

A good hike without much of a drive to get there

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The Olympian

•**What:** A hike through shady, cool Trillium Park

•**Where:** 500 Governor Stevens Ave. N.E.

•**To do:** Trillium Park is a 4.5-acre forest nestled in a ravine in the middle of the Governor Stevens neighborhood. A trail descends from the park entrance into a cool, green forest with a seasonal stream and a wetland pond. There are few better places within Olympia city limits for a short hike — especially during the hot days of July and August. This trail doesn't get a lot of use, and it has the feeling of a place far away from the city. Look for tree frogs near the wetland and the many old, decaying cedar trees that fell and are now hosts new plants.

•**Hike details:** From the entrance on Governor Stevens Avenue, 52 railroad-tie steps lead to the bottom of the ravine. Watch your step, as some of the wood steps have rotten spots. It's best to keep your feet on the packed earth. Look for the large cedar trees at the start of the hike. Maples and Douglas fir trees also are along the steps. A spur trail at the bottom of the ravine leads to a quiet spot and a bench. Look for the seasonal stream that runs into the pond. The pond is home to hordes of Pacific Chorus Frogs. The frogs make a huge racket in the spring when they start their mating songs. They're pretty quiet in the summer months. Look for owls in the park at dawn and dusk. The park also is home to raccoons, squirrels and a variety of birds — especially woodpeckers. Look for the dead trees that are speckled with woodpecker holes. The round-trip hike is about 45 minutes if you walk briskly, but this shady, natural park could swallow up your whole afternoon. If you sit quietly, wildlife — especially birds — appears like magic. Look for hollow logs. The park links Governor Stevens Avenue and Eskridge Street.

•**Directions:** From downtown Olympia, take Capitol Way south. Capitol Way becomes Capitol Boulevard at the Interstate 5 Bridge. Turn left on Governor Stevens Avenue to get to the park.

•**Parking:** There is no parking lot. There is limited parking on nearby streets, but don't block anyone's driveway.

•**Equipment:** Sturdy hiking shoes, water, binoculars and snacks. Bring rain gear if there are clouds in the sky. Bug spray is a good idea, as the wetland can produce some mosquitoes.

•**Safety:** The trail has many steps and is sloped in many places. Tree roots and mud are hazards, but they should not discourage hikers. This trail is impossible for people who use wheelchairs or walkers. Children should be watched closely, as there is a pond and steep pitches on the trails. Watch out for poison oak! Homes line the top of the ravine, so be considerate of homeowners.

•**History:** The Governor Stevens Neighborhood Association and generous landowners helped create the park in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

•**Rules:** No camping, fires, fishing, hunting, alcohol or firearms allowed in the park. Don't dump yard waste in the park. No motorized vehicles are allowed in the park, and pet owners must leash and clean up after their animals.

•**More information:** Call Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation Department at 360-753-8380 or go to www.ci.olympia.wa.us.

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