**The Nature Conservancy - Arkansas Statewide Survey Key Findings**

**To:** Interested Parties

**From:** Jon Gilmore, President – Gilmore Strategy Group

**Date:** March 14, 2019

---

**Clean water is a priority for the vast majority of likely Arkansas voters according to a poll conducted in the summer of 2018.** Protecting drinking water sources was the number one concern among those surveyed, polling at 98%, with conservation of fish and wildlife habitats at 96%. These potential voters are also more likely to vote for a candidate supporting conservation (90%) and have a favorable view of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (80%).

This overwhelming support for conservation in Arkansas was evident throughout the entire survey.

Among the key specific findings of the survey are the following:

- **Health of Water in Arkansas**
    - The voters were, by a large majority, most concerned with the quality of water within the state. An overwhelming 98% cited "protecting sources of drinking water" as an important issue overall for conservation within the state of Arkansas.
    - Additionally, the voters were concerned with runoff from dirt and gravel roads that is a leading contributor of pollution to water in Arkansas. 87% of the voters said they would support efforts to reduce pollution in our streams, rivers and lakes due to this runoff problem.
- **Conservation Sales Tax**
    - The one-eighth cent conservation sales tax passed by the voters in 1996 is widely popular among voters and across political party lines.
        - 79% of the voters favor the conservation tax with only 15% opposing. This included 81% of Democratic, 81% of independent, and 78% of Republican voters.
- **Conservation Issues**
    - We gave the survey respondents the opportunity to inform on how important they found different issues of conservation. The results were all high and fairly astounding with the following being the most popular:
        - Protecting sources of drinking water - 98%
        - Conserving fish and wildlife habitats - 96%
        - Conserving land for outdoor recreation such as camping, birding, and wildlife watching - 94%

        - Protecting land along our rivers, lakes and streams - 94%

    - As you can discern from the numbers above, the voters strongly believe in the importance of conservation. Overall, the numbers were all overwhelming majorities so we should focus on the top performers. Other conservation issues are important, but just not as much as the voters' concerns with water quality.

- **Vote for Elected Officials / Taxes**

    - Important to the overall future of conservation in Arkansas is work in and around the state legislature and the executive branch of Arkansas government.

    - We asked voters whether they would be more or less likely to vote for an elected official who supports conservation including improving the quality of our water for drinking and recreation?

        - This message was overwhelmingly popular with the voters with 90% saying they would be more likely and only 4% being less likely to vote for such a candidate.

- **We tested the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and the view of the voters, whether favorable or unfavorable.**

    - The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) was viewed favorably by 80% of the voters with only 5% holding a negative view of the organization. Only 15% did not hold a view or had never heard of the organization within Arkansas.

- **Summary**

    - This survey solidifies the fact that conservation and protection of Arkansas's natural heritage is important to the voters. It demonstrates the strong support for the conservation tax, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and the importance overall of protection of the water health in Arkansas.

    - Water quality is on the forefront of the minds of the voters. It goes beyond drinking water to include rivers, lakes and streams.

The methodology of the survey is as follows: Live telephone interviews were conducted June 11-12, 2018. This survey consists of 600 likely voter interviews (70% of the interviews were conducted via landline and 30% via cell phone) Interviews were stratified by county to reflect historic voter trends. The margin of error for this survey is ± 4.0%.