

# Metro Parks and Nature Field Guide

## MOUNT TALBERT NATURE PARK

STORY BY *Dan Daly*

PHOTOGRAPH BY *Fred Joe*

Discover the beauty of this forested oasis nestled between bustling Interstate 205 and Happy Valley. Rising 750 feet in elevation, this volcanic butte has been shaped for nearly 3 million years by fountains of lava, floods, fires and people. A mosaic of habitats and more than 4 miles of trails offer a year-round getaway for those looking to exercise, picnic or experience nature as it changes throughout the seasons.

Visitors that enter from the Mather Road Trailhead will be treated to a picnic shelter, restrooms and a short, wheelchair-accessible loop that circles through a native prairie. Early settlers found much of the Willamette Valley covered with similar prairies that have since been turned into farmland or developments.

Climb the butte's southern slope through patches of Oregon white oak woodlands and savannas. Native American communities and wildlife alike value the acorns as an important staple food. Oaks grow slowly and are easily overtopped and shaded out by faster-growing trees. Traditionally, Native Americans set fire to the oak woodlands



and savannas to burn off faster-growing trees and keep the oaks in full sunlight. These oaks can be seen on Mount Talbert. days, chainsaws do the work, and evidence of restoration efforts to free the oaks can be seen on Mount Talbert.

Round the west side of the butte on the Park Loop Trail to find deep red soils that hint at a once active cinder cone volcano, spewing and frothing iron-rich lava into the air. Watch for a large grove of cascara trees with shredded bark at the base that

give testimony to a large black-tailed deer buck, marking his territory with unusual vigor. Dense patches of beaked hazelnut shrubs seem to murmur of homesteading days gone by.

Entering the park from the Sunnyside Road trailhead will take visitors through a series of meadows and across Mount Scott Creek, a small salmon-bearing stream.

## BE ON THE LOOKOUT!



GREAT HORNED OWL



WHITE FAWN LILY



ORANGE HONEYSUCKLE



RUBBER BOA

# MOUNT TALBERT NATURE PARK

10945 SE MATHER ROAD, CLACKAMAS  
[oregonmetro.gov/mounttalbert](http://oregonmetro.gov/mounttalbert)

## DIRECTIONS

From I-205, take exit 14 for Sunnybrook Road and head east briefly. Take a right immediately onto Southeast 97th Avenue, which curves onto Southeast Mather Road. The main park entrance is on the left. TriMet buses 155 and 156 also run near different entrances to Mount Talbert.

## KNOW WHEN YOU GO

Open sunrise to sunset. *No bikes or pets, please.* The North Clackamas Parks & Recreation District provides day-to-day management.

## AMENITIES

Restrooms, picnic shelter, picnic tables, hiking trails, and a short, wheelchair accessible gravel trail.

## 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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Tom Hughes

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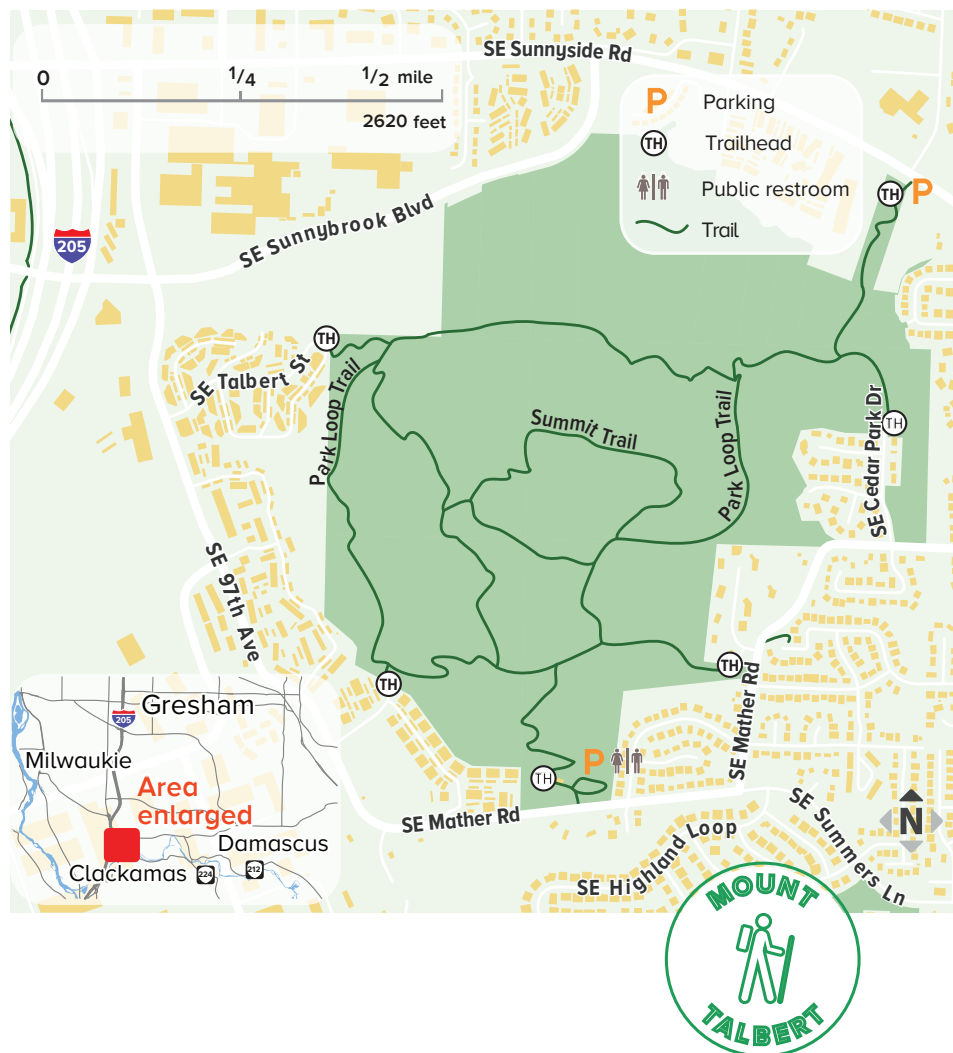
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## IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

For another dose of nature, enjoy a hike in the nearby Three Creeks Natural Area. Or take the whole family for a splash at the North Clackamas Aquatic Park. Looking for a spot of shopping? Hit up Clackamas Town Center, just across I-205. The area also offers plenty of restaurants, a theater and more.

## SEASON BY SEASON

**SPRING:** Wildflowers ranging from white fawn lily to common camas adorn the wet meadows and mixed woodlands in spring. Because Mount Talbert is an island of natural habitat in a sea of development, it is an ideal spot for migrating neotropical songbirds to rest, feed and nest. Warblers, vireos, orioles a

**SUMMER:** Mount Scott Creek, accessed from the Sunnyside Road trailhead, is a lesser-known spot to take the kids for a splash in the creek. Native shrubs such as salal, serviceberry and red huckleberry offer sweet edible fruits for those who know their plants.

**FALL:** Mount Scott Creek, accessed from the Sunnyside Road trailhead, is a lesser-known spot to take the kids for a splash in the creek. Native shrubs such as salal, serviceberry and red huckleberry offer sweet edible fruits for those who know their plants.

**WINTER:** Bare trees make geologic features easier to see. Ice age floods about 20,000 years ago likely caused the major landslide features on the Park Loop Trail. As you climb, notice rounded river cobbles in the trail that reveal the mystery of an active river system that somehow buried the volcano nearly to its summit.