

## **Benefits of Paper Charts when Boating**

## **Boating Tips**

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Even with today's reliability of electronic charting, any serious cruising boater employs paper charts as a backup. Here are a few helpful tips I learned about using paper charts.

I learned rolling charts is preferred versus folding them. Also, roll several charts into themselves chart side in, labeling the outside edge with the chart number of such as 1701 and location, Perquimans River.

Store the rolled charts in tubes or if tubes are not available substitute the cores of one or more paper towel rolls. For strength, wrap the core's outside with contact paper. You will find, rubber bands dry and break. I advise against laminating paper charts as it hinders writing on them as well as makes rolling difficult. You may also use snap-type, wooden clothespins or coated metal clamps to keep a rolled chart rolled tightly.

Have detailed charts of the suspect or dangerous areas to accompany the larger cruising charts. Highly detailed charts should prevent grounding or worse, finding rocky shoals or bottom. Like electronic charts, update paper charts that you frequently use about every 5 to 10 years. New data is constantly added, markers moved, added or removed plus channels shifted.

Here's a hint I found useful. For easy use of paper charts at the helm, you can make a 2" X 2' board of light plywood or wafer board similar to campaign signs. Add Velcro to the board's back and helm to hold the board on the helm. Add small shock cords to the left and right sides of the board to hold the rolled chart open on the board. Roll and unroll the chart between the shock cords as you move along the course line. Some boaters add clear Plexiglas atop the chart to hold it as well as keep it dry

Although navigating using electronics, I use those yellow or blue "sign here" or "date here" stickers to mark my position while monitoring progress along the course line. I also use a few very thin push pins to hold the chart or mark locations.

Have the proper navigation tools for paper charting: straight edge, dividers, parallel plotter, square protractor, #2 pencil plus an eraser. Train your first mate on using a paper chart it keeps them as aware of your surroundings as the captain.

Paper charts are not cheap. Borrow rather than buy paper charts for infrequent cruising locations. Make a list of the date and from whom you borrowed which charts then return them when done using them. Also keep a list of the date, to whom and which charts you've loaned plus require their return.

Critical navigation should be on the chart's front, make other important navigation notes on a chart's back. ALWAYS use a #2 pencil plus have a good quality eraser. Mend torn or damaged charts with invisible tape. An interesting repurpose of old charts... recycle for framed art, wall covering or book covers.

Remember, smart cruisers employ redundant systems with paper charts serving that purpose for electronic chart plotters.

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