



November - Week 3

Going with the Wind

“The wind that makes music in November comes in a hurry. The stalks hum, the loose husks whisk skyward in half playful swirls, and the wind hurries on.”*

In a poetic way, Aldo Leopold tells us that wind is merely air in motion. In Minnesota, the windiest months are the transition months in spring (March/April) and fall (October/November). This weather phenomenon is caused by uneven heating on the earth’s surface. From rocky ridges, to forests, to shoreline and lake surface, each physical aspect of Minnesota absorbs heat to a different degree.

In a science class you probably learned that warm air rises and cold air settles. During the day, air above land heats up faster than air above water. Warm air above land expands and rises, and heavier, cooler air rushes in to take its place, creating wind. At night, the winds are reversed because air cools more rapidly over land than it does over water. We can’t actually see the wind but we can certainly observe what the wind is doing. Describe several ways that you notice the wind right now.

In 1805, when wind was the power for his ship, Admiral Beaufort devised a scale to describe wind speed. Today, the scale has been revised to be usable to all of us. Check out the Beaufort Scale in the appendix of the Minnesota Weatherguide Environment Calendar and Almanac and use it to estimate the speed of the wind around you.

As you explore outdoors, observe how the wind changes speed or direction. While you walk along the lake shore, among the trees, between buildings, or out on the prairie, concentrate on the wind. In your journal, record the estimated wind speed and your evidence. If you are feeling creative write about where you would go and what you would do if you were the wind.

*Essay, “If I were the wind”, from *A Sand County Almanac*, by Aldo Leopold.



Whitecaps form at about 20 mph wind speed.