

Worth the Trip: Crossing the Columbia River

construction of the Wauna Paper Mill, and a historical tribute to Simon Benson, the famous self-made timber baron who successfully owned logging operations in the area in the very early 1900s. The pies, jams, jellies, and their other syrups and sauces they manufacture, are only sold from the restaurant gift shop; the soups are marketed wholesale around the Pacific Northwest and can be found in over 100 locations. A slice of their Marionberry pie ala mode and a cup of coffee was the perfect start to our day.



Above: The Berry Patch located in Westport. Right: The river view and totem poles at sunset at Kalama Harbor Lodge.

Just a few miles away from the Berry Patch is the dock for the Wahkiakum County Ferry. Wahkiakum County in Washington operates the Oscar B, and has run a ferry across the 1.5 mile crossing here since 1962. The ferry is the last car ferry to cross the lower Columbia and operates 365 days a year departing from Puget Island in Washington on the hour, every hour, between 5:00 am and 10:00 pm, and from Westport, fifteen minutes past the hour, every hour, between 5:15 am and 10:15 pm. Cost is \$6 for a car or pick-up and RVs pay by length.

A ferry has operated in the area since 1925, when Walter Coates started regular service, with one ferry crossing from Cathlamet to Puget Island, and a second ferry to cross to Westport; a road across the 2.5 mile island got travelers from one ferry to the other, and Coates shuttled pedestrian passengers in his own Buick. Coates sold his ferry business in 1932 and it continued operating until 1939 when the opening of the Puget Island – Cathlamet Bridge connected the island to the mainland and eliminated one of the crossings. Elmer Danielson took over and ran the Puget Island to Westport ferry until 1959 when

Wahkiakum County took over the service, and has operated it ever since. The short ferry ride takes just 10 minutes and the ferry accommodates about a dozen cars. It remains a unique and historic way to cross the Columbia River.

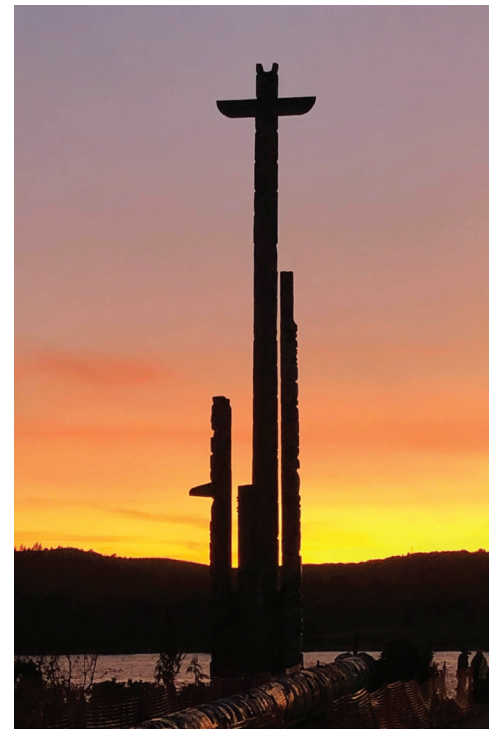
On the Washington side of the river, it's a short drive across Puget Island and the bridge to the mainland, where you can connect to the quaint town of Cathlamet. If you want to slow down and visit, Puget Island offers a great spot to kayak or canoe, fish, or just explore some history. We were too early to visit the River Mile 38 Brewing Company in Cathlamet, and instead headed southeast on Highway 4, a quiet and scenic route that winds through forests and along the Columbia, with a beautiful view of Mount St. Helens as an additional reward. If you're an RVer, you might consider a stay at County Line Park, located where Highway 4 crosses the Wahkiakum County line. Situated on the shores of the Columbia it offers hookups, restrooms, showers, and of course, a great view of the river, but is located right beside the highway. Back on Highway 4, as you near Longview, the scenery changes drastically to industrial. From Longview we hopped on I-5



south and headed for our final destination, the McMenamins Kalama Harbor Lodge.

McMenamins have a reputation for exquisite renovations of old and historic properties. The Kalama Harbor Lodge is a completely new construction located right on the Columbia River, and opened in 2018. The design and construction was inspired by the Hawaiian heritage of John Kalama and is based on the design of the Pioneer Inn in Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii. John Kalama was a full-blooded Hawaiian and an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company who worked in the region from 1837 to 1870, although the town is not named after him; the name was already in use by Native Americans when Lewis and Clark passed through the area in 1806.

Like many McMenamins properties, the Harbor Lodge offers rooms for overnight guests, and numerous bars and restaurants where you can grab a bite to eat or relax with a beverage. The Ahles Point Cabin is located just a short stroll down the waterfront on a paved path, and is a less crowded spot to unwind and enjoy the fantastic river view. At the main lodge, a wrap around patio, partially covered, offers a sunny spot to



take in the view or a place to get out of the rain; large space heaters make this a cozy option throughout the year. The Cloud Bar on the 3rd floor provided an even better view of the river.

The Harbor Lodge is located between the Port of Kalama and the Rasmussen Day-Use Park. Directly adjacent to the Lodge are a collection of four totem poles, handcrafted by local Native American Don Lelooska. The tallest totem is the largest one-piece totem pole in the world at 140 feet; it was lowered for safety reasons in 2018, but the other three remain as magnificent sentries and share the view over the Columbia.



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Free Breakfast

We would like to invite all veterans to attend a free breakfast. Hosted by New Dawn Fellowship.

*Vernonia's Scout Cabin
November 9, 2019
8am to 10 am*

Please bring service pictures you would like to share.