The W. Garfield Weston Foundation funds regional fieldtrips through the Helen Schuler Nature Centre

Lethbridge, Alberta – The Helen Schuler Nature Centre is excited to announce a multi-year funding commitment from The W. Garfield Weston Foundation. The W. Garfield Weston Foundation is committing $215,000 to the City of Lethbridge over the next three years. The funding will provide Lethbridge students with the opportunity to spend full days out on fieldtrips into Lethbridge parks as well as the Waterton Park Front, a large conservation area that borders on Waterton Lakes National Park. 2012 marks the fifth year that The W. Garfield Weston Foundation has supported these fieldtrips. To date nearly 2000 students, ranging from Grade 4 to Grade 7 have participated in these unique field trip experiences.

“Our Foundation has been engaged in environmental education initiatives for over 10 years and we are pleased to support the Helen Schuler Nature Centre,” said Camilla Dalglish, Director of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation. “It is wonderful that Lethbridge students are able to travel to Waterton Park Front where the Foundation has helped to conserve over 30,000 acres and have the opportunity to learn how they can actively contribute to the health of Alberta’s ecosystems.”

The programs coordinated by the Helen Schuler Nature Centre bring The W. Garfield Weston Foundation, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, the City of Lethbridge and local Lethbridge schools together to provide students with a valuable opportunity to take the learning out of the classroom and into the outdoors.

Program activities are designed to help students connect to nature and to the land. As a result, students can develop a better understanding of what conservation is and how they can take an active role in conserving. “The students get to experience for themselves, concepts like ecology, biodiversity and the importance of land conservation in a real world setting,” says Coreen Putman, Nature Centre Coordinator. “You really can’t compare what a child takes from these hands-on learning experiences in terms of what they internalize, what they are able to understand and what they remember compared to reading it out of a book, or off of a website. By getting them out into the landscape we are connecting them to the place that is their home.”