

Spring 2023

Student Forest Field Trips



*Supporting teachers
Inspiring students*

Inside Education's work connects us to the Traditional lands of the Treaty 6, Treaty 7 and Treaty 8 First Nations Peoples and Métis people province-wide. In our journey towards Reconciliation as an organization, we respectfully acknowledge the Indigenous people who have cared for and traveled through the land in the area currently known as Alberta since time immemorial.

Introduction

Inside Education's Spring of 2023 forest field trips were a resounding success in fostering environmental and natural resource literacy among students across Alberta. These curriculum-linked educational programs aim to provide students with immersive and hands-on experiences in the forest, enabling them to deepen their understanding of ecosystems, sustainable forestry practices, and the diverse uses of land.



These forest field trips have proven to be instrumental in cultivating the next generation of environmental stewards. The goal of this document is to report on the impact of the program and share outcomes as well as feedback.

With **over 4,000 students from 77 schools in 23 different communities**, the season was highly successful. Students from Grades 4-12 had the opportunity to visit one of our 8 forest field trip sites across Alberta.

Like all Albertans, we were impacted by the wildfires and resultant poor air quality throughout the spring. We were forced to cancel a number of programs and we adapted eleven field trips, representing 12% of all classes, to indoor programs. This highlights the importance of educating future generations about stewardship and the connections between natural resources, forest management, and climate change.

Very clear connections to the curriculum, engaging presentation, lots of value in being immersed in the forest ecosystem as a way to study it."

- Steven Russell, James Mowat School, Fort Saskatchewan



Inside Education Forest Education Field Trip Sites

Participants and Program Impact

A total of **4,171 students** from **180 classes** at **77 unique schools** attended forest field programming at Inside Education field sites between May 3 and June 23, 2023.

	Elementary		Junior High		High School		TOTAL	
	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students
Bunchberry	17	391	2	44	8	184	27	619
Cooking Lake	26	651	1	30	2	55	29	736
Des Crossley	21	524	-	-	3	47	24	571
Evergreen	16	418	-	-	-	-	16	418
Gregoire Lake	16	387	3	72	-	-	19	459
Huestis	-	-	1	10	-	-	1	10
Jumpingpound	51	1,167	3	37	3	80	57	1,284
Three Herons	-	-	4	52	3	22	7	74
TOTAL	147	3,538	14	245	19	388	180	4,171

Inside Education would also like to thank the **533 teachers and adult volunteers** whose dedication and support helped make the field trips a success!

Schools visited forest field sites from **23** different communities across Alberta:

- Airdrie
- Bentley
- Calgary
- Chestermere
- Delburne
- Diamond Valley
- Didsbury
- Edmonton
- Fort McMurray
- Fort Saskatchewan
- Grande Prairie
- Lacombe
- Leduc
- Okotoks
- Red Deer
- Rimbey
- Rocky Mountain House
- St. Albert
- Strathmore
- Sunchild First Nation
- Sundre
- Sylvan Lake
- Whitecourt



Program Feedback

Following the conclusion of each field trip, Inside Education reaches out to the participating teachers, requesting their invaluable feedback through a comprehensive survey. This evaluation process allows us to gauge the effectiveness of our student forestry field trip programming. The graphs presented below provide a summary of the responses received.

The results demonstrate that Inside Education forest field trips consistently deliver engaging curriculum-linked experiences, fostering a strong connection between students and the natural world. The hands-on nature of our programming and the expertise of our field staff contribute significantly to the program's effectiveness in delivering impactful educational experiences for students.

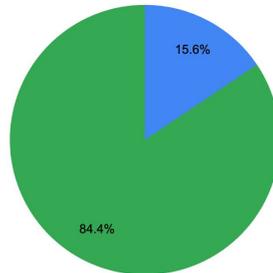


Average overall value rating of forest field trip programming:

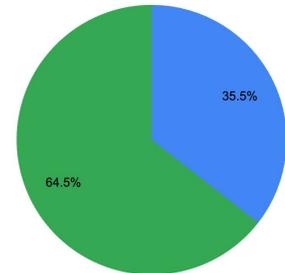
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Question: In your opinion, how well are we meeting the following program goals with the forest field trip program?

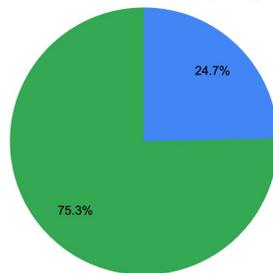
Opportunity for low-cost programming



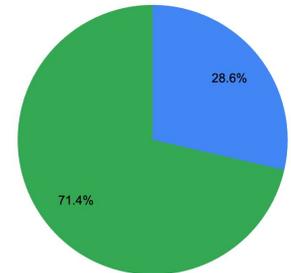
Linking to curriculum objectives



Providing a professionally led outdoor education program



Exposing students to numerous values of Alberta's forests



● Exceeding ● Meeting ● Not Meeting

We had a wonderful day in the forest. My students are still talking about all they learned and the fun they had a month later! Thank you for this rewarding experience.

-- Tracy Turre, Christ King Catholic School, Stettler, AB

Des Crossley Demonstration Forest (Rocky Mountain House)

As a former research site, Des Crossley Demonstration Forest is a valuable tool for teaching forest management to Alberta students, giving them a firsthand look at the effects of different management techniques.

Always a popular field trip site, in spring of 2023 Inside Education hosted students from ten communities in the central Alberta area, including nine rural schools and one Indigenous school.

Participants at Des Crossley - Spring 2023

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	21	524
High School	3	47
TOTAL	24	571



It was very engaging - hands on and in the forest. Lots of good information about the importance of the forest and how it benefits animals, people and the environment. Kids just love being in the forest as well.

- Brenda Bell, Terrace Ridge School, Lacombe

Edmonton-Area Forest Field Trips

Edmonton-area schools have the option of programming either at Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area east of the city, or at Bunchberry Meadows Conservation Area southwest of the city. Both are beautiful, diverse sites, and this option gives additional accessibility and reduces the cost of busing for Edmonton-area schools.

This spring we experienced extremely high demand for these programs, and in particular the number of senior high students at Edmonton-area field sites more than quadrupled over 2022.

Participants at Cooking Lake-Blackfoot and Bunchberry - Spring 2023

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	43	1042
Junior High	3	74
High School	10	239
TOTAL	29	736

We have done other field studies where the information was at a very low level, so we appreciated that this was focused on high school curriculum, that you had professional workbooks for each group, and how enthusiastic and knowledgeable your staff were.”

- Jill Bourassa, Jasper Place High School, Edmonton



Evergreen Learning and Innovation Centre (Boreal Wetlands Centre - Grande Prairie)

Participants at Evergreen - Spring 2023

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	16	418
TOTAL	16	418

Located just outside the City of Grande Prairie, the Evergreen Learning and Innovation Centre serves as a hub for innovative research, processes, and practices in natural resource industries.

Field trips to this site in particular were heavily impacted by poor air quality due to wildfire smoke, with half of the classes receiving adapted classroom programs, and many other getting rescheduled. Despite this, the northwest Alberta educator was able to deliver field trip programming to more than 400 students.



Direct ties with the biology 20 program of studies, and students enjoyed being able to participate and 'become' scientists. In Grande Prairie in particular, many students may end up getting jobs where they work outdoors, and I think they enjoyed seeing some of the types of work that might be done.

- Meaghan Vavrek, St John Paul II Catholic School, Grande Prairie

Gregoire Lake Provincial Park

(Fort McMurray)

At Gregoire Lake Provincial Park Inside Education collaborates with Alberta Parks to allow us access to this site outside of their public open season. This provides students the space to explore and enjoy an otherwise very busy site!

Gregoire Lake field trip programs primarily serve the Fort McMurray community. This season nearly a third of all schools in the city attended a program with Inside Education.

Participants at Gregoire Lake - Spring 2023

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	16	387
Junior High	3	72
TOTAL	19	459



Many students mentioned how nice it is to be in the outdoor setting to learn, and that they were excited to be able to identify trees in real life.

- Brittnee McIsaac, Walter & Gladys Hill Public School



Jumpingpound Demonstration Forest

Jumpingpound Demonstration Forest offers a unique opportunity for students to witness various stages of forest regeneration and explore the diverse landscape uses within the area, with tree harvesting, grazing, a pipeline, and recreation all taking place on or nearby the site.

Due to its close proximity to Calgary, there is generally overwhelming demand for forest field trips at Jumpingpound Forest - many schools return for programming year after year, but effort is always made to ensure that new schools have a chance to book field trip programs at this busy site.

Participants at Jumpingpound - Spring 2023

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	51	1,167
Junior High	3	37
High School	3	80
TOTAL	57	1,284



“The amount of knowledge we gain from this program is substantial. The fact that there are amazing companies supporting this to make it free makes it even better. “

- Amanda Sadler, North Star Academy

Three Herons Conservation Area

At Thee Herons we offer a unique program designed specifically for junior and senior high students, which focuses on water, wildlife, and conservation. This program makes use of the unique ecological and conservation status of the site to offer a program that is distinct from our other forest offerings.

Three Herons is one of Inside Education’s newest forest field trip sites, and we hope to see growing interest in the use of this beautiful and unique area.

Participants at Three Herons -Spring 2023

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	-	-
Junior High	4	52
High School	3	22
TOTAL	7	74



“One of the best comments I heard was... “I feel like a kid again!” while they are all laughing. She is 18 and that is a very positive comment from her and shows she was really enjoying herself”

- Mike Cote, Louise Dean School, Calgary

Student Feedback



"It was awesome, cool and fun. I loved the games and just being out in the trees. It was fun to be with friends."

"Best field trip ever!"



Exciting, excellent, surprising and fun!



"Really cool that we had an exploring time."

"I loved being in nature":



"We liked to actually be in a forest to learn, not just learn about one in the classroom"

"We liked that they let us use equipment"

Summary & Futures

The Inside Education is preparing for the our fall student field trips and the upcoming school year. In 2023-24, some K-6 classes will be piloting the new Alberta Program of Studies, necessitating revising elementary forest field trips to ensure that they align with the updated learning outcomes. These updated programs will be available alongside our existing offerings during the curriculum transition. We are pleased to share that field trips have already been scheduled at all of our sites for Fall 2023, including some classes that required rescheduling due to poor air quality during the spring from forest fires in the province. We eagerly await the opportunity to welcome schools back to our forest field sites in just a few short weeks.

Forest field trips continue to be a robust part of Inside Education's suite of programming, and we look forward to continually finding new and innovative ways to teach about forests and forestry to Alberta students and teachers.

Upcoming Forest Education Programs

- **Fall 2023 & Spring 2024 Field Trips** - Hosted at all 8 field trip sites across Alberta
- **Women in Outdoor Careers** - October 4 - Three Herons Conservation Area & October 19 - Huestis Demonstration Forest
- **Careers in Forestry Teacher Professional Development Program**, Oct 12-14, Edson, Alberta
- **Regenerate Youth Forest and Wildlife Summit**, March 7-10, 2024, Canmore Alberta

Contact

For More Information Contact:
Inside Education Society of Alberta
www.INSIDEeducation.ca

Steve McIsaac, *Executive Director*
smcisaac@insideeducation.ca

Natalie Graveline, *Forest & Wildlife Program Lead*
ngraveline@insideeducation.ca

Inside Education's Forest Field Trip Programs are delivered in cooperation with CAREERS: The Next Generation and Alberta Forest Products Association's *Work Wild* program through the nationally-recognized *Forestry Futures Alliance* partnership (forestryfuturesalliance.ca).

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