



First International Rights of Nature Training for Legal Professionals Hosted by Ethics Specialist Group of the World Commission on Environmental Law

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Grant Wilson (gwilson@earthlaw.org, 510-566-1063)

New York, NY (October 3, 2018)— Today, the Ethics Specialist Group (ESG) of the World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) – the world's oldest and largest international environmental organization – and Earth Law Center announce the first webinar specifically designed to introduce legal practitioners to the growing international rights of nature movement.

According to Kathryn Gwiazdon, a member of the WCEL and a leader within the ESG, "Rights of nature acknowledges the flaws of the existing legal system where nature has no voice in law and policy, and so harms occur without proper legal liability and culpability. It also appropriately raises the seriousness of environmental harms within jurisprudence – after all, no human right can exist without healthy, functioning ecosystems."

The 90-minute webinar, scheduled for November 15 at 12pm Eastern, will feature leading legal thinkers on the rights of nature from around the world. Participants will discuss the legal theory behind rights of nature, recent court decisions, law school education, and related topics.

The rights of nature movement is based on the premise that nature should – and inherently does – possess fundamental legal rights. Recognition of these rights enables nature to defend itself as a plaintiff in court, just as humans and corporations do. Ecuador and Bolivia recognize rights of nature nationally, as do dozens of local governments in North America. Specific ecosystems are also recognized as legal persons under the law, including the Atrato River and Amazon rainforest in Colombia and Whanganui River and Mt. Taranaki in New Zealand.

IUCN has played a growing role in the rights of nature movement. At its quadrennial World Conservation Congress in 2012, IUCN Members passed a Resolution on "Incorporation of the Rights of Nature as the organizational focal point in IUCN's decision making." And in 2016, IUCN Members included securing the rights of nature amongst its four-year work priorities.

"We are delighted to partner with the WCEL to share an overview of this timely topic in an easily accessible way," said Darlene Lee, Executive Director of Earth Law Center."

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About the WCEL Ethics Specialist Group: The IUCN WCEL ESG (<https://www.iucn.org/commissions/world-commission-environmental-law/our-work/specialist-groups/ethics>) is the hub for ethical engagement within IUCN by actively seeking to highlight ethical

issues in conservation and decision-making, and being responsive to queries from members, commissions, or Secretariat bodies. Its main projects include the Biosphere Ethics Initiative, Climate Change Justice, and Earth Democracy.

Meanwhile, the World Commission on Environmental Law (<https://www.iucn.org/commissions/world-commission-environmental-law>) is a network of environmental law and policy experts from all regions of the world volunteering their knowledge and services to IUCN activities.

About Earth Law Center: Earth Law Center (www.earthlawcenter.org) works to transform the law to recognize and protect nature's inherent rights to exist, thrive and evolve. This includes advancing the inherent rights of rivers through initiatives with local partners to secure rights recognition.