The Natural Edge

3rd Party Program Evaluation Report

January 2022
Sustainable Eastern Ontario


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Executive Summary

The Natural Edge program ran from 2019-2021 in Quinte watershed as a collaboration between Watersheds Canada and Quinte Conservation. The objective was to engage landowners in shoreline rehabilitation projects through planting native plants in areas that had previously been mown or otherwise used and degraded along the waterfront. Rehabilitating shorelines in this manner has a variety of benefits for wildlife, water quality, preventing erosion & mitigating flood risk, etc. The program subsidized costs of shoreline re-naturalizing by covering 75% of planting costs, and further supported landowners by providing labour for the actual planting, and expert assessment of the shoreline, including customizable planting plans.

Surveys were sent to program participants before and after planting to assess agreement with several statements regarding knowledge and understanding of environmental issues related to land use and waterways, values related to the natural environment, capacity to engage in shoreline rehabilitation, and project outcomes. Freeform comments were also collected, and a subset of key stakeholders was interviewed. Where possible, numerical analysis was conducted comparing agreement before and after plantings were completed. This was complemented with a qualitative analysis of comments and interview responses.

Overall, the Natural Edge program was hugely successful, with 86 plantings completed over a combined stretch of shoreline that nearly doubled the target set out when applying for funding. Participants were generally highly satisfied with the program and pleased by their experiences and results. As far as could be assessed, plant survival was high and had beneficial impacts on the shoreline, in particular for biodiversity. The program both relied on and supported social and community networks and collaborations. Several recommendations regarding leveraging the successes realized so far and adapting the program so that shoreline rehabilitation can continue past its completion are included in this report.

Introduction

The Natural Edge program is an outreach and landowner engagement program run jointly by Watersheds Canada and Quinte Conservation from 2019-2021 in the Central and Eastern Ontario region. The objective of the program was to recruit waterfront landowners willing to convert some or all of the waterfront on their land from a highly developed (usually mown lawn) state to a more natural and diverse state through the planting of various appropriate plant species. Increasing the biodiversity of this edge habitat, and returning it to a more natural state, supports healthier and more stable aquatic ecosystems, increases biodiversity onshore, and helps mitigate issues such as erosion and water contamination through runoff. This in turn helps improve water quality, increase fish habitat, and provide other benefits of natural wetlands.

The program heavily supported landowners to accomplish the transition. Cost, lack of knowledge, and lack of physical ability to install new plants were all potential barriers that could prevent a landowner from rehabilitating their shoreline, even if they were already aware of the benefits and wanted to do so. The program covered 75% of the cost and provided an expert evaluation of the area to be planted and a customized planting plan that took into account the landowner's wishes and concerns regarding aesthetics, maintenance, preserving water access, etc. In addition, the physical work of planting was carried out by staff and/or volunteers arranged by program coordinators – although landowners were encouraged to participate in this portion if they wished and were able to. Landowners were then entrusted with providing care to the new plants until fully established.

This third-party evaluation of the Natural Edge program was conducted by Sustainable Eastern Ontario, a non-profit based in Ottawa, ON, that provides support and capacity-building services for other environmental non-profit organizations, among other things. The primary purpose of the evaluation is to verify work done, assess success and lessons learned, and satisfy funder requirements. The secondary purpose is to provide insight into how the program could be improved, adapted, or scaled up to continue promoting the goal of re-naturalizing significant portions of shoreline and protecting Ontario waterways.

Meet the Evaluator:

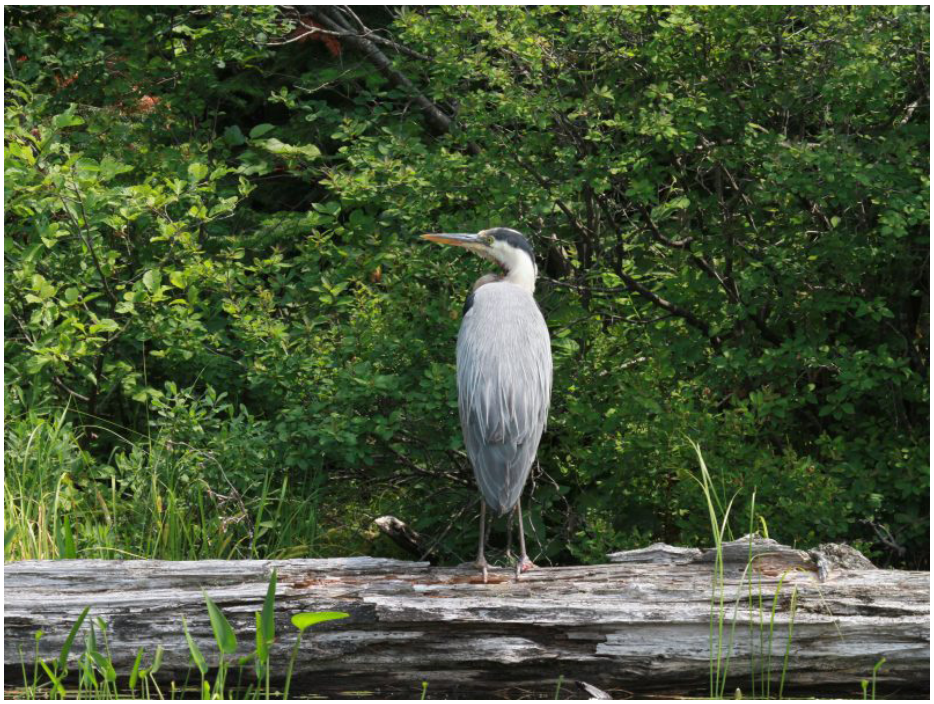
Kathryn Norman, M.Sc., B.Sc.H. is the Program Evaluator at Sustainable Eastern Ontario. She holds a Master's degree in Biology with a specialization in Wetland Ecology and Invasive Species Biology, and a Bachelor of Science (Honours) degree in Integrated Science – Biology & Psychology. She has studied statistics at the post-graduate level, worked in various academic research environments, and has received training in Non-Profit Program Evaluation from Capacity Canada, the Tamarack Institute, and the McConnell Foundation. She is an instructor with the Capacity Building Institute, where she specializes in teaching critical thinking skills, program evaluation basics, and communications. Questions regarding this evaluation can be sent to *Kathryn@SustainableEasternOntario.ca*, and more information about Sustainable Eastern Ontario and its services – including Program Evaluation – can be found at *www.SustainableEasternOntario.ca.*

Methodology

Evaluation was built into the Natural Edge program from its inception, and two digital surveys were conducted by email by in-house by Watersheds Canada/Quinte Conservation staff during the program: a pre-planting and a post-planting survey. The surveys were significantly similar, beginning with basic demographic information collection, and then assessing how strongly participants agreed or disagreed (on a five-point scale) with several statements regarding their environmental awareness, understanding of the environmental issues at play, values and concerns related to their waterway, and knowledge and ability to engage in shoreline rehabilitation work. The pre-planting survey also asked participants how they had learned about the program (selection from several options), and allowed space for general comments. The post-planting survey additionally asked about their motivation to participate (select from multiple options), the customized planting plans, plant survival rates (respondents selected the provided answer which was broadly most appropriate), overall satisfaction, and willingness to recommend the program to peers, as well as opportunity to provide comments. Additional meta-data regarding the survey completion process was collected automatically by the survey platform. The complete surveys are reproduced in Appendix 1 of this report. Surveys were not anonymous and participants had no expectation of anonymity.

In addition to survey data, qualitative interviews were conducted with key stakeholders selected by program staff to represent the range of experiences and perspectives of the participant pool. Interviewees were introduced to the Evaluator by email, and interviews were conducted in the following days by telephone following a standard outline. Respondents were advised of the purpose of the evaluation and that their responses would be kept anonymous unless specified otherwise, but that due to the small pool of interviewees and the personalized nature of the work performed, it was possible that individual statements could be traced back to them. The interview outline questions are reproduced in Appendix 2 of this report.

Data analysis & synthesis was conducted by the Evaluator based on full survey data provided by program staff and interview responses. Where possible, survey answers were converted to numeric values to allow quantitative comparison and assessment, using Microsoft Excel. Themes from qualitative survey data and interview responses were assessed according to the frequency with which keywords and concepts were referenced. In some cases, specific feedback from the surveys was further informed by conversation with interviewees or program staff who had followed up with the relevant individual.



Results

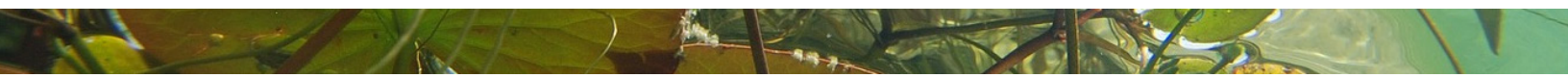
Overview:

Between the Spring of 2019 and the Fall of 2021, a total of 86 plantings were conducted as part of the Natural Edge Program. The primary waterways involved were Lake Ontario and various bays and specific areas thereof, and the Moira River, as well as several other smaller lakes, rivers, and creeks. Sites were located within the Quinte watershed, with some possible involvement of the Cataraqui and Lower Trent watersheds. A map of site distribution is displayed in figure 1.

Figure 1: Distribution of planting sites around Quinte watershed in eastern Ontario. Only sites for which sufficiently clear address information existed for Google Maps to find the location are displayed.

In total, 5863.25m (5.9km) of shoreline was planted and rehabilitated, for total of 35509 sq m (8.7 acres) planted area. Over 23,700 plants were used to accomplish this. The target length of shoreline to be rehabilitated, based on the original grant application, was 3km, and an anticipated 23 700 native plants were estimate to be used for this. In fact, nearly twice that length of shoreline was planted and the target numnber of plants installed was reached.

Of the 86 different sites (and therefore landowners), 74 were sent digital surveys. The difference is accounted for by technical issues with email (2), demo sites (2), and some unspecified reasons that appear to be either one individual owning multiple properties, or plantings done on public or municipal lands with no landowner. From these 74 contacts, 43 responses were received for the pre-planting survey, and 36 for the post-planting survey. These response rates -- 58% and 49%, respectively – are very good, even for a highly engaged audience such as this. Some attrition in re-



sponse rate over time is normal and to be expected. In general, all respondents answered all questions, with only a few skipped questions that showed now apparent pattern and likely do not indicate any biases or impact analysis in a significant way. Average survey completion time was ten minutes and thirty seconds for the pre-planting survey, and nine minutes, forty-two seconds for the post-planting survey. Gender data were not captured, but based on the names of respondents and traditional gender naming conventions, the population appears to be largely balanced, with perhaps a slight female over-representation – this female bias is not unusual in the environmental sector. On average, respondents took ten minutes and thirty seconds to complete the pre-planting survey, and slightly under ten minutes to complete the post planting survey.

Individual Responses: Survey Questions 4-17

The following questions were all statements for which respondents indicated on a five-point scale how much they agreed or disagreed, from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4) to Strongly Agree (5). In some cases, a higher number is "good" and in others a lower number is presumably desirable, which helps mitigate the tendency for respondents to simply select the same answer to every question. Both the frequency of different responses, and the numerical equivalent averages (full agreement being equal to 5), were compared. This section begins with Question 4, the previous questions having been collection of demographic information.

Question 4:

Awareness of environmental issues, especially human impacts on fresh water.

In this case, a higher number indicates greater awareness of issues and human impacts, which is presumably good from the perspective of an environmental organization and can be expected to be the case for a population that has chosen to participate in a program like The Natural Edge. Out of a possible high score of 5, the pre-planting responses averaged 4.2, and post-planting 4.5, a shift of 6%, which is not statistically significant. Frequency results are shown in Figure 2, left.

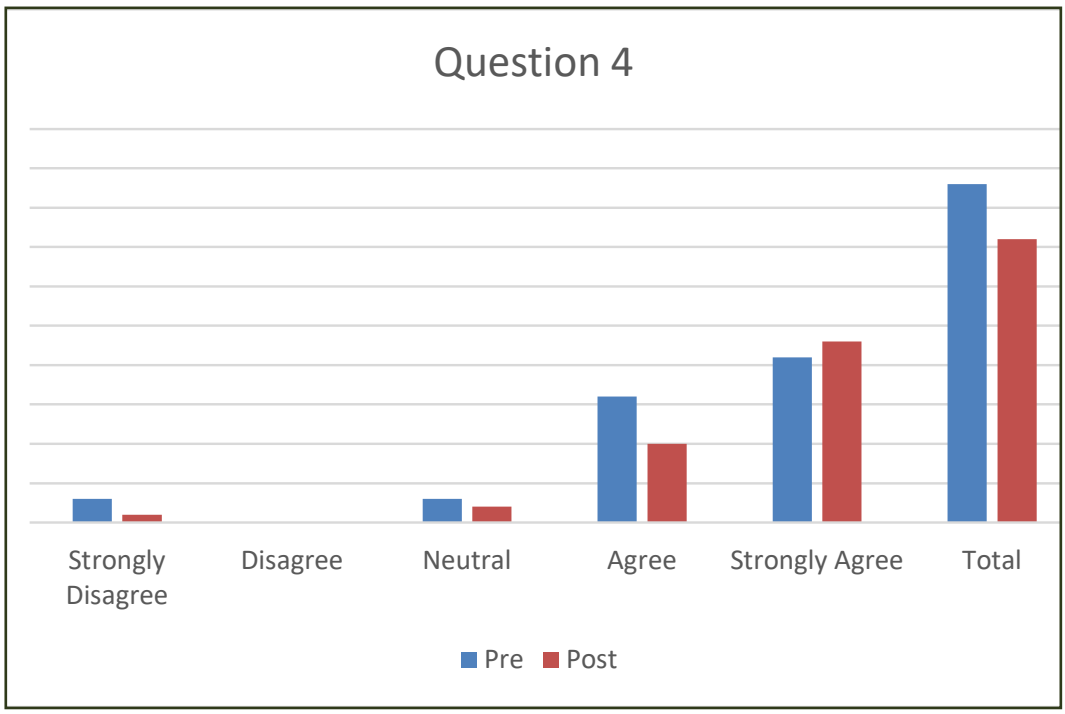


Figure 2

Question 5:

I always think about how my actions affect the environment.

Again, with this question, the respondent population would be expected to more strongly agree with the statement, and that result would be desirable in the context of creating change. Indeed, this was the case with pre- and post- scores of 4.3 and 4.5, respectively, a shift of 3%, likely due to chance.

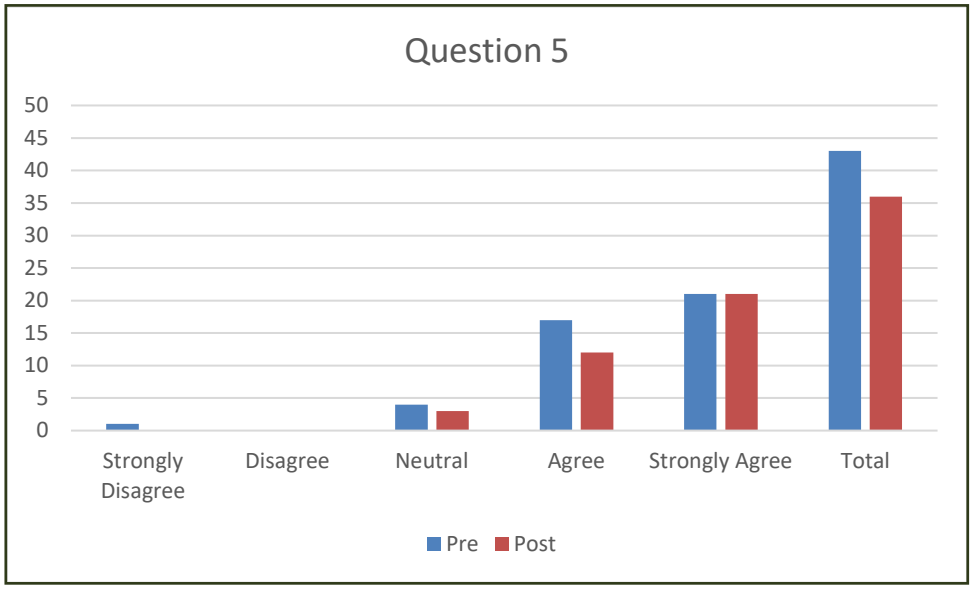


Figure 3: Frequency of responses for Question 5.

Question 6:

I value fish and wildlife, and the habitat that protects them.

It would be expected that the majority of individuals who participate in a program like the Natural Edge, or even just purchase rural waterfront property, would tend to value, fish, wildlife, and habitat, and indeed that was seen here. Both pre-and post- planting surveys showed an average agreement of 4.7 out of a possible five, the only differences being lost in rounding the final value. Note that lower values in the post-planting survey reflect slightly fewer responses, not changes in attitude. The lower number of responses is visible in the "Total" column in Figure 4, below.

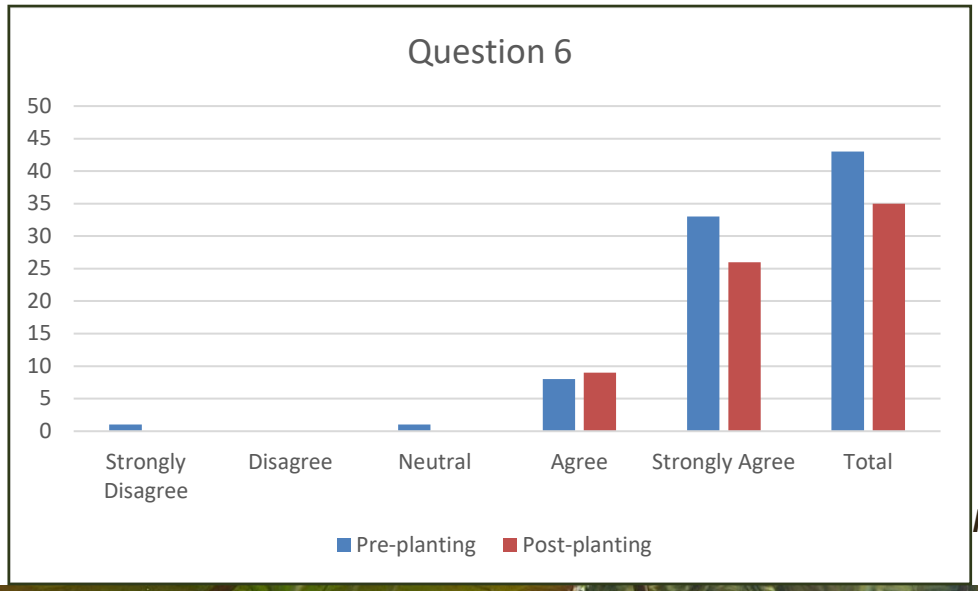


Figure 4

Question 7:

I value the aesthetics of my landscape more than having a natural shoreline.

In this instance, one might expect low agreement from the survey population, given their willingness to engage in shoreline naturalization, or mixed results, as "aesthetics" can mean different things to different people, and individuals may not have a strong opinion either way depending on how they use the land, whether shoreline is visible from the house or cottage, etc. Indeed, results were skewed towards disagreement but were somewhat mixed. Average agreement values were low (2.4 and 2.7, pre- and post-planting) and the slight shift is likely not statistically significant, and rather due to different individuals responding to the first and second survey.

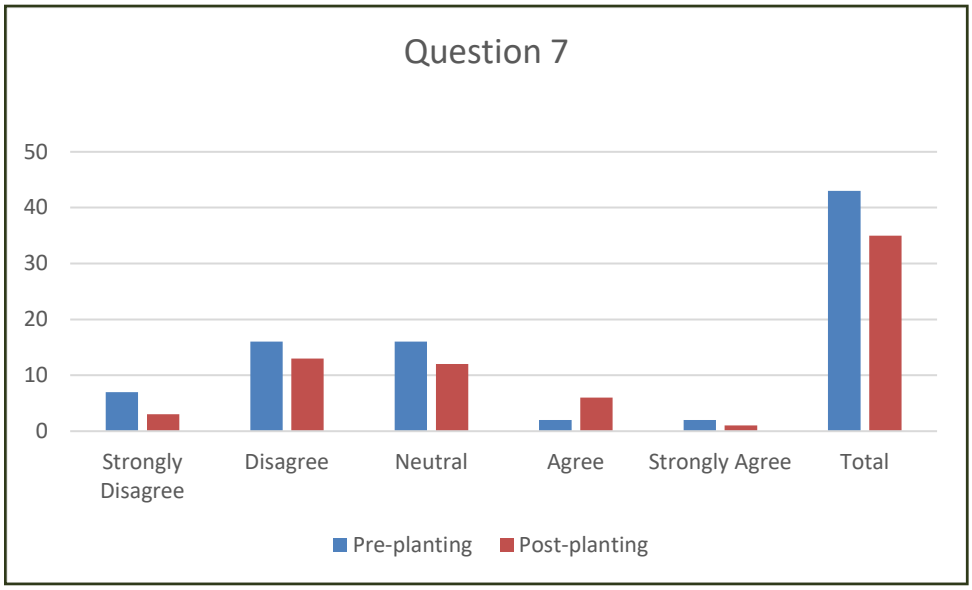
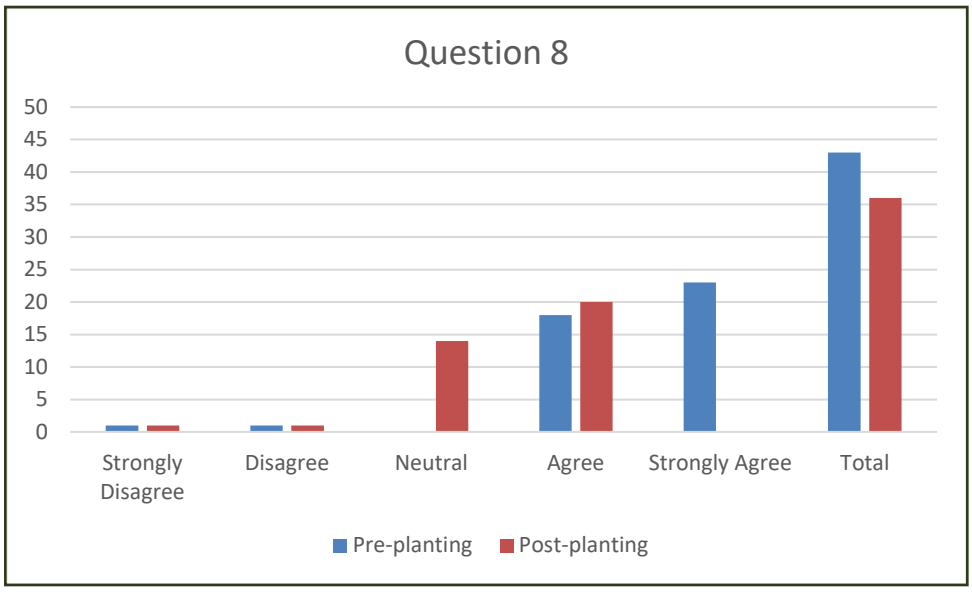


Figure 5

Question 8:

I understand how having a natural shoreline protects water quality.

Before looking at survey results, one might expect either high agreement with this statement from people who have already indicated they value the habitat and think about how their actions affect the environment or a mixed response, as understanding of shoreline-waterway interactions may not be common knowledge. An increase in understanding after completion of the consultation and planting process might also be expected.



In reality, average agreement was high (4.4 and 4.5) and respondents were apparently confident in their knowledge of this topic both before and after their planting was completed. Interestingly, while overall agreement remained largely similar, there was a slight shift away from strong agreement to more neutral responses. A possible ex-

Figure 6

planation is that working with program staff made some individuals realize they were not as aware of how shorelines impact water quality as they had initially assumed, a process of discovering the "unknown unknowns" which is common in educational situations. It may also be a simple artifact of variation in who responded to both surveys.

Question 9:

I understand how having a natural shoreline provides fish and wildlife habitat.

Expectations and results for this question are consistent with what was discussed for Question 8. Survey values show agreement of 4.5 and 4.6, a difference which is likely not statistically significant. Respondents may know more about fish habitat specifically because of another Watersheds Canada program relating to fish habitat enhancement and a lot of messaging regarding the importance of natural edges for fish, but the difference between responses to this question and the previous one is not large and may not be significant.

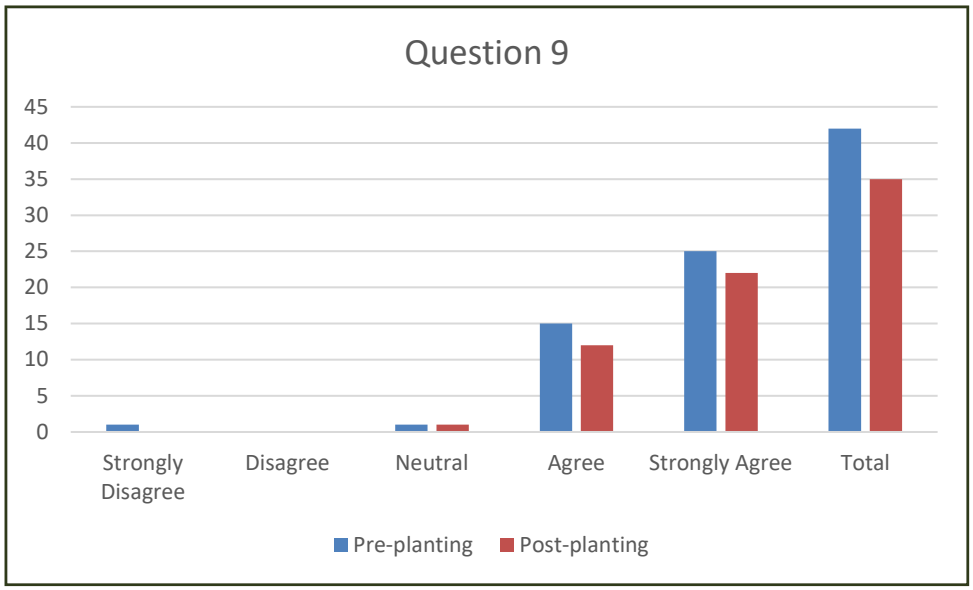
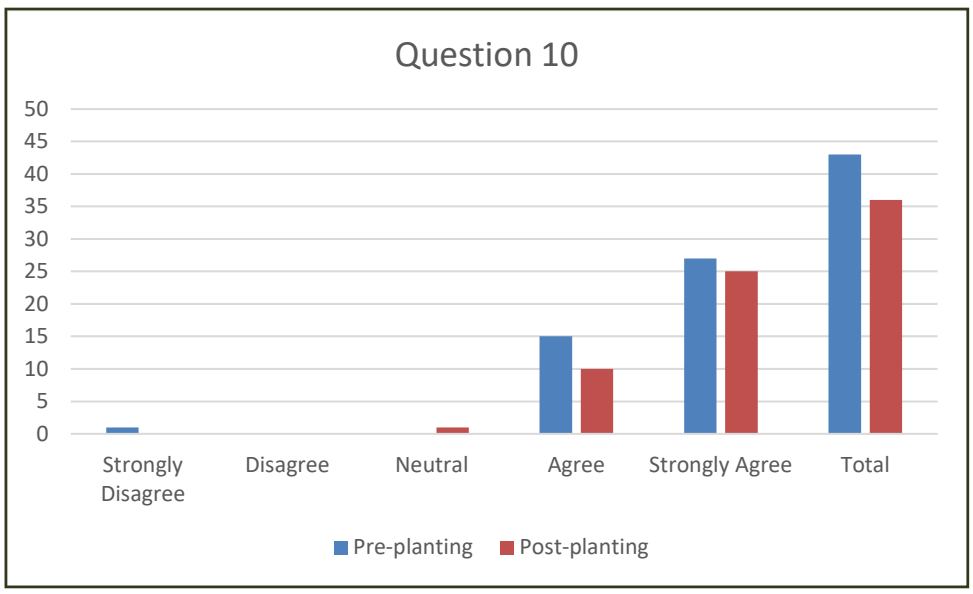


Figure 7

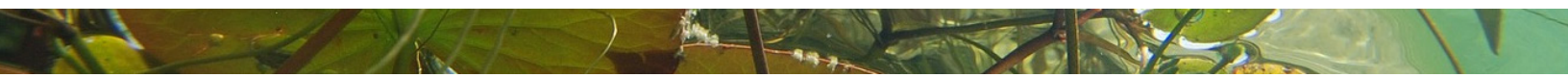
Question 10:

I am concerned about the health of my shoreline.



High agreement with this statement would be expected from a sample of people who chose to participate in a shoreline rehabilitation program, and indeed this question had some of the strongest agreement of the whole survey: 4.6 and 4.7 in the pre-planting and post-planting surveys.

Figure 8



Question 11:
I know how to restore my shoreline.

It would be difficult to predict what responses would be to this question – on one hand, people participating in the program might be expected to have a higher-than-average knowledge of shoreline rehabilitation if they know enough to be aware of its importance. On the other, if individuals were already highly knowledgeable, they would not necessarily need to participate in a program.

In reality, results were somewhat mixed, with an agreement level of 3 out of 5 in the pre-planting survey, and 3.6 out of five in the post-planting survey. This difference is one of the largest in the pre- to post- comparison and is likely statistically significant, with the biggest change seemingly people shifting from "disagree" to "agree" after having participated in their own shoreline planting in some way.

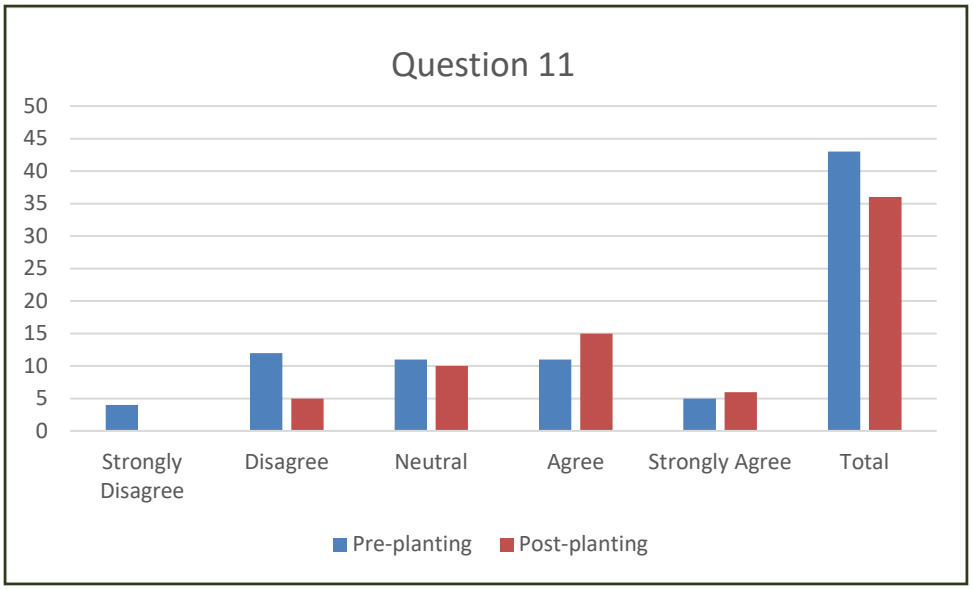


Figure 9

Question 12:
I know what plants to plant along my shoreline.

This question can be thought of as similar to question 11, with knowledge of the appropriate plants to use being a subset of knowing how to restore a shoreline, and in fact, the responses were similarly mixed, but with a larger shift towards greater agreement than in the previous question. A jump from 2.6 to 3.4 (out of a possible 5 for total agreement) represents a nearly 18% self-reported increase in knowledge of appropriate plant species for a shoreline, the largest shift in this portion of the survey. As with question 11, there was a decrease in disagreement that corresponds to an increase in agreement.

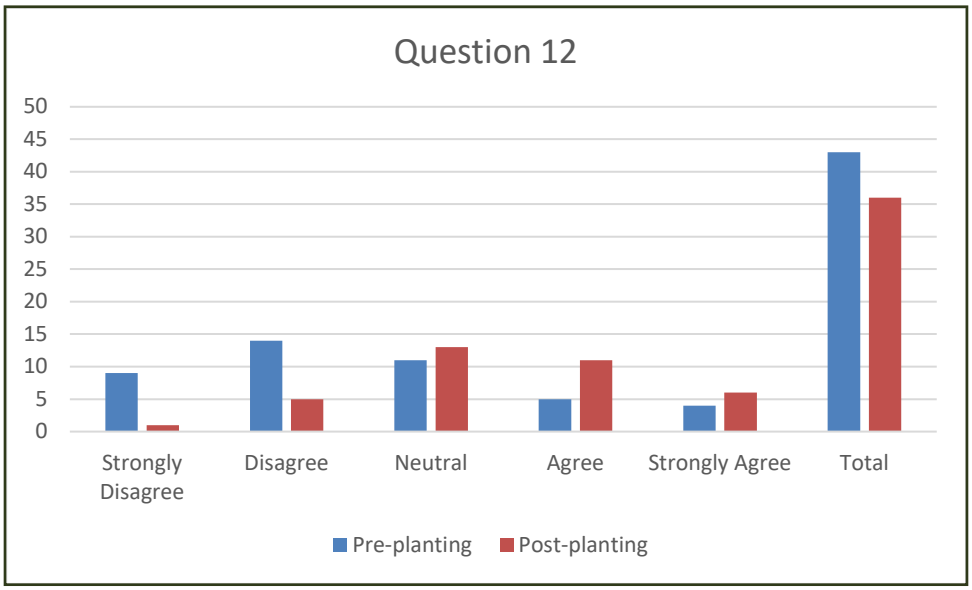
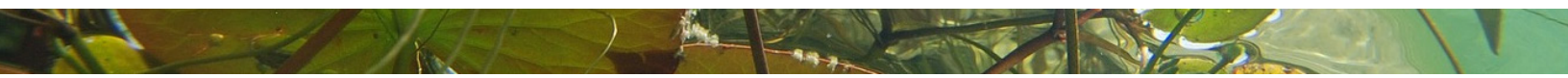


Figure 10



Question 13:
I am able to plant my shoreline myself.

This question speaks to the physical ability of participants to engage in the actual labour involved in installing new plants along the shoreline. Without knowing the age bracket of participants and the actual conditions at planting sites, it would be difficult to predict what responses would be to this question and if or how they might change. The responses received for this question averaged out to be fairly neutral, with a slight shift towards agreement in the post-planting survey (from 2.4 to 2.9, a just under 10% change). This may be reflective of increased confidence in their own ability to do the planting after having seen it done or participated with the assistance of program staff, but it is hard to draw that conclusion firmly based on the data.

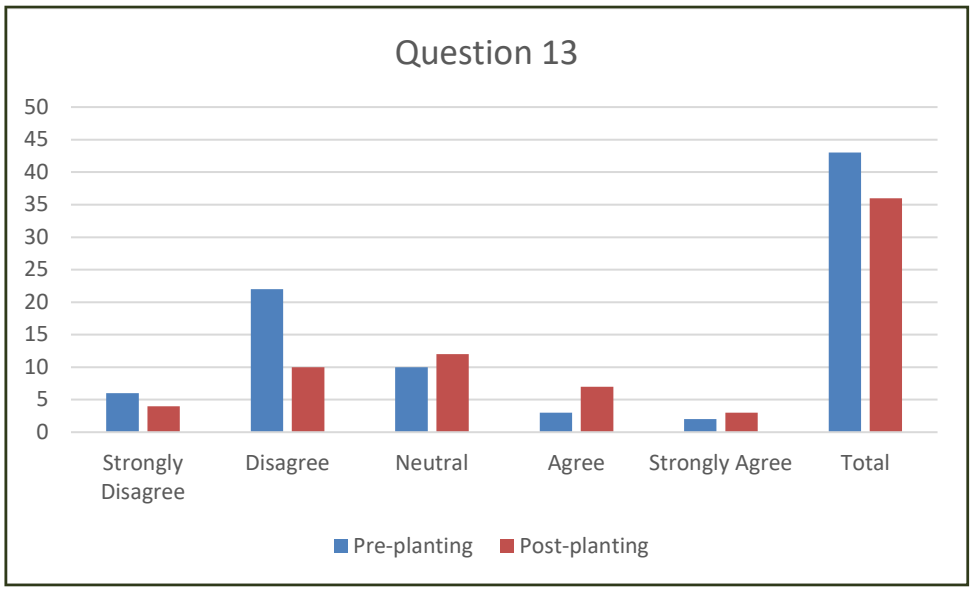


Figure 11

Question 14:
I understand how my actions on my land impacts my lake/river.

As with previous questions asking about understanding, fairly high agreement with this statement might be expected – presumably, those with no understanding of the connection would be less likely to join the Natural Edge program. Indeed, most respondents agreed with this statement in the pre-planting survey, with an average agreement value of 4.2 out of a possible 5. Post planting, this increased to 4.6, which is not surprising, although also not statistically significant. That going through the planning and planting process with program staff would increase participants' awareness of how their actions impact the body of water their property sits on is not an unlikely outcome.

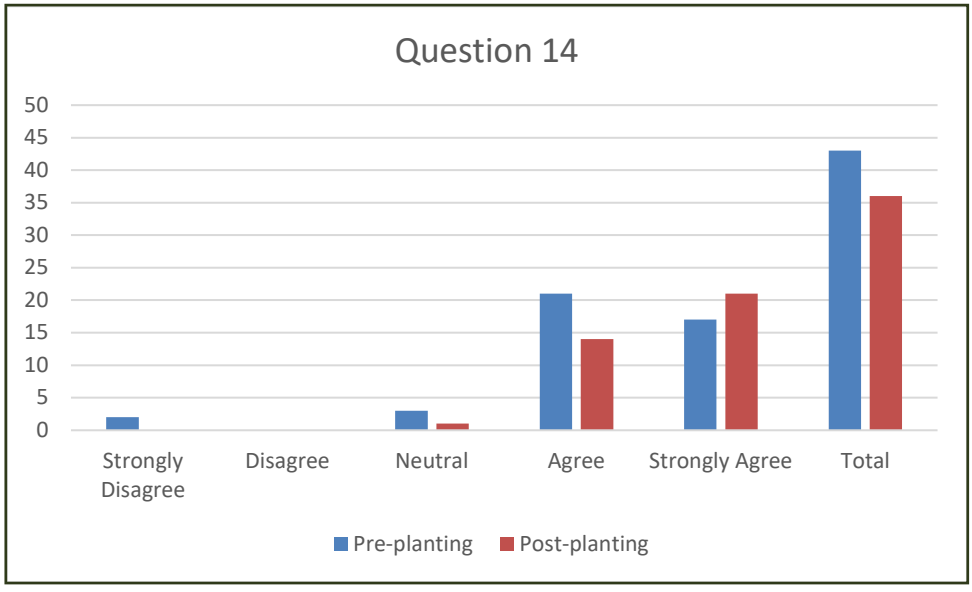


Figure 12

Question 15:

Funding from the Natural Edge Program is critical to my participation in shoreline naturalization.

Responses to this question might be expected to be mixed – presumably, a large number of waterfront property owners are at least financially well-off enough to afford a cottage or vacation property, and certainly property ownership correlates with higher socio-economic status. On the other hand, rural populations and aging populations are less likely to have high incomes, supply costs may be higher outside of large population centers, and property owners may be reluctant to spend money on something which may not increase property values. Agreement was high for this statement (4.6, pre-planting), although surprisingly there was a slight decrease in agreement post-planting (4.4). This is likely a result of random fluctuation and not significant, but could also indicate a greater willingness to invest in a natural shoreline among those who have seen the benefits of one.

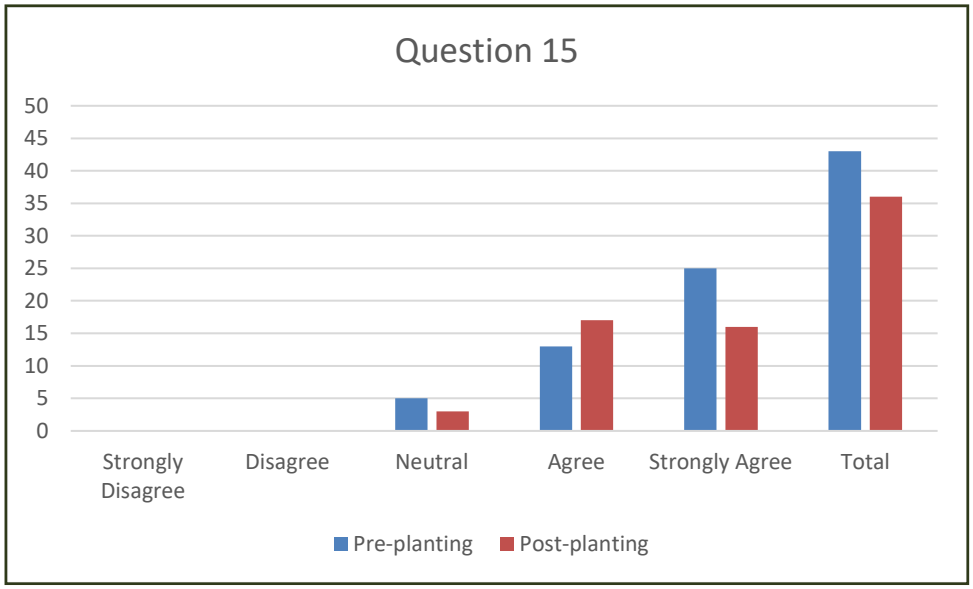


Figure 13

Question 16:

Guidance and education from the Natural Edge Program is critical to my participation in shoreline naturalization.

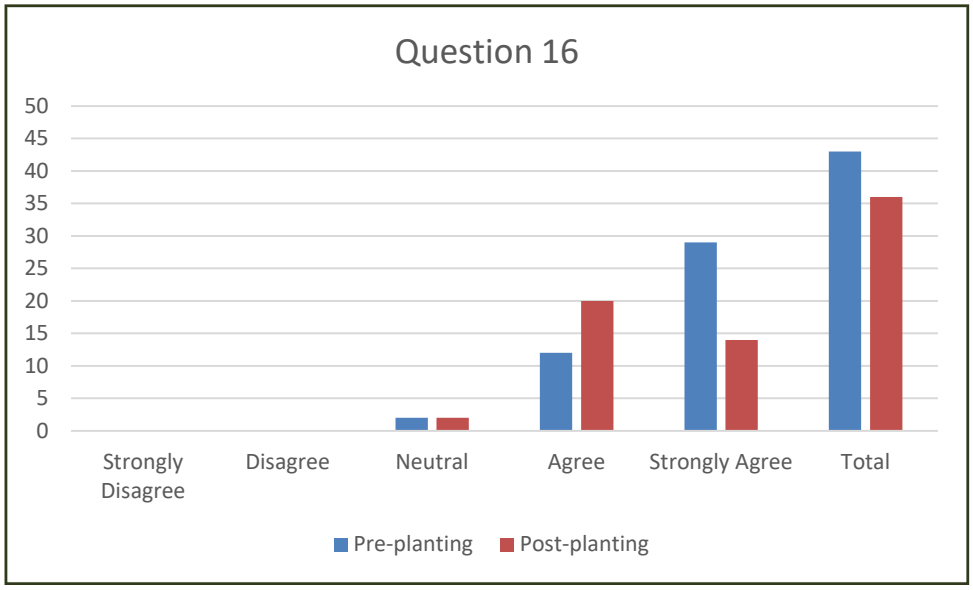
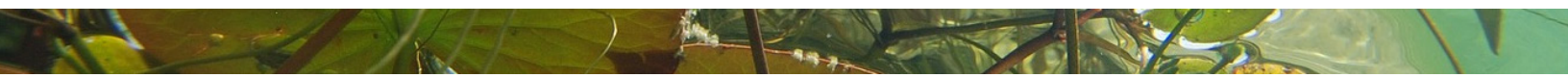


Figure 14

Agreement with this statement is expected to be high, as those who did not see the value in the guidance and education provided would probably not have joined the program. Pre-planting, average agreement was 4.6 out of a possible 5, very high. Post-planting there was a slight decrease in agreement to 4.3 – still quite high. They may reflect greater knowledge and confidence on the part of participants who feel more able to tackle



a shoreline restoration project on their own after having seen it done but again is likely a chance fluctuation. The largest change was a shift from agreeing strongly to simply agreeing – none of the respondents were in disagreement with the statement either before or after their own planting was done.

Question 17:
I am willing to speak to my peers about the importance of having a natural shoreline.

It is hard to predict ahead of time how strongly participants would agree with this statement, although knowing that many signed up based on word of mouth or other community-level campaigns, it would seem likely that most individuals would be willing to continue that train of communication. Pre- and post- results showed 4.5 and 4.2 average agreement, which is indeed quite high. As will be discussed further later, many respondents who indicated they were not willing to speak to peers commented that they had already done so, or something of that nature.

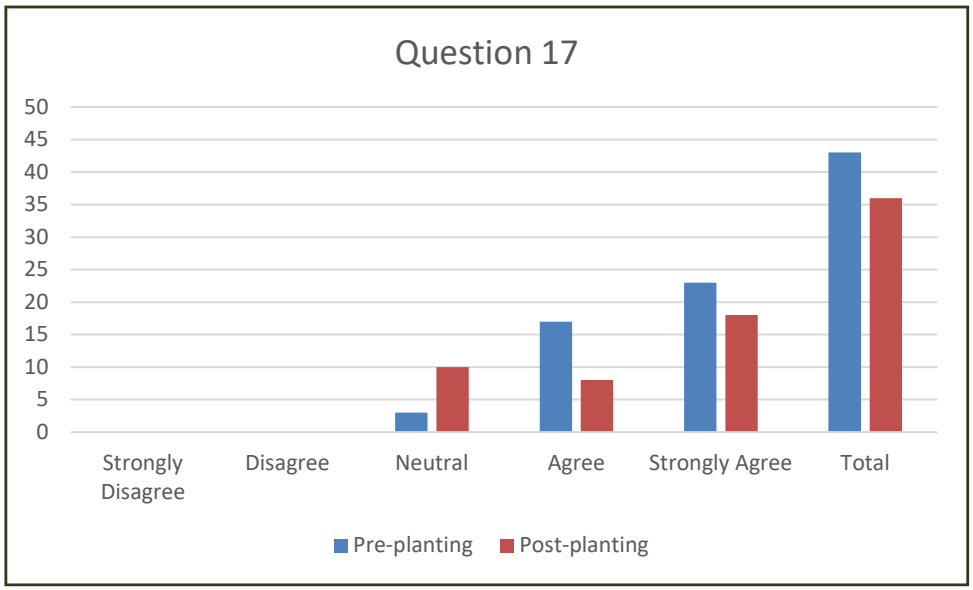
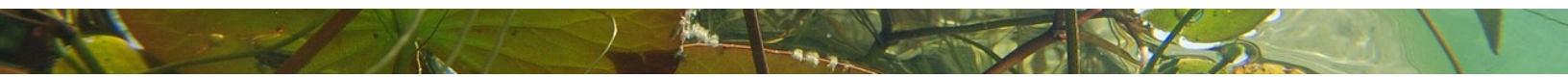


Figure 15

Pre-planting & Post-planting Comparison

Consistent questions between the pre-planting and post-planting surveys shed some light on whether and how participation in the Natural Edge program altered participants' views and self-assessments. Due to relatively small (statistically speaking) sample sizes and the difference in response rate between the two surveys, in-depth mathematical analysis, and calculation of statistical significance would not be meaningfully more informative than a simple assessment. It should be pointed out that some amount of variation is normal over time, and the fluctuations were overall not very large. Most notably, the changes in average response to Questions 12, 11, and 13 (in descending order) are most likely to be statistically significant, and the most meaningful in the real world.

The pre-planting and post-planting average values and % change are displayed in Table 1, with results that are likely statistically significant in bold. The information is also displayed graphically in Figure 16.



	Pre-Planting Survey Average Agreement out of 5	Post-Planting Survey Average Agreement out of 5	Difference (%) (Significant values in bold)
Q 4: Awareness of Issues	4.209302	4.5	5.8
Q 5: Think about actions	4.325581	4.5	3.5
Q6: Value wildlife/habitat	4.674419	4.742857	1.4
Q 7: Aesthetics	2.44186	2.685714	4.9
Q 8: Understand water quality impacts	4.418605	4.472222	1.1
Q 9: Understand providing habitat	4.5	4.6	2
Q 10: Concerned about shoreline	4.55814	4.666667	2.2
Q11: Know how to Restore Shoreline	**3.023256**	**3.611111**	**11.8**
Q12: Know what to plant	**2.55814**	**3.444444**	**17.8**
Q13: Able to plant	**2.372093**	**2.861111**	**9.8**
Q14: Understand actions & impact	4.186047	4.555556	7.4
Q15: Funding critical	4.465116	4.361111	-2.1
Q16: Guidance critical	4.627907	4.333333	-5.9
Q17: Willing to speak to peers	4.465116	4.222222	-4.9

Table 1

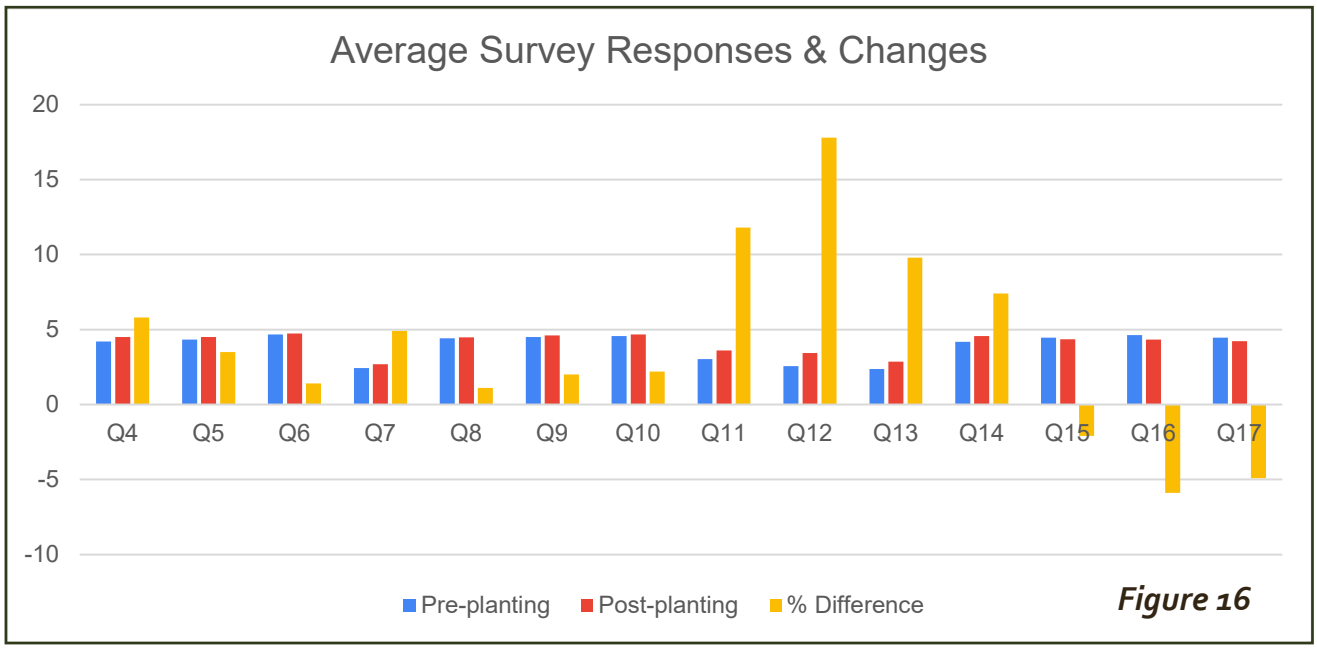
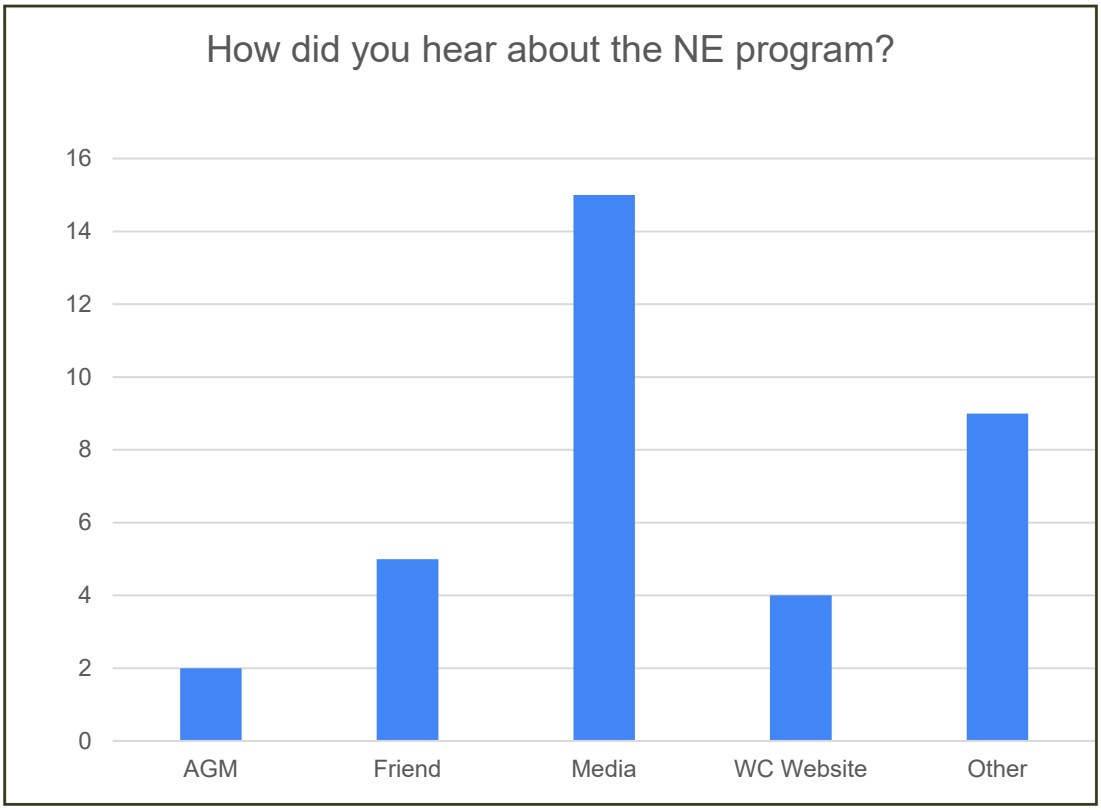


Figure 16

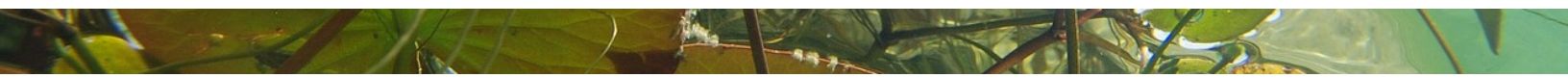
Finding the Program & Motivation to Participate

In the pre-planting survey, participants were asked how they had heard about the Natural Edge program. Some options were provided that respondents could choose from, and they could also indicate "Other" and specify what that meant. By far, the most commonly given answer was through media, specifically through Facebook. Of the 43 responses, 15 (35%) indicated some sort of media, which included Facebook, with some indication that this was primarily Facebook. The next most commonly selected option was "Other," and here nearly all respondents indicated they had heard about the program from another organization such as Quinte Conservation or Friends of the Salmon River. One indicated hearing about it from a neighbour (presumably not one they like enough to have selected the "Friend" option!). The Watersheds Canada website and AGM were the least commonly selected answers. Based on comments and interviews, Facebook was the most common media source for information, vs radio, newspapers, etc. – although organizational newsletters were also mentioned.



Given that Facebook is a social network and what individuals see there is influenced by their interests and those of their peers, and assuming that learning about the program from other organizations comes in the form of word of mouth from other volunteers or members of those organizations, one can conservatively

Figure 17



estimate that 20 of the 44 responses (45%) came from peer-to-peer or socially mediated information transfer. It is unclear from the responses what portion of media responses refer to social media vs other forms of media, but based on comments it seems to have been a significant amount. There was no survey option for having connected to this program as a result of having been generally involved with Watersheds Canada already, but this was mentioned a few times in interviews. The question of how those individuals came to find Watersheds Canada is out of the scope of this evaluation.

The motivations behind participating in any sort of community or environmental cause are many varied, and may include factors even the participants themselves are unaware of, but for the purposes of this project and evaluation, the post-planting survey included several options participants could choose from. Multiple selections were allowed, and four individuals selected more than one option – meaning that total responses to this question outnumber the total number of survey respondents. Shoreline & Habitat Restoration was the most common reason given for participation, followed by erosion control and bank stabilization. Although respondents indicated they were aware of the way land use impacts water quality, this motivation was only selected three times, and mitigation of runoff was only selected twice. Overall, respondents were most concerned with the habitat & wildlife benefits, and the benefits that were most likely to prevent damage to their properties, and least motivated by actual water quality.

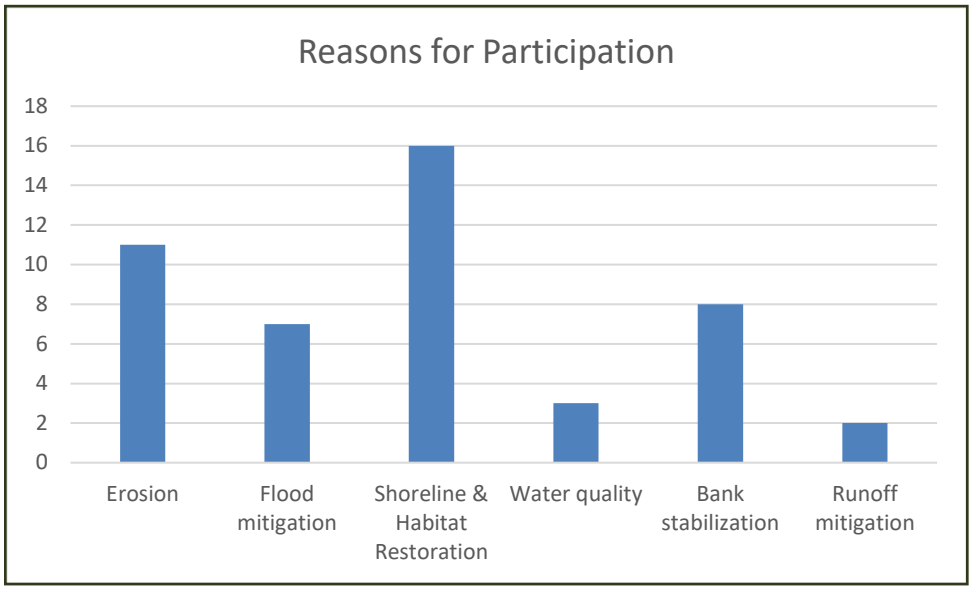


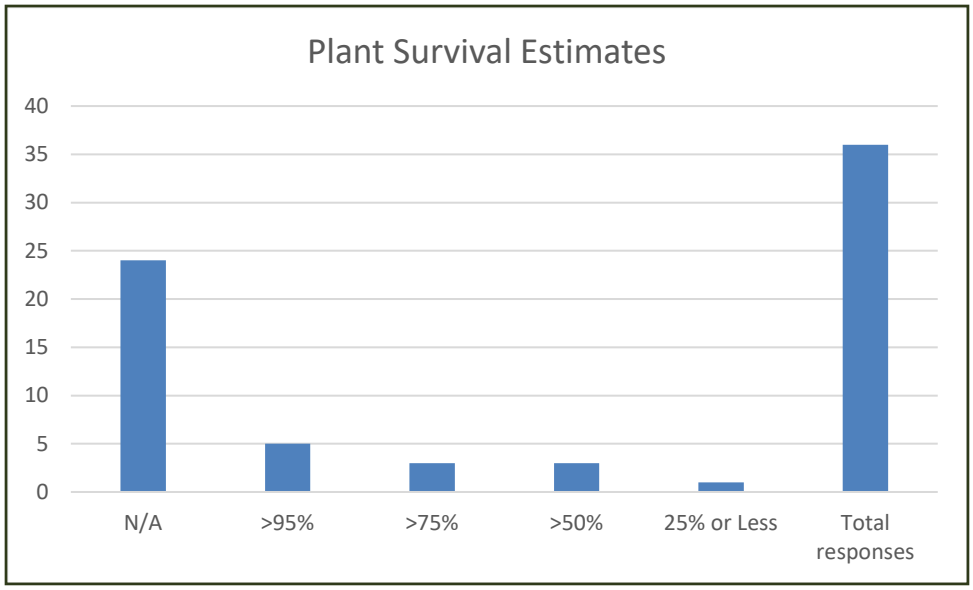
Figure 18

Plant Survival Rates

Program participants were tasked with providing basic care for newly planted areas (mostly watering during dry spells) during the establishment of the plants. The amount of effort this would entail would obviously vary based on the size of area planted, time of year (Spring plantings would need more immediate care over Summer than Fall plantings would need over Winter), and distance from the main residence or water source on the property to the planted area.

Overall, plant survival rates were reasonably high. However, the largest number of respondents selected the Not Applicable option because their plantings were relatively recent and it was too soon to estimate survival rates. Still, in the vast majority of cases where an estimate was possible, respondents indicated that over half of new plants had survived, and a survival rate of over 95% was the most common answer. Only one respondent indicated that 25% or fewer plants had survived.

Unsurprisingly, higher satisfaction appears to correlate with higher plant survival rate, although it is not possible to make strong conclusions about this because of the number of instances where survival estimates could not yet be made. It is also possible that those who didn't respond to the survey may be less satisfied with the program overall, as program participants can be hesitant to provide negative feedback on their experience. Still, the idea that higher plant survival rates contribute to higher



satisfaction with the program is intuitive and there is no reason to believe the relationship isn't there: more complete data are more likely to change the strength of the relationship than its existence.

Figure 19: Frequency with which different options for plant survival were selected. Not that a majority were unable to estimate at survey time.

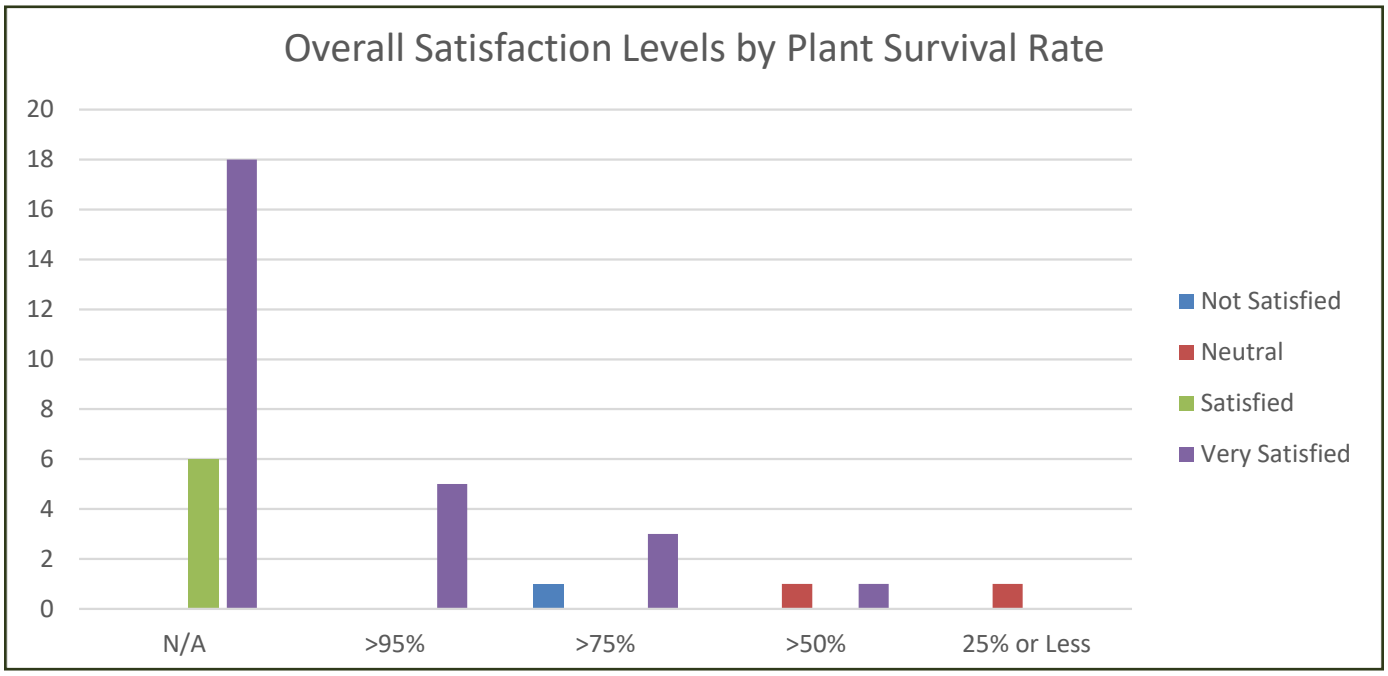
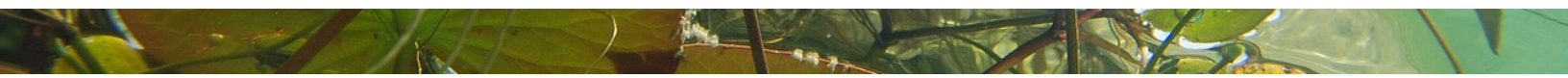


Figure 20: Overall satisfaction by plant survival rate estimate. Although the data do not support rigorous analysis, there certainly appears to be a trend towards lower satisfaction if fewer plants survive, which seems intuitive.



Participant Satisfaction

Overall, participants in the Natural Edge program were highly satisfied with their experiences, the vast majority (27, or 75%) selecting "Very Satisfied" in the survey. No respondents were Very Unsatisfied, and only one selected "Not Satisfied" – however, comments from this respondent and follow up conversation with program staff regarding their complaints revealed a misunderstanding that caused this negative response, and the individual ended up being happy with their planting after this was corrected, as will be discussed further later.

Closely related to participant satisfaction is the level of willingness to recommend the program to others, which was asked about in the post-planting survey. The overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that they would be willing to recommend the program. Curiously, those respondents who answered "no" to this question all followed that up with very positive feedback about the program. Whether this indicates that they selected "no" in error, or that their unwillingness to recommend the program stems from factors outside the program itself (for example, a poor relationship with a neighbour), cannot be determined. In interviews, all participants were willing to recommend the program and some indicated they already had.

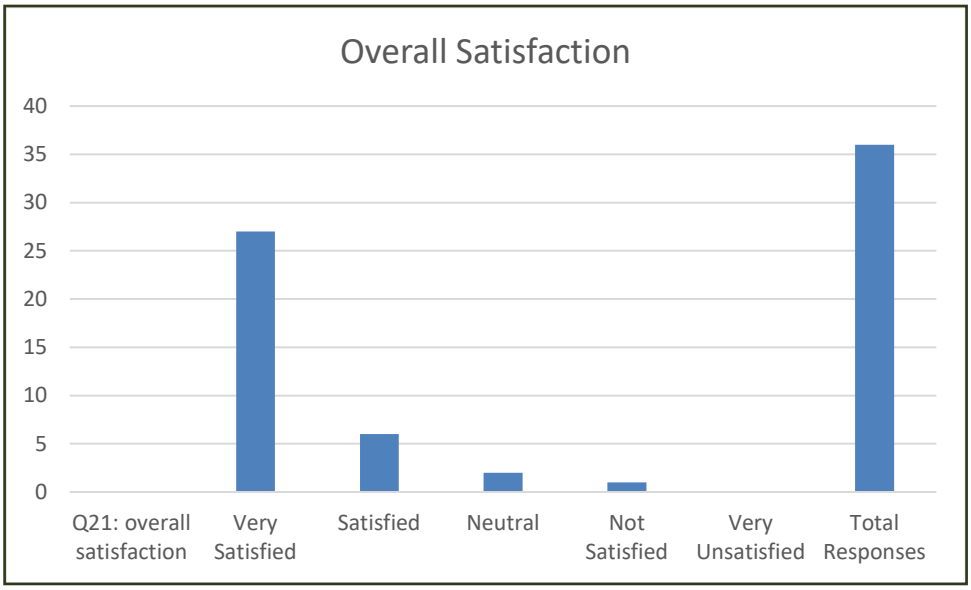


Figure 21: The majority of respondents indicated they were Very Satisfied with the Natural Edge program.

Subjective Survey Questions & Comments

Both surveys closed with an opportunity to leave additional comments or feedback. In the pre-planting survey, 20 of 44 respondents (45%) took advantage of this, and in the post-planting survey 24 of 36 (67%) did so. Nearly all comments were of a considerable length, indicating that participants felt strongly and/or were highly engaged.

Comments were overwhelmingly positive, and key themes that emerged were the expertise/knowledge, professionalism, and friendliness of program staff, gratefulness for having been able to participate, and appreciation for flexibility in planting plans based on site needs and aesthetic preferences. Excitement to participate came through in the comments in the pre-planting survey, and excitement to watch the planted areas mature and observe the changes this creates for wildlife and habitat was evident in the post-planting survey. Learning and education were mentioned frequently post-planting. Appreciation for the highly subsidized cost and the fact that they didn't have to do the physical work of planting themselves (mostly due to age and related physical limitations) also came up several times. Staff people Brendan and Maggie were mentioned by name several times as being knowledgeable,

professional, and great to work with.

Where less positive feedback was given it was largely minor and either outside the scope of the program (ex. beavers damaging plants), referred to unintended consequences (ex. concerns about poison ivy growth), or related to the survey itself (one respondent found the questions "awkward" and selected "disagree" in one instance because they had no better option). Other comments that expressed concerns mostly related to wishing they had known about the program earlier or that it was continuing longer, or wishing that neighbours or the community in general were more knowledgeable about shoreline issues and more accepting of a natural shoreline vs a mowed lawn.

All comments were entered into a word-cloud generator to help visualize trends and themes (Figure 22).

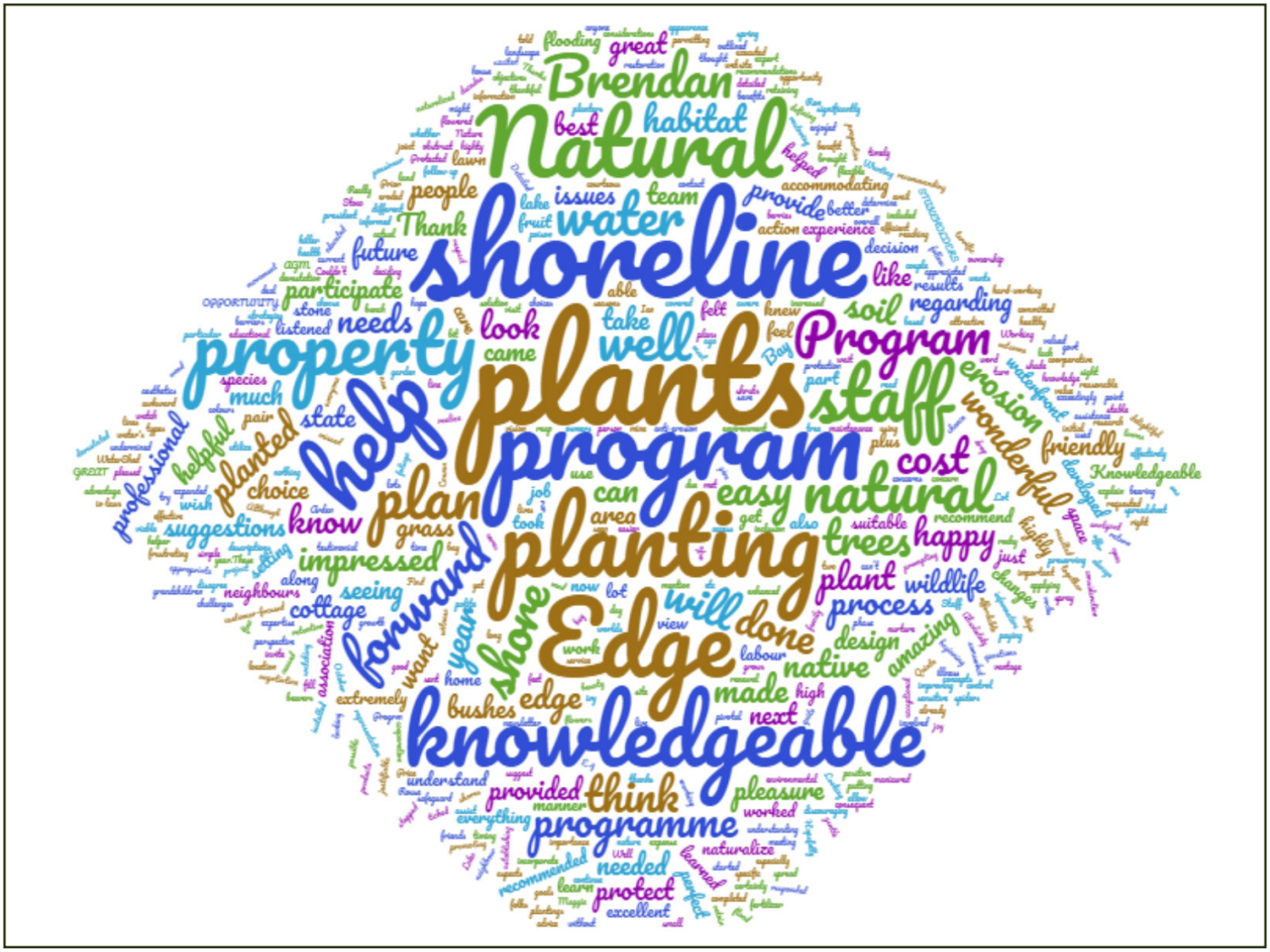
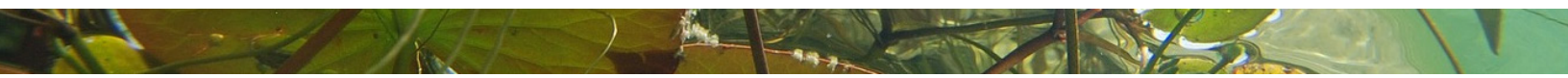


Figure 21: Word cloud based on respondent comments.



Interview Responses

Interviews were conducted with five individuals, two from the same property. These included program participants who were new to Watersheds Canada, those who had been familiar with it already, a steering committee member, and staff at Quinte Conservation involved in program planning and delivery. Themes from the interviews were overall similar to those revealed in survey comments. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive: the staff were knowledgeable, flexible, and enjoyable to work with, participants learned a lot and were happy with their planting and with the program in general. Their concerns were likely related to how neighbours and community members would respond to aesthetic changes and wishing more people know about the program, and the impact of increasing vegetation on turtle nesting sites. Program participants indicated that having the planting done for them had been essential as they were unable to do it themselves, and those involved with planting generally indicated they were surprised by how physically difficult the work was, even having expected a certain level of difficulty based on previous landscaping experience.

Perhaps most tellingly, all interview participants found the idea that they might wish to remain anonymous (although they understood why this could be important) humorous, frequently making jokes and sarcastic comments such as "Oh no, please don't tell them I thought they were wonderful and great collaborators!" All participants waived their anonymity during the interview.

Interpretation & Key Recommendations

Participant Attitudes, Knowledge & Motivation

Going into the Natural Edge program, most participants were already fairly environmentally aware, both of issues and of how their actions impact the natural world. They also valued fish, wildlife, and habitat and felt that caring for the shoreline to preserve or rehabilitate it was important. Their motivations to participate were more based on things they could easily see or that would impact their property's usability and value than on water quality per se, but they understood that there is an impact on water quality and the river/lake that they are next to from the way they use their land. This is not surprising for an environmental program: it is not generally people who are unaware of environmental impacts or unconcerned about the state of the natural world who participate in such things, but concern for the environment alone is not usually a sufficient motivator for the average person to take action: tying environmental concerns into more pragmatic, day-to-day concerns is a good way to promote change. Key Recommendations: Alter outreach and publicity materials & strategy to emphasize things like erosion prevention

and flood mitigation more prominently to appeal to landowners in a more pragmatic way. Continue to emphasize environmental benefits, but alongside practical benefits landowners can see. Investigate alternate outreach approaches that are more geared towards landowners than environmentally-minded people – ex. posters in local hardware stores and garden centers.

Fluctuations in attitude and self-assessed knowledge occurred between the pre-planting and post-planting surveys. It is not possible to state statistically that participating in the program clearly caused these fluctuations, due to relatively small sample sizes and differences between the group of respondents at each survey. However, none of the shifts in average agreement with the statements common to both surveys are out of line with what might be expected based on the experience of working with program staff and having a planting completed. Some insights may be drawn from the possibilities without being absolutely sure about causality, in order to better understand and adapt the program, and perhaps investigate what most causes people to change their self-assessments in the future. It is also important to note that there is a certain amount of bias in self-assessments – an individual who rates themselves as highly knowledgeable may, in fact, be highly knowledgeable, but may also be lying to look good, subconsciously inflating their level of knowledge because they expect that's what the survey administrator wants to see, or may simply be wrong about how much they know for any number of reasons. In some cases, this can cause respondents to inflate how much they agree with a statement in the post-planting survey, but in general, these factors are consistent between surveys: the bias in self-reporting should simply be kept in mind when interpreting results.

The most dramatic and mathematically significant changes from pre- to post-planting surveys had to do with participants' self-report of their knowledge and ability to handle a shoreline rehabilitation project themselves. The greatest increase was in knowledge of which plant species are appropriate for shoreline planting, which is not surprising: having worked on a planting plan with program staff, perhaps assisted in the actual planting, and been responsible for the care of the plants until established, it would be remarkable if participants didn't learn more about this topic. The comment sections and interview discussions also emphasized learning – participants repeated frequently how much they had learned during the process and seemed to feel more engaged in shoreline health, as well as more knowledgeable about how biodiversity and water quality were related to shoreline rehabilitation. In the post-planting surveys, many commenters indicated excitement to see how their plantings grow and mature and what sort of new

Key Recommendations:

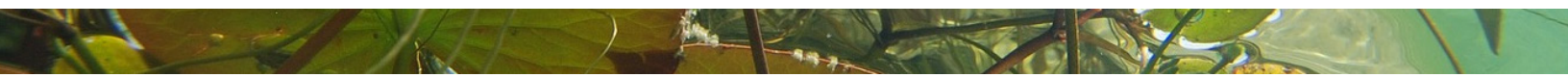
- ***Explore ways for the educational aspect of the program to help with additional outreach and recruitment, for example, through local community centres, senior's programs.***
- ***Leverage interest in wildlife to build interest in the program and support community attitude shifts around natural shorelines. For example, partner with local birdwatching groups, bio-blitz events, or field naturalist clubs to participate in events or give presentations.***
- ***Continue to engage local community groups in program outreach and general educational initiatives.***
- ***Leverage the willingness of participants to tell peers about the program and the issues it addresses by helping provide opportunities for them to do so: site visits, video or written testimonials in local media, opportunities to speak or volunteer at local events and venues, etc.***
- ***Check-in with past participants and share additional learning materials and stories of how other people shared their experiences and recruited new participants in order to keep and build community momentum.***
- ***Refresh and regularly share the good website content related to the Natural Edge program to keep it relevant on social media networks, tagging individuals and partner organizations where appropriate.***

wildlife they will see on their properties. Interviewees were excited to report new types of wildlife they had observed since planting was completed.

Even when respondents had concerns about wildlife, they expressed that this was a "good problem to have" and that they would rather have to deal with ensuring wildlife had good access to the water (for example) than with mowing a lawn or dealing with erosion. Many also expressed wishing they had known about the program earlier, and a mix of both noticing a shift in attitude towards natural shorelines in the community, and a sense of urgency of wanting to help spread the information and speed that attitude shift along. Related to this, the majority of respondents had become engaged in the program via some method that relied on peer-to-peer networks, word of mouth, and other social or community-based information streams. These are often the most persuasive ways in which people learn about opportunities to participate in causes they care about, and while they can be time-consuming to try to leverage, they often yield the best results.

Participant Capacity

Cost was heavily subsidized through this program: 75% of plant costs were covered and because planting was done primarily by program staff and volunteers, labour costs were not a factor for participants. The main cost accrued by participants was in time and incidental cost of keeping plantings watered (whether directly for water fees, or indirectly through electricity costs to pump well water). Landscaping projects can be quite expensive, depending on the size of the area involved and the number of plants installed, and for individuals the cost might be higher per plant as they would be less likely to be able to source plants in bulk and would be paying full retail prices. Most respondents agreed with the statement that funding from the Natural Edge program was essential to their participation, although the strength of that agreement decreased slightly post-planting. While many landowners could likely find a way to cover the full costs of a shoreline rehabilitation, it is understandable that most of these have other expenses that relate more directly to their quality of life and financial stability that would take precedence. Since shoreline rehabilitation is something that has public benefits, it is reasonable that most people would not be willing to shoulder the full cost of a project themselves. The ideal percentage of costs covered, to maximize participation while minimizing program expense, is beyond the scope of this evaluation, but would be worth looking into if plans to scale up shoreline rehabilitation are put in place. A survey would be an easy way to assess this, but perhaps not very accurate: the difference between hypothetical money being spent on hypothetical plants and the real world can be significant, as any gardener can attest to. A better testing method would be recruiting a large number of interested people with less specific language (ex. a "majority" of costs are covered, or "at least 50%" of costs are covered) and then divide them randomly into test groups when it comes time to prepare planting plans, and offer different specific amounts of coverage (ex. three test cases offered



50, 65, or 75% coverage) with specific planting plans, and compare uptake rates and cost per unit planted to the program. Of course, every individual will have a different point at which cost becomes a barrier to their participation, but if it turns out that smaller subsidies generate just as much uptake on average, the program as a whole would be more effective, with those savings translated into more plantings completed. If it turns out that reducing subsidy rates seriously impacts participation, those in lower-rate test cases could later be offered the higher subsidy rate.

One recurring theme from comments and interviews was that for those who physically participated in plantings, the work was generally harder than expected. Even for those used to landscaping work, digging holes large enough for new shrubs, etc. in previously unworked land proved to be physically demanding, whether due to poor land quality (rocks, roots) or instability (proximity to shore, uneven ground that is difficult to walk on). A few commenters specifically mentioned age and age-related physical limitations made working on planting themselves impossible or nearly so. Other barriers that might make someone disagree with the statement that they are able to do the planting themselves might include other physical limitations due to illness or disability, but also time constraints, or physically spending little time at the property where the planting is being done. The question didn't distinguish between different options, but based on comments and interview responses, age-related physical limitations were the most common reason for disagreement with this statement. A slight increase in agreement in the post-planting survey could be ascribed to participants being less intimidated by the physical work after having seen it done or participated in the planting process, but may also be random fluctuation. While some interested landowners will be able to do the physical

Key Recommendations:

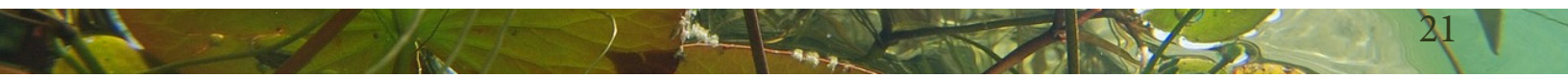
• Continue heavily funding the cost of planting new areas of shoreline as much as possible, but consider conducting field testing of different levels of subsidies to ensure that a good balance between cost savings for participants and the number of projects funded is found.

• Explore additional ways to reduce costs for participants, or emphasize long-term value from shoreline stability, beautification, and flood mitigation to create additional value.

• Explore options for working with landscaping businesses to offer "shoreline friendly" service options at a reduced rate that incorporate species and practices used in the Natural Edge program.

• Explore options to make physical assistance with planting work more accessible to landowners who would be unable to do planting work themselves. Corporate and student volunteering programs often expect a short-term but intense volunteer experience and may be a good fit – although these can be logistically taxing for small non-profits to coordinate, some corporate or campus volunteering programs are flexible and may be able to absorb related costs like transportation to the worksite in exchange for a rewarding volunteer experience for their participants. Assisting landowners with assembling their own team of volunteers to help with planting may be another solution. Additional funding opportunities may be available to facilitate either of these options if they are framed as capacity-building or community-promoting, rather than strictly environmental.

• Leverage the knowledge gained by highly engaged participants by supporting them in sharing that knowledge through various channels – written accounts, speaking at community events, following up with interested but hesitant landowners to share their experiences, etc.



work of shoreline restoration and planting themselves, it will be a barrier to participation in the Natural Edge program for a large percentage of interested individuals if the physical work is not being done for them. It is the understanding of the evaluator at the time of writing that a future version of this program will require landowners to do plantings themselves and that program staff expect a significant drop off in new recruitment as a result of this. Additional support from volunteers or financial support from other sources that enable the hiring of planting staff would help mitigate this but it is unclear how successful attempts to obtain either kind of support can be in different locations and communities.

• Continue to make expert assessments and help available to interested individuals to ensure shoreline plantings are done correctly without inadvertently damaging sensitive areas or spreading unwanted species, and that plants installed have the best odds of survival.

• Work with local municipalities and conservation areas to incorporate appropriate shoreline renewal projects into infrastructure projects that may be taking place anyway, or involve residents more in the care of their watersheds through planting projects or education about the impact land use has on the waterway they chose to live on.

It has already been established that participants learned a great deal over the course of the Natural Edge program, in particular regarding appropriate plant species. It is reasonable to expect that a high percentage of survey respondents (perhaps even a majority) know enough about the process that they could expand their own planted areas on their own, or help a neighbour rehabilitate a portion of their shoreline. However, to expand the program to new areas or conduct plantings on much larger stretches of waterfront, expert assessment, and assistance with planning would still be needed. As the saying goes, a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing, and it would be a terrible outcome if knowledgeable amateurs were to disturb a population of an endangered species, for example, in order to rehabilitate in shoreline in an area where it is not necessarily needed. Based on interview comments and the degree to which survey respondents praised the knowledgeability of program staff, there seems to be a good understanding by most participants that while they learned a lot, there is still a lot left they do not know, and assistance from trained professionals would still be needed to develop new projects. Finding a way to appropriately leverage the new knowledge and understanding program participants have, without risking overshooting that range, could be highly beneficial for the Natural Edge program and shoreline rehabilitation projects, in general, going forward.

Participant Satisfaction

Overall, participants were highly satisfied with the Natural Edge program. One major standout turned out to be, on further investigation by program staff, a case of misunderstanding the purpose of the program: the individual in question had thought that it was a program to control invasive species and/or promote native species, and found the selection of plants inappropriate as a result. After the misunderstanding was corrected and the rationale for plant species choices explained, the problem was resolved for this individual, -- although their survey responses had already been recorded. While the issue of invasive species on waterways is an important one and intersects with the goal of restoring and protecting natural shorelines in many different ways, it was not the focus of this project, and other

programs exist that deal with this problem more directly. For newly emerging invasive species, early detection and control are key, while for established invasive species, management is better conducted on the level of a municipality or regional conservation authority, than by individual landowners, with some exceptions. For those concerned about this issue, clearer communication, referral to other programs, or possibly partnership opportunities with other organizations that focus on this issue would help address the problem.

There appears to be a correlation between plant survival rate and overall participant satisfaction. Although the numbers are too small for rigorous statistical analysis, and too many survey respondents were not yet able to assess plant survival rates due to how recently their plantings were completed, the idea makes sense: if the majority of plants installed do not survive, it would be a disappointment for the landowner who invested time and money into the project.

> *I was extremely impressed with Natural Edge. They were very knowledgeable when recommending native species that would be suitable for my particular location. The plan they developed took into consideration our needs and the appearance of our shoreline from the vantage point of the house. The team doing the planting were a joy to work with.*
>
> *- FM, participant in 2019*

Plants used fell into one of three categories: bare-root plants, potted plants, and wildflower plants (only tracked separately in 2021). In general, bare-root plants are cheaper as they are easier to ship, store, etc., but may have lower survival rates than potted plants since the plant is effectively forced into dormancy, it is harder to tell which specimens are healthy at the time of purchase, and they often require greater care after planting in order to become established. Wildflower plants may be more popular with participants and in theory, should have higher survival rates if they are being planted in an area they are native to, as they are well-adapted to local conditions. However, suppliers of local wildflower species are harder to find, and individual plants may sit in garden or distribution centers for longer periods of time as a result. Overall, potted plants that are easy to source and have to be transported minimum distances to work sites can be expected to have the highest survival rates – and also to look the nicest when just planted – but are also often the most expensive option.

The question of whether it is better to focus on one type of plant or another, and if the cost-survival trade-off would make a difference to future participants in the program is difficult to assess from the data provided. The survey question about plant survival did not distinguish between different types of plants, and the sites where the largest numbers of bare-root plants were used were often parks and other areas without an obvious landowner to ask questions of later. Based on some interview comments, it is reasonable to conclude the bare-root plants were somewhat harder to care for and keep track of after planting – some interviewees mentioned having to go back and mark planting areas more clearly to avoid mowing down new plants, for example. In the case of small shrubs and trees, it can be several years before obvious growth occurs in a naturalistic setting, so the average landowner may not be able to tell if a bare root plant has survived, and for landowners who did not participate in the plantings on their properties directly, it may be easy to confuse which plants are the ones that were planted, and which grew naturally or even are undesirable. Program staff have revisited sites in some instances, but that data was not systematically captured or provided for this assessment (more data may exist for internal use).

In instances where it was clear that there was lower plant survival or lower satisfaction levels,

and this could be traced to specific properties, there was no clear relationship between either of these outcomes and the type of plants used (bare-root vs potted). Interestingly, most of these situations occurred in earlier planting sites, suggesting that perhaps either that was a difficult time for planting new plants due to weather concerns, or that program staff got better at communicating the post-planting care requirements of the plants to landowners as the program progressed. Because of the large proportion of survey respondents who were unable to estimate plant survival rates, it is not possible to draw robust conclusions about how plant survival rates may or may not vary based on the type of plant stock used.

Key Recommendations:

• If not already done, adjust program outreach and information materials to clarify the relationship of this program to invasive species management programs to avoid future confusion.

• Explore opportunities for partnership with invasive species management organizations or consider incorporating invasive species awareness materials into program information. Ex. Incorporate scans for key invasive species into initial site assessments.

• Celebrate program success internally, and share success stories and testimonials with the community and interested individuals.

Ecological Impact

In general, as far as can be assessed based on survey results and comments from respondents and interviewees, plant survival rates were reasonably high and observed environmental impacts have been positive. More follow-up – in terms of more detailed cataloging of plant survival, and longer-term survival assessment that captures data from recently planted sites, as well as outcomes that may not be obvious to landowners – would be needed to make more definitive statements about ecological outcomes.

Whether the relatively small areas that have been rehabilitated are enough to make a measurable difference in water quality parameters in the body of water that plantings are located along is unclear. However, the creation of even a small amount of appropriate habitat can have a huge impact on many species of wildlife, aquatic and otherwise. Interviewees reported increased biodiversity on their property and more instances of animals such as deer, mink, and various songbirds using the replanted areas. More detailed observation, including underwater at the shoreline, will likely reveal even more diversity and use of habitat by fish, amphibians, and other groups of animals.

Just as a single pollinator-friendly garden on land can be an oasis for many urban species, a small area of rehabilitated shoreline can increase habitat connectivity for aquatic species, as well as provide actual habitat.

Sociological Impact

Individuals who participated in the Natural Edge program were overwhelmingly positive about the experience. Themes from their collected feedback include a sense of gratitude for being able to participate in the program, excitement about the future of the planted areas, a sense of having learned a great deal, and a desire to see and work towards further change in their communities. Several mentioned that while there seems to be a general attitude shift around shoreline management and how land use affects waterways, there is still also a great deal of work to be done in changing attitudes and raising awareness.

The population sampled valued fish, wildlife, and the habitat that sustains them, and were aware of and concerned about the way their actions impact the environment. This reflects a larger societal trend towards awareness of ecological issues and desire to make more sustainable choices, and the Natural Edge program provides one very concrete way individuals can take action, and see the impacts of their actions. In a world where people often feel powerless in the face of large-scale environmental issues such as climate change, creating opportunities for tangible environmental improvement can be very empowering and motivating for individuals.

While a few respondents mentioned negative feedback from neighbours or community members or encountering individuals who could not see the value in habitat restoration, these individuals also indicated that such attitudes were becoming increasingly rare. Because recruitment for participation seemed to be most successful when existing community and peer networks were leveraged, and several comments and interview responses mentioned community building and collaboration, the community-building aspect of this project should not be overlooked. It has potential both to further this work and generally contribute to a more connected and resilient community in areas where the program takes place.

Limits of Evaluation & Future Follow-Up

While the Natural Edge program has the potential to have many and diverse impacts on local ecosystems, water quality, and viability of wild plant and animal populations, and communities across eastern Ontario and beyond, assessing many of these impacts is beyond the scope of this evaluation. The evaluator is reliant largely on data provided by program staff and self-reported data from participants – the possible limitations of which have already been discussed. Collecting data in community-based programs that cover a large geographical area is always a trade-off: perfect assessment of plant survival might be possible but would require a lot of resources for qualified staff to travel to planting sites and conduct that assessment. The resulting data, while more complete and detailed than an estimate provided by landowners, may or may not be more useful for evaluating program effectiveness or assessing potential directions for future programming. Nevertheless, to make more informed decisions about specific questions such as relative survival rates of bare root vs potted plants, or build a more solid case for specific claims about benefits to wildlife, water quality, etc., more rigorous data collection would be required. There may be opportunities to partner with local educational institutions or to host one or more researchers or graduate students who can incorporate some of this work into their research projects/theses. This would provide an opportunity for real-world learning for students, and also build a more robust case for the value of this work by backing it with rigorous scientific data.

Real-world programs often lack the strict controls and design limitations of scientific studies,

which has advantages and drawbacks. In order to be effective, interventions have to work in a real-world setting where unexpected variables can affect outcomes, but these same variables can make it difficult to draw firm conclusions about cause and effect. Finding a happy balance of flexibility and scientific rigor depends on a good understanding of the program goals and the level of proof required for any claims of effectiveness that are being made. In general, the more extreme the claim or hypothesis, the more robust the evidence required to support it.

In a sense, the Natural Edge program is an experiment testing several hypotheses: that individual landowners can make significant, positive changes to their land use and property with appropriate support; that individuals who value the natural world will make positive changes when given the opportunity; that rehabilitating shoreline will result in positive outcomes for wildlife and waterways; and that engaging landowners in a community-based, peer-to-peer type of outreach will build community and contribute to attitude shifts. None of these claims is, at face value, extreme. While more data could be collected, especially to answer very specific questions about particular outcomes or aspects of programming, this is always the case. Looking at the big picture, if the claim is that the Natural Edge program engaged individuals, built community and momentum for further positive change, physically improved shoreline habitats in a way that educated the public about land use and water quality, and created a positive experience for participants, the evidence presented here definitely supports the claim.

Key Recommendations:

• Conduct further evaluation of plant survival rates when more plantings have had a chance to become established, possibly including more detailed surveys of some planted areas by program staff to investigate differences in survival rates of different types of plants.

• Partner with other organizations/institutions to further assess biodiversity and habitat use in rehabilitated areas compared with areas that haven't been rehabilitated, perhaps engaging with graduate students or researchers as part of a larger research project.

• Explore the community building aspect of this work, both to promote future shorelines rehabilitation, but also potentially as part of other community resiliency work.

• Work with a third-party evaluator from the beginning of future projects to ensure survey design captures data relevant to key questions and makes sense to participants.

Conclusions

The Natural Edge program set out to engage landowners using a proven shoreline rehabilitation method to re-naturalize at least 3km of shoreline in the Quinte watershed. Over the course of the program, 86 individual sites were planted for a total of nearly double the target length of shoreline rehabilitated. Plants had overall high survival rates, although some data is still outstanding in this regard due to recent planting times. Participants were highly pleased with the program and their experiences, specifically citing the expertise and flexibility of program staff, and the amount that they learned during their involvement as key positive aspects. They also report seeing higher biodiversity as a result of their plantings. Landowners who participated in the program already valued the natural world and considered themselves relatively well-informed about environmental issues and how their actions impact it, but still reported learning a lot, specifically about the shoreline rehabilitation process and plant species involved. They were generally recruited to the program through some sort of peer or community network and were likewise willing to tell others in their networks about it and recommend participation. Support from the Natural Edge program, in terms of expert knowledge, financial support to cover the majority of costs, and physical support with planting, were essential to landowners to complete their planting projects. While participants learned a lot and cared for planted areas until plants were established, it is unlikely that they could or would have completed these projects without the support provided. In particular, the physical nature of the work involved would have been a barrier to several participants due to age-related physical limitations. The most surprising outcome revealed by pre-and post-planting surveys was the amount participants learned during the process, particularly about the plants involved.

Key recommendations mostly related to leveraging the knowledge and enthusiasm of past participants, and existing community networks as well as potential new partnerships, to further promote shoreline rehabilitation projects and find new opportunities to remove barriers to participation. Overall, however, the project was very successful and would likely continue to affect positive change if it were to continue as it has been.

Appendix 1: Survey Questions

Pre-planting Survey

Question 1: Name
Question 2: Waterbody
Question 3: Date

The following questions are statements and respondents are asked to rate agreement on a scale of 1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree.

Question 4: I am aware of environmental issues, especially human impacts on our freshwater.

Question 5: I always think about how my actions affect the environment.

Question 6: I value fish and wildlife, and the habitat that protects them.

Question 7: I value the aesthetics of my landscape more than having a natural shoreline.

Question 8: I understand how having a natural shoreline protects water quality.

Question 9: I understand how having a natural shoreline provides fish and wildlife habitat.

Question 10: I am concerned about the health of my shoreline.

Question 11: I know how to restore my shoreline.

Question 12: I know what plants to plant along my shoreline.

Question 13: I am able to plant my shoreline myself.

Question 14: I understand how my actions on my land impacts my lake/river.

Question 15: Funding from the Natural Edge Program is critical to my participation in shoreline naturalization.

Question 16: Guidance and education from the Natural Edge Program is critical to my participation in shoreline naturalization.

Question 17: I am willing to speak to my peers about the importance of having a natural shoreline.

End rating agreement.

Question 18: How did you hear about the Natural Edge Program?

Question 19: Comments

Post-planting Survey

Question 1: Name
Question 2: Waterbody
Question 3: Date

The following questions are statements and respondents are asked to rate agreement on a scale of 1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree.

Question 4: I am aware of environmental issues, especially human impacts on our freshwater.

Question 5: I always think about how my actions affect the environment.

Question 6: I value fish and wildlife, and the habitat that protects them.

Question 7: I value the aesthetics of my landscape more than having a natural shoreline.

Question 8: I understand how having a natural shoreline protects water quality.

Question 9: I understand how having a natural shoreline provides fish and wildlife habitat

Question 10: I am concerned about the health of my shoreline.

Question 11: I know how to restore my shoreline.

Question 12: I know what plants to plant along my shoreline.

Question 13: I am able to plant my shoreline myself.

Question 14: I understand how my actions on my land impacts my lake/river.

Question 15: Funding from the Natural Edge Program is critical to my participation in shoreline naturalization.

Question 16: Guidance and education from the Natural Edge Program is critical to my participation in shoreline naturalization.

Question 17: I am willing to speak to my peers about the importance of having a natural shoreline.

End rating agreement.

Question 18: Why did you participate in the program?

Question 19: Was the planting plan easy to follow and understand? If no, please state which sections were unclear.

Question 20: Please give an estimate of the survival rate of your plants.

Question 21: Overall, how satisfied were you with the Natural Edge program?

Question 22: Would you recommend this program to other shoreline property owners? If no, please state why.

Question 23: Want to help us reach more people? Fill in the testimonial section below with your experience with the Natural Edge Program. Your thoughts just might be what other people need to hear when they are considering maintaining their shoreline. Testimonial or Additional Comments.

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

Interviews begin with a brief introduction of who I am, what Sustainable Eastern Ontario is and why I'm speaking to them, the purpose of the evaluation (so they are clear I'm not evaluating them, just interested in their experiences to evaluate the project), and confirming some initial details about who they are and how they're connected to the project.
There is also a statement about annonymity.

Question 1: How did you get involved with Watersheds Canada & this program specifically? How long have you been involved? What has been your major involvement?

Question 2: Tell me a bit more about your organization/planting, walk me through the process and your impresions. Is there any other way you've been involved?

Question3: Were you involved in the actual planting work at all?

Question 4: Is there anything you would do differently, in retrospect, or anything you weren't that happy about?

Quiestion 5: What was your favourite part about this program, or something that stands out to you as surprising, surpassing expectations, etc.?

Question 6: What would you like to see going forwards in terms of long term outcomes or monitoring of plantings and habitat, in an ideal world?

Question 7: Is there anything else you'd like to add that we haven't discussed?