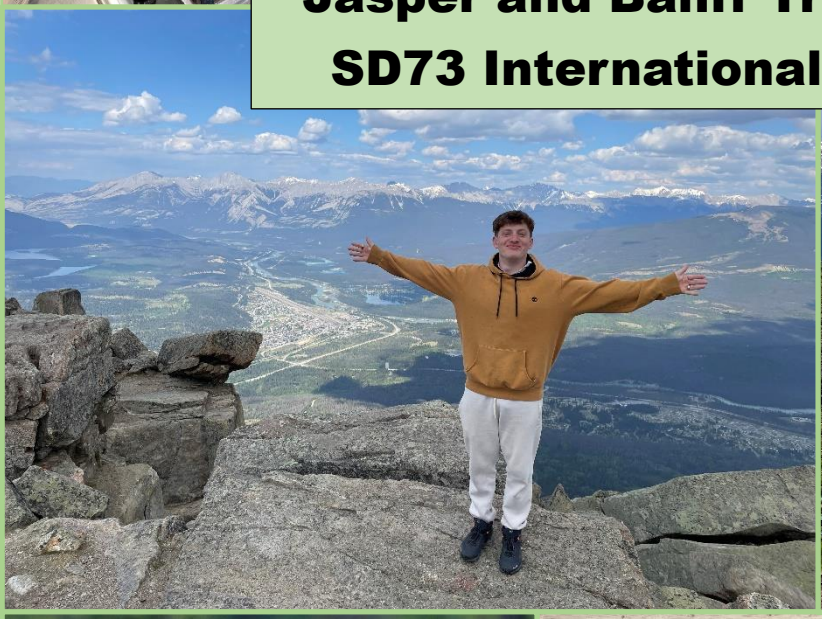
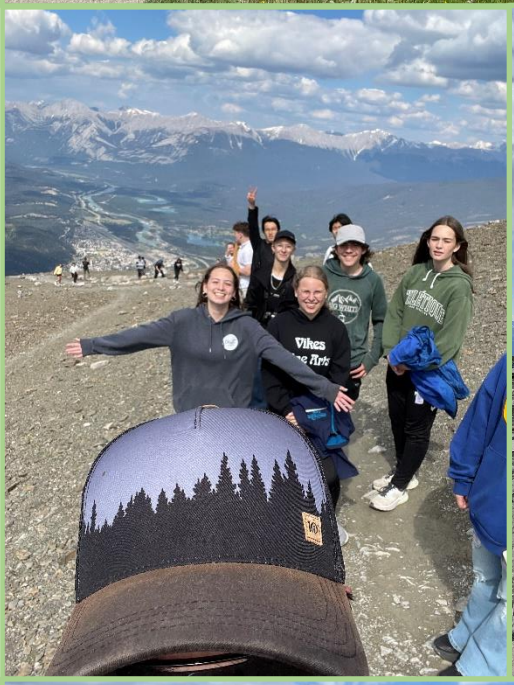
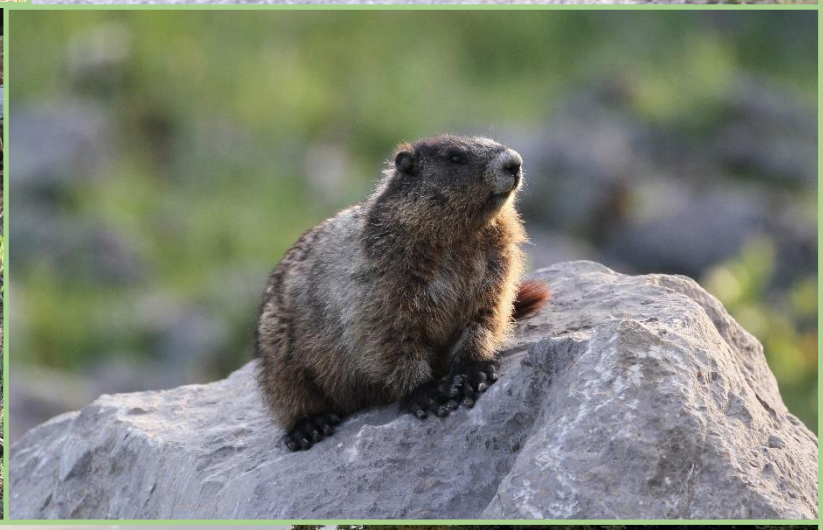
Jasper and Banff Trip May 26-29, 2023
SD73 International Student Program



Thirty students and four chaperones left Kamloops at 7:15am on May 26 and headed north on the Yellowhead Highway towards Jasper. We had a brief stop in Clearwater and lunch in Valemount and then posed by the highest peak in the Canadian Rockies → Mt. Robson (4000m). Once in Jasper, we drove directly to the sky tram and secured an earlier time than previously booked, giving us more time above the tree line. We enjoyed fantastic visibility and air quality (no wildfire smoke) for our entire time in Jasper and Banff. The red circle below shows the top of the sky tram.



We then drove the short drive to our hostel and checked in, grocery shopped, and had supper. At 8:00 we met on the bus for a wildlife drive. This drive resulted in several Black Bears, Hoary Marmots, Elk, and both Mule and White-tailed Deer.



The next morning, some of the students met for a morning wildlife drive. Unfortunately, we didn't see much except some lovely Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep rams on the way back to the hostel. After breakfast we went on a river float tour that lasted over an hour.

We then had a few hours of rest time to shop, buy food, or relax. At 1:00pm we met on the bus for a short ride to the Valley of the Five Lakes hike. This hike is around 5kms return and goes past five gorgeous turquoise glacial lakes. We stopped at a few of them and the students had the opportunity to walk into them to cool off.

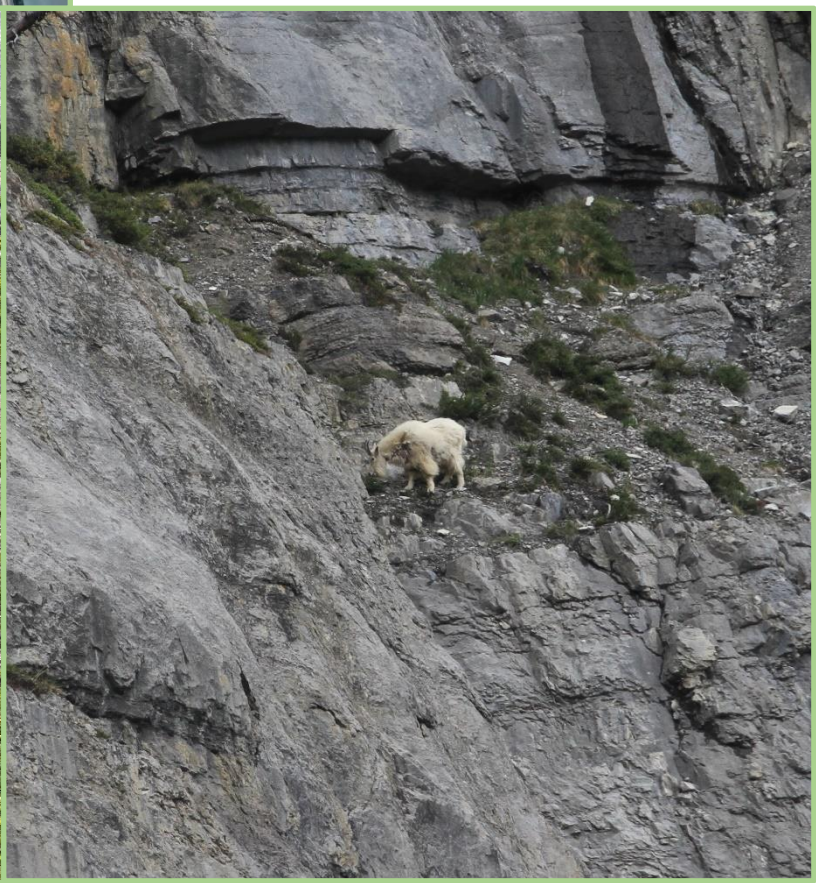
Once back at the hostel, we had some time for supper before meeting again for a wildlife drive at 7:30. This drive did not result in very much so we were back at the hostel earlier than expected and roasted marsh mellows for making smores over a campfire in the hostel fire pit. The burn ban had ended the day before we arrived which was perfect timing.

We enjoyed a later start to the next morning, meeting at the bus for a 9:00am departure. We drove south on the Icefields Parkway towards Banff with a brief stop at Athabasca Falls and a much longer stop at the Columbia Icefields where the Athabasca Glacier comes close to the road. We had two tours here: the glacier experience and walking on the glass-floored skywalk. Pictures of the waterfall and both tours below.

ICE EXPLORER
COLUMBIA ICEFIELD

After the skywalk, we drove the last few hours south to Banff, encountering a few Mountain Goats on the way and taking in the spectacular scenery along this route. At Banff, we checked into our hotel and then had some time for dinner and shopping in the town. The next morning, we headed west back towards Kamloops with a brief stop at the famous Lake Louise and Revelstoke for lunch.

Students on this trip were from: China, Spain, Germany, Japan, Italy, Belgium, Mexico, Czechia, and Brazil.



Favourite Moment From the Trip

Fabio – When I cooked the cake with Thibault and Rodrigo.

Gigi – Walking into the lake because Anita got into the water to get away from a bee.

Rodrigo – Rafting because we all took turns getting soaked.

Thibault – The hike and walking into the water because the hike was a good work out and it was refreshing to go into the water.

Hannah – When we went rafting and I lost a sock.

Anita – When Agata got totally soaked while rafting.

Sandra – When there was a "certain smell" in the sky tram.

Rebecca – The first wildlife drive when we saw bears because it was my first time to see bears.

Valeria – Rafting because it was fun watching different people getting soaked and we talked about different cultures.

Lorenzo – The bus rides because we were all together as friends talking a lot.

Agata – The Valley of the 5 Lakes Hike. Even though I hate hiking it was a nice hike and walking into the water was refreshing.

Anne – The hike. Usually I don't like hikes but I had fun with my friends walking into the water. I saw a leech.

Greta – The hike and the walking into the water because it was fun and refreshing.

Achille – When we went rafting because the landscape was beautiful and we were having fun seeing who was going to be the next one to be soaked.

Carla – When the big wave crashed over my head while rafting. Also hanging out in Banff.

Selma – To be able to stand on a glacier while wearing shorts and to see all the wildlife very close.

Kian – Rafting because it was nice to go over the rapids.

Justus – Rafting, the sky walk, and free time in Banff because I was never on a skywalk before. Rafting was fun to be on a river and see other people get soaked.

Tarja – Rafting and exploring Banff. Banff is pretty and we had a good time in the park. Rafting was a fun adrenaline rush.

Lilith – Exploring Banff because we walked around and the sunset was really beautiful.

Koko – Being at Lake Louise because it was so beautiful.

Reia – Shopping in Banff because these kinds of shops are not in Kamloops.

Amelia – When we were hiking above the sky tram and I could see all of Jasper.

Justin – the wildlife drives because the view was beautiful and the animals are difficult for me to see in my home country.

Alice – Walking on the ice field because I could drink the water directly from the glacier.

Carter – Making smores because they were tasty.

Gavin – Rafting because I learned a lot and the water was really cool.

Ruby – Hiking, the glacier, and the Athabasca Waterfall because they were all amazing.

Welt – At the lakes on the hike because the environment was good there and they were not crowded.

Charles – the sky tram because of the feeling I had when I was on top of the mountain.

One Thing That I Learned on the Trip

Fabio – How to count to ten on one hand.

Gigi – That I have more resilience than I thought.

Rodrigo – When Mr. Beeke says 5 minutes, it is 2 hours (while hiking).

Thibault – How to enjoy nature. For example, staying in one place and watching what the animals are doing.

Hannah – Banff is wonderfully expensive.

Anita – There are no polar bears in Jasper and Banff.

Sandra – There are no flat areas in Western Canada.

Rebecca – Banff is one of my favourite cities.

Valeria – That people bully others for wear flip flops with socks.

Lorenzo – To always bring the key with me when I go out of my room.

Agata – How easy and accessible it is to see wildlife in Jasper.

Anne – I learned the difference between moose, deer, and elk.

Greta – Banff is really expensive.

Achille – Marsh mellows can burn really fast.

Carla – That a tree can be 300 years old but still very short at high elevations.

Selma – That the Athabasca Glacier is melting 25 m each year.

Kian – The Ice Explorers cleaned their tires before going on the glacier so they don't destroy it even more.

Justus – The lakes in Jasper and Banff were warmer than the ocean in Tofino. I was expecting them to be colder.

Tarja – The river we were rafting on is full of water that was ice 24 hours before.

Lilith – Water from the Rocky Mountains goes to three oceans depending on what side of the mountains it is.

Koko – How so many different animals live.

Reia – How to make smores.

Amelia – Jasper is more beautiful than Banff and the air is fresher around mountains.

Justin – Next time I will bring better shoes for hiking.

Alice – Global warming is a serious problem. The ice field has melted a lot in the last 100 years.

Carter – Always bring extra clothes in case you get wet.

Gavin – During the rafting I found out that there are a lot of trees that fell down because of the pine beetle.

Ruby – Banff is not as good as Jasper even though Banff is more famous.

Welt – It is always cold in the morning in Canada, so it is a good idea to bring more clothes.

Charles – Compared to nature we are really small.

Mammal List: The following mammals were seen on the trip

1. Black Bear – 8
2. Elk – 16
3. Mule Deer – 8
4. White-tailed Deer – 5
5. Beaver – 1
6. Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep – 8
7. Mountain Goat – 7
8. Moose – 1
9. Hoary Marmot – 3
10. Columbian Ground Squirrel – 4
11. Red Squirrel – 2
12. Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel – 2