

# 30 by 30 Initiative

## What is 30 by 30?

In 2021, a presidential executive order made a plan to conserve 30% of US lands and waters by 2030. Currently about 12% of US lands and 25% of oceans around the US meet the criteria set out in the plan.

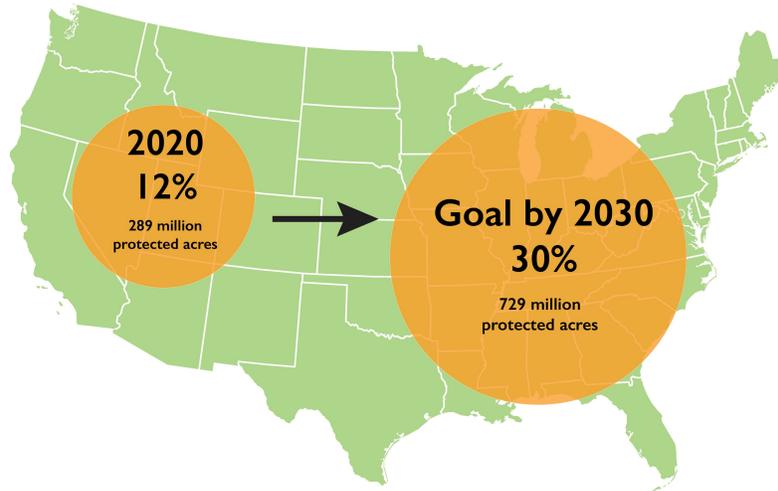


Figure 1. Current Protected Lands/Waters vs. Goal

## Do people support the 30 by 30 Initiative? Why?

The majority of Americans support this plan. Research shows that 4 out of 5 voters support a plan to protect at least 30% of America's land, ocean areas, and inland waters by the year 2030. A majority of voters strongly favor this plan.

### What do Americans Think of the 30 by 30 Initiative?

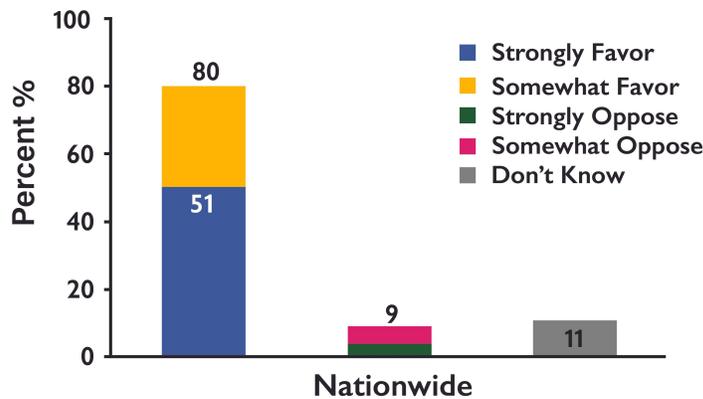


Figure 2. Public opinion poll data. ALG Research

People want to protect lands and waters for many reasons.

**Species and Their Habitats.** Some people are concerned about species that are in danger of extinction and the amount of habitat for wildlife that has been fragmented (broken up) or lost. Habitat loss is a major threat to many species. Other people want to protect lands and waters with high biodiversity—places where larger numbers of different kinds of species live.

**Climate Change.** Changes to Earth's systems have led to warming oceans, sea-level rise, droughts, floods, wildfires, and other changes. Protecting at least 30% of America's lands and waters by 2030 could protect our water, air quality, food, and overall health.

**Ecosystem Services.** Humans depend on ecosystems for their survival. These include things like clear air and water, but also if they are protected, more of us could have access to higher quality resources.

**Access to Recreation.** People also enjoy those same places for a variety of reasons. The 30 by 30 Initiative could lead to more people with more access to natural, protected spaces.

**Equitable Decision-Making.** Many Americans, including those who belong to communities of color, low-income communities, and tribal nations, have been excluded from decision-making about conservation, development, natural resource use, and how humans interact with nature. At the same time, members of these communities have often suffered the most from the consequences of land and water use decisions that have left their local air and water polluted. The 30 by 30 Initiative has already asked for input from a diverse range of community members and interest holders across the US.

**Cultural Importance.** Some people prioritize protecting places that have cultural significance to different groups of people. Protecting these places can protect the history and traditions of communities as well as the living and nonliving things found there.

**While most Americans support the 30 by 30 Initiative, some do not.** Governor Pete Ricketts from Nebraska opposes this initiative. He explained his opinion in a column on his official website (Ricketts, 2021). Ricketts' concern is centered around the fact that 97% of the land in Nebraska is privately owned making the goal of conserving 30% of the land a challenge in the state. He criticized the initiative for its lack of a detailed plan.

### **What is the plan for the 30 by 30 Initiative?**

A report titled *Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful* was developed by the National Climate Task Force. It defined eight principles that a plan to address the 30 by 30 Initiative needs to follow (Table 1).

Table 1. Recommendations from: U.S. Department of the Interior report: *Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful*.

30 by 30 Initiative Principles	
<b>Create More Parks and Safe Outdoor Opportunities in Nature-Deprived Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support locally led conservation and park projects</b> in communities that have less access to nature and its benefits.</li> </ul>
<b>Support Tribally Led Conservation and Restoration Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Review successful conservation programs</b> to determine how to better include and support tribal governments.</li> <li>• Take steps to <b>improve engagement</b> with American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians on the care and management of public lands and waters, particularly regarding sacred and ceremonial sites, and trust and treaty rights.</li> </ul>
<b>Expand Collaborative Conservation of Fish and Wildlife Habitats and Corridors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the decline of fish and wildlife populations and their habitats by working with states, tribes, local communities, and private landowners to conserve and restore wildlife migration corridors through incentives and local collaboration.</li> </ul>
<b>Increase Access for Outdoor Recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improve access for:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hunting</li> <li>• fishing</li> <li>• hiking</li> <li>• boating</li> <li>• other forms of outdoor recreation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Broaden and deepen connections to nature and its benefits.</li> <li>• Encourage the next generation of outdoor stewards.</li> <li>• Support programs that unlock access to public lands that are currently inaccessible.</li> </ul>
<b>Incentivize and Reward the Voluntary Conservation Efforts of Fishers, Ranchers, Farmers, and Forest Owners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide compensation to those who want to conserve lands and waters such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• farmers</li> <li>• ranchers</li> <li>• forest stewards</li> <li>• private landowners</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Focus conservation actions, including through voluntary measures and public-private partnerships.</li> </ul>
<b>Create Jobs by Investing in Restoration and Resilience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a <b>Civilian Climate Corps</b> that can help conserve and restore public lands and waters.</li> <li>• Bolster our nation's resilience to extreme wildfires, sea-level rise, droughts, storms, and other climate impacts.</li> <li>• Create well-paying union jobs.</li> <li>• Provide economic benefits to communities across the nation.</li> </ul>

### How will we know if the 30 by 30 Initiative is successful?

The National Climate Task Force will create the *American Conservation and Stewardship Atlas* to collect data about how lands and waters are being conserved and restored. In addition, the task force will track progress, including how the federal government is supporting local efforts to conserve and restore lands and waters.

**A question to think about: How do you think local communities will know if the 30 by 30 Initiative is successful?**

## References

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