 [Click to Print](#)[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

## First ladies

by Sara Stroud - 3.2.09

---

The sustainable business community, like any industry group, is a sum of its parts. Gender aside, the leaders in the space have spent years trying to convince stakeholders of the vast importance of adhering to triple-bottom-line economics.



Creating a shift in the way business is done and how success is measured takes an unconventional approach. Many of the women leaders that Sustainable Industries spoke with for this article attributed their success to their willingness to take chances and blaze uncharted territory.

Whether analyzing the financial risks of green building projects or assessing the marketability of a cleantech startup, creating the tools to help companies increase their energy efficiency or crafting the framework for a sustainable business curriculum, these women have laid the groundwork for systems that will be used for years to come.



**Andrea Ramage**

Director of sustainable solutions, CH2M HILL  
Bellevue, Wash.

As a leading sustainability expert at CH2M HILL, a global engineering and construction firm, Andrea Ramage is used to seeking answers to some very big questions. The 26,000-employee firm works on projects around globe, including Masdar City in Abu Dhabi, which is currently under construction and is designed to be the world's first net-zero carbon city (see "East meets West Coast," page 20).

As CH2M HILL's director of sustainable solutions, Ramage and a seven-member team work across the company's business units to help deliver sustainability-related work and to train staff. For the \$20 billion Masdar project, for which CH2M HILL is a program manager, Ramage is acting in an advisory and review capacity.

Integrating sustainability into all the processes of a large project is a

huge challenge, Ramage says. While standards such as the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) are useful, it's crucial to ensure that everyone making decisions on a project, from designers to builders, has a clear understanding of what sustainability means, she says.

Ramage, who worked as a geotechnical engineer for CH2M HILL in Portland in the mid-90s, is a convert to sustainable design.

"The sustainability bug bit me," she says. With like-minded colleagues, Ramage worked on the company's internal greening effort, eventually running the LEED-certification process for its Denver headquarters.

The flip side of the company's internal efforts was offering sustainability support to clients, which Ramage began to do in 2004.

While she works on projects around the world, Ramage also has a chance to focus on projects closer to home, such as a King County, Wash., water treatment plant and the city of Bellevue's operations strategy for environmental stewardship.

Whatever the project's scale, Ramage says she feels she is helping to create "something that is going to matter to the world."

"That's my favorite part of the job," she says. "It's all about taking visions and turning them into reality."

\*\*\*



Karla Bell  
Co-founder, CarbonFlow Inc.  
San Francisco

In a career that has touched upon many facets of sustainability, from green building to carbon markets, Karla Bell says some of the most helpful lessons were the ones she learned growing up in Australia as a competitive springboard diver.

"There's no such thing as 'can't,' and 'Don't look down,'" Bell says. "When you take off, you're not worried about when you're going to hit the water."

Certainly, if Bell had tried to imagine her trajectory through the growing sphere of sustainable business, she probably couldn't have imagined the path of her career, from being the project manager on what she says was the world's first green building program—the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney—to co-founding CarbonFlow Inc., which develops software for companies participating in carbon markets.

"I always did my own thing," Bell says.

A willingness to step away from the expected was what drove Bell, who worked for Greenpeace's Atmosphere and Energy campaign, in the early 1990s to enter a design competition for the athletes' village in Sydney's bid to host the Olympic Games. Sydney ultimately won the

bid, and many of the concepts Bell proposed for the village were expanded to include to the rest of the games, as well.

“The legacy is that all bidding cities have an environmental component,” says Bell, who also worked with Stockholm on its bid for the 2004 games.

After her experience with the Sydney Olympics, Bell worked as a consultant to the construction industry. In the late 1990s, she grew interested in carbon markets, and in looking for ways to speed up the transaction process, co-founding CarbonFlow with Neal Dikeman in 2006. With its software, CarbonFlow aims to decrease the time and cost of creating carbon credits.

“CarbonFlow is completely consistent with everything I’ve done,” Bell says.

The common thread among her various endeavors is that they are at the intersection of innovation and regulation. In that respect, she says carbon markets represent enormous opportunities, especially in the United States.

Bell credits her prescience to having spent years involved in sustainability, following emerging markets and getting a sense for how they are developing. “When you’ve been around, you see strategic opportunities,” she says. “You see business opportunities and opportunities for policy change.”

\*\*\*



Jennifer Allen  
Interim director,  
Portland State University Center for Sustainable  
Processes & Practices  
Portland

As the interim director of Portland State University’s Center for Sustainable Processes and Practices (CSP2), Dr. Jennifer Allen already had a full plate. Add to that a \$25 million grant earmarked for sustainability research and education that the university received in September 2008, and the scope of Allen’s position became even more vast.

The university hopes to make PSU a leader in turning the region into a “living laboratory” for sustainability. Among other areas, the funds will go toward enhancing the student experience, faculty and facility development and community engagement, Allen says.

“We want to continue to be the voice of sustainability,” in the region, says Allen, who is also on the boards of Ilwaco, Wash.–based ShoreBank Pacific and the Oregon Forest Resources Institute.

As a condition of the grant, which was awarded by the James F. and

Marion L. Miller Foundation and will be distributed at the rate of \$2.5 million per year over 10 years, the university must provide matching funds.

“We’re trying to be strategic and build capacity,” Allen says of administering the grant.

As the interim director of the program, Allen’s role is to support sustainability-related curricula and research at PSU, while facilitating partnerships with other institutions. After the university completes its search for a director, Allen says she plans to stay on as the program’s associate director.

In a career that has included positions at the World Bank, Ecotrust and the state of Oregon’s economic development department, Allen says she has watched sustainable business initiatives grow from a niche opportunity to a mainstream strategy.

When she was in graduate school two decades ago for environmental science and public policy, illustrating the link between business and sustainability was a stretch, Allen says.

Since then, business has stepped up to many challenges, she says; but she adds that she hopes the need for sustainable business practices will become a given and thought of as a value-added prospect.

Allen also stresses that business’ definition of sustainability should reach beyond environmental aspects to include social components, as well.

“Equality has to be part of the conversation,” she says. “The business community has huge role to play.”

\*\*\*



Lisa Michelle Galley  
Founder and principal,  
Galley Eco Capital  
San Francisco

Lisa Michelle Galley had an extensive and successful career in commercial real estate when she launched her own finance and consulting firm, Galley Eco Capital, in late 2007.

Her interest in sustainability peaked about four years ago when some of the big developers began creating their own internal green building teams.

Also around that time, she says she was looking for a new challenge, and for a way to “connect to something bigger.”

What she found was that there was a huge lack of information about sustainability in real estate finance, and no real interest from large banks

in starting their own programs. So she set out on her own.

Based in San Francisco, Galley Eco Capital offers financing strategies for sustainable real estate brokers and firms, consulting services to developers, and advising on renewable energy investments, helping navigate a potentially confusing variety of incentives and tax strategies for green building.

In the current market, Galley says more and more people want to perform energy efficiency retrofits of existing properties. “Everyone is focusing on energy efficiency,” Galley says, with owners of larger properties exploring the LEED for Existing Buildings (LEED-EB) rating program.

In January 2009, the company became a certified B Corporation after meeting a series of social and environmental performance standards set by nonprofit organization [B Labs](#).

Galley says women are underrepresented in the sustainable real estate finance industry, adding that the current economic climate could be the perfect time for women to break into the industry.

In a time of turmoil, institutions are looking for fresh ideas, and for positive, solution-oriented people, she says. “There are great opportunities for women.”

\*\*\*



Michelle Long  
Co-founder and executive  
director, Sustainable Connections  
Bellingham, Wash.

Michelle Long’s desire to create environmental and social change was sparked by a two-year trip around the world. Upon returning home to Bellingham, Wash., she started a new journey, this time through the uncharted waters of sustainable business.

Fueled by her conviction that business could be an “upstream solution” to problems, driving change and influencing policy, she and her husband Derek Long launched Sustainable Connections, a nonprofit aiming to connect sustainable businesses with like-minded customers and influence policy change.

“When business acts, local governments follow,” Long says.

Over the past five years, Sustainable Solutions has grown to include about 700 Whatcom County businesses and 11 employees.

The organization provides education, support and market development to its member businesses, while encouraging residents to direct their dollars to local merchants through its Think Local First campaign and an

online directory. Sustainable Connections focuses on locally owned businesses, not only to support community businesses, but because they have the autonomy to make rapid changes, Long says.

Sustainable Connection's initiative to support local business seems to be working: About 70 percent of jobs in the community are within locally owned businesses. And in a time of slumping retail sales, Whatcom County businesses have not seen sales drop as drastically as the rest of the state's.

Since its inception, Sustainable Connections has expanded to include programs focused on green building and supporting a sustainable local food system. In the coming year, Long says the organization plans to focus more heavily on job training and is launching a community energy efficiency challenge.

A community-wide challenge in 2006 to increase purchasing of renewable power resulted in more than 11 percent of electricity purchased in Bellingham coming from renewable sources.

"We have a bias for action. We learn by doing," says Long, who is also on the board of the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE) and co-author of "Local First: A How-to Guide," adding that she hopes Sustainable Connection's efforts will encourage other communities to adopt similar practices.

"It's happened somewhere, so we know it's possible," Long says.

\*\*\*



Andrea Traber  
Director of Sustainable Buildings and Operations,  
KEMA Services Inc.  
San Francisco

As the director of sustainable buildings for KEMA, a green building consulting firm headquartered in Arnhem, the Netherlands, but with an office in San Francisco, Andrea Traber has worked as a project manager and technical advisor on more than 40 projects aiming for LEED certification. A long-time green building advocate, Traber is also president of USGBC's Northern California Chapter.



Jill Bamburg  
Co-founder, faculty member,  
Bainbridge Graduate Institute  
Bainbridge, Wash.

In addition to co-founding Bainbridge Graduate Institute (BGI), which offers an MBA in sustainable business, Jill Bamburg led

development of curriculum for the school, which is in the process of seeking accreditation. She also served as the institution's dean. Prior to helping start BGI, Bamburg held senior marketing positions at Seattle-based Aldus Corp., the creators of PageMaker software, before the company was acquired by Adobe (Nasdaq: ADBE). Bamburg sits on the board of the Positive Futures Network, publishers of yes! magazine. And in 2006, she authored "Getting to Scale: Growing Your Business Without Selling Out," a book about scaling mission-driven businesses.



Margie Harris  
Executive director, Energy Trust of Oregon  
Portland

Margie Harris' roots in Oregon's sustainability community run deep. She helped create energy policies and programs at the state level and for the city of Portland, held executive positions for Portland Parks and Recreation and the city's regional transportation district.

Harris joined the Energy Trust of Oregon in 2001 as its first full-time employee. Today, she manages a \$130 million budget, most of which comes from funds allocated through the state's public purchase charge (which requires Oregon's two largest investor-owned electric utilities to dedicate 3 percent of their customers's bills to energy efficiency and renewable energy efforts). The organization is a symbol for Oregon's commitment to reducing its carbon emissions.



Kira Gould  
Director of communications, William McDonough +  
Partners  
San Francisco

As director of communications for William McDonough + Partners, a sustainable architecture and design firm, Kira Gould has become a high-profile voice within the green building community, lecturing around the country, including at USGBC's Greenbuild conference. In 2007, Gould chaired the American Institute of Architects Committee on the Environment, and co-authored the group's report on ecological literacy and architecture education. She also co-authored "Women in Green: Voices of Sustainable Design."



Nancy Floyd  
Founder and managing director, Nth Power  
San Francisco

As founder of venture capital firm Nth Power, which focuses on energy technology companies, Nancy Floyd has led investments in biofuels, energy intelligence and energy storage companies, including Serveron, SpectraSensors and Imperium Renewables.

Before launching Nth Power, Floyd built and sold two high-growth energy and technology companies. Floyd, who spoke at the 2008

Democratic National Convention, is also on the boards of the American Council on Renewable Energy and the Center for Resource Solutions. She has been an advisor to the National Renewable Energy Lab and was appointed by Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski to serve on the Oregon Economic and Community Development Commission.



Lynn Simon  
President, Simon & Associates Inc.  
San Francisco

As president of green building consulting firm Simon & Associates, Lynn Simon was involved in some of the first projects to earn LEED certification in California. A LEED-accredited professional, Simon served on the USGBC's board of directors for six years and currently serves as vice chair on USGBC's governance and curriculum committees.



Susan Anderson  
Director, City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability  
Portland

When Portland's mayor Sam Adams merged the city's planning and sustainable development bureaus, he selected Susan Anderson to helm the new Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. Anderson, which led the Office of Sustainable Development since its inception in 1991, is now in charge of making sure sustainability principles are integrated into the city's urban design, planning and government operations.



Sally Jewell  
President and CEO, Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI)  
Kent, Wash.

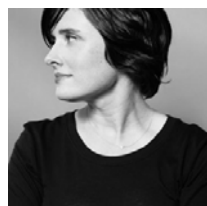
Sally Jewell spent almost two decades in commercial banking before 2005, when she took the top position at REI, the largest retail cooperative in the country. In her first year as CEO, profits grew 29.3 percent. She has been instrumental in leading REI's sustainability plan, which included building two LEED for Retail prototype buildings—the Boulder, Colo. store earned Gold certification in February 2009—and installing solar panels on 11 stores (see “REI explores solar,” page 43). The co-op's PEAK (Promoting Environmental Awareness in Kids) program reaches more than 8,000 children annually. In 2009 REI placed #12 among Fortune magazine's “100 Best Companies to Work for in America.”



Lucia Athens  
Senior sustainable solutions strategist,  
CollinsWoerman Architecture and Planning  
Seattle

A landscape architect with a long-time focus on sustainability, Lucia Athens was recognized in 2004 by Sustainable Industries as one of the 25 most influential people in Green Building in the Northwest. Athens helped the cities of Seattle and Austin, Tex., create their sustainable building programs. While working for the city of Seattle's Green Building Program, Athens helped steer one of the nation's first sustainable building policies. The policy mandates that all new city-funded projects and renovations over 5,000 square feet must achieve a LEED-Silver rating.

In her current role as senior sustainable futures strategist with Seattle-based architecture and planning firm CollinsWoerman, Athens shares her knowledge and experience with public- and private-sector clients.



Valerie Casey  
Director of digital experiences, IDEO,  
Founder of the Designer's Accord  
San Francisco

As head of digital experiences for global design consultancy IDEO, Valerie Casey has been the force behind some high-profile design projects, such as developing the digital-interaction strategy for Barnes & Noble (NYSE: BKS). But perhaps the biggest yet is the Designers Accord, which she founded in 2006.

The Designers Accord is a nonprofit coalition of more than 100,000 designers, engineers, educators and corporations, each pledging to reduce their carbon footprints while incorporating sustainable design into their products and practices.

1

Like this article? [Subscribe to \*Sustainable Industries\* magazine.](#)

---

© *Sustainable Media Inc.* All rights reserved. Permission is required for reproduction in whole or in part. For high-quality reprints of articles, contact FosteReprints at 866-879-9144 or via email:


[sales@FosteReprints.com](mailto:sales@FosteReprints.com)

#### RELATED LINKS:

- O Ecotextiles sews sustainability [Read More](#)
- Kelly Ogilvie reels in algae investments [Read More](#)
- Mr. Sun Solar takes solar to the roof [Read More](#)

**Find this article at:**

<http://www.sustainableindustries.com/sijprofile/40446922.html>

 [Click to Print](#)

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.