



Weaselhead Grade 1 At School Program Teacher's Guide Beavers

Website: theweaselhead.com
Email: education@theweaselhead.com

Thank you for your participation in our Grade 1 Weaselhead At School Education Program! This program is specifically designed to meet cross curricular learning outcomes focused on the new Alberta Science and Social Studies curriculums. Our program is led by a Weaselhead Naturalist who brings their own expertise and personal experiences to your program.

The following items have been enclosed in this Teacher's Guide package:

- Curriculum Connections
- Program Objectives
- Participant Guidelines
- Behavioural Expectations
- Program Outline
- Activities
- Background Information on the Weaselhead Area

Program Overview

Students learn how beavers have become such successful animals and how they contribute to healthy ecosystems. They also explore the importance of beavers to different cultures and learn how beavers shaped Canada as we know it today.

Curriculum Connections

Science: Students analyze properties of objects and investigate how they can be changed; Students investigate direction, pathway, and speed of moving objects and animals; Students analyze environments and investigate interactions and changes; Students investigate and examine needs of plants and animals; Students follow instructions and relate them to outcomes.

Social Studies: Students explore cultures of diverse communities.

Guiding Questions

Science

Matter

- How can properties of an object be altered?

Energy

- How can movement of objects and animals be understood?

Earth Systems

- In what ways can environments change?
- How do plants and animals survive?

Social Studies

- How can sharing cultures build connections between communities?

Before the Program

Pre-program preparation

- Students should have a journal or clipboard with blank paper.

For outdoor activities participants should:

- dress for the weather; dress in layers and wear appropriate footwear.
- bring pencils or pens.
- bring a field journal OR blank paper on a clipboard.

Behavioural Expectations for Nature Walks

- Remain with the group and keep in sight of supervisors at all times.
- There is always an adult leader at the front of the group and at the end of the group.
- Never remove natural items from the area. Vegetation, insects, mammals, birds, and amphibian life is to be respected and left in the natural habitat.
- Leave no trace of our visit. All litter must be brought back out.
- Unsafe behaviour such as tripping, wrestling, fighting, and teasing is unacceptable and may result in withdrawal from the activity.
- Cooperation by listening, participating in group discussions, observing, and recording is expected during the learning experience.
- Each adult is expected to participate in the activities and to provide due safety and care for each of the students.
- No headphones or earbuds are allowed. This is for the safety of the participants.
- **Cell phones are not to be used, unless there is an emergency. This applies to parent volunteers as well.**

Program Outline: 1.5 Hours

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| 5 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction, Land Acknowledgement Washroom visit |
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| 30 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exploring beaver adaptations ● Build a beaver |
| 30 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exploring how beavers shape ecosystems ● Build a dam OR if there is a beaver nearby to the school, a nature walk to the pond may take place instead |
| 15 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Storytelling - how beavers are viewed in different cultures and how beavers shaped Canada as we know it today |
| 10 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wrap up Discussion |

Activities

- Build a beaver: Students learn about the physical adaptations beavers have that make them so successful while dressing one of their peers up as a beaver
- Build a dam: using materials provided by the Naturalist, students build a beaver dam (and lodge if they want) and discuss how beavers shape ecosystems with their construction.
- Storytelling: Students learn how different Indigenous communities view beavers and how beavers shaped Canada as we know it today.

Weaselhead History

The Weaselhead area has a name shrouded in mystery. Like so many Indigenous stories, how the Weaselhead got its name has been lost over time. What we do know is that although there are weasels that call this area home, the name has nothing to do with actual weasels! Weaselhead is a traditional Blackfoot last name, so the name may be related to someone from the Blackfoot Confederacy. There is written history of a man with the name Weazel Head on the Tsuut'ina reserve as well, but little is known about where he originated. Early settler Sam Livingston, whose house is now part of Calgary's Heritage Park, was the first European to settle in the Elbow River valley, now known as the Weaselhead.

Between 1910 and 1990, Tsuut'ina reserve and parts of the Weaselhead were used for military training exercises. Foxholes and signs warning of ordinances possibly left behind remind us of this history, even today. The last time an exploded device was found was during the floods of 2013.

The City of Calgary bought what is now the Weaselhead from the Tsuut'ina Nation in 1929 to build the Glenmore Reservoir, which still provides roughly 40% of Calgary's drinking water.

Today, this protected area spans 404 hectares (989 acres) and is bursting with diverse habitats. Wander through dense White Spruce forests, leafy Balsam Poplar groves, and colourful wildflower

meadows. The Elbow River winds through it all, with floodplains, beaver ponds, and wetlands teeming with life.

As you explore, you'll uncover clues to the area's rich history. Fossils in sandstone cliffs date back 35 million years, and traces of ancient river paths still shape the landscape. You can find evidence of Indigenous campsites and buffalo hunts, as well as remnants of a military training base that once operated here.

With over 480 plant species, including rare ones like the Western Wood Lily, the Weaselhead is a wildlife haven. Frogs, salamanders, and more than 200 bird species thrive here, while larger animals like moose, bears, and even cougars visit throughout the year.

The Weaselhead is a living tapestry of Calgary's natural and cultural history, offering a rich, engaging experience for all who visit.