IN APRIL AND MAY 2013, WE WENT IN SEARCH OF OREGONIANS’ TRUE NORTH.

We wanted to find out what they value and believe, where they stand and where they want to put their energies – and the state’s – economically, politically and environmentally.

We went to all corners of Oregon and to every population group – not just voters. We contacted them via email, cell phone, landline and community outreach, and engaged them with a series of surveys. More than 9,000 Oregonians from all walks of life participated – people of all incomes, registered voters and not registered, young and old, in English and Spanish. This is by far the most in-depth and far-reaching research yet done about Oregonians’ beliefs and values. (For full details see Appendix A and B and visit truenorthoregon.org.)

THE 5 REGIONS:

Hundreds of Oregonians in each region participated in the project. Researchers used quotas and statistical weighting based on the U.S. Census to ensure valid samples within regions by age, gender and income.

Like any large, diverse group, Oregonians’ values and beliefs are complex. They are interconnected and often inconsistent. But across the state, the results of our research show that Oregonians’ similarities outweigh their differences. Often, our goals aren’t so different; it’s the strength of our convictions that sometimes vary.

“People are aware of how special this place is, so we are making strides to keep Oregon green and healthy.”

— Woman, 23, Willamette Region

For more insights into Oregonians’ values and beliefs, go to truenorthoregon.org.
20-YEAR OVERVIEW

Shifts in Oregonians’ Values and Beliefs: 1992 to 2013

2013 marks the third time the Oregon Values and Beliefs Survey has been done. It was first conducted in 1992, then again in 2002. Overall, we’ve remained positive and optimistic about Oregon in general, our personal futures, and the future of our communities.

Overall, today, how would you rate your feelings about Oregon?

- Very positive
- Somewhat positive
- Neither positive nor negative
- Somewhat negative
- Very negative
- Don’t know

How optimistic are you about your personal future over the next five years?

- Very optimistic
- Somewhat optimistic
- Neither optimistic nor pessimistic
- Somewhat pessimistic
- Very pessimistic
- Don’t know

When you think of your community 10 years from now, do you think it will be a better place to live, about the same as it is today, or worse than today?

- Better place
- About the same
- Worse place
- Don’t know

Oregonians Share a True North

Across the state, Oregonians share a guiding set of values and beliefs—on many topics. Whether you live in Northwest Portland or on a ranch in Eastern Oregon, you are likely to appreciate the same things about living in Oregon and to rate the importance of public services similarly.

84% support road and highway maintenance
81% think our tax system should be more simple and straightforward
78% think the government is wasteful and inefficient
86% think taxes are necessary to pay for the common good
64% think the tax system is fair

For more insights into Oregonians’ values and beliefs, go to truenorthoregon.org.
1. We Support Children.

Oregonians greatly value K-12 education.

From a list of 20 services, “K-12 education services” received the highest rating of importance at 81% and was the only item to exceed 50% strong feeling. Rating a service “important” indicated a willingness to support some increase in taxes or reallocation of funds from other services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Category</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Unimportant</th>
<th>Very Unimportant</th>
<th>DK/Refuse/Other</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>57%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willamette</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Oregonians want more parent involvement in children’s education, broadened curriculum choices, and graduates who know more about money management and have better learned the lessons of citizenship, work, and family. They foresee schools being fundamentally different places in 10 years involving new classroom atmospheres and teaching techniques.

Oregonians value post-secondary education and are particularly concerned about cost and workforce training.

Across the state, 76% of us want to make higher education more accessible by reducing the cost of tuition. 70% consider enhanced job training programs desirable to support low-income and disadvantaged Oregonians. A similar 69% are willing to support some increase in taxes to increase workforce training to boost economic development.

Oregonians feel some ambivalence to broad welfare support but not when it comes to the care of children:

- 79% of us are willing pay more taxes to ensure children have access to nutritious food at school.
- 77% of Oregonians want to ensure that all children have access to essential healthcare.

--- Female, 64 Willamette Region

“I am pro public schools, and am anxious about their future. I am happy my children are finished, but worry about today’s kids and teachers.”

--- Female, 64 Willamette Region

“I am pro public schools, and am anxious about their future. I am happy my children are finished, but worry about today’s kids and teachers.”

--- Female, 64 Willamette Region

“The school system funding, that’s my main concern.”

--- Female, 20, Eastern Region
Oregonians endorse personal responsibility for health and wellness. We also support access to a basic level of quality healthcare.

- 77% of us feel wellness and healthy living should replace treatment of illnesses as the primary goal and focus of the healthcare industry.
- 72% feel people should be held accountable for high-risk behaviors like smoking, drug use and lack of exercise through higher insurance premiums.
- 70% feel all people should have equal access to a basic level of quality healthcare.

“We... strive for a more perfect union and viable healthcare for all that are in need. As well as mental health services without discrimination.”

— Male, 42, Metro Region

For more insights into Oregonians' values and beliefs, go to truenorthoregon.org.
3. We want to protect the environment for future generations, and are willing to consider changing behaviors or priorities to address the prospects of climate change. When asked to share what they value about Oregon in their own words, 78% of Oregonians used terms like “natural landscapes,” “cleanness of air and water,” “green landscape,” “forests and mountains,” and “open spaces.”

Oregonians also value a healthy economy, but they want an approach to development that recognizes the importance of the state’s natural environment to its quality of life. When asked to choose between the environment and the economy, 57% favor environmental protection and 35% choose economic growth:

We also believe climate change requires us to change our behaviors. It is a concern across all regions in the state, although less so in the Eastern region:

8% don’t know
35% economic growth
57% protection of the environment
21% if climate change becomes a problem we can deal with later
72% climate change requires us to change our way of life such as driving less or living more simply

“We could use a greater sense of caring for the environment.”
—Male, 66, Southern Region

“I support the environment over progress (big money) every time.”
—Male, 30, Metro Region
4. We favor rehabilitation for criminals and find incarceration alone to be insufficient.

The question provided no information about the dollars currently spent on each approach; however, the finding validates a 2012 statewide survey that provided budget information and also showed that Oregonians support alternative approaches to imprisonment and parole when dealing with non-violent offenders.

"Investment in developing people pays off in the long run. Lead poisoned, ignorant, sick people cost more to house in prisons than educated, healthy people in their own homes."

—Female, 33, Eastern Region
5. We support maintaining our roads and investing in transit but are skeptical of building new roads. Majorities support this view in the Southern, Metro and Willamette Regions, while opinion is split in Central and Eastern Regions.

Oregonians are willing to shift some funding for road and highway construction toward public transportation, such as better bus service and high-speed rail projects, at a 1.7 to 1.0 ratio:

- 72% support road and highway maintenance
- 55% support public transportation like buses and trains
- 49% support new roads and highways

For more insights into Oregonians’ values and beliefs, go to truenorthoregon.org.
6. We are optimistic about our personal futures but more pessimistic about the state’s future and our ability to work together.

In their personal lives, however, Oregonians feel relatively satisfied and optimistic. To the question how optimistic are you about your personal future over the next five years? 84% say the goal is desirable, suggesting a significant degree of pessimism.

Asked when you think about Oregon 10 years from now, do you think it will be a better place to live, about the same as it is today, or worse than today? Most take a middle position: 42% think it probable, suggesting a significant degree of pessimism.

About two-thirds (66%) say Oregon’s economy will be worse and wages will not keep up with expenses. Oregon will be a more expensive place to live than the income we have. Property taxes will push us out of our homes.

—Female, 54, Eastern Region

Oregon’s economy will be better and infrastructure will catch up with increasing population.

—Male, 36, Willamette Region

The economy will be worse and wages will not keep up with expenses. Oregon will be a more expensive place to live than the income we have. Property taxes will push us out of our homes.

—Female, 56, Eastern Region

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“Manage the timber we have and plant more, don’t let the environmentalists have it all their way, compromise so we can have jobs and timber.”

—Female, 57, Southern Region

7. We don’t think government can help improve the economy.

Fewer than 20% of Oregonians mentioned spontaneously that unemployment, jobs and economic growth were issues they want their state and local government officials to do something about. Also mentioned as frequently were other issues such as education and taxes and government spending. Respondents rated economic development like subsidies and tax breaks for business attraction or expansion the lowest of 20 different services:

On the other hand, there is support across the state for government to increase timber harvests in dense, over-crowded forest stands and a willingness to pay something more to increase workforce training:

Increase timber harvests in dense, over-crowded forest stands

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
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<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Southern</th>
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<td>33%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>16%</td>
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<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8%</td>
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Increase workforce training

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<tbody>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>4%</td>
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<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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</table>
8. We don’t think the state tax system is fair and believe it should be made simpler.

The statement ‘Taxes are necessary to pay for the common good’ wins extremely high agreement among Oregonians, at 86% overall:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Metro</th>
<th>Willamette</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree Strongly</td>
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<td>44%</td>
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<td>48%</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree Somewhat</td>
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<td>40%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree Somewhat</td>
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<td>6%</td>
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<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree Strongly</td>
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<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But on issues of fairness and efficiency in taxation, the tables are turned:

- **63% Disagree**
  - Is our tax system fair?

- **64% Agree**
  - Is government wasteful and inefficient with our taxes and not to be trusted to make good decisions?

- **78% Agree**
  - Should our tax system be overhauled to be more simple and straightforward?

9. **We see ourselves as moderate.** Whether registered as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, Green, etc., a majority of Oregonians in all regions do not consider themselves strongly conservative or liberal on social and economic issues.

**Socially we are**

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<th>Willamette</th>
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<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Southern</th>
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</thead>
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<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somewhat liberal</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle-of-the-road</td>
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<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somewhat conservative</td>
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<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very conservative</td>
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<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
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**Economically we are**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very liberal</td>
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<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somewhat liberal</td>
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<td>Very conservative</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
We have an urban-rural divide.
But it’s not as deep or as wide as we often assume.

10. We have more in common than we might think. Oregonians across the state have similar values and beliefs about many things. Coast, Valley, Cascades or Columbia Plateau, you are likely to value the same things about living in Oregon and to rate the importance of public services similarly.

A majority of Oregonians in each region of the state want protection of productive farm and forest land from development, feel climate change requires us to change our way of life such as driving less or living more simply, and are willing to pay more to ensure a basic level of quality healthcare, that children have access to nutritious food at school, and to create greater access to mental health services. Furthermore, Oregonians across the state feel that personal income taxes are just too high, that change is needed in Oregon’s tax system, and that government is wasteful and inefficient with our taxes and cannot be trusted to make good decisions.
Agreement on key issues doesn’t mean we don’t disagree.

Statewide and regional differences came to light in the survey, but most by small margins.

We are divided on the level of public services that should be provided, and on some tax issues, too.

We also feel somewhat differently about some economic issues.

When it comes to the use of natural resources, Oregonians living in rural areas are more likely to agree that economic growth should be given priority even if the environment suffers to some extent and to support increased timber harvests in dense, overcrowded forest stands. But again, rarely are these differences more than a small margin.

For more insights into Oregonians’ values and beliefs, go to truenorthoregon.org.

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Track 1: Scientific/Random Sample

- Three statewide surveys involving 3,958 completed questionnaires were conducted via telephone (landline and cell) and online to reduce any disadvantage in using one collection medium.
- Enough interviews were completed to permit reporting in five regions: Eastern, Central, Southern, Willamette and Portland Metro.
- Quotas and statistical weighting were based on the U.S. census to ensure representativeness by age, gender and income at the regional level.
- We used more than one question to measure attitudes about key issues, utilizing different question formats and wording.

Track 2: Public Outreach Sample

Over 5,500 Oregonians participated in the Public Outreach Track of the Oregon Values & Beliefs Survey. Citizens were invited to become part of Oregon’s Kitchen Table and to complete one or more of the surveys at www.oregonskitchentable.org. A short questionnaire featuring a mix of questions from all three surveys was also available for Oregonians to take online. This survey had more open-ended questions, allowing citizens to offer their views in their own words.

Overall, more than 9,000 Oregonians participated in the 2013 Oregon Values & Beliefs Survey.

Appendix A

How the Oregon Values & Beliefs Survey was conducted: Two Tracks

Appendix B

Who Participated?

We went to all corners of Oregon and to every population group—not just voters.

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