Grasslands

Teacher Professional Development Program
Southern Alberta, May 31 - June 2, 2018

Three days roaming the Grasslands connecting water, watersheds, & climate change

The Grasslands region in Alberta is a biologically diverse and resource rich area that provides a great lens to view the intersection of many different stakeholders. For Alberta teachers, limited exposure to the people and perspectives of the Grasslands region presents it's own difficulty to integrating current, accurate and meaningful content for their students. For Inside Education, our goal was to provide an experiential learning opportunity that touched on many facets of the Grasslands through interactions with a spectrum of local experts, industry, governing bodies, and communities. The program brought together eighteen Alberta teachers for three days of Grasslands connections.

"I think that I took agriculture in the South for granted. I knew that agriculture was a big business, but I didn't realize the level of innovation and technology involved. I was also surprised to hear of the collaborative efforts to conserve native grasslands."

~ Lindsey Bingley

River Valley School, Calgary

Inside education

Program

The 2018 Grasslands PD program offered teachers the opportunity to connect directly with experts and stakeholders, providing the opportunity for teachers to develop an awareness, understanding and curriculum-connected lesson plans related to the Grasslands region.

Thursday May 31	Friday June 1	Saturday June 2
Theme: Grassland Ecology	Theme: Cows, Crops, Climate Change	Theme: People, Places, Perspectives
Program Welcome	Southern Alberta Crop Diversification Centre Tour	Grasslands and the Kainai First Nation
Western Sky Land Trust - Matheis Ranageland Research Institute	Guided tour by the Prairie Conservation Forum	Education Workshop featuring Nutrients for Life
Role of Alberta Parks in Grasslands conservation and species at risk - Dinsosaur Provincial Park	Keynote Presentation: the future of food in: water in a world of 10 billion	

I truly appreciated each speaker for the different dynamics that they brought to the learning process. I love hearing experts who share their knowledge then step back and say," ...but I don't know it all, keep asking questions." That is a true teacher...a life-long learner. I am deeply grateful for this experience and the people who shared it with me.

~ Sandi Hoppins, *Deer Meadow School, Olds*

Program Highlights

Discovering Native Prairie Species

Exploring Wetlands & Rangelands

1600+
Students Reached

Anticipated Impact

Speakers

- **Carol Engstrom**, Scotch Bonnet Consulting
- **David McAllister & Brian Sander**, Western Irrigation District
- **Ron McNeil and Brian Peers**, Prairie Conservation Forum
- **Sarah Downey**, Alberta Parks Educator
- **David Hill**, University of Lethbridge
- **Ray Cochrane**, Nutrients for Life

Tours

- **Mattheis Research Ranch**
  Edward Bork & Lisa Raatz
- **Dinosaur Provincial Park**
  Amber Dekam
- **Southern Crop Diversification Centre**
  Simone Dalpe and John Zhang
- **Kainai High School**
  Shane Wells, Al Black Water

Program Participants

Teachers and administrators from across Alberta participated in the program. From elementary to high school, and various disciplines, there was a lot of opportunity for networking and sharing of expertise and perspective.

- **Alison Katzko**, *Edgemont Elementary, Calgary*
- **Amanda Ellsworth**, *Fort McMurray Islamic School, Fort McMurray*
- **Carter Cox**, *Centennial High School, Calgary*
- **Kerrie-Ann Dalstra**, *Gateway Christian School, Red Deer*
- **Laura Kielich**, *Brooks Junior High School, Brooks*
- **Lauren Matsuba**, *Amiskwaciy Academy, Edmonton*
- **Lindsey Bingley**, *River Valley School, Calgary*
- **Mary Ann McCormick**, *Calgary Catholic School Board*
- **Meredith Easton**, *Brooks Junior High School, Brooks*
- **Nicole Lamboo**, *Senator Patrick Burns School, Calgary*
- **Peggy Townsend**, *Crescent Heights High School, Calgary*
- **Sandi Hoppins**, *Deer Meadow School, Olds*
- **Susan Reynolds**, *Hughenden Public School, Hughenden*
- **Tanya Faulkner**, *Bridlewood School, Calgary*
- **Tasha Paauw**, *Peter Laughed Middle School, Calgary*
- **Tasman Ryan**, *Fort McMurray Islamic School, Fort McMurray*
- **Uzma Jelani**, *Beacon Hill Public School and Greely Road Public School, Fort McMurray*
- **Xena Biffert**, *St. Rita School, Calgary*

Partners

We would like to extend our gratitude to our program partners for their commitment to high quality, meaningful teacher professional development. Inside Education also appreciates the in-kind support provided by all of the expert guests, speakers and tour hosts who dedicated their time and enthusiasm to the program.

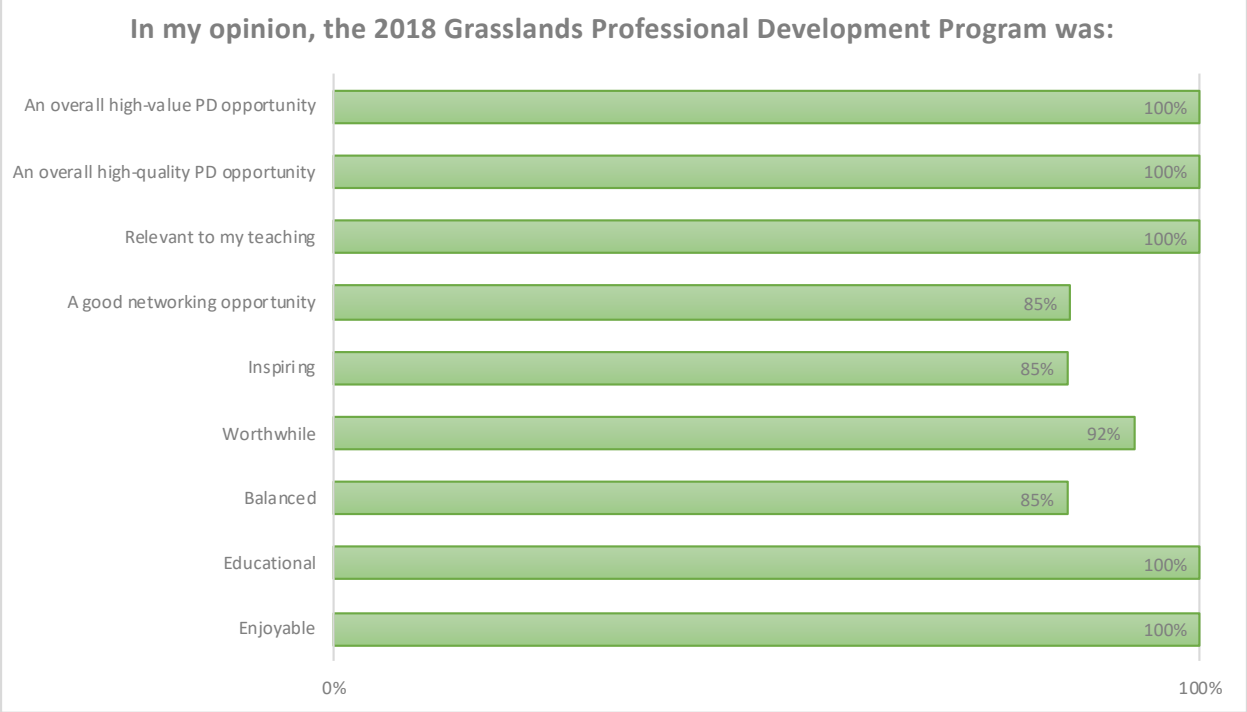
Land Stewardship Centre

ALBERTA CATTLE FEEDERS' ASSOCIATION

Classroom Impact and Feedback

Inside Education is excited to share the outstanding feedback received from teachers following the **2018 Grasslands PD Program**. The results below reaffirm Inside Education's approach to experiential professional development programs as an effective way to increase understanding of Alberta's natural regions, resources, and associated challenges and opportunities, while supporting teachers in bringing the content to the classroom.

Participant evaluations demonstrated that program objectives were met and exceeded, and teachers found the program valuable to their work. The electricity and climate careers program gives teachers confidence in bringing Alberta-relevant material to their students and provides.



All post-PD survey respondents agreed that the Grasslands PD experience led them to new resources and ideas to help further explore natural resources and environmental careers with their students. A cumulative reach of greater than 1600 students can be expected through the participant teachers.

> I told my students about the very optimistic opportunities that they have for careers within Alberta in the Agricultural sector which is very diversified. I also shared how in our communities we are given the honourable task of ensuring that our native grasslands need to be protected and reasons why.
>
> ~**Susan Reynolds**, *Hughenden Public School, Hughenden*

Classroom Connections

I believe that experiences are powerful. Knowing how impactful actually visiting sites are I have convinced my teaching team to visit a park we can walk to. We will be visiting the wetlands and grasslands in this park.

Stories are also magical. While sitting in this environment telling the students about my journeys I know this will have a positive impact in students themselves wanting to know more.

~**Alison Katzko**, Edgemont Elementary, *Calgary*

[This PD] provided me with a place to start when talking about Grasslands. Allows me to further guide students in their research…~**Lauren Matsuba**, *Amiskwaciy Academy, Edmonton*

We have already talked about careers in agriculture!

~**Meredith Easton**, *Brooks Junior High School, Brooks*

I'm excited to design my explore programming for next year and leading the students through the connections I have made through this experience, by integrating the knowledge and perspectives I gained during the program. On Monday I'm excited to share my photo story of experiences and allow the students to see how exciting my learning experience was for me, and hopefully illustrate the passion you can have for learning when you are immersed in the right environment.

~**Tasha Paauw**, *Peter Lougheed*

I shared some of the pictures I shared and some of the things I learned about plants, seeds, birds, my experiences. I still have lots to share with them and I am working putting together everything I learned into a way it will make sense to my students.

~**Tanya Faulkner**, *Bridlewood School, Calgary*

Summary & Future

The Grasslands Professional Development Program was a success thanks to the commitment of our partners, enthusiasm of the highly dedicated teacher participants, and the contributions of the time and expertise of the speakers and tour hosts.

It is evident from the feedback above that this type of programming is a highly valued professional development opportunity for educators. Teachers were incredibly grateful for the opportunity and would all recommend similar PD experiences to their colleagues. The participants were all very quick to make recommendations of other regions or topics they would like to see explored, suggesting that there is a hefty appetite for high-quality, high-value, Inside Education PD programs.

For more information about this and other Inside Education programs contact:
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