

URBAN FOREST PROGRAMMING

SPRING 2016
REPORT



Grade 4 students from J.H. Picard getting ready for a forest scavenger hunt at Cooking Lake

Forest Education in the Classroom and the Field!

Spring 2016 was an exciting time at Inside Education, as we added **Urban Forest Programming** to our list of programs! This included a new classroom program as well as starting up field programming at Cooking Lake again after a 8 year hiatus!

Thanks to the support of our generous program partners from Alberta Environment and Parks, Millar Western Forest Products, Forest Research and Innovation Association of Alberta (FRIAA), Alberta Forest Products Association (AFPA) and Edmonton Community Foundations, forest programming for urban centres has found it's place again within Inside Education's program repertoire. **2125 students** in total had the opportunity to experience forest education through the classroom or field programs this spring!

Classroom programming took place in 3 major urban centres within Alberta in March and April in 2016. 961 students had forest education come into their classroom during this time period!

Another opportunity for forest programming was presented to Edmonton area schools in the form of field programming at *Cooking Lake - Blackfoot Wildlife, Grazing and Provincial Recreation Area*. In May and June 2016, **1164 students** had the opportunity to develop their connection to Alberta's forests through experiential learning.

Urban forest programming has allowed for elementary, junior high and senior high students to explore forest ecosystems, land use, natural resource development, trees, forest products and stewardship through hands-on, curriculum-linked programs.

In This Report:

CLASSROOM PROGRAM

Program Overview	2
Participation	2
Program Evaluation	3
Partnership & Support	3
Teacher and Student Feedback	4
Summary	4

COOKING LAKE FIELD PROGRAM

Program Participation	5
Program Overview	5
Partnerships and Support	6
Program Evaluation & Feedback	7
Summary	9

URBAN FOREST PROGRAM

SUMMARY	9
---------	---

"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn"
- Benjamin Franklin



Urban Forest Classroom Education Pilot Program



Grade 6 students at Sweet Grass School discussing possible management options during the HarvestCraft activity

Program Overview

961 students from 41 classes at 17 schools were visited in March and April as part of the Forest Classroom Education Pilot Program. The Forest Classroom Presentation was developed with consideration of the Grade 6 Science curriculum, specifically Unit E: Trees and Forests.

The objectives of the presentation were to:

- Examine the many values of forests, including products and services provided as well as intrinsic value
- Explore the forest beyond the trees by investigating ecology, careers and disturbances in forests
- Investigate the land use of Alberta's forests, and how the many users work together in taking care of the forest
- Create a connection between the student's use of forests and how that affects the environment
- Empower student environmental stewardship through critical thinking of the decisions people make everyday

The 1-hour classroom program examined the themes of managed vs. unmanaged forests; sustainable forest harvesting; cooperation between forest users; forest products; and forest stewardship. These were examined through multi-media presentations (using Inside Education's "It's Our Forest" videos), interactive games, and a critical thinking activity where students made forest management decisions as a group.

The program combined use of existing Inside Education resources with the development of a "HarvestCraft" game for use in the designing of a harvesting plan in a multiple-use forest landscape.

Connecting urban students to the forests around them helps create a lifetime sense of stewardship for Alberta's great resource. By considering the multiple ways in which forests are used, and the variety of places forests can be found, students are able to discover the many connections that they have with Alberta's forests.

Schools Visited

Edmonton

St. Alphonsus
Bishop Savaryn
Inglewood
Sweet Grass School
Kameyosek
Centennial School
Mother Teresa
Grandin School
Calder School

Calgary

Masters Academy
St. Martha
Muriel Clayton
St. Basil

Grande Prairie

Crystal Park
Derek Taylor

Lacombe

Terrace Ridge School

Indus

Indus School

Who did we reach?

961 Students

41 Classes

17 Schools

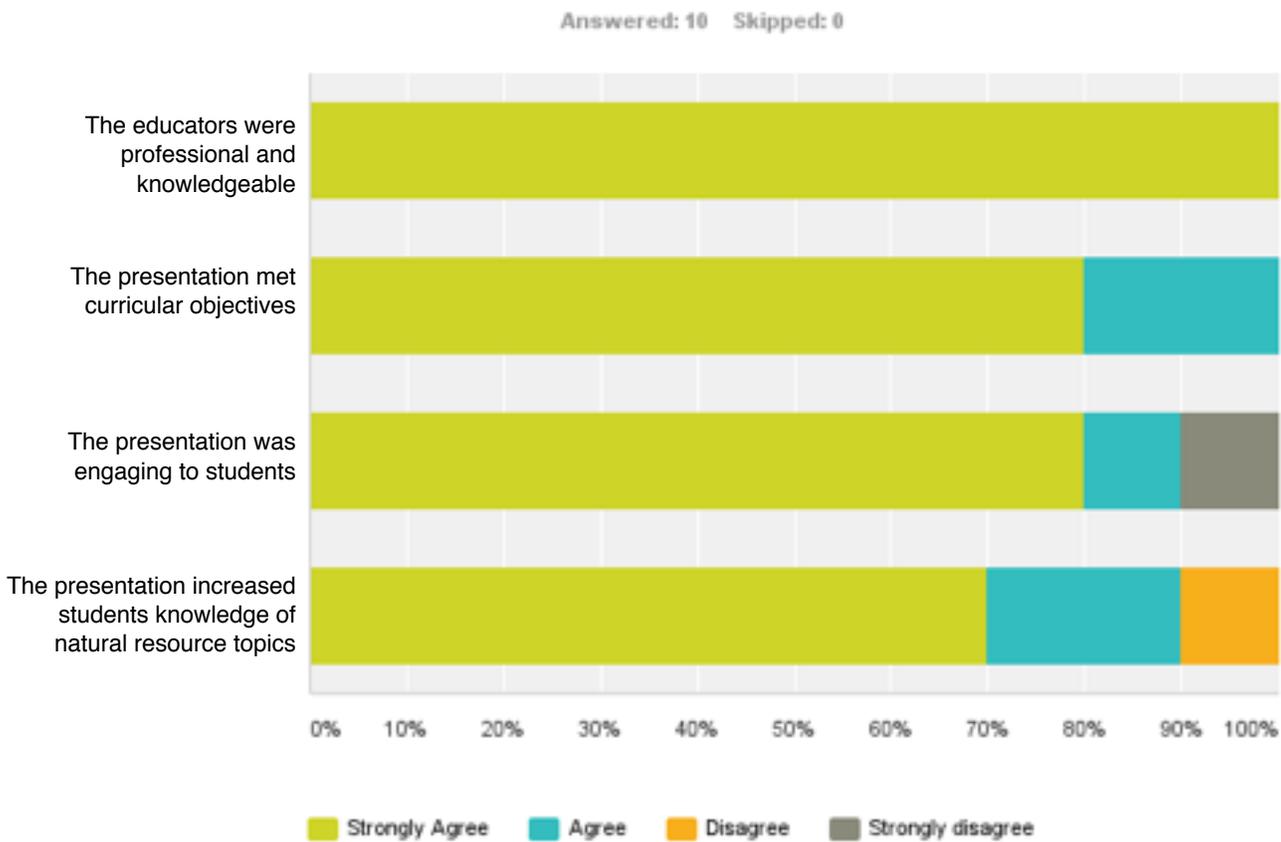
5 Communities

Program Evaluation

Teachers were given the opportunity to evaluate the Forest Classroom Education Program through an online survey. This information is of utmost value as we continue to develop the pilot program into the 2016-2017 school year. Following are some evaluation information we collected.

9/10 teachers rated the classroom program to be Highly or Somewhat Valuable
100% of respondents agreed that program objectives were met

Figure 1: Evaluation of how well the program addressed the indicated criteria:



Partnership and Support

Thank you to the generous sponsorship provide by the following organizations:



Successes:

- Development of new classroom program pertaining to Alberta's Forests
- Feedback received allowing for evaluation and continued development of the program
- Meaningful incorporation of existing Inside Education resources
- Development of new program resources

Challenges:

- Time constraints on getting through entire program



Sweet Grass School students put their heads together to make sustainable forest management decisions

Classroom Program Summary

Inside Education is proud to have piloted the Urban Forest Classroom Education Program in Spring 2016. With the experience and feedback we've received, Inside Education looks forward to bringing the best version of forest classroom education to students and teachers in the 2016-2017 school year.

Teacher and Student Feedback

"The review of key forestry concepts was timely and valuable. It allowed my kids to reconnect to the unit from September in an engaging and active way."

- Gary Smith, Inglewood School, Edmonton

"I loved the part where we closed our eyes and imagined we were in the forest. Call me crazy, but I felt like I was really there!"

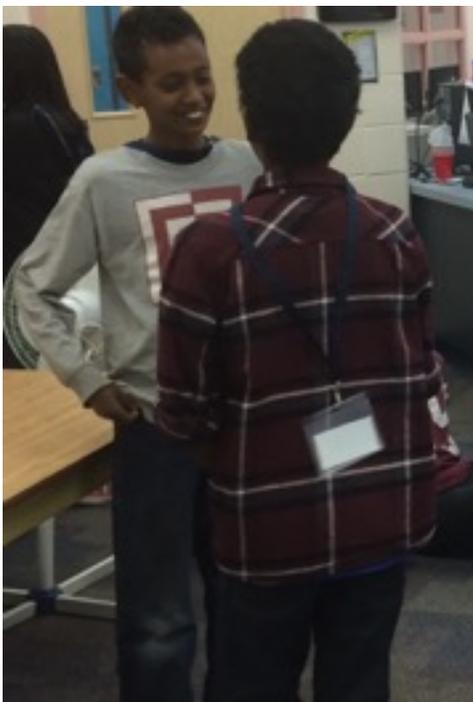
- Student, Kameyosek School, Edmonton

"This program helped to increase the students interest in trees and forests and made them more aware of the importance of them."

- Laura Morel, St. Martha School, Calgary

"Private industry/stewardship play an enormous role in our province and exposing their perspective to students is crucial in developing well rounded and informed citizens."

- Don Henderson, Kameyosek School,



What "wood" I make? Students from Calgary explore interesting forest products

Cooking Lake Forest Field Program

Participation

Program	# of Students	# of Classes	# of Adults
Grade 4	394	17	82
Grade 6	390	18	71
Junior High	293	11	32
Senior High	87	5	12
Total	1164	51	197

Program Overview

The Cooking Lake - Blackfoot Forest education program was well-received in the 2016 spring field season. 1164 students visited the site between May 4th and June 24th, with overflow onto waiting lists as interest exceeded the capacity of our programming at the site.

Re-establishment of the Cooking Lake - Blackfoot Forest education program has provided students in Edmonton with an opportunity for low-cost hands-on, outdoor education programming.

Cooking Lake Forest Programs are curriculum-based, to ensure the greatest value for teachers. The curriculum connections are as follows:

Grade 4 - Plant Growth and Changes; Alberta, a Sense of the Land; Waste in our World

Grade 6 - Trees and Forest; Evidence and Investigations

Grade 7 - Plants for Food and Fibre; Ecosystems and Interactions

Sr. High - CTS - Natural Resources - Forestry/Wildlife, Environment & Outdoor Education, Biology 20/30 Changes in Living Systems; Ecosystems and Population change.



Grade 4 students from J.H. Picard identifying plants at Cooking Lake

Cooking Lake forest programming combines an interpretive hike, curriculum-linked, student-lead activities and discussions about our natural resources. The program is designed to develop student's critical thinking skills through reflection and self-discovery, and to recognize the importance of the variety of groups that use Alberta's forests. Finally, a sense of stewardship is encouraged through personal experiences and connections students make with the forest.

Partnerships and Support

The program at Cooking Lake was made possible by sponsorship and in-kind support by the following organizations: **Alberta Forest Products Association, Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta, Millar Western Forest Products, Edmonton Community Foundation** and **Environment and Parks**.

The facilities and trails were excellently maintained for the duration of programming at Cooking Lake by the Government of Alberta employees and volunteers working at the recreation area. This helped ensure smooth and safe programming conditions.



Grade 6 students from Ben Calf Robe explore the trees at Cooking Lake a little more intimately

"I loved hugging the trees!" "I've never seen a tree without my eyes!"
- Grade 6 students from Pine Street School

"I liked pretending to be a squirrel!"
- Grade 4 student from St. Elizabeth Seton

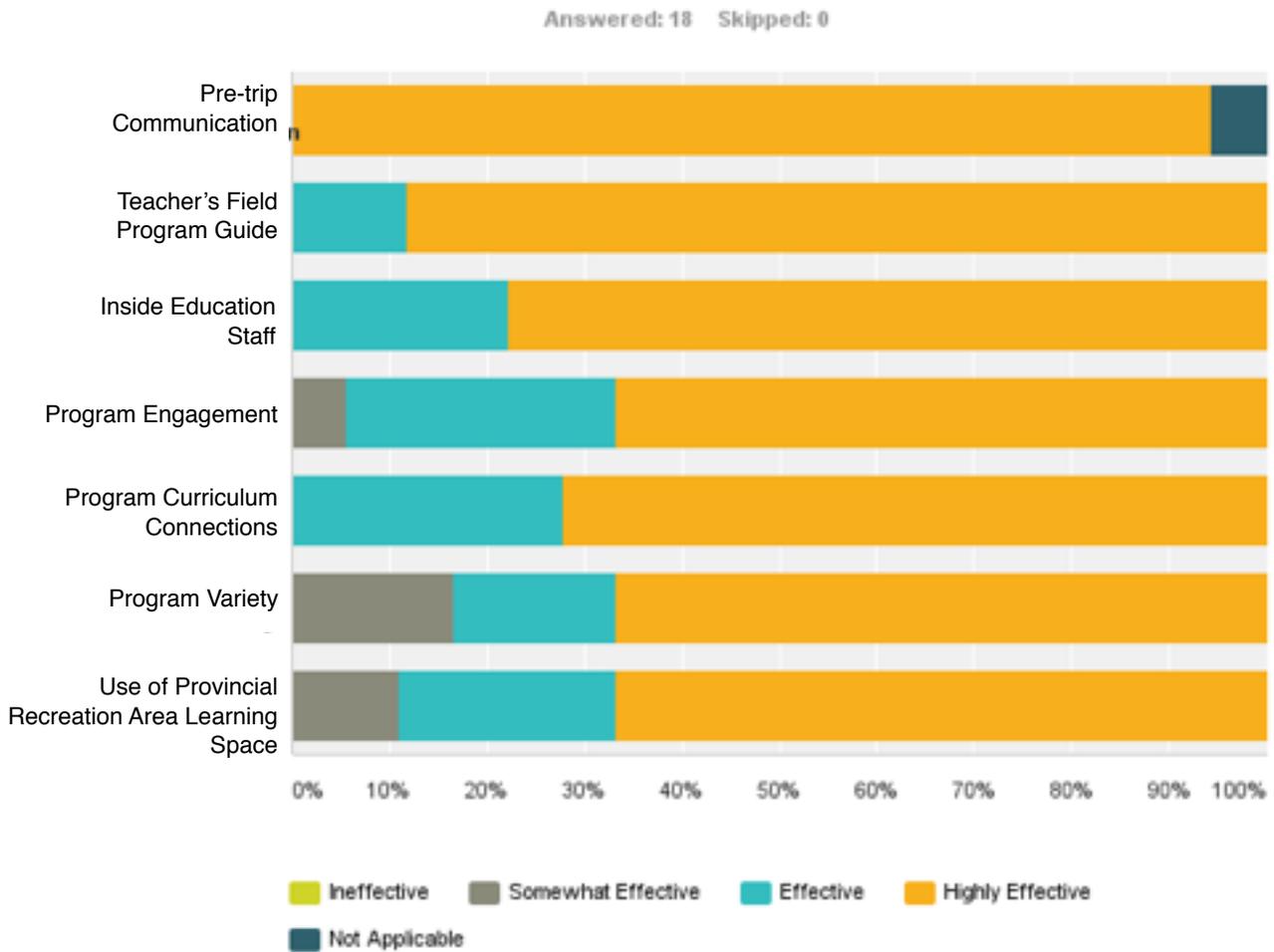


Program Evaluation

Teachers were given the opportunity to evaluate the Cooking Lake Forest Field Study Program through an online survey. This information is of utmost value as we continue to develop the program into the 2016-2017 school year. Following are some evaluation information we collected.

Overall average program rating given by teachers: **9.0 / 10**

Figure 2: Evaluation of the effectiveness of the indicated program components in providing an educational program

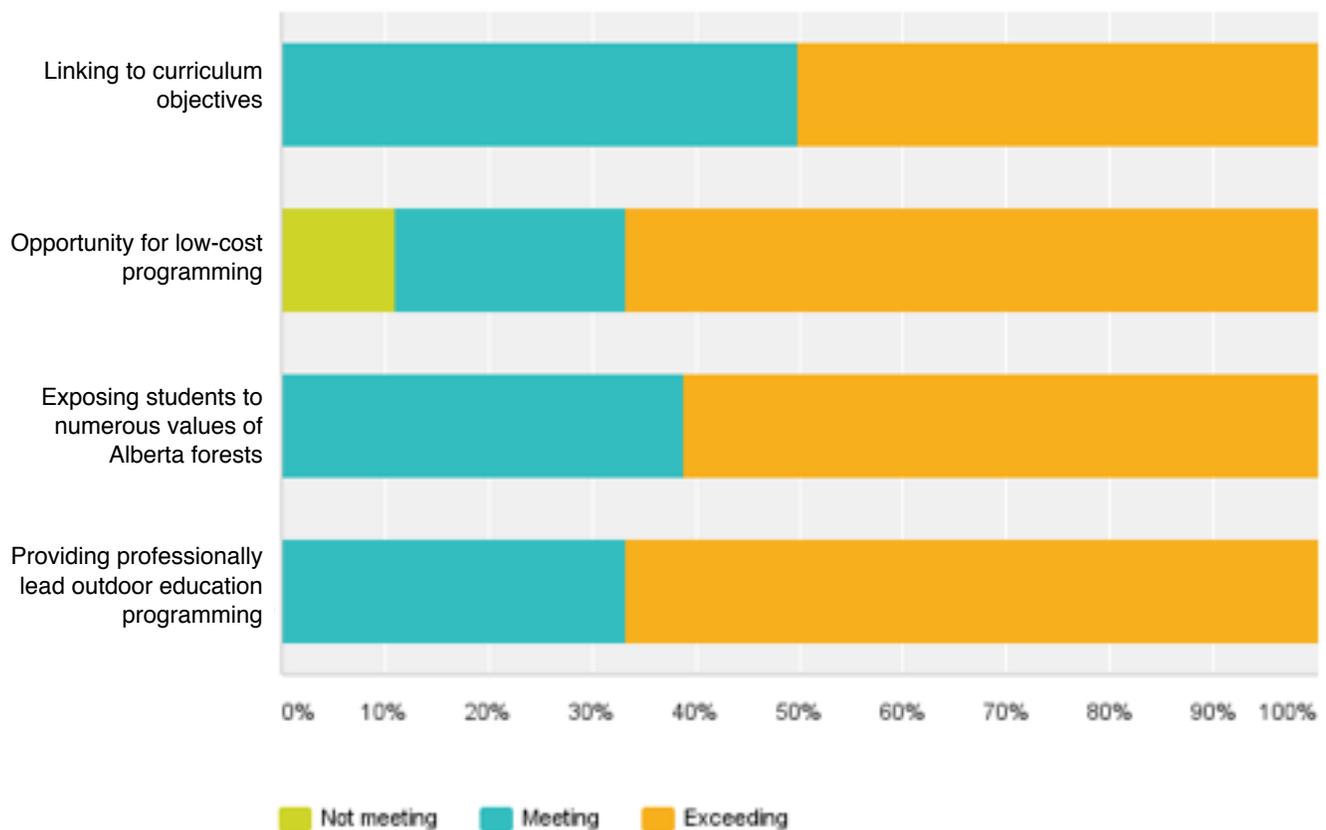


“The students had a really great time doing science and were inspired to take care of the environment. They got to experience and enjoy the beauty of nature. They wanted to learn more. The program leaders were knowledgeable, patient, kind and made learning fun.”

- Katharine Mah, Inner City High School

Figure 3: How well are the following goals being met with the Cooking Lake Forest Field Program

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



Grade 4 students experiencing the value of recreation at Cooking Lake

Many of my students could not get over how peaceful and relaxing it was. They were engaged and talked all week about what they saw, heard and learned.

- Salvador Galdamez, Gr 4 Teacher, John Paul I School

Students rarely get the opportunity to experience the forest in ways that we did on this field study. All students benefitted from the engaging activities and valuable connections made to the forest and our environment.

- Chris Sudyk, Gr 6 Teacher, Pine Street School

The programs you provide are great for students. It is especially nice because of the costs since we are a low income school and money can be tight for many of our students. The leaders you send out are top notch and give the students the best possible exposure!

- Paula Vinnick, Gr 4 Teacher, St. Elizabeth Seton School

Cooking Lake Forest Field Program Summary

In total, 1164 students from 25 schools in 7 communities joined us at Cooking Lake in the 2016 spring season. With the experience of a successful field season behind us and the valuable teacher feedback we have received, we will continue developing the Cooking Lake Forest Field program. We look forward to continuing programming at Cooking Lake in the Spring 2017 field season, providing more Edmonton area schools the hands-on experience Alberta's forests.



Successes:

- Provided experiential, outdoor education opportunities in the forest for students in Edmonton and area
- Feedback received allowing for evaluation and continued development of the program
- Successful and safe program delivery of programs to multiple age groups

Challenges:

- Find ways to improve curricular connections
- Improve the level of student engagement with our programs

Urban Forest Education Program Summary

Through classroom programming in Calgary, Edmonton, and Grande Prairie, as well as Cooking Lake Forest Field Programming, the **Urban Forest Education Program** reached **2125 students** across Alberta. 42 schools in 11 communities had access to forest education in the pilot year of Urban Forest Education.

With the valuable feedback we have received from teachers, as well as the experience we have gained this year, we look forward to continuing improvement of both programs to best suit the needs of Alberta students teachers for natural resource education. Moving forward, the next steps will be ensuring the programs provide information that is of value to Alberta students and teachers; increasing program engagement from the high level it is at currently; and

maintaining the important relationships with partners, sponsors and schools.

Inside Education is very excited to initiate and develop discussions about forests and forestry with Alberta's classes. These conversations can help students appreciate the value of forests as resources, and as vital parts of Alberta's ecosystems and environment. Hands-on learning, experiential education and engaging activities allow for students to discover our provinces forests in a fun and meaningful manner. These programs help develop a personal connection between students and the forest that can instill a sense of stewardship for our natural resources, as well as an understanding for the various groups using Alberta's forests every day.

For further information regarding:

Inside Education, please contact Steve McIsaac (smcisaac@insideeducation.ca)

Cooking Lake or Forest Classroom Programs, please contact Laura Pekkola (lpekkola@insideeducation.ca)