

MAPPING PLACE-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

You can work alone on this exercise or you can choose to lead a group of park staff and/or partners through this exercise together. You will need a large sheet of paper and colored pencils or markers. Draw a free-form “map” of your park and its local community. Start in the center with a shape that roughly represents the shape of your park and any of its key elements, leaving lots of room around the edges. Now think about what else in the community is important to include on the map. Next, sketch in these places and be sure to label anything that seems important, for instance:

- Key public buildings, like schools, museums, or the library;
- Municipal buildings like the town hall, courthouse, or post office;
- Geologic features, like hills or valleys;
- Watercourses, like rivers, ponds, or lakes;
- Cultural landmarks, like statues or historic markers;
- Public lands, like municipal parks or surrounding national forest;
- Bordering communities;
- Natural features, like the mountains, a favorite tree, or swimming hole; and
- Any other special places in your park’s community that connects to the human history of the place and/or the community’s local or regional economy

In this somewhat chaotic atmosphere, ideas breed ideas so let your imagination flow. Your map may look like a geographic map or it might be more representational—any variation is fine. The point is to generate ideas about potential partnerships and connections that can be made within your community.

Now, step back from your map. Using different colored markers, highlight:

- Locations of key learning opportunities;
- Locations of possible service learning projects, and
- Locations of possible project partners.

Once the exercise is complete, upload an image of your completed map to the appropriate folder on the Google drive in either jpeg or pdf format. Label the file with your last name, first initial, and park acronym as illustrated in the following example, (Ex: Zazo_J_SPAR.pdf) We will use this map on Day 2 to explore these place-based learning opportunities and build on them throughout the day.

Source: Adapted from *Learning to Make Choices for the Future: Connecting Public Lands, Schools and Communities through Place-based Learning and Civic Engagement*.