Town Range and Section in Michigan

Townships

The whole State of Michigan is laid out in a grid of **survey townships**. A survey (or congressional) township is a square unit of land containing approximately 36 square miles. Each square mile (640 acres) is a section. This division of land was laid out using surveys conducted for the General Land Office (GLO) and is called the U.S. Public Land Survey System (PLSS). The system is also referred to as the Rectangular Survey System or the Town and Range Survey System.

The map at the left shows the survey townships in Ingham and Jackson Counties. A line drawn across the southern boundary of Ingham county and extended all the east and all the way west in Michigan is known as the **base line**. Townships are numbered consecutively as they go north or south of the this line and extend as far as 9S and 67N. Another line drawn north-south through the center of Ingham county and extended all the way north and all the way south in Michigan is known as the **meridian line**. Townships are numbered consecutively as they go east or west from this line and extend as far as 49W and 17E.

Survey townships may be uniquely identified by referring to the Town and the Range which they occupy. For example the town-range notation, Town 2 South, Range 3 West (T2S-R3W or as in the picture 02S03W) identifies a unique tract of land roughly 36 square miles (the gray area). There are more than a thousand survey townships in Michigan, not to be confused with political townships, which may consist of several survey townships.

Sections

Each survey township is divided into **sections** of approximately one square mile, dividing the township into thirty-six blocks. The sections are always numbered back-and-forth beginning with one in the northeast corner of the township and ending with thirty-six in the southeast corner of the township. The diagram to the left shows the numbering of sections within a township. T2S R3W S24 would identify a unique square mile in a section in Jackson county.

Quarter Sections

Each section is divided into fourths, and then again into fourths, and then again into fourths. The grayed in area in the image at the right is the southwest quarter of the northwest quarter of the northeast quarter of section 24, or in notation: SW NW NE S24 T2S R3W.

Since each section is approximately 1 square mile, and there are 640 acres in a square mile, each quarter section is about 160 acres, each quarter-quarter section is about 40 acres, and each quarter-quarter-quarter section about 10 acres. The grayed in area is about 10 acres.