

Some notes on recording tracks using a Garmin etrex brand of GPS

(by, Michael S. Thorne; 3/10/07)

Setting up the GPS for data collection:

To erase tracks and waypoints currently in memory.

Scroll to *Trip Computer*

- *Reset...*
- *Select All*
- *Apply*
- The Data You Have Selected Will Be Permanently Deleted -> *OK*

Optimal settings for best track resolution.

Scroll to *Main Menu*

- Tracks
- Setup Track Log
- **Uncheck** Wrap When Full
- Record Method – *Auto*
- Interval – *Most Often* (this is the best method if memory is not an issue)
- When ready to begin track log switch – *ON*

Notes:

- ‘Wrap When Full’ should be unchecked. If it is checked it will ‘wrap’ new data points over the top of old ones when the maximum memory is reached. If unchecked it will turn off the track log when the memory is full.
- The GPS unit stores the tracks in the ‘Active Log’. In my opinion, saving the track log is a waste because the saved track log is a compressed version of the ‘Active Log’ and discards the majority of data points. When uploading the tracks to your computer it is the ‘Active Log’ that you want to keep.
- If the power of the GPS unit gets switched off. The ‘Active Log’ will remain in memory. Restarting the GPS will start a new ‘Active Log’. But does not overwrite the old one. Hence, you can have more than 1 log and won’t lose any data if the power is shut down.
- etrex Venture will store a total of 2048 Track Points in the ‘Active Log’.
- etrex Legend stores: 10,000 Track Points in the ‘Active Log’.
- What do you do if you wander off the trail? This is a matter of preference. Sometimes it is just easiest to set the GPS unit down on the trail at the point you

want to wander off at. But sometimes you may wish to bring the GPS unit with you to take a waypoint at an interesting feature that is located off-trail. In this case, I just carry the GPS unit with me, making note of where I wandered off the trail (sometimes by putting a stick or my pack down at the point). The off-trail wandering then gets recorded, but can be edited out of the final GPX file at a later time using a program such as Wissenbach Map.