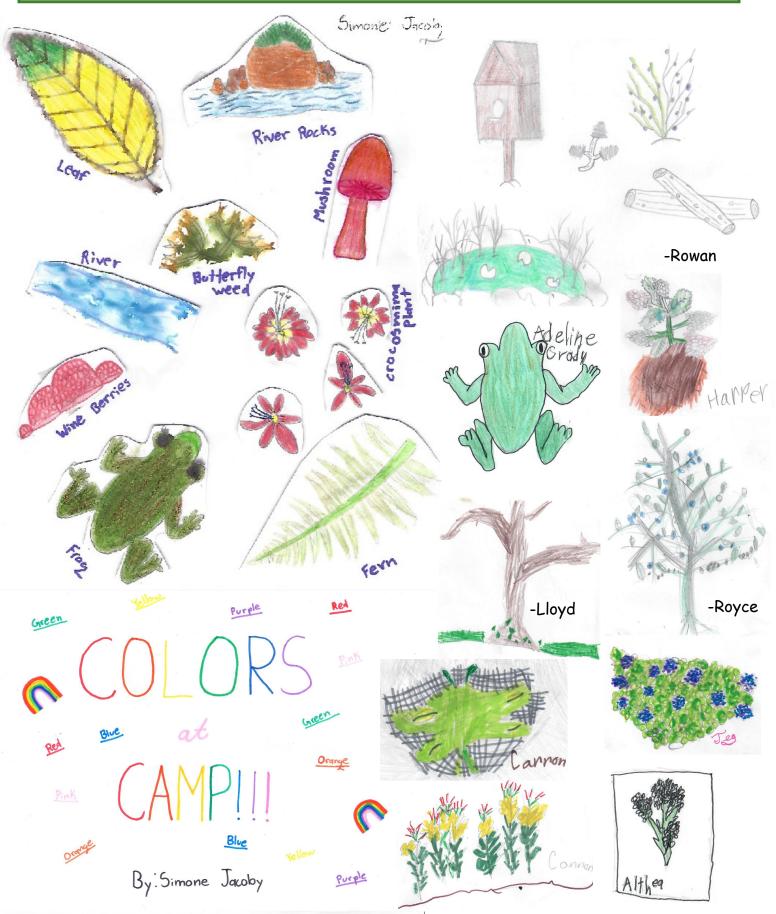
# NEWS FROM SINGING CREEK Rappahannock Nature Camp 2023



#### DEAR CAMPERS,

Today, golden leaves are falling from a Gingko tree outside my house. They all fall in a short time each year, and today, after our first freezing cold night of Autumn, is their time to fall. I love how they glitter as they drift through the air to create a thick golden carpet below.

At Camp, the leaves are mostly fallen, too, except for some young fiery maples, and the yellow and red-brown leaves of the cautious beeches and oaks, who hold their leaves for longer. Today there is a scent of smoke in the air, which reminds me of the surprisingly smoky days we had during session 3 last summer. There are fires burning in the forest to the south of us, The fires seem destructive, but also will enrich the forest soil and make way for new growth and healthy renewal, just as last summer's fallen leaves will (with the help of our many decomposers) become the soil for future summers' forest growth. It's a beautiful cycle, and wondrous to see each year.

A few weeks ago, we had a wonderful Fall Gathering at Camp, up at Azalea Rocks. It was a great time to get some Campers together, as well as many of the people who keep Camp happening each year. There are a lot of people involved in our Camp community! The group included people you know— Camp staff, like Lyt, Nina, and me, and families of Campers, including younger siblings who will be future Campers. It included our neighbors and the owner of the hilltop clearing we call Azalea Rocks, who share that special place with us. There were people who care about Camp and contribute to it, and people who have come in as visitors to teach us about rocks, mushrooms, macro-invertebrates and birds. White Horse even showed up, spotted by some campers! We read aloud some amazing poetry written by several of you last summer (they're printed on the next page!), had some quiet time, heard music and sang, and ate a good meal together by the campfire.



During a short hike to the Lagoon, I got to visit one of my summer quiet spots by a moss-covered log where I'd noticed that someone— maybe a raccoon or a bird—had been eating crayfish. Now, there were small bones and some cicada wings in that spot. I was delighted to see this "meal stop" still in use! Things had changed, and also stayed the same.

Next year will be Rapp Nature Camp's 39th year. We are all looking forward to being with our Campers, new and returning, as we continue to explore our Home along the Singing Creek. Now, enjoy looking back over last summer's News. See you at Camp!

~ Rachel



On October 9th, Indigenous Peoples' Day, a big group of campers, families, and friends of Camp gathered to celebrate at Azalea Rocks for our second annual Fall Gathering. We love this new tradition! Thank you to the PATH Foundation for the *Better Together* Grant that funded this event.

Songs of the Stream PenelorAs I sit and listen Thomas thoughts come to mind. Thoughts of a song. A harmonious melody ringing through the forest The call of the stream is sacred to all of the creatures. Stand quite still and you may see a quiet deer ambling from the trees Come to drink from the singing creck. Apart from her to you may also spot A waterskier on the top. These animals and even, more rely on the stream for the gifts it stores.



A SENSE by Mac Wofford

Hear the wind rustle through forest trees See the sunlight dappled amongst forest leaves Smell the smell of honeysuckle let it slowly fill your lungs Taste the forest's scent let it rest upon your tongue Feel the river rush between your fingers for you and everyone And know without a sense what was and what's to come

RIVER by Iliana Shapiro

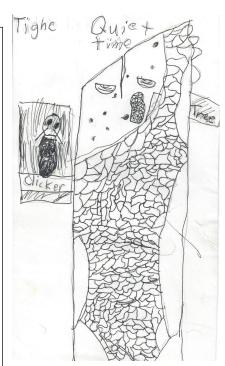
While I sit, As I sit, Sit by the river, I hear its song. Sshh Sshh Flowing through forest, Through meadow, the river goes so long. Sshh Sshhh

While I lay, as I lay, Lay by the river, Under twinkling star. Sshh Sshh Flowing through moss, Through farm, The river goes so far. Sshh Sshh

While I stand, As I stand, Stand by the river, I will never fall. Sshh Sshh Flowing through grass, Through bush, The river is for all. Sshh Sshh Sshh







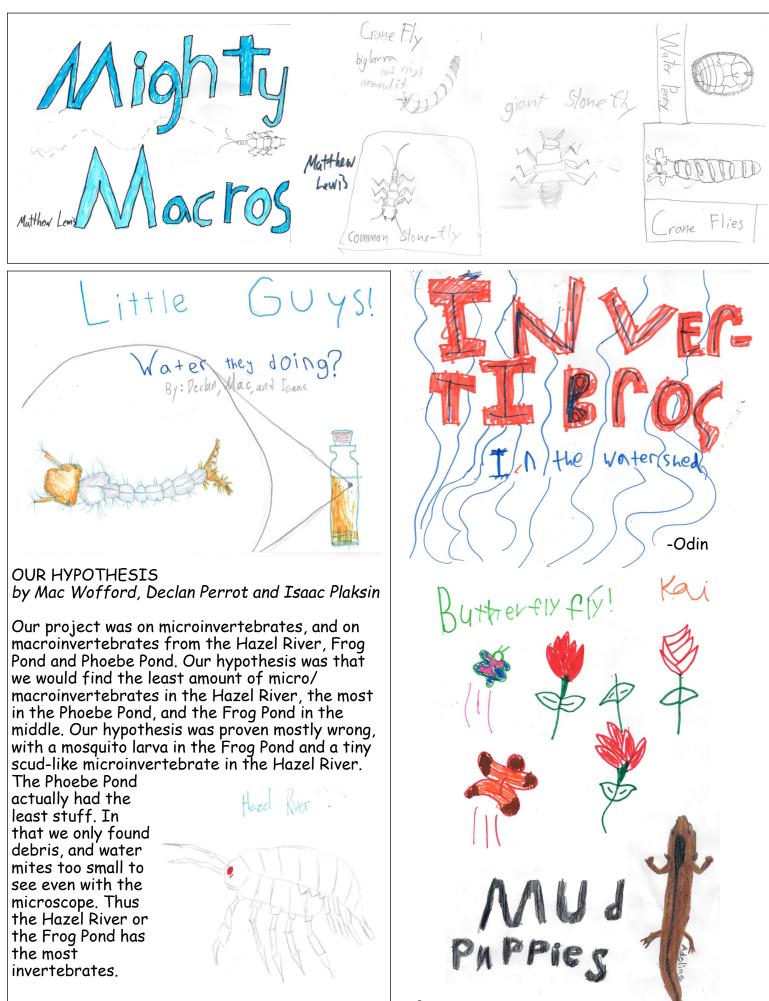
MY QUIET SPOT by Liam Kerr

The sound of nature is around you and in you. The world helps you tune out. The world—not a care—fills your head. And as you just sit there, and as nature slowly takes you to a different world, you think... What a privilege it is to be on this earth, and how you got here.



PEACEFUL NATURE by Honor Carney

While I hear the water flowing down, me, myself, very calm. Knowing that the peace that is happening now can last forever. I'm free. I can hear the wind, feel it, knowing this is my home. This wonderful place I picture is beautiful, amazing, wonderful, calming. It's home. And home is what I know it is. Nature.



# SPIDERS WE FOUND AT CAMP

by Eugene Lopiano and Roman Falk

Common House Spiders live in the U.S. and southern Canada. Females are up to 6mm long and males are a bit smaller. They are found in houses, barns, storage sheds, fences, bridges and other sheltered places. They have grey and black splotches on their back, and yellow legs with black. They weave uneven webs in corners. Barn Funnel Weavers live in barns, homes and dense bushes. Females are 7 to 12mm, males 6 to 9mm. They sit in their funnels and wait for prey, and then they move very fast.

Brown Daddy Long Legs eat small insects and decaying organic matter. Their habitats are barn Fyme Weaver tree trunks and open ground. We found a Daddy Long Legs in a funnel-shaped leaf and another one on the Mystery Tree.



(OMMON house

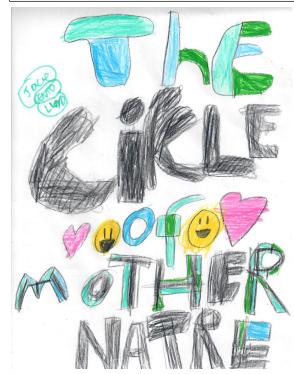
Ider Web

\*STuck

#### OUR CAMP by Harper Loch

WPG

Rapp Nature Camp is so fun. Kids get to play games, sing songs and explore in the wild. And especially the projects! My project is looking up close to things, and looking for small information.



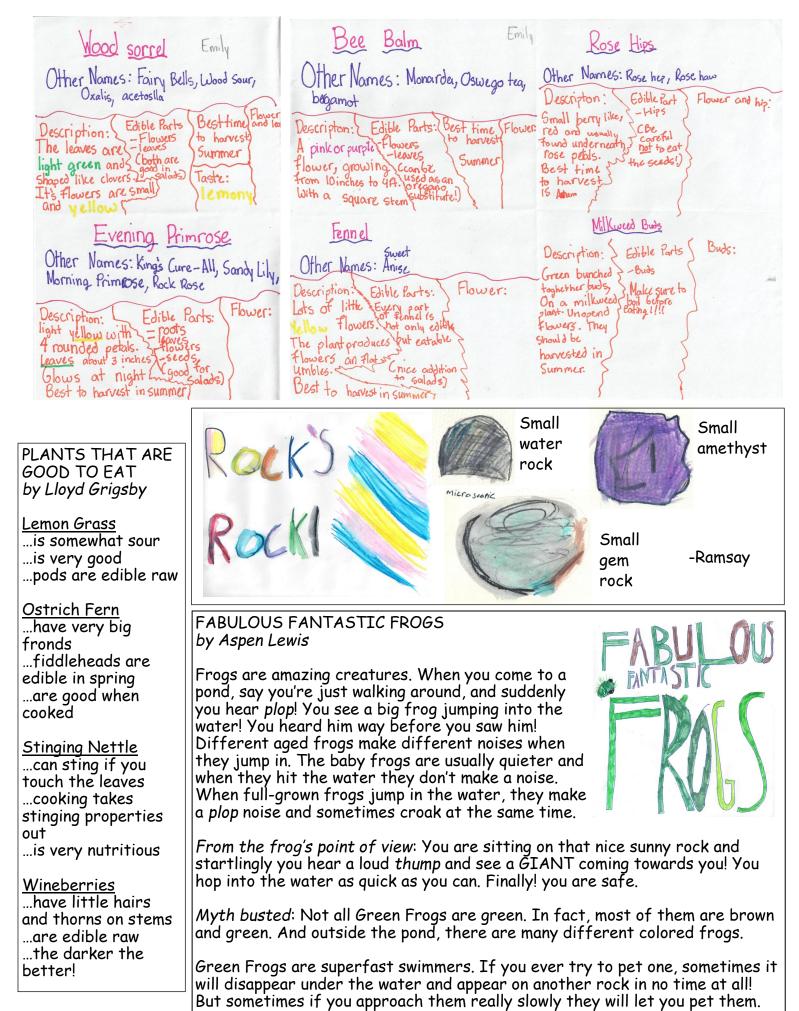


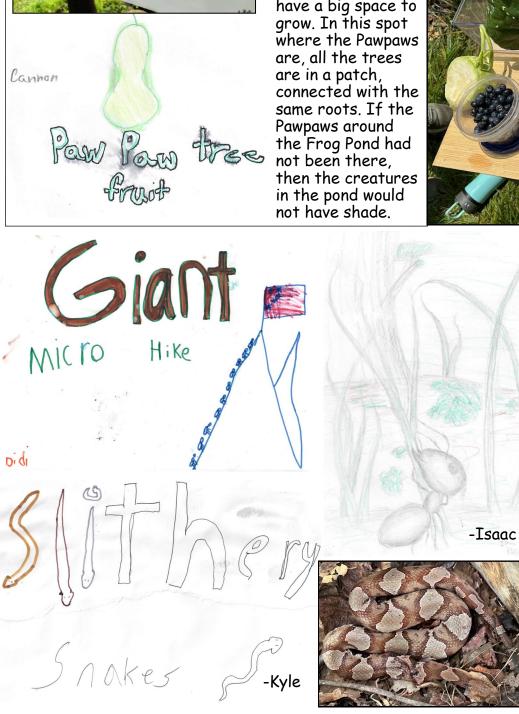


(OPO

BARTLA

Daddy long





Perfect

Paw Paw !

# PERFECT PAWPAW by Cannon Sharp

The bark of Pawpaw trees is thin and smooth. These trees can be up to 40 feet tall and 12 inches in diameter. The simple leaves are 5 to 11 inches long. A woodpecker pecked on Lyt's tree at the Frog Pond. It is very tall so it must have a big space to grow. In this spot where the Pawpaws are, all the trees are in a patch, connected with the same roots. If the Pawpaws around the Frog Pond had not been there, then the creatures in the pond would not have shade.



#### MICRO HIKE ANT JOURNAL by Lloyd Grigsby

#### Day 1:

Climbing. Going diagonal on pawpaw tree. See much lichen. Row of holes in distance.

#### <u>Day 2</u>:

Reach the row of holes. Bumpy, jagged hills between holes. Reach end of holes.

#### Day 3:

Find twig with two leaves about 2 inches away. Reach twig and go up and over. See cocoon on twig. Walk over bumpy terrain to mossy area.

#### <u>Day 4</u>:

Travel 1.5 inches through moss. Go up and behind stump of branch. Go up one more inch. End of journey.

#### Story of the Day: Session 1

ay 2

**Day 1**: What do you want to see today? Worm snake, earthworms, red eft, raven. Deer, toad, and river stoneflies. A great day to solve a

mystery and find a quiet spot. The music of camp begins!

Day 2: What did you hear today? Birds, wind, water and flutes. Quiet Time, project chatter and sound mapping. The footprints of

Rip Plop Plin

Camp make you want to pinch yourself to see if you are dreaming.

Day 3: What do you want to find today? Dig a hole! Follow the deer tracks; river animals; Red Dog; red minnows. Using traps and nets. Counting creatures: our river is healthy! The BEST quiet time. Wind and shadow. Loved the Whole Day.

**Day 4:** What did we share today? Project titles communicate ideas and gathering project pieces show our thinking. And it all comes together! Catching crayfish, hearing woodpeckers closeby, seeing snakes. And we share in a ritual river hike. Brings our day to a close.

**Day 5:** Thunder and silence that is loud. Raindrops bring us new sounds and feelings. Friends gather to follow the deer trail. Delightful Deer poop. Complete our projects. Rain can't dampen our friendships, and the songs of camp continue on!



#### Story of the Day: Session 2



Day 1: Welcome to Camp! Take a picture with your eyes. Mystery solving-- finding clues at Azalea Rocks, Pileated woodpecker, skink and worm. Finding Quiet Spots, and RIVER!

Day 2: Three Luna Moths! Let's see the terrain the size of an ant... Lichen

forest-- spiders, vines. Sing in our cool Barn.



Tree Frog habitat. Snakes at river and pond, newt and eft. Fungus everywhere. Perfect Quiet Time is on our minds as we begin

**Day 3:** White horse is spotted! A day of simple surprises. Bright sky, quiet time, rain. Rock game, painting, deeper seeing. Kohlrabi brightens our day! Finding Fungus on a foray. Three firey creatures

in a cozy home tonight. No-shoes storytime.

**Day 4:** Today's rain sparkled! Learning with our new friend herpetology. Full life cycles



of frogs, salamanders, newts are fascinating to hold. Project progress-- Habitat. Indoor music fills the house as we share this day.

**Day 5:** Pileated Woodpecker proclaims the start of our last day. Huge anticipation of sharing projects. Last quiet time on our islands. Friendships growing. Always learning. Camp Never Ends.





#### Story of the Day: Session 3

**Day 1:** A Rapp Nature Camp Welcoming Party: Magnificent Moths, Splendid Snakes, Fearless Frogs, Mini Mushrooms, Flycatcher, fis



Mushrooms, Flycatcher, fish and River Critters. Quiet Time tomorrow in our new spots with new friends.

Day 2: Mysteries abound at camp as we continue exploring: Crayfish claws? blind snakes? Mystery Tree games. Experiences continue too: exploring river. Making molds. Searching for turtle nests, ferns and frogs. Discovery Stations teach us how to make the most of our camp experiences and mysteries.

Day 3: Diving into our projects starts an eventful Day! Macros, Minnows, Mudpuppy to share. Petting frogs, Noisy Frogs. Precious Quiet Time. Our visitor tells the story of our river rocks. Coyote walk shows us Purple Cow! More wineberries tomorrow.

**Day 4:** Project signs display catchy names for amazing observations of Camp. Things get mixed up some days but our special place adapts to change like the plants and animals there. Our community consists of plants, animals and other things. Mushrooms, tadpoles and vernal pools. Community helpers all.

**Day 5:** A flurry of Activity for our last day! finishing projects, and music. Sharing our experiences with new and old friends. Keep on wondering! Camp continues on...



#### Story of the Day: Session 4

Day 1: Welcome Back to camp! Swing in our new campers. Ring the bell! Taking pictures, finding sticks. Making memories with new discoveries. Crayfish; Blind snake! Otter, deer, squirrel signs to decode on river's edge. Dragonfly friendships grow as we immerse ourselves in camp. Claim our Quiet Spots tomorrow.

Art by: Iliana and Tighe

**Day 2:** Camp has the power to open our senses. If we just close our eyes, our fingertips can find special trees and open up other senses. If we just sit, there is music to be heard in the Forest. Quiet time allows us to just be. With quiet footsteps and alert eyes you might spot a white horse, red dog, purple cow or crayfish. At Quiet Time we escape our very busy world and let our thoughts... just stir.

New friends have the power to awaken new curiosities.



**Day 3:** Take a hike with ants up a tree, under moss, above a funnel spider web! See the world anew. Coyote Walk by flycatcher and babies. Quiet Time fills our senses and companions sharing our spots. Treasure by White Horse! Fun filled River Hike, river splashing. Noisy frogs. Water Snakes. A special day!



**Day 4:** Jump into projects. Frogs, snakes, salamanders, flowers,

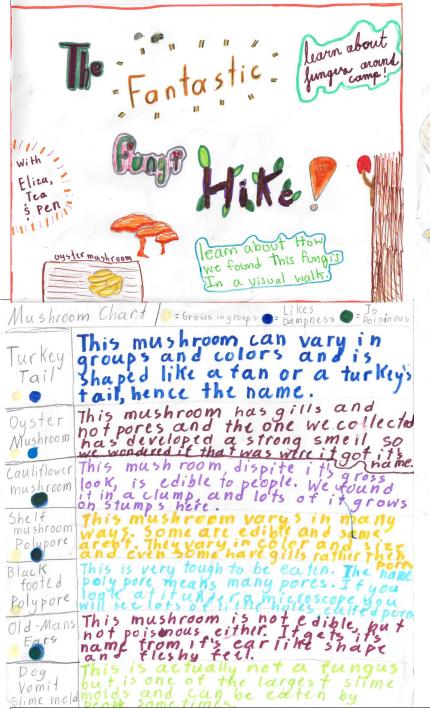
butterflies. Quiet Time becomes our habitat as creatures move in with us. Birds occupy houses and a nests-- Our knowledge expands. Poyal Walnut Moth

make nests-- Our knowledge expands. Royal Walnut Moth catches our eye. Snake sheds-- The Magic continues.

Day 5: Our last day with camp friends: With full hearts, awakened senses, and new friends, our week comes to an end. Helping each other finish Projects, enjoying Hearing one another. Remembering games of Trust and cool discoveries. Quiet time lets us reflect. We know that if we keep seeing the beauty, Camp never ends.





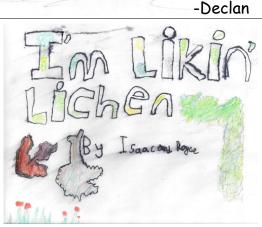


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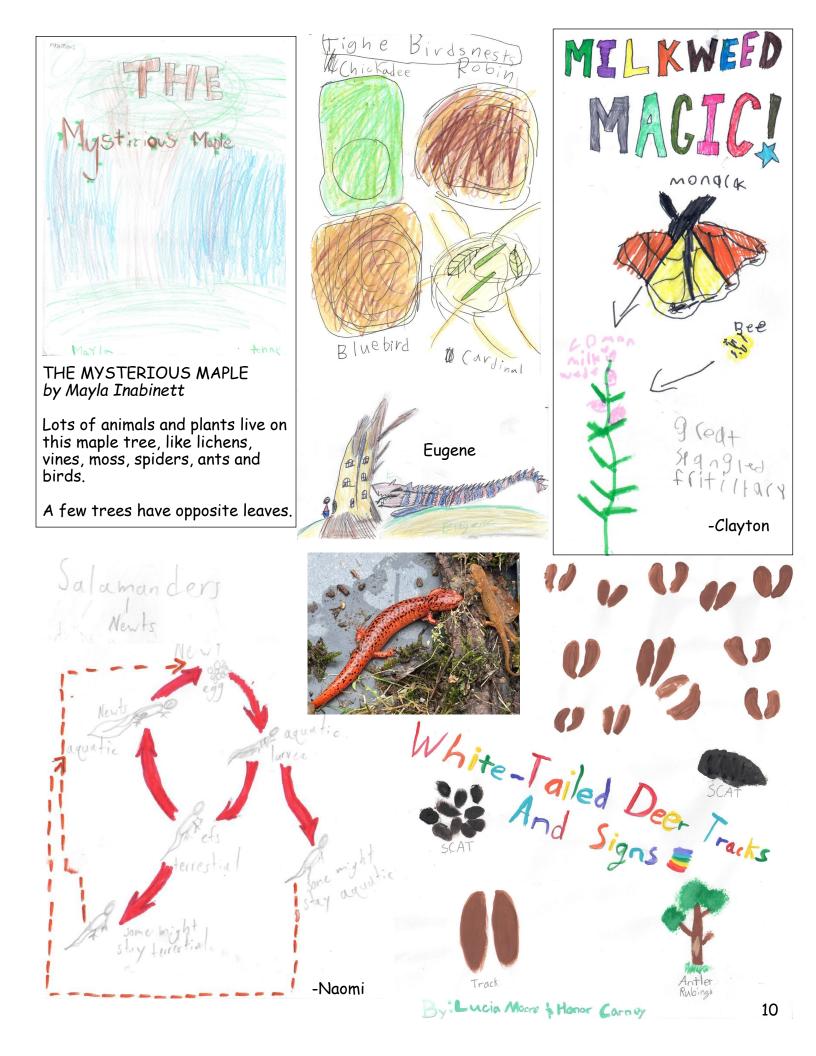
### LICHENS

by Royce Jones and Isaac Plaksin

Lichens are layers of algae and fungi—many layers, with algae on top and fungi on bottom. Fungi provide the home, allowing algae to grow without a body of water, and algae provide food via photosynthesis. Three types of lichens are crustose (like a crust), foliose (like a leaf), and fruticose (like a bush). Lichens can be used to monitor the presence of dirty air. Generally, crustose can grow in the worst air quality, and foliose in medium air quality; fruticose can only grow in the best, cleanest air.



Some birds use lichens to line their nests. Flying squirrels eat some lichens, and lichens provide the main food for caribou in winter. Some lichens have been used to make dyes. You can eat boiled rock tripe if stranded in the woods. Lichens provide habitat for ants. Lichens degrade rocks and provide surfaces for mosses and other plants to grow. Like mosses, ferns and mushrooms, lichens spread with spores, and they grow everywhere!







(loser





THE AMAZING VERNAL POOLS by Nico Shapiro

One vernal pool I was observing was formed when a tree fell and its roots came up with it. Vernal pools dry out when there's a heat wave, so no fish can live there. Rain fills the hole and creates a whole new ecosystem.

Ethan

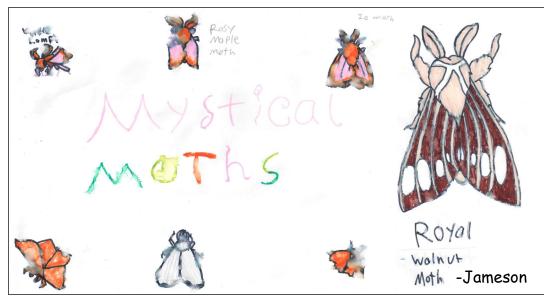




Enh

-Eugene

Ped Dag Se I gate When I had him Surgery found Red Dog andage. he had a hole! spottail shiner. could rip moer his not move took arm.I hts anm. him home had woheolon, shine h give takt 100 04 DA stision hin ali der CAN SFILES black jumphock wersio h gave him the stitch him who sore 11 Moore ucia



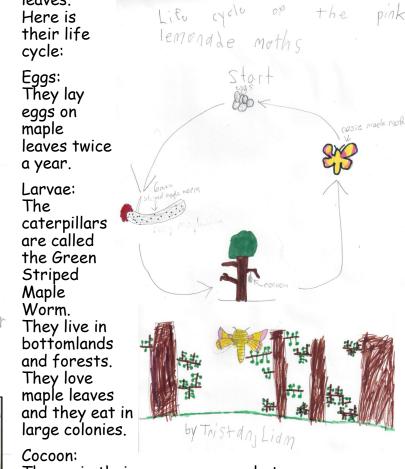


PINK LEMONADE MOTH by Liam Kerr and Tristan Kerr

Pink Lemonade Moth is our name for the Rosy Maple. These moths have pretty colors that remind us of pink lemonade. The moth is called Rosy Maple because the caterpillars eat maple

leaves.





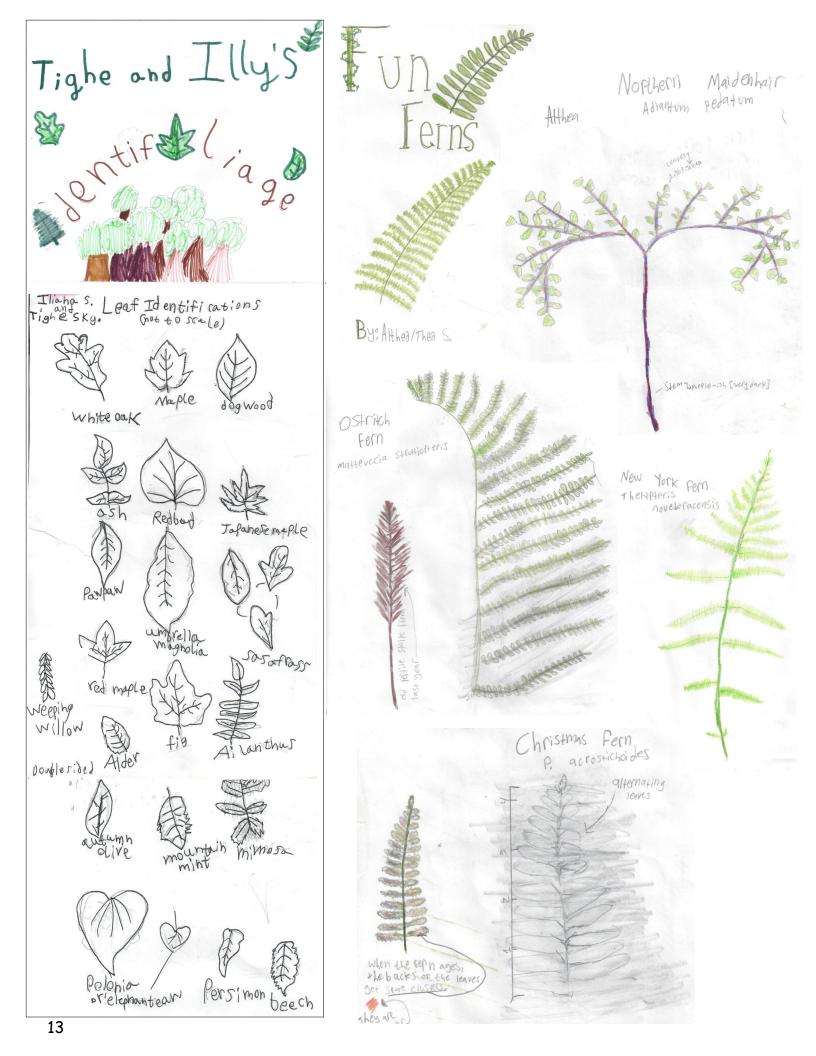
They spin their cocoons on maple trees.

#### Moth:

The adult moths do not eat anything at all. They are pink and yellow and appear to be hairy.



Magnificent



#### **AZALEA ROCKS MYSTERY** by Lyt Wood

On the first day of each camp session, we investigated some peculiar marks on the ground at Azalea Rocks. There were no clear tracks and no scats, just some spots where the dry leaves had been pushed back to expose the bare dirt underneath. Squirrels? Dogs? Bears? Deer? Horses? These were some of our guesses, but we took the time to investigate these marks and came up with this list of clues:



•The habitat was open woods of large tulip trees, oaks, maples and hickories, with no understory, and a ground cover of dry leaves, grasses and mosses.

•There were no claw marks and few signs of digging or scratching, just places where the leaves and a little dirt were pushed back. We could imitate these marks by pushing back a layer of leaves and dirt with closed fists.

•Some of the marks were under tables and benches. This ruled out the possibility of large animals such as deer or bears.

•There were LOTS of marks—more than a single small animal would have been likely to make—and the marks were mostly confined to areas covered with dry leaves.

•We found a few decayed acorns and hickory nuts—but no animal such as squirrels would be planting or eating nuts in June or July.

·Some of us detected a slight sweet smell, but there was no trace of skunk odor.

•Finally, the farmer among us (Rachel) noticed the presence of tiny soil aggregates at the edges of the marks. She had often seen little nuggets of soil like these. They were the excretions of earthworms!

Every track or sign tells a story: Why was the animal there? What was it doing? How did it make that sign? It is a mistake to start with a hypothesis or a wild guess and then look for evidence to prove it. It is always best to start by careful, thorough observation.

We finally concluded that raccoons—probably several of them—were returning to the area night after night, using their muzzles to sniff out the abundant, nutritious, delectable earthworms. Yum! Though the images are too poor to print here, a trail camera eventually confirmed this story.

#### MICRO HIKE POEM

by Gus Garcia

We are in some small shadows. A weight of a thin Wineberry thorn presses against skin that's left pearly white and dotted.

This grey-green rock is cool on my knees.

I feel only the weight of it pushing back.

The moss upon it would make such a soft pillow.

For I am tired—

And I've been gone and distant from something like this for too long.

### IS THIS OUR EARTH?

by Nina Anderson

Breathing in, the oxygen nourishes life. The air is not mine. We share the purity of breath, thrive as one.

Liquidity the waters flow in and around. The water is not mine. We drink in its blessings and stream, thrive as one.

Earth watches. Fingers help our eves

Fingers help our eyes to see life. The beauty is not mine. We are not independent souls, thrive as one.

#### EARTH SOUNDS By Nina Anderson

Earthy, brown and green Smell life, death, and symbiosis Ground, air, sky and us.

Deafening silence the beautiful music sings A sweet harmony.

Watching waters roll Bubbles tumbling on to an end I can't see.



# RAPPAHANNOCK NATURE CAMP at Singing Creek Our 2024 theme for study: "HOME"

OUR MISSION: "To allow individuals, especially children, to discover for themselves the wonder and beauty of the natural world, and to learn what it means to be a part of a community of living things."

SUMMER CAMP: Rapp Nature Camp activities are almost all outdoors. Activities include: games and songs, hiking, river time, quiet time, identifying plants and animals, assessing water quality, safely catching and releasing animals,



caring for plants, creating your own special nature-based project, making music, and drawing and writing for our camp newsletter.

Campers share their special projects and songs with visitors on the Friday of each session. This newsletter, "News from Singing Creek", gives you a small taste of our camp.

PERENNIAL CAMPERS: Rapp Nature Camp is glad once again to offer a series of nature outings for adults—our "Perennial Campers!" Our first event will be at Singing Creek in early March. We will prepare a combination of Camp activities and educational programs for adults. Some events will be held at the camp grounds, and others will be excursions to interesting habitats in and around Rappahannock County.



Join us next summer to find and experience the Wonder of nature!

# **2024 SUMMER SESSIONS**

for campers ages 8-16

SESSION 1: June 10 - June 14

SESSION 2: June 17 - June 21

SESSION 3: June 24 - June 28

**SESSION 4: July 1 - July 5** 

# Monday - Friday, 9am to 3pm

Campers may attend any number of sessions on a weekly basis. Discounted rate offered for a second week of camp. No two weeks are the same!

Rapp Nature Camp's home base is on the Upper Hazel River in Sperryville, one mile west of Route 231.



To learn more and to register for Summer Camp or Perennial Campers, visit our website, RappNatureCamp.org email RappNatureCamp@gmail.com

Or call Camp Director Rachel Bynum at 540-252-6308

Follow us on Facebook at **@RappNatureCamp**for updates on Camp activities!

Rappahannock Nature Camp P.O. Box 145 Sperryville, VA 22740



Rappahannock Nature Camp is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Your donations are appreciated!