Tryon Creek, OR



Vicinity Location:
About 5.5 miles south of Portland, OR.

Directions:
From Portland, take I-5 South to Terwilliger Blvd. Take exit 297 and curve around to Terwilliger Blvd. Get into the right lane. From the traffic light, drive 1.6 miles, crossing over I-5, following signs for Terwilliger Blvd and Lewis and Clark College. Turn right to enter the park. The park address is 11321 SW Terwilliger Blvd.
Portland, OR 97219

No permits are required.

There is a bathroom at this trailhead attached to the visitor's center.

Dogs on a 6 foot leash are allowed. Bikes are only allowed on bike trails. The trails in this review are mostly for hikers only. This park also has equestrian trails.

Hours for parking at trailheads vary. Hours at main parking lot are 7AM to Dusk.

The main parking lot will fill up on busy weekends so plan to arrive early or take a bus because there is not much alternate parking.

Trail:
Maple Ridge Trail, Middle Creek Trail, Cedar Trail, Red Fox Trail, Old Main Trail, Trillium Trail with connections to multiple trails in the park.

There is at least one geocache for this trail at: **N 45° 26.055 W 122° 40.681** Info at Geocaching.com.

Trail Maps:
Topo Map, State of Oregon Map, Download Garmin .gpx file

Length and Elevation: 2.5 miles round trip. Elevation gain of 325 feet and loss of 325 feet. Elevation at the trailhead is 250 feet, highest point is at 260 feet. Lowest elevation is 120 feet.

Review: 4/6/2012, 3/31/2018
The trailhead is at the north end of the main parking lot. It is off to the right just before the first parking spot on your right as you enter the main parking lot. There is also an equestrian parking lot which is reserved for equestrian parking only.

Follow the well traveled Maple Ridge Trail through the open forest. Stay on the Maple Ridge Trail and pass a junction for the North Horse Loops. You'll pass an old cedar stump that children can play in on your left. Drop down a little hill and cross a boardwalk passing skunk cabbage and coltsfoot.

The understory is mainly Oregon Grape, Salmonberry, Salal, and Sword Ferns and of course Trillium in the spring.

After walking about .1 mile you will come to a kind of roundabout in the trail. Continue generally straight ahead on the Middle Creek Trail. Walking down the trail you'll see a diversity of plants. This area is like a rainforest with the moss hanging down and draped all over the trees. The trail is compacted gravel with broken down leaves on top of the gravel. The trail is generally about four feet wide. The area is surprisingly quiet for being in the city. There really is no car noise and you can't hear any freeway noise.

Just after crossing over two bridges, make a left onto the Middle Creek Trail for hikers. Shortly the trail uses a boardwalk to cross a very wet area. Skunk Cabbage blooms in the spring and Jewelweed in the summer. Towards the fall, touch the ripe Jewelweed pods to have them spring out their seeds in a mini-explosion. It is great fun for kids and adults. How does a plant build up that much tension in a seed pod? There is also buttercups and more stinging nettle along this part of the trail.

Early in the spring you may be able to smell the Skunk Cabbage. If you think you smell a skunk then you'll know you are downwind from Skunk Cabbage. If you don't know what Skunk Cabbage looks like, it has a yellow hooded flower about a foot tall in the spring and two foot long shiny leaves in the summer. It likes to grow in very wet areas.

As you're walking, you may notice a parallel trail on the right. This is the West Horse Loop and it intersects a bit farther down the trail at a confusing junction of trails. At this junction has a sign that says Middle Creek Hiking Trail. Turn right and go over a small seasonal creek bridged by a culvert, walk across the horse trail, and look for Cedar Trail, a small trail that winds along the right edge of a small wet area. You will see the moss covered sign for the trail about 20 feet from the horse trail.

The Cedar Trail parallels a small creek for a bit then climbs and passes several groupings of trillium, Indian Plum, along with Cedar, Alder, and Fir trees. There are small meadows of Coltsfoot because the ground is so wet here. The trail climbs a bit more then drops down to cross Park Creek on Bunk Bridge. Park Creek is a lovely little bubbling stream with mosses and ferns all around.

Cross over the bridge and continue up, leaving the creek behind. Continue on the Cedar Trail, passing the junction for the Hemlock Trail on the right. This leads up to a trailhead with no parking. At the next junction of the Red Fox Trail turn left and walk towards Red Fox Bridge.

The next bridge is over Red Fox Creek which is a small creek with a pleasant sound. Climb up the hill looking at all the moss draping down from the trees and listen to birds singing in the trees.

Walk through the pleasant forest for another .25 mile and drop down to Tryon Creek on the Red Fox Bridge. Trillium and Salmonberries bloom here early in the season.

Climb up a couple of switchbacks to the junction with the Old Main Trail. Turn right and continue back towards the trailhead and the Trillium Loop. Continue straight on the Old Main Trail past the junction to the Big Fir Trail.

This part of the trail is wide and mostly level which makes for an easy walk back towards the parking area. Take some time to turn right and walk along the Ruth Pennington Trillium Trail. Walk the lower and upper loops of the trail and learn names of some of the native plants of the area. The trail sports at least 40 signs naming different plants found in Tryon Creek State Park. This is a paved trail and is accessible to strollers and wheelchairs. There are also some benches where you can sit to enjoy the flora.

After completing the Trillium Trail you are at the south end of the parking lot. From here you can walk back to your car, tour the visitor's center, or stroll along the brick walkway back to the trailhead where you started your hike.

This is a great spring hike or a hike on a cloudy day. It is a great hike for kids because the length of the hike can be changed depending on the weather and moods of the hikers.

Enjoy the photos!!
Gallery Pics
Switchback Steve

