HansonBridgett



# Christopher Powell

Partner

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**Areas of Focus**

- Environmental Law
- Land Use
- Real Estate
- Water Law
- Air Quality / Climate Change / Greenhouse Gases

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Owners of businesses, development projects, mining, mineral extraction and conservation projects across California rely on Chris for his knowledge in obtaining land use approvals and permits including conditional use permits, general plan amendments, specific plans, zone changes, subdivision maps, development agreements, plans of operations, rights of way, reclamation plans and vested rights determinations. He can assist from initial real property due diligence, purchase agreement negotiation and closing, through the application, environmental review and public hearing process, including negotiation of mitigation requirements and conditions of approval, and any subsequent litigation or enforcement action. Chris helps clients develop and use their properties for commercial/residential development, mining and oil & gas resource extraction, and mitigation banking and conservation easement projects. Chris has assisted clients with obtaining permits and approvals from cities, counties, and state and federal agencies such as the California Department of Fish & Wildlife, Regional Water Quality Control Boards, State Mining and Geology Board, Air Pollution Control Districts, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service. Additionally, Chris has extensive experience in location and maintenance of unpatented mining claims, permitting of projects on federally-owned land, severed mineral rights, preparation of mineral rights analyses and title opinions, and negotiation of mineral leases and royalty agreements.

Clients seek his guidance with regard to compliance with Land Use and Zoning Law, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Federal and California Endangered Species Acts (ESA & CESA), the Clean Water Act (CWA), Porter-Cologne Act, Williamson Act, Mining Law of 1872, Federal Land Management and Policy Act (FLPMA), and the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA).

As a sought-after thought leader, Chris is the author for the California Mineral and Energy Law Newsletter for The Foundation for National Resources and Energy Law (formerly Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation).

Chris regularly handles matters in the following areas of focus:

- Land Use
- Zoning
- Mining Law
- Environmental and Natural Resources
- Real Estate
- Mitigation Banking and Conservation Projects
- CEQA
- NEPA
- General Plans
- Severed Mineral Rights
- Vested Rights
- Mining Claims
- Surface Mining and Reclamation Act
- Subdivisions
- Development Agreements
- Easements and Rights of Way

## Representative Work

Assisted with obtaining use permits, plans of operation, zone changes, general plan amendments, reclamation plans and CEQA compliance for large surface mining operations across the state, on public and private land.

Assisted with due diligence, property acquisition, resolution of titles issues, mineral title analysis, CEQA compliance and agency coordination for mitigation bank and conservation easement projects.

Assisted with due diligence, CEQA compliance, and permit processing for large commercial development centers.

Assisted in negotiation of Development Agreements, approval of Tentative Subdivision Maps and related environmental review for residential development projects.

Assisted with zoning compliance issues and defense in city and county enforcement actions.

Purchase and sale of property, leases, easements, subdivisions, and title review/due diligence.

Assisted clients with obtaining approval of waste discharge requirements from the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Preparation of mineral title analysis and preparation of title opinions related to purchase of large-scale mining operations.

Assist clients with staking and properly maintaining unpatented mining claims.

Coordinated due diligence, purchase and permitting of several large gold mining operations.

Assisted oil & gas companies with title review and purchase or lease of properties.

## Publications

"California Governor Vetoes Proposed Data Center Law Relating to Water Supply and Signs Law Regarding Data Center Energy Use," co-author, Environmental Law Legal Alert (December 2025)

"EPA Issues New Underground Injection Control Permits for Carbon Capture Projects in California," co-author, Environmental Law Legal Alert (February 2025)

"Carbon Capture and Sequestration: Key Updates on Permitting and Regulatory Requirements in California," Environmental Law Legal Alert (November 2024)

"California Court Decision Creates Uncertainty as to the Ownership of Aggregate Resources on Land Subject to General Mineral Reservations," co-author, Environmental Law Legal Alert (January 2024)

*The Foundation for Natural Resources and Energy Law*, Volume XL No. 3, California Enacts Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act (2023)

"California Enacts Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act," Land Use Insights & Analysis (July 2023)

"Economic Feasibility and Policy Considerations for Carbon Sequestration Projects: Implications for Stakeholders," co-author, Land Use Insights & Analysis (June 2023)

*Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation*, Volume XXX No. 3, Emergency Regulations Regarding Suction Dredge Mining In California (2013)

*Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation*, Volume XXX No. 1, California State Water Resources Control Board Issues Preliminary Draft Of Wetland Area Protection And Dredged Or Fill Permitting Policy (2013)

*Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation*, Volume XXIX No. 4, New Stormwater Permit Will Impose Additional Regulatory Requirements On Mine Operators (2012)

*Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation*, Volume XXIX No. 3, California Court Of Appeal Holds That Mining Company Lacked A Vested Right To Mine Without A Permit (2012)

## Presentations

"Title Due Diligence for Transactions," The Foundation: Mineral Title Examination, Review, and Due Diligence for Oil and Gas and Mining Projects
(May 2024)

## Press

"Hanson Bridgett Announces 2025 Partner Promotions," Hanson Bridgett Press Release (January 2025)

## Honors & Awards

Top Lawyer, *Sacramento Magazine* (2022)

## Professional Affiliations

California Construction and Industrial Materials Association (CalCIMA), Member

The Foundation for Natural Resources and Energy Law, formerly Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation, Member and Contributing Author

## Academic Distinctions

Order of the Coif

Traynor Honor Society

Witkin Awards

## Education

J.D., great distinction University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law (2007)

B.A., University of California, Berkeley (2000)

## Admissions and Courts

California

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