

# RONALD W. OPSAHL

*Attorney at Law*

February 3, 2025

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: U.S. District Court Judicial Vacancy

Dear Senator Murkowski:

I was very happy to learn that you are again accepting letters of interest and resumes to fill the Federal District Court of Alaska seat vacated in July 2024, and presumably the seat vacated in December 2021. With this letter, I am expressing my interest in consideration for one of those vacancies.

Currently, I am a senior assistant attorney general for the State of Alaska within the Natural Resources Section of the Department of Law. I serve as Section lead on federal litigation pertaining to statehood defense and federal overreach, navigability, and RS 2477. I also advise and litigate on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources and other state agencies regarding the statehood entitlement program, Dingell Act Vietnam veterans' allotments, federal land management, Endangered Species Act, section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and other federal programs. Additionally, I serve as an advisor to the natural resources subcabinet, which consists of the commissioners and deputies for the departments of Natural Resources, Fish and Game, Environmental Conservation, and the Attorney General's office.

In way of background, I have been in practice for 20 years, specializing in administrative, environmental, wildlife, and natural resources law, especially in relation to public and private lands in the West. Prior to joining the State, my employment history included positions in both large and small law firms, operating a solo practice, and directing a natural resources practice group for a non-profit law firm focused on western land issues. Before law school, I was employed as a wildlife biologist and have conducted field work on numerous species in Alaska, Colorado, and Oregon. I find that the knowledge of environmental sciences that I gained as a field biologist helps greatly in my understanding the often-complex issues presented in a natural resources law practice and certainly has helped in gaining a strong rapport with the scientists and ecologists working on the ground.

Taken as a whole, I believe that I am a strong candidate for the federal bench. I am forwarding you via email a pdf copy of my resume for your review. If I can provide you with any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me [REDACTED].

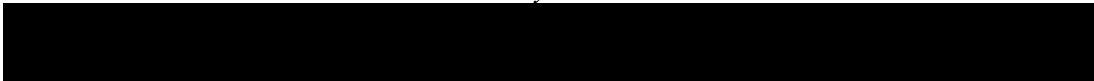
Sincerely,



Ronald W. Opsahl

# RONALD W. OPSAHL

*Attorney at Law*



## CURRENT POSITION

---

**State of Alaska, Department of Law**

*Senior Assistant Attorney General, Natural Resources Section*

**Anchorage, Alaska**

*November 2020–Present*

- Lead attorney advising matters of statewide significance pertaining to resource conservation and development, statehood defense and federal overreach, navigability, and rights-of-way; manages outside counsel and expert contracts; and mentors department attorneys
- Litigates in state and federal courts in cases involving the statehood entitlement program, state-owned submerged lands, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, the Endangered Species Act, section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and federal land management and programs
- Provides advice to executive branch subcabinet consisting of the commissioners and deputies of the departments of Natural Resources, Fish and Game, Environmental Conservation, the Attorney General’s Office, and the Governor’s Office

## PRIOR LEGAL EXPERIENCE

---

- Managed natural resources practice group representing land owner, industry, and trade association clients on a pro bono basis in cases of national significance in federal and state courts; responsible for short and long term practice group strategic planning; developed practice group and individual budgets covering client and case development, attorney professional development, and anticipated litigation costs and expenses; trained and mentored junior attorneys and firm staff in natural resources and environmental law and litigation
- Managed regional mineral title practice group representing oil and gas industries throughout the Rocky Mountain West; oversaw the preparation of mineral title opinions involving fee, state, and federal lands during a period of unprecedented petroleum resource development; responsible for short and long term practice group strategic planning and client development; established and implemented practice group marketing and training budgets; trained and mentored junior attorneys and firm staff in the preparation of mineral and surface estate title opinions
- Martindale-Hubbell® AV Preeminent® rated

**Opsahl Law Office, LLC**

*Attorney/Member*

**Lakewood, Colorado**

*May 2019–November 2020;*

*January 2011–October 2011*

**Mountain States Legal Foundation**

*Senior Attorney; Director – Natural Resources Practice Group*

*Staff Attorney*

**Lakewood, Colorado**

*May 2019–July 2020;*

*April 2005–January 2011*

**Fennemore Craig, P.C.**

*Of Counsel Attorney*

**Denver, Colorado/Phoenix, Arizona**

*November 2016–May 2019*

**Dufford & Brown, P.C. / Polsinelli, P.C.**

*Attorney*

**Denver, Colorado**

*November 2014–November 2016*

**Burleson LLP**

*Senior Counsel; Manager – Rockies Title Practice Group*

**Denver, Colorado**

*October 2011–November 2014*

# RONALD W. OPSAHL

## EDUCATION

---

- University of Denver, Sturm College of Law** **Denver, Colorado**  
*Master of Laws, Natural Resources and Environmental Law and Policy* *May 2005*
- Lewis and Clark College, Northwestern School of Law** **Portland, Oregon**  
*Juris Doctor and Certificate in Environmental and Natural Resources Law* *May 2004*
- Honors: Best Appellate Brief, Legal Analysis and Writing Moot Court
  - Law Review: ENVIRONMENTAL LAW, Notes and Comments Editor
- Colorado State University** **Fort Collins, Colorado**  
*Bachelor of Science, Wildlife Biology, Cum Laude* *May 2001*
- Honors: Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society; Xi Sigma Pi Forestry Honor Fraternity

## OTHER EXPERIENCE

---

- Wildlife Biologist, Field Technician** **Alaska, Colorado, and Oregon**  
*Various state and federal agencies* *May 2000–July 2002*
- Conducted ecological research on freshwater fish, large game animals, arctic waterfowl, and shorebirds in support of several research projects in Alaska, Colorado, and Oregon
- Intelligence Analyst and Reporter** **Stateside and overseas assignments**  
*United States Air Force* *July 1988–September 1997*
- Supervised an analysis and reporting team consisting of personnel from four military services and federal civilian employees
  - Analyzed intelligence activities and made initial decisions about the strategic, operational, and tactical importance of the activity; responsible for real-time and near-real-time reporting of significant activity to national- and theater-level military and civilian decision-makers

## LEGAL PUBLICATIONS

---

- Ronald W. Opsahl**, Opinion, *Trump is Right to Reform NEPA, But Will It Be Enough?* WASH. EXAMINER, Jan. 20, 2020 (discussing regulatory reforms to the National Environmental Policy Act)
- Ronald W. Opsahl**, Opinion, *Trump's Environmental Reforms: Good for the Environment, Bad for Lawyers*, REALCLEAR POL'Y, Aug. 26, 2019 (discussing reforms to the Endangered Species Act)
- Norman D. James & **Ronald W. Opsahl**, *Forest Service & State, County, & Local Government Coordination Under NFMA Section 6*, AM. STEWARDS OF LIBERTY (Sept. 7, 2017), available at [https://americanstewards.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/NFMA-Coordination-Legal-Analysis\\_James.pdf](https://americanstewards.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/NFMA-Coordination-Legal-Analysis_James.pdf)
- Ronald W. Opsahl**, *My Pooling Clause Does What? An Unintended and Unexpected Result of a Standard Pooling Clause*, ROCKY MOUNTAIN LANDMAN (Denver Ass'n of Prof'l Landmen, Denver, Colo.), Nov. 2016 (discussing oil and gas lease contractual provisions)
- Ronald W. Opsahl**, *Teetotaler's Legacies: Historical Liquor Restrictions and Modern Urban/Suburban Drilling*, ROCKY MOUNTAIN LANDMAN (Denver Ass'n of Prof'l Landmen, Denver, Colo.), Nov. 2015 (discussing potential ongoing effects of historical deed restrictions)
- Ronald W. Opsahl**, *Chronic Wasting Disease of Deer and Elk: A Call for National Management*, 33 ENVIRONMENTAL LAW 1059 (2003) (discussing adequacy of responses to wildlife disease epidemic)

## COURT ADMISSIONS

---

State admissions: Alaska (active), Arizona (inactive), Colorado (inactive), Kansas (inactive), Montana (inactive), and Wyoming (active)

Federal admissions: U.S. Supreme Court; U.S. Courts of Appeal for the 5th, 9th, 10th, and D.C. Circuits; U.S. Court of Federal Claims; and U.S. District Courts for the Districts of Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, D.C., and Wyoming