



AUTO TOUR

AAA Washington Travel Services

Northern Oregon Coast

Oregon enjoys a spectacular Pacific shore where the forces of nature create a stunning montage of landscapes. Miles of sandy beach alternate with bold headlands. Copious rains feed the myriad streams that wind down from forested heights, through green valleys, where in places dairy herds graze on luxuriant pastures. Approaching the sea, the rivers broaden into estuaries and bays. Dozens of small cities and towns dot the coastline. In these hard-working fishing ports, lumber towns and resort communities the visitor is always welcome. Virtually all of Oregon's 400-mile coastline is public domain, thanks to the landmark 1912 legislation that preserved the state's beaches for the people.

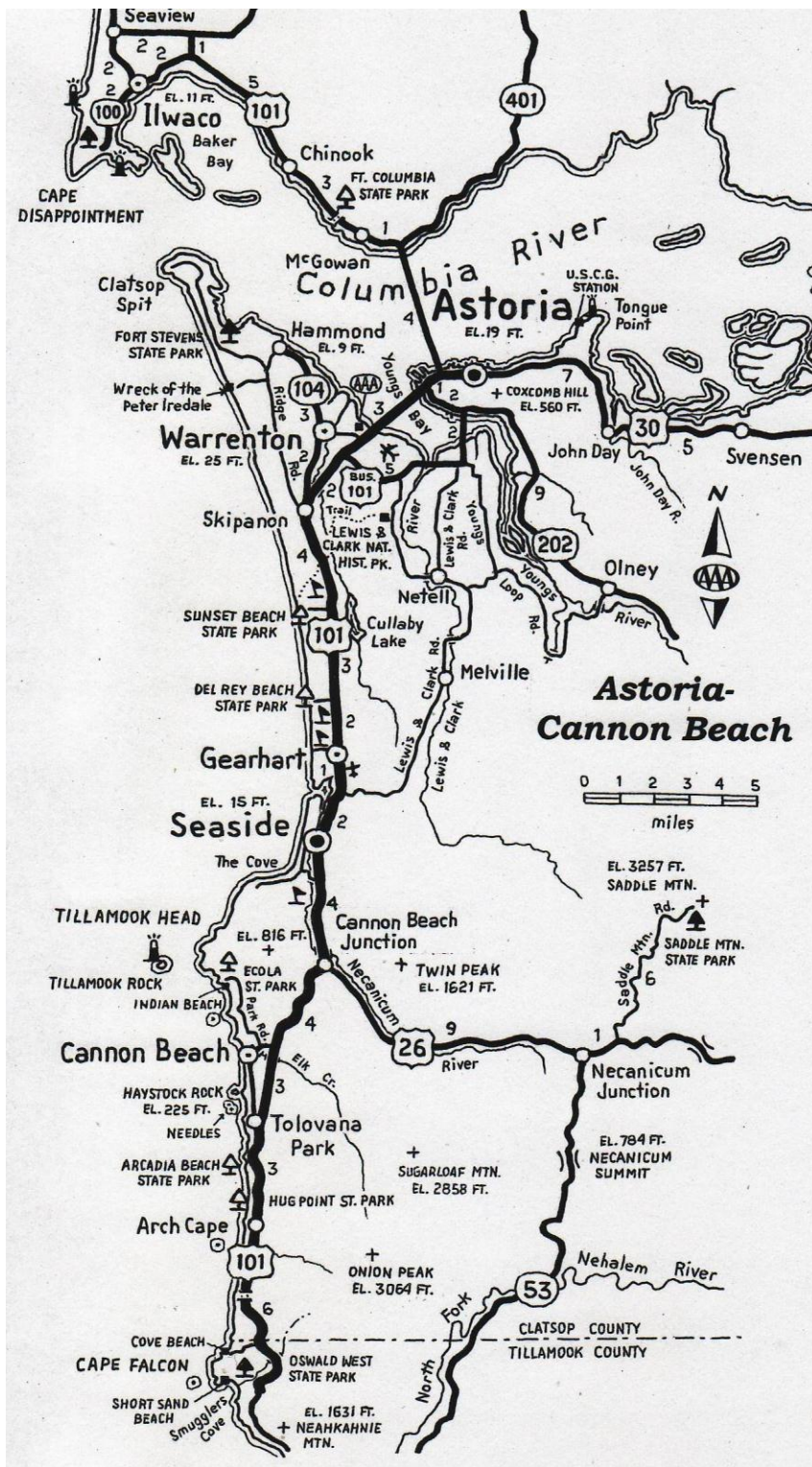


The landmark Haystack Rock guards Cannon Beach [Photo: Helen Doty, AAA Washington]

AAA Washington's **Northern Oregon Coast Auto Tour** covers the 110-mile section of US-101 from the Columbia River to Cascade Head (Astoria to Lincoln City). This highway can be driven in approximately 2 hours 40 minutes, although the numerous attractions beckon a much more leisurely pace.

1. Astoria to Cannon Beach

The **Columbia**, one of North America's great rivers, rises in a mountain lake, tucked away in the Rockies of southeastern British Columbia. At Astoria – 1,243 miles from its source – the mighty river is four miles wide. The American Captain Robert Gray was the first European to navigate the sandbars at the river's mouth, entering the estuary in 1792, although the presence of a large river had been noticed by Spanish Captain Bruno de Hezeta in 1775. Captain Gray named the river for his ship, the *Columbia Rediviva*. His "discovery" of the Columbia formed a critical component in the new United States' claim to the northwest coast of North America, a region that was coveted by Spain, England and Russia.



Before the construction of jetties on both banks of the river's mouth, the Columbia bar was one of the world's most treacherous. Sailors knew it as the "graveyard of the Pacific." The more than 230 shipwrecks in the vicinity lend credence to this epithet.

U.S. Highway 101 offers a dramatic approach to the Oregon Coast. From the Washington bank it spans the four mile wide Columbia, a mere dozen feet above the river's surface. Nearing the Oregon shore it rises high above the shipping channel, affording a panoramic view of Astoria and its commanding setting. The bridge, erected in 1966, replaced the last remaining car ferry service on Highway 101.

ASTORIA (pop. 10,080, alt. sea level to 565 ft.) occupies a hilly peninsula on the south bank of the Columbia River. Youngs Bay lies to the west, while the Youngs River is to the south. The Lewis and Clark Expedition explored this area in the winter of 1805-06. Astoria is the oldest European settlement in the Pacific Northwest, dating back to the 1811 establishment of a trading post. Its namesake is the early 19th-century New York merchant, John Jacob Astor.

The first overland settlers arrived in the 1840s. The first salmon cannery opened in 1866 and by the end of the 19th-century fishing and fish processing were flourishing. Immigrants, largely from Scandinavia and Finland settled in. Astoria's waterfront canneries worked round the clock and by the 1910s it was Oregon's second-largest city. Grain, flour and lumber were important exports.

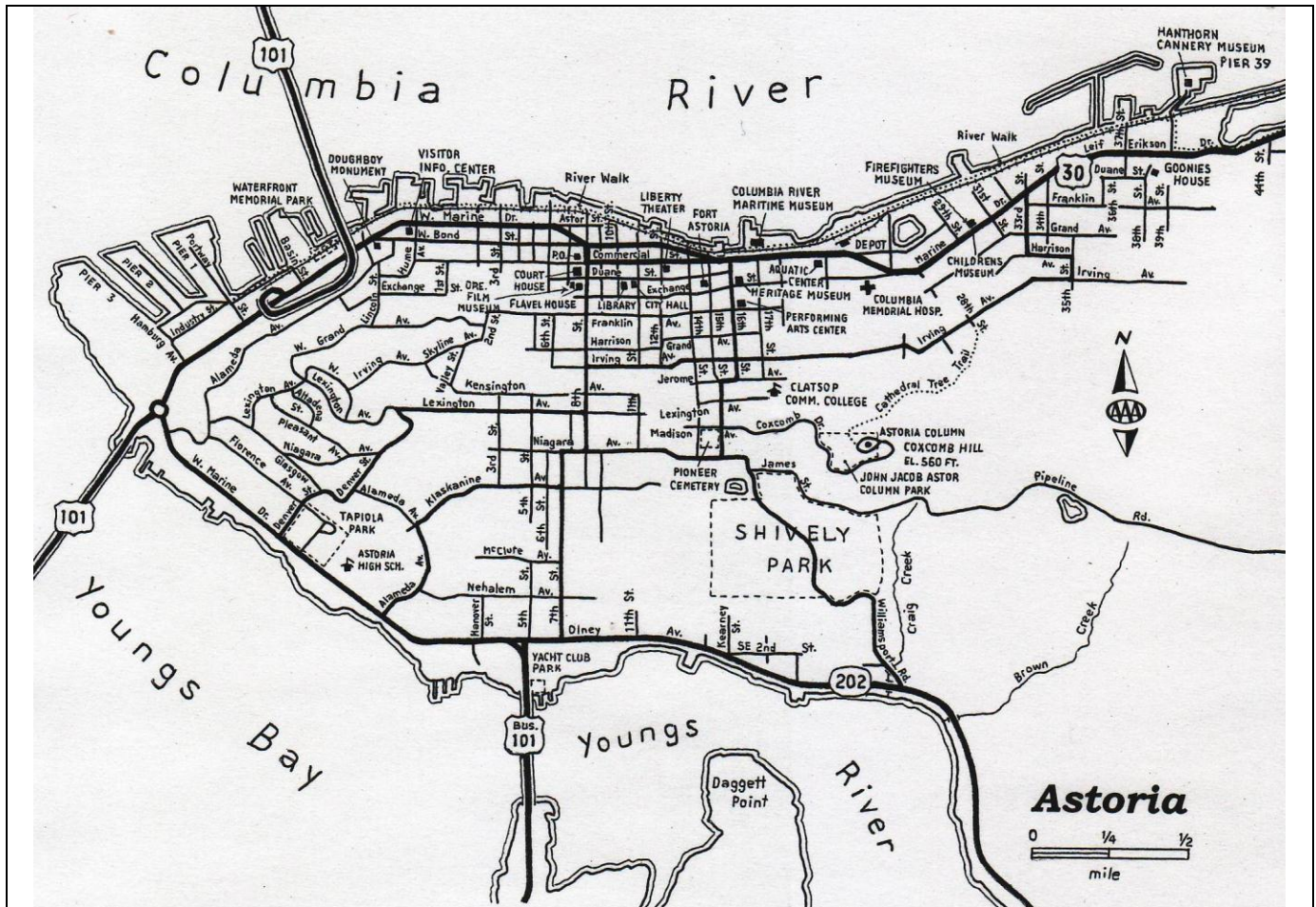
Fire devastated the city on 9 December, 1922, destroying 32 blocks of the central core and the Great Depression slowed the city's growth. Tuna fishing and canning became increasingly important in the 1930s. The population peaked at 20,000 during World War II, when Astoria became the scene of numerous wartime

activities. The naval base at Tongue Point was expanded; the airport became a major flight training center and a naval hospital was built.

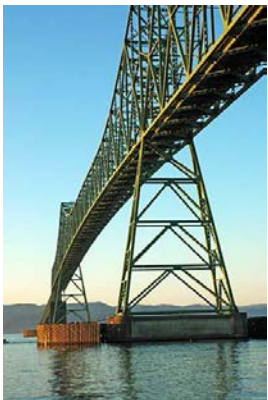
In the decades after the war, the naval base closed and the logging and fishing industries rose and fell. The population dropped and signs of urban decay – boarded up storefronts, abandoned waterfront buildings and piers – pockmarked the cityscape. The city has never forgotten her past. In fact, most have come to realize that Astoria's architectural and historical legacies are her richest treasures.

Today, Astoria wears her history well and is riding a tourism boom. More and more cruise ships are calling here on their spring and fall repositioning itineraries. Buildings are being refurbished. New shops, hotels and restaurants have opened.

The January, 2006 issue of *Sunset Magazine* labeled Astoria “The Next Great Destination.”



Astoria remains an important port and fishing center. The central business district extends back from docks, piers and warehouses lining the river. Residential streets climb the hills beyond. Many of its homes are lovingly restored Victorians, some four- and five-stories high due to the steep slopes. The heights command sweeping views of the colorful waterfront, rivers, bays and forested hills.



Astoria Bridge

The **Astoria Column** crowns the city’s highest point, 565-foot **Coxcomb Hill**. Erected in 1926, its exterior features a frieze commemorating important events in area history. The column was partially financed by Vincent Astor, great-grandson of the city’s namesake. A 1995 renovation restored the column’s weathered exterior. An interior 164-step spiral staircase leads to a viewing platform near the top of the 125-foot column, where a sweeping, 360-degree panorama encompasses views of the city and its peninsular setting, the Pacific Ocean, mouth of the Columbia River, Youngs Bay, various lakes, the shoreline of Washington, and the peaks of mounts St. Helens, Rainier, Hood and Saddle Mountain.



Astoria Column

The downtown and adjacent waterfront areas are easy to explore by foot. **Commercial Street** is the heart of downtown Astoria. Here you’ll find an interesting collection of galleries, antique stores, restaurants and shops – including a classic J.C.Penney store. Many buildings are undergoing restoration, including the elegant 1925 **Liberty Theatre**.

Down on the waterfront, two to three blocks toward the river from Commercial Street, a **trolley** operates on the shore-side track between the Port Docks west of the bridge and the East Mooring Basin (foot of 36th Street). The trolley runs daily from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, check locally at other times. A walkway parallels the track along the waterfront. At the foot of 14th Street a plaque marks the site of the **Astoria Ferry Dock**. This boat service ferried cars and

passengers across the Columbia to Washington from 1921 until the bridge opened in 1966. **Heritage Square**, bounded by Duane, Exchange 11th and 12th streets, is a developing public open space commemorating the city's multicultural history and role as an international port.

The outstanding **Columbia River Maritime Museum**, at the east end of the waterfront at 1792 Marine Drive (also on the trolley line), chronicles the region's intimate ties with the river and the sea. Its displays range from ship models, paintings, photographs, videos and dioramas to interactive exhibits. The lightship *Columbia*, last of its kind on the West Coast, is moored to a dock outside the museum. This AAA GEM attraction is open daily 9:30am to 5:00pm. AAA members get an admission discount. The museum has converted the nearby former **Astoria Depot** into an education center and school for boat building.

The **Uppertown Firefighters Museum**, at Marine Drive and 30th Street, occupies a former brewery and firehouse built in 1896. Its extensive collection of firefighting equipment and memorabilia dates back to the 1880s. The museum is open Weds.-Sun. afternoons. **Pier 39**, on the site of the former Bumble Bee Seafood cannery at the foot of 39th Street, is a mixed-use development, including condominium residences, office space, a pub, coffeehouse and lodging. The **Hanthorn Cannery Museum** features historical exhibits in four rooms of the historic cannery building dating back to 1875.



One of Astoria's grandest Victorians, the Flavel House was built in 1885 and is now operated as a museum.



A Uniontown streetscape still reflects the district's ethnic and historical legacy.

At the west end of downtown, the **Flavel House Museum** displays period furnishings in a grand 1885 Queen Anne-style Victorian mansion built by a sea captain for his young bride from the East. The mansion is open daily except holidays (AAA discount). Stroll the residential streets south of downtown for glimpses of some of Astoria's many Victorians. The nearby **Oregon Film Museum**, located in the 1914 former jail at 732 Duane Street, celebrates Oregon's long history of film making dating back to 1908. Jail cells contain exhibits about the *The Goonies*, a popular movie filmed in Astoria in 1985. A plaque at the corner of Exchange and 12th streets notes that Clark Gable (1901-1960) began his acting career at the Astoria Theatre.

The Clatsop County Historical Society operates the **Heritage Museum** in the 1904 former city hall at 1618 Exchange Street. The building is filled with old photos and displays of the city's colorful past. It's open daily from May through September; Tuesdays through Saturdays the rest of the year (AAA discount). **Fort Astoria**, a partial recreation of the 1811 outpost, stands at Exchange and 15th streets.

In the westside **Uniontown District**, along Bond and W. Marine streets near the Astoria Bridge, you can see vestiges of Astoria's ethnic roots. In the early 20th century this was the city's "foreign quarter," with ethnic shops, restaurants, bathhouses, bars and union halls. Finns formed the largest immigrant group, but there were also Chinese and Japanese. Look for the Suomi Hall, a Finnish fraternal lodge, and Finnish sauna bathhouse.

The 4.1-mile long **Astoria Bridge** dominates the west end of town. Its center span rises almost 200 feet above the shipping channel close to the Astoria waterfront. Its 1,232-foot long continuous-truss main span is the world's longest. The bridge opened in 1966, eliminating the last ferry crossing on the route of US-101.

WEATHERWISE – If there is a downside to Astoria and the North Coast in general it's probably the weather. The October to April rainy season brings an average 57 inches. Although rainfall is much less frequent in summer, low clouds and fog frequently obscure the sun. Astoria is at her moodiest when a Pacific storm blusters through, or on those seemingly endless gray, drizzly days that can occur in any month. Here's an overview of average monthly conditions . . .

ASTORIA, Oregon (elev. 8 ft.)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Max.	48.2	51.2	53.1	56.0	60.3	64.1	67.7	68.7	67.7	61.1	53.7	48.9	58.4
Min.	36.6	37.3	38.1	40.5	44.9	49.7	52.7	52.9	49.3	44.4	40.2	37.2	43.6
Precip.	10.24	7.57	7.30	4.95	3.03	2.56	1.02	1.40	2.69	6.02	10.40	10.70	67.90
Snow	2.0	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	1.1	4.2

The city of **WARRENTON** (pop. 5,090, alt. 5 ft.) lies on the Columbia's south shore, three miles west of Astoria on US-101. Named for pioneer settler D.K. Warren, it has several big-box stores and is a major shopping destination for the North Coast. The Astoria Airport and a Coast Guard base are east of 101. Clatsop Spit, the finger of land extending off to the northwest includes **Fort Stevens State Park**, Oregon's most visited state park. The former military installation was one of three guarding the entrance to the Columbia. Explore the abandoned fortifications, including Battery Russell, the only mainland fort bombed by the Japanese during World War II. Out on the beach you can still see the rusting, barnacle-encrusted remains of the four-masted British vessel *Peter Iredale*, grounded in a 1906 storm. A road leads across Clatsop Spit where South Jetty extends west from the tip. Together with its counterpart on the Washington bank, the jetty channels the flow of the Columbia, scouring its mouth of treacherous sand buildup. This is a great spot to watch giant ocean going vessels negotiate the river's entrance channel.

LEWIS AND CLARK NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, 3 miles southeast of Warrenton via Alt. US-101, is a full-scale replica of Fort Clatsop, the 1805-06 wintering site of the Lewis & Clark expedition. Their exploration helped solidify America's claim to the vast Oregon Country, at that time claimed by the U.S., England, Spain and Russia. The site features a visitor center and interpretive trails, including the 6.5-mile Fort to Sea Trail leading west to Sunset Beach.

At **SKIPANON**, US-101 turns south, running across the Clatsop Plains. This triangle of relatively flat land extending south from Youngs Bay toward Seaside, was the site of the first agricultural homesteads on the Oregon coast in the late 1840s. The congregation of the historical **Clatsop Plains Pioneer Church** (on the west side of the highway) dates from 1846. **Camp Rilea**, extending from 101 west to the ocean is a field training facility for the Oregon National Guard. Side roads lead west to the shore at **Sunset Beach State Park** and **Del Rey Beach State Park**.

GEARHART (pop. 1,500, alt. 10 ft.) has been a popular resort since the late 1800s. Its sandy beach stretches unbroken nearly 18 miles from the mouth of the Necanicum River just south of town, north to Clatsop Spit at the mouth of the Columbia. Named for a pioneer settler on the Clatsop Plains, the town is primarily a residential community of clapboard cottages nestled along dunes amid groves of shore pine. Early visitors came by train. The Spokane, Portland & Seattle extended its line from Astoria to Gearhart and Seaside in 1889. Passenger service ended in 1939. **Gearhart Golf Links**, opened in 1892 and is the oldest golf course west of the Mississippi. The historic **Gearhart Hotel** reopened in 2012. Highway 101 breezes by the eastern edge of town; to discover its charms turn west on Golf Course Road or Pacific Way.



Looking south over The Turnaround on The Prom, across the wide beach to Tillamook Head, "The Diamond Head of the Northwest."
[Photo: Seaside Visitors Bureau]

Several miles south lies **SEASIDE** (pop. 6,550, alt. 15 ft.), Oregon's premiere coastal resort. Founded by Portland entrepreneur Ben Holladay in 1870, the city faces a 250-foot wide beach of golden sand extending from the mouth of the Necanicum River south to the forested mass of Tillamook Head. The beach extends south to **The Promenade**, a paved walkway built in 1921, extends nearly two miles along the head of the beach. A **Salt Cairn**, just off the south side of The Promenade, marks a spot where members of the Lewis & Clark expedition collected salt in 1805. **The Cove**, at the base of Tillamook Head, is a popular surfing area.

From the Turnaround, midway along "The Prom," **Broadway**, the main tourist street, extends east to Highway 101. A multitude of shops, galleries, boutiques and arcades gives Broadway a carnival atmosphere, especially on weekends and during the summer. A block east of the Necanicum River, Seaside's former central business district, centers on Broadway and Holladay Drive. This area is

being restored and you'll find several good restaurants, shops and the **Seaside Antique Mall**. A Boardwalk lines the Necanicum's riverbank. A stroll or bike ride (rentals available) is a pleasant way to discover hidden charms, like the city's

multitude of pocket gardens. More than 2000 varieties of plants, shrubs, bulbs, annuals and perennials thrive in the mild coastal climate.

Attractions in town include the **Seaside Museum** (5th and Necanicum streets) and the small **Seaside Aquarium**, on The Promenade at 2nd. Both are open daily. The 1893 Butterfield Cottage, behind the museum, is typical of the type of residences built in Seaside in the early in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The **Gilbert Inn**, 341 Beach Drive, built in 1892 for Alexander Gilbert, Seaside's first mayor, is an elegant example of period architecture. Today it functions as a bed and breakfast. Shoppers gather at the **Seaside Factory Outlet Mall**, on the north side of town on US-101.

Highway 101 heads south from Seaside, swinging around the eastern flank of Tillamook Head. Four miles south of town is the important junction with the Sunset Highway (US-26), which branches east over the Coast Range to Portland and the northern Willamette Valley. Three miles east of this junction on US-26, in **Kloutchy Creek County Park**, stands the "Kloutchy Creek Giant." This Sitka Spruce, once the largest in the U.S., towered 216 feet; its base circumference measuring 56 feet. A storm in December, 2007 broke the tree about eighty feet above the ground. Its remaining 17-foot diameter trunk and two fallen sections are still awesome.

2. Cannon Beach to Bay City

CANNON BEACH (pop. 1,650, alt. 100 ft.), named for a cannon that drifted ashore here in an 1846 shipwreck, is a picturesque resort community fronting a spectacular 3½-mile long white-sand beach. Steep, forested hills back the townsite and form bold headlands to the north and south. Photogenic rocks pierce the sea just offshore, including **Haystack Rock**, a 235-foot monolith, one of the coast's most photographed features, and **The Needles** a cluster of narrow rocky spires just to the south.

Highway 101 bypasses the town to the east – be sure to take the signed business route that winds down into Cannon Beach; you won't be disappointed. This road becomes Hemlock Street which follows the shore several blocks inland from the beach, returning to US-101 at the south end of the Tolovana Beach district. Parking in town can be tight. Signs point to large, free parking areas a block east of Hemlock on Spruce Street.



*Early morning finds just a few walkers on the beach
[Photo: CannonBeach.net]*



Ecola State Park provides spectacular views of the coastline, here looking south toward Cannon Beach [Photo: Oregon State Parks]

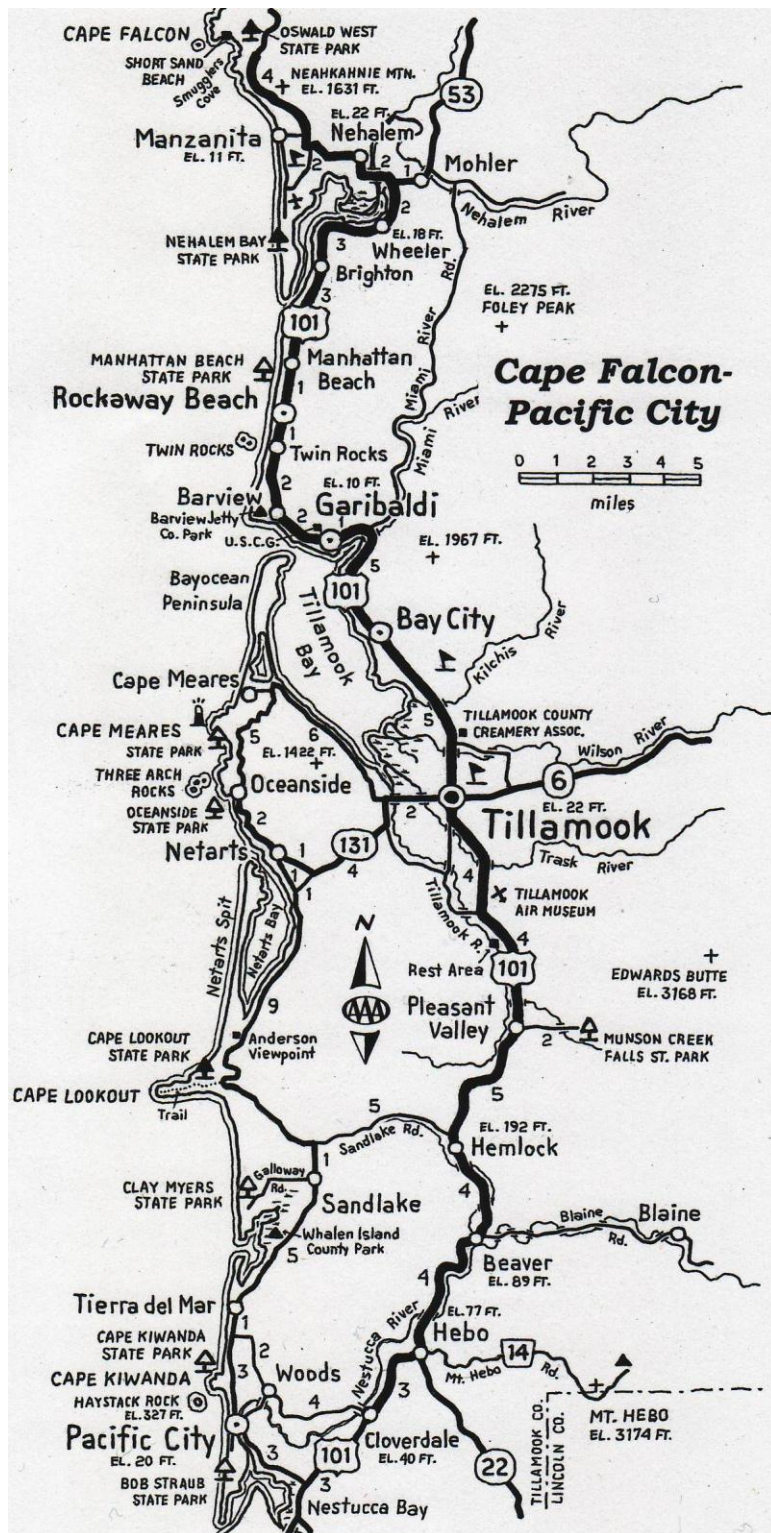
Wooden structures ranging in style from Cape Cod to Craftsman line the town's narrow, shady side streets. Flowers abound. Cannon Beach, together with its southern district **Tolovana Park**, sports a variety of interesting shops and two-dozen art galleries. Most cluster at the north end of town, the so-called downtown area. The active artist community has earned Cannon Beach the nickname "Oregon's Carmel." The **Cannon Beach History Center and Museum**, midtown at Spruce and Sunset, has displays about the town's early days, including the namesake cannon and an exhibit on the Tillamook Rock Lighthouse. The museum is open Wed.-Sun. 11am to 5pm; admission is \$3. The **Cannon Beach Visitor Center**, at the corner of Second and Spruce, is open daily 10am to 5pm.

Cannon Beach has dozens of lodgings. About a half-dozen are AAA approved, including the Four-Diamond **Stephanie Inn**. There are also lots of choices for a meal. The **Wayfarer Restaurant**, in the Surfsand Resort faces Haystack Rock.

A narrow lane winds north from Cannon Beach to **Ecola State Park**. The park bears a Native American word for 'whale', and here Lewis & Clark's party bartered with Indians for the meat of a beached whale. The road passes through stands of Sitka spruce, ending at grassy bluffs ending at scenic Indian Beach. The park's main trail, a segment of the Oregon Coast Trail, extends eight miles along the rocky ashore, passing cliffside vantage points offering magnificent views of pocket coves, forested headlands and offshore rocks. The most notable of these – **Tillamook Rock** – rises from the ocean two miles from shore. The ruins of a lighthouse occupy this inhospitable and inaccessible redoubt. During its years of active service

(1881-1957) wave-tossed rocks repeatedly broke the tower's glass windows, 132 feet above the sea! The rock, popularly known as "Terrible Tilly," today contains a columbarium. The trail's north end is accessible from Seaside. The 2½-mile Clatsop Loop Trail has interpretive panels.

Highway 101 continues south from Cannon Beach, closely paralleling the ocean glimpsed through dense stands of trees. **Arcadia Beach State Park** and **Hug Point State Park** provide access to the shoreline.



Just south of **ARCH CAPE** (pop. 200, alt. 50 ft.), US-101 enters Arch Cape Tunnel, then begins to climb the headland of Cape Falcon. Bruno Heceta named the feature *Sierra de Montefalcon* on 18 August, 1775, in honor of Santa Clara de Montefalco, as he sighted the cape on her saint's day. This rugged headland consists of deep ravines, isolated coves, steep cliffs and windswept grassy meadows high above the sea.

On the cape's southern flank is **Oswald West State Park**, named for the 1910s governor who obtained protection of the Oregon's beaches as public domain. The park features spectacular Short Sands Beach on Smuggler's Cove. Trails lead to ancient forests of Sitka spruce, western hemlock and western red cedar. Just south of the park, US-101 swings around the precipitous face of **Neahkahnie Mountain**, high above the sea. In places the roadway has been literally carved into the mountainside. Viewpoints offer a sweeping panorama south along the coast, across Nehalem Bay to Cape Meares and distant Cape Lookout on the far horizon -- one of the classic images of the Oregon Coast. Such elevated viewpoints also offer outstanding sites for whale watching.

Just west of US-101, **MANZANITA** (pop. 610, alt. 111 ft.) is a quiet beachfront resort town at the base of Neahkahnie Mountain. Established in 1914, the town is named for a shrub common along the Pacific coast – it means 'little apple' in Spanish.

A paved road leads south to **Nehalem Bay State Park**, which fronts both the calm waters of its namesake bay and the open ocean. A trail leads to the south end of the sandspit that separates the bay from the sea. It was on this spit that the Spanish galleon *San Francisco Xavier* ran aground in 1705 – its remains were visible at extreme low tide until 1930. Local legend relates that survivors of this wreck buried their cargo of treasure somewhere on the slopes of Neahkahnie Mountain. Decades of treasure seekers have only unearthed some chunks of beeswax bearing Latin religious markings.

The highway quickly drops down to the lowlands fringing Nehalem Bay to the village of **NEHALEM** (pop. 270, alt. 28 ft.), on the banks

of its namesake river, just above the point where it empties into the bay. Colorful shops line the town's main street. Highway 101 runs across lush pastureland, then swings around the head of the bay, through the town of **WHEELER** (pop. 415, alt. 18

ft.), then hugs the shore of Nehalem Bay. The railroad, which parallels US-101 between Wheeler and Tillamook, links the coastal communities with Portland. Before highways were improved, this rail line brought travelers to the beach towns. Today the line hauls only freight and a passenger tourist train and is owned by the Port of Tillamook Bay.

Between the mouths of Nehalem and Tillamook bays, US-101 runs through a string of beach resort communities – the largest is **ROCKAWAY BEACH** (pop. 1,320, alt. 16 ft.). In the early 1900s developers named the town for Rockaway, a beach resort on New York's Long Island. Twin Rocks, two pinnacles in the sea just beyond the surf line, are a local landmark. At the community of **BARVIEW** (pop. 150, alt. 40 ft.), **Barview Jetty County Park** offers good fishing from the jetty at the mouth of Tillamook Bay, one of Oregon's largest coastal bays. The copious waters of five rivers feed the bay and nurture its estuarine habitat – indeed, the name Tillamook means 'land of many waters.' Captain Robert Gray sailed across the bar into the bay on 14 August, 1788. Green hills, showing the marks of decades of logging, frame its shores. Piles of oyster shells dot the shoreline and at low tide, shore birds work the mud flats.



Manzanita's seven-mile beach extends north to the base of Neahkahnie Mountain [Photo: Cultural Oregon.com]

daily trips to Rockaway Beach and back from late June through Labor Day (weekends from Memorial Day weekend to late June and in September after Labor Day). Dinner train and seasonal theme trips also operate.

East of Garibaldi, the highway bridges the Miami River (its name derived from a Chinook jargon word meaning 'tributary'), then runs along the east shore of the bay.

3. Bay City to Lincoln City

BAY CITY (pop. 1,305, alt. 18 ft.), midway down the east shore, dates back to 1888. Its founder had a double reason for naming the town, both for its geographical location as well as for being from Bay City, Michigan. South of here the hills recede and a large valley extends southeastward from the marshy head of the bay. Fed by the Kilchis, Wilson, Trask and Tillamook rivers, the Tillamook Valley is one of the Northwest's prime dairy regions, nurtured by heavy rainfall and rich, alluvial soils.

TILLAMOOK (pop. 4,935, alt. 22 ft.) is the valley's busy trading center and seat of its namesake county. Founded in the 1860s, Tillamook's substantial downtown and adjacent residential districts attest to the early prosperity of the dairy farmers. North of town on US-101 the famous **Tillamook County Creamery Association**, a cooperative dating back to 1909, offers self-guided tours and a restaurant. They produce 78 million pounds of cheese a year and are renowned for "Tillamook Cheddar," ice cream, yogurt and other dairy products. The **Blue Heron Cheese and Wine Co.**, is on a 40-acre farm. Specializing in Brie cheese, they have a gift shop and deli, and displays barnyard animals and vintage farm equipment. Nearby is the **Latimer Quilt and Textile Center**, in a former schoolhouse, at 2105 Wilson River Loop Road.

The **Tillamook County Pioneer Museum**, downtown at 2nd and Pacific, has three floors of exhibits on area natural and human history. Another local attraction is the **Latimer Quilt and Textile Center**, in a former schoolhouse, east of town at 2105 Wilson River Loop Road.

The Wilson River Highway (SR-6) heads east from downtown Tillamook. It crosses the Coast Range, joining US-26 west of Portland. The northern Coast Range was devastated by a series of forest fires from 1933-1945. These fires charred a total of 355,000 acres, an area that was called the Tillamook Burn – it has since been reforested. The former Tillamook Naval Air Station, 3 miles south of town on US-101, was the home base of a fleet of dirigibles during World War II. Twin hangars, the world's largest wood structures (each 1,000 feet long, 296 feet wide and 195 feet high), housed the airships. One burned down in 1992; the other contains the **Tillamook Naval Air Station Museum**, featuring a large collection of vintage military

aircraft. The museum is planning to relocate to Madras in Central Oregon (its lease expires here in 2016). An exhibit space documents the history of the air station.



No trip to Tillamook would be complete without a stop at the local cheese factory – more than a million people a year make this one of coastal Oregon’s most visited attractions.

Leaving the flatland of the Tillamook Valley, US-101 winds through forested hills. Seven miles south of town, a paved road leads east to **Munson Creek Falls**, where a short trail leads to this 319-foot waterfall, the highest in coastal Oregon.

Continuing south, Highway 101 passes the hamlets of **BEAVER** (pop. 145, alt. 89 ft.), **HEBO** (pop. 231, alt. 77 ft) and **CLOVERDALE** (pop. 242, alt. 26 ft.), all on the banks of the Nestucca River.

From Hebo, Forest Road 14 winds 9 miles up to the 3,200-foot summit of Mount Hebo, one of the highest peaks in the region. The U.S. Air Force radar station here has recorded wind gusts in excess of 100 mph.

Three Capes Scenic Route

The **Three Capes Scenic Route** offers one of the most beautiful drives on the Oregon Coast, hugging the shore for much of its 34 miles between Tillamook and Pacific City (see map on page 7). Its name derives from the three coastal headlands it passes: capes Meares, Lookout and Kiwanda. Watch signing carefully at junctions (except for a short section between Oceanside and Netarts, it is not a numbered highway). Exercise extra caution on stretches of winding alignment between Cape Meares and Netarts and at Cape Lookout. NOTE: The road is closed indefinitely just north of Cape Meares State Park due to unstable hillside. The state park, Oceanside and Netarts are accessible from Tillamook via SR-131 (see map on page 7).



Waves dash against steep cliffs at Cape Meares

Head west from Tillamook on Third Street. Leaving town behind, we cross a verdant wetland of sloughs and marsh, the lower reaches of the Trask and Tillamook rivers. Two miles west of town bear right. Soon we're driving along the shore of Tillamook Bay. Bayocean Spit protects the bay from the Pacific's relentless breakers. A gravel lane leads down this peninsula. In the early 1900s the community of **Bayocean** grew up around a seaside resort. At its peak it boasted a 3-story hotel, cabins, residences and the world's largest indoor swimming pool. Erosion was always a problem, and by 1953 all had been washed away.

The Three Capes Scenic Route turns abruptly south and begins to climb the headland of **Cape Meares**, named for the English explorer John Meares, who passed these shores in 1788. Several roadside pullouts offer perspectives across the Bayocean Spit and north along the coast.

A narrow lane branches west to **Cape Meares State Park** with its eerie forest of wind-shaped Sitka spruce. One particular specimen, the "Octopus Tree," sports a branching morphology known as 'candelabra.' The **Cape Meares Lighthouse**, erected in 1890, commands an outstanding view of the rugged coastline with its guardian rock pinnacles.

The scenic route winds along the western flank of the cape, dropping down to sea level again at **OCEANSIDE** (pop. 326, alt. 50 ft.), a village of weatherworn cottages and newer residences set amid pine woods on a steep hillside overlooking the sea. The beach is picture perfect and offers great agate hunting in winter. A tunnel leads through Maxwell Point at the north end of the beach to an isolated cove beyond the headland (a light source will ease your walk through the dark interior). Just off the point stand **Three Arch Rocks**, a national wildlife refuge hosting Steller sea lions and countless seabirds, including gulls, cormorants, murrets, puffins, guillemots and petrels.

Our route continues as SR-131 through thickets of shore pine to the village of **NETARTS** (pop. 750, alt. 10 ft.), a scattered resort and fishing community at the mouth of its namesake bay. At the junction at the southern edge of town bear right (south). The Three Capes Scenic Route now skirts the eastern flank of Netarts Bay, a popular clamming and crabbing area. A 5-mile long spit of sand separates the bay from the ocean. The road ascends the ridge that forms Cape Lookout to **Anderson's Viewpoint** where an excellent panorama extends north along the coast across Netarts Bay to Cape Meares and Three Arch Rocks. This is a popular hang glider launch site.



The south flank of Cape Lookout rises abruptly from the sea

Cape Lookout, protruding a mile and a half into the Pacific, is one of the prominent headlands on the North Coast and is protected as a **Cape Lookout State Park**. Its basalt core is the remnant of an ancient lava flow. Small coves mark its north flank, while its south face rises sheer from the sea. A 2-mile interpretive trail winds through thick woods to the windswept land's end 400 feet above the sea; branches lead down to isolated coves. The park's campground is below the ridge near the southern end of Netarts Bay.

The road descends the cape's southern flank. Near the tiny community of **SANDLAKE** (alt. 41 ft.) you can ride dune buggies or go horseback riding on the beach. Skirting the eastern edge of **Sand Lake**, actually an inlet of the sea, the road crosses marshy lowlands peppered with sand dunes – there are several sections of roadway subject to blowing sand. South of the lake the resort community of **TIERRA DEL MAR** (pop. 220, alt. 20 ft.) overlooks the sea. Summer residents swell its population to over 1,000 – its Spanish name translates as 'land by the sea.'

PACIFIC CITY (pop. 1,027, alt. 10 ft.), the largest town on the loop, lies between the ocean and the Nestucca River. The dramatic sandstone flanks of **Cape Kiwanda** dominate the north end of town, rising from the beach in giant mounds of sand. The monolith off the north end of the beach is 327-foot **Haystack Rock**, not to be confused with the larger feature of the same name at Cannon Beach. The town is a resort and fishing center, famous for its dory fleet. Rather than navigate the roundabout Nestucca Bay channel, fishermen launch their dories directly into the Pacific surf from the beach. These flat-bottomed boats came into use in the 1920s, when gill net fishing was banned in the bay. They launch around 6 a.m. and return in the afternoon.

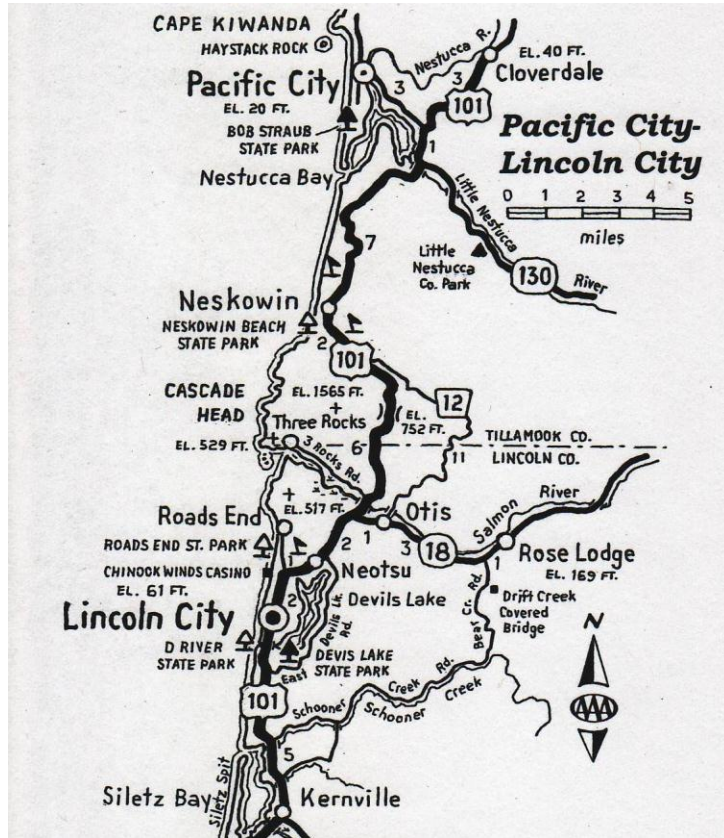
Bob Straub State Park, at the south end of town, occupies the sandspit separating Nestucca Bay from the ocean. Waves and wind make Pacific City a popular recreation area. Some of the longest waves on the Oregon Coast draw surfers, while hang gliders congregate around Cape Kiwanda.

The Three Capes Loop rejoins US-101 two miles east of Pacific City.

Highway 101 skirts the reedy eastern edge of Nestucca Bay. **Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge** includes marshland bird habitat. The paved Pacific View Trail ascends Cannery Hill, offering a panoramic view of the area. South of **ORETOWN** (alt. 48 ft.), a rural hamlet settled in the 1870s, US-101 winds along hills overlooking the sea. This is one of the few remaining sections of winding alignment on the Oregon Coast Highway.

The resort village of **NESKOWIN** (pop. 170, alt. 20 ft.) faces a sandy beach dominated by the forested ridge of Cascade Head to the south. Proposal Rock stands at the mouth of Neskowin Creek, originally called Slab Creek. The present name is derived from an Indian word meaning 'plentiful fish.' South of Neskowin the highway begins to climb **Cascade Head** in long, easy grades. The head is named for the waterfalls that drop from its steep ocean face into the ocean.

At the crest it reaches an elevation of 752 feet, the highest point on the route of US-101 in Oregon. Forest Road 12, the former alignment of US-101, follows Neskowin Creek – this route is 5 miles longer than the present highway. Little traffic makes this road popular with bicyclists.



Three hundred acres of this unique headland constitute the **CASCADE HEAD PRESERVE**, administered by the Nature Conservancy. Because of its unique flora, Cascade Head has been declared a UNESCO biosphere reserve and a U.S. Forest Service National Scenic Research Area. Forest Road 1861, which branches off US-101 at the summit, leads to two trailheads on the upper part of the head.



A 2.7-mile trail leads from the end of FR-1861 to isolated Harts Cove and this view 138-foot Chitwood Creek Falls.

The other major trailhead is at the hamlet of **THREE ROCKS** (pop. 10, alt. 16 ft.), on the estuary of the Salmon River, three miles west of US-101 via the paved Three Rocks Road. From here a 3-mile trail leads up from Three Rocks through wildflower studded meadows alternating with a coastal rain forest of spruce, hemlock and pine.

As the trail gains altitude sweeping views extend south: at the base of the head is the Salmon River estuary, one of the least disturbed on the Oregon coast. Beyond, a line of sandy beaches marches off to the next major headland, Cape Foulweather, eighteen miles to the south. You may hear the bark of sea lions – they haul out on isolated coves at the base of the head.

South of Cascade Head, US-101 crosses the Salmon River, and junctions with SR-18, the major route to the central coast from Portland and Salem. Gliding over small, grassy hills, with Devils Lake off to the south, Highway 101 enters the bustling resort of **LINCOLN CITY** (pop. 7,965, alt. 61 ft.) – covered in AAA Washington's **Central Oregon Coast Auto Tour**.

KEEPING INFORMED ON THE ROAD

Here is a listing of North Coast radio stations . . .

ASTORIA
 KVAS - 1230AM
 KAST - 1370AM
 KOAC - 89.7FM (NPR)
 KMUN - 91.9FM (NPR)
 KAST - 92.9FM
 KKEE - 94.3FM

SEASIDE
 KWSB - 840AM
 KCYS - 98.1FM

TILLAMOOK
 KMBD - 1590AM
 KTCB - 89.5FM (NPR)
 KTMK - 91.9FM (NPR)
 KTIL - 104.1FM

LINCOLN CITY
 KBCH - 1400AM
 KCRF - 96.7FM

WARRENTON
 KCPB - 90.9FM (NPR)