



Parks and Protected Areas Alberta Opinion Poll 2022

Canadian Parks and
Wilderness Society



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Highlights

- Parks are extremely popular among Albertans. 67% of Albertans have visited a national or provincial park in the past 12 months.
- 59% of Albertans feel the current amount of land being protected by national and provincial parks is not enough.
- Canada's international commitment is to protect 30% of its land for conservation purposes by 2030. 85% of Albertans support the province committing to this target.
- 95% of Albertans are concerned about loss of species and the global biodiversity crisis.
- 79% of Albertans oppose closure of existing provincial parks
- Most Albertans support setting aside more land in Alberta to protect wildlife habitat to prevent further decline of wildlife populations (77%), more land in Alberta to be left as wilderness where human activities are minimal (76%), and more land for provincial parks with a focus on recreation and leisure (73%).
- Fifty percent of Albertans support Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA) as a means of conserving ecosystems in the province while 17% of Albertans are in opposition. A high percentage (26%) are neutral, which may be due to a lack of familiarity with IPCA's.

The survey of 1000 Albertans was conducted from October 15 to 25, 2022



Study Background

The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society's mission in Alberta is to safeguard, connect, and expand Alberta's parks and wilderness. CPAWS works toward these goals through education, engagement, and collaboration with Albertans of all backgrounds.

The current poll was commissioned by CPAWS to understand the perspectives of Albertans related to parks and protected areas. The province-wide poll was conducted for CPAWS by DDL Analytics, Inc., a firm specializing in social science research of people's attitudes and behaviours related to nature and the environment.



Methods

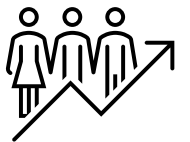
A total of n=1,000 online surveys were conducted among Albertans aged 18 or older via the Dynata online panel. Dynata is the world's largest online data platform.

The survey was conducted from October 15 to 25, 2022, using computer-assisted web interviewing (CAWI) technology.

Using data from the 2021 Census, results were weighted according to age, gender, and region in order to ensure a representative sample of the population.

Internet panel surveys are considered non-probability samples therefore a margin of error is typically not reported. If the data were collected through a probability sample, the margin of error for a sample size of n=1,000 would be $\pm 3.1\%$, 19 times out of 20.

Additional details are provided in Appendix A.

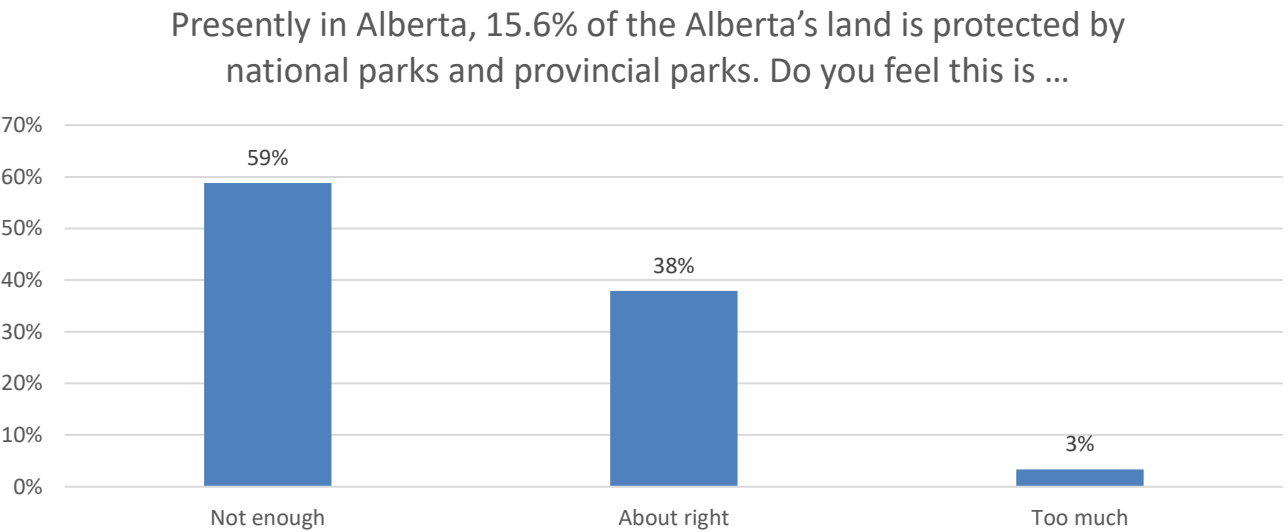


A scenic landscape photograph of a river flowing through a forested valley. The river is a vibrant turquoise color, likely due to glacial meltwater, and flows over a rocky bed. The surrounding forest is dense with tall, dark evergreen trees. In the background, mountains are visible under a dramatic sky with large, orange and grey clouds, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The text "Parks, Protected Areas and Biodiversity" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font in the center of the image.

Parks, Protected Areas and Biodiversity



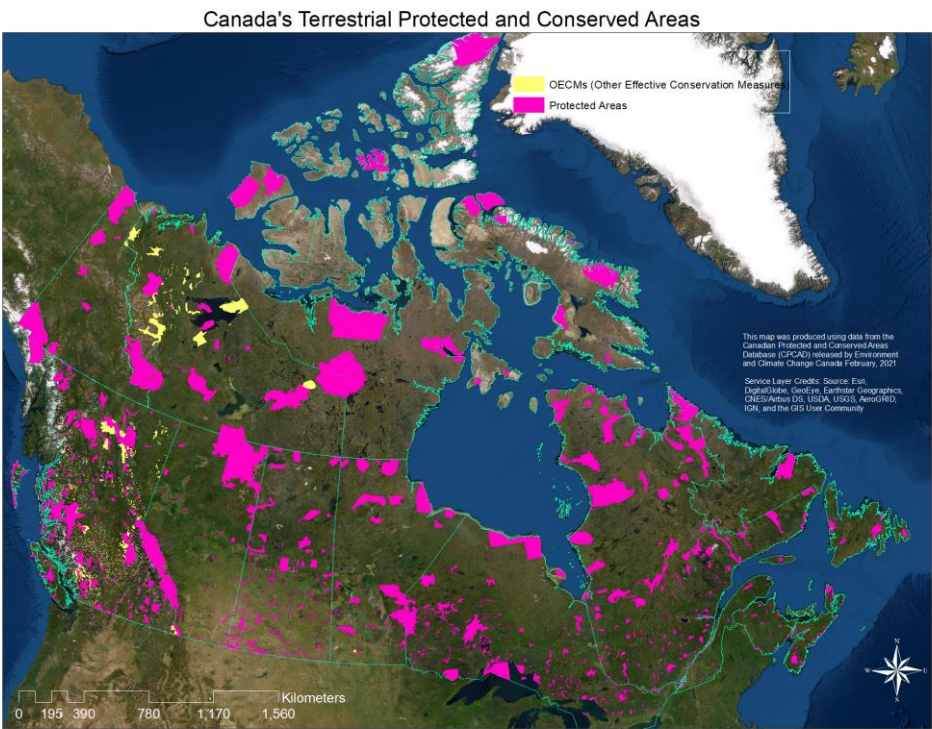
Albertans show strong support for setting aside more land to be protected by parks.



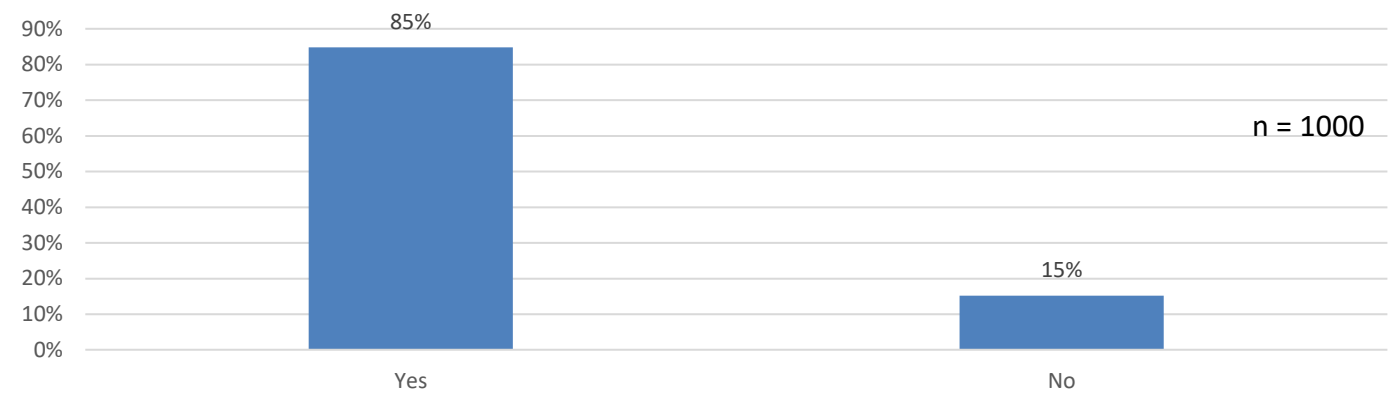
A majority (59%) of Albertans feel the current amount of land in the province being protected by national and provincial parks is not enough. Three percent of Albertans consider the current amount of land being protected is ‘too much’.

Those who have not visited a park in the past 12 months are more likely to indicate there is not enough land dedicated to parks in Alberta (65%) compared to those who have visited a park (57%).

The findings are consistent across the province - there are no significant regional differences.



Canada's international commitment is to protect 30% of its land for conservation purposes by 2030. Do you support Alberta committing to a target of 30% protection by 2030?



The vast majority (85%) of respondents are in favour of Alberta supporting Canada's international commitment of 30% of its land being set aside for conservation purposes by 2030.

Political party support has a significant impact on the desire for meeting Canada's commitment within Alberta. It is important to note, 20% of the population are undecided in their voting preference at this time. Undecided voters show higher support for meeting the international commitment than the party in power.

Support for the international commitment	Voting preference
72%	UCP
91%	NDP
94%	Alberta Party*
96%	Liberal Party*
89%	Undecided

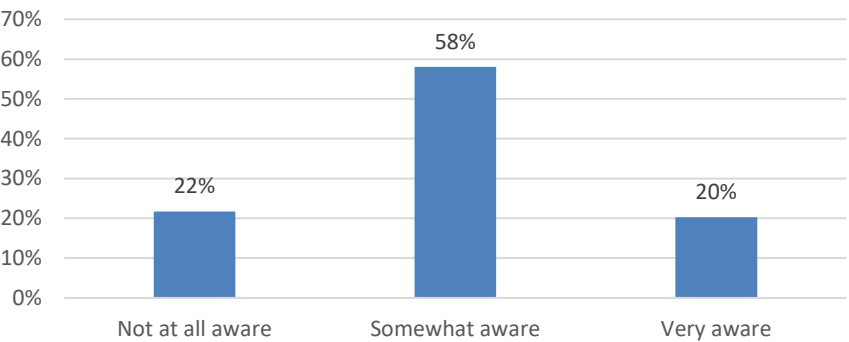
A slightly higher percentage of support comes from Edmonton (87%), compared to Calgary (84%) and the rest of Alberta (83%).

Three-quarters of those aged 55+ support the 30/30 commitment, compared to 90% for those under 35 years of age.

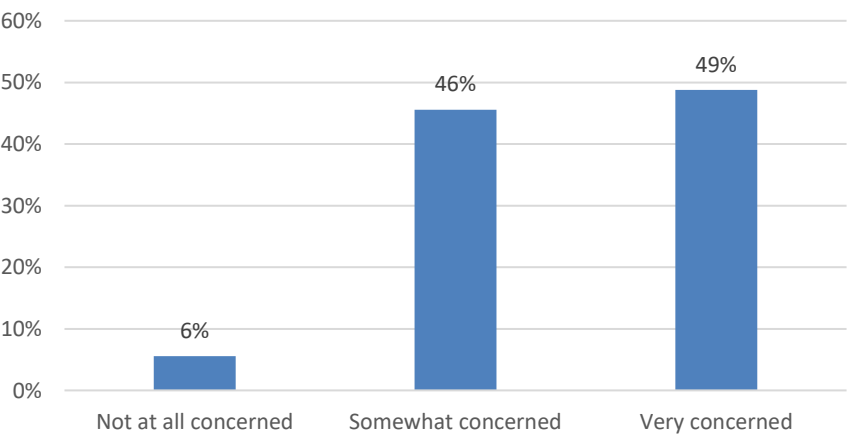
* caution, small sample size for Alberta Party and Liberal Party

Albertans are concerned about loss of species and biodiversity

How aware are you of the global biodiversity crisis? This refers to the decline and even disappearance of biological diversity among the living things that inhabit the planet.



How much does the loss of species and wildlife populations concern you?



Younger Albertans are significantly more aware of the decline in biodiversity.

Those who have visited a park in the past 12 months are also significantly more aware of the biodiversity crisis (25% very aware), compared with 12% for those who have not visited a park.

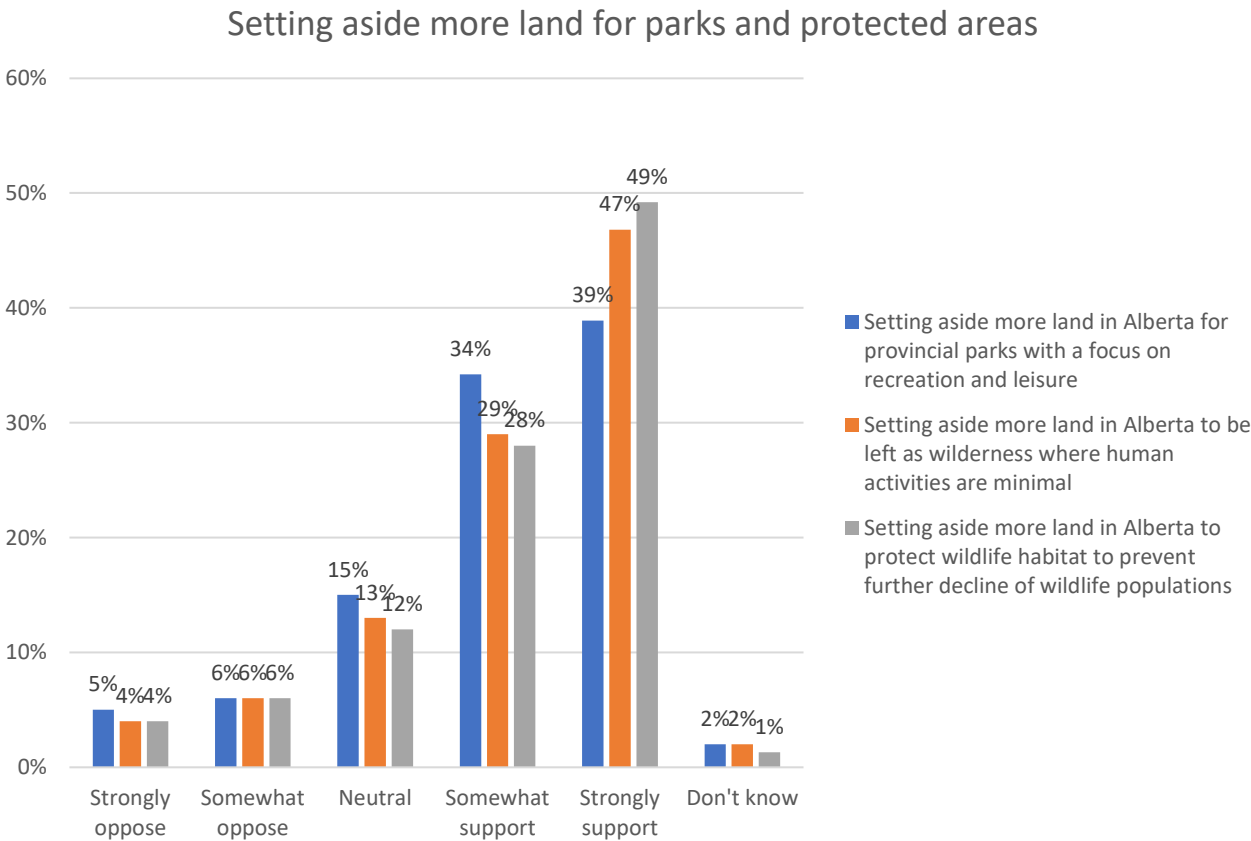
A higher percentage of younger Albertans are very concerned about species and wildlife populations loss.



More Land Needed for Protection of Wildlife Habitat, Areas with Minimal Disturbance, and Recreation

More than three-quarters of Albertans support setting aside more land in Alberta to protect wildlife habitat, and as wilderness to be left undisturbed by human activities. There were no statistically significant difference by age or region.

Seventy-three percent of Albertans also support having more land set aside for provincial parks with a recreation focus.

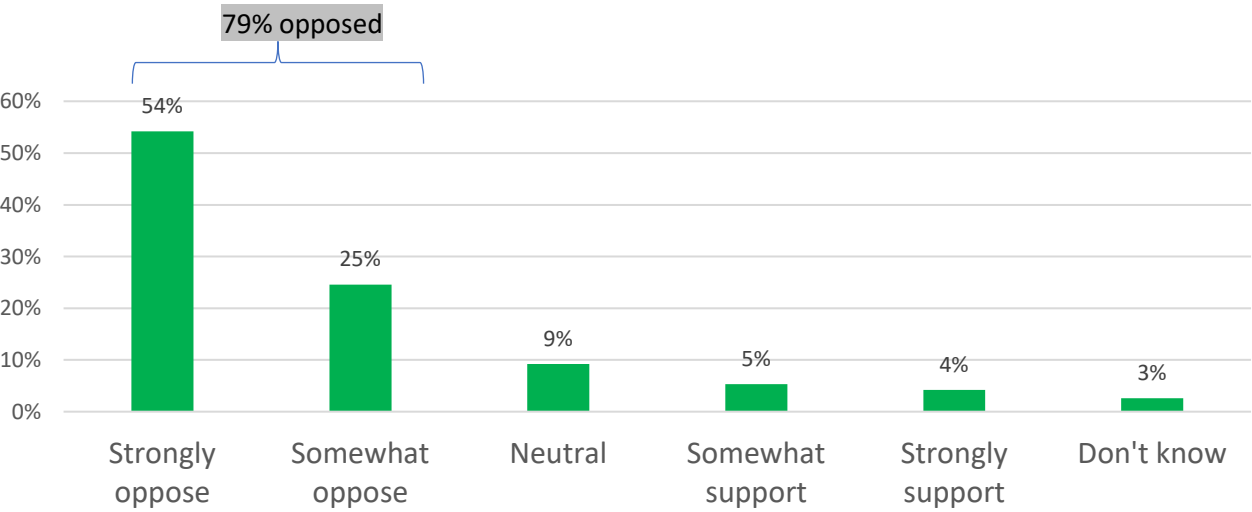


Strong Opposition for Closure of Existing Parks

Eight in ten Albertans oppose closure of existing parks, including 54% who strongly oppose these measures. Political party preference has minimal bearing on the opposition to park closure (UCP=82% oppose, NDP=90% oppose). Eighty-nine percent of undecided voters also oppose park closures.

Regional differences exist in relation to opposition, with Calgary having the lowest opposition (74%), compared with Edmonton at 83% opposition, and the rest of Alberta at 84% opposition.

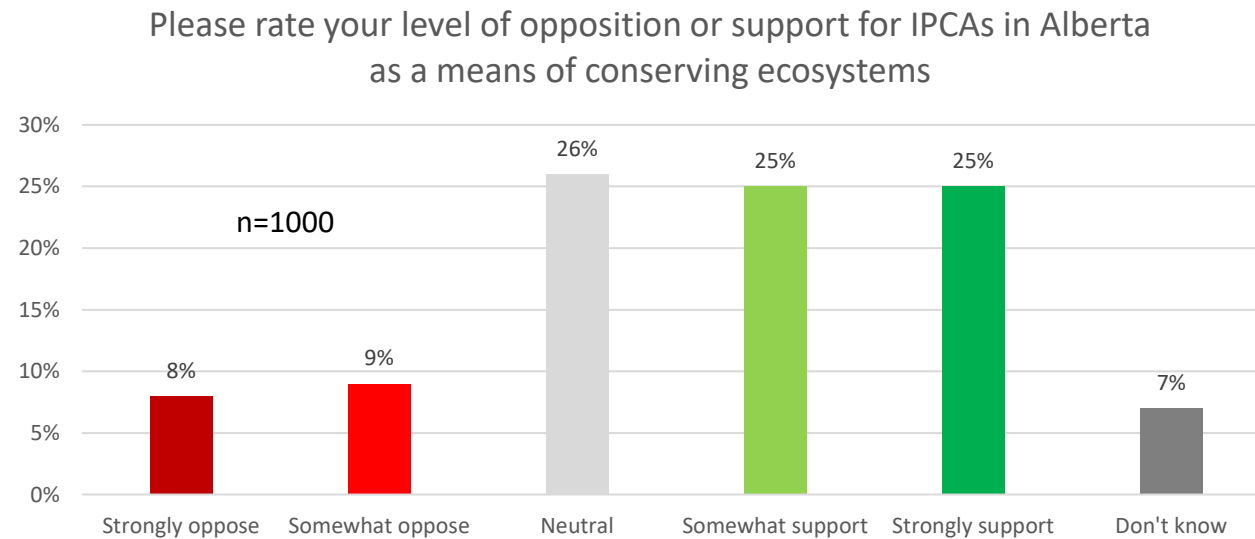
Closure of existing provincial parks



Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs)

Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas are lands and waters where the protection of the area is grounded in three core principles:

- Indigenous-led
- Represent a long-term commitment to conservation
- Elevate Indigenous rights and responsibilities



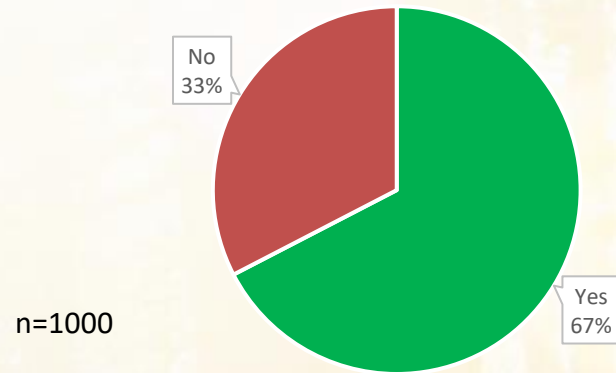
Half of Albertans support IPCA's as a means of conserving ecosystems in the province. Younger respondents show a higher percentage of support (62% under age 35 support) compared to those 35 to 54 years of age (53% support) and those over 55 years of age (46% support).

Regionally there are no differences in support for IPCA's.

The very high percentage of those who are neutral in their opinion may be due to a lack of familiarity with IPCS's.



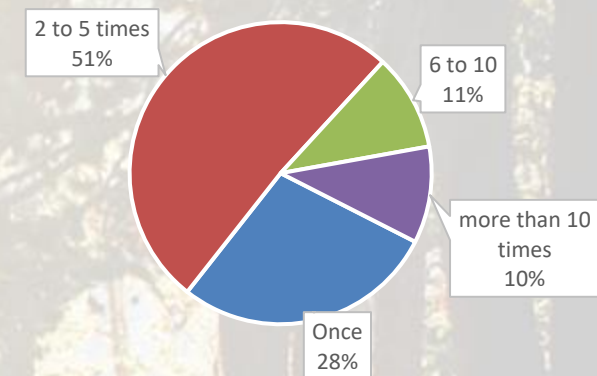
Have you visited a national or provincial park in the past 12 months for the purpose of leisure or recreation?



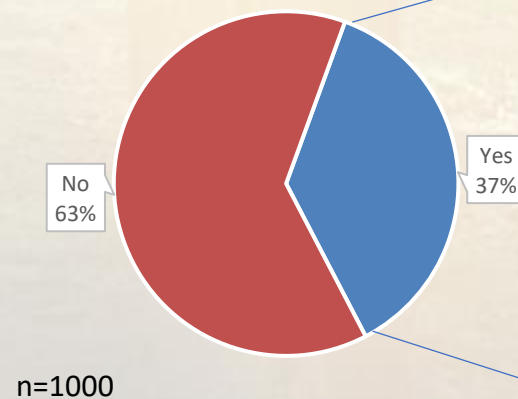
Almost 7 in 10 Albertans have visited a provincial or national park in the past 12 months. Calgarians have a higher rate of park visitation (70%) than Edmontonians (65%). The average across the remainder of the province is 67%, although this varies greatly from 43% to 100% depending on proximity to the Eastern Slopes.

Park visitation is highly related to age, with almost 9 in 10 Albertans 18 to 24 years of age visiting a national or provincial park in the past 12 months.

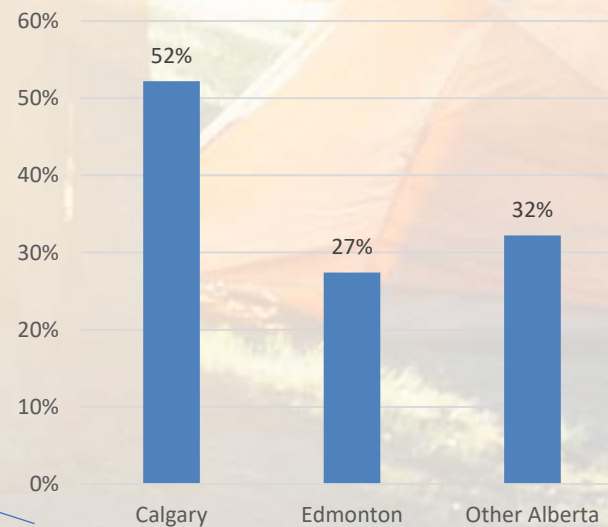
Approximately how many times over the past 12 months have you visited a national or provincial park in Alberta?



Have you visited Kananaskis Country in the past 12 months?



Where from in Alberta



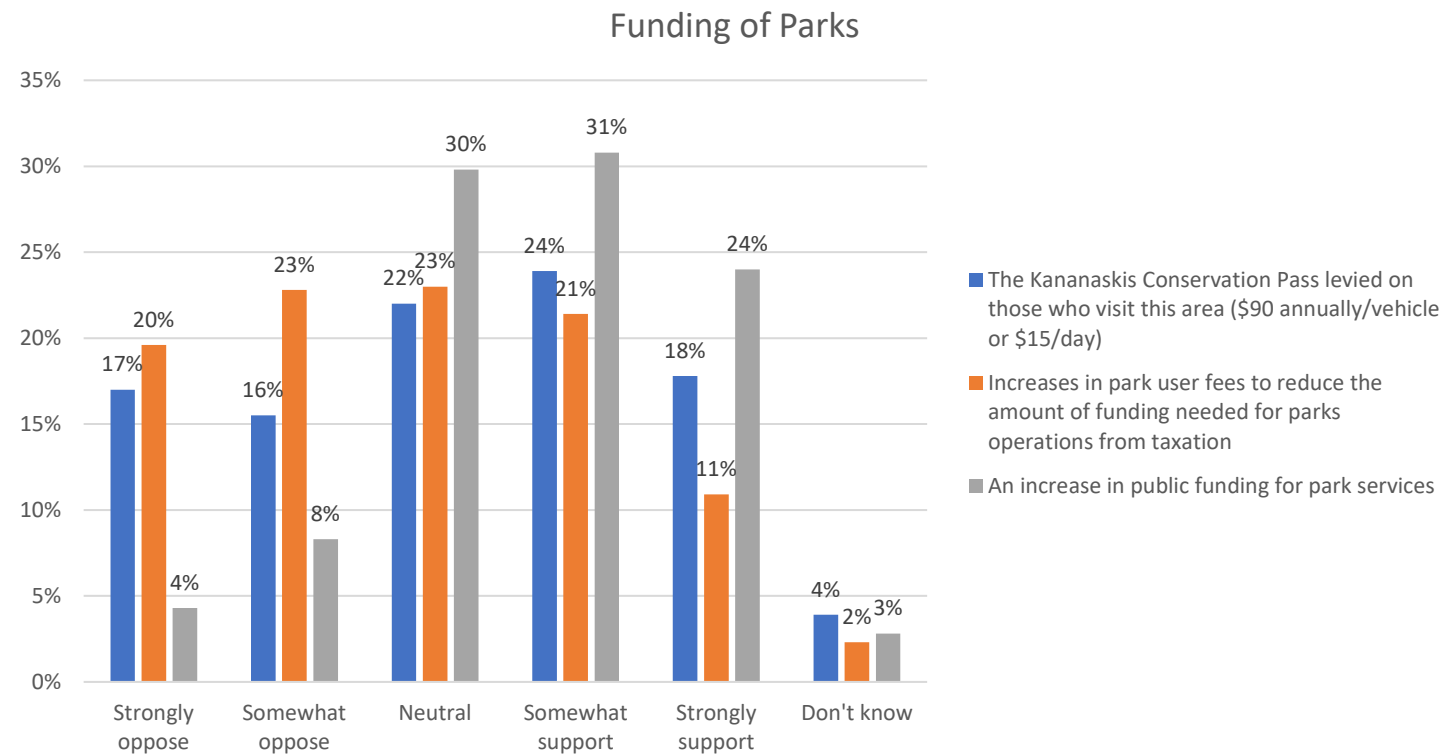
Almost 4 in 10 Albertans (37%) visited Kananaskis Country in the past 12 months. Proximity has a significant impact on visitation to Kananaskis, with over half of the Alberta-based visitation coming from Calgary. As with visitation to all parks, younger Albertans are more likely to visit Kananaskis Country than older Albertans.

Views on Park User Fees and K-Country Conservation Pass are Mixed

Over half of Albertans (51%) support increased public funding for park services, while 12% are opposed.

The Kananaskis Conservation Pass is supported by 42% of Albertans and opposed by 33%. There is no difference between those who have visited Kananaskis and those who have not. There is however higher support for the Conservation Pass among those 18 to 34 years of age (47%) compared to those 55 and older (40%). There were no differences by region.

Just over 4 in 10 Albertans (43%) oppose increases in user fees to fund parks operations, compared to 3 in 10 who support increased fees for this purpose. Almost one-quarter are neutral. There is no significant difference in opposition to fee increases between park users (44%) and non-users (42%).

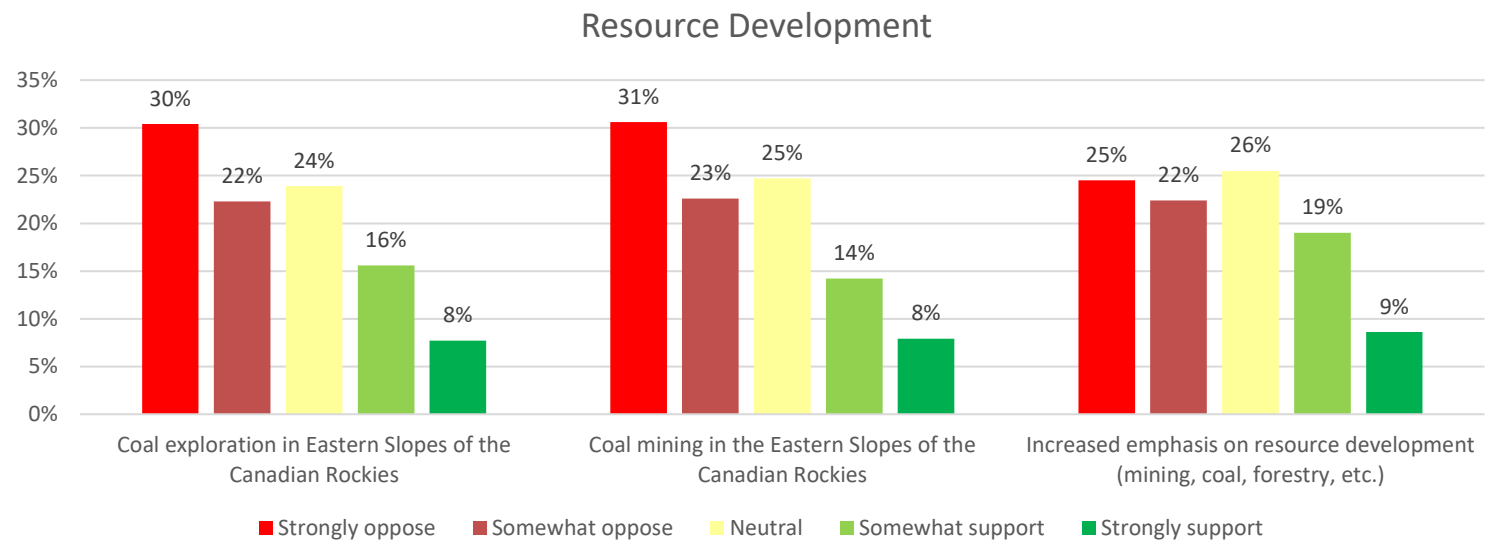


An aerial photograph showing a massive open-pit mine carved into the side of a mountain. The mine's terraced levels and dark, excavated slopes are prominent. A small cluster of buildings and infrastructure is visible near the top of the mine. The surrounding landscape includes forested areas and some water bodies in the distance.

Human Activity in the Eastern Slopes



Two-thirds of Albertans aware of coal mining in the Eastern Slopes are opposed



Almost two-thirds (65%) of Albertans indicated they are aware of proposed coal mining and development in the Eastern Slopes.

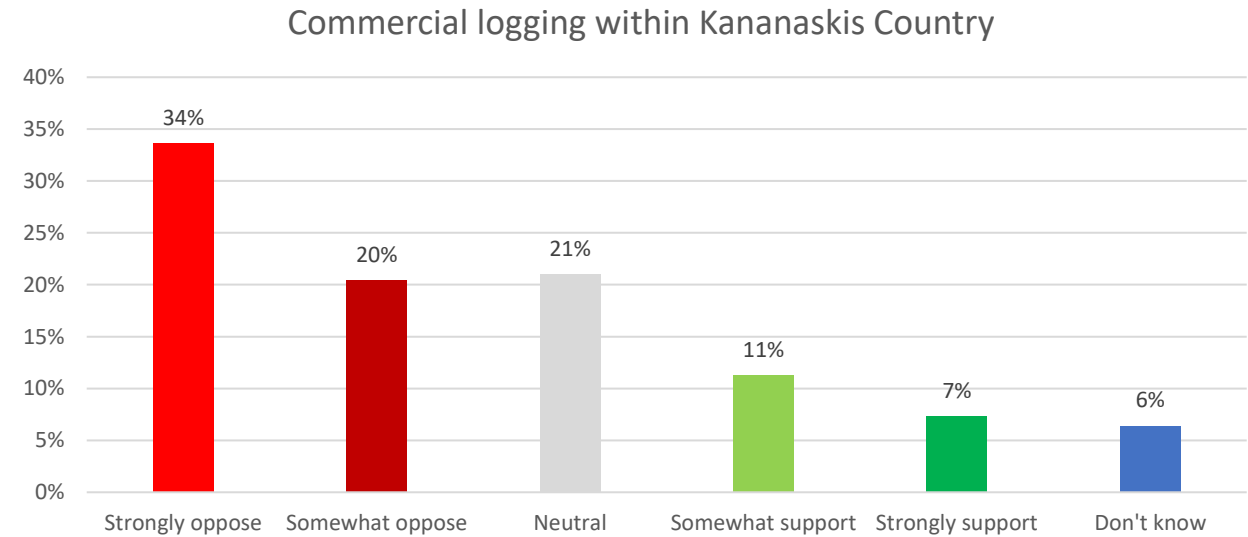
Whether aware or not, most Albertans oppose coal exploration (52%) and development (54%) in the Eastern Slopes. Opposition to coal exploration and development increases among those who are aware of the activities, **with 65% who are aware of coal mining in the Eastern Slopes indicating opposition to exploration, and 63% indicating opposition to current mining.** These numbers are identical to a poll conducted by Leger Marketing in August 2021 (63% opposed to mining), showing there has been little change in the opinion of Albertans in this regard. Conversely 22% of Albertans aware of coal mining in the Eastern Slopes support this use.

When the question of resource development is broadened to include other forms of development, opposition amongst Albertans is lower, with almost half being opposed (47%) and 28% being in support. The high neutral value may be due to the lack of specificity in the type of activities being considered by the question.

Regionally there is higher opposition from Edmontonians (62%) than Calgarians (47%) and other Albertans (52%).

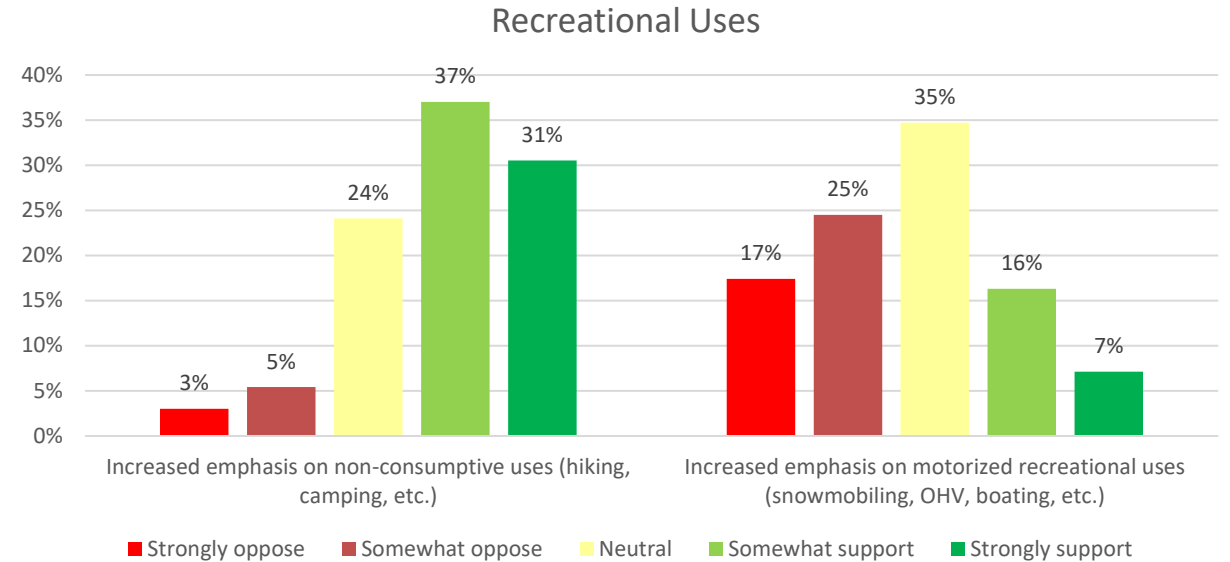


Most Albertans do not support logging in Kananaskis Country



53% of Albertans are opposed to logging in Kananaskis Country. The opposition is province-wide, and not just among those who frequent the area.

There is also increased opposition among older respondents with 60% of those aged 35 to 54, and 67% of those over 55+, being in opposition to logging, compared with 44% of those under 35 opposing logging in Kananaskis.

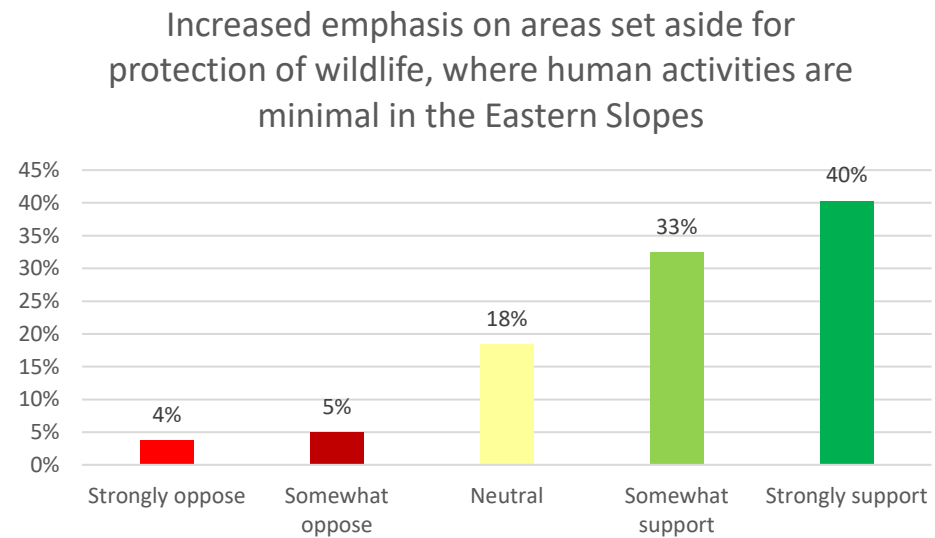


Within the context of recreational uses in the Eastern Slopes, there is greater support for non-motorized uses (68%) than for motorized uses (23%).

There is no statistically significant difference for increasing non-motorized recreational use in the Eastern Slopes based on the region of the province; however, there is higher opposition to motorized use from Edmonton (47%) and Calgary (44%) compared with the rest of Alberta (38%).

Respondents under 35 years of age are more in favour of increased motorized opportunities (36% support) compared with 35- to 54-year-olds at 23% support and 55+ at 12% support.

Strong support for areas set aside in the Eastern Slopes for protection of wildlife, where human activities are minimal



Almost three-quarters of Albertans support an increased emphasis on areas set aside for protection of wildlife where there would be minimal human activity in the Eastern Slopes. There is no difference by age or region.





Public Policy

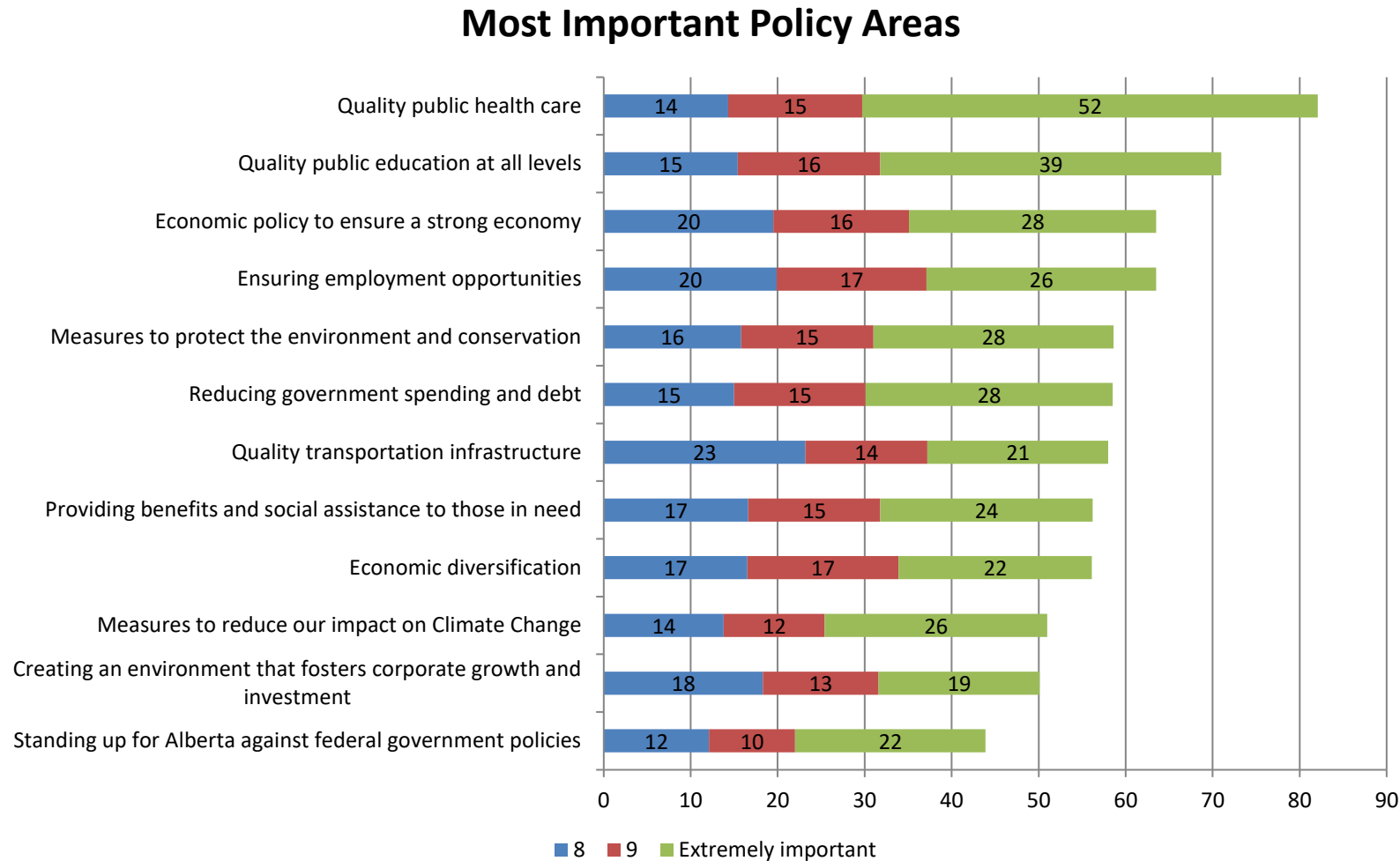
Albertans were asked to rate the importance of 12 policy areas on a scale from 0 to 10, with 10 being extremely important and 0 being not at all important.

The figure to the right shows 8,9 and 10 scores (most important).

Public health care, public education, and a strong economy top the list.

Measures to protect environment and conservation follow. (Note: It is possible that environment has ranked higher in this survey since the survey itself creates an awareness of the importance of the topic).

Provincially the lowest ranked item is standing up for Albertans against federal government policies. This is a key platform of the UCP and may be one of the reasons for so many undecided voters (since they are waiting to see how this materializes).

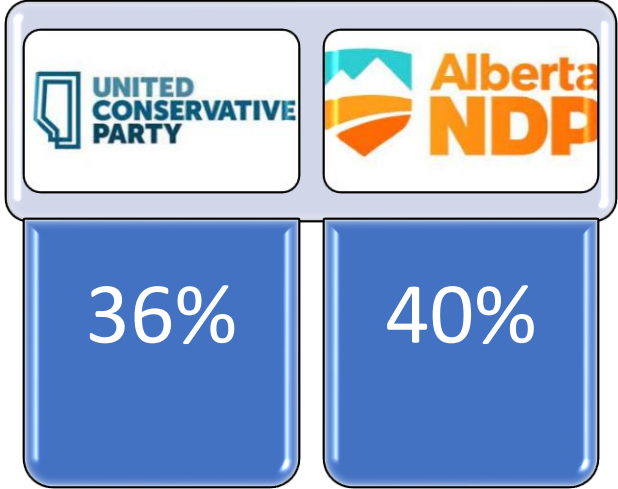




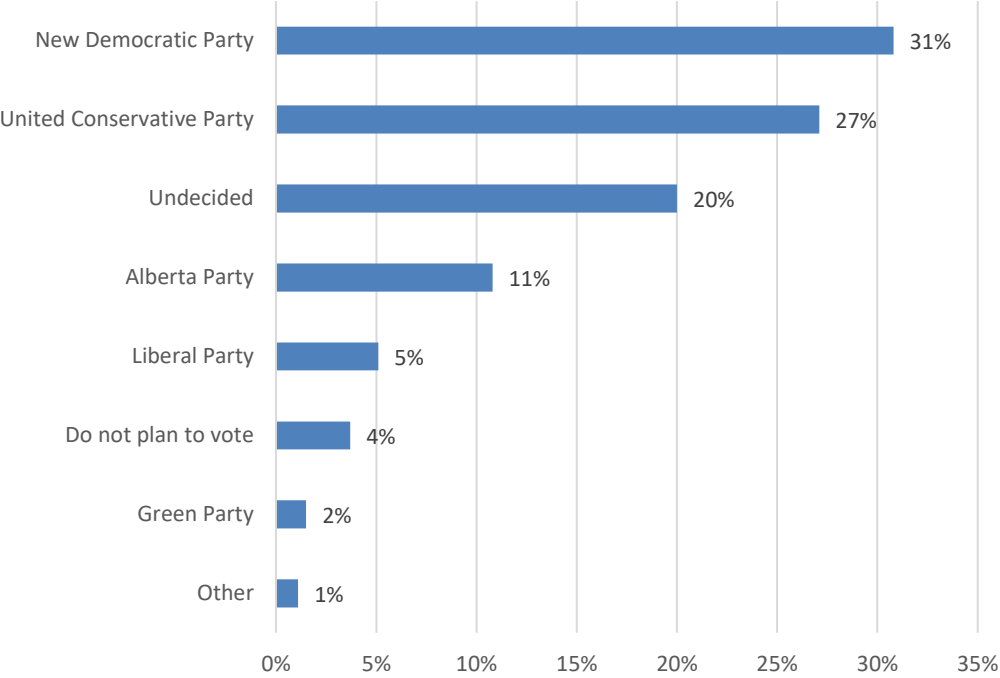
With a change in leadership of the United Conservative Party, and an election not scheduled until the spring of 2023, it is not surprising to see 20% of Albertans undecided. Most polls report decided voters, which based on this poll would be 40% NDP, and 36% UCP.

As seen throughout the survey, political ideology has a significant bearing on many aspects of protected areas and resource development within the province.

Voting preference among decided voters



Voting Preference at Time of Survey (October 15 to October 25)



Appendix A

Survey Design

Survey Design

Panel Sample

The survey sample was sourced from the largest provider of online sample in the world with nearly 70 million participants. Dynata's sample is meticulously vetted, verified and fully permissioned with billions of data points.

Imperium, a Dynata data quality solution, has pioneered data quality verification. Leveraging Imperium's QualityScore™, winner of Quirk's Media's 2021 Technology Impact Award for outstanding innovations, clients can prove the quality of their data for the most accurate, unbiased insights.

Dynata's automated data-hygiene and anti-fraud technology solutions use machine learning to ensure survey data is always of the highest quality throughout every step of the respondent cycle, from registration to in-survey completion.

Challenges with traditional telephone survey sampling, such as incredibly high non-response, unpublished cell phone numbers, and the nuisance factor of being called, have moved the research industry towards online sample. Online samples used today are proven to be accurate and representative of public opinion. A recent example of the accuracy of pure online polling was seen in the most recent federal election where online polls predicted the outcomes within one percentage point.

Quality Control

Quotas were used based on the 2021 census to ensure the survey represents age, region and gender proportionate to actual values. Without quotas, surveys would be over-represented by female respondents in the 45 to 64 age group and vastly under-represented by 18 to 24 year old males.

The vast majority of respondents will answer the questions in a serious and thoughtful manner. Occasionally some respondents will not take the survey seriously, so measures are needed to screen these respondents out. There were several methods used:

- a speed check based on the fastest possible threshold a person can complete the survey
- A trap question in which a specified response must be given to the statement 'for quality control choose somewhat agree for this item'
- Logic checks
- And patterned responses (such as all answers being 1)

To prevent order bias in responses, all question lists (Likert Scales) are randomized.

Survey Instrument

Survey about Parks and Protected Areas in Alberta

To begin we have a few questions about you that will help us better understand the data. You will remain anonymous, and no information provided in this survey will be linked back to you.

D1. Are you a permanent resident of Alberta?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No [discontinue]

D2. Please provide the first three characters of your postal code. This allows us to identify the region of Alberta you are from.

[] [] [] [] [if first letter is not T, discontinue]

D3. Which of the following age categories do you fall into:

Under 18 (discontinue)

- ☐ 18 to 24
- ☐ 25 to 34
- ☐ 35 to 44
- ☐ 45 to 54
- ☐ 55 to 64
- ☐ 65 or older

D4. What is your gender identity?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Intersex, non-binary, transgender, two-spirit
- ☐ Prefer to self-identify
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Demographic quotas set to 2021 Canada census levels.

The following questions seek your views on parks and protected areas in Alberta.

1. Have you visited a national or provincial park in the past 12 months for the purpose of leisure or recreation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2. [if yes to Q1] Approximately how many times over the past 12 months have you visited a national or provincial park in Alberta?

Approximately [] times

3. [if yes to Q1] Have you visited Kananaskis Country in the past 12 months?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

4. What percentage of Alberta's land do you feel should be protected by national and provincial parks?

[] %

- ☐ Not sure

5. Presently in Alberta, 15.6% of the Alberta's land is protected by national parks and provincial parks. Do you feel this is ...

- ☐ not enough
- ☐ about right
- ☐ too much

6. Canada's international commitment is to protect 30% of its land for conservation purposes by 2030. Do you support Alberta committing to a target of 30% protection by 2030?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

7. Please rate your level of opposition or support for the following:

[SCALE: strongly oppose, somewhat oppose, neutral, somewhat support, strongly support, don't know]

- a. Setting aside more land in Alberta for provincial parks with a focus on recreation and leisure
- b. Setting aside more land in Alberta to be left as wilderness where human activities are minimal
- c. The Kananaskis Conservation Pass levied on those who visit this area (\$90 annually/vehicle or \$15/day)
- d. Closure of existing provincial parks
- e. Increases in park user fees to reduce the amount of funding needed for parks operations from taxation
- f. Commercial logging within Kananaskis Country
- g. For quality control please choose 'somewhat support' for this statement.

g. Setting aside more land in Alberta to protect wildlife habitat to prevent further decline of wildlife populations

h. An increase in public funding for park services

The next few questions are about the Eastern Slopes of the Canadian Rockies. This is the area of mountains and foothills that stretches from just south of Grande Prairie to the Montana border and west to east from the British Columbia border towards Hwy 22 and Hwy 43.

8. Are you aware of the proposed coal mining/development in the Eastern Slopes of the Canadian Rockies?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9. Please rate your level of opposition or support for the following activities in the Eastern Slopes [this list will be randomized]:

[SCALE: strongly oppose, somewhat oppose, neutral, somewhat support, strongly support, don't know]

- a. Coal exploration in Eastern Slopes of the Canadian Rockies
- b. Coal mining in the Eastern Slopes of the Canadian Rockies
- c. Increased emphasis on non-consumptive uses (hiking, camping, etc.)
- d. Increased emphasis on motorized recreational uses (snowmobiling, OHV, boating, etc.)
- e. Increased emphasis on resource development (mining, coal, forestry, etc.)
- f. Increased emphasis on areas set aside for protection of wildlife, where human activities are minimal

Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs)

Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) are lands and waters where the protection of the area is grounded in three core principles:

- Indigenous-led
- Represent a long-term commitment to conservation
- Elevate Indigenous rights and responsibilities

10. Please rate your level of opposition or support for IPCAs in Alberta as a means of conserving ecosystems

[SCALE: strongly oppose, somewhat oppose, neutral, somewhat support, strongly support, don't know]

Biodiversity

11. How aware are you of the global biodiversity crisis? This refers to the decline and even disappearance of biological diversity among the living things that inhabit the planet.

- ☐ Not at all aware
- ☐ Somewhat aware
- ☐ Very aware

12. How much does the loss of species and wildlife populations concern you?

- ☐ Not concerned at all
- ☐ Somewhat concerned
- ☐ Very concerned

Public Policy

13. How important are each of the following when it comes to voting for a provincial government party?

[0 to 10 scale 0 is not at all 10 is extremely important]

- a. Quality public health care
- b. Quality public education at all levels
- c. Quality transportation infrastructure
- d. Measures to protect the environment and conservation
- e. Measures to reduce our impact on Climate Change
- f. Economic policy to ensure a strong economy
- g. Ensuring employment opportunities
- h. Providing benefits and social assistance to those in need
- i. Standing up for Alberta against federal government policies
- j. Creating an environment that fosters corporate growth and investment
- k. Economic diversification
- l. Reducing government spending and debt

14. Which political party are you most likely to vote for in the next provincial election?

- ☐ United Conservative Party
- ☐ New Democratic Party
- ☐ Alberta Party
- ☐ Liberal Party
- ☐ Green Party
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Do not plan to vote
- ☐ Not sure

DDL Analytics, Inc.

DDL Analytics, Inc. is a Canadian social science research firm specializing in quality-of-life research, both internal to organizations, as well as among the general population.

The company's principal researcher and owner, David de Lange, has more than 30 years' experience working on research for a wide range of clientele, including Alberta Environment, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Parks Canada, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Yellowstone to Yukon, Cows and Fish, The City of Calgary, The Calgary Foundation, Cenovus, Encana, Imperial Oil, Emerson Process Controls, AltaLink, TransAlta, ENMAX, and the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association, and many others. He has occupied senior positions in leading research firms and organizations, including Sr. Vice President at Leger Marketing and NRG Research Group, Sr. Associate at the Praxis Group, and Chief of Social Science Research for Parks Canada's Western Region.

A major focus of the company's research is human behaviour and attitudes related to natural environments. The company's principal has more than three decades of research experience in environmental protection and resource management, measuring public attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours, and linking these insights to priorities and actions.

