1. What is Environmental Law?

Environmental Law: Text, Cases & Materials (2nd edn)
Elizabeth Fisher, Bettina Lange, and Eloise Scotford

This chapter provides an introductory overview to environmental law including the way the subject is defined and the challenges involved in studying it. As with other chapters in this book, this introductory chapter provides an advanced introduction to environmental law containing carefully selected abstracts from cases, legislation, and academic debate. The chapter begins with an overview of the environmental law landscape in the UK and moves on to describe three different ways to define environmental law—descriptively, purposively, and jurisprudential—and why these different definitions matter. The challenges of practising and studying environmental law are explored and in the last section a framework is provided for structuring environmental law inquiry. Overall, the chapter provides a launching off point for the study of environmental law as well as a reference point for those who are studying the subject.
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