Derek Moscato

516 High Street – 9161

Communication Facility

Department of Journalism

Western Washington Univ.

Bellingham, WA

P: 360-650-7203

E: derek.moscato@wwu.edu

Clearcut Persuasion? Audience Cognition of

Mediated Environmental Advertising through

the Lens of the Elaboration Likelihood Model

Derek Moscato, PhD

Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism

Western Washington University

Bellingham, Washington

**Abstract:** Through the theoretical lens of Petty and Cacioppo’s Elaboration Likelihood Model and using the case of Oregon Wild and its campaign against clearcut logging on public lands, this study explores the impact of media coverage of contentious activist advertising on audiences. A survey with experimental conditions measures attitudes of audiences exposed to this interplay of advocacy communication. The study assesses partiality towards the sponsor organization, a willingness by the target audience to act on its behalf, and an understanding of the central environmental issue. Differences between gender in reception of the campaign and coverage are also examined. By examining the interplay of social advertising, news media, and audiences, this study highlights a dynamic, social psychological stream of public interest communication.

*Keywords*: Environmentalism, Activism, Advocacy, Advertising, Elaboration Likelihood Model, Forestry, Politics, Persuasion, Communication