

# Foundational Skills Series

## Land Navigation



### Colors Used on Modern Maps

The first maps used in the U.S. were enhanced, two or three-color topographic maps with details added such as water (lakes and streams), rock features (cliffs and boulders) and vegetation boundaries. Now, most maps contain five colors, and in some cases six, and provide much greater information.

#### *Brown: Land Forms*

Contour lines are indicated in brown. Differences in elevation of land forms are shown with a contour interval indicated in the margin of the map. Additional symbols are provided to show depression, pit, broken ground, cut or fill.



#### *Black: Man-made Objects*

Black indicates man-made objects including roads, trails, power lines, stone walls, fences, and buildings. It can also be used to indicate boulders, boulder fields and clusters.

#### *Blue: Water Features*

Blue represents lakes, ponds, rivers, water channels, marshes, wells, and any significant body of water.

#### *Green / White / Yellow: Vegetation*

This group of colors covers vegetation. Green means a forest of moderate thickness, and on many newer maps, the darker the green, the thicker the forest. White is typically open field or open minimally forested areas. Yellow is used on some maps to show open areas such as cultivated fields. Green vertical stripes are often used to indicate undergrowth.

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### *Magenta and Pink: Updates From Previous Versions*

Magenta and pink are used on some maps to indicate updates or changes to the current version of the map that have been made and documented during the most recent re-survey or review of data. New construction or any changes in of bodies of water or prominent features since the last map publication are all indicated using magenta.

The uses of different colors described are the standard used on United States Geological Survey maps (USGS). Many orienteering maps use the same colors with some variations. Information provided in the margin information of each map will indicate specific colors used on each particular map.