

## BEST WEBSITES TO USE TO BEGIN YOUR SEARCH FOR COUNTRY or HOMESTEAD PROPERTY



These are not listed in any particular order.

### [zillow.com](https://www.zillow.com)

Has a *price/tax history* that tells if the property has been listed recently at a higher or lower price and usually gives the acreage on land parcels. **Beware** of the *Zestimate* feature! It supposedly lets you know the property's actual value but this appears to be based on the 120 biggest markets (cities) or on some formula that is applied across the board nation wide.

There are many instances where the Zestimated value for rural land is thousands of dollars above that property's real value! Likewise, be extremely suspicious if the property is listed for 3 or 4 times the most recent Property Tax Assessment or with no listed property tax record.

### [realtor.com](https://www.realtor.com)

Has an *Around the neighborhood* feature that gives a price/square foot of any house on the property. Look carefully at that price and compare the rural housing price to the housing price in the nearest town and the State average - both of which may be listed on the website.

As a general rule, a rural house should not be more expensive per square foot than a house in town or than the State average.

Also; *be cautious* about property without indoor bathrooms and septic systems. If the water source is a spring, creek or river instead of a well the price *should not* be above the price/square foot in the nearest town or the State average.

**Note:** [realtor.com](http://realtor.com) seems to be for western States. [realty.com](http://realty.com) seems to be the same type of website for the eastern States.

#### [trulia.com](http://trulia.com)

Has a feature called *See reported crimes near this home* that may be of interest in rural homes. Compare *Home Details* (Realtor's description) with *Public Records* (both accessed on website) to see if acreage is the same in both places. You may find that the *Home Details* says *10 acres* but the *Public Records* says 9.86 acres.

Also *beware* of Realtor's statements such as *perc tested and septic approved in 2009*. (an actual statement on a parcel of land in my area listed for sale recently). In many cases the local public health department's septic approval is only good for a specified period of time such as one year.

To extend the approval longer usually requires an additional fee and there is a maximum period of time that the permit can be extended. (In my area the initial cost of a perc test and a septic permit is over \$900.00 and is good for one year. The permit can be extended for an additional year for an additional fee of \$100.00/year but can only be extended for a maximum of 5 years. So in the property listed in my county that said *perc tested and septic approved in 2009* means absolutely nothing except that it was approved in 2009.)

To get current approval for septic would require a new test fee of over \$900.00 and if the land passed again, a permit would be issued.

#### [remax.com](http://remax.com)

Has limited information and may not list the acreage of parcels of undeveloped (raw) land. Information may be limited to price, days the listing has been on the website, square footage of the house and number of bedrooms if there is a house on the land.

### [homes.com](http://homes.com)

Usually has pictures and price plus price per square foot. **Note:** what may seem to be conflicting information on a house such as *Heating: Radiant Space Heaters* and *Heating Fuels: Wood* on a rural home may mean that the heat is supplemented in winter by a wood burning stove.

### [unitedcountry.com](http://unitedcountry.com)

This is the website for United Country Real Estate, one of the oldest and most respected nationwide realty companies in the US. They list country homes, ranches, farms, and undeveloped land. They have listings in most States. Search their listings using *key words* such as “Country Homes with 10-20 acres”.

### [Craigslist.com](http://Craigslist.com)

Sometimes has land and country homes for sale. May be under *Real Estate for sale and the properties are usually for sale by private owner or FSBO* (For Sale By Owner). There may not be a picture and just a bare minimum written description and contact information limited to a phone number or e-mail address. Don't let this discourage you. I know more than one family who have found their country home on Craig's List.

These websites usually have listings by *State* and many times by *County* as well as by *City*. Watch out for remote rural land listed by a Realtor! Many times a Realtor lists remote land for the same price per acre as land that is out of the city limits but is on a paved or county maintained gravel road. Remote rural land, especially land on a private maintained road is not worth what land on a paved or county maintained gravel road is worth and land values *decrease* as distance from town *increases!*

*Foreclosure Websites:* Occasionally you may find a good country property on a foreclosure website. However, I *do not* recommend you searching for property this way because, you typically have to give credit card information and pay a monthly fee to access the website and make any offers through a Realtor. I will mention 3 Foreclosure Websites:

### [HUDHomes.com](http://HUDHomes.com)

Is probably the most reputable foreclosure website. It lists land nationwide that did not sell at a foreclosure sale. You must register and give a credit card number to be able to get the details on houses and land. After registering you have a 7 day free trial before your credit card will be billed a monthly fee, automatically, unless you cancel the registration. If you find a property you like, you must bid on the property through a Realtor.

### [HomePath.com](http://HomePath.com)

Foreclosure website for Fannie Mae. Only lists homes that are usually in residential (urban or suburban) areas and does not list land.

### [RealtyTrac.com](http://RealtyTrac.com)

**This is a good website to AVOID!** It has been reported numerous times for *rude personnel* who go ahead and bill credit cards even after the card holder has *cancelled a subscription*.

It seems to be very difficult to get the money refunded after a credit card has been billed and there are several reports of homes being listed that have never been in foreclosure. CAVET EMPTOR!