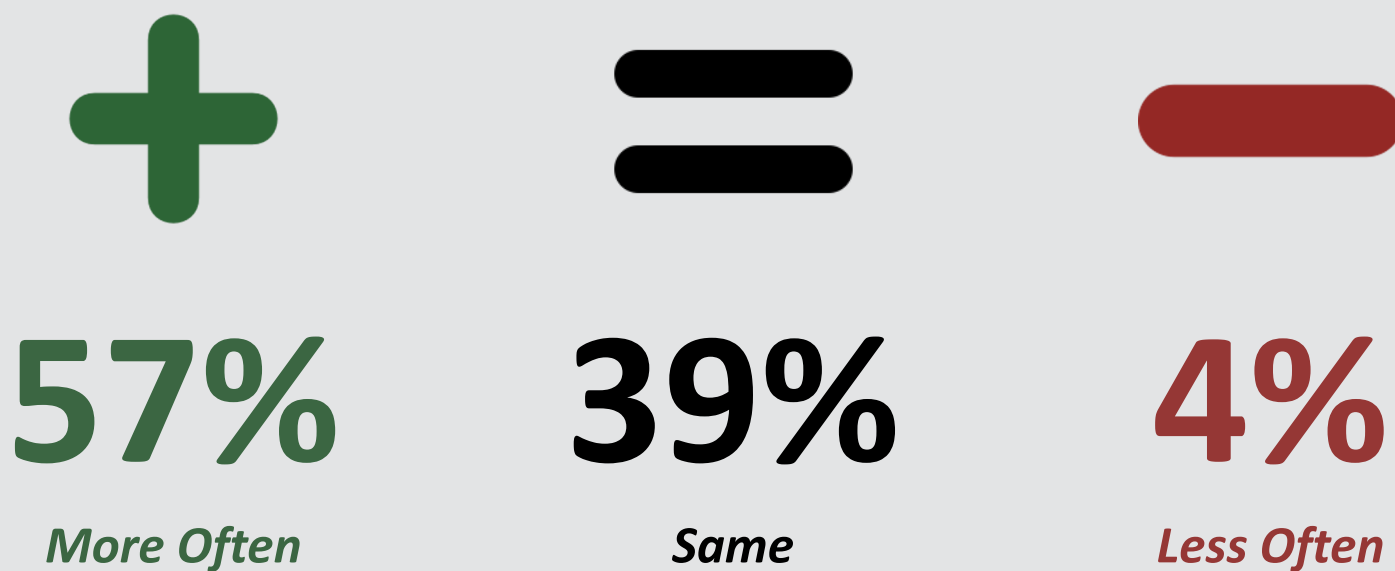


Outdoor Recreation in the West

The vast majority of Westerners say that they plan to visit national public lands more often in the year to come, even though nearly all visited these places and/or engaged in outdoor recreation in 2020. Crowding is cited as the greatest deterrent to visiting public lands more often in every state.

A majority of Westerners say they plan to visit national public lands more often in 2021. Fully 57 percent say they plan to go more often in the year to come if the pandemic is under control. New Mexico (66 percent) and Colorado residents (62 percent) are the most optimistic about their travel plans. The same is also true for newcomers to their state (63 percent plan to visit public lands more often this year). Those in cities and suburbs in the West also are planning to visit more often (60 percent and 61 percent respectively), while those in smaller towns and rural areas are about as likely to say they will visit more as the same amount they did this year.

Plans to Visit National Public Lands in the Year Ahead



Fully 88 percent of Westerners say they visited national public lands in the past year. The most frequent visitors (more than 20 visits) reside in Montana (34 percent report visiting more than 20 times), Wyoming (28 percent), and Idaho (24 percent). Those are also the three states with a majority who say they are a hunter or angler (60 percent sportsmen in Montana, 61 percent in Wyoming, and 53 percent in Idaho). Virtually all voters (99 percent) have visited national public lands before.

Hiking and camping are by far the most common outdoor activities, although Westerners recreate in a wide range of activities:



75%

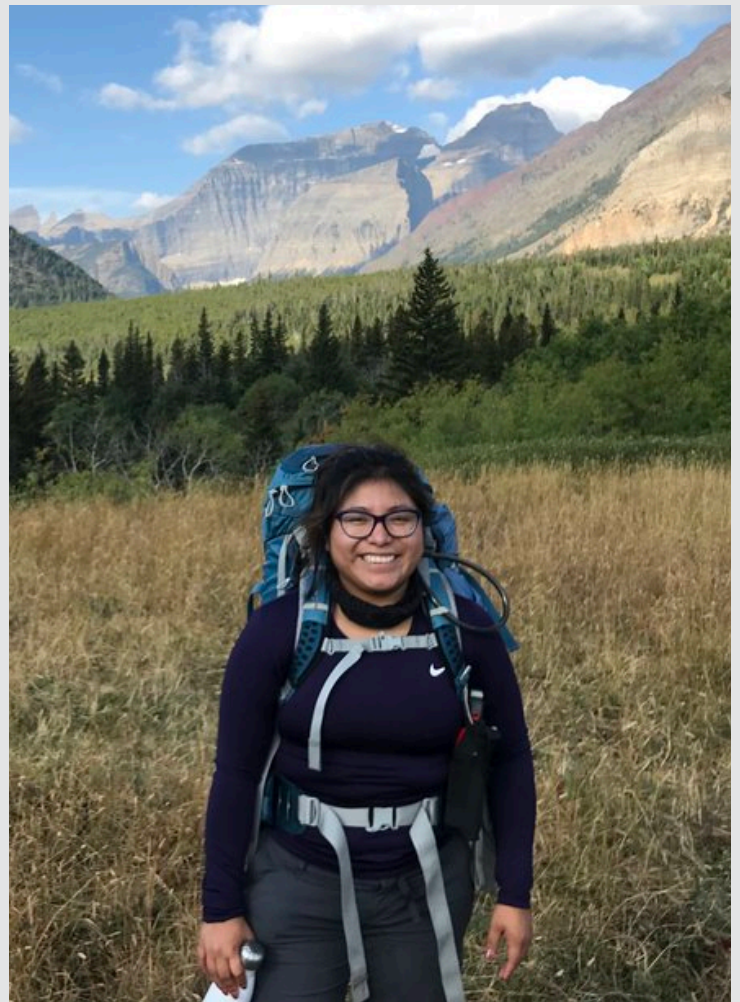
Hiking/Running/
Walking



47%

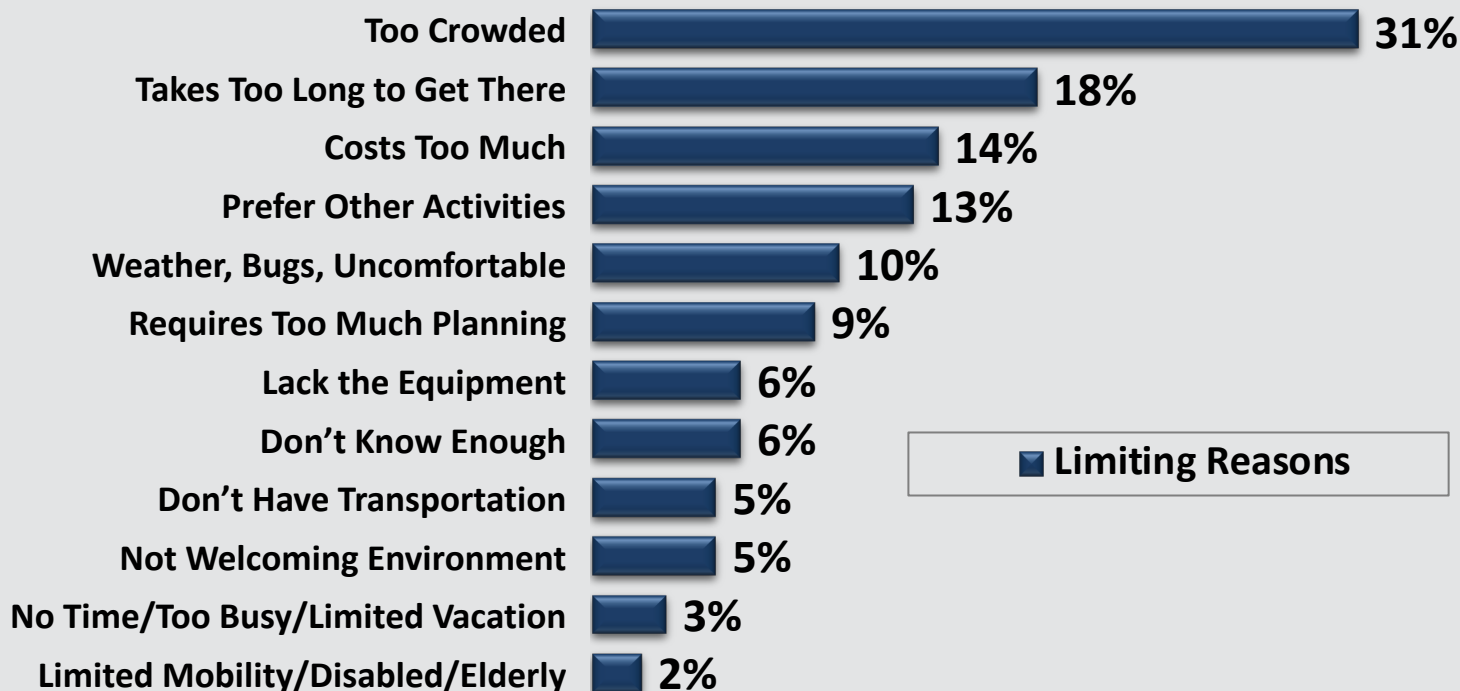
Camping

- Picnicking **34%**
- Hunting/Fishing **33%**
- Bird Watching/
Viewing Wildlife **31%**
- Boating/Rafting/Kayaking **27%**
- Sports **25%**
- Mountain/Trail Biking **22%**
- Off-Road/Snowmobile **21%**



Crowding is the greatest deterrent to visiting national public lands more often, topping concerns about distance or cost. Westerners were asked whether any of a range of issues limited how often they “might visit national public lands, such as national parks or national forests.” Crowding is by far the most frequently cited obstacle to visiting these places, topping mentions in every single state.

Reasons That Might Limit Visits to Public Lands



There were some distinctions in perceived obstacles, including:

- Voters who classify themselves as either lower income or working class are far more likely to say that cost is a factor (24 percent), compared to middle class (11 percent) or “well-to-do” respondents (just 5 percent).
- Latino voters are more concerned about how long it takes to get to national public lands (20 percent, tied with crowding at 19 percent).
- Black voters are nearly three times as likely to say they do not know enough about these places (15 percent) as voters overall.
- The youngest voters under the age of 35 are more likely to say that visiting these places requires “too much planning” (16 percent), but no more likely than older voters to point to cost, or a preference for different activities.

About one-in-ten voters say they have experienced hostility or felt unwelcome while visiting national public lands. Respondents who had visited national public lands in the last year were asked whether they had “ever experienced hostility or been made to feel unwelcome while visiting national public lands.” Just 11 percent say that has ever happened, and relatively similar responses by state except for a higher reporting among Wyoming residents (19 percent). Interestingly, race or ethnic background has little bearing on responses with 6 percent of Latinos, 12 percent of Black voters, 14 percent of Native American voters and 12 percent of white voters saying they had this kind of negative experience before. Interestingly, Republicans were twice as likely as Democrats to say they had experienced hostility at national public lands (14 percent and 7 percent, respectively).



Voters overwhelmingly support directing funding to increase access to parks and natural lands for lower-income people and communities of color. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) indicate support for “directing funding to ensure adequate access to parks and natural areas for lower-income people and communities of color that have disproportionately lacked them.” A near majority (46 percent) strongly support allocating funding in this manner. Only one-in-four (25 percent) express opposition. While support is significant in every state, it is especially strong among voters of color and lower income/working class voters, as seen in the accompanying graph.



Funding to Ensure Adequate Access for Lower-Income and Communities of Color

