



# Skitkemig Nutacomit

Earth Speaker

## Fiddleheads and Fishing



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It's hard to believe that Spring is just around the corner already. Soon we'll be busy with the traditions associated with Spring. As the snow and ice retreat the fiddleheads will begin to emerge and the frenzy will begin.

*Wild Harvest* located on the world wide web at [www.wildharvest.com](http://www.wildharvest.com) describes fiddleheads as follows:

*"Tiny gray-green spirals reaching into the first really warm days of Spring. Each of them wearing their own little fur overcoat to protect them when it was chillier weather. Snapped up and eaten by whoever has the sense and taste to do it."*

Fiddleheads and trout, what more could you ask for on a crisp Spring evening?



## HBMI Landscaping Project

Through funding from the Maine Forest Service and HBMI's Housing Authority, there will be a great deal of landscaping done around the houses on the reservation this Spring.

This will be a great opportunity for tribal members to get out and help beautify their surroundings. As part of the project we'll be putting on a supper, complete with door prizes, to explain the project and get folks fired up and ready to plant. On the actual planting day, we'll be providing all the necessary materials for planting plus there will be a big barbecue for all participants.

Each household will be asked to participate in planting. If you're not

able to do the physical work of planting there's plenty of other things to help out with, such as the barbecue.

Each residence will be given a garden hose and will be asked to help with watering the trees and shrubs through the summer and fall to help them get established.

This project should be a lot of fun and will enable us to all work together and beautify the housing area.

Keep your eyes open for more information as the date nears. For more info call Sue 532-4273 ext. 202



### Telephone Listing

(207) 532-4273

1-800-564-8524 (ME)

1-800-545-8524

- Christel Haley - ext 216
- Dave Joseph - ext 216
- Tony Tomah - ext 221
- Sharri Venno - ext 215
- Sue Young - ext 202

## Pollution Prevention & Environmental Justice Grants

HBMI has been awarded funding from HUD to build another 35 housing units on tribal land. We don't want to miss this opportunity to incorporate lessons from the current housing development and create a new kind of community, one that takes into account the Tribe's cultural needs and minimizes the impact of development on the environment.

The Band sought funding from an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Grant to help us create an environmentally friendly residential community. We also found money to involve tribal members, especially those who will live in the new community, in the design and construction of the community. Through hands-on participation in the project, tribal members will have the opportunity to receive training in one or more environmentally sustainable construction techniques and a sense of ownership in and commitment to the success of the project.

Trust lands are a limited resource for the tribe that cannot be moved away from environmental threats. By adopting the environmental principles proposed by these projects you will help to ensure

the health of the environment for future generations.

Here's a few of the benefits of an environmentally friendly community :

- Reduced construction costs by using local and sustainable resources
- Incorporating low flow water technology reduces the costs of running a home in addition to reducing the amount of wastewater generated
- Using energy efficiently will generate not only lower home operating costs, it will conserve our natural resources and reduce emissions
- By clustering homes in a traditional village design we can conserve open space, reduce infrastructure costs and help maintain a sense of community

### Get Involved!

A Steering Committee is being formed to oversee these grants. The committee will consist of people from the Maliseet Housing Authority, Tribal Administration, Tribal Council, Natural Resources, Planning and **Two Community Members** to be selected by the Tribal Council. For more information contact Sharri Venno, extension 215.



## Environmental Calendar

### April

15th - 22nd National Wildlife Week  
18 Full Moon (Hare Moon)  
21 Lyrid Meteor Shower  
22 Earth Day  
26 National Bird Day  
28 National Arbor Day

### May

4 Eta Aquarid Meteor Shower  
15 - 19 Maine Arbor Day  
18 Full Moon (Dyad Moon)

### June

5 World Environment Day  
16 Full Moon (Mead Moon)



## Maliseet Spring

The Maliseet language is full of words describing Spring. Here's just a few, how many do you know?

**Paskipokesson** - It is budding  
**Macekon**—Its starting to grow  
**Pomicuwon** - It is flowing  
**Pesqahsuwehsok** - Flower  
**Ktahqhomuhsis** - Blue violet  
**Kosqehsuhsis** - White violet  
**Apuwiye** - It is melting  
**Skonimin** - Seed  
**Kihkan** - A garden  
**Sispsis** - A bird  
**Wososs** - A nest  
**Sipuhsis** - A brook



## *What the Meduxnekeag River means to me . . .*

Sounds like an essay question for school doesn't it? Well in some ways it is. A couple months back, we sent out a letter asking you to help us explain the importance of the river to the Maliseet people.

Why do we want to know this? We want to ensure that the federal government understands all the implications surrounding any decisions they make regarding the Meduxnekeag River, (or any other body of water that is important to Band members) as they implement the Clean Water Act.

The information that we gather from you will help to inform various government agencies of your

concerns regarding water quality and the proposed transfer of authority from the federal government to the State of Maine. We'd also like to put together a collection of stories regarding the past, present and future of the river in a cultural context.

If you'd like to voice your comments and concerns regarding the river, please contact Christel Haley (ext. 216) as soon as possible.

Thanks for your help. We look forward to hearing from you!



### *Upcoming Training Real Estate Dept.*

From April 16th to the 23rd, Tony Tomah will be attending two certification trainings on Federal Indian Lands. The courses cover General Leasing of Tribal Lands and Lease Compliance. Once these courses are successfully completed, Tony will possess a Level I certification as a Federal Indian Land Associate.

### *Natural Resources / Real Estate*

An upcoming two day training session in Old Town will give our Natural Resources / Real Estate staff the opportunity to get some hands on GPS training. The department is fortunate to have GPS/GIS technology available and this training will help us to use this technology to it's full potential.

*Remember -  
Everyday is Earth Day!*

### *Tribal Survey*

A survey will be circulating sometime this summer asking tribal members to provide the Natural Resources Department with your thoughts and feelings on tribal values as they relate to land acquisition, natural resources and their management. The survey is part of a grant funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the benefit of both HBMI and the Aroostook Band of Micmacs.



### *A fond farewell,*

Angie Reed, Water Resources Specialist, has taken a position with the River Network. She's working on water quality issues with tribes all around the country.

Dan Jacobs, Forester/Environmental Specialist has accepted a position with the Maine Forest Service in Island Falls.

Please join us in  
wishing them the best.

## *Summer Intern Positions Announced*

The Natural Resource Department is currently accepting applications for the Water Resources Summer Intern Program.

We are looking for tribal members who would like to work in the outdoors and learn more about protecting and managing the tribe's natural resources. These are temporary positions for the Summer of 2000.

Some of the projects the Water Technicians took part in last year included: monitoring dissolved oxygen levels in the river, placing and collecting rock bags and baskets to collect insects to help evaluate the health of the river, and then on to the lab to begin evaluating the information collected.

These positions are a great chance to take part in protecting and enhancing your surroundings for today and tomorrow.

Please watch your mail for the official job announcements. For more information on these positions or to obtain an application, please contact Personnel Director, Cindy Marriam at 532-4273 ext. 214 or Sue Young at ext. 202



### *Emergency Forest Fire Training*

Next training scheduled for  
Saturday May 6, 2000  
Katahdin High School

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## HBMI Natural Resources Department

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# Nature's Notebook

## White Birch (*Betula papyrifera*)

Also called canoe birch or paper birch, its red-brown saplings don't develop the paper white bark for their first decade or so. Although it grows best in moist bottomland openings near streams lakes and ponds, it is adaptable to dry, sandy soils. A fast growing tree, white birch can grow from 50 to 80 feet tall and 1 to 3 feet around. The tree is relatively short-lived (60 to 80 years).



Birch bark and buds are browsed by partridge, snowshoe hare, porcupine, white-tailed deer, or moose. Black capped chickadees, common redpolls, pine siskins and fox sparrows feed on birch catkins. Black-throated green warblers use birch bark strips for exterior nest construction.

Probably no tree serves the northern Native American tribes in so many ways as white birch. It has provided sugar in the form of sap, transportation through the use of bark for canoes, medicine for stomach upsets, and dyes from the root. The Chippewas, among others, regard the tree as sacred, strongly associated with the legendary teacher-deity-trickster figure Winabojó, who blessed the tree for the benefit of humanity. Old branch scars on the trunks are Winabojó's "thunderbirds."

The light, water proof bark is a basic raw material for a host of domestic items, including decay-proof plates and baskets, utensils, matting for covering wigwams, torches, scrolls for ritual ceremonies, and reliable tinder in the wettest weather. Except for the extensive bark sheets needed for canoes, the removal of bark does not kill the tree, although it weakens the tree making it susceptible to insects and disease. When birch bark canoe building was common, tribes established shady, level areas as regular boat yards, where generations of canoe builders worked. The prime practitioners of the making of birchbark canoes were the Maliseet Indians of Maine and New Brunswick, whose chosen range corresponded to that of the biggest and best of the canoe birches. Their vessels, generally ten to twenty feet long, were sheathed with cedar planks, sealed with spruce pitch and decorated with porcupine quills.

For a canoe, a tree is felled, usually in spring, when the bark is heaviest and strongest. Builders make a lengthwise cut along the trunk, then pry off the bark. This sheet is stretched around a frame of white cedar, sewn with roots of black spruce, eastern tamarack, or jack pine and sealed with spruce pitch. Birchbark canoes are extremely durable due to their lightness and flexibility. Long-downed birch trees in a forest often reveal the wood rotting inside the dry still-intact bark.

The inner bark of white birch is edible as emergency food. A tea made of twigs and young leaves can be used for its medicinal purposes. White birch produces excellent sap for making syrup, though not in the quantity or sweetness of sugar maple.

Modern commercial uses of white birch involve only the wood from which small items like handles, dowels, and spools are manufactured. It is also increasingly used as pulpwood and makes an excellent firewood.

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**Sources:**

*Dwellely, Marilyn J.; Trees and Shrubs of New England, 1980, Down East Books, Camden, ME*

*Eastman, John; Forest and Thicket, 1992 Stackpole Books, Mechanicsville, PA*

*Grim, William Carey; The Illustrated Book of Trees, 1983 Stackpole Books, Mechanicsville, PA*

*Rupp, Rebecca; Red Oaks and Black Birches, 1990 Storey Communications Inc., Pownal VT*

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# Nature's Notebook

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## Yellow Birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*)

Its common name derives from the yellow fall leaf display. These leaves are also slightly aromatic. The bark is a distinctive shiny yellowish-silver gray peeling in small ragged curls. One of the largest of the eastern hardwoods, it usually grows from 60 to 80 feet high, occasionally reaching 100 feet and has a trunk diameter of 2 to 4 feet. While the yellow birch is tolerant of a wide range of soil and shade conditions, it requires bare ground or a stump to sprout. It will not germinate in leaf litter. Large seed crops produced every three years or so sometimes generate a dense carpet of seedlings. Few survive however, as they crowd each other out and are eaten by browsing mammals.



For example, yellow birch seedlings are preferred browse for white-tailed deer. Mature yellow birches are sometimes used as nesting sites by red-shouldered hawks. Seed catkins, which often stay on the tree, provide an important food source for resident birds. During the winter partridges use the buds for food. Yellow birch bark is eaten by snowshoe hare and beaver.

The bark of the yellow birch is highly combustible in any weather and can be used as kindling to start fires. Its twigs have the odor and flavor of wintergreen. Steeped in hot water, the twigs make a refreshing tea that is well-known to Native Americans.

The wood is heavy, hard, strong and close grained; some woodworkers compare it to maple. Yellow birch lumber is widely used for furniture and high quality veneer. It is also excellent firewood.

### Sources:

*Dwelley, Marilyn J.; Trees and Shrubs of New England, 1980, Down East Books, Camden, ME*

*Eastman, John; Forest and Thicket, 1992 Stackpole Books, Mechanicsville, PA*

*Grim, William Carey; The Illustrated Book of Trees, 1983 Stackpole Books, Mechanicsville, PA*

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# Nature's Notebook

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## Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*)

Is well-named as it has red flowers and new leaves in spring, red twigs and leafstalks in summer, red leaves in the fall, and red buds in the winter. One of the first trees to blossom in the spring, it also provides a beautiful display of fall foliage. Weather and the acidity in the soil produce varying degrees of redness—the more acid the soil, the deeper the red. Most trees that turn red in autumn are males; females tend to turn yellow-orange. Red maple is the most successful and abundant species in the Eastern Hardwood Forest. A rapidly growing tree typically found in swamps and poorly drained places, it can tolerate a wide variety of site conditions and is often found in a variety of drier habitats. Red maples reproduce from seeds, stump and root sprouts. Red maple frequently follows poplar into abandoned farmland, logged and burned over areas. Thus its numbers have increased rapidly since European settlement. Trees grow occasionally up to 100 feet high with a trunk up to 3 feet around achieving maturity at about 70 to 80 years.



Red maple is a preferred food for white-tailed deer who browse on twigs, leaves, and sprouts. Moose feed on strips of bark they scrape from the tree. Porcupines and mice leave gnawed patches from bark feeding in winter. Maple seeds are eaten extensively by wildlife, predominantly songbirds (red breasted nuthatches, purple finches, grosbeaks), squirrels, and white-footed and deer mice. Beaver and snowshoe hare also feed on maple trees. The sap is lower in sugar content than sugar maple, but it is also used in making maple syrup.

Historical accounts of the sugar-making process in American Indian cultures describe the following process. Tapping methods consisted mostly of slashing the bark with a tomahawk. Sap was collected in buckets or pans made of birch bark stitched together with spruce roots and set beneath the dripping gash. The collected sap was often simply allowed to freeze and the ice sheets thrown away, leaving behind a concentrated brown sugar syrup. In the alternative and more difficult procedure, the sap - collected and pooled in hundred-gallon mooseskin vats - was boiled down in troughs made of hollowed-out logs, by repeatedly dropping in hot rocks to maintain temperature. Finished syrup was used as a seasoning, a dip, or mixed generously with pulverized corn and bear fat as a main course. The Iroquois of New York used to take maple syrup along on journeys as trail food, ingeniously stored in the shells of quail or duck eggs.

*Sources:*

*Dwellely, Marilyn J.; Trees and Shrubs of New England, 1980, Down East Books, Camden, ME*

*Eastman, John; Forest and Thicket, 1992 Stackpole Books, Mechanicsville, PA*

*Grim, William Carey; The Illustrated Book of Trees, 1983 Stackpole Books, Mechanicsville, PA*

*Rupp, Rebecca; Red Oaks and Black Birches, 1990 Storey Communications Inc., Pownal VT*

## Tree Care and Maintenance Tips



**Water is the critical factor for tree survival after planting.** Deep water your trees regularly throughout the first growing season and for five years after planting. Allow water to run slowly, once or twice a week around the edge of the planting site to encourage lateral root development.



**Keep lawn mowers and string trimmers away from the trees to avoid wounding the trunk.**



**Never fertilize stressed trees or during the first growing season.** If absolutely necessary, apply fertilizer around the edge of the planting site to encourage lateral root development.



**Inspect your trees annually to head off problems while the tree is still young.**



**Replace mulch as needed to keep grass and weeds from competing with the tree for water and nutrients.**



**Remove stakes and strapping after the first growing season unless the site is extremely windy.** Inspect strapping to ensure that it is not interfering with growth or girdling the stem. Do not stake for longer than two years.



**Prune dead or injured branches immediately because insects and disease may enter these areas and severely restrict growth or kill the tree.** Pruning should begin after the second growing season to maintain the size and shape of the tree. **Do not top trees to reduce height.**



**Do not plant flowers or cultivate the soil under your trees** as these plants compete for the same water and nutrients required by the tree or root development may be limited by cultivation.



**Call an insured tree care professional for advice on large pruning jobs, hazard trees, and insect or disease problems.** Never prune trees near utility wires, leave that to the tree care professional.

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Source:

Reynolds, M. K. and H. S. Ossenbruggen; *Planting Trees in Designed and Built Community Landscape Checklists for Success*, 1998, USFS State and Private Forestry, Northeastern Area, Durham, NH.