

Self-Guided Neighborhood Tree Tour

Created by Bhopes Bassi

Neighborhood: Kelsey Creek Park and Farm

Starting point: Kelsey Creek Park and Farm parking lot at 410 130th Place SE

Summary/Theme: Introduction to plant and animal ecosystem in and around Kelsey Creek Park and Farm.

Kelsey Creek Farm Park in Bellevue is a largely overlooked gem. While the park is tucked in the heart of neighborhoods, it feels like an isolated country woods experience. You may have the impression of having traveled back in time as you move from the modern parking lot to a more rural feel as you hike into the forest. Kelsey Creek is Seattle's largest

watershed. It runs right down the middle of the park, providing habitat for spawning Salmon, Peamouth and for an abundant population of migratory and resident birds. All lifeform here depends on and contributes to each other and the park is a rich ecosystem. Bring your binoculars along if you also want to watch birds on this tour.





BELLEVUE NEIGHBORHOOD TREE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

This tree tour was developed by one of Bellevue's Neighborhood Tree Ambassador volunteers. The goal of the Neighborhood Tree Ambassador program is to help build community support for trees in Bellevue.



Trees are an important part of our community because they provide significant health and environmental benefits. Trees:



- Remove pollutants from the air and water
- Reduce stress and improve focus
- Lower air temperature
- Pull greenhouse gases from the atmosphere
- Reduce flooding and erosion caused by rain


Bellevue has a goal to achieve a 40% tree canopy across the entire city. As of 2017, we are at 37%. Around two-thirds of Bellevue's existing tree canopy is in residential areas. By preserving and planting trees in residential areas, Bellevue's community members can make a big difference in helping to reach the 40% tree canopy goal.

For more information about trees in Bellevue or the Neighborhood Tree Ambassador program, please visit BellevueWA.gov/trees.

If you have questions or would like to share feedback about this tour, please email trees@bellevuewa.gov.





Stop #	Landmark	Discussion	Photo
1	Parking Lot entrance – Yellow Birch	<p>Welcome to the Tree Tour of Kelsey Creek Park. We will start by looking at trees near the park entrance and in the parking lot. Right where you enter the Kelsey Creek Park, there is a Yellow Birch tree next to stop sign. As you enter the parking area, you will see Silver Maple tree near parking slots.</p> <p>Yellow Birch is a long-lived (typically 150 years) deciduous tree native to north-eastern North America and gets its name from the yellowish bronze color of the bark which peels off in fine horizontal stripes. The leaves are small but have a beautiful pointy pattern all along the edge.</p> <p>The tree is used for lumber.</p>	 



1	Parking Lot entrance - Silver Maple	<p>Silver Maple is a maple species native to eastern and central US, and southeastern Canada. It is a deciduous tree and grows along waterways and in wetlands leading to colloquial name of Water Maple.</p> <p>Silver Maple supports animal life directly in many ways. Its buds are primary source of food for squirrels during spring. Its seeds are a food source for squirrels, chipmunks, and birds. The bark can be eaten by beaver and deer. The trunk cavity provides shelter to squirrels, owls, raccoons, and woodpeckers. The leaves serve as a food source for butterflies and moth.</p> <p>The tree has been used by Native American tribes for various purposes. They used the sap of the tree to make sugar, as medicine and in bread. The Mohegan tribe uses the sap for cough medicine.</p>	 
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2	Picnic Shelter	<p>As you walk into the park, you will see a picnic shelter in front of you. This shelter can be rented from the city.</p> <p>There are many trees around the shelter which provide shade and cold air to people coming here for picnic, reunions, religious and ethnic gatherings etc.</p> <p>Explore the trees around the picnic area and match the leaves, barks and cones with the photos provided. If branches are high, look for leaves and cones fallen under the tree.</p>	 A photograph of a picnic shelter in a park. The shelter is a small, open-sided structure with a dark roof and stone walls. It is situated on a grassy area, surrounded by several large, mature trees with dense green foliage. The scene is captured from a low angle, showing the shelter and the surrounding trees in a natural setting.
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2	Picnic shelter – Norway Spruce	<p>Here you will see:</p> <p>Norway Spruce is an evergreen tree native to Europe but grows well in Pacific Northwest. Its needles are bottle brush shaped; cones are reddish orange with smoothly rounded scales.</p> <p>It is widely used as Christmas tree. Every Christmas, the city of Oslo gifts a Norway Spruce each to cities of London, Washington D.C. and Edinburg to be placed at most central locations of the cities. This is mainly a sign of gratitude by Norway for the help received by these countries during World War II.</p>	    <p>Norway Spruce</p>
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2	Picnic shelter- Scotch Pine	<p>Scotch Pine is another evergreen tree that is native to Eurasia but grows well in Pacific Northwest. Cones have a rhombus shaped pattern on the scales. The cones open in Spring giving them a beautiful blossomed flower shaped look.</p> <p>Scotch pine is used as Christmas tree and was the most popular Christmas tree in America until 1980s but other trees like Douglas-fir, Fraser fir are much more popular now. The tree is used to produce paper and timber.</p>	 	 
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2	Picnic shelter- Western Redcedar	<p>Western Redcedar is a tree native to Pacific Northwest. It has flat scaly needles, reddish, stringy bark and J-shaped branches which stoop down and then go back up again.</p> <p>Western Redcedar has historically played an important role in lives of the native tribes from coastal Oregon to southeast Alaska. They used the tree for constructing houses, utensils, instruments, canoes, and many other ornamental and ceremonial objects.</p>	
3	Restrooms and bridge over Creek	<p>On one side of the walkway around the picnic shelter, you will see the creek. Walk next to creek into the park and you will see restrooms, and a foot bridge over the creek to your left.</p> <p>Creek is home to variety of fish including Salmon and Peamouth, both of which reproduce in Creek. Various species of Salmon only return to Creek to reproduce, so they bring in lots of nutrients from the sea with them which helps trees. A study on Salmon in Alaska</p>	

		<p>showed that number of Salmon returning to freshwater from sea was positively correlated to amount of nitrogen in the soil near freshwater.</p> <p>Fish also serve as a food source to birds, e.g. Great Blue Heron feeds on Peamouth fish eggs during breeding season. The city has another program on Peamouth fish where you get to observe its breeding, so check that out if interested. So, fish, trees and birds are all interdependent on each other for food, habitat and nutrients.</p> <p>Let us look at some of trees around restrooms. You will see American Sweetgums, American Sycamore and Scotch Pine.</p>	 
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3	Restrooms and bridge over creek – American Sweetgum	<p>American Sweetgums: The American Sweetgum is native to the eastern US and Mexico. Its leaves are star-shaped with five lobes and look beautiful as they change colors in Fall. The tree's fruit is ball shaped with spikes and filled with a gum like resin that can harden and be used for chewing gum. Hence the name American Sweetgum. The tree is also used for lumber.</p>	 
3	Restrooms and bridge over creek – American Sycamore	<p>American Sycamore: The American Sycamore is native to certain parts of North and Central America. Its bark is broken into plate like scales which falls away giving way to fresh bark from inside. Its main use is lumber.</p>	 

4	Kelsey Creek Farm	<p>As you cross the bridge, you will see two barns and the entrance to the Kelsey Creek farm. The farm is closed right now due to COVID-19. City hosts many farm animals like cows, hogs, chickens, goats, rabbits, ducks, and sheep in the farm for educational purposes. The barn and the surrounding area have a rich history. In early 1900s, the area was used for timber mining, then the property changed hands and became a dairy farm, then after second world war the property again changed hands and became a farm to raise Hereford beef cattle. Some of the land was bought by the city in 1968-1969, the two barns were preserved, and the farmhouse became the headquarters of city's Park and Recreation Department in 1969. Check this document for detailed history of the farmhouse and the barn.</p> <p>On your left and across the barns, you will see a hill with many trees. Almost all the trees on this hill are Douglas Fir but you will also see Bigleaf Maple and European mountain-ash.</p>	
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4	Kelsey Creek Farm – Douglas Fir	<p>Douglas Fir is an evergreen tree native to Pacific Northwest. Douglas Fir can be easily identified with three pointed things coming out from under cone scales.</p> <p>A single Douglas fir can sequester 14 tons of carbon in first 100 years. Older trees store more carbon since they have lived longer than younger trees. Younger trees however absorb carbon dioxide at a faster rate because they produce food more quickly than older trees.</p>	  
4	Kelsey Creek Farm – Big Leaf Maple	<p>Big Leaf Maple is a maple native to North America and is mainly found along pacific coast from Alaska to California. It has the biggest leaves of any maple; the size of its leaves will immediately catch your eye.</p> <p>Its fruit is eaten by squirrels and grosbeaks.</p> <p>The tree is mainly used for lumber.</p>	

4	Kelsey Creek Farm – European mountain-ash	<p>European mountain-ash can be spotted by clusters of small red pomes(fruits) and is mainly used as ornamental tree.</p> <p>The tree is famous in various folklore around the world. For example, in English folklore twigs of this tree were believed to ward off evil spirits.</p>		
5	Your choice -- Back to parking lot or beautiful nature trails?	<p>We saw a lot of trees and learnt about many different animals in the park, so you can choose to end the tour here – climb down the hill towards left and cross the bridge over the creek to parking lot.</p> <p>If you want to continue, then climb down the hill towards right and discover the beauty of Kelsey Creek Park's nature trails. These trails provide serene country woods experience so close to downtown Bellevue.</p> <p>You should now be able to identify most of the trees you encounter on the trails. Big Leaf Maple, Western</p>	 <p data-bbox="1272 1338 1648 1377">One of the trails in the park</p>	

Redcedar and Douglas Fir are the most abundant trees on these trails.

If you have your binoculars, you will also be able to see incredibly beautiful birds on these trails. Rufous-sided Towhee, Winter Wrens, Belted Kingfisher and Great Blue Heron are some of the beautiful birds that you will get to see here.



Rufous-sided Towhee



Winter Wrens



Belted Kingfisher