



# The Guide To Subsurface Topo / Contour Map Usage

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At first glance, lake maps can be confusing to say the least. The next nine panels of this guide will take you step by step through an imaginary map, showing what each symbol means and why it's important or relevant. By the time you finish this guide, you will easily be able to interpret any map and locate areas most likely to be productive. No more needs said than this - a good map is the first thing a pro looks for!

## SCALE

### Panel One

To the right is a lake map - showing only the bright green shoreline. The first thing one must know about any map is the scale. Simply put, scale means what equals what. How far do I go on the map to go a given distance? How far is it across the lake? How long is the lake?

Scale is expressed either in words (1"=1000') or with a graphic representation (see below and the one on the map).

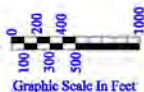
On this map, the scale is in fact 1"=1000' (one inch equals one thousand feet) Measurement with a simple ruler will show the dam is about 1 3/8 inches long which translates to 1375 feet - a little over a quarter of a mile. From the dam to the very back of the lake, up in the coves, is something more than four inches - four thousand plus feet. Almost but not quite a mile. You can measure any distance you want the same way - in the next panel, you'll see how useful that can be in determining the difference between a long sloping point and a nearly vertical bank.

You'll have to take our word for the next item (the computer calculated it) - the lake is 98.94 acres. Very similar to any number of Kentucky's small fishing lakes. (Beaver, Wilgreen, Willisburg etc.)

Now that you know all there is about scale, lets go to the next panel and take the mystery out of contours



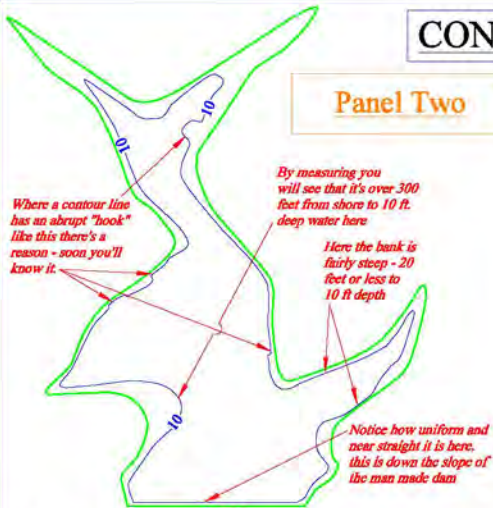
*Graphic representation of scale.  
You will see, if you use a ruler on it  
that it is correct.*



# CONTOURS

## Panel Three

### Panel Two

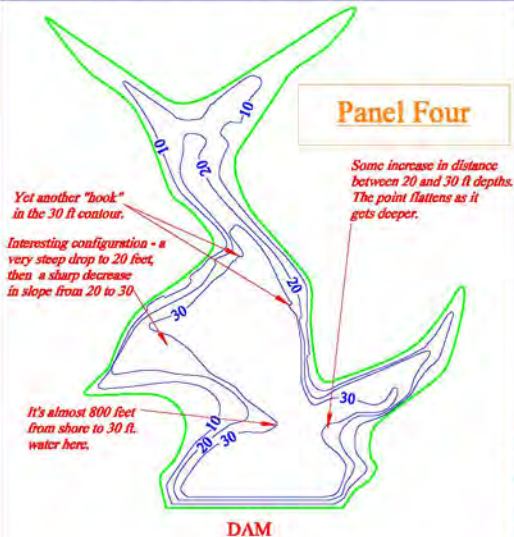


What is a contour? It's a line indicating a specific depth. If you made up thousands of lines with lead weights at one end and corks at the other exactly ten feet long and took them off the shore till just the floating corks were visible, then took a picture from high above the lake you'd see this line. Or, if you let ten feet of water out of the lake, the blue line would be the new shoreline. It's the ten foot contour now.



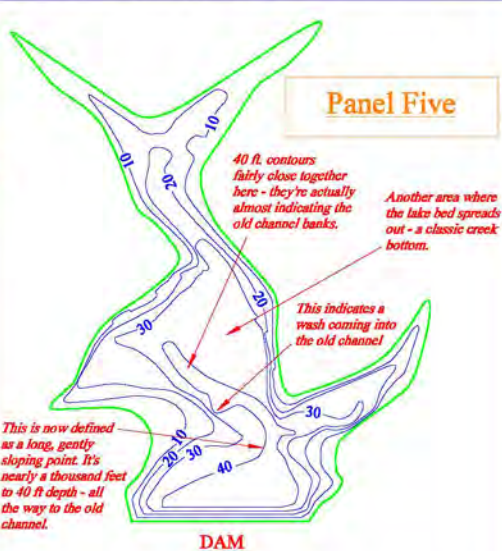
In this panel we add the twenty foot contour. Notice that the contours are always closed figures, and never actually cross each other. If they are so close that they are on top of each other, it's a vertical bank. This happens fairly often.

### Panel Four



Now we add the thirty foot contour - and a picture of the lake bottom is beginning to take shape. Notice that the area inside each contour gets smaller - heading toward deeper water.

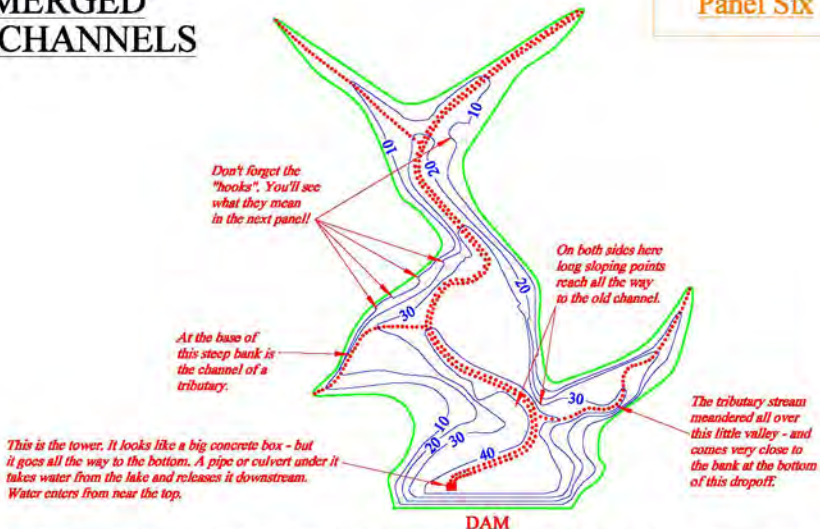
### Panel Five



The last contour - forty feet. This one encloses a relatively small area compared to the whole lake. In the next panel, we'll add the old creek channels - and really begin to see the whole picture.

# SUBMERGED CREEK CHANNELS

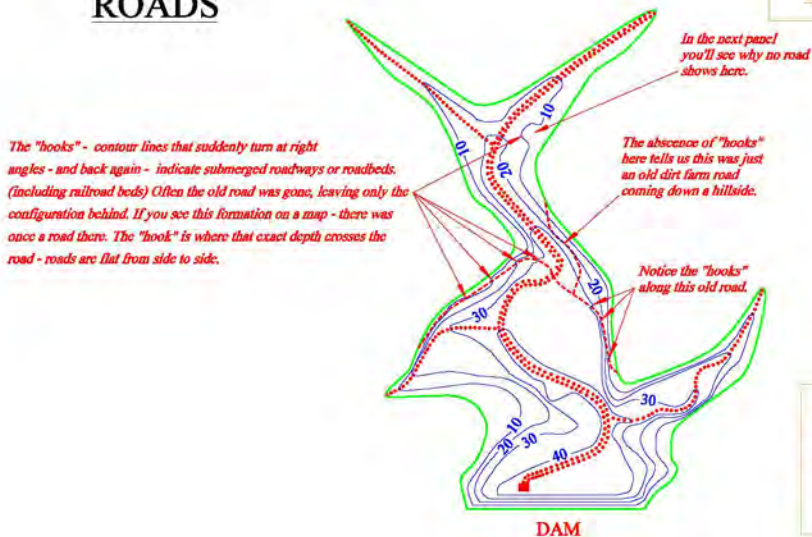
Panel Six



The double dotted red line shows the location of the main creek dammed to build the lake. The single dotted red lines are the smaller tributary streams that fed it. Although the contours were telling you so, you can now see that these streams don't necessarily go right up the middle of the coves - or the main lake! A person assuming the deepest water was in the middle would be wrong by a very long way in several places.

# ROADS

Panel Seven

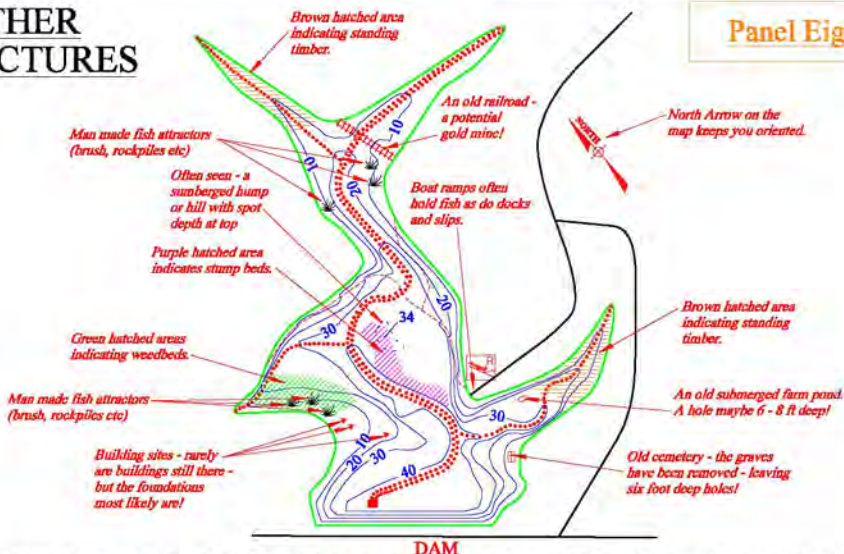


Panels Eight  
and Nine are  
on the back.

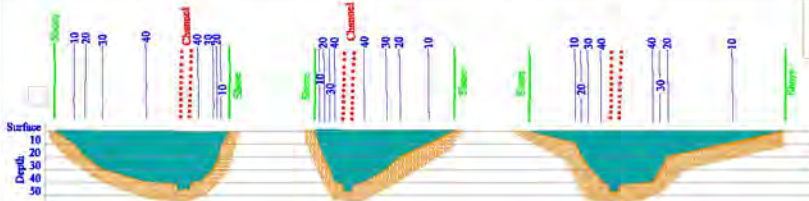
The dashed red line indicates the location of submerged roads - which can be anything from an abandoned highway to a farm road. Highways that are submerged are usually left intact with 24 ft wide pavement (and side ditches) under water exactly as it is on dry land.

# OTHER STRUCTURES

## Panel Eight



Almost anything man makes can be found at the bottom of one lake or another. We know of a lake in central Kentucky where several fishermen swear they catch fish around an airplane that went in and was never recovered. If it's really there it's probably true. Fish like and use structure - whether man made or natural formations. Here we'll point out several kinds found in almost all lakes. From map to map symbols and/or colors will vary. Check the map's legend to see what shows what.



## Panel Nine

*If the contours look like this...*

*The bottom looks like this*

When you've been all the way through this "programmed learning" guide you pretty much know all about topo/contour maps you need to. If you encounter maps that say they'll tell you where the fish are they aren't being honest with you. Fish are always moving, depending on time of day, season of the year, weather, water temperature and many other variables. If it were as easy as buying a map and going where it says the fish will be, we'd all be tournament winners every time - and the sport would be boring.

A good map is a tool. One of many at your disposal. Rods, reels, lures, depth finders, boats, motors and all the other equipment play a part. The primary function of a map is twofold - to get you close and to eliminate areas not likely to produce. Our little example map seems full of interesting places, but in the real world there's a lot of boring useless water. Without knowing where you are and what's under there, you'll waste many hours before you accidentally are in the right place at the right time. A wise and successful angler once said it best - "the problem is not catching fish - the problem is finding fish".

Anyone can go and buy a box full of expensive tools. Only a master mechanic can take them and achieve the desired result.

Hopefully, our products help. A lot of anglers apparently think so - they keep coming back for other maps.

Good fishin' - and thanks for your business!