

A map of the Etowah River Basin in Georgia, showing the river's course through several counties. The river is highlighted in blue, and the surrounding land is shaded in light yellow. County names visible include Bartow, Cherokee, Forsyth, Floyd, Polk, and Fulton. The title text is overlaid on the map.

Etowah River Basin: A Survey of Environmental Knowledge, Opinions, and Empowerment

The Nature Conservancy
UGA Institute of Ecology
Upper Etowah River Alliance
Kennesaw State University
Fall 2002

A map of the Etowah River Basin in Georgia, showing county boundaries and the river network. The basin is shaded in light yellow. The river is shown in blue. County names labeled include Lumpkin, Pickens, Dawson, Bartow, Cherokee, Forsyth, Floyd, Polk, and Paulding. The text 'Etowah River' is written in blue along the river's path.

Purpose of Survey

- 1) Baseline assessment of public knowledge, opinions, and sense of empowerment about the Etowah River Basin**
- 2) Baseline data for decision-making about public involvement and education campaign**

Three Components

A map of the Etowah River basin in Georgia, showing the river and its tributaries flowing through several counties. The counties labeled are Lumpkin, Pickens, Dawson, Bartow, Floyd, Cherokee, Forsyth, Polk, Paulding, and Cobb. The river is highlighted in blue.

- **Knowledge = familiarity or awareness**
- **Opinions = attitudes or insight**
- **Sense of Empowerment = feeling of autonomy, choice, responsibility, and authority**

Survey Basics



- **Phone survey with adults**
- **30 survey items**
- **Random sample from 11 counties**
 - Upper = Cherokee, Dawson, Lumpkin, Pickens
 - Lower = Bartow, Cobb, Floyd, Forsyth, Fulton, Paulding, Polk
- **1107 completions**

Survey Results: Demographics

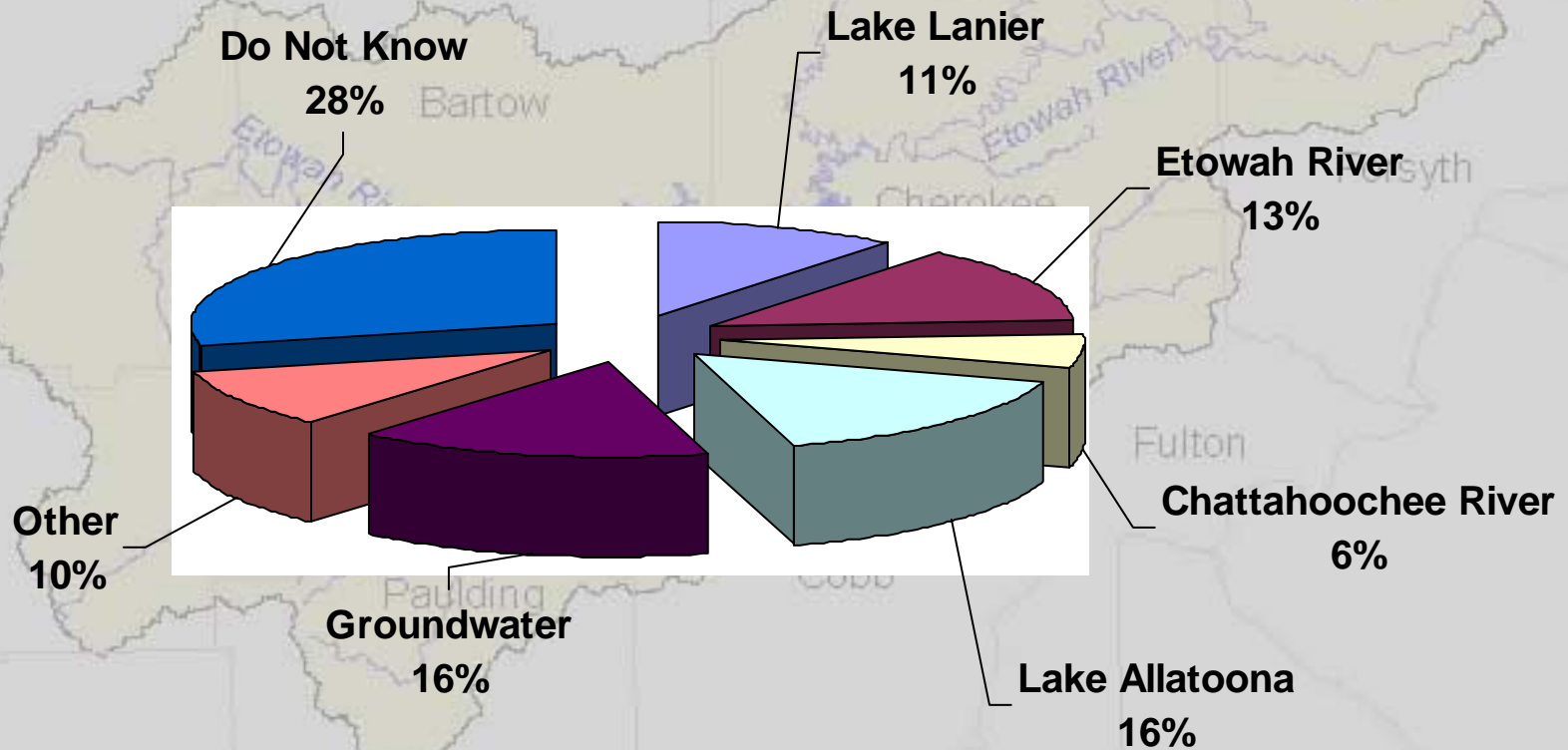
A map of the Etowah River basin in Georgia, showing county boundaries and names. The counties labeled are Pickens, Dawson, Bartow, Cherokee, Forsyth, Floyd, Polk, Paulding, Cobb, and Fulton. The Etowah River is shown in blue, flowing through the center of the basin. A large lake is located in the center of the basin, surrounded by the Cherokee and Bartow counties.

- Dwelling
- Own or rent
- Residence
- Employment
- Race
- Year born
- Education
- Income
- Gender

Survey Results

68% aware of living in watershed

28% unsure of drinking water source



Survey Results



Etowah Darter (*Etheostoma etowahae*)

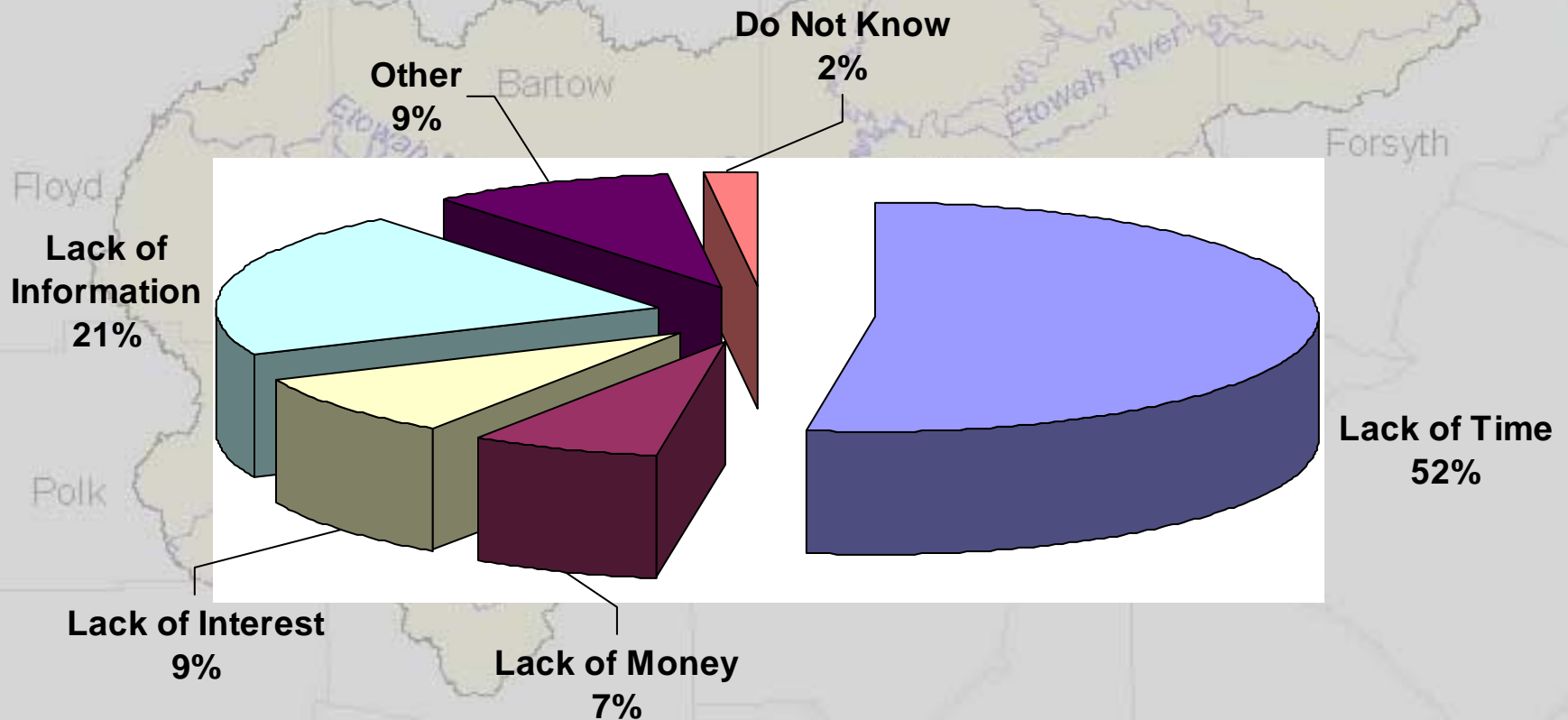
91% believe aquatic biodiversity is essential to health of the Etowah River

58% believe greatest threat to water quality is industrial waste (and other point-sources)

Survey Results

93% not active in environmental organizations

→ Hindered by time and lack of information



Survey Results

92% support local government restrictions on development to protect aquatic life

60% view restrictions as violations of property rights



Survey Results



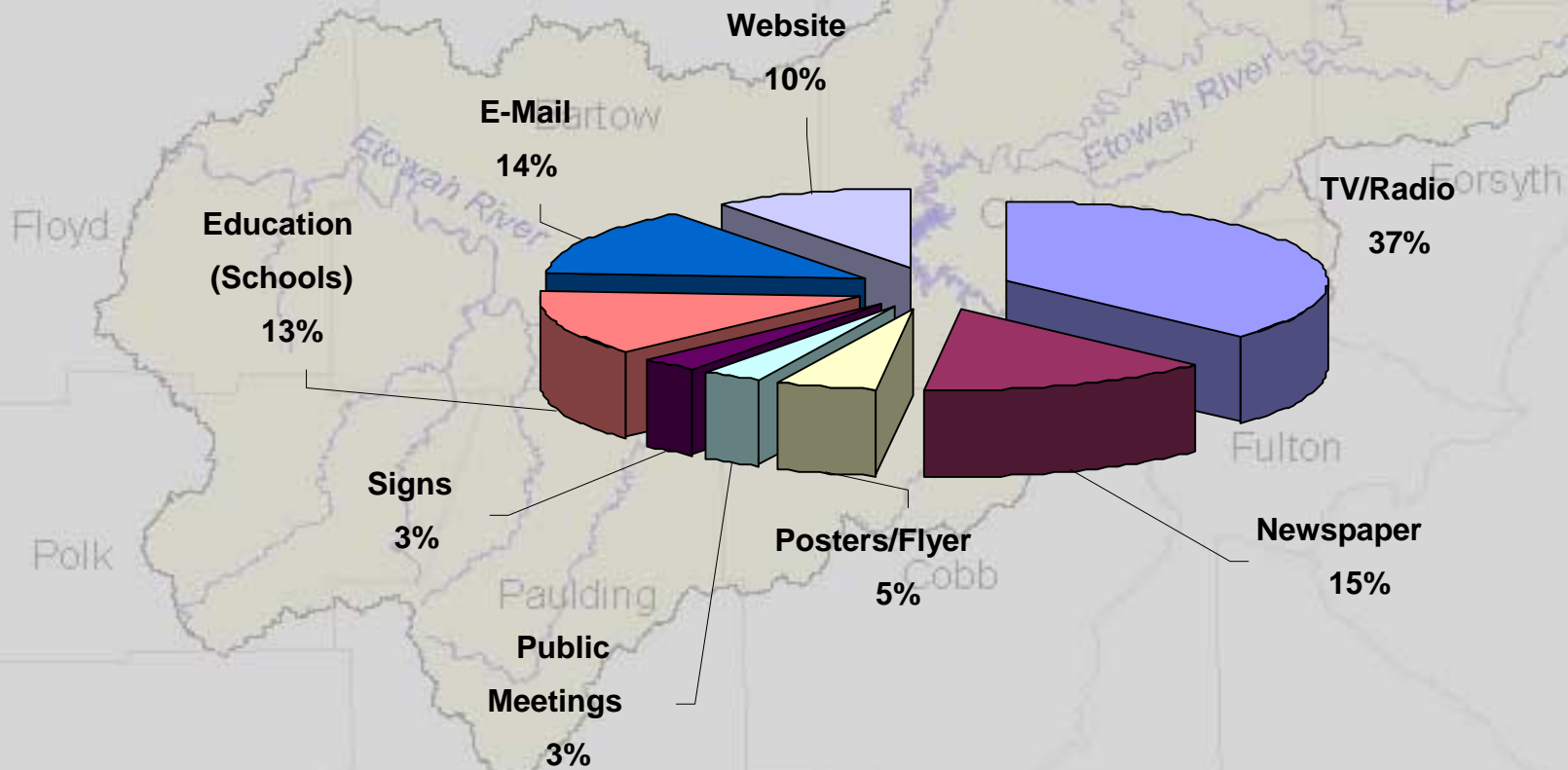
>85% are supportive of future policies like:

- **Greenspace plan**
- **Regional development plan**
- **Stricter regulations on future development**
- **Required maintenance or inspection of septic systems**
- **Increased buffer areas**

Survey Results

Methods of communication:

TV/Radio, Newspaper, Education in Schools



Goals of Public Involvement and Education Campaign



Short term

- Educate on background information
- Solicit and incorporate public input
- Receive public approval for final HCP

Long term

- Increase awareness and stewardship

Initial Recommendations for Campaign

- **Communicate through TV, radio, newspaper and education in schools**
- **Inform about environmental organizations and opportunities for involvement**
- **Provide suggestions for educational opportunities**
 - public forums**
 - guest speakers**
 - field trips**
 - community projects**

Initial Recommendations for Campaign

- Inform and solicit input on policies to minimize impacts of development on aquatic species
- Address property rights concerns



Fine lined pocketbook (*Lampsilis allis*)

Initial Recommendations for Campaign

A map of the Etowah River watershed in Georgia, showing county boundaries and the river's course. The river is highlighted in blue and flows from the north towards the south. Counties labeled include Lumpkin, Dawson, Forsyth, Cherokee, Fulton, Paulding, Cobb, and Floyd. The text of the slide is overlaid on this map.

- **Inform about point source vs non-point source threats and appropriate actions to take**
- **Increase awareness about source and status of drinking water**
- **Enhance understanding of unique species of the Etowah**

What's Next?

- **Stakeholder committee**
- **Poster**
- **Environmental marketing and other student projects**

