

PERMANENT ORIENTEERING COURSE

WIND CREEK STATE PARK (2016)

WHAT IS ORIENTEERING?

The skill which enables a person to navigate with a map. In the competitive sport, the winner is the person who finishes in the shortest time. However, many orienteers are more interested in enjoying the outdoors, and walk at their own speed. There are orienteers 2 years old and orienteers 80 years old.

WHAT DO I DO IF I GET LOST?

First of all, you might think you are lost, but you are not really. Wherever you are, you can get to a major feature in about 10 minutes: road to the north, west, and south; lake to the east. When you decide you are lost, head south. This should bring you to the road you came in on (North Picnic Road). If you encounter the sewage treatment pond, turn and head east. This will take you to North Picnic Road.

HOW DIFFICULT IS THIS COURSE?

This course has been set up so that a complete newcomer can finish in one to two hours at a gentle walking pace. Most of the course is on or near trails, but some off trail navigation is required to visit all 10 controls. The navigation is easy and should not distract from the pleasant surroundings. During the summer months, the vegetation may make off trail navigation a little difficult. During the winter, you should not have too much trouble getting off the trails. In orienteering terms, this is a beginner to advanced-beginner level course.

HOW FAR IS IT?

If you visit the controls 1 through 10 as described below, you will travel approximately 3 km or about 2 miles. This course is sufficient for BSA First Class requirement 4a: Using a compass, complete an orienteering course that covers at least one mile and requires measuring the height and/or width of designated items (tree, tower, canyon, ditch, etc.). Measure the height of a tree after navigating the course to complete the requirement.

THE MAP

The most difficult part of reading an orienteering map is understanding the contours. The contours on the map are at 3 meter intervals (about 10 feet). Moving from one contour line to another, you will either gain or lose 3 meters in elevation. However, this course can be completed without any knowledge of contours. Pay attention to trails and to trail junctions. They are pretty accurate on the map. However, during the summer, some of them may be a little hard to follow.

For those who have a compass, the vertical lines with the black triangles on the map are north-south lines known as meridians, pointing to magnetic north.

Orienteering is an international sport which is why all orienteering maps are in meters. The scale of this map is 1:5,000. This means that 1 cm on the map is 50 meters on the ground (1 inch = 139 yards).

WHITE areas – open woods

YELLOW areas – fields

GREEN areas – denser vegetation

BLUE – water features

BLACK – man made (buildings, roads, trails,) and rock features (boulders, cliffs....)

BROWN – land features (contour lines, ditches, pits,....)

The map has plenty of detail which means you do not need to rely too much on the compass. Pay attention to the various features (trails, streams, boulders, etc.) shown on the map to keep track of your location. Orienteering is more about reading and understanding the map - not shooting azimuths and pacing.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE (Controls 1-10):

To reach the beginning of the course drive east half-a-mile from the park office until you reach the beach area on your right. Turn left on North Picnic Road, and drive .6 miles to the end of the road. Park your car and walk to the turn-around circle at the end of North Picnic Road to start the course. The controls are made from 4"x4" treated posts that are about 2.5 feet tall. Each control has the control number and an orange orienteering symbol engraved into the front of the post.

For the rest of the course just follow the directions:

1 –TRAIL JUNCTION – N side

(Trail indicated by dashed black line on an orienteering map)

From the turn-around circle, go north a very short distance to the start of the trail. Control 1 is located a short distance along the trail on the north side of the first trail junction.

2 – BOULDER, .5 meter – N side

(Boulder indicated by a black dot on an orienteering map)

From Control 1, head north east along the nature trail for 250 meters. As you go along, look to the left (north) for a reentrant with a small boulder that is about .5 meter in height that is a short distance north of the trail. Control 2 is located behind the boulder (N side).

3 – TRAIL, eastern end – N side

(Trail indicated by dashed black line on an orienteering map)

From Control 2, return to the trail and continue north east until you come to a major trail junction. Go right (east) and continue to the end of the trail. Control 3 is located to the left (N side) at the edge of the lake.

4 – HILL – N side

(Hill indicated by a closed contour line on an orienteering map)

From Control 3, head west on the trail along the ridge for about 550 meters. Control 4 is on the right (north) side of the trail.

5 – DITCH – lower part

(Ditch indicated by a brown dotted line on an orienteering map)

From Control 4, head downhill cross country northeast. Cross the trail. There are some very steep areas just north of the trail (indicated by close contour lines). At the bottom you will cross a small stream which may be dry at times. Continue toward the lake inlet. Control 5 will be on your left (north) at the lower part of the ditch.

6 – ROCKY GROUND – NE part

(Rocky ground indicated by several black triangles close together on an orienteering map)

From Control 5, head north up the hill where you will find the nature trail. Go right (east/north-east) and follow the trail around to the small peninsula. Leave the trail and continue heading east when the trail turns back to the west. Control 6 will be in the north-east part of the peninsula.

7 – HILL

(Hill indicated by a closed contour line on an orienteering map)

From Control 6, continue northwest along the nature trail. The trail will make several turns and gain elevation. At the highest point along the trail, leave the trail and proceed north to the top of the hill. Control 7 is located at the top of the hill, just south of the road. You should not cross the road.

8 – REENTRANT – Upper part

(Reentrant indicated by a group of contour lines that form several U's on an orienteering map)
From Control 7, return to the trail and continue southwest. The trail will make several turns and lose elevation, cross a small stream and gain elevation. At the trail junction go right (west) about 100 meters up the trail. Control 8 is located at the upper part of the reentrant left of the trail. If you go too far, you will reach the top of a hill where the trail turns left (to the southwest).

9 – HILL

(Hill indicated by a closed contour line on an orienteering map)
From Control 8, return to the trail (head east from the control 8), head downhill/east back to the trail junction. Continue south/southeast along the trail for about 100 meters. Leave the trail and head south to the top of the hill. Control 9 is located at the top of the hill.

10 – BEND IN ROAD – NW side (between trails)

(Road indicated by a solid black (and brown) line on an orienteering map)
From Control 9, head downhill (south) for about 100 meters where you will find a trail. Go (south) on the trail and continue to the end of the trail where it meets the road. Control 10 will be on north side of the road behind the guardrail above the stream.

FINISH (back to the turnaround)

From Control 10, continue east along North Picnic Road back to the turn-around at the end of the road.

We hope you enjoyed this course.

For additional challenge

Try visiting the controls out of sequence. That is, you may want to go from 1 to 5 to 9 to 7 to 4..... or some other combination.

For more information on orienteering, visit the following web sites:

Vulcan Orienteering Club
(local orienteering club in Alabama)

www.vulcanorienteering.org

Orienteering USA
(national organization for orienteering in the United States)

www.orienteingusa.org