

ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES LAW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON SPRING 2013

## ENR Center Creates Food Resiliency Project

By Nate Bellinger



This year the ENR program added a seventh interdisciplinary project: the Food Resiliency Project. The mission of the

Food Resiliency Project is to probe key law and policy issues to ensure resilient, sustainable food systems. Mary Wood and Michael Fakhri are the faculty coleaders for the project.

The Food Resiliency Project comes at a time when there is a growing interest in food studies at the University of Oregon and around the country. As Assistant Professor Fakhri notes, "food is a prominent topic in popular politics and culture." The numerous social and environmental problems associated with our current food system, dominated by industrial agricultural and powerful agribusinesses, are becoming increasingly obvious and people around the world are reacting.

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part of a burgeoning movement of farmers, consumers, students, lawyers, and other activists who are challenging the status quo and working to create a new, more resilient, and sustainable food system. "Our task as legal scholars and students," says Fakhri, "is to

highlight how law structures the allocation of power and wealth when it comes to food production, distribution, and consumption. We treat law as something that might structure a food system that ensures socio-economic equality among different communities and individuals."

This year, as the Bowerman Fellow for the Food Resiliency Project, I worked closely with Assistant Professor Fakhri on a project we are calling Food as a Transnational Legal Concept. We began with an examination of four phrases that are commonly used when talking about food: the right to food, food security, food justice, and food sovereignty. We sought to identify what these terms mean, who uses them, and how they are similar or different from each other. After realizing that food sovereignty is defined by how many advocates are framing the future of the food

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movement, we are now considering what food sovereignty contributes to the discussion about food and how law can contribute to the conversations. Finally, we are exploring different approaches that communities around the world are taking to implement food sovereignty.

This March, Assistant Professor Fakhri and I presented our initial findings on a panel at the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference. We were lucky to be joined on the panel by Professor Patricia Allen, chair of the Department of Food Systems and Society at Marylhurst University. In addition, I am excited to say that Assistant Professor Fakhri and I will be publishing our work in the American Bar Association publication Natural Resources and Environment in a special fall 2013 edition on food.

Ultimately, the Food Resiliency Project seeks to participate in the various debates about the future of our food system while contributing research and policy ideas to help create a more resilient and sustainable system. The first year of the project has generated great enthusiasm and lively discussions at the law school and in the broader Eugene community. The project is an important and timely addition to the ENR program and I am very excited to see how it

continues to develop and grow over the coming years. Led by faculty members and program administrators with expertise in the area and staffed by student fellows, ENR's seven interdisciplinary projects provide research, analysis, and innovative solutions to today's most pressing

environmental issues. In addition to the Food Resiliency Project, ENR interdisciplinary projects include the Conservation Trust Project; the Energy Law and Policy Project; the Global Environmental Democracy Project; the Native Environmental Sovereignty Project; the Oceans, Coasts, and Watersheds Project; and the Sustainable Land Use Project.

Nate Bellinger is a 3L at the University of Oregon School of Law where he serves as a Bowerman Fellow for the ENR Center and a Wayne Morse Fellow for the Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics.



# **ENR Giving Opportunities**

Private gifts are an essential means of supporting the ENR Program. Recently, private donations have allowed us to expand our fellowship opportunities for law students.

Through ENR's seven interdisciplinary projects (Conservation Trust, Energy Law and Policy, Food Resiliency, Global Environmental Democracy, Native Environmental Sovereignty, Ocean Coasts and Watersheds, and Sustainable Land Use) law students team with faculty members and use their expertise to solve environmental problems in Oregon, the nation, and the world. For the past five years, Bowerman and Brower fellowships have offered funding for three to four students to delve into individual environmental research projects.

To learn more about giving opportunities, please visit www.uoregonlaw.com/giving.

# Engel '10 Embarks on New Career at Department of Interior

This fall, UO School of Law graduate **Andrew Engel** will inhabit the role of honors attorney



for the Solicitor's Office at the U.S. Department of the Interior, located in Washington, D.C. Engel carefully

designed his academic career at the UO, taking active steps to develop his legal skill set through dedicated study and the completion of several internships, before a professor wisely tipped him off to the honors program with the Interior Department.

By accepting the position, Engel has committed to serving the public as an honors attorney—a highly coveted position that drew hundreds of applicants—for at least three years. Throughout the first year, Engel will rotate between various divisions within the Office of the Solicitor to gauge where he fits best. With an eye toward his environmental preferences, Engel will be assigned a permanent home at the office during his second year.

Engel, who hasn't spent any significant time in D.C. since middle school, is eager to commence his work in the nation's capital and reconnect with friends living in the district.

Prior to attending the UO School of Law, Engel worked as a field manager for Clean Water Action, a nonprofit whose mission is to protect and improve the quality of the nation's water resources. There he organized neighborhood support for various water-related concerns, knocking on 80 to 100 doors a day and managing a small field crew.

Engel's passion for water law increased when he took a class with Associate Dean Adell Amos on the subject. She also aided Engel in his job search both before and after graduation, serving as a reference, recommending him to various clerkships and alerting him to the honors attorney opportunity. "Andy represents a perfect example of Oregon Law's commitment to public service and reputation as a law school that produces leaders in environmental and natural resources law," says Amos. "These positions at Interior are incredibly competitive and Oregon Law students fair very well in that process. After working at Interior myself, I have seen first-hand that students from Oregon Law are viewed as being substantively prepared and personally committed to the public service work of the Solicitor's Office. Andy embodies this reputation and will be a fantastic addition to the office."

Engel was active inside and outside of class, participating in the school's environmental law clinic with the Western Environmental Law Center for two semesters and codirecting the four-

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day, 3,000-person Public Interest Environmental Law Conference for Land Air Water, the nation's largest student-run environmental law society. He was a managing board member of the *Oregon Law Review*, the longest-running law journal in the Pacific Northwest, and a Conservation Trust Project Fellow with the Environmental and Natural Resources Law Center, which allowed him the opportunity to develop the handbook, *A Guide to Instream Water Protection in Oregon* (2010). In five years, Engel would ideally like to work in water resources law within his duties at the Interior. In addition to the environmental law faculty, Engel encourages incoming students to get to know Heather Brinton, managing director of the Environmental and Natural Resources Law Center, who served as a resource to Engel during his law school years. In addition, he recommends students study hard while maintaining a healthy balance between school and outside activities. Finally, Engel advises that students interested in environmental law and public service engage in student activities to expand their professional networks and develop valuable skills. He notes that at the Land Air Water conference he met legal professionals every which way he turned.

"Networking is the most important way to get your foot in the door, especially in this field, which can be smaller," said Engel. "A lot of people know each other."

### 2012–13 First-Year Fellows Spotlight

Each year, first-year law students are given the opportunity to serve as ENR Fellows under the Dean's **Distinguished Environmental** Law Fellowship and the Chapin Clark Fellowship. This year, ENR welcomed four first-year fellows: Ashley Carter, Gordon Levitt, Kristina Schmunk, and Malia Losordo. Ashley and Gordon joined the Global Environmental Democracy Project (GEDP). This project explores the principles of public participation, freedom of information, and access to the judicial system and how those principles play out when confronting international environmental problems. Kristina and Malia joined the Oceans, Coasts, and Watersheds Project, exploring critical issues in both marine and freshwater environments.

Ashley Carter is a native of Long Island, New York, where she was influenced by the great cross-section of people and ideas in nearby New York City. Her upbringing led her to study moral philosophy at Yale University, a topic that she later narrowed to environmental ethics while participating in Yale's Bioethics



Internship Program after graduation. As a member of GEDP, Ashley helped coordinate

an event dedicated to renowned Oregonian Tom McCall, entitled Writing the Oregon Story: Tom McCall and Oregon's Environmental Legacy. Ashley also attended and assisted with many other environmental events, which she says "helped me stay focused, energized, and engaged with what I was learning in class. One of the most motivating events was New Directions for Human Rights and the Environment, dedicated to Professor Svitlana Kravchenko, It was truly inspiring and reminded me why I came to Oregon to study environmental law."

This summer, Ashley will work at the Oregon Department of Justice Child Advocacy Section in Eugene. She has also secured an externship for spring 2014 with the United States Department of Justice Environmental Enforcement Section in Washington, D.C.

**Gordon Levitt** is a lifelong resident of Oregon and a Double Duck (i.e., he completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Oregon). As an undergraduate, Gordon studied political science



and business administration. Competing in climbing and Alpine ski racing and working as a

U.S. park ranger inspired Gordon to pursue a career as a public interest environmental attorney. Naturally, this goal brought him to Oregon Law.

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As a GEDP Fellow, Gordon says he has "enjoyed researching timely and substantive legal issues to help develop campaign finance reform bills for the 2013 Oregon legislative session." Gordon coauthored five bills submitted to the Oregon Legislative Assembly this past year, and presented his work as a panelist at the 2013 Public Interest Environmental Law Conference (PIELC).

This summer, Gordon will be working as a legal intern for the organization Our Children's Trust in Eugene.

Malia Losordo was born and raised in Raleigh, North Carolina, and is the 2012–13 recipient of the Chapin Clark Fellowship. During her undergraduate days, Malia studied geography at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and worked as a field and research assistant in a stream and landscape ecology lab at Duke University. In addition to law school, Malia is pursuing a master's degree in water resources science from the Water Resources Graduate Program at Oregon State



University. Based on her vast knowledge of marine issues and ecology, Malia was a natural

fit for ENR's Oceans, Coasts, and Watersheds Project.

Regarding her fellowship, Malia says "I really enjoyed having the opportunity to volunteer at ENR lectures throughout the year. They always provided much-needed study breaks and helped me stay focused on why I came to law school."

This summer, Malia will be interning in the Water Rights Division of the Oregon Water Resources Department in Salem.

**Kristina Schmunk** grew up in the Eugene-Springfield area and attended college at Oregon State University where she

### From Eugene to Zion and Back

In March, 1Ls Gordon Levitt and Malia Losordo took a Spring Break road trip to Salt Lake City where they attended the American Bar Association Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources' annual spring conference as ABA law student scholarship recipients. Read about their many adventures at the conference and in the great outdoors of Utah at lawblog.uoregon.edu and search for "Spring Break."

graduated summa cum laude with an honors bachelor of science in environmental engineering. Kristina's previous work as an engineer on water-based issues and her desire to pursue a career in water policy made her a clear choice for the Ocean, Coasts, and Watersheds Project.

Now at the end of her firstyear fellowship, Kristina says the experience was a "really amazing opportunity to engage in the ENR



program before I got into the substantive ENR classes [in the second and third years of law school]."

Like other first-year ENR fellows, she says, "Being a fellow kept me focused on why I came to law school, even when classes seemed tedious."

This summer Kristina will be clerking for the Honorable Rives Kistler of the Oregon Supreme Court in Salem.

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