

A Disabled Hikers Guide to Washington State Parks of King County

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Introduction

This guide covers five state parks in King County. It is intended to provide detailed information about the designated accessible features in the parks, with a focus on the primary attractions or recreational opportunities. I've offered suggestions for what I consider to be the most accessible activities in each park, as well as information on at least two trails per park. An overview of the parking lots with accessible parking and directions, and details on picnicking options, restrooms, and other facilities are also provided. I've also noted what is not accessible. Other relevant details, such as cell phone reception, signage, water and trash can availability are mentioned.

All Washington State Parks require a Discover Pass or day use parking fee. A Discover Pass costs \$30 per year (plus processing fee) and gives access to state parks and other state-managed public lands. You can purchase one online, at a payment kiosk, or at a [local retailer](#). If you have a permanent disabled parking placard or license plate, you can access all state parks for free and receive discounts on camping and other fees. If you are "legally blind, profoundly deaf, or otherwise meet the disability definition used by the Social Security Administration" but do not have a disabled parking plate, you can apply for a [disability discount pass](#). Other [discount passes](#) are available for disabled veterans, senior citizens, and foster families. All discount passes are valid only at state parks. Day use fees without a pass are \$10. There are several fee free days every year; 12 in 2024. The parks in this guide have electronic payment kiosks at the parking areas.

Lake Sammamish State Park

Overview

Lake Sammamish State Park is a day use park on the south side of Lake Sammamish, where Issaquah Creek and Tibbets Creek flow into the lake. There are three primary areas at Lake Sammamish State Park: Kitchen Shelter Area, Tibbets Beach, and Sunset Beach, as well as soccer and softball fields. There is no directional signage once you enter the park, so make sure you check out the map before you arrive. Tibbets Beach is on the left just past the ranger office, Kitchen Shelter Area is on the right just past Tibbets Beach, and Sunset Beach is at the end of the entrance road. While there are trails and paved paths that connect all of the areas in the park, none of the routes are fully accessible so you may want to park at the location you plan to visit.

Kitchen Shelter area features a reservable building with electrical outlets and a sink. The building is located about 100 feet from the parking lot, along a sidewalk. There is also a large grassy area, several picnic tables, a paved loop trail, and access to the Orchard Trail and Homestead Trail.

Tibbets Beach has several picnic tables and a few benches overlooking the lake, but it is the least accessible of the primary areas in the park. There is a concession building with restrooms (that aren't wheelchair accessible) and a paved path that travels from the parking area, along the lake, and connects with Sunset Beach. There are several designated accessible parking spots, but the parking lot is very rough.

Sunset Beach has recently undergone major accessibility improvements and is a highlight of the state parks system in the region. There is ADA accessible parking, picnic tables and shelters, single-user restrooms, and a wide sidewalk and paved path that travels along the lake. It also provides access to a generally accessible wetlands trail.

Lake Sammamish has been important to many tribes in the southern Salish Sea region since time immemorial. The Snoqualmie People had several villages along sq̓'aw̓č̓ x̓ač'u? (the traditional place name for the lake in Lushootseed). You can learn more about how the Snoqualmie Tribe is "restoring culture and life" back to Lake Sammamish [at this storymap](#).
[confirming information and permission with Tribe.]

Suggested Activities

Picnic and Play at Sunset Beach: There are three wheelchair accessible picnic tables at Sunset Beach, and four new accessible (*correct? I could not access all of them*) picnic shelters with. One picnic table is located at the east end of the parking area, in front of a section of accessible parking. Another is next to the beach in front of the concession building. The third is approximately 0.25 mile west on the paved path (heading towards Tibbets Beach along the shoreline). All of the picnic tables have a accessible grill that is 32" inches high. The picnic shelters have accessible counters, tables, and grills and are located on the east and west side of Sunset Beach, with paved access from the sidewalk.

The beach is sandy but has flat access from the sidewalk to the waterfront and would be accessible with a beach or all-terrain wheelchair. There is a clear line of sight from the sidewalk to the water, with several benches on the sidewalk along the beach. There is also a playground with an accessible surface and a picnic shelter and tables. The paved trail from Sunset Beach to Tibbets Beach is generally smooth and is the most accessible path in the park; it makes for a nice stroll or roll between the beaches.

What's Accessible?

Parking

Kitchen Shelter: there are approximately 40 parking spots at the Kitchen Shelter. Two are designated accessible, one is van accessible; however, the parking spots are on a slope and the pavement is rough. There are cracks and dips in the surface between the parking lot and the sidewalk as well.

Tibbets Beach: This is a large parking lot, but the surface is mostly cracked and uneven. There are eight accessible parking spots, including one van accessible spot all located at the end of the parking lot closest to the beach. There is a smooth, paved access route from the edge of the parking lot to a map and sign that provides information on the trails, but the path is cracked and uneven beyond that point.

Sunset Beach: The largest parking lot in the park, there are around 100 (*correct? I wasn't able to count all of them*) parking spaces on gravel or grass. There are seven sections of ADA accessible parking, with paved spaces, access aisles, and accessible routes to the sidewalk.

Restrooms and Facilities

Kitchen Shelter: There are gendered restrooms with an accessible stall with grab bars at the Kitchen Shelter, however the space in front of the single sink is only 32 inches wide, the soap dispenser is too high, and a trash can blocks access to the door.

Tibbets Beach: Gendered restrooms are located in the concessions building. A narrow hallway leads to a heavy and narrow door. There are no accessible stalls.

Sunset Beach: There are gendered restrooms and changing areas located at the concession building; however they were closed at the time of this writing. There are four all gender, accessible family restrooms as well; two on each side of the building. These single restrooms have grab bars and child-size changing tables, with flush toilets and sinks. The restroom on the south side (closest to the parking lot) of the building next to the women's restroom and the restroom on the north side (closest to the lake) next to the men's restroom have the lightest doors to open. All of them have a 34 inch wide door.

Rotunda Shelter Restrooms: There is another restroom building between the Rotunda Shelter and the end of the parking lot at Sunset Beach. There is no accessible route from the Rotunda Shelter, but there is a paved accessible route from the Sunset Beach lot. However, the restroom does not have an accessible stall.

Picnic Areas and Shelters

Kitchen Shelter: There are several picnic tables on paved pads scattered across the grassy area, but there are no accessible routes to them. The Kitchen Shelter is a large, enclosed building that fits 400 people and has electricity and sinks; however I was unable to enter it during my visit. Access from the parking lot is rough, but there is a sidewalk that leads to the shelter.

Rotunda Shelter: This unique circular shelter has electrical outlets, a fire pit in the center and picnic tables on a concrete pad; a few of them have accessible overhangs. However, the route to the shelter is over grass, and the pad is surrounded by gravel and a honeycomb-like rubber material with a 1–2-inch lip onto the pad.

Tibbets Beach: The most easily accessible picnic table at Tibbets Beach is on the west end of the beach, along the trail that leads from Sunset Beach to Tibbets Beach. It is located in the grass just off the path with a nice view of the lake. There is also a bench under a tree here. There is another picnic table on the left side when the trail forks to travel along Tibbets Beach – this one has an accessible overhang and is close to the trail.

Sunset Beach: As described in the suggested activities section, there are several accessible picnic tables and shelters at Sunset Beach.

Trails

There are over 5 miles of walking paths and trails in the park. There is directional signage at most trail intersections, but its always good to carry a map just in case. Here are the most accessible:

Sunset Beach to Tibbets Beach on the Cultural Native Plants Trail

0.8 mile round trip; flat; paved surface

Starting at Sunset Beach, head west on the concrete sidewalk. You will pass an accessible picnic table and shelter. Continue along the path with wetlands on either side. At the first fork at 0.2 mile, go right. The sidewalk transitions to asphalt with a couple of slight dips and rough patches and continues about five feet wide. Go right at the next fork and continue towards Tibbets Beach. There will be picnic tables on the left. On the right, there are numerous print interpretive signs on the fence – these signs are created by the Snoqualmie Tribe and feature drawings of native plants and their names in Lushootseed. The trail ends at Tibbets Beach with the above mentioned picnic table on the left and bench on the right. Note that the paved trails that fork off from here all have deep cracks and lifted sections that would be difficult to cross with a wheelchair or walker.

Wetlands Interpretive Trail

0.6 mile round trip; flat; paved, sand, and boardwalk surface

Starting at Sunset Beach, head east on the concrete sidewalk. At the end, just past the kayak launch, continue straight onto the paved path. There is a four-inch wide, half-inch deep crack at the beginning of the trail, with about 28 inches of level clearance around it. The trail continues paved and six feet wide. There are several areas of slight cross-slope with a dip in the trail. There are also several places where the asphalt has collapsed on the lake side of the trail with two feet or more drop-off, and one crack across the trail with about 36 inches of clearance on the right. The pavement then transitions to natural surface for a few feet; it is firm sand but there are several dips and rolls. But there are some very large cottonwoods and views of the lake and the creek.

At 0.1 mile you reach the boardwalk – there is a 1.5 inch lip onto the boardwalk. The boardwalk is generally six feet wide and level with edge guards but can be a bit slick. You travel through a lush forest and wetland area surrounded by salmonberry and other plants. The boardwalk ends at a large overlook of Issaquah Creek and the lake. You can take a few steps down onto a natural surface path that travels a couple dozen feet out to the mouth of the creek.

Orchards Loop

A brief mention of this trail. It begins from the end of the Kitchen Shelter area. You have to take a cracked paved path to it. The loop travels mostly through a field with a few areas of woods and passes a small orchard. It is generally flat, with the exception of one short, steep grade, but is mowed grass and very uneven with lots of dips, rolls, and holes and only one bench. If you are comfortable walking on that kind of surface, then there are lots of birding opportunities along the way.

Other Features and Things to Know

Maps and Signage: Most of the trails have directional signage with mileage. There are maps at the Tibbetts Beach trailhead and Orchard Loop trailhead.

Concession: the concession window at the Sunset Beach Café is 39 inches high. There are a few picnic tables in front of the concession area; two of them have an accessible overhand.

Trash cans: There are very few trash cans in the park. Most of the trash receptacles are tall dumpsters with covers that are difficult to open.

Water: there is an outdoor shower at Sunset Beach with three shower heads. They are each about 6 feet high with push button knobs at 38 inches high. There is one spigot with a turn handle at 28" high. There is a water fountain next to the restrooms, but they were not functioning at the time of this writing. There are water spigots at a few locations in the park but most of them are in the grass.

Cell service: Yes, generally good.

Kayak launch: There is an accessible kayak launch at Sunset Beach. The concrete ramp has handrails and leads directly into the water. I could not find a transfer bench.

Outdoors For All Foundation, an adaptive recreation program, operates equipment rental and recreation programs out of the building at Sunset Beach. You can rent adaptive bicycles, kayaks, paddleboards, and more.

Photos

[Photos are on this Google Drive](#)

Flaming Geyser State Park

Overview

Flaming Geyser State Park is a day use park along the Green River near Auburn. It is popular with hikers, equestrians, remote control airplane users, and people visiting the geysers. The geysers in the park are nothing like what you may experience in Yellowstone, for example. They are methane seeps that have mostly run out of gas; the most easily accessible one, the Flaming Geyser, is a small flicker with dribbles of water. But the scenery is beautiful – the park is bordered by three bends in the Green River, and Christy Creek flows through part of it. There are a lot of restoration efforts in the park, including restoring salmon habitat to the creek and native plants in the meadow.

There are two primary areas in the park – the day use area near the geysers, and the equestrian and remote control airplane field. There are no directional signs when you enter the park, so refer to the map before your visit. Once you pass the entrance station on Flaming Geyser Road, take the first left to the RC field or continue towards the right to the day use area.

Flaming Geyser State Park is on the [Traditional Lands of the Muckleshoot people](#). Muckleshoot is party to both the Medicine Creek and Point Elliot Treaties. These treaties reserve

governmental rights to the Muckleshoot People and recognize their “Usual and Accustomed Territory”, where they hunt, fish, gather, trade, govern, and live. These areas include Dzidzilalich, (Dz-zah-lah-luch), what is now known as the city of Seattle and surrounding region.

Suggested Activities

Picnic and Fish along the Green River: Picnic Shelter 3 has an accessible route of travel from the day use parking area. Park in either of the two sets of designated accessible parking spots in front of the restrooms. Follow the access aisle towards the picnic area and continue onto the asphalt path. It takes an 8% decline for a few feet, then curves left to the picnic shelter. The shelter is on a concrete pad with a level transfer between the pavement and concrete. There are a couple of picnic tables with a wheelchair accessible overhang, but at the time of this writing they were not positioned to provide clear access. The grill is set off in the grass with a couple feet of clearance between the edge of the shelter and the grill and is not wheelchair accessible. There is no view of the river from here.

If you follow the path to the right from the parking area instead of going left to the picnic shelter, you will reach an overlook with access to the river – this is part of the Salmon Interpretive Trail. The path transitions to an old, eroding sidewalk made of gravel and concrete aggregate. It is rough and bumpy, with a couple of 3-5% grades. In approximately 100 feet, you reach a large overlook with interpretive panels about the importance of salmon. A footpath on the left leads a few feet to the edge of the river, where you can fish.

What's Accessible?

Parking

Day Use Area: Parking spots line the road into the day use area, but the most accessible ones are at the end of the road in the picnic area. There is one set of two designated accessible spots directly in front of the restrooms, and another set of two designated accessible spots on the next aisle closest to the picnic area. There is an access aisle between the parking spots, and it extends across the parking lot to the restrooms and picnic area. However, neither set of parking spots are van accessible; the access aisle is too narrow. The pavement is also cracked in a couple of places. The rest of the parking area is surfaced in compact gravel and grass.

RC Field Area: There is one designated accessible parking spot with an access aisle; it is not van accessible, and the pavement is cracked and uneven. Two additional parking spots directly in front of the RC field have an access aisle, but they are not designated accessible. The rest of the parking lot is paved with many sloping areas.

Restrooms and Facilities

Day Use Area: There are four all gender, single use restrooms on the south side of the parking area. They are wheelchair accessible with a concrete access route, doors with handles, grab bars, and flush toilets but no sinks.

RC Field: There is an accessible portable toilet in a no parking zone at the end of the parking lot. It is up a slight incline.

Picnic Areas

There are four picnic shelters in the day use area. Shelter 3, described above, is the most accessible. There is one shelter directly adjacent to the Salmon Interpretive Trail, but you can only access it across grass and there is a 2 inch threshold onto the pad; there are no accessible tables. The other two shelters are set in the middle of the grassy area.

There are dozens of picnic tables set on concrete pads in the grass as well. There are two between shelter 3 and the overlook that have an overhang, but a bar at the bottom of the limits the clearance.

From the parking spots along the road, a few paths lead out to picnic tables tucked back in the trees. Most of them are uphill on dirt or grass, but there is one with a steep, paved path from the parking spots. It is located on the left side of the road, just past the turn off for the ranger station when you enter the day use area.

Trails

There are several trails in the park, but most of them are steep. Here are the three most accessible options.

Salmon Interpretive Trail

Less than 0.25 mile, flat with uneven sections, eroded concrete surface

This is the designated accessible trail in the park; it no longer meets accessibility guidelines but is walkable for people using a cane or possibly a walker. Wheelchair users will need to use caution. The trail begins at the parking lot next to shelter 3, described above. The surface is aging and eroded concrete and gravel mixture. There are several dips and rolls in the trail which hold water in the wet months, including one place that had flowing water across it during my visit, and it is rough and cracked in several places. The trail is generally five feet wide, but plants and trees may narrow the width.

The trail goes out to the Green River and continues to the right, following the river. There are a couple of print interpretive signs about the importance of salmon. The trail ends at a pretty spot tucked under some trees next to Christy Creek. There is a bench here as well.

Flaming Geyser

0.25 mile, maximum 10% grade, loose gravel surface

The trail to the Flaming Geyser begins at the end of the day use parking area, behind a gate. To access it, you have to travel along the road from wherever you parked, as there is no sidewalk. (The alternative is to take the Salmon Interpretive Trail, and go right and slightly uphill at the end, but it is also a bit rough.) There is 32 inches of clearance around the gate, and you have to cross over a 1-2 inch lip at the transition from pavement to gravel trail. There are also a couple of small roots and rocks as you go around the gate.

On the other side is an information board with a map of the park. The trail continues 8-10 feet wide with a loose gravel surface on a 2-4% incline for over 100 feet. Just past the lodge building, there is an overlook on the right of old concrete salmon ponds; to access it you have to go up a 4-5% incline on a grassy gravel surface.

Just past the overlook, a sign on the right points to the flaming geyser. Take a 10% incline on loose gravel for about 30 feet. There are a few large rocks sticking out in the center of the trail, then the trail levels out. You then come to an overlook of the creek and a big, circular depression that is a couple of feet deep – take care not to trip on the rocks here. In the center of the depression is a concrete cap – this is the geyser. You may have to look closely for a flame, if there is one. Mostly this is a pleasant place to look at the creek.

Meadow Trail

Approximately 0.5 mile, level, natural grass surface

This trail circles the RC Field and a pretty meadow at a bend in the river, and provides access to fishing and swimming spots. It is shared with equestrians. The begins at the RC Field parking lot (note that you can hear the airplanes flying overhead for the first third of the trail; they can be loud with a buzzing noise). Pass between the two stone pillars at the end of the parking lot, and take a short 10% decline. As you approach the river, go right on the mowed path. The trail is typically five feet wide, with some uneven areas and sections of patchy grass and mud. You will wind along a bend in the river, with the river on your left and a meadow on your right. The trail comes out at a small gravel parking area at the entrance road to the RC field – go right and follow the road back to the parking lot.

Other Features

Maps and Signage: There is one map behind the gate on the Flaming Geyser Trail. Another map is on the side of the road on a grassy hill, as you enter the parking lot. There is no directional signage.

Trash cans: Standard trash cans are available, but most of them are placed along the road or directly in front of parking spots and may be difficult to access.

Water: I could not find any accessible sources of drinking water.

Cell service: spotty to none

Remote Control Airplane Field: A paved sidewalk leads from the parking lot to a covered shelter with chairs. Benches are placed in the grass. This is a very popular location for model airplane flying.

Photos

[Photos are on this Google Drive](#)

Federation Forest State Park

Overview

Federation Forest State Park is near Enumclaw, and the furthest park from the metro areas in this guide. But it provides access to the White River and acres of old growth forest, with opportunities for picnicking, hiking, and generally getting a nice nature break away from the city.

The park is open seasonally, from April 1 – September 30. The interpretive center, open on weekends, provides opportunities for learning about the history and ecology of the park. While the park technically surrounds both sides of Highway 410, only the south side of the park has day use facilities and usable trails. It should also be noted that while highway signage indicates there is camping here, there is not. There is only one day use area, and the majority of trails start from behind the interpretive center.

Suggested Activities

Visit the interpretive center and hike the Whispering Hemlocks Trail

The Catherine T. Montgomery Interpretive Center is open on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from July through August. In April, May, September, and October it is open on weekends depending on weather and staffing. There is a three-dimensional tactile map of Takhoma / Mount Rainier and the surrounding landscape. There are many print interpretive panels about the history of the park and the Indigenous people of the region, including Muckleshoot. The contrast for text on the signage is generally high, but the signs are over six feet tall and may be difficult to read from sitting height. A children's area features found forest objects, plants, animal bones, and other tactile items.

The Whispering Hemlocks Contemplative Loop / East Interpretive Loop begins behind the interpretive center. It travels along the old river terrace amidst large trees. There are several benches and print interpretive signs along the way that encourage enjoying the forest through multiple senses.

These activities will be most accessible to people who can walk or navigate mobility equipment across loose gravel. There is no wheelchair accessible route.

What's Accessible?

Parking

There are two designated van accessible spots near the interpretive center, but only one has an access aisle and the curb cut does not meet ADA guidelines. The curb cut is 36 inches wide and about 55 inches long with a 7.5% incline along the length and 9% cross slope on either side, with no level area to turn. There is a textured plate on the curb cut. The sidewalk is 58 inches wide but it is rough and cracked. There is no other curb cut from the parking lot. There are approximately 30 standard diagonal and parallel parking spots in the parking lot.

The parking area at the end of the entrance road does not have any designated accessible parking spots. Most of the parking spots are on gravel and tucked in between trees. There are two paved parking spots in front of the group picnic shelter, and two in front of the restrooms.

Restrooms and Facilities

Interpretive Center: To reach the interpretive center, follow the sidewalk along the edge of the entrance road. Alternatively, you can walk across small, loose gravel and an area of concrete pavers with 0.5 – 1.5 inch threshold at the transition points. There are two shallow steps up to the interpretive center, or you can follow the concrete ramp from the sidewalk to the restrooms and along the side of the building; however this may be blocked by a trash can. The door has

two triangular paddle-style handles and is a bit heavy to open. There is no automatic door opener.

Interpretive Center Restrooms: There are gendered restrooms with an accessible stall, accessible sinks with motion activated faucets in the women's restroom and push faucets in the men's restroom, soap, and hand dryer. In the women's restroom, the accessible stall door swings out in front of one of the sinks.

Picnic Area Restrooms: At the end of the entrance road, there is one building with two all gender restrooms. Both are large enough to accommodate wheelchairs and mobility devices, but only one has grab bars on all sides. However, the route around the building is a bit narrow. Both restrooms have push faucets, soap, and hand dryers.

Group Picnic Area: The group picnic area along the river has one vault toilet, but it is not wheelchair accessible.

Picnic Areas

Interpretive Center: the nearest picnic tables to the interpretive center are along the north side of the parking lot as you exit. They are placed parallel and very close to the parallel parking spots. There is no accessible route to them.

Picnic Area: at the very end of the entrance road, there are several tables placed under the trees and one group picnic shelter. Two picnic tables near the restrooms can be accessed on generally level ground, but the route may be pinched by roots or have tree debris. The group picnic shelter is directly in front of two paved parking spots on the south side. A short, paved path takes an 8-10% decline to the shelter, and there is a slight gap between the pavement and the concrete pad. There are two picnic tables, one has an accessible overhang. The grills are approximately 4 feet high.

Group Picnic Area: There is a picnic area along the White River that can only be accessed by hiking in *[during my visit, someone indicated to me that they drive down with their friend who uses a wheelchair – is this an option?]*. It is on a wide, grassy area with several picnic tables along the river and one small picnic shelter in the trees.

From the picnic area parking lot, it is about 0.25 mile to the picnic area. Head towards the far right or southeast corner. There is a picnic table on the left and a wooden fence just beyond it. Take a 20% decline for a few feet then come to sets of stairs – there are 17 steps approximately 8 inches high on a roughly 20% slope. Continue onto a metal grate boardwalk at the bottom – it is pretty long and slightly bouncy. Transition to a packed gravel trail and continue a short distance to the picnic area.

The other option is to take the White River trail from the interpretive center loop. It is 0.8 mile to the picnic area, and the trail is generally narrow and uneven with lots of roots and other obstacles.

Trails

Most of the trails in the park are pretty rugged. They are narrow, with lots of roots, rocks, and logs to navigate, and several steep sections. The most accessible is the East Interpretive Trail,

and the first 0.5 mile of the Old Naches Trail (the riverside portion of the Land of the Giants Loop).

East Interpretive Trail / Whispering Hemlocks Contemplative Trail

0.35 mile loop, flat, loose gravel and natural surface

This is the designated accessible trail in the park, however it is not fully wheelchair accessible. The interpretive trails start to the left of the interpretive center. To reach the trailhead, you have to travel across small, loose, deep gravel and a circle of concrete pavers (mentioned above in the Interpretive Center section). The trail begins 40 – 42 inches wide with small, loose gravel up to 0.25 inch deep. Go left at the T-intersection, continuing on the same type of surface. You almost immediately come to the first bench with a print interpretive panel on a log. All of the benches along the trail are angled steeply backwards and may be difficult to sit or stand from. The trail surface transitions to firmer packed gravel and soil with hemlock needles and other tree debris.

At 0.1 mile, continue towards the right, past a narrow access trail from the parking lot, then you come to a overlook on the left with a bench and view from the top of the old river terrace. Continuing to the right on the main trail, there are a couple of sections that are pinched by roots and stumps to 36 - 38 inches, and a sharp drop off on the left that is partially protected by a log. At 0.25 mile, the trail curves slightly and there is an uneven section with a steep cross slope on the outer edge. Pass a couple more benches, then at 0.3 mile you come to a potentially confusing fork in the trail – continue towards the right and straight ahead to complete this loop and return to the interpretive center. There may be some larger gravel and rocks rising up to an inch above the surface of the trail. You return to the interpretive center at 0.35 mile.

Old Naches Trail

0.6 mile one way, generally flat, natural surface with lots of roots and rocks

This section of the Old Naches Trail is generally flat, except for a short, 20% decline at the end where it connects with the West Interpretive Trail – just turn around before that point. The majority of the trail has roots and rocks that you have to step up, over, and around – some are over six inches high. If that is not an obstacle for you, then this is the most accessible of the rugged trails in the park. It is mostly isolated from the road noise of Highway 410, and has some nice views of the White River.

Start at the Interpretive Trails trailhead behind the interpretive center. Go right at the T-intersection, then left at the next fork. Continue straight ahead, then go right at the fork where the White River trail starts heading downhill, following the signs for Old Naches Trail. Continue straight along the Old Naches Trail for up to 0.4 mile, navigating several areas of roots and rocks. You'll come to a fork, with the Old Naches Trail continuing straight and the West Interpretive Trail on the right; turn around here. (The Old Naches Trail continues for another 0.5 mile or so, but I did not hike the length of it).

Other Features

Cell service: none

Water: One water fountain next to the restrooms. There is a knob to turn on the water and approximately one foot of clearance beneath the fountain.

Maps and Signage: There is no directional signage when you enter the park. The information board with a trail map and printed brochures is located next to the loose gravel path. There is a trail map and brochures inside of the interpretive center. There is directional signage at most of the trail intersections.

Photos

[Photos are on this Google Drive](#)

Dash Point State Park

Overview

Dash Point State Park is one of the largest parks in the area. It's location between Tacoma and Federal Way make it a great getaway close to the city. It has over 3,300 feet of shoreline on Puget Sound, picnic and day use facilities, a 460-acre campground, and miles of hiking trails.

The day use area is on the north side of SW Dash Point Road. There are two main areas: the beach and Picnic Point. To go to the beach and the Thames Creek trail described below, go left once you enter the park and follow the road to the end. To reach Picnic Point, go right and continue to the end.

The campground is on the south side of SW Dash Point Road. Sites 1-51, including the cabins, are on the right once you enter the campground. Sites 52-138 are on interconnecting loops straight ahead – there is directional signage but it may be a bit confusing.

Suggested Activities

Visit Dash Point Beach

Dash Point Beach is one of the most accessible south Puget Sound beaches. A paved path leads you from ADA accessible parking to an overlook of the water. The beach access is fairly level with no drift logs in the way and would be accessible with a beach or all terrain wheelchairs. You may be able to launch a kayak with assistance across the sand.

What's Accessible?

Parking

Dash Point Beach: Large, paved parking lot with five ADA accessible spots; one is van accessible. The parking spots are directly in front of the trailhead with a paved route from the spots so you can avoid the walking/rolling in the parking lot.

Picnic Point: Small paved parking lot with two designated accessible spots that do not meet ADA guidelines; the pavement is very rough, cracked, and uneven and it slopes towards the head of the spot. There is an access aisle, but there is a 3-6" gap filled with loose gravel and grass between the pavement and sidewalk.

Restrooms and Facilities

Dash Point Beach: There is one building with gendered restrooms past the tunnel at the beach. There are three access routes: two from the paved trail and one from the outdoor shower. From the trail, the access route on the women's side is paved but at a 12-15% incline with two 2-3 inch thresholds to reach the building. On the men's side, the access route is paved at a 5% incline with no thresholds. You can travel along the sidewalk at the front of the building to reach the women's restroom, but it may be blocked by trash cans. Both restrooms have a privacy wall in front of the doors that restricts forward facing access. The women's restroom has one larger stall with grab bars, but there is not a full 60" of clearance. The sinks have push button activated faucets. The pipes are not wrapped but there is adequate clearance underneath. There is one soap dispenser on the side wall.

The outdoor shower is directly in front of the restrooms, facing the beach. A concrete sidewalk takes an 8% decline for a few feet and ends on wet sand. There are two showers – one is six feet tall with a push button activated shower head, the other is about two feet high with a push button activated shower head.

Picnic Point: There is one vault toilet in front of the accessible parking spots. From the sidewalk, there is a 1.5 inch threshold from the sidewalk to the concrete pad. The vault toilet has grab bars.

Picnic Areas

Dash Point Beach:

Shelter Two is the designated accessible shelter. From the trailhead, follow the paved path for about 20 feet and turn left onto the bridge. There is a 1.5 inch lip onto the bridge and a few soft boards, but it is about six feet wide and has rails with metal mesh to see through. On the opposite side of the bridge, an aging sidewalk curves left and then right, and may be pinched to 24 inches wide due to plant growth. It is a level transfer onto the concrete pad for the picnic shelter. There are three tables; two of them have a 24 inch overhang, but access is blocked by the shelter poles. On the far end of the picnic shelter, the sidewalk continues to another accessible table on a pad in the grass. However, there is a 1.5 – 2 inch lip with a 0.5 inch gap between the sidewalk and concrete pad on this end, so it may not be accessible for wheelchair users and could be a trip hazard, so take caution. Access to the picnic table may also be blocked by a trash can. There are two grills on the more accessible side of the picnic shelter, one is at a lower height.

There are several picnic tables scattered in the grass and sand along the beach. Some of them have an accessible overhang, but they all require traveling over uneven grass and gravelly sand; the two closest picnic tables do not have an overhang. There is one bench with no companion seating on a concrete pad at the end of the path to the beach.

Picnic Point:

The sidewalk from the accessible parking spots leads to a concrete pad with a lowered grill, but at the time of this writing there was no picnic table. There is a picnic shelter (Shelter One), but it has a 4 inch lip from the grass to the concrete pad. Several picnic tables are scattered in the grassy area, which is generally level.

Trails

Dash Point Beach

Less than 0.10 mile, flat, paved surface

From the beach parking lot, head to the northwest corner of the lot. There is a large information board and electronic payment machine. Follow the paved path for a couple hundred feet – you'll pass the footbridge to the Picnic Shelter Two, then travel through a short tunnel, and past the restrooms. Another footbridge on the left leads to a few picnic tables on the sand and grass, but the beach access from there is blocked by drift logs. The pavement ends with a slight lip on generally firm, compact sand, which continues mostly level for a few more feet onto the beach. There is a nice view of the water from the paved trail. There is a bench on the left, but it does not have adequate space for companion seating without being in the path of travel.

Thames Creek Beach Trail

0.4 mile one way, maximum 15% grade, compacted gravel and natural surface with some obstacles

This trail travels along Thames Creek and connects the campground and the beach. If you're out for a hike, I recommend turning around at the very interesting log bridge at 0.4 mile for the most accessible trip. This trail is most accessible for people who walk with hiking poles or crutches; it is not wheelchair accessible and may be too narrow towards the end for a large all-terrain chair.

The trailhead is at the entrance to the beach parking lot. Follow the paved path in front of the accessible spots and along the edge of the parking lot, and carefully cross the entrance road to the sidewalk; there is a curb cut at the end of the sidewalk. The trail starts behind a single wood barricade pole. The trail starts five feet wide, natural surface and compacted gravel and may be slightly muddy. Cross a short wooden footbridge over a culvert and then there is a nice, level pull out along the creek on the left. Continue straight ahead and cross another footbridge; this one is 8 feet long and 5 feet wide with 1 inch gaps between the boards and no edge guards.

The trail becomes more uneven on natural soil surface. At 0.1 mile you continue on a turnpike with a slightly raised crown in the middle. Cross another short footbridge that is about 4 feet wide with uneven boards covered in metal grating. The trail crosses a couple more footbridges and continues on a generally 3-5% incline, with one 15% incline for a few feet.

At 0.2 mile there is a 5-8% incline for a few feet then you cross a 30 foot long bridge with no edge guards, and 0.5 – 1 inch gap between the boards. There are several places where 1-2 inch high roots cross the trail. At 0.3 mile, the trail forks – the right fork leads steeply uphill, so continue straight ahead. The trail surface becomes soft silt and mud up to 1 inch deep, and continues generally level and 4 feet wide.

Take a short 10% incline and cross another 3 foot wide bridge with a 1 inch rise and 0.5 inch gap between the boards. The trail continues natural surface with some rocks rising up to an

inch. Cross another low log in the trail and then at 0.4 mile you reach the log stairs and bridge. There is a nice place to get close to the creek here. The bridge has 15 steep steps with metal grating on top to the bridge over the creek, and then seven more steep steps to a small deck with a bench, and a few more steps to the trail on the opposite side. Some of the boards on the steps are soft, and the metal grating is coming up, so watch your step if you cross it. I recommend turning around here, though, as it is pretty steep on the other side and just continues uphill to the campground.

Campground

Amphitheater: The amphitheater is a bit hidden – it is located on the right at the first intersection when you enter the campground, tucked below a hill. The nearest parking is across the entrance road. There are two access points to the amphitheater: on the right at the corner of Dash Point Park Rd and Upper Campground Loop, across the road from the RV dump station, or from next to the first campsite on the left on Lower Campground Loop, across from the cabins.

The upper access route has a sign on the edge of the Upper Campground Road. It is narrow crushed gravel surface on a 20-25% decline for about 20 feet as it approaches and heads down the amphitheater seating area. For the lower access route, you have to travel very steeply down the Lower Campground Road, pass the dumpsters, and continue curving left. The access is on the left. You have to cross grass and take a loose gravel path on a slight incline to the bottom of the amphitheater seating area. There is a picnic table next to the gravel, but the only place to sit in a wheelchair to view the platform is in the grass, and it is on a steep slope with no nearby seating.

Cabins: As of this writing, the accessible cabin sustained damage and is not available for rent.

Campsites: Site 26 is the accessible campsite. It is an RV hookup site with a paved pad and a narrow, not wheelchair accessible route to the nearby shower and restrooms.

Shower and Restrooms: The restroom building located in the center of sites 1-50 is not fully wheelchair accessible. There is a parking area, and the building is surrounded by loose gravel with many cracks and raised areas on the surrounding sidewalk. There are gendered restrooms with a shower. The doors are blocked by a privacy wall which restricts forward facing access. The hallway and restroom stalls are very narrow. The shower is designated as accessible; there are two shower benches with grab bars, but the shower handle is too high to use from sitting and the shower head is six feet high and affixed to the wall.

There is another restroom building with two accessible all gender stalls across from site 135. Access requires crossing loose gravel, and there is a 1-2 inch lip onto the concrete pad.

Other Features

Cell service: spotty to none, especially in the campground

Water: There are water spigots in the campground. I was not able to find an accessible water fountain.

Trash cans: There are regular size trash cans throughout the park, but the campground dumpsters are very high and not easy to lift.

Maps and signage: There is a print map at the trailhead for the beach, and campground maps at the check in station. There is no directional signage in the day use park, and I found the directional signage in the campground to be confusing. I recommend looking at a map before you arrive.

Photos

[Photos are on this Google Drive](#)

Saltwater State Park

Overview

Saltwater State Park is located in Des Moines, between Federal Way and SeaTac, less than two miles from the interstate. It used to be a popular urban camping destination, but the campground is now closed. It is still a wonderful day use park, with beach access, picnic facilities, and miles of trails.

There are no directional signs when you enter the park, and I could not find a map or brochures at the entrance station, so be sure to check out the map online. Once you enter the park, go past the first parking lot at the entrance station and continue until the road ends at the parking area. To the left is the restrooms and picnic shelter, to the right is the beach.

Note that Saltwater State Park is directly under a flight path for SeaTac International Airport. Planes fly frequently overhead, and they are very loud.

Suggested Activities

Take a stroll or roll along the beach then picnic along a creek

There is a paved path that travels along the beach, above a seawall of boulders, with nice views across the sound. It is a great place for birding and taking in the sea air. Then have a picnic under the trees at the Creek Shelter, which is wheelchair accessible and reservable.

What's Accessible?

Parking

Beach Parking Area:

There is a large, paved parking lot with two sections that extends from the beach to the picnic area. The beach parking area has four designated accessible spots near the beach access, but none of them are van accessible. There is one parking spot directly next to the paved trail that has a blue parking hump and a striped aisle next to it, but no accessible parking sign.

Picnic Parking Area:

There is one ADA accessible spot as you turn left into the picnic parking area. There are two ADA accessible spots in front of the Creek Shelter; there is an access aisle in between, but the parking spots may not be wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair accessible van.

Bluff Parking Area:

The parking lot adjacent to the entrance station and across from the Bluff Interpretive trail is paved but is on a steep slope and does not have any accessible parking spots. The most accessible parking option is one parallel spot in front of the entrance station and directly across from the interpretive trailhead, but watch for cars entering the park.

Restrooms and Facilities

Beach Area:

There is one restroom building in the beach parking area. It is on the south side of the parking lot, about 200 feet east of the concession building. A small wooden sign at the concession building points towards the restrooms. There is no accessible parking at the restrooms – you would have to park and then take the sidewalk along the edge of the parking lot. There are two parking spots with an access aisle in front of the restroom, but they are not designated accessible parking.

The restrooms are gendered with one accessible stall that has 60 inches of clearance and three grab bars. The faucets are push button activated and the pipes are wrapped with sufficient clearance underneath. There is a privacy wall in front of the entrance doors, but there is still sufficient room for access. The front doors have a handle and are light with a springy motion.

There is another restroom building about halfway down the shoreline trail, but it is closed and would not be wheelchair accessible.

Picnic Areas

Creek Shelter:

The Creek Shelter is the designated accessible shelter in the park and is reservable. It is located on the left side of the parking area – turn left at the end of the road and continue straight past the roundabout. Accessible parking is on the left directly in front of the shelter. From the parking spots, there is a 1 – 1.5 inch lip as you transition to sidewalk. The sidewalk inclines at 5% for a few feet and then reaches the shelter. The shelter is on a concrete pad. There are six tables, one has an accessible overhang. The grills are 34 inches high, but the surface surrounding them has textured metal plates with high diamond shapes on them that may be difficult for wheel-users to navigate. The grills also have high side walls that restrict access from sitting height.

There is also a first come picnic table next to the shelter. Follow the sidewalk to the left, and there is a bench and one table on a concrete pad. Unfortunately, the table does not have an accessible overhang.

Beach Shelter:

Located adjacent to the paved shoreline trail, this shelter is on a concrete pad in the grass. It is currently not wheelchair accessible, but will be renovated.

Bluff Shelter:

The Bluff Shelter is located near the top of the Bluff Interpretive Trail. To access it, you have to cross a dirt and natural surface path between two fence posts. The concrete pad has a 2 – 4 inch threshold and there are no accessible tables or grills.

Picnic tables are also scattered through the beach and picnic area. They are typically on concrete pads in the grass. There are several picnic tables to the left of the concession stand, beneath a couple of very large horse chestnut trees – watch out for their spiky seed pods.

Trails

Shoreline Trail

0.2 mile one way, flat, paved

From the edge of the parking lot, follow the paved path towards the beach. There is one slightly rough and raised section at the transition between the parking lot and paved trail. Beach access is directly in front of you, but it requires walking down two concrete steps. The beach is narrow, especially at high tide. To continue walking along the shoreline, follow the paved trail to the right and cross a paved footbridge over the creek. The bridge has horizontal wood slats through which you may be able to view the creek. There is a 1 – 2 inch shallow gap as you cross the end of the bridge. The paved trail then splits into a short loop – I recommend staying to the right. The left side of the loop has a very narrow, eroded and collapsed section with logs and rocks pushed up against the trail. There is only about 10 inches of level pavement with a 2 inch drop off on the edge.

You'll pass a couple of picnic tables, a playground structure, and a closed restroom building. The trail then continues along the edge of the rock seawall. There are several benches along the way, and you can watch and listen for birds, sea lions, and more (as well as planes).

About halfway down the trail, just before the picnic shelter, there is a collapsed and eroded section of pavement. The level section is about 2 feet wide, but there are still cracks running through it. The outer edge is mostly compact gravel and level, so you may be able to bypass the cracks. Just before the pavement ends, there is a pullout on the right – I recommend turning around here if you are using a wheelchair or scooter. The pavement continues just a few more feet then transitions to gravel and ends.

Bluff Interpretive Trail

0.3 mile, maximum 18% grade, loose gravel and natural surface

The trailhead is directly across from the entrance station, between two fence posts with 36 inches of clearance. The trail takes a 10% incline then passes an old building, and a trail information sign at the beginning of the loop. Continue straight ahead, on a 8 – 10% incline for 50 feet. There are plant identification signs stapled to small logs close to the ground along the edge of the trail. The trail continues on loose gravel at a 5-8% incline for a few more feet, then levels out briefly and takes another 10% incline as you approach the Bluff Shelter on the right. The trail then curves slightly left and levels out along the top of the bluff. There are views of the water through the trees, and a couple of picnic tables and benches along the right side. The edge of the bluff is protected by a wooden fence. At the halfway point of the loop, at the tip of

the bluff, there is a wide grassy area with a couple of picnic tables and a view through the trees of the beach below.

The trail then heads back down the bluff, with a loose gravel surface. Take a maximum 18% decline for about 30 feet, then the trail continues on a gently rolling decline. As you pass an old chimney and a couple of picnic tables on the left, there are a couple of small roots rising 2 – 3 inches across the trail; they can be navigated around with care. There are also a couple of 5% cross slopes. Go right at the end of the loop to return to the trailhead.

Other Features

Outdoor shower: There is an outdoor shower and scuba rinse station at the start of the shoreline trail. It is immediately adjacent to the paved trail at the edge of the parking lot. The surface is loose gravel with pavers. There are two push button activated shower heads; one shower head is a couple of feet high, the other is 6 feet high.

Trash Cans: There are several standard trash cans along the beach.

Water: I could not find any accessible water fountains.

Maps and Signage: There is an information board with a map located on the top of a grassy hill adjacent to the beach parking area. Another information board with map is located on the sidewalk near the Creek Shelter.

Cell reception: Spotty

Concession Stand: A concession stand is open daily from Memorial Day to Labor Day and on weekends in April, May, and September. It was not in operation during my visit.

Photos

[Photos are in this Google Drive.](#)