



**White Owl
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THE CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The Canadian Environmental Law Research Foundation and its sister organization, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, were formed in late 1970. A coalition of lawyers, law professors, scientists, conservationists, politicians and housewives, CELRF uses legal tools to prevent and control environmental damage.

As a public service, CELRF operates the Citizen's Environmental Law Advisory Office and Complaint Service, referring callers to appropriate agencies, advising them of their environmental rights, or when essential, referring them to legal counsel.

CELRF is doing its best to keep the interested citizen aware of the changing status of environmental law in Canada. For some years now it has been producing "Canadian Environmental Law News", a bimonthly publication. Speaking engagements, lectures and panel discussions keep CELRF's staff and directors in contact with the public.

Its biggest contribution to keeping the citizen informed has been the publication of a 400-page book "Environment on Trial". While written for the layman, Environment on Trial has been acclaimed by law journals and law faculties across Canada as a useful book for the professional. Over 3,500 copies have been sold this year.

Using Ontario law as an example, the book gives the citizen an



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insight into his environmental rights and how he can assert them, legally and politically. The editors, David Estrin and John Swaigen, also outline the legal reforms necessary to protect our natural resources, and propose a model Canadian Environmental Bill of Rights.

It is the hope of the Canadian Environmental Law Research Foundation that citizens will soon have such Bills of Rights on both the federal and provincial levels.

CELRF studies existing and proposed environmental legislation for weaknesses which could be corrected and seeks public understanding and support for the changes it proposes. Its 64-page critique of Ontario's proposed Environmental Protection Act resulted in several favorable changes in the legislation.

Among the most recent, and perhaps the most important briefs prepared by CELRF is its "Principles for Environmental Impact Assessment", which was written in response to the Ontario government's Green Paper on environmental impact assessment. Since Ontario is the first province to take an initiative in this area, the precedent set by its legislation is bound to have national impact.

CELRF considered it important enough to draft its own proposed legislation, based on the principles outlined in its brief to the government. This will be released sometime during December.

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The group is concerned with the Canadian outlook, and works with people in other provinces as well. CELRF's recent publication, "Le droit québécois de la protection et de la qualité de l'environnement" by P. Kenniff and L. Giroux of Université Laval, gives a summary and assessment of environmental law as it exists in Québec.

When all else fails - representations to elected members, presentation of briefs and other means - CELRF goes to court in the public interest to set precedents for environmental law, to demonstrate the inadequacy of existing law, or to remedy an environmental problem.