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Subject: : Tips and Tricks

Topic: : guesing width of small streams from maps

Re: guesing width of small streams from maps

Author: : pcray1231

Date: : 2013/8/21 9:24:55

URL:

Part of it depends on WHERE in the state it is.

W and NW of the ridge and valley province, on the plateau, stream length is an excellent indicator of how big it is. Streams all start small and grow at a rather consistent rate.

Excepting limestone regions, "catchment" size is probably the better determiner in the ridge and valley province, such as the pocono's. That can be tricky, though. Unlike plateau regions, which are virtually 100% sloped so it's easy to tell, there's lots of flat area. Fairly large streams sometimes "appear" virtually out of nowhere. Their catchment basins are actually appropriately large, but that's not so apparant from a topo map. That large flat ridge drains into 7 different streams, all of which don't seem to start to form valleys until the ridgeline.

Also, in very rocky terrain, on steeper slopes much of the water flow may actually be underground, in the rocks and rubble, rather than on the surface. Meaning flow is actually much larger than what it apepars when you walk along it. Likewise, small streams can sometimes fish bigger than they are, if they have large pools. I call it the bathtub effect. You can have a trickle or a torrent between "bathtubs", but the size of the bathtub is often what matters.

And in limestone, things are are really weird. Water can sink, flow underground, go underneath one stream and emerge in the next one over! Full fledged rivers can emerge out of nowhere, with seemingly tiny watersheds.