

Metro Parks and Nature Field Guide

HOWELL TERRITORIAL PARK

STORY BY *Laurie Wulf*

PHOTOGRAPH BY *Fred Joe*

Heading across Sauvie Island Bridge on a clear day often challenges drivers. The view slows one down, inviting visitors to drink in the light, calm and natural beauty that lies before them.

Mount Hood, Mount St. Helens, and Mount Adams rise in the distance as farmlands fill the frame with Multnomah Channel running beneath. Lewis and Clark passed the island and named it Wapato Island, a fitting title for lands once abundant with wapato important to the local Chinookan, Multnomah and Wapato tribes.

Howell Territorial Park will make you feel like you stepped back in time.

The park's eye-catching Classical Revival house was completed in 1858 for James and Julia Bybee. The house remains much like it was more than 150 years ago with nine rooms, six fireplaces and low-hung doorknobs on interior doors. A sweeping staircase captures one's imagination. The house was purposely built on high ground to avoid the island's annual floods.

Amelia and John Howell purchased the home in 1873.



They ran a successful cattle operation and owned more than 1,000 acres on the 26,000-acre island. Today, the view from the park remains broad and memorable, though the house isn't currently open for tours.

Exploring the park, you will find the orchard planted with cuttings from apple and pear trees carried by wagon trains traveling the Oregon Trail. These cuttings were then grafted onto dwarf rootstock and planted in the orchard. You may also notice the pound pear tree next to the red barn.

Be wary when the pears start to fall, as they do weigh in at over a pound each.

Walk gently as you view this land,
From giant oaks to grains of sand.
There are many wonders here to see,
Most of them wild, all of them free.
When you leave this special place,
With all its majesty and grace,
Leave nothing that is yours behind,
Take only with your soul and mind.

– Majorie Howell, 1993

Howell lived in the Bybee-Howell house as a child.

BE ON THE LOOKOUT!



BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK



WAPATO



SALAL GRAPE



RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH

HOWELL TERRITORIAL PARK

13901 NW HOWELL PARK ROAD
SAUVIE ISLAND, PORTLAND

oregonmetro.gov/howell

DRIVING

From Portland, head northwest on U.S. Hwy 30, turn right onto NW Sauvie Island Road. After crossing the bridge continue on NW Sauvie Island Road for about one mile then turn right onto Howell Park Road. The Sauvie Island loop is also a safe, popular family bicycle riding spot.

KNOW WHEN YOU GO

Open sunrise to sunset. No pets, please.

AMENITIES

Nestled among farms on Sauvie Island, Howell Territorial Park provides a tranquil setting for weddings, receptions, your next company picnic or family gathering.

RESERVATIONS

Call 503-665-4995 option 0 or email MetroPicnicReservations@oregonmetro.gov

METRO PARKS & 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 area.

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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IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Visit Sauvie Island's many farm stands for fresh-picked fruits and vegetables. Paddlers and boaters can use Metro's Sauvie Island boat ramp to access Multnomah Channel, and paddlers can also access Sturgeon Lake on the island's north end. Or relax at one of the island's several beaches, including popular Walton Beach. The island is a birdwatcher's paradise, particularly at the Sauvie Island Wildlife Refuge. For more ideas from the Sauvie Island Community Association, visit sauvieisland.org

SEASON BY SEASON

FALL: With the changing colors and falling leaves, the sounds of geese migrating south for the winter filling the sky in their well-known V formation. Other migrating birds in late fall, that have been spotted at the park include Sandhill Cranes, Tundra Swans and Snow Geese. Visit nearby pumpkin patches and corn mazes in preparation for Halloween.

WINTER: In winter, you might have the park all to yourself. This is a good time to spot birds perched in the old oak trees or fir grove. You might also spot deer, coyote or rabbits, or at least see their tracks in the moist soil. Every February, watch eagles, hawks and raptors glide overhead as part of Metro's Raptor Road Trip. Enjoy guided bird viewing, meet live raptors up close and see hawk identification displays.

SPRING: Pacific chorus frogs can be found throughout the park's grassy meadows, damp woodlands or hiding under wood in tight groups and wooded swamps. During mating season, listen for their loud "cre-ee-ee-eek" call. Apple blossoms begin to fill the orchard. The smell of freshly turned soil fills the air as workers ready the park's leased agricultural fields to plant organic vegetables. Children might fill the park during the weekdays for educational programs run by the nonprofit Sauvie Island Center, which is based at the park.

SUMMER: Pack a picnic and enjoy the cool evening breeze. Grillmasters can bring burgers, hot dogs and vegetables for the park's two barbecues. View or hear songs from nuthatches, sparrows, swallows, grosbeak or willow flycatcher.