

CAUTION: Your Cell Phone is NOT accurate enough to be used as a surveying tool!

Wisconsin Land Surveyors statement regarding the use of cellular telephone applications (apps) to locate property corners and boundary lines:

The Issue: Helpful cellular telephone applications (apps) can be a handy guide for users when it comes to outdoor activities like hunting, fishing, biking, and hiking. These apps can assist users in knowing their approximate location as it relates to boundary lines, roads, trails, bodies of water, and topographic features. However, assuming that these apps are capable of accurately locating property lines can often lead to misunderstandings, disputes between adjoining landowners, and possible litigation.

Our Position: While handy, these recreational applications use a low level of Global Positioning System (GPS) accuracy and rely on available, and often ambiguous digital mapping sources for parcel boundary information. The GPS on a cell phone lacks the accuracy necessary to perform survey-grade work. This low level of accuracy in the hands of an untrained individual is not the correct way to accurately locate boundary lines and protect landowner rights. Only a licensed, Professional Land Surveyor utilizes the highly accurate equipment, knowledge, and skill set necessary to accurately locate property lines on the ground. We say this for the following reasons:

- **EDUCATION AND TRAINING:** Professional Land Surveyors are properly educated and receive real world training in legal principles and boundary control. Well trained surveyors have a strong skillset and apply principles of mathematics and consider title (e.g., deeds) data in establishing boundary lines. Surveyors apply years of experience to establish property lines and protect the ownership rights of landowners impacted by their work. They also adhere to state laws, administrative codes, and local ordinances in the performance of their work.
- **LICENSING:** Professional Land Surveyors are officially licensed in Wisconsin to serve the public to accurately locate and officially mark property corners and locate property lines. Those corners and lines are then drafted onto survey maps, which become public records.
- **EQUIPMENT:** Professional Land Surveyors utilize the most advanced, highly accurate GPS equipment available. This equipment is capable of measuring to the nearest eighth of an inch. A typical cell phone app can be off by several dozen feet.
- **PROCESS:** Professional Land Surveyors properly research their client's deed, adjoining property owner's deeds, and previous survey records to analyze and determine precise locations of property corners and property lines.

Who we are: The Wisconsin Society of Land Surveyors (WSLS) and the Wisconsin County Surveyors Association (WCSA) represent more than 1000 Professional Land Surveyors. Both organizations work to advance the profession of land surveying and protect the land ownership rights of thousands of Wisconsin landowners and taxpayers.

Connect with the Wisconsin Society of Land Surveyors here: <https://www.wsls.org/>

Connect with the Wisconsin County Surveyors Association here: <https://wsls.org/wcsa>

Find a surveyor in your area here: <https://www.wsls.org/find-a-surveyor>

