

Environmental Issues

Secondary Data

According to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment the major source of air pollution in the State is motor vehicle emissions²⁰. The average travel time to work for residents of Weld County in 2000 was 23.7 minutes²¹. In Weld County, 24,604 workers aged 16 and over traveled 30 minutes or more to work and 27, 880, or 32% of workers 16 and over worked outside the county.

Community Environmental Issues – Survey Data

Key informants and household respondents were asked to indicate whether water pollution, air pollution, noise or light pollution and neighborhood trash was not an issue, a minor, moderate, or major issue for their communities. Respondent perceptions of the extent to which environmental issues were of concern in their community appear in Table 13 and Figure 26.

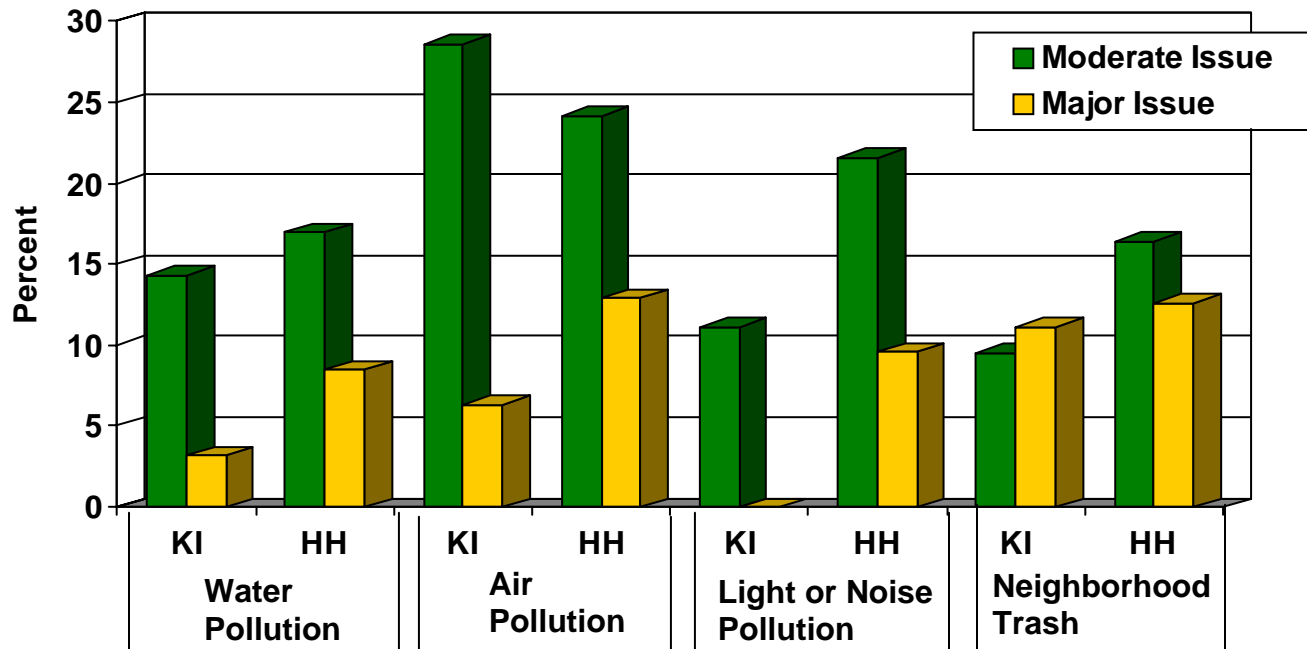
Table 13. Percent of Key Informants (KI) and Household Respondents (HH) Indicating that Environmental Concerns Are a Minor, Moderate, or Major Issue for their Community^a

Environmental Issues	Minor Issue		Moderate Issue		Major Issue		Don't know	
	Key Informant %	HH %	Key Informant %	HH %	Key Informant %	HH %	Key Informant %	HH %
Water pollution	38.1	19.7	14.3	17.0	3.2	8.5	3.2	10.1
Air pollution	42.9	22.0	28.6	24.2	6.3	12.9	1.6	4.9
Too much noise or light	52.4	23.6	11.1	21.6	0.0	9.6	1.6	2.7
Neighborhood trash	44.4	21.9	9.5	16.4	11.1	12.6	0.0	2.7

^a Throughout this report, the percent of respondents who reported concerns were "not an issue" were excluded from the charts and tables. The complete set of frequencies can be found in the Appendix.

Environmental issues in the community were not seen as a moderate or major issue by the majority of respondents. Of the environmental concerns listed, air pollution was the biggest environmental concern as 37.1% of household respondents and 34.9% of key informants saw these as a moderate or major community issue.

Figure 26. Percent of Key Informants (KI) and Household Respondents (HH) Reporting Environmental Issues as a Moderate or Major Issue



Community Environmental Concerns by Subgroup

The extent of community environmental concerns varied across Weld County. Over half of the respondents in living in south-east rural Weld (57.2%), 39.1% of respondents living in west-central Weld and 33.4% of respondents living in Evans reported that water pollution was a moderate or major problem. The concern over air pollution also varied by Weld County location. Those living in close to the major traffic corridors in Weld County (Highway 85, I-76 and I-25) and in the urban areas of Greeley/Evans were more likely to view air pollution as a moderate or major problem. These areas were south-west Weld (50.0%), Evans (50.0%), west-central Weld (45.5%), central-south Weld (44.8%), and Greeley (39.4%). Those reporting too much light or noise were more likely to live in east-central Weld (42%), central-south Weld (41.3%), west-central Weld (40.9%), Evans (39.1%), and Greeley (36.8%).

Other environmental concerns mentioned by respondents included:

West Nile and Mosquitoes

- Mosquitoes
- Mosquito spraying
- West Nile

Trash

- Trash from new housing developments. The rural neighbors see unsightly trash from new home construction
- Junky yards...unkept vehicles w/ no license tag...trash from old vehicles
- Number of vehicles parked on lot
- Lots of cars not from neighborhood
- Junk cars...lack of yard upkeep...junk in yards
- [No] code enforcement, lack of upkeep by landlords

Traffic Issues

- “Too many traffic, neighbors teenage...gas and oil wells employees...we need Rd. 23 surfaced with asphalt”
- “Non-agriculturally friendly/ too much traffic- drivers rude to equipment operators on Hwy 66”
- Speeding
- County road condition
- Cars, trucks, motor cycles-speeding down 35th Avene.
- People run stop signs and drive too fast
- Traffic pollution

Miscellaneous

- Habitat destruction
- The stench from the processing plants
- I believe that new development should be required to keep some kind on ground cover on the open lots instead of letting the dust and dirt blow away
- Greeley does not have a recycling program
- Need more recycling

Household Environmental Issues – Survey Data

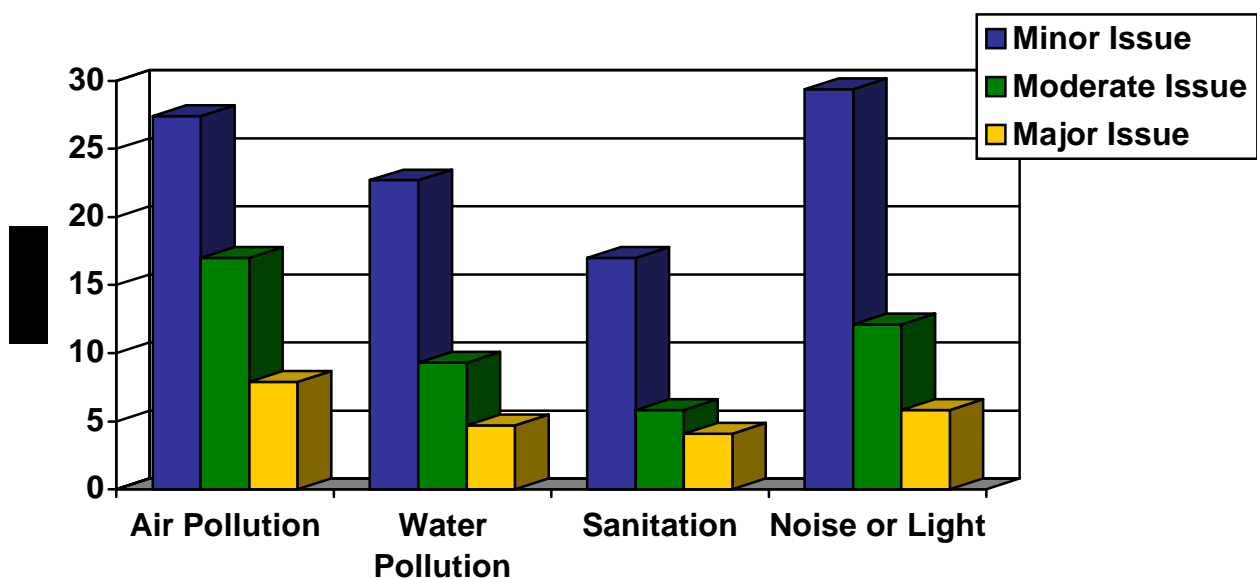
Respondents were asked to indicate if they or anyone in their household had experienced environmental issue such as experiencing air pollution or water pollution, septic or sanitation issues or too much noise or light. The results are shown in Table 14 and Figure 27.

Table 14. Number and Percent of Households Respondents Reporting Environmental Concerns as Not an Issue, a Minor, Moderate or Major Issue

Environmental Issues	Not an Issue		Minor Issue		Moderate Issue		Major Issue	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Experiencing air pollution	174	47.7	100	27.4	62	17.0	29	7.9
Experiencing water pollution	231	63.3	83	22.7	34	9.3	17	4.7
Experiencing septic or sanitation issues	266	73.1	62	17.0	21	5.8	15	4.1
Too much noise or light	192	52.7	107	29.4	44	12.1	21	5.8

Results indicated that with the exception of air pollution and too much noise or light, the majority of household respondents indicated that environmental issues were not of concern. Over half of respondents indicated that air pollution was either a minor, moderate or major issue, and of those one-quarter indicated that air pollution was a moderate or major issue. Too much noise or light was seen as a moderate or major household issue by 17.9% of respondents

Figure 27. Percent of Households Reporting Environmental Concerns as a Minor, Moderate or Major Issue



Drinking water was the primary environmental issue raised by the focus groups. While many of the respondents complained about the bad smell and foul taste of the drinking water in municipal water supplies, most drank the water because they were unable to afford bottled water. "The water is bad but we can't buy bottled water..." Another participant stated, "Well, the water is better here than in Mexico. At least it doesn't stain your teeth."

Other environmental issues that emerged related to noise pollution from barking dogs, trains and trucks. Trash in some neighborhoods was an ongoing problem whereas in other communities, trash was a transient issue and was related to events with a large number of people such as county fairs.

Household Environmental Issues by Subgroups

Respondents living in central-south Weld, south-east Weld, and west-central Weld were more likely to report that experiencing air pollution as a moderate or major issue than were respondents living in other regions of the county.

Finally, respondents with incomes less than \$35,000 were more likely to report experiencing water pollution than were those with higher incomes. Respondents with less than \$14,999 were twice as likely as to report experiencing a septic or sanitation issue than were respondents with higher incomes.