

Loading gpx files into GPS

How to download tracks for a ride
and upload them to your GPS

by Matt Smith, Cary NC 5/25/2020

This presentation was made for one purpose, to show you how to load a gpx map onto your GPS device. In this case I'm using a Garmin Zumo 396 and a PC.

There's a couple of notes that are important to understand.

- 1) Basecamp is not needed for this. Basecamp is used to create routes on your computer and then upload them to your GPS. You are not creating a route, you're following someone else's tracks.
- 2) There is a difference between Routes and Tracks. A route is calculated by your GPS to take you from point A to B and the GPS calculates the route for you. Tracks are made by someone else and are loaded into your GPS. The GPS does not calculate the route, it follows the Tracks that were saved by someone else.

MID ATLANTIC BACKCOUNTRY DISCOVERY ROUTE

MABDR Map

MABDR Distance: 1,052 mi / 1,693 km

To view current snow levels, fire activity or weather conditions, please launch our main map [here](#).

For additional route information, click on the features in the map.

MA1: Damascus to Newport Marathon Gas

Section Distance: 138 mi / 223 km

Get your motor running on Chestnut Mountain Road next to a waterfall, one of many that trail from nearby Valley Creek. Follow the lovely meandering route through Jefferson National Forest and along the banks of Mt. Rogers. Make sure to fill up the tank at Mt. Rogers - the views are just waiting to be seen around the car. Hours later at Norton's we'll see the view from the top of Mt. Rogers. That is an especially narrow road but the views are a highlight of the peak's higher elevations.

Fueling stops are few and far between in the Appalachians. Keep your eyes peeled for the Newport Gas Station in Newport, Virginia. It's a little out of the way - but it's there - before moving on to the next segment of your trip.

Map not loading? For best performance and experience, use the latest web browser version of Chrome or Firefox.

esri Story Map

Download GPSTracks | How to Use GPSTracks | Purchase Route Map | Lodging, Food, Fuel | Discovery Points | Packing List | Frequently Asked Questions | Join the MABDR Facebook Group

Find the .gpx files you want and download them.

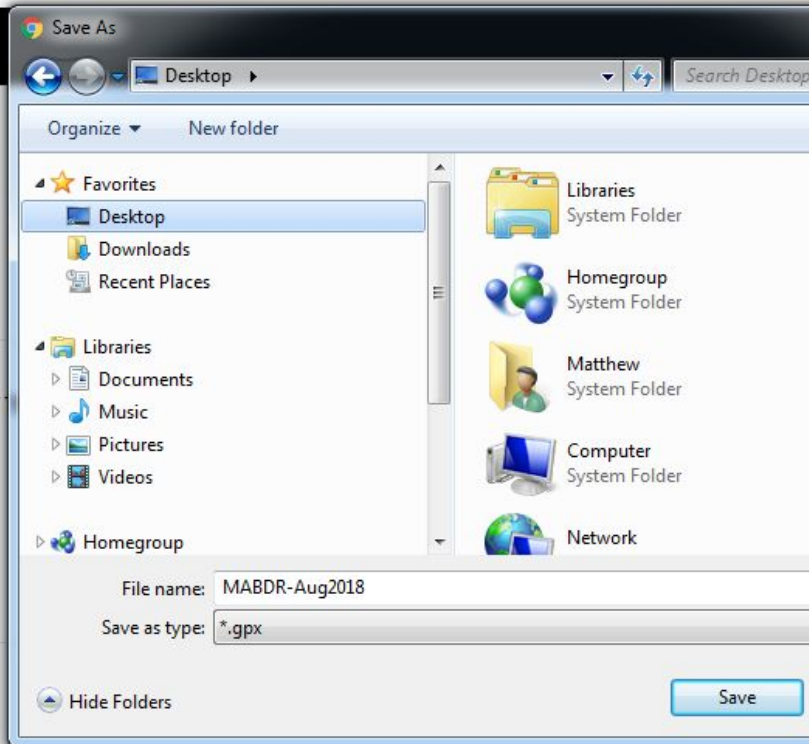
In this image I've selected the Backcountry Discovery Route Mid Atlantic or MABDR. Notice the red arrow that allows you to download the .gpx files or "tracks". Click this button and save them to your desktop.



BACKCOUNTRY
DISCOVERY
R O U T E S

Save to Desktop

Your screen should look similar to this when you save. BDR will ask where to save to, select the Desktop and Save.



THANK YOU MATT!

CLICK TO DOWNLOAD:

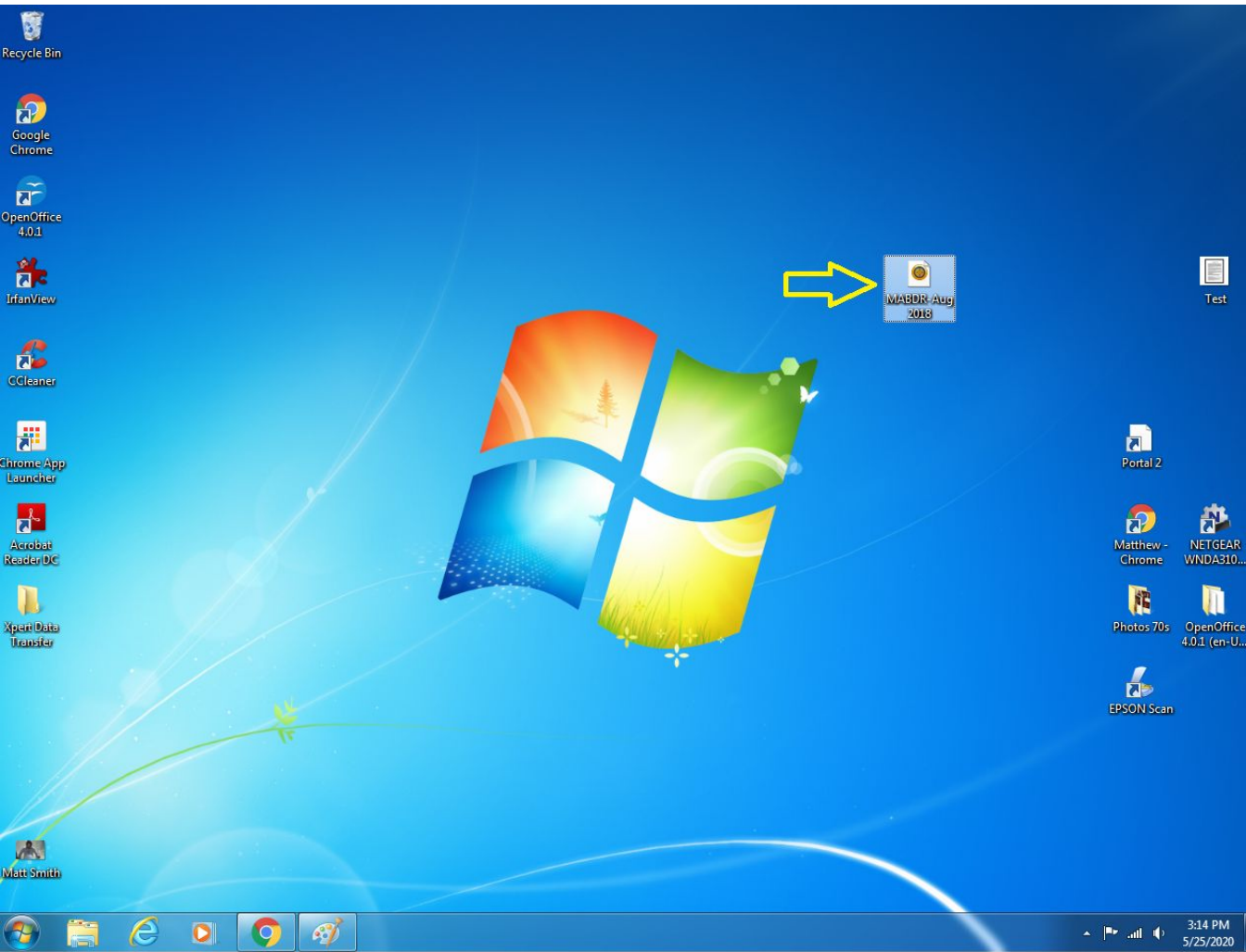
[Mid-Atlantic BDR \(MABDR\)](#)

HELP US CONTINUE OUR FIGHT

 **Donate**

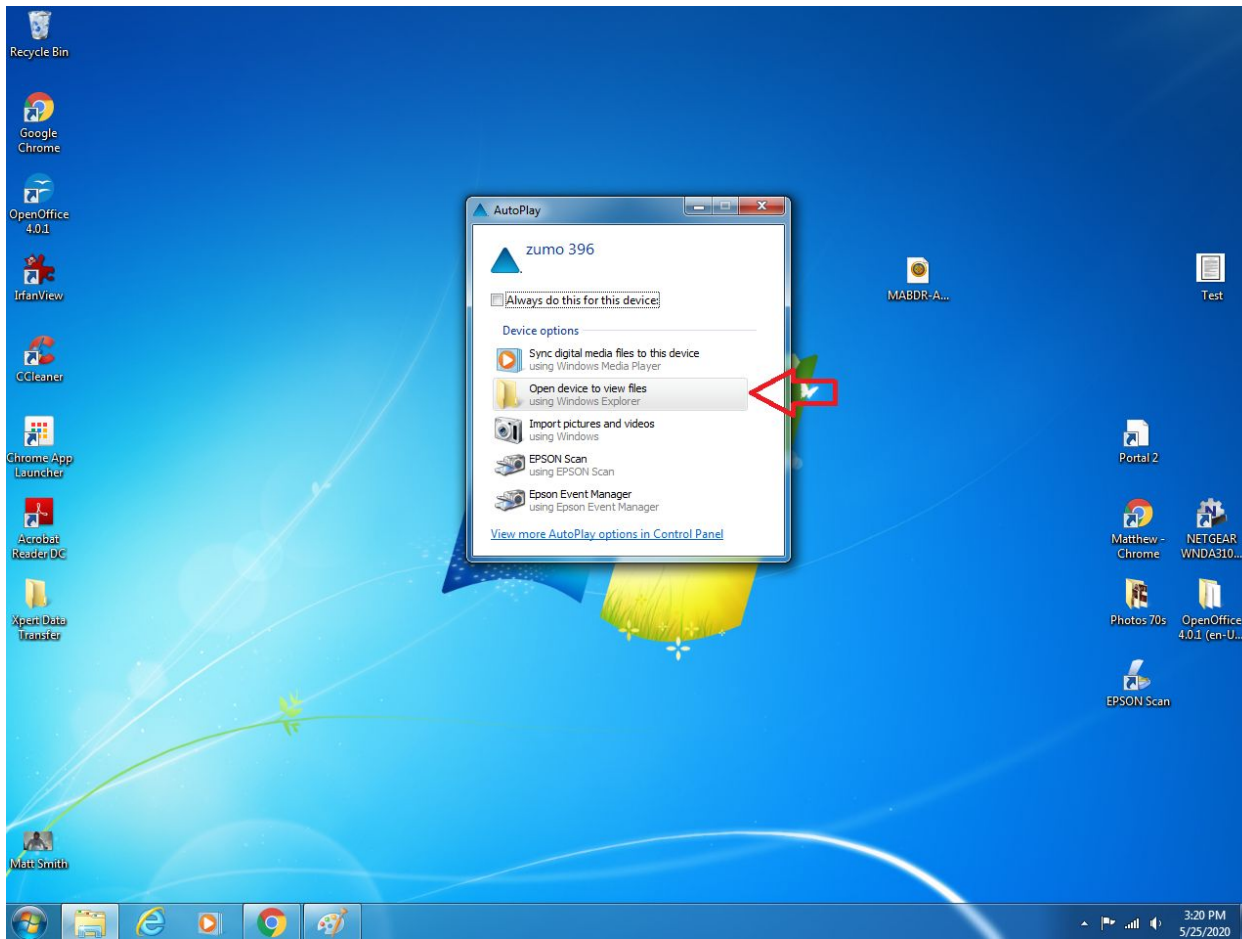


RESET THE FORM



Desktop View

This is where the file will be, sitting on your desktop.

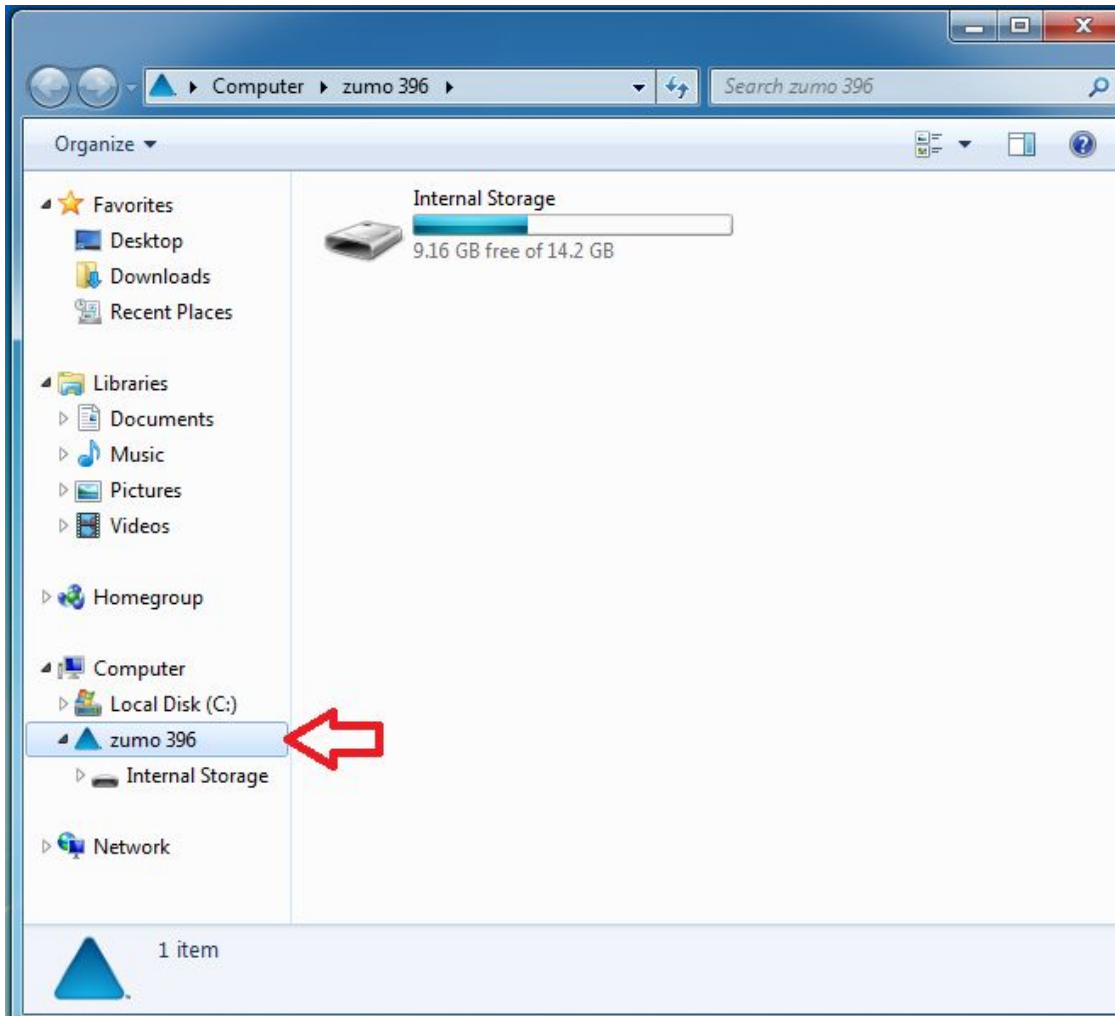


Connect your GPS unit to your PC USB drive

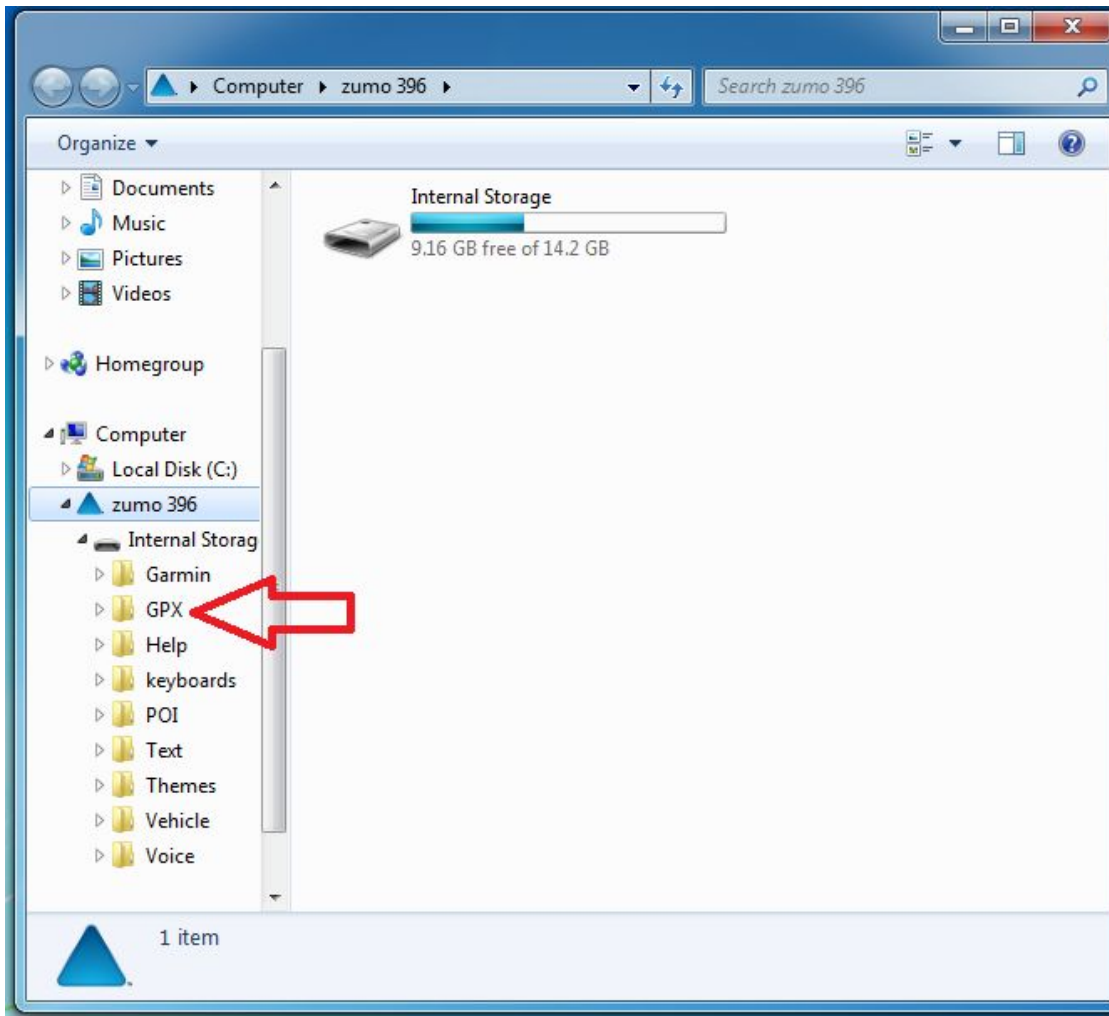
This may take a few minutes. Once the GPS unit is plugged in it takes a few minutes for the connection to be made by your computer. Soon there will be a dialog box asking what you want to do. Click Open Device to View Files.

File Explorer View

This is where the internal memory is located. It should pop right up for you.

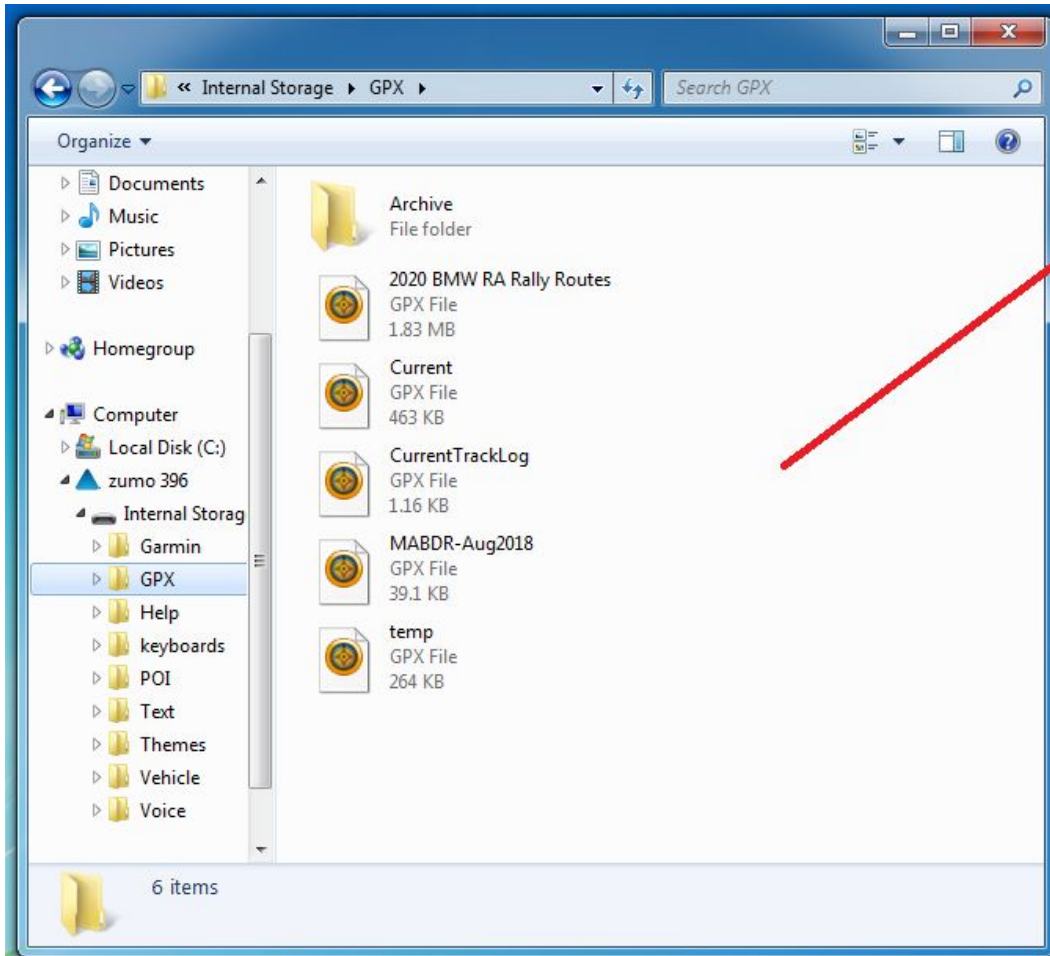


File Explorer



Click the down arrow to expand the internal memory file.

This is where the GPX file will go.

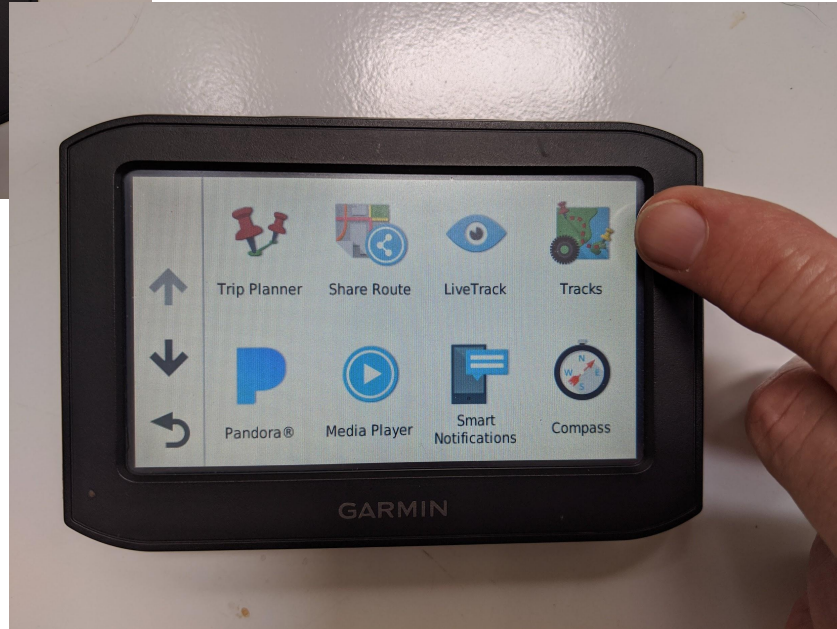
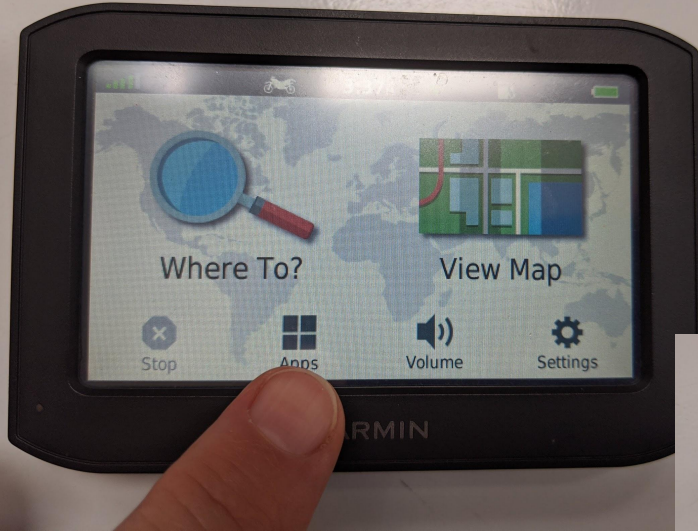


File Explorer

Click and drag your GPX file from the desktop into the area shown by the red line. As you can see I have other files there too for future trips.

GPS Function

Unplug your GPS from your PC and turn it on. Select Apps and then Tracks.



GPS Function

In the Tracks app there will be 14 files, one for each segment of the MABDR. The following slides have instructions that you'll need to do for each segment. In this picture I'm selecting the first segment from Damascus to Newport. Click this segment.



GPS Function

This brings you to the overview of the entire route, not just the first segment so that you can confirm this is the ride you want to work with.

At this screen, click on the wrench.



GPS Function



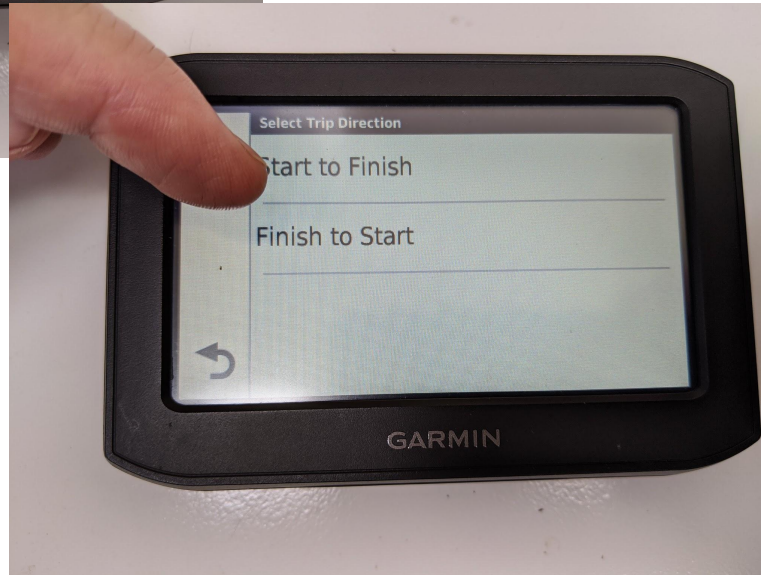
Selecting the Show Map will show this segment on the screen at all times, even when you load other segments. I recommend you leave this off because it isn't needed once the map loads. If you check this box you'll have to go back and uncheck it later so it's pointless to do this now.

Click the down arrow.

GPS Function

Click the Convert to trip.

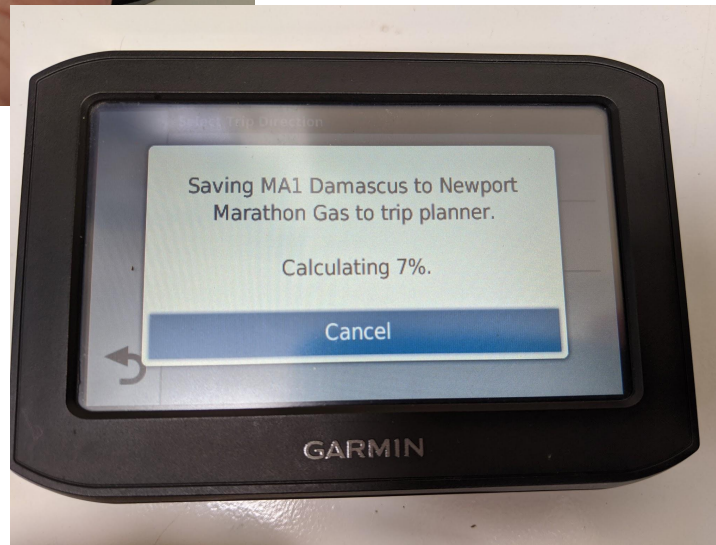
Click the Start to Finish



GPS Function

The next next screen allows you to change the name. Since this is the name of the segment, click Done.

This takes about 60 seconds while the system calculates.



GPS Function

Click Ok.

Click the back arrow until you're at the main menu.

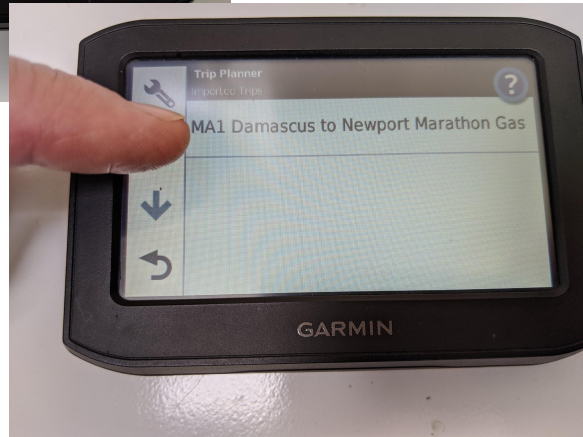


GPS Function

Click Trip Planner.

Click Saved Trips

Click the segment you want. Remember, you need to do this for each segment that you're riding.



GPS Function

Click Go!

Click Begin. This is important. If you are riding in from another area and you're not actually at the beginning point then the GPS will route you to the beginning which is where you want to start. If you chose End then it will route you to the end and miss the whole section.



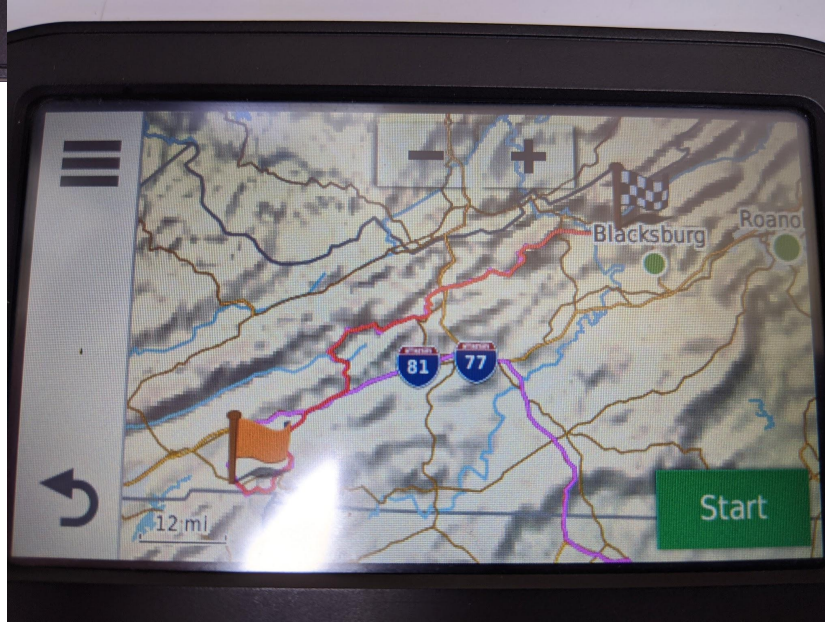
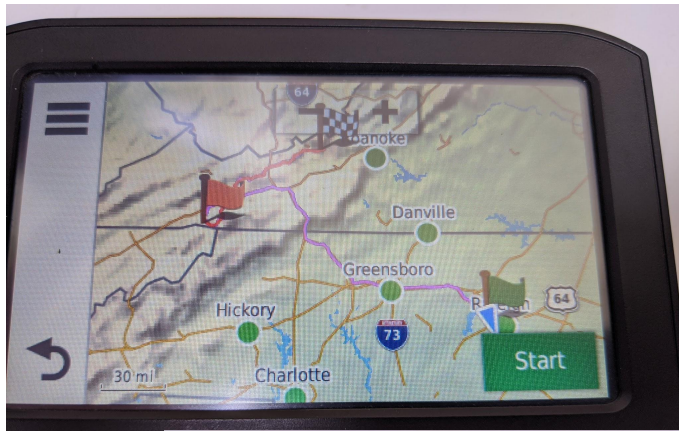
GPS Function

The system will now calculate the tracks. This takes a minute or so.

The segment shows up on the map and also includes the route to get to the beginning of the section.

You're done! As you can see by zooming in the route is intact and once you arrive at the beginning point you can follow turn by turn directions to the End.

The next day you do the same process again for section two.



Summary

I hope these instructions have been helpful. There may be some differences in different models so play around and figure out what works. I'm not a GPS expert but was able to figure this out by hours of investigation, videos and blogs to piece it together. To say it was frustrating is an understatement. Garmin doesn't have clear instructions on how to do this so I by the process of elimination I was able to figure it out.

Thanks for checking it out. I hope to see you out there on the trail!

Sincerely,

Matt Smith