A GPS Receiver is a wonderful land navigation device. You simply have to plug in the coordinates and then follow the directional arrow to your destination. In the past five years, I have used my GPSR (Global Positioning System Receiver) for Geocaching and land navigation in New York, New Jersey, Chicago, Minneapolis, and countless other cities. I have also used it for hunting where it has definitely proved to be a very useful tool.

For the past four years, I have taught hunter education. Part of the curriculum is an optional land navigation section. When I ask my students who has a GPSR or who has used a GPSR, the number of students who raise their hands is rather small. This greatly concerns me because a GPSR, which cost between $100 and $150 dollars is in my opinion a tool that every outdoor enthusiast should have, and should know how to operate.

A GPSR can be used to accomplish a wide variety of tasks. When you are hunting you can mark your vehicle, so you know where it is, even if you cannot find it due to poor weather conditions. When you are snowmobiling, you can stash extra fuel containers you may need in the event that you run low on gas coming back from a trip. They may be used to mark the location of a downed game animal or you can mark the location you shot from as a reference point when looking for a blood trail. They can also be used to relay your coordinates to authorities in the event that a hunting party member is hurt and needs medical assistance.

Currently I have not taught the use of a GPSR unit in my hunter education courses, but I feel there is a definite need to develop new training curriculum that will teach students how to use a GPSR so they do not become yet another lost hunter statistic.

The new curriculum will instruct the student about the proper operation of a GPSR and the best teaching method for these skills will consist of power-point presentation, live demonstration, and hands-on exercises.

- What kind of GPSR do I purchase? (Magellan / Lawrence / Garmin)
- How do to turn the GPS on?
- Interpretation of the various screens
- Plotting waypoints and routes
- How to reverse your routes
- Locating a point

All of the tasks outlined above may be taught within the constraints three to eight hours, and the navigation skills would be evaluated during the graded Range Day field course. By teaching students the proper use of GPSR, I hope to instill a valuable skill that students will not only be able to apply while they recreating in the woods, but a skill that may someday save a life.