

PARTNER

Steve M. Anderson

steve.anderson@bbklaw.com (951) 826-8279

Riverside

Steve Anderson works on water rights, groundwater, wetlands, in-lieu fee program, endangered species, environmental mitigation, conservation easements and other natural resource law matters. As a partner at Best Best & Krieger LLP, Steve is a member of the firm's Environmental Law & Natural Resources, Special Districts and Municipal Law practice groups.

Water Law
Steve is regularly involved in water issues faced by public agencies and private clients across California, including water rights disputes, groundwater, recycled water, water diversions and reporting, drought impacts on water supply, implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, water bonds (Proposition 1), water supply assessments, wastewater and integrated water planning. Steve routinely drafts water rights opinions and contracts involving water supplies.

General Counsel Practice
Steve serves as general counsel to water districts, court-appointed watermasters, resource conservation districts and other special districts. In this capacity, Steve works on Brown Act, conflict of interest, contracting, grant funding, employment, transactional and other public agency governance issues, in addition to natural resource law matters.

CWA, ESA and More
Steve also assists public and private entities with Section 404 wetlands permitting, in-lieu fee programs, mitigation banking and other federal Clean Water Act issues. He helps clients in complying with Section 7 consultation requirements, habitat conservation planning and conservation banking issues under the federal Endangered Species Act. Steve routinely interacts with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Regional Water Quality Control Boards and other state and federal regulatory agencies on permitting for infrastructure development and other public and private projects.

CORE PRACTICES

Endangered Species

Environmental Law & Natural Resources

Environmental Litigation

Special Districts

Water

Business

Municipal Law

EDUCATION & ADMISSIONS

Education

UC College of the Law, San Francisco (formerly Hastings), J.D.

University of California, San Diego, B.A.

Bar Admissions

California

District of Columbia

Steve represents public and private clients in administrative proceedings and civil litigation in state and federal courts involving the Delta, the Colorado River, State Water Resources Control Board orders, the ESA, the CWA, the California Endangered Species Act, the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act and other laws.

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Steve regularly makes presentations on water, endangered species, CWA, mitigation and land conservation issues at local, regional and statewide conferences. Steve has taught courses on the ESA and habitat conservation planning at the University of California, Riverside. He also frequently drafts articles on the ESA and California water law issues for state and national publications.

Before joining BBK, Steve served as a judicial law clerk to the Chief Justice of the Nevada Supreme Court.

Steve also serves as a volunteer attorney and board member of the Inland Empire Latino Lawyers Association legal aid project, a nonprofit that provides free legal services to the under-served.

Sample Recent Matters

- Assisted public agencies in forming GSAs under SGMA in more than eight groundwater basins.
- Represented public water agency in dispute over local surface water supplies; litigation settled on favorable terms.
- Secured approval for the first Army Corps/EPA in-lieu fee program approved in the Los Angeles District under the 2008 CWA Mitigation Rule.
- Represented coalition of water agencies in endangered fish species litigation related to Delta water supplies.
- Assisted resource conservation districts and nonprofit land trust to place into conservation thousands of acres of protected riparian habitat and uplands.
- Helped vineyard owner in dispute with uphill neighbor over groundwater pumping.
- Prepared water rights opinion in support of multi-million dollar real estate transaction.

Accolades

- The Best Lawyers in America®, Natural Resources Law, Water Law, 2019-2027
- Wiley W. Manuel Pro Bono Service Award
- IELLA Legal Aid Clinic Volunteer Attorney of the Year, 2001

Professional & Community Involvement

- Inland Empire Latino Lawyers Association legal aid project, Boards of Directors

Thought Leadership

Publications

- “Federal Wildlife Agencies Propose ESA Changes Including Narrowing the Scope of Consultation,” *PublicCEO*, Dec. 5, 2025
- "Federal Agencies to Defer the Applicability of the 2015 ‘Waters Of The United States’ Rule," *Argent Communications*, Jan. 8, 2018
- “New Federal Drought Action Plan Owes a Lot to Lessons Learned in California,” *BBKnowledge*, March 25, 2016
- “California State Water Board Will Hold Public Workshop on Draft Emergency Regulation for Measuring and Reporting Water Diversions,” *BBKnowledge*, Dec. 8, 2015
- “Natural Resource Conservation Subject of White House Directive to Agencies,” *BBKnowledge*, Nov. 19, 2015
- “As El Nino Looms, State Weighs Extension of Conservation Regs,” *BBKnowledge*, Nov. 12, 2015

- “California Water Board Lifts Curtailment of Senior Water Rights in Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta,” *BBKnowledge*, Oct. 30, 2015
- “[PRESENTATION] The Federal Endangered Species Act: Practical Strategies for Implementing Public Projects Affected by FESA,” *BBKnowledge*, Oct. 13, 2015
- “Drought: Problems Arise When Water Supply Goes Down,” *BBKnowledge*, Sept. 2, 2015
- “First Water Curtailment Action Filed in California,” *BBKnowledge*, July 21, 2015
- “California Water Suppliers Take Steps to Meet Conservation Standards,” *BBKnowledge*, June 26, 2015
- “California Appellate Court: CDFW Notification Required for Water Diversions,” *BBKnowledge*, June 16, 2015
- “Water Bond Passes Easily – But Real Work Begins Now for Public Agencies,” *BBKnowledge*, Nov. 5, 2014
- “Mitigate Early and Often: Four Public Agency Strategies for Streamlining Projects” *PublicCEO*, March 4, 2014 (via *BBKnowledge*)

Presentations

- Introductory Remarks, Argent Communications Group Annual California Water Law & Policy Conference, June 9, 2023
- "Brown Act and Legal Requirements,**"** California Association of Resource Conservation Districts Annual Conference, Jan. 20, 2022
- “In-Lieu Fee: Accelerate RCD Stewardship Programs,” California Association of Resource Conservation Districts Annual Conference, Nov. 13, 2019
- "Biology 101 for Planners: How to Turn Biological Constraints Into Project Assets," American Planning Association California Conference, Sept. 17, 2019
- "Whose Water Is It, Anyway?" Building Industry Association of Southern California- Baldy View Chapter Annual SBC Water Conference, Aug. 8, 2019
- Introductory Remarks, Argent Communications Group Annual California Water Law & Policy Conference, June 21, 2019
- "RCDs - Behind the Curtain: Basics of the Brown Act," California Association of Resource Conservation Districts Annual Conference, Nov. 16, 2018
- Introductory Remarks, Argent Communications Group Annual California Water Law & Policy Conference, June 11, 2018
- "Ensuring Sustainability as an End Goal," Law Seminars International's A Comprehensive Conference on the Next Phase for Sustainable Groundwater Planning in California, Feb. 5, 2018
- "Groundwater Sustainability Plans - Where Do RCDs Fit In?" California Association of Resource Conservation Districts’ Annual Conference, Nov. 16, 2017
- "Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District In Lieu Fee Program," Continuing Legal Education International’s 4th Annual California Wetlands Conference, June 15, 2017
- Introductory Remarks, Argent Communications Group Annual California Water Law & Policy Conference, June 12, 2017
- "Development of California Water Law: Quantity and Usage," HalfMoon Education's Water Laws and Regulations Seminar, Apr. 25, 2017
- "Understanding California Water Rights Laws," HalfMoon Education's Water Laws and Regulations Seminar, Apr.25, 2017
- "Complying with Water Quality Laws and Regulations," HalfMoon Education's Water Laws and Regulations Seminar, Apr. 25, 2017

- "Development of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs): Settled and Still Pending Legal Issues," Law Seminars International SGMA, GSA Setup & GSP Preparation Conference, Jan. 9, 2017
- "How RCDs can Participate in the Implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act," California Association of Resource Conservation Districts' 71st Annual Conference, Nov. 18, 2016
- "Sustainable Groundwater Management Act 2.0: 2 Years To 2020/2022," State Bar of California, Environmental Law Section Webinar, Nov. 17, 2016
- "A Guide to SGMA Compliance," Roadmap to Groundwater Sustainability Workshop, Sept. 13, 2016
- "Endangered Species: Big Picture Overview," Law Seminars International Endangered Species in California Conference, June 2, 2016
- "Groundwater Sustainability Agency Formation: How is it Going?" Association of California Water Agencies' Spring Conference, May 4, 2016
- "Competing Groundwater Sustainability Agencies," American Groundwater Trust Groundwater Law Conference, Apr. 26, 2016
- Presenter, American Council of Engineering Companies' Groundwater Sustainability Seminar, Jan. 28, 2016
- "Implementation of the Federal Endangered Species Act: Practical Strategies for Moving Forward with Public Projects," International Municipal Lawyers Association Annual Conference, Oct. 5, 2015
- "Surface Water: Identifying and Maintaining Adequate Stream Flows for Fish and Wetland Habitat for Birds," Law Seminar International's The Science and Law of Water in California Workshop, Sept. 17, 2015
- Conference Overview, Argent Communications Group Annual California Water Law & Policy Conference, June15-16, 2015
- "Rethinking Water: Strategies to Build an Equitable, Reliable, and Clean Water Source," Annual California Resource Conservation Districts Meeting & Conference, Nov. 13, 2014