

## Short local hikes a great way to be more active

By Chester Allen | The Olympian ( Modified by Patty Suskin)

Here are three short hikes worth fitting into your busy schedule:

### *Frye Cove Park*

- **What:** Outing to Frye Cove Park on Eld Inlet.
- **Where:** Frye Cove is at 61st Ave Northwest, just off Young Road Northwest.
- **To do:** This 67-acre park with 1,400 feet of Puget Sound beach is worth the drive. Frye Cove offers shellfish digging in season — you can see clam siphon holes all over the beach at low tide.

It's best to visit during low tide, as the entire beach can be under water during a high tide. Don't dig shellfish out of season or when warning signs are posted. For more information on shellfish seasons and safety, check [wdfw.wa.gov](http://wdfw.wa.gov) or [doh.wa.gov](http://doh.wa.gov) and click on "Beach Closures."

The clam and oyster season at Frye Cove runs from Jan. 1 through May 15. The beach has good numbers of Manila and littleneck clams, oysters and other clams.

- **Restroom:** There is a restroom between the parking lot and the beach.
- **Safety:** Keep a close eye on kids, as the woods are dense and the beach has sharp shells and barnacles.
- **Directions:** Take U.S. Highway 101 toward Olympia. Take the Steamboat Island Exit and take Steamboat Island Road about 6 miles to Young Road N.W. Turn right and follow Young Road for about two miles. Turn left onto 61st Ave N.W. and follow the road into the park.

The park is open from 9 a.m. to dusk, No camping, alcohol or firearms allowed.

- **More information:** Call Thurston County Parks and Recreation at 360-786-5595 or check [www.co.thurston.wa.us/parks](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/parks).

### *Watershed Park*

- **Where:** Watershed Park in Olympia offers trails, mature forest and pristine sections of Moxlie Creek right in the middle of town.

The main trailhead parking lot is on Henderson Boulevard, south of Interstate 5. There are other trailheads at Eastside Street and 22nd Avenue.

**To do:** Watershed Park is perfect for a quick hike during a rain break — or during a rainstorm. There is a 1.4-mile loop trail, and spur trails let hikers get in and out of the park — and to different neighborhoods — in an hour or so.

The trails have some steep climbs, boardwalks and stairs, so this is a great spot to keep your hiking muscles in shape — and stay strong this winter.

The city of Olympia has installed excellent trail markers and signs. This trail is not suitable for those who use wheelchairs. Benches are at some scenic spots. The Loop Trail is 1.4 miles. The hike from the main park trailhead on Henderson Boulevard to the 22nd Avenue trailhead is about 0.7 miles. The hike from the main trailhead to Eastside Street is about 0.6 miles.

- **Equipment:** Good hiking shoes, sunglasses, cameras, binoculars, warm clothes and rain gear.
- **Parking:** There is parking at the Henderson Boulevard trailhead.

### • **Directions:**

Take 101 South toward Olympia, then I-5 North

EXIT at the City Center (EXIT 105), taking the PORT OF OLYMPIA split.

Get in the left lane at the split. Take the roundabout as if you are making a LEFT turn ( away from town). You can see the small parking lot (almost a large shoulder) immediately on the LEFT only one-tenth of a mile from the roundabout at the off ramp.

There also are entrances on Eastside Street and 22nd Avenue.

- **More information:** Call Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation Department at 360-753-8380 or check [www.ci.olympia.wa.us](http://www.ci.olympia.wa.us).

### *Capitol Lake waterfowl walk*

- **What:** A nice loop walk around Capitol Lake begins at ends at Heritage Park.

Heritage Park is at the intersection of Water Street and Fifth Avenue in downtown Olympia.

The 1.6-mile loop trail around the north basin of Capitol Lake is probably the easiest way to see thousands of migrating waterfowl in South Sound. If you're lucky, you'll see a bald eagle make a diving run on a flock of ducks. This trail is flat and well-drained, and it's close to downtown, parking and the Capitol Campus. You don't have to hike the entire 1.6-mile loop, but if you do, know it travels from Heritage Park, passes near the bluff leading up to the Capitol Campus, crosses the lake on the bridge to Marathon Park and

follows Deschutes Parkway to Fifth Avenue and back to Heritage Park. The bridge has displays on lake wildlife and ecology, with an emphasis on salmon, cutthroat trout and steelhead, which all use the lake.

**How to get to Capitol Lake:**

Several ways- here is one.

- Take Hwy 101 South to Olympia, Exit at SPSCC ( **Cooper Point / Automall Drive/ Crosby Exit**)
- Take a **LEFT off the ramp onto Cooper Point Road**, go over the over pass, then make the
- **first RIGHT at the light ( Evergreen Park Drive)**. Take Evergreen Park Dr around & make a
- **LEFT onto Lakeridge Drive** ( toward the Thurston County Courthouse. Drive past the Courthouse and down the hill to the lake.
- Turn **LEFT onto Deschutes Parkway**.

There are plenty of parking spaces along Deschutes Parkway surrounding the lake and near Heritage Park.