

2022 Wetlands Field Programs



The Inside Education team is proud of our 2022 wetland education program. We were thrilled to see so many schools keen to investigate the important role of water, wetlands and riparian areas with students from across Alberta at their local natural, naturalized and constructed wetlands throughout 2022.

This year we saw a high interest for our wetlands and water programs delivering them to over **3,170 students in 24 communities** across Alberta.

Curriculum-Enhancing Programs

Inside Education wetland field programs are **no-cost** and available to all schools across Alberta, including a busing subsidy when needed. These ½ day wetland learning experiences take place at community based natural and constructed wetlands to foster connections to the local environment.

Grade 5 Wetland Ecosystems

“What impacts do humans have on a wetlands?”

Grade five students participated in hands on activities, games and observations of plants, wildlife, and human use, to emphasize the value of these aquatic ecosystems to people and the environment. By studying the positive and negative impacts that humans can have on wetlands, students compare and evaluate natural wetlands and constructed wetlands, including urban stormwater management ponds.

Grade 8 Freshwater Systems

“How can we assess the health of wetlands?”

At the grade eight level, we explored what it means to have a healthy riparian area, how to assess water quality and personal and community stewardship actions. Students move through three major activities to evaluate physical, chemical, and biological indicators of water quality in their waterbody.

Biology 20 Ecosystems and Population Change

“What tools are used to classify wetlands and assess their health?”

Senior high school students learned about wetland classification and assessment using real life tools such as the Ducks Unlimited Wetland Classification System Field Guide, the Alberta Wetland Rapid Evaluation Tool, and the EPT Index - a measure of aquatic biodiversity. These tools not only allowed for accurate data collection and scientific analysis but introduced students to tools used by environmental professionals.

PROGRAM THEMES

- *Types of wetlands*
- *Aquatic biodiversity*
- *Land management for point and nonpoint source contaminants*
- *Wetland ecosystem services*
- *Water Quality - chemical, physical and biological*
- *Invasive species*
- *Careers in environmental sciences*
- *Water & wetlands stewardship*



“My students LOVE working with 'experts' and studying science in the field. It makes it real and valuable to them.”

- *Tammy Wildemann, A. Blair McPherson School
• Edmonton*

The Participants

Inside Education received high interest for wetlands field trips, especially for our grade five Wetland Ecosystems program. Along with the student numbers listed below, Inside Education would also like to acknowledge and thank the **534** teachers, school staff and parent volunteers for dedicating the time to planning, accompanying and supporting these students in our programs.

| Total number of classes | Total number of students | Number of elementary students | Number of junior high students | Number of senior high students |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 149 | 3,174 | 2,649 | 418 | 107 |

Students from **24** communities joined us in 2022 for wetland programs.

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Airdrie | Haddock |
| Calgary | Hinton |
| Chauvin | Macklin (SK) |
| Edgerton | Provost |
| Edmonton | Rimbey |
| Edson | Rocky View County |
| De Winton | Sexsmith |
| Drumheller | Sherwood Park |
| Fort McMurray | Spruce Grove |
| Fort Saskatchewan | St Albert |
| Fox Creek | Strathmore |
| Grande Prairie | Sundre |

“We had fun activities and when we were scooping up and looking at the insects I was amazed at what we saw. I never really saw these before.”
 - Una, Grade 5 student



Program Impact and Feedback

Inside Education received lots of great feedback from teachers and students alike. Overall participants enjoyed the activities, our staff’s enthusiasm and knowledge, as well as stepping outside of their classrooms to learn.

The opportunity for experiential learning in their own community was a highlight for many teachers, along with the important ties to the Alberta curriculum at a variety of grade levels.

An important piece of feedback to receive and acknowledge is to bring in more indigenous connections to the program. This is something that we will take to heart and think deliberately on how to improve. Ideas already include learning and incorporating traditional names and uses for plants and animals, and other areas of traditional ecological knowledge. We also plan to bring samples of preserved invertebrates to have deeper conversations about water quality and indicator species.

“I loved that the field trip was brought to our community. The kids were shocked at the aquatic ecosystem that is in their own pond.”

- *Krista Shandro, Dr Lila Fahlman School, Edmonton*

“Absolutely amazing experience. Students were engaged and the curriculum connections were on point!!! Thank you.”

- *Nicole Blanchett, Prescott Learning Centre, Spruce Grove*



9.3/10

Participating teachers were asked in a post-program survey to rate the value of our program. On average responding teachers gave it a 9.3 out of 10

Summary and Futures

Inside Education is dedicated to providing high quality and accessible water and wetlands education throughout Alberta. We are excited to see a continued growing demand for wetlands programming in both the classroom and the field. Additionally for high school students, we will see the return of our **Navigate youth leadership summit in March 2023**, where participants will investigate technology, innovations and research in the water sector.

Inside Education would like to extend our gratitude to our funding partners for their generous contributions that make these programs possible!



Contact

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