

History

TRYON CREEK STATE PARK

The area around Tryon Creek State Park was home to Native Americans living in semi nomadic tribal villages collecting food from the forest, hunting, and trading with other Native American groups from other areas.

1850

In 1850 Socrates Hotchkiss Tryon, a pioneer settler from Scotland, was able to file a land claim with the US government that gave him possession of some of the land in Tryon Creek State Park. Socrates handed this land down to members of his family.

In 1874 the land was sold to the Oregon Iron Company. The Oregon Iron Company logged the area of cedar trees to make charcoal, a compound made from burning wood; there are still pieces of charcoal visible today on some trails. The charcoal from the logged trees, especially cedar trees, was then used as fuel to heat big furnaces where pig iron, a mineral from rocks in the earth, was melted and refined. Old Iron Mountain Trail was an old logging road.

1874

1900

In 1900 there was a large fire and there are still charred downed trees, called snags that are visible on the Center and Big Fir Trails.

Activity

When you start walking explain that Native Americans lived in the area of Tryon Creek State Park 5,000 years ago. Ask, "How do you think these people lived?" "What did they eat and where did they sleep?" "Why do you think they lived here?"

Check Here When Complete

Look at the trees and discuss what you notice about them. Ask, "Are the trees the same kind and are some of those trees the same size?" Many trees are a similar size because they are about the same age. When areas of a forest are logged gaps in the canopy are created that allows light to hit the forest floor and this light promotes new tree growth. Explain the significance of trees to the early settlers because they provided wood for lumber to build houses and fuel to burn.

Check Here When Complete

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From 1912-1915 logging continued as many cedar trees were cut down to make railroad ties and there was even a saw mill operated where Obie's bridge is now. There are many cedar stumps visible today that were cut down then, and some of the stumps have v-shaped notches in them called spring board notches where loggers stuck planks of wood in the trees to stand on while they used a long two handled saw to cut above them.

1912-1915

Activity

Ask, "What do you think metal is made of?" Explain that metal comes from the rocks in the ground and see if you can find any rocks to look at. Ask, "How do you think metals are made from rocks in the ground?" Explain that the rocks must be heated at very hot temperatures and melted into a liquid and then cooled back into a solid to be formed into a shape as metal. Explain that trees were cut down and then burned to create charcoal to fuel the ovens that heated pig iron found near Tryon Creek State Park. While walking see if you can find pieces of charcoal left near the trail and mark CH on your map when you find them.

Check Here When Complete

1960

While more logging continued from the 1940's through the 1960's and the area was continually used by people in the area as a place for horseback riding, there were unsuccessful attempts to protect the area as a park.

In 1965 the city of Portland installed a sewer pipe along Tryon Creek and a large area along the stream was disturbed from construction, resulting in the growth in many of the alder trees.

1965

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1969

In 1969 Multnomah County bought 45 acres to be part of a future regional park.

In 1970 a citizen group was formed called Friends of Tryon Creek Park and were able to get enough political and financial support to protect the area as Tryon Creek State Park.

1970

1975

In 1975 the Nature Center and the Nature Center Trail were dedicated and the park land was maintained by Oregon State Parks while all funding for the Nature Center came from the fund raising of the Friends of Tryon Creek State Park.

Activity

If you are walking on the Center of Big Fir Trails, explain that there was a large forest fire and see if you can find any burnt trees.

Check Here When Complete

While walking stop and find a cedar stump. Explain that cedar stumps are the only really big stumps you will find here since the other stumps have rotted away, but cedar is naturally rot resistant. Ask, "What would you make out of cedar if you knew it would not get damaged from the rain or water?" Explain that railroads were very important in the early 1900's as a way to move people, goods, and ideas. Cedar trees were used to make railroad ties and many of the stump you see were made into railroad ties at the saw mill that used to be at Obie's Bridge. Look for the springboard notches that loggers used on the cedar stumps and mark a CS on you map.

Check Here When Complete