



AUTO TOUR

AAA Washington Travel Services

Willapa Loop

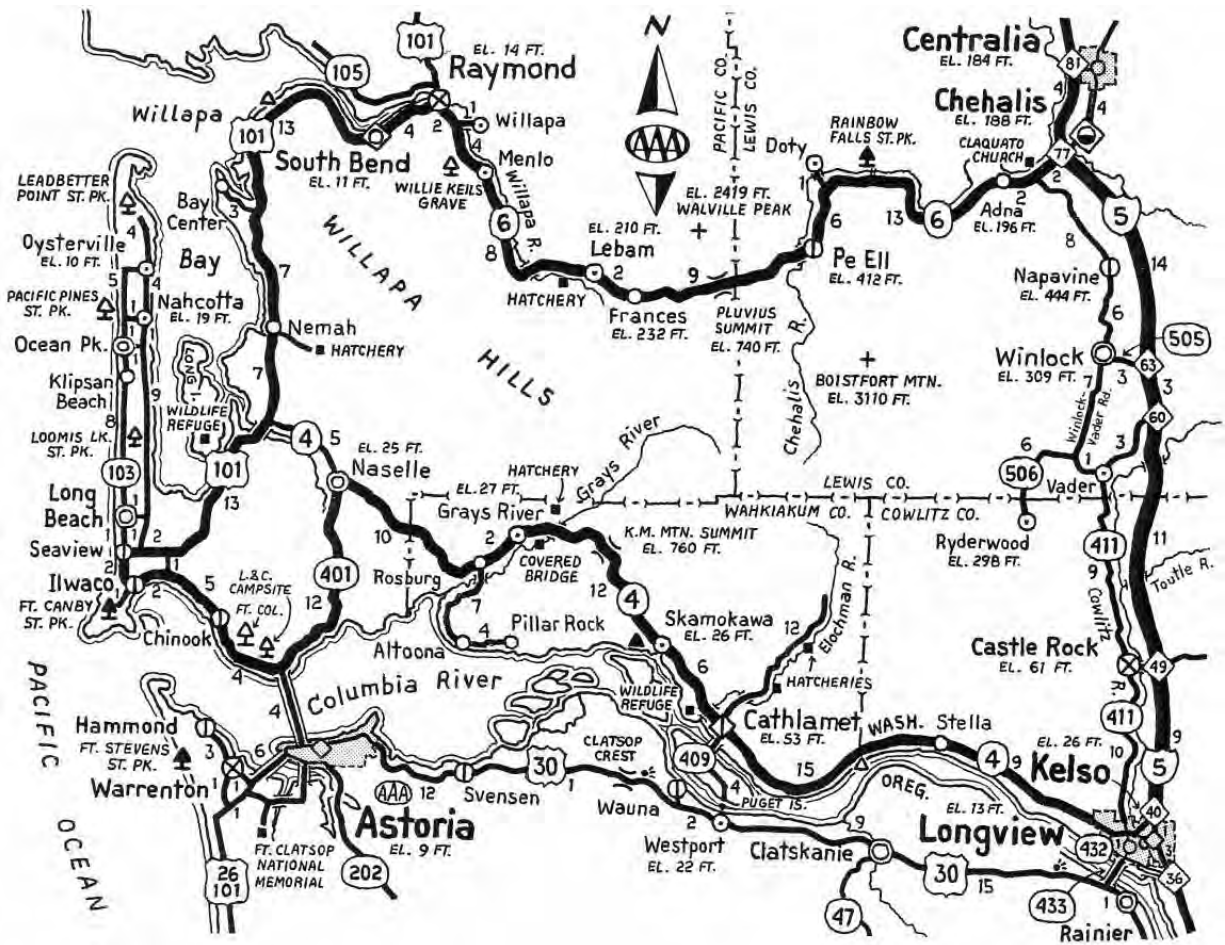
The name *Willapa* appears on a variety of features in southwest Washington including a range of hills, a river, a bay and a village. It derives from *Ah-whil-la-pah*, a band of Chinook peoples who lived along the river which now bears their name. Our **Willapa Loop Auto Tour** explores this corner of the Evergreen State, a well-watered region of rolling green hills, steady-flowing rivers, century-old farms and lumber towns whose bustle depends on the vicissitudes of the forest products industry. Fishing towns scatter along the Columbia's lower reaches and the oyster industry remains important on Willapa Bay.



(Clockwise from top left) Lake Sacajawea Park in Longview, Pacific County Courthouse in South Bend, Grays River Covered Bridge, and Beard's Hollow at Cape Disappointment State Park

The auto tour begins on Interstate 5 at Centralia and follows a counter-clockwise itinerary west to the Pacific, then south along the coast returning eastward along the Columbia River. Roads are two-laned (except for 41 miles of interstate between Kelso and Centralia) and paved. The route comprises 229 miles and takes about five hours to complete. Including stops, this route makes a good day trip from Seattle or Portland.

Rainfall is plentiful in southwest Washington, especially in the coastal counties. Snowfall at these low elevations is relatively rare, although icy roads are a wintertime possibility. The drier summer months from late June through September offer the best weather – morning coastal fog frequently yields to afternoon sunshine.



1. Centralia to Raymond (via I-5 & WA-6)

CENTRALIA (pop. 16,940, alt. 184 ft.), busy trading center of Lewis County, was settled in the 1850s. First called Skookumchuck, for the nearby river, it was changed to Centerville when the town was platted in 1875. This caused confusion since a Klickitat County town already had that name, so in 1884 it was given its present name to honor the Illinois town. A downtown park, on Pearl between Main and Locust, stands on land homesteaded in 1852 by George Washington, an African-American whose story is an epic of perseverance in a culture of prejudice. **Borst Park**, just west of I-5 Exit 82, is named for homesteader James Borst. The park features **Borst Blockhouse** (1854) and the **Borst House**, a pioneer residence built in 1857 (open summer weekends).

Follow Harrison Avenue and Main Street east into downtown Centralia. Main Street USA is in full effect between Tower and Pearl Streets, complete with hanging flower boxes. Stone and brick buildings sport large colorful murals depicting local history and several house antique malls. Pleasant, old residential districts lie north and west of the business district.

Four miles south at I-5 Exit 77 is Centralia's twin city **CHEHALIS** (pop. 7,500, alt. 188 ft.). Originally called Saundersville, the town was renamed in 1879 for a Native American word meaning 'shifting sand,' descriptive of the sandbars in its namesake river. Stop by the **Lewis County Historical Museum**, housed in the 1912 Northern Pacific Depot at 599 NW Front Street. Across the street at the Hotel Washington is the **Vintage Motorcycle Museum** featuring bikes from the 1910s and later as well as bicycles dating to 1865. The old residential neighborhood on Pennsylvania Avenue (four blocks west of the museum on West Street, then turn south) is a National Historic District featuring a variety of architectural styles.



Retrace your steps and cross the freeway – you’re now on Highway 6. At the first intersection, turn left onto Riverside Drive. A half-mile down the road the **Veterans Memorial Museum** features displays of uniforms dating back to the Indian Wars, a weaponry collection and a 1942 Stuart tank used by the Army in North Africa.

Adjacent to the museum, the **Centralia-Chehalis Railroad** (pictured at left) offers steam train excursions on summer weekends. The railroad suffered significant damage to its tracks in the December 2007 floods, but returned to its route in 2010. In addition to regular routes to Milburn and Ruth, special-event and holiday trips are scattered through the year.

Highway 6 follows the Chehalis River Valley west traversing farm country backed by wooded hills. Two miles west of the interstate, the now-quiet hamlet of **CLAQUATO** (rural, alt. 197 ft.) belies its bustling past. From 1862 to 1872 this was the seat of Lewis County. The settlement sprang up on a pioneer road linking the Columbia River with Puget Sound; its Salish Indian name means *high ground*. Centerpiece of the community is the white-framed **Claquato Church**. Built in 1858, it is one of the state’s oldest churches.

Farther down the highway flashes past the small town of **ADNA** (pop. 200, alt. 196 ft.) before encountering the lingering destruction of the Great Coastal Gale of 2007.

The Floods of 2007

On 3 December, 2007, southwestern Washington was inundated by floodwaters from a massive Pacific storm. Ten to fifteen feet of water covered Interstate 5 at Centralia and Chehalis, closing the highway for four days and cutting off the Chehalis River Valley from the outside world. Eight Washington counties suffered \$1 billion in damage.

Remnants of the destruction are still evident in sites just off Highway 6. **RAINBOW FALLS STATE PARK** (Discover Pass required, see below), a recreation area since the early 1900s, suffered a washout of its pedestrian suspension bridges overlooking the diminished rapids of the Chehalis. The park remains open for camping and picnicking. To access the park, follow the small brown signs. The detour crosses a one-lane bridge over Leudinghaus Road then proceeds west 2½ miles to the park. Along the route, fallen trees litter both sides of the now-muddied and slowed river. Left intact is the ½-mile Towering Timber Trail (south of the highway), a patch of old growth forest featuring western hemlock and Douglas-fir up to 200 feet tall.



The high water mark of the Chehalis River, three miles west of Adna

Note: As of July 2011, a **Washington Discover Pass** is required for admission to day-use areas of state parks, as well as areas administered by the state Department of Fish & Wildlife and the Department of Natural Resources.

The fee is \$10/car for a one-day pass, or \$30 for an annual pass. Purchase the pass from any State Parks regional office or at the park itself when staff is available. Click www.discoverpass.wa.gov for details on other methods of purchase, including over 600 locations where hunting and fishing licenses are sold (transaction fees apply). A \$99 fine can be levied against drivers of street-legal vehicles caught without a Pass.

Overnight campers in state parks need not purchase the Discover Pass for the nights they’re camping.



PE ELL (pop. 645, alt. 394 ft.) was founded in the 1880s as a sawmilling center. Prosperous farms later

flourished on the surrounding prairie, raising fruit, hops and dairy cattle. The town's curious name is derived from the initials of pioneer settler Pierre Louis Charles. Many of the early settlers were of Polish and Swiss ancestry. **Holy Ghost Church**, serving the Polish-Lithuanian community, was built in 1916.

West of Pe Ell Highway 6 winds through the densely wooded Willapa Hills, passing the sites of long-abandoned mill towns McCormick and Walville. Pluvius Summit, three miles west of the Lewis/Pacific county line and so-named for the plentiful rainfall of the region, marks the watershed divide between the Chehalis and Willapa rivers.

On Elk Prairie, the first sizable open space west of the divide, stands the village of **FRANCES** (pop. 30, alt. 230 ft.). Agricultural settlement on the prairie dates back to the 1880s. Many of the pioneers came from Germany and Switzerland. **Holy Family Church** was built in 1892. **LEBAM** (pop. 160, alt. 207 ft.), two miles down SR-6, prospered as a logging town after the Northern Pacific opened its branch line in 1893. Postal authorities objected to the town's rather long original name – Half Moon Prairie. So the local postmaster suggested a reverse spelling of his daughter's first name Mabel. Repeated fires and the closure of sawmills in the 1920s sealed Lebam's decline. Just west of town visitors are welcome at the **Forks Creek Salmon Hatchery**, founded in 1899.

The town of **MENLO** (pop. 250, alt. 69 ft.) bustles during the **Pacific County Fair** in August. When the railroad established a station here in 1893 it was called Preston. Since a King County place already had that name, a pioneer suggested Menlo Park, for his hometown in California. The valley widens as SR-6 continues west. Beside the highway is the site of **Willy Kiel's Grave**, one of the Northwest's more unusual heritage sites. The interpretative markers relate the rather macabre tale.

Farms give way to modest residences as we enter the outskirts of **RAYMOND** (pop. 2,885, alt. 13 ft.). Highway 6 joins US-101 in the southern part of town. Located at the head of ocean-going navigation on the Willapa River, the city was founded in 1904. Mills and lumberyards, many of them abandoned, line the river. This city boasted a population of nearly 7,000 before World War I, when twenty lumber mills and other manufacturing plants worked round the clock.



Raymond's cottage-style Public Library

Among the interesting buildings in the central business district is the **Raymond Public Library** on the corner of Fifth and Duryea streets. Stained-glass windows in the two-story Tudor cottage depict nursery rhyme themes.

On the edge of downtown lie pedestrian trails and two attractions. Transport back to the 19th century at the **Northwest Carriage Museum**, home to one of the most extensive collections of horse drawn carriages, including luxury vehicles, wagons, sleighs and buggies. Several vehicles were used in classic movies such as *Gone With the Wind* and *Virginia City*. The adjacent **Willapa Seaport Museum** provides a kid-friendly look at the life of mariners.

2. South Bend to the Columbia (via US-101)

From Raymond proceed west on US-101 which follows the Willapa River to **SOUTH BEND** (pop. 1,620, alt. 7 ft.), seat of Pacific County and the self-styled *Oyster Capital of the Pacific Northwest*. Note the piles of shellfish along the waterfront, a product of this important and reviving area industry. The town occupies a narrow plain and climbs into the nearby hills bordering a large southward bend of the Willapa River. The settlement dates back to a sawmill established in 1869.

Of interest are the **Pacific County Historical Museum**, located on US-101 downtown, and the 1911 **Pacific County Courthouse** (pictured on cover), a domed architectural gem on a hill south of the highway. Other examples of Victorian architecture symbolize South Bend's early wealth.

West of South Bend the estuary broadens into Willapa Bay. Highway 101 skirts its eastern shore for over thirty miles, traversing wooded headlands alternating with marshy meadows. Eight miles west of South Bend, a roadside historical marker indicates the site of **Bruceport**, settled in 1851 by the survivors of the scuttled oyster schooner *Bruce*.

Just south of the Palix River bridge a road branches west to **BAY CENTER** (pop. 275, alt. 20 ft.), a bayside village located on a narrow peninsula. The first settlers arrived in 1851 and a townsite was platted in 1873.

Oystering remains important and there are several 19th century buildings and a pioneer cemetery. **Bush Pioneer County Park** offers camping and is a pleasant spot for a picnic.

In the valleys of the Palix, Nemah and Naselle, Scandinavian and Finnish immigrants took up dairy farming and lumbering in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The **Nemah Salmon Hatchery**, 2½ miles east of US-101 on N. Nemah Road, maintains area stocks of this important sport and food fish. Salmon migrate upstream to the hatchery from September into mid-November. South of the Naselle River US-101 skirts the southern reach of the bay. Look for the headquarters of the **Willapa National Wildlife Refuge** beside the road. The refuge embraces **Long Island**, just offshore, which includes miles of trails, primitive campgrounds and a grove of thousand-year-old western red cedar trees. The island is accessible only by private boat.

Beyond the southern end of the bay Highway 101 strikes west to the **LONG BEACH PENINSULA**. Separating Willapa Bay from the Pacific Ocean, it stretches more than 25 miles from Cape Disappointment north to Leadbetter Point.

Watch for signing to **ILWACO** (pop. 945, alt. 20 ft.), an important commercial and sport fishing port on the Columbia River. The American Captain Robert Gray discovered the mouth of the great river in 1792. The Lewis and Clark Expedition explored the area in 1804-05. By 1900 the Ilwaco Steam and Navigation Company began operating a narrow gauge railway north to Nahcotta, linking coastal resort communities on the Peninsula. The area soon became a summer playground for Portland's Victorian elite who journeyed down the Columbia by steamer. The **Columbia Pacific Heritage Museum**, 115 SE Lake Street, chronicles area history.



Cape Disappointment Lighthouse

CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT, the wooded headland west of Ilwaco, commands the northern entrance to the broad Columbia estuary. Captain Robert Meares named the cape in 1788, describing his feeling upon not discovering the legendary Northwest Passage. Near the tip of the cape is the **U.S. Coast Guard Station** which operates a mariner's lifesaving service.

Nearby stands **Cape Disappointment Lighthouse**. Built in 1856, it's the oldest in the state. Most of the cape was part of **Fort Canby**, proclaimed in 1852 as Washington's first military installation. The fort's military mission ended after World War II and it became Fort Canby State Park in 1957, later renamed **CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT STATE PARK** (*Discover Pass required, see p. 3*). The park is part of the Lewis & Clark National Historical Park.

The park's highlight is the **Lewis and Clark Interpretative Center**, perched on a bluff overlooking the Pacific. Its exhibits chronicle their entire transcontinental trek. The park's large campground spreads over the sandy tract extending from the North Jetty to the base of North Head, the site of another lighthouse built in 1899.

Before the construction of jetties in the 1910s, the mouth of the Columbia was one of the world's most treacherous. Sailors knew it as *The Graveyard of the Pacific* – more than 230 shipwrecks in the area dot the ocean floor.

Return to Ilwaco. Here you can continue north to explore the Long Beach Peninsula, a popular destination offering one of the world's longest beaches of hard-packed sand, resort communities and historic towns. For more information consult AAA Washington's *South Washington Coast Auto Tour*.

3. Ilwaco to Longview (via SR-401 & SR-4)

From Ilwaco, US-101 heads east traversing the lush landscape that fringes the north shore of the Columbia River. The town of **CHINOOK** (pop. 465, alt. 15 ft.) sprawls along the river, here more than four miles wide. The settlement was the site of Pacific County's first seat in the early 1850s, but this honor soon passed to the Long Beach Peninsula town of Oysterville. Chinook's prosperity came to depend on salmon fishing. By the turn of the 20th century residents boasted the country's highest per capita income for a town of its size. The boom faded after 1934 when the federal government enacted a fish conservation act banning the use of fish traps and other so-called 'fixed gear.'

East of Chinook Highway 101 follows the Columbia at the base of steep hills. This section of road follows a railroad right-of-way dating back to 1900. The highway tunnels beneath Columbia Point, the site of **FORT COLUMBIA STATE PARK** (*Discover Pass required, see p. 3*), one of Washington's few spots of drive-thru history! The 600-acre park preserves a fortification dating from the Spanish-American War, one of a trio of military installations built to guard the entrance to the Columbia (the others being Fort Canby and Oregon's Fort Stevens). The park features thirty old structures, bunkers, batteries, lookouts and an interpretive center. A self-guided trail links many of the historic sites. The Army deactivated Fort Columbia after World War II and it became a state park in 1951.

One mile east of the fort, **St. Mary's Catholic Church** marks the site of the ferry port and cannery town of **McGOWAN** (alt. 17 ft.). Nearby **Middle Village-Station Camp**, a unit of Lewis & Clark National Historical Park, features a quarter-mile walkway with interpretive markers. This was an important Native American trading village and the Corps of Discovery camped here November 15-25, 1804. Just down the road is Point Ellice, site of the former ferry port of **MEGLER** (alt. 2 ft.). A car ferry service carried US-101 traffic across the broad Columbia until the **Astoria-Megler Bridge** opened in 1966. Look out across the river – Astoria lines the Oregon shore. The distinctive profile of Saddle Mountain, the highest point in the northern Oregon Coast Range, rises behind the city. East of the bridge the Columbia broadens; wooded hills frame its shore and in clear weather the cone of Mount Saint Helens, truncated by its 1980 eruption, looms on the eastern horizon.

Beyond Megler SR-401 hugs the Washington shore. A rest area and welcome center occupy the site of **Dismal Nitch**, named by the Lewis and Clark Expedition for the dreary weather prevalent during their stay here in November, 1805. Several miles upstream pilings are all that remain of the former logging town of **KNAPPTON** (no pop., alt. 20 ft.). First called Cementville, the town sprang up around a cement plant established in 1857. The cement works failed, but a sawmill prospered. The name was changed in 1871 to honor town founder Jabez B. Knapp. **Knappton Cove Historical Center** interprets the federal quarantine station that screened immigrants from 1900 to 1938. Knappton's fate was sealed when a fire destroyed the riverside mill in 1942.

The highway swings north away from the river. After crossing a low divide amid logged-over hills, it descends into the dairying valley of the Naselle River. Settlement in the valley dates back to the 1850s. Many pioneers came from Finland in the 19th century's final two decades and you'll note many Finnish place names in the area (e.g. Wirkkala Airport, Parpala Road). **NASELLE** (pop. 377, alt. 20 ft.), the chief trading center of the district, takes its name from *Nisal* – a local Indian tribe.

Here we join State Route 4, the **Ocean Beach Highway**, which links Interstate 5 at Kelso with US-101 paralleling the Washington shore of the Columbia. The highway runs east traversing hills covered in second- and third-growth forest. The Grays River Valley, another district homesteaded largely by Finns, is a picturesque dairy region of lush green pastures, moss-cloaked trees and weather-worn barns.

At the village of **ROSBURG** (pop. 315, alt. 25 ft.), settled in the 1880s, a road branches south following the Grays River to the Columbia. It continues along the great river's shore, skirting beaches strewn with giant river-born driftwood, to the settlement of **ALTOONA** (pop. 40, alt. 18 ft.). Like most Lower Columbia communities access in the pioneer period depended solely on the river; a road link was not opened until 1935. This stretch of river boasted six canneries a century ago and was an important port for steamers plying between Astoria and Portland. The town languished after the canneries closed in the 1940s.

The road continues along the Columbia four miles to the largely abandoned hamlet of **Pillar Rock**, so-called for the landmark stone sentinel just offshore. The Lewis and Clark Expedition camped here in 1804. Gazing downstream from this site they believed, after their arduous transcontinental trek, they could finally see the Pacific. It was, however, only the wide river estuary, as they were soon to discover the ocean laid a further ten days' journey downstream. The Hudson's Bay Company established a fish salting works here in the 1830s and a cannery processed fish from 1877 into the 1950s. Retrace the route to Highway 4.

From Rosburg SR-4 runs two miles east to the farming village of **GRAYS RIVER** (pop. 265, alt. 27 ft.). Two miles ahead, turn down Loop Road and look for the **Grays River Covered Bridge** (*pictured on cover*). Built in 1905, it stands as the Northwest's oldest existing covered bridge. East of here Highway 4 swings over a series of heavily-logged hills in long, easy grades, reaching a 760-foot summit at K.M. Mountain.

Beyond, it descends reaching the Columbia again at the village of **SKAMOKAWA** (*Skah-MOCK-uh-way*, pop. 400, alt. 30 ft.). A trading post was set up here in the 1860s. Scandinavians established dairy farms in the nearby valleys in the 1870s and Skamokawa was soon renowned for its rich butter and cream. Timber and fishing also brought wealth to the community. **Redmen Hall**, built in 1894 as a school, features historical displays and photographs. Nearby **Vista Park** features picnic and camping sites, a sandy beach and great views of giant

ocean-going freighters navigating the river. The town is also home to the pint-sized **Wahkiakum County Fairgrounds**, where the community gathers each August.

East of Skamokawa the highway skirts the **Julia Butler Hansen National Wildlife Refuge**. The 4,400-acre preserve includes several islands in the Columbia and is home to a subspecies of white-tailed deer once thought to be extinct.

CATHLAMET (pop. 490, alt. 56 ft.), seat of Wahkiakum County, perches on a rocky bluff overlooking the Columbia. Chinook Indians lived in the area prior to 1846 when Astorian James Birnie established a trading post. The town later prospered, like others along the lower Columbia, as canneries and lumbering concerns set up shop and homesteaders tended dairy herds in the hinterland. The **Wahkiakum County Historical Museum** has a large collection of logging paraphernalia among its eclectic exhibits. Several old Victorian buildings grace Cathlamet, including the **Pioneer Church** (1895) built on a rock outcrop overlooking the town, and the home of the late Congresswoman Julia Butler Hansen, built by Birnie in 1857.

From central Cathlamet, SR-409 bridges an arm of the Columbia to **PUGET ISLAND** (pop. 50, alt. 10 ft.), named for a lieutenant who sailed on George Vancouver's landmark expedition of 1792. The island's rich alluvial soil attracted Scandinavian settlers in the 1880s. They drained and diked the soggy bottom land establishing lush pastures for dairy and beef cattle. From the island's south shore the last remaining car ferry on the Lower Columbia operates to Westport, Oregon.

East of Cathlamet the Ocean Beach Highway hugs the Columbian shore for many miles. In places it runs along the base of steep bluffs; in others it climbs above the Columbia affording sweeping vistas. Little remains of the town of **STELLA** (alt. 160 ft.), where homesteading began in the 1870s. By the mid-1890s Stella was a bustling lumber port shipping huge rafts of logs to California.

4. Longview to Centralia (via SR-4 & I-5)

Highway 4 deserts the Columbia east of Stella, skirting sluggish sloughs and lush pasture land. Suburban sprawl marks the outskirts of **LONGVIEW** (pop. 37,510, alt. 21 ft.). Lewis & Clark's Corps of Discovery camped at the mouth of the Cowlitz River south of here in 1805. Homesteading started in 1849, and a community named Monticello sprang up between the Cowlitz and Columbia. A group of settlers, the so-called *Monticello Convention*, met here in 1852 to petition Congress for the creation of a separate territory north of the Columbia River.

Their wish was granted when in the following year Washington was established as a separate territory from Oregon. This act also designated Monticello seat of the newly-created Cowlitz County; however the flood-prone settlement was abandoned in 1867 and the county seat moved upstream to higher ground at Kelso.



R.A. Long, planner and founder of modern Longview

Longview became one of the largest planned cities in the country – a curving grid of streets interspersed with open space and parks reminiscent of cities of much larger size. Turn off Highway 4 onto Nichols Boulevard and **Lake Sacajawea Park**, appears on your left. Within its 120 acres are grassy lawns, groves of trees, specialty gardens, an arboretum and 52-acre Lake Sacajawea, a former oxbow of the Cowlitz River. Trout, bass, perch, carp and catfish inhabit the lake and fishing is allowed in season (a Washington fishing license is required of persons age 15 and older). The elegant **Old West Side Historic District** borders the park on the east.

Modern Longview was founded in 1923 by timber entrepreneur R.A. Long, who selected this riverside site for a deepwater port and forest products complex. For an impression of its planned character, turn left on Washington Way. **R.A. Long Park** sits in the center of a circuitous traffic plaza at Olympia and Washington Ways. This roundabout setup is unique in the Pacific Northwest. The grand streets lined with stately maples emanating from the hub are evocative of European capitals. The plaza is flanked by many of the city's earliest buildings, most erected in the Georgian style, including the 1926 library and the 1923 **Monticello Hotel**.

Just north of the park spanning Olympia Way is **Nutty Narrows** (pictured at right), said to be the world's first bridge for squirrels. Local resident Amos Peters built the bridge in 1963 to provide the critters with safe passage across the busy thoroughfare. The original maple trees supporting the span perished to disease in 2005, but the bridge was relocated to its present spot between **Lower Columbia College** and the Civic Center plaza. The city now has half-a-dozen similar structures lending credence to its moniker, "Squirrel Bridge Capital of the World".



Photo courtesy City of Longview

Longview's industrial district lines the Columbia River and includes large factories processing aluminum, chemicals and forest products. This is Washington's third largest port and ocean-going ships carry the region's products throughout the world.

Highway 4 bridges the Cowlitz River and **KELSO** (pop. 11,980, alt. 26 ft.) nestles on its east shore. The stream is noted for its winter run of smelt, a tasty small silver fish. Salmon, steelhead and sturgeon are also caught. Pioneer settlement dates back to 1847, and Kelso soon became a fishing, lumbering and trading center, capitalizing on its location near the confluence of the Cowlitz, Coweeman and Columbia. The **Three Rivers Mall** adjacent to Interstate 5 is named after this convergence. The old business district facing the Cowlitz contains a number of interesting buildings, including the 1912 train station (on First between Maple and Alder). The **Cowlitz County Historical Museum** (405 Allen St.) chronicles the area's development.

Ten miles north and just west of the freeway is **CASTLE ROCK** (pop. 2,135, alt. 52 ft.). The town takes its name from a local landmark to early river navigation. The first settlers arrived in the 1840s. A sawmill opened in 1875, specializing in cedar shingles, a new product made from the local stands of western red cedar.

Side Trip – Mt. St. Helens

Castle Rock is also one of the principal gateways to **MOUNT SAINT HELENS**, the most recently active volcano in the Lower 48. **Spirit Lake Memorial Highway** (SR-504) leads 52 miles east from Exit 49 to spectacular overlooks in the national volcanic monument. During the winter months (late November through March) snow accumulates on the upper reaches of this road and the **Johnston Ridge Observatory** and visitor center at road's end are closed in winter and early spring. The **Mt. St. Helens National Volcanic Monument Visitor Center**, six miles east of Castle Rock on SR-504, is a great place to obtain information on access and recreation in and around the volcano. The center features exhibits of area natural history and screens a video of the 1980 eruption. Keep in mind, Highway 504 ends at Johnston Ridge – it's another fifty miles back to Interstate 5. Allow two hours for the round-trip drive alone. THIS AREA IS COVERED IN OUR **AROUND MT. ST. HELENS AUTO TOUR**.

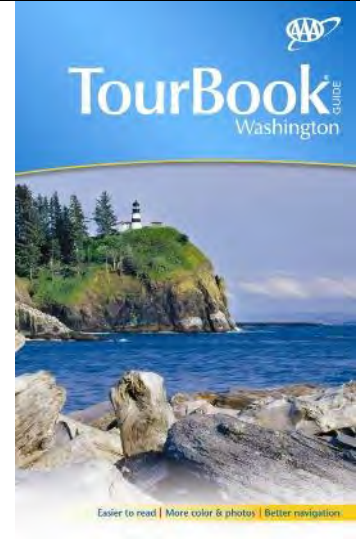





'World's Largest Egg'

Interstate 5 continues north through low hills, bypassing small towns dating back to the late 1800s and early 1900s. At the turn of the 20th century **VADER** (pop. 610, alt. 131 ft.), three miles southwest of Exit 60, had a booming forest products industry sustaining a population of 5,000. Six miles farther along SR-506 is **RYDERWOOD** (pop. 395, alt. 262 ft.), a retirement community occupying a former logging company town established in the 1920s.

WINLOCK (pop. 1,340, alt. 309 ft.) nestles amidst wooded foothills, three miles west of I-5 Exit 63. Although it's on the main railroad line, the town has the air of a quiet backwater, bypassed by the Pacific Highway (old US-99) and I-5. Winlock is the site of the **World's Largest Egg**, a plastic and wire mesh monument to its former role as a poultry raising center, located beside the railroad tracks just north of downtown. You can still see the old poultry sheds along the Winlock-Vader Road south of town.

The freeway glides down to the Chehalis River Valley farmlands south of Chehalis, completing our Auto Tour.

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Photos by Tony Mayer unless otherwise indicated, Map drawn by John King. Updated 14 June, 2018.