

The Bureau of Business and Economic Research

# Montanan's Opinions Regarding Montana State Park Funding: A Montana Poll Finding

January 2011

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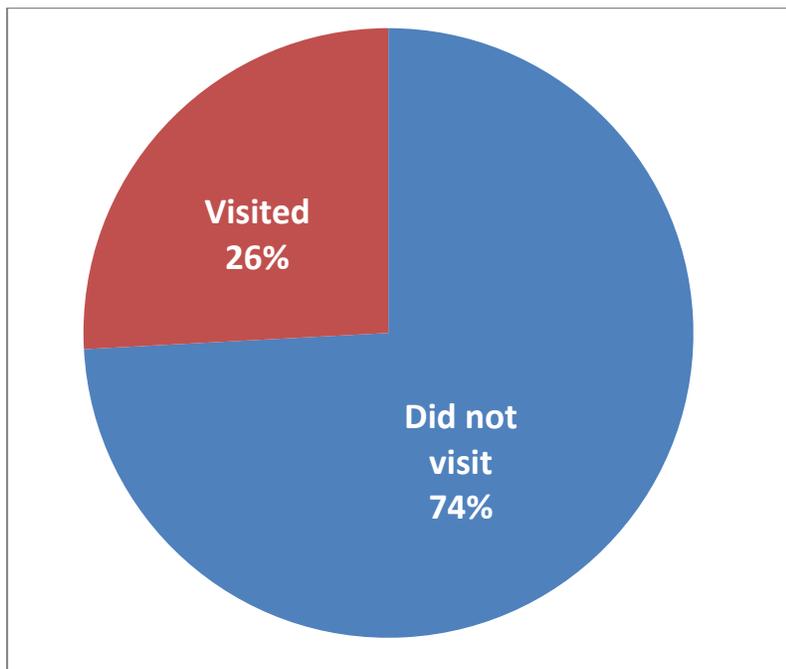
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The Montana Poll is a statewide public opinion poll that explores the attitudes and opinions of Montanans on a wide variety of social, economic, and political topics. Montana State Parks asked that a few questions measuring Montanans opinions about Montana State Parks be included in the latest Montana Poll conducted in November and December 2010. BBER obtained 441 completed interviews. The population sampled was adult Montanans who live in households with working landline telephones. Respondents were sampled using Random-Digit Dial. In addition, within households respondents were sampled using the Kish Table method. The response rate was 44.8% calculated using the American Association for Public Opinion Research formula RR3. The rate of sampling error is +/- 5%. This means that if the Poll were conducted 100 times, percentages of responses in 95 of the replications would be within +/- 5% of those found here. Sampling error for subsets of the population will be higher. The data are weighted by 2009 US Census Bureau estimates of the age and sex distribution of Montana's adult population. This is a common survey data processing technique that has been shown to improve the accuracy of survey estimates.

The following charts and tables summarize the results from the Montana Poll.

**Figure 1: Respondent (R) Visited Montana State Park in Last Year**



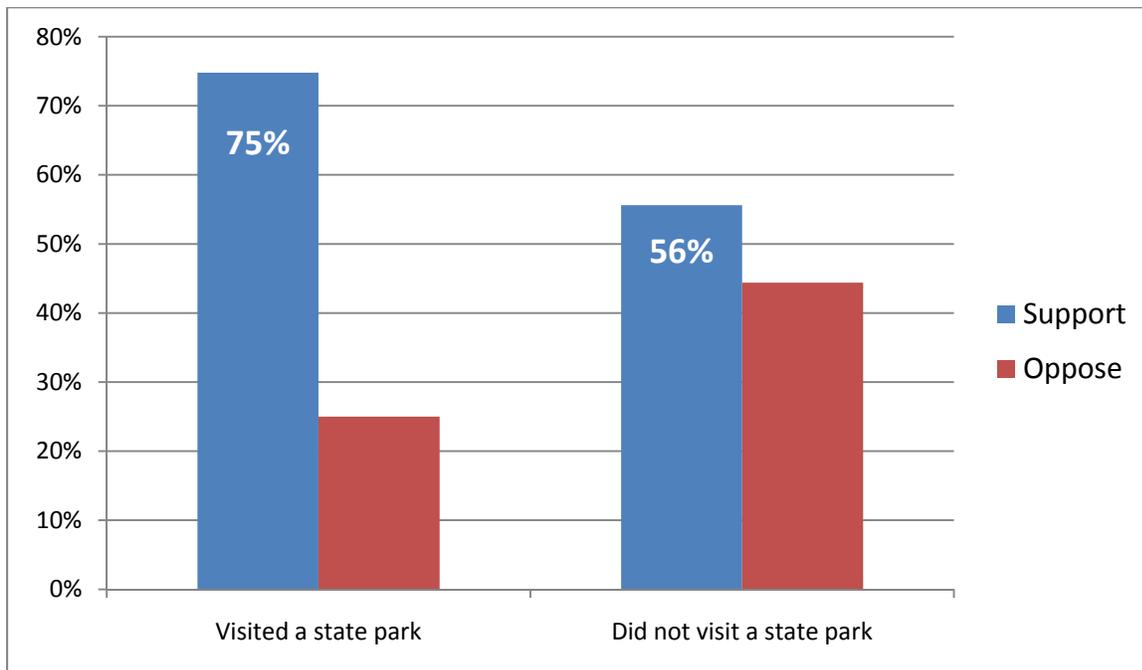
About one in four Montana adults visited a state park in the last year as measured by the Montana Poll after adjusting for those who visited National Parks or National Forest facilities. Respondents were asked the specific state park they visited; about 13 percent of respondents mentioned someplace other than a state park.

Respondents were asked a series of potential changes to state park funding or management. Each option will have two charts:

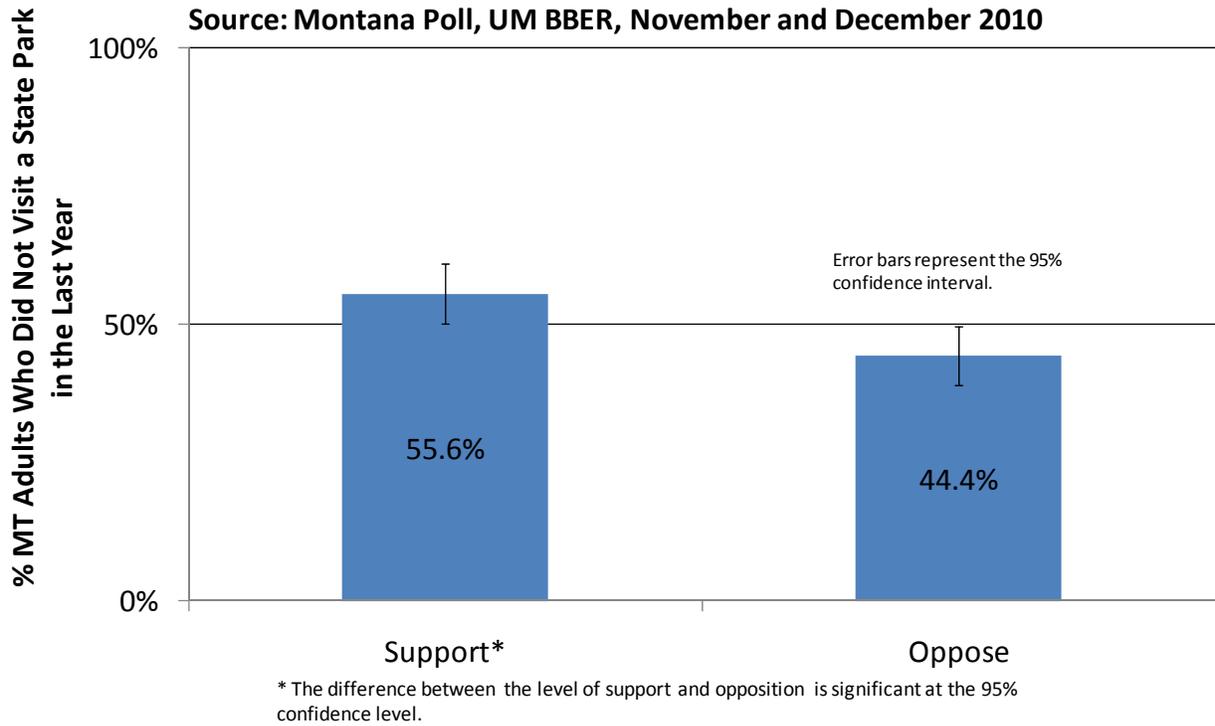
- A chart showing the intensity of support or opposition to the change of all Montana adults from the Montana Poll;
- A chart comparing support or opposition by whether a respondent visited a state park in the last year and a bar with showing the response to the same question from the 2010 Montana State Park Visitor Survey.

The individual responses are included after the charts as well as detailed tables showing comparisons between visitors and non-visitors. A copy of the questions as asked is also included.

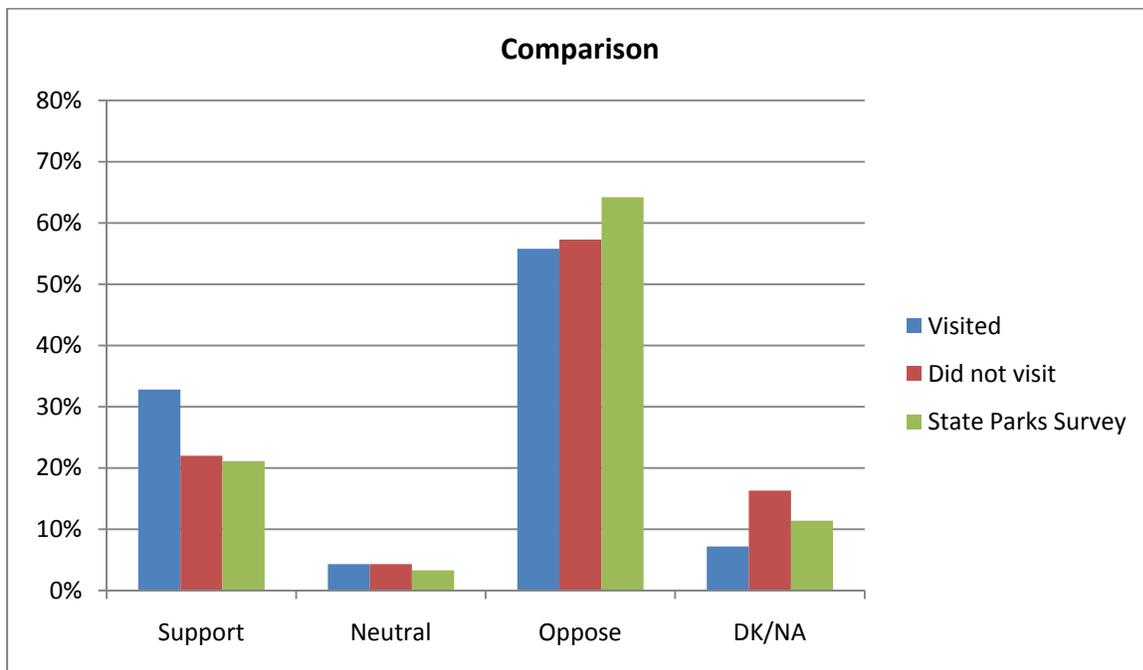
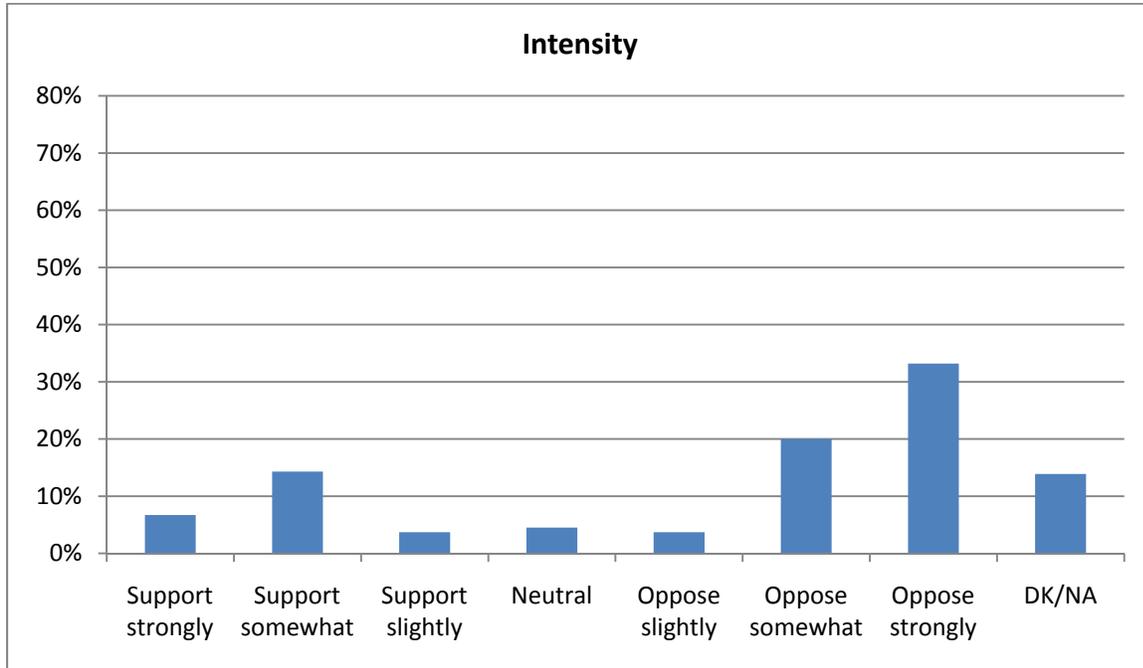
### Overall Support or Opposition for Optional Vehicle Registration Fee Increase by Park Visitation



## Support for Increasing the Optional Vehicle Registration Fee Among Montana Adults Who Did Not Visit a State Park in the Last Year

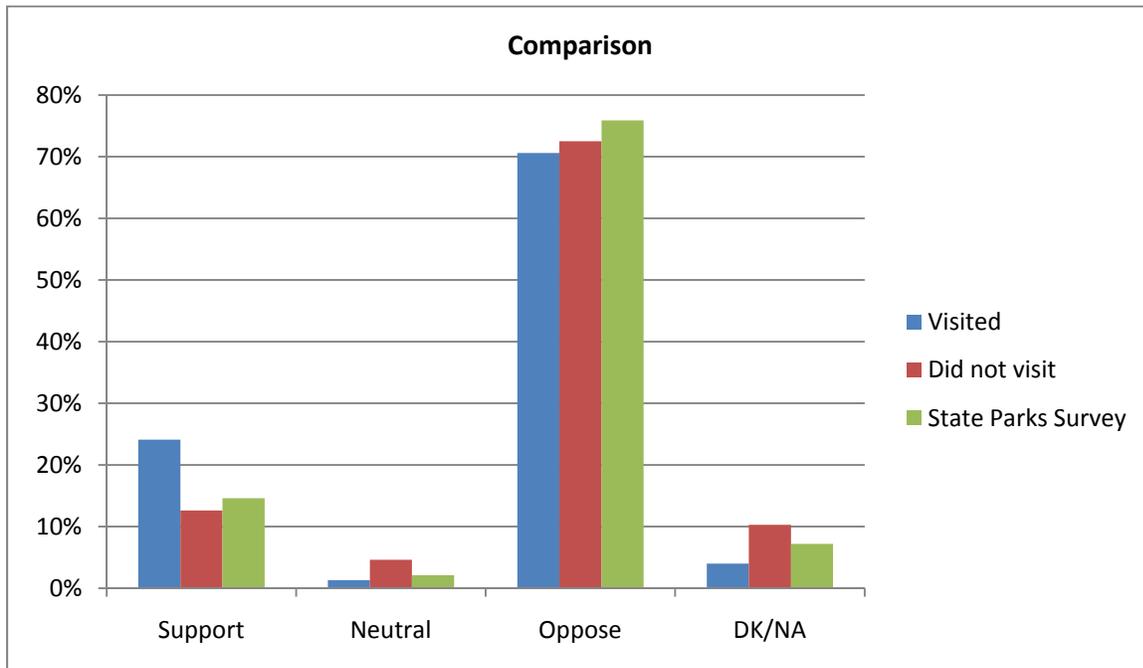
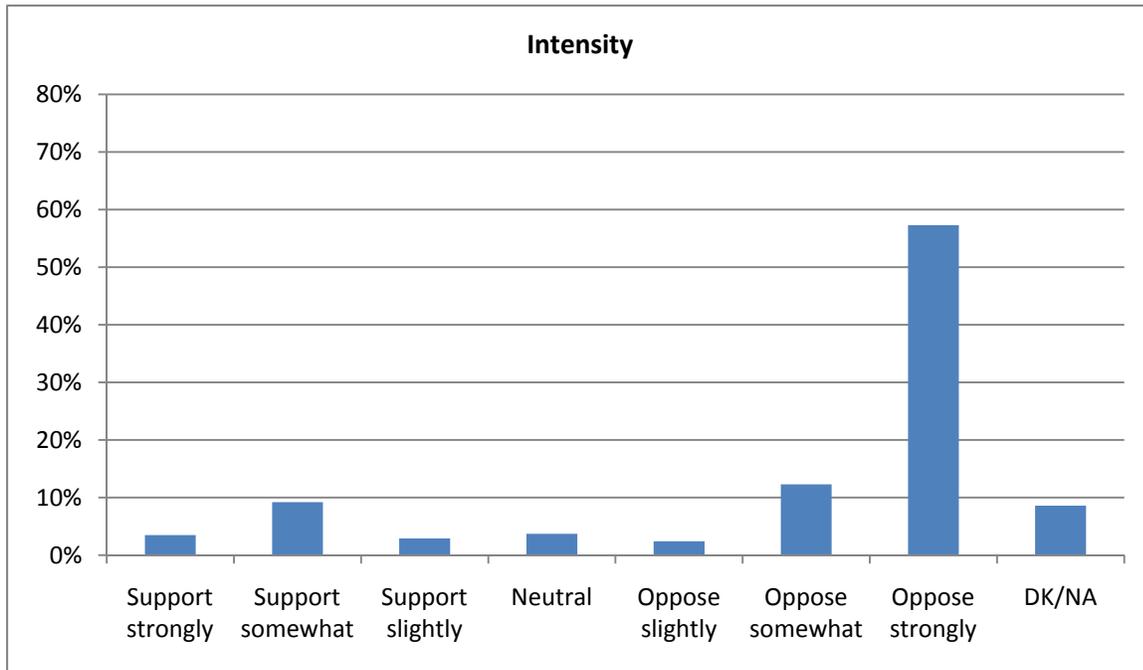


**Selling, closing or trading out some state parks that do not have regional or statewide significance?**



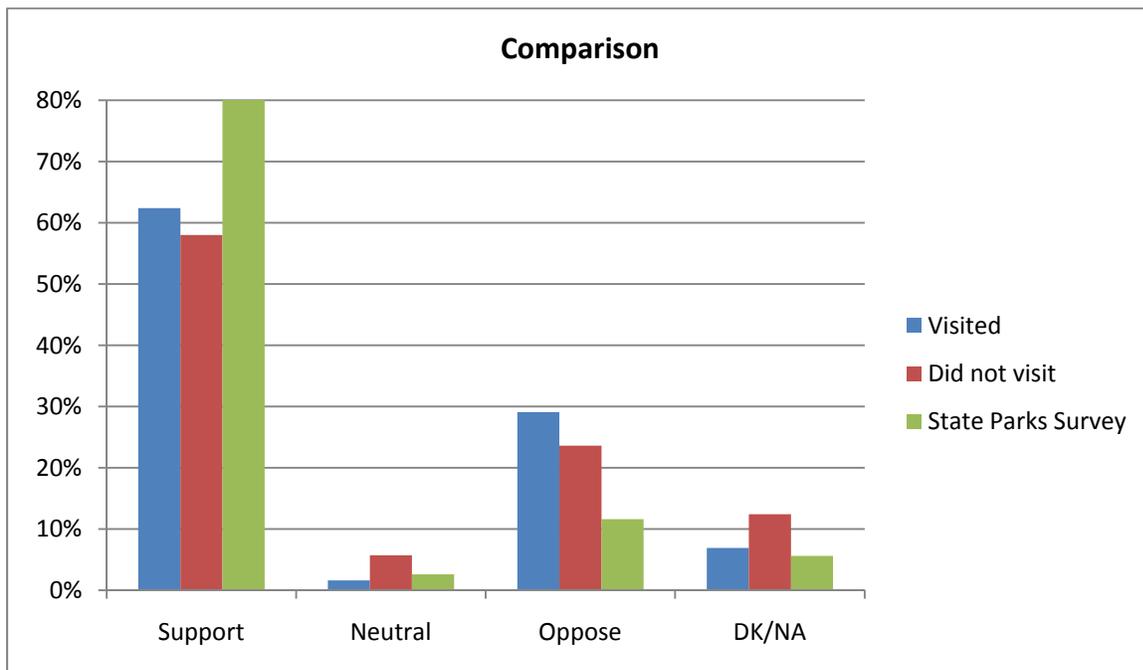
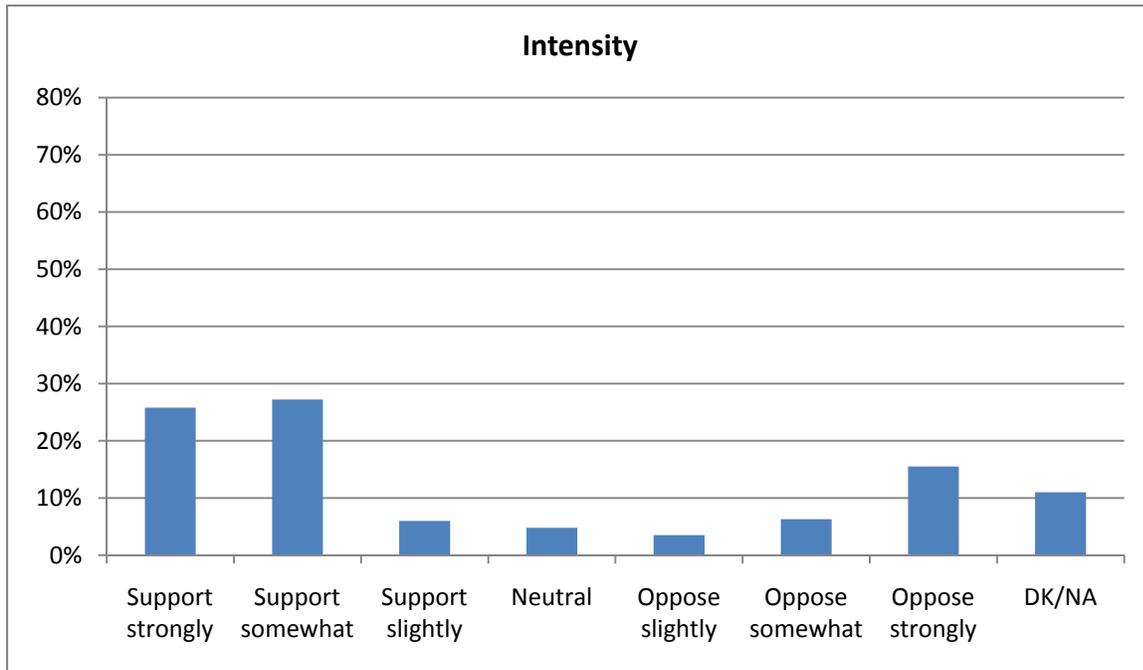
Montana adults are against selling, closing or trading out state parks. The opposition is found in both visitors and non-visitors.

### Privatizing state parks?



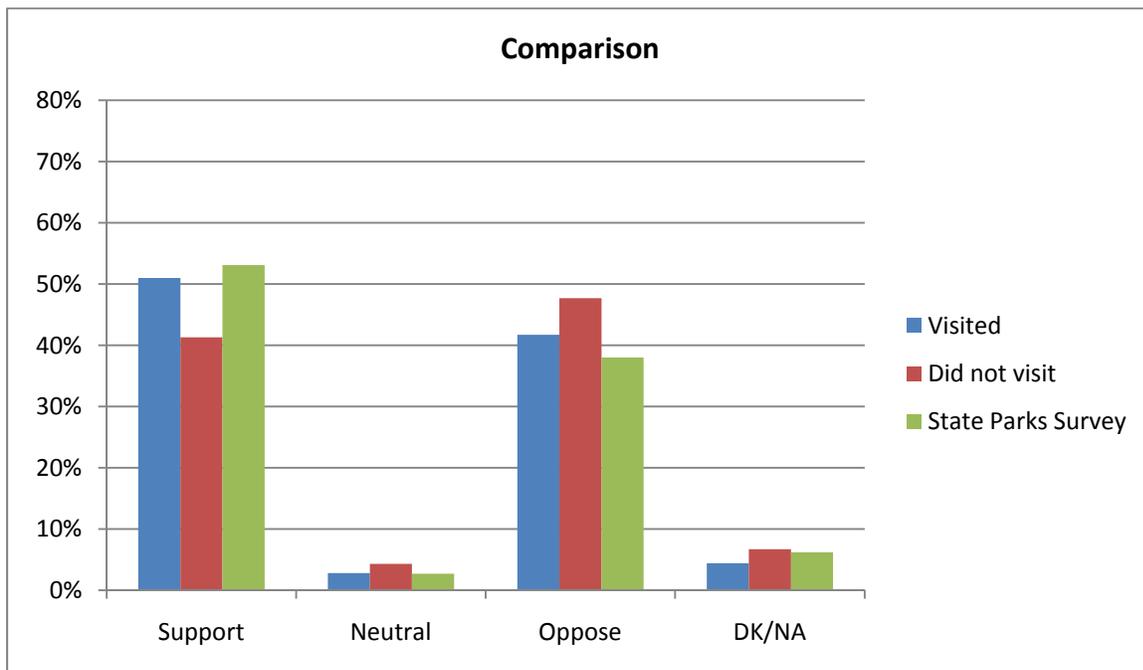
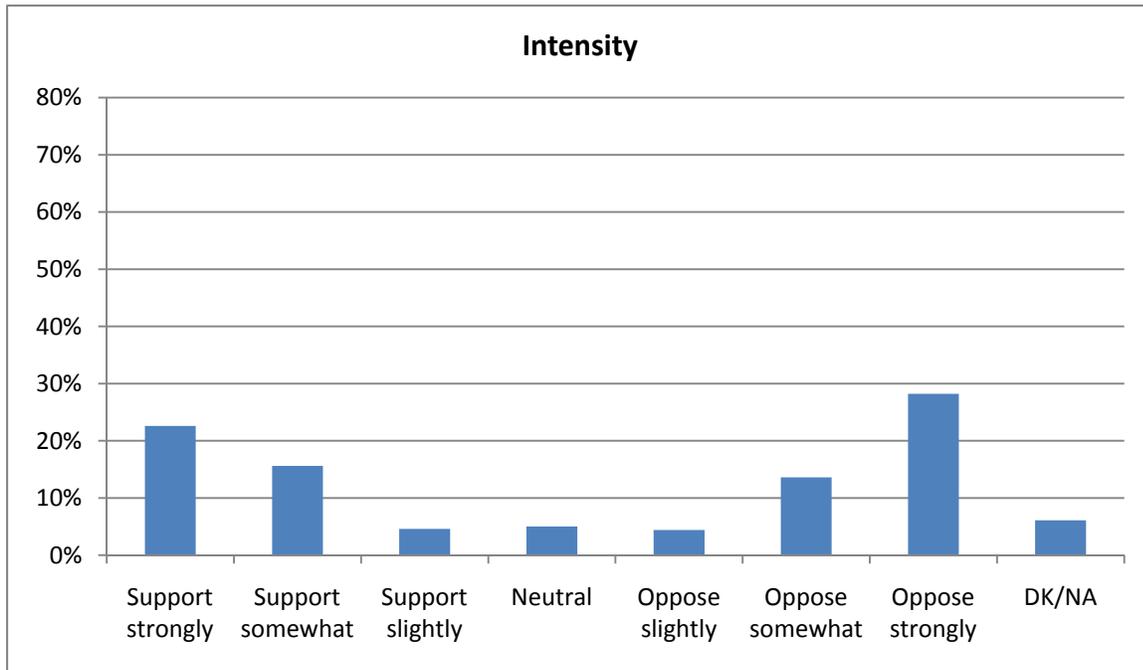
Montanans are adamantly opposed to privatization of state parks.

### Designating a portion of existing state taxes to parks?



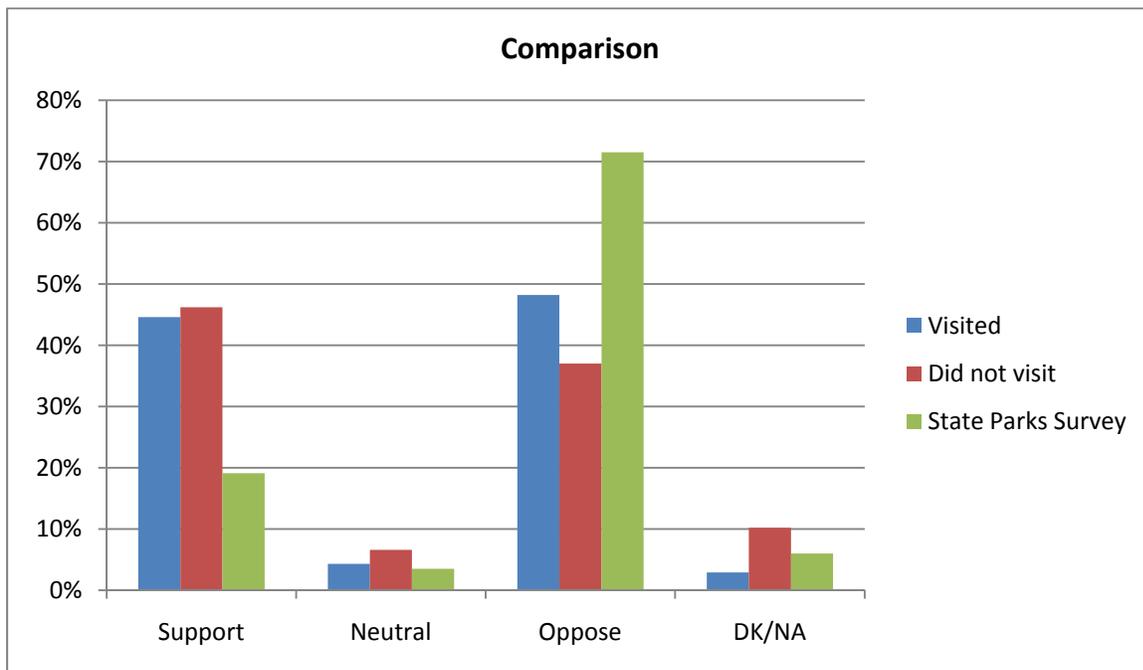
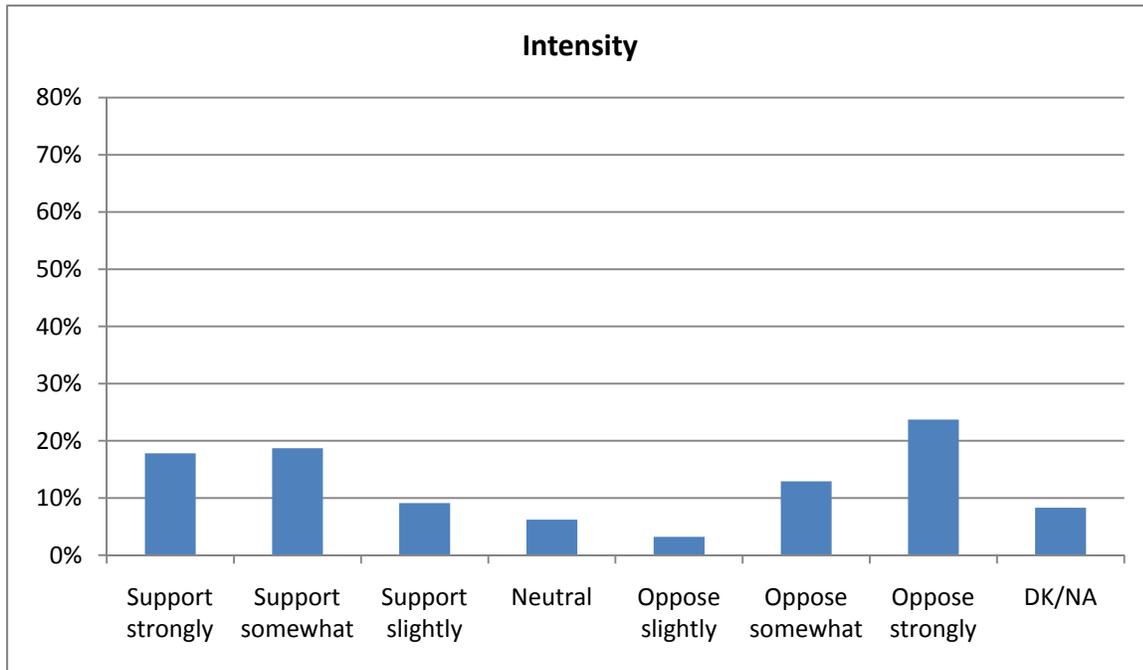
There is some support for designating a portion of state taxes for state parks.

### Changing the optional Montana vehicle registration fee to a required fee?



Montanans are evenly split about making the current optional motor vehicle fee mandatory. Both visitors and non-visitors are evenly split.

**Cut back on site improvements (such as building a restroom or boat ramp)?**



Montanans are also split about cutting back on park facility improvements. Those opposed have stronger opinions than those supporting this option.

## Response Frequency Tables

**Respondent (R) Visited MT State Park in Last Year**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	327	74.1	74.1	74.1
	Yes	114	25.9	25.9	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

**Montana State Parks are safe?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree strongly	1	.2	.2	.2
	Disagree somewhat	2	.4	.4	.6
	Disagree slightly	2	.5	.5	1.1
	Neutral	6	1.4	1.4	2.6
	Agree slightly	20	4.5	4.5	7.0
	Agree somewhat	93	21.1	21.1	28.2
	Agree strongly	302	68.4	68.4	96.6
	DK/MISSING	15	3.4	3.4	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

**Montana State Parks are clean and well maintained?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree strongly	4	.9	.9	.9
	Disagree somewhat	9	1.9	1.9	2.9
	Disagree slightly	2	.5	.5	3.4
	Neutral	6	1.4	1.4	4.8
	Agree slightly	13	2.8	2.8	7.6
	Agree somewhat	94	21.3	21.3	28.9
	Agree strongly	285	64.5	64.5	93.5
	DK/MISSING	29	6.5	6.5	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

**Montana State Parks provide good service?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree strongly	3	.7	.7	.7
	Disagree somewhat	5	1.0	1.0	1.8
	Disagree slightly	6	1.4	1.4	3.1
	Neutral	13	3.0	3.0	6.1
	Agree slightly	13	2.9	2.9	9.0
	Agree somewhat	132	29.9	29.9	38.8
	Agree strongly	217	49.2	49.2	88.0
	DK/MISSING	53	12.0	12.0	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

**Montana State Parks have enough staff working at the Parks?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree strongly	16	3.5	3.5	3.5
	Disagree somewhat	19	4.2	4.2	7.8
	Disagree slightly	3	.6	.6	8.4
	Neutral	24	5.5	5.5	13.9
	Agree slightly	14	3.3	3.3	17.2
	Agree somewhat	122	27.7	27.7	44.9
	Agree strongly	140	31.7	31.7	76.6
	DK/MISSING	103	23.4	23.4	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

**Montana State Parks are fun?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree strongly	2	.4	.4	.4
	Disagree somewhat	1	.2	.2	.6
	Disagree slightly	1	.3	.3	.9
	Neutral	8	1.8	1.8	2.7
	Agree slightly	6	1.3	1.3	4.0
	Agree somewhat	82	18.6	18.6	22.6
	Agree strongly	313	71.0	71.0	93.6
	DK/MISSING	28	6.4	6.4	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

**Montana State Parks are family oriented?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree strongly	1	.2	.2	.2
	Neutral	5	1.1	1.1	1.3
	Agree slightly	9	1.9	1.9	3.3
	Agree somewhat	79	17.9	17.9	21.1
	Agree strongly	317	71.8	71.8	92.9
	DK/MISSING	31	7.1	7.1	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

**Montana State Parks are convenient?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree strongly	8	1.7	1.7	1.7
	Disagree somewhat	10	2.3	2.3	4.0
	Disagree slightly	6	1.4	1.4	5.4
	Neutral	9	2.1	2.1	7.5
	Agree slightly	19	4.3	4.3	11.7
	Agree somewhat	141	31.9	31.9	43.6
	Agree strongly	218	49.4	49.4	93.0
	DK/MISSING	31	7.0	7.0	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

**Montana State Parks are important to preserving Montana's heritage?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree strongly	9	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Disagree somewhat	2	.4	.4	2.4
	Disagree slightly	1	.3	.3	2.7
	Neutral	8	1.7	1.7	4.5
	Agree slightly	7	1.6	1.6	6.1
	Agree somewhat	42	9.6	9.6	15.7
	Agree strongly	349	79.1	79.1	94.8
	DK/MISSING	23	5.2	5.2	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

**Changing the optional Montana vehicle registration fee to a required fee?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Oppose strongly	124	28.2	28.2	28.2
	Oppose somewhat	60	13.6	13.6	41.8
	Oppose slightly	20	4.4	4.4	46.2
	Neutral	22	5.0	5.0	51.1
	Support slightly	20	4.6	4.6	55.7
	Support somewhat	69	15.6	15.6	71.3
	Support strongly	100	22.6	22.6	93.9
	DK/MISSING	27	6.1	6.1	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

**Would you, yourself, support or oppose increasing the optional vehicle registration fee from \$4 to \$X?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Oppose increase to \$5	39	8.9	8.9	8.9
	Support increase to \$5	79	17.9	17.9	26.8
	Oppose increase to \$6	47	10.6	10.6	37.4
	Support increase to \$6	101	22.9	22.9	60.3
	Oppose increase to \$7	88	19.9	19.9	80.2
	Support increase to \$7	87	19.8	19.8	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

**Selling, closing or trading out some state parks that do not have regional or statewide significance?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Oppose strongly	147	33.2	33.2	33.2
	Oppose somewhat	88	20.0	20.0	53.2
	Oppose slightly	16	3.7	3.7	56.9
	Neutral	20	4.5	4.5	61.4
	Support slightly	16	3.7	3.7	65.1
	Support somewhat	63	14.3	14.3	79.3
	Support strongly	30	6.7	6.7	86.1
	DK/MISSING	61	13.9	13.9	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

**Privatizing state parks?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Oppose strongly	253	57.3	57.3	57.3
	Oppose somewhat	54	12.3	12.3	69.6
	Oppose slightly	11	2.4	2.4	72.0
	Neutral	17	3.7	3.7	75.8
	Support slightly	13	2.9	2.9	78.6
	Support somewhat	41	9.2	9.2	87.8
	Support strongly	16	3.5	3.5	91.4
	DK/MISSING	38	8.6	8.6	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

**Designating a portion of existing state taxes to parks?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Oppose strongly	68	15.5	15.5	15.5
	Oppose somewhat	28	6.3	6.3	21.7
	Oppose slightly	15	3.5	3.5	25.3
	Neutral	21	4.8	4.8	30.1
	Support slightly	26	6.0	6.0	36.1
	Support somewhat	120	27.2	27.2	63.2
	Support strongly	114	25.8	25.8	89.0
	DK/MISSING	48	11.0	11.0	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

**Cut back on site improvements (such as building a restroom or boat ramp)?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Oppose strongly	105	23.7	23.7	23.7
	Oppose somewhat	57	12.9	12.9	36.7
	Oppose slightly	14	3.2	3.2	39.9
	Neutral	27	6.2	6.2	46.1
	Support slightly	40	9.1	9.1	55.2
	Support somewhat	83	18.7	18.7	73.9
	Support strongly	78	17.8	17.8	91.7
	DK/MISSING	37	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	100.0	

**Custom Tables: Collapsed Overall Support or Opposition for Optional Vehicle Registration Fee Increase by Park Visitation**

		Overall support or opposition for optional fee increase	
		Support	Oppose
		Row N %	Row N %
Respondent Visited MT State Park in Last Year	Total	60.6%	39.4%
	Yes	74.8%	25.2%
	No	55.6%	44.4%

**Custom Table: Collapsed Opinion about Parks by Park Visit in Last Year**

		Respondent Visited MT State Park in Last Year		
		Yes	No	Total
		Column N %	Column N %	Column N %
Montana State Parks are safe?	Agree	98.8%	92.3%	94.0%
	Neutral	.0%	1.9%	1.4%
	Disagree	.8%	1.2%	1.1%
	DK/MISSING	.3%	4.5%	3.4%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Montana State Parks are clean and well maintained?	Agree	92.4%	87.4%	88.7%
	Neutral	.8%	1.6%	1.4%
	Disagree	5.8%	2.6%	3.4%
	DK/MISSING	1.0%	8.5%	6.5%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Montana State Parks provide good service?	Agree	88.6%	79.6%	81.9%
	Neutral	2.8%	3.1%	3.0%
	Disagree	6.0%	2.1%	3.1%
	DK/MISSING	2.6%	15.3%	12.0%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Montana State Parks have enough staff working at the parks?	Agree	72.0%	59.5%	62.7%
	Neutral	10.2%	3.9%	5.5%
	Disagree	11.8%	7.2%	8.4%
	DK/MISSING	6.0%	29.4%	23.4%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Montana State Parks are fun?	Agree	97.1%	88.7%	90.9%
	Neutral	1.2%	2.1%	1.8%
	Disagree	.0%	1.2%	.9%
	DK/MISSING	1.7%	8.1%	6.4%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Montana State Parks are family oriented?	Agree	97.8%	89.4%	91.6%
	Neutral	.7%	1.3%	1.1%
	Disagree	.0%	.3%	.2%
	DK/MISSING	1.4%	9.1%	7.1%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Montana State Parks are convenient?	Agree	95.6%	82.1%	85.6%
	Neutral	.5%	2.6%	2.1%
	Disagree	2.2%	6.5%	5.4%
	DK/MISSING	1.8%	8.8%	7.0%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Montana State Parks are important to preserving Montana's heritage?	Agree	92.1%	89.7%	90.3%
	Neutral	.0%	2.3%	1.7%
	Disagree	6.2%	1.5%	2.7%
	DK/MISSING	1.7%	6.5%	5.2%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Custom Table: Collapsed Funding Preferences by Park Visit in Last Year**

		Respondent Visited MT State Park in Last Year		
		Yes	No	Total
		Column N %	Column N %	Column N %
Selling, closing or trading out some state parks that do not have regional or statewide significance?	Support	32.8%	22.0%	24.8%
	Neutral	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%
	Oppose	55.8%	57.3%	56.9%
	DK/MISSING	7.2%	16.3%	13.9%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Privatizing state parks?	Support	24.1%	12.6%	15.6%
	Neutral	1.3%	4.6%	3.7%
	Oppose	70.6%	72.5%	72.0%
	DK/MISSING	4.0%	10.3%	8.6%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Designating a portion of existing state taxes to parks?	Support	62.4%	58.0%	59.1%
	Neutral	1.6%	5.7%	4.6%
	Oppose	29.1%	23.9%	25.3%
	DK/MISSING	6.9%	12.4%	11.0%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Changing the optional Montana vehicle registration fee to a required fee?	Support	51.0%	41.3%	43.8%
	Neutral	2.8%	4.3%	3.9%
	Oppose	41.7%	47.7%	46.2%
	DK/MISSING	4.4%	6.7%	6.1%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cut back on site improvements (such as building a restroom or boat ramp)?	Support	44.6%	46.2%	45.8%
	Neutral	4.3%	6.6%	6.0%
	Oppose	48.2%	37.0%	39.9%
	DK/MISSING	2.9%	10.2%	8.3%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

## Questions as Asked in the Montana Poll

**VISITS1. One of the activities that many Montanans enjoy is spending time in the outdoors. Montana's Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks maintains over 50 State Parks that give us an opportunity to get outside. Do you happen to recall whether you, yourself, had a chance to visit a Montana State Park during the period from April 1, 2010 until today, or not?**

Visited at least once	1	GO TO VISITS2A
Didn't visit	0	SKIP TO
DK	8	SKIP TO

**VISITS2A. Think back now over the period from April 1, 2010 to the weekend of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July which ended on July 5, 2010. How many times, if at all, did you, yourself visit a Montana State Park during the period from April 1<sup>st</sup> until July 5<sup>th</sup>?**

\_\_\_\_\_ visits

**VISITS2B. Can you recall the name of the Park (one of the Parks) that you visited, or not?**

\_\_\_\_\_ Park Name

**VISITS3A. And what about the period from just after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July (July 5, 2010) until today? How many times, if at all, did you, yourself visit a Montana State Park during the period from July 5<sup>th</sup> until today?**

\_\_\_\_\_ visits

**VISITS3B. Can you recall the name of the Park (one of the Parks) that you visited, or not?**

\_\_\_\_\_ Park Name

**Now I'm going to ask about some of your impressions of Montana's State Parks. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement:**

**PARKOP1. Montana State Parks are safe. Do you?**

Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree

IF AGREE: **Do you agree strongly, somewhat, or slightly? (#A)**

IF DISAGREE: **Do you disagree strongly, somewhat, or slightly? (#B)**

**PARKOP2. Montana State Parks are clean and well maintained?**

**PARKOP3. Montana State Parks provide good service?**

**PARKOP4. Montana State Parks have enough staff working at the Parks?**

**PARKOP5. Montana State Parks are fun?**

**PARKOP6. Montana State Parks are family oriented?**

**PARKOP7. Montana State Parks are convenient?**

**PARKOP8. Montana State Parks are important to preserving Montana's heritage?**

**VEHREGTAX. In 2003, an optional vehicle registration fee of \$4 annually was established to allow unlimited day use of Montana State Parks. Would you, yourself, support or oppose increasing the optional vehicle registration fee from \$4 to \$X? RANDOMLY ASSIGN A DOLLAR VALUE BETWEEN \$5.00 AND \$7.00.**

Montana Poll: January 17, 2010

Bureau of Business and Economic Research, The University of Montana-Missoula

**PARKFUND. Like many businesses, Montana's State parks are facing some tough financial issues, and have taken cuts in budgets and staffing levels. If there is a need for additional cutbacks or funding, would you support or oppose a(n)...**

Neutral 4

DK 98

IF SUPPORT: **Do you support strongly 7, somewhat 6, or slightly 5?**

IF OPPOSE: **Do you oppose strongly 1, somewhat 2, or slightly 3?**

1. Selling, closing or trading out some state parks that do not have regional or statewide significance?
2. Privatizing state parks?
3. Designating a portion of existing state taxes to parks?
4. Changing the optional Montana vehicle registration fee to a required fee?
5. Cut back on site improvements (such as building a restroom or boat ramp)?