

2025

# Student Forest Field Trips

Inside Education is proud to report on another successful year of providing no-cost, high-quality forest education field trips for K-12 students at seven field sites across the province.



The field sites where these events took place are located on the traditional territories of the Treaty 6, 7, and 8 First Nations, as well as across Districts 3, 4, 8, 13, 17, and 21 of the Métis Nation. Inside Education respectfully acknowledges the Indigenous Peoples who have lived on and cared for this land since time immemorial.

## Overview

Thanks to the support of the Forestry Futures Alliance, FRIAA, and our various forestry program partners, Inside Education facilitated successful field programming in May, June, September and October of 2025.

Students and teachers from urban, rural and Indigenous communities across Alberta participated in programming at the following field sites:

- Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area (Edmonton)
- Des Crossley Demonstration Forest (Rocky Mountain House)
- Boreal Wetland Centre at Evergreen Park (Grande Prairie)
- Gregoire Lake Provincial Park (Rural Municipality of Wood Buffalo)
- Huestis Demonstration Forest (Whitecourt)
- Three Herons Conservation Area (Diamond Valley)

A total of 6,365 students and 992 teachers and adult volunteers participated in forest field programming in 2025.

We are pleased to share the highlights from the spring and fall 2025 field seasons.



# Participants and Program Impact

A total of **6,365** students from **289** classes at **126** unique schools attended forest field programs at Inside Education forest field sites in May, June, September and October, 2025.

Inside Education would also like to thank the **992** teachers and adult volunteers whose support helped make our field trips a success.

Spring 2025:	Elementary		Junior High		Senior High		TOTAL	
	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students
<b>Cooking Lake</b>	48	1,077	16	378	2	52	66	1,507
<b>Des Crossley</b>	14	323	5	108	10	150	29	581
<b>Boreal Wetland Centre</b>	30	645	2	48	-	-	32	693
<b>Gregoire Lake</b>	12	285	1	30	1	24	14	339
<b>Huestis</b>	2	65	3	44	-	-	5	109
<b>Jumpingpound</b>	32	693	16	422	2	38	50	1,153
<b>Three Herons</b>	2	36	-	-	2	23	4	59
<b>TOTAL</b>	140	3,124	43	1,030	17	287	<b>200</b>	<b>4,441</b>

Fall 2025:	Elementary		Junior High		Senior High		TOTAL	
	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students
<b>Cooking Lake</b>	24	522	11	261	1	10	36	793
<b>Des Crossley</b>	7	108	1	14	1	16	9	138
<b>Boreal Wetland Centre</b>	8	203	4	107	-	-	12	310
<b>Gregoire Lake</b>	4	92	-	-	-	-	4	92
<b>Huestis</b>	5	147	4	27	1	17	10	191
<b>Jumpingpound</b>	9	229	7	109	2	62	18	400
<b>TOTAL</b>	57	1,301	26	504	5	105	<b>89</b>	<b>1,924</b>

# Participants and Program Impact

Throughout the 2025 field season, schools from across the province attended forest programming at our 7 forest field sites. In total, **38** unique communities from across Alberta visited forest field sites in 2025:

- Airdrie
- Bawlf
- Beaumont
- Bentley
- Big Valley
- Blairmore
- Calgary
- Camrose
- Chestermere
- Driftpile
- Eden Valley
- Edmonton
- Fort McMurray
- Fort Saskatchewan
- Grande Prairie
- Hanna
- Lacombe
- Leduc
- Maskwacis
- O'Chiese First Nation
- Penhold
- Ponoka
- Red Deer
- Rocky Mountain House
- Ryley
- Sexsmith
- Sherwood Park
- St. Albert
- Stony Plain
- Strathmore
- Sturgeon County
- Sturgeon Lake
- Sundre
- Swan Hills
- Sylvan Lake
- Tofield
- Vermilion
- Whitecourt

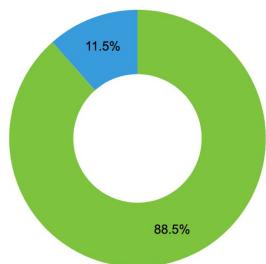


## Program Feedback

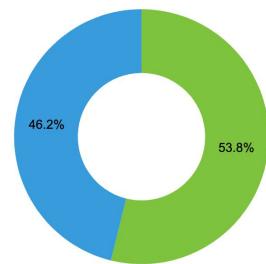
After each field program, a survey is sent to participating teachers allowing program staff to evaluate the effectiveness of our student forestry field trip programming. Overall, the responses indicate that our forestry field trips play a vital role in accessible forest education through low-cost programming and professional program leaders. We continue to link to curriculum objectives and expose students to a variety of forest and forestry perspectives.

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

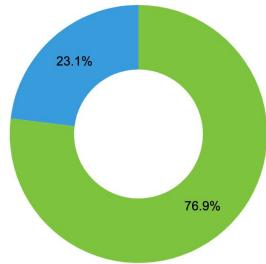
Opportunity for low-cost programming



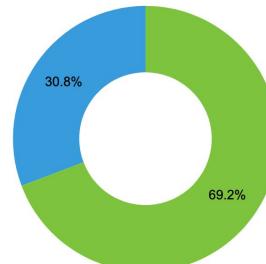
Linking to curriculum objectives



Providing a professionally led outdoor education program



Exposing students to numerous values of Alberta's forests



● Exceeding

● Meeting

Average overall value rating of forest field programming:

**9.3/10**

**"This trip was amazing. My students were engaged the whole time. They were able to stay active, be outside, and learn about the world around them. There are no better goals for a field trip!"**

**Bobbi Ferguson, O'Chiese First Nation School, O'Chiese First Nation**

**"Being in the forest made me love the forest more"**

**Student, Airdrie Christian Academy, Airdrie**

**"I absolutely love how connected your program was to our science curriculum- well thought out and fit to a T!"**

**Nicole Gruntman, Mattie McCullough Elementary School, Red Deer**

# Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area

In spring and fall 2025, Edmonton-area schools had the opportunity to program with Inside Education at **Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area**.

Cooking Lake-Blackfoot is a 97km<sup>2</sup> site managed by Alberta Parks and located east of Edmonton in the Beaver Hills Biosphere. Forest programs run from the Waskahegan Staging Area, which features both forest and wetland ecosystems.

In the 2025 field season, forest programs were in extremely high demand. Schools traveled from all over Edmonton and surrounding areas, including Stettler, Maskwacis, and Vermilion to attend the program.



## Participants at Cooking Lake - Spring 2025

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	48	1,077
Junior High	16	378
Senior High	2	52
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>1,507</b>

## Participants at Cooking Lake - Fall 2025

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	24	522
Junior High	11	261
Senior High	1	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>793</b>

**“The program provided an authentic opportunity for our students to learn in an environment they would never have a chance to be in.”**

*- Melissa Andrews, John A. McDougall, Edmonton*

# Des Crossley Demonstration Forest

Des Crossley Demonstration Forest is a former research site that provides a unique and valuable opportunity for showcasing the effects of different forest management techniques over time.

During the spring and fall of 2025, Inside Education hosted students from eleven communities in the central Alberta area. Classes make the trip from as close as Rocky Mountain House, to as far away as Hanna. Many of these schools are rural schools with limited access to field trip experiences.



## Participants at Des Crossley - Spring 2025

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	14	323
Junior High	5	108
Senior High	10	150
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>581</b>

## Participants at Des Crossley - Fall 2025

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	7	108
Junior High	1	14
Senior High	1	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>138</b>

**“I think my kids learned more about forests ecosystems in one field trip than they did in a whole unit of science.”**

*- Lindsay Nylander, Spruceview Homeschoolers, Sylvan Lake*

## Boreal Wetland Centre at Evergreen Park

Under the management of Ducks Unlimited, the Boreal Wetland Centre is a unique site that offers wetland, forest, and natural resource education opportunities. Located at the edge of Grande Prairie in Evergreen Park, it serves the northwest corner of Alberta.

Over 1000 students visited this site in 2025. The addition of an Education Program Coordinator operating out of Grande Prairie in 2024 allowed for higher attendance in 2025 and for classes from more schools and communities to attend the program.

### Participants at Boreal Wetlands Centre - Spring 2025

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	30	645
Junior High	2	48
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>693</b>



### Participants at Boreal Wetlands Centre - Fall 2025

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	8	203
Junior High	4	107
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>310</b>

**“This programming shows a high commitment to aligning with the curriculum and has updated to reflect new outcomes. Staff are knowledgeable and activities were engaging.”**

- *Desiree White, Parkside Montessori, Grande Prairie*

# Gregoire Lake Provincial Park

Gregoire Lake Provincial Park mainly hosts students from within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. This unique site includes a boreal forest ecosystem on the edge of Willow Lake.

Thanks to a collaboration with Alberta Parks, Inside Education is granted access to the park outside of the regular season, allowing students to explore the boreal forest ecosystem where their communities reside.

**"It was very much relevant to the curriculum, extremely well planned, managed and organised."**

*- Jigna Chaudhari, Fort McMurray Composite High School, Fort McMurray*

## Participants at Gregoire Lake - Spring 2025

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	12	285
Junior High	1	30
Senior High	1	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>339</b>

## Participants at Gregoire Lake - Fall 2025

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	4	92
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>92</b>



# Huestis Demonstration Forest

Huestis Demonstration Forest is a 10 km<sup>2</sup> section of boreal forest that exhibits sustainable forest management for students in the communities surrounding Whitecourt.

Throughout the 2025 field seasons, schools visited Huestis from Whitecourt and the surrounding areas, including the Indigenous communities of Driftpile and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation.



## Participants at Huestis - Spring 2025

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	2	65
Junior High	3	44
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>109</b>

## Participants at Huestis - Fall 2025

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	5	147
Junior High	4	27
Senior High	1	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>191</b>

**“It was a fantastic program and the staff were very knowledgeable. The staff were very enthusiastic about their jobs and eager to share knowledge with the students. They almost convinced me to go back to school for forestry! It was a fantastic day and would highly recommend to other schools.”**

*- Tresa Brodersen, Swan Hills School, Swan Hills*

# Jumpingpound Demonstration Forest

As a multi-use area, including recreation, tree harvesting, a pipeline, and grazing, Jumpingpound Demonstration Forest offers students the opportunity to explore a diverse forest ecosystem that is used by multiple stakeholders.

Jumpingpound Demonstration Forest serves schools in Calgary and the surrounding area. Being located close to a large city, programs at this site are always in high demand. Every year effort is made to accommodate a blend of returning schools and schools that are new to the Calgary-area forest field programs.

## Participants at Jumpingpound - Spring 2025

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	32	693
Junior High	16	422
High School	2	38
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>1,153</b>

## Participants at Jumpingpound - Fall 2025

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	9	229
Junior High	7	109
High School	2	62
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>400</b>



**“Honestly, the program was amazing. It aligned so well with our curriculum, the location was beautiful and the educators were great. Would HIGHLY recommend this trip and program!”**

*- Siobhan Hogg, Westmount Charter School, Calgary*

# Three Herons Conservation Area

As a small Nature Conservancy of Canada site, Three Herons offers many unique features, including mixed forest, shrubland, and a creek. The junior and senior high program offered here is distinct from other field sites, focusing on water, wildlife, and conservation.

In spring 2025, we supplemented our Three Herons offerings with a modified elementary forest program, which expanded our reach to include younger students. This program focuses on water and forest ecosystems, considering their interactions and impacts on each other.

Unfortunately, with an extra high volume of rain in spring 2025 resulting in flooding and damage to the trail system, the site had to be closed midway through the season. This closure continued into our fall 2025 season and will continue until repairs are finished.

We hope to return to Three Herons when repairs are complete, to see this diverse and unique area continue to grow in interest and use.



## Participants at Three Herons - Spring 2025

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	2	36
Senior High	2	23
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>59</b>

**“It’s nice to see teenagers get excited about nature.”**

*- Brydie Fee, Central Memorial High School, Calgary*

# Summary and Futures

Inside Education and our Forestry Futures Alliance Partners take pride in the hands-on learning opportunities at our forest field sites that provide a strong foundation for environmental stewardship among Alberta schools.

In the hopes of expanding our reach and incorporating more of the new K-6 Alberta Program of Studies, a new Grade 3 forest field program was launched in fall of 2025. We hope to see this new program continue to grow in interest in the future as a relevant learning opportunity for teachers and students.

Although there was a high volume of requests for the fall 2025 field season, many programs had to be postponed due to the Alberta's Teachers Strike that occurred in October. Our aim is to reschedule and deliver programs to the impacted schools in spring 2026 instead.

Inside Education looks forward to continuing to provide high-quality forest and forestry education as we continue into 2026, including forest field programming, teacher professional development opportunities and students summits, including the return of the Regenerate Forest & Wildlife Youth Leadership Summit in 2026.

## Contact

For more information contact:

**Inside Education Society of Alberta**

[www.InsideEducation.ca](http://www.InsideEducation.ca)



**Natalie Graveline** Program Manager | [ngraveline@insideeducation.ca](mailto:ngraveline@insideeducation.ca)

**Kathryn Wagner** Executive Director | [kwagner@insideeducation.ca](mailto:kwagner@insideeducation.ca)

