

C.M. Crockett Park Orienteering Courses

WELCOME!

Learning to use a map and compass together can be a challenging and also a rewarding experience. The park orienteering courses are user-friendly including a beginner course (for practice) and advanced course(s) for more determined individuals and groups. The original courses were laid-out by an Eagle Scout years ago, and have recently been verified and updated with compass, GPS, and the latest mapping software.

LOCATION

The C.M. Crockett Park Orienteering Courses are located at C.M. Crockett Park, 10066 Rogues Road in Midland, VA 22728. The park is owned and operated by the Fauquier County Parks & Recreation Dept.

PARK HOURS: The park is open 365 days/year dawn to dusk. Please be aware dawn & dusk times change with the season, so for example the park opens later and closes earlier in winter than mid-summer. The concession stand where you may obtain maps and directions for the courses is open weekends only March – Memorial Day, daily Memorial Day – Labor Day, and weekends Labor Day – the end of Oct. All days are 7am – dusk. If you want to visit the course(s) another time call the park office 540-788-4867 to obtain maps & course instructions.

DIRECTIONS: From Warrenton, VA area: Take Lee Hwy 15/29 South, Take RT 29 to Meetze Road exit RT 643, Take a left at stop sign at top of exit ramp onto Meetze Road, Follow RT 643 for 6.5 miles; sign on right C.M. Crockett Park, Turn right on Rt 602 (Rogues Road) proceed .5 miles to park main gate.

COURSE USE

The courses are designed for individuals, families, or groups. The terrain is of moderate grade, but you can expect to traverse some hills and to go through brush areas. The advanced courses do NOT follow the established trails. Maps, instructions, and the bearings & distances for the courses are available at the park office or printable from this website. A fully instructional sign on map & compass use is located at the start of the Beginner Course.

- Bringing your own compass is recommended. A Silva brand starter compass works very well (around \$10.)
- PRACTICE using the compass before beginning the advanced course; you can do so on the 'beginner course' which has few obstructions. Or, bring an experienced person along. There is also a pacing area at the beginner course to measure your two-step pace.
- In all seasons except winter wear insect repellent, and bring water to drink.
- The orienteering courses at C.M. Crockett Park are to magnetic north, do not set any adjustment on your compass for declination.
- Always hike with a partner, especially if this is your first time using a map and compass.
- Do the contours of the land match those on the map? (This can be helpful.)
- Print out the Beginner Course map and Advance Course map(s) from attached pages.

IF LOST: Hike downhill toward the lake, at the shore turn left and follow shore to park office.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Course Name	Description	Terrain	Notes
Beginner Course	Designed for practice of compass and pacing skills	Easy	Mostly grass areas
Germantown Course	A good challenge for even those experienced with map & compass as it is in forested area, foresights and backsights are limited.	Moderate with one long up-slope	Travels through mature forest with some brushy areas
Great Blue Heron Course	Under development	Moderate	Travels through mature forest with some brushy areas

*Tip: When walking upslope or downslope people shorten their pace. When going upslope because it is hard to stretch as far as your normal-length step, and when going downslope to avoid tripping! If you have not reached a certain marker for the next bearing and distance, consider continuing to walk on the same bearing, keeping a sharp lookout for the marker.

HOW TO USE A COMPASS

1. First find the "Direction of Travel Arrow" on the compass baseplate (see attached picture of compass.) Now turn the dial on the compass so that the "N" for North is exactly in line with the direction-of-travel arrow. Now hold the compass flat in your hand a little away from your body and any metal like belt buckles. Now turn your body, holding the compass flat in your hand until the Red end of the floating magnetic needle inside the compass is also exactly in line with the direction-of-travel arrow and the "N." Now everything on your compass is dialed in to magnetic north and you are also facing exactly north. If you have done this correctly, the red end of the floating magnetic needle inside the compass will be in line with the large "Orienting Arrow" (see attached picture of compass) on the compass, in line with the direction-of-travel arrow, and in line with the "N."

2. Now let's pick a direction. Just for example, if you wanted to travel 90-degrees East, turn the dial on the compass until 90-degrees is in line with the Direction-of-Travel arrow. Now, again holding the compass flat in your hand a little away from your body, turn your body until the red end of the floating needle inside the compass is in line with the Orienting Arrow. Raise your head from your compass and you are facing exactly 90-degrees East - your direction-of-travel.
3. You should do this a few times because it is good practice whenever you come to a new direction when using a compass to stop, dial everything on the compass to North (to learn what direction North is), then dial up your new direction-of-travel.

Pacing

Distances on maps are given in miles or feet. It will be necessary to convert your individual "pace" to the given distance you want to travel. In orienteering, you do not count every step you take. That would be too difficult. So, you count every other step. For example, if you start walking with your left foot (or right foot) you count one pace every time your left (or right) foot hits the ground. In this manner you only have to count every other step. Before you begin your trek you will need to measure how long your pace is.

The C.M. Crockett Park compass courses have an area measured to be 100 feet so you can determine the length of your pace. Locate the permanent cement post at the trashcan at the top of the steps that lead down to the concessions building. From there locate the park directional sign (on a 4x4 post) near the top of the steps (by the Holly-trees) that lead to the park restrooms. The distance between the cement post by the trashcan and the park directional sign is exactly 100 feet. Pace off the 100 foot distance at least two times, use the average of the two times for number of paces, divide that number into 100, and this will give you the length of your two-step pace in feet.

So a pacing example might be: A person on a hike wants to travel ½ mile. They have measured their two-step pace to be 5 feet long. So, ½ mile is 2,640 feet, they divide 2,640 feet by their 5-foot pace; they need to travel 528 paces in their chosen direction. You will need to do this each time you come to a new bearing (direction) and distance; convert the distance to travel (in feet) to your number of paces to walk.

Further Map & Compass Information

1. GPS (Global Positioning System) versus Map & Compass (Orienteering):
 - GPS shows location and sometimes contours, but not all the map features.
 - Once you learn how to really use a compass, it is a skill that you will remember and can employ throughout a lifetime.
 - How is Orienteering (map & compass) useful? Roadmap-reading or if you want to take a hike or backpacking trip where not many others go.
 - Provides a sense of accomplishment.

2. Contours: Lines of equal elevation on a topographic map.
3. Map features: Rocky outcroppings, hills & mountains, streams, roads, other man-made features, forests, etc. For orienteering, you need a good compass and a topographic map.
5. Magnetic North versus True North:
Because of the earth's magnetic poles, depending on one's location on the earth, quality compasses have an adjusting mechanism to correct for declination to make the compass read True North. All quality topographic maps are in True North. For simplicity, the compass course at Crockett Park are Magnetic North.

