

8. CONK FUNGUS

- * Have you noticed all the hoof shaped growths on the trees?

- * In standing trees, the presence of conks makes



- it more difficult to determine tree quality. A tree with conks contains masses of rotten wood or is hollow where the rotten wood has disintegrated.

- * This fungus can be used as a tinder start fires.

9. THE FOREST SINGS

- * Activity time! Now that you have immersed yourself into the forest take a minute to stand very still and listen to all the birds and noise around you. While you listen try to count all the different sounds you hear.

- * MMPP has approximately 175 different bird species!

10. BE CAREFUL!

- * Have you noticed the plant along the trail that is shown in the picture? It could be Cow Parsnip or Water Hemlock, they look very similar. The only difference is Water Hemlock, when consumed, is deathly poisonous.

- * Other plants to watch for are poison ivy and stinging nettle that can leave an uncomfortable rash on your skin.

- * Do not eat those small whitish green berries you see. Those are Snowberries or also called Ghostberries. Although they are an important food



Cow Parsnip

- source for quails, pheasants and grouse in the winter, they can make people sick.

11. ALL THAT WATER

- * MMPP has thousands of lakes which makes it difficult to get around in the back country.

- * 80% of MMPP is back country.

- * You never know if you will find a fish in one of the creeks. Fish will travel very far upstream to spawn. Fish can also be dropped by birds into other water.

12. BEAVERS



- * In 1942 two beavers were introduced into the park It did not take long for them to multiply into our now estimated 6000 beavers.

- * Beavers favourite trees are the Trembling Aspen which we have many of. They eat the bark and

- use the rest of the tree for building their homes and dams.

- * Beavers can be destructive. Two beavers can take down a small forest in a year, but beavers can also be a positive thing for the forest.

- * They create an ecosystem by damming the water for many other insects, organisms, aquatic animals, ducks and birds.

- * Beavers also help in succession by removing trees for new ones to grow.

13. LAYERS OF THE FOREST

- * There are five important layers of the forest: 1. Forest floor 2. Herb layer 3. Shrub layer 4. Understory and 5. Canopy.

- * Activity time! Start by crouching down to the ground and observing what you see. Work your way up by looking straight up and think about the different animals you would find in all the layers of the forest!

14. YOU ARE LUCKY!

- * MMPP is a very unique and rare forest to be this far south.

- * The climate here is more moist and cool than the surrounding areas which supports the vegetation.

- * MMPP is like a forest island surrounded by cropland.

- * Continental ice sheets covered most of Saskatchewan several times during the Ice Age. The last of these put the finishing touches on the Moose Mountain Upland approximately twelve thousand years ago.



The green area is MMPP Google



MOOSE MOUNTAIN
PROVINCIAL PARK

Birch Forest Interpretive Trail

2.1km



Welcome to one of our beautiful trails! Look for the 14 stops along the way and read the corresponding information at each stop.

Do you have more questions? Call or visit the Visitor Centre!

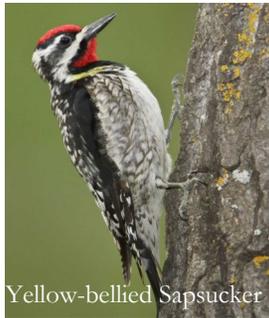
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1. SHRUB STORY

- * The shrub layer in Moose Mountain Provincial Park (MMPP) is very dense as you will notice if you look out into the trees at about eye level. Just imagine how difficult it would be to travel through there, especially for some of the large animals.
- * Shrubs play an important part of the forest community. Red squirrels harvest Hazelnuts, Blue Jays feed on berries, Coyotes and Red Fox supplement their diets with Saskatoons and Snowberries.
- * Shrubs provide protective corridors for moose, deer and elk. These animals travel through the forest to drink from the lake. The shrubs twigs and leaves they eat along the way are an important part of their diet.

2. WHAT IS THAT SOUND?

- * Listen for a knocking sound on the trees around.
- * Woodpeckers are a common sight around MMPP. In fact you could see eight different species of woodpeckers here.



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

- * The most common here is the Yellow Bellied Sapsucker. Others include (can be rare) the Three-toed Woodpecker, Black-backed Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker and the Red-headed Woodpecker.
- * Look on trees for rows of holes; this was left here by the Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers beak looking for sap and insects.
- * The sapwells made by Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers attract hummingbirds, which also feed off the sap flowing from the tree. In some parts of Canada, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds rely so much on sapwells that they time their spring migration with the arrival of sapsuckers. Other birds as well as bats and porcupines also visit sapsucker sapwells.

3. EDIBLE PLANTS, BERRIES, & NUTS

- * You should only eat things you can be absolutely sure you can identify.
- * Depending on the time of year you are hiking this trail, you may see a great amount of Raspberries, Saskatoon berries, Strawberries, Chokecherries and Dewberries!
- * Those small bright red berries that are low to the ground are likely a Low Bush Cranberry, they do not taste good on their own but they have been used in First Nations medicine.
- * There is also an abundance of Beaked Hazelnuts along this trail. They are delicious roasted!
- * Some of the edible plants include: Common Plantain, Wintergreen (five different types in Saskatchewan) and Dandelions!



4. FOREST FIRES & HARVESTING

- * The last natural forest fire in MMPP happened in 1897. A lot of the forest you see today is a result of that fire.
- * Forest fires play an important role in the succession of forests. Many trees need to see the sun to be able to grow.
- * Our forest is a stage 5 forest, meaning it consists of mostly old trees. These trees create a canopy for the rest of the forest blocking the sun from the new trees trying to grow.

5. OUR TREES

- * At this stop you are surrounded by many Green Ash and Trembling Aspen trees. The Green Ash has the dark, rough looking bark. It is a member of the Olive family, it reaches heights between 18 and 30 metres, with an approximate 16-18 metre spread.
- * The Trembling Aspen has the white bark with most of its leaves near the top of the tree, it is a part of the willow family and its name comes from the lightweight shiny leaves that tremble in even the gentlest wind.
- * Our other three native trees to the park are the White Birch, Balsam Poplar, and Manitoba Maple.
- * Paper Birch trees are the official tree of Saskatchewan.

6. BIRCH TREES

- * Many of the First Nations of North America prized the birch for its bark, which, due to its light weight, flexibility and the ease with which it could be stripped from fallen trees, was often used for the construction of strong, waterproof but lightweight canoes, bowls & paper. Many First Nations groups also created pieces of art by biting designs into the soft bark (called birch bark bitings).
- * Birch syrup is made from the sap of Birch trees. Since sugar was scarce, many First Nations groups made both maple and birch syrup to satisfy their sweet tooth!
- * Birch flour can be made by grinding up the inner bark, to be used for biscuits or bannock.
- * Birch leaves can be steeped as tea, and help lower blood pressure.
- * Birch bark can be soaked in water until moist and then formed into a cast for a broken arm.

7. WHO WAS HERE?

- * With the great variety of wildlife in this forest you never know what tracks you will see on the forest floor! Keep your eyes peeled for tracks or signs that an animal was in the area.
- * We have three wild ungulates here, moose, deer and elk. Ungulate means a hoofed animal.
- * Not only do we look on the ground for tracks we can look on trees for signs that an animal was near. The area between the forehead and antlers of a deer contains a large number of apocrine sweat glands, and leave a scent that communicates a challenge to other male deer while also attracting potential mates. Elk and moose also rub their antlers but mostly to remove their velvet.



Cougar - Deer - Wolf /Coyote - Bear - Elk - Moose