

Valleyview Park

Valleyview Park is a recreational park located within the community of Dover in the southeast quadrant of the city. This 13-hectare park opened in 2003 and contains a playground, splash park, pond, and lots of walking trails. The park was likely named for its proximity to the bluff overlooking Calgary's natural ravine or "valley", which provides an expansive view of the city. There is a nice combination of naturalized areas growing native wildflowers and manicured spaces for public use.

History

Prior to becoming the amazing park you see today, this area was once a disregarded barren field. A man named George Trotter, a long-time resident of Dover, gathered support from the community to create this park. The intention was to create a space that had something for everyone. Some of the features include a splash park, beach volleyball courts, pond, and many pathways and benches throughout the space. A natural area was also included to the west of 26th Street. This is one of the only regional parks in this part of Calgary, making it a special destination for many of the surrounding communities. Naturalized areas make our parks and green spaces more resilient to climate change, increases the beauty of the landscape, and reduces long-term maintenance costs from mowing, irrigating, and fertilizing.

Wildlife and Plant Life

Although this park is in a residential community, it supports an abundance of life to discover. The pond has developed into a beautiful wetland habitat housing unique riparian species. Listen to the Mallards and Red-winged Blackbirds among the tall cattails and sandbar willows along the perimeter of the pond. Trees such as balsam poplars, columnar aspens, ponderosa pine, and blue spruce have been planted by The City to increase biodiversity. This allows for more nesting locations for birds like Northern Flickers, Black-capped Chickadees, and Tree Swallows, to name just a few.

Head west across 26th Street to find a natural prairie ecosystem, where you will see many native species of grasses and wildflowers. This area was re-naturalized to replicate the fescue grasslands that were widespread across the Calgary region hundreds of years ago. Listen for the piercing chirps of the Savannah Sparrow, who nest on the ground within the tall grasses.

Did You Know?

This community was named for Mary Dover, whose father was A.E. Cross (a member of the Big 4 who founded the Calgary Stampede). Parks in urban areas, including this one, promote physical and mental health by increasing access to nature!



Valleyview Park Study

Overview

These activities provide hands-on learning opportunities which will enhance your students' understanding of Calgary's natural environment. Students will learn about wetlands in our communities, human impacts on the landscape, and ways we can reduce those impacts. Lastly, a field study will enhance your students' ability to identify local species.

Activity 1: What is a wetland?

Find a spot near the wetland pond and discuss why the “no swimming” signs are in the area. Reasons may include water safety for citizens and keeping a healthy ecosystem. This wetland was put in place when the park was first created, meaning it is not a natural wetland. Why do you think they added a wetland when constructing this park? What are the benefits of wetlands in city parks? Have students draw a diagram of the wetland and label the various features that help keep the ecosystem functioning well. For example, aquatic plants (phytoremediation), microorganisms (nutrient cycling), and the stillness of water (sedimentation) all contribute to cleaner and healthier water. What are some other benefits of this pond (ie. It creates great habitat, it's aesthetic, etc.)?

Activity 2: Our Ecological Footprint

An ecological footprint is the impact that an individual or community has on the environment, which includes the amount of land used to sustain their way of life. Walk to the naturalized lookout/bluff and have students take a few moments to notice the view and think about aspects humans have impacted. What can be seen that has always been here (river, mountains, etc.)? What has been added or affected by humans (golf course, roads, downtown, invasive species, etc.)? Is human activity on a landscape always bad? No! For example, the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary and other natural environment parks have been created or modified by humans to preserve the natural beauty and ecology of the land.

Activity 3: Pollinator Field Study

The parks pond, trees, and flowers provide great quality habitat for many types of pollinators. Pollinators are species that facilitate the transfer of pollen from one plant to another so that they may produce seeds. What features of this area make it a good home for pollinators? Walk around the park and try to identify areas where you might spot pollinators such as insects or birds. Pollinators that we observe in Calgary include bumblebees, moths, butterflies, beetles, and hummingbirds. Record observations of the pollinators you see and create a graph to illustrate the number and variety of pollinators you see throughout the year. Consider how you can be a polli-neighbour and share your findings with others in your school community. For more information on local pollinators, visit calgary.ca/Pollinators.

Activity 4: Food Web Connections

Pollinators are an integral part of an ecosystem's food web. Climate change threatens the survival of many of these vital species' populations. Draw a food web that makes connections between pollinators and other species in the park. Highlight the impacts that the loss of these pollinators could have on the rest of the ecosystem. If pollinators are removed from your food web, which other species are affected, and how? For example, plants would not be able to reproduce, animals would have limited food sources, and larger fauna may be put at risk.



Visiting Valleyview 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 amazing features and landscapes of Valleyview 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.