Service-learning Spotlight:
Williston Ash Tree Health Assessment

NR 25: Measurements & Mapping was taught by Zac Ispa-Landa the Fall 2012 semester. This course introduces students to basic concepts of mapping, from how to use a compass to how to create maps using Google Earth and Google Maps. Students engage in a service-learning project for the last month of the semester; this fall the projects ranged from mapping trails and invasive species populations with the Stowe Land Trust to charting the erosion of a stream at Niquette Bay State Park. Three students — Tara Gron, Hana Aronowitz, and Amanda Allard — worked with the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program and the Town of Williston to assess the health of approximately 100 ash trees planted along the streets of Williston. Williston’s last public tree inventory was completed in 2005, and with the threat of the invasive pest the emerald ash borer not far from Vermont’s borders, it is important for municipalities to monitor their ash tree populations. The student group performed basic ash tree health assessments using data collection units and then created a GIS map (below) ranking the condition of the trees they visited. To wrap up their project they presented their findings and recommendations to the Williston Conservation Commission.