

2024

# Student Forest Field Trips



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 four months of successful field programming in the spring and fall of 2024.

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

- Bunchberry Meadows Conservation Area (Edmonton)
- 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)

More than **8,169** students and **1,072** teachers and parent helpers participated in forest field programming in 2024.

We are pleased to share the highlights from the Spring and Fall 2024 field seasons.



# Participants and Program Impact

A total of **8,169** students from **360** classes at **214** unique schools attended forest field programs at Inside Education forest field sites in May, June, September and October, 2024.

Inside Education would also like to thank the **1,072** teachers and parent volunteers whose support helped make our field trips a success.

## Spring 2024:

	Elementary		Junior High		Senior High		TOTAL	
	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students
<b>Bunchberry Meadows</b>	42	919	13	278	1	20	56	1,217
<b>Cooking Lake</b>	35	898	-	-	1	7	36	905
<b>Des Crossley</b>	22	484	3	37	2	30	27	551
<b>Boreal Wetland Centre</b>	26	581	3	62	7	122	36	765
<b>Wood Buffalo</b>	11	240	5	131	-	-	16	371
<b>Huestis</b>	10	182	-	-	-	-	10	182
<b>Jumpingpound</b>	25	582	8	182	3	58	36	822
<b>Three Herons</b>	-	-	5	124	-	-	5	124
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>3,886</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>4,937</b>

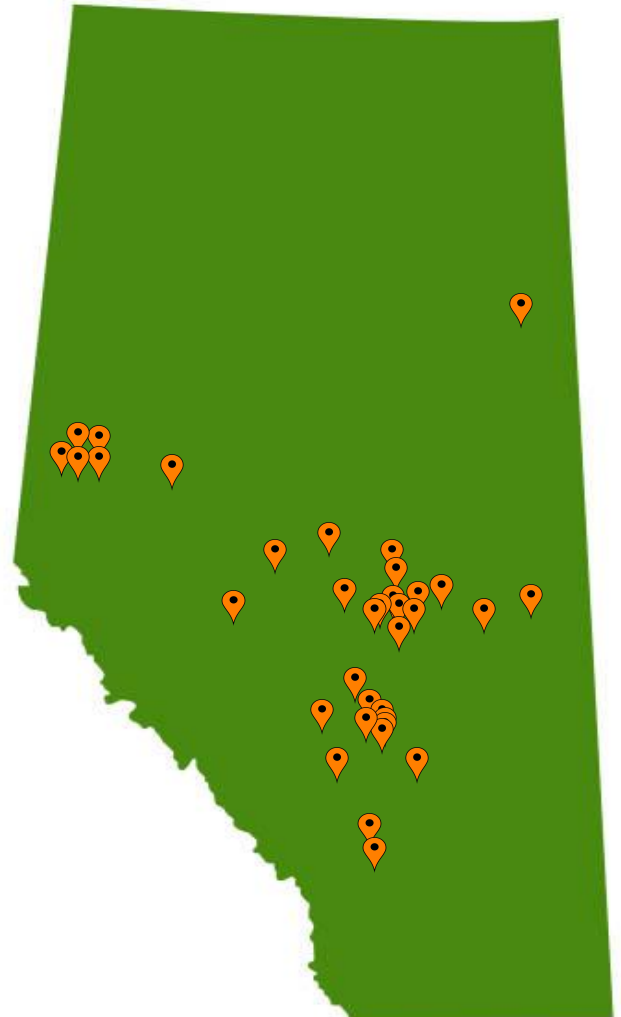
## Fall 2024:

	Elementary		Junior High		Senior High		TOTAL	
	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students
<b>Cooking Lake</b>	32	799	7	197	9	256	48	1,252
<b>Des Crossley</b>	11	254	7	120	5	114	23	488
<b>Boreal Wetland Centre</b>	8	181	14	42	3	70	25	293
<b>Wood Buffalo</b>	9	199	6	158	-	-	15	357
<b>Huestis</b>	-	-	2	70	1	20	3	90
<b>Jumpingpound</b>	16	407	7	148	8	119	31	674
<b>Three Herons</b>	1	18	2	60	-	-	3	78
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>1,858</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>3,232</b>

# Participants and Program Impact

Throughout the 2024 field season, schools from across the province attended forest programming at our 8 forest field sites. In total, **35** unique communities from across Alberta visited forest field sites in 2024:

- Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation
- Beaverlodge
- Bentley
- Blackfalds
- Bluffton
- Calgary
- Clairmont
- Clyde
- Edmonton
- Edson
- Fort Assiniboine
- Fort McMurray
- Fort Saskatchewan
- Grande Prairie
- La Glace
- Lamont
- Lamont
- Leduc
- Legal
- Myrnam
- Okotoks
- Red Deer
- Red Deer County
- Rocky Mountain House
- Sexsmith
- Sherwood Park
- Spruce Grove
- St. Albert
- Stony Plain
- Sturgeon Lake
- Sundre
- Sylvan Lake
- Trochu
- Vegreville
- Wembley
- Whitecourt

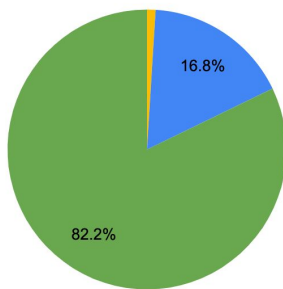


# Program Feedback

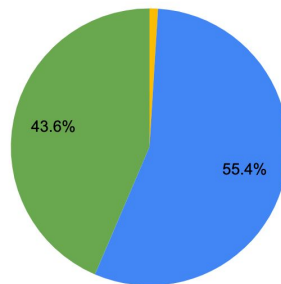
After each field program, a survey is sent to participating teachers so Inside Education can evaluate the effectiveness of our student forestry field trip programming. Overall, the responses indicate that our forestry field trips play a vital role in accessible forest education through low-cost programming 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?**

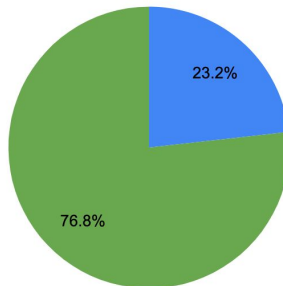
Opportunity for low-cost programming



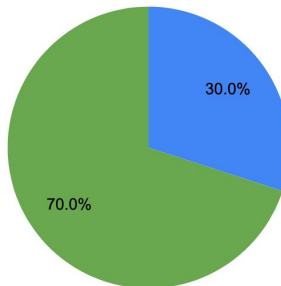
Linking to curriculum objectives



Providing a professionally led outdoor education program



Exposing students to numerous values of Alberta's forests



● Exceeding ● Meeting ● Not Meeting

Average overall value rating of forest field programming:

**9.3/10**

“My students are still talking about it a week later!”  
*Vanessa Martens, Mayfield School, Edmonton*

“Students mentioned that despite our cool and rainy weather, it was ‘the best field trip of the year!’”  
*Lisa Fox, Heritage Christian Academy, Calgary*

“This was an awesome field trip! Best day ever!”  
*Students from St. Elizabeth Seton, Edmonton*

# Edmonton Area Forest Field Sites - Spring 2024

In Spring 2024, Edmonton-area schools had the option of programming at either **Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area**, located east of the city, or at **Bunchberry Meadows Conservation Area**, located southwest of the city.

Bunchberry Meadows is a unique Nature Conservancy of Canada site. The 260 hectare property is part of the Devon Dunes Ecologically Significant Area, and features diverse forest ecosystems.

Cooking Lake-Blackfoot is a 97km<sup>2</sup> site managed by Alberta Parks. Forest programs run from the Waskahegan Staging Area, which features both forest and wetland areas.

In the Spring 2024 season, we experienced an extremely high demand for forest programs, and programs ran from both field sites, often simultaneously. This resulted in the number of students participating in forest programs tripling from the Spring 2023 season.

Participants at Bunchberry Meadows and Cooking Lake - Spring 2024

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	77	1,817
Junior High	13	278
Senior High	2	27
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>2,122</b>



**“As always your team puts on the best, most interactive, engaging and highly relevant programs! The program nails curricular outcomes perfectly and understands the balance of education and ‘educationally fun’ activities ”**

*- Christina Reid, Connections for Learning, Stony Plain*



# Edmonton & Area Forest Field Site - Fall 2024

In the Fall 2024 field season, forest programs ran out of Cooking Lake- Blackfoot Recreation Area. We once again had a very high demand for forest programs, and the number of students that participated in programs increased by over 60% from the Fall 2023 season.

Cooking Lake is an extremely popular field site, and schools traveled from all over Edmonton and surrounding areas, including Stony Plain, Vegreville, and Lloydminster to attend the program.

Participants at Cooking Lake  
- Fall 2024

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	32	799
Junior High	7	197
Senior High	9	256
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>1, 252</b>



**“It was a great day! The program related well to the science curriculum and involved activities that I could not accomplish in the classroom”**  
- Brent Irving, Belgravia Elementary School



# Des Crossley Demonstration Forest

As a former research site, Des Crossley Demonstration Forest is a unique and valuable tool for showcasing the effects of different forest management techniques.

Inside Education hosted students from ten communities in the central Alberta area during the spring and fall of 2024. Nine of these communities are in rural areas with limited access to field trip experiences.

In the fall of 2024, Inside Education proudly celebrated the 25th anniversary of programming at the Des Crossley Demonstration Forest.



## Participants at Des Crossley - Spring 2024

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	22	484
Junior High	3	37
Senior High	2	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>551</b>

## Participants at Des Crossley - Fall 2024

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	11	254
Junior High	7	120
Senior High	5	114
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>488</b>

**“The Des Crossley trip is always a highlight. It is a good curricular match with engaging activities in a beautiful setting.”**

*- Brent Eklund, Pioneer Middle School, Rocky Mountain House*



# Boreal Wetland Centre at Evergreen Park

The Boreal Wetland Centre is managed by Ducks Unlimited and includes wetland, forest, and natural resource education components. It is located at the edge of Grande Prairie in Evergreen Park and serves the northwest corner of the province.

Over 1000 students visited this site in 2024. Notably, students from many rural areas participated, including the communities of Beaverlodge, Sexsmith and the Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation. The addition of a Education Program Coordinator operating out of Grande Prairie allowed for more schools and communities to be able to visit the Boreal Wetland Centre in 2024 and will allow for higher attendance in the coming seasons.

## Participants at Boreal Wetlands Centre - Spring 2024

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	26	581
Junior High	3	62
Senior High	7	122
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>765</b>

## Participants at Boreal Wetlands Centre - Fall 2024

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	8	181
Junior High	14	42
Senior High	3	70
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>293</b>



**“It aligns with the curriculum, leaders were wonderful and the space was perfect for the lessons. It was great for students to see that this is in their own city!”**

- Cassandra Mercer, I.V. Macklin, 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 a large lake, and Inside Education’s collaboration with Alberta Parks allows us access to this site outside of their regular public season.

**“This program complimented our outdoor education program and gave the students a great opportunity to use their knowledge at a provincial park, and consolidate their learning in an environment that our school doesn’t provide. The program itself was planned and facilitated. Jayme, our instructor was amazing with the students! She was engaging and had fun and exciting activities that all students participated in.”**

*- Yusef Silvertan, Fort McMurray Composite High School*

**Participants at Gregoire Lake - Spring 2024**

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	11	240
Jr High	5	131
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>371</b>

**Participants at Gregoire Lake - Fall 2024**

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	6	149
Jr High	8	208
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>357</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 forestry communities surrounding Whitecourt.

Throughout the 2024 field seasons, schools visited Huestis from Whitecourt and the surrounding areas, including Edson, Fort Assiniboine and from the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation.

## Participants at Huestis - Spring 2024

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	10	182
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>182</b>

## Participants at Huestis - Fall 2024

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Jr High	2	72
Sr High	1	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>92</b>



# Jumpingpound Demonstration Forest

Jumpingpound Demonstration Forest offers students the opportunity to explore a diverse forest ecosystem that is used for a variety of purposes including recreation, tree harvesting, a pipeline, and grazing; all taking place on or near the site.

Jumpingpound Demonstration Forest serves schools in Calgary and the surrounding area. Many schools like to return every year, but we make an effort to ensure that new schools are also given the opportunity to come out to this busy site.

## Participants at Jumpingpound - Spring 2024

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	25	582
Junior High	8	182
High School	3	58
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>822</b>



## Participants at Jumpingpound - Fall 2024

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	16	407
Junior High	7	148
High School	8	119
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>674</b>

**“This is a fantastic opportunity for students to explore the natural world, especially for those who may not have these experiences outside of school. The curriculum connections are evident and help reinforce classroom learning.”**

*- Pam Mah, Westmount Charter School, Calgary*

# Three Herons Conservation Area

Three Herons is a small Nature Conservancy of Canada site where water, wildlife and conservation programs for junior and senior high students are offered. These programs utilize the unique features of this site, including a creek, mixed forest, and shrubland. This program is distinct from our other forest site offerings.

In fall 2024, we modified parts of our elementary forest programs to make use of the characteristics of the site and expand our reach by offering programs to younger students. The elementary program was focused on water, conservation, and forest ecosystems.

As Three Herons is still a newer forest field trip site to Inside Education, we hope to see growing use and interest in this diverse and unique area.

## Participants at Three Herons - Spring 2024

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Junior High	5	124
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>124</b>

## Participants at Three Herons - Fall 2024

	Number of Classes	Number of Students
Elementary	1	18
Junior High	2	60
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>78</b>



# Summary and Futures

Inside Education and our Forestry Futures Alliance partners are proud of the hands-on learning opportunities at our forest field sites that provide a strong foundation for environmental stewardship among students and teachers.

With the new K-6 Alberta Program of Studies, Inside Education’s elementary forest field programs have been revised to ensure they align with the updated learning outcomes and continue to be relevant learning opportunities for teachers and students. As we prepare for our future programs, we are passionate about continually finding new and creative ways to teach about forests and forestry.

As we continue into 2025, Inside Education looks forward to continuing to provide high-quality forest education, including forest field programming, teacher professional development opportunities and students summits, amongst other opportunities for experiential learning with the aim to engage tomorrow’s environmental stewards.

### Contact

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