

COLORADO

Voters express strong connection to public lands and the desire to protect them; Concern about water tops economic concerns amidst drought.

Coloradans engage in a wide array of outdoor recreation activities, including...

	<i>West</i>
Hiking	65%
Camping	52%
Bird watching/viewing wildlife	34%
Mountain biking	29%
Boating	19%
Riding an off-road vehicle or snowmobile	16%
Other	11%

Coloradans' Connection to Conservation:

- State voters overwhelmingly identify as a conservationist – fully 68% say that label describes them, with majorities throughout the state and of all partisan persuasions in this camp.
- 38% consider themselves to be a hunter or angler.
- 82% plan to visit a national park in 2013.
- 81% say that children not spending enough time in the outdoors is a serious problem here in Colorado.



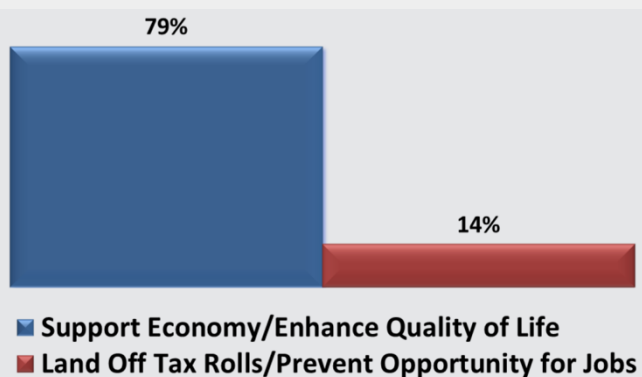
On Water:

- 93% say low levels of water in rivers in Colorado is a serious problem (69% believe it is an extremely or very serious problem), matched by concern about low levels of snowpack in the mountains (93% serious; 68% extremely or very serious).
- Concern about rivers and snowpack exceeds the proportion of the electorate which say “unemployment” is an extremely or very serious problem in the state (94% at least somewhat serious and 58% extremely or very serious problem).
- Half (49%) say pollution of rivers, lakes and streams is an extremely or very serious problem in Colorado, the highest concern registered in the last three years.
- More than three-in-five (63%) attribute the increasing number of extreme weather events – like droughts – at least in part to climate change.



On Public Lands:

- 98% - virtually all Coloradans – say that public lands are an “essential part” of Colorado’s economy.
- 85% believe the presence of these areas in the state helps to attract high quality employers and good jobs to Colorado.
- 74% oppose the sale of some public lands in order to reduce the budget deficit.
- Even when presented with two points of view about this issue, state voters become more opposed – 79% side with opponents of selling public lands.



79% 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.

On Energy Development:

- Coloradans continue to say the state should encourage the use of solar (56% say it is one of the two they would encourage) or wind (56%) – twice as many as point to any other energy source including natural gas (24%).
- 48% perceive oil and gas drilling as booming in Colorado.
- Only two-in-five can say with any certainty that drilling is occurring on public lands in the state.
- A solid majority of 54% want environmentally sensitive public lands to be “permanently protected” from oil and gas production.



When presented with two viewpoints about drilling on public lands, nearly twice as many Coloradans side with those who want stronger standards on drilling in place with none allowed near recreational areas, water sources and wildlife.

More than 38 million acres of public lands - including land in six national parks - are currently leased by oil and gas companies, and oil production on public lands has been steadily climbing. Public lands that are drilled are often closed for other uses - like hunting or hiking - and the effects of contamination on the land can linger for generations. We need to ensure strong standards are in place and that drilling is not allowed in critical locations near recreation areas, water sources, and wildlife.

62%

Bureaucratic red tape, burdensome federal regulations, and government policies that block access to federal lands have stood in the way of the West reaching its full energy and jobs potential and our country gaining energy independence. Energy production on public lands has declined, while increasing by double digits on private lands. We need to allow more public lands to be opened to responsible energy development.

33%

On the Politics of Conservation:

- Majority of 54% say they are not sure of the positions their Member of Congress has taken on conservation – more assume it is a lower priority than for themselves personally (22%).
- Sportsmen are most likely to say they know their Member's views, but more apt to say their Representative is not as conservation-oriented as they are personally (26%).
- GOP candidates have more to gain from supporting pro-conservation policies. Colorado voters are more impressed if a GOP candidate expresses support for protection of public lands than if a Democrat takes the same position – 59% and 48%, respectively, would have a more favorable view of that candidate.

61% of Independent voters are positively swayed when a GOP candidate espouses this view.

