

TREES FOR TOMORROW

The Eighth grade class from Belmont Community Schools attended Trees for Tomorrow, an accredited natural resource specialty school, located in Eagle River, Wisconsin from September 21-24. Twenty nine students and three teachers attended a combination of classroom studies and fieldwork in the "Northwoods" so that the students developed a better understanding of nature and increased their management skills in the areas of forest, water, wildlife, soil, and recreation.

In order to make the most of the experience, students asked not to bring cell phones, Ipods, or other electronic devices. Jeff Crase, one of the instructors, wanted to make sure the students to get back to nature. By the end of the trip all of the students recognized the importance of nature and all that it has to offer. One of the eighth grade students joked, "This trip was good for society because it forced us to be off technology for four days."

Students participated in classes on a variety of topics including testing water pollution using microorganisms, tree identification, GPS orientation, compass orientation, and basic survival skills. Jeff Crase will now bring several of the topics and activities back into his science curriculum. The class also visited Bond Falls, a beautiful waterfall located on the middle branch of the Ontonagon River in the Western Upper Peninsula. The visit to a natural bog was a highlight for many students as this wetland area is unique to select areas of the state.

The last evening of the trip was spent at the Kovac Planetarium. The planetarium was constructed entirely by owner Frank Kovac. The planetarium spins using an electric motor controller and is the largest rolling, mechanical globe planetarium in the world. The students were amazed to learn that Kovac hand-painted 5000 stars in the correct location and with the correct brightness using glow-in-the dark paint. One highlight of the trip included seeing the northern lights from Mr. Kovac's backyard following his presentation. Ricca Varvil began the trip by not really caring about the stars; however, after the presentation at the Kovac Planetarium she says that she wants to be an astronomer.

Trees for Tomorrow not only offers students a different setting to learn, but it also provides them the opportunity to grow as a class. Sydney Johnson summed it up in a letter of thanks she wrote when she said, "I got closer to people that I never expected to be close to. They are now my friends." Thank you to all of the people who helped make the trip a possibility.



Dear
Biddick Foundation,
Thank you for
MAKING "Trees"
possible for
the student
of Belmont-
[Signature]