*Date*: March 11th, 2010

*Time Spent*: 4 hours (2pm-6pm)

*Program:* Enfield Elementary

Today was my first day working with Primitive Pursuits at the Enfield Elementary School program. I was very nervous because I had no idea what to expect. I just knew that I had to meet the two instructors—Beth and Akiva—at the Greenstar Market downtown at 1:45 in order to carpool to the Enfield location. Once I met up with Beth and Akiva we drove to the Elementary school and met the first group of kids. There are two separate groups which come on Thursdays—the first is composed of 5th graders and runs from 2pm-4pm and the second group is full of 6th and 7th graders which runs from 4pm-6pm). As Beth went in to gather the kids and bring them outside I went with Akiva to the woods to tap a sugar maple tree. We tapped the tree to collect the maple sap so that we could drink some with the kids later on. I was most nervous about whether the kids would like me or not but I quickly found out that it was very easy to get to know them and they liked me a lot. We then took the kids on a hike out to the woods where we played a bunch of introduction warm-up games. The children were very interested in going to see the creek which was rushing with water because of all the snow melt and spring thawing of the frozen ground. We then had the kids carve sticks which would function doubly as throwing sticks and digging sticks. Once the kids had carved their sticks we played a group game where we threw the sticks at targets and got different amounts of points for hitting certain targets (targets were hypothetical animals which they would be trying to hunt in a survival situation).

Since the second group was older and slightly more mature we were able to do multiple activities at one time. At first Beth, Akiva, and I were all helping to monitor the kids carving and teaching them about knife safety. Then Beth told me to help another small group of kids make a fire so that we could make tea. Here I felt a lot of responsibility and independence which was very cool. I helped them made a fire and as soon as we had flames the kids wanted to put the pot of water on to heat up. I taught them that we had to wait until the flames died down and there were hot coals remaining as that is what is best to cook over, not the flames themselves. While the flames were dying down to hot coals I helped the kids gather white pine needles to put in the water to make pine tea. I learned all of these things about carving, fire-making and cooking in Environmental Sentinels and it was awesome to be able to teach it and actually do it with the kids. It was a beautiful day and the time went by fast. The best feeling was at the end when one of the kids eagerly asked me “Stephen will you be here next week??”

*Date:* March 13th, 2010

*Time Spent:* 5 hours (9am-2pm)

*Program:* EcoVillage day event

I was much more excited at the beginning of this day because I knew it would be similar to my previous day at Enfield which ended up going so well. There were two other instructors in my group of 10 kids—and one was Akiva who I met at the Enfield program. In addition Gigi drove me so I already knew two people there which made me much less worried. I had a lot of fun on this day because these kids all really, really wanted to be there (as opposed to the Enfield program where they were randomly signed up by the school). I was surprised at how much these kids knew about nature already. My responsibility was immediately tested when one of the kids got poked by a branch in the eye. Akiva and the other instructor both had their hands full and needed to stay with the group, so he asked me to take Shay back and find his parents. I was glad I had been paying close attention to our location while we had been walking through the woods and I was easily able to find our way out. Shay lived in EcoVillage so we went to his house where he got a little ice to put on his eye and he said he felt all better. We walked back into the woods and met up with the group. We played big group games, built a big fire (as it was pretty cold and the kids had to stay warm), carved, and practiced building shelters. Along the way I was needed to help the kids find the right types of sticks or other materials that were needed to build the fire and their shelters and teaching them where to find these materials. At another point in the day Akiva needed a jug of water for making hot cocoa over the fire. Me being there helped him out a lot because I took care of many logistical things (taking Shay back to his house, going back to get water—when I came back Akiva said “dude you’re my hero right now”, constantly tending the fire, and helping him by being able to help groups of kids who needed it while he was busy with other kids). My help allowed him to be able to organize the kids and teach the main lessons without having to do all that other stuff at the same time. Also more of the kids got personal attention by having me as another instructor.

I learned a lot from watching the other two instructors teach the kids and observed a lot about how they handled certain situations, how they answered questions, etc. Akiva thanked me at the end of the day and said I was a tremendous help. It felt good to know that I was really helping the instructors, teaching the kids, learning new things from both the kids and instructors, and having fun all at the same time.

*Date*: March 25th, 2010

*Time Spent:* 2 hours (2-4pm)

*Program:* Enfield Program

Today went really well, but it was also different from my first day at Enfield in a few ways. For one, the group of kids was different and they were all of a younger age. This was interesting to experience because kids of only slightly different ages have very different needs and have the physical ability to do very different activities. Today was very overcast and it began to rain. The presence of the rain was actually a good thing because it gave us the opportunity to give the kids the challenge of building a fire when things are wet. The kids were all very enthusiastic about trying to build a fire and successfully did so. Once the fire was built we sat around it to stay warm and one of the other instructors, Akiva, told a story for the kids about a hiking adventure he had in the Rockies. I learned a lot just from watching how the other instructors interact with the kids, how they answer their questions, how they keep them entertained and happy, and also how to keep the kids focused on an activity. Much of this is accomplished by turning activities into game-like situations, or by creating some kind of ultimate goal or reward to reward them for their success.

The theme for the day was eatable plants. As we were walking through the woods at the beginning of the day, Akiva would stop whenever he found a patch of easily recognizable eatable plants, and would explain all about the plant to the kids. This area is something that I know very little about, so I was learning just as much as the kids were. We showed the kids two types of eatable plants today: Wild garlic-mustard, and Colts foot. These plants have essential vitamins that would greatly enhance one’s ability to survive in the wild—plus everyone got to pick their own and try some.

*Date:* April 1st, 2010

*Time Spent:* 2.5 hours (2-4:30pm)

*Program*: Enfield Program

Today’s weather was amazing—sunny and in the mid 70s. The nice weather had the kids in very excited moods and they were eager to run around outside after being in school all day long. The enthusiasm was great, and it also gave an example of how a program’s activities must sometimes be changed to fit what the kids want, even if it is against the original plan that the instructors had planned. Since the weather was so beautiful for the first time in so long, and the kids had a great deal of pent up energy, they wanted to play around the edges of a stream rather than continue hiking. To adapt to this the instructors allowed everybody to play by the stream and wade in the water for a long time. We played fun group games and the kids had a lot of fun. Obviously there was no need to build a fire, but we continued our theme from last week of finding eatable plants. This week we showed the kids one new kind of eatable plant: trout lily’s. As with last week the kids all got to pick their own plants and try eating them.

*Date*: (Week of March 29th)

*Time Spent*: 1 hour

*Event*: First meeting about group project

Today we met to begin planning out our final project. We brainstormed ideas and decided on holding an event that will consist of similar activities done in the Environmental Sentinels class. Many students have expressed a strong liking for Sentinels and many say they wish they could take it again. With knowledge of this general attitude toward the class, its teachings, and its activities, we thought that it may be possible to form a Sentinels type of student club. As our brainstorming continued we decided that hosting an event would give people a flavor as to what a future club could be like. Our goal is to hold this event and gage how much interest there is in the event. Hearing genuine feedback from participants will be huge. If many students respond well to the event then we can go from there and possibly start an Environmental Sentinels student club next year.

**Total Hours to Date (3/11 - 4 /1): 14.5**

*Date:* April 11th, 2010

*Time Spent:* 2 hours

*Event:* Second group planning session for project

Today we made a lot of progress in our planning. We finalized the specifics of the event such as the activities that we will do and who will be the primary person running each activity. We have decided to bring the technology aspect into our activities. We chose activities that we can relate back to the idea of primitive technologies. Some of these activities include: rock pastels, shelter building, demonstrating a sun compass, a sense of direction hike, and a guided sense meditation. Each activity stresses the importance of being aware of your surroundings at all times and applying all senses, rather than relying too much on vision alone. On the day of our event we also want to stress seeing nature as full of resources which, with the right knowledge, can be very useful. For time in between the major activities we have planned a series of fun games and short stories. The games will be mostly to get people into the right mood and break the ice so to speak. One of our stories will be a version of the origins of Primitive Pursuits as an organization. It was interesting that everyone in the group was bringing ideas to the table that we had each learned in our individual weekly programs or in our different sections of the Sentinels class. I really like the cumulative aspect of our work together and how everyone is working well together. At the end of today we decided to meet in the next few days to do a practice run through of the event.

*Date:* April 14th, 2010

*Time Spent:* 1.5 hours

*Event:* Event run-though/practice

Today we met to practice running through the event. This was helpful in a variety of ways especially smoothing out the logistics of everything. We physically walked to all the locations along the route that we will take the group on the day of the event. We finalized who is going to run/introduce each section or activity. My activity to run is the shelter section. We will each have to work individually on what we are going to speak about for our individual section. As we followed our route and itinerary each of us practiced roughly how we would speak if it were the day of the event. This run through was very helpful and seemed to move our project along a great deal. We will do multiple more run-throughs before the event itself on Sunday May 2nd.

*Date:* April 22nd, 2010

*Time Spent:* 2 hours (2-4pm)

*Event:* Enfield Program

Today was the final day of the Enfield program. Today there was an abundance of vegetation growing on the ground in the forest. At this point the kids had learned many plants such as Spring beauty, May apple, colt’s foot, garlic-mustard, wild leeks, trout lilies, and more. Each previous week in the program we have taught the kids more and more eatable plants which grow in the local woods. This week was the final culmination of what they have learned. Their knowledge about all of these different plants and their ability to identify them were shown and further reinforced through a group game. The group was divided so that each instructor had about 5 kids. Each group went out in search mainly for the eatable plant that they were assigned but also for other eatable plants with good flavor that they happened to see along the way. My group was in charge of getting the garlic mustard. We found a big patch of it and everybody collected some. Garlic mustard is very easy to identify due to its intense smell and taste. The kids had by now learned that it is better to eat the younger plants and also that the tops of garlic mustard are the best.

Once the groups came back to the central camp site with the various collections of plants, we showed the kids how to use a smooth grinding rock to mash up the plants really well. Once the plants had been chopped up and smashed into a fine consistency, one of the instructors added some oil he had brought and salt. This was mixed together and put on crackers—wild pesto. The kids enjoyed this greatly and it actually tasted very good. It was awesome to see that the kids were able to retain their knowledge of the past few weeks and apply it to actually make something on their own that they could eat.

**Total Hours Spent to Date (–4/23): 20.5 Hours**