

West Coast Environmental Law

Fact Sheet



Who We Are:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We are a non-profit environmental law and public interest organization that is dedicated to safeguarding the environment through law.
What We Do:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We work to shape existing and future environmental laws and policies in British Columbia and Canada. We accomplish this by building coalitions, engaging communities, publishing policy papers, and assisting in the drafting of new legislation.▪ We offer legal advice and provide financial aid grants, through our Environmental Dispute Resolution Fund, to individuals or groups who need to hire legal representation to resolve an environmental conflict.▪ We track, analyze and comment on environmental law and policy in British Columbia and Canada, thereby allowing citizens to hear both sides on controversial issues. We distribute this information through our Environmental Law Alert Blog, monthly Legal e-Brief electronic newsletter, and our Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages.
Mission Statement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We believe in a just and sustainable society where citizens are empowered to protect the environment and environmental protection is enshrined in law.
History:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We were founded in 1974, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.▪ We were established to promote the cause of environmental law reform and to empower citizens to bring about progressive change.▪ We are recognized as British Columbia's legal champion for the environment.
Program Areas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Aboriginal Law▪ Climate Change▪ Energy▪ Environmental Assessment▪ Forests and Land Use▪ Green Communities
Accomplishments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We have helped establish and shape many significant environmental legislative initiatives in British Columbia and Canada.▪ We played a key role in the development of laws requiring the government to evaluate the environmental impacts its decisions, including the <i>Canadian Environmental</i>

	<p><i>Assessment Act</i> and BC's first <i>Environmental Assessment Act</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We spearheaded ground-breaking anti-toxins legislation in BC, such as the province's first laws addressing contaminated sites and a requirement to phase out organochlorines from pulp mills. ▪ We were one of just 3 environmental representatives on Canada's official delegation to Kyoto, Japan to help negotiate the Kyoto Protocol, the landmark climate change treaty. ▪ We provided legal representation and support to a wide range of high profile and successful environmental campaigns, from the protection of the Great Bear Rainforest to the coalition currently pressing for a legal ban on oil tankers off BC's North Coast. ▪ We founded the Environmental Dispute Resolution Fund, which for over 20 years has provided environmental legal aid to British Columbians.
Environmental Dispute Resolution Fund:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Environmental Dispute Resolution Fund is a financial grant that we provide to individuals or groups who need to hire legal representation to resolve an environmental conflict. ▪ It was established in 1989 and is the only source of environmental legal aid in British Columbia ▪ It allows recipients to obtain legal advice on a wide range of issues; pursue alternative dispute resolutions; appear before government tribunals; participate in environmental assessments and challenge government decisions in court. ▪ We have provided over \$4,000,000 in grants, helping to support over 500 legal cases.
Executive Director:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jessica Clogg (currently on parental leave until September 2011; Acting Executive Director is Andrew Gage)
Number of Employees:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 8
Governance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We are governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, who are appointed at the Annual General Meeting.
Funding:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We are funded by the Law Foundation of British Columbia, various other foundations and independent donors.
For Media Inquires Contact:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Andrew Gage, Acting Executive Director; 604-601-2506 (phone), 604-684-1312 (fax) andrew_gage@wcel.org (email)

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