

SPRING

VOLUME 1

# YOOPER TROOPERS

U.P. Conservation for Kids!



UPPER PENINSULA  
LAND CONSERVANCY



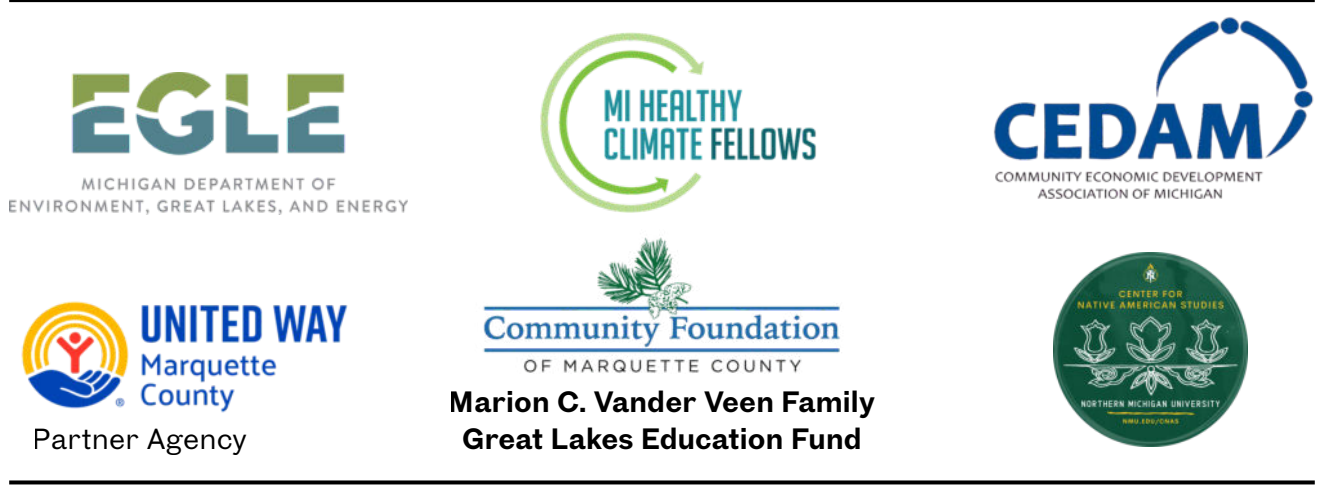
*Yooper Troopers* is a youth conservation magazine designed by **Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy (UPLC)** for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders. It centers youth voices, Upper Peninsula conservation topics, outdoor education, and UPLC's three pillars of connection:

***Connecting contiguous land,  
Connecting people with one another, and  
Connecting people with the land.***



For more information and PDF copies of issues, visit our website at [www.uplandconservancy.org/youth-magazine](http://www.uplandconservancy.org/youth-magazine)

Art and content for *Yooper Troopers* was created by Jenny Kalejs, a **2026 Michigan Healthy Climate Fellow**.



## **Calling all youth conservationists!**

Are you a 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grader interested in submitting a question, observation, drawing, or idea for a future issue of *Yooper Troopers*?  
Email [uplc@uplandconservancy.org](mailto:uplc@uplandconservancy.org) or drop by our office!

**Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy  
1907 Presque Isle Ave  
Marquette, MI 49855**

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**Blucy**  
the blue-spotted salamander

Let's explore nature together!  
I'll help you with the **big science words** in bold.

# POETRY CORNER

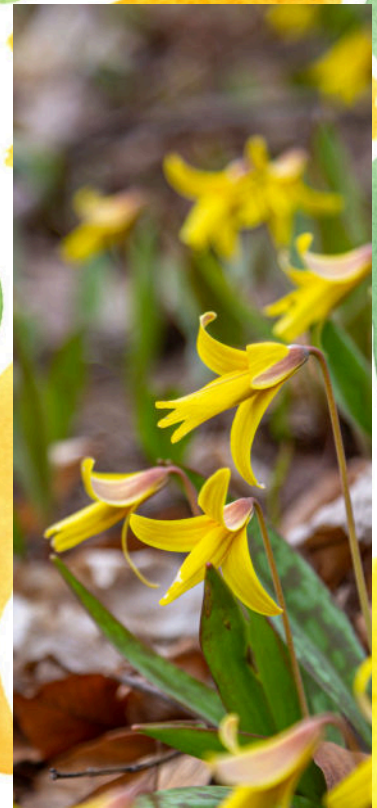
SPRING EPHEMERALS are flowers that bloom for a short time in the spring. Blink and they're gone!

METAPHORS help us describe one thing by comparing it to another

## Spring Ephemerals and the Nature of Metaphor

By Keith Taylor

The trout lily feels like metaphor-- its brown spotted leaves dominating the forest floor for two or three weeks, delicate yellow flowers drooping and hard to find . . . then disappearing one warm night when I forget to look-- but it's very real, underground now, awaiting its chance to bloom next year.



Trout Lilies

KEITH TAYLOR is a Michigan-based poet, writer, and professor Emeritus at the University of Michigan. He writes a lot about the natural world and is an avid birder.

Meet the spring  
**YOOPER TROOPERS!**

This long name is the **SCIENTIFIC NAME** for a black bear. The two-part name is made up of a Genus (group) and a lowercase species (specific type). All living things have scientific names!



**BB**  
the black bear

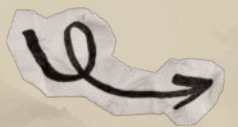


BB the black bear (*Ursus americanus*) just awoke from his winter hibernation. He decided to stretch his legs with a spring walk through Tory's Woods – a forested preserve managed by UP Land Conservancy (UPLC).

As BB yawned and blinked into the pale sunlight, he came upon a **vernal pool** – a temporary, rain-fed wetland that appears in spring and disappears by summer.

BB remembered that vernal pools are important habitat for frogs, salamanders, fairy shrimp, and countless other species that depend on them to complete their life cycles.

“HELLO!” came a little voice from the water.



Background photos of  
Tory's Woods by UP Photo  
Naturalist **Chris Burnett**

Startled – and still a little groggy – BB followed the sound of the voice only to discover a pair of googly eyes smiling up at him from the pool.

“Are you a black bear?” asked the tiny creature. “I’m a blue-spotted salamander (*Ambystoma laterale*). My name is Blucy.”

BB recovered from his initial surprise and remembered his manners.

“Ah – hello, um – Blucy! Pleased to meet you. Yes, I *am* a black bear. BB is my name.”

BB fumbled for some small talk.

“Is... the water fine?”

“Oh, very fine,” squeaked Blucy. “It’s the most wonderful time of the year for blue-spotted salamanders. When the warm rains come, we move from underground to mate and lay our eggs in vernal pools like this one.”

“Say – are there any fish in that pool of yours?” asked BB. “I’m starving.”

Blucy looked shocked.

“FISH? Goodness, no! That’s one of the reasons vernal pools are so important to blue-spotted salamanders – there are no fish to gobble us up, so we can lay our eggs in peace.”

BB nodded solemnly. “That makes sense. You’ll have to excuse me – I just woke up from hibernation and my brain is moving slowly.”

“Your brain is just fine” smiled Blucy. “But I can tell you just woke up from your serious case of bed-head!”

BB and Blucy laughed in the way of fast friends just happy to enjoy springtime.

–

**MEET MORE YOOPER TROOPER FRIENDS  
IN THE NEXT ISSUE!**



**Blucy**  
the blue-spotted  
salamander

# Life in a Vernal Pool

1. Visit Tory's Woods (or another forested preserve)
2. Look closely! Check the boxes if you see:

As BB the black bear learned, vernal pools are super important.

These rain-fed wetlands provide critical habitat for frogs, salamanders, fairy shrimp, and lots of other species.

As development, pollution, and climate change continue to threaten these fragile ecosystems, UPLC is stepping up efforts to protect and better understand vernal pools!

Knobbedlip Fairy Shrimp



(*Eubranchipus bundyi*)

Blue-spotted salamander



(*Ambystoma laterale*)

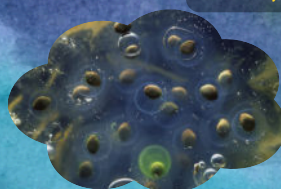
Wood Frog



(*Rana sylvatica*)

That looks a lot like my cousin Sal!

If you don't see frogs or salamanders, keep an eye out for their eggs!



A walk in the woods

# TORY'S WOODS



You can find directions to  
Tory's Woods here:

[uplandconservancy.org/torys-woods](http://uplandconservancy.org/torys-woods)

Take a walk at  
**Tory's Woods**  
**Nature Preserve**  
near Au Train  
and lookout for  
these native  
species!

The first bumblebees that you see are most likely Queen Bees emerging from their winter hibernation. They have the job of setting up the new colony!

The queen has to gather nectar from the first **spring ephemeral blooms** to build the food stores for the first hatch of worker bees. Then, her summer is busy with laying eggs - including next year's queen!



The **Yellow-banded Bumble Bee** (*Bombus terricola*) is a common species found in UP forests.

# A walk in the woods



**Pink Lady's Slipper**  
(*Cypripedium acaule*)

Pink Lady's Slippers are native orchids that grow in **coniferous** forests.

Bees that pollinate these orchids sometimes get trapped in the flower! The only escape is crawling down through an opening, picking up pollen on the way out. That's one clever orchid.

**CONIFEROUS** trees make cones and typically have needle-like leaves (like pines, fir, and spruce trees).

Trout lilies are a beloved **spring ephemeral** in the UP. These drooping yellow blooms can be found in rich, moist soils with lots of sun in April to May, depending on weather.

Fun fact: it takes six years for this plant to produce blooms!



**Trout lily**  
(*Erythronium americanum*)



**Black-capped chickadee**  
(*Poecile atricapillus*)

Black-capped chickadees stay around all winter. They are hardy little birds!

When spring comes and days get longer, chickadees become more vocal. You can hear their frequent two-note 'fee-bee' calls. Their songs are some of the first you'll notice as the weather warms up.

Scan the QR code to listen!



# ACTIVITY: Leaf or Bark Etchings

## MATERIALS:

Paper, crayon(s) with the paper peeled off, leaves or bark collected from the forest floor

*Leaves and bark you might find at Tory's Woods (and across the UP!)*



BIGTOOTH ASPEN



BALSAM FIR



BLACK SPRUCE



SUGAR MAPLE

## INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1. Gather Materials:** Collect leaves, bark, cones - anything with a bumpy texture - from the forest floor. Grab some crayons (with wrappers peeled off) or charcoal.
- 2. Position:** Place the leaf or bark on a flat surface with the bumpy side facing up.
- 3. Cover with Paper:** Place a sheet of paper over the leaf or bark.
- 4. Rub:** Using charcoal or the side of a crayon, rub firmly over the area of the leaf or bark. Use light pressure initially to outline, then apply more pressure to fill in details.
- 5. Layer Colors:** Experiment with different colors to create unique patterns!

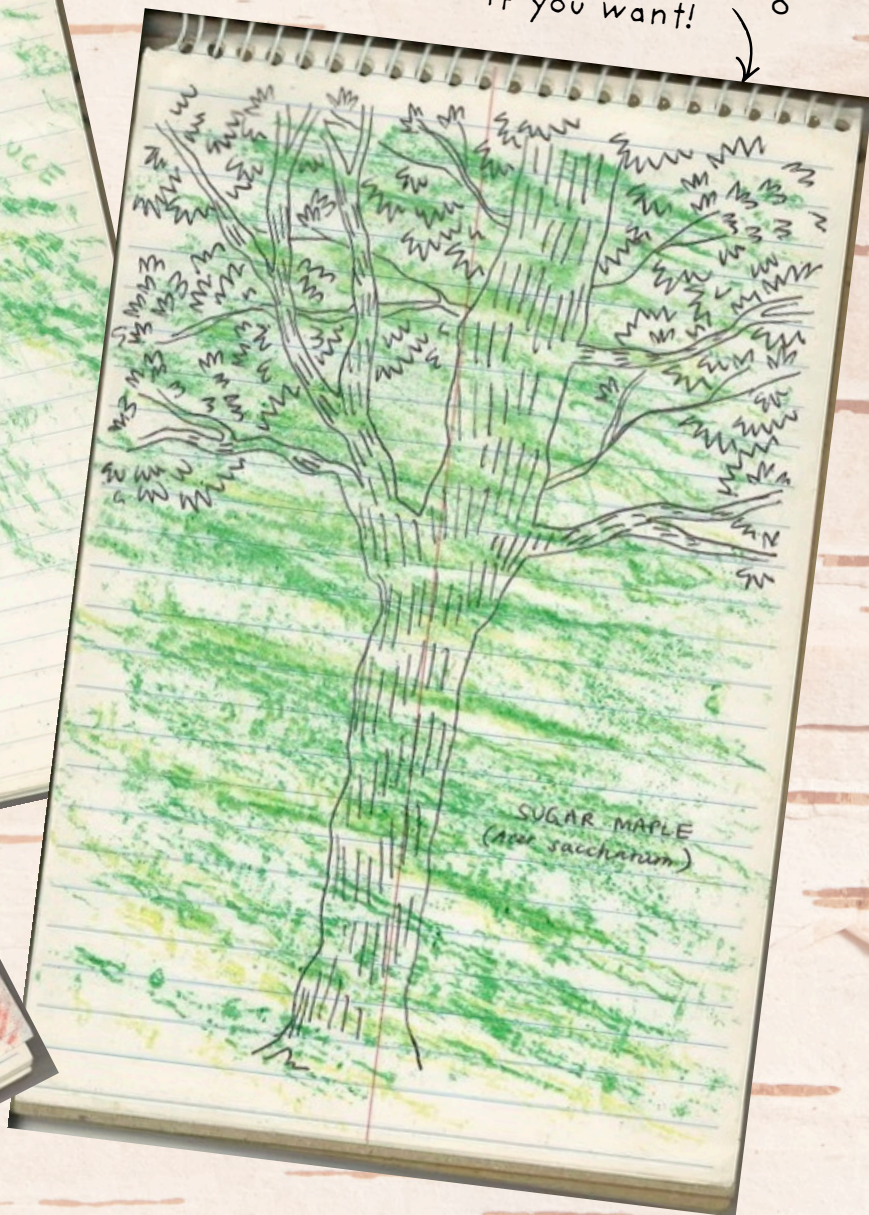


# Examples!

Bark and Evergreen  
Etchings from Tory's  
Woods



You can add a drawing  
if you want!



## TRY IT!

Create your own leaf or bark  
etching and give it to someone  
you love to be outside with.

# CHECK OUT THIS ZINE!

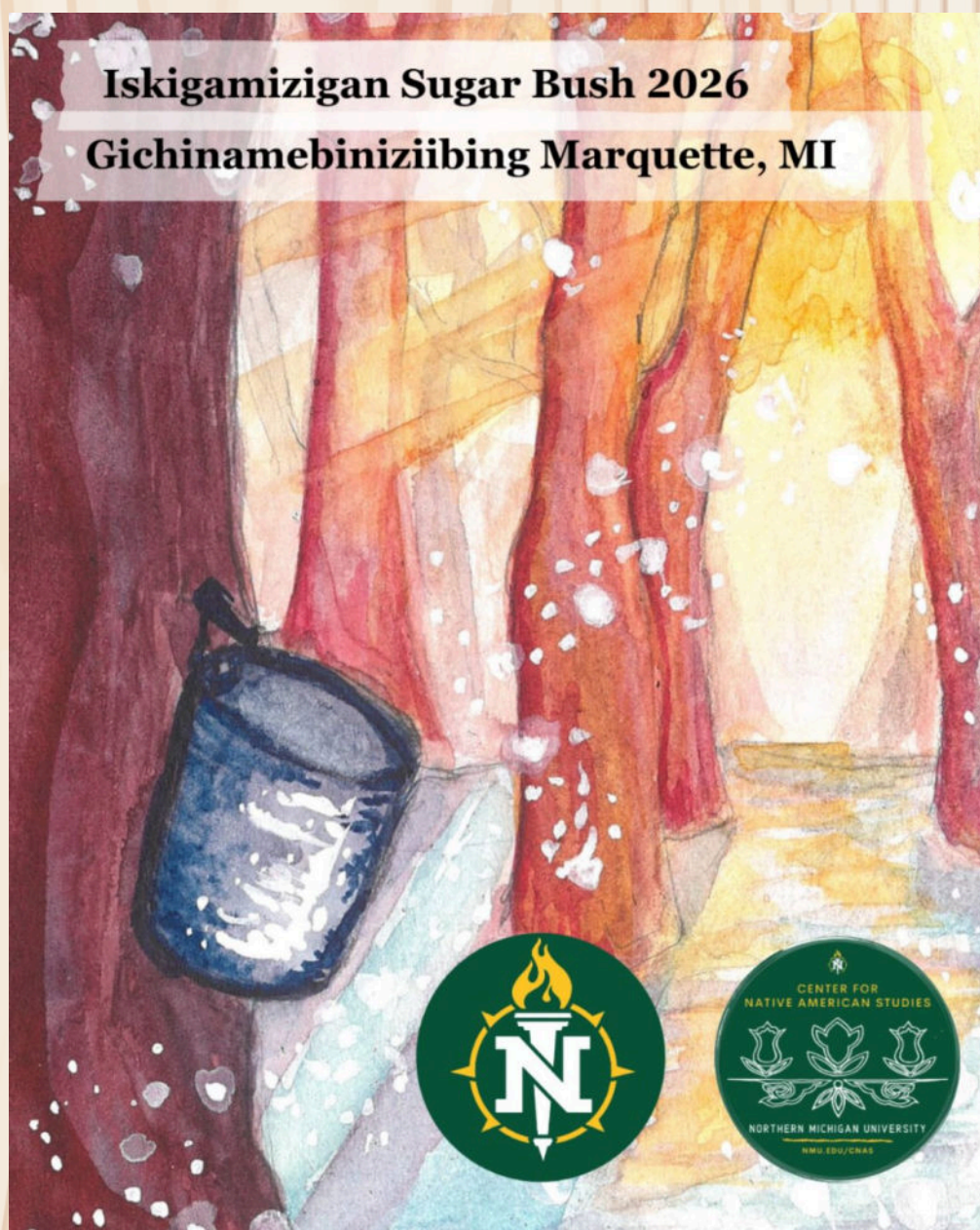
WAIT. WHAT'S A "ZINE?"

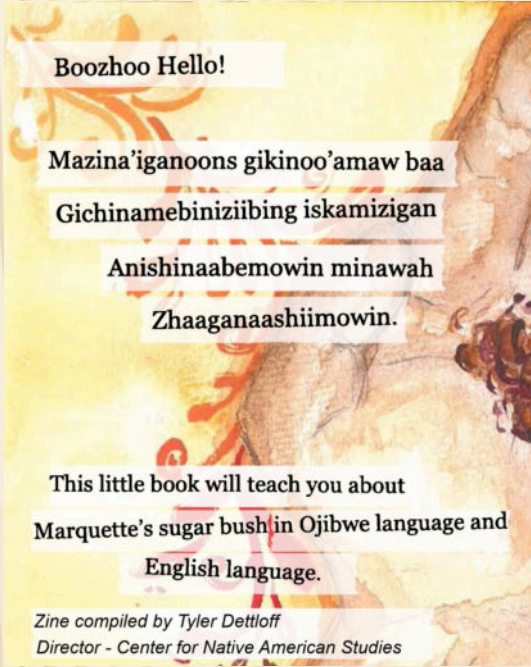
**Zine** is short for magazine. It's a homemade booklet about something you like.

Check out this zine made by **Tyler Dettloff**, Director of the Center for Native American Studies at Northern Michigan University (NMU) with beautiful art by **Presley Wyatt**, an NMU student!

Tyler and Presley's zine will teach you about Marquette's very own **sugar bush** in both **Objibwe** language and **English** language.

Maybe it will inspire you to help a neighbor **boil sap**, or go outside and say **miigwech** 'thank you' to a maple tree, or – maybe – **make a zine** of your very own!





Boozhoo Hello!

Mazina'iganoons gikinoo'amaw baa

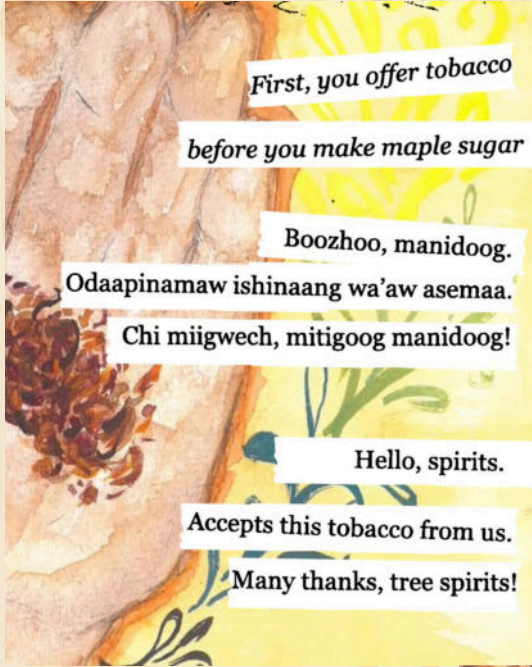
Gichinamebiniziibing iskamizigan

Anishinaabemowin minawah

Zhaaganaashiimowin.

This little book will teach you about  
Marquette's sugar bush in Ojibwe language and  
English language.

Zine compiled by Tyler Dettloff  
Director - Center for Native American Studies



First, you offer tobacco

before you make maple sugar

Boozhoo, manidoog.

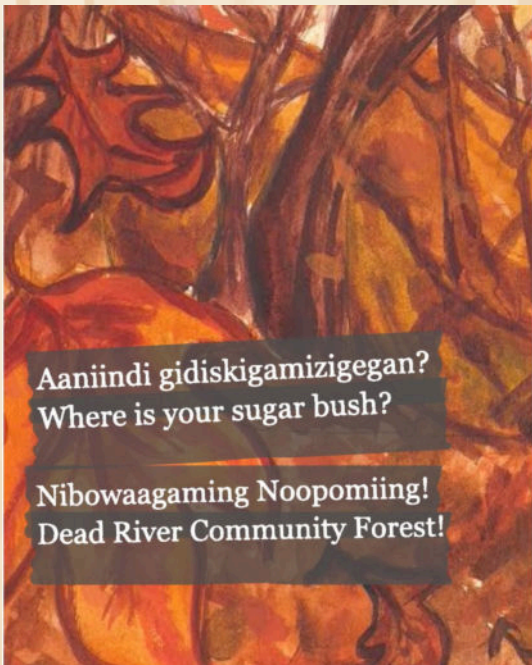
Odaapinamaw ishinaang wa'aw asemaa.

Chi miigwech, mitigoog manidoog!

Hello, spirits.

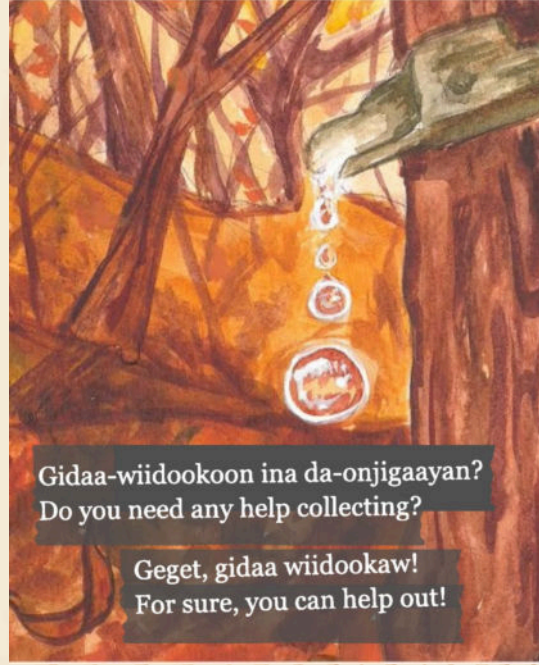
Accepts this tobacco from us.

Many thanks, tree spirits!



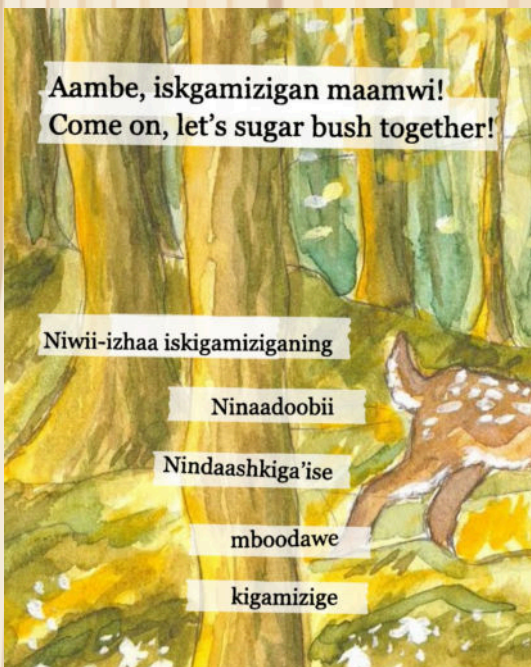
Aaniindi gidiskigamizigegan?  
Where is your sugar bush?

Nibowaagaming Noopomiing!  
Dead River Community Forest!



Gidaa-wiidookoon ina da-onjigaayan?  
Do you need any help collecting?

Geget, gidaa wiidookaw!  
For sure, you can help out!



Aambe, iskgamizigan maamwi!  
Come on, let's sugar bush together!

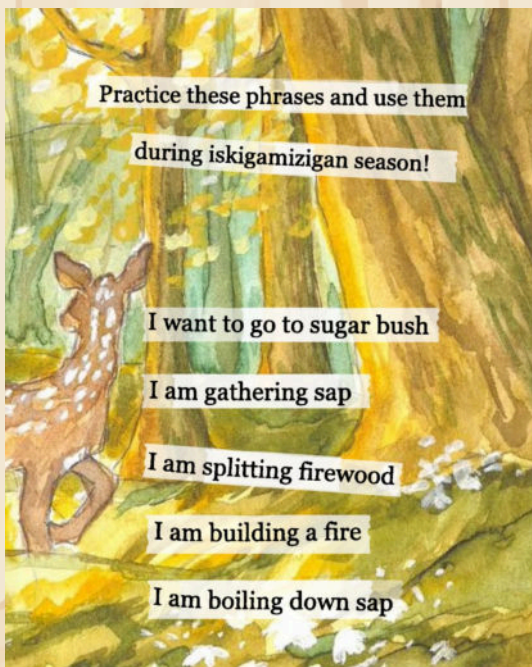
Niwii-izhaa iskgamiziganing

Ninaadoobii

Nindaashkiga'ise

mboodawe

kigamizige



Practice these phrases and use them  
during iskgamizigan season!

I want to go to sugar bush

I am gathering sap

I am splitting firewood

I am building a fire

I am boiling down sap



I'm waking up - and so are the trees! If you love maple syrup, thank a tree for sharing this gift!

Scan the QR code to listen to the Anishinaabemowin phrases that guided our community sugar bush! With thanks to the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.

RED CLIFF BAND



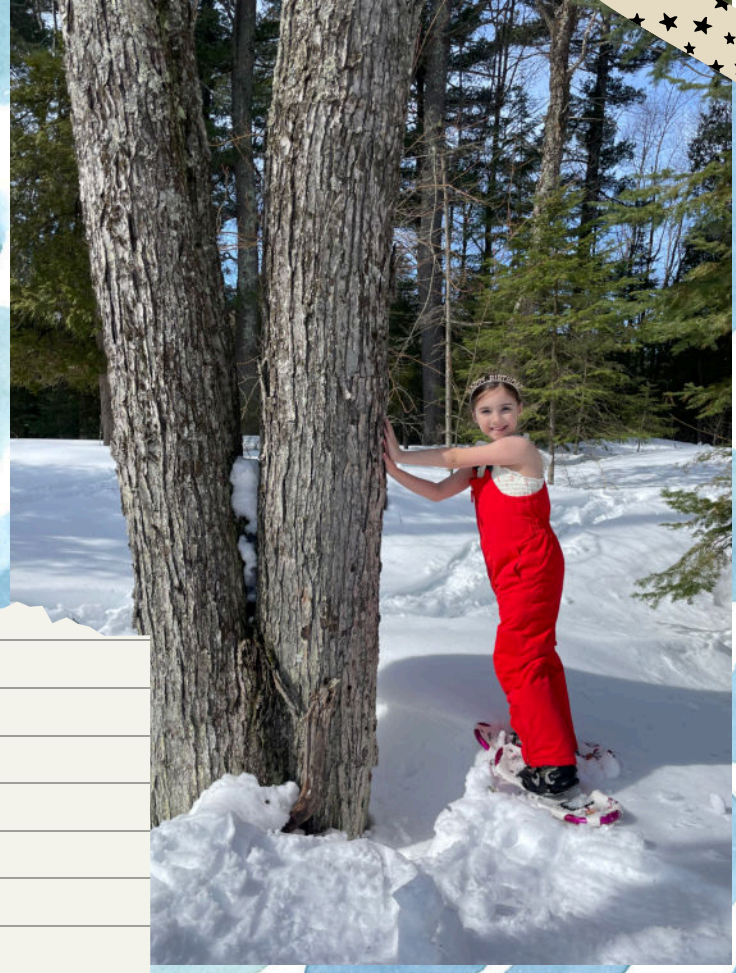
ISKIGAMIZIGAN RESOURCES

# Meadow among the maples



**Meadow** (age 7) was one of many volunteers who helped UPLC and the Center for Native American Studies (CNAS) scout sugar maple trees for sap tapping at UPLC's **Vielmetti-Peters Reserve!**

We asked Meadow what she likes about Iskigamizigan Sugar Bush season, and **this is what she said:**



●	
●	"I like to see the trees."
●	
●	"I like to see them changing."
●	
●	"When a blizzard comes, I wonder how they are feeling."
●	
●	

Meadow, age 7



# The SCIENCE behind SAP FLOW



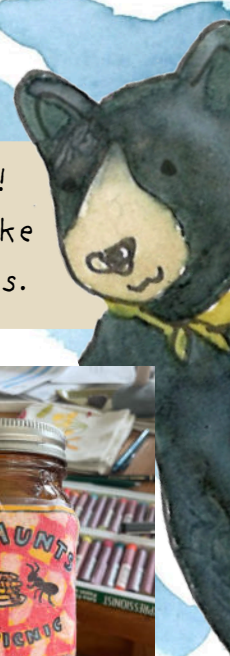
When temperatures are below freezing at night, pressure builds inside a tree and sap stored in the roots flows up through tissues called **xylem** and **phloem**.



When it's above freezing during the day, sap flows back down. Grab your bucket - this is the perfect time to tap a tree and collect sap to boil into syrup!



**IDEA:** Once your sap is boiled into syrup, you can make your own labels!



A watercolor illustration of a forest scene. Tall, slender trees with brown trunks and green and yellow foliage are the central focus. A bright sunburst is visible in the upper center. The ground is depicted with soft, blended colors of yellow, orange, and blue, suggesting a path or a clearing. The overall style is soft and artistic.

## Happy trails, yooper troopers!

For more about UPLC - including event information and a list of publicly accessible preserves - visit our website:

[uplandconservancy.org](http://uplandconservancy.org)



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