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Golden Gate University School of Law Celebrates Earth Day 2010

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**Golden Gate University School of Law
Celebrates Earth Day 2010**

Climate Change Remains a Priority in Teaching and Scholarship

Faculty and students at Golden Gate University School of Law are involved in a number of initiatives this Earth Day 2010 and throughout the year to address emerging environmental challenges and advance legal scholarship in environmental law.

International Climate Change Course Addresses “Hot” Topic of Geoengineering

In his innovative summer course on Climate Change and International Law, Adjunct Professor Dr. Wil Burns is incorporating his latest research on potential governance architecture for geoengineering research. “Given the feckless response of the international community to addressing climate change, and the prospects of temperatures rising 3-4 degrees Celsius during this century—well beyond critical thresholds for inflicting serious harm on human institutes and natural ecosystems—interest in climate geoengineering schemes has increased substantially in recent years,” Burns says.

“Potential options include ocean iron fertilization, tropospheric cloud seeding, sulfur dioxide particle injection in the stratosphere, and space-based reflective mirrors. All of these options could potentially help society avoid passing critical thresholds and buy us time to develop the political will and technological capabilities to decarbonize the world’s economy. However, these also pose serious potential risks to ecosystems and human health. My current research is focused on developing an effective international governance architecture to ensure effective participation by all potentially affected States and development of a liability protocol should adverse side effects occur in either research and development phases or deployment of such technologies.”

Burns is co-chair of the International Environmental Law Committee of the International Law Association and former chair of the International Environmental Law Group of the American Society of International Law. His most recent publication is a co-authored book on climate change litigation for Cambridge University Press. He can be reached at 650-281-9126 or jjwlp@internationalwildlifelaw.org.

Professor Paul Kibel Focuses Spotlight on Climate Adaptation

Associate Professor Paul Kibel, an expert on water law policy, has recently focused much of his research on climate adaptation. “Climate adaptation is critical,” Kibel notes, “because even if we are able to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at some point in the future, climate change is happening now and will continue for decades to come. Sea levels are rising, floods are increasing, water supplies are evaporating and stream temperatures are becoming lethal for fish. There is a growing recognition that we need to develop strategies to deal with these consequences. Not because we want to, but because we have to.” Kibel recently spoke at the University of Oregon School of Law on “Downstream Equities on the Colorado and the Danube: Crossborder Rivers and Climate Change” and at the Georgetown Law School/Georgetown International Environmental Review Workshop on “Adaptation to Climate Change and “North American Natural Resources Under Climate Stress” at the School of Law’s Annual Fulbright Symposium on International Legal Problems. He will serve as a faculty advisor for the 2010 Annual California Water Law Symposium, which will be hosted at the School of Law. His article “Climate Adaptation Policy at the Continental Level: Natural Resources in North America and Europe” has been accepted for publication in the *Pace Environmental Law Review*. He can be reached at 415-442-6685 or pkibel@ggu.edu.

Environmental Law Society Focuses on Overpopulation This Earth Day

The Golden Gate Environmental Law Society (ELS) chose overpopulation and its impact on the environment and natural resources as the focus of its efforts for Earth Day 2010. The ELS, along with the student group Law Students for Reproductive Justice, are distributing information about how unsustainable human overpopulation is diminishing natural resources and threatening many species—along with free condom packs supplied by the Center for Biological Diversity to promote awareness of the problem. Other recent ELS activities have included tide pooling at the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve south of San Francisco to gain greater understanding of legal issues in forming Marine Protected Areas; and selling water bottles to support student efforts and teach about the harmful environmental impact of plastics. For more about the ELS, contact Susan Dautel at 415-517-6231 or sdautel27@comcast.net.

Environmental Law & Justice Clinic Represents Underserved Communities

The Environmental Law and Justice Clinic (ELJC) at Golden Gate Law, established in 1994, was one of the first law school clinics to focus on environmental justice. The clinic trains students to be effective, ethical lawyers and to improve environmental conditions, particularly for residents of low-income and minority communities in the San Francisco Bay Area and California. The clinic includes two full-time faculty, a staff scientist, and a graduate fellow. Under clinic faculty and staff supervision and certified under the State Bar of California, ELJC student clinicians represent environmental and community organizations on public health, toxics, and environmental justice matters. They interview and counsel clients, develop legal strategies, draft legal documents, negotiate with opposing parties, and appear in court, gaining invaluable experience in litigation and dispute resolution. Much of the clinic’s work focuses on ensuring compliance with state

and federal environmental policies—for example, rules concerning greenhouse gas emissions and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)—and strengthening legal protections to public health and the environment in urban areas. The clinic’s honors have included receiving an Environmental Award from the US Environmental Protection Agency’s Pacific Southwest Region (Region 9) in 2009.

Beyond serving as a training ground for students, the clinic provides a vital public service through its pro bono work to dozens of environmental and community organizations throughout its history. The clinic’s director is Associate Professor Helen Kang, whose latest scholarly publication is “Pursuing Environmental Justice: Obstacles and Opportunities-Lessons from the Field” in the *Washington University Journal of Law and Policy* (2009). In the article she discusses how to address neighborhood pollution through regulation and policy changes. Deborah Behles, the clinic’s staff attorney, recently spoke on “Slowing Down the Natural Gas Rush in California” at the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference in Eugene. Last year, Behles received the prestigious John Marshall Award for Litigation Team Work from the US Department of Justice. For more about the clinic, contact Helen Kang at 415-442-6647 or hkang@ggu.edu.

Adjunct Professor Named Senior Attorney at Environmental Defense Fund

Adjunct Cynthia Koehler, who teaches Water Law at Golden Gate and is a past president of the Marin Municipal Water District Board, was recently named senior attorney and California water legislative director for Environmental Defense Fund. She also currently serves as director of the Marin Municipal Water District and is a Fellow in environmental regulatory implementation at Resources for the Future.

School of Law Environmental Law Journal Focuses on Farming and Food

The biannual *Golden Gate Environmental Law Journal* is a student-run scholarly publication dedicated to exploring contemporary and emerging issues in environmental law and policy. The current edition focuses on the subject of this past fall’s Environmental Law Symposium on campus which addressed “Farming and Food: What We Grow What We Eat” and includes papers on such topics as the impact of industrial farming and intellectual property rights and agricultural biodiversity. For more about the *Golden Gate Environmental Law Journal*, visit the journal’s web page at http://www.ggu.edu/lawlibrary/environmental_law_journal/eljvol3 or contact Editor-in-Chief Susan Dautel at editorinchief@gguelj.org.

About Golden Gate University School of Law’s Environmental Law Program

Golden Gate University School of Law’s Environmental Law Program offers a rich curriculum in US and international environmental law and hands-on training experiences for a highly integrated and practical education. The Law School offers several innovative environmental law courses, including Global Warming & the Courts, Global Warming & Renewable Energy, and Climate Change & International Law. Students in the JD program can obtain a Certificate of Specialization in Environmental Law, and practicing attorneys can advance their environmental law expertise by obtaining an LLM in Environmental Law.

In 1994 the Law School was one of the first US law schools, and the first California law school, to establish an environmental justice clinic. Today, the Environmental Law & Justice Clinic is California's only in-house law school clinic with an emphasis on environmental justice. The Law School also produces the *Golden Gate University Environmental Law Journal*; hosts an annual Environmental Law Symposium; competes each year in state, local, and national environmental law student competitions; coordinates the City Parks Project, and has an active student chapter of the Environmental Law Society that brings many distinguished speakers to campus.

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Note to Editors: For additional information about the School of Law's Environmental Law Program, contact Jill Goetz at 415-442-6636 or jgoetz@ggu.edu.