



PROPERTY OWNERSHIP AND LAND-USE HISTORY FOR ISLAND/SAN JUAN/SKAGIT/SNOHOMISH/WHATCOM FORESTLAND

For your Forest Stewardship Plan

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP AND LAND-USE HISTORY FOR ISLAND/SAN JUAN/SKAGIT/SNOHOMISH/W HATCOM FORESTLAND

By

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Abstract

A property ownership history is an outline of the ownership transfers over time. A land-use history, in contrast, is a record of how the land has been used by previous owners as well as natural disturbances that may have occurred. Understanding how the natural features of your land have been altered over time can provide insight into the overall quality of the land.

This information will help identify factors that may affect the use or management of your property. Including some history will deepen your discussion of resource conditions and management practices as you consider your land management plan.

This manual provides step-by-step instructions for completing an ownership and land-use history. It explains how to use the records websites for Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties, in Washington State, as well as the process for retrieving records from other local archives.

Property Ownership and Land-use History for Island/San Juan/Skagit/Snohomish/Whatcom Forestland

Introduction

What is an ownership history?

An ownership history is the outline of property ownership transfers through time. The result of this research will provide a listing of names and dates associated with each transfer of the property going back to the original private land owner. This information is commonly compiled by reviewing the tax assessment rolls to locate deeds or other vesting documents.

It is recommended to start your research when you (or the current owner) purchased the property, and then regress through time. After locating the name of the last seller of the property (as the grantor), you can then search backwards until you find when they purchased the property (as the grantee). Continue this process until finding the original land owner.

What is a land-use history?

A land-use history is the compilation of records identifying:

- how the land was utilized by the previous property owners
- natural disturbances that were identified to have occurred on the property

The land-use history is usually secondary to the ownership history and can be much more difficult. Records for land-use are rare and may require specific information such as the exact date a claim was made. However, if these records are found, they can reveal detailed information about tree stocking, logging, topography, or mining.

Why perform property history?

Completing a property history can allow you to add a narrative to the landscape. With each new owner, a new chapter about the land is written, helping you to better understand the characteristics that make up your property today. Learning who owned the property and how it was used and valued in the past can contribute to a better understanding of the growth and changes within communities.

On an environmental level, understanding how the natural features on the land were altered over time can provide insight into the current quality of the land. Gathering information regarding native trees, logging history, location of water features, and agricultural and mining use can all point to

potential explanations of soil quality, water storage, and wildlife presence.

How does this fit into my forest stewardship plan?

The [Washington State Integrated Forest Management Plan Guidelines](#) include an introductory overview of the property. In addition to providing an overview of the land features, you may wish to include a family and land use history. This information will help identify the factors which may affect the use or management of your property. Including some history will deepen your discussion of the resource conditions and management practices that you will outline in your management plan.

This manual provides a step-by-step guide through the process of completing an ownership and land-use history. The manual explains how to use the free online records retrieval websites for Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties as well as the process for retrieving records from other local archives.

This manual only covers the most basic requirements for an ownership and land-use history as they relate to a forest stewardship plan. There are other avenues you can explore on your own to delve deeper into the history of the previous owners of your property.

Online resources mentioned in this manual are hyperlinked within the text for easy web access. For readers viewing this offline, a Website Reference List with full-length URLs is also included.

Where do I start?

Personal knowledge and communication

It is easy to overlook the most accessible information available: personal knowledge. Start by asking yourself a few questions.

- Did you receive documentation about the property when it was purchased?
- Did the previous owner talk about current or previous land use?
- Did you inherit the property from family? If so, how did they utilize the land?

Neighboring property owners are also a great resource for learning more about the history of your property and the surrounding area.

Look up a historical overview of the property's city or town

The [Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History](http://www.historylink.org) can be accessed for free. The encyclopedia has three libraries:

1. Cyberpedias (overview essays)
2. Timeline essays (events keyed to specific dates)
3. People's Histories (reminiscences, documents, older historical accounts, and interpretations).

You can search these three libraries for your county, city, or town. To complete this search, visit the [Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History](http://www.historylink.org) and type in the name of your city or town in the **search box** on the right-hand side of the page (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Use the Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History (historylink.org) to search for the history of cities & towns within Washington State. Click on the Cities & Towns link, or enter your city or town in the Search box and click Go!

Familiarize yourself with your regional archive branch

An archive is a collection of historical government records, which are available to the public for review. An archive holds collections of records about activities, programs, and decisions of government agencies and elected officials. The records are presented in many kinds of formats, including papers, photographs, maps, and audio-visual materials.

It is important to familiarize yourself with exactly what records are available online and in the archives. Knowing what records are available will give you a better idea about what to ask for when you make an appointment to complete your in-person research.

Island, San Juan, Snohomish, Skagit, and Whatcom property owners can do this by accessing the [Northwest Regional Archives Guide to Holdings](#). Explore the types of records by choosing from the Record Groups, or by using the keyword search.

The archives only have the records that the county makes available. This means that the archives will not have the same records for each county.

If you cannot find the records you are looking for in the archives or online, try contacting your county's records office for more information.

Locate the legal description of your property

Most archive centers will be unable to identify your property by address. A parcel number and location within your section/township/range are the most helpful.

If you do not know your parcel number, the easiest way to find it is to look at the bi-annual property tax statement you receive from the county. If you do not have a copy of these statements, you can search for this information on your county assessor's website (via the address search or parcel viewer tools), or by calling your county assessor's office. Once you have the parcel number, you can use it to find the property legal description from the assessor website.

Island, San Juan, and Whatcom Counties

Via the property information search

The Island, San Juan, and Whatcom County Assessor's offices allow you to search for your parcel number by name or address.

You can access the parcel search engines here:

- [Island County Parcel Information Database](#)
- [San Juan County Parcel Information Database](#)
- [Whatcom County Parcel Information Database](#)

The following steps are the same for all three counties.

1. Once the page opens, read and accept the terms.
2. Click on the drop-down arrow in the box next to **Search Type** to see the list of search options.
3. After you choose the search option that characterizes information you have about the property, enter that information underneath the **Search Type** box and click **Search** (Figure 2).
4. Find the owner name, address, or account number you were looking for and click **View Details** (Figure 3). The property detail information will then open.
5. Take note of the parcel number, geographic ID, and legal description of your property.

Via the online property information interactive map

The following sections include information on interactive maps for Island and San Juan County only. Whatcom County does not currently have a mapping tool.

Island County parcels

Island County property owners can also find their parcel number using the [Island County GIS Mapping Tool](#).

The page will load and feature a welcome statement that explains a few tips for using the site. Read these, as they offer information about new features that have been added to the interactive map. Click **OK** to close the tip box and enter the website.

There are two ways to search for your parcel. Use the **Address Search** box if you know the street address of the property. If your property does not have a mailing address, or you cannot remember it, use the query parcels widget.

Address Search Box

1. If you know the street address of your property, enter it into the **Street Address Search Box** on the top left of the map (Figure 4).
2. Matching results will begin to appear below the text box after two characters are entered.
3. Select one of the matching results displayed.

Property Search Options

Select a search type, then enter one or more search terms. Click "Advanced" for more search options. To search for sales or by the map please click the "Sales Search" or "Map Search" above.

Search Type:

Owner Name: e.g., Smith John or Smith

Results Display

Appraisal Year for Tax Year:

Figure 2. Parcel search for [Island County Parcel Information Database](#) and [Whatcom County Parcel Information Database](#). Choose your search criteria, enter the information, and click Search.

Property Address Legal Description

Property ID	Geographic ID	Type	Tax Area	Property Address	Owner Name	Appraised Value	
<input type="checkbox"/> 684851	R32909-338-1200						<input type="button" value="View Details"/> <input type="button" value="View Map"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 675629	R32909-211-1070						<input type="button" value="View Details"/> <input type="button" value="View Map"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 684842	R32909-468-1310						<input type="button" value="View Details"/> <input type="button" value="View Map"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 17083	R13209-298-4790						<input type="button" value="View Details"/> <input type="button" value="View Map"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 92599	R23225-087-3000						<input type="button" value="View Details"/> <input type="button" value="View Map"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 803966	R23114-220-2980						<input type="button" value="View Details"/> <input type="button" value="View Map"/>

Page: 1

Figure 3. Click on the View Details link for the search result that identifies your property. This will generate your property detail report.

Query Parcels Widget

The query parcels widget is represented by the binoculars icon on the top right of the map (Figure 4).

1. When you click on the binoculars icon, a search box will open that will allow you to search for parcels by geographic number, parcel ID, or name.
2. Using the arrow, select to **Search by Name**.
3. Enter your name in the box and click **Apply** (Figure 4).
4. The parcel query will generate a list of property owners that match the name you searched. Find your name and your parcel number from the list. For additional property information, click on your name.
5. The map will zoom into your parcel and highlight it blue (Figure 5).
6. Click on your parcel.
7. A dialog box with your property information will pop up on the map. Use the navigation arrows to access page 4 of the property information dialog box.
8. Scroll to the bottom of page 4 and click on the picture of the Island County logo (Figure 5).
9. The property detail information will then open. Take note of the parcel number, geographic ID, and legal description of your property.

San Juan County (Polaris)

San Juan County property owners can find their parcel number using the [San Juan County – Polaris Property Search and Mapping Tool](#).

1. On the left side of the map is a menu. The page should load with the search box opened.
2. Enter your address or a road that intersects with your property and click **Search** (Figure 6).
3. A list of search results will generate. Click on the entry that most closely matches your property.
4. Once you click on the address, the map will zoom into your property and label it with a thumbtack. Once you have located your parcel on the map, click the **Information icon** and **then your property** on the map.
5. A window with your tax information will open. Scroll to the bottom and click on the link to **View Assessor Info** (Figure 7).
6. Your property detail report will open on the screen. Take note of the parcel number, geographic ID, and legal description of your property.

If you have trouble getting this information online, you can also contact the San Juan County Assessor’s office by emailing assessor@sanjuanco.com or calling (360) 378-2172.

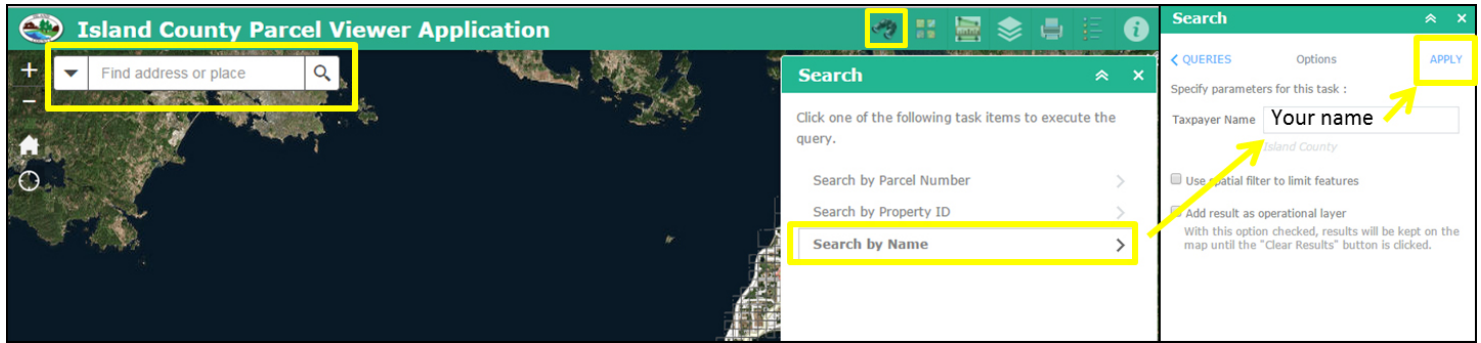


Figure 4. Island County Parcels GIS mapping tool. Search for your parcel by address, using the search engine on the top left of the screen. Or, search by name with the query parcel denoted by the binocular icon on the top right of the screen.



Figure 5. Click on the search result represented by your property (1), followed by your parcel on the map (2). On page 4 of the property information dialogue box (3), click on the Island County logo to receive the parcel information where you can find your parcel number (4).

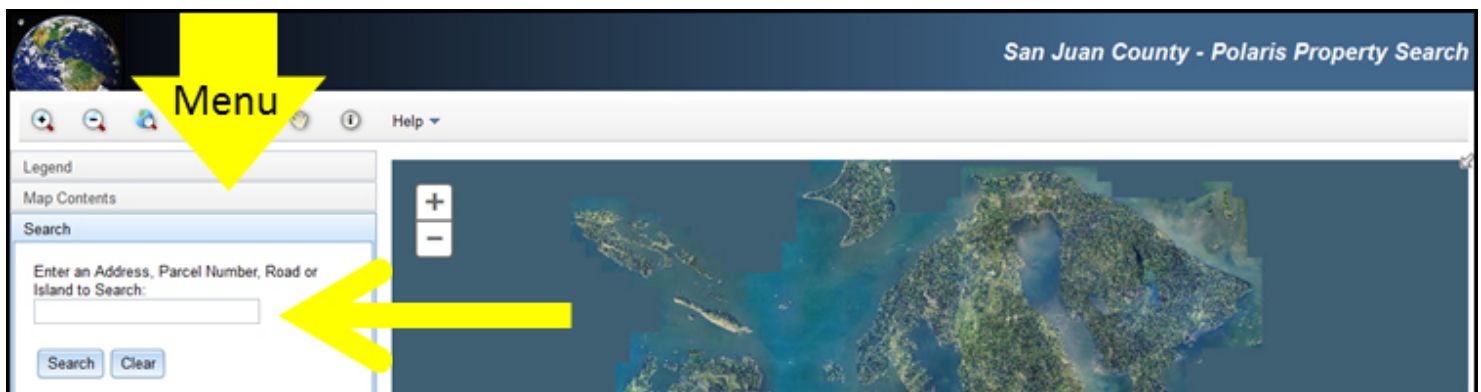


Figure 6. San Juan County - Polaris Property Search and mapping tool. Use the menu on the left side of the map to search for your property's parcel number by address or road.



Figure 7. Click the entry in the search list to identify your property. Then click on the information icon followed by your property on the map. When your tax information appears, follow the link to view assessor info.

Snohomish County

Via the property information search

The [Snohomish County Parcel Database](#) allows you to search for your parcel by address.

1. Enter your address in the **House No.** and **Street Name** boxes (Figure 8).
2. Once you find your property in the search results, click on the link to the **Parcel number** (Figure 9).
3. Take note of the parcel number and legal description (or property description) of your property.

Via the Online Property Information Interactive Map (SCOPI)

You can also find your parcel number using the [Snohomish County Online Property Information Interactive Map \(SCOPI\)](#).

This is the easier option if you do not have a house on your parcel, and therefore cannot search by house number.

1. Find the legend on the left side of the map.
2. Click the **Locate Address** button in the center of the legend (Figure 10). Your pop-up blocker will need to be disabled for the search engine to open.
3. Fill in the street or cross street information and click **Find Street Address** or **Find Street Intersection**
4. A list of results will generate. Click on the **View Map** link for the one that best matches your search (Figure 11).
5. The map will zoom in to that address (Figure 11). Once you have located your parcel on the map, click the **View Property Information** button at the very top of the map key (Figure 12).
6. Click on your property on the map.
7. Your property detail report will open on the screen (Figure 12). Take note of the parcel number and legal description (or property description) that are outlined in your property detail report.

If you have trouble getting this information online, you can also contact the Snohomish County Assessor’s office by emailing contact.assessor@snoco.org or calling (425) 388-3433.

Assessor's Office

Snohomish County

 Washington

Online Tools:

- Interactive Map
- Static Parcel Maps
- Property Sales
- Address Change
- eFile
- Mobile App
- FTP Data

Cindy Portmann Assessor
Ph: (425) 388-3433

Lookup Property Info

Parcel No.:

House No.: Street Name:

Figure 8. Snohomish County parcel search application on the home page of the assessor's website. Enter your address to find your parcel number.

Results Message: 1 records returned from your search input.

Parcel Number	Name	Location Address
3205340010		25 59TH

Figure 9. Click on the parcel number of the property listing that matches your name and address.

Locate Street Address

Type in the House Number and Street Name below

House Number
numbers only, 5-digit maximum

Street Name
(Example: 148th St. NE)

Zip Code optional

Locate Address →

Find a Street Intersection

(Example: 1st St NE & Maple Ave.)

&
Street Name Cross Street

Figure 10. The Locate Address button and Locate Street Address search engine. Fill in the street or intersection, then click Find.

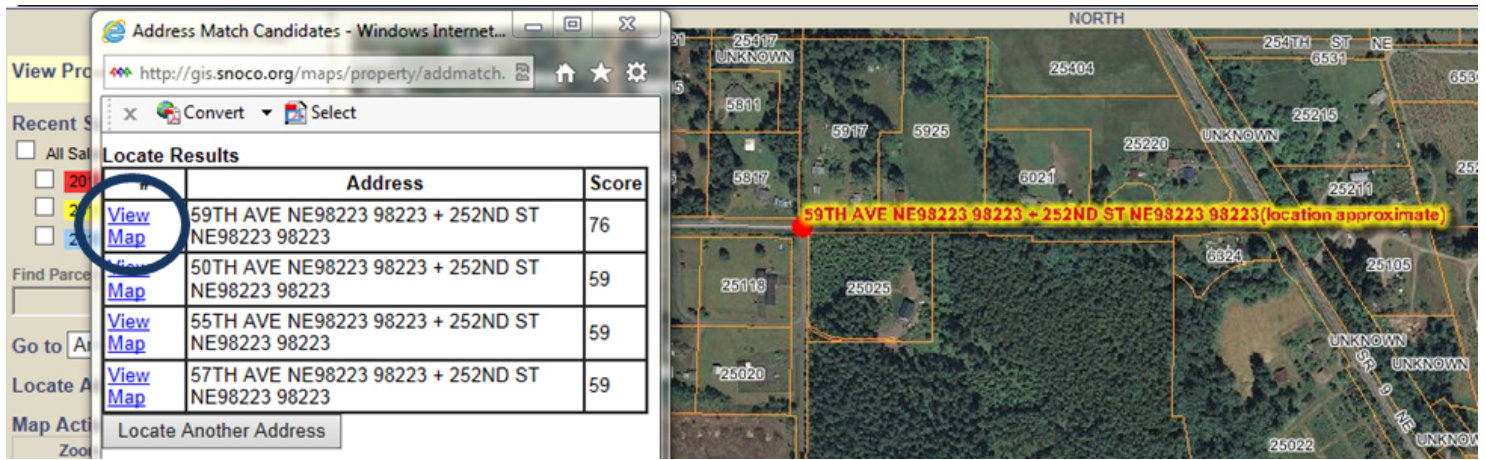


Figure 11. Click on the View Map link for the address or intersection that matches your property. The map will zoom into that address.



Figure 12. Click on the View Property Information button before clicking your property to generate the property detail report.

Skagit County

Via the property info search

The [Skagit County Parcel Database](#) allows you to search for your parcel by address.

1. Once the property search page opens, begin entering your address in the **Enter Address** search box (Figure 13). Matching results will begin to appear below the text box after two characters are entered.
2. Select one of the matching results displayed (Figure 14) or return all matching results by using the ENTER key on the keyboard (Figure 15).
3. Once you find your property in the search results, click on the **Parcel ID Link** to the Property Tax Information. Take note of the parcel number, XrefID, section/township/range, and legal description of your property.

Via the Online Interactive Map (iMap)

You can also find your parcel number using the [Skagit County Online Interactive Map](#) (iMap).

1. On the left-hand side of the map is a navigation pane. At the bottom, click on the **Search** button (Figure 16). You can choose to search by your parcel ID, the owner name, address, or road name.
2. Select the link that represents the information you know best. In Figure 17, a road name was chosen.
3. Matching results will begin to appear below the text box after two characters are entered. Select one of the matching results displayed, or return all matching results by using the **Enter** key (Figure 16).
4. The map will zoom in and highlight the area that was the subject of your search. Once you have found your property on the map, click on it (Figure 17).

SKAGIT COUNTY
 Property Search
 Assessor Information, Taxes, Land Improvements, Value History, Permits

Site Search [Search Icon]

Directory Find It Here Records Contact

Select a search option below:
 Address Parcel # Owner Name (Last First) Road XrefID

Enter Address: [Text Box] Clear Help Print

Type an Address or partial Address into the text box.

Assessor Home
 Treasurer Home
 Prior Searches
 Clear Prior Searches

Figure 13. To find your parcel number, enter your address into the Skagit County parcel search application on the home page of the assessor's website.

SKAGIT COUNTY
 Property Search
 Assessor Information, Taxes, Land Improvements, Value History, Permits

Site Search [Search Icon]

Directory Find It Here Records Contact

Select a search option below:
 Address Parcel # Owner Name (Last First) Road XrefID

Enter Address: 60 Clear Help Print

Type 60 KULSHAN CR, LA CONNER 98257 | P128947
 Match 600 BENNETT ST, SEDRO-WOOLLEY 98284 | P75307
 600 CASCADE MALL DR, BURLINGTON 98233 | P23863
 Selection 600 CENTRAL AVENUE, SEDRO-WOOLLEY 98284 | P76596
 using OR 600 COUNTY SHOP LN, BURLINGTON 98233 | P115795
 Return 600 CROSSROADS SQUARE, SEDRO-WOOLLEY 98284 | P100467
 If the 600 E CEDAR ST, MOUNT VERNON 98273 | P53995
 on the expand

Assessor Home
 Treasurer Home
 Prior Searches
 Clear Prior Searches
 P33000
 TESORO REFINING AND ...
 11242 MARCH'S POINT ...
 Anacortes, WA 98221
 P30338
 CRYSTAL CREEK HOLDIN...
 24858 BENHAM ROAD
 Mount Vernon, WA 98...

Figure 14. When entering your address into address search box, matching results will begin to appear. Select one of the matching results displayed to access the Property Tax Information.

SKAGIT COUNTY
 Property Search
 Assessor Information, Taxes, Land Improvements, Value History, Permits

Site Search [Search Icon]

Directory Find It Here Records Contact

Select a search option below:
 Address Parcel # Owner Name (Last First) Road XrefID

Enter Address: [Text Box] Clear Help Print

To view information on a property, click the Parcel Link at the left of each item

Results View: Site Address Includes Owner Address
 545 properties found searching by Address beginning with a value of '60'

Parcel	Owner	Site Address
P82003	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
P77907	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
P82004	[Redacted]	[Redacted]

Assessor Home
 Treasurer Home
 Prior Searches
 Clear Prior Searches
 P75307
 BLACK LES M
 600 BENNETT ST
 SEDRO-WOOLLEY, WA 9...
 P73920
 HYATT GLENN R
 500 BELLA STREET

Figure 15. Enter your address into the address search box and hit enter to return all matching results. Once you find your property in the search results, click on it to access the Property Tax Information.

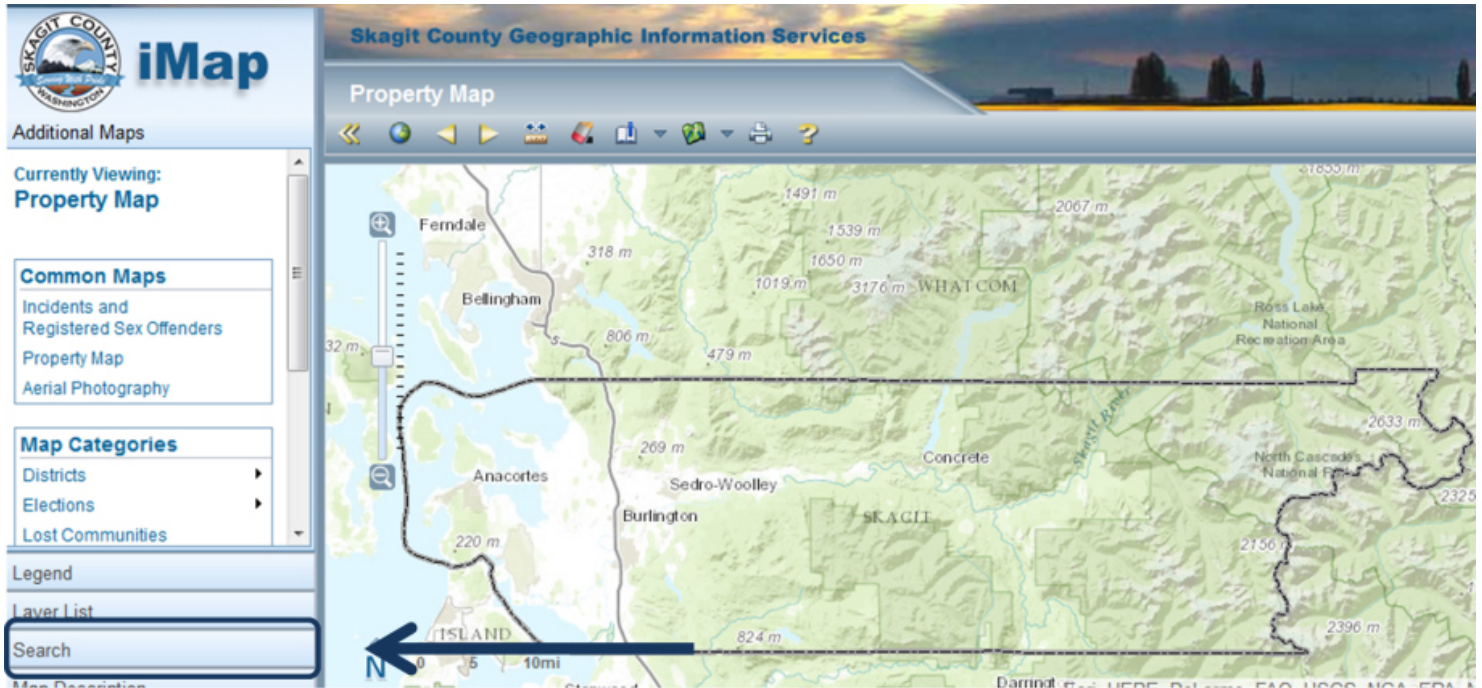


Figure 16. Skagit County interactive map (imap). Click the search button to find your property by parcel ID, name, address, or road.



Figure 17. Identify the search method for finding your property and enter the search information. Select one of the matching results displayed. The map will zoom in and highlight the area that was the subject of your search. Click on your property to access the property details.

5. A dialogue box with the tax parcel details will generate.
Click on the link called **Assessor Property Details** to generate the property detail report.
6. Take note of the parcel number, XrefID, section, township, range, and legal description of your property.

If you have trouble getting this information online, you can also contact the Skagit County Assessor’s office by emailing contact.assessor@snoco.org or calling (425) 388-3433.

Make an appointment

Now that you have familiarized yourself with exactly what records are available in the archives and identified the legal description of your property, you are ready to make an appointment at the regional archives. Appointments need to be made at least two days in advance to give the archivist time to find your property's records. The two day waiting time can be used for starting the online portions of your ownership or land-use history (outlined later in this manual).

When making your appointment, be specific about what information you are looking for (timber cruise records, aerial photos, tax assessment rolls, property record cards, etc.) and have your property's parcel number and legal description ready. These appointments are free and are typically 15 minutes long.

During the appointment, the research specialists will explain how to use the resources available and interpret the requested records. Once your time is up, the researcher may have to move on to another appointment, but should still be available for questions while you complete the rest of your research. The [Washington State Archives](#) website has additional research and contact information for each of the regional branches.

If your property is in Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, or Whatcom County you can make your research appointment at the Northwest Regional Branch in Bellingham. The Northwest Regional branch will have most of the ownership and land-use records for your property, including the auditor's general indexes, deeds and mortgages, real property assessments, mining claims, and minimal timber cruise records.

Please note that mining claims are organized by name, date, or claim. This means that you would have to know ahead of time that someone claimed your property for mining and what their name was. The Northwest Regional Branch is only opened for in-person research Wednesdays through Fridays.

Northwest Regional Branch

Western Washington University, MS-9123
Bellingham, WA 98225-9123

Phone: (360) 650-3125

email: NWBranchArchives@sos.wa.gov

If you are unable to visit the archive branch in person, copies of records can be requested via phone or email. The staff can also be hired to complete the property history for you. Research performed by Archives staff requiring more than 15 minutes will generate a fee. Research is defined by the Washington State Archives as "the collection, assembly or extraction of data or information from records, or the analysis of information to provide a report."

For exact pricing, consult the [Washington State Archives Services and Fees](#) website for the Northwest branch. If you decide this option is best for you, consider first completing the online portion of the ownership and land-use histories. The research you can do at home may decrease the research time needed by the archives staff. If you do not have a computer or do not wish to do any of the research on your own, then an archives staff member will be able to do the online portion as well, for an additional fee based on time spent.

Property ownership history

There are multiple ways to compile a list of the property ownership changes through time. This section will discuss the online and in-person research options for identifying the names and dates associated with each transfer of the property going back to the original land patent owner. Figure 18 offers a visual representation of the property ownership history search process explained in this section.

Start online

Find the original land patent owner of your property.

A land patent is an official document that identifies the title owner of a piece of land.

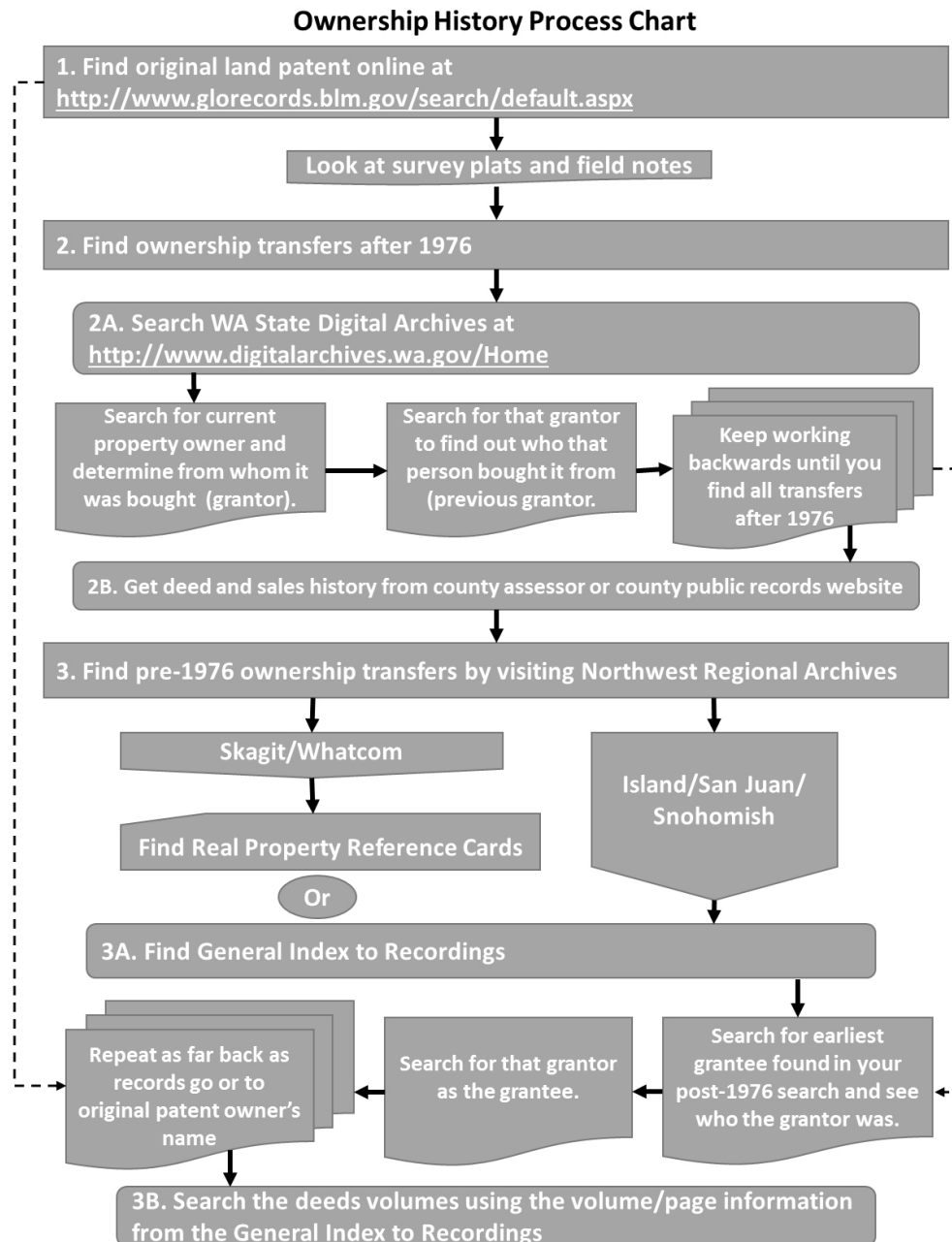


Figure 18. This chart offers a visual representation of the property ownership history search process.

These land patents reveal specific information on the initial transfer of land titles from the federal government to an individual. These patents also identify the specific locations for the patents and their issue dates. Land patent types include:

- Cash entry patents – a land patent in which the fees were paid in cash.
- Homestead patent – a land patent in which the fees were waived if the land had been lived on and cultivated for a minimum of three years.
- Military warrant patent – deeds issued to veterans in partial compensation for military service.

You can search for these patents by accessing the [Bureau of Land Management’s \(BLM\) general land office records](#) website (Figure 19).

1. Under the **Search Documents By Type** tab on the far left you can search for the patents on your property by location and land description.
2. In the **Location** section, use the drop down arrows to find your State and County.
3. Enter your township, range, and section and click **Search Patents**.

All of the people that received patents within your township, range, and section will be listed. Refer back to the legal description of your property and match it with the aliquots, land subdivisions, of the original patent holders (Figure 20).

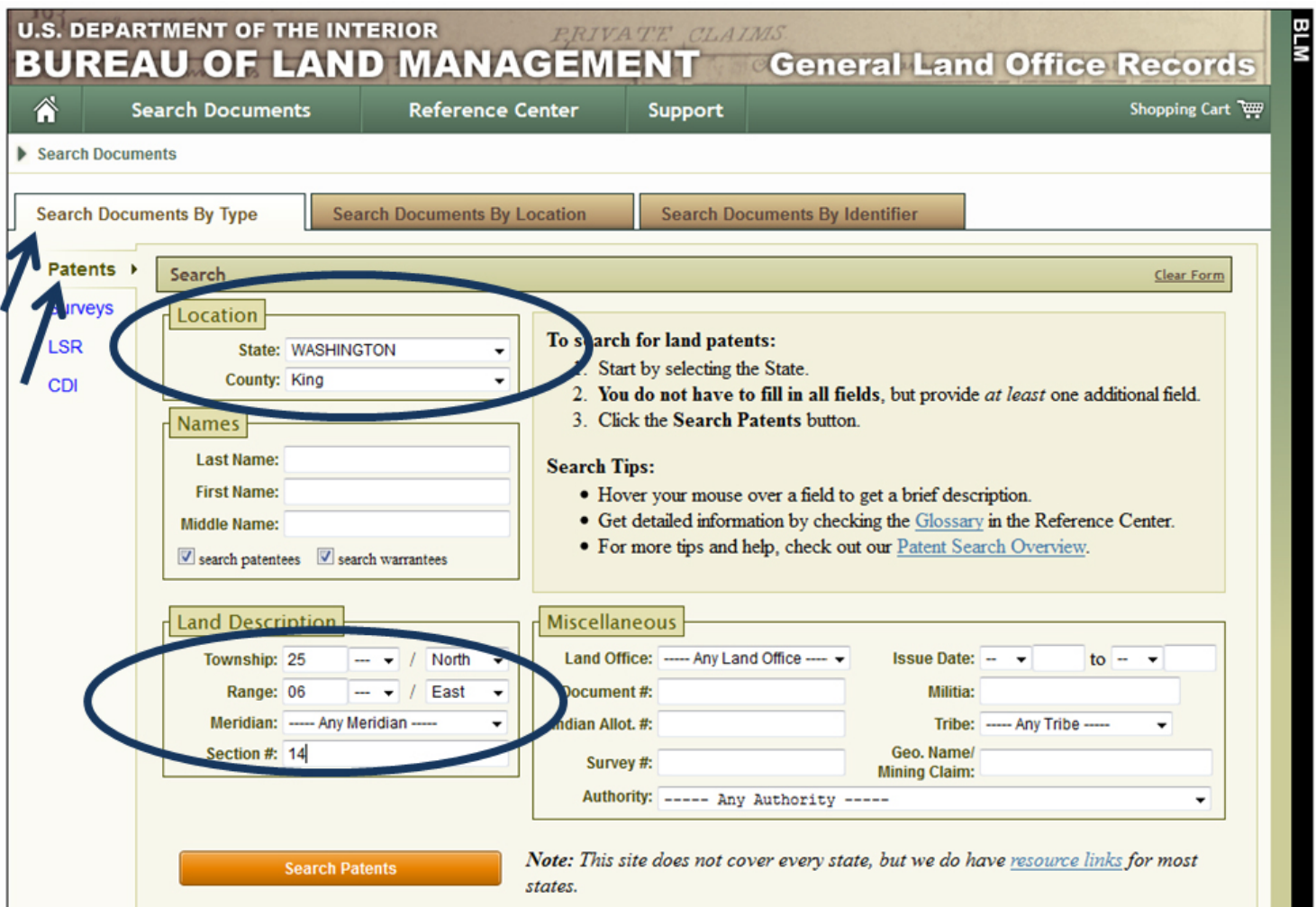


Figure 19. The Search Documents By Type tab, the patents section, and the location and land description search boxes are where you can provide information to identify the original land patent owner of your property.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT *PRIVATE CLAIMS* **General Land Office Records**

Search Documents | Reference Center | Support | Shopping Cart

Search Documents | Results List | Printer Friendly

Patents

Note: An *Italic* entry denotes data that has not been indexed against the land patent document, and has no image.

Image	Accession	Names	Date	Doc #	State	Meridian	Twp - Rng	Aliquots	Sec. #	County
---	WAOAA 065007	BARKER, WILLIAM W	3/25/1890	7808	WA	Willamette	025N - 006E	N½N½	14	King
---	WAOAA 064979	MOORE, PHILIP D	5/3/1887	7509	WA	Willamette	025N - 006E	SE¼	14	King
---	WASAA 065103	ODELL, JULIA J	6/9/1902	7444	WA	Willamette	025N - 006E	SW¼	14	King
---	WASAA 065040	SWARTWOOD, MARTIN V	3/7/1892	4200	WA	Willamette	025N - 006E	S½N½	14	King

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Figure 20. The list of individuals that received land patents within the section-township-range that was searched.

Example: Using the legal description of a sample property, can you find the original patent owners?

SEC 34 TWP 32 RGE 05 TH PTN **NE1/4 NE1/4** LY WLY OF GULCH THERIN EXT IN NWLY DIR THRU SD SUB BEING THE E LN OF TR DESC IN SURVEY REC AUD FILE NO 7701210296 TGW **SE1/4 NE1/4** LESS BEG 1/4 COR ON N BDY SEC TH E 478FT TH S 410FT TH W 478FT TH N 410FT TO POB & LESS S 208.71FT OF E 208.71FT.

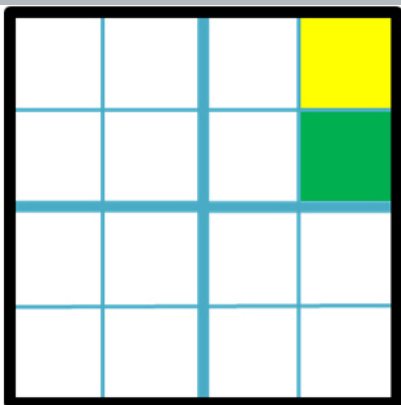


Figure 21. This is an example of how to find a property’s location within the Public Land Survey System by looking for clues in the property legal description. The black box represents a section (section 34 of township 32, and range 05 east). This box is split into quarter sections, then quartered again. The legal description explains the location of your parcel within these quarters. Quarter sections are read from smallest to largest. The yellow and green highlighted descriptors in the legal description correspond with the colored boxes in the section.

In Figure 21, the large black box represents an entire section (in this example, section 34 of township 32, and range 05 east). This box is split into four smaller boxes denoted by a thick blue line. These smaller boxes are quarter sections. Each quarter section is quartered again, identified by the thin blue lines. The legal description explains the location of your parcel within these quarters. The quarter sections can be read from smallest to largest. The rest of the descriptors are in relation to government-owned roads and monuments. The yellow highlighted descriptors in the legal description correspond with the yellow box in the section, and the same is true of the green. The aliquots that overlap with your property description will identify the original patent owner(s).

This diagram helps us see that this property was originally owned by two people, as shown in Figure 20. William Barker owned the north half of the north half of the section (i.e. the top row of boxes) and thus owned the yellow portion of the property. Martin Swartwood owned the south half of the north half of the section (second row of boxes from the top) and thus owned the green portion of the property.

To see the original patents online, click on the patent image. Many of these patents will not be available as images online. If the images of the original patents for your property are not available online, you can email:

- The Bureau of Land management to order a copy of the land patent:
 BLM_OR_SO_Land_Office_Mail@blm.gov B
- The National Archives in Seattle to obtain a copy of the full patent file which may include correspondence and other records associated with the patent:
 archives@nara.gov

Bring the names of the original patent owners with you to your appointment at the regional archives. This information will help you to determine when you have gone as far back in the ownership history as you can go.

Look at the survey plats and field notes.

The BLM general land office records website also has records on survey plats and field notes. Survey plats are the graphic drawings of the boundaries involved with a survey and contain the acreage used in the legal descriptions. Field notes are the narrative of the survey. They contain detailed descriptions of the instrumentation and procedures used during the survey process.

To access these records, go back to the [Bureau of Land Management’s \(BLM\) general land office records](#) website.

1. Select the **Surveys** tab in the far left margin.
2. In the **Location** section, use the drop down arrows to find your State and County.
3. Enter your township and range (Figure 22). You will not need a section here because the maps will contain all of the sections within your township.
4. Click on the **Search Surveys** button at the bottom of the page.
5. After the results page loads, click on the survey that you are interested in (Figure 23). The survey plat details will then open.

You can toggle through the tabs at the top to see the plat image and other related documents (Figure 24).

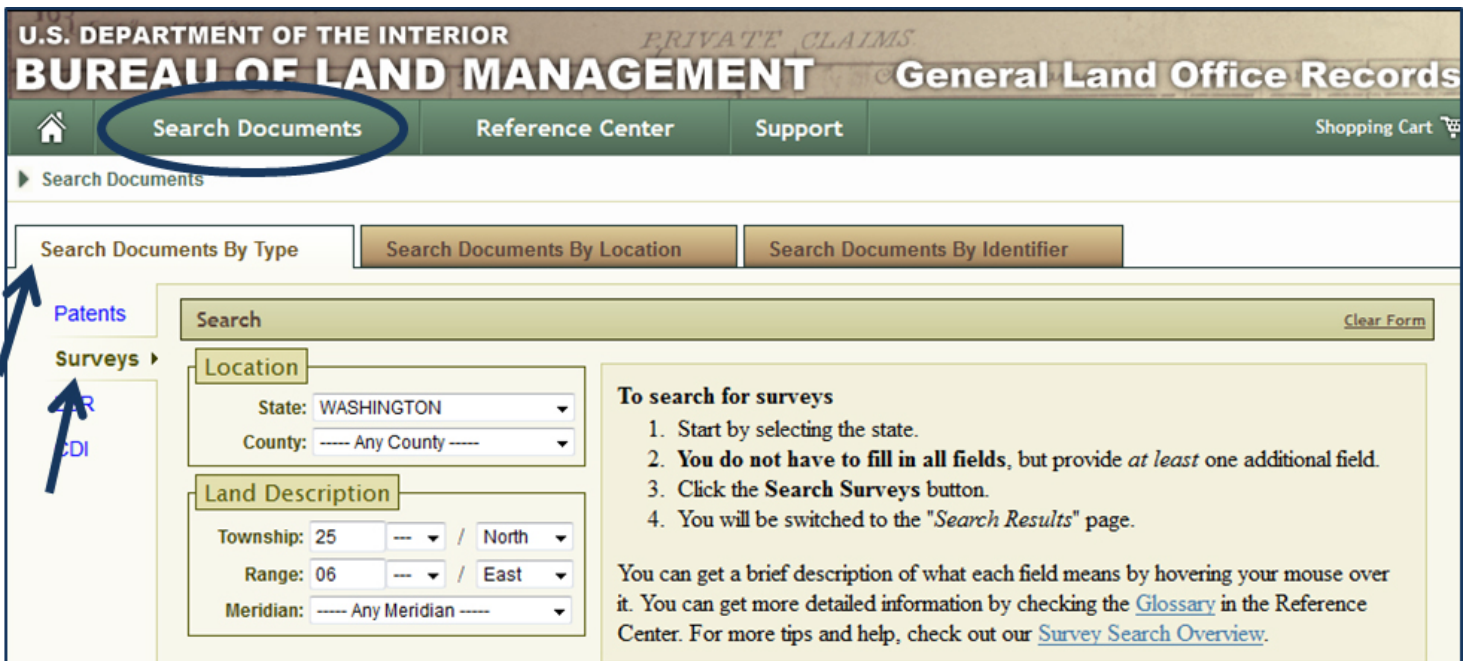


Figure 22. Search box for retrieving land surveys and field notes for the section your property is in.



Figure 23. List of surveys available in your township.



Figure 24. Tabs offering information on the selected survey.

Find ownership transfers after 1976

Most ownership records after 1976 can be found online in either your county’s digital archives or in the Washington State Digital Archives. Searching online archives is the easiest way to find the most recent transfers in ownership of your property. In these searches you are mostly looking for deeds, which are legal documents regarding the transfer of property. However, these searches may reveal other types of documents as well. For example, a document type called an “agreement” might show the government claiming a critical wetland on your property. With this in mind, it may be helpful to read through some of the non-deed or mortgage documents listed.

Note: These online searches may not work for everyone. If you cannot find what you are looking for online, the researchers at the Northwest archive location can help you with what you need. Additionally, some counties have an archive of their taxpayer records online. See below for steps on how to find these records for Washington State and each county.

Washington State Digital Archives

The Washington State Digital Archives is dedicated to the electronic preservation of local and state agency records. The Digital Archives is fairly new (2004) and does not contain all records for every county, nor does it include every county in Washington State. However, they are continually adding new records to the database, making it a useful place to start. Records identifying the transition of ownership for some properties after 1976 can be found at the [Washington State Archives – Digital Archives Search](#) site).

The easiest way to start looking for information on your property is to use the surname search on the home page.

1. Simply, enter your last name, or the last name of the current property owner and click **Search** (Figure 25).
2. The database will then ask you to identify the type of records that you are interested in. Use the list at the bottom of the page to choose your county’s **Land Records**.
3. Re-enter the name and party type in the box to the right and click **Search** (Figure 26).

The search results will generate at the bottom of the page. Make sure you check all of the results pages (navigation between pages is at the bottom).

Start searching through the results by finding the records that match both the first and last name of the property owner. Once you find the entry that you are looking for, open the image to get more details about the document and the transfer of the property.

If there is no image, then take note of the party type, document type, and year. Bring this information with you to the regional archives and the archivist can look up the document during your appointment. Once you find the correct grantor, then you can redo this process searching the grantor’s last name. Continue working backwards like this until you find all of the transfers of property that occurred after 1976. If you get stuck, it is likely because the transaction happened before 1976 and you will have to use your resources in person at the regional archives.

Island, San Juan, and Whatcom Counties

The deed and sales history for properties in Island and Whatcom Counties can be found using the Property Search tool on the county assessor’s website. If you used this manual to find your parcel number, then you already have some familiarity with this system.

1. To start, open the County Assessor Property Search Data page. Each county’s page can be found below.
 - [Island County Parcel Information Database](#)
 - [San Juan County Parcel Information Database](#)
 - [Whatcom County Parcel Information Database](#)
2. Read the terms of the search site and click **I agree**.
3. After the search engine loads, use the **Search Type** drop-down menu to search by account number. (Your parcel has two account numbers, the Property ID and the Geographic ID. You can use either one to search for your property. If you do not know the Property ID or Geographic ID for your parcel, refer to the section *Locate the legal description of your property.*)



Figure 25. Washington State Archives – Digital Archives Search site. Start your search with the surname of the property owner.

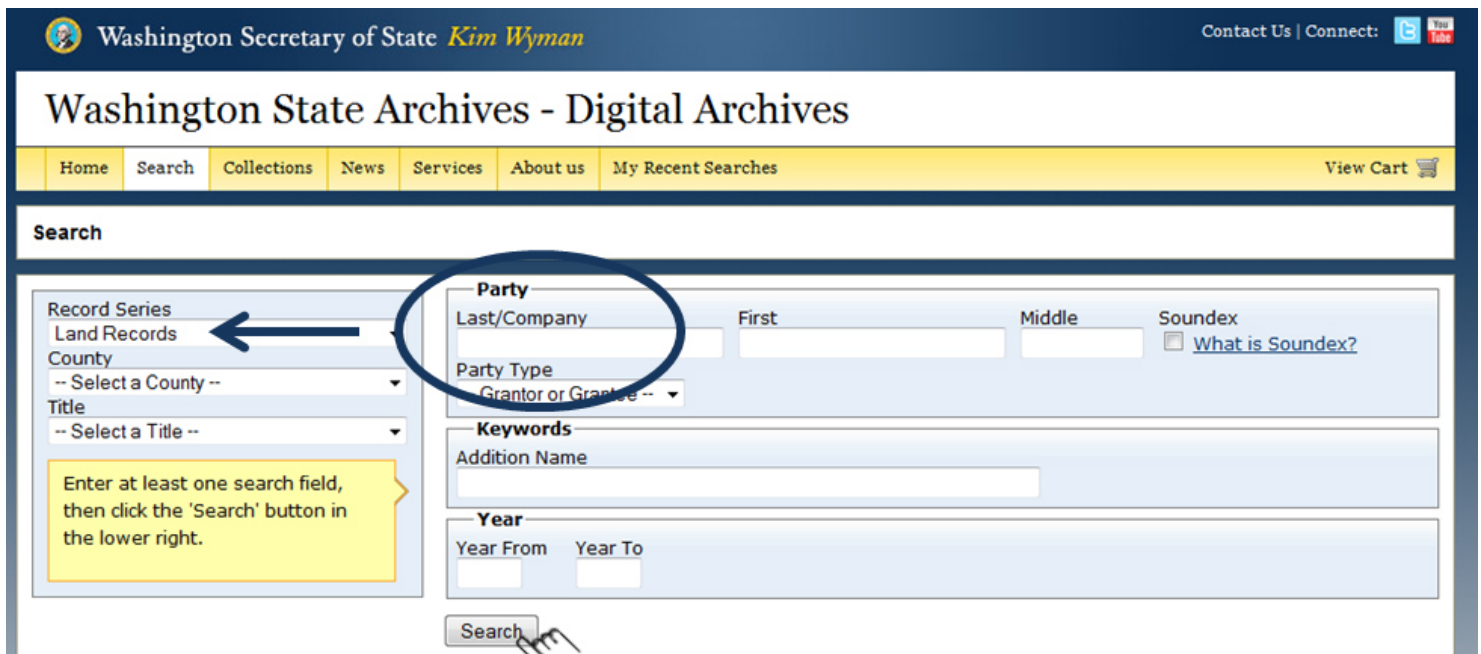


Figure 26. Search for land records associated with the last name of the property owner.

Skagit County

4. Fill in either your Property ID or Geographic ID and click **Search** (Figure 27). A list of results will load.
5. Click on the **View Details** link for your property (Figure 28). The property details report will load.
6. Scroll down to the section entitled **“Deed and Sales History”** and click the arrow to expand the section (Figure 29).

The deed and sales history for Skagit County properties can be located using the **parcel search tool** on the assessor website. If you used this manual to find your parcel number, then you already have some familiarity with this system.

1. To start, open the [Skagit County Parcel Database](#).
2. Begin entering your parcel number, and matching results will begin to appear below the text box after two characters are entered.

In this section you will find a list of the deed types, the names of the grantor/ grantee, and the date of the deed. Write down this information and bring it with you to your appointment at the regional archives.

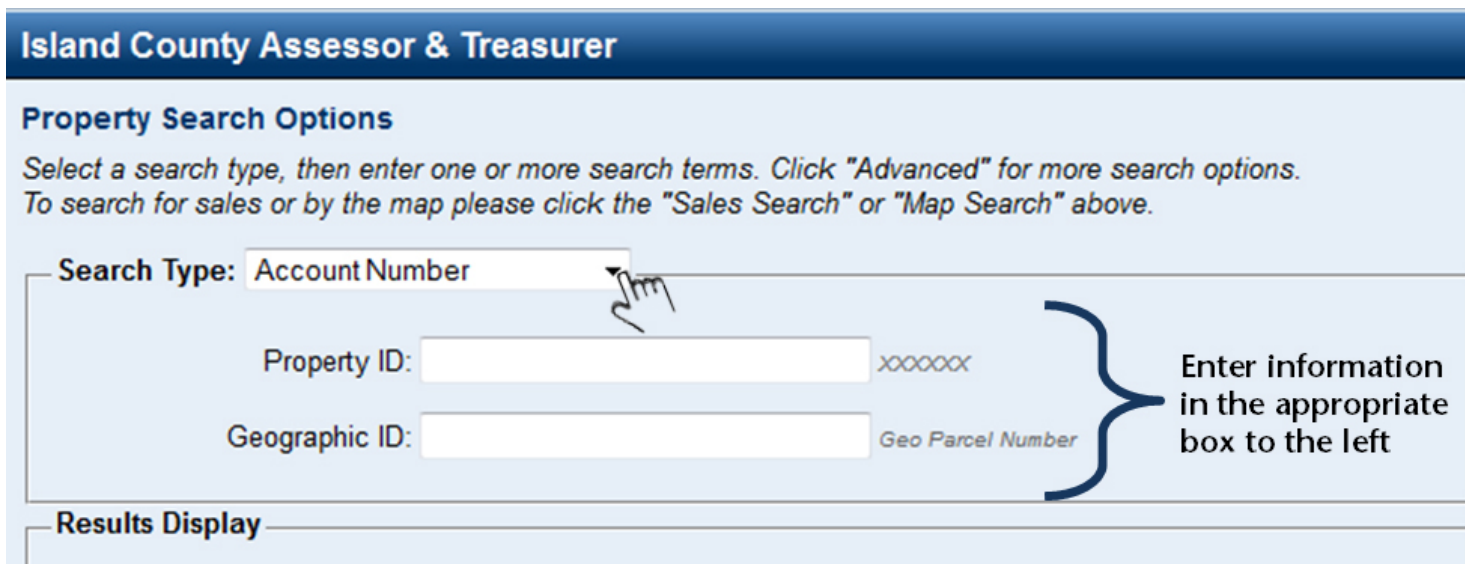


Figure 27. County Assessor Property Data page for Island, San Juan, and Whatcom County residents. Enter your parcel number and click Search.

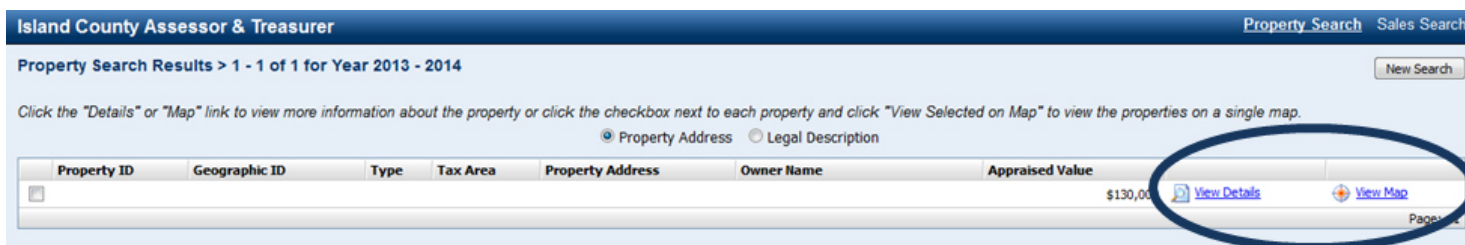


Figure 28. Generate your property detail report by clicking on the View Details link for the search result that identifies your property.

#	Deed Date	Type	Description	Grantor	Grantee	Volume	Page	Sale Price	Excise Number	Deed Number
1	12/04/2009	N	Personal Representative Deed					\$0.00	389	4269052
2	06/01/1992	W	Warranty & Grant Deed					\$0.00	23263	92015939
3	01/01/1900	O	N/A					\$0.00	0	0

Figure 29. The deed and sales history for your parcel. Bring a copy of this information to your archives appointment.

3. Select one of the matching results displayed, or return all matching results by using the **Enter** key on the keyboard.
4. Select your parcel number to generate the Property Detail Report.
5. The banner at the top of the report has tabs with information about your property. Click on the **Transfers** tab (Figure 30). A page with a list of the transfer history for your parcel will load. The page will be in descending chronological order of transfer date for all transfers that have occurred in 1976 or thereafter.

Take note of the date, deed type, buyer, and seller. Bring this information with you to your appointment.

Snohomish County

Snohomish County records were some of the first records added to the Washington State Digital Archives. Therefore, the digital archive is the best place to start (see Washington State Digital Archives section above).

As an alternative, you can use the [Snohomish County online records database](#).

1. In the middle of the page, under the title, **Viewing or obtaining copies of recorded documents**, click the link for **Online recorded document search** (Figure 31).
2. Read the disclaimer and accept the terms. This will bring you to a welcome page.
3. On the main menu, at the top of the page, click on **Recorded Documents**.
4. Click on **Search Recorded Documents** in the dropdown menu (Figure 32).
5. Start by searching only the last name of the current owner of the property.

This is suggested because the search engine looks for exact matches. If additional search parameters such as middle initial are used, but that information is not on the document, then it will not be in the list of results. This may cause you to miss an important record.

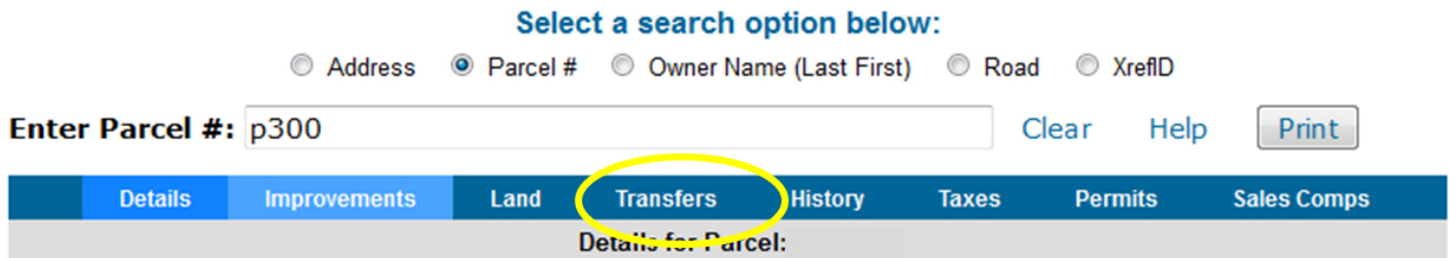


Figure 30. Type your parcel number into the [Skagit County parcel search tool](#) and select the matching result for your property. You will find the list of property transfers under the transfer tab in the property detail report.

Viewing or obtaining copies of recorded documents



Figure 31. Link to [Snohomish County online records database](#).

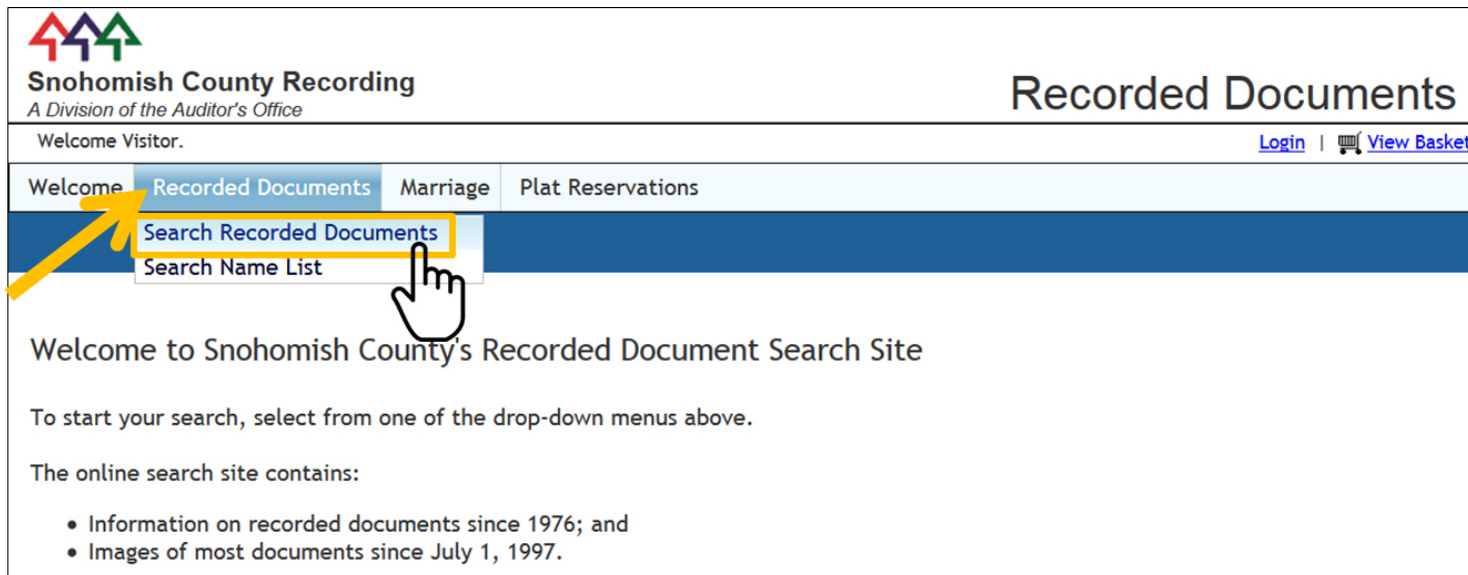


Figure 32. Click on the recorded documents link to access the Snohomish County public records search engine.

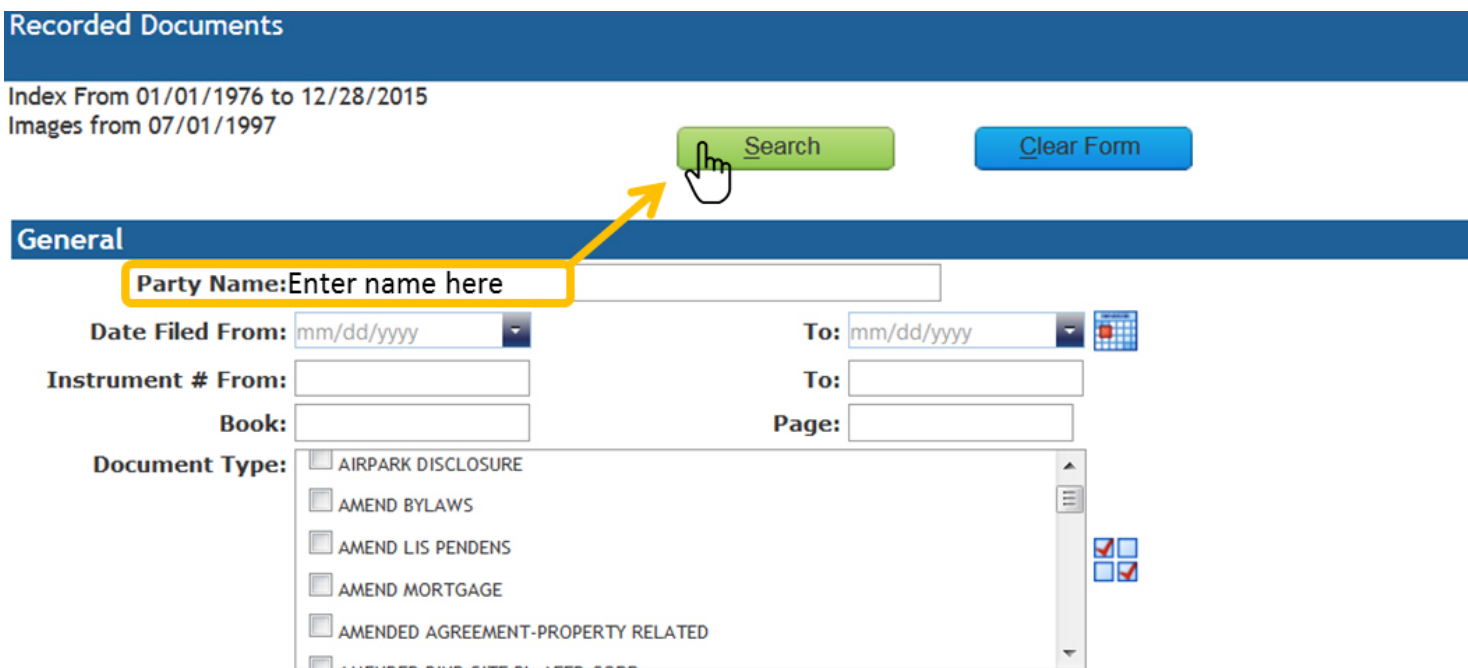


Figure 33. Enter the property owner's last name in the Snohomish County public records search engine criteria form then click Search.

It is also suggested that you leave out the parcel number because they are not always included in all document listings. Therefore, if you search by parcel number it is possible to miss an important record that does not have the parcel number linked to it. Instead, consider searching the parcel number as a secondary search to the owner's name.

If you searched the current owner, then you are looking for that name in the **Associated Name** column with an [E] (meaning they are the grantee and obtained the property in the transfer). The search will only show 25 results at a time. Check all of the pages using the navigation tool just above the results box (Figure 34).

6. Once you have entered your search criteria, click the **Search** button (Figure 33). A new page will load with the search results.
7. Start by searching for the results that match the first name of the property owner you are looking for (Figure 34).
8. Click on the **Instrument #** or **Image** to see more information and a scanned copy of the document.

Once you find the entry that you are looking for, take note of the grantor (denoted by the [R]). Repeat this process searching the grantor's last name and look for when s/he became the grantee. Continue working backwards like this until you find all of the transfers of property that occurred after 1976. If you get stuck, it is likely because the transaction happened before 1976 and you will have to use your resources at your regional archive branch to continue your search.



Snohomish County Recording

A Division of the Auditor's Office

Recorded Documents

Welcome Visitor.

[Login](#) | [View Basket](#)

Welcome | **Recorded Documents** | Marriage | Plat Reservations

Recorded Documents

Criteria: Party Name Begins With SMITH, R
 Showing Records 1 through 25 (100 records found as of 12/28/2015 12:27:02 PM [get full count](#))

Get a Free Copy: [Results List](#), [Selected Detail\(s\)](#), [Selected Images \(Use Mouse\)](#)
 Other Options: [New Search](#), [Refine Search](#)

Page 1 | Sort By: [v]

#	Image	Instrument # Book-Page	Date Recorded	Document Type	Name Associated Name	Legal Description	Status
1		9902260712	02/26/1999	AMENDED LIEN	[R] SMITH R [E] LAKE STEVENS SEWER DISTRICT		
2		9808270314	08/27/1998	POWER OF ATTORNEY	[E] SMITH RACHAEL [R] SMITH DAVID		
3		200002100341 0-0	02/10/2000	DEEDS(EXCEPT QCDS)	[R] SMITH RACHAEL (+) [E] SCHMER GEORGE	LOT 3 EL RANCHO DEL MONTE 43540000030001	
4		200312221075	12/22/2003	DEED OF TRUST	[R] SMITH RACHAEL L (+) [E] WELLS FARGO HOME MORTGAGE INC (+)	LOT 1 MARAVILLA 00428700000100	

Figure 34. Snohomish County public records search results page. Navigate through the pages with the navigation tool in the center of the page. Make note of the grantor to continue your search backwards in time to 1976. When available, review the instrument # and image links for additional information and copies of the deeds.

At the Northwest Regional Branch

Before arriving at the Northwest Regional Branch, you should have made an appointment and talked with the archivist about which records you are coming to look at. For more information on appointments and available records refer back to the sections titled Familiarize yourself with your regional archive branch and *Make an appointment*.

When you arrive at the Northwest Regional Branch in Bellingham (Figure 35), sign in at the front desk and ask for a parking permit to park in the lot across the street. After you sign in, you will be brought into the research room. The archivist will bring out a cart with the documents that you requested in advance. The ownership and land-use records will be together. The property ownership research can be completed from either past to present, or present to past. However, it is usually easiest to start with the current owners and work backwards. This section mostly describes what records you might look at during your appointment at the archives. It includes a short description of how to use the records and in what order to look at them. For a more detailed description on the step-by-step process on how to use each of these records, see the section below titled *Additional details on land record types*.



Figure 35. The Washington State Archives Northwest Regional Branch in Bellingham, WA.

Island County, San Juan, and Snohomish County

The **General Index to Recordings** (Island: 1854-1984; San Juan: 1877-1938; Snohomish: 1861-1975) is where you will want to start your search. Start with the latest volume and try to find the last grantee that you identified in your online search. The grantee will be listed along with the date, grantor, and archived location (volume, book, and page) of that deed. The location information will allow you to look up a copy of the deed (Island: 1853-1981; San Juan: 1886-1957; Snohomish: 1862-1965).

Once you have the name of the grantor, continue using the General Index to Recordings to find that person's name as the grantee on an earlier deed. Repeat this process until you go either as far back as the first records, or find the original patent owner's name.

Island County property owners may find the Real Property Assessment Rolls (yearly) to be useful. These rolls provide names of the property owners and are organized by township and range. This may fill in gaps if you have a lapse in dates. This archive also has volumes of land claims (notices of intent to acquire the described parcels of land) and other land records, including mine leases and quitclaim (transfer of interest) deeds (1853–1860).

San Juan County has filed Real Property Ownership Records (1974) with the Northwest Regional Archive. They also have copies of timber cutting permits (1970–1975) and land patents (1889–1932).

Snohomish County has the legal copies of land patents in the Northwest Regional Archive for you to look at (1889–1948). Other records at the Archives that you may be interested in include, loggers liens (1891–1965) and mining claims (1871–1972).

Skagit County and Whatcom County

Real Property Reference Cards (Skagit: 1983–1991; Whatcom: 1952–1981) are available for some Skagit and Whatcom County parcels. This is the best place to start. These reference cards may include owner information, land use codes, zoning, acreage, and land features. If the property has a building on it, then the card may include structure details, date of erection, and property values. These cards may fill in ownership gaps between what you find online and what you find in the General Index to Recordings (Skagit: 1871–1979; Whatcom: 1853–1991).

After you have compiled information from the reference cards, use the earliest grantee you have found to start your search in the **General Index to Recordings**. Start with the most recent volume, trying to find the last grantee from either your online research or the Real Property Reference Cards. The grantee will be listed along with the date, grantor, and location (volume, book, and page) of that deed. The location information will allow you to look up a copy of the deed (Skagit: 1871–1967; Whatcom: 1853–1965). Once you have the name of the grantor, you can use the **General Index to Recordings** to find that person's name as the grantee on an earlier deed. Repeat this process until you reach the first records, or the original patent owner's name.

If you know the land patent owner, both Skagit and Whatcom County have volumes of these patents in the Northwest Regional Archive for you to look at (Skagit: 1890–1920; Whatcom: 1890–1953). Other records at the archives that you may be interested in are mining claims (1884–1979).

Whatcom County property owners may also choose to look at lumber district records, which are records of logs scaled and measured by the lumber inspector on forest lands in the county (1880–1891), land claims (1854–1861), and other forest lands tax assessment materials (1949–1975).

Additional details on land record types

Property record/reference cards

These forms were used by the county assessor to record data on each parcel. They are organized by legal description and parcel number. Land-use code, zoning, acreage, and other features of the land may also be indicated on these forms. For properties with buildings, the cards will include the name of the plat, type of occupancy, date built, and other structural details used to assess the property value.

The information on these cards is abundant, so a sample card is provided here (Figure 36). Some of the key things to note for the purpose of this history are as follows:

- At the top of the card are the section, township, range, lot number, and property description. This is how you will determine that you have the correct property card.
- Just below we can see that the owner, Beatrice Harsh, purchased this lot on June 26, 1931.
- Ms. Harsh purchased this property with a two room cabin that was built in 1922, but it eventually burned down.
- The residents used a well for water and the land was farmed.

The bottom of the card describes the dimensions of the building and some cards may have a list of the owner or contract purchasers along with the date purchased. This may be another way to double check that you have the correct record card and line of ownership.

Follow the ownership records on the card forward in time. If the last owner on the card matches the owner from your online search, then you are on the right track. However, the likelihood of this is rare because when the cards became outdated, they were updated less and less. The original purchaser of the contract (pointed out in Figure 36) will be the one that will help you to move back in time when reviewing the tax assessment rolls.

1. DISTRICT: ROAD 3
 2. SECTION 14 TWP 25 N RANGE 6 TAX LOT NO. TAX LOTS Tax Lot A/W 25
 DESCRIPTION: S¹/₄ OF NE¹/₄ OF NE¹/₄ LESS W 60' AND S¹/₄ OF NE¹/₄ LESS W 60'

3. ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: Beatrice De Harsh
 4. CONTRACT PURCHASER: G. J. P.
 5. ARCHITECT: Vacant
 6. DATE: Occupied by Vacant
 7. CONDITION OF EXTERIOR: Poor
 8. BUILDING: 1 Fmly Dwl, 1 Story, 2 Rooms, 1' 1st Flr, 1 Attic
 9. CORNER JOINT: Log
 10. FIRST FLOOR JOIST SIZE: 6" Poles AND 4" IWBH CENTERS BRIDGED
 11. FIRST FLOOR JOIST SUPPORT COLUMN OR POST SIZE: 10" Poles
 12. CLASS OR GRADE NO.: Cabin
 13. BUILDING FINISHED OR UNFINISHED: Finished
 14. DEPRECIATION: CONDITION 80 % OBSOLETE % ECON. SUIT % TOTAL
 YEAR BUILT 1922 REMODELED No EFFECTIVE AGE 20 YRS. FUTURE LIFE 5 YRS

15. PLUMBING: 2 None Fixtures, 1 sink, 1 hot water tank
 16. ROOF: Shake
 17. EXTERIOR WALLS: Log
 18. FOUNDATION: Wd Lg on Rck
 19. HEATING: Stove
 20. INTERIOR TRIM: 2 Unfinished
 21. INTERIOR WALLS: 1 open log Stairway, Open Useful
 22. FLOORS: 1 Fir, 1 Shlp
 23. BASEMENT: None
 24. PORCHES: None
 25. EXTRA FEATURES: None
 26. BUILT-INS: None
 27. CONSTRUCTION: Solid Cheap
 28. CEILING HEIGHT: 1st Flr 10', Attic 2'7"

29. LAND INFORMATION: 1. SIZE, 2. ROAD Yes, Dirt, 3. SEWAGE, 4. TREND Static, 5. DRAINAGE, 6. USE Res. Farming
 LAND USE SOIL TYPE CROPS/TIMBER STAND NO. ACRES VALUE/ACRE VALUE

30. ASSESSED VALUE \$: 30
 DATE: 1/1/40

REMARKS: MAIN BUILDING DIMENSION 18 X 30 SQ. FT. AREA 540
 IMPROVEMENT VALUE: MAIN BUILDING \$ 40, OTHER BUILDINGS \$ 20, TOTAL \$ 60, ASSESSED VALUE 50% \$ 30

Figure 36. The front top half of a property record/reference card. This indicates the tax payer, section, township, range, lot number, property description, buildings, and residential use.

DISTRICT: ROAD		SCHOOL		WATER	FIRE	SEWER	HOSPITAL	AIRPORT	FERRY	PATTERSON
3		125-208		59	34		Hqs. #2		LIB	FLOOD ZONE
		414-65			FF	DECREASE OR INCREASE IN AS				
RECORD OF ASSESSED VALUE						DATE	BY	142506-025	4640	LAN
YEAR	AC.	LAND	BLDG'S. (2)	TOTAL						
1940	25	260	110	370						
1950	11	280	110	390						
1952	2180	1140	110	1250	11-20-51	Not (w)	(H) 4(13)(14)(15)(16)(17)(20) killed. (log # 6126)			
1952	2182	1150	110	1260	1-21-52	77x(w)	0 killed - seq # 7295			
1956	512	500	110	610	1/26/56	NL(B)	SEG 25 fr 17 SEG. D-586			
1958	4513	1510	110	1620	10-2-56	Arm H	few			
1959		1510	280 (2)	1790	12-6-57	JT.	Bldg "A" Revalue			
1963		4640	280	4920	9-20-61	Res	No			
1963		4640	80	4720	11/13/61	RM.	200 Imp. Void - burned			
1968		4640		4640	11-28-67	L.G.	R.V.			
1971		8990		8990	10/25/68	LS	REV			
1971	L	17980	B	T	17980*142506-9025-0	8/9				

Figure 37. The back side of the record card will identify the assessed value of the property through time. Consolidations and subdivisions are indicated here. In 1952, this property was consolidated with six additional lots.

The back of the card will also be very helpful in terms of identifying divisions and consolidations of parcels or lots. For example, in 1952 this plot increased by almost 200 acres when eight lots were combined with this one. If your lot was subdivided, then check the property card of the lot it was subdivided from. If the property owners are the same, then you need to follow both of these lots through time when going through the tax assessment rolls (Figure 37).

General Index to Recordings

The General Index to Recordings is the index of documents filed with the county auditor. The indexes are arranged by both grantor and grantee in volumes that cover a set period of time. The index listed by grantor is the direct index and the index listed by grantee is the indirect index. On the first page of these indexes is a table of contents that organizes the names of either the grantor or grantee alphabetically (Figure 38).

The column on the left is the first few letters of the last name. Once you find the row that matches the last name, move across that row until you reach the first letter of the first name.

The box you land in is the page number of where your grantor/grantee entry will be. For example, James Hicks would be found on page 982 (Figure 38).

When you turn to page 982 of the direct index, you will find a list of the grantors (or grantees in the indirect index) in alphabetical order by their last name in the second column. The date of the document is all the way to the left. The grantee will be listed in the column just to the right of the grantor, followed by the document type, and the volume, book, and page where you will find a copy of that document (Figure 39).

Copy down the information from the index for all of the deeds that you would like to look up and give them to the archivist. The archivist will bring out the volumes based on your notes. The deeds will be hand-written copies of the originals and will include the instrument filing number, date and time of filing, names of grantee and grantor, covenants, restrictions, reservations, agreements and easements, if any, and legal description of the property.

DIVISIONS OF SURNAMES, OR First Part of Corporate Names.	SUB-DIVISIONS BY FIRST LETTER OF GIVEN NAME, or First Letter of Second Capitalized part of Firm or Corporate Name containing no Given Name.																		
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	R	S	V	W
H																			
Haa Hab Hac Had	855	855	855	855	855	855	855	855	855	860	860	860	860	861	861	861	861	861	
Hae Haf Hag	862	862	863	863	863	863	863	863	864	865	865	865	865	866	866	866	866	866	
Hah Hai Haj Hak	867	867	867	868	868	868	868	868	868	869	869	869	869	869	869	869	869	869	
Hal	870	871	872	872	873	873	873	873	874	875	875	875	876	877	877	877	877	877	
Ham Han Hao Hap Haq	880	882	884	885	886	886	887	888	888	892	893	893	894	896	896	896	896	896	
Har	900	903	906	906	909	909	910	912	916	917	919	919	921	923	923	923	923	923	
Has Hat	925	925	926	926	926	926	926	927	927	927	927	927	928	928	928	928	928	928	
Hau Hav	929	929	930	930	930	930	930	931	931	931	931	932	932	932	932	932	932	932	
Haw Hax	933	933	933	933	933	933	933	934	934	934	934	934	934	934	934	934	934	934	
Hay Haz	935	935	936	936	936	936	936	937	938	938	938	938	938	939	939	939	939	939	
Hea Heb Hec	940	940	941	941	941	941	941	942	943	943	943	943	943	944	944	944	944	944	
Hed Hee Hef Heg Heh ..	945	945	945	945	945	945	945	946	946	946	946	946	946	946	946	946	946	946	
Hel Hej Hek Hel Hem ..	947	948	949	949	950	950	950	951	952	953	954	955	955	955	955	955	955	955	
Hen Heo Hep Heq	957	958	959	959	960	960	960	961	962	963	964	965	965	965	965	965	965	965	
Her Hes Het	967	968	969	969	970	970	970	971	972	973	974	975	975	975	975	975	975	975	
Heu Hev Hew	977	977	977	977	977	977	977	978	978	978	978	978	978	978	978	978	978	978	
Hex Hey Hez	979	979	979	979	979	979	979	979	980	980	980	980	980	980	980	980	980	980	
Hia Hib Hic Hid Hie	981	981	981	982	982	982	982	982	982	983	983	983	983	983	983	983	983	983	
Hif Hig Hih Hil Hij	984	984	984	985	985	985	985	985	985	986	986	986	986	986	986	986	986	986	
Hik Hil Him Hin Hio	987	988	989	989	990	990	990	991	992	993	994	995	995	995	995	995	995	995	
Hil Hio	987	988	989	989	990	990	990	991	992	993	994	995	995	995	995	995	995	995	

Figure 38. Table of contents for the General Index to Recordings. Using the first few letters of the last name and first letter of the first name, one can find the page in this volume that identifies the location of the deed pertaining to a particular transfer of property title. For example, James Hicks would be found on page 982.

Date	Grantor	Grantee	Doc	Vol	Book	Page	
15-189	Kocks	James H. E. G. Preston	Mortgage	11	"	534	Satisfied,
"	"	Joseph N. George Kelcey	"	14	"	284	
23-1892	"	James H. Anna Loftis	Deed	22	D	459	
25-	"	" " Emmitt & Monte Coistery	"	26	"	27	
27	"	J. H. Hartford Shingle Co.	Bill of Sale	9	Misc	66	
"	"	James H. Anna Royce	Deed	26	D	193	

Figure 39. Example page of the General Index to Recordings. Find the name of the grantor (general) or grantee (indirect) to identify the volume, book, and page in which the deed, or document you are searching for is located.

Deeds

In the Deeds volumes you will find the official records that convey the transfer of a real property title. Records include an instrument filing number and date, names of grantee and grantor, covenants, restrictions, reservations, agreements and easements, if any, and legal description of the property (Figure 40).



Figure 40. A volume of deeds found at the Northwest Regional Archives. Deeds convey the transfer of real property titles.

When you receive the volume for the deeds that you requested, turn to the page number that was indicated by the General Index to Recordings. That page will have the handwritten copy of the deed that represents the transfer of property title from your research (Figure 41).

Tax assessment rolls

Real property assessment and tax rolls were created to record the amount of property taxes assessed to real property. These records show the fee owner, the legal description of the property, the tax assessment, a record of payment, and who paid the taxes.

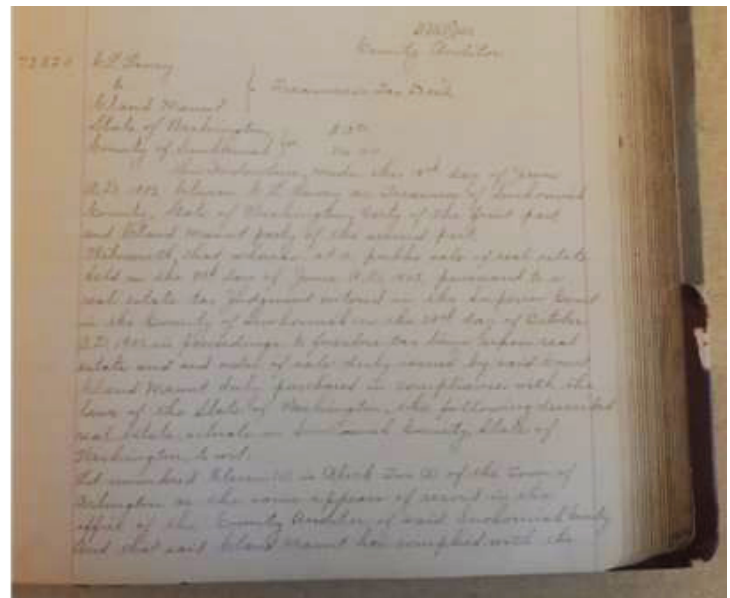


Figure 41. A handwritten copy of a deed that represents the transfer of a real property.

The tax rolls are very large, old books that need to be handled with care (Figure 42). On the side of the tax roll will be tabs indicating the township and ranges that the file covers. Open it to the township and range of your property. Flip to the page that has your section number on it. Each lot will be listed under the appropriate section (Figure 43). The first column is the taxpayer's name, usually the owner, but not always. The second is the legal description within your sections.

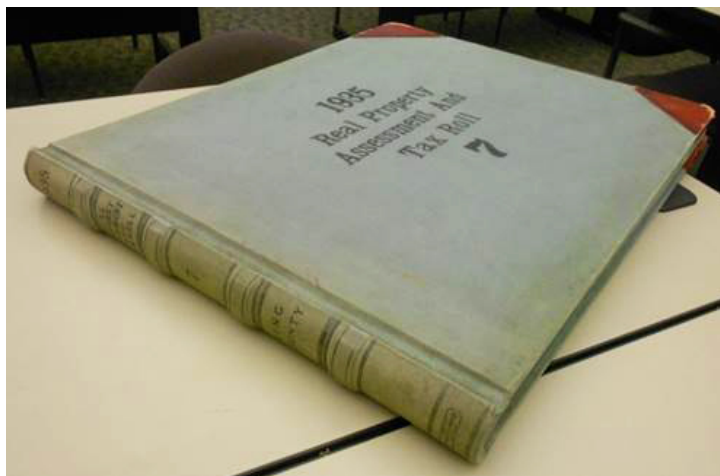


Figure 42. A volume of the real property assessment tax roll from 1935.

17			
18	<i>Sec 14 Twp 25 R 6</i>		
19			
20	<i>E.R. Maggs</i>	<i>NE 1/4 NE</i>	1
21		<i>SW 1/4 NE</i>	2
22	<i>Hughes L.O.L.C.</i>	<i>SE 1/4 NE</i>	3
23	<i>G.O. La Roche</i>	<i>SW 1/4 NE</i>	4
24	<i>E.R. Maggs</i>	<i>NE 1/4 NW</i>	5
25		<i>SW 1/4 NW</i>	6
26	<i>Hughes L.O.L.C.</i>	<i>SE 1/4 NW</i>	7
27		<i>SW 1/4 NW</i>	8
28	<i>J. Haysman</i>	<i>NE 1/4 NW</i>	9
29			10
30		<i>SW 1/4 NW</i>	11
31			12
32		<i>SW 1/4 NW</i>	13
33			14
34		<i>SE 1/4 NW</i>	15
35			16
36	<i>E.R. Maggs</i>	<i>NE 1/4 SE</i>	17
37		<i>SW 1/4 SE</i>	18
38		<i>SW 1/4 SE</i>	19
39		<i>SE 1/4 SE</i>	20

Figure 43. Tax assessment roll for section 14, township 25, and range 6 in 1935.

It is important to double check these with the legal description of your parcel. It is common for lots to disappear when moving back in time because the initial homestead lots were larger before subdivision became profitable.

The third column is your lot number. Take note of the name of the taxpayer and the date of the tax roll so you can do further genealogy and deed research if you choose. Continue this process backwards in time until you find the name of the original patent owners. There will be one entry per section per tax roll volume. This information can be helpful to fill in gaps if you have a lapse in dates.

Land patents

Land patent record volumes include homestead patent letters, which transfer the land title to the individual making the homestead claim. The letters include date of filing, name of grantee, location and description of real property, homestead certificate number, and date. These patents are organized in volumes by county over a set of dates. Within the volumes, the patents are roughly organized by name. This means that once you are in the vicinity of the name of your original patent owner, you will have to read through the grantee names one by one until you find the patent for your property (Figure 44).

Certified copies of your land patent can also be ordered from the BLM website or from the National Archives in Seattle. For more detailed information on this please refer back to the *Find the original land patent owner of your property section.*

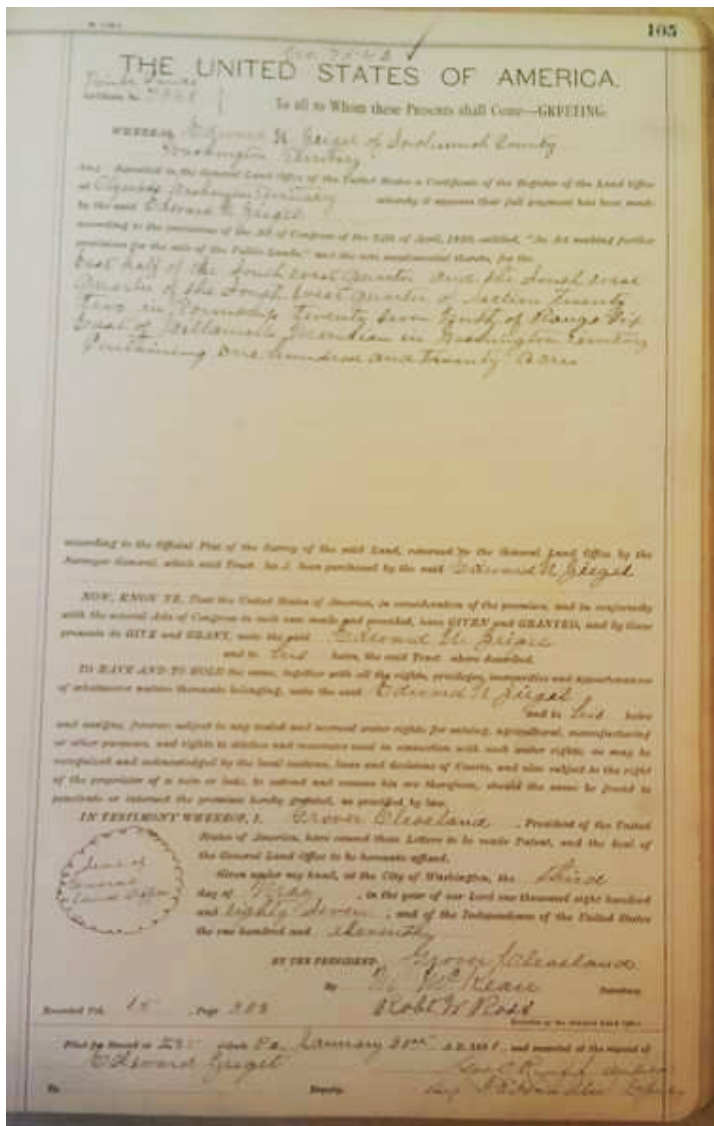


Figure 44. An example of a homestead land patent transferring property titles from the government to the homesteader.

Property land-use history

A land-use history is the compilation of records identifying how the land was used by the previous owners as well as natural disturbances that were identified to have occurred on the property.

This section will discuss the online and in-person research options for identifying some of the natural and anthropogenic disturbances that may have occurred on or around your property.

Land Use History Process Chart

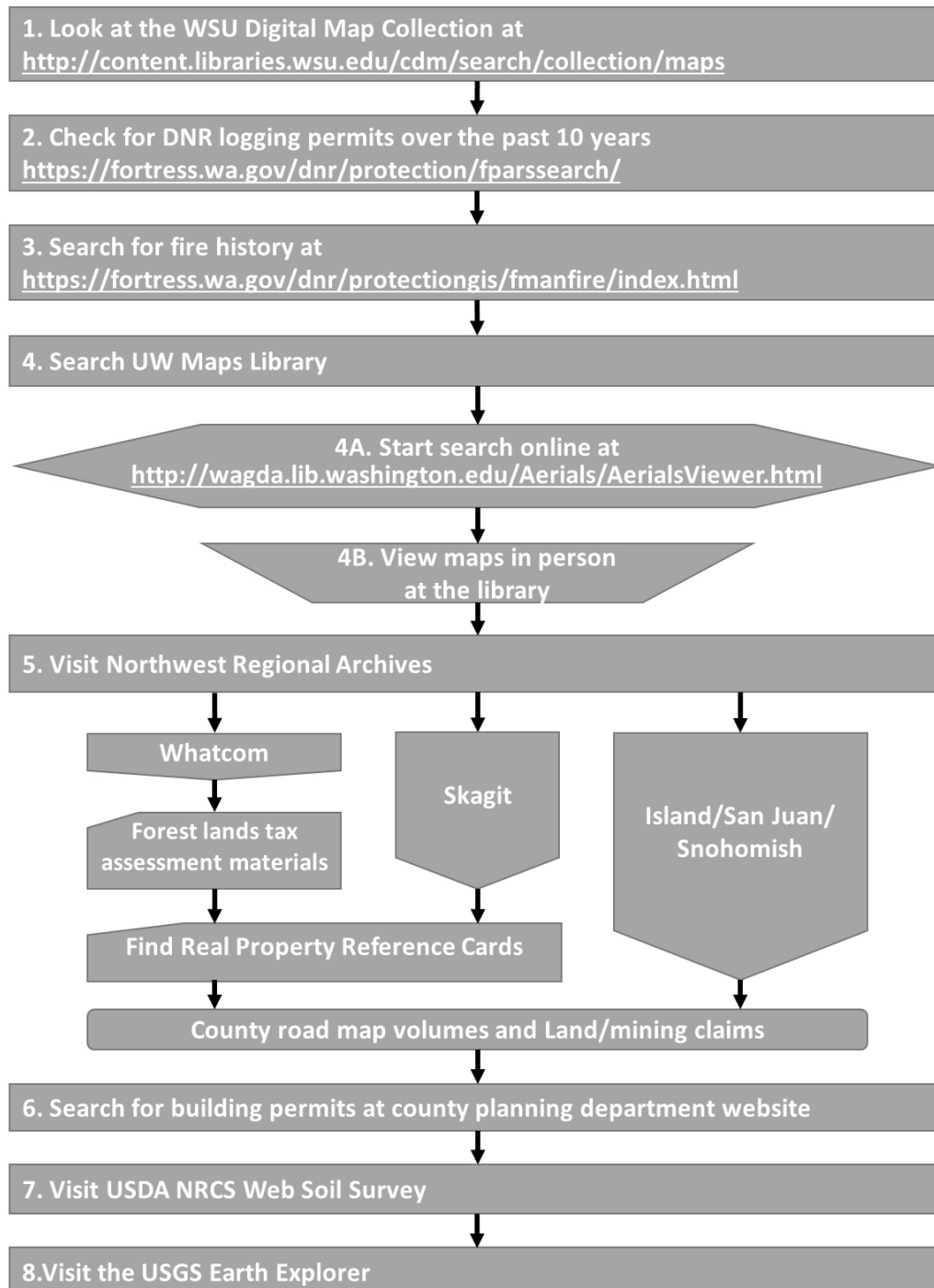


Figure 45. This chart offers a visual representation of the land-use history search process explained in this section.

This manual covers only those research techniques that reveal records and information on natural and anthropogenic disturbances that have occurred in post-European settlement history. The complete history of land management in this region dates back thousands of years. Pre-European management and natural history research goes beyond the scope of this manual, but you are encouraged to explore this information on your own.

Figure 45 offers a visual representation of the land-use history search process explained in this section.

Start at home

Search Washington State University's Digital Collection

The [WSU Digital Collection](#) website has more than 925 high-quality historic maps available. You can search these maps by type, subject, location, date, and creator via the legend on the left hand side of the page (Figure 46).

1. Start by choosing your map collection on the left. There are a lot to choose from, however only a few will pertain to land use.
2. After you choose your collection, enter the word "forestry" into the search bar at the top of the page. Maps about land classifications, tax designations, and forest characteristics are available.
3. Click on the title of the map to open it.

The map will open in a viewer that will allow you to zoom and rotate the map (Figure 47). Below the map will be a list of the map's details. The map in Figure 47 is from 1898 and identifies the dominant timber species present in a particular area. These maps are very interesting because they can reveal not only the dominant species, but also information about which trees were considered valuable and merchantable at the time. Other maps, like the land classification maps, will offer information about the logging regimes that have taken place. For example, there are maps that indicate locations that are naturally timberless or those that have experienced a fire, logging, or regeneration event. All of the WSU Digital Collection maps can be downloaded or printed for future observations.



The screenshot shows the WSU Digital Collection search interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: "Digital Collections Home", "Early Washington Maps Home", and "Browse This Collection". A search bar contains the text "forestry" and a "Search" button. Below the search bar, there are options for "within results" and "Advanced Search".

On the left side, there is a sidebar with the heading "Add or remove other collections to your search:". It lists several collections, with "Early Washington Maps" selected. Below this, there is a section titled "Narrow your search by:" with a list of filters: "Type", "Subject", "Creator", "Date.Original", and "Location Depicted".

The main content area shows search results for "forestry". It includes a "You've searched:" section with "All fields: forestry" and "(31 results)". Below this, there are sorting options ("Sort by: Title") and display options ("Display: 20"). The results are presented in a table with columns: "Thumbnail", "Title", "Date.Original", "Collection", and "Description".

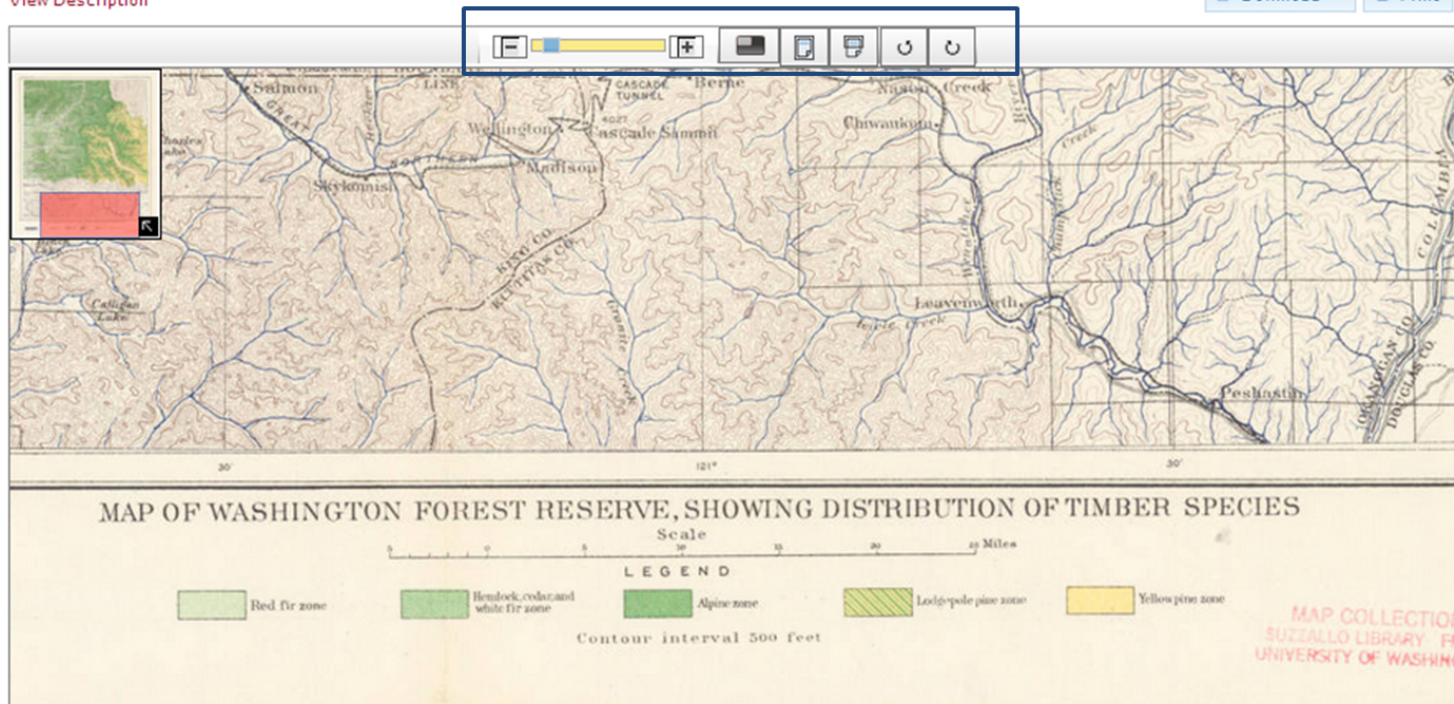
Thumbnail	Title	Date.Original	Collection	Description
	Density of forests Washington State, (1883)	1884	Early Washington Maps	1 map : col. ; 24 x 39 cm. Color shaded areas show ranges of "cords per acre". "Tenth Census of the United States" in upper right. Scale ca. 1:1,750,000.
	Forest type map, state of Washington, NE sheet (1936)	1936	Early Washington Maps	1 map : col. ; 97 x 158 cm. Relief shown by hachures and spot heights. Scale [1:253,440]. 1 in. = 4 miles ; Lambert proj. (W 125°-W 117°/N 49°-N 45')

Figure 46. WSU Digital Collection search page and options. Search for maps by collection, keywords, type, subject, creator, date, or location.

Map of Washington Forest Reserve, showing distribution of timber species (1898). Washington Forest Reserve, map showing distribution of timber species (1898)

[View Description](#)

[Download](#) [Print](#)



Description

Rating ★★★★★ Based on 0 rating(s)

Title Map of Washington Forest Reserve, showing distribution of timber species (1898). Washington Forest Reserve, map showing distribution of timber species (1898)

Creator Geological Survey (U.S.). Geological Survey (U.S.). Annual report

Date,Original 1898

Figure 47. WSU Digital Collection map viewer and map indicating the tree species distribution in the Washington Forest Reserve in 1898.

Find previous logging permits issued on your parcel

All landowners apply for logging permits through their regional Department of Natural Resources (DNR) office. Records for these permits have only recently become digitized and are now available via the [Forest Practices Application Review System \(FPARS\) FPA/N](#) search site. Records are kept in this database for up to ten years and then they are usually discarded. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to find records of logging permits for farther back in history than 10 years from any given time.

1. To begin your search, enter your parcel number or legal description and click, **Search** (Figure 48). A list of permit applications will generate.
2. Click on the link to the document type to view the permit applications (Figure 49).

These permits and applications give information on the applicant, location and size of harvest, purpose of harvest, and approving forester. If you have any questions about using this system or logging permits contact:

DNR’s Small Forest Landowner’s Office

Address: PO BOX 47012
Olympia, WA 98504-7012

Phone: 360-902-1415
Fax: 360-902-1428

Email: sflo@dnr.wa.gov



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
Natural Resources

FP HOME FP ACT FP RULES FP MANUAL SFLO



Forest **P**ractices **A**pplication **R**evision **S**ystem

FPARS Home

Create a Reviewer Notification Profile

My Reviewer Notification History

> FPA/N Search

FPA/N Search

Enter the FPA/N Number(s), Parcel Number or Legal Description in the space below, then click the "Search" button.

FPA/N Number:

OR

Parcel Number:

application numbers.

OR

Legal Description: T N R S

OR

SEARCH FOR MULTIPLE FPA/N NUMBERS:

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Figure 48. The forest permit search tool on the [FPARS](#). Enter your parcel number or legal description to find logging permits applied for on or near your property.






Figure 49. To view the permit applications, click on the link to the document type.

Fire history and statewide assessment data

In an effort to support the National Fire Plan, the Department of Natural Resources has made their fire and forest inventory data available via the Fire Prevention and Fuel Management Mapping System. Historical records are available for information on fire history (1970–present), insects and disease (2007– present), historical vegetation, and tree mortality (1989–2008) throughout Washington State. Additionally, information about soils, forest disturbance, smoke management, and forest inventory can be accessed using this portal.

Setting up the map:

1. To start, access the [Fire Prevention and Fuel Management Mapping System](#). When the page loads, you will see a map of Washington with preloaded fire data highlighted on the map in various colors (Figure 50).
2. On the top right side of the map is a toolbar. Click on the search tool () and enter your section-township-range into the appropriate boxes. This will tell the map to zoom into the general area of your property.
3. You can customize the type of base map by clicking on the  . For example, if you click the  and then choose **Imagery** the background of the map will change to a satellite picture.

Looking at the Data:

1. To the left of the map you will see a legend with three tabs. The first tab is a list of the data that is available to load onto the map. Select the first folder or link, **Wildfire & Prevention**.
2. A sub-list should generate under the folder title. Each item in this list represents a different layer of information or data (Figure 51). There are boxes next to each data set. If you check the box, then that data set will become active. This means that the data will become highlighted on the map.
3. Next to the check boxes you will find an icon. When you click on this icon a description of the dataset will pop up under the map. This information is useful to determine if you would like to make that data active or not.
4. Lastly, there will be a down arrow on the right side of each of the datasets (Figure 51). When you click on this arrow you will have the option to retrieve details, zoom into, and adjust the transparency (ability to view multiple stacked layers at once) of that dataset.
5. Clicking on the **Wildfire & Prevention** folder link again will close the list. You can repeat this process for each of the folders, activating and inactivating the datasets that are of interest to you.

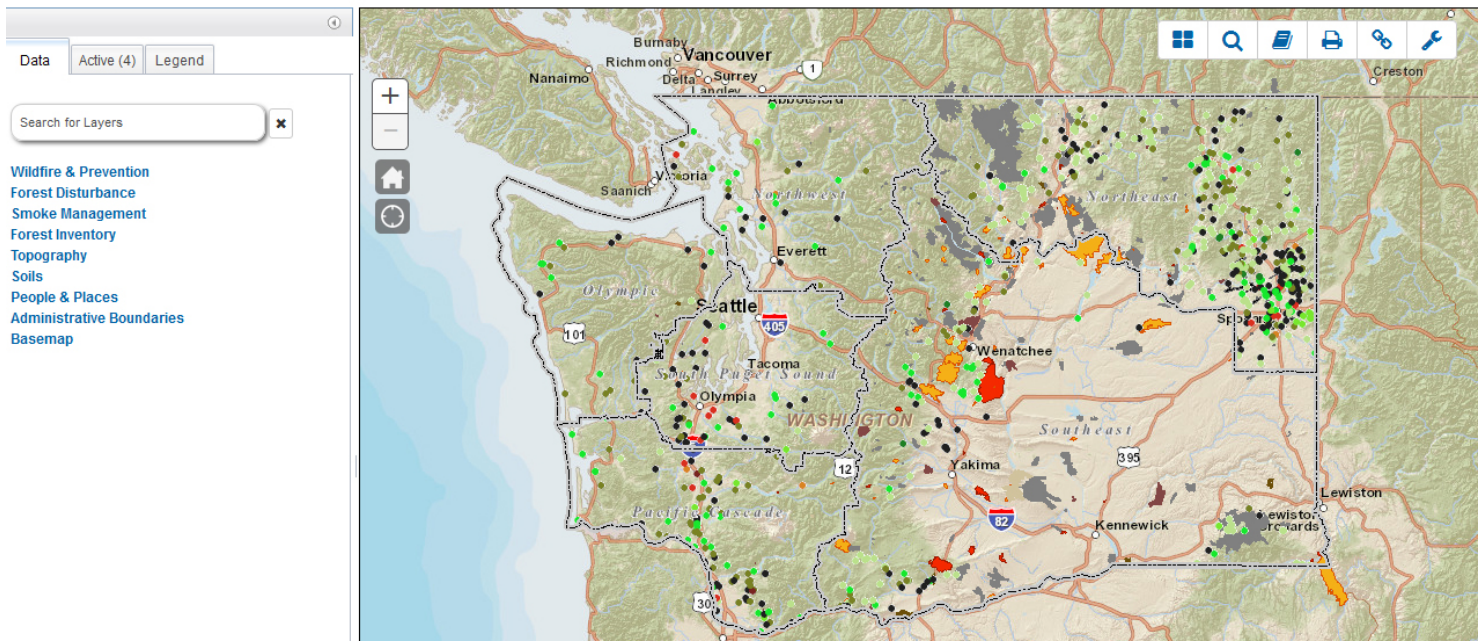


Figure 50. The Fire Prevention & Fuel Management Mapping System. Use this map to look up fire history and forest health data that may be relevant to your property.

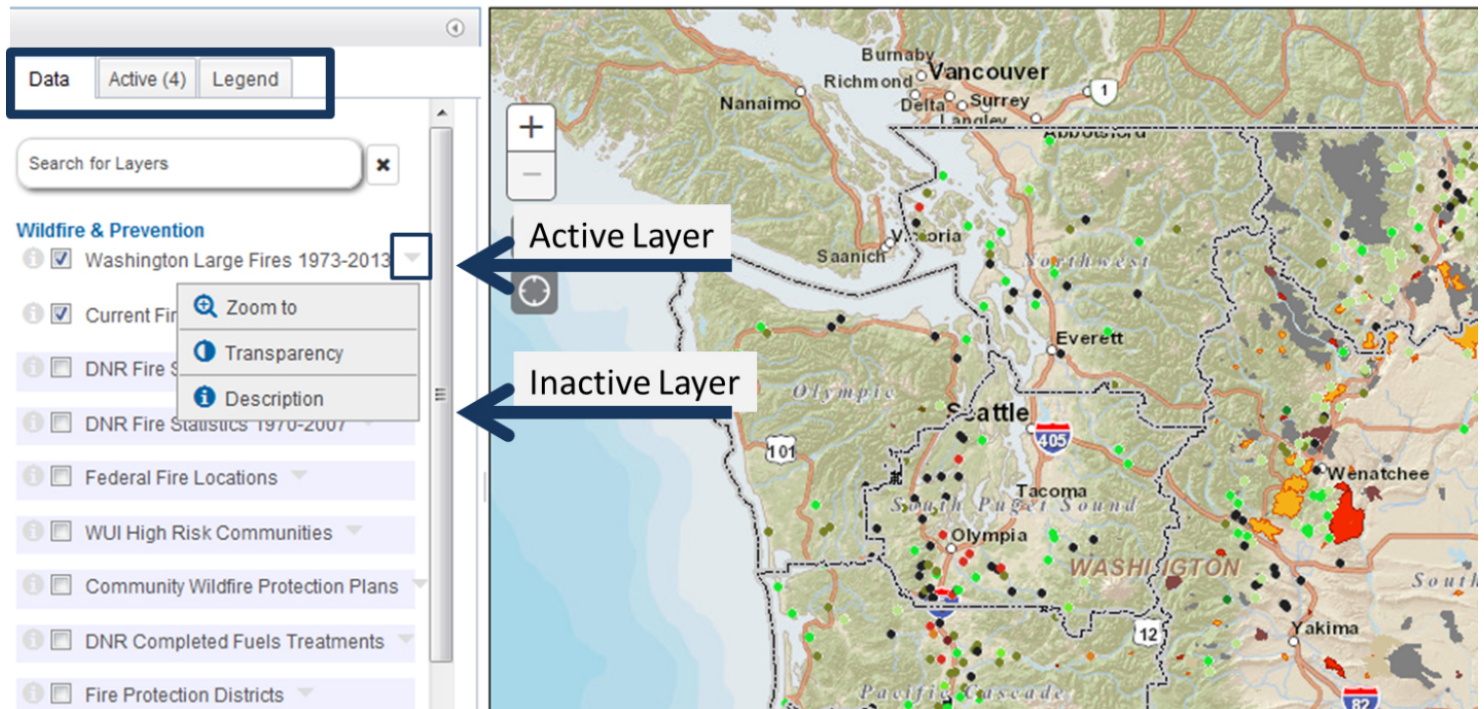


Figure 51. The tab and information buttons will assist you in viewing the available data. Active layers have a checked box while inactive layers do not.

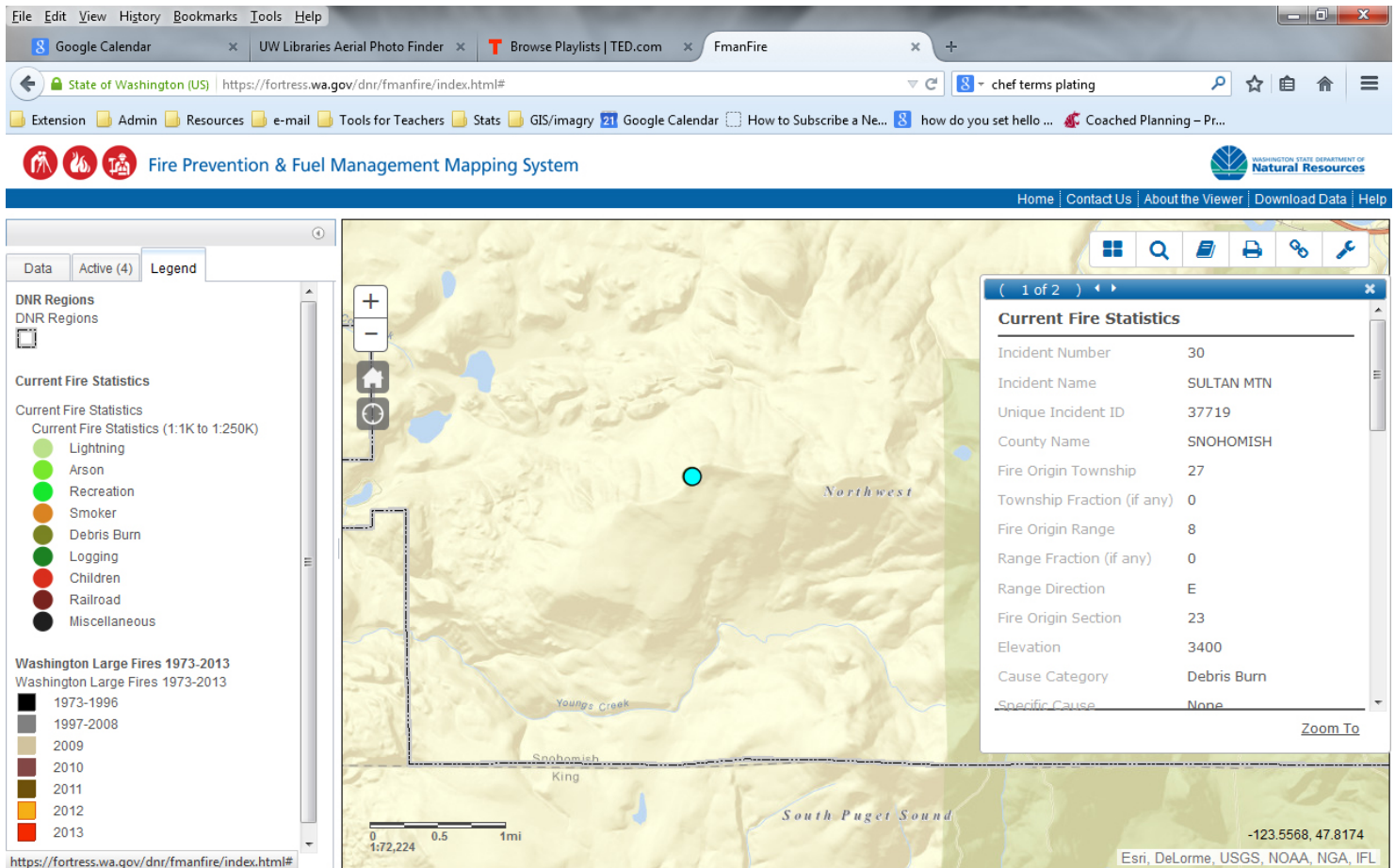




Figure 52. The information that will be presented when you click on a data point in the map viewer. This is also what the legend tab will look like when selected.


The second tab is a list of the active layers. This will help you to keep track of the layer you have selected without having to riffle through the folders again and again. The third tab is a legend for those active layers (Figure 51). As you select layers to be active, different colored circles will appear on the map. The legend identifies what the colors represent. You can find more information about the circles by clicking on them (Figure 52). Make sure that you click the circle and not the map behind it.

Other useful tools:

 This tool will allow you to zoom in and out of the map.

 This tool will bring you back to the map of the whole state of Washington.

 You can measure distances with this tool.

 You can create a bookmark of your map using this tool. This will allow you to come back to the same map you have been working on.

If you run into trouble or have questions, click the “Contact” link in the top right-hand side of the map to send an email.

Using the University of Washington Maps Library

The University of Washington Library System has an extensive maps department. This department holds thematic, street, land-use, topography, parcel, road, and zoning maps by county, city, or section-township-range. You can search for available maps and photos online with the [University of Washington Aerial Map Viewer](#).

1. Start by selecting the **Zoom** button in the toolbar at the top of the map (Figure 53).
2. Draw a box around the general vicinity of your property by clicking the mouse and holding it down while you scroll diagonally over your property’s location. The box will draw in red.

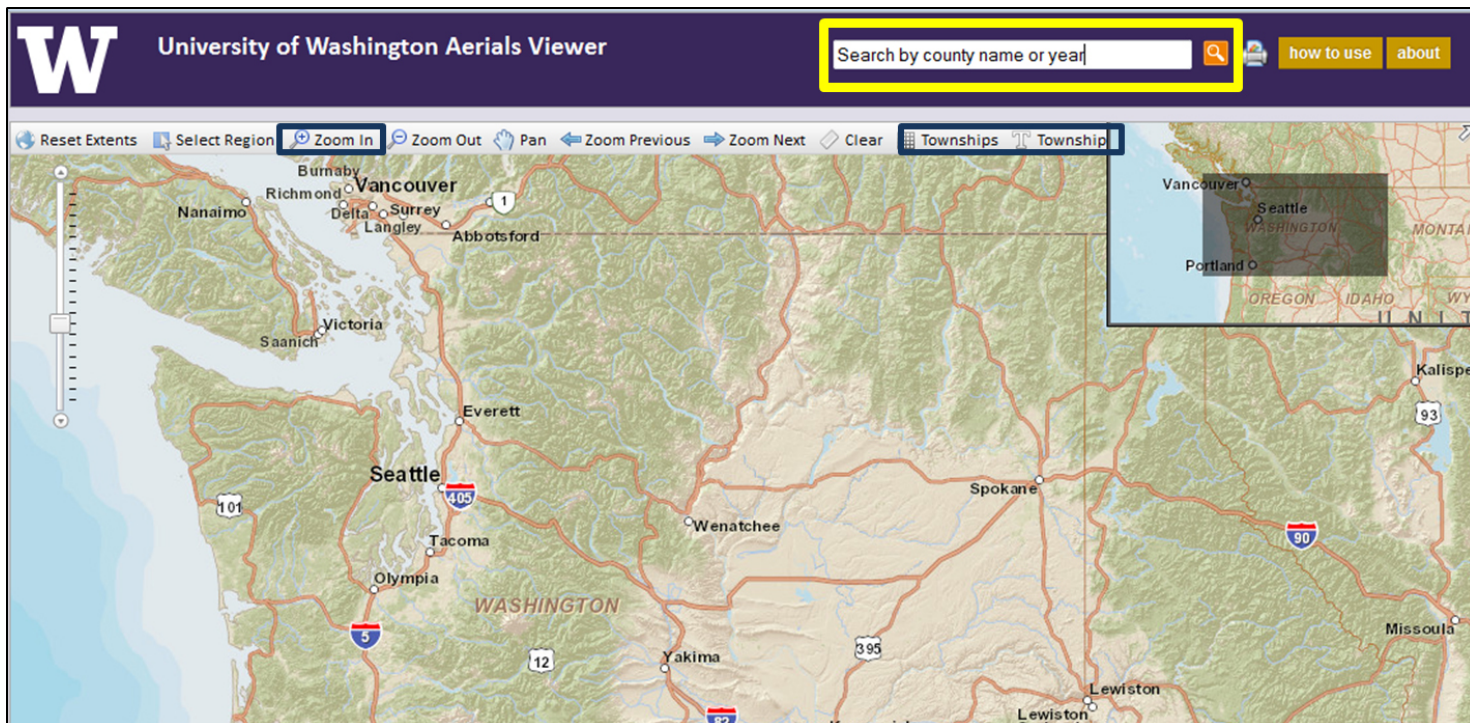


Figure 53. University of Washington aerial map viewer. Search for your property by using the search box or Zoom tool.

Zoom	Open PDF	On/Off	Title	Author	Index Map	Date	Scale	Color	Subject
		<input type="checkbox"/>	BBI	United States. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service	BBI	1964	Scale 1:20,000	b&w	Snohomish County (Wash.) -- Aerial photographs
		<input type="checkbox"/>	BBI enlargements	United States. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service	BBI-ENLARGE_3	1964	Scale [ca. 1:7,700]	b&w	Snohomish County (Wash.) -- Aerial photographs"; "King County (W
		<input type="checkbox"/>	BBI enlargements	United States. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service	BBI-ENLARGE_2	1964	Scale [ca. 1:7,700]	b&w	Snohomish County (Wash.) -- Aerial photographs"; "King County (W
		<input type="checkbox"/>	BBI enlargements	United States. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service	BBI-ENLARGE_4	1964	Scale [ca. 1:7,700]	b&w	Snohomish County (Wash.) -- Aerial photographs"; "King County (W

Figure 54. Index of maps in the library that cover the area searched for. Click Zoom to see the extent of the map, Open PDF to open a printable version of the map, and/or use the On/Off tool to open the map in the viewer.

- When you are happy with the area, let go of the mouse and the map will zoom into that location. You can keep zooming in like this until you have found your property.

(HINT: If the map becomes off-center, click on the **Pan** button to move the map around. This will allow you to grab the map and move it side to side, as well as up and down. You can pan the map at any time. If you would like to continue zooming, you will need to click on **Zoom** once more to restart that feature.)

- To help guide you, click on the **Townships** and **Township Labels** buttons so that you can be sure you are in the correct location. You can also search by county or year in the **search box** at the top of the page (Figure 53).
- Once you find your property, scroll down to the bottom of the page. There will be a list of all the maps the library has of that location (Figure 54).

The results box will scroll down and horizontally to give more information. This feature has a few tools that will help you to get a better idea of what information that map will provide. The **“Zoom In”** tool will outline and zoom the online viewer to the full extent of the map available in the library. The **Open PDF** tool will open a downloadable PDF of the map in a separate window. The **On/Off** tool will turn the map on/off in the viewer.

If you are using the University of Washington Aerials Viewer at home, bringing the map descriptions with you to the library will facilitate finding the hard copies. There are also computers available in the maps department of the library if you prefer to do all of your research there. The staff at the library are extremely helpful and knowledgeable, and will teach you how to use the descriptors to find the maps in their files.

At the Northwest Regional Archives Branch

In addition to ownership history information, the Northwest Regional Branch of the state archives in Bellingham also has information on land use. For instructions on visiting the archives, see the section titled *Property ownership history*.

Property Record/Reference Cards

These forms were used by county assessors to record data on each parcel. These forms are organized by legal description and parcel number. Land-use code, zoning, acreage, and other features of the land may also be indicated on these forms. For properties with buildings, the cards will include the name of the plat, type of occupancy, date built, and other structural details used to assess the property value.

The back of the card will include a land use and topography sketch of the lot (Figure 55). The larger permanent box printed on the card represents the township. The smaller boxes are the sections within the township. The sketch will be drawn in relation to your property's location within the appropriate section of the township. On the right side of the sketch will be a legend defining the symbols used in the sketch.

This sketch can give you some insight on your property today. For example, if the sketch indicates stumps in an area where you now have trees, then you can infer the property has second growth timber on it. Remember these are only insights for making connections to the past use. Current conditions are best evaluated by performing inventory sampling on your property. For more information, refer to [Basic Forest Inventory Techniques for Family Forest Owners](#).

County road map volumes

County road map volumes are organized by year and legal discription. The county road maps are organized to include one township for each volume. Each page within the township volumn is represented by a section (Figure 56). The sections are marked somewhere on the top of the page.

In the particular volume shown in Figure 56, you can find the section on the top right corner page protector. Additionally, there is a legend on the back page of the volume (Figure 57). These maps are interesting and important to look at because they provide detailed information about the local transportation route locations and frequency of use. Popular road routes will be identified as being constructed with sturdier road material, such as concrete rather than earth.

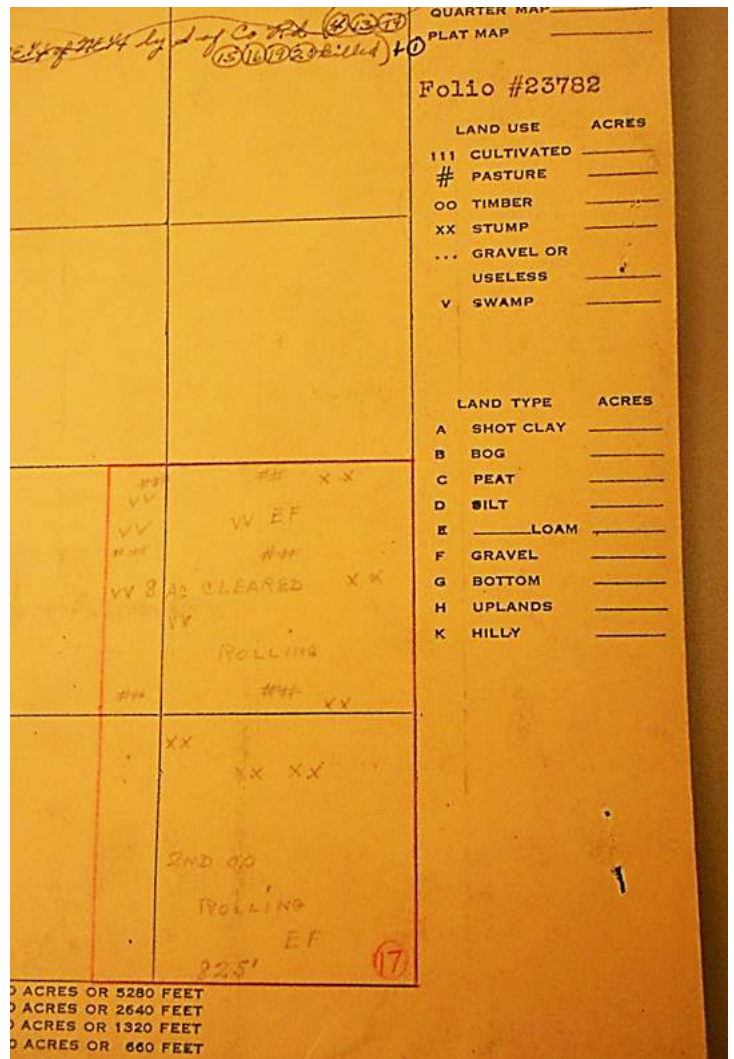


Figure 55. The back side of a property record/reference card can include a land-use and topography sketch of the lot. The legend is on the right.



Figure 56. The county road map volume for township 25N, range 6E. Each page within the volume is represented by a section. The section number is circled in white.

LEGEND		
Type of Road	Symbol	Township Maps India Ink & Water Colors
Dual Type	M.	Black India Ink [Symbol: Dashed line]
Concrete	J.	Black India Ink [Symbol: Solid line]
Brick	K.	Black India Ink [Symbol: Dashed line with squares]
Bituminous Concrete	G-1	Black & Green [Symbol: Dashed line with green segments]
Gravel - Oiled	E-3	Green Water Color [Symbol: Solid green line]
Gravel - Untreated	E-2	Vermilion Water Color [Symbol: Solid red line]
Earth - Graded & Drained	C	Vermilion Water Color [Symbol: Dashed red line]
Earth - Unimproved	A.B.	Vermilion Water Color [Symbol: Dotted red line]

Figure 57. The legend associated with the county road map records pictured in Figure 56.

Land/mining claims

Land claims are difficult to find for a given property because they are organized by name and date. This means that you need previous knowledge of a claim. If you are able to determine that your property may have had a land or mining claim on it, then you have to request the volume by name and/or date. The claims are entered chronologically and you will have to flip through each of them to find the exact claim you are looking for.

Mining claims include notices of the location and/or relocation of the presence of a mineral permit for mill site locations, and notices of quartz locations. The claims describe what the claim is for and the location of that claim (Figure 58).

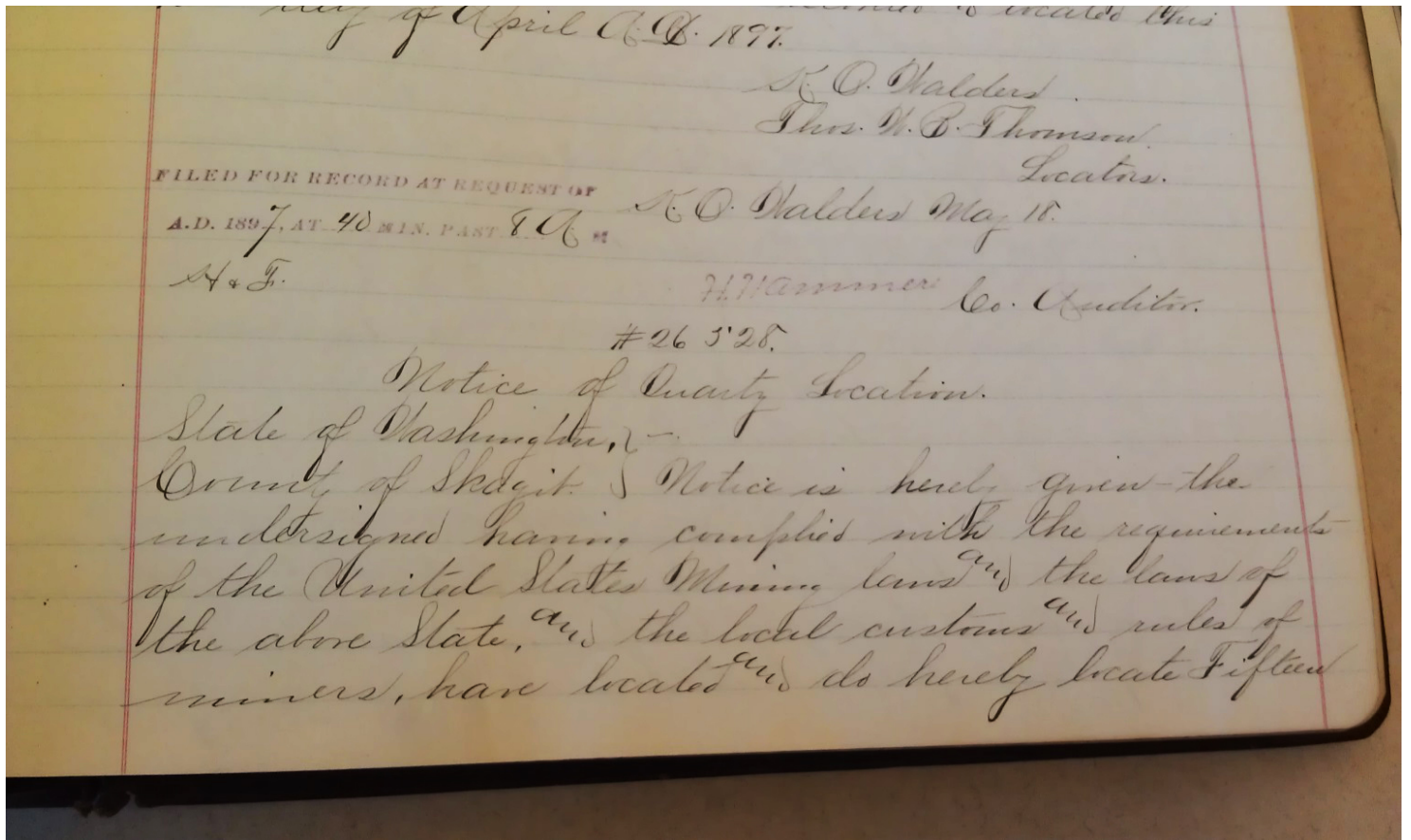


Figure 58. Example of a mining entry. This claim is for identification of quartz.

Forest lands tax assessment materials

These materials include appraisal manuals, a county road map, timber cruise summaries, and aerial photos for forest lands in some areas of Whatcom County. They are few and far between, filed in one box in the archives. The appraisal manuals are USDA Forest Service documents that explain the guidelines used by foresters to complete their timber cruises (Figure 59). The aerial photos are for each section and organized by township and range (Figure 60).

The file also includes an aerial photo interpretation manual that was used to train foresters. These photos can be used to identify large land features and vegetation types during the time of the photo (Figure 60). There is an example of one timber harvesting permit from 1962 that may be interesting to view (Figure 61). Lastly, timber cruise summaries are also organized by section-township-range. These cards include a map of the area they cover, a land description, and an estimate of merchantable timber by species (Figure 62).

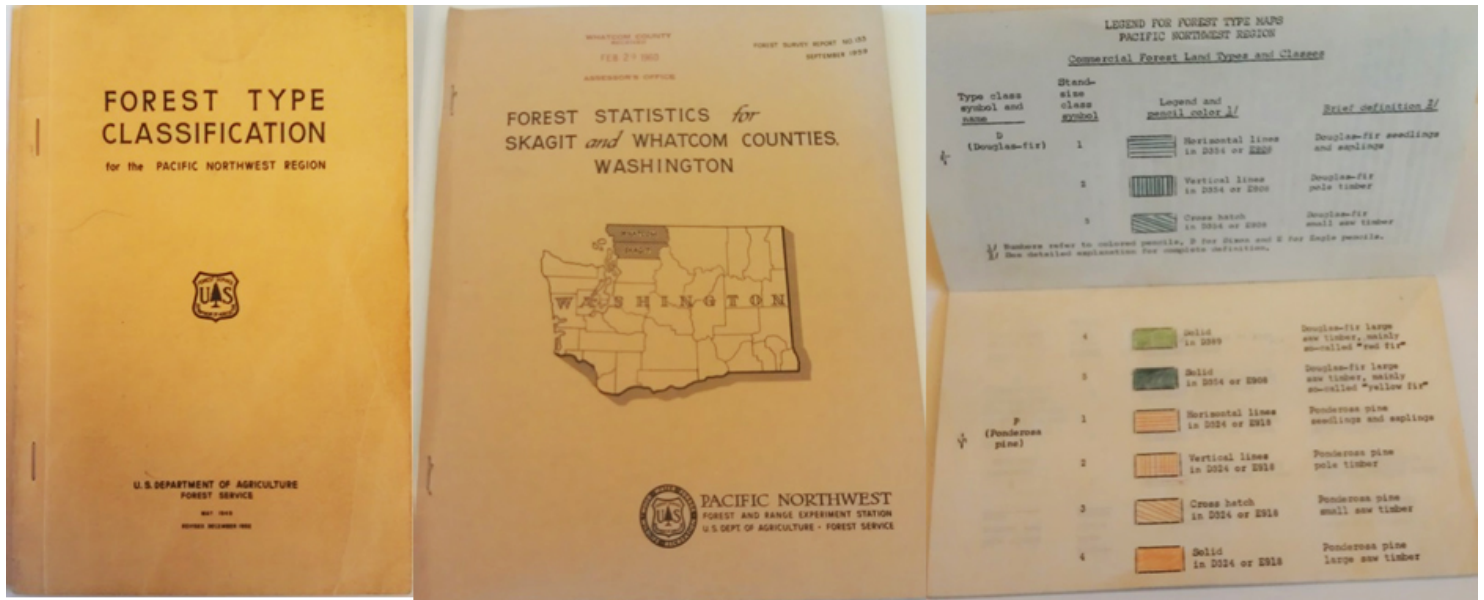


Figure 59. The appraisal manuals are USDA Forest Service documents that explain the guidelines used by foresters to complete their timber cruises.



Figure 60. Aerial photos are available for each section and organized by township and range in Whatcom County only. The aerial photo interpretation manual was used to train foresters on how to read these photos. These photos can be used to identify large land features and vegetation types.

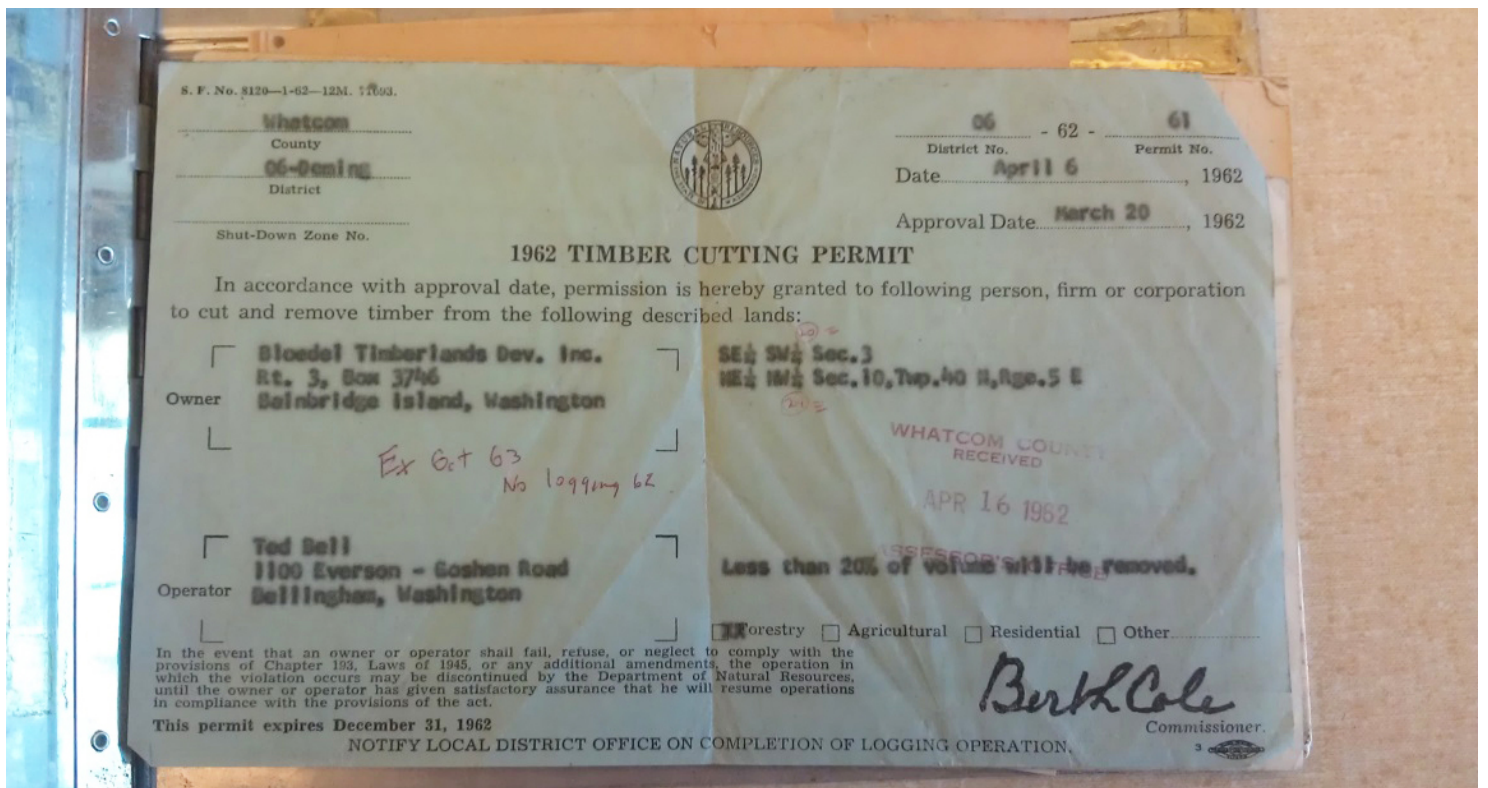


Figure 61. Timber harvesting permit from 1962.

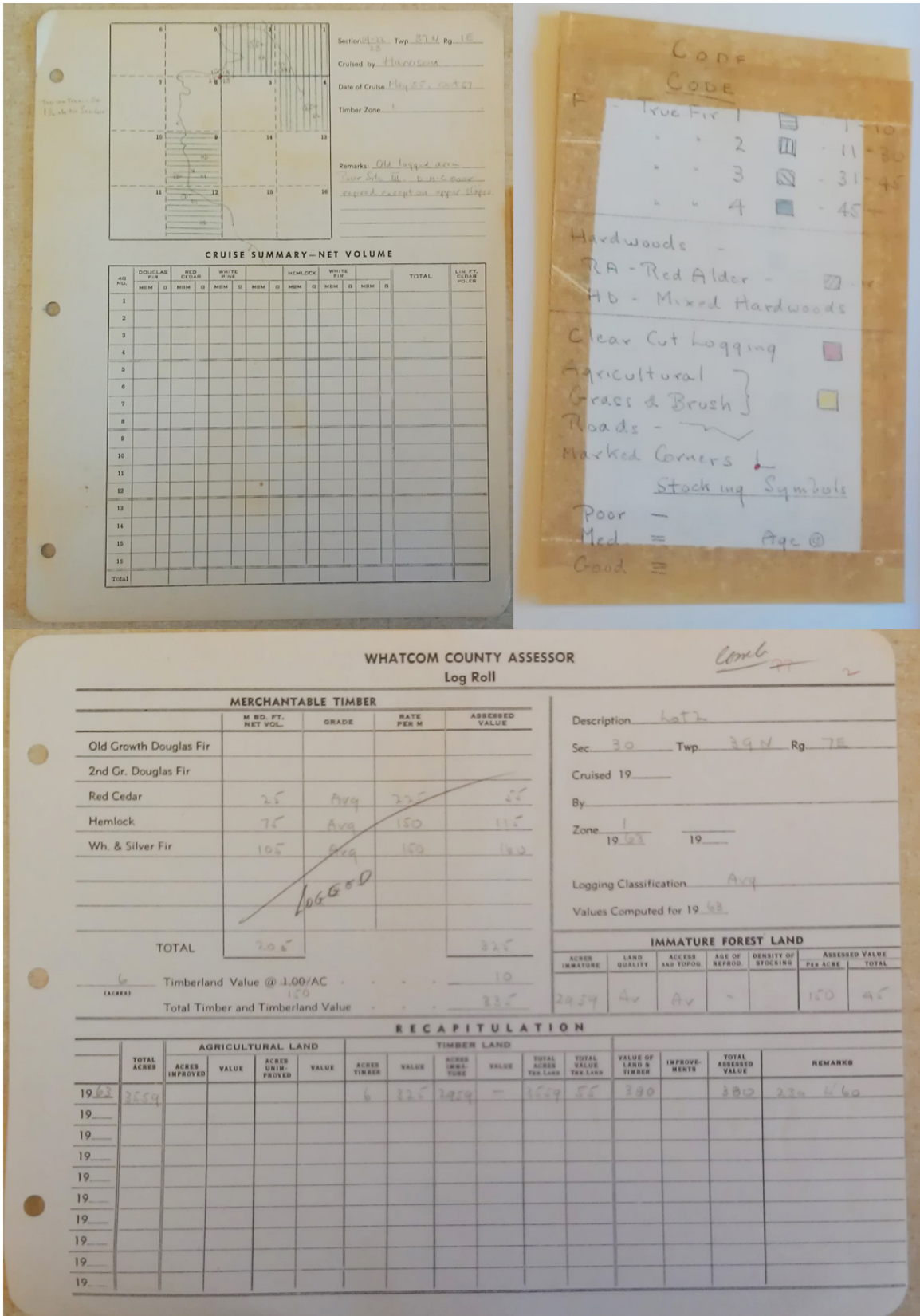


Figure 62. Timber cruise summaries are also organized by section-township-range. These cards include a map of the area they cover, a land description, and an estimate of merchantable timber by species.

Other resources

Building permits: These permits are required for the clearing of forest for development. These permits can include information on the building owner, architect, builder, date issued, and in some cases building inspector notes and building completion date.

- A. [Island County – Planning and Community Development](#); Whidbey Office, 1 NE 7th Street, Coupeville WA 98239; Camano Office, 121 NE Camano Dr, Camano Island WA 98282.
- B. [San Juan County – Community Development and Planning](#); 35 Rhone St, PO Box 947, Friday Harbor WA 98250.
- C. [Skagit County – Planning and Development Services](#); 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon WA 98273.
- D. [Snohomish County – Planning and Development Services](#); 3000 Rockefeller Ave. M/S 604, 2nd Floor, Robert Drewel Building, Everett WA 98201.
- E. [Whatcom County – Planning and Development Services](#); 5280 Northwest Drive, Bellingham WA 98226.

County Assessor: Contact your county assessor to find out if your property was ever enrolled in a tax benefit program that may have involved tree harvest, or land conservation.

Local histories: Inquire at your local library, historical society, or nearby institutions for histories of nearby schools, parks, churches, businesses, libraries, trolley lines, etc.

Biographies and other historical information: Northwest newspaper and magazine card file indexes with information on biographical, business, events, and other local history topics. Find these indexes at the Seattle Public Library’s Seattle Room and UW Libraries Special Collections in the Suzallo Library.

Census: U.S. Census for Washington from 1860 to 1940. Microfilm copies of the census are located at the National Archives, Pacific Northwest Branch in Seattle, and the Seattle Public Library. Information is also available through [Ancestry.com](#) (1860-1940).

Soil Survey: USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service offers free nationwide soil information. This soil information can be accessed at the [Web Soil Survey](#). Refer to [Forest Soil Data for your Forest Stewardship Plan](#) for step-by-step guide on how to navigate the Web soil survey for soil information on your property.

USGS Earth Explorer: visit <http://earthexplorer.usgs.gov/> for a comprehensive collection of aerial photography, satellite imagery, elevation data, land cover products, and digitized maps as well as remotely-sensed data for a given zip code or address.

Other resources: Genealogical research, local historical societies and museums, cemeteries, local and neighborhood newspapers, death records, probate records, civil and criminal cases, state penitentiary prisoner records, etc., are additional resources available to add to your property history research.

Glossary

aerial photo. Photographs taken by satellite or from a plane, typically of a landscape, showing geographic features and property changes.

agreement. A legal arrangement between two or more parties as to a course of action or plan on a property.

aliquots. A part or piece of a section.

archive. A collection of historical records available for the public to view.

assessor. An elected official who evaluates property value, usually for tax purposes.

cash entry patent. A land patent purchased with cash.

claim. A legal record protecting the terms of a patent or patent application.

covenant. A binding agreement.

deed. A legal document that transfers title of real estate.

easement. An agreement in which a property owner grants the use of a private land feature for a specified purpose; some examples may include access roads, open space, minerals, utility lines, etc.

field notes. Detailed descriptions of the instrumentation and procedures used during a land survey.

forest practices permit. See: **logging permit.**

General Index to Recordings. The index to documents filed with a county auditor, organized by landowner name.

geographic ID. The identification number for a specific property in Island or Whatcom County, assigned by the county assessor.

grantee. Receiver or buyer of property.

grantor. Conveyer or seller of property.

homestead patent. A land patent which was offered for free to those who have lived on and cultivated that land for a minimum of three years.

land patent. A deed transferring public property (by the government) to private individuals.

land-use. How humans use, manage, and modify the natural environment.

land-use history. compilation of records identifying how land was utilized by the previous property owners as well as natural disturbances that were identified to have occurred on the property.

legal description. The location of a property described by the section-township-range, and lot and block in a plat, or subdivision for platted properties.

lien. Legal documents giving the right of one person to retain land as collateral for a debt or claim.

logging permit. (also known as a **forest practices permit**) A permit issued by the Washington Department of Natural Resources that allows the harvesting of timber, constructing of forest roads and trails, or other regulated forestry activities.

map layer. A set of data specific to a geographic area that is read when overlaid onto a map.

merchantable timber. Standing trees that have commercial value.

military warrant patent. A patent in which fees were waved for veterans in partial compensation for military service.

mine lease. Legal document explaining the right to work a mine and extract minerals.

mortgage. A lien or claim against real property which offers security to the lender to take possession of the land if the buyer is unable to pay.

ownership history. Outline of property ownership transfers through time.

parcel number. Assessor's identification number for a specific property.

plat. Map or representation of a lot, subdivision, or community drawn by a surveyor. Plats typically include boundary lines, improvements, and sometimes easements and buildings.

property detail. The assessor information, including parcel data, legal descriptions, land data, views, waterfront, designations, nuisances, problems, environmental details, building information, tax and sales information, and history.

property record card. A history of a parcel of real property used to assess property taxes. The cards include information such as legal description, building use, number of rooms, some construction details, and, for improved property, at least one photograph.

property report. Assessor's report for a particular parcel, including legal description, owner, building information, tax information, and tax roll history.

Public Land Survey System. A series of survey lines developed to locate property within the United States. This system was widely used through the early 1970s before street and home numbering became popular.

quarter section. An area of one-fourth of a square mile, or 160 acres. This is the typical size of a homesteading aliquot.

quitclaim deed. A transfer of the remaining interest on a real property to a new party.

range. A column of townships designated by the Public Land Survey System.

real property. A stationary property that has been legally defined, including identification of land area, buildings, etc.

real property assessment. See: **tax assessment rolls.**

second growth timber. An area of mature trees that have regrown after logging or natural disturbance.

section. A piece of property designated by the Public Land Survey System that is one square mile in size.

section-township-range coordinates. A three-part number (also referred to as the STR number) derived from the Public Land Survey System, commonly used in the legal description of a property. The number locates a piece of property in relation to a section within a township within a range. It is still used to locate historical map information, records, and aerial photographs in archive collections.

sheriff deed. A transfer of property in which the real property is sold to a buyer in order to pay off a debt (typically from inability to pay the property tax).

subdivision. Breaking up or dividing of a property into smaller pieces.

survey. A graphical representation of an accurate measurement used to locate real property boundaries. Surveys are used in construction, plat, and subdivision layouts.

tax assessment rolls. (also known as **real property assessment**) Property taxes assessed to real property. These records indicate the owner, the legal description, tax assessment, and record of payment.

timber cruise. The practice and reporting of examining an area of forest to determine its potential commercial value.

topography. Description of the variation in physical features of an area of land (e.g. hills, valleys, etc.).

township. A square of thirty-six adjacent, one square mile sections designated by the Public Land Survey system. Townships lie adjacent to each other in relation to latitude.

warranty deed. Contains a guarantee explaining that the grantor is the true owner of the title being transferred.

XrefID. The Skagit County Assessor's identification number for a specific property.

Website reference list

This is an alphabetical list of websites mentioned in the text.

- Basic Forest Inventory Techniques for Family Forest Owners – <https://pubs.wsu.edu/ItemDetail.aspx?ProductID=15488>.
- Bureau of Land Management general land office records website – <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/search/default.aspx>.
- Fire Prevention and Fuel Management Mapping System – <https://fortress.wa.gov/dnr/protectiongis/fmanfire/index.html>.
- Forest Practices Application Review System – <https://fortress.wa.gov/dnr/protection/fparssearch/>.
- Forest Soil Data for Your Forest Stewardship Plan – <https://pubs.wsu.edu/ListItems.aspx?Keyword=em064>.
- Inventory sampling publication – <https://pubs.wsu.edu/ItemDetail.aspx?ProductID=15488&SeriesCode=&CategoryID=&Keyword=inventory>.
- Island County GIS Mapping Tool – <http://gis-web.islandcounty.net/flexviewers/IslandCountyParcels/>.
- Island County – Planning and Community Development – <http://www.islandcounty.net/planning/building.htm>.
- Island County Parcel Information Database – <http://www.islandcountyassessor.com/parcel-sales-search/parcel-search/>.
- Northwest Regional Archives Guide to Holdings – http://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/archives_holdings.aspx?r=6.
- Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History (HistoryLink.org) – <http://historylink.org/>.
- San Juan County – Community Development and Planning – <http://www.co.san-juan.wa.us/cdp/>.
- San Juan County Parcel Information Database – <http://parcel.sanjuanco.com/PropertyAccess/PropertySearch.aspx?cid=0>.
- San Juan County – Polaris Property Search and Mapping Tool – <http://sjcgis.org/polaris/>.
- Skagit County Online Interactive Map (iMap) – <http://www.skagitcounty.net/Maps/iMap/>.
- Skagit County Parcel Search – <http://www.skagitcounty.net/Search/property/>.
- Skagit County – Planning and Development Services – <http://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PlanningAndPermit>.
- Snohomish County Online Property Information Interactive Map (SCOPI) – <http://gis.snoco.org/maps/property/viewer.htm>.
- Snohomish County Online Records Database – <http://wa-snohomishcounty.civicplus.com/278/Recording>.
- Snohomish County Parcel Database – <http://assessor.snoco.org/propertysearch.aspx>.
- Snohomish County – Planning and Development Services – <http://snohomishcountywa.gov/201/Planning-Development-Services>.
- University of Washington Aerial Map Viewer – <http://wagda.lib.washington.edu/Aerials/AerialsViewer.html>.
- Washington State Archives – <http://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/>.

- Washington State Archives – Digital Archives Search site – <http://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/Home>.
- Washington State Archives Services and Fees – <http://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/fees.aspx>.
- Web Soil Survey – <http://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>
- Whatcom County Parcel Information Database –
- <http://property.whatcomcounty.us/>.
- Whatcom County – Planning and Development Services – <http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/358/Planning-Development-Services>.
- WSU Digital Collection website – <http://content.libraries.wsu.edu/cdm/search/collection/maps>.



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