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The isolation of scholars in various fields concerned with resources problems continues to be a principal impediment to progress. . . . [R]esources problems are so complex that traditional lines of approach prove inadequate. . . . Rarely do we find the work of the lawyer and the non-lawyer appearing side by side. . . . The primary function of the [new] Journal is to meet this need. . . .

—from the Foreword of Vol. 1, No. 1, 1961

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INTRODUCTION

It is an honor to introduce this first issue of Volume 50 of the *Natural Resources Journal* (NRJ), and to have the great luck to be a member of the editorial board during this landmark anniversary year. The enduring importance of the NRJ to the University of New Mexico School of Law, to the state of New Mexico, and to the field of natural resources law and policy, nationally and internationally, cannot be overstated.

Before 1961, no inclusive academic forum existed for all types of scholars and practitioners enmeshed in the vast field of natural resources. The advent of the NRJ opened these doors, exchanging air between the once-narrow hallways of law, science, economics, and other resource-related disciplines. Over the last half-century the NRJ has allowed us to see, in an academic publication, how the rock, the water, and the organism interact with the dollar, the people, the politico, and the gavel.

Though it is easy to forget how abstract laws and regulations affect our environment, man-made disasters harshly remind us how they interrelate. As I write this introduction, thousands of gallons of oil spew into the Gulf of Mexico creating what many today refer to as the greatest environmental disaster in the history of the United States. We cannot lay blame strictly upon the engineers, the corporate executives, the policy, the government, or the insatiable demands of human society—all are partly responsible. Yet, to avoid future catastrophic events, scientists, policymakers, lawyers, and other key players must be able to communicate with each other as humanity faces the potential of even worse environmental tragedies. The NRJ was created to provide this kind of forum, and we continue our long-standing tradition.

In celebration of the NRJ's anniversary, Professor Reed Benson has graciously gathered several of the finest contributors in the field of natural resources law to share their perspectives on what has happened with our natural resources during the last 50 years, and what may be ahead as we proceed into the twenty-first century.

As you hunker down to enjoy this special issue by the fireside, on the veranda, or, beginning this year, in front of your laptop computer, fill your glass with your favorite beverage and join us in a toast to the first of another 50 years of the NRJ.

—Melissa Kennelly
Co-Editor-in-Chief