



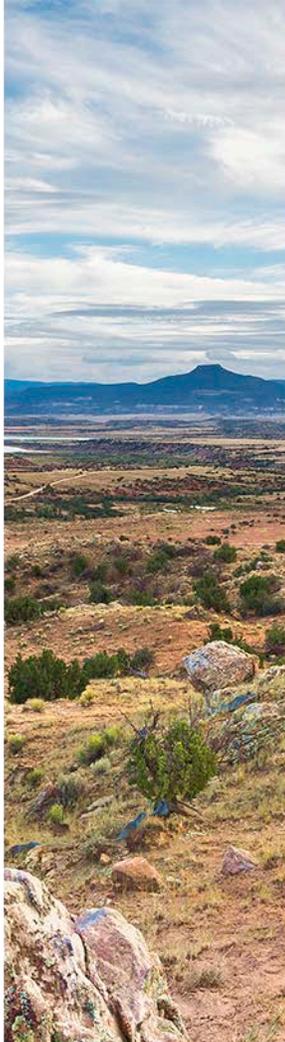
ARIZONA



COLORADO



MONTANA



NEW MEXICO



NEVADA



GOTTLIEB STRATEGIC RESEARCH

Key Findings

June 24, 2020

Prepared for:



Center for
Western Priorities



Center for Western Priorities

Public Lands Issues

Online Survey Among Likely Voters

Arizona, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada

JUNE 2-17, 2020

SAMPLE SIZES

ALL / LIKELY VOTERS = 2708

AZ = 600

CO = 600

MT = 408

NM = 500

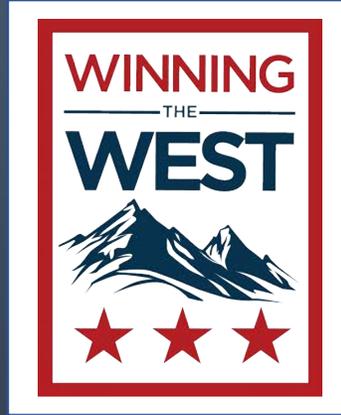
NV = 600

The margin of error (MOR) for the full sample of 2708 completed interviews is +/- 2%. The MOR for states with 600 interviews is +/- 4%. The MOR for states with 500 interviews is +/- 4%. The MOR for MT is +/- 5%. These calculations are based on the 95% confidence interval. There may be some differences between this document and the Topline document, and some charts may not add up to 100 due to rounding.



This survey was in the field while the country continued to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Major national and international events can have an impact on public opinion, as voters and other respondents change their life priorities. This survey gauges the pandemic's affect, if any, on public opinion when considering public lands issues in the West. We continue to track key issues important to Western voters in making their decisions on Election Day 2020.





Key Findings



GOTTLIEB STRATEGIC
—RESEARCH—

KEY FINDINGS

- Even during these trying times, public lands issues continue to be an important factor (81% important / 16% not important) in deciding who to vote for in the 2020 races for President, Senate and Congress. A third of voters (34%) say public lands issues are more important to them now than prior to the pandemic.
- Western voters believe that parks should reopen cautiously while restricting access to areas that see large crowds. An overwhelming majority of likely voters (95%) agree that it is possible to safely socially distance while also participating in outdoor activities on public lands. Three-quarters (75%) say they will visit national parks when the pandemic is over and it's safe to go outside (80% local parks, 69% local lake or river).
- A strong majority (69%) agree that face masks should be required to enter parks, trails and trailheads when other people are around.



KEY FINDINGS SLIDE 2

- Likely voters oppose providing federal support / stimulus to the oil & gas (34% Support / 56% Oppose), mining (36% Support / 53% Oppose), and coal (32% Support / 55% Oppose) industries to help businesses harmed by the COVID-19 economy and support providing federal stimulus funding to help outdoor recreation (66% Support / 25% Oppose), Western tourism (61% Support / 30% Oppose) and small businesses (72% Support / 21% Oppose).
- Most likely voters (59%) oppose loosening environmental protections during the pandemic (18% support). Western likely voters (53%) also believe that changes to environmental regulations should go through regular public comment and review periods as required prior to the pandemic, while only 22% support lifting regulations without waiting for public comment periods to end.
- Voters favor ensuring that air and water quality are high, and polluters are regulated by enforcing existing environmental laws (59%) over relaxing environmental regulations to get the economy back on track after the COVID-19 pandemic (18%).



KEY FINDINGS SLIDE 3

- Westerners in all 5 states strongly support several pro-public land proposals including:
 - Setting a national goal to conserve 30 percent of America's land and ocean areas by 2030 (75% Support / 15% Oppose)
 - Making public lands a net-zero source of carbon pollution (64% Support / 21% Oppose)
 - Increasing funding for maintenance and infrastructure on public lands (80% Support / 12% Oppose)
 - Investing in forest management to protect public lands, restore Western forests, and protect communities from wildfires (84% Support / 9% Oppose)
 - Fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund (74% Support / 14% Oppose)
 - Providing incentives for Western companies and consumers to invest in renewable energy sources (74% support / 17% oppose)
- Westerners choose the pro-public lands candidate over the pro-energy development candidate by a margin of more than 3 to 1, when presented with the choice between:
 - A candidate who believes in a balanced approach to energy development on public lands; that the outdoors are what define the West; who will make protecting our land, water and wildlife a top priority while supporting our recreation economy (55%)

//OR//

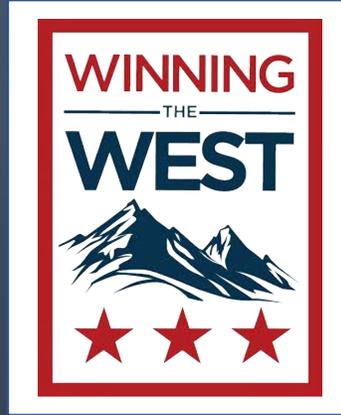
 - A candidate who says that federal bureaucrats overreach in their management of Western public lands and will prioritize local control and supports deregulating the energy industry (17%).



VOTER SNAPSHOT

<p>Other than the COVID-19 pandemic, do you think things in [INSERT STATE] are going in the right direction or have they gotten off on the wrong track?</p>	<p>52% Right Direction</p>	<p>39% Wrong Track</p>
<p>If the elections for Congress were held today, would you vote for the [ROTATE] Republican candidate, the Democratic candidate or a third-party candidate? If you are undecided, please indicate which candidate you lean towards at this time:</p>	<p>48% DEM</p>	<p>40% GOP</p>
<p>During this pandemic, while observing the laws, have you been able to get outside and enjoy open spaces and the outdoors?</p>	<p>86% YES</p>	<p>14% NO</p>
<p>Has the COVID-19 virus pandemic affected your employment status?</p>	<p>24% Negative Impact</p>	<p>74% No Change</p>
<p>Do you know anyone who has been diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus?</p>	<p>25% YES</p>	<p>73% NO</p>





Attitudes towards general public lands issues and proposals during the COVID-19 pandemic



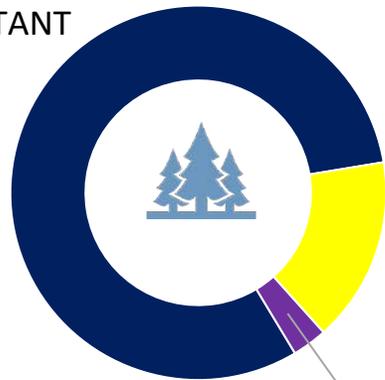
GOTTLIEB STRATEGIC
—RESEARCH—

Public lands, parks and wildlife continue to be very important factors when Western voters decide who to vote for

The issue's intensity remains high across all states and parties.

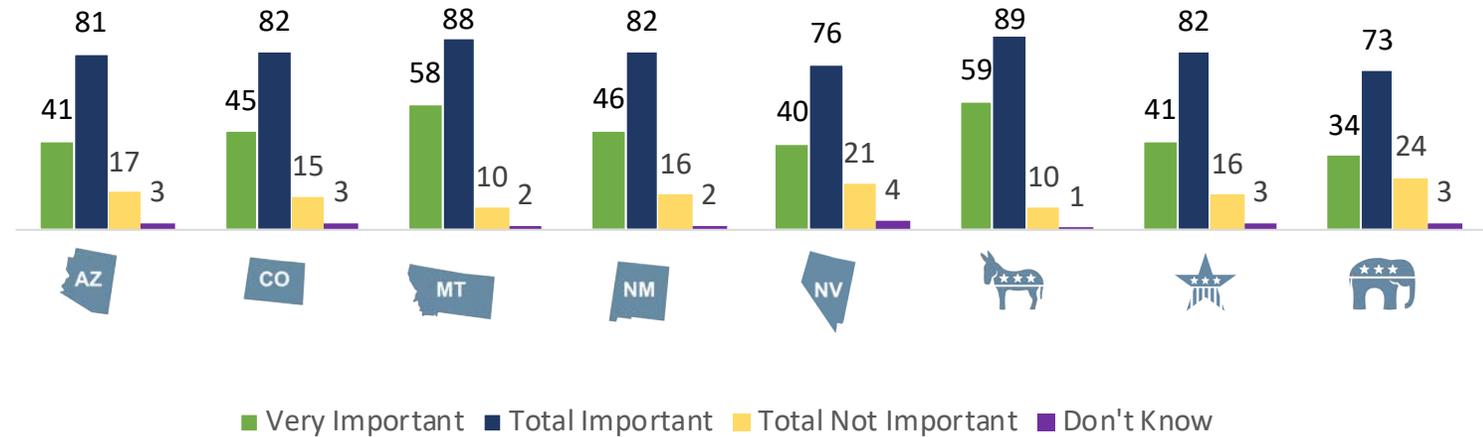
And thinking about the 2020 elections, how important are national public lands, parks and wildlife issues in [INSERT STATE] to you in deciding which candidate to vote for in the races for President [ALL BUT NV ADD: , Senate] and Congress?

81%
IMPORTANT



16%
NOT
IMPORTANT

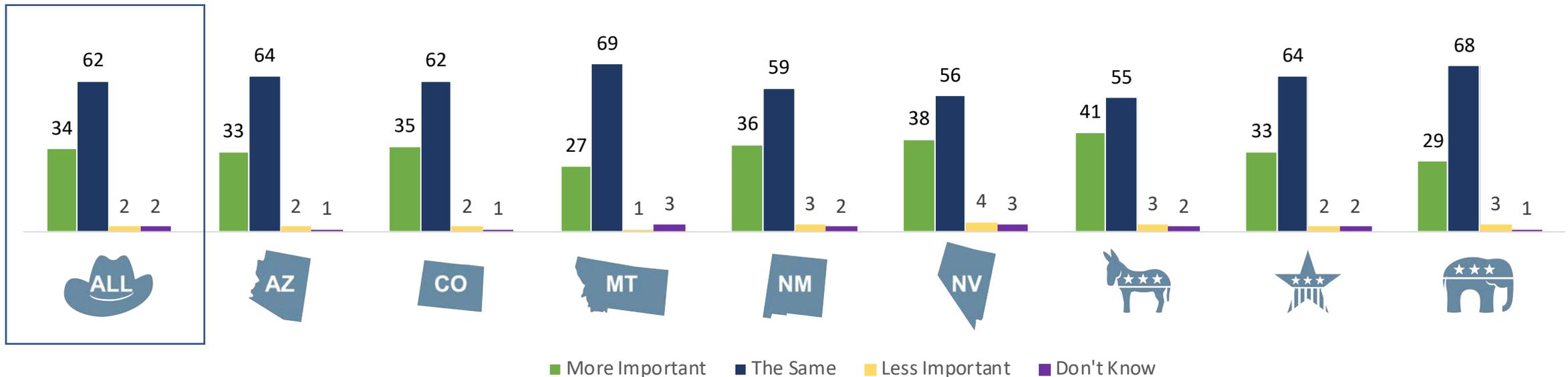
DON'T KNOW, 3



A third of voters say public lands issues are more important to them now than prior to the pandemic

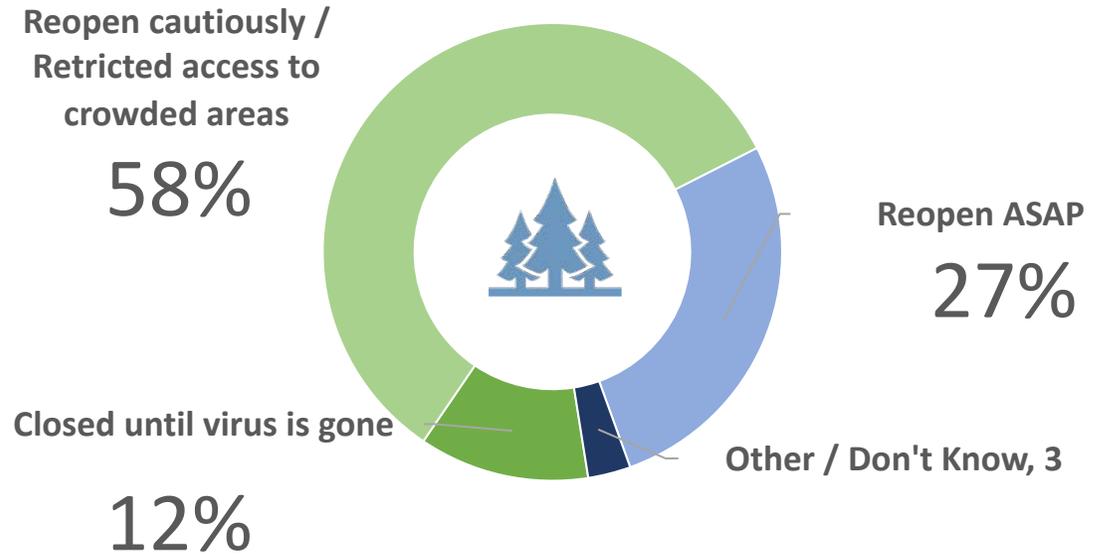
These results hold with GOP and Independent voters.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your opinion on the importance of public lands, parks and wildlife issues? – would you say these issues are:



Western voters believe that parks should reopen cautiously; most agree that it is possible to safely socially distance and participate in outdoor activities

During the COVID-19 shut-down, some more heavily visited national parks, such as the Grand Canyon, were kept open to visitors in late March, while other public spaces were being closed. Policy makers have been debating about how soon to reopen national parks to tourists. Which one of the following options is closest to your point of view?



95% Agree

“It is possible to safely socially distance yourself while also participating in outdoor activities on public lands like walking, hiking, biking and fishing.”

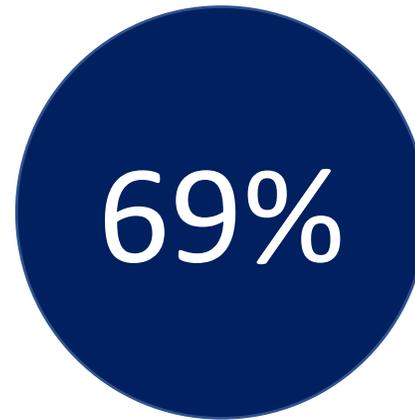


More than two-thirds say face coverings should be required to enter parks, trails or trailheads when other people are around

As parks, trails and other outdoor spaces reopen to the public, many social distancing practices are still in place, including wearing face coverings or masks when in areas with lots of people. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree that face coverings or masks be required to enter parks, trails or trailheads when other people are around?



Strongly Agree



Total Agree

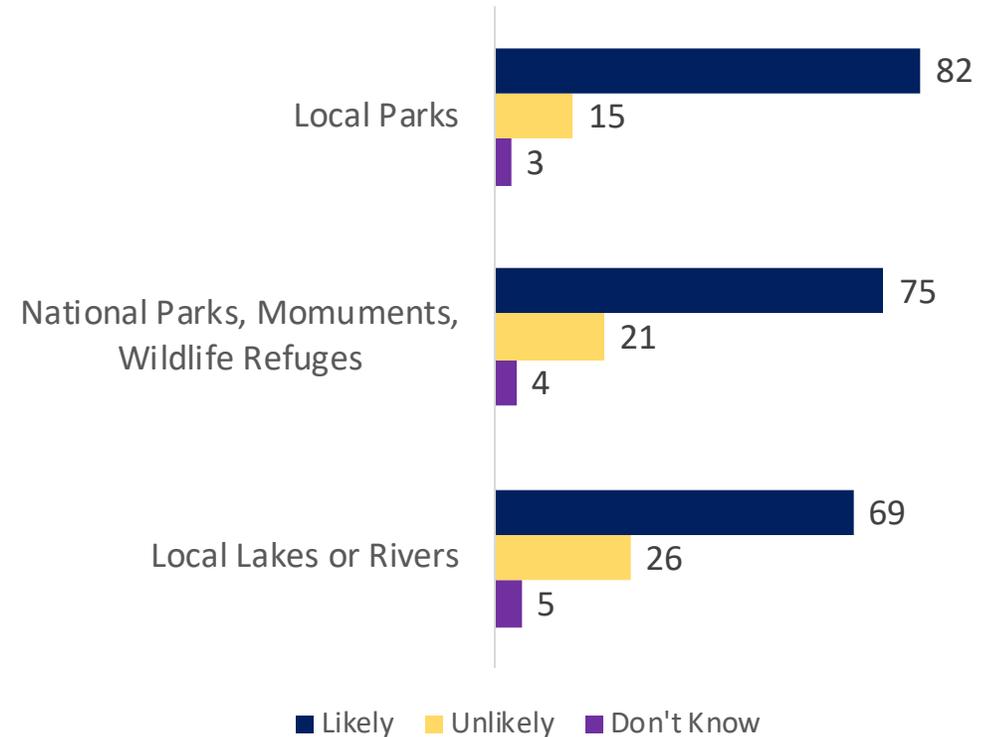


Total Disagree



Most say they will visit a national or local park, lake or river when safe to do so

For each of the following places, please indicate how likely are you to visit that place when the pandemic is over and it's safe to go outside:



Likely voters oppose providing COVID-19 federal stimulus to the oil & gas, mining and coal industries

For each one, please indicate if you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose providing direct federal support for that business or other entity?

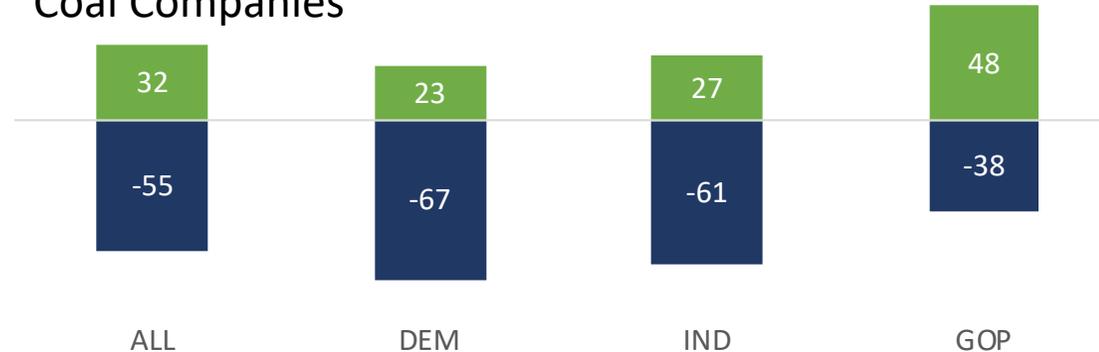
Oil & Gas Companies



Mining Companies



Coal Companies



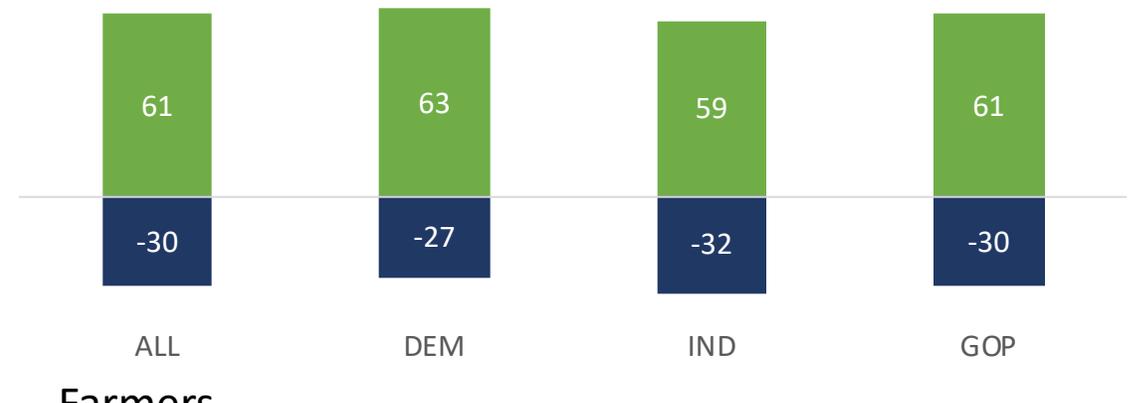
Likely voters support providing COVID-19 federal stimulus to outdoor recreation, Western tourism, small businesses and farmers

For each one, please indicate if you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose providing direct federal support for that business or other entity?

Outdoor recreation companies

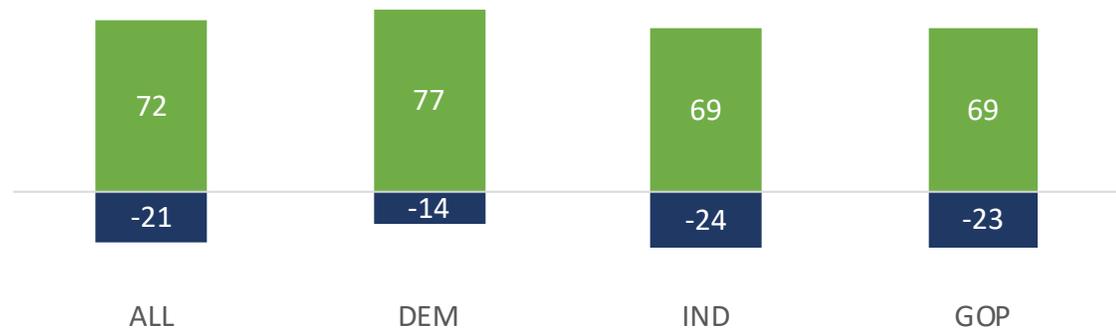


Western tourism related companies

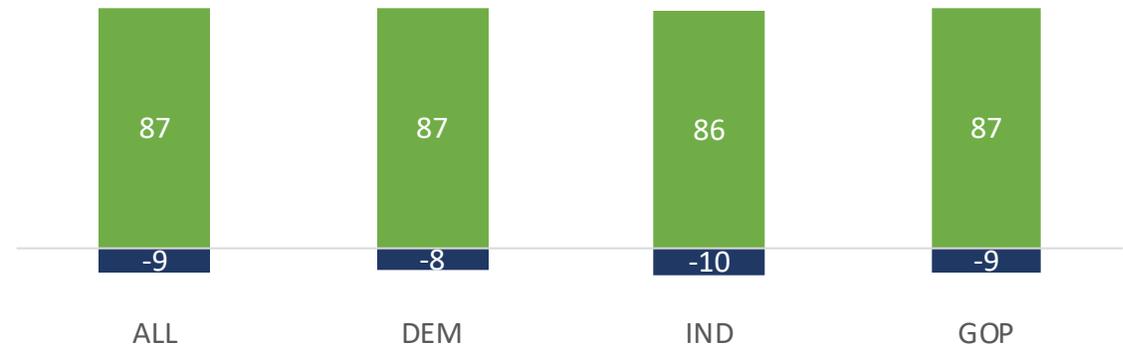


Small businesses

Those affected by canceled events, like the Telluride Bluegrass Festival



Farmers

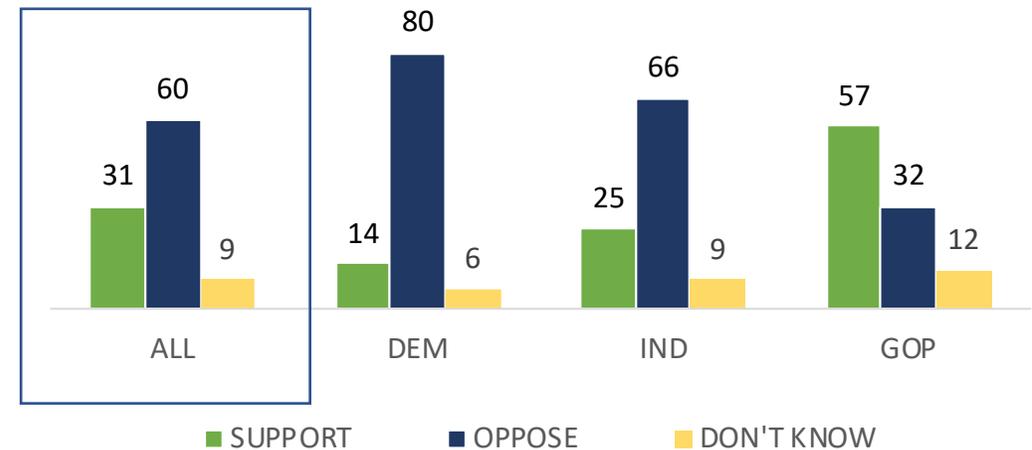
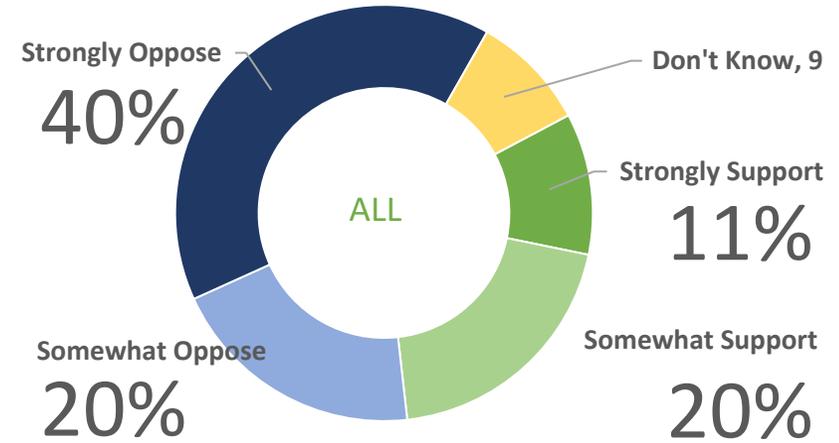


Most Westerners oppose the Administration's efforts to loosen environmental rules

GOP likely voters support the Administration's efforts to loosen rules

During the pandemic, the federal government has approved many regulatory reforms that lifted environmental protections. For example, the Administration loosened air quality standards for offshore drilling, allowed an expansion of new mining operations on public lands, and proposed removing penalties on energy companies for harming birds in oil spills.

Based on what you know, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the administration's efforts to loosen environmental rules?



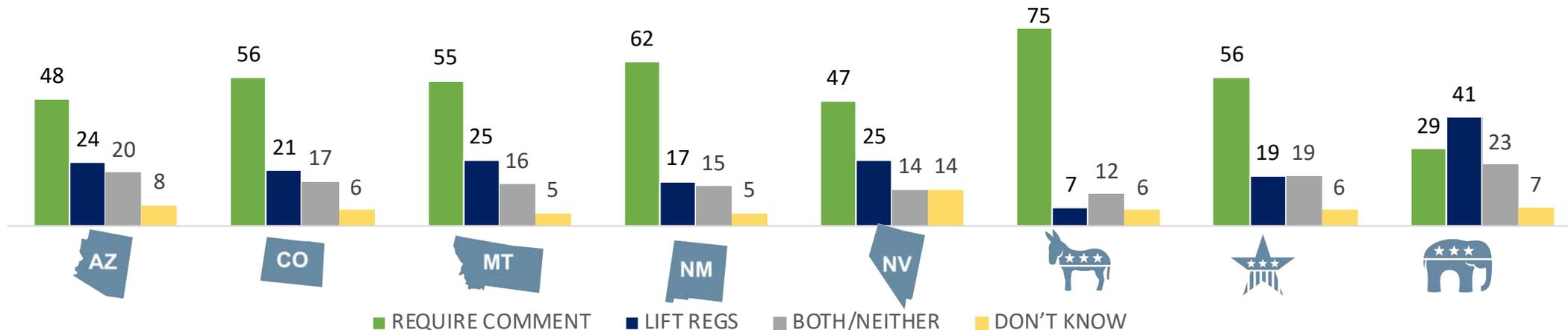
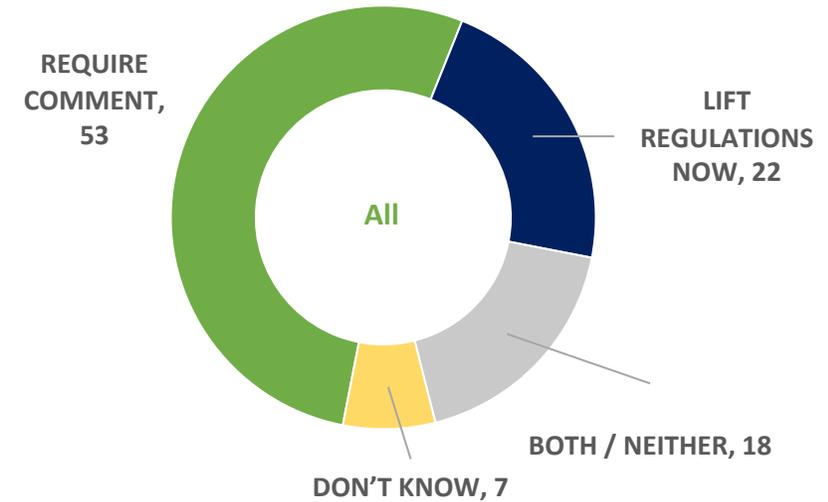
Voters agree that changes to major environmental regs should go through regular public comment, even under COVID-19

Changes to major environmental regulations should need to go through the regular public comment and review period as required prior to the pandemic; these changes should not be rushed to approval without proper public comment.

We don't have time to wait for months of public comment to lift burdensome regulations on companies and small businesses. Without regulatory relief, business won't be able to create the much-needed jobs to get the economy going again.

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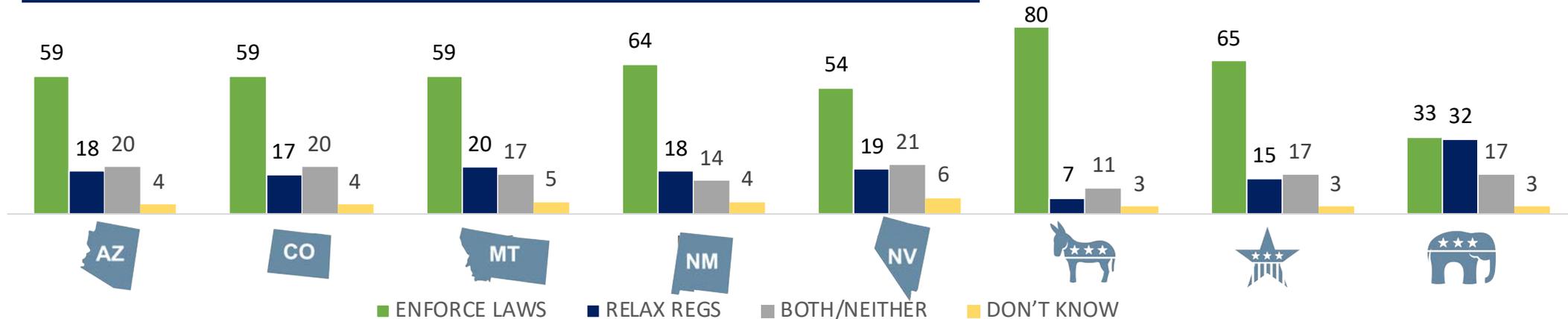
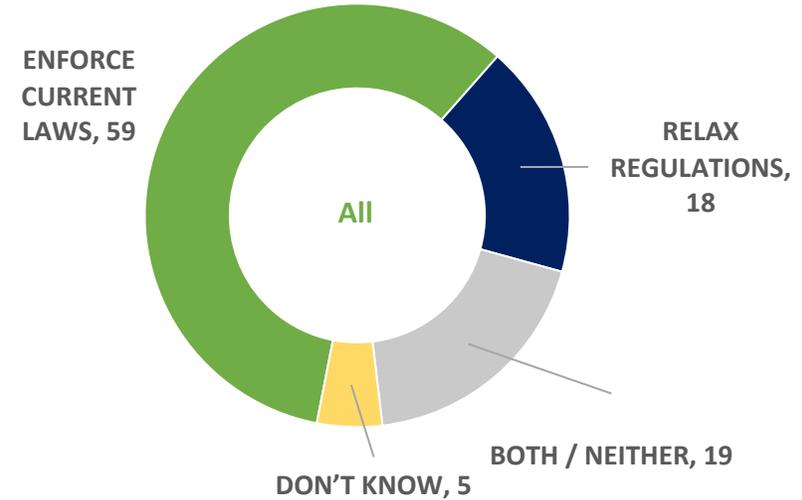
Voters agree environmental protections matter more than ever; we must enforce current environmental laws

Our environmental protections matter now, more than ever. We must ensure that air and water quality are high, and polluters are regulated by **enforcing the current environmental laws we have on the books** and keep them in place to protect us well into the future.

To get the economy back on track after the COVID-19 pandemic, the **United States needs to relax environmental protection regulations to promote economic growth** during these tough times and ensure that businesses can move quickly to invest, drill, and build.

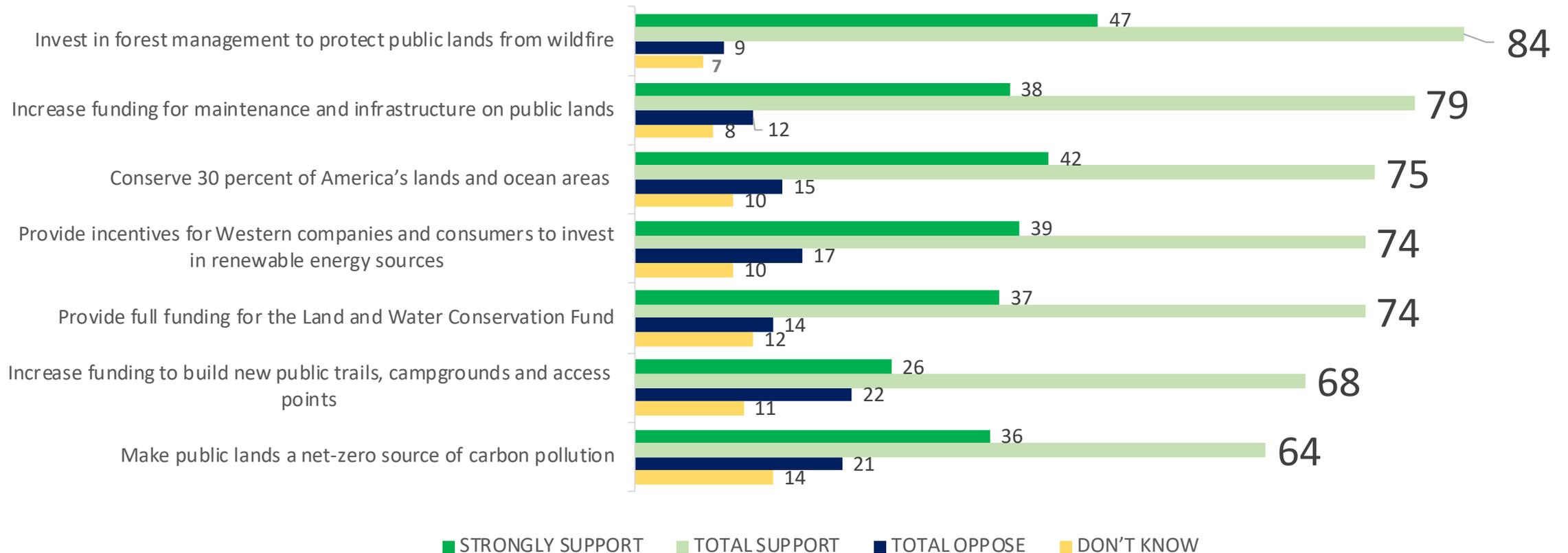
59

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Westerners in all 5 states strongly support several pro-public land proposals

For each of the following environmental and public land proposals, please indicate whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose each one.



Western voters favor protecting Native American sacred land over opening it up to oil and gas development

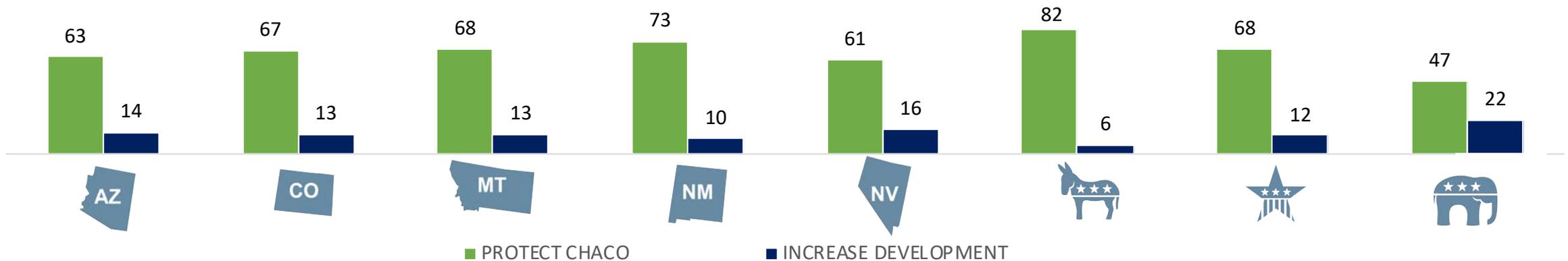
The Trump Administration is proposing plans to allow increased oil and gas drilling near the **Chaco Culture National Historical Park in New Mexico**. The area was a hub of ancient civilizations and is held sacred to many tribes. Tribal nations and archaeologists have called for a 10-mile no-drilling buffer zone around the park to protect it and the surrounding cultural resources. Between the following statements, which one is closest to your point of view?

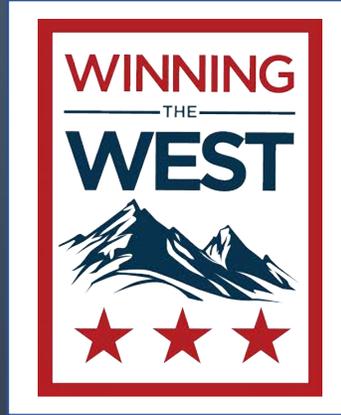
The Administration should respect tribal requests and create a 10-mile buffer zone around the park to protect it from development.

The Administration should open up more public land near the park to oil and gas development to create jobs and income for local communities

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Candidate Descriptions

Respect for Public Lands Still Critical to Winning the West



GOTTLIEB STRATEGIC
—RESEARCH—

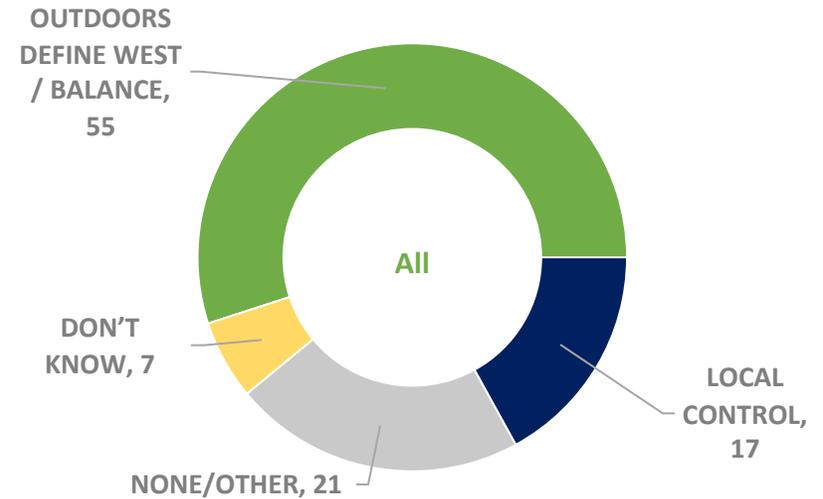
Western voters support balanced, pro-conservation candidates

Now I am going to read you a couple of descriptions of potential political candidates. Between the following two candidates, which one are you most likely to vote for?

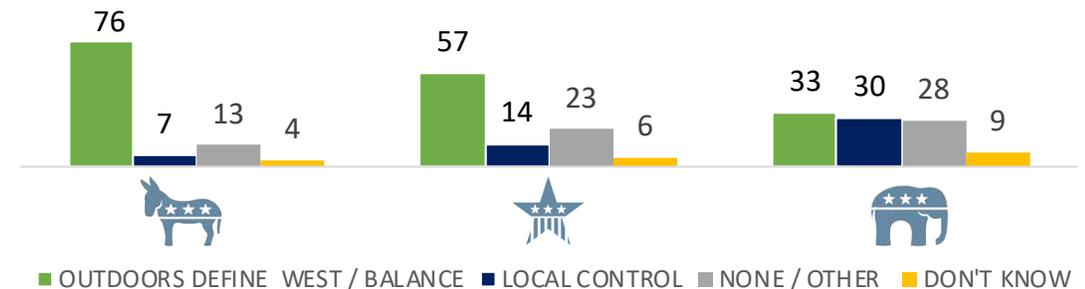
A candidate who believes that the outdoors are what define the West; who will make protecting our land, water, and wildlife a top priority to support our quality of life and our recreation economy; and who believes that we can have energy development on public lands if we manage it in a balanced way, with safeguards on oil and gas development and a preference toward approving clean wind and solar power

A candidate who says that federal bureaucrats overreach in their management of Western public lands. This candidate will, if elected, prioritize local control on national public lands; is someone who believes that we need to deregulate the energy and mining industries to ensure that we are giving oil and gas companies the access they need to produce enough domestic energy to make America energy independent as soon as possible while creating good paying jobs in the West.

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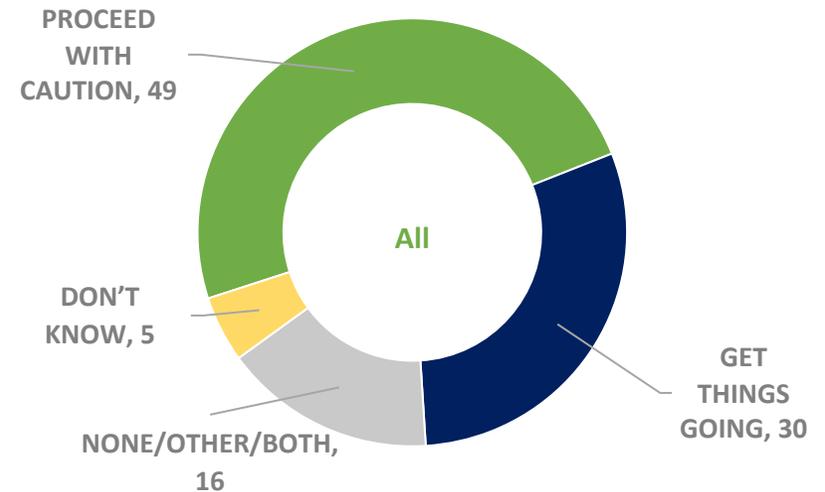
When it comes to COVID-19, voters are more likely to support cautious candidates over risk takers

Now I am going to read you a couple of descriptions of potential political candidates. Between the following two candidates, which one are you most likely to vote for?

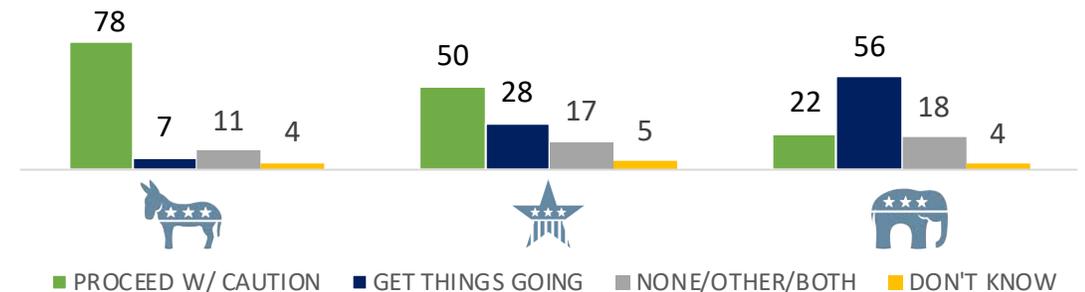
A candidate who says it's better to be safe than sorry; that this country needs to proceed with caution when opening up the economy, schools and public places; we need to ensure that protecting public health is our first priority. And says that when it comes to public health, science, not politics should drive the decisions about when it's safe to reopen.

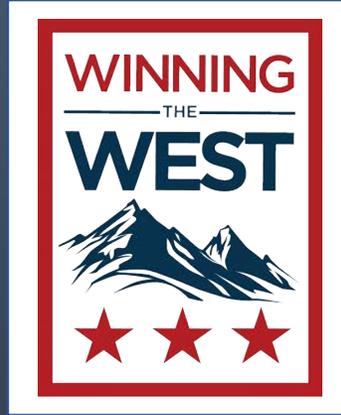
A candidate who says the economy has been shut down for too long. Public health is important, and we've flattened the curve; now we know how to control this virus if it spikes again. Taxpayers can't keep writing trillion-dollar checks at the expense of future generations who will be saddled with paying it back for decades. It's time to get things going and get back to our normal way of life as soon as possible.

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Messaging



GOTTLIEB STRATEGIC
—RESEARCH—

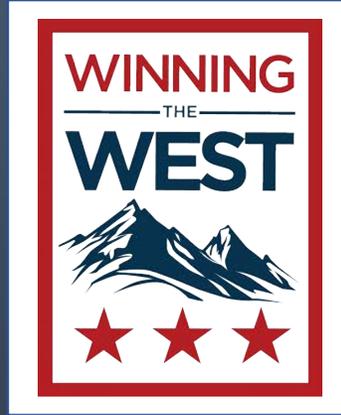
Voters are likely to support candidates who believe that protecting public lands is part of our Western way of life

The following are some statements about the future of public lands based on what the candidates running for office in 2020 might say, on a scale of 0 through 10, indicate how likely you would be to vote for a candidate who made this statement. 0 means you are extremely unlikely to vote for a candidate like this and a 10 means you are extremely likely to vote for a candidate like this.

TOP MESSAGES

	ALL	DEM	IND	GOP
Protecting our public lands, waters and wildlife is part of our Western way of life. Hunters, hikers and families expect these lands to be protected -- from soaring mountains to our deepest valleys. That's what makes the West a special place to live.	7.1	8.0	7.1	6.4
Public lands and parks provide some of the best opportunities to invest in America and get our people back to work. Shovel ready projects like repairing roads, trails and visitor centers will improve these places and help the economy; let's get America working and protect the outdoors – it's more important now than ever before.	6.9	7.5	6.8	6.5
Our public lands and natural resources transcend politics. Republicans and Democrats have protected and ensured access to treasured lands, mountains and deserts since the days of Teddy Roosevelt. We can't let our current dysfunctional politics stop what America does best, creating parks and monuments, ensuring public lands stay public.	6.9	7.9	6.9	6.0
We need to protect MORE parks and public lands, creating more treasured places for Americans to visit and explore. More open spaces will help us spread out and enjoy our outdoor heritage, while leaving a legacy for the next generation.	6.8	8.0	6.8	5.6
With drought, wildfires, mudslides and unpredictable weather, climate change has made it clear that it's more important than ever to protect our natural resources, public lands and open spaces.	6.8	8.3	6.7	5.3





APPENDIX



GOTTLIEB STRATEGIC
—RESEARCH—

VOTER SNAPSHOT

Western likely voters enjoy many outdoor activities

