KEY FINDINGS

THE 2015 SURVEY OF THE ATTITUDES OF VOTERS IN SIX WESTERN STATES

CONDUCTED BY: LORI WEIGEL / PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES
DAVE METZ / FAIRBANK, MASLIN, MAULLI N, METZ & ASSOCIATES

JANUARY 2015
2,400 telephone (cell and landline) interviews with 400 registered voters in six states: Arizona, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming.

Interviews conducted December 29, 2014 & January 3-11, 2015, in Spanish and English.

The margin of overall sampling error is + 2.9% at the 95% confidence interval for the total sample; and + 4.9% for each state.

The total numbers have been statistically weighted to reflect the true geographic distribution of voters throughout the region. Interviews within each state were distributed proportionally by region and each sample is demographically representative of their electorate.


Bi-partisan research team of Public Opinion Strategies (R) and Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (D).
We tested 11 different potential factors that could play a role in someone being attracted to life in the West, and asked voters tell us if it was a “significant factor, somewhat of a factor or not really a factor in you deciding to live and stay in the West.” The rationales voters say are most significant all revolve around the outdoors and nature.
In fact, these factors outrank economic ones in their significance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Living in West</th>
<th>Significant Factor</th>
<th>A Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clean air, clean water and environment</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy, outdoor lifestyle</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to live near, recreate on and enjoy public lands like national parks and forests</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of living</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic opportunities</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of public schools</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of health care and hospitals</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of traffic congestion</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of taxes</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting and fishing opportunities</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to open my own business</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Majorities of voters in four of the six states say a clean environment is significant in drawing them to and keeping them in the West.

Clean Air, Clean Water and Environment By State

- **Arizona**: 80% (48% Significant)
- **Colorado**: 90% (63% Significant)
- **Montana**: 92% (73% Significant)
- **New Mexico**: 87% (66% Significant)
- **Utah**: 81% (49% Significant)
- **Wyoming**: 94% (72% Significant)

**Total Factor**
There’s even more agreement over a “healthy outdoor lifestyle” playing a role; particularly strong in Montana and Wyoming.

Healthy, Outdoor Lifestyle By State

- Arizona: 86%, Significant 53%
- Colorado: 89%, Significant 54%
- Montana: 95%, Significant 73%
- New Mexico: 85%, Significant 57%
- Utah: 87%, Significant 57%
- Wyoming: 94%, Significant 67%

Total Factor
Here’s the kind of reasons voters provided for why they live in the West.

“We just like it here. We like the weather. Mostly, probably the main reason is just the weather and the outdoors. There’s sunshine and so much stuff outdoors to do, and things are just fresh.”
- Democratic Woman Age 45-54, Colorado

“We have the cleanest air and the most pristine wild lands and wildlife. I’m more comfortable here than I am anywhere else.”
- Independent Man Age 65+, Montana

“It’s a beautiful place to live and I can go walking with my wife in the mountains. It’s a nice place to live. You can raise your children and grandchildren where they have room to run, jump, explore, and be kids.”
- Republican Man Age 65+, Wyoming

“We have the cleanest air and the most pristine wild lands and wildlife. I’m more comfortable here than I am anywhere else.”
- Independent Man Age 65+, Montana

“I like the national parks. I like the outdoors, the recreation possibilities.”
- Independent Man Age 65+, Utah
Western voters back up their words in action. Nearly all of them report having visited nationally-managed public lands in the last year.

“And over the past year, how many times do you think you have visited public lands managed by U.S. agencies, such as national parks, national forests, national monuments, national wildlife refuges, or Bureau of Land Management Lands.”

- More Than 20 Times: 43%
- 6-20 Times: 30%
- 1-5 Times: 23%

Total Visited in Last Year: 97%
I'm going to mention a few priorities that some people have for national parks, forests, national monuments, wildlife refuges, and other national public lands. Please tell me how important each one is to you personally.

Is it very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important as a priority for parks and public lands.
Protecting and conserving national public lands for future generations and wildlife are the top priorities Westerners hold.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priorities for Public Lands Ranked By Very Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Total Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protecting and conserving natural areas for future generations</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting and conserving wildlife habitat</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sure that rangers have the resources they need to take care of public lands and provide services to visitors</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring access for recreational activities such as hiking, biking, hunting and fishing</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sure resources such as oil and gas, minerals or coal are available for development and mining</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making them available for livestock grazing</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Voters across the political spectrum place protecting public lands as the top priority they hold.

Protect and Conserve for Future Generations By Party

- **Republicans (37%)**: 95% Important, 75% Very Important
- **Independents (31%)**: 96% Important, 79% Very Important
- **Democrats (30%)**: 98% Important, 93% Very Important

Total Important
This is the top or next to top rationale in every state.

Protect and Conserve for Future Generations By State

96%  
Arizona  
83% Very

96%  
Colorado  
84% Very

96%  
Montana  
77% Very

96%  
New Mexico  
85% Very

96%  
Utah  
78% Very

94%  
Wyoming  
74% Very

Total Important
A majority of voters in each of these states say a lack of proper funding for these nationally managed lands is a problem in their state.

Lack of Resources to Properly Maintain Public Lands By State

- **Arizona**: 78% (38% Extremely/Very Serious)
- **Colorado**: 73% (35% Extremely/Very Serious)
- **Montana**: 63% (21% Extremely/Very Serious)
- **New Mexico**: 71% (34% Extremely/Very Serious)
- **Utah**: 67% (26% Extremely/Very Serious)
- **Wyoming**: 51% (17% Extremely/Very Serious)
By a 44 point margin, voters tell us they view these federal public lands as belonging to the nation - not to their state.

“And do you think of these public lands more as - AMERICAN places that belong to everyone in our country, or STATE places that belong more to the people of (STATE)?”

68%

American Places

24%

State Places
There is overwhelming support for Presidents continuing to have the prerogative to designate National Monuments; Support for Congress funding LWCF, but not for sale of public lands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Lands Actions Ranked By Support</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Oppose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Future Presidents continuing to protect existing public lands as national monuments</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to use some of the money from fees charged to oil and gas companies that drill offshore for conservation of natural areas and clean water, and to ensure access to outdoor recreation</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sell significant holdings of public lands like national forests to reduce the budget deficit</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Opposition to Congress acting to sell off public lands in order to reduce the budget deficit is rejected by majorities across the partisan spectrum.

Selling Public Lands By Party

- Republicans (37%)
  - 63%
  - Strongly

- Independents (31%)
  - 70%
  - Strongly

- Democrats (30%)
  - 76%
  - Strongly

Total Oppose
More than two-thirds also support the BLM protecting sage-grouse habitat through restricting some activities on public lands.

Approximately half of all remaining Greater sage-grouse habitat is on public lands managed by the BLM, that is the Bureau of Land Management. Because of the sage-grouse’s declining population, the BLM drafted plans to protect the bird and other animals that live in its habitat. Those plans would mean the habitat would continue to be open to hiking, biking, camping, fishing, and more, but there would be some limits on energy development, livestock grazing, and off-road vehicle use in certain areas.
These plans engender majority support in every state.

Sage Grouse Habitat Protections By State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total Support</th>
<th>Total Oppose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support: +53%  +46%  +25%  +46%  +39%  +12%
Most voters still admit not knowing their Members’ views on these issues.

“Would you say that your Member of Congress probably...”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>D/S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Places a HIGHER priority on protecting land, air and water than you do</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places the SAME priority on protecting land, air and water that you do</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>+1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places a LOWER priority on protecting land, air and water than you do</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>+5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not really sure of the positions your Member of Congress has taken</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Voters in these Western states tell us that the public lands, opportunities for outdoor recreation, and clean air and water they find here are significant reasons they choose to live where they do. Those eclipse economic factors.

Westerners value our national public lands. They visit them regularly and prioritize preserving them for future generations.

They have a conservation agenda for the new Congress that includes protection of land and water, but rejects the selling of public lands. Few are confident their Member of Congress places as high a priority on these issues as they themselves do.
Conservation in the West Poll
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