

*"What a great learning opportunity, and lots of fun, thank you!" –BLESS SNC Visitor*



# B.L.E.S.S. SUMMER NATURE CENTRE REPORT 2015

## **ABSTRACT**

A detailed summary of the activities held for nine weeks at the B.L.E.S.S. Summer Nature Centre.

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# Introduction

## LOCATION

The BLESS Summer Nature Centre is located on the corner of St. Albert Trail and Sturgeon Road. This is an optimal location as the path running behind the Nature Centre attracts many visitors. As well, during the week there is always plenty of parking for people who prefer to drive.

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of the BLESS Nature Centre is to provide a place where children can learn about nature in an urban setting. BLESS recognizes the importance of environmental education and participating in outdoor activities at a young age.

## DESIGN

The Nature Centre was open Monday to Friday, July 2<sup>nd</sup> until August 28<sup>th</sup> 2015. The hours of the Nature Centre were 10:00 AM-4:30 PM except on Wednesdays when they were 12:30 PM-7:00 PM. The purpose of evening hours was to give people a chance to come that otherwise would not be able to during the day. Each week this summer there was a different theme planned with corresponding crafts, indoor and outdoor activities. All activities were planned for a variety of ages and reading comprehension skills.

I was fortunate this summer to have a volunteer (Braydon Lamash) for the last four weeks in August. Braydon is currently in his second year of elementary education at the University of Alberta and he volunteered approximately 40 hours of his time. Braydon's help was very much appreciated, especially when numerous families were at the Nature Centre at once.

## MATERIALS

This year I was given a budget of \$400.00 to run the Nature Centre for the summer. This was twice as much as was given last year. Luckily, I was able to reuse many of the portfolio posters the Nature Centre coordinator prepared last year as the materials were in excellent condition. This made a significant difference in my spending as I did not have to remake many of the big posters; therefore, I used a little over half the budget this summer. The money used was for re stocking craft supplies, making posters for new themes, bathroom amenities, and cleaning supplies.

## Weekly Overviews

### ST. ALBERT RIVER CITY FESTIVAL

This year the River Festival was held along the Sturgeon River behind St. Albert Centre. This was a great opportunity for BLESS to advertise the Summer Nature Centre as there were a lot of families participating in the river cleanup. This year Meagan, the 2014 Nature Centre Coordinator provided an outline for the supplies and activities for the BLESS booth. This year BLESS had owl posters, Big Lake stickers, bird bookmarks, bird activity books, juice boxes, and fruit snacks to hand out. Some of these supplies were left over from Migratory Bird Day, and they were great to have as it attracted visitors to the booth.

### CANADA DAY

This year Canada Day celebrations were held at Rotary Park in St. Albert. This proved to be an optimal location as there was plenty of room for activities and entertainment. Originally BLESS's booth was to be set up in the BLESS Gazebo. However, it was decided to move the table closer to the path where more activities were taking place. This was a big success; I engaged with many members of the public and gave out approximately fifty business cards with information about the Nature Centre on the back.

This year I brought with me a small sample of aquatic invertebrates, Big Lake stickers, matching games, bird bookmarks, fruit snacks, the bean bag toss, and a BLESS banner. I also created a document with themes for the summer and taped it to the table; it was easy for people to take a picture with using their smart phones reducing the amount of paper handouts. It was also great to hear people say they had seen the profile for the Nature Centre in the Gazette earlier that week. Overall the entire event went well! However, I would suggest bringing more candy as I ran out quickly and that always seems to attract kids to the booth.

Many people inquired if they could find more information online about the Summer Nature Centre. Therefore, it would be a good idea to update the Summer Nature Centre page on the BLESS website to include the times when the Nature Centre is open.

## WEEK 1: WELCOME WEEK (JULY 2-3)

### Objective:

The objective of this week was to introduce visitors the Nature Centre. Activities included camping safety, colouring, crafts, and animal matching games.

### Attendance:

DAY	ADULTS	PRESCHOOL	ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	TOTAL/DAY	RANK
<b>Thursday</b>	19	10	15	4	48	1
<b>Friday</b>	12	8	6	2	28	2
<b>Total/Week</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>76</b>	

### Crafts:

#### A) Beaver Paper Plate

This craft was fairly easy to complete, sheets were provided with a beaver face to colour and cut out. The beaver face was then glued to a brown paper plate, some kids even made theirs into masks!

#### B) Popsicle Stick Dragonfly

The second craft was repeated from last summer as it was easy to make and required minimal supplies. Using one large Popsicle stick and two smaller ones children decorated them as desired, and I helped arrange them into a dragonfly shape.

### Activities:

#### a) Indoor


##### i) Chipmunk Maze

Simple maze activity leftover of from last year, it was good to have on the colouring table.

##### ii) Camping Safety True or False

Parents and kids both enjoyed this game as it was educational for everyone. Having this game set up at the beginning of camping season was also very beneficial. Majority of people explained they learned new things about camping.

##### iii) Fire Cup Knockdown



This was a new activity I made this summer, I decorated red cups with “fire” and had kids stack them and try and knock them over with ping pong balls. This was a fun and active game! I also included a poster about fire safety and the importance of preventing forest fires.

iv) BLESS Fortune Teller

I photocopied fortune teller outlines I found from a previous year. These were fun and easy to make and also had questions on them about wildlife around Big Lake.

v) What Am I?

This was another re used activity from previous years, kids had to look in an envelope and try and guess what the animal was by just seeing a little square of the picture.

vi) Colouring Pages

Numerous colouring pages were printed off including a camping one for younger kids and steps to put up a tent for older kids to try.

b) Outdoor

i) Side walk chalk

ii) Bean bag pond toss

iii) Potato Sack Races

**Notes:** Overall this was a good theme for the two days the Nature Centre was open this week. It gave people a taste of what the Nature Centre would offer for the rest of the summer! I would suggest repeating a welcome week next summer, good way to start the summer off and get kids interested in the Young Naturalist Program.



## WEEK 2: WACKY WETLANDS (JULY 6 – 10)

### Objective:

This week's objective was to introduce children to the wetlands around them and how important wetlands are to our ecosystem. Also, kids learned about the animals and insects that may have a wetland as their home.

### Attendance:

DAY	ADULTS	PRESCHOOL	ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	TOTAL/DAY	RANK
<b>Monday</b>	19	6	18	2	45	2
<b>Tuesday</b>	15	5	20	6	46	1
<b>Wednesday</b>	10	4	10	4	28	3
<b>Thursday</b>	8	1	11	2	22	5
<b>Friday</b>	12	2	7	2	23	4
<b>Total/Week</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>164</b>	

### Crafts:

a) Egg Carton Bumblebee

This was a new craft this year, kids painted part of an egg carton yellow and added on pipe cleaners as legs and antennas. Many egg cartons were left over from years before so I thought this would be a great way to utilize them. Although it took a while for the paint to dry, kids loved them! Above this craft station I also included a small info sheet about the importance of bees.

b) Paper Caterpillar

This craft was also new this year, it involved folding two different coloured pieces of construction paper continually until an accordion was formed. This was easy for all ages to participate in, and I also gave kids the option of adding antennas and googly eyes.


### Activities:

a) Indoor

i) Wetland Eye Spy

Using a poster from previous years, children and adults searched for animals, plants and insects on the wetland poster from a list provided.

ii) Go Fish



Using laminated cards of wetland insects and animals, children of many ages had fun playing this simple game. The cards can also be used for memory games.

iii) Food Chain

This game was also reused from previous years, the objective is to order the five different pictures in the correct way they eat each other in their ecosystem.

iv) Amphibian True or False

Children and adults both learned new facts from this game and was enjoyable for them to play together.

v) Metamorphosis match up game

Reused from previous years, the objective of this game is to match larvae with the correct adult species.

vi) Colouring Pages

This week I printed off, Design a Frog, Pollen Page and Metamorphosis Word Search. It is always helpful to have extra sheets of activities available especially for the younger kids.

b) Outdoor

i) Pond Toss

The bean bag toss outside

ii) Insect Nature Hunt

An insect themed scavenger hunt

iii) Pond Dipping

Every morning I went down to the river and collected a few trays of pond invertebrates to display outside on the bench. This activity is always very popular, educational, and helps kids learn what is swimming around in our Sturgeon River. Unfortunately, the river was very low this year so we talked about why that might be. I also included sheets with descriptions of all the invertebrates, kids had fun matching them with the real life versions swimming around in the trays.

**Notes:** Overall this week went very well, in the future I would suggest having two weeks during the summer when there is pond dipping. Pond dipping is always a very popular and educational activity that children of all ages could enjoy participating in.



### WEEK 3: FEATHERED FRIENDS (JULY 13-17)

**Objective:** The objective of this week was to focus on bird species in Alberta, including what they look like, sound like and eat. Activities ranged from identification, behavior and even touched on migration. On display I had several bird nests, feet, wings and feathers!

#### Attendance:

DAY	ADULTS	PRESCHOOL	ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	TOTAL/DAY	RANK
<b>Monday</b>	12	7	10	2	31	2
<b>Tuesday</b>	16	11	20	2	49	1
<b>Wednesday</b>	9	4	7	0	20	4
<b>Thursday</b>	8	7	8	1	24	3
<b>Friday</b>	6	7	6	0	19	5
<b>Total/Week</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>143</b>	

#### Crafts:

a) Pinecone Bird Feeder

The week prior I had gathered many different kinds of coniferous cones from around the nature centre for children to select for their craft. They then rolled the cone around in honey (allergy friendly) and to finish rolled around in bird seed. This craft is very practical and easy to make, also encourages children to hang their craft in their yard and watch for different birds.

b) Cardboard Roll Turkey

Using recycled cardboard rolls, kids decorated them as they pleased and glued their hand tracing on the back as a tail. This craft required a little more help but was overall liked and quick to make.

#### Activities:

a) Indoor

i) Specialist vs. Generalists (forks, knives, spoons)

This craft was reused from previous years and was fun for all ages. It involved trying to pick up different objects either using a fork, knife or spoon. Although younger kids did not fully grasp the concept of how

certain birds can only eat certain things they still had fun moving yarn, marbles, straws, etc. from one bin to the other.

ii) Matching Silhouettes

This game was set on a table where names of birds were matched to their silhouette.

iii) Owl ID

A poster was set up with about twelve different owls on it, kids had to match clues to the pictures. Easy, fun and educational for kids and adults!

iv) Bills and Feet

An activity sheet that involved matching several different kinds of bird species feet to their body and finally to their name. I had a birds of Alberta book close by to help with anyone who was stumped.

v) Bird Calls

Unfortunately the CD player no longer plays CDs so I downloaded the bird call CD onto my iPhone and played them for kids while they were colouring pictures or making their craft. I had them guess what bird call I was playing, very fun and easy to do!

vi) Coloring Table

This week I printed off an owl maze, owl picture and blue heron picture for kids to color for the weekly coloring contest.

b) Outdoor

i) Bird ID Course

Reused from last year, 20 different bird species were laminated and taped on coat hangers and hung around the Nature Centre. Kids and Adults enjoyed walking around trying to match the bird species to the correct list of names I supplied.

ii) Bird Bingo

iii) Side Walk Chalk

Kids were encouraged to draw their favorite bird.

**Notes:** Another great theme to include in the Summer Nature Centre program! Luckily there is a lot of artifacts like feathers for kids to look at, most kids were fascinated by the differences in size of an owl vs. a duck wing. Also there is numerous activities for kids to participate in, a comment I received this week was that the Nature Centre was "Organized and neat activities and of course great as always!" I would recommend that BLESS also invests in a new CD player or small iPod that the bird calls can be played on.

## WEEK 4: ROCKIN' ROCKS (JULY 20-24)

**Objective:** The objective of this week was to introduce kids to different types of rocks including metamorphic, sedimentary and igneous. I also incorporated a mountain theme including topics like Rocky Mountain vegetation and wildlife. This was also a great opportunity to have bear safety pamphlets out to remind adults and children of the importance of keeping their distance from wildlife. Overall, attendance was quite high this week and it was the busiest week of the summer!

### Attendance:

DAY	ADULTS	PRESCHOOL	ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	TOTAL/DAY	RANK
<b>Monday</b>	11	7	10	2	30	4
<b>Tuesday</b>	15	12	19	0	46	1
<b>Wednesday</b>	10	11	15	1	37	3
<b>Thursday</b>	5	5	7	2	19	5
<b>Friday</b>	17	7	12	4	40	2
<b>Total/Week</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>172</b>	

### Crafts:

#### a) Pet Rock

The pet rock was once again a popular craft with everyone this year. I found a box of rocks in the cabin that I put out for kids to choose their own rock to paint. Due to some of them being small in size kids were allowed to choose up to two rocks. I used the whole table for this craft as it was messy and the extra room was needed. Luckily kids of every age were able to participate.

### Activities:

#### a) Indoor

##### i) Become a Rock star

This was a new game I made this year, I wrote out various facts about metamorphic, sedimentary and igneous rocks and kids had to match the facts to the correct rock types. Above this activity I had posters explaining how each rock is made.

##### ii) Rock Scratch Test

I was able to borrow a rock scratch kit to use this week, there are nine rocks included with three different surfaces to test their hardness on. Kids had a lot of

- fun with this hands on activity and I definitely think it would be beneficial for BLESS to invest in one for years to come.
- iii) Animals of the Canadian Rockies Puzzles  
A reused activity from previous years, it included building puzzles of animals that live in the Rockies then matching up their names. Some kids struggled with telling the difference between caribou and elk so I educated them on ways to tell the difference between them.
  - iv) Colouring Pages  
This week I printed off a mountain maze as an extra activity and also had cougar and mountain sheep pictures for the daily colouring contest.

b) Outdoor

- i) Rainbow Rock Hunt  
The previous week I painted seven different rocks and would hide them around the Nature Centre for kids to find. Although this involved me hiding the rocks numerous times per day, kids really enjoyed going on a scavenger hunt for them so it was worth it.
- ii) Bean Bag Toss
- iii) Nature Scavenger Hunt
- iv) Side Walk Chalk

**Notes:** Overall I think this was a great new theme to introduce to the summer Nature Centre. Kids really enjoyed the rock games and learning about the different types. If this theme was to be repeated in the future I would suggest making some more games about mountain animals and a few more posters.

## WEEK 5: WONDERFUL WILDFLOWERS (JULY 27-31)

**Objective:** The goal of this week was to introduce visitors to all the different wildflowers found in Alberta and even around Big Lake!

### Attendance:

DAY	ADULTS	PRESCHOOL	ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	TOTAL/DAY	RANK
<b>Monday</b>	14	5	10	1	30	3
<b>Tuesday</b>	15	11	16	3	45	1
<b>Wednesday</b>	10	2	13	0	25	4
<b>Thursday</b>	15	6	14	2	37	2
<b>Friday</b>	8	7	8	1	24	5
<b>Total/Week</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>161</b>	

### Crafts:

a) Coffee Filter Flower

This popular craft repeated from last year simply involved giving kids a coffee filter to colour with markers and then adding some water to it when they were finished to create a tie dye effect.

b) 3D Sunflower

This craft was new this year and well-liked by all. It simply involved cutting out sunflower petals and gluing them around a circle where sunflower seeds were glued. Above this craft station I included a little info sheet about sunflowers.

### Activities:

a) Indoor

i) Insect Memory

Plastic insects were hidden under cups, kids had fun matching the different creepy crawlers. Many kids even played this game numerous times in one visit

ii) Labelling a Flower

A new game I made this year, I printed off a picture and kids had to try and label the flower parts using posters around the Nature Centre. We also discussed how flowers are pollinated.

- iii) Alberta's Wildflowers  
Also a new game made this year, on a poster I wrote the name of about twelve different flowers that can be found in Alberta. Kids then had to match the clue about the flower to the correct flower name.
- iv) Provincial Wildflowers  
A small poster I made where kids could try and match the provincial flowers to the correct province. I had a poster on the opposite side of the Nature Centre they could look at for help.
- v) Coloring Pages  
This week I printed off both Harebell and Wild Rose pictures for kids of all ages to colour.

b) Outdoor

- i) Wild Flower Walk  
Much like the Bird ID course, pictures of different wildflowers were hung up on coat hangers outside around the Nature Centre and with a sheet provided kids and adults had to try and guess the name of the flower to its picture. I supplied a plants of Alberta pamphlet for help.
- ii) Bean Bag Toss
- iii) Scavenger Hunt

**Notes:** This week was a great way to introduce kids to all the different beautiful flowers growing close to home in the summer months. A comment I received this week from a parent was "What a great learning opportunity, and lots of fun, thank you!" It is always great to know that not only kids are learning things but also parents. In the future it would be great to get more posters of wildflowers to hang up!

## WEEK 6: MARVELOUS MAMMALS (AUGUST 4-7)

### Objective:

The objective of this week was to focus on local wildlife, while touching on some exotic animals. Fortunately, there are many artifacts available in the Nature Centre that could be used for this theme. Kids had lots of fun feeling different antlers and furs.

### Attendance:

DAY	ADULTS	PRESCHOOL	ELEMENTARY	JUNIORHIGH	TOTAL/DAY	RANK
<b>Monday</b>						
<b>Tuesday</b>	8	6	8	0	22	4
<b>Wednesday</b>	11	5	10	1	27	3
<b>Thursday</b>	8	6	14	3	31	1
<b>Friday</b>	7	7	14	0	28	2
<b>Total/Week</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>108</b>	

### Crafts:

a) Animal Masks

Using templates kids could choose to trace out either a deer, fox or raccoon mask. This was one of my favorite crafts of the summer as the masks turned out really cute and was fun for all ages. Although this involved more of my help cutting and tracing it was definitely worth it.

b) Paper Bag Animal

Another great craft reused from previous years. Using construction paper and various supplies kids could decorate their brown paper bag to make an animal that lives in Alberta. I provided a list with about 20 animals above the craft table in case they needed ideas.

### Activities:

a) Indoor

i) Herbivore, Omnivore or Carnivore

Simple game where the objective was to sort animals into one of the three categories, I was surprised to hear how many kids thought deer were omnivores.

ii) Guess the Spots



- This was the one exotic game I displayed this week which is always great to keep things interesting. It was also quick and easy for kids of all ages to participate in!
- iii) Mammals vs. Non Mammals  
Sorting game, mainly for younger kids but older kids also had fun testing their knowledge.
  - iv) Foot Print Matching  
Awesome game for everyone to participate in. To help I left out Animal Tracks of Alberta books by the game. Although it may seem overwhelming at first with approximately 15 different animal tracks to match up, I tried to assist when possible suggesting clues like why an animal may have webbed feet.
  - v) Colouring Pages  
This week I printed off a Mammals of Alberta page that included about 10 different species for kids to colour.
- b) Outdoor
    - i) BLESS BINGO
    - ii) Rabbit Races  
With the potato sacks, kids had fun racing from when end of the field to the other.

**Notes:** Although attendance this week was low I believe it was due to the fact the long weekend was the weekend before so many families chose this week for holidays. In the future I would suggest having two weeks on mammals or forest animals because there really is lots to display and endless activities to include.

## WEEK 7: GO GREEN (AUGUST 10-14)

**Objective:** The objective of this week was to re enforce to kids the importance of the three R's (Reduce, Reuse and Recycling.) Also to demonstrate different ways they can help the environment in their own home, like always turning off lights when they are leaving a room and recycling not only bottles but also cardboard materials. I was pleasantly surprised to hear that quite a few families even had composts at home!

### Attendance:

DAY	ADULTS	PRESCHOOL	ELEMENTARY	JUNIORHIGH	TOTAL/DAY	RANK
<b>Monday</b>	11	3	13	1	28	4
<b>Tuesday</b>	8	10	10	2	30	3
<b>Wednesday</b>	10	4	8	1	23	5
<b>Thursday</b>	14	10	7	2	33	2
<b>Friday</b>	12	3	24	2	41	1
<b>Total/Week</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>155</b>	

### Crafts:

- a) Recycle Keepsake Box  
Using old tea, jewelry, coffee, chocolate containers/ boxes kids decorated them using numerous supplies I bought from the dollar store and construction paper. They turned out quite beautiful and proved how you can make something you would otherwise throw out into a treasure.
- b) Recycled Magnets  
Using old magnets found in the Nature Centre from previous years, kids once again decorated them with a variety of materials. I even found old small calendar pictures of animals for them to glue on which turned out great.

### Activities:

- a) Indoor
  - i) Reuse, Reduce, Recycle Quiz  
A fun quiz repeated from last year, educational for both kids and parents
  - ii) Sorting Test

Kids had to sort various objects into three categories (reuse, reduce and recycle) some were surprised at just how many things they could either reuse or recycle.

- iii) Matching Game (Reducing your impact at home)  
Repeated from years before, younger kids matched pictures to the statements with yarn but older kids also enjoyed reading the facts.
  - iv) Endangered Species Matchup  
A new game I made this year, I thought it would be beneficial to also include some animals in this theme, reinforcing the idea that when we recycle at home it also helps keep animals habitats clean.
  - v) Coral Reef Go Fish  
A fun extra activity to have, I also included an info sheet by the game that talked about the importance of coral reefs and how they are being destroyed.
  - vi) Colouring Pages  
This week I encouraged kids to draw what they loved most about nature and also printed off an Earth Day maze and a picture of the earth to colour.
- b) Outdoor
- i) Pollutant Knockout  
This year I hung the game up on the bicycle rack outside, kids then threw bean bags at pictures of things that were bad for the environment. This worked fairly well but the pictures could definitely be re laminated in order to make sure the game lasts for summers to come.
  - ii) Green Bingo
  - iii) Side Walk Chalk

**Notes:** This is always a great theme to include every summer at the Nature Centre! It is very important to reinforce that living a greener life helps not only protect the earth for humans but animals too.

## WEEK 8: FORESTRY FUN (AUGUST 17-21)

### Objective:

The objective of this week was to introduce visitors to the variety of plant life in that we have in Alberta. Also to incorporate animals and insects that use the forest as their home.

### Attendance:

DAY	ADULTS	PRESCHOOL	ELEMENTARY	JUNIORHIGH	TOTAL/DAY	RANK
<b>Monday</b>	10	9	8	2	29	2
<b>Tuesday</b>	12	5	9	0	26	3
<b>Wednesday</b>	20	5	18	3	46	1
<b>Thursday</b>	10	2	10	1	23	4
<b>Friday</b>	7	3	11	1	22	5
<b>Total/Week</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>146</b>	

### Crafts:

a) Butterfly mask

Due to the popularity of the animal masks I decided to include a butterfly mask this week. Using stencils kids traced and cut out butterflies and used various materials to decorate them, taping a Popsicle stick to the back to hold. We also talked about how butterflies use trees and other things in the forest to help them camouflage.

b) Grow your own Grass!

This activity was repeated from last year and quite popular. Kids were given a cup to decorate then to fill with dirt and add grass seeds. We discussed what plants need to grow and to put their cup somewhere with lots of sunlight when they got home!

### Activities:

a) Indoor

i) Vegetation Rubbing

Kids went and collected a variety of leaves from outside and I helped them tape them on a table in a design and then using wax crayons and paper made a rubbing.

ii) Forest Facts

Game repeated from years before, interesting facts about the forest for both kids and parents, although this game was a bit more difficult it was fun to play in a group.

- iii) Tree True or False  
An easier forest facts game to play with younger kids
- iv) Parts of a Tree  
This printed off this worksheet, where the older kids could label the parts of a tree and wood, using posters around the cabin for help.
- v) Nocturnal or Diurnal  
A sorting game where kids had to sort animals into either category, before they played we discussed what the words mean and what characteristics an animal who is awake at night might have.
- vi) Tree Harvest Matching  
New this year I made a poster with four different ways trees are harvested and had kid's matchup the name with the picture. We discussed how each different way is good or bad for the environment.
- vii) Colouring Pages  
I printed off a Smokey the Bear, protecting the forest sheet and I encouraged kids to draw their favorite thing to do outside as an extra activity.

b) Outside

- i) Treevia  
A scavenger hunt focused on trees and plants.
- ii) Bean bag toss
- iii) Sidewalk chalk

**Notes:** Overall this was a great new theme to incorporate into the nature center this year. It was great for me to share my love for the forest and teach kids new things I have learned about conserving trees.

## WEEK 9: WILD WEATHER (AUGUST 24-28)

**Objective:** The objective of this week was to teach kids about all the different types of weather and discuss the difference between weather and climate. I also tried to incorporate discussion about what animals live in what climate and also how they adapt to weather and climate changes.

### Attendance:

DAY	ADULTS	PRESCHOOL	ELEMENTARY	JUNIORHIGH	TOTAL/DAY	RANK
<b>Monday</b>	9	7	13	2	31	4
<b>Tuesday</b>	7	5	12	3	27	5
<b>Wednesday</b>	13	8	12	0	33	2
<b>Thursday</b>	10	5	20	2	37	1
<b>Friday</b>	13	8	10	1	32	3
<b>Total/Week</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>160</b>	

### Crafts:

a) Rainbow Wand

This craft was a popular one repeated from last year, children traced two clouds onto white paper and then attached a chopstick to one cloud. Then five different coloured streamers were attached to make the 'rainbow' and the other cloud glued on top. These were very pretty and children loved playing with them in the wind

b) Rain Stick

Also repeated from last year it involved decorating the outside of a paper towel or toilet paper roll with various stickers and construction paper. Then I helped kids attach wax paper with elastics on either side and fill it with a little rice. This resulted in a 'rain' sound when it was shook.

### Activities:

a) Indoor

i) Seasons Memory

Reused game from previous years. Memory games are always simple to play and kids really enjoy playing against each other.

ii) Arctic True or False

iii) Matching Spring Babies

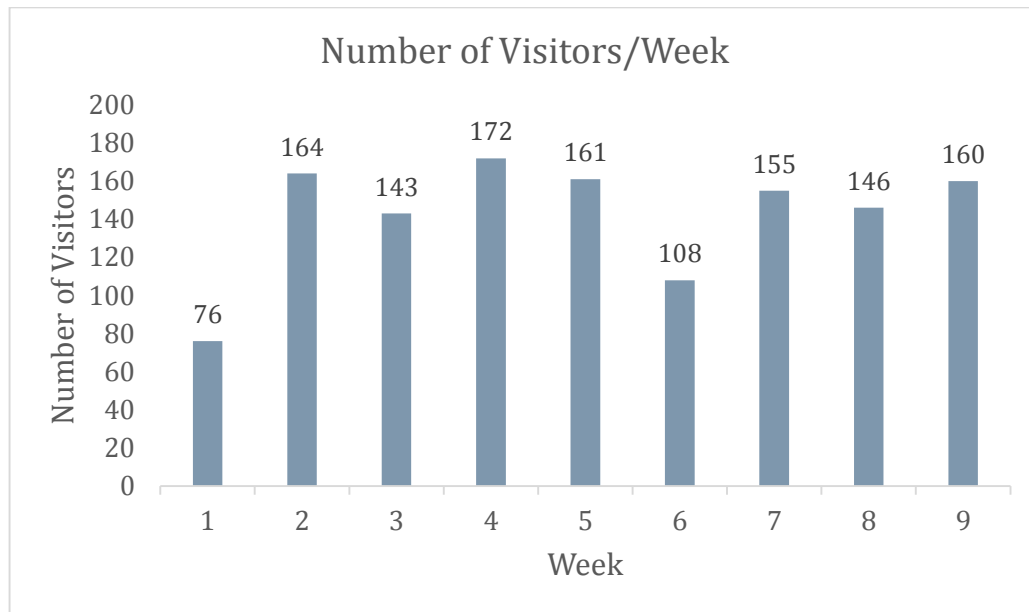
- Children has to match baby animals to their mom, very fun and good for kids of all ages.
- iv) Can you guess the season  
Varies facts about each season were written on cards and children had to guess what season that might happen in (e.g. Birds flying south.)
  - v) Weather Quiz  
Reused from last year, a trivia game ranging from very easy to moderately difficulty questions about the weather.
  - vi) Tornado in a Jar  
I filled mason jars with coloured water and added glitter, kids had fun shaking them and creating a tornado, I explained to them why this effect happens.
  - vii) Colouring Pages  
I had blank pieces of paper for kids to draw the weather on for the day or what their favorite weather is.
- b) Outdoor
- i) Rainbow Chip  
I laid out numerous quo cards with different colours on them and kids had to go outside and find different things to match the rainbow chips outside.
  - ii) Bean Bag Toss

**Notes:** This was a great last week at the Nature Centre, and definitely a theme worth repeating. It is always good to focus on not only biotic aspects of the environment but also abiotic. There was more than enough activities and I was pleasantly surprised that this was one of the busiest weeks of the summer. In the future it would be awesome to have more games for younger kids but overall it was a great end to the summer 😊



## Statistics:

### ATTENDANCE OVERVIEW

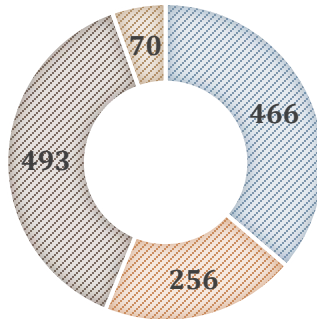


The total number of visitors at the Nature Centre this summer was 1285. Compared with last summer, there was 57 less visitors this year, keeping in mind last summer the Nature Centre was open a day more than this summer. Overall it was great to see consistent amount of visitors from summer to summer and generally from week to week. The busiest week this summer was week 4 (Rockin' Rocks), this was also the busiest week last summer. Therefore for next summer I would suggest having a theme that has a high number of activities and crafts that require minimal help from the Nature Centre coordinator, that way if there is a high number of visitors the coordinator can balance their time between them all accordingly. Week 6 there was a drop in visitors, partially due to the fact the Nature Centre was closed on Monday for August long weekend, therefore I concluded that families probably took that week to go for summer holidays.

Once again the Nature Centre was open late on Wednesday's, it was great having a late day as some kids participate in camps during the day or their parents work. I had positive feedback with the late nights and would recommend doing them again!

## AGE GROUPS OF VISITORS

■ Adults ■ Preschool ■ Elementary ■ Junior High



This summer once again there was almost twice as many elementary aged children compared to preschool aged. The high number of adults is due to people coming for a walk around Red Willow Park and stopping in either to get water or just to see what is inside. I was surprised by just how many adults had no idea the Nature Centre even existed in the summer months. Also some would ask about local plant life in the area so I would direct them to the plant guide books.

### CONCLUSION

Throughout the summer I noticed that majority of the visitors lived in neighborhoods close to the Nature Centre. Therefore, I would suggest more advertising next summer specifically in St. Albert's Northern neighborhoods, possibly small printouts to tape on mailboxes. I also believe it would be beneficial to contact Servus Place and St. Albert Public Library and see if it would be possible to distribute posters on their bulletin boards. This I believe would generate more visitors throughout the summer!

Overall I thought this was a very successful summer at the Nature Centre, once again there was a high number of visitors and all with something positive to say. I believe the Nature Centre is a great asset to St. Albert in the summer months, as technology is getting more easily accessible for kids it is important to remind them that playing outside is not only healthy for them but fun too!