

Our Common Ground – Green Map Story and Community Impacts

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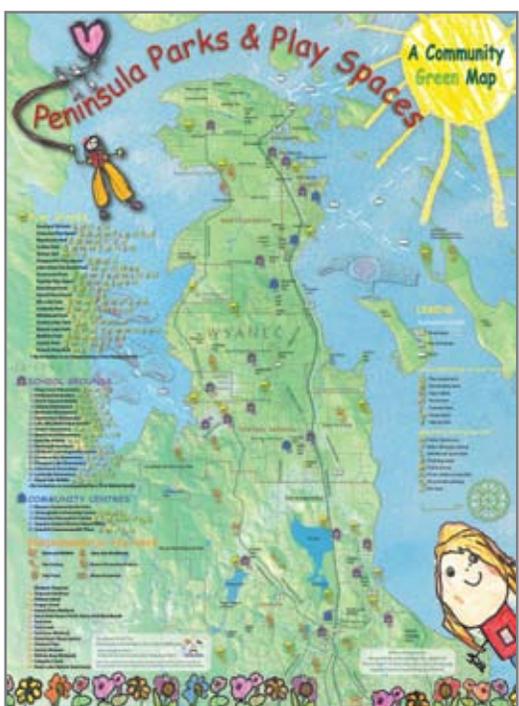
Background: We Make the Place by Mapping!

The Victoria and Region Green Map project began in 1999 as the first spatial regional profile of community and environmental assets and initiatives. Common Ground's enthusiastic newly formed team of community activists, students and planners worked with dynamo cartographer Ken Josephson and the University of Victoria Geography Department.

Making a visually and symbolically beautiful map that accurately portrayed the region and honoured the richness of the indigenous First Nations heritage took five years to complete. First Nations artists provided the map's original place names and local native motifs, and the map includes colorful vignettes that illustrate how community mapping has applications from health research to ensuring that 20,000 pounds of fruit from backyard trees would be picked for food banks.



Victoria and Region Green Map (right)



(Left) Early Childhood "Play" Map" 2007

What is Common Ground?

The Common Ground Community Mapping project began officially in 1998, stemming from several projects with local and global relevance and connections. A diverse group of people interested in sustainability, popular education, bioregionalism, green-, asset- and parish-mapping, aboriginal worldviews and rights, conservation, participatory learning, and GIS converged around the common interest in getting citizens of all ages involved in mapping and planning their communities. Together they named the project 'Our Common Ground.'



(Left) Haida Gwaii Map: Northern Haida Gwaii – (an unpublished community research project: “Mapping with First Nations” 2006

Common Ground also travelled to Cuba in 2003 and participated in Havana mural mapping with the outstanding Mapa Verde Cuba network. (below)



Impacts: Join the “Mad Mappers Tea Party!”

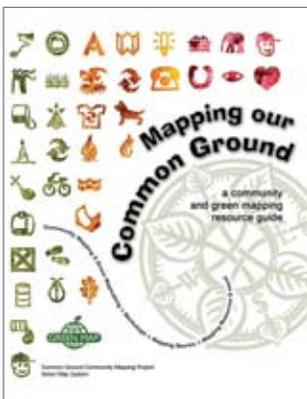
Green Mapmaking became a widespread regional networking and visioning process about sustainability involving 25 different groups as a result of Common Ground’s outreach. Hundreds of participants have gone on to develop smaller maps: schools, street recycling (binners), neighborhoods, sensitive ecosystems (Haida Gwaii). Seven other regional Green Maps have been printed to date; there is a webmap and our

“Mapping our Common Ground” book in English, Spanish (and soon, Portuguese!).

Participatory processes using maps began to be seen by institutional, community and academics alike as a viable planning tool and Green Map System greatly assisted in legitimizing that view. There is also an increased public awareness of indigenous place names, published for the first time on a regional map.

Common Ground’s next steps include more systematic training, a learning-based website, integrating community and Green Mapmaking into school and university curricula and connecting mapmakers in communities and universities throughout the Americas.

The work of Common Ground is never finished. The road is made by walking, the place (the map), is made by mapping...and the territory is infinite!



(Above) A booklet of mapmaking knowhow

The process of creating the map is as important as the product. (right)

