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Natural Resources Journal, Annual Report 2009 - 2010

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Natural Resources Journal Annual Report
2009–2010

Melissa Kennelly & Scott Stromberg
Co-Editors-in-Chief 2009–2010

This report covers the period from June 30, 2009, through May 31, 2010. It will discuss the status of Natural Resource Journal (NRJ) issues through Volume 50, the transition to the new Board, and the NRJ's strategic plan.

Status of the Issues: Vol. 48, No. 4 through Vol. 50, No. 3

Since the last Report, and as of July 2010, issue 48.4 (the Land Grant Symposium issue), and issues 49.1, 49.2, and 49.3/4 (a combined issue) are now in Print.

Volume 50 is the NRJ's 50th Anniversary volume and will consist of three issues: the first containing solicited articles from key scholars in the field of natural resources law; the Berkeley "As If Equity Mattered" symposium issue for the second; and the NRJ's own 2010 "Water-Energy Conundrum: Water Constraints on New Energy Development in the Southwest" symposium for Volume 50's third, and final, issue. These three issues were started by our editorial board and were in various stages of the editing process at the time our board graduated; a smooth transition to the new, 2010-11, Board ensured that progress would not be impeded. We anticipated that Vol. 50, No. 1, would be in print (and online) by October 2010, and, at the time of this writing, we have been advised that that schedule has been met. We anticipate that the balance of Volume 50 issues will follow soon thereafter.

It should be noted that the NRJ changed printing vendors during our Board's tenure. Issue 48.4 was printed with the prior vendor. It was felt that they did not give the NRJ acceptable attention, which resulted in excessive errors on their part, and uncertain schedules. This situation, at least in part, accounted for a delay in publication. By spring 2010, NRJ had switched to a new printer. Significantly more responsive to our needs, they have reliably committed to, and kept, schedules; we have also seen dramatic improvements to quality and accuracy.

This change, combined with aggressive 2009-10 NRJ initiatives to: improve and expand Board & Staff training programs; extensively develop and upgrade existing how-to manuals; promulgate more effective internal editorial & production processes; create, adopt, and adhere to a very formal internal schedule; and, pursue a comprehensive review of existing positions and responsibilities, are expected to bring further improvements to on-time delivery going forward, as well as improve the students' journal experience overall.

NRJ's 50th Anniversary Symposium

In conjunction with articles solicited for issue 50.3, the NRJ held the above-mentioned Water-Energy Symposium at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Albuquerque, on February 12, 2010. The symposium had well-known speakers that included Stanley Pollack, Tania Trujillo, Robert Glennon, Michael Hightower, Michael Connor, Denise Fort, Martin Pasqualetti, Stacy Tellinghuisen, Joan Drake, and Cyndi Murray; Professor Eileen Gauna presided over a panel. The symposium was funded by the RMMLF (\$5,000.00) and the Environmental Law Section of the New Mexico State Bar (\$3,000.00), as well as \$10,000.00 provided by UNMSOL in recognition of the NRJ's 50th anniversary year. Each speaker provided a unique perspective on the water-energy issues of the Southwest. The symposium also provided CLE credit to attorneys and fees varied for attorneys, government employees, and students. There were approximately 85 people in attendance.

Transition to the New Board

This year we continued the transition and evolution of the NRJ. Reed D. Benson served his second year as the Faculty Editor-in-Chief, and Lynne Arany served her second year as the NRJ's Director of

Publications. Additionally, Kristina Fisher, student Editor-in-Chief from 2007–08, served her second year as an adjunct professor to teach the NRJ’s seminar class.

The Board will continue to consist of roughly two student co-editors-in-chief, one managing editor, three citations editors, and six manuscript editors. This structure worked well during the 2009–10 period and we believe that it will continue to be the model as long as the two students in the EIC position work well together. We expect that the leadership positions will continue to be made by appointment through an administrative process model instead of elections. In this model, the Board selection committee is made up of the two student editors-in-chief, the managing editor, the director of publications, the faculty advisor, and the NRJ writing seminar adjunct professor. Each 2L staff member ranks their desired Board positions, and these rankings are made available to the entire staff and Board. Students who desire the editor-in-chief or managing editor positions must write a short paragraph about why they want these positions. The staff then has the opportunity to comment about the applicants and their desired positions (compiled and kept anonymous by the faculty advisor); these comments are heavily considered by the Board selection committee.

NRJ Strategic Plan

The 2010–11 Board and Professor Benson have elected to transition to a student-run Journal, meaning that Professor Benson’s role has changed from Faculty Editor-in-Chief to Faculty Advisor.

New strategies were adopted to increase productivity and quality of the NRJ. The Editors-in-Chief and Managing Editor adopted a Publication Schedule, which assigns a timeline for publication and deadlines for the entire Board including manuscript editor deadlines, citation editor deadlines, author deadlines, and EIC deadlines. The new Board decided to conform to the common publication standard of environmental law journals of two issues per year starting with 51.1 and 51.2. We also decided that the NRJ should focus publishing articles on natural resources law and policy in the southwestern United States, as it seems to be the NRJ’s natural niche. The NRJ should publish more legal articles to increase its national rankings so that the Journal can be competitive in obtaining high-quality articles. The NRJ plans to implement an informal peer review process for selected manuscripts from non-law authors by reviving the NRJ advisory board and asking a few scholars from various disciplines to help review manuscripts and select topics for special issues. Finally, the NRJ will seek more articles through “calls for papers.” We also suggested changing the way that NRJ students complete their writing requirement. For more on this and the strategic issues mentioned above, see the NRJ’s 2009 Strategic Plan document created by Professor Benson (Memorandum: NRJ reforms, December 4, 2009).

The NRJ has made progress in updating its pages on the UNMSOL website and in publishing articles online there as well. This is the first year that entire articles have been published (in PDF format) on the website. Online publication began with issues 48.4 and 49.1, and should continue indefinitely as each subsequent issue is published. Further, UNMSOL’s Library purchased PDF files of all previous NRJ issues from HeinOnline, and is in the process of separating the PDFs of the issues into separate articles so that each can be accessed individually online through NRJ’s website. We also envision an interactive website where discussion of articles and issues can take place on the website along with the articles. More work needs to be done to refine NRJ’s online presence and to make articles available online in a timely fashion in order to provide added value to authors and increase NRJ’s competitiveness.

The Natural Resources Journal is committed to maintaining its long tradition of excellence among academic natural resource publications and hopes that the future boards will continue this tradition.

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