

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Oklahoma	
COUNTY: Alfalfa	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70.10.35.0008	DATE 9/29/70

1. NAME

COMMON:
The Sod House

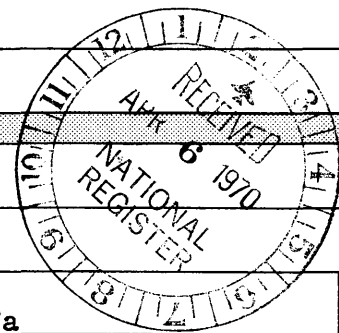
AND/OR HISTORIC:
The Marshall McCully Sod House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
NW/4 Sec. 18, T 23 N, R 11 W

CITY OR TOWN:
c. 4 m. N of Cleo Springs

STATE Oklahoma	CODE 35	COUNTY: Alfalfa	CODE 003
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:
Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN: Oklahoma City	STATE: Oklahoma	CODE 35
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Office of the County Clerk

STREET AND NUMBER:
Alfalfa County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: Cherokee	STATE: Oklahoma	CODE 35
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Sod House

DATE OF SURVEY: 1964 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:
Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN: Oklahoma City	STATE: Oklahoma	CODE 35
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

To build his house Marshall McCully had to "borrow" sod from a neighbor a mile to the north where the soil was less sandy, the cover of buffalo grass better matted. There, with team and 14-inch "sod buster" plow, he turned over long strips of virgin prairie land, about six inches thick, which he cut into 18-inch lengths. (The sod from approximately half an acre was needed for the house he had in mind.) These individual building blocks, hauled back to his homestead by wagon, were laid -- grassy side down -- with overlapping joints like regular stones or bricks. As Mr. McCully planned a larger house than usual -- he ended with two 10 x 12-foot rooms -- he built his outside walls with two thicknesses of sod. The two-foot-and-thicker walls not only added strength, but kept the soddy warmer in winter, cooler in summer.

An end-to-end cedar ridge-pole, buttressed in the center by the log partition between the two rooms, supported the low roof. Split logs extended from it to either side of the house, supporting in turn the sod roof. With good alkali beds near by Mr. McCully was able to smooth his walls with a plaster that is still in place. Each room had a window on three sides, its own outside door, and a connecting door. The dirt floor was covered in 1895 with the present wooden flooring.

Restoration work, as indicated in Section 8, has been limited for the most part to necessary maintenance and repairs. The idea has not been to "pretty up" the soddy, but rather to show it as it was when the McCullys lived in it. The sheet iron cover building has been added only to protect the historic home.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



SIGNIFICANCE

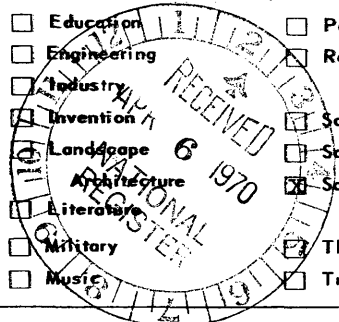
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1894 to 1909

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A close parallel often exists between the cost of an item and the length of service it gives. Certainly this is true in the case of the sod house. Constructed of blocks of grass-matted soil, its cost was understandably low. The Great Plains were blanketed by sod - more than enough for the walls and roofs of the estimated one million "soddies" constructed, for the most part, in the last half of the 19th century. But if its cost was low, so was its life expectancy. Not only did the elements tend to hurry the "dust to dust" transition -- especially on the largely treeless prairies where hard rain showers and persistent winds are as common as soap weed and buffalo grass -- but so did the area's housewives and homemakers. As means became available, and alternate building materials, most homesteaders were quick to erect more conventional dwellings. The average sod house, abandoned and neglected, rarely lasted more than a dozen years or so.

The two-room McCully sod house in northwestern Oklahoma is a rare, perhaps unique, certainly invaluable exception. Erected in 1894, it is the only original example of this type of construction in Oklahoma and, some believe, the last original sod house built by a homesteader. Now partially restored and preserved in a protective metal building, it is open to the public as a state historical monument, an impressive testimonial to the hardiness and resourcefulness of the pioneers who settled and developed the western prairies.

Marshall McCully staked his claim to the quarter section on which the sod house stands a few days after the Cherokee Outlet was opened to settlement by run on September 16, 1893. He built his two-room, 12 x 24-foot house in August 1894 and lived in it until 1909, when he and his family moved into a large frame house nearby. It is believed that the wind protection given by the new house, with the shelter provided by an elm tree which grew up at the corner of the soddy, were at least partly responsible for its survival the fifty-plus years it served the McCully family for storage. Mr. McCully kept his home here until he died in August 1963, at 95. On December 31, 1963, exactly 60 years after the patent for the land was issued to him, the Oklahoma Historical Society acquired the structure.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Chapman, B. B., "The Sod House of Marshall McCully: A Last Relic of the Great Plains History," (The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Summer 1967, Vol. 45, pp. 211-216)
 Fraker, Elmer F., "Homesteader's Sod House," a pamphlet, 1969

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

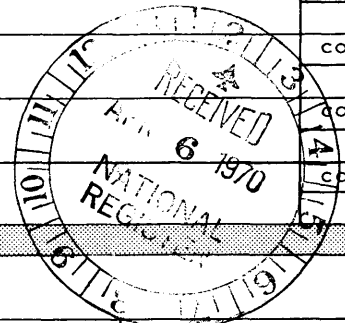
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	36°	28'	17"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	98°	25'	23"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

NO UTM
HL

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **c. 1 acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Kent Ruth**

ORGANIZATION: **Oklahoma Historical Society** DATE: **February 1970**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Historical Building**

CITY OR TOWN: **Oklahoma City** STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **35**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name *James N. Shu*

Title *Liaison officer for Oklahoma*

Date *25 III 70*

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Ernest Allen Connally
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

SEP 29 1970

Date _____

ATTEST:

William J. Murtagh
 Keeper of The National Register

Date **JUL 1970**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Oklahoma	
COUNTY	
Alfalfa	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70.10.35.0008	9/29/70

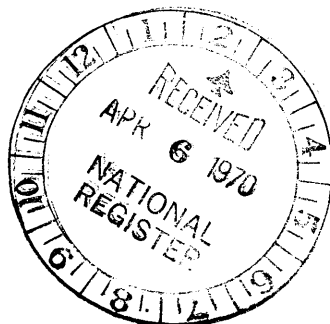
(Number all entries)

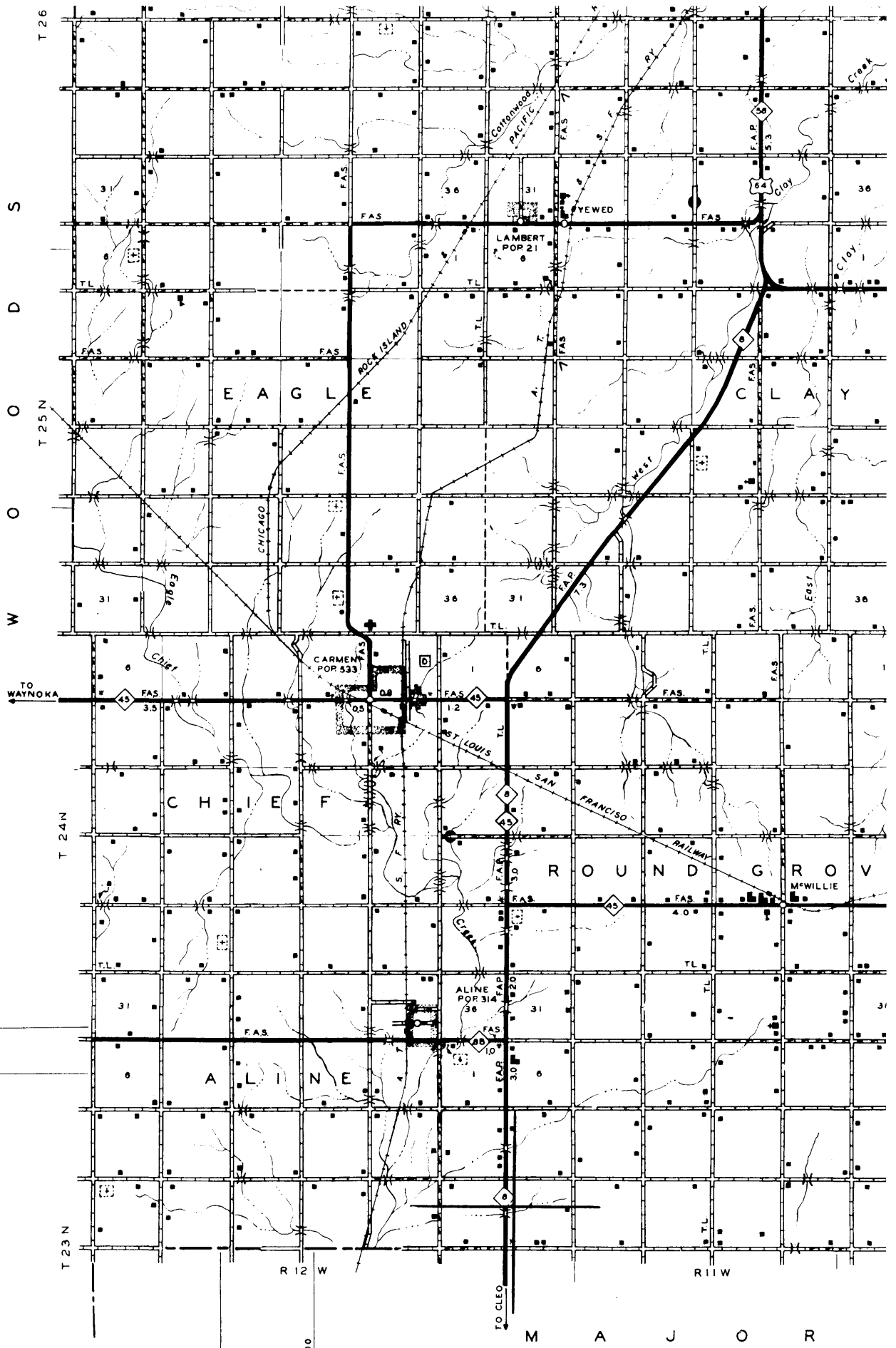
Sod House

8. Significance

Only necessary restoration work has been attempted - repair of two outside corners of the house, replacement of sod on the roof. Interior walls have been repainted with a substance similar to that used by Mr. McCully at the time of building. Aside from a cook stove, some quilts made by Mrs. McCully, and a few of Mr. McCully's tools, most of the furnishings of the house are not original, but merely representative of the homesteading period. (Ironically, most of the McCully belongings were destroyed in a fire a few years after the family moved out of the soddy.) Of the McCully home, Administrative Secretary Elmer L. Fraker of the Oklahoma Historical Society has this to say:

This sod house is of historical significance because it helps show how people lived in the early years of settlement on the great plains. The sod house, of cheap construction and ease of erection, had much to do with making it possible for homesteaders to exist during the early years of their newly acquired farms. Without the use of sod for houses, settlement of the great plains would have been much more difficult and greatly delayed.





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W
T 25 N
T 24 N
T 23 N

R 12 W R 11 W

M A J O R

530,000 FEET
36° 30'

1,860,000 FEET

96° 30'

TO WAYNOKA

TO CLEO

T 25 N

T 24 N

T 23 N

EAGLE

CLAY

CHIEF

ROUND GROVE

ALINE

LANBERT POP 21

CARMEN POP 533

ALINE POP 314

COTTONWOOD PACIFIC

ST. LOUIS

SAN FRANCISCO RAILWAY

VIEWED

CHICKAGO

CHICKAGO

CHICKAGO

CHICKAGO

CHICKAGO

CHICKAGO

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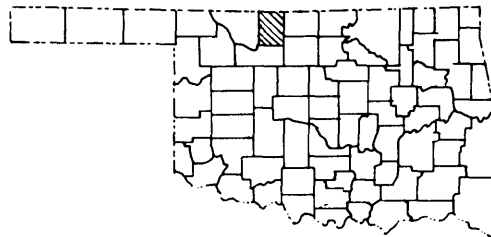
CHICKAGO

POPULATION FIGURES BASED ON 1960 US CENSUS
DRAINAGE FEATURES OBTAINED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

DATE OF INVENTORY
1964

REVISIONS

DATE	BY
7-1-66	JK
ALL DATA EXCEPT CULTURE	
1-1-67	JK
ALL DATA EXCEPT CULTURE	
1-1-68	M.B.
ALL DATA EXCEPT CULTURE	
1-1-69	AL
ALL DATA EXCEPT CULTURE	
1-1-70	LS
ALL DATA EXCEPT CULTURE	



GENERAL HIGHWAY MAP ALFALFA COUNTY OKLAHOMA

PREPARED BY THE
OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS
PLANNING DIVISION

IN COOPERATION WITH THE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS

SCALE



LAMBERT CONFORMAL CONIC PROJECTION U.S. COAST & GEODETIC SURVEY DATA 20000
FOOT GRID BASED ON PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM NORTH PROJECTION ZONE.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Oklahoma	
COUNTY Alfalfa	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70-10-35-0008	DATE 9/29/70

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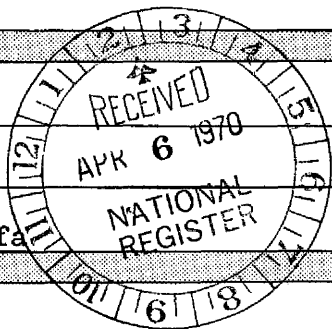
1. NAME

COMMON: The Sod House
AND/OR HISTORIC: The Marshall McCully Sod House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
NW 1/4 Sec. 18, T 23 N, R 11 W
CITY OR TOWN:
c. 1/2 m. N of Cleo Springs

STATE: Oklahoma	CODE 35	COUNTY: Alfalfa	CODE 003
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3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE:
Oklahoma State Highway Department County Map
SCALE: 1/2" = 1 mile
DATE: 1969

4. REQUIREMENTS

- TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. Property boundaries where required.
 2. North arrow.
 3. Latitude and longitude reference.