

John H. Davidson

"We are confronted with the reality that we are destroying the last vestiges of our natural heritage. From the prairie potholes and rivers to the grasslands, the remaining plant and animal species all are being destroyed at an unprecedented rate. Creative leadership in law and policy is required if we are to save any of these resources."

ADVOCATE FOR PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Since he came to The University of South Dakota in 1971, Professor John H. Davidson, School of Law, has been a strong advocate of protecting the environment. While other states in this region have seriously harmed their environments, Professor Davidson feels that "South Dakota still has something to save."

Protecting the Missouri River has been one of his ongoing interests. Until the United States Army Corps of Engineers constructed a series of dams as part of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program, authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1944, the Missouri River would flood, frequently destroying farmland and homes. Professor Davidson works with the Missouri River Coalition, run by the national advocacy group American Rivers, to influence Corps policy. According to him, the Corps water management policy, written in 1961, does not adequately address the needs of wildlife, recreation users, or drought conditions. The policy also views navigation as the main focus of Corps policy although navigation accounts for only one percent of the economic benefit of the river. Professor Davidson feels that "the Missouri issue will never go away."

Professor Davidson serves as volunteer expert to many advocacy groups. He serves or has been appointed to many national and regional groups that focus on environmental policy. For example, he was a Presidential appointee to the Western Water Policy Review Advisory Commission which ended its work in 1995. More recently, he has been appointed to the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Missouri River Ecosystem Science. As a popular professor of law, he teaches courses such as Water Law, Environmental Law, and Natural Resources Law.

