

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there communities that have done this that I could talk with?

- Monroe County, Illinois
 - Our 4-H clubs were part of the National 4-H GIS/GPS Technology Leadership Team in 2009.
- A 4-H club in McLean County, Illinois
 - Partnered with the city government to document “green resources” in the urban area of Decatur. Members of this club plan to apply for the 2011 National 4-H GIS/GPS Technology Leadership Team.
- In Maine two YCM projects that would be good to contact are, Tracy Ross in Gray ME and Penny Kern in Presque Isle, ME.

What are critical success factors in keeping an effort moving forward?

- Youth need to select the project. If they believe in it and have personal buy in they are more likely to finish.
- Focus on the end product and how it will provide a benefit to the community.
 - It is critical for youth to have a clear goal in mind.
 - Knowing that there are specific audiences interested in seeing and using their work (i.e. map) is highly motivating for youth.
- Youth need to see progress on the project at every meeting.
- Providing opportunities for youth to meet people who use GIS in novel ways, and learn about the viability of a possible career using GIS skills. Opportunities are as diverse as the youths’ interests: conservation, natural resources, emergency management, business analysis, transportation, government, education.
- Recognize the work they have done publicly and throughout all levels of the community from the general public to the county commissioners and other government and political entities.

Can youth be good leaders in these efforts?

- Youth can be excellent leaders in these efforts. However, to be most effective they need to be trained – both in the technology and in leadership development
 - Youth returning after a year or two in the project are especially good leaders.

What are good ways to recognize youth and adults for their efforts?

- GIS maps lend themselves well to being shared online.
 - List the map-makers names whenever sharing maps
- Traditional recognition for youth (county fair etc.) hold great importance as this is where they get direct feedback on their work where their peers see their project
- Find “special” opportunities for youth (and adults) to showcase their work.

- Highlight youth maps along with GIS specialists' maps on GIS day.
- Make presentations of community maps to organizations
- Develop relationship with local media encouraging them to spotlight youth projects
 - Submitted photos of presentations and names to the local newspapers
- Presentation of certificates/plaques/medals
- Create opportunities to present to meaningful groups like town councils, school boards etc.

What do youth like most about Youth Community Mapping experiences?

As with all of us, different aspects of activities appeal to individuals differently. The same can be said for the YCM experience. The power behind the YCM experiences is the opportunity for our youth population to come together and create a greater community shared by their many diverse interests.

- Seeing the data go up onto the map for the first time.
- Being together working on projects - ideally out collecting data.
- Interaction with caring adults who want them to succeed and be self-sufficient in a rapidly changing technological world.
- Learning to use new technology, using the GPS units and seeing their resulting map. They prefer to start with a small (short) project, as large projects that take a lot of time, bog them down, and you start to lose their interest.

What do adults like most about Youth Community Mapping experiences?

- Enjoy working with youth.
- Enjoy watching the light bulb go off in the kids' heads as the youth realize they figured out how to accomplish a task using the technology.
- Like the youth development and seeing youth contribute to their community.
- See youth grow in confidence and ability to interact with partnering adults to make a difference.
- Like the opportunity to mentor youth and be able to say "I made a difference in this child's life."
- Learning new skills themselves and maybe coming up with a new career or hobby
- The social, professional, and career development they note when youth partner with the GIS experts and community leaders.
- Seeing the self-confidence of youth who complete a project and the pride as they watch a county board or a city council use their map in discussion and needs analysis, or when a conservation area posts their map of county recreation areas on the Center's wall, in their brochures, and on their website.

Are there any out of pocket costs?

- Usually minimal; it's like time, give as much as you can or want. Look for supportive business/industry locally and foundations that award grants that you would be eligible for. Encourage parents to help transport or supervise on data collection projects.