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The Boston Globe

Recycle, buy organic, find open spaces

By Diane Daniel, Globe Correspondent | July 16, 2006

Many visitors center maps show a city's landmarks, a couple of parks, the big hotels, some restaurants. Beyond that, you're on your own.

Green Maps dig a little deeper and are much greener in their emphasis on environmental and community assets. Those could include parks, farmers' markets, recycling centers, thrift stores, and places to buy organic and environmentally sensitive products. They might even point the way to spots you wouldn't have known to ask about, such as, in Kyoto, the best place to watch fireflies. Or, in Toronto, how to head out for a kayak ride.

The New York -based mapping project, now in its 11th year, is growing at a rate of about 60 mapping projects a year, said founder and director Wendy Brawer. There are 350 maps covering 47 countries, some printed and others only available by download. One of the most recent printed maps is for Cambridge.

Local community groups create their own maps using Green Map System software and a universal iconography that is not English language-dependent. Young mapmakers are involved, too. One of the most popular maps is called LoMap, a 250-site map of Lower Manhattan produced by youngsters ages 7 to 17 that features youth-oriented activities.

Brawer said Green Maps are popular with parents and grandparents seeking low-cost activities. "You'll find many free and youth-oriented things," she said, "not canned experiences you have to pay for."

For information on Green Maps, call 212-674-1631 or visit www.greenmap.org. Downloadable maps are free, as are most of the printed maps if you obtain them locally. To have printed maps sent to you (\$5 each), go to www.greenmap.org/store. Information about the Cambridge map is at <http://cambridgema.greenmap.org>.

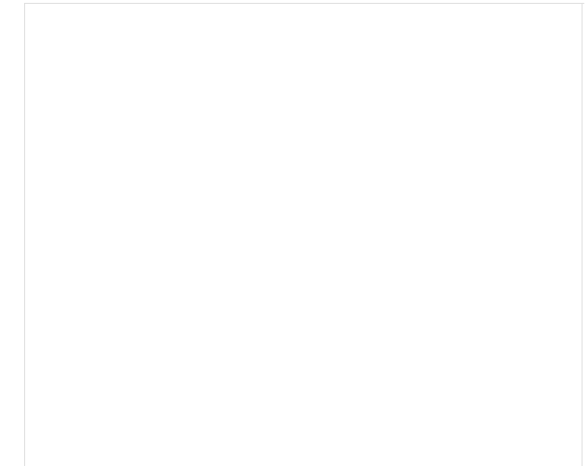
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