

Women on the Move

Polly Jessen,

Partner, Kaplan Kirsch & Rockwell LLP, Denver



Jessen began her career in environmental law representing a PRP conducting a series of NPL-list mining site cleanups. The sites required removal and management of old mine tailings and metal deposition from smelting along river banks, in grazing pastures, and through municipal areas. “The stakes were high. So, the client was creative and began experimenting with risk assessments, GIS mapping, land use mechanisms such as zoning overlay districts, and sophisticated engineering controls, to manage risk and allow future development. It was great experience in implementing many of the tools that are now widely accepted by regulators and the Brownfields development community,” Jessen said. From that time on, Jessen continued to work extensively with owners and redevelopers of contaminated property. Six years ago, Jessen and five other attorneys left the international law firm of Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, LLP, to form Kaplan Kirsch & Rockwell LLP. The firm has 17 attorneys and offices in Denver, Washington D.C., and New York City. Now, nearly all of Jessen’s clients are involved in some aspect of contaminated property and urban infill redevelopment. She counsels clients in the range of environmental risk management tools and redevelopment issues from environmental insurance and indemnifications to materials management during construction and methods of accommodating surface use rights of oil and gas developers. Current and former clients include: redevelopers of the former Stapleton International Airport, former Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, Denver Union Station, and several former industrial sites. She also has become involved in wind power development projects. “I feel fortunate to be able to work with sophisticated clients in a field of law where everyone wins,” says Jessen, who speaks and publishes frequently on contaminated property redevelopment issues. **IREM**