

In 1944, recreation was added to the Mill Creek Project's Congressionally authorized project purposes.

The Project's 612-acre area provides a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities near the City of Walla Walla. Seasonal hunting and fishing is permitted in designated areas. Many of the Project's recreation facilities have been upgraded or replaced over the decades to comply with current laws and regulations. Average annual visitation at the Mill Creek Project is about 365,000.

Rooks Park, is an 18-acre developed park open year-round to walk-in traffic and open seasonally to vehicle traffic from April through mid-October. It provides day-use facilities with a reservable picnic shelter, sand volleyball court, ADA-compliant playground, horseshoe pit, group fire rings, picnic tables, stand-up fire grills, ADA-accessible restrooms, a nearby a pedestrian bridge crossing Mill Creek and more. Large open areas allow for field games, while small secluded areas provide a quiet place to enjoy the outdoors.

More than 20 miles of recreational trails run throughout the Project, along Mill Creek and around Bennington Lake. Trail surfaces vary from pavement and gravel, to dirt and grass, meandering through open grasslands and wooded areas. Walkers, runners, bicyclists, rollerbladers, horseback riders, cross-country skiers and nature observers can choose from three designated loop trails that all interconnect with spur trails. Along the north side of Mill Creek stretches the Mill Creek Recreation Trail, a paved path that connects Rooks Park with the City of Walla Walla. Motor vehicles are not permitted on visitor trails or off-road on Corps-managed lands.

Bennington Lake is filled with mountain runoff water each spring and stocked with rainbow trout by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Seasonal fishing is allowed with a state-issued permit. When the lake is at recreation level (1,205 feet above mean sea level), it covers about 52 surface acres of water. Boating on the lake is limited to non-motorized vessels and other small vessels with electric motors only. This policy protects the lake from unwanted pollutants associated with gasoline-operated motors and provides maximum space for vessels compatible with the lake's small size. Picnic tables, mini-shelters and an ADA-accessible restroom are available nearby. Park benches and mini-shelters placed around the lake on the trails provide resting areas to enjoy the surrounding views of the lake and the Blue Mountains.

Mill Creek Project's recreational features and facilities require continuous O&M to keep them functioning properly and safe for visitors. Maintenance activities sometimes get a helping hand from local volunteer groups.

