Methodology

- Public Opinion Strategies conducted a survey of N =1,000 sportsmen throughout the United States March 4-11, 2018.

- Of the 1,000 sportsmen we interviewed, 600 interviews were conducted online, 280 on a landline phone, and 120 on a cell phone. All respondents are registered to vote and all identify as a hunter or angler, or both.

- The confidence interval associated with the online portion is ±4.56%. The margin of error associated with the phone portion is ±4.90%.

- Quotas were set to ensure interviews were distributed proportionally throughout the nation. The sample is demographically representative of hunters and anglers.
Sportsmen express strong and consistent support for a wide range of regulations and policies intended to protect and restore the health of rivers, streams, and wetlands. They perceive a strong link between the health of these waters and their ability to hunt and fish, and advise their Member of Congress to support pro-conservation goals.

In fact, four-in-five sportsmen are willing to back up this expressed support with their pocketbook, as 81 percent say they would be willing to pay more in taxes each year to fund water restoration programs.

Moreover, elected officials who support these policies are viewed favorably by sportsmen, who tend to be more male, rural and conservative than the electorate overall.
Key Demographics

Gender

- Male: 62%
- Female: 38%

Age

- 18-34: 24%
- 35-44: 21%
- 45-54: 16%
- 55-64: 21%
- 65+: 18%

Ethnicity

- White: 79%
- Total Non-White: 19%

Region

- Northeast: 17%
- Midwest: 28%
- South: 37%
- West: 19%

Community

- Urban: 17%
- Suburban: 30%
- Small Town: 17%
- Rural: 36%

Party

- Republican: 39%
- Independent: 37%
- Democrat: 23%
80%
Consider themselves to be a conservationist, including sportsmen across party lines…

84%  77%  79%
Sportsmen offer advice to their Member of Congress regarding fish and wildlife habitat and water health:

- **Take Care Of Our Waters**
- **Be Able To Pass Down To Future Generations**
- **Protect Resources/Nature**
- **Support Hunting**
- **Meet With Constituents/Sportsmen**
- **Reduce Pollution**
- **Stop Dangerous Practices**
- **Protect The Environment**
- **Keep Food Healthy**
- **Support Fishing**
- **Fight Climate Change**
- **Open Nature To All**
- **Take Care Of Planet**

If you were giving advice to your Member of Congress on how they should address issues that are important to sportsmen like you - regarding fish and wildlife habitat, and the health of rivers, streams and lakes, what would you tell him or her?
Sportsmen focus on conservation so outdoor traditions can be preserved.

“We need better commitment of taking care of our waters. The health of the water really has to be noticed.”
-Male, Angler, Tennessee

“We need access to these lands. The focus should be on keeping these lands open and available, not just on city issues. There should be a clear plan for keeping the forests and animals healthy so we can enjoy them, and hunt.”
-Female, Hunter, Washington

“We need to make sure that wildlife habitat is taken care of and maintained to promote the health and life of fish and wildlife and can sustain the wildlife and fish for generations to come to be able to enjoy.”
-Male, Both Angler and Hunter, Oregon

“Remember who votes for you and that nature must be kept clean for us and future generations. It is our responsibility.”
-Female, Angler, Indiana

“I would tell them that our rivers, streams and lakes not only provide enjoyment to sportsmen like me but they will also provide enjoyment and education to our children. It is very important to help protect the natural wonders.”
-Female, Angler, Virginia

“It is important to protect the health of our rivers and lakes, but it is also important to allow members of the public to engage in the activities that they enjoy.”
-Male, Angler Minnesota

If you were giving advice to your Member of Congress on how they should address issues that are important to sportsmen like you - regarding fish and wildlife habitat, and the health of rivers, streams and lakes, what would you tell him or her?
Those saying conservation issues are a primary factor in their support for an elected official increased in the last year.

Importance of Conservation Issues in Support for Elected Official

May 2017* | March 2018

- **Very Important**: 92% | 95%
- **Total Important**: 39% | 44%
- **Not At All Important**: 8% | 5%
- **Total Not Important**: 5%

*Respondents from May 2017 were asked a slightly different question about public lands.

Compared to other issues like the economy, health care, and education, how important are issues involving protecting fish and wildlife habitat, public lands and water quality of lakes, rivers and streams for you in deciding whether to support an elected public official?
Voters of every political persuasion say habitat and water issues are important to their support.

Conservation Issues are Important by Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Total Important</th>
<th>Not at all Important</th>
<th>Total Not Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compared to other issues like the economy, health care, and education, how important are issues involving protecting fish and wildlife habitat, public lands and water quality of lakes, rivers and streams for you in deciding whether to support an elected public official? Are they...
Sportsmen’s Views of Water Protections
Water quality tops sportsmen’s conservation concerns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Extremely/Very Serious</th>
<th>Total Serious</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pollution of lakes, rivers, and streams</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of habitat for fish and wildlife</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of coastal lands, wetlands and marshes</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction and damming of streams and rivers</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low level of water in rivers</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are some specific problems that people are sometimes concerned about. For each one, please tell me whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, or not a serious problem.
Sportsmen have little doubt that the Clean Water Act has been a net positive for the nation.

Clean Water Act Impact on the Country

Good Thing

93%

Bad Thing

4%
Moving forward, sportsmen prefer to strengthen the existing water standards; almost none say relax them.

Current Water Laws Preference

- Strengthen those Standards: 50%
- Maintain those Standards: 42%
- Relax those Standards: 6%

When you think about the laws and standards currently in place that are intended to protect the health of lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands, would you prefer that decision-makers in Washington...
An elected official’s stand on water issues can drive positive impressions.

Impact of Elected Official Supporting Water Restoration Efforts

- Much More Favorable: 41%
- Somewhat More Favorable: 42%
- Somewhat Less Favorable: 3%
- Much Less Favorable: 1%
- No Difference: 11%
- Don’t Know: 2%

Total More Favorable: 83%

Now, let’s say that an elected official spoke out in support of protecting or restoring the health of lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands, would that give you a more favorable or less favorable impression of that person or not make a difference in your views either way?
Sportsmen across the political spectrum say that an elected official voicing a pro-conservation view gives them a more favorable impression.

Elected Official Support by Party and 2016 Vote

- **Total**: 83% Much More Favorable, 41% Total More Favorable
- **Republicans**: 84% Much More Favorable, 36% Total More Favorable
- **Independents**: 77% Much More Favorable, 37% Total More Favorable
- **Democrats**: 89% Much More Favorable, 54% Total More Favorable
- **Trump**: 79% Much More Favorable, 37% Total More Favorable
- **Clinton**: 91% Much More Favorable, 54% Total More Favorable

Now, let’s say that an elected official spoke out in support of protecting or restoring the health of lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands, would that give you a more favorable or less favorable impression of that person or not make a difference in your views either way?
Every policy proposal tested receives solid support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Actions Ranked by % Strongly Support</th>
<th>Strongly Support</th>
<th>Total Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure polluters are held accountable and that protections are in place to prevent polluted spills that could affect groundwater, rivers, or streams.</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restore wetlands and coastal areas which act as natural defenses to absorb rains during hurricanes and storms and help filter pollutants from rivers and streams.</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restore lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands that have been harmed by development, invasive species or other changes.</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant trees and shrubs next to streams, rivers, and lakes to prevent pollution from getting into the water and to stabilize stream banks.</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide financial incentives to farmers and ranchers who take steps to reduce polluted run-off such as switching to less polluting fertilizers, storing manure and animal waste safely, or fencing cattle so they do not erode stream banks.</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is solid majority support across the partisan spectrum for these policies.

**Possible Actions – Total Support by Party**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Actions</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure polluters are held accountable and that protections are in place to prevent polluted spills that could affect groundwater, rivers, or streams.</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restore wetlands and coastal areas which act as natural defenses to absorb rains during hurricanes and storms and help filter pollutants from rivers and streams.</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restore lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands that have been harmed by development, invasive species or other changes.</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant trees and shrubs next to streams, rivers, and lakes to prevent pollution from getting into the water and to stabilize stream banks.</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide financial incentives to farmers and ranchers who take steps to reduce polluted run-off such as switching to less polluting fertilizers, storing manure and animal waste safely, or fencing cattle so they do not erode stream banks.</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Congress or the Administration could take various actions that would affect rivers, lakes, streams and wetlands. For each one, please indicate whether you would support or oppose that action.
Four-in-five sportsmen support extending Clean Water Act protections to headwaters streams and wetlands.

A few years ago, the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers decided that smaller streams and wetlands which flow into larger rivers and lakes, and eventually the ocean, are protected under the Clean Water Act. The EPA has since reversed their decision. Do you support or oppose providing the same protections to smaller streams and wetlands as we do for bigger rivers and lakes?
Both anglers AND hunters express full support for protection of headwaters streams and wetlands.

**Support for CWA Standards Expansion by Sportsmen Type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Support</th>
<th>Total Support</th>
<th>Strongly Oppose</th>
<th>Total Oppose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hunters</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglers</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you support or oppose applying the same Clean Water Act rules and standards that apply to larger rivers to these smaller, headwater streams and wetlands?
Even among sportsmen in rural areas, more than three-quarters support this policy.

Support for CWA Standards Expansion by Geography

- **City (17%)**
  - Strongly Support: 62%
  - Total Support: 84%
  - Strongly Oppose: 14%
  - Total Oppose: 16%

- **Suburbs (30%)**
  - Strongly Support: 52%
  - Total Support: 76%
  - Strongly Oppose: 21%
  - Total Oppose: 29%

- **Town (17%)**
  - Strongly Support: 60%
  - Total Support: 87%
  - Strongly Oppose: 12%
  - Total Oppose: 8%

- **Rural (36%)**
  - Strongly Support: 47%
  - Total Support: 78%
  - Strongly Oppose: 22%
  - Total Oppose: 78%

Do you support or oppose applying the same Clean Water Act rules and standards that apply to larger rivers to these smaller, headwater streams and wetlands?
What is even more significant is that sportsmen are willing to pay more in taxes to fund these policies.

Many of these policies require some funds to be spent to achieve those goals. How much – if anything - would you be willing to pay in taxes per year to fund efforts like these to restore and maintain water quality and quantity in lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands?

Many of these policies require some funds to be spent to achieve those goals. How much – if anything - would you be willing to pay in taxes per year to fund efforts like these to restore and maintain water quality and quantity in lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands?

**Amount Extra Willing to Pay**

- 0 Dollars: 17%
- Less than 25 Dollars: 14%
- 25 Dollars: 14%
- 50 Dollars: 16%
- 75 Dollars: 6%
- More than 100 Dollars: 13%
- Not Sure: 2%

**81% Willing to Pay Something**

Many of these policies require some funds to be spent to achieve those goals. How much – if anything - would you be willing to pay in taxes per year to fund efforts like these to restore and maintain water quality and quantity in lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands?
Even GOP voters who are typically resistant to tax increases indicate willingness to pay more to restore and conserve rivers, streams and wetlands.

Willing to Pay by Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Willing to Pay $50+</th>
<th>Total Willing to Pay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOP Men</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOP Women</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of these policies require some funds to be spent to achieve those goals. How much – if anything - would you be willing to pay in taxes per year to fund efforts like these to restore and maintain water quality and quantity in lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands?