



Program Summary - 2007

Overview

The success of the Minister for the Day program is grounded in the unique combination of two events. First, there is a value-added in-class activity. Teachers responded enthusiastically that this program provided an important opportunity to “think outside the box” and to integrate various curricula. Second, the day spent in Edmonton with finalists and the Minister of Environment provides students and teachers a deeper experience to take back to their communities. This central day provides an opportunity for the Minister to raise the profile of the department through coverage of the event and dialogue with the students. Everyone gained a better sense of the importance of the work done at Alberta Environment and are more aware of the issues around them.

Program Background:

Minister for the Day 2007 was the seventh installment of the program. Targeted at grade 5 students and teachers from across Alberta, the program encourages classes to explore wetland stewardship issues in Alberta and to look at other key area of Alberta’s Environment in more depth. AENV provided each class with teaching and learning materials and a class set of student entry booklets. Teachers were free to deliver the content in whatever manner they chose.

Minister for the Day is a flagship program for Environment Week. It provides high-quality educational value while involving a larger number of teachers/students (and indirectly their family and friends) from a broad cross-section of the province. The Minister has the opportunity to showcase his and Alberta’s leadership in environmental management and be part of a “good news” event.

Classroom Participants:

- **60** classes applied to participate.
- **48** classes representing schools across the province took part in the in-class program.
- **6** from Northern Region, **28** from Central and **9** from South.
- **821** students took part in the in-class portion.

Winning Entries:

- **28** staff members volunteered to mark class sets of entries
- **12** provincial finalists were chosen
- **1** from Northern Region (Lac La Biche), **5** from Central (Stony Plain, Drayton Valley, Edmonton, Langdon), **6** from South (Calgary – 5, Seven Persons)
- Winners and their teachers were brought to Edmonton for a full day event.
- Winners toured the legislature, met with Minister Renner, toured the Minister’s office, took part in a press conference event, visited Big Lake at Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park and tested the water for Alberta Water Quality Awareness (AWQA) Day. They learned about endangered species and wetlands, and were treated to a pizza dinner before heading home.



Feedback from Teachers and Students

In-class program:

- **23** of 48 classes responded to feedback survey
- Most classes invested *1-2 hours*, with 32% investing *more than 5 hours*
- **87%** of teachers surveyed *tended to agree* that The Minister for the Day 2007 program was a valuable educational experience for students.
- **83%** of teachers surveyed felt the student booklet enhanced wetlands learning while encouraging the students to apply their knowledge.

Testimonials

[The students] learned that they can contribute to the preservation of Alberta's wetlands. – Teacher Participant

[My students] definitely [take] a more critical approach to environmental issues and the role of empowering youth to take action. – Teacher Participant

[My students are] definitely more aware of stewardship. They now realize that respecting the Earth involves many things, not just littering. – Teacher Participant

The kids know that someone else is reading their opinions. It goes beyond the school community. It's a practical example of responsible stewardship. – Teacher Participant

The contest was really well organized, the workbook was well thought out... I was impressed with all of it. – Teacher Participant

"The Day":

- **100%** of teachers surveyed strongly agreed that this program provided a valuable education experience for students.
- **100%** of teachers surveyed felt this program increased their motivation to involve their students in environmental education activities in the future.
- **100%** of teachers surveyed strongly agreed that they would be interested in participating in this program in the future and encourage other teachers to participate.
- **100%** of teachers surveyed strongly agreed that the MFTD 2007 program provided them with information and experiences they could share with the other students in their class or students in future classes.



Testimonials

I learned how fast Alberta's wetlands are disappearing, and all their important functions.. – Student Participant

I learned our wetlands have many important jobs such as filtering water and we need to protect them as best we can. – Student Participant

I learned that there [are] groups that people can join to help the wetlands and people can do simple things like taking shorter showers, which also help. – Student Participant

I will tell other people what is happening to the wetland and tell them easy things they can do to help save the wetlands. – Student Participant

I will remember shaking Mr. Renner's hand [and] sitting in his chair. – Student Participant

I'd like every Science teacher to share the same or similar experiences because of its value and so that they would be more aware of [the] environment and wetlands... and share it with their students. – Teacher Participant

Being at the wetland with experts in the field was most impactful. Students were able to have their questions fully answered. – Teacher Participant

It was all fantastic! Great organization! Thank you for the experience. – Teacher Participant

