

MORE HISTORY

In 1942 the Army held a brief encampment at Carkeek Park. A sewage treatment plant was built there in 1949, and a model airplane field in 1959. More recent improvements have been improved trails and raised platforms constructed to protect wetland and salmon habitat. Venema and Piper Creeks might have been swept underground into culverts and forgotten, as in other city parks, but fortunately, instead, they were kept above ground and channeled through natural looking rock weirs and small dams. The result has been gently contoured creek beds and a natural looking ravine. Native plants and trees shelter and shade the creeks, and some of the invasive ivy has been removed.

THE WALK

At the park entrance, stop at the **Education Center** and new **Environmental Learning Center** to check for upcoming festivals, classes, and events. A native plant garden, backyard wildlife sanctuary, rainwater collection and retention system, and solar panels are other features. Follow the **Salmon to Sound trail** all the way to salt water, and see returning chum salmon spawning in the fall. The Suquamish Tribe gave chum salmon fry to be raised and released here by local children so mature fish, once imprinted with Venema Creek, would return to Carkeek Park.

Walk down the creek into the wooded park along wetland ponds and swamps adjoining the trail. Look for flourishing native plants and birds. One day when we were next to the creek a great blue heron posed in a pond on one leg just a few feet from us, unruffled and undeterred by our presence. During the winter many trees stand in pools of water. Raised trails follow wooded pathways out to the salt-water beach. On the south side of the lower grassy area a trail ascends the bluff offering outlooks over the Sound and the North Beach residential area. Trains passing daily along the waterfront are fun to watch and listen for from this vantage point.

Or cross the creek, and walk east along the creek on a trail past the restored pioneer orchard and climb up to the southeast edge of the park at NW 100th and 6th NW. Ancient apple trees still bear fruit in season. Additional signed trails both north and south of the ravine have been built and graveled; metal bridges over Venema Creek make travel over muddy wetland safe, clean and easy. A metal scaffolding staircase, much like a child's constructed Erector Set, gets you over the railroad tracks to the beach.

From above, the **North Bluff trail** climbs to a **North Meadow**. Other amenities of this park include playing fields, fire pit, picnic areas, and a large hollow concrete salmon for kids.

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Carkeek Park Urban Walk

An In-city Family Adventure with
Joan Burton



START YOUR WALK HERE



CARKEEK PARK – A HAVEN FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Spawning salmon returning along Venema and Piper's Creek are features of this 216-acre woodland waterfront park along Puget Sound. You can understand why Indian tribes camped at this beach for centuries to gather clams and to fish. Sweeping views of the Olympics will dazzle you too. Ravine homesteaders planted the old orchard along the Piper's Creek trail after the Seattle fire in 1889 forced them to re-locate here.

Stroll raised platforms following the course of the merged creek at the bottom of the ravine all the way to the beach. Carkeek Park has winding woodland trails to explore; for older kids an Education Center, and Environmental Center; Piper's and Venema Creeks where chum salmon spawn in season, and a saltwater beach. What child can't find something to enjoy here?

WATCH SALMON SPAWN FROM CREEKSIDE TRAIL

The Salmon to Sound Trail leads down the stream to Puget Sound. From mid-October to Thanksgiving time families watch here for spawning fish fighting their way upstream. Because trains pass the Park every day, children will want to climb the staircase next to the beach to look down on them and listen to their hooting, puffing sounds.

The North Meadow at the end of the North Bluff trail is an expanse of grass playing fields; imaginative play equipment, and picnic areas. Kids enjoy this park at every time of the year.



Distance: One Mile Round Trip
Time: One Half Hour
Terrain: Moderate
Restrooms: Upper Level Visitor Center

GETTING THERE

From I-5 take exit #173. Go west on Northgate Way, cross Aurora Avenue, continue west and cross on Greenwood Avenue North. Angle left or west on Holman Road NW. Go three blocks and turn right on 3rd Avenue NW. Drive 5 blocks to NW 110th Place, turn left and follow signs to Carkeek Park, dropping down a winding Carkeek Park Road to enter the park. Pass the environmental center, and take the road leading back uphill to a parking lot overlooking Puget Sound and the Olympics. Metro bus #28 will also get you there.

HISTORICAL NOTES

This is not the original **Carkeek Park**. At one time, Pontiac Bay, north of Sand Point on Lake Washington, was named Carkeek Park. However, it was purchased from the city for a military airfield in 1926 to become today's Magnuson Park, so this is the second park given to the city by English building contractor Morgan Carkeek. When Pontiac Bay became Sand Point, he gave \$25,000 to help purchase land at Piper's Creek for a new Carkeek Park on Puget Sound. Once the Piper family homestead and then an overnight camp for boys and girls, it lay at the end of a three-mile hike along the shores of the Sound.

The park was not initially popular and was first used to grow vegetables for the animals at Woodland Park Zoo. During the Depression several works projects created camp buildings and forest trails, attracting more visitors.

