ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES ARE RARELY SIMPLE. From climate change to local conservation, they 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.
PROFESSOR MAUREEN "MOLLY" BRADY'S scholarship undertakes historical analyses of legal rules and land use policies, which she uses to account for developments in eminent domain law and to explore how different institutions respond to problems in city planning and governance.

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

PROFESSOR CALE JAFFE ’01 directed the Virginia office of the Southern Environmental Law Center before joining the Law School to direct the Environmental and Regulatory Law Clinic.

Through the Environmental and Regulatory Law Clinic, HALIMA NGUYEN ’18 worked on an amicus brief that helped the Mattaponi Indian Tribe voice their concerns about a plan to build a major electric transmission line over the James River, near Jamestown Island, Virginia.

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.

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 REGULATORY 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.

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. Law students help plan these conferences and edit and publish the papers that emerge from them.

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 networking events, 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.