

Zaaga'igan Ma'iinganag

SPRING 2023

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF BAYFIELD



**PLACE-BASED
EXPERIENTIAL
LEARNING**

ZAAGA'IGAN MA'IINGANAG

Levi Dixon
photo by: Toben Lafrancois



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WHO IS ZAAGA'IGAN MA'IINGANAG?

A NOTE FROM TOBEN

What you are about to see might need some explanation (or hopefully you've skipped ahead, the photos are the point really, but now you're here with a few questions).

The Lakewolves experience is place-based, student-driven, and by definition... immersive. This evolving program has become central to Bayfield High School (WI) Alternative Education as well as offering opportunities for all students who try it out during Water Week.

I provided the first participants tools, training, and safe experiences in the Lake and surrounding waters - the rest was up to them.

The founding members defined what the photography and our dives meant to them.

So what did they come up with?

The core value of the Lakewolves is *respect* - for the Lake and for the traditions of those who have always protected it. They want to speak for the Lake in their own ways, but remain firmly connected to traditions.

One way this plays out in practice is that we strive to learn Ojibwemowin place names of the waters we swim. Our public galleries feature these names. For tribal members and those of us outside or tribally adjacent, this is our shared baseline. We respect the original water protectors while engaging the next generations who will give the Lake their voices.

After outings, we edit photos and discuss aesthetics, personal reflections, aquatic biology, and cultural connections both as a group and individually. The teachers and I support whatever the kids are fascinated by. Some days it's cultural, others artistic, historical, or ecological... often all at once. *(cont'd on next page)*



Toben teaching in the Caribbean, slightly warmer waters than Lake Superior.

I believe that Lakewolves represents our region's most unique program focused directly on strengthening connections between youth and fresh waters. I can't imagine an ecological or economic future without these connections. But our primary mission is creating great experiences.

Reams of research papers support the intuitive idea that personal connections to healthy ecosystems are fundamental to physical and mental health. Science is coming around to traditional knowledge that water can be medicine!

We also know that people won't protect what they don't understand or love. This program simultaneously bounces between those two poles- creating healthy outdoor experiences for the team while producing culturally and ecologically valuable photos that kindle awe, joy and respect for the Lake in the viewers.

The health of our youth and the Lake is inseparable. Their shared future depends on what we do now to foster connections, share knowledge across generations, and create opportunities outside the classroom and in the waters.

The photos and reflections you read in this magazine will spell that out better than I can, so enjoy!



Toben Lafrancois is an aquatic ecologist, research diver, and underwater photographer. He is a Research Associate at Northland College and an Associate Director of Under the Surface at Northwest Passage, Ltd.

ZAAGA'IGAN MA'IINGANAG FOUNDERS



Yrsala Peterson



Bazile Minogiizhigaabo Panek



Vennessa Gordon

BENEATH THE SURFACE: EMPOWERMENT OF YOUNG VOICES THROUGH UNDERWATER ARTISTRY

Bazile Minogiizhigaabo Panek

In the heart of Ojibwe country, far-reaching ripples are being made. Lake Wolves, an underwater photography group I had the privilege of founding in my high school years, has made its mission to draw students into the deep, aqua wonderland that lies beneath our local lakes' surfaces. For many of these students, this opportunity represents a first encounter with the wild, enigmatic world under the water.

The Lake Wolves initiative is grounded in the rich Ojibwe tradition of respecting and caring for our natural surroundings. We echoed this principle in our diving trips, using photography not only as an artistic outlet for our students but also as a means to highlight the breathtaking beauty of our aquatic ecosystems. Through their lenses, the students reveal life that might otherwise go unseen by many, thereby nurturing a deeper appreciation for our interconnectedness with these ecosystems.

The Lake Wolves' curriculum extends beyond the mechanics of underwater photography. It blends hands-on learning with practical diving skills, environmental education, and teachings from Ojibwe culture, creating a holistic approach. By doing so, the Lake Wolves are empowering a new generation of environmental stewards and artists who speak for the lakes, their inhabitants, and their stories.

While we initially started as a small local group, the impact of the Lake Wolves has resonated far beyond the Chequamegon Bay area. The stunning photographs captured by students have not only graced local exhibitions and schools, but have also been showcased on national platforms, bringing to light the unseen world beneath our lakes and the talents of our young photographers.

As we continue to dive deeper and explore further, Lake Wolves remains committed to reaching every young person who is yet to discover the enchantment of the underwater realm and to the lakes' unseen ecosystems that eagerly await their lens. In capturing these unseen wonders, we not only create art and awareness but also continue the Ojibwe legacy of reverence for our shared natural world. As a founder and now an ardent supporter, I urge you to behold these photographs with a sense of reverence; you will find yourself deeply immersed in their artistic impressions, stirring within you a commitment to nurture young talents far and wide.

COMMUNITY

BAZILE MINOGIIZHIGAABO PANEK
WIISAAKODEWAN-MINIS (STOCKTON ISLAND)

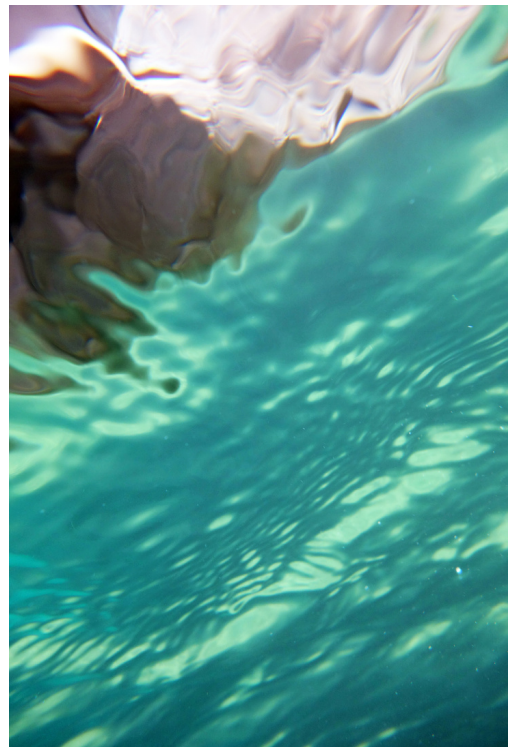


We're all connected to nature and the world around us. We all live as one with nature, and not above it.



BAZILE MINOGIIZHIGAABO PANEK

Underwater photography is a way for me to give the Lake a voice for others to interpret. The Lake speaks to me, and I want others to hear it too.



SEE DAYLIGHT
WIISAAKODEWAN-MINIS
(STOCKTON ISLAND)

IZHI-MOONIINGWANNEKAANING-MINIS (TO MADELINE ISLAND) MOONIINGWANIKAANING (MADELINE ISLAND)



VENNESSA GORDON

Back in 2017, I was an active community member but I struggled with anxiety and depression from traumatic experiences. I struggled being a strong youth leader and lost who I was. Zaaga'igan Ma'iinganag helped me discover myself again along with conquering my anxiety and depression. I will forever be thankful for this program as it helped me find me again.

SPRINGTAILS IN SPRING WIISAAKODEWAN-MINIS (STOCKTON ISLAND)



SPIDER FROM BELOW

YRSALA PETERSON



YRSALA PETERSON

There are animals, and spirits, living in Lake Superior. To us, their world is a blur of half glimpsed wonders. Every once in a while they must also peer out at our strange world and catch the shadows of life on land. This is the view of a spirit of the lake, emerging.

Underwater photography is empowering. It is a window to a world that gets few visitors and too little appreciation.

I want to see parts of my Lake I have never seen before and show people how amazing, how precious, how moving and inspiring it can be.

EVOLUTION OF ZAAGA'IGAN MA'IINGANAG



Zaaga'igan Ma'iinganag has become an integral part of the Bayfield High School Alternative Education program where it continues to evolve and grow. Students explore shipwrecks and shorelines in Lake Superior and wade in streams looking for plants, animals, and any other enticing photographic targets.

Gaa-giishkidaawangaa-wiikwedong
(Little Sand Bay)



Miskominikaaniing-ziibi
(Raspberry River)



Mashkode-bizhiki-wiikwed
(Buffalo Bay)

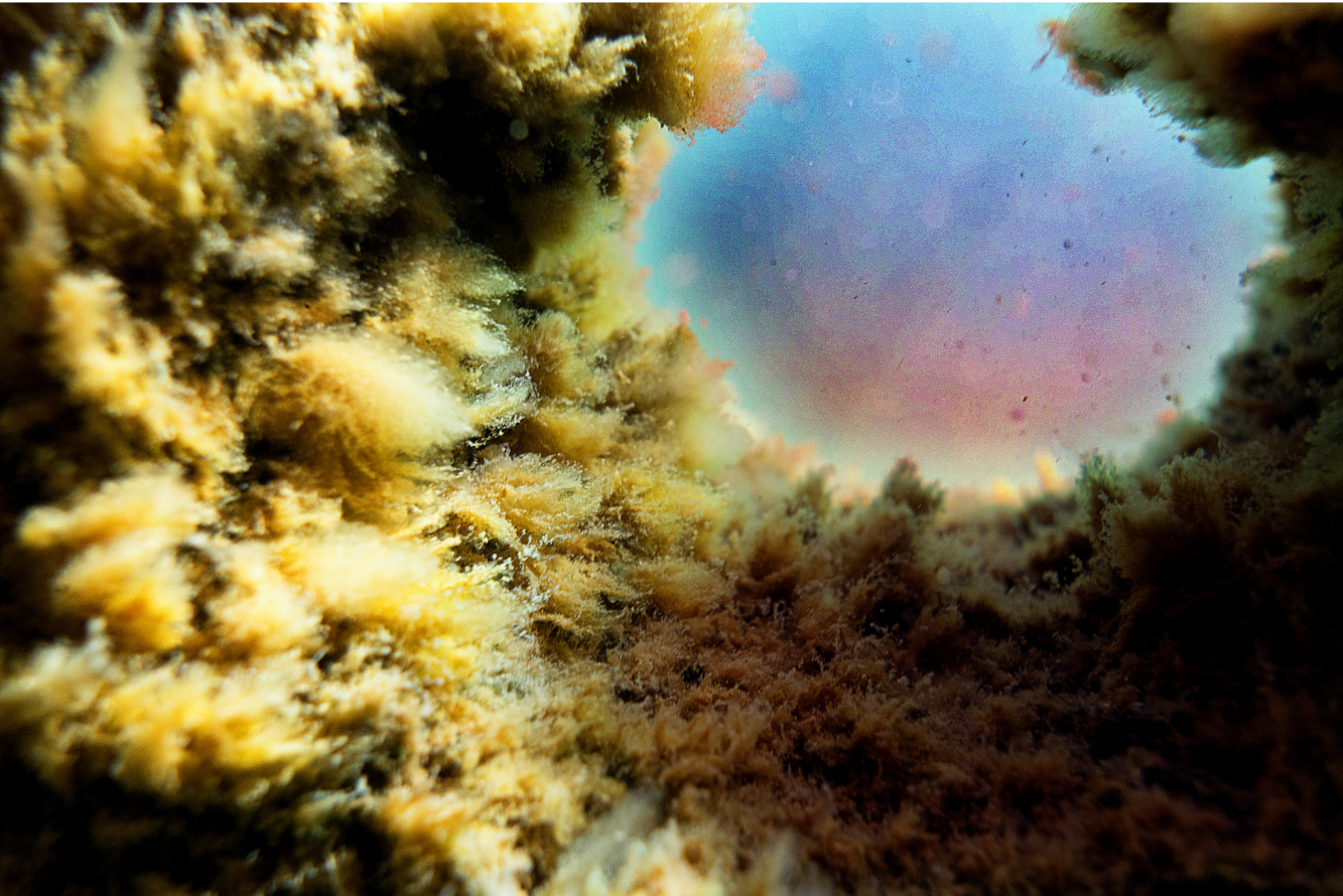
Zaaga'igan Ma'iinganag has also found its way into May Term - a weeklong session during which Bayfield students select mini-courses focused on place-based, experiential learning.



ANOTHER WORLD

MASHKODE-BIZHIKI WIKWED (BUFFALO BAY)

AVEN FRANK



My name is Aven Frank. I am a junior at Bayfield High School and I am in the alternative education program. I learn best with examples and hands-on experience. I am good at solving problems and I have the will to not give up. I want to become better at motivating myself. I like riding motorcycles and I like snowboarding. I like that I don't have to sit in a chair all day in Alt. Ed I like that I can take pictures of whatever I want. There's no pressure for my pictures to be "good". Snowboarding makes me happy because it makes me feel alive. Listening to music makes me happy because I can just exist in my own world for a while.

BUBBLES

GAA-GIISHKIDAAWANGAA-WIIKWEDONG

(LITTLE SAND BAY)

ETHAN GARY



My name is Ethan and I like to be outside and work on things. I enjoyed taking these pictures because we live by such a beautiful lake and taking photos underwater lets us see the beauty in a different way. It is cool to see how just holding the camera underwater and snapping a random picture can show how cool bubbles look.

AUTUMN LEAF

BEMIDEWISHKAWEJIKANING-ZIIBI
(SISKIWIT RIVER)

EVELYN SNIDER



My name is Evelyn Snider. I'm 14 years old, and I am in the alternative education program. My best way of learning is watching and being told what to do. If I am not given a little push, I do not do what is expected. I'm very interested in art, I'd do anything to just draw in my free time. Another, is taking walks outside. The very two things that make me happy are basically drawing and listening to music. It gives me time to myself and sometimes I'll invite people to draw with me, but that's very rare. It's really fun having Toben freely give us cameras. I like to see other peoples' ideas when it comes to photography. One thing that I really like about the alt ed program is being able to go outside.

OZHAASHAABIKAA

(SLIPPERY ROCKS)
MASHKODE BIZHIKI
WIIKWEDONG



HELEN STILLDAY

My name is Helen Stillday. I'm 15 years old and live in Red Cliff, WI. I am a student in the high school alternative education program.

I love to go swimming in the lake, I like to ride bikes and four-wheelers. I love to hang out with family and friends. I like being around the shore of Lake Superior. I like the sound of the waves. I like the smell of the lake - not the smell of fish - but the smell of freshness, especially on rainy days and spring days.



BAGIDA'WEWIN (FISHING USING A NET) MASHKODE-BIZHIKI WIIKWED (BUFFALO BAY)

My name is Isiah. I am 17 years old and am in the Bayfield High School Alternative Education program. I like to be active, and I like being outside. My favorite sport is basketball, and I play whenever I can.



DAGWAAGIN (AUTUMN)

Zaaga'igan Ma'iinganag -- 12

I really like living by Lake Superior. The lake calms me down and helps clear my mind. I don't have many opportunities to get on the lake, but I like swimming and just hanging out on the shore. That's one of the reasons I like the underwater photography project. It gives me a chance to be in the water.





SNOW

MASHKODE-BIZHIKI
WIIKWED
(BUFFALO BAY)

JACOB
GURNOE

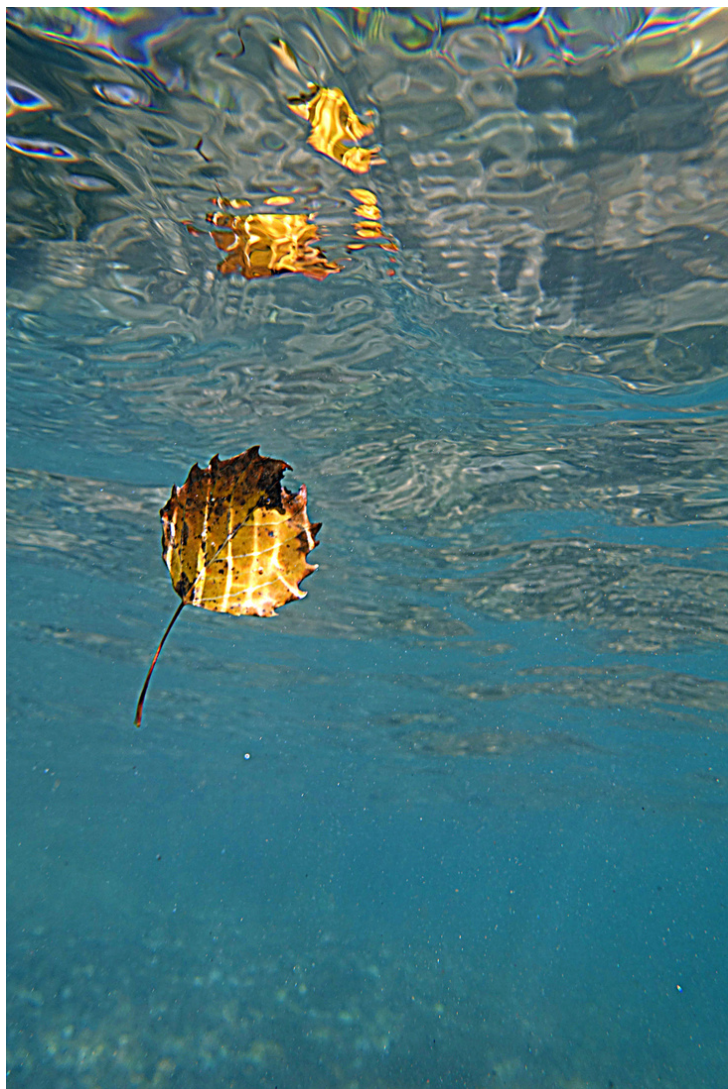
My name is Jacob. I am 17 years old and I am in the Bayfield High School Alternative Education Program. I like to play video games and baseball.

I took this photo while our class was setting fishing nets under the ice on Lake Superior.

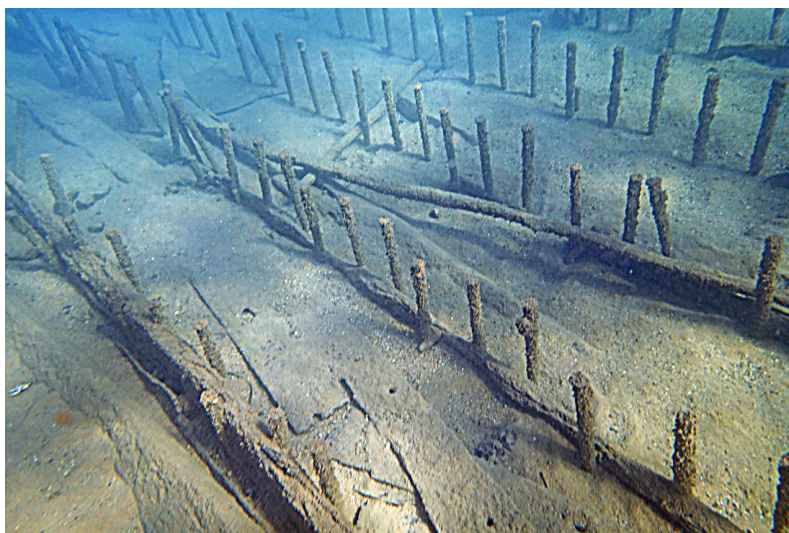
I think that this is a good view on what you see when you live here in Bayfield in the winter. On good day, we see blue skies.

One cool thing about this photo is the refraction of light by the ice crystals - you can see little circles with rainbows inside.

ANIIBIISH (LEAF) MASHKODE-BIZHIKI-WIIKWED (BUFFALO BAY)



HOKENSON DOCK GAA-GIISHKIDAAWANGAA-WIIKWEDONG (LITTLE SAND BAY)



LARRY LAPOINTE

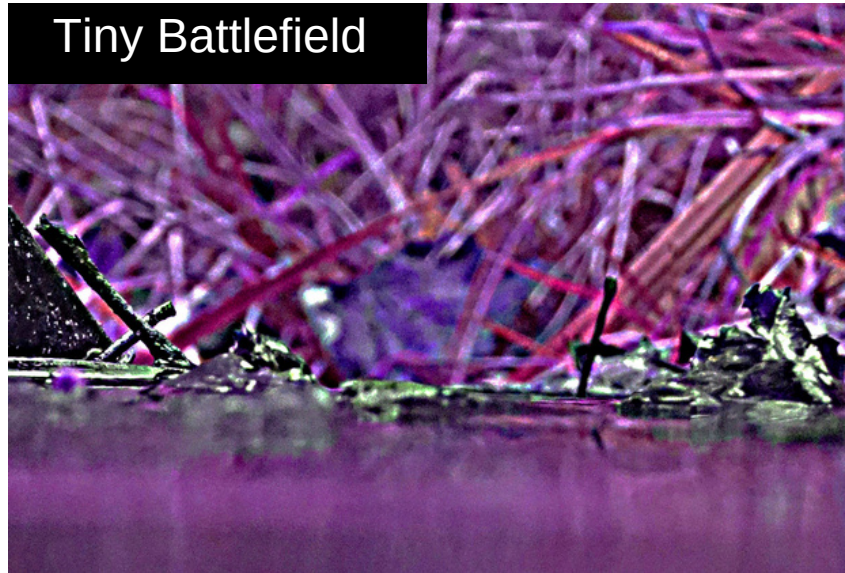
My name is Larry Lapointe. I Am a student at Bayfield High School. I work best when I am active and involved in the activity I'm doing. It helps me to actually do what I'm trying to learn instead of just listening. I care about my friends being happy instead of being sad. So I work to provide a learning opportunity for my friends.

I like to go fishing and hunting. I like to go mountain biking. I would like to learn how to weld better so I can fix what I broke. I like that Toben takes us out to the lake to go underwater. The two things that make me happy are playing basketball alone and with my friends. And playing video games with my friends.

Zaaga'igan Ma'iinganag -- 14

DRIFTS ON THE FEDORA MASHKODE-BIZHIKI-WIIKWED (BUFFALO BAY)





LEVI DIXON

I'm a 17-year-old high school student at Bayfield High School.

My inspiration for these photos was partly from my love for water and the rest was from my mind wanting to show people how my mind sees things. For the photo with abstract colors, I wanted to show the creativity of my point of view. The blending of nature and my creativity was good for me because in this case, I had to get outside to get the photos.

**THE WORD
OF WATER**



ICY WATER RUSHED
BLOWING WIND COLD
WAVES BIG WAVES
TIDES PUSHING CRASHING, SNOW FLOATING FALLING
BUBBLES SLOW DANCING, HEAVY LEAVES

THIS IS HOW I DREAM
HOW DO YOU DREAM?

NISWI GAYAASHKWAG (3 SEAGULLS)

Gaa-giishkidaawangaa-wiikwedong / Little Sand Bay



I love the whole Zaaga'igan Ma'iinganag project. I love being in the water and also taking pictures. Those two things make me happy. I also like editing the photos. It's fun to sharpen the photo and adjust colors to make it look like I remember it.



ANIBIISH (LEAF)

My name is Logan Goodlet. I am 15 years old, and I am in the alternative education program at Bayfield High School. I learn best when I can be doing hands on things. My strengths are I am a good worker. My favorite things to do are play video games and basketball.



DANCING LIGHT

MASHKODE-BIZHIKI WIIKWED
BUFFALO BAY
MADELYN HANSON

Hi, my name is Madelyn Hanson, and I am 16 years old. I learn best when I'm seeing or touching something.

I'm creative and persistent. I enjoy baking and reading. I like the alternative education program because it is hands-on and the teachers are understanding.

During the photography project, we get to spend time in the water not in the classroom. My two favorite things are being with my friends and eating.



LITTLE SQUIRT FISH BUG

(MASHKODE-BIZHIKI WIIKWED, BUFFALO BAY)

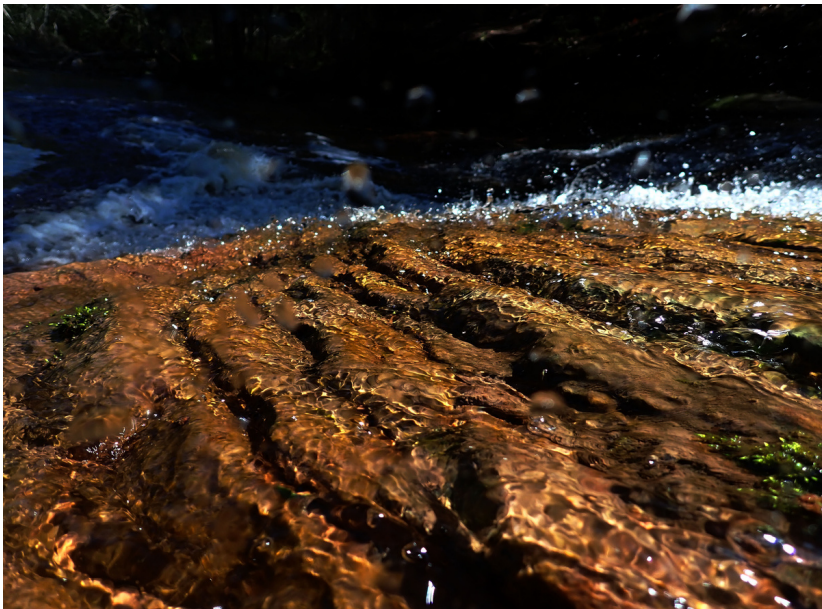
WREN



My name is Wren. I'm an eleventh grade student at Bayfield High School, and I am also a part of the Alternative Education Program there. My favorite part about the program is that I get to go outside and be in nature. I really like being in nature because it is quiet and not in a loud confined space. I have anxiety and it's hard at times to be in a relaxed mood, but when I'm outside it is very nice and calming. I took this picture on a private beach in Redcliff. I was walking on the shallow end along the shore and then I saw a little weird guy swimming in the water. I couldn't really tell what it was. It looked like a bug, but it had a fish tail, and it was swimming like a fish. I decided to see if Toben could identify the little fish bug for me (*Baetisca* sp.), so I took a picture of it. I did not really mean it to be a good photo, but wow it turned out to be a really nice picture. The critter was just below the surface, so I put the camera just under the water and angled the lens up. You can see a little bit of the sky and the tree line from the top of the lens that was out of the water. And you can see a very cool squiggly reflection of the bug at the water surface.



2023 WATER WEEK



KORESA NEWAGO

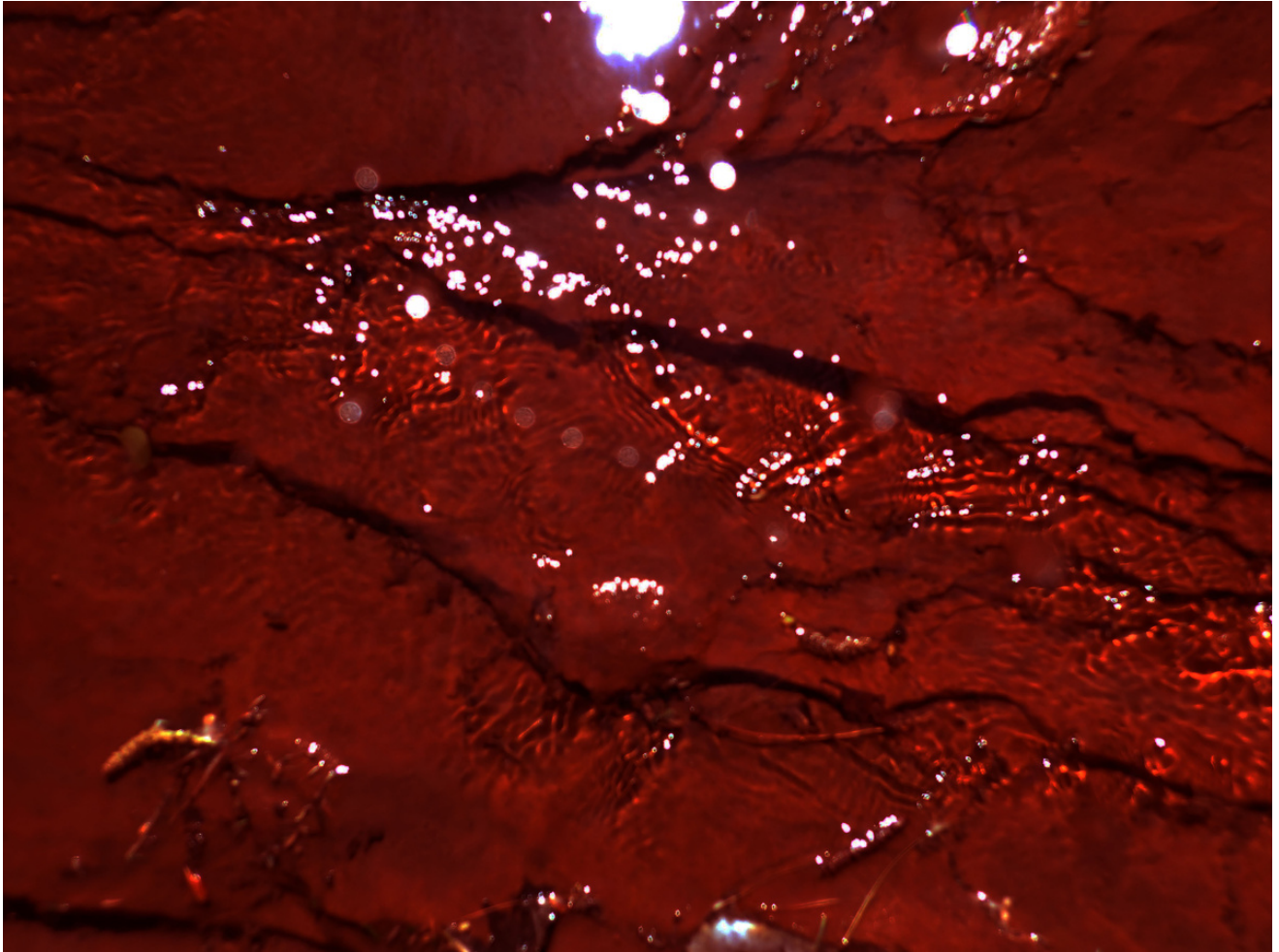
This was an amazing experience, I would do this again if I ever had the opportunity. I love living by Lake Superior and I am truly grateful for Nibi (water). The best pictures that I took were completely on accident. This shows how beautiful our planet is!



R. CADOTTE



SKYLER LAMOREAUX



My name is Skyler Lamoreaux. I like drawing and basketball. I liked doing photography for Water Week mostly because I got to walk in a river. I really enjoyed being able to do whatever because I haven't walked in a river in a while. The picture on the right is a stream of unnamed red liquid. I like how it looks. The bottom photo is a shot I took from behind a log.



FLOWERS IN ANOTHER LIGHT



My name is Wylder Moriarty. I am a freshman in Bayfield High School, and I like exploring and learning about the world I live in. These pictures were taken during the 2023 May Water Week, at Zaskakokwe-Ziibi (near Cornucopia) and Bwaan-Ziibi (In between Washburn and Bayfield). Here are my three image descriptions (from left to right): *Flowers In another Light* is a picture of a marsh marigold that was photoshopped to have a shifted hue. *Fairy Shrimp In A Hole* is an image I took of a dark hole under a river bank, that I later discovered while sorting through all of the photos I took that day. *Trout Fry With Leaf* is a picture of a newly hatched trout fry swimming around a leaf.



WYLDER
MORIARTY

FAIRY SHRIMP HOLE



TROUT FRY WITH LEAF



ZIBAASKOBIJIDE (SETTING A NET UNDER ICE)

CARL BUTTERFIELD

MASHKODE-BIZHIKI-WIIKWED
(BUFFALO BAY)



I like going into the water. When I'm near water, I feel happier. I like taking pictures, I just like being outside.

I like looking at the pictures from under the water because I could see things I don't usually see. When I put the camera under the water and start clicking, I don't know what the pictures will look like until I look at them on the computer. Like this picture. This is a running board we used to help us set fishing nets under the ice on Lake Superior. I like the way the ice looks - and the blackness of the hole. I really like looking at the grain in the board and the knot in the rope.

HUMAN STRUCTURES UNDER WATER



I like learning by doing. I struggle in a regular classroom. Sometimes, I don't think teachers understand how I think. I need to be able to move and talk while I figure things out. Some teachers don't like that. I think I am at my best when I am learning outside and doing things.

I know some people who go for a walk in the woods and just zone out. It's just them and nature. It helps them relax. It feels good. It helps them forget their pains and their problems. That's how I feel when I'm in the water. It's my safe place. I hope everyone has something that does that for them.

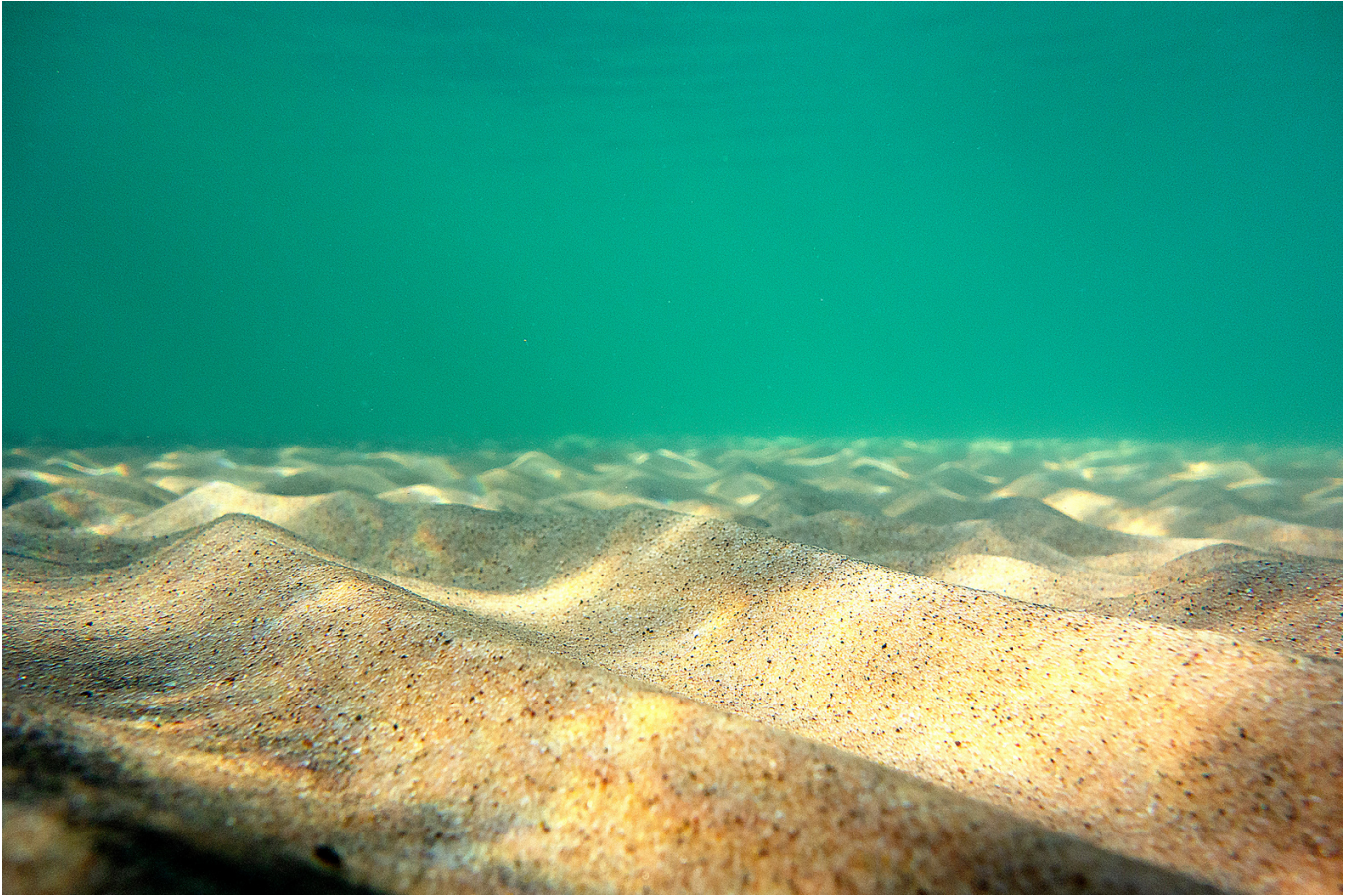


COLEMAN KENT



DEEP DUNES

GAA-GIISHKIDAAWANGAA-WIIKWEDONG / LITTLE SAND BAY



SERENITY

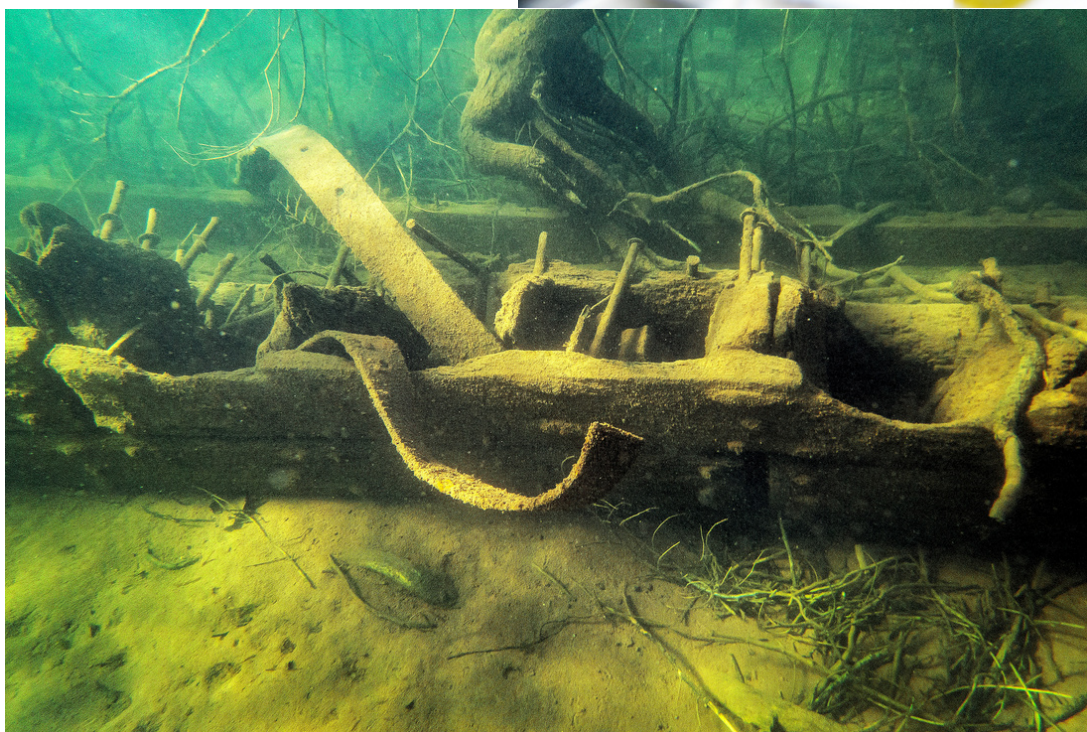
MAWIKWE (MEYER'S BEACH CAVE)



SEREN JOYNER
2022 BAYFIELD GRADUATE



VICTORIA
KAHITE



CARL
BUTTERFIELD

JOSH
LOZANO





GRAY
HALFADAY

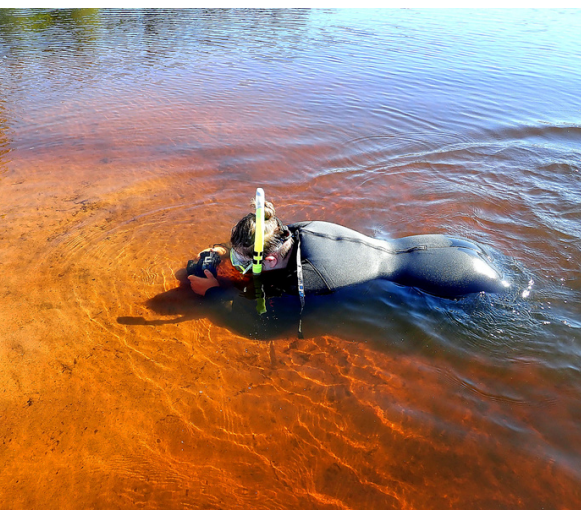
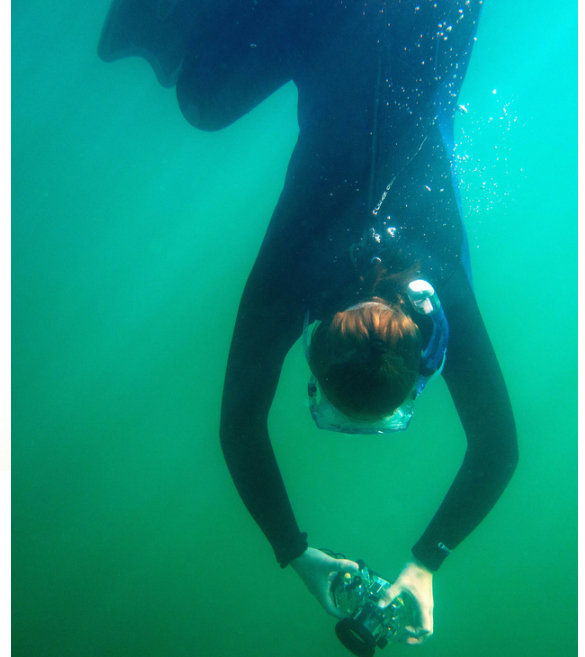
VENNESSA
GORDON



WREN
ZIFKO

ZAAGA'IGAN MA'IINGANAG (LAKEWOLVES)

ON THE HUNT



THOUGHTS FROM THE TEACHERS



My own passion for learning was ignited by the experiential and place-based components of my formal and informal education - engaging with my surroundings and trying to make sense of observations and patterns. Now, as an educator, I focus on facilitating that type of learning.

It is no secret that we are likely to learn best when lessons are relevant to our lives and experiences - when we feel a connection to what we are learning. Zaaga'igan Ma'iinganag (ZM) models this tenet as students are encouraged to intimately engage with their "place."

Our students grow up on the shores of one of the world's greatest lakes, yet, for many, the ability to access that resource is limited. ZM provides an opportunity to bridge that limitation. ZM safely equips our students with the tools necessary to explore the Lake Superior waters and tributaries.

ZM has ignited the curiosity and sense of wonder in many of our students as well as grow their confidence and sense of belonging. The student images and action shots in this publication provide anecdotal evidence. And, I am thrilled to be part it.

Rick Erickson teaches at Bayfield High School. He was selected as 2014 Wisconsin High School Teacher of the Year and 2017 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science and Teaching.

The water here is Sacred. Whether you live here, or just come for a visit, everyone goes to the water when they're here. Being in Lake Superior and its surrounding rivers and streams, gives people a sense of renewal. Lake Wolves offers students who call these waters home a chance to discover their backyards in a unique way. To see and capture the natural world from new vantage points. To immerse themselves in the water and also the present moment. To be able to play, to be creative, to ask questions, to experience the water's offer of discovery and renewal in a deeper way than perhaps they ever have before. Lake Wolves gives youth a chance to see what they're capable of and to develop their own creative lens. It is from this point that they go forward with added meaning to their relationship with water, with their backyards, with the creative process, and empowered to be stewards of the water for seven generations to come. At Lake Wolves, it all starts with a camera, and a willingness to go see what's out there.

Travis Patterson is a para-professional who works in the Bayfield High School Alternative Education Program.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Zaaga'igan Ma'iinganag would not be possible without the collaborative assistance of many individuals and organizations.

Chi miigwech - a big thank you to the following....and many others who have contributed along the way.

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