

Environmental law: earthly matters

Let's be frank. Colonizing Mars is not really an option. But we've got a pretty special planet right here. It has oxygen, water and the NBA, which is why we need to keep it humming.

Many people are being drawn to environmental law. It focuses on protecting our natural resources. And climate change is affecting our lives in major ways, with experts saying that the recent wildfires in California, the deadliest ever, were fueled in part by atmospheric warming.

To see how much this has become a part of our national consciousness, one only has to look at law schools. Many have excellent environmental law programs. Indeed, the number of schools receiving an A+ stands at 14. Another 22 got an A grade.

Two of the best are on opposite sides of the country. Vermont Law School in South Royalton, Vt., and Lewis & Clark Law School in Portland, Ore., consistently lead a host of rankings, our publication's included.

Lewis & Clark has 32 environmental law courses. Among its faculty is Pamela Frasch, a pioneer in animal law who co-authored the premier American casebook in the field, "Animal Law: Cases and Materials."

Students can get key practical-training experience in the school's Earthrise Law Center legal clinic. The school also boasts the International Environmental Law Project, the Green Energy Institute and the Environmental Law Review.

Vermont Law School's celebrated environmental law program dates back to 1978. No other school offers more degrees, certificates, faculty and research centers focused on environment law.

Its Environmental Law Center is the largest in the nation and addresses pressing issues such as climate change, energy and sustainable agriculture, to name a few.

But, as noted, this work is hardly limited to a handful of law schools. University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law in Salt Lake City also earned an A+ in our ranking and offers a wide array of courses that expose students to environmental, energy, natural resources, land use and water law.

The program is housed in the school's Wallace Stegner Center for Land, Resources and the Environment. The center is named after the Pulitzer Prize-winning author and



conservationist.

University of Utah also created the Green Team, which works to make the law school, as well as the community, more sustainable.

The environmental law clinic at Golden Gate University School of Law in San

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH'S Environmental law professor Lincoln Davies with students.

Francisco worked with clients in a historically African-American community on

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a cleanup effort at the site of the former Hunters Point Shipyard.

The school's Environmental Law and Justice Clinic works to protect poorer communities, which face the lion's share of environmental hazards, studies show. In the case of Hunters Point, the clinic found that the U.S. Navy's primary contractor for a \$270 million radiation cleanup, Tetra Tech, had a record of sampling fraud, data falsification

and disposal fraud. The Navy was forced to redo the cleanup project.

The San Francisco Chronicle noted: "Attorney Steven Castleman, who worked with the students, said it was ironic that a handful of law students was able to discover irregularities in one semester that the Navy didn't see in three years since the first Tetra Tech whistle-blowers came forward with allegations in 2014."

Environmental Law

A+

- Columbia Law School
- George Washington University
- Georgetown University
- Georgia State University
- Lewis & Clark Law School
- Pace University
- Tulane University Law School
- UC Berkeley School of Law
- UCLA Law
- University of Colorado
- University of Oregon
- University of Utah
- University of New Mexico
- Vermont Law School

A

- Duke University
- Emory University School of Law
- Golden Gate University
- IU Bloomington (Maurer)
- IU McKinney School of Law
- Loyola University New Orleans
- Touro Law Center
- UBuffalo School of Law
- UC Hastings
- University of Arizona
- University of Connecticut
- University of Denver
- University of Hawaii
- University of Idaho
- University of Maryland
- University of Minnesota
- University of Montana
- University of San Diego
- University of Washington
- West Virginia University
- Widener Law Commonwealth
- Harvard Law School

A-

- American University
- Arizona State University
- Barry Law School
- Chicago-Kent College of Law
- University of Florida
- University of Michigan
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Virginia
- NYU School of Law

preLaw magazine graded law schools based on the breadth of their curricular offerings. The scores were weighted as follows: 30% for a concentration, 24% for a clinic, 12% for a center, 12% for an externship, 9% for a journal, 8% for a student group and 5% for a certificate. An A represents a score of 90% or higher, an A- is 78% to 89% and a B+ is 72% to 77%.



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