

To Those Preparing to Take the Missouri State-Specific Exam for Licensure by Comity



Results from past Missouri State-Specific Land Surveyors Exams by candidates seeking a Missouri Professional Land Surveyor license by comity have been reviewed by the Board. Some candidates have done poorly on the exam, and, because they are licensed in another state(s) can't understand why. Because each state is different and has different laws, rules, standards, regulations, and in some cases, GLO instructions and dependent resurvey procedures, each state (that uses the NCEES exams) also gives this "state-specific" exam. Missouri is no different in requiring this exam, but is quite different in some matters relative to our GLO system and resurveys on the U.S. Public Land Survey System (USPLSS). Surveyors who have studied the "BLM Manual" to learn about the GLO system, lotting, section protraction and restoration of lost corners, without some education and practice on Missouri's USPLSS will do poorly on the exam. The usual GLO system and restoration of lost corners, as applied in the western states, is not widely applicable in Missouri. Below are some examples.

Missouri is probably different than the USPLSS that most comity applicants are familiar with because:

- 1.) Missouri was surveyed under Tiffin's 1815 instructions and Missouri has "double corners" (closing and standard) on every township exterior (not just on Standard Parallels and Guide Meridians).
- 2.) Missouri GLO protraction of fractional sections and lotting schemes are not standardized.
- 3.) Per RSMo Chapter 60 (specifically 60.315 (6)), in Missouri, Standard Corners and Closing Corners are weighted equally, meaning that a township exterior is not solely defined by Standard Corners along the line (as is specified in the BLM Manual and as applied in most other USPLSS states). In a dependent resurvey in Missouri, a lost corner is reestablished by proportioning to the next adjacent existing corner, be it a Standard or Closing Corner.
- 4.) In Missouri, the quarter corners to the fractional sections located south of the Township Line and east of the Range Line were never set. These are the "Blank" Quarter Corners. They are not established at the midpoint between the section corners to which they belong (see 60.345).
- 5.) Our resurvey rules are governed by the Revised Statutes of Missouri, Chapter 60, and not by the "BLM Manual."

Being licensed in a number of western states might even be a detriment to passing the Missouri State-Specific Exam. Here's an example: Establishing the north quarter corner of, say, a Section 3: Midpoint in most USPLSS states. Proportioned according to the GLO plat in Missouri, considering the next adjacent existent corners, be they Closing or Standard Corners. In some fashion, that situation will be posed on the Missouri State-Specific Exam. Those who apply the rule of most other states will get the problem wrong, and appropriately so, for Missouri. The State-Specific Exam works.

On another subject the Board notes that frequently comity applicants are not aware that Missouri is a "low water" state. Meaning that on a navigable river the riparian boundary between the upland owner and the State is the low water line. Riparian boundaries as well as Missouri State Plane Coordinates, "Minimum Standards," Board Rules, other Statutes applicable to surveying, etc. are also covered on the exam.

The Board believes the Missouri State-Specific Exam works as intended. To get licensed in Missouri, albeit you are licensed in other states and you know the "BLM Manual" by heart (or the survey law and resurvey rules of another state by heart), what matters is do you know Missouri statutes, rules, regulations, practice and our state's GLO instructions and GLO practices. The Board recommends study and practice relative to our State prior to getting licensed in Missouri.

If you have a question, please feel free to contact the Board office at (573) 751-0047.