

I spent last summer, rediscovering my roots in Denver Colorado working for EarthJustice. I was actually born and raised in Salt Lake City Utah, but a large part of my life has been spent hiking through the red rock canyons of Southern Utah. Before coming to law school I worked and volunteered with the Sierra Club, and the Utah Wilderness Coalition supporting their efforts to protect these amazing wild places. Working with EarthJustice I had the opportunity to put my legal skills to work on issues that I had been exposed to as an organizer including the roadless rule, R.S. 2477, and coal bed methane leasing. I also had the opportunity to work on new issues, including a permit approving a habitat conservation plan, and the citizen suit provisions of the Endangered Species Act. Working with EarthJustice allowed me to go beyond the theory I learned in my classes, and to gain hands on experience with environmental law.

EarthJustice not only taught me about the law, it showed me the impact environmental lawyers can have on public lands. During the last several years the commercial exploitation of our public lands has dramatically increased. It often seems that public lands are not being managed in a manner beneficial for the public or the environment, but rather they are being managed to appease extractive industries. It is sometimes difficult to remain hopeful under these conditions. Working with EarthJustice I saw first hand that lawyers can stop roadless areas from being developed, valuable habitat from being destroyed, and ensure that the public has an opportunity to become informed and voice its opinion about public lands policy. This summer renewed my belief that dedicated lawyers can make a significant difference in the fate of our public lands.