WHAT TO KNOW PRIOR TO BUYING LAND

When purchasing land to build your new home, there are a few things that mustbe included in the ratified land contract to protect yourself.

Make sure that your land contract is contingent upon the following:

* 1. Get a **soil test** to verify that the lot is suitable for a septic system to accommodate the house you want to build. If the lot is on public water/sewer, verify tap fees and connection fees. You do not want to be surprised with a lot that doesn’t perc or one that requires an alternative septic system that will be cost prohibitive due to the conditions.
		1. A percolation test, or perc test, is a procedure performed to review water drainage in different soils. It determines how long it takes for the soil to drain moisture. It is important for many uses, such as when designing a leach field for a septic system, planning a building design, or considering agricultural use of the land.
	2. Obtain **well and septic** estimates if applicable. Make sure that the well and septic estimates are within your budget before closing on the land.
	3. Obtain a **shrink / swell soil report** to determine if the soil is suitable for a standard house foundation.
		1. This is a report that tests how the soil shrinks and swells when it becomes wet and dries out. Soil that expands or shrinks too much can cause foundational issues and structural settling and may not be buildable.
	4. Verification of the **locality building setbacks** to determine if the footprint of the home you want to build will fit within those setbacks.
		1. Setback lines refer to the distance (feet)a house must be from the front, side, and rear property lines. Setbacks allow for access to underground utilities and distance between properties.
	5. Verification of any **wetlands or flood plains** that may affect the building of your new home.
	6. A **45 to 60 day feasibility study** to allow the time necessary to address all the above.
1. Make sure the land contract is set to **close at least 60 to 75 days from the date of contract ratification** as it takes time to obtain and finalize your land financing. The appraisal that will be done must include both the value of the land and the value of the home that you will be building, so this requires that your floor plans be drawn and agreed upon by you prior to the appraisal be ordered.