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Subject: : Gear Talk

Topic: : Good maps?

Re: Good maps?

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URL:

jayL:

Are you talking about paper maps, software based maps or both? If you want paper maps you will more than likely have to buy two different types; topographic & street. For the street maps nothing beats the ADC book maps you can find at just about any Wawa. You may have to buy a few to get all counties you want. The ADC maps will give you all the roads but not all the waterways; for that you will need a topo map.

For the topo maps get a Delorme Pennsylvania Gazetteer. It is also a book map, similar to the ADC map but as a road map it leaves a LOT to be desired. You could also buy individual USGS 7.5 minute quad maps at a hiking/camping store like REI but they are EXPENSIVE when you have to buy a lot of them which you will to cover that much area. A USGS 7.5' Quad is an area in the northern US of about 49 square miles. While quads offer a lot more detail than a regular topo map or Topo USA; the road information is lousy. Be advised that many topo maps are based on USGS surveys, many of which were done MANY years ago so you may find errors especially when it comes to roads and access points. Like most topo maps; using a quad map as a road map will leave A LOT to be desired.

If you are talking about computer software based maps I use 4 different map programs because ALL of them have shortcomings. For a basic road map program that does everything that Mapquest does and more check out Microsoft Streets & Trips. It is an excellent road map program that you can buy at Staples BUT it doesn't have many waterways in it. You CAN print out any map you create with it so you can transport maps.

For really good topographic and road map combination software, check out Delorme Topo USA. You can buy the whole US or just the Eastern Region on CD or DVD. Topo USA will give you both topo mapping & road mapping and both maps are pretty good with lots of other features. Topo USA will also give you turn by turn directions and you can print out any map you create. If you want to get a lot more detail for extra \$\$\$ you can add USGS 7.5 minute quad maps to Topo USA or even aerial or satellite views.

Finally for the ultimate in finding places you can always take the big plunge and buy a handheld GPS and the requisite map software which will give you directions right to the creek. With most GPS's you will need BOTH street map & topo map software which when added to the price of the GPS will get you close to \$500. Topo USA software will NOT work with another manufacturer's GPS but Delorme just came out with a new GPS called Earthmate GPS PN-20 that will work with the Topo USA software but I haven't heard enough about it yet to comment.

All I can tell you I have spent an EXTREMELY large amount of time and money mapping and searching for streams all over the state and country and I haven't found ONE product, program, map or the like that does it all. Sometimes cross referencing multiple sources and using a compass is the only way I have found some

places. All of the maps out there seem to be missing something so it can get frustrating although in the counties you are interested in; it shouldn't be TOO bad.

BTW, you won't find anything that will tell you access information or ownership in detail; unfortunately that you have to find out the hard way.

Good luck and good hunting!