

Maple Syrup Season 2014 – Summary

report by

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Overview: This report documents the activities of the Saint John's Maple Syrup operation during the 2014 season. From a syrup perspective it was an above average year. From an educational and Benedictine perspective – it was an outstanding year!

Staff: Once again the leader of the operation was Br. Walter Kieffer, O.S.B. He was assisted by Core Crew members Gary Gillitzer, Jean Lavigne, Al Meier, William Mock, Stephen Saupe, and Dan Weber. Saint John's Outdoor University staff members – Sarah Gainey, Jenny Kutter, MJ Bach, Kate Delfs, and Tom Kroll – were also involved. Mr. Bill Ruhr, a new volunteer this year, invested a large amount of time in the operation and worked closely with the Core Crew. This year, for perhaps the first time ever, the Core Crew kept track of their work hours (**Table 4**). Incredibly, this group invested more than 565 hours in the operation (**Table 4**).

The Core Crew was assisted by nearly 200 volunteers including students, faculty, staff, and friends who collectively donated more than 885 hours to the operation (**Table 4**). These hours are self-reported by the volunteers who are requested to keep a record by signing our log book at the sugar shack or online. The motivation to keep track of hours is that volunteers are rewarded for their participation by receiving an amount of syrup proportional to how much time they donated and they are invited to an end-of-the-season party (*see below*).

Organizing a large crew can be a daunting task, but the Outdoor University staff does an amazing job. Sarah Gainey sends regular email updates to volunteers who have signed up to be on the distribution list. This year at least 25 updates were sent to the list. When Sarah was unable to send them, Jenny Kutter filled-in admirably. Not only were the daily updates informative alerting volunteers to upcoming activities, but in nearly every one Sarah included an interesting maple syrup tidbit/fun fact. She called these 'Sarah's Syrup Snippets' and they are summarized in **Table 7**.

The Outdoor University staff tried a new approach to organizing crew members – using a Doodle survey. It worked reasonably well, though for the most part the crew still makes decisions about upcoming work the night before and relies on old-fashioned telephone calls for communication. This is often necessary because it is often not easy to predict what needs to be done until the last minute.

Upgrades: There were a few upgrades to the operation this year. First, new pans were purchased for Little Larry. These pans are a major improvement over the previous ones because they allow the crew to easily drain them at the end of the day. This prevents ice from freezing within the pans and potentially damaging them. Another advantage is that these pans now make Little Larry nearly identical to Big Burnie which is ideal for teaching purposes. The pans were purchased from Anderson Maple Syrup and were delivered on April 2, 2014.

An additional syrup pan was also purchased for Big Burnie. This pan will serve as a backup in case one of the pans is accidentally burned. Also, it allows the Crew to swap pans on a regular basis (*every other firing*) to remove sugar sand that can accumulate and lead to burning.

Mr. Brian Jungels, Cold Spring (MN), donated to the operation a new bulk storage tank. It holds approximately 300 gallons. Br. Walter, Bill Mock and Dan Weber picked up the tank at the conclusion of the season. This will now give us enough storage capacity to handle most large sap flows. Br. Walter and crew are in the process of constructing a concrete pad to support all of the storage tanks. This was necessitated, in part, because a groundhog burrowed under one of the existing tanks. The pad, when complete, will allow all of our tanks to be plumbed in line.

Last summer, an AmeriCorp crew, led by Br. Walter, spent about three weeks on an assortment of projects including staining the wood shed and the sugar shack. In addition, they cut, split, and filled the shed full of three-foot wood.

Ideas to consider for future shack improvements include:

- (a) Finish the sign above the north doors;
- (b) make a plaque listing the syrup boss & crew members;
- (c) make a plaque listing the winners of our various awards (*Sweet Predictions & Sap*);
- (d) complete the paneling on the west wall;
- (e) build a structure to stabilize the bottler when it is full of syrup;
- (f) install more attractive fire screening around the wood stove;
- (g) construct a more attractive wood box or other structure to hold the wood, paper for burning in the wood stove;
- (h) include leaves, buds, etc., with the wood paneling display;
- (i) label all buckets with their purpose (*i.e.*, collecting pails; drip pails; filter cleaning pails and so on) which will serve to keep things tidy, prevent them from being used for other purposes so they remain where they are expected;
- (j) remove any items from the main shack that are not directly used in the syruping operation;
- (k) sort all the materials in the shack into well-labeled bins to keep materials tidy and functional so that multiple people working in the space know where things belong;
- (l) finish the area beneath the windows and around the window above the NW door;
- (m) remove all items in the rafters above the firing area and then finish this area – it would be especially attractive if the rafters could somehow be reoriented to allow more light from the window above to enter the shack;

- (n) build shelves or other system beneath the current maple jugging shelf to store the empty jugs waiting to be filled; and
- (o) attach to the outside of the shack a bracket and holder system for the propane tank.

Tapping: “Community Tapping Day” was held on March 15th from 2:00 – 5:00 PM. In the morning, the Core Crew and assorted volunteers gathered at the sugar shack to begin to begin organizing for the event. Tom and Sarah gave a demonstration on tapping to the Crew (**Fig. 1**).

The event was much like previous years. The Outdoor University staff did a great job organizing the event including refreshments and ‘crew’ buttons. Br. Walter opened the activities with a prayer and MJ Bach performed her maple syrup song. Participants were instructed on how to tap a tree and then helped assemble some bags.

Like last year, there were several tapping crews, each with an experienced leader, a tree measurer, a ‘tapper’ with portable drill and spare battery (**Fig. 3**), a ‘spile driver’ with a hammer and bucket of spiles (**Fig. 4**), a ‘runner’ who dropped a bag/holder/bucket beneath the tap hole, and a ‘hanger’ who hung the bag on the spile. Sugar maples trees were marked with paintballs by Outdoor University staff to make it easier for the crews to identify tappable trees.

This was the second year of our spile-size study. The western half of the sugarbush (*i.e.*, North Point, The Hollow) was tapped with 5/16ths spiles while the western half with 7/16ths taps, which is the reverse of last year (**Fig. 10**). Though the data are not yet analyzed, in 2013 there appeared to be no difference between sap yields, but in 2014 the 5/16ths taps showed a reduction. Depending on what the data show in the final analysis, we may continue this study for a third year in 2015.

By the end of the season we had installed 1493 (**Table 3**) – roughly two thirds were 7/16ths. We installed the majority of taps, about 900, on Tapping Day. We had intended to install about 1200 taps but all of our drills ran out of battery power. Br. Walter and helpers went out the following day(s) and tapped some additional trees. During the course of the season another 300 or so were installed by school groups, festival visitors and others.

Clean Up: We began to remove taps on April 22nd and were finished removing taps by April 25th. Both evaporators were disassembled and thoroughly cleaned. It took several days of hard-working volunteers to wash up all of the buckets and barrels. The assembly line process developed last year with prewashers, washers, rinsers, bleachers, and stackers made the process go quickly. The Core Crew truly appreciated the help of the volunteers (“*there is a special place in heaven for bucket washers*”).

Sap Production: Continuing the Saint John's tradition, we maintained our sap (**Fig. 5**) production records on a scrap board. The data from 2014 are summarized in **Tables 1 & 3**. In addition, data for all years are summarized in **Tables 5, 6 & 10**.

Like last year, this was a late season for sap flow (**Table 6, Fig. 23**). The first sap was collected nearly two weeks (1 April) later than average (20 March). Similarly, the last sap collected (22 April) was 11 days later than average (11 April).

Overall, the length of the sap season (21 days) was average. Typically, there are 22 days from the beginning of sap flow to the end (**Table 6**).

A total volume of 12,160 gallons of sap was collected. The largest daily sap collection during the season was 2,250 gallons. Based on the number of taps, it was an above average year for sap production. We collected 8.1 gallons per tap compared to an average of 7.3 (**Table 6**).

Syrup Production: Syrup production data were also recorded on a scrap board (**Fig. 6**). Based on these data we produced 351 jugs of syrup. Since we bottle into a mixture of various-sized containers (gallon, three-liter, four-liter, five-gallon pails), this equates to 317 gallons of syrup (**Table 8**). In other words, we produced 9.7% fewer gallons of syrup than the number of jugs that were bottled.

This is the first time in years that that we've kept track of the actual volume of syrup produced. Our previous records (**Table 6**) report the total syrup production as 'gallons' even though the count was actually 'jugs.' In a year that gallon containers were primarily used, the volume of syrup will equal the number of jugs. However in a year like this one in which the majority of jugs were three-liter bottles, the means that the syrup production data could be off by 10% or more. Since there is no way of knowing how many jugs of a given size were used in the past, past syrup data can only be considered approximations. In addition syrup is eaten at festivals, by volunteers and school groups which also lowers our statistics for the total amount of syrup produced.

In the future we plan to record both the number and size of the containers that we jug on our syrup record board. The only good news is that sap volumes should be accurate since these have always been measured using tanks graduated in gallons.

As stated, this year we made 317 gallons of syrup. We produced nearly a quart of syrup per tap (0.85) versus an average season yield of three-quarters of a quart per tap (**Table 6**). The sugar concentration averaged 2.24% which was average. This yielded a sap-to-syrup ratio of 38.4 which is above average (40.4).

One measure of our syruping success – or perhaps it's an indication of our lack of planning – is that we ran out of glass jugs into which we could bottle the syrup. Fortunately, we had lots of food-grade pails for the excess. This worked out especially well to supply Third Street Brewery with their syrup.

Sweet Predictions Award: Last year we began the tradition of predicting the amount of syrup we would produce. Fourteen people joined the competition (**Figure 7**). The outcome was in doubt until the very end of the season because there was controversy over how the winner

should be determined (nearest guess vs. nearest guess that doesn't go over like the "Price is Right") and whether it should be based on 'jugs' or 'gallons.' At the wrap-up meeting, the Core Crew voted that the winner should be based on actual gallons and the one who has the closest guess, whether or not the guess was higher than the final total. As a result, this year's winner of the Sweet Predictions Award was Br. Walter (**Figure 8**)!

Syrup Quality: The mark of a good operation is not the volume of syrup produced but the quality of the syrup. A high-quality syrup must be of the correct sugar density (concentration), be clear and free from sediment (sugar sand), and have no off-flavors. Syrup is also graded based on color (golden, amber, dark, very dark).

This year, samples were taken from nearly every bottling during the season and analyzed (**Fig 9 & Table 9**). Unfortunately we didn't remember to start the process until April 8th so we missed a few early samples.

Of the samples examined, we produced almost exclusively dark and very dark syrups. Only one of the syrups tested was amber. Unfortunately we have no comparative data, but the samples seemed darker this year than in the past.

The sugar concentration of the samples ranged from a low of about 59% to 70%. Both the variability of the values, and the values themselves, are a concern. The fact that the concentrations vary so much suggests that we need to do a better job measuring the sugar concentration before bottling. We especially need to make sure that the syrups are bottled at the correct density. At the shack syrup concentrations are measured with a hydrometer while a refractometer was used here. It is possible that one or both of the instruments require calibration. In any case, these results suggest we need to insure that: (a) we are accurately measuring sugar concentration before jugging; and (b) we should calibrate both instruments and insure all syrup-makers are versed in their use. The temperature probe might also be used to help determine final syrup concentration.

Syrup should be crystal clear without sugar sand or other particulates. Initially several of our samples had some sediment in them which eventually settled out. This suggests we need to determine how to better remove sugar sand. Perhaps we should always plan to use new paper filters whenever we jug and evaluate the way in which we clean the filters.

Festivals & Celebrations: Once again we held two festivals (March 29th & April 5th) (**Fig. 11**). As usual, the festivals featured maple syrup sundaes, live music, face painting, children's nature area (**Fig. 13**), tours of the sugarhouse, educational lectures, tapping demonstrations, horse drawn wagon rides, samples from Third Street Brewery, and a Native American area (**Fig. 12**). There were 1758 participants at the two festivals (**Table 4**); of these, 1119 participated at the first festival on March 29th, which was our largest festival ever.

To encourage student participation in the maple syrup operation, the Outdoor University staff sponsored a variety of events during the syrup season including a maple syrup cook off,

sundaes at Gorecki and Reef, 'shots' at Br Willy's pub happy hour, and flapjack Friday at the Sexton bus stop

Schwietz Family Celebration & Blessing – The family of Mr. Larry Schwietz held a reunion at Saint John's and the maple syrup operation on the weekend of March 29, which coincided with the first festival. The Schwietz's were special guests because they have been very generous supporters of the operation. Among other things, the Schwietz family donated the funds to enable us to purchase "Little Larry" for our educational activities. The Schwietz family had a full day of activities. After Mass, they were transported by horse-drawn wagon to the sugar shack (**Fig. 14**) where they were welcomed and given an overview of the operation by Br. Walter, Tom Kroll and Steve Saupe (**Fig. 15**). After, Abbot John Klassen O.S.B. blessed the evaporators (**Fig. 16**), which wasn't done last year – it was cancelled due to the weather. Following the blessing the family was free to enjoy the festival (**Fig. 17**). That evening, the syrup crew hosted a dinner for the Schwietz's at the McKeown Center. Mary Kroll and Linda Saupe organized the potluck while Tom Kroll was responsible for beverages and general logistics. The Schwietz's received a plaque commemorating their support of the operation (**Fig's. 18 & 19**).

Volunteer Celebration – On May 12th the Core Crew hosted a Pancake Dinner to thank the all of the volunteers who helped during the seasons. Sarah Gainey, Saint John's Outdoor University program did much of the logistical work for this outstanding event. It was held at home of Saint John's President, Michael Hemmesath. The Core Crew cooked, served and cleaned while volunteers could relax, enjoy a delicious meal featuring our maple syrup, and pick up a gift of syrup to thank them for their help.

Publicity/Honors: The Outdoor University staff maintained a daily blog at the following link: <http://www.csbsju.edu/Arboretum/Stewardship/Projects/LandStewardship/MapleSyrup/Volunteer/DailyUpdate.htm>. The same information was also sent to anyone requesting to be part of the maple syrup email distribution list (*see Staff section above*).

In addition to the regular posts and updates, the following publicity/articles about the maple syrup operation appeared:

- Anon (2014) Get a glimpse of maple syrup process. *St. Cloud Times*. April 5, 2014, p 2A.
- Anon (2014) Maple Syrup Harvesting – 2014. *Abbey e-News*. May 2014.
- Reger, Molly (2014) Tapping into tradition. *The Record*. March 28, 2014.
- Hilsen, Cori (2014) Locals gather to help with syrup-making. *St. Joseph Newsleader*. pP 1 & 5.

The operation was also featured by WJON radio (<http://wjon.com/frozen-in-time-st-johns-maple-syrup-video/>).

Maple Sap Award: This award was initiated last year to recognize some of the lighthearted moments that keep the Core Crew smiling. The Core Crew this year voted to give the Maple Sap Award to Tom Kroll for sending Outdoor University staff members hunting for empty glass

jugs that he never remembered to order (**Fig. 8**). Other nominees for the award were: (a) Br. Walter Kieffer, O.S.B. – for incorrectly positioning the valves that would have resulted in a sure meltdown of the syrup pan; and (b) Steve Saupe – who, while cleaning Little Larry, sliced open his ring finger requiring five stitches. **Table 11** provides a running list of award winners.

Education & the Community-at-large: Once again, we provided educational tours to about 1500 students, from pre-school to college (**Table 4**). In addition to the standard tours, festivals, and school groups, we served the public other ways. For example, Br. Walter held a cook-out at the sugar shack for a Knights of Columbus event and ROTC uses the space for some of their field exercises.

The Outdoor University staff also helped to tap trees at the home of Saint John's President, Michael Hemmesath. They installed about 20 taps and the sap was then transported to the sugarhouse for processing using a tank loaned by Gary Gillitzer.

Licensure: We were again licensed by Stearns County Environmental Services (Fig 32). We are proud of licensure and work hard to maintain it. Each year we contact Ms. Jane Knott, Stearns County Environmental Services, at the start of the season to schedule a time for her to visit the operation. We were inspected on April 8, 2014 by Jane Knott.

Appendices: Tables & Figures

(Unless otherwise indicated, all images, figures, and tables provided by SG Saupe)

Table 1. Sap Collection Data – Spring 2014

Date	Sap collected (gal)
1 Apr	580
4 Apr	225
5 Apr	860
6 Apr	1710
7 Apr	1125
8 Apr	750
11 Apr	1505
13 Apr	265
17 Apr	220
18 Apr	1770
19 Apr	675
21 Apr	2250
22 Apr	225
Total (gal)	12,160

Table 2. Syrup Production Data – Spring 2014

Date	Syrup (jugs)
7 Apr	65
8 Apr	51
11 Apr	16
13 Apr	40
18 Apr	33
19 Apr	41
21 Apr	43
22 Apr	36
23 Apr	18
24 Apr	8
Total (gal)	361

Table 3: Maple Syrup Production Statistics Summary – Spring 2014

Spiles (7/16ths)	911
Spiles (5/16ths)	573
Spiles (spiles GPS'd)	1484 (1493)
# sap collection days	13
Sap collection dates	1 – 22 Apr
Tanker loads of sap	57
Total sap collected (gal)	12,160
Syrup produced (gal)	351
Batches of syrup produced	29
Ratio (sap/syrup)	34.6
Sugar concentration (%)	2.48
Wood Used (syrup / cord)	12.5

Table 4: Maple Syrup Volunteers & Visitors – Spring 2014

Volunteers	189+
Volunteer hours (<i>Core crew excluding Br. Walter & W. Mock</i>)	565.5
Volunteer hours (<i>excluding core crew & SJOU staff</i>)	885.5
Total Volunteer hours	1451
Festival Participants	1758
Student groups (pre K – 12)	1239
Student groups (post-secondary; 12 sections BIOL221L, 2 FYS)	ca. 250
Total students	1489
Tapping Day participants	200+
Total visitors	3447

Table 5. 2014 Summary Data

2014 Summary: Sap & Syrup Data									
# of Taps	1493	different numbers from GPS and actual count; used GPS count data							
Taps 5/16th (actual count)	911								
Taps 7/16th (actual count)	573								
Taps total (actual count)	1484								
Taps total (GPS count)	1493								
Taps Placed	15-Mar								
Taps Pulled	22-Apr								
Wood Used (cords)	12.53								
volunteers	189								
volunteer hours	885.5								
Core Crew hours	565.5								
festival particip	1758								
Students preK-12	1239								
Students post	250								
syrup boss	Walter Kieffer, OSB								
Syrup Crew	William Mock; Sarah Gainey, Stephen Saupe, John Oreilly, Gary Gillitzer, Al Meiers, Dan Weber; Bill Ruhr								

continued on the next page

Syrup Production					Sap Production					
DATE	Batch	JUGS	TIME	Total/Day	DATE	LOADS	Time	GALLON	SAP/DAY	
					1-Apr	3		220	580	
7-Apr	1	8	8:15 AM	65				200		
	2	14	9:30 AM					160		
	3	17	2:00 PM		4-Apr	1		225	225	
	4	10	3:30 PM		5-Apr	4		225	860	
	5	16	6:15 PM					225		
8-Apr	6	13	12:00 PM	51				200		
	7	11	2:45 PM					210		
	8	13	5:30 PM		6-Apr	8	1:45 PM	225	1710	
	9	14	7:00 PM				2:30 PM	225		
11-Apr	10	16	5:30 PM	16			3:00 PM	225		
13-Apr	11	14	3:00 PM	40			3:30 PM	220		
	12	12	4:30 PM				5:00 PM	225		
	13	14	7:00 PM				5:20 PM	140		
18-Apr	14	12	10:30 AM	33			6:15 PM	225		
	15	10	3:30 PM				6:37 PM	225		
	16	11	5:00 PM		7-Apr	5	2:50 PM	225	1125	
19-Apr	17	11	11:00 AM	41			3:40 PM	225		
	18	15	12:00 PM				4:20 PM	225		
	19	15	3:30 PM				5:30 PM	225		
21-Apr	20	10	7:30 AM	43			6:20 PM	225		
	21	9	11:00 AM		8-Apr	4	11:00 AM	225	750	
	22	13	2:15 PM				2:20 PM	225		
	23	11	5:00 PM				2:50 PM	170		
22-Apr	24	15	11:00 AM	36			4:00 PM	130		
	25	10	3:45 PM		11-Apr	7	1:00 PM	250	1505	
	26	11	5:00 PM				3:30 PM	220		
23-Apr	27	8	1:30 PM	18			4:30 PM	225		
	28	10	3:30 PM				5:32 PM	220		
24-Apr	29	8	4:30 PM	8			6:22 PM	225		
							7:14 PM	205		
							8:15 PM	160		
					13-Apr	2	5:00 PM	185	265	
							6:00 PM	80		
					17-Apr	1	5:00 PM	220	220	
					18-Apr	8	9:00 AM	200	1770	
							9:50 AM	220		
							11:00 AM	225		
							12:30 PM	225		
							2:50 PM	225		
							3:28 PM	225		
							4:10 PM	225		
							5:30 PM	225		
					19-Apr	3	9:00 AM	225	675	
							10:30 AM	225		
							1:00 PM	225		
					21-Apr	10	8:30 AM	225	2250	
							9:30 AM	225		
							10:15 AM	225		
							10:42 AM	225		
							11:10 AM	225		
							12:10 PM	225		
							1:15 PM	225		
							3:00 PM	225		
							4:10 PM	225		
							5:30 PM	225		
					22-Apr	1	10:45 AM	225	225	
10		29		count		13				
		351		sum		57		12160.0		
24-Apr		17.0		max	22-Apr	10		250.0	2250.0	
7-Apr		8.0		min	1-Apr	1		80.0	220.0	
16-Apr		12.1		average	11-Apr	4.4		213.3		
18-Apr		12.0		median	11-Apr	4.0		225.0		
17				difference		21				
							sap/syrup	34.6		
							ave [sugar]	2.5		
							syrup per cord	28.0		

Table 6. Summary from all years

St. John's Maple Syrup - Summary of Data																																	
1942 - present																																	
updated: May 28, 2014																																	
Year	# of Taps	total syrup (gal)	total sap collection (gal)	Wood used (cords)	Taps placed	Taps Pulled	first day syrup	last day syrup	Mean Syrup date	# days between first & last cooking	# cooking days	batches finished	avg gal per batch	avg gal per cook day	first day sap	last day sap	# sap collecting days	mean sap collection date	Median sap collection date	Length sap season (last - 1st collect day)	# tanker loads	max daily sap collected	min daily sap collected	average gal sap collected per collecting day	average gal sap collected per tap per collecting day	Sap (gal) per tap per season	Syrup (gal) per tap	Syrup (qt) per tap	sap/syrup ratio	syrup/cord	average sugar conc from rule of 86	interval between tapping (years)	
1942	150	45	1440				28-Mar	12-Apr																		9.6	0.30	1.20	32.0		2.69	1	
1943	900						16-Mar	12-Apr																		4.9	0.14	0.56	35.0		2.46	2	
1945	1750	246	8600				17-Mar	12-Apr																							2.46	3	
1948							7-Apr																										
1949		273	9000				7-Apr																										
1951																																	
1953																																	
1954	800	210						23-Apr																									
1958																																	
1959	800						7-Mar	10-Apr																									
1964	1500	182																															
1966	2200	350	13000																														
1968	3100																																
1972			16447																														
1974	3700	369	15379				3-Apr	20-Apr	11-Apr	17	15	63	5.9	24.6	23-Mar	20-Apr	15	6-Apr	5-Apr	28	94.0	2800.0	175.0	1096.5	0.3	4.2	0.10	0.40	41.7	2.06	2		
1978	1890	373	14674				26-Mar	16-Apr	5-Apr	21	14	58	6.4	26.6	22-Mar	19-Apr	12	9-Apr	8-Apr	16	87.9	2275.0	175.0	1281.6	0.6	7.9	0.20	0.81	39.3	2.19	4		
1982	1850	271	9758				16-Mar	26-Apr	2-Apr	22	12	42	6.5	22.6	2-Apr	15-Apr	13	3-Apr	4-Apr	24	83.9	1943.0	481.0	1128.8	0.6	5.3	0.15	0.59	36.0	2.39	4		
1985	1950	560	21179				17-Mar	12-Apr	1-Apr	26	17	71	7.9	32.9	16-Mar	22-Apr	13	13-Apr	14-Apr	20	55.8	1225.0	350.0	750.6	0.4	10.9	0.29	1.15	37.8	2.27	3		
1988	2000	348	12850				23-Mar	8-Apr	30-Mar	16	11	37	9.4	31.6	23-Mar	6-Apr	12	30-Mar	30-Mar	14	73.4	1807.8	175.0	1070.8	0.5	6.4	0.17	0.70	36.9	2.33	3		
1990	1300	364	11384				26-Mar	11-Apr	2-Apr	16	12	47	7.7	30.3	22-Mar	10-Apr	11	31-Mar	30-Mar	19	65.1	1662.5	52.5	1034.9	0.8	8.8	0.28	1.12	31.3	2.75	2		
1992	1600	344	14461				20-Mar	4-Apr	27-Mar	15	12	38	9.1	28.7	19-Mar	4-Apr	15	26-Mar	27-Mar	16	82.7	2100.0	306.3	965.4	0.6	9.1	0.22	0.86	42.1	2.04	2		
1994	1600	308	12598				17-Mar	5-Apr	27-Mar	19	14	45	6.8	22.0	16-Mar	4-Apr	14	24-Mar	24-Mar	19	72.0	1750.0	87.5	899.9	0.6	7.9	0.19	0.77	41.0	2.10	2		
1996	1200	277	10631				31-Mar	24-Apr	12-Apr	24	13	36	7.7	21.3	21-Mar	22-Apr	17	7-Apr	8-Apr	32	60.7	1750.0	87.5	625.4	0.5	8.9	0.23	0.92	38.4	2.24	2		
1999	1200	181	7369				18-Mar	10-Apr	27-Mar	23	12	22	8.2	15.1	26-Feb	8-Apr	19	24-Mar	24-Mar	42	42.1	992.3	105.0	387.8	0.3	6.1	0.15	0.60	40.7	2.11	3		
2000	1200	223	10092				16-Mar	2-Apr	25-Mar	17	9	33	6.8	24.8	6-Mar	30-Mar	10	20-Mar	20-Mar	24	57.7	1925.0	175.0	1009.2	0.8	8.4	0.19	0.74	45.3	1.90	1		
2002	600	107	3413				1-Apr	25-Apr	11-Apr	24	5	12	8.9	21.4	28-Mar	13-Apr	7	4-Apr	6-Apr	16	19.5	1138.0	175.0	487.6	0.8	5.7	0.18	0.71	31.9	2.70	2		
2003	539	146	6519				27-Mar	9-Apr	2-Apr	13	5	17	8.6	29.1	17-Mar	9-Apr	11	28-Mar	29-Mar	23	37.3	1225.0	175.0	592.6	1.1	12.1	0.27	1.08	44.8	1.92	1		
2004	600	99	5513				15-Apr	16-Apr	2-Apr	23	8	10	9.9	12.4	18-Mar	5-Apr	10	27-Mar	26-Mar	18	31.5	1575.0	175.0	551.3	0.9	9.2	0.17	0.66	55.7	1.54	1		
2005	600	45	2770				5-Mar	16-Apr	4-Apr	19	5	6	7.5	9.0	24-Mar	10-Apr	9	2-Apr	4-Apr	17	15.8	525.0	57.8	307.8	0.5	4.6	0.08	0.30	61.6	1.40	1		
2006	1000	124	5031				11-Mar	12-Apr	4-Apr	19	7	7	17.1	17.7	13-Mar	10-Apr	10	28-Mar	27-Mar	28	28.8	1006.3	175.0	503.1	0.5	5.0	0.12	0.50	40.6	2.12	1		
2007	965	116	3680				10-Mar	21-Apr	11-Apr	33	6	13	10.5	19.3	18-Mar	14-Apr	8	1-Apr	2-Apr	27	21.0	1050.0	87.5	460.0	0.5	3.8	0.12	0.48	31.7	2.71	1		
2008	1000	227	9350				1-Mar	29-Mar	20-Apr	8-Apr	22	9	24	9.5	25.2	21-Mar	19-Apr	12	4-Apr	3-Apr	29	41.6	2025.0	200.3	780.0	0.8	9.4	0.23	0.91	41.2	2.09	1	
2009	1287	268	10840				14-Mar	23-Mar	5-Apr	22	8	27	9.9	33.5	17-Mar	13-Apr	13	1-Apr	3-Apr	27	53.0	1915.0	80.0	833.8	0.6	8.4	0.21	0.83	40.4	2.14	2.13	1	
2010	938	130	5345				23-Mar	10-Apr	29-Mar	18	6	11	11.8	21.7	17-Mar	29-Mar	7	23-Mar	23-Mar	12	53.0	1915.0	80.0	763.6	0.8	5.7	0.14	0.55	41.1	28.9	2.09	1	
2011	1200	126	5615				2-Apr	11-Apr	6-Apr	9	5	12	10.5	25.2	18-Mar	10-Apr	9	31-Mar	2-Apr	23	29.0	1310.0	225.0	623.9	0.5	4.7	0.11	0.42	44.6	1.93	1		
2012	1100	39	2410				5-Mar	31-Mar	26-Mar	9	2	3	13.0	19.5	15-Mar	24-Mar	5	19-Mar	19-Mar	9	14.0	795.0	295.0	482.0	0.4	2.2	0.04	0.14	61.8	1.39	1		
2013	1326	557	19055				9-Mar	29-Apr	16-Apr	24	19	48	11.6	29.3	30-Mar	26-Apr	19	13-Apr	14-Apr	27	87.0	2925.0	225.0	1002.9	0.8	14.4	0.42	1.68	34.2	23.2	2.51	1	
2014	1493	317	12160				7-Apr	24-Apr	16-Apr	17	10	29	12.1	31.7	1-Apr	22-Apr	13	11-Apr	11-Apr	21	57.0	2250.0	220.0	935.4	0.6	8.1	0.21	0.85	38.4	25.3	2.24	1	
sum	43298	7223.8	280504	53.5							236	711					301																
average	1353	241	9676	13.4	10-Mar	15-Apr	25-Mar	14-Apr	4-Apr	19.2	9.8	29.6	9.3	24.0	20-Mar	11-Apr	12.0	31-Mar	31-Mar	22.3	55.4	1679.4	178.3	792.8	0.6	7.3	0.19	0.75	40.6	24.7	2.2	1.9	
minimum	150	39	1440	4.5	26-Feb	24-Mar	7-Mar	31-Mar	25-Mar	9.0	2.0	3.0	5.9	9.0	26-Feb	24-Mar	5	19-Mar	19-Mar	9	14.0	525.0	52.5	307.8	0.3	2.2	0.04	0.14	31.3	21.4	1.4	1.0	
maximum	3700	560	21179	24.0	19-Mar	26-Apr	7-Apr	29-Apr	16-Apr	33.0	19.0	71.0	17.1	33.5	3-Apr	26-Apr	19	13-Apr	14-Apr	42	121.0	2925.0	481.0	1281.6	1.1	14.4	0.42	1.68	61.8	28.9	2.7	5.0	
count	32	30	29	4.0	16	15	29	29	24	24	24	24	24	24	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	24	27	29	29	28	4	28	37	

Table 7. Sarah's Syrup Snippets from 2014 (*Fun facts by Sarah Gainey in her daily update emails sent to volunteer distribution list*)

1. According to our records, March 19 is our average first date of sap collection. What will it be this year? Only time will tell...
2. Temperature conditions determine when sap flows out of the trees. We need nights below freezing and days above freezing for sap flow. Want to know more? Join Outdoor U's MJ Bach at her Thursday Forum presentation 'Saint John's Sweet Tradition: Maple Syrup' this coming Thursday, March 20 from 4:15-5:15 in Quad 346 at SJU. Rumor has it she will be performing her original maple syrup song!
3. Put the snow to good use! ['Sugar on Snow'](#) is a delicious maple syrup treat to make on fresh snow.
4. It may be an old tradition, but research on improving maple syruping methods continues at places of higher learning across the country. Check out this [research](#) from the University of Vermont on a new way to collect sap from young trees. Interesting, but I'd rather keep our old trees with their branches on.
5. In honor of the [maple syrup cook-off](#) for CSB/SJU students today at 7 pm at McKeown (stop by for some samples!), here is a [website](#) with some amazing recipes using real maple syrup!
6. I always love finding other people who get why we pour our heart and soul into making maple syrup. [Sam Neumann](#) is an emerging author out of Boulder, Colorado whose book *Quitting Cold Stone (And Other Struggles)* includes a couple of brilliant paragraphs on how underrated pure maple syrup is (excerpt attached to this email).
7. Wow! It's a good thing we tap as many trees as we do. Hopefully we will never encounter any [exploding maple trees](#) that burst due to extreme pressure building up from a lack of tapping! (*April Fool's Day daily update*)
8. How long into the [NPR story](#) were you a believer?
9. Mike Leedahl is one of our amazing volunteers who demonstrates Native American maple syruping techniques during our festivals. One of his other many talents is writing and his latest entry on his 'Black Powder Beagles' blog is called '[The Liquid Gold of the Avon Hills](#).' Enjoy!
10. Looking for other people as into maple syrup as you are? Check out the Minnesota Maple Syrup Producers Association [website](#) and their latest newsletter (attached) by our very own Steve Saupe!

11. Are you up on your maple syrup facts? Try this [quiz](#) from Braingle on maple syrup. This syruper did very well, even though some of their facts are slightly out of date and slightly inaccurate. Bonus points if you can tell me which ones!
12. Looking for a new resource on how to make maple syrup at home? Check out *The Sugarmaker's Companion* by Michael Farrell. It includes information on making syrup from trees other than maple, including birch and walnut. One of our own staff members was inspired to a few Black Walnut trees in her yard this spring...we'll let you know how it tastes!
13. I'm hoping for [this](#) in my Easter basket!
14. Things are always easier to understand when in [cartoon form](#).
15. This [song](#) is pretty good. But there is one I like better.
16. Here are the early statistics from this syruping year, as compiled by Steve Saupe:
 - Sap collected – 12160 gals
 - Syrup produced – 351 gal
 - Sap/syrup ratio – 34.6
 - Avg sap sugar conc – 2.5%
 - # of cooking days – 10
 - # of sap collected days – 13
 - # of tanker trips into woods – 57
 - Sap collection season length – 17 days
 - # of batches of syrup cooked on finishing stove – 29
17. There are lots of [great people](#) all over the state of Minnesota who do what we do!
18. We taste tested the Black Walnut syrup in the office that MJ Bach, an Outdoor U staff member, made after tapping the walnut trees in her front yard. It's not maple syrup but it does taste good. I would use it to sweeten my coffee!
19. An [official proclamation](#) from the state of Minnesota!
20. The end of the syruping season can determined by a number of things, including when the temperatures stop fluctuating between freezing and thawing, when the buds burst on the trees, and/or when the syrupers are tired out and ready to move on to different things!

Table 8: Analysis of Actual Syrup Production during the 2014 Season.

Container size	Number Jugged	Volume (gallons)
4-liter glass jug	63	66.6
3-liter glass jug	182	144.2
Gallon jug	66	66.0
5-gallon plastic pail	8	40.0
Total		316.8

Table 9: Analysis of syrup samples from 2014 season. Sugar concentration was measured with a Misco Abbe Palm digital refractometer. If two values are reported, they were measured on different dates. Color was estimated using a color comparator kit from Vermont (Fancy – Medium Amber – Dark Amber – Grade B) which is basically equivalent to the new grade standards (Golden – Amber – Dark – Very Dark) that are reported below. The clarity was visually determined by estimating the degree of cloudiness (0 – 3) at the completion of the season; all samples were clear several weeks later with some cloudiness on the bottom of the bottle.

Date	Batch	Clarity	Color	[Sugar]
April 8	9	0	Dark	66.9/67.6
April 11	10	1	Dark	63.7/67.8
April 13	11	1	Very Dark	68.1/68.4
	12	2	Very Dark	66.8/67.5
	13	2	Very Dark	66.4/66.9
April 18	14	2	Very Dark	58.7/60.1
	15	0	Very Dark	65.6/70
	16	0	Very Dark	67.7/68.1
April 19	17	1	Very Dark	67.2/66.8
	18	1	Very Dark	66.5/68
April 21	20	1	Amber	68.9
	21	2	Very Dark	67.7
	22	1	Very Dark	68.5
	23	0	Very Dark	68.3
April 22	24	1	Very Dark	66.8
	25	2	Very Dark	67.5
	26	3	Dark	65.9

Table 10. Summary of Maple Stats – 1942 – 2014.

compiled by
Stephen G. Saupe
College of St. Benedict/St. John's University
Biology Department
Collegeville, MN 56321
Date: May 29, 2014



This document provides a summary of data from the St. John's Maple Syrup Operation. Ranges are shown in parentheses. Data prior to 1972 are incomplete because they were destroyed when the original sugar house burned down.

General

First season to make syrup	1942
Number of years since St. John's began making syrup	72
Number of seasons during which St. John's has made syrup	38
Average time (in years) between successive syrup-making seasons	1.9

Tapping Data

Average date trees are tapped	10 March (26 Feb – 19 Mar)
Average date taps are removed	15 April (24 Mar – 26 Apr)
Average number of taps (<i>for all seasons</i>)	1353
Average number of taps (<i>prior to 2002</i>)	1619
Average number of taps (<i>since 2002</i>)	989.1
Fewest number of taps (& <i>year installed</i>)	150 (1942)
Maximum number of taps (& <i>year installed</i>)	3700 (1974)

Sap Collection Data

Average first date of sap collecting	20 March
Earliest date on which sap was first collected (& <i>the year</i>)	26 Feb (1999)
Latest date on which sap was first collected (& <i>the year</i>)	3 Apr (1974)
Average last date of sap collecting	11 April
Earliest date on which sap was last collected (& <i>the year</i>)	24 March (2012)
Latest date on which sap was collected (& <i>the year</i>)	26 April (2013)
Average number of days during the season on which sap was collected	12 (5 – 19)
Average number of days between first and last sap collection (= <i>length of sap production season</i>)	22.3 (9 – 42)

Sap Volume Data

Most sap collected, in gallons, during a season (& <i>the year</i>)	21,179 (1985)
Average sap collected, in gallons, during a season	9676
Average sap collected, in gallons, on a collecting day	793 (308 – 1282)
Most sap collected, in gallons, on a single day (& <i>the year</i>)	2952 (2013)
Average gallons of sap collected per tap	7.3 (2.2 – 14.4)
Average gallons of sap collected per tap per collecting day	0.6 (0.3 – 1.1)

Sugar House & Evaporator Info

Year sugar house constructed (first season of use/syrup production)	1971 (1972)
Year South addition added to sugar house	1999
Year West addition to sugar house completed and wood shed renovated	2009
Teaching Evaporator (Little Larry) size	2 ft. wide x 6 ft. long
Teaching Evaporator (Little Larry) capacity (gallons / hour): sap boiled / syrup produced	20 / 0.5
Production Evaporator (Big Burnie) size	3 ft. wide x 14 ft. long
Production Evaporator capacity (gallons / hour): sap boiled / syrup produced	200 / 5

Syrup Production Data

Average gallons of syrup produced during a season (<i>data for all seasons</i>)	241
Average gallons of syrup produced during a season (<i>since 2002</i>)	177 (45 – 268)
Maximum gallons of syrup produced in a season	560 (1985)
Minimum gallons of syrup produced in a season (& <i>the year</i>)	39 (2012)
Average quarts of syrup per tap	0.75 (0.14 – 1.7)
Wood used (gallons syrup / cord burned)	24.7 (21.4 – 28.9)

Sugar Concentration Data

Average sap/syrup ratio	40.6 (31.3 – 61.8)
Average seasonal sugar content of sap, in percent	2.2%
Lowest seasonal sugar content of sap, in percent (& <i>the year</i>)	1.4% (2005)
Highest seasonal sugar content of sap, in percent (& <i>the year</i>)	2.7% (1990)

Table 11. Great moments in Saint John's Maple Syrup History – A Summary of the Maple Sap Award Winners

Year	Award Winner	Great Moment
2014	Tom Kroll	Forgetting to order desperately need gallon jugs
2013	Gary Gillitzer	Driving a full sap tank into the woods to collect more sap



Figure 1. Tom Kroll & Sarah Gainey training tapping crews on Tapping Day



Figure 2. Jenny Kutter, Ben Carlson & Sarah Gainey display a sign used in the spile study.



Figure 3. Erin Wissler (CSB '14) showing how to tapping a maple on Tapping Day. Note the green paintball dot identifying the tree as a sugar maple.



Figure 4. Chris Beranek (SJU '14) tapping in a spile on Tapping Day.

SAP 2014

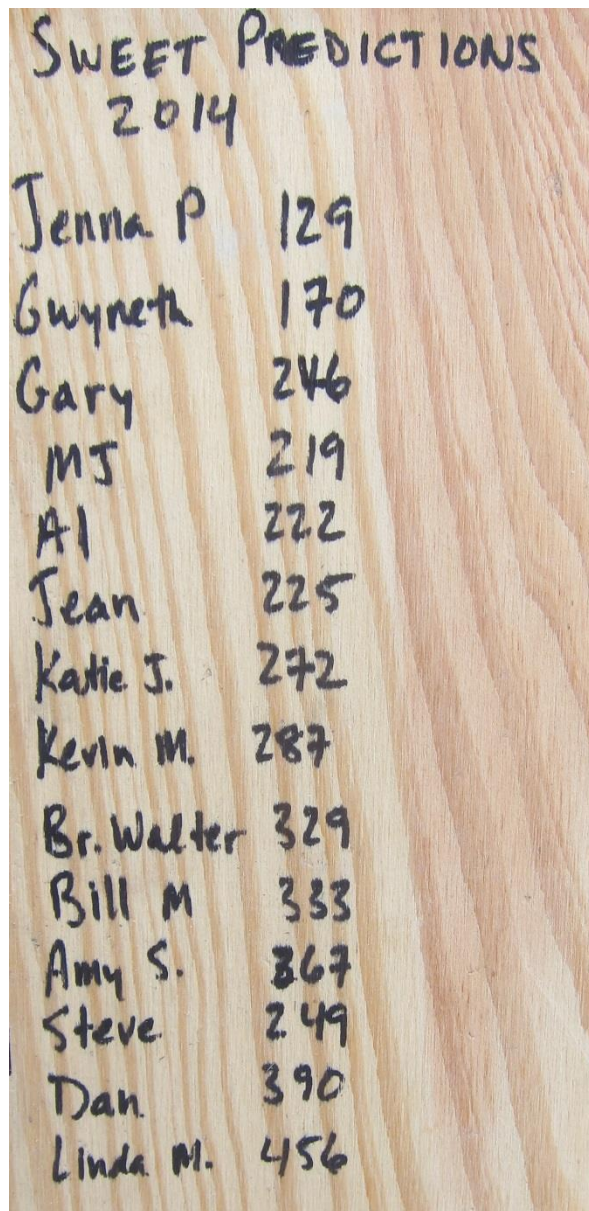
April 1	220	4/21	
	200	8 ³⁰	225
	160	8 ³⁰	225
4	225	10 ¹⁵	225
5	225	10 ⁴²	225
	225	10 ¹⁰	225
	200	11 ¹⁰	225
	210	12 ¹⁰	225
6	1:45 P 225	1 ¹⁵	225
	2:20 P 225	3 ⁰⁰	225
	3:20 P 225	4 ¹⁰	225
	3:30 P 225	5 ³⁰	225
	5:00 P 225		
	5:20 P 140		
	6:15 P 225		
	6:37 P 225		
7	2:50 P 225	4-22-	
	3:40 P 225	10:45	225
	4:20 P 225		
	5:30 P 225		
	6:20 225		
8	11:00 225		
	2:20 225		
	2:50 170		
	4:00 130		
4/11	1 PM 220 +30	8:15	160
	3:30 220		
	4:30 225		
	5:32 220		
	6:22 225		
	7:14 205		

4/13	
5 PM	185
6 PM	80
4/17	
5 PM	220
4/18	
8:40 AM	200
9:50	220
11	225
12:30	255
2:00	225
3:28	225
4:10	225
5:30	225
4/19	
9 AM	225
10:30	225
1 PM	225

Figure 5. Board (left – front; right – back) showing sap collection records for 2014

2014			
Apr. 7	8:15	8	
2	9:30	14	
3	2:00	17	
4	3:30	10	
5	1:15	16	
April 8	12:00	13	
7	2:45	11	
8	5:30	13	
9	7:00	14	
April 11	10 5:30	16	
April 13	11 3:00	14	
12	4:30	12	
13	7:00	14	172
April 18			
	14-10:30	12	
	15-3:30	10	94
	16-5:00	17	
Apr. 17	11:00A	11	
19	12:00P	15	
19	3:30	15	
	246		
April 21			
	21-7:30	10	
	21-11:00	9	
	22-2:15	13	
	23-5:00	11	
	289		
April 22	24 11:00	15	
6/4	25 3:45	10	
	26 5:00	11	
	325		
April 23			
	27-1:30	8	
	28 3:30	10	
	343		
Apr. 24	29 4:30	8	
	351		

Figure 6. Board showing syrup production records for 2014



A photograph of a handwritten list of names and their corresponding guesses for the Sweet Predictions Contest in 2014. The text is written in black marker on a light-colored wooden surface. The list is organized into two columns: names on the left and numerical guesses on the right.

SWEET PREDICTIONS 2014	
Jenna P	129
Gwyneth	170
Gary	246
MS	219
Al	222
Jean	225
Katie J.	272
Kevin M.	287
Br. Walter	329
Bill M	333
Amy S.	367
Steve	249
Dan	390
Linda M.	456

Figure 7. Sweet Predictions Contest guesses



Figure 8. Brother Walter Kieffer (left) and Tom Kroll, winners of the 2014 Sweet Predictions and Maple Sap awards, respectively.



Figure 9. Syrup samples from 2014. Top row: Batch 9 (April 8), Batch 10 (April 11), Batch 11 – 13 (April 13). Middle row: Batch 14 – 16 (April 18), Batch 17 – 18 (April 19). Bottom row: Batch 20 – 23 (April 21), Batch 24 – 26 (April 22). There is no batch 19 sample.

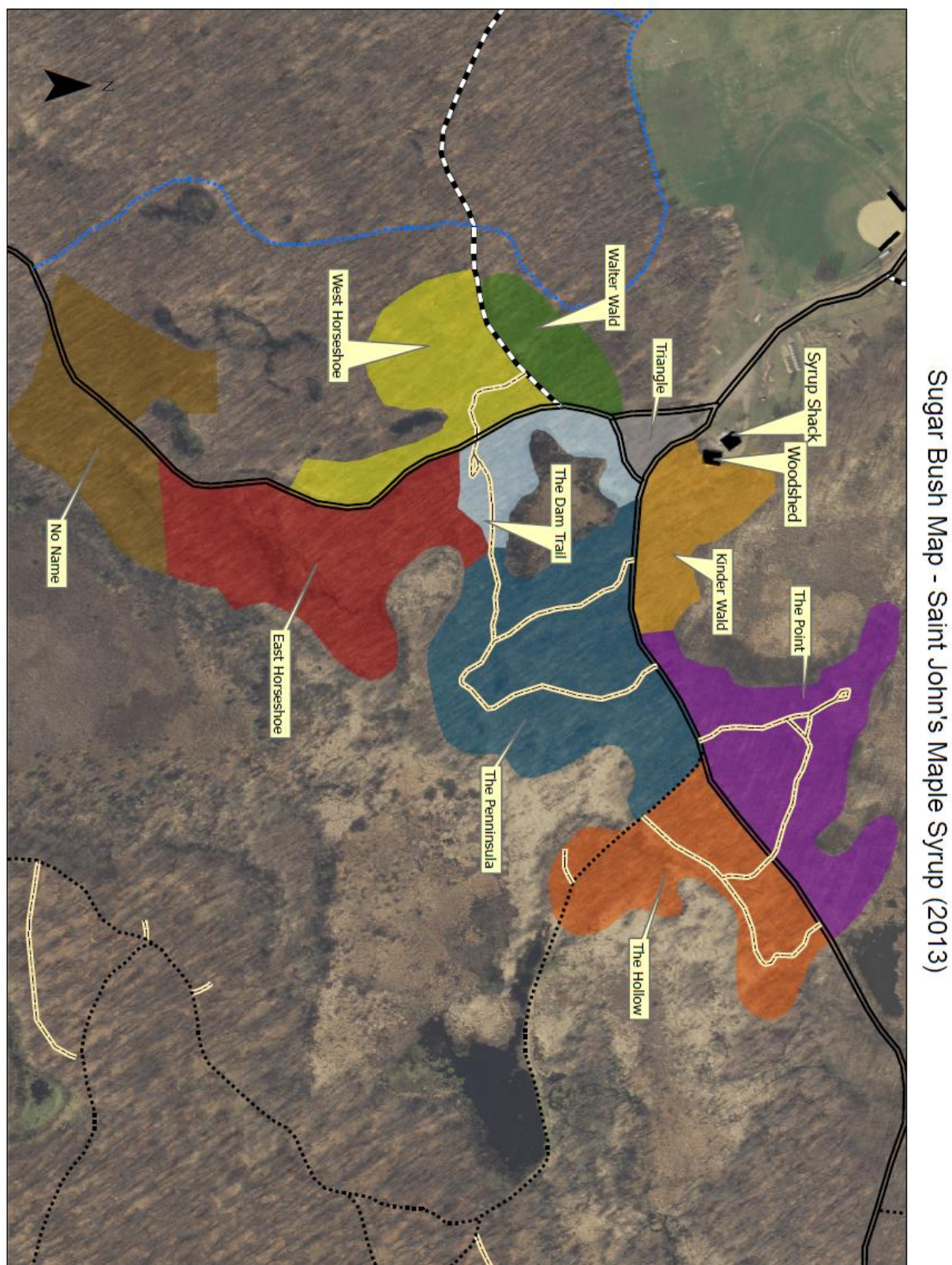


Figure 10. Map of the Saint John's Sugar Bush stands. Image provided by Jean Lavigne, Ben Carlson and Tom Kroll.



Figure 11. Advertisement for the second maple festival. *Image from Saint John's Outdoor University program.*



Figure 12. Mike Leedahl chatting with visitors at the Native American area at the March 29th festival. *Image by Amy Anne Saupe.*



Figure 13. Katie and Gwyneth Lavigne-John staff the nature booth at the March 29th festival. *Image by Amy Anne Saupe.*



Figure 14. The Schwietz family being transported to the Saint John's Sugar House for a special tour and blessing of the evaporators. *Image by Amy Anne Saupe.*



Figure 15. Tom Kroll (center) and Br. Walter Kieffer, O.S.B (second from left) welcome the Schwietz family to the Saint John's sugarhouse. *Image by Amy Saupe.*



Figure 16. Abbot John Klassen, O.S.B., preparing to bless the evaporators, Big Burnie and Little Larry. *Image by Amy Anne Saupe.*



Figure 17. Larry & Carol Schwietz enjoying maple syrup sundaes and hot chocolate at the March 29th festival. *Image by Amy Anne Saupe.*



Figure 18. Larry Schwietz (left) accepting a certificate of appreciation from the Saint John's Maple Syrup Operation present by Tom Kroll (right). *Image by Amy Anne Saupe.*



Figure 19. Certificate presented to the Schwietz family for their contributions to the Saint John's Maple Syrup Operation.



Figure 20. Core Crew members Dan Weber, Bill Mock and Br. Walter Kieffer, O.S.B. (left to right) cook pancakes at the Volunteer Appreciation Supper.



Figure 21. Volunteers fill their plates with pancakes, sausages and Saint John's maple syrup while Core Crew member Al Meiers looks on.



Figure 22. President Michael Hemmesath welcomes the guests at the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.

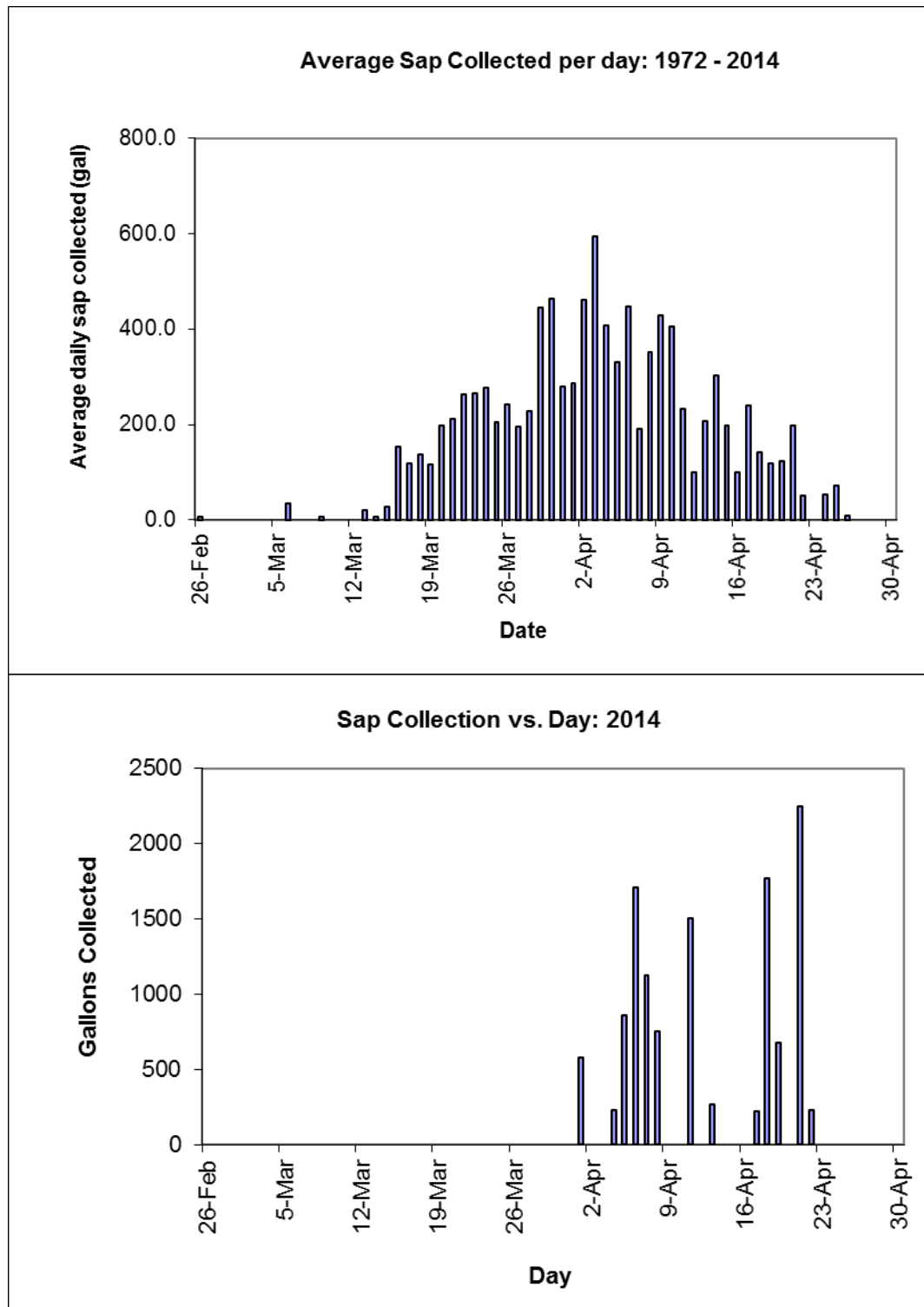



Figure 23. Daily sap production in 2014 compared to the historic production of sap.

Figure 23. Licensure of the Saint John's Maple Syrup Operation received from Stearns County Environmental Services

		Stearns County Environmental Services 705 Courthouse Sq Rm 343 St. Cloud, MN 56303 320.656.3616	
Type: Full Date: 04/08/14 Time: 10:00:00 Report: 4302141010		Food and Beverage Establishment Inspection Report	
Location: ST JOHN'S UNIVERSITY MAPLE SYRUP PROCESSING PO BOX 2900 COLLEGEVILLE, MN 56321 Stearns County, 73		Establishment Info: ID #: 5226 Risk: High Announced Inspection: Yes	
License Categories: MSPL Expires on: 12/31/14		Operator: ST JOHN'S ABBEY STEPHANIE YOUNG Phone #: 320-363-2900 ID #: 2	
The violations listed in this report include any previously issued orders and deficiencies identified during this inspection. Compliance dates are shown for each item.			
No NEW orders were issued during this inspection.			
Total Critical Orders This Report: 0 Total Non-Critical Orders This Report: 0			
-THE SAP WAS JUST STARTING TO FLOW A BIT AT 10 AM DURING THIS INSPECTION. -TREES HAVE BEEN TAPPED SINCE MARCH 15TH AND THE SAP IS FLOWING WELL. -ALL THREE EVAPORATORS WERE UP AND RUNNING DURING TODAY'S INSPECTION. -THIS FACILITY IS STILL USING FOOD GRADE BAGS AND FIVE GALLON PAILS TO COLLECT SAP FROM THE TREES. SAP IS THEN DUMPED INTO LARGE PLASTIC BARRELS AND TRANSPORTED TO THE SUGAR SHACK TO BE STORED IN BULK TANKS OUTSIDE THE SHACK. FROM THESE BULK TANKS, THE SAP IS PIPED INTO THE EVAPORATOR USING FOOD GRADE PLASTIC HOSE. -THE SAP IS HEATED IN THE LARGE EVAPORATOR AND THEN FILTERED TO REMOVE THE SUGAR SAND PRIOR TO BEING POURED INTO THE SMALL EVAPORATOR WHERE IT IS HEATED ONCE AGAIN PRIOR TO BEING FILTERED AGAIN, AND THEN TRANSPORTED TO THE KITCHEN IN STAINLESS CONTAINERS. SAP THAT WILL BE PLACED IN SMALL BOTTLES FOR GIFTS ETC., IS HEATED ONE MORE TIME PRIOR TO BEING BOTTLED. -ALL CONTAINERS USED FOR SAP COLLECTION AND TRANSPORT ARE SANITIZED WITH A CHLORINE SOLUTION OF 50-100 PPM, AS ARE THE BULK TANKS, EVAPORATORS, AND HOSE. -THE SPIELS ARE AUTOCLAVED AFTER EACH SEASON TO KILL ANY PATHOGENIC SUBSTANCES.			

Type: Full
Date: 04/08/14
Time: 10:00:00
Report: 4302141010
ST JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

Food and Beverage Establishment Inspection Report

Page 2

-ALL SYRUP PRODUCED IS STILL USED ON THE ST JOHNS AND ST BENS CAMPUSES, AS WELL AS FOR SOME GIFTS. NO SYRUP IS SOLD.

NOTE: All new food equipment must meet the applicable standards of NSF International. Plans and specifications must be submitted for review and approval prior to new construction, remodeling or alterations.

I acknowledge receipt of the Stearns County inspection report number
4302141010 of 04/08/14.

Certified Food Manager: N/A

Certification Number: _____ Expires: ____/____/____

Inspection report reviewed with person in charge and emailed.

Signed: _____

STEVE SAUPE
BIOLOGY PROFESSOR

Signed: Jane Knott

Jane Knott
Environmental Health Specialist
Stearns Environmental Services
320.656.3613
jane.knott@co.stearns.mn.us



Saint John's Maple Syrup Mission Statement

The mission of the Saint John's Maple Syrup operation is to continue the long-standing Benedictine tradition of making maple syrup. Since 1942 the monks and their friends have gathered together to tap trees, collect sap and boil it down to produce a heavenly confection that is a testament to the forest stewardship of the Benedictine community. In addition, we strive to provide opportunities for the Saint John's community, including monks, students, and the public at-large, to learn about, and participate in, the process of making this sustainable forest product.

updated: May 2012

Saint John's Maple Syrup

Goals & Objectives

In 2001, Abbot John Klassen, OSB, requested that the Saint John's Arboretum take joint responsibility with the Abbey for the Saint John's Maple Syrup operation. A Mission Statement (*above*) and the following goals and objectives were established:

Goals. *The goals of the Saint John's Maple Syrup operation are to:*

1. maintain the tradition of Benedictine syrup-making on campus
2. provide educational opportunities for the Saint John's community including monks, students, staff and the general public
3. provide the Abbey with maple syrup

Objectives: *To accomplish the goals elucidated above, the specific objectives of the Saint John's Maple Syrup operation are to:*

1. annually produce maple syrup and welcome visitors in the Benedictine tradition
2. collect sap and make syrup from approximately 1000 taps
3. make enough syrup to meet the needs of the Abbey and Arboretum (including festivals, visitors, and guests) and to reward our volunteers.
4. provide educational opportunities for CSB/SJU students, pre-college students, and the Saint John's community.
5. host annually a Community Tapping Day and Maple Syrup Festivals

updated: May 2012



A Blessing - *by Walter Kieffer, O.S.B.*

Oh, God of all goodness.

In the beginning you created the earth and divided it between the lands and the waters.

On the lands you created all kinds of vegetation; plants and trees of all kinds, and commanded them to cover the earth, providing both shelter and food for all.

Of the multitude of trees you have given us in this forest, you gave us the sugar maple to provide your gift of sweet sap from the healthy trees, and fuel for the cooking from the old and culled trees.

Today, following the rich traditions of our native brothers and sisters, we ask your blessing on this spring ritual of sapping.

May all the tap holes be clean and of a correct depth.

Help us to tap the spiles correctly – hard enough to seal the spile and hold the bag, but without damaging the tree, splitting the wood and losing the sap.

We ask your blessing on this season's collecting, boiling, jugging, cleanup and wood restocking.

May you reward our labors with a fruitful harvest.

Lord, we ask your blessing on all nature.

Protect the woods and waters of our lands for generations to come.

Bless all who come out to work, observe, and visit.

May we be ever mindful of all gifts you provide for us.

We make this prayer as always through Christ our Lord, and in the power of your Holy Spirit.
Amen.