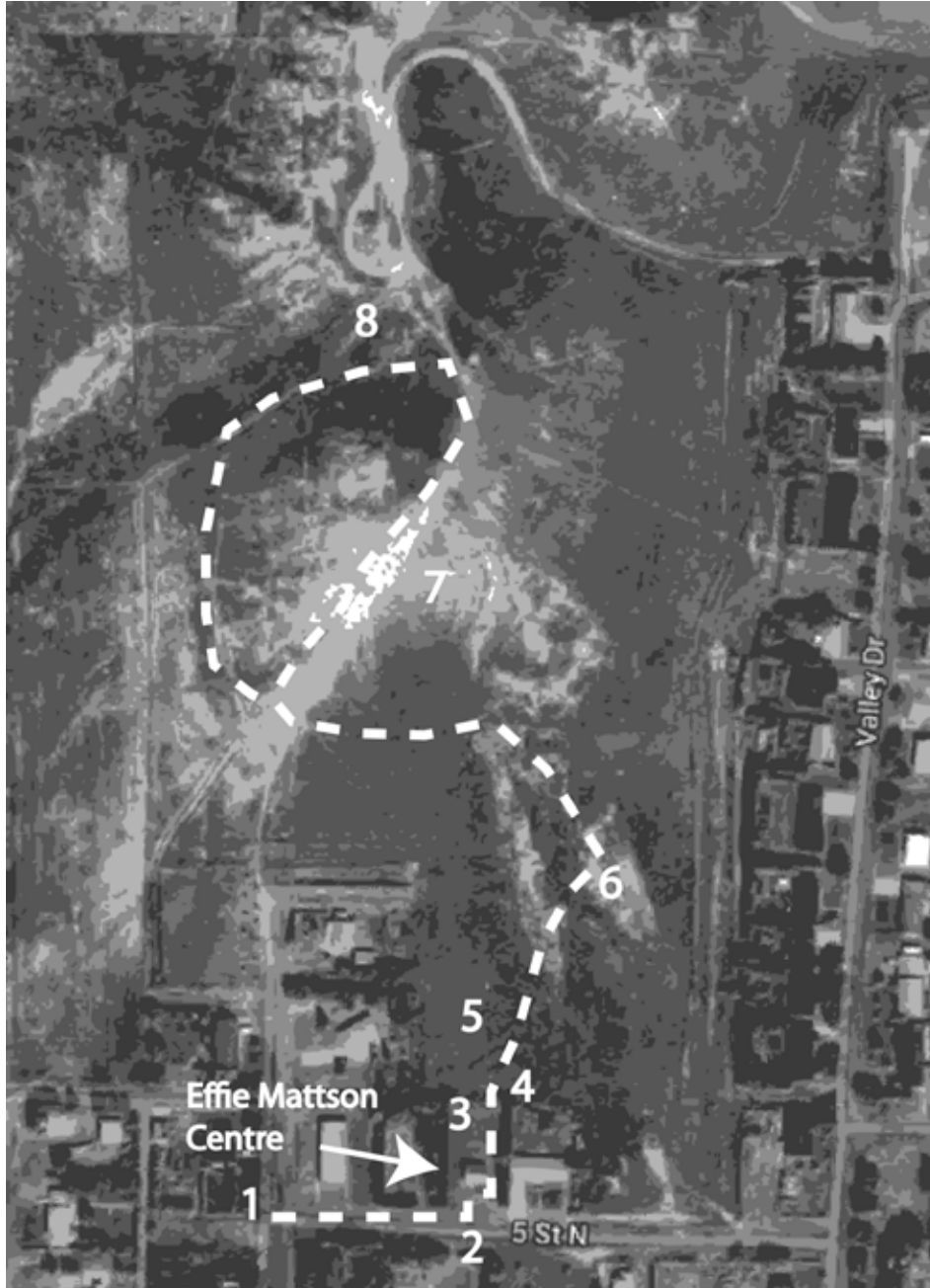


Effie Mattson Sound Walk



- 1 Listen to the sounds of your walking as you go to the Effie Mattson Centre. Does your clothing make sound? Is the surface you are walking on making sounds? Do the sounds change when you change what you are walking on? How quietly can you walk? How noisily?

Consider onomatopoeia that relate to the sounds of your movement – these are words that sound like the thing they name – so swish, shuffle, click, clomp, scrunch are all words that sound like their sound. Are there words that sound like you sound when you walk? If not, perhaps you should invent one. If you have invented one, and you have a pencil with you, write it here:

- 2 As you approach the Effie Mattson Centre yard, stop outside of it and be very quiet and listen for bird sounds in the yard. The empty yard next door may also be filled with birdsong. Listen for different sounds in the birdsong. You may hear the lower notes of Mourning Doves cooing and higher notes from Song Sparrows. How many separate sounds can you identify? Is the tapestry of songs sparse - just one or two voices - or dense - too many to count?

Is it windy? Listen for those sounds as well – listen for the rhythms and the nearby sounds it is making - perhaps there are rustles and creaks or just a general whooshing sound (more onomatopoeia). Also listen for the sounds of the town. Perhaps there are voices, automobile sounds, hammering, power tools or lawn mowers, or music being played.

- 3 As you move into the yard see if the sounds change as you move from an open space to an enclosed one. Also see if the birds remain singing or if their sounds change. If you stand very quietly for a while, do they change again?

If it is a windy day, compare the sounds made by the caragana hedge on one side of the yard with the row of conifers on the other side. How are the sounds different? Can you imitate each sound with your

hands? How about verbally? How well does each tree sound work in masking other sounds? How aware are you of the sounds of the town that you heard outside the yard?

You can also explore the building by gently tapping on different surfaces. Can you tell by the sound which parts are solid and which are hollow? Can you find different notes?

4 As you leave through the back of the yard, stop and put your ear against the power pole. You should be able to hear the hum of electricity translated down the pole from the wires.

5 Walk outside of the yard and stop to listen to how the sounds change in an open space. How does the wind sound now? How about the birds? Are there other sounds? How far or near are they?

6 Walk to the open space marked by a stick. This is a different space again. How do the wind, insects, birds and sounds from the town sound now? Concentrate on the sounds while surveying the surrounding space. Listen for a few moments. Now close your eyes and try listening again. Listen to the quality of the sounds, their distance and direction. Try facing in a different direction and see if this makes a difference. Listen intently with your eyes closed for a few moments. How does having your eyes closed change the experience of the sound?

7 Proceed to the top of Columbus Hill. If there has not been much wind on your walk so far, you may find some on the top of the hill. Investigate the wind by facing into it for several moments. You can try this with your eyes open and closed as well. Once you have listened to the wind head on for a few moments, turn so that it is hitting the back of your ears. How does this change the sounds?

This is a different space again so listen to the different sounds from the town, the birds and insects and now from the highway and rail-

way tracks. The direction of the wind may influence which sounds get to you sooner. You can experiment with friends to see which sounds carry best in the wind and from which directions. Try high, low and middle tones and see which carry best.

8 On your way down, you can try out the sound qualities of the crevice on the west side of the hill.

Every time you repeat this sound walk, you will find differences in what you hear as the weather and air movement are constantly changing. Sounds might be very different on a still foggy day than on a clear windy day. You might hear different animals and birds at different times of day - perhaps some coyotes in the evening. In winter, listen for how the snow might change the quality of the sound - does it seem quieter, as if the soft snow is absorbing the sound? Or perhaps the snow is smooth and reflects it back to you. If the snow squeaks underfoot, it could be telling you about the temperature. How does the absence of leaves in fall change the sound?

Think of how you might depict one of the sounds you have heard using a line. Consider if the sound rose or fell or remained steady. Was it broken or unbroken? Did it seem to vibrate a lot or was it full and smooth. Was there some other movement suggested by the sound? If you have pencil with you, you can draw the line here:

