

Vermont Clean Water Messages and Campaigns  
Statewide Survey Results  
September 7, 2016

Introduction

In April 2016, 127 people representing 109 organizations across Vermont were contacted by the CWC Public Awareness team to gather information about clean water messages and campaigns their organizations had undertaken or were developing. For purposes of this research, clean water messages or outreach campaigns are those that encourage a particular target audience to implement a practice that results in cleaner water.

Sixty people (47%) representing 53 organizations completed the survey (Figure 1). Of those, 70% conduct clean water messaging or outreach campaigns. Non-respondents will be phoned as part of the Public Awareness Team’s next 90-day cycle of activity.

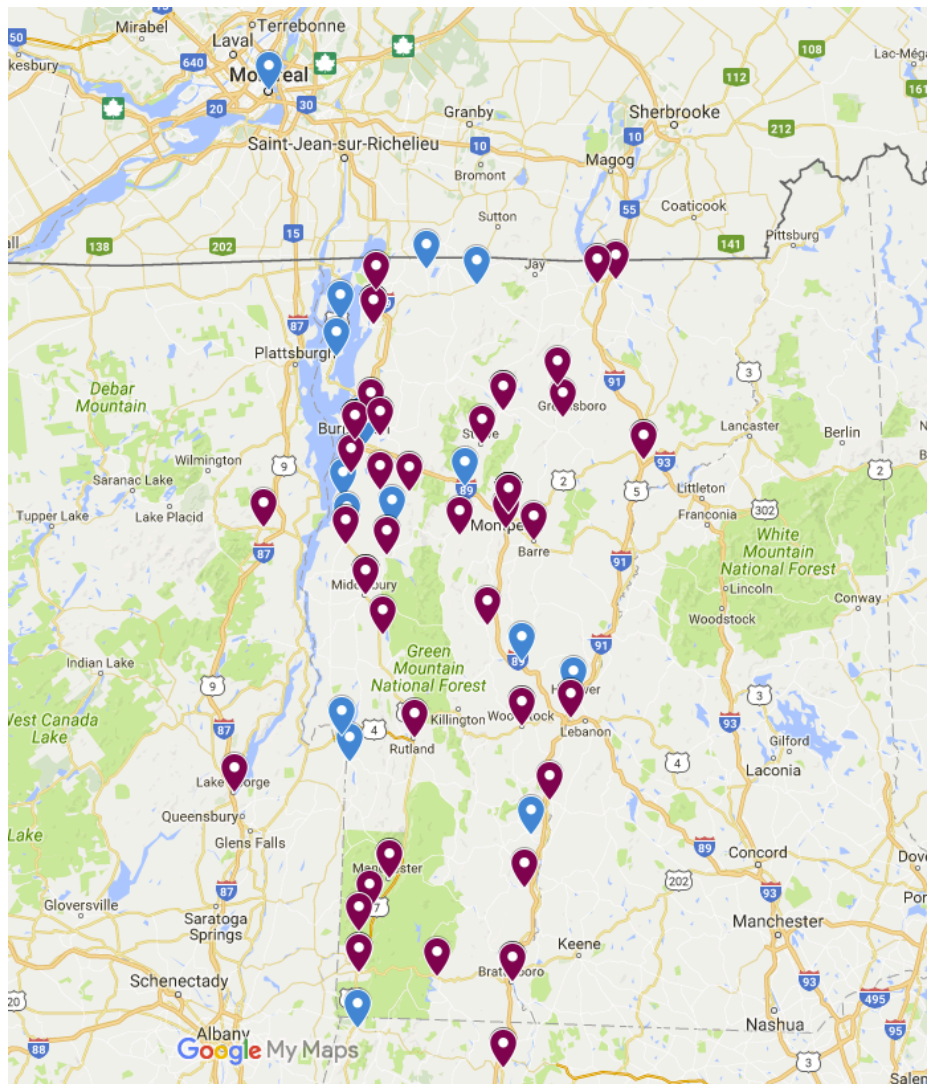


Figure 1. Geographic distribution of respondents and non-respondents. Red pins indicate non-respondents. Blue dots indicate respondents.

### Topic Areas of Focus of Clean Water Messages

The top five topic areas of focus for clean water messaging or campaigns among respondents were agricultural runoff, stormwater, landscaping, fertilizer reduction and landscaping (Figure 2). The diversity of topics of messaging by responding organizations was evident, as fewer than half of respondents addressed any single topic area. Organizations least commonly focused messaging on automobile-related issues, industrial wastes, household chemicals, and grease management (Figure 3).

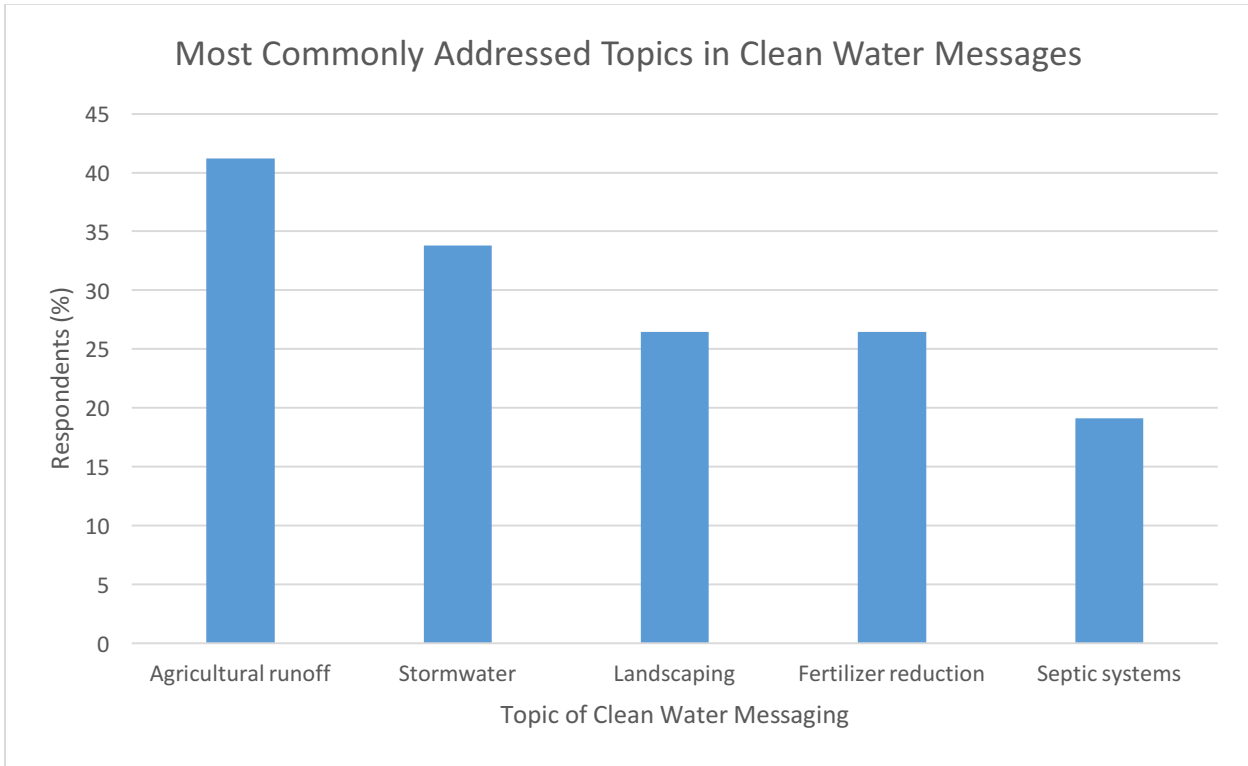


Figure 2. Most commonly addressed topics of clean water messages in Vermont, as indicated by percent of respondents.

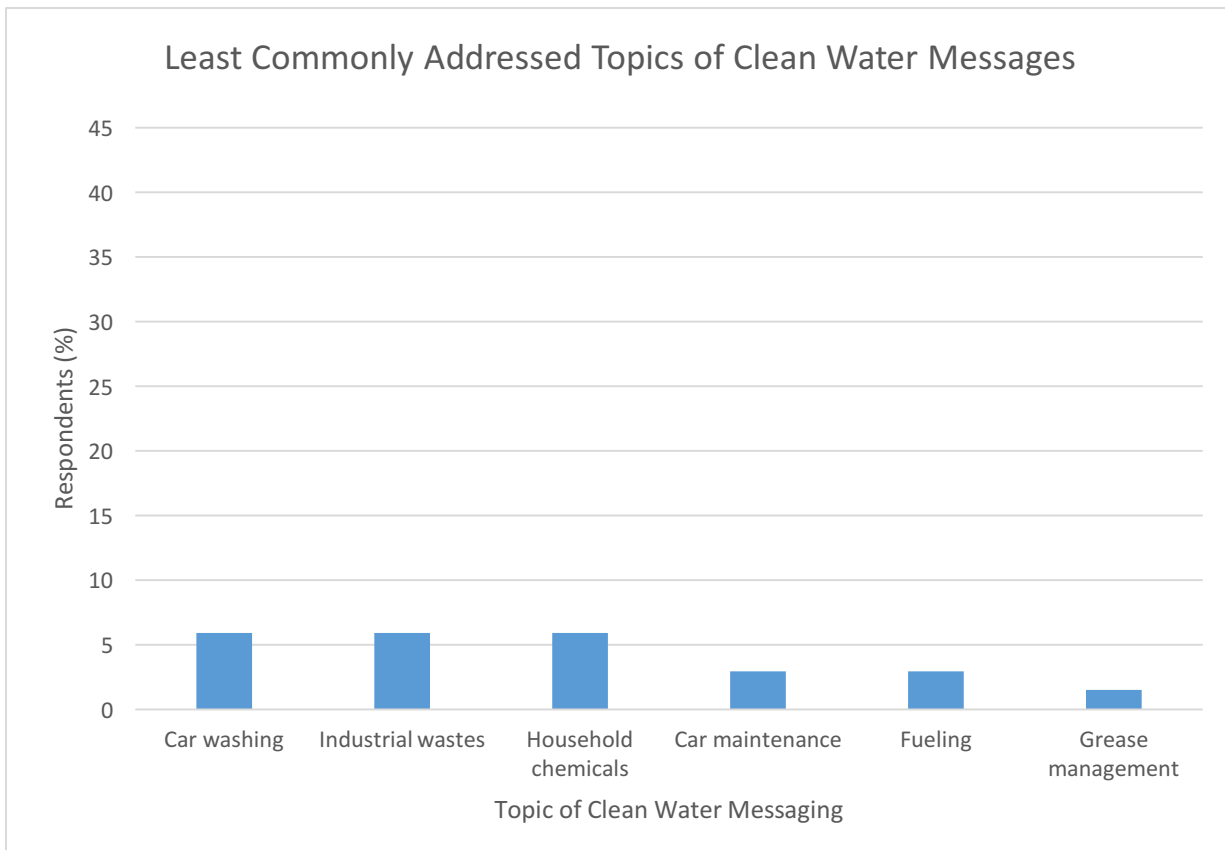


Figure 3. Least commonly addressed topics of clean water messages in Vermont, as indicated by percent of respondents.

### Target Audiences

A list of 21 potential target audiences for clean water messages was presented to respondents. Respondents were asked to select those that their organization had targeted. They included:

- General public
- Homeowners/Landowners
- Renters
- Farmers
- Environmental groups
- Municipalities
- Public works departments
- Students (K-12)
- College students
- Teachers
- Baitfish shop owners
- Recreational boaters
- Lakeshore businesses
- Beachgoers
- Industry
- Construction companies
- Landscapers
- Marina owners
- Garden stores
- Religious groups
- Minority populations

The primary target audience for clean water messages was the general public, with homeowners/landowners, farmers, and municipalities addressed by approximately one third to half of organizations that shared clean water messages (Figure 4). Of audience choices provided to respondents, those least often targeted were religious groups, minority populations, and shop owners (Figure 5).

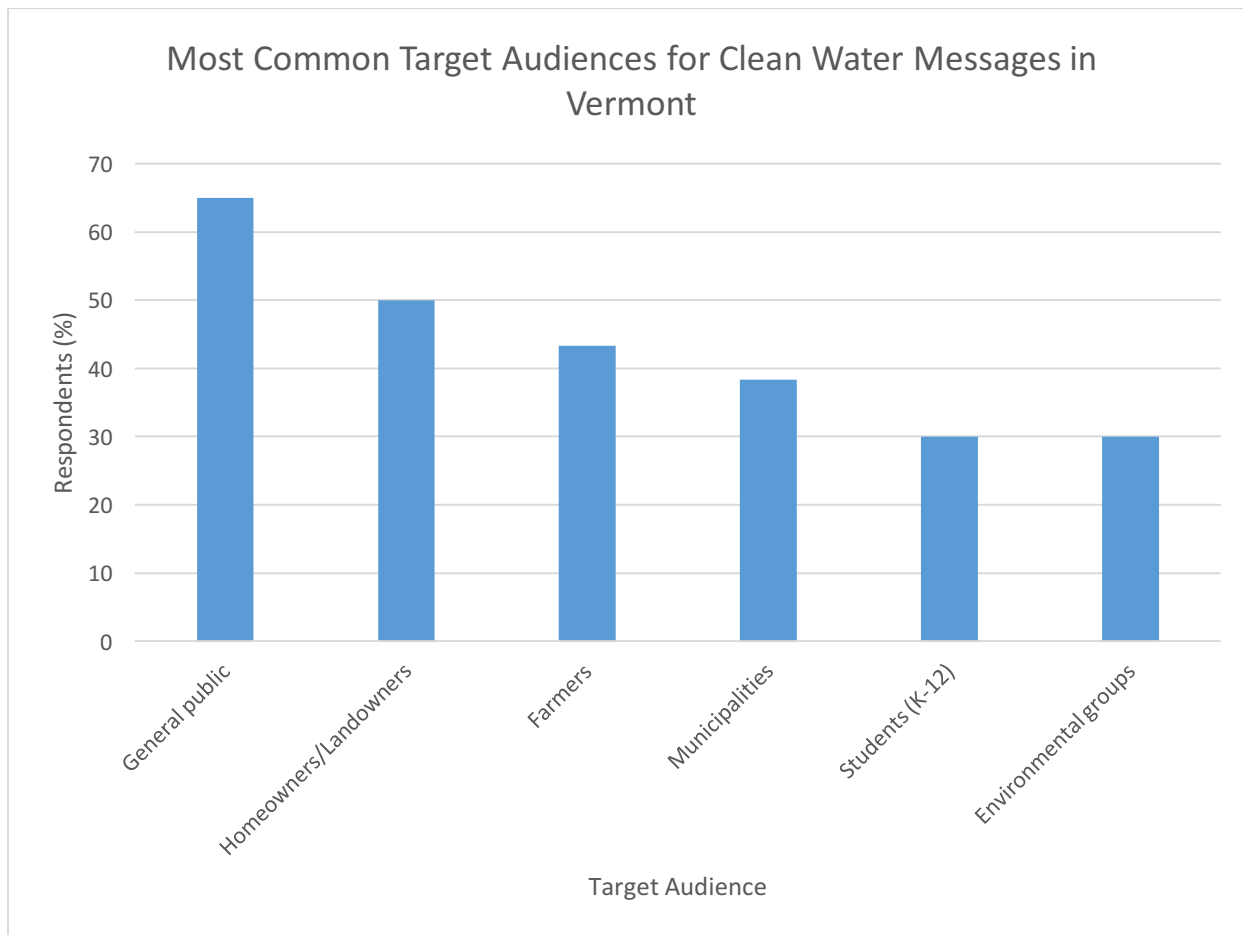


Figure 4. Most common target audiences for clean water outreach messages in Vermont, as indicated by percent of respondents.

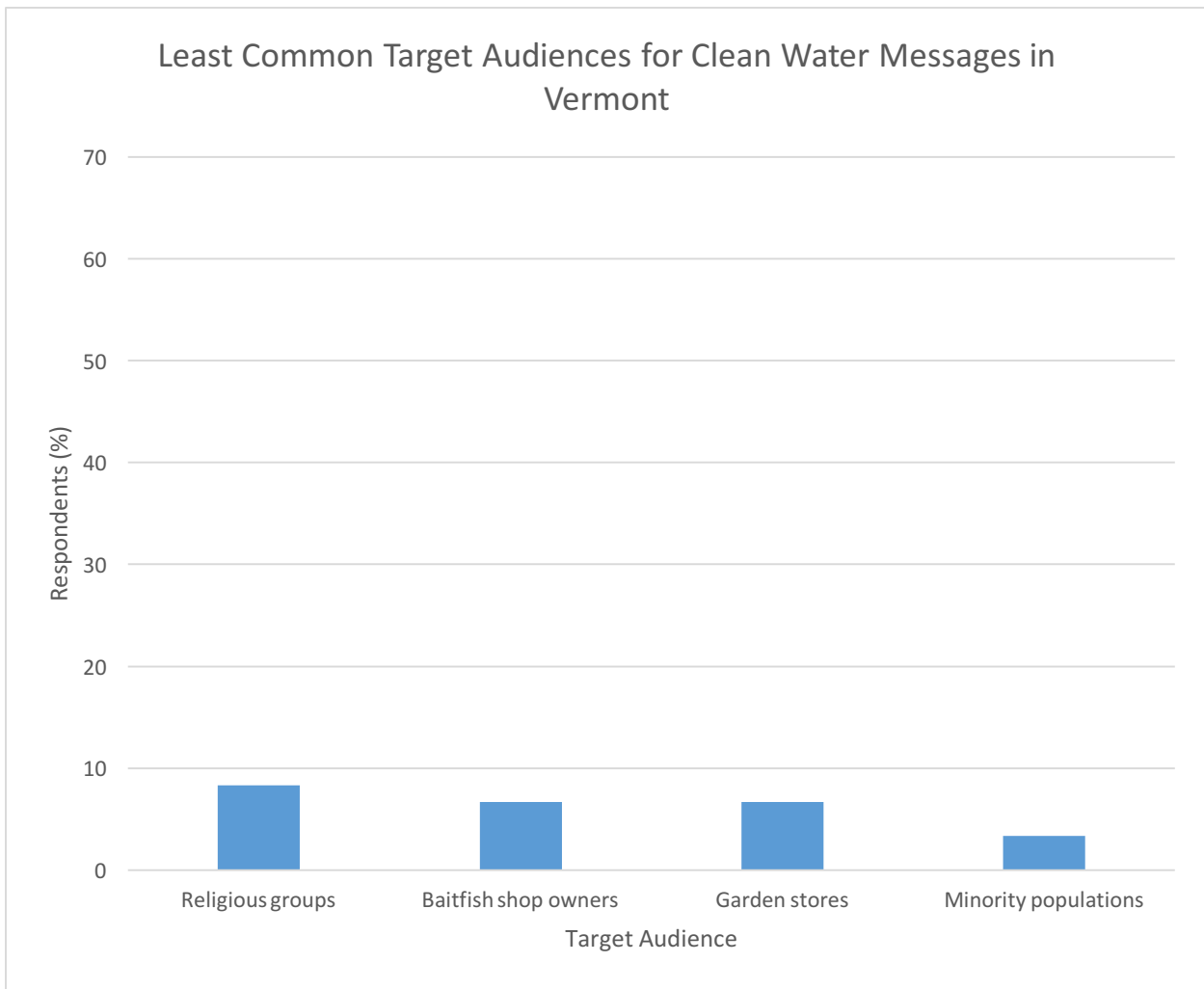


Figure 5. Least common target audiences for clean water outreach messages in Vermont, as indicated by percent of respondents.

Other target audiences identified by respondents included:

- Hardware stores
- Media personnel
- State, federal, and provincial gov't and leaders
- Recreational river users (paddlers and anglers)
- Campers and hikers
- Non-governmental organizations (watershed associations, lake associations, conservation organizations, etc.)
- Loggers

## Outreach Strategies

Respondents were provided a list of 13 types of outreach strategies organizations may have used to share their clean water messages. Of those, the most commonly used were fliers, brochures and handouts (Figure 6). The least common strategies were fines, preferential treatment and asking people to pledge a commitment (Figure 7).

- School curriculum
- Radio
- TV
- Fliers/brochures/handouts
- Direct mailing Signs
- Webinar/workshop/presentation(s)
- Commitment/Pledge requests of target audience
- Trinkets distributed with the message (e.g., key chains, cups, t-shirts, hats)
- Preferential treatment if target audience implemented a practice (e.g., tax benefit, coupon for free/discounted products)
- Fines or other form of disincentive if practice was implemented
- Messaging via a trusted source (e.g., Tom Messner of WPTZ in an ad)
- Reliance upon encouraging target audience to comply with request based on social norms (e.g., everyone is doing it)

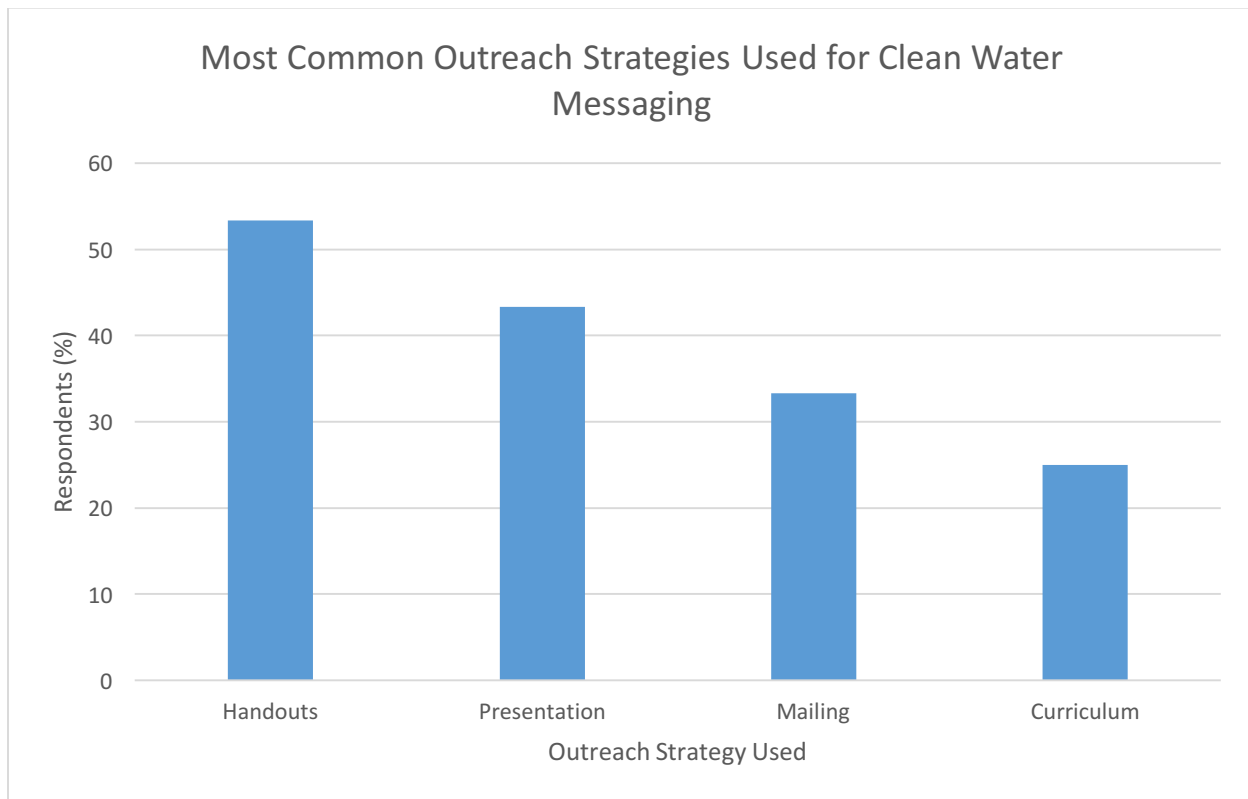


Figure 6. The most commonly used outreach strategies to share clean water messages in Vermont, as indicated by percent of respondents.

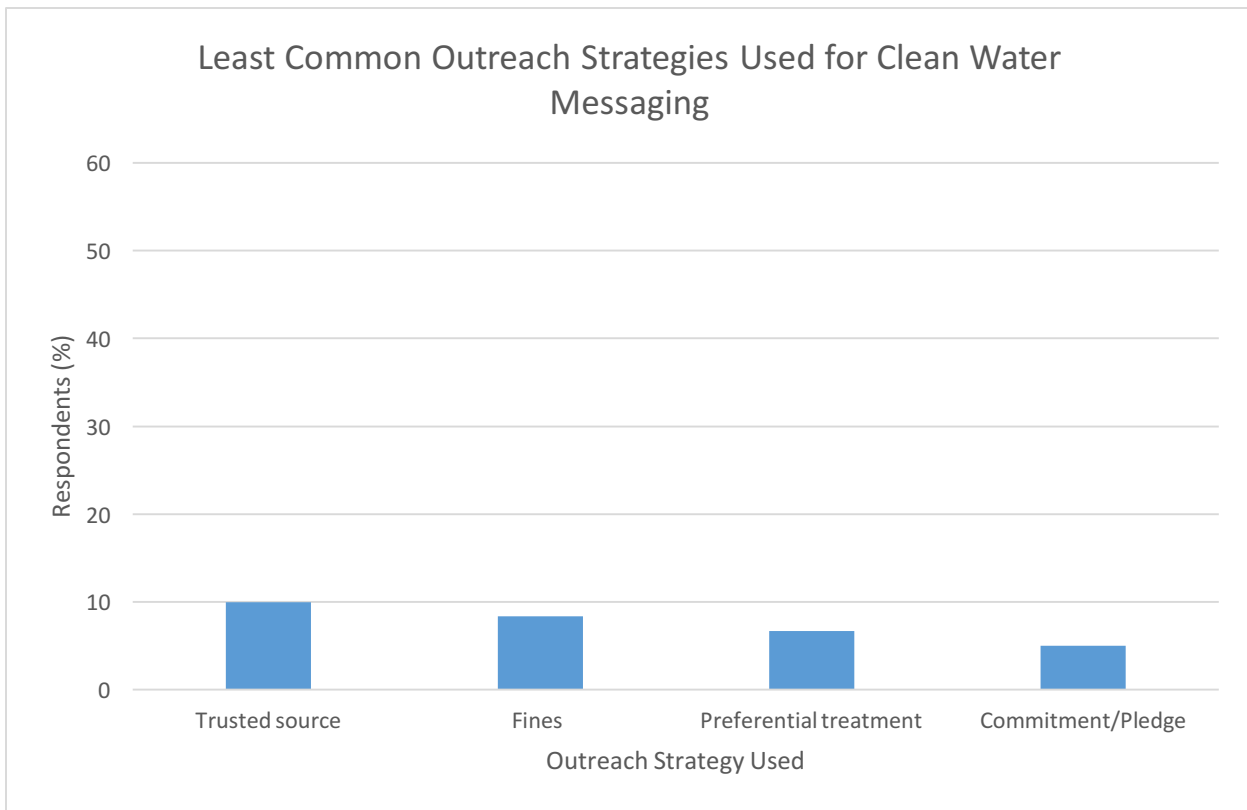


Figure 7. The least common outreach strategies used to share clean water messages in Vermont, as indicated by percent of respondents.

### Outcomes Reported

Only 43% of respondents reported outcomes for their outreach campaigns. Of those that did, responses fit into five general categories. A number of organizations reported that outcomes were unknown or that campaigns were still in development. Some reported increased awareness. Some reported increased communications among audience members. Some report that target audiences had implemented best practices. None of these types of outcomes was prevalent among those who reported outcomes.

### Program Missions

Fifty-one people reported their organization’s mission in the survey. These missions explained why organizations existed and how they were doing their work. Several common terms or phrases were used by multiple organizations. These included: “working landscape,” “rural character,” “protecting,” “enhancing,” “conserving,” “restoring” and “sustainable.”

#### “Why” themes (# respondents)

- Water quality/environment (35)
- Community/culture (19)
- Economy (13)
- Human health (3)
- Recreation (3)

#### “How” themes

- Stewardship
- Community engagement
- Collaboration
- Research
- Education
- Collaboration
- Advocacy
- Planning

## Interest in Partnering for a Clean Water Culture

Forty-one organizations are interested or already are partnering on the Voices for the Lake, Culture of Clean Water project (Table 1). One respondent (2%) said no, as their mission doesn't align with this project. One respondent said possibly. A few respondents mentioned that they have very few staff, so although interested and willing to collaborate, needed to do so at a limited level. One person cautioned against duplicating existing efforts.

Table 1. Organizations interested in working together to reach out to specific target audiences to break down barriers and showcase benefits of acting in a manner that results in clean water.

|                                                                       |                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative                               | Lamoille County RPC                      |
| Addison County RPC                                                    | Lewis Creek Association                  |
| Black River Action Team                                               | Missisquoi River Basin Association       |
| Bristol Watershed                                                     | Native Energy                            |
| Central Vermont RPC                                                   | OBVMB                                    |
| Central Vermont Trout Unlimited                                       | Poultney-Mettowee NRCD                   |
| Chittenden County RPC                                                 | Southeastern Vermont Watershed Alliance  |
| Connecticut River Valley Trout Unlimited                              | Southwestern Vermont Trout Unlimited     |
| ECHO                                                                  | USFWS                                    |
| Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds, Inc.                           | UVM Extension                            |
| Franklin County Regional Chamber of Commerce                          | Vermont Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce |
| Franklin Watershed Committee                                          | Vermont Land Trust                       |
| Friends of Northern Lake Champlain                                    | Vermont River Conservancy                |
| Friends of the Winooski River                                         | VNRC                                     |
| Friends of Waterbury Reservoir                                        | VT Agency of Agriculture                 |
| Hoosic River Watershed Association                                    | VT DEC                                   |
| Lake Champlain Basin Program                                          | Watersheds United Vermont                |
| Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce                                    | White River NRCD                         |
| Lake Champlain Committee                                              | White River Partnership                  |
| Lake Champlain Islands Chamber of Commerce;<br>Grand Isle County NRCD | Winooski NRCD                            |
| Lake Champlain Sea Grant                                              |                                          |