

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CLINIC

Fall 2023 – Spring 2024

Professor Wyatt Sassman

Since 1984, the Environmental Law Clinic at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law has provided real world experience for students interested in both developing practical legal skills and exploring the practice of environmental law. Under the supervision of Professor Wyatt Sassman, students represent community groups and environmental advocacy organizations before courts and administrative agencies in a broad range of environmental matters.

Are there any prerequisites?

No. Administrative Law, Evidence, and Legal Profession are helpful but not required.

Are classes required?

Yes. Classes will meet twice weekly. In addition, students will be required to attend orientation on the Thursday and Friday before the first day of classes. **Attendance at orientation is mandatory.** The purpose of the orientation is to familiarize students with SLO procedures and the Clinic's case management system, and to teach some basic substance, skills, and ethics.

How many credits will I receive?

The Environmental Law Clinic is a year-long clinic. Students will enroll for 18 total credits over the course of two semesters. Twelve of the credits count as out-of-class credits; and the other six count as in-class credits.

What kind of time commitment is involved?

The Environmental Law Clinic requires a substantial time commitment, though the time required may vary somewhat with the ebb and flow of litigation. The clinic is very intensive and students can expect to spend at least 20 hours per week working on client-related matters, including time spent preparing for and attending class. Due to the time commitment required, students are not permitted to take more than one clinic at a time, and any student wishing to work at any internship, externship, other experiential advantage courses, or job outside the clinic must receive advance approval from the professors. Approval will only be granted in extraordinary circumstances or involving economic hardship.

What are the benefits of taking this clinic?

Throughout the Environmental Law Clinic, students will have the opportunity to get hands-on experience by litigating matters in federal and state court as well as engaging in administrative appeals and non-litigation advocacy projects. Typically, student projects include drafting legal documents (60-day notice letters, complaints, discovery documents, briefs, and administrative comments), oral advocacy, legal research and writing, interviewing and working with clients, engaging community leaders and decision-makers, and advocating at the policy level. The clinic faculty also make an effort to expose students to a wide variety of career opportunities, including opportunities in public interest environmental law.

What do we do?

The Environmental Law Clinic offers students a wide range of projects and cases in the field of environmental law. Although the particular cases and projects in a given year may not cover every aspect below, the faculty seeks to maintain a balanced and varied docket.

The Clinic represents clients in litigation in both state and federal court, at both the trial court and appellate court level. The Clinic represents clients in a variety of administrative proceedings including hearings before federal and state administrative agencies, commenting on proposed rulemakings at the state or federal level, commenting on and administrative appeals of permits or changes in management plans, and involvement in the development of environmental impact statements.

Substantively, the Clinic deals with cutting-edge issues across the field of environmental law. These involve actions to address current hot topics such as climate change and fracking. Because we are located in the West, the Clinic also handles many matters dealing with public lands management, water rights and planning, the protection of wildlife and endangered species, and the management of cultural resources. Furthermore, as the Front Range develops and continues to grow and become more urban, the Clinic takes on issues relating to pollution, public health, and environmental justice. Clinic students have worked under most of the major environmental statutes, including the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the National Forest Management Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.

Where can I get more information?

Current Clinical Student Panel: Tuesday, March 14th; 12:00 PM – 1:00PM in Room 255

Hybrid Event; Zoom <https://udenver.zoom.us/j/89818626830>

Clinic Fair: Wednesday, March 15th; 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM on Student Street

Clinical Faculty Information Session: Thursday, March 16th; 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM in Room 255

Hybrid Event; Zoom <https://udenver.zoom.us/j/86954534836>

How and when do I apply or register?

Online applications open at 9:00AM on Monday, March 13th and close at 11:59PM on Sunday, March 19th, 2023.

Online applications for AY 2023 – 2024 year will be available at: <https://www.law.du.edu/content/slo-application>

Laurie Saraceno, the Administrative Director, will register accepted students before the beginning of the fall semester.