



THE DOGWOOD DIGEST

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

Winter Term: Week 7 – February 19 – 25, 2024

As we reflect on week 7 of our winter term, we can't help but notice all the changes that have been happening right before our eyes! The snow is melting very quickly, making fast flowing rivers and mini waterfalls where there are normally logs and soil. The maple trees are running, allowing us to collect a lot of sap. The birds have returned to the forest-seeing many robins, cedar waxwings, juncos, and chickadees hopping from branch to branch, eating berries once again. This week saw beautiful blue and sunny skies, with a hint of excitement for Spring.

Seeds (5-7 years)

- Collected enough sap from the maple trees to fill an entire sap bin ready to be boiled
- Collected sap a second time as the trees began to run even more with the warmth of the sun
- Created a project board of ongoing woodworking projects - it included the names of projects, who was doing them, and the tools and skills involved in completing them
- Demonstrated teamwork, communication and problem-solving skills while building a bridge across a "river" to address the water flowing across a trail in the forest
- Collectively came up with a plan to build a wooden bridge and worked together to carry all materials through the forest - we created a train line, with an engine and a caboose for each large log
- Practiced weaving and lashing to bind the bridge together
- Played camouflage at High Point

Sprouts (7-10 years)

- Collected sap, started a fire, fed birds and chopped wood to begin our days
- Explored snow mountain; carved out arches and caves, made slides and used tools to mine
- Created tire swings, plans for a bird sanctuary, and adjusted fort structures
- Continued woodworking projects like building a matching chair for a previously built table and a crib for toy babies
- Discovered many fresh deer beds and scat along fox's forest trail, wondering if we could have seen them had we been there a little earlier (or quieter)
- Carved out a river through our fire circle and downhill towards the stream to divert water away from our meeting space - we used wooden chisels, mallets and smaller sticks to weave through frozen trees and other obstacles
- Played Sardines, snodgeball and a new version of Open Season

Forest Rangers (11-14 years)

- Embraced a still and fresh morning, enjoying the sounds of spring coming
- Discussed modes of transportation, purposes and key features to design and build a vehicle for moving large amounts of wood across snow
- Utilized hard skills, teamwork and communication to fully accomplish a challenge
- Reset and refined rules for a game, reflecting on fairness, and game play
- Identified 5 + bushes and trees in search of elderberry, by bark, buds smell and even taste
- Laughed out loud at Oak's new idea of shower socks - a cozy and satisfying experience we should all try out
- Crafted our own charcoal pencils and blenders to complete our sketches
- Played a great 3 rounds of Open Season, moving our bodies and outsmarting our opponents
- Took time to appreciate a pileated woodpecker sighting as it jumped and danced from tree to tree a short distance away

More Dogwood Visitors: Homeschool Group

- Great day of team building by completing a series of physical and intellectual challenges that required teamwork, communication, problem solving, and compromise
- Learned and practiced various orienteering skills, including; compass work, mapping, coordinates, pacing and directions
- Worked together to create sleds with sticks and ropes to move large logs with ease
- Completed a challenge involving jumbo jenga blocks, building to a certain height
- Balanced and used loose parts to complete the "crocodile crossing" challenge

It was definitely a week full of teamwork, communication, problem solving, woodworking, creating, skill development, trust building, kindness and curiosity. So much happens in a week (even on shorter weeks), it is impossible to capture every rich moment in a short newsletter. Ask your forest schooler what they got up to this week!



Can't beat an early morning view of the forest like this!



A snowy hill can provide so much joy and learning when granted the time



Working together to collect sap from the few trees tapped at the Nest site



Practicing lashing and frapping with rope and cedar logs with Mosquito's support to be able to transport the logs



There is always time to feed the chickadees!



Friendship and science principles at work



Why stand on the ground telling jokes when you could all practice your balance too!



Practicing saw skills for new woodworking projects



Testing out the bridge's stability



Pine demonstrating how to use a chisel



Peekaboo!



A feast fit for a Gnome King – the table and chair were hand-crafted by the Sprouts



Working together to move a large pile of wood through the forest to the new shed



The process for making charcoal pencils



The charcoal tools – end result



The snow was perfect for packing and creating



The wood projects are becoming increasingly complex and creative!



Working together to transport cedar logs to another area of the forest



The only way to keep track of everyone's woodworking interests and the tools they need



The homeschool group had a blast exploring the snowy and sunny forest!