Basic GPS lesson

By Jamie Madson, Rockford Middle School Forest

Subjects: Social studies, English language arts

Materials: each pair of students needs 1 GPS unit, 2 index cards, pencil, 1 piece of string. One or more hole punchers.

# Procedure:

In the classroom, use a power point that includes instruction on how students will use the Garmin eTrex 20 GPS unit. Go over: turning unit on, finding satellites, coordinates (what they are), understanding and setting waypoints, entering coordinates to find waypoints set by others.

1) Get a partner.

2) Tell one person from the group should grab two index cards, one pencil, and one piece of string. Punch a hole in the corner of one index card. Sit down and wait instruction.

3) Write the first sentence of a story on the top of the index card that has a hole. Wait further instruction.

4) Follow me. Go outside to desired location. Give parameters for how far they can travel based on their age and ability level (within sight of you, far enough away from other groups, etc.).

5) Have students find a tree to which to attach their index card (with hole) using the string. The story card is now hanging from the tree. The student must use the GPS to mark the location and write the GPS coordinates on the second index card. Come back to the teacher.

6) The teacher will collect all of the index cards, then redistribute them to groups.

7) Each group must enter the coordinates from the new index card into their GPS unit and “go to” the site.

8) When they find the index card on the tree, they will write a second sentence, continuing the story that was started, and leaving the card on the tree. When finished, they return to the teacher.

9) Have students continue until they have gone to about 4-5 cards/trees. On the last trip, have students bring back the index card after they write their sentence.