

LAND USE: Putting The Pieces Together

DENVER — Specialized firms often want lawyers to have similar experience. But partners Steve Kaplan and Lori Potter at Kaplan Kirsch & Rockwell say they look for lawyers who each bring something unique to their focus on environmental, land use, public lands and transportation law.



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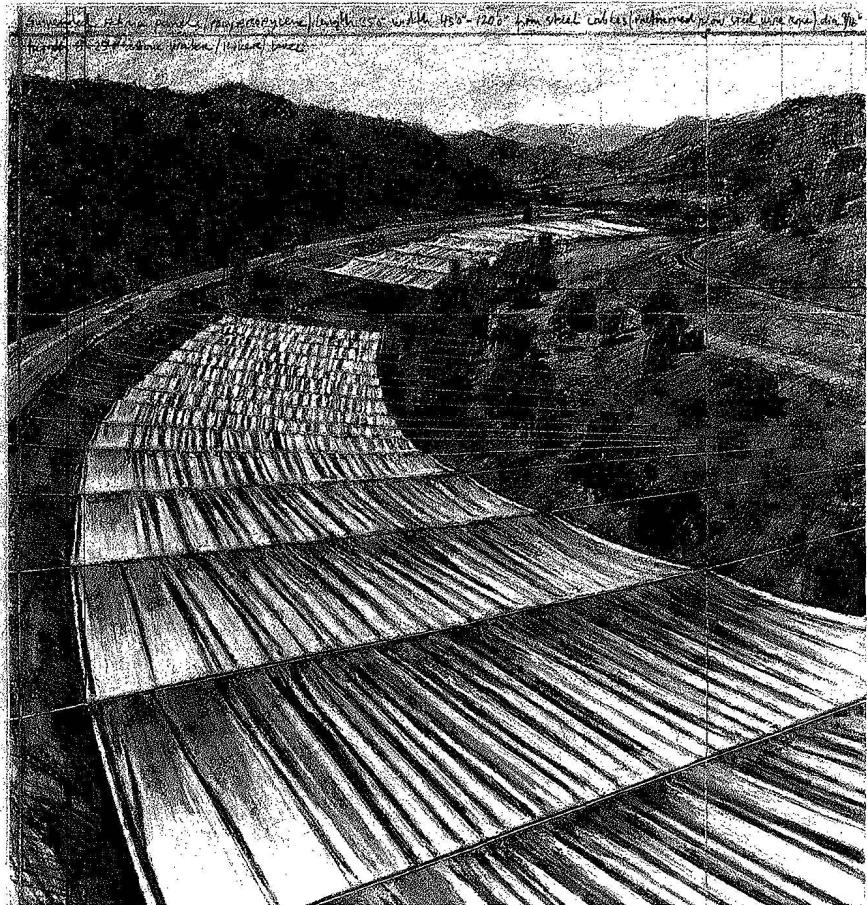
Potter said that each lawyer brings “a slightly different piece of the jigsaw puzzle.” For example, while Kaplan has government experience as the former Denver city attorney and general counsel of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Potter has extensive public lands and enforcement experience.

“When you put all those pieces together, I think that we cover all areas of environmental law, which is both very specialized but has a number of different facets,” she said. “That’s one of the things that really separates us from others. We don’t have clients just in one segment of industry or one segment of the field. We have clients from all interests, from municipalities to developers to neighbors to the green community. We know how all of these interests are affected.”

That diversity also allows the firm to work with clients of all shapes and sizes, from the Denver International Airport to an installation art project currently underway by acclaimed artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude, who died last week.

The firm was founded in 2003 and has grown into three national offices, including one in Denver. It wasn’t so much the decision to specialize, said Kaplan, but it was really what he liked to work on and to build a practice doing so.

“What we like to do is basically work on projects, help get projects and infrastructure built and help people sort out complicated legal issues that involve the public sec-



WOLFGANG VOLZ, © CHRISTO 2007

An artist's sketch of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's “Over The River” project for the Arkansas River.

tor including the federal government,” he said. “If you’re fortunate, you’re able to work on matters that are very exciting and very complicating. For us, it’s really being able to work on very complicated, multi-layered matters that I think keep everybody engaged.”

As for networking, Kaplan said their methods aren’t any different than traditional law firms. They attend national conferences and

they’re members of several nonprofit organizations.

“But a lot of it is what you have done and how people have view what you have done. Our philosophy is if you do high quality work, you do it with integrity and you’re responsive to your clients, you start to build a foundation for a successful endeavor,” he said. “There’s no substitute at the end of the day for really hard work and quality work.”