

AFTER-WORK ESCAPES

“Stimpson Family Nature Reserve’s moss-strewn, old-growth forest offers wildlife viewing opportunities along rolling trails that are excellent for walking, hiking or running.”

– BRANDON FRALIC



Near **Beaver Pond**, the Stimpson Preserve is notable for its idyllic woods and trickling streams. Wooden bridges, like this one, can be slippery when wet or frosty, so watch your step if it's wet outside!

Stimpson Family Nature Reserve / BELLINGHAM

Take a stroll through 350 acres of undisturbed old-growth forest and thriving wetland ecosystem at the Stimpson Family Nature Reserve.

Head out from the parking area onto the forested gravel path. Dedicated by the Stimpson family in 2003, the reserve's trail system is two connected loops, the shorter of the two circling Geneva Pond. Take a moment to look out at the Beaver Pond before reaching the Main Loop junction at 0.3 miles. Head to the right to continue skirting the pond and surrounding wetland. Beavers are active in the area, so be on the lookout! The 3-mile Main Loop gently climbs through Douglas-fir, western hemlock and redcedar towering above the trail. Small streams run past the trail after heavy rains, and fallen logs and snags attract pileated woodpeckers. At just over a mile, a viewpoint of Lake Whatcom can be made out through a break in the forest. From this high point, the trail continues downhill through a section of forest with picturesque moss formations on the surrounding trees.

At 2.5 miles, a junction with the Geneva Pond Loop leads off to the right. Continue straight to finish the 3-mile loop and head back to the parking lot, or take the Geneva Pond Loop to add another 1.8 miles to your hike (including the 0.4 miles back to your car). The Geneva Pond Loop circles a small pond. With open areas on the southwestern edge of the pond, the sunlight shimmers off of water lily pads and the backs of wood ducks floating along peacefully. Meeting back up with the Main Loop Trail, turn right to reach the parking area in 0.4 miles.

DISTANCE: 4.9 miles // **ELEVATION GAIN:** 300 ft. // **ELEVATION PEAK:** 800 ft.
MAP: Whatcom County Parks // **PERMIT:** None // **DOGS:** Not permitted

INFO: whatcomcounty.us/2180/Stimpson-Family-Nature-Reserve

TRAILHEAD: From Bellingham, drive east on Lakeway Dr (I-5 exit 253). Follow the road, which eventually becomes Cable St. Just after the fire station, turn right onto Austin St (signed also for Lake Louise Rd). Continue until it becomes Lake Louise Rd, just after a four-way stop. At 1.5 miles, look for the parking area on the left side.

HIKE & PHOTOS: Brandon Fralic

POST-HIKE PUB

Stop by **Boundary Bay Brewery** after your hike to refuel. Try a beer from the Galbraith Mountain series, named after trails near Stimpson Reserve. Also check out their full food menu consisting of fresh, Northwest-inspired pub grub.

