

**BLM-024**

# GLOSSARIES OF BLM SURVEYING AND MAPPING TERMS



PDF VERSION

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

# GLOSSARY OF BLM SURVEYING AND MAPPING TERMS



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**APPELLANT** – The party who takes an appeal from one court or jurisdiction to another. Used broadly or nontechnically, the term includes one who sues out a writ of error. See WRIT OF ERROR.

**APPELLEE** – The party in a cause against whom an appeal is taken; that is, the party who has an interest adverse to setting aside or reversing the judgment. Sometimes also called the “*respondent*.”

**APPLICANT** – An individual, corporation, State or local government, etc., applying for rights in, or title to, public lands or resources. See APPLICANT, SURVEY.

**APPLICANT, SURVEY** – An individual, corporation, State or local government, etc., requesting the execution of a cadastral survey.

**APPLICATION** – A formal request for rights in, or eventual title to, public lands or resources.

**APPROPRIATED PUBLIC LANDS** – Original public domain lands which are covered by an entry, patent, certification, or other evidence of land disposal; for certain purposes, public lands which are within a reservation, which contain improvements constructed with the aid of Federal funds, or which are covered by certain classes of leases are also considered appropriated. See VACANT AND UNAPPROPRIATED PUBLIC DOMAIN LANDS.

**APPROVED CLEAR LIST** – A selection which has been approved by the Secretary of the Interior or the Director of the Bureau of Land Management. See CLEAR LIST.

**APPROVED MINERAL SURVEY** – The approval of a mineral survey at the State level is final. No Washington Office acceptance is required as in the case of public land subdivisional surveys.

**APPROVED SURVEY** – The terms “*approved survey*” and “*official survey*” are often incorrectly used as being synonymous with “*accepted survey*.” Strictly speaking an “*approved survey*” is a survey which has the field notes approved and the plat accepted by the BLM official who has been delegated the authority for such action. The proper term is now ACCEPTED SURVEY. (Prior to 1910 the field notes and plats were APPROVED by the Surveyor’s General, which action was equivalent to the present acceptance of the plat. After 1910 they were approved by the Surveyor General, or Supervisor of Surveys, and after examination accepted by the Commissioner of the General Land Office.) The field notes and plat become OFFICIAL records of the BLM when filed in the appropriate land office. The field notes and the plats of Mineral Surveys are both APPROVED at the State Office level. See ACCEPTED SURVEY, OFFICIAL SURVEY and MINERAL SURVEY.

**APPURTENANCE** – Anything so annexed to the land or used with it that it will pass with the conveyance of the land. An incidental right (as a right of way) attached to a principal property right and passing in possession with it.

**ARBITRATION** – The submission for determination of disputed matter to a private unofficial person selected by agreement or in a manner provided by law. Voluntary arbitration is; therefore, by mutual and free consent of the parties.

**ARBITRATOR** – A private, disinterested person chosen by the parties to a disputed question for the purpose of hearing their contention and giving judgment between them. The parties to the dispute submit themselves to the arbitrator’s decision (award).

**ARE** – A metric unit of area equal to 100 square meters.

**AREA, GROSS** – In BLM usage, the total area of all lands, irrespective of ownership, within the boundaries of a township, reservation or other tract of land. See AREA, NET.

**AREA, NET** – In BLM usage, the area of public lands within the boundaries of a township, reservation or other tract of land less exclusions. See AREA, GROSS.

**AREAS (BLM)** – From the mid-1950’s until 1961 the Bureau of Land Management was composed of the Headquarters Office in Washington, D.C.; a field organization of three “Areas” in the United States and one in Alaska; 11 State Offices and an Eastern States Office which was in Washington, D.C.

*Area 1* had supervision over Washington, Oregon and California. The Area administrative office was in Portland, Oregon.

*Area 2* had supervision over Idaho, Nevada, Utah and Arizona. The Area administrative office was in Salt Lake City, Utah.

*Area 3* had supervision over Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and the Missouri River Basin surveys. The Area administrative office was in Denver, Colorado.

*Area 4* had supervision over Alaska and the administrative office was in Anchorage, Alaska. See SPECIAL OFFICES (BLM). Also see REGIONS (BLM).

**ARKANSAS DRAINAGE ENTRY** – An entry on public lands to which, under Federal statutory authority, Arkansas State drainage charges attach.

**ARKANSAS SWAMP LANDS COMPROMISE ACT** – Under the terms of this act of April 29, 1898, Arkansas relinquished all rights, title and interest to the remaining unappropriated swamp and overflowed lands within its boundaries (43 U.S.C. sec. 987).

**ARROW** – An obsolete term for chaining pin.

**VAR INT (Land Status Records)** – Variable Interest.

**VAR.** – Variation.

**VIZ** – A contraction for *videlicet*, to-wit, namely, that is to say.

**vs.** – Versus. Also, occasionally, abbreviated v.

**VT** – Vermont.

**VACANT AND UNAPPROPRIATED PUBLIC DOMAIN LANDS** – Public domain lands which have never left Federal ownership and have not been reserved, withdrawn, dedicated or set aside for a specific purpose. These lands, some 450 million acres, are mostly in the 11 Western States and Alaska. The vacant and unappropriated public domain is administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

**VALUABLE MINERAL** – See MINERAL, VALUABLE.

**VARA** – A Spanish unit of measurement of various lengths.

**VARIATION** – See MAGNETIC VARIATION.

**VEIN** – In mining law, a continuous body of mineral or mineralized rock, filling a seam or fissure in the earth's crust, within defined boundaries in the general mass of the mountain (boundaries which clearly separate it from the neighboring rock), and having a general character of continuity in the direction of its length. A requirement that a miner shall locate his claim "*along the vein*" means along the out-crop or course of the apex and not along the strike. "*Lode*," "*ledge*" and "*vein*" are synonymous in mining law as well as in common usage.

**VEIN, DISCOVERY** – In mining law, that vein which served as a basis of the discovery and location of a mining claim.

**VERSUS** – A Latin word meaning *against*. In the title of a cause of action, the name of the plaintiff is put first, followed by the word "*versus*," then the defendant's name. The word is commonly abbreviated "*vs.*" or "*v.*"

**VIS FLUMINIS** – In the civil law, the force of a river; the force exerted by a stream or current; water power.

## W

**W (Land Status Records)** – West.

**WA** – Washington.

**WAA (Land Status Records)** – War Assets Administration.

**WAR DEPT (Land Status Records)** – War Department.

**WASH.** – Washington.

**WASH MER (Land Status Records)** – Washington Meridian.

**WC** – Witness Corner.

**W/CHG (Land Status Records)** – With Change(s).

**WCMC** – Witness Corner Meander Corner. WC is the abbreviation for Witness Corner when used alone or, as in this case, with another abbreviation; however, in the field notes or in simply talking about it, a surveyor would say, "*Witness Meander Corner*," not "*Witness Corner Meander Corner*."

**WD (Land Status Records)** – Warranty deed.

**WDL (Land Status Records)** – Withdrawal.

**WDN (Land Status Records)** – Withdrawn.

**WFO** – Western Field Office. Established in Portland, Oregon in 1973. See SPECIAL OFFICES (BLM).

**WI** – Wisconsin.

**WILL MER (Land Status Records)** – Willamette Meridian.

**WIS.** – Wisconsin.

**W/O (Land Status Records)** – Without.

**WO** – Washington Office.

**WP (Land Status Records)** – Water Power.

**W P** – Witness Point.

**W.P.C.** – Witness private claim. Used in the specimen field notes in the General Instructions of 1855.

**WP DES (Land Status Records)** – Water Power Designation.

**WR (Land Status Records)** – Water rights.

**WR MER (Land Status Records)** – Wind River Meridian.

**WS (Land Status Records)** – Watershed.

**WT (Land Status Records)** – Warrant.

**WV** – West Virginia.

**WY** – Wyoming.