

## **Women and the Environment: Paper Mill Public Health Web Quest**

A Web Quest by the Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Equity  
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You work at the *Kentucky Star Post* as a writer. Recently your best friend and some other women in town have accused the Pacific Paper Mill, a large corporation in your town with dumping harmful toxins into the ground water. The women claim that the water has made their infant children sick. Several of the children in the community have actually died. The dumping has occurred in an area where many of the lower income families live and depend on ground water wells rather than city water. The population in this part of the community tends to be mostly minority members of the community. The President of the Pacific Paper Mill is on the board of the local hospital and health center and has donated a large sum of money to the medical research community. The three male doctors in town have stated that there is no connection with the illnesses and the women have taken their case to the state legislature with no success. They have substantial evidence that points to the contamination of ground water from other companies throughout the US.

Your boss has asked you to write an article that pertains to the issue. He has not told you what direction the article should go. You are to complete your assignment and present your article along with a defense for why it is important to publish it.

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### **The Task**

The following questions must be answered in order to write the article with accurate and informative information while maintaining an unbiased viewpoint:

- How have other Kentucky women in the media faced difficult situations such as this one?
- What are some of the issues that women in Kentucky have faced in working with politics and the legislature?
- What affect does being a minority population have on the issue?
- How is health care for women different than for men?
- How do the Pacific Paper Mill donations to the hospital affect the relationship of the doctors to the issue?
- How does the paper's relationship with the mill (they get their paper from the mill) affect your article?
- What are the factors that affect the women as they take their issue to the legislature?
- What is your responsibility as a writer to the community?
- What is your responsibility to women in Kentucky?
- What is your responsibility as a worker to the paper?
- What evidence exists to support the idea that groundwater pollution from paper mills can be a factor in making people sick?
- What are some of the struggles other women have faced in bringing unpopular issues to the forefront?
- What legal rights do the women have and what obstacles will they face?

Research and answer the above questions using the resources listed in the resource section. Form teams of researchers to bring the information together and discuss how each of the questions relates to the article that your boss has asked you to write.

Write the article and present it to your class or develop a power point presentation to present. Take a position or a stand and defend it using the information you have gathered.

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## Resources

Kentucky Women in Journalism  
Kentucky Women in Public Service  
Kentucky Women in Health and Medicine  
Kentucky Women in Law  
Kentucky Women in Science  
Kentucky Women in Business and Industry

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## Women and the Future

<http://www.women.com/womenfuture/index2.html>  
<http://www.nwhp.org/index.html>  
<http://www.state.ky.us/agencies/women/index.html>

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## Books

*The Future Well-Being of Women in Kentucky*  
*Zona Gale, Her Life & Writings: A Resource Guide*  
*Votes for Women: A Resource Guide*  
*Pioneer Women's Diaries: A Resource Guide*  
*Latino Women of Science*  
*Multicultural Women of Science*  
*Celebrating Women in Mathematics and Science*  
*Remember the Ladies ! A Handbook of Women in American History*  
*Mary Breckinridge : A Woman Who Saved Many Lives*  
*Women's Curriculum Toolbox*

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## Videos

*There's No Such Thing As Woman's Work*  
*Fast Food Women*  
*The Fairer Sex*  
*Flyers in Search of a Dream*  
*Marian Anderson*  
*Still Killing Us Softly*  
*Women in Construction*  
*Zona Gale 1874-1938*  
*Votes for Women: The 1913 U.S Senate Testimony*  
*The Life and Writings of Belle Case La Follette*

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Groundwater Contamination Agencies

<http://www.agwt.org/>  
<http://water.usgs.gov/wid/indexlist.html>  
<http://www.heraldnet.com/Stories/98/9/25/10100554.htm>  
<http://home1.gte.net/tango33/paper.html>  
<http://puyallup.tricity.wsu.edu/~sonn/scenes.htm>  
<http://www.naplesnews.com/today/florida/d270945a.htm>  
[http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/fieldops/ne/PPC\\_News/PPC\\_News.htm](http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/fieldops/ne/PPC_News/PPC_News.htm)  
<http://www.sjwyman.com/overview.html>  
<http://www.envirolink.org/archives/enews/0143.html>

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## The Process

As a group, divide the following steps up among your group and determine who will do each. After completing your assignments, come back together to present your findings to the group. Determine what direction each group member would like his or her presentation to take. Each member will present his or her own project. Each member of the group will present their project to the class as though it is the review board for the paper. The project should include key findings, justification for the direction your article will take. The teacher will act as the editor and will either approve or modify your project as it is stated. You will then write the article and present it to the class.

### STEPS

1. Go to Kentucky Women and Media and find some of the women who have presented unpopular ideas and write down what approaches they have used to get their points into the public eye.
2. E-mail or interview someone who has presented an unpopular issue and document the pros and cons that they experienced.
3. Go to the Women in Politics section and research the issues that women in Kentucky have faced in working with politics.
4. Write down the major issues and concerns facing women in politics.
5. Interview a member of the minority community and get input on how politics has addressed issues concerning minorities and what their views on the groundwater pollution issue are.
6. Look in the Health and Medicine section and research how women have been involved in health and medicine in the past in Kentucky and write down some of the factors that may influence the situation with the women and the mill.
7. Talk to a health care official or a hospital administrator about the importance of medical research and document the results.
8. Talk to a business person about the economy and the importance of business growth in a community and document the results.
9. Go to the Law section and research the women in Kentucky who have been involved in Legal careers and compare that number to men. Write down what you conclude.
10. Go to the Science Section and research the number of women involved in Science and determine how they may be involved in your quest for information? Write any comments that relate to the topic down.
11. Visit the business and industry section of the quest and determine if any of the women listed here add perspective to your article. Make any relevant comments. If there are opportunities to contact any of the women and inquire regarding their experience and motivations to do what they are doing, do so.
12. Visit the Women and the Future to secure insight on what your responsibility to women in Kentucky may be.
13. Interview bosses to see what they feel their workers responsibility to their company should be. Document the results of your interview.
14. Visit the Groundwater Contamination Agencies websites to determine what the effects of paper mill pollutants are on ground water. Document the information.
15. Use books and videos to further research your area of interest.
16. Meet together as a research group and discuss what you have found and decide what you will write your article on and how you will justify it to the Newspaper editor.

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## **Learning Advice**

As you begin to develop your ideas use concept mapping to organize your thoughts and document your findings. As a group you will want to put together the facts that each member has discovered. Be sure to listen carefully to each of the researchers. If some researchers have had a more difficult time developing their thoughts, other members of the team may want to work through the information with them to develop it further. The group should have a meaningful discussion about the issues involved. If additional issues come up that the group has no direct experience with, a plan to speak with someone who has experience in the area should be developed. Any facts that are not provided in the original web quest can be determined through group consensus. (For instance, one of the children who died, died of high chlorine levels in her blood and the family doesn't have the money or the expertise to hire a lawyer.)

Each member of the group will listen to all of the information provided before determining the type of project he or she will develop in order to convince the editorial board that their article should be published. A Powerpoint presentation, video, performance piece, written paper or speech may be developed to convince the review board. Remember, in any of these presentations, justifications and rationale for your article will need to be presented. Everyone will write his or her own article at the end of the project.

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## **Conclusion**

At the end of this project students will have researched issues of ethics, community responsibility, gender bias, civic and community responsibility, community infrastructure and public service. They will have analyzed the information presented, organized it into a workable body of knowledge and developed conclusions and projects that demonstrate multiple ways of knowing that stem from creative critical thinking and problem solving. They will have a more in depth understanding of the issues that face women in Kentucky and will have experienced a historical perspective of the issues involved.

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