



Weaselhead Grade 6 At School Naturalist Guide Landscape Changes and Human Histories

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Thank you for your participation in our Grade 6 Weaselhead Education Program! This program is specifically designed to meet cross curricular learning outcomes focused on the new Alberta Science and Social Studies curriculums. This program is focused on earth and living systems. 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

Program Objectives

Students examine evidence to better understand how our changing climate and weather events are impacting the Weaselhead natural area. They will build a timeline of historic events in the area and study local maps and discuss the different human and non-human factors that have shaped the land.

Curriculum Connections

Science: Students investigate climate, changes in climate, and the impact of climate change on Earth; Students investigate the characteristics and components of and interactions within ecosystems

Social Studies: Students will learn about the history of the Elbow River in the Weaselhead by considering the Elbow River and Priddis Trail as trade and travel routes. Timelines of historic events are constructed by students.

Guiding Questions

Science

Earth Systems

- How can climate and its effects be understood?
- How is climate change affecting different parts of Calgary?

Living Systems

- How are organisms supported by vital biological processes and systems?

Social Studies

- How has the Weaselhead changed over time?

Before the Program

Pre program preparation

- Students should bring a journal or clipboard with blank paper.
- Students should be divided into groups of 4-5 for the pond dip.

For outdoor activities participants should:

- dress for the weather; dress in layers and 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.**

Field Trip Program Outline: 1 ½ hours

5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction, Land Acknowledgement
40 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students learn about wetlands, how they are constructed and how they have changed over time• Pond Dip to learn about aquatic organisms
35 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students gain an understanding of local changes and how geography has influenced the development of Calgary• Activity: Timeline
10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion of the importance of healthy rivers and ecosystems and how students can advocate for them.

Activities

- Pond dip: students learn about aquatic organisms and how changes in water availability related to climate and weather events affects their survival.
- 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.