



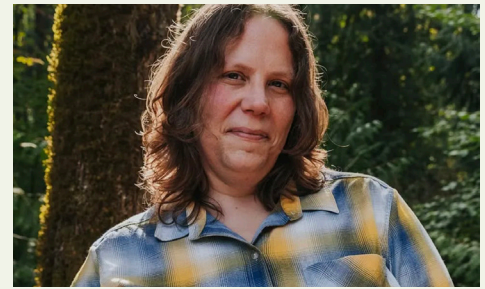
A DISABLED HIKER'S GUIDE TO 5 WASHINGTON STATE PARKS

LAKE SAMMAMISH

Lake Sammamish | Flaming Geyser | Federation Forest | Dash Point | Saltwater

This assessment and guide were written by Syren Nagakyrie of Disabled Hikers, with funding and collaboration from the Washington State Parks Foundation.





Syren Nagakyrie is the founder of Disabled Hikers, a nonprofit organization building disability community and justice in the outdoors. Syren grew up with multiple disabilities and encounters numerous barriers to outdoor recreation but has always found nature to be a place of belonging. As a long-time disabled activist and community builder, Syren is committed to building a movement of Disabled leadership in the outdoors. They are the author of *The Disabled Hiker's Guide to Northern California: outdoor adventures accessible by car, wheelchair, and foot* (2024) and *The Disabled Hiker's Guide to Western Washington and Oregon* (2022), both published by FalconGuides. They also work with parks, organizations, brands, and government agencies to improve access and belonging for disability community.

www.disabledhikers.com



The Washington State Parks Foundation's vision is to ensure a vibrant and inclusive state parks system for generations to enjoy. This guide to accessibility in five Washington State Parks was developed with the support and collaboration of the Washington State Parks Foundation.

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Lake Sammamish State Park

Overview

Lake Sammamish State Park is a day-use park on the south shore of Lake Sammamish, where Issaquah Creek and Tibbetts Creek flow into the lake. There are three primary areas at Lake Sammamish State Park:

- Meadow Shelter (formerly Kitchen Shelter),
- Tibbetts Beach, and
- Sunset Beach.

In addition to these three areas, there are soccer and softball fields. There is no directional signage once you enter the park, so make sure you check out the map before you arrive. Tibbetts Beach is on the left just past the ranger station, the Meadow Shelter (formerly Kitchen Shelter) is on the western end of the park, just past Tibbetts Beach, and Sunset Beach is at the end of the entrance road. While there are trails and paved paths that connect all of the areas in the park, none of the routes are fully wheelchair accessible so you may want to park at the location you plan to visit.

The Meadow Shelter (formerly Kitchen Shelter) features a reservable building with electrical outlets and a sink. The building is located about 100 feet from the parking lot along a sidewalk. There is also a large grassy area, several picnic tables, a paved loop trail, and access to the Orchard Trail and Homestead Trail.

Tibbetts Beach has several picnic tables and a few benches overlooking the lake, but it is the least accessible of the primary areas in the park. The paths that lead from the parking area and along the beach all have large cracks and root bumps, and narrow or steep sections. There is a concession building with



restrooms (that aren't wheelchair accessible) and a paved path that travels from the parking area along the lake and connects with Sunset Beach. There are several designated accessible parking spots, but the parking lot is very rough.

Sunset Beach has recently undergone major accessibility improvements and is a highlight of the state parks system in the region. There is ADA accessible parking, picnic tables and shelters, single-user restrooms, and a wide sidewalk and paved path that travels along the lake. It also provides access to a generally accessible wetlands trail.

Resources

Park phone number (425) 649-4275 | [State Park website](#)
[State Park Official Map](#) | [Virtual Park Tour](#)

Suggested Activities

Picnic and Play at Sunset Beach

There are three wheelchair accessible picnic tables at, and four new accessible picnic shelters at Sunset Beach. One picnic table is located at the east end of the parking area in front of a section of accessible parking. Another is next to the beach in front of the concession building. A third is approximately 0.25 miles west on the paved path (heading towards Tibbetts Beach along the shoreline). All of the picnic tables have an accessible grill that is 32" inches high. The picnic shelters have accessible counters, tables, and grills and are located on the east and west side of Sunset Beach, with paved access from the sidewalk.

The beach is sandy but has flat access from the sidewalk to the waterfront and would be accessible with a beach or all-terrain wheelchair. There is a clear line of sight from the sidewalk to the water, with several benches on the sidewalk along the beach. There is also a playground with an accessible surface and a picnic shelter and tables.

Tribal Connections

Lake Sammamish has been important to many tribes in the southern Salish Sea region since time immemorial. The Snoqualmie People had several villages along sqTawxTxTačuT (the traditional place name for the lake in Lushootseed). You can learn more about how the Snoqualmie Tribe is restoring culture and life back to Lake Sammamish at this [ArcGIS StoryMap](#).



A view of Lake Sammamish and the benches at Sunset Beach.



The picnic table at the east end of the Sunset parking area.

The paved trail from Sunset Beach to Tibbetts Beach is generally smooth and is the most accessible path in the park; it makes for a nice stroll or roll between the beaches.

Outdoors For All Foundation, an adaptive recreation program, operates free equipment rental and recreation programs out of the building at Sunset Beach. During the summer, you can rent adaptive bicycles, kayaks, paddleboards, and an all-terrain Action Trackchair.

What's Accessible?

PARKING

Meadow Shelter (formerly Kitchen Shelter): there are approximately 100 parking spots at the Meadow Shelter (formerly Kitchen Shelter). Two are designated accessible and one is van accessible; however, the parking spots are on a slope and the pavement is rough. There are cracks and dips in the surface between the parking lot and the sidewalk as well.

Tibbetts Beach: This is a large parking lot with 600 spots, but the surface is mostly cracked and uneven. There are eight accessible parking spots, including one van accessible spot all located at the end of the parking lot closest to the beach. There is a smooth, paved access route from the edge of the parking lot to a print map and sign that provides information about the trails, but the path is cracked and uneven beyond that point.

Sunset Beach: This is the largest parking lot in the park, there are over 2000 parking spaces on gravel or grass. There are six sections of ADA accessible parking, with paved spaces, access aisles, and accessible routes to the sidewalk.

RESTROOMS AND FACILITIES

Meadow Shelter (formerly Kitchen Shelter): There are gendered restrooms with an accessible stall with grab bars at the Kitchen Shelter, however the space in front of the single sink is only 32 inches wide, the soap dispenser is too high, and a trash can blocks access to the door.

Tibbetts Beach: Gendered restrooms are located in the concessions building. A narrow hallway leads to a heavy and narrow door. There are no accessible stalls.

Sunset Beach: There are gendered restrooms and changing areas located at the concession building; however they were closed at the time of this writing. There are four all gender, accessible family restrooms as well; two on each side of the building. These single restrooms have grab bars and child-size changing tables, with flush toilets and sinks. The restroom on the south side of the building (closest to the parking lot) next to the women's restroom and the restroom on the north side (closest to the lake) next to the men's restroom have the lightest doors to open. All of them have a 34 inch wide door.



Tibbetts Beach parking



One of the sections of accessible parking at Sunset Beach

Rotunda Shelter Restrooms: There is another restroom building between the Rotunda Shelter and the end of the parking lot at Sunset Beach. You have to cross a grass lawn to get to it from the Rotunda Shelter, or there is a paved accessible route from the Sunset Beach lot. However, the restroom does not have an accessible stall.

PICNIC AREAS AND SHELTERS

Meadow Shelter (formerly Kitchen Shelter): There are several picnic tables on paved pads scattered across the grassy area, but there are no paved accessible routes to them. The Western Kitchen Shelter is a large, enclosed building that fits 200 people in rows of chairs or 144 buffet style. The shelter has electricity and sinks; however I was unable to enter it during my visit. Access from the parking lot is rough, but there is a sidewalk that leads to the shelter.

Rotunda Shelter: This unique circular shelter has electrical outlets, a fire pit in the center, and picnic tables on a concrete pad; a few of them have accessible overhangs. However, the route to the shelter is over grass, and the concrete pad is surrounded by gravel and a honeycomb-like rubber material with a 1–2-inch lip onto the pad.

Tibbetts Beach: The most easily accessible picnic table at Tibbetts Beach is on the west end of the beach, along the trail that leads from Sunset Beach to Tibbetts Beach. It is located in the grass just off the path with a nice view of the lake. There is also a bench under a tree here. There is another picnic table on the left side when the trail forks to travel along Tibbetts Beach – this one has an accessible overhang and is close to the trail.

Sunset Beach: As described in the suggested activities section, there are several accessible picnic tables and shelters at Sunset Beach.



Salmonberry shelter at Sunset Beach



The Rotunda Shelter with a view of the transition between the grass and concrete pad.



The accessible picnic table along the Sunset Beach to Tibbetts trail.

TRAILS

There are over five miles of paths and trails in the park. There is directional signage at most trail intersections, but it's always good to carry a map. I recommend using one of the trail or map apps if you can, as the state park maps lack detail. Here are my recommendations:

Sunset Beach to Tibbetts Beach on the Cultural Native Plants Trail

0.8 mile round trip; flat; paved surface

Starting at Sunset Beach, head west (left facing the lake) on the concrete sidewalk. You will pass an accessible picnic table and shelter. Continue along the path with wetlands on either side. At the first trail fork at 0.2 miles near the accessible picnic table, go right. The sidewalk transitions to asphalt, with a couple of slight dips and rough patches, and continues at about five feet wide. Go right at the next fork and continue towards Tibbetts Beach. There will be picnic tables on the left side of the trail beneath large trees. On the right, there are numerous print interpretive signs on the fence – these signs are created by the Snoqualmie Tribe and feature drawings of native plants and their names in Lushootseed. The trail ends at Tibbetts Beach with the above-mentioned picnic table on the left and bench on the right. Note that the paved trails that fork off from here all have deep cracks and lifted sections that present a tripping hazard and would be difficult to cross with a wheelchair or walker.

Wetlands Interpretive Trail

0.6 mile round trip; flat; paved, sand, and boardwalk surface

Starting at Sunset Beach, head east (right facing the lake) on the concrete sidewalk. At the end, just past the kayak launch, continue straight onto the paved path. There is a four-inch-wide, half-inch-deep crack at the beginning of the trail, with about 28 inches of level clearance around it. The trail continues paved and six feet wide. There are several areas of slight cross-slope with a dip in the trail. There are also several places where the asphalt has collapsed on the lake side of the trail with two feet or more drop-off, and one crack across the trail with about 36 inches of clearance on the right. The pavement then transitions to natural surface for a few feet; it is firm sand but there are several dips and rolls. There are some very large cottonwood trees and views of the lake and the creek.

At 0.1 miles you reach a boardwalk with a 1.5 inch lip. The boardwalk is generally six feet wide and level with edge guards but can be a bit slick. You travel through a lush forest and wetland area surrounded by salmonberry and other plants. The boardwalk ends at a large overlook of Issaquah Creek and the lake.



The paved trail between Sunset and Tibbetts Beaches.



Where the Wetland Trail transitions to natural surface.



The overlook of Issaquah Creek at the end of the boardwalk

You can take a few steps down onto a natural surface path that travels a couple dozen feet out to the mouth of the creek.

Orchards Loop

This trail begins from the end of the Kitchen Shelter Area, but you have to take a cracked paved path or cross the grass lawn to get to it. The loop travels mostly through a field with a few wooded areas and a small orchard. It is generally flat, with the exception of one short, steep grade, but is mowed grass and very uneven with lots of dips, rolls, and holes and only one bench. If you are comfortable walking on that kind of surface, then there are lots of bird watching opportunities along the way.



A view of the Orchards Loop trail through mowed grass

Other Features

Maps and Signage: Most of the trails have directional signage – typically wooden poles with engraved trail names with arrows and mileage. There are print maps at the Tibbetts Beach trailhead and Orchard Loop trailhead.

Concession: The concession window at the Sunset Beach Café is 39 inches high. There are a few picnic tables in front of the concession area; two of them have an accessible overhang.

Trash cans: There are very few trash cans in the park. Garbage and recycle containers are located inside the Meadow Shelter. There are dumpsters in high traffic areas with covers that are difficult to open.

Water: There is an outdoor shower at Sunset Beach with three shower heads. They are each about 6 feet high with push button knobs at 38 inches high. There is one spigot with a turn handle at 28" high. There is a water fountain next to the restrooms, but they were not functioning at the time of this writing. There are water spigots at a few locations in the park but most of them are in the grass.

Cell service: The cell service is generally good.

Kayak launch: There is an accessible kayak launch at Sunset Beach. The concrete ramp has handrails and leads directly into the water. I could not find a transfer bench.

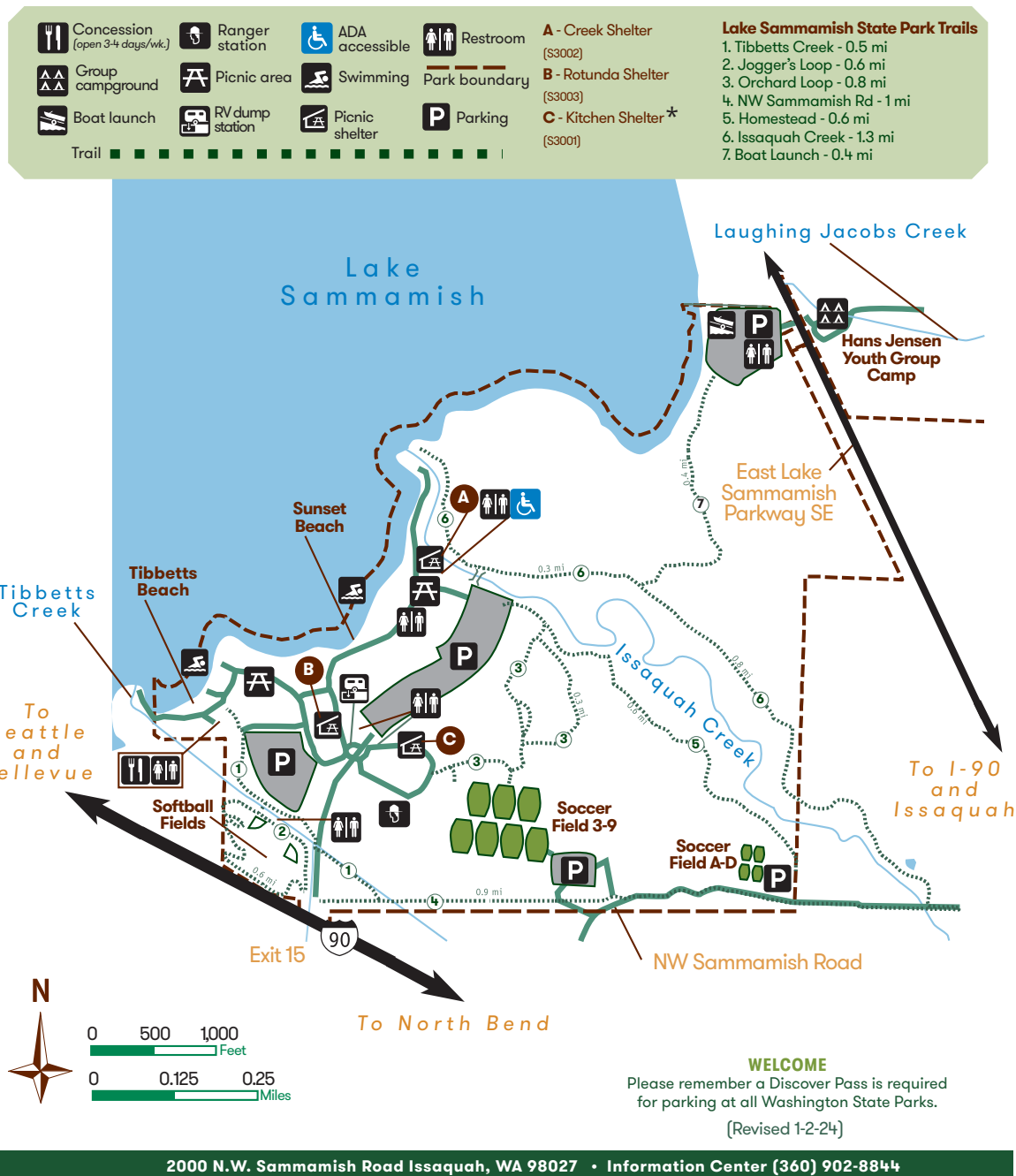


The accessible kayak launch into the lake.

Washington State Park Official Maps

Maps are current as of April 2025. Please visit www.parks.wa.gov for the most updated maps.

Lake Sammamish State Park



* The Kitchen Shelter has been renamed the Meadow Shelter.