



MONTANA

Avid outdoors enthusiasts, Montanans espouse strong pro-conservation views; perceive public lands as boon for economy.

On the Politics of Conservation:

- When it comes to the position their Member of Congress has taken on protecting land, air, and water, a plurality (45%) of Montana voters say they are not sure what position their Representative has taken.
- Both Democrats and Republicans would be seen more favorably by half (50%) of Montana voters if they spoke out in support of public lands.
- For Republican elected officials, speaking out in support of public lands would be especially helpful with Independent voters, as 57% of Independents would view them more favorably.

Montanans' Connection to Conservation

- An overwhelming majority (73%) of voters in Montana say they are conservationists.
- Montanans love being outdoors. Sixty percent (60%) are regular campers and 57% say they hike regularly. Bird watching or viewing other wildlife and boating are also popular activities in the state, with more than one-third of voters regularly participating in them.
- Younger voters in the state are especially active outdoors, with 77% of 18-34 year-olds saying they camp regularly and 68% saying they are regular hikers.
- Given their high level of outdoor activity, it is not surprising that 71% of Montana voters plan to visit a national park sometime in 2013.
- Montanans' clear affinity for the outdoors means that they want children in the state to spend time outside and worry they are not --77% of voters in the state say that children not spending enough time outdoors is a serious problem.

On Public Lands:

- Voters in Montana overwhelmingly support public lands, with 91% of voters saying they are an essential part of the state's economy.
- Support for public lands in Montana is driven by the 72% of voters who believe public lands in the state support the economy, provide recreation opportunities, and enhance quality of life, rather than being a fiscal burden and preventing creation of jobs in traditional industries.
- Montana voters also see public lands as a job creator. Fully 70% of voters agree that national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas help attract high quality employers and good jobs to Montana.
- Voters are strongly opposed to selling off public lands as a way to reduce the deficit, with just 27% supporting selling off the land, compared to 66% who oppose it. Intensity is especially strong, as more than half (52%) of Montana voters are strongly opposed to selling off public land.



On Energy Development:

- Montana voters are strong advocates of wind power, with 53% of voters listing it as one of the top two sources of energy they would encourage the state to develop – 20 points higher than would choose natural gas (33% of voters) or coal (28%).
- Montanans overwhelmingly believe that oil and gas drilling is “booming” in their state (67%).
- Montana voters are unsure on whether oil and gas drilling is taking place in the state's national parks or national forests. Less than a third (27%) say that this is probably true, while 44% say they don't know or have not heard enough.
- A strong majority of voters in Montana (57%) say environmentally sensitive places should be permanently protected from oil and gas drilling.