



MEDIA ADVISORY

Grade 4 students testing out Zoo School

Students in a Grade 4 class from Mother Teresa Elementary School are getting a break from their regular classroom this week, but they're still learning – at the Saskatoon Zoo Society's Zoo School. The program combines traditional classroom learning with hands-on educational experiences at the Saskatoon Forestry Farm and Zoo. This class from Mother Teresa is only the second group of students to attend Zoo School as it's piloted. ***(Backgrounder attached.)***

At Zoo School, led by Zoo Society instructors, students learn about ecosystems and species at risk from a Saskatchewan perspective, consider their own ecological footprints and gain a deeper appreciation for our local environment. Subjects like math and language arts are also included – with a focus on nature.

Of course, students will also get to see the zoo animals live and in person as they learn about them. For example, in a lesson about biodiversity the class will dissect owl pellets – dry, regurgitated food waste – then visit with a Great Horned Owl.

Media are invited to visit Zoo School at the Affinity Learning Centre ***(Map attached)***. Details are as follows:

Lesson with Owl at Zoo School
10 a.m.
Thursday, April 29
Affinity Learning Centre
Saskatoon Forestry Farm and Zoo

For more information, please contact:

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Backgrounder

Saskatoon Zoo Society Zoo School 2010 Pilot Project

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2010 marks the International Year of Biodiversity. But what exactly is biodiversity, and how do we teach the importance of biodiversity in a meaningful way to our youth? Especially to youth who are so attached to the digital world they suffer from what has been termed “nature deficit disorder”?

Over the past two years, the Zoo Society programming staff has been using a grant from the Royal Bank Foundation to establish a cross-curriculum school program at the zoo. This March the Saskatoon Zoo Society launched a two-year pilot program called Zoo School. A grade four class from Mother Teresa School moved their class into the Affinity Learning Centre for a week. This month, another Grade 4 class from Mother Teresa will be attending Zoo School. The week-long curriculum-based program integrates traditional classroom learning with hands-on educational experiences. Students study biodiversity, habitats, and species at risk. The program explores Saskatchewan's history and culture and their effects on today's society. Other subjects, such as math and language arts, focus on nature and the environment.

Often when students study ecosystems and species at risk they examine exotic areas such as tropical rainforests or the African savannah. Zoo School brings these subjects home to look at Saskatchewan's grasslands and our local species at risk. Along the way students will also be looking at their lifestyle and the impacts of their ecological footprint. It is hoped that the week-long program will lead to a deeper understanding and respect for our local environment in which we live and depend upon to survive.

Helping the Zoo Society teaching staff with their task will be a host of animal ambassadors from the zoo. The students will have the opportunity to get up close and personal with the animals to learn about their habitats, adaptations, and ecology. The students will also learn what it like to be a zookeeper and what is involved in taking care of the animals at the zoo.

However, Zoo School is more than connecting kids with conservation and nature. The program looks at developing healthy bodies as well. The students will be spending a lot of their time outdoors as they hike through the Forestry Farm to learn more about the national historic site or checking out the animals at the zoo. Zoo School aims to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will allow the students to make healthy lifestyle choices. That includes the food they eat as well. Kids rarely, if ever, read the nutritional information labels found on our food today. Getting the students to understand the importance of these labels takes on a new slant at the zoo. For example, the students will need to calculate how many mice to feed an owl based on some rather unique nutrition labels. It's a fun and memorable way to learn about nutrition.

Being memorable is what Zoo School is all about. The lessons are learned in a manner that cannot be accomplished in a traditional classroom. The experience will stay with the students and have a lasting impact on their lives. A big thank you goes out to the Catholic School Board and Mother Teresa Grade Four students for participating in our Zoo School Program.

FORESTRY FARM

Welcome to the Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park & Zoo!

For your navigational needs hang on to this map, and you'll find your way to a world of fun at the Forestry Farm. If you look closely, you'll find the Forestry Farm to be more than a great summer destination - it's a living piece of Saskatoon's heritage. Whether you relax in our park, tour our heritage spots, or experience the bustling world of animals at the zoo, our greatest feature is the thrill of discovery amidst the miracle of nature. It's a natural place to be.



1 Forestry Farm House

Built in 1913, this historic building is available to rent for special events. Accommodates up to 40 people.

2 Hall

The Forestry Farm Hall can accommodate up to 225 people, and has access to large barbeques.

3 Gazebo

Outdoor BBQ facility perfect for small, secluded gatherings. Water and electricity are available, as are barbeques and picnic tables.

4 Administration

For inquiries call us at 975-3382 (Open 8:30-4:30).

5 Wedding Garden

We are honoured to host your special day in our beautifully landscaped garden.

6 Greenhouse and Butterfly Exhibit

Sutherland Forest Nursery Station Heritage Buildings
All original buildings from our National Historic Site are illustrated in orange.

Affinity Learning Centre

 Toilets  Picnic area  Telephone  Parking

