

# Understanding Maps...

## Shasta-Trinity National Forest



There are basically two types of maps which cover the Shasta-Trinity National Forest: 1/2" to the mile Recreation Maps and various scale topographic maps. The Forest Recreation Map shows detail in a flat, two dimensional, or planimetric way. Topographic maps add a third dimension, that of depth, by means of elevational lines known as contour lines that are measured in feet or meters above sea level. Wilderness maps published by the Forest Service are topographic.

### Recreation Maps...

The most widely used maps are probably the Forest Recreation Maps. These maps, which cover an entire National Forest, show the locations of land features, roads, streams, campgrounds, lakes and trails.

Two kinds of coordinate systems can be found on these maps. The most commonly used system is the township grid. The 36 square mile townships are placed in a grid pattern, using east-west and north-south running base meridians as the main orientation lines. Townships are numbered from north to south and east to west of these base meridians.

North-south orientation is noted in the right hand (east) and left hand (west) margins of the map and indicated thusly: T1N, T1S etc.

East-west orientation is noted in the top (north) and bottom (south) margins of the map and indicated thusly: R1E, R1S etc.

<b>R. 6W.</b>						
6	5	4	3	2	1	
7	8	9	10	11	12	
18	17	16	15	14	13	<b>T. 36 N.</b>
19	20	21	22	23	24	
30	29	28	27	26	25	
31	32	33	34	35	36	

The Township grid is further broken down into a system of 36 one square mile sections. These sections are numbered in the following manner:

Forest visitors may encounter "location posters" or "K tags." These yellow, metal signs show one's location by section, township and range.

The second coordinate system shown on the Forest Recreation map is longitude and latitude. Longitude is expressed in degrees, minutes and seconds west from Greenwich. Latitude is expressed in the same increments north of the equator. This system is rarely used by the Forest Service. It is, however, the basis of measurement for 7.5 and 15 minute topographic maps. Latitude and Longitude are shown in 7.5 minute increments on Forest Service Recreation Maps.

### Topographic Maps...

Topographic maps are most commonly referred to as quad maps or topo maps. These maps are usually published by the U.S. Geological Survey, although the Forest Service Wilderness Maps are also topographic and cover the entire wilderness area. There are also some private publishers of topographic maps.

The most notable feature of a topo map is the contour lines. Contour lines are thin brown lines which connect points of equal ground elevation. By studying the contour lines one can determine the general shape or form of the land.

The vertical distance between contour lines is known as the contour interval. Most maps have the contour interval printed in the map legend, or immediately under the map scale. Contour line intervals are usually 40 feet for 7.5 minute maps, and 80 feet for 15 minute maps (this can vary with different kinds of terrain).

Like the recreation map, the topo map has the township grid and longitude and latitude noted in the margins. Additionally, the map includes a Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) grid, which is a metric system rarely used by Forest Visitors.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410, or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity provider and employer.



Shasta-Trinity National Forest

