

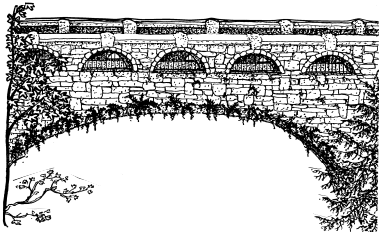
**Whatcom Falls Park - a century of history**

In the **1890's**, the Whatcom Falls area was known as the "Picnic Ground", popular for biking, walking and picnicking. When the private landowners planned to sell, Bellingham citizens wanted it purchased for a city park. Like other towns at this time, the City of Bellingham did not have funds for parks. Land purchases depended on local philanthropists and volunteers provided maintenance.

In **1908** the Young Men's Commercial Club raised funds to purchase the original forty acres for \$12,000, about half the value of the land. The city later reimbursed the club.

During the **1920's**, organizations like Whatcom Falls Park Club, Ladies Cooperative Society of Elizabeth Park, Y.M.C.C. and private individuals donated trails, plantings, play equipment, picnic shelters and wooden bridges across the creek.

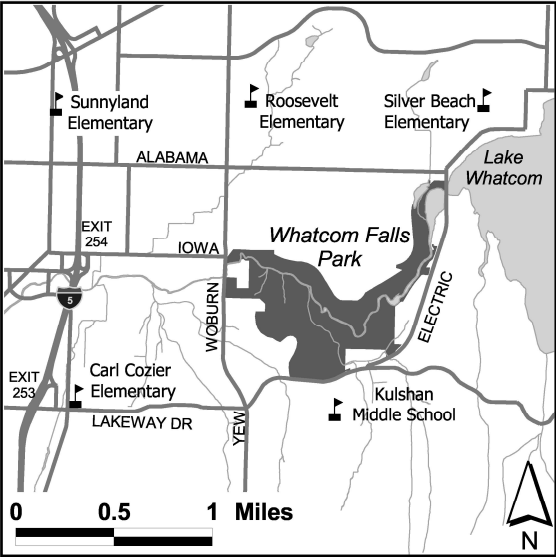
The Great Depression of the **1930's** brought federal money to purchase most of the park's current 241 acres. In **1936**, Federal, State Game Commission and Whatcom County Sportsmen's Association funds built the fish hatchery. Roosevelt's New Deal Works Progress Administration paid workers to move the Chuckanut sandstone arches from a downtown burned-out building to the park. In **1939** the sandstone was used to construct the landmark stone bridge.



Fire devastated the park on **June 10, 1999**. A buried pipeline burst, spilling over 200,000 gallons of gasoline into Hannah and Whatcom Creeks. In 30 seconds, 1.5 miles of the creek's riparian habitat burned. Flames shot 200 feet high; smoke rose five miles into the sky, and three young lives were lost. Many agencies continue working together to restore the burn area, a project expected to take decades.

**When you visit the park, please stay on the marked trails and out of fragile areas. Avoid social trails and help the park heal.**

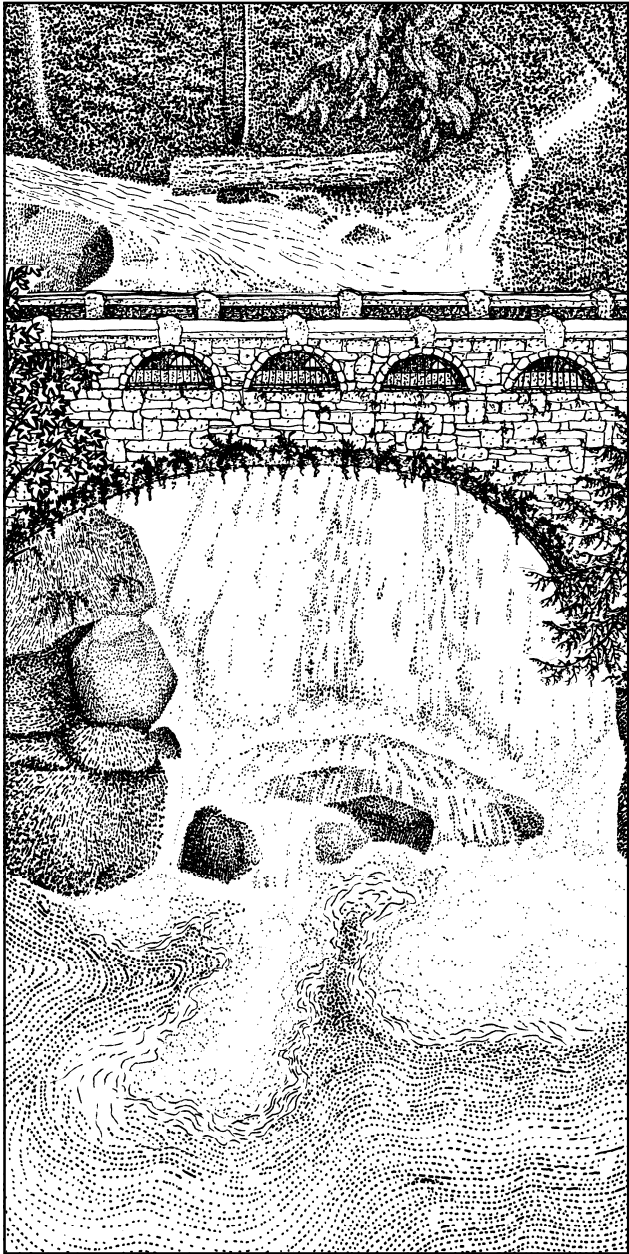
**Whatcom Falls Park**  
1401 Electric Avenue



**Access** to Whatcom Falls Park from I-5: Exit 253, head east on Lakeway Drive. Turn left at light on Kenoyer. Follow road to parking lot and picnic shelters.

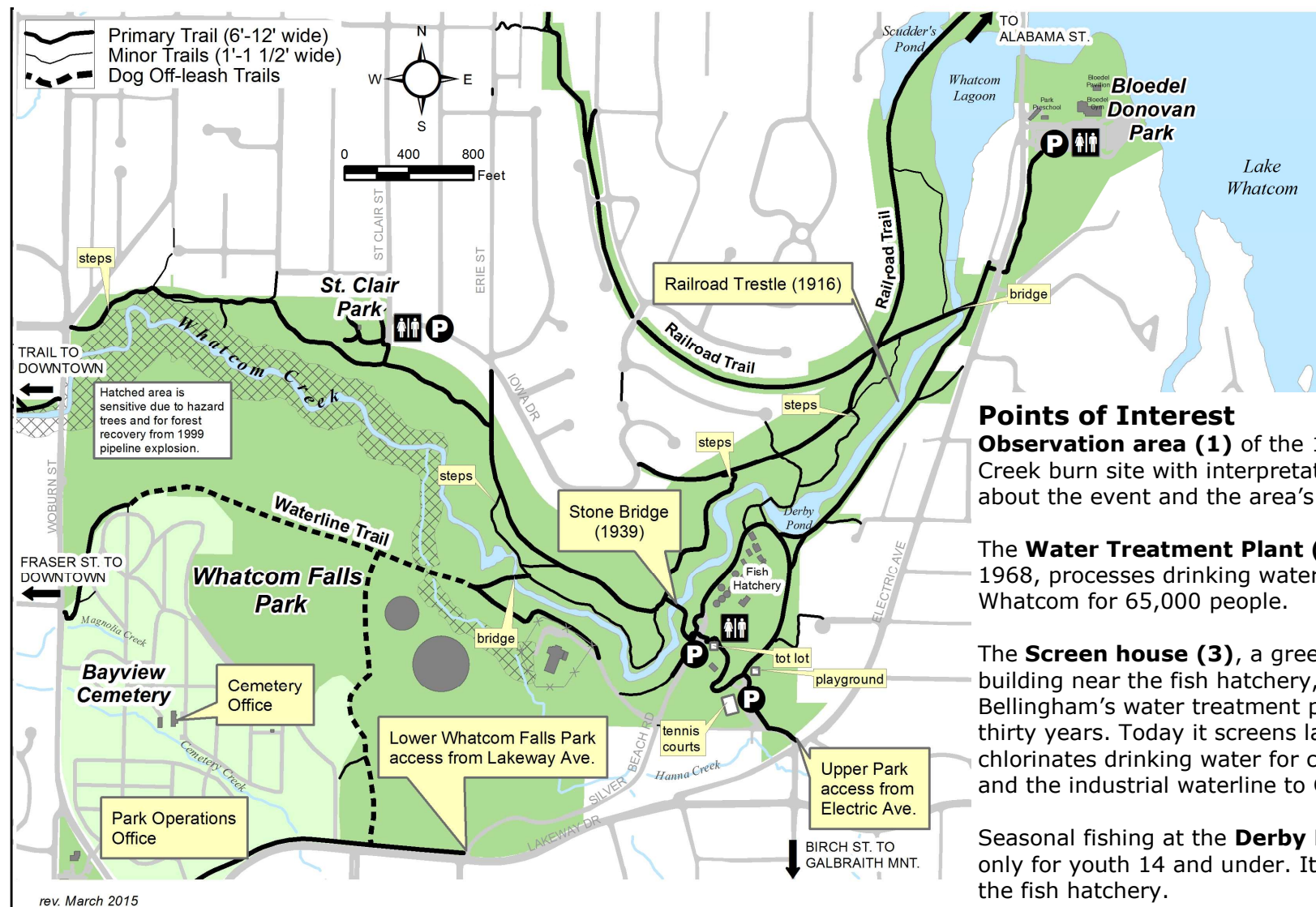
**Buses** serving Whatcom Falls Park:  
#11 Geneva #40 Lakeway

Questions about picnic shelter reservations, events, or programs please call:  
**Bellingham Parks and Recreation**  
3424 Meridian Street  
Bellingham WA 98225  
(360) 778-7000



**Whatcom Falls Park**  
Bellingham Parks and Recreation





## Park Rules

**Park hours** – 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

### Dogs

- Dogs must be on leash at all times unless on trails across bridge, north of the creek. This is considered a dog training and exercise area where dogs can be off leash.
- Owner or handler must remove fecal matter deposited by their animals in the park.
- Owners or handlers must have in their possession the equipment necessary to remove fecal matter.

**Alcoholic** beverages are prohibited.

**Trails**, 5.5 miles, are predominantly rolling, gravel surfaced, hiking trails, some steepgrades. Scenic trails along north bank of creek, east and west of stone bridge. Please stay on graveled trails and help preserve forest habitat.

## Points of Interest

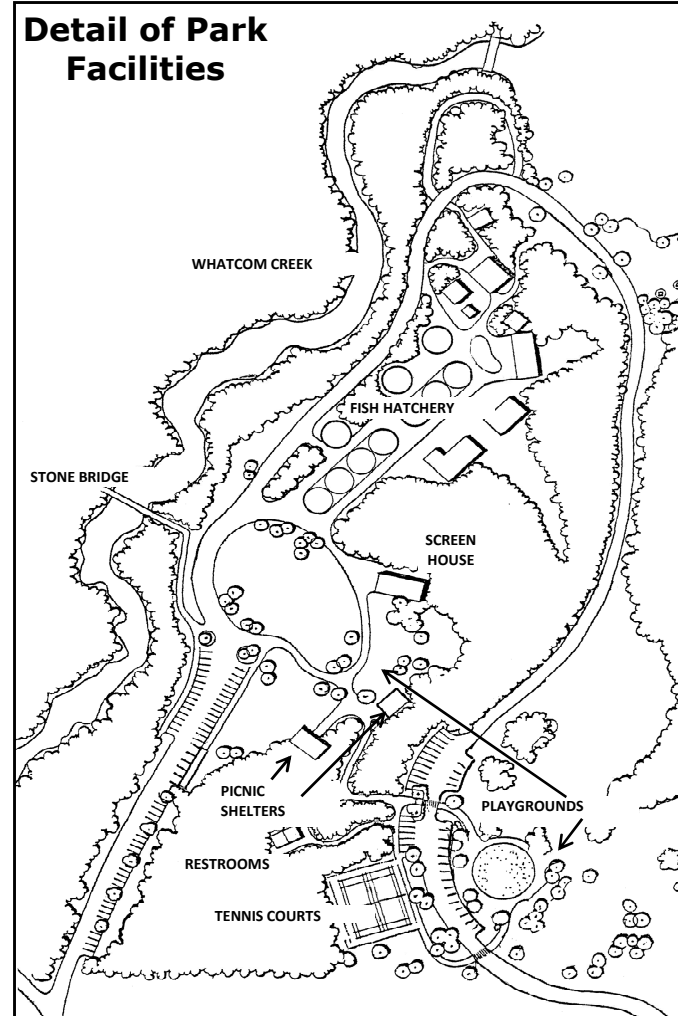
**Observation area (1)** of the 1999 Whatcom Creek burn site with interpretative displays about the event and the area's recovery.

The **Water Treatment Plant (2)**, built in 1968, processes drinking water from Lake Whatcom for 65,000 people.

The **Screen house (3)**, a green two-story building near the fish hatchery, served as Bellingham's water treatment plant for nearly thirty years. Today it screens large objects and chlorinates drinking water for city residences and the industrial waterline to Georgia Pacific.

Seasonal fishing at the **Derby Pond (4)** is only for youth 14 and under. It is stocked by the fish hatchery.

## Detail of Park Facilities



The Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul & Pacific **train trestle (5)**, built in 1916, linked Larson's Mill to Bellingham Bay.

A **pedestrian bridge (6)** crosses the creek here, a part of the Whatcom Creek Trail. Once the site of the Northern Pacific Railway trestle, it was torn down in the 1973.

The **fenced area (7)** was the site of the first screen house. A water intake pipe near Larson's Mill (now Bloedel-Donovan Park) supplied the old treatment plant and now supplies the fish hatchery with water.

Lake Whatcom water flows under Electric Avenue to the **Control Dam (8)** and into Whatcom Creek. The dam, built in 1906, maintains the lake's level within a 2.5-foot range.

**Scudder's Pond (9)**, a wetland habitat.