



LAW

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Connecting Communities
Protecting the Planet

Building Strong Organizations

IN THIS ISSUE:

Building Strong Organizations

ELAW Fellowship Program
(pgs. 1, 4-5)

Fate of Jamaica's Goat Islands

(pg. 2)

Thank You, Volunteers!

(pg. 2)

Protecting Taksim Park

(pg. 3)

ELAW Welcomes Two to Team

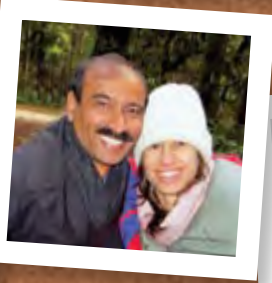
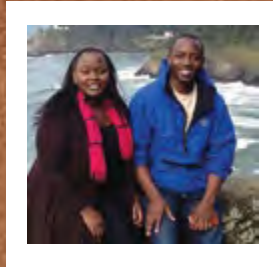
(pg. 5)

Saving Mangroves

(pgs. 6-7)

South Africa: Environmental Justice for Atlantis

(pg. 7)



Recent ELAW Fellows

(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM)

Thuli Makama, SWAZILAND

Benedette Mutuku, KENYA

Adolf Runyoro, TANZANIA

Alejandra Serrano, MEXICO

Nataliya Horodetska, UKRAINE

Ali Athar Qazi, PAKISTAN

Dana Tabachnik, ISRAEL

Roles Theard, HAITI

Chimgee Dashdorj, MONGOLIA

Rahul Choudhary, INDIA

Elena Chernobrovkina, RUSSIA

Bazarsad Nanjindorj, MONGOLIA

"We are amplifying the voices of communities and making the government accountable to its people, its land, and its natural resources."

Laura Palmese Hernandez

The Environmental Law Alliance is working to strengthen the corps of grassroots advocates around the world dedicated to protecting communities and the environment. These advocates, working in their home countries, know best how to strengthen the rule of law and protect local communities. A key to this work is building strong local organizations that collaborate with communities to solve local problems.

ELAW has hosted more than 150 environmental professionals from all around the world. Many Fellows have founded or work for local non-profit organizations that take on David and Goliath battles seeking justice for the disadvantaged.

Helping our partners strengthen their organizations is a key part of ELAW Fellowships.

In October, ELAW welcomed three Fellows: Benedette Mutuku, Law and Policy Project Officer at the Institute for Law and Environmental Governance

(ILEG), based in Nairobi, Kenya; Adolf Runyoro, Legal Officer at the Lawyers' Environmental Action Team (LEAT), based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; and Laura Palmese Hernandez, an environmental attorney at Instituto de Derecho Ambiental de Honduras (IDAMHO, Environmental Law Institute).

Benedette, Adolf, and Laura all represent a new, young generation of grassroots advocates who are committed to building a greener and more just future.

Benedette and Adolf's two-week Fellowships included an intensive capacity building program for non-profits. They met with ELAW development professionals to hone their skills in strategic planning, board development, fundraising, communications, and more. They met with leadership coach Michael McNally and worked with ELAW Staff Attorneys and Staff Scientists to build skills and advance their work at home.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Fate of Jamaica's Goat Islands



PHOTO: Jeremy Francis

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Associate Director

Mark Chernaik
Staff Scientist

Jackie Chimelewski
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Meche Lu
Staff Scientist

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Staff Attorney

David Pugh
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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.

EDITOR: MAGGIE KEENAN

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The Goat Islands and two fish sanctuaries in Jamaica's Portland Bight Protected Area may be destroyed to make way for a mega trans-shipment port, proposed by the Chinese government.

ELAW is helping partners at the Jamaica Environment Trust (JET) save these unique marine resources in Jamaica.

"There has been no official announcement of the plan, still no details, no consultation with anyone, not even with the NGO currently managing the protected area," says Diana McCaulay at JET.

ELAW is working with Diana to get the word out before it's too late, and tapping the expertise of grassroots leaders around the world who are working to save protected areas from development schemes.

The Port Authority of Jamaica has now commissioned an Environment Management Scoping Study to assess the feasibility of the proposed location at Goat Islands. The Minister of Transport and Works wrote to JET in late September and said that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) would be conducted before any decision is made.

ELAW will work with JET to evaluate the EIA and ensure that fragile ecosystems are not sacrificed for short-term gains.

Thank You, Volunteers!



"Ten weeks may be a relatively short time, but it is long enough for me to develop an immense gratitude, appreciation, and admiration for ELAW and building a sustainable, just future through grassroots activism. This summer has been a living and learning adventure that I am confident will prove nothing less than life-changing. Thank you all for your friendship, guidance, and inspiration as I endeavor to embody the examples you have all shared." Marissa Knodel

Every year, we hear from many law and science students across the country who are eager to volunteer at ELAW. This summer's fleet of volunteers holds terrific promise. We celebrate this next generation of grassroots advocates!

Marissa Knodel is in the dual degree program with Vermont Law School and the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Killian Doherty has spent many years in Latin America, and has returned to the U.S. to study law at the University of Oregon. Together with Marissa, he spent his summer helping the ELAW legal team improve environmental legislation, challenge corruption, and give voice to communities around the

world. Hayley Langmas, Laura Krogman, and Eliza Pearce have helped the ELAW science team identify resources for a mangrove database, used GIS to create maps, and conducted research on environmental threats. All three are in the University of Oregon Environmental Science Program. Melina Zamalloa, a women's and gender studies major at UO, is a jack of all trades. She helped with numerous administrative projects. In the photo above (L to R) are Pia Parisis-Marcoux, a high school junior from New York City, Addie McGuire, who just returned to the University of Pennsylvania, and Marika Jaeger, who is pursuing a career in conservation at Stanford University.

Protecting Taksim Park

Taksim Park is one of the few remaining green spaces in Istanbul. When authorities began destroying the park to build a shopping mall, people objected and the government responded with heavy handed tactics. Seven people lost their lives and thousands were injured. ELAW partner Gonca Yilmaz provided legal support to citizens swept up in the protests.

Gonca co-founded the Denge Ecological Life Foundation, based in Istanbul. She has practiced law for ten years and works on problems related to hydropower and coal plants. She is in Portland this year, pursuing a masters degree in environmental and natural resources law at Lewis and Clark Law School.



Q & A with Gonca Yilmaz



Q: Why is Taksim Park important?

A: Our local and central government have gradually opened up all the free spaces to construction projects. This is urbanization. Taksim Park is a small park, located in very center of Istanbul, in Taksim Square. If we lose Taksim Park, there will be no green area left in the city center.

Taksim Square has historical and symbolic meaning for the people of Turkey. It is a center of culture, history, and civil rights movements. When individuals, groups, or non-governmental organizations want to make their voices heard about a loss of civil rights, they gather in Taksim Square. You could call Taksim our Central Park or Hyde Park, though it's much smaller.

Q: Why is the park threatened?

A: Two years ago, the Istanbul Chamber of Architects alerted us to government plans to alter the zoning of Taksim Park to allow construction of a shopping mall. A public meeting with NGOs was held and the attendance was enormous. We held weekly meetings for two years, a campaign was organized,

and lawyers discussed legal avenues for protecting the park. We filed three cases on behalf of different groups of plaintiffs. I filed the citizen suit. The cases are still pending.

The central government's decision to build the shopping mall was framed around a project to "renew the historical Ottoman Barrack," but in a later speech the Prime Minister claimed that, if he wanted to, he would build a shopping mall too.

Q: Were you involved in Occupy Taksim?

A: Yes, thousands, if not millions of people were in the streets. It was impossible to stay away from the protests. These were mostly educated people — professors, doctors, engineers, lawyers, and famous actors. We all participated in the demonstrations. The protests spread, with everyone simply claiming their fundamental human rights to free speech and to live in a healthy environment.

Q: Was the campaign a success?

A: Partly. Construction in the park has been put on hold, but we lost seven people and 16 others lost their eyes, and thousands were wounded. Hundreds ended up in jail due to irrational accusations. I believe the price should not be that high.

Q: What is the future of the park?

A: Nobody is sure. The government may change its mind and go ahead with the project. Citizens will need to watch because the process is not always democratic.

Building Strong Organizations continued

Strengthening local organizations in East Africa is critical to protecting the region's vast natural resources.

"Recent discoveries of oil in Turkana and minerals on Kenya's coast are keeping us busy," says Benedette. "We need equitable sharing of benefits and public participation in decisions about natural resources."

Adolf's current projects include safeguarding Tanzanians from lead paint and collaborating with colleagues to protect the land rights of Maasai communities threatened by foreign interests seeking land for trophy hunting.

In Central America, ELAW has worked with IDAMHO founder Clarisa Vega for many years to protect the Mesoamerican Reef and challenge short-sighted tourism development. Laura is a recent law graduate who was hired by Clarisa after volunteering at IDAMHO.

"We are amplifying the voices of communities and making the government accountable to its people, its land, and its natural resources," says Laura.

Laura will be in Eugene for 10 weeks and will work one-on-one with the ELAW team to build her skills and strengthen IDAMHO. She will also study English at the University of Oregon's American English Institute, (AEI) which generously provides ELAW Fellows with a Director's Distinction Scholarship.

ELAW is located on the edge of the University of Oregon campus, so ELAW Fellows have valuable opportunities to work with students and faculty. ELAW Fellows also offer a unique opportunity for citizens of Eugene and the campus community to meet, learn from, and work with the planet's most committed and courageous environmental defenders.

We design each ELAW Fellowship to meet the specific needs of the Fellow. We provide one-on-one training with ELAW Staff Attorneys, Scientists, and development staff, and reach out to other experts in the U.S. and around the world, to help ELAW Fellows meet their training objectives.

ELAW Fellows also learn about the ELAW network and how they can collaborate with colleagues across borders to obtain critical legal and scientific resources.

ELAW Fellows have gone on to do outstanding work and become respected leaders. Four ELAW Fellows later won the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize, including 2010 Goldman Prize winner Thuli Makama from Swaziland.

Many thanks to the Ford Foundation and the Summit Foundation for supporting our ELAW Fellows from Kenya, Tanzania and Honduras.

We would also like to thank Laurie Prosser and Xiaoli Jiang for supporting Adolf's Fellowship.



Benedette Mutuku, Adolf Runyoro, and Laura Palmese Hernandez met with Ernie Niemi, a natural resource economist. Ernie and ELAW Board member Bill Jaeger have done great work explaining economics to visiting Fellows.

ELAW designs each Fellowship to meet the Fellows' needs. Fellow may:

- Work one-on-one with ELAW staff lawyers, scientists, and development professionals, as well as experts in resource economics and more.
- Participate in the ELAW Annual Meeting.
- Participate in environmental law and other classes at the University of Oregon, and present at brown bag lunches with the Department of International Studies and others.
- Meet with UO student groups, including the African Student Association, the Native American Law Student Association, and others.
- Participate in the UO Public Interest Environmental Law Conference (www.pielc.org).
- Collaborate with organizations working on similar issues in the Pacific Northwest, such as Oregon Wild, the Western Environmental Law Center, Cascadia Wildlands, the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council, the Washington Forest Law Center, and others.
- Meet with government agencies, and attend public hearings and court sessions at Lane County Circuit Court and the U.S. District Court.
- Participate in public presentations to Eugene community groups and meet with the press.



Many people in Eugene, Portland, and Seattle generously host ELAW Fellows. Many thanks to Penny Salus and Jared Rubin (pictured here with their children Tali and Luis) who hosted Laura for her first two weeks in Eugene. If you are interested in hosting ELAW Fellows – for a meal, a day trip to the coast or Cascades, or a short home stay – please contact Maggie Keenan, ELAW Fellows Program Coordinator (Maggie@elaw.org).

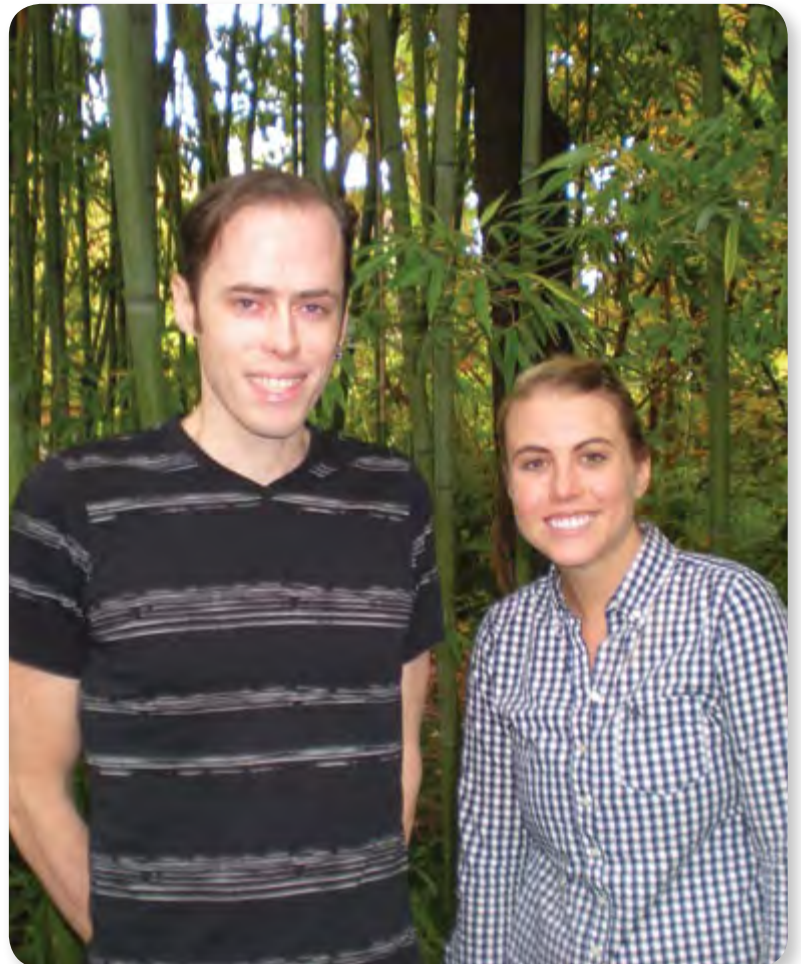
ELAW Welcomes Two to Team

ELAW is thrilled to welcome Jackie Chimelewski and David Pugh to the ELAW team!

Jackie manages ELAW's Eugene office and coordinates ELAW's volunteer program. Jackie graduated with a degree in Political Science from the University of Pittsburgh in 2007 and has worked in political and social justice nonprofit organizations in Washington, DC and Pittsburgh. When she is not dedicating her time and energy to environmental protection, Jackie enjoys hiking and camping around the Pacific Northwest and exploring Oregon by bike.

David manages ELAW's website and helps ELAW partners around the world use web-based tools to protect communities and the environment. He has a wide variety of computer skills that span from server engineering to front end web development. David graduated from the University of Oregon in 2006 with a degree in Biochemistry. David enjoys studying science, playing the violin, and fitting in a weekly game of Pathfinder.

David and Jackie are helping ELAW meet the needs of ELAW partners around the world.



David Pugh and Jackie Chimelewski.

Saving Mangroves



Red mangroves in the Sian Ka'an UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Mangrove Warbler



We need healthy mangroves, but have destroyed up to 50 percent of all mangroves around the world in the last 50 years. This habitat could disappear completely, within as little as 100 years, if we do not act to protect it. Mangroves buffer coastal communities from flooding and storms, and provide habitat for thousands of species of birds, mammals, and marine species. Recent evidence suggests that mangroves sequester carbon more effectively than any other tropical forests.

ELAW Staff Scientist Heidi Weiskel traveled to the Yucatán twice this year to collaborate with partners at the Southeast office of Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental (CEMDA, Mexican Environmental Law Center). CEMDA is working hard to protect marine and coastal ecosystems from short-sighted development schemes.

"The tall, healthy mangroves within the Sian Ka'an UNESCO Biosphere Reserve on the Yucatán Peninsula are a spectacular example of what this ecosystem can look like when its protected status is taken seriously," says Heidi. "There are active fisheries in this region, as well as robust turtle and bird populations, and a thriving ecotourism industry."

Coastal developers make promises to restore mangroves, but these efforts often fail. Heidi and

Alejandra Serrano, the director of the Southeast office of CEMDA, visited a failed mangrove restoration project in Puerto Morelos (see photo).

"The local hydrology and sediment conditions were not considered," says Heidi. "The mangroves were planted without accounting for the tidal cycles or the freshwater flows at the site. The soil dried out around the plants and they could not take root and thrive."

In September, Heidi teamed up with CEMDA's new Staff Scientist, Minerva Rosette, to review plans for a major housing development near a protected mangrove forest, and an enormous tourism complex proposed for Holbox Island. The tourism complex would cut channels through pristine mangroves to increase waterfront acreage and build hotels, villas, condominiums, offices, shopping plazas, and roads, to service thousands of visitors. The project would devastate Holbox's rich fisheries and stunning landscape, and likely harm the whale shark population.

Heidi and Minerva evaluated different strategies for measuring the carrying capacity of Holbox, and the most effective way to communicate the true impacts of the proposed tourism complex to the Holbox community.

Minerva is an engineer by training and spent the past three years using GIS and other tools to help communities protect the Urique-Batopilas biological corridor.

Saving Mangroves (CONTINUED)

Heidi also worked with CEMDA Staff Attorneys Raquel Campo and Ximena Ramos. Ximena is a former ELAW volunteer who recently received an LLM in environmental law from the University of Oregon School of Law.

The key to ELAW's work is identifying strong local partners, because they know best how to protect coastal communities and the environment. We provide our partners with the tools and resources they need.

We applaud Alejandra and her team for their hard work protecting the Yucatán.



L to R: Heidi Weiskel, Minerva Rosette



Mangrove "restoration" project in Puerto Morelos.

South Africa: Environmental Justice for Atlantis

Partners in South Africa have announced great news: the densely populated, low income community of Atlantis won't become home to Cape Town's trash.

The City of Cape Town is running out of places to put trash, so it proposed building a massive landfill in nearby Atlantis. The Apartheid government established Atlantis in the 1970s as a racially segregated industrial center. Citizens of Atlantis have struggled socially and economically for decades. Concerned about the potential impact of the massive landfill, local residents called on ELAW partners at the Legal Resources Centre for help.

ELAW scientists reviewed the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and sent information about the impact of landfills on people and the environment. Using this information, our local partners argued successfully that Atlantis is not a good place for a landfill. Instead, it will be sited in a less populated area.

"This is a good victory. The decision authorizes construction of a state-of-the-art landfill in an appropriate location, and not near the vulnerable community of Atlantis," says ELAW Staff Scientist Mark Chernaik.





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Many communities around the world face toxic pollution, unsustainable development, and corruption. ELAW partners are helping people in these communities stand up to powerful interests and speak out for a cleaner, greener future.

To win big victories for communities and the environment, these grassroots advocates need legal and scientific resources. That's why they call on ELAW for help.

Join us in crafting a more just, sustainable future by making a donation to ELAW today.

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