

You have successfully arrived at the Nestucca/  
Sand Lake Water Trail online guidebook.  
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# TILLAMOOK COUNTY WATER TRAIL OREGON



## Nestucca and Sand Lake WATERSHEDS FLATWATER & WHITEWATER

*Produced by the Tillamook Estuaries Partnership*

# WELCOME TO THE NESTUCCA, SAND LAKE, & NESKOWIN CREEK WATERSHEDS

## Tillamook County Water Trail - The Vision

The Tillamook County Water Trail encourages the quiet exploration and discovery of the ecological, historical, social, and cultural features of Tillamook County from the uplands to the ocean.

The Water Trail is a recreational and educational experience that promotes and celebrates the value of Tillamook County's waterways with direct benefit to the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the County.

The Water Trail enhances the identity of Tillamook County by establishing an alternative, low-impact way to enjoy and appreciate the wonders of all five Tillamook County estuaries and watersheds.

A water trail is a path on a waterway connected through signs, maps, and access points providing a scenic and educational experience for non-motorized users.



South Tillamook County boasts three impressive watersheds that together span 357 square miles and contain the unassuming hamlets of Beaver, Hebo, Cloverdale, Pacific City, and Neskowin, among others. History establishes these waterways as valued sites for sustenance, trade, and recreation. The waters of the Neskowin, Sand Lake and Nestucca estuaries flow through land dominated by dense forests, serene refuges, and tranquil parks. Bustling dairies dot the banks as you follow the path blazed by many a salmon making their way to and from the sea. Overhead you can spy migrating birds as they circle down to find the perfect spot to land.

This guidebook aims to help you explore and experience the superior recreational opportunities this area affords with safety, responsibility, and stewardship in mind. Buckle up your life jacket, place your paddle in the water and set out on your next adventure.

Above: Roger Ross Photography

Below: Printed with artist permission, Rose Perez ©



"EARLY MORNING CATCH" CIRCA 1800'S

Rose Perez, artist  
Lava ©



# CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

Courtesy of Pacific City Birding & Blues Festival



A watershed is a complex and diverse ecosystem. Restoring healthy rivers and bays is also a multifaceted endeavour. Burgeoning awareness of the area's abundant rivers, sloughs, and bays was the impetus for establishing the Tillamook County Water Trail (TCWT).



The Tillamook Estuaries Partnership (TEP) was chosen as lead partner for the TCWT and has shepherded the process

since its inception. TEP, a National Estuary Program, was perfectly positioned for this role given their mission - to conserve and restore Tillamook County's estuaries and watersheds in their entirety.

The TCWT attracts a broad range of individuals, each adding unique perspectives and ideas that enhance the project. Paddle clean-ups, educational tours, and water quality and invasive species monitoring have been undertaken by users of the TCWT. Utilizing targeted outreach in regional newspaper articles, internet, and personal presentations, the TCWT has proven to be a catalyst for increased interest in paddling throughout Tillamook County, and local waterways in general. The project has moved beyond its original vision to become a valuable tool not only for recreationalists, but for individuals interested in sustaining this region's vital natural resources.

Guy Stewart - Nestucca-Neskowin Watersheds Council



Residents of Oregon have many opportunities to raise their awareness of natural resource issues. One tangible way is to join a local watershed council. Watershed councils are locally organized, voluntary, non-regulatory groups established to improve the conditions of watersheds in their area. Councils represent varied interests in the basin and are

balanced in their makeup. Council members collaborate to identify issues, promote cooperative solutions, focus resources, establish goals for enhancement, and foster communication throughout the watershed.

There are many ways you can support restoration and conservation efforts in your watershed: volunteer with your local watershed council; use native vegetation in your landscaping and curb the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides; maintain your septic systems; plant riparian buffers along your riverbank; appreciate the beauty of your surroundings; and as always reduce, reuse, and recycle; contact the Tillamook Estuaries Partnership for more ideas.

Aubrey, grade 5 © Community Arts Project  
www.communityartsproject.net

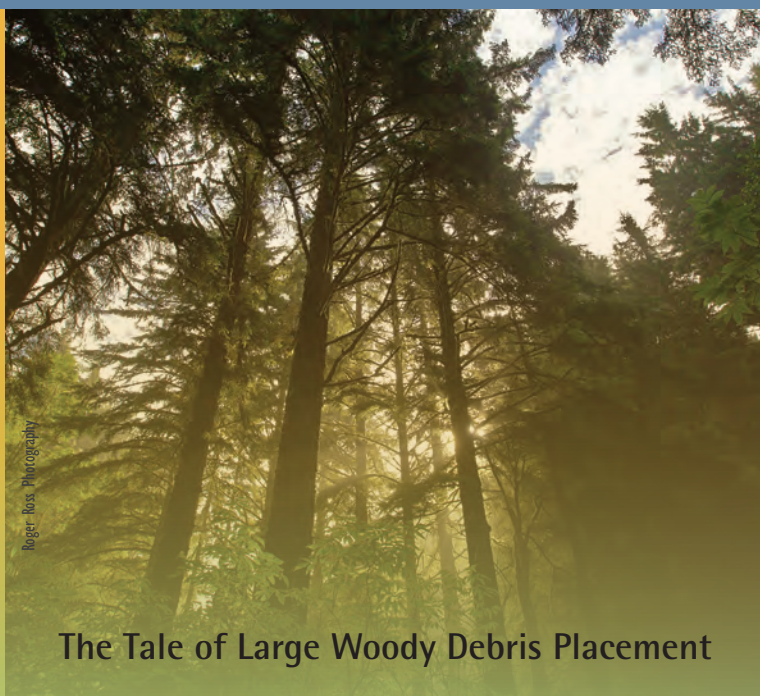


## Working for healthy watersheds - how you can help.

- Nestucca, Neskowin & Sand Lake Watershed Council: (503)965-2200
- Tillamook Bay Watershed Council: (503)322-0002
- Lower Nehalem Watershed Council: (503)368-7424
- Upper Nehalem Watershed Council: (503)429-0869
- Tillamook County Soil & Water Conservation District: (503)842-2848
- Tillamook Estuaries Partnership: (503)322-2222



# CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION



## The Tale of Large Woody Debris Placement

Within the Nestucca watershed, as in most watersheds, large woody debris is a primary factor in controlling the shape of a stream channel, slowing water velocity, and providing shelter for aquatic wildlife. Substantial logs create areas of calm water that allow gravels to collect, creating ideal spawning habitat for salmon species. Large wood traps sediment and organic matter, materials that make up the nutritional foundation in most small streams. Land management practices of the last century led to a considerable reduction of large woody debris in streams, triggering rapid channel deterioration and decreasing fish populations. Now, local landowners, agencies, and non-profit organizations are teaming up to reverse the impact of earlier practices and large woody debris is once again becoming a prominent feature of our waterways.



## What is a Healthy Riparian Area?

No guidebook would be complete without a map, and no waterway is complete without a riparian area. In all likelihood, everyone has visited a riparian area, but may not have realized it. A riparian area is simply the vegetated corridor along the bank of a water body. Healthy riparian areas are an important part of a thriving watershed, consisting of a diverse mix of native plants, and trees which work together to provide shade, inhibit erosion, and filter contaminants. High-functioning riparian areas have a direct positive effect on water quality and habitat for salmon and other aquatic life.

The Tillamook Estuaries Partnership, along with the Tillamook County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Nestucca, Neskowin and Sand Lake Watersheds Council, and other partners, team up with volunteer landowners to develop and implement enhancement plans for privately owned riparian areas. Common strategies include the removal of invasive species and plantings of native trees and shrubs, to establish a healthy understory that out-compete encroaching invasives. On appropriate agricultural sites, riparian enhancement includes fencing or off-channel watering systems for livestock. Whenever possible, these water quality improvement solutions are provided at reduced or no cost to the landowners. Working toward improved water quality is a community responsibility; the organizations listed above are ready to help.





# THE NESTUCCA

Although they share a common purpose of creating the Nestucca Bay, the Nestucca and Little Nestucca watersheds are each unique. Take the time and appreciate the subtle differences as you explore these watersheds from the comfort of your non-motorized craft.

## Upper Nestucca

Venture 50 miles upriver from its mouth on the edge of the Pacific Ocean and discover the Nestucca River's headwaters. Flowing from an elevation of 1,852 feet at the McGuire Reservoir, the Nestucca River travels west, climbing down a thickly-forested narrow valley to the community of Blaine.

"Life Cycle of a Salmon", East Elementary School



Occupants of the upper segment of this watershed include Chinook, and Coho salmon; and Cutthroat and Steelhead trout. Restoration efforts have reopened a network of tributaries for fish passage and reintroduced large woody debris. The large wood, although beneficial for the ecosystem, impedes paddling, as does the low river levels in the warmer seasons, on this upper stretch.

## Blaine to Beaver

Near the tiny community of Blaine the valley widens, dairy farms begin to appear and the gradient lessens. Depending on the time of year, prepare to share the waterways with avid drift boaters enjoying the emerald colored Class II - III waters in pursuit of a winter Steelhead or fall Chinook.

## Beaver to Pacific City

The array of scenery along this final lower stretch of the Nestucca is pleasing. Riverside homes are interspersed amongst farmland and forests. Near Cloverdale the influence of the tide is felt, the river broadens and the current starts to slow. The modest town of Woods, with its easy access to the river and proximity to the ocean, made a perfect spot for the first inhabitants to settle. Bustling Pacific City tempts you with a variety of eateries, shops and activities as you reach the end of your journey.

## The Little Nestucca

Hosting an impressive 71 miles of fish-bearing tributaries, the Little Nestucca River takes shape in the Van Duzer Corridor. It winds west through dense forest land and the historic Dolph Junction, cutting through a narrow rocky canyon. It then slows and widens out to saturate a broad wetland valley and filters into the southern curve of the Nestucca Bay. The Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge encompasses much

of the wetland area, and birding in this scenic marsh is a relaxing and rewarding venture. Although the faster upriver stretches of the Little Nestucca are hard to access with a boat, Little Nestucca River Rd. braids east alongside the river, and crosses back and forth and over scenic one-lane bridges allowing any river lover breathtaking views of the rocky salmon run.



Photo Contest Winner, 2nd Place - "Little Nestucca River" by VanScott [www.neskowin.smugmug.com](http://www.neskowin.smugmug.com)







## Salmon as King

The mighty salmon is revered, by many, as a cultural, economical, and spiritual icon of the western waterways. As long as people have lived near these waters, they have relied on the salmon as a food source and some regard it as a foundation for life. It is estimated annual runs of salmon in South Tillamook County were in the tens of thousands before pioneer

settlement, giving credence to the anecdotal stories that claim "There were so many fish I could have walked across their backs". This abundance must have been extraordinary to behold, and it is no wonder the Native Americans honored this species with such devotion.

The Nestucca region was soon recognized as a premier fishing area, and as its notoriety grew, commercial entities saw economic potential in the bountiful fishery. The Elmore Cannery was built near the mouth of the Nestucca Bay in late 1880's. Profits were as plentiful as the fish for several years, but before long the salmon runs slowed and the cannery closed in 1919. Spurred on by local concerns, citizen efforts led to a voter approved referendum that eventually closed Nestucca Bay to commercial fishing in 1927.

Today we understand over-harvest will eventually deplete a species and poor management practices can diminish habitat and negatively impact water quality. Various federal, state, and local agencies are undertaking projects re-establishing stream complexity, improving the functionality of riparian areas, and restoring wetlands and other freshwater and estuarine habitats. Combined with careful harvest management practices salmonid numbers are beginning to show improvements. And though today, they might be fewer in number than long ago, salmon still define and shape a way of life for countless local residents and visitors.



Above: "Nestucca Bay Catch";  
 Courtesy, Tillamook County Pioneer Museum  
 Background: "Juvenile Salmonid"; Roger Ross Photography



## The Dory Story

Imagine yourself in Pacific City in the early 1900's; the shores are dotted with horse-drawn wagons hauling double-ended, flat-bottomed boats onto the sand. Eager fishermen unload the vessels, called "dories", roll them to the water on logs, leap aboard, and begin to row through the surf zone out to the open ocean. You are witnessing the origins of the Pacific City dory fleet. This tradition of dory fishing grew considerably when Nestucca Bay was closed to commercial angling and fisherman were forced to find an alternative for the "catch". Because there were no moorings within Nestucca Bay, ingenious fisherman decided the easiest route would be to launch and land the dories directly on the beach at Cape Kiwanda. This daunting task required strong respect for the ocean and an experienced hand at the helm.

Today outboard motors have been added to the dory, but even with this modern convenience, many dorymen still row through the surf just as their fathers and grandfathers before them. The Pacific City Dorymen's Association, formed in 1996, is over 300 members strong. Their mission includes promoting the values of the dory fleet, protecting and improving public access to the beach, and supporting fishing laws and regulations consistent with realistic conservation of the resources. Each summer the dory fleet celebrates their unique history and distinctive traditions with "Dory Days". For more information visit: [www.pcdorymen.com](http://www.pcdorymen.com).



Above: Today, traditional non-motorized, dory boat rowing races live on; Courtesy, Pacific City Sun  
 Below: Courtesy, Clyde Hudson



# SHARING THE WATERWAYS

While enjoying the water trail, be aware of your direct impact on the surrounding area. Your efforts will make a difference both for the environment and other waterway users. Fishing, boating, and hunting are popular around the Nestucca Bay watershed – know the seasons and give ample room for these activities. When observing wildlife, allow adequate space so they are not disturbed. Do not remove rocks, plants, or other native objects, as these create habitat for the multitude of species living along these shores.

Public access is a privilege to us all. Out of consideration to private landowners, if you are unsure whether the land is private or public, please stay off. For more information, see *Who Owns the Waterways*, Oregon Department of State Lands.



Public access is indicated on the maps within this guidebook. In the field, proper access is denoted by a Tillamook County Water Trail sign.

When exploring the outdoors, some key concepts will help keep the environment clean and beautiful:

- Be prepared; educate yourself
- Pack it in, pack it out
- Use public access
- Camp on hard surfaces
- Dispose of human wastes properly
- Respect wildlife and private property
- Leave it how you find it...or better

*Common courtesy goes a long way on the water.*

Emerging along side the long-standing tradition of drift boat fishing, the TCWT is hosting a new non-motorized sport – kayak fishing. The ability to probe nooks and dodge main channels expand the typical experience and offer enthusiasts more to explore. Additionally, stand up paddleboarders (SUP) seeking remote paddling opportunities and easy access have begun to discover the TCWT. Trends are such that lessons and clubs for kayak fishing and 'SUPing' can be found nearly everywhere. The U.S. Coast Guard deems SUPs as "vessels" which must abide by boating safety laws: If outside the surf/swim zone a life jacket and noise device must be on board and an Oregon aquatic invasive species (AIS) permit is required on crafts 10' and larger. Additionally, know local regulations, navigation rules, and take a boater safety course. Websites to visit: American Canoe Association, Oregon State Marine Board, U.S. Coast Guard



Above: Janice Gaines, SUP Manzanita  
Below: TEP 2012 Speaker Series – Kayak Fishing Workshop



# RESPECTING THE WATERWAYS

## Safety is a Top Priority

Proper planning and preparation will ensure your paddling experience is a positive one. Being knowledgeable about local weather, tides, and currents will assist in making good boating decisions. Conditions can change rapidly. Check the current conditions before you hit the water and include them in your trip planning. Guidebooks, including this one, and maps should be used for reference only and no guarantee is made as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the information they contain.

There are many in-water hazards to consider; educate yourself about what these hazards are and learn their locations. Understand that new obstacles can arise at any time, such as log 'strainers' - downed trees in the water that can be life threatening. Wearing a life jacket is critical. Anticipate the chance of getting wet, and dress accordingly. The water in Tillamook County is very cold, even in summer months. As the tide goes out, the water in the rivers and bays moves rapidly, so plan to paddle incoming and slack tides. If you are new to non-motorized boating, take classes to improve your skills and knowledge. It is important to always paddle with a companion and to not overestimate your skill level.

## South Tillamook County Weather & Safety Information

USGS Real Time Water Data:

[www.waterdata.usgs.gov](http://www.waterdata.usgs.gov)

NOAA Weather: [www.wrh.noaa.gov](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov)

Tide Predictions:

[www.saltwatertides.com](http://www.saltwatertides.com)

Surf Report: [www.oregonsurfcheck.com](http://www.oregonsurfcheck.com)

Emergency: 9-1-1

US Coast Guard Observations:

South of Pacific City: (541)765-2124

North of Pacific City: (503)322-3531

Nestucca Rural Fire Protection and Rescue - Pacific City: OR (503)392-3313

Artwork above: Bobby Wood



## Be Prepared:

- Wear your life jacket.
- Carry proper safety equipment.
- Preparation, knowledge, and skill building is critical to safe paddling.
- Paddle with a companion who knows local waterways and can assist in an emergency.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you will be back.
- Scout for river and water hazards.
- Never grab a stationary object while moving on swift water.
- Stay clear of a motorboat's path.
- Position your boat perpendicular to an approaching wake/wave.
- Wear a helmet and prepare for whitewater above Cloverdale on the Nestucca River.
- Dress adequately for the water temperature; be familiar with signs of hypothermia.
- Obtain an AIS permit and carry on board. [www.dfw.state.or.us](http://www.dfw.state.or.us)

## NEW!

Free Online Paddlesports Safety Course, offered by Oregon State Marine Board. Learn the basics at your own pace: [www.oregon.gov/OSMB](http://www.oregon.gov/OSMB)



Facebook: Tillamook County Water Trail or visit our website: [www.tbnep.org](http://www.tbnep.org)



Facebook is a registered trademark of Facebook, Inc.

## Items to bring on your trip:

- Life jacket
- Helmet
- Extra paddle
- Non-cotton clothes
- Paddle float
- First aid kit
- This map/compass/GPS
- Dry bags
- Rope/Knife
- Bilge pump
- Drinking water/food
- Sunscreen
- Whistle/flares/flashlights/etc.
- Cell phone w/emergency numbers (coverage can be unreliable)
- Oregon Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) permit



# DRESS FOR SURVIVAL

## DRESS FOR SURVIVAL by Jim Geltz

The intent of layering outdoor clothing is to keep you warm even when wet. Layering traps the warm air of your body in and between the layers. Three insulation layers are ideal. The layer next to your skin should be made of synthetics, silk, or wool. A long sleeve, light weight, pullover undershirt is just right for the first layer. The next layer is usually a medium weight, long-sleeved layer garment containing "pile", a material made from recycled plastic pop bottles. The outer layer can be a wind shell, a dry suit, or another breathable and wind/water resistant garment. For rain, a quality rain-suit is a good option. In intermittent rain, a waterproof pull-over with a hood and venting under the sleeves works well. When paddling hard, you'll still get damp, but stay warm. A pull-over shell in hard rain will eventually soak through, so having poly or pile underneath is critical. Water temperature and weather conditions should dictate your clothing choice, not what you own.

Once wet, cotton is nearly impossible to dry out and robs you of your body heat 20 times faster than dry clothing. In the Pacific Northwest, wearing cotton clothing is potentially hazardous because of year-round cold water temperatures.

Fall, winter, and spring paddling warrants a dry suit with gaskets in the neck, ankles, and wrists that will keep your layers from getting splashed. Even in warm summer weather, you will want to dress not for the air temperature, but for the water temperature, which along this coast is 50 degrees. If you accidentally go in the water in rough conditions, wearing a wet suit or a dry suit is imperative. A hypothermic event can easily kill someone within an hour.



Dressing for on-the-water activities in appropriate cold-water clothing can give you extra time to perform a self-rescue or enable you to rescue someone else. Proper layering will offer you a few more minutes in an adverse situation.

Regardless of how you dress, the final layer is your life jacket. If you are on the water, wear it! Once you are in the water it's too late to put it on and buckle it up. Without it, your chances of survival go down fast. It is seldom a single event that threatens your survival. Usually three or more factors combine to create a survival situation. Without good layering and a protective outer layer you have one strike against you before you depart. So to have a good time when you are paddling, make safe decisions, and dress appropriately.



## National Recreation Trail Designation

In 2012, the entire Tillamook County Water Trail system was privileged to receive a National Recreation Trail (NRT) designation from the National Park Service.

The NRT program recognizes exemplary trails of local and regional significance. This national network of trails provides outstanding opportunities to enjoy America's great outdoors. Currently, 58 water trails have received this national honor, TCWT is proud to be included in this group.





# RESOURCES

## Weather & Conditions

Pacific City Weather: [pacificcity.org/weather.html](http://pacificcity.org/weather.html)  
Live Pacific City Cam/Wind & Swell Report: [momentsurfco.com/live-cam](http://momentsurfco.com/live-cam)  
Oregon Rivers: [waterdata.usgs.gov/or/nwis/rt](http://waterdata.usgs.gov/or/nwis/rt)  
Tide Predictions: [protides.com](http://protides.com)  
Tide tables provided at local markets.  
NOAA: [www.wrh.noaa.gov/pqr/](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/pqr/)  
Buoys: [www.wrh.noaa.gov/pqr/buoys.php](http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/pqr/buoys.php)  
Surf Report: [www.oregonsurfcheck.com](http://www.oregonsurfcheck.com)  
Garibaldi, OR Coast Guard Observations: (503)322-3234  
Depoe Bay, OR Coast Guard Observations: (541)765-2122  
Road Report: [tripcheck.com](http://tripcheck.com)



## Safety Information

American Canoe Association: [americancanoe.org](http://americancanoe.org)  
Oregon State Marine Board Equipment and Safety Information:  
[www.boatoregon.com/OSMB/BoatLaws/Requirements.shtml](http://www.boatoregon.com/OSMB/BoatLaws/Requirements.shtml)  
US Coast Guard Navigation Center - Local Notice to Mariners: [navcen.uscg.gov](http://navcen.uscg.gov)

## Instruction/Tours

### Retail/Rentals

Kayak Tillamook, LLC: [kayaktillamook.com](http://kayaktillamook.com)  
Nestucca Adventures: (503)965-0060  
Moment Surf Co.: (503)483-1025  
Wheeler Marina Rentals: (503)368-5780  
Wheeler on the Bay Lodge: (503)368-5858  
Water Trails: [seakayakermag.com](http://seakayakermag.com)



## Clubs/Groups

Tillamook County Water Trail: [tbnep.org](http://tbnep.org)  
Bend Paddle Trail Alliance: [bendpaddletrailalliance.org](http://bendpaddletrailalliance.org)  
Lower Columbia Canoe Club: [l-ccc.org](http://l-ccc.org)  
Oregon Kayak & Canoe Club: [okcc.org](http://okcc.org)  
Oregon Ocean Paddling Society: [oopskayak.org](http://oopskayak.org)

*Artwork: Fishprint by Alondra -  
TEP's 11th Annual Children's Clean Water Festival*

## Transportation/Shuttles

Tillamook County Transportation District: [tillamookbus.com](http://tillamookbus.com)  
Original Nestucca Valley Sporting Goods: (503)392-4269  
Nestucca Adventures: (503)965-0060

## Chambers

Pacific City-Nestucca Valley: (503)392-4340  
Manzanita-Nehalem-Wheeler: (877)368-5100  
Rockaway Beach: (503)355-8108  
Tillamook: (503)842-7525

## Camping

Bureau of Land Management:  
[http://www.blm.gov/or/resources/recreation/site\\_info.php?siteid=238](http://www.blm.gov/or/resources/recreation/site_info.php?siteid=238)  
Oregon State Parks and Recreation:  
[oregon.gov/OPRD/PARKS/](http://oregon.gov/OPRD/PARKS/)  
Tillamook County Parks Dept.: (503)322-3522  
[www.co.tillamook.or.us/gov/parks/Campgrounds.htm](http://www.co.tillamook.or.us/gov/parks/Campgrounds.htm)  
Tillamook State Forest:  
[http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/pages/state\\_forests/recreation.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/pages/state_forests/recreation.aspx)  
US Forest Service:  
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/siuslaw/recreation/camping-cabins/recarea/?recid=42677&actid=29>



## Paddling Permits/Fees

Aquatic Invasive Species: [www.dfw.state.or.us/online\\_license\\_sales/index.asp](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/online_license_sales/index.asp)  
Oregon State Parks Day Use Fees: [www.oregon.gov/OPRD/PARKS/dayuse\\_permit.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/OPRD/PARKS/dayuse_permit.shtml)  
Tillamook County Boat Launch Fees:  
[www.co.tillamook.or.us/gov/Parks/BoatLaunchFees.htm](http://www.co.tillamook.or.us/gov/Parks/BoatLaunchFees.htm)

## Other

Wildlife Center of the North Coast: (503)338-0331  
[www.coastwildlife.org](http://www.coastwildlife.org)  
(If you encounter injured wildlife)





# THE WATERSHEDS OF SAND LAKE, NESTUCCA, AND NESKOWIN



1 MILE



## Legend

for following section maps

- |                           |                              |                     |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Public Access - Flatwater | Public Access - Whitewater   | Highway Mileposts   |
| US Forest Service         | Flow Direction               | 10 River Miles      |
| Parks                     | Private Land - Do not access | Wetlands            |
| Local Gov't.              | Bureau of Land Management    | Mud Flats           |
| Oregon Dept. of Forestry  | US Fish & Wildlife Service   | Disabled Access     |
| Common Kayak Access       | Wildlife Viewing             | Lodging             |
| Camping                   | Restroom                     | Motorized Boat Ramp |
| Picnic Area               | Drinking Water               | Food                |

This guidebook cannot alert you to every hazard or anticipate the reader's abilities. The content within these maps is in no way a guarantee that any area is safe or unsafe. People using this guidebook must understand their own limitations, paddle within their abilities, and assume full responsibility for their own safety.

All designated access sites are owned by public entities, fees may be charged. Roads leading to denoted areas are accessible with 2-wheel drive vehicles, although for remote sites, 4-wheel drive may be necessary under some conditions. No warranty is made by TEP as to the accuracy, reliability or completeness of information contained in this guidebook.



Hebo Lake Campground - 12 sites, open seasonally, vault toilets and water. Small lake with ADA fishing access, paddling, and hiking year round.

Castle Rock Campground - 4.5 miles east of Hebo, free, minimal sites, vault-toilets.



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### Help Stop the Spread of Aquatic Invasives

Aquatic invasive species are a serious threat to Oregon's waterways. Introduction and spread of harmful non-native species can upset the delicate balance of our fragile ecosystems. Aquatic invasive species are often spread between waterways by hitching a ride on boats and gear.



U.S. Geological Survey

These tiny New Zealand Mudsnails can easily transport themselves on boots, boats and gear, and have been found in Tillamook County.



The Nature Conservancy

Above: Knotweed is spreading rapidly in Oregon riparian ecosystems. These tall and robust plants are commonly seen in the lower rivers. Below: Yellow Flag Iris - This aquatic invader can be mistaken for cattails when not in flower.

**CLEAN** your boat and gear thoroughly before transferring to a new water body.

**DRAIN**, remove, and empty all compartments of your watercraft. Rinse well including areas that may trap mud and debris.

**DRY** your boat and gear.

More info: [www.boatoregon.com/OSMB/Clean/ANS.shtml](http://www.boatoregon.com/OSMB/Clean/ANS.shtml)

**REPORT INVASIVES:** If you think you have found an invasive species, call the hotline: 1-866-INVADER

Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Permits are required on all crafts 10' or longer. More info: [www.boatoregon.com/OSMB/](http://www.boatoregon.com/OSMB/)



Allison Fox

Eurasian Water Milfoil - Currently found in many Oregon waterbodies. University of Florida, Bugwood.org





# POPULAR SOUTH COUNTY TRIPS

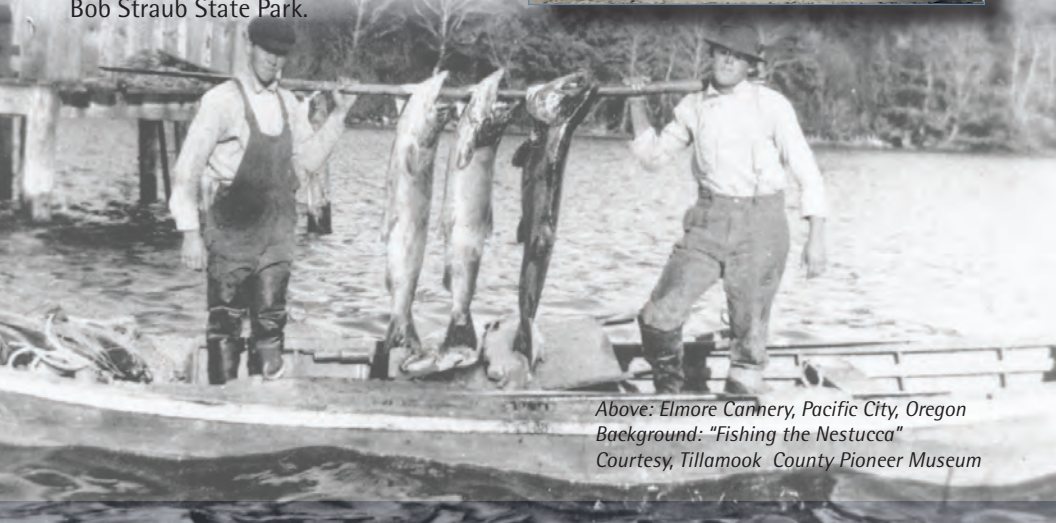
## Little Nestucca River

### Meda Loop Boat Launch to Pacific City Boat Launch

Considerations: 3 miles; 2 hours; Beginner - Intermediate  
High tide launch in order to paddle with the outgoing tide.  
Afternoon winds off the ocean can create choppy water.  
Excellent scenery, birding, and wildlife viewing. Launch fee.

This Little Nestucca River paddle will take you up the river through the Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge's wetlands, or out to Nestucca Bay. Pastures meld into dense forests of Red Alder and Sitka Spruce. The forested areas and the many gnarled washed out logs and roots of the Refuge harbor much wildlife. As you round the middle bend, Cape Kiwanda and Haystack Rock reside in the distance. Paddling the shallow bay now, navigating mud flats at low tide, it's hard to imagine that for a short time at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this area boasted a thriving commercial fishery. The abundance of salmon generated enough income to support a cannery and brought many large commercial vessels to the Port. In less than 40 years, fish populations plummeted and navigability issues led to the closure of the Elmore Cannery in 1919.

**Access:** Traveling south on Hwy. 101, approximately 26 miles south of Tillamook, take a left on Meda Loop Rd. past mile marker 91. The boat launch is the first immediate left. **Access:** The Pacific City County Boat Launch is west on Pacific Ave, left on Sunset drive, left towards destination - follow signs for Bob Straub State Park.



Above: Elmore Cannery, Pacific City, Oregon  
Background: "Fishing the Nestucca"  
Courtesy, Tillamook County Pioneer Museum

## Nestucca River

### Bixby County Boat Launch to Three Rivers County Boat Launch

Considerations: 5 miles; 2 hours; Class I; Beginner - Intermediate  
Moving water and small riffles; Water level is ideal at 5' - 7' on NOAA's hydrologic gauge near Beaver, OR.  
Plan for peak angling Fall through Winter. Launch fee.

If you prefer the river to do some of the work and a small thrill, this is your run. This scenic stretch is enveloped in natural beauty. Quick-moving water zips you past wide-leaf maples and through a bountiful salmon and steelhead run. The hazy blue Nestucca is a popular fly fishing and drift boat destination, so prepare to share the waterway with fishermen trying to land the "big one". Low water may require portage near Farmer Creek.

**Access:** Headed south on Hwy. 101 take a left (east) on Blaine Road in Beaver, OR. Drive .5 miles and turn right onto Bixby Road. Follow 1.3 miles to the dead end and the launch site. This site is a sandy put-in with minimal parking and no restroom. To find the take-out, head south on Hwy. 101, turn right (west) on Hanson Rd. just south of Hebo. Follow .3 miles to a three way intersection and turn right. Follow to the end to the boat launch. There is a three dollar day use fee and a port-a-toilet with plenty of parking.





### Three Rivers County Boat Launch to Cloverdale

Considerations: 2.75 miles; 2.5 hours; Class I; Beginner - Intermediate  
Some minor moving water; once the gauge has dropped below 6' you could be dragging your boat. Launch fee at each facility.

This short but fulfilling run is perfect for anyone that is seeking a quick peek at the magnificent scenery that is inherent to the Nestucca watershed. One of the least populated stretches of the river, this section winds through some of south Tillamook County's finest cattle country. **Access:** Three Rivers County Boat Launch is located just south of Hebo. Turn right (west) on Hanson Rd. Follow .3 miles to a three way intersection and turn right. Follow to the end to the boat launch. There is a three dollar day use fee and a port-a-toilet with plenty of parking. The take-out for the Cloverdale launch is found behind the post office.



Photo Contest Winner, 3rd Place, "The Nestucca River," Charlie Wooldridge

### Lower Nestucca

#### Cloverdale Boat Launch to Woods

Considerations: 7.5 miles; 4 hours; Beginner - Intermediate  
Most of this stretch is tidally influenced. Launch fee.

Paddlers can expect good birding, scenery and picture taking opportunities on this trip. Mostly tidally influenced, the put-in has a surprise riffle that is easily portaged if NOAA's hydrologic gauge near Beaver, OR is lower than 7'. If possible, plan to paddle early in the day with the outgoing tide. High winds or an incoming tide can make the final mile quite physically demanding. **Access:** The Cloverdale launch is found behind the post office, follow the small sign; \$4 use/parking fee. The take-out is on the north bank, up-river of the Woods bridge. A concrete ramp makes getting out of the water simple; minimal street-side parking is nearby.

### Nestucca Bay

#### Woods to Pacific City and the Nestucca Bay

Considerations: 3 miles; 2 hours; Beginner - Intermediate  
Tidally influenced

The paddle through Pacific City offers many visual delights from a modest "urban" tone in town and on out to the bay for a more natural and remote experience. One of "PC's" most fascinating historical stories is that of the *Brooten Baths*. Hans Brooten brought his large family from North Dakota to the Nestucca Bay after recurring visions encouraged him to help the sick. Hans discovered a mineral which he called "kelp ore" deep within his property along the bay. Although some considered him unsound, he persevered to find a use for his new found discovery. He advertised the healing properties of "kelp ore", and the sick would bathe in special baths, apply it directly to the skin, or take it by mouth. Some claimed it cured their ailments. Visitors began to arrive from all over to be healed, so Brooten built more baths and a hotel to accommodate the crowds. The Brooten Baths prospered until its peak during the 1920s when an outbreak of tuberculosis eventually closed the business. Today, the house still stands, but little remains of the bath houses, hotel, or any evidence of the many guests seeking to be healed. You can still paddle past the old pilings from the resort that remain out in the Nestucca Bay, a couple of blocks south of the Fisher's Point Boat Launch. The docks were used to access the bay, especially for clamming as these were a celebrated item on the hotel menu.

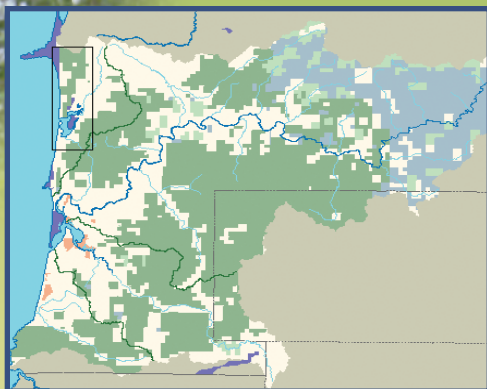
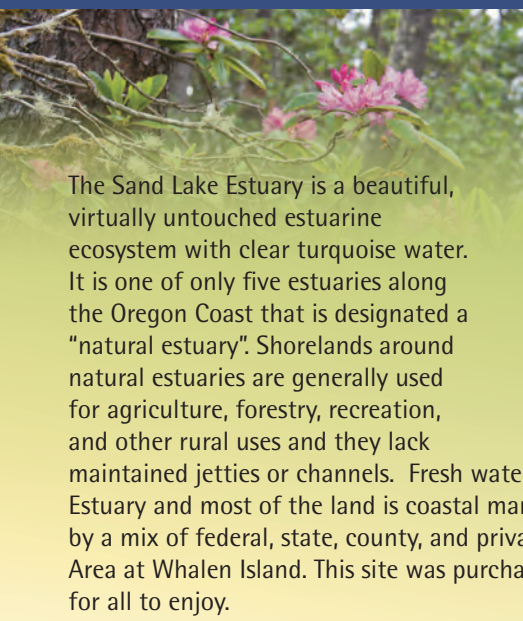
There are several public access points around the Pacific City area. Refer to the following detailed map "Lower Nestucca".



Photo Contest Winner - 3rd Place, "Mom and the Nestucca Bay", Tom Hochstatter



# SAND LAKE ESTUARY



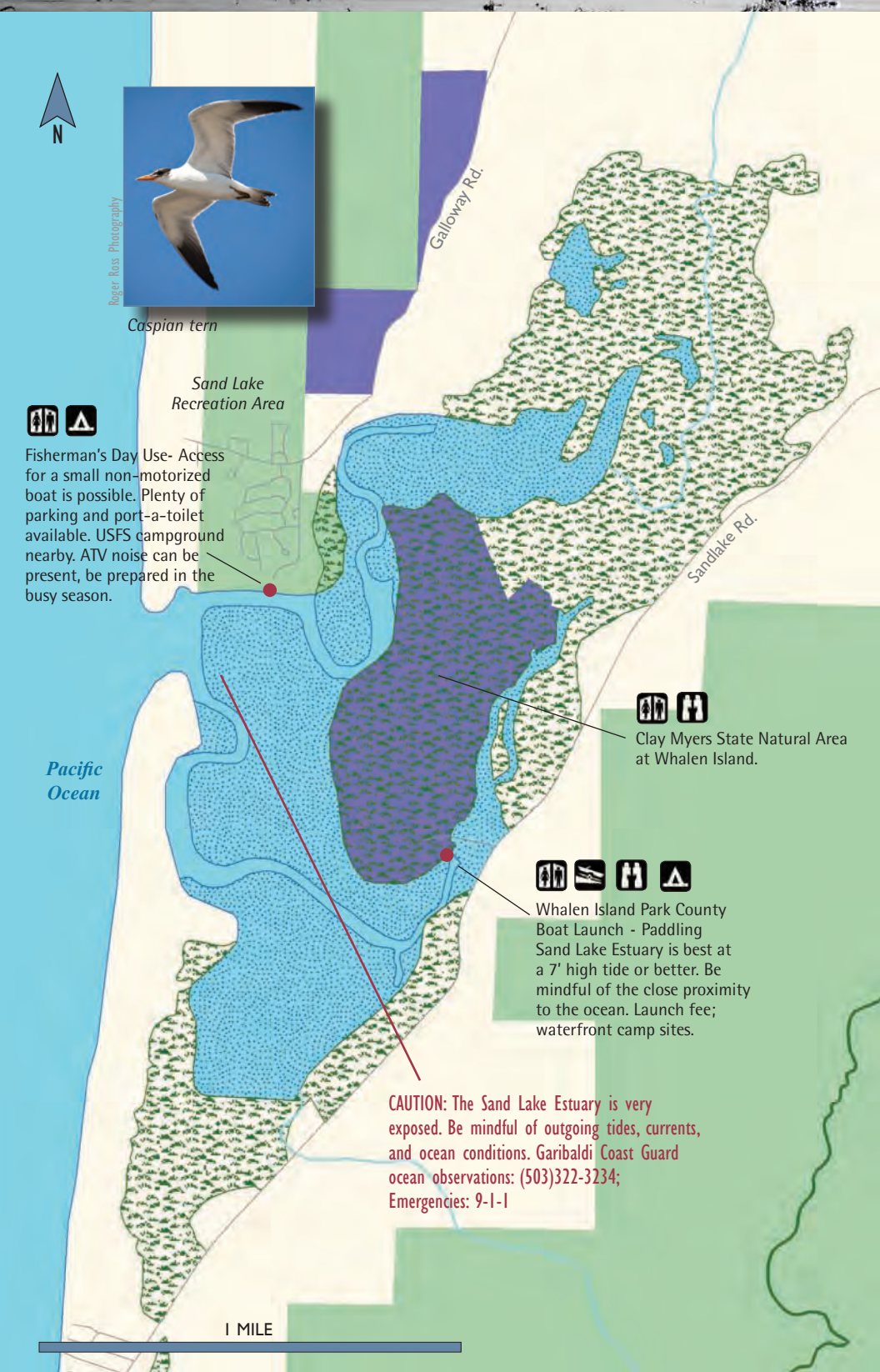
The Sand Lake Estuary is a beautiful, virtually untouched estuarine ecosystem with clear turquoise water. It is one of only five estuaries along the Oregon Coast that is designated a "natural estuary". Shorelands around natural estuaries are generally used for agriculture, forestry, recreation, and other rural uses and they lack maintained jetties or channels. Fresh water influence is minimal in the Sand Lake Estuary and most of the land is coastal marsh. In the middle of the estuary, surrounded by a mix of federal, state, county, and private land, lies the Clay Myers State Natural Area at Whalen Island. This site was purchased with assurance of permanent protection for all to enjoy.

Estuarine wetland systems are dominant within the Sand Lake basin. The north end of the estuary is a maze of narrow passages and channels. This is a shallow salt water bay with a narrow mouth leading directly into the ocean. The wetlands north of Whalen Island are habitat for many plant and animal species and best left undisturbed. The estuary is active year round on land and in the water. ATV riders can often be heard having fun in the adjacent dunes, birders comb the marshes for elusive sightings of migrating species, and in May, photographers are capturing the beauty of the blooming masses of rhododendrons.

Don't let the idyllic nature of this bay fool you, and take great care while exploring. Be aware of ocean conditions and stay away from the mouth which is unrestricted and very dynamic. Paddling the estuary at a high tide of at least 7' offers more options as there are many sand bars in the estuary that are exposed on a falling tide.



Above: Roger Ross Photography  
Below: Jim Geltz





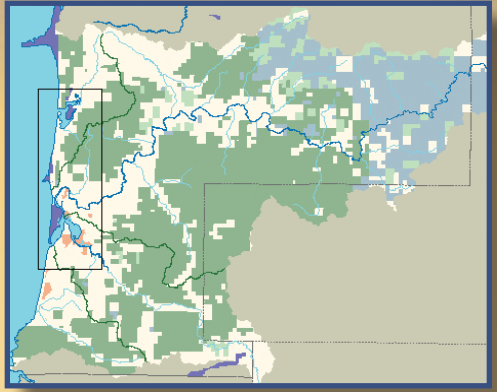
# LOWER NESTUCCA



## Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge

By Ben Purcell, 2012 Neahkahnie High School Senior Project

The Nestucca Bay Wildlife Refuge, located near Pacific City, offers a glimpse at thriving areas of preserved Oregonian nature and over 200 different species of animals. Harbor seals wander up the water trails in search of fish, Belted Kingfishers perch on derelict pilings, and swallows and Marsh Wrens thrive on the insect-rich grasses of the river's bank. As you search the sides of the river, you will hear bird songs floating across the estuary. A sharp eye will see waterfowl taking flight, and raptors soaring overhead. Those paddling through the Refuge will find new perspective when taken in from the water.



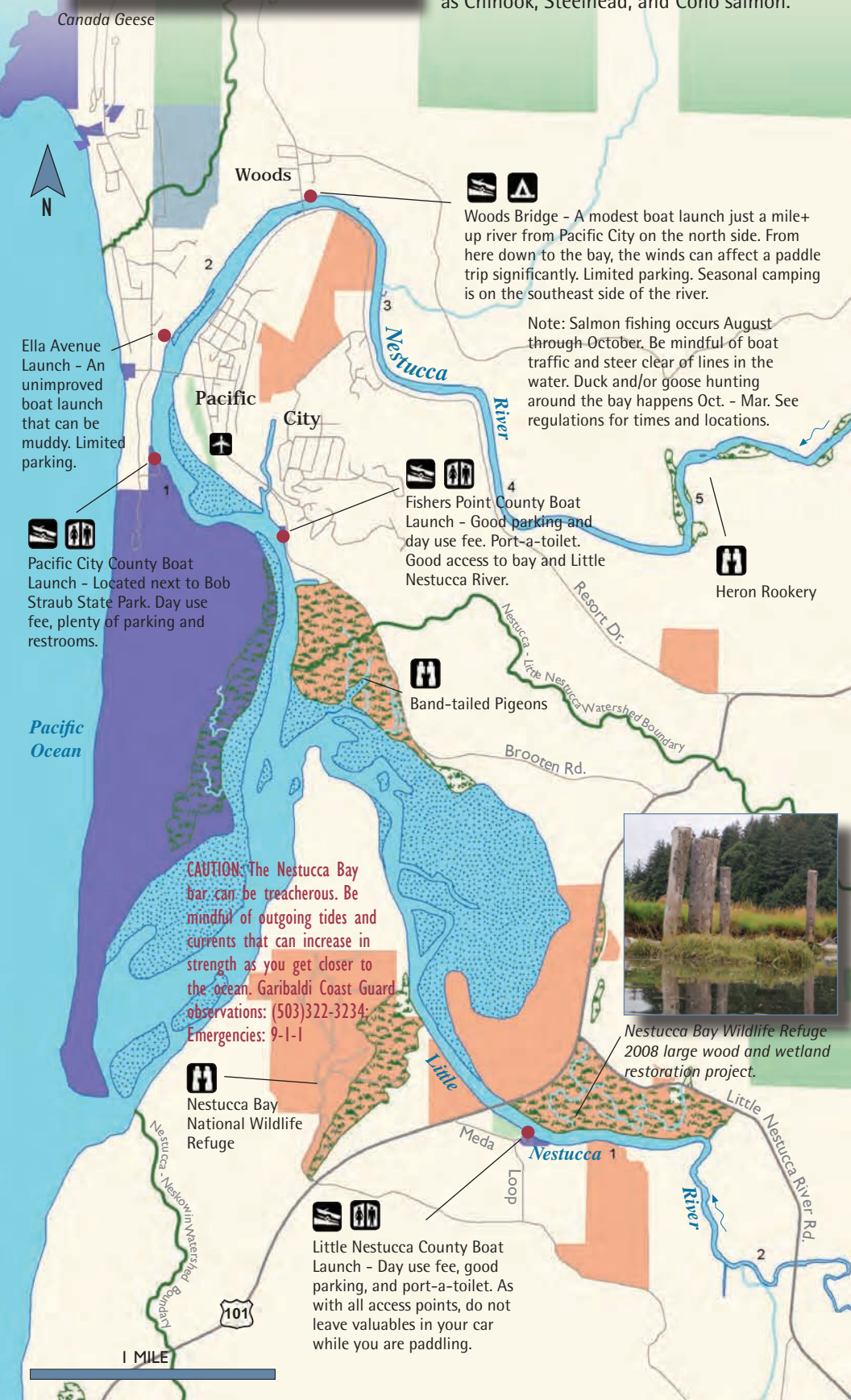
The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service established the Refuge with a mission to protect the Aleutian Cackling Goose, which were listed as endangered in 1991. This species breeds on the Aleutian Islands, but was nearly eaten to extinction when fur trappers introduced arctic foxes to the area. Thanks, in part, to the work of the Refuge, the Aleutian Cackling Goose has since made a full recovery.



ODFW

Canada Geese

The Nestucca Bay Wildlife Refuge has many diverse habitats to behold. On Cannery Hill, you will find a mix of plants and butterflies resulting in coastal prairies. The prairies melt into forests of Red Alders and Sitka Spruce. Beyond the forest is the Little Nestucca River, where salt marshes and sheltered channels are ideal habitat for Cutthroat trout, as well as Chinook, Steelhead, and Coho salmon.





# LOWER NESTUCCA BIXBY TO WOODS



Beaver

16 1st bridge - No restroom and minimal parking.

5 Bixby - Minimal parking.

101

13 Nestucca

12 Farmer Creek - No restroom, minimal parking.

11

10 Three

22

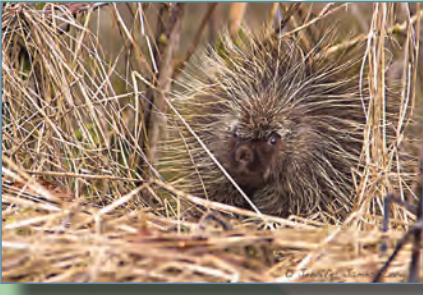
Rivers

Hebo

Three Rivers County Boat Launch - Day use fee and port-a-toilets, and plenty of parking.

7 Cloverdale - turn west just behind the post office follow small fish sign. Day use fee, no restrooms, and plenty of parking.

Cloverdale



Jennifer James-Lang

Look closely, you may spot this common Porcupine. Mostly nocturnal, this herbivore can be found nearly everywhere.

Heron Rookery



Roger Ross Photography

1 MILE

Woods Bridge - minimal parking. Camping w/fee, across the River.

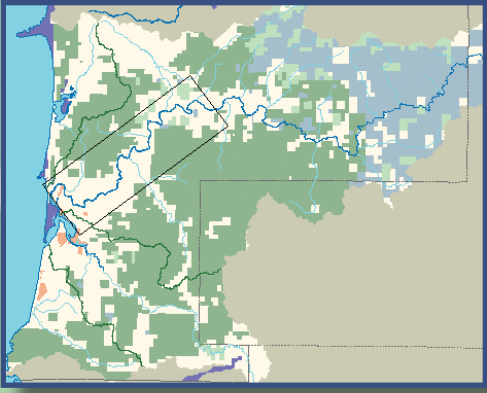
Woods

Pacific City

Resort Dr.

Broom Rd.

101



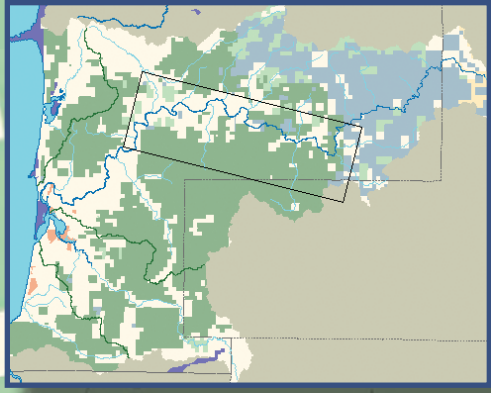
South Tillamook County enjoys the water trail. The community has spent numerous hours participating in this and similar projects supporting natural resources in nearby watersheds.



# NESTUCCA RIVER ROCKY BEND TO BIXBY



**Rocky Bend Campground** - Open year round, no fee, vault toilet, no water, metal fire rings, and no garbage service. Pack it out! 15 miles east of Beaver, OR.



**CAUTION: Class V+**  
This stretch requires out-of-boat scouting and/or portaging. Scouting and portaging for purposes other than emergencies are strongly discouraged as lands surrounding this site are under private property ownership.

**CAUTION: The following sections discuss whitewater paddling which requires advanced experience and training. Those who do not have whitewater training, experience, and equipment should NOT attempt this stretch.**

- ### River Classification System
- Class I**  
Moving water with small riffles.
  - Class II**  
Maneuverable and often swimmable rapids; straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels which are evident without scouting.
  - Class III**  
Rapids with high irregular waves requiring good boat control skills.
  - Class IV**  
Intense and powerful whitewater and/or rapids that require technical maneuvering and precise boat handling.
  - Class V**  
Maximum intensity whitewater. Massive waves, churning holes, and steep drops that may be unavoidable. Proper equipment, extensive experience, and practiced rescue skills are essential.

Miles 26.3-28.5 informal access points. Refer to map legend to distinguish private vs. public property. Some pre-trip planning may be helpful if you plan to use this stretch of the Nestucca for launch or landing.

**Z-Drop** - No restroom and minimal parking.

**Borba Rd.** - also called "five and a half". No restroom and minimal parking. Launch is a drift boat slide.

**4th bridge; Wolfe Creek Rd.** - Modest gravel ramp, no restroom, and minimal parking.

**1st bridge; 1979 access** dedicated to an avid steelheader, Rocky Barnett - No restroom and minimal parking.



The Common Merganser can be found in the upper river freshwater as well as the tidal saltwater. A diver for its dinner, the Merganser seeks small fish, insects, worms, and frogs but is not terribly picky. Tree cavities within a mature forest are their nesting preference.

ODFW

1 MILE



# UPPER NESTUCCA



## An Oregon Scenic Waterway

The Nestucca River is designated as a Oregon Scenic Waterway from its headwaters to the confluence of Moon Creek near Blaine. The people of Oregon established the Oregon Scenic Waterways Program in 1970 to protect and preserve the natural setting and water quality of waterways possessing outstanding scenic, fish, wildlife, geological, botanical, historical, archaeological, and outdoor recreational values while balancing the needs of the people who live along them. More information regarding Oregon Scenic Waterways Program: <http://egov.oregon.gov/OPRD/RULES/waterways.shtml>



Fan Creek culvert replacement on the upper Nestucca - 2012

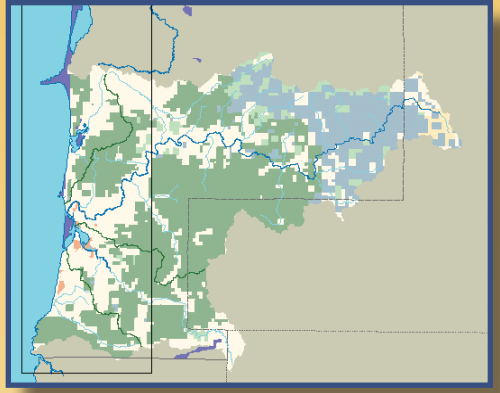
What happens where a stream meets a road? Typically, a culvert (a pipe or tunnel-like structure) is used to pass the stream under the road. Fish move up and down streams for many reasons, including spawning. This movement can be blocked or impeded by culverts that are undersized, overly steep, plugged with debris, or perched above the stream at their downstream end. Many stream miles in the Nestucca basin are affected by culverts. However, efforts are underway to replace barrier culverts with "fish-friendly" crossings designed to match a stream's gradient, width, and bed materials.

**CAUTION:** Due to recent large wood placement in the river in this upper Nestucca region, paddling above Rocky Bend Campground is not possible.



# NESKOWIN

This tiny community is beloved as a tranquil retreat for vacationers. Neskowin lies on the north side of Cascade Head near where Slab Creek empties into the Pacific Ocean. At one time this tiny estuary was diked in an attempt to grow cranberries and the area had a stronger prominence of dairy farms. Over the years humans slowly changed the course of the flow of the creek's water. Now, some of this area is part of U.S. Fish & Wildlife's Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge and is vital for rearing young salmon. Known for its quiet pace and natural beauty, bird-watching, and photography are very popular local pastimes.



Iconic tree-lined Proposal Rock beckons visitors to the beach to explore its nooks and crannies. Just south of the Rock site is the eerie "Ghost Forest". In most winters, storms unearth the remnants of an ancient Sitka spruce forest. The stumps of the Ghost Forest are thought to be about 2000 years old, and may have at one time stood as tall as 150 feet. Scientists believe that the forest was ultimately destroyed as a result of an earthquake or tsunami. The event that ruined the forest also helped to save the stumps by burying and preserving the remains. Today, during low tide, some 100 primeval stumps can be seen rising out of the splashing waves.



Neskowin "Ghost Forest" by VanScott  
www.neskowin.smugmug.com



TEP partnered with ODFW, NNWC, and the Neskowin Regional Water District to improve fish passage on Hawk Creek - 2009.



Visitors to Neskowin Beach

Jack Berrell



*The Tillamook Estuaries Partnership (TEP) is lead partner and acts as a resource, on behalf of a coalition of state and federal agencies, site managers, municipalities, recreationalists, and citizens, for water trail planning and development in Tillamook County. TEP facilitates volunteer involvement and stewardship, and works to educate users about relevant issues and best practices for non-motorized water recreation.*

*Countless volunteer hours have been dedicated to this project. We wish to extend heartfelt appreciation to all those who have contributed to this process for their ongoing, enthusiastic participation.*



**Tillamook Estuaries Partnership**  
A National Estuary Project



Above: Roger Ross Photography  
Below: Artwork by Bobby Wood

*Thank you to our sponsors for their generous contributions of technical assistance and/or monies to the Tillamook County Water Trail.*







All the water that will ever be,  
is right now.

- National Geographic

*The Tillamook County Water Trail is a multi-year project. Guidebooks and maps for the trail will encompass estuaries and watersheds throughout Tillamook County. Donations to keep this project flowing are always appreciated. For information about additional maps in this series or to make a donation, contact the Tillamook Estuaries Partnership at (503) 322-2222.*

