



# Round Lake Loop Interpretive Trail Guide

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This guide describes various water related features around Round Lake which correspond to numbered trail-side posts.

The 1.2 mile loop trail has short sections of moderately steep terrain and crosses a dam with hand rails where children should be closely supervised.

The kiosk at the interpretive trail's starting point presents a more comprehensive picture of both Round and Lacamas Lakes, their watersheds and history, and what you can do to help protect water quality.

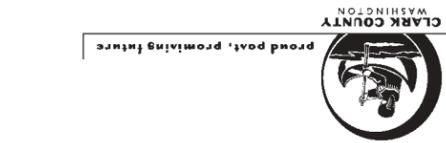
After following the interpretive trail, take a second look at the more detailed kiosk information to see how nature and humans influence lakes and their watersheds.

The first post is about 500 feet to the right (south) when looking at the kiosk from the main paved trail, just beyond where the trail changes to gravel.

Recycled cedar posts were used to mark this interpretive trail.

After finishing the trail, please return this trail guide to the kiosk box for others to use.

**Voice** (360) 397-2000, **Relay** 711 or (800) 833-6388,  
**Fax** (360) 397-6165, **E-mail** ADA@clark.wa.gov.



Funded by the  
Clark County Clean Water Program

The Clark County Clean Water Program helps fund and implement a federally required mandate to reduce the amount of pollution in our waterways. For more information about the program or this trail guide: Call Clark County Clean Water Program at (360) 397-6118, extension 4345; Email [cleannwater@clark.wa.gov](mailto:cleannwater@clark.wa.gov); Or, check out the Clean Water Program on the Clark County website at [www.clark.wa.gov](http://www.clark.wa.gov)

References used for this guide are from the following publications:

Field Guide to the Birds of North America, National Geographic Society

Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians by Robert C. Stebbens

Fish, An Enthusiast's Guide, by Peter B. Moyle

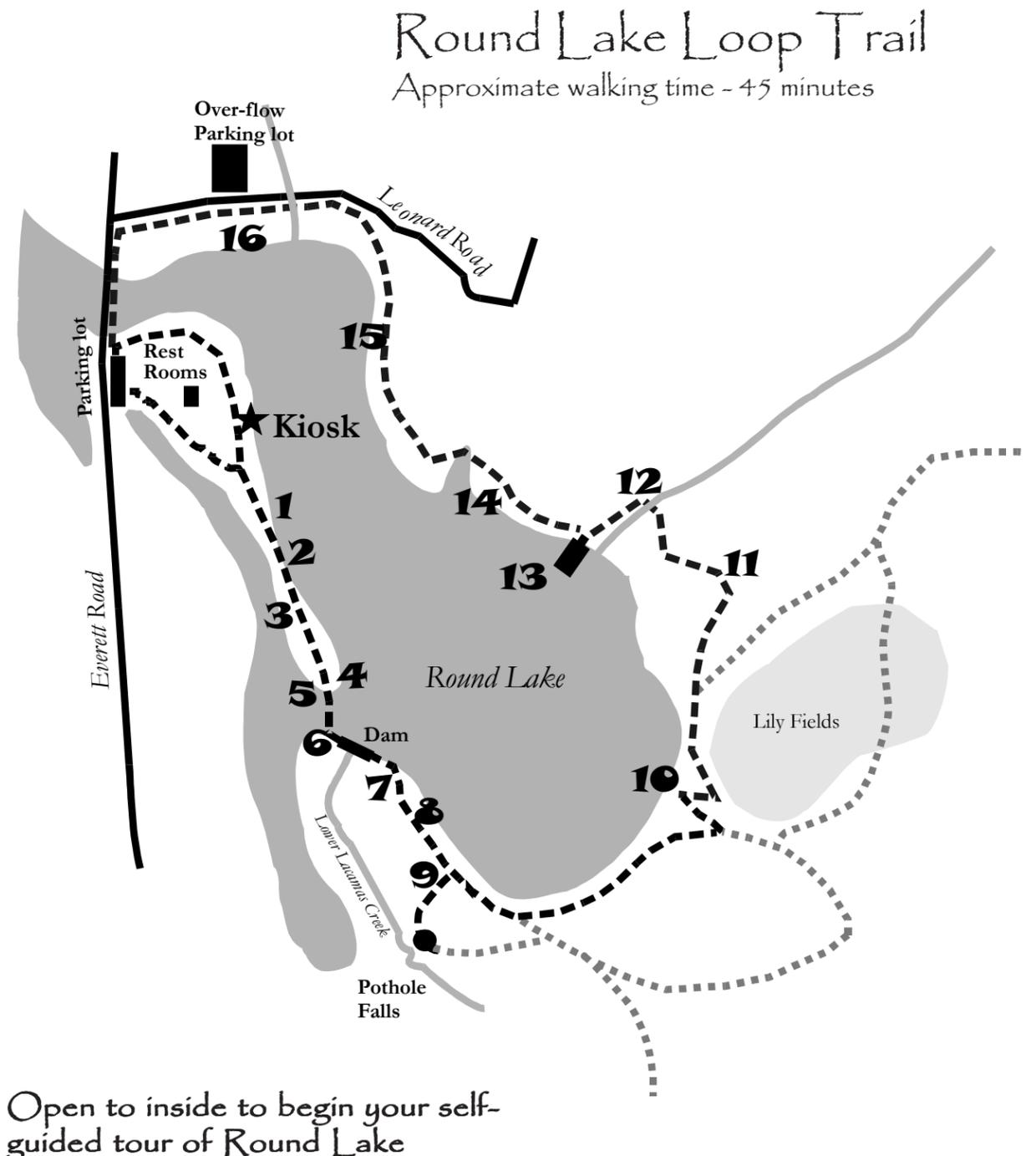
Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast, by Jim Pojar and Andy Mackinnon

Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest, by Hitchcock, Cronquist, Ownbey, and Thompson

Feel free to keep this trail guide. Otherwise, please return it to the box located at the kiosk. Thank you!

Continued from inside....

your right to 26-acre Round Lake on your left. Continue on the left shoulder of Leonard Road, then turn left (south) at the intersection with Everett Road and follow the gravel shoulder across the pedestrian walkway on the east side of the highway bridge. Turn left onto the paved trail into the Park and follow it back to the kiosk to learn more about the lakes.



## Round Lake Loop Trail

Approximate walking time - 45 minutes

Open to inside to begin your self-guided tour of Round Lake

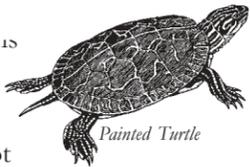
**1** Healthy lake-side (riparian) trees, such as these Douglas Fir and Western Red Cedar, protect the shoreline from erosion, provide wildlife habitat, and create shade to help keep the water cool. These buffer areas also filter out pollutants before they reach the water. As you



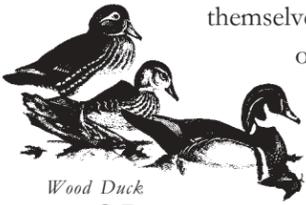
Western Red Cedar

**2** The exposed tree roots on these steep slopes near the lake's edge suggest recent soil erosion. This erosion has been accelerated by heavy foot traffic that compacts soils and damages plants. Please be careful and tread lightly near the shore.

**3** This waterbody, Mill Pond, is held back by a dam across an old natural side channel. Its water is sent through a 7,000 foot aqueduct to the paper mill in downtown Camas. However, it also provides valuable wildlife habitat. Waterfowl and turtles warm themselves in the sun while resting on the dead trees rising out of the pond's water.

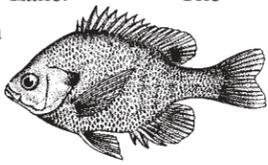


Painted Turtle



Wood Duck

**4** To your right is a rotating fish screen and the main dam on Round Lake. The large, self-cleaning mesh drum helps prevent fish and debris from entering Mill Pond through the channel connecting it to Round Lake. Please do not damage the sunfishes' spawning nests which are scooped out in the nearby shallows. The log boom in front of the dam catches large floating debris that might otherwise block the dam's spillway.



Bluegill Sunfish

**5** The diverse aquatic plant community under the water's surface provides habitat for insects, amphibians, reptiles, and fish. Look here and elsewhere on the lake for common aquatic plant leaf shapes to help identify them: South American Waterweed's (*Elodea densa*) short, dense leaves attached to long flowing stems; Pond Weed's (*Potamogeton*) oblong submerged leaves; Waterlilies (*Nuphar polysepalum*) oval, heart-shaped floating leaves; and Coontail's (*Ceratophyllum demersum*) very thin, thread-like pointed leaves in dense whorls resembling a tail.



Waterweed

Water Lily



Pond Weed



Coontail



**After crossing over the wooden plank foot bridge spanning the channel between Round Lake and Mill Pond (next to the fish screen) turn left at the trail intersection and follow the lake's shore about 100 feet to the beginning of the main dam.**

**6** You are about to cross Round Lake's main dam, built in 1938, below which flows lower

Lacamas Creek. The newer concrete buttresses on each side of the dam and the emergency overflow you just walked past help ensure the dam's safety during flooding periods. The hand-operated gate valves in the center of the dam control the lake's surface height and the amount of water released over the spillway.

**7** Looking out from this platform, the bottom of the dam shows the height of the natural lake outflow prior to the twelve foot rise in the lake's level caused by the dam. Evidence of scouring and broken off chunks of Troutdale Formation bedrock below the dam testify to the erosive power of water over time. The cool, moist microclimate generated by the outflow promotes the lush vegetation clinging to the steep sides of this natural ravine.

**8** The canopy of trees here provides a cooler, darker microclimate for shade-tolerant plants like mosses, ferns, shrubs, and understory trees, such as vine maple, which in turn help to protect the shoreline areas.

**9** Take a sharp right turn here and follow the side-trail about 400 feet to view the "potholes" from the fenced overlook (return on the same trail). Fast swirling water carries loose rocks which grind holes in the softer Troutdale Formation.



Vine Maple

**Please stay to the left and on the main trail as you go through the remaining trail intersections.**

**10** This massive boulder's rounded surface and huge size suggest it was rolled along by enormous, extremely fast moving flows. Most likely it was carried to this area over 12,000 years ago by the prehistoric Missoula Floods. These recurring floods originated in Montana's Rocky Mountains when advancing glaciers dammed rivers, backing up volumes of water on the scale of the present day Great Lakes. The rising water behind these ice dams eventually caused them to float and rapidly break apart, suddenly releasing gigantic volumes of water, ice, and rocks. The tremendous flood waters rushed through the Columbia Gorge, exiting as a wall of water over 500 feet high and moving at 50 miles per hour. After leaving the narrow Gorge, the flood waters slowed and dropped many similarly large boulders near its mouth.

**Please turn left at the next trail intersection.**

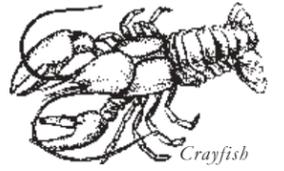
**11** This second-growth forested ravine shows how running water has helped shape the landscape as it cuts down through the volcanic basalt outcrop which can be seen above to the right. This diverse landscape provides upland habitat for a variety of wildlife.

**12** During the wet season, runoff from rain and nearby springs flows across the surface on this steep section of the trail. Wooden waterbars reduce erosion and sediment by guiding water off the trail, where it is filtered by vegetation before entering the small stream below. The stream captures



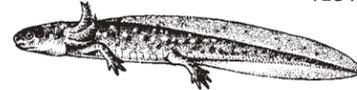
Raccoon

atmospheric oxygen as it tumbles down this ravine, benefiting aquatic organisms in the stream and lake, such as crayfish and salamanders. During the dry season, most of the water in small tributary streams like this one comes from groundwater. Because this water may enter the ground a great distance away from the lake, it is important to keep groundwater clean throughout the watershed.



Crayfish

**Continue down the hill and take the short side trail onto the viewing platform extending into the lake.**



Rough Skinned Newt / Salamander

**13** Seasonal changes in the appearance of the lake can be seen from this viewing platform. During the wet season, the lake water is cloudy with fine suspended sediment that originated from erosion in the watershed. During the dry season, the greenish color of the lake is from millions of microscopic algae feeding on the rich nutrients in the water. These algae and other larger plants form the base of the lake's food web. They are fed upon by microscopic animals, insects, and snails which are eaten by fish, which in turn are eaten by birds, mammals, and humans.

**14** The bridge over this wetland allows you to get a close-up view of a wetland plant community without getting wet. Here you may see the following plants: tall Common Cattail (*Typha latifolia*) with long strap-like leaves and brown spike flowers during the summer; grasslike Common Rush (*Juncaceae*) with round cross-sections and sharp pointed tips; and Common Duckweed (*Lemnaceae*) consisting of many tiny circular plant bodies floating on the water surface.

**15** Leaning out over and floating on the lake are several large fallen trees. These snags enrich the lake habitat by providing perches for birds of prey and waterfowl as well as cover for fish. When the lake is very low you may see the top of a few old-growth tree stumps, hinting at how much smaller the lake was before it was dammed. Off to your right, you'll see a recently formed sediment delta gradually filling in a portion of the lake from eroded soil carried by a small tributary stream. It is covered by some of the same plants seen in the wetland.



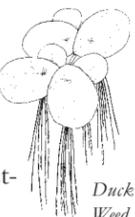
Common Rush



Great Blue Heron



Cattail



Duck Weed

**The gravel trail ends a short distance ahead after you go up the small grade. Please turn left (west) following along Leonard Road to the next post, on your left opposite the gravel parking lot.**

**16** The channel in front of you was deepened over a hundred years ago to both increase the ability to transport logs on the lakes and provide more water for the paper mill in Camas. Water flows from 296-acre Lacamas Lake on

**Continued on back.....**