

Private Survey Access Policy

One of the core services provided by the County Surveyor's Office, dating back to statehood in 1858, is the filing and public display of its surveys. MS 389.03 provides that "All records of surveys are public records and must be made available by the county surveyor at all reasonable times to inspection by any person."

In addition to the hundreds of field books and innumerable in-house survey records, the County Surveyor has accumulated hundreds of field books and other media from dozens of public and private sources. These records currently reside in Pike Lake and Virginia records libraries. Among these are the "Private Surveys" which are surveys generated by the private sector Land Surveyors. In 1975, St. Louis County Ordinance 21 was adopted to require the filing of surveys in St. Louis County. This ordinance was adopted under the authority of MS 389.08, which states "All surveys so filed are public records and must be made available by the county surveyor at all reasonable times for inspection by any person". Together, these records are an invaluable source of information used in the maintenance, retracement and restoration of our Public Land Survey System (PLSS). They are also used as references by private sector surveyors preparing to create and retrace boundary surveys. Our libraries are visited chiefly by members of the private sector land surveyor community, along with members of the public and other interested parties.

Historically, archived survey records have been difficult to access by both internal county staff and external users. To address this problem, the St. Louis County Survey Explorer (**Se**) was developed. The **Se** was designed so the survey records which are imaged and indexed in the County Surveyor's Master Index (**CSMI**) can be accessed via a user friendly web mapping interface.

Currently, there are approximately 12,000 private surveys on file in the Pike Lake Surveyors Office. These records are of great value to internal and external stakeholders.

The St. Louis County Survey Division is currently in the process of scanning the Private Survey record source and making them available via the **Se**. The surveys which have been made available have a watermark which clearly states

"This survey was filed with the St. Louis County Surveyor's Office
in accordance with St. Louis County Ordinance 21"

"COPYRIGHT NOTICE - This survey is for research purposes only"

"CONTACT SIGNING SURVEYOR FOR ADDITIONAL USE"

These surveys have been made be available for inspection and/or research purposes only and not for any direct or indirect commercial advantage.

The copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user uses a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

If you have further questions, contact:

Nick Stewart, County Surveyor, Virginia, MN – 218-742-9823

Preston Dowell, Deputy County Surveyor, Virginia, MN – 218-742-9824

Todd Hendershott, Deputy County Surveyor, Pike Lake, MN – 218-625-3882