



Questions No Land  
Seller Wants You to  
Ask...

So, Be Sure to Ask  
Them!

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# Questions No Land Seller Wants You to Ask... So, Be Sure to Ask Them!

No matter where you plan to buy land, you need to read this brief guide on the must ask land buying questions. In this article, we detail a few specific questions you need to clarify with the selling party and/or the county before you purchase.

While buying land is an excellent idea, it never ceases to amaze me how many people do buy land and never ask the basic questions necessary to ensure they truly are making a good investment purchase. It can be a huge shock to folks when the reality sets in that they can't access their property, let alone find it.

Yes! That does happen!

The important thing is to not stop questioning!

*Albert Einstein*

While it is always considered best practice to physically view the land you plan to purchase, that is not always possible. I will admit, to this day, I have yet to physically set foot on any of the vacant land properties that I have purchased and sold. In the following paragraphs, we will give you some specific questions to ask and facts to confirm prior to signing on the dotted line.

In the land business, we call this doing your due diligence.

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**NOTE:** Not all land investors will have all the answers to these questions. If they don't, that should in no way kill the deal. It simply means that you will need to do a bit more of the above mentioned due diligence before agreeing to purchase the land in question.

## Questions To Ask EVERY Seller:

### Is there a clear title chain?:

The #1 question you should ask anyone selling a piece of land is whether there is a clear title. There should be no liens or encumbrances and the ownership history should be traceable for at minimum 30 year back in history.



Clean Title is a MUST!

This, more than any other issue can cause you no end of headaches. If the title chain is not clear, the deal is off, no matter how good the deal may be.

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When we buy a piece of land here at [Legacy Lands USA](#), we do a complete title check back 30+ years. We are looking to be sure there are no interested parties that may come back and claim ownership of the land. We have heard of horror stories where an individual "forgot" to file a deed 20+ years ago then resurfaced to lay claim to the land that had been sold multiple times since. That is a headache that we don't want to deal with.

We ensure that there are no breaks in that title chain. Our aim is for a smooth and clean title change.

We convey (fancy word for sell) all our land with a warranty deed. This means that we are guaranteeing that the title chain of the property is in order and that the property will be marketable should you ever need/want to sell.

This, however, does not mean that all deeds in the chain are warranty deeds. If there are other types of deeds in the chain, we spend the extra time to ensure that all is in order. At times, this means we hire an abstractor (title chain investigator) to double check that there will be no title issues for you going forward.

If the seller will not convey the property with a warranty deed, then you need to do a bit of extra research to ensure there will be no issues in the future. If the property is that important to you, spend the few hundred dollars to hire an abstractor to trace the title chain. If the seller is diligent, they'll have already ensured this is complete.

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## Legal Access:

While the question seem like a no brainer, the answer is anything but clear for a fair few rural parcels. Just because there is an unobstructed road to the property does not mean that it will remain open or allow for unlimited access. Most roads in rural areas are dirt. During certain seasons of the year, these roads may become unusable due to snow, mud or any number of other weather related issues.

These roads may also cross other peoples land before making it to your land. If so, you will need to check that you have the legal right to cross. This may come in the form of a county ordinance, easement or a written agreement between you and the owner of the land you must traverse.

**A Note on BLM Land:** Generally, if the property you are buying is adjacent to BLM (Bureau of Land Management) land, you have the right to cross that BLM land to reach your property. You cannot permanently modify BLM land however, so road improvements may not be possible.



## Road Maintenance:

Who maintains the roads? In some areas the county is responsible to maintain the dirt roads. To what level, is a whole nother story. You can usually check with the county Planning and Zoning Dept. to find out this information if the seller does not know.

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**Private roads:** If there is no road to the property, and you plans to put one in, be sure to check what the requirements are. In Apache County AZ, for example, they have an ordinance that all roads be passable by Emergency Vehicles and large construction equipment.



## Floodplains:

This is a very important piece of information to ask should you want to build on the land. If the land is to be used for purely recreational purposes, then this is not as big an issue. You should contact the county Engineers Dept. to get a floodplain map of the local area.

This bit of information may or may not be something the typical land seller would have. Personally, it is not information I will spend the time to seek out.

## Plat Map or Survey:

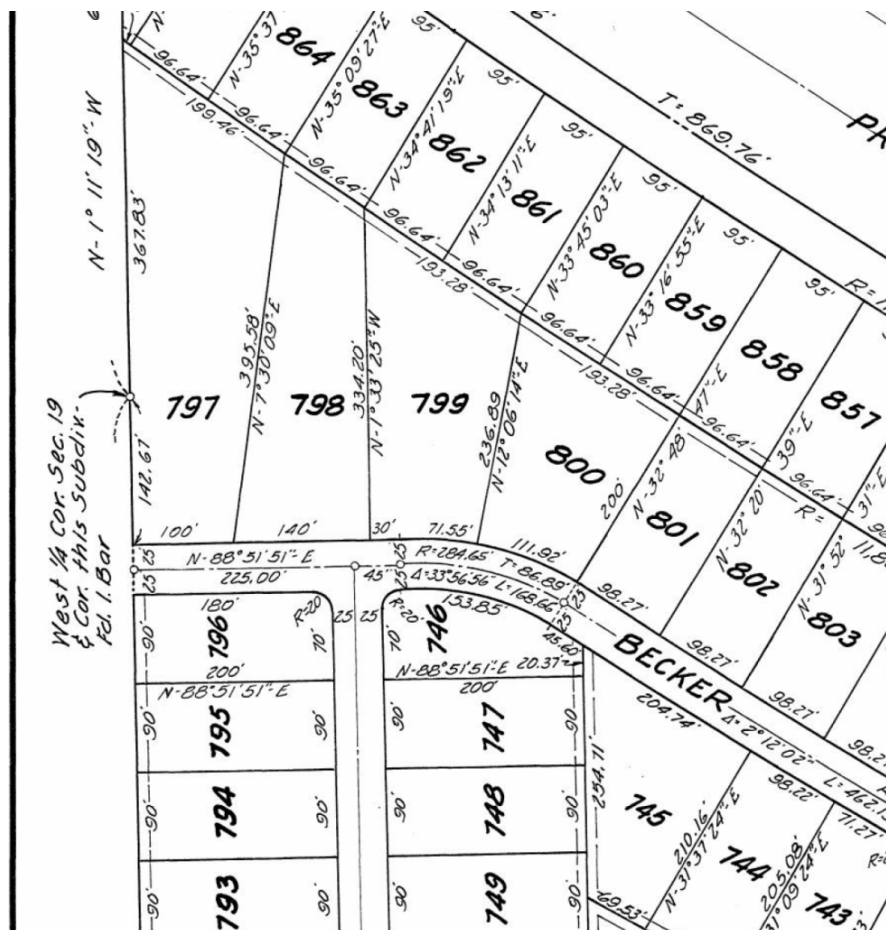
If the lot is in a platted subdivision, then it is likely that the lot has been surveyed at some point. You can contact the county Planning or GIS departments and request the plat map for the area your lot is in. If you are computer savvy, you may be able to look up the plat map on the county GIS website.

**NOTE:** With the continued improvements of the GIS systems across the country, plat maps are not as important as they once were in determining the lot boundaries. If you can't get a plat map, it shouldn't be a stress point.

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A plat map is the official map that was created when the land was subdivided. It details the measurements, location within the subdivision and the Lat/Long. Easements are also recorded on these maps. this is one reason you should attempt to get the plat of the land you buy. It will typically tell you where you can legally access your land.

Below is an example of what a typical plat map looks like. Having a copy of this map is a valuable tool when trying to determine where your lot boundaries are. To be honest, it can be difficult to know exactly where the lot lines lay. To be absolutely sure, as the buyer, you can have the land surveyed at your expense if you feel the boundaries are in dispute.



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## Land Characteristics:

In a nutshell, what does the land look like. Is it flat? On the side of a hill? Or is it covered with trees or have no vegetation at all?

[Google Earth](#) is a wonderful resource for determining many of the land characteristics. Another way to figure out land characteristics is to search the area in Google and go to the images tab. Many times you will find folks that have uploaded picture from the area that you can view.

You can and should also ask the seller for all the pictures they have.

In all honesty and transparency, most land investors like us here at [Legacy Lands USA](#), have never stepped foot on the properties we sell. Some will hire photographers to go to the properties and take some pictures or a drone video. We typically do not. We have founds that the world wide web, and Google, have more then enough pictures of the areas we buy and sell land in to get us by.

## HOAs and CC&Rs:

If you are buying land in any type of a plotted subdivision, there is a good chance there is an HOA or CC&Rs. I'll be honest, they can be a drag and a costly monthly expense.

I live in a community that has a relatively high monthly HOA fee. However, the amenities that I receive for that fee are well worth it.



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Know that with HOAs and CC&Rs, come a tone of rules. Rule on what you can build or cannot build, what farm animals you are or are not allowed to keep, whether you can grow crops or not, noise ordinance, and the list goes on and on. Be sure to ask about them. Also, contact the county Planning dept. for further information on HOAs.

## Mail and Parcel Delivery:

If you plan to build and live on your land, it may be a good idea to ask where the nearest post office is located. Mail is often times not delivered to rural areas of the country even if you live there.

For most, a P.O. Box in the nearest town will be the best way for you to receive mail and parcels. Be sure to check with the local Post Office to see if they have any regulations and for further information.

## Utility Services:

The following list of items contain valuable information on what you may need to ask the county vs. the seller. Simply asking if the seller knows if there are any utilities in the area or on the lot, is typically all you need to ask. If there are utilities, the seller will be sure to let you know. Having them increases the salability of the land. They will want you to know.

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That said, let's make this easy. Always assume that there are **NO** utility services when it comes to rural vacant land. If there are utilities in that area, assume also, that they will be operated at a lesser standard than in cities and that repairs and maintenance will take longer to complete, not to mention cost more.

The county will not spend a dime more than necessary on infrastructure unless there is a need. That being, if there are multiple residents in an area, you may be able to petition the county to bring utilities in if that area is starting to experience an increase or influx of people.

## **Electricity:**

If you are lucky enough to find a lot with electricity, know that you will pay more for the lot. If there is a power pole near the lot, a general rule of thumb is it costs approximately \$5/foot to extend the line to your lot. This may or may not include hooking it up to your home.



Solar and/or wind are 2 of the most common alternatives for electricity generation. As battery technology is ever improving, the addition of battery towers to store electricity for when the sun goes down, is getting ever cheaper and more feasible. Generators are another viable alternative and are recommended as a back up at minimum.

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## **Water:**

More even than electricity, water is one of the most important utilities get figured out. There are a few options typically available.

**Drill a well:** First off, wells cannot be drilled on every property. There are areas that it may very well be impossible to drill a well for one reason or another. However, wells still remain one of the most common methods for attaining water for your property.

They can be costly however. Be sure to ask the seller if they know what the water table depth is in the area. Typical costs to drill a well range from \$10-55/foot. At a depth of 300 feet, the cost could be north of \$10,000 just to drill the hole. Be sure to contact a local well company to confirm these estimates.

**Holding Tank and Water Delivery:** This method may be the most economical means of getting and storing water for your rural property. Costs vary depending on whether the tank is above or below ground. A quick Google search puts the price of an above ground, 10,000 gallon water holding tank at approximately \$6,000.

**Water rights:** It is best to always assume that the water and mineral rights do not transfer to you when purchasing rural vacant land. These rights have most often been sold to someone else long before now. Always ask the seller if, by some miracle, they are still attached to the property.

You will also need to consult a water company on the cost of water delivery. We suggest you start by contacting the county water district. They should be able to give you all the information, rules and regulations regarding water.

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**Sewer:** Septic is one of the most common ways to dispose your gray and black water. That being, not all areas are well suited to it. Percolation can be an issue that may make it not feasible to put in a septic system. These systems can cost up to \$10,000 to install so be sure to consult a local company prior to buying.

**Perk Test:** You may need to conduct a perk test prior to being allowed to place a septic system on your lot. This test is designed to estimate how fast/slow liquids disperse through the soil. If too slow, a septic system may not be able to function properly. This test is not one that you should expect a seller to do, but is a good thing to ask about nonetheless.

**Phone/Cell Service/ Internet:** Let's be honest, you are thinking of buying land in the middle of nowhere right? To be safe, don't expect there to be any land line phone or internet service and there may or may not be cell service in the area.

Check with the county and view the coverage maps for the major cell phone carriers in the area to get an idea of what services are available. The best way to find this information out still remains to head out to the property and test the cell coverage for yourself.

## **Building Regulation:**

If you are buying a property from us, this is one of the areas we ensure we get you information on. We take great pride in letting our customers know exactly what they can and can't build on their property.

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It is our job to help you imagine what you can do on your land. If you are buying from someone else, be sure to ask about what the land is zoned for. Some areas have little to no zoning regulations while others are very strict on what can be build.

The county Planning a Zoning Dept. will be your best resource for attaining verification on building restrictions. We have seen subdivisions that are adjacent to each other have drastically different zoning regulations.

**Building permits:** Some areas require you to build within a certain time frame after purchase of the land while others do not require you to build at all. What is the same in nearly any place you buy land, is the fact that you need a building permit if you do decide to build. Check with the local Planning and Building Dept. to get the specifics for the area you are buying land.

## Bringing it All Together

Rural living is not for everyone. However, should you decide to venture out and give it a try, hopefully this guide has served to point you in the right direction. While it mat not cove every detail, it is a good start.

If you have any further questions, be sure to ask them below! If we don't know the answer, we will help you find it!

Buy land, they aren't making it anymore!

*Mark Twain*

## To Building Your Legacy

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## About Us!

We are Paul and Sarah and help folks build their legacy with land. We hunt far and wide to find undervalued Rural Vacant Land at 40-80% of market value. We then pass those savings on to our clients. We believe land is by far the best legacy investment you can make. It's a hedge against inflation, can't be destroyed, appreciates over time, it can be used for camping, recreation or living and can be passed from one generation to another! Let us help you find the perfect piece of land to begin building you legacy today!

Contact Us: [LegacyLandsUSA@gmail.com](mailto:LegacyLandsUSA@gmail.com)

Website: [www.legacylandsusa.com](http://www.legacylandsusa.com)

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