

CONTACT

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PRACTICES

Endangered Species & Wildlife
Native Affairs
Public Lands

EDUCATION

University of Washington
Seattle University School of Law

BAR AND COURT ADMISSIONS

Alaska State Bar
District of Columbia Bar
Washington State Bar

RICHARD A. AGNEW

PARTNER



Professional Background

Rick Agnew represents a variety of clients before Congress and federal agencies, particularly on matters relating to federal laws and permits governing energy projects, environmental matters, and the uses of natural resources.

As Chief Republican Counsel for the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs (now the Committee on Natural Resources) of the U.S. House of Representatives, Rick served as committee counsel and staff supervisor in a wide array of federal issues, involving natural resources, Native Americans, and energy production and use. He also was involved in the effort to revitalize Pennsylvania Avenue and Union Station in Washington, DC. Today, Rick uses that experience to help firm clients secure funding or permit authorizations for energy and transportation projects as well as the redevelopment of communities after significant natural disasters or other economic loss.

Rick is active in Bar Association Continuing Legal Education activities and has been a frequent speaker on natural resource, Native American, and electric policy issues.

Rick served as Chairman of Van Ness Feldman from 2012-2019, and then returned to practice on a full time basis. Rick serves on the board of [VNF Solutions](#).

Representative Experience

- Providing counsel regarding federal permitting for major water conveyance projects along the West Coast.
- Providing counsel regarding federal permitting for ecosystem restoration projects along the Gulf Coast and Mississippi River.
- Counseling state universities on land grant entitlements and federal educational funding programs.
- Counseling several Pacific Northwest public utilities on hydroelectricity relicensing proceedings, including state certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.
- Securing funding for initial studies for a municipal wastewater treatment facility in northwest Washington state.
- Providing counsel to a corporation seeking to provide transportation access to a proposed economic redevelopment project for areas damaged in the 1993 Mississippi River floods.
- Providing counsel to a large group of utility customers of the Bonneville Power Administration in major litigation involving federal Power Marketing Administration costs related to compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to ensure accountability and effective salmon recovery use under the Act.
- Counseling a major hydroelectricity generating utility seeking permit authority under Section 10 (Habitat Conservation Plans) of the ESA.
- Successfully forming a four-state legislative initiative to establish and secure funds for the coastal Pacific salmonid initiative, resulting in \$1 billion in species recovery appropriations over the past two decades.
- Representing an agricultural trade association on various natural resource matters before Congress and

federal agencies.

- Counseling an Alaska Native Corporation on major oil and gas development and land exchanges with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to allow full economic use of Native lands.
- Providing counsel to major cruise ship operators regarding National Park Service concession contracts and entry permits into Glacier Bay National Park.
- Assisting in securing nearly \$10 million in federal funding for a community in Washington state, to redevelop and revitalize a now closed pulp mill site for economic development purposes.

Government Service

U.S. House of Representatives

Chief Republican Counsel/Staff Director, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, 1985-1991
Republican Counsel, Subcommittee on Public Lands and National Parks, 1983-1985
Staff Counsel, Congressman Don Young (R-AK), 1980-1983

Awards and Honors

"Best Lawyers in America" by *Best Lawyers*

Native American Law, 2012-2025
Natural Resources Law, 2013-2025

Legal 500 - Recommended Attorney

Government Relations, 2019-2021

Super Lawyers

2016-2024

Named Best Lawyers' "2014 Lawyer of the Year"

Washington D.C., Natural Resources Law

"Lawyer of the Year" by *Best Lawyers*

Native American Law, 2021

Articles and Presentations

- Northwest Hydroelectric Association's 2022 Annual Conference, Portland OR, 02/23/2022
- VNF LIVE EXTRA: A Deeper Dive into Your Questions on the Natural Resource, Water, Tribal and Resiliency Opportunities in the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act, 01/20/2022
- VNF Live: Natural Resource, Water, Tribal, and Resiliency Opportunities in the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act, 01/11/2022
- Tribal Energy in California and the Southwest , Law Seminars International, 06/24/2021
- VNF Live - Post Election Natural Resources Policy Outlook, 11/13/2020
- 2017 Electric Transmission in the West, Law Seminars International, Portland OR, 05/25/2017
- National Water Resources Association's Western Water Seminar 2016, Sun Valley ID, 08/03/2016
- NHA's 2013 Alaska Regional Meeting, National Hydropower Association, Girdwood AK, 09/26/2013

Alerts

- Midterm Election Update: Impact on Committees in the 118th Congress, 12/02/2022
- Biden Administration Announces Sweeping Slate of Administrative Actions, 01/22/2021
- OUTLOOK 2014: KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS, 01/23/2014
- Government Shut-down: Update #6: The Government Opens and Debt Default Is Avoided, 10/17/2013

- Federal Agencies to Implement Contingency Plans Following Government Shut-down: Update #5, 10/15/2013
- Federal Agencies to Implement Contingency Plans Following Government Shut-down: Update #4, 10/13/2013
- Federal Agencies to Implement Contingency Plans Following Government Shut-down: Update #3, 10/08/2013
- Federal Agencies to Implement Contingency Plans Following Government Shutdown, 10/01/2013