



# Weaselhead Grade 3 At School Program Teacher's Package Dark Skies and Storytelling

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Thank you for your participation in our Grade 3 Weaselhead 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:** Students analyze the impacts of humans interacting with the local environment through the lens of natural vs. artificial light. Students also discuss First Nations' relationship with the land and explore the interconnectedness of cultures through star stories.

## Guiding Questions

### Science

#### Earth Systems

- What visible changes can be identified by examining Earth's surface?

#### Living Systems

- How do plants and animals interact?

#### Scientific Method

- How can investigation help to deepen understanding in science?

### Social Studies

- Who are Albertans?
- How can Albertans make an impact in their communities?

## Program Objectives

Students investigate natural and artificial light and learn how each affects plants and animals (including themselves!). They explore the importance of dark skies for connecting cultures to the land and each other. Students learn how they can make a difference through small actions.

## Before the Program

### Pre program preparation

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

### Program Outline: 1 ½ hours

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| 5 minutes  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction and Land Acknowledgement,</li></ul>   |
| 45 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentation on dark skies and light pollution highlighting how light changes affect plants and animals</li><li>• Activity: using portable lights, students experiment with different colours and brightnesses</li></ul> |
| 30 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Storytelling - children are introduced to star stories from around the world and learn how cultures use stories</li></ul>  |
| 10 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion and Wrap Up</li></ul>   |

## Activities

- Natural vs. Artificial light: what difference to different colours and brightnesses of light make? Children are given artificial lights with adjustable colours and brightnesses and given the opportunity to explore how everything around them looks different.
- Star stories from different cultures will be shared and comparisons between different parts of the world and their stories will be made.

## 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.