



The MAX Blue Line whizzes by to the north, traffic flows on Northwest Cornelius Pass Road, and hidden from view nestled between oak savanna and upland forest, Rock Creek continues its southerly flow toward the Tualatin River.

The creek, home to winter steelhead, cutthroat trout and Pacific lamprey, among others, gives life to this 42-acre parcel of land. A partnership between Metro and the city of Hillsboro, Orenco Woods Nature Park includes the Rock Creek Trail, providing neighbors and the surrounding community a wonderful way to connect with nature.

The former town of Orenco is rich with history. The area was historically dominated by white oak savanna and was inhabited by the Kalapuya people. The land was a rich source of acorns, camas, hazelnuts and wildlife.

In 1906, the largest nursery on the west coast, Oregon Nursery Company, moved from Salem to this area. The nursery, co-founded by Malcolm McDonald, was one of the largest employers in the

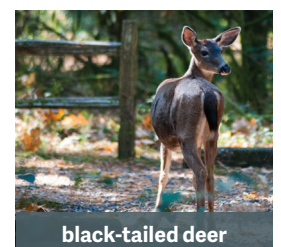
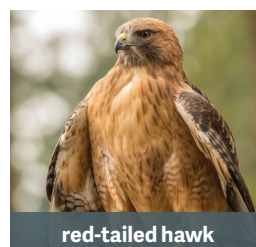
northwest. McDonald's beautiful 1912 Craftsman-style house is now owned by the city, though it is not currently open.

The nursery, from which the town of Orenco's name is derived, developed a versatile and desirable apple used for desserts and ciders. In the 1910s, one million Orenco apple trees were planted with a plan to sell them overseas. The onset of World War I led to setbacks for the nursery. The nursery closed in 1927, and the town of Orenco dissolved in 1938.

From 1953 to 2006, the site was a nine-hole golf course. In 2006 the land was slated for a large housing development. The recession hit and development halted, allowing Metro and the City of Hillsboro to purchase the land and keep the nature along the creek intact. When the golf greens were removed, historic acorns sprouted from the earth and began growing into oak trees.

Restoration efforts coupled with amazing new bridges, a nature play area, picnic shelter and trails make this a spectacular place to visit.

Be on the lookout!





Orenco Woods Nature Park

7100 NE Birch St., Hillsboro

Getting there

From U.S. 26, take the Northwest Cornelius Pass Road exit and head south. Take a right on Northeast Cornell Road, then left on Northwest 231st Avenue, which will be renamed Northeast Century Boulevard. Take a left on Northeast Birch Street; the park is at the end of the street. The Orenco stop on the MAX Blue Line is a short distance away.

Know when you go

Park open sunrise to sunset. Pets allowed on leash on Rock Creek Trail only. Hillsboro Parks & Recreation Department provides day-to-day management.

Amenities

Restrooms, picnic shelter, nature play area, trails.

Pets policy

To protect plants, wildlife and people, Metro does not allow pets at most regional parks and natural areas. Pets can damage sensitive habitat and threaten wildlife the region has worked to protect. In natural areas where pets are not allowed, people see more wildlife and get closer to it. Seeing-eye dogs or other service animals are allowed. Please bring cleanup materials.

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Season-by-season highlights

Spring: With a suite of micro habitats, Orenco Woods offers migrating songbirds a place to rest and feed in the oak savannas, upland forest and riparian edges. Some may even decide to set up shop and nest in the confines of this desirable habitat. Grab your binoculars and tune your ears to the vibrant sounds of spring that echo throughout the landscape.

Summer: Summer may have people seeking an escape from the heat, but the insects are just getting started when the temperatures rise. Insects depend on outside sources for body heat, and, they operate best when the temperatures are warm. Take an evening walk and listen to the hums of the pollinators as they search for delicious nectar meals, and in the process, pollinate the plants. Look for the yellow-faced bumble bee on the south side of the trails that wind through the park.

Fall: As fall settles in and daylight hours quickly fade, the wildlife takes back the park. With leaves falling to the ground along the creek's edge, animals can be more easily spotted. Beavers have left their footprints on the land in the form of old chewed sticks. Dawn and dusk are great times to catch these iconic Oregon creatures in their natural habitat. Black-tailed deer are also known to move through the site and are often in small family groups at this time of year, making them that much easier to spot.

Winter: Red-tailed hawks can be seen at Orenco Woods throughout the year, and may be nesting in the tall Douglas fir trees. As winter settles in, the hawks start their courtship displays. Look for two or more large raptors effortlessly soaring in wide circles in the winter skies. You may see the big raptors dive or extend their legs in a dazzling display of skill and mastery of flight.