



# Weaselhead Grade 8 Outdoor Program Teacher's Package Biodiversity and Ecosystems

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Thank you for your participation in our Grade 8 Weaselhead Education Program! This program is specifically designed to meet curricular learning outcomes focused on the Alberta science curriculum. 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
- Freshwater ecosystem information
- Background Information on the Weaselhead Area

## Curriculum Connections

**Science:** Unit E: Freshwater and Saltwater Systems

## Guiding concepts and questions

Unit E: Freshwater and saltwater systems

- How do human activities affect water quality?
- How can we study changes in water systems?
- What interactions take place in freshwater systems?

## Program Objectives

Students learn about biotic and abiotic water quality indicators in freshwater ecosystems. They learn how changes in water quality affect different organisms and how ecosystems are interconnected. They learn about the Southwest Calgary Ring Road Impact Study and how monitoring over time provides evidence to answer questions. They learn how small actions create ripple effects in a system.

## Before the Trip

### 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)

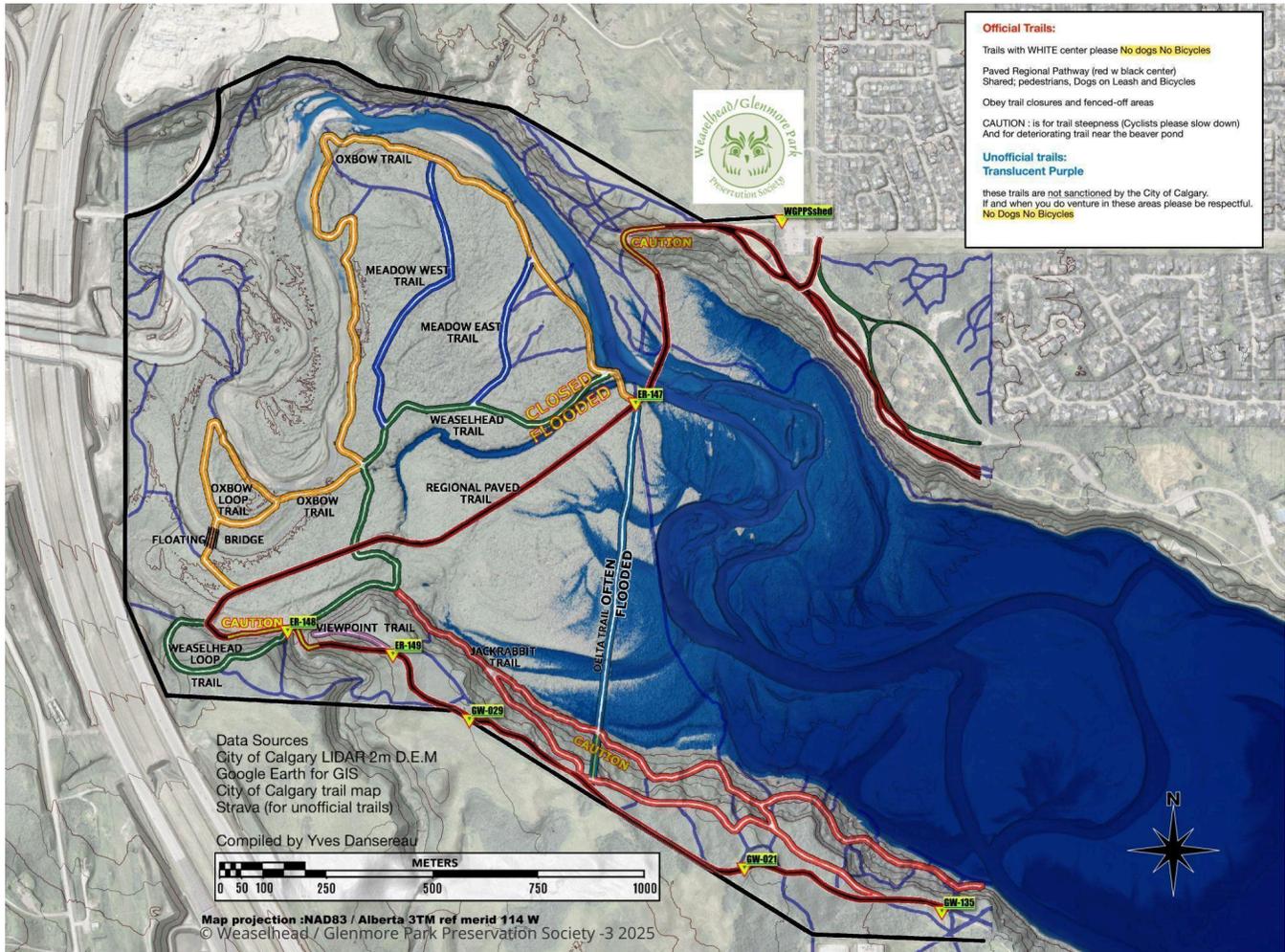
***NOTE: This entire program is held outside with no indoor facilities. Students must be prepared for all weather and conditions. They will be hiking approximately 3-5 km on dirt trails. Appropriate footwear is a safety requirement.***

### 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 37<sup>th</sup> 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"> <li>● Meet your Naturalists at the grey shed in the NW corner of the parking lot at 37<sup>th</sup> Street.</li> </ul>
9:30 – 9:45 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduction, Land Acknowledgement, park rules, and expectations</li> <li>● Washroom visit</li> </ul>
9:45 – 10:30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● From the top escarpment, observe and discuss the Elbow River watershed and its importance for sustaining biodiversity</li> <li>● Hike towards the river and brainstorm ways our activities affect biodiversity and healthy river systems.</li> </ul>
10:30 – 10:40 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Snack break</li> </ul>
10:40 – 11:40 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hike to wetland</li> <li>● Activity: First wetland study: Students conduct both biotic and abiotic testing and add their results to a larger dataset.</li> </ul>
11:40 am – 12:10 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lunch</li> </ul>
12:10 – 1:10 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Activity: Second wetland study: Students conduct only biotic testing and make inferences about water quality based on bioindicator species.</li> </ul>
1:10 – 2:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Activity: Forest five</li> <li>● Hike back towards the bus learning about different plants and animals in the Weaselhead</li> </ul>
2:00 – 2:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Walk back to parking lot</li> <li>● Wrap up and conclusion: Highlighting the importance of stewardship, the actions the Weaselhead Society takes, and the actions the students can make themselves.</li> </ul>

## Activities

- First Pond Study: Students measure water quality through biotic and abiotic means and learn about bioindicator species. Students' results are added to other classes' results to create a larger dataset that can be analyzed over time. The Southwest Calgary Ring Road study is discussed as a way to monitor human impacts on freshwater systems.
- Second Pond Study: Students only measure biotic factors in the wetland and use them to make inferences about water quality. Again, their results are added to a larger dataset to allow for long term monitoring.
- Forest five: Students take 5 minutes to sit and listen and observe the world around them. Afterwards they discuss what they noticed.

## Freshwater Ecosystem Information

- The aquatic ecosystems of the planet carry the greatest biodiversity. We still know little about many of the species that inhabit these ecosystems.
- Aquatic ecosystems include rivers, lakes and wetlands. They all contain water at the surface or near the surface.
- Aquatic life is influenced by the temperature of the water, the depth to which light penetrates, the nutrients found in the water, the pH level of the water, the amount of dissolved oxygen, and the soil substrate.
- If we were to look at the food web of aquatic invertebrates we would find primary producers in the form of phytoplankton, algae, aquatic mosses, and vascular plants (water lilies).
- Primary consumers in the form of zooplankton, invertebrates, fish, birds, and mammals (beaver).
- Secondary consumers in the form of invertebrates (dragonfly nymphs) and vertebrates (fish and coyotes). There are also scavengers (invertebrates and fish) and decomposers (microorganisms) present.
- Management of our aquatic ecosystems can be seen in the allocating of water for different uses, the monitoring of water quality, the monitoring of flow rates, the regulating of discharges into bodies of water and research on aquatic ecosystems.

### Fresh Water Cycles

#### The Nitrogen Cycle:

- Nitrogen gets washed into the rivers, lakes and oceans. This may be from natural sources or from pollution.
- The blue-green algae that is found in aquatic habitats plays an important role in Nitrogen Fixation, which is the conversion of atmospheric nitrogen into a form that plants are able to use.

#### The Carbon Cycle:

- In aquatic ecosystems we find photosynthesis taking place in the surface water. This is the depth to which the sun can reach.
- Many carbon stores from decomposition end up in streams, rivers and lakes from runoff.
- The carbon in the cycle moves back and forth between the atmosphere and the water.

#### The Sulfur Cycle:

- The production of hydrogen sulfide and sulfate occurs in marshes, ponds, lakes, and oceans.
- This can be noticed in the form of “swamp gas” rotten egg smell.
- “Acid Rain” occurs when there is too much sulfur in the atmosphere.

#### The Phosphorus Cycle:

- Small amounts of this nutrient enter the aquatic environment.
- It may be used by the aquatic plants.
- If it settles to the bottom it may become part of newly formed rocks.
- Seabirds in coastal areas supply a rich source of phosphorus in the form of Guano.
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### The Water Cycle:

- Water constantly changes form. It is this constant change that limits the amount of water available in the fresh water form.
- Pollution build up in the cycle also affects the amount of fresh water in a usable form.

### **Introduction to Alberta's Fresh Water**

- Alberta contains 2.2% of Canada's fresh water. We have one of the lowest percentages in all of Canada. This freshwater can be found in 5 major river systems, several thousand lakes and numerous wetlands.
- This 2.2% supplies drinking water, water for crops, water for industrial processes and generation of electricity.
- Precipitation in the mountains or lack of can have an effect on the water supply to Calgarians as our water needs are supplied by the bow and the Elbow, both of which are dependent on annual rain and snowfall.
- The primary sources of water for human use in Alberta are our rivers. Unfortunately we also use these same rivers for the discharge of waste.
- Groundwater is an important water resource. Many of the people in Alberta are dependent on groundwater for their water supply.

### **Freshwater of the Weaselhead Area**

- The Weaselhead area is found along the Elbow River watershed at the mouth of the river leading into the Glenmore reservoir. The area of the valley making up the Weaselhead has been a part of the river valley, although the mouth of the river was formed with the flooding of the river valley by the completion of the dam.
- There are a number of wetland ecosystems found within this area. All of these ecosystems help in keeping the quality of the water in the reservoir high. In the valley, groundwater is pushed through the glacial scree, helping to filter it. The wetland plants absorb pollutants, assisting with the filtration of the water.

### The Elbow River Watershed

- A watershed is the region that drains into a particular body of water. It includes both the aquatic and terrestrial components.
- The Elbow River Watershed is found within a larger watershed known as the Hudson Bay Drainage Basin.
- The Elbow River Watershed covers an area of 1210km squared. It flows from the Kananaskis country through Bragg Creek and drains into the Glenmore Reservoir. Before it reaches the Glenmore Reservoir it travels 120km through 4 eco-regions.
- The 4 eco-regions consist of: Prairie Farmland directly to the west of the reservoir, although in the last few years much of this farmland has been turned into residential areas. Further west it rises 150 feet into the foothills. The foothills are covered with Aspen Parkland and Spruce Groves. On the western edge of the watershed there is a mixture of Sub-Alpine and Alpine Valleys. The Sub-Alpine is mostly made up of Spruce and Pine forests. While in the Alpine Region the mountains rise up 1000 meters above the valley and only dwarf shrub vegetation is found there.
- The Elbow River begins in Kananaskis primarily as meltwater from Rae Glacier above Elbow Lake.
- This water travels east eventually through the Weaselhead where it empties into the Glenmore Reservoir. The water then flows through the dam and links up with the Elbow again.
- Water from the Glenmore Reservoir is the source of nearly half of Calgary's water supply.
- The Elbow River flows through downtown Calgary where it drains into the Bow River just west of the Calgary Zoo.
- The now larger Bow River flows south down towards Medicine Hat where it meets up with the Oldman River, then drains into the South Saskatchewan River.
- From here the water flows through Saskatchewan where it meets up with the North Saskatchewan. This flows into the lakes in Manitoba and through the Nelson River until it drains into Hudson Bay.
- 75% of the water in the Elbow River Watershed comes from mountain snow melt. This leads to seasonal fluctuation in the flow rate. The highest flow rate is seen in mid May to mid July.

### **Waterbodies in the Weaselhead**

### The Elbow River

- The green clear water of the Elbow is due to the glacial lake that feeds it. The Elbow River once meandered through the river valley. Now it is the water source for the Glenmore Reservoir. The river runs along the north side of the valley through the Weaselhead area. The delta where the river and the reservoir meet is found at the east end of the area.

### Beaver Lagoon

- This lagoon feeds off the Elbow River just west of the pedestrian bridge. It is home to muskrats and a number of nesting ducks and geese. Surrounded by the Spruce Forest, this sheltered spot is a great place to sit and watch wetland birds.
- Emergent plants are found more to the south end of the lagoon where there is less water movement. The level of water does not fluctuate as much as the other wetlands during the year, except in times of flooding and drought when the river level is affected.

### Old Oxbow

- Found in the centre of the natural area this wetland was formed when a bend in the river was cut off and the river changed course. This now becomes an overflow area for water when the runoff is very high. Water levels fluctuate over the year depending on the water table and the amount of precipitation.
- Historically Boreal Chorus Frogs and Wood Frogs were found here but lower water levels over the last few years may have altered their presence.
- The pond is full of emergent plants, made up mostly of Common Scouring Rush and Mares tails. This oxbow historically was home to a number of invertebrates, however, lower water levels over the last few years has shifted this biodiversity.
- Owls often frequent the trees along the shore and a number of songbirds can be found here, especially in the spring when the birds are migrating north.

### New Oxbow

- Created in 2009 after flooding changed the course of the river. Water used to flow very swiftly at the new oxbow pond dipping site. It changed course across the top and left initially just a dry gravel bed along that area which eventually turned into some oxbow wetlands
- Home to Boreal Chorus and Wood Frogs
- Rare plants including Elephant's head have been found here

### Beaver Pond

- Home to our beavers, this pond was formed through the hard labor of this native species. The dam was built at the east end of the pun a number of years ago and is hard to distinguish from the other vegetation as the dam is now covered in plant life.
- The level of this pond fluctuates with the climate and the amount of precipitation, but there is usually some water in it. Beavers also monitor the water levels, sometimes opening the dam to allow it to drain to a certain level.
- You can see where the beaver had been busy on the hill on the south side of the pathway. The beaver will usually use the Balsam Poplar to repair its dam and lodge. The Trembling Aspen bark is used as its main food source.
- The Wood Frog calls this pond its home; you can hear the males, at dusk, in the spring.
- Boreal Chorus Frogs and Tiger Salamanders also call Beaver Pond home.

### Delta Mud Flats

- This is the area where the river flows into the reservoir. This area of marsh plays an important role as a nesting site for many species of waterfowl. Because most waterfowl nest on the ground, this area is closed to recreational activities.

- The Delta Mud Flats was formed as a result of the construction of the Glenmore Dam. Over the years sediment settled at the mouth of the river and wetland plants and habitat established.
- Settlement has continued upstream of the Delta Mud Flats and the Weaselhead area has experienced a loss of fish spawning habitat as a result.

## **Wetlands: Important to a Healthy Environment**

### Definition of a Wetland

- A wetland is an area where the land is saturated with water long enough to have poorly drained soil, water loving plants and biological processes associated with wet areas.
- Generally the soils are low in oxygen and plant life in these areas is specifically adapted to these conditions. They are water tolerant plants equipped with special air chambers in their stems that carry oxygen from above the water level down to the roots. Water pools in these areas either permanently or seasonally. They are characterized by alternating periods of flooding followed by periods of drying.
- The edges of the wetland usually have a very healthy plant population. In the wetland itself there are submerged plants. These plants are totally underwater (ex. Algae). Emergent plants are partially in water and partially out of the water (ex. Cattails).

### Importance of Wetlands

- When looking at wetlands it is not just the wetland itself that is important and vital but the surrounding margins as well. They are dynamic and ever changing. They are not stagnant environments. They are at the mercy of the hydrological cycle and are affected by whatever happens upstream.
- Wetlands are natural purifiers of water. They trap sediments absorbing the excess nutrients and heavy metals.
- Wetlands are highly productive and play an active role in hydrological function, life support, water quality, economics and society at large.

### Hydrological Functions

- Wetlands act as natural reservoirs by slowing the water flow in times of flooding and help to maintain the water table at other times. Evaporation from plants is a source of water to the atmosphere and helps to contribute to rain. They reduce erosion as they slow down the flow of water. They increase the soil moisture in the border areas. When one wetland in an area is disrupted it may affect all others in the area due to the transportation of water underground.

### Life Support

- Wetlands provide food, water and shelter for a number of species. They support many endangered and threatened species.
- In Alberta, 158 species of birds are dependent on wetlands for some part of their life cycle. The Boreal wetlands of the province are highly important to waterfowl. Along with birds, wetlands support a number of mammals, amphibians and reptiles either directly or indirectly. There is also support for a great diversity of plant life. Amphibians are important to the wetland as they act as ecological indicators. For birds the wetlands supply nesting areas and a high invertebrate food source. Benthic invertebrates, those found on the bottom of the pond, are good indicators of pollution.
- Stonefly and Mayfly nymphs are highly sensitive to pollution, caddis fly and chironomids can tolerate pollution moderately, and worms are highly tolerant. Invertebrates may live through their whole life cycle in a wetland or for just a part. Fish use wetlands as breeding grounds.

### Water Quality

- Wetlands act as giant filters removing sediment, absorbing nutrients, removing chemical residues and treating water waste. They are known as “Nature’s Kidneys”.
- They decrease the nutrient contamination. There are often cases where there is too much nutrient in the water which causes an algal bloom decreasing the level of oxygen in the water. With the wetlands absorbing much of

the excess, the rivers are kept clean of algal blooms that can affect the native habitat species. Vegetation in the wetlands helps to remove chemicals and cleanses and purifies the water.

- Effluent from pulp and paper mills, if filtered through a wetland first, does not destroy the river ecosystem. An old myth that was the cause of many wetlands being filled in on the prairies were that they gave off gases causing death. Often the high level of gases in a wetland occurred when the farmers were dumping their raw sewage into them.
- In Calgary we are now experimenting with building Wetlands to act as water purifiers and hydrological storage areas. These help to clean water from storm sewers and to store water to help with drought conditions. It is important when they design these wetlands that they include wildlife habitat into the design.

### Economic

- Wetlands are important for tourism, fishing, hunting and peat extraction in this province. They are also starting to be used for forage crops like wild rice.

### Society at Large

- They create stimulating natural experiences like bird watching.
- They have educational value through field trip experiences.
- Scientific research takes place on and around wetlands. An example of this is research in the decline of frog populations.
- Wetlands are not only threatened by human activity but by pollution and climate change.
- In Alberta, wetlands cover 21% of the province with most of these found in the northern part of the province. The most northerly wetlands tend to be permanent while the more southerly ones tend to be more temporary.

### **Life in Wetlands**

- There are insects in a wetland that need to breathe from the air while others are able to extract the oxygen from the water.
- There are a number of ways that invertebrates get their food. Some are herbivores eating the plant life, which helps to keep the levels of algae under control. Carnivores are also present. These feed on invertebrates, fish, microorganisms, and tadpoles. There are a few invertebrates that are omnivores and tend to feed on what is available.
- The invertebrates in the water tend to move in a number of ways as well. Some tumble through the water; these are usually from the fly family. Some are able to stride along the water surface without breaking the water tension. Some get around by propulsion and others take a leisurely row. Some even carry their houses around on their backs.

- Purple Loosestrife is an introduced species from Eurasia. It crowds out the native wetland species. Eventually the whole food web of the wetland is affected by the invasion of this species.

### **Two Types of Wetlands**

- The wetlands of Alberta can be divided into two categories; either Peat Lands or Non-Peat Lands. 93% of all the wetlands in Alberta are Peat Lands.
- Peat Lands are made of peat, which is the partially decomposed sedges, rushes, grasses and mosses that pile up over the years. Peat Lands can be either Bogs or Fens.
- Non-Peat Lands are all other types of wetlands, swamps, marshes and ponds.
- Marshes may also be referred to as sloughs and are found in depressions. Water collects in these depressions usually seasonally. There are many emergent plants in a marsh and they are where water collects from run-off, snow and rain. Beavers build ponds by damming up one end of flowing water.
- The Oxbow and the Lagoon in the Weaselhead are known as Bottomland/Riverine wetlands. These wetlands are found along the floodplains of rivers and streams. They fill with spring melt water or seepage from the slopes of the river valley embankment. These areas were created by river scoring during floods or by old river scars and oxbows.

### **Wetlands and Climate Change**

- Evapotranspiration- Wetland plants take up water and release it into the atmosphere. Two thirds of the annual water in a wetland is cycled into the atmosphere.
- Cloud Seeding- Wetlands give off sulfide which helps to seed clouds.
- Modulate Temperature- Wetlands modulate the temperature of the adjacent uplands (the higher area around a wetland).
- Carbon Cycle- Wetlands play a role in the carbon cycle acting as “carbon sinks”.
- Hydrological cycle- Wetlands play an important role in the hydrological cycle. Especially in times of major hydrological events like flooding.
- Water Volume- Low water volume in a wetland increases the concentration of pollution in the area. Wetlands are sinks for heavy metal pollutants.
- Wetland Life Forms- Small changes in the temperature could have a significant effect on the wetland life forms (biota).

### **The Protection of Wetlands**

- The decline in wetlands in some places is as much as 60%. We are just starting to realize their value in a healthy environment. We are starting to see the importance of them in urban settings as well as rural.
- In urban areas the main loss is due to urban development. In rural areas the main loss is due to drainage to increase the amount of farmable land.
- Around the Calgary area over 90% of our natural wetlands had been eliminated by 1966.
- We must remember though that when protecting wetlands the adjacent land must be considered as well. There needs to be a “buffer” of protection around the wetland.
- We can protect wetlands for the future through education.



**Biotic and Abiotic factors affecting the fresh water of the Weaselhead Natural Area.**

Aquatic Environment	Beaver Lagoon	Elbow River	Oxbow
Abiotic Factors			
Turbidity	Clear	Cloudy	Clear
Surface Temperature	5°C	6°C	1°C
Middle Temperature	5°C	5°C	2°C
Bottom Temperature	5°C	4°C	3°C
Velocity	0.7 m/s	10 m/s	0 m/s
Dissolved Oxygen	5 ppm	6 ppm	4 ppm
pH	7	7.5	6
Nitrate	<2.5 mg/L	<2.5 mg/L	<2.5 mg/L
Nitrite	0 mg/L	0 mg/L	0 mg/L
Ammonia	0 mg/L	0 mg/L	0 mg/L
Biotic Factors			
aquatic plant life	pondweed	algae	mare's tail
	rush		Water buttercup
	algae		coontail
terrestrial plant life	white spruce	wolf- willow (silverberry)	labrador tea
	pussy willow	pussy willow	bog willow
	red-osier dogwood	white spruce	white spruce
animals	wood frog	white tailed deer	red winged blackbird
	muskrat	canada goose	boreal chorus frog
	coyote	northern pike	tiger salamander
aquatic invertebrates	predacious diving beetle	stonefly nymph	horsehair worm
	water strider	caddisfly larva	snail
	fairy shrimp	mayfly nymph	water mite



Location	Temperature	Dissolved Oxygen Concentration
	(° C)	(ppm)
Kananaskis	2.5	6
After Elbow Falls	2	7
Bragg Creek	4	4
Elbow Valley Estates	5.5	5
Above storm sewer outlet in W.H.	6	5
Class Data	6	5 to 6
Glenmore Reservoir	6	3
Sandy Beach	6.5	5
By Ft. Calgary	9	4 to 5

### Biological Water Quality Indicators

There are many species found in the aquatic environments that are good indicators of water quality.

We can divide the organisms into two groups:

**Pollutant Tolerant Species:** these are able to survive in both clean water and in dirty water.

Examples include:

Mosquito Larvae

Midge Larvae

Leeches

Freshwater shrimp/Scuds

**Pollutant Intolerant Species:** these are able to survive only in clean water. Examples:

Mayfly Larvae

Stonefly Larvae

Dragon Fly Larvae

True Bug Larvae

Beetle Larvae

Caddisfly Larvae

Freshwater Sponges

Trout

Frogs Toads

Salamanders

If you are looking for information on bioindicators this is a good website to visit:

<http://lakes.chebucto.org/ZOOBENTH/BENTHOS/benthos.htm>

## 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.*