



Howling Herald

Get Outside!



Winter 2005

Newsletter for Northern Michigan's Young Naturalists



It's Wintertime! **Did you say you are BORED???**

It's that time of year again! The snow is falling and so is the temperature outside. For many people it means more time spent indoors. But why? There are so many fun things to do when the snow flies, things that you can only see and do with a blanket of snow on the ground. Keep reading and you'll quickly see just how much fun wintertime can be. You'll never hope for an early spring again...well, you just won't be bored waiting for it to arrive!

What can you do in the winter you ask? Just about anything you can do any other time of year...but more! If you aren't already into a winter sport, like skiing or snowshoeing, it might be a good time to learn. Snowshoeing is a great all around activity because you don't need to learn any new tricks like you do for skiing, or ice skating. And, you can borrow snowshoes at any outfitter, or you can buy some that work great and don't cost as much as skates or skis.

If you're not really into sports, but still enjoy being in the outdoors, there's lots of exploring you can do. Winter is the best time to learn about trees, you'll become a pro in no time. Building a snow fort is a fun way to spend an afternoon, and by keeping busy you also keep warm. Or, start a new tradition, like decorating a snowman (or tree) for the birds Or, make some snow ice cream.

See, there's lots to do outside and we're just getting you started! Check out all the fun ideas for you to do this winter inside this issue. Oh, and there's a challenge for you... As soon as you begin to feel bored inside, layer up and head outside. Just let your curiosity lead you and you'll be sure to cure that boredom! (Just be sure to tell an adult where you go.)



Inside



YN Fall Outing



YN Winter Outing...*Snowshoeing!*



New Member List



Winter Scavenger Hunt



Start a New Tradition



Winter Fun Tips



Mysterious Michigan Critter



Lake Effect Snow

Young Naturalist Club



First we met at the gazebo, where we had some apple cider and learned about leaf pressing.

Then we went for a hike with Naturalist, Renee. Here we found some giant striped maple leaves.



Headlands Nature Preserve Mackinaw City

- 600 acres of land
- 2 1/2 miles of shoreline
- 4 1/2 miles of trails



The largest and least disturbed piece of land in the Mackinaw City area.



After our hike, we came back to the gazebo where we made leaf scrapbooks...



Just a Plain Hike!



...And learned to identify the different leaves we found...



...And just plain had fun!



NEW MEMBERS!

Welcome to the club everyone! We have lots of new members from the fall. (These are members who have joined between August and November)



John Bailey
Bryan Hagar
Arri Monroe
Ian Morrison
Brittany Patton
Glory Rice
Bow Rudolph
The Snook Family



New Classroom Members:

Ms. Howe and Ms. Meier of St. Francis

Get Out and Play!

Did You Know?

Did you know that playing outside can help you with your homework?

It's true! Kids who spend their free, unstructured time outside tend to be more creative than kids who spend their free time in organized sports and activities. So, get outside and play...just make sure you get your homework done!

(Reference: *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*, by Richard Louv)

NEXT YNC OUTING!!

When: Saturday, January, 21st, 2006

Where: Headlands Nature Preserve

Why: To trek through the preserve on snowshoes and learn which animals tough out our harsh Michigan winter by looking for their tracks and other signs left behind!



The Headlands



Winter Fun

Here's your winter fun checklist! Tons of things for you to do this winter. Just check them off as you go...or keep a tally each time you try them. Get outdoors and have some fun!



_____ Go Sledding



_____ Make a Snow Fort



_____ Catch Snowflakes



_____ Go for a Snowshoe Hike



_____ Find Tracks in the Snow



_____ Try Ice Skating



_____ Make Snow Ice Cream



_____ Go Skiing



_____ Explore a New Place

Start a New Tradition...

Make a Snowman for the Birds

- ✓ Carrots (nose)
- ✓ Raisins (mouth)
- ✓ Prunes (eyes)
- ✓ Apple halves (ears)
- ✓ Peanut butter pine cones (buttons)

A Christmas Tree for the Birds

- String garlands of popcorn, peanuts in shells, cranberries, raisins, dates or orange peel.
- Hang pinecones or bagels, spread with peanut butter and dip in birdseed and a little sand (birds need grit in their diet)
- Hollowed orange rind as a container for nuts, stale bread, apple wedges, raisins and suet chunks.
- Tie small bunches of wheat together and hang them.
- Fill plastic net onion bags with chunks of suet. Mix in some sand.
- Hang apples, carrots, donuts, bagels, or Indian corn with ribbon.



Winter Scavenger Hunt

*Test your winter IQ
and see if you can find some of these
things at a nature preserve or natural area near you!
You may even be able to find them in
your own backyard.*

1. Find an insect gall on a goldenrod plant.



2. Look for a place where an animal might be hibernating.



3. Find some hemlock sprigs scattered on the ground....can you guess who chopped these down? Look up, you may see him in a tree, sleeping snugly on a tree branch in a pokey little ball.



4. Look under evergreen trees for some tiny little tracks...it's a white footed mouse. Can you guess why he pops under the snow at times? Can you find where a mouse may have been somebody's lunch?



7. Find a snow flea. Though not related to the fleas you are used to, snow fleas do jump like fleas. Snow fleas typically come out on milder winter days and like to hide at the base of trees, on trails and in deep tracks.



5. Look for snake tracks in the snow....Just kidding! But if you find something that looks like a snake track, it's probably a shrew. As they move through the snow, or plow through, they leave a trough-like print behind.



8. Find a set of tracks and follow them. Where do they go? What did the animal do along the way? Can you tell if the animal was a hopper, walker or waddler?



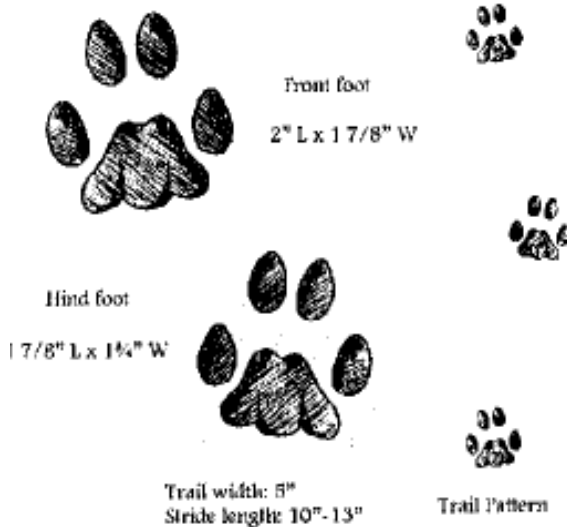
Meet Michigan's Most Mysterious Feline



Bobcat



Bobcat



Bobcat tracks show four toes on the front foot and four toes on the hind foot. Cats do not show their claws in their tracks because they are retractable. Cats, unlike dogs, keep their claws sharp by not walking on them. Bobcats are active any time. They are seen in the daytime, but do a lot of hunting at night. They hunt small mammals, such as mice and squirrels, but can take an animal as large as a deer.

Bobcat young are born in April or May. The average is three kittens per litter. They are born blind and stay with their mother until fall. Bobcat scat is in segments and usually contains the hair and bones of its prey. Bobcats can weigh up to about 30 pounds. They have short tails (six to seven inches long), while mountain lions have long ones. The end of the tail is black, tipped with white.



WINTER Challenge Corner

Layer Up!

As soon as you begin to feel bored, layer up and head outdoors. What kinds of things does your curiosity lead you to?

Send us an email, write us a letter or draw a picture of the discoveries you made when you went outside. The member with the most creative discoveries will win a compass! The winner will also have their name and winter challenge discovery posted in the next *Howling Herald* and on the Conservancy website (www.landtrust.org).



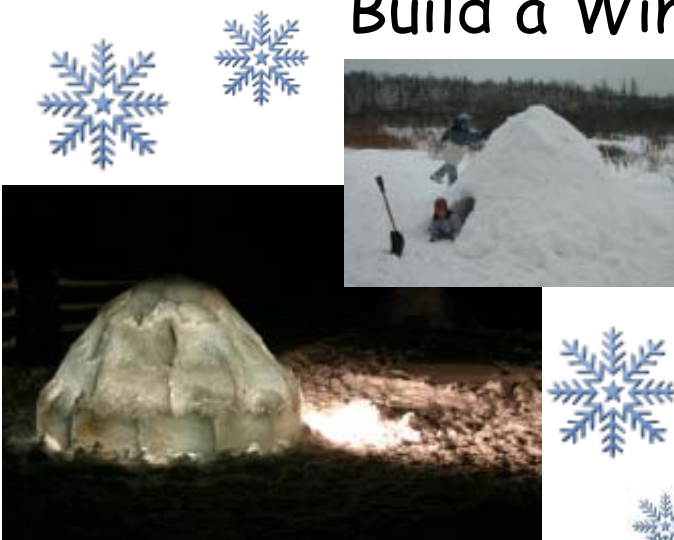
Send your challenges to:
Little Traverse Conservancy
c/o Young Naturalist Club
3264 Powell Rd.
Harbor Springs, MI. 49740



Who has the best winter time discovery?
Send us your discovery for the winter challenge and the winner will receive a compass. You may find yourself wanting to get outside more often! Get outside and have fun this winter!

DUE DATE:
March 1st,
2006

Build a Winter Hideaway Hut



DUE DATE:
March 1st,
2006

Put on your creativity caps and build a snow shelter! Send in your photos and we'll include some of the most unusual ones in winter activity page. Experiment with different natural materials and shapes to create your house of snow. Here are some ideas to inspire you!

Ask Henry

Young Naturalist Club
Little Traverse Conservancy
3264 Powell Rd.
Harbor Springs, MI 49740

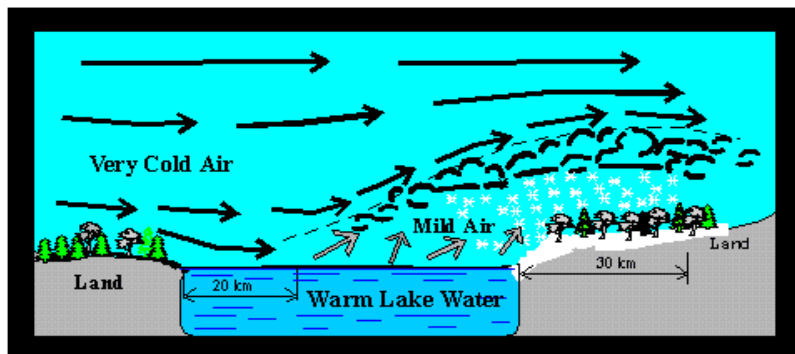


What is lake effect snow?

Lake-generated snow squalls (small snow storms) form when cold air, passing over the warmer waters of a large lake, picks up moisture and heat and is then forced to drop the moisture in the form of snow upon reaching the downwind shore (land). Lake-effect snows are common over the Great Lakes region because these large bodies of water can hold their summer heat well into the winter and rarely freeze over. Lake-effect snows are most pronounced and effective wherever terrain features such as small hills or mountains are oriented along the lee shores (eastern side of the lake).

Write or email any of your experiences with nature. Ask Henry about anything you would like to learn more about. We love to get mail from club members!

WRITE SOON!
FAN MAIL!



For more information about lake effect snow, see "The Weather Doctor" at www.islandnet.com/~see/weather/doctor.htm



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