

REPORTS OF THE SECTIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW SECTION

Clara Poffenberger, Chair

The Environmental Law Section had a very active year in 1998–1999. After the previous year's effort to increase membership, the section's board of governors decided to make efforts to improve the services that the section provides for members. To do so, board members made recommendations and three items were approved. First, a survey was sent out to all members to help determine the make-up and interest areas of section members. Second, the board approved several social events to allow members to network and to share their interests with board members. Third, the board approved a pro bono committee for the purpose facilitating pro bono environmental services from interested section members.

During the year 1999–2000, the board will evaluate the results of the survey and use the results to help determine how to better serve section members and to increase member participation in section activities.

The board received positive feedback regarding social events to be held in various locations in Virginia. The board held two social events for section members, one in Washington, D.C. and one in Richmond.

The formation of the pro bono committee began in 1998–1999 and will need further development in 1999–2000. However, board members determined that there was enough member interest in providing pro bono environmental service and the committee could serve to determine how best to channel those services from section members. The board has developed by-laws for the committee, which sets out the purpose of the committee. Essentially, the purpose of the committee is to create a clearinghouse for pro bono environmental legal services. The goal is to have information on environmental projects in need of pro bono legal services and information on attorneys interested in providing pro bono environmental legal services. Such an information network should allow for interested section members to connect with the appropriate organizations and citizens and should also allow for the creation of legal teams so that a pro bono client is not stranded when an attorney for whatever reason can no longer continue services.

The board continued to publish and distribute to all section members the quarterly *Environmental Law News*. The *News*, which is written and prepared by law students on Washington & Lee's *Environmental Law Digest*, provides section members with articles, updates, and summaries of regulatory, legislative, and judicial developments in Virginia environmental law.

In addition, the board and the *Digest* completed the first edition of the section's *Virginia Environmental Caselaw Compendium*. The *Compendium* project was started by Channing Martin and largely implemented by Mike Beverly, past chairs of the section. Mary Ellen Kendall, 1999–2000 chair, ensured its completion this year. Copies of the *Compendium* were mailed out to all section members. The *Compendium* is the first of its kind in the Commonwealth and it provides section members with a summary description of all reported (and, where available, unreported) environmental cases from Virginia state and federal courts. The *Compendium* and subsequent updates is provided to section members at no cost.

On April 9, 1999, the section sponsored a well-attended and well presented *Environmental Science for Lawyers* in Richmond. The course not only provided basic science on environmental matters but also provided CLE credits for ethics for a presentation on "junk science." Mary Ellen Kendall and Leonard Vance prepared and presented a valuable session on the use of science and experts in litigation.

The Environmental Law Section completed its 1998–1999 Bar year at the VSB Annual Meeting in Virginia Beach, where the section sponsored a CLE workshop entitled *Environmental Crime: You Fought the Law and the Law Won*. Following the workshop, the section held its annual business meeting during which the section elected new board members and the new officers. ❀