



2025
SURVEYORS'
Conference

The Report of Survey

A Narrative Approach

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Don Teter graduated from Davis and Elkins College in 1973 with a B.A. in History and Political Science. In 1977 he published *Goin' Up Gandy*, a history of the Dry Fork region of Randolph and Tucker Counties, West Virginia. In the early 1970's he worked briefly as a reporter and writer for the weekly *Allegheny Journal* and during the late 1970's he published numerous local history articles in the weekly *Tygart Valley Press*.

Don has been a licensed surveyor since 1982, is a past-President of the West Virginia Society of Professional Surveyors, and was Editor of *The West Virginia Surveyor* for nearly ten years. He was a director of the national Surveyors Historical Society for ten years, and is Assistant Professor of Surveying at Fairmont State University.

*Put it before them briefly so they will read it, clearly so they will appreciate it,
picturesquely so they will remember it, and above all,
accurately so they will be guided by its light. - Joseph Pulitzer*

*The more a subject is understood, the more briefly it may be explained.
- Thomas Jefferson to Joseph Milligan, April 6, 1816*

*Don't leave inferences to be drawn when evidence can be presented.
-- Richard Wright, American Author (1908-1960)*

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Ode to the Spell Checker

Eye halve a spelling chequer
It came with my pea sea
It plainly marques four my revue
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.
Eye strike a key and type a word
And weight four it two say
Weather eye am wrong oar write
It shows me strait a weigh.
As soon as a mist ache is maid
It nose bee fore two long
And eye can put the error rite
Its rare lea ever wrong.
Eye have run this poem threw it
I am shore your pleased two no
Its letter perfect awl the weigh
My chequer tolled me sew.

From Hillbilly Holler, November, 2006

Do not put statements in the negative form.
And don't start sentences with a conjunction.
If you reread your work, you will find on rereading that a
great deal of repetition can be avoided by rereading and editing.
Never use a long word when a diminutive one will do.
Unqualified superlatives are the worst of all.
De-accession euphemisms.
If any word is improper at the end of a sentence, a linking verb is.
Avoid trendy locutions that sound flaky.
Last, but not least, avoid clichés like the plague.

~William Safire, "Great Rules of Writing"

**The Report of Survey,
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I. When and Why to Prepare a Report.

A. Apparently few mandatory rules, but some voluntary guidelines

CHAPTER 37. STATE REGISTRATION BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS, LAND SURVEYORS AND GEOLOGISTS

§ 37.1. Definitions.

Documents—Specifications, land surveys, reports, plats, drawings, plans, design information and calculations.

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE FOR PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYORS IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania Society of Land Surveyors (November 19, 2021)

SECTION C DEFINITIONS

Report – A narrative compilation and analysis of facts and circumstances concerning a survey. Sometimes, including a certification of the survey.

B. Allow clients and others to understand your conclusions, in greater depth than the plat.

Nov. 18, 2010

Dear Mr. Teter,

Thanks again for all you've done. I didn't realize how much research went into surveying. It was so interesting to read the report.

Sincerely,
Flora Towery

C. To explain why the ideas or opinions of clients or adjoining appear to be incorrect.

When I am getting ready for an argument, I spend one third of my time thinking about what I am going to say, and two thirds about what my opponent will say. – Abraham Lincoln

D. Help you or your company recall what was done

1. If questions arise months/years later, the report should jog your memory, and save you from asking “What was I thinking?”
2. In a large organization, it can help other workers or successors understand.
3. The best preparation for explaining or testifying is organizing your thoughts on real or digital paper.

It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech. – Mark Twain

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- E. Do it now, when you can charge a client, not later on you own nickel.
- F. Demonstrate the depth of your research and analysis.
 - 1. Shows you didn't just "measure it in".
 - 2. If others understand the basis of your opinion, they may be more likely to agree with you, or less hostile or demeaning in disagreement.
- G. Encourages careful thought about boundary resolution.
 - 1. If you expect to write a report, you will be thinking critically.
 - 2. Testing report language in your mind clarifies issues.
- H. To limit your responsibility or liability.
 - 1. Explain your limits; if you are not offering an opinion on an issue make that clear.
 - 2. Recommend seeking the advice or expertise of other professionals as appropriate: Lawyer, Forester, Engineer, Soil Scientist, Hydrologist, Wetland Expert, etc.
- I. Explaining your work may help prevent frustrating and expensive lawsuits.
 - 1. The wheels of justice turn ever so slowly.

How many lawyers does it take to grease a combine? Just one, but you have to run him through real slow. - Cleve Benedict, lawyer, congressman, state agriculture commissioner.

- 2. Even if justice and the "right" survey prevail, it will often cost more than the disputed ground is worth.

A jury consists of twelve persons chosen to decide who has the better lawyer. - Robert Frost

We operate under a jury system in this country, and as much as we complain about it, we have to admit that we know of no better system, except possibly flipping a coin. - Dave Barry

- J. If a complaint is filed with the licensing Board, a good report greatly simplifies your response, and may help the Board expedite resolution of unfounded complaints.
- K. Can't I just put it all on the plat?
 - 1. Yes, in some cases, and it keeps the report from being separated and lost.
 - 2. Avoid overburdening the plat (small type sizes, etc., can interfere with reproducibility).
- L. To Certify or Not to Certify? (Webster's Dictionary: "1. to declare ... true, accurate, certain, etc. by formal statement ... 2. to guarantee; vouch for")
 - 1. Sometimes it's appropriate or required.
 - 2. You are likely accepting liability.

II. Laying the Groundwork.

- A. Organize the job file (paper or digital).
 - 1. Research organized by tax parcel # or owner's names, documents in chronological order.
 - 2. Copies of field notes, printout sheets, work maps in the file.
- B. Keep track of the reasoning for your boundary resolutions.
 - 1. Make notes in a separate CAD layer, so they appear at the appropriate spot on the drawing when thawed.
 - a. What did you use? Natural monuments, Senior rights, Bearing/bearing, Bearing/distance, Distance/distance, intersection of best fit fences?
 - b. Controlling deed book/page/date/parties
 - 2. Or, create a word processing document for notes,
 - 3. Or, whatever combination works for you; the key is to get it written down.

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- C. Organize the plat
 1. **Number all corners!**
 2. Show tie lines that support your conclusions.
 3. Make it legible, with type large and heavy enough to reproduce clearly through at least a couple of generations of copies/faxes. Presume that somebody (lawyer, realtor, etc.) or their assistant will shrink it or use a poor quality copy.
 4. Be willing to change layout and content on your plat during the report-writing process.

III. What Type of Information?

Whatever you would like others to understand about your logic. Reporters want the five W's and H –

Who? What? Where? When? Why?, and How?

1. Controlling documents.
2. Controlling evidence.
3. Information from client or adjoiners.

IV. Writing the First Draft, don't lock up waiting for perfect language; get something "on paper" (or screen). Not striving for perfect wording in the first draft removes the shackles from your mind.

The beautiful part of writing is that you don't have to get it right the first time, unlike, say, a brain surgeon. - Robert Cormier

First drafts are for learning what your novel or story is about. - Bernard Malamud

Don't get it right, get it written. - James Thurber

- A. Generally use the active voice instead of the passive
"I did."

Not:

"It was done by me."

See Appendix One.

Tell your story instead of making a list.

B. Organize the Report

1. Preamble or opening section (should always include the italicized items, others as desired)
 - a. *ID the client* [WHO?]
 - b. *ID the property* [WHERE?]
 - c. *When you did it* [WHEN?]
 - d. *Procedures* (Equipment, methods, closure, etc.) [WHAT?, HOW?]
 - e. *Assistants* [WHO?]
 - f. *Special circumstances or purpose of survey* [WHY?]
 - g. *Adjoiner contacts* [WHO?]
2. Body of Report
 - a. Headings for each adjoiner or group of adjoiners (e.g., a subdivision), or special areas of concern; with subheadings for further breakdown of discussion.
 - b. Do a "walking tour" on paper, starting at Corner 1 and following the lines consecutively around the plat. This will help keep you from leaving things out. You may need to renumber the corners. [WHY?, HOW?]
 - (1) Explain what boundary resolutions are based on (record/evidence, etc.).
 - (2) How was conflicting record or field evidence dealt with?
 - (3) What deeds or documents were controlling or most relevant, and why.
 - (4) Information from or interaction with adjoiners.
3. Summary of conclusions, if needed. [WHY?]
4. Additional information
 - a. Line marking/corner monumentation [HOW?]

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- b. Document distribution [WHO?]
 - c. Adjoiner contacts [WHO?]
- C. Should you list Documents consulted? Either in the preamble or with each adjoiner's section.
- 1. Advantages
 - a. Shows, or implies, that you did the research
 - b. Makes the report longer
 - 2. Disadvantages
 - a. Makes the report longer
 - b. When a list is given it could be construed or implied, especially by attorneys, as meaning you did not look at documents not listed.
 - c. A list doesn't reveal the relevance of the documents or the weight you gave them.
 - 3. Instead, give specific information regarding key documents, descriptions, or plats relied on.
- D. Keep it as brief as possible
- 1. Don't use a paragraph when a sentence will do, but don't agonize over the perfect sentence.
 - 2. Don't fill it with "fluff" or superfluous data or information which does little to enlighten the reader (traverse data, coordinate sheets, listing numerous documents not relevant to the discussion, etc.).

*Half the world is composed of people who have something to say and can't,
and the other half who have nothing to say and keep on saying it. – Robert Frost*

*A man does not know what he is saying until he knows what he is not saying.
–G.K. Chesterton*

- E. Be truthful, but cautious
- 1. Proprietary information regarding the client's business should not be revealed.
 - 2. Detrimental information should be dealt with carefully, in litigation the other side will likely get copies of documents through "Discovery".
- F. Date, sign and seal, unless it's preliminary. If it is preliminary, say so on the document.
- V. **Revising the Draft – The Craft of Writing** (Revision generally should be done at least twice). "it doesn't sound right" can be a good guide.

Writing is easy. All you have to do is cross out the wrong words. – Mark Twain

- A. Effective writing doesn't result from brilliance, but from work, and it can be learned.
- 1. Practice may not make perfect, but it makes less lousy.

*Writing is just work -- there's no secret. If you dictate or use a pen or type with your toes –
it is just work. – Sinclair Lewis*

I'm not a very good writer, but I'm an excellent rewriter. – James Michener

- 2. Good readers become good writers; you don't have to diagram sentences to recognize clumsy ones.

*Most of us don't know a gerund from a gerbil and don't care, but we'd like to speak and write
as though we did. – Patricia T. O'Conner, *Woe is I**

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Read, read, read. Read everything -- trash, classics, good and bad, and see how they do it. Just like a carpenter who works as an apprentice and studies the master. Read! You'll absorb it.
Then write. – William Faulkner

B. Let it get 'cold' before revision.

*I find that I can criticise my composition best when I stand at a little distance from it. –
Henry David Thoreau, 1854*

1. Let it get cleared from your mind, then take a fresh look.
2. When done too soon, you likely won't catch some errors or convoluted language.
3. At least a day, a week is much better. If you still remember what you meant, you won't be able to tell if others won't understand what you meant.

C. Print a hard copy with double spacing, leaving room for penciled in revisions or comments. Even if you prefer to do all revision work on screen, print a copy to see how it looks and to make sure spacing and indentation comes through correctly.

D. Try reading it aloud. If you stumble, so will many readers.

In conversation you can use timing, a look, an inflection. But on the page all you have is commas, dashes, the amount of syllables in a word. When I write, I read everything out loud to get the right rhythm. – Fran Lebowitz

- E. Read with a critical mind, and rewrite (Cut, burn, scramble and stitch back together)
1. Reorganize topics, paragraphs, and sentence order for better flow. Don't be afraid of apparently drastic changes which may greatly improve organization.
 2. Trim or revise pompous or convoluted language.
 - a. Big words or technical and legal terms improperly used are not impressive, and may actually cause confusion or alter your intended meaning.

*Don't shoot too high. Aim low, and the common people will understand you.
– Abraham Lincoln*

- b. Trim sarcasm, peevishness, name calling, and hurt feelings out; whether toward clients, adjoiners, or other surveyors. Leave the childish behavior to your client, the adjoiners, and some attorneys. They are much better at it than you anyway.
3. Convert surveyors' jargon into plain English.
Inverses between found monuments on Alan's lines were used to derive an average secular variation, which was then applied to determine the alignment of Bob's boundary.
Could become:
I used the average bearing change found on Alan's lines to control the bearing of Bob's line.

verbosity leads to unclear, inarticulate things – Dan Quayle

*Habitual or customary performance of what you advise in your homilies is advisable –
Howard Richler*

4. Remove redundant or unneeded words. Shortened sentences are usually an improvement over longer ones.
I understand that "that" is a common culprit for that.
Can become:
I understand "that" is a common culprit.

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Commonly found redundancies include:

Added bonus; Future potential; True fact; Revert back; Sum total; End result; Join together; Close proximity; Past experience; And etc.; Attach together; Descend down; Duplicate copy; Exact replica.

The most valuable of talents is never using two words when one will do. – Thomas Jefferson

A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. – William Strunk, Jr., from *The Elements of Style*

He can compress the most words into the smallest ideas of any man I ever met.
– Abraham Lincoln, speaking of a fellow lawyer

5. Avoid clichés or tired phrases (“It seems that”, “Practice makes perfect”, “In view of”, “In consideration of”, “off the top of my head”, etc., etc.)

VI. Proofreading and Double-checking. A, B, and C should be on your mind during all rewriting.

- A. Don't be overly dependent on spell-check for common words, it doesn't catch improper usage, and is helpless with homonyms:

They're not well-informed in *there* when they talk about *their* boundary.

You may *accept* the found location of a monument, *except* when you disagree with it.

The *principal* object of the lecture was to discuss boundary *principles*.

Then we understood why it was less important *than* the other monuments.

Too often, *two* surveyors don't know how *to* cooperate.

In *very* many cases, the evidence will *vary*.

I *sat* down after we *set* the corner.

When the sun *shone* brightly, I could easily discern the blazes he had *shown* me.

Many times surveyors have a hard time deciding what to *do* to collect the money *due* them.

Diligent study sometimes *lessens* the need for *lessons* from others.

Summery weather makes it difficult to sit at a desk to write a *summary* of your conclusions.

The planning commission would not *waver* regarded its decision against granting a *waiver*.

When you *affect* my thinking, you may have an *effect* on my actions.

The *residents* [plural] lived in the *resident's* [possessive] fine brick *residence* [house].

- B. Check the grammar, you don't have to be an English teacher to make it better.

1. Correct verb usage

Since Fred *reserved* the lot from the sale to Joe, Joe needed to *except* it from the sale to Ralph.

“He *did* it.” NOT “he *done* it.”

“They *have* been.” NOT “They *has* been.”

“We *saw* the corner.” NOT “We *seen* the corner.”

“We *ran* the line.” NOT “We *run* the line.”

2. Check your pronouns

- a. “I” is the subject (the doer)

I ran his lines.

- b. “Me” is the object (the doee)

The crazed adjoiner ran after *me* with a pitchfork.

- c. If you can drop the clause and not change the meaning, use *which*, with the clause inside commas.

If you can't drop the clause without losing the meaning, use *that*, and don't use commas.

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The garbled description, *which* was barely legible, was so illogical *that* it appeared to have been written by an illiterate attorney.

3. Use adverbs and adjectives sparingly and correctly.
 - a. Adjectives modify nouns (*good* evidence)

As to the adjective, when in doubt, strike it out. – Mark Twain

- b. Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives or other adverbs. Using adverbs to modify adjectives can be overdone (*really very good* evidence).

Substitute "damn" every time you're inclined to write "very;" your editor will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be. – Mark Twain

C. Check formatting

1. Proper use of capitalization. **AVOID ALL CAPS! IT'S LIKE YELLING!**
 - a. First word of a sentence
 - b. First letter of all names
 - c. First letter of all words in subheadings, except: and, of, the, etc.
 - d. For occasional emphasis of a few words or a single word.
The adjoiner's property DOES NOT have senior title.
2. Be judicious with punctuation.
 - a. Question marks and exclamation marks should be rare.

Cut out all those exclamation marks. An exclamation mark is like laughing at your own joke.

– F. Scott Fitzgerald

- b. Commas (,): My Webster's *Guide to English Grammar* has 20 specific rules for the use of commas, filling a half page. In general, read it aloud, and if it seems to need a slight pause, put in a comma. Try it without the comma before deciding to use one. Some more specific uses for commas:
 - (1) Before and usually after the year in a date which includes the month.
The deed was dated January 2, 1843, but was not recorded until 1901.
 - (2) To separate words in a list.
Compasses, chains, axes and stakes were their tools.
 - (3) Between clauses.
Since we found no evidence of Fred's survey, we cannot be certain it does not conflict with our conclusions.

Sometimes commas are essential:

My three favorite things are eating my family and not using commas.

- c. Semicolon (;)
 - (1) When you need further division of a list, beyond commas.
Ames, Iowa; Frederick, Maryland; and Roanoke, Virginia.
 - (2) Joining compound sentences, which generally consist of clauses which could be independent sentences.
The evidence of Black's lines was sparse; no blazes or fence wire could be found.

With educated people, I suppose, punctuation is a matter of rule, with me it is a matter of feeling. But I must say I have a great respect for the semicolon; it's a useful little chap. – Abraham Lincoln

- d. Colon (:)

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- (1) To introduce a series.
You should not go to work without your tools: the total station, the rod and prism, the data collector and field book, the brush axe, and a first-aid kit.
 - (2) Before an extended quotation.
The 1817 description reads: “Beginning at a rock oak on the ridge, thence following the ridge and Joe Johnson’s line to the low gap where the line leaves the ridge with the road.”
 - (3) To separate hours from minutes.
I spoke to his attorney that morning at 10:45.
 - e. Quotation marks (“like this”)
 - (1) When directly quoting.
The deed says “with the Poorhouse road.”
 - (2) To enclose titles of books, chapters, etc.
According to “Boundary Control and Legal Principles” it should follow the center of the road.
 - (3) Single quotation marks (‘) for a quote within a quote.
Robillard said: “Think about what Justice Cooley meant when he said ‘no man loses title to his land or any part thereof merely because the evidences become lost or uncertain’, and look to the judge’s words for guidance.”
 - f. Parentheses
 - (1) To enclose nonessential explanatory material. In general, the sentence would still read ok without the words in parentheses.
The deed calls for 12 poles (198 feet), but the distance is short.
 - (2) To sometimes enclose letters or numbers in outline format.
 - g. Brackets []
 - (1) Like parentheses, when parenthetical material is in other parenthetical material.
We found a distance of 233.3 feet (although the deed calls for 12 poles [198 feet], more or less) along the road.
Don’t get carried away with brackets.
 - (2) To enclose insertions or corrections added to a quote.
“The boundary was to follow Rocky Gap road [secondary route 12] until it strikes the Sandy river.”
 - h. Apostrophe (‘)
 - (1) Generally indicates the possessive case of a noun with an added *s*, not the plural.
Some *adjoiner’s* motives have been questioned by other *adjoiners*.
Used without the added *s* when the noun ends in an *s* or *z* sound.
Samuel Inverness’ deed was vague.
 - (2) For contractions.
It’s (it is) clear, that is *its* correct location.
You’re (you are) not likely to find *your* blazes.
 - i. Dash (–)
 - (1) For a break in continuity or thought in a sentence.
We checked the distance on slope – a difficult chore crossing the stream and climbing the cliff – to confirm the monument position.
 - (2) Between inclusive dates.
Jackson owned the property 1806–1861.
 - j. Ellipsis (...) indicate words or letters are omitted.
“Down the ridge with Jones, Baker, Smith and Longstreet to the cliff facing Sugar run.”
Can become:
“Down the ridge ... to the cliff facing Sugar run.”
3. Typestyles and sizes should be consistent.
 4. Indentations consistent throughout.
 5. Bold text used consistently.
 6. Consistent and correct use of italics (don’t overdo it).
 - a. Foreign or legal phrases.
 - b. Titles of books, periodicals, etc.

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- c. Stress an important word.
*Evidence of the fence was **not**found.*
- d. Set apart subheadings.
- 7. Modify line spacing to make headings and subheadings stay with the relevant text.
- 8. Use “sic” in brackets to show that a quoted word or phrase, containing an error, is precisely reproduced.
According to Joan’s deed, “This land joins a certin [sic] tract lying in the bottom.”
Underlining is often used for this purpose in handwritten or typed deed books.
- 9. Etc., is an abbreviation for “et cetera”, which is Latin for “and others”. Webster’s additionally defines it as “and the like; and the rest; and so forth.”
Etc. should rarely, if ever, be used in a report. Say what you mean and no more. If you imply an unspecified list, an attorney could have an opening to lead discussion astray.
- 10. “Et al.” is an abbreviation of the Latin phrase *et alia*, meaning “and others.” The “al.” needs a period after it to indicate it is an abbreviation of *alia*; but it is incorrect to put a period after “et.”
- 11. “et ux.” is an abbreviation for the Latin “et uxor” meaning “and wife.” Indicates that the wife joined the husband as Grantor or Grantee.

“The connotation that somehow the wife is merely an adjunct to her husband, as well as the modern concepts of joint tenancy, tenancy in common, community property where applicable, and equal rights of the sexes have combined to make the expression a chauvinistic anachronism.

-- The Free Dictionary; Gerald N. Hill and Kathleen T. Hill

- D. Check spelling of names, places, etc.
- E. Check deed references, dates, etc.
- F. Get peer review.
 - 1. Double check grammar.
 - 2. Double check formatting
 - 3. Double check spelling of names and places.
 - 4. Double check deed references.
 - 5. Double check: a logical document or mush?

VII. Distributing the Report – Who Gets a Copy?

- A. The client
- B. Client’s attorney or agent, if appropriate.
- C. Adjoiners, or their agents or attorneys, if appropriate.
- D. Title companies, if appropriate.
- E. Other surveyors, now or in the future (the ultimate audience, or the kiss of death?).
- F. Should it be recorded?
 - 1. It could help preserve it.
 - 2. If it is likely to be recorded, use extra care to be sure it is professional and avoids pettiness.

You can’t wait for inspiration. You have to go after it with a club. – Jack London

Appendix One, The Passive Voice

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A MODEST PROPOSAL

by
John Philip Bachner*

This opportunity to address you is appreciated by me, because a discussion of the passive voice is something that is enjoyed. Why? Because, all the ranting notwithstanding, the passive voice still seems to be preferred by most design and environmental professionals when reports are written by them.

Design professionals have been told in college that the “scientific style” is represented by the passive voice. Unfortunately, any number of problems are created by the “scientific style,” such as ambiguity, awkwardness, confusion, heightened risk, and needless liability, all because unnaturalness is embodied by the passive voice; i.e., the passive voice is not thought in by people and the passive voice is not spoken in by people. (Can it be imagined by you if the passive voice *were* spoken in by people? At weddings, it would be heard by us, “Is it solemnly sworn to by you that this woman will be taken by you, for holding and having purposes, should illness be contracted by her or not, and regardless of the amount of wealth or debt that is accumulated by you, for as long as life is lived by you, and until your parting is created only by death?” To which it would be answered by the groom, “It is done by me.”) So, why then would it be wanted by anyone to have things written by them or others in the passive voice, given that it is harder writing by them that way and problems are created for readers by the results? The answer so often heard by me is, “Because the way it always has been done by us is that. It was learned by us that way and the most comfort is given to us by us when we continue doing that which we were taught by our teachers.”

The time has been brought to us now for a change. A design professional’s report is developed by many people, by whom it could be said in unison, “The firm is represented by us.” Thus, it is occurred to by me the thought that a report could be written in the active voice, and, where the subject of a verb is called for, all rules of the known universe could be bent by the persons by whom the report is drafted, edited, et al., in that “we” could be used (accurately) as the subject of an active-voice verb; e.g., “We developed these recommendations” (vs. “Recommendations were developed as follows”).

What is thought about this by you? Your comments could be sent to me by you if it is so inclined by you.

**John Philip Bachner is the executive vice president of ASFE/THE BEST PEOPLE ON EARTH, an association of professional firms that practice geoprofessional, environmental, and civil engineering; geology, ecology, biology, and archeology; infrastructure security; brownfields revitalization; construction and program management; and construction materials engineering and testing. ASFE helps its members prosper through professionalism. More information is available at www.asfe.org. This article is copyrighted by ASFE and has been used with ASFE's permission. Reproduction, duplication, or any form of reuse of this article without ASFE's written permission is not allowed.*

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Appendix Two, Sample Report and Plat

Report of Survey for Betty French 85.50 acres, Pifer Mountain Clover District, Tucker County, West Virginia

In 2006, I surveyed a tract lying on both sides of West Virginia Route 38 and Pifer Mountain Road (Secondary Route 6), on Pifer Mountain, in Clover District of Tucker County, West Virginia. The plat attached to and made a part of this report is an accurate representation of the survey, which was made with a Topcon Total Station with a control traverse error of closure of approximately 1 part per 11,000. The property surveyed includes Tax Parcels 16, 17, and 17.1, on Tax Map 201, and a 14 foot wide strip not shown on the tax maps, with the total surveyed area being 85.50 acres.

The Phillips Line

From corner 1 to corner 2, I found the remnants of an old wire fence, the bearing of which is consistent with the deed calls for both the French and Phillips tracts. I confirmed the position of corner 1 by checking the distance along the old Hobson Road from 1 to corner 23, based upon the U.S. Forest Service survey of 1934 and 1935.

I placed corner 2 at the intersection of the fence lines. Apparently the corner between Phillips and Browning lies on the French line somewhat to the east of corner 2, but it was not necessary to resolve this question with certainty.

The Browning Lines

The lines from 2 to 7 originated with a 4 acre outsale from the W.E. and Lily Miller tract to Charlie Runner (24/468, 11/26/1904). The description is somewhat vague, having only general directions and one distance. I used old fences to control these lines, since they appear to be the best available evidence of the intended location of the boundary.

Forest Service Tract 8i Lines

I found Forest Service corners at 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, with those corners being consistent with the Forest Service survey of 1935. That survey appears to have been consistent with the previous deed record and evidence, so I used those corners as found.

The Kinsel Lines

From 11 to 12, I found a marked and painted line, with the rebars at 12 and 13A apparently having been set when that line was marked. I found these lines and corners to be consistent with the deed record on both sides of the boundary, and used them as found.

French's access road across Kinsel

Parcel Three in French's deed (183/599) is an access road to the portion of the French tract lying west of the highway, with the center of that road being shown on the plat from A to B. The original conveyance for this strip was Deed 61/395, dated 3/28/1949, from Harry A. and Geneva Poling to Walter Miller. The deed said the conveyance was for "a certin (sic) piece or parcel of land for a right of way through their land," so it appears the intent may have been to convey the land itself and not just an easement. The deed stated the roadway was to be 14 feet wide and estimated that it contained ½ acre, but the actual area is 0.10 acre (1/10 of an acre) which I have included as part of the French acreage. The deed stipulates the use of a gate on the road.

The Schaffer Lines

With French's Tax Parcel 201-16

French's tax parcel 201-16 originated with Deed 59/260, dated 9/20/1947, from C.P. and Edna Osburn to Walter Miller. That deed called for the conveyed parcel to run 8 rods (132 feet) along the county road. Although I placed the line in the center of the road, I used the deed distance measured along the north side of the road to control the position of corner 14. This yielded a distance from the north side of the road to corner 15 consistent with the deed call for 18 rods (297 feet), and consistent with fence remnants found southward of corner 15.

At 15, I found a fence corner post beside the remnants of a large serviceberry snag, and I checked the position of that post with the found chestnut stump at 15A. Corner 15 is consistent with the call for a stone with service pointers found in the 1942 description of the Miller tract (55/178, 12/2/1942, William E. Miller to Walter Edgar Miller and Mabel Olive Miller), and is also consistent with Schaffer's call for a stone with sarvis pointer. There are some rocks lying on the ground near the fence post, and one of those is likely the called for stone, which may have been removed or accidentally knocked over when the fence post was set.

With French's Tax Parcel 201-17

There is some uncertainty regarding the location of Schaffer's boundary running from corner 15 to the vicinity of 16C. The line was described in Deed 18/173 (5/26/1899, R.E.L. Nestor to John M. Shafer, 40 ¼ ac.) as having a bearing of N 14 W and a distance of "about 70 poles". The same bearing is found in several deeds in Nestor's and French's title chains. At 16A, I found a pipe apparently set as the corner of Nestor, and I found a stone pile at the end of a fence at corner 16B. Neither the bearing from 15 to 16B (N 15-31 W), nor the bearing from 16A to 16B, is consistent with the calls in the Schaffer, French, and Nestor deeds.

To resolve this discrepancy, I ran a tie line down the road running northeastward from corner 19 to a rebar found on Phillip McClung's 1998 survey of part of Summerfield's lines (a copy of McClung's plat was provided by Robert Summerfield), and used the tie line and McClung's data to calculate a position for the rebar found at 18A. The calculated distance from the stone pile at 16B to the rebar at 18A is 1877.4 feet, nearly 178 feet longer than called for in the descriptions of Nestor's tract. I calculated a position for 16C by placing it between the foot of the hill and the creek, as

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called for by deeds in Schaffer's title chain, at Nestor's deed distance of 1699.5 feet from 18A. The bearing from 15 to 16C is consistent with that found in the deeds.

The distance from the pipe at 16A to the rebar at 18 is 1267.6 feet, which appears to be consistent with Nestor's deed distance of 77 poles (1270.5 feet), but the line may have originally been measured on slope. Although the position of the pipe at 16A appears to be supported by this distance, both it and the stone pile at 16B appear to be in conflict with the other evidence of the Schaffer line.

The 1942 description of French's property called for the line from 15 to 16 to run N 12 ½ W 36 poles (594) feet to a stone at a fence corner. I did not find the stone, and the fences in this area have apparently migrated around over the years. I placed corner 16 in the line between 15 and 16C, using French's deed distance of 594 feet measured on slope from corner 15. The distance from corner 16 to the red maple found at 17 is 28.8 feet longer than called for in the 1942 description, but using the called for distance from 17 would have conflicted with the evidence of the apparent location of the Schaffer line.

There appears to be an area of overlap between the Schaffer and Nestor tracts, enclosed by corners 16, 16A, 16B, and 16C. I was not working for the owners of either of those properties, so I did not need to resolve the issue of that overlap. I placed the line from corner 15 to corner 16, consistent with what I feel is the best evidence of the correct location of the Schaffer line, and did not include any area west of that line in the French tract.

Notification letters seeking information regarding their boundaries were sent to all adjoining, including the owners of the Schaffer and Nestor tracts, with no response being received from either. I am not offering a professional opinion regarding whether the apparent overlap should be part of the Schaffer or Nestor tract.

The Nestor Lines

The southern boundary of the Nestor tract is described as running S 69 ½ E 77 poles (1270.5 feet). I found a marked line running from the pipe at 16A to the rebar at 18, with the bearing and distance of that line being S 63-04 E 1267.6 feet. While the length of that line appears consistent with the deed, it may have originally been measured on slope.

At 17, I found a 37 inch red maple bearing old gate hinges at the remnants of an old fence. That tree appears to be the one called for in the 1942 description of the French tract as being a "maple at the gate". When I placed the line between 17 and 18 it fell in old fence remnants and an old fence row, and most of the line also falls very close to the marked line found between 16A and 18.

Nestor's Right of Way

The deed from Walter Miller to Roscoe Nestor (113/665, 11/20/1985) granted a 25 foot wide right of way across Miller's land (which is now French's), saying the right of way is "along the Baker line." The Baker line is now Schaffer's boundary, and it appears this right of way was intended to be on old roadways lying approximately as shown on my plat eastward of corners 14, 15, and 16.

The deed specifies that in the event the French land is grazed, the owner of the Nestor tract must keep gates closed at both ends, and that the owner of the Nestor tract must maintain the right of way, which can also be used by the owners of the French tract.

The Summerfield Lines, North of Pifer Mountain Road

There has apparently been some confusion as to whether or not the lines of the Summerfield tract should corner at 18, or at a point somewhere near 19, with the deed record and recent surveys made for Summerfield not being entirely consistent. Despite the apparent confusion over the exact configuration of these lines, it appears clear that the rebar now found at 18 is in the place of the chestnut stump called for in the 1942 description of the French tract, and that description also called for the black gum found at 20. I used those two corners to prorate a position for corner 19, where the 1942 description called for a gate post, with the calculated position placing corner 19 in the road at the gate.

Although Eldon Plaughter's 1993 survey for Summerfield (plat copy provided by Robert Summerfield) used one straight line from the road to corner 18, he had that line within a few feet of where I have placed the lines from 18 to 20.

Summerfield's Apparent Right of Way

Although I am uncertain of its origin, there appears to be a right of way on an existing road from Pifer Mountain Road to the Summerfield tract (at corner 19), with that road being used by Summerfield and apparently other landowners. Usage of that road appears to have been undisputed for many years, so I have shown it as a right of way.

Pifer Mountain Church and Cemetery Line

I placed the line between the found gum tree at 20 and the found rebar at 21, with the southern half of that line closely following a new fence, and the portion of the line lying just south of the road lying in old fence remnants a few feet west of the new fence.

The Summerfield Line (Tax Parcel 201-20)

Summerfield's tax parcel 201-20 was surveyed in 1992 by Green Engineering, with the plat being recorded at 141/456, and the rebar found at corner 21 was apparently set by Green. I found Green's position for the line from 21 to 22 to be reasonably consistent with the deed record and the evidence, and used that line as found.

The Lines with USFS Tract 8h

At corners 22 and 23, I found capped USFS pipes in stone piles. There may be small discrepancies between the positions of those monuments and the original locations of these corners, but any such discrepancies are minor, and I used those corners as found. Between 23 and 24 (and also between 25 and 26, on the other side of the highway), the deeds call for the boundary to run with the old Hobson Road. The original position of the old road bed is reasonably distinct between corners 25 and 26, but between 23 and 24 the original position has been somewhat obscured by construction of a newer road along the south side of the old one. I obtained a copy of the field notes of the Forest Service's 1934 and 1935 survey, then combined the data in those notes with the surviving physical evidence of the old road bed to determine the position of the lines from 23 to 24.

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The Right of Way of West Virginia Route 38

I located the pavement and most of the culverts along the portion of the highway running through or along the French tract. I plotted the original plans for the highway (Project 5190B, 1945 & 1946, Sheets 5-8), then used the best fit between those plans and the existing road to determine the location of the highway right of way. In some areas, particularly in the curves, the present painted centerline apparently lies a few feet away from the actual center of the deeded right of way.

Line Marking and Document Distribution

The corners of the French tract have generally been marked with rebars and stone piles, as indicated on the plat, except where there were existing corners. Where the boundaries run through the woods, the lines have been marked with two hacks on trees on each side of the line, with those trees generally being within arm's reach of the line. Trees lying on the lines have been marked with two hacks on the sides where the line enters and leaves the tree. Corner witness trees have been marked with three hacks facing the corners. The hacks on the trees have been painted with blue enamel.

I will keep originals of all documents of this survey, with copies of the plat, description, and this report being provided to Betty L. French.

September 19, 2006

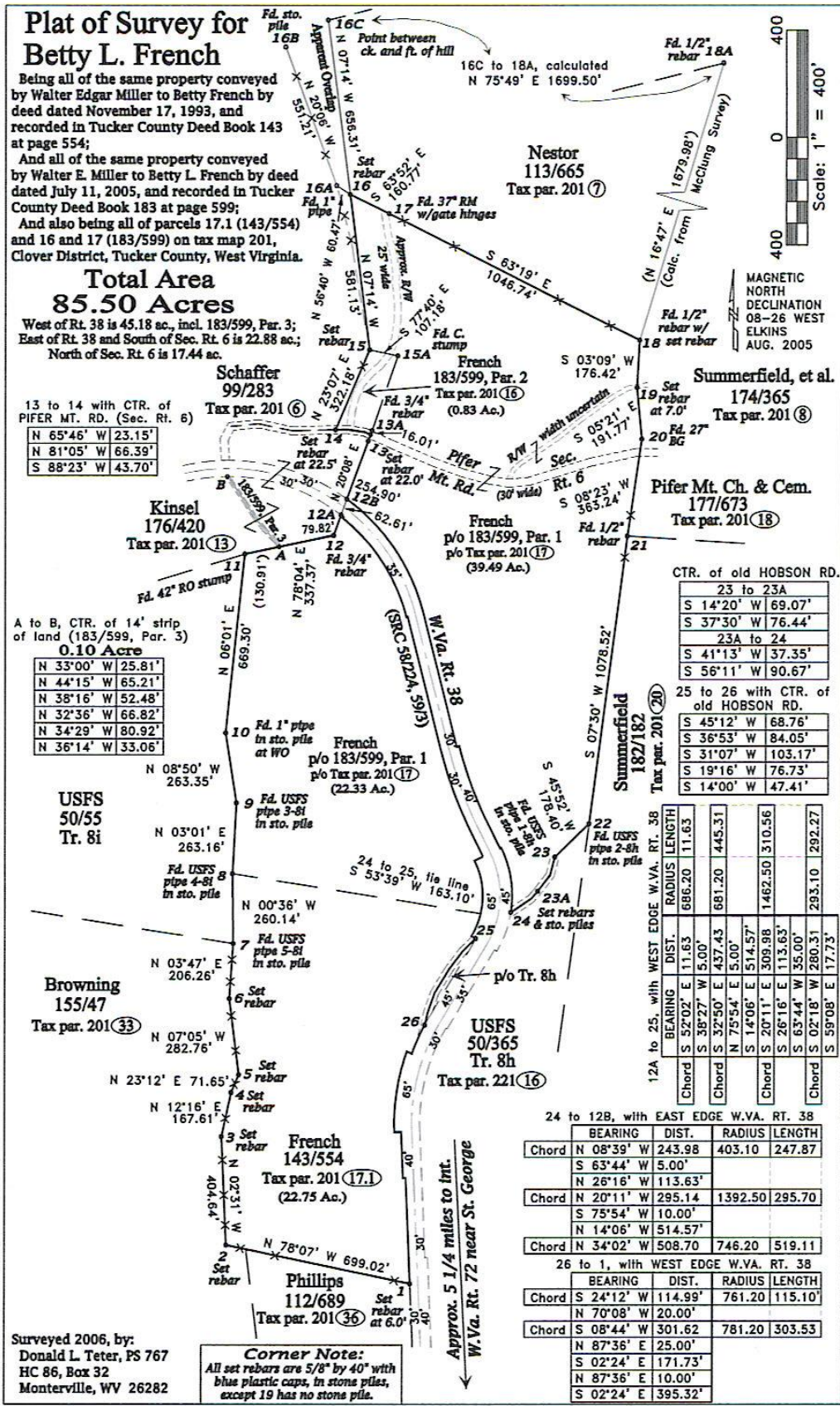
Donald L. Teter, PS 767
HC 86, Box 32
Monterville, WV 26282

Example of Revising Your Text

~~The corners of the French tract have~~^{are}~~generally been~~ marked with rebars and stone piles, as indicated on the plat^{at} except where there were existing corners. Where the boundaries run through^{Lines in} the woods, the lines have been^{are} marked with two hacks on trees on each^{be} side of the line, with those trees generally being^{Line} within arm's reach of the line. Trees lying on the lines have been^{are} marked with two hacks on the sides^{and} where the line enters and leaves the tree, ~~Corner~~^{and} witness trees have been^{are} marked with three hacks facing the corners. ~~The hacks on the trees have been~~^{are} painted with blue enamel.

Corners are generally marked with rebars and stone piles, except at existing corners. Lines in the woods are marked with two hacks on trees beside the line, generally within arm's reach. Line trees are marked with two hacks where the line enters and leaves the tree, and witness trees are marked with three hacks facing the corner. Hacks are painted with blue enamel.

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SESSION EVALUATION



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