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Project Title	Public Perceptions & Attitudes Toward Professional Foresters, Registered Forest Technologists and Forest Management in BC
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BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Since 1997, the Association of BC Professional Foresters has been tracking public perceptions of forest management in British Columbia with particular emphasis on awareness and opinions of Professional Foresters and Registered Forest Technologists.

Synovate (formerly known as MarketFacts MarkTrend) was commissioned to conduct the research from June 2000. Prior to 2000, Angus Reid conducted the poll for the Association. This report focuses on the 2004 results conducted from July 8th to July 19th, 2004. Where possible, comparisons are made with previous waves of research.

On the total sample of 500, the maximum margin of error is +/-4.4%, 95 times out of 100. When comparing the results of this poll to previous polls, a difference of at least six points is required to be considered statistically significant at the 95% level of confidence.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

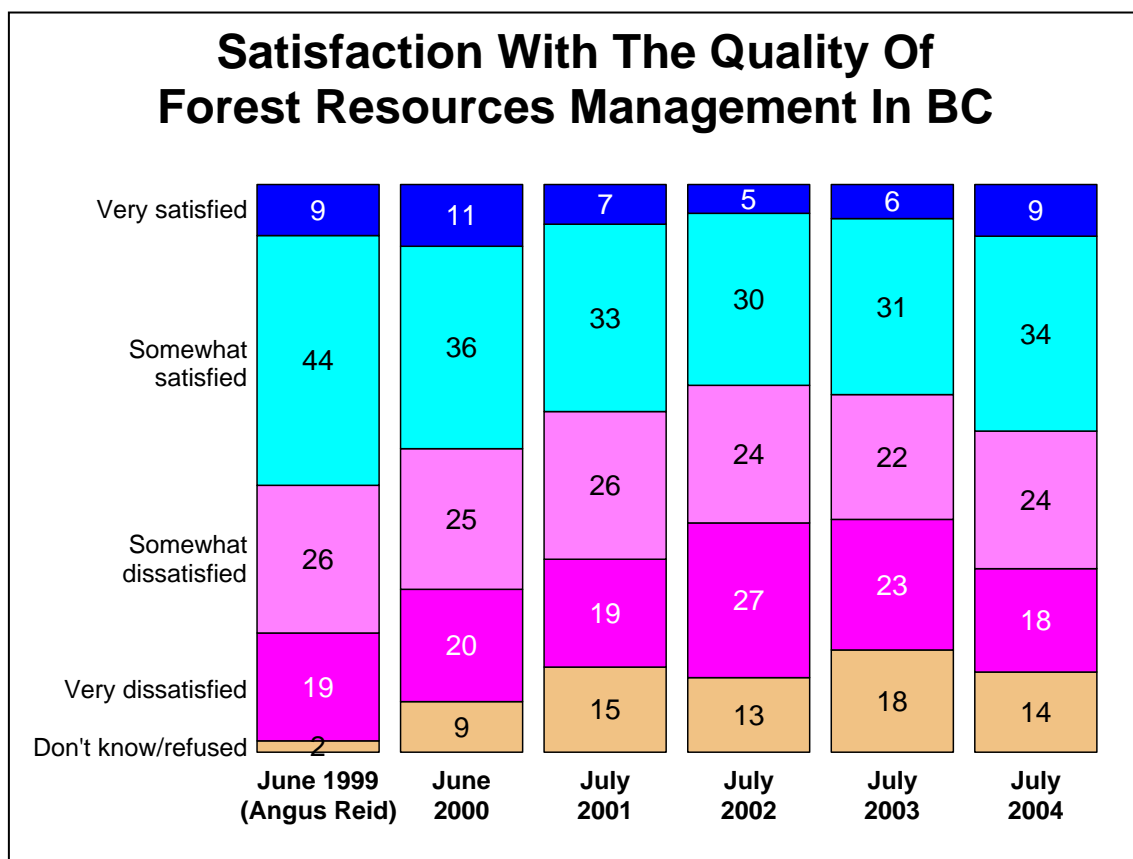
Satisfaction With Forest Resources Management in BC

Over four in ten (43%) BC residents are currently satisfied with the quality of forest resources management in the province, including one in ten that are very satisfied. On the flipside, a similar proportion of residents (42%) are not satisfied.

After experiencing a steady decline from 53% to 35% between June 1999 and July 2002, public satisfaction with forest resource management has edged up for two consecutive waves to sit at its highest point in four years. However, those dissatisfied with how the forest resources are being managed have generally remained consistent since June 1999.

Demographically, there are few differences in opinion between residents with two exceptions:

- Top earners (those with household incomes of \$100,000 or more per annum) are markedly more satisfied than those earning less (62% versus 44% among those earning less than \$100,000)
- Those 65 or older (53%) are more dissatisfied than those under 65 (40%).



Whether Forest Resources Management Is Improving Or Getting Worse In BC

Compared to five years ago, one quarter of residents believe the quality of forest resource management has improved. In contrast, three in ten each believe that it has deteriorated or remained unchanged.

Although the net perception (net difference of % saying it improved versus % saying it worsened) has yet to reach the high registered in June 2000 (+20), this wave's net difference of -6 is an improvement from the -12 and -18 of the July 2002 and July 2003 waves, respectively.

Demographically, most groups tend to believe that forest resources management has deteriorated rather than improved. Regionally, those outside the GVRD, particularly in the Island/Coast and North Central (mentioned by four in ten residents in these two areas), believe forest management has declined.

Whether The Quality Of Forest Resources Management In BC Is Getting Better Or Worse Compared To Five Years Ago

	June 2000 Total	July 2001 Total	July 2002 Total	July 2003 Total	July 2004 Total	Area					
						GVRD	Non GVRD	FV/Other SW	Island Coast	Th/OK Koot	North Centrl
Base	501	501	500	500	500	250	250	39*	88	80	43*
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Much better	11	6	5	4	6	5	6	3	7	3	14
Somewhat better	40	15	13	12	18	20	16	28	13	19	7
About the same*	n/a	36	38	33	31	33	30	33	26	34	28
Somewhat worse	19	13	18	18	16	14	18	15	22	15	21
Much worse	12	9	12	16	14	11	16	10	17	18	19
Don't know/refused	18	20	13	18	15	16	13	10	16	13	12
Net difference	+20	-1	-12	-18	-6	0	-12	+6	-19	-11	-19

* In June 2000, respondents were not provided with the option of "about the same".

** Caution: small base size

Credibility of Various Groups

Resource professionals (including Foresters, Forest Technologists, Biologists, Engineers, Geoscientists and Agrologists) are perceived to be the most credible sources when it comes to information regarding BC's forest resources (achieving a rating of 7.1 out of 10), followed by Academics (6.2) and Environmentalists (5.8) and then Community Leaders (5.3) and Journalists (5.1). On the other end of the spectrum, Forest Industry Execs (4.7), Government Managers (4.2) and Politicians (3.2) are seen as less credible sources of information.

The rating for all resource professionals is in line with previous ratings for Biologists, Geoscientists and Agrologists and an improvement over ratings for Professional Foresters and Registered Forest Technologists. Ratings of all other groups are consistent with previous waves.

Credibility Of Various Groups - Average Rating Out Of 10 -					
	<u>June 2000</u>	<u>July 2001</u>	<u>July 2002</u>	<u>July 2003</u>	<u>July 2004</u>
Other resource professionals (biologists, geoscientists, agrologists)	7.2	7.3	6.9	7.2	n/a
Professional Foresters & Forest Technologists*	6.4	6.7	6.4	6.7	n/a
Resource professionals such as foresters, forest technologists, biologists, engineers, geoscientists and agrologists**	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7.1
Academics	5.7	6.0	5.8	6.1	6.2
Environmentalists	5.4	5.1	5.2	5.7	5.8
Community leaders	5.2	5.4	5.2	5.1	5.3
Journalists	n/a	4.9	4.8	5.1	5.1
Forest industry execs	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.6	4.7
Government managers	4.0	4.4	4.1	3.9	4.2
Politicians	3.1	3.6	3.3	3.0	3.2

June 2000: 1=no confidence at all & 10=complete confidence as protector of public interest in BC's forests.

Since 2001: 1=no trust at all and 10=trust completely for information regarding BC's forest resources.

* Registered Professional Foresters prior to July 2003.

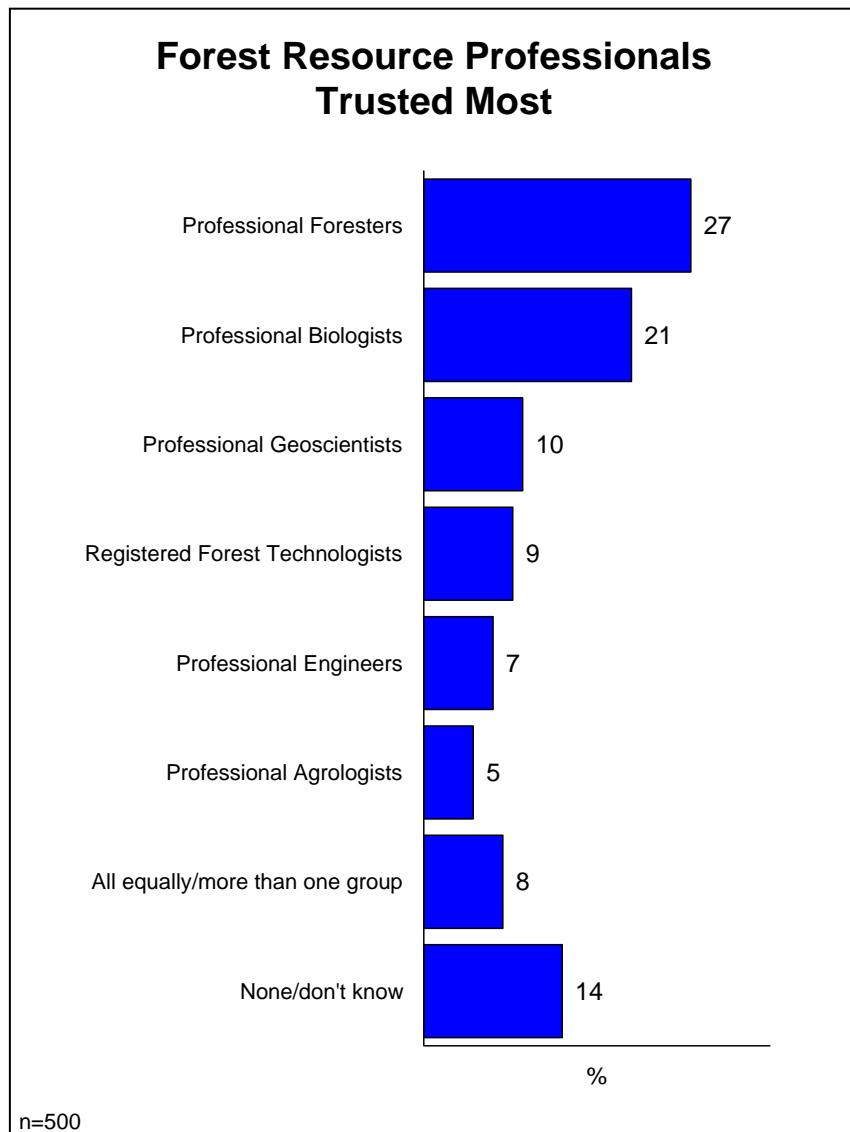
** Prior to 2004, Professional Foresters and Forest Technologists were listed separately from other resource professionals.

Forest Resource Professional Trusted Most

Professional Foresters (27%) followed in second place by Professional Biologists (21%) are the most trusted resource professionals. One in ten BC residents trust Professional Geoscientists or Registered Forest Technologists the most, while no more than 7% favour Professional Engineers or Agrologists.

Top bracket income earners (households earning \$100,000+) are considerably more likely to trust Professional Foresters the most (42% versus 26% earning less than \$100,000 per year). Furthermore, trust in Professional Foresters increases with age from 17% among those 18 to 24 to 32% among those 55+.

Those satisfied with forestry management are more likely to trust Professional Foresters, while those who are dissatisfied have greater confidence in Professional Biologists.



Public Awareness Of Professional Foresters

Currently over eight in ten are aware of what a Professional Forester is including 19% who are “well aware”. Since July 2001, awareness has edged up steadily from 74% to the current all time high of 83%. Strong awareness of the designation tends to rise with age and is generally higher outside the GVRD.

Awareness Of What A Professional Forester Is*

	June <u>2000</u>	July <u>2001</u>	July <u>2002</u>	July <u>2003</u>	July <u>2004</u>
Base	501	501	500	500	500
	%	%	%	%	%
Well aware	21	18	20	23	19
Somewhat aware	58	56	56	58	64
Not aware	20	26	24	18	17
Don't know	1	-	-	1	-

- Percent “Well Aware” Of What An Professional Forester Is* – July 2004 -

	<u>Base</u>		
Total	500	%	19
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	251	%	22
Female	249	%	16
<u>Age</u>			
18-34	109	%	6
35-44	104	%	15
45-64	178	%	22
65+	103	%	31
<u>Income</u>			
< \$25,000	59	%	15
\$25,000 -< \$45,000	103	%	17
\$45,000 -< \$65,000	101	%	14
\$65,000 -< \$100,000	74	%	20
\$100,000+	50	%	30
<u>Region</u>			
GVRD	250	%	13
Non GVRD	250	%	25
Fraser Valley/Other SW	39**	%	23
Island Coast	88	%	20
Thompson/Okanagan/Kootenay	80	%	29
North Central	43**	%	30
<u>Satisfaction With Forest Management</u>			
Very/somewhat satisfied	215	%	20
Very/somewhat dissatisfied	214	%	22

Note: When asked in the June 1997, 1998 and 1999 Angus Reid surveys “Do you know what a registered professional forester is?”, the percent answering “yes” was 42% in 1997, 45% in 1998 and 44% in 1999.



* Prior to July 2003, Professional Forester was referred to as Registered Professional Forester.
** Caution: small base size.

Public Awareness Of Registered Forest Technologists

Comparatively, the BC public is less familiar with Registered Forest Technologists. 55% claim to be aware of this profession, however this only includes 8% who are “well aware”. Again, awareness typically increases with age and tends to be higher outside the GVRD.

Awareness Of What A Registered Forest Technologist Is*

	July <u>2003</u>	July <u>2004</u>
Base	500 %	500 %
Well aware	14	8
Somewhat aware	55	47
Not aware	29	45
Don't know	1	-

- Percent “Well Aware” Of What A Registered Forest Technologist Is* – - July 2004 -

	<u>Base</u>		
Total	500	%	8
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	251	%	10
Female	249	%	6
<u>Age</u>			
18-34	109	%	5
35-44	104	%	7
45-64	178	%	10
65+	103	%	10
<u>Education</u>			
High school or less	126	%	7
Vocation/technical/college	142	%	10
University	226	%	7
<u>Region</u>			
GVRD	250	%	5
Non GVRD	250	%	10
Fraser Valley/Other SW	39**	%	8
Island Coast	88	%	9
Thompson/Okanagan/Kootenay	80	%	11
North Central	43**	%	14
<u>Satisfaction With Forest Management</u>			
Very/somewhat satisfied	215	%	6
Very/somewhat dissatisfied	214	%	13

* Referred to as Forest Technologist in July 2003.

** Caution: small base size.

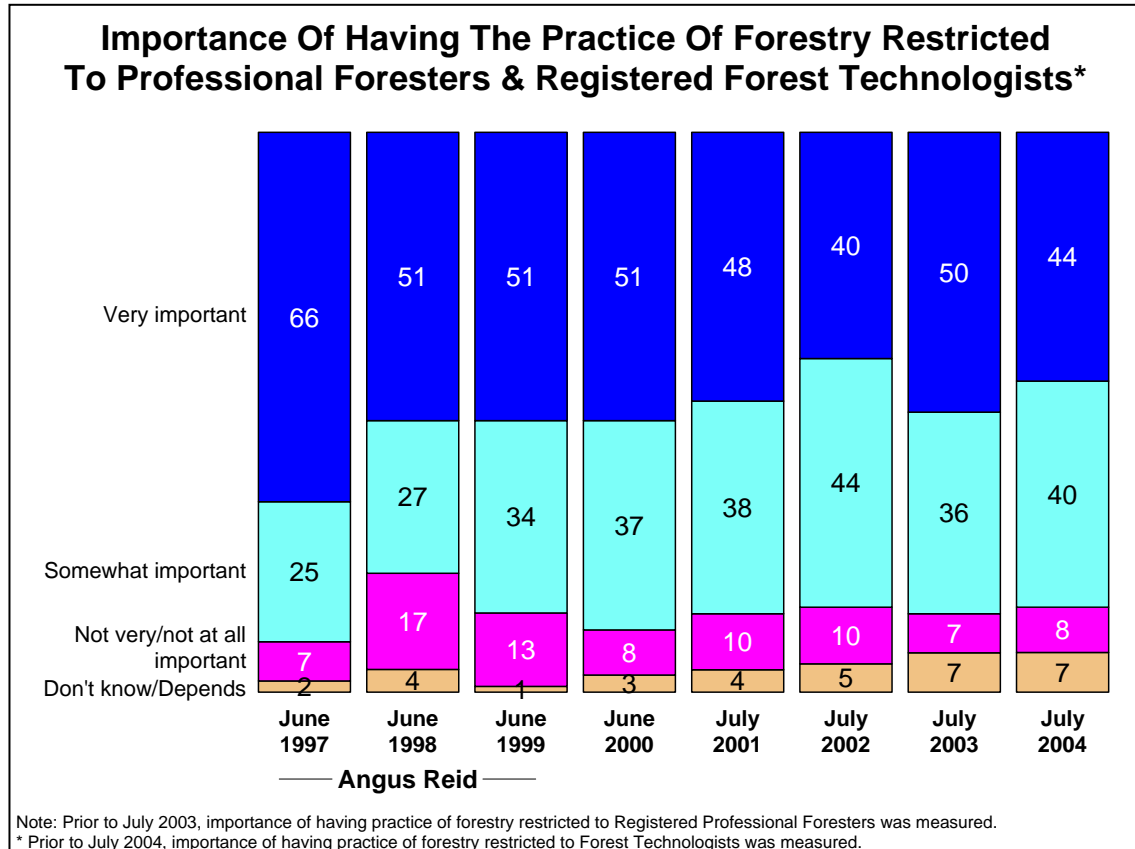
Importance Of Restricting The Practice Of Forestry To Professional Foresters & Registered Forest Technologists

Consistent with historical levels, 84% of BC residents say it is important to restrict the role to Professional Foresters and Registered Forest Technologists when it comes to the management of BC's forest resources, including 44% who consider this "very important".

Those satisfied with the quality of forestry resources management (92%) are more apt to feel it is important to restrict the practice to the two groups than those who are dissatisfied (78%).

1997 to 2002: Now, as you may or may not know, the practice of forestry in British Columbia is restricted by law to registered professional foresters and, as such, they are the only people entitled to plan, approve, or assess the impact of most forestry activities. Thinking about the management of BC's forest resources, do you think it is very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important to have the practice of forestry restricted to professional foresters?

2003 & 2004: In BC many important activities are entrusted to self-regulating professions on the understanding that they are obligated to protect the public's interests. This is true for law, medicine, accounting, engineering and many others including the practice of forestry which is entrusted to professional foresters and registered* forest technologists. Thinking about the management of BC's forest resources, do you think it is very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important to have the practice of forestry restricted to professional foresters and registered* forest technologists? (*Added in July 2004)



Perceived Performance Of Professional Foresters & Registered Forest Technologists

Ratings of Professional Foresters and Registered Forest Technologists are consistent with those in July 2003.

Overall, eight in ten residents agree that Professional Foresters and Registered Forest Technologists are technically competent, 72% believe they are ethical in their decision-making, two-thirds are of the opinion that they are accountable for their actions, and 63% feel that they do a good job at managing BC's forest resources. Those well aware of the two professions have similar perceptions.

Performance Evaluation Of Professional Foresters And Registered Forest Technologists^{*1}

	<u>Angus Reid^{*2}</u>			<u>Strongly/ Somewhat Agree^{*3}</u>					<u>Strong/SW Agree Among Those Well Aware Of</u>	
	<u>June '97</u>	<u>June '98</u>	<u>June '99</u>	<u>June '00</u>	<u>July '01</u>	<u>July '02</u>	<u>July '03</u>	<u>July '04</u>	<u>PFs July 2004</u>	<u>RFTs July 2004</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Professional foresters and registered forest technologists are technically competent	600	600	600	501	501	500	500	500	95	39*
Professional foresters and registered forest technologists are ethical in the forest resource management decisions they make ^{*4}	83	82	80	79	78	77	82	80	82	79
Professional foresters and registered forest technologists are accountable for their actions	72	64	59	72	71	65	71	72	74	72
Professional foresters and registered forest technologists are doing a good job of managing BC's forest resources ^{*5}	n/a	n/a	n/a	71	64	61	64	63	60	64

* Caution: small base size.

^{*1} Performance of "registered professional foresters" were evaluated prior to July 2003 and performance of forest technologists were evaluated prior to July 2004.

^{*2} For the Angus Reid surveys, agreement was based on those rating 5, 6 or 7 on a seven point scale where one means "completely disagree" and seven means "completely agree".

^{*3} For the Synovate surveys, agreement was based on those strongly/somewhat agreeing.

^{*4} Statement worded as "registered professional foresters are ethical in the decisions they make" in June 2000

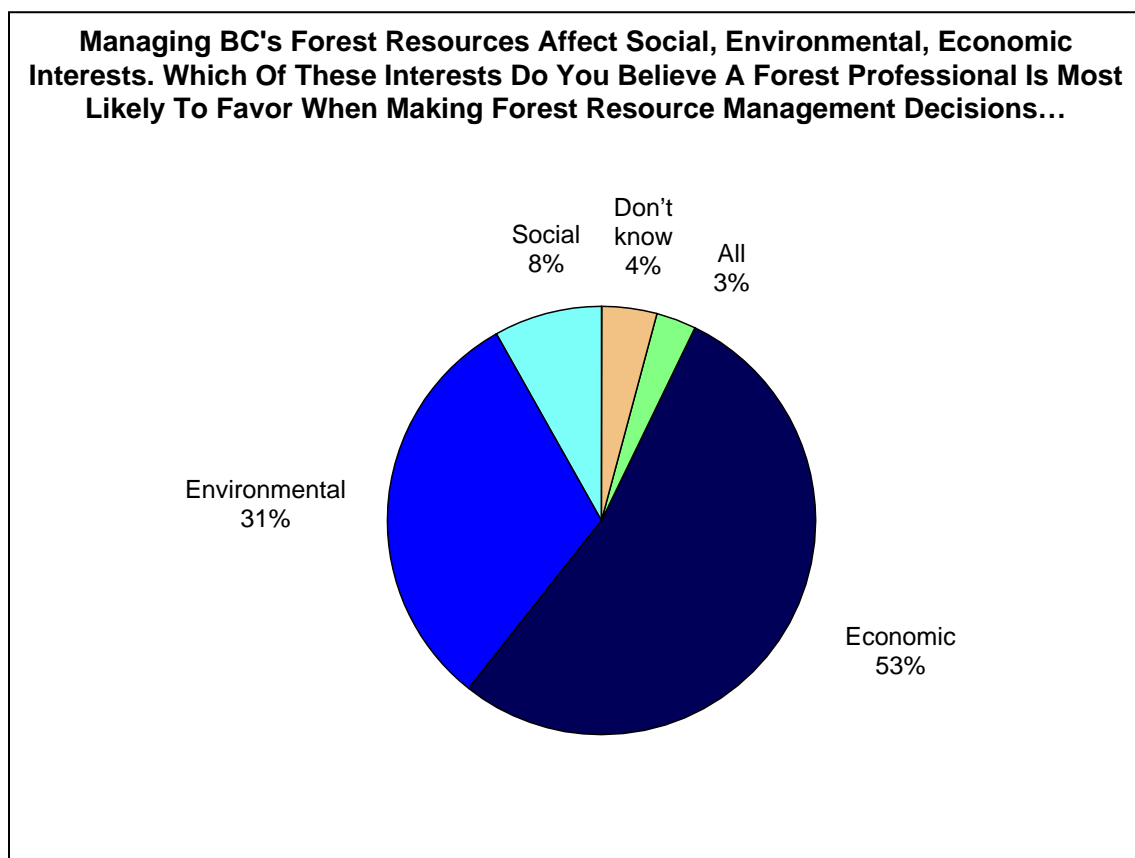


*⁵ Statement worded as “registered professional foresters are doing a good job of practicing forestry in BC” in June 2000.

Interest Forest Professional Most Likely To Favour

When asked which interest a forest professional is most likely to favour when making forest resources management decisions, the BC public believe that economic interests will be served first (mentioned by over one-half residents) followed by environmental interests (mentioned by three in ten). Only 8% feel decisions will be made with social interests in mind.

By region, GVRD residents are more likely to believe that forest professionals will favour environmental interests (37% versus 25% among non-GVRD residents). By household income, residents in the bottom income bracket are more apt to believe that social interests will be served (20% versus 5% among those earning \$25,000+ per annum) while those in the top bracket tend to believe that environmental interests will prevail (50% versus 29% among those earning less than \$100,000).

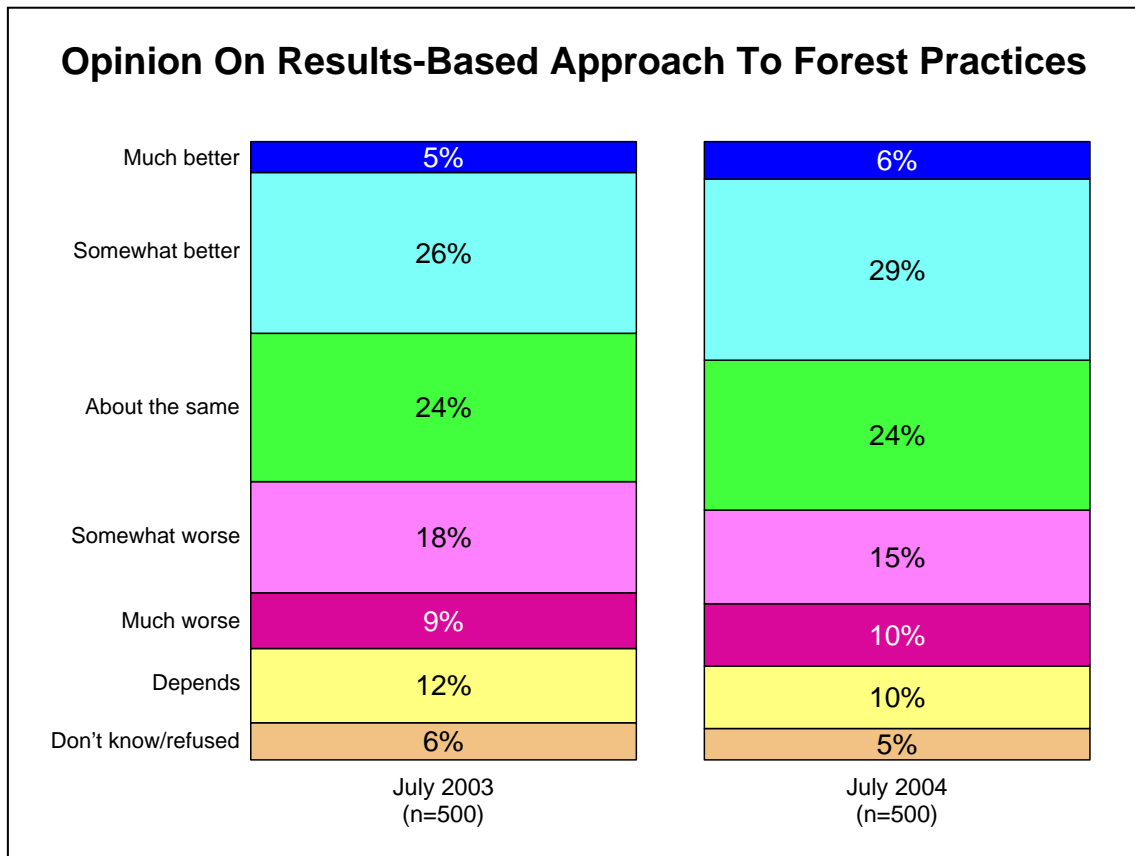


Opinion On Results-Based Forestry System

In line with a year ago, 35% of British Columbians believe the new results based approach will lead to better forest practices, including three in ten who saying it will be “somewhat better”, while one-quarter each take the opposite viewpoint or expect no change. This leaves 15% who are unsure or say it depends on the circumstances.

Opinions on moving to a results-based system is relatively consistent with the exception that Fraser Valley/Other South West residents are less prone to say the approach will result in worse forest practices.

Negativity towards a results-based system tends to grow with age and is highest among the university educated and those well aware of Professional Foresters and Registered Forest Technologists.



Importance Of Greater Reliance On Resource Professionals

Three-quarters of British Columbians believe the change to a results-based system will make it more important to place greater reliance on the judgment and accountability of resource professionals including 44% who say it will be much more important and 32% who say it will be moderately more important. Only 7% feel that it will make it less important to place reliance on the groups, while the balance of residents think it won't make a difference, that it depends or have no opinion. This is similar to the importance afforded to the reliance on Forest Professionals and Forest Technologists a year ago.

By region, with the exception of residents in the FraserValley/Other South West area, British Columbians tend to believe it is much more important as opposed to a little more important to rely on resource professionals. Likewise this opinion is more typical of older residents (those 35+).

