



Weaselhead Kindergarten - Grade 1 Outdoor Program Teacher's Guide Biodiversity and Ecosystems: Exploring Local Environments and Communities

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Thank you for your participation in our Kindergarten and Grade 1 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
- Background Information on the Weaselhead Area

Curriculum Connections

Science: Introduction to living things and their needs. Learning about how animals and plants adapt to changing environments and seasonal changes. Studying how animals move.

Social Studies: Exploring local communities and their characteristics and landmarks. Students identify how natural communities are similar to human communities. Citizenship is explored through the lens of being a good environmental steward.

Guiding Questions

Science

Energy

- How can movement of objects and animals be understood?

Earth Systems

- In what ways can environments change?

Living Systems

- How do plants and animals survive?

Social Studies

- What is the significance of places within communities?
- In what ways can people contribute to groups?

- How can groups contribute to belonging?

Program Objectives

Students investigate how plants and animals survive in relation to seasonal changes and the basic needs of all living things. They study animal track patterns and movement. Students navigate the park, recognizing and learning about landmarks. Students identify how natural communities are similar to human communities.

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)

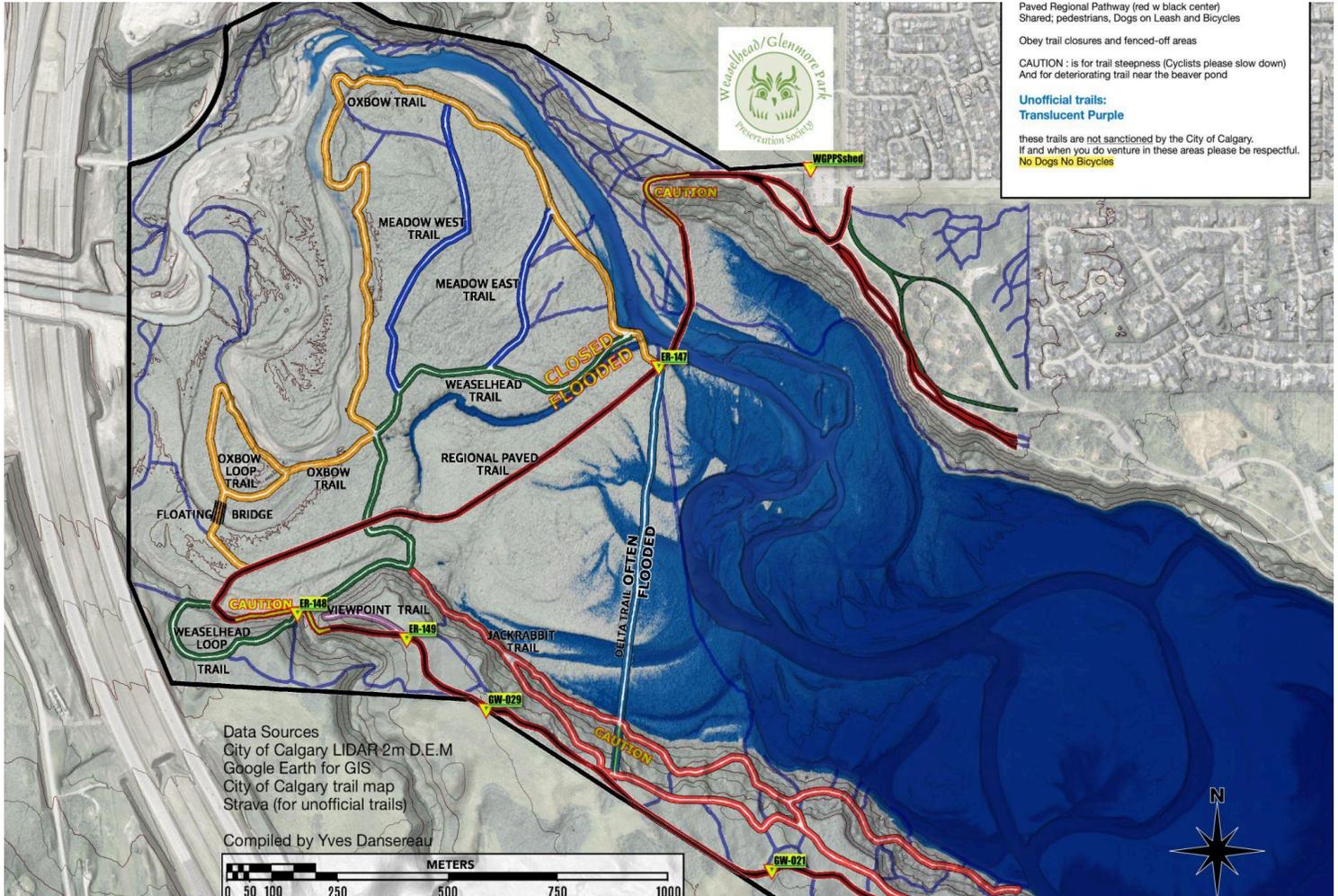
NOTE: This entire program is held outside with no indoor facilities. Students must be prepared for all weather and conditions. They will be hiking approximately 3-5 km on dirt trails. Appropriate footwear is a safety requirement.

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.
- **Cell phones are not to be used, unless there is an emergency. This applies to parent volunteers as well.**

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"> ● Hike with a focus on seasonal changes, plant and animal interactions and adaptations
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 with a focus on observing and learning about bird and animal movement ● Activity: Animal Track Patterns
11:40 am – 12:10 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lunch
12:10 – 1:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pond dip: focus on movement of animals in the water and adaptations to survive ● Forest 5 exercise (5 minutes of quiet to use their senses and discover the world around them) ● Winter Adaptations Activity: Naming various species discussed, students act out if they hibernate, migrate, or stay active
1:30 – 2:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Walk back to field near parking lot ● Activity: Oh Deer ● Wrap up Discussion

Please Note: This outline is adjusted by each Naturalist leader to accommodate distances between the classes. If there are 2 or 3 classes coming, we will be visiting different places at different times and may not see each other during the day. The above is just an example of a typical outline.

Field Trip Program Outline: HALF 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 am – 12:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Choose from either the morning or afternoon full day program outlined above

Activities

- Nature walks to observe and identify local flora and fauna.
- Interactive discussions about the roles of community members in environmental stewardship.
- Pond dip: students learn what lives in the water and how they have adapted to do so.
- Seasonal explorations to observe changes in the environment.
- Nature walks to identify and discuss local landmarks and their cultural significance.
- Animal Track Patterns: Animal movement, with a focus on 4 track patterns and related movement activities.
- Activity based around the three adaptations to survive winters in Alberta (migrate, hibernate, or stay active).
- “Oh Deer”: Basic needs of plants and animals and the challenges they face are explored.

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.