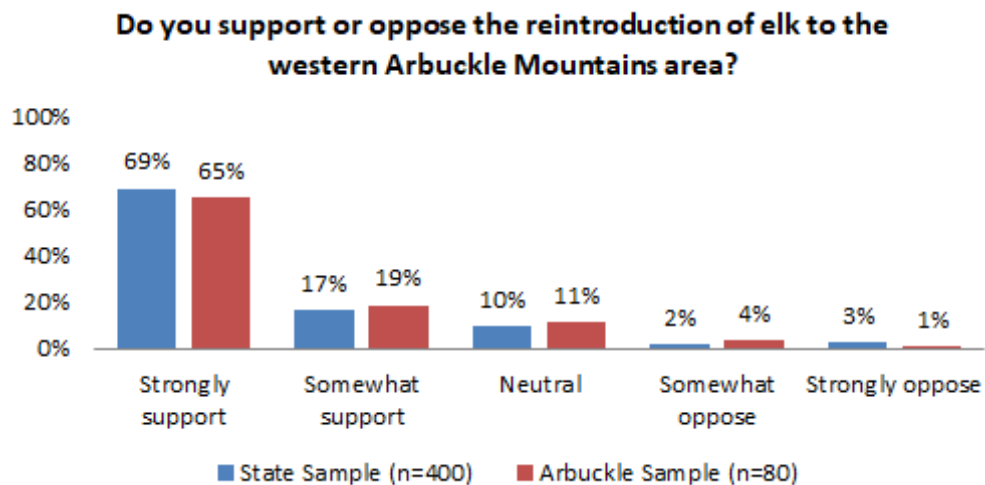


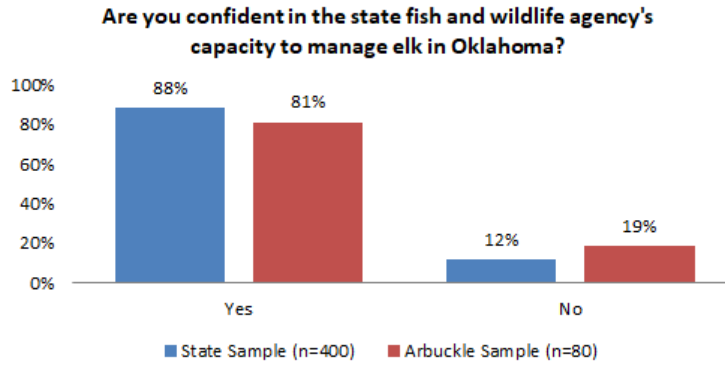
ODWC is considering the reintroduction of elk to south central Oklahoma near the Arbuckle Mountains. Due to the potential impact of elk on the landscape we collected information on perceptions and concerns of Arbuckle-area residents. Because wildlife benefit all residents of the state, we also collected data from a statewide sample to see how Oklahomans would support or oppose a reintroduction to this region.

The data shown in these graphs represents the opinions of 400 Oklahomans from across the state and 80 Oklahomans that specifically live in the Arbuckle region. The statewide sample has been weighted to reflect the demographics of the state. Support for the reintroduction was high in both groups.



Arbuckle Region Specifics: We asked those that live in the Arbuckle region if they own land, what the main use of that land is, and how many years they have lived in the region. The results continued to have strong support for an introduction. For respondents that own land, particularly if that land supports agriculture production, there was a slight increase in the opposition. Finally, there was a small increase in opposition from those that have lived in the region for over 20 years.

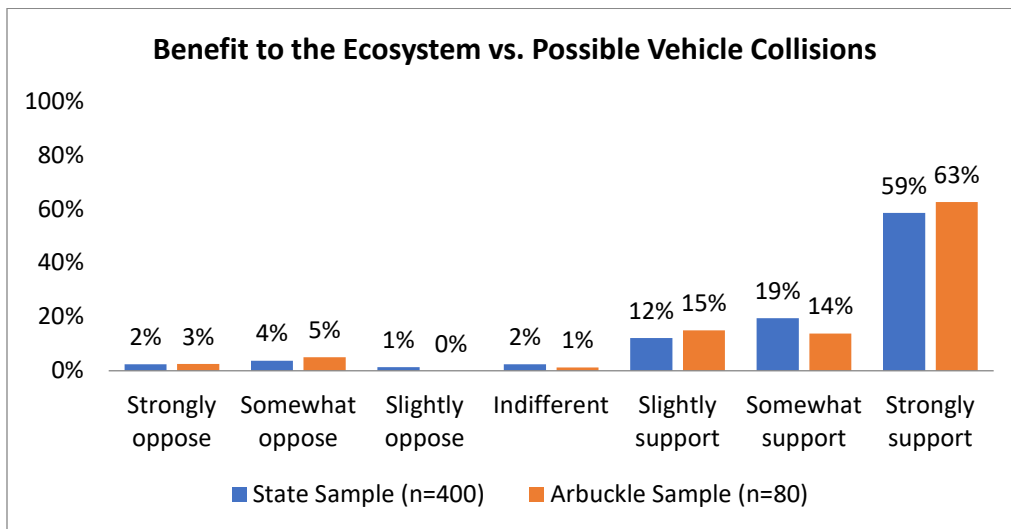
We also wanted to know if people trust us to manage these elk once they are released. The vast majority of both the statewide sample and the Arbuckle sample have confidence in ODWC:



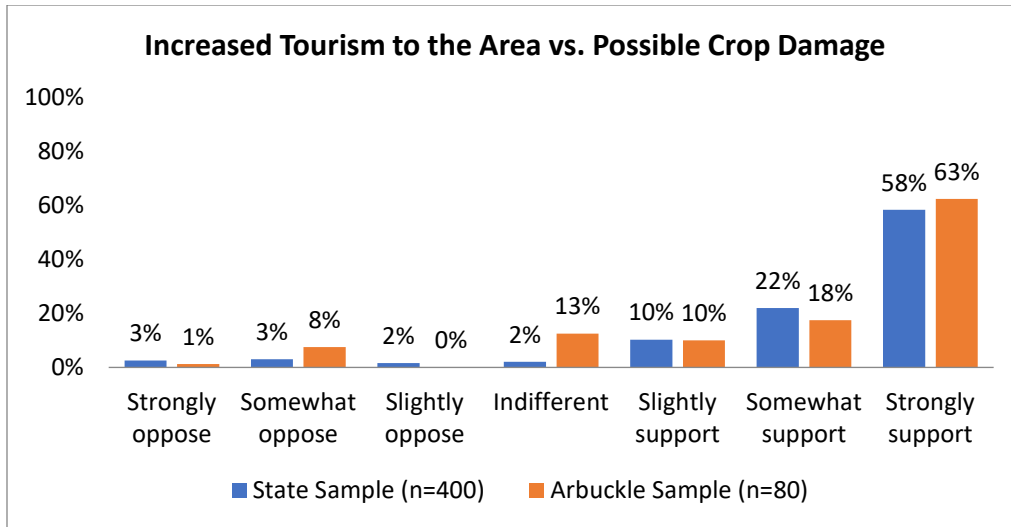
To better understand the concerns that constituents may have related to the reintroduction and how that may influence support or opposition, we asked a series of questions proposing benefits aligned with possible concerns to see if it would change their initial opinion of the reintroduction.

These questions were proposed as:

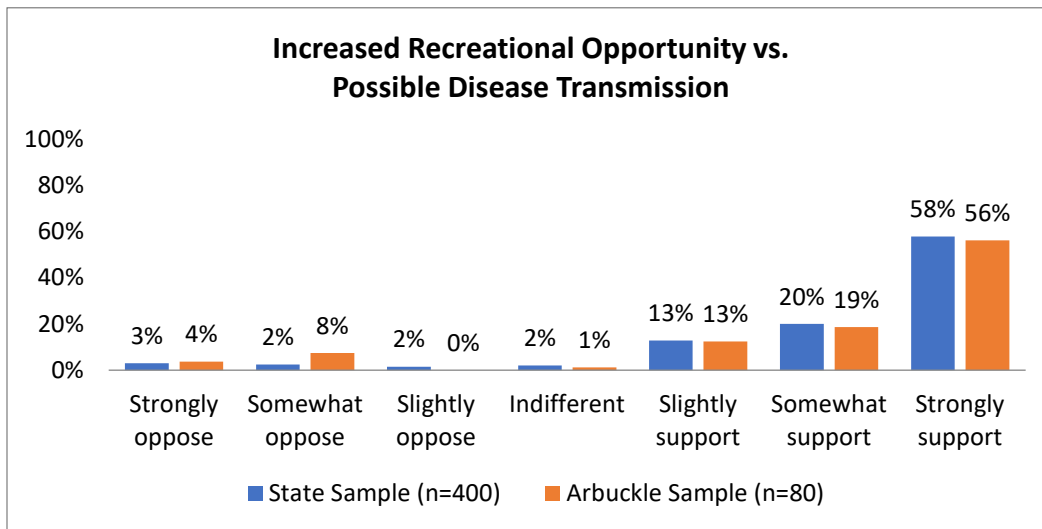
“Supporters say that reintroducing elk “.....”, but people who oppose a reintroduction say that “.....”, knowing this do you support or oppose the elk reintroduction?”



Given this information, strong support in the statewide sample decreased by 10% and the Arbuckle sample decreased by 2%.

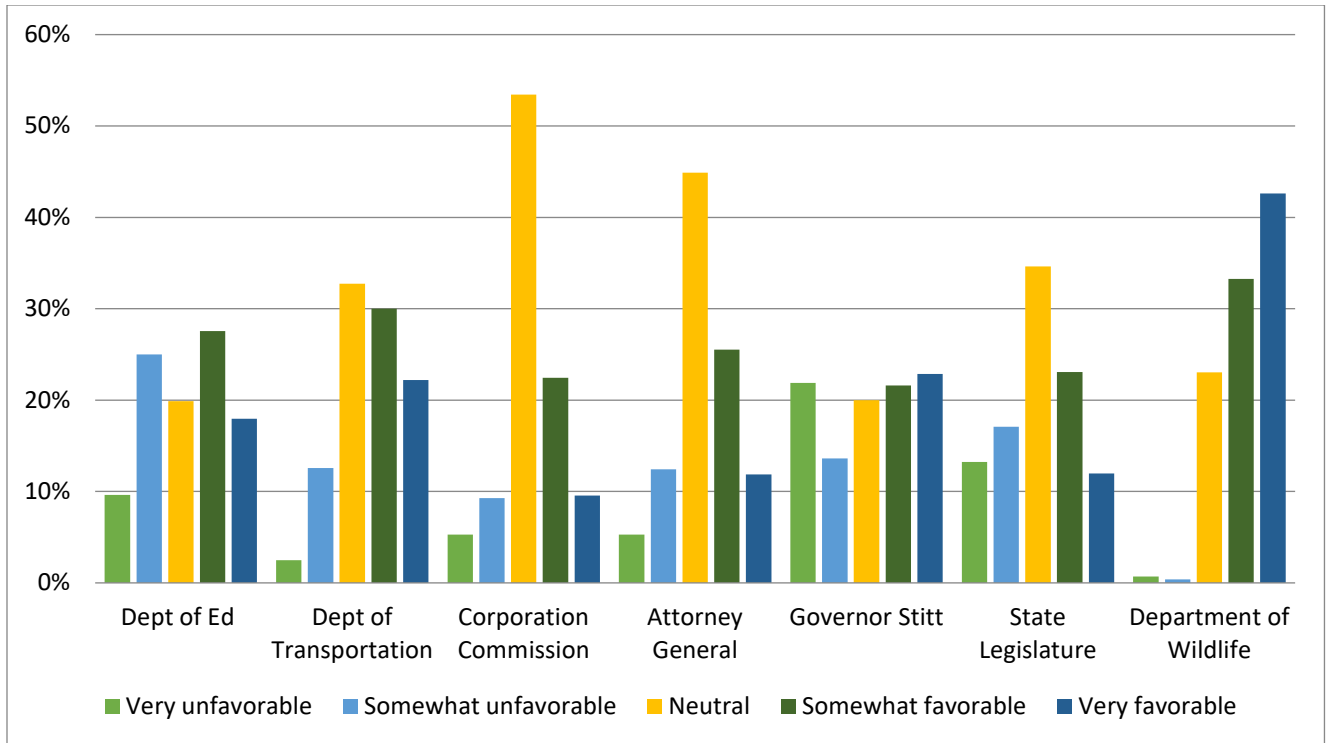


Given this information, strong support in the statewide sample decreased by 11% and the Arbuckle sample decreased by 2%.



Given this information, strong support in the statewide sample decreased by 11% and the Arbuckle sample decreased by 9%.

We also wanted to know general favorability of our agency. This can help us understand why people may have answered the way they did in terms of this reintroduction, but it is also helpful to know in the future as we make different decisions about our state’s fish and wildlife populations. For comparison, we asked respondents their feelings towards a variety of governing bodies. As seen below, out of all government bodies, ODWC is much more favorable with few responses indicating somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable.



Finally, we asked an open-ended question looking at the benefits that people see for this reintroduction and the answers included: hunting opportunities, viewing opportunities, benefits to the ecosystem and diversity of species. We also asked an open-ended question related to concerns that people might have and keeping them off the road, poaching, property damage and disease rose to the top (these were asked ahead of the questions where we posed the benefits and concerns to the respondents).