



Weaselhead Grade 2 At School Program Teacher's Guide Biodiversity and Ecosystems

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

Thank you for your participation in our Grade 2 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

Curriculum Connections

Science: Understanding habitats and the diversity of plants and animals; Learning how plants and animals grow.

Guiding Questions

Living Systems

- How do plants and animals live and grow?
- What are some of the different life cycles of animals?

Program Objectives

Students investigate natural areas, learning about plant and animal interactions and the importance of healthy water systems. They observe how the sun impacts Earth's components. With a focus on the local area, students learn about communities and connections to the land.

Before the Program

Pre-trip Preparation

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

For outdoor activities participants should

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

Behavioural expectations for outdoor activities

- 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 only to be used if taking pictures or in case of emergency for all field trip participants including parent volunteers**

Field Trip Program Outline: 1 ½ hours

5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction, Land Acknowledgement
40 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation or walk with a focus on seasonal changes, plant and animal interactions and adaptations.• Activity: Pond dip, Bug hunt or “Oh Deer” to highlight animal interactions and interconnections. This activity is season and location dependent.
35 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation or walk with a focus on animal life cycles• Animal life cycle activity - draw a life cycle for one animal or play the animal interconnection game to see how different animals relate to each other and how offspring look similar or different to their parents.
10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wrap Up Discussion: Review all the different things that were discussed and how they all relate. Highlight the importance of looking at interconnections and relate this back to traditional Indigenous world views. Ask students to share their favourite life cycle that they learned about.

Activities

- Nature walks to observe and identify local flora and fauna.
- Option of pond dip or bug hunt depending on season. If doing a pond dip, the nature walk will be shortened
- Interactive discussions about the roles of community members in environmental stewardship.
- Seasonal explorations to observe changes in the environment.
- Game to learn about life cycles.

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.