

# Western Resources Legal Center

Training Legal Advocates to Represent Natural Resource Users

2012 Newsletter

## Western Resources Legal Center – Five Years in Review

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For such a small scale operation, WRLC has certainly achieved more than even the founders envisioned five years ago. Through the leadership of the Board, Executive Director Caroline Lobdell's hard work, and the support of numerous sponsors, we have grown from an inaugural semester consisting of three students to now accepting up to eight students a semester and averaging nearly twenty applicants. In total, over the past five years, we have had the opportunity to work with 36 Lewis & Clark law students who have gained valuable knowledge and experience through this unique program.

Offering the nation's only hands-on training program for emerging leaders in legal advocacy for natural resource users, we have seen a tremendous growth in student interest. To meet this increased demand, we expanded our curriculum and created more opportunities for students to be actively engaged in natural resource issues. In Spring 2011 we began offering a two credit Advanced Seminar for select students to continue working with WRLC. We also helped form Lewis & Clark's first externship that allows law students to work with the Oregon Farm Bureau and Oregon Cattlemen's Association. Currently, WRLC is in the process of developing a program where top law students are placed in natural resource organizations to work directly with their legal counsels.

### WRLC's Expanding Portfolio of Legal Experience

Our objective is to push students to think critically about complex natural resource litigation on a variety of levels from litigation in district courts to the U.S. Supreme Court and on the administrative and regulatory front. In the program's first year, students were tasked with preparing an Amicus brief for the U.S. Supreme Court representing forestry interests in *Priscilla Summers v. Earth Island*. Just last year, WRLC students assisted with another U.S. Supreme Court Amicus brief representing ranching and timber interests in *NEDC v. Brown*, commonly referred to as the Clean Water Act forest roads case. Students are currently working diligently to prepare a Washington Court of Appeals Amicus brief representing local and national ranching interests in a case involving state agency overreach and accountability. This spring, one of our students will be making part of the oral argument on a motion for summary judgment in a federal District Court case. Students are also delving into cases concerning the mismanagement of wild horses and other wildlife at the state and federal levels.

One of the most rewarding things that we have seen develop out of the program is a sense of determination and passion for natural resource



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# WRLC - Five Years in Review (cont.)

advocacy among students who participate in WRLC. Recently, we fought aggressively to gain intervenor status in a significant Idaho District Court case regarding the sage grouse. After more than one motion seeking intervention, WRLC was finally granted the opportunity to participate and now continues to represent natural resource interests as the case progresses. In another example, students are representing clients before the Oregon Water Resources Department in an effort to obtain approval of the client's groundwater permit application with the state. Students have taken ownership of the issues and have really stepped up as leaders.

WRLC is committed to providing students with a balance of legal experience which includes work beyond litigation. We take on a variety of research projects evaluating potential claims and strategies on topics such as wildfire mismanagement, constitutionality of water fees and taxes, as well as approaches to the changing law regarding Oregon Water Quality Standards, to name only a few. In fact, WRLC students are currently working in collaboration with the Oregon State Bar Agriculture Executive Committee to author practitioner articles related to Oregon's Right to Farm Act, pesticide use, and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.

## Student Successes After WRLC

This unique sampling of legal experience on natural resource issues has laid the foundation for successful future careers of our students. WRLC has built relationships with an extensive network of employers throughout the country that continues to grow. We are proud to report that many students have landed

externships, clerkships, and even fulltime employment as a result of their participation in WRLC. WRLC has helped place recent graduates in Oregon, Washington, Montana, Alaska, Texas, Wyoming, and Washington, DC. Two of our students have even landed judicial positions. In addition to prestigious job placement, WRLC has also equipped students with a competitive edge that has enabled several to be awarded with scholarships including the Rocky Mountain Mineral Legal Foundation Scholarship, the Oregon Cattlemen's Award, and the Hawaii Cattlemen's Council Scholarship.

## WRLC's Achievements

WRLC introduced diversity to the legal education system and has been recognized for its innovative work. Lewis & Clark Law School has acknowledged through various forms the importance of expanding opportunities for its law students to learn about natural resource litigation. In 2011, an endowed lecture series was established in honor of WRLC and former Lewis & Clark Law School Dean, James L. Huffman, who is both a champion of natural resource issues and one of the founders of WRLC.

Furthermore, in recognition of Executive Director Caroline Lobdell's contributions through WRLC to promote and protect Oregon agriculture, she won the Oregon Women for Agriculture's 2012 Service to Agriculture Award. Caroline has also recently been appointed to the Oregon State Bar Agricultural Law Executive Committee and the Oregon State Bar Administrative Law Executive Committee. In 2011, WRLC also earned the Oregon Cattlemen's Association Top Promoter Award. Our

achievements over the last five years have also been recognized by other states that are interested in creating a program modeled by our work.

## A Big Thank You to Our Sponsors

None of this would be possible without the continued contributions of our many sponsors and advocates. Supporters of our program have not only committed themselves financially, but they have opened doors for our students by offering potential case work as well as opportunities to gain additional experience either as an extern, intern, clerk, or attorney with their organization. We appreciate each of their commitments and continued belief in the program.

Over the course of the next five years, we hope to continue to fulfill this need for diversity on the legal education front and produce legal professionals who go on to become successful lawyers and advocates of natural resource issues.



Caroline Lobdell

# Student Gains Edge Through WRLC

By Laysan Unger  
Student, Lewis & Clark Law School



Laysan Unger

Laysan Unger grew up in Hawaii on her family's cattle and timber ranch. The McCandless Ranch also harbored the last remnant wild population of the Hawaiian Crow, thanks to the conservation diligence of her family. While growing up, Laysan gained a deep appreciation for the care of wildlife while actively managing timber and raising cattle. Laysan will graduate in 2012 and currently clerks at the Dunn Carney law firm. Laysan appreciates the professional development opportunities provided by WRLC, as she pursues her quest to represent resource producers. This is explained in the following letter from Laysan Unger to the Dean of the Lewis and Clark Law School, Robert Klonoff.

## Dear Dean Klonoff:

My name is Laysan Unger and I am a rising third year day student at Lewis

& Clark Law School. I wanted to take this opportunity to write to you about how influential the Western Resources Legal Center has been on my tenure at Lewis & Clark. After my first year I was hired by Caroline Lobdell to clerk for the WRLC, which I did from May - December 2010. To continue my participation with this program, I took the WRLC Internship in the Spring of 2011. As a direct result of my involvement with the WRLC, I have not only gained valuable experience working on real cases representing natural resource users, but I have also been the recipient of scholarships from both the Oregon Cattlemen's Association and Hawaii Cattlemen's Association. I firmly believe that without my involvement with the WRLC, those organizations would not have selected me to receive their monies. I have also been told that I am the first Lewis & Clark Law student to receive scholarship funds from either of those organizations.

In addition, I have had the opportunity to work closely with local attorneys in the field through the WRLC. This close working relationship between the WRLC and firms specializing in natural resource law has led to me being offered a summer externship at Schroeder Law Offices in Northeast Portland and a Fall 2011 semester externship at Dunn Carney in the Agriculture and Natural Resources practice area. Both of these employers were impressed with my extensive knowledge of and practical experience in natural resource law, and my depth in the field can be directly attributed

to Caroline Lobdell and the WRLC. Caroline is committed to teaching law students through the WRLC Internship, but she is also dedicated to helping students make connections in the field that have been shown to pay dividends in their careers going forward. I am confident that I would not have been offered these two positions without a strong and consistent demonstration that I intend to practice natural resource law upon graduation and practical experience in the field. My involvement in the WRLC has given me the unparalleled opportunity to demonstrate my interest, develop relevant skills, and work closely with attorneys in the field. Because attorneys know and respect the work the WRLC does, the program is a significant boon to both the Lewis & Clark Law school and the individual students who participate in the WRLC Internship.

I sincerely hope the Western Resources Legal Center continues to enjoy robust support from the law school administration. I know I am not the only Lewis & Clark Law student that can say the WRLC has had an incredible impact on my law school career and has been instrumental in establishing a strong foundation for my professional opportunities.

Thank you for your time.  
All my best, Laysan

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## Get Involved

Given the current economic environment of natural resource based industries WRLC needs your help now more than ever. You can help WRLC in its mission to help natural resource users while training the extraordinary legal minds of future lawyers, judges, educators and politicians.

- **Make a financial contribution to WRLC**

Your tax deductible donation is essential to the continuation of this important work.

- **Tell a friend about WRLC's important work.**

If you know someone who works in a natural resource field or whose livelihood (which is most of us) depends on natural resources, encourage them to become involved with WRLC.

- **Send our newsletter far and wide.**

Tell people about our website [www.wrlegal.org](http://www.wrlegal.org) or send them a copy of our newsletter.

- **Invite WRLC to speak at your meeting.**

Let us come and tell this important message to your group. Contact us at 503.222.0628.

- **Welcome a WRLC student to intern with your organization's legal department.**

- **Tell us about your potential case or legal issue.**

## Do You Need WRLC's Help?

WRLC seeks cases and issues that allow students to build practical skills and learn environmental and/or natural resources law while advocating for natural resource entities. If you have a potential case or issue please go to our website [www.wrlegal.org](http://www.wrlegal.org) and download a "**Request for Legal Services Form**" and submit it to us today!