

# Public Opinion on National Parks

*Key findings from a nationwide survey among registered voters  
Conducted January 11 – 17, 2016  
for the*

Center for American Progress

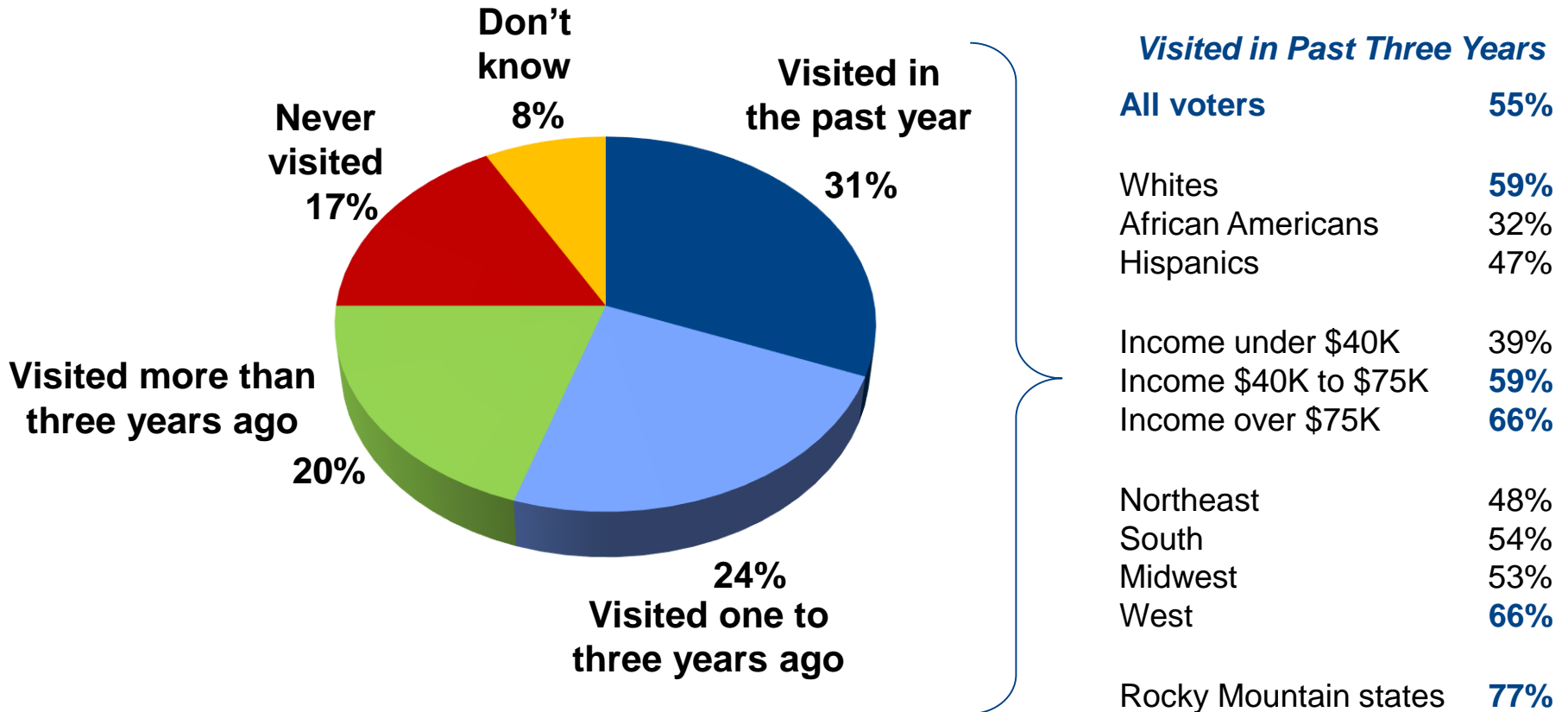


# Methodology

- Nationwide survey among 1,024 registered voters
  - Includes oversamples of 188 Hispanic voters and 188 African-American voters
- Survey among 201 registered voters in Rocky Mountain states (*AZ, CO, ID, MT, NM, UT, WY*)
- All interviews conducted online January 11 to 17, 2016

# Most Americans have first-hand experience visiting national parks.

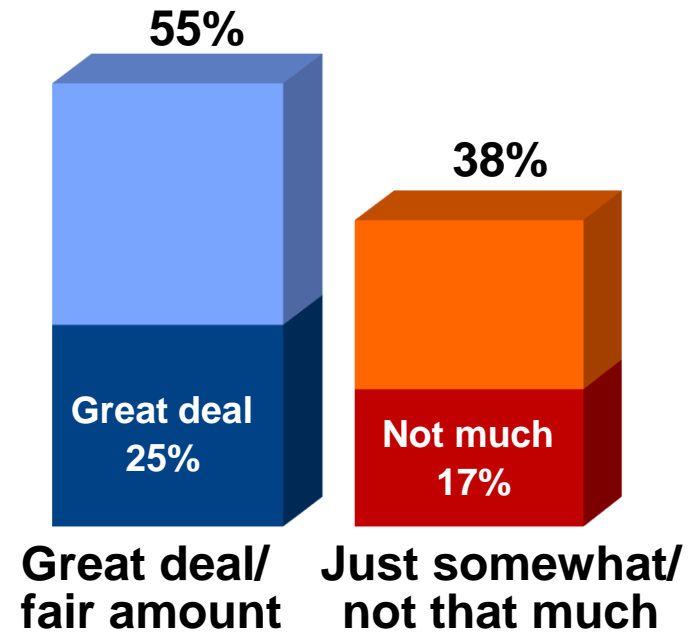
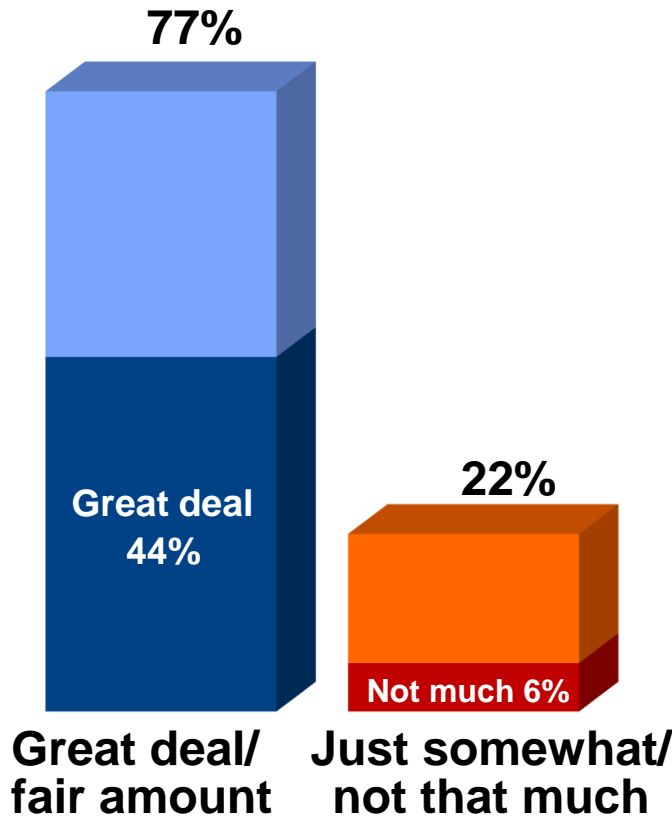
*Have you ever visited the National Park System? If so, when was the last time you visited a park, monument, or other area?*



# Voters recognize the value of national parks to the US and in their own lives.

*How much does the US benefit from national parks and the National Park System?*

*How much do you personally benefit from national parks and the National Park System?*

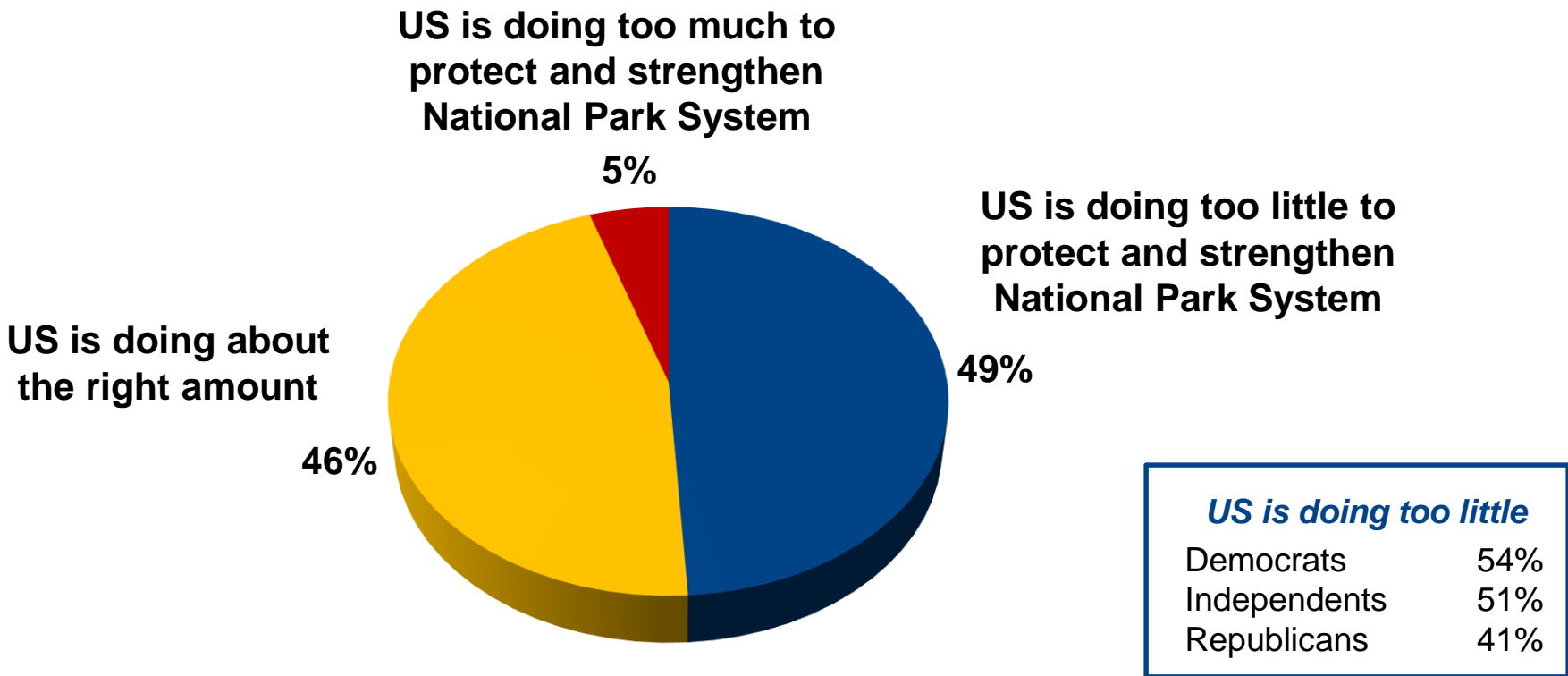


# The benefits of national parks are clear to a wide swath of the electorate.

	US benefits a great deal/fair amount from national parks	I benefit a great deal/fair amount from national parks
<b>All voters</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>55%</b>
Age 18 to 34	73%	54%
Age 35 to 49	72%	48%
Age 50 to 64	77%	57%
Age 65/over	<b>86%</b>	<b>60%</b>
Whites	79%	56%
African Americans	70%	43%
Hispanics	67%	57%
Democrats	<b>81%</b>	<b>59%</b>
Independents	75%	<b>61%</b>
Republicans	75%	50%
Urban	74%	55%
Suburban	80%	56%
Small town/rural	75%	54%
North	71%	46%
South	81%	<b>59%</b>
Midwest	71%	47%
West	<b>82%</b>	<b>66%</b>
Rocky Mountain	79%	<b>61%</b>

# Half of Americans think the federal government is doing too little to protect and strengthen US national parks.

*Assessment of How Much the US is Doing to Protect/Strengthen National Parks*



65% of voters say that protecting and strengthening America's National Park System should be an important priority.

# Protecting and maintaining parks are top-of-mind goals for the national parks.

*Given that the National Park System will be 100 years old this year and celebrating its centennial anniversary in 2016, what goals do you think our elected and government leaders should have for our national parks and other protected places moving forward?*

(aggregated volunteered comments)

<b>Protect/preserve parks, natural spaces/wonders, land</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>Keep them clean, keep up with maintenance, keep well maintained, in pristine condition</b>	<b>17%</b>
Protect, preserve animals, wildlife; make sure they are safe, protect their habitat	8%
Keep parks safe, security guards, more security	8%
Continue to maintain affordable access, keep them affordable	7%
Make sure they are here for future, for future generations to enjoy	6%
Keep them open, running, stay open, accessible to all	5%
Provide funds, necessary funds to maintain properly, keep funding	5%

35% of voters are aware that NPS will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2016.

# Voters have three standout priorities for the National Park System.

*Which one or two of these should be the most important goals for the National Park System?*

## Protecting the National Park System

44%

## Repairing and restoring national parks

42%

## Protecting more national wonders and historical places as national parks

41%

## Connecting kids with the national parks

17%

## Ensuring that national parks better reflect diversity of our peoples and cultures

10%

## Modernizing the National Park System

8%



# Repairing and restoring national parks has broadest appeal.

*Which one or two of these should be the most important goals for the National Park System?*

	<b>Demo- crats</b>	<b>Inde- pendents</b>	<b>Repub- licans</b>	<b>Whites</b>	<b>African Americans</b>	<b>Hispanics</b>
Protecting the National Park System	40%	49%	48%	50%	31%	33%
Repairing and restoring national parks	41%	35%	47%	42%	41%	40%
Protecting more national wonders and historical places as national parks	48%	41%	34%	42%	41%	43%
Connecting kids with the national parks	15%	15%	22%	17%	15%	23%
Ensuring national parks better reflect diversity of our peoples and cultures	14%	9%	6%	8%	15%	11%
Modernizing the National Park System	7%	11%	9%	8%	9%	7%

# Five proposals receive strong support from the majority of voters.



**Protect the pristine open lands** around national parks so that **wildlife has access** to the large, connected landscapes they need to survive



**Reduce the backlog of maintenance projects** in parks and public lands by fixing up bathrooms, campgrounds, roads, museums, and visitor facilities



**Protect special marine areas** such as ocean parks and sanctuaries for whales, fish, and coral



**Ensure that school children have the opportunity to gain free entry** to national parks, regardless of their family's financial situation



Make sure that our parks are protected from air pollution, industrial traffic, and spills by **keeping coal mining and drilling for oil and gas away from park boundaries**



# Voters support a number of other policies to improve the parks.

	<b>Total support</b>	<b>Strong support</b>
Improve public access to national forests, rivers, parks, and other public lands for fishing, hunting, and hiking	<b>89%</b>	46%
Purchase privately owned lands within the boundaries of parks from willing sellers so that we don't see mining, drilling, and private development in the middle of places such as Grand Teton National Park and Gettysburg National Battlefield	<b>83%</b>	45%
Create more parks, open spaces, trails, and playgrounds in cities so it is easier for kids to get active outdoors and stay healthy	<b>87%</b>	44%
Create a new \$1 billion National Park Centennial Fund that would set aside a portion of revenues from oil and gas production on federal lands and waters to help protect and restore parks and open spaces across the country for the second century of conservation	<b>84%</b>	44%
Establish new national monuments and wildlife refuges to protect special places and at-risk wildlife	<b>86%</b>	42%
Ensure that the park rangers, scientists, and other people working in our system of parks and public lands reflect the diversity of American society	<b>76%</b>	31%
Update the National Park Service's exhibits and displays to better reflect the contributions of traditionally under-represented communities to our nation's history, culture, and society	<b>83%</b>	30%
Establish a goal of creating 100 new parks in 100 communities across the country that would include new local open spaces and ballfields, state parks, and national monuments and parks	<b>74%</b>	29%
Create new national park sites that focus on contributions of Americans that are currently under-represented in our park system, including Latinos, African Americans, LGBT Americans, women, Native Americans, and Asian Americans	<b>67%</b>	26%

# Top Policies among African Americans and Hispanics

	African Americans		Hispanics	
	Total support	Strong support	Total support	Strong support
Ensure that <b>school children have the opportunity to gain free entry</b> to national parks, regardless of their family’s financial situation	<b>94%</b>	63%	<b>88%</b>	41%
<b>Reduce the backlog of maintenance</b> projects in parks and public lands by fixing up bathrooms, campgrounds, roads, museums, and visitor facilities	<b>87%</b>	58%	<b>96%</b>	50%
Make sure that our parks are protected from air pollution, industrial traffic, and spills by <b>keeping coal mining and drilling for oil and gas away</b> from park boundaries	<b>93%</b>	58%	<b>91%</b>	45%
<b>Protect special marine areas</b> such as ocean parks and sanctuaries for whales, fish, and coral	<b>94%</b>	55%	<b>93%</b>	52%
<b>Protect the pristine open lands around national parks</b> so that <b>wildlife</b> has access to the large, connected landscapes they need to survive	<b>90%</b>	53%	<b>91%</b>	46%
Create <b>more parks, open spaces, trails, and playgrounds in cities</b> so it is easier for kids to get active outdoors and stay healthy	<b>91%</b>	53%	<b>96%</b>	58%
Ensure that park rangers, scientists, and <b>people working in our system of parks and public lands reflect the diversity</b> of American society	<b>93%</b>	53%	<b>84%</b>	35%
Establish <b>new national monuments and wildlife refuges</b> to protect special places and at-risk wildlife	<b>87%</b>	45%	<b>96%</b>	50%
<b>Purchase privately owned lands within the boundaries of parks from willing sellers so that we don’t see mining, drilling, and private development</b> in the middle of places such as Grand Teton National Park and Gettysburg National Battlefield	<b>83%</b>	39%	<b>89%</b>	55%

# African American and Hispanic Support for Remaining Policies

	African Americans		Hispanics	
	Total support	Strong support	Total support	Strong support
<b>Improve public access</b> to national forests, rivers, parks, and other public lands for fishing, hunting, and hiking	89%	48%	89%	42%
Create a <b>new \$1 billion National Park Centennial Fund</b> that would set aside a portion of revenues from oil and gas production on federal lands and waters to help protect and restore parks and open spaces across the country for the second century of conservation	83%	47%	88%	44%
Create <b>new national park sites that focus on contributions of Americans that are currently under-represented</b> in our park system, including Latinos, African Americans, LGBT Americans, women, Native Americans, and Asian Americans	85%	42%	69%	27%
Update the National Park Service’s <b>exhibits and displays to better reflect the contributions of traditionally under-represented</b> communities to our nation’s history, culture, and society	90%	41%	89%	43%
Establish a <b>goal of creating 100 new parks in 100 communities</b> across the country that would include new local open spaces and ballfields, state parks, and national monuments and parks	76%	37%	82%	33%

# Candidates who take a strong stand in support of national parks are highly popular with voters.

*If your representative in Congress took a strong stand in support of policies to protect and strengthen the national parks, what would your reaction be?*

