



ND 4-H Youth Use GIS and GPS

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North Dakota 4-H youth are using geospatial technologies in community development projects at various locations across the state. Four ND county 4-H organizations received geographic information system (GIS) software grants in 2005 and are using this technology to support their communities. The ND 4-H State Technology Team is using GIS and the global positioning system (GPS) to teach youth how geospatial technologies are used in agriculture and other industries.

The county 4-H organizations in Grant, Sioux, McLean and Mountrail Counties won GIS software grants from Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) of Redlands, CA, in 2005. These counties were among the 75 US county recipients of the ESRI GIS Grant Program for 4-H in March. The goal of this program is to foster and support the integration of GIS into community applications. Each county can use ESRI's ArcGIS software on 25 computers, including 4-H members' home computers. The recipients are expected to participate in and submit a project to the ESRI Community Atlas Program by May 2006. Successful recipients will receive permanent software licenses after completing their project. The NDSU extension youth specialists involved in the ESRI grant program are Sue Isbell, Grant County, Sheila Vander Wal, McLean County, Cheyenne Erickson, Ft Berthold, and Jorey Dahners, Sioux County. These extension agents are teaching youth how to use the software so they can be involved in community projects using geospatial technologies. Participating youth in these counties are using GPS to identify and mark tourism points of interest including historical points, unique local businesses, day trip sites, walking and biking trails and birding sites. Others are locating and marking all of the rural cemeteries in the county and cooperating with community officials to list the names and information of individuals interred at these sites. They use the GIS programs to display the data collected in their projects and to make the information available for interested community members.

The ND State 4-H Technology Team members are also using geospatial technologies in their activities. The North Dakota 4-H Youth Technology Leadership Team includes seven Teen Leaders, and four NDSU Extension Agents. Throughout the year team members actively promote 4-H and technology to youth and adults across the state, through "hands on" technology activities. The Technology Team collaborated with the University of North Dakota Aerospace Department in April for the annual 4-H Aerospace Camp in Grand Forks. Team members participated in a GIS for the Internet training workshop in Fargo in June. They used handheld GPS units to conduct GPS training and scavenger hunts at the NDSU Extension Youth Conference in Fargo, also in June. The team provided GPS training to youth during the ND 4-H Science and Technology Camp in Washburn in August.

More information about geospatial technology is available from the NDSU Agriculture and Biosystems Engineering Department Web site at <http://www.ageng.ndsu.nodak.edu>. Follow the links to Extension Programs and Geospatial Technology Education.