

Community Mapping Activity

Summary

The Community Mapping Activity invites participants of all ages to share their memories and experiences within a specific area. These areas could include watersheds, cities, counties, states or other regions (e.g. boundaries associated with nonpoint source pollution mitigation projects). The target audience could be a school class or group of children, a community influenced by a mitigation project, a group of volunteers who have stewardship over specific locations, or the general public.

Objectives

- **Create opportunities for land managers and local leaders to inform the public about land improvement projects.** As people record their memories and post them on a map, land managers have attentive audiences and an opportunity to educate about how their project is improving the community. This objective also applies to teachers or other presenters, who can instill knowledge about current and local environmental projects and issues.
- **Teach about local natural resources.** Topics could consist of the water cycle, the function of a watershed, storm water processes in an urban setting or the availability of natural resources in the highlighted area. Think about what natural resource topics might be important to your audience.
- **Answer questions and collect informal public feedback.** In the informal setting of a water fair, festival, or other local gatherings, people often feel more comfortable to ask questions and provide candid feedback about mitigation projects. The map activity lends to more friendly discussions and can be the basis for an informed conversation about possible changes.
- **Increase map literacy.** People will learn to make spatial references, increase their knowledge of the local area and become more familiar with mapping features such as scale bars, contour lines, locator maps and legends.
- **Connect the public between generations.** People from different generations can connect their experiences by sharing memories in similar locations from different time periods.



Community Mapping Activity

Materials Needed

- Printed map of the project area(s), relevant boundary, topography and local natural resources
- Sturdy frame for mounting the map (sheet of plywood, PVC frame, poster board, etc.)
- Small circle stickers with numbers written on them
- Sticky notes- Post-it Super Sticky Notes work well
- Writing utensils- permanent markers work well

Preparation

- **Create or locate a map.** You can create a map using Google Earth, ESRI ArcMap or another online GIS. Including a project area will help your map have a clearer purpose. If you already have a map that clearly highlights your project area, locate and ensure you can use it for your event. A project area can be drawn on with permanent marker and erased with ethanol.
- **Construct, buy or locate a mount for your map.** E.g. the map to the left is 4' X 6' and is supported by a 1" diameter PVC pipe frame that can be deconstructed and stored in 2 pieces. Velcro was applied to the back of the map to adhere it to the PVC frame.
- **Buy or locate other supplies** (markers, stickers and sticky notes).
- **Number the circle stickers before the event.**
- **Decide what information you will highlight in your interactions.** Determine which projects you will highlight and the message you want to get across to the public. Perhaps share statistics, like the number of acres revegetated or the number of construction sites improved. This activity is usually good for a 30-60 second synopsis of what you have accomplished.
- **Print out simple activity instructions and post near the map.**



Activity Logistics

Welcome and invite each participant to do the following:

1. Write down a favorite memory of an event that occurred within the predefined boundary on a sticky note.
2. Choose one of the pre-numbered circle stickers and write that number onto the sticky note.
3. Put the circle sticker in the location of their memory and the sticky note along the outside edge of the map or on a separate poster.

Community Mapping Activity

Post-event suggestions

- Create an online, interactive map with locations of memories.
- Include memories in a newspaper or other article about your project. Make sure these are anonymous or that you have permission to identify the participants.
- Display the map and memories in a community location, such as a library or county building, with a write-up about how the project will improve or has improved the community.

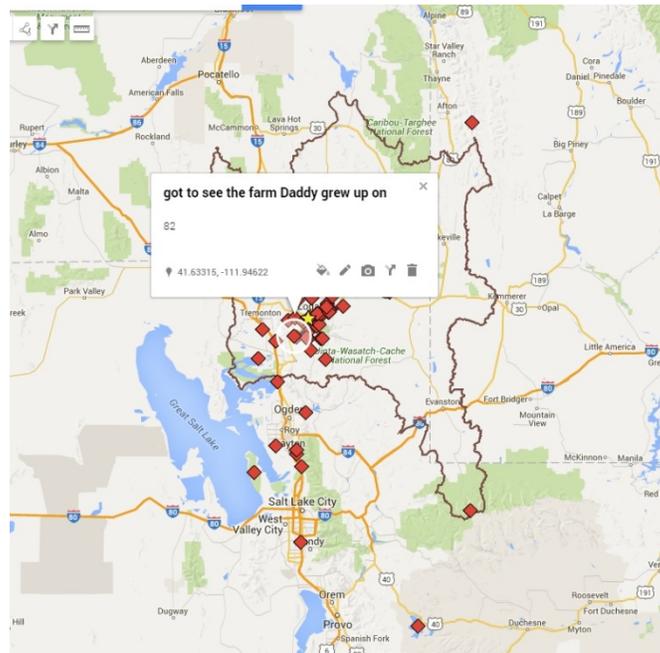


Figure 1: Google Map showing the Bear River Watershed and memories collected from participants of the Bear River Celebration and Free Fishing Day in 2016. This map is located online at <http://www.utahcleanwater.org/community-mapping-activity.html>