change data/observations into decision-making	71	22.5	32.4	32.4	12.7	1.75	0.72
Educating community members about climate change	73	27.4	42.5	24.7	5.5	1.49	0.63

*Not a priority is excluded from the mean and standard deviation.

TABLE 31 TARGET STAKEHOLDERS			
“Please rank the three most important target group of stakeholders related to your organization/agency’s mission/purpose. Enter a number next to the top three recipients to indicate their rank, where 1 is the most important.”			
(n=71)			
Ranked 1 st	Ranked 2 nd	Ranked 3 rd	Frequency
			Producers (e.g., ranchers, farmers)
32	10	4	General public
6	10	11	Recreational groups (e.g., anglers, hunters, birders, boaters)
4	13	9	Youth organizations/schools (e.g., FFA, 4H)
4	11	8	Local community leaders (e.g., county commissioners, local elected officials)
0	2	0	Agri-business professionals (e.g., crop advisors, retailers)
0	2	5	Businesses/industries
0	4	12	State legislative leaders (e.g., state representatives)
7	2	4	Other (please specify) *

*See Table 32

TABLE 32 TARGET STAKEHOLDERS - OTHER

“Please rank the three most important target group of stakeholders related to your organization/agency’s mission/purpose. Enter a number next to the top three recipients to indicate their rank, where 1 is the most important.”	
The below responses contain the other (please specify) write-in answers from Table 31 (n=13)	
Agency partners	
All landowners	
City, local, state, and federal fire management agencies	
Community-based conservation groups	
FWP, USFS, County Weed Districts	
Land management agencies	
Landowners	
Private well owners	
Program partners (agencies, NGOs, land trusts); lakeshore landowners	
State/federal agency staff	
Tribal community	
Tribes	
Watershed groups, upper Missouri headwaters	

3.5 Experience with the Big Sky Watershed Corps Program

Respondents were offered the questions below if they indicated that they host a BSWC member in 2021 (the current year). Respondents who indicated that they hosted a BSWC member in the past (see tables 8-10, section 3.2) were also offered the following questions.

TABLE 33 YEARS AS HOST-SITE

“Including the year 2021, how many years has your organization/agency hosted a BSWC member?” (n=28)	
Mean	3.82
Range	1 - 10

TABLE 34 HIRED BSWC MEMBERS

“Has your organization/agency ever hired a BSWC member as a part or full-time staff member after their term of service concluded?” (n=46)		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	29	63.0%
No	16	34.8%
Unsure/don't know	1	2.2%

TABLE 35 BSWC AND CAPACITY

“Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. Hosting BSWC member(s) increases/increased my organization/agency’s capacity to: If the statement is not a relevant goal or function of your organization/agency, please select “not applicable.” “Not applicable” is excluded from the mean									
	n	Not applicable (0)	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)	Mea n	Standard Deviation
	Frequency (%)								
Educate various stakeholders about environmental topics/practices (e.g., engage through in-person or online events, does not include social media “likes” or comments)	44	0	0	4.5	6.8	40.9	47.7	4.32	0.80
Spread awareness about purpose/mission/objectives throughout the community	44	0	0	2.3	11.4	45.5	40.9	4.25	0.75
Improve riparian areas through hands on restoration work (e.g., willow planting, weed pulling, trash clean up, etc.)	44	18.2	2.3	4.5	15.9	25.0	34.1	4.03	1.05
Build new partnerships or collaborations with other organizations/agencies/businesses	44	0	2.3	6.8	15.9	40.9	34.1	3.98	1.00
Deepen existing relationships with partners and/or collaborators	44	0	0	4.5	20.5	47.7	27.3	3.98	0.82
Recruit volunteers	44	9.1	2.3	2.3	18.2	40.9	27.3	3.98	0.92
Adapt to unforeseen challenges	43	4.7	0	4.7	20.9	44.2	25.6	3.95	0.83
Maintain/restore local water bodies through education (e.g., volunteer water quality monitoring, community education events, etc.)	44	6.8	0	4.5	25.0	34.1	29.5	3.95	0.89
Develop curriculum about organization/agency programs and objectives	44	6.8	0	6.8	18.2	45.5	22.7	3.90	0.86
Monitor the outcomes of programs and initiatives	44	6.8	2.3	2.3	22.7	40.9	25.0	3.90	0.91
Encourage volunteers to continue donating their time (e.g., maintain volunteers)	44	9.1	2.3	4.5	15.9	47.7	20.5	3.88	0.91
Expand social media presence	44	13.6	0	11.4	18.2	27.3	29.5	3.87	1.04
Complete administrative tasks	42	4.8	4.8	7.1	28.6	35.7	19.0	3.59	1.04
Involve members of the public in decision-making (e.g., choose restoration sites, set goals, etc.)	44	15.9	0	18.2	34.1	20.5	11.4	3.30	0.96

Appendix A

“Are there any other programs or initiatives that have been a high priority for your organization/agency over the past 12 months that we did not list? Please describe:” *
Irrigation Water Management & Efficiency Working Group to assist large irrigation districts in the <<Name of river corridor>> with strategic and long-term planning for efficient water use and drought preparation.
<<Name of working group>> to assist local landowners and county weed districts with education and mapping resources, grant writing services and outreach to stem the problematic spread of invasive woody species in the river corridor. Stream channel stabilization and side channel restoration efforts with local landowners. Consultation to landowners and local Conservation Districts with river channel migration issues related to stabilization and permitting issues
Currently we're working a lot on development of our group. Interior structure and stability of the group.
Developing zero waste infrastructure and engagement throughout the community
development of water quality campaign
Education & Outreach about aquatic invasive species. We conduct advertising on Clean, Drain, Dry messaging and host a Big Sky Watershed Corps member to conduct site visits with business owners around the <<Name of river basin>> about the threat and prevention of aquatic invasive species in Montana.
Fire and fuels management on agency and private lands Restoration of wildlife habitats Riparian treatments
Fire Mitigation Work
fuels mitigation, climate change adaptation
Increasing the pollinator habitat in the county; Soil/range health; providing education on innovative noxious weed management
Introducing to the County a market-based solution for land preservation through Transfer of Development Rights
<<Name of program>> is a High School Competition which, I have been coordinating for the last 25 years, it a Competition on the Natural Resources and makes these students Environmentally aware of problems going on with the Natural Resources...
<<Name of organization>> has not been very active in the last year, with the exception of submitting testimony to the 2021 Legislature. <<Name of organization>> is a collaborative of watershed groups. We meet as issues arise, but our members are all very busy with their own organizations, so we have decided to maintain <<Name of organization>> as more of a conversation/coordination forum than an organization with its own projects and funding sources. We agree that there is potential to secure grant funding to be distributed amongst members organizations, but haven't seen the right grant opportunity (or designed the right project) to do that yet.
Pollinator initiative
Range riding; wildlife-friendly fencing
Salinity
Science talks (adults)
Soil health. Regulations pertaining to water rights.
Stormwater outreach, enforcement, permit compliance.
We are currently working on creating pollinator habitats throughout the watershed
We have two river cleanup programs; an annual event in August and a year-round effort with reusable litter bags. I wasn't sure if that falls under "waste management".

*Identifying information is omitted to protect respondent confidentiality.

Appendix B

Additional Comments

“Are there other ways that hosting BSWC member(s) increases your organization/agency’s capacity to achieve your mission, purpose, or goals that you would like us to know about?”*
Ability to travel statewide to meet with stakeholders and partners.
Because we are a group that works statewide but are centralized in one location, having a BSWC member helps us be more engaged directly with different watersheds and conservation districts where we have an interest in partnership work.
Being a part of the BSWC program has allowed our organization to grow in a smart and sustainable way. Moving from a part-time Executive Director when we had our first member to now 3 full-time staff and our member.
BSWC members have helped me follow up on phone calls and contacts when I'm really busy. This helps more project work along and keep our stakeholders engaged. BSWC members help write and update social media content including our website that keeps us looking relevant.
Each of our watershed corps members has enabled us to expand programming in one form or another through the individual passion projects they have developed while with us.
Enhances the amount of education/outreach we can deliver (and events we can have a presence at); has expanded our ability to reach stakeholders (one BSWC has very focused plan to provide in person site visits to water-based recreation businesses for example).
Hosting a BSWC member did not help increase our capacity in any way beyond their term.
Hosting a BSWC member has provided us with flexibility in staffing to allow full time <<Name of agency>> staff to focus on high priority workloads while still achieving secondary objectives such as education/outreach, pre/post project data collection and day to day office tasks.
Hosting a BSWC member has really increased the capacity of all our education programs!
I believe that hosting BSWC members allows non-profit groups like ours to use qualified, capable, and talented individuals to assist us in accomplishing our mission to the public and our overall purpose to complete complex and multi-tier projects to help communities.
Made us realize that with increased staff numbers, we could more than double our reach into the community we serve.
Nothing additional to what was already noted.
Our BSWC left before the end of her term of service.
Our organization is expanding education and outreach events and citizen science programs, septic maintenance education, and work on climate change - areas currently limited by staff capacity that could significantly grow.
Training provided by BSWC for both members and site supervisors helps to set the stage for a positive working relationship and arms members with the tools and contacts they need for having a successful service term. As a small watershed group, the BSWC program has been pivotal in our organization's ability to expand our work and impact in the community.
Typically they are hard workers that bring out of the area perspective and are great at thinking outside the box. Very helpful to boards with stagnant board members.

*Identifying information is omitted to protect respondent confidentiality.

“Please list any other comments you have about the survey, your organization/agency, land and water resources stewardship and restoration, etc.” *
Although the <<Name of agency>> has participated with BSWC in the past, this is my first year working with the MCC to incorporate a seasonal staff member into our operations (Conservation Fellow). I think it is clear that all parties (member, host, community, MCC) benefit from this capacity-building opportunity.
FYI I answered most questions from an <<Name of organization>> national perspective but the staffing and volunteer data are for the <<Name of location>> work unit, not the state/national data.
I think it's beneficial to understand all the roles BSWC members bring to the table in dealing with natural resource management and learning the roles to being a steward of the land.
If you would like me to complete another survey for the <<Name of organization>>, I can do that. A lot of these questions seem more relevant to <<Name of organization>> than to <<Name of organization>>, which is really just a round-table collaborative of watershed groups - more of a conversation forum than an actual conservation org.
It would be good to have an option to save and finish later so I could complete all answers, or share with someone else who can complete specific answers.
On the volunteer/educational event #'s portion of this survey I was unable to un-click the buttons (unsure, we don't track this etc.) which skewed my answers for that portion.
Our organization has recently transitioned from a science/education outreach based program to more of a restoration and stakeholder collaboration organization. This has caused some growing pains as we learn to source larger amounts of funding in diverse areas. The largest struggle is finding non-federal match dollars to keep projects rolling.
The Big Sky Watershed Corps program has been an integral part of our organization.
This year has been tough one with Covid, we do not have any grants to do work on the streams this year.
We are a total volunteer group, no budget as we are not a 501c3. We work in the project planning, execution, monitoring using our Restoration principles and our charter, consensus agreements, mission and code of conduct documentation to help work with land and resource management agencies and private land owners to do work to trend back to restored landscapes that are fire resilient and provide quality water and wildlife habitats in a sustainable landscape.
We facilitate collaboration between local, state and federal agencies and the private land owners/managers along the <<Name of river corridor>> to most effectively manage noxious weeds.

*Identifying information is omitted to protect respondent confidentiality.