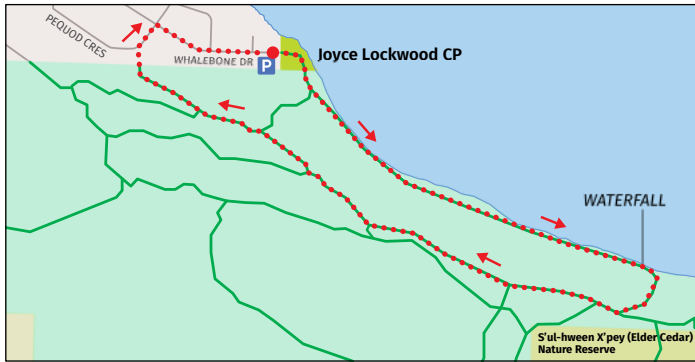


Walk #4

Whalebone to Waterfall Loop



Approx Time: 60-75 mins

Approx Distance: 5.5 km return
(loop route)

Difficulty: moderate, but with several more challenging, steep sections (both up and down). Poles might be useful, and sturdy waterproof footwear is recommended since some sections of trail are liable to be wet and muddy in the winter months.

Hazards: trail follows top of dangerous cliffs in places— please keep small children and dogs close

Begin: end of Whalebone Drive at entrance to Joyce Lockwood Community Park

What To Expect

This lovely walk features sword fern-lined forest trails with sea and mountain views towards the Sunshine Coast, Howe Sound and the North Shore, as well as glimpses of the occasional ferry!

Trail Route

Cross the small footbridge into Joyce Lockwood Community Park and follow the trail as it runs above Whalebone Beach and then continues rising gradually through a forest of tall firs, western red cedars and bigleaf maples along the cliff-top.

(Joyce Lockwood, a former RDN director for Gabriola, was active in many island projects of the 1980s and 90s and, amongst other things, deserves credit for single-handedly constructing and installing the island's many mailbox noticeboards!)

The walk starts by winding past a grove of trembling aspens to the right of the trail nominated by both **Richard Strachan** and **Darci Swinton**, and three of these trees are listed in GaLTT's Big Tree Registry. Trembling aspens are relatively rare on Gabriola and these particular trees may all be connected through a shared root system—an interesting characteristic of this species. They are also noted for the sight and sound of their leaves rustling in the breeze, as their name suggests, and so are best admired when they come into leaf in the spring, although their white bark is a beautiful feature year-round.

The trail soon passes one of several rough beach access paths, beyond which a section of boardwalk helps walkers avoid one of the muddier sections of this route. You then cross a creek on a footbridge constructed by GaLTT trail builders. Stay to your left once over the



The trembling aspens



2026 Winter Walkabout: Favourite Trees Revisited

* trees were nominated by GaLTT members in 2021

bridge. From here, the trail leaves the park and crosses through an area set aside by the federal government for treaty settlement with the Snuneymuxw First Nation.

Take care where the trail runs very close to the cliff-top, as there are many exposed tree roots underfoot and a steep drop to the stony beach below. Part way along, it passes the site of a mudslide which occurred a few years ago, when several large trees toppled down the cliff. Some of the large fir trees (both Douglas- and grand fir) and western red cedars standing all along the cliff edge may be at risk of a similar fate in coming years. To the right of the trail there are many fine bigleaf maples, including two standing close to the trail that you will pass approximately 15-20 minutes into your walk; in each case their branching trunks make it hard to tell whether they are one tree or several.



After about 1.5 kilometres, the trail crosses two branches of a small seasonal watercourse, Jenkins Creek, which flows out over the cliff in the winter months. Note that this waterfall cannot be seen from the trail without a rather risky scramble down the cliff (not recommended!) and it is, in any case, most impressive when viewed from a distance, from Whalebone Beach.

At this point, the trail turns sharply to the right and climbs fairly steeply for about 200 metres to meet an old logging road. Turn right here and follow this wider trail as it first crosses the stream leading down to the waterfall



and then continues gently uphill through the forest. Ignore the various paths leading off to the left and stay right wherever you meet a fork in the trail.

In due course, you will reach a small clearing where a young arbutus tree leans in towards the trail from the right— notable as this species is less common in this area of the island. From here, the trail drops down the first of

several fairly steep hills, where walking poles may be helpful. Stay on this descending trail all the way down, and along a stretch lined with red alders. Keep to the left near the bottom and the trail eventually comes out onto Pequod Crescent. (This street is named after the ship in Herman Melville's famous novel, *Moby Dick*, and many of the side streets off Whalebone Drive are, likewise, named after characters in the book.) Turn right on this gravel road and then right again where it meets Whalebone Drive to return the short distance along the road to where you started.

**Note: the route can be walked in reverse if preferred. This provides a good cardio workout and warm-up at the start of your walk as you climb several hills along the trail, but it involves a fairly steep descent to the waterfall, which is trickier in muddy conditions than climbing it.*

Why not finish up with a well-earned rest at the beach?

