

# Nature Week at Heritage Village - April 12th

## THREE FOUND WOUNDED AT HERITAGE VILLAGE

### Culprit sunburn

Three 10-year olds were found wounded this week at Heritage Village. Their wounds are serious and could prove fatal according to Bill Cook, Eastern UP Forester.

More than a century ago Charles and Ella Stimpson planted a row of maple trees on each side of the farm lane that is today Stimpson Road. Kurt Grebe, President of the Historical Society ten years ago, oversaw the planting of 61 maple trees along the entry of Heritage Village to replicate that lane. These young trees survived drought the first summer, burrowing rodents during the winters, and insect born diseases. The last hard winter did the damage.

The perpetrator is sunburn also known as sunscald. Again according to Bill: "Thin-barked trees, usually hardwoods, exposed to both direct and reflected sunlight can experience bark temperatures into the 70 degree range even though the air temperature is below freezing. If water moves into the warm, under-bark tissues, the tree are vulnerable to rapid freezing and tissue death. As the sun sets bark surface temperatures can drop too fast for the tissues to react. Ice crystals form inside cells, burst the cell walls, and tissues die. In the spring, the tissues dry-out and then crack, usually on the south or southwest side of the tree." Maples are susceptible and three out of 61 have been sunburned, of all things, in the dark winter of Mackinaw.



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## Who Pooped in our Woods this week?

### Ruffed Grouse

You hear them as they fly off in a panic on your approach. The thumping base, like the sound of a teenager's car bouncing to the radio, enters your body and becomes an experience more than a sound. This is no song bird.

"More often than not, a grouse defecates in its night roosting site before leaving in the morning. Grouse scat comes in two forms, one a dry, fibrous cylindrical pellet with a white-wash of uric acid at one end, and the other a softer, darker brown plop. The vast majority of a grouse's diet (buds, twigs, leaves, catkins) goes directly through its digestive system and forms the dry, courser scat. Finer (and more nutritious) material such as the cambium layer of woody plants enters the caeca, two specialized pouches, before passing



YouTube



through the large intestine. The caeca contain bacteria which break down cellulose and produce the more digested, and therefore more liquefied, scat."\*

As the snow cover thins the grouse are nesting on the trail where this scat was found. It is on display at the Nature Center at Heritage Village.

\*by *NATURALLY CURIOUS WITH MARY HOLLAND*  
<https://naturallycuriouswithmaryholland.wordpress.com/2013/01/30/ruffed-grouse-roosts-and-scat/>



**MACKINAW  
NATURE  
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