HansonBridgett



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Firm Leadership
Water Practice Leader

Areas of Focus

- Air Quality / Climate Change / Greenhouse Gases
- Environmental Law
- Land Use
- Litigation and Dispute Resolution
- Proposition 65
- Water Law
- Government
- Vineyard and Wine Law

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Nathan has over a decade and a half of experience in water law and environmental law. He advises clients on water rights issues in defending and protesting water rights applications and transfers, including related issues under the California Environmental Quality Act, the California Fish and Game Code, the Clean Water Act sections 401 and 404, the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the public trust, reasonable use and physical solutions doctrines. Nathan has assisted public agency clients in implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and the State's emergency water conservation regulations. His experience includes involvement in water transfers and groundwater management issues related to dwindling water supplies. He has also defended industrial and municipal clients in stormwater permit compliance and citizen suit actions involving stormwater discharges under the Clean Water Act. He currently serves Stinson Beach County Water District as general counsel.

Nathan has experience in NEPA/CEQA compliance, environmental due diligence, remediation and development of contaminated properties, environmental reporting requirements, hazardous waste management, environmental permitting, Prop 65, UST clean-up, and endangered species. He has appeared before numerous administrative and judicial proceedings, including the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, California Superior Court, the California State Water Resources Control Board, the Nevada State Engineer and a Bureau of Land Management, Administrative Law Judge.

Before becoming an attorney, Nathan worked in hazardous waste disposal and environmental health and safety (EH&S) management for medical instrument, drug delivery, and biotechnology companies.

Representative Work

Water Law. Advises water right owners on the complex California water rights system, including permitting and reporting requirements before the State Board. Adjudication of groundwater and surface water rights in courts and in administrative hearings. Assists with groundwater management, drought conservation measures, and water transfers and wheeling agreements. Experience in fishery restoration projects and negotiated settlements with government agencies and environmental groups. Advises public agency clients in the implementation of SGMA, including basin boundary modifications, application to become a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA), and development of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP) and alternatives. Serves as counsel to a watermaster in a fully appropriated stream system.

Municipal Clients. Advises on environmental compliance requirements and review of environmental documents (CEQA / NEPA / ESA / Porter-Cologne Act / Fish and Game Code).

Industrial Stormwater. Advises municipal and industrial clients on stormwater compliance and defending citizen suit actions under the Clean Water Act, and negotiation of settlements.

Defends clients in Clean Water Act actions, and resolves litigation through favorable settlement terms.

Publications

“Appellate Court Clarifies Groundwater Well Permitting Responsibilities,” author, Water Law Legal Alert (August 2026)

“Ninth Circuit Reaffirms Traditional Balancing Under Fish & Game Code Section 5937,” co-author, Water Law Legal Alert (December 2025)

“Court Reaffirms Constitution’s Role in Water Use Disputes,” co-author, Water Law Legal Alert (April 2025)

“Legislature Increases State Water Resource Control Board’s Civil Penalties for Water Rights Violations,” Environmental Law Legal Alert (September 2024)

“New Legislation May Alter California’s Established Water Rights System,” Water Law Legal Alert (March 2023)

“State Water Board Lacks Power to Curtail Pre-1914 Water Rights under Water Code, § 1052(a),” Water Law Legal Alert (September 2022)

“US ACE Nationwide Permits Include Water Reclamation & Use,” co-author, *Water and Waste Digest* (April 2022)

“California’s Variable Water Supply Needs More Than Rainfall,” co-author, *Bloomberg Law* (February 2022)

“Ninth Circuit Upholds ‘Significant Nexus’ Test for Federal Permitting of Wetlands Projects,” Water Law Alert (August 2021)

“Court of Appeal Finds Overlying Correlative Rights Do Not Have to Share Equally in Water Shortages,” *Water Law Alert* (March 2021)

“Court of Appeal Upholds State Board’s Broad Power to Regulate Riparian and Pre-1914 Appropriative Water Rights to Protect Threatened Fish,” co-author, *Water + Environmental Law Alert* (July 2020)

“Uncertainty on Maui: How Will Functional Equivalence Work in the Real World?,” co-author, *Water Law Alert* (April 2020)

“New PFAS Regulations Work Dramatic Changes to California’s Drinking Water Supplies — With More Changes Likely to Follow,” co-author, *Water Law Alert* (February 2020)

“Applying for a Business License in 2020? You May Need to Consider Your Water Quality Impacts,” co-author, *Water Law Alert* (December 2019)

“Can Groundwater Permitting Affect the Public Trust?,” co-author, *Water Law Alert* (September 2018)

“California’s First Appellate District Court Finds Reasonable Use Determination Requires Consideration of All Competing Water Users,” *Water Law Alert* (February 2018)

“Ninth Circuit: Changes in Water Flows Benefiting Fish Don’t Require SWRCB Permission,” *Water Law Alert* (February 2017)

“DWR Provides Notice Of Proposed Emergency Regulatory Action for GSPs Under SGMA,” co-author, *Water Law Alert* (July 2016)

“The DWR Releases Proposed Groundwater Sustainability Plan Emergency Regulations Under SGMA,” co-author, *Water Law Alert* (May 2016)

“Governor Issues New Water Conservation Order; SWRCB Proposes Water Conservation Emergency Regulation Amendments,” co-author, *Water Law Alert* (May 2016)

“The DWR Releases Draft Regulations for the Management of Groundwater Basins Under SGMA,” co-author, *Water Law Alert* (February 2016)

“Infographic: Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA),” Hanson Bridgett’s *In The Loop* (October 2015)

“The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act: Implementation Update,” *Water Law Alert* (August 2015)

“SWRCB Issues Curtailment Notice for Senior Water Rights,” *Water Law Alert* (June 2015)

“New Ruling: CDFW Notification Required For Water Diversions That Don’t Alter Streambed,” *Water Law Alert* (June 2015)

“SWRCB Issues Emergency Regulation and Governor Proposes Conservation Enforcement Legislation,” co-author, *Water Law Alert* (April 2015)

“SWRCB Issues Draft Regulations to Achieve 25% Water Use Reduction,” co-author, *Water Law Alert* (April 2015)

“Update: State Water Resources Control Board Releases Proposed Regulatory Framework to Implement the Drought Executive Order,” co-author, *Water Law Alert* (April 2015)

“Drought State of Emergency: Governor Brown Issues Executive Order Mandating 25 Percent Reduction of Urban Water Usage,” co-author, *Water Law Alert* (April 2015)

“State Water Resources Control Board Proposes to Continue and Add New Requirements to the Drought Emergency Water Conservation Regulations,” *Water Law Alert* (March 2015)

“State Water Resources Control Board Requires Additional Reporting by Riparian and Pre-1914 Water Right Owners,” co-author, *Water Law Alert* (February 2015)

“Gearing Up for the Continuing Drought Emergency,” *Water Law Alert* (February 2015)

“Court Finds SWRCB has Jurisdiction over Pre-1914 Water Rights and Defines Forfeiture Standard,” *Water Law Alert* (September 2014)

“Superior Court Finds Issuance of Well Drilling Permit for Groundwater Extraction is Subject to the Public Trust Doctrine,” *Water Law Alert* (July 2014)

“Sour Grapes: A Potential Prelude to Water Rights Curtailment,” *Water Law Alert* (June 2014)

Presentations

"Getting to Yes in SGMA – Turning Challenges to Opportunities," Groundwater Resources Association SGMA Implementation Summit & Workshop (June 2024)

"Quenching Our Thirst: The Bay Area's Response to the Drought," BASF (August 2022)

"Water Rights in California - Current Issues, Legal Challenges and Recent Trends," presenter, National Business Institute Seminar (January 2021)

"Groundwater Quality Under SGMA," 2020 Association of California Water Agencies CLE Virtual Workshop (September 2020)

"Managing Groundwater Quality Under the Sustainable Ground Water Management Act (SGMA)," Mapistry's EHS Virtual Summit (August 2020)

"Clean Water Act Citizen Suits: Plaintiff and Defense, Litigation and Settlement Strategies," co-speaker, Strafford Webinar (March 2019)

"California Groundwater: SGMA & Beyond," moderator, Water Law Symposium (February 2019)

"Stormwater Litigation Avoidance, Response, and Defense Strategies," Pollution Prevention Summit (September 2018)

"Clean Water Act Citizen Suits: Plaintiff and Defense Tactics for Litigation," co-speaker, Strafford Webinar (March 2018)

"Preventing, Litigating and Settling Clean Water Act Citizen Suits," co-speaker, Mapistry's Industrial Stormwater Summit Webinar (October 2017)

"Dark Days in Industrial Stormwater: What You Can Do to Fight Back or Avoid Stormwater Lawsuits," Webinar (January 2017)

"Drought Regulations, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, and Water Rates," co-presenter, County Counsel's Association of California Environmental Law and Regulation Fall 2016 Study Section Conference (October 2016)

"Drought Regulations, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, and Water Rates," co-presenter, California Special Districts Association Annual Conference (October 2016)

"Stormwater Citizen Suits," Bay Area Environmental Safety Group (February 2016)

“Implementing the 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act,” moderator, 2016 California Water Law Symposium (January 2016)

“Litigation Under the Clean Water Act,” Ted Talk, Municipal Management Association of Northern California Annual Conference (October 2015)

“Environmental Law Panel: Sustainable Groundwater Management and the Drought,” moderator, University of San Francisco Environmental Law Student and Alumni Society and the Environmental Law Society (October 2015)

“And Not a Drop to Drink: Public Agency Options for Responding to Drought,” co-speaker, Municipal Management Association of Northern California Annual Conference (October 2015)

“Life After Permit Submission: IGP Compliance and Minimizing Your Risk to Third Party Lawsuits,” co-speaker, Mapistry’s California’s Stormwater Awareness Week (September 2015)

“State Water Resources Control Board Emergency Regulations for Water Suppliers,” co-speaker, Public Agency Rountable Series (July 2014)

“Protecting, Preserving and Utilizing Your Water Rights During a Water Shortage,” panelist, Water Shortage Seminar (April 2014)

“Stormwater: What you need to know to survive winter,” co-speaker, Public Agency Roundtable Series (November 2013)

“CEQA Reform—Recent Trends and Future Implications,” Public Agency Roundtable Series (June 2013)

“Introduction to Water Law,” County Counsels’ Association of California (May 2010)

“Litigation on the Truckee and Carson Rivers,” Newlands Water Protection Association (September 2009)

“The Evolution of Water Rights Transfer Law in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals,” co-presenter, Lorman Educational Services (July 2008)

Press

“Their land is sinking. But Tulare Lake farm barons defy calls to cut groundwater pumping,” *Los Angeles Times* (December 2023)

“Hanson Bridgett Secures Water Rights for Ventura County and Ventura County Waterworks Districts 1 and 19,” (July 2023)

“Property Owners and Officials Find Ways Around Century-Old Laws as the West Runs Out of Water,” CNN (July 2022)

Honors & Awards

Super Lawyers, Energy & Natural Resources (2010–2015)

Education

J.D., University of San Francisco School of Law (2005)

M.S., University of San Francisco (1997)

B.S., Clarion University of Pennsylvania (1989)

Admissions and Courts

California

Nevada

U.S. Court of Federal Claims

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California