

Aqua Map Up and Running in 3 Steps



Aqua Map is a full featured marine navigation app that runs on both Apple and Android smartphones and tablets. It has lots of features and for some, may appear to be overwhelming in learning how to use it. Well, it does have lots of capabilities but it is simple to install and use right away – as I said in the title, in three steps.

Step 1: Buy an Apple or Android device with a GPS chip. There are many choices but here are three that I have tested to work on Aqua Map, Navionics, and the Garmin Active Captain apps. If you already have a capable device, you're ahead of the game.

\$50 – [Samsung J3 Orbit](#) 16 GB smartphone. It has a 5-inch screen which is the same size screen on my old Garmin 492 chartplotter I used for many years from Maine to Key West. It comes with a GPS chip.

\$220 – [Samsung Galaxy Tab A 10.1](#) 32 GB. It has a 10-inch screen and comes with a GPS chip.

\$459 – [Apple iPad 32 GB](#) with a 10-inch screen and a GPS chip (the less costly non-cellular model does not have GPS).

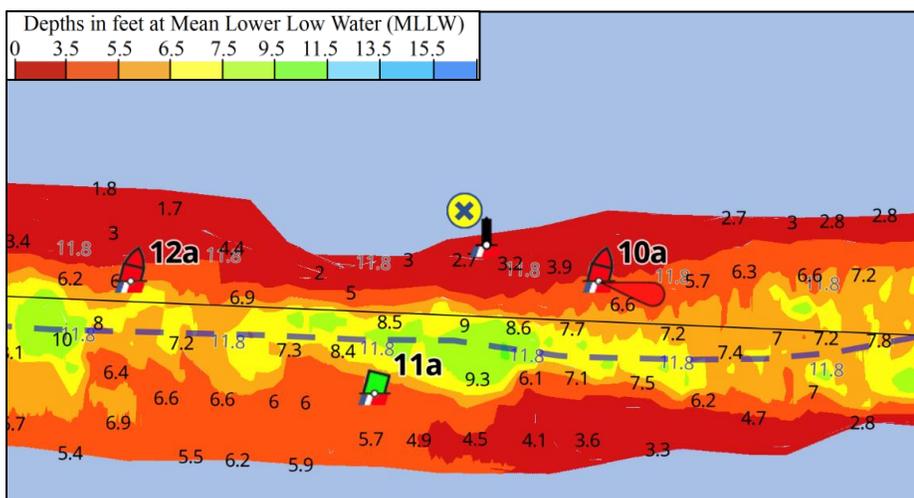
With the Android devices being less costly, why would anyone buy Apple products? There are two main reasons:

- Performance is better on Apple devices (screen redraws, scrolling). The CPUs are more powerful on average.
- Apps are usually updated for Apple products first and then ported to Android so the Apple apps will usually have the latest enhancements. Nevertheless, the two Samsung products mentioned above are good choices in the Android family.

Step 2: Download the Aqua Map app from Apple or Google Play store by opening a browser on your device. You can just Google the name "Aqua Map". One of the choices will be to download the Aqua Map Marine app. The download is free, the charts need to be purchased (see step 3).

Step 3: Once Aqua Map is installed and open, tap on the chart download symbol at the bottom left of the screen. You will see an array of squares covering a chart of the world. Scroll over to the US and tap on the squares covering the areas where you want to cruise. On first use, the squares will have padlock icons. Tapping on one will bring up an option to buy charts for that area. The entire US only costs \$10/year. Once selected, tap on the download icon at the bottom center of the screen. You now have a functioning chartplotter with free updates four times a year. It has charts for your area and will show your location on the charts as you proceed on the waterways of the US.

Optional Step 4: Activate Aqua Map Master. How would you like to see US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) survey



charts to one-foot accuracy displayed on the charts as you cruise along the ICW and in many other waterways of the US? The sample chart shown is a shallow area just south of Beaufort, NC. You would know the depths from an official US source and only Aqua Map offers that capability. It is invaluable in safely transiting shallow areas. The cost is \$10/year and also includes weekly chart updates for buoy changes as well as weekly updates on USACE surveys. Tap on the Gear icon at the bottom right of the screen which brings up Settings.

Then tap on the Aqua Map Master icon in Settings and sign up.

Optional Step 5: Download [Bob423 Tracks](#) (you can find them with Google too) for the deep-water path from Norfolk, Virginia to Ft Lauderdale, Florida to avoid all the shallows. See [How to Download Tracks](#) for step by step instructions for both Android and Apple products. Select the [Bob423 Long Tracks](#) tab and then tab on [B423 Norfolk to Ft Lauderdale 090320](#) to download to your device. The track will appear as a blue dotted line as shown in the Step 4 picture, ready to follow in Aqua Map.

With the above steps completed, you will have a chartplotter with free updates four times a year, weekly updates to USACE surveys and buoy changes, and a track to follow on the ICW to stay out of the mud.

Aqua Map has many additional capabilities such as tides and currents, anchor alarm, Waterway Guide, Active Captain, Route Explorer for ETAs to bridges and least cost fuel stops, AIS display, NMEA display of depths and wind speed and more – but all that capability can be learned at your leisure. For now, you have a new chartplotter to help you navigate the shallows of the ICW and waterways of the US.