

Angel Gomez, Club Director of Sales
Angel's

Be Alive!

– Multnomah County, Ore.

Wahclella Falls



Angel Jr., Aden and Kathy at Munra Falls



Wahclella Falls is in the distance, with Tanner Creek flowing.



Aden and Angel Jr. at Wahclella Falls.

Happy New Year, everybody!

The last few months *Be Alive!* stories have been set up north in Oregon and Washington state. I want to thank my sister-in-law, Deborah, and her family for extending an invitation. Thank you so much!

Once we arrived, I couldn't wait until we could start exploring. The entire area is gorgeous and breathtaking! Oregon and Washington are amazing areas to explore; I can't wait to go back. Wahclella Falls was one of the easiest and closest waterfall trails I have visited. Every step took us to greener lands, and the closer we got to the falls, the more amazing the views were. And yes, it is right off the Columbia River Gorge.

Let's dive in!

Wahclella Falls was named after a nearby village of Native Americans by the Manzama mountaineering club in 1915. The falls area is named Wahclella Falls; however, the United States Geological Survey still records the waterfall as Tanner Creek Falls.

The Hike

The trail and the parking lot are right off the highway and cost only \$5 a day. This will be the best \$5 you will ever spend on a waterfall trail.

The first part of the trail is mostly flat and travels along Tanner Creek. It's full of trees and lush greenery. The creek is continuously flowing, with gorgeous sparkling water all the way from the falls to the entrance of the trail. After a few minutes of walking you will come up to a small dam used by the Bonneville Fish Hatchery. Once you pass the dam you will continue on a smaller trail, and then you will reach the first small waterfall, Munra Falls. The waterfall is right next to a bridge (you will walk right by it); the footbridge is where Munra Falls drops into Tanner Creek. This is a great spot for some photos.



Angel Jr. and Aden in front of Tanner Creek.

After you pass Munra Falls, the trail climb becomes a bit steep. Be careful of your footing and stay close to the mountain. There will be some stairs to help climb higher on the trail, then back to single trail along the mountain. When you come up to a fork in the trail, the trail will loop around, so you can take any route. If you choose the lower trail on the fork, you will travel through some switchbacks and then see Wahclella Falls in the distance. There will be another bridge before you get to Wahclella Falls – that bridge goes over Tanner Creek and, depending on the season, you will see a small waterfall in front of you. By the way, look along the trail – there will be massive rocks in the creek there. Stop and look up – they all came from the top of the mountain.

In a few minutes, you will get the first view of Wahclella Falls; the water flows out of the 50-foot drop into a pool-like pond. Amazing! Take a moment and just enjoy the view. We all hugged each other, gazed at the waterfall and enjoyed the view. The waterfall is close to the highway, hidden less than a mile off the road. Once you are at the base of the waterfall, you can actually go into the water, but let me tell you that the water is cold (not to mention the spray from the water falling decreases the temperature). We all put on our jackets and zipped up. I saw lots of people with their dogs and also some very brave people actually going into the water. We got close and sat down by a fallen tree that hovered over some of the water, but that was close enough for us. This is a must-see trail, and the waterfall is a huge bonus for anyone. All this beauty for only \$5; what a deal!

In case you want to add a little more exploring to your day trip, just across the road is the Bonneville Fish Hatchery. It's free, and you can see lots of gorgeous fish, from little babies to gigantic ones. There is a small gift shop and visitor center, and tours are available. The Bonneville Dam is also right in the area – still more amazing views.

Don't forget to bring your camera and take plenty of photos and send them to me at agomez@cityemployeesclub.com. Bring water, snacks and maybe some sunscreen.

**As always, be safe and Be Alive!,
Angel**



Angel Jr. and Aden arrive at Wahclella Falls.

Wahclella Falls

Northeast Bonneville Way and Interstate 84
Mount Hood National Forest
Cascade Locks, OR 97014

Distance: about 2 miles round trip
Elevation gain: 300 feet
Difficulty rating: easy to moderate
Hike time: about two hours
Trail condition: dirt
Hours – All seasons: 8 a.m. to dusk
Parking/entrance fee: day pass, \$5

Directions: Take I-5 north from Portland. Drive eastward on Interstate 84 to Exit #40 for Bonneville Dam. Turn right at the stop sign; drive about 100 feet and turn right again at the fork (left takes you to the Tooth Rock Trailhead). Follow the short road to the end, where you'll see the trailhead parking lot. (This trip is about 1,000 miles from Los Angeles.)