



Canadian Council  
on Invasive Species

Conseil Canadien sur les  
Espèces Envahissantes

# **National Firewood Survey - Results and Report**

**Researched and prepared by**

**Beyond Attitude Consulting**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**BEYOND  
ATTITUDE**

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## Background

The Canadian Council on Invasive Species is developing a communications campaign to encourage Canadians not to move firewood. Firewood can carry invasive species and diseases that can damage trees and forests. The spread of invasive species can be reduced by strategies to restrict the movement of firewood. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency regulates the movement of firewood in Canada where it is known that forest pests and disease exist. Only the Territories, Alberta, and Newfoundland and Labrador are currently free of pests and regulations on the movement of firewood. In all other provinces the movement of firewood is regulated.

Canadian Council on Invasive Species recognizes that regulating firewood is important but believes that a communications strategy must focus directly on nurturing best behaviours and not rely solely on raising awareness about the issue in the hope that behaviours will follow naturally. The Behaviour Change communications strategy will include approaches and techniques of applied behavioural psychology.

To help inform the development of the Behaviour Change communications strategy, the Canadian Council on Invasive Species commissioned a national baseline survey of Canadians to determine current behaviours, knowledge of invasive species, attitude towards risk, and likelihood of the adoption of behaviours that would reduce the risk of spreading invasive species. The survey contained questions focused on firewood (research and findings below) as well as a series of other questions related to other, key invasive species pathways to assist the Canadian Council on Invasive Species with future behaviour change programs.

## Research Method

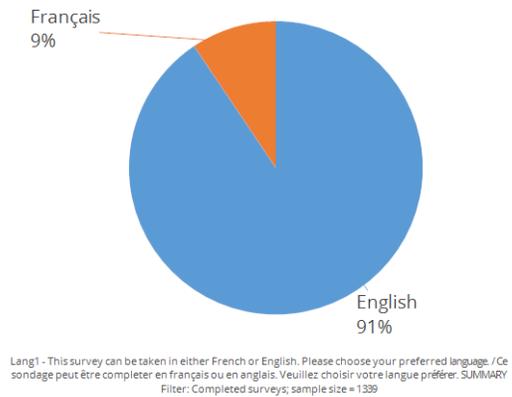
The firewood survey was conducted in February and March of 2018. The survey was offered online with an opportunity to win one of three prizes of \$250 each by random draw of all respondents choosing to enter the lottery.

There were 1339 respondents from across the country. The survey was open to anyone over the age of 17 living in Canada. Had this been a random sample survey conducted by random-digit telephone number dialing, it would be accurate to plus or minus 2.68%, 19 times out of 20. However, as it was an online survey, the level of error cannot be calculated, so the telephone survey metrics are offered for guidance only.

The availability of the survey was promoted through networks of associations, many of which would include people who are active outdoors. It is likely that the sample of respondents is skewed towards people who are active outdoors, and to a lesser extent, possibly to people who have some knowledge of invasive species. However, efforts were made to reach out beyond the community of invasive species researchers, workers and volunteers. As well, 2 questions were included in the survey to identify the level of understanding of each respondent. This allows the interpretation of the data to account for level of current knowledge.

The survey was available in both French and English. The first question of the survey allowed the respondent to choose the language of the questions.

No weighting has been applied to the data.



## Distribution Across Canada

The survey was designed using quotas to ensure input from across Canada. The quotas were based on population distribution in 7 regions:

- The North (comprising Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut),
- British Columbia,
- Prairies,
- Ontario,
- Quebec,
- Maritimes,
- Newfoundland and Labrador.

The quotas were originally established based on an intended 800 respondent survey. However, quotas were increased for some provinces that requested (and paid for) additional data and stand-alone reports with statistical accuracy for their area. This explains why the survey reached 1339 respondents and has increased sampling from some of the provinces.

Respondents were asked which province they live in, and if the quota was full for their associated region, they were informed that the survey was no longer available in that region.

## Current Use and Source of Firewood

The survey sought to understand the current uses of firewood, and where people acquired it.

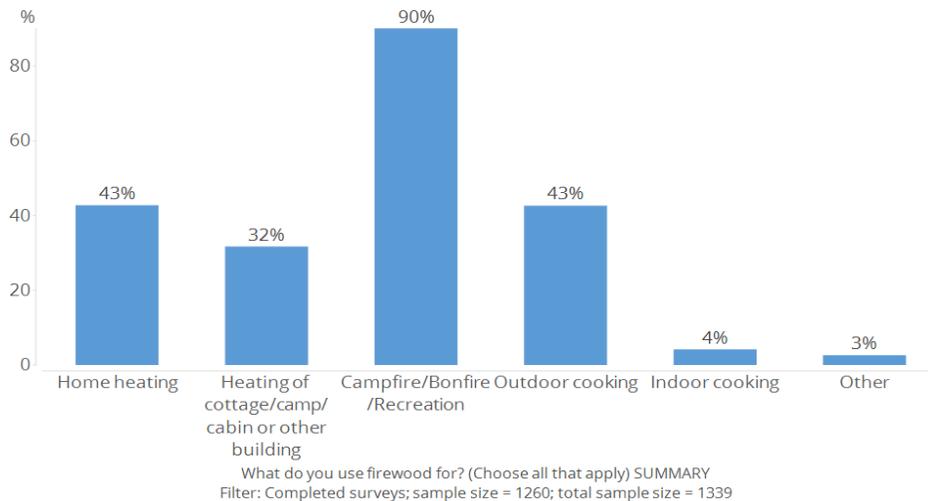
### Use

Use of firewood was common among respondents, with 94% reporting they used it for one

or more purposes. Those respondents were then asked about their specific uses of firewood.

90% of firewood users indicated that they use firewood for campfires, bonfires and recreation. 43% indicated that they used firewood for home heating, and the same proportion of people use firewood for outdoor cooking. 32% reported that they heat cottages, camps, or cabins or another building with firewood. A further 4% use firewood for indoor cooking.

### ***What do you use firewood for? (Choose all that apply)***



### **Source**

Respondents were asked how far they traveled to get their firewood. Almost 2 out of 3 (64%) indicated that they gathered or cut their wood within 15 km of where they burn it. Almost half (47%) indicated they buy it within 15 km of where they burn it.

Seventeen percent said they gathered or cut the wood themselves in one area and transported it more than 15 km to where they burn it, and 13% said they buy it in one area and transport it to another to burn it.

The numbers above do not add up to 100% because people were asked to check all that applied. For example, a respondent could indicate that they bought firewood locally for their home, and they also transported some of it more than 15 km to their cottage.

These findings suggest that people are most likely to source firewood close to where they burn it, which for the purpose of this survey, was defined as within 15 km. Further analysis of the survey results indicates that the cost of delivery or of gas is a significant motivator of sourcing firewood locally.

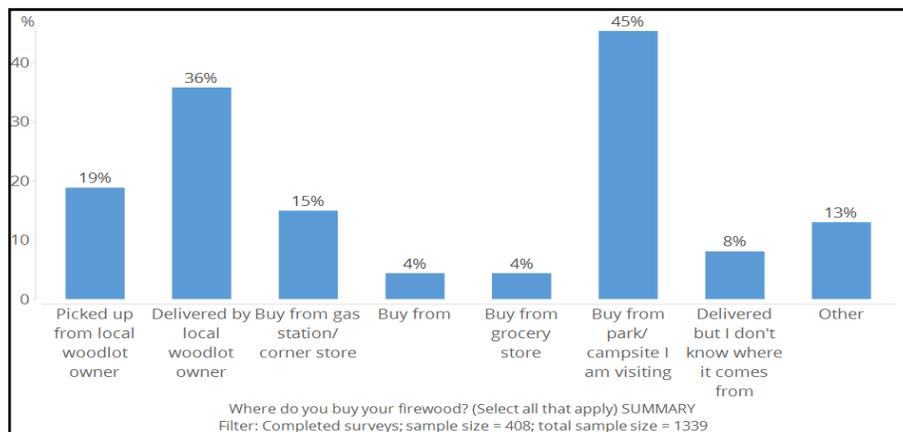
***Where do you usually get your firewood compared to where you burn it?  
(Choose all that apply)***

	%
I gather/cut it in the area where I burn it (within 15 km).	63%
I gather/cut it and transport it to the area where I burn it (more than 15 km).	17%
I buy it locally where I burn it (within 15 km).	47%
I buy it in one area and transport it to another where I burn it (more than 15 km).	13%
Other	4%

Where do you usually get your firewood compared to where you burn it? (Choose all that apply) SUMMARY  
Filter: Completed surveys; sample size = 1260; total sample size = 1339

Those people who said that they bought firewood were asked where they purchased it. The most frequent answer was that they buy it from the park or campsite they are visiting, which was indicated by 45% of respondents. More than 1 in 3 (36%) of respondents said they had their firewood delivered by a local woodlot owner and another 18% said they picked it up themselves from a local woodlot owner. Another 8% said they had it delivered but did not know where it came from. Lastly, 15% buy their firewood from a gas station or corner store and only 5% source it from “big-box” stores like Wal-Mart.

***Where do you buy your firewood? (Select all that apply)***

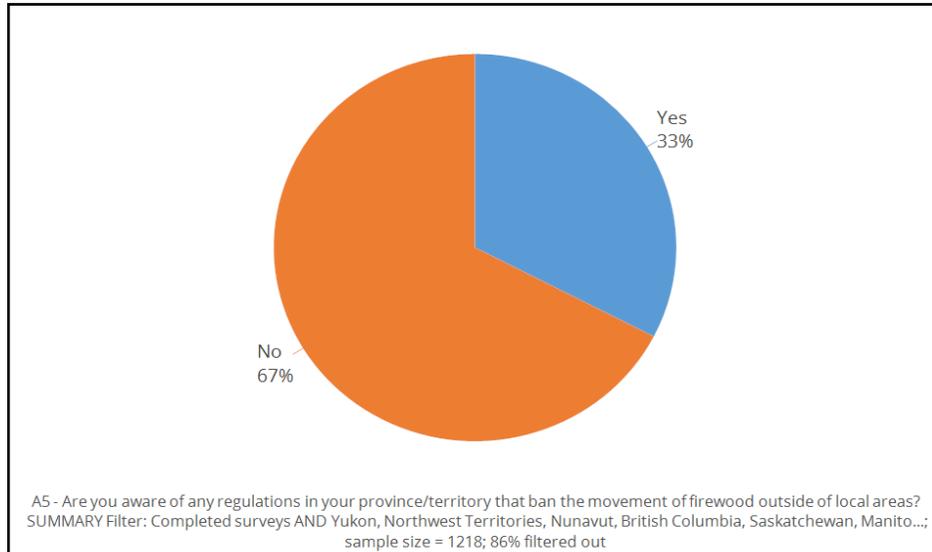


**Awareness**

Respondents were asked if they had seen any information campaigns that asked people not to move firewood. Just over half had (54%) and 41% indicated they had not. Five percent

were unsure.

***Are you aware of any regulations in your province/territory that ban the movement of firewood outside of local areas?***

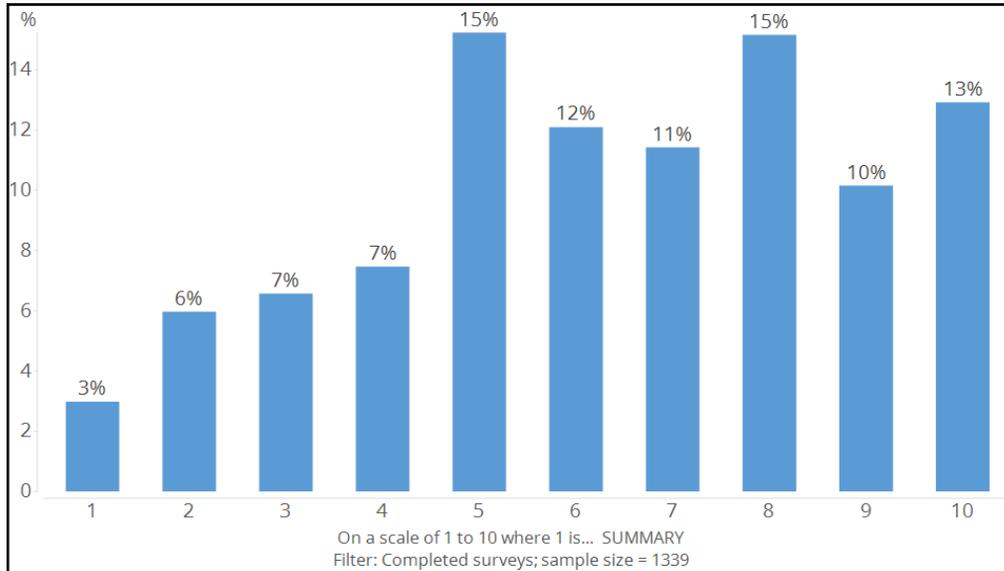


Two in three (67%) of residents were not aware of regulations that prevented the movement of firewood in their province. Only 33% are aware of such regulations. This indicates the need for increased awareness of the existence of regulations, as all provinces except Alberta and Newfoundland and Labrador have regulations regarding moving firewood. None of the three territories have regulations regarding moving firewood either.

## **Attitude**

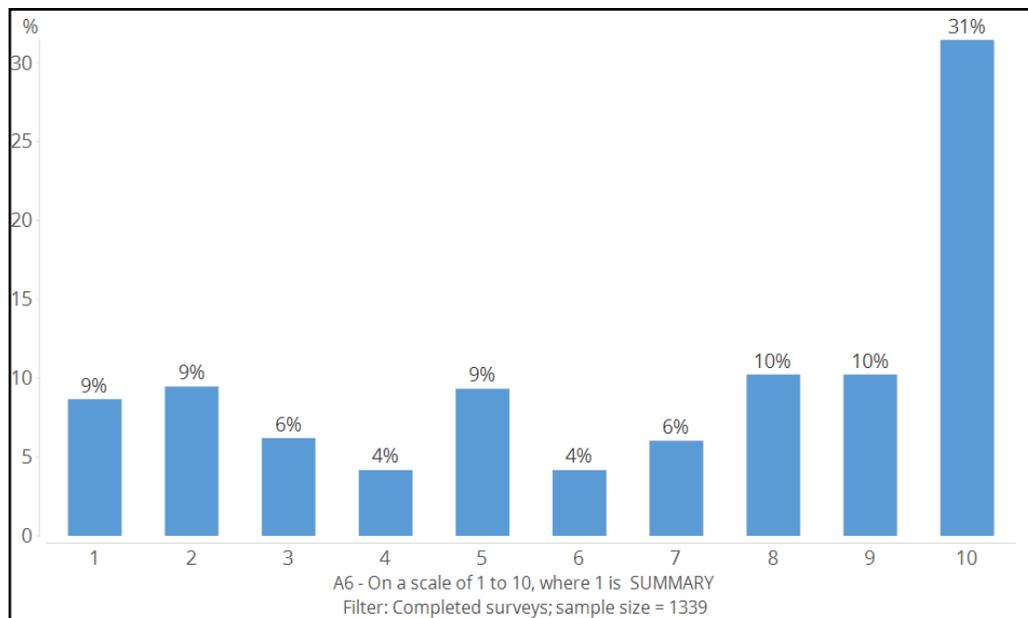
Four in ten (38%) of respondents indicated they thought moving firewood was quite risky for our forests (8-10 on a 10-point scale), while 15% felt there was little risk (answering 1-3). Almost half (47%) were in the middle of the scale, answering between 4 and 7. The results indicate that there needs to be some attention paid to fostering a greater concern of risk to our forests. It is difficult to encourage people to adopt a new behaviour when they perceive little reason to do so.

***On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is "Not Risky" and 10 is "Very Risky," how risky do you think the movement of firewood is for our forests?***



When asked how likely they were to make sure they did not move firewood more than 15 km, about 1 in 3 (37%) were less likely to do so and 61% were likely to do so.

***On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is "Very Unlikely" and 10 is "Very Likely," how likely are you to make sure you do not move firewood more than 15 km?***



## **Behaviours, Barriers and Motivators**

Respondents were asked questions designed to understand their current behaviours, and what might prevent or encourage them to adopt preferred behaviours.

### **Sourcing local Firewood**

The survey contained questions about acquiring firewood from local sources.

#### **Barriers**

Respondents were asked the open-ended question “What factors might prevent you from getting your firewood close (within 15 km) to where you burn it?” The most frequent responses were:

- Availability of firewood in the area where it is to be burned (particularly in urban areas for people who heat their homes with wood)
- Availability of local woodlots, permitted cutting areas
- Lack of sellers in remote areas
- Local wood quality (too wet)
- Cost, including more expensive wood at a campground, and bringing home wood purchased or unused at campground
- Restrictions on cutting or gathering wood in parks or other areas
- Lack of knowledge of risks
- Lack of knowledge about where the seller obtained the wood
- Lack of tools or capability to cut or gather wood themselves

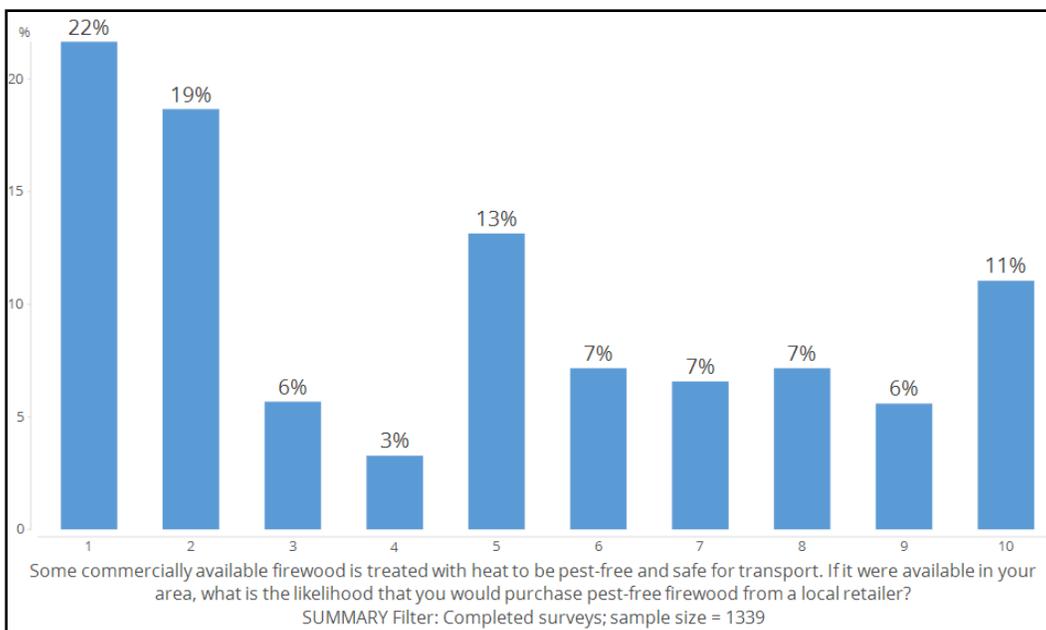


- Convenience
- Knowledge of why it is important to buy it where you burn it
- Knowledge that there could be consequences if caught moving it

While some respondents said that they were motivated to do the right thing to stop the spread of invasive species or by other ecological reasons, they were very much in the minority. Availability, cost and convenience were by far the most frequently cited motivators for sourcing firewood locally.

These findings raise an obvious question: If some government bodies are creating regulations and spending money on information campaigns to prevent the spread of invasive species on firewood, why are other government bodies (or sometimes the same ones) making it more expensive and inconvenient to use local firewood in government-operated parks? Or in other words, some agencies may be creating barriers that discourage the behaviours they promote.

***What might motivate you to get your firewood close to where you burn it?***



**Pest-free firewood**

The survey included questions about firewood that had been heat-treated to be pest free. The objective of the questions was to determine the barriers and benefits associated with using the product.

Respondents generally stated that they would not use firewood heated to be pest-free, with



- Availability (many did not know where they could get it)
- Concerns about potential chemicals (although the question indicated it had been treated with heat)
- Inconvenience compared to abundantly available low-cost or free firewood.

It was clear in the comments that most people were not aware that firewood that had been heat-treated to be pest-free existed.

### Motivators

Respondents were asked what might motivate them to buy firewood that was treated to be pest-free.

### *What might motivate people in your area to purchase firewood treated to be pest-free?*



The most common motivators were:

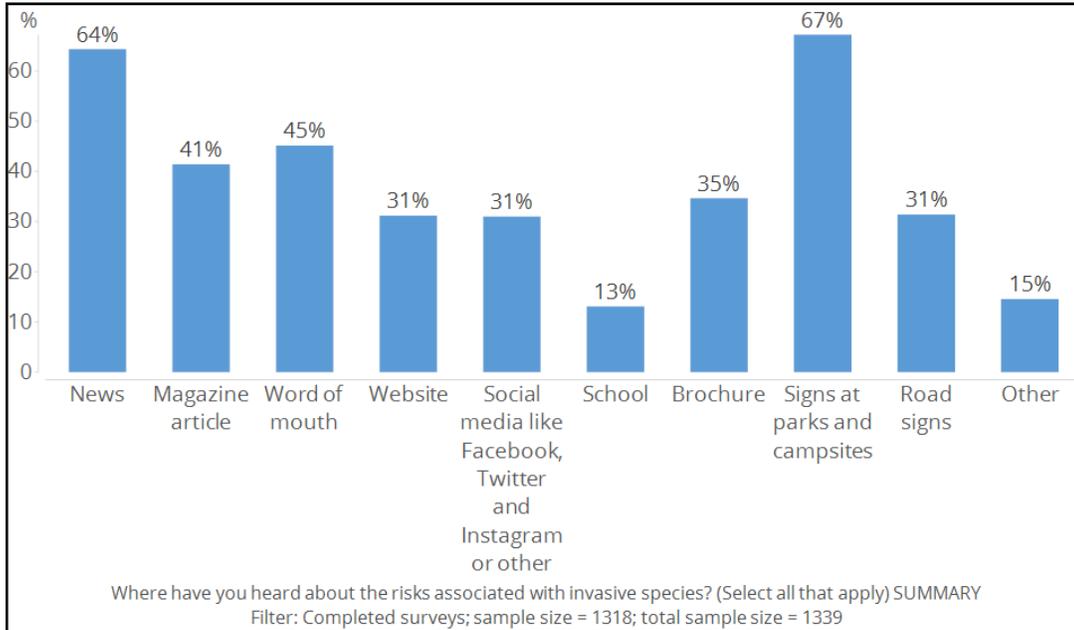
- Reasonable cost
- Knowledge about the product, its safety, and its benefits
- Convenience
- Availability (many people had not heard of it, so likely felt that it was not available in their area).

It appears that if people understood that the product is available and perceive it to be safe and reasonably priced, they may be motivated to purchase it. This would rely on them believing that the product helped eliminate a risk of them transporting invasive species.

## Sources of Information

Respondents were given a choice of several different sources of information from which they might have received information on invasive species.

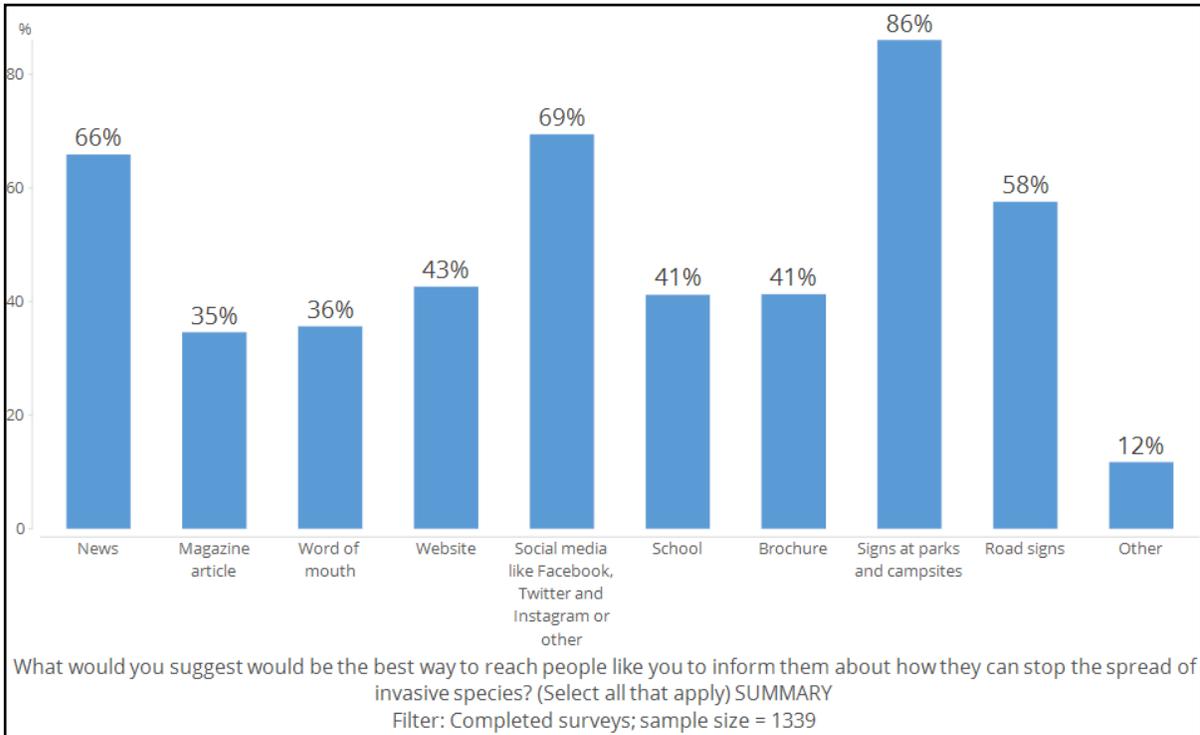
***Where have you heard about the risks associated with invasive species? (Select all that apply)***



The most frequently identified sources were signs at parks (67%) and news (64%). Other frequent sources were magazine articles (41%) and word of mouth (45%). The responses indicate that a broad list of communications vehicles have reached people with messaging on invasive species.

Respondents were then asked which way is best for reaching them with information on invasive species.

***What would you suggest would be the best way to reach people like you to inform them about how they can stop the spread of invasive species? (Select all that apply)***



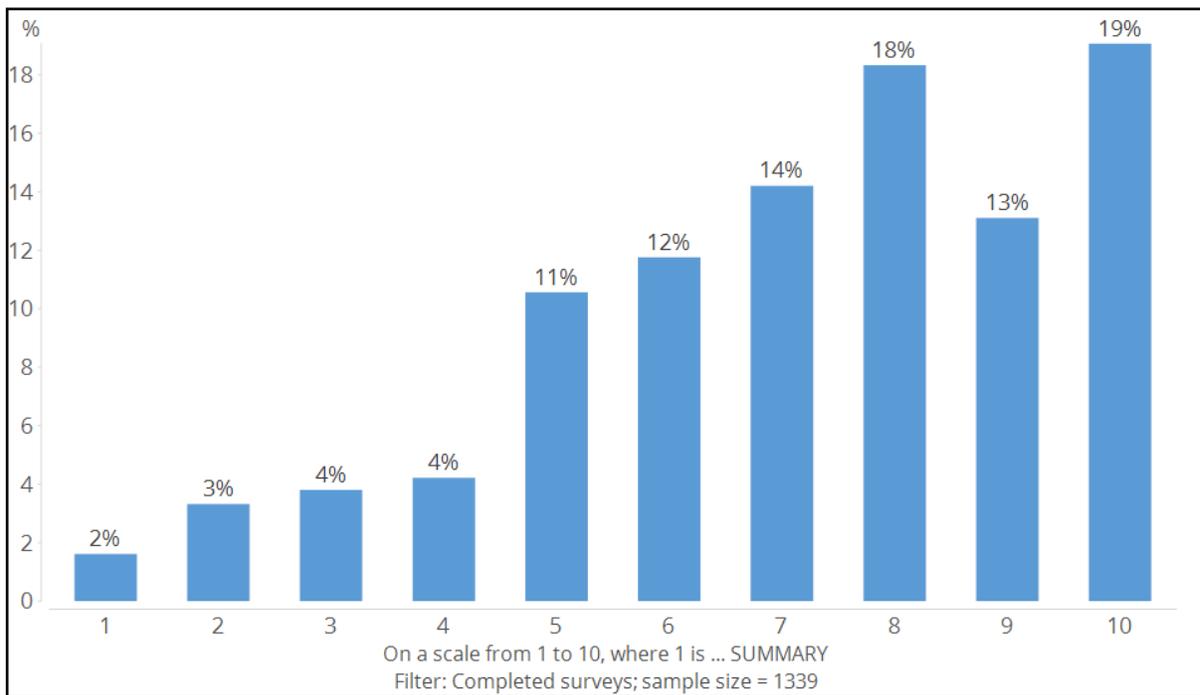
When asked how best to deliver information, the overwhelming choice of respondents was through signage at parks (86%). Social media was next at 69%, followed by news (66%) and road signs (58%).

## **Concern and Knowledge**

### **Concern About Risk**

Near the end of the survey, respondents were informed that people who were active outdoors could spread invasive species that could cause significant damage to natural areas. This statement was made to ask follow up questions that tested their attitudes after being informed of the risk.

***On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is "Not at all" and 10 is "Very," how concerned are you about the risk of damage to natural areas caused by invasive species?***



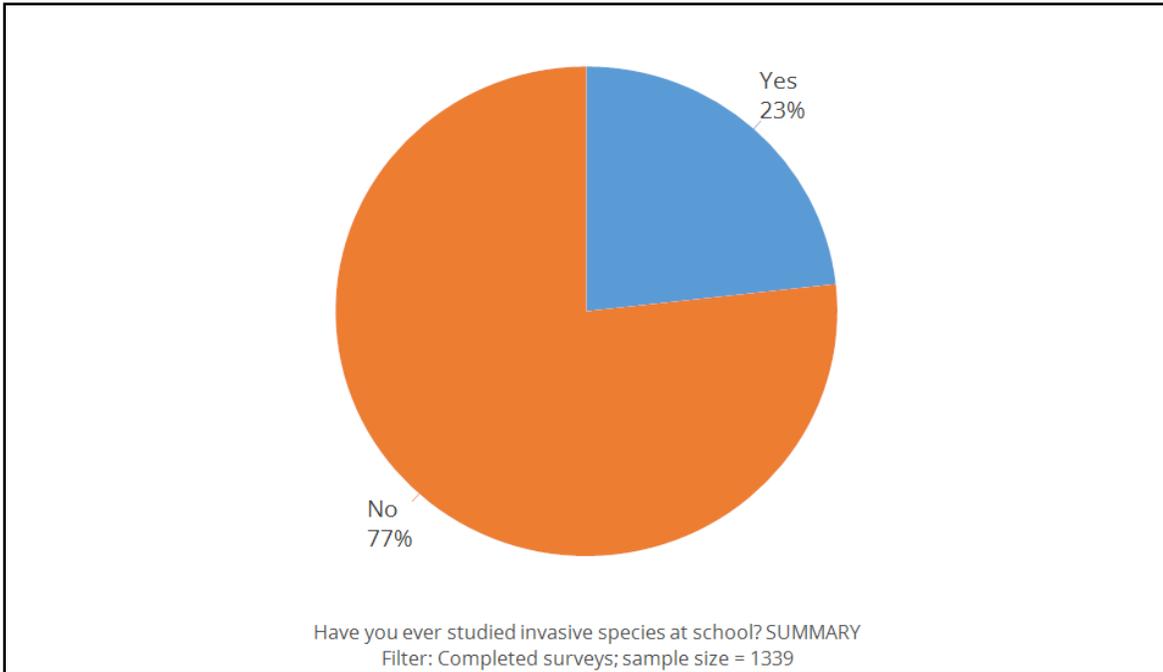
Respondents were then asked about their level of concern about invasive species damaging natural areas. 76% indicated a high level of concern (6-10 on a 10-point scale). Only 24% chose the lower half of the scale (1-5 on the 10-point scale).

The results indicate that there is certainly some social bias (tendency to answer in the socially acceptable manner) in answering the question just after the information was given to them. However the results indicate that people who are informed of the risks associated with invasive species know that they should be concerned about the damage caused by transporting them. This is valuable to know in the design of communications approaches that focus on behaviour change.

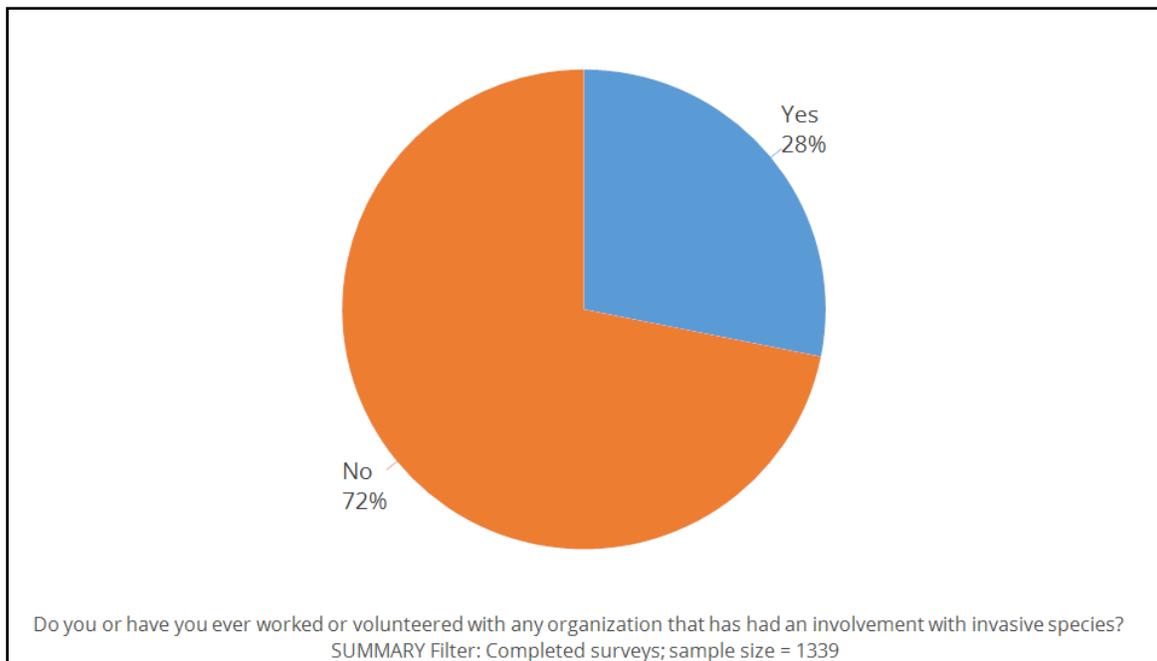
### **Current Knowledge**

In order to gain an understanding of the overall familiarity respondents had with invasive species before they began the survey, we asked if people had studied invasive species at school, and if they had ever worked for, or volunteered with, any organization that worked on invasive species programs.

***Have you ever studied invasive species at school?***



***Do you or have you ever worked or volunteered with any organization that has had an involvement with invasive species?***



With 23% of respondents having studied invasive species in school and 28% having worked with an invasive species organization, it is possible that people with advanced knowledge of invasive species are over-represented in the data. However, it is a simple matter to filter the data to find out the differences between the well-informed and less-informed respondents. This should be done in developing a Behaviour Change communications strategy.

Evaluation of the data indicates that there is not a lot of skewing of responses. Respondents who have not studied invasive species in school and have not worked in invasive programs are almost as very concerned about risk from moving firewood (34%) as those who do have that education and experience (38%).

## **Findings For Behaviour Change**

The data gathered from the survey was analyzed to inform the development of a national Behaviour Change Strategy for firewood.

### **Need to increase awareness and improve attitude**

It is clear from the results of the research that a significant barrier to getting people to source their wood where they burn it is that many people are unaware of the risks, and most do not perceive the risks as substantial. However, once people were told about the risks, their level of concern increased.

Respondents indicated that the best way to reach them was through signage at parks and social media. They also indicated news and road signs. However, they also indicated that they were being reached through a wide range of communication channels.

Communications campaigns to raise firewood awareness and attitude should emphasize, but not be limited to, the vehicles preferred by the respondents.

### **Attitude and Awareness Alone is not enough**

The barriers and motivators research determined that decisions about moving firewood are not going to be made with the goal of mitigating risk of invasive species alone.

The biggest factors affecting decision-making on firewood are cost, convenience, availability and quality.

If people feel that they have to pay a high price for what they believe is poor quality (wet) wood at a park or campground, they are much more likely to solve the problem by bringing in drier and less expensive wood from other places. If, on the other hand, the park offers quality (dry) wood at competitive prices, people will likely be quite happy to enjoy the convenience of being able to pick up wood at the park, rather than have to carry it in from elsewhere.

Parks and campgrounds should adjust their entry fees and wood prices to ensure that wood is not considered to be prohibitively expensive to buy locally.

Campgrounds and parks should provide information on availability of wood in the vicinity of the park. This information could be added to the facility's website to make sourcing local wood more convenient.

### **Reminding people**

From a behaviour change perspective, the best way to encourage people to acquire their wood locally is to remind them what to do, when they are doing it. It makes sense to include this information at all campsites and campgrounds where people are likely to be burning firewood. It would also be advisable to remind people when they are booking a reservation on the facility's website.

One example of an opportunity to promote good firewood management is to improve signage at gas stations and corner stores that sell treated firewood. The signage should indicate that the wood:

- has been heat-treated to eliminate pests or diseases
- is chemical-free
- meets the regulatory requirements for transportation of firewood
- is accepted at all campsites.

### **Target audiences**

Uses of firewood fall into two main categories. One is heating of homes, cabins/cottages/camps and other buildings. The other is for campfires. Similarly, users can be defined as being people who either heat buildings or burn campfires.

It is important to realize that there is significant overlap between the two groups. This is mainly because 9 out of 10 firewood users use it for campfires. So, it is likely that people who use firewood for heating buildings are also using it for campfires, either at home or in other places. It is also likely that some people who have a significant amount of wood at home for heating would take some of it with them when they went camping rather than purchase more at a higher price.

People who use firewood at home should be targeted in communications efforts and encouraged to avoid taking firewood with them to other places. Encouragement should be in the form of informing them of risks of moving firewood, and of the consequences of getting caught breaking regulations.

A further target audience is managers of parks and campgrounds. It appears that one of the reasons people move firewood when they are camping is that they perceive wood available in the park to be expensive and of poor quality (wet). If campground managers truly wish to encourage people to buy wood where they burn it, then they should not discourage it through high prices and/or poor quality.

## **Behaviours**

Choosing correct behaviours is important. The best candidate behaviours for promotion have significant impact, likelihood of adoption, and have not already been largely adopted.

It seems that the behaviours that have been communicated by existing campaigns meet these criteria:

- Buy it locally
- Burn it locally
- Use it up

The notion of burning it all at a campsite (use it up) is one of the messages currently in use in some firewood communications. That should be evaluated. The logic behind it is understandable, because if the firewood is used up, then it can't be transported elsewhere. However, it may actually encourage people to take firewood with them, as leaving it behind tells campground managers that the rule of using it up was broken.

It appears that a more useful approach could be to encourage people to Leave it Local - leave excess firewood behind as a nice surprise for the next camper. This could be included in all messaging at parks and campgrounds.

## **Conclusion**

The 2018 Firewood Survey serves 2 purposes. Firstly, it provides a baseline of Canadian's awareness, attitudes and behaviours with respect to the use of firewood and the risks to our forests presented by moving it. At some time in the future, the survey can be conducted again in order to evaluate the effectiveness of communications efforts.

Secondly, the survey provides important information that will inform the development of a national Behaviour Change communications strategy for firewood. With the information gathered, the Canadian Council on Invasive Species can work with partners to reduce barriers preventing people from moving firewood, and to take advantage of known motivators.

## Appendix A - Survey Questions

64 Questions

**Lang1:** This survey can be taken in either French or English. Please choose your preferred language. /Ce sondage peut être complété en français ou en anglais. Veuillez choisir votre langue préférée.

- 1) English
- 2) Français

**I1:** Thank you for taking this survey. It involves 2 subjects: the use of firewood, and involvement in outdoor activities. This survey is open to residents of Canada who are 18 years of age or older. The information collected will be used to help develop communications programs. All of your responses will be kept separate from any personal contact information you may provide. At the end of this survey, you will have an opportunity to have your name entered into a draw for 1 of 3 prizes of CAN\$250. If you have any questions about this survey please call Beyond Attitude Consulting at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

**Q1:** Are you over 18 years of age and living in Canada?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

**M1:** Please indicate in which province/territory you live.

- 1) Yukon
- 2) Northwest Territories
- 3) Nunavut
- 4) British Columbia
- 5) Alberta
- 6) Saskatchewan
- 7) Manitoba
- 8) Ontario
- 9) Quebec
- 10) Newfoundland and Labrador

11) Prince Edward Island

12) New Brunswick

13) Nova Scotia

**Q1A:** Do you use firewood for either heating, cooking or for recreational purposes like campfires?

1) Yes

2) No

**M2:** What do you use firewood for? (Choose all that apply).

1) Home heating

2) Heating of cottage/camp/cabin or other building

3) Campfire/Bonfire/Recreation

4) Outdoor cooking

5) Indoor cooking

6) Other

**F1:** Where do you usually get your firewood compared to where you burn it? (Choose all that apply).

1) I gather/cut it in the area where I burn it (within 15 km).

2) I gather/cut it and transport it to the area where I burn it (more than 15 km).

3) I buy it locally where I burn it (within 15 km).

4) I buy it in one area and transport it to another where I burn it (more than 15 km).

5) Other

**F2:** Where do you buy your firewood? (Select all that apply)

1) Picked up from local woodlot owner

2) Delivered by local woodlot owner

3) Buy from gas station/corner store

4) Buy from "big box store" like Walmart

- 5) Buy from grocery store
- 6) Buy from park/campsite I am visiting
- 7) Delivered but I don't know where it comes from
- 8) Other

**A2:** Have you seen any information campaigns that ask people to not move firewood?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No
- 3) Not sure

**A3:** On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is "Not Risky" and 10 is "Very Risky," how risky do you think the movement of firewood is for our forests?

- 1) 1
- 2) 2
- 3) 3
- 4) 4
- 5) 5
- 6) 6
- 7) 7
- 8) 8
- 9) 9
- 10) 10

**A5:** Are you aware of any regulations in your province/territory that ban the movement of firewood outside of local areas?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

**A6:** On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is "Very Unlikely" and 10 is "Very Likely," how likely are you to make sure you do not move firewood more than 15 km?

- 1) 1
- 2) 2
- 3) 3
- 4) 4
- 5) 5
- 6) 6
- 7) 7
- 8) 8
- 9) 9
- 10) 10

**B1:** What factors might prevent you from getting your firewood close (within 15 km) to where you burn it?

- 1)

**B1A:** What might motivate you to get your firewood close to where you burn it?

- 1)

**B2:** Some commercially available firewood is treated with heat to be pest-free and safe for transport. If it&nbsp;were available in your area, what is the likelihood that you would purchase pest-free firewood from a local retailer? Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is "Very Unlikely" and 10 is "Very Likely."

- 1) 1
- 2) 2
- 3) 3
- 4) 4
- 5) 5
- 6) 6
- 7) 7
- 8) 8

9) 9

10) 10

**B3:** What might prevent people in your area from buying firewood that is treated to be pest-free?

**B4:** What might motivate people in your area to purchase firewood treated to be pest-free?

**C1:** Where have you heard about the risks associated with invasive species? (Select all that apply)

1) News

2) Magazine article

3) Word of mouth

4) Website

5) Social media like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram or other

6) School

7) Brochure

8) Signs at parks and campsites

9) Road signs

10) Other

**C2:** What would you suggest would be the best way to reach people like you to inform them about how they can stop the spread of invasive species? (Select all that apply)

1) News

2) Magazine article

3) Word of mouth

4) Website

5) Social media like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram or other

6) School

7) Brochure

8) Signs at parks and campsites

9) Road signs

10) Other

**D0:** We are now going to ask you some questions which will assist us in evaluating our communications needs. All answers will be kept confidential. Answers are optional.

**D2:** Please indicate to which age group you belong.

1) 19 or younger

2) 20 to 24

3) 25 to 29

4) 30 to 34

5) 35 to 39

6) 40 to 44

7) 45 to 49

8) 50 to 54

9) 55 to 59

10) 60 to 64

11) 65 to 69

12) 70 to 74

13) 75 to 79

14) 80 to 84

15) 85 to 89

16) 90 or older

**D1:** What is your gender?

1) Female

2) Male

3) Prefer not to answer

4) Prefer to self-identify

**Postal:** Please provide the first 3 characters of your postal code.

**KNOWLEDGE1:** People who are active outdoors can unknowingly spread invasive plants, animals, insects and microorganisms which can cause significant damage to our natural areas. The good news is that people can take steps to reduce the spread of damage-causing invasive species.

**KNOWLEDGE2:** On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is "Not at all" and 10 is "Very," how concerned are you about the risk of damage to natural areas caused by invasive species?

1) 1

2) 2

3) 3

4) 4

5) 5

6) 6

7) 7

8) 8

9) 9

10) 10

**KNOWLEDGE3:** On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is "Haven't heard about it before" and 10 is "Expert," please indicate your understanding of invasive species and the risks they present.

1) 1

2) 2

3) 3

4) 4

5) 5

6) 6

7) 7

8) 8

9) 9

10) 10

**KNOWLEDGE4:** On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is "Not at all" and 10 is "Very", please indicate your interest in learning more about how people like you can prevent the spread of invasive species and damage to our natural areas.

1) 1

2) 2

3) 3

4) 4

5) 5

6) 6

7) 7

8) 8

9) 9

10) 10

**D3:** We would like to ask a few questions to help us understand your knowledge of invasive species before taking this survey. Do you or have you ever worked or volunteered with any organization that has had an involvement with invasive species?

1) Yes

2) N

**D4:** Have you ever studied invasive species at school?

1) Yes

2) No

**Z1:** You can enter your name into a draw for a chance to win a CAN\$250 prize. To enter, you must provide contact information. Your information will be kept separate from the survey data

and only used for the draw.

**Z2:** Do you want to enter your name into the draw?

1) Yes

2) No

**Z3:** Please provide your name.

**Z4:** Please provide an email address.

**N1:** If you would like to receive the national invasive species newsletter, provide your email address below. The information will only be used for that purpose

**I3:** Thank you for completing the survey. We will follow up with the winners of the draw in April 2018. For more information on invasive species, visit the Canadian Council on Invasive Species at [canadainvasives.ca](http://canadainvasives.ca).

**Complete1:** You will now be taken to the Canadian Council on Invasive Species website.