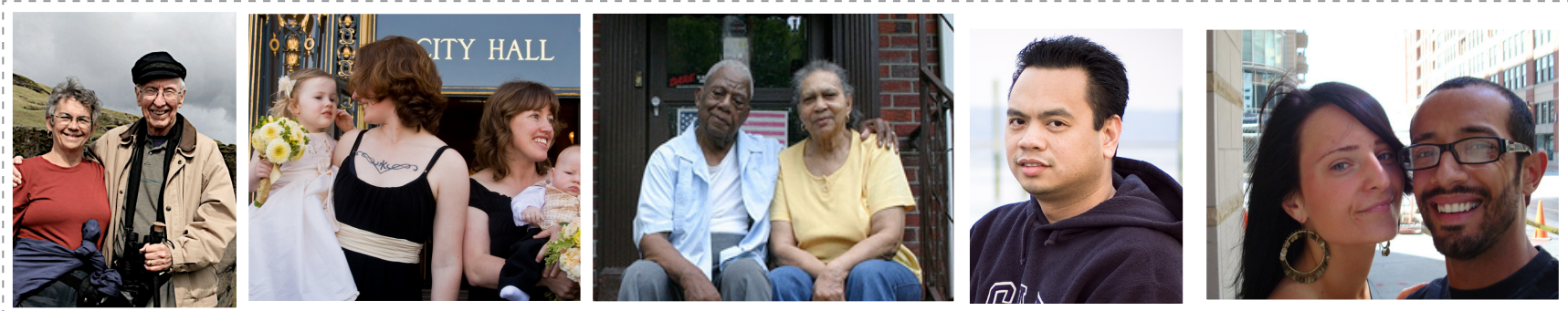


RE:GREEN



THE ECOLOGICAL ROADMAP

A Guide to American Social Values and Environmental Engagement

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executive summary
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EARTHJUSTICE

Because the earth needs a good lawyer

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introduction

Most Americans say that they care about the environment, yet a growing number believe that the situation is hopeless. And even those who think that something can be done don't engage nearly as much in environmental advocacy as one might expect.

This disconnect between ecological concern and action must be addressed, given the broad public support needed to tackle increasingly complex ecological challenges, including climate change. Unfortunately, traditional demographic research fails to address this disconnect because it doesn't provide insight into variations in worldviews that either motivate people to get involved or create barriers to action—or even trigger anti-environmental reactions.

To fill this gap, Earthjustice launched the Social Capital Project in 2005, so that we, our clients, and others could better mobilize the base of support for environmental protection. We felt that it was imperative to understand how the environment fits into people's broader worldviews, so we created the Ecological Roadmap, a national segmentation study of the American public that organizes people according to how they rank more than 130 social values.

These social values shape the public's understanding of and engagement in environmental issues. The Roadmap has allowed us to develop new communications and advocacy approaches with the potential to shape those values.

To find more effective ways of building long-term public support for conservation in a region, Earthjustice in 2007 launched the Building Social Capital in the Pacific Northwest Pilot Project and produced the Ecological Roadmap for the Pacific Northwest.

This is the first micro-targeting tool to identify segments of the public based on their environmental worldviews and to locate these various segments at the census block level within a region, and to validate the findings through extensive qualitative research. Mapping social values in the Northwest allows leaders in the region to see exactly where there are opportunities to engage segments of the public and grow their base of support.



methodology

Earthjustice launched the **Social Capital Project** to help our clients and partners:

- Positively frame environmental advocacy; and
- Build public support for environmental protection as we address specific environmental challenges.

With the firm American Environics, Earthjustice's Social Capital Project analyzed home surveys of approximately 2,000 Americans 15 years of age and older, voters and non-voters, citizens and non-citizens, about a range of values. The American Values Survey is a tested instrument used by companies like GM and Proctor & Gamble.

The 2007 survey includes personality, social psychology, and media use to test issues including environment, foreign policy, health, kids, race, sexuality, religion, tax, fiscal, and government. In the end, more than 100 social values constructs were measured in more than 800 questions.

The Social Capital Project then validated and clarified these findings with a dozen focus groups in New York, California, Washington, and Oregon; and with two additional surveys—one exploring segmentation in Washington state and one around green consumerism. American Environics mapped the segments by comparing segment characteristics with information collected through the U.S. Census.

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segment summaries

TABLE: SEGMENT WORLDVIEWS

	%	
SEGMENT	U.S.	WORLDVIEW ON THE ENVIRONMENT
Greenest Americans	9%	Everything is connected, and our daily actions have an impact on the environment.
Idealists	3%	Green lifestyles are part of a new way of being.
Caretakers	24%	Healthy families need a healthy environment.
Traditionalists	20%	Religion and morality dictate actions in a world where humans are superior to nature.
Driven Independents	7%	Protecting the earth is fine as long as it doesn't get in the way of success.
Murky Middles	17%	Indifferent to most everything, including the environment.
Fatalists	5%	Getting material and status needs met on a daily basis trumps worries about the planet.
Materialists	7%	Little can be done to protect the environment, so why not get a piece of the pie.
Cruel Worlders	6%	Resentment and isolation leave no room for environmental concerns.
UnGreens	3%	Environmental degradation and pollution are inevitable parts of America's prosperity.

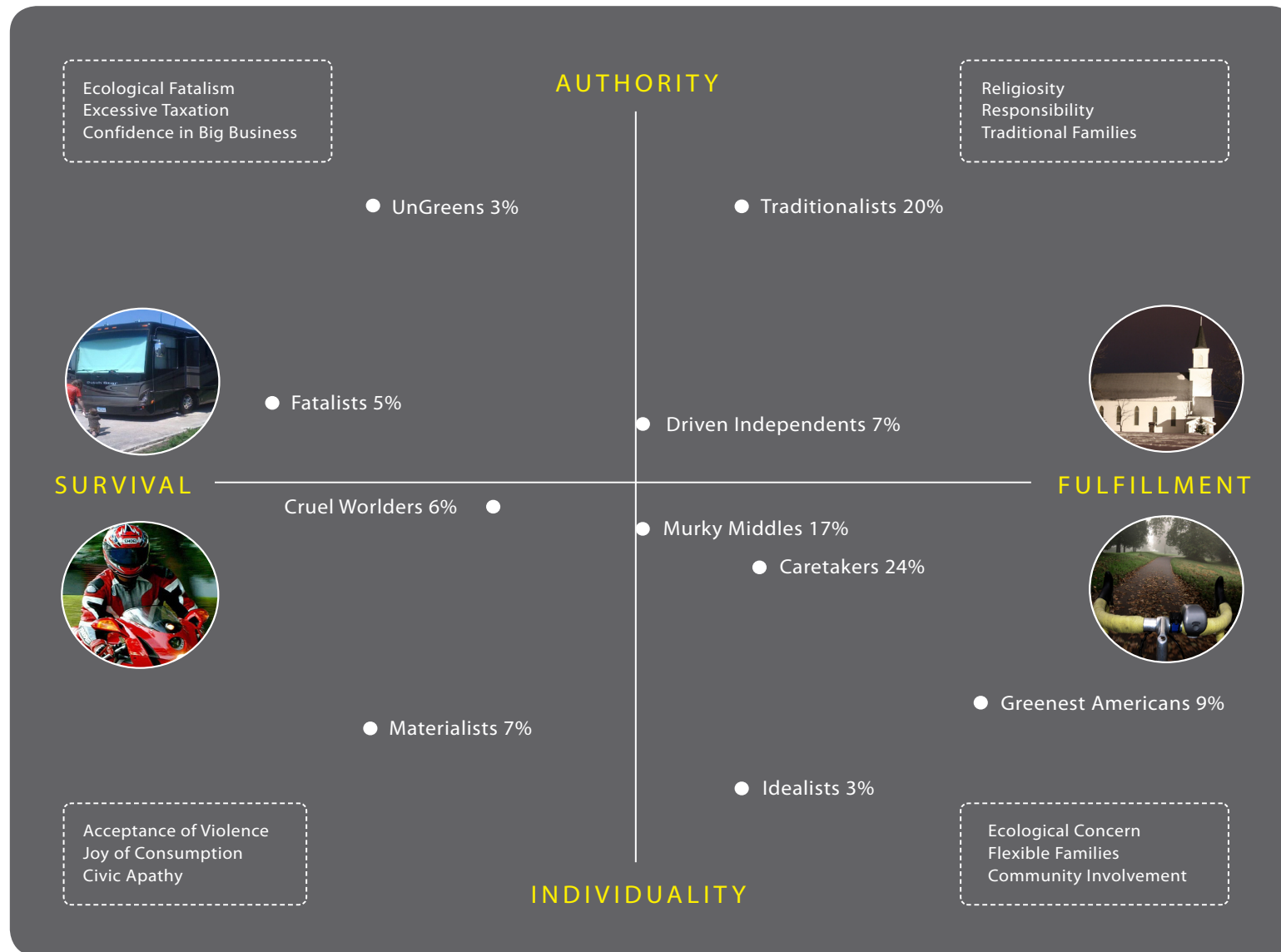
Americans can be identified by 10 worldviews on the environment.

The top three segments are the most environmentally friendly, but the majority do not identify as environmentalists.

The three segments in the middle don't spend a lot of time worrying about the environment, but they aren't necessarily opposed to environmental protection either.

For the remaining four groups, day-to-day realities and priorities tend to trump any environmental leanings.

CHART: SEGMENTATION MAP

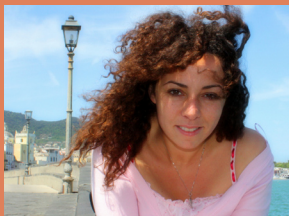


Each of the ten segments are charted according to their relative worldviews. The segments are located within a quadrant based on their unique combination of social values. The chart shows how the segments are positioned in relation to one another along a values spectrum of survival (e.g. *acceptance of violence*) to fulfillment (e.g. *ecological concern*) and from authority (e.g. *religiosity*) to individuality (e.g. *flexible families*). For example, the chart shows that the Greenest Americans—who are the only segment to have *ecological concern* as their top value—are firmly rooted in the fulfillment/individuality quadrant with a worldview that differs from the majority of Americans.

getting to know the segments

YOUTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Apathetic, materialistic and fatalistic, the majority of young American adults have values that reflect a lack of concern for their own lives, let alone others or the planet—*ecological fatalism* is a top value for the two youngest groups, the Materialists and the Fatalists. Many of those who do care are Idealists, who might better be able to influence their peers than environmental messages associated with older generations.



GREENEST AMERICANS

The environment is their top issue. To members of this largely older, highly educated, wealthy, white segment, it's important to think about one's life in the context of others. They believe in taking the steps they can to reduce their impact on the environment. For more than half of this group, environmental values are primarily acted on through daily lifestyle and purchasing decisions, so the focus needs to be on trying to get them beyond green shopping and toward environmental activism.



Top three values: *ecological concern, comfort with ambiguity, flexible families*

Bottom three values: *ecological fatalism, civic apathy, sexism*

IDEALISTS

These young, active, independent thinkers are cynical about government, business and the mainstream media. They hold ecological values twice as strongly as the average person, but only half as much as the Greenest Americans. They are do-it-yourself environmentalists, whether it's canning homegrown vegetables or converting their car to run on biodiesel. Members of this segment prefer small social groups and organizations; reaching them through online communities and peer groups might be the way to get them fully engaged.



Top three values: *culture sampling, religion a la carte, interest in the unexplained*

Bottom three values: *ecological fatalism, traditional family, religiosity*

CARETAKERS

They care about the environment, and there are a lot of them—a quarter of all Americans. These fair-minded, family-focused individuals do not strongly identify as environmentalists and they care even more about other issues, such as rising energy costs. To them, environmentalism is not about calculating their carbon footprint, but rather about ensuring that there are safe and healthy outdoor places for their families to be together. By tapping into family, health and community concerns, there is potential to motivate this largest of all segments into higher levels of action and engagement.



Top three values: *flexible families, group egalitarianism, acknowledgement of racism*

Bottom three values: *modern racism, xenophobia, ecological fatalism*

TRADITIONALISTS

This older, rural, moderate-to-conservative group is highly religious. They care about family values and time-honored ways of doing things. To them, families and communities should take care of those in need, not the government. They express little concern for the environment, but are not fatalistic about it either. Part of the problem is their negative perception of environmentalists as being too liberal and too challenging of authority. But it may be possible to connect ecological values to a morality around stewardship and legacy.



Top three values: *religiosity, traditional family, humans superior to animals*

Bottom three values: *religion a la carte, flexible families, sexual permissiveness*

CLIMATE CHANGE

Most Americans, except for the UnGreens, believe it is possible to solve climate change—they just don't want to be the ones to foot the bill. This is true even for segments of the public that believe that climate change is one of the most important problems we face. Except for the Greenest Americans and the Idealists, who are getting more engaged than ever on climate issues, most people worry more about the cost of energy than they do about a warming planet.



DRIVEN INDEPENDENTS

Success is its own reward for this group that features many young professionals. Predominantly male, these social and political independents care little about what others think of them. To them, it's a dog-eat-dog world and they feel no obligation to share what they've got. They are somewhat amenable to change, but it had better not affect their bottom line. Though they worry little about the environment, members of this segment don't believe that our economic progress has to come at a cost to the environment either. The best hope for reaching them is to avoid marketing efforts that rely on new age spiritualism and to try to equate going green with being successful.



HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The environment is a health issue, yet many people who care a lot about their health don't express *ecological concern*. Health concerns have the potential to bridge the environmental divide and get groups such as Driven Independents and Fatalists to make the connection between personal and planetary health.

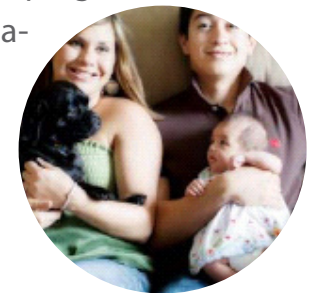


Top three values: *modern racism, social mobility, just deserts*

Bottom three values: *religiosity, acknowledgement of racism, ecological fatalism*

MURKY MIDDLES

This apathetic and socially isolated segment has low expectations for their lives and for life in general. They don't take good care of themselves and, despite being tolerant of others, members of this group are not interested in helping those in need. Average in terms of age, race, income and education, members of this segment are neither fatalistic nor hopeful about ecological issues. They're much more concerned about how much things cost, particularly energy. Yet, proving a correlation between conservation and financial savings might get this passive segment to jump on the green bandwagon.



Top three values: *acceptance of violence, parochialism, civic apathy*

Bottom three values: *modern racism, religiosity, effort toward health*

FATALISTS

Big shoppers, members of this segment tend to be enthusiastic about things they associate with raising their social status. That's why more than any other group, they like the idea of buying organic food, even though they are the least able to afford it and are not interested in environmental issues. Predominantly young, low-income, non-white and urban, they don't see much meaning in their lives and don't think that anything can be done to protect the environment. A more inclusive and culturally diverse environmental movement has the potential to connect with this group.

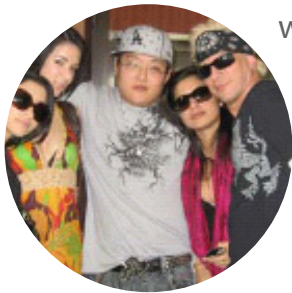


Top three values: *ecological fatalism, modern racism, tried and true*

Bottom three values: *no group inherently superior, liberal communitarianism, comfort with ambiguity*

MATERIALISTS

They don't like being told what to do. This very young segment sees the world as a harsh place, with everyone out for themselves. As a result, they will do whatever it takes to get ahead. Members of this segment enjoy risky behavior and are obsessed with stuff and status. The group least likely to vote, they see little point in environmental activism. It's conceivable that featuring young celebrities who share some of their anti-authoritarian values may attract some interest to green issues.



Top three values: *penchant for risk, modern racism, acceptance of violence*

Bottom three values: *religiosity, liberal communitarianism, social responsibility*

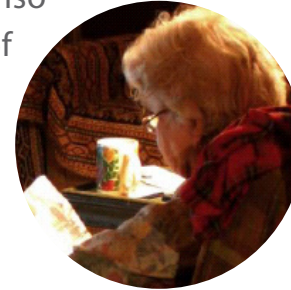
DIVERSITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

People's attitudes toward diversity and racism are a greater indication of *ecological concern* than their race. Americans who score high on *racial fusion*, the belief that ethnic diversity enriches people's lives, tend to be eco-minded. On the other hand, *modern racism*, the view that minorities have gained more than they deserve, is one of the top two values for four segments of the American public—all of which possess little *ecological concern*.



CRUEL WORLDERS

Members of this segment have a pretty bleak outlook on life. They resent being left out of the American Dream and don't believe that the future will be any better. Socially isolated, they find the world a confusing place and tend to be intolerant and wary of others. They pay scant attention to environmental matters and are suspicious of environmentalists. It is hard to act on environmental values when meeting basic needs is such a challenge, but this group's pessimism and antagonism are even bigger barriers.



Top three values: *modern racism, xenophobia, parochialism*

Bottom three values: *culture sampling, pursuit of intensity, meaningful moments*

UNGREENS

The social values of these political conservatives are the polar opposite of the Greenest Americans.

Xenophobic, racist, and sexist, members of this segment believe that Americans deserve their material wealth and shouldn't feel guilty about it. They prize obedience, individual responsibility and the free market. To them, environmentalists are extremists who don't understand that environmental degradation is an inevitable part of a prosperous economy. Their black-and-white worldview is unlikely to change any time soon, but it's important to recognize this group's interest in outdoor recreation.



Top three values: *ecological fatalism, innate good and evil, American entitlement*

Bottom three values: *flexible families, ecological concern, animal equality*

barriers to environmental engagement

The Roadmap, along with extensive focus groups, allowed the Social Capital Project to identify five barriers that keep Americans, even some with the strongest environmental values, from getting involved with environmental issues.

1. **Environmental Sainthood.** Somewhat revered by the most eco-minded Americans, environmentalists are chastised by others for their blind dedication. Real or not, the perception that environmentalists are willing to sacrifice all self-interest to save the earth sets an unattainable standard. Many people will take simple steps such as recycling, but beyond that, they throw up their hands because they feel that they can never be green enough.
2. **Environmental Elitism.** Having the time and money to be green seems out of reach for many. The cost premiums often associated with eco-friendly choices, as well as the stereotype of environmentalists as white, urban professional elites, turns off many people. Ironically, income and race are not the strongest determinants of environmental concern; there are Americans at all income levels and of all races who believe that living in a clean environment, having access to the outdoors, and eating healthy food shouldn't be a luxury.
3. **Environmental Fatalism.** Having a sense that something can be done about the environment and that individuals can help effect that change makes all the difference in engagement on environmental issues. Unfortunately, the majority of Americans don't see the point in getting involved. Values such as *social isolation*, *meaningless life and future*, *civic disengagement*, and *ecological fatalism* dominate American culture overall and have done so since the early 1990s. This is particularly true with younger Americans, who generally distrust any kind of institution and the political process.
4. **Environmental Cognition.** Our brains are wired to process information that conveys a simple cause and effect. But the fundamental interconnectedness of environmental issues makes direct cause and effect difficult to ascertain. It doesn't help that environmental professionals communicate at an expert level, often failing to make the connections between the environment and the issues people care most about—their jobs, their health, and their families. The groups with the highest education levels have the highest levels of *ecological concern*, but even they want simple answers to environmental challenges.
5. **Environmental Overload.** The public, for the most part, finds environmental issues overwhelming. They can't determine which issues are most important, can't tell environmental groups and other actors apart, and can't decide how best to respond. Without a compelling vision of what can be done, the range and magnitude of ecological problems causes people to tune out. Asking people to change a light bulb in response to climate change, for example, does not seem like a significant response to a monumental problem.

barriers to environmental engagement

"I would never consider myself an environmentalist because I can't do it all the way."

-Grandmother
(Greenest American)



The barriers to environmental engagement must be overcome if we are to build broad, active support for real change in political and economic behavior on the scale needed to address the magnitude of challenges such as climate change. Currently, conservation organizations are only appealing to a small subset of the Greenest Americans who are influential but whose numbers do not amount to anything approaching a movement. Furthermore, our research reveals that what appeals to the most ecologically engaged segment of the public often alienates others—even those with strong environmental values—from getting involved.

Although the public has yet to engage deeply in combating climate change despite increased awareness and acceptance of the problem, all is not hopeless for tackling this and other pressing environmental issues. The key is understanding how the various segments of the American public see the world and their place in it. Once you know that, it is possible to overcome the barriers to environmental engagement and motivate people to action.

recommended strategies

Environmentalism is about the appreciation of all life and the interconnections that tie us to each other and to the world around us. If we can tap into that core value and create opportunities for people to directly experience environmental benefits in their lives, we will make great strides in building a green, engaged public.

STRATEGY 1:

Redefine what it means to care about the environment. It is now seen as extremist or out of reach.

- Use non-expert language and focus on the values that environmental campaigns stand for, not the technical details. Images associated with ideas mean a lot. Empty, isolated landscapes or presenting people as victims of environmental harm doesn't connect with most people.
- Bring a range of perspectives and constituencies into environmental campaigns. Consider how multiple issues and stakeholders intersect with environmental issues.
- Don't make people feel guilty about their impact on the environment. Don't rely on scare tactics of doom and gloom either. Tales need to be told about how people can be part of the solution to man-made environmental problems.

STRATEGY 2:

The environment has become personal. Illustrate the interconnectedness of environmental issues.

- Illustrate how environmental issues connect with each other and to daily life. Don't assume that people understand why it is important to protect a particular natural resource or endangered species. Make the connections obvious.
- Demonstrate tangible improvements to people's lives as a result of environmental protection measures. The need to address environmental problems often seems abstract and less immediate than other concerns, such as the economy or health issues. Make it concrete and something that people experience directly.
- Collaborate with partners who represent the full range of impacts environmental issues can have, such as economic, health and social justice concerns. Consider the stakeholders' entire interests—geographic, cultural, and economic.



STRATEGY 3:

Leverage personal actions and turn them into collective action. Make the connection between daily lifestyle choices and larger systemic issues, such as biodiversity and climate change.

- Assess which lifestyle actions would have larger political, social, and economic impacts if they were focused and added up. People don't want fifty choices to save the environment. They want to know the one or two things that they can do.
- Provide feedback mechanisms for engagement. What are the results of actions the public takes?
- Rather than change behavior through increasing knowledge, tap into existing environmental attitudes, emotions, and beliefs. Provide regular prompts and encouragement that promote greater engagement over time.

STRATEGY 4:

Fill people's need for social connectedness and a sense of purpose in life as a way to drive engagement on the environment.

- Create environmental narratives based on values, not issues, that connect to everyday challenges that people face.
- Solve environmental problems in a way that also overcomes *social isolation* and other fatalistic values by looking for ways to build community and by addressing issues such as poverty and job creation at the same time.
- Give people a large role in creating change. Writing checks and letters is important, but young people in particular want more of a hand in campaigns. The use of social media in conjunction with grassroots organizing usually delivers more of an impact.



ECOLOGICAL ROADMAP FOR THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST: Mapping Social Values in Oregon and Washington



December 2008

introduction

The [Ecological Roadmap for the Pacific Northwest](#) reveals that, as is the case nationally, concern for the environment doesn't always translate into environmental activism. At the same time, people in the region are still relatively connected to the natural world and have a strong attachment to and appreciation of the region's beauty and rural landscapes.

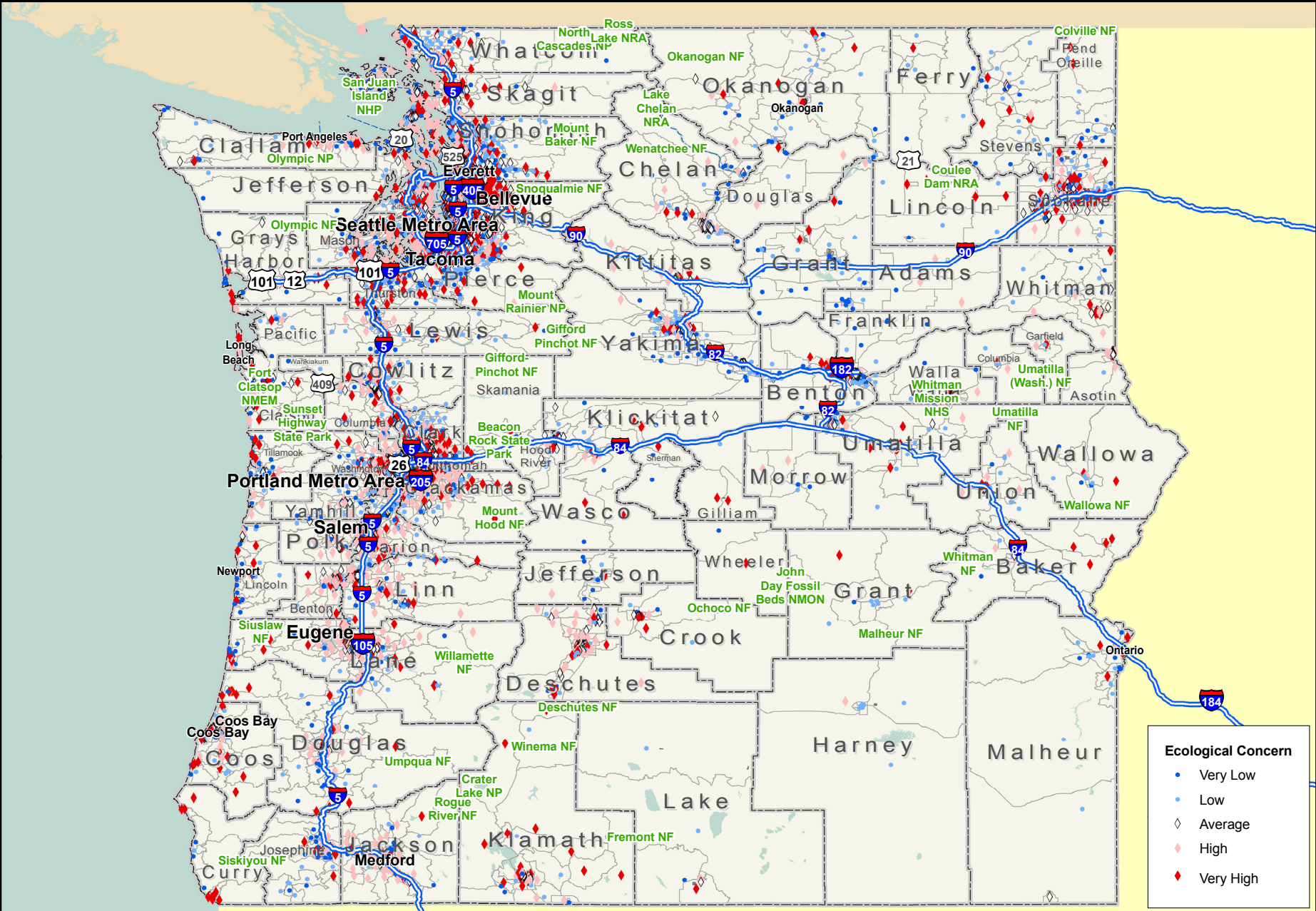
One of the reasons that engagement in environmental protection is not as strong as it could be is because even though the Pacific Northwest is home to more of the Greenest Americans than the national average, this segment often can be found living right next to people with very different worldviews. This occurs in places where strong support for environmental protection is assumed and in places where it is not. As a result, values such as *ecological fatalism* and *humans superior to animals* are equally or even more dominant in the culture than *ecological concern* and *animal equity*.

By mapping social values down to the community level, the Roadmap helps identify where there are opportunities to engage the most ecologically minded segments of the public and how to reach those who do not hold the environment as a central concern.

Reaching out to new constituencies requires an understanding of how people who do not pay close attention to politics experience both the benefits and degradation of the environment. With this perspective in mind, it is possible to identify the common values that bridge from the most ecologically engaged to less green, yet still reachable segments of the public and to connect daily environmental concerns to the larger systemic and policy debates.

Bridge values, such as *social responsibility*, *social connectedness*, and *holistic health*, can be tapped to help frame issues in ways that resonate for the Greenest Americans as well as other segments of the public. By revealing the connections between the way people live their lives, how their choices impact the natural world, and what they can do to have the greatest positive impact, the Ecological Roadmap for the Pacific Northwest points the way forward to growing the conservation base.

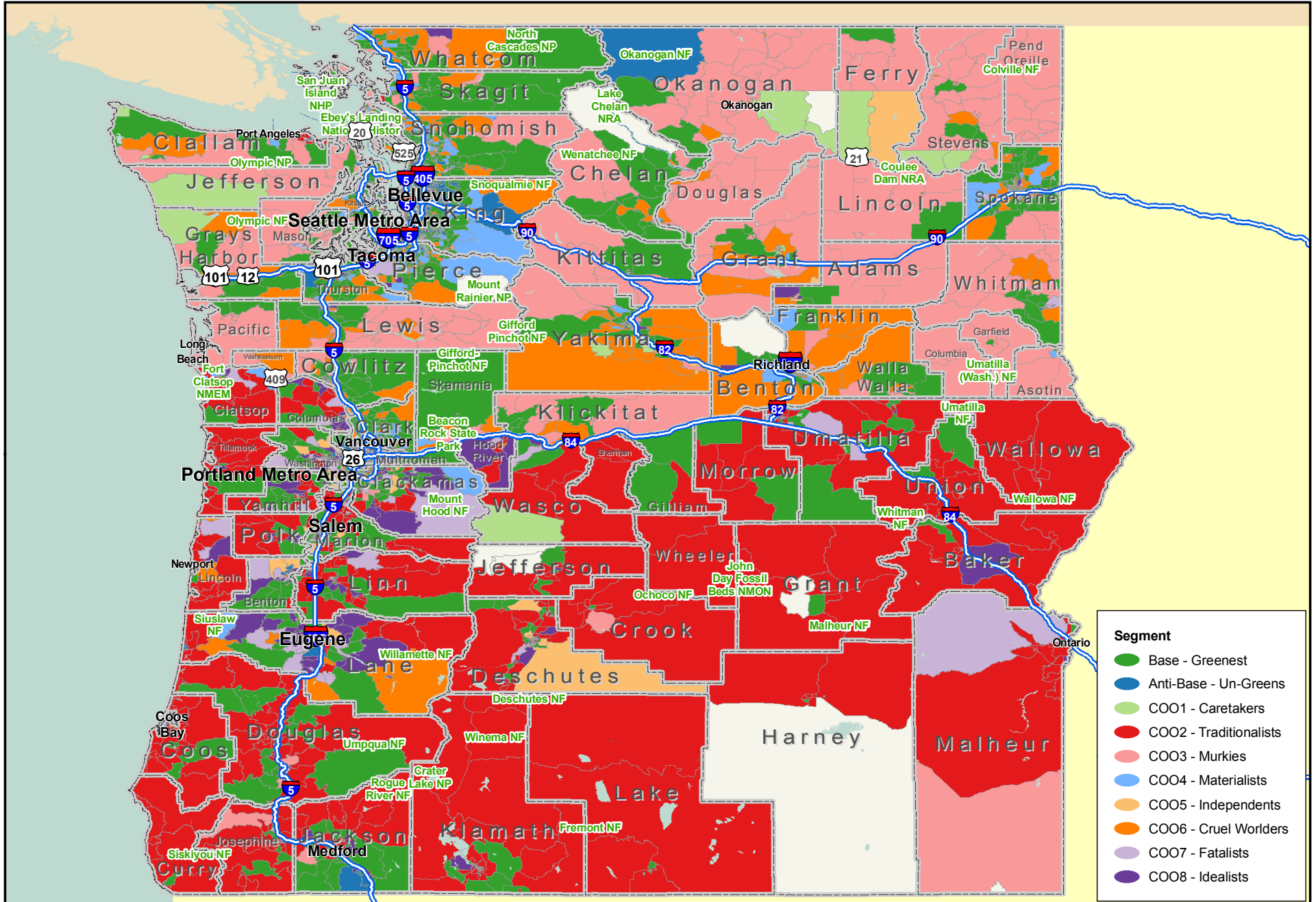
ecological concern: Oregon and Washington



DATA: AMERICAN ENVIRONICS

MAP DESIGN: ENVIRONICS ANALYTICS

ecological roadmap segment presence likelihood: Oregon and Washington

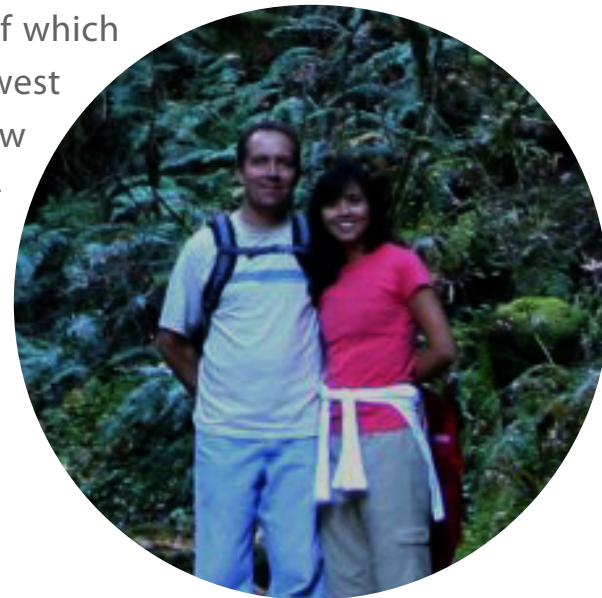


three types of communities

Earthjustice has identified three types of communities in the Pacific Northwest, and a mix of environmental passion and apathy is at play in all of them.

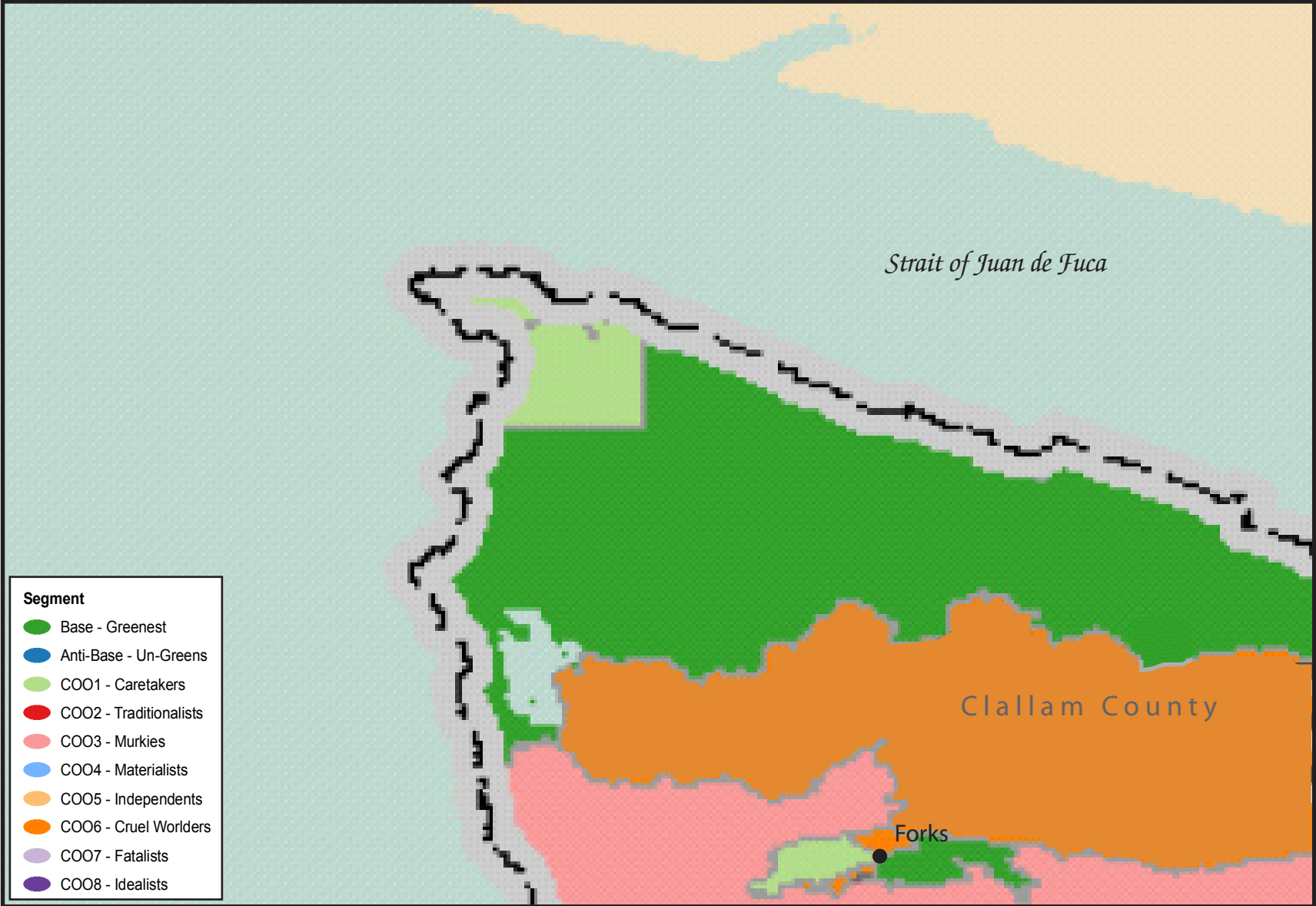
1. GATEWAY REGIONS are rural areas outside national parks and recreation areas in Oregon and Washington, and they possess pockets of higher-than-expected ecological values despite their reputations as battlegrounds on natural resource issues. Places such as Port Angeles, Forks, Hell's Canyon, Fossil, and Ashford are adapting to rapidly changing economies and are adopting new community members, from immigrant workers to middle-class retirees. Once dependent on timber, mining, and grazing, today's gateway regions increasingly depend on a tourist economy that wants to see lodges instead of clearcuts.

Along with the Greenest Americans, these areas are also home to many UnGreens, Traditionalists, and Cruel Worlders, the latter of which are more than twice as likely to reside in the Pacific Northwest as they are nationally. The Greenest Americans, often new to gateway regions, don't want to antagonize their neighbors, but they care deeply and could be mobilized if they knew they weren't alone. They hold values such as *social responsibility*, *social connectedness*, and *holistic health* in common with the UnGreens and Traditionalists.



EXAMPLE 1: GATEWAY REGION MAP

ecological roadmap segment presence likelihood: Forks



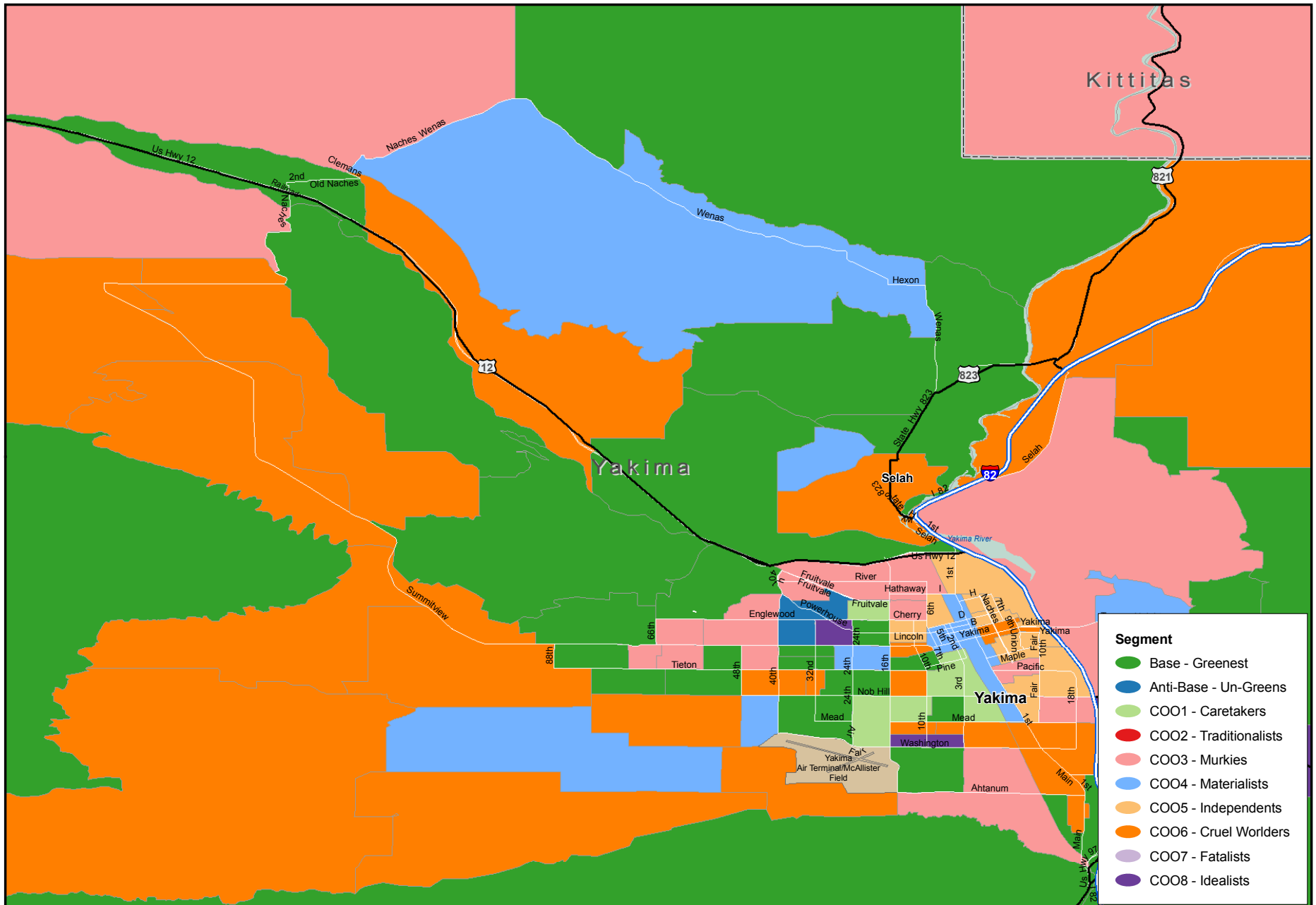
2. QUALITY OF LIFE COMMUNITIES are places where people move (or stay) for safe neighborhoods, easy commutes, and sense of place. People living in communities such as Spokane, Yakima, Medford and Bend value convenience, affordability, morality, and community, along with clean air and water. Local parks and beautiful scenery draw and keep residents in these family-friendly communities, from Greenest Americans and Caretakers to Ungreens, Traditionalists, and Murky Middles.



As farmlands are converted into housing and retail developments, and as the country roads become more congested, these communities are becoming increasingly connected to conservation issues. The Caretakers, for example, might get engaged in creating or protecting local parks as a way of ensuring their children or grandchildren have access to safe, clean places to play outside.

EXAMPLE 2: QUALITY OF LIFE COMMUNITY MAP

ecological roadmap segment presence likelihood: Yakima



DATA: AMERICAN ENVIRONICS

MAP DESIGN: ENVIRONICS ANALYTICS

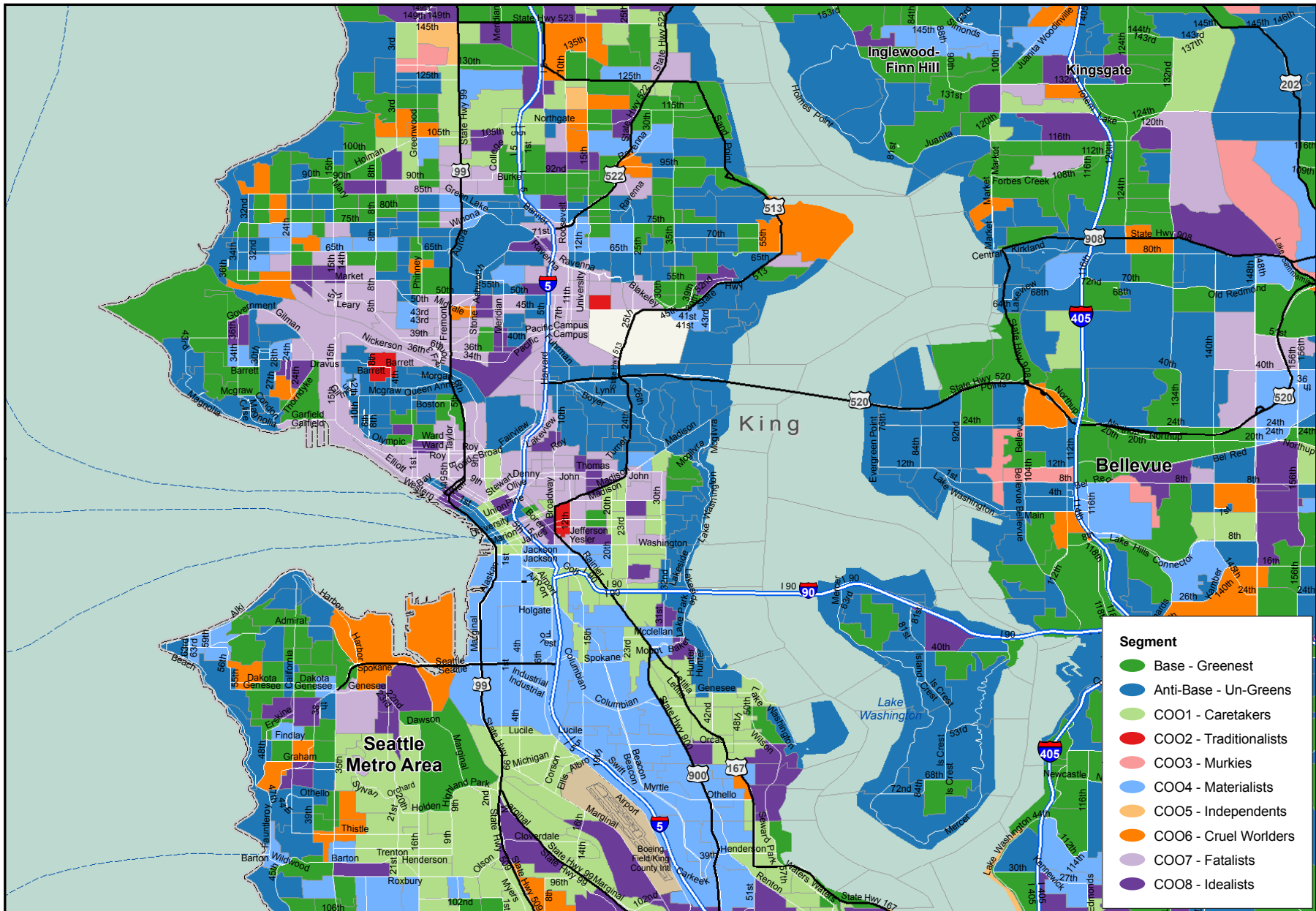
3. GREEN CITIES are places where many residents want eco-friendly lifestyles—parks, farmers markets, mass transportation—and access to wilderness areas. Yet even in these cities, such as Seattle, Portland, Bellingham, and Eugene, where levels of environmental activism are assumed to be high, the story is a bit more complicated.

Greenest Americans, Caretakers, and Idealists live alongside a large number of Cruel Worlders and Murky Middles. Even those with strong green values tend to express them in their daily choices—recycling, buying green products, using alternative transportation—rather than through advocacy activities or engagement in public decision-making processes.



EXAMPLE 3: GREEN CITY MAP

ecological roadmap segment presence likelihood: Downtown Seattle



DATA: AMERICAN ENVIRONICS

MAP DESIGN: ENVIRONICS ANALYTICS