

INDIANA BARN FOUNDATION

BARN SURVEYORS' GUIDE¹

Purpose

- The purpose of the Indiana Barn Foundation's statewide survey of heritage barns is to create an inventory of Indiana's historic barns that counts, identifies, and documents barns fifty years old and older by style, design, and location.
- Assist in the Foundation's efforts to preserve Indiana's barns and measure their loss.
- Build awareness of the rapid decline of Indiana's traditional barns and agricultural buildings.
- Help communities and their leaders to appreciate the cultural value of Indiana's barns and the heritage they represent.
- Establish a standard for classifying and evaluating the historic significance of Indiana's traditional barns.
- Build a database of information on Indiana barns.

Getting Started

1. Form a local committee of other barn enthusiasts who are willing to dedicate some time and other resources to accomplishing this task. Consider the county historian, local historical or preservation groups, local farm bureau or other agricultural groups, and barn owners.
2. Learn how to use the Barn App developed by Tim Sheets for IBF. Plan to attend one of the IBF workshops held across the state in 2018. Know the various barn styles and features of the App before undertaking the inventory.
3. Obtain county and township maps of roads and barn locations. Visit your local county's Assessor's Office. Introduce yourself and explain that you are helping the Indiana Barn Foundation conduct an inventory of the barns in your county. Ask if the office has any method for identifying barn locations in the county; specifically, have they established a system that maps barn locations, and if so, can they help you access that information? If they do not have maps, do they have any recorded documents that identify property that includes a barn or anything else that might help you in your survey efforts? All county assessors keep a record of property improvements for tax purposes. Since barns over 50 years old by State law are exempt from taxes, they may show up on these records. Ask if county records are accessible on the Internet, which would allow you to work from home.

¹ Created by Duncan Campbell, IBF Board Member; revised by Janet Ayres, IBF Board Member, 11.2.17

In Carroll County, for example, Proval is the tax assessment data base and a report on properties with barns over 50 years old can be printed off by Parcel ID number. Proval shares a data base with Beacon and by creating a barn “layer”, maps of properties with tax exempt barns can be printed by township and county.

There are other ways to obtain maps. Certain libraries and state agencies can provide access to aerial maps of the counties, which may be of use to you in identifying barn locations or establishing survey routes. The Indiana State Archives & Records Administration www.in.gov.iara is one resource. The Indiana Geological Survey, which houses the Indiana Historical Aerial Photo Index, www.igs.ubduaba.edu/IHAPI is another. Indiana University hosts the Indiana Spatial Data Portal (ISPP), which also provides access to several kinds of state/county maps that could be of use, www.gis.iu.edu or www.libraries.indiana.edu. It is likely that Purdue’s libraries offer similar services. If you do not have Internet access or are not able to access these resources, visit your local library and ask the librarian to assist you. Librarians are professional searchers, and like to help, so they are often the best place to start.

If you have Internet access, become familiar with Google Earth and Google Maps. With these tools and a little practice you can look at satellite views of anywhere on earth. A quick way to learn is to follow the tutorial on how to locate your own home. Knowing how to navigate this asset will allow you to zoom in on any place in your county—could be helpful.

4. Plan for expenses. There will be a charge for printing color maps from the County Assessor’s Office. In Carroll County, the total charge was \$54. This included 14 township color maps, 12”x18” and a 24”x36” county map. These maps indicated the location of all the heritage barns. It made it easy to indicate the boundaries for each committee member and keep track of where each person had been. It was a necessary compliment to the barn App.
5. You will have to drive all the roads in your county and this can be a daunting task. However, with 7-8 committee members, you can each take a township and make the task much more “doable”. Divide the inventory task among committee members by Township. With the county and township maps you can indicate the boundaries for each survey member.

Surveying Tips:

1. Please be courteous and considerate and stay off of private property. Inventory only barns that you can view from the road. If you enter the property without permission, you are trespassing. It is not illegal for you to photograph barns from the road, but it is illegal to trespass.

2. Establish a survey pattern that will help you avoid backtracking or inadvertently duplicating your work. It is easiest and safest to conduct a survey with two to three people. One can pay attention to driving and watch for other vehicles; another can pay attention to the map; another can get out of the car to take photographs. It is also helpful to have individuals who can assist in identifying barn styles, siding, roofing materials, etc.
3. Drive carefully! It is easy to drive off the road or cross into the lane of oncoming traffic when looking at barns. Another reason not to survey alone.
4. The best times to survey are early spring and late fall, for the purposes of unobstructed photography and comfortable temperatures. Once the trees have leafed out it is more difficult to see through the landscape. And winter temperatures often prohibit outdoor activity.