

Land Status. Lesson 1: Master Title Plat.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Welcome to the Land Status online curriculum. This curriculum is designed to teach employees of BLM, other agencies in the Department of the Interior, other federal agencies, and tribal entities where to locate information about land status. The course is designed to assist you in using the Land Status Records System to accurately determine the ownership and status of any parcel of public land.

This lesson provides historical information on the land status record systems. It also provides an overview of the specific details on a Master Title Plat or MTP to assist you in reading the information.



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RESOURCES

- Abbreviations guide
- Commonly used symbols
- State codes for patent numbering
- Public education land grants
- Explanatory MTP
- Explanatory HI

Select link to view online or download/print a copy.



The following resource aids have been designed to assist you with comprehending land status records. Please review the following: abbreviations guide, commonly used symbols, state codes for patent numbering, public education land grants, Explanatory MTP, and Explanatory HI. Select each link to view it online or download and print a copy. (Links not available in this study guide.)

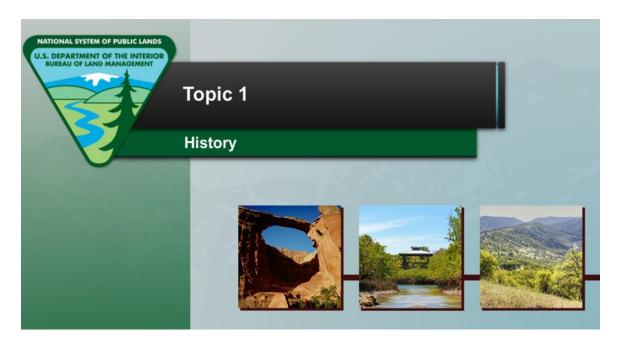
Objectives

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

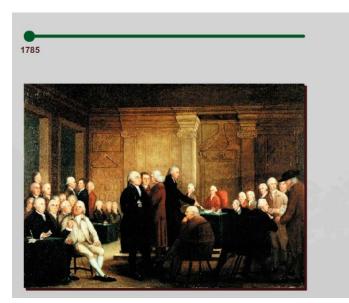
- Summarize the history of the Land Status Records System
- Identify the survey data on a Master Title Plat



At the end of this lesson, you will be able to: summarize the history of the Land Status Records System, and identify the survey data on a Master Title Plat.



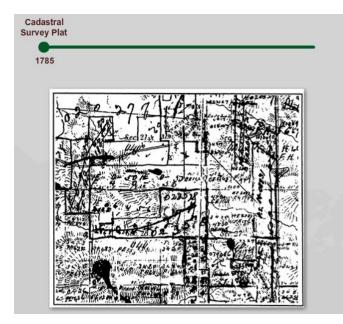
Topic 1: History



Recordkeeping for Public Lands Began Over 200 Years Ago

Ordinance of 1785

A systematic approach to recordkeeping for the public lands began over 200 years ago with the Ordinance of 1785.



Recordkeeping for Public Lands Began Over 200 Years Ago

Ordinance of 1785

Cadastral Survey Plat

- System for recording land patents and records essential to chain of title
- Handwritten entries became difficult to read and track

That ordinance set forth the use of the Cadastral Survey Plat, a system for recording land patents and related case records essential to the chain of title in the public domain states. The Cadastral Survey Plat worked well at first. However, the handwritten entries soon became difficult to read and track.

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Permanent Reference for Land Transactions for the Survey of Public Lands

Broken Down by:

- State
- Territory
- Meridian
- Township
- Range
- Section
- Subdivision

In 1800, the Tract Book System was established by an Act of Congress. This newrecording system was designed to be a permanent reference for all land transactions for the survey of public lands. These tract books were broken down by: State, Territory, Meridian, Township, Range, Section, and Subdivision.

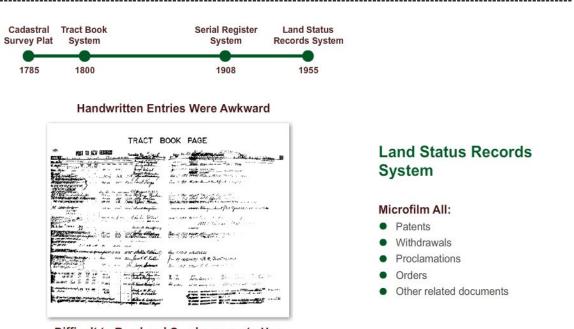
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Need to Document History of Each Land Case Transaction

Serial Register System

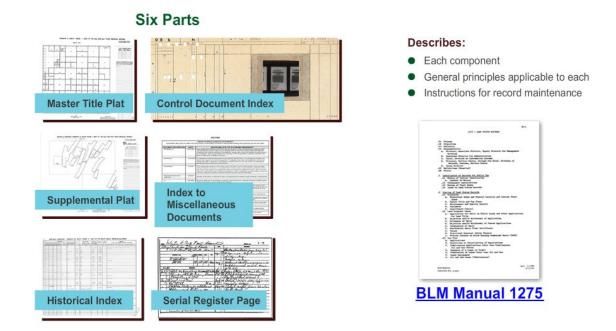
Every Transaction Within a State Was Given a Serial Number

By 1908, there was a need to document the history of each land case transaction that occurred on the public land. The Serial Register System was designed to accomplish this purpose. Every transaction within a state was given a serial number so that each event that occurred could be recorded on the register.

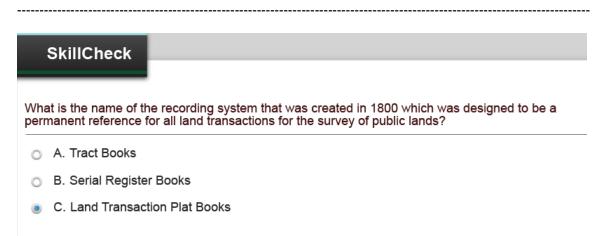


Difficult to Read and Cumbersome to Use

Tracking land status through numerous handwritten entries was awkward. By 1955, the Tract Book System had become so difficult to read and cumbersome to use that Congress authorized the establishment of yet another records system. This system is referred to as the Land Status Records System. The first step in the new system was to microfilm all patents, withdrawals, proclamations, orders, and other related documents that affect land status.



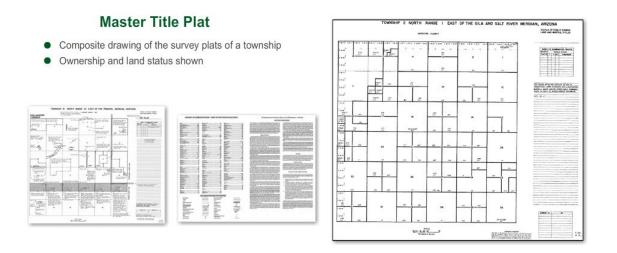
The Land Status Records System consists of six parts. They are the: Master Title Plat, Use Plats and Supplemental Plats, Historical Index, Control Document Index, Index to Miscellaneous Documents, and Serial Register Page. BLM Manual 1275 describes each component of the Land Status Records System and the general principles applicable to each including instructions for record maintenance. (Link not available in this study guide.)



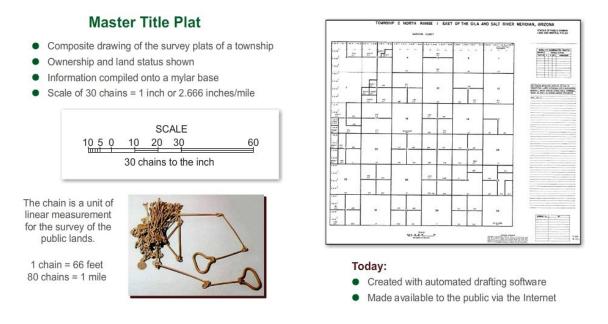
Correct Answer: C. Land Transaction Plat Books



Topic 2: MTP Overview



The Master Title Plat, commonly referred to as the MTP, is a composite drawing of the survey plats of a township on which ownership and land status is shown.



Information taken from the cadastral survey data was originally compiled onto a mylar base and drawn at a scale of 30 chains equal to 1 inch or 2.666 inches per mile. The chain is a unit of linear measurement for the survey of the public lands. One chain is equal to 66 feet and 80 chains are equal to 1 mile. Today, MTPs are created using a variety of automated drafting software and are made available to the public via the Internet.

TOWNSHIP 3 NORTH RANGE 18 EAST OF THE PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, MONTANA]
Township, Range, Meridian, and State	

The heading on each Master Title Plat will give you the legal description by Township, Range, Meridian, and State. For example, TOWNSHIP 3 NORTH RANGE 18 EAST OF THE PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, MONTANA.

TOWNSHIP 3 NORTH RANGE 18 EAST OF THE PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, MONTANA

Township, Range, Meridian, and State

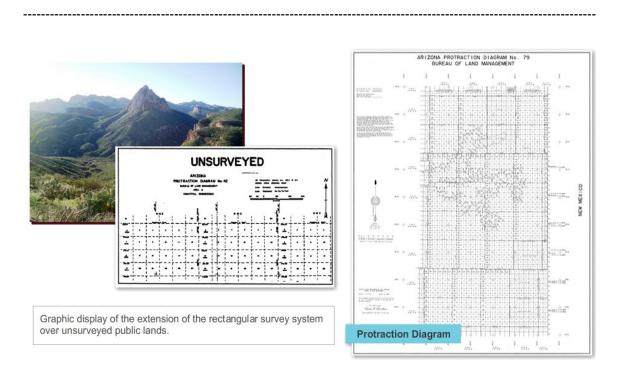
Not Surveyed/Partially Surveyed: Notation Precedes Heading

PARTIALLY SURVEYED

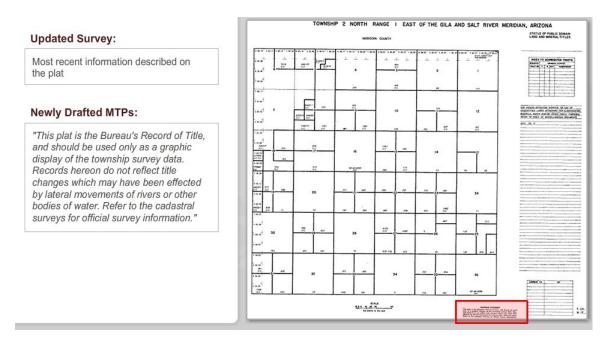
UNSURVEYED

Completely Surveyed: No Notation

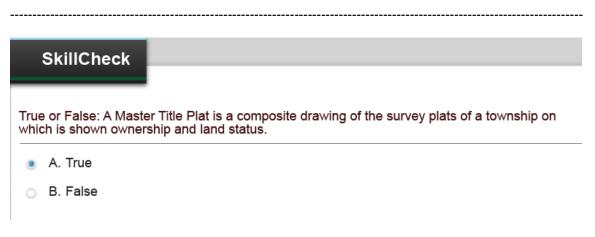
When the township has not been surveyed or has only been partially surveyed, a notation for survey status will precede the heading. If the township has been completely surveyed, there will be no notation.



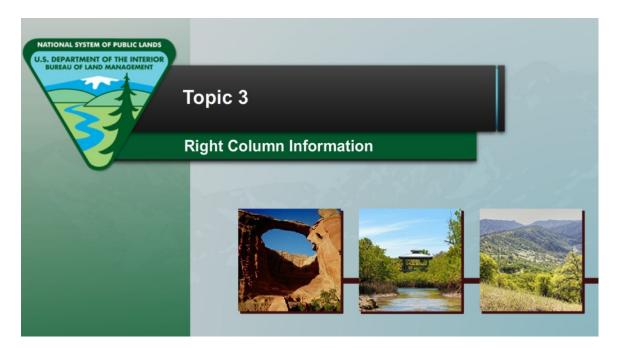
When a township is unsurveyed, the information to compile the MTP is taken from an approved protraction diagram. The protraction diagram is a graphic display of the extension of the rectangular survey system over unsurveyed public lands.



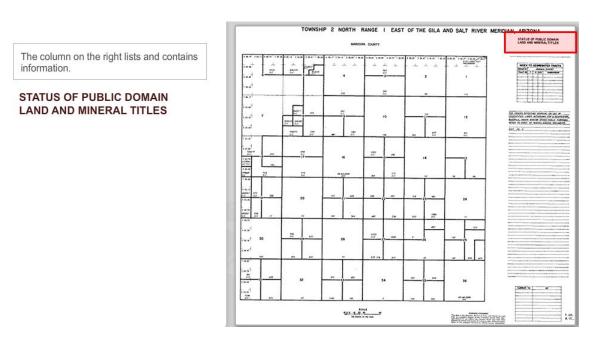
Also, if there has been an updated survey on the land, the most recent information will be described on the plat. All newly drafted MTPs have the following statement on the bottom of the township diagram. "This plat is the Bureau's Record of Title, and should be used only as a graphic display of the township survey data. Records hereon do not reflect title changes which may have been effected by lateral movements of rivers or other bodies of water. Refer to the cadastral surveys for official survey information."



Correct Answer: True



Topic 3: Right Column Information

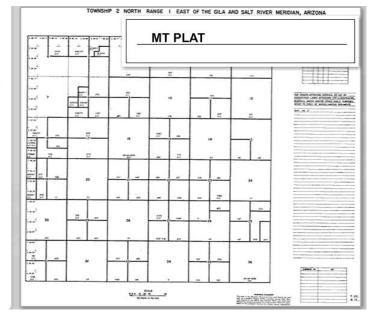


The column on the right side of the MTP lists and contains information to aid the reader. At the top of this column, the following will appear: STATUS OF PUBLIC DOMAIN, LAND AND MINERAL TITLES.

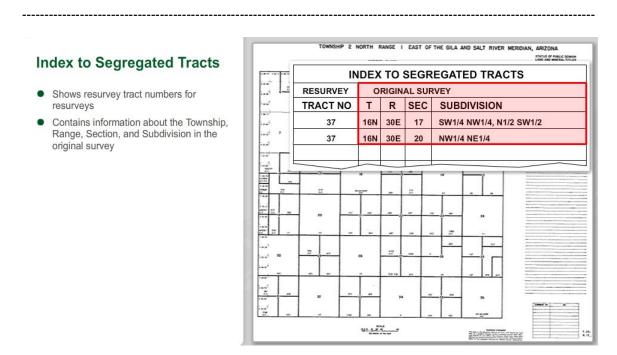
Kind of Plat:

- MT PLAT for Master Title Plat
- MTP SUPPL for Supplemental Master Title Plat
- USE PLAT for Special Use Authorizations
- OG PLAT for Oil and Gas Plat

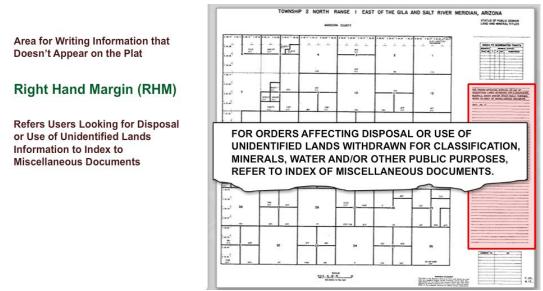




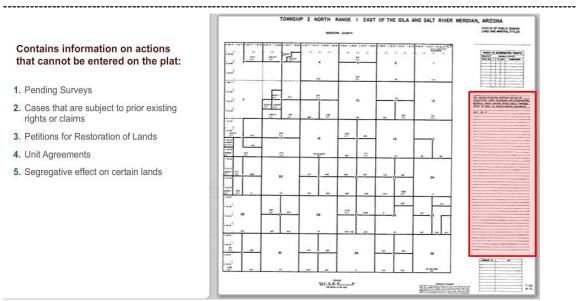
Next, on the right, is a single line that designates the kind of plat. Examples of plat designations include: MT PLAT for Master Title Plat, MTP SUPPL for Supplemental Master Title Plat, USE PLAT for Special Use Authorizations, and OG PLAT for Oil and Gas Plat. On some plats, the line intended for the plat designation is left blank. When this occurs, you can assume that the plat is an MT Plat or Master Title Plat.



Underneath the plat designation is a box labeled "Index to Segregated Tracts." This boxshows the resurvey tract numbers for any resurveys. In addition to the resurvey tract number, the box contains information about the Township, Range, Section, and Subdivision in the original survey from which the resurvey was made.



Below the Index to Segregated Tracts box is an area for writing out information that does not appear on the plat. This area, which is ruled for entering text, is commonly referred to asthe Right Hand Margin (RHM). The following statement will appear at the RHM: FOR ORDERS AFFECTING DISPOSAL OR USE OF UNIDENTIFIED LANDS WITHDRAWN FOR CLASSIFICATION, MINERALS, WATER AND/OR OTHER PUBLIC PURPOSES, REFER TO INDEX OF MISCELLANEOUS DOCUMENTS. The statement refers users of the plat who are looking for information about the disposal or use of unidentified lands to another document within the Land Status Record System, which is the Index to Miscellaneous Documents. Information about the Index to Miscellaneous Documents will be covered later in this lesson.



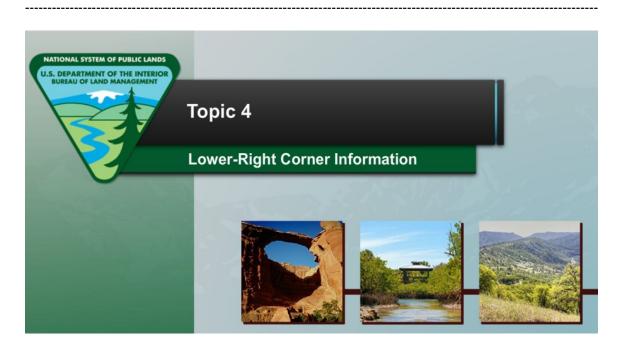
The RHM will also contain information on actions that cannot be entered on the plat such as: 1. Pending Surveys, 2. Cases that are subject to prior existing rights or claims, 3. Petitions for Restoration of Lands, 4. Unit Agreements, and 5. Segregative effect on certain lands, such as lands closed to mining but open to mineral leasing. The information noted in the RHM should be read before proceeding with any work associated with the plat. If you fail to check the RHMfor restrictions and reservations to land status information, you may end up making erroneous decisions or judgments regarding a parcel of land.

SkillCheck

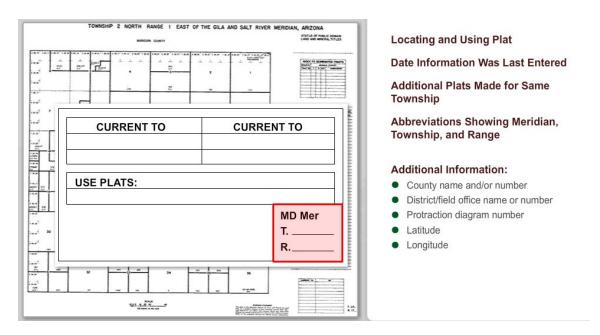
Which of the following items can be written in the RHM of the MTP? (Select all that apply.)

- A. STATUS OF PUBLIC DOMAIN LAND AND MINERAL TITLES
- B. Pending surveys
- C. Petitions for Restoration of Lands
- D. Plat designation
- E. Cases that are subject to prior existing rights or claims
- F. Index to Segregated Tracts

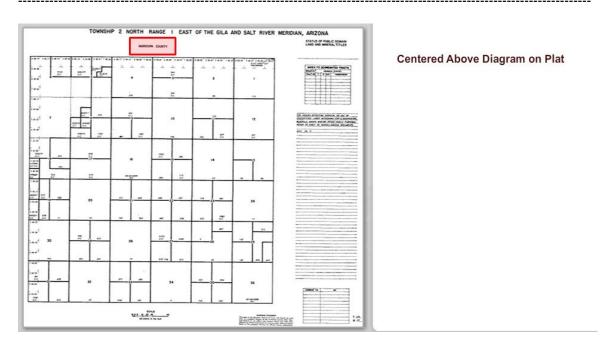
Correct Answers: B. Pending surveys, C. Petitions for Restoration of Lands, and E. Cases that are subject to prior existing rights or claims.



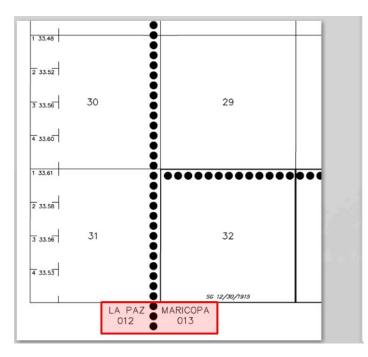
Topic 4: Lower-Right Corner Information



In the lower-right hand corner of the plat, immediately below the RHM, is an area of information helpful in locating and using the plat. Notice the box labeled "Current to." The date that information was last entered on the plat should be entered here. Some states also list if any additional plats have been made for the same township. In the lower-right hand corner of this area, there will be a set of abbreviations showing the Meridian, the Township, and the Range. Additional information on a plat that may be helpful is the county name and/or number, district/field office name or number, protraction diagram number, latitude, and longitude.



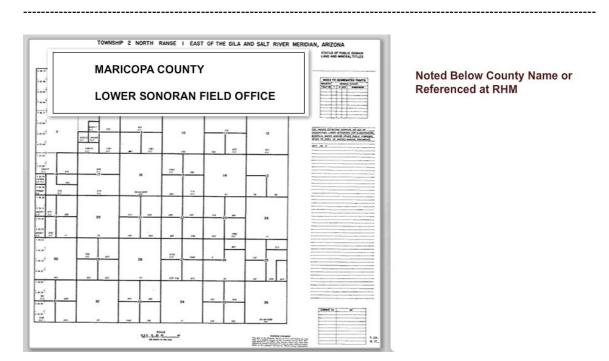
The County name and number is centered above the diagram on the plat.



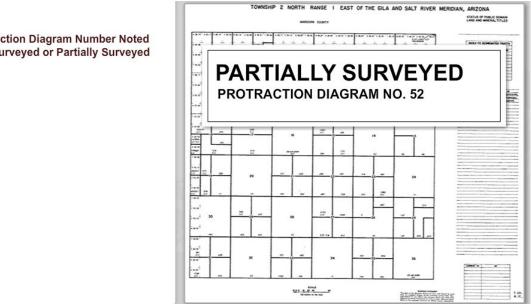
Township Encompassing Two Counties:

- County symbol depicted on plat
- County names and/or numbers noted on either side of symbol

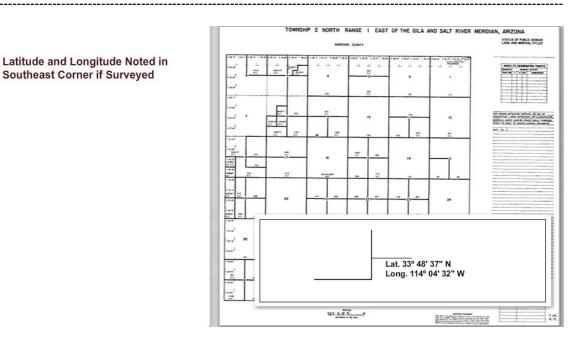
If the township encompasses two counties, the county symbol will be depicted on the plat to show the division between them. Along with the symbol, the County names and/or numbers will be noted on either side of the symbol.



The District or Field Office name and/or number are noted below the county name or referenced at the RHM. For example, MARICOPA COUNTY, LOWER SONORAN FIELD OFFICE.



If the township is unsurveyed or partially surveyed, the protraction diagram number will be noted below the word PARTIALLY SURVEYED in the heading or in the RHM of the plat.



When the township has been surveyed, the latitude and longitude of the southeast comer of the township will be noted.

Protraction Diagram Number Noted if Unsurveyed or Partially Surveyed



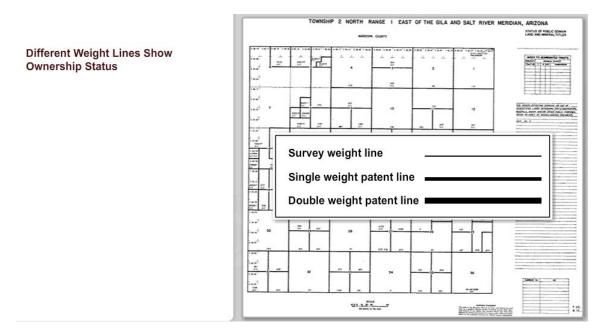
Knowing the meanings of abbreviations and symbols is vital to understand land status records. In fact, there are so many abbreviations and symbols used in land status work that without an abbreviation and symbol key, first time or infrequent users will find interpretation of plats and other documentation difficult.



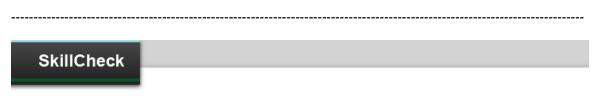
Each BLM State Office Has Listing of Abbreviations and Symbols

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To assist users, each BLM State Office has a listing of abbreviations and symbols to use with the Land Status Records System. Refer to Resource Aids 1 and 2 for abbreviations and symbols for more information.



Different weights or thickness of lines are used to show ownership status on the Master Title Plats. The lines shown here are the survey weight line, single weight patent line, and the double weight patent line. We will cover these in more detail in the next lesson.



True or False: The protraction diagram number will be noted below the word partially surveyed in the heading or in the RHM of the plat if the township is unsurveyed or partially surveyed.

A. True

B. False

Correct Answer: True

Summary

You should now be able to:

- Summarize the history of the Land Status Records System
- Identify the survey data on a Master Title Plat



You should now be able to: summarize the history of the Land Status Records System, and identify the survey data on a Master Title Plat.

Quiz Answer Key

1. In 1955, a new system was established. What is this system which makes extensive use of microfilming?

- A. Land Status Records System
- B. Public Land Automated Tracking (Plat) System
- C. Title Mapping System

Correct Answer: C. Title Mapping System

2. Match each item to the area in which it should appear on the MTP.

•	Index to Segregated Tracts	A. Heading
•	Latitude and longitude	B. Right Column
•	Plat designation	C. Lower-Right Corner
•	Partially Surveyed/Unsurveyed	
•	County	

Correct Answers: Index to Segregated Tracts = B. Right Column Latitude and longitude = C. Lower-Right Corner Plat designation = B. Right Column Partially Surveyed/Unsurveyed = A. Heading County = A. Heading

- 3. Where would you find the plat type on the MTP?
- A. Heading
- B. Right Column
- C. Lower-Right Corner

Correct Answer: B. Right Column

4. True or False: The survey weight line is drawn regardless of whether a section is surveyed or unsurveyed.

Correct Answer: True

5. True or False: The township and the range appear in both the header and lower-right corner of the MTP.

Correct Answer: True