

Our Trip Takes Us

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By Becky Hirn

Through life I've learned some great lessons from a number of places – books, my parents, good friends, jobs, and even my own children. This week it was Mother Nature herself speaking to me.

We decided to make a three-day stop in lovely St. Croix County, Wisconsin, on the western edge of the state. Driving across the state we started seeing flashes of fall in the trees. Bits of red and orange were sticking out here and there in all the green. The amazing fall show was just getting started. Luckily, we are able to take it all in while motoring down the road. I tried to snap some photos, but just couldn't quite get the whole picture. The state's website, www.travelwisconsin.com reported the color change at 10-20 percent complete. The site also led us to a peaceful campground called Glen Hills Park, where we could catch even more of the autumn display.

After we got all hooked up at site 61, Carter convinced us to take a family hike. What a treat! At the bottom of a steep hill in the middle of the woods, we found the evening sun was just low enough to shimmer off the water of the huge Glen Lake. It was almost bright enough to be called blinding, but still just beautiful. Again, I tried to take a picture with my phone, but the bright light and the panoramic view were just too much for one shot.

Our second day there, I carved a little time out of our morning school routine to take a jog around the park. After running I like to sit and stretch in a reflective sort of place. So as I run, I search for that spot. At this park, I found just the spot early on. There was a small mound in the middle of a group of trees that had already started to turn. A blanket of yellow and orange leaves covered the mound.

After a couple laps through the campground, I went back to my spot. Sitting at the top of the mound, surrounded by the trees, I took a deep breath. While stretching I tried to let go of my muscle tension, and also my mind's tensions. I tried to release those worries and fears that naturally build up. In that quiet moment I began to notice the trees weren't really dropping the leaves. Instead the wind was gently blowing them down. Each time the wind blew, more leaves came floating down. Like old worries and fears, the leaves fell in piles around me. I thought of letting my own worn-out worries fly away in the autumn breeze.

Once I returned from my own "walk in the woods", I wrote a short story about trees, trying to capture that moment that Mother Nature gave me. I don't know if I got it all down exactly the way I want it. I'll keep trying to polish it.

The changing of the leaves, the sunlight on the water and the wind blowing in the trees all remind me of the power of nature and its ability to speak directly to people. Poets, musicians and artists try endlessly to capture that idea. And even though we all may agree a sunset on the beach is a beautiful thing, it

really is a personal experience. And that experience is difficult to take a picture of, to draw or write down on paper. It just has to be experienced firsthand.

Becky Hirn is a Delphos resident traveling America with her family for a year. She documents the journey at www.ourtriptakesus.com. Follow the Hirn family in photos, blogs, on Facebook and Twitter. Or learn how to partner with the trip as an advertiser. You may e-mail Becky at beckyhirn@ourtriptakesus.com