

## **Environmental Information: Research, Access & Environmental Decisionmaking**

By Sarah Lambdan (2017). 324 pages, ISBN: 9781585761852. \$36

**Subject:** Subject-specific legal research (Environmental Law)

**Useful for:** Useful for instructors teaching an Environmental Law research course or for researchers interested in learning how to access environmental information.

**Format:** Chapters with index.

### **Reviewer's Comments:**

The typical Environmental Law course makes it seem like the practice of environmental law consists almost exclusively of statutes and cases, but in reality, it involves things like environmental impact statements, other scientific studies, decisions from various regulatory agencies, agency guidance documents, “grey literature,” and more. Thankfully, this book helps to make sense of this mess.

Chapter 1 introduces the concept of environmental information, and Chapter 2 provides a helpful overview of the major environmental laws in the United States (e.g., National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Clean Water Act (CWA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), etc.).

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the legal research process, which may be helpful for a non-lawyer working in environmental policy, but would likely not be particularly useful to a legal research instructor or upper-level law student.

Chapter 4 provides guidance on where to locate documents generated in compliance with the statutes discussed in Chapter 2. These statutes require stakeholders to generate an enormous variety of reports and data. Chapter 4 helps you figure out where to find all that information.

Chapters 5 and 6 provide a deep-dive into how to effectively use Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and other government accessibility laws. Where researchers cannot get the information they need through the resources discussed in Chapter 4, using these laws is often required.

Chapter 7 discusses how to locate environmental information generated during the rulemaking process. While the discussion of the *Federal Register* may not be ground-breaking for most legal researchers, this chapter provides helpful tips on where to find information generated both before and after the official rulemaking process.

Chapter 8 discusses the concept of “grey literature,” which is essentially information that isn’t officially published by a governmental entity or by a commercial publisher. This includes documents created by NGOs and non-profit organizations, certain types of scientific and academic literature, and documents generated by corporations.

## RIPS-SIS Legal Research Text Review

Chapters 9 and 10 provide introductions to researching state/local and foreign environmental information, respectively. Many environmental issues are governed by agencies at both the state and federal level, so understanding how to access this information is essential.

Finally, Chapter 11 discusses ways of analyzing and making sense of environmental information. Most of the information used in environmental law is *heavily* scientific in nature, and a legal researcher may have no idea how to process it. Chapter 11 makes that process a little less scary.

On the whole, this book is an excellent introduction to researching environmental information. I could see this book being used as the main textbook in an Advanced Environmental Law Research course, or individual chapters (particularly Chapters 4, 7, and 8) being used in an Environmental Law or Administrative Law-focused class session in a more general ALR course. Additionally, this book could prove useful to any legal researcher faced with the need to track down this type of information.

**Reviewed by:** Matt Flyntz, University of California, Irvine, in 2018