



NYRAG

## memo

## Environmental Habitats

## NYRAG Members' Green Offices

below The Hearst Tower is the first building in New York City to receive a Gold LEED-certified rating for core, shell, and interiors.

Visitors to NYRAG's office are often impressed by our "green" design, which includes energy-efficient lighting, flooring made from recycled products, storage facilities built from bamboo, decorative wall panels made of rapidly-renewable cork, and paint with low levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). NYRAG is proud to have an environmentally sound office—and many of our members are proud of their own green spaces.



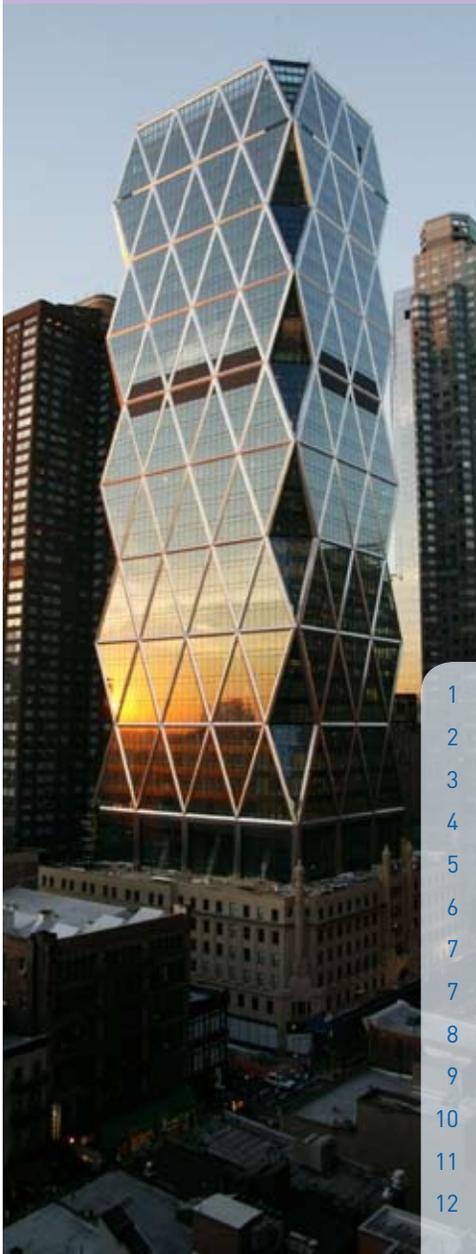
Bob Dandrew

"When we created our office space, green characteristics were part of the original design," says Bob Dandrew, Executive Director of the NoVo Foundation. "Our foundation values sustainability, and we were

determined to incorporate this. Throughout the space, we rely on green building materials, from recycled paper-based desktops to rapidly-renewable bamboo millwork and flooring. The concept of good indoor air quality was also important. We have low or no VOC-emitting materials in our carpets, furniture upholstery, ceiling tiles, paints, adhesives, and finishes. The walls are insulated with

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# From the President



Dear NYRAG Members:

A passion for supporting the environment seems to be everywhere these days—politics, popular magazines, blogs, television shows—everyone is talking about the importance of being “green.”

Whether or not your organization funds projects on climate change, conservation, environmental justice, or myriad other related subjects, chances are that you or a colleague in your office is involved in protecting the environment. Terms like “carbon footprint,” “sustainability,” and “environmental consumerism” are now part of the common vernacular, and environmentalism has grown into a core subject of local, state, and national discussions.

Similarly, environmental grantmaking is no longer a funding area confined to its own silo, and grantmakers have realized that

environmental concerns, like several others, transcend one issue area and can impact other kinds of grantmaking focuses, such as health and human services, the welfare of children and families, and community and civil rights.

NYRAG is proud that the construction of our office space was “green,” with structural features and furniture built from renewable and low-polluting materials. Whether or not your organization funds environmental programs, you and your colleagues may be interested in supporting sustainability through other activities. A recent report by the Environmental Grantmakers Association, [Green Beyond Grants](#), offers simple guidelines for any office to become more environmentally sustainable, such as installing automated occupancy sensors for lights, avoiding purchasing products made of vinyl, and encouraging employees to use public transportation.

In this issue of the *NYRAG Memo*, in addition to learning the story

of two other “green” office spaces here in the city, you’ll also find important information about Mayor Bloomberg’s PlaNYC and the recent United Nations summit on climate change. The nuclear energy debate, a current hot topic, is tackled by a former Greenpeace founder and an anti-nuke activist who argues that grantmakers have too long sat on the sidelines. We also look at the how-to’s, and special challenges, of making environmental grants, including a discussion on evaluating impact.

We look forward to continuing this conversation, through our publications and through upcoming programs. Our goal with this *Memo* is to provide articles of interest to all of our members, whether or not you fund in this area. Please let us know if we have succeeded by contacting me at [rbrown@nyrag.org](mailto:rbrown@nyrag.org).

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna D. Swan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Environmental grantmaking is no longer a funding area confined to its own silo. Grantmakers have realized that environmental concerns transcend one issue area and can impact other kinds of grantmaking focuses.

# Grantmaker Spotlights

## Innovative Environmental Programs

Environmental grantmaking, like the environmental movement itself, is multi-faceted, approaching many issues in a variety of inventive ways. The following profiles spotlight NYRAG members and their innovative grantee partners.

### The Overbrook Foundation

“The Overbrook Foundation has made it a priority to fund environmental projects that promote sustainability in the United States and protect threatened biodiversity in Latin America,” says Daniel R. Katz of Overbrook’s Environment Program. “We realize these issues are enormous, and need our immediate and focused attention. Conservation organizations are becoming more sophisticated, and we hope that collectively, foundations will do all we can to support them.”

In December 2007, Overbrook awarded fellowships through its Conservation Fellows

Program to six leading young conservationists from Latin America. Their mandate? To pursue projects that protect diverse ecosystems. Fellowship awards are administered annually by the [Center for Environmental Research and Conservation \(CERC\)](#) at Columbia University’s Earth Institute, chosen by the foundation to implement its program because CERC supports local conservationists and has strong ties to the Latin American environmental community.

The foundation’s local initiatives include their past support of the New York Public Interest Research Group’s [Campaign for the Bigger, Better Bottle Bill](#). New York’s Returnable Container Act, known as the “Bottle Bill,” requires a five-cent refundable deposit on beer and soda containers sold in the state. Since its passage 25 years ago, the bill has led to the recycling of more than 90 billion bottles and cans—and the elimination of more than six million tons of plastic, glass, and metal waste.

NYPIRG is now spearheading a statewide campaign to update and improve the Bottle Bill. A “[Bigger, Better Bottle Bill](#)” would mandate a deposit on containers for non-carbonated beverages such as bottled water, iced teas, and sports drinks. The result? Nearly three billion more bottles and cans recycled annually in New York. The new bill would require beverage distributors to transfer any unclaimed container deposits (currently estimated at \$140 million a year) to the State Environmental Protection Fund, a dedicated trust fund that supports local recycling programs, parks, waterfront revitalization, open space, and farmland preservation.

*Established in 1948 by Frank and Helen Altschul, Overbrook is a family foundation that strives to improve the lives of others by supporting projects that protect human and civil rights, advance the self-sufficiency and well-being of individuals and their communities, and conserve the natural environment.*

*More information about the Overbrook Foundation’s environmental grantees and their other projects can be found at [www.overbrook.org](http://www.overbrook.org).*

### Top 10 Recipients of Foundation Grants for the Environment

1. [Conservation International](#)
2. [Nature Conservancy](#)
3. [Environmental Defense](#)
4. [Conservation Fund](#)
5. [Fauna and Flora International](#)
6. [Longwood Gardens](#)
7. [Detroit Riverfront Conservancy](#)
8. [Barnes Foundation](#)
9. [Institute of Ecosystem Studies](#)
10. [Duke Farms Foundation](#)

*Source: The Foundation Center, 2007*

### The Beldon Fund

Since 2002, the Beldon Fund has invested in a unique three-way partnership to support nurses’ involvement in the growing environmental health movement. [The American Nurses Association](#), the Environmental Health Education Center of the [University of Maryland’s School of Nursing](#), and [Health Care Without Harm](#) (an international coalition of organizations working to reduce pollution in the healthcare industry) have joined forces to help nurses go green.

Nurses are a powerful mobilizing force because they’re the front-line healthcare providers in homes, workplaces, schools, and communities. Several polls show they are trusted more than any other professionals, including physicians. Nurses represent one of every 100 Americans, one of every 44 registered women voters, and 98 current state legislators.

According to [Nurses’ Health – A Survey on Health and Chemical Exposures](#), a report funded by Beldon and conducted by the [Environmental Working Group](#) and the aforementioned nursing alliances, nurses also have a personal stake in the environmental movement. On the job, they are frequently exposed to radiation, sterilizing chemicals, household

According to the Environmental Grantmakers Association (EGA), biodiversity and species protection receives the highest amount (28 percent) of all EGA giving. Restoration and land conservation receives 15 percent, climate and energy 13 percent, sustainability 12 percent, and policy and advocacy 10 percent.

# Evaluating Impact

## Conversations Between Foundations and Grantees

One vital aspect of the foundation-grantee relationship is measuring the grantee's success in achieving goals and in advancing the foundation's mission. Does this process become more difficult in the case of environmental grantmaking, when outcomes can be longer-term and potentially harder to quantify? NYRAG sought answers from **Bill Robertson** of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and **Will Rogers** of the Trust for Public Land—and from **Barbara Greenberg** of the Levitt Foundation and **Paula Hewitt Amram** of Open Road.

**NYRAG** Can you tell us a little bit about the relationship between your two organizations?

**Bill Robertson** The Mellon Foundation has supported the Trust for Public Land [TPL] for about 20 years. The foundation began in its very earliest days with an interest in land conservation, and we did that directly and funded studies on it. When we realized we didn't have enough staff to actually decide on specific projects, we began funding TPL, supporting it because it was the only land-saving national group that worked by finding and adopting the projects of others. TPL helped small and large organizations alike do the land conservation they wanted to do rather than following its own predetermined agenda.

**Will Rogers** The Mellon Foundation grasped our business model, and helped us achieve our mission. We began early on with a revolving capital fund of about \$3.7 million, with the idea that TPL could use that money to tie up property and invest in this land or a portion of it. This gave us working money, and

**Nationally, grants made to the environment total 5 percent of all grant dollars.**

*Source: The Foundation Center, 2007*

then, when we were able to turn land over to the public, we would return the money to the revolving fund and use it again on more property. Over the course of 20 years, these funds helped fuel 1,200 separate projects in which we were involved. That \$3.7 million circulated 13 times and helped protect 820,000 acres with a fair-market value in historic dollars of \$1.8 billion. The fund was the first of its kind for TPL. It gave us tremendous leverage, and helped us secure our success.

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Clinton Avenue Elementary students hold Mildred Helms Park plan as part of a Trust for Public Land project.



Hanging out at P.S. 32 in Gowanus, Brooklyn, also a Trust for Public Land project.

## Justice for the Earth, Justice for All

# A Conversation About the Environmental Justice Movement

**Peggy Shepard** of WE ACT For Environmental Justice and **David Yarnold** of Environmental Defense discuss the need for policies—and grantmaking—that help people of all economic strata go green.

Since 1996, the **Just Transition Alliance**, a voluntary coalition of environmental justice activists, labor leaders, indigenous people, and working-class people of color has sparked local, national, and international dialogue. To help shepherd communities and workers from unsafe workplaces and environments to healthy, viable communities, the alliance uses educational workshops, joint fundraising, and local organizing to build the skills of both labor and local communities, fighting for policies that lead to just transition in both the boardroom and the halls of government.

**NYRAG** How do you define the Environmental Justice Movement?

**Peggy Shepard** The Environmental Justice Movement incorporates a civil rights analysis of environmental decision-making. It embraces a broad holistic framework, involving where we live, work, play, and go to school. This movement challenges the current environmental protection paradigm by addressing inequities such as the disparate impact of pollution and unequal protection and enforcement. It reaches out to the millions of people of color and low income who are living and working in polluted environments without opportunities to breathe clean air, drink pure water, attend safe schools, work in uncontaminated environments, and enjoy open space, clean parks, and access to revitalized waterfronts. We redress this disproportionate impact through targeted action that emphasizes pollution prevention, enforcement, environmental and public health education, and constituency building. We also focus on cumulative impacts that create hot spots throughout our country.

Here in New York City, where I live and work, more than 80 percent of residents are renters and have little control over their indoor air environment. Our research partners have discovered that deteriorating housing is a key environmental concern. Exposure

**“The Environmental Justice Movement challenges the current environmental protection paradigm by addressing inequities such as the disparate impact of pollution and unequal protection and enforcement.”**

—Peggy Shepard

### NYRAG members that fund WE ACT include:

J.M. Kaplan Fund  
 Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation  
 Ford Foundation  
 Mertz Gilmore Foundation  
 New York Community Trust  
 Rockefeller Brothers Fund  
 Sills Family Foundation

to indoor air allergens is leading to asthma, low birth weight, and developmental delays among children. For years, our neighborhoods have been bereft of investment by the state and federal government. Now that the reinvestment is coming, we need to learn to manage it, shape its growth, and encourage sustainable development that is clean and creates jobs but does not negatively impact human health or displace community residents.

**David Yarnold** One of the real eye openers for me was coming to understand the different ways people define the word “sustainability.” When you talk to people in the environmental movement who don’t focus on urban neighborhoods, sustainability is about pristine rivers and hybrid cars—good things, but very different from an idea of sustainability that includes maintaining healthy homes with no lead paint and developing neighborhoods in a way that’s beneficial for established as well as new residents. This definition has a bit of a cultural frame around it.

For the most part, grantmakers don’t ask mainstream environmental organizations about issues of environmental justice, about the diversity of their staffs, or about where their resources are going. I find it shocking that in all the conversations about climate change legislation in Washington, no one ever addresses pollution saturation in poor

# The Nuclear Option

Today, global warming is nearly undisputed. Reports about the negative impact of fossil fuels are ubiquitous, and environmental experts offer ominous predictions if we continue to rely on coal-generated power. Recently, we've seen the once-taboo nuclear energy option gaining attention—in presidential debates, in the news, and even amongst self-proclaimed environmentalists. Still, many of us may be left wondering: Is the environmental community really considering nuclear power as a solution? Can the rewards possibly outweigh the risks? And if not, then what are the technologies of the future, and what role can foundations play in promoting and developing these technologies?

NYRAG tackled these questions by talking to the controversial **Patrick Moore**, a Greenpeace founder who now is vocally in favor of nuclear energy, and **Daniel Hirsch**, of the environmental organization Committee to Bridge the Gap, a nonprofit that works to reduce nuclear risks.

**NYRAG** Is it crazy to consider nuclear energy part of the solution to global warming?

**Patrick Moore** Not when you realize that 70 percent of the clean electricity being produced in the U.S. today is nuclear. Not when you note that fossil fuel power plants are the second leading cause of air pollution, next to transportation fuels, and that burning fossil fuels causes more damage to public health than any existing technology.

Only three technologies—fossil fuel, hydroelectric, and nuclear—can produce continuous and reliable electricity. And though hydroelectric and nuclear power are both non-CO<sub>2</sub>-emitting technologies, the U.S. has unfortunately reached its hydroelectric capacity.

Nuclear energy is the only non-greenhouse-gas-emitting power source that can effectively replace fossil fuels and meet our demands. There's just no other technology available, which is why there's bipartisan support in Congress for nuclear energy. Both sides realize this is the only way to substantially reduce fossil fuel dependence.

**“No major environmental organization supports nuclear energy. This...piece of disinformation [is] paid for by the nuclear energy industry. Patrick Moore hasn't been an environmentalist for decades. He makes his living by taking money from the timber, mining, and nuclear industries.”**

—Daniel Hirsch



**Daniel Hirsch** Nuclear technology is the most dangerous technology on earth. Everything else simply pales in comparison. A few pounds of plutonium—about the size of a grapefruit—can destroy an entire city in a nuclear explosion. At Nagasaki, just one gram of matter was converted to energy that killed 100,000 people. Each nuclear power plant produces, annually, enough plutonium for about 100 nuclear weapons. Nuclear materials are exquisitely dangerous. If inhaled, one millionth of an ounce of plutonium will cause lung cancer with virtually 100 percent certainty. If I had a grapefruit-sized piece of plutonium and could divide it equally and put a speck of it in the lung of every person in the U.S., every single one of us would develop cancer.

An operating nuclear plant generates 15 billion curies of radioactivity, each of which produces 37 billion disintegrations per second. If a single one of those interacts with the genetic material in our cells, it can cause cancer or birth defects in future generations.

Building nuclear power plants costs at least \$5 billion per facility. And that steals money from true environmental solutions. We've got only about a decade to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> enough to avert catastrophe.

**NYRAG** Dr. Moore, it seems you're saying the dangers posed by nuclear energy do not outweigh the risks posed by fossil fuel consumption.

# 2007 United Nations Climate Change Conference



Bali, Indonesia  
December, 2007

Representatives from more than 180 countries attended the Climate Change Conference, as did observers from intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations. The conference hosted meetings of several UN bodies, including the 13th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 13) and the Third Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (MOP 3 or CMP 3).

The Climate Change Conference culminated in the adoption of the “Bali roadmap,” a new negotiating process that will, by 2009, create the successor of the Kyoto Protocol, a treaty that attempted to address global warming by limiting greenhouse gas emissions. Penned in 2005, this treaty is set to expire in 2012.

The participating nations acknowledged that the evidence of global warming was “unequivocal,” and pledged to act on several measures to reduce global emissions and deforestation. Participants established an Adaptation Fund to help poorer countries protect themselves against the effects of climate change. They also discussed the need to remove obstacles to the transfer of clean energy technologies from industrialized nations to developing ones, and the need to provide incentives for this exchange.

The 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference, which will be held in December 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark, will explore the final stages of roadmap negotiations and end with the expected ratification of the post-Kyoto Protocol treaty.

NYRAG uncovered an interesting, but troubling, postscript to the Climate Change Conference. According to *The Sydney Morning Herald*, the air-conditioning system that cooled the more than 10,000 delegates used hydrochlorofluorocarbons, refrigerant gases that damage the ozone layer. The air-conditioning system, described as visibly leaking, released the equivalent of 48,000 tons of carbon dioxide—roughly the same amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions created by all the aircraft that flew U.N. delegates to Indonesia. ▲

## Greening Your Workspace

# Innovative Foundation and Corporate Space Practices

On March 19th, NYRAG members gathered for a series of presentations about how to create a sustainable office, which can function as a mission-related asset and an opportunity to represent core values. You don't have to be an environmental grantmaker to decide to reduce your organization's carbon footprint. The most important step that a foundation can take is simply to reduce consumption.

One of the biggest contributors to foundations' carbon consumption is transportation, both commuting and travel. Second is office energy use, including lighting (30 percent), heating (25 percent), office equipment (16 percent), and water heating (9 percent).

Conducting a Carbon Audit is one way to begin the greening process and you can start by simply using a website such as [SafeClimate.net](#) or [The Green Office](#). Some effective practices include:

- Using efficient light bulbs and light sensors;
- Spending a little extra to purchase wind or solar energy;
- Buying Energy Star certified equipment;
- Using paper thoughtfully and using non-toxic cleaning supplies;

- Purchasing organic, in-season, local food, coffee, and tea;
- Using non-disposable glasses, plates, and silverware;
- Supporting public transportation, promoting telecommuting and videoconferencing options, consolidating trips (combine conferences and Board meetings, for example), seeking out green hotels, and offsetting air travel.

The [EGA Green Co-Op](#) is a free resource that offers hybrid car rentals, organic bouquets, and other environmentally friendly options.

David Grant, President and CEO of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, described the process of designing the innovative “green building” that will soon be their new home in Morristown, NJ. The Dodge Foundation has a history of environmental responsibility, and decided to incorporate these values into the design and selection of a new space.

The new building features:

- Close attention to simple structural elements, such as insulation and windows, a more important factor in reducing energy

- usage than some “glitzy” techniques;
- Light shelves and sun shades on the outside of the building to direct natural light into the office (decreasing the need for artificial light);
- Photovoltaic arrays on the roof of the adjacent parking garage and geothermal wells below;
- A green roof with plantings to absorb stormwater as well as stormwater re-use to eliminate runoff from the building;
- Salvaged wood used in the reception area;
- Changes to process, including electronic proposals, scanning and recycling of old documents, remote access opportunities, and green web hosting;
- An indoor planted biowall that will filter air for the entire building;
- A location adjacent to the Morristown Train Station.

Costs, zoning ordinances, and reluctant developers still present significant barriers to incorporating many of these design features into new or existing buildings. Luckily, the emerging “green economy” is likely to help us see reduced costs over time for many of these techniques, services, and materials. ▲

# PlaNYC Updates

## NYRAG Hosts Meetings with City Officials

City Connect is a NYRAG special committee, chaired by **Marilyn Gelber** of the Independence Community Foundation, that unites grantmakers and New York City officials. The committee has pledged to devote the next two years to exploring philanthropy's role in PlaNYC, Mayor Bloomberg's sustainability effort consisting of ten goals to be completed by 2030. To help NYRAG members better understand the plan, and how local foundations can become and remain involved, City Connect recently hosted two Members Briefings. Please visit NYRAG's [Calendar of Events](#) to register for upcoming programs that are part of the PlaNYC series.



### December 19th: Rohit Aggarwala, Director of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability

Throughout his presentation, Mr. Aggarwala stressed that foundations and their grantees are crucial to PlaNYC's success because so much of the plan requires public-private partnerships. For this reason, he made a plea for the philanthropic community to remain involved.

At its inception, PlaNYC was not a sustainability effort, but a land use plan that asked, "If we're going to have a million additional residents in this city by 2030, where are they going to live and work? How will they get around? Where will they get their energy, and how much will that cost? Where will they have the space to play? How will they face the shared threat of climate change? How can we help keep these people healthy?"

The push to answer these questions changed a strategic land use plan into a sustainability plan, known as "PlaNYC" and comprised of ten goals made up of more than 125 initiatives.

On October 22, 2007, PlaNYC's six-month anniversary, the Mayor's office released the first [progress update](#). Mr. Aggarwala reviewed the plan's major accomplishments in the following areas:

According to *National Geographic's "Green Guide,"* the top ten environmentally friendly cities in the U.S. are:

- 1 Eugene, OR
- 2 Austin, TX
- 3 Portland, OR
- 4 St. Paul, MN
- 5 Santa Rosa, CA
- 6 Oakland, CA
- 7 Berkeley, CA
- 8 Honolulu, HI
- 9 Huntsville, AL
- 10 Denver, CO

*Criteria for this 2006 list include air quality, electricity use and production, environmental perspective and policy, green design, green spaces available to residents, public health, recycling, socioeconomic factors, transportation, and water quality.*

- air quality
- housing and open space
- brownfields (abandoned industrial and commercial facilities plagued by environmental contaminations)
- water
- transportation
- energy
- climate change

#### Highlights Mr. Aggarwala mentioned include:

- On June 25th, the administration kicked off GreeNYC, PlaNYC's multimedia marketing campaign, forging partnerships with non-profits, corporations, and marketing professionals to develop targeted energy efficiency and carbon reduction awareness campaigns aimed at specific sectors of the public.

**"If funders talk to mayoral candidates, they should ask them about PlaNYC, which is not just Mayor Bloomberg's plan, but the city's plan, requiring consideration in the next election."**

— Rohit Aggarwala, Director of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability

# Doris Duke Going Green

**Joan Spero**, President of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (DDCF), and **Andrew Bowman**, Director of DDCF’s Climate Change Initiative, broach the battle against global warming.

**NYRAG** Why did the foundation decide to develop an initiative aimed at combating climate change?

**Joan Spero** In 2005, our board challenged us to identify what we believed to be the most pressing issues for society outside of the areas we already were funding, but within the bounds of Doris Duke’s will. We were well aware of what was happening, and what was predicted to happen, with global climate change, and knew immediately that this was one of the issues we wanted to investigate.

**Andrew Bowman** To explore how DDCF might fill a useful niche not yet addressed by existing climate change philanthropy, we conducted an extensive review of the scientific literature and consulted with dozens of outside experts—scientists and policy experts, academics and activists, as well as staff at other foundations. What was remarkable was how quickly a consensus emerged around the importance of supporting what we generally refer to as “technology policy.”

**NYRAG** What exactly does the term “technology policy” encompass?

**JS** In order to create a clean-energy economy, we will need to accelerate the development and deployment of new energy-saving technologies. Foundations do not have the resources to directly make that happen, but they can help design and promote pragmatic policy solutions that can speed this transition. These policies essentially put low-carbon technologies on a fast track to becoming affordable norms, rather than expensive

alternatives. Ultimately, these technology policies allow us to become more efficient so that we need and use less energy, and they also allow us to produce the energy we need with fewer greenhouse gas emissions—such as by using cleaner, renewable energy sources like wind and solar technologies.

**AB** It will be absolutely necessary for society to place a price on greenhouse gas emissions, which will internalize the costs to the environment and society from burning fossil fuels. This alone, however, will not be sufficient, as a price on carbon by itself will not achieve emission reductions at the necessary pace and in enough sectors of the economy for us to avoid catastrophic climate change. We will need to take additional steps, which is why we use the shorthand of describing our strategy as “price-plus.” By this we mean



© Frances Goldstein

Researchers from MIT’s Center for Energy and Environmental Policy Research (CEEPR) have been working with leading European scholars under a grant from DDCF’s Climate Change Initiative to assess the European Union’s carbon dioxide Emissions Trading Scheme, and the lessons that can be gleaned for U.S. policy design.

that we will need specific policies to correct market failures and other barriers to technological innovation in particular sectors of the economy, as well as to provide incentives for a shift to clean-energy technologies. A good example of such policies are well-designed building codes that require that energy use and efficiency be carefully considered at the time a building is designed and constructed.

**NYRAG** How are these principles reflected in the strategies you ultimately adopted?

**JS** We went back to our board with a recommendation that we focus on pricing policies as well as policies that help less polluting technologies become more widely and quickly adopted across the economy. The board decided to devote \$100 million above and beyond our other grantmaking programs to the creation of a new, five-year Climate Change Initiative. We launched the initiative early in 2007, and moved quickly in order to approve more than \$30 million in grants by the end of that year.

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## The Environmental Grantmakers Association’s 2007 “50 Largest EGA Funders by Environmental Grantmaking Program” list includes the following NYRAG members:

- Beldon Fund
- Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation
- Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Henry Luce Foundation
- New York Community Trust
- Overbrook Foundation
- Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
- Surdna Foundation
- Tides Foundaion

## Making A Difference

# Two Perspectives on Funding Climate Change Programs

**Lauren Russell Geskos** of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors spoke with two New York-based grantmakers with different takes on climate change funding: **Adam Wolfensohn** of the Wolfensohn Family Foundation, which has long funded environmental and climate change initiatives, and **Maria Blair** of the Rockefeller Foundation, a relatively new—but significant—supporter of these solutions.

**Lauren Russell Geskos** Climate change is a complex issue for grantmakers due to the virtually infinite breadth of its causes, effects, and solutions. Why did you decide to focus on climate change, and why did you select the avenue you did to target it?

**Maria Blair** Our core mission is to build resilience and create opportunities for poor and vulnerable people. We hadn't done significant funding in the climate change arena, and were asked to sponsor a commission to the G8 Summit last year. This prompted us to question ourselves about climate change, asking what we should do about it and how it relates to our focus on poverty, particularly in the developing world.

The most immediate challenge that the developing world faces in regard to global warming is managing its inevitable impact. Among our grantees in Africa and Southeast Asia, we were starting to see flooding, disease, increased storm activity, and variable yields in

agriculture. We decided to explore how all this would affect the poor and vulnerable.

New Orleans demonstrated how natural disaster can decimate a poor community. In the next 50 years, we'll continue to see significant direct and indirect effects of climate change—and its potentially devastating impact will disproportionately affect the poor. Realizing this pulled us solidly in favor of funding initiatives that help poor communities prepare for and recover from extreme weather events.

**Adam Wolfensohn** We've been funding environmental issues for a long time, and in 2001, we started to shift from supporting public land projects to supporting climate change initiatives. Few foundations were looking at climate change then. Even advocacy groups were still getting their heads around it. We made this change because I was studying environmental issues and was completely amazed at how little was being done on this front. I spent some time in Alaska, and realized that you can protect that state's forests from logging, but that if a spruce beetle infestation

In the most recent Foundation Center data (2005), environment and animals received 7.9 percent of the total dollar amount—and 9.3 percent of the number of grants—of all grants made nationally.

**“Funding environmental issues in general is already a small piece of the pie, so climate change is incredibly underfunded.”**

—Adam Wolfensohn

sparked by warmer winters kills the whole forest, little good has been done.

Our foundation is just our immediate family, and we each have broad discretion in our funding initiatives. We've focused heavily on coal extraction and coal permits in Alaska. From an investment perspective, our family is looking at groups like [E+Co](#).

**LRG** Despite the dramatic rise in concern about climate change, why is only a small percentage of overall giving in this country going to these initiatives?

**MB** There's been a fairly recent uptick in momentum and awareness around climate change, and often philanthropic giving is responsive rather than proactive to these shifts. Part of it is also that climate change is perceived as an environmental issue when in reality it impacts every dimension of society. As long as this problem continues to be viewed as an environmental one, funders who perceive it that way will never break out of the box. It's crucial that we see this as a social issue, too.

**AW** Funding of environmental issues in general is already a small piece of the pie, so climate change is incredibly underfunded. When you look at the budgets of corporate entities that do not want to shift to a carbon-free economy, the imbalance is significant.

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## Tap Water Cheaper, Safer, Greener?



According to the Natural Resources Defense Council and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New Yorkers should start drinking more of our city's tap water instead of buying the bottled alternative, for some of the following reasons:

### Single-serve bottled water is the fastest growing beverage of choice in the United States.

- Americans purchased nearly 31 billion bottles of water in 2006—over ten times more than they did in 1996—and spend \$11 billion on bottled water every year.
- Nearly 2.5 billion bottles of water a year are sold in New York alone—stacked up end to end, they'd stretch to the moon.

### But...it's not guaranteed to be healthier than tap water.

The Natural Resources Defense Council conducted a four-year review of the bottled water industry and its safety standards, including a comparison of national bottled water rules with national tap water rules, and independent testing of over 1,000 bottles of water. They concluded that “there is no assurance that just because water comes out of a bottle it is any cleaner or safer than water from the tap. And in fact, an estimated 25 percent or more of bottled water is really just tap water in a bottle—sometimes further treated, sometimes not.”

### Water in plastic bottles may, in fact, be less healthy than tap water.

The NRDC also reported that chemicals called phthalates, which are known to disrupt testosterone and other hormones, can leach into bottled water over time. One study found that water that had been stored for 10 weeks in plastic and in glass bottles contained phthalates, suggesting that the chemicals could be coming from the plastic cap or liner. There are regulatory standards limiting phthalates in tap water, but no legal limits for phthalates in bottled water—the bottled water industry waged a successful campaign opposing the setting of legal limits.

### Bottled water wastes money.

- Bottled water costs as much as \$10 per gallon—tap water costs less than one cent per gallon.

**“New York City has some of the highest quality tap water in the nation. The communities of New York State have spent billions to ensure that the city's water supply is protected and pristine. Given that investment, our tap water may very well be higher in quality than what you'd buy at the grocery store. So, leave those water bottles on the shelf and take a drink from your tap!”**

— Resa A. Dimino, Special Assistant, Commissioner's Policy Office, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

- Millions of dollars are spent annually to clean up plastic bottles that are littered.
- Nationally, local governments spend \$43 billion per year to deliver high-quality drinking water.
- New York spends \$2 billion per year to provide safe drinking water to the public.

### Bottled water is bad for the environment—which is ultimately bad for our health.

- Nationally, only 10 percent of plastic water bottles are recycled—90 percent end up as either garbage or litter.
- 18 million barrels of crude oil equivalent were consumed in 2005 to replace the 2 million tons of plastic water bottles that were wasted instead of recycled. Manufacturing that much plastic releases more than 800,000 metric tons of carbon equivalent into the atmosphere.
- Tap water creates less pollution and uses far less energy and natural resources than the transporting and manufacturing of plastic water bottles.
- In New York, the oil used to make our bottles is equal to 66 million gallons of gasoline—enough to power 120,000 automobiles for a year.
- In 2006, the transportation of bottled water to New York City from western Europe released an estimated 3,800 tons of global warming pollution into the atmosphere. ▲

*The recent news reports about the presence of prescription and over-the-counter drugs in tap water in 24 major U.S. metropolitan areas raise concerns about whether or not it is truly a healthier choice. Though only tiny amounts of pharmaceuticals were detected, the long-term effects of drinking water contaminated with trace amounts of these drugs are unknown. New York City was not one of the 24 metropolitan areas involved in this study.*

## Sowing a Home-Grown Food Economy in a Global City

# Perspectives from a Singer, a New York State Deputy Commissioner, and a Grassroots Activist

At a members briefing sponsored by the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation, the Surdna Foundation, and the North Star Fund, participants discussed how New York can examine and improve currently existing food systems.

### Speakers included:

- Jeremiah P. Cosgrove, Deputy Commissioner for the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, who is part of a fourth-generation farming family and who now oversees dairy and agricultural protection and development;
- Karen Washington, the co-founder of La Familia Verde, a board member of the South Bronx Food Coop, and a member of the Bronx Food Justice Coalition;
- Adrienne Young, a singer-songwriter who fuses traditional music with social consciousness and activism around food, seeds, and farming.

Fern Estrow, MS, RD, CDN, the Chair of Food Systems Network NYC, served as the briefing's moderator.

### The presenters stressed the need to:

- improve local and regional connections between producers and consumers;
- promote equity, sustainability, and healthy food choices for all involved;
- endorse social and environmental justice;
- shrink the urban carbon footprint.

Attendees agreed that there is a pressing need—and a growing desire—to find the “real” face and identity of food production behind the advertised one. This trend is illustrated by the growing interest in artesian farming and

cuisine. It's necessary to compare conventional, industrial food distribution to alternative, communal practices, examining how these systems interact during production, trade, and consumption in the global food network.

Ms. Estrow defined a “food system” as a cycle that includes growing, transportation, processing, preparation, cleaning after the meal, food safety, and disposal.

Mr. Cosgrove discussed the newly-created Council on Food Policy, which is exploring safe, fresh, nutritious, and affordable food supplies for the state. Its initial tasks include exploring infrastructure needs such as those for land, human capital, ports and bridges, and free space in New York City.

To illustrate the importance of infrastructure, Mr. Cosgrove cited the Elmhurst Dairy, the only large-scale milk-processing plant in New York City and a primary supplier of milk to city schools. This dairy is in danger of shutting down because the MTA has limited trailer truck traffic on several bridges leading from upstate New York.

Ms. Washington stressed the community aspect of community gardens and the grassroots aspect of turning empty lots into flower beds and vegetable patches without financial compensation. She also noted that by 2010, there will be no land left in the city for community gardens, prompting her organization and others to investigate alternatives such as rooftop gardens. She also mentioned that:

- urban/rural connections and partnerships are of vital importance;
- there is a misconception that people of color and poor people don't want fresh produce, which prompted many communities to start their own farmers' markets;
- the South Bronx Food Coop has helped communities to not only gain access to fresh food, but to produce fresh food at a grassroots level.

A representative from the Deputy Mayor's Office of Health and Human Services discussed initiatives from the newly-created Office of the Food Policy Coordinator, which focuses on increasing access to and demand for healthy food, decreasing hunger, and reducing obesity.

### The four focuses within those areas are:

1. food supports (WIC, food stamps, and school lunch programs);
2. increasing access to healthy food, particularly in low-income communities;
3. encouraging healthy food choices;
4. looking at the city itself as a purchaser of food. (New York City serves 860,000 meals a day and is the largest institutional purchaser of food behind the U.S. Department of Defense.)

City officials know access to healthy food can evaporate within a radius of a half-mile or even a few blocks. The Department of Health's Healthy Bodega pilot program, designed to encourage 100 bodegas to adopt better food choices, will expand its reach to 1,000 bodegas this year.

The Office of the Food Policy Coordinator is also committed to boosting the number of green markets in low-income communities and encouraging healthy choices through measures such as a school-based city program called “Learn It, Grow It, Eat It.” It also offers coupons distributed to community-based organizations for use in green markets.

### The briefing's Q&A session highlighted several noteworthy green food organizations and initiatives:

- [FoodRoutes Network](#), a national organization focused on support and information around local food systems;
- the [Fair Food Foundation](#);
- the [National Funders Network on Sustainable Agriculture](#). ▲

ENVIRONMENTAL HABITATS | NYRAG MEMBERS TALK ABOUT THEIR GREEN OFFICES

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a material made almost entirely of natural denim and cotton fibers, which are 85 percent post-industrial and 100 percent recyclable so they reduce landfill waste. All the appliances are energy-efficient models. Even the HVAC system is green, providing each room with an individual temperature control that reduces energy waste.”

**NYRAG’s green offices include:**

- 100 percent recycled polyester for upholstery.
- 100 percent recycled denim for sound-absorption material.
- Pressed sunflower seeds, wheat straw fiberboard, and recycled milk and detergent bottles used for desk surfaces.
- Low-energy-consumption lighting fixtures.
- Benches made from salvaged wood from local dumpsters.
- Chairs and benches made from salvaged seatbelt straps.



NYRAG conference room

At the Hearst Corporation, Lou Nowikas, Director of Real Estate and Facilities, said, “After meeting with architects around the world, we quickly realized that creating a green building was the right thing for us to do.” The result is the Hearst Tower, the Hearst Corporation’s world headquarters and the first building in New York City to receive a Gold Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified rating for “core and shell and interiors.”

“Our approach to environmental sustainability stems from our determination to create the best building for our employees, our neighborhood, and our city,” said Mr. Nowikas. “Our green construction has slashed our electricity usage by 26 percent, and our water usage by 14 percent. Much of these savings were achieved through innovations in the core of the building, where floors are paved with heat-conductive limestone and a water collection system recycles rainwater for use in the cooling system. In addition, we have desks made of sustainable wood, motion-sensor faucets and lights, carpets made of collected and recycled material, and an elevator system that makes fewer stops, resulting in reduced energy consumption.”

What about LEED certification? Mr. Nowikas called it “absolutely worth pursuing” for other foundations and corporations. “The only widely recognized format by which to measure the extent of ‘green,’ this process provides an organized format to achieve being ‘green’ in a thoughtful and thorough way,” he said. “We’re proud of this designation, and believe it raises the bar for future office towers in New York City.”

For Mr. Dandrew of the NoVo Foundation, the LEED process was “educational,” and its guidelines were ones “every organization should consider looking at.” Ultimately, NoVo opted not to pursue certification, deciding that the money it cost would be better spent on grantees. Even so, Dandrew said the experience “provided a great checklist for recommended performance benchmarks, helping



NoVo Foundation

us realize that the most important point for us was to meet a high standard of green building construction and design.”

What about having a green space as headquarters? “Our building has become a catalyst for a new environmental consciousness in our entire company,” said Mr. Nowikas. “Our divisions have adopted eco-friendly behaviors, and we’re constantly challenging our service providers to improve their own eco-practices. Our businesses are developing green initiatives that go beyond our building. Being green is now a daily mantra at Hearst. For our employees and our visitors, it means a healthier, more inviting, and more productive working environment.”

Mr. Dandrew added, “We feel good about working in a space with excellent air quality and natural light. And knowing it’s constructed almost entirely of renewable or recycled materials gives us a special sense of satisfaction. Our environment has improved overall employee productivity and job satisfaction to the point where we often find ourselves working late just because we’re so comfortable in our office!” ▲

**“Our green construction has slashed our electricity usage by 26 percent, and our water usage by 14 percent.”**

—Lou Nowikas, Hearst Corporation

GRANTMAKER SPOTLIGHTS

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cleansers, and residues from drug preparation. As a result, they are suffering increased rates of asthma, miscarriage, and certain cancers, while their children show increased cancer and birth defects.

Linking environmental advocates, medical professionals, and health-affected groups at the local, state, and national levels, the Beldon partnership is fighting to take mercury out of healthcare products and introduce alternatives to the endocrine-disrupting chemicals found in common plastic medical devices such as IV tubing. Its work has spurred state bans on toxic flame-retardants and the creation of environmental health task forces at 19 state nursing organizations and the Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association.

“The environmental health world is richer now thanks to the active engagement of registered nurses,” said Anita Nager, Director of Programs at the Beldon Fund. “Nurses are one of the guiding forces that will lead us to a healthier future.” ▲

*The Beldon Fund seeks to build a national consensus to achieve and sustain a healthy planet. By 2009, it will funnel its entire principal and earnings toward this goal. Central to the fund’s strategy are efforts to bring new voices—public health professionals and those whose health has been compromised by contamination—to environmental advocacy.*

More information about the Beldon Fund’s mission and grantees can be at [www.beldon.org](http://www.beldon.org).

The New York Community Trust

“Although environmental problems may be invisible to many New Yorkers, safe drinking water, clean air, and nontoxic buildings are critical for residents’ quality of life,” said Patricia Jenny, a Program Director at The New York Community Trust. “Philanthropy has an important role to play in protecting the resources that sustain our lives.”

Through one of its grant programs devoted to reclaiming the waterfront and expanding open space, The Trust has, over the past three years, awarded grants to the Bronx River Alliance, a coalition of more than 70 community groups and government agencies dedicated to protecting, improving, and restoring the Bronx River



Bronx River Greenway

corridor. Support from The Trust has helped the alliance lay groundwork for the Bronx River Greenway, a proposed 23-mile, multi-use path connecting Bronx River communities from Westchester through the Bronx. Stretching for more than 15 miles so far, the greenway will offer critical north-south recreation and transportation to pedestrians, bicyclists, and others. Today, the alliance is working to introduce the greenway to community members through canoeing, kayaking, and education and outreach programs.

The New York Community Trust also supports Riverkeeper in its quest to preserve land in watersheds that provide up to 1.5 billion gallons of unfiltered drinking water to more than nine million New Yorkers daily. Riverkeeper played a critical role in the first broad-based watershed legislation in 1997. Through community outreach and legal policy promotion and enforcement, it remains one of the leading organizations dedicated to safeguarding the region’s drinking water. ▲

*With assets of more than \$2 billion invested in 1,800 individual charitable funds, The New York Community Trust is one of the largest community foundations in the nation. Launched in 1924, it builds an endowment for the city, supports its nonprofit organizations, and helps charitable New Yorkers achieve their philanthropic aims.*

*With a large fund dedicated to projects of national and international significance, The Trust offers environmental grantmaking that has a global scope. It supports projects that address climate change, preserve biological diversity through habitat conservation, and reduce toxin levels that are hazardous to human health. Grants aim to minimize fossil fuel use through energy efficiency, alternative energy, and better transportation options. They also promote land conservation and smart growth strategies, reforming destructive agricultural and industrial practices and fostering clean production practices and safer chemical use.*

More information about The New York Community Trust and its grantees can be found at [www.nycommunitytrust.org](http://www.nycommunitytrust.org).

NYRAG is pleased to have profiled the following environmental grantees as part of *Voices from the Front Line: Profiles of our Nonprofit Partners:*



Sustainable South Bronx

recommended by the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation



New York Sun Works

recommended by the Toshiba America Foundation

We encourage all NYRAG members to recommend their own grantees—please email [talkback@nyrag.org](mailto:talkback@nyrag.org) with your suggestions of first-rate organizations that you’d like to share with your colleagues, or if you’d like to receive *Voices* directly to your email inbox.

## EVALUATING IMPACT | CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN FOUNDATIONS AND GRANTEES

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**BR** Between 1981 and 2005, we invested \$24 million in TPL. When we decided to change our environmental focus, we followed one of the Mellon Foundation's operating principles: to leave institutions stronger than we found them. We offered TPL matching grants to develop better fundraising among individuals, because while TPL excelled at winning support from large traditional sources, it was not active in securing it from individuals. We developed a four-year program that helped TPL achieve this aim.

**WR** One criticism grantees may have of foundations is that they tend to be faddish and insist every grant dollar go into an incremental dollar of program, failing to realize that organizations need to be healthy and take care of their people and systems in order to realize their goals. The Mellon Foundation not only understood our business model and gave us revolving capital, but it also offered us unrestricted operating support over a number of years. This kept us strong, as did specific Mellon grants that allowed us to accomplish what was otherwise beyond our reach. One Mellon grant established a system for tracking all our project and transactional work, while another created what we called a "venture fund," allowing us to take unprecedented risks on important land conservation. Mellon showed a real appreciation for our work, and even when it stopped supporting these

**"One criticism grantees may have of foundations is that they tend to be faddish and insist every grant dollar go into an incremental dollar of program, failing to realize that organizations need to be healthy and take care of their people and systems in order to realize their goals."**

—Will Rogers

projects, this was done in a way that left us stronger. I very much agree with Bill's point. We established a matching grant program, attracted a wealth of individuals because of that match, and are on much firmer footing today than we were five years ago, particularly with individuals. The Mellon Foundation can take a lot of credit for that.

**NYRAG** What evaluation method did Mellon use in their working relationship with TPL? And how does TPL itself evaluate the impact of its work?

**BR** We tracked the number of projects TPL undertook on a yearly basis, monitoring the size of their staff and the amount they were spending on overhead as well as on particular ventures. We did this not to restrict them, but to make sure we understood their work. We traveled regularly with Will's predecessor and with Will, visiting projects and talking to those helped by TPL. When people came to us and asked about land conservation, we referred them to TPL and noted how pleased people were with their reception. When we make grants—particularly a series of grants—we try to figure out how grantees are regarded in the field by both their counterparts and by the people they serve.

**WR** We measure impact in a number of ways, and to some extent we have an advantage because what we do is so concrete. It's in the marketplace, it's on the ground, and it's relatively easy to measure. We can assess acres protected and fair market value, but there's an impact that's more difficult to gauge because our mission is very much about the relationship between people and land. The main question we ask is, "Is the land we're saving important as a habitat for people?" This gets us working everywhere from inner cities to the wilderness, and that broad agenda made us a good fit for the Mellon Foundation, which had people coming to them looking at all different kinds of landscapes. The foundation was then able to turn these people over to us.

In addition to acres and dollars, we also examine the qualitative impact on individuals and communities in terms of inner-city parks,

playgrounds, and public gardens. This tends to be more anecdotal, because it's so difficult to measure. Even so, it's a crucial part of assessing impact. While receiving help from Mellon, we expanded our own conservation model beyond simply doing transactions and began to also assist communities in identifying their own priorities. We helped them do conservation financing—to pass bond initiatives and establish sales taxes to buy the land they sought to protect.

During our relationship with Mellon, the foundation helped us expand our own business model to create a much more robust approach to market-based land conservation. Over the last ten years, we've helped secure \$25 billion of public funding at the state, county, and municipal levels for land protection, parks, and open spaces. We've worked on 100 plans, small and large, that enabled communities to peg their own priorities. We consider all this when we assess our impact. And like any other nonprofit, we also examine program versus non-program activities to make sure we're working efficiently.

**BR** We watch that as well, and TPL has consistently earned high marks from external raters who assessed their efficiency and the number of dollars they've actually spent on programs. This was always very important to Mr. Mellon, and it continues to be important to us at the foundation. What matters is not just the significance of what people do, but how they do it. Evaluating TPL and how they deal with their clients was important to us, and we did that by simply talking to people.

**NYRAG** Mr. Robertson, is there any advice you'd give to a grantmaker who wants to start participating in environmental programs and is worried about measuring and evaluating impact?

**BR** We've been happy with our program, mostly because, as one of our previous presidents said, the foundation has always tried to be a rifle shot rather than a shotgun blast. I would advise other grantmakers to pick projects that are narrow enough for you to achieve results with the resources you are able to

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commit. Don't pick a program where you can only fund five percent of the best proposals. Instead, pick one and carefully define it so you can fund most of the good proposals you get.

**NYRAG** What current projects does TPL have in the works?

**WR** We still have the benefit of the revolving fund from the Mellon Foundation, which we continue to use and leverage just as much as we did in the past. New York allows us to express the full range of our conservation work, and we're partnering with Mayor Bloomberg on an elaborate greening program in which school children design, renew, and create playgrounds as part of PlaNYC. We're also doing similar work in Newark.

Also on our agenda is protecting watershed lands across New York State. Our **New York office** can provide more detail on these projects. When we do land conservation, and people-oriented land conservation, we try to pick places that will have a ripple effect and that will inspire communities. We've managed to protect an amazing list of special places with help from the Mellon Foundation. Our work has extended to urban areas, working landscapes, rural sites, and the wilderness. ▲



*William Robertson IV has been the Program Officer for Conservation and the Environment at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation since 1979. Mr. Robertson received a bachelor's degree from Parsons College and a master's degree from Sam Houston State*

*Teachers College, both in biology. For most of the 1970s, he served on the staff of the National Academy of Sciences and National Research Council, where he was involved in the production of several ecological reports. Mr. Robertson has served as a Trustee of the Center for Plant Conservation (1985-1996), on the External Advisory Committee of the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (1995-1998), on the Steering Committee of the XVI Botanical Congress (1995-1999), and on the Visiting Committee of the H. John Heinz III Center for Science Economics and the Environment (1998). Mr. Robertson is also a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.*



*William B. Rogers is President and Chief Executive Officer of the Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national nonprofit organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, playgrounds, community gardens, farms, historic places, and wilderness. Mr.*

*Rogers joined TPL's Western Region as Director of Projects in 1991, served as Western Regional Director, and was chosen national president in 1998. Since 1972, TPL has helped protect more than two million acres of land—one third of this since Mr. Rogers became president. Under Mr. Rogers' leadership, TPL launched its successful Conservation Finance Program, which has helped 333 states and communities design and pass ballot measures that have created more than \$25 billion in land conservation funding. Mr. Rogers serves on the boards of Island Press and the Center for Land-Based Learning. He is a graduate of Stanford University and received his MBA from Harvard University.*

Below, **Barbara Greenberg** of the Levitt Foundation discusses assessing outcomes with **Paula Hewitt Amram** of Open Road, a Levitt grantee.

**NYRAG** Paula, can you give me some background on Open Road, and tell me a little about the kind of outcomes you are hoping to achieve?

**Paula Hewitt Amram** Open Road was founded in 1990, and is based in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, though we work city-wide. When we first started, it was to take over a specific vacant lot that was being used for drug dealing. That established the way Open Road functions: working closely with families and staying involved long-term. In 1993, we took over a contaminated homeless encampment. It's now called Open Road Park. The young people who started this project with us were then ages 11 and 13, and are now program directors. Our core mission is to develop these relationships and through them develop outdoor environmental projects that have tremendous public use. Open Road Park is now a one-acre public park with a basketball court, greenhouse, and a turtle pond. It also serves as the home-base for all our programs.

**NYRAG** And Barbara, how is this a good fit for Levitt, and helping to further your mission?

**Barbara Greenberg** The Levitt Foundation is a relatively small foundation, giving less than \$1 million per year. Our focus is young people ages 6 to 18 in the five boroughs and on Long Island. We encourage children and youth to learn about their environment and improve and protect it in their own neighborhoods. We prefer to fund programs that are youth-empowered, so kids identify and take action on issues that are important to them.

**NYRAG** How do you set up your evaluation program to see if a particular grantee is meeting those goals?

**Other NYRAG Members That Fund Trust for Public Land:**

- Achelis Foundation
- Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation
- Nathan Cummings Foundation
- Dickler Family Foundation
- Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation
- Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
- William and Mary Greve Foundation
- Ittleson Foundation, Inc.
- Mertz Gilmore Foundation
- Pfizer Inc
- Rockefeller Brothers Fund
- Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
- Scherman Foundation
- Silverman Charitable Group
- Tides Foundation

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**BG** We obtain evidence that the young people have acquired knowledge, that they've improved or protected their environment, and that they've practiced leadership and citizenship skills. We strive to be accountable and use each grant dollar wisely. However, we aren't able to justify costly outside evaluations on every project.

What we've done is build monitoring and evaluation into our whole grantmaking cycle. For instance, when we solicited a proposal from Open Road, we asked them to describe their goals and define the measures of success by which both of us could judge their achievements. Once a grant was approved, our letter of agreement restated these measures of success, and when they make their reports to the Levitt Foundation, they gauge their progress against these measures. Similarly, when we site visit we see how much of this has been achieved. In these ways, evaluation becomes an integral part of the entire grant cycle.

**PHA** I can give you an example of one of our long-term projects that Levitt supports. It is called Prove It with Improvement, and we had very targeted goals because the young people had already chosen to work on specific environments. These were the same youth who had been involved with the project before we wrote the proposal, and they'd already designed the project in a park in the Lower East Side. They wanted to reopen a locked gate, reopen a locked bathroom, and improve the environment where it had been poorly cared for. So that was one of the evaluations: asking whether they completed these very specific goals.

We also said we'd be working with 20 young people and at least 30 adults from the general public. We had quantitative measures like these, plus qualitative measures like leadership development. We take attendance every day, and we know if the same people are coming on a regular basis, and if they were there in 2005, 2006, and 2007. We require that adult staff do extensive daily writing and keep journals. These journals are also part of our reports. In addition, many of our staff meet directly with



Open Road program participants hold a meeting.

the Levitt Foundation during site visits and are responsible for creating presentations.

**BG** The Levitt Foundation is interested in whether we achieved the environmental impact we wanted. However, we also want to know whether the kids are practicing leadership skills and building their confidence.

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Open Road Park

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We expect many of these young people will become the future stewards of their urban environment, but we also anticipate these hands-on learning experiences will serve them well in whatever path they choose.

**PHA** One of our evaluation methods is to do surveys of the surrounding neighborhoods. We found there's been a change in people's expectations during the 15 years we've been working in the Lower East Side. There is more of an expectation environmental projects are going to be more racially and culturally diverse. Not only is there an increase in the number of these programs, but there is also more demand for them. The city has a program where it grades parks, so this is another way for us to evaluate our work. Are the parks

getting a better letter grade since we've been involved? Asking this question enables us to do external as well as internal evaluation. ▲



*Paula Hewitt Amram is the Founder/Executive Director of Open Road, which designs and creates free, public, youth-led projects through participatory design, including public gardens and parks, green roofs, mapping websites, public murals, and youth-led research. Since 1989, Ms. Amram has consulted on programs for the New York City Department of Education, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and environmental and youth organizations.*

*Another NYRAG member that funds Open Road is The Hite Foundation.*



*Barbara R. Greenberg, MSW, is President of The Philanthropic Group, an organization that provides consulting and management services for foundations. Greenberg facilitated a decision-making process to assist the Levitt Foundation board in reaching consensus on a grantmaking focus. She designed its grantmaking strategy, and has managed its grantmaking program for ten years. Ms. Greenberg has more than 25 years' experience in the private, nonprofit, and public sectors, in diverse roles including Executive Director of a family foundation, Manager of a national corporate grantmaking program, and Executive Director of a countywide nonprofit counseling center. Her experience also includes serving as a board member with NYRAG, Grantmakers in Aging, the American Society on Aging, and the American Littoral Society.*

Abbreviated Sample Evaluation from Levitt Foundation of Open Road

## To evaluate the success of each grant project, Levitt Foundation seeks evidence that:

**1. Children and youth increased their knowledge and understanding of their environment**

**Open Road's measures of success:**

**Quantitative:** Open Road youth increased their knowledge and understanding of their neighborhood through a youth-led research program, Prove It. Youth prepared and led four public presentations on improvements that neighbors desired in a local park.

**Qualitative:** Youth knowledge and understanding of their own environment was collected prior to the program start date through written and oral interviews. This information was collected at the end of the program and results were compared by adult and youth staff.

**2. Young people improved or protected their neighborhood environment**

**Open Road's measures of success:**

**Quantitative:** The short-term improvements for the 2007 Prove It program included daily free outdoor youth programs, daily stewardship of trees and other natural areas in parks, reopening and advocacy for improvement of public bathrooms, and litter removal. Long-term improvements included reopening of locked park areas through advocacy and meetings with public officials and neighborhood partners.

**Qualitative:** Open Road Interviews with youth and adults in Seward Park before and after the program was conducted showed the work young people accomplished improved the neighborhood, especially in the areas of park access and quality.

**3. Young people practiced leadership and citizenship skills, building their confidence and self-esteem**

**Open Road's measures of success:**

**Quantitative:** Twenty youth took on leadership positions and developed citizenship skills within the program. This is documented in attendance and task sign-in sheets and daily journals. These skills were proven through successful meetings with presentations led by youth. Eight meetings with decision makers, including the Parks Department, police precinct, and community board, yielded successful results.

**Qualitative:** In daily journals and in-depth structured group discussions, youth described a positive evolution in their self-esteem and confidence during the course of the project. Anecdotes and stories told by youth showed the relationship between a rise in self-esteem and competence in real-world skills.

## JUSTICE FOR THE EARTH, JUSTICE FOR ALL

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communities and the need to have what's known as place-based cleanup.

**NYRAG** So how can grantmakers most effectively advance environmental justice and help these underserved communities?

**DY** There's a huge opportunity here to change business as usual. Personally, I'd go to the criteria. What do you ask an organization in terms of its focus—its reach, breadth, partnerships, and ability to see the entire community and not just an elite environmental client?

If grantmakers insisted on reaching a broader base of communities and considering more diverse viewpoints during decision-making, this could help drive work and dollars where they have not historically been present.

**PS** In some ways, that's the mandatory versus voluntary argument. I've engaged in several environmental health research projects where the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) mandates partnerships for certain grant programs. The first few years can be rocky as people adjust to the different institutional cultures, but ultimately, the partners feel their work together has been valuable, that science has been enriched, and that the translation into policy is more active. This experience over the past ten years of our environmental health research partnerships reconfirms for me that grantmakers must develop parameters and criteria if they are to ensure that diversity and untraditional partnerships occur.

**“For the most part, grantmakers don't ask mainstream environmental organizations about issues of environmental justice, about the diversity of their staffs, or about where their resources are going.”**

—David Yarnold

**“Climate change is a much larger debate than just discussing how we can reduce our carbon footprint.”**

—Peggy Shepard

With few exceptions, the Environmental Justice Movement hasn't had the intentional and strategic support from foundations that the mainstream environmental groups received through the '70s and '80s. With one half of one percent of all environmental funding, the Environmental Justice Movement has built a grassroots base of support, but cannot affect real change in a community without affecting policy. To do that, resources and capacity are necessary. Your mention of climate change is an important example. The U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports that climate change will disproportionately affect populations of color and low income—those who do not have the resources to adapt—the hardest. While Hurricane Katrina was not the result of climate change, its impact on New Orleans illustrates how natural disaster can ravage vulnerable communities. Yet climate change legislation and policy advances without a diverse perspective and without the voices of those on the front lines.

You could look at the so-called new Green Economy as a potential second coming of the industrial or technological revolution. But we must not repeat the mistakes of the past. Just because you create cleaner energy doesn't mean that the production process itself is cleaner. We have to ask, “Where are these new technologies going to be based? Are we going to replace a community scarred by mining with a community scarred by something else?” We must consider this and proceed with caution and foresight.

More than a billion people in the developing world lack safe drinking water, and more than 2.6 billion live without adequate sanitation. This under-recognized crisis kills 5 million people per year—and sickens several billion more. The toll? Even more devastation than that caused by HIV/AIDS and malaria.

Each day, preventable waterborne diseases claim the lives of 4,500 children. More than 80 percent of illnesses in the developing world are caused by unsafe water and inadequate sanitation. The resulting social and economic problems prevent developing countries from reducing poverty and improving standards of living.

The good news? Currently, 83 percent of the world has access to safe, affordable, and sustainable drinking water, while 60 percent has access to improved sanitation. These numbers reflect tremendous progress, and prove that solutions do exist.

There's a growing realization that safe drinking water is a key issue which could—if handled correctly—not only save millions of lives, but serve as a point of entry for other development challenges such as poverty reduction, healthcare, education, environmental protection, and children's and women's rights.

*Source: Water Advocates, which provides pro-bono consulting services to leaders of corporations, foundations, and civic and faith-based organizations looking to increase their support for worldwide access to safe, affordable, and sustainable drinking water and sanitation.*

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JUSTICE FOR THE EARTH, JUSTICE FOR ALL

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**NYRAG** What sort of workforce development opportunities are emerging as a result of the environmental movement?

**PS** The environmental movement has sparked a rethinking of workforce training and development in many traditional blue-collar realms such as carpentry and the other trades. We should consider how to create job training programs within the environmental field that lead to sustainability as well as better jobs. We should discuss how green jobs and investments in greener technology can provide access to underemployed residents and to those who need to transition from “dirty” industry to cleaner jobs.

**DY** The mainstream media is just discovering “green collar jobs,” which benefit the environment, the economy, and society so they are win-win-win. Pioneers in this field have been doing this work for more than a decade. Now, more people are seeing a confluence of events: public awareness around the environment, the need for economic development, and urban centers as potential homes for a broader range of people.

**PS** We’re tackling serious issues that affect all of our communities. For instance, climate change is a much larger debate than just discussing how we can reduce our carbon footprint. The public has been shaken and a little frightened into thinking about these issues. Now that we have peoples’ attention, we need to frame these issues in a way

“With one half of one percent of all environmental funding, the Environmental Justice Movement has built a grassroots base of support, but cannot affect real change in a community without affecting policy.”

—Peggy Shepard

that appeals to their values. What sort of job opportunities will there be, and what type of employment will disappear? People will lose jobs if we move away from coal and dirtier energy sources, and this should also be a key part of the debate.

**DY** As we produce cleaner coal, there may very well be jobs for people who know how to retrofit coal plants. Work such as this will implement new technologies.

**NYRAG** How does the environmental justice movement spill over and affect other areas beyond workforce development?

**DY** One of the criticisms of the environmental movement is that it too often practices the politics of denial and sacrifice, but when you link economic development and environmental quality, you’re talking about the politics of opportunity, not the politics of denial. So I don’t understand why that isn’t more appealing to grantmakers.

**PS** I would guess that the influential environmental organizations are not advancing that vision. And it’s certainly not just economic development. Think about affordable housing. Do we want a diverse city? And what about green building legislation? It’s important to have good indoor air quality, so that our housing does not remain a key environmental exposure and one of the largest contributors of greenhouse gases.

**DY** What we are talking about is environmental quality at the neighborhood level—high-quality, livable, affordable housing.

**PS** Anyone who understands environmental health realizes that indoor air pollutants within deteriorating housing are associated with children being born with increased risk of disease, low birth weight, DNA damage, and developmental delays. The research is very scary, and proves we’re already hurting the next generation. The environmental movement should have a stronger voice in the debate around quality healthcare, toxic exposures, and the cost of public health to society. ▲



*Peggy Shepard is Executive Director and co-founder of WEACT For Environmental Justice, aka West Harlem Environmental Action. Founded in 1988 in West Harlem, WEACT builds community power to improve environmental health, policy, and protection in communities of color. WEACT has 16 staff members, and a budget of \$1.3 million. Ms. Shepard received the 10th Annual Heinz Award For the Environment, and won the Dean’s Distinguished Service Award from the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health in 2004. WEACT is a nationally recognized organization in the field of community-based participatory research in partnership with the Mailman School of Public Health. A former journalist and editor, Ms. Shepard is a frequent lecturer and member of the National Children’s Study Federal Advisory Committee to the National Institutes of Health. She has authored numerous articles and served as guest editor of an Environmental Health Perspectives monograph, Advancing Environmental Justice Through Community-Based Participatory Research, published by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.*



*As Executive Vice President, David Yarnold is responsible for all operations of Environmental Defense (ED), a leading global nonprofit organization with 345 employees, 500,000 members, and a \$108 million budget. He authored ED’s California strategy and was a key leader in the passage of the nation’s most sweeping climate change legislation. Mr. Yarnold joined ED in 2005, after nearly 27 years at the San Jose Mercury News. A Pulitzer Prize-winning editor, he has appeared on CNN, MSNBC, BBC, the PBS News Hour, and elsewhere. He has spoken at numerous conferences on diversity in the environmental movement and served as a guest instructor at the nation’s leading journalism training institutes on topics ranging from diversity to building a high-performance culture. Mr. Yarnold is also on the board of directors of the American Leadership Forum Silicon Valley, EcoAmerica, and the Stanford University Graduate School of Business’ Center for Social Innovation.*

## THE NUCLEAR OPTION

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**PM** The risks of fossil fuel consumption are not just air pollution, but climate change on a global scale. Could even a large nuclear accident be as disastrous as the whole world suffering this catastrophe? Some are predicting the end of civilization as we know it.

Chernobyl was bad, but that's the only accident that ever harmed the public. And even there, the impact was greatly exaggerated. No reactor in the West has ever caused damage to the public. Three Mile Island was a terrible mechanical failure, but there was no evidence of harm to the public or to any workers at the site, and there have been five or six major follow-up [health studies](#) since. So on the safety side, there's simply no question here.

**DH** Actually, [studies](#) by Dr. Steven Wing of the University of North Carolina found increased cancer rates associated with the Three Mile Island accident.

**NYRAG** Mr. Hirsch, you mentioned how “exquisitely dangerous” nuclear energy is, but how likely is a disaster to occur? In what ways can something go wrong and result in a meltdown?

**DH** Nuclear power plants produce a great deal of heat, and you need to cool their fuel constantly or it will melt and release radioactivity into the environment. If you disrupt the coolant—which can happen in dozens of ways—the fuel can melt and enough radioactivity can be unleashed to affect an area the size of Pennsylvania.

The long-life radioactivity of a nuclear plant is 1,000 times that of the Hiroshima bomb. A fuel pool contains about 10 times as much long-lived radioactivity as the core. That's 10,000 Hiroshimas worth. If there's an accident at the fuel pool, which can be caused by an earthquake, operation mistake, pump failure, or design flaw, the fuel can melt and catch fire, releasing tremendous radioactivity into the environment. This could kill hundreds of thousands of people. Some would die immediately and some would die later, due to cancer or genetic effects in meltdown victims' offspring.

What can happen accidentally can also happen intentionally. A nuclear power plant is, in

essence, a pre-placed nuclear weapon. While it can't explode like a nuclear bomb, it can release vastly greater quantities of radioactivity. All that's required is someone with conventional explosives, or a plane, to damage the reactor. We have two reactors at San Onofre, near San Diego and Los Angeles, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission [NRC] estimated that if there were a meltdown at one of those sites, it could cause 130,000 immediate deaths, 300,000 latent cancers, and 600,000 genetic effects.

Indian Point is a very badly-located plant. The release of radioactivity there would contaminate much of New York, and you'd never be able to evacuate. The 9/11 Commission discovered the terrorists' original idea was to attack the plant's reactor. They flew past it in practice missions, but in the end, Bin Laden decided to defer this plan.

The NRC made a public statement after September 11th, insisting all their reactors could withstand the impact of a jumbo jet. A couple of days later, they had to issue a correction saying none of their reactors—with one possible exception—were designed to withstand a jumbo jet attack. My organization has petitioned the NRC to revamp regulations so reactors would be *required* to guard against plane and ground attacks. Seven state Attorneys General supported us on this.

We also proposed that reactors be required to defend against 19 ground attackers—the number of terrorists who posed a threat dur-

ing 9/11. For 25 years, the NRC had required reactors to guard against just three external ground attackers. But after 9/11, the commission increased this level to just five external attackers. That's only a quarter of the number who pulled off the World Trade Center attacks.

The NRC had a program that tested the security of reactors, but even with six months of advanced warning and even with just three mock terrorists involved, reactors in this program failed the test nearly 50 percent of the time. The mock terrorists were able to breach reactor security, attacking the primary target and getting to the backup target too. If actual terrorists were involved, a meltdown could have resulted.

The nuclear industry says it won't build reactors unless it can win immunization from liability. Yet the insurance industry won't cover them, indicating the chance of accidents is very high. The industry also admits they aren't economical. Though they claim nuclear power would be “too cheap to meter,” they simultaneously tell Congress nuclear energy is too expensive without massive taxpayer subsidies, including huge loan guarantees. Wall Street won't invest in this because it's too pricy and too risky.

**NYRAG** What about the nuclear waste? How serious is this risk?

**DH** You get about 50 years of energy from a nuke. But you also get about 500,000 years of waste. It comes down to generational ethics. Is it right for us to get the benefits and for future generations to get the cancers, and be burdened by this into perpetuity? Radioactivity has varying half-lives, and some of it has longevity in the hundreds of thousands of years. At Yucca Mountain, the Department of Energy predicted that the peak levels of exposure would occur somewhere between 200,000 and 300,000 years in the future.

**PM** The issue of nuclear waste is badly misrepresented. Spent nuclear fuel has very little waste. Most of it is reusable fuel that can be recycled. The key is to store used fuel safely and securely: in pellet form, encased in steel and concrete. Fission products in used fuel

**“One of the greatest political ironies...is that the people who associate themselves with environmentalism are the ones who oppose nuclear technologies that would actually reduce global warming.”**

—Patrick Moore

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are the true waste here, and these products are completely non-radioactive after 300 years of being stored securely underground.

**DH** This is just false. Some fission products are dangerous for tens of thousands of years, and there’s no such thing as nuclear “recycling.” Current reactors that use plutonium generate as much new plutonium as they fission, so you’re left with as much of it as you had before. In the process, you’ve created a “plutonium economy,” in which separated plutonium is in commerce, available for theft and available for the creation of nuclear weapons. Plutonium reprocessing is, in short, a proliferation nightmare.

**NYRAG** Mr. Hirsch, if nuclear energy is not the answer, what is? You mentioned “true solutions.” What are these?

**DH** For a start, we should build solar-thermal facilities in our deserts. These use mirrors to concentrate the heat of the sun, and can produce steam and run turbines. They generate a tremendous amount of energy with zero fuel cost. Energy comes free from the “nuclear power” source in the sky: the sun.

To the solar-thermal facilities, we should add both wind energy and photovoltaics [technology that converts light directly into electricity]. We could easily create an inte-

grated system, with a little bit of backup from natural gas. This system could last forever, though other power sources will run out. We all know we’ll end up here when oil and uranium are gone. Why no not do it now, instead of wasting time by investing in nuclear power?

**PM** A huge problem for public understanding is that so many activists have misled people into thinking that wind and solar energy can replace fossil fuel energy. This is simply not the case. These are inherently intermittent and unreliable sources of power. Solar energy can be prohibitively expensive. Wind energy does have a niche role to play, but it can never generate more than about 10 percent of our electricity, because it is not reliable. Every windmill you build has to be backed up by a reliable source of power.

**NYRAG** Has the mainstream position truly switched to being more open about going nuclear? What’s the consensus in the environmental community?

**PM** Things have definitely changed. We’re not going to see tens of thousands marching in the streets, and many environmental groups are more focused on fighting coal than on fighting nukes. They hold their anti-nuke policies because they’ve invested so much time and money convincing their supporters that nuclear power is evil. They can’t change their policies, or they would lose their supporters.

One of the greatest political ironies and logical disconnects of our time is that the people who associate themselves with environmentalism are the ones who oppose nuclear technologies that would actually reduce global warming.

Many independent environmental thinkers now support nuclear power. They include Stewart Brand, founder of the [Whole Earth Catalog](#); James Lovelock, father of the Gaia hypothesis; Jared Diamond, author of *Guns, Germs, and Steel*; Gwyneth Cravens, who wrote *The Truth About Nuclear Energy*; Tim Flannery, author of *The Weather Makers*; and a group called [Environmentalists for Nuclear Energy](#).

Like my colleagues in the environmental movement of the ‘70s and ‘80s, I once opposed

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Al Gore on the Nuclear Option



In 2006, former Vice President Al Gore, author of the environmental bestsellers *Earth in the Balance* and *An Inconvenient Truth*,

made the following statement in an [interview with Grist.org](#):

“There are serious problems [with nuclear energy] that have to be solved, and they are not limited to the long-term waste-storage issue and the vulnerability-to-terrorist-attack issue... For eight years in the White House, every weapons-proliferation problem we dealt with was connected to a civilian reactor program. And if we ever got to the point where we wanted to use nuclear reactors to back out a lot of coal...we’d have to put them in so many places we’d run that proliferation risk right off the reasonability scale...In any case, if they can design a new generation [of reactors] that’s manifestly safer, more flexible, etc., it may play some role, but I don’t think it will play a big role.”

“You get about 50 years of energy from a nuke. But you also get about 500,000 years of waste. It comes down to generational ethics. Is it right for us to get the benefits and for future generations to get the cancers, and be burdened by this into perpetuity?”

— Daniel Hirsch

THE NUCLEAR OPTION

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nuclear energy. Greenpeace began at the height of the Cold War and the Vietnam War, when the whole world was afraid of an all-out nuclear exchange between the Soviet Union and the U.S. Even my science education didn't give me enough clear thinking to differentiate between nuclear power's peaceful and beneficial uses and its destructive and even evil ones.

Many different technologies can be used for evil. Fire could be, and we don't ban that. The machete has caused more combat death in the past 20 years than any other technology, and it's the most important tool for farmers in the developing world. It all comes down to controlling people's behavior and how they use technology versus banning the technology itself. It would be just as foolish to lump nuclear medicine with nuclear weapons as it has been to lump nuclear energy with nuclear weapons.

**DH** Despite what appear to be big disagreements over nuclear power, every true environmentalist actually agrees. No major environmental organization supports nuclear energy. This is a marvelous piece of disinformation—and one paid for by the nuclear energy industry. Patrick Moore hasn't been an environmentalist for decades. He makes his living by taking money from the timber, mining, and nuclear industries, which support clear-cutting, polluting mining operations, toxic chemicals, pesticides, and genetically engineered crops.

The Nuclear Energy Institute [NEI] is the nuclear industry's lobbying group, and it's been successful in part because foundations have sat on the sidelines. In terms of resources, this is a

one-sided fight. The NEI has hired a huge public relations firm to promote a revival of nuclear power. This campaign continually repeats the misinformation that environmentalists now support nuclear energy. But all the major environmental groups remain anti-nuke, including the [Sierra Club](#), the [Natural Resources Defense Council](#), the [Union of Concerned Scientists](#), and [Greenpeace](#).

If you read the mainstream press, you come away with the impression that the environmental community is divided. This is a falsehood, and it's created largely by imbalanced resources. Polluters can funnel millions of dollars into public relations and lobbying campaigns. But the forces on the other side have no resources, and no coordinated effort.

**NYRAG** So where are we headed? Where do you predict this debate will be in the next decade?

**PM** If the tide continues turning as it has in the past two to three years, there will be a huge resurgence in the global acceptance of nuclear power. This is not just a U.S. issue. Finland, Sweden, China, Japan, France, Slovakia, and South Korea have all chosen nuclear power for their futures. Italy is now accepting nuclear power as part of its solution. Germany has the most dysfunctional plan on the planet: to shut down all nuclear plants while also pledging to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, even though these are mutually exclusive objectives. The reason Sweden's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are the lowest in Europe is because it uses 50 percent hydro-electric and 50 percent nuclear power. This is a causal relationship, not just a correlation.

**DH** If nothing's done, we will wind up with the worst of all worlds: one with more global warming, because the resources necessary for true solutions have been stolen by the nuclear energy industry. There will be more nuclear weapons, more accidents, more potential terrorist targets, and more waste that's dangerous for half a million years. We have a window of just a few years to fight this battle. But it's not being fought because funders have sat on the sidelines. Either they believe the rhetoric, or they think this will just sort itself out on its own.

**“Nuclear energy is the only non-greenhouse-gas-emitting power source that can effectively replace fossil fuels and meet our demands.”**

—Patrick Moore

So I have a challenge to foundations: If you wish to prevent a disaster, engage in this fight. Propaganda is gaining traction because it's not being disputed. This is the battle of the millennium, and if we don't reverse this trend, we'll be drowning in plutonium as well as melted icecaps. ▲



*Daniel Hirsch is President of the Committee to Bridge the Gap (CBG), a 37-year-old California nonprofit that works to reduce nuclear risks. CBG “bridges the gap” between nuclear dangers and a sustainable, safe energy future, and focuses on questions of nuclear waste, terrorism, proliferation, and accidents. Committed to opposing the push for a nuclear revival, CBG recently helped kill a proposed California initiative that would have lifted the state’s moratorium on new nuclear plants. Mr. Hirsch also teaches nuclear policy at the University of California, Santa Cruz.*



*Dr. Patrick Moore is a co-founder of Greenpeace and served for nine years as President of Greenpeace Canada and seven years as a Director of Greenpeace International. In 1990, Dr. Moore founded and chaired the BC Carbon Project, a group that worked to develop a common understanding of climate change. Dr. Moore currently serves as Chair and Chief Scientist of Greenspirit Strategies Ltd., a consultancy that focuses on environmental policy and communications in forestry, agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, mining, biodiversity, chemicals, energy, and climate change.*

**“We have a window of just a few years to fight this [global warming] battle. But it's not being fought because funders have sat on the sidelines.”**

—Daniel Hirsch

PLANYC UPDATES | NYRAG HOSTS MEETINGS WITH CITY OFFICIALS

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- On July 2nd, the city opened 69 schoolyards as playgrounds, fulfilling its pledge to open all Category I sites. It also launched construction on the first four of 161 schoolyard sites needing capital improvements. Mr. Aggarwala noted that 2.2 million New Yorkers live more than a 10-minute walk from a park or playground. He said PlaNYC’s solution of opening schoolyards for public use is the fastest way to address this problem.
- On September 10th, the city passed the Jamaica rezoning plan, which will allow for major retail, residential, and transit oriented development opportunities created by the recently created JFK AirTrain.
- On October 9th, the administration launched the Million Trees Initiative and planted “Tree One” a year ahead of the target start date stated in PlaNYC.
- In early December, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and former President Bill Clinton announced that NYCHA has joined the Clinton Climate Change Initiative’s Global Building Retrofit

Program, which unites energy suppliers, banks, and 16 cities across the globe in working to retrofit government buildings.

**The Q&A portion of the program examined these concerns:**

- Although PlaNYC was designed to address sustainability and not employment, the issue of green jobs has emerged, prompting the city to launch a year-long study that will explore job creation issues (e.g., the need for more local gardeners and nurseries as the city fulfills its goal to plant a million trees).
- Mr. Aggarwala suggested a three-pronged approach to ensuring PlaNYC stays on track when a new mayor takes office:
  1. Complete current work as quickly as possible, because if new laws are passed now, they will be difficult to undo even if they take effect after the present administration leaves.
  2. Maintain consistent and transparent reporting—if it’s established that updates are required every six months, the new administration will be expected to continue such reporting.
  3. Push for philanthropic involvement. If funders talk to mayoral candidates, they should ask them about PlaNYC, which is not just Mayor Bloomberg’s plan, but the city’s plan, requiring consideration in the next election.

• In response to one participant’s concerns about some of her foundation’s grantees, who live in neighborhoods where a waste treatment plant is expanding into the park, Mr. Aggarwala stressed that there are always going to be “puts and takes” with such projects. “I can’t guarantee that we’ll never build something that creates some pollution,” he said, noting that the administration is reducing the carbon footprint of city operations by taking steps such as planting trees first in areas with poor air quality. “If you’re going to attack air pollution, you need to target the areas where it’s most concentrated,” Mr. Aggarwala added.

- The Mayor’s office is working with the Department of Education to address environmental awareness as part of the school curriculum and to help students build skills that are appropriate for a more environmentally aware economy.
- Recycling is not included in PlaNYC because a consolidated waste management strategy was adopted right before the Mayor’s office began developing the plan.
- [The Campaign for New York’s Future](#) reaches out to organizations that are preserving PlaNYC. Grantmakers should join this effort to ensure the plan’s continuation and success.



**February 14th:**  
**Emily Lloyd, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)**

PlaNYC includes two initiatives focused on water. The first is related to storm water management, a [water quality](#) issue that exists in part due to climate change. The second works to [sustain the water system](#) to support the city as its population grows.

**The current New York City water system:**

- is a sustainable system that is almost completely gravity-based, with pumping needed only for very tall buildings;
- requires no filtering, which results in energy savings;

**A recent report from the Citizen’s Budget Commission tackles how to financially sustain the sustainability plan, recommending that:**

- PlaNYC be expanded and institutionalized;
- a systematic plan bring all city-owned assets to a state of good repair;
- capital assets be tracked on appropriate replacement cycles, funded with operating revenue rather than debt;
- all city expansion projects be based on clearly explained priorities and rooted in rigorous economic analysis of future benefits.

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- features rates currently lower than the national average, which, if raised to match other cities, would add \$500 million a year for maintenance as well as land acquisition around the reservoirs to ensure water quality.

Commissioner Lloyd described the city’s water supply system as “very successful, but currently plagued by aging infrastructure.”

Climate change has led to an increase in the volume of rain, as opposed to snow, which means that reservoirs fill faster, which decreases the system’s ability to provide flood control, while also increasing the potential effects of drought.

**Current needs and goals include:**

- aid for public awareness of and support for continuing investments to improve the city’s water supply system;
- increase the visibility and availability of drinking water throughout the city, by reopening water fountains in parks and schools;
- promote the quality of the city’s drinking water, encouraging kids to drink water instead of soda or sugary juices, and con-

vincing people that drinking city water is a safe, cheap, and environmentally friendly alternative to buying bottled water;

- have 90 percent of New York City’s waterways available for recreation by 2030;
- reduce Combined Sewer Overflows (which result from rain) and the harmful impact that they have on surrounding waterways;
- add reservoir capacity and introduce a conservation program.

DEP is creating the New York City Tap Water Conservancy along with an educational campaign that will include distribution of reusable water bottles. Residents can currently receive a free tap water test kit by calling 311.

As it is, New York City’s water use will likely be reduced by up to 20 percent in the coming decade because of water saving fixtures on showers, toilets, washing machines, etc.

The city is exploring a number of options for managing storm water on the ground as the rain falls. Impermeable surfaces such as streets and parking lots increase runoff and reduce absorption capacity, while green space increases absorption and alleviates pressure on the water system. Storm water coming from rooftops also goes straight into the sewer system.

**Potential solutions include:**

- replacing pavement areas with yards, bricks, or sand;
- expanding tree pits;
- creating “blue belt” areas in parks by re-engineering what is underground to provide more drainage or water detention;
- using plants that consume more water;
- replacing schoolyards and other asphalt surfaces with permeable paving that slowly absorbs water instead of directing it to sewers;
- installing “blue roofs,” which consist of a filter that retains storm water on the roof of a building for up to 24 hours before releasing it to the ground at a slower pace. ▲



**High Point, Seattle: A Respect for the Environment**

**High Point** is Seattle’s first and only **Built Green** neighborhood. An innovative natural drainage system uses natural processes to filter and clean rainwater on its way to Longfellow Creek. Landscaping uses native plantings chosen for their hardiness and low water needs. The first porous pavement street in Washington, plus porous pavement walkways, allow rainwater and run-off to filter into the ground naturally. All homes meet a minimum of Built Green 3-Star standards, with many achieving 4-Star level and Energy Star certification.

“Water system improvement and storm water management are both crucial to developing a sustainable New York City, managing a growing population, and improving quality of life. They require a pooling of resources and knowledge and increasing public awareness of the value of the city’s water resources.”

— Emily Lloyd, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection

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**AB** The grants approved so far under the Climate Change Initiative all fall under the pricing and technology policy strategies that Joan mentioned. To give a little more background, the first strategy supports the development of optimal pricing policies for carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. These policies are surprisingly complicated, and plenty of design work is needed to work out all of the details so that the policies are effective at helping society efficiently achieve emission reductions in an amount and on a schedule that science indicates is necessary. The policies must also be designed with an eye toward what is politically possible. One of

**“Foundations can help design and promote policies that speed the transition to a clean-energy economy.”**

— Joan Spero

our pricing policy grants supports the Harvard Project on International Climate Agreements, which strives to attain all of these goals in the design of an international climate accord that will replace the Kyoto Protocol once it expires in 2012. The second strategy is to support the development of policies that will bring already available clean energy technologies, as well as new technologies, to market more quickly, and this is especially true of those technologies related to energy efficiency, renewable energy, and low-emission uses of coal, such as carbon capture and storage technologies.

**NYRAG** To what extent did you take into account what other funders were doing? And how is what you are doing unique?

**JS** We spoke with a number of other funders about the work they were doing in this realm, their funding priorities, and how they thought we could add value. In this way we learned that many of them have been and remain focused on what we refer to as “constituency building”—working to inform and inspire the public, and generate support for political action on climate change. The fact that many other funders were taking this approach influenced our decision to fund the design of specific policies to promote clean-energy technology, which is complementary and essential work that we learned was not being funded at an adequate level. We want to be sure that when society does decide to take action, the best possible policies are there, on the shelf, fully vetted and ready to be implemented.

**AB** One area where DDCF is unique, even among the relatively small group of funders that focus on energy technology policy, is in trying to ensure that tomorrow’s clean

energy technologies emerge on an accelerated timeline. Our work in this area focuses on how energy technology innovation occurs and how it can be improved and stimulated through government policy. Another area where DDCF intends to break new ground is climate change adaptation. We recognize that climate change is occurring and some additional amount of climate change is in the pipeline due to emissions that have already occurred. Given DDCF’s long-standing commitment to wildlife conservation through habitat protection, we will likely begin our adaptation work by focusing on how biodiversity conservation can best be achieved in an era of climate change. ▲



*Andrew J. Bowman joined the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation in January 2005 after practicing law in various capacities, including for Defenders of Wildlife and at the law firm Perkins Coie. Since arriving at the foundation, Mr. Bowman has helped*

*administer program activities related to wildlife habitat conservation. He is now the Director of the foundation’s Special Initiative on Climate Change—a five-year, \$100 million effort that focuses on technology policy as a means to mitigate climate change.*



*Joan E. Spero has served as President of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation since 1997, and also serves as President of two operating foundations supported by DDCF: the Duke Farms Foundation and the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic*

*Art. Ms. Spero served in the U.S. Department of State as Undersecretary for Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs (1993-1997) and as Ambassador to the United Nations for Economic and Social Affairs (1980-1981). She was a corporate executive at American Express Company (1981-1993) and an Assistant Professor at Columbia University (1973-1979). Ms. Spero has authored several books and articles in professional journals and is active in professional associations in foreign affairs and economics. Ms. Spero recently announced that she will step down from her position as President of DDCF in December 2008.*

## “Design to Win”

Commissioned by a number of prominent climate change funders (including DDCF), **this report** provides a well-researched, accessible menu of philanthropic investments that can make a significant impact on the climate change problem. “Design to Win” is especially strong in assessing and prioritizing the options for philanthropic investments in the short term (the next ten years). It makes clear that there is literally no time to lose for the philanthropic sector to increase its investments around climate change, and that the battle may be essentially lost if aggressive policy changes are not enacted over the next decade. The positive message that it brings is that a targeted set of philanthropic interventions, carried out at a significant scale, can indeed have a profound impact and lead to success. It also makes clear that there is plenty of room for more funders in this area, and that additional philanthropic resources are very much needed.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE | TWO PERSPECTIVES ON HOW TO FUND CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMS

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One reason grantmakers may hesitate is the enormity of the issue. Funders have a hard time finding an angle that's appropriate. Do they want to use the media? Political advocacy? Renewable energy? There was a period recently where every grant proposal seemed to be classified as climate funding, making it even harder to differentiate between potential grantees.

This is a huge, complicated philanthropic issue. It's the core of our ecology, and the core of our economy. How do you take a bite-sized chunk of that? You need to look for leverage points.

A recent CNN.com article, "Eco-Philanthropy," explores the successes and backlashes of international environmental aid. The piece argues that it is incumbent upon the very wealthy to shoulder much of the responsibility of alleviating environmental ills caused in part by their excessive lifestyles. However, eco-philanthropy has also garnered criticism from local communities who live, for instance, in an area of a rainforest that a philanthropist has purchased for preservation.

**LRG** Are there any organizations that you view as doing truly innovative, groundbreaking work in this field?

**AW** I'm fond of the [Renewable Energy Alaska Project](#). They're small and scrappy, but effective. Alaska's economy is based on oil, but the state is also a tremendous laboratory for renewable energy because it's full of villages powering themselves on expensive diesel fuel. There's such an opportunity here to use geothermal and wind power that Alaska has the potential to be a leader in this effort.

It's also important to support resistance to threats such as the massive oil shale projects in this country and tar sands development near Alberta, Canada. Huge sums of money are being devoted to these projects, which will make them very difficult to shut down.

**MB** There are two sectors that I think have done interesting work on this front.

First, the conservation community has been quite thoughtful and innovative in addressing how this could impact animal communities and the environment. The [World Wildlife Fund](#), for instance, is doing great domestic and international work in this field.

Second, there is disaster relief and preparedness. Because of the nature of climate-related catastrophes, this sector has viewed climate change as a major risk category. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent have already started educating their staff and the locals in at-risk communities about how climate change will transform the nature of the disasters they face. They're developing tactics such as designating people in rural villages to be the first to blow whistles when a flood is imminent.

We recently funded an innovative competition developed, designed, and administered by the New York City Office of Emergency Management. It addressed what temporary housing would look like if a Category 3 hurricane hit New York City. A storm of that intensity could strike even without climate change, but as we know, climate change boosts the frequency and intensity of such storms. Since FEMA trailers don't work in New York, what housing solution could be temporary

"Climate change is perceived as an environmental issue when in reality it impacts every dimension of society. Funders who perceive it that way will never break out of the box."

—Maria Blair

but still substantial? More than 100 competitors from 30 countries tackled this question, offering fascinating examples of housing that could be used after any disaster. This grant was small, but the contest helped contribute to New York City's resiliency. In other cities, it could be easily replicated. This was not just an environmental grant, but one that helped the whole city continue to be a safe place to live.

**LRG** What advice would you give to grantmakers whose program areas are not currently focused on climate change, but who want to have an impact?

**MB** I see strong connections between most issues and climate change, so I'd steer away from thinking about it as a separate problem. As an issue, it has developed in momentum as well as depth, and there's a lot more to it than what you read in the paper. Do landscaping. Get out. Ask questions. You'll elicit answers that are surprising, and create opportunities that may have been difficult to see in the first place.

I'd also suggest asking grantees questions such as whether they see climate change as impacting what they do in the future. We got into the issue by talking to our grantees, particularly agricultural ones, who were describing unpredictable seasonality in their crops that was clearly related to climate change. We then talked to grantees in health, who described increases in malaria and dengue fever that were also related. Climate change

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adds stress and risk to an already-stressed system. Understanding this additional burden helps us have a richer view of all the other problems we're working on.

**AW** First, get clear on your theory of social change and your goals. Many of these debates come down to how we can best transform our culture, politics, and economy. Is it a bottom up or a top down process? Do we need marches on Washington and mass localization to stir the hearts of millions? Or do we need strong leadership from Washington and public acquiescence that follows that leadership? I think the latter is the more likely scenario. This is currently too distant and too large an issue for the majority to comprehend it and imagine having a significant impact.

**LRG** Do you agree that climate change is inevitable at this point and that the efforts we're making will merely slow down and buffer it, not reverse it?

**AW** It's already happening, and nobody really disputes that. The question is how far we will let it go, and whether we can avoid climate thresholds that will tip us into catastrophe.

It's unlikely that for every unit increase in CO<sub>2</sub> concentration, we'll see a gradual, predictable change in the climate. But whether or not the system is linear, we want to limit this shift. There's no question that we've impacted the climate. But we must work to shrink that impact. We need to guard against catastrophic changes. We need to save ecosystems such as coral reefs, which are now tremendously stressed.

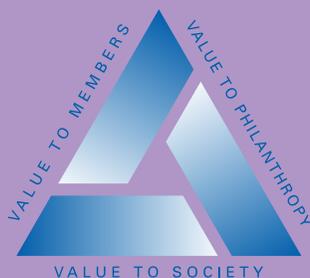
**MB** We believe that reducing future emissions of greenhouse gases is critical, and that we must prepare for the impacts of the warming that is already inevitable. You can't do one without the other, and when you invest in both, you see the connection between the two. For us, they're complementary sides of the same issue. Once you invest in resilience building, you understand how complex and difficult and expensive it can be. You also see its limits, which gives you a great sense of urgency to reduce future emissions. When investing in emissions reduction, you understand at a deep level what we've already done. You understand the urgency of protecting those who are most vulnerable from climate changes that are already inevitable. ▲



*Maria Blair joined the Rockefeller Foundation in 2005. As an Associate Vice President and Managing Director, Ms. Blair provides leadership and strategic direction for select Foundation initiatives. Before coming to the Rockefeller Foundation, she was an*

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*Adam Wolfensohn has worked in the climate and energy field for five years as an investor, consultant, grant-maker, and media producer. Within the Wolfensohn family office, he has managed the clean technology fund and direct investment portfolios. He also produced the climate change documentary "Everything's Cool," which debuted at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival. From 2002 to 2003, he managed pioneering work with Conservation International to make the 2003 Pearl Jam and "Warped" tours carbon neutral thanks to avoided deforestation offsets. Mr. Wolfensohn earned a bachelor's degree from Princeton University, and a master's degree in Environmental Management from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.*



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