

CONSERVATION OPINIONS IN THE ROCKIES: TRUMP ERA DISRUPTION OR CONSISTENCY OVER EIGHT YEARS?

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LAND USE INSTITUTE: WESTERN PLACES/WESTERN SPACES

MARCH 8-9, 2018 DENVER COLORADO

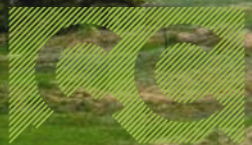
Panel Members:

Walt Hecox, Colorado College, Rockies Project

Lori Weigel, Public Opinion Strategies

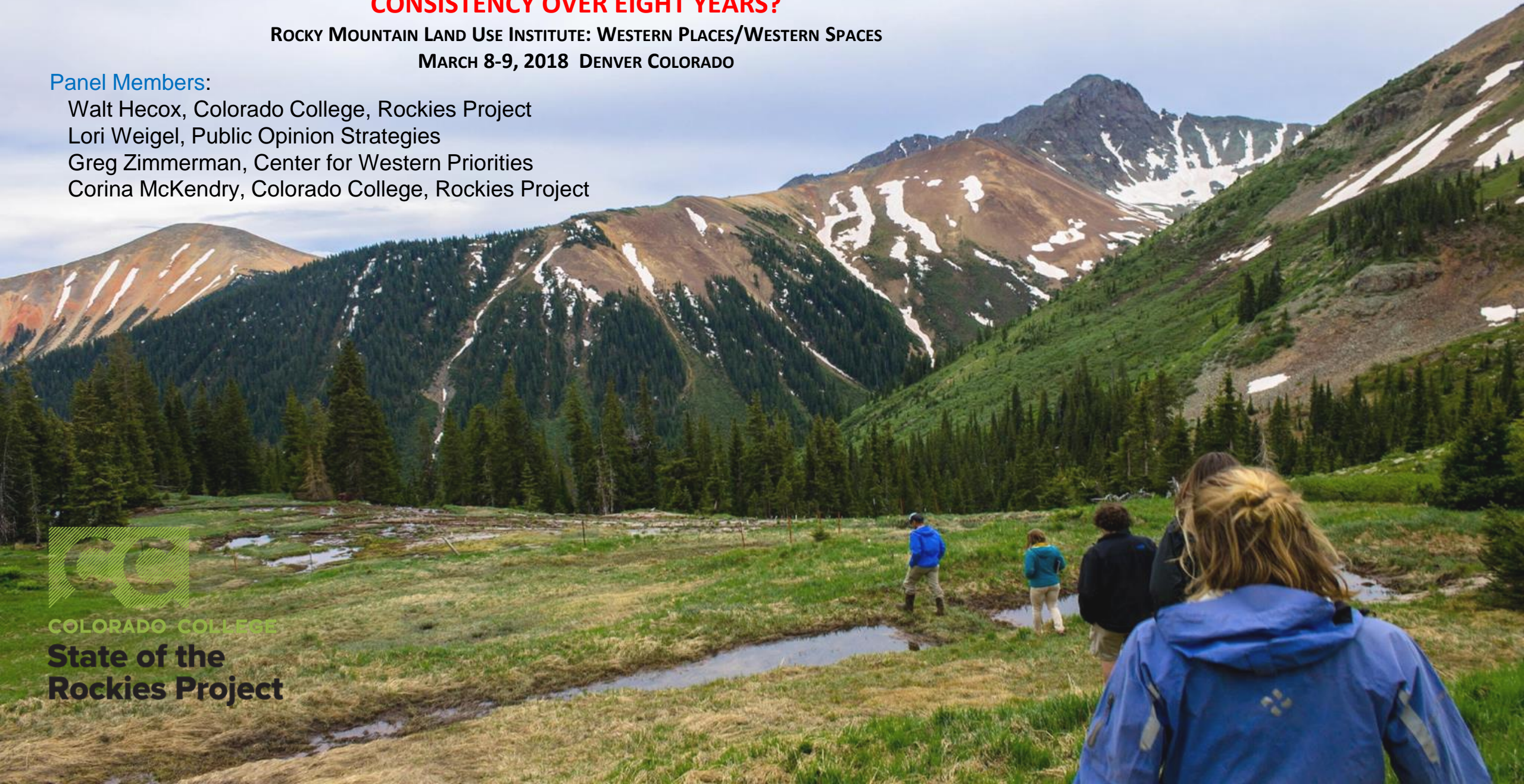
Greg Zimmerman, Center for Western Priorities

Corina McKendry, Colorado College, Rockies Project



COLORADO COLLEGE

**State of the
Rockies Project**



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What We Plan to Cover Today

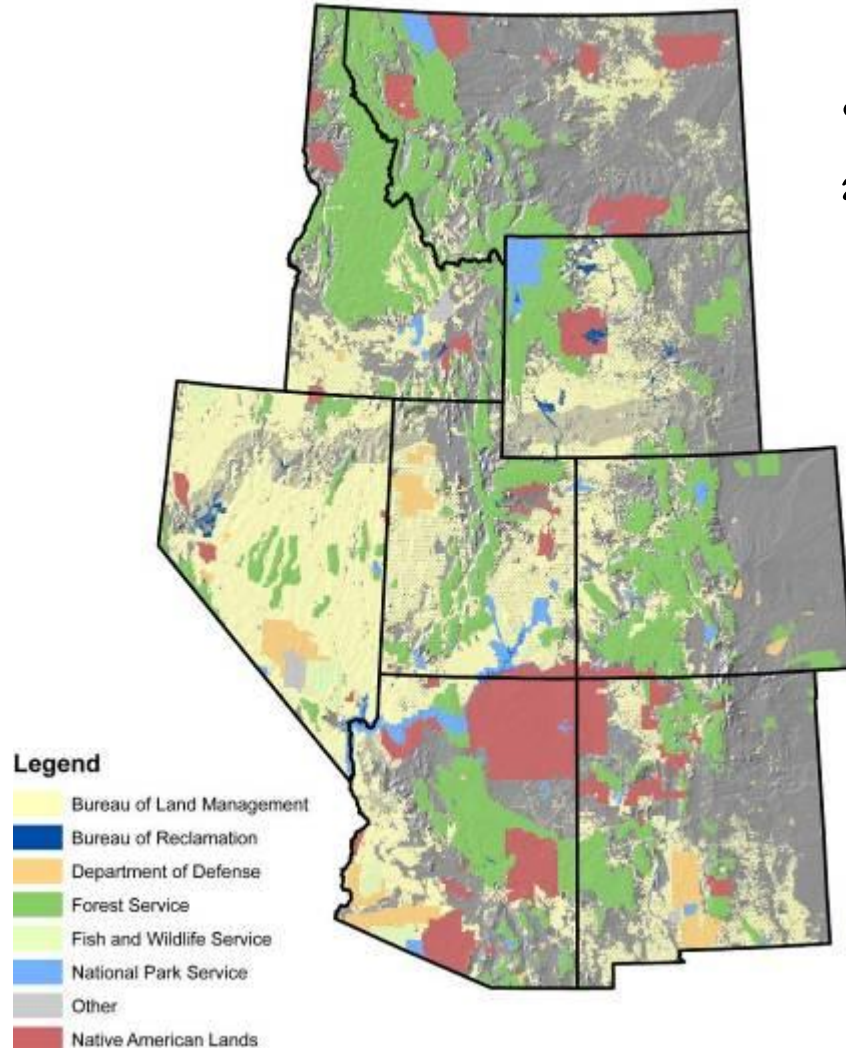
DESCRIPTION

- Does the Trump era represent fundamental changes in Rockies' region attitudes about natural amenities?
- Vast open spaces, mixes of public-private land ownership, and intense interest in clean environments help define the western states and their quality of life.
- This session will discuss eight years' of the Colorado College Conservation in the West Surveys that annually take the pulse of the Rockies, with results useful to media, governments and non-profits.
- A retrospective review will highlight complexities of rural-urban views in the face of political challenges.
- Results illuminate shared values and deep seated commitment to nature as the foundation of where we all live.

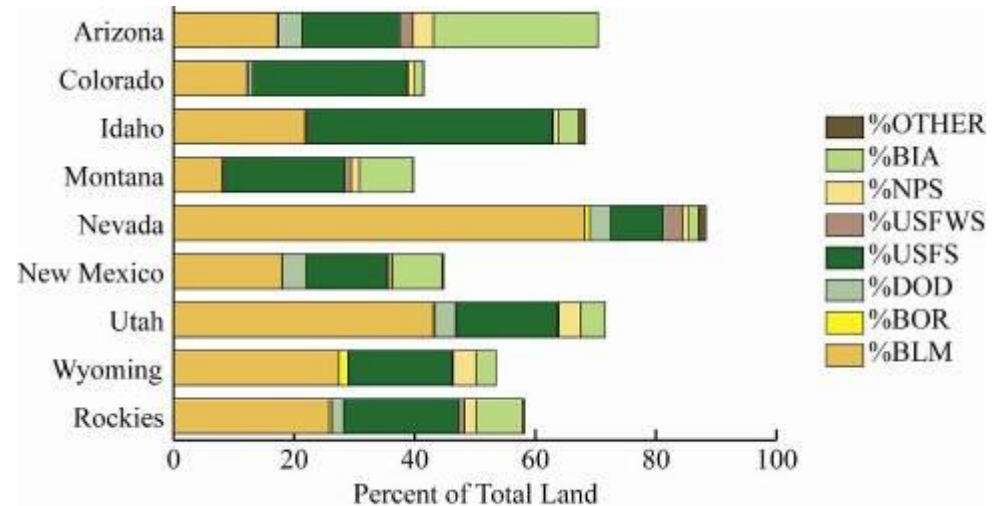
Area of Interest: 8 States in Rockies Region

Federal Land Ownership in the Rockies

- In the Rockies, approximately 2/3 of forests are publicly owned by Federal Agencies

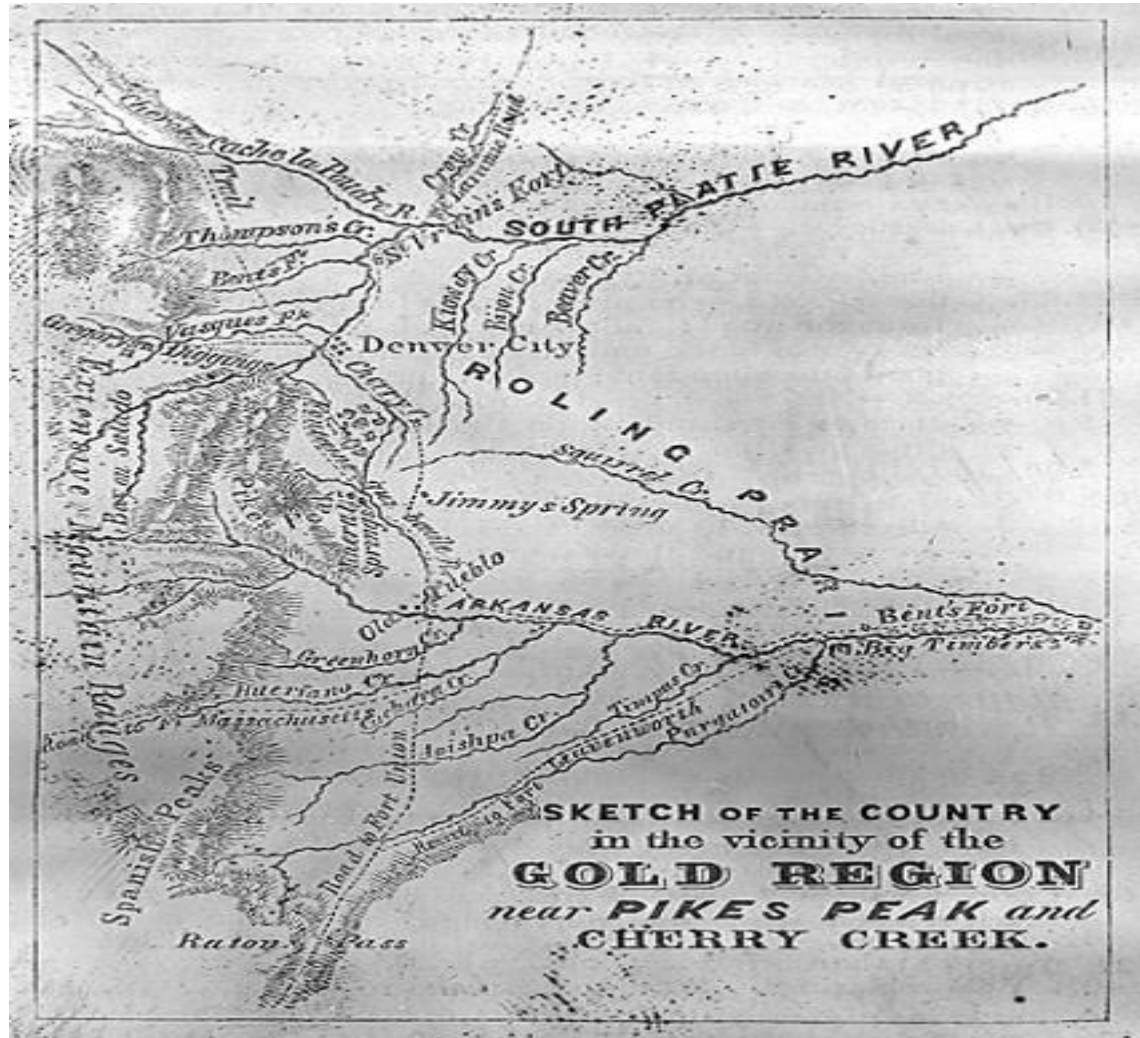


Federal Land Ownership in the Rockies by State and Agency



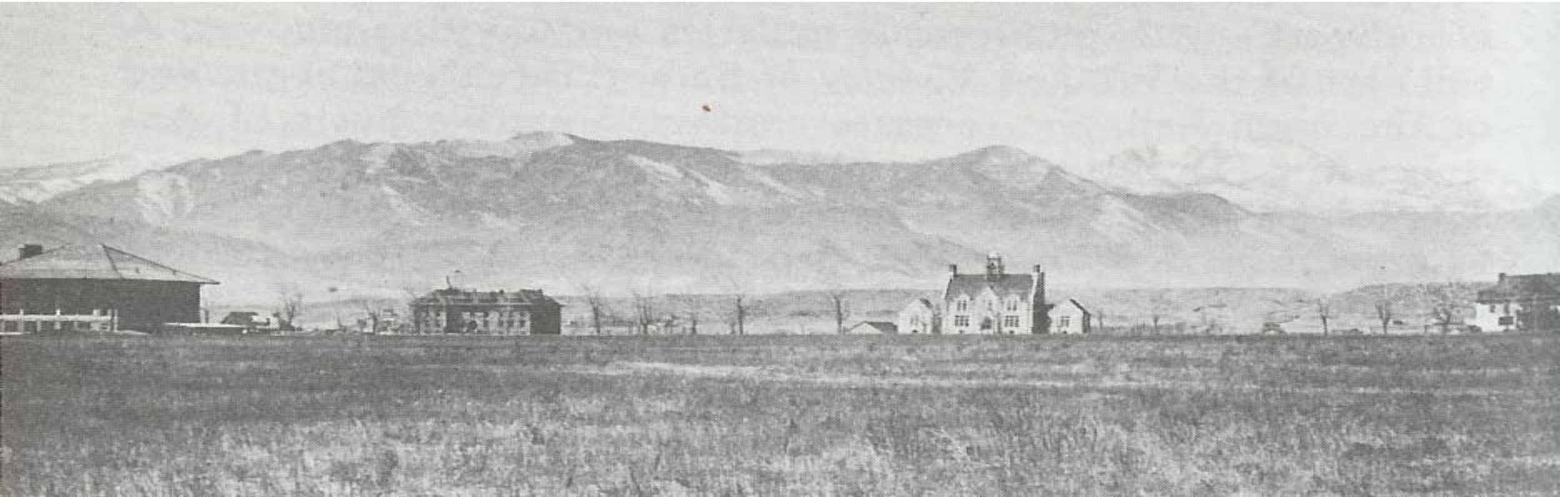
Era of Westward Expansion: 1840s – 1960's

PIKES PEAK OR BUST GOLD RUSH (TO DENVER): 1858



- Homestead Acts spread westward expansion
- Transport and water diversion settled prime lands
- Leftover lands became valued as amenities

A BOOMING CAMPUS CIRCA 1888



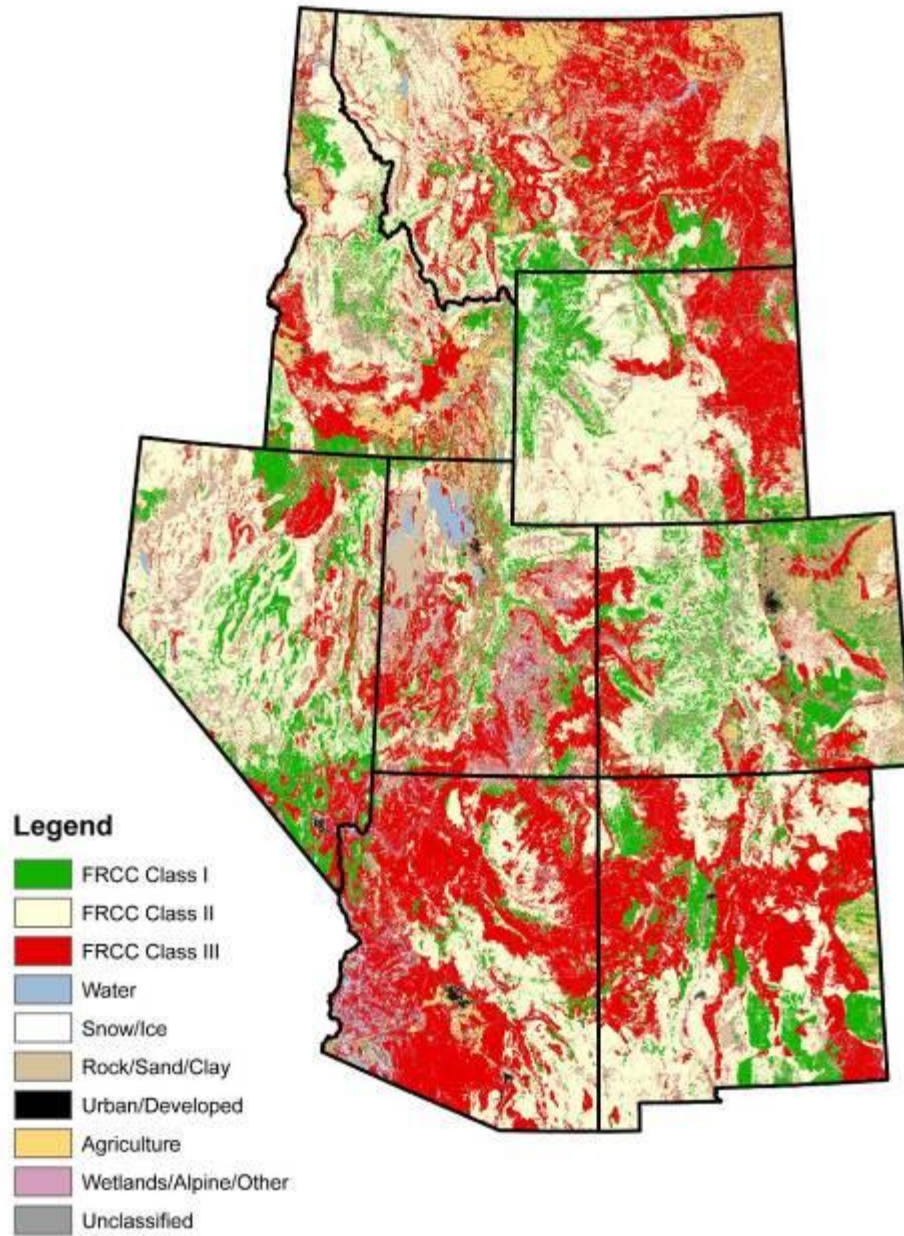
Colorado College on the stark plains – Water Diversion
and Lush Urban Vegetation only came later!

Era of Environment and Conservation 1960s-2015

Some Major Environmental Legislation: Shaping Management of the Environment

1963 Clean Air Act	1976 Resource Conservation & Recovery Act
1965 Solid Waste Disposal Act	1976 Solid Waste Disposal Act
1965 Water Quality Act	1980 CERCLA (Superfund)
1967 Air Quality Act	1987 Clean Water Act Reauthorization
1969 NEPA	1980 Oil Pollution Act
1970 Clean Air Act (1970)	1990 Clean Air Act (1990)
	2003 Healthy Forests Initiative

The Fire Regime Condition Class



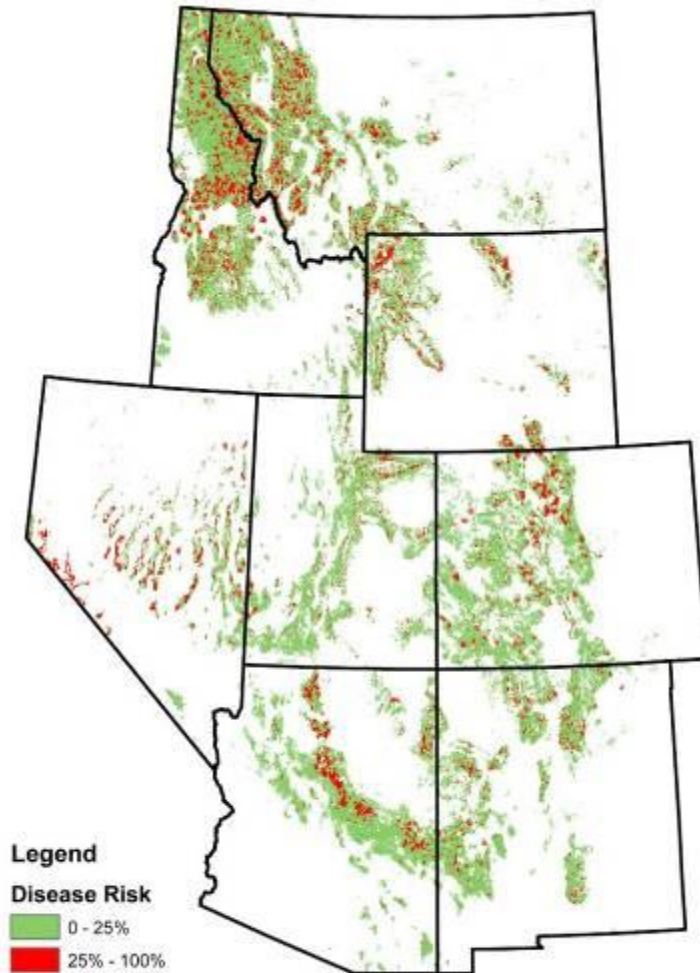
•FRCC Class III

- High departure from historical vegetation characteristics, fire frequency, and fuels composition, severity, and pattern
- Results from fire exclusion, logging, and/or exotic insect or disease invasion

Measuring Forest Disease

Top 10 Counties- Percent Diseased Acres

Disease Infestation in the Rockies



County, State	%Diseased	Rank
Lyon, NV	81.9	1
Mineral, NV	66.5	2
Storey, NV	55.4	3
Esmeralda, NV	55.1	4
Douglas, NV	40.0	5
Carson City, NV	31.3	6
Churchill, NV	31.3	7
Nye, NV	29.0	8
Sheridan, WY	28.0	9
Lander, NV	26.0	10

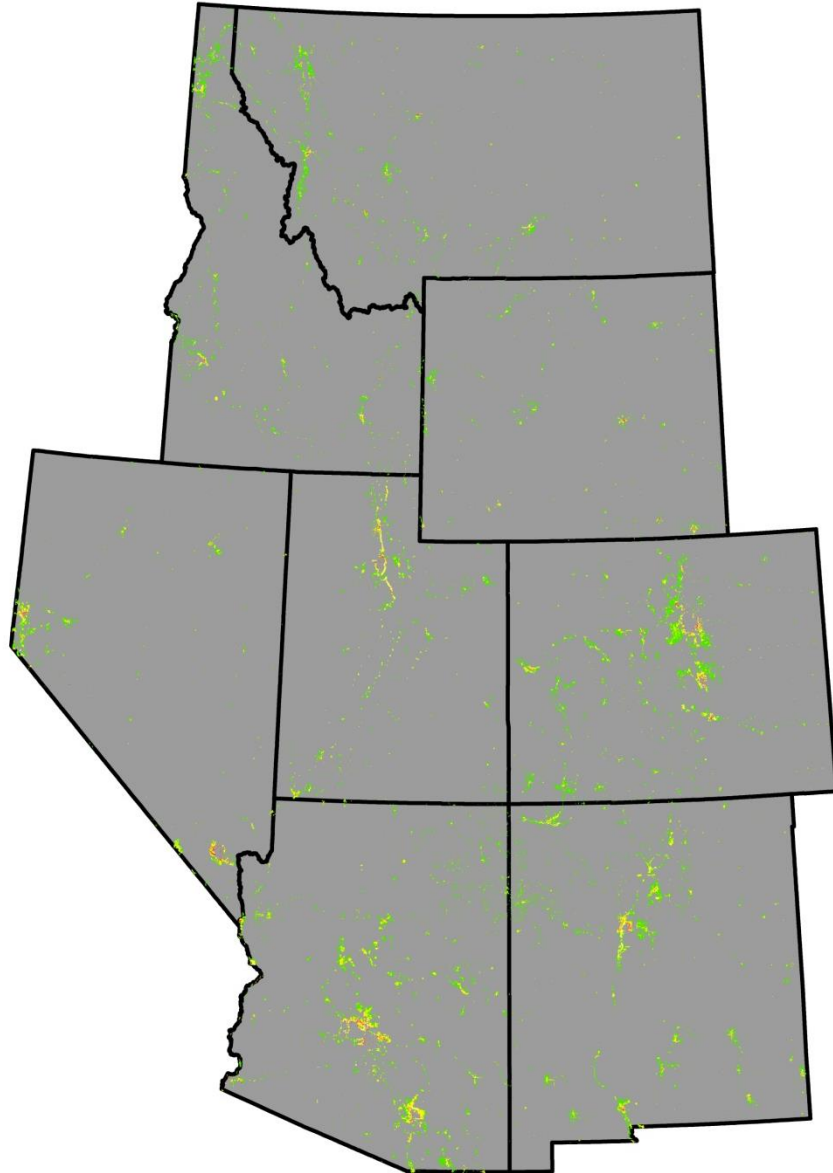
Top 10 Counties- Total Diseased Acres

County, State	Healthy Acres	Diseased Acres	Rank
Idaho, ID	2,3071,820	1,418,843	1
Coconino, AZ	9,736,496	994,528	2
Nye, NV	1,507,716	614,445	3
Flathead, MT	1,8321,596	530,418	4
Teton, WY	4,903,880	515,213	5
Sanders, MT	18,294,456	440,973	6
Shoshone, ID	18,281,844	440,745	7
Mineral, MT	18,286,349	437,917	8
Ravalli, MT	18,601,228	436,099	9
Missoula, MT	18,302,978	434,220	10



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The Wildland Urban Interface



- Areas with wildland fuels within a .5 mile buffer around housing densities greater than 1 house per 40 acres
- Expected to double in the next 20 years
- Renders traditional fire prevention practices unfeasible and presents policy dilemmas

Water Resources:

Changes in River Basin Region Temperature and Snowpack



River Basin Regions	Winter Temperature Change: 1976 to 2085	Snowpack Change: 1976 to 2085 (cm)	Snowpack Change: 1976 to 2085 (Percent)
Arkansas-White-Red	+5.1	-2.3	-53%
California	+5.1	-0.6	-100%
Great Basin	+5.3	-2.3	-83%
Lower Colorado	+4.8	-1.2	-99%
Missouri	+5.3	-2.1	-31%
Pacific Northwest	+4.6	-9.6	-47%
Rio Grande	+4.6	-6.3	-65%
Texas-Gulf	+4.5	--	--
Upper Colorado	+5.3	-4.7	-53%

-HadCM3 Business as Usual,
Projected from historic averages to 2085

-Winter Temperature: Degrees Celsius

-Snowpack: Centimeters of SWE on April 1st

Era of Recreation
& Amenity
Resource Uses:
1960s ++



Era of Deregulation 2016 - ??

Domestic energy policy -- America First Energy Plan : Trump wants America to achieve energy independence from OPEC and all nations hostile to the interests of the United States
Renewable energy policy : The America First Energy Plan does not mention renewable energy and instead reflects the President's focus on fossil fuels
Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipeline : executive order reviving the plans for the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines was signed by Trump on January 24, 2017
Climate Change : Trump signed a "sweeping executive order" instructing EPA "regulators to rewrite key rules curbing U.S. carbon emissions and other environmental regulations"
EPA budget cuts : in March 2017, he announced plans to cut the EPA 2018 budget by 31%, by far the largest budget cut to any federal agency
Department of the Interior : The Trump Administration plans to open up more federal land for energy development , such as fracking and drilling. ^[62] The Clean Water Rule, issued by the EPA and the Army Corp of Engineers in 2015, is also a target for possible repeal
Endangered species threat : proposed budget does not grant any funding for state efforts for the recovery of endangered species.
Regulation of hazardous chemicals : Trump administration has attempted to change the way the federal government evaluates hazardous chemicals that may pose a risk to human health
Clean water legislation : February 2017, Trump signed a resolution overturning President Obama's Stream Protection Rule . ^[79] after being in effect for less than 30 days: February 28, 2017, President Trump enacted an executive order to allow the Administrator of the EPA to revise or rescind the Clean Water Rule , also referred to as Waters of the United States (WOTUS), in the name of economic growth

Dramatic Changes Coming at Federal Level:

Public Lands Management Changing Fast under Trump Administration: US Dept. of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke:

“My first goal is to restore trust with America that we are in fact using our public lands ‘for the benefit and the enjoyment of the people’—not for the very few and the elite,”

“We are going to be great stewards of these treasures,” Mr. Zinke says, “but we are also going to restore access to the people and to industry—and be a partner.”

“It worries me to think about hunting and fishing becoming activities for the land-owning elite,”

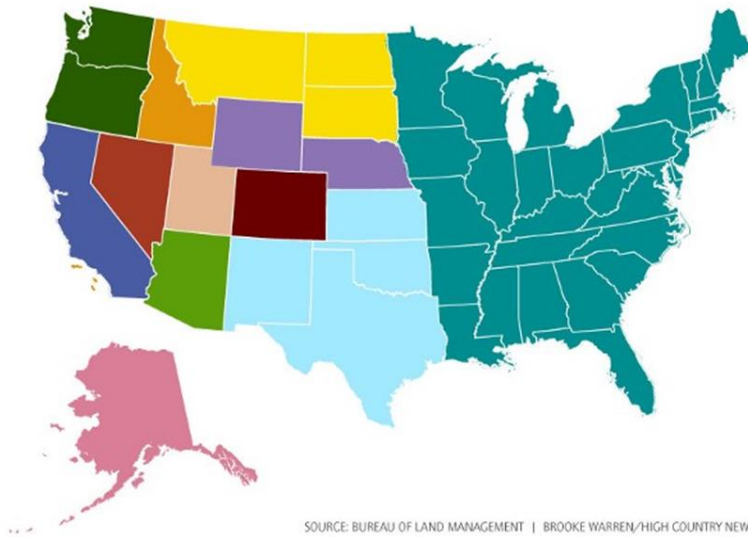


WSJ Sept. 29, 2017



DOI Sec. Zinke Returning to John Wesley Powell Concept of Rockies Boundaries?

Bureau of Land Management Office Jurisdictions



SOURCE: BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT | BROOKE WARREN/HIGH COUNTRY NEWS

Proposed management regions for the Department of Interior



SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR | BROOKE WARREN/HIGH COUNTRY NEWS



Feb. 23, 2018



The Conservation in the West Poll, conducted in eight western states, explores bi-partisan opinions in each state and for the region concerning **conservation, environment, energy, the role of government, tradeoffs with economies, and citizen priorities.** The results of the poll are widely circulated online, as well as on traditional media channels, and have become an important component of debates and discussions over natural resource policy in the West.





**COLORADO
COLLEGE**

Founded 1874

Mission and Vision

"At Colorado College our goal is to provide the finest liberal arts education in the country. Drawing upon the adventurous spirit of the Rocky Mountain West, we challenge students, one course at a time, to develop those habits of intellect and imagination that will prepare them for learning and leadership throughout their lives."





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Founded 1874



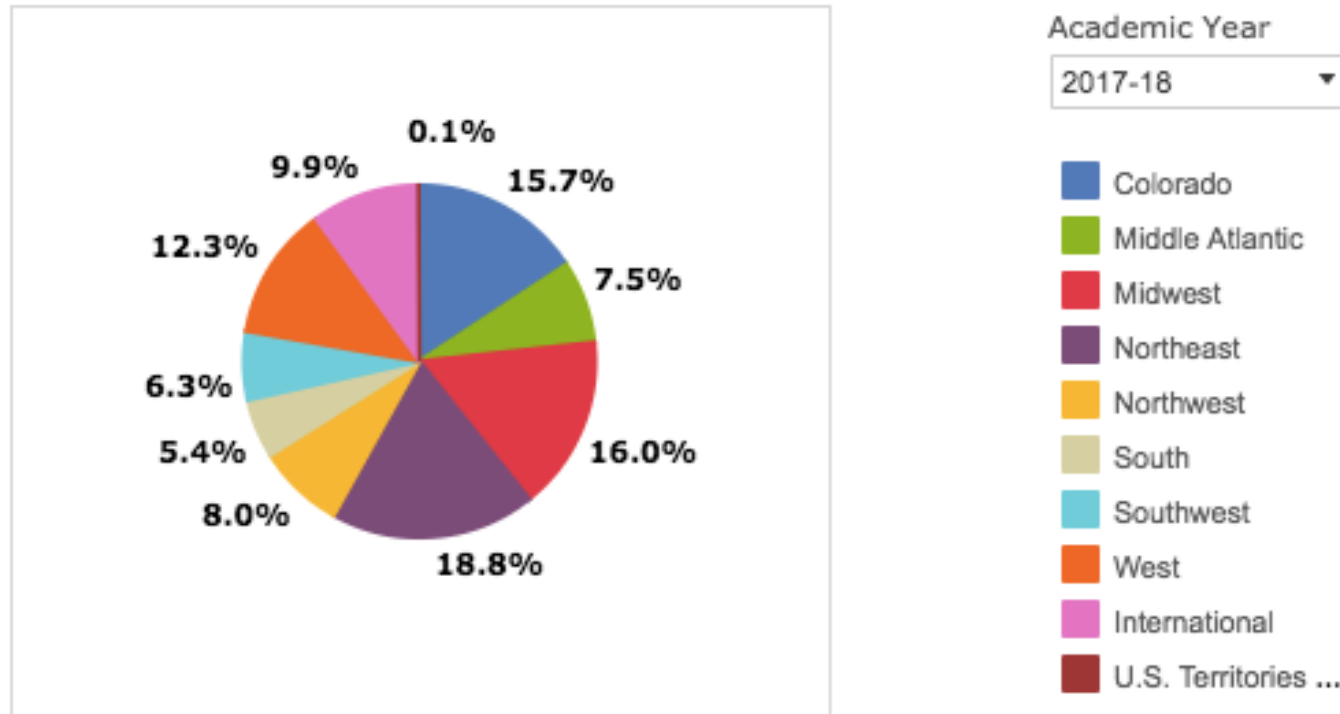
Katherine Lee Bates wrote “America the Beautiful” while a visiting professor at Colorado College in 1893



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Home Region of Enrolled Students

Source: Colorado College Fall Census



We are a nationally competitive college with a strong attachment to the Rockies.



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State of the Rockies Project

The State of the Rockies Project engages students, faculty, conservation experts, and stakeholders to address critical environmental and natural resource challenges through interdisciplinary research in the Rockies and the American West.

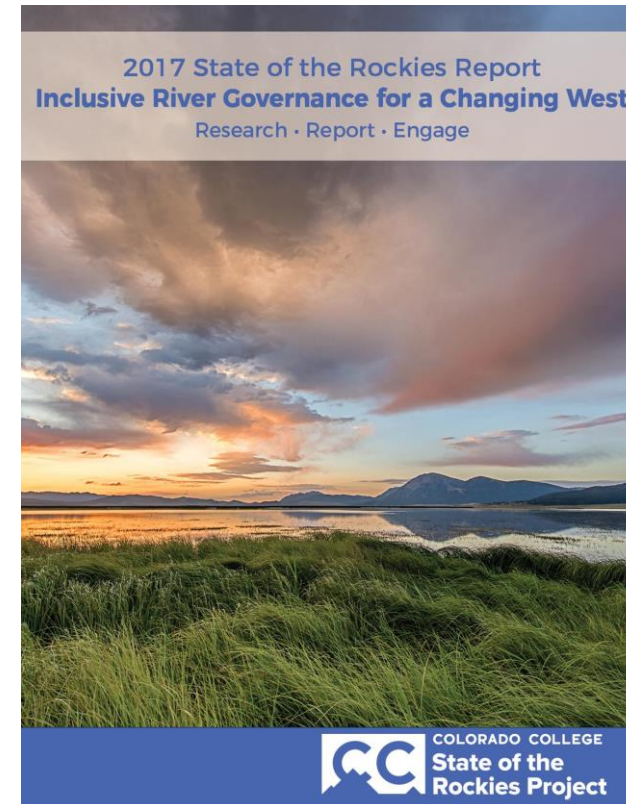
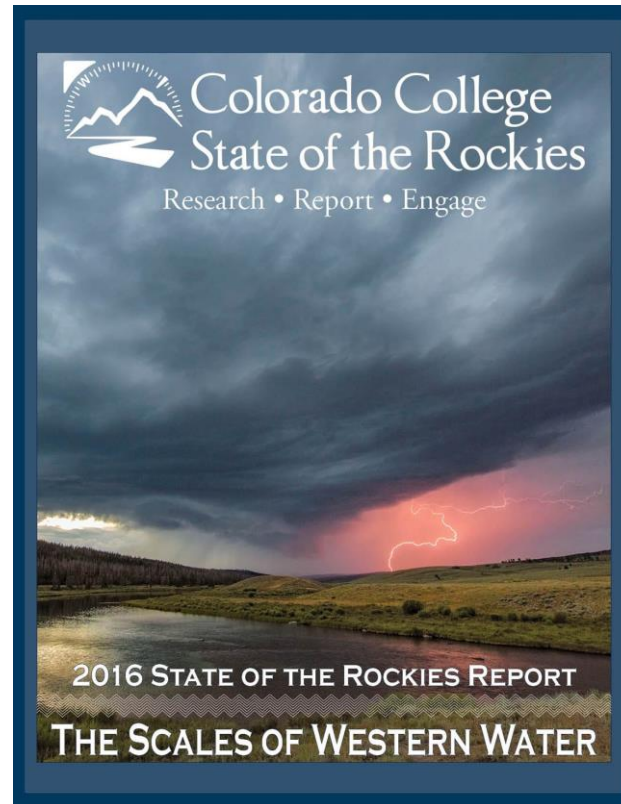
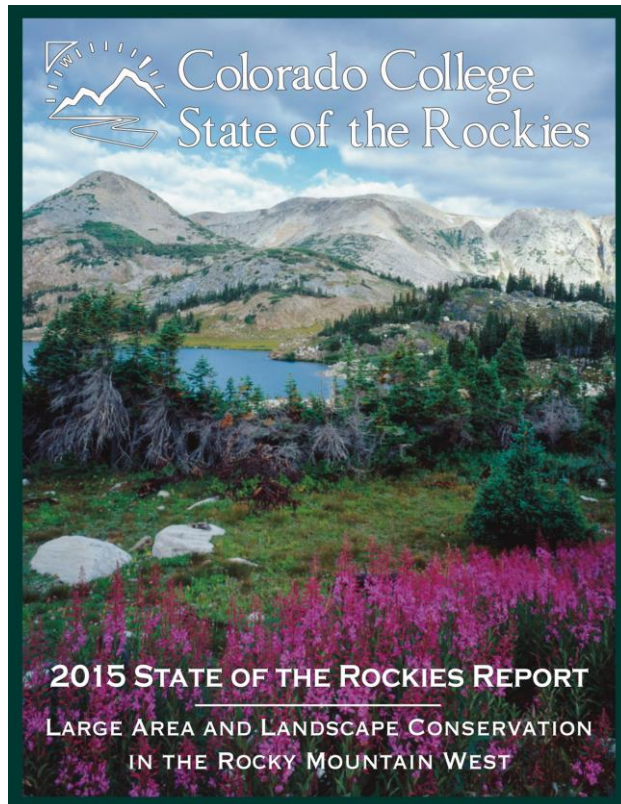


We Strive to: Research-Report-Engage

- Inform stakeholders about critical regional issues.
- Encourage dialogue and collaborative action to protect and nurture the Rockies.
- Connect peer communities by sharing best practices.
- Stimulate Colorado College student contributions and outreach in the Rockies.

1. Research Fellowship

- Annually hires a team of undergraduate Research Fellows
- Students design their own research into conservation issues
- Topics often combine natural science with policy analyses
- Intensive 10 week summer field research session



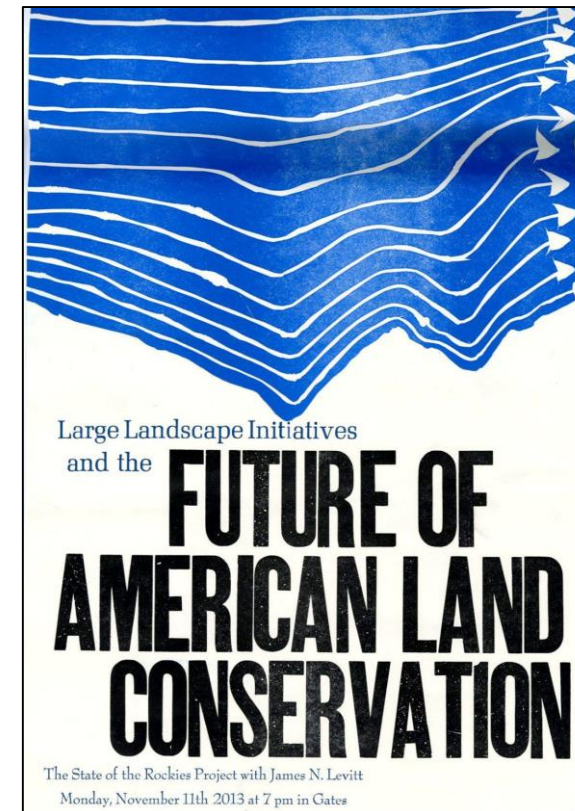
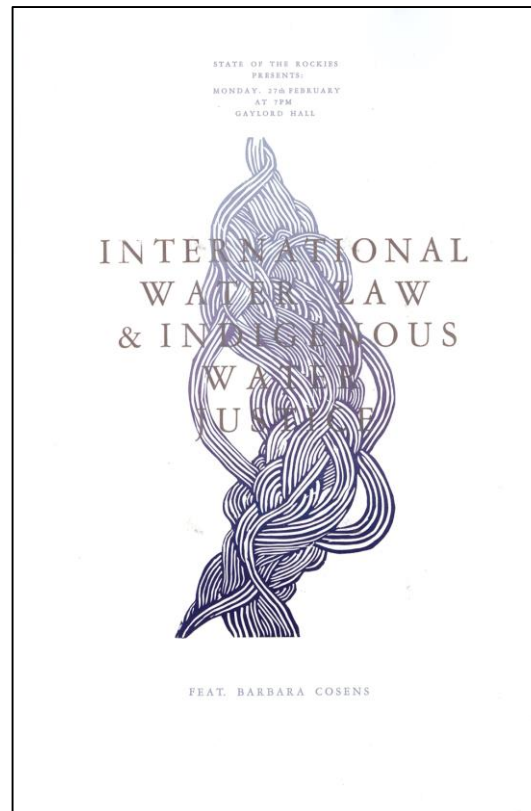
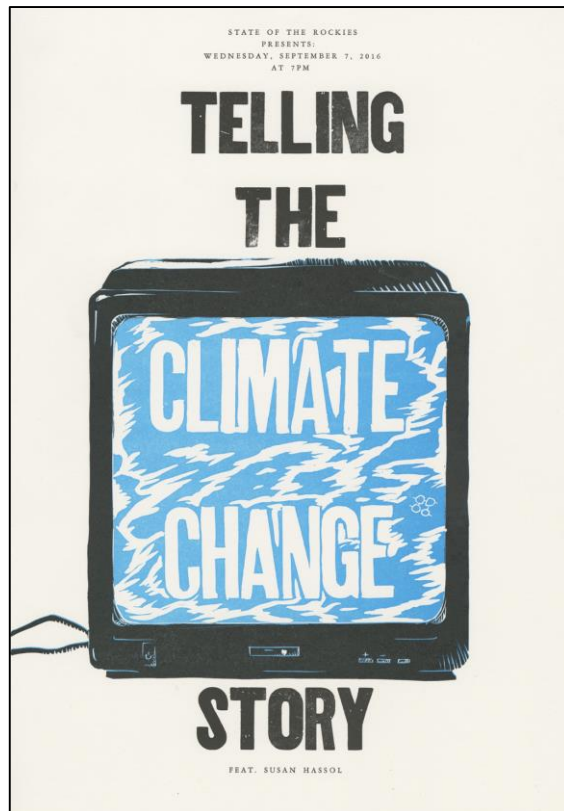
Recent research topics have included:

- Large landscape conservation
- Forest management in the Anthropocene
- Indigenous peoples and public land management
- River governance



2. Speakers Series

Presentations delivered by experts from academia, the non-profit sector, and government. All events are free and open to the public. Speakers Series topics are complementary to our rotating research themes.



3. Conservation in the West Poll



THE COLORADO COLLEGE
STATE OF THE ROCKIES PROJECT

Conservation in the West Poll

Future of the State of the Rockies Project

- Continue to Research, Report, Engage
- Faculty-driven collaborative research agenda
- Annual academic conference
- Greater Colorado College student engagement with poll



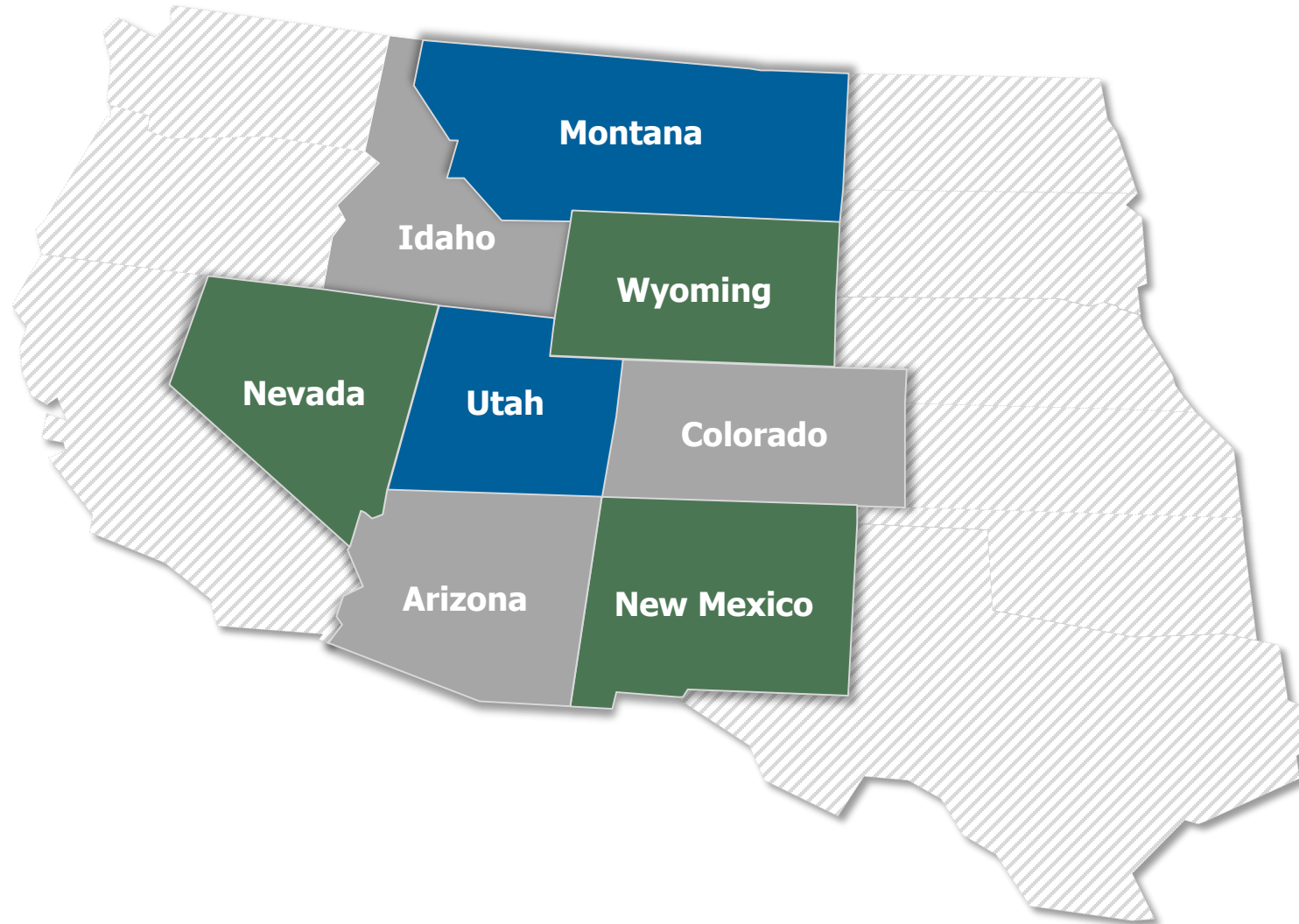
KEY FINDINGS

THE 2018 SURVEY OF THE ATTITUDES OF VOTERS IN EIGHT WESTERN STATES



JANUARY 2018

CONDUCTED BY: **LORI WEIGEL / PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES** **DAVE METZ / FAIRBANK,**
MASLIN, MAULLIN, METZ & ASSOCIATES



Methodology

- ❖ 3,200 telephone (cell and landline) interviews with 400 registered voters in eight states
- ❖ December 20, 2017 and January 2-8, 2018
- ❖ Spanish and English interviewing
- ❖ The margin of overall sampling error is $\pm 2.65\%$ and $\pm 4.9\%$ for each state.
- ❖ Demographically representative; total numbers weighted to reflect true geographic distribution of voters throughout the region
- ❖ Eighth annual survey (began in 2011)
- ❖ Bi-partisan research team of Public Opinion Strategies (R) and Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (D)
- ❖ References to bipartisan national poll conducted by The Nature Conservancy in December 2017



Conservation in a New Era

Two Significant Changes in the Last Eight Years:



Today, a number of conservation issues are on par with other problems nationally.

Seriousness of Issues: Ranked By Extremely/Very Serious	Extremely/ Very Serious	Total Serious
The federal budget deficit*	66%	87%
Crime and illegal drugs	59%	89%
Uncontrollable wildfires that destroy property and forests^	59%	80%
Kids not spending enough time outdoors and in nature**	56%	85%
Too much government spending*	55%	82%
Pollution of rivers, lakes, and streams**	54%	81%
Pollution of oceans*	54%	75%
Global warming*	52%	68%
Your state budget**	50%	75%
The economy and unemployment	49%	78%
Rollbacks of environmental protection laws**	45%	70%
Climate change**	45%	66%
Loss of habitat for fish and wildlife*	43%	73%

^Asked of western states and FL only N=232

*Asked of half sample A only N=403

**Asked of half sample B only N=397

I am going to read you a list of issues, and I'd like you to tell me how serious a problem you think each one is in your area. After I read each one, please tell me if you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a serious problem in your area.

Concern nationally has increased in the last five years about every single conservation issue we tracked.

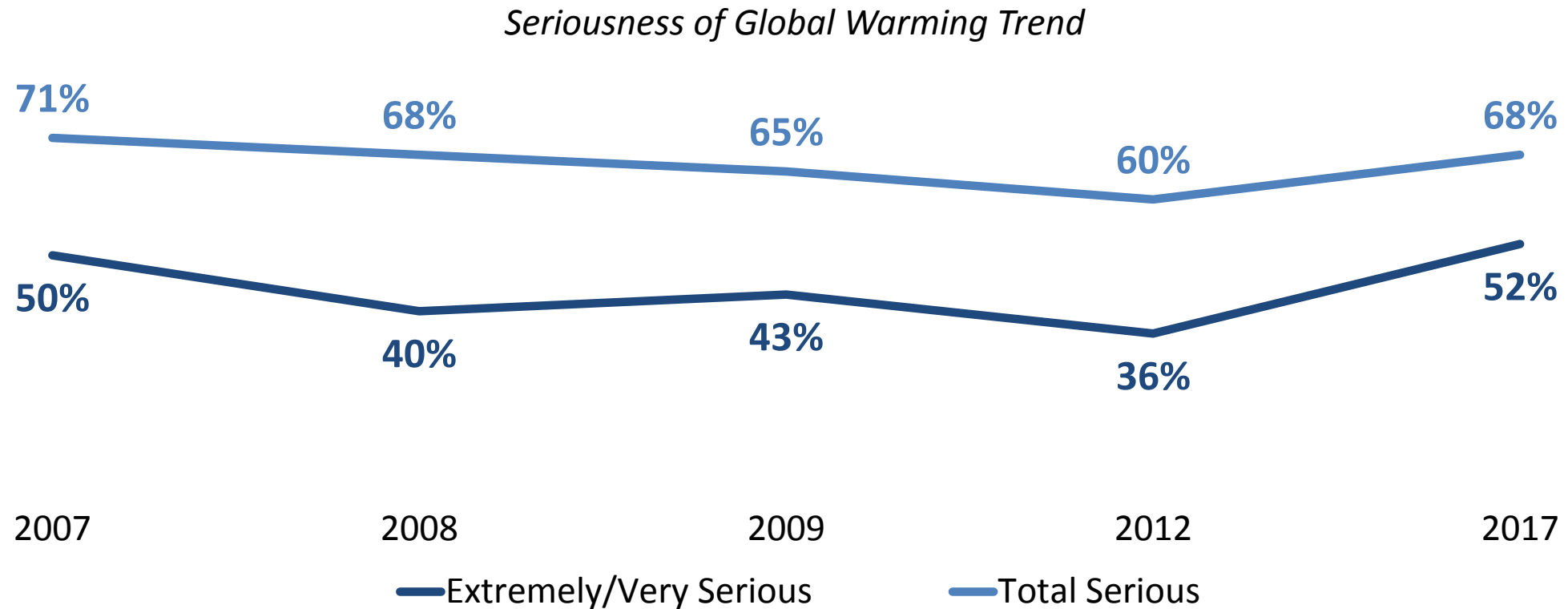
Seriousness of Issues Trend: Ranked By Extremely/Very Serious 2017	2012	2017	Net Difference
	Extremely/ Very Serious	Extremely/ Very Serious	
The federal budget deficit*	76%	66%	-10%
Kids not spending enough time outdoors and in nature**	50%	56%	+6%
Too much government spending*	65%	55%	-10%
Pollution of rivers, lakes, and streams**	42%	54%	+12%
Pollution of oceans*	40%	54%	+14%
Global warming*	36%	52%	+16%
The economy and unemployment	80%	49%	-31%
Loss of habitat for fish and wildlife*	34%	43%	+9%
More storms and extreme weather**	26%	38%	+12%
Loss of coastal lands, wetlands, and marshes*	27%	33%	+6%
Loss of property rights**	39%	33%	-6%
Management of public lands**	24%	31%	+7%
Lack of access to public lands*	12%	20%	+8%

*Asked of half sample A only N=403

**Asked of half sample B only N=397

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More than two-thirds again say global warming is a serious problem – back up to pre-recession levels.

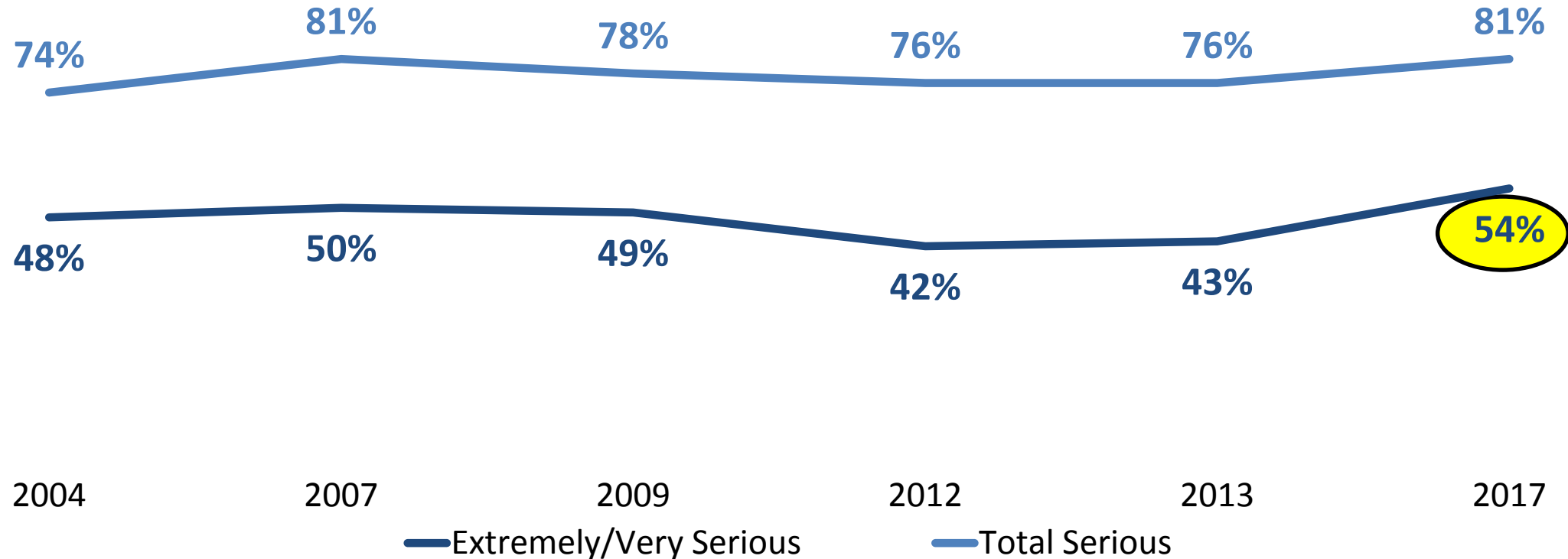


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American voters saying water pollution is a very serious problem is also the highest in a decade.

Seriousness of Pollution of Rivers, Lakes, and Streams Trend



*Asked of half sample A only N=403

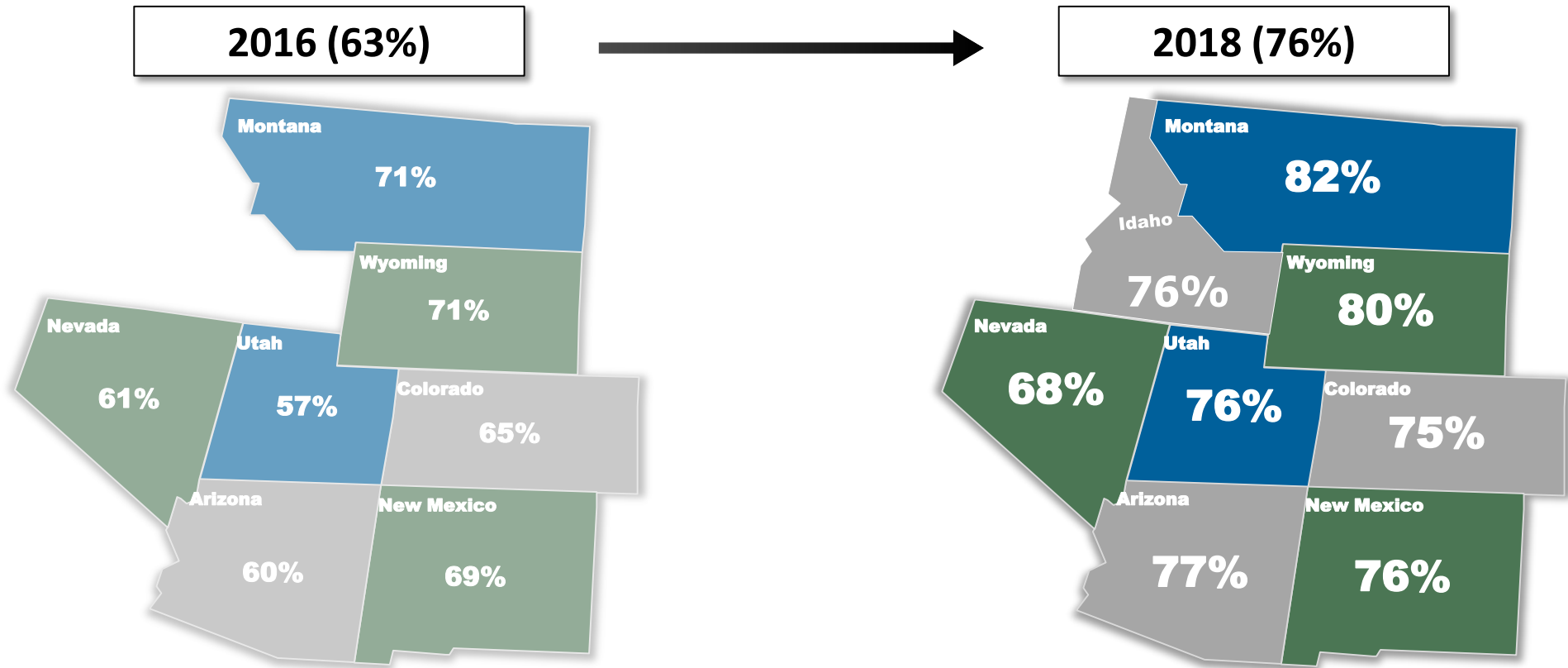
I am going to read you a list of issues, and I'd like you to tell me how serious a problem you think each one is in your area. After I read each one, please tell me if you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a serious problem in your area.

In the West, we also see increases in concern in just the last few years.

<i>Problems Ranked by % 2016 Extremely/Very Serious</i>	2016	2017	2018
Low levels of water in rivers	51%	51%	53%
Unemployment	43%	37%	34%
Pollution of rivers, lakes and streams	38%	34%	43%
Poorly-planned growth and development	35%	33%	43%
Loss of habitat for fish and wildlife	33%	31%	42%
Uncontrollable wildfires that threaten homes and property	32%	N/A	47%
Lack of resources to properly maintain and take care of national parks, forests and other public lands	27%	24%	37%

Next, I'm going to read you a list of issues some people say are problems in (STATE). For each one, please tell me if you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a problem in (STATE).

Western voters are increasingly identifying as a conservationist.



Do you consider yourself to be a conservationist?

Outdoor recreation is reported at higher rates too.



Hiking

2013 West

59%

2018 West

63%



Camping

52%

57%



Bird watching and
viewing wildlife

31%

37%



Boating

22%

26%



Riding an off-road vehicle
or snowmobile

20%

23%

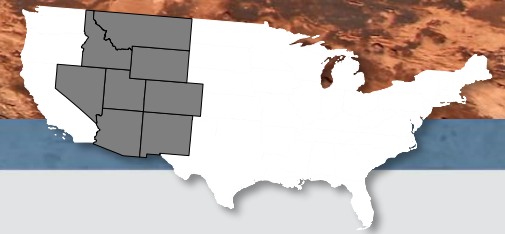


Mountain biking

20%

19%

Which of the following types of outdoor recreation, if any, do you participate in regularly?



Consistent Conservation Values

Westerners have consistently wanted an emphasis on water conservation over diversions to cities.

2016

2018

Using our current water supply more wisely, by encouraging more water conservation, reducing use, and increasing recycling of water.

77% 78%

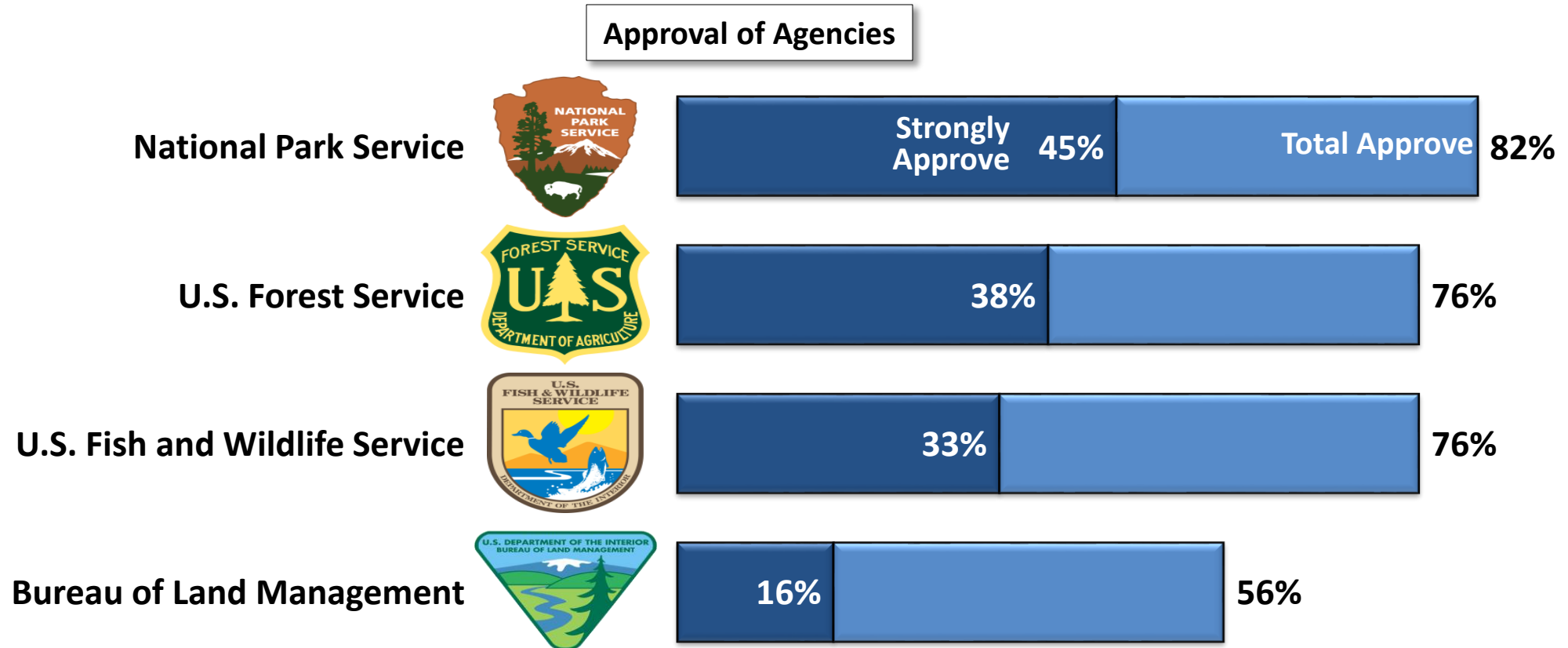
Diverting more water from rivers in less populated areas of the state to communities where more people live.

15% 13%

Note: Question not asked in Idaho or Montana

Many experts say that STATE will likely face water shortage situations in the future. They say that we face a choice in how we address that shortage. So, which one of the following would you prefer state water officials invest more time and resources in pursuing?

Voters were happy with how federal agencies handled issues in their state before the new Administration.



I'd like to read you some different agencies which deal with issues in your state. For each one, please indicate whether you approve or disapprove of the job they are doing at this time.

Voters consistently advocate for this Administration emphasizing conservation on national public lands.

2017

2018

Ensuring we protect sources of clean water, our air quality and wildlife habitat while providing opportunities to visit and recreate on our national public lands

68% 64%

Ensuring we produce more domestic energy by increasing the amount of national public lands available for responsible oil and gas drilling and mining

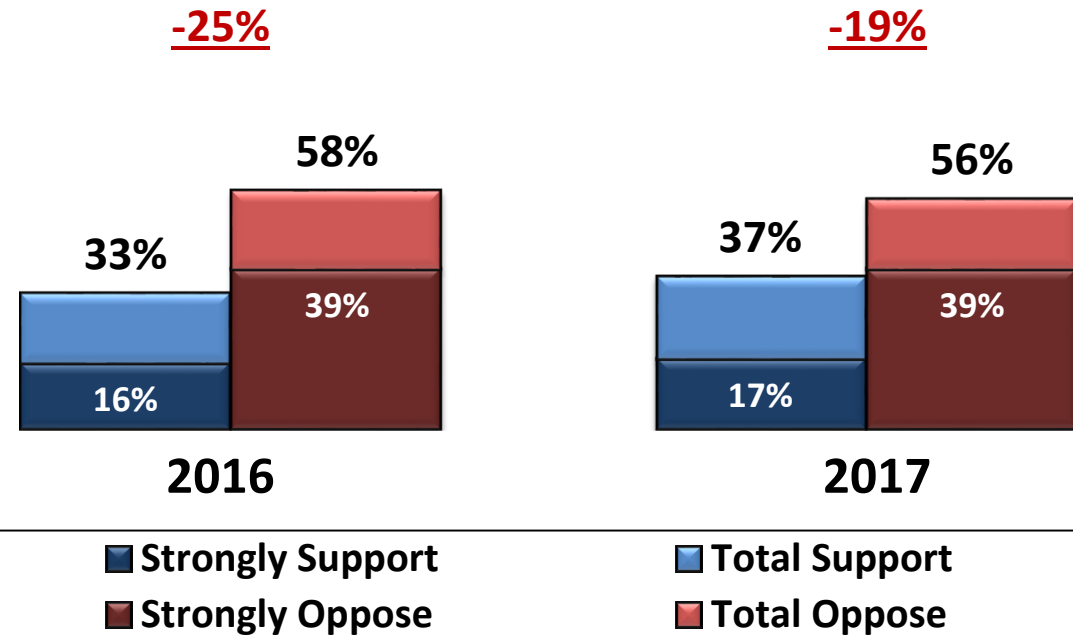
22% 23%

And in general, would you prefer the administration place more emphasis on...

We have seen consistent opposition to turning national public lands over to state government.

Some Members of Congress have proposed giving state government control over national public lands, such as national forests, national monuments, and national wildlife refuges in its borders. The state government would decide the future management of the lands, but state taxpayers would pay all costs, including the cost of maintenance and preventing and fighting wildfires.

Support for Giving State Government Control Over National Public Lands - Trend

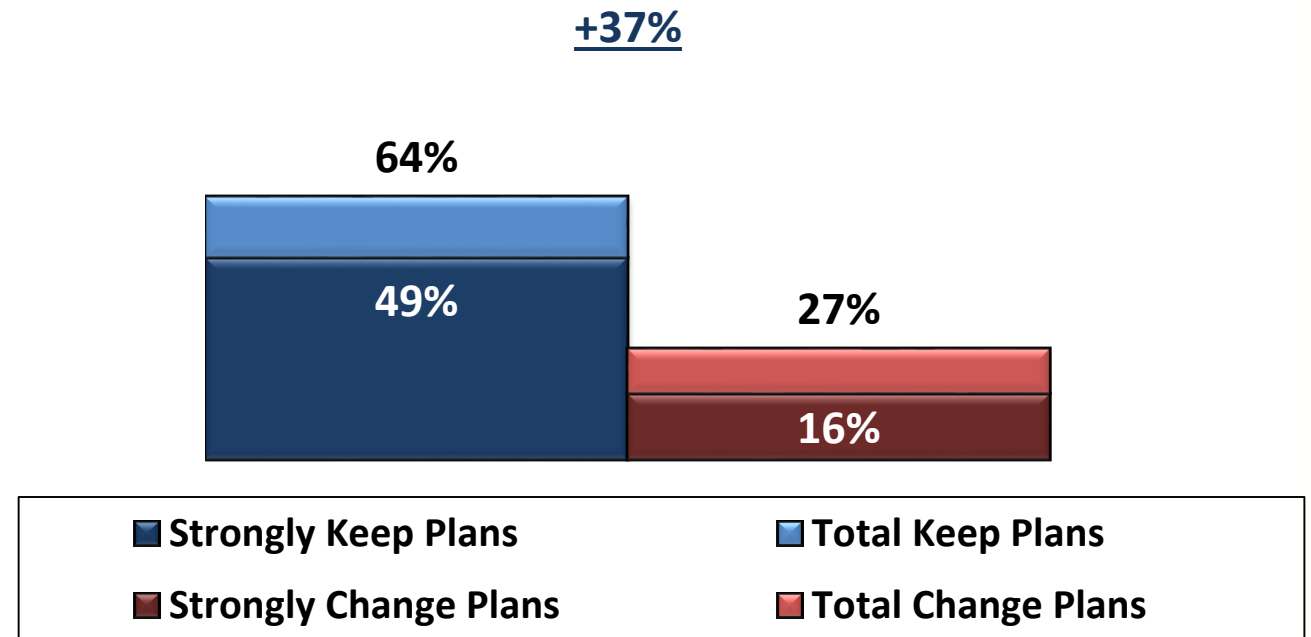


Do you support or oppose this proposal?

Two-thirds of Western voters this year say they want to keep current plans to protect sage grouse habitat.

Approval of Sage Grouse and Wildlife Protection Guidelines

Three years ago, the U.S. government, Western states and governors created plans to protect habitat for the threatened sage grouse and other wildlife. The Interior Department now says these plans should be changed to allow more oil and gas production and other activities. Opponents of changes say that the plans had public input and were created in collaboration with states to avoid wildlife like the sage grouse becoming endangered.

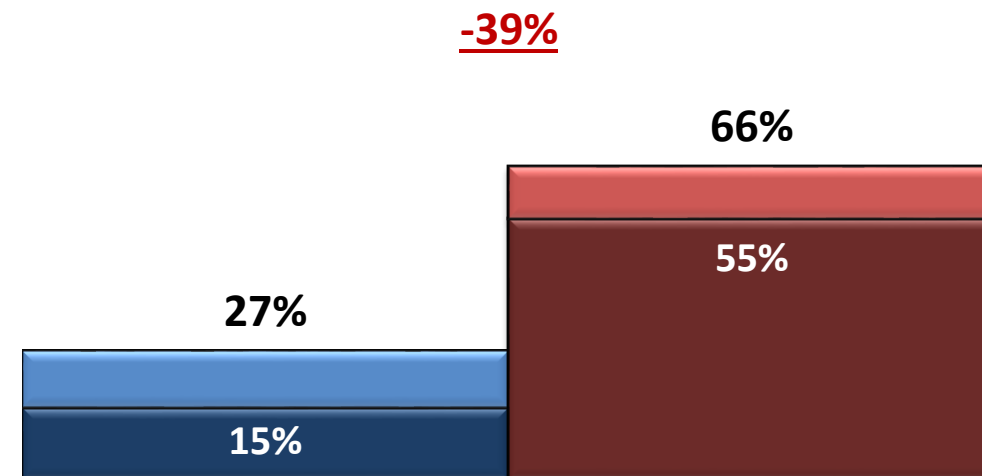


Would you prefer keeping these plans or changing them?

Two-thirds of Westerners say it is a bad idea to reduce the size of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Escalante.

Thinking specifically about two national monuments in Utah – Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Escalante, which contain fossils, petroglyphs, cliff dwellings and wildlife habitat - President Trump announced in December that the administration would remove existing national monument protections and reduce the size of the lands conserved as national monuments by approximately two million acres.

Evaluation of UT National Monuments Reduction



Very Good Idea

Very Bad Idea

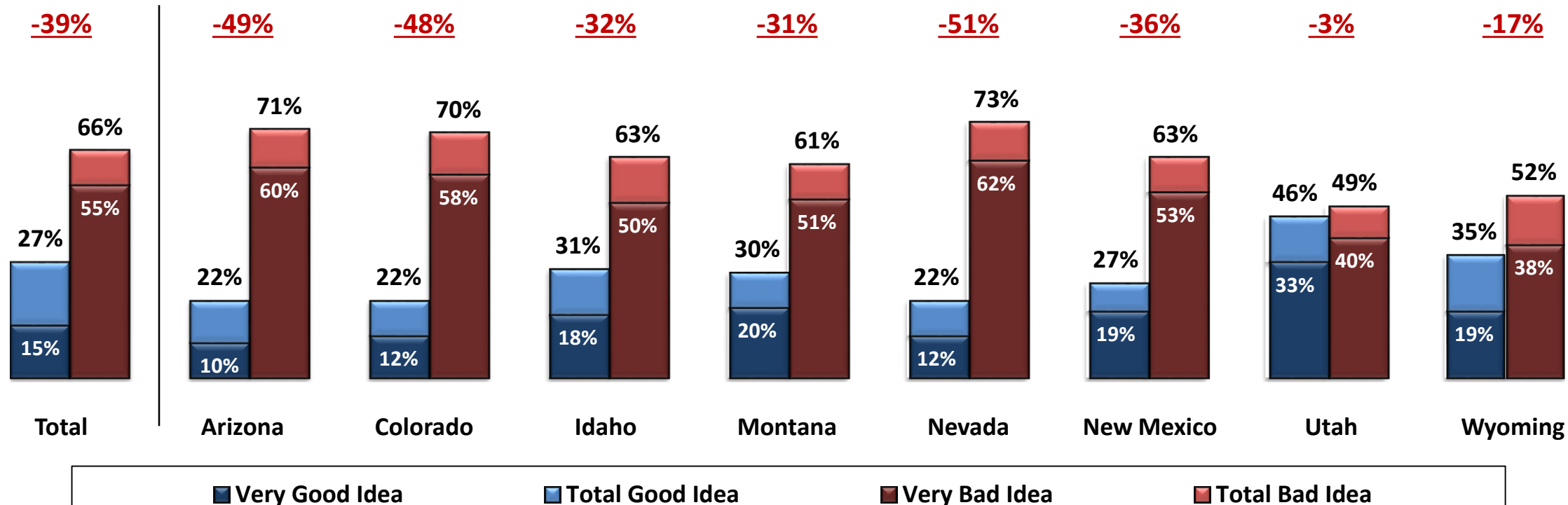
Total Good Idea

Total Bad Idea

Would you say that it is - a good idea or a bad idea - to reduce the size of these national monuments?

Majority in seven of eight states say bad idea; Utah is divided.

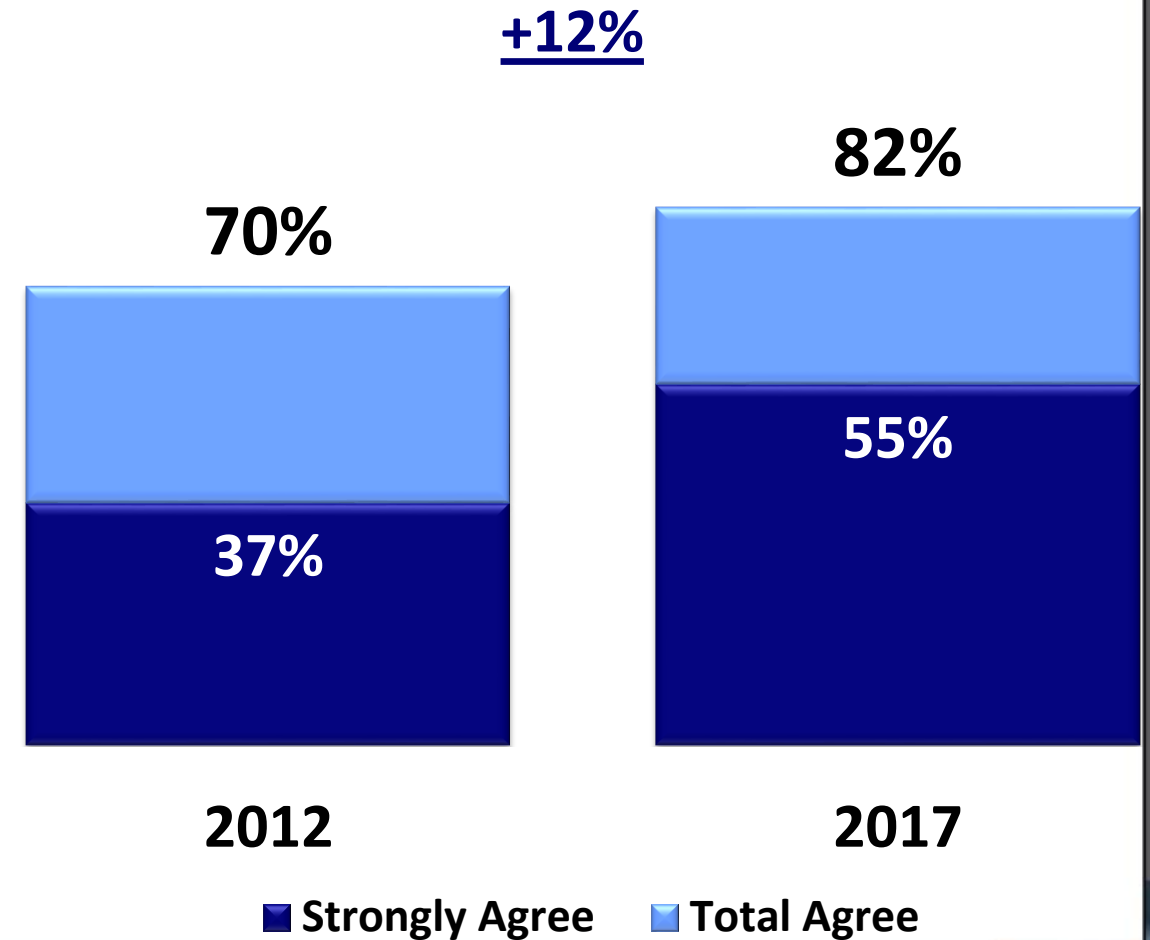
Evaluation of National Monuments Reduction – By State



Would you say that it is - a good idea or a bad idea - to reduce the size of these national monuments?

Nationally, voters tell us that public lands like national forests are essential to their state's economy.

Our state and national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas are an essential part of my state's economy.



*Asked of half sample A only N=403

In 2014 following the closing of public lands during the government shutdown, almost all Westerners said it hurt gateway communities.

The closing of national parks and public lands to visitors and recreation during the recent government shutdown hurt small businesses and the economy of communities.

Agree
85%
Disagree
13%

Today, almost all Westerners say that the outdoor recreation economy is very important to the future of their state and the West.

Economic Importance of Outdoor Recreation

When you think about the economic future of (STATE) and the Western U.S., how important do you think the outdoor recreation economy will be - meaning people who come to hunt, fish, camp, see wildlife, as well as those who manufacture and sell equipment for those activities?

Very Important	71%
Somewhat Important	22%
Total Important	93%
Total Not Important	6%
A Little Important	4%
Not Important At All	2%



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

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& ASSOCIATES**

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**State of the
Rockies Project**

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