

Dave Owen

Harry Sunderland '61 Professor of Law at UC Hastings College of the Law

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Biography

Professor Dave Owen teaches courses in environmental, natural resources, water, land use, and administrative law. His interest in the subject area began when he was about six years old and his parents denied him access to all television except for PBS wildlife specials. He then became inordinately interested in poachers. He went on to study geology in college, primarily because the labs were outside, and became an environmental consultant. During one hot summer day of hazardous waste site sampling, while sweating miserably in a Tyvek suit and inhaling aniline fumes, he decided graduate school sounded like a nice idea. So he became an environmental lawyer. He went to Berkeley Law, where he served as editor-in-chief of Ecology Law Quarterly and was selected for the Order of the Coif.

Professor Owen went on to clerk at federal district court and then work for a small law firm in San Francisco, where his practice focused primarily on water law. He worked on Colorado River allocation, Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta litigation, and federal state disputes over the proposed Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository, among other matters. In 2007, he began teaching at the University of Maine School of Law. He joined the Hastings faculty in 2015.

His research focuses primarily on water resource management, and some recent projects have addressed taxation of water consumption, the roles of federal regional offices, stream protection under the Clean Water Act, policies to expedite dam removals and hydropower upgrades, and the intersection of groundwater use regulation and the takings clause. Four of his articles have been recognized by his peers as among the top environmental law articles of their respective years; another article has won the Morrison Prize as the top sustainability law article of its year, and he has presented three articles at the Harvard-Stanford-Yale Junior Faculty Forum. He also contributes frequently to the Environmental Law Prof Blog.

In his spare time, Professor Owen was once a passably competent ultimate Frisbee player. Now he mostly runs on trails, a bit slower with each passing year, and coaches soccer. He lives in Albany with his wife Megan, a pediatric occupational therapist, his two children, and a dog named Steve.

Expertise

Education/Learning, Legal Services

Areas of Expertise

Environmental Law, Natural Resources Law, Water Law, Administrative Law, Water Resource Management, Implementation of the Endangered Species Act

Affiliations

Education

University of California, Berkeley School of Law

J.D. Law

Amherst College

B.A. Geology

Accomplishments

Morrison Prize

Professor Owen's recent paper "Trading Dams", coauthored with The Nature Conservancy's Colin Apse, received the first annual Morrison Prize for sustainability research. The Morrison Prize, sponsored by Arizona State Law School, "seeks to recognize the most impactful sustainability-related legal academic article published in North America during the previous year."

Land Use and Environmental Law Review

The Land Use and Environmental Law Review, a compilation of the top environmental and land use law articles of the preceding academic year, has republished Professor Owen's article "Mapping, Modeling, and the Fragmentation of Environmental Law" (2013 Utah L. Rev. 219).

The Land Use and Environmental Law REview

The Land Use and Environmental law Review, a compilation of the top environmental and land use articles of the previous academic year, has republished Professor Owen's article "Regional Federal Administration" (63 UCLA L. Rev. 58).

Rutter Award for Teaching Excellence

UC Hastings has given the 2017 Rutter Award for Teaching Excellence to Professor Owen.

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