

February 2018

# SIDE SHOTS

Professional Land Surveyors of Colorado

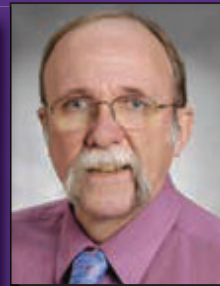
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# Rule of the Month—Basis of Bearings, Board Rule 6.8

By Earl Henderson, PLS

Board Rule 6.8 clarifies C.R.S. 38-51-106(1)(e) which requires that all Land Survey Plats contain a statement of how bearings, *if used*, were determined (emphasis added). I think we can all agree that the vast majority of us are currently using bearings to define directions on our Land Survey Plats, but in fact I have recently seen some plats using angles and not bearings. I personally find it cumbersome to use anything other than bearings, but if that's your preference then have at it. But if you're in the same camp as most of us you likely use bearings and you likely already know that a Basis of Bearings (BOB) statement is required. However, it's surprising how often the BOB is incorrectly stated. I'll get to that later (BR 6.8.3).

There are several parts to Board Rule 6.8. My personal favorite is BR 6.8.1 Purpose. It should go without saying, but obviously somewhere in the past it was deemed necessary to state in rule that the purpose of the BOB statement is for "...other surveyors..." not for yourself. But the last sentence of BR 6.8.1 is the best part. No matter what is said in statute or rule, if the BOB statement doesn't facilitate a retracement of the survey, it just ain't good enough.

BR 6.8.2 Composition is also an interesting aspect of this rule. Although there's a good deal of information and requirements in this paragraph I'd like to bring your attention to three things in particular. The first is that the BOB "...shall state...the bearing between *two fully described monuments at each end of a single line.*"(emphasis added) There need to be monuments at each end of the BOB line so that the "other surveyors" can establish your BOB. Without those monuments "other surveyors" cannot start where you started. Second, those monuments need to be "fully described" so that again the "other surveyors" can be certain that they're using the correct monuments and following in your footsteps. And third, the LSP "...shall show the... relationship between the basis of bearings and the survey." Although all these aspects should be obvious from both common sense and reading the rule, it's apparently not, from what I see. After all, what use is a BOB if you can't set up on two monuments in the field, know that you're on the correct monuments, and then survey to the subject property?

BR 6.8.3, & 6.8.3.1-6.8.3.4 describe the acceptable methods for stating the BOB on the LSP depending on what method you've chosen to use for that particular survey. I'm not going to go into the details as they're pretty self explanatory and non-controversial. But I will say this, it is baffling how often a BOB statement is stated incorrectly when there are specific and numerous written examples right there in the Board Rules. Why would you state your BOB without quoting the appropriate example directly from this rule? There's no statute or rule that states you have to quote the example. But if you choose to use some other phraseology, then you're opening yourself to the possibility that your phrase will be interpreted as not complying with the rule.

BR 6.8.3.5 shows a couple of examples of unacceptable BOB statements but by no means, and you can take my word for this, are these the only unacceptable ways to make a BOB statement. But once again I need to make the point that it's baffling just how often a BOB statement appears to be quoting one of these examples of unacceptable statements.

The bottom line for all the rules pertaining to the BOB statement is that as a professional, it is your responsibility to show "other surveyors" how to follow in your footsteps. And if no one can follow your footsteps, how can you expect "other surveyors" to be able to agree with your decisions and conclusions? When crafting a BOB statement remember that it's always acceptable to include more than the minimum amount of information if you think the situation warrants it. And also remember that what you should be trying to accomplish with a BOB statement is to help "other surveyors" follow in your footsteps, as I hope we are all trying to do with each decision we make. We tend, as a group, to romanticize following in the footsteps of ancient surveyors, but we should be just as conscious of following in the footsteps of our current fellow professionals and describing to "other surveyors", who may be looking at us as ancient, how we got to where we were going. Of course that presupposes that we're not already so ancient that we've already forgotten where we were going, for what, and...(!@#\$ – I knew I should have written that down).

Be safe out there.