



Weaselhead Grade 4 Outdoor Field Trip Teacher's Guide Landscape Changes and Human Histories

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Thank you for your participation in our Grade 4 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
- Field Trip 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

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

Guiding Questions

Science

Earth Systems

- How does Earth sustain life?
- Do different systems (lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere) work independently of each other?
- What are some examples of nonliving things in an ecosystem?
- How is the traditional Indigenous view of Earth systems different from the Western view?

Social Studies

- What drove the damming of the Elbow River and how has that changed the landscape over time?
- Who historically lived and used the land in the Weaselhead and how has that changed over time?

Program Objectives

Students will investigate the different earth systems and how they interconnect. They will also explore the role natural and human made waste play in the environment and how waste influences earth systems. Through a mapping activity, students will explore how the landscape has changed in the Weaselhead with connections to Alberta and Canada. Responsible citizenship is explored through the lens of being a good environmental steward.

Before the Program

Pre-trip Preparation

- Please have students divided into 4 or 5 groups per class prior to the field trip.
- Students should bring a journal or set-up a field trip journal on a clipboard with blank paper.

Participants should:

- dress for the weather; dress in layers and 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.
- bring a plastic bag OR mat, if the student does not want to sit on the ground. (Optional)

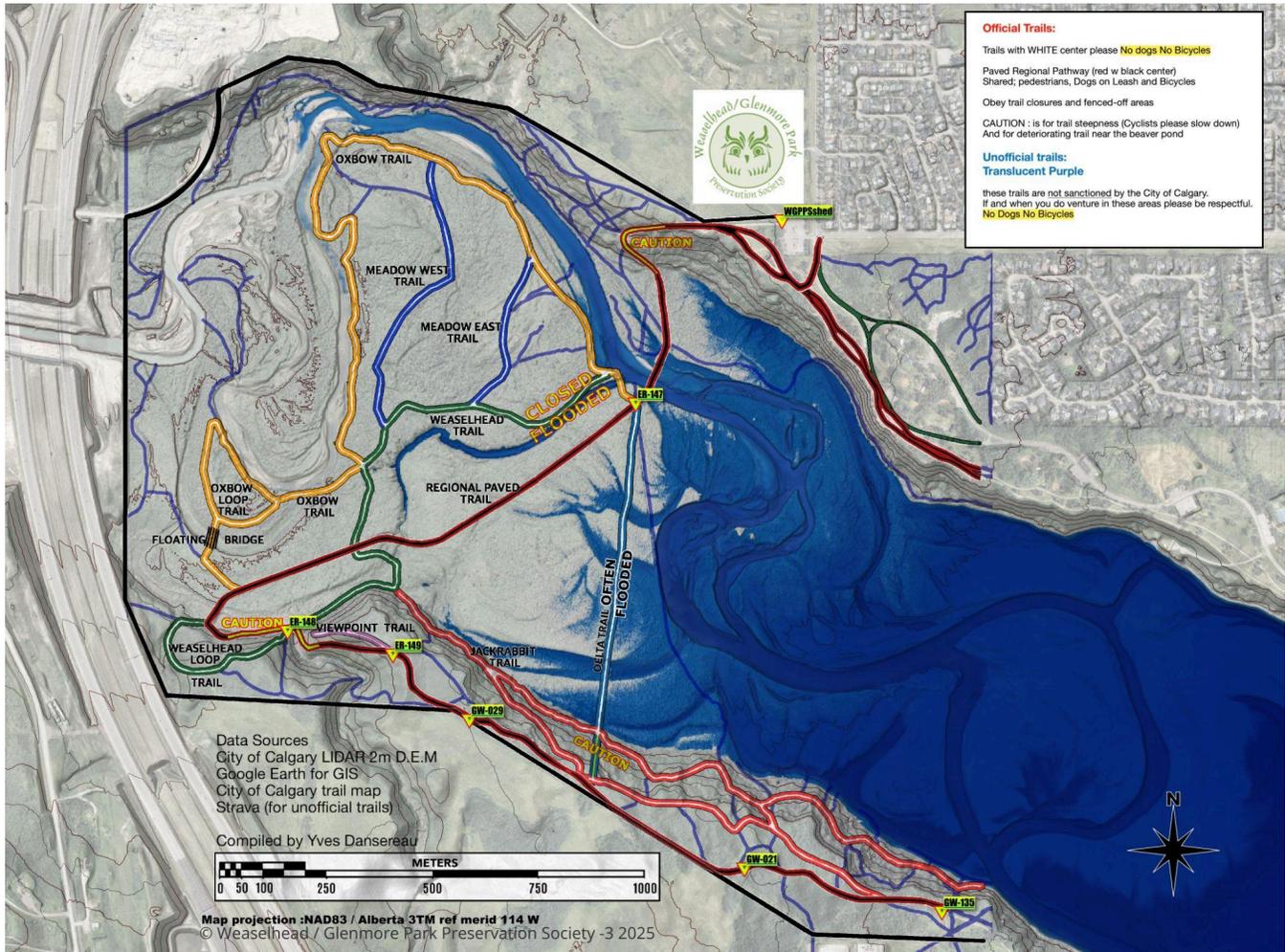
NOTE: This entire program is held outside with no indoor facilities. Students must be prepared for all weather and conditions. They will be hiking approximately 3-5 km on dirt trails. Appropriate footwear is a safety requirement.

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.
- **Both adult's and student's cell phones must be kept away unless taking pictures or in case of emergency.**

Map of the Area

Your group will be starting their hike at the 37th Street Parking Lot. Meet your Naturalist leader at the shed located in the NW corner of the parking lot. We will hike into the Weaselhead down the hill to cross the bridge and explore the area. Depending on conditions, we may also be using the fields and the Aspen Forest in North Glenmore Park.



Field Trip Program Outline: FULL DAY

9:30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meet your Naturalists at the grey shed in the NW corner of the parking lot at 37th Street.
9:30 – 9:45 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction, Land Acknowledgement, park rules, and expectations ● Washroom visit
9:45 – 10:30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activity: Litter Relay ● From the top escarpment, observe and discuss how the visible landforms changed over time shaping the landscape. Investigate and discuss how the sun impacts vegetation compared between the north and south facing escarpments. ● Hike down the hill, investigating various ecosystem interactions, plants, and animals.
10:30 – 10:40 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Snack break
10:40 – 11:40 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hike towards a pond study site with discussion of the lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere and biosphere and how changes in one affects the others. ● Activity: Pond study to learn about aquatic invertebrates and how changes in earth systems affect them.
11:40 am – 12:10 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lunch
12:10 – 2:15 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hike and lessons ● Activity: Timeline mapping
2:15 – 2:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Walk back to parking lot ● Wrap up and conclusion: Highlighting the importance of stewardship, the actions the Weaselhead Society takes, and the actions the students can make themselves.

Activities

- Landscape drawing: Throughout the day, students use their journals to draw the landscape in the Weaselhead and connect it to different earth systems
- Pond dip: students learn about how different earth systems influence life in a wetland
- Timeline: Students learn historical knowledge locally, provincially and nationally and apply it to an interactive activity where they receive cards with historic events and assemble themselves across a span of the classroom or field to create a timeline of historic events.

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.