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Away for a Day: Westmoreland Nature Play Park



(image courtesy of GreenWorks P.C. www.greenworkspc.com)

When a friend of mine told me about the “most awesome, incredible park” in Westmoreland, I was a bit skeptical. I don’t mind taking my kid to the park, but “most awesome” and “incredible” don’t usually enter into my descriptions. With most park trips, I have to fight the overwhelming urge to check my phone, even when no beeps or buzzes have distracted my attention. I get bored. Cries of “Mommy, push me” and “Mommy, look at me on this wood platform,” are not the stuff of “most awesome.” I sit there, space out a bit and hope that my kid gets tired enough that bedtime will not be a power struggle.

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Recently, we did meander our way over to the Westmoreland Nature Play Park that opened in September 2014. My son immediately gravitated to the gently sloped sand pit, equipped with a water pump at the highest point, slough stoppers built into the structure and a host of trucks and digging toys scattered throughout the sand. My boy was so focused, quiet and happy, I could have checked my phone for hours. Instead, I helped him push the sand around with the trucks, redirect the river of water by building dams and generally make a wonderful mess. It was glorious fun for our toddler — and for me, too.

Because of the overwhelming appeal of the sand-truck-water combination, my son mostly ignored the various climbing structures the park offers. There is a boulder with anchored ropes to help kids climb over 12 feet off the ground. There are a couple of wood structures to be conquered, also with ropes. But my favorite features of the park were the dozens of free-standing, sanded, large wood branches that are available for anyone to use. On subsequent visits to the park, we have noticed the branches in various patterns and kid-designed structures, such as a cave or a bridge, or some other sculptural monument to child creativity.

My son isn't interested in the climbing or building with branches yet. But that's okay. It just means that as he grows, he will continue to appreciate the most awesome, incredible park in Portland.

4 SHARES

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