



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

Spring Term: Week 8 – May 6 – May 12, 2024

Have you noticed the forest lately? The “green wall” has returned - over the last week the leaves have really popped: above, the canopy has begun to “close”, scattering the sunlight through the forest; around, the forest is filling in, making it trickier to see further distances within the forest. The land is ever changing, providing us the opportunity to continuously explore, learn, create, and play, while observing the changes week after week.

Seeds (5-7 years)

- Went on a scavenger hunt for weather cards hidden around our space, then discussed and sorted them by season and event
- Explored S, R, W and P as our letters of the day and created a list of other nature words we know of that start with those same letters
- Went on an alphabet hike in search of things in our forest that start with each letter of the alphabet - we collected some items and created an alphabet display in the Den
- Discovered a bouncy log on our hike that fit the whole class and stopped to sing about it!
- Explored a creek running off the pond overflow drain, and made contrast to creek banks we play on regularly versus those that we purposefully leave be
- Played camouflage, Wolf Pack, Baseball, and “Sun, Sun, Rain” (Duck, Duck, Goose)
- Learned all about how to play chess from our oldest peers, and including how to communicate during disagreements about play
- Had a positive community discussion to establish how we can respectfully communicate with one another during conflict, and practiced structured communication utilizing both the popcorn and circular way of sharing our thoughts and ideas
- Played with building blocks to create a ranch, stables and catapults

Forest Rangers (11-14 years)

- Reviewed goals to complete our community garden
- Reviewed tool use safety and procedures with new tools, such as draw knives and hacksaws
- Found a beautiful gift of cedar bark that came off in huge sheets from our processed poles and rails; Broke down cedar bark, then wove and braided beautiful pieces
- Thought of how we can give back to the forest for it’s gift of cedar
- Explored in search of new plants to draw, observe and later identify with different uses and notes of interest
- Got active playing tag!
- Worked on our accuracy using the shepherd's sling, communicating and respecting the importance of safe practice
- Learned how to play Coup - a card game designed to outplay, trick and eliminate opponents by reading body language and social cues, and using our own skills to avoid being caught in deceit

Sprouts (7-10 years)

- Played Forest school baseball and made a few baseball bats with Hornet
- Created a fort on logs that sits in the sun, weaved poles together to create a floor and a tent structure to provide shade
- Played Rabbit and Fox in the sunny Berry Patch, and snuck around Fox’s Forest playing Sardines
- Searched for weather cards in the forest and made connections between different types of weather, ways of measuring weather, seasons, and what to wear
- Explored around the pond discovering frogs, frog eggs and creating tunnels and villages at the sand box
- Revisited community goals, discussing what a community is, what it means to be part of a community and how we want to feel in a community
- We created a goal of wanting to feel happy, safe, comfortable, included, and respected at forest school, and a plan to ensure we can accomplish this goal
- Created the official Battle bugs game - a game that we have been playing on the chalkboard for the last few weeks but is now a forest schooler-created board game for all to play
- Played hide and seek in the rain and couldn’t help but feel it was the best weather to play in
- Planted a red oak tree at the berry patch and pulled invasive garlic mustard with Mama Bear

Roots & Shoots (0-6 years)

- Explored colours in the Spring forest, playing I-Spy while matching colourful sticks to found nature items
- Hiked through the beautiful Spring trilliums, capturing some photos of each family in the trilliums
- Enjoyed snack at High Point and then played Hide and Seek with Scooter
- Played at the mud kitchen, created mud paint hand prints and art, and used dandelions to rub on paper to create a pretty sun



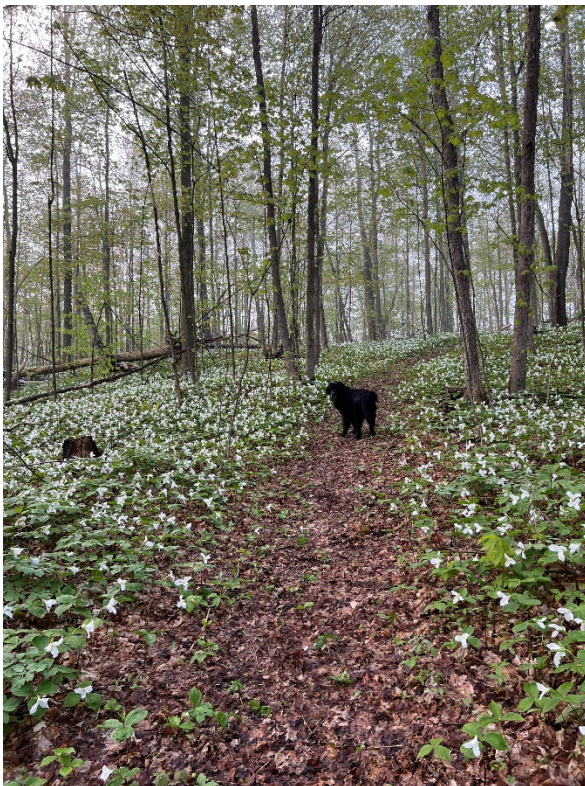
Monthly Seeds (5-7 years)

- Noticed the changes in the forest with new flowers growing, fish in the pond, and leaves on the trees
- Searched for weather related cards in our forest and sorted them by seasons, discussing when we usually see certain types of weather and how it affects the clothing we wear
- Explored S and R as our letters of the day and created a large list of nature words we know of that start with those same letters
- Went on an alphabet hunt through the forest, ending with some play time in the sandbox
- Explored the Nest site - playing in the village, testing our abilities on the climbing wall, and swinging on the swing
- Washed rocks that will be painted for our fire pit, and noticed how smooth and sparkly they were in the sunlight
- Harnessed the power of the sun using magnifying glasses to burn designs into wood

Other Dogwood Activities: Fireside Chat

- Welcomed Dogwood parents to discuss current and future directions and ideas for Dogwood and enjoyed a tasty “campfire pizza roll”
- Topics included:
 - 24-25 programs
 - Supporting parent/child community connection
 - Creating a “Parent Voice” (continued seasonal fireside chats & a Facebook group for registered families to have a platform for conversations, clothing swaps, events/meet ups, or volunteering time/services/resources to Dogwood activities
 - Having seasonal student check-ins, including in person drop off/pick up or phone call chats and/or a written summary for families who choose to opt in

We are so grateful for the infinite opportunities the forest gives us to explore. More and more, we’re finding that the plans we set in the morning get replaced by new discoveries, new interests, and positive, productive play - and that is completely OK with us! In fact, we encourage it! The ability to be flexible with the direction of our day is something we just love about forest school. Thank you all for a wonderful week exploring the forest and recognizing how beautiful it is. We hope you have a great weekend and a Happy Mother’s Day from all of us here at Dogwood Forest.



Forest (the dog) in the forest with the trilliums



Cedar bark braiding



Exploring the Marsh Trail



Getting creative with blocks



Playing hide and seek with Scooter



Cooking over the fire always brings friends together



Peeling bark off cedar logs for our garden poles helps reduce rate of rot



Mud painting with the Roots & Shoots – some handprints, some abstract art



Exploring the Berry Patch



Playing "Battle Bugs" – the game board was created by some forest schoolers



Working on whittling a baseball bat



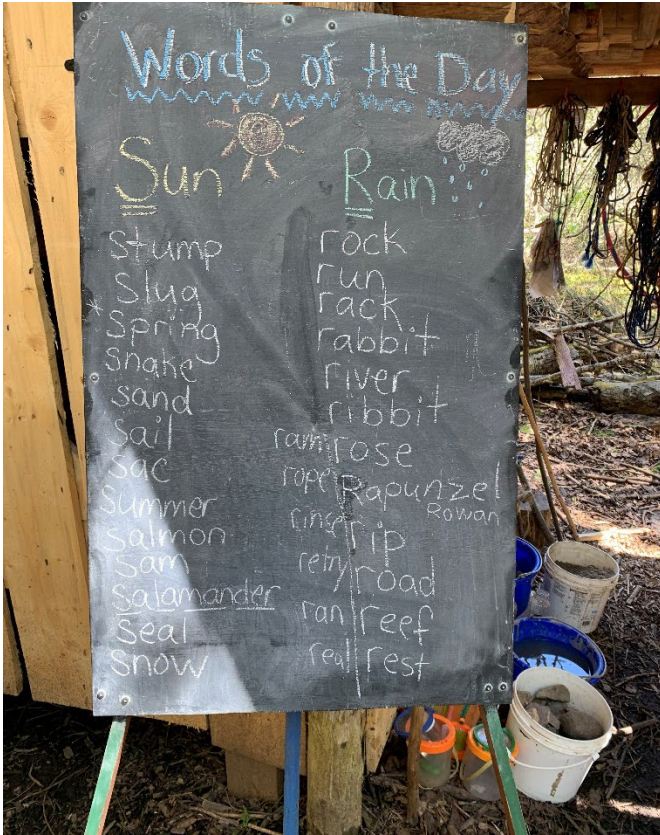
Weaving cedar poles together for a fort



Avoiding the mud crocodiles while exploring the squishy nature of mud



Learning the game of Chess with our volunteer, Fox



Exploring letters and words in nature



Toad eggs



A fun game of Rabbit & Fox at the Berry Patch



Making room for a new baby Oak tree to be planted



A hand whittled baseball bat – functional too!



Our grass buddies are sprouting hair!



Forest School Mom with her mud paint handprint flower - Happy Mother's Day!



Fireside Chat ft. a snack break with Mosquito making pizza roll ups – good company & good food!