ENVIRONMENTAL & LAND USE LAW

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES ARE RARELY SIMPLE.
From climate change to biodiversity and air pollution to local conservation, the challenges of sustainability and long-term environmental health raise complex scientific, ethical, economic and political questions that defy easy answers.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND LAND USE LAW PROGRAM at the University of Virginia empowers students to confront these questions during law school so they can build the practical skills, analytic tools and hands-on experience needed to make their mark as environmental leaders in government, business and the not-for-profit sector. The program combines outstanding legal teaching with opportunities for interdisciplinary study, clinical experience and scholarly inquiry. Interacting with faculty who research and shape the law at the local, regional and global levels, students at the University of Virginia experience environmental law firsthand as it is practiced today, and study how it can better meet the next generation of challenges. With a wide range of courses, conferences, student groups and opportunities for independent study, students at the University of Virginia are part of a vibrant intellectual community that crosses boundaries of academic disciplines and between practice and scholarship.

NESTLED in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Charlottesville and surrounding Albemarle County provide a beautiful and uniquely fruitful setting for the study of land use and environmental issues.


COURSES AND SEMINARS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Seminars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Law</td>
<td>Property Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Natural Resources Law: Energy and Water Resources</td>
<td>Regulation of the Political Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate Change: Science, Policy and Law</td>
<td>Risk Regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy and Environmental Products Trading and Commodities Regulation</td>
<td>Science and Policy of Biodiversity Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toxic Chemicals in the Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban Law and Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CLINIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental Law and Conservation Clinic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These courses represent the 2012-13 school years. Not all courses are offered every year.
THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA HAS PARTNERED with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to find solutions to some of the nation’s most vexing conservation challenges. The partnership — a collaboration among the NFWF, the Law School and UVA’s Environmental Sciences and Biology Departments — includes summer internships for UVA students at NFWF project sites and courses taught jointly by foundation staff and UVA faculty members [left]. As an NFWF fellow, KIERAN HARTLEY ’14 will study initiatives to protect and restore U.S. species and habitat to determine what can be learned from their successes and failures. “This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that uniquely meets my research interest, which is to find empirical order at the intersection of institutional incentives, science and policy,” Hartley said.

CURRICULUM The Environmental and Land Use Law Program includes more than 20 elective courses and seminars, including several interdisciplinary classes in law and urban planning, environmental sciences and the humanities. Students engage in research projects on subjects such as state law, climate change nuisance claims, land conservation in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, regional land use and growth-management policies, and the Environmental Protection Agency’s settlement practices.

UNIVERSITY COURSES Students may receive Law School credit for related graduate courses offered by other departments and schools in the University, including classes on topics such as preservation planning, land use policy, ecology, climatology and business-government relations. Students can obtain joint degrees in law and land use planning, business or environmental sciences.

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND CONSERVATION CLINIC Students in the clinic represent environmental nonprofits, citizens’ groups and other community organizations seeking to protect and restore the environment of Virginia and other parts of the country. The clinic works closely with lawyers at the Southern Environmental Law Center, a preeminent environmental public interest law firm headquartered in Charlottesville. Students participate in a range of activities on environmental matters. They comment on administrative rules, participate in permitting proceedings, advocate before state administrative agencies and boards, and contribute to factual investigations and litigation. Although much of the clinic’s work consists of traditional legal advocacy and counseling, clinic students also typically deal with the role of broader public advocacy in environmental disputes. The clinic explores the limits of the law in protecting natural resources and examines cooperative and innovative ways of protecting and restoring the environment.

BEYOND THE CURRICULUM The Law School’s support for learning opportunities in environmental and land use law goes deeper than course offerings.

SYMPOSIA Over the past dozen years, the Law School has sponsored national conferences on growth management, nature conservation, environmental contracting, revitalization of contaminated land, transboundary watershed management and climate change. These symposia attracted leading practitioners and scholars, and top government officials. Law students help plan these conferences and edit and publish the papers that emerge from them.

U.S. DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR DAVID HAYES [left] and CLAUDE GASCON, executive vice-president and chief science officer at the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, spoke at the University of Virginia Conference on Building Effective Conservation Programs at UVA Law in March 2013.

VIRGINIA ENVIRONMENTAL LAW JOURNAL Founded in 1979 and managed and edited by students, the journal is a leader in environmental legal scholarship.

VIRGINIA ENVIRONMENTAL LAW FORUM This popular and active student group hosts speakers and sponsors law students who participate in environmental moot court and negotiation competitions. The forum, in cooperation with the Law School’s Mortimer Caplin Public Service Center, also provides pro bono opportunities to students interested in environmental law. Students may choose from a range of environmental pro bono projects on behalf of public interest and governmental clients that have requested assistance.

Forum members also have opportunities to network with environmental law employers and professionals.

PUBLIC SERVICE The Law School has made a strong financial commitment to students choosing to pursue public interest careers. The school’s Mortimer Caplin Public Service Center helps students interested in environmental law find summer internships and postgraduate employment.

ENVIRONMENTAL & LAND USE LAW www.law.virginia.edu/environmental

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PROFESSOR JASON JOHNSTON is an expert in natural resources law as well as law and economics, and teaches courses on climate change and natural resource law and policy, among others.

PROFESSOR MICHAEL LIVEMORE is one of the nation’s leading experts on regulation and using cost-benefit analysis to evaluate and promote sound environmental policies. He is co-author of “Retaking Rationality: How Cost-Benefit Analysis Can Better Protect the Environment and Our Health.”

Professor Michael Livemore 

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