



OPINION  
RESEARCH  
& STRATEGY



**TO:** U.S. Nature4Climate

**FROM:** Lori Weigel & Karoline McGrail/ New Bridge Strategy  
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**RE:** New National Natural Climate Solutions Poll Results and Messaging Overview

**DATE:** June 13, 2023

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New Bridge Strategy and FM3 Research conducted a survey among N=1,000 registered voters nationally from May 14-22, 2023. The sample included additional interviews among 400 voters living in counties defined by the US Census as “mostly rural” or “completely rural” who describe themselves as living in a rural area or a small town. Interviews were conducted online and distributed proportionally throughout the country. Quotas were set for key demographic sub-groups, such as gender and age. The margin of error is +3.1% for the overall sample. The margin of error will vary for sub-groups.

**Key Poll Results:**

We provided the following brief, factual explanation of what Natural Climate Solutions (NCS) with some examples to set the context for respondents who might not be familiar with the term:

*“Natural Climate Solutions are actions that reduce emissions and increase carbon storage in forests, farms, grasslands and wetlands. Practices that could be included are actions like...*

- *Encouraging farming techniques that retain carbon in the soil, such as planting cover crops;*
- *Conserving and replanting forests;*
- *Conserving and restoring coastal wetlands; and*
- *Reducing the loss of natural areas, planting trees, and providing parks in communities.*

*Efforts to expand these practices could be supported by laws and public funding approved at the federal, state, and local levels.”*

- **An overwhelming majority of American voters – fully 92 percent – indicate support for Natural Climate Solutions, with nearly half (47 percent) strongly in support.** A mere 8 percent oppose it. All major demographic groups, party affiliations and regions of the country support Natural Climate Solutions. Additionally:
  - Three-in-four voters support Natural Climate Solutions even if they don’t think climate change is happening.
  - Three-in-four voters nationally and in rural areas agree that investing in Natural Climate Solutions cost-effectively protects against climate impacts.

- Eighty-nine percent of respondents were supportive of IJJA and IRA dollars being used for Natural Climate Solutions.
  - Support for specific proposals tested that would incorporate Natural Climate Solutions into the U.S. Farm Bill spans party affiliation, with at least 72 percent of Republicans and 91 percent of Democrats supporting each one.
- **Wildlife habitat, water, and forest health are some of the most resonant reasons voters support Natural Climate Solutions.** As the following chart depicts, elements that top the list as being either “extremely” or “very important” to undertake all mention either wildlife, water, or forests/trees. The table below shows the top reasons to support NCS by party.

| Natural Climate Solutions Actions –<br>% Extremely or Very Important   | Overall | GOP | IND | DEM |
|--|---------|-----|-----|-----|
| Protecting natural lands that provide habitat for fish and wildlife  | 84%     | 80% | 80% | 92% |
| Planting more trees in forests to improve water quality and prevent mudslides  | 83%     | 79% | 83% | 86% |
| Replanting forests impacted by wildfire, disease, and other challenges, which also helps prevent mudslides and protect water quality | 83%     | 77% | 83% | 88% |
| Planting trees in cities to provide shade, reduce heat, and lower energy costs   | 82%     | 79% | 80% | 86% |
| Implementing management practices in forests, like thinning and controlled burns, that reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires     | 82%     | 80% | 84% | 83% |
| Protecting and restoring grasslands that also support wildlife and improve water quality   | 82%     | 78% | 76% | 89% |

Some items were asked of half the sample in order to assess nuances in language.

- **Actions to incentivize forest owners or farmers were also seen as extremely or very important by more than two-thirds of voters.** The table below shows the reasons to support NCS by party related to farmers and landowners.

| Natural Climate Solutions Actions –<br>% Extremely or Very Important   | Overall | GOP | IND | DEM |
|--|---------|-----|-----|-----|
| Incentivizing forest owners to adopt climate-smart forestry practices, including sustainable wood harvesting, removing invasive plants, and planting trees adapted to thrive in a changing climate, that also improve water quality and wildlife habitat | 77%     | 69% | 75% | 85% |
| Incentivizing farmers to adopt cover crops that also reduce erosion and increase water efficiency  | 76%     | 69% | 76% | 82% |
| Encouraging farmers to plant trees in farmland and pastureland, which can help improve soil health, water quality and provide new sources of income for farmers  | 75%     | 69% | 71% | 83% |
| Encouraging farmers to adopt climate-smart farming techniques that also reduce erosion and increase water efficiency   | 72%     | 62% | 65% | 86% |

Some items were asked of half the sample in order to assess nuances in language.

- **Taking care of our natural areas – whether for future generations or for wildlife and recreation – is a compelling rationale for Natural Climate Solutions.** We tested two variations of a message about protecting our natural lands that not only store carbon but have meaning for people. Both were equally powerful as 46 percent say the message is “very convincing” as a reason to support funding Natural Climate Solutions.

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*“One of our most important Natural Climate Solutions is protecting the forests, coastal wetlands, and grasslands we already have. In addition to storing carbon, these are the places that make America beautiful, and we owe it to future generations to protect them.”*

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*“One of our most important Natural Climate Solutions is protecting the forests, coastal wetlands, and grasslands we already have. These areas help store carbon, while also providing habitat for wildlife and opportunities for hunting, fishing, hiking, and other recreation activities.”*

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- **Just as in the previous messages, highlighting the co-benefits of Natural Climate Solutions is impactful as well.** Mentioning non-climate related benefits of taking these actions helps bridge party lines and provides a compelling rationale for supporting taking these actions as in the following two messages:

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*“Many Natural Climate Solutions on farmland, in forests, and along coasts are things we should be doing anyway to conserve nature, improve water quality and make our lands and communities more resilient to extreme weather.”*

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*“Natural Climate Solutions help address climate change, and many of the strategies also help protect wildlife, improve water quality, and increase the productivity of farms. They are win-win strategies that help solve many problems at once.”*

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**Despite partisan polarization around climate change generally, support for Natural Climate Solutions is strong across party lines, suggesting a continued path forward for bipartisan climate action.**