

# COLORADO



*Centennial state voters place a clean environment and outdoor lifestyle as the top reasons they live in the West. Public lands ties economic opportunities as the greatest draw. Residents still concerned about water; lay out clear direction for the new Congress.*

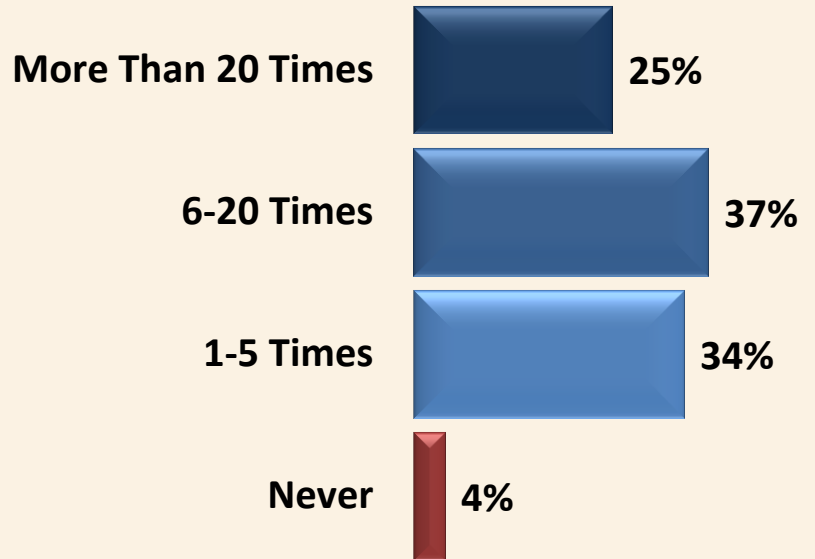
In a state where tourism and outdoor recreation is tied with health care and tech in voters' minds as important economic industries, it is no wonder that Coloradans also say that public lands was just as significant a factor in their decision to stay in the state as is economic opportunities. Coloradans – like Westerners overall – place the environment, public lands, and the related outdoor lifestyle emanating from those as the biggest factors in drawing them to the state and keeping them here.

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*The beautiful seasons and weather. We fell in love with Colorado because of the beautiful nature, so my husband looked for a job out here. That is mainly it. Like I said, we came out here to visit and we fell in love with how pretty the mountains are, how clean the parks are, and there is a lot of things to do. He looked for a job out here and we came out.*  
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<i>Reasons for Living in the West Ranked By Significant Factor</i>	<i>Significant Factor</i>	<i>Total Factor</i>
Clean air, clean water and environment	<b>63%</b>	<b>90%</b>
Ability to live near, recreate on and enjoy public lands like national parks and forests	<b>55%</b>	<b>84%</b>
Healthy, outdoor lifestyle	<b>54%</b>	<b>89%</b>
Economic opportunities	<b>44%</b>	<b>83%</b>
Quality of public schools	<b>43%</b>	<b>70%</b>
Cost of living	<b>34%</b>	<b>75%</b>
Quality of health care and hospitals	<b>32%</b>	<b>72%</b>
Level of traffic congestion	<b>31%</b>	<b>65%</b>
Hunting and fishing opportunities	<b>26%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Opportunities to open my own business	<b>25%</b>	<b>47%</b>
Amount of taxes	<b>20%</b>	<b>58%</b>

*The emphasis on the outdoors is part of the stereotype – but apparently the reality – for most Coloradans.*

Fully 96% say they have visited public lands managed by U.S. agencies in the last year.



They view these lands as American places belonging to everyone in the nation (72%), rather than just Colorado places (20%).

**American Places**

**72%**

**State Places**

**20%**

Their priority for managing these places is clear: protecting and conserving wildlife habitat and these lands for future generations are deemed the two most important priorities.

The concern for wildlife may be in part what drives support for the Bureau of Land Management establishing strong protections in sage grouse habitat, including limiting some energy development, grazing and off-road vehicle use (70% support, 24% oppose).

Notably, making sure rangers have the proper resources is also important to the state's electorate (72% very important). In part, this may be due to the clear perceived need. Nearly three-quarters (73%) say lack of resources to properly maintain and care for these U.S. lands is an extremely or very serious problem.

Water is another issue about which Coloradans are concerned. Fully 82% view the low levels of water in rivers as a serious problem facing the state. As these very issues are debated here in development of a state water plan, voters continue to maintain that conservation is key. Three-quarters (74%) side with a conservation focus over a supply focus that diverts river water to more populous areas of the state.

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

**74%**

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

**16%**





**Finally, Coloradans are quite clear on the actions they would like to see taken or avoided in this new Congress:**

**Congressional Actions Ranked By Support**

	<b>Support</b>	<b>Oppose</b>
<b>Future Presidents continuing to protect existing public lands as national monuments</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Continue to use some of the money from fees charged to oil and gas companies that drill offshore for conservation of natural areas and clean water, and to ensure access to outdoor recreation</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Continue taxpayer support for solar and wind energy production</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Sell significant holdings of public lands like national forests to reduce the budget deficit</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>70%</b>

**What's Unique About Colorado?**

	<b>77%</b>	Highest of any state – want to continue LWCF funding to natural areas, water and outdoor recreation
	<b>68%</b>	Highest of any state – say we ought to continue to protect natural areas and wildlife habitat from development and industry
	<b>46%</b>	Marijuana industry is at least somewhat important to the state's economy already. It is also the most likely to view breweries/vineyards/distilleries as important (76%)