

Sarah Uhleman

This summer was an amazing experience. I received my stipend to work for the Gifford Pinchot Task Force, a small grass-roots forest protection organization. They had only one attorney, alumni Susan Jane Brown, to litigate the many timber sales the group tracks throughout Oregon and southern Washington. My first few weeks with the Task Force were great. I shared an office with the canvassers, giving me an opportunity to reconnect with the activist world I often feel so far away from. I communicated with our clients, some of whom have been incredible activists for decades, drafted a complaint, and watched while Susan Jane single-handedly acted as sole-litigator, fundraiser, and executive director of the organization. I also went to DC for a forest lobbying week to discuss the new fire legislation with Congressmen and Forest Service staff.

Four weeks into the internship, my boss, Susan Jane, decided to leave the Task Force and accept a position with Lewis and Clark's environmental law clinic, the Pacific Environmental Advocacy Center (PEAC). Without Susan Jane, the Task Force no longer employed an attorney, and the PILP Board allowed me to switch organizations and follow Susan Jane to PEAC. THANKS AGAIN TO THE BOARD! My position did not change, I continued to track, comment, and write legal memorandum regarding post-fire salvage logging sales in eastern Oregon. A major part of post-fire salvage litigation is challenging the soundness of the science, so beyond learning the legal angles of forest litigation, I picked up quite a bit of fire science and forestry. PEAC also employs a number of wonderful attorneys and I broadened the scope of my knowledge just from listening to them discuss their cases.

In total, PILP provided me with the opportunity for an incredibly interesting and informative experience. I feel like I learned much more about forest litigation than ever possible in a class. I also received experience that will help me narrow what my future career path will be. Finally, I'd like to say thank you to the PILP board and all people who helped with the auction to raise the money for this experience.