

*Ashley Nikkel counsels mining and natural resource companies on complex permitting, environmental review and policy matters at the intersection of mining law, NEPA and federal public lands management.*



## Ashley C. Nikkel

Office Managing Shareholder | Reno

### Biography

Ashley Nikkel is a shareholder on the environmental, energy and natural resources, and litigation practice teams at Parsons Behle & Latimer.

Ashley is nationally recognized for her sophisticated practice at the intersection of mining law, environmental permitting, administrative law and federal public lands policy. She represents mining and natural resource clients through all stages of project development and operation, with particular emphasis on large-scale hardrock mining projects on federal lands. Her practice focuses heavily on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), federal land management regimes, and the increasingly technical and policy-driven regulatory frameworks governing domestic mineral development.

Clients regularly rely on Ashley to navigate high-profile and legally sensitive permitting matters involving the Bureau of Land Management, the United States Forest Service and other federal and state agencies. Her experience spans exploration programs, mine plan approvals, rights-of-way, project modifications and expansions, compliance strategy, administrative appeals, litigation risk management and federal litigation. She regularly integrates technical permitting analysis with practical business objectives and anticipated judicial review.

In addition to her project-specific work, Ashley maintains an active policy and regulatory practice involving federal rulemakings. She regularly works with leading mining industry organizations, including the National Mining Association, the American Exploration & Mining Association and the Nevada Mining Association, on emerging environmental, permitting

### Contact information

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### Capabilities

Mining

NEPA

Project Permitting & Compliance

Environmental & Natural Resources

Environmental Litigation &  
Administrative Appeals

Public Lands

### Licensed/Admitted

Nevada

U.S. Dist. Court, District of Nevada

U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Dist. of  
Nevada

U.S. Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit

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and public lands issues affecting the mining sector. Her work in this space includes analysis of proposed federal regulations, preparation of comments on agency rulemakings and strategic counseling regarding the practical implications of evolving environmental and administrative law requirements for the mining industry.

A Reno-Tahoe native, Ashley previously served on the board of directors for the Nevada Center for Civic Engagement and has coached nationally recognized teams through Incline High School's "We the People" civic education program for more than two decades. Ashley also enjoys her work with the Foundation for Natural Resources and Energy Law (FNREL), where she serves as a trustee, member of the Programs Committee, and thought leader on environmental permitting, NEPA, public lands and mining law issues.

## Experience

### **Ninth Circuit Amicus Brief on Land Exchange and Tribal Doctrine**

Authored amicus brief for a national industry association in a case challenging a land exchange. Advocated for the mining industry's position on the legal framework and argued that upholding the district court's decision would hinder federal agencies' ability to facilitate land exchanges crucial for mineral production and processing.

### **Defended Claims of Interest Royalty and Reached Beneficial Settlement**

Defended mining company from claims that another company is entitled to an interest royalty. Years later the claim was refiled and a beneficial settlement was reached for the clients.

### **Defending a Large Gold Mine Against Royalty Claims**

Representing an international gold mining company's mine against royalty claims by another world-class gold mine.

### **Structured Gold Mine Transaction and 1031 Exchange**

Structured the sale of a gold mine to a junior mining company for the client including negotiating and documenting all aspects of the transaction, including a private placement and the payment of a mortgage. Also represented client Nevada Gold Mines in an IRS Section 1031 like-kind exchange of two mining properties, including environmental due diligence; real property transfers/recordings; personal property transfers; private placement on a secured credit facility; and tax structuring.

### **Nevada Gold Mines, LLC**

Represented Nevada Gold Mines, LLC as lead counsel against the Pershing County Water Conservation District who contended that priority water rights had been negatively impacted by the State Engineer's alleged improper actions regarding water appropriations and

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conjunctive management of water rights in the Humboldt River Basin. After years of litigation, the District agreed to dismiss the case with prejudice.

### **Permitting Challenge in Federal District Court**

Provided legal advice related to federal and state permitting of the Mount Hope Project owned by Eureka Moly. Represented Eureka Moly in appeals in Federal District Court challenging federal approval.

## **Accomplishments**

### **Professional**

Recognized as "One to Watch" in *Best Lawyers in America*: Appellate Practice, Litigation, Environmental – 2021-2025

Mountain States Super Lawyers Rising Star, Business Litigation, 2021-2022

Nevada Top Rank Attorneys (formerly Nevada Legal Elite), 2025, 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020, 2017, 2016 and 2015

Clerked for the Honorable Mark Gibbons of the Nevada Supreme Court (2012 - 2013)

Clerked for the Honorable Janet J. Berry of the Second Judicial District Court, State of Nevada (2013 - 2014)

### **Academic**

William S. Boyd School of Law, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (J.D., *summa cum laude*, 2012)

- *Nevada Law Journal*, Articles Editor
- Society of Advocates member, top sixteen competitor in the Robert F. Wagner National Labor and Employment Law Moot Court Competition
- CALI Excellence Awards (for highest grades) in Torts, Lawyering Process II, Lawyering Process III: Appellate Advocacy, Federal Public Lands & Natural Resources, Appellate Clinic, American Legal History, Water Law, and Capital Punishment
- Clinic Legal Education Association Award for excellence and achievement in the clinical program
- Scribe Award from the American Society of Legal Writers for excellence in legal writing

University of Nevada, Reno (B.A., *summa cum laude*, 2009)

- Honors Program, double major in Political Science and History with a minor in Economic Policy
- Chief Justice of the Associated Students of the University of Nevada Judicial Council
- Dean's Award for Outstanding Graduate in the Humanities

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## Associations

### Professional

Foundation for Natural Resources and Energy Law  
Trustee, Nevada Mining Association  
(2025 to present)  
71st Annual Institute Mining Section Co-Chair  
(July, 2025)  
Programs Committee Member  
(2026 to present)

National Mining Association  
(2019 to present)

American Exploration and Mining Association  
(2019 to present)  
Mining Law Short Course Chair  
(2023 to present)

Nevada Mining Association  
(2019 to present)

Northern Nevada Women Lawyers Association  
(2013 to present)

William S. Boyd School of Law Alumni Board of Directors  
Northern Nevada Liaison (2013 to 2016)

### Community

Volunteer Coach For The Center For Civic Education's "We The People" Program At Incline High School, Nevada  
(2005 To Present)

Nevada Center For Civic Engagement, Board Of Directors  
(2020 To 2025)

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## Articles

“The Rise of Federal Equity in Mining,” *Trends*, American Bar Association Section of Environment, Energy and Resources, July 2026

American Law of Mining (Second Edition), Chapter Update Author

Preliminary Injunctions, Vacatur, and Remand Strategy in Natural Resources and Energy Litigation after Winter and Seven County (publication forthcoming, 2026)

Nevada’s White Gold Rush: The Boom Beneath the Desert Floor, Nevada Business Weekly – Smart Money/Thought Leaders (Fall 2025)

A Winding Road: Securing Land Tenure for Mining Operations, 71 FNREL Inst. 19 (2025)

Lithium Mining in Nevada: The White Gold Rush? June 8, 2021

State of the Nevada Courts May 19, 2020

Executing on Janus: the Trouble with Trustees in Nevada March 15, 2017  
Nevada Lawyer

Painting Ourselves Into a Corner: the Fundamental Paradoxes of Modern Warfare in Al Maqaleh v. Gates

## Presentations

Mining Law Short Course, American Exploration and Mining Association Annual Meeting (2019 to present)

Preliminary Injunctions and Remedies, FNREL Special Institute on the Federal Administrative Practice in the Context of Project Development, Boulder, CO (April 2026)

Moderator, A Winding Road: Securing Land Tenure for Mining Operations, FNREL 71st Annual Institute, Whistler, B.C. (July 2025)

Regulatory and Legislative Update, Nevada Mining Association Day at the Legislature, Carson City, NV (March 2025)

Permitting Ancillary Facilities on Public Lands, Idaho Mining Association Annual Conference, Boise, ID (October 2024)

Solicitor’s Opinion on Ancillary Use, American Exploration and Mining Association Annual Meeting, Reno NV (December 2023)

Update on Ancillary Facilities on Public Lands, Nevada Landmen’s Association (November 2023)

Nevada Mining Association Environmental Committee – Permitting and Rulemaking Updates (2021 to Present)

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