



## **From Log to Basket Authentic Black Ash Baskets**



**Basket weaving is an old traditional art that has been carried on through many generations.**

**The Black Ash tree is unique among all trees in North America. It does not have fibers connecting the growth rings to each other. This is a useful property for basket makers. By pounding the log, the weaker spring wood layer is crushed allowing the tougher and darker summer wood layers to be peeled off in long strips. The long strips are split, trimmed, cleaned and dyed to be used in basket weaving.**



The first step is finding the perfect tree (this one was taken off of a friend's property in Bay Mills) We like to find a tree that is about 8 inch in diameter, in which we can get a least 2 sections that are approximately 4-5 feet long.



Josh and Sarah take turns pounding strips down the log, we use the back of an axe and/or a 5 pound mallet.

The bark is stripped off using a draw knife. In the spring, we are able to peel the bark off by hand, which is a faster and easier way.



This picture shows 6 layers that have sprung from pounding. Layers will vary based on the thickness.



Based on the thickness, each strip is then cut on the edge to start splitting the original strip to make it thinner. Rarely, we are able to split one strip up to three times.





After the strip has been split, the rough side needs to be scraped smooth, which a knife is used.

Once the strips are scraped smooth, they are then rolled up into bundles to prevent curling, which happens with thinner strips. Based on the thickness of each strip, they are either used for bottoms, (frame) or ribbon/reeds for the rows.





Now we think of an awesome design for a basket, cut the strips into the desired width/length, then dye it to the color we want, (we use Rit fabric dye), by boiling the color and submerging the strips for approx. one minute.

After fan drying our ribbon/reed we are ready to construct our basket.





Each of our baskets have sweetgrass woven into the rim, as we also gather it during the season.

There are many different designs and techniques to basket making. Josh and I are still learning new styles and every basket is a new challenge.

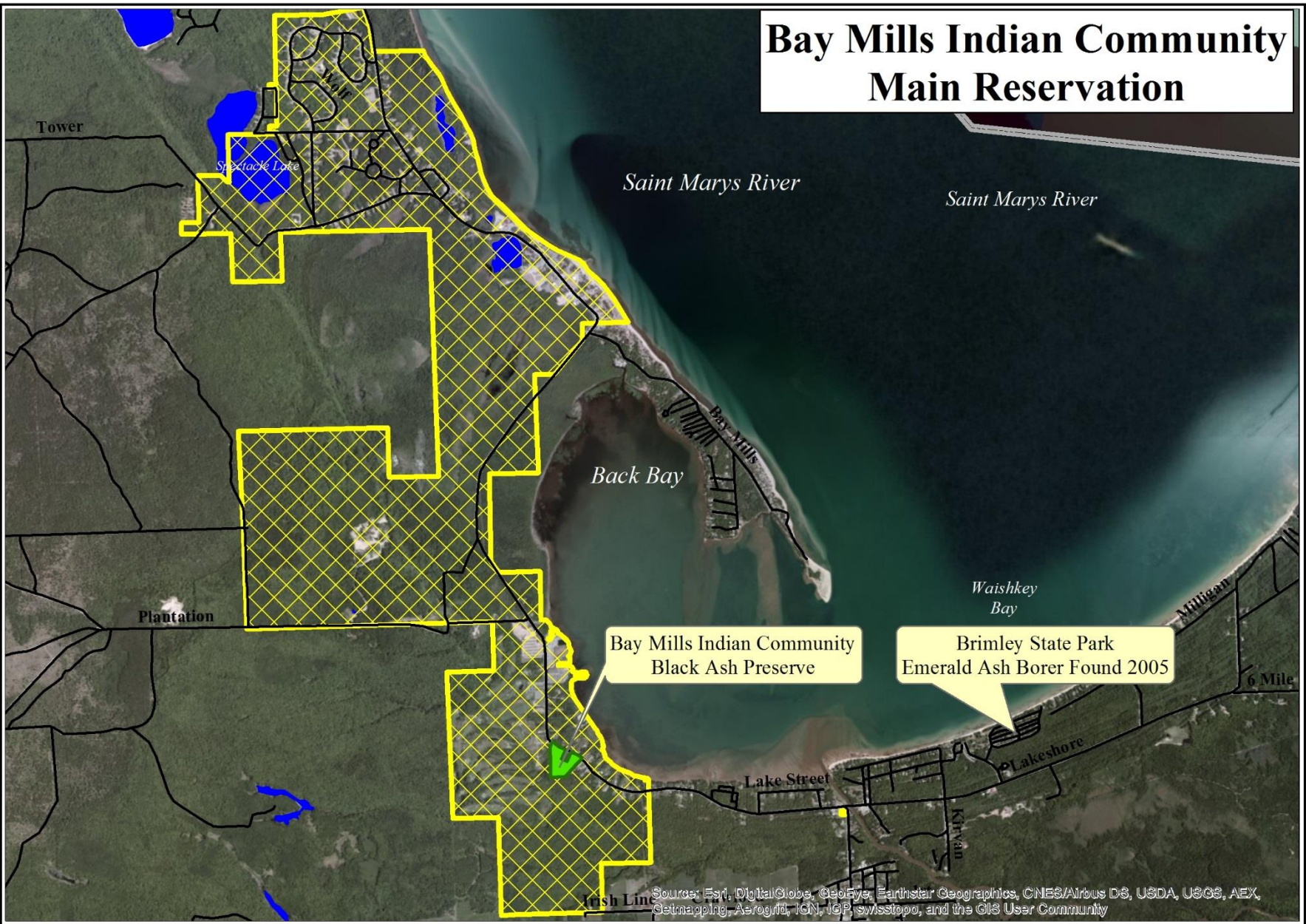
Pictured are a few that we have done.







# Bay Mills Indian Community Main Reservation



The Bay Mills Black Ash Preserve covers approximately 13-14 acres.

Confirmed Emerald Ash was found in 2005 at the Brimley State Park which is approximately 2.5 miles from the Ash Preserve. As of yet, there has not been any confirmed eab on the preserve.

Map Created By: Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan  
Data Sources: USGS, Michigan Spatial Data Library, ITC  
Map Projection: Michigan GeoReference  
March 2015



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

**Map Legend**

- Roads
- BMIC Reservation
- BMIC Black Ash Preserve
- Lakes

The protection of the Black Ash tree from this invasive borer is dire, not only for us now but for future generations.

As basket makers, it is imperative to educate children of today and of tomorrow the essence of protecting mother nature.

Our goal is to pass the craft of black ash basket making to our children, and if we cannot contain this invasive species, this will be a dying art.