



COLLEGE OF LAW  
*The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA*

# ONE-J SYMPOSIUM

*From Liabilities to Assets: Bridging Regulatory Gaps,  
Business Innovations, and Tribal Implications for  
Abandoned Wells*

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9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Friday, April 17, 2026

The University of Oklahoma College of Law  
Dick Bell Courtroom





*Check-In and Continental Breakfast available starting at 8:15 a.m.  
in the Dick Bell Courtroom foyer.*

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# SCHEDULE

- 8:15 a.m.**     **Breakfast and Meet and Greet in Dick Bell Foyer**
- 9 a.m.**        **Welcome and Opening Remarks**
- 9:30 a.m.**     **OCC Work on Abandoned Wells and Regulatory Changes to Address**
- Melissa Scimeca, Senior Attorney for the Oklahoma Corporation's Commission Oil & Gas Division
  - Mike McGinnis, Deputy Director for the Oklahoma Corporation's Commission Oil & Gas Division
- 10:20 a.m.**    **Who Owns the Heat? Navigating Subsurface Property Rights in Geothermal Energy**
- Professor Gabriel Eckstein, Texas A&M School of Law
- 11:20 a.m.**    **Environmental Defense Fund Study on Future of Wells and Suggestions for Further Reforms**
- Adam Peltz, Director and Senior Attorney for Environmental Defense Fund
- 12:20 p.m.**    **Lunch in David L. Boren Atrium**
- 1 p.m.**         **The Real Cost of Restoration: Economic Drivers and Fiscal Realities of Well Decommissioning**
- Daniel Raimi, Resources for the Future
- 2 p.m.**         **Industry Perspective**
- Staci Taruscio, CEO of Rebellion Energy Solutions
- 3 p.m.**         **Tribal Counsel and AG Panel Discussion**
- Stephen Ward, Partner at Conner Winters and Outside Counsel for Caddo Nation
  - Attorney General Geri Wisner, Muscogee Creek Nation
- 4 p.m.**         **Reception held in Dick Bell Foyer**



**Oklahoma Corporation Commission**  
**Mike McGinnis,**  
**Deputy Director of Oil and Gas Division**  
**– OCC**

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Mike McGinnis has served since 2020 as deputy director of the Oil and Gas Conservation Division of the Oklahoma Corporation Commission. At the OCC, he is involved with all aspects of the regulatory process, providing technical assistance to all departments as well as rule making and the legislative process. McGinnis's 38-year career in the oil and gas industry includes extensive experience in production, operations, completions and drilling from the Gulf of Mexico to Oklahoma. He has worked conventional and unconventional plays, including both vertical and horizontal wells. He has worked for Kirkpatrick Oil Co., Chesapeake Energy, Range Resources, Union Pacific Resources and Tenneco Oil Co. He earned a bachelor of science degree in petroleum and natural gas engineering from The Pennsylvania State University and a bachelor of arts degree in mathematics from St. Vincent College in 1982.



**Melissa Scimeca,**  
**Attorney General Counsel in OCC**

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Melissa Scimeca serves as deputy general counsel at the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, where she focuses on oil and gas regulatory matters that shape Oklahoma's energy landscape. In this role, she works closely with the diverse spectrum of Oklahoma's oil and gas producers, navigating the balance between industry needs and the rights and interests of citizens. Scimeca's legal background spans public service and private practice. She previously served as a public defender in the Oklahoma County Juvenile Court and also practiced insurance defense. A graduate of Oklahoma City University School of Law, she brings a blend of regulatory insight, public-sector experience and a commitment to fairness to every role. Scimeca also holds an master of business administration degree in systems analysis and bachelor of science degree in accounting.





**Gabriel Eckstein, Professor of Law,  
Texas A&M; Director, Energy, Environmental  
& Natural Resources Systems Law Program  
and Environmental & Energy  
Resources Clinic**

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Gabriel Eckstein is professor of law and director of both the Energy, Environmental & Natural Resources Systems Law Program and the Environmental & Natural Resources Clinic at Texas A&M University. He focuses his research and teaching on water, energy, natural resources, and environmental law and policy at the local, national and international levels. Eckstein has published widely on international and U.S. law applicable to geothermal energy, groundwater management, transboundary watercourses and aquifers, pollutants of emerging concern, endangered species and other topics.

At Texas A&M University, Eckstein serves as affiliated faculty with the Energy Institute; on the graduate faculty for the Water Management & Hydrological Science program; as associated professor with the Bush School of Government and Public Service; and as Faculty Fellow with the Center for Health Systems & Design, College of Architecture. Eckstein regularly advises UN agencies, national and sub-national governments, NGOs, and other groups on international and U.S. water and environmental issues and has represented nations before the International Court of Justice. Currently, he is the president of the International Association for Water Law, and previously served as president of the International Water Resources Association. Eckstein is a member of the American Law Institute, holds degrees in law, international affairs and geology, and serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Water Law*.





## **Adam Peltz, Director and Senior Attorney, Energy Transition at the Environmental Defense Fund**

In his role as a director and senior attorney in the Environmental Defense Fund's Energy Program, Adam Peltz focuses on oil, gas and carbon capture, utilization and sequestration regulation and policy, and serves as a public advocate on these issues. He is responsible for managing multi-stakeholder efforts concerning oil and gas development and Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage to improve environmental outcomes through enhanced regulation and improved industry practices, especially concerning secure geological storage of carbon dioxide, and orphaned oil and gas wells.

Peltz started as a Legal Fellow with the Environmental Defense Fund in 2011, working on natural gas as well as international climate efforts. During law school, he studied international development and climate change law and interned at the Legal Resources Centre in Ghana, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation in Washington, D.C., and with the Geneva, Switzerland-based carbon credit certifier the Gold Standard.

Peltz earned his Juris Doctor from the Boston School of Law, master of arts degree in international relations from Boston University and bachelor of arts degree in political science and international affairs from the University of Chicago. He has been a member of the State Bar of New York since 2012.





## **Daniel Raimi, Relief for the Future Fellow; Lecturer, Gerald R. Ford School of Policy, University of Michigan**

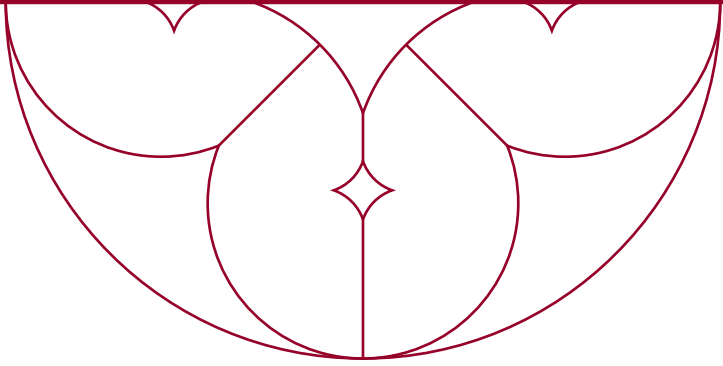
Daniel Raimi is a Relief for the Future Fellow and a lecturer at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan. He works on a range of energy policy issues with a focus on tools to enable an equitable energy transition. He has published in academic journals including *Science*, *Science Advances*, *Environmental Science and Technology*, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *Review of Environmental Economics and Policy*, *Energy Research and Social Science*, and *Energy Policy*, as well as in popular outlets, including *The New Republic*, *Newsweek*, *Slate* and *Fortune*. He is quoted extensively in such national media outlets such as CNN, NPR's All Things Considered, *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

Raimi regularly presents his research to policymakers, industry, and other stakeholders around the United States and internationally, including before the U.S. Senate Budget Committee and the Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee of the U.S. House's Natural Resources Committee. In 2017, he published *The Fracking Debate* (Columbia University Press), a book that combines stories from his travels to dozens of oil- and gas-producing regions with a detailed examination of key policy issues.

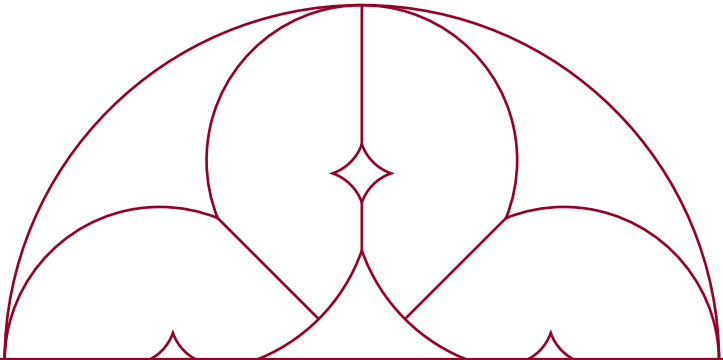
Raimi also cohosts *Resources Radio*, a weekly podcast from RFF, in which he interviews leading researchers on energy and environmental topics.

Raimi received his master's degree in public policy from Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy in 2012 and his bachelor's degree in music from Wesleyan University in 2003. Prior to entering graduate school, he worked as a guitarist, composer, and music instructor in New York and Los Angeles.





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## **Staci Taruscio, CEO of Rebellion Energy Solutions**

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Staci Taruscio, chief executive officer of Rebellion Energy Solutions, has a petroleum engineering degree from the University of Tulsa and nearly 20 years of experience in field operations, reservoir engineering and project management roles at oil and gas operating companies across the United States and Canada. She also holds a master's degree in business administration and is a proven leader in the upstream E&P sector of the oil and gas Industry, having founded two private operating companies.

Upon the successful exit of her most recent E&P iteration, Taruscio pivoted her expertise to plug and abandonment work, focusing on converting legacy wells from liability to asset. She works with NGOs, NPOs, operators, private investors and scientists to uncover hidden value, standardize processes and develop tech to push focus onto this emerging micro-economy.

Taruscio has contributed her expertise to the ACR (American Carbon Registry) Methodology for the Quantification, Monitoring, Reporting and Verification of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions and Removals from the Plugging of Orphaned Oil and Gas Wells and is a founding board member of Fellow Environmental Partners, a 501(c)3 nonprofit cooperative dedicated to contributing data on which we can have meaningful conversations to this space. She is a firm believer in bringing people together, valuing collaboration across specialties as a true energy transition.





## Stephen Ward, Partner at Conner Winters and Outside Counsel for Caddo Nation

In the course of a practice spanning some 30 years, Steve Ward has handled a broad range of matters in federal Indian law and tribal law, including a number of high-profile and important cases. He is ranked nationally by Chambers USA in Indian law, and was recognized in 2021, 2024, and 2026 by The Best Lawyers in America as a Lawyer of the Year for his work in Indian law, as well as in gaming law. Ward founded the Indian law practice at Conner & Winters in 2002, and it quickly gained a nationwide reputation.

Over the years, Ward's practice team has handled development projects both large and small for tribal governments and enterprises. These have ranged from the construction and financing of major gaming resorts – both Indian gaming and commercial gaming – to the formation of small tribal businesses, including construction management enterprises, travel plazas, retail stores and a meat processing facility. Ward has assisted with chartering entities ranging from tribal authorities to Section 17 corporations. The Conner & Winters Indian law practice has become known for helping tribes finance Indian country development. In the past decade, the practice has assisted with over \$2 billion in Indian country financings, including through conventional and bond financings.

In addition to transactions, Ward is regularly involved in litigation addressing key issues of the day in Indian law. He has been involved in noteworthy litigation involving breach-of-trust claims settled for almost \$200 million; the effort to repatriate the remains of Jim Thorpe, the famous Sac and Fox athlete, pursuant to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, Bet Tribe gaming compact litigation; a natural resource damages action involving a major Superfund site in Indian country; and others. He has led cases before a number of United States District Courts and United States Courts of Appeals, and he has assisted with briefing in several cases before the United States Supreme Court.

Ward received an undergraduate degree in journalism in from Oklahoma State University 1978, after which he worked as a newspaper reporter at *The Tulsa Tribune*. After receiving his law degree from the University of Tulsa in 1990, he served as a judicial law clerk, first to a United States District Judge, and then to the Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit.

Ward was born in Stillwater, Oklahoma, and has read and widely studied the history of Oklahoma tribes.



## **Geri Wisner, Deputy Attorney General, Muscogee (Creek) Nation**

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Geri Wisner is the deputy attorney general for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the fourth-largest Native American tribe in the United States, whose 2020 historic legal victory, *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, recognized the 1866 treaty that reinstated its reservation status and criminal jurisdiction.

Wisner is nationally recognized as the Indian Country Prosecutor. Victims of crime want her in their corner because she has a reputation of fighting the good fight to ensure voices of marginalized and vulnerable victims are heard. Law enforcement wants her to prosecute their cases because she aggressively fights for law and order. Tribes want her as their prosecutor because she serves as a role model committed to justice and safety within indigenous communities while strengthening Tribal sovereignty.

Wisner is citizen of the Muscogee Nation, a former United States Marine and a mother. She previously served as the attorney general for the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska and the prosecutor for the Wyandotte Nation of Oklahoma, the executive director for the Native American Children's Alliance and oversees the Wisner Law Firm. She is a nationally recognized speaker on the issues of criminal justice, collaborative responses to address violent crimes and integrating traditional Tribal healing and customs with recognized best practices.



