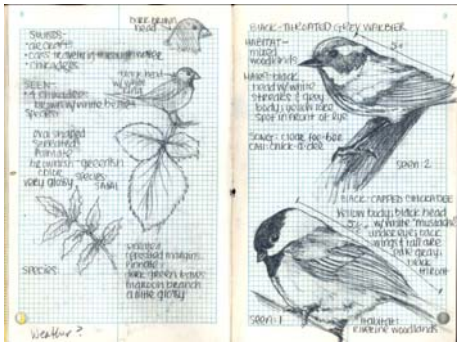
Why NatureMapping

"Why enlist citizens?" There are not enough natural resource professionals to monitor the plant and animal diversity within our states. People develop local knowledge and are observing wildlife virtually everyday. The public has a wealth of knowledge that can translate to providing natural resource professionals, planners, and decision-makers with collaborative information for developing and implementing stewardship plans that protect the local biodiversity of plants and wildlife.

By the early 1990s, the public educational systems were looking to infuse more environmental education in the classroom. At the same time, there was a need to verify range distribution maps of animals modeled for various statewide habitats. Guiding students as scientists, through research professionals, provided a link between science inquiry in the classroom and needed wildlife information.

The *NatureMapping* Program is the catalyst for developing and maintaining the opportunity for individual observers as well as schools and communities in more sophisticated monitoring and research projects. Hands-on workshops and support from educational institutions and businesses link researchers with schools and communities through local **Activity Centers**.

Become a citizen scientist and a valued volunteer partner with the scientific community and the private sector. Contact a local Activity Center and ask if they are or want to become *NatureMapping* certified and get involved in small research projects or become a *NatureMapper* on your own.



Field notebook created in a School of Tacoma Arts *NatureMapping* project

How to become a NatureMapper?

Visit our website,
http://depts.washington.edu/natmap
to learn the simple steps to become involved in the Program.

More questions?

Karen Dvornich, National Director
University of Washington
E-mail: vicon@u.washington.edu

"Biodiversity is the variety of life that we depend upon." - *Karen Dvornich*

The Program was co-founded in 1992 by Margaret Tudor, Wildlife Education, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Karen Dvornich, University of Washington, Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit.

The *NatureMapping* Program, February, 2009

The *NatureMapping* Program

Washington State

The *NatureMapping* Program – The goal of the program is to keep common animals common. In doing so, it will help to maintain a quality of life that we all envision. Observing and experiencing wildlife helps to build an understanding that provides a greater appreciation for our natural world. Recording and sharing wildlife information is the key to the Program. Shared information becomes a public database which helps us to learn more about the dynamics of the wildlife near us.

Join citizens, schools, natural resource agencies, business and local governments exchanging information and developing field projects about:
fish and wildlife, marine species,
plant and habitats, insects,
and water quality
through the *NatureMapping* Program

The *NatureMapping* Program builds the link between schools, citizens, and researchers in creating hands-on learning experiences. Local **Activity Centers** certified by *NatureMapping* provide the on-going support of real-life science inquiry which is guided by local research professionals.

Certified Activity Centers

Local **Activity Centers** are the backbone of a citizen science network across the state. Each *NatureMapping* Activity Center develops and maintains monitoring and research projects based on local science inquiry.

These regional centers consist of Informal Science Education Organizations whose mission aligns with **The *NatureMapping* Program**.

- The Tacoma Nature Center
  - Northwest Trek
- West Valley Outdoor Learning Center (Spokane)
- City of Vancouver Water Resources Education Center
- North Cascades Institute (Sedro Woolley)
- WSU Extension, Wenatchee
  - Barn Beach Reserve, Leavenworth
- Franklin Conservation District

The *NatureMapping* Program provides materials, skill building workshops, technology tools, and guidance with project development.

The **Activity Centers'** trained staff conduct multiple levels of workshops:

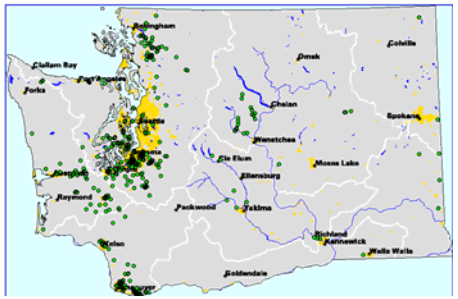
- Teacher Preparation
- Data Collection and Monitoring
- Project Design, and
- Facilitation and Technology

For Schools

- Develop and strengthen observation skills basic to science inquiry.
- Use inquiry to explore the wildlife and natural resources within your community.
- Establish the use of technology to explore questions through GIS (Geographical Information Systems) data sets.
- Engage in teacher training to develop a sound approach to field investigations for the classroom.
- Integrate essential learning requirements across all grade levels and topics.

Students, professionals, and community linked by a local lizard

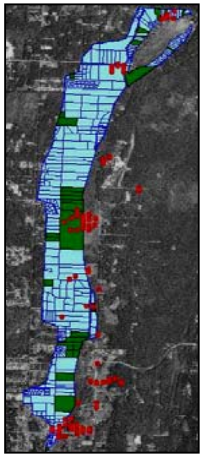
Water quality and restoration data from schools as well as research groups adds to the understanding of land use, fish and wildlife habitats.



For Communities and Businesses

- Join local Activity Centers in providing expertise and guidance which contributes to the investigative science and hands-on learning experiences.
- Local support is important in developing life-long learners. Participation in local research projects, monitoring, and bioblitzes builds community.

The first Bioblitz (24-hour all species inventory) in Washington State covered 800 acres along Crescent Valley on private lands for the landowners.



35 Professionals
teamed with public participants reported:
305 Plants
66 Birds
14 Mammals
6 Amphibians
2 Reptiles
2 Fish
150 Invertebrates

NatureMapping wildlife data contributes information that anyone can access for a better understanding of what lives in the neighborhood (black dots are *NatureMapping* locations).