

“Expanding GPS Mapping Resources for Community Development”

**University of Pittsburgh at Bradford
Dr. Livingston Alexander
President
300 Campus Drive
Bradford, PA 16701
814-362-7510**

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**Dr. William Schumann
Assistant Professor of Anthropology
Social and Behavioral Sciences Division
University of Pittsburgh at Bradford
300 Campus Drive
Bradford, PA 16701
814-362-7960
wrs18@pitt.edu**

Final Report Narrative

Name of Project: GPS Mapping and Community Development Grant Period: February 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

Grantee Name: U of Pittsburgh at Bradford Project Director: Dr. William Schumann

Description of Project:

The GPS Mapping and Community Development project is a teaching project (through ANTH 0250: Applied Anthropology; instructor: Dr. William Schumann) that is intended to provide Pitt-Bradford students with applied learning experiences through campus-community research partnerships that build sustainable community development capacity. Specifically, Pitt-Bradford students and faculty would develop walking trail user application data for mobile devices that would serve public use and educational purposes in Bradford, PA. This project is developed in partnership with the Allegheny National Forest Visitors Bureau, the school board and individual science teachers of Bradford, the Bradford Chamber of Commerce, and the Tuna Valley Trail Association of Bradford. The GPS mapping project relies on widely available, user-friendly mapping and data entry technologies available through Google maps and related digital photography software. This project is innovative for developing a program of classroom-based learning that would fully integrate and apply the principles of place-based studies, project management, and student-led research as the central means of conveying course information on applied anthropology. This project will yield two community-based presentations in addition to an estimated four meetings among various project partners, participating faculty, and UPB students.

Students in Applied Anthropology would: (1) physically map and digitally photograph trails to identify ideal points for natural and/or historic data entry; (2) compile natural scientific and historic data (text and photography for the first phase of project development) on Bradford to upload onto the trail application maps so that trail users can access this information via handheld devices such as smart phones. Thus, trail users would have access to on-site, informational resources that would enhance the walking experience and (in principle) set the tourism assets of McKean County apart from those of other areas.

Activities:

In addition to the conference presentation, poster, and other activities, please include details regarding the following requirements from the Scope of Work:

- Students developed a conference presentation, including a power point presentation and script, for the ATP meetings in Dec. 2013.
- Students developed a conference poster for the ATP meetings in Dec. 2013.
- Students digitally mapped approximately 30 trail points on McDowell Trail during the fall semester.

- Students collected information about site-specific user content, such as distinctive features of trees, seasonal plants, and the waterway running parallel to much of the trail (Tuna Creek).
- Students conducted field interviews with environmental experts on and off campus.
- Students surveyed local businesses in consultation with the Bradford Area Chamber of Commerce.
- Students networked with local school groups through UPB's College in the High School program about training high school students to develop trails as part of their sciences curriculum in future years.
- Students developed multiple conference presentation assets, such as audience-specific power point materials, to utilize throughout the project.
- Students created business and data collection questionnaire materials.
- The project director surveyed former ATP students about career outcomes, which indicated that the ATP project has encouraged and enabled placement into competitive graduate programs and other leadership opportunities.
- The project director wrote letters inviting input and participation from five area schools in Bradford for future project development and programming.
- The project director (Dr. Schumann) contributed approximately 40 hours each of research time (i.e., beyond classroom time) in match support of this project.

Activities with community partners:

May 2013, Bradford, PA project partners meetings (Allegheny National Forest Visitors Bureau, Bradford Area Chamber of Commerce representative, area school representatives, local trail association representatives). Topic: general project logistics.

August 2013, Bradford, PA project partners meetings (Allegheny National Forest Visitors Bureau, McKean County Conservation District). Topic: identifying ideal mapping points.

September 2013, Bradford, PA project partners meetings (Bradford Area Chamber of Commerce). Topic: strategies for identifying and approaching key businesses.

November 2013, Bradford, PA project presentation and discussion (Allegheny National Forest Visitors Bureau, PA Wilds' small business ombudsman). Topic: developing broader interest and building coalitions.

Presentations in addition to ATP meetings:

October 2013, Bradford, PA project demonstration and tutorial held as part of UPB alumni weekend.

November 2013, students presented project research to representatives of the Allegheny State Park of NY, Jamestown Community College of NY, the Pathways of Kinzua Project group (a regional trail development consortium), and the tourism authority of Warren County, PA.

Dec 2013, Bradford, PA town hall meeting (approx. 30 community members attending) to present the application to the community.

Project Outcomes:

Construction of a new digital map in Bradford to compliment the map created in Smethport in 2012. The local tourism authority now has a multi-town 'network' of digital trails to promote on its website. The project was also presented to project partners as well as the larger community on multiple occasions (see above).

Problems Encountered:

Creating projects of appropriate scale for student schedules. This year's project scaled back the range of activities associated with the GPS project, primarily in terms of setting a lower number of map points to create as a project goal. While it was an improvement, it will always be a challenge to set realistic workloads for this project, which partially reflects how students become very committed to the project and tend to prioritize it above other demands at school. However, this was also a great 'teaching moment' for students to understand how to manage their time after graduation.

As the school calendar happened to be arranged for 2013, some students ran into problems with traveling to D.C. while other, end-of-term projects and assignments were due. Ultimately, most UPB faculty were supportive of finding compromises.

Finally, class schedule changes meant shifting the school lesson plan component of the project to spring. However, this opened additional possibilities for the project (described in activities, above).

Program Continuation and Sustainability:

UPB is now developing a free GPS mapping institute event (planned for April or May 2014) in which additional trail groups, institutions (such as Jamestown Community College of NY), and others can be trained in the mapping technique to develop projects independently of UPB. An agreement is also established with the McKean County tourism authority to host new trail content, thus creating a hub for attracting tourism and promoting public education related to the project outcomes. Continuing the project with new partnerships and additional community development applications is currently under discussion among UPB faculty.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Again, the ATP has been an excellent incubator for this project. The students come back from the ATP conference confident that their experience with the GPS project positions them for future leadership. This reflects the quality of the ARC review process and the quality of the planning and implementation on the part of ETSU. It is an excellent program that I hope will continue.

Attachments (in PDF format):

Flyer announcement of research demonstration from Dec. 11, 2013.