

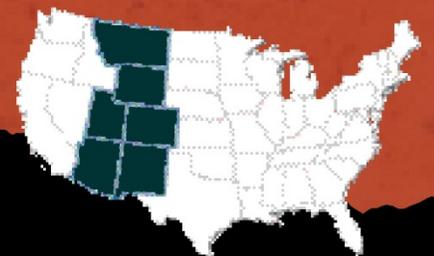


THE COLORADO COLLEGE
STATE OF THE ROCKIES PROJECT

Conservation in the West Poll

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE 2014 SURVEY OF THE ATTITUDES OF VOTERS IN SIX WESTERN STATES



JANUARY, 2014

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

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For complete 2014 Conservation in the West Poll findings, and additional information, visit: www.stateoftherockies.com

To contact the Survey Firms:

Lori Weigel / Public Opinion Strategies: lori@pos.org

Dave Metz / Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Assoc.: dave@fm3research.com

For information about The State of the Rockies Project and Colorado College contact:
Rockies@ColoradoCollege.edu

Colorado College State of the Rockies 2014 Conservation in West Survey

February 13, 2014 Press Release

New Survey: Conservation Could Impact 2014's Ballot Box

Candidates' positions on public lands could sway voters this year

COLORADO SPRINGS – Conservation and land use issues could have the power to sway how westerners vote in 2014 elections, according to the new Colorado College State of the Rockies Project *Conservation in the West Poll*.

"The West is a major political battlefield this year, and the poll tells us congressional candidates would be wise to consider their position on conservation and land use issues carefully," said Colorado College economist and State of the Rockies Project faculty director Walt Hecox, PhD. "Westerners want their air, water and land protected, and where a candidate stands on these issues could potentially sway votes."

This year's bipartisan survey of 2,400 registered voters across six states looked at voter attitudes on a list of issues, including land use, water supplies, air quality and public lands' impact on the economy. The results show overwhelming – 85 percent – agreement that the government restricting access to national parks and public lands hurt small businesses and communities' economies in the West. In a follow up message to elected officials and land managers, 83 percent believe funding to national parks, forests and other public lands should not be cut, as it provides a big return on a small investment.

"The Rocky Mountain region is politically diverse, with communities running the spectrum from red (predominantly) to purple to blue," said Colorado College McHugh Professor of Leadership and American Institutions and regular Colorado political commentator Tom Cronin. "These poll results reinforce that a love for protected lands ties western voters together. Westerners across the political spectrum support the work of public land managers and expect conserved public lands to remain that way."

Other public sentiments expressed in the survey include that:

- 72 percent of Westerners are more likely to vote for a candidate who wants to promote more use of renewable energy sources like wind and solar power.
- 69 percent of Westerners are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports enhancing protections for some public lands, like national forests.
- 58 percent of Westerners are more likely to vote for a candidate who votes to increase funding for land-managing agencies like the U.S. Forest Service.

The survey also holds warning signs for candidates, including that:

- 72 percent of Westerners are less likely to vote for a candidate who supports selling public lands like national forests to reduce the budget deficit.
- 67 percent of Westerners are less likely to vote for a candidate who reduces funding for agencies like the U.S. Forest Service.
- 54 percent of westerners are less likely to vote for a candidate who voted to stop taxpayer support for solar and wind energy companies.

“Hispanics view the protection of our public lands as a moral obligation. It’s natural that this community would be drawn to candidates who support conservation,” said Maite Arce, president and CEO of the Hispanic Access Foundation. “With the tremendous growth of the Latino voter bloc, especially in the Western states, we’re going to see engagement in environmental policy and advocacy for our public lands at levels we’ve never seen before.”

The results reflect the strong connection Westerners feel to their public lands, with 95 percent saying they have visited public lands in the last year. More than two-thirds of those surveyed said they would recommend an out-of-state visitor visit the outdoors, like a national park, rather than an attraction in town.

The government shutdown’s effects on Westerners are ongoing. When asked how they felt about the resulting closure of public lands, 89 percent responded with a negative emotion like annoyed, angry, concerned or upset. Potentially as a result of seeing what happens when public lands are no longer available, opposition to the sale of public lands increased from last year’s poll, with 74 percent now rejecting this idea.

The 2014 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 400 registered voters in each of six western states (AZ, CO, NM, UT, WY, MT) for a total 2,400-person sample. The survey was conducted from January 7 through 13, 2014, and yields a margin of error of +/-2.9 percent nationwide and +/-4.9 statewide. The full survey and individual state surveys are available on the Colorado College website

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About Colorado College

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 ten years, the college also has run the State of the Rockies Project, which seeks to increase public understanding of vital issues affecting the Rockies through annual report cards, free events, discussions and other activities.

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, and CNBC rely on Public Opinion Strategies to conduct their polling. The firm conducts opinion research on behalf of hundreds of political campaigns, as well as trade associations, not-for-profit organizations, government entities, and industry coalitions throughout the nation.

ARIZONA



Arizona voters demonstrate that conservation issues have the power to sway their vote – with key sub-groups reacting strongly to potential issue positions; register strong concern regarding water pollution.

Pro-conservation candidates generate enthusiasm among Arizona voters.

- Arizona voters are very enthusiastic toward a candidate who wants to promote greater use of renewable energy, with 72% saying they would be more likely to support such a candidate (48% much more likely). Likewise, they strongly back a candidate who “supports enhancing protections for some public lands like National Forests” (69% more likely and 34% much more likely to vote for that candidate).
- On the other hand, Arizonans react negatively towards a candidate who holds anti-conservation positions. Voters in Arizona are among the most likely to say they would not support a candidate who voted to reduce funding for federal agencies which oversee public lands, as seen in the following graph.

Much Less Likely

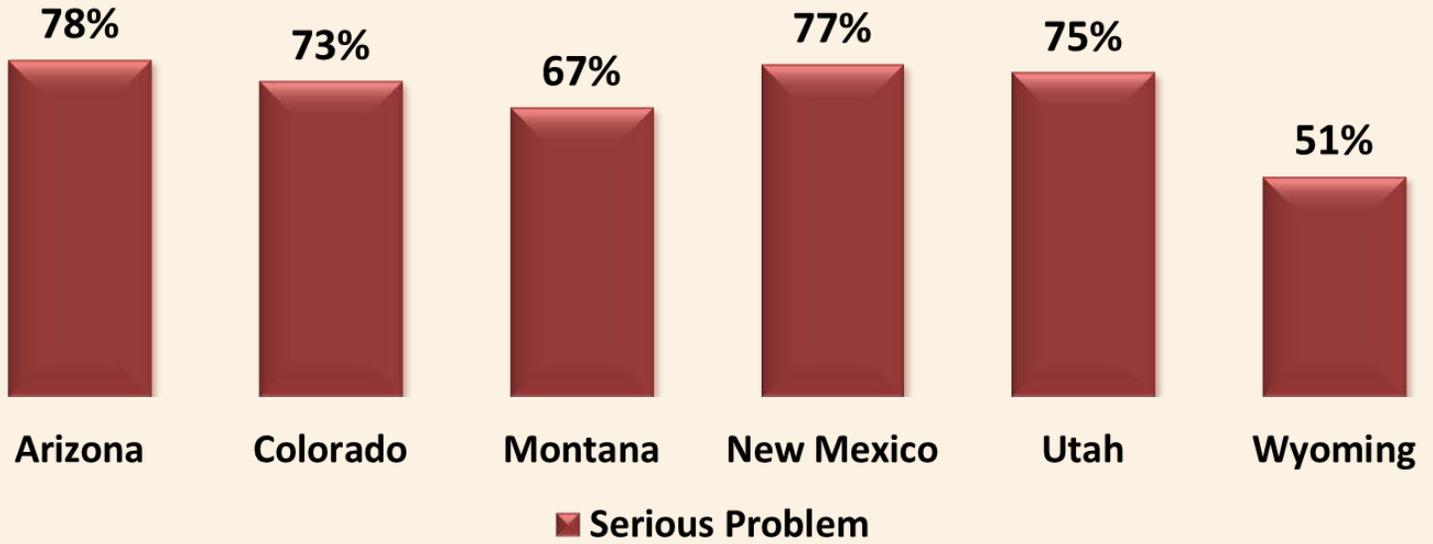
Moderates	46%
Independents	42%
Sportsmen	39%
Small Town/Rural	38%
Seniors	34%
Latinos	26%



Arizona voters are concerned about the pollution of rivers, lakes, and streams.

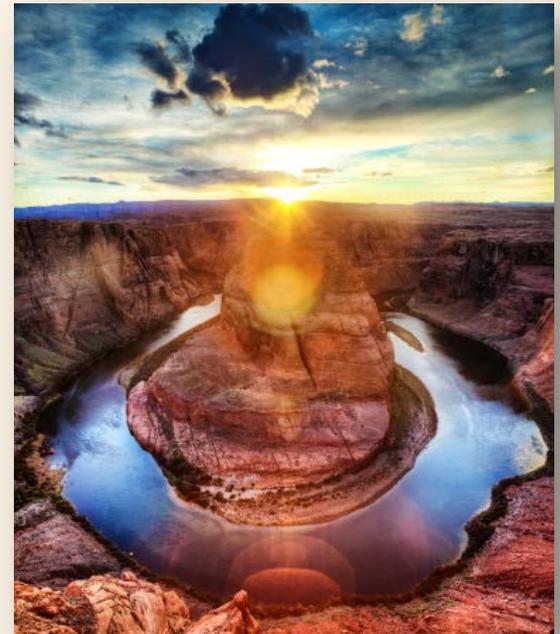
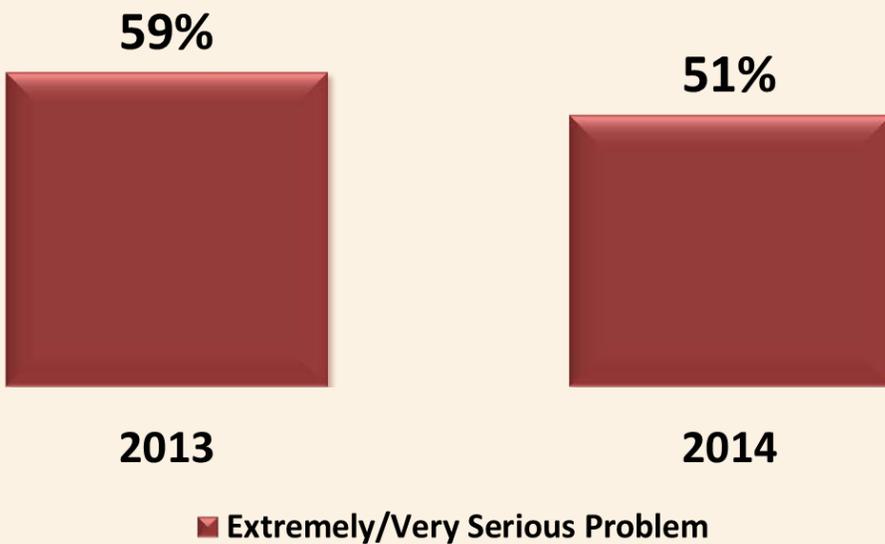
- Compared to the rest of the Western states, Arizonans, along with voters in New Mexico, are the MOST concerned about the pollution of rivers, lakes, and streams, with 78% of voters saying it is a serious problem, and 38% saying it is an extremely or very serious problem.

Pollution of Rivers, Lakes, and Streams By State



- Similarly, water supply continues to be a strong concern here as well, with nearly the same proportion of state voters saying the “low level of water in rivers” is a serious problem as did so last year.

Low Level of Water in Rivers By Year



COLORADO



Centennial state voters are most enthusiastic about a candidate who supports renewable energy or enhancing protections for public lands, while they are well aware but fairly divided over oil and gas development issues.



More Likely

A candidate who wants to promote more use of renewable energy - like wind and solar power	76%
A candidate who supports enhancing protections for some public lands like national forests	72%
A candidate who wants to continue tax incentives for land owners who willingly agree to keep their land as working farms, forests or in a natural state	68%
A candidate who votes to increase funding for agencies like the U.S. Forest Service	57%
A candidate who wants to reduce government red tape so that there can be more oil and gas development in your state	47%

- The positive response to a candidate perceived as bolstering public lands may be connected to the closure of these areas during the government shutdown. Fully 87% say that the closure hurt Colorado small businesses and the economy of nearby communities.

Pro-conservation candidates generate enthusiasm among Colorado voters.

- Coloradans stand out for being the most enthusiastic toward a candidate who wants to promote greater use of renewable energy, or who “supports enhancing protections for some public lands like National Forests,” as evidenced in the accompanying graph.
- Conversely, Coloradans will hold anti-conservation positions against a candidate. They are the most likely to say they will not support a candidate who voted to reduce funding for federal agencies which oversee public lands (74% less likely to vote for that candidate).
- Colorado voters are more likely to be divided over a candidate who wants “to reduce government red tape so that there can be more oil and gas development” in the state (47% more likely, 41% less likely).

Hydraulic fracturing is clearly on the radar for most Coloradans.

- Colorado voters are on par with Wyoming residents in their reported awareness of hydraulic fracturing. Fully 84% of Coloradans and 85% of Wyoming voters say they have heard a lot or something about the practice. That contrasts with only 59% in Arizona and Utah. A majority of Colorado voters who are aware of the practice say that there either needs to be tougher laws (28%) or enforce existing laws better (29%) in respect to this practice.

- With a potential ballot measure facing voters in Colorado, we asked voters there to tell us their inclinations on the dynamics of that issue. Fully one-in-five in the Centennial State are not even willing to provide an opinion on this issue yet, but of the remainder, twice as many opt for local control over statewide regulations.

Allow local communities to regulate the location and extent of fracking, so that they can decide what happens in their community

55%

Have the state regulate the location and extent of fracking, so that there are consistent standards

22%

Do not have an opinion at this time

20%

Coloradans reject diversions of river water to more populated areas, instead preferring to focus on conservation and recycling of water.

Using our current water supply more wisely, by encouraging more water conservation, reducing use, and increasing recycling of water

<u>Colorado</u>	<u>Utah</u>	<u>Wyoming</u>
78%	76%	75%

Diverting more water from rivers in less populated areas of the state to communities where more people live

14%	12%	13%
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- Fully 82% of Coloradans view the low level of water in rivers as a problem, rivalling the economy. But, more than three-quarters, say the way to address water shortages is to invest time and resources in finding ways to use the current water supply more wisely, rather than diverting more water from rivers in less populated areas of the state.

MONTANA



There are more hunters and anglers in Montana than in any of the other Western states. Thus, it is no surprise that Montana voters are also some of the most frequent visitors to public lands among the states in the West. Big Sky Country voters are also the most opposed to selling off public lands as a way to reduce the budget deficit.

Montanans are among the most frequent visitors to public lands.

- Two-thirds (66%) of Montana voters visit public lands six or more times per year, with 38% visiting more than TWENTY times per year. The number of Montanans in that frequent visitor category is nearly double that of any other Western state, with the exception of Wyoming.
- With so many in the state frequently visiting public lands, the closing of public lands during the federal government shutdown left Montanans angry (29%) and annoyed (27%).



More than three-in-five Montana voters consider themselves a hunter or angler.

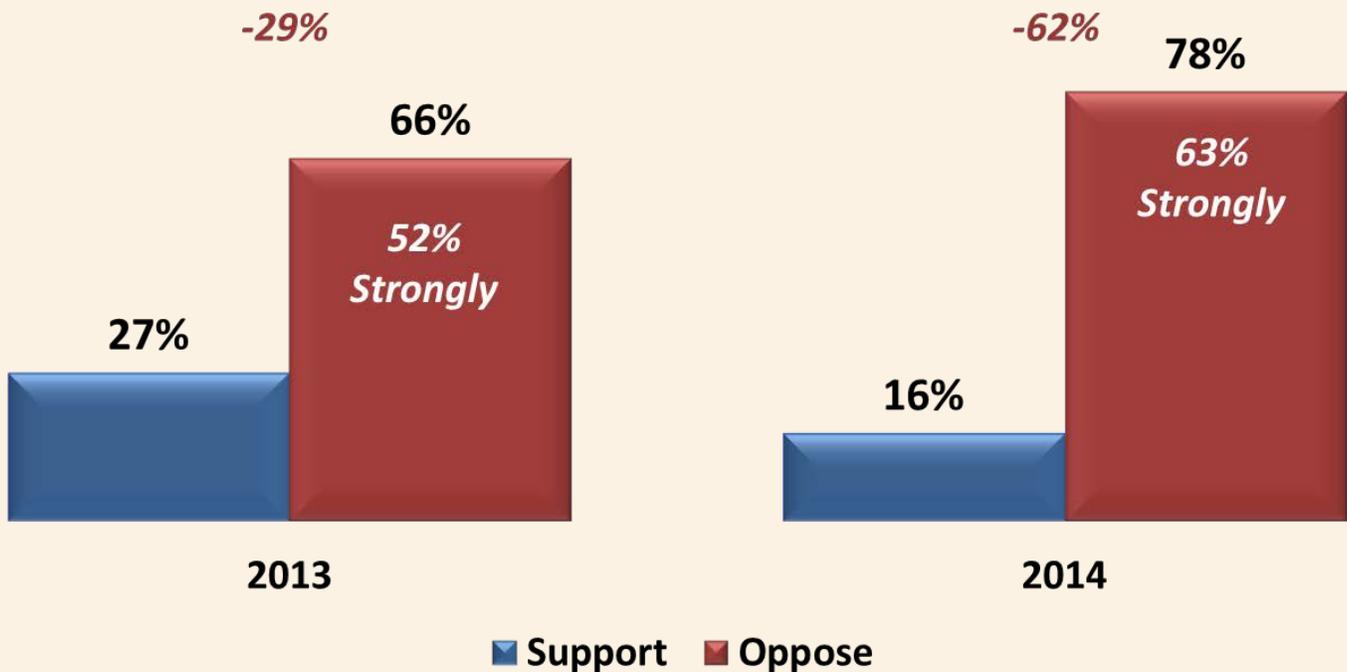
- Sixty-three percent (63%) of Montanans are sportsmen, with close to half (47%) saying they are both a hunter and an angler.
- Montana and Wyoming are the only two states in the West where more than half of the population considers themselves to be a hunter or angler.

	Hunter	Angler
Arizona	24%	33%
Colorado	25%	34%
Montana	53%	57%
New Mexico	27%	33%
Utah	26%	34%
Wyoming	54%	59%

Montana voters are strongly opposed to selling off public lands as a way to help reduce the budget deficit.

- Seventy-eight percent (78%) of Montana voters are opposed to selling public lands in order to reduce the budget deficit, with a significant majority (63%) saying they are strongly opposed to it.
- Opposition to this proposal has increased by a net twenty-three points in Montana since 2013, the second largest increase across the six states.

Selling Public Lands to Reduce Deficit



Montanans seek to protect sensitive areas of public lands permanently as energy production proceeds.

- The majority say that “some public lands should be drilled, while environmentally sensitive places should be permanently protected.” Another 27% would strictly limit drilling, while 20% would allow public lands to be generally open to drilling.
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) express support for Master Leasing Plans being used as a tool by the Bureau of Land Management.
- 78% of the state’s electorate say they have heard a lot or some about hydraulic fracturing and more of those voters would make the laws tougher (22%) or enforce existing laws better (31%) as the state moves forward. (Another 20% say both laws and enforcement are at right levels and 18% believe they are too tough).

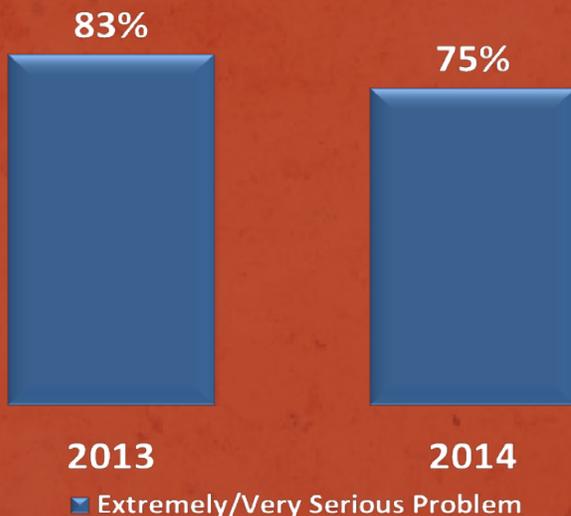
NEW MEXICO



The Land of Enchantment, with its significant Latino voting bloc, indicates that conservation has the power to sway voters there positively, as they continue to be concerned about water and express a strong affinity to public lands.

- New Mexico voters continue to be the most concerned about water and rivers after a prolonged drought in the state. Three-quarters (75%) of state residents regard “the low level of water in rivers” as an extremely or very serious problem, eclipsing the level of concern in every other state (region-wide, 50% regard this as an extremely or very serious problem). This concern is down only slightly from 2013, when 83% rated the low level of water in rivers in the same manner.

Low Levels of Water in Rivers



New Mexico voters underscore that public lands are important to them ...

- They are the most likely to reject the sale of public lands as a means to reducing the federal budget deficit (78% oppose).
- 94% of voters report having visited public lands in the last year.
- Over two-thirds (68%) say they are more likely to vote for a Congressional candidate who supports protection of public lands.
- One-in-four (26%) say the closures of public lands left them “annoyed” and an equal number (25%) were “angry.”
- Fully 82% say that funding for public lands should not be cut, as it provides a big return for a small investment.”
- 75% say they are less likely to vote for a candidate who proposes the sale of federal lands and 61% have the same reaction for a candidate who reduces funding for federal land management agencies.

New Mexico Latinos express equally strong pro-conservation views:

- 62% identify as a conservationist
- 76% agree that “funding for national parks, national forests and other public lands should not be cut, as it provides a big return for a small investment.”
- 62% are strongly opposed to selling off public lands to reduce the deficit.



Two-thirds of New Mexico voters give the use of Master Leasing Plans by the Bureau of Land Management in their state a thumbs up.

- Sixty-four percent (64%) register their support after hearing a brief explanation of the concept, and only 22% oppose it. These views remain solid after voters hear a pro and con discussion of the issue as well.

Master Leasing Plan Views By State

Those who support master leasing plans say that some places are appropriate for drilling, but on some public lands drilling could negatively affect our rivers, wildlife, or opportunities for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. These plans will resolve conflicts in advance so that wildlife habitats, air quality and water quality are protected, and leasing can move forward in appropriate areas with fewer delays.

59%

Those who oppose master leasing plans say that the government already takes years planning for whether or not oil and gas drilling can occur in specific sites. Master leasing plans are yet another layer of red tape that will slow down responsible energy production on public lands, making it take even longer for oil and gas companies to develop our country's energy resources.

26%

UTAH



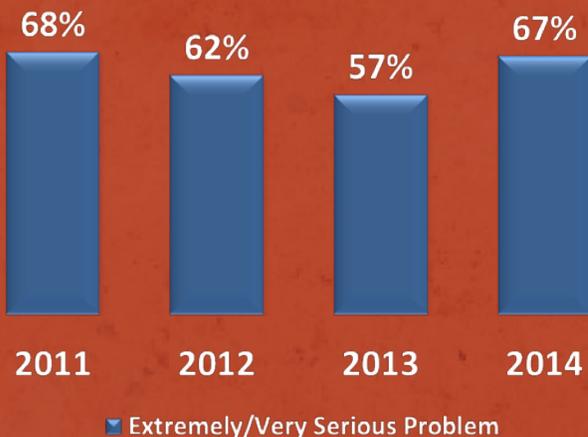
Beehive State voters continue to worry about air quality, oppose river diversions as a solution to water woes, and demonstrate a strong connection to public lands and candidates that support them.

- Utah voters stand out from the rest of the Western region due to their significant and sustained concern about air quality. Voters in Utah have consistently stated that “air pollution and smog” are extremely or very serious problems facing their state, with two-thirds (67%) today qualifying it as such, and virtually everyone classifying it as at least a somewhat serious problem (95%). This stands in stark contrast to the perceptions of the rest of the region (32% extremely or very serious problem region-wide).

Consistently throughout the data, Utah voters demonstrate their strong connection to public lands...

- They are the most likely to say that the closure of public lands during the federal shutdown hurt small businesses and the economy of communities near public lands (89% agree, only 8% disagree).
- One-in-three (33%) say the closures of public lands left them “annoyed” and another quarter (24%) were outright “angry.”
- 96% of voters report having visited public lands in the last year.
- Two-thirds (66%) say they are more likely to vote for a Congressional candidate who supports protection of public lands.
- Conversely, 63% say they are less likely to vote for a candidate who proposes the sale of federal lands.

Smog and Air Pollution Trend



Voters in Utah have the most positive reaction to the use of Master Leasing Plans by the Bureau of Land Management of any state.

- Two-thirds (67%) register their support after hearing a brief explanation of the concept, and only 20% oppose it. These views remain solid after voters hear a pro and con discussion of the issue as well.

Master Leasing Plan Views By State

Those who support master leasing plans say that some places are appropriate for drilling, but on some public lands drilling could negatively affect our rivers, wildlife, or opportunities for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. These plans will resolve conflicts in advance so that wildlife habitats, air quality and water quality are protected, and leasing can move forward in appropriate areas with fewer delays.

60%

Those who oppose master leasing plans say that the government already takes years planning for whether or not oil and gas drilling can occur in specific sites. Master leasing plans are yet another layer of red tape that will slow down responsible energy production on public lands, making it take even longer for oil and gas companies to develop our country's energy resources.

28%

The vast majority reject river diversions as a way to deal with water shortage issues in Utah.

- 81% say that low levels of water in rivers is a serious problem facing the state – the only state in the region to register more concern today than last year.

- When provided with two paths that state resource officials could take in dealing with water shortage problems, Utah voters strongly prefer a conservation-based approach over diversions of river water, much as those in neighboring states facing the same issue.

Using our current water supply more wisely, by encouraging more water conservation, reducing use, and increasing recycling of water

<u>Colorado</u>	<u>Utah</u>	<u>Wyoming</u>
78%	76%	75%

Diverting more water from rivers in less populated areas of the state to communities where more people live

14%	12%	13%
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WYOMING

Voters in the Cowboy State strongly back a candidate who seeks to protect natural areas and public lands while proceeding with energy development. Worried about the low level of water in rivers, they also flatly reject diversions.



Pro-conservation candidates are strongly supported by Wyoming voters.

- In this deep red state, voters support candidates who want to spur more oil and gas development while simultaneously expressing support for protections of public lands and tax incentives for working lands. Nearly as many are more supportive of a candidate backing wind and solar.
- On the opposite end of the spectrum, Wyoming voters are much LESS inclined to vote for a candidate who supports selling public lands in order to reduce the budget deficit. Fully 71% would be less likely to support a candidate who took this position.
- One possible reason for this intensely negative response? Fully 85% of Cowboy State voters say that the closure of public lands during last year's government shutdown hurt Wyoming small businesses and the economy of nearby communities.

More Likely

A candidate who wants to reduce government red tape so that there can be more oil and gas development in your state	67%
A candidate who wants to continue tax incentives for land owners who willingly agree to keep their land as working farms, forests or in a natural state	66%
A candidate who supports enhancing protections for some public lands like national forests	62%
A candidate who wants to promote more use of renewable energy-like wind and solar power	60%
A candidate who votes to increase funding for agencies like the U.S. Forest Service	48%



Voters in Wyoming support the use of Master Leasing Plans by the Bureau of Land Management in their state.

- Two-thirds (66%) register their support after hearing a brief explanation of the concept, and only 23% oppose it. These views remain solid after voters hear a pro and con discussion of the issue as well (58% side with supporters, while 31% side more with critics).
- Voters here are divided on hydraulic fracturing laws, as just under half of those aware of the practice say that there needs to be tougher laws on this practice (18%) or that the existing laws should be better enforced (28%). Three-in-ten (29%) feel the status quo works, and 19% say current standards are too tough.

Wyoming voters remain concerned about the low level of water in rivers, but fewer perceive it to be a very serious problem.

- Fully 68% of voters in Wyoming say that the low level of water in rivers is a serious problem, with 26% saying it is an extremely or very serious problem. This is down from 2013, when 83% of voters in the state said it was a serious problem, and half (50%) said it was an extremely or very serious problem.

There is overwhelming opposition to diversions of river water, with voters far preferring to focus resources and energy on conservation and recycling of water.

- When it comes to addressing water shortage situations, three-quarters (75%) of voters in Wyoming would prefer for state water officials to invest time and resources in finding ways to use the current water supply more wisely, rather than diverting more water from rivers in less populated areas of the state. The numbers are almost identical in both Colorado and Utah.

Using our current water supply more wisely, by encouraging more water conservation, reducing use, and increasing recycling of water



Diverting more water from rivers in less populated areas of the state to communities where more people live



Conservation and Voting

Entering the 2014 election year, Westerners tell us that a candidate's position on conservation issues can sway them – either for or against that candidate.

A number of pro-conservation stands by a candidate are warmly received by voters, with significant pluralities indicating they would be much more likely to vote for a candidate who espouses these views.

We tested eight different positions that a Congressional candidate could take in order to assess the impact of those positions on the Western electorate:

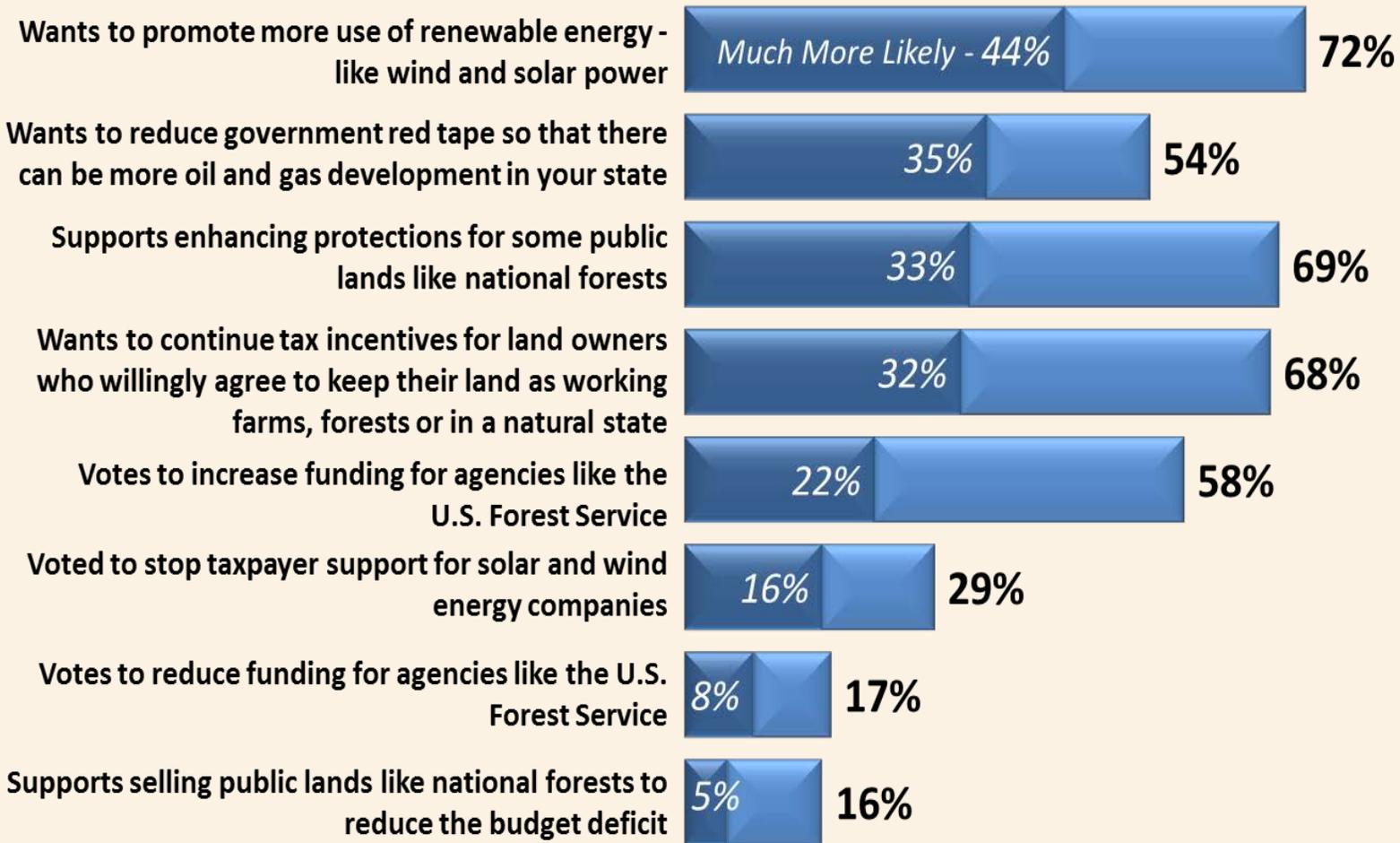
“In thinking about the elections for U.S. Congress this November, please tell me how a candidate taking each of the following positions would impact your vote - would it make you more likely or less likely to vote for that candidate, or would it not make much difference in your vote decision?”



Developing energy and protecting public and private lands can be considered “vote motivating” issues.

Voters are clearly still seeking energy to be produced in their states, with 72% more likely and 44% much more likely to vote for a candidate who wants to promote the use of renewable energy – like wind and solar power in their state. This view extends across party lines - Republicans (59%), Independents (69%), and Democrats (89%) are more inclined to back a candidate who advocates for the use of renewable energy. Similarly, sixty-nine percent (69%) of voters are more likely and 33% much more likely to vote for a candidate who supports enhancing protections for some public lands like national forests.

Candidate Positions Ranked By Much More Likely

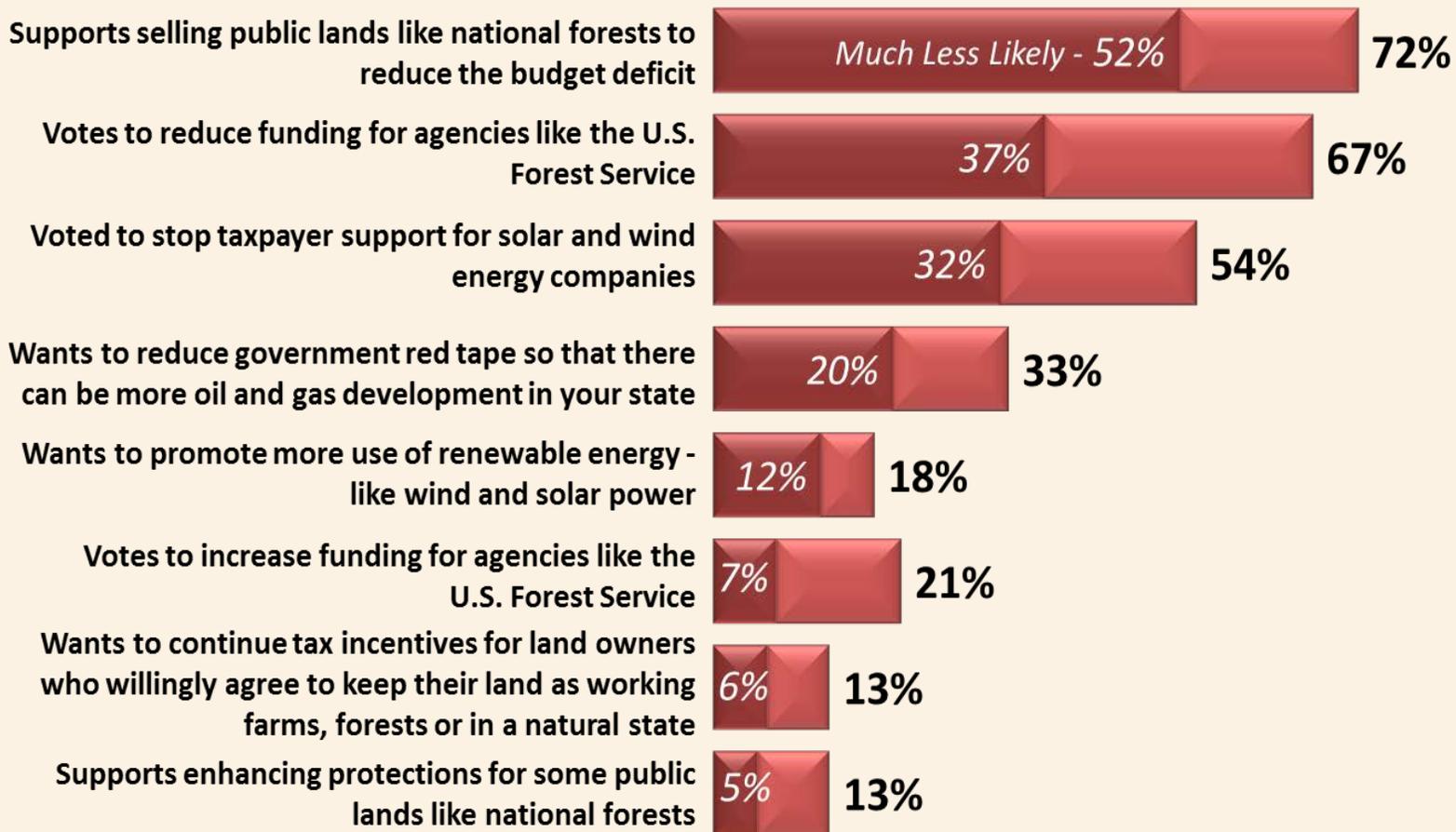


Typically, a position that reaches 30 percent more likely or greater is one that can be considered effective. Key swing voter groups – in particular suburban women, young voters, and Latinos – consistently are most impressed by a candidate who takes a pro-conservation stand.

The most significant negative by far is espousing the sale of public lands to help reduce the budget deficit.

Fully 72% of voters would be less likely to vote for a candidate who supports selling public lands like national forests to reduce the budget deficit, with more than half (52%) saying it would make them much less likely. Voters across the political spectrum reject a candidate who is for selling off public lands with enough intensity this could be considered an effective campaign issue. This is true with voters of all political affiliations: Republicans (65% less likely), Independents (72%), and Democrats (83% less likely).

Candidate Positions Ranked By Much Less Likely

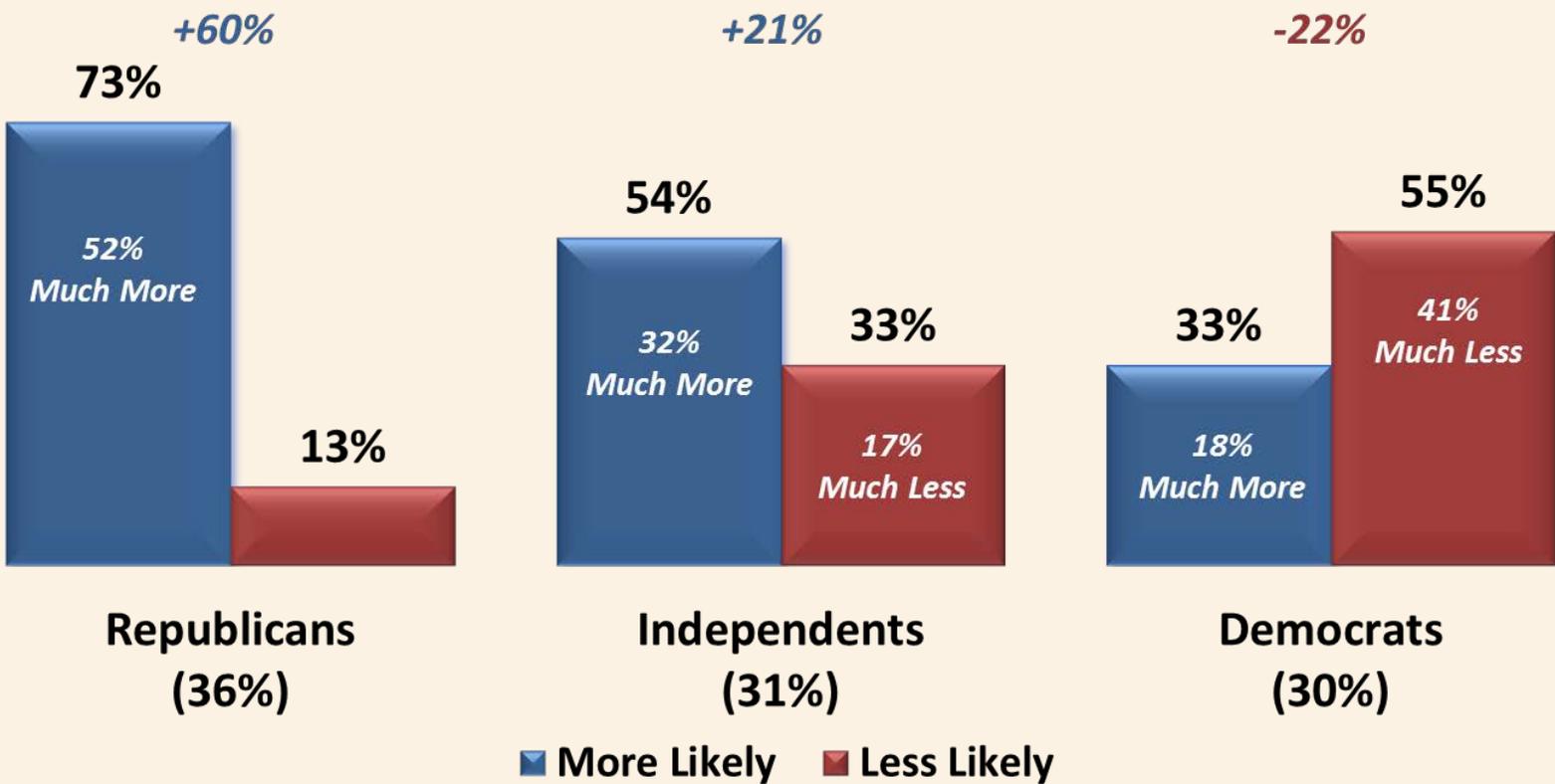


In fact, the vast majority of voters advocate for exactly the opposite – 83 percent agree that “funding for national parks, national forests and other public lands should not be cut, as it provides a big return for a small investment.” Voters clearly reject a penny wise but pound foolish approach to public lands.

Reducing red tape to spur oil and gas development can be a powerful negative or positive, depending on one’s partisan affiliation.

The most partisan issue we tested was “A candidate who wants to reduce government red tape so that there can be more oil and gas development in your state.” As the following graph demonstrates, voters view this issue very differently depending on their political identification:

Reduce Red Tape/Oil and Gas Development By Party



Overall, voters are far more likely to show support for candidates who seek to protect natural areas and public lands while proceeding with energy development.



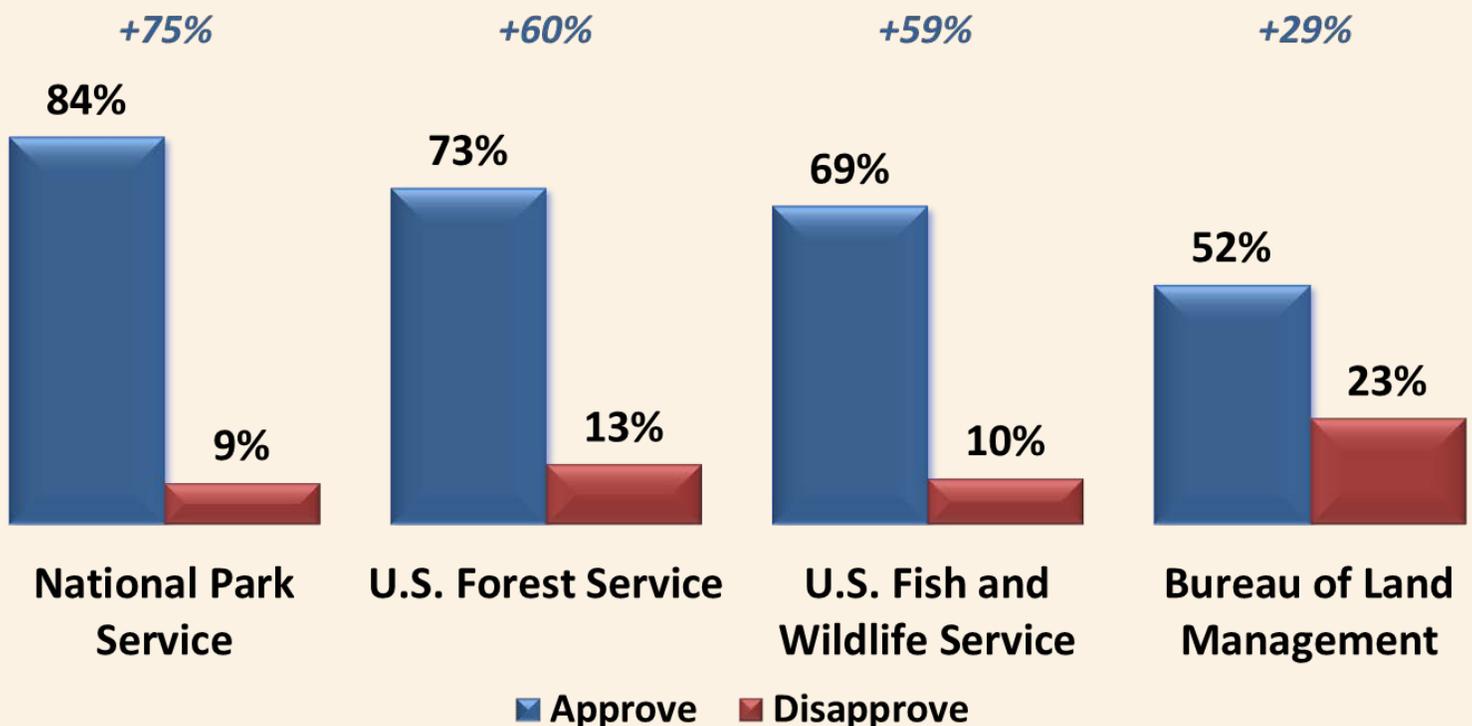
Governance of Conservation

In an era of disdain for the federal government and many public institutions, the strong regard for public agencies related to conservation is striking. Voters in this region also shy away from candidates who would reduce funding for these entities.

Federal agencies which oversee the management of public lands and conservation receive high marks from Western voters.

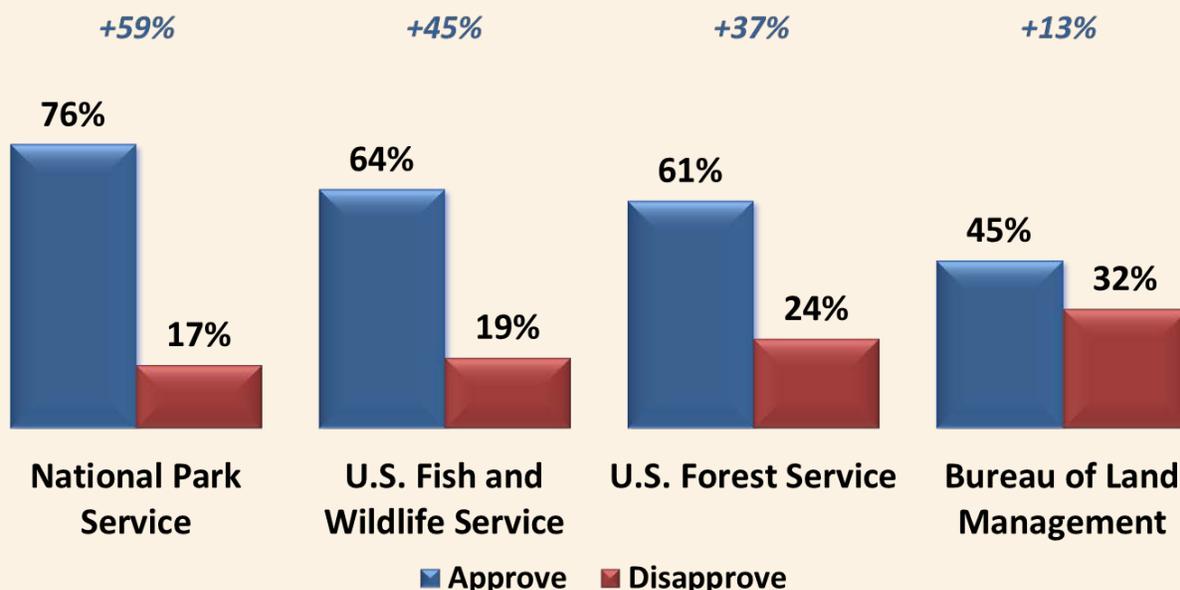
Voters in every state in this region register overwhelming approval for a number of public agencies, with the most positive regard for the job the National Park Service is doing, as more than four-in-five approve and a near majority (44%) strongly approve. Fewer than one-in-ten (9%) disapprove. Strong majorities also approve of the job the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife service are doing, while the Bureau of Land Management is significantly less well known and is more divisive.

Federal Agency Approval Ratings



Sportsmen, those who identify as conservationists, those who visit public lands, and Latino voters tend to be most positive in their assessment of all of these public agencies. There is also strong approval for these agencies among voters across the partisan spectrum, including among Tea Party supporters.

Federal Agency Approval Ratings Among Tea Party Supporters



Voters perceive funding for public lands as providing a big return on their investment, and therefore reject cuts in funding and candidates who advocate for such cuts.

More than four-in-five voters agree that “funding for national parks, national forests, and other public lands should not be cut, as it provides a big return for a small investment,” with a majority of 57% strongly agreeing with this view.

Funding for national parks, national forests and other public lands should not be cut, as it provides a big return for a small investment.

**Agree
83%**

**Disagree
13%**

Two-thirds of Western voters say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who supported reductions in funding for government agencies which deal with public lands, like the U.S. Forest Service. The intensity of this negative is at a level where we would also consider this to be “effective” as a position against that candidate (37% say they would be much less likely to vote for a candidate who supports a reduction in funding).

<i>Much Less Likely</i>	
Latinos	44%
Moderates	42%
Sportsmen	40%
Small Town/Rural	38%
Independents	37%
Seniors	35%

As the graph depicts, a number of key “swing” voter groups in these states are particularly opposed to backing a candidate who votes to reduce funding for the U.S. Forest Service and similar agencies which oversee public lands.

Conversely, Westerners are twice as likely to look upon an increase in funding for these agencies as a positive (58% more likely to vote for that candidate, 22% much more likely), rather than a negative (21% less likely, 7% much less likely).

Voters are also much more likely to vote for a candidate who supports enhancing protections for public lands.

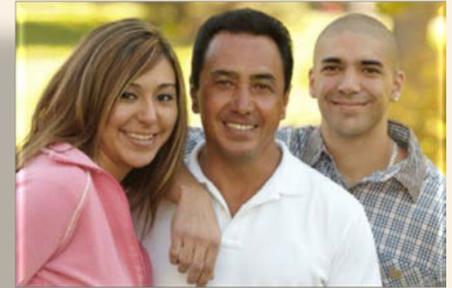
Nearly seven-in-ten voters (69%) are more likely to support a candidate who is in favor of enhancing protections for some public lands like national forests, while 13% say they would be less likely. Support for a candidate who holds this position crosses party lines, and is also strong with key subgroups such as younger women (71% more likely), moderates (74%), suburban women (75%) and Latinos (64%).

Latino Voters

More likely to say that every single environmental problem is a serious problem, this critical sub-group of the electorate is also swayed by a candidate's position on a number of conservation issues.

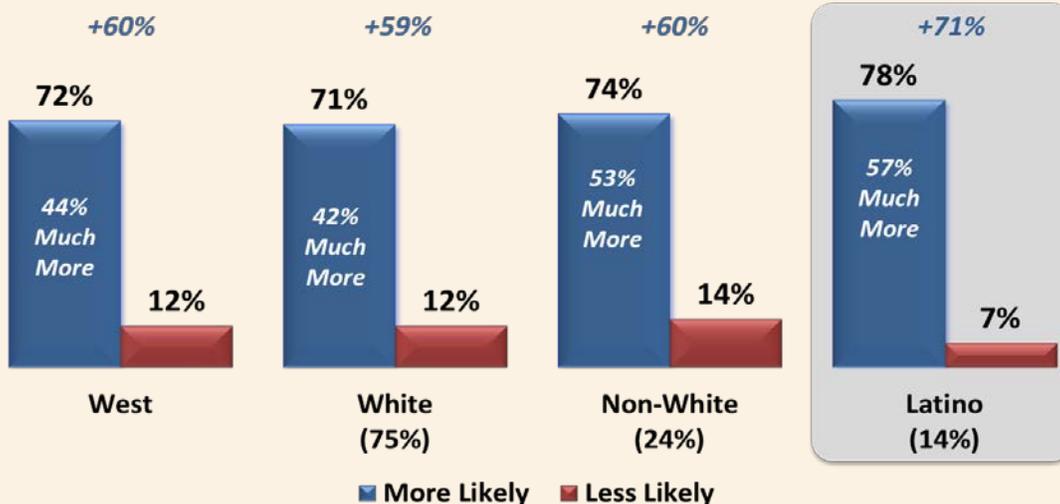
At the Ballot Box

One of the fastest growing segments of the electorate in the Western United States, Latino voters demonstrate that a Congressional candidates' views on conservation have the power to sway their vote. Latino voters are far more likely than their Anglo counterparts to...



- Support a candidate who wants to promote greater use of renewable energy (57% much more likely, 15 points greater than among non-Hispanic Whites);
- Back a candidate who votes to increased funding for agencies like the U.S. Forest Service (33% much more likely, compared to 20% of non-Hispanic whites – a 13 point margin); and
- Vote for a candidate who supports enhancing protections for some public lands (38% much more likely, compared to 34% of non-Hispanic Whites).

Support for Candidate Who Will Promote Greater Use of Renewable Energy By Ethnicity



Moreover, they are also more likely to hold a candidate accountable for taking certain position, including:

- A majority (52%) of Latino voters are *much less likely* to vote for a candidate who supports selling public lands to reduce the budget deficit, which makes that position a political non-starter among this significant sub-group; and
- A candidate who votes to reduce funding for agencies like the U.S. Forest Service would also risk drawing significant ire from Latino voters. Forty-four percent (44%) of Latinos in these Western states say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who took that positions – seven points higher than the 37% overall who would be much less likely.

Views on Public Lands

Latinos are just as likely to identify as a hunter or an angler as the rest of the electorate, and visit public lands nearly as frequently (50% of them visit public lands more than five times a year, with 22% visiting more than 10 times per year. Just 5% never visit – the same proportion as the general electorate. Latinos still have ill feelings as a result of the federal government shutdown last fall which resulted in the closing of public lands such as national parks and forests. When asked what word best described how they felt, 31% said they were concerned, 21% were annoyed, 19% were angry, and 16% were upset. Only 10% said they were indifferent.

Forty three percent (43%) of Latinos consider themselves either an angler (14%) a hunter (6%) or both (23%). More than one half (54%) of Latino men are sportsmen.



A significant majority (61%) of Latinos say that funding for national parks, national forests, and other public lands should NOT be cut, because it provides a big return for a small investment.

On Conservation Policies

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of Latino voters are OPPOSED to the selling off of public lands as a way to help reduce the federal budget deficit, on par with the views of Anglos (73%). A majority also say they are strongly opposed.

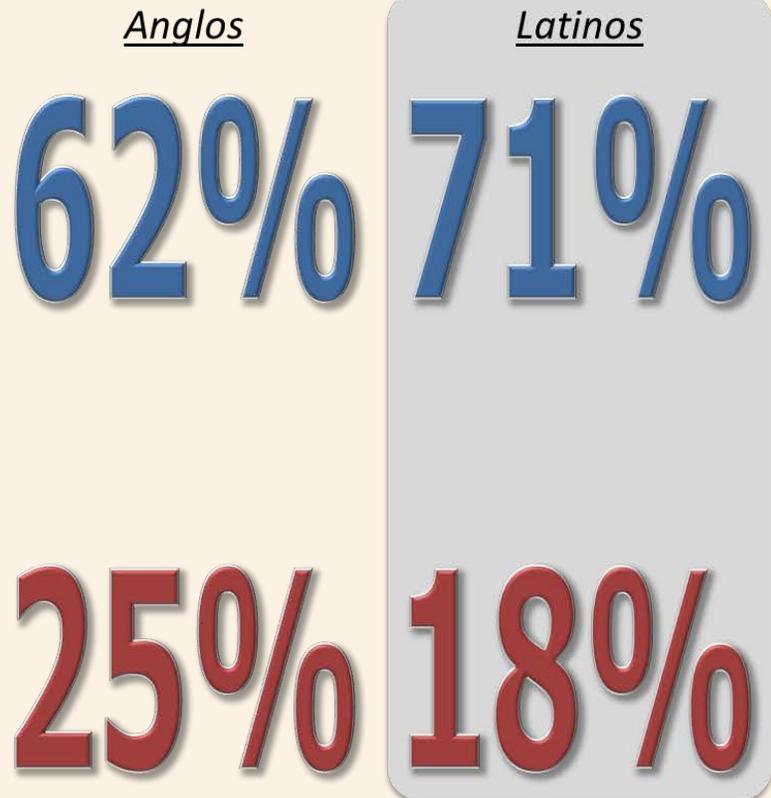
Latinos are nearly as likely to support the use of the new tool at the Bureau of Land Management, a Master Leasing Plan (MLP). Sixty percent (60%) say they would support MLPs being used in their state, with one quarter (25%) saying they strongly support MLPs being used (compared to 65% support, 25% strongly among Anglos).

Support among this important audience rises as voters hear more. Seventy-one percent (71%) of Latinos say the supporting statement comes closest to their own point of view, while just 18% align more with the statement from the opposition. Among white voters, 62% side with the supporting statement, with a quarter (25%) choosing the opposition statement.

Master Leasing Plans Views By Ethnicity

Those who support master leasing plans say that some places are appropriate for drilling, but on some public lands drilling could negatively affect our rivers, wildlife, or opportunities for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. These plans will resolve conflicts in advance so that wildlife habitat, air quality and water quality are protected, and leasing can move forward in appropriate areas with fewer delays.

Those who oppose master leasing plans say that the government already takes years planning for whether or not oil and gas drilling can occur in specific sites. Master leasing plans are yet another layer of red tape that will slow down responsible energy production on public lands, making it take even longer for oil and gas companies to develop our country's energy resources.



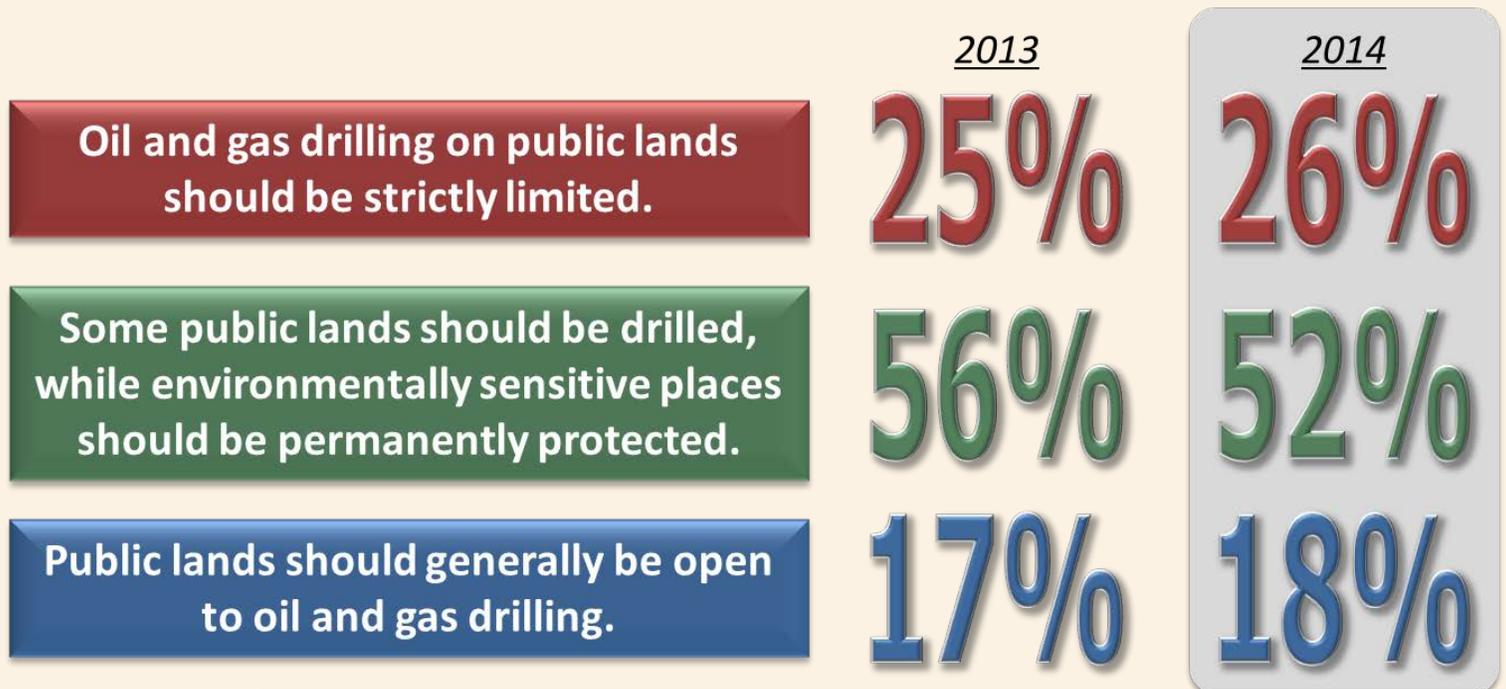
Oil and Gas Development

Western voters want to protect water, wildlife habitat, and other sensitive areas of public lands, while proceeding with energy development.

A majority of Western voters continue to want to ensure environmentally sensitive places on public lands are protected.

More than half (52%) say that environmentally sensitive places on public lands should be permanently protected when energy production is allowed. The core dynamics are essentially unchanged from 2013.

Oil and Gas Drilling on Public Lands



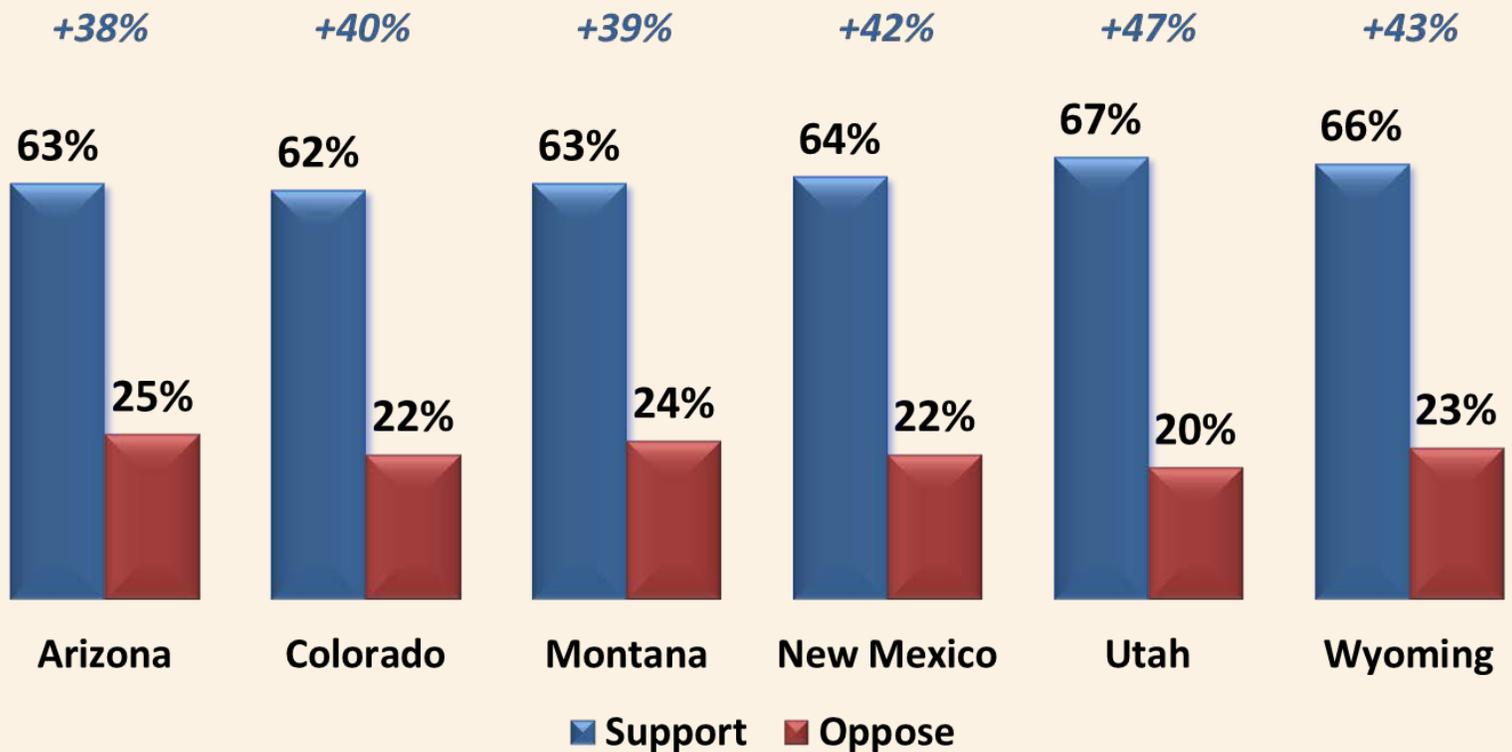
More than three-in-five voters support Master Leasing Plans being used as a tool to balance oil and gas production with protections.

Given this is a relatively new tool, survey respondents were read a brief, neutral explanation of Master Leasing Plans and then asked whether they support or oppose this tool:

“The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for balancing oil and gas drilling, fish and wildlife habitat protection, and recreational uses on millions of acres of public lands. In areas where there could be future disagreements over the best use of the land, the agency is using a new tool, called a Master Leasing Plan. Before any oil or gas drilling is considered, the Master Leasing Plan would map out specific areas appropriate for oil and gas drilling, and create protections where needed for wildlife, water and historic sites. Oil and gas companies, local governments, local businesses environmental organizations, and the public will be able to provide input in the design of the plan.”

Significant majorities of voters in all of these states express support for Master Leasing Plans (MLPs).

Master Leasing Plans By State



Support for MLP's extends across virtually all sub-groups – including Tea Party supporters.

Even after replicating some of the potential debate over MLP's, voters stand fast in their support for this tool as seen here:

Those who support master leasing plans say that some places are appropriate for drilling, but on some public lands drilling could negatively affect our rivers, wildlife, or opportunities for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. These plans will resolve conflicts in advance so that wildlife habitats, air quality and water quality are protected, and leasing can move forward in appropriate areas with fewer delays.

62%

Those who oppose master leasing plans say that the government already takes years planning for whether or not oil and gas drilling can occur in specific sites. Master leasing plans are yet another layer of red tape that will slow down responsible energy production on public lands, making it take even longer for oil and gas companies to develop our country's energy resources.

25%

Voters are more mixed over how to address hydraulic fracturing , although a majority would toughen either existing laws or enforcement.

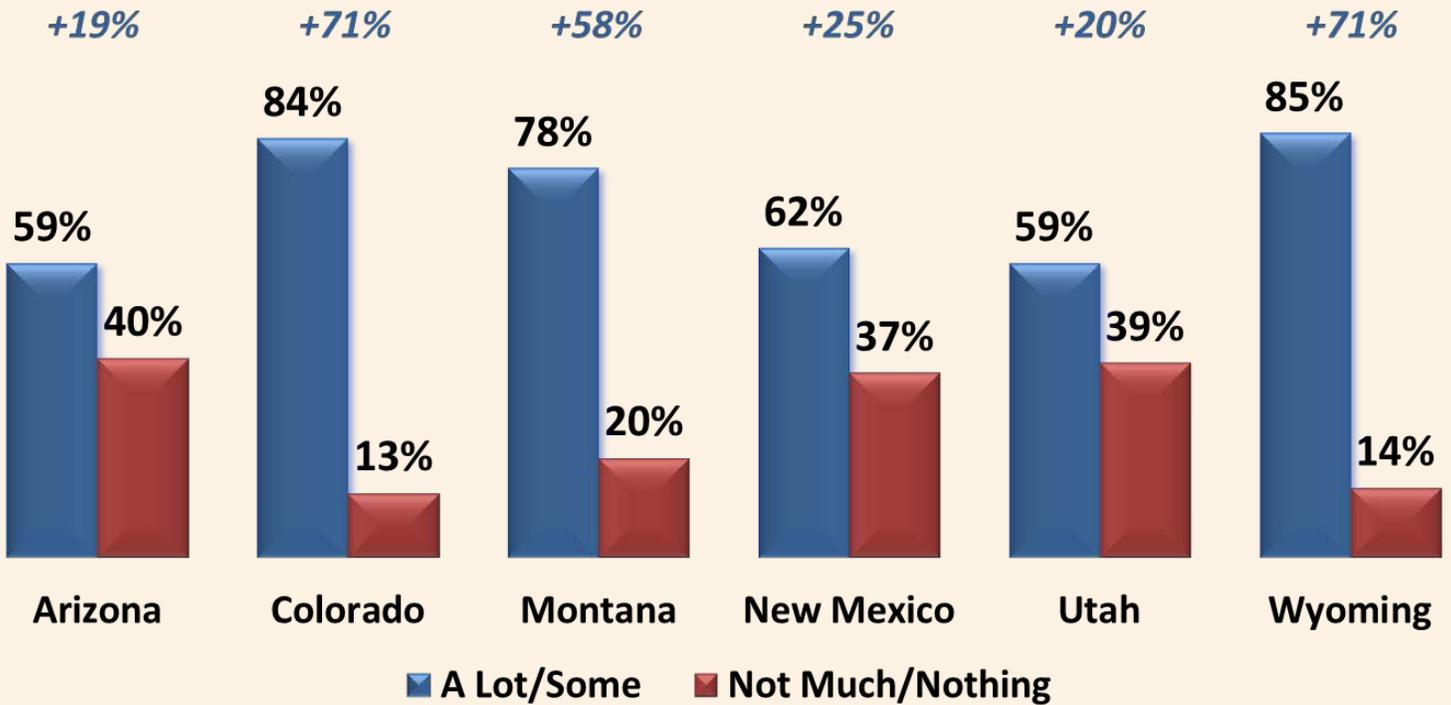
Voters who are familiar with hydraulic fracturing were given four options on the laws which oversee the practice of fracking in their states. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of voters say that the laws ought to be made tougher, and another 27% say that while the laws are tough enough, they need to be better enforced. Far fewer think things are about right currently (16%) and another 17% would reduce regulations on this practice. By state, Arizona and New Mexico are most inclined to toughen laws or enforcement; Utah and Wyoming the least.

Voters in Wyoming, Colorado, and Montana are most aware of the practice of hydraulic fracturing.

Overwhelming majorities of voters in Wyoming (85%), Colorado (84%), and Montana (78%) are aware of the practice of hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking.



Hydraulic Fracturing Awareness By State



Hydraulic fracturing has become a ballot issue in at least one of these Western states.

With a potential ballot measure facing voters in Colorado, we asked voters there to tell us their inclinations on the dynamics of that issue. Fully one-in-five in the Centennial State are not even willing to provide an opinion on this issue yet, but of the remainder, twice as many opt for local control over statewide regulations.

Allow local communities to regulate the location and extent of fracking, so that they can decide what happens in their community

55%

Have the state regulate the location and extent of fracking, so that there are consistent standards

22%

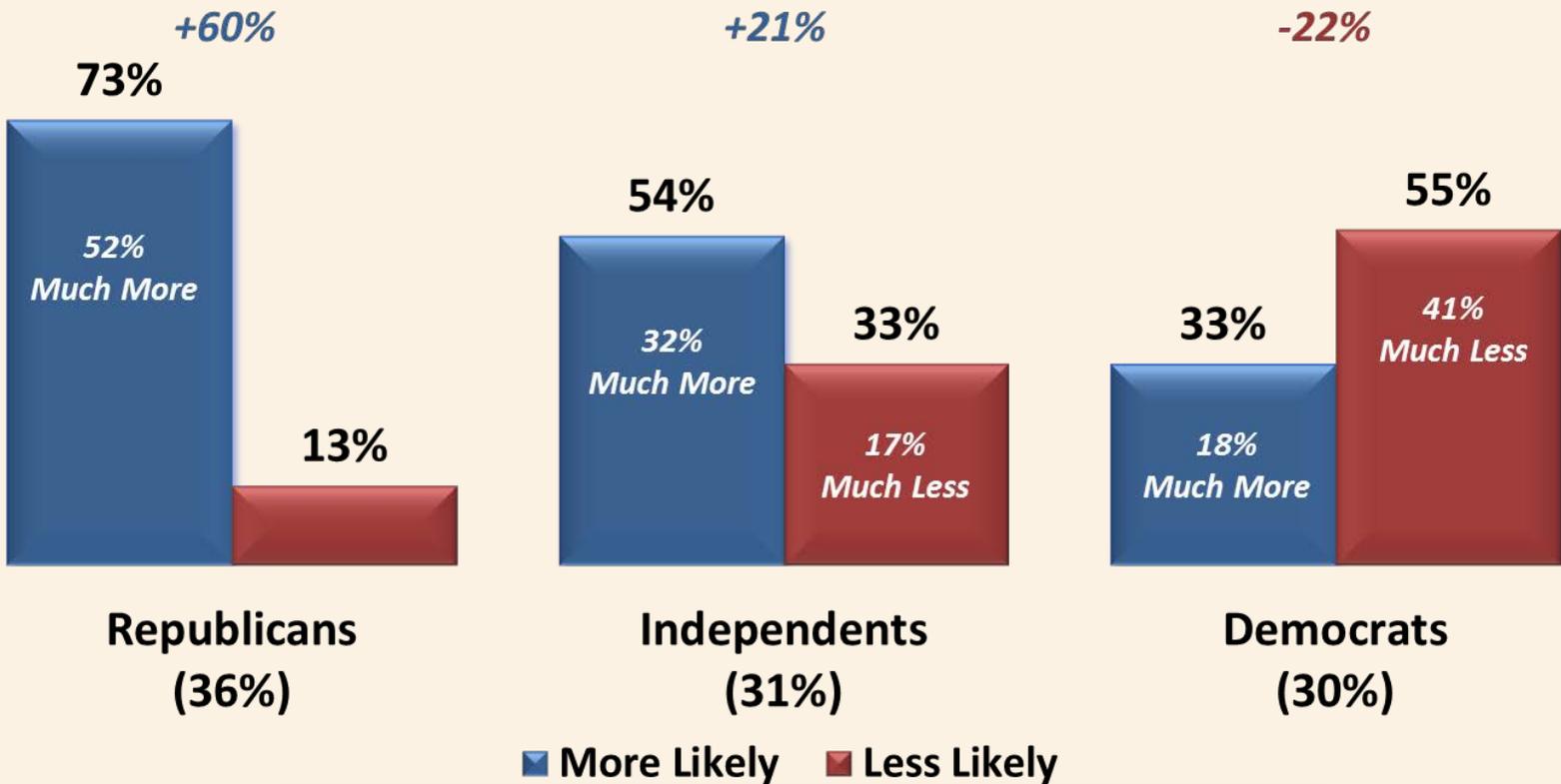
Do not have an opinion at this time

20%

For a candidate, reducing red tape in order to foster more oil and gas development can be a powerful negative OR positive, bearing a strong relationship to voter's partisan affiliation.

Overall, more than half (54%) of voters would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supported reducing red tape so that there could be more oil and gas development in their state, with 35% saying they would be MUCH more likely. Advocating for this position is a strong positive among Republicans, soft positive for Independents, but is a clear negative among Democrats in this region.

Reduce Red Tape/Oil and Gas Development By Party



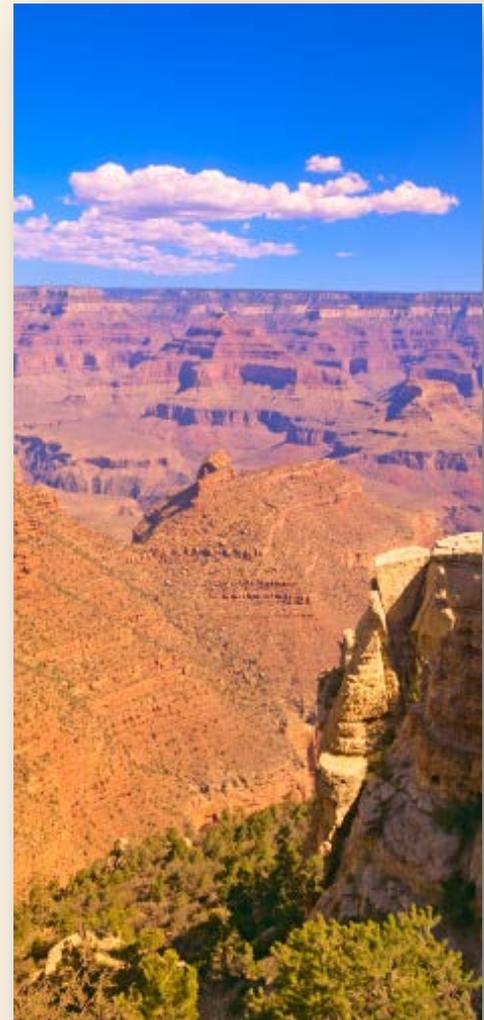
Public Lands

Throughout the last four years of polls, Western voters have told us they value public lands for a number of reasons – from places to recreate to drawing tourists to their state. That leads voters to providing clear direction on policies affecting public lands.

There is strong opposition to selling public lands – even when framed as a way to help reduce the budget deficit, and that opposition has increased since 2013.

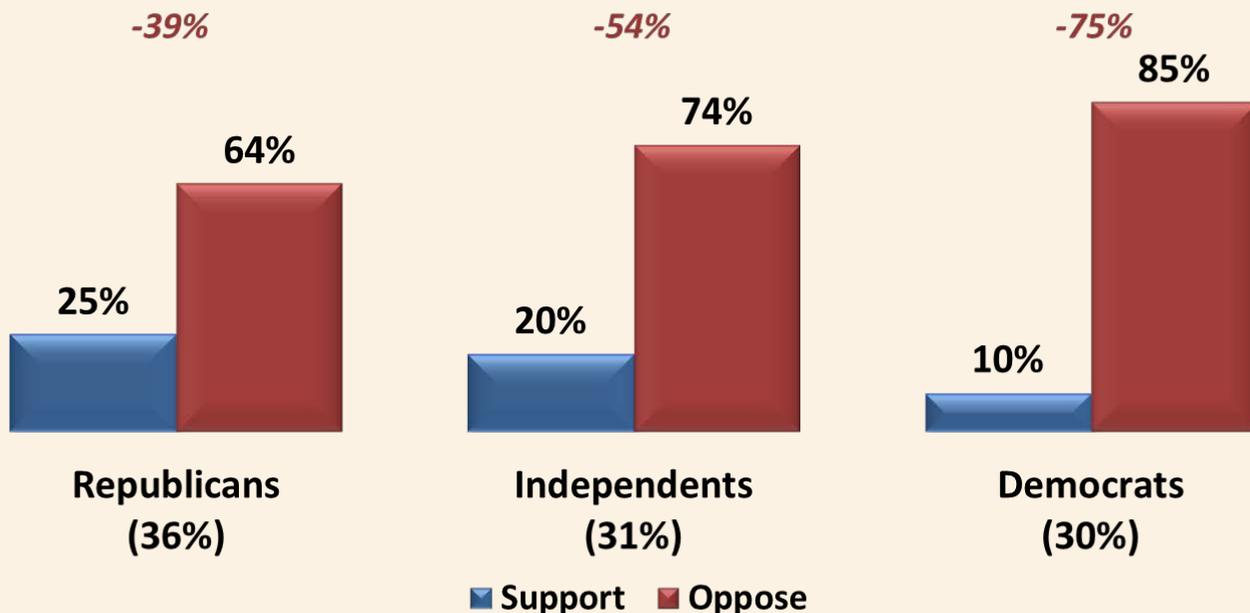
Three-fourths (74%) of voters are now opposed to selling off public lands as a way to reduce the budget deficit, while just 19% of voters support this. Intensity is strongly against it, as 58% say they are strongly opposed to selling off public lands. As the graph indicates, this is a significant increase from 2013. Opposition has increased the most among rural residents, Latinos, and sportsmen.

Selling Public Lands to Reduce Deficit



Opposition to selling off public lands cuts across party lines, as significant majorities of every political persuasion oppose this idea.

Selling Public Lands to Reduce Deficit By Party



And last year, voters continued to overwhelmingly side with opponents of selling public lands even after hearing both viewpoints.

Those who oppose selling off public lands say that public lands are essential to the strength of our state's economy. Public lands in your state generate billions of dollars from attracting tourists; hunters and anglers; high quality businesses, and skilled workers. Selling off these public lands to corporations for development will hurt our economy and quality of life.

71%

Those who support selling off public lands in your state say government should not be in the business of owning and managing land. We can sell millions of acres of these publicly owned lands to private corporations and individuals, raising millions of dollars to bring more money to the government to fund vital services.

23%

Voters are much more likely to vote for a candidate who supports enhancing protections for public lands like national forests and much LESS likely to vote for a candidate who supports selling public lands.

The disdain voters have for selling public lands extends to a candidate – more than three-in-five voters in every single state and the vast majority of voters across the West say they would be less likely to vote for that candidate – with striking negative intensity (72% less likely and 52% much less likely to vote for that candidate). In contrast, the vast majority are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports enhancing protections for public lands (69% more likely, 33% much more likely).



Why this strong response to protecting public lands?

Nearly all – 95% – of Western voters say they have visited public lands in the last year, with more than half exploring these places frequently.

Fifty-seven percent (57%) of voters say they visit public lands more than five times per year, with 35% visiting more than 10 times per year. Sportsmen, Republican men, Montana and Wyoming residents are the most frequent visitors to public lands.

Voters continue to perceive public lands as a main attraction in their area, and overwhelmingly say their closure during the federal shutdown hurt small businesses and the economies of communities in their state.

By more than a three-to-one margin, voters say they would recommend out-of-state visitors go to a natural area such as a national park rather than visit a site in a city (68% natural area; 14% a museum, restaurant or shopping location in a city). In fact, the vast majority of these Westerners say that the closure of public lands during the federal shutdown was “harmful to small businesses and local economies” near these sites.

The closing of national parks and public lands to visitors and recreation during the recent government shutdown hurt small businesses and the economy of communities.

**Agree
85%**
**Disagree
13%**

With direct personal connections and this perception of public lands as the key attractions in their state, no wonder then that Westerners were upset over the closures. They tell us a range of negative emotions that sum up their feelings that they were annoyed (29%), angry (27%), concerned (19%) and upset (14%). Only 9% were indifferent and virtually no one was happy (1%).

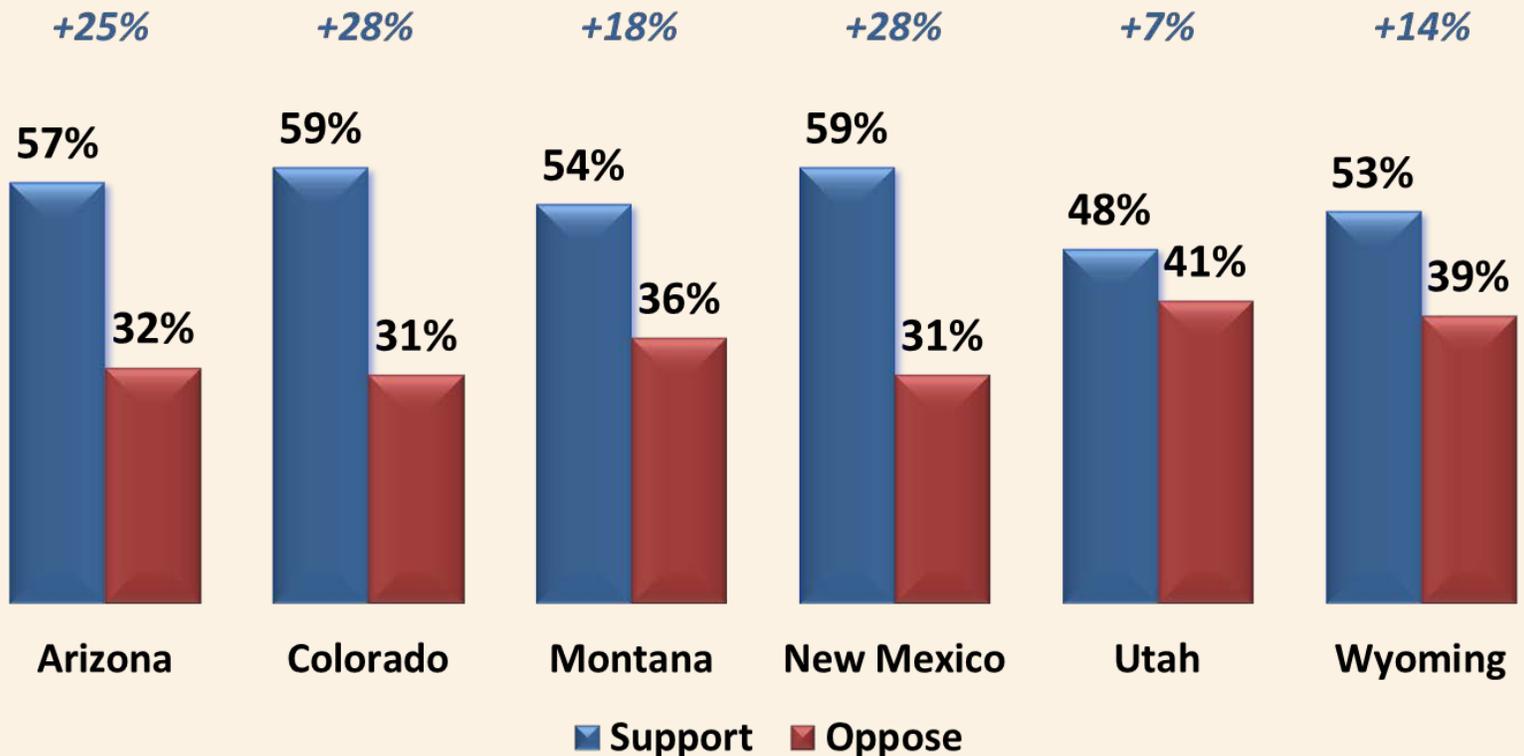
A majority of voters support state land conservation efforts to avoid the listing of sage grouse as an endangered species.

Given recent developments, the survey also explored the potential for states to fund natural areas as a way to avoid issues related to the sage grouse.

“As you may know, large parts of sagebrush areas throughout the West have been developed in recent years. That has affected wildlife like mule deer, antelope, and especially the sage grouse. Some states have proposed conserving more of this wildlife habitat to help ensure that sage grouse do not become even more rare. They want to avoid the bird being listed by the federal government as an endangered species, which would trigger more federal regulation and could stop certain development like oil and gas production on public AND private lands.”

There is solid support for this concept across these states, as the following graph depicts, with key swing groups such as Independents (57% support), younger voters (65% support), and Latinos (75% support) even more enthusiastic.

State Funding for Habitat By State



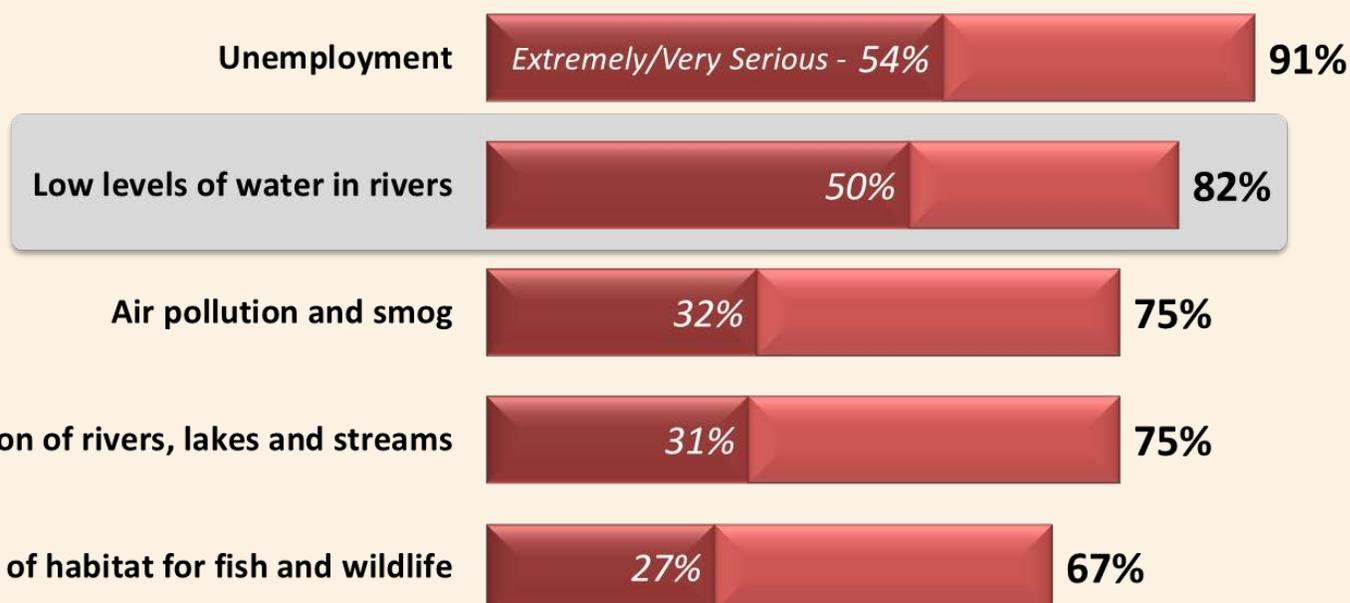
Water

"A man from the West will fight over three things: water, women and gold, and usually in that order." - Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona

The low level of water in rivers is seen as a serious problem in this region, second only to the economy as a problem.

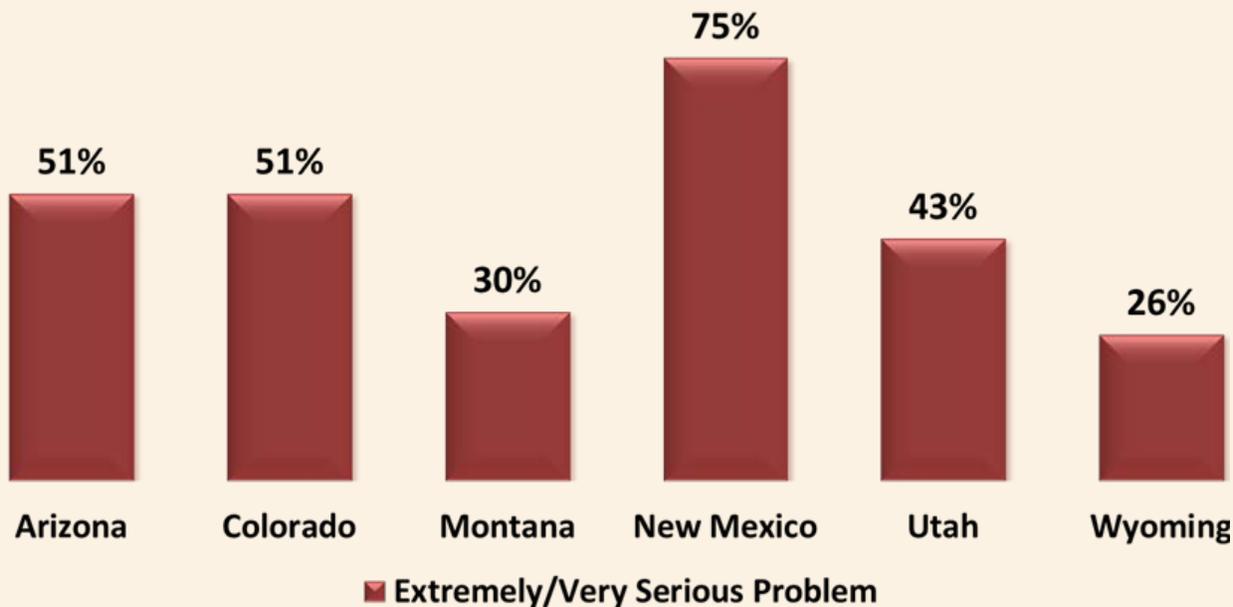
Overall, the low level of water in rivers is viewed as a major problem, second only to “unemployment” which tends to be the most dominant economic concern for voters. More than four-in-five in the region categorize the low level of water in rivers as a serious (82%) problem, with half (50%) saying it is extremely or very serious.

Issues Ranked By Extremely/Very Serious Problem



However, there are some clear differences by state, with New Mexicans expressing the strongest concern about rivers of any state in the region.

Low Levels of Water in Rivers By State



Voters in three key states in the region reject diversions of river water to more populated areas, instead preferring to focus resources and energy on conservation and recycling of water.

When it comes to addressing water shortage situations, more than three-quarters of voters in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming, express a preference for state water officials to invest time and resources in finding ways to use the current water supply more wisely, rather than diverting more water from rivers in less populated areas of the state.

Using our current water supply more wisely, by encouraging more water conservation, reducing use, and increasing recycling of water

<u>Colorado</u>	<u>Utah</u>	<u>Wyoming</u>
78%	76%	75%

Diverting more water from rivers in less populated areas of the state to communities where more people live

14%	12%	13%
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The rejection of diversion is strongly held across all three states and in every type of community in those states, with even urban voters who are most likely to benefit preferring conservation and other means (74%). Moreover, this issue stands out for having very little partisan dynamic – 74% of Republicans, 75% of Independents and 86% of Democrats in these states prefer conservation.

We have seen from other research in the West that voters tend to think diversions are, expensive, harmful to wildlife and even the economies of rural areas, and are perceived as more of a band-aid solution rather than a long-term fix.

Water is clearly not an issue that is going away. That said, voters in three of these Western states are very clear in directing their officials away from river diversions as a way to solve water woes.

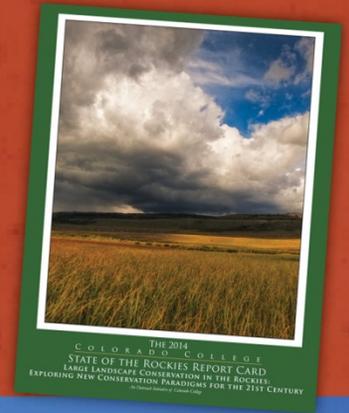




THE COLORADO COLLEGE STATE OF THE ROCKIES PROJECT

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 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.