

The Law Office of
Lara Pearson

Member: 2 years

Lara Pearson sometimes gets funny looks when she says she is a lawyer who cares about people and the planet: “Lawyers aren’t known to be warm and fuzzy,” laughs Pearson. “That’s not the feeling you get when you hear ‘attorney.’”

Pearson, an intellectual property attorney, has been doing her best to demonstrate that her Incline Village, NV, law firm can be a truly green business. The three employees at the Law Office of Lara Pearson (p. 238) bike or walk to work as often as possible. They have reduced their paper use by printing fewer e-mails, and shifting the paper they do use to 100 percent post-consumer recycled paper. They’ve invested in a variety of strategies for reducing energy use, from changing to compact fluorescent light bulbs, to using the programmable thermostat, to setting the computers to “sleep” after ten minutes and unplugging appliances after each use.

Pearson’s team also evaluated each of their vendors, moving the firm’s bank account to a local credit union, and their telephone service to BetterWorld Telecom (p. 266). The office purchases carbon offsets to reflect the carbon impact of all air travel and energy use. Clients who come to the office for a consultation find Fair Trade Certified™ Theo Chocolate bars,

organic fruit roll-ups, and Clif Bar (p. 204) Luna Bars to snack on rather than conventional reception-area junk food.

Pearson’s firm has helped model green practices in the legal community, becoming the first firm in Nevada and only the 15th in the country to meet the American Bar Association’s “Law Office Climate Challenge” (www.abanet.org/envirom/climatechallenge).

Pearson’s firm has also made significant donations of funds and legal services to organizations that are working for a more just and sustainable world. She has provided *pro bono* intellectual property legal advice to nonprofits like Rock the Earth, Conservation Value, and Green America. And every year, the Law Office of Lara Pearson donates one percent of its gross revenue to any one or more of the 1,500 environmental organizations approved by 1% For The Planet, an environmental philanthropy initiative for businesses founded by Yvon Chouinard of Patagonia (p. 111).

Pearson has persisted in making this annual one percent “tithe” for a greener world even when both her financial advisor and her mother were encouraging her to reconsider her small start-up firm’s generosity.



Lara Pearson proves that lawyers can be socially and environmentally responsible.

“We’re really serious,” she says. “To me that [one percent] is a fixed expense. I’m not changing it.”

Ever since founding the firm, Pearson has turned to Green America’s Green Business Network™ for business connections and for friendship. Pearson has valued Green America’s Green Business Network and Conference as an “amazing” source of business connections and support. She encourages green businesses and green consumers to look for law firms and other service providers who are themselves making green decisions.

“The money our clients spend with us continues to further our shared values even after it leaves our firm,” says Pearson. “Not every firm can say that.”

For her, every business, law firm or otherwise, can prioritize “being good to each other—and taking care of the planet that’s on loan to us while we’re here.”

—Joelle Novey