Welcome

PARK RULES:
- PARK HOURS: 7:30am - 9:00pm or SUNSET whichever comes first.
- No Alcoholic Beverages
- No Weapons
- No Littering
- Pets Must Be On Leash
- Animal Waste Must Be Removed By Owner
- Parking Is Allowed In Designated Areas Only
- Solicitation Of Any Kind Is Prohibited

These and other park rules can be found under Lakewood Municipal Code (LMC) 08.76.000 Available at www.cityoflakewood.us
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Fort Steilacoom Park

FORT STEILACOOM STORY

The land that is now Fort Steilacoom Park has been a hunting and gathering ground, a Hudson’s Bay Company farm, a military base, a hospital farm and now a recreational area. The site was leased from the state for public use in 1970 and named Fort Steilacoom Park.

DISCOVERY TRAIL LEGEND

1. Hudson’s Bay Company
2. Farming Legacy
3. Patient Cemetery
4. Poultry Farm
5. Old Military Road
6. Chief Leschi’s Story
7. Prairie
8. Native Plants
9. Ornamental Plant History
10. Native Wildlife
11. Waughop Lake Geology & Plants
12. Hill Ward Memorial
13. Orchard
14. Ethnobotany

The Discovery Trail is a work in progress. For more information and educational material, visit www.discoverfortsteilacoom.com
This view shows the approximate locations of structures and landscape as they appeared in the early 1930’s. Each barn served a different purpose related to the farm’s animals, crops, or labor. Buildings to the far left were living quarters and the area seen at the far right was the chicken farm. The barns shown in color remained in place as the Discovery Trail was developed in 2010.
Farming Legacy at Fort Steilacoom Park

Farming Legacy

Farming on the park site began as early as 1844. The Sound Agricultural Company (a division of the Hudson's Bay Company) operated a farm managed by Joseph Heath.

In 1871 State funding for the Insane Asylum of Washington (now known as Western State Hospital) was scarce, so a small farm was created to provide food for the patients and staff.

By the early 1900's, the farm property was used for the production of crops, orchards, grazing areas, and pens for cows, chickens, turkeys, and pigs grown to about 200 acres. Barns were maintained to manage animal care and general farm maintenance.

In 1926 it was determined that the most productive crops were grown on a hill above Lake Waughop. Dr. Charles Taylor directed farm workers to regularly pump out lake silt and spread it over nearby hills. Crop yields quickly increased.

Labor for the farm was performed by hospital patients as part of their occupational therapy. Male patients tended fields and orchards, worked with livestock, and provided grounds maintenance. Female patients were responsible for canning produce, preserving seeds, and tending livestock.

At the height of the farm's productivity, 220 of the hospital's 840 acres were devoted to farm activities and included 70 acres of orchards and gardens, 60 acres for pigs and 90 acres for poultry and dairy. The patient staff was comprised of 150 full time and 90 seasonal workers.

With the advent of drug therapy, there was a reduction in the number of patients, their length of hospitalization and ability to perform certain tasks. This diminished the availability of workers and with outside labor too costly, the farm operation ceased in 1965.

Fort Steilacoom Park
Waughop Lake
Geology & Plants

Dr. John Waughop was superintendent of Western State Hospital from 1880 to 1897. Formally known as “Mud Lake”, the lake was renamed Waughop Lake after his death in honor of his dedication to the care and recovery of his patients. The surface area of Waughop Lake is approximately 33 acres with a mean depth of seven feet. The lake is fed by ground water springs. During the farming era, silt was siphoned out of the lake and distributed over the sand and gravel fields. This created fertile soil to help the Western State Hospital farm become productive.

**Carex species (Sedge)**
Native Habitat: Worldwide
Description: Grass-like plants with triangular solid stems and fibrous roots or rhizomes. Uses: The roots, seeds, and stem-bases are edible. The white inner-root is used in basketry.

**Western Spirea – Spiraea douglasii**
Native Habitat: Northern California north to Alaska
Description: Grows 5-6’ tall and wide in low, moist areas. Uses: Branches used to make brooms and to hang salmon for drying and smoking. Seeds have medicinal properties.

**Cattail – Typha latifolia**
Native Habitat: North America, Europe, Asia and Africa
Description: It grows in shallow fresh-water. Uses: Cattail has many uses including eight food products, three medicines and at least 12 other functional uses such as fuel alcohol, oil, wax and woven products.

**Cattail**

**Juncus species (Rush)**
Native Habitat: All wet regions of the world
Description: Grass-like plants with cylindrical or flattened solid stems. Uses: The stems are used to make rope, mats and baskets. Seeds are edible.

**Yellow Pond Lily – Nuphar Lutea**
Native Habitat: Western-North America in lakes, ponds and other still water.
Description: Heart shaped floating leaves. Yellow, feathery flowers that appear in late spring and continue until early fall. Uses: Has many traditional medicinal uses. Roots and seeds are edible.

**Black Cottonwood – Populus trichocarpa**
Native Habitat: Western-North America
Description: A deciduous tree that grows 60-120’ tall. The seeds have long, white hairs; the “cotton.”
Uses: Yellow buds were used to make a yellow dye and the dried inner bark could be used for soap. The wood was used to make friction fire sets.

**Scurpus species (Sedge)**
Native Habitat: Worldwide
Description: Grass-like plants with triangular solid stems and fibrous roots or rhizomes. Uses: Pollen, seeds, shoots and lower stalk are edible. The rhizome can be used to make flour, syrup and gruel.

**Kettle Lake Formation:**
Kettles are depressions created by partially buried, glacial ice blocks as they melted. The depressions that filled with water became kettle lakes. Lake Waughop is a kettle lake.
Hill Ward Memorial Project

1932
Western State Hospital built the Hill Ward (also known as the White House) as a dormitory for male patients who worked the farm in the occupational therapy program. Hill Ward was closed in 1965.

1989
Hill Ward was partially demolished and its ruins were used as a search and rescue training facility. The demolished building ruins were used for 10 years to train over 1,500 first responders. Some of the trainees supported national and international rescue and recovery events such as the Oklahoma City bombing and "9/11".

2007 - 2009
The City of Lakewood, Pierce County and the State of Washington partnered to create a community memorial that paid tribute to the people who lived and worked here. The building ruins were completely demolished, crushed and mounded in the building's original footprint. The curb around the perimeter represents the actual exterior walls of the building. The original entry stairs and the end porches were saved and relic pieces of the building were used throughout the project. The original patient pathways from the Hill Ward building to the farm areas have been restored.
Hill Ward Chimney Relic

The concrete decorative “bump” in the center of this island was salvaged during the demolition of the Hill Ward building.
Hill Ward Curb Relic

Discovered during the restoration process, this curb was built in 1930 as part of the Hill Ward building landscape.
Hill Ward
Labyrinth & Historical Trail

Fort Steilacoom Historical Path
Highlights of Fort Steilacoom’s history are engraved on pieces of the Hill Ward Building which were salvaged during demolition.

1  Puget, Nisqually and Steilacoom Peoples lived, traveled and traded in our area.
2 1776 James Cook explored region looking for Northwest Passage.
3 1833 Fort Nisqually, a Hudson’s Bay Trading Post, was built here.
4 1846-1868 Joseph Heath operated a Hudson’s Bay Company farm on this site.
5 1849 Ft. Steilacoom, first official US presence north of the Columbia River, was built on this land to protect American interests.
6 1854-1869 Ft. Steilacoom provided refuge to settlers during Indian Wars of 1854-56
7 1877-1900 The 640-acre fort and farm were converted to an insane asylum. The farm was developed as an occupational therapy tool.
8 1915 The asylum was renamed “Western State Hospital.”
9 1937 The Hill Ward is built on this site to house patients.
10 1965 Hill Ward closed.
11 1970 Pierce County leases 340 acres from the State for public outdoor recreation.
12 1989 Hill Ward was partially demolished and used as a search and rescue training facility.
13 2008 Hill Ward ruins were removed.

Labyrinth
Labyrinths are not mazes. Labyrinths consist of only one path from the entrance to the center. The same path is used to exit the labyrinth. Walking the labyrinth clears the mind, creates calm during periods of stress and encourages meditation for personal and spiritual growth.
Hill Ward Wall Relic

This retaining wall, built by Western State Hospital patients, was uncovered in 2008 during the development of the Hill Ward Memorial.