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Public Affairs, Roger Williams University

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Shifting Seas: Symposium to Examine Climate Change, Oceans and Law

The Marine Law Symposium, a two-day event at RWU Law, brings together scientific and legal experts to consider how laws and policies regarding our fragile coastal communities should be made in the future.



November 12, 2012 | Public Affairs Staff

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, communities are urgently re-evaluating how best to protect their coastal infrastructure from the effects of climate change – such as severe storms, rising sea levels and eroding shorelines. Yet, before we can change the way we plan and build these coastal communities, we must consider how existing laws and policies that govern coastal life will have to evolve. Questions of where to safely rebuild communities, how to protect coastal infrastructure and how private property rights may change are all raised by the changes we are seeing to our coasts and oceans.

At the [9th Marine Law Symposium](#), to be held Nov. 14 to 15, [Roger Williams University School of Law](#), leading scientific experts and legal practitioners will gather to discuss these concerns and examine the laws and policies that are implicated as climate change continues to transform coastal and ocean environments. Scientific experts will provide context on the effects of climate change in the ocean such as increased extreme weather events, the melting Arctic ice cap, and ocean acidification. Attorneys will confront emerging law and policy issues, and managers from coastal communities in New England, the Gulf of Mexico and California will share their experiences in responding to changing coastal environments.

“Much is at stake for our coastal communities in the face of changing ocean conditions,” said Susan Farady, director, Marine Affairs Institute, Roger Williams University School of Law. “We need to look back no further than two weeks to see how our current way of life on the coast is at risk. The aftermath of Sandy puts hard questions directly before us.

Decisions about how we manage our lives along the coastline are not going to get any easier. Over the course of two days at the Marine Law Symposium, an impressive array of national and international experts will take a comprehensive look at many ways laws and policies are implicated by changing ocean conditions.”

Keynote speakers for the 9th Marine Law Symposium include:

- Dr. William B. Curry, Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences – to present on the early signs of global warming and the long-term outlook for the oceans.
- Dr. Laura Petes, NOAA Climate Program Office – to describe the emerging landscape of climate adaptation initiatives at the Federal level and the relevance of these efforts to coastal and ocean decision-making and management.
- Geoff Feinberg, Yale Project on Climate Change Communication – to present findings from “Climate Change in the American Mind” and give an overview of key opinions held by the American public on climate change.
- J. David Breemer, Pacific Legal Foundation – to discuss several pending legal cases to illustrate the conflicts between private property rights and public beach access rights.

HOW TO ATTEND

The 9th Marine Law Symposium will take place in the Roger Williams University School of Law Appellate Courtroom (Room 283) on the University’s Bristol campus at One Old Ferry Road. The event will begin at 8:30 a.m. and interested attendees must [register in advance](#). The Symposium is approved for twelve MCLE credits. Read the [full agenda here](#).

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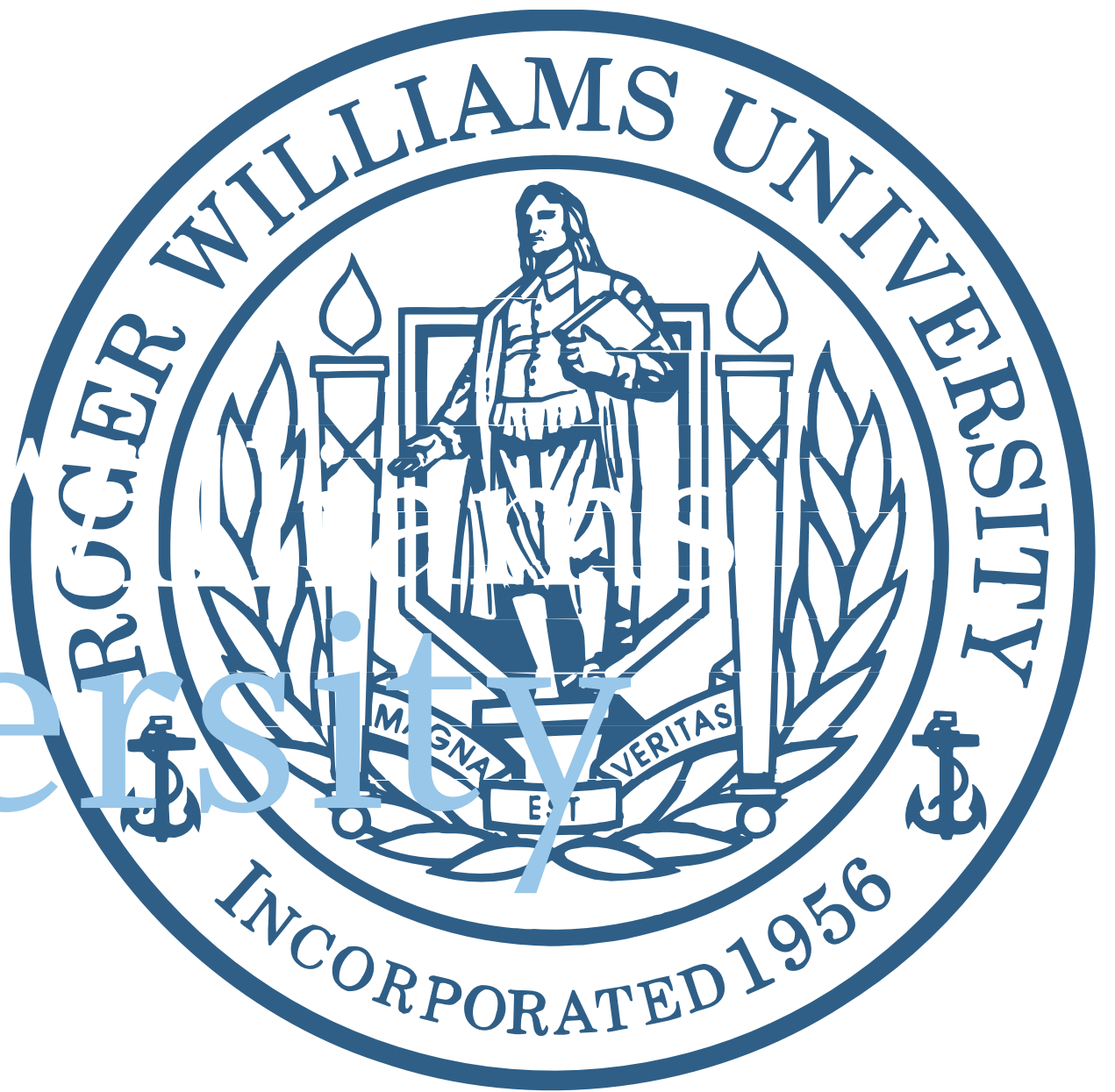
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