



Hogback Mountain
Conservation Association

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Hogback Mountain Newsletter

The following article and photos are presented by Carol Berner to help us celebrate another great day for youngsters and adults at MES Day this year on Hogback Mountain. -- (B.A.)

"I Played Camouflage and Saw 100 Trees"



On Tuesday, May 28 Hogback Mountain hosted a hundred children and teachers from Marlboro Elementary School for the fifth annual school-wide Hogback Day. The meadows bloomed with violets, a light breeze tugged kites into the sky and dappled sunshine warmed children hiking the woods in



search of porcupines. The event highlighted burgeoning connections between the school, the community and the 600-acre forest conserved and donated to the Town of Marlboro in 2010.

Our email address is hogback1@sover.net. If you prefer not to receive future Newsletters please let us know. Suggestions for improvement are always welcome as are articles and pictures for future publication

“I played camouflage and saw 100 trees,” wrote Kindergarten student Leo, capturing the spirit of Hogback Day as an event integrating play, discovery and noticing nature. The structure of the day is designed as an invitation for K-8 students and their teachers to explore Hogback, offering a range of outdoor investigations to engage multiple ages, interests and learning styles.



The day opened with a choice of activities led by community members who share an area of expertise including trail-building, kite-making, nature journals, hiking, fairy puppets and scouting. Brazilian Capoeira was a new offering this year, described by one student as “martial arts and dance mixed together.” Fourth grader Sloan drew a picture of herself doing acrobatics in the meadow and wrote: “Capoeira was originally done by slaves to protect themselves from danger. I loved doing Capoeira it was so much fun.”

The most popular morning sign-up was "Looking for Porcupines," led by Junior High teacher Tim Hayes. Students excitedly reported finding quills and scat, seeing active dens and eating snack at Conehead Rock. In the words of Kindergarten student Dan: "I went porcupine finding it was fun and cool." The Junior High long-term porcupine study is one example of how Hogback Day functions as a catalyst for teachers and students to find new ways to use Hogback



My favorite part of Hogback day was when we went to Conehead rock with Tim to look for porcupines. We found two active dens. The view was really nice. I had lots of fun. We also found porcupine quills and had snack under the rock.

“Fun and cool” are important elements of Hogback Day, laying the foundation for broader goals of connecting to place, building a sense of belonging and fostering agency. Group games, organized by MES teachers Patrick Johnson and John Bentley, were the highlight of the day for many students. Children’s drawings reflect the exhilaration of active play in the context of hills, trees and a 100-mile view: “I was running so fast that I jumped onto a skinny tree and it tipped over... I had the best time ever.”

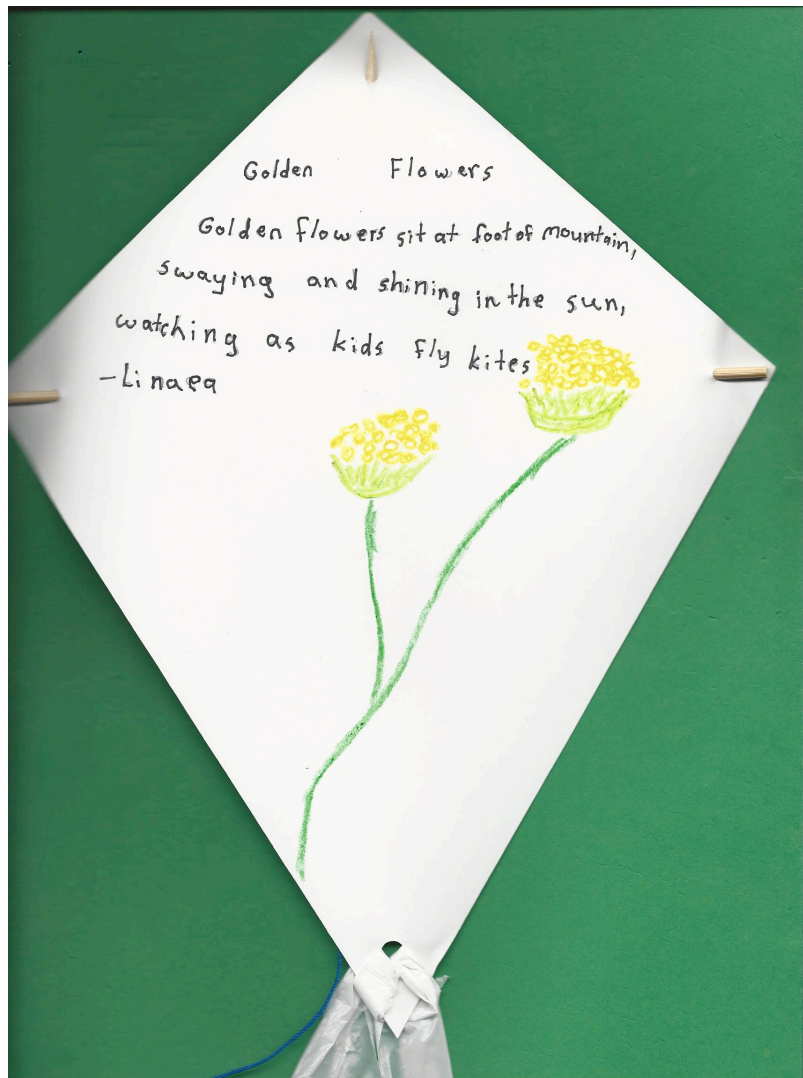


at Hogback I played capture the flag. I had a lot of fun. I was running so fast that I jumped on to a skinny tree and it tipped over. I almost fell on John. I had a lot of fun doing capture the flag. then we went back on to the field. after we played some games, we went back to school. I had the best time ever.

For some children, writing poetry was another way to connect with nature. In “Kite-Making and Haiku” children used their senses and imagination to write a few short lines capturing a moment on the mountain. Warren, a first grader who ran his kite up and down the meadow all morning, wrote about movement:

Birds singing
Bees buzzing
Trees moving.

Sixth grader Linaea wrote her poem from the point of view of flowers blooming nearby. Moving through the landscape and taking the perspective of nature are some of the ways in which children express their connections to Hogback.





Who knew that there was so much garbage, or that it could be so exciting to pick up? Fourth grader Broden elegantly sums up why the cleanup activity was satisfying for her: "I liked helping clean up the earth on Hogback Day... It makes me sad that people throw their trash on the ground that's why it makes me happy to help pick it up." Broden's drawing and writing vividly express the positive sense of self and responsibility for the environment that go hand in hand when children spend time learning in and from their local landscapes.



If Hogback Mountain could speak, it might echo Leo's observation with its own expression of wonder and gratitude for Hogback Day, "I played camouflage and saw 100 children."



Birds' songs mingling
Little breezes whisper by
The green grass dances.

~ Frida, Grade 6

Grass blade

Sway you go
on this windy day
You sway all day
You make me want
to sway all
day

~ Madison, Grade 3

Many thanks to Hogback Mountain Conservation Association and the community members who facilitated Hogback Day activities:

Nancy & Bob Anderson, HMCA
Raven & Kate Averill, Montague MA
John Bentley, Marlboro Elementary (MES)
Tim Hayes & Jr. High Students, MES
Patrick Johnson, MES
Jane May Jones, Magical Earth Retreats
Ron LaBrusciano, Antioch New England (ANE)
Jahnvi Newsom, Capoeira Brattleboro
Mike Purcell, Hogback Preservation Commission
Megan Wright, ANE Graduate Student

Hike to Fire Tower
Scouting Skills
Group Games
Looking for Porcupines
Group Games
Fairy Puppet Making
Kite-Making and Haiku
Capoeira
Trail Exploration
Nature Journaling

Follow-Up:

If you'd like to get involved please contact Carol Berner, cbberner@gmail.com

To see more Hogback Day photos go to the MES gallery: <http://marlboroschool.net/>

To learn more about Hogback Mountain, visit the website at <http://hogback.org>

Check out the River of Words regional website at <http://row.ctriver.org/> to find out more about integrating environmental education, literacy and the arts.