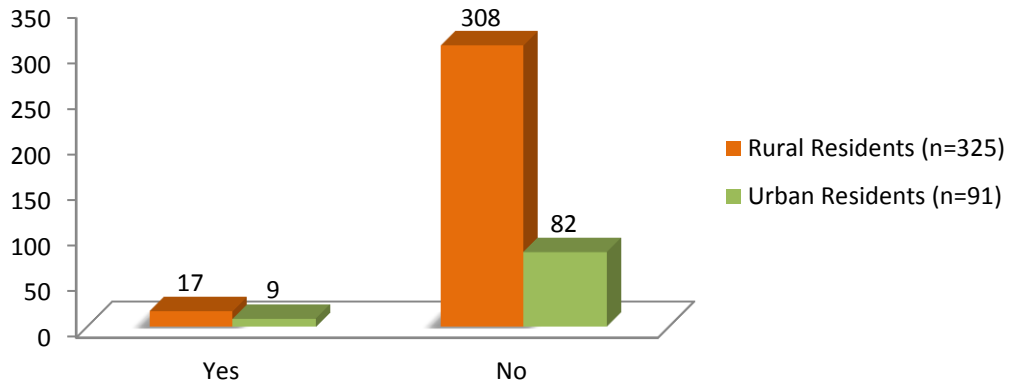
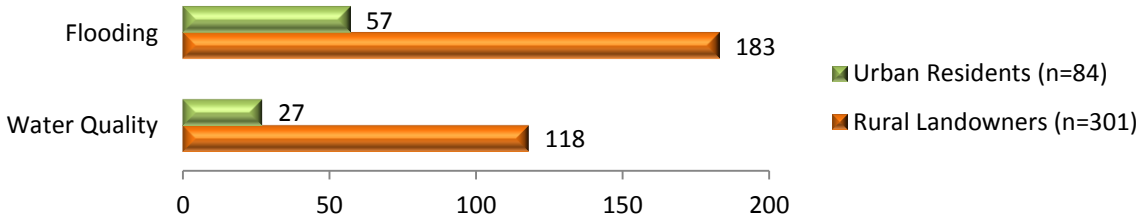
Turkey River Watershed Management Authority Survey Report

The landowner/resident survey was sent out at the beginning of September 2013 to 1,500 randomly selected rural landowners and city residents in the Turkey River Watershed (TRW). One thousand of the surveys went to landowners and 500 went to city residents. The addresses were obtained from GIS parcel shapefiles. Of the 500 surveys sent to city residents, 91 were completed and returned and 60 were undeliverable so the response rate was 20.6 percent. Of the 1,000 rural landowner surveys, 91 were undeliverable and 325 were completed and returned resulting in a 35.7 percent return. The combined percentage returned was just over 30 percent. The overall survey is representing a TRW population of approximately 32,300 residents. For hundred sixteen respondents to the survey resulted in a confidence interval of 4.8 at a 95% confidence level.

Question 1: Before receiving this survey, had you attended a public meeting about the Turkey River Watershed?

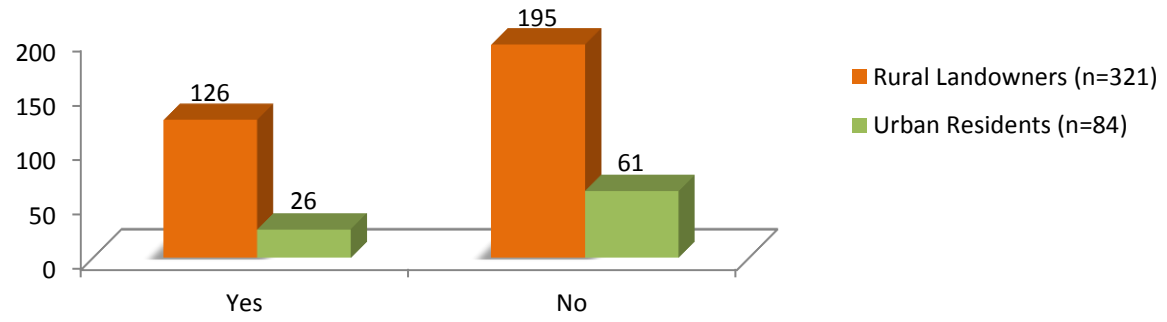


Question 2: Which do you believe is a bigger issue for the Turkey River Watershed?

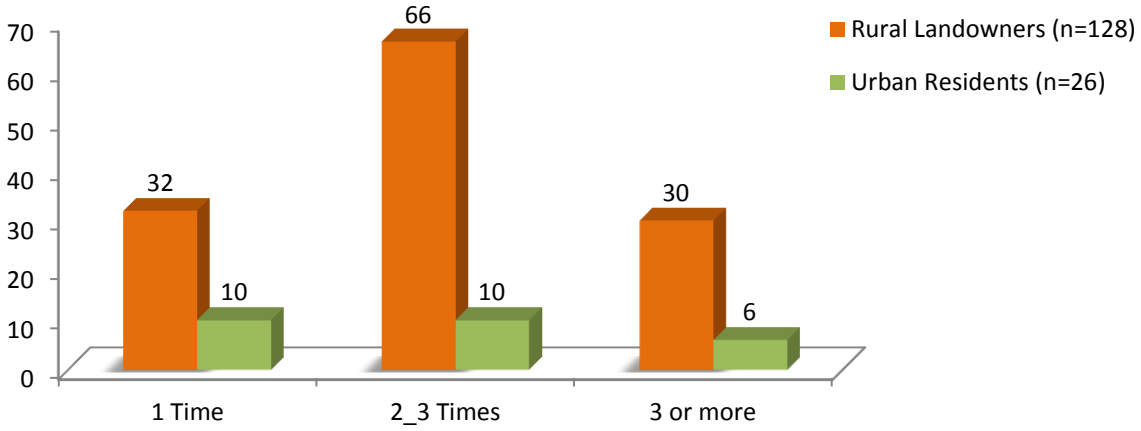


Most people replying to the survey have not attended a public meeting in the Turkey River Watershed. The primary concern for most people is flooding yet the proportion of those concerned with water quality was somewhat close.

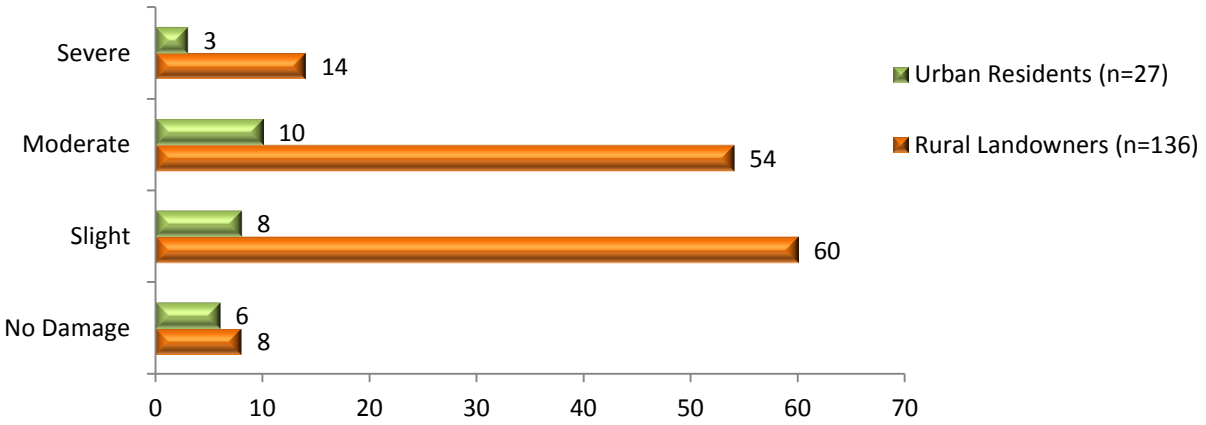
Question 3: Have you been impacted by flooding in the past 5 years?



Question 4: If you answered 'Yes' to question #3, how often have you been impacted by flooding in the past 5 years?

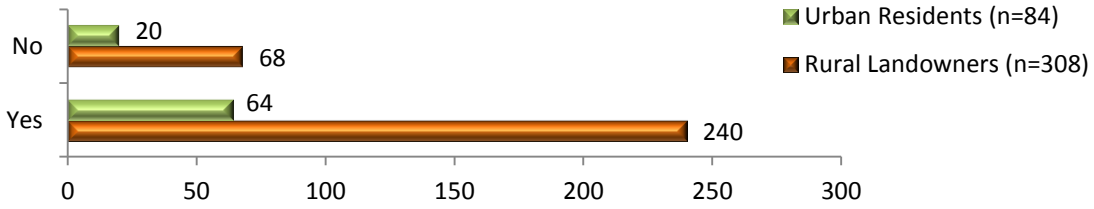


Question 5: If you have been impacted by flooding, circle the answer that best applies to the impacts you have experienced to your property.

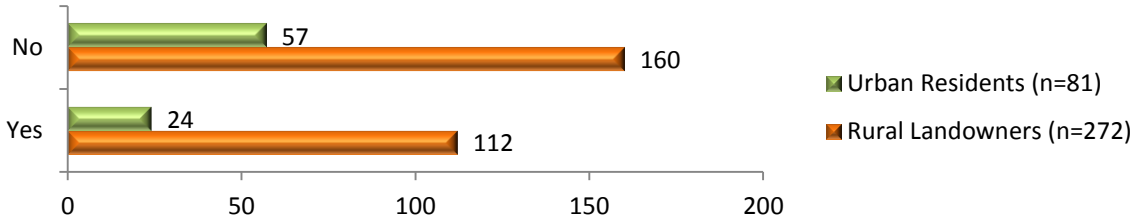


Approximately 30% of rural landowners and 18% of urban residents have been impacted by flooding in the last 5 years in the Turkey River Watershed. However, question six of the survey reveals that over 75% of people surveyed know someone that has been impacted by flooding. Three out of four people that have been impacted by flooding have been affected multiple times. This means that of those impacted, many will likely be affected by flooding again in the near future if nothing is done to reduce the likelihood of future flood events. Most of those surveyed received slight to severe damage to their property when flooded. Flood prevention is an investment to lower the cost of future flood events which impacts everyone living in the TRW Counties directly or indirectly. Currently, a majority of urban residents (70%) and rural landowners (59%) feel that more should be done to address flooding in the TRW.

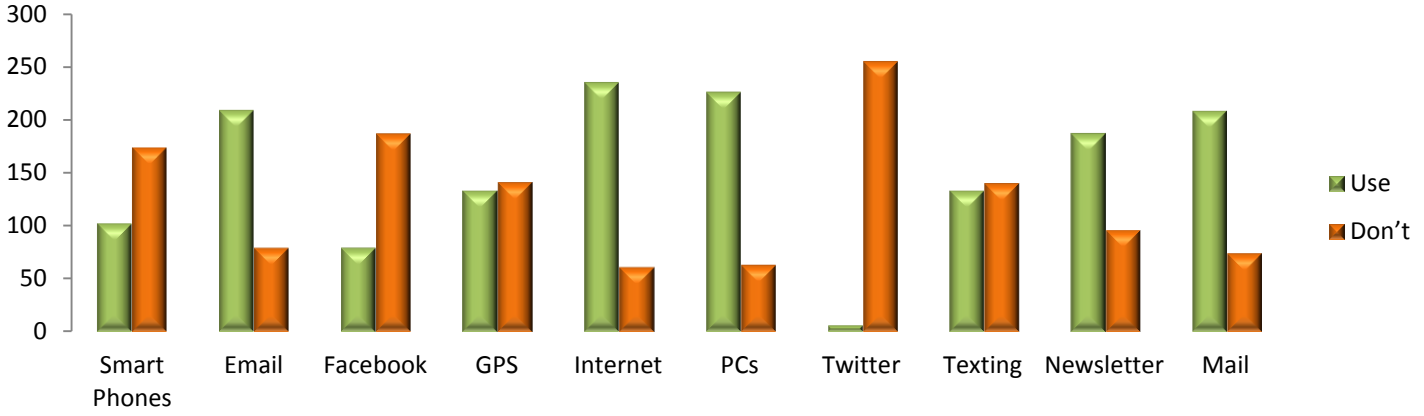
Question 6: Do you know anyone, other than yourself, that has been impacted by flooding in the past 5 years?



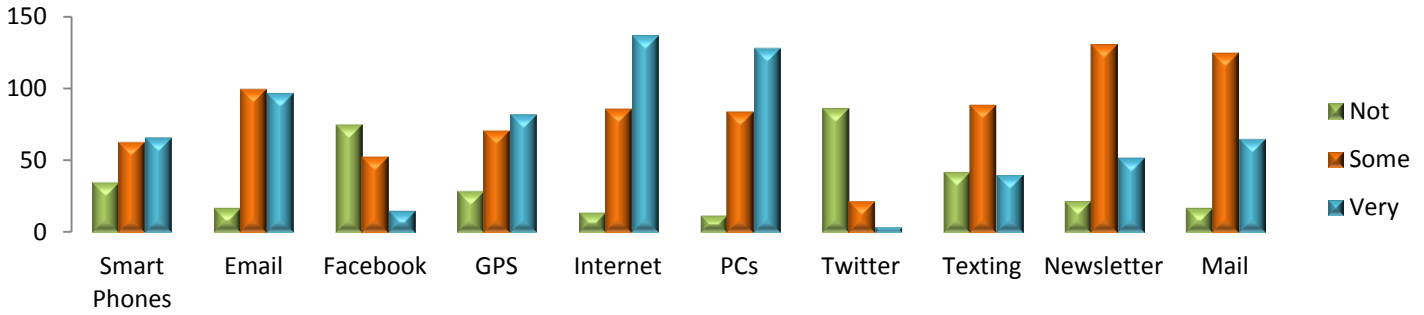
Question 7: Do you feel enough is being done to address flooding in the Turkey River Watershed?

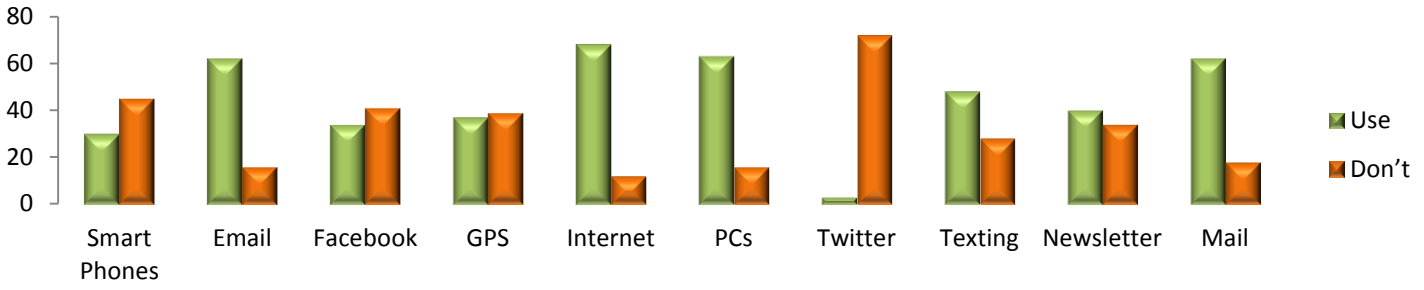


Question 8: Which of the following technologies do you currently use and how useful do you find these tools in your day-to-day operations?

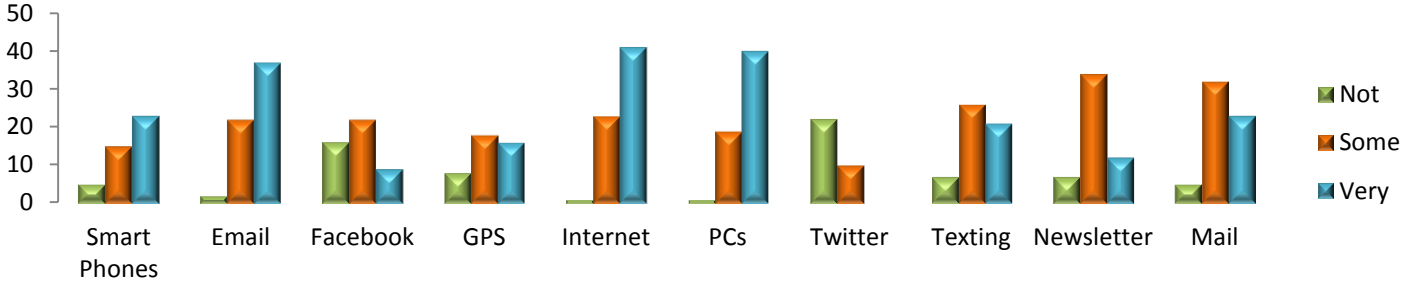


Rural Landowners



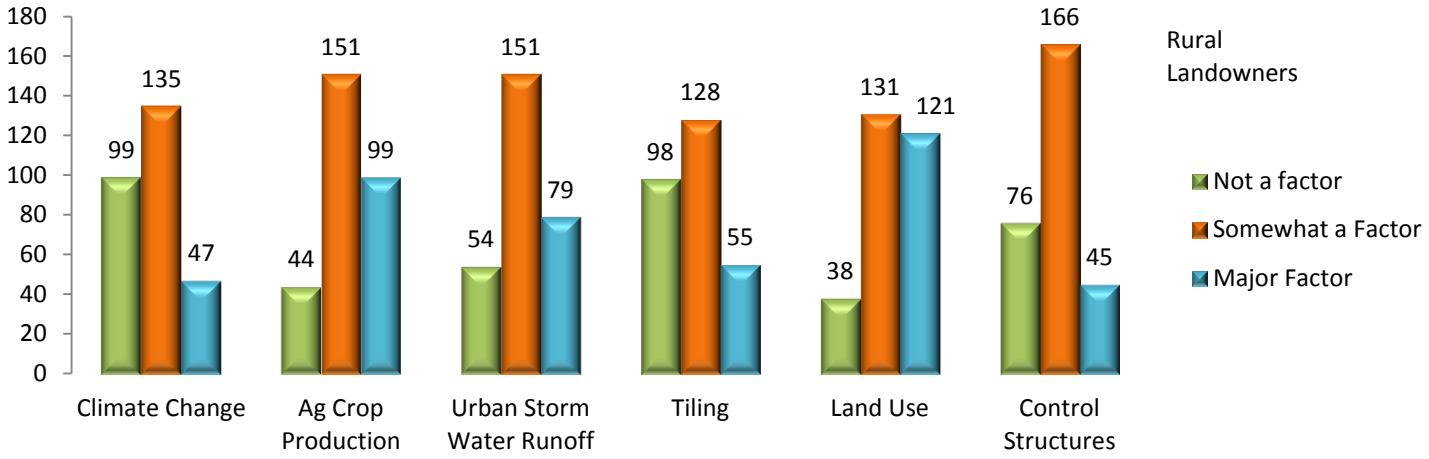


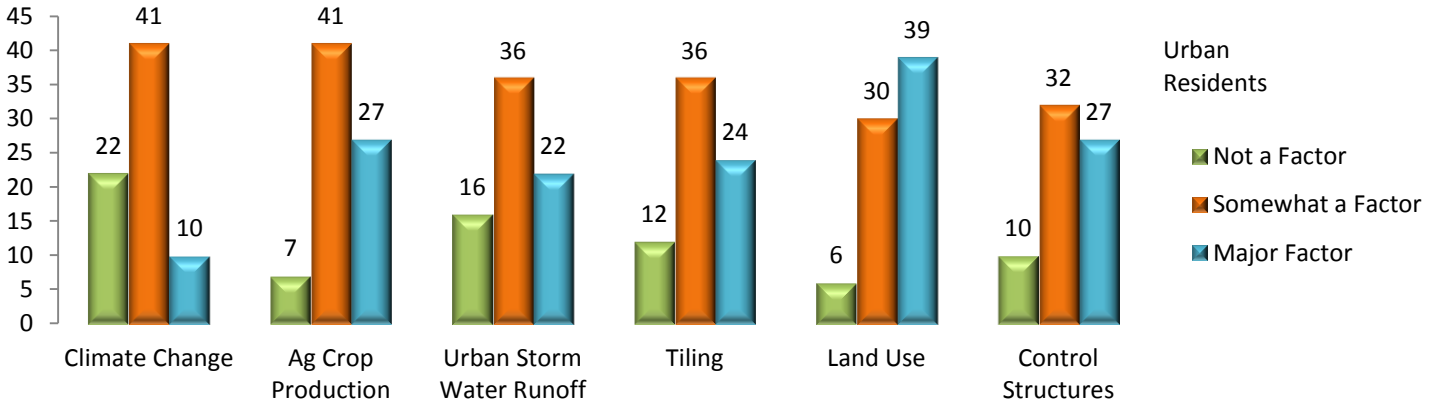
Urban Residents



Mail and internet/email were the most valuable and most widely used pieces of technology used by both populations in the TRW. These technologies will be important for education aspects of the TRW Plan.

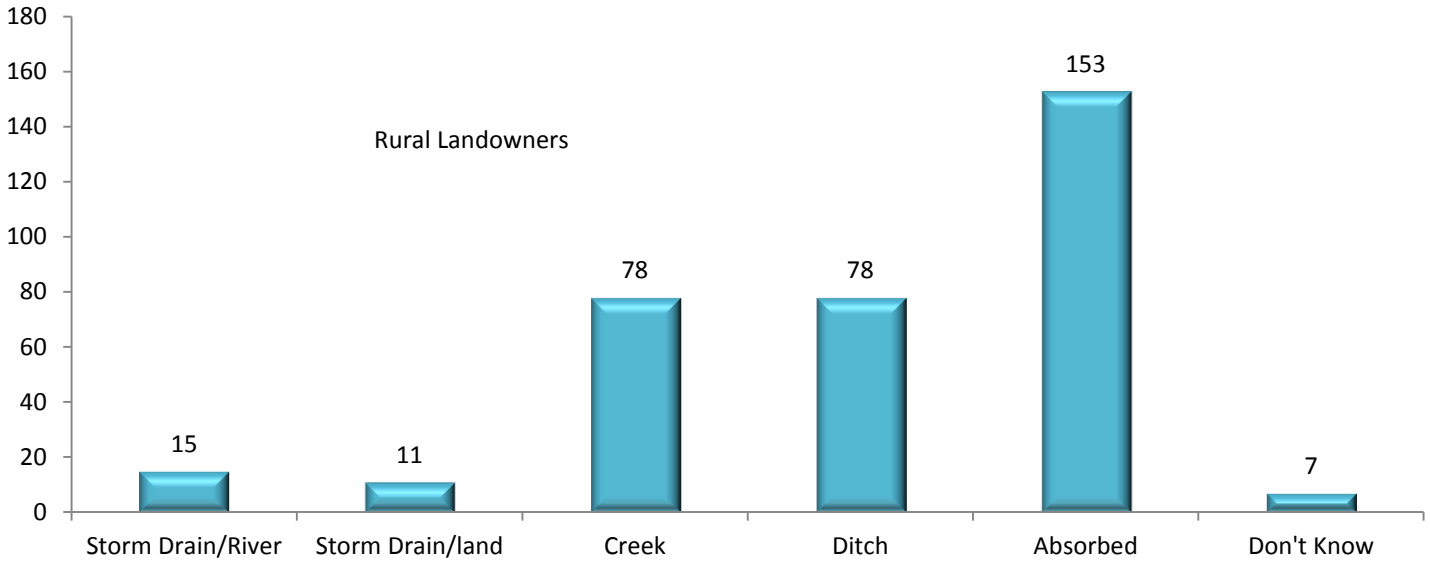
Question 9: How much do you believe each of the following contribute to recent flooding issues in the Turkey River Watershed?

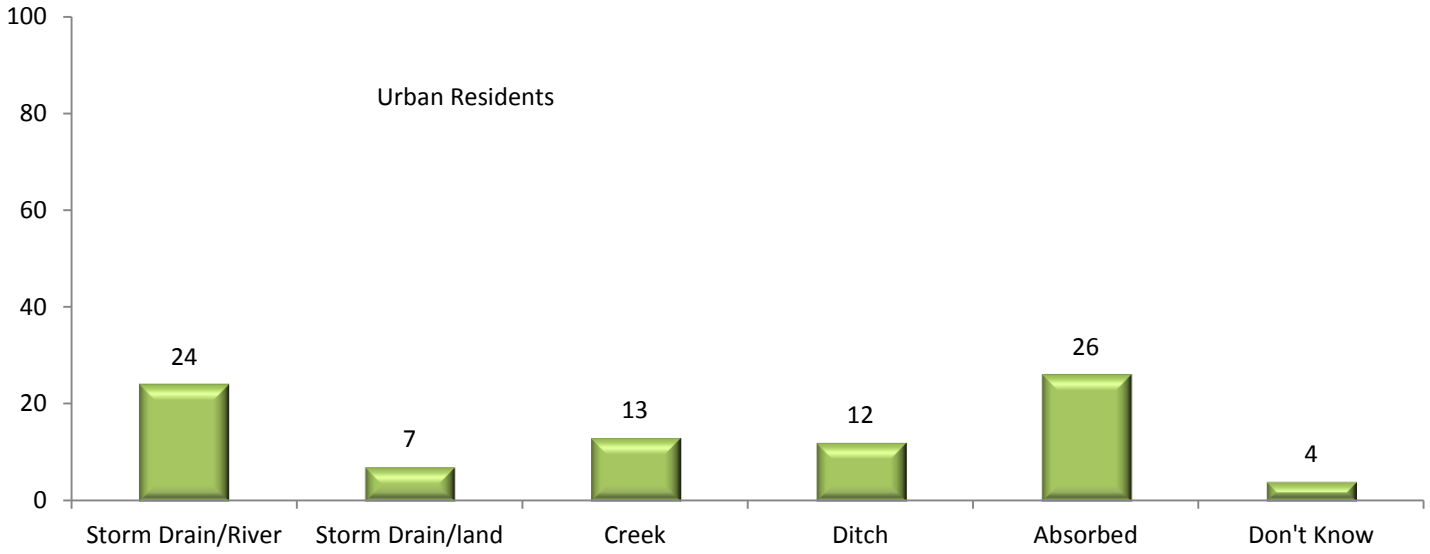




When asked which factors contribute to flooding, a majority of each survey group felt that all factors contributed at least somewhat with the exception of urban residents feeling that recent land use changes being a major contributor. Climate change was most likely to be considered a non-contributor to flooding. Not surprisingly, rural landowners rated agricultural crop production, subsurface tiling, and land use changes as contributing less than urban residents. An equal percentage urban residents and rural landowners considered urban storm water runoff as a major contributor to flooding problems.

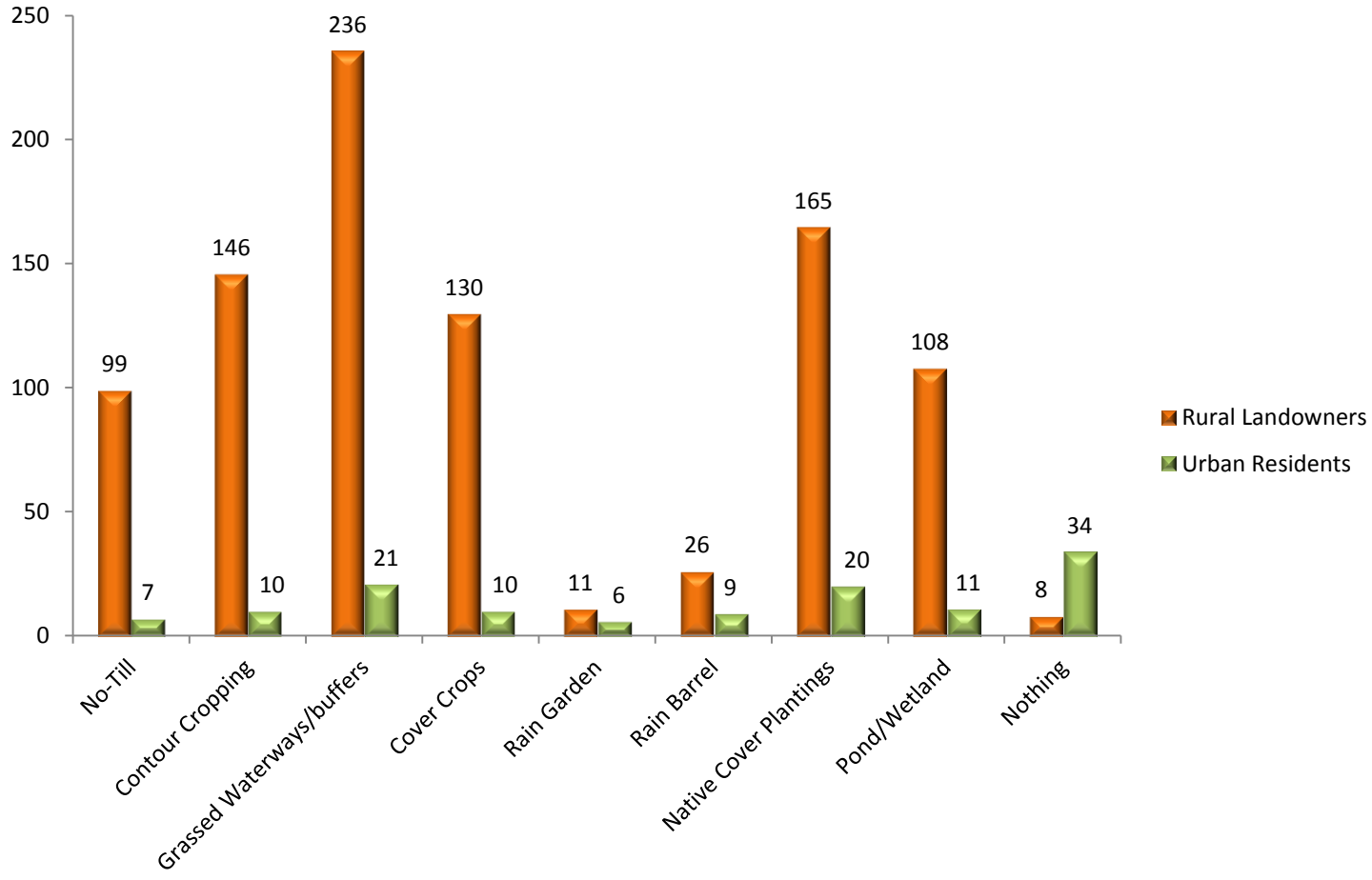
Question 10: Do you know where water goes that falls onto your land or yard?





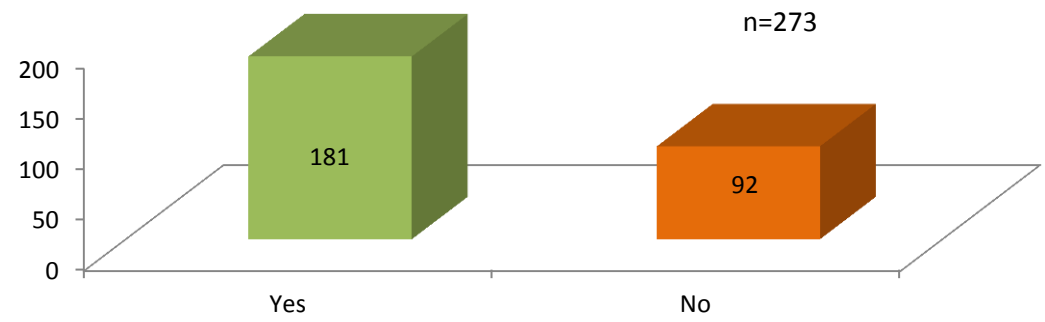
A large majority of rural landowners responded that water is absorbed by their land, while the next two most common answers indicate that water runs directly in to a stream or river. Urban residents responded that water is either absorbed or moves through storm drains into a stream or river. Seven rural landowners and four urban residents responded that they did not know where the water goes after falling on their land. Water that is not absorbed by the land ends up in the Turkey River regardless of where it falls in the watershed. Education efforts outlined in the TRW Plan should aim to help residents determine how water flows off their property.

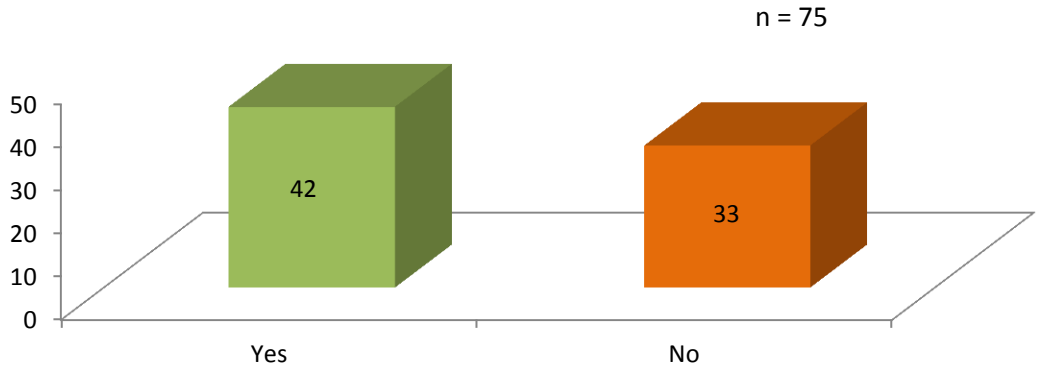
Question 11: What are some methods/practices you are using on your land or property to reduce or slow the amount of runoff entering the river?



Rural landowners are utilizing several runoff reduction strategies including grassed waterways, contour farming, no-till, native cover plantings, and ponds or wetlands. A significant majority of urban residents responded that they are not doing anything to reduce runoff on their property.

Question 12: Are you interested in learning more about what you could do to reduce flooding or improve water quality in the Turkey River Watershed?





The final question of the TRWMA survey was intended to determine whether residents of the TRW would respond positively to efforts to reduce flooding. Over two thirds of rural landowners and 56% of urban residents were interested in learning more about how they could reduce flooding or improve water quality on their property. Of the respondents to the survey, that totals 223 potential projects that could be done as part of the TRW Plan. The results of this survey are intended to represent the TRW population as a whole indicating that a considerable majority of people in the TRW are willing to participate in reducing flooding and improving water quality.