

# Survey Says...Your Neighbors Are In!

They just need a little help!

**Francesca King** Watershed Stewards Academy  
**Steve Raabe** OpinionWorks



# Francesca King

Steward Engagement Manager



WSA envisions every community in Anne Arundel County actively engaged to ensure a healthy environment for all.

Our mission is to train and mobilize community leaders to drive change for sustainable landscapes and clean waters.



## Since WSA started in 2009...

- Trained over **300** Watershed Stewards
- Who have planted more than **202,500** native plants and trees
- And engaged over **205,000** residents



## But there's a gap...

- ③ Just how much are Stewards influencing their communities?
- ③ Are residents changing their individual behaviors?



## Steve Raabe

President, Opinionworks LLC  
All-around Friend of WSA



# OpinionWorks Credentials

- Measure perceptions, attitudes
- Surveys, focus groups, in-depth interviews
- Seek engagement, behavior change

## Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program

- Behavior change related to marine debris

## The Baltimore Sun

- Elections and issues polling since 2007

## Chesapeake Bay Program

- Development of a Baywide indicator of stewardship behavior

## University of Richmond

- Brand assessment among prospective students

## The Recycling Partnership

- National consumer research on response to recycling prompts and tools

## University of Connecticut Sea Grant Extension

- Behavioral and attitudes study in Long Island Sound watershed

## William Penn Foundation

- Assessing equitable access to the trails and parks in Greater Philadelphia

## Los Angeles County, California

- Evaluation of media campaign encouraging proper disposal of batteries



# Inspiring Action, Fostering Stewardship

Thousands of Chesapeake Bay watershed residents were surveyed about their stewardship behaviors that impact the Bay's health.

[Learn about the survey](#)

## What Is Chesapeake Behavior Change?

Chesapeake Behavior Change is a resource to help organizations apply the Stewardship Index Survey results to their work to ultimately increase the number of residents taking on-the-ground action to protect and restore the Bay. Explore the site to learn about the survey, its findings, and how to use





## Why does this matter?

### We're connected to communities

- ① How do they perceive us?
- ① How can we support Stewards?



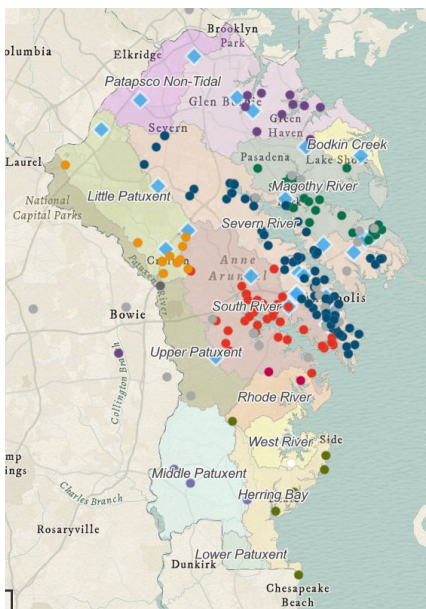
**Planting trees**



**Planting native plants**



## Survey Method



- **Representative Countywide Sample**

- 411 interviews
- Online sampling using consumer panels
- Representative of County's population

- **WSA Distribution**

- 893 interviews
- Online through lists and social media
- Not representative of County, but a good sampling of WSA's constituents

- **Fielded Sept 24-Nov 11, 2022**

# Focus Groups



Kathy Flament, Moderator

Watershed Stewards Academy

03:57

While the challenges are great, the opportunity to conserve and preserve this precious gift of water is even greater. It takes each person doing their part.

— Kirvin Bonner, Master Watershed Steward

Take a look at our list of Certified Master Watershed Stewards to find a Steward in your community.

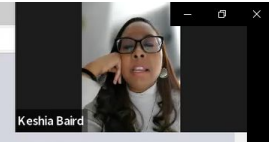
0:38:01

WSA Focus Group A VIDEO 030923

Type here to search

Search 53°

2:54 PM

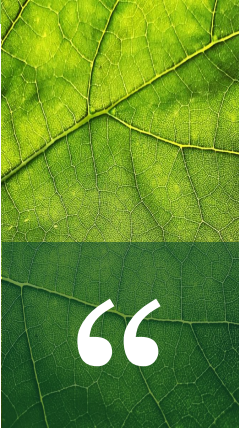


- **4 Groups**

- A. < 45 and somewhat likely to plant
- B. North, West, South County and less likely to plant
- C. Have a Steward in their community and know it!
- D. Have a Steward but don't know it

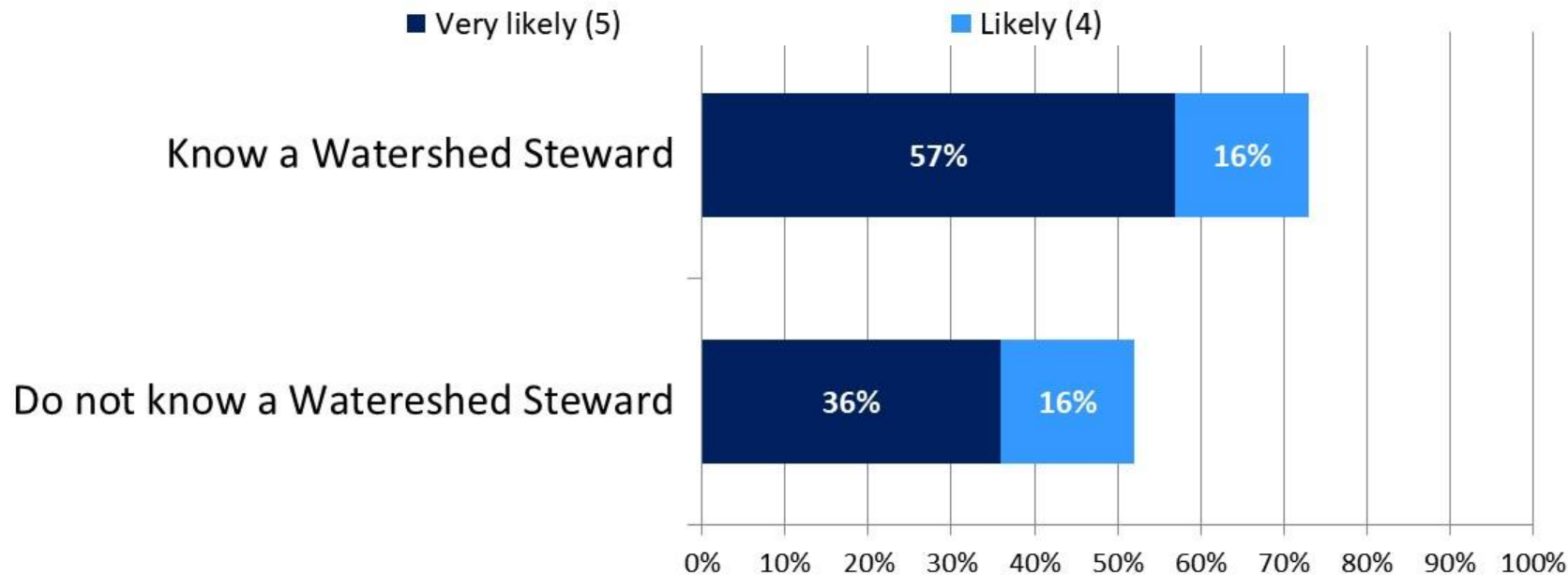
- **Open-Ended Listening**

- Virtual small group
- Facilitated by a friendly moderator
- No wrong answers!
- Patient exploration of the “why”



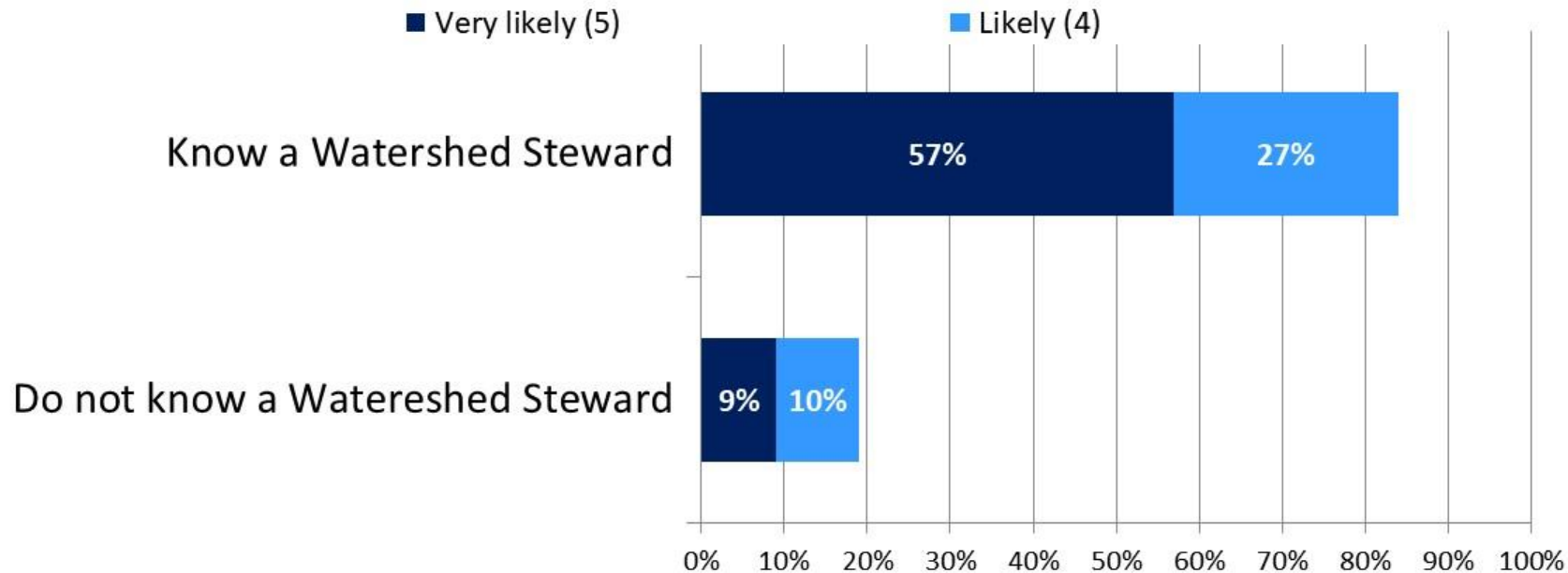
*Before we launch into the results,  
any questions?*

# Impact of Knowing a Master Watershed Steward: Likelihood of Planting Native Plants



**In the next 5 years how likely are you to plant native plants in your community or at your home?  
(5=Very likely, 4=Likely, 3=Somewhat likely, 2=Not very likely, 1=Not at all likely)**

# Impact of Knowing a Master Watershed Steward: Likelihood of Planting a Tree



**In the next 5 years how likely are you to plant a tree(s)?  
(5=Very likely, 4=Likely, 3=Somewhat likely, 2=Not very likely, 1=Not at all likely)**

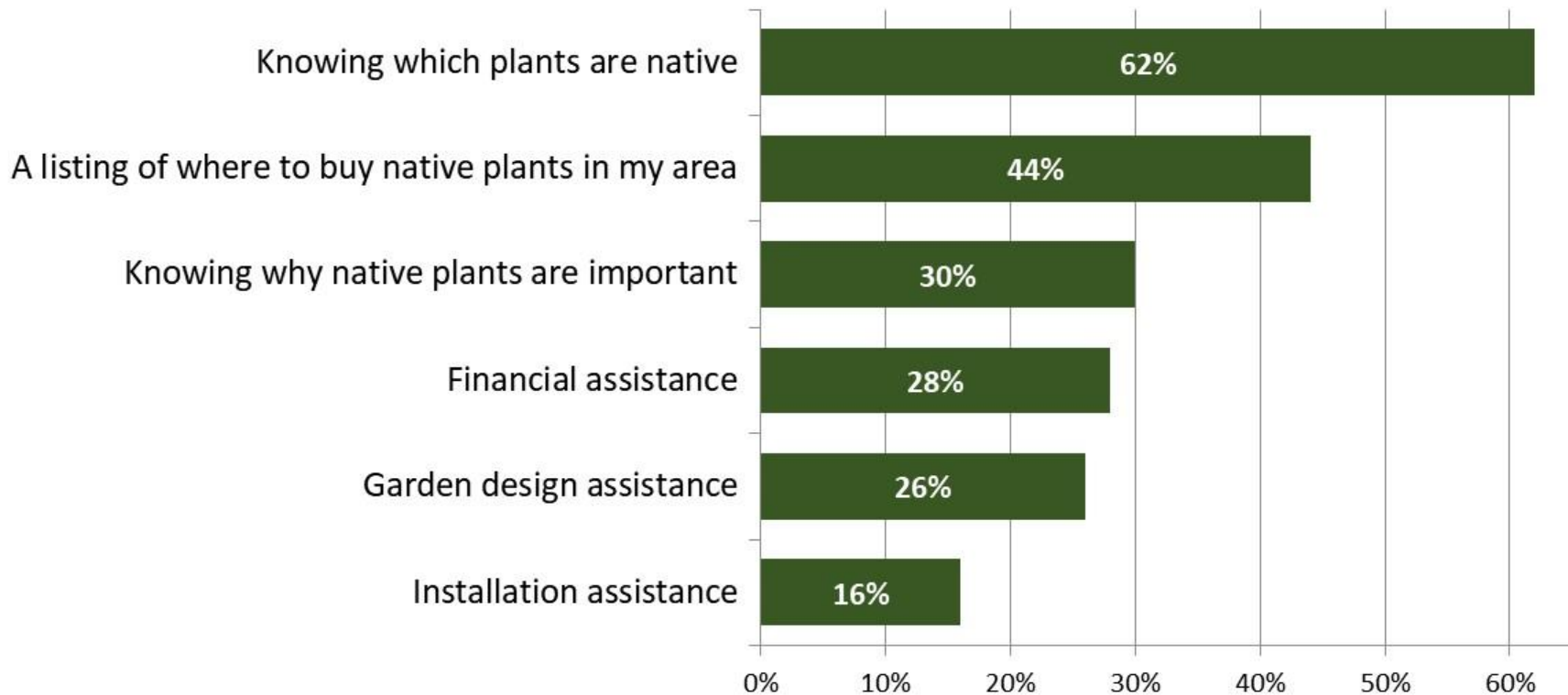


**59%** Have planted a tree

**74%** If they know a Steward

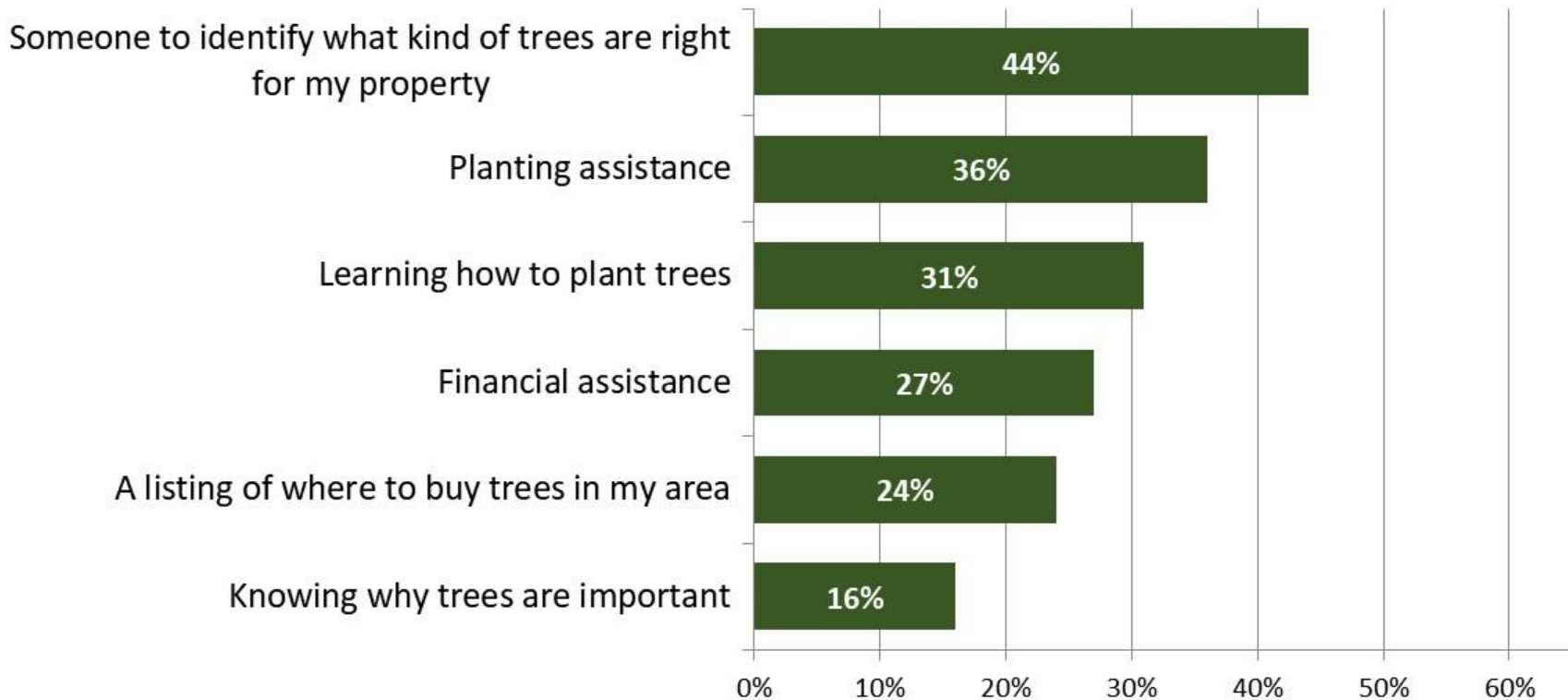


# The Help People Need to Plant Native Plants



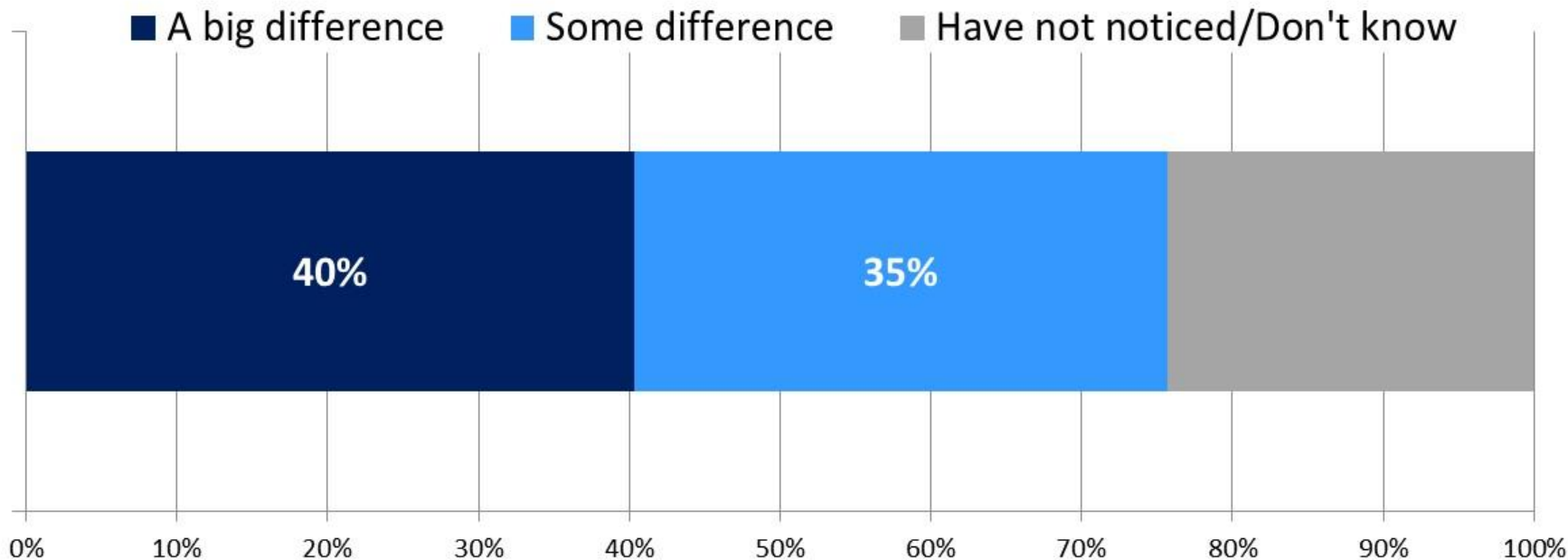
**What would help you to plant native plants? Choose up to 3.**

# The Help People Need to Plant Trees

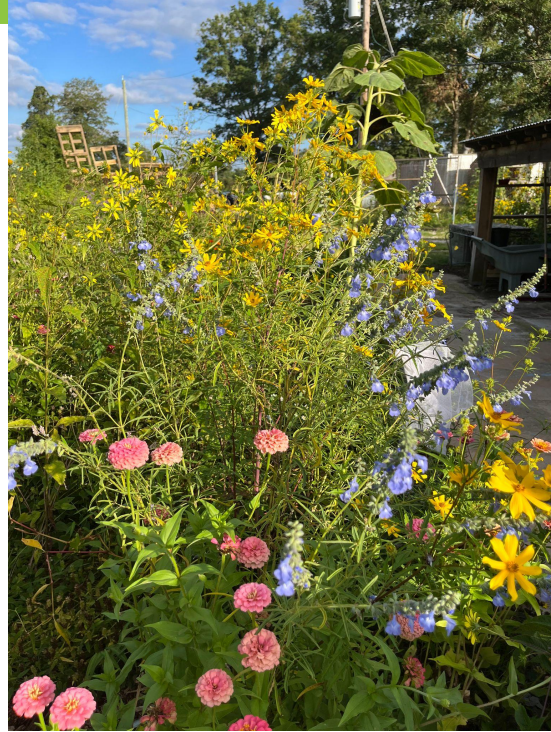


**What would help you to plant trees? Choose up to 3.**

# Has Your Master Watershed Steward Made a Difference?



**In your opinion, has your Watershed Steward made a positive difference in your community?**



*Reactions?*



**Let's explore the  
results of the focus  
groups**



## **We began with asking about their connection to nature - it's strong!**

**Alert**

**Energized**

**Peaceful**

**Relieves stress**

**Freeing**

**Positive memories**

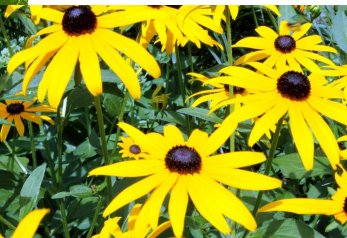
**Associations with loved ones**



**Here's what we tested...**

# What natives are right for my yard?

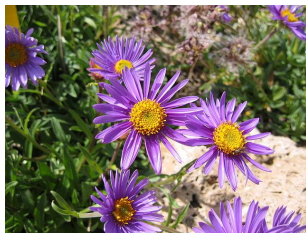
## Online Garden Design Tool



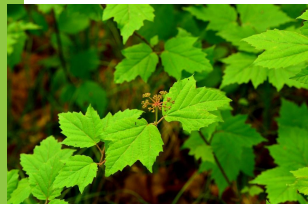
Black Eyed Susan



Columbine

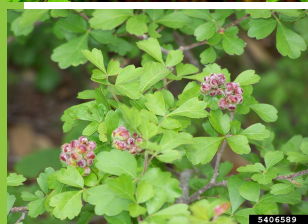


Aster



Viburnum

Sumac



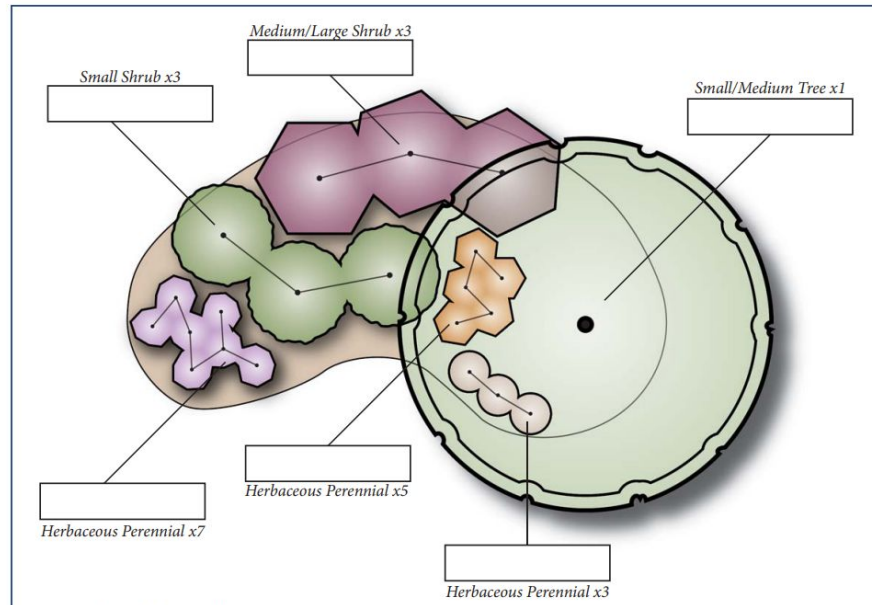
River Birch



### Typical Mix – 90 square feet

Part Sun, dry soils

(contained in 14.5 x 9 foot area)







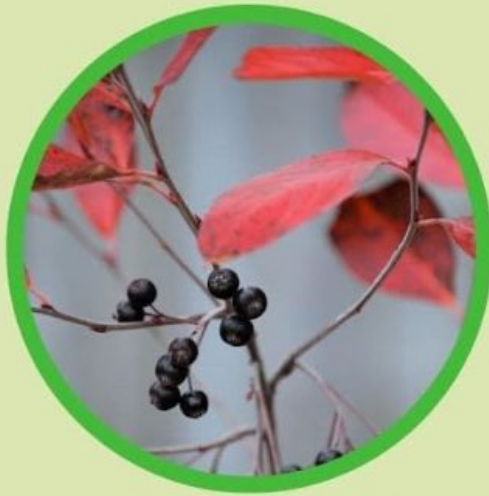
## And they loved it!

**“Very helpful. It takes away that kind of stress of thinking about how you lay out the plants”**

**“It’s very individualized to the situation that I have in my yard or I have in the community space. I could then work it out on this website - that'd be exciting!”**



# THIS NOT THAT



**NATIVE PLANT**  
PURPLE CHOKEBERRY  
(*ARONIA PRUNIFOLIA*)



**INVASIVE PLANT**  
HEAVENLY BAMBOO  
(*NANDINA DOMESTICA*)





## **They loved that too!**

One person even asked for it before we showed them...

**“That's exactly what I want. I don't know the difference. I would be sold on always getting the native if it shows a comparison like that.”**

# What natives are right for my yard?

## A Garden Bundle

*The bundle includes:*

- **20 native plants** (specific plant species and number are in the instructions) that will grow well in your yard conditions
- a suggested **design layout** with planting and **care instructions**

\*Plants are included at wholesale prices. Bundles can be ordered for different site conditions (sun/ shade, wet/dry)





**"Yeah, take my money."**

**"I absolutely love this. It takes all the guesswork out for me."**

### **Improvements:**

- ⦿ A la Carte - ability to swap out
- ⦿ Price points
- ⦿ Expected growth (height, spread)

A top-down view of a lush, dense carpet of bright green ferns. The fronds are intricate and feathery, creating a complex, textured pattern. The lighting is bright, highlighting the vibrant green color of the plants.

**And then we asked  
about Stewards...**



**When they already  
knew a Steward,  
they were big fans!**

If they didn't know WSA or  
Stewards existed, they were  
excited to find out!!



## We asked about where they'd want to meet a Steward



### At the right time:

In-the-moment expertise at Home Depot, Lowes





## At the right place...



**Farmers Market**



**Parks, nature preserves**



**Libraries**



**Community plantings**



**Educational events for families**



**Translation?**



Can you think of any ways you could apply that in your community?





**So how do we help Stewards  
help their neighbors?**



## Steward Survey Highlights: What Would Help You Lead Action?

- Design support
- Help engaging my community
- Resources:
  - guides, templates, digital materials
- Site prep

**And of course....more time!**





## How do we build on this potential?

We'll be doing focus groups with Stewards next month to uncover things like...

- ④ What do Stewards need?
- ④ What do Stewards think of what residents want?

# NEXT STEPS

**April**

**Steward Focus Groups**

**May-June**

**Tool & Strategy Development**

**Summer/Fall**

**Test it Out!**

# Big Takeaways





## Your neighbors got on board - quickly!

### Motivators:

- Make a difference
- Good for the environment
- Support pollinators
- Bring butterflies
- Clean up the water
- A better future for children

### Needs:

- Make it easy
- Be where they are
- Share what matters:
  - Price, color, size

# We Need To



**Increase Visibility**



**Refine how we talk about our offerings**



**More support and resources**

**Let's talk about it!**

**Thank you!!**