

What to look for on the Woodland Trail

Entire Trail	The Woodland Trail will take you through various sub habitats. From Douglas Fir forest to Oak groves and back along where the forests meet the prairie. Side trails to points of interest have blue flags .
Westside of Trail	Head south and stay to the right. Miners Lettuce with edible leaves and flowers are along the forest edge.
	As you go into the cooler Douglas Fir forest see the large ant hills made from the fir needles. The ants build this large mounds to regulate heat. Don't disturb them. Although the ants do not sting they do bite, but it is not very painful. They can spray formic acid which is a mild acid to repel predators. The acid smell is a bit like vinegar. Do you see any flattened knocked down ant hills ? Those were probably visited by bears looking for larvae.
	Near the ant hills look for Bleeding Heart plants. Ants are responsible for another method of seed dispersal. Some plants have a sweet or oil rich substance attached to the seed .The ants feed this to their larva and discard the seed. Trillium and Bleeding Heart, among others, are ant plants.
	As you go up a hill you will transition from woodland into meadow. Look for snags maybe it was an old shore pine that died or a Douglas Fir that has been girdled.
	Between the snags and conifers is part of an old unpaved airstrip which has been restored to prairie that is now used by butterflies instead of planes.
	Continuing south back through the woods you will find a marked side trail from here you can view a large circle of oaks. This is where an oak tree died and was replaced by small oaks growing up from the roots of the original tree. When an oak is damaged or killed by fire sprouts grow up around the original tree. Eventually it becomes a large multi trunked tree.
Southwest corner	From a turn in the trail you transition into the Gary Oak woodland. Conifers are girdled or removed to make room for the oaks as a tool in restoration. Oaks are slower growing and need more sunlight. Native Americans periodically burned to decrease the conifers. Controlled burns are also used in restoration.

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	Look for birds nesting in branches, cavities or bird boxes.
Southeast side of Trail	Look for large galls on the oak branches. These large galls are sometimes called “oak apples”. They are green when formed in the spring. By summer they become light brown, later will be sooty with mold. The galls are rich in oak tannins which can be extracted and used in inks or dyes.
	Look for marble size galls which have a modeled brown color and are on oak leaves
	Each different type of galls is formed when the oak is bitten by a different type of gall wasp. The saliva of the wasp stimulates the plant to produce the gall. This modifies the plant’s normal response to injury, resulting in food and shelter for the larva.
	Deer, elk bear and many smaller animals use the acorns as a food source. Look for smooth patches in the bark where the elk and deer have rubbed their antlers on the young oak trunks
	Look for other shrubs and trees mixed in with the oaks:
	Indian Plum shrub are early to fruit . Many northwest tribes ate the small plums fresh. They were also cooked or dried. Twigs and bark were used to make medicines. They flowers are an early spring nectar for hummingbirds. Later in the summer the fruits provide food for other birds and animals.
	Oregon Ash tree has yellow/green flowers in the spring and bright orange berries in the fall. The flowers of the Oregon ash come out before the leaves and look very much like lichen on its bark. The gray clusters are lichens.
	The Serviceberry shrub blooms white in May. Its berries were a staple in the diet of many native peoples, often used in pemmican. Elk, deer and birds browse its branches for food.
	Look for long thin black boxes on posts they are roost for bats which have lost much of the natural roosting habitat as old growth forest and dead trees have been cut down.
5 corners	At this intersection the picnic area will be to your left and around this area that you will see young oaks coming up.
	Continue west back to your parking area and look for prairie plants . Document what you see with pictures and upload to INaturalist when you get home. https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/prairie-appreciation-days