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**COLORADO VOTERS ACROSS POLITICAL SPECTRUM AGREE:
OUR PUBLIC LANDS ARE ESSENTIAL TO OUR ECONOMY**

**COLORADO COLLEGE SURVEY FINDS STRONG SUPPORT FOR INVESTMENTS, PROTECTIONS FOR
COLORADO’S LAND, AIR AND WATER**

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO – The results from the [2012 Colorado College State of the Rockies Conservation in the West poll](#) find that Colorado voters across the political spectrum – from Tea Party supporters to those who identify with the Occupy Wall Street movement and voters in-between – view Colorado’s parks and public lands as essential to their state’s economy and want to see clean air, clean water, natural areas and wildlife funded and protected.

The survey, completed by Lori Weigel of Public Opinion Strategies (a Republican firm) and Dave Metz of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (a Democratic firm), found that nearly 8 in 10 Colorado voters view having a strong economy and protecting land and water as compatible. **Voters are near-unanimous in their view that Colorado’s national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife areas are an essential part of the state economy, and residents’ quality of life.**

“We know that visitors come to Durango because of all of the outdoor opportunities they can experience in our backyard. For our business, protecting land and the Colorado River is part of our business model,” said Kirk Komich, owner of the Leeland House and Rochester Hotel in Durango.

Two-thirds of Colorado voters want to reduce America’s need for coal, oil and gas by expanding use of clean, renewable energy -- which they see as a local job creator; the same percentage of voters do not want corporate profit and development of public lands to limit public access. Three in four voters want to uphold industry regulations that protect Colorado’s land, air, and water, and see these regulations as having a positive impact on the natural beauty of their state, and their quality of life.

“Coloradans love this state because of the outdoor recreational opportunities, including hunting, fishing, and wildlife-watching,” said Suzanne O’Neill, director of the Colorado Wildlife Federation. “Protecting our land, clean air, and streams requires balancing energy development on public lands with safeguards for important wildlife habitat and open space for all of us to access and enjoy.”

The survey also tested voter attitudes on local issues and elected officials. Sixty-seven percent of Colorado voters voice support for the job being performed by Governor John Hickenlooper. More than 8 in 10 agree, that despite state budget problems, investments in Colorado's parks, water and wildlife should be maintained. Seventy-six percent want state Lottery funds to continue to be used to protect parks, wildlife habitat, and natural areas and school construction, instead of being redirected to the general state education budget. Sixty-six percent support protection of some of the lands in the Arkansas River Canyon as a national monument.

"Sportsmen put their money where their mouth is when it comes to funding conservation," said David Nickum, executive director of Colorado Trout Unlimited. "We were pleased to see that overwhelming majorities of Colorado voters recognize the importance of funding protection of our land, water and wildlife even in the face of state budget problems. In particular, Coloradans remain deeply committed to using lottery funds to support our state's natural areas."

The poll surveyed 2,400 registered voters in six key western states (AZ, CO, NM, UT, WY, MT) January 2 through 5 and 7, 2012, and yields a margin of error of + 2.0 percent nationwide and +4.9 statewide.

The full survey and individual state surveys are available [on the Colorado College website](#).

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About Colorado College

Colorado College is a nationally prominent, four-year liberal arts college that was founded in Colorado Springs in 1874. The college operates on the innovative Block Plan, in which its 2,000 undergraduate students study one course at a time in intensive 3½-week segments. For the past nine years, the college also has run the [State of the Rockies Project](#), which seeks to increase public understanding of vital issues affecting the Rockies through annual report cards, free events, discussions and other activities.

About Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates

[Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates](#) (FM3) – a national Democratic opinion research firm with offices in Oakland, Los Angeles and Madison, Wisconsin – has specialized in public policy oriented opinion research since 1981. The firm has assisted hundreds of political campaigns at every level of the ballot – from President to City Council – with opinion research and strategic guidance. FM3 also provides research and strategic consulting to public agencies, businesses and public interest organizations nationwide.

About Public Opinion Strategies

[Public Opinion Strategies](#) is the largest Republican polling firm in the country. Since the firm's founding in 1991, they have completed more than 10,000 research projects, interviewing more than five million Americans across the United States. Public Opinion Strategies' research is well respected, and prestigious media outlets such as *The Wall Street Journal*, NBC News, CNBC, and National Public Radio rely on Public Opinion Strategies to conduct their polling. The firm conducts polling on behalf of hundreds of political campaigns, as well as trade associations, not-for-profit organizations, government entities and industry coalitions throughout the nation.

About the Polling Partnership of FM3 and Public Opinion Strategies

FM3 and Public Opinion Strategies have conducted bipartisan research on a wide range of issues over the last several years, including energy, land use, health care and transportation. Together, the two firms have jointly conducted research on behalf of political campaigns,

businesses, not-for-profit organizations and public agencies in 38 states and nationally. In these six states, the two firms have conducted 650,000 interviews among voters and consumers.