



REFRESHING PROPERTY BOUNDARY MARKINGS

Revised January 24, 2025

Good fences make good neighbors.

—Robert Frost, “Mending Wall”

Only licensed surveyors can make property boundary demarcations—like cutting and painting new tree blazes, installing corner monuments and pins, and so on. Vermont state law allows property owners to maintain existing surveyed boundary monumentation. You can and should refresh the paint on your tree blazes and existing monumentation, and clear fallen debris away from surveyed boundary markings to keep your boundaries visible.

The process of locating existing boundary markings can be a lot like a treasure hunt, since blazes can be hard to find if paint has faded and hatchet scars healed over. Refreshing boundary paint work every 5 years will give you and your neighbors a shared understanding of the lay of the land, avoiding accidental trespass. Such regular boundary maintenance, by you or your forester, will also avoid the expense of hiring a surveyor to reestablish lost boundary marks. Contact Vermont Family Forests if you’re interested in having our conservation forester help with this.

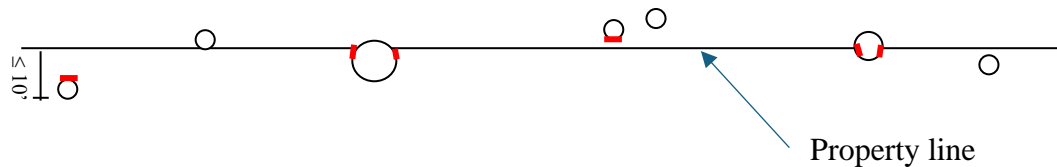
Important notes before getting started

- It’s best to let neighbors know in advance that you plan to refresh the boundary markings.
- Be sure to only refresh existing boundary blazes where you actually see old paint—do not add new blazes.
- It’s best to apply paint when the trees are dry.
- When repainting a blaze, leave a small patch of the existing paint visible as reference (don’t paint over it completely.)
- Work as neatly and tidily as possible.
- One mile of boundary line generally requires one gallon of high-quality paint. VFF tested latex paint and found that it did not hold up nearly as well as oil-based paint. We now recommend and use Nelson Boundary Paint – RED, brush type.

Instructions for refreshing boundary markings

- 1. Identify your boundaries.** Using your survey map or UVA property map, walk the boundary to identify the blazes and monumentation with which the surveyor marked the property boundaries. UVA maps created by VFF are digitally compatible with the free Avenza mapping program. By downloading this map app to a smartphone, and uploading your VFF map to the app, you can see not only see your property, but also where you are on the map in real time.

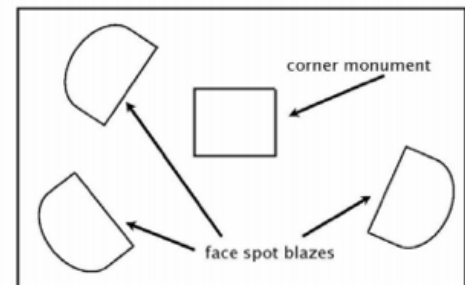
2. **Repaint blazes** with brightly colored, oil-based paint, leaving some of the old paint visible.



- Surveyors blaze **centerline trees** (trees located right on the property line) on either side of the tree where the property line intersects with the trunk. Refresh the paint on those blazes with a 2"x6" vertical mark at each point.
- Surveyors mark **trees on either side and within 10 feet of the property line** with a blaze that faces the boundary line. Refresh these blazes with a single 3- to 4-inch-wide band facing the property line.
- **Corner monumentation** is usually marked on 3 witness trees located within 5' of the corner. These witness trees each receive three 3- to 4-inch-wide bands on the side of the tree directly facing the corner stake or post. It's best to simply flag monumentation if there is any doubt about its location.

3. **Cut away limbs or brush** that hide existing blazes from view.

4. **Maintain corner monuments** by cutting away brush and dead limbs around the monument. Simply flag the monumentation if there is any doubt about its location. Paint only the monument itself, not the whole mound of stones. Repaint witness tree blazes. If the monument is in bad shape or missing, contact a licensed land surveyor to perform re-monumentation.



VFF landowner Chris Runcie refreshes her property boundaries. Note the old blue paint still visible near the fresh paint.