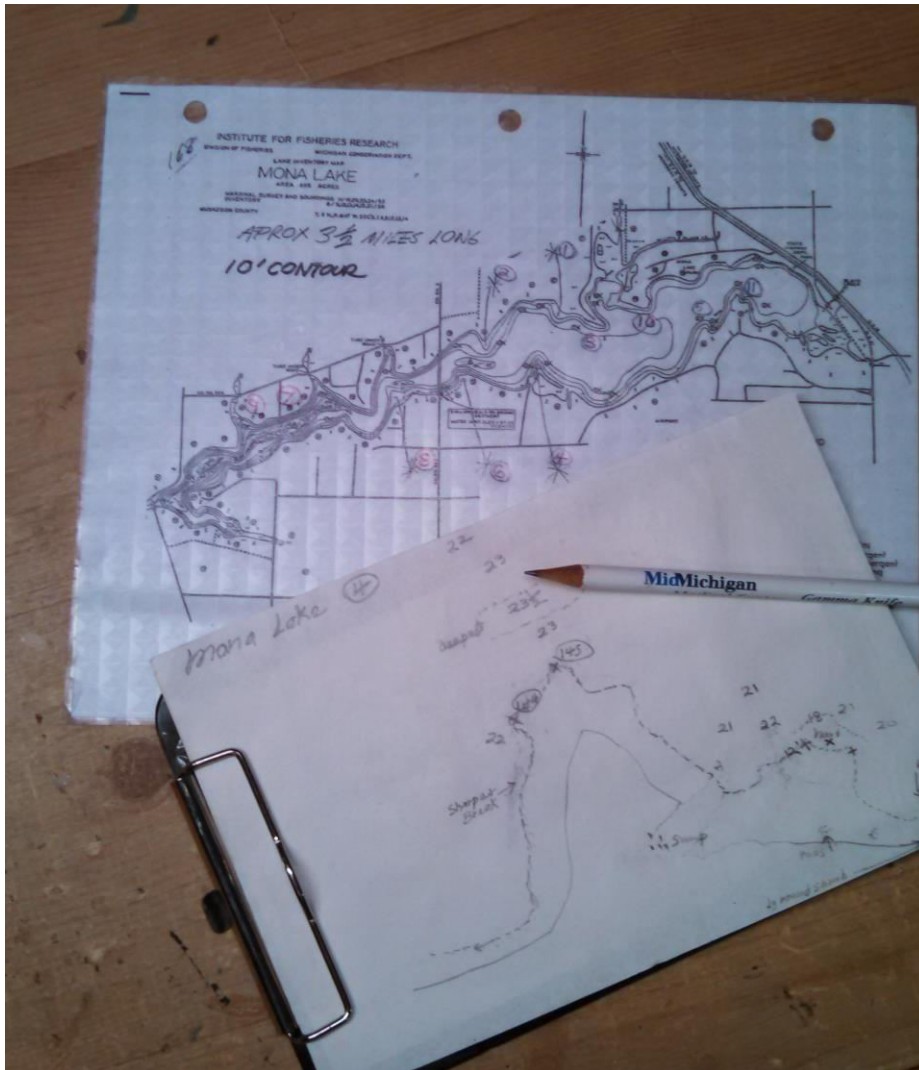


# HOW TO DRAW STRUCTURE MAPS

by Chase Klinesteker



## **WHY DO WE NEED TO DRAW MAPS OF STRUCTURES?**

By drawing the structures we fish with pencil and paper, we become better and better at mapping and interpretation, the key to fishing success. This process burns in our memory the ability to visualize what is underneath the water. This helps us locate where to find the fish, that 10% of the water that contains most of the fish.

## **DO WE NEED TO HAVE EVERY SINGLE DETAIL ON OUR MAPS?**

No. Only the information related to helping us locate the fish is necessary. Structure maps are an individual thing. Only the person doing the drawing needs to understand the information on the map. The actual drawing of the map is what helps us visualize better. It is your choice whether you decide to save the map or not. If you decide to keep them, the next time you fish that structure, the details will get better and more accurate.

## **WHAT INFORMATION IS HELPFUL ON MAPS?**

A top view line drawing of the structure is the usual approach. Terry O'Malley feels that also drawing a side view will give one an even better perspective of the depth and form of the breaklines. An article by Buck Perry in the "National Spoonplugger" (Mar.-April 2000) covers what is useful on maps in 5 basic elements:

1----The **shoreline and visible reference points**, including markers, docks, pilings, weeds, linesights, and an arrow indicating the **direction of NORTH**.

2----**Water depths** indicated by numbers in feet at a particular spot. Especially helpful for breaks, breaklines, and contact points. The **deepest water in the area** should be indicated also.

3----**Contours, breaks, and breaklines**. These are the most important aspects of your map. For breaklines, use a solid or broken line to indicate the form of the bottom where depths change. The depths where it breaks and bottoms out(base breakline) are important to record. Breaks should be noted if possible(rocks, eroded spots, weeds, bushes, stumps, etc.).

4----The **type of bottom present** will determine the movement of the fish. Whether it is hard, sand, gravel, weeds, muck, clay, etc. makes a big difference where the fish move and whether you can present lures properly. Also be aware of a muck line( bottom hardness change), as fish often relate to it.

5----**Species of fish found** in an area should be noted. Proper presentation of lures can vary slightly with different species.

Maps can eliminate practically a lifetime of fishing blind. They can show what is there, eliminate most of the water, plus remove fears and false moves. When the fisherman is in potentially productive water, he can then concentrate his attention entirely on fishing.

### **I KNOW SEVERAL AREAS IN MY LAKE PRETTY GOOD. WHY DO I NEED TO DRAW THEM?**

First we should ask: CAN YOU DRAW THEM? Try drawing the structures. Do they all include the 5 basic elements? If so, you probably have fished them thoroughly, have a great memory, and don't need to do much practice drawing(unless you want to improve your fishing results further). For the rest of us, drawing maps of structures can really help to better pinpoint the fish. Terry O'Malley has said: "If you can't draw a structure, you haven't mapped it".

### **HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO TROLL SPOONPLUGS IN MAPPING?**

Very important. The extremely accurate depth control of Spoonplugs allows us to strain all depths of water on a structure and determine (feel) minute differences the fish can see but that we might otherwise not notice. We should make as many passes with each size lure as necessary to picture the structure, especially when learning lure presentation. A marker or two helps considerably in this process, as well as observing the shoreline and other above the water features. This is why Mr. Perry encourages us to only occasionally glance at the depth sounder. Using only a depth sounder will not allow this visualization to take place much at all.

### **WHAT BASIC TOOLS ARE USED IN MAPPING?**

Pencil and paper, markers, boat, motor, trolling rod reel and line, lake map if available, and a set of Spoonplugs. A depth sounder can be an aid.

### **CAN I BECOME A GREAT MAPPER QUICKLY?**

Probably not. It is a growth and learning process. Visualization skills need to be learned by doing. Practice improves your ability. Your fishing results, however, will begin to improve right away. No one is forcing you to draw maps. The more you draw, the quicker your fishing results will improve.

### **WHAT ARE SOME RESOURCES I CAN USE TO IMPROVE MY MAPPING ABILITY?**

Bucks' "Green Book" is excellent and his Study Guide contains excellent examples of many different mapping situations. One of his best video tapes, #11—"Buck talks Mapping", is highly recommended. Don Dixon did a video on mapping and interpretation that was a visual test. The March 2000 issue of Northern Indiana Spoonplugger newsletter has great material on mapping. This newsletter is one of the best club newsletters on Spoonplugging, and always has articles written by John Bales. If you are a member of the national organization, you can get this newsletter online. The most important "resource" is to get on the water and start mapping and drawing maps. Skill and interpretation will come with experience.

**BUCK SEZ: "MAPPING AND INTERPRETATION IS THE KEY TO FISHING SUCCESS"**