

Vancouver: Salmon Creek Greenway

This 3.1-mile one-way paved trail in West Vancouver winds along the banks of Salmon Creek. The 850 acres of the greenway, opened to the public in 1996, include forest, creeks, meadows and ponds. Along the path are wildlife interpretive areas, duck nesting boxes and restored habitat. If you like birding, bring binoculars.

Access the greenway from either end. The east end access is at Salmon Creek Park, 1112 NE 117th Street. The west end access is at the Felida Bridge, at NW 36th Avenue's crossing of Salmon Creek. Transit access is easiest at the west end.

Beginning at the east end, at Salmon Creek Park, is Kline Pond. Once a gravel pit, it is now a spring-fed lake with a sandy beach and lifeguards in summer. The park has 35 developed acres and 368 acres of undeveloped natural area.

The Salmon Creek Greenway trail leads west from the park. The creek itself consists of two habitat subtypes: a free-flowing stream that responds to rainfall cycles, with main channels and meandering overflow channels, and the tidal Columbia River backwater. Small ponds contain waterfowl throughout the year. Benches along the trail invite you to sit quietly and watch the rich wildlife scene.

An optional out and back walk is the .5 mile long Cougar Creek Trail on the south side of the Salmon Creek Greenway at about the midway point. Cougar Creek is the first major tributary upstream from the mouth of Salmon Creek. Riparian woodlands remain along much of the deep ravine in its lower reaches.

6.2 miles 13094 steps difficulty 45,707, -122.668

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A Name Game

Salmon Creek runs through Felida, now part of Vancouver, but once a farming and orchard community. In 1890, a name was needed for the small community northeast of Vancouver Lake. Local lore says that the name "Powley" was submitted to postal authorities; the name was denied and authorities gave an alternate: "Polly." The postmaster of the area, C. C. Lewis, responded in disgust, saying the name sounded like a parrot; if that's what was wanted, he said, why not use the name of his cat. So he submitted "Thomas," his cat's name, as well as Tomcat and Felidae, the Latin name for cat. Felida it was.

The Salmon Creek Greenway is one of the largest watersheds in Clark County; its waters flow into Lake River, the Vancouver Lake Lowlands and ultimately the Columbia River. On Salmon Creek, a dam located where I-5 now crosses blocked annual salmon runs. Locals would fish there with pitchforks, picking fish out of the water and hauling them away by the wheelbarrow load.



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