

LAW 7127: Natural Resources Law

This course examines federal public land and natural resources law. Historically, natural resources played a foundational role in the growth of the Nation and its economy. The laws governing the use and disposition of natural resources were profoundly important in establishing private rights in public resources and fueling economic growth and development. Natural resources on public lands, including mineral and energy (oil and gas) resources as well as timber and grazing rights, remain important to the national economy. The 29% of the United States that is held as public land, by agencies as diverse as the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management among others, has become increasingly important to Americans as park and wilderness resources. The public lands are now valued for recreational opportunities ranging from backpacking to nowmobiling, as well as the value of the lands as scenic resources, wilderness, and wildlife habitat. As these interests have gained hold, lawmakers and legal institutions increasingly have had to grapple with the often-conflicting public and private rights in lands and resources. In addition, resource conservation legal frameworks have evolved beyond "natural" resources to include the recognition of public rights in the preservation of cultural and historic resources. Conservation frameworks are being applied to private lands in the form of conservation easements. The course first examines the origins and history of public land and natural resources law. It then explores the the statutes and regulatory regimes that govern a variety of resources including mineral and energy resources, wildlife and parks, timber and grazing, wilderness and cultural resources. Students learn the governing statutes for these resources - for example the National Park Service Organic Act, the National Forest Management Act, and the Endangered Species Act- with a particular focus on how the courts resolve disputes in the

Credits: 2.0