



# ELAW advocate

SPRING 2016

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Connecting Communities  
Protecting the Planet

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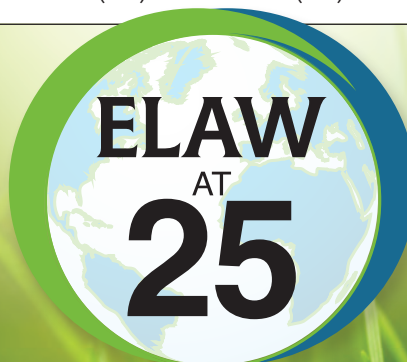
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**"We had this  
vision of building  
a network of  
environmental  
lawyers around  
the world, and  
empowering  
them to protect  
the environment  
through science  
and law."**

Bern Johnson  
ELAW Executive Director



## OUR STORY: THE BEGINNING

Public interest lawyers from 10 countries launched ELAW 25 years ago. These lawyers were working together at the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference at the University of Oregon School of Law. As they talked, they discovered that communities in their countries were facing similar environmental challenges. They realized that if they could share strategies and legal and scientific information across borders, they could protect communities and the environment more effectively.

ELAW's founders agreed to collaborate, replicate successful strategies, and learn from each other. The U.S. co-founders, John Bonine, Mike Axline, and Mary O'Brien, secured an office in Eugene and ELAW U.S. opened in 1991. ELAW began its cross-border collaboration in the early days of e-mail. As the network of public interest lawyers grew, ELAW became a pioneer in wiring the grassroots.

Today, more than 300 ELAW partners in 70 countries are helping build a sustainable future on every continent except Antarctica.

The C.S. Mott Foundation was one of ELAW's first supporters, beginning in 1992 with a three-year grant. Mott continues to support ELAW today.

"When ELAW was established 25 years ago, public interest law and science to build environmental, social, and governance standards for finance in the developing world was in its infancy . . . Today, ELAW has global impact," says Tracy Romine, C.S. Mott Foundation Program Officer.

The Mott Foundation recently featured ELAW in *Mott News*: "Global alliance marks 25 years of elevating environmental standards in developing nations." Find the full report on page 2.

BELOW: We opened our office in Eugene in 1991. Lori Maddox (far right) was the first hire and Bern Johnson (second from right) was the first Staff Attorney. Mark Chernaik (far left), Jennifer Gleason (middle), and Catherine Fleishman soon joined the team.



1992 ELAW Annual International Meeting



# Global Alliance Marks 25 Years



## ELAW U.S. Staff

- Bern Johnson  
Executive Director
- Lori Maddox  
Associate Director
- Mark Chernaik  
Staff Scientist
- Killian Doherty  
Law Associate
- Glenn Gillis  
Information Technology Manager
- Jennifer Gleason  
Staff Attorney
- Maggie Keenan  
Communications Director
- Pedro León Gutiérrez  
Of Counsel
- Mercedes Lu  
Staff Scientist
- Liz Mitchell  
Staff Attorney
- David Pugh  
Web Developer
- Heidi Weiskel  
Staff Scientist
- Ashley White  
Director of Philanthropy and  
China Program

## ELAW U.S. Board

- David Hunter, Chair
- Mike Axline
- John Bonine
- Elaine Chang
- Bill Jaeger
- Glenn Miller
- Jim Offel
- Scott Pope
- Amy Shannon
- Mick Westrick

The Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (ELAW) helps communities speak out for clean air, clean water, and a healthy planet. We are a global alliance of attorneys, scientists and other advocates collaborating across borders to promote grassroots efforts to build a sustainable, just future.

The ELAW Advocate is a publication of the ELAW U.S. and does not represent the views of ELAW partners around the world.

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Source: *Mott News*, December 17, 2015

## Global Alliance Marks 25 Years of Elevating Environmental Standards in Developing Nations

*Growing up in the Amazon Rainforest, Paulo Oliveira saw how government and private sector disregard for indigenous peoples' rights could disrupt communities and harm natural resources.*

*His desire to change that led him to become Brazil's first indigenous attorney and, over the course of 20 years, an influential advocate for tighter regulation of development finance.*

*Oliveira said the Oregon-based Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide, a longtime grantee of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, equipped him with the legal and technical skills he needed to better protect indigenous communities in Brazil and the lush forest that sustains them. He spent several months in the U.S., learning how to use digital technology, research and communications to more effectively address environmental issues.*

*"The period I spent with ELAW was a watershed in my professional career, paving the way to begin working internationally," Oliveira said. "I met environmental lawyers from other countries and learned the importance of international cooperation to support communities affected by large enterprises."*

*The Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide, known as ELAW, is celebrating its 25th anniversary. Mott was one of the group's initial funders, and has provided \$2,889,350 in grants over the past two decades.*

*ELAW is a global alliance of attorneys, scientists and advocates that supports grassroots efforts to secure clean air, clean water and a healthy planet. The group's efforts are helping to bring environmental and civil society standards in the developing world up to norms found in developed countries.*

*Funding from Mott enabled ELAW to become a force for legal change on a global scale, said ELAW Executive Director Bern Johnson. The group has trained environmental attorneys in 105 countries, on every continent except Antarctica.*

*"The Mott Foundation was there in the very beginning, when most people had not even heard of email," Johnson said. "We had this vision of building an electronic network linking grassroots advocates around the world and empowering them to make international financial institutions a force for building a sustainable future. ELAW partners around the world are defending local communities and guarding against ill-conceived energy and infrastructure projects that impact the environment and human rights."*

*ELAW provides legal professionals with the knowledge and support they need to be effective in their own communities.*

*In Brazil, the group helped Oliveira investigate intellectual property contracts that were supposed to protect the indigenous knowledge of a Brazilian tribe when dealing with pharmaceutical companies, which bio-prospect in the tropics.*

*The evolution of ELAW has been dramatic, and its work has profoundly affected many communities in developing nations, said Traci Romine, a Mott program officer who manages grants to the organization.*

*"When ELAW was established 25 years ago, public interest law and science to build environmental, social and governance standards for finance in the developing world was in its infancy," Romine said. "Today, ELAW has global impact. Its model of training, supporting and building a strong community of committed advocates worldwide raises environmental and social standards to protect ecosystems and communities for generations to come."*

*In its early years, before email was ubiquitous, one of ELAW's biggest challenges was communicating with attorneys and environmental advocates in distant locales. Advances in digital technology have largely solved that problem, but the growth of the world economy has presented new challenges.*

(CONTINUED ON PG. 3)



**"The period I spent with ELAW was a watershed in my professional career, paving the way to begin working internationally."**

Paulo Oliveira

## Launching Effective Organizations



Rugemeleza Nshala (left) traveled to Eugene in 1995 and ELAW helped him launch the Lawyers' Environmental Action Team.

In 1994, a group of recently graduated lawyers were inspired to create Tanzania's first public interest environmental law organization. In 1995, ELAW sent Staff Attorney Jennifer Gleason to Arusha. She delivered a computer and a modem, and connected ELAW's new partners to their colleagues around the world. She helped them strategize about their organization's mission and register their new organization.

In early 1995, the Lawyers' Environmental Action Team (LEAT) was officially registered. Later that year, two LEAT lawyers, Rugemeleza Nshala and Vincent Shauri, traveled to Oregon to participate in ELAW's Annual International Meeting and the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference (PIELC).

ELAW co-founder John Bonine passed a hat at PIELC to collect seed money. Today, LEAT has a dedicated team of grassroots advocates helping citizens protect natural resources.

The key to ELAW's success is providing legal, scientific, and technical support, and making connections across borders.

In 2000, a young Liberian lawyer, Alfred Brownell, contacted ELAW to ask for help in launching Green Advocates, Liberia's first public interest environmental law organization. Jennifer helped craft Green Advocates and connected Alfred and his colleagues to LEAT and partners at the Centre pour l'Environnement et le Developpement in Cameroon.

Alfred traveled to Eugene for an ELAW Fellowship in 2001 and drew support to draft Liberia's first framework environmental law. Green Advocates drafted the 2006 National Reform Forestry Law and runs programs that provide legal aid to individuals and groups affected by environmental and human rights violations. Since the organization was founded in 1997, its staff have worked tirelessly to promote ecological awareness and human rights in Liberia.

[www.lead.or.tz](http://www.lead.or.tz)  
[www.greenadvocates.org](http://www.greenadvocates.org)

### Global Alliance (CONTINUED)

*The rise of China as a global economic force and the formation of the BRICS alliance — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — have transformed international development finance. Those changes are expected to accelerate the construction of large hydroelectric dams, power plants and other energy infrastructure in developing nations.*

*In 2014, the BRICS nations announced the creation of a \$100 billion development bank to fund those types of infrastructure projects.*

*Johnson said Mott's long-term financial support and partnership with ELAW have enabled the group to adapt to emerging issues, such as climate change and tectonic shifts in the global economy that are changing the landscape of development finance.*

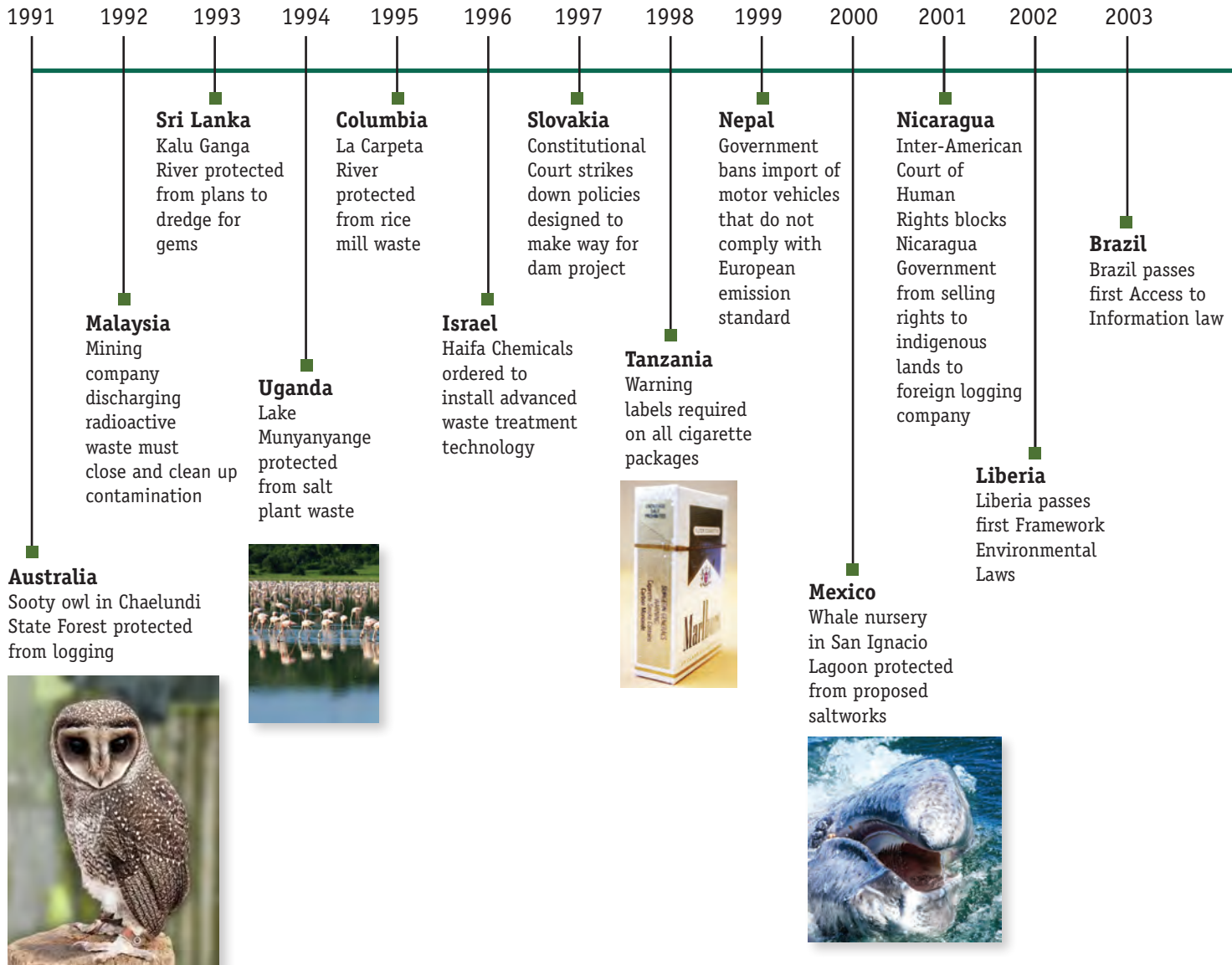


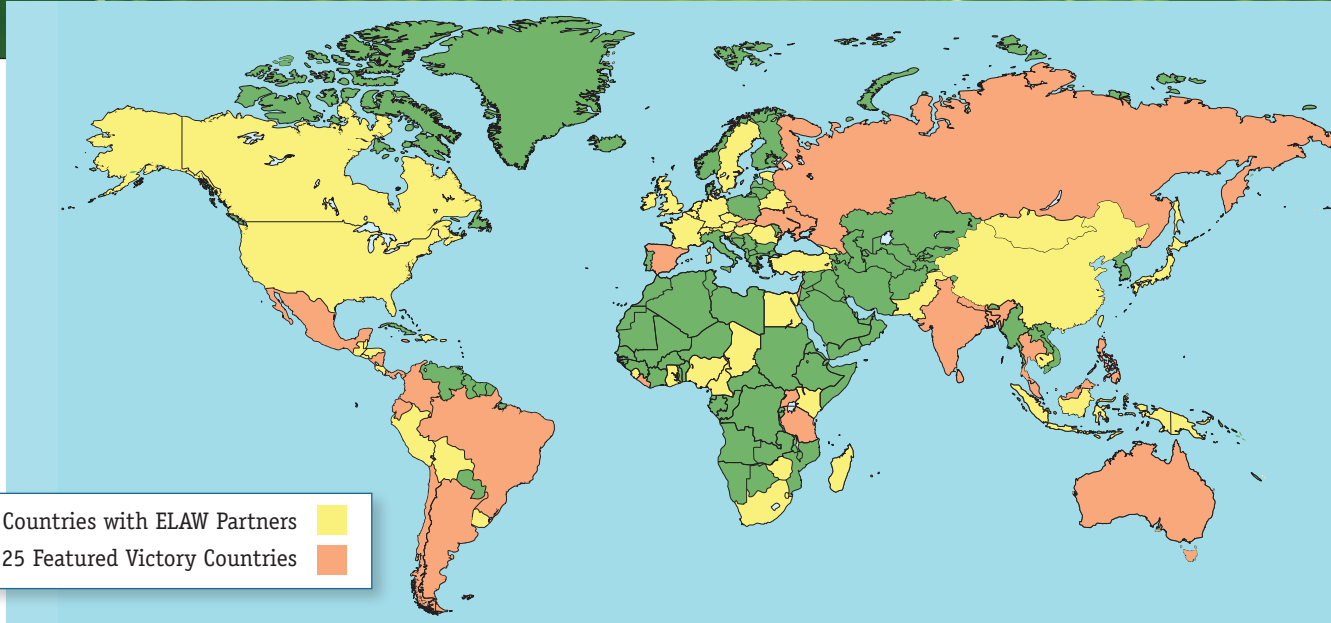


# 25 Victories Worldwide

ELAW partners in more than 70 countries are building a sustainable future around the world. This timeline features 25 victories in 25 countries in ELAW's first 25 years.

- Argentina • Australia • Austria • Bangladesh • Belarus • Belgium • Belize • Bolivia • Brazil • Cambodia • Cameroon
- Canada • Chad • Chile • China • Colombia • Costa Rica • Czech Republic • Dominican Republic • Ecuador • Egypt
- El Salvador • Estonia • France • Georgia • Germany • Ghana • Guatemala • Haiti • Honduras • Hungary • India
- Indonesia • Ireland • Israel • Jamaica • Japan • Kenya • Liberia • Madagascar • Malaysia • Mexico • Mongolia • Nepal
- Netherlands • Nicaragua • Nigeria • Pakistan • Panama • Papua New Guinea • Peru • Philippines • Romania • Russia
- Sierra Leone • Slovakia • Slovenia • South Africa • Spain • Sri Lanka • Swaziland • Sweden • Switzerland • Tanzania
- Thailand • Trinidad and Tobago • Turkey • Uganda • Ukraine • United Kingdom • United States • Uruguay • Zimbabwe





2004    2005    2006    2007    2008    2009    2010    2011    2012    2013    2014    2015

**Chile**  
Government ordered to clean up contaminated mining waste near low-income housing in Arica

**Russia**  
European Court of Human Rights orders Russia to protect citizens suffering from polluting emissions of Russia's largest steelworks



**Bangladesh**  
High Court victory protects flood zone in Dhaka

**Ecuador**  
Canadian copper mine proposed near Cotacachi-Cayapas Ecological Reserve shelved



**Argentina**  
Authorities provide clean water to Chacras de la Merced where water is contaminated by leaking sewage treatment plant

**Ukraine**  
Villagers in Hnizdychiv protected from pesticides and polluted water

**Jamaica**  
Pellew Island saved



**Spain**  
Air and noise pollution from asphalt roof manufacturing plant halted

**India**  
Odisha steel facility shelved, sparing communities from forced relocation

**Thailand**  
Klity Creek ordered cleaned up

**Panama**  
Puerto Verde port project that threatened indigenous communities shelved



**Philippines**  
Oil exploration halted in Tanon Strait

## Recent Victories



Ximena Ramos (center) and Xavier Martinez (left) join community members and the legal team outside Mexico's Supreme Court.



### Mexico: Victory For Bees

Mayan beekeepers in Campeche and Yucatan are celebrating a Supreme Court decision protecting their community and their bees from environmental hazards, including glyphosate, a toxic herbicide. The court suspended Monsanto's permit to plant Roundup-ready GMO soybeans until affected Mayan communities are consulted. The consultation is mandatory because the planting may cause significant impacts on the lives of community members and their environment. ELAW collaborated on this victory with partners at the Mexican Center for Environmental Law (CEMDA).

### India: Unilever Pays For Mercury Contamination

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." This proved true in a March victory, after 15 years, for nearly 600 former workers exposed to toxic mercury at a now-closed thermometer factory in Tamil Nadu, India.

"The former workers, many of whom are sick owing to the occupational exposure to mercury, are elated," writes ELAW partner Nityanand Jayaraman. "The settlement amounts will help repay old debts, meet medical expenses and rebuild broken lives."

The problem started in 1983 when a Unilever thermometer factory in Watertown, New York, shut down and moved to Kodaikanal, India. Tons of mercury waste from broken thermometers at the India site found its way to a dirt lot in a neighborhood near the factory. The factory was shut down in 2001 after the company was caught for dumping toxic mercury wastes in a densely populated part of town.

From 2006 to 2009, ELAW submitted expert testimony on behalf of the ex-workers showing how their exposures to mercury was associated with prolonged neurological impacts.

"Little would people realize how crucial ELAW's support has been to getting past the halfway mark on this long campaign to hold Unilever accountable," says Nity, who notes the job is not done. "Even now, only one of two key issues has been resolved. The settlement resolves all health-related claims of ex-workers, but the question of environmental remediation remains."

ELAW will continue to work with partners in India to ensure that Unilever's clean-up operation in Kodaikanal meets international standards.

## Recent Victories



### Protecting the Mesoamerican Reef

ELAW has worked with partners in Mexico, Belize, Honduras, and Guatemala for more than 10 years to protect the Mesoamerican Reef.

Praxis Associates conducted an independent evaluation of the ELAW Mesoamerican Reef Program.

Praxis reports that ELAW partners **feel safer** because of their affiliation with ELAW. They feel more **confidence, inspiration, connection, and solidarity** because of ELAW. They believe that they are **more effective** in their work and enjoy **enhanced credibility**.

They believe that ELAW's legal support resulted in more sophisticated and successful legal arguments and that ELAW's scientific support has contributed significantly to their victories.

Many thanks to The Summit Foundation and the Oak Foundation for supporting ELAW's work in Mesoamerica.



**"Fracking is coming to Morocco. Americans might associate the North African country on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea with the black-and-white romance of Casablanca, but Morocco faces some of the same modern environmental issues as we do in the U.S."**

Camilla Mortensen writes about Samira in the **Eugene Weekly** March 3, 2016

## ELAW Fellow

### Samira Idllalène

Safi, Morocco

"Being here is like a dream," says **Samira Idllalène**, a law professor at Cadi Ayyad University and our first partner from Morocco. She is an expert in marine law and speaks English, French, Arabic, and her native Amazigh.

Samira consults with several Moroccan NGOs. They collaborate on issues tied to proposed fracking operations, beach resorts built on lands protected by the Ramsar Convention, and more.

Samira discovered the ELAW Fellows Program online and is thrilled to find a network of like-minded grassroots advocates who will help her make progress using legal tools to protect communities and the environment back home.

Samira met one-on-one with ELAW Staff Attorneys and Staff Scientists as well as local experts in coastal protection. She was joined by ELAW Staff Scientist Heidi Weiskel on a panel at the 2016 Public Interest Environmental Law Conference at the University of Oregon School of Law: Balancing Coastal Development and Protection: International Lessons.



PHOTO: Todd Cooper/Eugene Weekly

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# ELAW

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## Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide

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[twitter.com/ELAWUS](http://twitter.com/ELAWUS)

## ELAW Earns Stellar Rating From *MarketWatch* as "Effective Charity"

**Charity Navigator**, **GuideStar**, and **MarketWatch** recognize ELAW for our commitment to accountability, transparency, and strong fiscal management. We were thrilled when *MarketWatch* highlighted ELAW as one of "10 Little-Known Charities That Do the Most Good" (December 21, 2015):

*An efficient, effective charity is one that uses your donation dollars wisely, so that you can be sure your money is going to the cause you care about. . . . Many of America's most effective charities are well known. But some lesser-known charities are exceptional, and Charity Navigator offers this list of 10 charities, all of which operate on less than \$2 million a year and earn stellar ratings from the organization.*

ELAW's work would not be possible without your support - visit [www.elaw.org/give](http://www.elaw.org/give) to support ELAW's efforts protecting the environment and communities around the world!

Thank you for all you do for the planet!



At back: ELAW Associate Director Lori Maddox in Southern Belize.



### THINK GLOBALLY. ACT GLOBALLY.

**Charity Navigator** and **GuideStar** give ELAW their highest rating for fiscal management, accountability, and transparency. To support our high impact work defending the environment and human rights in communities around the world visit [www.elaw.org/give](http://www.elaw.org/give) to make a secure, online gift. Call **541.687.8454 x105** for more ways you can help ELAW protect the planet.