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SCHOOL OF LAW

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The School has met the standards of the American Bar and of the Association of American Law Schools. The School has been fully accredited since 1948.

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Lawyers who function in their profession, whether as private practitioners or public servants, are an integral part of the system by which a democratic society governs itself. If they are to properly discharge the responsibilities of this role, their education for the profession must be broad and intensive. In its breadth, that education must encompass a full understanding of and belief in the democratic respect for individual personality and the democratic processes designed to allow individuals to develop and participate in a free, self-governing society. In its intensification it must impart a high degree of competence in the craftsmanship of the law—in those skills and insights essential to an adequate performance of the lawyer’s function as advocate, judge, legislator, teacher, administrator, or civic leader.

Such education neither begins nor ends in the law school, and the School of Law is continually concerned not only with its own curriculum but also with the quality of pre-legal education and with the continuing self-education that should be pursued by all members of the profession. Consequently, students are urged to enter the School with as broad a cultural and educational background as possible. Accordingly, the basic requirement for admission is now a baccalaureate degree from an approved college or university.

The student will spend the equivalent of six semesters of study in the School of Law in courses designed to bring the teachings of history, philosophy, and the social sciences to bear upon the solution of legal problems and to develop the skills and insights essential to research, analysis, synthesis, criticism, and exposition. Due to the low ratio of students to teachers (fewer than 15 to 1), substantially more individual and small group work is possible in the School than in most law schools.

For application materials and further information, write to UNM School of Law, MSC11 6080, 1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131-0001 or go to http://lawschool.unm.edu.
The isolation of scholars in various fields concerned with resources problems continues to be a principal impediment to progress. . . . Resources 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