

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

# Units of Measure

With John Farnsworth

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CADASTRAL SURVEY

# Units of Measure

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Historically, the chain has been the unit of linear measurement utilized by the General Land Office and the Bureau of Land Management. John Farnsworth is going to tell you what this edition of the Manual has to say about it.

Chapter 2 of this edition of the Manual has the discussion on units of linear measurements. Now historically, the chain unit which is 66 U.S. survey feet in length has been utilized by both the general land office, the BLM and their surveys. This is also called the Günter's chain.

The main advantage to using the 66-foot chain is that ten square chains equal's one acre. This is why the chain unit has lasted so long in public land survey system use with that ease of acreage calculation. Now some of the early surveys especially in the south were measured with poles, perches or rods. Any four of these units is equal to one chain. Now the next edition does have a change and in this edition of the Manual, feet and meter units are now authorized for use in federal cadastral surveys.

Now, the public land survey system has always utilized horizontal distances at mean ground elevation above sea level for any particular survey. So if you are trying to utilize some calculations and you reduce things to sea level elevation you are not going to match the distances shown on a BLM or GLO survey plat. Now Table 2-1 of the Manual gives you some common conversions between different units. So really, the only change in this edition of the Manual is the allowance of use of feet or meters in the public land survey system.



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