

American Millennials: Cultivating the Next Generation of Ocean Conservationists



Packard Foundation Turns 50: Looks to the Future

Research Background

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation's U.S. West Coast subprogram and Communications teams embarked upon a quest for new insights into U.S. ocean conservation opportunities, partnered with Edge Research.

Central question: Can we elevate ocean conservation as a priority?

Millennials are key audience. Some known about them, but we wanted to deepen understanding.

By sharing our findings, we aim to contribute to strategic thinking, planning and knowledge.

Additional briefings planned for grantees, funders and broader ocean conservation field.

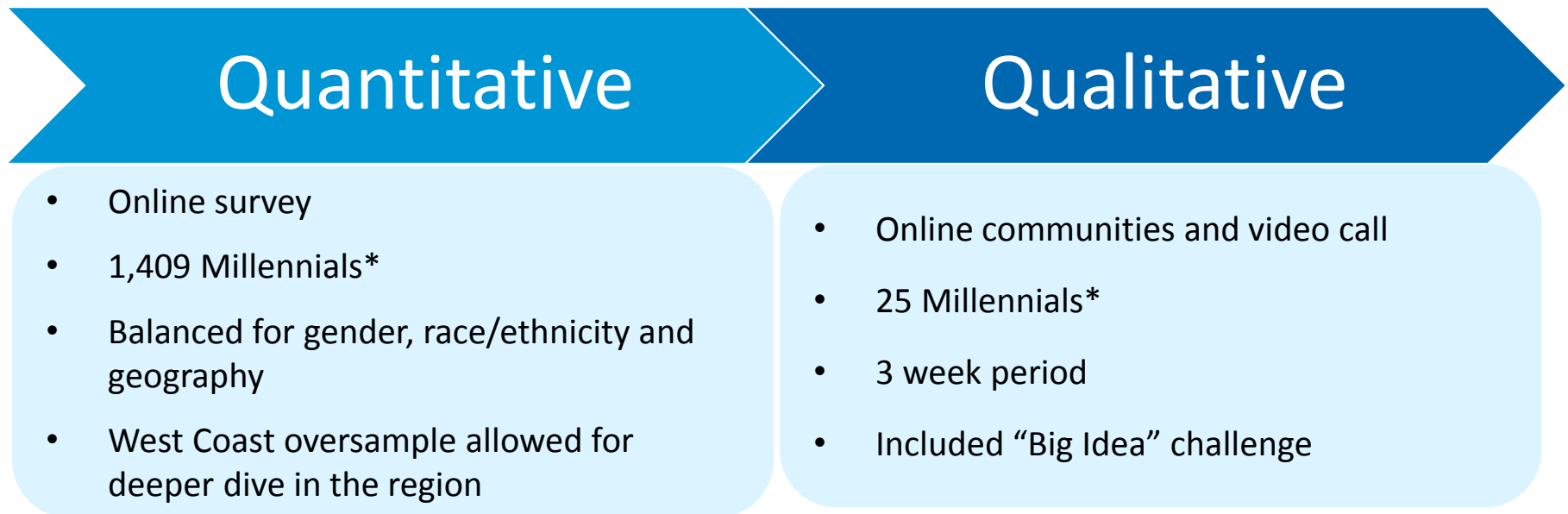
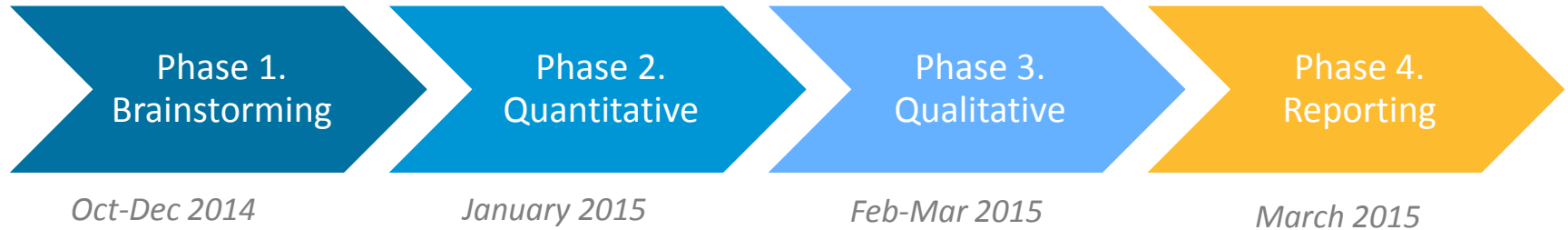
Research Goals

Long-term: Provide baseline for measuring cultivation of next generation leaders and supporters of ocean conservation.

Short-term: Provide direction for the Foundation, its grantees and other partners on Millennial attitudes towards ocean conservation, their values, and future engagement opportunities.

Research Approach

Used research techniques that connect with the way Millennials communicate



**For this research, a Millennial was defined as an individual age 19-30 (standard: born between 1981-1997).*

Millennial Outlook

Millennial Outlook

Environment a second tier issue, as it is for Americans in general



My relationship to the ocean

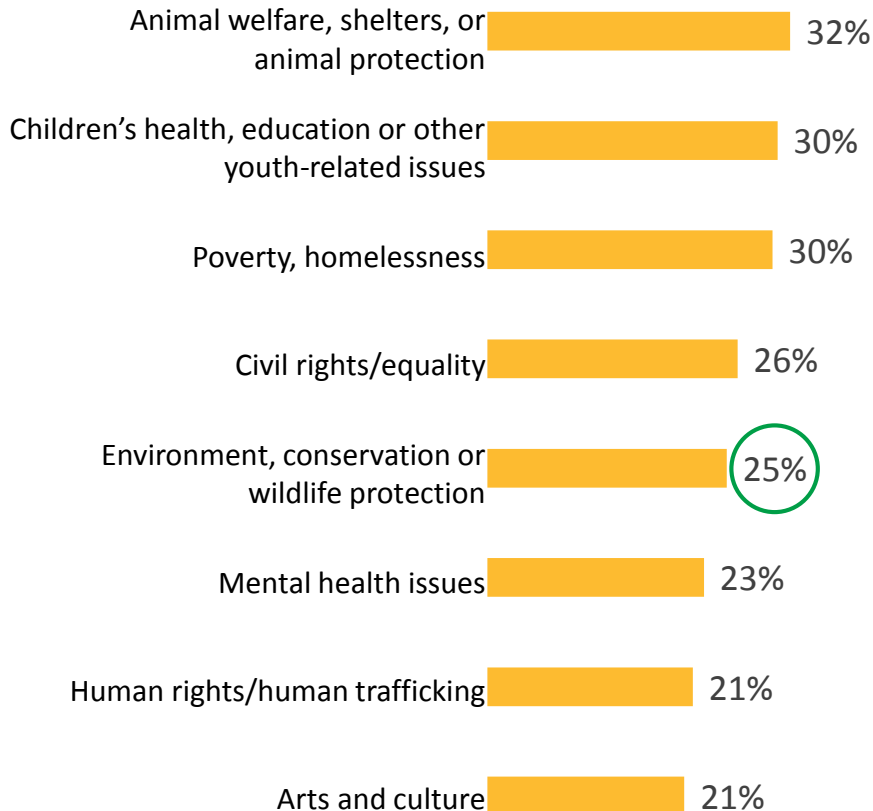
The Millennial Conversation:

- Human and civil rights, climate change, the economy, education are top issues of concern
- Oceans are not part of the current conversation
- More motivated by animal welfare than the environment
- Prefer and place value in people action (individually AND collectively) over institutional action
- Recognize problems with the ocean, especially oil spills and plastic trash, but do not have a sense of urgency about them

Note: The photos in this presentation were provided by qualitative research respondents.

Involved in Causes

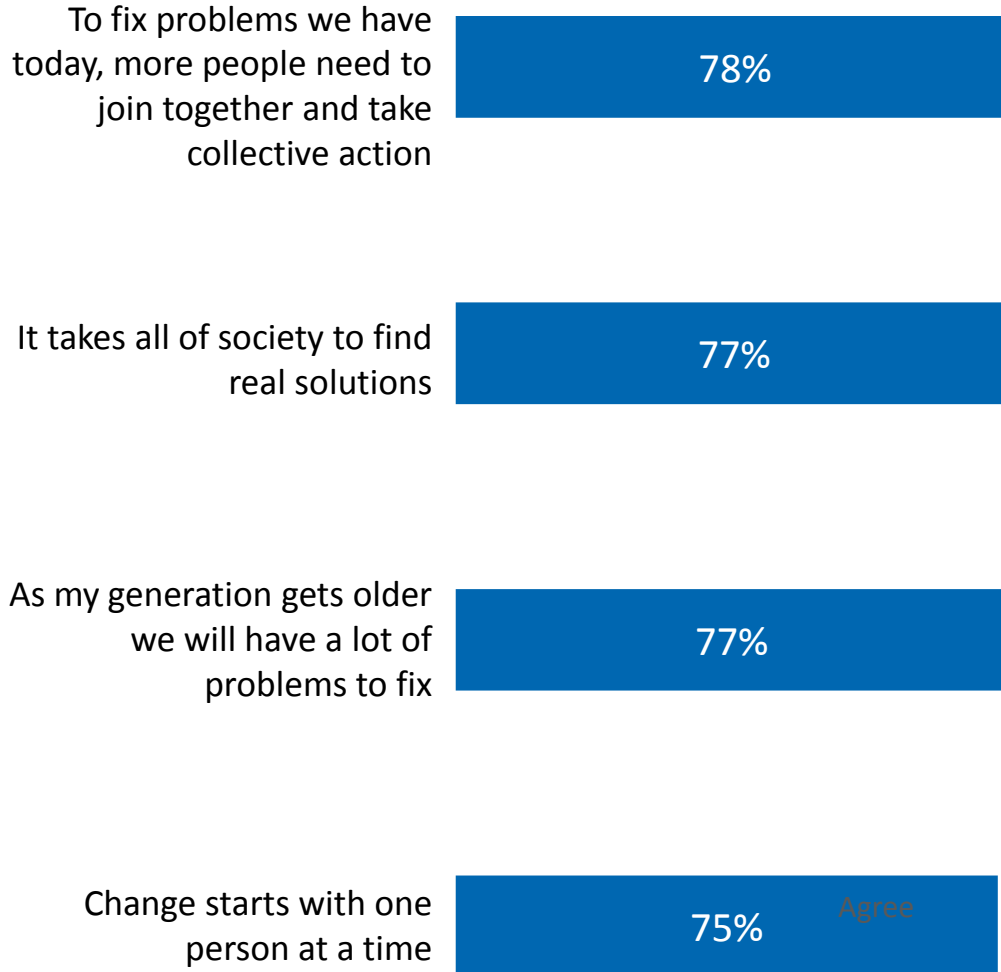
More than half of Millennials are involved in causes (59%)



Key facts about Millennial cause involvement:

- Involvement spikes in the mid-20s: Age 25 have highest reports (68%)
- Animal welfare is a top cause and a recurring theme in research: Animals are an emotional link to the ocean
- 1 in 4 of the “involved” are involved in environment, conservation or wildlife protection; Involvement highest among:
 - Advanced degree (38%)
 - Northeast region (36%)
 - Asian (34%)
 - Males 28-30 (33%)
 - Liberals (30%)
 - Coastal states (28%)
 - White (28%)
 - Voted in 2014 (27%)

Solutions and Change



Millennials are about **PEOPLE** change, not **INSTITUTIONAL** change

They believe individuals are the source of solutions, acting together and alone. This is in keeping with existing research showing they are less trusting of institutions.

Millennials **DO NOT**:

- Count on government for solutions
- See non-profits (as a category) as effective

Ocean Perceptions

Ocean Associations and Interactions

There is a gap between the ocean of their imagination and the ocean they experience:
It is hard to care for what they can't see



When I think of the ocean...

In theory:

- Oceans = global
- Natural beauty
- Marine life habitat
- Pollution (to a degree)



My ocean story...

In practice:

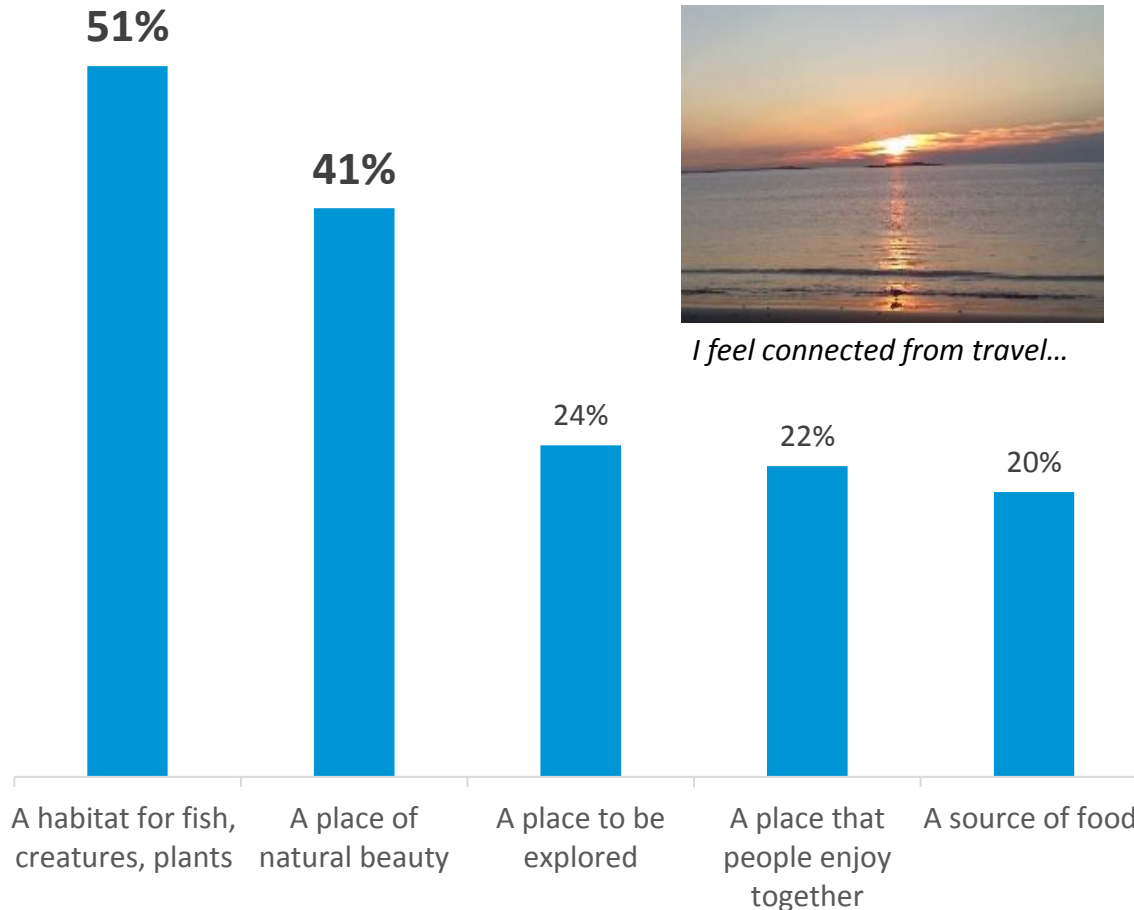
- Oceans = local
- Beaches are equated with parks/playgrounds
- Development/disaster news
- NOT nature, wild places

Key Interaction Facts:

- 3 in 4 (76%) had ocean interaction in the past year; 43% in the last month
- In the past five years, 64% have visited a beach – the most common type of interaction by far; Next most common was visiting an aquarium (37%)

Ocean Functions

Despite beaches providing most common interaction, habitat and beauty trump all functions

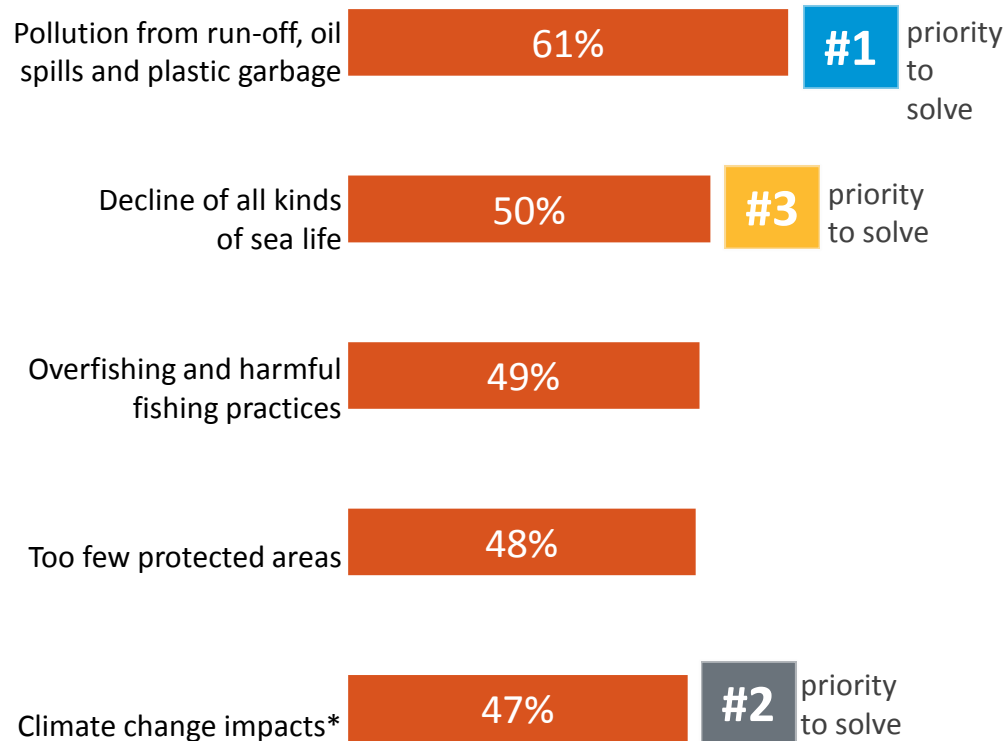


Oceans represent idyllic, wild places in the mind. But the reality of experience is far removed from this: We need to bridge that divide.

Charismatic animals and natural beauty are the opening to engage Millennials – NOT economic or other critical functions.

Ocean Threats

Top threats range from pollution and failure to protect marine life to climate change. While these threats are recognized, they are not urgent.



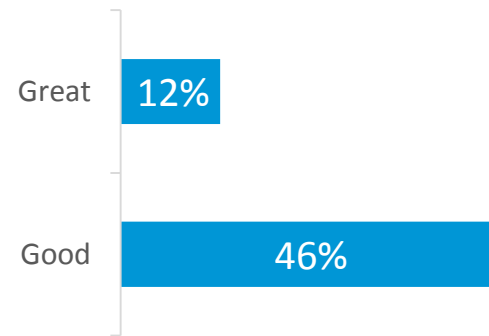
**Specific climate change impacts were not tested.*

- Willing to believe that a variety of things are problems for the ocean today and for the future
- Pollution is the most widely recognized and urgent issue
- Twice as many prioritize pollution than climate or decline of sea life
- Fewer than 1 in 10 prioritize overfishing or too few protected areas

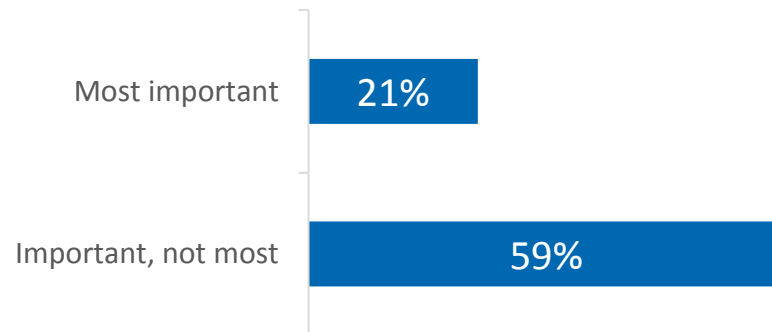
Ocean Report Card

Lack of threat urgency is reflected in attitudes towards importance and condition of oceans. Similar results for U.S. waters and waters around the world.

Condition =
“Good”



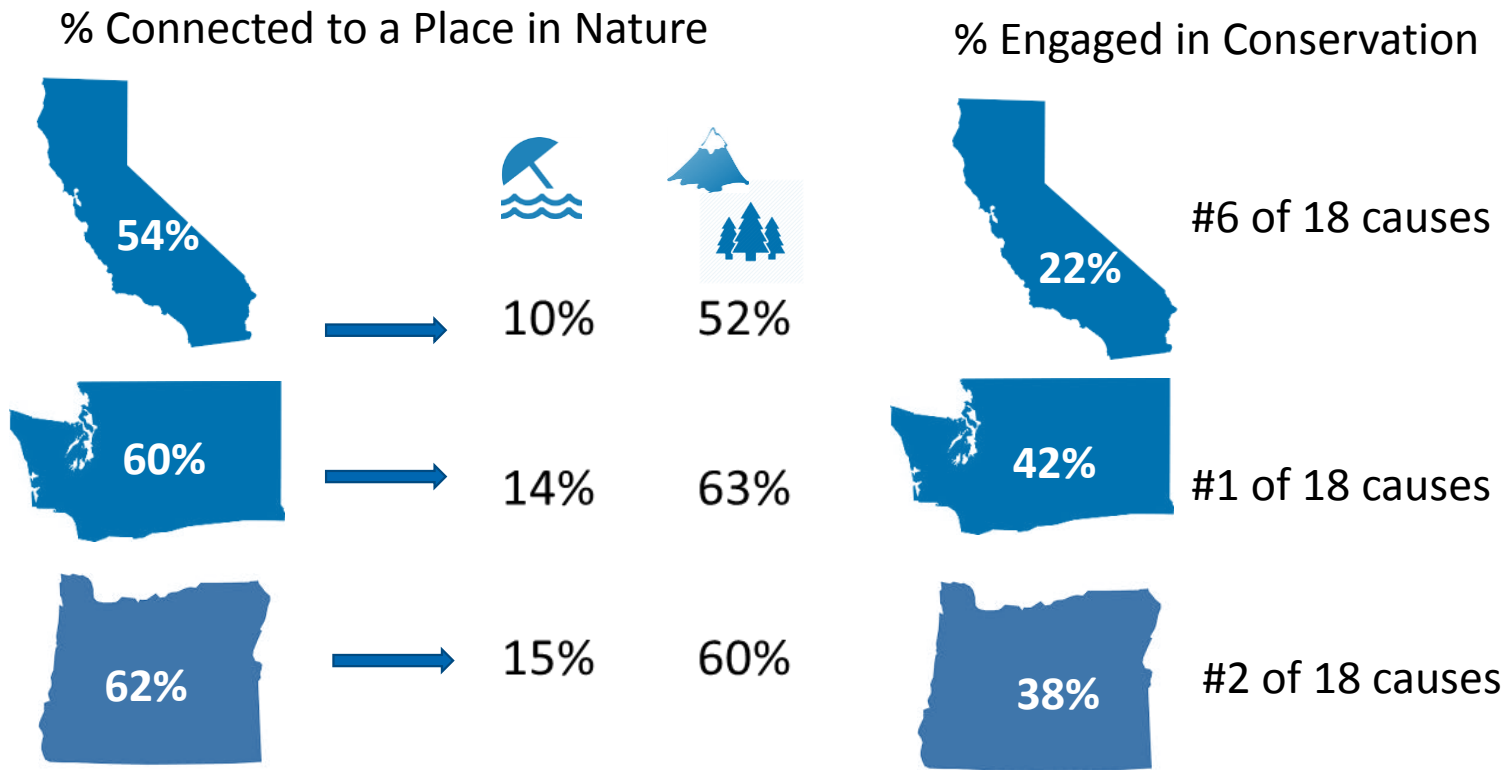
Attitude =
2nd Tier Issue



West Coast Deep Dive

Engagement with Nature and Conservation

Connections to nature more land-based than shore-based – Millennials in Washington and Oregon are more likely than others of their generation to feel strongly connected to a natural place – Conservation engagement varies



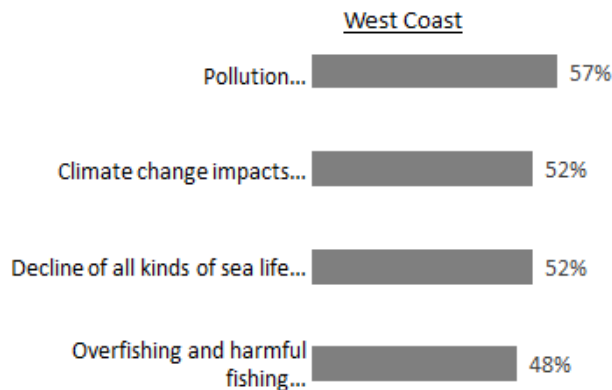
Ocean Interactions and Perceptions

Beach visits are common – Perception of pollution as top threat consistent with the nation – At least half say their most recent interaction was direct – For most it was within past month

**Visited in
past 5 years**



CA	71%	40%
WA	76%	44%
OR	86%	46%

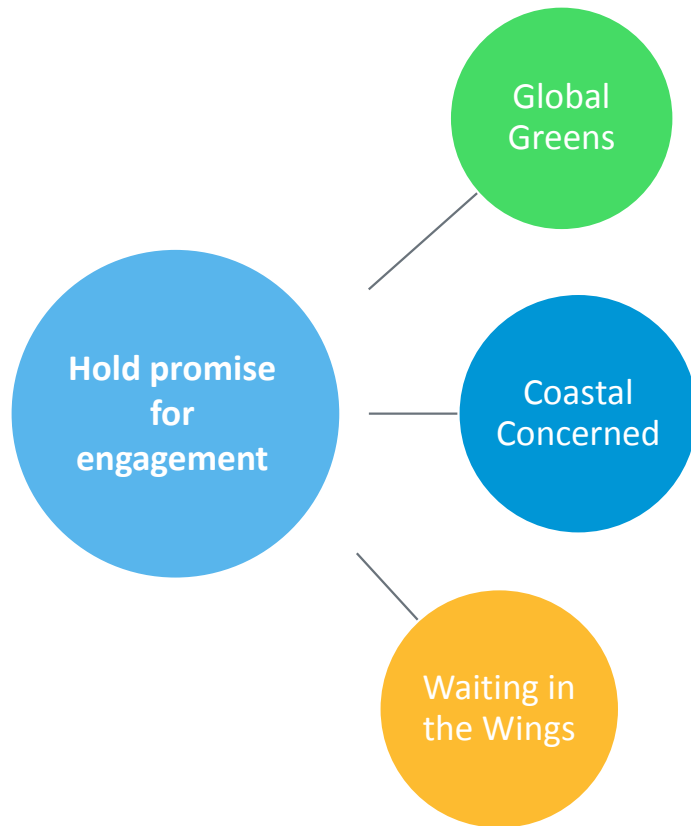


Activity (in past 5 years)	CA	WA	OR
Rec or sport fishing	11%	16%	16%
Snorkel or SCUBA	13%	15%	10%
Rent beach house	16%	17%	24%
Power boating	15%	18%	9%
Surfing	19%	12%	10%
Kayaking or sailing	14%	19%	13%
Whale watching	22%	29%	41%
State park visit	29%	42%	44%

Target Groups

3 Target Groups Stand Out

Using segmentation analysis, we grouped Millennials based on shared attitudes and behaviors, uncovering three distinct segments that can be activated



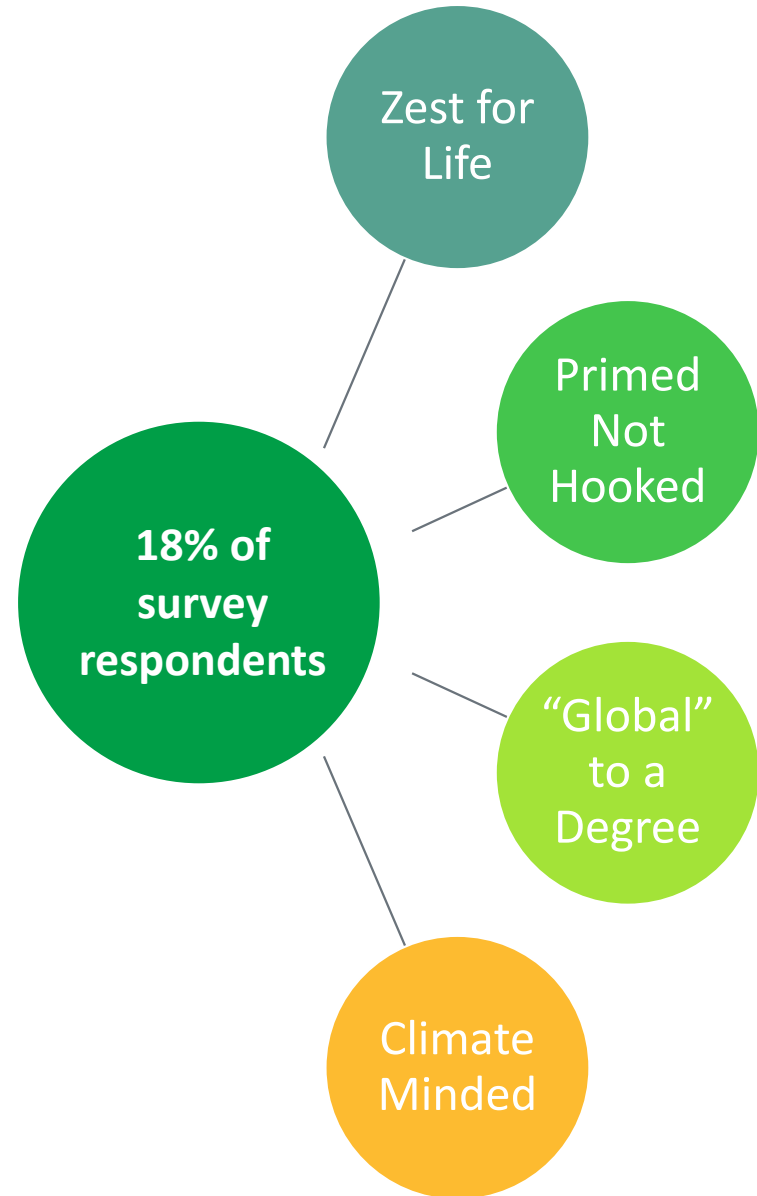
5 groups emerged, 3 stood out as promising for engagement

Using an algorithm, we sought out and recruited members of these three audiences to participate in the qualitative phase.

Global Greens

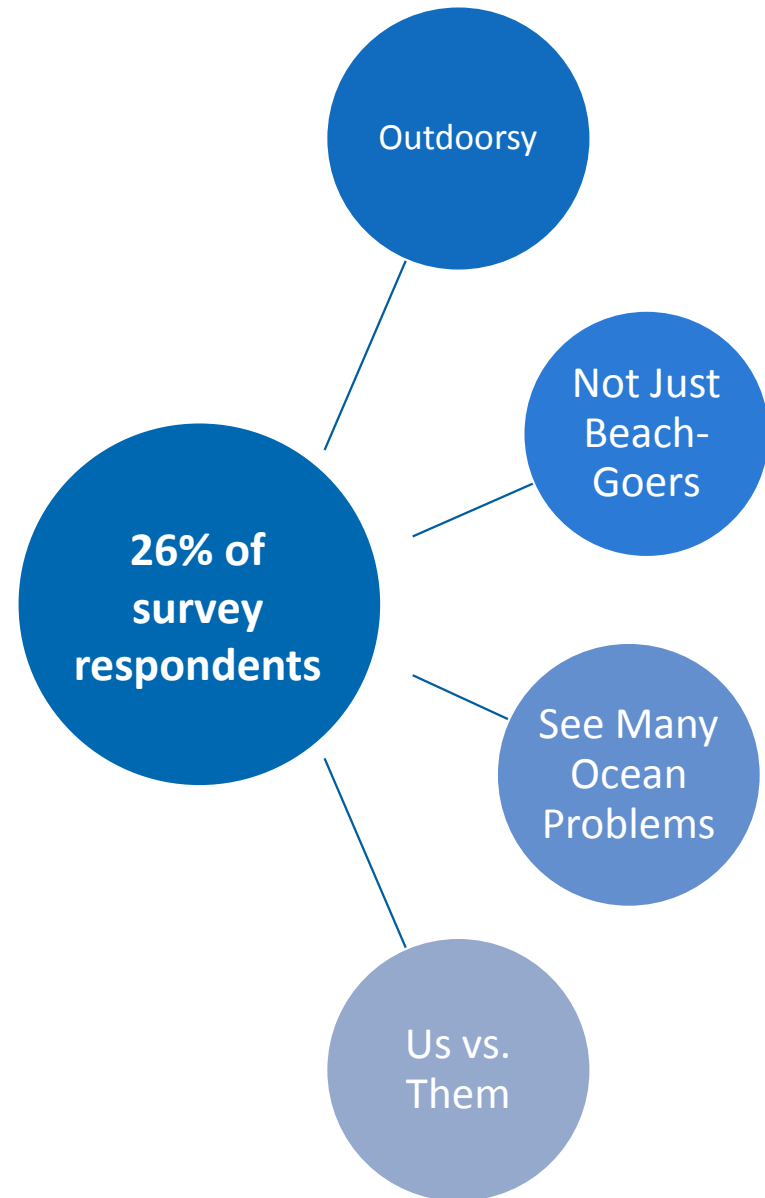
"The ocean doesn't appear in conversation as much as it should. I think this stems from the fact there is not one particular thing the media/public has honed in on that needs to be immediately 'saved.' Sometimes we hear about ocean levels, sometimes average temperatures. I think the ocean preservationists should be 'tuning' their message a bit."

Deanna, 21



Coastal Concerned

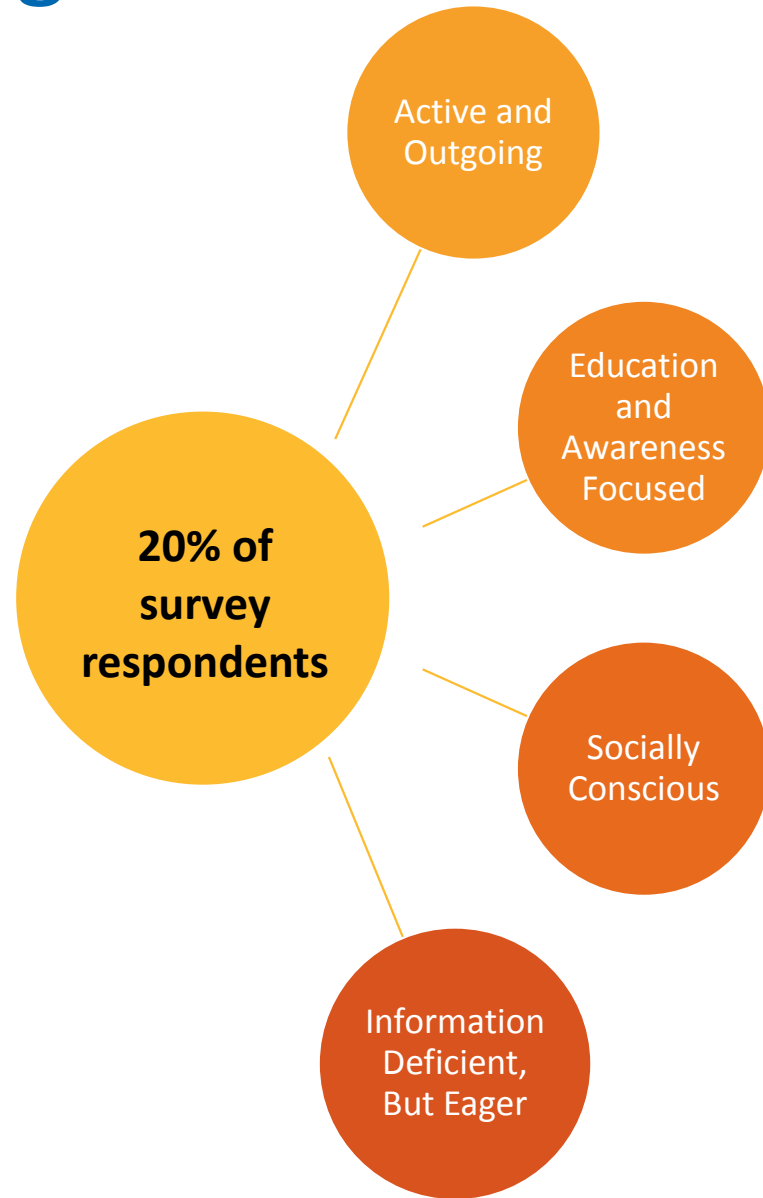
*"I always see people throwing cigarette butts out of their car, and it makes me so mad. Not only because they go into storm drains directly to the ocean, but also the threat of wildfires in Southern California. Also, every time I went to the beach with my kids this last summer there were cigarette butts everywhere in the sand. It is really depressing how a lot of smokers just don't care." **Eduardo, 30***



Waiting in the Wings

"I had no idea exactly how much danger the ocean is in. Reading these articles about all of the sad and horrible things happening in our oceans disgusts me. It makes me want to become more involved in saving our oceans and encouraging others to do the same."

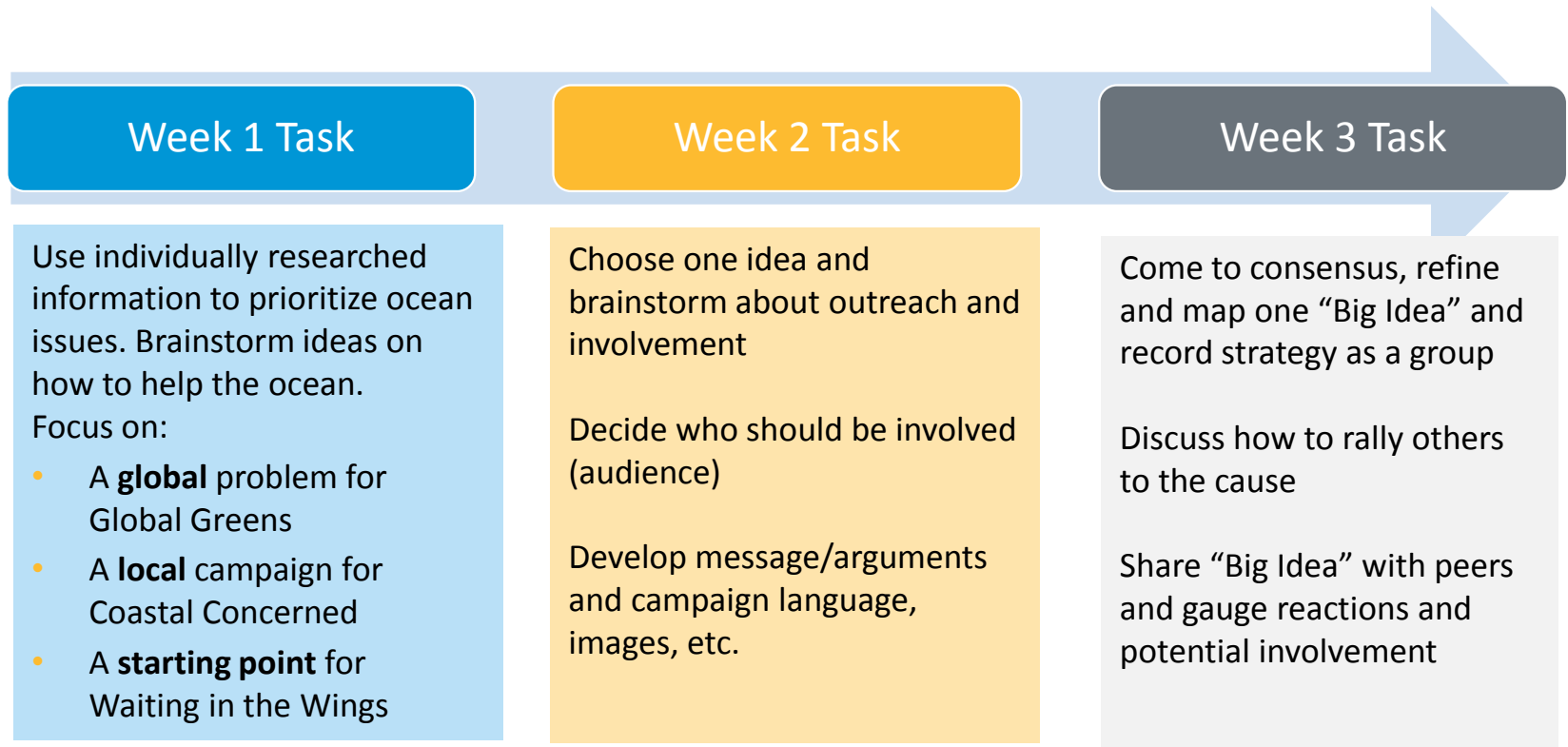
Amanda, 22



Qualitative Research: Changing Perceptions

Qualitative Research Structure

Respondents were brought together in three different online communities over the course of three weeks



Week 1: Problems

This step revealed that problems seem overwhelming: The more you know, the more there is to worry about

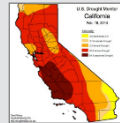
Global Greens (Task: A global problem)

Oil spills
Plastic garbage



Coastal Concerned (Task: A local campaign)

Water conservation
Cigarette butt litter
Difficulty with
oil clean-up
Global pollution



Waiting in Wings (Task: A starting point)

Trash (especially plastic)



Weeks 2 and 3: Solutions

Apps, social media, competitions and in-person events were all popular engagement tools

Global Greens

App that rewards recyclers, tracks reduced trash in the ocean

Corresponding social media campaign to raise overall awareness

Coastal Concerned

'Take back our beach' from trash campaign

Community-wide and tourism focus

Very visible group/ community identity

Waiting in Wings

College campus competition for an idea to save the ocean

Education and awareness on issues AND how young people can get involved

Common Themes

No matter the campaign idea, certain common elements came out of each team

- Disruptive, edgy and snarky communications set the right tone
- Element of competition is welcome
- Digital is their natural environment
- Social groups and peers are persuasive
- Need emotional reinforcement from community (in-person or online) to feel empowered



The Way Ahead

Ocean Entry Points

Connecting to Millennials' activist streak means tapping into the way they see ocean problems and solutions: Need a rallying cry, a problem to solve



It's their home...



Interest in:

- Animal welfare
- Collective action
- Individual behavior change
- More “cooperation” less “us vs. them”

Millennials are potential lifestyle activists:

- Will walk the talk
- Will engage socially/locally
- BUT have to be inspired first

Where to Start

Speak to hearts and minds by utilizing entry points: Protecting marine animals and habitat, and trash – problems to tackle collectively



From discovery...

- Impacts to humans and animals resonate
- Overfishing and climate change harder to tackle
- Plastics, toxic trash have local entry points, even when not living on coast
- Start in teens when nature connection happens for most
- If a connection to nature did not happen during teenage years, can we expect to create one a decade later?

Raising the Ocean Profile

The ocean is not currently part of Millennials' conversation.
If it's not trending, is it happening? Can I make it part of my brand?



An example of meeting Millennials in their space.

Tips for becoming part of their conversation:

Media:

- Be in their natural environment – THE MEDIA
- Digital is gateway to reality
- Traditional media lends credibility

Outreach and Activation:

- Be social (media and events)
- Use competition elements
- Be edgy
- Give emotional reinforcement

What Now?

Our thinking...

- Investigate message platform and scaled calls to action on:
 - Plastics
 - Marine life and habitat
- Considering the nature connection happens in the 'Tweens, investigate reaching into the younger millennials and the next generation
- Develop and test a multi-channel campaign for living the ocean-mindful lifestyle

We want to hear from you...

- Is there anything you heard that makes you think differently about your work?
- If you could ask our respondents anything, what would it be?
- Are you seeing innovative, new ways of groups engaging Millennials on their issues of concern?

Thank You

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