

# Who owns the moon?

Business



When I was a kid, I always wondered who owned the moon. I mean certainly you own the ground in which is your property. But do you own the tiny triangle shaped wedge going to the center of the earth.

Of course you don't own the sky above your head, your government does. After all, you have no say in what planes fly over your house. But the only reason the government can claim this space is because it is directly over their land. But seeing as how the earth is constantly rotating, on its axis and around the sun, who owns things like the moon, or the planets? It was following a little research based on these questions that I discovered something called the " United Nations Outer Space Treaty". 102 countries have signed this treaty, including the U. S.

, Russia, China, Japan, U. K., and relatively every other nation save a few African and South American countries. The treaty starts out by stating that no country may put nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction in orbit, on the moon, or any other celestial body. The treaty continues to state that the moon and other celestial bodies are to only be used for peaceful purposes.

It states that they are the common heritage of mankind. No state may claim territory either, although if they launch an object into space, they are responsible for that object and any damages that it causes. After this treaty was ratified, the Moon Treaty was proposed to put all space activities under the jurisdiction of the international committee opposed to the original treaty where each state takes care of their own exploration. This treaty is mostly regarded as a failure, with major signatories including India, France,

Pakistan, Australia, and Mexico, no space capable nation has signed it.

Needless to say, space law is ambiguous at best.

Many legal scholars still argue whether the treaty prohibits or allows occupation. Certainly you can't claim the land you choose to occupy, but you can claim the object you reside in. It is confounding that you are allowed to own the object, but not the space that it takes up. Now hold on you might be thinking. I'm one of the people who purchased some lunar land, what about me? Well the unfortunate fact is that your " deed" has no real legal standing.

Back in the 1980's, an unemployed man named Dennis Hope had a little read through of the Outer Space Treaty and realized that no state may own outer space, but it says nothing about individuals. So he sent a letter to the U. N., from which he never heard back because they mostly assumed him crazy and so he took that to mean he could sell portions of outer space. Of course, he got rich.

Since then he claims to have sold 611 million acres of outer space property. These plots, (depending on where) average about \$36. 50 USD after " lunar tax" and what not. He once sold 2. 66 million acres for \$250, 000 USD to one individual. Also, he is selling Pluto for that same price.

He has sold plots to George H. W. Bush, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan. He is also president of the Galactic Government which includes all the land owners he has sold to (and it looks good on his Resume). Although I doubt he'd ever need a job, after all, with all the helium 3 deposits he owns, he is worth about \$6 quadrillion USD.

But Hope isn't the only lunatic to make his claim. Back in 1953 Jenaro Gajardo Vera claimed the moon was his. But Martin Juergens of Germany has him beat even, after all, back in 1756 the Prussian King Frederick the Great gave the moon to his family and it has been passed down for generations. If you are looking for some lunar land but don't quite have that much money, you are in luck Robert R. Coles has been selling them for quite some time for only \$1 USD per acre.

Gregory W. Nemitz also made a few space bucks, after his company, Orbital Development claimed an asteroid that NASA later landed a probe on. He made sure to send NASA the \$20 dollar parking bill. So who owns the moon? Everybody... and nobody really. You might think you own a little although if you check the fine print more often, you should note that you have bought a "novelty item".

But cheer up, there are over 200 billion stars in our galaxy alone, and there are billions of galaxies. You being a member of humankind are in ownership of all that, the Outer Space Treaty says so. It's funny how we claim to own the universe, when we only know such a small part of it. Who are we? We find that we live on an insignificant planet of a humdrum star lost in a galaxy tucked away in some forgotten corner of a universe in which there are far more galaxies than people. -Carl Sagan