



# Weaselhead Grade 3 At School Program Teacher's Guide Rivers and Wetlands

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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
- A Map of the Weaselhead
- Program Outline
- Activities
- Background Information on the Weaselhead Area

## Curriculum Connections

**Science:** Students investigate ecosystem interactions and explore the water cycle; Students investigate and analyze how materials have the potential to be changed with a focus on water; Students analyze changes in Earth's surface and explain how its layers hold stories of the past as seen through changing river courses; Students analyze and describe how plants and animals interact with each other and within environments; Students relate investigation to building knowledge.

**Social Studies:** Students examine natural resource use in Alberta; Students explore civic actions.

## Guiding Questions

### Science

#### Earth Systems

- How do rivers changing course affect the surrounding environment?

#### Living Systems

- How do plants and animals interact?
- What can you discover with your senses?

#### Scientific Method

- How can investigation help to deepen understanding in science?

### Social Studies

#### Systems

- How is water used and stored in Alberta?

#### Citizenship

- How can Albertans make an impact in their communities?

## Program Objectives

Students investigate ecosystem interactions in rivers and wetlands. They observe and learn how the Earth's surface changed over time with a focus on the Weaselhead using aerial images of the Elbow River over time.

## Before the Program

### Pre program preparation

- Students should bring a journal or set-up a field trip journal on a clipboard with blank paper.

### For outdoor activities participants should:

- dress for the weather. Dress in layers. Wear appropriate footwear.
- bring a snack, lunch, and plenty of water for a full day field trip.
- 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.**

## Field Trip Program Outline: 1 ½ hours

5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Introduction, Land Acknowledgement</li></ul>
35 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Presentation on rivers and wetlands and how changing rivers shape the land</li><li>● Activity: Elbow River Timeline</li></ul>
40 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Pond dip to explore different aquatic organisms and how healthy water is important to their survival.</li><li>● If a pond/river dip is not a possibility, alternate activity is exploring aquatic invertebrates through instructional cards.</li></ul>
10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Wrap up and discussion including actions students can take to support healthy watersheds</li></ul>

### Activities

- Elbow River timeline: Students are given part of an image and asked to assemble the full image. Once all images are put together they will be arranged in chronological order so students can see how the river has changed over time in the Weaselhead.
- Pond dip: At the edge of the Elbow River or in one of the Park's wetlands students will explore the aquatic invertebrates living in our watershed and learn how they interact with each other and the surrounding ecosystem OR exploration of aquatic invertebrates through instructional cards

### 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.

*REMEMBER: This is a natural area park. It is illegal to remove anything from the area. Fossils and certain plant species are protected in Alberta.*