

WEST GREEN LAKE

On the west side you will encounter the west bathing beach and the old bathhouse, built with city funds in 1928, then in 1970 converted into the small Bathhouse Theatre. On a clear day Mount Rainier will loom above on your left. A long row of different kinds of crabapple trees, called Crabapple Alley, line the path here. Sunsets above Green Lake are memorable.

Another lovely time to walk the path is the first Saturday night in December when small candles in paper sacks called "luminarias" are arranged along the path around the lake.

Continue around the lake with the hum of traffic from Aurora Avenue above you, and return alongside cattails, sometimes filled with songbirds such as warblers and red-winged blackbirds, to the parking lot near the old Aqua Theater at the south end, built in 1950. It once held 5,000 people for performances of the Aqua Follies and various musical theatrical productions. The last concert, in 1969, presented the Grateful Dead.

The Pitch 'n Putt golf course stands where the old Cowen Creek outlet of the lake used to flow. Among the reeds along the southwest corner of the lake, look for a pier from which local rowing club crews and the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation rowing programs launch their practice shells.

ROUND THE BEND, THEN RETURN

Just south of the Aqua Theatre look for the playing fields and picnic areas of Lower Woodland Park across Green Lake Way, orphaned from Upper Woodland Park, the home of the Zoo, by the building of Aurora Avenue in the 1930's. Then continue your walk north to East Green Lake Beach.

The trees of Green Lake are a source of pride to the local community. A map lists 162 different species along the lakeshore, most notably black cottonwoods, cypress, maples, willows, and larches. The unkempt tangle of willows and underbrush is considered a wilderness area in the park, planted with native vegetation to enhance attractiveness to wildlife. Here you may see great blue herons finding refuge from crowds in the park, downy woodpeckers, red-breasted nuthatches, black-capped chickadees, and bushtits nesting in the trees. The cattails host singing red-winged blackbirds. The pads of water lilies continue from year to year. In winter, other species of waterfowl, including wood ducks, buffleheads, scaup, and goldeneyes use the lake and sometimes rest beneath the willows.



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Green Lake Urban Walk

In-city Family Adventure



START YOUR WALK HERE →



FAMILIES FLOCK TO GREEN LAKE

This historic urban lake, beloved by Seattleites for more than a century, is a magnetic place for walkers. Families love the walk around the lake at any time of the day or year. The two and 3/4 mile long path circling the lake attracts runners, skaters, bicyclists and walking families at all times of the day and in all seasons. Two swimming beaches and a wading pool are the major attractions for children at Green Lake.

East Green Lake has both a beach and an indoor pool, Evans Pool, for winter days. West Green Lake has its beach alongside the Bathhouse Theatre, where parking is slightly easier. Between the two on the north side is the large free-form wading pool. Wind surfing boards and paddle boats are available to rent if you and your child would like to get out on the lake. Duck Island sometimes attracts eagles to its trees, if your kids have sharp eyes.

GETTING THERE

You can reach the lake from several directions (see map). If you take the 65th and Ravenna Boulevard exit (North-bound on I-5), turn left on Ravenna Boulevard. Go straight to East Green Lake Way and turn right. Drive one block and turn left into the parking area next to Evans Pool. Metro buses #6, #16, #26, #48 and #359 serve Green Lake.

START ON YOUR WALK

Begin walking around the field house, Evans Pool and the crowds of swimmers in the summer at the East Green Lake beach on land filled in when the lake level was lowered. The field house-community center was built in 1929 and Evans Pool, built in 1954, brought swimmers inside during cold weather. Near here stood pioneer homesteader Erhart Seifried's, ("Green Lake John's") cabin. Today in the same area look for wind surfers bobbing about in the erratic breezes like giant dragonflies. Notice the tennis courts, platforms with diving boards, ball fields, and various watercraft available for rental here. You may want to try out a water bicycle or paddleboat or sail board lessons at the Small Craft Center. Seifried, who settled on the NE shore in 1869, paid \$10 for the 130-acre property claim, developed orchards, had a few cows, and lived by the lake for 17 years, selling his property eventually for \$15,000.



WALK ON TO WEST GREEN LAKE BEACH

A series of curves in the shoreline bring you to the free-form 1937 wading pool, built by the Works Progress Administration to keep men employed. Look across the lake to get another perspective. On the northwest end of the lake you can see the man-made Waldo Dahl Island, popularly known as Duck Island, created as a wildlife refuge. Dahl was a Seattle Park Board member and an avid bird watcher.

Wild birds, which have adopted the sanctuary, have increased in number. A visiting pair of eagles has moved to the island, perching in trees and hunting for fish and waterfowl. You may also see other birds of prey, such as osprey, peregrine falcons and Cooper's hawks. Species on the island include mallards and Canada geese.

In the winter months many other species use the island. Double crested cormorants spend the night, belted kingfishers hunt from branches over water, and great blue herons and common mergansers hunt from fallen logs. Many migratory birds such as American Widgeons, cormorants and mallards are attracted to the park in winter by available food. All along the west side of the lake, watch for pied-billed grebes nesting among the cattails and also building their floating nests out in the open among the water lilies.

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