

2013 RPF Registration Exam

This package contains the exam questions and key points (in italics) listed after each question that may be used or referenced for developing good answers. This list of key points is meant to provide direction to members on areas for further study in regards to the exam questions. It is not meant to be a definitive answer to each question and a candidate may well come up with other valid points.

Question 1 (Short answer)

You are an operations forester working for a major licensee and are preparing a new area for development.

You have completed your pre-field work and are preparing to send your lay-out consultants into the bush for their first day in the area. Your mapping department has examined GIS data that indicates no other activity in the area. You have prepared a map with a proposed boundary for the consultant to use for their initial visit to the block.

The consultants call you at the end of their first day in the block and give you the following observations:

1. As they were navigating their way to the block along the road for which your company holds the road-use permit, they noticed that the road was significantly more travelled than what they expected, considering their understanding that your company has had exclusive use of the area for the last 20 years and has not been active in the area for the past 5 years.

- a. **Potential stakeholders** – *Other road users, specifically, which user has been using the road with the result that the road looks significantly used; other forestry users, industrial users, recreational users or First Nations;*

Why important? – *Your company holds the RUP and should be aware generally of any other significant users of the road, industrial or recreational. A party may be using the road without proper authorization. Other industrial users should have proper permits or arrangements with your company to use the road. Special concerns if road is seeing heavy recreational use. Your company has responsibility for maintaining the road – safety, environmental and liability concerns if the road is not in proper condition.*

- b. **Professional Obligation:** *For example:*

Under Bylaw 11.3.10, I have a duty to have proper regard for the safety of others. In the present case, the road may not be properly maintained due to the potential unauthorized use.

- c. **Strategy:** *If I think there are potential safety concerns with the road, I would make sure that the road is properly assessed to determine if any upgrade works need to be completed. I would also investigate further into whether anyone else has recognized rights to use the road, this may include seeing if there are any road-use*

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agreements that my company has with other users, contacting FLNRO or generally speaking with/observing other users in the area to determine what is going on.

2. In one portion of the block, they report what looks to be a portion of a mountain bike trail. After following the trail for a short distance, they found a monument with a metal plaque reading "Proudly constructed in 2010 by the Dare Devils MTB Club".

- a. **Potential stakeholders** – Recreational users/the Dare Devils MTB Club;

Why important? – Safety concerns regarding obstacles and potential for workers and recreational users to hurt themselves. Environmental concerns relating to construction of the trail and whether it has damaged the environment (i.e. streams, illegal falling of trees, excavations); legal concerns regarding unauthorized construction and whether they have a permit or not for the trail.

- b. **Professional Obligation:** For example:

Under Bylaw 11.3.3, I need to have proper regard for the trails if the MTB club has the proper permits. If the trails are not properly authorized, I have a duty to bring this matter to the attention of the proper authorities.

- c. **Strategy:** *I would first investigate as to whether the trail is properly permitted or whether it is an unauthorized work. Once this is determined, I would consider contacting the MTB club directly and dealing with them accordingly. If the trail is authorized, I would have to adjust our plans for the block to accommodate the trail, if the trail is not authorized, I would determine how to deal with its proper disassembly/deconstruction, taking into account the sensitivity of the MTB club on this matter.*

3. As they were having lunch on a rock outcrop just at the top of the proposed boundary, they noticed that they could easily see the entire lake where their friend operates a commercial wilderness canoe adventure business.

- a. **Potential stakeholders** – Friend's commercial wilderness canoe adventure business; other users of the lake;

Why important? – Potential for visual quality issues if the block is visible from the lake.

- b. **Professional Obligation:** For example:

Under Bylaw 11.5.5, if I believe that our work may be detrimental to good forest stewardship, I have a duty to bring it before my employer. In this case, if visual quality could possibly be an issue we have not yet considered, I need to set this on the agenda for something to look into.

- c. **Strategy:** *I would determine whether or not we have properly classified the block in terms of any visual quality objectives that we have to meet. I would then look further*

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into the issue of the potential viewscape from the lake and whether we need to make any adjustments to our block design to meet any requirements. Once I have a better idea of the responsibilities that we have respecting visual quality, I would contact the canoe operation for their comments and determine whether there are any other interest groups that I should make contact with.

4. On the other side of a creek on the outside of the block boundary, they note a cluster of culturally modified trees.
 - a. **Potential stakeholders** – First Nations;

Why important? – Presence near boundary could indicate that the area has seen use in the past and that there could be CMTs inside the block as well. Depending on the age of the CMTs, certain legal requirements may attach to the trees under the Heritage Conservation Act.
 - b. **Professional Obligation:** For example:

Under Bylaw 11.3.7 and 11.5.4, I have a duty to only work in subject areas where I feel competent. If I am unable to properly assess whether the CMTs are culturally significant and develop a plan to deal with them, I need to make sure that the proper people have a look at them.
 - c. **Strategy:** *I would take note of where the cluster of CMTs are and during the course of layout of the block observe whether there are any other CMTs or culturally significant objects to take account of. I would engage the properly qualified people to look into the CMTs to determine how we should deal with them. If deemed necessary, I would engage with the relevant First Nation(s) to discuss the matter of the CMTs and adjust the block layout accordingly, if necessary.*
5. On their walk out, the consultants walked through a recently planted block and come across a 2m wide slashed-out survey line that ends with a stake “Pad here.”
 - a. **Potential stakeholders** – Oil and gas/mining company – the industrial user that staked the pad; forest tenure holder with obligation to reforest block (i.e. potentially your company);

Why important? – Potential for multi-resource conflict on the land base; damage to the regenerated block;

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b. **Professional Obligation:** For example:

Under Bylaw 11.5.1, I have a duty to my employer to act diligently in my work. In the present case, I have a responsibility to determine who has constructed the pad and also how the construction of the pad has affected the reforestation of the adjacent block.

c. **Strategy:** *I need to determine who is responsible for the pad and who has the responsibility for the plantation. Once I have determined these things, I need to look at how my company's strategy for the area may be affected by this other industrial user. Once I have enough background information regarding the situation, I would determine whether my company should look into developing a further strategy, likely with the other resource professionals/company associated with the pad, to try to minimize the impacts from multiple users on the landscape.*

Part I – For **two** of the five above observations:

a) In three sentences or less, outline generally why you think the observation is important and the stakeholder to whom the observation relates.

See examples above.

(2 marks)

b) In three sentences or less, describe the nature of the professional obligation you have with regard to the observation.

Obligations listed should not be of a general nature and must relate to the specific observation. Answers should reference who you owe the duty to (i.e. the public, the stakeholder in question or your employer) and give a source for the origins of the duty. See examples above.

(2 marks)

c) In three sentences or less, describe a strategy for addressing your concerns with the observation that you think will demonstrate your diligence in dealing with the matter.

Strategies should be practical and demonstrate the writer's understanding that to be diligent more information is required to properly address the observation. Answers should include gathering more information relating to the observation, determining the rights of the stakeholder in question and then putting together a plan to initiate contact with the stakeholder or relevant governmental authority. See examples above.

(2 marks)

Part II – In short answer form, identify and explain three actions you could take in the long-term to make sure you have more updated stakeholder information for the area.

(4 marks)

Answers should be concise and propose logical steps for becoming more aware of the multiple users on the land base. Possible general subject areas are:

More effective stakeholder consultation – could include encouraging public comment and review opportunities for forest stewardship plans, being aware generally of the community's interest in

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areas, developing relationships with stakeholders (including other industrial users in the area) and being proactive generally.

Identify past scenarios where stakeholders have slipped through the cracks and determine what actions you could have taken to discover the stakeholder earlier.

Liaise with government to be kept up-to-date of active interests in the area.

Update your company's mapping database with new information as it becomes available.

Develop a protocol for continuous monitoring and updating of changes in the area.

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Question 2 (Short answer)

The BC provincial government is in the process of developing a new piece of legislation to govern the use of natural resource roads called the Natural Resource Roads Act (NRRA).

- a) Describe three important difficulties with the current regime and how the NRRA will address these.

(6 marks)

Resource roads and the NRRA: Three important difficulties with current regime and how NRRA will resolve. One mark each for the difficulty and the resolution. Important to display professional thought and analysis, and a reasonable argument on how the NRRA could address. Some speculation is okay but it needs to be reasonable.

- *Resource roads currently administrated under 11 pieces of legislation, which are not uniformly applied across all roads. So variable agency involvement plus requirements on roads. Confusing, cumbersome, very interconnected (i.e., connection of roads to appraisal system and stumpage).*
 - *NRRA should create a single, streamlined, modernized approach to management and admin of resource roads.*
- *Current legislation around resource roads is not stable. October 2012 was most recent change to Workers' Compensation Act that amended definition of roads as workplace only if under construction, maintenance, or repair. Therefore currently the legislative framework is not stable.*
 - *NRRA should make amendments easier, clearer, measure all impacts, engage stakeholders more easily, etc.*
- *Government has struck 14 working groups to address issues with current framework. Candidate can choose any one of these issues (at http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/mof/nrra/NRRA-Working-Groups_WEB.pdf) and describe the current situation: safety framework, publically funded oversight of practices, balancing rights to use roads with rights to control roads, access management input, cost sharing, ownership and control of structures, fees rents and taxation, securities and insurance, government roads, scope of roads, info sharing and management, recreational maintenance funding, and road standards.*
 - *Professional analysis and opinion of how NRRA could address the issue presented.*
- *Enviro impacts – no coordination and not every industry is held to same standard (i.e., OGMAs and variable allowance for industry to use/build/disturb)*
 - *NRRA still vague (<http://www.wcel.org/resources/environmental-law-alert/regulating-road-less-travelled>) but could possibly help. Candidate to make an argument.*

General references:

<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/mof/nrra/>

<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/mof/nrra/Progress-Report-March-7.pdf>

<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/mof/nrra/Discussion-Paper.pdf>

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<http://www.bcforestsafe.org/node/2043>

- b) Describe any potential conflicts you might have with other resource professionals when it comes to the use of resource roads. How can these conflicts be resolved?

(4 marks)

Potential conflicts with other professionals with regards to resource roads and how to resolve:

- *Sky is the limit (conflicts over use, preservation, different standards for different users, stumpage/appraisal, who maintains, who pays, who hold access rights, access management, environmental, etc.).*
- *Expect candidate to describe a reasonable conflict – can draw on the situations/issues described above or come up with a scenario on his/her own.*
 - *1 mark background, why is it a conflict/how does the conflict occur/arise*
 - *2 marks – thoughtful analysis of what can be done (investigate, communicate, learn, etc.)*
 - *1 mark – ABCFP bylaws and dispute resolution*

NOTE: This part of the answer should not just regurgitate the bylaw on respectful regard and advocating for good forest stewardship. The candidate should display some personal and professional thought, and apply a reasonable and mature analysis to how the situation arose, how it could be mitigated, and/or how it could be prevented in the future.

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Question 3 (Essay)

As a forest professional, you are expected to act diligently with respect to all aspects of your professional work.

a) What does “acting diligently” mean?

(4 marks)

One mark for each valid point

- *“Due diligence” can be restated as “reasonable” or “proper diligence”*
- *Acting diligently means ensuring that “all work is complete correct, consistent, and reliable*
- *You must be able to demonstrate how a decision was reached*
- *You must make sure that all relevant factors have been considered*
- *Document work well so that others (and yourself at later points in time) will know what was considered.*

b) How could you demonstrate that you acted diligently with respect to an issue, if your conduct is called into question?

(6 marks)

One mark for each valid point

- *Appropriate documentation is essential*
- *Must be able to demonstrate that:*
 - *Work meets all statutory requirements*
 - *All non-statutory requirements have been considered*
 - *Work meets employer expectations*
 - *Recommendations/rationales backed by appropriate data/science*
- *Involve peers to assess work*
- *Access experts where necessary*
- *Follow appropriate legislation*
- *Organize standard operating activity summaries to help ensure completeness and correctness*

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Question 4 (Short answer)

Over the past several years, there have been reports from several sources (e.g., Auditor General's office, Forest Practices Board, Association of BC Forest Professionals) that have commented on the status of forest inventory information for British Columbia's public forest. Several of these documents have expressed concern that the information available is inadequate to support decision-making regarding forest resource use.

a) What are the main sources of inventory information for BC's public forests?

(2 marks)

VRI and Forest cover inventory – Inventory branch

RESULTS – regen delay and free growing survey results

Land and ecosystem: TEM, PEM

Visual landscape inventory

Sources of non-timber inventory – archaeological surveys (RAAD), species at risk inventories

Candidates should mention at least VRI and RESULTS, and a few additional sources of information not directly linked with timber supply. 1 mark for VRI and Results, and 1 mark for 2 or more additional sources.

b) Why is inventory information important? Give two examples of how inventory information is used; one at a local (e.g. cut block) scale, and another at a landscape scale. For each example, explain what information is necessary and the potential consequences of having inaccurate or out-of-date information.

(4 marks)

Why inventory information is important – forms basis for good decisions based on current data. Is normally required early on in decision making. Can be used to monitor impacts of management, climate change. Can be good indicators. Necessary for setting AAC, necessary to ensure sustainable industry and maintain other values (One mark for a reasonable statement that incorporates two or more of the ideas above or other good ideas.

1.5 marks for each example. If they don't explicitly indicate how inventory information is used they should not get full marks. Example "to ensure we meet objectives on the land base" is not good enough. They should have a good example and follow it with how the inventory is used, and the consequences, specifically stated, of not having good data.

Local scale examples: cut block layout and patch size retention – requires age class structure

- economics of cut block layout – base initial work on forest inventory data (VRI) on leading species and age class

- timber inventory important for appraisal and stumpage fees

- archaeological assessment – provides information on cultural values

- identification of species at risk

- planning for salvage harvesting especially following mountain pine beetle

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Landscape scale examples

- *timber supply review, determining AAC – uses VRI, terrain stability assessments, VLI,*
- *strategic level land-use decisions, e.g. protection of wildlife habitat (e.g. mule deer winter range)*

- c) As a professional forester responsible for preparation of a higher level plan (e.g. Forest Stewardship Plan), how would you ensure you had accurate and adequate inventory information necessary for the plan? What is your responsibility if you believe you do not have sufficient information?

(4 marks)

2 marks for how to ensure adequate information- should have at least 2 good methods described, examples include:

- *Ensure complete collection of data, consult FPPR for data requirements*
- *determine data source and assess competence/credibility of source*
- *ground truthing*
- *consult other experts/professionals on data outside area of expertise*
- *review age of inventory information specific to the area*
- *ensure useful public review and use that opportunity to gain additional non-timber inventory information*

2 marks for what to do if information inadequate – the following are some examples of things that can be done. The discussion should be specific and not just focused on about due diligence.

- *seek assistance to get appropriate data*
- *advocate for updated inventory information*
- *not do plan until appropriate information available*

Question 5 (Short answer)

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You are an FIT working for a consultant and doing layout for your client who has a forest license. As directed by your supervisor, you have been developing a new cutblock in an area that has traditionally been used exclusively by your client. You have done a review of the maps and aerial photos and notice that the area you are laying out is a large leave strip surrounded by old, previously harvested blocks. While locating the block boundary you find fresh ribbons and blazed falling corners with metal tags. According to the metal tag you notice that the work was done by another local consultant the day before.

Your supervisor told you that the client wishes to submit this block for approval as soon as possible. You believe that you were in that location first since you have been working in the area for a number of months and have never seen anyone else. Further, your client has invested considerable money into development of this block. You decide to ignore the ribboning and tags and submit the layout to your client. The client then submits the block for approval in the Forest Tenure Administration system (FTA). Sometime later your client gets a call from another licensee accusing your company of stealing their layout. The other licensee then lodges a professional complaint against you.

- a) What do you tell your supervisor about what happened?

(1 mark)

You tell your supervisor exactly what happened and explain your rationale for making the decisions you made.

- b) What should a professional do when they find another person's layout and are aware of a potential overlap?

(2 marks)

There are a number of potential issues here, including whether the layout overlap is consistent with prior agreements between licensees, whether you completed your own layout or simply copied the layout you found in the field, the need to fully inform your supervisor and client, and to respect the rights of the other professionals involved.

You should document the situation by taking photographs and notes.

You should consult with your supervisor and client to determine the appropriate response. There are issues of client-confidentiality here, and there may, or may not be a prior agreement between local licensees on chart areas. Your response could include contacting the Practice Advisory Service to obtain advice on the situation. The other party should be informed and brought into the discussion. You should attempt to resolve the overlap in a professional manner and if you are unable to resolve the overlap, you should seek guidance from the appropriate ministry representative on the matter.

- c) What professional obligations have you potentially violated?

(4 marks)

Reference to the relevant sections of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Practice should be given.

Duties to your employer are described in Code of Ethics section 11.5.

Member to member obligations under the Code of Ethics (11.6).

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Specifically, under the COE - responsibility to the public, the profession, the employer, and other members (11.2); members are to uphold professional principles above the demands of employment (11.3.2.)

Specifically, under the Standards – competency with regard to taking due care (12.2.3); upholding professional principles (12.3); maintaining professional integrity (12.4).

d) Explain whether your supervisor is or is not professionally accountable for your work.

(3 marks)

Yes, your supervisor is accountable for your work, especially since you are an FIT. Bylaws 10.2 and 10.6 cover the certification of completed work.

Supervisors need to be aware of the people who are working under them and the limits of their abilities. If you were a registered member, your supervisor may not be professionally accountable.

Reference to the Practice Guidelines on Supervision (May 2013) must be given. The Foresters Act requires a person to be a registered member, special permit holder or certificate holder to practice professional forestry (Foresters Act section 20) – a person may engage in the practice of professional forestry if the person does it under the supervision of a registered member. Your supervisor is taking on the professional accountability for all of the professional forestry work done by the non-member in the same way as if your supervisor was formally signing off a professional document the non-member has prepared.

In addition, you are only an FIT and therefore your supervisor should exercise extra diligence when relying on non-professionals (if you were a professional, your supervisor could have a legal defence for relying on your work). Your supervisor needs to be able to demonstrate that s/he was diligent with regard to assigning tasks appropriate to your skill level and monitoring whether the work performed was up to the required standard.

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Question 6 (Essay)

You have been tasked at work with a completely new job. What do you do to ensure you are competent to complete the work?

(10 marks)

Any 10 of these or similar relevant points for full marks

Key Points:

- *Obtain a detail description of the requirements of the new job, in writing if at all possible*
- *Review description with your employer*
- *Talk to other people, within your organization or without, who have some experience with similar jobs to determine what skills/abilities they think are needed*
- *Self-assess your abilities/skills against the requirements of the new job*
- *Undergo a voluntary peer review*
- *If possible, spend some time on a similar job with someone who has the requisite experience*
- *Contact the ABCFP Practice Advisory Service if necessary*
- *Explore any ethical requirements relative to the new job*
- *Determine if there are any legal requirements involved in doing the job*
- *Identify any potential overlap of duties with other professionals*
- *Notify employer/client that the work is new to you and may take longer*
- *If consulting, consider decreasing your hourly rate while you are learning since the task will likely take longer for you to complete*
- *Hire additional help*

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Question 7 (Essay)

You meet a logging contractor on site for a pre-work meeting. You regularly use this contractor and have had many pre-work meetings with them in similar areas. Your usual work truck is in the shop and you realize that you do not have your pre-work forms as you arrive on site as they are in your regular truck. You decide to continue with the meeting as everyone and the equipment is ready to go and your office is more than 3 hours away. You review safety hazards, procedures, discuss strategies, and get the contractor started. You observe for a while to ensure things are going well and then leave with the intention of completing the forms and signing them when you get back to the office. Upon arriving at the office you learn that there was a serious accident on the site and a WorkSafe investigator is on route and has requested to see all documentation regarding the safety plan and pre-work as part of the investigation. Explain what you would do considering the Code of Ethics and standards of professional practice.

(10 marks)

Ethics: No documentation, accident, investigation. What do you do with regards to Code of Ethics and standards of professional practice?

- *Don't just regurgitate code of ethics – note which element is applicable and interpret it in relation to this scenario*
 - *Complete and correct*
 - *Professional care*
 - *Integrity*
 - *Due diligence*
 - *Safety*
- *I'd expect a thoughtful answer about the following:*
 - *Cooperating with the investigation*
 - *Being honest about the missing paperwork*
 - *Taking responsibility for not having the forms*
 - *Trying to work with contractor to improve practices and prevent accidents in the future*
 - *Learning from the experience and implementing/ integrating learning into your practice (for example, was the terrain too steep for the machinery, do you need to change the prescription, etc.)*