



THE DOGWOOD DIGEST

A weekly highlight of what our forest schoolers explored, learned, played, created, & so much more!

March Break Camp - March 11-14, 2024

It's March! That means the forest is beginning to change, the weather is getting warmer but still unpredictable, and the animals have begun to return. Each morning, we were greeted by songs from the Robins, the sound of dripping maple sap and the warm sun on our faces. With so many changes and so much to see and do in the forest, it is so hard to theme our days around one very specific thing. Instead, we like to go about our day exploring, learning, creating, and playing.

Explored:

- Explored frozen puddles and tested their thickness
- Searched the forest for signs of animals, such as tracks, scat, homes, sounds, etc.
- Fed chickadees out of our hands each day and tried out different strategies to encourage and help them feel safe and comfortable
- Hiked new spaces, trails and landmarks - our favourite being the Marsh and Boardwalk Trail as it was so diverse, moving from open space to marsh to cedar forest and tall phragmite reeds
- Collected sap from our maple trees - sometimes collecting twice in one day due to high flow rates. We measured how the sap flow changes from the cool morning to the warm afternoon
- Explored teamwork and problem solving as a whole group and in teams: Team Chickadee and Team Sapsuckers
- Cooked our lunches and snacks (and marshmallows) over the fire
- Saw a fisher in the forest during a quiet game of Fire Keeper which tied into the conversation about how if we are quiet and calm, and present in the forest, we can notice and appreciate more

Learned:

- Made new friends and learned each other's names
- How maple syrup is made using the maple sap we collected from our maple trees
- Different signs and sounds of animals and their diets
- Birds have different calls for different purposes. For example, a song versus an alarm call to signify potential danger
- Problem solving and communication skills when working and playing together, as well as how to overcome personal challenges
- Difference between cooking over the fire using flame versus heat from the wood coals
- Tied knots for different purposes, including ropes for our climbing structure and obstacle course, as well as making different types of bracelets

Created:

- Guided painting of a sunset in the mountains, over the span of 2 days - focusing on lines, colours and definition. We brought the painting to life by outlining our work with black marker
- Homemade watercolour paint, using corn starch, baking soda, vinegar, corn syrup and food colouring
- Bracelets - a fan favourite
- Tire swings, seesaws, obstacle courses and an Eagle's Nest, using loose parts, fallen branches and ropes.
- Created a list of animal signs in the forest as we came across them - came across a whopping 34 separate locations of deer pellets.
- Built up and secured the Eagle's Nest, using wooden mallets
- Completed a large wooden puzzle as the final clue to find Ember on our scavenger hunt

Played:

- Imaginative play at the Eagle's Nest
- Played group games such as: Checkpoint, Shark Attack, Fire Keeper and baseball in the forest
- Ended each day with an exciting few rounds of Zoom-Skirt
- Our volunteer Ember created a scavenger hunt for us where he mysteriously "went missing" and had to follow his clues to find where he was hiding. It took us all over the forest, weaving in and out of trails, stopping at landmarks to read and solve his riddles and clues

We had such a fun and exciting week of making new friends, sharing new experiences, and learning about ourselves and the forest. The richness of everything we did at camp goes beyond what is written here so we encourage you to ask your child what their favourite parts were! Thank you for a wonderful week at Dogwood - it was great to see familiar faces and make new friends as well! We hope to be able to see you again very soon!



Loving the hikes on these sunny days!



Exploring ice thickness in frozen puddles



Creating water colour paint with every-day household items



Practicing patience and stillness when feeding the chickadees



"Sap suckers" is a community job – checking buckets and collecting sap daily, sometimes twice!



Open-ended exploring, climbing, playing, balancing, creating and more on the play structure



Bracelet making with embroidery string – a camper favourite



Exploring the boardwalk trail through the marsh





“Guided Painting” workshop with Otter, learning about colours, lines, and definition



Measuring and recording daily flow rate of the sap



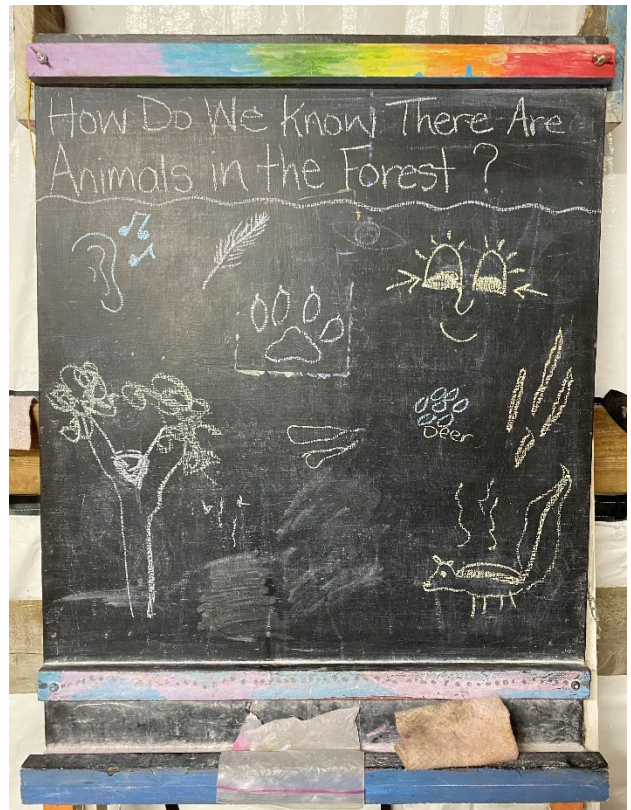
Oh hey little sprouts! Popping up earlier this year with all of these warmer weather



Practicing teamwork and collaboration through various challenges



Playing on the child-created log seesaw



Explored and discussed signs of animals in the forest



Feeling the softness of moss – the carpet of the forest and a cozy place for a nap!



Teamwork makes the dreamwork! Working together to relocate a cedar branch



Jobs – things we do to show kindness and help our space and our community; this week campers picked between collecting sap and feeding the birds



Working together to build a wooden puzzle that was a clue to where they would find Ember



Playing Fire Keeper in the forest – a game requiring patience, quietness and strategy



Grateful for all that the forest provides and appreciating the beauty of each season