



Weaselhead Grade 4 At School Program Teacher's Guide Beavers

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Thank you for your participation in our Beaver Weaselhead Education Program! This program is specifically designed to meet multi-grade 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 lessons.

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

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

Curriculum Connections

Science: Students investigate the systems of Earth and reflect on how their interconnections sustain life; Students analyze organisms and relate external structures to functions; Students examine and apply design processes to meet needs.

Social Studies: Students investigate changes in Canada's political boundaries; Students examine significant historical events that contributed to the formation of the country of Canada; Students examine the role of the fur trade in the development of Canada.

Guiding Questions

Science

Earth Systems

- How does Earth sustain life?

Living Systems

- In what ways do the structures of organisms support survival?

Computer Science

- How can design meet needs?

Social Studies

- How did Canada become a country?
- How did colonies influence the formation of Canada?
- How did economic opportunities influence the establishment of Canada?
- How did beavers shape Canada?

Program Objectives

Students learn how beavers shape the land and contribute to healthy ecosystems. They explore some of the adaptations beavers have that make them successful semi aquatic organisms and learn how some of these adaptations created demand for trade, shaping Canada as we know it today.

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">• Introduction, land Acknowledgement
45 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation introducing students to beavers, their life cycles and their impact on the landscape• Activity: Build a beaver
30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion of how beavers shaped Canada including images of changes to the landscape with and without beavers across Canada
10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wrap up and discussion

Activities

- Build a Beaver: Learn about external and internal adaptations of beavers that help them be so successful
- Timeline: Students learn about the importance of beavers in shaping Canada today. Using images before and after settlement they learn how beavers and humans interacted to shape the landscape.

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 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.