

2013 ABCFP Public Opinion Poll Results

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Executive Summary

Every two years, the ABCFP conducts public opinion polling to find out what is important to the people of BC. In the 2013 edition of the poll, we asked key questions about forest management in the province. Results from the survey gauge how BC adults view forest professionals and forestry management and can be used to inform future strategic planning by the association. The 2013 poll was conducted during the month of August and 647 BC residents responded. Results are considered to be 95% accurate (by +/- 3.9%, 95 times out of 100). That means that we can be 95% sure that the results garnered from this survey are accurate within 3.9%.

Because most of the questions are consistent from poll to poll, we are able to identify trends going back to 1999. Some of the trends we discovered in the 2013 poll are the desire of the people of BC to only allow forest professionals to practise forestry; the level of satisfaction with forest management has continued to increase; and the increasing level of trust the public has in forest professionals.

Should We Restrict the Practice of Professional Forestry?

The practice of professional forestry has been restricted to forest professionals since 1947 when professional foresters agreed to take care of the public's interests in our forests in exchange for this exclusive right to practise. We are pleased to see that the people of BC also think it is important to restrict the practice of professional forestry to Registered Professional Foresters (RPFs) and Registered Forest Technologists (RFTs) – collectively known as forest professionals. While the number of people who think this restriction (called right-to-practise) is important has gone up and down over the years, it has been on a continual upward trend since 2006.

Are You Satisfied with the Quality of Forest Management in BC?

Satisfaction with forest management is a volatile variable that changes with market and environmental conditions. In recent years, the mountain pine beetle, softwood lumber agreement and the mid-term timber supply issue have been in the news and at the front of the minds of many British Columbians.

More than half of British Columbians are satisfied with the quality of forest management in the province today. In spite of the volatility of insect infestations, an unpredictable market and more, the satisfaction has increased each poll since 2009. We have found that there is a difference in the satisfaction level between older (55 plus) and younger (18-24) British Columbians. Older respondents tend to be somewhat less satisfied than younger ones.

Who Is The Most Trusted Source of Forest Information?

When asked about how trustworthy different groups are when it comes to being an information source about forest resources, resource professionals (which include forest professionals as well

as professional engineers, biologists, agrologists and more) are the most trusted. This trend is consistent with both urban and rural dwellers.

The poll asked respondents to compare resource professionals with journalists, politicians, government managers, forest industry executives, academics, community leaders, and environmentalists. Resource professionals earned a trustworthiness rating of 7.6 (out of 10) while the least trusted group is politicians with a rating of 3.1.

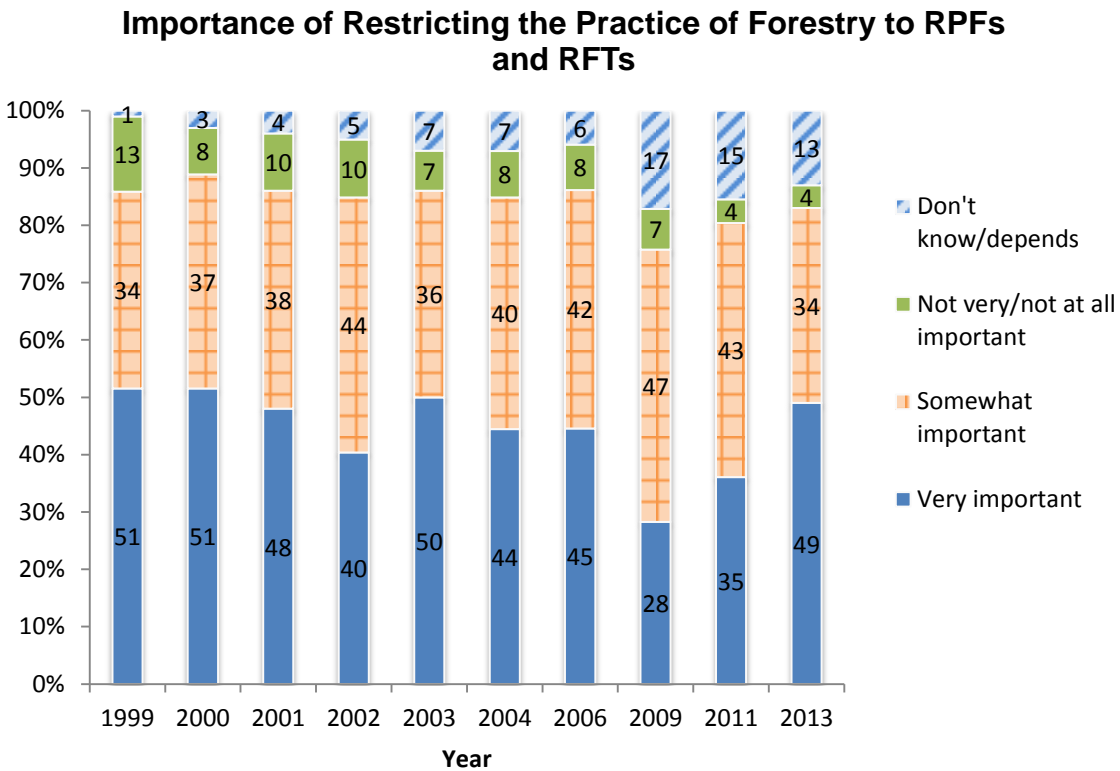
When we look more closely at the resource professional group, we see that RPFs are the most trusted professionals – far surpassing our engineering and agrologist colleagues. RFTs and professional biologists are tied for second place.

The trustworthiness of RPFs has increased 8% since 2006 while RFTs have seen their trustworthiness levels more than double since 2006 (RFTs became a part of the ABCFP in 2004).

A more detailed report of each question follows. You can find reports of past public opinion polls on our website.

Restricting the Practice of Forestry to RPFs & RFTs

The majority of BC residents (83%) think that it is important to have the practice of forestry restricted to Registered Professional Foresters and Registered Forest Technologists. This result represents the highest percentage of BC residents who feel this way since 2006.



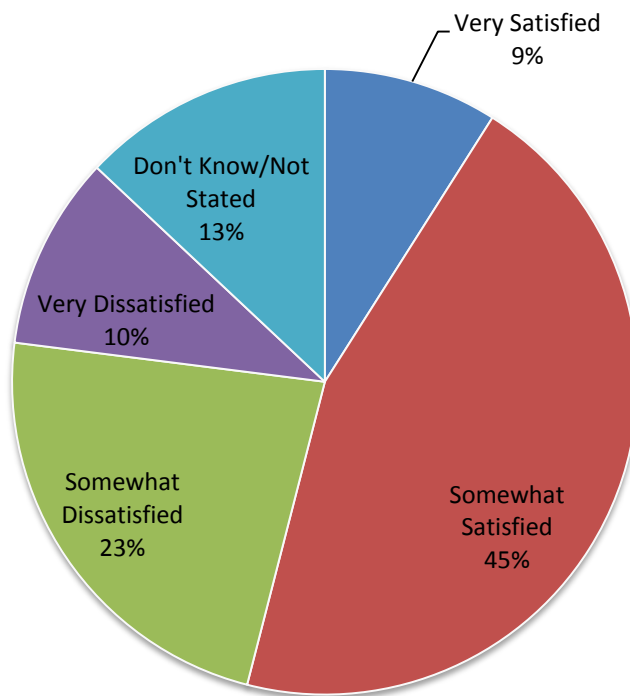
Quality of Forest Resources Management in BC

The level of satisfaction with the quality of forest management in BC continues its upward trend beginning in 2009. Over half of British Columbians (54%) are satisfied (45% somewhat satisfied and 9% very satisfied) with the quality of forest resources management in BC today.

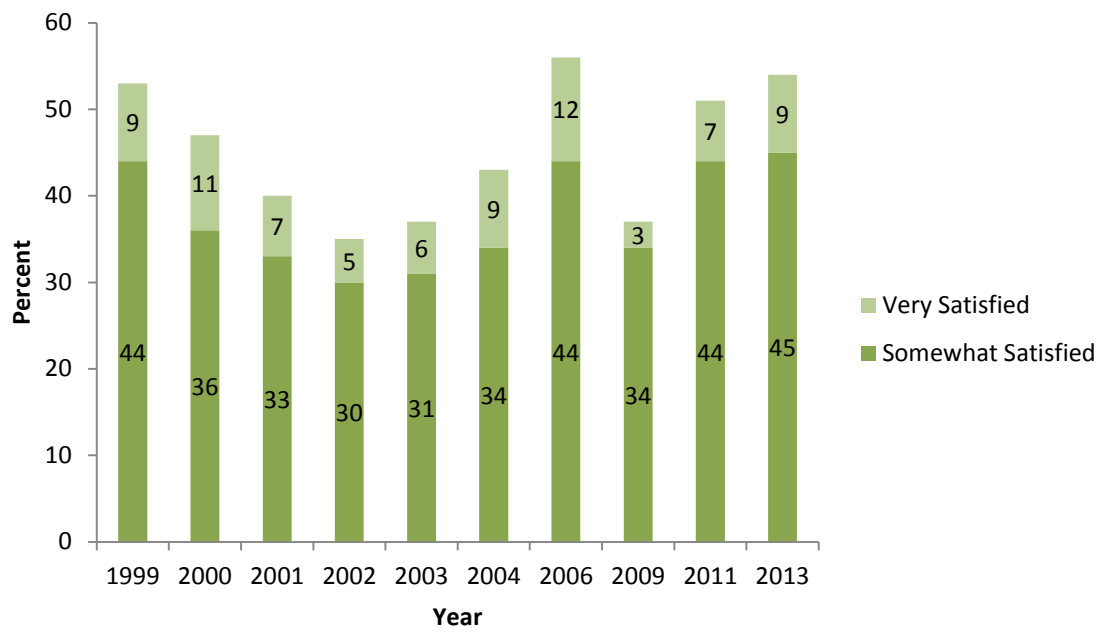
Respondents aged 18 to 24 are most likely to report being somewhat or very satisfied with forest resource management in BC (61%) while those aged 55 and up are most likely to be somewhat or very dissatisfied (52%).

33% of British Columbians are dissatisfied (somewhat dissatisfied 23% and very dissatisfied 10%) with the quality of forest management in BC today. This dissatisfaction rate is lower than in previous years (51% in 2009 and 36% in 2011).

Satisfaction with the Quality of Forest Resources Management in BC



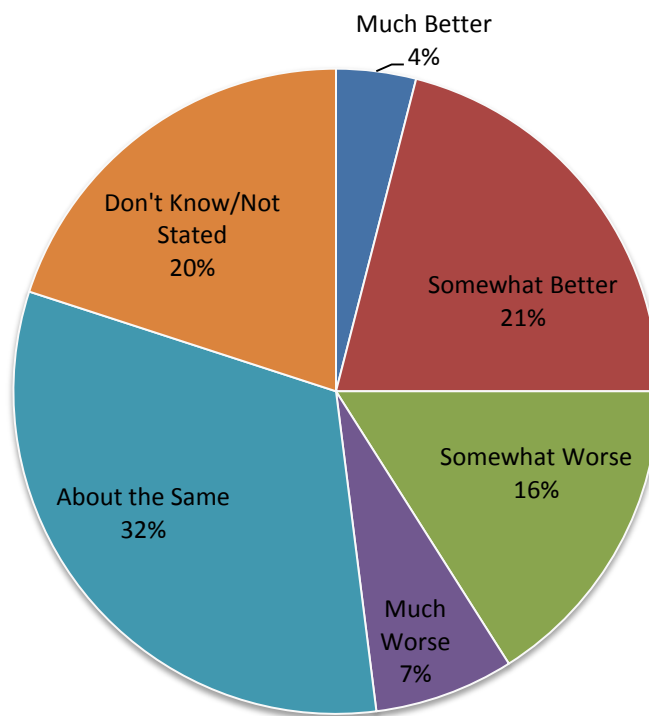
Satisfaction with the Quality of Forest Resources Management by Polling Year



Quality of BC Forest Management Then and Now

About one-third (32%) of respondents feel the quality of forest resource management in BC has remained the same in the past five years. 25% of respondents feel that the quality of forest resource management in BC has increased and 23% feel quality has decreased. These results indicate that the overall perception of the change in the quality of forest resource management in BC is fairly neutral.

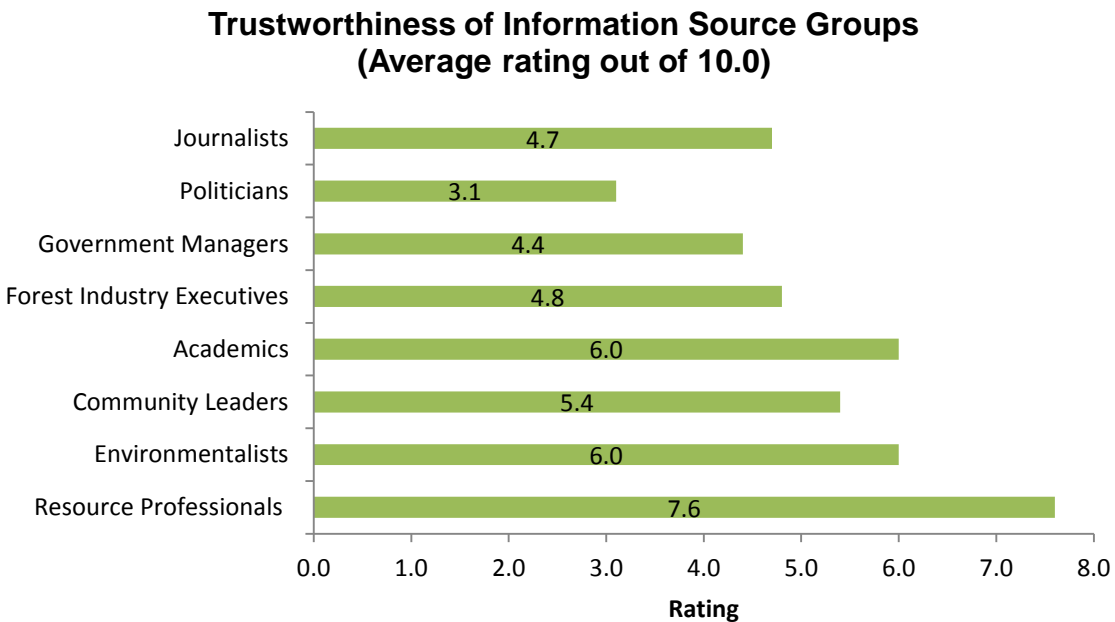
Perceived Quality of Forest Resources Management in BC Compared to Five Years Ago



Trustworthiness of Resource Professionals

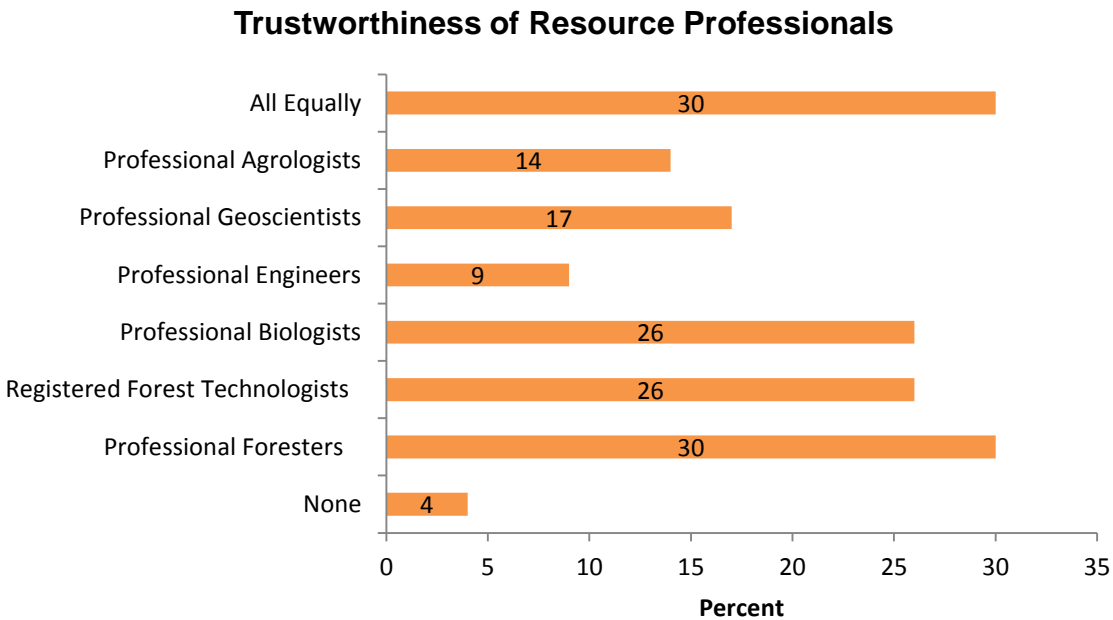
Resource professionals (including Foresters, Forest Technologists, Biologists, Engineers, Geoscientists and Agrologists) are the most trusted source of information about BC's forest resources (scoring at rating of 7.6 out of 10.0). This result is consistent with all public opinion polling since 2006. Environmentalists and academics follow both achieving a rating of 6.0.

The ratings for resource professionals increases as education level increases (7.2 to 7.8).



Within the group of resource professionals, it was found that Registered Professionals Foresters (RPFs) were perceived as the most trusted (30%). Registered Forest Technologists (RFTs) and Biologists tied for second place with 26% each.

The trustworthiness level of Registered Professional Foresters increased 8% since 2006 (from 22% to 30%). Levels of trustworthiness for Registered Forest Technologists have seen a more dramatic increase since 2006 – moving from 12% to 26%.



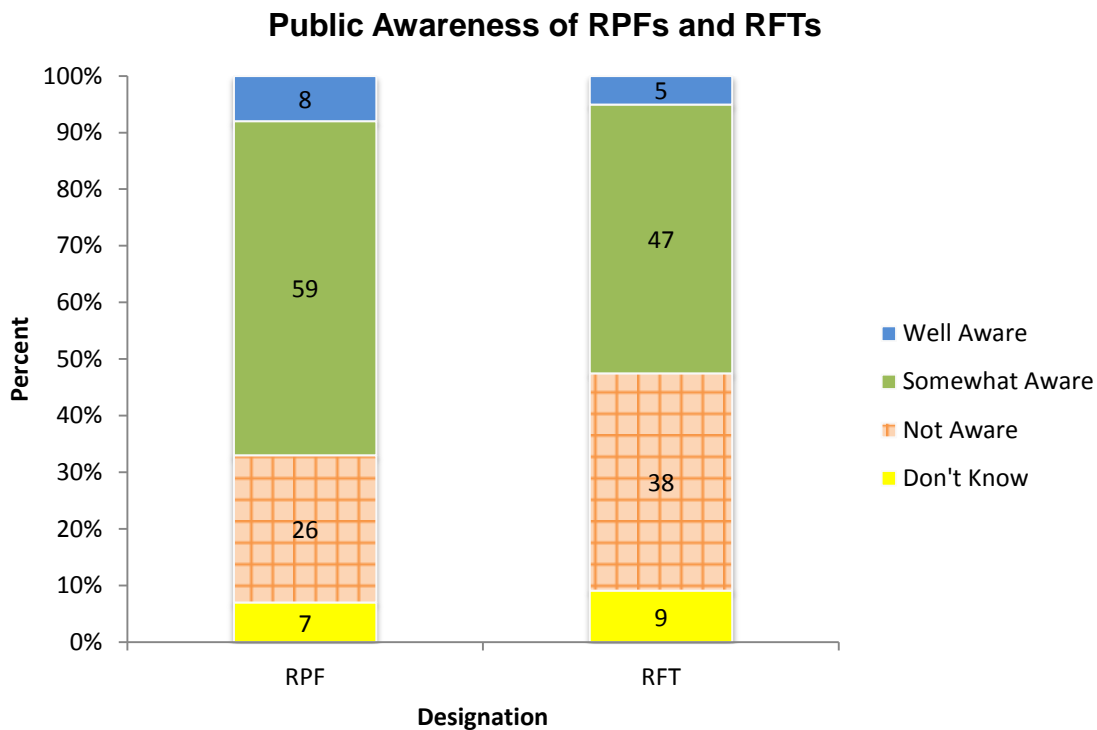
Public Awareness

Two-thirds (67%) of BC residents are aware (well aware and somewhat aware) of what a Registered Forest Professional is. This result is somewhat lower than the 75% awareness reported in 2011.

The level of awareness for Registered Forest Technologists is 56% – slightly higher than reported in 2011 (52%).

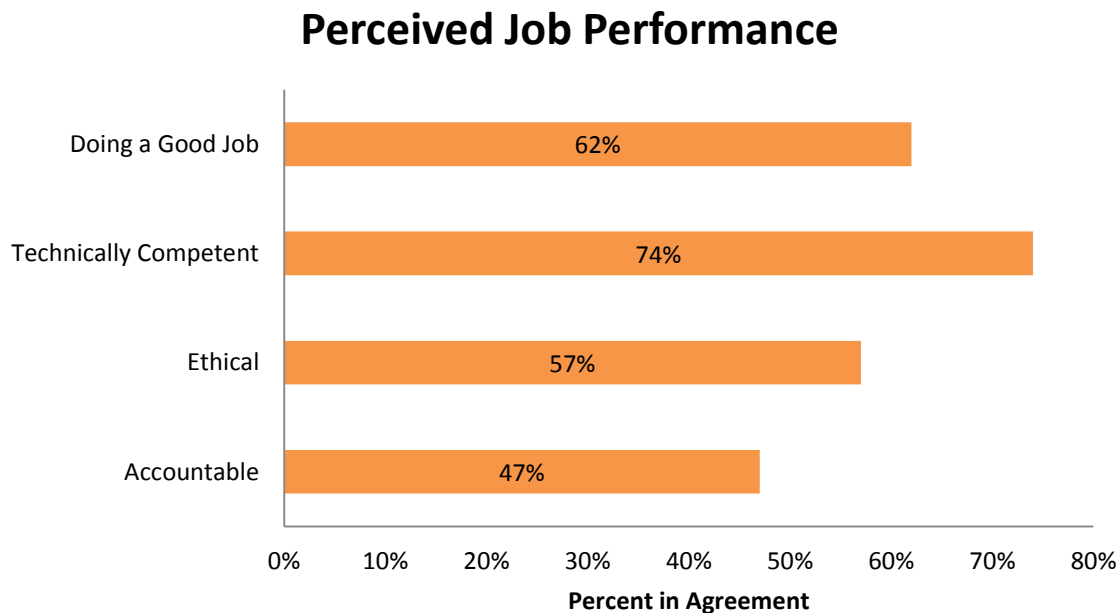
Male residents of BC are more aware of RPFs and RFTs than females residents (71% RPF and 55% RFT for males compared to 64% RPF and 51% for females).

Although percentages of awareness are high, 26% of BC residents are not aware of what a Registered Professional Forester is and 38% of residents are not aware of what a Registered Forest Technologists is.



Perceived Job Performance

The perceived job performance of Registered Professional Foresters and Registered Forest Technologists (collectively known as forest professionals) was measured using several indicators. When asked if forest professionals are doing a good job of managing BC’s forest resources, 62% of BC residents agreed (strongly and somewhat agreed). 74% agree that forest professionals are technically competent, 57% feel that forest professionals are ethical in the forest resource management decisions they make and 47% feel that forest professionals are accountable for their actions.



Males are more likely to give higher ratings on most job performance measures as compared to females.

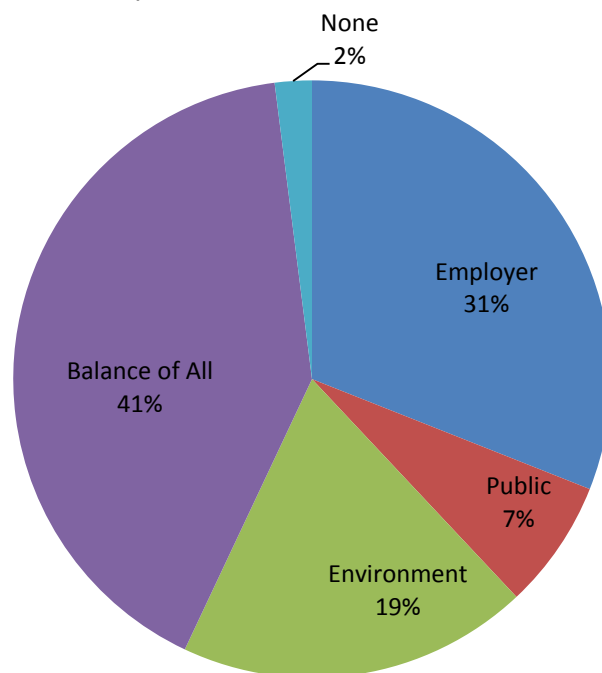
Indicator	Male (% in agreement)	Female (% in agreement)
Doing a Good Job	66%	59%
Technically competent	77%	71%
Ethical	63%	52%
Accountable	47%	47%

Decision-Making When Faced With a Conflict Between Interests

When asked how forest professionals would deal with decision-making when faced with a conflict between interests, 41% felt that forest professionals would choose to balance the needs of their employers, the public and the environment. 31% of respondents felt that forest professionals would follow the directives of their employers, 19% felt forest professionals would do what's best for the environment and 7% felt forest professionals would take only the view of the public into consideration.

Decision-Making When Faced with Conflicting Interests

Q: When faced with a conflict between interests, do you believe forest professionals would choose...



Summary

The majority of BC residents feel that it is important to have the practice of forestry restricted to Registered Professional Foresters and Registered Forest Technologists. Over half are satisfied with the quality of forest resource management. Resource professionals are their most trusted source for information regarding BC's forest resources and within the group of resource professionals, RPFs are most trusted. What is also of note is the low trustworthiness of government managers and other sources of information versus resource professionals.

Public awareness of RFTs has improved while that of RPFs has declined since 2011. Similar to results reported in 2011, younger people (those ages 18 to 34) and females are more likely to be unaware of what forest professionals are.