



THE COLORADO COLLEGE  
STATE OF THE ROCKIES PROJECT

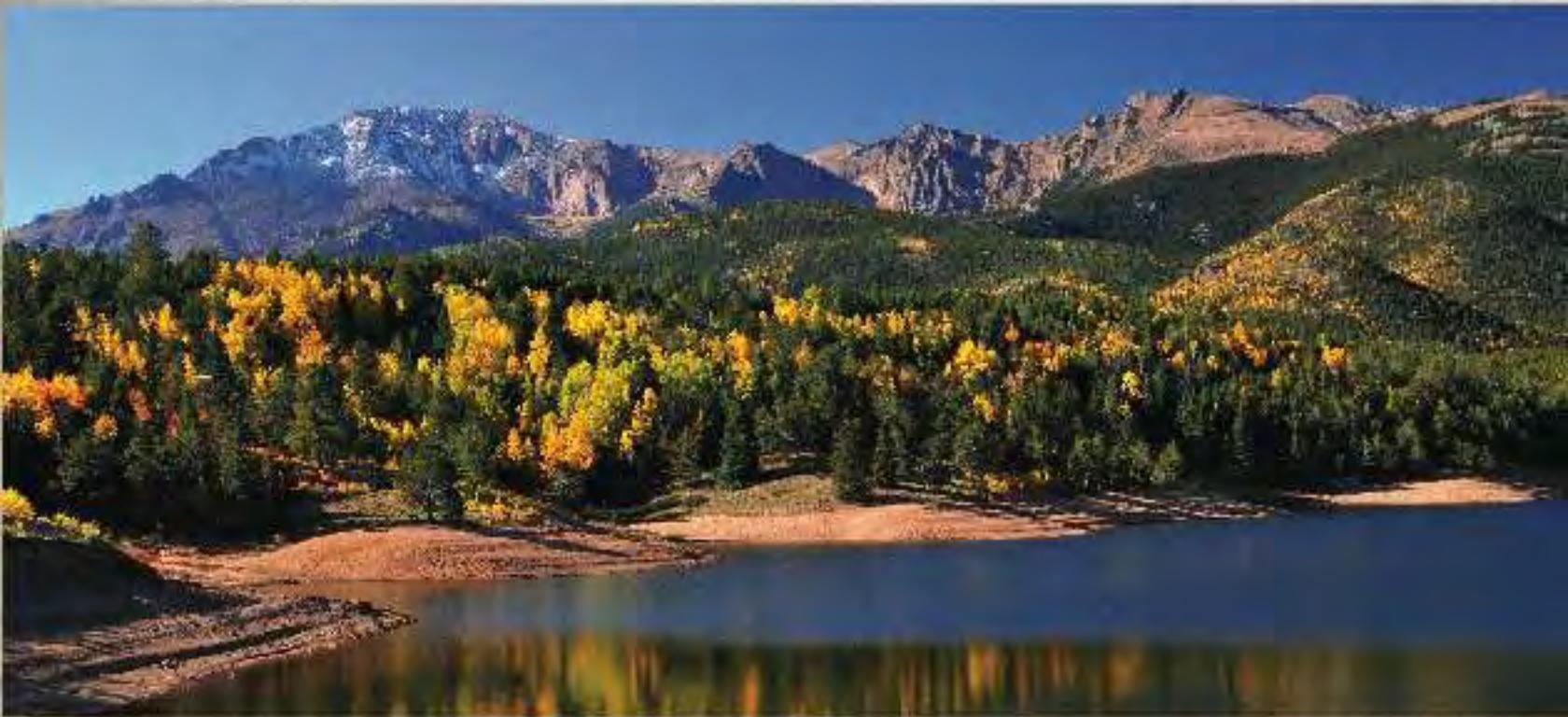
Conservation in the West Poll

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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THE 2012 SURVEY OF THE ATTITUDES OF VOTERS IN SIX WESTERN STATES



**JANUARY, 2012**

SPONSORED BY: THE COLORADO COLLEGE STATE OF THE ROCKIES PROJECT

CONDUCTED BY:

LORI WEIGEL / PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES • DAVE METZ / FAIRBANK, MASLIN, MAULLIN, METZ & ASSOCIATES



# Colorado College State of the Rockies Project Conservation in the West Poll

2012 Survey of the Attitudes of Voters in Six Western States

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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For the complete 2012 Conservation in the West Poll findings and more information visit: [www.stateoftherockies.com](http://www.stateoftherockies.com).

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## Colorado College State of the Rockies 2012 Conservation in West Survey

Highlights of January 30, 2012 Press Release

WESTERN VOTERS ACROSS POLITICAL SPECTRUM AGREE:  
PUBLIC LANDS ARE ESSENTIAL TO OUR ECONOMY

NEW SURVEY FINDS VOTERS IN KEY WESTERN STATES BELIEVE U.S.  
DOES NOT HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY;  
SUPPORT PROTECTIONS FOR AIR, WATER, AND PARKS

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO – The results from the 2012 Colorado College State of the Rockies Conservation in the West poll find that western voters across the political spectrum – from Tea Party supporters to those who identify with the Occupy Wall Street movement and voters in-between – view parks and public lands as essential to their state’s economy, and support upholding and strengthening protections for clean air, clean water, natural areas and wildlife.

The survey, completed in Arizona, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming by Lori Weigel of Public Opinion Strategies (a Republican firm) and Dave Metz of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (a Democratic firm), found that **swing voters across the west** – who will be key to deciding the outcome of a number of U.S. Senate and governors’ races, and possibly the presidential race – **nearly unanimously agree that public lands such as national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas are “an essential part” of the economies of these states.** Four in five western voters view having a strong economy and protecting land and water as compatible.

Two-thirds of Western voters say America’s energy policy should prioritize expanding use of clean renewable energy and reducing our need for more coal, oil and gas. Even in states like Wyoming and Montana, which are more often associated with fossil fuels, voters view renewable energy as a local job creator.

Survey results are a sharp contrast to the energy and environmental debates currently happening in Washington, and in many state capitals. “Western voters consistently believe that conservation helps create and protect jobs for their states,” said Dave Metz. “In fact, by a 17 point margin, voters are more likely to say that environmental regulations have a positive impact on jobs in their state rather than a negative one.”

Seven in 10 Western voters support implementation of the Clean Air Act, and updating clean air standards. They see regulations designed to protect land, air, water and wildlife as having positive impact on public safety (70 percent), the natural beauty of their state (79 percent) and their quality of life (72 percent).

“What we read in the press and what politicians say about an ever-sharpening trade-off between environment and jobs in a deep recession do not square with views of many western voters,” said Colorado College economist and State of the Rockies Project faculty director Walt Hecox, PhD. “Instead, those stubborn westerners continue to defy stereotypes, by arguing that a livable environment and well-managed public lands can be — in fact must be — compatible with a strong economy.”

Similarly, western voters voiced support for continued funding of conservation, indicating that even with tight state budgets, they want to maintain investments in parks, water, and wildlife protection. When specific local issues were tested with voters in some states – such as increasing the state’s renewable energy standard in Montana, establishing national monument protections for the Arkansas River canyon in Colorado, and updating energy standards for new homes in Utah – voters want to actually strengthen protections. While there are geographic and partisan distinctions on a number of key issues, such as energy development on public lands, the data show that the broad conservation values uniting westerners are much more prevalent than the occasional issues that divide them.

“The depth and breadth of the connection between westerners and the land is truly remarkable -- when people are telling us that public lands are essential to their economy, and that they support continued investments in conservation, even in these difficult economic times,” said Lori Weigel. “Westerners are telling us that we've got to find a way to protect clean air, clean water, and parks in their states.”

The 2012 Colorado College Conservation in the West Survey is a bipartisan poll conducted by Republican pollster Lori Weigel of Public Opinion Strategies and Democratic pollster Dave Metz of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates. The poll surveyed 2,400 registered voters in six western states (AZ, CO, NM, UT, WY, MT) January 2 through 5 & 7, 2012, and yields a margin of error of + 2.0 percent nationwide and +4.9 statewide.

The Colorado College “State of the Rockies Project” in this Executive Summary is pleased to make available the highlights from comprehensive results of the January, 2012 “Conservation in the West Survey,” conducted by two renowned national survey firms: Public Opinion Strategies as well as Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Assoc. This 2012 analysis of opinions explores bi-partisan opinions in each of 6 western states and for the six-state region concerning conservation, environment, energy, the role of government, trade-offs with economies, and citizen priorities. The research was funded by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. A full range of information about and results from both this 2012 survey and last year’s 2011 survey are available on the Colorado College State of the Rockies web site: <http://www2.coloradocollege.edu/stateoftherockies/>

### **About Colorado College and the State of the Rockies Project**

Colorado College is a nationally prominent, four-year liberal arts college that was founded in Colorado Springs in 1874. The college operates on the innovative Block Plan, in which its 2,000 undergraduate students study one course at a time in intensive 3½-week segments. For the past nine years, the college also has run the State of the Rockies Project, which seeks to increase public understanding of vital issues affecting the Rockies region through annual report cards, free events, discussions and other activities. These dimensions to the Project provide a means for the Colorado College both to help motivate youth to prepare for the next generation of conservation leaders and to “give back” to the region in a meaningful way.

### **About Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates**

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) – a national Democratic opinion research firm with offices in Oakland, Los Angeles and Madison, Wisconsin – has specialized in public policy oriented opinion research since 1981. The firm has assisted hundreds of political campaigns at every level of the ballot – from President to City Council – with opinion research and strategic guidance. FM3 also provides research and strategic consulting to public agencies, businesses and public interest organizations nationwide.

### **About Public Opinion Strategies**

Public Opinion Strategies is the largest Republican polling firm in the country. Since the firm’s founding in 1991, they have completed more than 10,000 research projects, interviewing more than five million Americans across the United States. Public Opinion Strategies’ research is well respected, and prestigious media outlets such as *The Wall Street Journal*, NBC News, CNBC, and National Public Radio rely on Public Opinion Strategies to conduct their polling. The firm conducts polling on behalf of hundreds of political campaigns, as well as trade associations, not-for-profit organizations, government entities and industry coalitions throughout the nation.

### **About the Polling Partnership of FM3 and Public Opinion Strategies**

FM3 and Public Opinion Strategies have conducted bipartisan research on a wide range of issues over the last several years, in particular on conservation-related initiatives and policies. Together, the two firms have jointly conducted research on behalf of political campaigns, businesses, not-for-profit organizations and public agencies in 38 states and nationally. In these five states, the two firms have conducted 650,000 interviews among voters and consumers.

# Arizona

*A survey of Arizona voters regarding conservation demonstrates a strong conservation ethic and support for continuing to fund conservation and maintain protections.*



Like their fellow Westerners, Arizona voters overwhelmingly identify as conservationists (60%) – a label that bridges partisan and ethnic lines as well as many other factors in the state.

Sub-group	Identify as Conservationist
Latino	51%
White/Anglo	61%
City	63%
Suburban	56%
Rural	65%
Tea Party Supporter	61%
Occupy Wall St.	71%
GOP	57%
Independent	54%
Democrat	68%
Hunter	57%
Angler	60%
Not Sportsmen	60%

Arizona voters prioritize conservation goals throughout the survey, in regard to energy, regulation, and public lands. Among the select findings from the survey:

## On Jobs:

- 78% say that we can protect land and water and have a strong economy at the same time.
- 90% agree that “Our national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas are an essential part of Arizona’s economy.”
- When asked whether environmental regulations have a positive or negative impact on jobs in their state, Arizona voters are more likely to say they have a positive impact (47%) rather than a negative impact (31%).

## On Energy:

- 72% say increasing the use of renewable energy will create jobs in Arizona.
- State voters are more apt to say they would encourage the use of solar power (74%) and wind power (44%) than other sources of energy (responses are top two mentions combined).
- A plurality of 40% say that increasing the use of renewable energy would not have an impact on the reliability of the electricity system in the state.

## On Regulation:

- 61% of Grand Canyon state voters are more likely to view environmental laws more as “important safeguards to protect private property owners, public health and taxpayers from toxic pollution and costly clean-ups” than to view them as “burdensome regulations that tie up industry in red tape, hurt them too much financially, and cost jobs” (31%).
- 74% say that Arizona should maintain protections for land, air and water in the state rather than reduce them in an effort to create jobs as quickly as possible.
- Only 35% agree that “One of the best ways to create jobs is to cut back environmental regulations that are weighing down Arizona’s businesses.”



- Voters in this border state reject the idea that the illegal immigration situation warrants suspending environmental laws along the border. Nearly three-quarters (73%) say that it is not necessary to suspend environmental protections “within one hundred miles of the US-Mexico and US-Canadian border, including in National Parks and other protected public lands,” in order to reduce illegal immigration. Just 22% of Arizona voters think this is a necessary step in efforts against illegal immigration.
- 72% support the EPA “continuing to implement the Clean Air Act by updating the standards for air quality, including for smog, dust, and emissions from power plants, factories and cars,” with a majority (55%) strongly in support. Support tends to be higher among Latinos (84%), voters under age 35 (82%) and women voters (80%).

#### On Prioritizing Conservation:

- 89% say that “Even with state budget problems, we should still find money to protect and maintain Arizona’s land, water and wildlife;” 87% say the same about state parks.
- More broadly, 50% say that more should be done to protect water, air, natural areas, and wildlife in the state, while only 7% want less done in this area. Latinos (61% more should be done) and voters in Northern Arizona (60%) are particularly strong in this view.

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89% say that  
 “Even with state budget problems, we should still find money to protect and maintain Arizona’s land, water and wildlife;” 87% say the same about state parks

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# Colorado

*A survey of Colorado voters regarding conservation demonstrates a strong conservation ethic and support for continuing to fund conservation and maintain protections.*

Like their fellow Westerners, Colorado voters overwhelmingly identify as conservationists (67%) – a label that bridges partisan and ethnic lines as well as many other factors in the state.



Sub-group	Identify as Conservationist
Latino	64%
White/Anglo	68%
City	68%
Suburban	67%
Rural	67%
Tea Party Supporter	67%
Occupy Wall St.	81%
GOP	62%
Independent	65%
Democrat	73%
Hunter	66%
Angler	75%
Not Sportsmen	67%

Colorado voters prioritize conservation goals throughout the survey, in regard to energy, regulation, and public lands. Among the select findings from the survey:

## On Jobs:

- 78% say that we can protect land and water and have a strong economy at the same time.
- 93% agree that “Our national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas are an essential part of Colorado’s economy.”
- When asked whether environmental regulations have a positive or negative impact on jobs in their state, Colorado voters are more likely to say they have a positive impact (44%) rather than a negative impact (29%).

## On Energy:

- 64% say increasing the use of renewable energy will create jobs in Colorado.
- State voters are more apt to say they would encourage the use of solar power (55%) and wind power (46%) than other sources of energy (responses are top two mentions combined).
- A plurality of 45% say that increasing the use of renewable energy would not have an impact on the reliability of the electricity system in the state.

## On Regulation:

- 63% of Centennial state voters are more likely to view environmental laws more as “important safeguards to protect private property owners, public health and taxpayers from toxic pollution and costly clean-ups” than to view them as “burdensome regulations that tie up industry in red tape, hurt them too much financially, and cost jobs” (29%).
- 75% say that Colorado should maintain protections for land, air and water in the state rather than reduce them in an effort to create jobs as quickly as possible.
- Only 34% agree that “One of the best ways to create jobs is to cut back environmental regulations that are weighing down Colorado’s businesses.”
- 71% support the EPA “continuing to implement the Clean Air Act by updating the standards for air quality, including for smog, dust, and emissions from power plants, factories and cars,” with a majority (54%) strongly in support.

State voters are more apt to say they would encourage the use of solar power (55%) and wind power (46%) than other sources of energy





### On Prioritizing Conservation:

- 86% say that “Even with state budget problems, we should still find money to protect and maintain Colorado’s land, water and wildlife;” 82% say the same about state parks.
- Two-thirds (66%) of Colorado voters support designating some of the public lands in the Arkansas River Canyon in Colorado as a National Monument (respondents were told that National Monuments have “protections for natural areas and water similar to those in national parks. The public can recreate or view unique natural, cultural, and historic sites, and the lands are protected from development and resource extraction.”)
- 76% would prefer to continue to have Lottery funds distributed to protect natural areas and to school construction, rather than redirecting all that funding to the state education budget and eliminating this source of funding for conservation (15%).

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76% would prefer to continue to have Lottery funds distributed to protect natural areas

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# Montana

*A survey of Montana voters regarding conservation demonstrates a strong conservation ethic and support for continuing to fund conservation and maintain protections.*



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Montana voters overwhelmingly identify as conservationists (70%) at a level even higher than their fellow Westerners— a label that bridges partisan and ethnic lines as well as many other factors in the state.

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Sub-group	Identify as Conservationist
City	64%
Suburban	66%
Rural	73%
Tea Party Supporter	74%
Occupy Wall St.	80%
GOP	69%
Independent	65%
Democrat	80%
Hunter	71%
Angler	72%
Not Sportsmen	68%

Montana voters prioritize conservation goals throughout the survey, in regard to energy, regulation, and public lands. Among the select findings from the survey:

### On Jobs:

- 80% say that we can protect land and water and have a strong economy at the same time.
- 93% agree that “Our national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas are an essential part of Montana’s economy.”
- When asked whether environmental regulations have a positive or negative impact on jobs in their state, Montana voters are more likely to say they have a positive impact (48%) rather than a negative impact (34%).

80% say that we can protect land and water and have a strong economy at the same time



### On Energy:

- 63% say increasing the use of renewable energy will create jobs in Montana.
- State voters are more apt to say they would encourage the use of wind power (55%) and solar power (40%) than other sources of energy (responses are top two mentions combined).
- Three-quarters (75%) of state voters indicate support for Montana increasing the use of renewable energy sources like wind, solar and geothermal from ten percent to 25 percent by 2025. Just 19% oppose this idea. The intensity of support (48% strongly support) far exceeds intense opposition (14%). A majority of voters across the political spectrum – including 78% of Independents – support increasing the use of renewable energy to 25 percent.

## On Regulation:

- 58% of Treasure state voters are more likely to view environmental laws more as “important safeguards to protect private property owners, public health and taxpayers from toxic pollution and costly clean-ups” than to view them as “burdensome regulations that tie up industry in red tape, hurt them too much financially, and cost jobs” (33%).
- 75% say that Montana should maintain protections for land, air and water in the state rather than reduce them in an effort to create jobs as quickly as possible.
- Voters in this border state reject the idea that the illegal immigration situation warrants suspending environmental laws along the border. Two-thirds (66%) say that it is not necessary to suspend environmental protections “within one hundred miles of the US-Mexico and US-Canadian border, including in National Parks and other protected public lands,” in order to reduce illegal immigration. Just 21% of Montana voters think this is a necessary step in efforts against illegal immigration.
- Less than half (49%) agree that “One of the best ways to create jobs is to cut back environmental regulations that are weighing down Montana’s businesses.”
- 65% support the EPA “continuing to implement the Clean Air Act by updating the standards for air quality, including for smog, dust, and emissions from power plants, factories and cars,” with a plurality (40%) strongly in support.



## On Prioritizing Conservation:

- 86% say that “Even with state budget problems, we should still find money to protect and maintain Montana’s land, water and wildlife;” 85% say the same about state parks.
- 87% of Montanans view the loss of family farms and ranches as a serious problem facing their state – the highest of any state in the region.
- Virtually everyone (95%) says that public lands are essential to Montana’s quality of life.

# New Mexico

*A survey of New Mexico voters regarding conservation demonstrates a strong conservation ethic and support for continuing to fund conservation and maintain protections.*

Like their fellow Westerners, New Mexico voters overwhelmingly identify as conservationists (67%) – a label that bridges partisan and ethnic lines as well as many other factors in the state.

New Mexico voters prioritize conservation goals throughout the survey, in regard to energy, regulation, and public lands. Among the select findings from the survey:

### On Jobs:

- 80% say that we can protect land and water and have a strong economy at the same time.

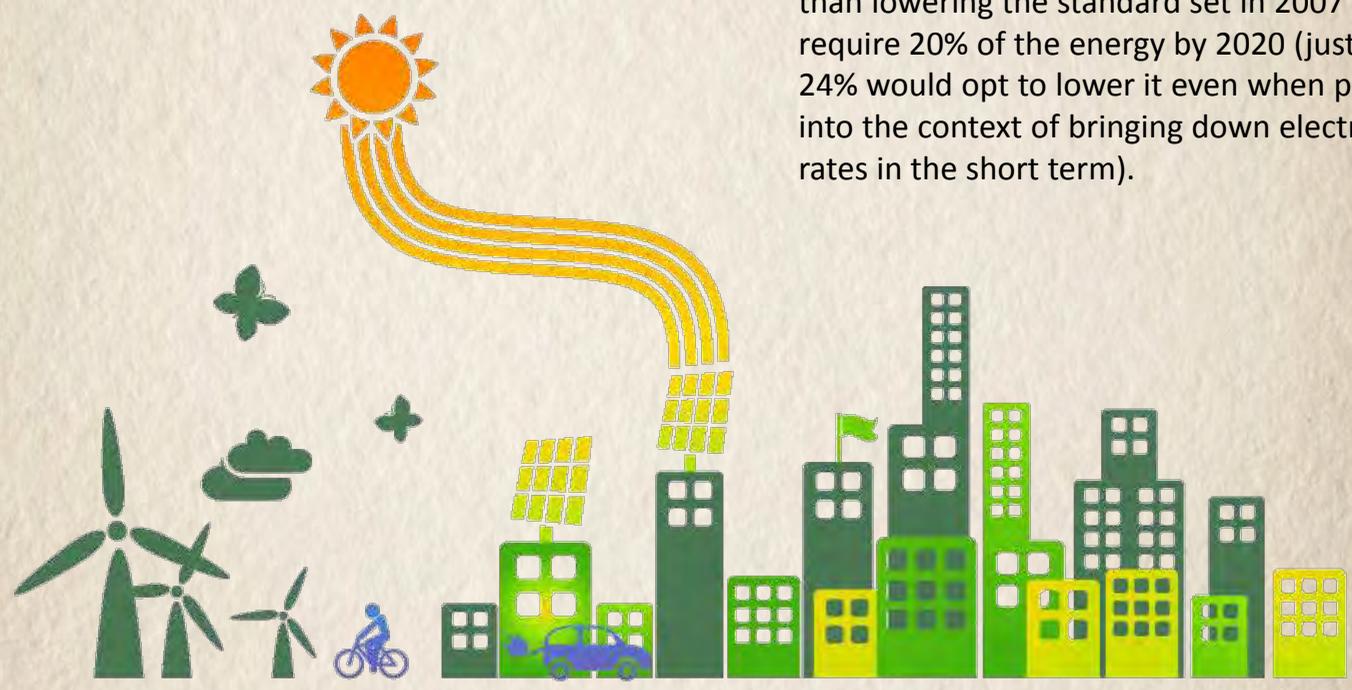
Sub-group	Identify as Conservationist
Latino	65%
White/Anglo	69%
City	77%
Suburban	70%
Rural	63%
Tea Party Supporter	73%
Occupy Wall St.	77%
GOP	70%
Independent	63%
Democrat	66%
Hunter	72%
Angler	70%
Not Sportsmen	64%



- 85% agree that “Our national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas are an essential part of New Mexico’s economy.”
- When asked whether environmental regulations have a positive or negative impact on jobs in their state, New Mexico voters are more likely to say they have a positive impact (46%) rather than a negative impact (32%).

**On Energy:**

- 70% say increasing the use of renewable energy will create jobs in New Mexico.
- State voters are more apt to say they would encourage the use of solar power (66%) and wind power (52%) than other sources of energy (responses are top two mentions combined).
- 71% say they would keep the existing clean energy standards in New Mexico rather than lowering the standard set in 2007 to require 20% of the energy by 2020 (just 24% would opt to lower it even when put into the context of bringing down electricity rates in the short term).



When asked whether environmental regulations have a positive or negative impact on jobs in their state, New Mexico voters are more likely to say they have a positive impact (46%) rather than a negative impact (32%)



### On Regulation:

- 73% say that New Mexico should maintain protections for land, air and water in the state rather than reduce them in an effort to create jobs as quickly as possible.
- 61% of Land of Enchantment voters are more likely to view environmental laws more as “important safeguards to protect private property owners, public health and taxpayers from toxic pollution and costly clean-ups” than to view them as “burdensome regulations that tie up industry in red tape, hurt them too much financially, and cost jobs” (31%).
- Only 42% agree that “One of the best ways to create jobs is to cut back environmental regulations that are weighing down New Mexico’s businesses.” A majority of 54% disagree.
- 68% support the EPA “continuing to implement the Clean Air Act by updating the standards for air quality, including for smog, dust, and emissions from power plants, factories and cars,” with a majority (52%) strongly in support.

### On Prioritizing Conservation:

- 84% say that “Even with state budget problems, we should still find money to protect and maintain New Mexico’s land, water and wildlife;” 87% say the same about state parks.
- 50% say that more should be done to protect air, water, natural areas and wildlife by state government in New Mexico, while a mere 7% think less should be done.
- 63% say that “inadequate water supplies” are an extremely or very serious problem in their state – the highest of any of the six states to recognize this issue.

# Utah

*A survey of Utah voters regarding conservation demonstrates a strong conservation ethic and support for continuing to fund conservation and maintain protections.*

Sub-group	Identify as Conservationist
City	63%
Suburban	60%
Rural	59%
Tea Party Supporter	64%
Occupy Wall St.	71%
GOP	54%
Independent	68%
Democrat	62%
Hunter	68%
Angler	72%
Not Sportsmen	54%

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Like their fellow Westerners, Utah voters overwhelmingly identify as conservationists (60%) – a label that bridges partisan and geographic lines as well as many other factors in the state.

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Utah voters prioritize conservation goals throughout the survey, in regard to energy, regulation, and public lands. Among the select findings from the survey:

## On Jobs:

- 76% say that we can protect land and water and have a strong economy at the same time.
- 95% agree that “Our national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas are an essential part of Utah’s economy.”



- When asked whether environmental regulations have a positive or negative impact on jobs in their state, Utah voters are more likely to say they have a positive impact (53%) rather than a negative impact (28%).

### On Energy:

- 64% say increasing the use of renewable energy will create jobs in Utah.
- State voters are more apt to say they would encourage the use of wind power (55%) and solar power (51%) than other sources of energy (responses are top two mentions combined).
- By a two-to-one margin, Utah voters say they prefer to reduce the need for coal, oil and gas by expanding the use of renewable energy like wind and solar (62%), rather than dig or drill for coal, oil and gas wherever we can find it domestically (29%).
- 76% of the state’s voters say they would “require developers to meet updated standards to reduce energy waste and reduce home owners' utility bills, even if it increases the price of brand new homes by somewhere between one and eight thousand dollars,” rather than allowing developers to build new homes under current standards (18%). A majority of voters in every geographic region, urban voters, suburban voters and rural voters, as well as majorities across the political spectrum would choose to require updated standards for new homes, even knowing the cost implications.



64% say increasing the use of renewable energy will create jobs in Utah

## On Regulation:

- 69% of Beehive state voters are more likely to view environmental laws more as “important safeguards to protect private property owners, public health and taxpayers from toxic pollution and costly clean-ups” than to view them as “burdensome regulations that tie up industry in red tape, hurt them too much financially, and cost jobs” (23%).
- 80% say that Utah should maintain protections for land, air and water in the state rather than reduce them in an effort to create jobs as quickly as possible.
- 69% support the EPA “continuing to implement the Clean Air Act by updating the standards for air quality, including for smog, dust, and emissions from power plants, factories and cars,” with a plurality (42%) strongly in support.

## On Prioritizing Conservation:

- 84% say that “Even with state budget problems, we should still find money to protect and maintain Utah’s land, water and wildlife;” 90% say the same about state parks.
- 62% view “air pollution and smog” as extremely or very serious problems facing their state – the highest of any state in the region by far.



# Wyoming

*A survey of Wyoming voters regarding conservation demonstrates a strong conservation ethic and support for continuing to fund conservation and maintain protections.*

Like their fellow Westerners, Wyoming voters overwhelmingly identify as conservationists (71%) – a label that bridges partisan lines, as well as many other factors in the state.



Sub-group	Identify as Conservationist
Rural resident	76%
Tea Party Supporter	76%
Occupy Wall St. Supporter	88%
GOP	70%
Independent	69%
Democrat	79%
Hunter	75%
Angler	74%
Not Sportsmen	67%

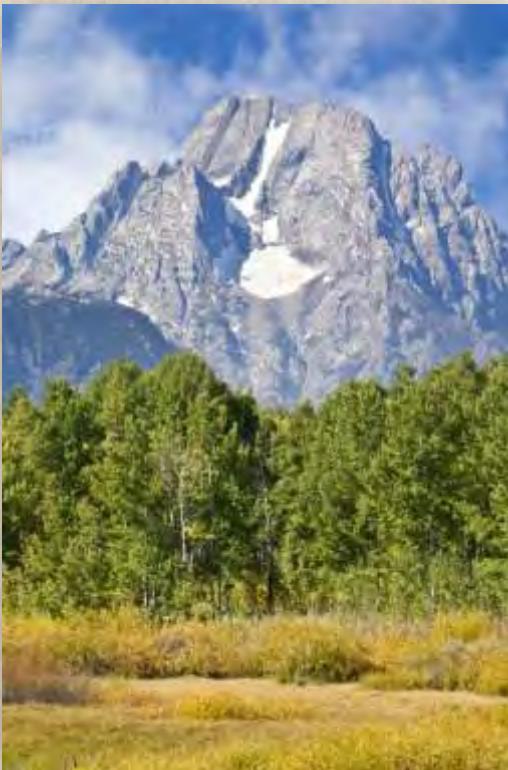
Wyoming voters prioritize conservation goals throughout the survey, in regard to energy, regulation, and public lands. Among the select findings from the survey:

### On Jobs:

- 80% say that we can protect land and water and have a strong economy at the same time.
- 97% agree that “Our national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas are an essential part of Wyoming’s economy” – the highest of any of the six states. Virtually all – 99% - say they are essential the “the quality of life” in Wyoming.
- When asked whether environmental regulations have a positive or negative impact on jobs in their state, Wyoming voters are more likely to say they have a positive impact (47%) rather than a negative impact (35%).

## On Regulation:

- 62% of Equality state voters are more likely to view environmental laws more as “important safeguards to protect private property owners, public health and taxpayers from toxic pollution and costly clean-ups” than to view them as “burdensome regulations that tie up industry in red tape, hurt them too much financially, and cost jobs” (27%).
- 79% say that Wyoming should maintain protections for land, air and water in the state rather than reduce them in an effort to create jobs as quickly as possible.
- 69% reject suspending environmental protections along both borders by saying it is not necessary to help stem the flow of illegal immigrants into the country. Only 22% feel this is a necessary step.
- Wyoming voters are more divided on whether or not “One of the best ways to create jobs is to cut back environmental regulations that are weighing down Wyoming’s businesses” (48% agree, 49% disagree).
- 62% support the EPA “continuing to implement the Clean Air Act by updating the standards for air quality, including for smog, dust, and emissions from power plants, factories and cars,” with a plurality (37%) strongly in support.



## On Prioritizing Conservation:

- 87% say that “Even with state budget problems, we should still find money to protect and maintain Wyoming’s land, water and wildlife;” 88% say the same about state parks.
- 75% support the State Legislature fully funding the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resources Trust to preserve fish and wildlife, ranchlands, natural areas and water in the state, while only 22% oppose this. Support is broad-based and wide-spread throughout the state, including among...

Men (77% support) and women (73%); Voters of all age groups including seniors (69%); Republicans (69%), Independents (87%) and Democrats (82%); Anglers (78%) and hunters (77%); and More than 69% in every major area of the state.

## On Energy:

- 56% say increasing the use of renewable energy will create jobs in Wyoming.
- A majority of Wyoming voters say the highest priority in meeting America’s energy needs is to reduce the need for more coal, oil and gas by expanding the use of clean, renewable energy that can be generated in the U.S. (51%) rather than drilling and mining for more of these traditional energy sources (41%).
- That said, Wyoming voters are unique from other states in that they would be most apt to encourage the use of wind power (42%) and natural gas (40%) in their state over other sources, and are disinclined from discouraging any particular energy sources.

87% say that “Even with state budget problems, we should still find money to protect and maintain Wyoming’s land, water and wildlife;” 88% say the same about state parks.

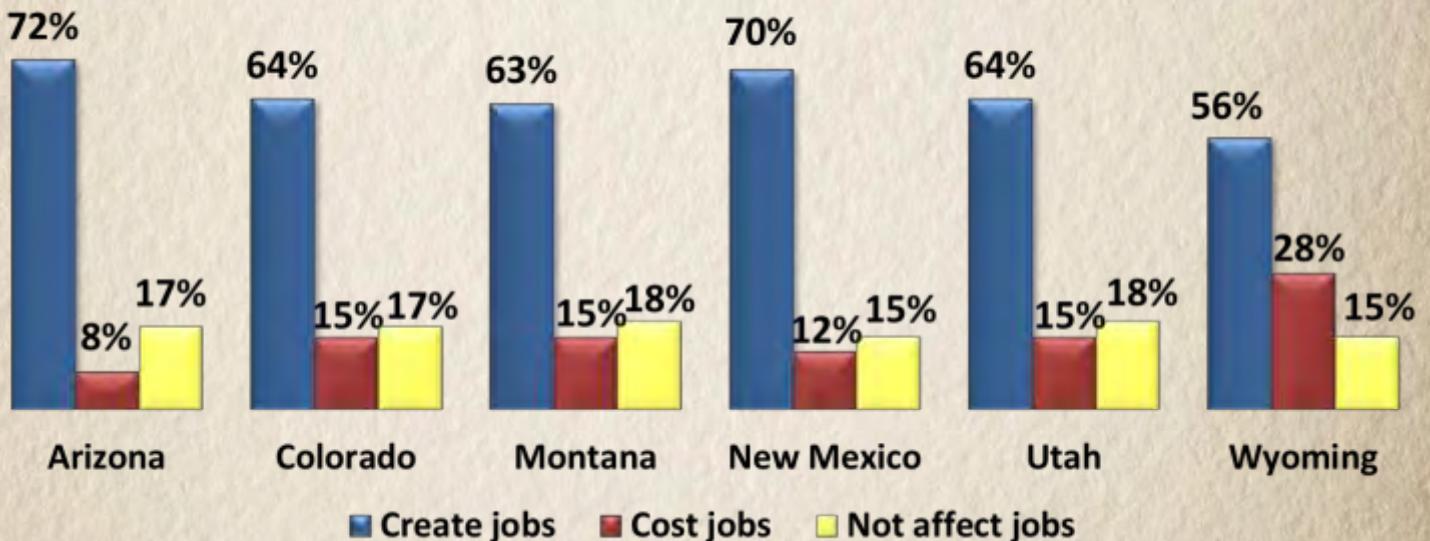


# Energy

*Western voters view renewable energy as a job creator; would opt to encourage more wind and solar broadly, and specifically in two key states.*

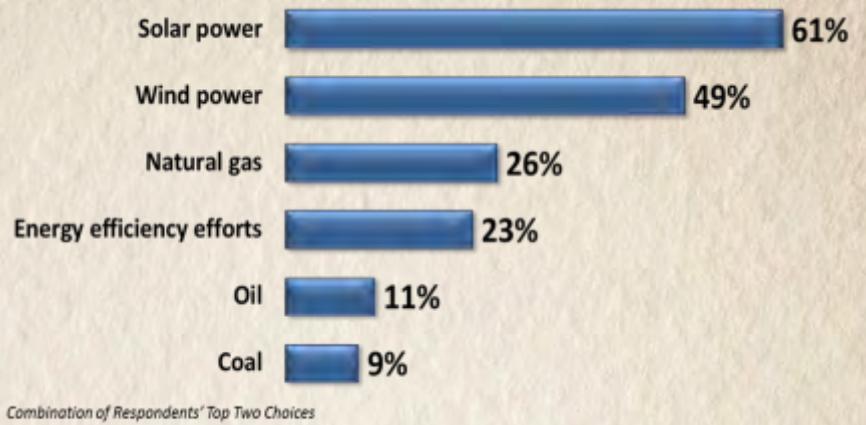
There is a strong view among voters in these Western states that renewable energy is a job creator. Fully 68% say that increasing the use of renewable energy in their state will create jobs, while just 13% think it will cost their state jobs and another 16% do not think it will have an impact on jobs. A majority of voters in every state – including states with traditional energy sectors like Wyoming and Montana – believe renewable energy is a boost for the job situation in their state:

## Increasing the Use of Renewable Energy's Impact on Jobs in State



Notably, this view of renewable energy as a job creator has not changed in the last year, when 67% said renewable energy is more likely to create jobs in their state (January 2011).

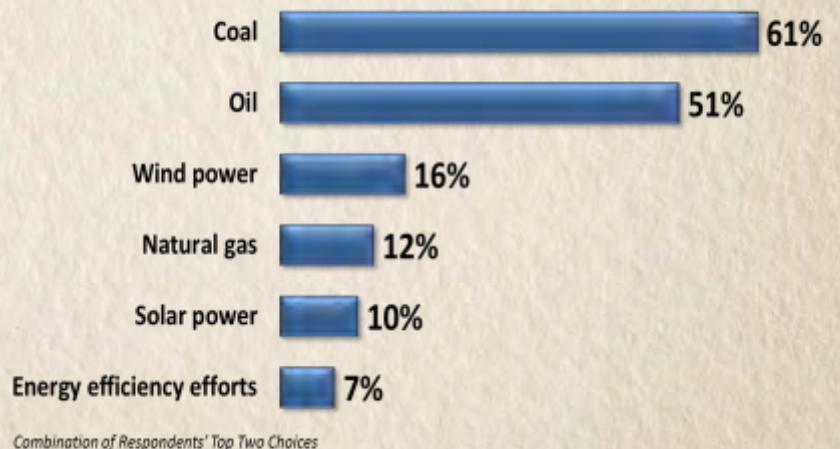
When offered the opportunity to choose the energy mix for their state, Western voters say they would primarily encourage the use wind and solar. Respondents were asked to select among six options for the two types of energy they would encourage in their state. As the graph indicates, voters tend to gravitate toward solar followed by wind and then natural gas:



There are distinctions in these preferences as states in the Southwest are much more likely to cite solar as their first preference. For example, 74% of Arizonans and 66% of New Mexico voters choose solar. Conversely, Montana and Utah residents are more likely to point to wind as the energy source they would encourage (55% each).

Conversely, across the region, voters are more apt to discourage the use of coal and oil:

States in the Southwest are much more likely to cite solar as their first preference



Specific policies to encourage increasing the use of renewable energy are also supported at the state level.

- Three-quarters (75%) of Montana voters support increasing the renewable energy standard in their state. Fewer than one in five opposes increasing the amount of the “electric supply that comes from clean, renewable energy like wind, solar, and geothermal from the already-achieved standard of ten percent to a standard of twenty-five percent by the year 2025.” The increase in the standard is supported by more than seven-in-ten voters in every region of the state and by a majority of Republicans (55%), Independents (78%) and Democrats (93%) in the state.
- New Mexico voters overwhelmingly support continuing the state’s renewable energy standard of 20 percent from renewable sources by the year 2020. Fully 71% of voters indicate they would tell their State Legislator to maintain the current standard knowing it was put in place to help create clean energy jobs, promote energy independence and provide locally created energy, while 24% would opt to reduce the standard in order to help bring down electricity rates.
- Latino voters are especially likely to side with maintaining the current standard (78%). In fact, majorities of nearly all key sub-groups – including Independents (73%), Republicans (54%) and Democrats (83%) would tell their Legislator to keep the standard in place.

Three-quarters  
(75%) of  
Montana  
voters support  
increasing the  
renewable  
energy standard  
in  
their state



- On the energy efficiency front, a solid majority of Utah voters (76%) supports “requiring developers to meet updated standards to reduce energy waste and reduce home owners’ utility bills, even if it increases the price of brand new homes by somewhere between” \$1,000-\$8,000.

Support is broad-based and widespread throughout the state, including among...

- Men (73% support) and women (78%);
- Voters of all age groups including voters under age 35 (80%);
- Republicans (71%), Independents (76%) and Democrats (87%);
- Anglers (77%) and hunters (73%); and
- More than 75% in every major area of the state.

Voters in these six states do not perceive increasing the use of renewable energy as negatively affecting the reliability of their electric system. Respondents were asked “if we reduce the portion of our state's electricity needs which come from coal-burning power plants and use more solar, wind and other renewable sources over the next few years” did they think this would make the electricity system more reliable (31%), less reliable (21%), or not have much impact (42%). Voters in every state are most likely to believe increasing renewable energy use will have almost no impact on electricity reliability.



Voters in these six states do not perceive increasing the use of renewable energy as negatively affecting the reliability of their electric system

# Environmental Regulations

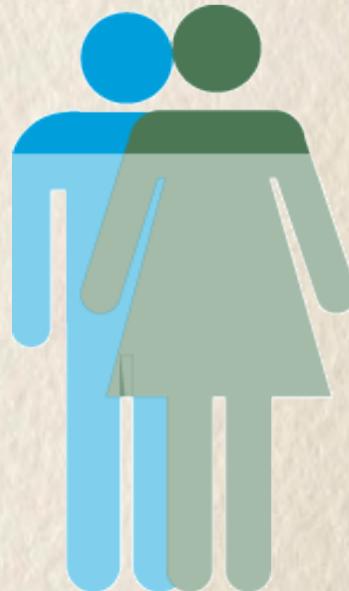
*Western voters are more likely to view environmental laws as important safeguards rather than burdens on business; in many cases they support strengthening laws and reject reducing or suspending them, even when reductions are placed in a pro-jobs context.*

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Western voters are twice as likely to view environmental laws as “important safeguards” than to perceive them as costly and burdensome regulations. Respondents were asked “when you hear about the laws that govern industry’s responsibility for your state’s clean water, clean air, natural areas and wildlife do you think those are more likely to be...”



**63%**  
Important safeguards to protect private property owners, public health and taxpayers from toxic pollution and costly clean-ups



**29%**  
Burdensome regulations that tie up industry in red tape, hurt them too much financially, and cost jobs

Western voters are twice as likely to view environmental laws as “important safeguards”

The responses across the states are remarkably similar:

	<i>Safeguards and Protections</i>	<i>Burdensome Regulations</i>
<b>Arizona</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Colorado</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Montana</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>New Mexico</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Utah</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Wyoming</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>27%</b>



Predictably, there is a partisan distinction in views of regulation on industry. Three-quarters (78%) of Democrats and 64% of Independents view regulations as “important safeguards,” but Republicans are more divided (48% safeguards, 42% burdensome regulations). The division among GOP voters masks an internal schism: the 20% of the electorate in these states who identify as Tea Party Republicans (38% safeguards, 54% burdensome regulations) compared to the 15% of the electorate who are non-Tea Party Republicans (62% important safeguards, 29% burdensome regulations). The latter’s perceptions of environmental laws are far closer to Independent voters.



Voters overwhelmingly believe that regulations will have a positive impact on different features of life in the West -- their quality of life, public health, recreational opportunities -- and even jobs. By 17 point margin, voters are more likely to say that environmental regulations are positive for jobs in their state rather than negative. Respondents were asked whether “regulations on industry a that are designed to protect land, air, water and wildlife” in their state have a positive impact, a negative impact or almost no impact on each of the following:

	Positive	Negative	No Impact	Difference Score
Natural beauty of our state	79%	7%	12%	+72
Public safety	70%	10%	16%	+60
Quality of life	72%	13%	12%	+59
Public health	66%	14%	16%	+52
Outdoor recreation	60%	17%	20%	+43
Hunting and fishing	55%	18%	20%	+37
Jobs	47%	30%	18%	+17

The proportion of voters saying regulations have a positive impact on jobs in their state exceeds the number saying it has a negative impact in every single state, with very few variations.

That surprising response to how voters perceive the impact of regulations on jobs is reinforced in Western voters’ rejection of the idea that cutting regulations is a job creator. Three-in-five voters in the region (60%) disagree that “One of the best ways to create jobs is to cut back environmental regulations that are weighing down your state’s businesses,” while 38% agree. Voters in every state are more likely to reject this idea than agree with it. The exceptions: Tea Party supporters (69% agree) and those who say they get most of their information about politics and current events from Fox News (70%). Majorities of non-Tea Party voters, swing voters, and self-described moderates, as well as all other news, viewers reject this view on job creation.





Even when the suspensions of environmental standards are for a different purpose – reducing illegal immigration – voters still side with maintaining current protections. Respondents were told that *“Some members of Congress have said that, in order to help stop the flow of illegal immigrants into the US, it is necessary to suspend all environmental protections within one hundred miles of the US-Mexico and US-Canadian border, including in National Parks and other protected public lands.”* Only one-in-five voters (21%) across the West indicated that they believe it is necessary to suspend these environmental protections in order to help stop the flow of illegal immigrations into the U.S. Voters in both border and interior states tended to have the same reaction to the proposal:

	Arizona	Colorado	Montana	New Mexico	Utah	Wyoming
Necessary	22%	22%	21%	25%	20%	22%
Unnecessary	73%	68%	66%	65%	72%	69%

The survey also found support for *strengthening* some regulations:

- Seven-in-ten (70%) support “the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency continuing to implement the Clean Air Act by updating the standards for air quality, including for smog, dust, and emissions from power plants, factories and cars, based on the latest science.” More than six-in-ten in every state indicate support, as does a majority of Republicans (51%), Independents (72%) and Democrats (91%).
- A specific proposal to designate some public lands in the Arkansas River Canyon as a National Monument is overwhelmingly supported by Colorado voters (66% support, 22% oppose).
- A solid majority of Utah voters (76%) supports “requiring developers to meet updated standards to reduce energy waste and reduce home owners’ utility bills, even if it increases the price of brand new homes by somewhere between” \$1,000-\$8,000.

Utah voters (76%) supports “requiring developers to meet updated standards to reduce energy waste and reduce home owners’ utility bills





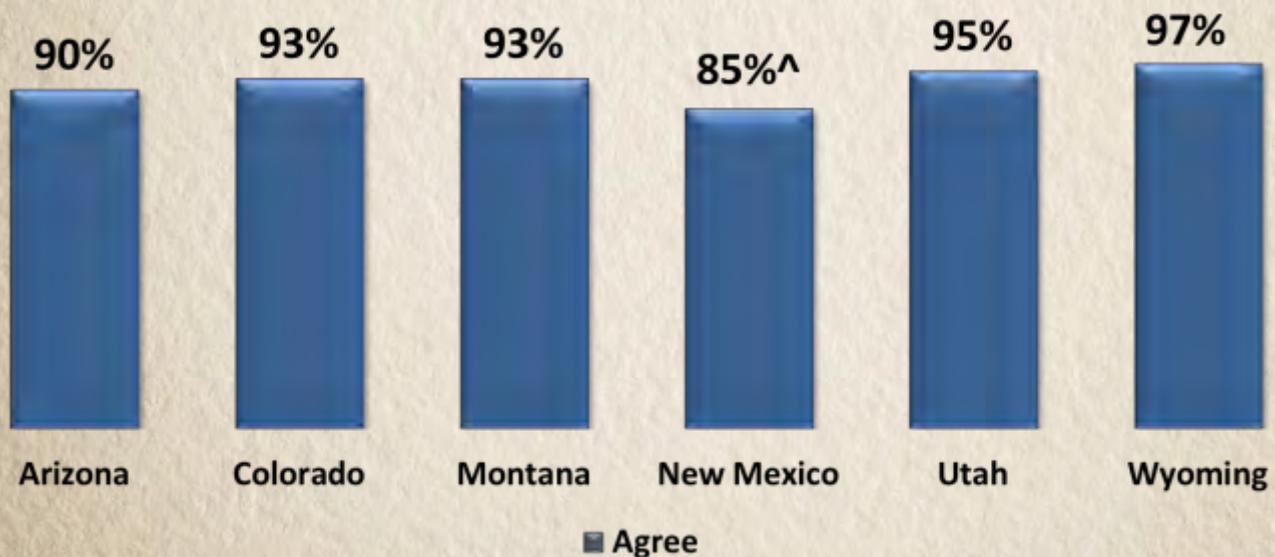
In fact, when asked whether environmental regulations have a positive or negative impact on jobs in their state, voters are more likely to say they have a positive impact (47%) rather than a negative impact (30%). Another 18% believe they have no impact on jobs. This dynamic is evident in every single state.



Voters also view the presence of public lands in their state as a job creator. There is nearly unanimous agreement that “national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas are an essential part” of their state’s economy. More than 85% of voters in every state agree with the importance of public lands to their economy.

Voters also view the presence of public lands in their state as a job creator

Agreement that Public Lands Essential to their State’s Economy



This agreement with the importance of public lands to their state’s economy is shared across virtually every sub-group examined in the survey. That includes such diverse groups as:

SUB-GROUP	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL AGREE
Latino	65%	91%
White/Anglo	68%	92%
City	65%	88%
Rural	66%	93%
Tea Party Supporter	60%	89%
Occupy Wall St.	80%	92%

Voters clearly do not like the idea of commercial activities on public lands affecting their access to or experience on public lands. Fully 69% agree that “We should not allow private companies to develop our public lands when their doing so would limit the public's enjoyment of - or access to - these lands” (44% strongly agree). More than three-in-five in every state agree with this statement.

That said, when commercial activities are defined as accessing natural resources, voters are conflicted. Less than half (47%) agree that “we need to allow companies greater access to our natural resources, by ensuring them the ability to extract resources from our public lands,” while a nearly equal number (50%) disagree.

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69% agree that “We should not allow private companies to develop our public lands when their doing so would limit the public's enjoyment of - or access to - these lands”

# Latino Voters

*Latino voters consistently register stronger pro-conservation views than voters overall in six key Western states.*

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Across these states, the 14% of the electorate which identifies their ethnic background as Hispanic or Latino express support for an array of conservation policies related to energy, regulation, and public lands.

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- 62% describe themselves as a conservationist
- 39% consider themselves to be a hunter or an angler
- Latino voters tend to be far younger than voters overall in the West and are more urban. More Latino voters reside in New Mexico than in any of the other states.

Across these states, the 14% of the electorate which identifies their ethnic background as Hispanic or Latino express support for an array of conservation policies

## On Jobs:

- 87% say that we can protect land and water and have a strong economy at the same time, compared to 78% of voters overall across the region.
- 94% agree that “Our national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas are an essential part of their state’s economy.”
- When asked whether environmental regulations have a positive or negative impact on jobs in their state, Latinos are nearly three times more likely to say they have a positive impact (60%) rather than a negative impact (22%).

## On Energy:

- 78% say increasing the use of renewable energy will create jobs in their state – ten points higher than among voters overall in the region.
- 80% say the higher priority for meeting America’s energy needs is to reduce our need for more coal, oil and gas by expanding our use of clean, renewable energy that can be generated in the U.S. – 15 points higher than Western voters overall
- Latino voters say they would encourage the use of solar power (72%) and wind power (56%) than other sources of energy (responses are top two mentions combined). Conversely, 64% would discourage the use of coal and 56% the use of coal in their state (top two mentions combined).
- 60% say air pollution and smog is an extremely or very serious problem affecting their state.



## On Regulation:

- 66% of Latino voters say they view environmental laws more as “important safeguards to protect private property owners, public health and taxpayers from toxic pollution and costly clean-ups” than to view them as “burdensome regulations that tie up industry in red tape, hurt them too much financially, and cost jobs” (25%).
- 76% say that their state should maintain protections for land, air and water in the state rather than reduce them in an effort to create jobs as quickly as possible.
- Fewer than one-in-four Latino voters (23%) agree that “One of the best ways to create jobs is to cut back environmental regulations that are weighing down their state’s businesses.”
- Majorities of Latino voters ascribe positive benefits to environmental regulations for public safety (84% positive impact), the natural beauty of their state (82% positive impact), their quality of life (79% positive impact), public health (62% positive impact) and opportunities to engage in outdoor recreation (57% positive impact).
- 81% support the EPA “continuing to implement the Clean Air Act by updating the standards for air quality, including for smog, dust, and emissions from power plants, factories and cars,” with over two-thirds (69%) strongly in support. This compares to 70% of all voters in the region who support EPA air quality updates.
- Views of the necessity of suspending environmental protections along the border in order to help stop the flow of illegal immigration are within margin of error of the broader electorate. Only 20% think suspension is necessary, while 74% of Latino voters do not.

## On Prioritizing Conservation:

- 89% of Latino voters say that “even with state budget problems, we should still find money to protect and maintain” their state’s “land, water and wildlife;” 86% say the same about state parks.
- 88% similarly consider cuts to funding for state parks, protection of natural areas and water quality as a serious problem.

# Sportsmen & Conservation

*Sportsmen in six Western states register strong support for continued funding of conservation; view regulations as positive for outdoor recreation and their sport.*

Across these states, two-in-five (39%) voters identify themselves as a hunter or angler. One-in-five say they are both a hunter and an angler (21%), while the rest are one of the two (hunter only 5%; angler only 13%). These voters are significant proportions of the electorate in virtually every one of these Western states (percentages are total identification and therefore can exceed 100%):

	Total Hunter	Total Angler
Arizona	22%	30%
Colorado	25%	33%
Montana	49%	53%
New Mexico	33%	35%
Utah	25%	35%
Wyoming	47%	54%



- 69% of anglers and 66% of hunters describe themselves as a conservationist – one of the highest proportions of any sub-group analyzed in the survey.
- 51% of sportsmen consider themselves to be conservative politically; 38% identify as supporters of the Tea Party movement. They are twice as likely to be Republicans (45%) as Democrats (21%), with the remainder Independents (32%).
- Sportsmen are twice as likely to be male than female (52% of men and 27% of women identify as a hunter or angler).

### On Prioritizing Conservation:

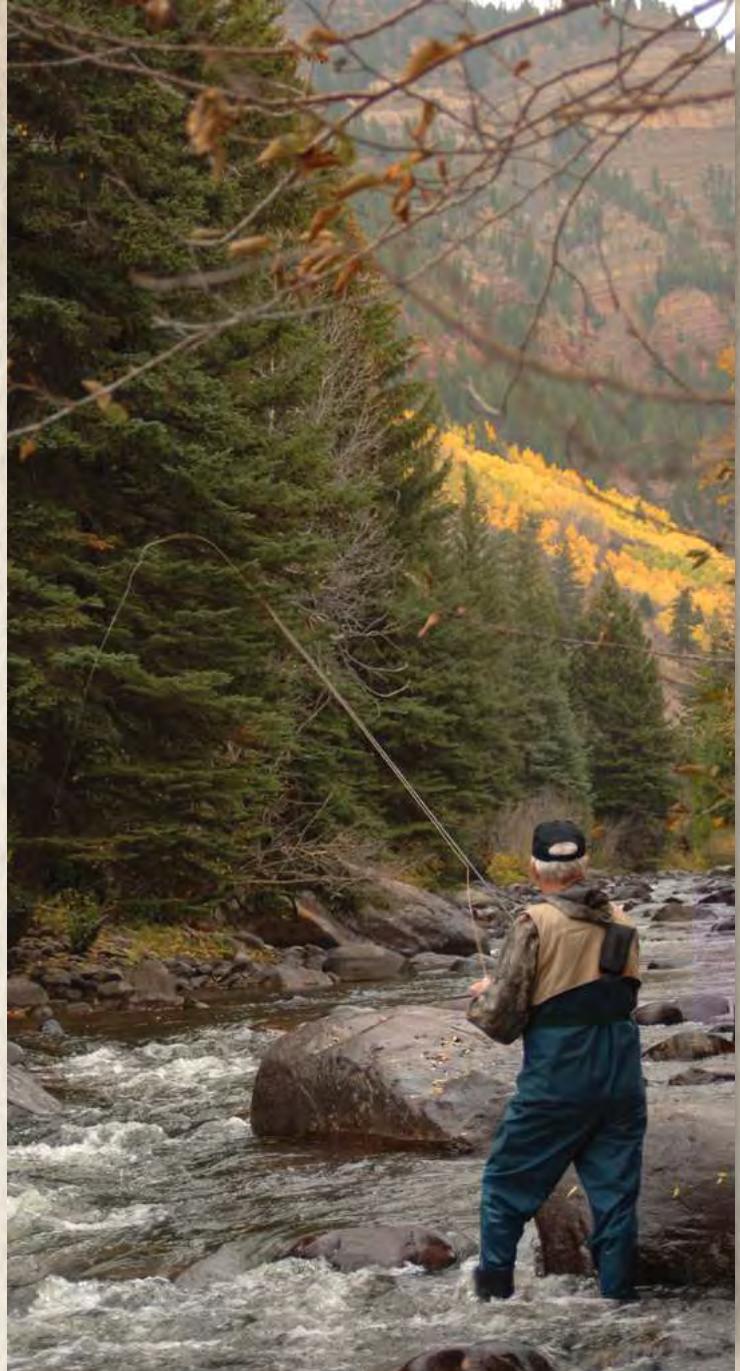
- 85% of sportsmen in the West say that “even with state budget problems, we should still find money to protect and maintain” their state’s “land, water and wildlife;” 81% say the same about state parks.
- 75% consider cuts to funding for state parks, protection of natural areas and water quality as a serious problem.

### On Jobs:

- 75% say that we can protect land and water and have a strong economy at the same time.
- 92% agree that “Our national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas are an essential part of their state’s economy.”

### On Regulation:

- By a 20 point margin, sportsmen are more likely to view environmental laws more as “important safeguards to protect private property owners, public health and taxpayers from toxic pollution and costly clean-ups” (56%) than to view them as “burdensome regulations that tie up industry in red tape, hurt them too much financially, and cost jobs” (36%).



75% consider cuts to funding for state parks, protection of natural areas and water quality as a serious problem

- 68% say that their state should maintain protections for land, air and water in the state rather than reduce them in an effort to create jobs as quickly as possible.
- 62% say that environmental regulations have a positive impact on opportunities to hunt and fish in their state; a solid majority says the same about opportunities for outdoor recreation (56%). Majorities of sportsmen also ascribe positive benefits to environmental regulations for the natural beauty of their state (78% positive impact), public safety (70% positive impact), their quality of life (69% positive impact), and public health (60% positive impact).
- 65% agree that “We should NOT allow private companies to develop our public lands when their doing so would limit the public's enjoyment of - or access to - these lands.”
- 62% support the EPA “continuing to implement the Clean Air Act by updating the standards for air quality, including for smog, dust, and emissions from power plants, factories and cars,” with 43% strongly in support. Just over one-third (36%) oppose this.
- Views of the necessity of suspending environmental protections along the border in order to help stop the flow of illegal immigration are similar to voters overall in these states. One-in-four (25%) think suspension is necessary, while two-thirds (66%) of sportsmen do not.



62% say that environmental regulations have a positive impact on opportunities to hunt and fish in their state

# State Funding for Conservation

Western voters say even with tight state budgets, we should find a way to maintain investments in land, parks, water, and wildlife protection.

Voters in six Western states overwhelmingly agree that “even with state budget problems, we should still find money” to protect their state’s land, water and wildlife. Fully 86% agree with this view, with a majority (53%) strongly agreeing. This view is on par with how voters responded last year when 84% of the electorate called on their state to continue making investments in conservation.

Notably, when asked the same statement about state parks, voters responded in nearly identical proportions as 85% agree their state should find the funds to protect and maintain state parks (51% strongly agree). Support for maintaining funding for conservation more broadly, and for state parks specifically, is strong in every state.

State	Find funds for land, water & wildlife	Find funds for state parks
Arizona	89%	87%
Colorado	86%	82%
Montana	86%	85%
New Mexico	84%	87%
Utah	84%	90%
Wyoming	87%	88%

“Even with state budget problems, we should still find money” to protect their state’s land, water and wildlife

When asked in a different manner, similarly strong proportions of voters in these states say that cuts in funding to these areas in their state are at least somewhat of a problem:



77%

Cuts to funding for state parks, protection of our natural areas and water quality



72%

Cuts to funding for state parks



There is also evidence of support for maintaining or even increasing state funding for conservation in two of these Western states.

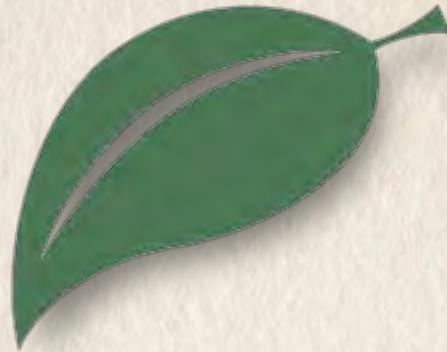
- Wyoming voters were provided with an explanation of the Wildlife and Natural Resources Trust and then asked about their support for full funding of the Trust: “Here in Wyoming, the State Legislature created the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resources Trust in 2005. To date, the Legislature has set aside 95 million dollars in the Trust, so that the interest can be used for protecting fish and wildlife, ranchlands, natural areas and water. But, the Legislature could set aside up to 200 million dollars under current law, without increasing taxes.”

75% support and 22% oppose the State Legislature fully funding the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resources Trust to preserve fish and wildlife, ranchlands, natural areas and water in the state.

Support is broad-based and widespread throughout the state, including among...

- Men (77% support) and women (73%);
- Voters of all age groups including seniors (69%);
- Republicans (69%), Independents (87%) and Democrats (82%);
- Anglers (78%) and hunters (77%); and
- More than 69% in every major area of the state.

- Colorado voters would opt to keep Lottery funds for conservation, rather than re-dedicating Lottery funds to education. Centennial state voters were provided with some background on how Lottery funding is handled now and asked about how this should be dedicated in the future: *“Today, state lottery funds are distributed around Colorado for natural areas, wildlife habitat, land along rivers and streams, state and local parks, trails, and nature education. If Lottery funds exceed a certain amount in any given year, the additional money goes to a kindergarten through twelfth grade school construction fund. Knowing this, would you prefer to...”*



76%

Continue to have Lottery funds distributed to protect natural areas and to school construction



15%

Eliminate this source of funding for land and water conservation and school construction, so that all Lottery funds are redirected to the general state education budget



Voters across the political spectrum and throughout the state indicate they would prefer to keep Lottery funding for its current purposes rather than redirecting it to education. This view is dominant with every sub-group of voters, including:

Conservatives (72% support), moderates (75%), and liberals (81%);  
Anglers (78%) and hunters (79%);  
Whites (76%) and Latinos (80%);  
Men (82%) and women (70%);  
Tea Party Supporters (73%);  
Republicans (74%), Independents (74%) and Democrats (78%); and  
Voters in the Denver metro area (75%), Colorado Springs area (65%),  
Eastern Plains (76%), and Western Slope (82%).



Voters across the political spectrum and throughout the state indicate they would prefer to keep Lottery funding for its current purposes rather than redirecting it to education

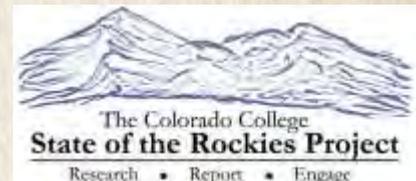
2011-12 State of the Rockies Project Focus

# The Colorado River Basin: Agenda for Use, Restoration, and Sustainability for the Next Generation

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During our ninth year, the State of the Rockies Project efforts are all focused on a single regional challenge: proper management of the Colorado River Basin, including our tradition of student-faculty collaborative research, a monthly Speakers Series, and a Source to Sea Journey by two Rockies Project Field Researchers. We will culminate our efforts by unveiling the 2012 State of the Rockies Report Card at our Annual Conference April 9-10, 2012, which will include a lineup of officials speaking on the future management of the Colorado River Basin.

Find out more at: [www.stateoftherockies.com](http://www.stateoftherockies.com)





THE COLORADO COLLEGE  
STATE OF THE ROCKIES PROJECT

## STUDENTS RESEARCHING, REPORTING, AND ENGAGING:

THE COLORADO COLLEGE STATE OF THE ROCKIES REPORT CARD, PUBLISHED ANNUALLY SINCE 2004, IS THE CULMINATION OF RESEARCH AND WRITING BY A TEAM OF COLORADO COLLEGE STUDENT RESEARCHERS. EACH YEAR A NEW TEAM OF STUDENTS STUDIES CRITICAL ISSUES AFFECTING THE ROCKIES REGION OF ARIZONA, COLORADO, IDAHO, MONTANA, NEVADA, NEW MEXICO, UTAH, AND WYOMING.



**Colorado College**, a liberal arts college of national distinction, is indelibly linked to the Rockies. Through its Block Plan, students take one course at a time, and explore the Rockies and Southwest as classes embark in extended field study. Their sense of "place" runs deep, as they ford streams and explore acequias to study the cultural, environmental, and economic issues of water; as they camp in the Rocky Mountains to understand its geology; as they visit the West's oil fields to learn about energy concerns and hike through forests to experience the biology of pest-ridden trees and changing owl populations. CC encourages a spirit of intellectual adventure, critical thinking, and hands-on learning, where education and life intertwine.

The Colorado College State of the Rockies Project dovetails perfectly with that philosophy, providing research opportunities for CC students and a means for the college to "give back" to the region in a meaningful way. The Report Card fosters a sense of citizenship for Colorado College graduates and the broader regional community.

**RESEARCH** During summer field work, the student researchers pack into a van and cover thousands of miles of the Rocky Mountain West as they study the landscape, interview stakeholders, and challenge assumptions. Back on campus, they mine data, crunch numbers, and analyze information.

**REPORT** Working collaboratively with faculty, the student researchers write their reports, create charts and graphics, and work with editors to fine-tune each Report Card section. Their reports are subjected to external review before final publication.

**ENGAGE** Through a companion lecture series on campus, the naming of a Champion of the Rockies, and the annual State of the Rockies Conference, citizens and experts meet to discuss the future of our region. Each Report Card has great impact: Media coverage of Report Cards has reached millions of readers, and the 2006 report section on climate change was included in a brief presented to the U.S. Supreme Court. Government leaders, scientists, ranchers, environmentalists, sociologists, journalists, and concerned citizens refer to the Colorado College State of the Rockies Report Card to understand the most pressing issues affecting the growing Rockies region.