

Metro Parks and Nature Field Guide

BLUE LAKE REGIONAL PARK

STORY BY *Annie West*

With the Columbia River to the north and the park's namesake to the south, Blue Lake Regional Park offers 185 acres in a natural greenway that provides a calm, quiet retreat from city life for birds, wildlife – and people.

One mile west of the Sandy River Delta, Blue Lake is a natural lake fed by underground springs. Before 1939, when a levee was installed along Northeast Marine Drive, natural wetlands connected Blue Lake and the Columbia River, allowing fish and wildlife to move with ease.

Today, Blue Lake is home to a self-sustaining population of bluegill, black crappie and largemouth bass. Anglers can try their luck along a fishing pier at the park.

Reclaimed wetlands in the park provide habitat for native wildlife, including beavers, river otters and Northern red-legged frogs, which are listed by the state as a sensitive species that's under threat. The park's many walking paths allow an opportunity to see wildlife and experience nature without disturbing the delicate ecosystem.



C. Bruce Forster ©

Long before the area's current inhabitants, the south shore of the Columbia River was home to Nichaqwli (neeCHAHKlee) Village, as documented in the diaries of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. Carved cedar house posts and canoe-shaped benches offer visitors a glimpse of the Chinook village that once thrived here.

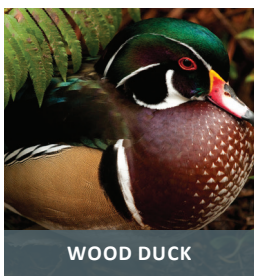
Today, Blue Lake continues to serve as a gathering place. Children play at the water spray ground, families fish from the pier and disc golfers play the 18-hole course. Osprey circle above looking

for fish, coyotes hunt for squirrels and beavers build lodges on the lakeshore.

On a clear day, Mount Hood is framed by the shores of the lake, providing spectacular views and a visual reminder of the wild landscape surrounding the placidity of Blue Lake.

For more information, visit oregonmetro.gov/bluelake

BE ON THE LOOKOUT!



WOOD DUCK



BEAVER



PACIFIC CHORUS FROG



BALD EAGLE

BLUE LAKE REGIONAL PARK

21224 NE BLUE LAKE ROAD, FAIRVIEW

oregonmetro.gov/bluelake

DIRECTIONS

From Interstate 84, take exit 14 and go north on Fairview Parkway. Turn right on Northeast Sandy Boulevard, left on Northeast 223rd Avenue and left onto Northeast Blue Lake Road. Or bike to the park on the Marine Drive Trail.

KNOW WHEN YOU GO

Open 8 a.m. to sunset. *No dogs or alcohol, please.* Mostly wheelchair accessible. \$5/car, \$7/bus parking fee, free with annual pass.

AMENITIES

Four playgrounds/nature play areas, free and reservable picnic areas, paddle boat and canoe rentals, swim beach, splash pad, 18-hole gold level disc golf course, ballfields, horseshoe pits, basketball and volleyball courts, fishing pier and Discovery Garden.

RESERVATIONS

To reserve picnic shelters or the Lake House, call 503-665-4995 option 0 or email MetroPicnicReservations@oregonmetro.gov

METRO PARKS AND NATURE

Whether you're in the mood for a short hike or a weekend camping trip, a boat ride or a picnic, Metro has a destination for you. You'll share the landscape with salmon swimming in restored streams, birds streaking across the sky and giant, old oak trees towering overhead. Thanks to voters, you can explore 17,000 acres of parks, trails and natural areas across the Portland metropolitan region.

If you picnic at Blue Lake or take your kids to the Oregon Zoo, enjoy symphonies at the Schnitz or auto shows at the convention center, put out your trash or drive your car – we've already crossed paths. *So, hello. We're Metro – nice to meet you.*

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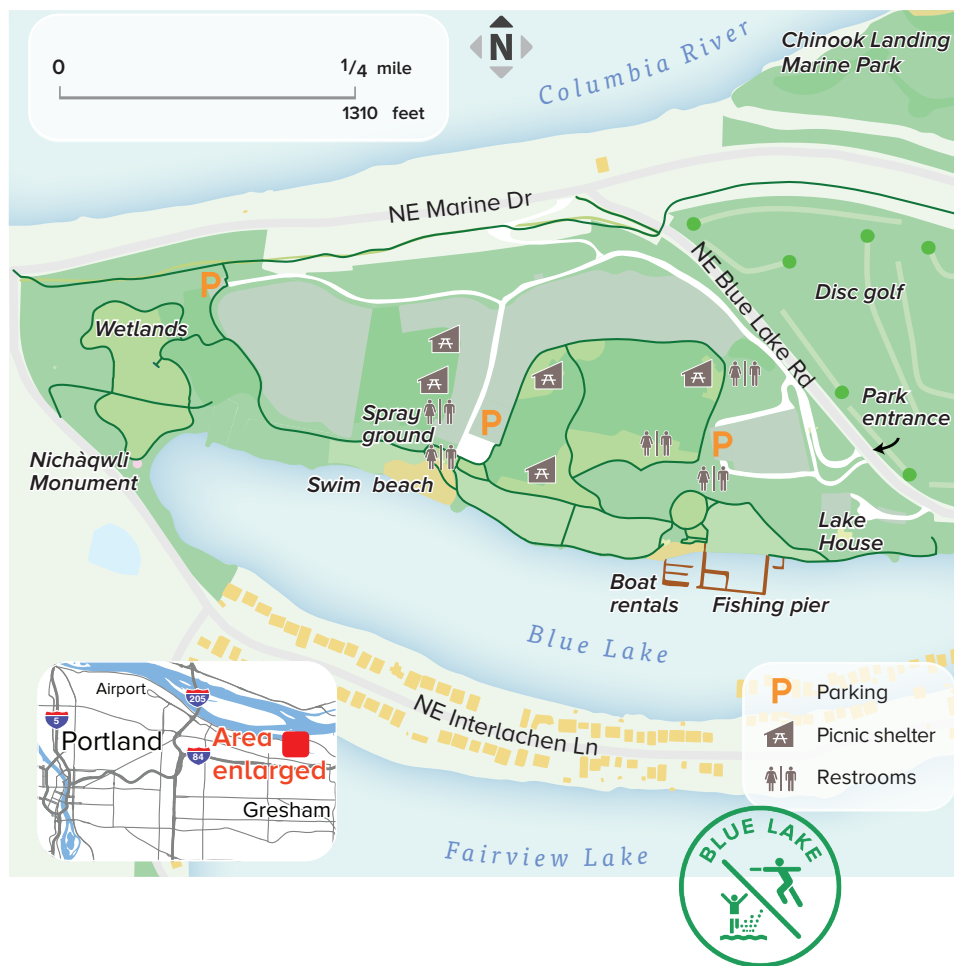
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Metro

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IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The adjacent Chinook Landing Marine Park offers boat ramps on the Columbia River, an archery range and wildlife habitats. Grab a bite and a pint at McMenamins Edgefield. In historic Troutdale, visit shops, museums, galleries and restaurants. Continue exploring nature with a visit to the Sandy River Delta Recreation Area, Glenn Otto Community Park, or the Dabney and Lewis and Clark state recreation areas.

SEASON BY SEASON

SUMMER: Come out for a picnic, swim or a round of disc golf. Pack a lunch and pedal the Marine Drive Trail to Blue Lake. When you arrive, jump in the lake for a cooling swim, rent a canoe or paddle boat. Take a walk through the wetlands in search of blue and green herons, basking turtles and other native wildlife. Look for osprey and bald eagles – occasionally with a slippery silver fish in their talons – flying between the Columbia River and Blue Lake. The park offers fields for soccer, kickball and softball, three volleyball courts and horseshoe pits. Children can splash around at the water spray ground.

FALL: Larger animals return as the crowds retreat. Deer graze from branches, and squirrels collect and bury their acorns for the winter. Disc golfers challenge their skills against the autumn breezes and many come to enjoy cooler, quieter picnics, soccer games and family gatherings amid the autumn colors.

WINTER: Wildlife comes out of the woodwork. Watch red-tailed hawks swoop from trees in search of their next meal. Identify them by their dark heads, light breasts and dark belly bands, best seen when they are in flight. Flocks of Canada geese browse in the fields as bald eagles soar above. The park offers more than two miles of paved and gravel paths for walking and jogging. Or enjoy a day of quiet fishing.

SPRING: Nearly 100 Kwanzan cherry trees burst into vibrant pink blossoms. Listen to the wetlands come alive as frogs come out of hibernation and ducks and geese begin preparing their nests for babies later in the season. Get your fishing gear and take advantage of the annual trout stocking in April and May. Bring the kids to build forts in the nature play area, which features natural elements such as logs, sand and stones.