



Why Larch Sanctuary is a Special Place

Celebrating Conservation
April 29, 2017



Learn more at larchsanctuary.ca

Larch Sanctuary is:

- a wildlife corridor and migration stopover.
- nesting ground for 42 different types of birds.
- 58 acres connected to the River Valley system.
- a mix of century-old white spruce, deciduous forest and regenerating birch trees.
- an intact riparian area, vital for the survival of 80% of Alberta's wildlife.
- a protected place where Edmontonians can easily connect with nature.



SONG SPARROW

These melodic birds can be found along brushy edges of the creeks and Oxbow, and throughout the parklands. If you look carefully, you might spot the song sparrow's nest on or near the ground, concealed under a tuft of grass or low in a shrub.



EASTERN PHOEBE

The Eastern Phoebe is one of the earliest migratory birds to return to the Sanctuary in the spring, and one of the latest to leave in the fall. It is a small flycatcher with a dark greyish-brown head and back, white throat and dirty grey breast.

You'll recognize it by its characteristic behaviour, pumping its tail up and down while sitting on a branch. Its song is simple and sounds much like its name – fee-bee!



WOOD FROG

The smallest true frogs in Alberta live in this part of Whitemud Creek Ravine, hardy amphibians capable of tolerating subzero temperatures. They hunt for worms and insects in damp, shady wooded areas of the Sanctuary's aspen parkland.

You'll recognize a wood frog by a dark brown or "bandit's mask" across its eyes, brownish body and white stripe down its back. They range in size from 1" to 2", a little bigger than the Boreal Chorus Frogs that also make this place home.


We know from tracks and scat observed along Whitemud Creek that moose are sometimes present. Moose is an Algonquin word that means “twig eater”. Their name explains the appeal of the Sanctuary. They graze on the buds of trees and shrubs, munch on bark and pine cones, slurp up aquatic plants and use their four stomachs to digest the twigs.



Conservation Easements:

- are enabled by provincial legislation.
- protect habitat for environmental, scenic or agricultural reasons.
- are legal contracts between landowners and qualified organizations, like the Edmonton & Area Land Trust.
- involve land use restrictions to conserve what gives the land its unique value.
- take a long time to put into place, and are typically permanent.

The Larch Sanctuary Easement protects its rare oxbow and remarkable biodiversity that surrounds it.



The oxbow is a remnant of an earlier river that once sat higher than Whitemud Creek. Spring flooding feeds it now, combined with rainfall and groundwater. Notice when you visit how the level varies from season to season.