

When I go on hikes that I am leading or one lead by others I always want a copy of their maps so that I know where I am and what features to look for. On my bushwhacking trips I have some times as many as five different maps of the same area each with a different content of some kind. I tend to set things down when I take a break and get up and walk off leaving the charts behind. Sometime I am sweating so much or I drop the map on wet ground that the ink from my printer runs or smears and the charts become useless so I always have a second set in a zip lock bag in my pack. I am always a bit amazed at how many people don't really care about the map and are happy to just tag along. I used to have an extensive collection of topo, park and other maps which I was quite proud off. They got accidentally left behind in a file cabinet on our last move though. However by that time with personal computers, the internet, and GPS hard copy maps are a thing of the past as is paying for most of them. Now you find the right map on your computer and then cut out and past just the section you want and in any size desired limited only by your printer.

Sometimes I do break down and take a disc of a special map or section to FedEx (formerly Kinko's) and get them to print out a big 2x3 foot version. I see people using the National Geographic maps but they are too small in resolution. The only good they are to me is showing the current boundaries of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the location of the trails. Then I have to lay the appropriate section on my scanner and blow it up about 300%.

I have been fortunate to collect some I think invaluable maps sites which I thought might be useful to other club members not to mention saving them money and file space. So I have listed some of the more useful ones as follows:

Maps of the Great Smoky Mountains

[http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/nphhtml/gsmhome.html#em"](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/nphhtml/gsmhome.html#em)
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/nphhtml/gsmhome.html#em>

This site has the history of maps of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and sites to click on leading to an almost innumerable list of maps. If you can figure out how to download the individual maps you can have them have them readily available on your PC and export sections to save as separate files and to make notes on. Particularly useful to guys like me looking for a lot of pre-park features are the 1929 Topos and the 1931 east and west maps.

Smoky Mountain Hiking Trails

[http://web.eecs.utk.edu/~dunigan/gsmnp/trails.php"](http://web.eecs.utk.edu/~dunigan/gsmnp/trails.php)
<http://web.eecs.utk.edu/~dunigan/gsmnp/trails.php>

This site provides more sites to click on with more information than you might want to know about all the trails in the Park including contours, aerial photos, and profiles.

North Carolina Maps

<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/search/collection/ncmaps/searchterm/Swain%20County/field/spatia/mode/exact/conn/and/order/date!title/ad/asc/cosuppress/0>

This site provides road maps for each of the counties of North Carolina going back to the late 1800s.

Horace Kephart Notebook and Maps

[http://wcudigitalcollection.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p16232coll8/id/556/rec/347"](http://wcudigitalcollection.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p16232coll8/id/556/rec/347)

For Kephart and Smokies fans this site provides a copy of his notebooks with pictures, notes and maps of the mountains in the early 1900's. It takes a while to get comfortable with using this site though.

USGS Map Site

[http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/topomaps/f?p=262:1:3583696912705615"](http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/topomaps/f?p=262:1:3583696912705615)
<http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/topomaps/f?p=262:1:3583696912705615>

I have in my opinion possibly saved the best until last. On this site you can get a downloadable PDF copy of virtually any map USGS has made. Of particular use to us outdoor type are the 1/24000 topo maps. They have every one for each location that they have ever done (at least in theory). All you have to know is the "exact" name of the map and enter it. That is not always so easy as for example the maps of the pre Fontana era and area had different names before they were partially inundated. So if you want a copy of the maps from the 1930/s or 40's you have to work a little harder. So the key is to find a map that is close by that you know the name of. Then the names of the adjoining maps are on the margins on each side so you can work your way to the desired chart. I did not know the name of the map where I live which is outside of Asheville. I figured the map including Asheville was probably called Asheville which it was. The margin in my directions said "Oteen". I had no idea what that referred to but found that it refers to the little community on the west side of the VA hospital. I think if they were doing it over it might be called Swannanoa or Fairview.

So you now no longer need to keep a file of those old expensive unwieldy topo maps. The use of sites like these has become so pervasive that the TVA has closed its formerly invaluable map shop in Chattanooga.

Even if you are not a map freak like me I hope you find these sites fun to peruse and useful in facilitating and enhancing your outdoor excursions. You can use the money you save to by a new pair of hiking socks!!

