

Project Webfoot Spring 2016 Summary Report

Inside Education was pleased to again partner with Ducks Unlimited Canada to deliver another successful year of wetlands programming. During the Spring 2016, *Project Webfoot* provided an engaging learning experience to over **1600 grade five students** across Alberta.



Program Outline

The Project Webfoot program includes a teacher resource kit (distributed by Ducks Unlimited), a classroom presentation and an outdoor field study.

The Classroom Presentation

Students are engaged in a variety of hands-on activities and demonstrations that provide background knowledge and help to prepare them for their field study.

Themes include:

- ▶ classifying wetland ecosystems, plants, animals and invertebrates.
- ▶ exploring the value of wetlands by role playing human impacts and stewardship actions.
- ▶ identifying adaptations by transforming a student into a wetland critter.
- ▶ Responsible uses of wetland ecosystems - including waterfowl hunting.

Classroom presentations were carried out for each of the program sites with the exception of the St. Albert/Big Lake field trip program.

The Field Study

The opportunity to visit a wetland in person is a unique experience for many students. During the field study, students participate in a variety of interactive station activities and experience invertebrate sampling (a highlight for sure!).

Themes include:

- ▶ exploring the wetland ecosystem using their senses.
- ▶ detecting evidence of wildlife and plant life found in a wetland.
- ▶ identifying aquatic invertebrate species and making connections to the health of the wetland.
- ▶ recognizing the value of wetlands and practicing stewardship.

By the Numbers

DUC Partner	Classes	Students	Teachers/Parents
DOW Chemical	5	122	7
Enerplus	3	75	6
Progressive Waste Solutions	32	800	117
Ducks Unlimited Canada*	24	628	62
Total	64	1625	192

* Wetland Discovery Days at John E. Poole Wetland (Big Lake)

28 Schools Participated in the Project Webfoot Program!

64 classes
1625 students
192 teachers & volunteers

DOW Chemical

West River's Edge - Fort Saskatchewan

- Ecole Parc Elementaire
- Fort Saskatchewan Elementary School
- James Mowat School

Progressive Waste Solutions

Frank Lake

- AB Daley School
- Blackie School
- Big Rock School
- Cayley School
- Dr. Morris Gibson School
- Good Shepherd School
- Spitzee School
- West Meadow School

Wetlands at Olds, Coronation, Didsbury

- Coronation School
- Deer Meadows School
- Westglen Elementary School

Enerplus

Wallace Park - Wainwright

- Wainwright Elementary School

John E. Poole Wetland Program

- A. Blair Macpherson School
- Prince Charles School
- Kameyosek School
- Lansdowne School
- Crawford Plains School
- Neil M. Ross School
- Fraser School
- Elmwood School
- St. Richard School
- Meyokumin School
- St. Dominic School
- Julia Kiniski School
- Hardisty School



EVALUATION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Successes

- Positive feedback from all participating schools.
- An ongoing commitment to safety ensured another incident free program year.
- Visiting established wetland sites that support station activities, pond dipping and provide interpretive learning opportunities.
- Reaching new schools and teachers who enjoyed the program for the first time.
- Continuing to support schools who look forward to the program every year through ongoing community sponsorship.
- Confirming partnerships several months prior to delivery, leaving time to coordinate the program calendar.
- Booking in advance of the field season and having firm commitments allowed flexibility for weather related rescheduling.
- Dedication from Ducks Unlimited in supporting the program and answering questions in a timely manner.
- Exploring new field study activities that were very well received.



Recommendations

- Continuing to establish how communication will be structured between sponsors, Ducks Unlimited, Inside Education and schools to ensure everyone is on the same page.
 - This could be streamlined somewhat at the John E. Poole program next year. While Inside Education appreciates the work done in scheduling the schools, it led to some onsite confusion (location, timing, where to go, etc.)
- **Making teacher resources available online or sending the binder to newly sponsored schools only.** Returning teachers commented that they already have multiple copies of the materials.
- Establishing (semi-) permanent signage at Frank Lake to avoid buses missing the turn off - this was a problem last year and continued this year.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Teachers were asked to **evaluate** how well Inside Education met its wetland education **program goals**.

And in their words, here is why the program is so valuable...

Having an educator express all the values of a wetland, while standing at one is incredible. The kids have the opportunity to hear, see and smell the wetland ecosystem. Invaluable learning opportunity!

Kellie McLeod, Dr. Morris Gibson School, Okotoks

Everything is additive. Our discussion of the wetlands starts in September, expands through October, gets viewed in the winter, and then revisited numerous times in the spring. Your program enhances our look at the environment around us.

Guy LaCoste, A.B. Daley School, Nanton

The opportunity for hands on experience was so valuable. The fact it was sponsored was wonderful as money is always tight, it provided an opportunity we may not have had.

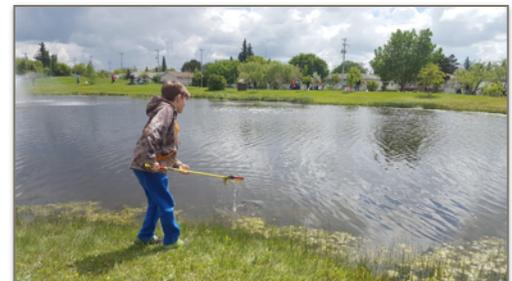
Janis Nelson, Wainwright Elementary School

This field trip provided an excellent overview of the wetland unit - helping to build prior knowledge for students to relate to as we cover some of the more specific outcomes related to the unit. Excellent format for organism identification in a wetland.

Elizabeth Weins, Westglen School, Didsbury

The class presentation was funny and provided lots of new facts to everyone; the slideshow was put together well. I loved that they provided guides for pond-dipping so we didn't have to guess which insect or creature it was. The stations were fun, well thought out and I enjoyed them. I would definitely go on this field trip again.

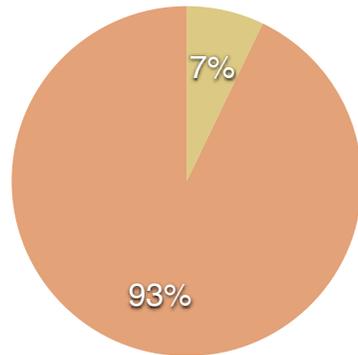
Graham Overn, James Mowat School, Fort Saskatchewan



Evaluation Data

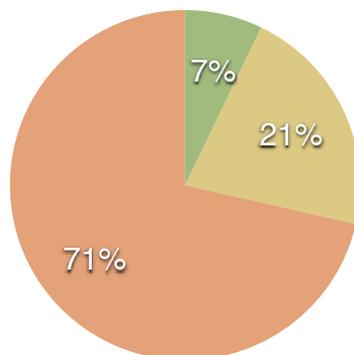
1) Please rate the effectiveness of the Project Webfoot *Field Experience*

● Ineffective ● Somewhat Effective
● Effective ● Highly Effective



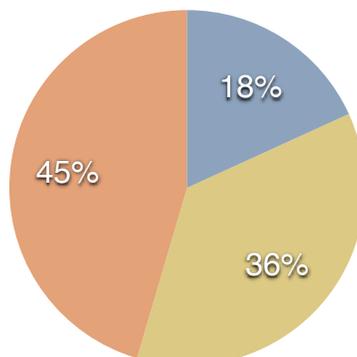
2) Please rate the effectiveness of the Project Webfoot Classroom Presentation

● Ineffective ● Somewhat Effective
● Effective ● Highly Effective



3) Please rate the effectiveness of the Project Webfoot learning resources (mailed).

● Ineffective ● Somewhat Effective
● Effective ● Highly Effective



Summary

The Project Webfoot education program continues to be an important part of the grade five wetland ecosystems unit for grade five classes across the province. It provides a one of a kind, interactive learning experience that enhances wetland understanding and appreciation. The ongoing commitment to both a classroom and field experience, notably beyond the 'just pond dipping' experience, which is often the experience at other field sites certainly sets this program apart.

We should also point out the pending move towards curriculum-review being (again) undertaken by Alberta Education. We believe issues related to sustainability, notably connectivity to climate change, will be an important component of the curriculum review. We also observe that the current Gr. 5 curriculum is not expected to change for a *minimum* four years from now, so there is ample time to contemplate a go-forward approach. We continue to believe there is ample desire and need for programs like Project Webfoot - especially as we endeavour to support *today's* teachers and students.

This has proven to be another successful school year with overwhelming positive feedback from both teachers and students. Inside Education values the opportunity to partner with Ducks Unlimited in the delivery of this important program and we look forward to another successful program season this fall and through the coming school year.

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