

John Newman is an experienced litigator in Parsons Behle & Latimer's Missoula office. His broad practice includes land use and real property disputes, and commercial, employment, environmental, and tort litigation. As a former civil Assistant U.S. Attorney, he has particular expertise in cases involving the federal government.



John M. Newman

Of Counsel | Missoula

Biography

John Newman is an of counsel attorney at Parsons Behle & Latimer. He brings years of experience representing the United States government in all manner of civil cases to a wide-ranging litigation practice. John has handled a diverse array of cases in his career, including easement and title disputes, property damage, personal injury, professional negligence, employment discrimination, elections, eminent domain, Indian trust, federal program entitlement, immigration, government records, and environmental matters. As a former public sector land use planner and decades-long member of local planning boards and commissions, John has deep expertise in land use and development issues. He has tried cases in state and federal courts and argued before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

John began his legal career as a law clerk to then-Chief U.S. District Court Judge Dana L. Christensen in Missoula. He then represented local governments and corporate clients in private practice before joining the U.S. Attorney's Office. In addition to his civil practice with the government, John served as the District Elections Officer prosecuting election crimes, and as the U.S. Attorney's Office point of contact for ethics and professional responsibility matters. In prior professional lives, John mapped fiber optic networks in New York City and was a consulting engineer for a global property insurer. He holds both a law degree and master's degree in cultural geography from the University of Montana and an undergraduate degree in chemistry and environmental studies from Middlebury College.

Contact information

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Capabilities

Appeals

Civil Rights Including Title VII and Title IX

Employment Litigation

Environmental Litigation & Administrative Appeals

Environmental Property Damage

Medical Malpractice & Hospital Negligence

Plaintiffs Litigation

Public Lands

Real Estate Litigation

Whistleblower (Qui Tam)

Licensed/Admitted

Montana

U.S. Dist. Court, Dist. Of Montana

U.S. Court Of Appeals, 9th Circuit

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Experience

Defended against claims of negligent firefighting

In a published decision, the Ninth Circuit affirmed the Montana federal district court's summary judgment in favor of the U.S. Forest Service in consolidated cases alleging negligent management of and communication related to a more than 60,000-acre wildland fire near Lolo, MT. See *Schurg v. U.S.*, 63 F.4th 826 (9th Cir. 2023).

Defended against quiet title claims

John obtained summary judgment in favor of the United States in numerous cases claiming that easements held by the Forest Service did not allow for public access to federal lands. See, e.g., *Wilkins v. U.S.*, 2024 WL 4680696 (D. Mont. Nov. 5, 2024), *aff'd*, 2025 WL 3752187 (9th Cir. Dec. 29, 2025); *Incline Ranch, LLC v. U.S.*, 2025 WL 3268290 (D. Mont. Nov. 24, 2025).

Multiple trial wins in employment discrimination cases

John successfully tried multiple cases alleging race and age-based employment discrimination to verdict in jury and bench trials in federal court.

Dozens of summary judgment wins and favorable settlements in tort cases

John has secured both wins on merits briefing and settlements on terms favorable to the United States in cases involving Post Office slip-and-falls, injuries arising from federal law enforcement encounters, vehicle collisions, alleged medical malpractice at federal facilities and federally funded community clinics, federal transportation and irrigation infrastructure failures, and property damage at EPA cleanup sites, among others.

Fought off challenge to municipal bond

After the citizens of Bozeman, MT voted in favor of a multimillion-dollar bond to construct a desperately needed public safety center, John fended off challenges to invalidate the bond in district court and before the Montana Commissioner of Political Practices, on grounds that the city improperly advocated for the bond's passage.

Accomplishments

Academic

University of Montana School of Law, (J.D. with Honors, 2014)

- American College of Trial Lawyers National Trial Team member
- Teaching Assistant, Legal Research & Writing
- Editor, Public Lands and Resources Law Review
- International Academy of Trial Lawyers Award
- Cremer Award for Best Environmental Research Paper

University of Montana Department of Geography (M.S., 2009)

- Teaching Assistant
- Thesis: Rural Subdivision Planning in Missoula County, Montana

Middlebury College, Departments of Chemistry and Environmental Studies (B.A., 2002)

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Associations

Professional

State Bar of Montana

Federal Bar Association, Montana Chapter (Director)

Local Rules Committee, U.S. District Court, District of Montana (2018-2025)

Community

Missoula City Planning Commission (2026-present; Chair)

Missoula County Elections Advisory Committee (2025-present)

Missoula City Board of Adjustment (2018-2026; Chair)

Missoula City-County Planning Board (2012-2020; Chair)

Missoula City and County Impact Fee Advisory Committees (2021-2022)

Past member of the boards of Missoula Community School, Habitat for Humanity, and Missoula Mountain Bike Coalition

Articles

“Koontz v. St. Johns River Water Management District: The Constitutionality of Monetary Exactions in Land Use Planning”, 76 Mont. L. Rev. 359 (2015)

Presentations

“The Federal Tort Claims Act: Jurisdiction, Substantive Law, and Special Considerations,” Montana Federal Bar Association and Federal Practice Section Annual CLE Seminar, Missoula, MT (September 4, 2024)

“The Quiet Title Act,” State Bar of Montana Annual Real Estate CLE, Fairmont Hot Springs, MT (February 13, 2026)

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