

# Big Marlborough Park

*Big Marlborough Park is a large park located in northeast Calgary. This 18-hectare park is frequently used by nearby schools and the Marlborough Community Centre. The park is a large greenspace for members of the community to enjoy throughout the seasons. The park provides many recreational opportunities as well as habitat for many species of plants and animals.*

## All About the Park

This park features a variety of athletic areas such as tennis courts, soccer fields, baseball diamonds, walking paths, a playground, an outdoor skating rink, and a toboggan hill. It is common to see the members of the community enjoying the park year round. Family groups enjoy picnics in the park during warm, sunny days, as well as ice skating in the winter months. Wildlife like birds, mammals, and insects call this park home. What do you use this park for, or what do you see other visitors doing in the park today?



## Wildlife and Plant Life

To improve the health of the local ecosystem, a variety of tree species were planted to increase this park's biodiversity. There is a combination of both native and non-native tree species you can observe in the park, including balsam poplar, green ash and Colorado blue spruce. If you listen closely, you just might hear Black-billed Magpies, Northern Flickers, and various sparrows flying from tree to tree in search of food or a quiet place to rest. Occasionally deer can be seen along the edge of the park, grazing on long grasses and tree buds in the spring. It is important that we use this natural space responsibly to ensure we are peacefully coexisting with nature in our communities.



## Did You Know?

Marlborough Park functions as a dry storm pond, collecting stormwater after periods of heavy rainfall to help reduce flooding within the surrounding community. Storm ponds also function to remove pollutants from and purify stormwater runoff.





# Big Marlborough Park Study

## Overview

These activities are designed to allow students to think about their local environment, and why green spaces are significant within the city. Students will learn about the local flora and fauna living in the park, and consider how humans can impact biodiversity. Lastly, students will discuss pollution and its effects on parks through participating in a relay race. This activity will promote understanding of proper waste disposal practices.

## Activity 1: Green Space Reflection

Parks like this can be an important space to help support people's mental health, even in the winter months. Find a comfortable spot around the field to sit and reflect how the park makes you feel. Close your eyes and take slow, deep breaths. Focus on the smells and sounds of your surroundings. After a few minutes, discuss how everyone feels after the reflection. Why are spaces like this important and what value do they add to the city? How can slowing down help you learn more about a natural space? Record your thoughts and reflections in a journal.

## Activity 2: Variety of Life

This park may look like an open field, yet there is so much to see and explore! To help increase Calgary's urban canopy, over ten different tree species have been planted in this park, including spruce, pine, oak, hawthorn, and elm. Walk along the pathway that surrounds the park and try to identify these tree species, along with other plants and animals that you see. Can you spot any Black-billed Magpies, American Robins, Northern Flickers, Black-capped Chickadees, or Eastern Grey Squirrels? How might humans impact the biodiversity within this park? Sketch and colour a picture of your favourite plant or animal observed the park. Share your artwork with others to teach them about local biodiversity and importance of keeping our communities healthy for our wild neighbours.

## Activity 3: Pollution Solution

In small groups, brainstorm and discuss different types of pollution. Litter is unfortunately often found in our parks. Is there any litter in this park? How can we prevent litter and other pollutants from entering our environment? One thing we can do is to always sort our waste properly, like into a recycling or compost bin. Divide the class into two teams and provide each student with a photo of a type of waste (garbage, recycling, or compost). Then have the students run to a designated "bin" to dispose of their "waste". This could be a specific waste bin or a location in the field. The first team to successfully sort all of their waste items wins!

## Activity 4: Stormwater

Stand in the middle of the field and notice the flat bowl-like design with grates along the edge. Did you know that Big Marlborough Park is a dry stormwater pond? Stormwater is water that comes from rain and snow melt. During these precipitation events, water collects in this park to manage flooding in the community. Pollutants are also removed from the water through natural processes. Did you know that stormwater is typically not treated before returning back to the river? With a partner, create a poster or sign that describes how we can all help keep our stormwater clean. Feel free to put up your poster or sign at your school or in your community.



# Visiting Big Marlborough Park?

What you need to know.

## Park Etiquette — [Click here for bylaws related to parks and pathways](#)

- Stay on designated trails at all times, unless otherwise posted. This helps to protect the habitat of plants and animals that live in the park.
- Use quiet voices. Running and yelling will scare away wildlife and reduce the opportunities to view these species.
- Do not disturb or feed wildlife, including birds.
- Look but do not remove vegetation (including flowers and berries). These plants could be food, nesting material, or a rare native species.
- Do not litter. Place all garbage, recycling, and compost in appropriate bins or take them back to your school.

## Nature Kit Information

Calgary Parks would like to encourage you to explore the interesting features of Big Marlborough Park. To enhance your experience, we have a free learning kit available for you to use which includes:

- A map of the park or region
- Biofacts (bone clone mammal/bird skulls, track and scat molds, egg replicas)
- Bird plushes with audio of bird call or song
- A tree cookie (cross section from a known tree species)
- Alberta natural history field guides and booklets relevant to the topic of the kit
- Printed resources to supplement the park study activities
- Various laminated photographs and information on local plant and animal species
- Nature BINGO activity page

## Renting a Nature Kit

- Kit is available for a one-week duration FREE of charge.
- User is responsible for picking up and dropping off the kit at the designated location.
- If the kit is not returned, or materials are missing or damaged, the user will be charged a replacement fee.