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KU geography students mapping trails near Clinton Lake

Maps to help keep hikers oriented



[Mike Yoder](#)

Kansas University students Levi J. Winegar, of Sacramento, Calif., left, and nontraditional student Robin Holladay, of Lawrence, map out trails Monday for a Mutt Run Trail mapping project. Several groups of students from the "Maps: Conception and Development" class were working on the project in the off-leash dog area near Clinton Lake. [Enlarge photo](#)

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The trails near Clinton Lake are popular for their scenic hiking routes, but make one wrong turn and it's easy to get lost.

Well, the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department wants to change that.

On Monday the department enlisted the help of Kansas University geography students who used an old-fashioned technique to chart trail maps.

"No one knows where the paths go here," Travis White said. The graduate teaching assistant helped 18 students chart nearly 7 acres of land near Mutt Run dog park. "It's a maze here," he said. "With the grass line and the trees you can see other people walking but you have no idea where they are because the paths are not connected and there is no overall map that shows where you are."

The process is called orienteering. Students measured distance and direction using a compass and tape measure. Then they plotted each leg of every path in 10- to 30-meter increments. It's a primitive, yet essential, skill for any geographer.

"What's important about the students learning this is that they'll see how this has been done for literally thousands of years," said George McCleary, associate professor of geography.

The class was chosen for the assignment when the Parks and Recreation Department asked Micah Seybold, the city's GIS coordinator, to find a low-cost solution to mapping the uncharted trails. A former KU geography student himself, Seybold said it was a natural fit to have the students go out and map these trails.

The students will use the data to create updated trail maps for the public.

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