

Environmental Innovation Day

# Women in Outdoor Careers

October 3, 2024 - Calgary

October 17, 2024 - Grande Prairie



*This program took place in regions inhabited by the First Peoples of Treaty 7 and Treaty 8 and the Métis people of the Battle River and Peace River Territories since time immemorial. In the spirit of reconciliation and reciprocity, Inside Education respectfully acknowledges all Indigenous Peoples whose deep respect for the environment forms the foundation of our personal responsibility for the stewardship of our environment and natural resources, a connection we strive to foster through all of our programs.*

# Introduction

Inside Education is pleased to report on a second successful year of our Women in Outdoor Careers program, a series of educational events designed to connect female and non-binary students with professionals in a variety of environmental and natural resource sectors including agriculture, forestry, reclamation, monitoring, conservation and stewardship!

Two Women in Outdoor Careers events were held in October 2024 - one at Jumpingpound Demonstration Forest in Kananaskis, and the second at the Boreal Wetland Centre at Evergreen Park, outside of Grande Prairie.

Expert guests were invited to speak about their career paths including how they got started in their career. Each guest brought an activity, demonstration, or equipment to demonstrate a day-in-the life on the job. This year’s program saw **18** expert guests interact with **133** students from **6** schools.



## Program Partners



Canadian Natural



SUNCOR ENERGY FOUNDATION



“This is a really good program and it provides a lot of opportunities to young women... about different industries that may be a bit more male dominated”

- Student, Senator Patrick Burns

## Jumpingpound Demonstration Forest

The Calgary-area Women in Outdoor Careers program was held at Jumpingpound Demonstration Forest in Kananaskis. In attendance was over **110** grade 8-11 students from:

- Senator Patrick Burns School
- Alice Jamieson Academy at Stanley Jones School
- Rundle Academy
- Foothills Academy

Experts from various outdoor and natural resource sectors were invited to speak about their careers and bring a hands-on experience that helps to demonstrate a day-in-the-life! This included a reclamation and soil testing demonstration with Canadian Natural, a pasture grazing assessment with the Foothills Forage and Grazing Association, a tree planting exercise with West Fraser, and demonstration of a Wolman Pebble Count with BGC Engineering.

The day ended with a networking session that encouraged connecting with other students and sharing their experiences from the day.



### Expert Guests | Organizations

- **Terri Perron and Amanda Rezansoff** | Alberta Conservation Association
- **Lara de Moissac** | Alberta Grains
- **Nicole Mills and Mel Hairabedian** | BGC Engineering Inc.
- **Ainslie Campbell and Angie Stefura** | Canadian Natural
- **Sherry Huang** | CAREERS
- **Sonja Bloom** | Foothills Forage and Grazing Association
- **Britni Smith** | West Fraser

# Boreal Wetland Centre

The Grande Prairie Women in Outdoor Careers program at the Boreal Wetland Centre welcomed **22** grade 8-12 students from **St. John Paul II** and **Hillcrest Christian School**

Stations included demonstrations from Ducks Unlimited on how to use a soil auger, plant identification with WorkWild, and Canadian Natural showcased some equipment that they use out in the field.

Students had the opportunity to visit all 7 stations in small groups and had personal interactions with speakers to ask more questions and have in depth conversations. During the debrief, there was a moving and impactful discussion in which speakers shared advice they would give their past self about their career.

Students, speakers, and teachers left the program feeling empowered and supported by other strong, generous and resilient women and non binary people.



## Expert Guests | Organizations

- **Chelsey Rhodes** | Alberta Parks
- **Kelly Burke** | Alberta Parks and Forestry
- **Pam Schamehorn** | Canadian Natural
- **Amy Clarkson** | City of Grand Prairie
- **Kate Biendarra & Melody Tollefsrud** | County of Grande Prairie
- **Kailee Goertzen** | Ducks Unlimited
- **Laura Brandon** | Work Wild





**“Seeing all the different industries that make up our outdoor careers and that it’s not just the same three types of jobs that you learn about in school”**

*- Student, Senator Patrick Burns School*



**“I learned a lot about the jobs and that they are available around my hometown area. It was a great experience and I am very glad we went to it.”**

*- Student, Hillcrest Christian School*



**“It’s a great opportunity for outreach and is a worthwhile endeavour for encouraging girls or non-binary individuals to get into an outdoor career.”**

*- Lara de Moissac, Alberta Grains*

## **Program Impacts and Feedback**

**“The thing that impacted me most during Women in Outdoor Careers was the speakers enthusiasm. You could tell that they enjoyed their jobs and wanted other people to like them too.”**

*- Student, Hillcrest Christian School*

**“Seeing all of the pictures of firefighter groups and rangers was very inspiring and impactful.”**

*- Student, Hillcrest Christian School*

**“Love to help out the new generation when I can and give them opportunities I would’ve loved to have had”**

*- Kate Biendarra, County of Grande Prairie*

# Summary and Futures

One of Inside Education’s missions is to connect students with careers in natural resource fields, especially students from populations underrepresented in these areas. It was with this objective in mind that the **Women in Outdoor Careers** program was brought back for a second year, with the goal of showcasing outdoor careers in a variety of sectors including forestry, water, energy, agriculture and wildlife.

By connecting students with experts in environmental and natural resource careers, students were able to gain a better understanding of the expectations and skills required of certain careers, and the paths that these women took to get to their careers.

We believe that the incredible mentors, and engaging, outdoor nature of this program, will help support the next generation of women and non-binary leaders to become environmental and natural resource stewards. With this, Inside Education intends to continue showcasing and developing hands-on, careers-focused programs that highlight a wide variety of environmental and natural resource topics!



**“Importance to inspire young ladies to respect and enjoy the outdoors, which may lead to working in outdoors in a stewardship role.”**

*- Terri Perron, Alberta Conservation Association*



## Contact

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