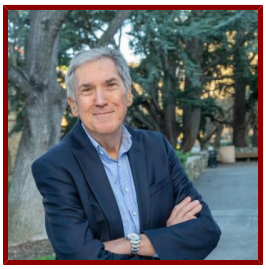
Stanford



Barton Thompson

Robert E. Paradise Professor of Natural Resources Law, Professor of Environmental Social Sciences and Senior Fellow at the Woods Institute for the Environment

Stanford Law School

Curriculum Vitae available Online

Bio

BIO

A global expert on water and natural resources, Barton “Buzz” Thompson focuses on how to improve resource management through legal, institutional, and technological innovation. He was the founding Perry L. McCarty Director of the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment, where he remains a Senior Fellow and directs the Water in the West program. He also has been a Senior Fellow (by courtesy) at Stanford’s Freeman-Spogli Institute for International Studies, and a visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution. He founded the law school’s Environmental and Natural Resources Program. He also is a faculty member in Stanford’s Emmett Interdisciplinary Program in Environment and Resources (E-IPER).

Professor Thompson served as Special Master for the United States Supreme Court in Montana v. Wyoming, an interstate water dispute involving the Yellowstone River system. He also is a former member of the Science Advisory Board of the United States Environmental Protection Agency. He chairs the boards of the Resources Legacy Fund and the Stanford Habitat Conservation Board, is a California trustee of The Nature Conservancy, and is a board member of the American Farmland Trust, the Sonoran Institute, and the Santa Lucia Conservancy.

Professor Thompson is of counsel to the law firm of O’Melveny & Myers, where he specializes in water resources and was a partner prior to joining Stanford Law School. He also serves as an advisor to a major impact investment fund. He was a law clerk to Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist ’52 (BA ’48, MA ’48) of the U.S. Supreme Court and Judge Joseph T. Sneed of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Professor, Stanford Law School
- Senior Fellow, Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment
- Professor, Environmental Social Sciences
- Founding Perry L. McCarty Director, Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment

PROGRAM AFFILIATIONS

- Public Policy

Teaching

COURSES

2026-27

- Housing Law and Policy: LAW 7158 (Win)

- Natural Resources Law and Policy: LAW 2506 (Win)
- Property: LAW 217 (Spr)

2025-26

- Property: LAW 217 (Spr)
- The Business of Water: CEE 273B, EBS 273 (Spr)
- The Business of Water: LAW 2508 (Spr)
- Water Law & Policy: EBS 251 (Aut)
- Water Law and Policy: LAW 2519 (Aut)

2024-25

- Natural Resources Law and Policy: LAW 2506 (Aut)
- Property: LAW 217 (Spr)
- The Business of Water: CEE 273B (Aut)
- The Business of Water: LAW 2508 (Aut)

2023-24

- Externship, Special Circumstances: LAW 884 (Aut)
- Graduate Practicum in Environment and Resources: ENVRES 270 (Win)
- Property: LAW 217 (Spr)
- The Business of Water: CEE 273B (Win)
- The Business of Water: LAW 2508 (Win)
- Water Law: LAW 2519 (Win)

STANFORD ADVISEES

Doctoral Dissertation Reader (AC)

Kazumi Hoshino-Macdonald

Doctoral Dissertation Advisor (AC)

Michael H.F. Thorburn

Doctoral Dissertation Co-Advisor (AC)

Keala Carter, Eeshan Chaturvedi, Julia Sharapi

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **Storing and managing water for the environment is more efficient than mimicking natural flows.** *Nature communications*
  Null, S. E., Zeff, H., Mount, J., Gray, B., Sturrock, A. M., Sencan, G., Dybala, K., Thompson, B.
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- **Socio-hydrological impacts of rate design on water affordability during drought** *ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH LETTERS*
  Nayak, A., Rachunok, B., Thompson, B., Fletcher, S.
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- **CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGES FOR LAND CONSERVATION: RETHINKING CONSERVATION EASEMENTS, STRATEGIES, AND TOOLS** *DENVER LAW REVIEW*
  Owley, J., Cheever, F., Rissman, A. R., Shaw, M., Thompson, B. H., Weeks, W.
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- **Pwehe Ke Kai a"o H"ena: Creating State Law based on Customary Indigenous Norms of Coastal Management** *SOCIETY & NATURAL RESOURCES*
  Vaughan, M. B., Thompson, B., Ayers, A. L.
  2017; 30 (1): 31-46
- **Barriers to Innovation in Urban Wastewater Utilities: Attitudes of Managers in California** *ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT*
  Kiparsky, M., Thompson, B. H., Binz, C., Sedlak, D. L., Tummers, L., Truffer, B.
  2016; 57 (6): 1204-1216
- **Assessment of human-natural system characteristics influencing global freshwater supply vulnerability** *ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH LETTERS*
  Padowski, J. C., Gorelick, S. M., Thompson, B. H., Rozelle, S., Fendorf, S.
  2015; 10 (10)
- **Adapting Conservation Easements to Climate Change** *CONSERVATION LETTERS*
  Rissman, A. R., Owley, J., Shaw, M. R., Thompson, B. (.
  2015; 8 (1): 68-76
- **The Innovation Deficit in Urban Water: The Need for an Integrated Perspective on Institutions, Organizations, and Technology** *ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING SCIENCE*
  Kiparsky, M., Sedlak, D. L., Thompson, B. H., Truffer, B.
  2013; 30 (8): 395-408
- **COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING, DOMINANT-USE ZONES, AND USER RIGHTS: A NEW ERA IN OCEAN GOVERNANCE** *7th William R and Lenore Mote International Symposium in Fisheries Ecology*
  Sanchirico, J. N., Eagle, J., Palumbi, S., Thompson, B. H.
  ROSENSTIEL SCH MAR ATMOS SCI.2010: 273–85
- **Institutional incentives for managing the landscape: Inducing cooperation for the production of ecosystem services** *ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS*
  Goldman, R. L., Thompson, B. H., Daily, G. C.
  2007; 64 (2): 333-343
- **Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist: Prizing people, place, and history** *STANFORD LAW REVIEW*
  Thompson, B. H.
  2006; 58 (6): 1695-1703
- **Conservative environmental thought: The Bush administration and environmental policy** *Annual Meeting of the Association-of-American-Law-Schools*
  Thompson, B. H.
  UNIV CALIFORNIA BERKELEY SCH LAW.2005: 307–47
- **The continuing innovation of citizen enforcement** *UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS LAW REVIEW*
  Thompson, B. H.
  2000: 185-236
- **People or prairie chickens: The uncertain search for optimal biodiversity** *STANFORD LAW REVIEW*
  Thompson, B. H.
  1999; 51 (5): 1127-1185
- **Endangered Species Act: A case study in takings & incentives** *STANFORD LAW REVIEW*
  Thompson, B. H.
  1997; 49 (2): 305-380
- **JUDICIAL TAKINGS** *VIRGINIA LAW REVIEW*
  Thompson, B. H.
  1990; 76 (8): 1449-1544