

**Jasper and Banff Trip May 29 – June 1, 2026  
SD73 International Student Program**



On May 22, 2026, 28 students and 3 chaperones left Kamloops at 7:00am and drove north up the Yellowhead Highway toward Jasper National Park. We had a short food and washroom stop in Clearwater and then an early lunch stop in Valemount before turning east and passing Mount Robson. The drive from Mount Robson to Jasper allowed for views of the Rocky Mountains.



Our first stop upon arriving in Jasper was the Sky Tram. This tram takes you to the top of Whistlers Mountain which is around 2500 meters in elevation. A Pika and a couple White-tailed Ptarmigan were seen up above the treeline there.



There was still some snow at the top, and the temperature was much colder than down in the valley below. We stayed at the top for around an hour and then checked into our hotel and had some time for dinner before our first dusk wildlife drive.



The wildlife drive that night produced a Bald Eagle nest, some Elk, and some White-tailed and Mule Deer.



The next day we left our hotel at 8:40 for our river float tour. We saw a Grizzly Bear and her first year cub on the way. Everyone had good distant views of them as they searched for food in a wildfire area that burned a couple of years ago.

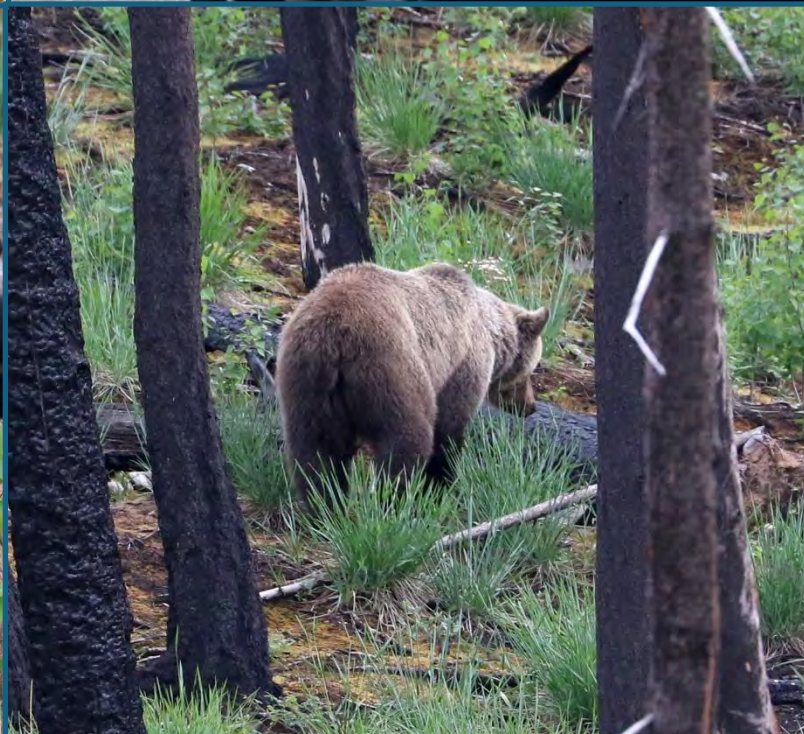


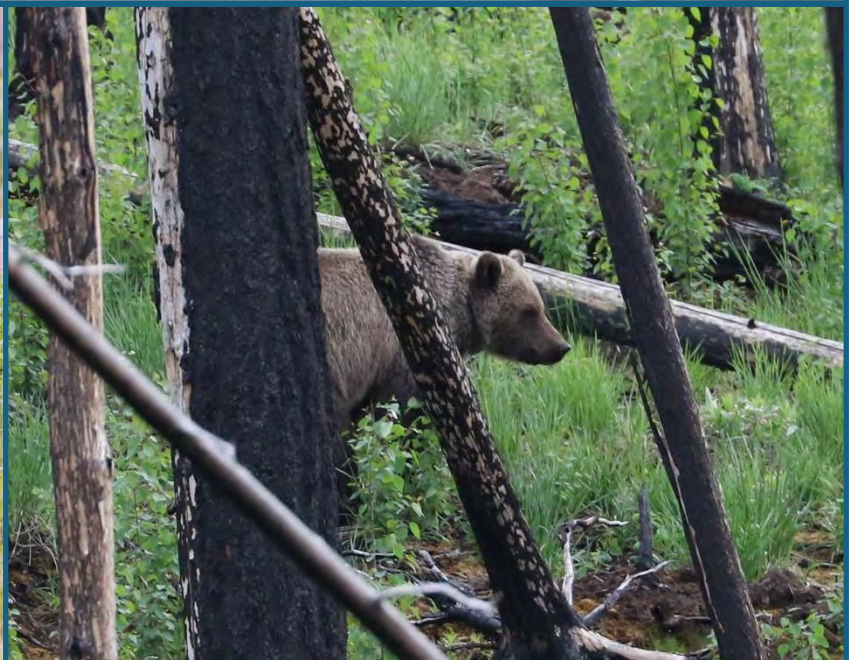
The river float tour lasts around 1.5 hours and is a scenic float that allows you to take in gorgeous scenery of being right in the middle of the Rocky Mountains. It was rainy but the tour included plastic rain covers to stay dry.





After our float tour, we had a break for lunch and then cancelled our planned afternoon hike due to heavy rain threatening. Students enjoyed free time to check out the town of Jasper, grocery shop, or hang out with friends. We left on our second wildlife drive at 6:00PM and were out until nearly 10:00PM. This drive resulted in several nice bull Elk right by the road, two more Grizzly Bears, seeing some spawning Rainbow Trout, and much more scenery.



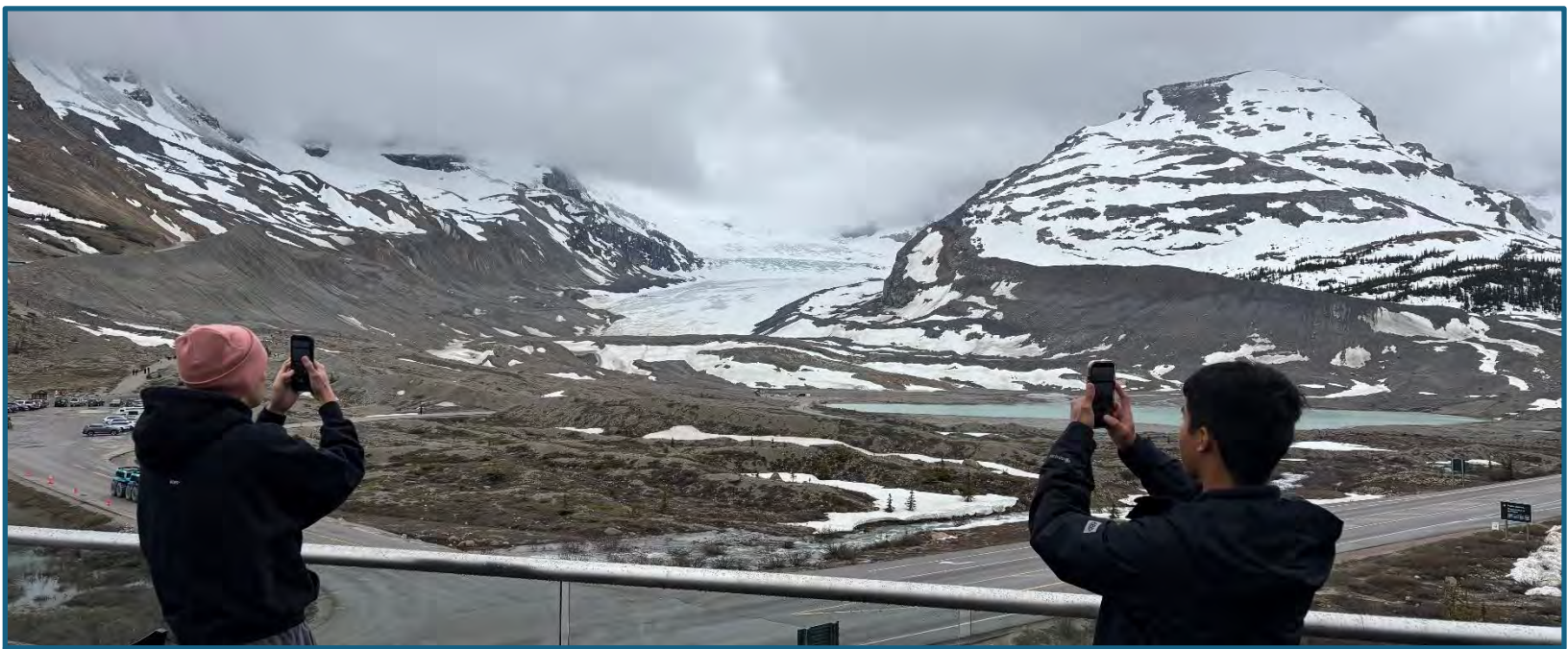


The next morning, we checked out and left by 8:45 and turned south of the Icefields Parkway towards Banff. We had time for a stop at Athabasca Falls so stopped there for 40 minutes. After the falls, we spotted some Mountain Goats high up on the cliffs along the road. The scenery along this road is world class.





We stopped at the Columbia Icefields for our glacier experience on Athabasca Glacier and our time on the Skywalk. The glacier experience takes you right onto the Athabasca Glacier via ice explorer vehicles designed for such an adventure. The Skywalk is a glass bridge 300 meters above the valley floor below. Both tours take 2.5 hours total and are not many places in the world where getting onto a glacier is so accessible.



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After the ice fields, we drove the 1.5 hours to Lake Louise, checked into our hostel, and drove the 40 minutes to the town of Banff. Here, we had roughly two hours for dinner and looking around the town. We then drove the Bow Valley Parkway from Castle Junction to Lake Louise as our wildlife drive from 8:30-9:30pm and saw a few more bull Elk and a very nice Black Bear.



That night we played games at the hostel before bed. The last morning, we left our hostel at 9:30 and drove the short ways to Lake Louise. We stayed there for more than an hour taking in the views and doing a short hike along the edge of the lake. After this we headed west and arrived back in Kamloops around 5:30pm without any issues on the road.



### My Favourite Moment:

1. Playing games with Japanese, Brazilian, French, and Spanish people at the hostel and walking into Lake Louise.
2. Ian – Being at Lake Louise because we went into very cold water.
3. Zafer – When we the Black Bear very close because I could see it near me and could clearly see the size and what it looked like.
4. Gonzalo – The drive from Jasper to Banff because that scenery does not exist many other places.
5. Jonathan – Walking into Lake because the water was so blue and it was an amazing experience.
6. Haruki – Being at the Columbia Icefield because when I was in Japan I researched about Canada and saw this on the internet so I always wanted to go there.
7. Himari – The float tour because I got very wet and it was fun.
8. Lias – cooking in the room in Jasper, because I got to know the people I stayed in a room with better and it was fun being around them.
9. Asaki – the float tour because I like to try new things.
10. Jette – Seeing the bears because I like them and I've never seen a Grizzly bear before.
11. Enzo – Visiting Lake Louise and see bears because I've never seen a bear and I've always seen photos of Lake Louise and I think it is the most beautiful place I've ever been.
12. Gabriel – Being at the glacier because being with my friends there was so fun and seeing and drinking the melt water was fun. I also like Lake Louise because the colour of the water and the mountains were crazy beautiful.
13. Jessica – To see a Grizzly Bear because I've never seen one before.
14. Felipe – Playing pool at the hostel because we were together hanging out and chilling.
15. Noah – Being at Lake Louise and the glacier because I thought Lake Louise was the most beautiful lake I've ever seen and the glacier because I've never seen anything like that.
16. Lenia – The morning that we saw the Grizzly Bear with the baby because it was both very impressive and cute to experience a bear with a baby in the wild.
17. Elena – the Black Bear right beside our bus and the Grizzly Bear baby because I love bears and they are my favourite animals.
18. Fiete – Being at the glacier because I will probably not go on a glacier again in my life and not a lot of people have the opportunity to do that.
19. Songhyeon – Shopping at Banff. The buildings were so beautiful and there were many things that I wanted to buy.
20. Maho U – Watching animals and making dinner because I saw bears, elk, and deer for the first time.
21. Anri – Discovering many different kinds of blue. At first I thought that if the weather had been better I could have captured more beautiful bright blue, however as time went on, I began to realize that the cloudy and raining weather actually made the blue of the lake stand out more. Also I found many different shades including greenish blues and each one felt unique.
22. Dennis – Shopping in Banff because I could buy everything I wanted.
23. Ricky – Being at lake Louise because it was beautiful and the colour of the lake was turquoise.
24. Jasper – Walking on the glacier because we were not standing on snow but on a giant ice cube.
25. Adele – When we went looking for wildlife and saw the Black Bear because I've never seen a bear that close before.
26. Maho O – Free time in Jasper because I could go shopping with my friends.
27. Jerry – Lake Louise and the wildlife watching because Lake Louise was very beautiful and I also like hiking. Wildlife because I cannot see these animals back in my country.
28. Zach – When we arrived at Jasper and saw the landscape there. It was beautiful.

### One Thing That I Learned:

1. Dino – we need to have more passion for something. For example, even though it was raining, we still saw a Black Bear cross the road because of our patience.
2. Ian – My dream when I came to Canada was to see a bear. We saw many animals and that made me excited. I learned how to make friends with people from other countries despite cultural differences.
3. Zafer – That mountain goats live on cliffs because they feel secure there.
4. Gonzalo – That Jasper was burned two years ago in a fire.
5. Jonathan – You have to make the best of what you get. The weather was bad but we could still see the beautiful mountains.
6. Haruki – At the Columbia Icefields I learned a lot of the history of that area. Many people from many different countries are concerned about nature.
7. Himari – When I go to the Columbia Icefields museum I learned it was important for people to save nature.
8. Lias – I learned that even when you are sick you should appreciate everything that happens around you and make the best out of it.
9. Asaki – I could understand different views and animals around the world.
10. Jette – That all bears eat 90% vegetation in the Spring.
11. Enzo – That water around the Athabasca Glacier goes to three different oceans: The Pacific, the Arctic, and the Atlantic.
12. Gabriel – That ice at the glacier was from 200,000 years ago and that the water there goes to three different oceans.
13. Jessica – that the flames of the Jasper wildfire were up to 80m high and could not be stopped.
14. Felipe – The ice that melts at the Athabasca Glacier goes to three different oceans.
15. Noah – That the ice by the glacier is so much more pure than regular ice and that is why the colour was so special.
16. Lenia – That there are special wildlife bridges and under passes just for animals over and under huge roads to make it easier for them to cross.
17. Elena – The difference between a Moose and an Elk.
18. Fiete – That glacial ice is so blue because it is so compact and there is not a lot of air in it.
19. Songhyeon – How to see wild animals because I've never done that before.
20. Maho U – There are many rainy days in the mountains.
21. Anri – I learned not to sleep on the bus because I might miss beautiful things or animals. I realized that it was not about staying awake, but about being present in the moment and noticing the beauty around me.
22. Dennis – to cook by myself because I did not do this before coming on this trip.
23. Ricky – It takes a long time for a forest to recover from a fire. The fire there was two years ago but there isn't much recovery going on.
24. Jasper – The government put a lot of money into protecting wildlife by preventing them from being on the roads in Banff.
25. Adele – It takes hundreds of years for a glacier to form.
26. Maho O – I learned that the Rocky Mountains are huge.
27. Jerry – Glaciers are light blue because there is only 10% of air inside the ice.
28. Zach – What an Elk looked like.

### Mammal List From The Trip:

**Grizzly Bear – 4, Black Bear – 1, Mule Deer – 13, White-tailed Deer – 6, Elk – 30, Pika – 1, Red Squirrel – 2, Columbian Ground Squirrel – 15, Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep – 15, Mountain Goat – 10, Porcupine – 1**

**Students on This Trip Were From: Spain, Japan, South Korea, Switzerland, Germany, Taiwan, Belgium, Brazil, and France.**