

Community Lawyering for Environmental Justice Part 9: Clean Air Act Permitting and Environmental Justice

Faculty Biographies

Meredith Hankins, Senior Attorney, NRDC – Meredith Hankins works to reduce pollution from the power and industrial sectors, using litigation and administrative advocacy to develop, protect, and enforce strong federal standards. Hankins has more than a decade of experience working with the Clean Air Act, beginning as a refinery permitting engineer at the South Coast Air Quality Management District and later as a deputy attorney general representing the state of California in challenges to Trump-era environmental rollbacks. They also previously served as a legal fellow with the Emmett Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at UCLA School of Law and as a senior attorney with the Institute for Policy Integrity at NYU School of Law, as well as clerked for Justice Michael Wilson on the Supreme Court of Hawai'i. Hankins has a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the University of Southern California and a JD from the University of California at Davis. They work out of NRDC's New York office. Hankins is admitted to practice law in California.

Taylor Lilley, Environmental Justice Staff Attorney, Chesapeake Bay Foundation – Taylor works to develop litigation to address disproportionate environmental impacts on vulnerable and marginalized communities. As part of this work, Taylor works with departments across CBF to develop relationships with community leaders and grassroots organizers throughout the watershed. Taylor graduated cum laude from the University of Florida with a B.S. in Forest Resources and Conservation. She earned her Juris Doctor from the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law in 2018 where she received a certificate of concentration in environmental law. While in law school, she worked with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Maryland Environmental Law Clinic, participated in joint partnership between the University of Maryland and the Arava Institute, and worked with the University of Malawi Chancellor College of Law Environmental Justice and Sustainability clinic. Taylor is an active member of the District of Columbia Bar.

Keri Powell, Senior Attorney & Air Program Leader, Southern Environmental Law Center – Years of successfully defending clean air protections up and down the East Coast prepared Keri Powell well for her role as leader of SELC's Air Program. A nationally recognized expert on the Clean Air Act with experience in her own practice, at EPA's Region 4 office in Atlanta, and with Earthjustice and the New York Public Interest Research Group, Keri has worked at every level to fight air pollution.

As leader of the Air Program, Keri is SELC's principal spokesperson on regional issues related to air quality and helps the organization develop and implement its clean air goals through cases and other initiatives, with an emphasis on alleviating environmental injustices. Key targets include biomass plants and other industrial facilities that cause toxic air pollution across the South.

Away from work, Keri finds solace on Georgia's St. Simon's Island, where she and her family are captivated by the majestic live oaks, dramatic tides, legions of fiddler crabs waving their claws, and the broad, unspoiled marshland vistas.

Zoe Vogel, Public Interest Environmental Law Fellow, Environmental Law Institute,

Moderator – Zoe is currently a Public Interest Legal Fellow at the Environmental Law Institute, and previously served as a law clerk at ELI during the summer of 2022. Zoe received her J.D. with honors from Tulane University Law School, where she served as the Editor-in-Chief for the Tulane Environmental Law Journal, a student attorney with the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic, and an Intersectionality Chair for the Environmental & Energy Law Society. During her time there, she also held positions with the National Wildlife Federation, the Tulane Institute on Water Law and Policy, and Louisiana's Center for Planning Excellence. She previously earned her B.S.B. from the University of Minnesota, Carlson School of Management, during which time she worked as a farm intern to better understand the lived experience of environmental policies (shoutout to Tangletown Gardens!).