

WALK B Starting from Picnic Shelter #2 at the south end of William Hawrelak Park up to Saskatchewan Drive.

DISTANCE/DIFFICULTY: 3.2 km round trip; moderately steep hills and granular path

- Start at Picnic Shelter #2 at the south end of the park, near the footbridge. At the east end of the Buena Vista/Hawrelak footbridge, take the wide path that heads south into the woods.
- Stay on the main trail; a former horse trails runs parallel to it. A few ponds along the trail may shelter ducks. Continue up the slope to a deck with a bench at the top of the bank near 76 Avenue and Saskatchewan Drive.
- Walk north along Saskatchewan Drive to a steep set of stairs (175 steps) on your left near the trees (north of 78 Avenue) that heads down to the original trail. Turn right to reach Picnic Shelter #2.

WALK C Starting from Picnic Shelter #1 at the north end of William Hawrelak Park to Groat Bridge.

DISTANCE/DIFFICULTY: 3.2 km round trip; easy, granular path

- Start at Picnic Shelter #1 at the north end of William Hawrelak Park. Walk towards the river on the north (right) side of the shelter, past a large picnic fire ring. Continue into the woods on your right.
- Two parallel paths head east towards Groat Bridge.
- Take the trail closer to the Royal Mayfair Golf Course and return on the lower (horse) trail.

AMENITIES

- washrooms in Shelters #1 and #2, at either end of the park (open from spring to freeze-up)
- washrooms in the pavilion at the lake, open year-round

- emergency phone at the east end of the Buena Vista/Hawrelak footbridge

DESCRIPTION

William Hawrelak Park offers a balance between groomed green spaces for recreation and green space for natural vegetation that protects the river and provides habitat for native plants and animals.

The park is closed to vehicle traffic during major events such as Heritage Days, sporting events or Earth Day, when park-and-ride arrangements are in effect.

Before Keillor Road slumped into the river, horse riders from the Whitemud Equine Centre used the horse trail near the river (Walks B and C). On Walk B you may see a few red-coloured pipes scattered in the lower hillside; they are slope indicator pipes used to measure ground water.

HISTORY

Opened officially as Mayfair Park in 1967, the park was renamed William Hawrelak Park in 1977. William Hawrelak (1915-1975) was Mayor of Edmonton in 1951-59, 1963-65 and again in 1974. He died in office.

This land, acquired by the City of Edmonton in 1922, was originally used as a gravel and sand pit. In 1954 city council decided to create the park, which features an artificial lake where the open gravel pit used to be. Since 1976 William Hawrelak Park has been the site of the Edmonton Heritage Festival, held the first weekend in August. In 1985 the beautiful white outdoor Heritage Amphitheatre was built to host plays and concerts, including a blues festival, Shakespeare in the Park and Symphony Under the Sky.

In 1971 a Vincent Massey Award for Excellence in Urban Environment was given to the people of Edmonton for outstanding achievement for Mayfair Park. (See the plaque inside the lake shelter.)