

Exploring, enjoying our own backyard for fitness sake

Moving Grays Harbor

By Maryann Welch

We live in a beautiful place with plenty of recreational opportunities. But sometimes we tend to take for granted what's in our own "backyard." I know I was surprised at the vast inventory of great walking places we have locally.

With school out soon and the official first day of summer coming next week, this is a great time to plan some fun activities for you and your family.

Our hope and goal here at the Grays Harbor Public Health and Social Services Department is that you have a very active summer. And, judging from the overwhelming response we've had from these columns, you are taking what I've said about activity to heart.

It's been great to hear that we've found a way to motivate quite a few people to get more active – whether it's been the one walk taken after reading the column or the person inspired to be more active every day.

So, today and next week we're going to simply list some great places for walks. You may want to clip and save these so that when your inspiration cools down as the summer heats up, you'll have a handy list of fun places to visit right here in Grays Harbor County.

To get the entire list, pick up one of our brochures, "Moving Grays Harbor." You can find them at city halls, parks and recreation offices, chamber of commerce offices, and doctor's offices throughout the Harbor. Or, you can pick up a copy here at our Department, 2109

Sumner Ave. in Aberdeen, or online at www.ghphss.org.

(Some of the trails are more easily accessible for wheelchairs, strollers and bikes. We've noted that at the end of each entry.)

Try Aberdeen's awesome trails

- **Basich Trailway:** 1.5 miles of paved trail from Cushing Street in South Aberdeen to Cosi Lions Park. This trail meanders through Pioneer Park and along the natural setting of Mill Creek. Park at Lions Park in Cosmopolis or Pioneer Park off Tilden Street in South Aberdeen. Accessible.
- **Chehalis River Trailway:** 1.65 miles of paved trail from Mill Street through South Aberdeen residential areas and along the Chehalis River, ending next to Highway 105. Park at the Mill Creek pump station (as you cross the Chehalis River Bridge entering South Aberdeen, take a right onto Marion Street and then a right onto Mill Street) to begin your walk. Accessible.
- **Morrison Riverfront Walkway:** 1.8 miles of paved trail from Guesthouse Inn & Suites to Lakeside Industries. Park at Guesthouse Inn & Suites, Wal-Mart, Gateway Plaza or Morrison Park to begin your walk. Accessible.
- **Stewart Park Trail:** .8 miles of rugged trail up and down hills and across bridges. Follow B Street north toward Wishkah Road. Take a left onto Valley Road. Follow trails from the parking lot.
- **Swano Lake Trails:** 2 miles of dirt trails that loop around Swano Lake on the Grays Harbor College campus. This trail has hills, bridges and interpretive signs. Park in the lower lot by the maintenance building and follow signs to the trailhead.
- **Sherwood Forest Trail:** Very rugged trail located off Bel Aire

Drive in Aberdeen. Turn onto Sherwood Lane; there is a sign at trailhead. Miles of terrain to explore.

- **SouthShore Mall:** This is a great place to walk on those rainy days that we get even in the summer. The mall opens at 7:30 a.m. Monday through Saturday to accommodate walkers. The inside corridor is a half mile per lap. Accessible.

Hoquiam has great walks too

- **Bowerman Basin Sandpiper Trail:** Located at the Hoquiam Airport. This trail offers great bird viewing along a wooden plank trail in west Hoquiam. Park near café to begin your walk.
- **Riverside Dike:** A 1.4-mile loop from the Hoquiam Farmers Market, across the Riverside Bridge, down Levee Street, across the Simpson Avenue Bridge, then across to the Farmers Market.
- **Sunset Memorial Park:** A popular walking area located off Grand Avenue in Hoquiam. Features miles of paved loop roads with gradual inclines and declines and very limited traffic. Abutting Sunset Park is **Elton Bennett Nature Walk**, which offers miles of rugged trails in a natural setting.

Little Cosmopolis is big on parks

- **Makarenko Park Trail:** 2 miles of gravel trails located in the woods between Bell Hill and Cemetery Hill. This is a great nature trail for walkers and joggers. Upon entering Cosi, turn north onto G Street and then take a left onto Altenau Street. Go up the hill until you get to Stanford Drive and follow the road to the right. It will dead-end at Makarenko Park.
- **Mill Creek Park Trail:** Cosi's most popular park. It's located on C Street just a few blocks past the school. This park offers miles of gravel

trails, both flat and graded along Mill Creek and around Mill Creek Pond.

For more information about these trails, contact Aberdeen Parks & Rec. at 537-3248 or

www.aberdeeenparksandrec.com/parks.htm; Hoquiam Parks and Rec. at 532-5700, ext. 240 or www.ci.hoquiam.wa.us or the City of Cosmopolis at 532-9230.

What's your fitness story?

YMCA to give away membership

Have these columns helped inspire you to get active? If so, we want to hear about it. Share your story with us and we'll enter your name into a drawing for a 1-year membership to the YMCA of Grays Harbor. (Thank you YMCA!)

Please e-mail your story to moving@co.grays-harbor.wa.us or call Wilma Weber @ 532-8631 x 483. Thanks for reading! Drawing will be June 30.

Mark Your Calendar

- **Quinault's Rainforest Bike Ride** is scheduled for June 24. The ride is a benefit for their cancer team and is 33 miles around the lake. The ride is level and fairly easy. (Don't let the mileage scare you, it's not a race!) Plan to pack a picnic lunch and a camera because there could be opportunities for wildlife pictures. For more information call 288-2368.

Maryann Welch is the director of Grays Harbor County's Public Health and Social Services Department.

If you have questions about becoming more active or have information about free or low-cost activity in the area, contact the health department at 532-8665 ext. 483, e-mail us at moving@co.grays-harbor.wa.us or visit our web site at www.ghphss.org.