

**For more information:**

Rob Henken  
President, Public Policy Forum  
414-276-8240 or 414-708-4392 (c)  
[rhenken@publicpolicyforum.org](mailto:rhenken@publicpolicyforum.org)

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## **Survey Probes Citizens' Views on Protecting Water Resources**

**MILWAUKEE** – *Tuesday, January 25, 2011* – A new survey of nearly 400 residents of the Milwaukee, Kinnickinnic, and Menomonee River watersheds shows opinions are mixed on the role of government and the impacts of individual actions on protecting the region's water resources.

The survey, designed and analyzed by the Public Policy Forum and commissioned by 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, also shows that citizens rank "the quality of water in the inland lakes, rivers, and streams in southeastern Wisconsin" an average of 3.3 on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 representing "extremely poor" and 5 representing "excellent"), and that sewer overflows and flooding are considered to be the top two water problems for the region during the next decade.

"In general, survey respondents were keenly aware and concerned about the negative impacts of sewer overflows and industrial discharges on the quality of our region's waterways, though somewhat less so about the impacts of nonpoint sources, such as stormwater runoff," says Forum President Rob Henken. "Respondents also viewed government actions to protect water resources

as at least somewhat effective, though they were less encouraged about the potential impact of their own actions, such as conserving water or reducing their use of salt or pesticides.”

The survey also gauged citizens’ understanding of various water resource issues and where they receive information about such issues. It found environmental organizations are the most trusted source of information, suggesting the potential for such organizations to play a more prominent role in educating the public about the causes of water pollution problems and potential solutions.

A Research Brief highlighting the survey results was released by the Public Policy Forum today and is available on the Forum’s Web site: [www.publicpolicyforum.org](http://www.publicpolicyforum.org). The Brief was sponsored by Badger Meter, while the survey itself was funded by Wisconsin Coastal Management Program and the Joyce Foundation of Chicago, with additional support from Southeastern Wisconsin Watersheds Trust and American Rivers.

Milwaukee-based Public Policy Forum, established in 1913 as a local government watchdog, is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the effectiveness of government and the development of southeastern Wisconsin through objective research of public policy issues.

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