

**From:** [Krista Evans](#)  
**To:** [Mohr, Jason](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] WPIC Comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 10, 2019 10:11:01 AM  
**Attachments:** [KEvans\\_memo-OwnershipUpdates.pdf](#)

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Jason --

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment for the WPIC call/meeting scheduled for tomorrow. Please forward the following to the committee. Thank you. Krista

Dear Members of WPIC --

I am writing to provide comment regarding geocodes and their use in the water right ownership update process.

- 1) The deed trumps all. The statutes are clear that if the deed is silent the water transfers with the property. Entities that think that filing an ownership update form with DNRC transfers the water right are not correct. I would recommend working with the legal profession and the Title companies to improve education on this point.
- 2) This is not a new issue. Please see the memo that I provided to WPIC at their March 2016 meeting regarding HB 39. The issues in this memo still exist.
- 3) The geocodes serve a valuable purpose in that they provide notice to DNRC that property was transferred. The next level of analysis is where we appear to be having some challenges. I would strongly suggest that we retain the use of geocodes for the purpose of notification when property has transferred. The second phase of validation is where the process needs some adjustments. I would recommend that if there is any question about how much if any of the water right transferred with the property that DNRC contact the buyer and the seller. The current postcard method is not working. Often, buyers who have no understanding are making an uninformed statement when they say "sure, I own the water right". The questions to the buyers and sellers are going to have to be case and land transfer specific. I recognize that this comes with a cost both from a personal standpoint and financial.
- 4) The accuracy of the database is critical due to the fact that it is this information that is used to provide public notice in the adjudication (decree issuance, etc) and for new appropriations and the opportunity to object. Without an accurate database there may be due process and proper notice questions.
- 5) There have been statements made that the geocodes are not part of the water right. It is important to note that the HB 110 exempt from filing claim forms had a line item for the geocode.
- 6) Any and all maps associated with a claim MUST be included in the claim file so that the information is available to DNRC, the Water Court, claimants, and others. This is important information that MUST be included in the claim file. DNRC has to have the whole picture in order to conduct an analysis to determine what water transfers.
- 7) DNRC can't "fix" some of these challenges. In situations where the Water Court has DECREED an over broad place of use it is impossible for DNRC to make corrections.

Because it is decreed, only the Water Court can make corrections.

8) Based on comments reflected on the WPIC website it appears that DNRC sent out a survey. Blake Creek Project Management did not receive that survey and therefore is unable to respond.

I will not be able to attend the WPIC meeting/call on December 11. However, Blake Creek staff will be available to answer questions.

Krista

Krista Lee Evans  
Blake Creek Project Management, Inc.  
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## **HB39 OWNERSHIP UPDATE STATUS SHEET**

### **Background**

HB39 (2007) revised the water right ownership update process requiring the DNRC and DOR to coordinate water right ownership records based on property transfers. The impetus for the bill was the 30% return mail (outdated ownership records) encountered in the billing process associated with HB22 (2005). The effective date of HB39 was July 1, 2008. Rep. McNutt's goal in requesting the legislation was to automate the process as much as possible.

### **Current Status**

The Water Rights Bureau reports the average number of ownership updates for the eight (8) years prior to the passage of HB39 was 4,621 ownership updates per year (excluding 2006). Since, HB39 the DNRC has been receiving an average of 6,039 ownership updates per year (a 31% increase). It's important to note ownership updates may be initiated through the sale of property or the result of researching return mail associated with the issuance of a Water Court Decree. The Montana Water Court has issued 25 decrees and 7 Compacts since the passage of HB39.

### **Implementation of the HB39 Ownership Update Process**

It was hoped the ownership update process between DOR's ORION system and DNRC's Water Rights Information System would allow some ownership updates to occur automatically. This is not the present state.

The DNRC and DOR have both modified their systems to accommodate two data elements to link DOR parcel records (geocode) and DNRC water right records (water right id). The effort to populate these data elements in each system is not complete. *Opinion: In the DNRC database the geocode is attached to the water*

*right record and not to the place of use. It is questionable whether an automatic process will ever be successful except in those instances where there is a single place of use and a single geocode.*

The timeliness of updates is another area of concern. The flowchart on the following page illustrates the current flow for the most common and simple transfer, i.e., all associated water rights transfer with the property.

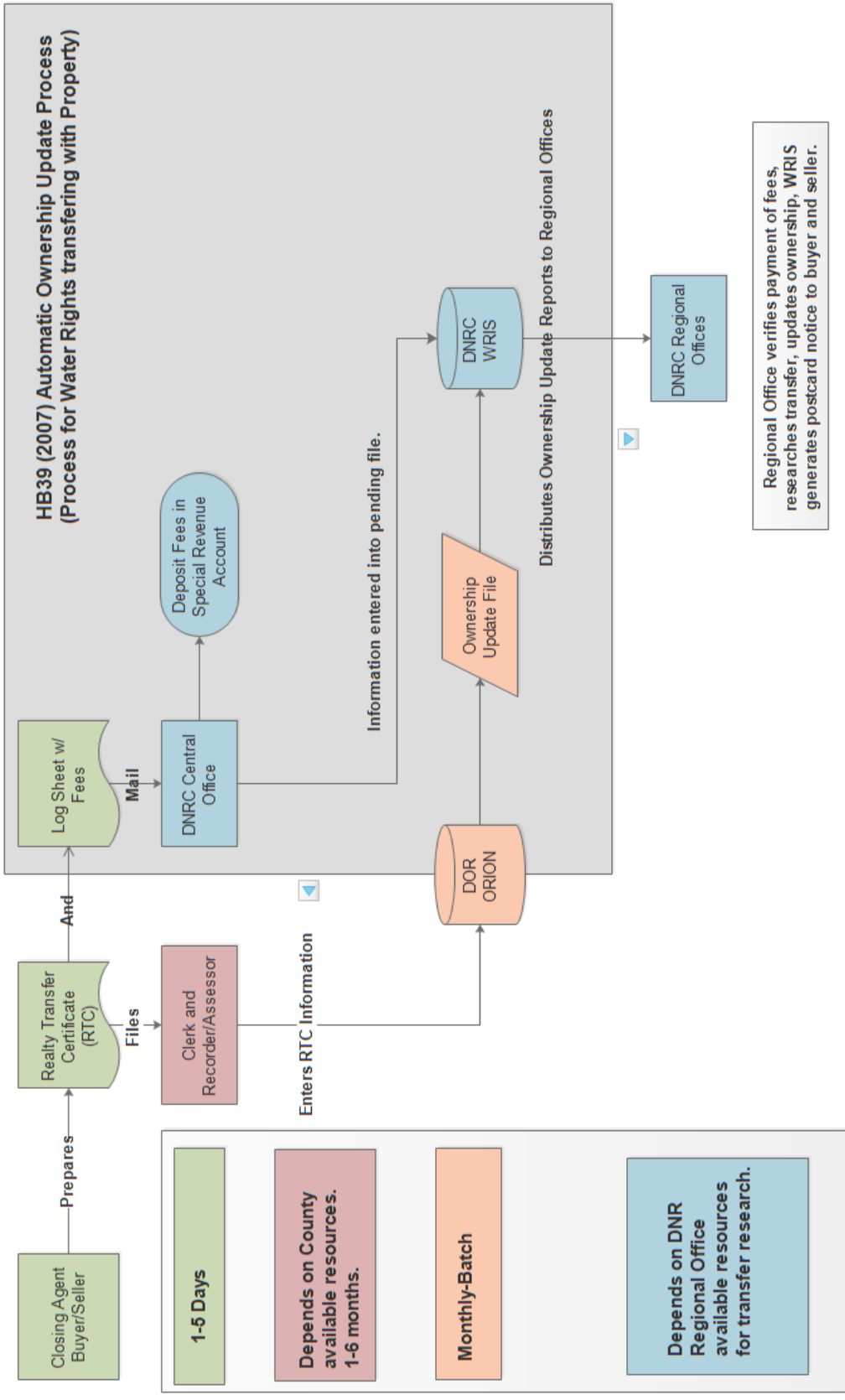
### **Where do we go from here?**

Now that the system has been in place for a number of years we can evaluate the success and challenges. The fees currently collected by DNRC to manage the ownership update are captured in a state special revenue fund. I would suggest that there are a number of elements that can be evaluated and potentially improved upon:

- (1) Is there a way to make county downloads more consistent? How much would this cost? Would the counties be willing/able to comply?
- (2) Is it possible to attach the geocode to the place of use? How much time, effort, money would this take? What would be the return on investment over time?
- (3) Would it be more cost/time efficient to identify one employee that does all ground-truthing on geocodes rather than being completed by the regional offices on a time availability basis?
- (4) How are the funds in the state special revenue account being used now? Would this revenue source be adequate for making changes and/or updates to the existing system?

Regards,

Krista Lee Evans  
Blake Creek Project Management



### Processing Timeline

- 1-5 Days
- Depends on County available resources. 1-6 months.
- Monthly-Batch
- Depends on DNR Regional Office available resources for transfer research.



To: WPIC

From: Nancy Zalutsky

Date: December 9, 2019

Re: Response to DNRC Survey

1. What about geocodes do you think WPIC should know?

Geocodes are a useful way to track water rights appurtenant to a single residential lot because those lots are created by survey rather than geography. Using aliquot parts to describe small (<10 acres) residential lots creates a lot of overlap of places of use. Strict adherence to using geocodes to assign ownership of stock and irrigation water rights does not work because the place of use of a water right is bound by the physical attributes of the land while geocodes were assigned to parcels created by surveys. A geocode review can serve as the beginning of an inquiry into the ownership of a water right, but it should not be the only piece of evidence used to make the determination

2. Do you have any suggestions to improve geocoding and the water right ownership update process?

I wrote an op-ed piece about changing the process in 2016. I submitted it to WPIC for the December 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. [https://mtstandard.com/news/opinion/guest/five-steps-to-streamline-water-rights-transfer/article\\_c8bbd377-66e8-5825-8424-47cb23607c4d.html](https://mtstandard.com/news/opinion/guest/five-steps-to-streamline-water-rights-transfer/article_c8bbd377-66e8-5825-8424-47cb23607c4d.html)

3. Once water rights have had their geocodes validated, is this process easier to locate all water rights pertinent to the property?

No. I continue to use a map-based approach where I compare the POU, owner of record and actual use to locate water rights.

4. Have you found entering a geocode to search for water rights on a property within the DNRC water rights query system efficient? Could the water right query system be more user-friendly?

I don't use the DNRC water rights query system. I rely on B3 Insight, an interactive map application, to identify water rights.

5. Do you feel the DNRC water right records are more up-to-date and accurate regarding legal descriptions, ownerships and geocodes?

More up to date than what? No comment.

6. If there was one thing that could make ownership updates run smoother, what would you recommend?

Require them as part of the deed recording process.

7. Do you feel you need additional training in how to find water rights by geocode, owner, GWIC, etc.?

No.

# Five steps to streamline water rights transfer

- Nancy Zalutsky
- Montana Standard Jul 15, 2016 [https://mtstandard.com/news/opinion/guest/five-steps-to-streamline-water-rights-transfer/article\\_c8bbd377-66e8-5825-8424-47cb23607c4d.html?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=email&utm\\_campaign=user-share](https://mtstandard.com/news/opinion/guest/five-steps-to-streamline-water-rights-transfer/article_c8bbd377-66e8-5825-8424-47cb23607c4d.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share)

You are positive you own water rights, but a search of the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation website does not list any in your name or your ranch's name. Does this mean you don't own any water rights? Did you lose or forfeit them?

The good news is that you probably do still own water rights but finding the right record could be a different story. For example, the record for your water rights may have a misspelling, or the ownership was not updated when the land was transferred. Thankfully, in Montana water rights are appurtenant to the land where they are used, meaning when land is sold, the right to use water on the land automatically transfers to the new landowner.

The change in ownership for both land and water rights occurs when the deed is signed by the seller, but the records are not updated until the deed is filed at the county clerk and recorder's office and a water right fee log is filed and processed by DNRC. This processing averages three months (or longer) and while county land records are updated immediately, the lag in water right transfers continues to raise concerns.

Without accurate ownership records, the Montana Water Court includes the wrong parties in water rights cases. If the actual water right owner is not served until a case is decided, the court and the parties have to start over, wasting valuable resources. And if you are a water right owner, missing notices will rob you of the opportunity to correct errors in Water Court decrees; receive notice of proposed permits, change applications and DNRC examinations; and protect your water right during court proceedings.



Current law requires the seller only to list water rights transferring with land and to certify that the water rights will be transferred. Then, DNRC must verify the list based on land owner information received from the Department of Revenue. If there are any discrepancies in the documentation, staff must take additional time to contact the new owner to clear them up. Furthermore, DNRC tracks land by 10-acre squares while DOR records parcels by geocode, a unique number designating a parcel created by a survey or subdivision. This makes it difficult to connect a water right to a geocode, and merging the two systems is like fitting a square peg into a round hole.

To overcome these deficiencies, the Legislature could simplify the water right ownership process in five steps:

1. Change the per water right fee structure to a flat fee.
2. Replace the Certification of Water Right Ownership Update with a form to be submitted to the clerk and recorder along with a check for the fee and a stamped envelope for the DNRC regional office to be forwarded to the DNRC.
3. Require the DNRC to add the new owner's name to the water right and notify the previous owner of the change in ownership and a deadline to dispute the ownership change.
4. Barring a protest, remove the previous owner's contact information from the water right.
5. Further simplify the transfer of a single domestic well by noting its number on the Realty Transfer Certificate and forwarding it to the appropriate DNRC regional office along with the fee.

Montana law requires the recording of deeds for land as soon as they are filed. This instantaneous recording of deeds is mandated because current land records protect the record owner from missing property tax payments or being held liable for liens against the previous owner. Don't water right owners deserve the same protection? By streamlining Montana's

transfer process, we could reduce costly errors, clarify water rights ownership and provide assurance for one of our most important rights.

-- Nancy Zalutsky has more than 20 years of experience in water rights and is a research analyst at Ponderosa Advisors LLC, providing information about water rights used in the development of Water Sage, an interactive mapping application that integrates information about water rights, land ownership and relative priority.

**From:** [stephenson@dmsnaturalresources.com](mailto:stephenson@dmsnaturalresources.com)  
**To:** [Mohr, Jason](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Geocode Survey  
**Date:** Saturday, December 07, 2019 5:19:39 AM

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Jason

I was forwarded this survey from DNRC and told to send my responses to you. My responses are in red text below.

1. What about geocodes do you think WPIC should know? (i.e.: saves time searching on geocode rather than searching section, township and range.)
  - a. My firm is a water right consulting firm. A lot of our work is due diligence and helping buyers in a transactional settings. We do not rely on geocodes to search for water rights. Not all water rights are “geocoded”. We also find that water rights that are “geocoded”, there is a high level of inaccuracy and incomplete listings in the geocodes that are on water rights. When taking an inventory of water rights associated with a property, we search by legal land description and names.
2. Do you have any suggestions to improve geocoding and the water right ownership update process?
  - a. We don’t think geocoding is necessary for water rights. It is not part of how the right is defined and leads to inaccurate ownership updates.
3. Once water rights have had their geocodes validated, is this process easier to locate all water rights pertinent to the property?
  - a. See response to #1 above.
4. Have you found entering a geocode to search for water rights on a property within the DNRC water rights query system efficient?
  - a. See response to #1 above.
5. Could the water right query system be more user-friendly?
  - a. I think the water right query system in MT is great and robust. When compared to other states (we do work in multiple other states as well) the query system in Montana is terrific.
6. Do you feel the DNRC water right records are more up-to-date and accurate regarding legal descriptions, ownerships and geocodes?
  - a. I’m not sure what the original context is for this question, but assume it means since “geocoding” began?
7. If there was one thing that could make ownership updates run smoother, what would you recommend?
  - a. It would be wonderful if ownership updates could be processed quicker. 608 forms typically get processed quickly, but 641 ownership update split forms can sometimes

not get processed and over to the court quickly. In addition, when we notice ownership errors and send a letter explaining the situation, with chain of title supporting documentation, the letters can sometimes go unaddressed for a long time. However, we know everyone is extremely busy and respect that there is a lot going on.

- b. It also is unfortunate when an erroneous owner is added (and/or the real owner removed) by virtue of a DOR update, that often times the real owner has to go through the court to remove the erroneous owner. This can be a very expensive process. When a mistake is noticed, DNRC could inform the erroneous owner saying DNRC added them by mistake and thus DNRC is removing them. DNRC could take responsibility for the errors the DOR updates are creating and correct them. The real owners should not have to bear the cost of fixing the errors.

8. Do you feel you need additional training in how to find water rights by geocode, owner, GWIC, etc.?

- a. No.

Deborah Stephenson

**DMS Natural Resources, LLC**

602 S. Ferguson Ave., Suite 2

Bozeman, MT 59718

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** December 9, 2019

**TO:** MT Legislature Water Policy Interim Committee

**FROM:** Julie A. Merritt, Water Resources Specialist, WGM Group, Inc.

**RE:** DNRC Water Right Ownership Updates and Geocodes

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Chairman Brown and members of the Water Policy Interim Committee, I would like to make the following comments regarding the on-going concerns about the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation's (DNRC) process for maintaining records of ownership on water rights.

I have been involved with the process of updating ownership records on water rights since 1995. First as a consultant for two years, then as a DNRC employee for eight years and again as a consultant for fourteen years. During my tenure at the DNRC, I was the project manager for the Water Rights Database conversion project an experience that provided me with a front row seat to the difficulties of maintaining the appropriate database structures needed to handle the complexities of the ownership update process.

Problems with the DNRC's ownership records are not new. Most commonly, difficulties arise on irrigation rights that are appurtenant to land that has been divided since the time the water right or claim was originally filed. Over the years, DNRC has invested vast amounts of time and energy into tracking ownership on such water rights. Various policies and methods have been employed in an attempt to "fix" the problem. Adding geocodes to the water rights is the latest in a long line of efforts to improve the ownership records. I know it has resulted in a far more accurate ownership record on the whole.

I regret that I was unable to attend the last conference call that was held on this issue though I did listen to the recording. There were some good points made by many and I will try to avoid repeating them.

That said, I will start with one of the points made by DNRC New Appropriations program manager, Jim Ferch, in his comments to you on November 21<sup>st</sup>,

"Maps, maps are huge."

As you all are no doubt aware, irrigated fields, aka water right places of use, don't always come in nice squares or rectangles. However, the method we have used to describe the places of use are legal land descriptions that can do no better than a

square or a rectangle. In a similar fashion, land ownership parcel boundaries are often not rectangular and generally don't follow the lines of irrigated field boundaries. However, with the parcel boundaries, we have a relatively reliable depiction of the actual shape and size of the parcels.

When the initial geocoding process was done, the rectangular grid of a water right place of use was laid over the irregularly shaped parcel boundaries resulting in many instances of false positives where geocodes of parcels that did not actually contain any part of the irrigated area were associated with certain water rights. Mr. Ferch has explained this process to you, so I won't repeat. I will simply say that this is where the issue of maps becomes so important!

Because of these discrepancies between the size and shape of parcel ownership boundaries and water right places of use, the only way to really know the actual place of use of any given water right, and thus the correct ownership, is to have a map of that right. Good maps are like gold but even a bad map can be used in conjunction with aerial photos, topographic maps, and other data to identify the actual place of use.

The biggest concern I have is that the DNRC and the Water Court have both had opportunities to leverage maps to make the ownership process clearer and more transparent to the public. Time and again they have chosen not to take advantage of those opportunities.

The DNRC has spent hundreds of thousands of person-hours using GIS software to map the places of use of tens of thousands of water rights through its WR Mapper program. In a number of Water Court basins, staff have mapped the location of the place of use and point of diversion of every historical irrigation claim. Sadly, after a hard copy map was printed and put in the file, nothing further has been done with these data. The GIS data could have been used to better inform the initial geocoding process and could still be used to better advantage to improve the process going forward. Unfortunately, these very valuable datasets generally just sit, collecting virtual dust.

Likewise, the Water Court has missed years of opportunities to make the record better. As a water rights researcher, I routinely encounter situations where water right places of use and points of diversion have been modified through the Water Court adjudication process. While all the parties to the case may completely understand and agree to those modifications in the moment, years down the road, the details have often faded. More often than not, maps that may have been submitted as part of the settlement of a case are not included in the water right file that is easily accessible to the public through the DNRC Water Right Query System. Instead, the maps get filed away in the Water Court case files which are saved and stored but not generally available to the public.

I cannot begin to describe the frustration I feel when I read in a Master's Report that a place of use and/or point of diversion were modified and a map was created but it

was not included in the documents that were saved to the water right file. Again, it doesn't even need to be a good map. Any map that gives an indication of the parties' intentions makes it far more likely that an answer to an ownership question can be readily determined.

If the DNRC and the Water Court took full advantage of the data that are already available to them, we would have a much better basis to make informed decisions about water right places of use and ultimately about water right ownership. Once this is achieved, the correct geocodes can be assigned to every water right and the process of updating ownership can be automated with a higher degree of confidence.

Two major changes need to happen:

- The DNRC must process the WR Mapper GIS data that was created in order to make it available to the public in an understandable format. Our tax dollars were used to create these datasets and, in my opinion, the value is lost if it is not made available for use. Additionally, the DNRC should consider mapping the places of use for basins that have not been examined using the WR Mapper.
- The Water Court needs to adopt a policy that a map must be saved to the claim file whenever the outcome of a Water Court case modifies the place of use or point of diversion of any water right. Ideally, the modifications would be transmitted back to the DNRC so the WR Mapper data could be updated and any geocodes corrected if necessary.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter. I firmly believe that with some focused effort, we can greatly improve the system of tracking water right ownership in Montana.



# MONTANA WATER SPECIALISTS

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836 Holt Dr. Bigfork, MT 59911



Date: 12-10-2019  
To: Montana Water Policy Interim Committee  
From: Lamont Kinkade, Montana Water Specialist  
Re: Comments and suggestions relevant to Geocoding and timelines of the DNRC Water Rights Query data base

For the past decade I have been a practicing Water Specialist working with consumers to research and resolve their water issues. Over that decade I have accumulated a certain level of experience, as shown in Attachment A. Based on my actual hands-on use of both the Geocode and the DNRC Query tools, I would like to submit the following observations, and suggestions, for your thoughtful consideration.

Regarding the issues apparently surrounding the Geocode and its future - - I find the availability of Geocoding to be an indispensable part of my practice and I would hate to see Montana's water users and water professionals deprived of its valuable applications. Like any system created and implemented by human hands it can have occasional imperfections. But those infrequent "imperfections" pale in comparison to the benefits it provides as an extremely useful tool in locating, tracking and assisting in the documentation of Water Rights information.

Accordingly, I would like to take this opportunity to voice my heartfelt support for the continuing availability of Geocoding! I truly believe that any thought of eliminating it would be would be unwise, unnecessary and an unfortunate step backwards in time.

Inasmuch as many of the concerns about the Geocode seem to be rooted in a lack of understanding of what information all those numbers represent, I might suggest that WPIC consider tasking their staff to create a one-page informational graphic and presentation along the lines of the one shown in Attachment B. A useful addition to such a graphic might be a brief summary of what the Geocode should, and should not, be used for. For example it should be considered to be an extremely useful tool to assist in narrowing down the search for an individual property, but should never be considered to be the equal of, or used as, a traditional "Legal Description!" Other clarification and instructions might be added as well.

With regard to the question of getting Ownership Updates into the DNRC Data Base and Query system in a more timely fashion - - It would seem to me that it should become mandatory for the title company to complete the relevant Water Rights Ownership Update documents, attach a copy of the recorded deed, a check for the fee and mail it all directly to DNRC within 5 days of closing. That way the Water Rights update information would be required to be sent to the right place (DNRC), rather than relying solely on the current requirement that the Water Rights update information in the RTC be sent to the wrong place (DOR); and then everybody waits for it to someday get into a "data-dump" and eventually find its way to the right place (DNRC).

Several title companies in Kalispell are "voluntarily" doing this "Direct Submission" approach as a service to all concerned in the transaction and it's working quite well - - but since it's currently only "voluntary", and done by only a few companies, it's a little hit and miss. "Mandatory Direct Submission" would solve that and go a long way toward reducing the current excessive wait-time for eventual updates. Just a suggestion for your thoughtful consideration.

Thank you for your kind attention and for this opportunity to submit these comments.

Sincerely,

  
Lamont Kinkade, Senior Specialist  
MONTANA WATER SPECIALISTS

Attachments: A and B





# MONTANA WATER SPECIALISTS

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Attachment A

## QUALIFICATIONS

OF

### LAMONT KINKADE

Senior Water Specialist

#### Summary of Experience, Education, Training & Certifications

During the last 25 years of my practice of “resolving water issues”, I’ve been fortunate to have had a variety of opportunities to keep up to the minute on the rapidly changing events surrounding “Water Rights”, “Water Quality”, and the consumer’s future “Right to Water.” Briefly put, these include the following:

- ✓ Montana Water Law Conference participant (2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2014, 2013) \*
- ✓ University of Montana training in Water Rights as part of Real Property transactions \*
- ✓ Montana State University training events in Water Issues & Practices \*
- ✓ Montana DNRC training and certification as a Water Commissioner/Water Mediator \*
- ✓ Formal Mediation training, certifications and experience \*
- ✓ Montana DEQ training and certifications in Groundwater Issues \*
- ✓ Montana DNRC formal training events in evolving Water Rights Issues \*
- ✓ Multiple Montana DEQ training events on a variety of water-related environmental issues \*
- ✓ 5 years Chairman of the NMAR “Subcommittee for Water Issues” \*
- ✓ Participating member of the MAR “Water Rights Working Group” \*
- ✓ Presented testimony on Water Issues before the state’s Water Policy Interim Committee (WPIC) \*
- ✓ Presented testimony before the Natural Resources Committee of the Montana legislature \*
- ✓ Presented testimony on Water Issues before the Montana State Legislature hearings \*
- ✓ Thirty years of advanced Continuing Education as a licensed real estate Broker \*
- ✓ Earned four nationally recognized certifications, namely SRS, ABR, GRI & CRS \*
- ✓ Successful completion of hundreds of Water Rights related transactions \*
- ✓ Over two decades of experience in Water Rights related “Issue Resolution”, as well as the marketing, sale and purchase of Water (with and without the appurtenance to land)
- ✓ Completed service in US Navy (1962-1966) Honorable Discharge
- ✓ Graduated University as a Business Administration Major (1968 – Bachelor Degree awarded)

\*Detailed specifics for each of the above items are available on request from [MontanaWaterSpecialists.com](http://MontanaWaterSpecialists.com)

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# MONTANA WATER SPECIALISTS

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Attachment B

## UNDERSTANDING THE GEOCODE

Geocode: A key descriptor which identifies a parcel of land by its unique location (county, township, section, quarter section, quarter section block, quarter section lot, and unit number)

A typical sample Geocode might look like this: 32-1227-26-4-01-01-0000 or 32122726401010000. In either configuration it will consist of 17 alpha-numeric characters broken into 7 separate internal codes, as indicated by the "X"s in the example below. Each of these 7 individual internal codes give specific information about the location of the property, as indicated in the boxes below. (Note some county records which are exclusive to a particular county may not show the first 2 characters in their county database.)

This Geocoding system was developed by the Montana Department of Revenue as part of its Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal system (CAMA) for all properties in Montana. This Geocoding system is also being expanded for use as a designation code to identify water rights in Montana.

County #	Township & Range Location Code	Section Number	Quarter Section of largest portion of the parcel	Block Number	Lot Number	Unit Number
<b>XX</b>	<b>XXXX</b>	<b>XX</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>XX</b>	<b>XX</b>	<b>XXXX</b>

First 2 characters

Next 4 characters

Next 2 characters

Next 1 character

Next 2 characters

Next 2 characters

Next 4 characters

Flathead = 07
Lake = 15



# MONTANA WATER SPECIALISTS

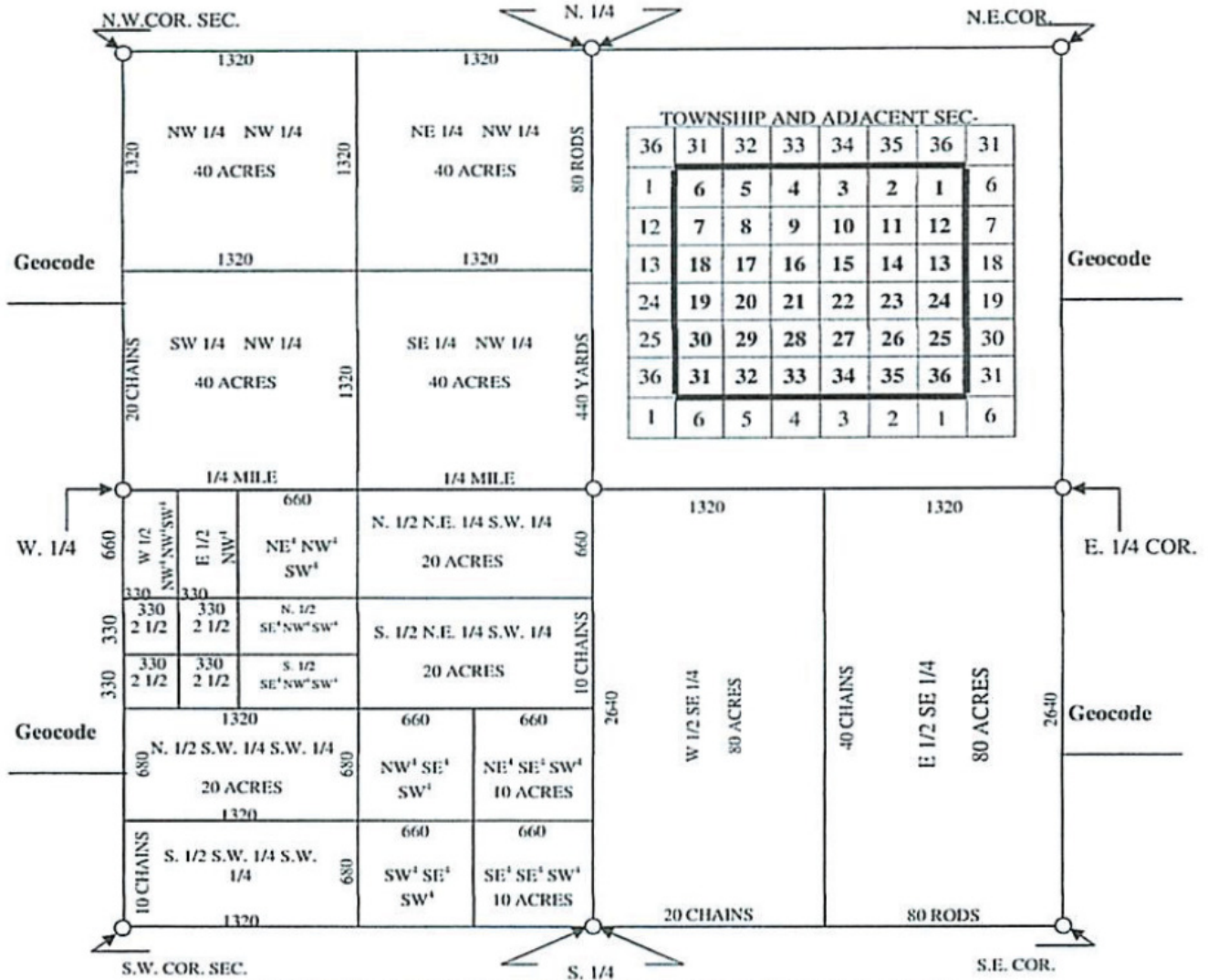
Cell 406-249-4997

www.MontanaWaterSpecialists.com

836 Holt Drive, Bigfork MT 59911



## UNDERSTANDING RANGES-TOWNSHIPS-SECTIONS



TOWNSHIP STARTS NUMBERING AT BASELINE NORTH OF SOUTH

- 16 1/2 FEET = 1 ROD
- 25 LINKS = 1 ROD
- 4 RODS = 1 CHAIN
- 66 FEET = 1 CHAIN
- 10 SQ CHAINS = 1 ACRE
- 160 SQ. RODS = 1 ACRE
- 4840 SQ. YARDS = 1 ACRE
- 43560 SQ. FEET = 1 ACRE
- 1 SECTION = 640 ACRES
- 1 LINK = 7.92 INCHES
- .66 FEET = 1 LINK
- 5280 FEET = 80 CHAINS

Calculation of legal description elements:

- 1 Section = 640 ac
- 1/2 Section = 320 ac
- 1/4 Section = 160 ac
- 1/2 of 1/4 Section = 80 ac
- 1/4 of 1/4 Section = 40 ac
- 1/4 of 1/4 of 1/4 Section = 10 ac
- 1/4 of 1/4 of 1/4 of 1/4 Section = 2.5 ac

Note: In the event the above section is a rare "Correction Section," the area quantifications must be calculated for that unusual section.



## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### aliquot

The regular (mathematical) division of a parcel of land defined by the Public Land Survey System (PLSS). The basic unit of land in the PLSS is the section, a parcel of land 1 mile square in extent (640 acres). The NORTH HALF of Section 1 (N 1/2, 320 acres) is an aliquot part, as is the SOUTH EAST QUARTER (SE1/4, 160 acres), or the NORTHEAST QUARTER OF THE NORTH WEST QUARTER (NE1/4 NW1/4, 40 acres).

### cadastral

Commonly, land ownership information. Formally, of or relating to an official register of the quantity, value, and ownership of real property used in apportioning truces; showing or recording property boundaries, subdivision lines, buildings, and related details.

### CAMA

(Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal) System for recording and determining valuation of real property, and improvements on the property, for purposes of taxation. Various characteristics describing the property and improvements are maintained for this purpose.

### css

Cascading Style Sheets, or styles, is a Web formatting convention which allows assignment of several properties at once to all the elements on Web pages marked with a particular tag. Formatting properties not available using standard HTML tags are possible using styles (line spacing, background colors).

### FGDC

Federal Geographic Data Committee, an interagency committee, organized in 1990 under OMB Circular A-16 that promotes the coordinated use, sharing, and dissemination of geospatial data on a national basis. The FGDC is composed of representatives from sixteen Cabinet level and independent federal agencies. The Steering Committee sets high-level strategic direction for the FGDC as a whole. The Coordination Group advises on the day-today business of the FGDC. Staff support for FGDC committees is provided by the FGDC Secretariat staff. The FGDC subcommittees are organized by data themes. Working groups play a crosscutting role, dealing with issues that span many subcommittees.

### FTP

File Transfer Protocol, an Internet protocol and service providing network file transfer between any two network nodes. User must have file access rights to transfer files to or from node. Typically used between remote host and local host (computers).

### geocode

a key descriptor which identifies a parcel of land by its unique location (county, township, section, quarter section, quarter section block, quarter section lot, and unit number).

### Geographic Coordinate Database (GCDB)

The GCDB is a database (digital) of the most dependable coordinates available for the US Public Land Survey System (PLSS) corners. It is produced by the US Bureau of Land Management. The data contained in the GCDB has been collected with a 95% level of accuracy. For details see the BLM website.

### GIS

Geographic Information System: a combination of computer hardware and software used to collect, maintain, analyze, and display geographic (map) information.

### JavaScript

A scripting language embedded within standard HTML pages which makes Web pages more interactive (forms, dynamic page creation, window control). JavaScript can be run in Web pages either client-side (local machine) or server-side (remote host machine). JavaScript was developed by Netscape Communications and is supported by most browsers.

### MGIC

(Montana Geographic Information Council) Fourteen members, appointed by the Governor, to provide policy level direction and promote efficiency and effective use of resources for matters related to geographic information. Executive Order N

**From:** [Kristi Billmayer](#)  
**To:** [Mohr, Jason](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: Using geocodes to search water rights  
**Date:** Monday, December 02, 2019 2:49:03 PM

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Dear Mr. Mohr,

As an escrow officer and closing agent for over 20 years, I can say that researching the water rights using the geocodes is of great value. When we have to search by name, especially if there are a lot of folks with the same last name, the search can get overly cumbersome. The geocodes greatly streamline that process as well as serve as a most useful double check to make sure we have not missed any water rights. Many thanks for your time and attention.

Warmest regards,

Kristi Billmayer

Sr. Escrow Officer

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**Beware of cyber-crime!** If you receive an e-mail or any other communication that appears to be generated from a Hill County Title Company employee that contains new, revised or altered bank wire instructions, consider it suspect and call our office at a number you trust. Our wire instructions do not change.