Community Science for Biodiversity Monitoring

The Electronic Field Guide (EFG) Project

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Goals of the EFG Project

- Allow a wide range of people to easily identify species
- Provide facility to share information in public databases

EFG Focus on Software

- Build tools for biologists to make their own guides
- Taxon independent
- XML, Java middleware, ObjectStore database

Develop Capacity to Work With Communities

- Develop relationships – Gain experience
- Use current digital technologies

  Digital cameras

  Color Inkjet Printers

  GPS units

  Simple web-enabled databases

Project Focus

- Phenology Monitoring of Dandelions – Global Climate Change
- Mapping of Invasive Plant Species
- Biodiversity Monitoring

Community Partners

- Elementary Schools
- Massachusetts Aububon Society
- Field Naturalists
- UMass Boston - Biology Department
- Harvard - Musuem of Comparative Zoology
- State of Massachusetts - Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

Lessons Learned

- Techology is up to the task
- People are enthusiastic
- Community building takes more effort and time that originally envisioned- Need partners
- Community can get data unattainable by scientists; K-12 classes can do real Science
- Scientists are skeptical of Community Science – Need Metadata