

**Property Descriptions
For
Rural Alaska:**

**Interpretation and Writing Skills
For
Land Managers**

I. Introduction

1. History & Purpose

“Certainty of Land Location has value”

2. Monuments – identifying boundaries without descriptions...

3. Written Descriptions

- Statute of Frauds
- Descriptive Terms
- Written Land Descriptions

a) Deed conveying real property

b) Lease of Real property

c) Creation of an easement or right of way

d) Vacation of an easement or right of way

- Elements of the written property description

- a) *Intent*

- b) *Location*

- c) *Geometric shape*

- d) *Size*

4. General Format for Descriptions

- *Preamble/Caption*

- *Body*

- *Limiting or Qualifying Clauses*

- a) *Reservations*

- b) *Exceptions*

- c) “*Subject to*”

5. Types of Descriptions

- U.S. Rectangular Grid
- Metes & Bounds
- Subdivision/Plat
- Other Types of Descriptions

II. U.S. Rectangular System

1. Background:
2. Latitudes & Longitudes (Geographic Positions)
3. Layout of Grid
 - Initial Point
 - Principal Lines
 - a) *Base line*
 - b) *Principal Meridian*

In Alaska we have:

Copper River Meridian

Fairbanks Meridian

Seward Meridian

Kateel River Meridian

Umiat Meridian

- *Standard Parallels*
- *Guide Meridians*
 - a) *Quadrangles*
- *Townships*
- *Sections*

- *Fractional Units - Aliquot Parts*

- 1) *Reading & Plotting*

- 2) *Writing*

- Punctuation

- Exercises

III. Metes & Bounds Descriptions

1. Background

Metes and Bounds

2. Point of Beginning/Point of Commencement/Closure

- *Point of Beginning*
- *Point of Commencement*
- *Closure*

3. Directions: Angles, Bearings and “North”

- *Angles - Bearings*

- *North – Basis of Bearings*

- a) True North (Astronomic)

- b) Magnetic North

- c) Grid North

- d) Assumed North (Datum North)

4. Distances – Linear Measurements

- Feet (English Units)

- Meters (Metric Units)

- Chains (Federal Surveys)

- Measurement Conventions

5. Curves

- Radius
- Central angle or delta
- Arc Length
- Direction of Curvature
- Direction of Travel
- Tangency

6. Descriptive Calls

- *Metes Descriptions*

- *Bounds Descriptions*

Calls to monuments –

- Natural Monuments
- Manmade Monuments.

Calls to adjoiners –

- Prevents unintended overlaps
- Prevents unintended gaps

- Superiority of Calls (Rules of Construction) –
 1. Monuments – natural or artificial
 2. Calls to Adjoiners
 3. Distances
 4. Bearings
 5. Areas

7. Areas

- Acres/Square Feet –
- Acres/Chains –
- Hectares/Square Meters –

8. Closure & Precision

Error of Closure

Perimeter distance

Precision

9. Writing the M&B Description

- Point of Commencement/Point of Beginning
- Lines described by lengths and bearing (or curves)
- Must completely enclose parcel

- Must return to close on POB
- Intent – Refer to adjoining properties
Refer to monuments

- Statement of Area

IV. Descriptions by Plat Reference

1. Background

2. Types of Plats

- Federal
 - a) Federal Townsite
 - b) United States Survey (U.S. Survey)
 - c) Mineral Survey
 - d) ANCSA 14(c) Survey
- State or Local Government
 - a) Alaska State Land Survey (ASLS)

b) Subdivision Plat

c) Replat

3. Method of Description

4. Other Survey Plats

V. Other Types of Descriptions

- Centerline/Strip description
- Point description/Station & Offset
- Coordinate description
- Linear description
- Proportional description
- Area description

- Sources of Error in Property Descriptions

1. Surveying Errors

- Defective instruments
- Poor procedures in measuring
- Incompetent surveyors
- Error in computation

2. Ambiguities and Typographical errors in writing descriptions

- *Patent Ambiguity*
- *Latent Ambiguity*

3. Loss of Evidence