



Adventure Log

Our adventure started on a rainy Monday morning. Doesn't sound like the best way to start your week, does it? Well, in this case it was. On April 25, 2016, we decided to take a hike to the biggest tree in Beauvais Lake Provincial Park. At 8:15, we left the school. Once at the park, we waited for our "tour guide" to arrive. After that, our journey was underway. What was estimated to be about an hour long hike we conquered in just over half an hour. The real challenge lied in bushwhacking our way to the tree, which was off the trail. First, we were all spread out on both sides of the path, looking. You'd think it would be difficult to lose the biggest tree in the park, however it took us almost as long to find the tree as it did for us to hike to the top of the mountain. This is most likely due to the fact that this estimated 500 year old Douglas Fir lost its top for unknown reasons (probably wind or lightning), making it shorter than many of the surrounding trees. After a while, we decided to one side searching. Turns out this was the wrong side, as we ended up in a mini-forest of the wrong type of trees. Once we established that we needed to change our search to the other side of the trail, we experienced almost instant success. We happened upon a very old part of the forest. Soon after, we came across the tree. The photos don't do justice to its size. This tree's biggest asset has to be its thick bark which protects it against harsh weather, animals, and forest fires. Our hike was worth it. This tree was bigger than we had imagined taking 4 grade 10 students hand to hand to reach around it. Of course, you can't visit a storied tree such as this and not climb a branch or two, so that's what we did. More than a few pictures were taken and then we had to leave (no pun intended). Hiking to the bottom in record time is where our adventure came to a close. I can safely say I, and my 6 comrades, have gained a greater knowledge and appreciation of the park.

Beauvais Lakes' Trees Will LEAF You in Awe

Aspen:

When you think of forest fires, you usually don't think "helpful," right? Actually, Beauvais Lake could really use a forest fire right now. This is because of the problems arising due to the aspen trees invasion. They are so hardy and aggressive, they are starting to take over the land that native grasses used to call home. A controlled burn is being considered as a possible solution to the rising aspen population. This will not put the species at risk, as aspen trees are resilient and grow quickly.

Balsam Poplar:

Also known as Cottonwood tree, balsam poplar trees are a greenish brown tree that has light soft wood. It is low in strength, therefore good for campfires. Balsam poplars can grow up to 100 feet tall, and 24 inches in diameter. These trees add 6 feet to their height each year and can live to be 70 years old. Female trees are the only trees of this species that produces cotton.

Larch:

Larch trees are a common species in Beauvais Lake provincial park. They can grow from 80-140 feet tall, however you likely won't find any that height in the park due to our windy climate. The heartwood of a larch is very strong, and is used to construct many things including coffins, buildings, telephone poles, fences, furniture, boats and railroad ties.

Douglas Fir:

These trees have reddish-brown bark and can grow anywhere from 157-196 feet tall sometimes taller. The branches often grow between 10-15 centimetres thick. At maturity the diameter of the

trunk is anywhere from 12-20 feet. The main use for the wood is lumber for building construction. Other uses may include railway ties, boxes and crates. Amongst other things douglas fir also makes good Christmas trees. In this park, there is a douglas fir tree that is an estimated 500 years old. To reach around it, it takes 13 grade 5 students hand to hand! However, despite its large circumference, this tree is only about 10-20 meters high.

Lodgepole Pine:

Did you know that the lodgepole pine is Alberta's provincial tree? They can grow up to 300m high over the course of their 200 year life spans. The branches of these trees grow mostly on the top third of the tree, especially when growing in crowded conditions. Cones of lodgepole pines can remain on the tree for 10 to 20 years. A lodgepoles' bark is less than 2cm thick. Sometimes bears will tear the outer layers of bark off in order to access the nutrient rich inner bark.. Can you spot any lodgepoles in the park that have been visited by a bear?

Sources:

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