

EXPLORER DAYS

WITTENBERG-BIRNAMWOOD SCHOOL FOREST

EXPLORING WINTER

During the months of January and February students in K-5th grade spent Explorer Days at the WB Nature Center to explore, navigate and look for signs of animals in winter!

Ask your students about what they learned on their Explorer Day!

January Goal: Today I will explore the school forest looking for and analyzing animal sign.

February Goal: Today I will navigate the school forest.

NATURE NOTEBOOKS:

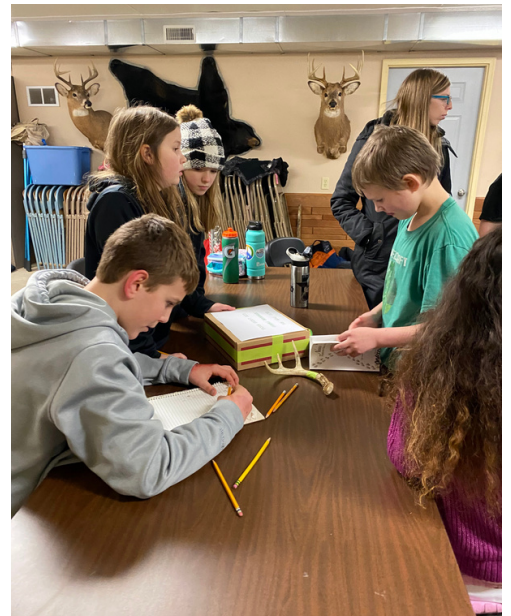
This month we took a close look at deer antlers and skulls. We noticed similarities and differences between animals and predicted how when and how these antlers may have been dropped. We saw a lot of chew marks...could that have been a rodent?

DRESS FOR THE WEATHER, PLEASE!

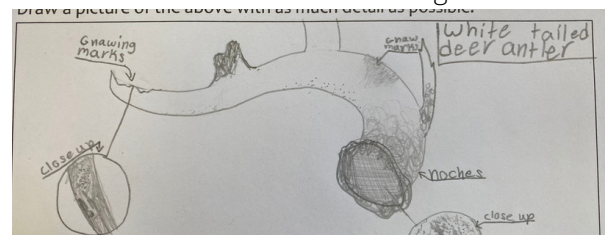
We have been having some mild winter weather these past few months. However, being ok during a 15 minute recess without snowpants and boots is completely different than being outside for 2-3 hours on explorer days. Please prepare your students for the weather by sending the proper gear! Cold hands and feet are no fun...please send waterproof mittens and boots on Explorer Days. There is no such thing as too "cool" to be warm. Spring is ahead, plan for all temperatures, as well as lots of mud and water!



Enjoying the beauty of winter!



The 4th and 5th graders learned about animal sign through a break-out box challenge.



A 4th grade students nature notebook drawing of a deer antler.

WINTER IS A GREAT TIME TO GO OUTSIDE AND EXPLORE!

In January, students explored animal tracks. The K-1 students made tracks in dough, the 2-3 students make their own field guide, and the 4-5 students told a story using animal tracks. We noticed many things about various animal footprints...such as:

- What type of gait the animal has
- The size of the animal
- The direction and speed the animal was moving
- Possibly when it came trough and area
- Using clues, such as webbed feet, to predict where that animal lives.
- how to identify what animal it was!

In February, we introduced mapping and navigation basics. With our goal of not getting lost and practicing some navigation skills, we explored some new trails at the forest. We also explored some parts of maps, such as the compass, the key, and the scale.

See if your student can use a few strategies to find N, and therefore figure out E, S, and W. Go on a hike and let them navigate the trail!

Some ways to remember the N, E, S, W directions:

- Never, Eat, Soggy Waffles
- Never, Eat, Slimy, Worms
- Never, Ever, Stop, Wandering
- Navigate, Every, Single, Woods



Drawing, writing and measuring are all part of Nature Journaling.



Analyzing animal sign means telling the story of what the animal is doing without even seeing the actual animal! We learned that if there are frost crystals around an opening there is something warm breathing inside...I wonder what it could be?



Snowshoeing...fun yet exhausting!



We have a porcupine at the school forest that some classes are lucky enough to see!



Silly winter Olympics...group ski!



Making tracks prints in playdough