

# MOTIVATING LIFESTYLE DRIVEN ADVOCACY

RESEARCH AND INSIGHTS BY PROTECT OUR WINTERS



BURTON



PHOTO: ANDREW MILLER

# ARE WE AS GOOD AS WE THINK WE ARE? HOW DO WE GET BETTER?

In 2019, POW embarked on a robust consumer research project to fully understand how to increase the number and intensity of climate advocates by thoroughly understanding the motivations of outdoor enthusiasts—why they are attracted to their sport, where athletes and outdoor brands fit in and how they can be convinced to do something that we now know is very hard for them to do: fully engage as advocates for policy changes that will alleviate the worst effects of climate change.

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# KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND ACTIVATION.

Research illuminates ways to build authentic and effective relationships with outdoor enthusiasts through the following messaging strategies:

- **Avoid being overly political.** Climate change feels like a partisan issue to many potential advocates—focus on practical policies that should have support regardless of party.
- **Use climate experts who live outdoor lifestyles as trusted messengers.** People are looking for credible information from experts—and lifestyle affinity is the first step in gaining acceptance.
- **Respect the journey to activism.** Meet people where they are to take them where we want to go together: don't assume that we all start at the top with a drive to fight climate change—allow people to make small moves upward.
- **Embrace imperfect advocacy.** We have to admit that no one is perfect and you don't need to be perfect to be an impactful advocate.
- **Acknowledge an effed up system.** The deep and deeply warranted cynicism people have with government and the political system must be acknowledged before we can get people to participate.
- **Make systemic solutions more personal.** If the motivation for activism is not to be personally inconvenienced and the preferred solutions are personal, policy solutions have to be positioned as requiring the least inconvenience and the most personal impact.
- **Elevate local heroes.** It is important to make connections between local conditions and global actions. Every community has a local “celebrity” athlete in every sport. Finding these local heroes, arming them with effective messaging and helping them organize and activate their community is key to getting the local and state influence that translates into robust national policy advocacy.
- **Translate systemic impacts into personal ones people can understand.** Climate activists may be motivated by reducing 1.8m metric tons of carbon. Outdoor enthusiasts aren't. They are interested in what they can do personally to make a difference—and that has to be communicated through personal actions they can understand, beyond switching to LED lightbulbs or buying a hybrid car. For example, many research respondents wished they could do more by buying a hybrid car to reduce emissions, but they couldn't afford it. When asking outdoor enthusiasts to advocate for converting city bus fleets to all-electric, translate the impact into the equivalent of them buying thousands of hybrid cars. “You may not be able to buy a Prius, but you can put the equivalent of thousands of them on your local roads by calling your representative and asking them to switch our transit fleets to all electric.”

# POW HELPS PASSIONATE OUTDOOR PEOPLE PROTECT THE PLACES AND LIFESTYLES THEY LOVE FROM CLIMATE CHANGE.

**We are a community of athletes, scientists, creatives and business leaders advancing non-partisan policies that protect our world today and for future generations.**

This work was driven by POW's core belief that people who love the outdoors should also be on the front lines of saving their sports and the lifestyle they love from the impacts of climate change. With a better understanding of what motivates outdoor enthusiasts to act, this research arms the outdoor community with insights and messaging necessary to empower outdoor enthusiasts to become climate advocates, while overcoming the political polarization that often comes with the issue. A unifying passion to protect a lifestyle has the potential to reach across party lines to raise a critical mass of new and diverse climate advocates at a time when the window to address climate change is shrinking.

This report provides an overview of the methodology, findings, key insights and strategic messaging guidelines.



# RESEARCH DESIGNED TO CREATE POLITICAL AND POLICY **IMPACT.**

Artemis Strategy Group & Neimand Collaborative designed this research to understand how to better empower outdoor brands and athletes to engage, recruit and move their followers to action. Artemis Strategy Group is known for its groundbreaking motivational research technique that unlocks the DNA of consumer decision-making. Their research not only shows where people stand on an issue but, most importantly, how they got there and how they can be moved to a new position. Neimand Collaborative is a social impact marketing firm skilled in building motivational research into brand behaviors, organizing strategies and messaging to create social change through policy change.

The research was designed to discover how the outdoor industry can empower outdoor enthusiasts to advocate for policy changes that address climate change. We asked the following questions to guide research design:

- How do we first build upon the existing community of Ardent Outdoor Enthusiasts —those who have built their lifestyle around their sport - and do it as much as they possibly can?
- How do we branch out to also engage Avid Outdoor Enthusiasts— those who are recreational devotees, have other lives, but love their sport and do it frequently?



Both Ardent and Avid groups are needed to build a critical, sustainable mass of climate advocates for successful policy influence. Therefore, our methodology sought to understand common motivations among Ardent and Avid athletes with the hope that one message could be found to motivate them to protect their outdoor lifestyle from the effects of climate change. Each stage of research built upon the next, culminating in a large quantitative survey that tested, validated and ranked qualitative perceptions and insights. Selection criteria, demographics and methodology for each phase of research can be found in the Addendum section of this report.



## METHODOLOGY



19 one-on-one interviews with athletes to understand their journey to activism, their level of comfort in being advocates and how they felt they could motivate their followers with authentic messages. Given the diversity of professional athletes and their connection to large groups of social media followers, we felt they were a proxy for understanding outdoor enthusiasts in general; their point of view, language and journey to becoming advocates.



Insights gained from the athlete interviews were incorporated in an online survey of 34 athlete followers who gave their views on how climate change impacts their lifestyle, their desire to take action and their desired interaction with POW.



Learning from the online discussion boards informed focus group discussions in Salt Lake City, UT, Knoxville, TN and Grand Rapids, MI, which were designed to understand where outdoor enthusiasts stood on climate change, how they saw it impacting their lifestyle and the opportunities and barriers to becoming advocates. These locations were chosen for their conservative, moderate and independent ideological leanings and constituencies, helping us gain an understanding of perceptions and motivations across the ideological spectrum of outdoor enthusiasts.



Qualitative inputs, impressions, language and concepts informed a national quantitative survey, where a representative sample of more than 2,100 people across a variety of sports, demographics and geographies reacted to and ranked their personal thoughts and priorities relative to climate change and activism. The data delivered a “motivation map” of decision-making pathways related to climate change activism.

# KEY FINDINGS: A WAY TO **MOTIVATE** CLIMATE ADVOCACY THROUGH LIFESTYLE PROTECTION.

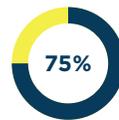
**A significant community of people are aligned on climate change, see advocacy groups as leaders in the fight and are looking to groups like POW and their partners for guidance about what to do:**



Among the outdoor enthusiasts who identify as skiers, snowboarders, trail runners, climbers and mountain bikers, 90 percent believe that climate change is caused by humans, regardless of their political beliefs. Nationally, this group represents over 50 million individuals.



They believe that advocacy groups and outdoor brands are part of the solution.



They are looking for guidance on what to do and how to engage because they don't trust policymakers and institutions to impact real change to save the lifestyle they love.

Athlete ambassadors and brands are perfectly positioned to move outdoor enthusiasts past barriers and into effective advocacy.

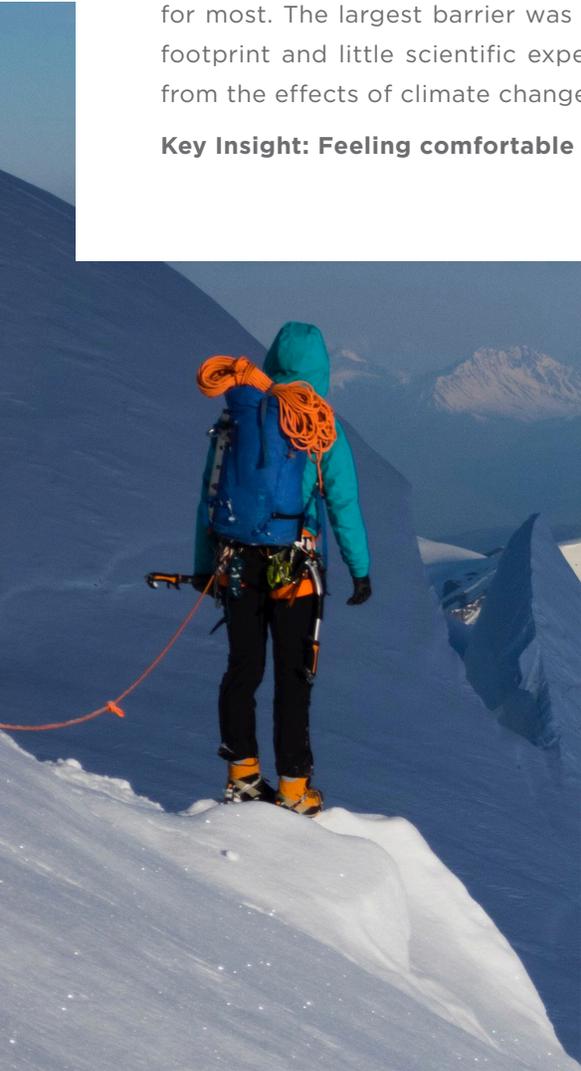


## KEY FINDINGS

# POW ATHLETES ARE ON A JOURNEY TO BECOMING **TRUSTED ADVOCATES.**

Interviews with POW athletes sheds light on their desire to be ambassadors for their sport and lifestyle, not to be scientific experts on climate change. The road to becoming a climate advocate is a long one for most. The largest barrier was feeling uncomfortable as an “imperfect advocate” with a large carbon footprint and little scientific experience. However, athletes felt compelled to save the places they love from the effects of climate change, and the urgency of doing so motivates them to learn and do more.

**Key Insight: Feeling comfortable with being an imperfect advocate leads to more impactful advocacy.**



# ATHLETES ARE **TRUSTED LIFESTYLE MESSENGERS.**

Focus groups with outdoor enthusiasts showed that they trusted POW athletes as lifestyle role models—and for advancing and protecting a lifestyle that depends on protecting natural areas from climate change. Outdoor enthusiasts share the same hesitancy to embrace advocacy. They are more motivated to save the natural places they love, feel ill-equipped to be effective advocates and are overwhelmed by the challenge.

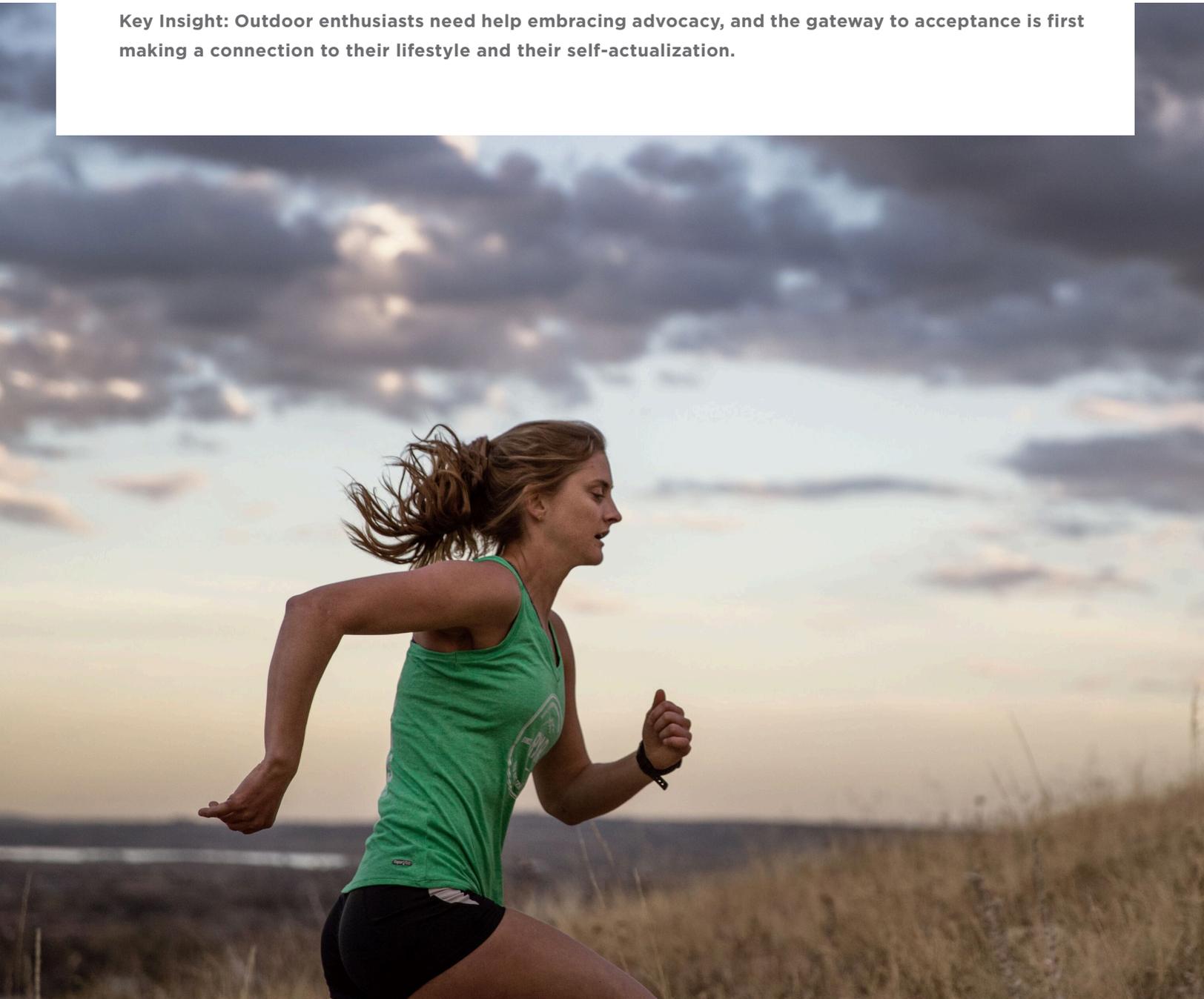
**Key Insight: The lifestyle affinity, love of natural areas and outdoor sports shared by athletes and outdoor enthusiasts present an opportunity for connection and transformation on advocacy—as long as athletes “stay in their lane” of being concerned and informed individuals, rather than posing as “climate experts.”**

## KEY FINDINGS

# OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS ARE SURPRISINGLY **HARD TO ACTIVATE.**

Focus groups and online discussion boards revealed that outdoor enthusiasts highly value natural areas for recreation, but their temperaments are not immediately conducive to advocacy. Outdoor sports enthusiasts look to escape the world, not save it. People focused on self-improvement, physical sensation and inner peace are not prime candidates for abstract communal action.

**Key Insight: Outdoor enthusiasts need help embracing advocacy, and the gateway to acceptance is first making a connection to their lifestyle and their self-actualization.**

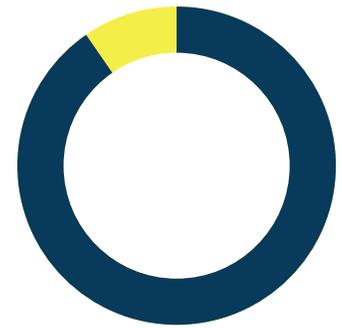


## KEY FINDINGS

# OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS BELIEVE THAT CLIMATE CHANGE IS CAUSED BY HUMANS.

Ninety percent of outdoor enthusiasts think that some or all of climate change in the past 100 years is caused by human activity. While a majority personally see a moderate-to-great deal of harm being done now, they believe the greatest effects will be felt by future generations.

**Key Insight: We don't have to convince them of the problem, we have to convince them that the problem needs to be solved now to protect their lifestyle.**

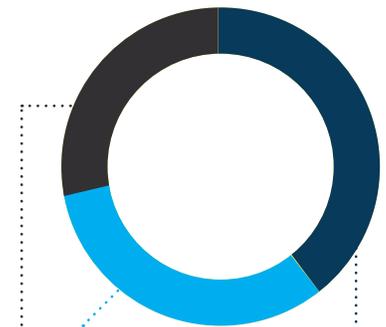


90%

# DESPITE BELIEVING IN CLIMATE CHANGE, OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS DO NOT AUTOMATICALLY SKEW LIBERAL.

Forty percent of outdoor enthusiasts identify as Democrat, 31% as Republican, and 29% as Independent. As a whole, traditional climate change language is interpreted as overly-partisan by the majority of outdoor enthusiasts, dampening potential involvement for those beyond a relatively small group already comfortable with climate advocacy.

**Key Insight: Traditional environmental and climate change messaging will fail to build the critical mass of nonpartisan support necessary to move legislators across the ideological and political spectrum. Using personally motivating, nontraditional messaging is key to activating outdoor enthusiasts.**



40% Democrat

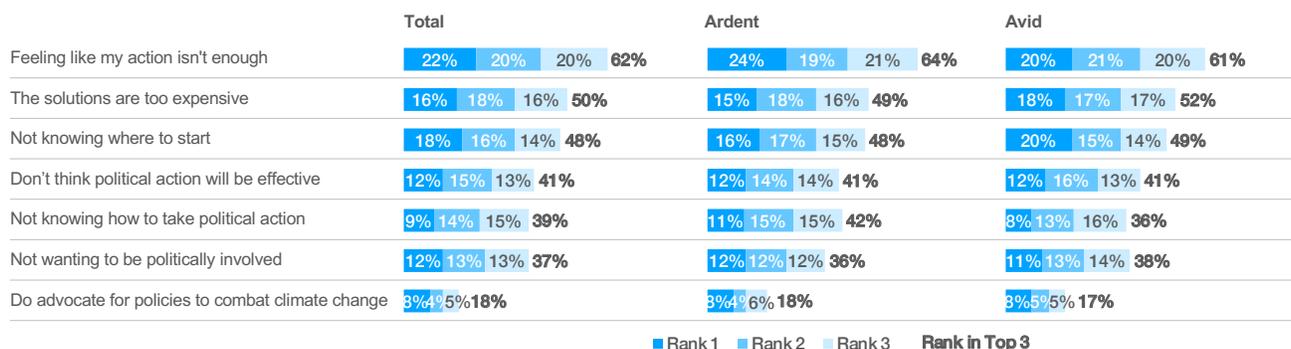
31% Republican

29% Independent

# FEELING OVERWHELMED HOLDS BACK SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ADVOCACY.

A majority feel that any action they take will not be enough to make a difference (62 percent) and nearly half don't know where to start (48 percent).

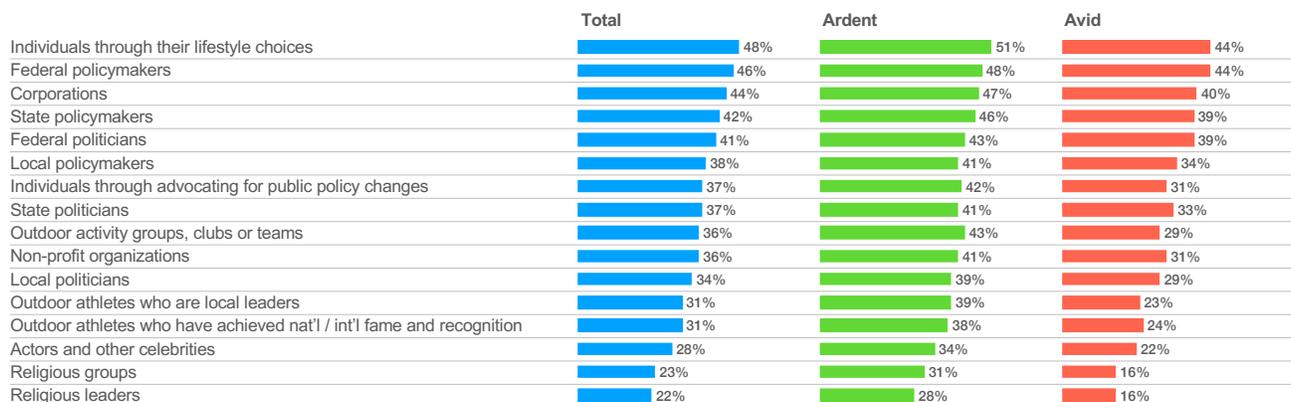
**Key Insight: Athletes and outdoor enthusiasts are held back by feeling inadequate as advocates; giving them permission to embrace their imperfect advocacy is a way to help them feel comfortable with increased activism.**



# PERSONAL LIFESTYLE CHOICES ARE SEEN AS HAVING AS MUCH IMPACT AS POLICYMAKERS AND CORPORATIONS.

Outdoor enthusiasts see relatively small lifestyle actions as being on the same scale as legislative and corporate actions. Lifestyle choices (48 percent) are seen as equal or nearly equal to actions by federal policymakers (46 percent), corporations (44 percent), and state policymakers (42 percent).

**Key Insight: Efficacy ratings are very low on all dimensions, under 50 percent, and the perceived impact of institutions is lower than their potential. Outdoor enthusiasts need to be personally empowered to make an impact, with policy impact as a means to an end to protect personal interests and responsibilities.**





# RECYCLING IS FALSELY PERCEIVED BY FAR TO BE THE BIGGEST PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION TO ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE.

The biggest perceived action to improve the environment and address climate change is to recycle, reduce waste and pick up litter—actions that aren’t big enough to make a difference. Ninety-four percent of outdoor enthusiasts currently and likely will recycle, reduce waste or pick up litter (78 percent currently do). Participation in other actions is small by comparison:

- Talk with peers about actions that can be taken locally (41 percent)
- Commute by bike or by walking (39 percent)
- Actively support legislation to protect public lands (37 percent)
- Actively support legislation on carbon emissions (34 percent)

**Key Insight: While outdoor advocates are inclined to take personal action over advocacy and policy actions, recycling is not enough to make an impact. A bridge has to be built between personal actions and advocacy.**

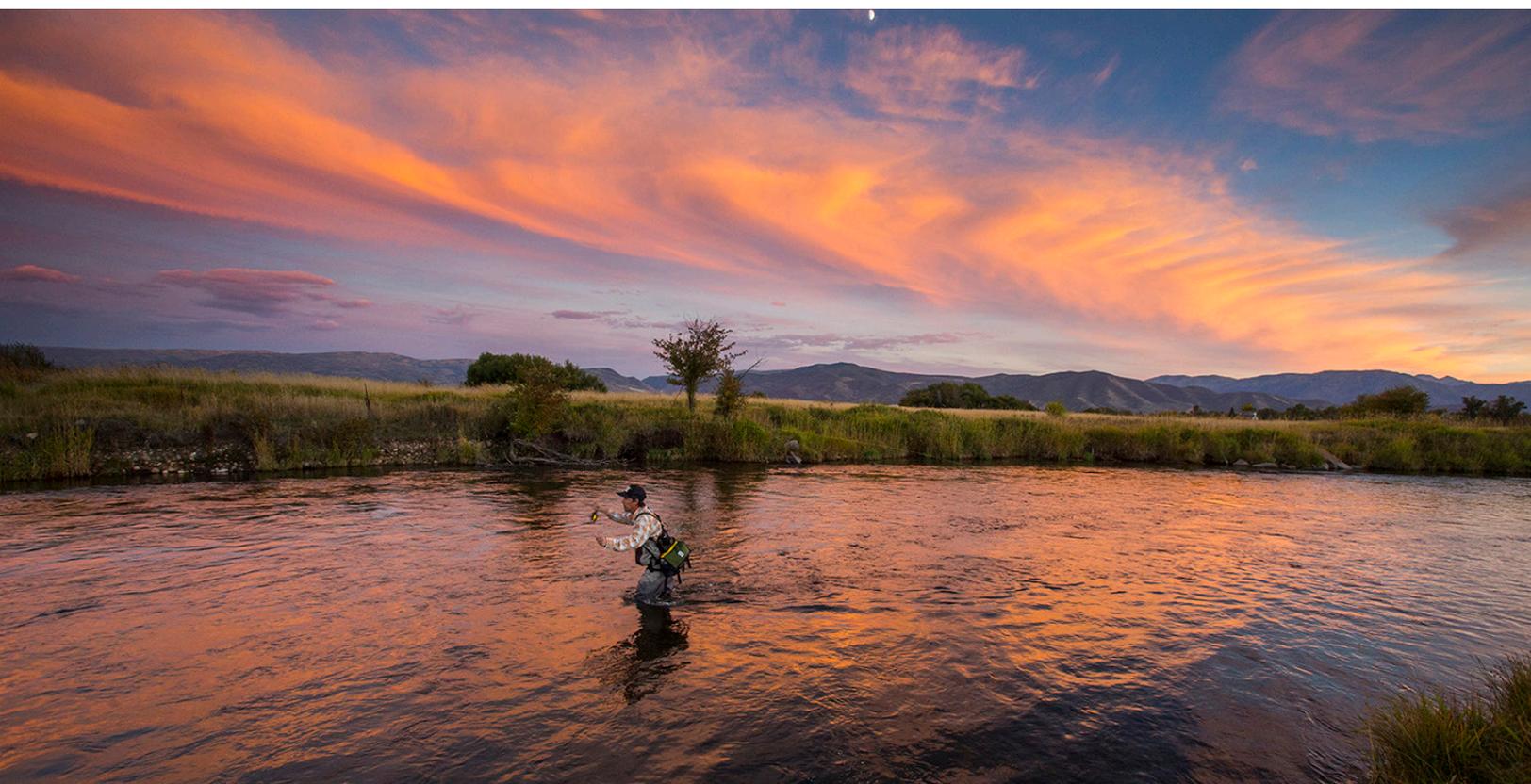
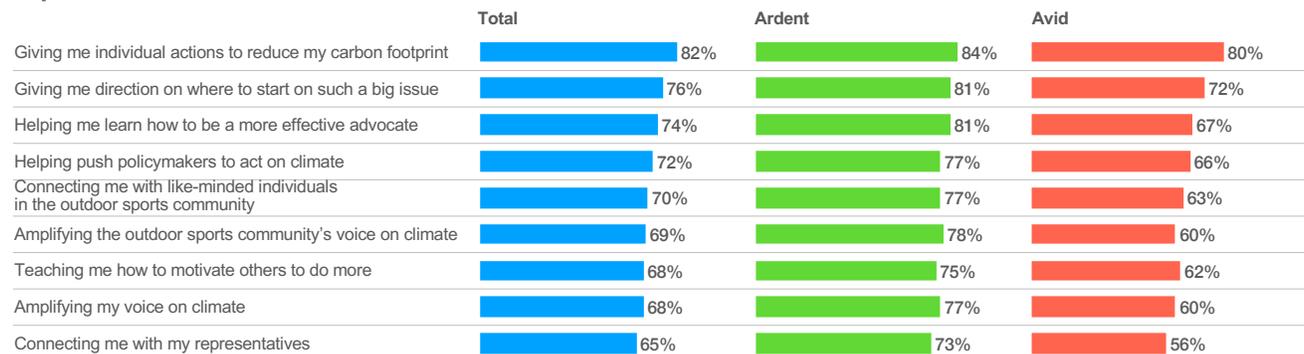


# OUTDOOR ADVOCACY GROUPS LIKE POW ARE SEEN AS PART OF THE SOLUTION.

Nearly three-quarters want direction on how to address climate change personally and how they can start to become better advocates:

- Giving me individual actions to reduce my carbon footprint (82 percent)
- Giving me direction on where to start on such a big issue (76 percent)
- Helping me learn how to be a more effective advocate (74 percent)
- Helping push policy makers to act on climate (73 percent)

**Key Insight: There is a desire to do more and be more effective. Given the right information and tools that are aligned with their culture, outdoor enthusiasts can make the transition to greater influence and impact.**

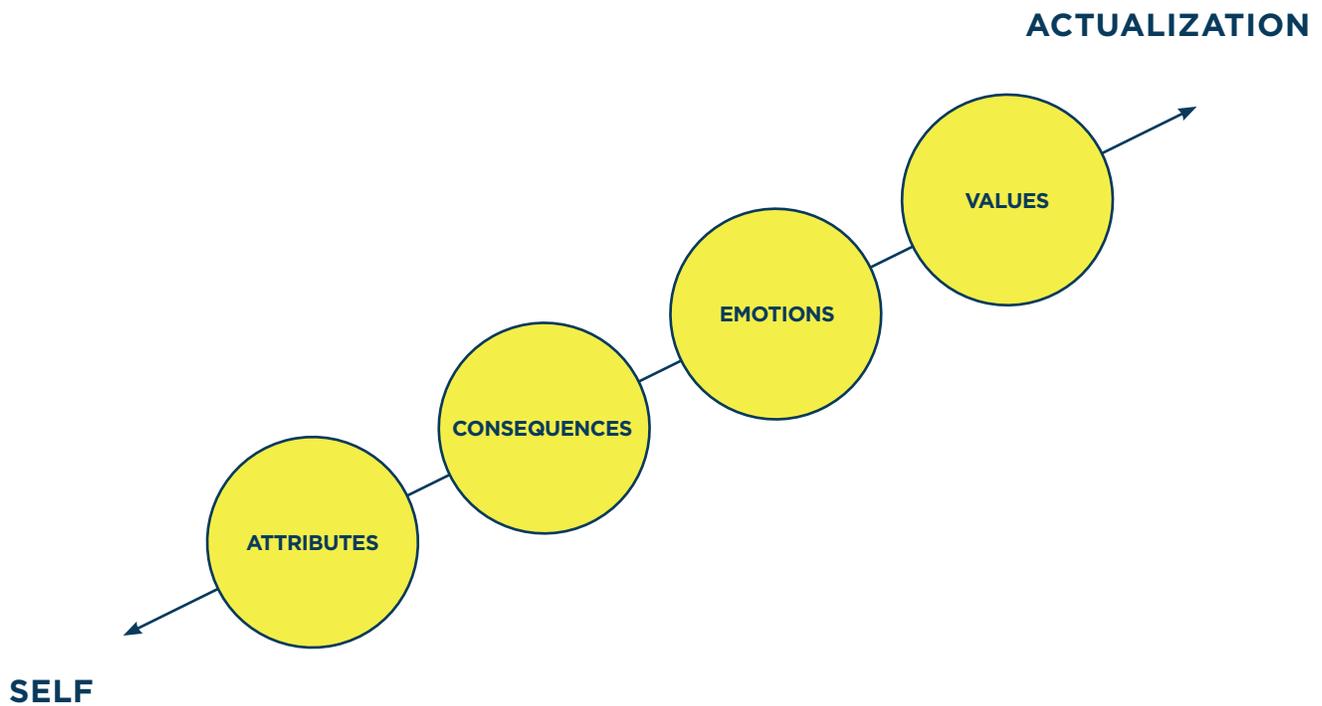


# UNDERSTANDING MOTIVATIONS HELPS US MOVE OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS INTO ADVOCACY.

*“The industry that equips outdoor enthusiasts for building a lifestyle around shared passions can be a trusted messenger in motivating them to take meaningful action.”*

Motivation research was used to move past an assessment of where outdoor enthusiasts are on climate change to learn how to **speed their journey from awareness to impactful advocacy**. Data from each phase of research informed a comprehensive motivation map of how outdoor enthusiasts perceive the threats of climate change to their lifestyles, as well as what it would take to motivate them to take action.

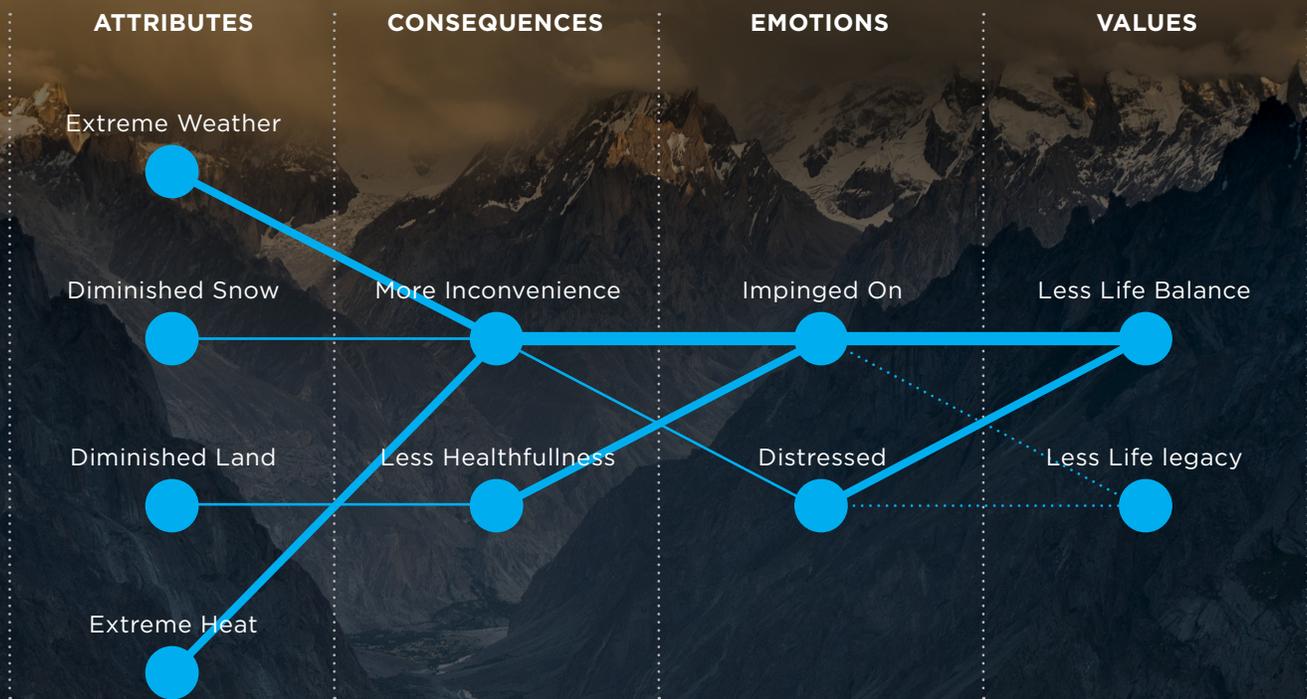
Motivation research moves people through all phases of decision-making, using a series of questions that move them from personal needs to personal values. It assumes that all individuals seek higher tangible and emotional value from their decisions and actions, which follow a pathway from physical experience to emotional benefits and ultimately feelings of actualization.



# CLIMATE IMPACT PATHWAYS.

Respondents are asked to rate and rank a series of descriptive and value statements that come from focus group research. These statements are divided into four dimensions: Attributes, Benefits, Emotional Consequences and Values. The responses in each category are then grouped into descriptive nodes, such as Access, Healthfulness, Hope and Good Life. Aggregate ratings for each of the nodes are calculated to show which are most important. Because respondents are asked to rate the most important statement in each of the node segments, we can use the data to mathematically create a link from one node to another, ultimately showing common pathways of thought across those surveyed. Pathways that start and end on common attributes and values can be combined into a “hybrid pathway” that identifies a common decision-making process for a majority of people. This helps us both find a critical mass of people to influence policy decisions and find one message to motivate them to take action.

The motivation map derived from our research shows how the majority of people (61 percent) see the different physical attributes of climate change negatively impacting their core values.





● **On the Attribute Level:**

Respondents identified four negative attributes of climate change—**Extreme Weather, Diminished Snow, Diminished Land and Extreme Heat**—as preventing them from participating in their sports and enjoying their outdoor lifestyle. These attributes directly connect to negative consequences in the next node set.

● **The Consequences:**

The extreme and limiting conditions identified on the attribute level create two dominant consequences: **More Inconvenience and Less Healthfulness**. Bad weather forces outdoor enthusiasts to delay or cancel their favorite activities or travel greater distances to participate in them. These activities are considered critical to their physical and mental health; therefore, they feel less healthful when their activities are limited.

● **The Emotions:**

“Bummer” is the biggest emotion here. They **feel impinged upon** by having to forgo activity, pay more to do it or to simply not get the full value out of the outdoor equipment they purchased to pursue their lifestyle. **Feeling distressed** is a secondary, but important emotion. The sport and lifestyle they love is under threat.

● **The Values:**

The attributes, consequences and emotions lead to a negative set of values; essentially, diminishing the value of their lifestyle. The ultimate result is feelings of having a Less Balanced Life and leaving **Less Life Legacy** to future generations. **Less Balanced Life** is defined as not being able to counteract the pressures of life, work and the world with the escape into natural environments that test and improve physical skill and emotional well-being. The great escape that is outdoor sports to outdoor enthusiasts no longer becomes available and the balance of life is upset. Less Life Legacy is not being able to pass on a sport and its experiences to future generations, particularly younger family members.

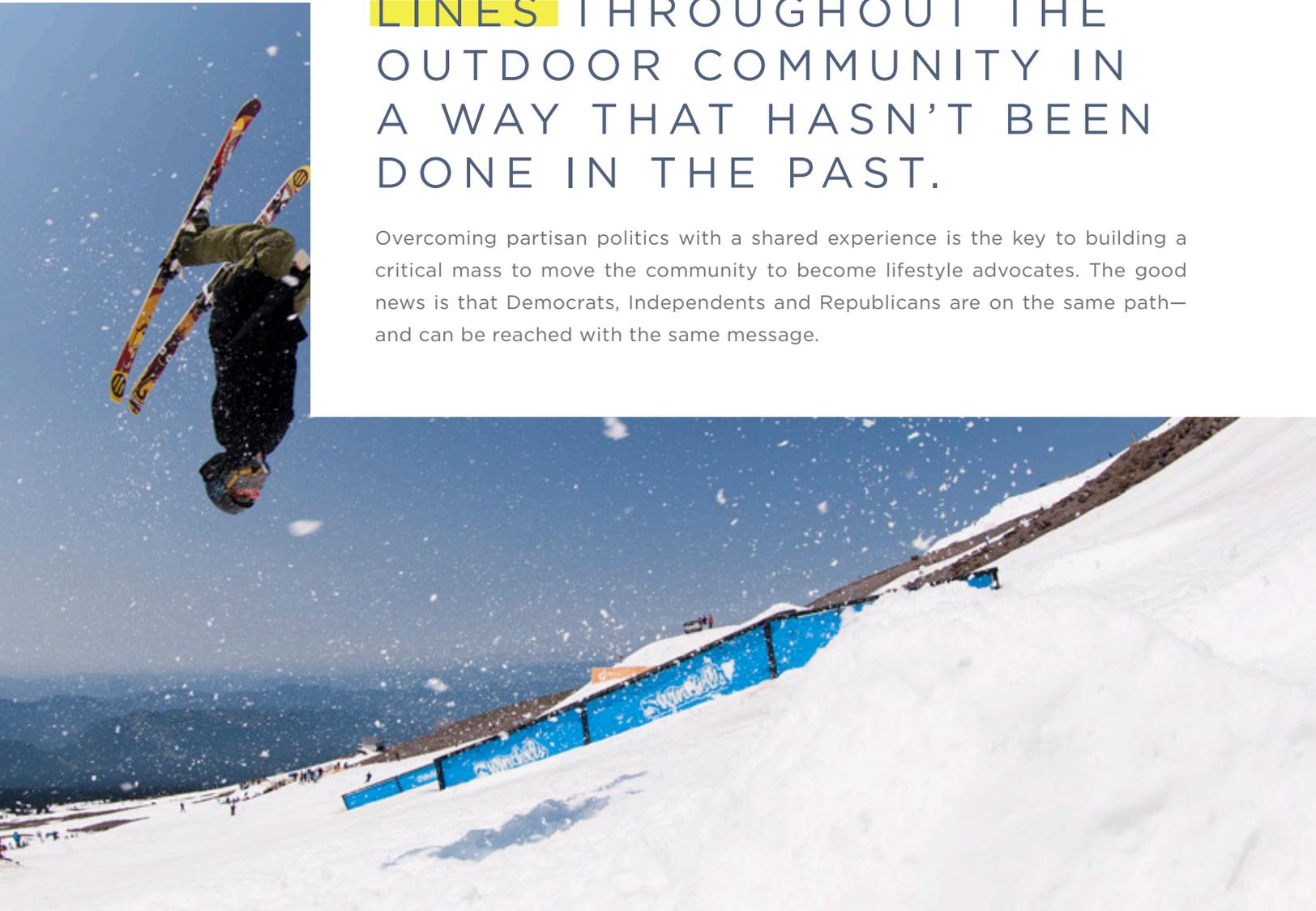
● **Key Insight: The best way to get a majority of outdoor enthusiasts to take communal action against climate change is to first show them how it negatively impacts the places they love and the sports that rock their world. The path to social action goes through personal experiences and consequences.**

# A RESONANT, NON-PARTISAN MESSAGE: FROM SAVING THE PLANET TO **SAVING A LIFESTYLE.**

The widely shared distress of losing cherished outdoor lifestyles provides the opportunity to motivate a majority of the outdoor community with one simple message. Research shows what motivates people to pursue their sport—the desire for a better life through physical and psychological improvement. It also reveals how they see climate change impacting their sport and lifestyle—greater distress triggered by the fear of less balance and loss of life legacy.

## THIS COMMON GROUND HAS THE POTENTIAL TO **REACH ACROSS PARTY LINES** THROUGHOUT THE OUTDOOR COMMUNITY IN A WAY THAT HASN'T BEEN DONE IN THE PAST.

Overcoming partisan politics with a shared experience is the key to building a critical mass to move the community to become lifestyle advocates. The good news is that Democrats, Independents and Republicans are on the same path—and can be reached with the same message.



# CHANGING THE WAY WE SPEAK TO TRANSFORM ADVOCACY.

The research shows that the traditional climate and environmental movement is leaving people behind and missing opportunities to get the outdoor community to take action. We can reach communities that traditional climate organizations cannot by starting with personal connections and meeting people where they are. By rooting people in the places and lifestyles they love, we can rally climate action by first talking about how we can save places, shared experiences and traditions. This will prevent alienating those who are turned off by politics, the perceived partisan nature of the issue or feel too overwhelmed to take action. Our research suggests the greatest success can be had by changing the message progression to the following:

**Person → Place → Climate Change → Empowerment**

vs.

Climate Change, People, Advocacy, Politics

## “WHAT’S HAPPENING TO THE WORLD IS NOT AS MOTIVATING AS WHAT’S HAPPENING TO ME.”

Attempts to engage people in climate change advocacy often disregard where they start from. Going right to the extreme impacts about groups and communities, discussing global warming, focusing on political viewpoints—this progression most often causes people to step back from the conversation and avoid it altogether.

The new progression grounds the message with the individual first and the importance of their sport to their being. Identify a place of importance in where they live and play—and acknowledge the community they’ve built around that place. Then bring in climate messaging, being specific and personal about how climate change is impacting their lifestyle. Speak to their experience—it’s too easy for people to assume the effects of climate change are in the future or somewhere else in the world. Finally, empower these like-minded individuals to move past their individual actions to make an impact.

# IN SHORT, WE ARE STILL ADVOCATING FOR CLIMATE ADVOCACY AND CHANGE, BUT WE'RE DOING IT IN A WAY THAT IS PERSONALLY RELEVANT.

**Below is an example of how POW tweaked its mission statement before and after this research and revelation:**

*"POW works against climate change by turning passionate outdoor people into effective climate advocates. We are a community of athletes, thought pioneers and forward-thinking business leaders working to affect systemic solutions to climate change."*

**Here is the message after we applied the personal message progression:**

*"POW helps passionate outdoor people protect the places and lifestyles they love from climate change. We are a community of athletes, scientists, creatives, and business leaders advancing non-partisan policies that protect our world today and for future generations."*



## LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT HAS CHANGED AND WHY:

1. Outdoor enthusiasts don't necessarily want to be climate advocates; they want to protect the places and lifestyles they love from climate change and will become advocates to do so. Going right into climate activism will turn them off.
2. Outdoor enthusiasts don't intuitively want to affect systemic political solutions to climate change. That kind of activist jargon will alienate about two-thirds of our potential audience. What they are willing to do is join with like-minded people to advance nonpartisan solutions to protecting their world from climate change—protecting the balance in their lives and leaving a legacy to family and society.

# ONE SIMPLE FRAMING MESSAGE WORKS FOR ALL.

This narrative captures an effective message and activation strategy in one statement:

The outdoor places where you escape to find and create your best self are under threat from extreme weather. Climate change is making it harder and harder to do the sports that rock your world. POW helps you save your great escape by identifying cool solutions and helping you advocate for their adoption. It may not change the whole world, but it will give you a fighting chance to save yours for generations to come.

Using these findings and messaging recommendations, advocacy groups, athletes and outdoor brands can build a powerful, nonpartisan political force through lifestyle advocacy, weaving these insights into value statements, programs, engagement strategies and products.

# INTRODUCING THE OUTDOOR STATE

# WE ARE THE OUTDOOR STATE

We are the Outdoor State. From powder to pines, mountain tops to coastal surfs, Not defined by borders, but still crossing paths. United by our natural playground, And, exhilarated by our great escapes. Now it's up to us to take a stand. Because climate change has reached every backyard, impacting us all, threatening what we love. Together, we are millions of voices who will deny the deniers, and protect our Outdoor State for the generations yet to come. Standing side by side on election day, doing what we must. Knowing every vote will trigger an avalanche of change. History will remember what we stand for.

**JOIN US.**

Are you an outdoor brand **interested in the consumer data** behind this report?

Seeking beta on the best route to matching your products with your customers to not only get outside, but get involved in the climate fight?

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THANK YOU