



# Teacher Training

Summer 2004

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June 21- 23, 2004  
Macalester College, St. Paul, MN

July 7- 9, 2004  
Itasca Community College, Grand Rapids, MN

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# Background

- In the U.S., we average 140,000 wildfires per year, burning approximately 14.5 million acres. Each year since 1990, more than 900 homes have been destroyed by wildfire. When people build their “dream homes” in the woods or on wild lands on the edges of urban areas, these properties may be vulnerable.
  - Here in Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of Forestry has adopted the national Firewise Communities program. This program is designed to help communities assess and reduce the risk of wildfire to homes.
  - The Minnesota Alliance for Geographic Education (MAGE) has received a Firewise Community Grant from the U.S. Forest Service to support the creation of a Firewise Community Assessment curriculum and to train teachers to implement this curriculum. The curriculum will be correlated with National and MN Academic Standards in Social Studies and Science.
  - Based on this curriculum, MAGE will offer two 3-day teacher trainings during the summer of 2004. Each training session will accommodate 12 teachers. Training sessions will include content instruction on wildfire, Firewise and the Urban/Wildland Interface, and hands-on technology training in GPS and AtlasGDS GIS.
  - As a result of this training, teachers will be prepared to lead students in conducting a Firewise Community Assessment in their own community, or in a neighboring community.
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# Teachers Work to Make A Difference In Their Community With GPS and GIS!



Kris McCarthy [left] and Mary Mohr-Scinocca [right] work on Atlas GDS to look for areas of homes that are potentially at high-risk for wildfire damage.

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Who: Middle and High School Geography, Social Studies, and Science Teachers; Youth and Service Group Leaders were invited to participate.

Why: To engage students in a standards based, authentic, active learning project designed to introduce them to Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). To help students develop inquiry skills, geography and science content knowledge and hands-on experience with issues of human-environment interaction. To provide a valuable service to a community and the state of Minnesota.

Teacher Benefits: New "Firewise Communities: Reducing the Risks of Wildfire" curriculum, GIS and GPS training, MN Environmental Atlas and AtlasGDS software, CEUs and stipend.

Need computers and GPS receivers? If needed, the Minnesota DNR Firewise Program will provide laptop computers with pre-loaded MN Environmental Atlas and AtlasGDS software and Garmin Rino 110 GPS receivers for teachers to use in implementing the Firewise Community Assessment project in their home schools.



Ken Pekarek (MN Land Management Information Center) [left] and Sara Damon (Firewise Institute Director) [standing] assist teachers with the Firewise GIS tutorials.

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Jerry Benson (Luverne Middle/HS) and Randy Hanson (Fergus Falls Alternative Learning Ctr) collect GPS waypoints.



Itasca Community College  
Geography / GIS Program  
Director Tim Fox provides  
background on geographic  
fundamentals.

For additional information contact Sara Damon at:  
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