



# Land Survey Program

## What is the Public Land Survey System?

The United States Public Land Survey System (USPLSS) in Missouri is an extension of the system adopted by the United States Congress in 1785. Between 1815 and 1855, Missouri was surveyed into one mile squares called sections. Thirty-six sections in a block of land measuring six miles on each side is called a township. This created the basis for the transfer for the land from the United States Government to private owners and is the basis for all land transfers and ownership in the state today.

## How are sections marked?

The sections were originally marked with wood posts, rocks or mounds of earth. This record of the original survey called the General Land Office (GLO) survey is found in the original field notes and plats. Today, new permanent monuments are placed at the section and 1/4 section corners (halfway between section corners). These monuments may also be aluminum pipes, iron rods, concrete markers or iron pipes with caps stamped to identify the corner. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources, county surveyors and private surveyors will have set some of these monuments. They will have a witness post and sign set near the corner marker to identify the corner.

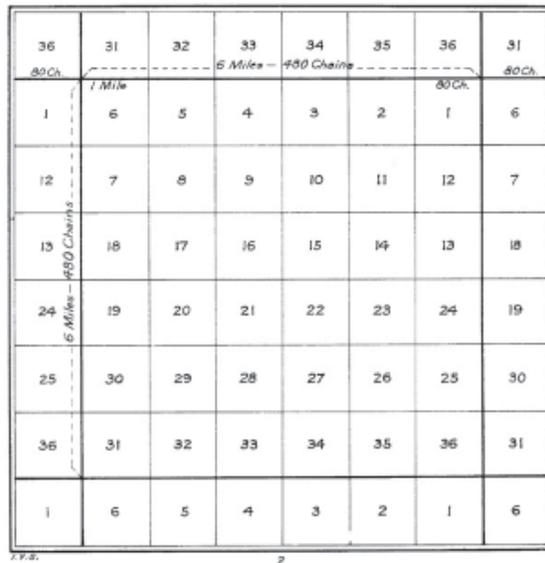
## Why are these corners important?

The land corners are the basis for the location of all property in Missouri. Properly monumented, they are a dependable, consistent, accurate source of information for resolving property boundary disputes and other boundary related questions.

The location of a government corner affects all of the property in a section or quarter section because all survey monuments are part of a grid pattern. For this reason, you and many other land owners may rely upon the location of a single corner.

These corners are also important because they also establish reference points for subdivision surveys and tracts cut out of larger parent tracts.

THEORETICAL  
TOWNSHIP DIAGRAM  
SHOWING  
METHOD OF NUMBERING SECTIONS  
WITH ADJOINING SECTIONS



**Why are trees marked near monuments?**

Missouri regulations require surveyors to obtain reference measurements to four durable objects. Many times in rural areas the only durable objects near a corner are trees. Surveyors try not to damage trees when they mark them for identification.

**Why are these corners being monumented by MoDNR?**

The Department of Natural Resources has been given the responsibility under state law to remonument and preserve these important land corners.

**What if a survey monument becomes damaged?**

Land-use activities sometimes destroy monuments. Any destruction of a survey monument is a violation of Missouri law 60.550 and 60.355. The department's Land Survey Program will replace MoDNR monuments that are in danger of being damaged or destroyed. If you have any trouble locating or protecting a monument, call the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Land Survey Program.

**How can I obtain additional information and assistance?**

Surveys, maps, field notes and geodetic data or assistance can be obtained by contacting the Land Records Repository at P.O. Box 250, Rolla, MO 65402-0250 or by calling 1-800-361-4827 (within Missouri) or (573) 368-2300. The Land Survey Program's Web address is as follows:  
[www.dnr.mo.gov/geology/lndsrv/](http://www.dnr.mo.gov/geology/lndsrv/).



**Survey Monument**