



NATURAL RESOURCES JOURNAL

Volume 45
Issue 2 *Spring 2005*

Spring 2005

Introduction

Natural Resources Journal

Recommended Citation

Natural Resources Journal, *Introduction*, 45 Nat. Resources J. vii (2005).
Available at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nrj/vol45/iss2/1>

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INTRODUCTION

Development of coal bed methane in the intermountain west, after-the-fact assessment of environmental impacts, an 1892 interstate water agreement in India, a twenty-first century allocation of a water source shared by two southeastern states, the definition of “species” as used in the Endangered Species Act, and the relative effectiveness of markets and commands in environmental control—what do these incredibly diverse topics have in common? They measure the historical depth and intellectual range of natural resource issues today. And they are literally bound together by this quintessentially inter-disciplinary issue of the *Natural Resources Journal*.

This issue brings together the work from academics connected to institutions as far flung as Irvine, California, and Hamilton, New Zealand, a measure of the *Journal's* international reach. The authors come from a wide range of disciplines including political science, law, economics, and biology, a measure of the *Journal's* academic breadth.

We are particularly glad to welcome back to the *Journal* University of California at Irvine's Dr. Helen Ingram. She has been a stalwart contributor to the *Natural Resources Journal* for almost as long as the venerable *Journal* has been around. Over the last 40 years Dr. Ingram has written many groundbreaking articles about the politics of western water and even served as the *Journal's* assistant editor for political science. Dr. Ingram returns to this issue with co-author Joseph DiMento, a lawyer and political scientist, to assess the effectiveness of environmental assessments under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and to suggest improvements in the future. NEPA has been the centerpiece of U.S. environmental policy for as long as Dr. Ingram has been contributing to the NRJ. The subject and the career dovetail nicely. The article moves the history into the future.

Finally, the *Journal* welcomes the University of New Mexico's own Dr. David Gutzler of the Earth and Planetary Science Department to this issue with his opening essay on climate and climate change in New Mexico and the southwest. At this writing, Galveston, Houston, and the southeast are bracing for the second mammoth hurricane of the month. The general forces that Dr. Gutzler describes so well are coming to roost in the chaos of a natural phenomenon so powerful and so horribly organized as to make us think of the Book of Job, not the *Natural Resources Journal*. The *Journal* and Job do belong to the same world, and we are pleased, as always, to quietly make that inter-disciplinary connection.