

# CEENRG

## Thursday Seminars

Lent Term 2024

Cambridge Centre for Environment,  
Energy and Natural Resource Governance

<http://www.ceenrg.landecon.cam.ac.uk/seminars>

### Legal personhood designation for natural resources as a sustainable development mechanism: An initial inquiry

#### Prof Daniel Cole

Robert H. McKinney Emeritus Professor of Law, Indiana University

**Abstract:** In recent decades, watersheds, rivers, and forests around the world have been granted legal rights amounting to legal personhood, enabling them to hold property rights, enter contracts, and sue and be sued. In this presentation, I will explain the meaning and practical consequences of legal personhood designation for watersheds and forests. There is reason to believe that such a policy move could lead to better, i.e., more sustainable management. But advocates who believe the move is necessarily a game-changer are likely to be disappointed. Like practically all policy experiments, outcomes are not preordained, and a lot depends on the details of policy implementation. I will compare and contrast a few cases in order to demonstrate how some approaches to resource personhood are likely to be more successful than others simply due to the institutional details and how they are being implemented.



**15 February 2024, 3.15 – 4.15 pm (UK Time)**

- In-person: **Weston Seminar Room (2.49)** in the David Attenborough Building
- Online: Zoom. Please **REGISTER** to receive Zoom link on the day of the seminar