



# Weaselhead Grade 3 At School Program Teacher's Guide Landscape Changes and Human History on the Land

Website: [theweaselhead.com](http://theweaselhead.com)  
Email: [education@theweaselhead.com](mailto:education@theweaselhead.com)

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 observe and learn how the Earth's surface changed over time using images of the Weaselhead to demonstrate these changes. They will then shift to analyze the impacts of humans interacting with the local environment and discuss First Nations' relationship with the land.

**Social Studies:** Studying the cultural and environmental aspects of communities, students explore a brief history of the Weaselhead. They examine the physical geography of Alberta, using the Weaselhead as a case study.

## Guiding Questions

### Science

#### Earth Systems

- What visible changes can be identified by examining Earth's surface?
- How has the Weaselhead changed over time?

#### Scientific Method

- How can investigation help to deepen understanding in science?

### Social Studies

- What are features of the land in Alberta?
- How are resources used in Alberta?

## Program Objectives

Students observe and learn how Calgary's landscape has changed over time and how humans have influenced some of those changes using the Weaselhead as an example.

## Before the Program

### Pre program preparation

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

### For any 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.

### Outdoor activity behavioural expectations

- 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.
- **Parents and teachers: please keep cell phones away unless taking pictures or in case of emergency.**

### Program Outline: 1 ½ hours

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|------------|--|
| 5 minutes  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction, Land Acknowledgement</li></ul>   |
| 25 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentation or walk around school to learn about major landscape features in Calgary</li><li>• Activity: landscape pencil drawing</li></ul> |
| 30 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Activity: Timeline of changes in the Weaselhead</li></ul>  |
| 20 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion of human interactions with the environment including Indigenous and non-indigenous relationships to the land.</li></ul>           |
| 10 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion and wrap up</li></ul>   |

### Activities

- Landscape pencil drawing: In Journals, or on blank paper, students will draw a familiar landscape to them with a picture of the Weaselhead as guidance as needed. As they sketch, your Naturalist leader will lead a discussion on how the Earth's surface in their view and drawings has changed over time from both natural and human caused events. They will discuss impacts and interactions in the watershed.

- Weaselhead Timeline: Using aerial images of the Weaselhead over time, students will assemble different pictures. Once assembled, students will arrange all images in a chronological order and learn about different events that shaped the river we see today.
- Storytelling: Learning about different connections to the land through stories both Indigenous and non.

## 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.