



**MICHELLE DIFFENDERFER**  
President/Shareholder

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Mrs. Diffenderfer assists landowners, businesses and governments with local, state and federal, environmental, natural resource and land use issues. Michelle helps clients navigate these various legal requirements for permitting land development and infrastructure projects.

#### AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Represents local and state governments and special districts as special counsel on environmental, natural resource and water resource issues.
- Represents the Seminole Tribe of Florida as special environmental counsel, including casino related development and water resource issues on the Tribe's various reservations and land holdings.
- Gains permitting and approvals for private development and public infrastructure projects involving complex issues related to wetlands, mitigation, threatened and endangered species, water quality, and drainage.
- Represents landowners and governments in the review, preparation and comment on Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.
- Represents landowners and governments in the development, implementation and interpretation of Water Supply Policy, Plans, and Regulations.
- Represents clients in due diligence, permitting and compliance issues with the South Florida Water Management District, Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).
- Represents clients in the development of Biological Opinions, Habitat Conservation Plans and in the issuance of Incidental Take Permits and related consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

#### PRACTICES

Environmental and Natural Resources Law

Land Use and Real Estate Law

Governmental Law

Indian and Aboriginal Law

#### INDUSTRIES

Real Estate Development

Transportation and Infrastructure  
Utilities

#### EDUCATION

J.D., cum laude, University of Miami,  
School of Law, 1994

B.A., with honors, Brown University, 1990

## PROFESSIONAL, CIVIC AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- American Bar Association, Section of Environment, Energy and Resources, Secretary
- Leadership Florida, (Class of XXXIII) Gulfstream Council
- Rosarian Academy Family Association, Board Member
- The Episcopal Church of Bethesda by the Sea, Chancellor
- Girls II Women, Inc., Past Chair
- Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches, Past Chair
- The Florida Bar, Environmental and Land Use Law Section, Past Chair
- Leadership Palm Beach County, Class of 2000
- Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County
- Executive Women of the Palm Beaches
- U.S. Green Building Council, South Florida Chapter
- Florida Association of Environmental Professionals
- Palm Beach County Bar Association
- Caribbean Bar Association
- American Bar Foundation, Fellow
- United Way, Women's Leadership Council

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

- Martindale Hubbell AV<sup>®</sup> Preeminent<sup>™</sup> Peer Review Rated
- The Florida Commission on the Status of Women, Florida Achievement Award, honoring individuals who have improved the lives of Florida women and/or have served as positive role models for women and girls in their communities, 2016
- The Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches ATHENA<sup>®</sup> Award, honoring individuals that have achieved professional excellence, actively served the community, and helped women to reach their leadership potential, 2008
- South Florida Legal Guide, Top Lawyer in Environmental Law, 2017
- Families First of Palm Beach County, Harriet Goldstein Award, 2015
- EmpowHER of the Palm Beaches, Palm Beach County's Woman of Corporate Power 2015
- The University of Miami School of Law Alumni Achievement Award, 2014
- The Palm Beacher Magazine, Women in Power, 2014
- The Caribbean-American Democratic Club of Palm Beach County, Community Change Maker Award for Environmental Advocacy, 2013
- Business Leader Magazine's Women Extraordinaire Award, 2011
- Florida Super Lawyer, 2010-present
- The International Who's Who of Environmental Lawyers, 2009-2015
- Florida Trend Magazine's Legal Elite, Environmental and Land Use Law, 2011

## PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

- “Lake Okeechobee and the Estuaries” presented at the Florida Chamber Environmental Permitting Summer School, July 2016
- “EPA Clean Water Rule” presented at the American Bar Association Spring Conference, April 2016
- “Clearer or More Confusing? Final Waters of the U.S. Rule Change Remains Murky” presented at the Florida Bar Environmental and Land Use Section Conference, January 2016
- “Looking Out to Sea: Resurging Interest in Seawater Desalination Projects Face the Twin Specters of Technical Challenges and Permitting Complexity”, May 2015
- “New USEPA Report on Connectivity of Streams and Wetlands May Affect CWA Jurisdiction,” Journal American Water Works Association, March 2014
- “Florida’s New Crop: Is Water Farming for You?,” Journal American Water Works Association, December 2013
- “Secondary and Cumulative Impacts Analysis and the Clean Water Act,” Journal American Water Works Association, July 2012
- “Secondary and Cumulative Impacts Analysis in the Environmental Context for Assessing Environmental Damage,” WestLaw Journal: Environmental, June 2012
- “Who Gets the Water? A Competition for a Limited Resource,” Journal American Water Works Association, March 2012
- “Greenwashing: What Your Client Should Know to Avoid Costly Litigation and Consumer Backlash,” American Bar Association's Natural Resources & Environment Publication, Winter 2011
- “Cumulative Impacts Analysis and Global Threats,” presented at the ABA Section of Environment, Energy and Resources Law Summit, October 2010
- “Greenwashing: A Guide to the Ethical Advertising of Green Products,” Manatee Chamber of Commerce Current Magazine, December 2009
- “Two Tribes Embrace Green Development Practices for Off-Reservation Projects,” Natural Resources & Environment, Fall 2009
- “Florida Water Law: Limited Availability in the Land of Abundance,” presented at the Water Sustainability Plenary AIChE Spring National Meeting, April 2009
- “Overview of Federal and State Wetlands Protection Regulations,” Florida Water Law & Policy, CLE International, October 2007
- “The Winds of Change...Storming into the Future,” presented at the Florida Association of Special Districts Annual Conference, June 2006
- “What is an ARNI and Why Should You Care?,” American Bar Association's Natural Resources & Environment Publication, March 2003
- “Endangered Species Conservation Banking,” March 2002
- “Evolving Issues in Eastern Water Law”