



Information Sheet for Valuing Rural Stewardship of Riverine Ecosystems: Transfer-Ready Water Quality and Land Cover Co-Benefits, Linked Rural and Urban Economies Survey

Principal Investigator: Charles Towe, University of Connecticut

Study Title: Valuing Rural Stewardship of Riverine Ecosystems: Transfer-Ready Water Quality and Land Cover Co-Benefits, Linked Rural and Urban Economies.

Sponsor: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Introduction

You are being invited to participate in a research study. This consent form tells you about the study including its purpose, what you will be asked to do if you decide to take part, and the risks and benefits of being in the study. Please read the information below and take decision whether or not you agree to participate.

Why is this study being done?

To help identify ways to create new effective policy to address current concerns on possible development of water quality and co-benefits created in the rural communities from which ecosystem services flow to a full, rural-to-urban population due to hydrologic connection of riverine ecosystems.

What are the study procedures? What will I be asked to do?

This study consists of participation in an online survey that will take on average 20 to 30 minutes. We will ask you to answer attitude and demographic questions and to answer choice scenario questions involving local water quality.

What are the risks or inconveniences of the study?

We believe there are no known risks associated with this research study; however, a possible inconvenience may be the time it takes to participate. Declining to participate will only mean that we are unable to include your choices in our study results.

What are the benefits of the study?

You may not directly benefit from this research; However, the knowledge gained from this study may contribute to researchers' understanding of the way we value and support projects contributing to the public good.

Will I receive payment for participation? Are there costs to participate?

Your voluntary participations are greatly appreciated. There are no costs to you for participation. You will be compensated the amount you agreed upon before you entered into the survey.

How will my personal information be protected?

The following procedures will be used to protect the confidentiality of any information you provide. First, your name or other identifiers will never be directly affiliated with any records on the choices made or survey questions you answered.



Second, only researchers will make use of the information we collect, and the data will be secure on the researcher's password protected computers. Since this information will never be recorded with your name, there will be no way for anyone to identify your answers based on the data files we use in our analysis. Researchers may publish interpretations or results of the research based on analyses of information we collect from all participants, and never publish information in a way that would allow anyone to identify any of the individual participants.

You should also know that the University of Connecticut Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Office of Research Compliance may inspect study records as part of its auditing program, but these reviews will only focus on the researchers and not on your responses or involvement. The IRB is a group of people who review research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

Though we will try our best to keep your responses confidential and secure on the researcher's password protected computers, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Can I stop being in the study and what are my rights?

The decision to take part in the study is up to you. If you agree to be in the study, but later change your mind, you may drop out at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate. If you decide to participate in the study, you do not have to answer any question that you do not want to answer, or you can leave the entire survey blank if you choose to do so. Declining or withdrawing at any time during the focus group will not affect your relationship with UConn or the researchers.

Whom do I contact if I have questions about the study?

We will be happy to answer any question you have about this study. If you have further questions related to the study, you may contact the research team (Email: waterqualityvaluation@uconn.edu; Subject line: "Water Quality NIFA Study"). If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Connecticut Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 860-486-8802.

Thank you!