



PROJECT REPORT

# 2009 WatershedEXT Electronic Mailing List and Website User Evaluation Survey

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## 2009 WatershedEXT Electronic Mailing List and Website User Evaluation Survey

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The WatershedEXT electronic mailing list and the watershed management cluster website are tools employed by the FORREX Watershed Management Cluster for increasing awareness of and access to science-based watershed management information. The WatershedExt electronic mailing list, with a subscriber base of over 1100 people is an important method for distributing watershed management information to the large and diverse audience who receive and read this product. In addition, the WM website, which receives relatively heavy use, is an important tool in making content and links available for clients.

To ensure that the format, content and scope of the WatershedEXT electronic mailing list and WM website are meeting the needs of users, an evaluation survey was conducted during the 2009-10 fiscal year. The objective of the evaluation survey was to:

1. Assess the level of satisfaction with the WatershedEXT electronic mailing list and website, and
2. Identify areas of potential improvement or change in the electronic mailing list and website.

Questions were formulated to assist the WMEP specialists to help improve the delivery and content of the electronic mailing list and website. In addition, content was collected to improve FORREX's understanding of client usage of these resources. The survey was conducted during July and August 2009 using an electronic, web-based survey system ([www.zoomerang.com](http://www.zoomerang.com)).

This document summarizes the results of the evaluation survey which was distributed to subscribers of the WatershedEXT electronic mailing list. A summary of the key survey results and responses is provided in Section 2, followed by the complete survey data in Section 3.

## 2. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The survey was sent to approximately 1100 subscribers (total subscribers at the time of survey initiation). A total of 134 responses were received which equates to a response rate of approximately 12%. The low response rate may be related to the survey being conducted during July and August when many subscribers are away from the office for vacation or in the field. The summary of results includes the key points and the value in parentheses refers to the specific survey question being summarized (full results are provided in Section 3 of this report).

The first two survey questions were intended to provide background information about the clients. Specifically respondent location and field of expertise.

- Most survey respondents are involved in watershed management in BC (Table 1, Q. 1)
- The primary fields of practice of respondents were (1) forestry, (2) water management and (3) fisheries and aquatic ecology, with other fields represented at lower levels (Q. 2)

*Table 1: Location of respondents*

<b>Location</b>	<b>No. Responses</b>
Coastal BC	57
Southern Interior BC	67
Northern Interior BC	39
Within Canada	17
Outside Canada	8
Other	10

Overall, the responses to the evaluation questions regarding the WatershedEXT electronic mailing list were very positive. The following are brief summary points based on the survey results. For greater detail, please see the full results and written responses in section 3.

- The majority of respondents (66%) have been WatershedExt electronic mailing list subscribers for more than 3 years
- The majority of respondents (66%) felt that it was important that the electronic mailing list remain focused on water-related topics (Q. 4).
- If the electronic mailing list became more broadly focused (e.g., beyond water related topics) 54% said they would still subscribe and 38% said they would wait to decide whether to maintain their subscription (Q. 5)
- Of the respondents, 62% subscribe to at least one other FORREX electronic mailing list, with the 'FORREX' electronic mailing list being the most commonly subscribed (47% of respondents) (Q. 6)
- Of the respondents, only 1 felt there was excessive duplication between lists (Q. 7)
- 94% of respondents felt that the posting frequency of once a month is adequate (Q. 8)

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- 97% of respondents felt that the overall performance and utility of the WatershedEXT electronic mailing list is excellent or good (Q. 9)
- 96% of respondents felt the quality of information featured is excellent or good (Q. 9)
- 92% of respondents felt that the timeliness of the information provided is excellent or good (Q. 9)
- 91% of respondents felt that the comprehensiveness of the information is excellent or good (Q. 9)
- 92% of respondents rated the WatershedEXT electronic mailing list as the best or good relative to other electronic mailing lists they receive (Q. 10)
- 98% of respondents agreed that the WatershedEXT electronic mailing list postings increased their awareness of events, news and information related to watershed management in BC (Q. 11)

The final question in the WatershedEXT electronic mailing list portion of the survey was open-ended, asking for comments and suggestions for improving the electronic mailing list. The complete list of responses is included in Section 3, and key comments/suggestions are noted below.

- General support and “keep up the good work” comments
- Separate content by topic to allow subscribers to browse according to their interests
- More diverse content beyond forestry , suggestions include: aquatic ecology, mining impacts, protected areas, student opportunities, job opportunities
- More frequent and shorter posts are more likely to be read
- Set-up website to allow for RSS subscriptions

The second section of the survey included questions relating to usage and evaluation of the quality of the WM website in particular and the FORREX website in general. Full results are provided in section 3, and key points are summarized below.

- 62% of respondents currently use the FORREX website when looking for information on natural resources management (Q. 13)
- 39% of respondents visit the FORREX website about once a month, while 18% visit more than once a month and 32% visit less than once a month and 11% never visit the FORREX website (Q. 14)
- 70%, 31% and 51% of respondents have accessed Streamline, the Compendium of Forest Hydrology and Geomorphology in British Columbia, and the watershed management links resources on the FORREX website, respectively. (Q. 15)
- The most highly accessed web resources outside the WM program are JEM, event listings, and the FORREX Series and file report publications (Q. 15)
- 95% of respondents considered the overall quality and utility of information available on the WM website to be excellent or good (Q. 16)
- 89% of respondents indicated that the ease of finding desired information on the WM website was excellent or good (Q. 16)
- 94% of respondents felt that the WM website links were up-to-date (rated excellent or good) (Q. 16)

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The final question in the WM/FORREX website portion of the survey was open-ended, asking for comments and suggestions for improving the website. The complete list of responses is included in Section 3, and key points are noted below.

- More information on restoration would be appreciated
- More information on non-forestry topics
- Might be more effective to organize information by topic rather than product type
- A method to note what content is new (probably intended for electronic mailing list)

### 3. FULL SURVEY RESULTS

*Question 1. In which geographical area are you involved in watershed management activities? (select all that apply)*

	<b>No. Responses</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Southern Interior BC	68	50%
Coastal BC	58	43%
Northern Interior BC	39	29%
Within Canada	17	13%
Other, please specify*	9	7%
Outside Canada	8	6%

\*Respondents who selected the option of “Other” geographical area of involvement in watershed management activities included four stating “all of BC”, two for “Alberta”, one for “western Canada” and one for “Oregon”.

*Question 2. In which field/area do you primarily practice? (Select all that apply)*

	<b>No. Responses</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Forestry	56	42%
Water Management	50	37%
Fisheries and Aquatic Ecology	47	35%
Biology (e.g., terrestrial ecology)	24	18%
Geosciences and Engineering	21	16%
Other (see list below)	20	15%
Mining	15	11%
Agriculture	11	8%
Power Supply	10	7%

Written responses to “Other” field/area of practice:

- A concerned citizen in the Shawnigan Lake watershed
- Broad-based sustainability issues
- Climatology
- Ecological restoration
- Energy Sector
- Environmental Assessment of major projects
- Fish habitat rehabilitation and enhancement
- Flood forecasting, water (snow) supply monitoring
- Forest Certification
- GIS

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- Hydrology
- Land conservation, GIS
- Land use planning
- Marine Conservation
- Protected Areas and Conservation of Biodiversity
- Recreation
- Strategic land use planning
- Urban ecology
- Urban/rural development
- Waste management, water quality

**Question 3.** *How long have you been a subscriber to the listserv?*

	<b>No. Responses</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
< 1 year	17	13%
1-2 years	28	21%
>3 years	89	66%

**Question 4.** *Our postings are focused on water-related topics. There are advantages and disadvantages of being topically specific. To you, how important is it for the listserv to maintain this topical focus on water?*

	<b>No. Responses</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Very important	88	66%
Somewhat important	40	30%
Not important at all	6	4%

**Question 5.** *Would you still subscribe to the listserv if it included other topics such as timber management, conservation biology, growth and yield, information management and socio-economics?*

	<b>No. Responses</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Yes, I would still subscribe	73	54%
Unsure, I would have to wait and decide	51	38%
No, I would leave the list if the topic focus was expanded	10	7%

**Question 6.** Do you subscribe to other FORREX listservers? Please select those of which you are a subscriber.

	No. Responses	% of Responses
FORREX	63	76%
ConservExt	11	13%
ForestDynamicsExt	4	5%
SocialScienceExt	3	4%
BC Journal of Ecosystems and Management (JEM)	27	33%
Linking Innovation & Networking Knowledge (LINK)	14	17%
Natural Resources Information Network (NRIN)	8	10%

**Question 7.** Do you feel that there is an overlap between the Watershed Management listserver and other listservers operated by FORREX?

	No. Responses	% of Responses
I do not subscribe to any other FORREX listservers	70	52%
No, I have not experienced duplication in content	28	21%
Yes, but the overlap is minimal and not problematic	35	26%
Yes, the duplication should be addressed	1	1%

**Question 8.** We generally send out postings once a month. Do you feel this posting frequency is adequate, too frequent or not frequent enough?

	No. Responses	% of Responses
Adequate	126	94%
Too frequent	4	3%
Not frequent enough	4	3%

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***Question 9.** With respect to the Watershed Management Listserver, please rate the following:*

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Overall performance and utility	55 (42%)	73 (55%)	3 (2%)	1 (1%)
Quality of information featured	63 (48%)	64 (48%)	4 (3%)	1 (1%)
Timely featuring of news, events and courses	66 (50%)	55 (42%)	10 (8%)	1 (1%)
Comprehensive information	53 (41%)	65 (50%)	12 (9%)	0 (0%)

***Question 10.** Out of all the information style listserv postings you receive, how would you rate the Watershed Management Listserv?*

	<b>No. Responses</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
The Best	33	25%
Good	87	67%
Average	10	8%
Poor	0	0%
The Worst	0	0%
Total	130	100%

***Question 11.** As a result of the Watershed Management listserv, can you say that the postings have increased your awareness of events, news and information in Watershed Management in British Columbia?*

	<b>No. Responses</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Yes	130	98%
No	1	1%
Undecided	2	2%
Total	133	100%

*Question 12. Please provide any further suggestions and comments to help us improve the WatershedEXT Listserv.*

- contacts for people involved in watershed stuff...not all at once but feature a few an issue
- Great work, keep it up...
- I don't have a suggestion at the moment that would reflect a significant improvement.
- I recently received "early retirement" from Terminal Forest Products with the recessionary sale of their woodlands. They have asked me to look after their silviculture liabilities and consequently your service which is forwarded to me is beneficial to keeping a finger on the pulse. Thank-you!
- If more topic is included on the listserv, I suggest to separate them by topic headings.
- If you add additional topics to the listserv, having them "separated" would allow users to quickly browse through sections of interests
- Inclusion of issues and articles on forest certification would benefit my work
- It is great the way it is.
- Keep it coming!
- Keep up the good work
- Keep up the good work
- Keep up the good work and stay dynamic with the issues MPB hydrology etc.
- Listserv's are out-of-date now. Why not set up your website so that I can subscribe to it as an RSS feed. Maybe a forum, blog or wiki?
- more protected area coverage as it pertains to watershed protection and management
- My interest is in waste management and environmental impact specifically to water quality and aquatic ecology so more related content would be nice. Sometimes these topics are covered but not always.
- Nothing is needed... great service and Great job!!!!
- Please include mining related impacts to watersheds
- Send out more frequently, but otherwise a fantastic resource. Particularly in the past half year or so as it features new publications as well as conferences/courses, etc.
- Something geared towards students? Or job opportunities?
- The one challenge I have with the listserv is that the emails are quite long. Though I indicated that once a month was adequate you might want to consider a more frequent email schedule with less content in each. Too much content = not reading it all.
- This listserv is critical for those involved in watershed management in BC. It is the glue that holds us together.
- We need to include more than forestry land use.

**Question 13.** Do you currently use the FORREX website when you are looking for information on natural resources management?

	<b>No. Responses</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
Yes	82	62%
No	50	38%
Total	132	100%

**Question 14.** How often do you visit the FORREX website?

	<b>No. Responses</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
every day	0	0%
several times a week	3	2%
about once a week	7	5%
several times a month	15	11%
about once a month	52	39%
less than once a month	42	32%
never	15	11%

**Question 15.** Please indicate which of the following resources on the FORREX website you have accessed? (Select all that apply)

	<b>No. Responses</b>	<b>% of Responses</b>
None	14	11%
Streamline	92	70%
The Compendium of Forest Hydrology and Geomorphology in BC	41	31%
Watershed Management links	67	51%
BC Journal of Ecosystems and Management (JEM)	49	37%
LINK	20	15%
FORREX Series and File Report publications	39	30%
Event listings	44	34%
Natural Resources Information Network (NRIN)	13	10%
Mountain Pine Beetle Gateway	16	12%
Other, please specify	1	1%

*Question 16. With respect to the Watershed Management website, please rate the following:*

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Overall quality and utility of information available	34 (31%)	71 (64%)	6 (5%)	0 (0%)
Ease of finding desired information	25 (23%)	73 (66%)	13 (12%)	0 (0%)
Up-to-date links	33 (30%)	70 (64%)	5 (5%)	1 (1%)

*Question 17. What changes or additional features would you suggest for the FORREX and Watershed Management websites? (responses of “none” or “nothing” have been removed)*

- A way to mark what is new from the previous posting.
- Diversity is beneficial to my application.
- I have just been introduced to the site so don't feel I am confident enough yet to answer all your questions.
- I would like to see more on restoration as I see that as a key issue in the 21st Century.
- Just keep up the excellent work!
- My work is non forestry related Water Management. It would be helpful for me to have more info on water management topics
- No changes but this survey made me aware of the other services and I will be sure to check them out on the website.
- Sometimes a bit hard to find stuff on the page. Maybe organize by key strategic management areas - beetle, fire, rangeland, climate change, etc.