

OrYSN: Task at Hand

By Geoff Paull, PLS. Introduction by Christopher Glantz, PLS

The Oregon Young Surveyors Network (OrYSN) has seen overwhelming support for the surveying profession in Oregon. One of the major benefits of the OrYSN is allowing young surveyors the opportunity to network with other young surveyors and the profession at large. A recent example is one that is personal to me. Last year, I switched jobs. When I started, I was excited to see another young surveyor in my department. He embodied everything we look for in a young surveyor. He's smart, eager, and passionate. I could tell right away that he is going to be one of the leaders in our profession. His name is Geoff Paull.

During my first few weeks on the job, I heard that Geoff was beginning to study for the PLS exam. I'm not sure he wanted my advice, but I felt I needed to help anyway. Geoff and I discussed topics he should study and materials he should use to help him prepare for exam day. I can't count how many times I've helped another surveyor prepare for the PLS exam, and during this process with Geoff, I realized that documenting the process would make a terrific article. So, I asked Geoff to put something together for the OrYSN. He was a bit hesitant, but he gave way to my constant pestering. The following study guide is from Geoff. We hope that you find it useful.



My name is Geoff Paull, and I passed the PS Principles and Practices of Surveying Exam and the Oregon Specific 4-Hour Surveying Examination in October of 2016. In the thought of giving future land surveyors a studying resource, I am putting together an outline of what I did to take and pass the required exams to become a Registered Land Surveyor in the state of Oregon.

In June of 2016, I was getting close to acquiring the four years of experience needed to qualify for registration as a Professional Land Surveyor (OAR 820-010-2020). I started the process of getting registered for the exams. That process included registering for the PS Principles and Practice of Surveying exam through the NCEES website. In October of 2016, the PS Principles and Practices of Surveying Exam transitioned into a computer based exam and is offered year-round. This test consists of 100 questions that are primarily multiple choice. More information about the PS Principles and Practices of Surveying Exam can be found at www.ncees.org/surveying/ps/. The Oregon Specific Surveying examination is offered twice a year, in October and April. Information about this exam can be found at www.oregon.gov/osbeels/pages/registration.aspx. For the Oregon specific Exam, I had to fill out the Oregon Specific Examination Application which also can be found on the OSBEELS website.

The scheduling of the exams was the easy part. The constant studying was not so easy. I first downloaded and printed out the Oregon Specific Land Surveying Syllabus and the *PS Reference Handbook*. These documents can be found at oregon.gov/osbeels and ncees.org respectively. I began my studying in June. That gave me approximately 3 months before my exams. I started with the books *Surveyor Reference Manual* by George

M. Cole, and *Surveying Solved Problems* by Jan Van Sickle along with the *PS Reference Handbook*. I started out trying to complete one section of each book in a week. This turned into two or three sections as time went on, as each section did not take as long as I initially thought. As I worked the problems, I looked up anything I did not fully understand. These books specifically helped me out a great deal:

- *Evidence and Procedures for Boundary Location* by Walter G. Robillard and Donald A. Wilson
- *Brown's Boundary Control and Legal Principles* by Walter G. Robillard and Donald A. Wilson
- *The Manual of Surveying Instructions* 2009 Edition and 1973 Edition
- *Elementary Surveying* by Charles D. Ghilani and Paul R. Wolf

There are many other resources available and the internet, in general, is a valuable resource. I became very familiar with the *PS Reference Handbook* as it is the only document available during the PS Principles and Practices of Surveying Exam. Besides this document, it is a closed book exam. Reading through the Geospatial Positioning Accuracy Standards was not an easy read, but those standards are important, and I needed to know them. I ended up reading through that document several times before the day of the test.

I made it a point to try a study for at least two hours every day, whether it be reading, watching videos, or working through problems. There were several days I only briefly looked at material, and there were days that I did not study at all. However, there were also some weekends that I studied for eight hours or more. I spent more time in subject material that did not come easy to me and less time in subject material that I was comfortable in. Even though I felt comfortable with several different topics of Land Surveying, I con-

tinued to revisit those areas throughout my study efforts. I did this to keep some of the methods fresh in my mind. I did not want to be trying to remember how to do something during the exam.

I asked several people that I work with for suggestions on how to study and I borrowed several documents and books that proved to be a valuable move for me. Another resource that I found valuable is from Caltrans. Videos and old survey problems are discussed, and the land descriptions sections helped me. Here is the link to Caltrans: www.dot.ca.gov/hq/row/landsurveys/LSITWorkbook/WorkbookTOC.html.

For the Oregon specific exam, I printed off the latest *Oregon Revised Statutes* and *Oregon Administrative Rules* and created a binder to take into the exam. I read the Oregon Revised Statutes and Oregon Administrative Rules that are specified in the Oregon Specific Land Surveying Syllabus. That exam is open book, and I took all of my books in with me. I put tabs on all of the pages that I needed for quick referencing and become familiar with those tabs before the exam. Also I took time off before each exam, not to cram but to just relax and mentally prepare. I did not want to be thinking about work at all. I did review, but not much.

In short, the recipe responsible for my passing of the exams needed to register as a Professional Land Surveyor can be stated in only a few words. Study. Study. Study. I just kept reminding myself that this is temporary and the end is in sight. My books are now on my bookshelf in my study, where they belong, not all over the living room and kitchen table. Work hard and good luck." ▽