

Tips for Buying Mountain Properties

Buying properties in the mountains can be substantially different from purchasing in suburban areas. Because every property may present different issues, proper Due Diligence may include several other issues important to consider prior to closing. This is presented as a basic tutorial and as general information only.



1. **Seller's Property Disclosure.** This disclosure issued by the Seller will provide you with information regarding construction issues, plumbing, electrical, roofing, structural, landscaping, and a number of other concerns that will reveal the home's age and integrity. This document is a real confidence-builder to a Buyer.
2. **Square Footage Disclosure.** This disclosure issued by the Seller confirms the actual square footage registered by the city, county or municipal district, or an appraisal.
3. **Wells.** Remember this is the water your family will drink and bathe in for years. It's worth a few hundred dollars to test the well's water potability, recovery rate, and system issues. You may want to ask the testing service to test for radon, radium, uranium and other heavy hazardous elements. The State of Colorado issues well permits and regulates the types of wells for which a property is entitled. Ask Margaret about the state's standards.
4. **Water Rights.** You may purchase a property with a stream or lake within the boundaries. Unfortunately, that does not usually mean you will have rights to use the water. Margaret will suggest that the Seller disclose if water rights or water use are being transferred.
5. **Septic Systems.** Many counties have regulations that require the septic system be tested, cleaned and certified prior to Deed transfer. Regardless of municipal standards, Margaret will ask the Seller to verify that requirements have been met.
6. **Physical Inspections.** Margaret will suggest you invest in a Property Inspector. An inspector will take several hours to investigate everything from the furnace to the roof, then give you a report suggesting any basic systems or appliances that may need repairs or additional service.
7. **Specialists.** You may want to bring in a plumbing specialist, or a structural engineer, or even a forestry specialist to provide further investigation. Many mountain homes may be miles from fire and rescue departments. You may want to create "defensible space" around your home by clearing trees or shrubs that are close to the home and may become fodder for a fire. Ask Margaret about other specialists you may want to consider in your inspection process.
8. **Surveys, Plat Maps, Easements.** A Seller should disclose any information they know about plat maps, easements, and boundaries. While many folks do not know exactly where the property line is, a Buyer should ask and investigate the facts. Margaret will encourage you to invest in a survey or at least an Improvement Location Certificate (ILC). An easement or variance will appear in the Title Commitment. Occasionally, an attorney is necessary to prepare the proper legal documents.
9. **Title Commitment and Deeds.** The Seller will contract a Title Company to insure the line of title ownership and pay for Title Insurance for the Buyer. Talk with your attorney and accountants as to how you would like to take ownership of the property. Ask Margaret about the different types of Title Ownership and Deeds.
10. **Insurance.** Margaret will advise you to talk with your insurance company during Due Diligence to confirm that the new home can be insured.