Crystal Springs Creek Walking Tour

1. JOHNSON CREEK PARK
   Here the clear waters of Crystal Springs Creek meet Johnson Creek's more turbid water. After spending years maturing and growing in the Pacific Ocean, using their sense of smell and environmental cues as a compass, migrating salmon return here. This is the gateway to Crystal Springs Creek.

2. BRANNEN RESTORATION SITE
   This site was once a private residence. Thanks to the work of several agencies, the site was transformed into a natural area. In 2012 new culverts were installed at SE Umatilla St. and SE Tenino St. to improve fish passage. In 2016, the CSP added native trees, shrubs, and perennial plants to improve the habitat.

3. SE 21ST AVENUE - SE UMATILLA TO SE TACOMA
   Here Crystal Springs Creek flows alongside SE 21st Ave. Swales on Tacoma manage stormwater and improve water quality. Carefully cross Tacoma to follow the creek along the pedestrian and bike path.

4. SE 21ST AVENUE - SE TACOMA TO SE SPOKANE
   Here a footpath follows the creek. See the interpretive sign at SE 21st Ave. and SE Spokane St. describing wildlife at the site.

5. WESTMORELAND PARK - SOUTH
   Westmoreland Park features several bridges over the creek, wildlife viewing, a nature-based play area, and other recreational activities. Prior to urbanization this area was a broad wetland covering both sides of what is now SE McLoughlin Blvd. This area has been used as a dairy farm, an airstrip, and since the 1930s, a park. Starting in 2013, the crumbling concrete along the creek was removed and native plantings added, providing a more natural setting.

6. WESTMORELAND PARK - NORTH
   In 2013-2014 a major restoration changed the creek. Following removal of the large, shallow in-stream pond, summertime warming of creek decreased, which improved the habitat for wildlife. A wetland area and riparian buffer deter the over-population of waterfowl, and a new trail and boardwalk provide opportunities for wildlife viewing.

7. WESTMORELAND'S UNION MANOR
   On the grounds of the prominent seven-story Westmoreland's Union Manor, community-led restoration efforts continue to remove invasive plants and improve habitat along the banks of the creek. A pollinator garden was established in 2011.

8. BYBEE BRIDGE
   Take in views of the creek, the Eastmoreland Golf Course, and the city. To improve fish passage, the undersized culverts at SE Bybee Blvd. and SE Glenwood St. were replaced. To the north, in 2012, culverts were replaced under SE McLoughlin Blvd., the TriMet light rail tracks, and the Union Pacific Railroad.

9. SE 28TH AVENUE /EASTMORELAND GOLF COURSE
   In 2017 the Portland City Council named Crystal Springs Creek the city's first "Salmon Sanctuary." Along with this recognition, a grant was awarded the CSP to restore a portion of the creek that flows through Eastmoreland Golf Course.

10. CRYSTAL SPRINGS RHODODENDRON GARDEN
    View some of the springs that contribute to Crystal Springs Creek at the popular botanical garden. The garden contains a man-made lake where a fish ladder allows passage up to the lake and springs. View wildlife along the pathways and bridges on the garden grounds. An admission fee is required on certain days.

11. SE 28TH AVENUE / LOWER REED CANYON
    At the western edge of the Reed College campus, Crystal Springs Creek crosses SE 28th Ave. through a culvert. East of the culvert, the stream's meander was restored and large wood and swales were added to capture and treat stormwater. Restoration efforts undertaken by numerous partners have attracted adult salmonids back upstream and encouraged research and educational opportunities.

12. REED CANYON & FISH LADDER
    Walk along the shaded crystal clear water within the Reed Canyon, where native plant communities have been reintroduced. In 2001, Reed College constructed a fish ladder. For the first time since the turn of the 20th century, migrating salmon can now access the cool, clean headwaters of Crystal Springs Creek.

13. REED LAKE & HEADWATER SPRINGS
    A series of boardwalks allow easy viewing of stream and lake. The headwater springs that form Reed Lake serve as rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids, which need a safe place to grow before entering the swift-flowing lower stream system. The canyon has always been a prominent part of the Reed College campus, and in recent years has become an important resource for educational curricula as well.

Experience Crystal Springs Creek

This walking tour is about experiencing Crystal Springs Creek—perhaps Portland's most enchanting waterway. While less than three miles long, Crystal Springs Creek is a striking example of how a healthy urban creek can be a prominent feature of a vibrant community.

Crystal Springs Creek is a unique natural resource. Its spring-fed waters are cool, clean, and consistent year-round. Its uppermost origins in Reed Canyon reveal a pristine environment in the heart of a major city. The confluence is at Johnson Creek Park, where the clear waters of Crystal Springs contrast with the more turbid Johnson Creek.

Along Crystal Springs Creek there is wildlife—nearly 100 species of birds, scores of mammals, countless native plants, and, most remarkably, increasing salmon population—and there is human life, with homes, businesses, schools, a golf course, transit, parks, and much more.

As you follow this walking tour, think about what you see, hear, smell, and feel. Consider where you are and what a rare opportunity it is to explore this diverse environment in the middle of Portland. This is the Crystal Springs experience!

Birds

There are nearly 100 bird species present in the watershed. Look for these common birds:

- ☐ Bald Eagle
- ☐ Canada Goose
- ☐ Mallard
- ☐ Wood Duck
- ☐ Great Blue Heron
- ☐ Osprey
- ☐ Anna's Hummingbird
- ☐ Belted Kingfisher
- ☐ Downy Woodpecker
- ☐ Northern Flicker
- ☐ Steller's Jay
- ☐ Barn Swallow
- ☐ Black-capped Chickadee
- ☐ Cedar Waxwing
- ☐ Yellow-rumped Warbler
- ☐ Spotted Towhee
- ☐ Song Sparrow
- ☐ Dark-eyed Junco
- ☐ Red-winged Blackbird

Other Wildlife (* introduced)

- ☐ Black-tailed Deer
- ☐ Townsend's Mole
- ☐ Bats (several species)
- ☐ American Beaver
- ☐ Nutria*
- ☐ Common Muskrat
- ☐ Eastern Fox Squirrel*
- ☐ Raccoon
- ☐ Coyote
- ☐ Mink
- ☐ River Otter
- ☐ Striped Skunk
- ☐ Northwestern Salamander
- ☐ Long-toed Salamander
- ☐ Red Legged Frog
- ☐ Pacific Tree Frog
- ☐ Northwestern Garter Snake
- ☐ Floater Mussels
- ☐ *Corbicula* clams*
- ☐ Signal Crayfish
- ☐ Western Painted Turtle
- ☐ Western Swallowtail Butterfly

Salmon Life Cycle

A healthy creek provides the habitat that salmon need to thrive: shade, cold water, good water quality, clean spawning gravels, food, and large wood and boulders in the creek. As you walk along the creek, look for signs of a healthy watershed.

Four members of the salmon family (salmonids) and Pacific lamprey spend part of their life cycle in Crystal Springs Creek: Steelhead and Cutthroat trout, Coho and Chinook salmon. Of these, only Cutthroat spend their entire lives in freshwater, while the other three salmonids and Pacific lamprey migrate to the Pacific Ocean before returning to their original spawning grounds. Here is an overview of the salmonid lifecycle:

1. Sac-Fry develop from eggs laid in stream gravel, then transform into fry and begin to feed in sheltered areas.

2. Fry become parrs, which inhabit freshwater then migrate downstream to estuaries.

3. Parrs lose their distinctive markings and grow into **smolts**, which migrate towards estuaries as they adapt to salt water.

4. Adults inhabit the Pacific Ocean for 2-6 years, then begin migrating home to fresh water.

5. Spawning adults develop distinctive coloration and features as they return to spawning areas, lay eggs, and die.

Plant & Wildlife Checklist

How many plants can you identify on your walk today?

Stop. Look. Listen. Do you see signs of wildlife?

Freshwater mussels are the most endangered wildlife in North America. Crystal Springs Creek is home to thousands of native Floater mussels.

Plants

In addition to the beautiful ornamental plants to be seen in the Rhododendron Garden and elsewhere, numerous native plants line the banks of Crystal Springs Creek. The following are among the most common:

- ☐ Sword Fern
- ☐ Western Red Cedar
- ☐ Douglas Fir
- ☐ Skunk Cabbage
- ☐ Western Trillium
- ☐ Pacific Willow
- ☐ Red Alder
- ☐ Oregon Grape
- ☐ Pacific Bleeding Heart
- ☐ Douglas Spirea
- ☐ Red-osier Dogwood
- ☐ Oregon Ash
- ☐ Common Snowberry
- ☐ Salmonberry

Crystal Springs Creek Walking Tour

Crystal Springs Creek at Johnson Creek Park

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
CITY OF PORTLAND

Crystal Springs PARTNERSHIP

CONNECT + PROTECT + RESTORE

Crystal Springs Partnership

The Crystal Springs Partnership (CSP) is a group of neighbors, agency partners, and organizations who believe that Crystal Springs Creek is an extraordinary urban waterway. The Partnership's mission is to re-establish and maintain healthy native salmon runs in Crystal Springs Creek through community collaboration, education, advocacy, and restoration.

GET INVOLVED – GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY

- Volunteer with a local watershed group
- Attend a Naturescaping or Rain Garden workshop
- Turn your backyard into wildlife habitat
- Plant native plants and remove invasive ones
- Eliminate chemical use on your property

Johnson Creek Watershed Council

We are in a cooperative relationship with the Johnson Creek Watershed Council.

www.jcwc.org

Visit our website to learn about the creek, sign up for our mailing list, or make a donation.

www.crystalspringspartnership.org

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