

First Year Perspectives

By Jonah Sandford, Brandon Cobb, and Ryan Shannon

NEDC offers unique hands-on learning experiences for Lewis and Clark law students interested in environmental law. Jonah Sandford, Brandon Cobb, and Ryan Shannon describe what it was like to volunteer with NEDC during their 1L year.



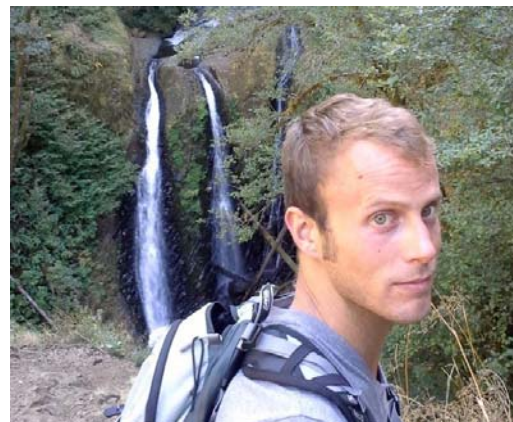
Jonah Sandford:

Working with the NEDC Water Group has been invaluable for me as one of the few opportunities over the 1L year to gain practical legal experience in the environmental field. This year I had the privilege of commenting on several industrial stormwater discharge permit applications submitted to Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality, as well as the Columbia River Crossing project's application for a dredge and fill permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

These opportunities allowed me to work for the first time with the Clean Water Act and to engage in a meaningful way with environmental issues impacting the Pacific Northwest. Beyond this practical experience, it has been really inspiring to spend time with the NEDC staff and project group leaders. Everyone in the organization is always willing to offer guidance and support. Even during the 1L year I was always made to feel like a valuable member of the team. All year long my experiences with NEDC have served as an excellent reminder of why I came to law school in the first place, and I think it has given me a great start toward a career in environmental law.

Brandon Cobb:

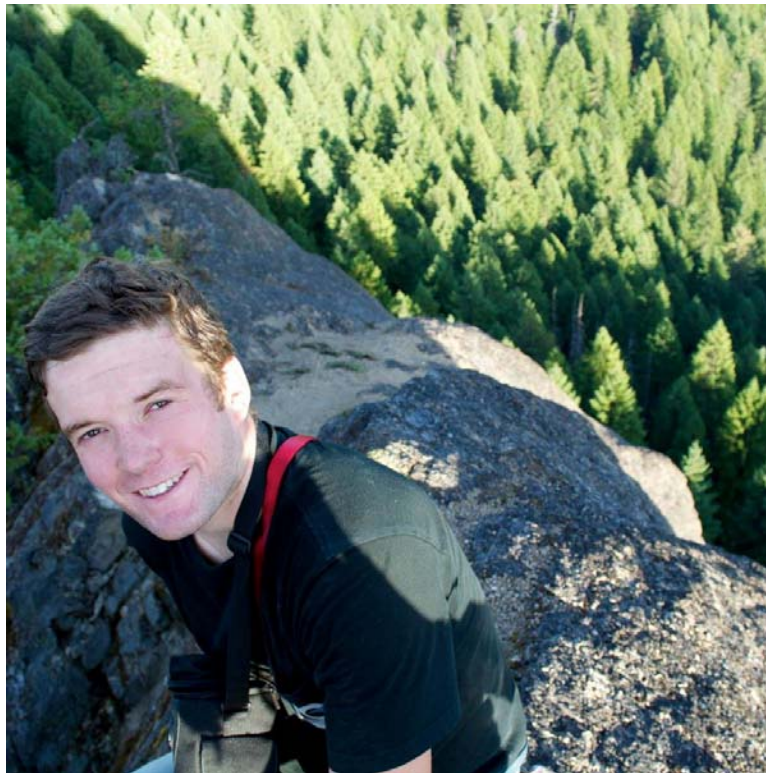
As an incoming 1L with a strong interest in environmental law, NEDC provided an invaluable experience during my first year. First, I was able to join a community of passionate and like-minded students and lawyers, helping me build rewarding relationships during the tumultuous first year.



Second, NEDC provided exposure to important local environmental issues, allowing me to learn about, and then participate in, the process of pushing for non-detrimental water management solutions. Besides being a great learning experience, this process vastly improved my “elevator pitch” and taught me how to talk a bit more like a lawyer at networking events and job interviews. Most importantly, NEDC kept me grounded during my first year, continuously reminding me of what drove me to law school in the first place.

Ryan Shannon:

Working with NEDC this year has been an exceptional experience. If nothing else, it has been great to meet everyone involved with NEDC and to get to know them over the course of the year. As a first year law student, I have really enjoyed the opportunity to become involved with local environmental issues and concerns.



I split my time with NEDC this year between the Lands and Wildlife Group and the Water Group. While working with Lands and Wildlife I had a chance to look at a scoping comment under the National Environmental Policy Act addressing a proposed natural gas pipeline in northwest Oregon. With the Water Group, I received an introduction to the Clean Water Act while reviewing the new bridge proposed for the Interstate-5 Columbia River Crossing. All in all, it has been a wonderful experience and I encourage all interested incoming students to come check NEDC out next year.