

Results of Tybee Neighbors Website Survey Questions

02-11 Mini-Survey -

44 responses

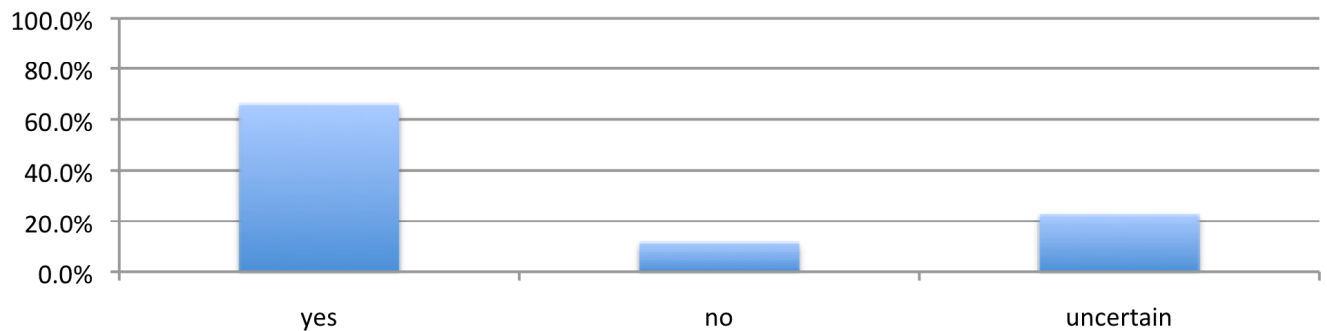
Background: Section 1. The amount of water that Tybee Island is permitted to withdraw from the Floridan Aquifer has recently been reduced by 44,000 gallons per day, placing our island at the same levels of withdrawal that were permitted in 2004. We can expect our water to continue to become increasingly expensive in the future. It is critical that Tybee residents and our visitors do all we can to help conserve this vital resource. Beginning in February, Tybee Neighbors will be featuring ideas, practices and devices to help in this effort on our website. With this survey, we are asking that you share your water-saving ideas or resources in the comments area below, and by answering the questions that follow. Together we can make a difference.

Please check the appropriate box to answer these questions.

Question # 1

Do you understand your water bills?

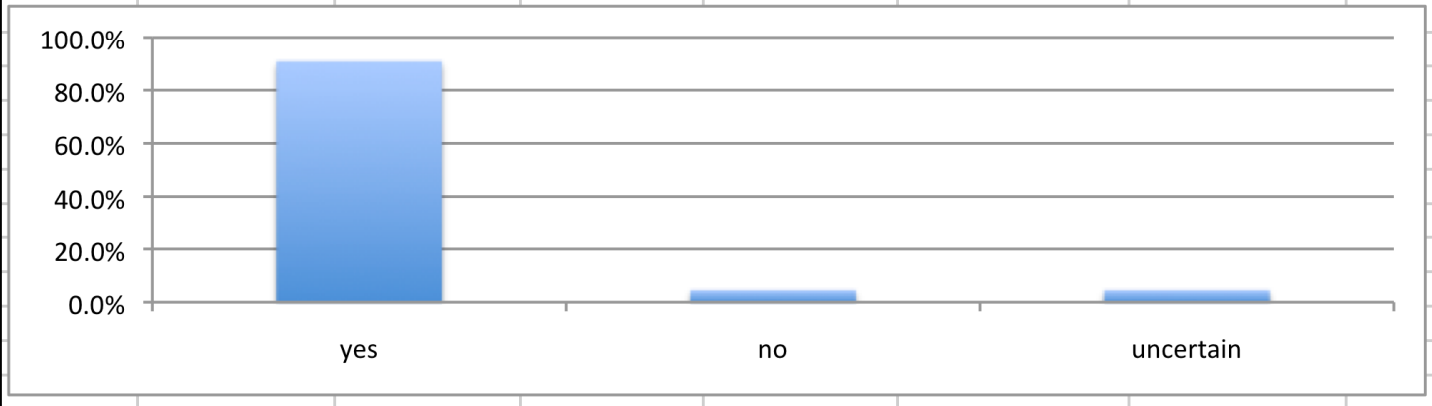
	yes	no	uncertain
percent	65.9%	11.4%	22.7%
number	29	5	10



Question # 2

Do you agree that those living and working on Tybee need to conserve water?

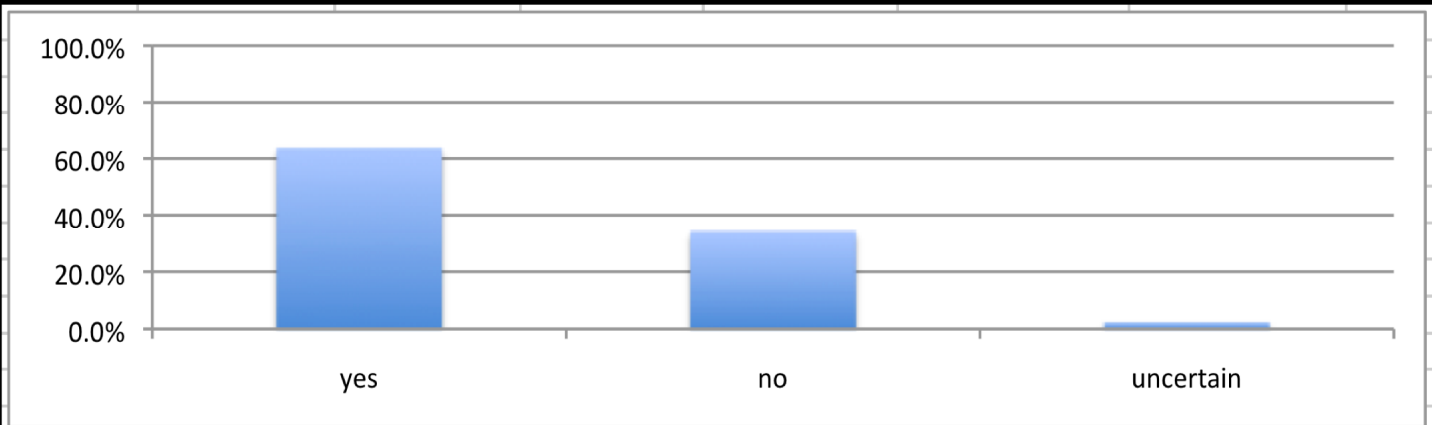
yes	no	uncertain
90.9%	4.5%	4.5%
40	2	2



Question # 3

Do you currently have low flow toilets in your home?

yes	no	uncertain
63.6%	34.1%	2.3%
28	15	1



	number	percent
Participants 18 or older	44	100.0%
Participants who live on Tybee	41	93.2%
Participants who own on Tybee	42	95.5%

Ideas on Ways to Conserve Water

"We run the dishwasher only when full, wash dishes by hand with a plugged sink, avoid use of the garbage disposal by composting almost all kitchen waste, water yard plants at the roots by hand, have allowed most of the lawn to die and are replacing it with mulched material, planted drought-tolerant landscaping, limit our showers, use an eco-efficient front-loading washing machine with weight sensors to adjust water, sweep rather than hose down the driveway & wash our cars infrequently. We would like to install lo-flow toilets as we had in our former home but have not yet done so. Until then we are following the "let it mellow" flushing system. We have aerators on our faucets, but have not yet installed lo-flow showerheads. (Intend to do this soon.)"

"We were mandated by Tybee Zoning to put in grass before we could obtain an occupancy permit for our new home almost 3 years ago. Not only did that result in a significant expense to us but it wasted a tremendous amount of water to keep the newly sodded yard JULY through SEPT. Later on the Zoning Dept simply said they were following the state regulations. MY SUGGESTION: Tybee officials need to set an example by showing its citizens that they are informed. City officials irresponsibly enforce laws that they should know are non-sensical (like mandating that a resident sod their yard in the heat of the summer). This arbitrary enforcement of ordinances and regulations undermines the citizens efforts to act responsibly in the face of water shortages. BEGIN BY EDUCATING CITY EMPLOYEES AND HAVING THEM SET AN EXAMPLE OF RESPONSIBLE WATER USE."

"I agree that conserving water is a good idea."

"I am not willing to conserve water on Tybee to allow more highly dense and thoughtlessly developed condos, duplexes and triplexes."

"That has been the carrot and stick reasoning behind water conservation in the last 5 to 7 years."

"THERE ARE MANY FOLKS OUT THERE THAT WILL FEEL WHAT I HAVE WRITTEN HERE IS ABSOLUTELY DISGUSTING!!!!"

There are ways and equipment in place today to reprocess water to actual distilled quality. Not just drinking quality but distilled!! The city of Tybee already process, in small amounts, this same distilled quality water to run the lab tests on the water run through our waste water treatment before it is re introduced to the ocean. This is not the first time I have discussed or mentioned this reprocessing to city council members. The waste water treatment plant in Columbia South Carolina reprocesses their water and sells it to a bottling company that in turns further processes it bottles it and sells it everyday out of vendors , gro. stores conv. stores hospitals, restaurants etc. all for public purchase and consumption. I of course will not divulge the product name or the bottling company to avoid getting some adverse reaction from them over loss of sales of the products.

I do not know the exact stats on how much the city of Columbia re-uses or sells or what percent of waste water recapture to public water disbursement to users is. I feel sure that they are at least reprocessing 75%. I also am aware that this type system is very costly. With all of the greening going on in this country I also feel sure that there is some money out there somewhere that would be available to fund such an operation for a small city that is trying to be as green as possible.

This may sound a little far fetched to some but stop jog your memories about desalinization plants that have been around for years that convert salt water to fresh. That has been working for years. One can pinch , conserve or what ever and not have a percent of an effect on the benefits of reprocessing. Think green recycle."

“The cost of water alone forces people to conserve water”

“I personally look at my bill every month and try to find ways of avoiding increases on the bill.”

“Funny how International Paper takes over 4M Gallons out a week and no one has stopped them. They have a "license" to do it. Why is no one stopping them. Make them use river water ! It's brown paper - it doesn't matter what kind of water they use. Oooh, may cause rust .That's their problem. I am getting tired of these double standards that seem so prevalent here in Georgia”

“In the summer, we collect the condensate from the AC overflow pipes and use it to water the garden. We do not run water while brushing our teeth, nor do we let the water in the sink run while we walk around the kitchen.”

“Water bills: it rarely seems to correspond to our own usage, And there are months when we are away, but still have to pay a minimum for no usage. That does not encourage conservation, since there is no correlation between usage and payment. “

“We should all conserve. One of the easiest is to capture rain water and water from HVAC condensation.”

“We do not have low flow toilets, but the tank level at the minimum. We also practice "We are an island in the sun, so we don't flush for number one.”

“Change shower heads to low flow, I can't think of anything else but am more than willing to participate in water conservation on Tybee Island”

“Require city workers to inspect the city's plant watering systems daily to insure they are not wasting water and start fining businesses and residents who use their sprinkler systems when it is raining.”

“Encourage the establishment of a minimum water usage car wash which uses recycled water on the island and ban car washing to individuals at their homes.”

“Have the city build cisterns to capture water for use in city buildings and encourage the use of cisterns in new home and condo construction and by existing hotel and home owners by offering tax credits in addition to reducing the cost of water for minimum users.”

“Install grey water systems for watering all city foliage and encourage homeowners and business to install similar systems.”

“Stipulate in building codes that low flow toilets, shower heads, faucets, etc. are mandatory in new construction and when replacing any of these.”

“Make it mandatory for the city to notify residents or absentee owners when their water meter reading is 15% higher than its regular average to ensure that water leaks are found and eliminated quickly.”

“Provide brochures to all property owners showing the kinds of grass, plants, etc. which can be grown on the island using the least amount of water and encourage garden clubs and the Tybee Beautification Assn. to present plaques or other forms of recognition to residents who create water saving yards and gardens.”

“ When the city changed to a monthly from a bi-monthly billing system it increased the cost to minimum users by 100 percent, without ever indicating the price was going up. This was accomplished by charging the same amount for minimum users each month that they previously paid every two months. This not only upset minimum users but encouraged them to use more water since their cost was doubled despite the fact that they were using no more water.”

“Consider abandoning the Beach Bums Parade since it wastes a large amount of precious water and reflects badly on Tybee when the city and country are urging conservation. Another option would be to require participants and spectators in the parade to use only salt water or beer. “

“Make it mandatory to water plants and lawns only before 9 a.m. and after 7 p.m. during the summer and adjust the hours accordingly for winter watering.”

“We recently purchased a low flow toilet which works very well and only uses .8 gallons per flush. It is a new company and it was a little expensive but if purchased in quantity the price would be very reasonable. The same company also sells low flow showerheads which greatly reduce water usage. If the large condos and motels converted to these units it would reduce the island water use significantly. My wife has the information on this company and would be happy to share it with anyone who is interested.”

“We plant only drought resistant plants and avoid outdoor watering.”

“rain barrels for gardening”

“restrict use of water for car washing and gardening to set times”

“low usage plumbing”

“Xeriscaping, NO sprinkler systems, period. Excruciating high fines for sprinkler systems that run when it rains.”

“First our city government needs to change out their toilets to low flow then they will be able to convenience the citizens to follow suit”

“The only idea I have will probably be resistant to most of you. People just do not understand that their dishwashers will NOT remove food from unrinsed plates. This necessitates a second washing cycle and in many cases a scrubbing episode in the kitchen sink. How much water does that waste when a simple quick rinse in the beginning would have taken care of it? “

“People that have automatic watering systems, should have sensors that shut the water supply off during rain, middle of the day, & only water 2 times a week for 20 to 30 minutes at a time. Have 1 or 2 non-potable water stations so visitors can rinse off before going home. Conserve our own water at home.”

“I have a charge of 1 unit on my water bills most months. I almost never use water on my yard. All of my toilets are 1.6 gal except from one that is dual flush at .9 gal. I catch my rain water in a cistern.”

“I use two rain barrels and mostly native vegetation. Lots of mulch and compost.”

“Wider use of rain barrels connected to the air conditioning systems”

“As to the water bills, it took quite a while, but I finally do understand. I do not think a discount on a water bill should be given to those who allow their toilets to leak. It is our responsibility to keep things in working order. To gather water for outdoor watering, I have an assortment of all shapes and sizes of buckets and barrels catching rainwater from the roof. It may not look great, but it serves the purpose. I also read in an article that if a family of 4 would urinate while taking a shower instead of flushing a 2 1/2 gal. toilet, the potential savings for a year would be 3650 gals. of precious water. Something to think about.”

“Grow something other than grass in your yard.”

“Tybee ought to offer at wholesale rates on the devices for outdoor faucets so that dripping during freezing weather is not required. Tybee ought to offer at wholesale rates other water saving devices such as low-flow toilets and shower heads. That way it is a win-win situation.”

“Why are water bills so late, if you have a high usage month by the time you get the bill you forget why. If you have a leak, it’s two months before you know it. Keeping bills current would help everyone have a up to date record of usage.”

“We don’t flush except when necessary. I think locals know what needs to be done. We need to focus on our visitors...information, education, and enforcement.”

“Proceed with SCAD plans for using rainwater in public restrooms, xeriscape our yards, use native plants, do away with lush lawns, collect rainwater for watering and washing cars...”

“We have two Mansfield Eco-Quantum dual flush toilets in our Tybee house that use 1.1 gallons/flush since we never use the 1.6 option. They work fine. We just installed the Niagara Stealth toilet that uses 0.8 gallons for every flush in our CT home and it is so quiet and effective! We’ll have to buy more!”

“I do the usual things - don’t run the dishwasher until full, turn off faucet while brushing teeth, mulch plants, no grass. I bucket flush from the bathtub 2-3 times a day. I have a rain barrel but one is not enough. I like to see a way to obtain the large containers at the community garden for residential use(400 gallons I think.)”

“The Master Plan, developed 4-5 years ago, clearly states that we are exceeding our carrying capacity for water. Since the most recent Hilton Head saltwater intrusion folks are finally acknowledging that it’s not if but when for Tybee to lose its first well. So, while on the one hand, Tybee is beginning consider alternatives to the aquifer, on the other hand they continue to create greater density by granting variances, subdividing lots, etc. There’s no clear recognition that we are in danger and certainly no logical path to providing an adequate water supply in the future. I haven’t made the transition to low-flows yet, but I’m a careful flusher - be above.”

“Fines for residents who run sprinkler systems on unauthorized days.”

“There are several designs that implement shower water to be used for flushing the toilet! They are widely available on the web and Paul Wolff has copies of schematics that he has offered to share. I think Tybee could save a significant amount of water if homeowners, and vacation rental owners, were to implement this type of system for flushing their toilets. It is not expensive to make the retrofits and would be beneficial not only to the homeowner but the community! Further, The Vacation Rental Business is the most lucrative business on Tybee Island! There should be a way, or a requirement, for the Vacation Rental industry to have a system like this in place! Likewise, I see no reason why the hotel/motel industry should not be required to have such systems. It is only my opinion, but folks who rent their places to vacationers and tourists, do not use this particular residence as their primary residence. Therefore, they are pocketing money from the rental of this residence, in our community, which, in turn depletes our natural resource, thereby reducing the amount of water available for use by actual residents. OR, in the alternative, places used primarily as vacation rentals, B & B’s, hotel/motels should be charged for EVERY drop of water DURING SEASON, without benefit of the 2000 gallon buffer. “

Places used primarily as vacation rentals, the B & B’s, and hotel/motels should be required to either:

1. Retro fit their toilets to flush with shower water; or
2. Pay the buffered bill in off season, and pay for each and every drop IN SEASON!

Water is our most precious resource! AND all the water that we will ever have is already here on Earth! We must protect and conserve it at all costs!”

“I also feel that Tybee would benefit immensely from the appointment of a Water Marshall, either via the Community Resource Group or an official position with the city! This position would pay for itself, should a volunteer not step up. The person could be responsible for making sure watering guidelines are followed, like sprinklers watering driveways, watering on the improper day, etc. This person could also provide administrative assistance for the retrofits, maybe visit and talk with folks who live in residences that seem to be consuming too much water, and provide help with leaking faucets, pipes and toilets! “

“People, including children, are dying ALL DAY, EVERY DAY because of the lack of clean water . . . and so many people just allow it to drip from their shower, their faucet or toilet. A leaky faucet is not only throwing money away, it's STEALING water from other Tybee residents! AND IT'S ALL WE HAVE!”

“I don't understand my water bill because, it has doubled since we went to once a month billing, even though I conserve water as much as possible, & still I have to pay a minimum, whether or not I use that much water.

“We do not have low flow toilets, but use the &"if it's yellow, let it mellow"; motto. I never rinse dishes before putting them in the dishwasher; only run laundry and dishwasher with full loads. Avoid use of disposer. When I need hot water, I use the faucet closest to the hot water tank to avoid wasting a ton of cold water while waiting for it to get hot.”

Ideas for Encouraging Visitors to Conserve Water

“Signage and auto shut-off devices on outdoor showers, etc. Cottage rental agencies and hotels could provide the kind of bathroom cards used by major hotel chains to encourage patrons to conserve water. “

“ Increase the cost of water for those using the most of it like hotels and those operating swimming pools, while decreasing the cost to those using the minimum amount to encourage conservation.”

“This is a wasteful world we live in.... About the only way you are going to get a tourist to conserve water is to install faucets that have to be held on to wash off beach sand. They don't care and think that every one whom lives here is benefitting from what they paid to come/ stay here.”

“The only other way to keep them from wasting water is to put in a coin operated faucet. How many of them do think would put in a quarter? “

“It is difficult to get visitors to conserve anything. Since they pay to be here, they feel entitled to live with careless abandon. “

“Visitors are different from residents; when we rented our house, we felt that renters had little regard for resources. They cranked the AC, etc. Maybe there could be a third world conservation compact they would sign. How about billboards with data as you enter the island? “

“Incentives for utilizing conservation techniques determined by the city“

“All restaurants, uniformly, must charge .25 for a glass/cup of water. Guess that's not positive, but it will send a message. “

“Education - I have sample brochures that will help and have helped me in my rentals.”

“I do encourage all my guests to reuse towels whenever possible to help me conserve water and lower my energy costs.”

“Every rental be it motel or house should have in plain sight, a card explaining just how dear every drop of water is and to respectfully use it wisely. Refrigerator magnets large enough to notice would be the easiest”

“Information, education, and enforcement...let them know that the gravy train has stopped, that they won't get to come to Tybee if we can't afford water, and that the issue affects them as much as it does locals.”

“I think we should mandate that hotel, motels, and time shares install x percentage of their toilets per year. I think the town should order hundreds of them at cost and offer them to residents and businesses and sell them at a price that covers the administration cost, but is still a great deal for purchase price.”

“Need graphics such as the hurricane towers showing flood categories. Who has the creativity?”

“I don't think most people understand what 'Water First' means when they come on the island and the sign is too small!”

Signage

Responses Regarding Goods or Services that you Would Like to be Able to Purchase on Tybee.

“farmer's market with local produce and eggs, appropriate plants, etc. We had one in our equally small former hometown, which had a fair number of weekend visitors, and it worked well. Some local artisans also rented booths to sell their wares, and conservation-related groups had booth displays. With the increased number of families visiting Tybee, a Saturday morning market might do well.”

“New York Times”

“Cup of good coffee”

“More complete hardware”

“--A car wash which conserves water.

--A public swimming pool.

--A lumber company/hardware store like a miniature Home Depot.

--A home cleaning (maid service) company.

--A barbershop for men.

--A computer repair and sales business.

--A dating service for lonely visitors.

--Chinese, Japanese and Italian restaurants, along with a steak house, and fast food fried chicken and hamburger franchises.

--A golf driving range.”

“Tybee could use a good Chinese takeout restaurant.”

“Groceries!”

“Something like an ACE Hardware would be nice. Chu's just doesn't have a broad enough selection of home tools, supplies.”

“I know we've had a bakery before and I supposed it just couldn't survive the off season, but a good one would be nice to have.”

“I would dearly love to buy local at Christmas but my main purchases are for teenage grandchildren who, of course, want electronics. They are not available on Tybee.”