

Sectioning Tracks

Tracks in Soil



Locate a track and document it completely.



I bracket it like this with a scale and stick rule to mark a photo as sectioned.



Cut lengthwise down the middle of the track, longer than the tracks length.



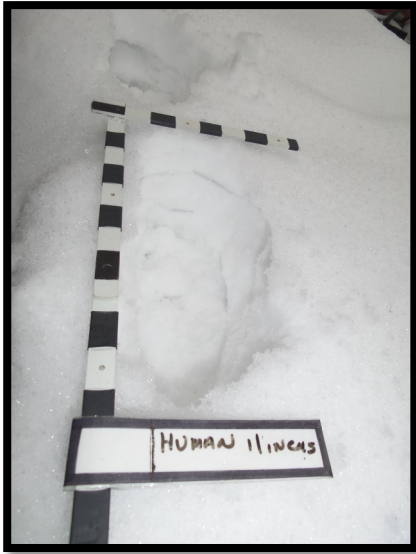
Make a crosswise cut across the width of the track in the middle.



End result should look like this.

When doing this photograph every step and draw the section in layers if you need to. It is important to cut longer and wider than the track so you can see the differences in pressure distribution by the toes, heel and mid-tarsal region of the foot. One track can give you lots of good information but you will need to do many to get a more rounded picture of how different substrata affect track making patterns. Do you really need to do this? No, but it is useful to see how the process of soil deformation works in the woods. It is also possible to do this across a suspected pathway to gauge if the path is made by human feet, animal feet, or big hairy feet. The more compressed the soil is the bigger the critter that made the path. Cut into a path the same way you would a track then cut into the soil off the path to give yourself a reference and compare the two. Always use your own footprints, or those who are with you, as a comparison gauge when possible.

Tracks in Snow



My cold barefoot track in snow with protractor.



Track sectioned down the middle to show the compression of the snow under the track. The stick rule is used to measure depth of the track as well as depth to the ground if possible.

Ill defined tracks in snow is where sectioning a track can really help in identification of the various marks you can find in the snow that look like Bigfoot tracks but may not be. Since my local Bigfoot population was extremely uncooperative in this particular project I used my own foot to illustrate this process. In deep snow the snow will often fall back into the track obscuring the outline as well as the imprint. Step and stride length should help you figure this out a bit but deer will often bound across open areas giving the impression of bipedal tracks. This technique is also useful after there has been a little melting going on or when freezing rain has fallen on the tracks in the snow. Both of these circumstances will obscure tracks but often the snow under a hard crust caused by melt/freeze cycles or frozen rain. You may not get good tracks this way but at least you should be able to tell what made them. If you think they were made by a Bigfoot follow the tracks to a more protected area and you may possibly find better tracks.



Photo from a steeper angle showing outline of the foot. A little dust or dirt on your trowel will make the cut edges show better in photographs.