



TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Center for Survey Research at Penn State Harrisburg
The Nature Conservancy
The Trust for Public Land

RE: Summary of Key Findings from Pennsylvania Statewide Public Opinion Survey

DATE: December 7, 2012

The Center for Survey Research at Penn State Harrisburg recently completed a statewide survey of 608 Pennsylvanians to assess public support for increasing state funds to conserve and protect open space, clean water, natural areas, wildlife habitats, parks, historic sites, forests, and farms. The survey results showed **overwhelming public support throughout the state and among all demographic groups for both continuing existing dedicated state funding for conservation, as well as increasing state funding for land and water conservation, even if that meant a small increase in taxes.**¹

The survey questions were commissioned by The Nature Conservancy and The Trust for Public Land.

Survey respondents were asked the following question:

“Do you think that state funds dedicated to preserving farmland and open space, providing parks and trails, and protecting rivers and streams should continue to be used for these purposes?”

Overall, the vast majority of Pennsylvanians surveyed (92.1%) think that state funds dedicated to preserving farmland and open space, providing parks and trails, and protecting rivers and streams should continue to be used for these purposes.

- Breaking out the responses by gender yields an identical response from both men and women (92.4% and 91.8% respectively).
- At least 85% of respondents in each age category supported using state funds for these purposes. Almost all (97.5%) of those aged 25 to 34 supported using state funds for these purposes. Those 75 years of age or older supported the idea at 85.7%.
- Most respondents, regardless of their race, supported using state funds at a rate of approximately 90% or more, with African Americans supporting at the highest levels. Whites supported at 92.6%. African Americans supported at 97.9%. Asian support was 79.1%. Hispanic support was 79.2%.

¹ **METHODOLOGY:** A total of 608 telephone interviews with adult Pennsylvanians were conducted between October 1 and November 4, 2012. The Penn State Poll used a dual frame design consisting of a representative landline sample with a cell phone sample supplement. Project activity was directed by Stephanie L. Wehnau, Acting Director of the Center for Survey Research at Penn State Harrisburg. The margin of error is plus or minus 4.0 percentage points.

- All household income categories supported using funding for these purposes at a rate of 92% or greater. Household incomes making less than \$10,000 annually supported at 78.2%. Those making \$150,000 or more annually supported at 88.0%.
- There were no significant differences in respondents who supported using funds for these purposes by level of educational attainment.
- Respondents in almost all regions supported using funds for these purposes at a rate of 91% or more.

Survey respondents were then asked the following question:

“Would you support increasing state funds to conserve and protect open space, clean water, natural areas, wildlife habitats, parks, historic sites, forests, and farms, even if it would cost the average household \$10 more annually?”

About three out of every four adult Pennsylvanians surveyed (77.7%) support increasing state funds to conserve and protect open space, clean water, natural areas, wildlife habitats, parks, historic sites, forests, and farms, even if it would cost the average household \$10 more annually.

- Women were more likely than men (83.1% as compared to 72.0%) to support increasing state funds.
- There was little variability by age category in those who support increasing state funds. Individuals 25-34 years were most likely to support increasing state funds at a level of 81.6%.
- Whites supported increasing state funds at a rate of 78.5%. African Americans supported at 75.6%. Asians supported at 100%. Hispanics supported at 56.7%.
- Respondents who resided in households whose annual income was \$20,000 to \$125,000 were more likely to support increasing state funds. More than 81% of individuals in each income category of households earning \$20,000 to \$125,000 supported increasing state funds. Those living in households making less than \$20,000 annually supported at 67.4%. Those living in households that make more than \$125,000 annually supported increasing state funds at 65.1%.
- There were no significant differences in respondents who supported increasing state funds by level of educational attainment.
- There was some variability in those who supported increasing state funds by region. Respondents in central Pennsylvania were most likely to support increasing state funds, at a rate of 96.2%. For respondents in western Pennsylvania, support ranged from 63.5% to 88.4% Northeast Pennsylvania supported at 87.1%. Southeastern Pennsylvania support ranged from 77.5% - 80.3%.

Overall, the results of the survey show that Pennsylvania residents clearly value the state’s natural resources. Results showed overwhelming public support for both continuing existing dedicated state funding for conservation, as well as increasing state funding for land and water conservation, even if that meant a small increase in taxes. Furthermore, these high levels of support are found throughout every geographic region and every gender, ethnic, educational, and economic demographic throughout the state.