



## **Erlands Point Preserve**

Erlands Point Preserve is a 30-acre county park located just downstream of Chico Salmon Park, which is typically the primary salmon viewing site for Salmon Tours. Erlands Point Preserve contains the main stem of Chico Creek, several side channels that serve as important salmon rearing habitat, and a large man-made pond that are all hydrologically connected. It also contains a large forested area with walking trails.

Historically, the park served as a staging area for construction of State Route 3, which borders the park. The pond in the center of the park was excavated as part of this work. The main open area within the park was regularly mowed, but little other ongoing use or maintenance of the park occurred prior to 2016, when Olympic College and other student groups began studying the pond, stream, and forested areas of the park. Since that time, volunteers have organized work parties to remove invasive plants like English ivy and Himalayan blackberry and conduct citizen science projects to monitor water quality in the stream.

Beaver activity has also been a significant force that has shaped the flow and storage of water in the park, both historically and recently. Up until September 2019, work was underway to create a gravel path and viewing platform within Erlands Point Preserve that would allow salmon viewing during Salmon Tours. (This was going to be especially important this year, as restoration work at Chico Salmon Park is impacting its use during Salmon Tour.) However, beavers have gotten a jump on restoration work at Erlands and have created a large dam that flooded the potential viewing site. While this creates a problem for salmon viewing, it actually creates just type type of complex stream habitat that improves water storage and creates safe salmon rearing habitat. The Coho and Chum salmon that migrate up Chico Creek this fall will have no trouble navigating around or over the new beaver dams.

Erlands Point Preserve will serve as a central site for the 2019 Salmon Tour with salmon-related education - with booths on topics ranging from the salmon life cycle, to stormwater-related impacts, to how beavers impact their watershed. However, safe viewing of salmon spawning and migratory activities will have to be conducted from other sites along the Salmon Tour.

<https://www.kitsapgov.com/parks/Pages/ErlandsPointPreserve.aspx>