

# Chippewa Stories “Dibaajimowinan”

**AUGUST 2018 | CHIPPEWA NATIONAL FOREST**

## APPLY | KNOWLEDGE GLOBALLY

The Forest Service looks toward a bright, hopeful future and the next generation. This summer and throughout the year, we are working to recruit young people by making them aware of career opportunities within the Forest Service and natural resource fields of study. A trip to the Chippewa National Forest this summer achieved just that.

Eight youth from the Twin Cities traveled about 3 hours north to explore natural resources careers, participate in service projects and enjoy fun recreational activities that abound in the national forest. They are associated with three youth employment organizations with a conservation focus (Minneapolis Parks, Green Team, Urban Roots and Urban Boat Builders).



Students camping on the Forest. Photo by: Wilderness Inquiry

The trip began with a tour of Itasca Community College (ICC) and the Minnesota Interagency Fire Center (MIFC) in Grand Rapids. At ICC the youth learned about the 2 year forestry technician program where graduates can either apply for technician jobs or use it as a springboard to a 4 year forestry degree. At MIFC the youth saw wildland firefighting equipment that can be deployed nationwide and Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl educational materials that are mailed to customers around the world!

The next day, the youth spent time with Chippewa National Forest’s recreation staff, who shared personal testimonies about their jobs. They gave the group up close and personal experience with their day-to-day by leading them through brush clearing around the Clubhouse Lake campground and at the historic Joyce Estates. They ended the day by experiencing the rewards of hard work in the recreation field – swimming and canoeing! It also included some survival skill training - the group learned how to work together in pairs to help right a canoe that had flipped over.

The last day, the youth had an opportunity to learn about another branch of the Forest Service – Research – through a tour of the Marcell Experimental Forest (MEF) near Grand Rapids. The MEF contains six experimental watersheds, each consisting of an upland portion and a peatland that is the source of a stream leaving the watershed. Each watershed has been instrumented to study the hydrology, nutrient and mercury cycling, and release of organic carbon and acidity. During the MEF tour, the group learned about an experiment that measures spruce and peatland response under changing environments. The spruce forest and underground peat are subjected to five different temperatures and two increased carbon dioxide levels.

A key partner in making this trip possible was Wilderness Inquiry, who provided excellent supervisory staff, meals, camping equipment for the youth, as well as transportation. The hope is that connecting youth to the natural world around them will inspire a deep connection and desire to be stewards of the land in both an official and unofficial capacity.

## SUSTAIN | OUR NATION’S FORESTS AND GRASSLANDS

In an effort to improve the efficiency of field data collection, reduce the use of paper forms, and eliminate redundant data entry, the Chippewa National Forest (CNF) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) are partnering on the development and implementation of field data collection using smart devices.

Darryl Holman, CNF Resource Information staff, developed a mobile field data collection application in Survey 123 to collect data for the TNC Riparian Assessment Survey protocol. A field crew from TNC and CNF will be collecting data on smart devices using the application and uploading that data to a shared database. Testing of the application will take place in the upper portions of the Third River drainage of the Chippewa National Forest during late summer and fall.

## DELIVER | BENEFITS TO THE PUBLIC



Bag full of berries.  
Photo by: Chippewa NF

Working on the Chippewa National Forest, you see the patterns of seasonal recreation use, you also see the traditions of families enjoying the national forests. It's well known that there is a ritual to the Minnesota walleye fishing opener in May or the opening of deer hunting season in November. In between though, there is a more subtle group who wait patiently all year for the summer berry season.

The perfect combination of conditions in 2018 led to an excellent crop of just about everything you could gather on the Chippewa National Forest. While the cold spring may have held back the morel mushrooms, the berries were early and surprisingly abundant. Wild strawberries, raspberries and the highly sought-after blueberry.

Blueberry pickers are notoriously secretive, but the bumper crop this year had people sharing the more accessible areas (but never giving up their best blueberry site.) To pick blueberries, you must find a site under the pines, in acidic sandy soil. A little shade, a little moss is good to hold moisture in. The diehard blueberry pickers' start early in the morning, before the heat of the day hits. For others, the picking starts in the early evening, as the deer flies slow down. Pickers have their favorite buckets and favorite hats!

You are either a fast and dirty picker, meaning your bucket fills with berries quickly, but it also contains leaves and sticks, or you are a clean picker. A bucket of solid blue berries with no sticks or leaves is a beautiful thing. Either way, berry picking is therapeutic, a bit of quiet meditation in the woods to just slow down and use all your senses. Note that flash of blue color as you walk under the jack pine. Taste that sweet blue berry, there is nothing that compares to a wild blueberry. Hear the wind in the trees overhead, the feel of pine needles and soft moss underfoot. Enjoy the scent of the woods after a July rain.

The annual trek to the berry patch means time with family. Picking blueberries is time connected to the forest. Connected to the traditions. Look at the star on the top of a blueberry and remember the story that this berry is a gift from the heavens, dropped out of the sky. Once home, the pickers take time to clean the berries, culling the green leaves or green berries from the batch. Ready for muffins, or miini-baashkimasigani-biitoosijigani-bakwezhiigan, a blueberry pie (the longest word in Ojibwe language). Other berries are put in bags and frozen, because people in northern Minnesota know, Minnesota's wild blueberry holds in the taste of summer. And on some cold winter day in January, we grab a handful of those frozen berries and remember July.

## EXCEL | AS A HIGH PERFORMING AGENCY

Four interns stepped on the Chippewa National Forest and made a big impact this summer. The different internship programs provided work experience related to each student's academic program or career aspirations and gave these individuals exposure to public service while enhancing their educational goals.

Marcy Gotchie, a Resource Assistant Program (RAP) intern from the Salish Kootenai College, and Maria Chiaberta, an intern from the Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI) worked on a number of projects this summer. Both played a significant role in supervising kids on the Youth Archaeology Program, they helped on historic restoration projects led by Northern Bedrock Historic Preservation Corps at Shingobee Chalet and Joyce Estate. The biggest legacy of Marcy and Maria's time on the Chippewa was their work reorganizing the Heritage Lab. Because of their efforts, this space is once again being used and we are that much further along in our curatorial responsibilities.

Students Alex Engelson and Anna Züst teamed up with the Forest engineering team through the CCMI program. The engineering duo completed the road inspections of all Forest Service roads that was started last summer. The field observations will be incorporated into the corporate data systems this fall. Once the data entry is completed, the Chippewa will have a completely updated base inventory for resource specialists to have quality data available for use. Other tasks over the summer included repainting portal signs, assisting with fleet management, enabling Smokey Bear to visit Kindergarten classes, and working with the boundary management program.



Forest Service

Chippewa National Forest  
200 Ash Ave. NW, Cass Lake, MN 56633  
218.335.8600  
[www.fs.usda.gov/chippewa](http://www.fs.usda.gov/chippewa)

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.