



UPLC

CONNECTIONS

SPRING/SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER



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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: ON A MYCOLOGY MISSION

Makena Ridiros is an NMU student who has been working with UPLC to complete her senior capstone project. Inspired by the mushrooms she encountered at the Chocloy Bayou, she decided to research the mycological relationship between Eastern White Pine trees and the fungi genera *Suillus* and *Russula*. From her findings, she aims to design a sign which could educate visitors to the Bayou on the connection between the trees and fungi all around them. Regarding her objectives for her capstone work, she says "I think that the importance of this project stems from the many roles fungi play in a forest ecosystem, many of which happen under our feet unseen. By the end of this project, my main goal is to have designed an information-rich sign for people to enjoy and learn from for years to come."

Thanks Makena!



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Spring is my favorite time of year. Each day, you're gifted with a rush of new sounds, sights, and smells—a vivid announcement of life in the land, air, and water around us! A passing migrant bird practices a song as it takes a well-deserved rest before continuing its journey. Frogs camouflaged on the water's edge, take in the sun's warmth before a night of vocalizations. Ramps emerge on the forest floor signaling the start of summer's floral bounty. Spring endlessly calls on us to tune into nature, and simultaneously offers reminders of the importance of the connections between life and the resources that sustain it.

As UPLC enters the spring season, we are excited to spend more time connecting with nature and with you on the lands we protect throughout the U.P. We are thrilled to welcome a stewardship intern this summer, who will be helping develop the Dead River Community Forest Management plan, and document the current conditions and future needs of our protected lands through our monitoring program. In addition, our Search Committee has been hard at work developing a job description for the new executive director position. This is an exciting step for UPLC, and we are looking forward to bringing on someone with new areas of expertise to compliment our current team.

Our commitment to education remains strong, and we are proud to be continuing partnership work with NMU students in the Environmental Sciences and Native American Studies departments. Looking ahead, we are planning many events for the summer and fall. We invite you to join our monthly e-newsletter to stay up-to-date on all of our upcoming events and activities. I hope you will join us in celebrating life this season, and continue to support our mission to protect land today, for life tomorrow. Thank you!

-Clare Fastiggi, *Interim Director*

WELLNESS IN THE WOODS

SEAN FITZPATRICK - EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEMBER

The oldest hominins—the taxonomic tribe from which we humans evolved—date back roughly 7 million years. It was not until the rise of the industrial revolution approximately 250 years ago that homo sapiens began living in more urbanized, modern settings. It's been a relative blink since artificial blue light started to consume our waking hours. Thus, 99.9999% of the adaptation and evolution of hominins took place while we lived and worked in natural environments. The modern human's relatively abrupt disconnection from nature and the environment for which our species adapted has led to an increase in stress. Lucky for us, there is a bounty of natural beauty actively conserved throughout the UP where we can reconnect with our ancestral nature.

The evidence supporting the benefit of going outside and finding a little patch of green and blue is abundant and ever-growing. Stepping out into nature triggers natural physiological and psychological responses that decrease your body's stress-response, increase the body's natural calming system (the parasympathetic nervous system), stimulate your brain's cognitive functioning, and enhance your body's immune system, digestive system, and more. In short, nature is more than just beautiful. It is so good for you.



For those that struggle to get out in a green or blue space on a regular basis, don't fret. Evidence suggests that one's sense of connection to nature, even if they're sitting in a windowless office, can have similar effects as stepping outside. So, wherever you are reading this, close your eyes, take a deep breath, and connect to the smells of the cedars, the song of the chickadee, the slow rebirth of Spring, or the feel of Lake Superior gently polishing billion-year-old agates. It's all happening right outside.

Interested in learning more and soaking up the benefits of forest bathing with UPLC? Join us for Wellness in the Woods on the last Wednesday of the month starting in June. Check out the calendar on our website for the locations as the date draws nearer.

UPLC
CONNECTS
COMMUNITIES TO
PEACEFUL
NATURAL AREAS
BY PROMOTING
RESPONSIBLE
OUTDOOR
RECREATION
ACTIVITIES,
PROVIDING
EDUCATIONAL
PROGRAMS, AND
ENCOURAGING
CONSERVATION
PRACTICES



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

JUNE 28TH

JULY 26TH

AUGUST 30TH



FOLLOW OUR ONLINE
EVENTS CALENDAR

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JOURNEY INTO THE WILDERNESS: STORIES FROM OUTDOOR EXPLORATIONS

SNOWSHOE HIKE AT THE VIELMETTI-PETERS RESERVE

MICHAEELEN (MIKE)
OSULLIVAN



On January 26, 2023, Northern Center for Lifelong Learning (NCLL) members and UPLC leaders braved a cold Marquette winter morning to snowshoe hike two miles over rolling terrain down a forest path to the Vielmetti-Peters Reserve.

The silence of the forest draped in thick white snow felt calming and inviting. The company of human friends felt comforting and peaceful.

Andrea Denham, UPLC's past Executive Director, led us to a stand of trees, with UPLC's Holli Langlieb bringing up the rear of our happy line of snowshoe hikers. Andrea provided a handout and talked about how to identify different types of trees by their bark, their leaves, their branches, their seeds, etc. It was a great educational experience in addition to being an invigorating outing into the wild.

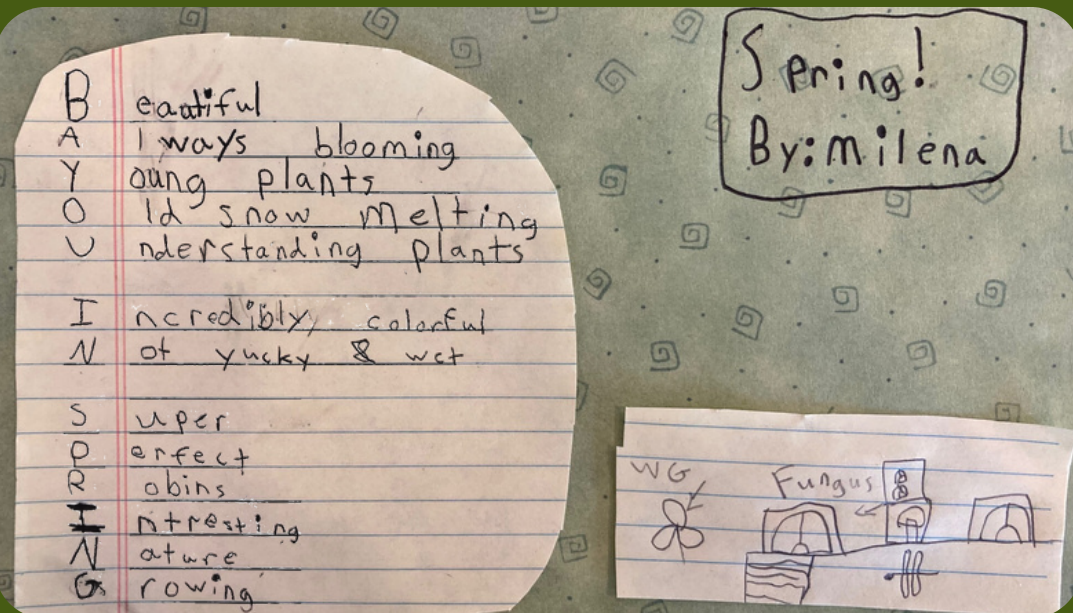
This hike marked a new beginning for me. I experienced two bad falls a few years back which left me with painful injuries and chronic residual pain. This hike encouraged me to get outside in the snow again. Being in the safety and comfort of friends within the silence of the forest has helped me to calm the fear of falling and of injuring myself again. I am thankful for NCLL and for UPLC and for all who help to organize and to deliver hikes and activities and learning opportunities for my community. I am looking forward to attending many more hikes and activities with these wonderful and generous community-focused associations that are kept alive by the work of many kind volunteers and dedicated employees.



POETRY AT THE PRESERVE

MILENA &
HOLLI LANGLIEB

UPLC Volunteers, Holli and her daughter Milena, explored the Chocoy Bayou on a sunny spring day this April. Milena, who has been learning about acrostic poems in her 2nd grade class, captured the beauty of the Bayou in the poem below. Thank you for sharing your beautiful art with us, Milena and Holli!





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SUMMER EVENTS & HAPPENINGS

- MAY** Spring Wildflowers Hike
Saturday, May 20th
Vielmetti-Peters Conservation Reserve
- JUNE** Trail Tending
TBD June - Stay Tuned!
Tory's Woods Conservation Preserve
- AUGUST** 3rd Annual Art Walk
Sunday, August 20th
Chocolay Bayou Conservation Preserve

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