How to Stake and File a Mining Claim in Oregon

To stake and file a mining claim in Oregon, you post a location notice on the claim, mark its boundaries, record a copy of the notice with the county clerk, and file with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Oregon gives you 30 days from the day you post the notice to mark the boundaries and 60 days to record with the county, while BLM's deadline is 90 days. A new lode claim costs $274 in BLM fees, plus the county's recording fee.

Oregon is strict about those dates, because state law says a claim that isn't marked and recorded the way it requires is void. Oregon also requires a sworn statement with the county clerk each year, even if you pay BLM's yearly fee.

Last checked November 9, 2026. This is a plain-words summary of Oregon and federal law, not legal advice. Fees and rules change, so confirm dates and costs with your county clerk or BLM before you rely on them. The newest version of our Oregon staking guide is at goldmapsonline.com/how-to-stake-a-mining-claim-in-oregon.html. Check it before you file, since fees and rules can change after you download your maps.

The steps at a glance

Step	Where	Deadline	Cost
1. Post your location notice	On the claim	This starts the clock	No fee
2. Mark the boundaries	On the claim	30 days after posting	Your posts or stones
3. Record a copy of the notice	County clerk	60 days after posting, or 30 for a mill site	$76 or more for one page
4. File with BLM	Online in MLRS, or BLM in Portland	90 days after posting	$274 for a lode claim
Keep it each year	BLM	September 1	$200 per lode claim or per 20 acres of placer
Record each year	County clerk	30 days after you pay or do the work	$16 or more, plus $5 per added claim

Start with your map

A filled closed box on your Oregon map means that section has no active claims today, which makes it a good place to start looking. Its pop-up gives you what the paperwork asks for: the county, the township, range and section, and the BLM code.

One example from the November 2026 map is a closed placer box in Baker County at T12S R41E Sec 32, Willamette Meridian, with the BLM code 33 0120S 0410E 032. A box covers a section of about 640 acres and doesn't show a claim's exact edges, so the map tells you where to look and your own checks tell you whether you can stake there.

Check the ground first

1. **Look it up in BLM's records.** Go to reports.blm.gov/reports/MLRS, choose Mining Claims – Geographic Report, enter the BLM code, and tick Active and Filed. Our step-by-step MLRS guide walks through each screen.
2. **Check that the land is open to mining.** BLM's Master Title Plats, on the GLO Records website, show what's open. You can't stake in national parks, national monuments, wilderness areas, Indian reservations or military land, and private land is off limits.
3. **Watch for Oregon state land.** Federal mining claims don't apply there, and mining state minerals takes a lease from the Oregon Department of State Lands.
4. **Walk the ground.** A new claim can take up to 90 days to reach BLM's records, so look for fresh posts and notices before you put up your own.
5. **Make a discovery.** Every claim needs a discovery of a valuable mineral. BLM's test is whether a sensible person would spend more time and money trying to develop a mine there, and recording a claim and paying the fees won't make it valid without one.

Lode or placer

A lode claim covers gold in solid rock, like a quartz vein, and can be up to 1,500 feet long and 600 feet wide. A placer claim covers loose gold in sand and gravel, and can be 20 acres per person, up to 160 acres for a group of eight or more. The notice and the markers differ, so pick the type that fits what you found.

If you own a lode or placer claim, or a mill, Oregon's law also lets you locate a mill site of up to 5 acres on land without valuable minerals, the same way as a placer claim but with no discovery and only 30 days to record it.

Step 1: Post your location notice

The day you post the notice is your location date, and every deadline counts from it. Oregon's law lets a U.S. citizen, or someone who has declared they intend to become one, locate a claim after making a discovery.

For a lode claim, post the notice on the vein itself. It has to give all of these:

- The name of the claim, the names of the locators and the date of location
- How many feet you claim along the vein each way from where you found it, and the width on each side
- The general direction of the vein, tied to a natural object or permanent monument nearby, with the boundaries described so they can be traced on the ground

For a placer claim, post the notice where it's easy to see on the claim. It has to give all of these:

- The name of the claim, the names of the locators and the date of location
- How many feet or acres you claim
- A description by legal subdivision, like a quarter section, if you can, or else one tied to a natural object or permanent monument nearby

BLM's Oregon office also needs the township, range, section and quarter section with the Willamette Meridian, and each claimant's full name and mailing address, so put them on the notice too. It won't accept GPS coordinates

alone, and a lode claim also needs its edges described by distance and direction, tied to a permanent object. Use a separate notice for each claim. BLM says there's no official form, so you can write your own.

Step 2: Mark the boundaries

You have 30 days from posting to mark the boundaries so they're easy to trace on the ground. Each marker can be a solid wood post at least 1.5 by 1.5 inches that sticks up at least 3 feet, or a solid mound of stone, or earth and stone, at least 2 feet high.

- **Lode claim:** four markers, one at each corner.
- **Placer claim:** a marker at each corner or angle. If a side or end runs more than 1,320 feet without a corner, the law also asks for markers along it, so put one every 1,320 feet.

Oregon's law says a placer claim described by legal subdivisions doesn't need markers, but BLM's Oregon packet says federal law requires clearly marked boundaries. Mark the corners anyway, since it costs little and meets both. BLM doesn't allow perforated or uncapped pipe as markers, because of wildlife deaths.

Step 3: Record with the county clerk

Within 60 days of posting, record a copy of the notice you posted with the county clerk in the county where the claim sits. A mill site gets only 30 days. Oregon doesn't ask for a map with the county copy, and state law says a claim that isn't marked and recorded on time is void, even though BLM gives you 90 days.

Oregon's recording law sets these basics for the copy you record:

- A title on the first page that says what it is, like Location Notice
- The names of the locators on the first page
- The name and mailing address the clerk should send it back to, also on the first page
- Clear print of at least 10-point type, on pages no bigger than 8.5 by 14 inches

If the first page leaves something out, you can attach a cover sheet that gives it. The clerk still records a paper that misses these rules, but it adds a $20 penalty. Record a signed original rather than a photocopy or fax, since counties like Benton and Umatilla ask for one, and ask your clerk whether it wants a blank space at the top right of the first page for its label.

State law sets the fee at $5 a page, plus $71 more on each notice, so a one-page notice costs at least $76. Counties add their own fees on top, and a one-page notice costs $77 in Malheur County, $83.50 in Grant County and $106 in Umatilla County. The clerk collects the fee up front, and some counties send back a paper that comes with too little money, so ask for the exact amount first.

The clerk counts a notice by the day and time it arrives, not the day you mail it, so mail it well before day 60. The clerk returns the original within 10 business days after recording it.

If you find a mistake in your notice later, you can post and record an amended notice. It counts from your original date, but it can't take away rights someone else gained in the meantime.

Step 4: File with BLM

BLM needs its own filing by the 90th day, and it advises recording with the county first. Send BLM a copy of the recorded notice, a map of the claim and the fees. You can file online in MLRS at mlrs.blm.gov with a login.gov account, by mail, or in person at BLM's Oregon/Washington State Office in Portland, which handles claims in both states. Set up an appointment with its public room before you go.

A sketch works as well as a map, as long as it shows the claim well enough that someone could find it on the ground. Claims you file together can share one map, but each claim needs its own notice.

Claim	Fees	Total
Lode	$25 + $49 + $200	$274
Placer, up to 20 acres	$25 + $49 + $200	$274
Placer, 21 to 40 acres	$25 + $49 + $400	$474

The three fees are the processing fee, the location fee and the first maintenance fee, for claims located on or after September 1, 2026. Each added 20 acres of placer, or part of 20 acres, adds $200.

A claim that isn't recorded with BLM and the county by the 90th day is abandoned and void under federal law, even if the ground is good. BLM says it refunds the location and maintenance fees in that case, after the appeal period.

Re-staking a closed claim

Re-staking a closed claim means making a brand-new claim, and none of the old owner's rights carry over. Oregon's law says an abandoned claim is open ground, located the same way as a new one, and any work done on it before doesn't count. All four steps apply, and Oregon doesn't require any digging for it.

Don't count on the old markers. When a lode claim is dropped or declared invalid, Oregon's law says its posts are to be removed, so put up your own. The law has no separate rule for re-staking a placer claim, so treat it as a new claim too.

Keeping your claim each year

On or before September 1 each year, pay BLM $200 per lode claim, or $200 for each 20 acres of a placer claim, or the claim is forfeited. If you stake before September 1 but file with BLM after it, you'll owe two maintenance fees at once, one for each year, unless you qualify for the small miner waiver and file it when you record the claim.

Oregon also requires a sworn statement, called an affidavit of annual compliance, recorded with the county clerk within 30 days after you pay BLM's fee or do the yearly work, so paying or working early moves that date earlier. The law doesn't say whether the first fee you pay with a new claim counts, so to be safe, record one within 30 days of that payment too. The affidavit has to give all of these:

- The name of each claim and where its location notice is recorded
- The days worked and their dates, and any improvements, with their value and where they are
- Who asked for the work, and what was paid and by whom if the owner didn't do it
- That BLM's fee has been paid and that you intend to keep the claim for the year

If you skip it, the law treats that as first-glance evidence that the work wasn't done. State law sets the fee at $5 a page, plus $11 more on each affidavit, so a one-page affidavit costs at least $16, plus $5 for each added claim on it.

With 10 or fewer claims nationwide, you can do at least $100 of work on each claim instead of paying. File the free waiver form with BLM by September 1, on paper because it can't be filed online, then file an affidavit of the work with BLM by December 30 at $15 per claim. The Oregon county affidavit is still due within 30 days after you do the work.

A claim doesn't give you a free hand on the surface. Work beyond casual use can need a notice or a plan of operations, so talk to the local BLM field office or Forest Service ranger district first.

Oregon bans motorized in-stream placer mining, including suction dredges, up to the high water line in any river with essential salmon habitat. Gravity and syphon dredges aren't part of that ban, but DEQ's 700-PM permit still has them register. Where motorized mining is allowed, it needs a DEQ permit, and a suction dredge hose can't be more than 4 inches across inside. Even hand work in a salmon stream can need a Department of State Lands permit, so ask before you dig.

Who to ask

- **BLM Oregon/Washington State Office:** Call 503-808-6030 for mining claims, or 503-808-6008 for the public room. The office is at 1220 S.W. 3rd Avenue, 11th Floor, Portland, OR 97204, open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday. It handles claims in both Oregon and Washington, and you'll need an appointment to record in person.
- **Oregon Department of Environmental Quality:** The 700-PM permit for suction dredges and other in-stream mining, on DEQ's mining permits page.
- **Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries:** Operating permits and exclusion certificates for surface mining, on DOGAMI's surface mining page.
- **Oregon Department of State Lands:** Mineral leases on state land and permits for digging in salmon streams, at oregon.gov/dsl.

Where these rules come from

- Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 517: location notices, markers, recording, relocation and yearly affidavits
- Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 205, sections 205.180 to 205.238 and 205.320 to 205.327: document rules, recording dates and county fees
- Oregon Revised Statutes 468B.112 to 468B.118: motorized in-stream placer mining
- BLM's Oregon/Washington mining claim packet and mining claim fees
- 43 U.S.C. 1744 and 30 U.S.C. 28f: the yearly filing and the maintenance fee

Oregon county clerks

A claim is recorded in the county where the ground is, and in Oregon the county clerk records it, though a few counties give that office another name. Call before you mail anything, since offices move and hours change. A star marks an office we couldn't fully confirm on the county's own website, so check its phone number first.

County	Clerk's address	Phone
Baker	1995 Third Street Suite 150, Baker City, OR 97814	(541) 523-8207
Benton	4500 SW Research Way, Corvallis, OR 97333 Mail: P.O. Box 888, Corvallis, OR 97339	541-766-6756
Clackamas	1710 Red Soils Court, Suite 110, Oregon City, OR 97045	503-655-8551
Columbia	230 Strand St., St. Helens, OR 97051	503-397-3796
Coos	250 N. Baxter, Coquille, OR 97423	(541) 396-7600
Crook	300 NE Third St, Rm. 23, Prineville, OR 97754	541-447-6553
Curry	29821 Ellensburg Ave, Gold Beach, OR 97444 Mail: 94235 Moore Street, Ste 212	(541) 247-3295
Deschutes	1300 NW Wall Street, Suite 202, Bend, OR 97703 Mail: P.O. Box 6005, Bend, Oregon 97708	(541) 388-6549

County	Clerk's address	Phone
Douglas *	1036 SE Douglas, Room 124, Roseburg, OR 97470-3301 Mail: P.O. Box 10, Roseburg, OR 97470-0004	541-440-4252
Gilliam	221 S. Oregon Street, Rm. 200, Condon, OR 97823 Mail: P.O. Box 427, Condon, OR 97823-0427	541-351-9490
Grant	201 S Humbolt Suite 290, Canyon City, OR 97820	541-575-1675
Harney *	450 N. Buena Vista Ave, Suite 14, Burns, OR 97720-1565	541-573-6641
Hood River	601 State Street, Hood River, OR 97031	(541) 386-1442
Jackson	10 S. Oakdale Avenue, Room 114, Medford, OR 97501	541-774-6152
Jefferson *	66 SE D St., Suite C, Madras, OR 97741-1739	541-475-4451
Josephine	500 NW 6th St., Room 170, Grants Pass, OR 97526 Mail: P.O. Box 69, Grants Pass, OR 97528-0203	(541) 474-5240
Klamath	305 Main Street, Klamath Falls, OR 97601	541-883-5134
Lake	513 Center Street, Lakeview, OR 97630	541-947-6006
Lane	125 E 8th Ave, Eugene, OR 97401	541-682-3654
Lincoln	225 West Olive St., Room 201, Newport, OR 97365	541-265-4131
Linn *	421 Water Ave., NE, Suite 1300, Albany, OR 97321 Mail: P.O. Box 100, Albany, OR 97321-0031	541-967-3831
Malheur	251 “B” St. West, Vale, OR 97918	(541) 473-5151
Marion	555 Court St NE, Suite 2130, Salem, OR 97301 Mail: PO Box 14500, Salem, OR 97309	503-588-5225
Morrow	100 S. Court St., Suite 102, Heppner, OR 97836 Mail: P.O. Box 338	(541) 676-5600
Multnomah	501 SE Hawthorne Blvd Suite 175, Portland, OR 97214 Mail: PO Box 5007, Portland, OR 97208-5007	503-988-2273
Polk	850 Main Street, Dallas, OR 97338	(503) 623-9217
Sherman	500 Court Street, Moro, OR 97039 Mail: PO BOX 243	541-565-3606
Tillamook	201 Laurel Avenue, Tillamook, OR 97141	503-842-3402
Umatilla	216 SE 4th St., Room 116, Pendleton, OR 97801	541-278-6236
Union	1001 Fourth Street, Suite D, La Grande, OR 97850	541-963-1006
Wallowa	101 South River Street Room 100, Enterprise, OR 97828	(541) 426-4543
Wasco	401 E 3rd St., Ste 100, The Dalles, OR 97058	541-506-2530
Washington	155 N First Avenue, Room 130, Hillsboro, OR 97124	503-846-8752
Wheeler	701 Adams St., Ste. 204, Fossil, OR 97830 Mail: PO Box 327	(541) 763-2374
Yamhill	414 NE Evans St., McMinnville, OR 97128-4607	503-434-7518