

Sellwood to Oaks Bottom

This walk combines the best of the city's urban landscape with its natural areas. On it, stroll the Sellwood neighborhood's scenic blufftop streets and travel the multiuse Springwater Corridor Trail through Oaks Bottom, a 140-acre birdwatcher's paradise along the Willamette River. Bring binoculars.

Begin at the Sellwood Library, SE 13th Avenue and Bidwell Street. Walk south on 13th and turn right onto Spokane. Follow Spokane downhill; after the railroad tracks, turn right onto the Springwater Trail. On the left is Sellwood Riverfront Park and then Oaks Amusement Park. On the right is the Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge. Across from Oaks Park, pass over a pedestrian tunnel that leads into the refuge. Continue on the Springwater Trail to a pedestrian tunnel under the railroad tracks. Turn right into the tunnel to enter Oaks Bottom. Follow the paved path through the refuge uphill to a parking lot at Mitchell Street and Milwaukie Avenue.

From the lot, turn right on Milwaukie, then right on Ellis, left on 15th, right on Henry and left on 14th. From 14th, turn right on Bybee. Along the bluff top, Bybee turns into 13th. From 13th, turn right on Knapp and keep right to walk along Sellwood Boulevard with its spectacular views of downtown and Oaks Bottom. A heritage white oak grows at 1224. Turn left on 11th, left on Lambert and then right on 13th to return to the start.

3.8 miles

8025 steps

difficulty

45.467, -122.653

SELLWOOD TO OAKS BOTTOM

A Home for Wildlife in the City

Oaks Bottom is a floodplain wetland of the Willamette River. Part of it had become a landfill, a common fate of wetlands in urban areas. Filled areas exist at the north end of the bottomland where fill was placed from the I-405 freeway construction, and at the south end, which was a former garbage dump. In 1969, the landfill's owner intended to develop the area as an industrial park. The city purchased the land and planned a developed park; by the 1980s, however, growing interest in preserving urban natural areas led to the abandonment of those plans. In 1988, Oaks Bottom became the city's first wildlife refuge. Watch for great blue herons, which thrive here in close proximity to their rookeries on nearby Ross Island. Over 100 species of birds have been sited here.



Great blue heron



