

What Do You Have and What Do You Want? Turning Dreams Into Reality

Lesson Description

Most people who purchase a small-acreage property have an idea of the eventual look and uses they envision for their property. Unfortunately, this vision is sometimes nebulous, incomplete, or unrealistic. You will be encouraged to focus on short-term and long-term goals for your property. The first step in any land use endeavor is to identify the existing asset(s) of a property. As you come to realize the extent and potential of your physical holdings as well as the limitations and responsibilities, you will be better prepared to set and implement reasonable goals for their properties.

Lesson Objectives

1. Learn what stewardship and sustainability mean.
2. Gain an understanding of their reasons for living on small-acreage properties.
3. Be able to assess and develop clearly defined sets of short-term and long-term goals for their properties.
4. Know how and why to complete an inventory of their property's facilities and assets.
5. Demonstrate an awareness of different components of their property by creating physical inventory maps.



Module 1, Lesson 1

What Do You Have and What Do You Want? Turning Dreams Into Reality

Activity Sheets

1. Goal-setting Activity Sheet.
2. Inventorying Property Facilities and Assets Activity Sheet.
3. Physical Inventory Map – existing conditions.
4. Physical Inventory Map – proposed changes.
5. Understanding Legal Descriptions Activity Sheet (optional).
6. Calculating Acreages from Property Maps Activity Sheet (optional).

Supplemental Resources

Best Management Practices for Small Acreages, WSU Clark County Extension

Resource List, WSU Clark County Extension

Natural Resource Conservation Services eFOTG

Washington Soil Survey Reports Online

Tips on Land and Water Management for Small Acreages in SW Washington



Goal-setting Activity Sheet, page 1 of 2

Your Goals and Resources: What Are Your Goals For Your Property?

After reflecting for a few moments, list goals for your property. Don't let your ideas be limited by considerations such as finances. You'll revise your goals after the next lesson. If you have a timeline in mind, record a finish date for the goal. If not, note the relative priority of each goal.

What are your goals for your property?	What resources do you need?	What is the priority or time line?	When will you be finished?
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			



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Goal-setting Activity Sheet, page 2 of 2

What are your goals for your property?	What resources do you need?	What is the priority or time line?	When will you be finished?
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			



Inventorying Property Facilities and Assets Activity Sheet, page 1 of 4

What buildings do you have on your property?

House Yes No Footprint?* _____

***Footprint.** The space occupied by a building expressed in square footage.

Outbuildings Y N

Type: _____ Foot print* _____

Type: _____ Foot print* _____

Type: _____ Foot print* _____

Type: _____ Foot print* _____

What facilities do you have on your property?

Corrals Yes No

Location and dimensions _____

Pasture(s) Yes No

Location and dimensions _____

Location and dimensions _____

Fences Yes No

Type _____

Location and lengths _____

Type _____

Location and lengths _____

Type _____

Location and lengths _____

Type _____

Location and lengths _____

Well(s) Yes No

Type _____

Permitted uses _____

Volume of water you're allowed to use each day _____

Type _____

Permitted uses _____

Volume of water you're allowed to use each day _____



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Inventorying Property Facilities and Assets Activity Sheet, page 2 of 4

Facilities on your property, continued:

Water lines Yes No

Type (household, irrigation, etc) _____

Location _____

Type _____

Location _____

Septic system Yes No

Type _____

Size and location of tank _____

Depth, location and dimensions of drainfield _____

Sewer lines Yes No

Size, location and depth _____

Gas/oil lines Yes No

Type (above or below ground) _____

Location _____

Type _____

Location _____

Power lines Yes No

Type (above or below ground) _____

Location _____

Type _____

Location _____

Cable lines Yes No

Type (above or below ground) _____

Location _____

Type _____

Location _____

Telephone lines Yes No

Type (above or below ground) _____

Location _____

Type _____

Location _____



Inventorizing Property Facilities and Assets Activity Sheet, page 3 of 4

Facilities on your property, continued:

Do you have easements on your property for any of the following?

- Sewer Yes No Location _____
- Power lines Yes No Location _____
- Cable lines Yes No Location _____
- Telephone lines Yes No Location _____
- Access Yes No Type _____
Location _____
- Drainage Yes No Location _____
- Irrigation ditches Yes No Location _____
- Frontage Yes No Type (sidewalks, street widening, etc) _____
Location _____

Are you aware of any buffer zone requirements on your property? List the location, width and requirements.

Property assets:

Existing trees or areas with vegetation Yes No
Condition _____

Defensible space areas Yes No
Condition _____

Pasture(s) Yes No
Condition _____

Streams/creeks Yes No
Condition _____

Wetlands Yes No
Condition _____

Ponds Yes No
Condition _____



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Inventorying Property Facilities and Assets Activity Sheet, page 4 of 4

Property assets (continued):

Are you having problems with any of the assets listed above? Write them below.

Property problems:

Wildfire threats within 50 feet of your house or outbuildings:

Trees? Yes No Tall shrubs? Yes No Dry groundcover? Yes No

Firewood piles? Yes No Decks? Yes No

What material is your roof made from? _____

Do your attic vents have screens? Yes No

Do you know if your landscaping plants are "fire resistant"? Yes No

Weedy areas Yes No

Describe the weeds. List the name or description, the amount of area affected, and the severity of the problem.

Any other problems? _____



Sample Inventory Map

Property characteristics

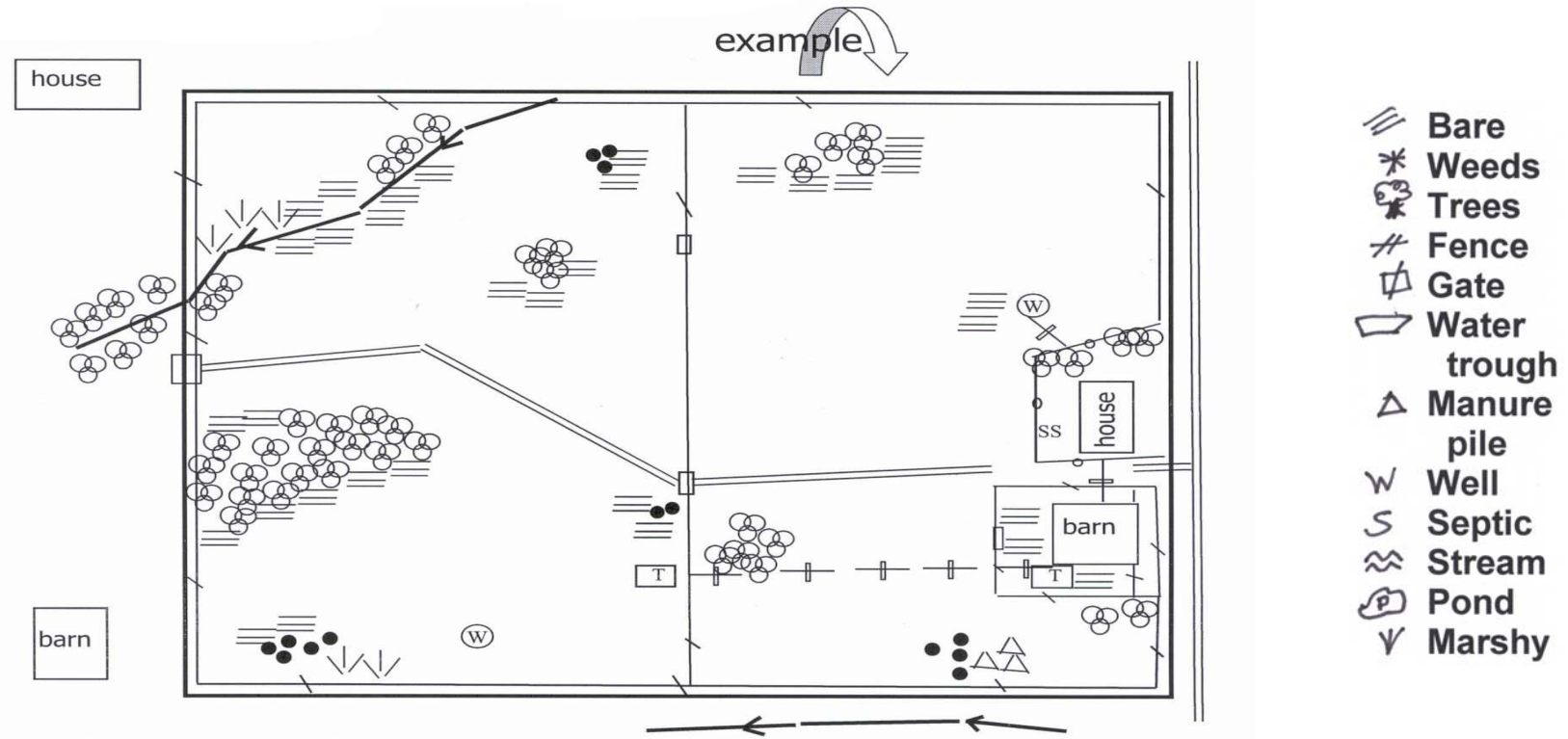
Legal description: SE1/4, NE1/4, SE1/4 of Section 9, T20N, R14E

Total acres: 10 Types and numbers of animals: 6 cattle, 1 horse, 3 goats

Number of pastures: 2 Months animals are grazed: 9 months Soil types: clay loam, silt loam

Grasses present: Tall fescue, orchardgrass, clover, bentgrass

Weeds present: Canada thistle, pigweed



Adapted from: Presentation materials written by Wendy Williams, USDA NRCS, Bozeman, MT.

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Inventory Map of Existing Resources Activity Sheet

Sketch the outline of your property and show all the facilities and assets. Add the locations of your neighbors' buildings and facilities that are close to your property.













Legal description: _____

Total acres: _____ Types and numbers of animals: _____

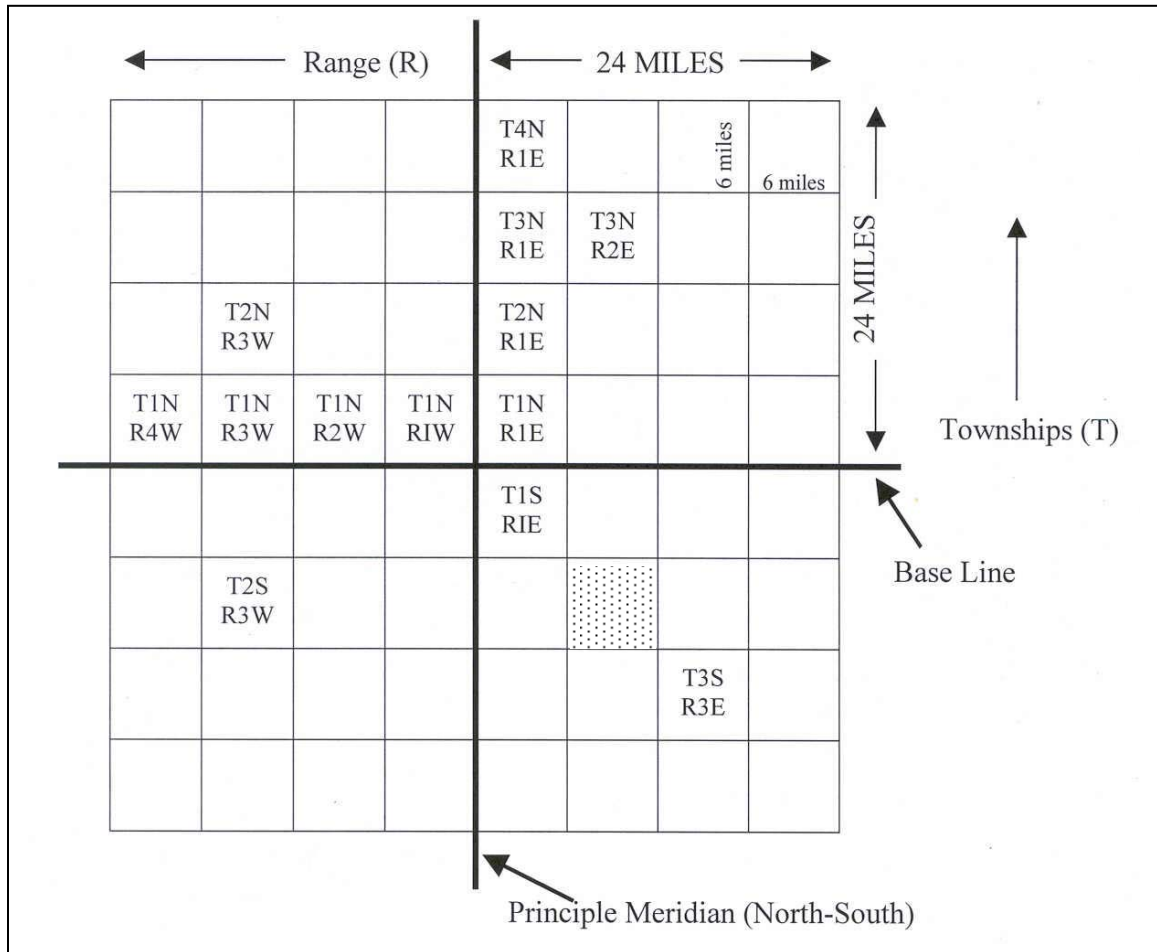
Number of pastures: _____ Months animals are grazed: _____ Soil types: _____

Grasses present: _____

Weeds present: _____

-  Bare
-  Weeds
-  Trees
-  Fence
-  Gate
-  Water trough
-  Manure pile
-  Well
-  Septic
-  Stream
-  Pond
-  Marshy

**Understanding Legal Descriptions Activity Sheet, page 1 of 4
Townships and Ranges**



Townships and ranges

In the west, to write legal descriptions of properties, land was divided into townships and ranges starting at different principle meridians.

- Each T/R area is 6 miles on a side.
- Townships and Ranges begin counting off from the point where the Principle Meridian and the Base Line meet.
- Townships are either north or south of the baseline and Ranges are either east or west of the Principle Meridian.
- Each Township and Range block equals approximately 36 square miles (23,040 acres).

Note the dotted block. This is T2S, R2E. We will use this in the next worksheet to describe sections.



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Understanding Legal Descriptions Activity Sheet, page 2 of 4 Sections

Township 2 S, Range 2 E

6	5	4	3	2	1
7	8	9	10	11	12
18	17	16	15	14	13
19	20	21	22	23	24
30	29	28	27	26	25
31	32	33	34	35	36

1 mile

1 mile

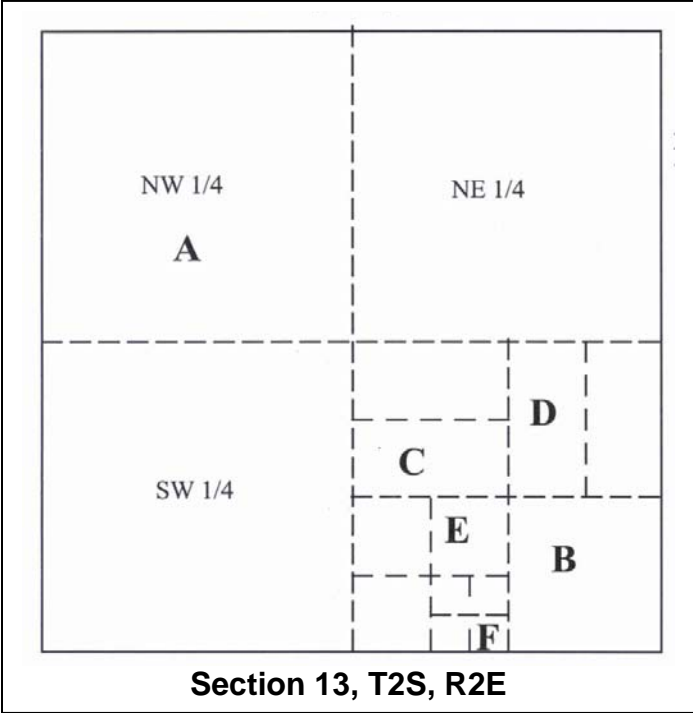
By convention, sections are counted off as shown on the diagram above.

- Each township contains 36 sections.
- Each section is about one mile on each side.
- One section, or one square mile, is 640 acres.
- $1 \text{ mile by } 1 \text{ mile} = 5,280 \text{ feet} \times 5,280 \text{ feet} = 27,878,400 \text{ square feet} / 43,560 \text{ square feet per acre} = 640 \text{ acres}.$
- Due to the curvature of the earth, not all sections are exactly one square mile.
- Section 13, the dotted section above, will be used for the exercises on the next page.



Understanding Legal Descriptions Activity Sheet, page 3 of 4

Legal descriptions: By convention, these descriptions start from the smallest area and proceed to the larger area, as seen in the sample descriptions below. Descriptions are usually written in terms of halves or quarters.



Area A:
NW 1/4, Section 13, T2S, R2E (160 acres)

Area B:
SE 1/4, SE 1/4, Section 13, T2S, R2E (40 acres) – the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter

Area C:
S 1/2, NW 1/4, SE 1/4, Section 13, T2S, R2E (20 acres)

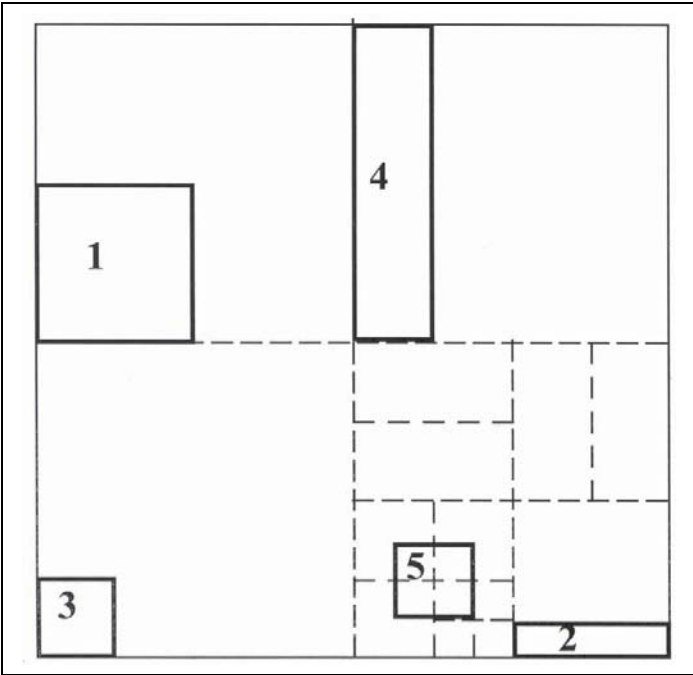
Area D:
W 1/2, NE 1/4, SE 1/4, Section 13, T2S, R2E (20 acres)

Area E:
NE 1/4, SW 1/4, SE 1/4, Section 13, T2S, R2E (10 Acres)

Area F:
SE 1/4, SE 1/4, SW 1/4, SE1/4, Section 13, T2S, R2E (2.5 acres)

Sometimes it helps to write or think of a “of the” in place of the commas in the legal description. The description for area F then becomes: “the SE1/4 of the SE 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of section 13 of T2S, R2E”

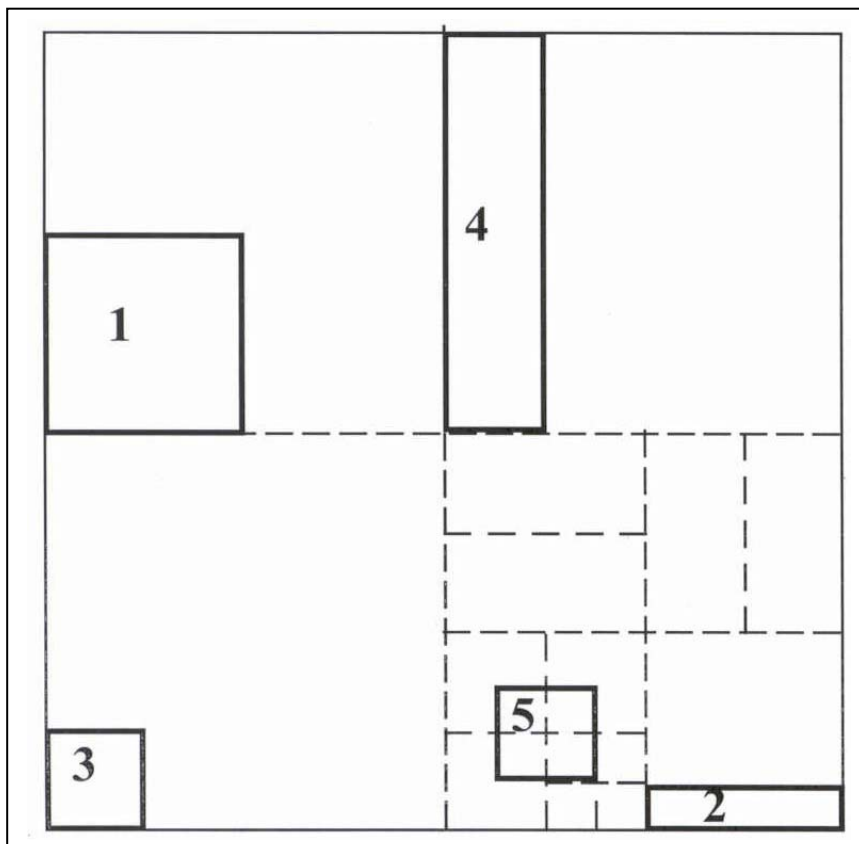
Exercise: Describe the five properties shown at the left and list their acreages. These properties are also in Section 13, T2S, R2E, as shown above.



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Understanding Legal Descriptions Activity Sheet, page 4 of 4 Answer Key

- 1) SW 1/4, NW 1/4, Section 13, T2S, R2E (40 acres)
- 2) S 1/4, SE 1/4, SE 1/4, Section 13, T2S, R2E (10 acres)
- 3) SW 1/4, SW 1/4, SW 1/4, Section 13, T2S, R2E (10 acres)
- 4) W 1/4, NE 1/4, Section 13, T2S, R2E (40 acres)
- 5) Starting at the number 5 and working clockwise, SE 1/4, NW 1/4, SW 1/4, SE 1/4, **AND** SW 1/4, NE 1/4, SW 1/4, SE 1/4, **AND** NW 1/4, SE 1/4, SW 1/4, SE 1/4, **AND** NE 1/4, SW 1/4, SW 1/4, SE 1/4, Section 13, T2S, R2E (10 acres total)



Calculating Acreages from Property Maps Activity Sheet, page 1 of 2

When calculating acreages for your property, try to break the area into squares or rectangles with known distances for each side, as shown below.

For full rectangles, multiply the length of one side in feet times the length of the other side in feet to get the square footage. Then, divide by 43,560 square feet/acre to get the number of acres.

Examples:

Area A: $400 \times 155 = 62,000$ square feet
 $62,000$ square feet divided by $43,560 = 1.42$ acres

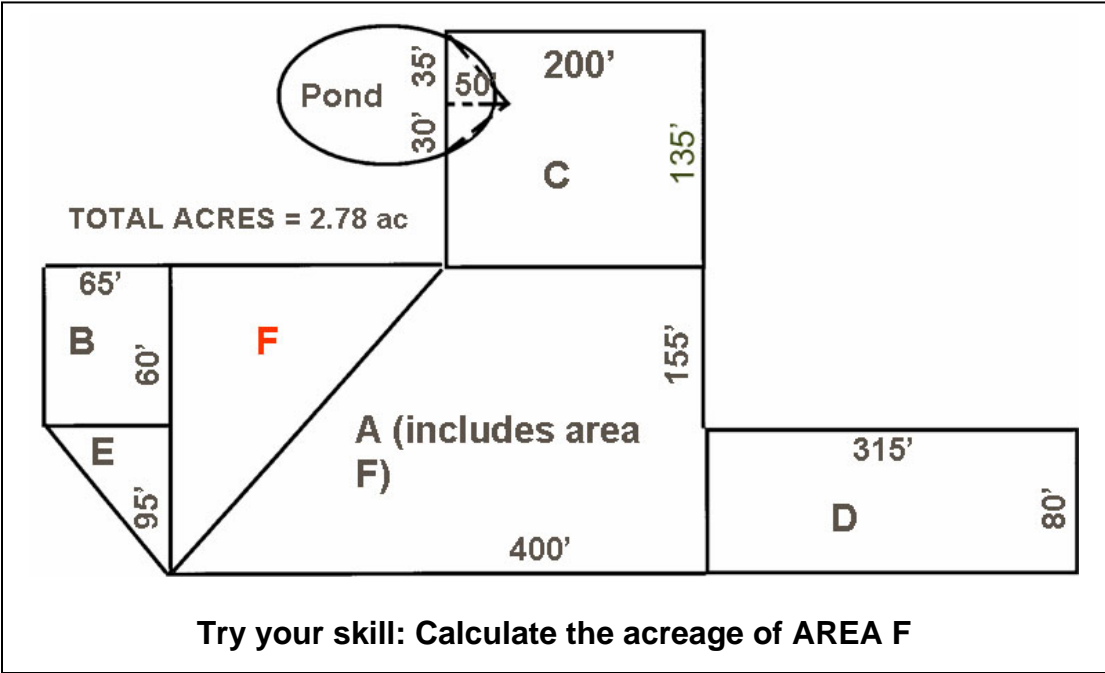
Area B: $65 \times 60 = 3,900$ square feet
 $3,900$ square feet divided by $43,560 = 0.09$ acres

Area C: $200 \times 135 = 27,000$ square feet by $43,560$ square feet per acre = 0.62 acres.
 As an aside, the pond area in C (using triangular areas; length times width divided by 2) = $50 \times 35 = 1,750/2 = 875$ square feet + $30 \times 50 = 1,500/2 = 750$ square feet = $1,625$ square feet of pond. Usable land of Area C = $27,000 - 1,625 = 25,375$ square feet divided by $43,560 = 0.58$ acres

Area D: $315 \times 80 = 25,200$ square feet
 $25,200$ square feet divided by $43,560 = 0.58$ acres

Area E: $65 \times 95 = 6,175$ square feet
 $6,175$ square feet divided by $43,560 = 0.14$ acres
 HOWEVER: Area E is only half of the rectangle, so divide by 2 to get 0.07 acres

Total Acres = $1.42 + 0.09 + 0.62 + 0.58 + 0.07 = 2.78$ acres



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Calculating Acreages from Property Maps Activity Sheet, page 2 of 2 Answer Key

Note that Area F is a triangle. You can figure out the length of one side of the triangle by adding together sides from E and B:

$$95 \text{ feet} + 60 \text{ feet} = 155 \text{ feet.}$$

You can figure out another length by subtracting the length of side C from side A:

$$400 \text{ feet} - 200 \text{ feet} = 200 \text{ feet.}$$

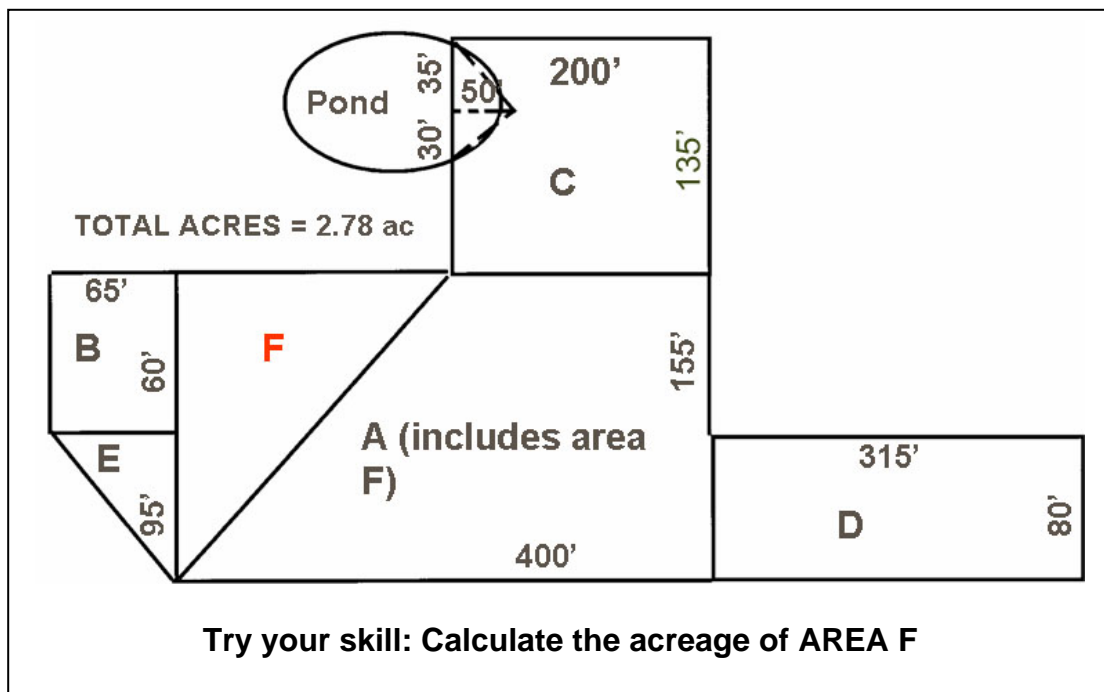
Now you can calculate the size of the rectangle that includes F:

$$155 \times 200 = 31,000 \text{ square feet}$$

$$31,000 \text{ square feet divided by } 43,560 \text{ square feet per acre} = 0.71 \text{ acres}$$

Triangle F is half the rectangle

$$0.71 \text{ acres divided by } 2 = 0.355 \text{ acres}$$



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Glossary

Buffer zone, buffer strip: Neutral area that acts as a protective barrier separating two conflicting forces. An area that acts to minimize the impact of pollutants on the environment or public welfare. For example, a buffer zone is established between a composting facility and neighboring residents to minimize odor problems. A buffer strip is a grassed or planted zone that acts as a protective barrier between an area which experiences livestock grazing or other activities and a water body. Buffer strips can be streamside features to protect streams and streambanks or features built on slopes to slow water runoff velocities.

Covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs): A series of regulations created by neighborhoods or housing developments that govern various construction features, such as setbacks, fence heights and types, house paint colors, etc.

Easement: A right to use the land of another for a specific purpose, such as for a right-of-way, access to water or utilities; an incorporeal interest in land.

Footprint: The space occupied by a building expressed in square footage; the “footprint” the building makes on the property.

Section: A subsection of a township. Each township is divided into 36 sections, each section contains 640 acres and measures 1 mile by 1 mile.

Township: A unit of legal land description adopted from the English system. Townships are approximately 6 miles on each side.

Watershed (drainage basin): An area of land that collects rain and/or snowmelt and discharges much of it to a stream, river, or other water body, or to groundwater.

Wetland: An area of land that is saturated at least part of the year by water. Wetlands are defined and delineated with specific criteria related to their hydrology, soils, and vegetation. Wetlands associated with coastal salt water include salt marshes, tidal basins, marshes, and mangrove swamps. Inland freshwater wetlands include swamps, marshes, seeps and bogs (lentic wetlands) and streams, rivers, and springs (lotic wetlands).



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Web sites for further information

Washington State University Clark County Extension, <http://clark.wsu.edu>

Clark County Clean Water Program, <http://www.clark.wa.gov/environment/stormwater/index.html>

Washington State University Cooperative Extension Small Farms, <http://www.smallfarms.wsu.edu/>

Oregon State University Extension Service Oregon Small Farms, <http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/>

Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Service Small Acreage Management, <http://www.extension.colostate.edu/boulder/acreage.shtml>

Gallatin County, Montana Code of the West, http://www.gallatin.mt.gov/Public_Documents/gallatincomt_webdocs/codewest

Idaho OnePlan Farm Planning, <http://www.oneplan.org/>

Landing Colorado Style, http://digitool.library.colostate.edu//exlibris/dtl/d3_1/apache_media/L2V4bGlicmlzL2R0bC9kM18xL2FwYWNoZV9tZWRpYS8xMDAzODM=.pdf

Larimer County, Colorado Code of the West, http://www.co.larimer.co.us/planning/planning/code_of_the_west/

University of Nebraska Lincoln Cooperative Extension Acreage and Small Farm Insights, <http://acreage.unl.edu/>

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Small Ranch Manual, <http://www.unce.unr.edu/publications/files/ag/other/eb9502.pdf>

