



To: Interested Parties

From: Lake Research Partners
Bellwether Research & Consulting

Re: Results of Vet Voice Foundation Poll of Post-9/11 Veterans

Date: November 12, 2013

Lake Research Partners and Bellwether Research & Consulting conducted a bipartisan poll on behalf of the nonprofit Vet Voice Foundation to gauge the opinion of Western veterans who served in the U.S. military during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars on issues affecting America's parks and public lands. The study found that across Western states veterans strongly favor protecting public lands by designating them as national parks, monuments, or wilderness. They strongly favor considering upfront the impacts of energy development on public lands, local recreation opportunities, and wildlife habitats.

Veterans in Western states strongly favor protecting public lands for future generations. A 75 percent majority favors the federal government protecting public lands by designating them as national parks, monuments, or wilderness, including 56 percent who *strongly* favor.

Veterans want a balanced approach to energy development that also protects recreation and wildlife habitat. Two-thirds (66 percent) favor a proposal that says the Federal government must weigh the impact of energy development leases on local recreation and wildlife habitat. Western veterans are more divide with many undecided voters in their support for the Federal government granting leases to energy companies for energy exploration on public lands. Forty-four (44) percent support granting leases to energy companies while 32 percent oppose, and 23 percent are undecided.

Western veterans overwhelmingly support the concept behind the Land and Water Conservation Fund which uses fees from offshore energy development to protect and conserve local and national parks, wildlife refuges and working forests onshore. Eighty (80) percent want to continue to use this money from fees charged to oil and gas companies that drill offshore to conserve natural areas, clean water and to ensure

access to outdoor recreation, including 62 percent who *strongly* favor. This is consistent with polling of the broader U.S. population.¹

Protecting public lands for future generations resonates strongly with veterans, much more so than increasing domestic energy production in these areas.

77 percent of Western veterans find this statement convincing, including 43 percent who find it very convincing:

“Too many of our children stay inside watching TV, playing video games, or spending time online and not enough time enjoying all that the outdoors has to offer. As veterans, we know that parents and communities need to encourage kids to spend time outdoors, not only being active, but exploring and connecting with nature. We need to ensure there are places where kids can get lost in the wonder of nature – forests, lakes and parks – so this generation and future generations do not lose this vital connection.”

In contrast, 58 percent of Western veterans find this statement convincing, including 29 percent who find it very convincing:

“For decades Americans have depended on foreign oil from hostile countries that controlled the world’s supply. Over the past several years, we have made tremendous strides in developing new sources of domestic energy by drilling for natural gas on federal lands which has created jobs, lowered the price of energy, and made America more energy independent. We need to continue to lease federal land for energy exploration so that we can maintain our energy independence and expand domestic sources of energy.”

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Lake Research Partners and Bellwether Research & Consulting designed and administered this survey which was conducted online and by telephone September 9 – October 20, 2013. The survey reached a total of 686 post-9/11 veterans in CA (121 interviews), CO (111 interviews), NV (107 interviews), NM (101 interviews, 15 served pre-9/11) MT (23 interviews), OR (108 interviews), and WA (115 interviews). The sample was drawn from an online panel and respondents were screened to include only veterans of the armed services and active duty who had served post-9/11 (with the exception of the 15 respondents in New Mexico). The margin of error for the total sample is +/-3.7%.

The self-identified partisan composition for the total sample is 24 percent Democrat, 45 percent Republican, and 20 percent Independent. The self-identified partisan composition of the broader electorate across these 6 states according to 2012 presidential exit polls was 40 percent Democrat, 27 percent Republican, and 33 percent Independent.

¹<http://lwcfcoalition.org/files/July%202011%20National%20LWCF%20Survey%20Key%20Findings%20MEMO.pdf>