

Garfield Nature Trail offers cool spot for leisurely short walk

Budd Inlet can be seen from lower trail

What: Garfield Nature Trail, a .33-mile trail in northwest Olympia.

Where: The trailhead is at 600 Rogers St. S.W., which is between Conger and Madison avenues. The other end of the trail is on West Bay Drive south of Giles Avenue. There is a trail overlook at the intersection of Percival Street and Madison Avenue.

To do: The Garfield Nature Trail is a step back in time -- right in the middle of a west Olympia neighborhood. The trail threads through tall Douglas firs, cedars and big alder trees. Lush undergrowth spills along the steep slopes. The trail provides a cool spot on a hot, late-summer day because the trees cast a lot of shade.

From the Rogers Street trailhead, the path goes down steps to a gravel trail. The trail follows an unnamed seasonal creek. The creek is mostly damp mud right now, but it burbles with water after every rain.

A walk down and back up the trail takes less than an hour for diligent walkers. The trail is short, but it is packed with interesting things to see. Look for the rustic benches at scenic points. Notice how huge ferns pack the steep sides of the ravine. You'll see many rotting logs in the creek and ravine banks. The lower part of the trail has views of Budd Inlet.

Safety: This trail has steep, slippery steps, so be careful. Children should be closely supervised on this trail, as it is close to the creek and log deadfalls. Some of the bridges and boardwalks don't have railings. Don't allow children to crawl into the culverts at both ends of the trail.

Rules: Leashed pets are allowed, but owners must pick up their waste. Bags are provided at the Rogers Street trailhead. No running or bicycling is allowed on the trail. No weapons, drugs, alcohol or camping are allowed in the park. The park is open from dawn to 9 p.m.

Courtesy: Homes are located at the top of the ravine, so don't scream, trespass or make a ruckus. There is another wooded area on the west side of Rogers Street that looks like part of the trail, but it isn't! Stay out of this clearly marked

private property. Stay on the trail to protect delicate plants on the steep sides of the ravine. Garfield Nature Trail has a long tradition of neighborhood volunteers, so respect the signs, trail work and other features.

Parking: There is limited parking on Rogers Street and in the surrounding neighborhood.

For more information: Call the Olympia Parks, Arts & Recreation Department at 360-753-8380.