

LP8 Land Records Search Worksheet

Name _____

This exercise provides an introduction to the basic steps involved in researching property records for a specific parcel. Researching the history of transactions is necessary to ensure good title reasonably free of encumbrances. A formal title search is usually done by an attorney or title examiner.

Directions: Visit the county courthouse or a county court website where the property is located. Search for property and tax assessment records. To search land records, you will need the name of the current owner(s) and the property's parcel identification number. Recorded deeds can be found online or in the grantor and grantee index books in the courthouse. These books are organized chronologically by dates and are in alphabetical order. In a class discussion afterwards, share what you have found and any questions or insights on how to use this information in your land search or inheritance.

Exercise 1: Research the Property's Chain of Title or History of Ownership

Locate and review the deed of the current owner(s) to identify who the owner(s) received the property from. Remember, the person giving land and signing the deed is the grantor. The person receiving land is called the grantee.

Example of a Chain of Title:

John Smith (grantee) received the property from Sally Jones (grantor) in 2004.

Sally Jones (grantee) received the property from Neil Hampton (grantor) in 2001.

Neil Hampton (grantee) received the property from Jules Jones (grantor) in 1998.

1. Was the deed properly recorded?
2. What was the date, volume and page number where the deed can be found?
3. How long has the current landowner(s) owned the property?
4. List the previous 20 years of ownership history in the Chain of Title format provided above.

Exercise 2: Identify Title Encumbrances Against the Property

For each land transfer, search for any documents under the owner's name that recorded transactions (deeds, liens, restrictions, easements, rights of way and tax records) involving the property.

1. Are there any voluntary liens against the parcel?
 - Deeds of Trust or Mortgage Lien
 - Note Payable
 - Builder Liens and Mechanic's Liens
 - Contracts for Sale
 - UCC-1 Financing Statements
2. Are there any involuntary liens against the parcel?
 - Federal Tax Lien
 - State Tax Lien
 - Mechanic's and Materialmen's Lien
 - Abstracts of Judgment
3. Are there any other restrictions, easements or rights of way that affect the property?
 - Conservation easement
 - Other deed restriction on use
 - Access or other use easements
 - Rights of way for access or utilities
4. Describe the parcel's tax records, which may include tax values of land and buildings.

Discussion Questions

1. What did you learn about the parcel from searching for its title, liens and tax records?
2. Did you find anything from this search that will affect your plans?
3. Did you learn anything that affects your communication with the landowner(s)?

This *Land Records Worksheet* has been informed in part by Court House Direct www.courthousedirect.com.

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