



BLUE THUNDERBIRD LAND-BASED TEACHINGS LEARNING CENTRE

Winter 2021

Newsletter



WINTER WITH COVID

As everyone settled into the new ways of being together, we were grateful that one solution was to be outdoors more often. Our calendar was booked full and learners took on full days, outdoors here. We've been listening to stories, snowshoeing, tobogganing, fire building, exploring tracks, snow, and winter habitats, following the low sun and long shadows, and digging deeper into the history of Treaty One Territory and the beautiful place this has been and will continue to be.

BIRCH BARK CANOE

Look up! We were generously gifted a Birch Bark Canoe to share with you! In snowshoe season, we find ourselves discussing and using technologies which help us navigate the landscape. When we imagine this snow melting and water flowing, we connect to the ways the canoe has helped people live a good life here in this climate for ages. Indigenous ingenuity and technologies keep us afloat today. Come check it out!





MS. KOZAK'S CLASS - AE WRIGHT

Ms. Kozak's grade 1/2 class weaves their classroom learning with experiences they have in the community. This year they linked classroom learning with experiences at Living Prairie Museum, Festival du Voyageur, and multiple visits to the Aki Centre. They pre-researched and created booklets on the Tall Grass Prairie, which meant these learners had incredible familiarity with the plants they saw here, even in the winter! They learned about seeds by finding, sorting, and observing them. They planted Indigenous seeds in winter to have them wake in spring. And, they will take home plants they started from seed for summer vacation to see what pollinators may find them. They even created a video about the Tall Grass Prairie ecosystem. Looking forward to seeing you again!

MS. SUKICH'S CLASS - ERR

Ms. Sukich's grade 1 class visited multiple times to see the land through the seasons. Visiting in the melting season (March) can feel like a challenge as we transition from snow activities to wet activities, but these grade 1's dove in to all thing this seasonal transition brings: shadow lengths, sun's heat and light, sun's position, colours that attract and reflect light. They were detectives, observers, and connection-makers. They predicted outcomes to shadow positions during their visit, snowshoed to find colours that melt the snow, and explored how different materials in the greenhouse can trap heat. Super!



HC AVERY TEAM

Mr. Durling, Mr. Barkman, and Ms. Barber's classes joined for virtual presentations over winter around the topic of revitalizing land. They connected with Elder Dan, Entomologist and Indigenous Scholar Kyle Bobiwash, and Alexis from the Aki Centre. These presentations explored views of revitalization and their role in caring for the land and each other. These learners came to the Aki Centre to experience the prairie restoration, sow seeds, test soil, and witness revitalization in action. This experience supports and fuels the work these learners are doing at their schoolyard, where they are growing food and adding biodiversity. Insights were bountiful, these are natural stewards!



MS. BARKMAN - WEST ST PAUL SCHOOL

Ms. Barkman's grade 8 class worked with big ideas linked to World Water Day, Water is Life, and the climate change Flood:Ed Challenge. Their classroom conversations and teachings from Elder Dan guided experiences at the Aki Centre. The time connecting through listening, observing, and service learning grew into student projects. They made a submission to the Flood:Ed Challenge and created of a "Walking Tour" ([here](#)) for the Aki Centre, here. The quiet reflections we saw became powerful words and actions. Amazing!



MS. RINGER AND MR. ELLISON - GARDEN CITY COLLEGIATE

A great day for grade 12 learners! They took a different spin on tobogganing. For half a day they calculated the angle of the hill, timed their runs, considered their variables, measured distances, and graphed their data. This was followed up by a visit to the NoviComp to talk compost science, to speculate and connect the dots between their prior scientific knowledge and our compost method. They visited the greenhouse to discuss the passive solar design and theory, and the difference between soil and compost. For the remainder of the day, they listened to stories of the birch bark canoe and snowshoes, both Indigenous technologies. They walked the land on snowshoes, listened to the history of this place, and connected what they observed to colonization, sustainable ways of being, and the lessons of the Three Sisters Garden. 90% outdoors, learning from the land. (It was a cold one!)



SNOW SCIENCE AND HABITATS

There is much to explore with snow. We have shovels, snow saws, snowshoes, toboggans, snow thermometres, and fire to warm up with. Dig in!

As we increase plant diversity on this land, we see an increase in birds, pollinators, and mammals. How do they survive the winter? Make it your experience!

Use our tools to test out your theories. Dig down to the ground and compare the ambient air temperature to the temperature at ground level. How would it feel to live under the snow?

Need to run from a predator in winter? Try racing in your snow boots. Then, try it with snowshoes. Which animals around here have similar winter adaptations, making their feet broader in winter? Why does this make a difference?

Come out, borrow our tools, and use your body to learn about the winter connections!



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