

Ever since Tom Patterson’s tutorial on colorizing Digital Ortho Quads (DOQs) I’ve been looking for an appropriate map design project to follow his lead. A redesign of the University of Maine Recreational Trail Map provided that opportunity.

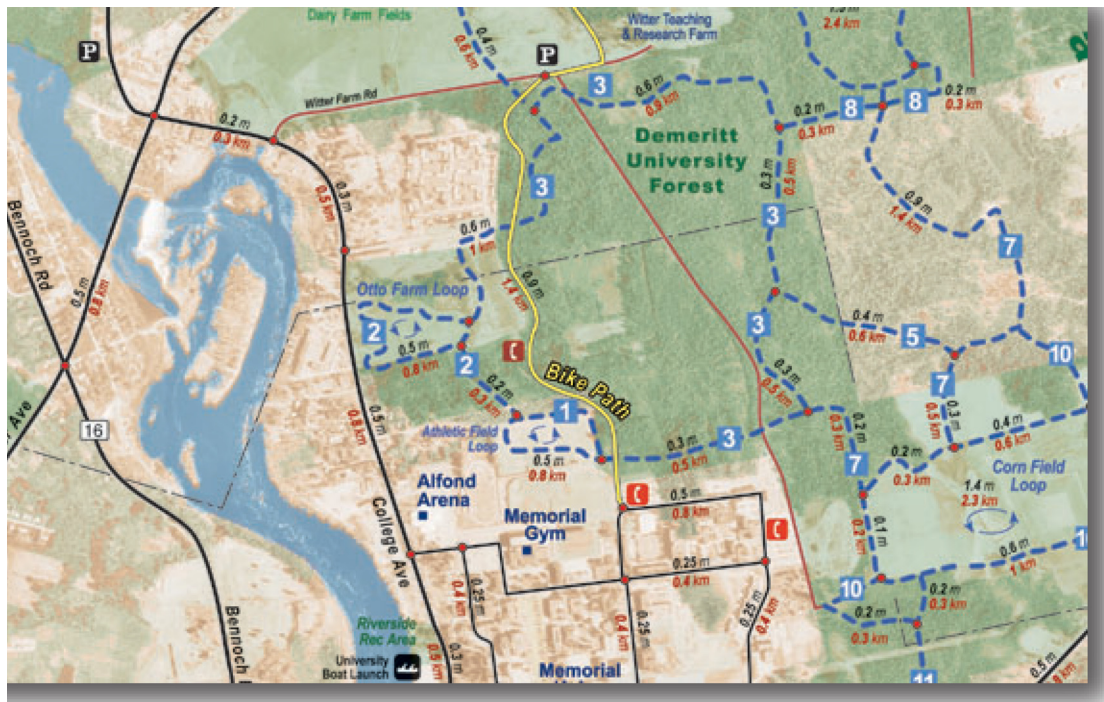
DOQs offer texture as a design element. This texture illustrates nature, visible as forests, fields, and rivers, and culture in the form of towns, roads and parking lots. This pixel-level detail eliminates cartographic ‘white space’ but makes it difficult to embellish with text and symbols commonly used on abstract maps. The DOQ-based map carries less information than an abstract map, if using traditional inventories of lines and text. It pushed our design parameters towards a deletion principle. We didn’t add the centerline and text of every street, only roads and trails suggested as recreational options; letting the pixels breathe, so to speak. Neighborhoods appear complete with back yards, open fields and shopping centers. An abstract map may symbolize public land as a solid polygon, but the DOQ reveals dense forest, logging operations, and open fields. Instead of a symbol, like a tidy square, the paper mill sprawls the way industry often does with acres of wastewater tanks. Traditional representation of river as blue polygon yields to river as image, complete with pools, ripples, and whitewater; not whitewater symbolized as three wavy lines, but actual white pixels frothing amidst blue pixels, intuitively interpreted as shallow, fast moving water. Or so the mapmakers hope. This is less cartographic data by one metric, yet infinitely more by another. Not every project benefits from the overwhelming amount of imagery a DOQ provides, but in this case we felt it offered an immediate sense of place, bringing the reader into the map on an intuitive level with minimal effort.

The map is offered in four formats: 11 x 17 folded paper map distributed on campus and at trailhead locations, 22 x 34 posters printed on demand, and on-line as high and lo-res PDFs.

Map available at: www.umaine.edu/campusrecreation/facilities/trails.htm



The published map is 11 x 17 inches, shown above reduced in size, below is a section at actual scale.



Map design by Michael Hermann and Matthew Cote, University of Maine Canadian-American Center ©2004.