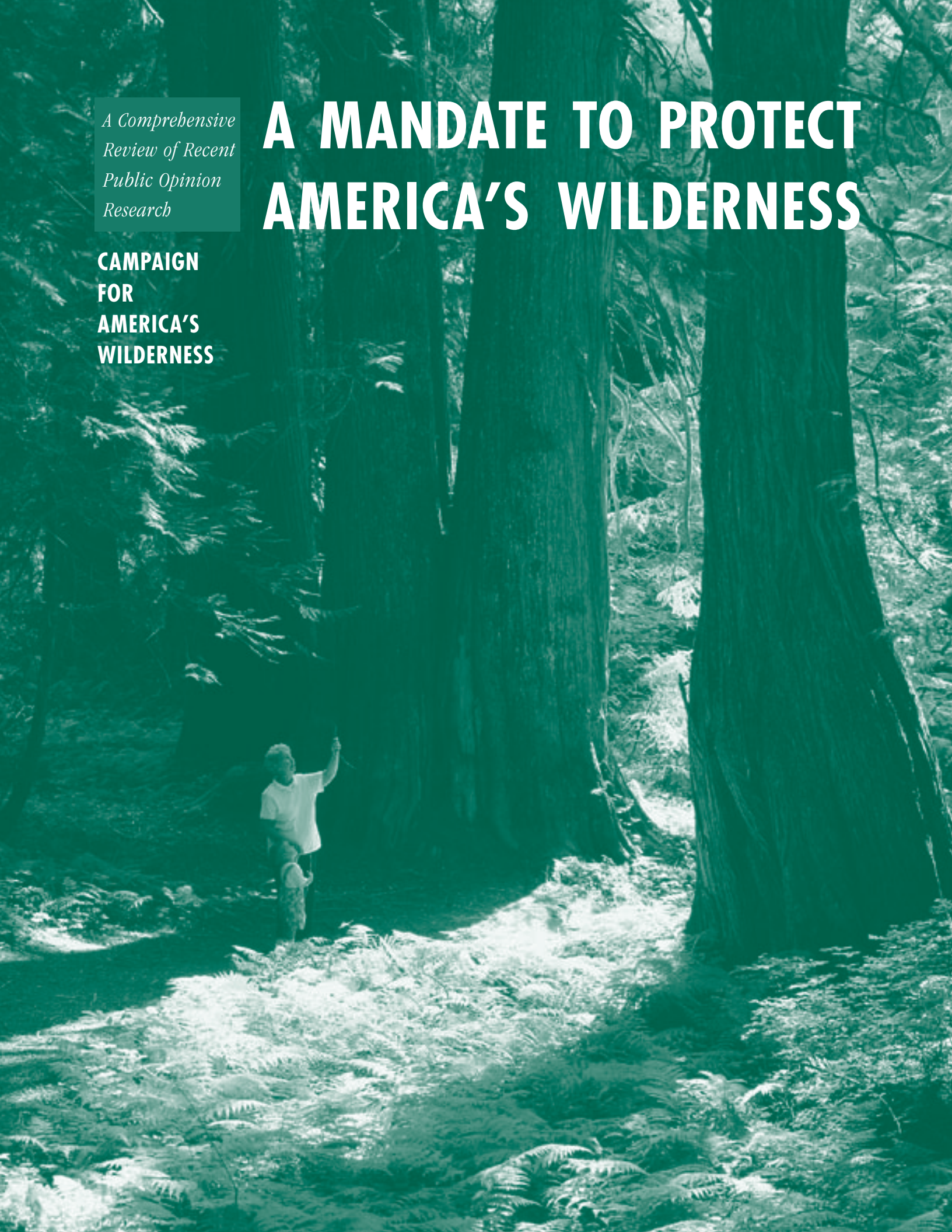


*A Comprehensive
Review of Recent
Public Opinion
Research*

A MANDATE TO PROTECT AMERICA'S WILDERNESS

**CAMPAIGN
FOR
AMERICA'S
WILDERNESS**



The *Campaign for America's Wilderness* works with grassroots wilderness advocates to add public land to the National Wilderness Preservation System for the benefit of future generations.

CAMPAIGN FOR AMERICA'S WILDERNESS

122 C Street NW, Suite 240
Washington DC 20001
Tel 202/544-3691
Fax 202/544-5197
WWW.LEAVEITWILD.ORG

Durango
New York
Portland
Seattle

A MANDATE TO PROTECT AMERICA'S WILDERNESS

- Surveys of public opinion taken over the past four years by commercial polling firms and the media—and by the federal government itself—consistently find that the American people treasure the heritage of wilderness on their public lands.
- The American people want to see more of their federal lands preserved as wilderness—consistently and by wide margins.
- The very high level of support for protecting more wilderness is broadly shared:
 - Geographically, registering in nationwide, state and local polls
 - Among both urban and rural residents
 - Across the political spectrum
 - Among all ages and ethnicities
- Strongly held values drive this majority support for protecting more wilderness. These values go far beyond on-site recreational use of wilderness areas, reflecting:
 - A strong and fundamental sense of duty to preserve a legacy of wildness for future generations
 - Very high appreciation for the “ecological services” of wilderness—clean water, clean air, habitat for wildlife
 - A commitment to protecting wild scenic landscapes to enjoy from the roadside as well as the trail
- Americans believe decisions about the fate of their federal lands that could be—but are not yet—protected as wilderness should be made in the national interest.

This report is based on a comprehensive review of public opinion polls concerning wilderness taken in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002. In this first review of its kind, we sought to include all credible polling touching on wilderness. The support for preserving wilderness—and more of it— is highly consistent through them all. The findings of polls by commercial firms and the media are confirmed by academic surveys and, most notably, in intensive polling done by the U.S. government.

More than ever before, in the words of President Lyndon Johnson, there is “informed public opinion demanding that we maintain our wilderness birthright.”

Douglas W. Scott
Policy Director
Campaign for America's Wilderness
January 2003

This is one in a series of *Campaign for America's Wilderness* Research Reports on topics pertinent to wilderness preservation. All are available at www.leaveitwild.org/reports/index.html. Details about any of the polls may be obtained from dscott@leaveitwild.org, 206/342-9212.

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January 2003

Photo credits:

The photo on the front cover is of the Hobo Cedar Grove, Grandmother Mountain, Idaho Panhandle National Forest. The photo opposite page 42 is Willow Creek draining into Fish Creek, Clearwater National Forest, Idaho. These are by Chuck Pezeshki, <http://users.moscow.com/pezeshki>. The photo opposite page 1 is in the Missouri River Breaks National Monument, Montana, courtesy of the Bureau of Land Management.

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CAMPAIGN
for AMERICA'S WILDERNESS



"TO THE PIONEER OF HISTORY THE WILDERNESS WAS A FOE TO BE CONQUERED, SO THAT HE MIGHT MAKE FARMS AND PASTURES OUT OF THE ENDLESS FORESTS.

TODAY'S PIONEER HAS A NEW PURPOSE—TO PRESERVE SOME REMNANTS OF THAT WILDERNESS FROM THE ONRUSH OF MODERN CIVILIZATION.

THE AX AND THE PLOW WILL NOT SERVE US IN THIS STRUGGLE. TODAY'S INSTRUMENTS ARE MORE SUBTLE. THEY ARE PROGRESSIVE LAW AND INFORMED PUBLIC OPINION DEMANDING THAT WE MAINTAIN OUR WILDERNESS BIRTHRIGHT."

PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON
FEBRUARY 14, 1966

“AN ENDURING RESOURCE OF WILDERNESS”

In 1964, CONGRESS ENACTED AND THE PRESIDENT SIGNED “AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM FOR THE PERMANENT GOOD OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE”—THE WILDERNESS ACT.

The Wilderness Act is a landmark in world conservation history. In ringing phrases the law states the national policy “to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.” The goal is –

to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition.¹

An April 2001 nationwide *Los Angeles Times* poll shows just how strongly the American people today share the congressional purpose set forth in the Wilderness Act. This poll—like scores of others—documents the overwhelming consensus (91% to 7% in this poll) of the American people that preserving wilderness areas and open spaces is personally important to them. A majority (51%) says preserving wilderness and open spaces is extremely important, while only a tiny minority (7%) says it is not very important or not important at all.²

PERSONAL IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING WILDERNESS: NATIONAL OPINION

Important	91%
Extremely	51
Somewhat	40
Not important	7
Not very	5
Not at all	2
Don't know	2

FIGURE

1



“WHAT I HAVE BEEN PREPARING TO SAY IS, THAT IN WILDERNESS IS THE PRESERVATION OF THE WORLD.”

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

“WALKING” (1862), IN *WALDEN*

¹ The Wilderness Act, 16 U.S.C. 1131-1136. For the complete text of the law, see <http://www.leaveitwild.org/reports/wilderness1964.html>

² *Los Angeles Times* poll, April 2001, N=813 adults. QUESTION: “How important is it to you personally that wilderness and open spaces are preserved? Is it extremely important, or somewhat important, or not very important, or isn’t the preservation of wilderness and open spaces important to you at all?”

In partial fulfillment of the promise of the Wilderness Act, Congress has designated 106 million acres of federal land for permanent statutory protection, in 44 states. This is just 4.7 percent of our nation's landmass. But far more roadless public land that could be protected remains. This is the unprotected wilderness . . . as much as 319 million acres. Thus seven out of eight acres of the wilderness Americans use and cherish are *not* protected by law.³

WHERE WILDERNESS FITS INTO THE PUBLIC'S ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Concern for the wise protection of public lands, forests, and wilderness has been a part of American life since the time of John Muir and Teddy Roosevelt.

Since the first Earth Day in 1970, Americans have raised the health of the environment and protection of their public lands to the position of a major national issue—for themselves as consumers and voters, and for their elected officials. Today, large majorities of Americans support strong government regulations to protect public lands, natural resources, and the environment.

Americans do not see their environmental goals as requiring a trade-off with economic growth. Large majorities believe environmental protection and economic growth can be accomplished at the same time—and expect their government to work for both.

For decades, surveys have indicated very strong public support for tough enforcement of the nation's environmental laws—regardless of costs. In the *New York Times/CBS News* poll, respondents are asked whether they agree or disagree that “protecting the environment is so important that requirements and standards cannot be too high and continuing environmental improvements must be made regardless of cost.” A large majority of Americans agree with this statement by a margin of about 20 points—and this margin has remained consistent in the polling since September 11, 2001.⁴

PROTECT ENVIRONMENT AT ANY COST: NATIONAL OPIONION

	<i>June 2001</i>	<i>January 2002</i>	<i>November 2002</i>
Agree	57%	56%	57%
Disagree	38	39	36
Don't know/No answer	5	4	7

FIGURE
2

³ Details and maps of wilderness areas in each state are available at www.leaveitwild.org/wildernessmap/index.html. The history of wilderness preservation is summarized in the Campaign for America's Wilderness report *A Wilderness-Forever Future: A Short History of the National Wilderness Preservation System* (June 2001). Details about the scale of unprotected wilderness are found in the Campaign's report *America's Wilderness Heritage in Crisis: Our Vanishing Wild Landscape* (September 2002). Both are found at www.leaveitwild.org/reports/index.html. Not all of the 319 million acres of unprotected wilderness will ever be designated as wilderness, but they merit thorough on-the-ground study and fair consideration.

⁴ *New York Times/CBS News* poll, June 2001, N=1,050 adults; January 2002, N=1,034; November 20-24, 2002, N=996. QUESTION: “Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Protecting the environment is so important that requirements and standards cannot be too high, and continuing environmental improvements must be made regardless of the cost?”

Nor have voters accepted the current administration's view, inherent in its energy plan, that environmental and public land protection must be sacrificed to bolster domestic energy supplies. The *Gallup* poll found, in March 2001 (during a period of high sensitivity to energy supply issues) that a majority of voters (52%) agreed "protection of the environment should be given priority, even at the risk of limiting the amount of energy supplies—such as oil, gas and coal—which the United States produces." Only about one-third (36%) felt that development of such energy supplies should be given priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent.⁵

FIGURE
3

**ENVIRONMENT "VS." ENERGY:
NATIONAL OPINION**

<i>Protection of the environment</i>	<i>Development of energy supplies</i>	<i>Both equally (volunteered)</i>	<i>Neither/Other (volunteered)</i>	<i>No opinion</i>
52%	36%	6%	2%	4%

More than residents of any other state, Alaskans have been bombarded for decades with anti-wilderness propaganda from the oil and logging industries, frontier boosters, and politicians. Yet, when a May 2001 *Ivan Moore Research* poll presented the assertion that "concern for the environment should never take precedence over economic issues," Alaskans disagreed by more than a two to one margin over those who agreed (61% to 27%).⁶

FIGURE
4

**ECONOMIC ISSUES TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER THE ENVIRONMENT:
ALASKA OPINION**

Disagree	61%
Strongly disagree	38
Mildly disagree	23
Agree	27
Strongly agree	18
Mildly agree	9
Neutral	12

Three-quarters (73%) of self-identified progressives disagreed that environmental issues should never take precedence over economic issues; only one-fifth (21%) agreed. But notably, a majority of self-identified conservatives also disagreed (53%, 30% strongly so), while only a third (36%) agreed.

⁵ *Gallup* poll, March 2001, N=1,060 18 years and older. QUESTION: "With which one of these statements about the environment and energy production do you most agree— [Rotated: protection of the environment should be given priority, even at the risk of limiting the amount of energy supplies—such as oil, gas and coal—which the United States produces [or] development of U.S. energy supplies -- such as oil, gas and coal -- should be given priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent]?"

⁶ *Ivan Moore Research* poll, May 2001, N=265. QUESTION: "I am going to read you a list of opinion statements. Please tell me if you strongly agree, mildly agree, mildly disagree or strongly disagree with each statement I read: . . . Concern for the environment should never take precedence over economic issues."

Priority for Environmental Concern Before September 11

Not surprisingly, environment ranks as a somewhat lower priority for Americans than issues such as the economy, education, and crime. Nonetheless, environmental issues routinely rank as a major issue, as demonstrated in many surveys, including an April 2001 *Los Angeles Times* poll.⁷

IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING THE COUNTRY: NATIONAL OPINION

Economy/jobs	27%
Crime/drugs	15
Education	15
Environment	13
Morals/family values	10

FIGURE
5

Priority for Environmental Concern After September 11

Of course, the terrorist attacks of September 11 moved security issues to the top of public concerns, but this has not diminished the high priority Americans give to their expectation that the federal government address environment and pollution issues. An *IPSOS-Reid* poll taken in late October-early November 2001 shows a solid majority (55%) feel it is very important that the federal government address environment and pollution issues in the next twelve months, with only a tiny minority (9%) feeling it is not very or not at all important.⁸

IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS: NATIONAL OPINION

	<i>Very/ Somewhat important</i>	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Somewhat important</i>	<i>Not very/ Not at all important</i>	<i>Don't know/ Not sure</i>
Security issues	96%	82%	14%	2%	1%
Economic issues	95	69	26	4	1
Energy issues	95	69	26	4	1
Health care issues	92	66	26	8	--
Environment & pollution issues	91	55	36	9	--

FIGURE
6

⁷ *Los Angeles Times* poll, April 2001, N=813 adults. QUESTION: "What's the most important problem facing this country today? Is there another problem you think is almost as important?" (Accepted up to two replies)

⁸ *IPSOS-Reid* poll, October 25-November 10, 2001, N=532 adults nationwide. QUESTION: "Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important that the federal government address... in the next twelve months?"

FIGURE
7

In November 2002 *ReedHaldyMcIntosh* conducted an election eve poll for AARP among voters and likely voters age 45 or older. Respondents were asked how important various domestic issues are in choosing which candidates they would vote for in the election for Congress. Combining the “very important” and “somewhat important” responses, protecting Social Security and the economy ranked highest (95% each). The environment ranked equal with homeland security (90% each).⁹

Of particular interest is the bipartisan opinion on the importance of the environment as an issue in voters’ choices of how to vote. Overwhelming majorities of Democrats (92%), Republicans (83%) and Independents (93%) in this growing and politically active segment of the population said the environment was important in their voting decisions.

IMPORTANCE OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN VOTING DECISIONS
AMONG OLDER VOTERS: NATIONAL OPINION

	<i>Very important/ Somewhat important</i>
All respondents	90%
Democrats	92
Republicans	83
Independents	93

As these polls show, environmental concerns place high among priority concerns, though not in the highest tier for several reasons:

- Unless you live with an environmental threat that you can see and feel every day, other issues that you do experience daily, like healthcare and education take on greater immediacy.
- Americans hold a false sense of security that the government is protecting the country’s natural resources. When voters find out what is going on with much of their public lands—how much is open to logging and mining, and how little has been designated as wilderness—they are surprised and deeply concerned.



“I’M SURPRISED I HAVEN’T SEEN MORE DETERIORATION IN SUPPORT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SINCE SEPTEMBER 11, BUT ENVIRONMENTALISM HAS BECOME EMBEDDED IN THE CULTURE.”

CHARLES M. McLEAN

DENVER RESEARCH GROUP

QUOTED IN *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

JANUARY 13, 2002

⁹ *ReedHaldyMcIntosh* poll, November 2-4, 2002, N=1,000 age 45 or older. QUESTION: “I am going to read you a list of domestic issues that affect voters 45 or older and for each I would like you to tell me how important that issue is in your decision about which U.S. Congressional [and Senate] candidates to vote for. The next issue is [the environment] . . . would you say it is very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important in your decision about which US Congressional and senate candidates to vote for?” A separate question asked: “Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican/a Democrat/an Independent?”

AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF WILDERNESS PRESERVATION

Americans recognize that natural areas and open space will be increasingly threatened in the years ahead.

In a study conducted in June 1999 by *Luntz Research*, the public expressed more pessimism than optimism about the ability to enjoy places in nature in the future. Nearly four in ten (38%) said both the *number* and the *quality* of places in nature for Americans to enjoy would be worse in the next twenty years ¹⁰

OUTLOOK FOR *NUMBER* AND *QUALITY* OF PLACES IN NATURE TO ENJOY: NATIONAL OPINION

	<i>Number of places</i>	<i>Quality of places</i>
Better	22%	24%
Much better	7	4
Somewhat better	15	20
Worse	38	38
Somewhat worse	26	28
Much worse	12	10
About the same	37	35
Don't know/Refused	3	2

FIGURE
8

Americans' strong concern for places in nature to enjoy is demonstrated by mushrooming participation in many forms of outdoor recreation. The research arm of the U.S. Forest Service leads the multi-agency *National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE)*, an extensive inter-agency polling program on outdoor recreation trends and environmental issues. ¹¹ This work has continued for over forty years and now involves year-round surveying of an extraordinarily large sample. Among the topics explored in depth by the *NSRE* is wilderness preservation.

¹⁰ *Luntz Research* poll, June 1999, N=1,200, including an oversample of 300 among ten "Western/Mountain" states. QUESTION (1): "What about your ability to find places to enjoy nature and the outdoors? Over the next 20 years, do you think the number of the places you like to visit will be [read list] than they are today?" QUESTION (2): "What about your ability to find places to enjoy nature and the outdoors? Over the next 20 years, do you think the quality of the places you like to visit will be [read list] than they are today?"

¹¹ *National Survey on Recreation and the Environment* findings and related information can be accessed at www.srs.fs.fed.us/trends/. The *NSRE* continues a series begun in 1960 by the congressionally created Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission. Subsequent surveys in this series have been conducted in 1965, 1970, 1972, 1977, 1982-83, 1994-95, and 2000-2001 and this work is on-going. The *NSRE* is coordinated by the Forest Service's Recreation, Wilderness, and Demographic Trends Research Group, based at the Southern Research Station, Athens, GA. The project leader is Dr. H. Ken Cordell.

Before being asked a sequence of wilderness questions, *NSRE* respondents were provided general information about wilderness in an introductory statement:

The Wilderness Act of 1964 allows Congress to preserve certain federal lands in their wild condition. These lands cannot be used for purposes such as timber harvesting, developing ski resorts, or highways. To date, the Congress has added 625 areas to this National Wilderness Preservation System to protect wildlife, scenery, water, and recreation opportunities, and to keep these areas wild and natural.¹²

The *NSRE* response shows that many Americans (48%) express awareness of the fact that Congress protects wilderness by designating areas of federal land as units of the National Wilderness Preservation System [Figure 11].¹³

FIGURE
9

AWARENESS OF NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM:
NATIONAL OPINION

Yes	48%
No	51
Don't know/Refused	1

Both the *National Survey on Recreation and the Environment* and commercial polling show that by very substantial margins, Americans believe not enough of their federal land is protected as wilderness—both nationally and in their own states.



“UNDER THE WEIGHT OF TECHNOLOGY AND POPULATION EXPANSION, OUR ENVIRONMENT IS CHANGING FASTER THAN WE GAIN ABILITY TO CONTROL IT. IF IT IS TO BE A HOSPITABLE ENVIRONMENT RATHER THAN ONE THAT IS BARELY TOLERABLE, THE JOB OF CONSERVATION MUST BE ACCELERATED. THAT IS OUR ASSIGNMENT—AND I THINK THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE OUR LAND WILL BE WITH US.” SENATOR CLINTON P. ANDERSON (D-NM)

NOVEMBER 1964



¹² The *NSRE* researchers pre-tested the wording of this introductory statement. They found most people do not relate to a number like “106 million acres” (the current size of the National Wilderness Preservation System). Moreover, their testing found that including or not including this descriptor made no difference in responses.

¹³ *National Survey on Recreation and the Environment* poll, 2000-2001, N=10,468. QUESTION: “Were you aware that the Congress established this National Wilderness Preservation System?”

SHOULD MORE WILDERNESS BE PROTECTED? NATIONWIDE AND REGIONAL POLLS

In a June 1999 *Mellman Group* survey, nearly half of Americans (48%) felt that not enough wilderness has been protected. One-third (35%) felt that about the right amount has been protected, while a very small minority (8%) felt too much wilderness has been protected.¹⁴

NOT ENOUGH WILDERNESS PROTECTED: NATIONAL OPINION

Not enough	48%
About right	35
Too much	8
Don't know	9

FIGURE
10

The Federal government's *NSRE* polling confirms this finding: a near majority of American (49.2%) felt that Congress has not designated enough land as wilderness, less than one-third (29.6%) believe that the amount of land protected is about right, and only a tiny minority (5.9%) felt that too much has been protected.¹⁵

NOT ENOUGH LAND DESIGNATED AS WILDERNESS: NATIONAL OPINION

Not enough	49.2%
About right	29.6
Too much	5.9
Don't know/Refused	15.3

FIGURE
11



"WILDERNESS IS MELTING AWAY LIKE SOME LAST SNOWBANK ON SOME SOUTH-FACING MOUNTAIN SIDE DURING A HOT AFTERNOON IN JUNE. IT IS DISAPPEARING WHILE MOST OF THOSE WHO CARE MORE FOR IT THAN ANYTHING ELSE IN THE WORLD ARE TRYING DESPERATELY TO RALLY AND SAVE IT."

ROBERT MARSHALL

NATURE MAGAZINE

APRIL 1937

¹⁴ *The Mellman Group* poll, June 1999, N=800 likely voters. QUESTION: "Do you think the U.S. has protected too much wilderness, about the right amount, or has too little wilderness been protected—or don't you have an opinion on this?"

¹⁵ *NSRE* poll, 2000-2001, N=15,620. Question: "Do you think the amount of land the Congress has designated as wilderness is not enough, about the right amount, or too much?"

Strong support for protecting more federal land as wilderness is registered in every region of the country. The margin between “not enough” and “too much” is overwhelming in every region: ten to one in the Eastern half of the country, four to one in the Mountain states, and five to one in the Pacific states (includes Alaska).¹⁶

FIGURE
12

NOT ENOUGH LAND DESIGNATED AS WILDERNESS:
REGIONAL OPINION

	<i>Northeast</i>	<i>Midwest</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Mountain</i>	<i>Pacific</i>
Not enough	52.6%	50.2%	49.6%	45.7%	44.6%
About right	26.9	31.2	29.1	32.6	29.6
Too much	5.3	5.0	4.7	10.4	8.6
Don't know/Refused	15.2	13.6	16.7	11.3	17.2

Moreover, this overwhelming margin of support holds true for both urban respondents (nine to one) and rural respondents (six to one).¹⁷

FIGURE
13

NOT ENOUGH LAND DESIGNATED AS WILDERNESS:
URBAN/RURAL OPINION NATIONALLY

	<i>Metropolitan respondents</i>	<i>Non-metropolitan respondents</i>
Not enough	50.7%	43.5%
About right	28.4	34.0
Too much	5.6	7.4
Don't know/Refused	15.4	15.0

The message from the *NSRE* polling is clear: The protection of wilderness is nothing short of a mandate from the American people. Protecting more federal lands as wilderness is supported by overwhelming margins nationally, regionally and in rural America.

¹⁶ *NSRE* poll, 2000-2001, N: Northeast=2,942; Midwest=3,405; South=5,526; Mountain=1,348; Pacific=2,333. This data for the Northeast, Midwest and South is for those “regions” as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau; the data for the Mountain and Pacific states is for those “divisions” as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. QUESTION: “Do you think the amount of land the Congress has designated as wilderness is not enough, about the right amount, or too much?”

¹⁷ *NSRE* poll, 2000-2001, N: Metropolitan=12,452; Non-metropolitan=3,168. Metropolitan is defined as the U.S. Census Bureau’s “Metropolitan Statistical Area” counties; non-metropolitan is the non-MSA counties. QUESTION: “Do you think the amount of land the Congress has designated as wilderness is not enough, about the right amount, or too much?”

The *NSRE* also documents strong public support for government protection of wilderness *in the respondents' own states*. Seven in ten (69.8%) of the public favored designating *more* federal lands in their state as wilderness, with more than four in ten (42.5%) strongly in favor.¹⁸

DESIGNATE MORE FEDERAL LAND AS WILDERNESS
IN OWN STATE: NATIONAL OPINION

Favor	69.8%
Strongly favor	42.5
Somewhat favor	27.3
Oppose	12.4
Somewhat oppose	6.4
Strongly oppose	6.0
Neither	12.2
Don't know	5.6

FIGURE
14

Strong support for the designation of more wilderness in respondents' own states was registered in every region—by margins of eight to one in the Northeast, six to one in the Midwest and the South, four to one in the Mountain states, and five to one in the Pacific states (includes Alaska).¹⁹

DESIGNATE MORE FEDERAL LAND AS WILDERNESS
IN OWN STATE: REGIONAL OPINION

	<i>Northeast</i>	<i>Midwest</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Mountain</i>	<i>Pacific</i>
Favor	74.7%	69.2%	70.3%	62.1%	68.4%
Strongly favor	46.9	40.2	42.2	37.6	44.3
Somewhat favor	27.8	29.0	28.2	24.5	24.1
Oppose	9.6	12.0	11.1	21.2	13.7
Somewhat oppose	5.5	7.1	5.6	9.5	6.4
Strongly oppose	4.1	5.0	5.5	11.7	7.2
Neither	10.0	14.2	12.0	13.2	11.6
Don't know/Refused	5.7	4.6	6.6	3.6	6.3

FIGURE
15

¹⁸ *NSRE* poll, 2000-2001, N=10,382. QUESTION: "How do you feel about designating more of the federal lands in your state as wilderness? Would you say you strongly favor, somewhat favor, neither favor nor oppose, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this idea?"

¹⁹ *NSRE* poll, 2000-2001, N: Northeast =1,965; Midwest=2,230; South=3,525; Mountain=1,056; Pacific=1,541. This data for the Northeast, Midwest and South is for those "regions" as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau; the data for the Mountain and Pacific states is for those "divisions" as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Question: "How do you feel about designating more of the federal lands in your state as wilderness? Would you say you strongly favor, somewhat favor, neither favor nor oppose, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this idea?"

Moreover, majority support for protection of more wilderness in respondents' own states is strong among both urban and rural residents—by margins of seven to one among urban respondents, three to one in rural counties.²⁰

FIGURE
16

DESIGNATE MORE FEDERAL LAND AS WILDERNESS IN OWN STATE:
URBAN/RURAL OPINION NATIONALLY

	<i>Metropolitan respondents</i>	<i>Non-metropolitan respondents</i>
Favor	71.5%	62.8%
Strongly favor	44.5	34.6
Somewhat favor	27.1	28.2
Oppose	10.8	18.8
Somewhat oppose	5.9	8.4
Strongly oppose	4.9	10.4
Neither	12.0	12.9
Don't know/Refused	5.7	5.5

SHOULD MORE WILDERNESS BE PROTECTED?
STATE POLLS

Should More Wilderness be Protected in California?



In an August 2001 poll of Californians by *Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates*, three-quarters of respondents (72%) said they would support designating more land in California as wilderness (and protecting more wild rivers), with less than a quarter (22%) opposing. Moreover, the degree of support was relatively intense, with a majority (52%) strongly supporting more wilderness, while only one in ten (12%) voiced strong opposition.²¹



“THE [WILDERNESS ACT] IS OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE TO WESTERNERS. THE VANISHING WILDERNESS IS YET PART OF OUR WESTERN HERITAGE. WE WESTERNERS HAVE KNOWN THE WILDS DURING OUR LIFETIMES, AND WE MUST SEE TO IT THAT OUR GRANDCHILDREN ARE NOT DENIED THE SAME RICH EXPERIENCE DURING THEIRS. THIS IS WHY THE WEST NEEDS A WILDERNESS BILL.” SEN. FRANK CHURCH (D-ID), DURING SENATE DEBATE ON THE WILDERNESS ACT
SEPTEMBER 5, 1961

²⁰ *NSRE* poll, 2000-2001, N: Metropolitan=8,293; Non-metropolitan=2,089. Metropolitan is defined as the U.S. Census Bureau's "Metropolitan Statistical Area" counties; non-metropolitan is the non-MSA counties. QUESTION: "Do you think the amount of land the Congress has designated as wilderness is not enough, about the right amount, or too much?"

²¹ *Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates* poll, August 25-30, 2001, N=901. QUESTION: "In general, would you support or oppose the government designating more land and rivers in California as protected wilderness areas?"

CONCEPTUAL SUPPORT FOR MORE WILDERNESS:
CALIFORNIA OPINION

Support	72%
Strongly support	52
Somewhat support	20
Oppose	22
Somewhat oppose	10
Strongly oppose	12
Need more info/Don't know/No answer	6

FIGURE
17

In a next question, the pollsters first informed respondents that fourteen percent of all the land in California is already officially designated as wilderness. They were asked their views on a proposal to designate an additional four percent (approximately four million acres) as wilderness (along with additional wild rivers), with a summary of activities that are restricted in such areas and a statement of some of the benefits of wilderness protection. With this greater amount of information, voters offered overwhelming support (77%) for this proposal, with little opposition (16%).²²

SUPPORT FOR A SPECIFIC WILDERNESS PROPOSAL:
CALIFORNIA OPINION

Support	77%
Strongly support	58
Somewhat support	19
Oppose	16
Somewhat oppose	6
Strongly oppose	10
Need more info/Don't know/No answer	7

FIGURE
18

In further analysis, the *Fairbank* researchers found that there is no major demographic or geographic group in California in which a majority of those polled oppose the designation of additional wilderness areas and wild rivers.

²² *Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates* poll. QUESTION: “Now I would like to give you some more details about one specific proposal to protect wilderness in California. A group of California citizens, including conservation groups, local elected officials, school groups, property owners, businesses and churches has come together to identify endangered natural areas in California.

“This group has identified public lands making up four percent of the state that should be added to the 14 percent already officially designated as wilderness. They have also identified one percent of California rivers that should be added to the two percent already designated as wild. Designating the land as wilderness and the rivers as wild would have the following effects:

- protecting land from logging, mining, new roads, mechanized vehicles and other development, except for firefighting and public safety purposes
- preserving free-flowing rivers that are unblocked by dams
- reducing pollution and protecting air and water quality
- preserving areas where plants, fish, and animals live
- leaving the areas open to the public for camping, hiking, backpacking, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, horseback riding and other outdoor activities.

“No privately-owned land would be affected by this proposal, and the proposal would have no additional cost to taxpayers. A proposal is being introduced in Congress that would designate these parts of California as wilderness areas and wild rivers.

“Having heard this description, does this proposal to protect more wilderness areas and wild rivers in California sound like something you would support or oppose? [If support/oppose, ask: Is that strongly support/oppose or just somewhat?]”

Should More Wilderness be Protected in Nevada?

A *Mason-Dixon Polling & Research* statewide poll of Nevadans taken after the September 11 terrorist attacks echoes the nationwide support for protection of more wilderness. Informed of the current extent of wilderness designated in their state, and both the restrictions and benefits associated with wilderness designation, a solid majority of Nevadans (56%) feel that too little wilderness has been protected in their state . . . by a fourteen to one margin over those who feel there is too much (4%).²³

FIGURE 19

CONCEPTUAL SUPPORT FOR MORE WILDERNESS: NEVADA OPINION

Too little	56%
About right	34
Too much	4
Not sure	6

The Nevada poll proceeded from this general question to gauge opinion on a specific proposal for designation of an additional four million acres of wilderness in the Mojave Desert region of the state. Three-quarters (74%) of respondents favored this proposal, with only about one in five (21%) opposed. Moreover, there was solid majority support from both urban (79% to 17% margin in Clark County, which includes Las Vegas) and rural respondents (56% to 35% margin), and the support was strongly bipartisan—two to one among Republicans (64% to 31%) and six to one among Democrats (83% to 13%).²⁴

FIGURE 20

SUPPORT FOR A SPECIFIC WILDERNESS PROPOSAL: NEVADA OPINION

	<i>Statewide</i>	<i>Clark county</i>	<i>Rural Nevada</i>	<i>Republicans</i>	<i>Democrats</i>
Favor	74%	79%	56%	64%	83%
Oppose	21	17	35	31	13
Undecided	5	4	9	5	4

²³ *Mason-Dixon Polling & Research* poll, October 2001, N=625 registered voters. QUESTION: "Currently, 2.5% of the public land in Nevada is protected as Wilderness. Wilderness leaves areas open to hiking, camping, hunting, horseback riding and livestock grazing, and prevents such activities as mining, oil and gas development, road building and dirt bike and other off-road vehicle use. Do you think 2.5% is too much, too little, or about the right amount of Wilderness?"

²⁴ *Mason-Dixon Polling & Research* poll. QUESTION: "Conservation groups along with some businesses and Native American tribes in Nevada have proposed designating 4.1 million acres in the Mojave Desert region of Southern Nevada as Wilderness. Their Wilderness proposal would leave the area open for activities such as hunting, hiking, camping, horseback riding and livestock grazing. It would prohibit industrial activities such as mining and geothermal development, and dirt bike and other off-road vehicle use. Do you favor or oppose this proposal?"

Finally, the Nevada poll asked a more limited question focusing on a proposal to designate two million acres of additional wilderness in Clark County. This question posed the respective arguments of wilderness advocates and opponents, using the most loaded language of those who oppose wilderness—that wilderness “locks up too much land.” Nonetheless, results showed majority support for designating this additional wilderness in every category—urban, rural, Republican and Democrat.²⁵

SUPPORT FOR A SPECIFIC WILDERNESS PROPOSAL
FOR CLARK COUNTY: NEVADA OPINION

	Statewide	Clark county	Rural Nevada	Republicans	Democrats
Favor	69%	73%	52%	60%	78%
Oppose	25	23	38	34	17
Undecided	6	4	10	6	5

FIGURE
21



*Should More Wilderness be
Protected in Alaska?*

A researcher at *Alaska Pacific University* conducted a statewide poll in Alaska in 1998 to assess opinion concerning future management of the Chugach National Forest. One series of questions asked respondents whether they favored or opposed managing the forest for a list of possible uses. Three-quarters (73%) favored managing the forest for wilderness; 15% opposed.²⁶

CONCEPTUAL SUPPORT FOR WILDERNESS IN THE
CHUGACH NATIONAL FOREST: ALASKA OPINION

Favor	73%
Strongly favor	40
Somewhat favor	33
Oppose	15
Somewhat oppose	10
Strongly oppose	5
Neither favor or oppose	12

FIGURE
22

²⁵ *Mason-Dixon Polling & Research* poll. QUESTION: “There are 4.6 million acres of public land in Clark County, Nevada. Wilderness advocates say we need to protect 2 million acres of these public lands from industrial development and dirt bikes and other off-road vehicle use. Some oppose this idea, saying it locks up too much land and that these lands should be open to commercial development and off-road vehicle use. Given these arguments, would you support or oppose Congress protecting 2 million acres of public lands in Clark County as Wilderness?”

²⁶ Mail-in poll by Greg Brown, Environmental Science Department, *Alaska Pacific University*, July 1998, N=802. QUESTION: “There are many possible public uses of the Chugach National Forest. Please tell us whether you *favor* or *oppose* managing the Forest for the following uses. (Please circle one response for each item).”

This poll then asked respondents how much of the Chugach National Forest they would like to see recommended to Congress for designation as wilderness. There is no designated wilderness on the forest today, though 99% of the forest is roadless. In 1984 the Forest Service plan recommended that one-third of the forest be designated, some 1.7 million acres. Six in ten (61%) Alaskans favored designating at least this much.²⁷ Yet, in a May 2002 decision, the Bush era political leaders of the Forest Service recommended just 1.4 million acres of wilderness, mostly “rocks and ice.”

FIGURE
23

AMOUNT OF CHUGACH NATIONAL FOREST TO BE DESIGNATED
AS WILDERNESS: ALASKA OPINION

More than 1.7 million acres	31%
1.7 million acres	30
Less than 1.7 million acres	14
None	20
No opinion	5

*Should More Wilderness be
Protected in Utah?*



In an October 1999 poll by *Dan Jones and Associates*, Utahns were asked to rate how important it was “to you personally to keep Utah’s remaining undeveloped lands in their natural, wilderness state.” On a scale of one to ten, with ten defined as extremely important, the mean response was 7.21.²⁸

FIGURE
24

IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING REMAINING UNDEVELOPED LAND
IN ITS WILDERNESS STATE: UTAH OPINION

◀ Not at all important							Extremely important ▶				Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know	
4%	2%	2%	3%	16%	8%	11%	17%	8%	27%	2%	
8%							52%				

²⁷ Greg Brown, *Alaska Pacific University* poll, N=823. QUESTION: “Congressionally designated wilderness is devoted to recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical purposes. Wilderness also provides solitude and near pristine environments.

“In general, road-building, logging, mining, and permanent structures are prohibited in Wilderness areas. Wilderness areas *in Alaska* may allow the construction and maintenance of cabins; the use of motorized vehicles such as snowmobiles, motorboats and aircraft; temporary fishing and hunting camps; and subsistence uses by both natives and non-natives. The current Forest Plan (1984) recommended some 1.7 million acres (about 1/3 of the Forest) for wilderness designation (which has yet to be acted upon by Congress). How much of the Chugach National Forest would you like to see recommended to Congress as Wilderness? (Please circle one response: None; Less than 1.7 million acres; 1.7 million acres (1984 Forest Plan recommendation); More than 1.7 million.”

²⁸ *Dan Jones and Associates*, October 1999, N=410. Question: “First of all, using a scale of one to ten, when ONE means NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT and TEN means EXTREMELY IMPORTANT, how important is it to you personally to keep Utah’s remaining undeveloped lands in their natural, wilderness state?”

Should More Wilderness Be Protected in Idaho?

An April 2002 *Davis, Hibbitts & McCraig, Inc.* poll found an overwhelming majority of Idahoans (84%) expressed concern about preserving Idaho's unique legacy of open, wild places. This concern ranked with clean air and water (84%), and below only education, jobs and the economy, and crime and drugs. It ranked above concern about taxes (81%).²⁹

Opinion about Congress designating more wilderness has long been sharply polarized in Idaho. Reflecting this, a conceptual question about designating more federal land in their state as protected wilderness found Idahoans almost evenly divided between support (44%) and opposition (47%).³⁰

CONCEPTUAL SUPPORT FOR MORE WILDERNESS: IDAHO OPINION

Support	44%
Strongly support	25
Support	19
Oppose	47
Oppose	20
Strongly oppose	27
Don't know/Refused	8

FIGURE
25

The poll then asked respondents which of two statements more accurately reflected their own point of view. One statement listed “a great many benefits” wilderness areas provide to the land and local communities; the other used the loaded rhetoric of wilderness opponents: “locks up more of Idaho,” “increases federal control,” “hurts Idaho’s economy.” Notwithstanding the loaded rhetoric, substantially more Idahoans—by a 20-point margin—agreed with the benefits statement (56%) than with the “lock up” statement (36%).³¹ Asked to rate a series of value statements about wilderness—from not at all important (1) to extremely important (10), the most important to respondents was “Preserving a place for Idahoans to have the freedom to hunt, camp, fish, and hike” (8.0 on the 1-10 scale).³²

²⁹ *Davis, Hibbitts & McCraig, Inc.* poll, April 2002, N=500. QUESTION: “Now I’d like to read you a list of issues and I’d like you to tell me how concerned you are about each issue. Please tell me if you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not at all concerned about the issue.” [The results given here combine “very concerned” and “somewhat concerned.”]

³⁰ *Davis, Hibbitts & McCraig, Inc.* poll. QUESTION: “In general, would you strongly support, support, oppose, or strongly oppose Congress designating more federal land in Idaho as protected wilderness?”

³¹ *Davis, Hibbitts & McCraig, Inc.* poll. QUESTION: “Now, I’m going to read you two statements, please tell me which statement more accurately reflects your point of view (ROTATE):

a. Wilderness designation provides a great many benefits to the land and the communities, including protecting fish and wildlife, preserving recreational hunting and fishing, and adding to the tourist economy.

b. Wilderness designation locks up more of Idaho, increases federal control, bans snow mobiles and off-road vehicles, prohibits roads and development, and hurt’s Idaho’s economy.

[DON’T READ] Don’t know.”

³² *Davis, Hibbitts & McCraig, Inc.* poll. QUESTION: “Now I’d like to read you some values some people say wilderness represent. Using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means that particular value is not at all important, and 10 means that value is extremely important, please rate each of the following values: . . . Preserving a place for Idahoan’s to have the freedom to hunt, camp, fish, and hike.”

The Idaho poll also asked about a specific proposal to designate a 500,000-acre wilderness in the Boulder-White Cloud Mountains near Sun Valley. Having heard both the restrictions and benefits involved, Idahoans supported the proposal by a two to one margin (62% to 29%).³³ Twice as many Idahoans strongly favored the Boulder-White Cloud wilderness proposal (38%) as were strongly opposed (19%).

FIGURE
26

SUPPORT FOR A SPECIFIC WILDERNESS PROPOSAL:
IDAHO OPINION

Favor	62%
Strongly favor	38
Somewhat favor	24
Oppose	29
Somewhat oppose	10
Strongly oppose	19
Don't know/Refused	9

***Should More Wilderness Be Protected
in North Dakota?***



In a November 1999 statewide poll by *Midwest Research Associates*, an overwhelming majority (87%) of North Dakotans felt protecting wilderness is a good idea, while only a tiny number (3%) felt it is not.³⁴

FIGURE
27

CONCEPTUAL SUPPORT FOR MORE WILDERNESS:
NORTH DAKOTA OPINION

Yes	87%
No	3
Maybe	7
Don't know/None	4



“DO WE HAVE ENOUGH REVERENCE FOR LIFE TO ALLOW WILDERNESS THE RIGHT TO LIVE?”

MARGARET MURIE, PIONEER EXPLORER OF THE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, 1957

³³ *Davis, Hibbits & McCraig, Inc.* poll. QUESTION: “In the next year Idaho’s members of Congress may propose that Congress set aside 500,000 acres of the Boulder-White Cloud Mountains as a wilderness area. This wilderness designation would mean this area would remain open to most types of recreation, including hunting, camping, horseback riding and fishing, but new roads, mining, and off-road vehicles would be prohibited. Generally, would you favor or oppose such a proposal? [IF FAVOR/OPPOSE ASK: ‘Is that strongly (favor/oppose) or somewhat (favor/oppose)?’]”

³⁴ *Midwest Research Associates* poll, November 1999, N=550. QUESTION: “As you may know, wilderness is federal land designated to preserve its natural resources. Therefore, it contains no roads or development. However, it is open to activities such as livestock grazing, backpacking, horseback riding, and hunting on foot or horseback. Do you believe wilderness areas are a good idea?”

Respondents were told that 414 square miles (265,000 acres) in North Dakota would qualify to be designated as grasslands wilderness—about half of one percent of all lands in the state. A remarkable plurality (39%) favored protecting *all* 265,000 acres as wilderness. A strong majority (61%) supported designating about a third or more of the total area, contrasted with the small minority (14%) who favored less than a third or none.³⁵

AMOUNT OF NATIONAL GRASSLANDS TO BE DESIGNATED AS WILDERNESS:
NORTH DAKOTA OPINION

	39%
100% of roadless land	39%
76–99%	3
51–75%	5
31–50%	14
21–30%	4
11–20%	2
1–10%	3
0%	4
Don't know	26

FIGURE
28



***Should More Wilderness Be Protected
in New Mexico?***

People commonly think the federal government has protected more wilderness by law than it has. That so much less of their public land is given this protection than they assume comes as a surprise to a majority of Americans.

A June 2002 *Research & Polling, Inc.* survey asked New Mexico voters how much of the total land of their state is currently set aside as wilderness. A majority (52%) thought it was 16% or more.³⁶ When asked how much they feel should be designated as wilderness, an even stronger majority (61%) felt it should be 16% or more.³⁷

³⁵ *Midwest Research Associates* poll. QUESTION: “There are about 414 square miles in North Dakota that qualify to be designated as grassland wilderness. That is about one half of one percent of all the land in the state. What percentage of those 414 square miles should be protected as grassland wilderness? [Open ended, data compiled in categories shown in the data table.] NOTE: North Dakota has more than 265,000 acres of roadless federal land administered as part of national grasslands by the Forest Service, yet none has been protected wilderness by law. In a July 2002 decision, the agency set apart 41,520 acres in 4 units as “suitable for wilderness.”

³⁶ *Research & Polling, Inc.* poll, June 2002, N=600. QUESTION: “Now I’m going to ask you some questions about wilderness. In wilderness areas, hiking, camping, hunting and fishing are allowed, but mining, drilling, logging, and off-road vehicle use is prohibited. About what percentage of the land in New Mexico do you believe is currently set aside as wilderness?”

³⁷ *Research & Polling, Inc.* poll. QUESTION: “About what percentage of the land in New Mexico do you feel should be designated as wilderness?”

FIGURE
29

AMOUNT OF STATE THAT SHOULD BE DESIGNATED AS WILDERNESS:
NEW MEXICO OPINION

0–15%	21%
16–30%	24
31–50%	25
More than 50%	12
Don't know/Won't say	18

In fact, just 2.2% of New Mexico's land area is set aside as wilderness. Told this, a strong majority (57%) felt this was not enough.³⁸

FIGURE
30

CONCEPTUAL SUPPORT FOR MORE WILDERNESS:
NEW MEXICO POLL

Not enough	57%
Right amount	35
Too much	5
Don't know/Won't say	4

By nearly a two to one margin (59% to 27%), New Mexicans support having Congress designate more public land as wilderness, with 40% strongly supporting.³⁹



“THE CONCEPT OF THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL WILDERNESS SYSTEM MARKED AN INNOVATION IN THE AMERICAN CONSERVATION MOVEMENT—WILDERNESS WOULD BE A PLACE WHERE OUR ‘MANAGEMENT STRATEGY’ WOULD BE TO LEAVE LANDS ESSENTIALLY UNDEVELOPED.” SEN. RUSSELL FEINGOLD (D-WI)

SEPTEMBER 8, 1999

³⁸ *Research & Polling, Inc.* poll. QUESTION: “Currently 2.2% of the land in New Mexico is set aside as wilderness areas. Do you think New Mexico has too much wilderness area, not enough wilderness area or the right amount of wilderness area?”

³⁹ *Research & Polling, Inc.* poll. QUESTION: “A proposal may be introduced in the U.S. Congress to set aside more public land in New Mexico as wilderness areas. Do you support or oppose a proposal to set aside more public lands in New Mexico as wilderness areas? Is that *strongly or somewhat* support/oppose?”

Should More Wilderness Be Protected in Vermont?

A February 2002 poll by the *University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies* showed overwhelming support for wilderness protection on the Green Mountain National Forest. Virtually three-quarters of respondents statewide (73%) agreed that more wilderness areas should be established, with only one-fifth disagreeing (20%). Among those respondents living in towns within or adjacent to the national forest, majority support for more wilderness was nearly as great (69%).⁴⁰

CONCEPTUAL SUPPORT FOR MORE WILDERNESS: VERMONT OPINION

More wilderness should be established on national forest

	<i>Statewide</i>	<i>Local towns</i>
Agree	73%	69%
Strongly agree	27	27
Agree	46	42
Disagree	20	19
Disagree	17	13
Strongly disagree	3	6
Neither	7	13

FIGURE
31

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked how much of the land area of Vermont they feel should be wilderness compared to the 1% presently designated. Statewide, the mean was 6.5% of the state. In the towns in or adjacent to the national forest the mean was higher, 7.5%. That 7.5% would constitute some 450,000 acres.⁴¹

⁴⁰ *University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies* poll, February 2002, statewide N=472 voters; N=112 in towns in or adjacent to Green Mountain National Forest (the firm states this smaller sample provides a margin of error of +/- 10% at a confidence level of 95%). Respondents were given considerable information about wilderness prior to being questioned, including “Wilderness is land that is largely free from human disturbance, where natural processes prevail. Designated wilderness areas on federal public lands such as the Green Mountain National Forest are open to recreational uses such as camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, snowshoeing, and skiing. Roads, motorized recreation, logging, and most permanent structures are not allowed in wilderness areas. Currently, about 60,000 acres of land in Vermont are in federally designated Wilderness areas—this is about 1% of all the land in the state.” QUESTION: “I am now going to read some statements to you. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree . . . More wilderness areas should be established on the Green Mountain National Forest.”

⁴¹ *University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies* poll. QUESTION: “In the Northeast, Vermont and Maine have about 1% of their land in wilderness areas. New Hampshire has 2% and New York has 7%. What percent of land in the state of Vermont do you think SHOULD be in wilderness areas?” [The wilderness in New York is almost entirely on state lands in the constitutionally protected Forest Preserve in the Adirondacks and Catskills.]

HISPANIC OPINION ON WILDERNESS PRESERVATION

Citizens of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin comprise a growing portion of the voting population. If there is a conventional wisdom that assumes a lack of interest in environmental issues, including wilderness preservation, among Hispanic voters, the polls—both nationwide and in key states—consistently demonstrate otherwise.

Polling by *Bendixen & Associates* in late April/early May 2002 assessed opinion about wilderness among Hispanic heritage voters in California, Arizona, and New Mexico. Support for protecting more wilderness was overwhelming. In California it was 81%—higher by 9 points than support among the general population as measured in the earlier statewide *Fairbank* poll [See Figure 17, page 12]. Opposition was 10 points less. The polls for Arizona and New Mexico, though involving smaller samples, showed the same overwhelming pattern of support for more wilderness (75% and 72% support respectively). These results did not vary with political party affiliation.⁴²

FIGURE
32

CONCEPTUAL SUPPORT FOR MORE WILDERNESS IN OWN STATE: HISPANIC OPINION

	<i>California</i>	<i>Arizona</i>	<i>New Mexico</i>
Support	81%	75%	72%
Strongly support	56	48	56
Somewhat support	25	27	16
Oppose	12	17	18
Somewhat oppose	6	8	9
Strongly oppose	6	9	9
Not sure	7	8	10



“CALIFORNIA LATINOS BELIEVE THEY HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO BE GOOD STEWARDS OF THE ENVIRONMENT. PROTECTING WILDERNESS IS PART OF THIS ETHIC TO ENSURE THAT OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN ARE ABLE TO EXPERIENCE WHAT WE ENJOY TODAY.” ED NAVARRO

LOS ANGELES BOARD MEMBER

NATIONAL HISPANIC ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

⁴² *Bendixen & Associates* poll, April/May 2002, N=California 500, Arizona 150, New Mexico 150; all registered voters. The firm states that the California poll has a margin of error of +/-4%, while the margin of the Arizona and New Mexico polls is +/-8% each. Respondents were offered the language of their preference for their interview. QUESTION: “A proposal is being prepared for the United States Congress that would increase the amount of wilderness in California/Arizona/New Mexico. The proposal would keep those wilderness areas open for recreation like camping, hunting, and fishing, but would prohibit mining, oil drilling, logging, the construction of new roads, and the use of off-road vehicles within these wilderness areas. Would you support or oppose such a proposal? (If answer support/oppose: ‘Do you strong support/oppose or somewhat support/oppose the proposal?’).”

The Federal government's *National Survey on Recreation and the Environment* also provides insight on Hispanic opinion. In its findings among the general population nationwide, seven in ten (69.8%) favor designating more federal land in their own state as wilderness [see details, pages 10–11]. Of that large sample, 14.8% were self-identified as of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.⁴³ Compared to respondents not of Hispanic origin, Hispanics were even stronger supporters of preserving more wilderness. Three-quarters (75.2%) favored more wilderness in their own states.⁴⁴

DESIGNATE MORE FEDERAL LAND AS
WILDERNESS IN OWN STATE: HISPANIC OPINION

	Hispanic origin	Not Hispanic origin
Favor	75.2%	69.0%
Strongly favor	47.6	41.7
Somewhat favor	27.6	27.3
Oppose	6.8	13.3
Somewhat oppose	3.6	6.9
Strongly oppose	3.2	6.4
Neither	9.0	12.7
Don't know/Refused	9.0	5.0

FIGURE
33

Sergio Bendixen, whose firm specializes in polling Hispanics, notes that preserving wilderness is an important value to Hispanic voters, “with roots in Latin American culture, in its commitment to family and even in religious concepts”:

More than 90 percent agreed that “. . .wilderness areas are part of God’s creations and we have a moral responsibility to . . . protect them” and over two-thirds *strongly* agreed that ‘if we don’t protect the wilderness now . . . beautiful natural areas will disappear before our children and grandchildren have a chance to enjoy them.’⁴⁵



“OUR FAST DWINDLING WILDERNESS REMNANT REQUIRES THAT THE BURDEN OF PROOF SHOULD BE REVERSED, AND ONLY THOSE ROADLESS AREAS SHOULD BE INVADED WHERE THE URGENCY OF DEVELOPING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS IS UNQUESTIONABLE AND THE PARTICULAR WILDERNESS TO BE INVADED CAN REASONABLY BE SPARED.”

ROBERT MARSHALL

THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE

APRIL 25, 1937

⁴³ Collectively referred to as “Hispanic” in this report.

⁴⁴ NSRE poll, 2000–2001, N=10,382 adults (N=for Hispanic respondents=1,539; for non-Hispanic respondents=8,781). Respondents were offered the language of their preference for their interview. QUESTION: “How do you feel about designating more of the federal lands in your state as wilderness? Would you say you strongly favor, somewhat favor, neither favor or oppose, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this idea?”

⁴⁵ Sergio Bendixen, Memorandum to Roger Rivera, National Hispanic Environmental Council, and others, May 13, 2002, page 2.

PROTECTING NATIONAL FOREST AND NATIONAL GRASSLAND ROADLESS AREAS

How Much National Forest Land Should be Protected?

Another insight on public opinion about wilderness comes from polling about the future of the portions of the national forests that still are roadless. As with the more specific topic of officially designated wilderness, many Americans do not have a particular grasp of the extent of their national forest lands or how much has been or could be protected for its natural values.

In a June 1999 *Mellman Group* poll, slightly over half (53%) of Americans cannot guess the percentage of national forest permanently protected from logging and development. About one-third of the public overestimates the amount of forest land that is protected. The mean response given was that one-third of national forest land is protected. In fact, only eighteen percent of U.S. national forests is permanently protected from logging and other developments as a result of congressional designation as wilderness.⁴⁶

FIGURE
34

HOW MUCH NATIONAL FOREST LAND IS NOW PROTECTED FROM LOGGING AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT: NATIONAL OPINION

Less than 20%	17%
Between 20%-39%	13
Between 40%-59%	8
Between 60%-79%	4
80%+	5
Don't know/Refused	53

By contrast, over one-third (34%) think eighty percent or more of national forests *should* be protected from logging and other development. A majority (54%) favors protecting at least forty percent of national forests permanently.⁴⁷

FIGURE
35

HOW MUCH NATIONAL FOREST LAND *SHOULD* BE PROTECTED FROM LOGGING AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT: NATIONAL OPINION

Less than 20%	5%
Between 20%-39%	10
Between 40%-59%	11
Between 60%-79%	9
80%+	34
Don't know/Refused	31

⁴⁶ *The Mellman Group* poll, June 1999, N=800 likely voters. QUESTION: "About what percentage of U.S. national forests do you think are permanently protected from logging and other developments?" (Open ended)

⁴⁷ *The Mellman Group* poll. QUESTION: "About what percentage of U.S. national forests do you think *SHOULD* be permanently protected from logging and other development?" (Open ended)

When informed in a more recent *Mellman Group* poll, in April 2001, that eighteen percent of national forest land is permanently protected from development, six in ten Americans (61%) believe this is not enough.⁴⁸

NOT ENOUGH NATIONAL FOREST LAND PROTECTED:
NATIONAL OPINION

Not enough	61%
Right amount	24
Too much	8
Aren't sure/Don't know	7

FIGURE
36

A number of state-level polls taken in 2000 offer additional detail about Americans' support for protecting more of their federally owned national forest lands. Majorities from every one of these states felt by wide margins that not enough, rather than too much, national forest land has been permanently protected from logging and other development.⁴⁹

NOT ENOUGH NATIONAL FOREST LAND PROTECTED:
STATE OPINION

	California	Colorado	Minnesota	New Mexico	Oregon	Washington	Wisconsin
Not enough	56%	62%	52%	52%	66%	54%	66%
About right	30	27	33	31	24	30	24
Too much	7	5	7	9	3	9	3
Don't know	7	6	7	8	7	7	7

FIGURE
37

Fishing and hunting are popular uses of the national forests. In a nationwide 1999 *Responsive Management* poll, licensed hunters and anglers registered near-consensus (91% to 7% of hunters, 92% to 4% of anglers) that it was important to them to have “places for solitude and natural experiences” on the national forests. Nearly seven in ten said places for solitude and natural experiences were *very* important.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *The Mellman Group* poll, April 2001, N=1,000 likely voters. QUESTION: “Currently, 18% of the land in the United States’ national forests is permanently protected from logging, and other development. Do you think the U.S. has too much permanently protected area in national forests, not enough permanently protected area in national forests, or the right amount of permanently protected area in national forests, or aren’t you sure about that?”

⁴⁹ *Fairbank, Maslin, Maulin & Associates* poll, February 2000, N=800 likely voters across California; *Ridder/Braden* poll, March 2000, N=501 likely voters across Colorado; *The Feldman Group* poll, March 2000, N=500 registered voters across Minnesota; *Research & Polling* poll, March 2000, N=504 registered voters across New Mexico; *Ridder/Braden* poll, March 2000, N=502 likely voters across Oregon; *Ridder/Braden* poll, March 2000, N=501 likely voters across Washington; *Chamberlain Research Consultants* poll, March 2000, N=600 Wisconsin residents. QUESTION: “National Forest lands in the United States total 192 million acres. Currently 18% of these lands are permanently protected from logging and other development. Do you think the U.S. has too much, not enough, or about the right amount of permanently protected land in our national forests?”

⁵⁰ *Responsive Management* poll, December 1999, N=302 anglers, 300 hunters. Question: “How about providing places for SOLITUDE AND NATURAL EXPERIENCES? Is this important or unimportant, to you, as a use of the National Forests?” (Prompt for degree)

FIGURE
38

IMPORTANCE OF PLACES FOR SOLITUDE
AND NATURAL EXPERIENCES: HUNTERS AND ANGLERS

	Hunters	Anglers
Important	91%	92%
Very important	69	66
Somewhat important	22	26
Unimportant	7	4
Somewhat unimportant	5	3
Very unimportant	2	1
Neutral	0	1
Don't know	2	3

The *Responsive Management* poll also found that overwhelming majorities of sportsmen (84% of hunters and 86% of anglers) support efforts to prevent development within roadless areas on national forests.⁵¹

FIGURE
39

SUPPORT FOR PROTECTING REMAINING NATIONAL FOREST ROADLESS AREAS: HUNTERS AND ANGLERS

	Support	Oppose	Strongly support	Support	Neither	Strongly oppose	Oppose	Don't know
Hunters	84%	11%	55%	29%	3%	6%	5%	2%
Anglers	86	10	48	38	2	5	5	1

***The U.S. Forest Service Roadless
Area Conservation Rule***

Controversy over the fate of national forest and national grassland roadless areas was much in the news during the final three years of the Clinton administration as the U.S. Forest Service conducted an unprecedented nationwide public review process to formulate a new Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

A December 1999-January 2000 poll by one of the country's top Republican polling firms, *American Viewpoint*, showed very broad support for the proposal to protect remaining national forest roadless areas. Americans supported the roadless area protection plan by an overwhelming margin (76% to 19%). Moreover, Republicans supported the plan by two to one (62% to 31%).⁵²

⁵¹ *Responsive Management* poll. QUESTION: "Next I'd like you to ask you some questions on your support for efforts by sportsmen to keep the remaining roadless areas in National Forests roadless. The purpose of keeping these areas roadless is to provide hunters and anglers places to hunt and fish with more solitude and no disturbance by vehicles, including off-road vehicles. In general, do you support or oppose these efforts?"

⁵² *American Viewpoint* poll (Linda DiVall, pollster), December 1999-January 2000, N=1,000. QUESTION: "As I just mentioned, National Forest lands in the United States total 192 million acres. 51% of this land has already been logged, mined, or has roads, and remain open to commercial development. 18% is permanently protected. The remaining 31% are wild but unprotected roadless areas. The Clinton administration has proposed to protect nearly all of these remaining wild but unprotected areas. This means that it could be used for most types of recreation but that logging, new roads, mining, oil drilling, and off-road vehicles would be prohibited. Do you favor or oppose this proposal?"

CONCEPTUAL SUPPORT FOR PROTECTING
REMAINING NATIONAL FOREST ROADLESS AREAS: NATIONAL OPINION

	Total	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Favor	76%	62%	86%	78%
Oppose	19	31	10	18

FIGURE
40

Following a nationwide public input process and the largest public response in the history of federal rulemaking, the Roadless Area Conservation Rule was signed in January 2001, giving the promise of protecting 58.5 million acres of roadless areas on national forests and national grasslands. Notwithstanding the overwhelming public support for the rule, outcry against it from opponents and from officials of the incoming Bush administration was immediate and intense, keeping the topic prominent in the media.

In the period after its approval, there was frequent media coverage of opponents' attacks on the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. A nationwide *Los Angeles Times* poll in April 2001 provided a summary of the arguments pro and con and asked a very specific question about support for the new Forest Service policy: "Do you approve or disapprove of the ban on logging and road building in about 30 percent of the national forests?" By nearly two to one (58% to 32%) Americans supported the Forest Service action.⁵³

SUPPORT FOR U.S. FOREST SERVICE
ROADLESS AREA CONSERVATION RULE: NATIONAL OPINION

Approve	58%
Approve strongly	38
Approve somewhat	20
Disapprove	32%
Disapprove somewhat	15
Disapprove strongly	17
Don't know	10

FIGURE
41



"NEVER BEFORE HAVE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE SO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN HELPING TO DECIDE HOW THEIR PUBLIC LANDS SHOULD BE MANAGED." DAN GLICKMAN

SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

NOVEMBER 2000

⁵³ *Los Angeles Times* poll, April 2001, N=813 adults. QUESTION: "As you may know, before President Clinton left office he ordered a ban on logging and road building on nearly 60 million acres of national forests, or about 30 percent of the total acreage in the forest system. Supporters say the ban is needed to protect the forests and the wildlife that lives in them. Opponents say it will cut too deeply into the nation's timber supply and increase the likelihood of forest fires. How about you? Do you approve or disapprove of the ban on logging and road building in national forests, or not?" [If approve/disapprove] Do you (approve/disapprove) strongly, or (approve/disapprove) somewhat?"

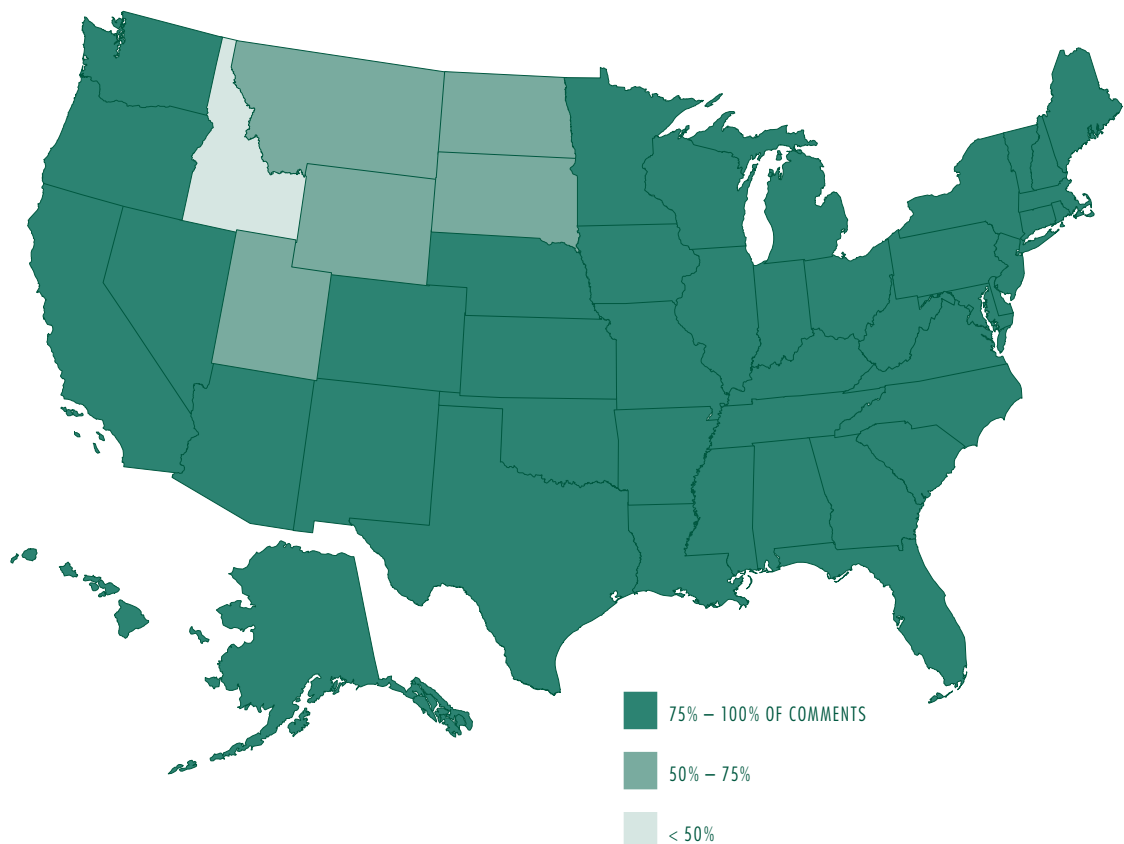
The Forest Service did an exemplary job in seeking the widest possible participation from the public, including over 400 public meetings, most in rural locations near each national forest. These nationwide results were echoed in the Western states. For example, 24 meetings were held in Montana and 17,000 Montanans commented, with a two-thirds majority (67%) supporting stronger protection for even more roadless land. They received 1.2 *million* public comments, the overwhelming majority (96% nationwide) favoring not only the Roadless Rule as proposed by the Forest Service, but even broader and stronger protections.

As this report was going to press, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals strongly affirmed the Forest Service's procedures followed during the adoption of the Rule, finding they provided "for meaningful public debate and comment." This important December 12, 2002 decision overruled a lower court—in a case the Bush administration refused to defend, leaving the defense to environmental attorneys. [For the Court's decision, go to www.ca9.uscourts.gov/ and under opinions find Case Number 01-35472.]

FIGURE
42

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON U.S. FOREST SERVICE ROADLESS AREA CONSERVATION RULE

COMMENTS SUPPORTING PROTECTION FOR AT LEAST AS MUCH LAND
AS RECOMMENDED BY THE AGENCY... OR MORE



This map, based on Forest Service data, shows the relative level of public support in each state. This reflects the comments on the agency's Draft Environmental Impact Statement, not comments in the earlier scoping process. Map by John A. McComb

PROTECTING ROADLESS AREAS ADMINISTERED BY THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Parallel to the situation with national forest roadless areas, there are millions of acres of roadless areas on public lands in the Western states administered by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. A 1976 law required the review of these roadless areas for possible designation as wilderness.

How Much BLM-Administered Land Should be Protected?

In a January 2000 nationwide poll by *The Mellman Group*, two-thirds (66%) supported protection of 60 million acres of BLM-administered lands for wildlife habitat, non-motorized recreation, and scientific research—the kind of values protected by wilderness designation. This overwhelming support is noteworthy given that the question adopted the most loaded phraseology of wilderness opponents: that such protection “locks up too much land and would cost jobs.”⁵⁴

SUPPORT FOR PRESERVING 60 MILLION ACRES OF BLM-ADMINISTERED LAND: NATIONAL OPINION

Favor	66%
Strongly favor	55
Somewhat favor	11
Oppose	18
Somewhat oppose	4
Strongly oppose	14
Don't know/No opinion	16

FIGURE
43

This nationwide poll also explored opinion on how much of the BLM-administered land in the Western states should be officially designated wilderness. After being informed of the total extent of BLM-administered lands and arguments pro and con, respondents were asked to volunteer a percentage of that total they think should be designated as wilderness. The mean response was that 65% should be designated as wilderness—which would be 113.8 million acres. Presently, only 6.3 million acres of BLM-administered lands enjoy official wilderness protection—one-eighteenth of the amount favored by poll respondents.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *The Mellman Group* poll, January 2000, N=1,000. QUESTION: “It has been proposed that President Clinton protect 60 million acres, or 40%, of BLM land in the Western states for wildlife habitat, non-motorized recreation, and scientific research. Conservation groups say that we need to protect these lands from oil development and mining so we can leave them as a legacy for future generations. Some local politicians oppose this idea saying it locks up too much land and would cost jobs and that these lands should remain open to commercial development and off-road vehicle use. Would you favor or oppose the proposal that President Clinton protect these 60 million acres?” [If favor/oppose, ask: “Do you feel that way strongly or not so strongly?”]

⁵⁵ *The Mellman Group* poll. QUESTION: “The Bureau of Land Management, or BLM, is a federal agency that manages 175 million acres of public land in the western United States. Some people suggest that some of this land be designated Wilderness, which leaves areas open to hiking, fishing, camping and other non-motorized recreation and prevents such activities as mining, oil and gas development, road building or off-road vehicle use. What percentage of these 175 million acres, if any, do you think should be designated as wilderness?” (Open ended)

Strong support for protecting much more of the BLM-administered public lands is also demonstrated in a number of state-level polls taken in 2000. Protection for 60 million acres in the Western states for wildlife habitat, non-motorized recreation, and scientific research was registered by lop-sided margins of Californians (69% to 21%), Coloradans (69% to 24%), and Oregonians (60% to 33%).⁵⁶

FIGURE
44

SUPPORT FOR PRESERVING 60 MILLION ACRES OF
BLM-ADMINISTERED LAND: STATE OPINION

	<i>California</i>	<i>Colorado</i>	<i>Oregon</i>
Favor	69%	69%	60%
Strongly favor	52	53	40
Somewhat favor	17	16	20
Oppose	21	24	33
Somewhat oppose	10	9	13
Strongly oppose	11	15	20
Don't know/No opinion	10	6	7

These state surveys also explored opinion on how much of the BLM-administered land in the respondents' own states should be designated wilderness. After being informed of the total extent of BLM lands in their state and arguments pro and con, they were asked to volunteer a percentage of that total they think should be designated as wilderness. As the mean response, respondents in all these states recommended well more than half of the total acreage be preserved as wilderness.⁵⁷

FIGURE
45

HOW MUCH BLM-ADMINISTERED LAND IN YOUR STATE
SHOULD BE DESIGNATED AS WILDERNESS: STATE OPINION

	<i>Total BLM land (millions of acres)</i>	<i>Percentage respondents say should be wilderness</i>	<i>Would be this much (millions of acres)</i>	<i>Present congressional- designated BLM wilderness (millions of acres)</i>
California	14	56%	7.8	3.59
Colorado	8	61	4.9	0.15
Oregon	16	59	9.4	0.17

⁵⁶ *The Mellman Group* poll, February 2000, N=800 registered California general election voters; *Ridder/Braden* poll, February-March 2000, N=501 Coloradans; *The Mellman Group* poll, February 2000, N=503 registered Oregon voters. QUESTION (with slight variations in the Oregon poll): "It has been proposed that President Clinton protect 60 million acres, or 40%, of BLM land in the Western states for wildlife habitat, non-motorized recreation, and scientific research. Conservation groups say that we need to protect these lands from oil development and mining so we can leave them as a legacy for future generations. Some local politicians oppose this idea saying it locks up too much land and would cost jobs and that these lands should remain open to commercial development and off-road vehicle use. Would you favor or oppose the proposal that President Clinton protect these 60 million acres?" [If favor/oppose, ask: "Do you feel that way strongly or not so strongly?"]

⁵⁷ *The Mellman Group* poll, February 2000, N=800 registered California general election voters; *Ridder/Braden* poll, February-March 2000, N=501 Coloradans; *The Mellman Group* poll, February 2000, N=503 registered Oregon voters. QUESTION (with slight variations): "The Bureau of Land Management, or BLM, is a federal agency that manages 14 million acres of public land here in California [8 million acres here in Colorado; 16 million acres here in Oregon]. Some people suggest that some of this land be designated wilderness, which leaves areas open to hiking, fishing, camping and other non-motorized recreation and prevents such activities as mining, oil and gas development, road building or off-road vehicle use. What percentage of these 14 [8; 16] million acres, if any do you think should be designated as wilderness?" (Open ended)

BLM-Administered Roadless Areas in Utah

For decades controversy has swirled around the unusually large amount of BLM-administered land—23 million acres—in Utah. Members of the Utah congressional delegation have blocked congressional consideration of proposals to protect an expanse of wilderness areas reasonably matched to the extraordinary quality of the federal wildlands in their state.

A December 1999 *Mellman Group* poll explored nationwide opinion about BLM-administered wilderness options for these federal lands in Utah. Americans support protecting some of these Utah BLM-administered roadless lands as wilderness by a lop-sided margin (80% to 14%).⁵⁸

SUPPORT FOR PRESERVING BLM-ADMINISTERED ROADLESS AREAS IN UTAH: NATIONAL OPINION

Favor	80%
Strongly favor	62
Somewhat favor	18
Oppose	14
Somewhat oppose	7
Strongly oppose	7
Neither/Don't know/Refused	6

FIGURE
46

Asked what percentage of the BLM-administered land in Utah should be designated as wilderness, the nationwide response was more than two-thirds of the 23 million acres. That would be 15.4 million acres of additional wilderness.⁵⁹

HOW MUCH OF THE BLM-ADMINISTERED LAND IN UTAH SHOULD BE DESIGNATED AS WILDERNESS: NATIONAL OPINION

<i>Total BLM land in Utah (millions of acres)</i>	<i>Percentage respondents say should be wilderness</i>	<i>Would be this much (millions of acres)</i>	<i>Present congressional-designated BLM wilderness in Utah (millions of acres)</i>
23	67%	15.4	0.027

FIGURE
47

⁵⁸ *The Mellman Group* poll, December 1999, N=1,000. QUESTION: “Now I would like to talk to you about public lands for a few minutes. The federal government owns 23 million acres of public land in Utah managed by the Bureau of Land Management. These lands include red rock canyons, and parts of the Mojave Desert and the Great Basin. Congress is considering setting aside some of these lands as National Wilderness Areas. That means they would be closed to new oil drilling and mining but would still allow hiking, fishing, and other non-motorized recreation. In general, would you say that you favor or oppose designating some of these 23 million acres of federal land in Utah as wilderness areas? Would that be strongly favor/oppose or only somewhat favor/oppose?”

⁵⁹ *The Mellman Group* poll. QUESTION: “What percentage of these 23 million acres do you think should be designated as wilderness and therefore protected from commercial development like mining and oil drilling?” (Open ended)

Statewide polling within Utah also shows strong support for protection of a great deal of additional wilderness.

In an October 1999 poll by *Dan Jones and Associates*, Utahns were asked to volunteer how much of the BLM-administered lands in Utah should be designated as wilderness. The mean suggestion was that 14.9 million acres of the total 23 million acres of BLM-administered lands be designated—more than the most expansive proposal advocated by Utah conservation groups, let alone the meager 27,000 acres of BLM-administered land presently designated as wilderness in the state.⁶⁰

FIGURE
48

HOW MUCH OF THE BLM-ADMINISTERED LAND SHOULD BE DESIGNATED AS WILDERNESS: UTAH OPINION

<i>Total BLM land in Utah (millions of acres)</i>	<i>Percentage respondents say should be wilderness</i>	<i>Would be this much (millions of acres)</i>	<i>Present congressional-designated BLM wilderness in Utah (millions of acres)</i>
23	65%	14.9	0.027

In a follow-up question, respondents to this poll were asked which of two competing wilderness proposals for Utah they would support—a 9 million acre citizen proposal or a 2 million acre proposal once suggested by members of the Utah congressional delegation. Utahns favor the larger citizen proposal by a twenty-three point margin (54% to 31%).⁶¹

FIGURE
49

SUPPORT FOR LARGE VS. SMALL WILDERNESS PROPOSALS: UTAH OPINION

2 million acres	31%
9 million acres	54
Somewhere in between (volunteered)	8
Don't know (volunteered)	7

⁶⁰ *Dan Jones and Associates*, October 1999, N=410. QUESTION: "As you may or may not know, roughly two-fifths of Utah's land is owned by the American people and managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The BLM permits a variety of activities on its lands, including mining, grazing, logging, driving off-road vehicles, hiking, hunting and camping. Designating a portion of these lands as wilderness would protect them for wildlife and recreation, such as hiking and camping. They would remain open to the public, and grazing and hunting, and the management of wild species would also be allowed to continue in the designated wilderness areas. But the new designated areas would be closed to new oil and gas drilling, mining, logging, motorized vehicles and new roads. Of the total 23 million acres of land managed by the BLM, how many ACRES (in millions) do you think should be designated as wilderness?"

⁶¹ *Dan Jones and Associates*, October 1999, N=410. QUESTION: "As I mentioned, the BLM managed about 23 million acres of land in Utah. Conservation groups believe that 9 million acres remain pristine, and should be preserved in their roadless condition as designated wilderness areas. Utah's Congressional delegation has previously proposed that about 2 million acres of BLM land be protected as wilderness. Which figure do YOU feel more accurately reflects the IDEAL amount of wilderness area in Utah—2 million or 9 million acres?"

VALUES DRIVING PUBLIC DESIRE TO PROTECT WILDERNESS

The extraordinarily high sense of personal importance Americans attach to preserving wilderness arises from specific benefits they associate with these areas of natural landscape. The federal government's *National Survey on Recreation and the Environment* has probed public feelings about these the benefits of wilderness most valued by the public. When offered a list of values and benefits of wilderness, the public ranks all very high, but to different degrees.⁶²

PRIORITY VALUES AND BENEFITS OF WILDERNESS PRESERVATION

Value ▼	Degree of Importance ►	Extremely/ Slightly/Not at all				
		Very/ Moderately	Don't know/ Refused	Extremely	Very	Moderately
1	Protecting water quality	97.3%	2.7%	54.9%	36.5%	5.9%
2	Protecting air quality	97.2	2.8	58.9	32.8	5.5
3	Protecting wildlife habitat	96.5	3.5	51.5	35.5	9.5
4	Knowing future generations will have wilderness areas	94.7	5.3	46.0	39.1	9.6
5	Protecting rare and endangered species	94.0	6.0	49.8	33.0	11.2
6	Preserving unique wild plants and animals	93.1	6.9	43.7	36.0	13.4
7	Providing scenic beauty	92.6	7.4	35.6	38.5	18.3
8	Knowing that wilderness areas exist	91.7	8.3	36.0	38.0	17.7
9	Providing recreation opportunities	90.7	9.6	29.7	36.9	24.1
10	Knowing that in the future, I will have the option to visit a wilderness area or primitive area of my choice	90.2	9.8	35.9	37.2	17.1
11	Preserving natural areas for scientific studies	85.4	14.6	24.7	32.5	28.2
12	Providing spiritual inspiration	81.5	18.5	27.4	30.6	23.5

FIGURE
50



"IT IS A PECULIAR THING, BUT PEOPLE WHO RARELY GET OUT OF THE CITIES, WHO KNOW THAT THEY HAVE NO CHANCE OF EVER GOING INTO A WILDERNESS AREA, BECAUSE OF HEALTH OR INFIRMITY, STILL ARE IN FAVOR OF WILDERNESS. AND I THINK THAT WE WILL FIND THAT CONDITION WILL CONTINUE."

RICHARD E. McARDLE, CHIEF, U.S. FOREST SERVICE

TESTIMONY, FIRST SENATE HEARING ON THE WILDERNESS ACT, JUNE 1957

⁶² *National Survey on Recreation and the Environment* poll, 2000-2001, N=5,239. QUESTION: "Wilderness areas provide a variety of benefits for different people. For each benefit I read, please tell me whether it is extremely important, very important, moderately important, slightly important, or not important at all to you."

Too often wilderness is thought to be valued primarily for recreation. It is particularly noteworthy that personal, on-the-ground use of wilderness areas that involves physically entering the boundary of such an area—for recreational opportunities by backpackers, hunters, fishermen, and the like—ranks ninth among the benefits most valued by the public. Less than a third rank recreational use as extremely important, while majorities feel that the “ecological services” of clean air, clean water and wildlife habitat are extremely important. This is not to say that wilderness recreation is not an important value to tens of millions of Americans—it is—but to emphasize that Americans value their wilderness heritage for a wider array of benefits, and not only for themselves but for others, for their community and nation, and for future generations. The public is overwhelmingly in tune with the congressional purpose in the Wilderness Act.

- **Americans “use” their wilderness areas in many ways not measured in any accounting of on-the-ground use actually taking place within a wilderness boundary.** The recreational uses commonly associated with concepts of wilderness—backpacking, camping, running wild rivers—are but one portion of the overall value the American people assign to preservation of wilderness.
- **Americans attach surpassing importance to the “ecological services” wilderness areas provide—protection of air and water quality, wildlife habitat and endangered species, unique ecosystems, genetic diversity, and scenic beauty.** These are, to an overwhelmingly broad majority, extremely important “uses” for which they value wilderness preservation.
- **Americans share a very deep commitment to the value of wilderness for the future, particularly the importance of preserving wilderness *as their legacy* to future generations.** This sense of the future value of wilderness also includes their own future option to visit, and the benefit of simply knowing such wild places exist and are being preserved.

The *NSRE* also includes a second way of looking at the values of wilderness areas, by probing respondents’ reaction to a series of personalized value statements expressing major themes of wilderness preservation philosophy.⁶³ These are typical of value statements often voiced by the public in testimony at agency and congressional hearings on proposals for designation of additional wilderness areas.

The striking thing about these findings is the extraordinary degree of consensus among Americans that wilderness preservation is important for these values. For example, nearly nine in ten Americans (89.1%) support “protecting wilderness just so they will always exist in their natural condition, even if no one were to ever visit or otherwise benefit from them.” Even more lop-sided consensus supports the values of preserving wilderness so that future generations will have the option to visit them (96.7%), to protect plant and animal species (93.9%), and as a way to contribute to higher air and water quality (93.8%).

▲
⁶³ *NSRE* poll, 2000-2001, N=10,382. QUESTION: “Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements about wilderness.”

PERSONAL VALUES OF WILDERNESS: NATIONAL OPINION

FIGURE

51

	Agree	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Somewhat agree</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	<i>Don't know/Refused</i>
I enjoy knowing that future generations will be able to visit and experience wilderness areas	96.7%	1.4%	84.0%	12.6%	0.6%	0.8%	0.6%	1.4%
Wilderness areas are important because they help to preserve plant and animal species which could have important scientific or human health value, such as new medicines	93.9	2.7	77.5	16.5	1.4	1.4	1.3	2.1
Wilderness areas are important to protect because they contribute to better local, national, and global air and water quality	93.8	2.5	79.6	14.1	1.4	1.3	1.2	2.4
I enjoy knowing that other people are currently able to visit wilderness	93.7	2.4	70.8	22.9	2.1	1.5	1.0	1.8
I believe the trees, wildlife, free flowing water, rock formations, and meadows that wilderness protects, have value themselves whether or not humans benefit from them	93.1	3.4	72.8	20.3	1.5	1.9	1.5	2.0
I enjoy reading about and viewing pictures, videos, TV shows and movies featuring wilderness areas	89.9	5.2	59.4	30.4	3.3	3.3	1.9	1.7
I support protecting wilderness just so they will always exist in their natural condition, even if no one were to ever visit or otherwise benefit from them	89.1	6.7	67.9	21.2	2.2	3.7	3.0	2.1



"IN ADDITION TO LAND PRESERVATION, THE (WILDERNESS ACT) HAS ENCOURAGED THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA'S HISTORY, PROMOTED RECREATION, PROVIDED FOR ITS DIVERSE WILDLIFE AND ECOSYSTEMS, AND SATISFIED PEOPLE'S URGE FOR SOLACE AND A RETURN TO WILD PLACES." SEN. ROBERT C. BYRD, D-WV

SEPTEMBER 8, 1999

WILDERNESS VS. TRADEOFFS

The depth of importance Americans assign to wilderness is underscored when they are asked whether they would pay more for electricity, gasoline, or consumer products in order to assure the protection of wilderness values.

When informed that air pollution from power plants and industry obstructs views of wilderness scenery, an overwhelming majority (85.5%) of *NSRE* respondents supported requiring companies to clean up their air pollution, “even if it meant you might pay more for electricity or consumer products.” A solid majority (54.4%) agreed strongly, while fewer than one in ten (9.4%) disagreed.⁶⁴

FIGURE
52

CLEANING UP AIR POLLUTION OBSCURING WILDERNESS SCENERY EVEN IF ELECTRICITY OR CONSUMER PRODUCTS WOULD COST MORE: NATIONAL OPINION

Agree	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Don't know/Refused</i>
85.5%	9.4%	54.4%	31.1%	2.6%	5.1%	4.3%	2.6%

This broadly shared priority for protecting wilderness even if at some additional costs to the respondents as consumers has also been shown in media polls.

In one of the hardest fought issues of the year, on April 19, 2002 a bipartisan majority of the United States Senate voted 54-to-46 not to allow oil and gas drilling in the wild coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska. The 54 senators voting to protect the Arctic wilderness were in step with nationwide public opinion, as demonstrated in a poll completed just days before. The April 2002 *TIME/CNN* poll, taken at a time when the Arctic debate and President Bush’s advocacy for drilling there and in many other sensitive western wildlands was receiving intensive media coverage, found a two to one majority (62% to 33%) favored protecting wilderness areas *even if it would cause higher gas prices*.⁶⁵

FIGURE
53

PROTECTING WILDERNESS EVEN IF IT MEANS HIGHER GASOLINE PRICES: NATIONAL OPINION

Favor	62%
Oppose	33
Not sure	5

⁶⁴ *NSRE* poll, 2000-2001, N=5,239. QUESTION: “Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: It has been documented that air pollution from power plants and industry obstructs views of wilderness scenery. Companies should be required to clean up their air pollution, even if it meant you might pay more for electricity or consumer products.”

⁶⁵ *TIME/CNN* poll by Harris Interactive, April 2002, N=1,003 adults. QUESTION: Protecting the environment sometimes involves costs and other kinds of sacrifices. Do you favor or oppose each of the following? ... Protecting wilderness areas, even if it were to cause higher gas prices.”

“LOCAL CONTROL” AND WILDERNESS PRESERVATION

ALL AMERICANS’ VOICES SHOULD BE HEARD IN FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

In the political debate over wilderness preservation, opponents often argue for a greater level of local control, suggesting local residents should have a disproportionate voice in deciding whether to preserve areas of public lands. They offer the plausible-sounding argument that local communities need “flexibility” that is somehow threatened if decisions are made from a broader national perspective.⁶⁶

This “local control” argument has been a particular theme of hard-Right special interest groups in the mold of James Watt and the so-called “wise use” movement. It is a theme sounded by the current administration in defending its efforts to reverse the U.S. Forest Service’s 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

However, the American people as a whole are the landlords of these public lands and resources. Federal stewardship of these public lands comes with very large direct and indirect subsidies to local communities, as well as the economic benefit of the scenic, recreational and other economic contributions these lands make to local communities.

In an April 2001 *Los Angeles Times* poll, a solid majority (61%) felt that the federal government should give an equal say to the views of all Americans in its management of the public lands, with only one third saying the federal government should pay more attention to the views of people who live nearby. While it is not surprising that support for “local control” is greater in the mountain states, even there a majority feels an equal say in the management of federal lands should be given to all Americans.⁶⁷

“LOCAL CONTROL” VS. EQUAL SAY FOR ALL AMERICANS IN FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT

	<i>National</i>	<i>California</i>	<i>Mountain states</i>
More attention to locals	34%	34%	46%
Equal say to all Americans	61	63	51
Don’t know	5	3	3

FIGURE
54

⁶⁶ In fact, in decisions on designation of wilderness areas, local opinion does have a disproportionate voice over national opinion, as these are legislative decisions made in the House of Representatives and Senate, where deference to the local representatives and senators is a very strong factor. Moreover, administrative decisions by the federal land managing agencies are also disproportionately influenced by local opinion.

⁶⁷ *Los Angeles Times* poll, April 2001, N: National=813 adults; California=512; Mountain States=553; The mountain states are AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT and WY. QUESTION: “As you may know, the federal government manages millions of acres of public lands. In its management of the public lands, should the federal government pay more attention to the views of people who live nearby or should it give an equal say to the views of all Americans?”

RURAL SUPPORT FOR PROTECTING MORE WILDERNESS

Too often, wilderness issues are perceived as pitting urban majorities against rural minorities who are assumed to be adverse to designation of additional wilderness areas.

An August 2001 *Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates* poll of Californians oversampled in five rural counties where a great deal of potential but not-yet-officially-designated wilderness is located. In these rural counties, respondents back an expansive proposal for substantial additional wilderness designation by a margin of two to one (60% to 29%).⁶⁸

The *National Survey on Recreation and the Environment* findings show that by a wide margin Americans believe that not enough federal land has been designated for protection under the 1964 Wilderness Act. This overwhelming margin of support does not differ substantially between metropolitan (50.7% “not enough” to 5.6% “too much”) and rural residents (43.5% “not enough” to 7.4% “too much”). [For details, see Figure 13, page 9.]

In a post-September 11, 2001 *Mason-Dixon Polling & Research* poll of Nevadans, when asked about a citizen proposal to designate 4.1 million acres of the Mojave Desert region of Southern Nevada as wilderness, three-fourths (74%) favored that large proposal. Not surprisingly, support was stronger in Clark County (which includes Las Vegas), but in rural Nevada a solid majority of voters (56%) also expressed support, with only one-third stating opposition (35%).⁶⁹

RURAL SUPPORT FOR A SPECIFIC WILDERNESS PROPOSAL FOR SOUTHERN NEVADA

	Statewide	Clark county	Rural Nevada
Favor	74%	79%	56%
Oppose	21	17	35
Undecided	5	4	9

FIGURE
55

⁶⁸ *Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates* poll, August 25-30, 2001, N=901. The oversample involved 100 interviews completed with likely voters in Plumas, Sierra, El Dorado, Toulumne and Mariposa counties. The polling firm states that the margin of sampling error in this oversample is 9.3%. For the question, see footnote 24.

⁶⁹ *Mason-Dixon Polling & Research* poll, October 2001, N=625 regular voters. QUESTION: “Conservation groups along with some businesses and Native American tribes in Nevada have proposed designating 4.1 million acres in the Mojave Desert region of Southern Nevada as Wilderness. Their Wilderness proposal would leave the area open for activities such as hunting, hiking, camping, horseback riding and livestock grazing. It would prohibit industrial activities such as mining and geothermal development, and dirt bike and other off-road vehicle use. Do you favor or oppose this proposal?”

A June 2002 *Grove Quirk Insight* poll asked central Oregon residents of two counties about a proposal to designate 37,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management administered lands in those counties as a new “Oregon Badlands Wilderness.” The question described that motorized use would not be allowed and that 10 miles of existing motorized vehicle trails would be closed. A majority in the two local counties (54%) favored designating the area as wilderness, a 19-point margin over those opposing (35%).⁷⁰

SUPPORT FOR NEW WILDERNESS IN OREGON:
LOCAL COUNTY OPINION

Favor	54%
Strongly	44
Not so strongly	10
Oppose	35
Not so strongly	10
Strongly	25
Undecided	11

FIGURE
56

A February 2002 *University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies* poll found that large majorities of both the statewide sample and a smaller sample of residents of the towns in or adjacent to the Green Mountain National Forest favored designating additional wilderness areas *even if it required removal or rerouting of snowmobile trails*. By a small margin, the sample from the nearby towns registered even higher agreement (68%) than the statewide sample (65%).⁷¹

MORE WILDERNESS IN VERMONT EVEN IF IT MEANS REMOVING SNOWMOBILE USE:
STATEWIDE AND LOCAL OPINION

	Statewide	Local towns
Agree	65%	68%
Disagree	27	26
Neither	8	6

FIGURE
57

⁷⁰ *Grove Quirk Insight* poll, June 2002, N=400 statewide. QUESTION: “Now I’d like to get your reaction to a proposal regarding the Badlands area in Central Oregon. The proposal, if approved by Congress, would designate about 37,000 acres of federal land as a wilderness area. The area is currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management or ‘BLM.’ Under this wilderness designation, all motorized vehicles such as trucks, dirt bikes and all-terrain vehicles would not be allowed within the designated wilderness area and 10 miles of existing, year-round motorized vehicle trails would be closed. Hiking, horse back riding and hunting would still be allowed. This arrangement is similar to other designated wilderness areas in Central Oregon such as Three Sisters and Mill Creek. Do you favor or oppose designating this area as wilderness, or aren’t you sure? [IF ‘FAVOR’ OR ‘OPPOSE’, ASK:] Is that (FAVOR/OPPOSE) strongly or not so strongly.”

⁷¹ *University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies* poll, February 2002, statewide N=472 voters; N=112 in towns in or adjacent to Green Mountain National Forest (the firm states this smaller sample provides a margin of error of +/- 10% at a confidence level of 95%). QUESTION: Respondents were asked whether they strongly agreed, agreed, neither agreed or disagreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed that “I would support the establishment of additional wilderness areas on the Green Mountain National Forest, even if it required the removal or re-routing of snowmobile trails.”

USING SCIENTIFIC PUBLIC OPINION DATA IN FEDERAL LAND DECISION MAKING

The Majority of Americans Are “Not at the Table” as the Fate of Wilderness is Decided by Agencies and the Administration

Allocating lands among competing and often-incompatible uses is the heart of land management planning for federal lands, and is essential to preserve wilderness. Federal law requires meaningful involvement of the public in these decisions. For example, the required public involvement in planning for the national forests is intended to “ensure that the Forest Service understands the needs, concerns, and values of the public.”⁷²

The land managing agencies do commonly hold public meetings and solicit written comments as a means of helping decision-makers understand the concerns and values of the public at large. However, these meetings are almost always held in local communities not convenient to the great majority of Americans who, though they live further away, are nonetheless co-equal owners of the public lands. Certainly, the more broadly such public meetings are held, and the more widely written input is solicited, the more complete a picture of public “needs, concerns, and values” officials would obtain.

Yet, it has been rare for the federal agencies to seek—or to give much weight to—scientifically tested public opinion findings as they make fundamental decisions for the development or preservation of public lands. Development interests such as mining, oil and gas drilling, and logging companies are always well represented at the local decision-making table. The Forest Service’s *National Survey on Recreation and the Environment* demonstrated that Americans attach highest importance to the “non-use” values served by protecting wilderness—benefits such clean water, wildlife habitat, and leaving a legacy of wildlands for the future. But as the director of the *NSRE*, Dr. H. Ken Cordell, and his colleagues observe: “Usually, non-use interests, that is, the interests of the majority of Americans, are not at the table.”⁷³

As the natural resource planner for the southern region of the Forest Service has commented, those attending local public meetings concerning national forest planning:

typically represent only a portion of the public’s interests and seldom represent the so-called ‘silent majority’ who do not or cannot attend these meetings. The survey results . . . provide input from this broader public concerning what they would like to see emphasized in national forest management.⁷⁴



⁷² 36 CFR 219.6(a)(2).

⁷³ H. Ken Cordell, Michael A. Tarrant and Gary T. Green, “Is the Public Viewpoint of Wilderness Shifting?” [forthcoming].

⁷⁴ See footnote 75.

Opinion Survey in Planning for the National Forests of the Southern Appalachians

Forest planners for the national forests in the Southern Appalachians commissioned the research arm of the Forest Service to conduct comprehensive public opinion research. The July 2002 poll surveyed adults in the “primary market area” for these forests.⁷⁵

Regarding their own participation in various recreational uses within these national forests in the past 12 months, the preferences of the public may challenge some stereotypes. Of 20 recreational activities, the fourth highest participation was “visit a wilderness or other undeveloped, roadless area” (39.2%), ranking below picnicking (54.7%) but above fishing (34.4%) and camping at a developed site (25.2%). Further down the list were driving off-road (24.0%), bicycling or mountain biking (16.2%), and hunting (14.2%).⁷⁶

Asked about possible management objectives for the national forests, more than two thirds felt that designating more wilderness areas was “important” to them (67.1%, with 41.4% feeling this was *extremely* important). Most of those objectives that rate even higher—including protecting old growth forests (85.3%) and trails for non-motorized recreation (68.7%)—are enhanced by wilderness designation. By comparison, only half as many felt it was important to pave new roads (34.5%) and fewer than one quarter felt it important to expand access for motorized off-road vehicles (22.8%).⁷⁷

The high level of importance attached to designating more wilderness areas was remarkably consistent among subgroups identified in the poll:⁷⁸

- 64.6% of residents for more than 20 years favored more wilderness, as did 69.6% of those living in the region for less than 10 years
- 66.5% of owners of rural land, and 67.2% of non-owners
- 66.2% of White/non-Hispanic respondents, and 69.4% of non-Whites including Hispanics
- 69.2% of working people, and 60.9% of retirees.



⁷⁵ *Public Survey Report, Chattahoochee & Oconee and Sumter National Forests: A Survey of Residents of the Greater Southern Appalachian Region to Describe Public Use and Preferred Objectives for Southern Appalachian National Forests*, U.S. Forest Service and University of Tennessee, July 2002. The quotation cited at footnote 74 is at pages ii-iii. This report and similar ones for the other national forests involved are found at www.srs.fs.fed.us/trends/sanfprt.html.

All data cited on this page is for the entire regional sample in the “primary market area,” N=5,222. The primary market area is defined as the 596 counties having any portion of their boundaries within a 75-mile straight-line radius of any portion of the boundary of any of the 13 national forests in the region. This includes some counties in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. The survey was designed to assure a minimum sample size of at least 400 within the market area for each national forest.

⁷⁶ *Public Survey Report*, Table 2, page 15.

⁷⁷ *Public Survey Report*, Table 5, pages 22–23.

⁷⁸ *Public Survey Report*, Table 9, pages 34–36.

In reporting their findings, the Forest Service survey scientists offered their advice concerning the 12 issues the planners had identified at the outset, phrasing each as a management direction well supported by the poll findings. Included was “Recommend additional roadless areas on National Forest System land for wilderness designation.”⁷⁹ Noting that the growing, diversifying population of the region means shifting attitudes toward management of the forests, the authors conclude:

The trend has been toward more sensitivity for maintaining the natural condition and appearance of lands and forests. While we generally are a consumptive society, people express deep concern and caring about the future of natural resources and lands, such as National Forests. Overall, with some modest variations, there is agreement among people of different ages, races, employment status, places of residence, and education that careful management of National Forests to assure clean water, sustained healthy forests, wildlife habitat and naturalness are of highest priority. This is clear direction for setting management emphasis in [new national forest plans].⁸⁰

Every one of these highest public priorities is not only compatible with wilderness, but will best be assured by using the full strength of the Wilderness Act to designate more of the national forests for permanent protection and enjoyment.

The evidence of diverse polling compiled in this report creates the overwhelming presumption that, were they similarly invited to be “at the table” as part of federal agency planning, the American people would express their overwhelming support for the strongest possible protection of a great deal more wilderness.



“THE PRESIDENT IS COMMITTED TO PROMOTING A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT, AND TO GIVE LOCAL COMMUNITIES INPUT AND FLEXIBILITY TO ENSURE THE ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS WORK FOR THEIR COMMUNITY,” [WHITE HOUSE SPOKESWOMAN CLAIRE BUCHAN SAID]. BUT ‘FLEXIBILITY,’ ON THE GROUND, HAS OFTEN MEANT REOPENING PUBLIC LAND FOR EXPLOITATION.” *THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

DECEMBER 28, 2001

⁷⁹ *Public Survey Report*, page 41.

⁸⁰ *Public Survey Report*, page 41.

“FOR THE PERMANENT GOOD OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE”

The official title of the 1964 Wilderness Act is “An act to establish a National Wilderness Preservation System *for the permanent good of the whole people, and for other purposes.*”⁸¹

The phrase “the whole people” emphasizes that the law applies to public lands belonging equally to all Americans who share the benefits of preserving wilderness.

The phrase “for the permanent good” extends the emphasis on the whole people beyond our own generation. It reflects congressional recognition of the moral imperative that underlies all conservation: the duty of each generation to look out for the interests of the unborn people who are, in Theodore Roosevelt’s splendid words, still “within the womb of time, compared to which those now alive form but an insignificant fraction.”⁸²

T.R. went on to say: ***“Our duty to the whole, including the unborn generations, bids us restrain an unprincipled present-day minority from wasting the heritage of these unborn generations.”***

The diverse public opinion research summarized in this report shows remarkably consistent, very strong majority appreciation of the multiple values and benefits—the multiple uses—of wilderness. It shows strong majority support for protecting *more* federal land as wilderness.

There can be only one conclusion: The whole people, on behalf of those yet “within the womb of time,” want more of their wilderness heritage protected, just as strongly as possible. That is the purpose and the promise of our National Wilderness Preservation System.



“THE EYES OF THE FUTURE ARE LOOKING BACK AT US AND THEY ARE PRAYING FOR US TO SEE BEYOND OUR OWN TIME. OUR DESCENDANTS ARE KNEELING WITH CLASPED HANDS HOPING THAT WE MIGHT ACT WITH RESTRAINT, THAT WE MIGHT LEAVE ROOM FOR THE LIFE THAT IS DESTINED TO COME.”

TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS
*AMERICA’S REDROCK WILDERNESS:
PROTECTING A NATIONAL TREASURE*
1998

⁸¹ This is the full title of the Act, found above the enacting clause. See www.leaveitwild.org/reports/wilderness1964.html.

⁸² Roosevelt, Theodore. *A Book-Lover’s Holidays in the Open*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1916; Bartleby.com, 1998. www.bartleby.com/57/. [Printout 11/20/02].



METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

The *Campaign for America's Wilderness* asked Kate Stewart of *Belden Russonello & Stewart* to compile and review recent polling concerning wilderness. This report draws on the *Belden Russonello & Stewart* review (which was completed just prior to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001) augmented with additional polls through November 2002.

With one exception, only polls taken within the past four years are included in the analysis, which was written by Douglas W. Scott, policy director of the Campaign for America's Wilderness. We included no polls sponsored by organizations opposed to most wilderness protection, for the few we found were classic examples of “push polls,” in which bias in the wording of the questions distort public responses.

This review does not include the extensive polling about the high profile issue of oil drilling versus wilderness in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. For details contact the Alaska Wilderness League: (202) 544-5205.

Every poll discussed in this report is documented in a footnote giving the polling organization, date of the poll, and complete wording of the question. N = sample size (how many people were polled). Some of the polls use weighted data, adjusting raw results to improve accuracy by compensating for known factors in the sample that would otherwise not match the entire population. Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Oversampling involves polling more people in a geographic or demographic subset of the population, usually to get better data on just that subset.

Except as noted, the polls reported here involve sample sizes yielding margins of error in the 3–4% range or less. “Margin of error” is a statistical measure of possible errors arising from sampling alone. It is often misunderstood. The words imply that there is a finite “margin of error” when there is not. The *Harris Poll* includes the following caveats with all their poll results:

“Unfortunately, there are several other possible sources of error in all polls or surveys that are probably more serious than theoretical calculations of sampling error. They include refusals to be interviewed (non-response), question wording and question order, interviewer bias, weighting by demographic control data, and screening (e.g., for likely voters). It is difficult or impossible to quantify the errors that may result from these factors.”

We are grateful to Ms. Stewart, the many polling firms and sponsoring organizations that made their research available to us, and to Dr. H. Ken Cordell, Dr. Gary T. Green, and the staff that works with them on the *National Survey on Recreation and the Environment*.



“DEFENDERS OF THE SHORT-SIGHTED MEN WHO IN THEIR GREED AND SELFISHNESS WILL, IF PERMITTED, ROB OUR COUNTRY OF HALF ITS CHARM BY THEIR RECKLESS EXTERMINATION OF ALL USEFUL AND BEAUTIFUL WILD THINGS SOMETIMES SEEK TO CHAMPION THEM BY SAYING THE ‘THE GAME BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE.’ SO IT DOES; AND NOT MERELY TO THE PEOPLE NOW ALIVE, BUT TO THE UNBORN PEOPLE. THE ‘GREATEST GOOD FOR THE GREATEST NUMBER’ APPLIES TO THE NUMBER WITHIN THE WOMB OF TIME, COMPARED TO WHICH THOSE NOW ALIVE FORM BUT AN INSIGNIFICANT FRACTION. OUR DUTY TO THE WHOLE, INCLUDING THE UNBORN GENERATIONS, BIDS US RESTRAIN AN UNPRINCIPLED PRESENT-DAY MINORITY FROM WASTING THE HERITAGE OF THESE UNBORN GENERATIONS.”

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

A BOOK LOVER'S HOLIDAYS IN THE OPEN

1916

CAMPAIGN FOR AMERICA'S WILDERNESS

122 C Street NW, Suite 240
Washington DC 20001
Tel 202/544-3691
Fax 202/544-5197
WWW.LEAVEITWILD.ORG

Durango
New York
Portland
Seattle