



Nature Protection & Forestry in New Brunswick

Survey Report



February 2022

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Methodology & Logistics

Overview & Reporting

The following represents the results of a February 2022 telephone survey of N=300 eligible voters, 18 years of age or older from New Brunswick, conducted by Oraclepoll Research Ltd. The Survey was commissioned by the Conservation Council of New Brunswick, CPAWS and the Atlantic Salmon Federation. This report contains the executive findings from the current survey.

When and where possible, results from this poll are compared to a September 2020 survey that established baseline data for several indicators.

Study Sample

A total of N=300 interviews were completed, with residents throughout the province. All respondents were screened to ensure that they were residents of New Brunswick, that they were 18 years of age or older and eligible to vote in the province. The sample was stratified to ensure a representative breakdown by regions. The adjacent table provides a breakdown of the total sample by area.



A randomized dual sample frame database was used that was inclusive of cellular and land line telephone numbers.

Logistics

The poll was conducted by telephone with live person-to-person operators at the Oraclepoll call centre facility using computer-assisted techniques of telephone interviewing (CATI) and random number selection (RDD). A total of 20% of all interviews were monitored and the management of Oraclepoll Research supervised 100%.

Initial calls were made between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. Subsequent call-backs of no-answers and busy numbers were made on a (staggered) daily rotating basis up to 5 times (from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.) until contact was made. In addition, telephone interview appointments were attempted with those respondents unable to complete the survey at the time of contact. If no contact was made at a number after the fifth attempt, the number was discarded and a new one supplanted it.

Survey interviews took place between the days of February 3rd to February 5th, 2022.

Confidence

The margin of error for the N=300 sample is $\pm 5.6\% \frac{19}{20}$ times.

Error rates vary and are larger for geographic and demographic sub-samples of the survey population. Results displayed in some tables and graphs may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Provincial Plan to Increase Protected Areas

The following preamble below was first read to all respondents after which they were asked about their support for increasing protected natural areas. The question was modified in this current polling wave, but results from the two surveys are referenced.

“Around the world, people and governments are responding to environmental challenges like climate change and wildlife habitat destruction by creating protected natural areas. Protected areas include parks, and other land designations that generally limit industrial activity while allowing recreation and other sustainable uses. The following questions are about protected areas and protecting land in New Brunswick.”

Q1. In 2019, the New Brunswick government promised to increase protected natural areas from 4.9 to 10% of land in the province. Should the New Brunswick government follow through on this promise this year?



Nine in ten residents in the province said that the government of New Brunswick should follow through on its promise to increase protected areas from 4.9% to 10%. In the previous poll conducted before the 2020 vote, 87% felt that next government should honour this pledge after the Election.

In a new probe, respondents were asked if they have heard of the New Brunswick Nature Legacy Program. The 27% (N=81) that said they have heard of it were then asked how they became aware of the Program.

Q2. The New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources and Energy announced its Nature Legacy program on Nov. 26, 2020. Have you heard of the New Brunswick Nature Legacy Program?



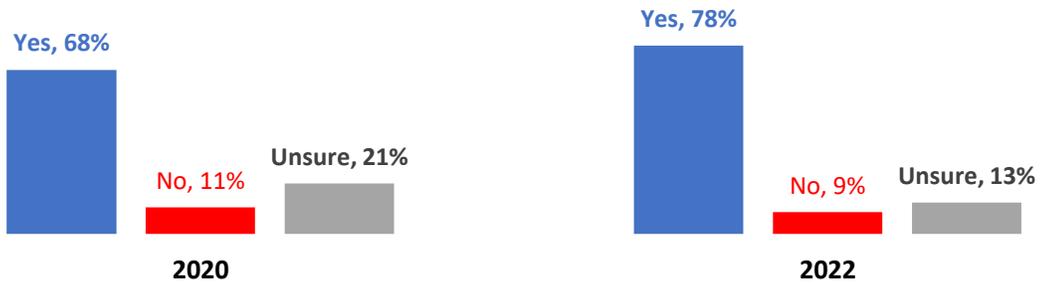
Q3. From what sources did you become aware of the New Brunswick Nature Legacy program?

Traditional media (newspapers, radio, TV news)	36%
Internet websites (unspecified)	19%
Unsure / don't recall	14%
Friends/family/word of mouth	10%
Social media (unspecified)	9%
Facebook	5%
Government of New Brunswick news releases/website	4%
Non-profit/enviro organizations' news releases/websites	2%
Twitter	2%

There is moderately low awareness of the New Brunswick Nature Legacy Program at 27%. When those aware where asked about how they found out about it, traditional media was most referenced, followed by internet searches, social media, and word of mouth.

The next tracking question asked if the government should meet a 25% land protection target by the year 2025. Results over the two-survey period are presented in the graph below.

Q4. The Government of Canada has committed to protecting 25% of Canada's land by 2025. Should the New Brunswick government contribute to Canada's goal by protecting 25% of land in the province?

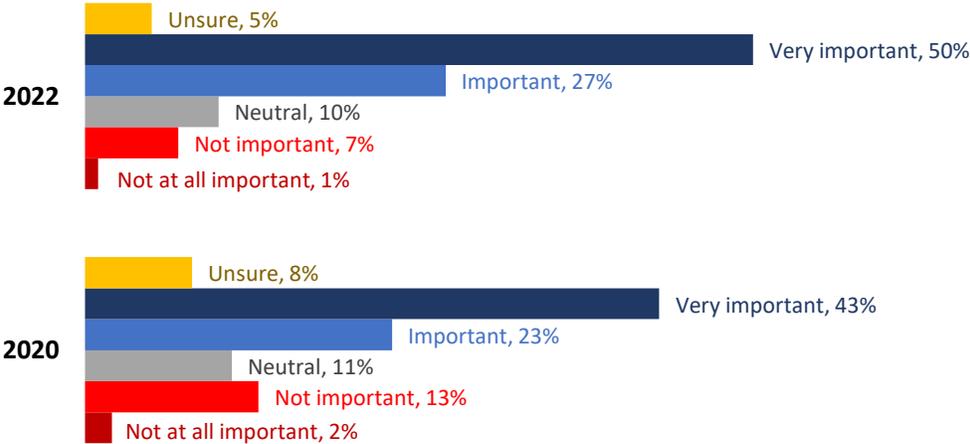


Almost eight in ten or 78% support protecting one quarter of land in the province, a +10% increase compared to the 2020 polling period. Only 9% are opposed and 13% were unsure.

Habitat Protection

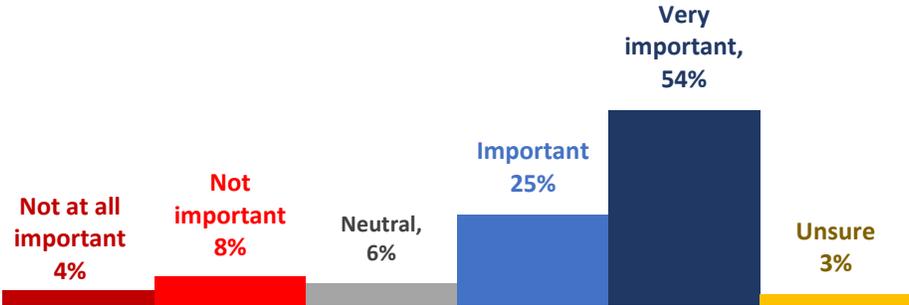
Respondents were asked to rate the importance (using a five-point rating scale) of safeguarding habitats for native fish species and wildlife in future protected areas. The question on fish (Q5) is a tracking indicator, while the question about wildlife (Q6) is new.

Q5. Habitat destruction has played a major role in the decline of native fish species like Brook Trout and Atlantic Salmon. How important is it to you that new protected areas safeguard habitat for native fish species? Please use a scale from one not at all important to five very important.



Seventy-seven percent answered that it is important or very important that new protected areas safeguard habitat for native fish species. This represents a +11% increase in the total importance level compared to the previous 2020 poll.

Q6. Using the same scale from one not at all important to five very important, how important is it to you that new protected areas safeguard important areas for wildlife?



Nearly eight in ten or 79% are of the opinion that it is important or very important that new protected areas safeguard spaces for wildlife. Only 12% feel it is unimportant, while 6% had a neutral neither important nor unimportant view and 3% were unsure.

In an open-ended or unaided question, respondents were asked to name the main barrier they think is preventing the government from taking action to protect more nature in the province.

Q7. Since the launch of the Nature Legacy program, the provincial government has identified numerous potential sites, but none have received legal protection. What do you think is the main barrier to government action to protect more of nature in New Brunswick?

Private sector interests/lobbying/influence	33%
Not a government/political priority	19%
Economic issues (jobs, logging etc.)	17%
Unsure	8%
Lack of awareness/public buy in/ public interest	7%
It is not needed/do not support it	6%
Lack of funding	5%
There are no barriers	3%
Legal barriers/issues/courts	3%

Half referenced areas related to private sector interests or economic issues such as jobs, while other notable mentions included this not being a government priority and a lack of public awareness or buy-in.

Restigouche Waterway Park

A brief description was read about a proposed provincial park along the Restigouche River. They were then asked if the next government of New Brunswick should follow through and establish this as parkland.

Q8. New Brunswick has drafted plans for a new provincial park that would protect 20,000 hectares of land along the Restigouche River in northern New Brunswick. Do you think the government should proceed to establish this park?



There are +4% more New Brunswick residents or 82% that are of the opinion the government should proceed to establish a new park along the Restigouche River.

Forest Management

In an unaided or open question, residents were asked to indicate what concerns them most about the current state of forests in the province. Results below illustrate the percentage change for each category in relation to the 2020 poll.

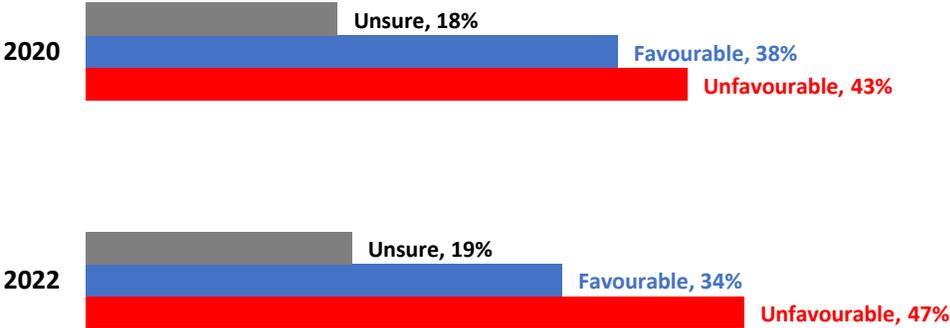
Q9. "What concerns you about the state of New Brunswick's forests?"

Logging / forestry	25%	+7%
Clear cutting	14%	+3%
Lack of protection / protected spaces	12%	+2%
Impact of climate change	11%	-3%
Unsure	9%	-6%
Protection of species / endangered	8%	+3%
Nothing	6%	-1%
Herbicide / glyphosate usage	6%	-3%
Waterway protection	4%	-1%
Pollution / waste / trash	2%	-1%
Fires	1%	-3%
Commercial activity (tourism, roads, etc.)	1%	-1%

Logging and clear-cutting issues most concern nearly four in ten (39%), a combined +10% increase in relation to 2020, while herbicide use was referenced by another 6%. Other top issues related to a lack of protection of spaces and species.

In a tracking question, respondents were asked if they have a favourable or unfavourable opinion of industrial forest management in the province.

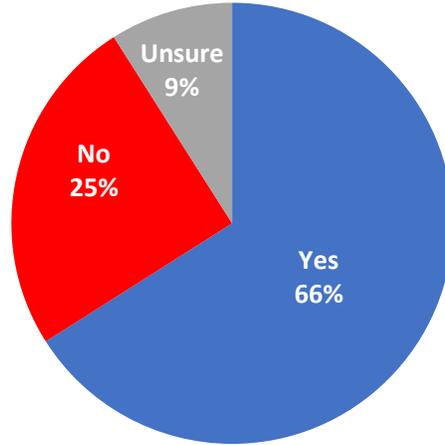
Q10. "Do you have a favourable or unfavourable opinion of industrial forest management in New Brunswick?"



Close to half or 47% said they have an unfavourable opinion of industrial forest management in New Brunswick, +4% higher than in 2020. This compares to only slightly more than a third or 34% that have a favourable opinion (down -4%), while 19% were unsure (+1%).

In a reworded question, respondents were asked if they thought the forest management system that has not been reviewed for 25 years needs to change.

Q11. The Crown Lands and Forests Act establishes rules for forestry companies to follow, but it has not been reviewed for over 25 years. Do you think the management system needs to change in New Brunswick?



A 66% majority said that management system needs to change, compared to only 25% that do not, while 9% were unsure or did not know.

In another revamped set of questions, respondents were asked to rate the importance of seven areas that may be considered if the province decides to review forest management practices. A five-point rating scale from 1-not at all important to 5-very important was used and the table below combines the total unimportant (1-not at all important & 2-not important) and total important (4-important & 5-very important) scores.

Q12. If the province decided to review forest management practices, how important should the following be considered? Please use a scale from one, not at all important, to five, very important.

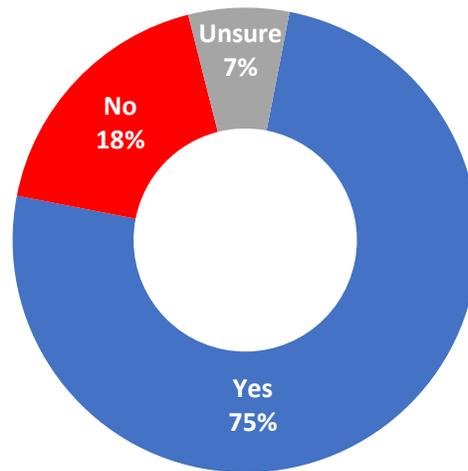
	Total unimportant	Neither important nor unimportant	Total important	Unsure
a. Recreation or tourism	8%	7%	79%	6%
b. Providing for the forestry industry's needs	27%	21%	45%	7%
c. Mitigating floods and the effects of extreme weather	4%	7%	81%	8%
d. Protecting rivers, streams, and lakes, ensuring water quality	6%	5%	85%	3%
e. Protecting multi-species forest landscapes, including hardwood & softwood species as well as old growth forests	12%	9%	70%	9%
f. Protecting fish & wildlife as well as endangered species habitats	6%	5%	84%	5%
g. Limiting the size of clear cuts	7%	7%	82%	4%

The highest level of importance at 85% was placed on protecting rivers, streams, and lakes, ensuring water quality and protecting fish and wildlife at 84%. Closely following at 82% was for limiting the size of clear cuts, then mitigating floods or the effects of climate change at 81% and recreation tourism at 79%. Results were lower but still at seven in ten important for protecting multi-species forests, while numbers were mixed on the issue of providing for the forestry industry's needs with a low 45% saying this area was important.

The following short statement about wood harvesting on public land was first read to respondents. They were then asked if they support the establishment of a new ecologically based forestry system in New Brunswick.

“The vast majority of wood harvesting on public forest land in New Brunswick is done by clear cutting. Softwood trees are replanted, and the herbicide glyphosate is used in some areas to kill native hardwood species that regrow quickly.”

Q13. Do you support reviewing the Crown Lands and Forests Act to establish a new, ecologically based forestry system in New Brunswick?



Three-quarters of respondents support reviewing the Crown Lands and Forests Act to create a new ecologically based forestry system in the province. Less than two in ten or 18% do not and 7% were unsure.

Information Sources

In an open-ended or unaided probe, respondents were asked to name their main source for obtaining information on nature protection. One top of mind response was accepted. If social media in general was cited, a drill down probe asking for the specific platform was asked – 2% still said social media in general.

Q14. What is your primary source for getting information on nature protection in New Brunswick?

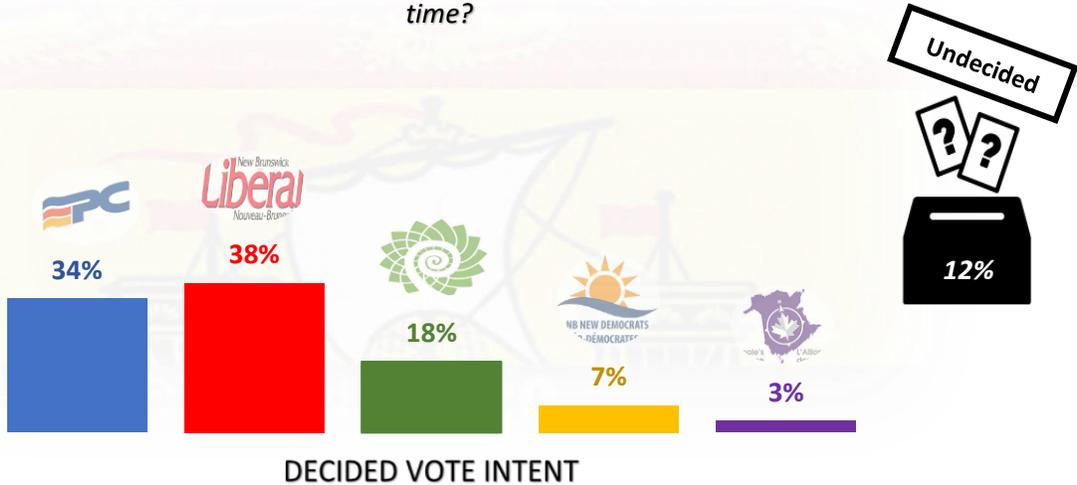
Facebook	31%
Traditional media (newspapers, radio, TV news)	27%
Internet websites (unspecified)	16%
Unsure / none	4%
Twitter	4%
Instagram	3%
YouTube	3%
Social media (unspecified)	2%
Friends/family/word of mouth	2%
Government of New Brunswick news releases/website	2%
Non-profit/environmental organizations' news releases/websites	1%
TikTok	1%
Research publications	1%
LinkedIn	1%
Reddit	1%
WhatsApp	1%

Close to half or 47% referenced social media sources with Facebook being most named, followed by traditional media and then internet websites.

Vote Intent

All N=300 respondents were then asked about their vote intent if a Provincial Election were held. Results below contain the findings of decided voters.

Q15. If a Provincial Election were held today, which of the following Parties and their candidate would you most likely vote for or be leaning towards at this time?



The Liberals currently lead among decided voters with 38% support, while the Progressive Conservatives follow in second with the backing of 34%. There are 18% that said they would vote Green, while the New Democrats and Peoples Alliance trail with 7% and 3% respectively.