

# RECOMMENDED LEGAL WEB SITES FOR LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

MARTHA MANN\*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

For those who may have confined their on-line legal research to Lexis® and Westlaw® searches, the Internet (also known as the World Wide Web) has become a legal resource worth discovering. The Internet is unique in that it allows free or nearly free<sup>1</sup> computer access to a spectrum of legal information, some of which is not widely published.<sup>2</sup> An additional advantage is that a great deal of the textual information is placed on the Internet as it is created, eliminating any wait for publication and distribution. It is now possible to read and download documents as archaic as the Code of Lipit-Ishtar<sup>3</sup> or as recent as the latest United States Supreme Court decision.

The Internet, started in 1969 as a United States Defense Department experiment to provide reliable communication in the event of a nuclear attack, has emerged into an expansive network of computers all over the world, connected by telephone lines and

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\* J.D., Florida State University College of Law (expected 1998); M.A., University of North Florida (1994); B.A., University of North Florida (1991).

1. Access to the Internet is free to many students and academicians, and nearly free to those who pay a monthly service charge for on-line service.

2. *E.g.*, archival documents and texts documenting the evolution of the conservation movement which can currently be viewed at the Library of Congress's American Memory web site. See discussion *infra* Part III (providing a brief description of the Library of Congress site).

3. The Code of Lipit-Ishtar contains some of the earliest known codified laws. Lipit-Ishtar was a shepherd and farmer who became the ruler of Isin circa 1868-1857 B.C. The Code is estimated to have been written circa 1868 B.C. See *Counsel Quest* (visited July 12, 1997) <<http://home.earthlink.net/~parajuris/CounselQuest/index.html>>.

modems.<sup>4</sup> Today, there are over 23 million on-line users, with a predicted growth to 66.6 million by the year 2000.<sup>5</sup> By utilizing the Internet, one can send and receive electronic mail, view electronic newsletters, participate in electronic conferences,<sup>6</sup> transfer files from one computer to another, and search for information on any particular topic through the World Wide Web. As it exists today, this "information superhighway" can access information on just about every topic imaginable.<sup>7</sup> The World Wide Web is composed of web sites (also referred to as "home pages") which are drafted in hyper text language (HTML). The information portion of the World Wide Web is contained within the home pages.

## II. SEARCHING THE WEB

Essentially, there are two different ways to search the web. The first approach is to browse the web by typing key words or phrases into a search engine. Search engines allow a web search by using terms similar to those used on Lexis® or Westlaw®. There are many existing search engines which can be used to find information and resources. Some search engines may work better than others, depending upon the information sought and the sophistication of the search engine itself. A few of the more popular general search engines along with their web site addresses are set forth below:

- Alta Vista      <http://altavista.digital.com/>
- Infoseek      <http://www.infoseek.com/>

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4. See Linda S. Brehmer and Ernest A. Cox, *Making the Internet Useful*, 48 A.L.I.-A.B.A. 129 (Jan. 9, 1997). For those interested in the creation and development of the Internet, see KATIE HAFNER & MATTHEW LYON, *WHERE WIZARDS STAY UP LATE: THE ORIGINS OF THE INTERNET* (1996).

5. See *id.*

6. See generally Eugene Volokh, *Computer Media for the Legal Profession*, 94 MICH. L. REV. 2058 (1996).

7. For additional information on legal Internet resources, see also Brehmer and Cox, *supra* note 1; Volokh, *supra* note 3; Linda Karr O'Connor, *Best Legal Reference Books of 1994*, 87 LAW LIBR. J. 310 (1995); Robert J. Ambrogi, *Non Legal Web Sites Can Help Busy Lawyer*, 40 RES. GESTAE 24 (1997); Alan Pearlman, *How Search Engines Help Make Web Use Easier*, 14 LEGAL TECH. NEWSLETTER 4 (Dec. 1996); JAMES EVANS, *LAW ON THE NET* (1995).

- Lycos <http://www.lycos.com/>
- Hot Bot <http://www.hotbot.com/>
- Yahoo <http://www.yahoo.com/>
- Excite! <http://www.excite.com/>

A purely legal search engine, dubbed “Lawcrawler,” can be found at: <http://www.lawcrawler.com/>. Lawcrawler allows the user to search federal legal sites, state legal sites, or both. Finally, there is the mother of all search engines—a compilation of all engines in one uniform resource locator (URL). This site is located at: <http://www.search.com> and contains over 250 of the best search engines on the web, all located in one area.

The second approach to searching the web involves typing in a known home page address and using the hyper text links to access further information and resources. Web sites generally have addresses, such as “<http://abanet.org>” for the American Bar Association. Within each home page, many terms and phrases (usually highlighted or set off in some way) called hyper text links are present. These links reference other home pages that contain similar or related information. By clicking on the hyper text link, the Web searcher can immediately go to a related topic and obtain additional information without conducting a separate search. Once favorite web site is found, its address may be saved as a bookmark for quick access in the future.

### III. RECOMMENDED WEB SITES FOR LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

The following is a list of websites which currently offer a vast amount of legal information and resources. Some are general legal websites with environmental and land use topics contained within; others are dedicated specifically to environmental and/or land use topics. However, due to the number of web sites available and the constant growth in the number of web sites, this list is far from inclusive.

#### THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF LAW LIBRARIES/WASHBURN

<http://lawlib.wuacc.edu/>

This site contains links to a broad spectrum of legal resources. A listing of law schools, law firms and even course outlines is avail-

able, as is access to many law library catalogs. There is also information about discussion groups for specific areas of law.

#### THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

<http://www.abanet.org>

A web site mainly for those interested in the bar itself, this web site also contains many links to other legal websites. Thirty-three state bar organizations also have their own web sites. (The Florida Bar Association's web page is located at <http://FLABAR.org>.)

#### CENTER FOR GLOBAL AND REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

[http://www.cger.uiowa.edu/servers/servers\\_environment.html](http://www.cger.uiowa.edu/servers/servers_environment.html)

Created and updated by the Center at the University of Iowa, this site contains one of the most extensive directories of environmental information and topics. Unique links included are those to research programs and projects, along with digital and graphic environmental data.

#### CORNELL LEGAL RESEARCH ENCYCLOPEDIA

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/library/take1.html>

Compiled by a group of law librarians, this site has topical and jurisdictional resources arranged by resource format, including print, microform, CD-ROM, Lexis®, Westlaw®, and Internet, and includes direct links to references.

#### THE COUNCIL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/CEQ>

This government web site contains information about the current administration's environmental record in addition to links to NEPA Net, the White House Virtual Library, and environmental impact analysis data links.

#### COUNSEL QUEST

<http://home.earthlink.net/parajuris/CounselQuest/index.html>

An excellent general legal research tool, this web page contains links to resources that vary from archaic laws to recent courts and opinions. It also contains articles, newsletters, humor and the law, a reference desk, and information on Usenet newsgroups.

#### THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

<http://www.epa.gov>

You can search the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) server by phrase or by listed topics ranging from endocrine disruptors to environmental justice. There is also an "Envirofacts" database, a federal regulation environmental subset, and a link to an Environ-

mental Indicators Home Page, which further provides links to data collected nationally or by state, county, or zip code.

#### THE ESSENTIAL ORGANIZATION

<http://www.essential.org/cpi/studies/toxic/index.html>

This site was created by a non-profit organization to “provide provocative information” to the public on topics the creators feel are neglected by the mass media. There are links to topics such as the Environmental Resources Information Network, Citizen’s Clearinghouse for Environmental Waste, Center for the Study of Responsible Law, Nuclear Information and Resources Service, and Clean Water Action.

#### THE FINDLAW INDEX

<http://www.findlaw.com>

A very useful starting point for a search, this site contains its own search engine and legal subject index. Topical legal stories and case records are regularly featured, as are recent United States Supreme Court decisions. The site also contains links to United States Federal Government resources, state law resources, foreign and international resources, as well as links to a directory of law schools, law firms and lawyers, and consultants and experts.

#### GREEN UNIVERSITY INITIATIVE

<http://www.gwu.edu/greenu>

This web page was created through a private-public partnership between the EPA and George Washington University. The site allows the searcher to access United States environmental information resources by subject, name, or via web search engines. Environmental career opportunities are also listed.

#### INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS

<http://www.econet.apc.org/econet/en.issues.html>

The Institute has supported ecological sustainability and environmental justice for more than a decade. The web page highlights weekly news stories and information on environmental activism.

#### THE INTERNET LEGAL RESOURCE GUIDE

<http://www.ilrg.com/>

This site contains a categorized index of 3100 websites covering resources such as academic journals, professional associations, a form index, and federal and state research tools. The sidebar index is quite helpful in narrowing the possible links to resources.

#### LAWYERS’ LEGAL RESEARCH INDEX

<http://www.llr.com>

This site is especially useful for those still learning how to negotiate the Internet. The site takes the on-line user through Internet basics and instructions on beginning an on-line research project as part of its legal research instruction. Of interest to the environmental researcher are lists and links to internet resources in administrative law. The site also enables full-text searches of recent case law. Said to have one of the better search engines, this is also the only site on the Internet where one can find all United States Supreme Court decisions since 1990, all federal court of appeals decisions since 1992, and recent state court decisions.

#### THE LEGAL INFORMATION INSTITUTE AT CORNELL LAW SCHOOL

<http://www.law.cornell.edu>

One of the more established web sites, LII was founded in 1992 to distribute legal information electronically, including disseminating it over the Internet. This site contains a wealth of well-organized primary sources and links to other sites and sources. The site includes sections on "environmental law," "pollution," and "natural resources." Accessible environmental law materials include United States Code, Code of Federal Regulations, state statutes and environmental regulations, recent environmental decisions of the United States Supreme Court, and federal agency information.

#### LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AMERICAN MEMORY—THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/amrvhtml/conshome.html>

An interesting collection of texts not widely available, this web site purports to document the "historical formation and cultural foundations of the movement to conserve and protect America's natural heritage." The site contains federal statutes and Congressional resolutions, books, pamphlets, presidential proclamations, prints, photographs, and even a two-part motion picture. It includes the full text of Acts to establish the National Park Service, early water conservation acts, and early references on the conservation of natural resources.

#### LISA'S GREEN PAGE

<http://www.echonyc.com/kamml/enviro.html/>

Although it claims to be somewhat dated, this is a useful site with an eclectic variety of environmental and legal resources on the Net.

#### THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE INFORMATION RESOURCE EXECUTIVE STATESEARCH

<http://www.nasire.org/ss/index.html>

The Statesearch service provides links by state to web pages aimed at energy, environment, and natural resources.

## PACE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW LIBRARY

<http://www.law.pace.edu/env/vell6.html>

This organized "library" provides links to primary legal sources and its own search engine. This site is purely geared toward environmental legal research on the Internet with links to research topics, the reliability of Internet data, standards, current issues, and secondary sources.

## PARKNET: THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PLACE ON THE WEB

<http://www.nps.gov/>

This web site provides information related to the National Park Service and its preservation of America's cultural and natural heritage. The site contains its own PARKNET search engine and a library with environmental news, legislative information, and references. Included in the National Park Service. Info topic is an index of legal resources related to the National Park Service.

## QUANTUMLAW

<http://www.quantumlaw.com>

Access this web site to obtain daily summaries of environmental legislation, regulations, and cases in areas of wastes and hazardous substances, air, water, pesticides, and toxics and Title III.

## THOMAS (LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET)

<http://thomas.loc.gov>

Created by the United States Congress "in the spirit of Thomas Jefferson," this site tracks the week's congressional floor activities, major legislation, the Congressional Record (back to 1993), committee reports and transcripts, and historical documents.

## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

<http://www.dot.gov/>

The Department of Transportation's home page includes information on the United States DOT and links to individual states' Department of Transportation and related legal Web sites.

## UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES INTERNET LAW LIBRARY

<http://law.house.gov>

The site provides full text offerings of the United States Code and the Code of Federal Regulations in addition to historical documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and international treaties. It also includes links to state and international laws and treaties.

## THE VIRTUAL LIBRARY OF ECOLOGY, BIODIVERSITY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

<http://conbio.rice.edu/vl/>

Scientifically based topics include global sustainability, the history of life, endangered species, pollution, national and state issues, biodiversity and conservation.

## THE WWW VIRTUAL LIBRARY: THE ENVIRONMENT

<http://ecosys.drdr.virginia.edu/Environment.shtml>

Created at the University of Virginia, this truly amazing web site contains a page of general environmental links and pages of specific information and data on topics such as the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and lithosphere. It also includes the notable "List of lists of Environmental Resources."

## YAHOO ENVIRONMENTAL

[http://www.yahoo.com/Society\\_and\\_Culture/Environment\\_and\\_Nature/Law](http://www.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Environment_and_Nature/Law)

This site contains a “hotlist” of environmental topics, drawn from the day’s news and archived news stories. Topics range from environmental disasters to ozone depletion to recycling.