

This park is designated as a
Preservation Area



Elizabeth Hall Wetlands



History

The Elizabeth Hall Wetlands, a preservation area of 32 hectares, is tucked away alongside the Oldman River. It encompasses a wooded area, wetlands, and an oxbow pond. The park is dedicated to Elizabeth Carol Hall, an ardent naturalist, city alderman, and a devoted individual who found so much happiness observing nature.



Diversity & Change

The oxbow pond, which is encircled by a 2km pedestrian trail and interpretive signage, is a place of continual change or succession. Over time, the oxbow pond will fill in gradually with sediments and become shallower. Plants will grow along the edges and more pond weeds will grow on the bottom. The animal species inhabiting the wetland will eventually shift as the pond becomes a marsh and gradually changes into a meadow. Although trees and shrubs might start to grow where the pond once was, it will still be a peaceful and natural setting in which to enjoy the changing seasons.

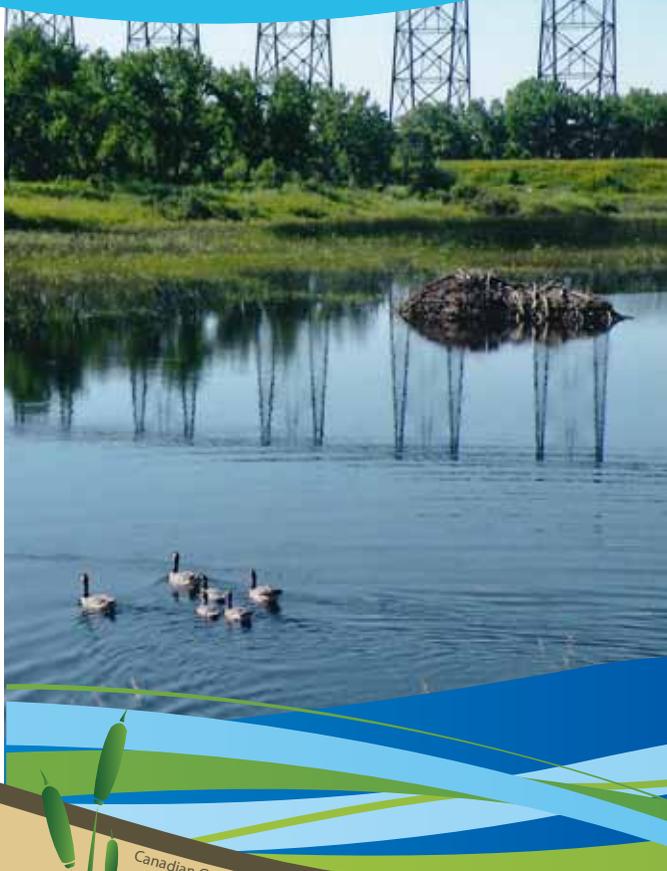
Wetlands & Water Quality

More than 70% of the wetlands on the Canadian Prairies has been changed or lost. Farming and urban expansion are the two main reasons for the alarming loss of wetlands. Researchers are just starting to understand the important role wetlands play in keeping our drinking water clean.

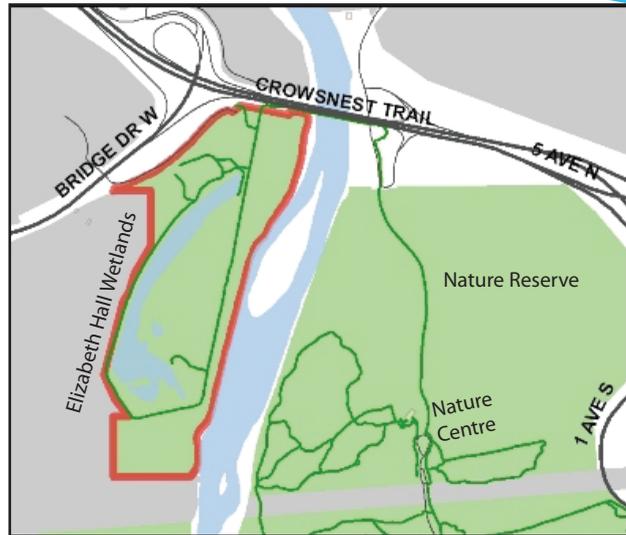


Dock at Elizabeth Hall Wetlands Photo by Ken Orich

“Wetlands act as huge ecological sponges by soaking up pollutants and filtering water before it reaches your tap. They also store water for later use.”
- Ducks Unlimited Canada



Canadian Geese & Beaver dam Photo by Megan Dasselaar



HELEN SCHULER
NATURE CENTRE

403.320.3064
lethbridge.ca/h SNC
hsnc@lethbridge.ca

Elizabeth Hall Wetlands is a must see for birdwatchers, photographers, and nature enthusiasts.



Yellow-headed Blackbird Photo by Ken Orich



Canadian Beaver Photo by Ken Orich



Painted Turtles Photo by Ken Orich



Dragonfly Photo by Ken Orich



Boreal Chorus Frog Photo by HSNC

Birds

Some of the most colourful birds among the cattails are the red-winged and yellow-headed blackbirds. Their distinctive calls, along with other songbirds, make the wetlands a very musical place.

Killdeer with its bold neck bands, can usually be spotted along the edges of the pond. Shorebirds, such as the solitary and spotted sandpipers, American avocets, and great blue herons share this pond with mallards, Tundra swans, and Canadian geese amongst many other waterfowl birds.

Mammals

Muskrats and beavers live in the pond along the river and you may see them swimming or eating the plants along the edge of the pond. Amongst many other mammals, white-tailed deer, porcupines, short-tailed weasels, and coyotes can sometimes be spotted near the shoreline.

Painted Turtles

On sunny days, the Western painted turtle might be found sunbathing on a log in the pond. This is one of the few places in Alberta where turtles are found. In the winter, they hibernate in the mud on the bottom of the wetland.

Invertebrates

A close look in the water at the edge of the pond will reveal a teeming world of miniature animals. Caddisfly, mayfly, and dragonfly larvae, water boatmen, diving beetles, fisher spiders, and water striders are just a few you might see. Monarch and Canadian tiger swallowtail butterflies flutter amongst the diverse plant growth.

Park Amenities

Thanks to generous funding support from Ducks Unlimited, a dipping dock can be found on the north east corner of the pond. The dock provides a unique opportunity to walk among the emergent plants and look for turtles and muskrats.

Along with many other school programs, thousands of local Grade 5 students visit the wetlands each year to discover more about what makes them special.

A waterfowl viewing blind is located in the south east corner. Here visitors have a front row seat to watch courtship displays, nest building, and the care of young.

There is interpretive signage around the 2 km pedestrian trail.

Conservation message

The wetlands are critical nesting and feeding areas for many birds. This is one of the reasons why dog-walking is not permitted. Studies show that dogs (even those on-leash) have a significant negative impact on wildlife, especially on ground-dwelling and ground-nesting birds.

Floodplain Features

The Oldman River, which flows through Lethbridge, curves back and forth across the landscape. It is a meandering river. Over time, parts of the channel are cut off and abandoned, forming oxbow ponds such as the one at Elizabeth Hall Wetlands.



Signage Photo by HSNC