MILWAUKEE

Green Mapmaking along the USA's Great Lakes

GREEN MAP® ATLAS
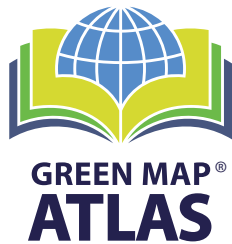
A project of the **Green Map System:** promoting sustainability and citizen action in communities around the world through locally created maps of the natural and cultural environment
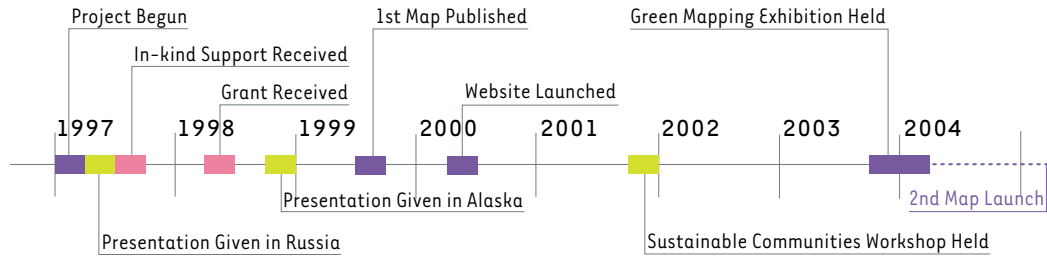
Introduction

Milwaukee Green Map

www.wisconline.com/greenmap/milwaukee

Milwaukee

Detail of the Milwaukee Green Map (1999)

Timeline:

- 1997 — Project Begun
- Presentation Given in Russia
- 1998 — In-kind Support Received
- Grant Received
- 1999
- 2000 — 1st Map Published
- Presentation Given in Alaska
- Website Launched
- 2001
- 2002 — Green Mapping Exhibition Held
- Sustainable Communities Workshop Held
- 2003
- 2004 — 2nd Map Launch

Although I had lived in an urban place for many years, I wasn't entirely convinced that cities were healthy or environmentally sound places to live. Having grown up in rural Wisconsin, I felt I needed evidence that there was something sustainable about a city like Milwaukee.

In March of 1997 I saw a magazine article detailing the New York Green Apple Map, and got excited about its potential here. My project at the time, urbaNature, was meant to communicate urban living as a natural process, and I thought the Green Map System would be a perfect way to show people what was going on here.

As much of my work as an information designer was with environmental NGOs, I knew of many concerned people in Milwaukee. But I wondered if they were aware of what other groups were doing. Starting this project was a way to reveal connections, increasing the momentum.

The Milwaukee Green Map Project was really a personally motivated art work — an information design task that reflected my own interests in this place. When you make a map, you can see everything that's happening, and I think that's the beauty of it.

Map Data

- Language: English
- Number of Map Editions: 1
- Published Map Formats: Print, Website
- Number of Sites Charted: 408
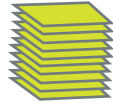- Number of Global Icons Used: 60
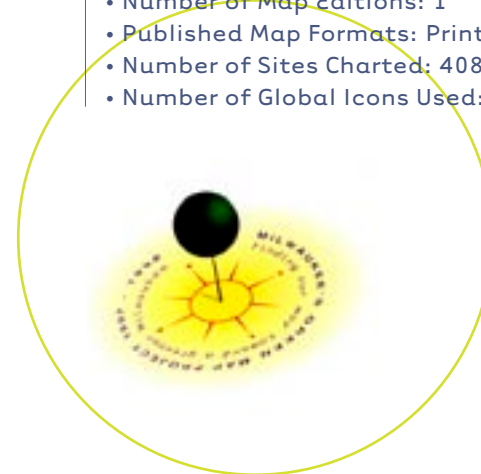
Mapmaking

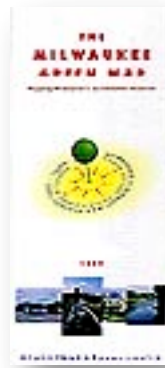Milwaukee · Wisconsin · USA
Milwaukee Green Map
www.wisconline.com/greenmap/milwaukee

10,000 maps printed

The Milwaukee Green Map (1999)
Postcard publicizing the exhibit "Green Mapping: Information design as a tool for social change"
Matthew Groshek addressing participants from 14 countries at the first Global Green Mapmakers Meeting in 2002

The map looks the way it does because of my own personal sensibility as an information designer. I wanted a densely layered map, using the Green Map Icons as a gateway into bigger ideas. So I included maps of the watershed, population density, historic green space and more on the reverse side, showing how this interconnectedness can reveal sustainability. The sweetness of the map is that this simple visual tool can link into a network that is hugely complex.

For clarity, I kept the map lighter in color, and tried to balance text and images. It was difficult fitting everything in when nearly every site came with an incredible story. I prioritized by considering basic, everyday needs: clean drinking water, waste management, food resources. I also included aesthetic considerations such as green space and light pollution—which, for example, not only wastes energy but also diminishes the night sky. Almost every site meshes together aesthetics, social, economic and environmental impacts.

Differences between computer platforms set many design parameters for this project. The base map was in a Macintosh-compatible Adobe Illustrator format, which I quickly realized could not handle GIS maps contributed by community groups. I placed hundreds of GIS locations by hand, which I would hope to avoid doing with the next map.

MGMs were free to educational institutions and sold through nature centers, bookstores and the local food co-op. Approximately half the 10,000 printed maps were distributed, although sadly the remaining maps were inadvertently recycled! Currently, conversations are underway with an anonymous donor to start a second edition.

Technical Data

Software:
Adobe Illustrator
Adobe Photoshop
FileMaker Pro
Cadtools
Avenza MAPublisher

Hardware:
Macintosh workstation
Flatbed scanner
35mm camera
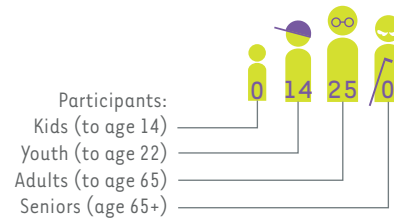Printer

Paper:
Halopague, 100% recycled (20% post consumer)

Map Structure:
Folding
· Map: 86.4 X 55.9 cm / 34 X 22 in

Teamwork

Milwaukee Green Map
www.wisconline.com/greenmap/milwaukee

Participants:
Kids (to age 14) — 0
Youth (to age 22) — 14
Adults (to age 65) — 25
Seniors (age 65+) — 0

22 international Green >> Mapmakers presented their projects at the Rockefeller Foundation's conference center in Bellagio, Italy

<< Isabelle Duvivier, Mapmaker from Santa Monica, California, exchanged ideas with Matthew about map design

Although I attempted to form partnerships early on, the vision for collaboration changed as the project proceeded. I thought a clear buy-in from partners was necessary, but many NGOs I knew seemed overworked already. So instead I sought out information bits from different groups—for example a transportation plan from Citizens for a Better Environment—and also asked them to suggest sites for the map. The Center for Urban Initiatives and Research (CUIR) at the University of Wisconsin/Milwaukee also provided feedback and some neighborhood GIS mapping.

I have been influenced by many other mapping projects, but the MGM was ultimately a personal assessment of my community. Although this may seem exclusionary, it can be a powerful perspective too. I realized that by educating myself, I could share this with others through the map. Some places just seemed appealing, such as resale shops. Milwaukee is well known for its scavenger mentality, and there's a healthy sense of competition here having to do with salvage and thrift.

I felt that scientific, quantifiable criteria would not have communicated enough about the quality of the place we live. A Green Map is always a cultural portrait, hard to measure but not always hard to chart. People sometimes think that if you're not from a disenfranchised group you don't have anything to say about the place you live. I don't believe that's true — when the environment is compromised, everyone is disenfranchised.

A 2003 exhibit at Cardinal Stritch University presented the Milwaukee Green Map and other maps from around the world

Large Green Map Icons gave the public a taste of how information design can increase awareness of social issues

Economics

Milwaukee Green Map
www.wisconline.com/greenmap/milwaukee

Green Map Icons, as shown on Milwaukee's map

These icons are the common currency of all Green Maps

'People resources' such as data collection and checking came through university internships, high school groups and environmental centers. Many people volunteered their skills, including database and website construction. I also received $5000 from the Harry F. and Mary Franke Idea Fund, disbursed through The Park People. That money re-paid people for services initially donated, such as large-scale digital outputs. I volunteered my time, spending about 5-10 hours per week. Though I planned on six months, the project took nearly two years, and would have cost about $50,000 at market rates.

Near the end, I gave an interview about the MGM and mentioned needing donated printing services. Two days after the article came out, Sells Printing Company called and offered to print 10-15,000 copies. An environmentally-conscious company, they avoid using wasteful negatives through a filmless electronic process, and also use soy-based inks and recycled paper, and conserve other resources. Without this generous

(upper, lower) The MGM website targets visitors to Milwaukee, with the hope that they will use the map to discover the sustainable resources of the region. Images of this kind were used to introduce the Green Map Icons, and show how they reveal complex ideas simply to varied audiences

Economic Data

Type of Organization: Individual

Support:
Grants, in-kind, sponsorship

Major Project Supporters:
Milwaukee Foundation
Harry F. and Mary Franke Idea Fund
Sells Printing Company
Bradner Smith and Company of Wisconsin

Cost of Map: $5, but free to educational groups

Spin Off Projects: Presentations, workshops and exhibitions

donation, the map would have remained stuck in my computer — where it had been for four months already — with no way to give it to people.

Assessment

Milwaukee Green Map
www.wisconline.com/greenmap/milwaukee

(left to right) The MGM was featured in several publications including *Milwaukee Magazine* (October 99) and *New Trends in World Design* (January 01). A *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article (March 99) was instrumental in obtaining donated printing for the map. Coverage also included pieces in the "Outpost Exchange" newsletter (April 01) and *Lapin*, a Japanese magazine.

One of the greatest challenges was simply deciding when the map was complete. Another was communicating the value of the map before it was made. The NGO community runs a tight economic line when it comes to projects without direct benefit, yet the map is an easy way of raising consciousness about sustainability. Communities need a language that allows non-specialists to communicate with experts, and these maps can help start that dialogue.

Milwaukee's link to GMS gave the project credibility, as well as the power of networked global thinking. Showing that people all over the world are doing this, using the Green Map Icons, gives you leverage. It has increased the professional credibility of my firm, Education Design Link, too.

There were some local press articles, but most coverage has been global rather than local. Recently I designed an exhibit called "Green Mapping: Information design as a tool for social change" at

Cardinal Stritch University, which has generated a renewed interest in the MGM project. People were made aware of the global scope of Green Maps, and were impressed by their number, quality, and regional diversity.

The size of my original map may be too big — I like the idea of people walking around with maps in their pockets. Another drawback was that it might not have reached beyond those who were already pretty environmentally conscious. It did, however, fit nicely into the general attitude here about green building, sustainable city planning and other environmentally sound practices and services. Hopefully, the next MGM can reflect these changes while celebrating thoughtful living.
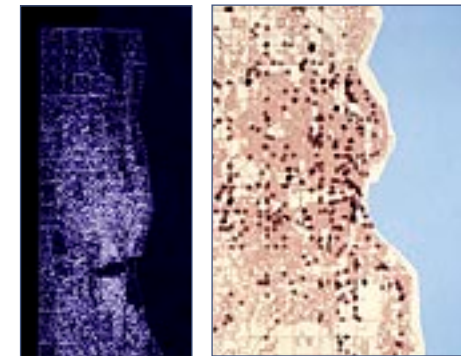
(left, right) An inset map of population density appears next to a map of light pollution on the MGM, making an illuminating comparison. This GIS map was used as a reference to locate "Remediation and Redevelopment" sites

The foundation of the project was the idea that, through interpretation and careful selection, data becomes information, which is then transformed into useful, place-based knowledge

Conclusion

"When I first started my position, I used the map as an essential resource to increase my background knowledge of the Milwaukee River Basin and identify priority areas to focus on."

– Kimberly Gleffe, Director, River Revitalization Foundation

The supplementary maps on the reverse side connect GMS to other mapping ideas, and make the Milwaukee Green Map project unique. The personal approach to mapmaking also distinguishes this project from many other Green Maps.

For the second version of the Green Map I'll try to get more community support, a team of people to help develop the process. I would also find a writer for the text and have a stronger web presence, with images of people and their stories revealing a deeper sort of narrative. Also, a print map is still valuable because of its beauty as a printed object.

My favorite part of the project is connecting with many different people locally, and also globally. The Global Green Mapmakers Meeting in Bellagio, Italy was an incredible chance to meet colleagues from 14 countries, and I was impressed to see how they could work with community partnerships.

Green Mapping has been an exceptional experience, bringing home the strengths of civic involvement and the power of information design.

"Groshek set out to answer his family's questions about why anyone would want to live in Milwaukee and ended up creating a road map to the community's progressive side."
—Shelly Jarenski, Outpost Exchange, April 2001

"The Milwaukee Green Map is a phenomenal resource for connecting people to their environmental community."
—Ken Leinbach, Executive Director, Urban Ecology Center

Landscape restoration such as the prairie and oak savannahs at Wehr Nature Center remind visitors of Wisconsin's pre-settlement features

Even in winter, the Lake Michigan shoreline provides breathtaking scenery and recreational opportunities such as biking, walking and cross-country skiing

The Milwaukee River, where recreation once competed with wastewater disposal, has returned to a wildlife habitat and fishing/canoeing destination in recent years

GREEN MAP®
ATLAS

Volume One
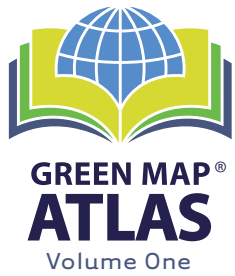
<< The Schlitz Audubon Nature Center has become a showcase for green building practices in Milwaukee

An environmental corridor for countless animals and plants, the Milwaukee River also offers its bounty to other determined locals

Milwaukee Green Map (1999)

Credits

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Want
This Map?

online only: **www.wisconline.com/ greenmap/milwaukee**
questions? **edlmg@execpc.com**

www.greenmap.org is your global link to every local Green Map project, multilingual Icon posters, an invitation to participate, and more.