



# BLM Indian Lands Surveyor teaches Cadastral Survey curriculum to middle schoolers



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*Story by Tammie Adams, Writer/Editor. Photos courtesy of Theresa Back, Future City Competition Coach and Gifted and Talented Coordinator.*

In early November 2023, Kenneth Roy, BLM Indian Lands Surveyor for the Bureau of Indian Affairs Midwest Region, taught an activity from a BLM Classroom Investigation titled [“Cadastral Surveying: Finding the Boundaries of U.S. Public Lands”](#) to students at Scott Highlands Middle School in Apple Valley, Minnesota. Four student teams started from an existing survey corner to find the “missing” corner in the activity. The winning team was within four feet of the actual location!

BLM Classroom Investigations are teaching guides that meet curriculum standards for students in middle school. These teaching guides can be adapted for high school and upper elementary levels. There are currently nine Classroom Investigation curricula ranging in topics from wilderness to solar

energy. They usually include three activities, and each activity takes one 45-minute class period.

The lessons in the Cadastral Survey Classroom Investigation introduce students to the public domain, Public Land Survey System, and surveying methods and tools. Students use surveying techniques to map their classrooms and practice being a surveyor for a day. To learn more about Cadastral Survey, check out the BLM webpage [here](#).



Kenneth Roy, BLM Indian Lands Surveyor for the Bureau of Indian Affairs Midwest Region, shows Scott Highlands Middle School students cadastral surveying tools as he teaches the “Surveyor for a Day” activity.

The students Roy taught used compasses and strings to travel around the perimeter of an imaginary township to find a “lost” corner monument. He created four groups: Team BLM, Team National Park Service, Team Corps of Engineers, and Team Choctaw Initial Point. The groups assigned a crew chief, a rear, and a head chain person. Team Corps of Engineers was the winner and took home the prize of a General Land Office Records frisbee. Kudos to Roy for teaching this curriculum and introducing students to cadastral survey.





A student uses a compass and string to resurvey an imaginary township that is missing a corner monument.

"The Classroom Investigation series supports the BLM's multiple-use mission by introducing middle school students to the variety of ways we manage public lands while linking to what they are already learning," said Rachel Sowards, BLM National Education Program Lead. "We are looking to expand this curricula series to align with national strategic plans with new topics, such as aquatics, amphibians and reptiles, and pollinators."

The Information and Publishing Services Section at the BLM's National Operations Center helped finalize the Cadastral Survey Classroom Investigation by providing editing and layout services, and it was printed and available for distribution in May 2023. The [Cadastral Survey Classroom Investigation](#) is available online and via PMDS. All Classroom Investigations are available online at: <https://www.blm.gov/classroominvestigations>.

*Editor's note: Part two of this story will highlight a prestigious competition the students won by applying what they learned in the BLM's Cadastral Survey Classroom Investigation. Look for that story in the BLM Daily next week.*