

Identifying Issues of Concern

1. The collection of environmental health issues from the Delaware community followed the methods suggested by NACCHO and NCEH, with some modifications to meet the local needs. The county was divided in five geographic regions representative of the demographic diversity of the area, and the gathering of public input was conducted in all five regions. Five focus groups were convened with the help of a professional consulting firm that was hired by the BOH. They followed the procedures described by Krueger, to ensure the quality and accuracy of the data collected. The participants were randomly selected from the telephone book and met the demographics of our county. The focus groups involved a total of 65 participants and were conducted between May and June of 1998. Each participant was paid a fee to participate in the focus group. The focus groups participants were randomly chosen from each region to represent the county's demographics. The same *questionnaire* was used in each region.
2. Twenty-four facilitated discussions were conducted throughout the different townships, villages, and geographic regions of the county, with hundreds of individuals representative of every *township*, and several *community organization*. A *discussion guide* was developed by staff at the DGHD to aid in the process. The facilitated discussions were designed to collect public input about the main perceived environmental problems in the county; the groups were selected in a manner to guarantee that all segments of the county's population were represented. The Nominal Group Process methodology was followed. After the group listed their issues with the aid of a facilitator, each person was given a number of sticky dots and then asked to vote on the issue considered the most important. When all the dots were counted for each issue, more dots meant a higher level of concern for that particular issue, less dots meant a lower concern for that issue or set of issues.
3. The 26 members of the PACE Committee were asked to present their environmental concerns.
4. In August 1998, twenty-six key informants with environmentally related professions were enlisted for a telephone interview. This survey followed procedures described by Dillman, with some adaptations. Open ended *questionnaires*, regarding what they perceived as being the main environmental health problems in the county and how to address them were sent in advance to each one of the key professionals. Interviews were conducted according to a set schedule. To aid in the return rate of this survey, the informants were also given the option to mail or fax in their answers.

The PACE Committee also selected to do the following surveys in order to rank and compare results with the other survey methodology that were used.

1. Delaware County Fair. An issue ranking survey using a computer program was used in the DGHD booth at the Delaware County fair in September, 1998. Two hundred Delaware County Fair participants recorded indicated their top five environmental concerns from our *fair questionnaire*.
2. 500 Senior Government Classes were asked to selected their top environmental concerns. There were 4 school districts and one private school who participated.
3. 40,000 newsletters were sent, one to every household that included a questionnaire asking residents to identify their top environmental concerns. There were 1200 *questionnaires* that were returned. This was a similar ranking survey was inserted into the fall, 1998 issue of the DGHD community newsletter, which asked each community resident to rank their top 5 environmental concerns.

These are the top environmental concerns recorded from the fair, community survey, and senior high government class. The top issues are as follows:

FAIR SURVEY	COMMUNITY SURVEY	SENIOR GOVERNMENT CLASS
1. Loss of farmland 2. Trash/Litter 3. Drinking Water 4. More Parks 5. Development 6. Recycling	1. Loss of Farmland 2. Development 3. Drinking Water 4. Green space 5. Trash/Litter 6. Recycling	1. Trash/Litter 2. Outdoor Air 3. More Parks 4. Drinking Water 5. Development 6. Loss of Farmland 7. Recycling

VERY SIMILAR RESULTS FROM THE THREE SURVEYS.