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Zygmunt J.B. Plater

*Boston College Law School, plater@bc.edu*

Charlie Lord

*Boston College Urban Ecology Institute, charles.lord@bc.edu*

William Shutkin

*Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute*

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## **FOLLOWING UP THE AALS SYMPOSIUM: AN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE NETWORK**

CHARLIE LORD\*  
ZYGMUNT PLATER\*\*  
WILLIAM SHUTKIN\*\*\*

As well-demonstrated by the Association of American Law Schools' environmental justice symposium, which provided the substance for the essays in this law review volume, the field of environmental justice—which until so recently lay largely unacknowledged within the active practice of environmental law—has now emerged to claim a great deal of attention and energy within the academic world.

Professor Pat McGinley should be congratulated for his skill in shepherding the suggestion for an environmental justice symposium into an unusually successful actuality, and it looks as if the meetings have continued to trigger academic momentum. At the conference, it was suggested that a network be set up to link interested members of the law school world and other academics to facilitate the exchange of ideas, teaching materials, documents, ongoing research, and other information in the environmental justice field. This suggestion has been gathering speed, and it appears that an environmental justice network will be one of the tangible products of the Orlando meetings.

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\* Visiting Scholar, Boston College of Law; Co-founder and Director, A.C.E., Alternatives for Community and Environment, the environmental justice center based at Boston College Law School.

\*\* Professor of Law, Boston College Law School.

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Casey Jarman at Hawaii Law School, Marc Poirier at Seton Hall University School of Law, several of us at Boston College Law School, and others at campuses around the country are currently compiling a master list of academics interested in building the environmental justice network. The plan is soon to set up a national Board of Advisors to advise in the network's development and functioning.

The environmental justice network will have an electronic foundation. Given the current explosion of interest in electronic communication, it seemed appropriate to orient the network around an electronic linkage between participants, travelling on the electronic superhighway of the Internet. Initially, the central feature of the electronic network would be an on-line bulletin board organized in a variety of relevant research and information categories.

At the request of colleagues at the Orlando meetings, we at Boston College have planned an exploratory phase of building the electronic network, with a trial system to be on-line by the start of the new academic year in September.

The elements of the network as currently hypothesized are as follows:

1. We at Boston College Law School will provide the service of maintaining the proposed academic environmental justice network electronic bulletin board our university's Internet Gopher.
2. The academic environmental justice network will serve faculty and students at law schools concerned with the field of environmental justice, and with other interested scholars and practitioners in the field who want to participate.
3. The network will be primarily an electronic network, reflecting the reality that almost all schools now have at least the basic initial stages of electronic communication.
4. The environmental justice network will have three processing steps: (a) receipt of information at our network office primarily by e-mail or diskette; (b) processing of such items for posting; and (c) posting the items in an Environmental Justice Network folder on Boston College's Internet-accessible InfoEagle Gopher,

- collecting the items in a dozen or more categories of information accessible for reading and downloading by correspondents.
5. The e-mail linkage will use an e-mail address on the Internet for the receipt of information by the network center from any correspondent who knows the address.<sup>1</sup>
  6. Materials received at the network's e-mail address will be posted in a variety of categories. The current draft list of categories includes:
    - a. "About This Academic Environmental Justice Network"
    - b. "Index"
    - c. "Course and Teaching Materials"
    - d. "Research File"
    - e. "Brief Bank"
    - f. "Federal Government Documents"
    - g. "State Government Documents"
    - h. "News Flashes"
    - i. "Communicator"
    - j. "Network Participants" list
    - k. "Archives"
  7. The bulletin board will be open for reading and downloading by anyone who knows the Gopher address, but not open for self-posting by correspondents.

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1. It is not part of the proposed model at this time to have a monthly "newsletter" prepared and electronically-transmitted to correspondents each month. Such a newsletter would require too extensive an editing and publication process. Nor would the Gopher bulletin board be open for posting of information by anyone who accesses it. Open posting has its benefits, but serious burdens as well. To facilitate individual communication, one category of information posted on the bulletin board will be a list of e-mail addresses to facilitate communication between all those who want to be so listed.

8. Materials will periodically be reviewed for currency, and older items shifted to an archive file.

As presently conceived, working with the Board of Advisors, the environmental justice network bulletin board will be a project at Boston College Law School of the Black Law Students' Association and the Conservation Research Group (Boston College Law School's environmental law society), with the participation of other student groups, faculty members, and the assistance of Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE), the environmental justice center housed at Boston College Law School and run by Bill Shutkin and Charlie Lord.

To be included on the initial master list of interested academics, and for further information, contact Environmental Justice Network, Boston College Law School, Newton Centre, Massachusetts 02159. To contact by telephone, dial (617) 552-0928; by fax, (617) 552-2615; or by e-mail, [lordca@bcvms.bc.edu](mailto:lordca@bcvms.bc.edu).