

INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S POLICY RESEARCH  
1707 L Street NW, Suite 750 ♦ Washington, DC 20036

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**Engaging Women in Environmental Activism:  
Recommendations for Rachel's Network**

Report by the Institute for Women's Policy Research  
by Amy Caiazza, Ph.D., and Allison Barrett

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## Introduction and Executive Summary

Many women have been important leaders in environmentalism. The inspiration for Rachel's Network, Rachel Carson, sparked a movement with the publication of her book *Silent Spring* and her subsequent activism. Other activists, such as Jane Goodall, Terri Swearingen, Marjory Stoneman Douglas, Lois Gibbs, and Theo Colborn, among many others, have followed in her footsteps, matching her efforts and passion with their own. Their work is a model for activism among women, who articulate strong support for environmental issues in surveys of political attitudes.

Despite these powerful role models, relatively few women are engaged in activism and political work around environmental issues. As a result, Rachel's Network is currently working to increase women's environmental activism (including philanthropy) and raise women's visibility within the environmental movement. By doing so, Rachel's Network is providing an important pathway and inspiration for calling attention to the pressing environmental issues facing our country and increasing women's overall levels of political and civic engagement.

In this report, the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) outlines key research findings that can help Rachel's Network achieve these goals by better understanding women's attitudes toward the environment, their activism around environmental issues, effective strategies for engaging women in environmental activism, and potential partners among women's organizations for building a coalition around environmentalism. The report also provides an outline of next steps for research to further our understanding in all these areas.

## Summary of Key Findings

### Women's Attitudes Toward the Environment

- *Most men and women support increased government spending for the environment. Women, though, are less likely than men to support environmental spending cuts.*
- *Women are less sympathetic to business than men when it comes to environmental regulation—but they are also more likely to have no opinion about this issue.*
- *Women have more positive feelings about environmental activists than men do.*
- *Both women and men reject “jobs versus the environment” as a false choice.*
- *Women are particularly concerned about environmental problems that create risks for their health and safety, especially at the local level.*
- *Women have less trust that the institutions responsible for protecting the environment are actually doing their jobs.*
- *Women's higher levels of empathy, altruism, and personal responsibility make them more interested in environmentalism as a way to protect not only themselves and their families, but also others.*
- *Women who support feminist, peace, and other “progressive” causes are most receptive to environmentalism.*
- *There is mixed and inconclusive evidence on the links between motherhood and environmentalism among women.*
- *There is little research on the specific environmental issues that appeal to women.*

## **Women's Political Activism and the Environment**

- *Overall, women are less likely than men to participate politically.*
- *Women are more likely than men to volunteer for and give money to environmental causes.*
- *There is ample room to increase women's environmental activism, as less of women's total political activity is devoted to environmental issues than men's.*
- *Women's environmental leadership has been particularly prominent in a few key areas, especially in local environmental movements and in green consumerism.*
- *Since both environmentalism and political participation are linked to income and education, higher-income, highly educated women are more likely to respond to efforts to mobilize activists.*
- *The links between environmental activism and motherhood are unclear.*

## **Strategies for Engaging Women in Environmental Activism**

### Creating an Effective Message

- *Raise women's knowledge of environmental concerns, especially at the local level, but don't let that be the sole strategy of your message.*
- *Highlight negative consequences in the here and now. Focus on changing the way things are, not preserving the status quo.*
- *Make use of women's empathy and altruism, especially on behalf of vulnerable populations, and link environmentalism to issues of basic human needs. Both messages will help inspire activism and develop long-term support.*
- *Do not fall into a "jobs versus the environment" trap: women know better.*
- *Build a sense of personal responsibility by outlining easy and concrete action steps that women can take to make a difference.*
- *Don't focus explicitly on gender issues to recruit women's activism, but do look to feminists to support environmentalism.*

### Developing Other Political Strategies for Increasing Women's Activism

- *Target women who are likely to act as "policy entrepreneurs."*
- *Rely on women's existing personal, professional, and activist networks to recruit members and activists.*
- *Pursue potential members, activists, and leaders through as much personalized contact as possible.*
- *Instill a sense of respect and confidence in women by providing opportunities to practice leadership skills.*
- *Let potential activists shape the priorities and strategies of your work. This strategy brings women confidence and underlines your group's respect for activists' contributions and experiences.*
- *Remove barriers to participation by structuring opportunities to participate around women's lives.*

### Using Effective Tools for Targeting the Media

- *Highlight the risks of current policies and conditions.*
- *Use the knowledge of experts, but not exclusively—tie it to compelling anecdotes or stories about the consequences of environmental problems.*
- *Remember that most environmental coverage is event-centered and involves a strong visual component.*
- *Use a media-friendly spokesperson who inspires trust in women, such as a well-known and trusted woman activist, advocate, or celebrity, and/or locally visible leaders, rather than elected or other public officials.*

### **Best Bets for Alliances with Rachel’s Network**

- *Many women’s organizations have members who fall among the target groups identified as key constituencies—highly educated, high-income working women, with and without children.*
- *Organizations highlighted as “best bets” include key philanthropic networks, professional networks, grassroots organizations, and health/social justice groups.*

### **Next Steps for Research**

*Several steps for future research could help Rachel’s Network build support for its work, particularly by appealing to its key constituencies:*

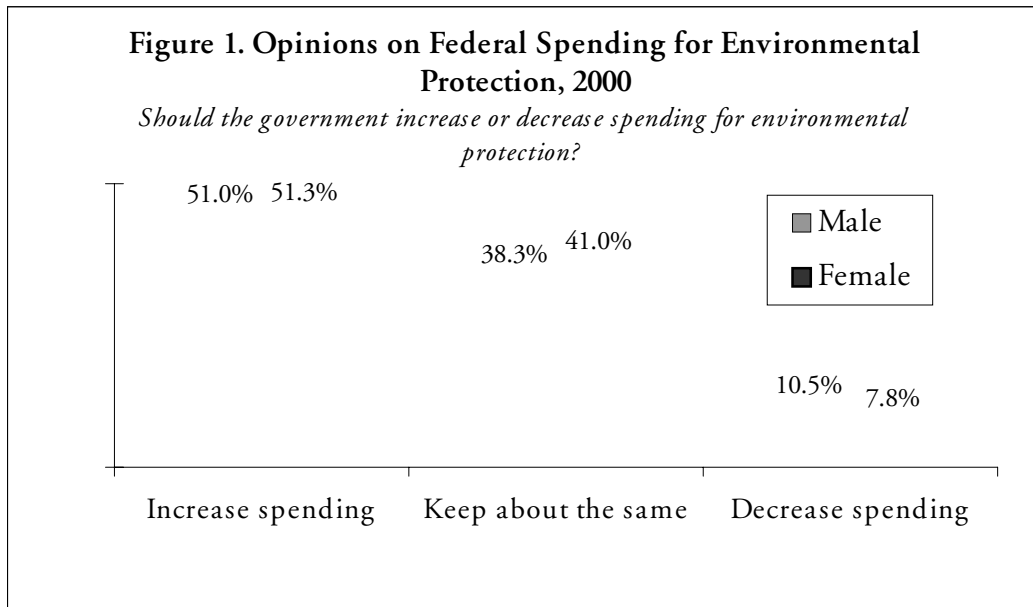
- *Analyzing more recent data on women’s giving and volunteering to environmental groups.*
- *More in-depth analysis of existing data on women’s environmental attitudes.*
- *A targeted set of focus groups on the messages that will appeal especially to higher income young professional women, both mothers and non-mothers, both traditional and feminist.*
- *A larger-scale poll of women’s attitudes toward the environment with questions designed to more fully assess the links between environmental activism, motherhood, and feminism, and/or to assess women’s interest in different kinds of environmental issues.*
- *An assessment of women’s giving to national and/or local environmental groups*

**Part I:  
Women’s Attitudes Toward the Environment**

Surveys often find strong interest in environmentalism among women and a gender gap in environmental attitudes. Understanding why and how different environmental issues appeal to women will allow Rachel’s Network to develop a strategy to encourage women’s activism. The following findings can help design that strategy.

- *Most men and women support increased government spending for the environment. Women, though, are less likely than men to support environmental spending cuts.*

Similar proportions of men and women support more government spending for environmental protection—in fact, over half of both men and women are in favor of such a spending increase (see Figure 1). Women, though, are more likely than men to support maintaining current levels. Men are more likely than women to support cutting spending (Note: Figures 1 through 7 are based on IWPR calculations of data from the American National Election Study, a nationally representative, biennial survey of political attitudes and behavior with over 1,500 respondents).

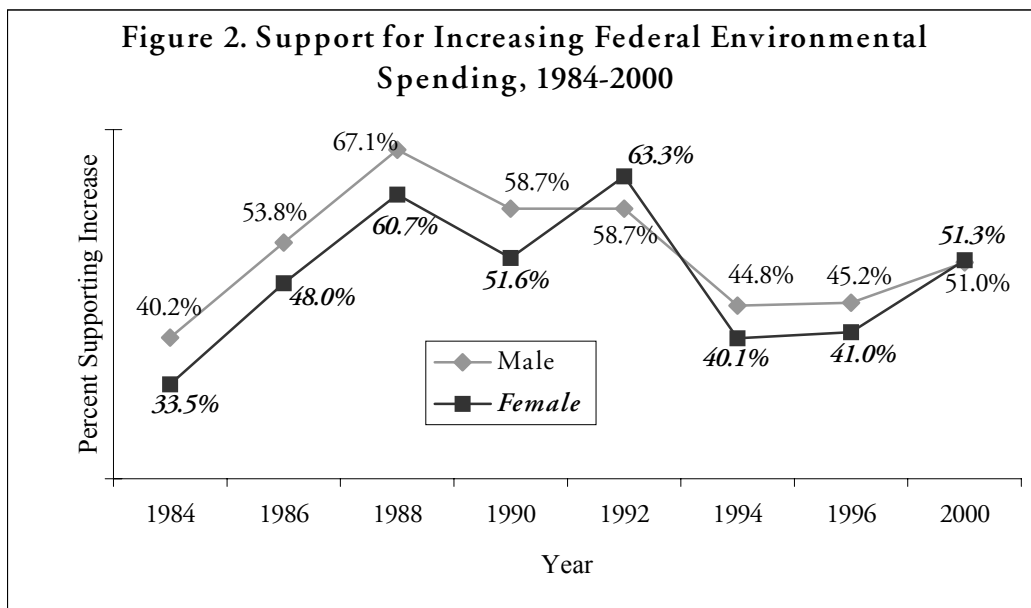


Source: IWPR calculations of the American National Election Study for 2000.

Women’s support for more environmental spending increased during the late 1990s (Figure 2). In 1994, 40.1 percent of women supported more spending. By 2000, 51.0 percent did. Notably, though, both numbers are a drop from the 1992 high of 63.3 percent, indicating that there is room for even more support among women.

An earlier gap between men’s and women’s support for environmental spending has also closed in recent years. With the exception of 1992, in every year from 1984 to 1998 women reported less support than men for increasing spending. This gap narrowed during much of the

1990s, however, and by 2000 the difference between men's and women's support for more spending was negligible, with women reporting slightly more support.

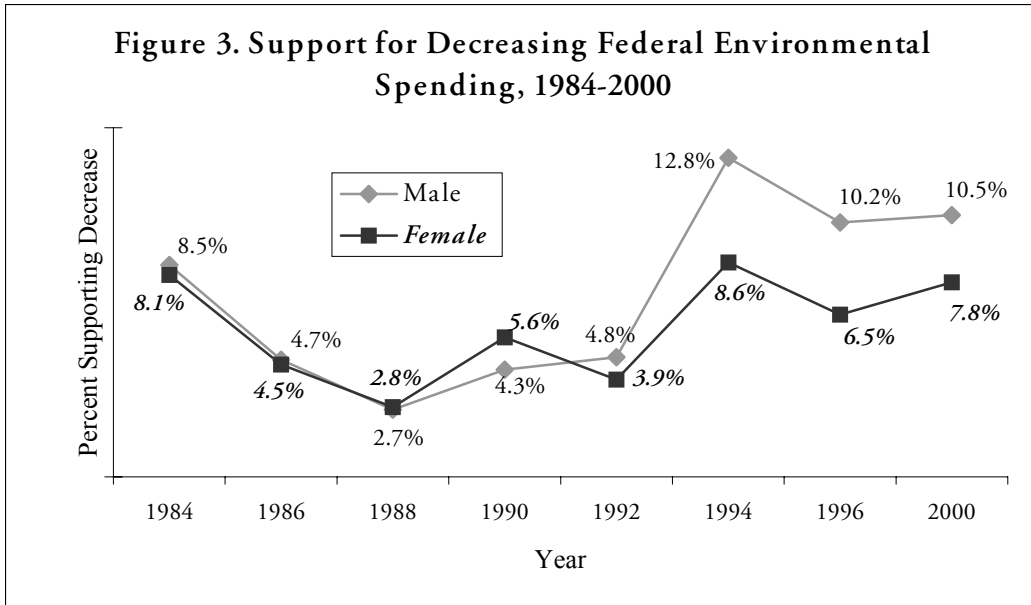


Note: Data not available for this question for 1998.

Source: IWPR calculations of the cumulative American National Election Study, 1948-2000.

Similarly, while men and women were in favor of decreasing environmental spending at comparable levels prior to 1994, since then there has been a large gap between women's and men's opposition to spending (Figure 3). Men are now much more likely to support cuts in spending for the environment. Notably, the proportion of both men and women supporting this idea has increased in recent years: 3.9 percent of women supported it in 1992, while 7.8 percent did in 2000. Men's support for spending cuts has also increased, from 4.8 percent in 1992 to 10.5 percent in 2000 (with a high, though, of 12.8 percent in 1994).

These findings suggest that there is somewhat more support for environmental spending among women than men. However, there is room for environmental groups to reclaim some lost support among both sexes for maintaining or increasing spending for environmental protection.



Note: Data not available for this question for 1998.

Source: IWPR calculations of the cumulative American National Election Study, 1948-2000.

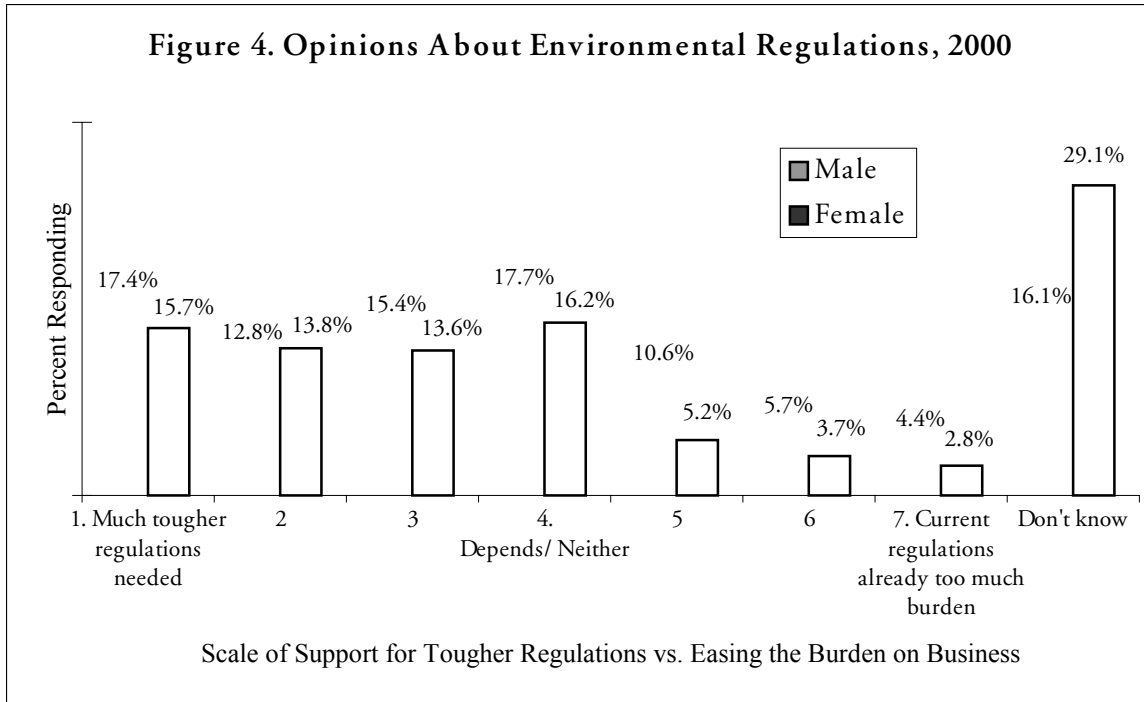
- *Women are less sympathetic to business than men when it comes to environmental regulation—but they are also more likely to have no opinion about this issue.*

Close to half of both women and men think tougher regulations are needed to protect the environment (Figure 4; based on a score of 3 or less on a seven-point scale measuring support for tougher regulations versus diminishing the burden on business). Women, however, are more likely than men to reject the notion that environmental regulations are overly taxing on business. As of 2000, just 12 percent of women, compared with 21 percent of men, agree at all with the statement that these regulations are too burdensome (based on a score of 5 or above on this measure).

At the same time, women are much more likely than men to have no opinion at all on this question: almost a third—29 percent—of women say they don’t know how they feel about it. This compares with just 16 percent of men (others have also found that women know less about environmental issues and political issues in general. On environmental issues, see Mohai 1997; on political knowledge generally see Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Tolleson Rinehart 1992. At the same time, just 33 out of 1,807 total respondents—both men and women—answered “don’t know” to the question in Figure 1 about support for federal environmental spending in 2000—indicating more entrenched public opinion among women and men on that topic).

These findings point to a need and opportunity for more public education among women about environmental issues and government involvement in environmental protection. Such efforts could move more women from the “don’t know” to the “much tougher regulations needed” columns.

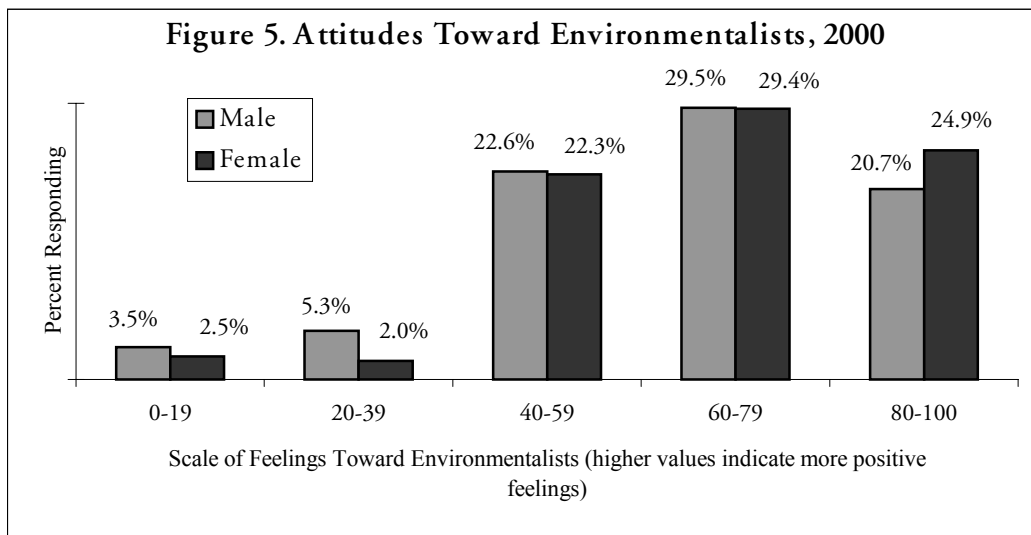




Source: IWPR calculations of the cumulative American National Election Study, 1948-2000.

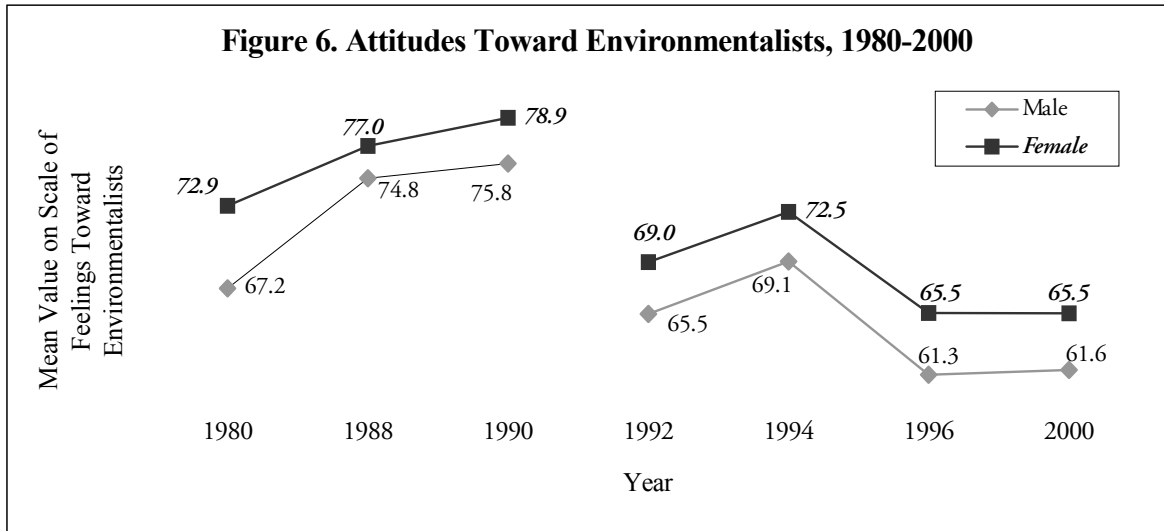
- *Women have more positive feelings toward environmental activists than men do.*

As of 2000, women were more likely than men to report positive feelings about environmentalists (Figure 5). When asked to place themselves on scale of 0 to 100, with 0 indicating the most negative and 100 indicating the most positive feelings toward environmentalists, women were more likely than men to be in the highest range, 80 to 100. In contrast, they were about half as likely as men to place themselves on the lower end of the scale, under 40.



Source: IWPR calculations of the American National Election Study for 2000.

Women’s attitudes toward environmentalists have been more positive than men’s since at least 1980 (the first year this question was asked; Figure 6). Currently, the mean value of reported attitudes toward environmentalists is relatively positive for both, at 65.5 out of 100 for women and 61.6 out of 100 for men, but it is still higher for women. At the same time, support from both women and men for environmentalists dropped considerably during the mid-1990s. For women, it dropped from a high of 72.5 in 1994 to a low of 65.5 in 2000.



Notes: In 1980-1990, the survey asked about attitudes towards “people seeking to protect the environment.” In 1992-2000, the survey asked about attitudes towards “environmentalists.” Scores are out of 100, with higher values indicating more positive feelings. Data not available for this question for 1982-86 or for 1998.

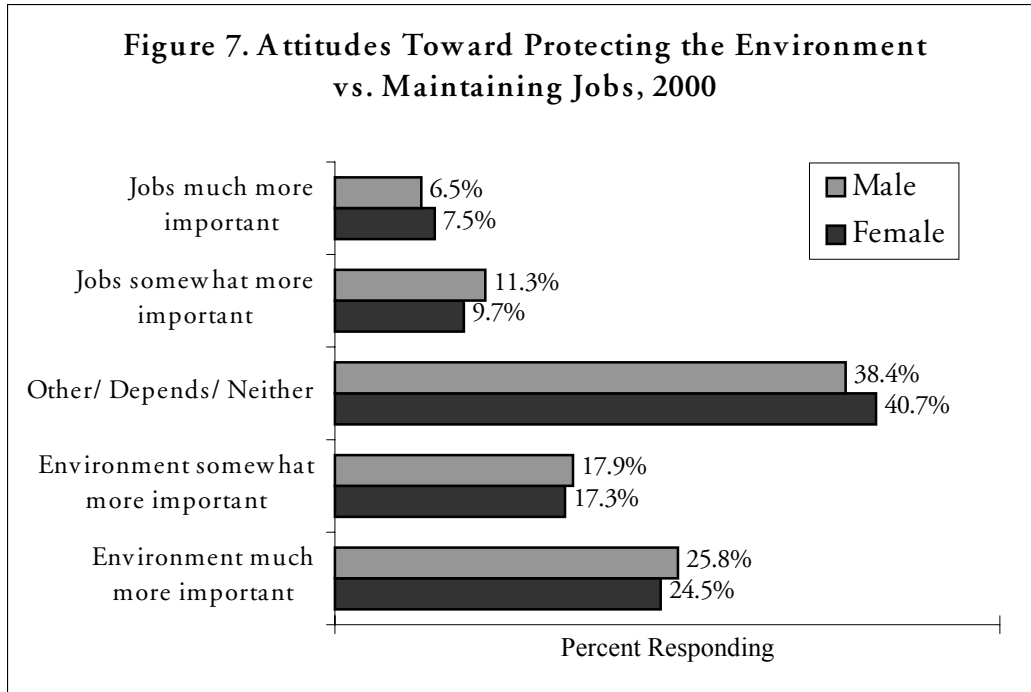
Source: IWPR calculations of the cumulative American National Election Study, 1948-2000.

Notably, support from both men and women dropped about 10 points on the scale after 1992, when the survey question was changed to ask about attitudes toward “environmentalists” rather than “people seeking to protect the environment.” This suggests that the leaders of environmental groups should take care when talking about their goals and identifying themselves as environmentalists in public settings.

Again, all these findings point to room to regenerate positive public opinion for environmentalism among women through public education by environmental groups.

- *Both women and men reject “jobs versus the environment” as a false choice.*

Most women and men see creating jobs and protecting the environment as compatible policy goals; as a result, they cannot give an answer when presented with this choice. As Figure 7 shows, when asked to assess the relative importance of “protecting the environment” versus “maintaining jobs,” both women and men are most likely say “other,” “neither,” or “it depends.” Women are slightly less likely to choose sides than men are. If they do answer, both men and women are more likely to support protecting the environment over maintaining jobs.



Source: IWPR calculations of the American National Election Study for 2000.

Similarly, a 2001 survey for the Sierra Club found that over half of men and women (56 percent) claim that “improving the environment can create jobs and help the national economy,” and another 20 percent see no relationship between the two (while just 17 percent see improving the environment as slowing economic growth). The same poll found that men are more likely than women to see protecting the environment as bad for the economy (19 percent versus 16 percent). Republican women are also more likely than Republican men to say that improving the environment creates jobs (48 percent versus 38 percent; Lake and Sneed 2001).

- *Women are particularly concerned about environmental problems that create risks for their health and safety, especially at the local level.*

Over two-thirds of men and women see pollution as one of the top three environmental problems facing the nation, more than double the rate of concern for any other environmental issue (Mohai 1997). Air pollution, water pollution, and hazardous or toxic wastes are environmental problems that adversely affect all people’s health and well-being.

Yet in each of seventeen studies conducted since 1960, women are significantly more concerned than men about environmental risks to their health and safety (Davidson and Freudenburg 1996; Flynn, Slovic, and Mertz 1994; Blocker and Eckberg 1997). As a result, messages emphasizing the importance of preserving the environment in order to protect the health and safety of women and their families are more likely to be compelling to them than messages about preserving the beauty or diversity of the environment.

Women are also consistently more concerned than men about environmental issues at the local level (e.g., Blocker and Eckberg 1989), which may in turn be related to the recognizable

health and safety concerns caused by detrimental local conditions and policies. Local environmental problems such as hazardous waste repositories or poor water quality are more easily connected by most people to health and safety concerns than are problems such as global warming or acid rain, which seem less changeable and more distant. Using local problems to awaken women's interest in environmentalism can be very effective.

At the same time, it may be possible to achieve the same effect by explicitly linking global environmental issues to personal health and well-being through educational campaigns and "canary-in-the-mine imagery" about environmental degradation (Bord and O'Connor 1997). For example, images of fish dying from pollution can be an opportunity both to educate people about the negative effects of pollutants on our food and water supply and to present an early warning sign that if things do not change humans will soon be affected.

- *Women have less trust that the institutions responsible for protecting the environment are actually doing their jobs.*

Lower levels of trust in the government, business, and science and technology are connected to higher levels of concern about environmental problems among both women and men (Freudenburg 1993). However, women are more likely than men to be suspicious of these institutions, and to believe that the institutions responsible for protecting the environment are not trustworthy or reliable (Davidson and Freudenburg 1996).

An effective strategy for gaining women's support will use their lower levels of institutional trust to emphasize their need to be involved and vigilant in protecting the environment. Examples of corporations damaging the environment by acting unethically in pursuit of profits, or of the government not adequately enforcing environmental protection laws, are messages that are likely to activate women's increased concern for the environment.

Gender differences in perceptions of environmental risk and distrust in science and technology are even more pronounced among environmental activists than among the general public. This suggests that a combination of distrust and perceived risk is particularly likely to inspire women to act as environmentalists (Steger and Witt 1988). A successful approach for activating women's environmentalism may involve educating women about the negative effects of environmental problems and calling attention to the failure of existing institutions to provide protection from these effects.

- *Women's higher levels of empathy, altruism, and personal responsibility make them more interested in environmentalism as a way to protect not only themselves and their families, but also others.*

Support for environmentalism can be inspired by individuals' concerns for the negative consequences of poor conditions on not only themselves and their families, but also on other people, the ecosystem, and non-human life (Stern and Dietz 1994). In general, women have higher levels of these "altruistic" values than men (Dietz, Kalof, and Stern 2002). Women are more pro-environment both because they are more concerned about others and "because of an

increased likelihood to make connections between environmental conditions and their [own] values” (Stern, Dietz, and Kalof 1993, 339).

To increase the number of women who make this vital connection, Rachel’s Network should appeal to women’s altruism by stressing the need to protect all individuals from the consequences of environmental degradation through better policies and practices.

- *Women who support feminist, peace, and other “progressive” causes are most receptive to environmentalism.*

Women who support political goals tied to peace, gender and racial equality, and quality of life issues (such as increasing people’s say in politics and worklife, making cities more beautiful, and moving toward a less impersonal society) are twice as likely to hold pro-environmental beliefs and seven times as likely to be active members of an environmental group than others (Inglehart 1990). Of course, women who are active in local environmental groups do not always identify as feminists; many do not see feminism as related to their environmentalism at all (Burningham 1998). But women who identify with feminism are much more likely to hold pro-environmental attitudes, making them an excellent group to target with environmental messages through feminist networks and media outlets (Somma and Tolleson-Rinehart 1997; Smith 2001).

To reach a receptive audience of women, Rachel’s Network can target existing networks of women active in social-justice causes and/or media sources directed toward liberal and progressive populations, and especially feminists.

- *There is mixed and inconclusive evidence on the links between motherhood and environmentalism among women.*

Some researchers argue that women are motivated to protect the environment as a natural extension of their traditional care-giving role as mothers, while men are less concerned about the environment and more concerned about the economy as a result of their traditional role as breadwinners. Others find that having children in the home is either not a factor in environmentalism or is only associated with more attention to “green consumerism” (rather than, for example, political activism around environmental causes). Still others have found that pro-environmental attitudes increase with women’s full-time employment in the paid labor force and are lowest among full-time homemakers, suggesting that work status is more important to environmentalism than parental status (Blocker and Eckberg 1989, 1997; Mohai 1992; Somma and Tolleson-Rinehart 1997).

There is ample room for further research to identify the issues that are most effective in appealing to mothers and non-mothers, full-time workers, and homemakers. Polling or focus groups could be used to clarify the nature and goals of different women’s environmental attitudes.

- *There is little research on the specific environmental issues that appeal to women.*

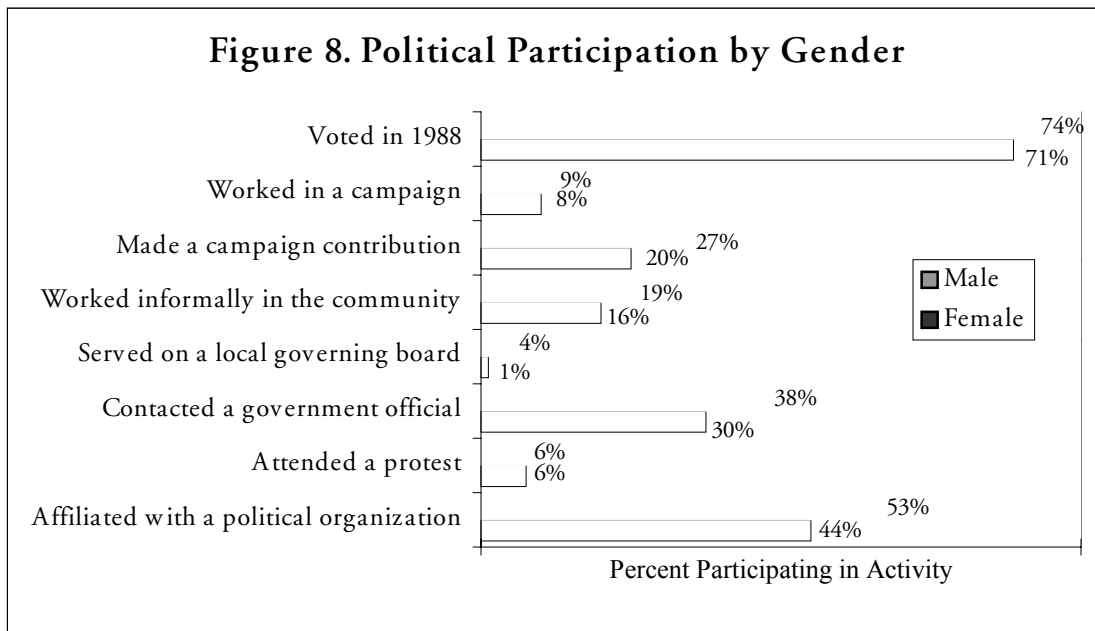
Beyond generalizations about the importance of health, safety, and a focus on local issues, researchers know little about the specific issues within environmentalism that interest women. Mostly because of data constraints, few studies have delved into support for environmental issues beyond the broad generalizations noted here. A tailored and targeted poll or focus groups on women's pro-environmental attitudes would allow more analysis of their interests and concerns for different types of issues.

## Part II: Women’s Political Activism and the Environment

While women have greater concern for the environment than men, they are often perceived as less active in the environmental movement. In part, this perception is justified, because women’s levels of political participation and leadership around environmentalism are lower than men’s, at least in some areas. In part, however, it is because women’s environmental action is focused on personal environmental practices, such as “green consumerism,” or on local environmental efforts, both of which are less likely to be noticed by the media, the public, and environmental leaders.

- Overall, women are less likely than men to participate politically.

Women engage in 1.96 political acts a year, while men engage in 2.27 (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001). On almost every measure of political activism, women participate at the same or lower levels than men (see Figure 8).



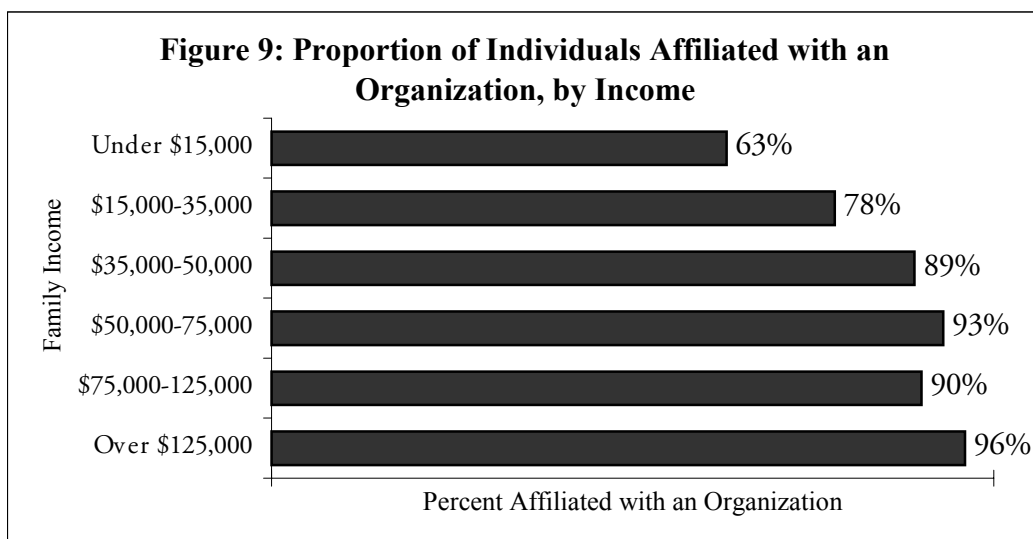
Source: Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001, based on the Citizen Participation Study.

The gender gap in political participation is particularly large for financial contributions to political organizations. The average size of a woman’s donation to groups that take a political stance is \$227, 40 percent less than a man’s average donation of \$390 (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001). Interestingly, these numbers represent 2.4 percent of women’s mean earnings and 1.2 percent of men’s—women are more generous than men with the resources they have. Still, even in the top income categories, women’s donations lag behind men’s (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001).

At the same time, some women are much more politically active than others. Women are more likely to participate if they have higher levels of education, higher family incomes, and

experiences with discrimination, and if they participate full-time in the paid workforce (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001).

As an example of these patterns, the relationship between income and affiliation with a civic or political organization is illustrated in Figure 9. This figure shows that 63 percent of people with family incomes of less than \$15,000 are affiliated with a civic or political group, while over 90 percent of individuals in categories of \$50,000 and above are.



Source: Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 1999, based on the Citizen Participation Study.

Overall, affluent college-educated women are substantially more likely to engage in political and civic participation than are other women. Thus these women are most likely to provide active support to Rachel’s Network’s activities and goals (however, there are more total women in some of the lower income categories—for example, in the \$35,000 to \$50,000—and so outreach to them may achieve greater numbers participating although they are a lower proportion of their income group).

- *Women are more likely than men to volunteer for and give money to environmental causes.*

Despite lower levels of political activism among women overall, as of the early 1990s, women reported volunteering and donating to environmental organizations at higher levels than men (Table 1). In the late 1980s, more men reported donating money and time to environmental organizations, but as of 1993, this trend had reversed. As Table 1 shows, women were 50 percent more likely to volunteer and 38 percent more likely to donate money to environmental causes. As a result, women were 59.9 percent of self-reported donors and 62.3 percent of self-reported volunteers to environmental causes (Hodgkinson et al. 1995).

Although Table 1 presents the most recent published data available, more recent raw data is now available about women and men’s giving and volunteering to environmental groups through a 2001 version of the same survey used to produce the analysis in Table 1. Analyzing this data would provide a more up-to-date picture of women’s involvement in the environmental movement.



	Women	Men
Reported volunteering	7.4%	4.9%
Reported donating money	13.4%	9.7%

Source: Hodgkinson et al. 1995, based on the Giving and Volunteering in the United States Survey.

- *There is ample room to increase women's environmental activism, as less of women's total political activity is devoted to environmental issues than men's.*

Although more women than men participate in environmental groups as volunteers and givers, they devote a lower proportion of their total political acts to environmentalism than men do. As Table 2 shows, 10 percent of men's and 8 percent of women's political actions are inspired by environmental issues. Concern for the environment ranks seventh among the issues that motivate women to political action, while it ranks fourth for men.

	All		Anglo-Whites		Blacks		Latinos	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Education	20%	13%	20%	13%	19%	14%	24%	16%
Abortion	14	7	15	8	6	3	6	3
Taxes	12	15	12	16	9	8	5	9
Basic Human Needs	10	9	9	8	19	21	20	13
Crime or drugs	9	7	7	5	27	23	16	18
Economic issues (except taxes)	9	11	9	12	5	7	1	6
<b>Environment</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>
Foreign policy	5	8	6	8	1	7	6	8
Children or youth (except education)	5	4	4	3	8	10	15	2
Social issues (except abortion)	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2
Women's issues	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
Blacks, Latinos, or Civil Rights			1	1	7	11	6	12

Source: Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001, pp. 120, 305, based on the Citizen Participation Study.

Women's prioritization of environmental issues also differs by race. White and Latino women devote higher proportions of their political activism to environmental concerns than Black women do. White and Latino women report 9 percent and 6 percent of their activism as inspired by environmental issues, while Black women report just 1 percent.

Table 2 indicates that education, abortion, taxes, and basic human needs all surpass environmental issues for women as issues inspiring activism. Linking these issues to environmentalism could inspire more involvement in environmental activism among women. For example, linking environmental concerns to basic human needs, such as safe housing and food, could bring women into the environmental movement, especially if it stressed potential environmental risks to basic health and safety. This is particularly true for targeting women of color.

- *Women’s environmental leadership has been particularly prominent in a few key areas, especially in local environmental movements and in green consumerism.*

The leadership of large, national environmental organizations is mostly male, but women dominate both the leadership and the membership of local environmental groups created to combat threats to community health or safety. Almost half of all citizen groups formed to combat local disasters are led by women or have memberships that are predominately women. Conversely, men dominate the leadership of just over one-fifth of these groups, and less than one-fifth of them have predominately male membership (see Table 3).

Women are particularly likely to be leaders and members of local groups created to combat technological, as opposed to natural, disasters (Neal and Phillips 1990). Technological disasters involve situations such as the discovery of harmful factory emissions, nuclear incidents, or other “manmade” disasters, as opposed to natural ones such as earthquakes or volcanoes. This type of environmental activism, however, often receives negative attention from the media. Analysis of coverage of their efforts has found that local women leaders are often dismissed as “a bunch of hysterical housewives,” “concerned mothers,” or “neighborhood women” rather than serious political activists (Neal and Phillips 1990).

Table 3. Gender Distribution of Emergent Citizen Groups in Disaster Situations			
	Female-dominated	Mixed	Male-dominated
Leadership	50.0%	27.3%	22.7%
Membership	47.7%	34.1%	18.2%

Source: Neal and Phillips 1990, p. 246.

Women are also more likely than men to practice environmentalism through non-political means. One area in which women’s environmentalism goes largely unrecognized is in their “green” lifestyle and consumption choices. Women, and especially women with children, are more likely than men to act in environmentally responsible ways inside the home, by buying environmentally responsible products, recycling and reducing water, and moderating energy usage (Burningham 1998, Blocker and Eckberg 1997, Steel 1996). This may result, in part, from women’s greater responsibility for household duties, which gives them more opportunities to engage in small-scale personal environmentalism. It may also result from women being more likely to make the connection between environmental beliefs and everyday actions. While not as

often recognized as environmental activism, these private behaviors directly impact the environment and have the potential to create measurable, concrete change if widespread.

In addition, women's openness to green consumerism may indicate an untapped source of support for more direct political activism. Rachel's Network might target women who already practice "green" consumerism or "green" lifestyles to encourage taking their activism to the next level. These women are more likely to identify already as environmentalists, and they are potentially more amenable to taking overt political action.

- *Since both environmentalism and political participation are linked to income and education, higher-income, highly educated women are more likely to respond to efforts to mobilize activists.*

While every woman is a potential activist, certain women are more likely than others to be politically active. With environmental groups in particular, affluent households are more likely to donate time and money, and to donate more (Hodgkinson et al. 1995). Thus, the women most likely to become activists in the environmental movement are college-educated affluent women who work full-time, whether they are young, single professionals or married "soccer moms."

Pollsters describing a desirable group of voters first used the term "soccer mom" in the 1996 elections, yet the exact demographic characteristics of these women are not universally agreed upon. Most commonly, "soccer moms" are politically moderate, suburban, middle- to upper-class married mothers who work outside the home yet remain strongly involved in their children's lives (Carroll 1999). While they make up less than 10 percent of the population, soccer moms have the potential to be key activists, combining their educational and financial resources with their skills as members of the paid labor force. In fact, despite expectations that working women with children are simply too busy to be politically active, they are "considerably more active in politics, more likely to have gotten involved in community activity, and to have given time to charitable activity" than mothers who are not in the labor force (see Table 4; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001: 323).

Like soccer moms, young urban professionals' high levels of education and involvement in the paid labor force predisposes them toward being more politically active and politically savvy than the average woman. Their employment also raises their household incomes, which may also make them more likely to donate larger sums of money to environmental groups (see Hodgkinson et al. 1995).

To target both these groups, Rachel's Network should use existing women's professional networks to recruit activists. Women who participate in professional networks are likely to be college-educated, affluent, and full-time workers (a list of potential professional networks to target are presented in Part IV of this report).

Table 4. Mean Number of Political and Volunteer Acts of Mothers, by Work Status		
	Full-time work	At home
All	2.35	1.56
Married	2.51	1.84
Married college graduates	4.19	2.77

Source: Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001, p. 324, based on the Citizen Participation Study.

- *The links between environmental activism and motherhood are unclear.*

Many local women activists view their efforts as a natural extension of their traditional roles as mothers and wives (e.g., Burningham 1998, Neal and Phillips 1990). But there is also a link between feminist and pro-environmental attitudes—suggesting that many women, including mothers, come to environmentalism for reasons completely separate from their parental status. It is possible, of course, that different kinds of women are mobilized for different reasons. Further research through polling or focus groups could assess whether different messages appeal to more traditional and more feminist women and whether these women engage in different types of activism. This research would allow Rachel’s Network greater precision in targeting messages to different populations.

### **Part III: Strategies for Engaging Women in Environmental Activism**

The following strategies can be effective ways to involve women in environmental activism. These strategies are drawn from the research described in the previous sections, from successful models of women's organizing, and from research on messages and strategies used by social movements and other groups to increase activism around the environment.

#### **A) Creating an Effective Message for Involving Women in Environmental Activism**

The main goal of an effective message is to win attention and inspire activism. The following principles can guide the development of a message that will achieve both, particularly among women, in support of Rachel's Network's pro-environmental goals.

- *Raise women's knowledge of environmental concerns, especially at the local level, but don't let that be the sole strategy of your message.*

Knowledge about environmental degradation is a "necessary precondition" for inspiring activism (Jensen 2002), and women report less knowledge about the environmental consequences of existing policies and practices (e.g., Mohai 1985). As a result, a successful message strategy for involving women in environmental activism should incorporate a public education component designed to increase women's environmental knowledge, taking into consideration the following themes:

- Because women's activism is more likely to be inspired by local issues, the most effective messages will be tailored to raising awareness of the consequences of state and local policies and conditions.
- Within local efforts, women are more concerned with changing policies and practices to mitigate the consequences of "technological" as opposed to "natural" disasters: toxic waste dumps as opposed to earthquakes, for example (while men are more likely to take action in response to natural disasters; Neal and Phillips 1990). Public relations efforts should focus primarily on problems created by individuals, corporations, or policies.

At the same time, knowledge building cannot be the sole or main focus of an effective strategy. While knowledge about the effects of environmental degradation can help increase attention to environmental issues, it can also contribute to "action paralysis" by overwhelming individuals with too much bad news (Jensen 2002). Knowledge is also not enough to change people's individual personal or political habits—for example, by taking new action about a problem (Kollmus and Agyeman 2002). It must be accompanied by other kinds of messages designed to increase awareness of why and how people can act to change things (see p. 21).

- *Highlight negative consequences in the here and now. Focus on changing the way things are, not preserving the status quo.*

Attempts to inspire activism will be more successful when issues are framed in terms of avoiding harmful consequences rather than achieving positive ones. Messages should emphasize the losses that occur as a result of inaction. They are more persuasive than messages emphasizing the positive benefits of action (Davis 1995; Stern, Dietz, and Black 1986; McKenzie-Mohr and Smith 1999). Because women are most sensitive to perceived health and safety risks of environmental conditions, focusing on these conditions is most likely to involve them in environmentalism.

Among women, an effective message for inspiring activism will also offer new ways of doing things, as an alternative to current policies and practices. While women are less trusting than men in corporations, government, and even science, and they have less faith in technological solutions to environmental problems, they are more willing to change behaviors to create a better world (Kollmus and Agyeman 2002).

Women donors in particular stress that they want to change the way things are as opposed to preserving something good that already exists (Shaw and Taylor 1995).

- *Make use of women's empathy and altruism, especially on behalf of vulnerable populations, and link environmentalism to issues of basic human needs. Both messages will help inspire activism and develop long-term support.*

Women have a stronger sense of empathy and altruism than men, and they are more likely to let concern for others and society shape their policy preferences (Gault and Sabini 1999; Stern 2000; Welch and Hibbing 1992). This empathy or altruism can create a sense of obligation in women to take environmental action (Stern 2000). Relying on values of empathy and altruism also focuses political debates on principles that scientific methods tend to downplay, such as protecting the weak and innocent (Stern and Dietz 1994). This approach can motivate women by addressing their distrust of science and other institutions to represent the needs of these groups.

Environmental groups can take advantage of women's empathy by focusing on the consequences of environmental policies and practices on widely valued places or commodities, or on vulnerable populations such as children or low-income families (Stern and Dietz 1994). An environmental justice message, focused on the economic and social injustices felt by many minority or low-income families due to current environmental policies, may be a key way to do this. This focus also links environmentalism to basic human needs, another key concern among women.

Building on women's empathy to develop a broad sense of social justice can also lead to more long-term support for environmentalism. Many women leaders in the environmental justice movement were first inspired by the negative health effects of local conditions on their own families and communities. These women then developed a more altruistic need to protect the health of all families (Jetter, Orleck, and Taylor 1997). Messages focusing on the consequences to "your" children, "your" home, and "your" community can motivate people, but

a simultaneous strategy encouraging women to think about environmentalism beyond their own communities inspires more long-term and committed activism.

Thus, although locally tailored messages can be important to first inspiring women's involvement, they should also be accompanied by messages and images designed to build a broader sense of the urgency of environmental issues at the national and even global levels.

- *Do not fall into a “jobs versus the environment” trap: women know better.*

As noted earlier in this report, women not only support environmentalism at higher rates than men, but they are more likely to see a “jobs versus the environment” dilemma as a false choice. And because women are more distrustful of corporate institutions—especially of their commitment to protecting the environment—they are also unlikely to have sympathy for corporate arguments against government regulation that rely on this dichotomy. If presented with a need by the opposition to counter this argument, Rachel's Network should argue that environmental protection and economic growth can go hand in hand.

- *Build a sense of personal responsibility by outlining easy and concrete action steps that women can take to make a difference.*

Building a sense of personal responsibility is crucial to inspiring women to activism. Regardless of their knowledge of an issue or their sense of altruism for others, people are more likely to become active members of a movement when they believe that their own actions matter (Guagnano, Stern, and Dietz 1995; Stern et al. 1999). In general, people react to “threatening messages” either by doing something about a problem or avoiding it. Which method they choose is related to whether they see a way that they, personally, can fix the problem.

Mobilization efforts will be most successful if they stress both negative consequences and personal responsibility (Stern, Dietz, and Black 1986). This is particularly important for women, who tend to report lower levels of faith in the potential effects or importance of their political activism (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001).

Groups should outline specific ways for individuals to take action and to engender a sense of common purpose (Jensen 2002; McKenzie-Mohr and Smith 1999; Steel 1996). When potential activists have a list of clear, direct steps to take, they are more likely to take action by following them (McKenzie-Mohr and Smith 1999).

Rachel's Network should make civic education a crucial part of its message strategy. This should involve giving potential members and activists a set of clear steps to take action and, as noted below, making those steps as easy to take as possible, by structuring them around the obstacles and opportunities in women's lives.

- *Don't focus explicitly on gender issues to recruit women's activism, but do look to feminists to support environmentalism.*

Although women are more likely to support environmental causes than men are, activists within environmental groups do not necessarily see their work or support for these issues as related to gender. Women working both in large, national organizations and in small, localized grassroots groups rarely see gender as integral to their involvement (Burningham 1998; Cable 1992). Messages focusing on perspectives such as “ecofeminism” are not likely to engender broad-based support among women.

At the same time, women who identify themselves as feminists are among the most likely to support environmentalism. Reaching out to feminists by partnering with feminist organizations and networks can be an extremely effective way to tap potential pools of activists.

## **B) Developing Other Political Strategies for Increasing Women's Activism**

Developing an effective message is not the only component of an effective political strategy. Rachel's Network should consider the following key issues and principles in choosing strategies to amass active political and financial support for their work.

- *Target women who are likely to act as “policy entrepreneurs.”*

Interest groups and social movements are most likely to be effective if they involve and encourage members who become “policy entrepreneurs”: key leaders and issue drivers who are creative, politically savvy, and committed to a cause (see Kingdon 1995). Recruiting this kind of member involves not only targeting women who are interested in a particular issue but those who have the resources and knowledge to become leaders.

Rachel's Network has identified two potential groups of women as target audiences that might provide these kind of leaders: “soccer moms” and “urban professionals.” As noted in the previous section, both of these groups of women can be characterized as well-educated, middle-to upper-class, working women. Their education brings them a greater likelihood of having the knowledge and political skills needed to be activists, and their financial resources bring an ability to devote money to environmentalism. Both groups are also more likely to be concerned with environmental issues. Therefore targeting these groups will increase the likelihood of engaging creative, politically savvy, and committed leaders with the resources enabling their involvement.

Several strategies for targeting these two groups are described below within this section.

- *Rely on women's existing personal, professional, and activist networks to recruit members and activists.*

Rachel's Network should tap into existing groups and networks with potential women members, particularly potential policy entrepreneurs. Groups that build relationships with the right allies have a preexisting network of support among “joiners”: people who join one organization are much more likely to also join another, especially if it is involved in similar or



parallel causes (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1988). By building networks with potential allies, Rachel's Network can then identify women leaders within these organizations to recruit to its cause.

Ideas for potential allies, particularly those that involve "soccer moms" and "young urban professional women," are included later in this report (see "Best Bets for Alliances with Rachel's Network").

- *Pursue potential members, activists, and leaders through as much personalized contact as possible.*

In all kinds of political activism, face-to-face contact and personal recruitment are crucial to inspiring people to join and sustain their support for a movement (McKenzie-Mohr and Smith 1999; Stern 2000). While getting a message out through the media is extremely important, localized, personal contact is irreplaceable for getting people involved in a cause.

Personalized contact is particularly important in attempts to encourage women's philanthropy: women are most motivated, and most likely to continue supporting a cause, when they are contacted personally before and after they give money to a cause—even more so than men (Braus 1994; Shaw and Taylor 1995). A "snowball" system of networking and appeals through friends and colleagues, with rigorous and consistent follow-up, can be the most effective way to encourage women's philanthropy.

Finally, to encourage those who have committed to a cause to follow through, it can be useful to advertise the names of people who commit (with their permission of course). This strategy also holds supporters up as role models and allows interested people who recognize a name to talk to the person about it (McKenzie-Mohr and Smith 1999).

- *Instill a sense of respect and confidence in women by providing opportunities to practice leadership skills.*

A major factor keeping women from all kinds of political activism is a lack of confidence in their leadership skills. Because women are less likely to serve as leaders and organizers in civic, religious, and professional settings than men are, they also have fewer opportunities to make speeches, organize meetings, communicate with the media, and perform other leadership or civic roles. As a result, they are less likely to translate those skills into the political realm (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001).

Creating opportunities for women to practice these skills can instill confidence and encourage their activism. Women involved in grassroots environmental organizing have noted that with these opportunities, over time they are more likely to volunteer as leaders and instigators of public and high-profile efforts (Cable 1992). Because women environmental activists are often denigrated as irrational housewives who are "anti-job" and unscientific (Seager 1993), this kind of practice and preparation can be particularly important for building the self-confidence needed in women activists to withstand these criticisms. Finally, opportunities to

practice civic and political skills can instill a greater sense that women's political activism matters, thus building longer-term support for a movement.

Groups can give members the opportunity to develop their political skills in several possible ways (among others):

- Within internal meetings or other functions, participants can rotate responsibilities for designing agendas, facilitating discussions, and designing and implementing decision-making processes. This is particularly important for members who do not have experience in a professional setting requiring these skills.
  - Different group members can be given opportunities to talk to the media and can be provided training to do so.
  - Efforts to recruit members and donors can involve as many members as possible. This not only extends the potential membership pool by tapping into new personal and professional networks, but it also gives women practice asking for participation and for money, which in turn builds their confidence.
  - Groups can also provide opportunities for different members (rather than a few select leaders) to take part in political events and actions, including talking to elected officials. Participants can be paired so that a more experienced person accompanies a less experienced one, taking care that the “greener” member has meaningful opportunities to lead discussion.
- *Let potential activists shape the priorities and strategies of your work. This strategy brings women confidence and underlines your group's respect for activists' contributions and experiences.*

According to Darlene Clover, “throughout history, it has invariably been women who have blown the whistle on the negative impacts of environmental degradation and human manipulation of the environment. In fact, they are at the forefront of major environmental initiatives, struggles and actions worldwide and the virtual ‘backbone’ of many an environmental group” (Clover 2002). Despite their involvement, women's experiences are often dismissed as selfish concerns for their children and families—rather than rational, scientific understandings of development and progress—even within environmental groups and movements (Seager 1993).

Within all kinds of organizing, showing respect for the experiences and perspectives of potential members can instill sustained involvement and commitment to a cause (Kollmus and Agyeman 2002). But choosing strategies that articulate a sense of respect for women's voices may be particularly effective for getting them involved in environmental activism, both because women often support a more consensus-based form of decision-making, and because their experiences are often not respected within environmental organizations or among their opponents (Clover 1995; Seager 1993). This seems to be especially valuable for encouraging women's giving (Braus 1994; Shaw and Taylor 1995).

Deliberative processes that bring potential members as much as possible into decision-making and policy discussions can be an effective way to include a variety of values and opinions into a movement—and thus for showing a sense of respect for women’s individual voices and input. Tools for doing so include forums such as town halls, roundtables, and focus groups. These forums do not have to be particularly large, especially if they are designed to elicit support among a relatively small target group (for example, young urban professional women), but they should be structured to develop buy-in among potential members and givers.

- *Remove barriers to participation by structuring opportunities to participate around women’s lives.*

Any attempt to foster activism must make opportunities to become involved as easy as possible by structuring them around people’s lives (Guagnano, Stern, and Dietz 1995; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1988). This can mean taking into consideration issues such as time, flexibility, and geographic distance, among others. Because women often lead lives with different patterns and responsibilities from men’s—including more responsibility for family issues—any attempt to involve women in activism should be structured around their lives in particular. That is, women and men often experience different opportunities and barriers to participate based on their gender roles (Caiazza and Hartmann 2001; Cable 1992).

This lesson can be tailored to target the key audiences Rachel’s Network is most interested in catalyzing into action: soccer moms and young urban professionals. Targeting so-called soccer moms, for example, could involve holding events at locales where they are likely to congregate, such as schools (including PTA events) or community centers. In fact, using schools as a focus of activity could be particularly effective because kids and young adults are particularly drawn to environmentalism, and a focus on environmental values is a popular way to teach science. Thus there may be opportunities and synergies for mothers and children to participate in environmentally focused activities, perhaps sponsored by a group like Rachel’s Network or one of its allies, through schools. Young, female urban professionals may be more accessible through professional associations and events, particularly those designed to develop networks and contacts among women in the professions (for example, women’s caucuses within bar associations).

### **C) Using Effective Tools for Targeting the Media**

Many of the strategies noted above are also important in media work: highlighting the negative consequences of current policies is an effective way to garner press coverage, for example. There are also a few principles specific to winning media coverage around environmental issues that can be applied to Rachel’s Network’s work.

- *Highlight the risks of current policies and conditions.*

A large portion of media coverage of the environment focuses on potential risks of current policies, whether locally, nationally, or globally (Anderson 1997). While some of this coverage is prompted by major accidents or disasters, some also addresses more mundane or routine problems that win attention primarily because of individuals’ or groups’ public relations

work (Hansen 1991). Calling attention to potential risks—and particularly health risks to specific vulnerable populations—can be an effective way to bring media visibility to the environmental concerns Rachel’s Network is most concerned with. This principle may be key to choosing specific issues to focus on as central areas of media and organizing work.

- *Use the knowledge of experts, but not exclusively—tie it to compelling anecdotes or stories about the consequences of environmental problems.*

Expert knowledge lends credibility to a cause and can encourage media coverage of an issue. In recent years, however, faith in both “experts” and “science” has diminished among the public and among the media, especially in environmental debates, where public officials often call research findings into question by stressing scientific debates over them (Anderson 1997). In addition, as noted above, women tend to trust “the experts” and science even less than men. Therefore expert testimony should be supplemented with human-interest stories and other less scientific proof of the consequences of certain policies and practices. Involving members or spokespeople who can describe their personal experiences with the negative consequences an issue or problem can bring it to life, for example.

- *Remember that most environmental coverage is event-centered and involves a strong visual component.*

Most environmental coverage is prompted by events, including both dramatic disasters (such as an oil spill) and, less frequently, actions created by advocates (such as press conferences or publicity stunts; Anderson 1997; Shanahan 1993). Journalists have little time to cover stories that are not given some urgency or event to justify their reporting. In addition, stories that feature a dramatic or compelling visual image are much more interesting to journalists and their readers (Anderson 1997). Providing these kinds of images is particularly effective within environmental media work, since so many environmental issues involve long, drawn-out processes rather than one-time events—compelling images can provide journalists a way to justify their coverage of environmental issues that lack the drama of a spectacular and/or tragic one-time event.

Again, finding a spokesperson who has experienced the personal consequences of a policy or issue can provide the compelling image needed. Photographs or film of dramatic problems are also effective, particularly when they involve their consequences on weak or vulnerable populations.

- *Use a media-friendly spokesperson who inspires trust in women.*

Picking a good spokesperson can both win media attention and help engender trust and belief among women in the causes Rachel’s Network will promote (McKenzie-Mohr and Smith 1999). Potential choices include the following:

- For women, who are less likely to trust government or corporate institutions, a well-known and trusted woman activist or advocate is more likely to engender support than an elected or other public official.

- A well-known and trusted celebrity, especially one with clout in environmental causes based on past activism, can call attention to a cause through both media value and reliability.
- Because women are often more motivated by local environmental causes, Rachel's Network could develop a network of locally visible activist leaders within targeted cities or localities.

Individuals with personal stories of the negative effects of an issue or problem can put a face to it, provide the important compelling issues needed to build press attention, and build empathy among potential women supporters.

## **Part IV: Best Bets for Alliances with Rachel's Network**

The following organizations are good candidates for alliances with Rachel's Network. Many of their members fall among the target groups identified as key constituencies—highly educated, high-income working women, with and without children. Members are also often local activists and leaders who can provide political skills and leadership to Rachel's Network at the national, state, and local levels, and many have the resources and willingness to give financially to progressive causes.

All descriptions and contact information are taken from the organization's own websites.

### **1) Women's Philanthropic Organizations**

These organizations provide an opportunity for Rachel's Network, as an organization of women philanthropists, to tap into existing networks of women in philanthropy as donors and professionals.

#### **Best Bets:**

##### **Women Donors Network**

1018 Fulton Street Palo Alto, CA 94301  
Phone: 650.328.2600 • Web: [www.womendonors.org](http://www.womendonors.org) • E-mail: [info@womendonors.org](mailto:info@womendonors.org)

*As a national organization of women who donate at least \$25,000 per year to non-profit progressive causes, the Women Donors Network is a dynamic peer community where women can explore all aspects of philanthropic practice. WDN provides the tools and relationships women need to be activist donors working together for progressive change. The WDN culture promotes an atmosphere of openness and confidentiality that allows free-ranging discussion of issues concerning what, why, when and how to fund.*

##### **Women's Funding Network**

1375 Sutter Street, Suite 406 San Francisco, CA 94109  
Phone: 415.441.0706 • Fax: 415.441.0827 • Web: [www.wfnet.org](http://www.wfnet.org) • E-mail: [info@wfnet.org](mailto:info@wfnet.org)

*Founded in 1985, the Women's Funding Network is a partnership of more than 90 women and girls' funds and philanthropic organizations. Committed to changing society by improving the status of women and girls locally, nationally, and internationally, the Women's Funding Network works to strengthen and empower member funds.*

##### **Women and Philanthropy**

1015 18th Street, NW, Suite 202 Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202.887.9660 • Fax: 202.861.5483 • Web: [www.womenphil.org](http://www.womenphil.org)

*Women and Philanthropy advocates within the field of philanthropy for the full engagement of women and girls in society. We work to increase the effectiveness of foundations and individual philanthropists in creating a more caring and just world.*

## **2) Women's Professional Networks**

Existing professional organizations and networks provide an opportunity to target highly educated working women who are already active with their professional communities. They are likely to have strong political skills, public speaking experience, and knowledge of current events, including environmental politics. They may also serve as civic leaders where they live and work, and they are likely to have the resources to give to political causes (such as Rachel's Network). The following are a few examples of possible partners with particularly promising constituencies.

### **Best Bets:**

#### **Association for Women in Science**

1200 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 650 Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: 202.326.8940 • Web: [www.awis.org](http://www.awis.org) • E-mail: [awis@awis.org](mailto:awis@awis.org)

*With over 75 chapters, AWIS is the largest multidisciplinary science organization for women in the United States. Membership is open to all—professionals, students, men, women, teachers, writers—who support women in science. AWIS currently has 76 chapters in 42 states.*

#### **National Association for Female Executives**

P.O. Box 469031 Escondido, CA 92046  
Phone: 212.445.6235 • Fax: 212.445.6228 • Web: [www.nafe.com](http://www.nafe.com) • E-mail: [nafe@nafe.com](mailto:nafe@nafe.com)

*The National Association for Female Executives (NAFE), the largest women's professional association and the largest women business owners' organization in the country with 125,000 members, provides resources and services—through education, networking, and public advocacy—to empower its members to achieve career success and financial security.*

#### **National Conference of Women's Bar Associations**

P.O. Box 82366 Portland, OR 97282  
Phone: 503.657.3813 • Fax: 503.657.3932 • Web: [www.ncwba.org](http://www.ncwba.org) • E-mail: [info@ncwba.org](mailto:info@ncwba.org)

*The NCWBA is an organization of women's bar associations, for women's bar associations. It provides a national forum for exchanging ideas and information vital to organizational growth and success in today's profession. The NCWBA gathers three times a year to exchange ideas and foster connections among the leadership of women's bar associations throughout the nation, as well as abroad. The NCWBA also provides a free electronic "women's bar leadership" listserv. The NCWBA's quarterly newsletter is another way we share news of significance*

### **Other Professional Networks:**

#### **American College of Nurse-Midwives**

818 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 900 Washington DC 20006  
Phone: 202.728.9860 • Fax: 202.728.9897 • Web: [www.midwife.org](http://www.midwife.org)

### **American Medical Women's Association**

801 North Fairfax Street, Suite 400 Alexandria, VA 22314  
Phone: 703.838.0500 • Fax: 703.549.3864 • Web: [www.amwa-doc.org](http://www.amwa-doc.org) • E-mail: [info@amwa-doc.org](mailto:info@amwa-doc.org)

### **Financial Women International**

200 North Glebe Road, Suite 820 Arlington, VA 22203-3728  
Phone: 703.807.2007 • Fax: 703.807.0111 • Web: [www.fwi.org](http://www.fwi.org) • E-mail: [info@fwi.org](mailto:info@fwi.org)

### **International Women's Media Foundation**

1726 M Street NW, Suite 1002 Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202.496.1992 • Fax: 202.496.1977 • Web: [www.iwmf.org](http://www.iwmf.org) • E-mail: [info@iwmf.org](mailto:info@iwmf.org)

### **National Association of Women Business Owners**

1595 Spring Hill Road, Suite 330 Vienna, VA 22182  
Phone: 703.506.3268 • Fax: 703.556.3266 • Web: [www.nawbo.org](http://www.nawbo.org) • E-mail: [national@nawbo.org](mailto:national@nawbo.org)

## **3) Women's Grassroots Organizations**

Grassroots groups can potentially partner with Rachel's Network to provide a pool of "joiners" who may support environmental causes. Most are made up of large networks of local affiliates involving local women as leaders and activists. The groups listed below tend to have members who fall into the demographic target groups identified by Rachel's Network and/or an existing focus on environmental issues. As activists already, members of these groups are likely to have civic skills and political savvy and be leaders in their communities. As progressives, they are also likely to be receptive to the importance of environmental issues even if they are not currently active on behalf of environmentalism.

### **Best Bets:**

#### **American Association of University Women**

1111 16th Street, NW Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 800.326.AAUW • Fax: 202.872.1425 • Web: [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org) • E-mail: [info@aauw.org](mailto:info@aauw.org)

*Since 1881 the American Association of University Women has been the nation's leading voice promoting education and equity for women and girls. The Association—with more than 100,000 members, 1,300 branches, and 550 college/university institution partners nationwide—advocates education and equity. Since its founding in 1881, members have examined and taken positions on the fundamental issues of the day—educational, social, economic, and political.*

#### **General Federation of Women's Clubs**

1734 N Street, NW Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202.347.3168 • Fax: 202.835.0246 • Web: [www.gfwc.org](http://www.gfwc.org) • E-mail: [gfwc@gfwc.org](mailto:gfwc@gfwc.org)

*Working locally through thousands of clubs in the United States and globally in more than 20 countries, GFWC members support the arts, preserve natural resources, promote education, encourage healthy lifestyles, stress civic involvement, and work toward world peace and understanding. Clubs shape their local agendas to suit particular community needs. Each local chapter benefits from membership, service, material, and program support from state and national Federation levels.*



**National Council of Jewish Women**

53 West 23rd Street, 6th Floor New York, NY 10010

Phone: 212.645.4048 • Fax: 212.645.7466 • E-mail: actionline@ncjw.org

*The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is a volunteer organization, inspired by Jewish values, that works through a program of research, education, advocacy and community service to improve the quality of life for women, children and families and strives to ensure individual rights and freedoms for all. One national principle guiding this group is environmental protection.*

**National Organization for Women**

733 15th Street, NW Washington, DC 20005

Phone: 202.628.8669 • Fax: 202.785.8576 • Web: www.now.org • E-mail: now@now.org

*The National Organization for Women (NOW) is the largest organization of feminist activists in the United States. NOW has 500,000 contributing members and 550 chapters in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Since its founding in 1966, NOW's goal has been to take action to bring about equality for all women. NOW works to eliminate discrimination and harassment in the workplace, schools, the justice system, and all other sectors of society; secure abortion, birth control and reproductive rights for all women; end all forms of violence against women; eradicate racism, sexism and homophobia; and promote equality and justice in our society.*

**Soroptimist International of the Americas**

Two Penn Center Plaza, Suite 1000 Philadelphia, PA 19102

Phone: 215.557.9300 • Fax: 215.568.5200 • E-mail: siahq@soroptimist.org

*A volunteer service organization for women in business, management, and the professions, Soroptimist International of the Americas is part of Soroptimist International, comprising almost 100,000 members in about 120 countries around the world. The heart of Soroptimist's mission is to "make a difference for women" through volunteer service to the community. Projects are carefully chosen to address challenges unique to today's women. Sample club projects include providing minority women with routine medical care, funding domestic violence shelters, sponsoring career development programs for teen mothers, and tutoring women in literacy and basic job skills.*

**Women's Action for New Directions/Women Legislators Lobby**

691 Massachusetts Avenue Arlington, MA 02476

Phone: 781. 643.6740 • Fax: 781.643.6744 • Web: www.wand.org • E-mail: info@wand.org

*WAND is a grassroots organization whose mission is to empower women to act politically to reduce violence and militarism, and redirect excessive military resources toward unmet human and environmental needs. WiLL is a network of progressive women state legislators.*

## **Other Grassroots Organizations:**

### **Girls Incorporated**

120 Wall Street New York, NY 10005  
Phone: 800.374.4475 • Web: [www.girlsinc.org](http://www.girlsinc.org)

### **League of Women Voters**

1730 M Street, NW, Suite 1000 Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202.429.1965 • Fax: 202.429.0854 • Web: [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) • E-mail: [lwv@lwv.org](mailto:lwv@lwv.org)

### **MANA, A National Latina Organization**

1725 K Street, NW, Suite 501 Washington, DC 20006  
Phone: 202.833.0060 • Fax: 202.496.0588 • Web: [www.herman.org](http://www.herman.org) • E-mail: [hermana2@aol.com](mailto:hermana2@aol.com)

### **National Council of Negro Women**

633 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20004  
Phone: 202.383.9134 • Fax: 202.383.9135 • Web: [www.ncnw.com](http://www.ncnw.com)

## **4) Health and Social Justice Organizations**

The last group of potential partners includes groups with a focus on health and/or social justice. All of these groups are most likely to lend support to environmentalism if it is framed as a health-focused issue with an emphasis on social justice.

### **Black Women's Health Imperative**

600 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, Suite 310 Washington, DC 20003  
Phone: 202.548.4000 • Fax: 202.543.9743 • Web: [www.blackwomenshealth.org](http://www.blackwomenshealth.org) • E-mail: [nbwhp@nbwhp.org](mailto:nbwhp@nbwhp.org)

*Black Women's Health Imperative, the new name of the National Black Women's Health Project, is a leading African American health education, research, advocacy, and leadership development institution. The organization is gaining the well-earned reputation as the leading force for health for African American women. Our mission is to promote optimum health for Black women across the life span—physically, mentally and spiritually. This group has been a part of the National Coalition for Health and Environmental Justice, working to create and strengthen a gendered voice in the environmental justice movement.*

### **National Asian Women's Health Organization**

250 Montgomery Street, Suite 900 San Francisco, CA 94104  
Phone: 415.989.9747 • Fax: 415.989.9758 • E-mail: [nawho@nawho.org](mailto:nawho@nawho.org)

*The National Asian Women's Health Organization was founded in 1993 to achieve health equity for Asian Americans. NAWHO's goals are to raise awareness about the health needs of Asian Americans through research and education; to support Asian Americans as decision-makers through leadership development and advocacy; and to strengthen systems serving Asian Americans through partnerships and capacity building.*

**Other Health and Social Justice Organizations:**

**Kaiser Family Foundation Women's Health Policy Program**

2400 Sand Hill Road Menlo Park, CA 94025  
Phone: 650.854.9400 • Fax: 650.854.4800 • Web: [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org)

**National Women's Health Resource Center, Inc.**

120 Albany Street, Suite 820 New Brunswick, NJ 08901  
Phone: 877.98.NWHRC • Fax: 877.986.9472 • Web: [www.healthywomen.org](http://www.healthywomen.org) • E-mail: [info@healthywomen.org](mailto:info@healthywomen.org)

## **Part V: Next Steps for Research**

IWPR's analysis of existing research suggests several steps for future research that could help Rachel's Network build support for its work, particularly by appealing to its key constituencies.

- *Analyzing more recent data on women's giving and volunteering to environmental groups.*

As noted above, a 2001 survey of giving and volunteering in the United States provides an opportunity to produce a more up-to-date picture of women's overall levels of giving and volunteering in this area. The analysis could also analyze the giving and volunteering of women by income level, focusing on middle- and upper-income women, and by work status. This work, however, would be limited by the parameters of the survey. For example, it would not allow analysis of women's involvement in different kinds of environmental issues.

- *More in-depth analysis of existing data on women's environmental attitudes.*

The brief analysis of data in the first part of this report, which presented women's attitudes toward environmental issues as measured in the American National Election Studies, could be supplemented with further work examining trends and differences by age, income, marital status, parental status, and work status, for example. This would allow a more targeted understanding of environmental attitudes among the key constituencies of women identified by Rachel's Network as its potential core supporters.

- *A targeted set of focus groups on the messages that will appeal especially to higher income young professional women, both mothers and non-mothers, both traditional and feminist.*

Once Rachel's Network has developed specific messages designed to appeal to its key constituencies, a set of focus groups could be used to refine them and/or choose between alternative approaches. This research could ensure maximizing the effectiveness of the messages chosen and allow Rachel's Network to appeal to different types of women within the overall categories of "young urban professionals" and "soccer moms"—for example, self-identified feminists, more traditional women, and those who fall somewhere in between the two categories. The focus groups could also involve feedback on a set of political strategies generated based on the lessons in this report. Overall, they would allow Rachel's Network greater precision in targeting messages to its different key audiences.

- *A larger-scale poll of women's attitudes toward the environment with questions designed to more fully assess the links between environmental activism, motherhood, and feminism, and/or to assess women's interest in different kinds of environmental issues.*

A survey would provide a more comprehensive and statistically reliable way of filling in gaps in research on women's environmental attitudes and activism. For example, a poll could look more carefully at the importance of motherhood as a motivation (or not) for activist work among some certain of women. It could also assess women's interest in different issues within

environmentalism—such as land use, natural disasters, resource conservation, and others, which would help Rachel’s Network set its internal goals and focus its efforts. The results of such a project could also call attention to Rachel’s Network’s efforts by attracting significant media interest.

- *An assessment of women’s giving to national and/or local environmental groups*

In order to provide an analysis of women’s giving to environmental groups—including the kinds of issues they are most likely to give to—IWPR could analyze the annual reports of a variety of major national, regional, and local environmental groups. This research is likely to be time-consuming, because organizations are not required to make individual donor lists public. Some do, however, include lists of major donors in their annual reports, and IWPR could collect and analyze a variety of these. In addition, IWPR could ask organizations for confidential lists of donors with the assurance that they will only be analyzed by gender without any identifying information. This research would help Rachel’s Network identify priority goals and issues in the coming years in order to maximize interest among women and especially women’s philanthropy.

## **About the Institute for Women's Policy Research**

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) is a scientific research organization dedicated to informing and stimulating debate on public policy issues of critical importance to women and their families.

IWPR focuses on issues of poverty and welfare, employment and earnings, work and family issues, the economic and social aspects of health care and safety, and women's civic and political participation.

The Institute works with policymakers, scholars, and public interest groups to design, execute, and disseminate research and to build a network of individuals and organizations that conduct and use women-oriented policy research.

IWPR, an independent, nonprofit organization, also works in affiliation with the graduate programs in public policy and women's studies at The George Washington University.

IWPR's work is supported by foundation grants, government grants and contracts, donations from individuals, and contributions from organizations and corporations. IWPR is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

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