

Calgary Captured 4-6 Program

By Andi Antal

Calgary Captured Messages

1. Calgary's urban parks are sources of biodiversity
2. Identifying which species live and move around Calgary
3. Learning how those species move to gain a better understanding of their needs
4. Establishing coexistence with wildlife (i.e. reducing human wildlife conflict)

Relevant Curriculum Topics

- Grade 4 Social Studies: importance of urban parks as wildlife habitat, conflicts due to competing demands on land use (construction, tourism, etc.), need for habitat preservation (think about whose responsibility it is)
- Grade 4 Science: biodiversity of urban parks and how human activities threaten it by WASTE production; identify types of waste toxic to people/environment and how to mitigate/reduce waste
- Grade 5 Social Studies: importance of parks and protected areas for both growth and development of Canada and for sustainability of Canada's natural environment, how natural resources are used and conserved, and whose responsibility it is to ensure preservation of parks and protected areas
- Grade 5 Science: human actions can threaten wetland ecosystems, how can groups and individuals take actions to preserve wetlands, changes in one part of an environment have impacts on the whole environment
- Grade 6 Social Studies: how to participate in a democratic system (i.e. letter writing)
- Grade 6 Science: value of trees and forests for human and wildlife/habitat, how human actions threaten or enhance forests

Protectors of the Land Training Course

Part 1: Learn the ways of the land

Part 2: Know the animals and how they move

Part 3: Learn the threats

*** students should complete worksheet activities AFTER presentation, unless tons of time***

Introduction

Welcome class, introduce self, introduce program topic, treaty acknowledgement

Part 1: The Land (Biodiversity)

- Introduction to weaselhead park + uses of the park
- Brief intro to weaselhead ecosystems/habitats (forest, grassland, river, etc.)
- **Activity:** Land Trivia
- Define biodiversity and why it is important (ecosystem health). Define ecosystem.

Part 2: The Animals

- How do we know which animals are using the park? PHOTO EVIDENCE
 - Explain what the Calgary Captured project is. Define citizen science.
 - Go through wildlife cam photos, identify animals, talk about their sensory abilities, adaptations, how they move through the park, and how they utilize their habitat
 - **Activity:** play animal bingo while we go through the wildlife cam photos
- After photos: why is it important to have parks in urban areas? For wildlife!
 - Not all of the photos were taken in the Weaselhead. They were taken throughout parks in the city of Calgary, like Nose Hill, Fish Creek, Ralph Klein, Weaselhead, etc.
 - Define urban/ urban parks
 - The Calgary Captured project shows us that we have WILD NEIGHBOURS! We may not think of wildlife when we think of our neighbours, but these photos show us that we have wild animals that share space with us in the city of Calgary
 - **Activity:** write a story/poem/song that tells the story about one of the animals we saw in the photos... it doesn't have to be real! Share (some) students stories, if time...

Part 3: The Threats

- **Activity:** Trivia Time
- From global threats of biodiversity (climate crisis, global warming, deforestation, pollution, etc.) to local threats of biodiversity
 - Parks are land that is set aside to protect the plants and animals (define environment). Urban parks are important because it is the home of all of the animals we just saw photos of, and it is important for them to have space for their habitat (forest, etc) within the busy, bustling city
 - We have rules in parks, to make sure that the wildlife (and their habitat) don't get harmed... To protect biodiversity. What are some things we are not allowed to do inside the park? What happens if people do those things JUST OUTSIDE of the park?
- Ring Road and its impacts
 - Habitat loss
 - Noise pollution

- Wildlife movement
- Pollution/waste (grade 4)
- Impact on Beaver Pond and wetlands (grade 5)
- **Activity:** add to/change your story/poem/song; how you think your animal may be impacted by these threats?

- Humans/the way we think about our wild animal neighbours can impact how we treat them!
Are you afraid of any animals?
 - If we are afraid of animals we probably won't do a good job at protecting them or being good neighbours to them. Our own fear is a threat.
 - Bears, bats (and their benefits), bobcat vs house cat size comparison, coyote vs dog comparison = these animals are not scary, they just need space
 - They aren't cute, cuddly PETS either... they need space! Habitat that is not being taken over by roads, humans, and off-leash dogs...
- **Activity:** Take a Stand
 - It is our responsibility as citizens to make sure our parks and protected areas are preserved for wildlife habitat
 - Parks and protected areas harm the economy
 - Parks should be made more accessible to people to be used for recreation
 - It is important to have a good relationship with our wild neighbours

Conclusion

- Are we being good neighbours to the wildlife in Calgary? How can we be better?
 - Ways we are not being good neighbours = building roads beside parks (restate impacts of RR), thinking negatively of these animals/ thinking they are aggressive (fear)
 - Ways we can be better = giving animals their space (habitat), making RR a better road, learning more about these animals, and speaking up for them
 - **Activity:** Draw your own protector of the land badge. You've completed the training course!