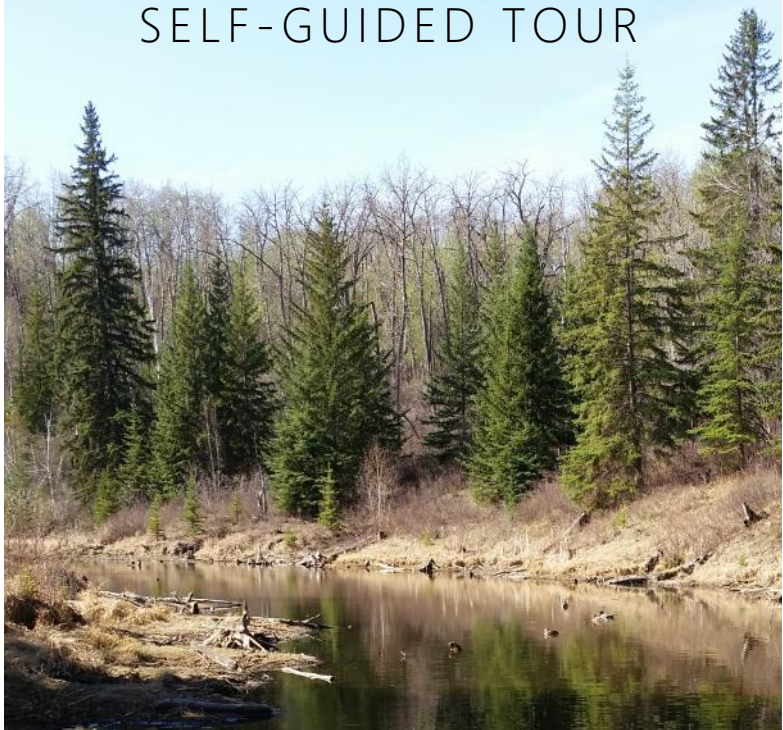


# LARCH SANCTUARY SELF-GUIDED TOUR





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# WHO IS EALT?

Edmonton and Area Land Trust (EALT) is a non-profit organization dedicated to conserving natural areas in and around Edmonton to protect wildlife habitat and allow individuals to connect with nature, not only today, but for generations to come.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Volunteer or donate! EALT has a variety of volunteer opportunities available to suit your interests. For more information on how to get involved in supporting local conservation visit: [www.ealt.ca](http://www.ealt.ca)

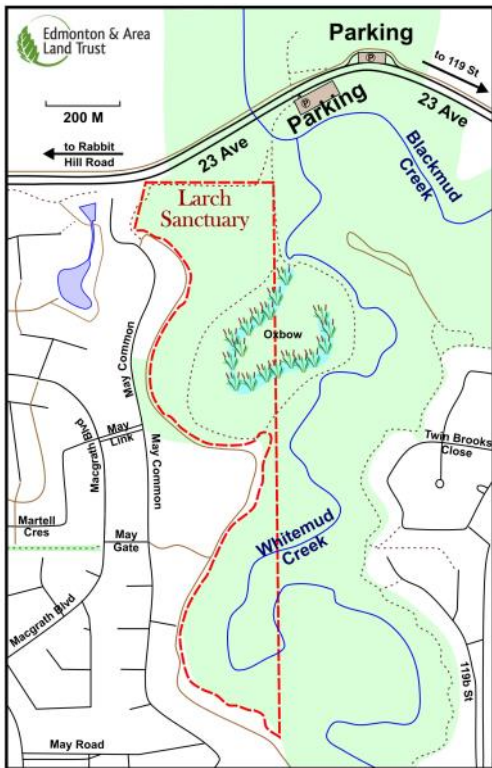


# LARCH SANCTUARY

Nestled in the middle of Edmonton lies Larch Sanctuary, a tranquil section of the Whitemud Nature Reserve. The combination of wooded areas, along with the riparian areas lining the creek and oxbow lake, retain remarkable biodiversity, providing habitat for dozens of species of mammals, birds, and amphibians. Larch Sanctuary also provides residents with a unique place to be active and connect with nature.



# DIRECTIONS



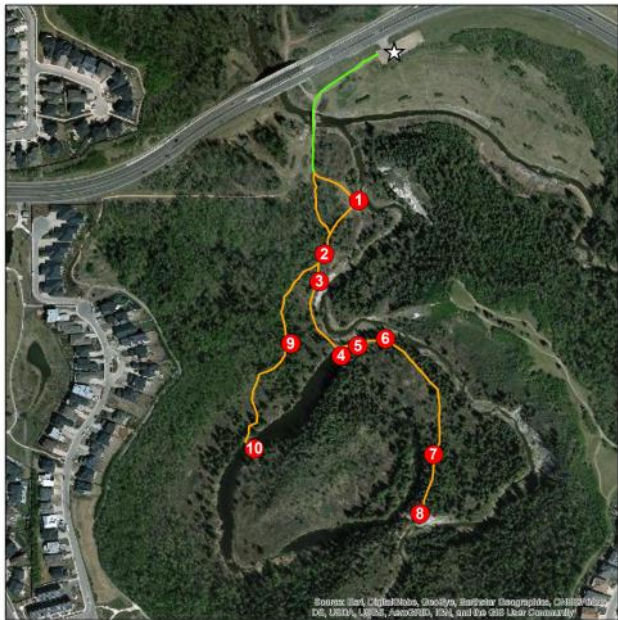
## FROM RABBIT HILL ROAD:

Head east on 23 Ave; park in the south lot.

## FROM 119 ST:

Head west on 23 Ave; park in the north lot. Take the trail under the overpass to access Larch Sanctuary trails.

# SELF-GUIDED TOUR TRAIL MAP



## Legend

Self-guided Tour  
(1.3 km)

Easy

Moderate

● Points of Interest

★ Parking



0 100 200 400 Meters

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# 1

## WHITEMUD CREEK

You're standing in front of the Whitemud Creek. About 100 meters downstream, the Whitemud and Blackmud Creeks merge, flowing towards and draining into the North Saskatchewan River. The topography along the creek varies from relatively flat (such as where you are standing) to much steeper slopes along the creek's banks. Some slopes are incised with deep gullies due to erosion, so watch your step as you gain elevation along the trails!





# 2

## WILD ROSES

Stop and smell the roses! The beautiful pink flowers you see along the path are wild roses, one of the many wildflowers found in Larch Sanctuary. The wild rose is Alberta's Provincial Flower. Wild rose petals, as well as the rose hips (which are the fruit of the flower), are edible and can be dried or used to make tea, jam, jelly, or syrup.



# 3 NATURE WATCH

At this amazing vantage point, take a few minutes to patiently watch for wildlife. Scan for moose and deer walking in the trees, ducks swimming, or great blue herons hunting. Watch the sky for our largest woodpecker – the pileated woodpecker – flying by, or a red-tailed hawk soaring overhead.

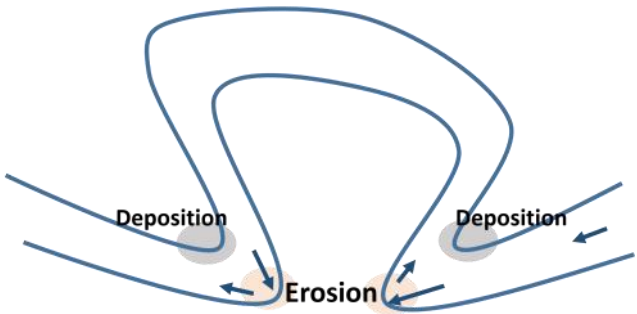


# 4

## OXBOW LAKE

This wetland curves around the trees, forming a U-shaped body of water called an oxbow lake. The oxbow is free-standing water that was once a meander in Whitemud Creek. Fast flowing water eroded the outside curves of the creek while depositing soil on the inside curves, eventually cutting through the narrow neck of land, leaving the oxbow stranded.

### Oxbow Formation



# 5

## BEWARE THE BENTONITE

This hill shows exposed bentonitic clay. Bentonite acts like a sponge and can absorb several times its dry mass in water. It is extremely slippery when wet. The trails become difficult to traverse in the spring and after heavy rainfalls, due to these clays. Make sure the trails are dry when you're exploring!



# 6 NATURE SOUNDS

Stop here for a few moments to listen to the world around you. Listen to the rushing water as it flows down the creek, or the trilling sounds of the chipping sparrows. You may be able to hear the white-throated sparrow sing its distinctive “dear sweet Canada, Canada, Canada” song.



CHIPPING SPARROW BY GERALD ROMANCHUK

# 7 SPRUCE TREE ROOTS

The network of roots on the ground serve many purposes. Not only do they anchor the trees in the ground, they also absorb water and nutrients from the soil to keep the trees alive and healthy. While the roots form convenient stairs for us, the exposed roots are evidence of high traffic which has led to soil erosion and compression. Walk with care!



# 8 WATER MOVEMENT

Here you can compare the characteristics of the oxbow (to the right) with Whitemud Creek (to the left). The water in Whitemud Creek is flowing by, while the water in the oxbow stands still. Whitemud Creek is fed from upstream and collects water from a large basin. The water in the oxbow is collected from groundwater and ravine runoff when the snow melts or when it rains.



# 9 GEOCACHING



Geocaching is an exciting outdoor treasure hunt. Using a GPS or the Geocaching Smartphone App, you follow coordinates and find hidden containers - in parks, behind trees, under logs, and more! There's a logbook to sign and cool swag to trade inside. Let's try it: you're at ground zero of a geocache now, meaning it could be anywhere, within a few meters of this point. Helpful hint: *past the stump near the fallen spruce.*



# 10 WATER WILDLIFE

Take a look in and around the water. What do you see? Look for ducks, frogs, snails, dragonflies, backswimmer bugs, and other unique creatures. You've probably heard of a dragonfly, but what about a damselfly? Damselflies look like little dragonflies but instead of outstretched wings, damselflies fold in their wings when at rest.



# CELEBRATE 150 ACRES OF CANADA'S NATURAL HERITAGE

*Celebrate 150 Acres of Canada's Natural Heritage* is a unique project that encourages participation in nature walk events hosted by EALT in urban and rural locations, to mark Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday. EALT gratefully acknowledges that Canada's Aboriginal peoples were the original stewards of the land. This project celebrates 150 acres of the over 2,000 acres of land that EALT stewards.



COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATIONS  
OF CANADA  
all for community.

FONDTIONS  
COMMUNAUTAIRES  
DU CANADA  
ensemble pour tous.



Canada

This initiative is made possible by the Community Fund for Canada's 150<sup>th</sup>, a collaboration between Edmonton Community Foundation, the Government of Canada, and extraordinary leaders from coast to coast to coast.





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You can visit all of EALT's natural areas! Directions and trail maps are available at:

[www.ealt.ca/conservation-lands](http://www.ealt.ca/conservation-lands)