

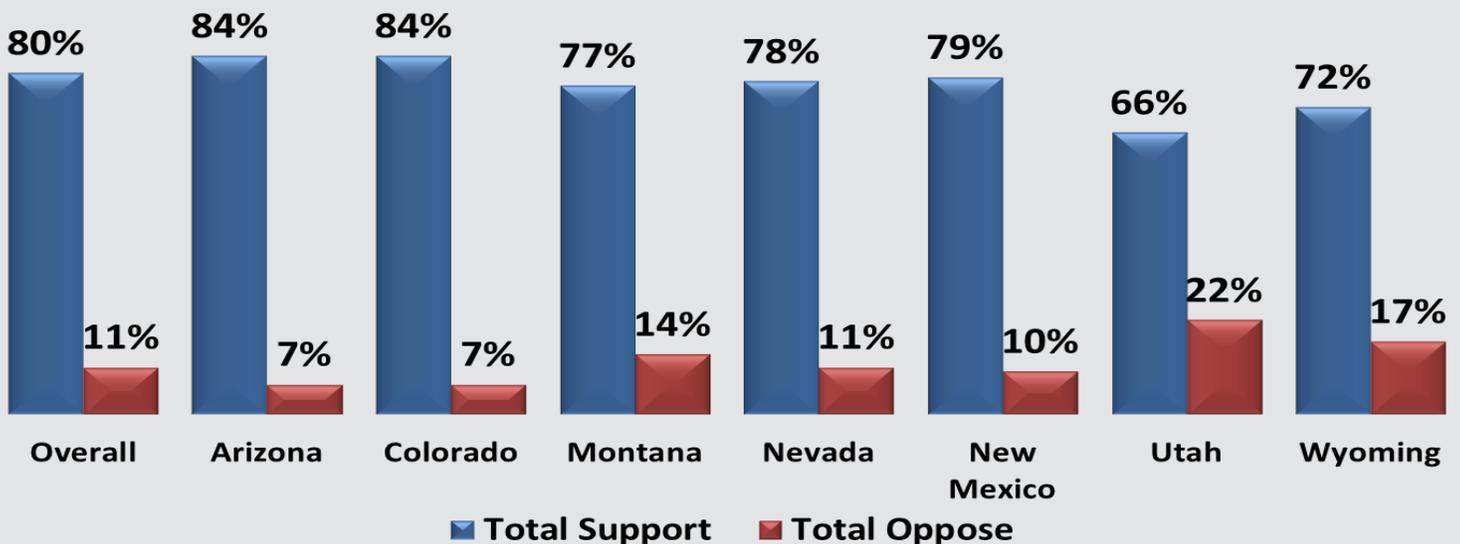
Public Lands

Voters express strong support for continued conservation and increasing protection of national public lands – both in the abstract and in specific efforts in some states. They reject efforts to dispose of these lands, instead saying they are economically beneficial for their states.

Four-in-Five Westerners Support Continued Presidential Authority to Designate National Monuments.

Fully 80% of Western voters indicate support for “future presidents continuing to protect existing public lands as national monuments,” with two-thirds or more in every state surveyed indicating support. That support extends across the partisan spectrum, as 72% of GOP voters, 80% of independents and 89% of Democrats support Presidents continuing to use this authority.

Future Presidents Continuing To Protect Existing Public Lands As National Monuments



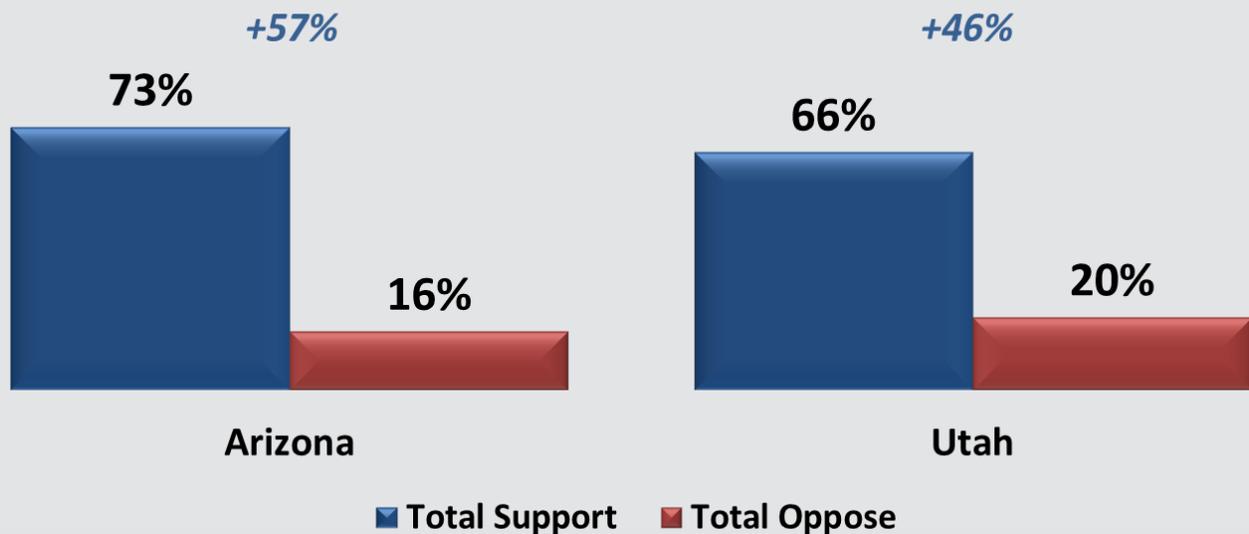
That support is likely grounded in views the “State of the Rockies” surveys have documented over time. Just last year, when we asked how important certain priorities for national public lands are to voters, protecting and conserving natural areas for future generations and protecting and conserving wildlife habitat topped the list. In fact, two-thirds of Western voters in this year’s survey (67%) say that “loss of habitat for fish and wildlife” is a serious problem in their state.

New National Monument Supported by Vast Majority of Voters in those States.

For the second year in a row, Arizonans offer overwhelming support for designating a national monument on lands surrounding the Grand Canyon even when voters are specifically told that this would “make permanent the current ban on uranium and other mining in these lands.” Nearly three-quarters – and a majority of voters across party lines – support establishing this new National Monument.

There is similar support for a new National Monument among Utah voters. Two-thirds (66%) register support for protecting “nearly two million acres of existing public lands surrounding the Bears Ears Buttes south of Canyonlands National Parks as a National Monument, in large part to protect cliff dwellings and sacred American Indian sites.” Even with the admonition that this would be in lieu of “development, mining and other kinds of resource extraction,” Utah voters are three times as likely to support as oppose this measure. In fact, nearly two-in-five (39%) strongly support the proposal.

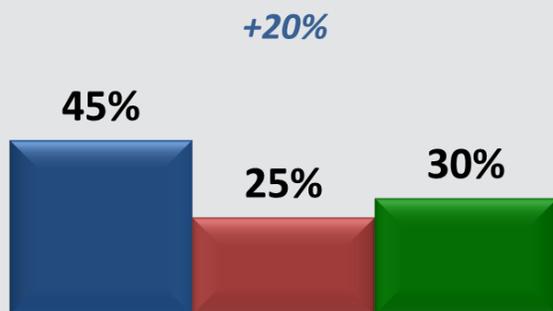
Support For New National Monument Designations



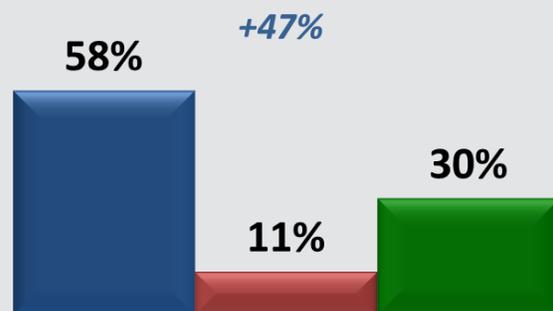
Once Controversial National Monument Designations Now Viewed as Positives for their State.

We also asked voters in two states, which over a decade ago had National Monuments designated within their borders, to consider the impact those designations had on their state. Utah voters were asked to consider the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument while Montana voters did the same for the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. In both cases, voters are far more likely to view those designations as having been more of a good thing, rather than more of a bad thing.

Utah – Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument



Montana – Missouri River Breaks National Monument



■ Total Good Thing ■ Total Bad Thing ■ Don't Know

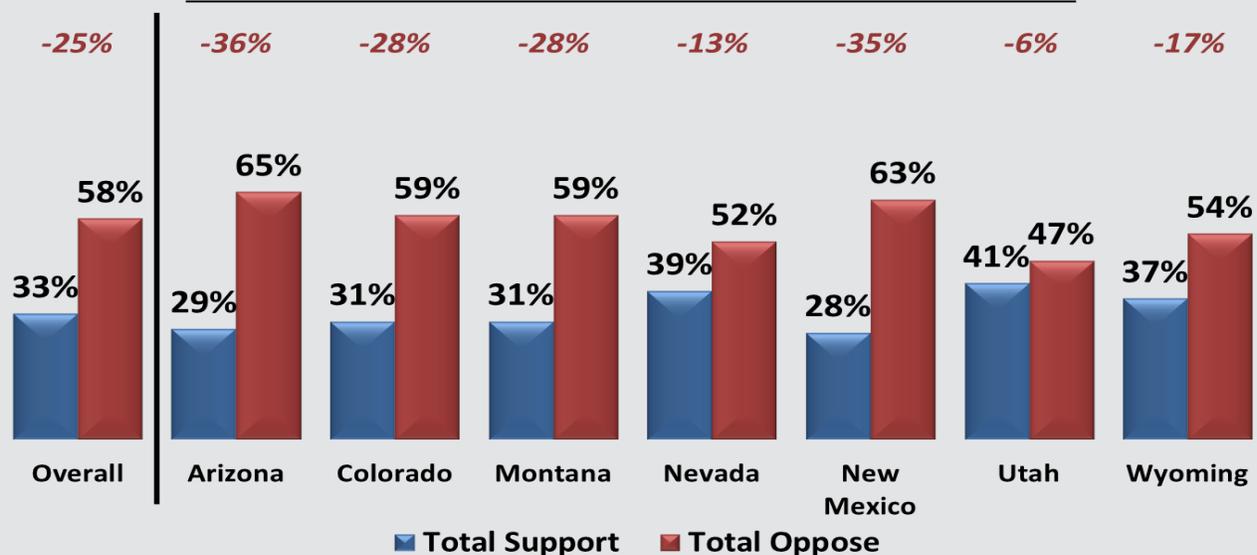


Western Voters Oppose States Taking Control of National Public Lands; Support Continued Investments in Conservation.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate whether they support, oppose, or feel neutral about a number of potential actions that Congress could take that impact national public lands. The findings indicate that the majority of voters living in states where most of these lands are concentrated tend to support continued U.S. oversight of these lands, and in fact, would invest more through programs like LWCF to increase public lands nationally. For example:

- Three-in-five voters in the West reject the sale of “significant holdings of public lands” (60% oppose). Just one-in-four (26%) would support this even though it was framed as having the goal to “reduce the budget deficit.” This is the second year in a row that voters have rejected this idea. There is no subgroup of voters among which a plurality supports this proposal.
- A solid majority of voters oppose giving state government “control over national public lands” to allow the state “to decide the future management of the lands” if state taxpayers have to “pay all the costs, including the cost of maintenance and preventing and fighting wildfires.” (58% oppose). Even in Utah where this idea originated, voters are more likely to reject than embrace this proposal.

State Government Control Over National Public Lands



- Western voters overwhelmingly support (80%) allowing the U.S. Forest Service to “treat the largest and most expensive wildfires as natural disasters in order to have access to emergency disaster funding, like the government handles other natural disasters such as hurricanes and tornadoes.” Support for this policy is particularly strong in Colorado (83%) and Arizona (82%), but exceeds 70% in every state.
- Three-quarters (75%) call on Congress to “renew the Land and Water Conservation Fund which uses some of the money from fees charged to oil and gas companies that drill offshore to protect natural areas, clean water, parks and access to outdoor recreation across the country” (the survey was conducted prior to the budget deal, which included a temporary continuation of LWCF for three years). Fully 70% of GOP voters, 75% of independents and 81% of Democrats support this continued investment in LWCF.

National Public Lands Viewed as Economic Boon for the West.

Some of the support for national public lands in the West is likely due in part to voters' strong sense that these lands not only benefit the quality of life in their state, but also the economy. By a twelve-to-one margin, voters in the West are more likely to say that national public lands, such as national forests, national monuments or wildlife refuges helps the economy (72%), rather than hurts it (6%). Just 19% think these lands have little impact on the state economy.

When you think about the presence of national public lands, such as national forests, national monuments, or wildlife refuges in your state -do you think that having such lands...

Helps our economy

72%

**Has little impact
on our economy**

19%

Hurts our economy

6%

Some of this perception is likely drawn from personal experience. Last year, a stunning 95% of the Western voters surveyed in the State of the Rockies survey told us that they had visited national "public lands managed by U.S. government agencies, such as national parks and national forests in the last year." In fact, a majority (58%) of voters said they had visited public lands six or more times per year, with 42% visiting more than 10 times per year.

