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## BUYING A PLACE IN THE COUNTRY — STAYING AHEAD OF THE CURVE

If you buy a residential property in a city or town, it is generally very easy to establish the allowed uses of the property, the lot boundaries, and the availability of city water, sewer, and utility services. Buying a rural residential property, however, requires a prospective buyer to look into issues they may have never considered or encountered before.

### I. CHECKLIST FOR PURCHASING RURAL RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY

#### A. Boundary Lines:

1. Get a copy of the last recorded survey of the property.
2. Talk to neighbors about boundary lines.
3. Have surveyor find corner points if any red flags appear such as a misaligned fence.

#### B. Easements:

1. Make sure all easements benefiting or burdening property are located and understood.
2. Establish who is responsible for easement maintenance.

#### C. Land Use:

1. Check with county land planning department that all uses and structures on property are allowed for that zoning.
2. Understand that adjacent farm or forest uses are generally protected by law from nuisance claims.
3. Call Sheriff's office and county land use enforcement officer to see if adjacent properties have any non-conforming or illegal activities (such as squatters or drug manufacturing) reported.
4. Establish that the property is within a defined rural fire protection district.

#### D. Property and House Inspections:

1. Have qualified pest/dry rot and whole house inspections for all significant structures.
2. Ensure well water is tested for nitrates, bacteria, salt, and arsenic.
3. Ensure well produces at least five gallons per minute for four hours during the summer.
4. Ensure septic system is properly functioning and there is sufficient room on the property for a replacement drain field.

**Liam Sherlock** has successfully handled many environmental and hazardous waste matters for clients for over 20 years. If you have concerns or questions regarding spills, storage tanks, or need assistance dealing environmental government agencies and/or with insurance companies or please contact him at 541-686-9160 or by email at [lsherlock@eugenelaw.com](mailto:lsherlock@eugenelaw.com)