

Triumphs and trade-offs: Readers share their views on *JEM*

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JEM readers: your collective voice is being heard! We're poring over the results from our on-line reader survey, conducted between February 11th and 25th, 2004, and what we hear is confirming the journal's validity. Fear not, though, the 96 readers who responded (18% of invitees) agree with us that there's always room for improvement!

We're fairly pleased at our respondents' mix of backgrounds and affiliations—32% were associated with industry; 27% with the provincial government; 27% with private consulting or contracting firms; 19% with academic institutions; and 8–10% each with non-government organizations, federal government, private land, and the public. Only 4% of respondents identified themselves with First Nations or regional/municipal government, which indicates a need for us to do a better job of reaching those audiences. Most *JEM* readers seem focused on management (57%), with the remainder involved in operations (44%), planning (43%), research (40%), extension and education (26%), and policy (24%). We acknowledge how critical it is that research, policy, planning, management, and operations continuously inform each other, and we sincerely hope that this science-based extension journal is supporting this essential dialogue.

Here are some highlights of the survey results, along with ideas for acting on your suggestions.

- **Range of Topics** – 79% of respondents felt that the range of topics in *JEM* is “balanced,” while just 11% felt topics were “a bit broad” and 11% “a bit narrow”—encouraging, we're on track!
- **Geographic Scope** – Most respondents are interested in articles on British Columbia, Western Canada, and the Canada/USA Pacific Northwest (79%, 49%, and 56%, respectively), while fewer expressed interest when the scale was Canada (26%), North America (20%), or International (22%). Comments indicate that, whatever the geographic context of articles in *JEM*, readers expect their relevance to British Columbia to be clear.
- **Type of Content** – The most popular type of content, selected by 85% of respondents, is “articles summarizing research, focusing on management implications,” although a strong interest was evident in “provocative critiques on new and emerging issues” and research papers on final and interim results. Of least interest to most respondents were “article/book reviews” and “feedback on previously published articles,” indicating that we should keep focusing on the core content of *JEM*.
- **Article Categories** – Respondents' order of preference was for Research Reports (68%), Extension Notes (57%), Discussion Papers (47%), and Perspectives (34%). This reflects the proportion of submissions we receive in each category, suggesting consistency between what authors want to write and what readers want to read. As one respondent notes: “. . . in the fast-paced world of natural resources management, accessibility becomes an issue; please ensure that reports and extension notes are kept to a moderate length so all can use and enjoy the materials therein.” Authors, take note!
- **Peer Review** – 32% of respondents were *not* aware that *JEM* is peer reviewed! While we're glad that 68% did know this, we see a need to raise awareness of our rigorous peer-review process among both readers and authors, current and potential. Thanks to Rob D'Eon for his guest editorial (see page 75) in this vein!
- **Relevance, Innovation, and Quality** – 85–95% of respondents think that *JEM* is usually or always “scientifically sound,” “relevant to sustainable management of the province's ecosystems,” “easy to access,” and “readable in style.” While 72% felt *JEM* is usually or always “timely,” only 62% felt it was usually or always “innovative in content.” This highlights a constant challenge for both us and the research community—