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A COOPERATIVE APPROACH IN GPS TRAINING

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ABSTRACT: As Global Positioning System (GPS) technology becomes more commonly used in many aspects of natural resource management, the need for education and training in this area has also increased. However,

the high cost of the equipment and the high level of technical knowledge required has been a barrier to including GPS in forestry and other natural resources curricula. This fall the forest technology program at Penn State-Mont Alto and the Bartlett Tree Experts Company collaborated on a two-day training session in GPS using Trimble receivers and data collectors. Ten students and faculty from Mont Alto and ten Bartlett personnel participated in the program. The first day of field procedures and data processing was taught by a Trimble-certified trainer. The second day consisted of training by Bartlett Tree Research Laboratory staff in Bartlett's tree inventory system and management plan writing. As a practical project over 400 trees in the campus's arboretum were inventoried with the Bartlett tree inventory and appraisal system. The workshop was mutually beneficial to both groups. Bartlett was able to train its personnel in a well-equipped computer lab and typical landscaped environment on campus. The university students used the latest equipment and were able to get career and practical insights from arborists employing the technology in the field. The combined efforts of all the participants in the tree inventory facilitated a long-standing need in the arboretum's management. Sharing resources in joint training exercises such as this one provides a realistic teaching opportunity in a time of budget restraint.