

Summary of Survey Results for the Mascoma River Watershed

Mascoma River Local Advisory Committee, with technical assistance from Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, conducted surveys in summer 2012 to understand what community members view as priority issues in the Mascoma River watershed. The surveys were segmented to cover different stakeholder groups in the watershed: (1) municipal officials, (2) waterfront landowners along the Mascoma River and Mascoma Lake, and (3) interested citizens who live in the watershed. The survey results have been used by the Local Advisory Committee to create a River Corridor Management Plan.

Survey of Municipal Officials – 33 respondents out of 148 mailed (22% response rate)

**Note – A similar survey was completed in 2000, and several questions were repeated verbatim in 2012. Results for both surveys were compared to see if and how priorities have shifted.*

Surveys were mailed to all Boards of Selectmen/City Councils, Planning Boards and Conservation Commissions in towns within the Mascoma River watershed.

Most significant threats to water quality (reported by percent of responses)	
2012 Survey	2000 Survey
Septic systems (76%)	Road salt and snow dumping (66%)
Stormwater runoff (67%)	Poor siting of development (66%)
Road salt and snow dumping (61%)	Septic systems (61%)
Impairment of wetlands to filter pollutants (52%)	Stormwater runoff (59%)

Most important approaches to protect water quality (reported by average score 1-3)	
2012 Survey	2000 Survey
Buffer zones (2.77)	Buffer zones (2.89)
Enforcement of local regulations (2.65)	Enforcement of state regulations (2.79)
Best management practices (2.53)	Best management practices (2.79)
Enforcement of state regulations (2.52)	Enforcement of local regulations (2.75)
Increased landowner education (2.47)	Increased education of local officials (2.53)

Least important approaches to protect water quality (reported by average score 1-3)	
2012 Survey	2000 Survey
Stronger state regulations (2.03)	Increased erosion control in utility and highway projects (2.08)
Incentives for volunteer land management (2.10)	Stronger state regulations (2.09)
Increased erosion control in utility and highway projects (2.13)	Stronger local regulations (2.25)
Stronger local regulations (2.24)	

Do you foresee new development that will degrade water quality?	
2012 Survey	2000 Survey
Yes – 15%	Yes – 56%
No – 33%	No – 12%
Not Sure – 45%	Not Sure – 27%
No Response – 6%	No Response – 2%

Most important resources of the Mascoma Watershed (reported by average score 1-3)	
2012 Survey	2000 Survey
Dependable quality water supply (2.94)	Dependable quality water supply (3.00)
Streams (2.72)	Streams (2.92)
Forest Lands (2.69)	Forest Lands (2.92)
Lakes (2.67)	Wildlife habitat (2.92)
Wetlands (2.65)	Lakes (2.86)
Wildlife habitat (2.59)	Scenic quality (2.83)
	Wetlands (2.76)

Significant aquatic natural resources in the Mascoma Watershed (reported by number of responses)	
2012 Survey	2000 Survey
Rivers – general (10)	Mascoma River (10)
Ponds/lakes – general (10)	Mascoma Lake (8)
Mascoma River (7)	Wetlands – general (7)
Wetlands – general (6)	Rivers – general (7)
Smaller watersheds/brooks/seasonal streams (3)	Crystal Lake (6)
Mascoma Lake (2)	Goose Pond (6)
	Ponds/lakes – general (5)
	Spectacle Pond (3)
	Orange Basin (3)
	Smaller watersheds/brooks/seasonal streams (3)
	Also mentioned (2): Grafton Pond, Orange Pond, Bicknell Brook, Indian River, George Pond, Mud Pond, Smith Pond, Canaan Street Lake, Mascoma Watershed
Also mentioned (1): Goose Pond, Orange Basin, Orange Pond, Reservoir Pond, Indian River, Canaan Street Lake, Connecticut River, Kelton Pond	Also mentioned (1): Reservoir Pond, Tewksbury Pond, Knox River, Mud Bog, Cole Pond, Enfield Pond, Bear Pond, , Scales Brook, Committee Meadow Brook, Tunis Brook, Silver Lake, Connecticut River, Kelton Pond, Johnson’s Brook

How have you seen the Mascoma River and Mascoma Lake change over time? (aggregated by theme)	
Theme	Number of responses
Cleaner water and waterfront	9
More development	6
No significant change	5
Poorer water quality	3
Increase in milfoil/invasive species	1

What are your top three concerns for the Mascoma River and Mascoma Lake? (aggregated by theme)	
Theme	Number of responses
Development	13
Pollution (fertilizer and runoff)	10
Water quality	10
Sewer lines/private septic system failure	4
Motorized boats	4
Drinking water	3
Milfoil	2
Wildlife habitat	1
Flooding	1
Better access	1

In the next 10 years, what changes in the Mascoma River Watershed would you like to see?	
Theme	Number of responses
More control over development	10
Protection of land and wildlife	10
Cleaner water	6
Better public access	4
Enforcement	3
Raise Awareness and Stewardship	2
Motorized Boat Control	1
Expansion of Designated River	1
Increased Business	1
Expand Sewer Lines	1
Address Runoff	1

Survey of Waterfront Landowners – 114 respondents out of 468 mailed (24% response rate)

Surveys were mailed to all private landowners on the Mascoma River and Mascoma Lake from Canaan Center to West Lebanon; surveys were not mailed to local or state government entities. 68% of respondents were lakefront landowners, 22% were riverfront, and 11% did not identify themselves as lakefront nor riverfront.

Most important resources of the Mascoma Watershed (reported by average score 1-3)	
Theme	Average Score
Scenic quality	2.90
Dependable quality water supply	2.85
Wildlife habitat	2.82
Water-based recreation	2.67
Forest lands	2.54
Recreational trails	2.50

How have you seen the Mascoma River and Mascoma Lake change over time? (aggregated by theme)	
Theme	Number of responses
Better water quality/cleaner	38
Less pollution	24
More development	10
Less sewage/waste	9
Busier boat traffic	7
Milfoil has gotten worse	6
Water level is higher	6
More invasive aquatic plants	6
More populated	4
New bridge	2
More pollution	2
River has re-routed due to erosion	2
Too many "jet skis"	2
Algae/Lou Gehrig's disease concern	2
Milfoil in better control	1
Better recreation	1
High levels of silt	1
River temperature is too high for trout	1
Water level is lower	1
Reduction in water quality	1

What are your top three concerns for the Mascoma River and Mascoma Lake? (aggregated by theme)	
Theme	Number of responses
Water quality	50
Milfoil	25
Development	20
Invasive aquatic plants	19
Pollution/trash	19
Wildlife habitat	11
Wetland quality/habitat	5
Public access/public beaches	5
Overcrowding	5
Runoff	5
Boat horsepower/speed	5
Light and noise pollution	4
Recreation	4
Taxes/affordability	4
Septic tanks/sewage	3
Erosion	3
Enforcement of laws	3
Loon safety/preservation	3
Flooding	2
Water level – too high	2
Personal watercraft/jet skis	1
Boat moorings need regulation	1
Scenic beauty	1

In the next 10 years, what changes in the Mascoma River Watershed would you like to see?	
Theme	Number of responses
Cleaner water	19
Milfoil control	14
Development control	11
Better public access	11
Preservation of current state	10
Good fish and wildlife management	8
Pollution control	7
Motorboat/personal watercraft control	6
Sewer line extension	6
Preserve natural beauty	3
Improve affordability/lower taxes	3
Reduce light pollution	3
Preserve recreational access	2
Less public access	1

Survey of Watershed Public – 20 surveys completed out of 200 distributed (10% response rate)

Mascoma River Local Advisory Committee members each took surveys to distribute at community and lake association events ; in addition, UVLSRPC distributed this survey online through its mailing lists.

Most important resources of the Mascoma Watershed (reported by average score 1-3)	
Theme	Average Score
Wetlands	2.95
Wildlife habitat	2.95
Scenic quality	2.90
Dependable water quality	2.90
Forest lands	2.79
Recreational trails	2.75
Water-based recreation	2.70
Agricultural lands	2.50

How have you seen the Mascoma River and Mascoma Lake change over time? (aggregated by theme)	
Theme	Number of responses
Cleaner water	4
More development	2
More recreation	2

What are your top three concerns for the Mascoma River and Mascoma Lake? (aggregated by theme)	
Theme	Number of responses
Overdevelopment	7
Milfoil/invasive species	5
Water quality	5
Recreation/public access	4

In the next 10 years, what changes in the Mascoma River Watershed would you like to see?	
Theme	Number of responses
Better development practices	4
More permanently protected land	4
More trails	3
Public involvement and awareness	2
Finish Mascoma River Greenway trail	1
More pedestrian and sail-based recreation	1
Improved cleanliness	1
Improved public access	1
Less dependency of watershed for drinking water	1