



THE COLORADO COLLEGE
STATE OF THE ROCKIES PROJECT

Conservation in the West Poll

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NEW SURVEY: CLEAN AIR AND WATER, OUTDOOR LIFESTYLE, AND PUBLIC LANDS CITED AS TOP REASONS FOR LIVING IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST

Voters say protecting natural areas for future generations is an essential priority

COLORADO SPRINGS – Voters in six Western states say clean air and water, a healthy outdoor lifestyle, and access to public lands are the top reasons residents choose to live in the Mountain West, according to the new Colorado College State of the Rockies Project [Conservation in the West](#) poll released today.

“We’ve long known that public lands are a critical part of why people choose to live and work in the West, but our findings show that these remarkable places are truly the cornerstone of our lifestyle, our values, and what keeps us in the West,” said Dr. Eric Perramond, Director of the Colorado College State of the Rockies Project and a professor of environmental science and southwest studies. “Towns and cities across the West have a unique competitive advantage over other regions – access to the peaks, canyons, and rivers found on national public lands.”

This year’s bipartisan survey of 2,400 registered voters across six states assessed voter attitudes on a range of issues, including land use, water supplies, the impact of public lands on the economy, and reasons why Americans choose to live in the Mountain West. Notably, when asked to name their top factors for living in the West, respondents say access and recreation on public lands outweigh economic opportunities, quality of education, and quality of healthcare.

Key findings include:

- 96 percent of respondents say an important priority for public lands management is protecting public lands for future generations.
- 96 percent of respondents also favor ensuring access on public lands for recreational activities.
- 95 percent of respondents report visiting national public lands at least once in the last year.
- 80 percent of respondents support presidents continuing to protect existing public lands and monuments.
- A mere 17 percent of respondents support selling off public lands to reduce the deficit.

This is the fifth consecutive year Colorado College has gauged public sentiment on conservation issues in the West. The 2015 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, MT, NM, UT, WY) for a total 2,400-person sample. The survey was conducted December 29, 2014 and January 3 through 11, 2015, and yields a margin of error of +/-2.9 percent nationwide and +/-4.9 statewide. The full survey and individual state surveys are available [here](#), 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 3 1/2-week segments. For the past twelve years, the college also has run the [State of the Rockies Project](#), which seeks to increase public understanding of vital issues affecting the Rocky Mountain West through annual reports, 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.

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