

The surface ownership and the mineral status will generally fall into one of the following groupings.

Surface

- Public Land (U.S. Bureau of Land Management or U.S. Forest Service Administration)
- State Trust Lands
- Private ownership (also small tracts of Federal, State, county, city and other specialty designations)
- Special Use Federal Lands (National Parks, Indian Reservations, military bases and gunnery ranges, wildlife preserves, etc.)

Subsurface (mineral status)

- Open to entry under the U.S. General Mining and Mineral Leasing laws.
- Open to entry under the U.S. General Mining and Mineral Leasing laws with restrictions.
- Withdrawn from entry under the U.S. General Mining and/or Mineral Leasing laws. (Claim staking and mineral leasing prohibited)
- Mineral rights held by the State.
- Privately owned mineral rights.

If the information given by the BLM indicates that the land and/or mineral rights of interest are either private or State, the remaining steps may need to be followed.

Third

If the lands in question have been deeded to the State of Arizona, (State lands), the State Land Department, 1616 W. Adams, Phoenix, AZ 85007, (602) 542-4631, should be contacted as to the surface and mineral status under their jurisdiction. Some lands originally deeded to the state have been subsequently transferred to private ownership. Some have also been traded back to the Federal government.

Fourth

If the lands of interest are now known to be private, the County Assessor's Office for the county in which the lands are situated may be contacted to determine the landowner. Please note: The county records, as they pertain to land ownership, begin with the recording of a patent (deed) from the United States or a deed from the State. The county records do not show statutory nor administrative proceedings relating to mineral or surface status prior to issuance of patent. Whether or not Federal land is open or closed under the mining laws **cannot** be determined from the county recorder.

NW NE 40A	NE NW 40A	NW NE 40A	NE NE 40A	NW NE 40A	NE NW 40A	W ¹ / ₂ NE ¹ / ₄ 80A	E ¹ / ₂ NE ¹ / ₄ 80A
SW NW 40A	SE NW 40A	SW NE 40A	SE NE 40A	SW NW 40A	SE NW 40A		
NW SW 40A	NE SW 40A	NW SE 40A	NE SE 40A	N ¹ / ₂ 80	SW ¹ / ₄ A	SE ¹ / ₄	
SW SW 40A	SE SW 40A	SW SE 40A	SE SE 40A	S ¹ / ₂ S 80	W ¹ / ₄ A	160	A

1 section

1 section

Figure 2. Legal subdivisions of a section with size in acres. Sections may be divided in similar manner into smaller fractions. For example a placer claim is 20 acres in size and could be described as the S¹/₂SW¹/₄NE¹/₄ of Section 5, Range 3 East, Township 4 North, G.S.R.B. & M.

For information about accessing land and mineral records on line see circular 126 Guide to Online Land Status Records 2007.