



CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LAW  
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS

Issue 2 June 2015

# Loyola CEL Newsletter

## Contents

- Environmental Policy Students Draft and Move LA Legislation ...1
- Student spotlight: Sarah Thompson '16 ..... 1
- "Fireside chat" with author John Barry ..... 2
- Environmental Law Students visit LUMCON ..... 2
- Alum Panel Talks Hot Topics in LA Environmental Law ..... 3
- New Graduates Earn Environmental Law Certificate .. 3
- Cuba Connection .....3
- Academic Highlights In Environmental Law ..... 4

## Student spotlight: Sarah Thompson



Sarah Thompson (Loyola Law '16), will be President of Environmental Law Society next year and is a summer intern at the EPA's Office of Policy in DC through a Gauthier-St. Martin Student Stipend for Environmental Practice, and the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education Fellowship.



L - R: Shawn "Pepper" Bowen (Loyola Law '15), Representative Ebony Woodruff District 87), Sarah Thompson (Loyola Law '16)

## Environment Policy Students Draft and Move LA Legislation

Our environmental advocacy and policy course offers students an opportunity to work with experienced lawyers and real clients - nonprofit organizations, indigenous people and under-represented individuals, groups, or communities - focusing on a particular environmental policy or legislative issue for the semester. This year, students Shawn "Pepper" Bowen and Sarah Thompson crafted legislation that would begin Farm to School programs in

Louisiana. The bills, introduced by Rep. Ebony Woodruff and Sen. Francis Thompson, would help bring more local fresh food into public schools. Both bills unanimously cleared their respective Committees and are being voted on by the full House and Senate in coming weeks. If either bill becomes law, Louisiana would join 47 other states and the District of Columbia in forwarding farm-to-schools programs.



## A Note From Loyola's Environmental Law Center

Loyola's Center for Environmental Law (CEL) brings together dedicated students, inspiring professors, expert lawyers, and active members of the community to study and respond to challenging environmental problems. Through CEL, students can explore cutting-edge environmental issues in the classroom, engage with experts at special events and during programs, or draft and analyze policy and legislation for real clients. In addition, CEL oversees a popular certificate program in environmental law that prepares students for careers in private practice, government service, industry, non-profit advocacy, and public policy analysis.

It's been a busy and exciting year at CEL – we hope you enjoy the highlights we offer in this edition of our newsletter. Have a wonderful summer and we look forward to the next academic year!

Sincerely,  
Rob and Marianne

*The Environmental Law Program at Loyola University New Orleans School of Law and the Center for Environmental Law is directed by Robert R.M. Verchick and managed by Marianne Cufone. They can be reached at:*

**Marianne Cufone**

[mcufone@loyno.edu](mailto:mcufone@loyno.edu) | 504-861-5548

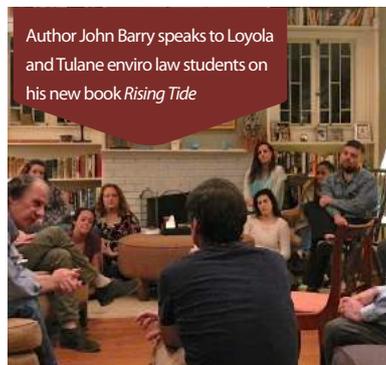
**Rob Verchick**

[verchick@loyno.edu](mailto:verchick@loyno.edu) | 504-861-5472

# CEL Clips & Events

## "Fireside chat" with John Barry

Reknowned author and former member of the Orleans Parish "Levee Board" John Barry spoke in an intimate setting with Loyola and Tulane environmental law students at the home of Professor Robert R.M. Verchick. The discussion focused on Barry's book, *Rising Tide*, and recent happenings in the now infamous Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority lawsuit against nearly 100 oil and gas companies in New Orleans. The students fired dozens of questions at Barry who candidly explained his book and the happenings, to date, in the suit.



## Environmental Law Students visit LUMCON

To facilitate students getting away from computers and into the natural environment so they personally connect with environmental law issues, the Environmental Law Center sponsored a trip to LUMCON – the [Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium](#) – in April. Students spent several hours on a research vessel. They collected marine wildlife and bottom samples of sand from the Gulf of Mexico that they then reviewed and discussed with on board experts. One of the big highlights of the day was seeing several dolphins swimming alongside the boat.

On the trip back to shore there was a lively talk about challenges to the Gulf ecosystem, like oil spills and the importance of science and law in smart use of resources.



## Alum Panel Talks Hot Topics in LA Environmental Law

Loyola Law’s Environmental Law Society sponsors panels and guest speakers to present interesting topics for consideration and discussion by students, faculty and often the larger community as well. Now annually, the ELS hosts a “Hot Topics in Louisiana Environmental Law” panel. This year, the panel of all Loyola Law alums talked about an interesting range of current issues, including recent legal cases on hydraulic fracturing, the continuing oil spill recovery in the bayous and a suit brought by the Levee Board against nearly 100 oil and gas companies.



Two Loyola Law Environmental Certificate Grads celebrating their achievements

# New Graduates Earn Environmental Law Certificate

In May, Loyola Law graduated its 2015 class. This year, 14 students successfully completed a Certificate in Environmental Law. In addition to regular course work, these students focused on various environmental law topics, participated in pro bono projects, wrote a paper dedicated to exploring a particular environmental issue or situation and met other criteria. The unique program is designed to provide a foundation in environmental law such that new lawyers are able to engage knowledgeably, ethically, and effectively in this continually expanding field.



Loyola Law alumni at the “Hot Topics” panel

## Cuba Connection

In April, Professor Robert R.M. Verchick, the Gauthier-St. Martin Chair in Environmental Law at Loyola University New Orleans and Senior Fellow in Disaster Resilience Leadership at Tulane University traveled to Cuba. There, he participated in the [Cuba Hoy Conference](#), which promoted cultural and business exchanges between the U.S. and Cuba. As a result, further opening lines of communication for sharing information and experiences may be possible. Cuba is particularly in tune with environmental issues - as an island nation. Fishing, farming and tourism are among important industries. University of Havana has a significant legal program and environmental law is a popular topic there. The Center for Environmental Law looks forward to collaborative efforts with University of Havana and perhaps building an exchange program for students.



Prof. Verchick at the University of Havana



## Academic Highlights In Environmental Law

Loyola Law's faculty participated in many events and produced a variety of works throughout 2015 thus far. Here are just a few highlights:

**BLANIE LECESNE** was a panelist in a webinar entitled "Deepwater Horizon Litigation: Where Things Stand and What is Next." The webinar aired on January 14, 2015 and is available for viewing at <http://eli-ocean.org/seminars/oilspilltrial/>.

**JOHN LOVETT** participated in a panel discussion of Robin Paul Malloy's book, *Land Use Law and Disability* (Cambridge 2015), at the 6th annual conference of the Association of Law Property and Society (ALPS) at the University of Georgia Law School on May 1, 2015.

**M. ISABEL MEDINA** spoke on civil liberties during pandemics as part of a panel at the Loyola College of Social Sciences, on Thursday, December 4 at 6 p.m.

**ROBERT R.M. VERCHICK** presented a paper at Pantheon-Sorbonne University (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne) in Paris on the topic, "Adapting to a Changing Climate." The presentation, part of a symposium, titled, "Exploring the Toolbox of International Law from the Perspective of the December 2015 Paris Conference on Climate," was made possible by the French Ministry of Ecology,

Sustainable Development, and Energy.

Professor Verchick has been appointed President of the Board of the Center for Progressive Reform (CPR), a nonprofit policy institute that works to protect public health, safety, and the environment. CPR is made up of a full-time staff in Washington, D.C., and a body of 60 tenured professors who contribute their talents as Member Scholars. Professor Verchick has been a Scholar at CPR since 2004. All Scholars, including the president, serve on a pro bono basis.

For the full text of the Loyola Law team's 2015 achievements, [click here](#) or visit [bit.ly/loynoenvirolaw](http://bit.ly/loynoenvirolaw).