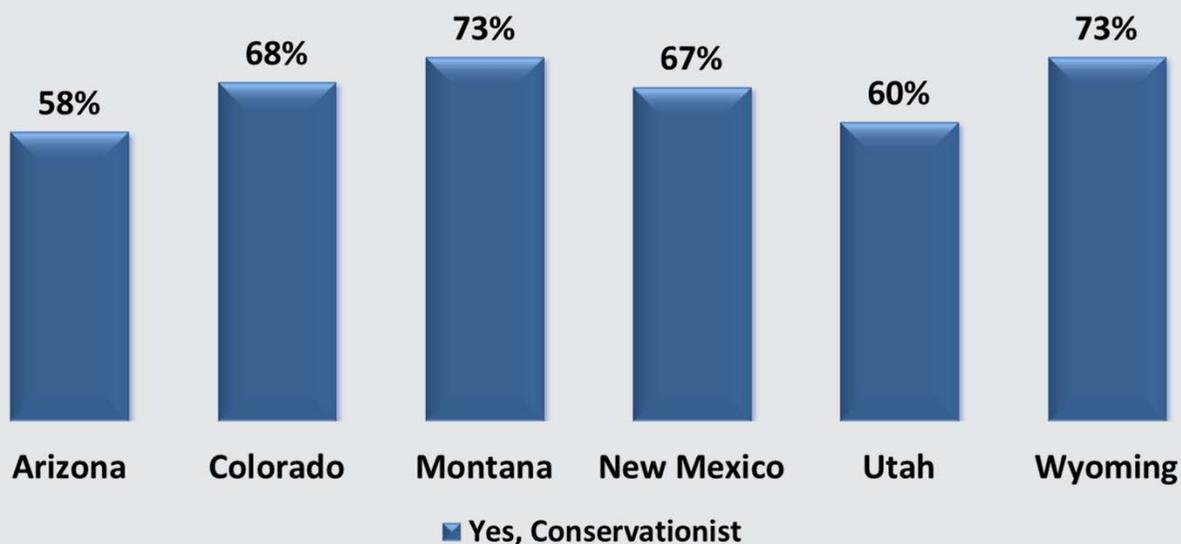


# The Conservation Connection

*Nearly two-thirds of Westerners consider themselves a conservationist and virtually all engage in outdoor recreation; Four-in-five worry about children not spending enough time in nature.*

Fully 63% of voters interviewed across these Western states say they consider themselves to be a "conservationist." This self-perception is wide-spread, with the strongest identification in Montana and Wyoming where 73% of voters in each state consider themselves to be conservationists.



With the amount of time these Western voters are spending in natural areas engaged in outdoor recreation, it is no surprise that such a sizeable majority connect with conservation. Looking at the six states as a whole, fully 85% say they engage regularly in at least one outdoor recreational activity.

The state most likely to engage in outdoor recreation? Wyoming, where 92% say they regularly hike, camp, view wildlife, or enjoy other activities outdoors.

	<i>Outdoor Recreation</i>
<b>West</b>	<b>85%</b>
<b>Arizona</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b>Colorado</b>	<b>89%</b>
<b>Montana</b>	<b>87%</b>
<b>New Mexico</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>Utah</b>	<b>91%</b>
<b>Wyoming</b>	<b>92%</b>

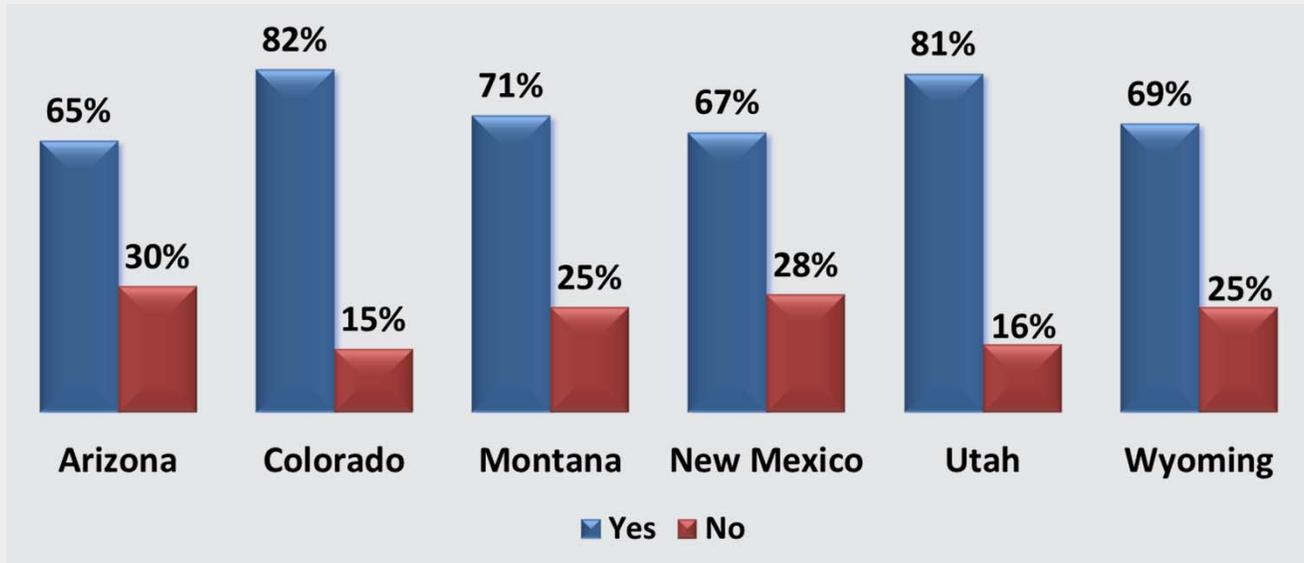
Coloradans and Utah residents have the highest number of regular hikers and mountain bikers. Wyoming and Montana voters are most apt to view wildlife or bird watch, boat, while Utah and Wyoming residents rate highest in the proportion who say they regularly camp or use ATV's or snowmobiles. Not surprisingly, rural residents are most likely to pursue these activities (91% engage in at least one activity – compared to 83% elsewhere). More than one-in-three Westerners have embraced the outdoor lifestyle to such an extent that they say they regularly engage in three or more activities, while half (47%) take part in two activities on a regular basis.

The survey also dispels some common assumptions about outdoor recreation:

- Two-thirds of seniors (67%) say they engage in at least one of these outdoor recreation activities regularly;
- Latino voters are just as likely as white respondents to report regularly pursuing at least one of these (85% of each); and
- Pursuing outdoor activities is completely bi-partisan. Those who voted for Governor Romney in last fall's presidential election are just as likely to hike, bird watch or view wildlife, and actually more likely to go camping than their counterparts who supported President Obama.

Given these predilections, it is no surprise that almost three-quarters of survey respondents (73%) plan to visit a national park sometime in 2013. More than four-in-five residents of Colorado (82%) and Utah (81%) say they plan to spend time in national parks this year, while a still impressive two-thirds in New Mexico (67%) and Arizona (65%) echo this view. 79% of those who engage in outdoor recreation activities regularly plan to visit a national park, compared to just 35% of those who don't recreate outdoors.

### Plan to Visit a National Park in 2013



Despite the amount of time these Western voters and their families are spending outdoors, there is still a concern that children should be spending even more time outside. Across the six states, 83% say that “children not spending enough time outside” is a serious problem, with half (50%) saying it is an “extremely serious” or “very serious” problem. This concern is most prevalent in New Mexico (57% extremely/very serious) and Arizona (52% extremely/very serious).

**% Total Serious Problem**

**83%**

**“Children not spending enough time in the outdoors”**

All of this data underscores previous research findings in the region establishing Western voters' strong ties to the land and nature. Those were particularly highlighted in their responses to an open-ended question asked in the 2011 survey. Voters were asked then what they liked most about living in the Western United States, other than the weather. Responses were dominated by comments about outdoor recreational activities, the scenery and beautiful geography, open spaces, and the easy access to the outdoors and wilderness.

**“Other than the weather, what do you like most about living in the Western United States?”**

