

Local Conservation Finance: The Sheridan County Ballot Initiative



A National Model



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Bozeman says YES to Parks & Trails!

On November 6, 2012, Bozeman voters overwhelmingly passed a \$15 million bond for parks, trails, natural areas, stream corridors, and athletic fields. With more than 73% of voters supporting the measure, it is clear that Bozeman knows parks and trails are a good investment for our businesses, our families, and our future.

Over the coming months, the City of Bozeman will begin to lead the process of establishing an application system, review process, evaluation criteria, and metrics to fund possible trail and parkland projects. Interested members of the community will be encouraged to participate in that process. To stay informed, please [sign up for email updates](#) or follow us

Recent Posts

- [ABC Fox Montana: Bozeman Parks & Trails Bond Passes](#)
- [KTVM: Voters support Parks & Trails Bond](#)
- [Bozeman Daily Chronicle: Bozeman voters support parks & trails bond](#)

Parks & Trails Bond Steering Committee

Robyn Erlenbush, Co-Chair: ERA

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Voters approve \$47 million bond for S.L. County parks, trails

By [Marjorie Cortez](#), Deseret News
Published: Wednesday, Nov. 7 2012 1:14 a.m. MST

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Gunnison Ranchland Conservation Legacy

"To create a legacy for future generations by preserving ranching and conserving ranchlands in the Gunnison Country."



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*We have preserved **18,255 acres** of ranchlands and continue to make progress toward our goal of protecting 30,000 acres in the Gunnison-Crested Butte area.*

Thanks for Voting YES for Ballot Issue 1A!!!

81% of Gunnison County voters supported renewal of the Gunnison Valley Land Preservation Fund

We appreciate your continuing support for agricultural land conservation!

What We Do

We work to ensure that productive agricultural lands remain part of our changing community.

Gunnison Legacy is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization (Gunnison Legacy Fund) based in Gunnison County, CO. Acting on behalf of landowners in conjunction with established land trusts, GRCL works with ranching families to protect their lands with conservation easements.

Benefits:

- * families know their land is available for

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Voters Give Landslide Approval For Conservation Spending Nationwide

San Francisco - 11/07/2012

Across the nation, voters of all political leanings gave overwhelming approval yesterday to taxing themselves and spending money for new parks in their communities, The Trust for Public Land announced Wednesday.

Of the 57 measures on local and statewide ballots, 46 passed, an approval rate of 81%. The measures in 21 states will provide more than \$2 billion overall, including \$767 million in new money to support protection of water quality, new parks and natural areas and working farms and ranches. Complete results can be found on The Trust for Public Land's [LandVote website](#).

Sheridan Parks, Pathways and Open Space



Optional 1 Cent Ballot Proposition

Tax	Purpose
4%	A statewide sales tax with 69% to state general fund and 31% to local governments.
2% General Purpose (Fifth Penny)	In increments of .5%. Used for general funding for local governments. Established for a period of years.
2% Specific Purpose (Sixth Penny)	In increments of .5%. Projects must be approved when tax is approved. Established for a set amount of money.

W.S. §39-15-204

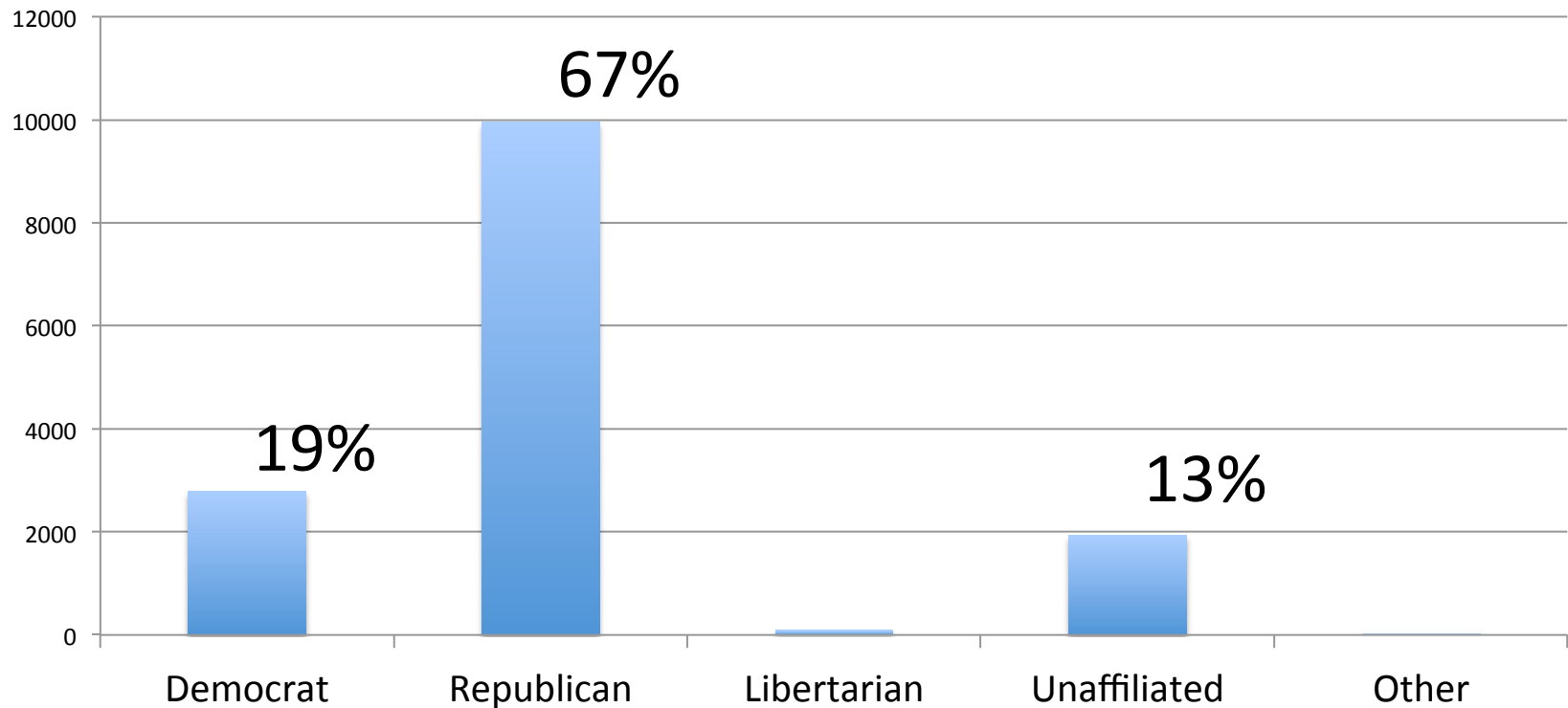
Note: Total General Purpose and Specific Purpose cannot exceed 3%.

Optional 1 Cent Ballot Proposition

- Voters in Sheridan County approved the Optional 1 Cent Ballot Proposition in 2006 by 66% to 34%.
- 2007-2008 Economic Collapse
- Question: Would voters in Sheridan approval a renewal of the optional tax? Would they be more likely to support the tax if it included funding for conservation projects?

Current Voter Registration

Sheridan County Voter Registration



TNC Poll of Sheridan Voters

- Funded by The Nature Conservancy and the Sonoran Institute
- Polling Conducted by Public Opinion Strategies
- May 25-27, 2010
- Telephone survey of 300 registered voters
- Distributed proportionally throughout the county
- Demographically representative of likely voters
- Margin of error +/- 5.66%

Poll Description

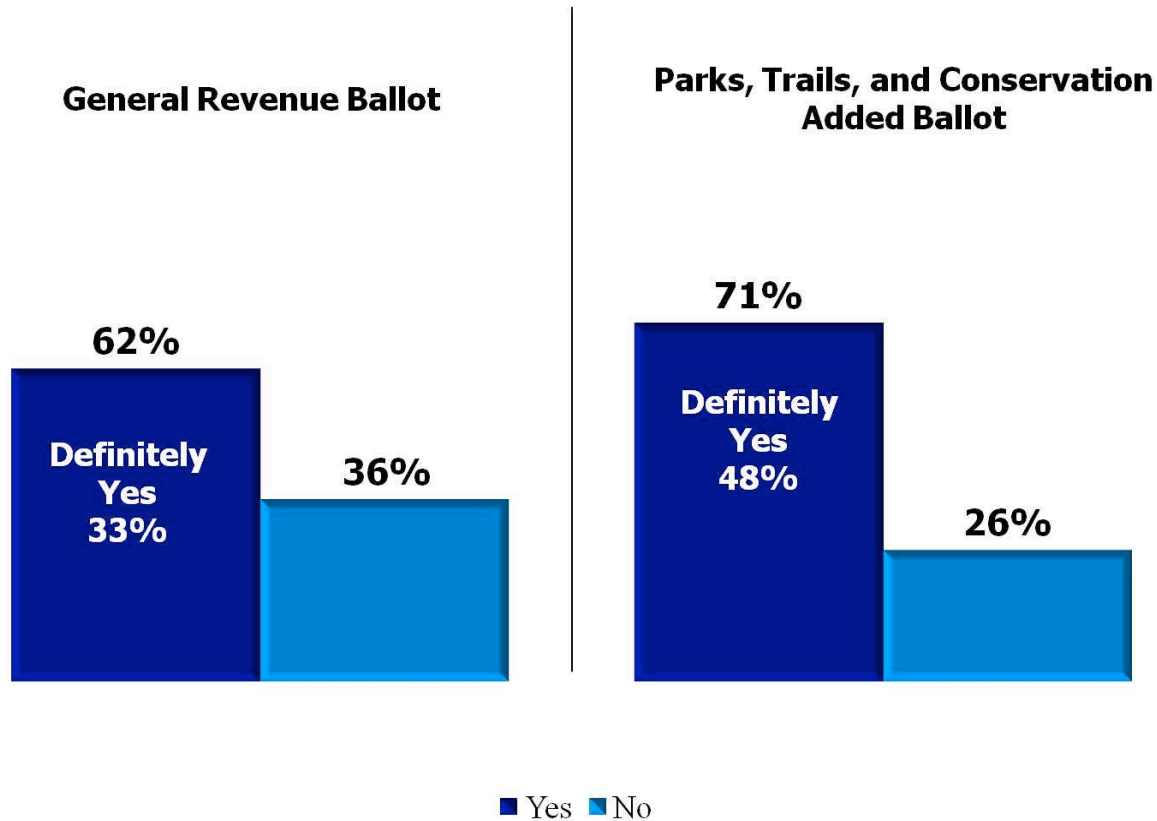
Half of respondents heard:

Shall the Board of County Commissioners for Sheridan County continue to impose an excise tax of one percent upon retail sales of tangible personal property, admissions and services within the county, for the purposes of general revenue?

The other half of respondents heard:

Shall the Board of County Commissioners for Sheridan County continue to impose an excise tax of one percent upon retail sales of tangible personal property, admissions and services within the county, for the purposes of general revenue, ***and for the conservation of lands that preserve water quality and quantity, wildlife habitat, and working ranches, and creating and improving parks and trails in the county?***

Increased Support for 1 Cent Ballot



Increased Support for 1 Cent Ballot

Majorities of nearly every key sub-group side with including conservation funding as a priority for the county. This includes majorities of all partisan groups, all ages, and residents of the City of Sheridan and those in the rest of the county. It is worth noting that this view is strongly held among parents of children under the age of 18 (62% include conservation, parks and trails; 33% deal with other issues first).

Specific Responses

- *“I’m an outdoors man. I fish... Conservation. Preserving the land from development, so it’s not overdeveloped.” GOP man, 65+*
- *“To keep the parks up and maybe make new ones, and the upkeep of the water ways.” – GOP woman, 45-54*
- *“I’m into ranching and I think that’s very important. And conservation is also important, and I also use trails on the mountains.” – GOP man, 35-44*
- *“Well, it also takes care of the water and the wildlife. It does a lot of good.” – Democratic man, 65+*
- *“I guess the main reason would be for conservation purposes, like wildlife and natural resources. I mean, I’m that kind of guy who enjoys nature, I think that’s important to the quality of life we enjoy in Sheridan County.” – GOP man, 25-34*
- *“The wildlife. That’s the only reason (I’m voting Yes).” – GOP woman, 65+*

Public Priorities

Topic	Extremely Important	Important	Total
Continuing Operations at Seniors Center and Support for the Elderly	18%	52%	70%
Protecting and Restoring the Water Quality of Rivers, Streams and Creeks	18%	50%	68%
Maintaining Roads	14%	53%	67%
Maintaining Public Safety and Assisting Law Enforcement	17%	45%	62%
Continuing Operations at the Local Animal Shelter	10%	38%	48%

***Top Conservation Related Funding Projects
Ranked by % Extremely Important to Include***

Funding Projects	Extremely Important	Ext/Very Important
Protecting and restoring the water quality of rivers, streams and creeks	18%	68%
Protecting natural areas threatened by development	15%	51%
Protecting land around rivers, streams and lakes	14%	54%
Protecting fish and wildlife habitat	14%	51%
Maintaining the rural character of Sheridan County	12%	43%
Protecting working ranches	11%	45%
Providing access for additional hunting and fishing opportunities	11%	43%
Protecting natural areas	10%	48%
Protecting open space	10%	46%
Protecting land for outdoor recreation	9%	54%
Protecting scenic views and mountain vistas	9%	44%
Creating and improving parks, pathways and trails	5%	36%
Creating and improving neighborhood parks	4%	44%

Media Coverage



Press



Bighorn
Forest
Land
Torn Up

...
Outdoors,
Page B6

124th Year, No.38 Serving Sheridan County, Wyoming

THURSDAY

Thursday, July 1, 2010

50¢

Survey: Voters support 1-cent tax for conservation

By Michael Pearlman

michael@thesheridanpress.com

A poll of Sheridan County voters found they are more likely to support the 1-cent optional sales tax if conservation, parks and trails are included in the proposal.

County voters in November will decide whether to renew the sales tax for four years.

The telephone poll of 300 voters conducted in late May also found that most residents support require-

ments to protect water quality over major investments in infrastructure. Survey results were presented to city and county officials Wednesday.

"We were interested in seeing what the hot-button issues were for the next election," said Jon Heyneman, project manager for the Sonoran Institute, which commissioned the poll in con-



Quotable

"We were interested in seeing what the hot-button issues were for the next election."

*Sonoran Institute
Project Manager
Jon Heyneman*

junction with the Nature Conservancy.

The Sonoran Institute is a nonprofit organization with offices throughout the Rocky Mountain West that works "to promote better management of growth and change," according to its website.

The organization

opened an office in Sheridan about six months ago, Heyneman said. Its main office is in Tucson, Ariz.

Seventy-one percent of voters surveyed indicated they would support the 1-cent optional tax when presented with a ballot question that specifically included language referencing conservation, parks and trails funding. Without specific conservation components included, 62 percent supported the ballot proposal.

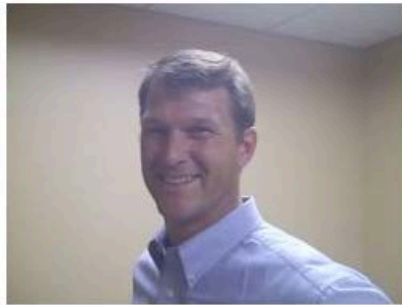
Please see **Conservation**, Page 2

Media Coverage

Officials Briefed on Poll Results

By Ron Richter on Wed 06/30/2010 07:12pm

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The Sonoran Institute and the Nature Conservancy partnered to commission an outside firm to conduct a poll to survey Sheridan County residents to gauge support for the Optional One Cent Sales Tax that is up for renewal this year. 300 random registered voters were surveyed by telephone over a three-day period in late May. The results of that poll were presented to City and County officials Wednesday afternoon.

Project Manager with the Sonoran Institute, John Heyneman, says that the majority of those polled were in favor of renewing the tax if some portion of the funding be used for conservation of natural areas. ▶

Protecting and restoring the water quality of rivers, streams and creeks was what the survey indicated as being the top project that voters would like to see funded through the tax. Heyneman explains that he'll be providing the results of the poll to the outlying communities within the County soon. ▶

The poll was conducted by Public Opinion Strategies, a national political and public affairs research firm that was founded in 1991. The firm has conducted more than five million interviews with voters and consumers in all fifty states and over two dozen foreign countries.

Media Coverage



Weekly Poll Question: 1-Cent and Conservation

By [MaryJo Johnson](#) on Mon 07/05/2010 06:03am

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A recent survey conducted by the Sonoran Institute revealed that of 300 Sheridan County residents polled, 71% would favor spending 1-Cent funds on Parks, Trails and Conservation projects. The Sonoran report concluded by saying that "even when voters hear rationales on both sides of whether or not to include these purposes for funding, voters squarely side with the idea that it is important to protect these areas and do not view them as something that can be postponed."

The survey results prompted this week's Bank of Sheridan / [sheridanmedia.com](#) poll question: "Are you more likely to support the continuation of the Optional 1-Cent Sales Tax if conservation,

parks, & trails are [included?](#)"

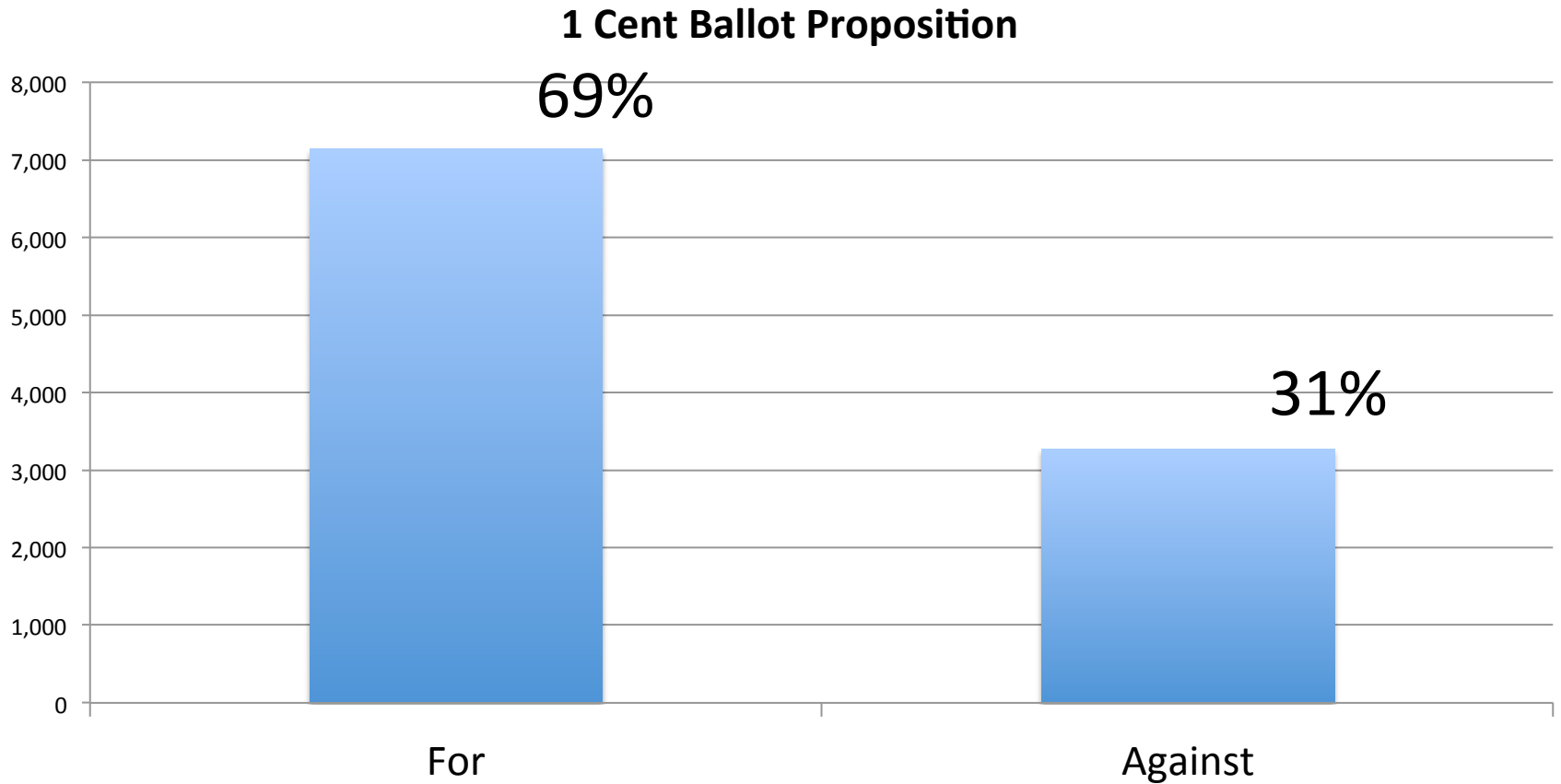
City Commitments to Conservation

- WATER QUALITY/OPEN SPACE/PARKS/
PATHWAYS & RECREATION
 - “Expenditures for water quality for streams, City parks, pathways system, recreation programs and open space.” \$250,000/year.
- HERITAGE AND HISTORY
 - “Expenditures for historic buildings places and artifacts” Sheridan Community Land Trust \$15,000/year.

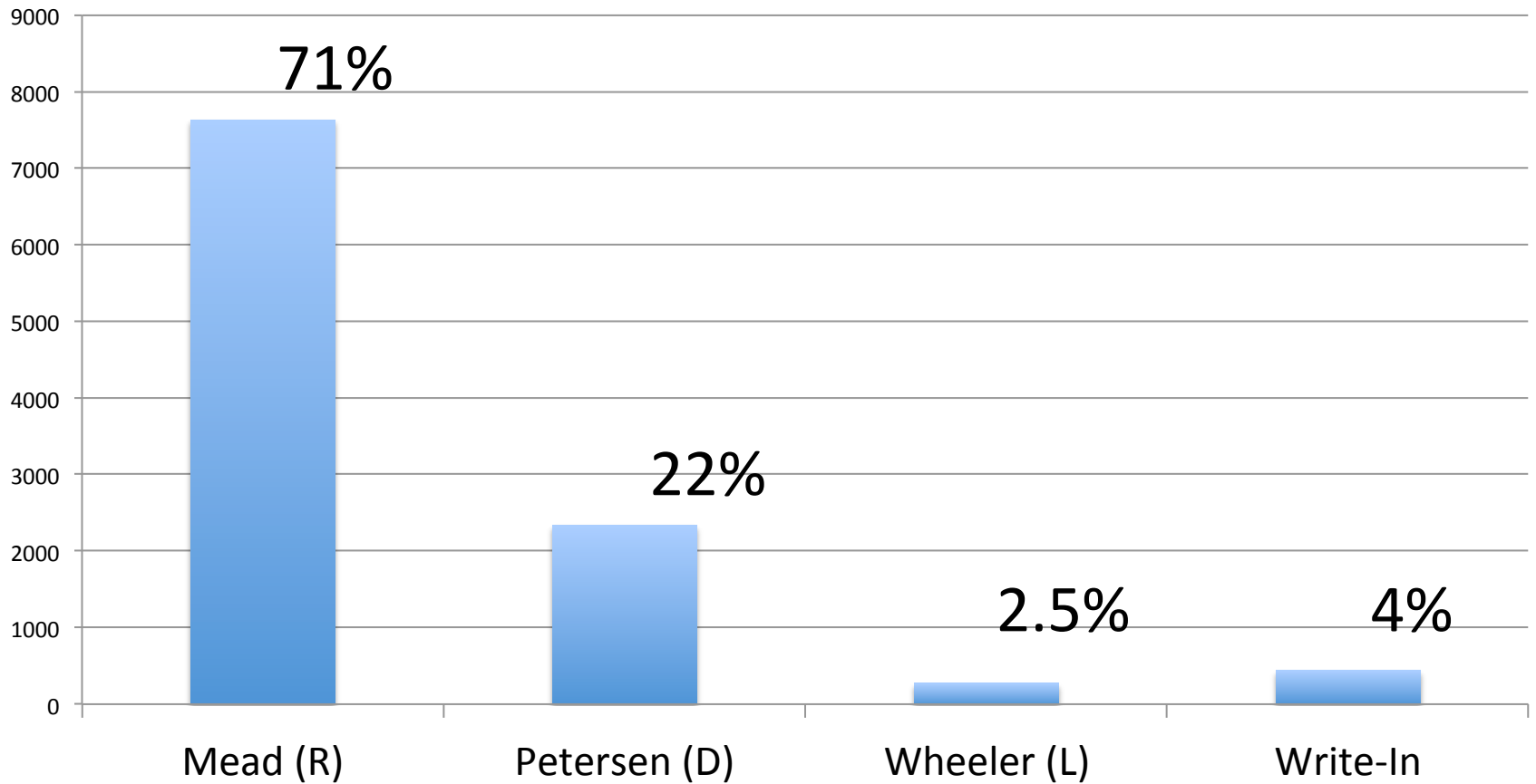
County Commitments to Conservation

- \$20,000/year to Sheridan Community Land Trust
- \$20,000/year for discretionary conservation projects.

1 Cent Results



Governor's Race



Open Space and Trails



Creek Restoration



Public Parks and Pathways



\$1 million+ for Sheridan Parks, Pathways and Open Space

