

# The Prospector

Portland Gold Prospectors, Inc.

GPA Portland, Oregon Chapter



September, 2020

## TOPO MAPPING

by KEVIN HOAGLAND

**Understanding** how to read a topo map is very important to finding the claim areas listed in the mining guide and is an invaluable tool for understanding how gold may have moved on the claim sites, allowing you to prospect more efficiently and get the gold quicker!

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) began mapping and creating topographic (topo) maps in 1879 to better understand and catalog public lands. The first maps were plotted by cartographers (map makers) finding high spots and using sighting tools like sextons to approximate distance and elevation to draw their maps. These maps were the most accurate for the time but were best thought of as “mostly accurate”. Over the years, topo maps became more accurate with aerial photography and now with satellite imaging, topo maps are more accurate than at any time in the past and can be depended on for all forms of locating surface features.

### What is a topographic map?

*Topo maps have been the best described as offering the user a three-dimensional view on a two-dimensional sheet. Topo maps show contours, elevations, mountains, valleys, bodies of water and much more.*

For a prospector, a topo offers features that are very important in your quest for gold. By studying a topo, you will locate old and current roads, trails and town sites, water flow areas along with slopes, mountains, valleys and on many maps, mines are shown. All of these are crucial if you are looking for an area that has produced gold in the past and with practice you can create a best guess as to how the material was worked before visiting the site or deciding to pass.

Here is an example of using a topo to decide what equipment to bring to an area. Looking at a topo you find an area that has a number of mines shown on the map. The terrain is somewhat steep and there are a number of trails



leading into the area and out to major roads. There are no water ways such as streams or rivers in the area and the closest ones do not have roads leading to them from the mine sites. The area also does not show much flat terrain around the mines themselves. This area on the map tells us volumes about the mines and what type of work was being done. Because of

the slope steepness we can guess that the mines were hard rock or lode mines. There are a number of trails and very little flat terrain and no available water. This tells that the material was most likely not processed on site due to the lack of flat space and water. The roads lead directly to major roads which tells that the material mined was no doubt taken from the site for

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**PRESIDENT'S BLOG  
September, 2020**

-----NO CHAPTER MEETING IN SEPTEMBER, 2020-----

Dear Fellow Prospectors -

I know I sound like a broken record...

Unfortunately, we continue to be at a standstill with regard to resuming chapter meetings...

Clackamas County is in "Phase I" – and the Governor has restricted social gatherings to 10 people due to the ongoing challenges of the Covid-19 virus.

There has been some discussion about doing an online or "virtual" meeting via computer - using a program like "Zoom." I have used this program for Toastmaster meetings – and it has worked OK – however we usually have (only) 7-10 attendees, and we have a timed agenda. I am not sure what the cost is or how many of our members are interested in a virtual meeting.

We have also discussed dividing up the roster into two groups and having two meetings on the same day. However, under the circumstances, we would not serve food or have a raffle – and, at the

moment, we are still restricted to 10 people - with masks and social distancing requirements.

There have also been discussions about meeting at a park where we can spread out...

I like this idea, but weather is always a gamble.

Please feel free to contact me with ANY ideas on how we can have a meeting.

All of this is very frustrating as we had discussed having more speakers and demonstrations going forward. We will still work toward these goals as soon as we can.

I don't know when "normal" will return because it continues to be a moving target!

Please stay safe and stay well!

*Mike*

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**From Jim Erwin, September 3, 2020**

I had my barn sale last weekend. one customer that lives close is a director for The Fallen Outdoors a veteran organization that gets vets outdoors for various activities.

The two of us have put together a gold panning demo set for Saturday, Sept. 19 at 10 am here at my place. I'm hoping to have 2 good panners eg. Jerry and Richard to demo the panning.

I'll get the detector out and give a brief demo on detecting..

I would hope to have club and GPAA info to hand out and a effort to get a new member to two. We plan to have 4 vets here so the demo can be a one

on one .

Ground rules are: masks and social distancing will be required.

I'll provide bottled water on ice.

I will cook hamburgers for the PGPI members following the demo. If you have something you like with burgers you are welcome to bring it.

Our patio is big enough to spread out and social distance.

Please let me know if this is something you can help with.

Thanks,  
*Jim*

processing. Now, if in researching the area you find that the mines in the area were gold mines then the assumption would be that the ore was most likely higher grade ore that made it profitable to remove all of the material and haul it to a processor. In this area the likelihood of finding a good amount of gold with a drywasher or recirculating water unit may not be the best technique for recovery.

The first process to becoming proficient in reading a topo is learning to understand the lines that cover the map area. The lines on a topo map are the indicators for contours, roads, property sections. Solid, dashed, or both and in different colors all indicate different information. You will also find curved lines to indicate terrain changes and other features such as elevation change where a hill will have a larger circular line at the bottom to show the base of the hill.

There are also a number of symbols on a map in a legend describing the symbols. You can also purchase a mapping book that includes all of the information that is included on a map. While learning what all of this information is, that small investment in the publication is well worth the cost. You will find that you will use this often, especially in looking over maps for a new area where there are unfamiliar symbols. Some of the symbols you will find on a map are for quickly knowing boundaries, buildings, contours, survey monuments, mines and caves, railroads, waterways, roads and related features, power and phone lines to name a few.

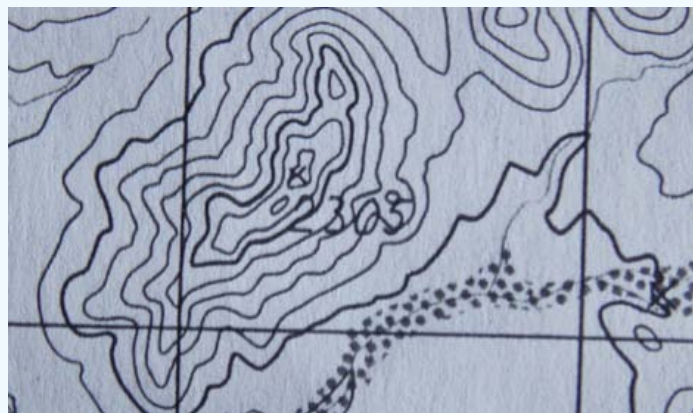
### **Contour lines**

Contour lines are the most recognized feature on a topo. The lines show equal elevation and if you were to drive or walk a contour line for miles and miles, you would never increase your elevation. Contour lines also show the elevation along with the shape of the land and its features like steep mountains, gradual hills and the steepness of banks going into streams and river. All of this is excellent information to have before heading into the field to prospect. Plus knowing the terrain flatness or slope again tells a great deal of information on how gold would be moving in an area.

Understanding the lines on a map is relatively simple and can be mastered with little practice. Topo maps only include lines for set elevations. The lines are evenly spaced creating the contour interval. To make map reading easier, maps use different intervals depending on the topography. If the land has a sharp rise or drop like a mountain or gorge, the map may

show the contour interval every 60 to 100 feet to show the steepness. This makes it much easier to see the rise of the mountain or the drop of a valley. As all maps vary, it is always good to look in the maps margin area. This is where the USGS list the contour interval for the map being used.

The lines however offer little information unless they include base information. On a topo map every 5th contour line is called the index line and it will be a thicker and darker brown line. There will be breaks in the line that include the elevation information. This will give you the base line of the steepness of the terrain. One example of index lines is if you see a line that in the break reads 500 then it is known that the elevation of this line is 500 feet. If the fifth line from there reads 600 then you will know that the four lines would indicate that there is a 20 foot increase in elevation for each line making this a steep slope. Conversely, if looking at a map and the four lines between the index lines are spaced far apart, there is little raise in elevation and it is relatively flat land.



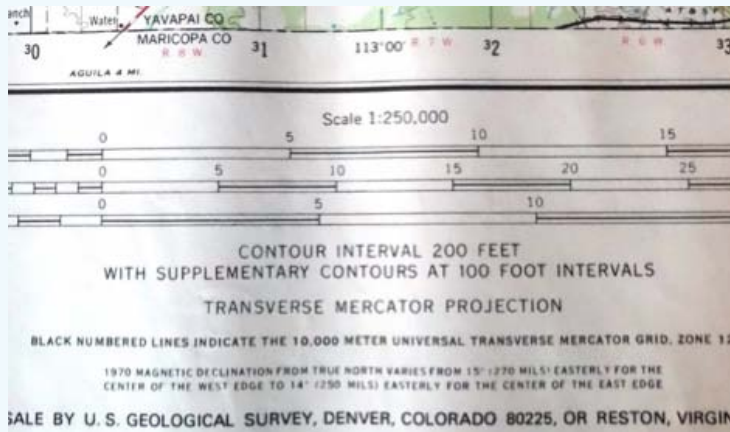
*On a topo map every 5th contour line is called the index line and it will be a thicker and darker line that is brown.*

Looking at the map above of the area around Stanton, Arizona you can easily see elevation changes in the index lines from the desert floor to the top of the mountain to the north on the map.

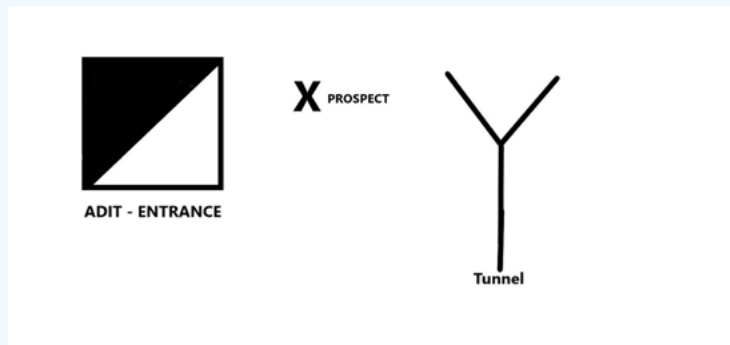
The next part in reading a topo is understanding scale. Maps are plotted on a ratio scale, meaning one measurement on the map equals a measurement of actual distance on the map.

On a USGS topo, the standard first unit of measurement is one inch and the second unit is ground distance. If at the bottom of your topo the scale is listed as 1:24,000 it simply means that one inch on the map is equal to 24,000 inches or 2000 feet of distance. There are a number of different scales and it is suggested that when buying maps that you use

only one scale if possible. This will help in plotting areas that may be on more than one map sheet.



As an interesting point of trivia, the USGS topo map catalog has over 57,000 1:24,000 maps to cover the 48 contiguous United States and Hawaii.

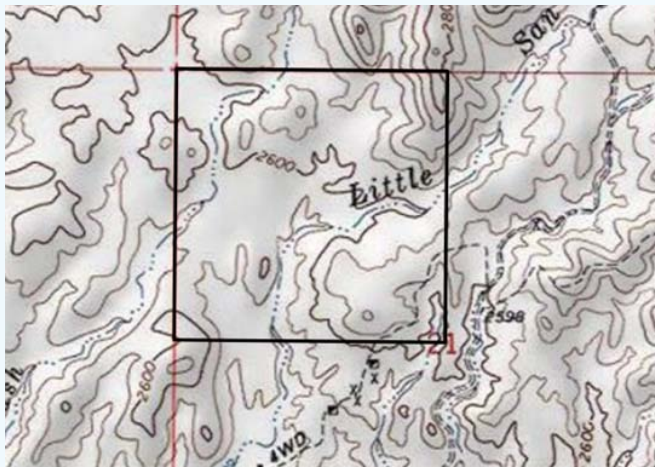


These are the three most important TOPO Mapping symbols to a prospector:

- Prospect - Where they Prospected
- ADIT - Where a shaft was opened
- Tunnel - Where they worked.

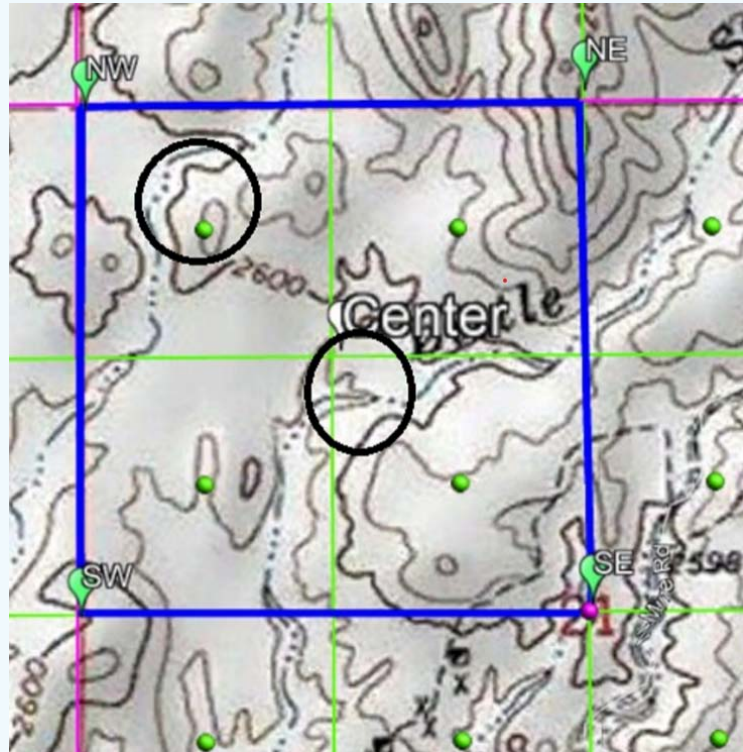
Seeing these symbols on a Topo will give you a good idea where to look in the peripheral Placer areas to get on the gold.

By using a Topo Map, areas that I described in the Claim Review below start to stand out. Notice the X X X to the south of the claim? Those are mine sites and I have found others on the claim that are not registered and



not on the Topo. Most importantly I used this info for elevation which helped me a great deal on locating my spots on the claim.

Before you spend a lot of time jumping into the water channels prospect the old benches, fans and depressions. Especially those that are showing a lot of red iron staining or compacted gravels above the water channels.



Some of these areas are less than a few feet across and can be easily missed. I generally start out here with a gold pan, (dry panning) and a detector. I've found a few nice nuggets in these areas then following up with a drywasher.

When I'm drywashing well out of the water channels the gold is somewhat coarse and small. Of course the closer I get to the water channels the finer and the more smooth the gold becomes with a great deal of it being flood gold that I recover on the flood benches.

Kevin Hoagland is the Executive Director of Development at the Gold Prospectors Association of America and the Lost Dutchman's Association of America. He can be reached at [khoagland@goldprospectors.org](mailto:khoagland@goldprospectors.org)

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Gold Prospectors Association of America - September October 2020 Gold Prospectors Magazine and Kevin Hoagland



# 2020 Prospecting Season is Going Better Than Expected! – August 2020

Newsletter By Dave McCracken  
General Manager – The New 49r Prospecting Association



*Papa Bear showing off the results of several hours of work in his “secret spot.” He shows off his gold mining adventures and friends on a YouTube channel up on the Internet.*

**Because** of the COVID situation and predictable economic downturn, we were expecting a rather slow mining season this year. But we have a surprising number of members arriving along the Klamath River and tributaries, and there is quite a lot of excitement around Happy Camp about the gold that some members are recovering.

We even considered putting a commercial toilet out at K-15A last week because of the number of members camping up there. But when we took a closer look, we realized that nearly all of them already had closed black water systems and had arranged for the local service provider to stop once a week to pump them out.

There is a lot of gold, and some really nice nuggets being recovered from K-15A!

You know; we have some really cool members!

I think everyone is feeling really lucky to be out in some of America’s greatest outdoors, and being free to search for gold and other adventure with no hassles or bad news.

Quite a few members are bringing the gold they are finding into the office to show off. I am impressed!

Some members are sniping shallow cracks in the river, and in the creeks and prying nice gold nuggets out of the cracks. There are two members up on Indian Creek that really struck it rich. We agreed to not publish images of their gold so as to not start a stampede up there. I’m not kidding!

Our property holdings are so extensive, we have been walking or boating right past these gold rich areas for the past 35 years and never even took a look!



Longtime member, Adam Myers and his dad, fabricated a rather ingenious sluice box on stilts that they set up right out in the middle of the Klamath River at Savage rapids. They are recovering some nice gold. Their history with us extends way back to the 1990’s. I remember they were working a commercial dredge on the Klamath just below Seattle Creek. That was after myself and half dozen other commercial miners recovered nearly a thousand ounces of gold. They still did well! And the truth is that most of that upper stretch of K-17 has yet to be mined. But I believe we will need suction dredges to get at it.

Dickey Melton showed me an image of a bunch of chunky gold nuggets that were recovered at the mouth of Indian Creek just in a single day. He said those were recovered by digging up out of the water.



*Here is a pennyweight of beautiful nuggets that Scott Bagley recovered during just part of a single day!*

Other members are actually swimming across to the far side of the Klamath River and recovering gold right out of the shallow water with masks, snorkels, fins and a gold pan. Others are using small boats and kayaks.

We have signed up a fair number of new members this season already.

It's possible that the 3+ months of COVID lockdown is motivating people to get out in the great outdoors and experience some adventure. The near-record high value of gold may also have something to do with the increased interest. I added it up the other day, and a pennyweight of gold (20th of an ounce) at today's price is worth \$75 even when discounted to 75% of the spot price value. You can always get at least 75% of spot, or more, for the gold you find in the river.

I know one member who has recovered nearly an ounce of gold just prospecting part time during the month of July. Others are doing just as well. All of this without the use of any mechanized assistance!

In real terms, the true value of the gold along these extensive properties is probably more valuable than the net assets of any financial institution on the planet. Especially these days when the government is printing trillions upon trillions of Dollars out of thin air (as necessary as that might be under the circumstances). We should be calling our properties the "Klamath First National Bank." Ours is the only bank in the world where you can go out and make a draw anytime you wish. There are no interest or bank fees to pay. And you never have to pay the gold back!

This is as close as it comes to an opportunity to maintain some degree of personal freedom during these ever-more difficult and troubling times. As far as I know, we are the only organization in the world that makes a very large bank of pure wealth freely available to our members.

Having said that, in case you have not heard, the U.S. Supreme Court has declined for a second time to review our legal complaints that leftist State governments (California, Oregon, Washington and others) are imposing very unreasonable regulations upon our industry. As long as you guys continue to stand with us, we will continue the fight for our basic freedoms.

There remains hope that America will wake up and realize that we need to produce value and wealth in excess of what we consume. Mr. Trump and his team appear to be leading the charge on this, though he is not getting as much support from congress and the mainstream press that he deserves. We all know that these are very troubled times for America. The whole world hangs in this balance. We are all going to have a better idea the way things are going to go once the November elections are settled.

I believe personal integrity and pursuit of the truth are the only road towards enlightenment. The guidance I receive on that level is that we should bite the bullet and stay the course for a while longer and see how these larger forces play out. I am willing to invest my personal resources to keep the program going as long as you guys, our members, are also willing to hang in there until we overcome what is destroying America, or it becomes clear that there is no longer any hope. My assessment of your support will be in what percentage of Full Members are willing to invest \$50 a year to help keep our dream alive. The freedom for Americans to go out on the federal lands and invest their personal resources to keep all the gold you find is what settled the west!

This is not the first time I have made this commitment to you guys in August. We are still here thanks to you guys!

Kitco's one year chart confirms that gold was in the mid \$1,400's just a year ago. Now it is trading just under \$2,000. This is quite a jump considering the existing state of the economy! One day, our leaders may realize that it would be a good idea to allow us modern methods to recover it?

I am eternally grateful to those of you who stick it out alongside me and our loyal staff.

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#### **New 49'er Gold Prospecting Association**

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