

MELISSA SCANLAN

Midwest Environment Advocates, Inc

1999 Global Fellow



BIG BOLD IDEA

Provide high quality legal services that support a multicultural, grassroots social movement; build local leadership; and implement innovative solutions to environmental problems.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Midwesterners are a people rooted in their land. That bond can be traced from a time when lakes and rivers formed the backbone of villages and transportation for European settlers. This connection with the land is even more significant for the Native American communities that preceded European settlement. Despite this connection, the region faces many environmental problems, from toxic fish to pollution from livestock factories. The Midwest Environmental Advocates (MEA), Wisconsin's first and only nonprofit environmental law center, provides legal and technical assistance to grassroots groups promoting environmental justice in the Western Great Lakes region. MEA provides high-quality legal service to support a diverse social movement, builds local leadership, and implements innovative solutions to environmental problems. The center also runs an Advocacy Network of pro bono attorneys to represent individuals and groups on environmental issues. MEA has already vastly improved conditions in the Midwest.

PERSONAL BIO

Melissa Scanlan is a law professor and has served as associate dean of the Environmental Law Program and director of the Environmental Law Center at Vermont Law School, which consistently earned the U.S. News & World Report top ranking in environmental law under her leadership. In 2019, she was a Fulbright Senior Scholar in Spain researching Spanish cooperatives that are sustainability leaders. Melissa is the founder of a variety of enterprises in the social economy, all of which continue today. Infused with clear vision and longevity, she raised millions of dollars to capitalize these enterprises and designed their governance documents, establishing the mission, purpose, and day-to-day direction. She brings a deep understanding of starting and stewarding enterprises to her research, teaching, and service. She was the co-founder, with Gus Speth, of the New Economy Law Center, which she now directs. She was the co-lead consultant in launching the Center for Water Policy at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's School of Freshwater Sciences. She co-founded the Washington Heights Community Garden. Immediately out of law school, she received a competitive Equal Justice Works Fellowship (formerly NAPIL) and an Echoing Green Fellowship to found and direct Midwest Environmental Advocates, Wisconsin's first nonprofit environmental law center. Melissa is a 1999 Echoing Green Fellow.

Issue area

Environment

Organization/Fellow Location

South Royalton, United States

Impact Location

North America

United States

Organization Structure

Nonprofit

[VISIT WEBSITE](#)

