

Spring 2021

# DIY Forest Field Trip Program

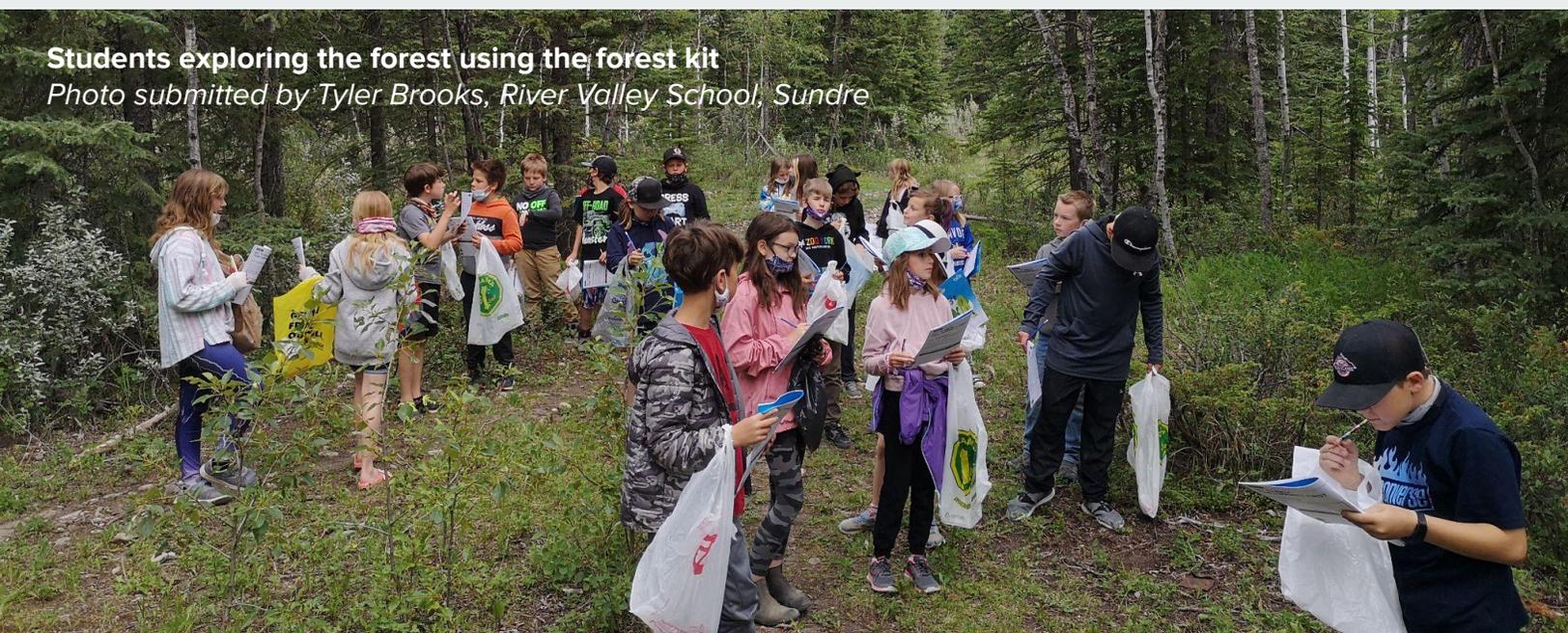
## Introduction

**Inside Education** has been delivering field programs at Demonstration Forest sites across Alberta for over 25 years. With the Covid-19 pandemic, Inside Education had to shift the focus from delivering engaging, in-person programs to creating meaningful experiences remotely. The DIY Forest Field Trip Program of Spring 2021 was designed to do just that.

The DIY Forest Field Trips combined Inside Education’s expertise in forestry and forest sciences with a ready-to-use kit of tools to help classes explore their local forests with sufficient knowledge and equipment. Even with schools being sent home for online learning for the first 3 weeks of May, Inside Education was still able to distribute 77 kits to 40 schools over the course of May and June of 2021.

The DIY Forest Field Trip Program provided teachers the opportunity to engage their students in hands-on learning about the forests around them, providing them with an outdoor experience that they might not have otherwise had the chance to participate in.

**Students exploring the forest using the forest kit**  
*Photo submitted by Tyler Brooks, River Valley School, Sundre*



# The Program

The DIY Forest Field Trip Programs were designed to give grade 4, 6 and junior high school students a curriculum-connected opportunity to learn about and experience forests first-hand. To reach this goal, the program was delivered in 2 components:



- VIRTUAL PRESENTATION** An Inside Education educator spent one hour with each class delivering curriculum-relevant information about forests and forestry to prepare the students for their outdoor field trip. The virtual presentation was also an opportunity for students and teachers to ask questions and begin the scientific inquiry process about the forests around them.
- FIELD TRIP KIT** A kit containing a class set of field kit materials, including student activity booklets and a teacher’s guide, were delivered to each class. The kit was designed to have everything needed for a forest field trip with minimal preparation required from the teachers.



## PROGRAM THEMES

The DIY Forest Field Trips explored important forest themes through curriculum-linked, grade appropriate activities. The Grade 4, 6 and Junior High programs all included activities based on the following themes:

- Scientific inquiry in the forest
- Tree Identification and Measurement
- Forest Products
- Wildlife Habitat Assessment
- Forest Health
- Soil Science/Health
- Forest Stewardship

# Participating Schools

Inside Education was able to reach **1603 students** from **77 classes** in **26 communities** with the DIY Forest Field Trip Program. The 40 participating schools are listed below.

- Anzac Community School** | Anzac
- Art Smith Aviation Academy** | Cold Lake
- Bill Woodward School** | Anzac
- C. Ian McLaren School** | Black Diamond
- Cayley School** | Cayley
- École Steffie Woima** | Sylvan Lake
- Elizabeth School** | Elizabeth Metis Settlement
- Father Mercredi** | Fort McMurray
- Fort Saskatchewan Elementary** | Fort Saskatchewan
- Gateway Christian School** | Red Deer
- Horse Hill School** | Edmonton
- Hythe School** | Hythe
- Isabelle Sellon School** | Blairmore
- Johnny Bright online school** | Edmonton
- Kameyosek** | Edmonton
- Lacombe Upper Elementary** | Lacombe
- Manachaban Middle School** | Cochrane
- Millarville Community School** | Millarville
- Namao School** | Namao
- NorthStar Academy** | Alberta
- Onoway School** | Onoway
- Our Lady of Peace** | Edmonton
- Pioneer Middle School** | Rocky Mountain House
- Queen Elizabeth** | Edmonton
- River Valley School** | Calgary
- River Valley School** | Sundre
- Robert W Zahara School** | Sexsmith
- Simon Fraser** | Calgary
- Sister Mary Phillips** | Fort McMurray
- St. Joan of Arc School** | Calgary
- St. Angela** | Edmonton
- St. Joan of Arc** | Calgary
- St. Kateri** | Fort McMurray
- St. Kateri** | Grande Prairie
- St. Matthew** | Rocky Mountain House
- Steele Heights School** | Edmonton
- Swan Hills School** | Swan Hills
- Westmount School** | Strathmore
- Woking School** | Woking
- Woodbridge Farms School** | Sherwood Park

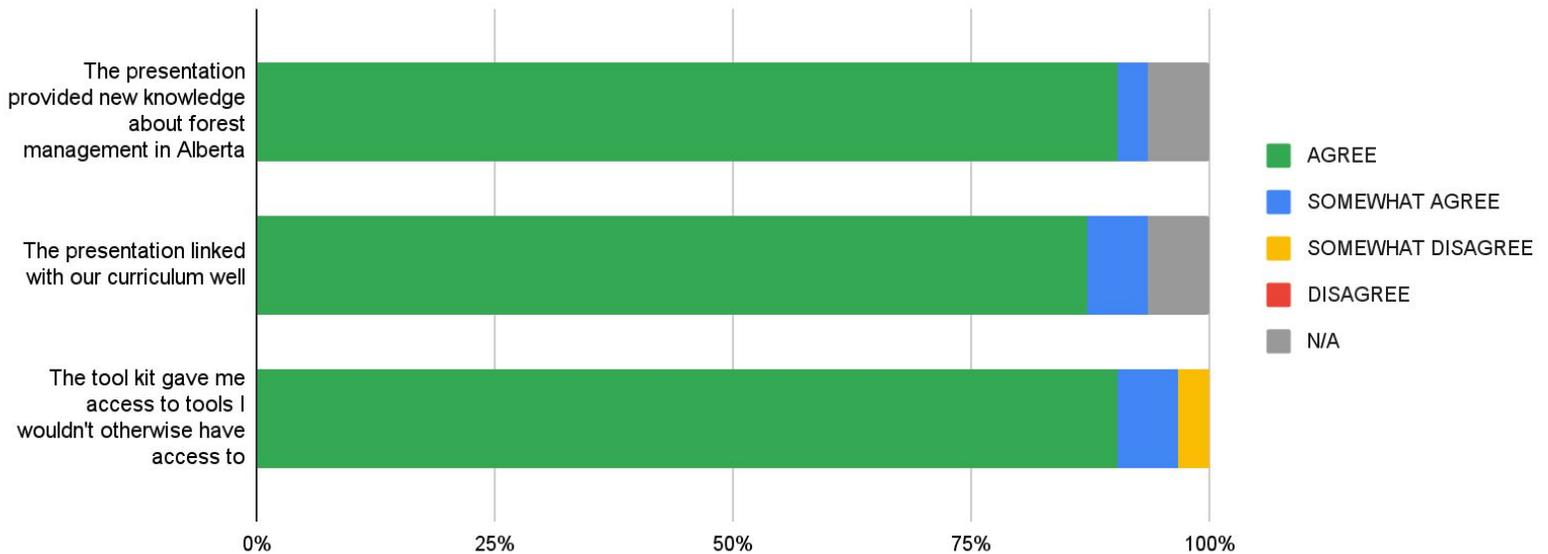


*Map of communities with schools that participated in the DIY Forest Field Trip Program.*

# Program Impact and Partners

The DIY Forest Field Trip Program allowed for teachers to lead their classes through outdoor forest programming when Inside Education was unable to program in person. In a post-program survey, feedback was gathered from 31 respondents, which is summarized in the figure below.

Impact of DIY Forest Field Trip Program on forest/forestry education of students (n=31)



**THANK YOU TO THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR PARTNERS INCLUDING THE FOREST RESOURCE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA AND ITS MEMBER COMPANIES. WE EXTEND OUR APPRECIATION TO THE FOLLOWING:**



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*“Having the opportunity to get outside, connect to the topics and to engage with learning in a hands-on way was a hugely positive experience for students.”*

**- Kim Higgins, Junior High teacher,  
Kisipatnahk School  
(Maskwacis)**

*“This was by far the best virtual field trip we participated in all year! Everything was so well prepared and organized. The students loved the hands-on materials and were so excited to spend the afternoon in the forest following our informational session. Students were so engaged and excited to participate in and share their findings. ”*

**- Stephanie Carrozza, Grade 4 teacher,  
Brookwood School (Spruce Grove)**



## Teacher Feedback

*“It brought awareness to how much wood is needed (volume) to build objects we use and what kinds of wood products are made (eg. pulp). The presentation helped me to see how dependent we are on wood products, too. I think it is great to educate our students about how forests are used and managed in our province. ”*

**- Deirdre Bray, Grade 6 teacher,  
Onoway Elementary**

*“It was one of the more amazing presentations we have had this year and I have signed up for next year because of it.”*

**- Jessica Petrov, Grade 9 teacher,  
Steele Heights (Calgary)**

*“[The kit] provided hands-on activities to make the theory meaningful - this tool kit often felt less like a “lab activity” and more like students were actually doing the work of a biologist”*

**- Meghann Elgert, Grade 6 teacher,  
Fort Saskatchewan Elementary**

## Summary and Futures

Inside Education is thrilled by the success of the Spring 2021 DIY Forest Field Trip Program. Visiting classes virtually and delivering field trip materials as a kit provided all classes an equal opportunity to access professional outdoor, forest educational programming, regardless of their location. Though in-person field programming at Demonstration Forest sites is preferred, the opportunity to reach a broader geographic area through virtual programming was beneficial.

Engaging classes in discovery of their local forests helps students to develop a valuable connection to their community forests, leading to improved awareness of the values of forests elsewhere in Alberta. The development of a virtual option for field programming will allow Inside Education to continue to engage remote communities in forest education, even when programming at Demonstration Forest sites is back to normal.

### Contact

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