

# Mining Claims Research Guide

Western Mining History distributes location data on active mining claims based on data retrieved from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) LR2000 application. The purpose of this guide is to aid in the understanding of what the BLM claims data is useful for, and how to use the data to assist in your research.

Mining claims are generally located within the Public Land Survey System (PLSS) by Meridian, Township, Range, Section (MRTS). The PLSS is a grid system that subdivides geographical areas into distinct units. This guide will not delve into the details of the PLSS system, we recommend searching for guides on this subject or reading the following explanation provided by the USGS:

[https://nationalmap.gov/small\\_scale/a\\_plss.html](https://nationalmap.gov/small_scale/a_plss.html)

## Mining Claim Data at Western Mining History

Mining claim data distributed by Western Mining History consists of a custom index of active claim data (pending or closed claims are not included) that has been merged with location data for PLSS sections. This allows active claim information to be displayed on maps to give a general idea of where claims are located.

**Important note:** while the claims data distributed by WMH is deemed accurate, it is not guaranteed. The BLM LR2000 should always be used to verify information on claims you are interested in.

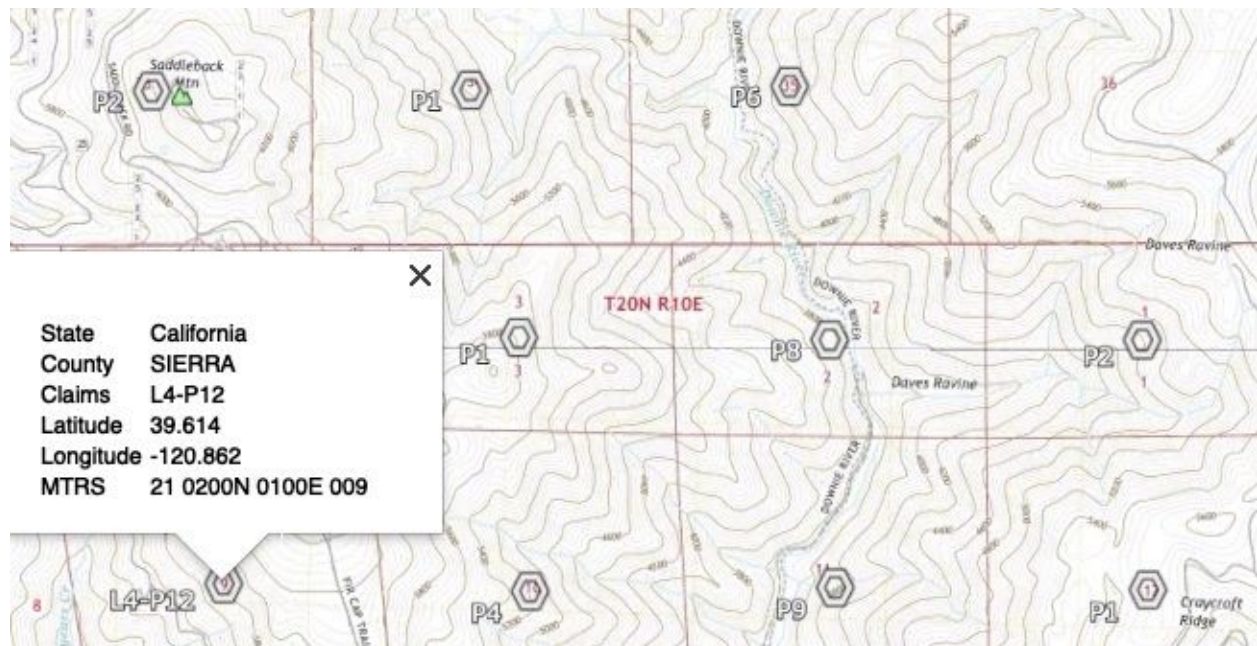
**Important note:** if you want to locate the exact boundaries of a claim, you need to go to the county recorder's office where the claim is located to retrieve full location notice. Mining claims can't be precisely located with the data available from the BLM LR2000.

Parts of the PLSS grid are irregular or incomplete, resulting in uncertainty of how the BLM's MRTS values translate to actual locations on the ground. Claim data analyzed by Western Mining History reveals that about 4% of mining claims in the LR2000 database are located in these irregular MRTS sections.

WMH has manually located most of these irregular or unsurveyed sections. Claim values with an asterisk like P6\* indicate that the claims are in one of these irregular sections. While most of these locations will be roughly as accurate as the regular sections, extra care should be taken when doing research on these claims.

# Viewing Active Mining Claims

Claims data in WMH premium packages is distributed either as CSV or KMZ formats. The files can be viewed in GIS applications, mapping applications, or in Google Earth Pro. The following image illustrates how mining claim information is displayed in a Google Earth Pro example:



The information window contains the MTRS value for each section that contains active mining claims.

Note: the lat and long values are the center points for the PLSS section and are not related to claim location.

The claims value in the info window is in the following format:

## **L4-P12**

Which breaks down to the following values:

L4 - the number of lode claims in a section

P12 - the number of placer claims in a section

# Using MTRS Values to Reference Claims in LR2000

Using an example from the map sample image above, let's explore the section with the claim value of "L4-P12".

We know from the information window that the MTRS value for this section is "21 0200N 0100E 009". This value in the exact format used in the LR2000 system and can be used to shortcut the slow and cumbersome search tools in that application.

## Looking up a claim on the LR2000

Now that we have the MTRS for the section we are interested in. First open the LR2000 at the following address (if the link has changed you can search the internet for LR2000):

<https://reports.blm.gov/reports.cfm?application=LR2000>

Note: the LR2000 is a notoriously slow and unreliable app, so some patience will be required while doing research.

On the main page under "Public Mining Claim Reports", click on "Pub MC Geo Index". You are now on the "Pub MC Geo Index Report" search form. Select the following fields to get a list of the mining claims in the PLSS section of interest:

**Admin State** (Choose the state you are looking at claims in unless it is Washington or South Dakota. Admin state for Washington is Oregon. Admin state for South Dakota is Montana)

**Disposition** (choose active, or alternately choose closed if you want to research closed claims)

**Meridian Township Range Section** (you can skip the "Meridian Township Range" field)

In the Meridian Township Range Section field, copy the value you got from the claims CSV file "21 0200N 0100E 009". Click on the form outside of the MTRS field, then wait a few seconds for the field to register (see image below, the field value turns blue)

<b>* Admin State</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> (All Column Values) <input type="checkbox"/> AZ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CA <input type="checkbox"/> CO <input type="checkbox"/> ES <input type="checkbox"/> ID <input type="checkbox"/> MT <input type="checkbox"/> NM <input type="checkbox"/> NV <input type="checkbox"/> OR <input type="checkbox"/> UT <input type="checkbox"/> WY
<b>* Disposition</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> (All Column Values) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACTIVE <input type="checkbox"/> CLOSED <input type="checkbox"/> PENDING
<b>* Meridian Township Range:</b>	--Select Value-- ▼
<b>- * Meridian Township Range Section</b>	21 0200N 0100E 009 ▼
<b>(Ex: NE or NE,SW) Subdiv</b>	
<b>Geo State</b>	(All Column Values) ▼

That is all you need to do, click the “OK” button at the bottom of the page and grab your favorite beverage because the LR2000 takes a while to return the results.

NOTE: if you are using the townships analysis layer from the WMH Gold Maps for Google Earth Pro, you can use the township values provided in the “Meridian Township Range” field to search for claims in an entire township.

The following image shows part of the mining claim geographic index report for the MTRS value we entered into the search form.

**Geo State:** CA  
**County:** SIERRA  
**Field Office:** EAGLE LAKE FIELD OFFICE  
**Meridian Township Range:** 21 0200N 0100E

Section	Subdiv	Serial Number	Lead Serial Number	Case Type	Claim Name
009	NE,NW	<a href="#">CAMC27337</a>	<a href="#">CAMC27327</a>	PLACER	SADDLEBACK PLACER
	NE,NW	<a href="#">CAMC27343</a>	<a href="#">CAMC27327</a>	PLACER	SADDLEBACK PLACER #7
	NE,NW	<a href="#">CAMC27344</a>	<a href="#">CAMC27327</a>	PLACER	SADDLEBACK PLACER #8
	NE,NW	<a href="#">CAMC292897</a>	<a href="#">CAMC292890</a>	LODE	DDL 8
	NE,NW	<a href="#">CAMC292899</a>	<a href="#">CAMC292890</a>	LODE	DDL 10
	NE,SE	<a href="#">CAMC14334</a>	<a href="#">CAMC14332</a>	PLACER	EXCELSIOR EXT #2
	NW	<a href="#">CAMC292893</a>	<a href="#">CAMC292890</a>	LODE	DDL 4
	NW	<a href="#">CAMC292895</a>	<a href="#">CAMC292890</a>	LODE	DDL 6
	SE	<a href="#">CAMC14333</a>	<a href="#">CAMC14332</a>	PLACER	EXCELSIOR EXTENSION
	SE	<a href="#">CAMC269903</a>	<a href="#">CAMC269897</a>	PLACER	WHITE BEAR #3
	SE				
	SE	<a href="#">CAMC269904</a>	<a href="#">CAMC269897</a>	PLACER	WHITE BEAR #4

Clicking the link for each “Serial Number” value will download the full serial register page for that claim.

That’s it, you now have the full BLM records for the claims you are interested in.

## Narrowing Possible Claim Locations Using Quarter-Sections

Although you can’t find the exact claim boundaries without getting a copy of the original claim record from the county recorder, you can narrow down where claims are to the quarter section.

**Geo State:** CA  
**County:** NEVADA  
**Field Office:** MOTHER LODE FIELD OFFICE  
**Meridian Township Range:** 21 0180N 0110E

Section	Subdiv	Serial Number	Lead Serial Number	Case Type	Claim
021	NE	CAMC293515	CAMC293514	PLACER	SO PC
	SE	CAMC318262	CAMC318244	PLACER	LUCKY
	SW	CAMC316454	CAMC316454	PLACER	CHRIS

This LR2000 search result shows 3 placer claims in a particular PLSS section. The “Subdiv” column reveals that these claims reside in the NE, SE, and SW quarters of the section.

This tells us two important things. First, the NW corner has no claims and is open to prospecting. Second, each of the other corners has just one claim. Since placer claims are usually around 20 acres (you can confirm the size of each in the full LR2000 reports), and each quarter section is 160 acres, you know there is still a lot of open ground to prospect on.

Now that you know what quarter sections contain claims, you could add your own Google Earth placemarks with notes in each quarter, or you could write notes on map images you have exported and printed.