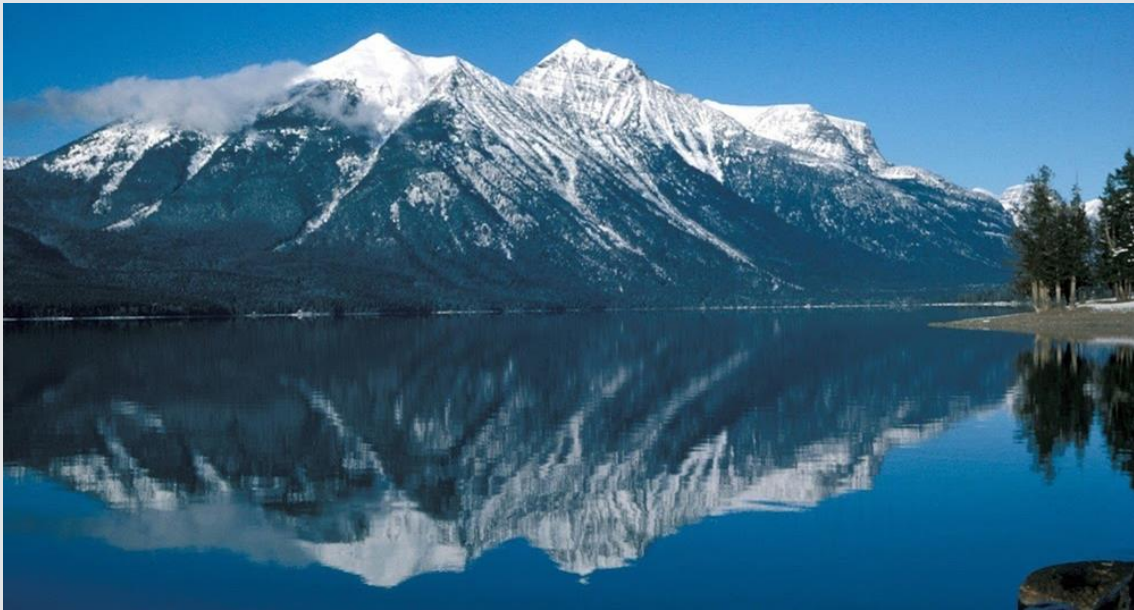


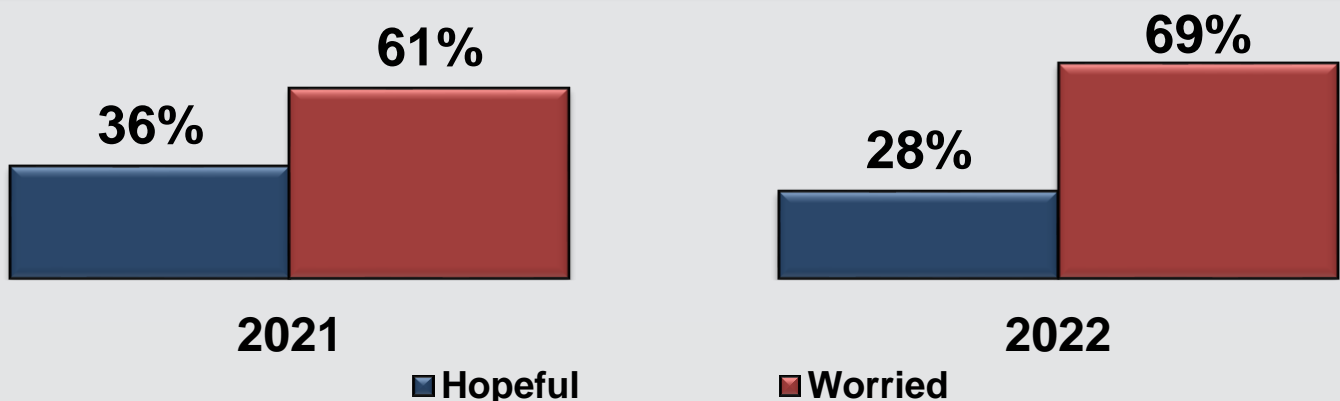
Nature in 2022

Amidst spiking concern over water supplies, wildfires, climate change and the loss of natural areas in their state, Western voters are pessimistic in their assessment of the future of nature. Consequently, voters are increasingly factoring in elected officials' record on the environment in their decision to support or reject them.



Western voters are increasingly pessimistic in their assessment of the future of nature. They are more than twice as likely to say they are “worried” (69 percent) about “the future of nature, meaning our land, water, air and wildlife” than say they are “hopeful” (28 percent). That 41-point margin has increased from a 25-point margin in just the last year alone.

Outlook on the Future of Nature



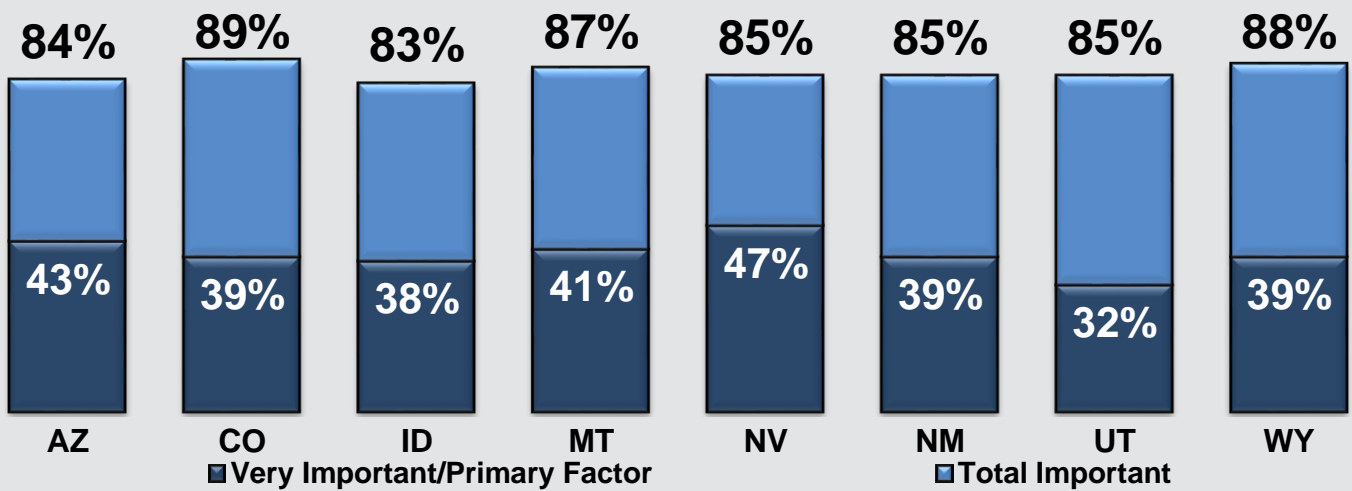
Seven of the eight Mountain West states have become more pessimistic in the last year about the future of nature, with double-digit increases in those “worried” in Arizona, Colorado and Montana, which each increased in negative views by 10 points. A majority across party lines view the future of nature with worry rather than hope, but the shift in the last year has not come evenly. Democrats are increasingly pessimistic (86 percent worried, +15 since 2021), as are independent voters (70 percent, +10), while Republicans’ views are essentially unchanged (54 percent, +1).

Concerns about a wide range of issues connected to nature have dramatically increased over the last twelve years. As the following chart demonstrates, there are massive increases in the proportion of Mountain West voters who regard a range of issues as extremely or very serious problems in their state since the inception of the State of the Rockies survey (comparisons are among the five original states of Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming). All but two issues have seen double-digit increases in concern.

<i>Problems Ranked by % Increase in Extremely/Very Serious</i>	2011	2022	% Change
Inadequate water supplies	40%	70%	+30%
Climate change	27%	52%	+25%
Loss of natural areas	36%	55%	+19%
Loss of habitat for fish and wildlife	38%	55%	+17%
Poorly-planned growth and development	42%	60%	+18%
Pollution of rivers, lakes and streams	42%	54%	+12%
The impact of oil and gas drilling on our land, air and water	31%	41%	+10%
Air pollution and smog	40%	49%	+9%
Loss of family farms and ranches	50%	58%	+8%

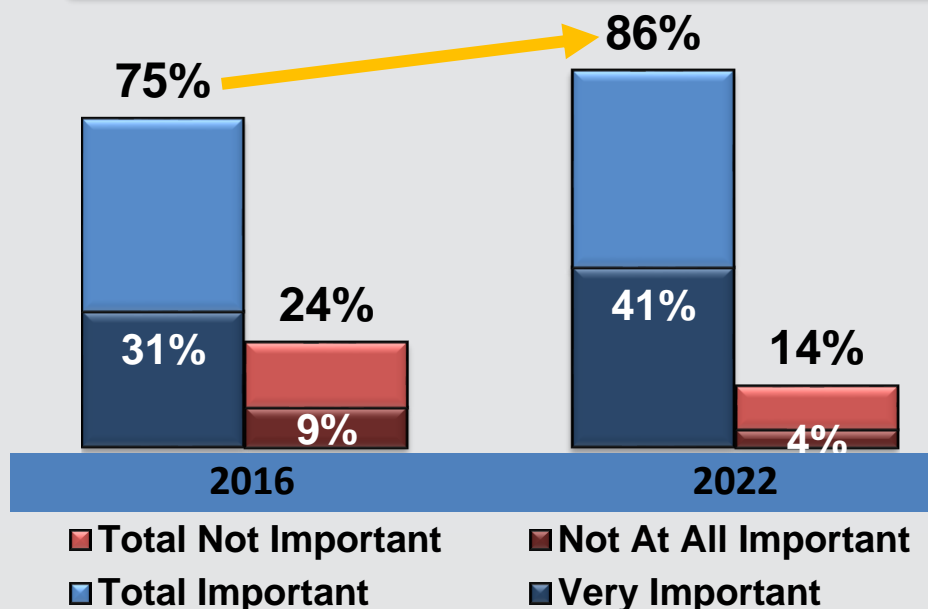
More than four-in-five Western voters say that compared to perennially important topics like the economy, health care, and education, issues involving “clean water, clean air, wildlife, and public lands” are important in deciding whether to support an elected public official. Fully 86 percent of voters say that “compared to other issues like the economy, health care and education ... issues involving clean water, clean air, wildlife and public lands” are important to their voting decisions. In fact, 41 percent say that these issues are a primary factor in determining their support. There is consensus about the importance of these issues across states, gender, age, party, and race and ethnicity.

Importance of Conservation Issues in Voting Decisions



Moreover, among the seven states that were asked this question in 2016 and 2022 (AZ, CO, MT, NM, NV, UT & WY), the importance of these issues is at a record high. There has been an 11-point increase, from 75 percent in 2016 to 86 percent today saying conservation-related issues are important in their decision to support an elected official.

Importance of Conservation Issues 2016-2022



Conservation issues are deemed important by many of the most critical “swing” sub-groups. More than four-in-ten Latinos (45 percent), young voters under age 35 (45 percent), those who have moved to the Western states within the last five years (41 percent), and sportsmen (40 percent) indicate it is a primary factor in their decision to vote for a candidate. Strikingly, women are one of the sub-groups most inclined to say this issue will be a primary factor in how they evaluate an elected official’s record, with rural women (47 percent), small town women (49 percent), non-college women (53 percent), independent women (45 percent) and women who hunt or fish (46 percent) all placing the issue high on their list.



Key Voter Groups Prioritizing Conservation

