

The Cooking Lake - Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area

Field Program Teacher Handbook

Updated: August 2018

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Welcome to the **Cooking Lake - Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area** Education Program!

Inside Education is excited to offer forest field programs at Cooking Lake- Blackfoot, an important historical area in Treaty 6 Territory and part of Metis Nation Region 4. The Alberta part of Treaty 6 encompasses the ancestral and traditional territory of 16 distinct First Nations, including the Cree, Dene (DEN-eh), Anishinaabe (ah-nish-in-AH-beh) (also known as Ojibwe oh-jib-weh) and the Stoney Nakota. Known in Cree as “o-pi-mi-w-sioo-sakyakn” (Place Where We Cook Lake), this region was first home to Cree, Blackfoot, and Sarcee First Nations before Canada’s settlement. It is part of the Beaverhills United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Biosphere Reserve, designated so because of the ecologically unique “knob-and-kettle” landscape and its role as a transition area between southern prairie parkland and northern boreal forests.

Our program runs out of the Waskahegan Staging Area and takes students into the woods to study, learn, and connect with this beautiful landscape!

What you need to know:

1. **We run rain, snow, or shine!** All of our programs immerse your students completely in the outdoors, with limited access to shelter. Make sure your students are prepared for the weather.
2. **We have booklets!** Most of our programs will provide booklets to guide student learning throughout the day, each one tailored to grade level. These booklets also include reflection questions for back in the classroom to help extend your lessons!
3. **We adapt and accommodate!** Our educators are well prepared to adapt a program for weather, adjust the day’s timing due to bell schedules, and accomodate learning styles and individualized program plans.
4. **We have two educators!** We can have two classes (up to 80 students) on site for a field day. Each class will be lead by one educator for the entire day, and students will either be in pairs or small groups for activities. In the morning, each class will hike through the Cooking Lake forest with their educator, meeting back together for lunch before continuing the afternoon program.

This program is offered through a partnership between **Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Environment and Parks, Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta, Millar Western, and Inside Education.**

1.0 Program Description

Our award-winning forest field study program helps students understand and connect with the forest ecosystems in Alberta. During the field study students will become familiar with local tree and shrub species, perform tree measurements, search for animal evidence and be introduced to topics pertaining to the use and development of Alberta's forests. We discuss the values of the forest, the ecological goods and services it provides, and how our landscape may change over the next few decades. At Cooking Lake-Blackfoot, we offer five different field programs in May and June each school year.

1.1 Programs Offered

Grade 4

Explore the living cycle of the forest by studying plants, how they grow and the role of decomposition. Students will consider the forest as a natural resource and discover how people connect with local forests. Activities include native plant identification with a basic dichotomous key; learning about different ways plants reproduce; and discovering decomposers.

Curriculum Connections: Plant Growth and Changes; Waste in Our World; Alberta: A Sense of the Land

Grade 6

Connect with the forest by examining the natural and human factors that shape the forest landscape. Students will identify our forest plant species, and use real forestry tools to explore careers. Activities include investigating the living and non-living components of a forest; identifying native plants with a dichotomous key; using forestry tools to study and evaluate the health and age of the forest; and considering the impacts of multiple users such as forestry, oil and gas, agriculture, and recreation.

Curriculum Connections: Trees and Forests; Evidence and Investigations

Grade 7 High Science

Uncover the interactions in our forest ecosystems by exploring its symbiotic relationships, succession system, and soils along with traditional and modern human uses of our plants and natural resources. Activities include investigating the biotic and abiotic components of a forest; identifying native plants and discussing how humans use these species; performing a soil core and evaluating soil type and texture; and considering the impacts of multiple users such as forestry, oil and gas, agriculture, and recreation.

Curriculum Connections: Plants for Food and Fibre; Interactions and Ecosystems

NEW! Junior High Wildlife Program

This new program will utilize our on-site wildlife cameras to consider how species move and interact in the forest with an emphasis on species at risk and natural development.

Senior High

Compare old growth and new growth forests through a comprehensive plot study and explore the opportunities and challenges of a multi-use forest area. Each student team evaluates their own plot to investigate the biotic and abiotic components of their forest section. Activities include identifying plant and wildlife species; using forestry tools to study tree volume, age, health, and canopy cover; performing a soil core and evaluating soil type and texture; and considering the impacts of multiple users such as forestry, oil and gas, agriculture, and recreation. *Curriculum Connections: CTS - Natural Resources - Forestry/Wildlife, Environment & Outdoor Education, Biology 20/30 Changes in living systems; Ecosystems and Population*

1.2 On-site Schedule

Our programs are typically offered between 10:00 am - 2:00 pm, but we are open to shifting our days in order to accommodate bell times and long distances.

A Typical Day of Programming

9:45 am – Arrival & Welcome
10:00 – 12:00 Morning Program
12:00 – 12:30 Lunch
12:45 – 1:45 Afternoon Program
1:45 – 2:00 Wrap-Up and Departure

2.0 Site Description and Directions

2.1 Site Description

Cooking Lake/Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area is located approximately 30 km east of Edmonton, or only 24 km from Sherwood Park. The **Waskahegan Staging Area**, where the field study takes place, is equipped with a parking lot, picnic tables, fire pit, indoor shelter and outhouses. The Park Office and the Interpretive Centre are also housed at this site.

This field program takes students through mixed-wood forests and boreal wetlands in glacial moraine. The glacial moraine has formed a hilly effect on the landscape known as ‘knob and kettle’ terrain. Cooking Lake has a history of forestry, farming, and pasture land, but it has always supported lynx, fox, mink, muskrat, elk, deer, moose, wolves, coyotes and black bears. The surrounding wetlands provide excellent habitat and are an important stop for

migratory birds. Cooking Lake was also an important stop as part of the Carlton Trail, the primary overland route from the Red River Colony to Edmonton in the 19th Century.

☆ **Meeting Point**

Inside Education Staff will be waiting in the parking area just next to the toilets and Picnic Area of the **Waskahegan Staging Area** in the Cooking Lake – Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area (see map on page 4).

2.2 Directions

The Waskahegan Staging Area shows up in a Google map search as Waskegehan Staging Area and Canadian Birkebiner Finish. Use the following link for Google Maps. Turn on Satellite View to see the Demonstration Forest parking lot (you may even see two buses parked in the parking lot). We suggest you open this link and then share it to your cell phone.

<https://goo.gl/maps/bAg1bs4y8E92>

Address for Cooking Lake:
52365 Range Road 210
Sherwood Park, AB, T8G 1A6

1. The site is approximately 30 kilometers east from Edmonton. It is located in the Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area at the Waskahegan Staging Area.
 - **From Yellowhead:**
Take Highway 16 headed eastbound, turn right (South) onto Range Road 210 and follow the road approximately 7 kilometers.
 - **From Sherwood Park Freeway:**
The Freeway becomes Wye Road and Secondary Highway 630. Turn left (North) onto Range Road 210 and travel approximately 7 kilometers.
2. Access Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area (Waskahegan Staging Area) from Range Road 210. The road to enter the site is on the east side of R.R. 210.
3. Drive past the Interpretive Centre and Park Office (located on your left hand side). Turn right to park in the lot beside the outdoor toilets (not the horseback riding side of the parking lot).
 - The facility has picnic tables and a picnic shelter.

See Appendix for printable map

3.0 Program Planning & Procedures

3.1 Cost and Deposit

Through the generosity of the Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Environment and Parks, Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta, and Millar Western, these programs are **offered at no cost!**

*In addition, each school is eligible for a \$100/school/day **transportation subsidy** to offset the cost of bussing. Please see *3.4 Transportation* for more details.

3.2 Cancellations

Inside Education field programs run rain, snow or shine, with the exception of inclement weather resulting in hazardous conditions, or risks that threaten the safety of participants. Cancellation, rescheduling, or program modifications will be discussed between Inside Education and the school and efforts will be made to reschedule the program to another mutually agreeable date.

Our Site Coordinator will be in touch with you a few days before your field trip with last minute reminders and information about site conditions.

Field trips may be cancelled or rescheduled where possible with a minimum of **14 days notice**. Cancellations with less than 14 prior to the scheduled field trip date will be charged a **\$150 cancellation fee** which will be invoiced to the school and payable within one month of the cancellation date. This cancellation fee reflects partial cost recovery for staff, time, and resources that cannot be recuperated. Field programs cancelled due to hazardous conditions will not be charged a cancellation fee.

Our programs are often fully subscribed, and it can be difficult to find a spot for rescheduling. If we are ultimately unable to reschedule this season, your school will be given priority next year. Pending staff availability, we may be able to provide a short 60-minute presentation to your class in lieu of a field program.

3.3 First Aid and Safety

Inside Education strives to provide the highest quality learning experience in a safe environment. Cooking Lake - Blackfoot is a Provincial Recreation Area, meaning a variety of activities may be occurring on-site at any given time. There are horseback riders allowed on site, but we will be using trails and areas where horses are not allowed. As with any outdoor field trip, there are risks associated with weather, wildlife, and other unforeseen circumstances. Listed below are some of the *extraordinary or unusual hazards* that participants may encounter on site:

1. Blow-down of standing dead trees (snags)
2. Encounters with wildlife
3. Wildfire

Safety of all program participants is of **primary** concern to Inside Education. As such, the following risk management measures are in place:

- Inside Education staff have current standard first aid and carry first aid kits including a list of local emergency contact numbers
- Staff carry cell phones to ensure a link to EMS in the event of an emergency
- Inside Education staff perform daily risk assessment and site checks
- Inside Education staff use walkie-talkies to stay in communication with each other throughout the day
- A safety briefing is performed with teachers and adult volunteers upon arrival on site
- All program participants wear high-visibility vests
- Students are never to leave supervision of an adult, and must always travel in pairs or in groups
- Trees with high susceptibility to blow-down are marked or removed prior to field season
- Inside Education staff are trained in emergency procedures, and conduct annual emergency training drills; each field site has an emergency action plan
- Inside Education reserves the right to modify or cancel a program without notice if, for any reason, site conditions threaten the safety of participants.



In most instances, programs are modified or cut short because students are unprepared for the changing weather conditions. Please ensure they are prepared for rain and cold weather!



3.4 Transportation

Bus Booking

Schools are required to book their own transportation. Please note: The bus is required to stay on site for the duration of the program. Cooking Lake is a rural location and if there is an emergency or inclement weather or a wildfire requires an unexpected end to the program, Inside Education is unable to transport students to safety.

Busing Subsidy

You may apply for a \$100/school/day busing subsidy, Payment for the subsidy will be made by Inside Education upon receiving an invoice from the school or school district only, within 90 days of the program completion. Due to the nature of charitable program operations and reporting requirements, subsidies are NOT available after the deadline -- no exceptions. You can claim your subsidy after your program date(s) by sending an invoice which includes your school name, field trip dates, and a copy of your busing receipt to our Finance Administrator Mitali Robb at mrobb@insideeducation.ca or mail to:

Inside Education
ATTN: Mitali Robb
11428 100 Ave. NW
Edmonton, AB T5K 0J4

If you have any questions, please contact Mitali Robb directly at 780-421-1497 or via her email.

Follow Vehicle

All schools are also encouraged to supply an extra follow vehicle (personal car) in case of emergency. This vehicle should stay on site for the duration of the program. Please ensure the owner of the vehicle is willing and able to transport a student to the hospital if necessary.

3.5 Field Study Groups & Student Checklist

Depending on the grade level, class size, and weather, we will be dividing the group into smaller groups or pairs. In order for our program to begin on time, we ask for you to have them delegated in advance so we can organize ourselves quickly at the start of the day.

We ask that each class (~25-30 students) be subdivided into **five or six** smaller field study groups (**5-6 students per group**). For elementary programs, assigning an adult to each group works best, although this is not required.

To prepare your students for the day, please review the attached **Student Checklist** and distribute prior to the field trip (**see Appendix**)

3.6 Adult Volunteers

Experience has shown that adult volunteers help our programs run more smoothly and efficiently. Inside Education would like to emphasize the importance of parent volunteers for safety and supervision. Please provide copies of the **Adult Volunteer Information Sheet** to all volunteers (**see Appendix**).

Elementary and Junior High Programs: We suggest **4-6 adult volunteers per class of 30**.

Senior High Programs: We suggest 2-3 adult volunteers per class of 30.

4.0 Program Resources & Contacts

In addition to field studies, Inside Education offers a variety of classroom resources to extend your learning. Below are a choice selection of what we have to offer, but please visit <http://www.insideeducation.ca/learning-resources/> to see everything we have to offer!

We also offer all-expenses paid teacher professional development on a variety of topics throughout the school year. Visit our website to see our upcoming programs and to apply! See <http://www.insideeducation.ca/teacher-professional-development/>

4.1 It's Our Forest Video Series

This video series is designed to initiate discussion with your students on Alberta's forest-related issues. This resource examines forest ecology, the human values of the forest, land-use planning and the people and products of the forestry industry. The accompanying

teacher's guide offers interactive activities to get your class engaged in critical thinking, considerate action and reflective practice needed to help them understand the value of the forest from multiple perspectives. *Offered in french!*

4.2 Tools of the Trade Forest Education Kit

This kit contains 20 forest tools and 1-page quick reference sheet explaining what it is, who uses it, why the tool is important in the forest industry and an activity to put the tool to use. Suitable for any unit that explores forestry, careers and technology this resource kit was developed to support teachers in bringing forest careers to life in the classroom. Take the kit outside and discover the hands-on, outdoor work that is part of everyday life in the forest industry! Schools can request to borrow the kit for a maximum of 2 weeks at no-cost (including shipping)

4.3 Guide to the Common Native Trees & Shrubs of Alberta

Access the same guide our educators use in our field programs! Offered both in online format or a printed, waterproof hard copy, the guide contains 30 pages featuring the most common native plants with colour photographs, common and scientific names and key facts about each species. Easy identification is ensured with the dichotomous key and glossary. Hard copies are available for only \$6.25 (that includes shipping!)

If you have any questions, or would like to find out more about Inside Education, teacher professional development opportunities, or print resources, please contact:

Nataline Graveine – Des Crossley Field Coordinator
Email: ngraveline@insideeducation.ca

Please see the following pages for the Teacher Checklist, Student Checklist, Adult Volunteer Information Sheet, and a printable map!



4.0 Appendix

Teacher Checklist

By reading through this planning guide and completing the checklist below, you and your students will be prepared to have an exciting and educational day on site!

Administration:

- Complete online booking confirmation form** - *an educator will send you the link*
- Inform school administration and complete internal forms
- Arrange Emergency Contact Number (cell phone)
- List of student emergency contacts and phone numbers
- Review student medical conditions and ensure students bring necessary medications
- Provide insight to Inside Education staff to help ensure your all your students have a successful day (mobility concerns, individual program plans, etc.)

Transportation:

- Book busing, confirm arrival and departure times (bus must stay on-site for day)
- Provide bus driver with a copy of map & directions (see Appendix)
- Obtain telephone number of bus driver in case of emergency
- Arrange follow vehicle to stay on-site for the day

Parent and Volunteer Information:

- Arrange for volunteers (**1 adult for 5-6 students**); ensure they each have a map & directions to the site
- Distribute volunteer information sheet (**see Appendix**)
- Assign volunteers to field study groups

Student Information and Activities

- Distribute and review **student checklist (see Appendix)**
- Review field trip expectations with your students

WHAT TO BRING ON THE DAY OF THE PROGRAM:

1. Map to the site
2. Class list and list of adult volunteers
3. Emergency cell phone
4. Extra pencils and sharpener
5. Student medical forms and necessary medication
6. Inside Education contact information: 780-421-1497

After the Program

- Provide invoice to Inside Education to access busing subsidy
- Complete post-field program survey (and get your school's name in the hat to win a guaranteed spot next field season!)
- Congratulation yourself on a field trip well done!



The Cooking Lake - Blackfoot Recreation Area Forest Field Program

Student Checklist

Our class is visiting Cooking Lake on:

(Date)

This field study program is completely outdoors, with no access to heated shelter. Inside Education run our programs rain, snow, or shine, and we will often leave the trails and walk through the forested areas or open grasslands. Often the weather at Cooking Lake - Blackfoot Recreation Area is different than the Edmonton region and can change quickly. Please check the weather forecast and come prepared for anything!

What I should bring with me:

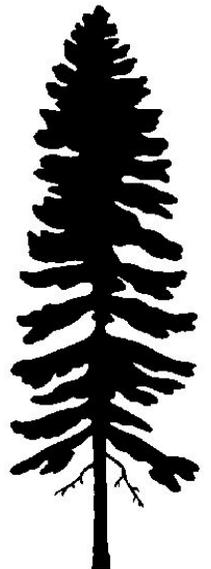
- Pencil**
- Small backpack or daypack (*feel free to leave heavy books and binders at school!*)
- Hearty lunch and snack
- Full water bottle** (*there is no drinking water on site*)
- Ana-kits, inhalers or other medications (*as required*)
- Sturdy footwear (*no light fabric shoes or sandals*)
- Extra** socks
- Sweater / Jacket** (*it is shady in the forest and often quite cool*)

Cool/Cold Days

- Rain Gear (*waterproof jacket / pants, or a garbage bag works just fine*)
- Extra** sweater / jacket
- Toque / Mitts (*never a bad idea – small and easy to pack*)
- Rubber boots or waterproof insulated snow boots

Warm/Hot Days

- Hat
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Extra water





The Cooking Lake - Blackfoot Recreation Area Forest Field Program

Adult Volunteer Information Sheet

Thanks so much for volunteering for this field trip! Inside Education staff appreciate your help in ensuring a successful field trip to Cooking Lake. In fact, we could not do this without you!

This field study program is completely outdoors, with no access to heated shelter. We run our programs rain, snow, or shine, and we will often leave the trails and walk through the forested areas or open grasslands. Often the weather at Cooking Lake - Blackfoot Recreation Area is different than the Edmonton region and can change quickly.

What to Bring:

- Weather appropriate clothing and sturdy footwear
- Water bottle
- Ana-kits, inhalers, or other medication as required
- A backpack
- A hearty snack and lunch

Example program outline:

9:45 am – 10:00 am Arrival to Site
10:00 am - 12:00 pm Morning Program
12:00 pm - 12:30 pm Lunch Break
12:30 pm – 1:45 pm Afternoon Program
1:45 – 2:00 Wrap-Up and Departure

An experienced educator leads the program; however, we value your help in directing and focusing the students' attention through the various activities.

Tips to keep in mind:

- ▶ **Interact with all of the students in your group.** Ensure that all students have an opportunity to participate in activities.
- ▶ **You are a role model: lead by example during the program.** Demonstrate care for the natural environment by picking up garbage and staying on trails.
- ▶ **Be involved.** Listen to directions, ask questions, and please take part in activities!
- ▶ **Don't do the work for the students.** Let students think through a problem on their own before giving them hints or tips.



The Cooking Lake - Blackfoot Recreation Area Forest Field Program Map & Directions

The Cooking Lake - Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area is approximately 30 kilometers east of Edmonton. Inside Education Staff will be waiting in the parking area just next to the toilets and Picnic Area of the **Waskahegan Staging Area** in the Cooking Lake – Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area

Google Maps: Typing “Waskahegan Staging Area” into Google Maps will show you the correct location. Turn on satellite view to see the layout of the parking lot. We will be at the south end.

➤ **Yellowhead/Highway 16:**

If coming from Edmonton, take Highway 16 headed eastbound, turn right (South) onto Range Road 210 and follow the road approximately 7 kilometers.

➤ **Sherwood Park Freeway:**

If coming from Edmonton, the Sherwood Park Freeway becomes Wye Road and Secondary Highway 630. Turn left (North) onto Range Road 210 and travel approximately 7 kilometers.

Access Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area (Waskahegan Staging Area) from Range Road 210. The road to enter the site is on the east side of R.R. 210.

Drive past the Interpretive Centre and Park Office (located on your left hand side). Turn right to park in the south lot beside the outdoor toilets (do not park on the horseback riding side of the parking lot).

