

WHAT YOU WILL SEE

The watershed includes large natural areas, wildlife corridors, and migratory routes. With any trip to the Columbia Slough, visitors may be able to spot a wide range of wildlife and plants.

- ♦ **Birds:** There are more than 175 bird species in the watershed including great blue heron, osprey, kingfisher, red-winged blackbird, peregrine falcons, killdeer, and bald eagle.
- ♦ **Mammals:** 29 species of mammals call the Slough home. Beavers are commonly spotted, and although they are typically shy, they leave evidence of their work – downed trees. Nutria, which bears a strong resemblance to beaver, have a thin rat-like tail and are often spotted sunbathing during the day. River otters inhabit most reaches, and even sea lions venture into the western part of the Slough now and then.
- ♦ **Fish:** 28 species of fish live in the Slough. Migrating juvenile coho and Chinook salmon use the Lower Slough as a refuge for resting and rearing. Carp and smallmouth bass are common non-native fish.
- ♦ **Amphibians & Reptiles:** 10 species of amphibians and reptiles can be spotted, including Western painted turtles are common in some areas.
- ♦ **Algae & Macrophytes:** Algae, a naturally occurring single-celled plant can form thick mats throughout the water column. Similarly, multi-celled plants (Macrophytes) grow densley, especially in the Middle Slough. Both algae and macrophytes can be difficult to paddle through, especially in the late summer months.
- ♦ **Trees:** The City of Portland Revegetation Program and other partners have planted over 1.4 million native trees and shrubs along more than 40 miles of the Columbia Slough.
- ♦ **Stormwater Outfalls:** Stormwater from streets, parking lots and roofs reaches the slough through pipes. Some of these outfalls are visible along the banks of the Slough.

AREAS OF INTEREST

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| - Wheelchair Accessible | - Paddling (No Launch) |
| - Birding | - Parking |
| - Restrooms | - Biking |
| - Hiking | - No Pets Allowed |
| - Paddling | - Boat Launch |

1 Kelley Point Park N Marine Dr. & Lombard St

This multi-use park features cottonwood forest with grassy, open areas. It offers inviting beaches through the summer months, paved trails, picnic tables, as well as fabulous views of the Columbia Slough, Willamette and Columbia Rivers, Sauvie Island, and marine traffic.

2 Kelley Point Park Canoe Launch

Just inside the park entrance, a free parking area provides access to an informal canoe launch from the bank of the Slough. Paddlers should keep in mind that Slough flows are tidal here.

3 Kelley Point Park to Smith & Bybee

Wetlands Trail The trail starts across the street from the entrance to Kelley Point Park. It passes through grassland and along the wetlands.



Nature in the City



Leave No Trace

With all recreation in the Columbia Slough Watershed, remember to leave no trace. Should you need to report trash, spills, etc, please contact the following:

- ♦ To report spills contact the Bureau of **Environmental Services Pollution Hotline** at **503-823-7180**
- ♦ To report trash, large dumped items, or hazardous waste located on public property, contact **RID Patrol** at **503-234-3000** or report online at www.ridpatrol.oregonmetro.gov.
- ♦ *Unsure who to contact?* Reach out to **Columbia Slough Watershed Council** at **503-281-1132** or via email at info@columbiaslough.org for assistance.

Columbia Slough Watershed Council is contributing to habitat enhancement through volunteer opportunities, projects with private landowners, and their **Healthy Industrial Lands Initiative**.



This guide was made possible by Oregon State Parks, with additional creative support from SymbiOp Cooperative.



Imagine a place with so much to see, learn, and do...

Then step right in! You don't have far to go to discover the many pleasures of the Columbia Slough Watershed, a beautiful area of nature in the city.

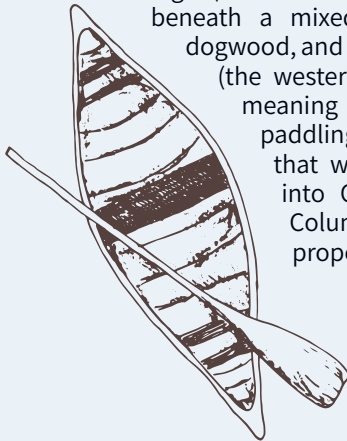
The area we know as the Columbia Slough is the traditional homelands of the Upper Chinook peoples, and the watershed rests on the traditional village sites of the Multnomah, Clackamas, and Cascade bands of Chinook, and the Tualatin band of Kalapuya. These Tribes and many others remain a vibrant part of the region and community today. At the crossroads of two significant rivers - the Columbia and Willamette - the Tribes use the area to hunt, travel, and fish via the calmer waters of the Slough. Historically rich in plants, fish, and wildlife, the Slough and the surrounding area is home to salmon, sturgeon, camas, and wapato that were principal food sources for many Pacific Northwest Tribes.

As European settlers arrived, dramatic changes occurred. Many of the thousands of people were removed from their homes, the original floodplain was drained and filled, levees were constructed to control flooding, and upland areas were cleared for development. Today's Columbia Slough is a remnant of the original waterways, and the watershed is a diverse urban area home to 170,000 people, many businesses, a port, and an airport.

Today's Columbia Slough Watershed is a 40-mile network of wetlands, marshes, lakes, and channels that meander through the former floodplain of the Columbia River. The Slough collects runoff and groundwater from the surrounding 50-square-mile watershed. Urban and natural landscapes are connected, offering an intriguing mix of sights and experiences. Varied habitats support numerous species of fish, birds, and wildlife. They also provide important ecological functions: improving air and water quality, providing drainage, and helping to control flooding. Opportunities for both active recreation and peaceful contemplation abound!

Paddling the Columbia Slough

The 19 mile long "head to mouth" paddle is possible via the Slough mainstem, however, two levees, culverted road crossings and a water level sewer pipe add challenges to a full length trip. In the narrow, tree-lined Upper and Middle Slough (the eastern 9.5 miles), paddlers can glide beneath a mixed alder, cottonwood, red-osier dogwood, and willow canopy. The Lower Slough (the western 8.5 miles) is wider and tidal, meaning a well timed trip allows for paddling with the current. Keep in mind that water levels are lower from July into October, and that most of the Columbia Slough banks are private property.



Walking and Biking

Paved bicycle and walking paths are available throughout the watershed, including the Columbia Slough Trail and the 40 Mile Loop. Segments run along the Slough itself, providing excellent wildlife viewing, and wind through many other natural and industrialized spaces. Regional trail plans call for a complete trail system along the Slough in the future.

Visit www.40mileloop.org or www.theintertwine.org for more information.

Public and private restoration projects are improving water and sediment quality for fish, wildlife and people. The City of Portland has almost entirely eliminated combined sewer overflows (CSOs) to the Slough through the Big Pipe Project in 2000. Green streets and rain gardens use natural systems to improve water quality. Over 1.2 million trees and shrubs have replaced invasive species and transformed more than 40 miles of Slough banks and uplands. Together, these actions are revitalizing one of our region's most important natural areas.



Red Osier Dogwood
Cornus sericea

PADDLING SAFETY TIPS

The Columbia Slough is a flat, slow moving body of water. However, paddlers should always be prepared by following these simple rules:

- ♦ Wear a Coast Guard approved personal floatation device.
- ♦ Don't paddle under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- ♦ Don't paddle alone. Advise others of your plans.
- ♦ Bring a whistle or a signal device.
- ♦ Be aware of weather, tides, and time of day. Tidal information can be found at www.tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov
- ♦ Wear appropriate clothing, including shoes and hats.
- ♦ Bring food and water - paddling can be hard work!
- ♦ Avoid obstructions such as aquatic plants, downed trees, thick clumps of macrophytes and algae mats.
- ♦ All waterways can contain pollutants. Wash your hands after contact.



AREAS OF INTEREST

— Trail — — Planned Trail ♿ - Wheelchair Accessible 🦅 - Birding 🚽 - Restrooms 🥾 - Hiking 🛶 - Paddling 🛶 - Paddling (No Launch) 🚗 - Parking 🚲 - Biking 🚫 - No Pets Allowed 🚤 - Boat Launch

4 St. Johns Prairie Grasslands *Currently no public access, but can be seen from adjacent viewpoints* 🦅

This site, a former landfill that closed in 1990, is a part of the Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area. Its 264 acres of grasslands complement the adjacent natural areas. Future trail expansion projects are planned.

5 St. Johns Prairie Canoe Access *9387 N Columbia Blvd, across from Chimney Park* 🦅🛶

Follow City Dump Rd until you reach a bridge to cross the Columbia Slough. At the time of publication, bridge crossing is blocked by a fence. Here you can find street parking and an informal canoe launch. Enter and exit the water with caution at this site as the mud is slippery and the bank is steep. Paddlers should keep in mind that Slough flows are tidal here.

6 Smith & Bybee Wetlands Natural Area *5300 N Marine Dr* 🦅🦅🚽🥾🛶🚗🚫

At nearly 2,000 acres, this is one of the nation's largest urban freshwater wetlands. Its varied habitats include ash and cottonwoods, open meadows, wetlands, and Smith and Bybee Lakes. The Interlakes Trail includes two wildlife viewing platforms which are great for year round bird watching. A boat launch provides water access at the eastern end of the parking lot. The informal boat launch is a gravel trail leading down to the water and depending on time of year, can be quite a muddy entrance. The launch area is located at the easternmost end of the road that runs through the Natural Area. Paddlers can also access the wetland lakes by paddling up the Lower Slough and portaging over the water control structure (difficult).

7 Bicycle & Pedestrian Trail *Multiple access points* 🚲🚗🚲

This vacated road (formerly N Marine Dr) is part of the 40 Mile Loop regional trail system, and is located along the northeast edge of Smith Lake. Parking is available at Smith & Bybee Wetlands Natural Area.

8 Wapato Wetlands *Accessible only by boat from the Slough during high water* 🦅

These privately owned wetlands contain the largest stand of Wapato within Portland. This native plant, known for its

arrowhead-shaped leaves, is edible and grows best along the edges of streams and ponds. It will grow right out of the mud and into water 2 feet deep.

9 Columbia Blvd Wastewater Treatment Plant *5001 N Columbia Blvd*

The plant started treating sewage in 1952. Treated sewage is currently discharged into the Columbia River. A footbridge connects the Peninsula Crossing and Columbia Slough trails, which are both paved. The site includes a 6-acre restored forest great for birding, as well as a boat launch accessible during high water as low water brings mud flats. Boat launch is 0.3 miles from the gravel parking area located at Columbia Blvd and N Fiske Ave. 🦅🚲🚲🚗🚤

10 Peninsula Crossing Trail This 5.1 mile-long paved trail is, as its name implies, is a crossing through a peninsula from the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. The trail can be accessed in the north via Columbia Blvd, and users can continue the journey north along the nearby Columbia Slough Trail. The trail connects to N Willamette Blvd in the south. The trail can be accessed at multiple points. 🚲🚲

11 Force Lake *Follow directions to Heron Lakes Golf course at 3500 N Victory Blvd, lake is just before their entrance.* 🦅🚗

Once a recreational lake for the city of Vanport, a World War II housing project destroyed by flooding in 1948, this site is now great for birding and hiking the loop around the lake. Located just beyond the lake is Heron Lakes Golf Courses. Near its entrance is an interpretive sign describing Vanport and local wildlife.

12 Vanport Wetlands 🦅

Numerous waterfowl and shorebird species frequent this 90-acre Port of Portland-owned mitigation wetland (accessible for Port of Portland guided tours only).

13 Delta Park *N Denver Ave & Martin Luther King Jr Blvd* 🚲🚗

This multi-use park offers sports fields, paths, a playground, paved paths, and picnic tables.

14 Bridgeton Slough Walking Path *NE Bridgeton & Marine Dr* 🥾

A short trail parallels the Bridgeton Slough. A planned extension along the levee will connect to the Expo Center.

15 Columbia Children's Arboretum *10040 NE 6th Dr* 🦅🚲🚲🚗

The 27-acre arboretum and park is a mosaic of wetland, riparian, and grassland habitat. Beginning in 1968, students planted trees from each state here. The park was renovated in 2023

to include a small parking area and paved paths. An additional entrance and neighborhood parking is also available at NE Meadow Ln west of NE 13th.

16 Flyway Wetlands *NE 13th and Golf Ct, no public access* 🦅

This 25-acre wetland natural area has no amenities or access, but can be seen from adjacent viewpoints.

17 Multnomah County Drainage District Headquarters *1880 NE Elrod Dr* 🦅🚲🚗

This Drainage District maintains 35 miles of waterways, 15 miles of levees, and pumps that control water levels over 8,200 acres of the Columbia Slough Watershed. A boat launch into the Lower Slough is available by navigating up the hill to the west of the parking area. A boat launch is available for accessing the Middle Slough by following a flat trail on the east side of the parking area that goes behind the Drainage District buildings.

18 Catkin Marsh *No current public access*

This 54-acre wetland, located within the former Broadmoor Golf Course, will be a future trail link in the regional trail system.

19 Whitaker Ponds Natural Area *7040 NE 47th Ave* 🦅🦅🚽🥾🛶🚗🚫

This park has a 0.5 mile non-paved walking path that leads through a cottonwood forest, past two spring-fed ponds. A floating dock that serves as a boat launch onto the Whitaker Slough which connects to the Columbia Slough can be found by following the paved path north from the parking lot. A paved viewing platform and viewing dock make for great bird watching areas, however, please note that paddling is not allowed on the actual ponds. The park also contains environmental education areas, a gazebo with picnic tables, and stormwater treatment wetlands.

20 Colwood National Golf Course *7313 NE Columbia Blvd* 🦅

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Colwood converted 9 of their holes into a natural area. Large numbers of bats live here and at other golf courses along the Columbia Slough.

21 Cully Park *5810 NE 72nd Ave*

🦅🦅🚽🥾🚗 This now 25-acre park was designated in 2018, however, until 1990 was an operating landfill. Today the park has a Native gathering garden, community garden, play structures, fenced dog area, soccer field, and a paved walking trail with views of Mt. Hood.

22 Alderwood Trail *Multiple Access Points*

🦅🦅🚲🚲🚲 This 2-mile asphalt trail passes by riparian forest and sloughs where numerous bird species can be seen. The trail can be accessed from NE 92nd Ave, NE Cascades Pkwy, as well as two access points and NE Alderwood Rd & NE Glassplant Rd. The trail also connects with the I-205 bicycle path at NE Clark Rd and 105th Ave. Additionally, paddling access is available via a gravel ramp at NE Alderwood Rd & NE Glassplant Rd.

23 Johnson Lake Natural Area 🦅🦅🚲

This 15.2-acre area is home to numerous birds, beavers, otters, and dragonflies. The woods north of the lake are restored with western red cedar, cottonwood, and fir. Access to the trail from the west is found at the end of NE Colfax St, off of NE 92nd Dr, and via NE Glassplant Rd from the east. A flat dirt trail connects these two entry points. Street parking is available.

24 Gateway Green *Access via Gateway Regional Center/Gateway MAX stop and I-205 bike path* 🦅🦅🚲🚲

This 38-acre parcel is an island of trees and grassland nestled between I-84 and I-205. It contains a portion of the I-205 bike path. Future plans include a world-class off-road cycling facility, nature play areas, and sheltered picnic areas. Parking is available in the area around the Gateway Transit Center, or in the SW corner of the Gateway Fred Meyer parking lot.

25 Columbia Slough Nature Park *11198 NE Simpson St* 🦅🦅

This 2-acre natural area borders the Columbia Slough. When you arrive, a ramp and boat launch is located behind the left side of the mound. Street parking is available, however, scout ahead of time as parking barriers may be present. Please note that though the driveway area is blocked by a chain, the public is still allowed to access this area..

26 Little Four Corners & Pond 🦅🦅

North and south arms of the Columbia Slough merge here and one can also see numerous springs well up from the Slough's bottom. There is good wildlife viewing from NE 112th, north of Marx St. Little Four Corners is a great area to explore by paddling from Columbia Slough Natural Area or NE Glassplant Rd & NE Alderwood Rd. The nearby pond was once called Prison Pond, however it is unknown if it has taken a new name in recent years.

27 Senn's Dairy Park *11206 NE Prescott St*

🦅🦅🦅 This 1-acre park includes native landscaping, picnic tables, a walking path, a playground, and a community garden.

28 143rd Avenue Levee 🦅🦅🚲

The informal walking path on the elevated levee provides scenic views and good wildlife viewing. The Slough Trail used for biking and walking, extends west past Costco to NE 124th Ave. Please note that paddlers that reach this area must portage to continue on the Slough. This involves walking uphill along a gravel path to the top of the levee, and then downhill along a gravel path to the Slough, an approximate length of 260 yards.

29 Glendover Golf Course and Nature Trail *14015 NE Glisan St* 🦅🚲

A 2.2-mile wood chipped public walking trail circles this Metro-owned golf course.

30 Wilkes Creek Headwaters Park *NE 154th Ave & NE Fremont St* 🦅🚲

This 20.7-acre park is being developed as a hybrid park that contains both natural areas and developed amenities such as parking, play areas, restrooms, and more. The eastern branch of Wilkes Creek emerges from a hillside spring in the park. The park is home to forty bird species, coyotes, and the **Stumptown Scud** (a freshwater crustacean only found in the Portland area). Neighborhood parking is available.

31 Portland Water Bureau Groundwater Facility *16550 NE Airport Way* 🦅🚲🚲

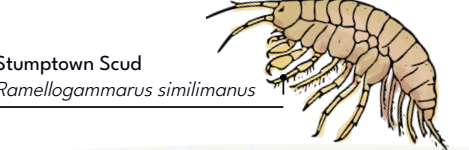
The Columbia South Shore Well Field system provides Portland's backup drinking water from wells located hundreds of feet below the surface. This Portland Water Bureau facility offers access to a trail stretching from NE 158th Ave to Marine Dr, as well as a boat launch. Although the parking lot is closed to public access, the boat launch and natural area remain available for public use.

32 Multnomah County Drainage District Pump Station *NE 158th & Marine Dr* 🦅🚲

Water from the Upper Slough is pumped into the Columbia River here to prevent flooding inside the levees. There is access to the Marine Dr bicycle-pedestrian trail and the Slough Trail.

33 Nadaka Nature Park and Garden *NE 176th & Glisan, Gresham* 🚲🚲

This 12-acre park features native plant landscaping, nature play area, community garden, picnic shelter, public art, and a .46 mile trail. Restrooms are seasonal.



Stumptown Scud
Ramellogammarus similimanus

34 Big Four Corners Natural Area *NE 170th Ave & Airport Way* 🦅🚲🚲

This 200-acre natural area includes sloughs, cottonwood forest, willow wetlands, clear cold springs, and Oregon white oak woodlands that users can find along the 4 miles of walking trails. At the time of publication, public access is not recommended due to frequent presence of campers.

♦ **Wildlife Pond & Mitigation Wetlands**

N side of NE Airport Way. There is a walk-in access on the north side of the road. No parking.

♦ **Mason Flats Wetland** *S side of NE Airport Way.* This restored wetland provides excellent habitat for wildlife and many bird species. The NE Airport Way sidewalk provides excellent views, and this area can also be accessed by paddling from the Portland Water Bureau launch.

♦ **Slough Trail** *Access to the trail is from the south side of NE Airport Way.* A trail extends to the NE 185th Ave city boundary, passing wetlands and a stormwater treatment pond along the way. The area is planted with native vegetation.

35 Blue Lake Regional Park Wetlands *20500 NE Marine Dr, Fairview* 🦅🦅🚽🥾🛶🚗🚫

This 64-acre regional park has a walking path circling a wetland at its west end. Open ponds and emergent marsh are rich in wildlife. Blue Lake Park also offers a nature play area, boating, fishing, covered picnic areas, disc golf, and swimming. The park is closed to the public until late spring 2024 for much needed upgrades. Entrance is free with your Metro Annual Parking Pass, or pay \$5 per car or \$7 per bus. Park visitors who walk or bike in do not pay an entry fee.

36 Lakeshore City Park *3653 NE 217th Ave, Fairview* 🦅🦅🦅

The shallow 110-acre Fairview Lake has public access at this location, while all other access is private. The park has a nature play center, fishing platforms, covered picnic area, walking trails, and is rich with wildlife. The Slough begins at a small dam at the lake's west end. Street parking is available.

37 Salish Ponds *NE 207th & Glisan, Fairview* 🦅🦅🚲🚲

A 6-acre and a 12-acre pond in a former rock quarry feature ADA-accessible fishing, walking, and bird watching opportunities. The park is also along the Gresham-Fairview Trail, a popular biking and walking trail. There is easy access to the trails from the Target parking lot or an entrance on NE Glisan between Fairview Pkwy and W Pond Dr.

