

LONG ISLAND

A NATURE WONDERLAND



It is difficult to convey a sense of size in a photo, but western red cedars on Long Island and elsewhere around Willapa Bay are capable of growing to 16 feet in diameter. — OBSERVER FILE PHOTO

Long Island is a 4,700-acre nature wonderland. Home to an abundance of wild birds and animals, it contains one of the last remaining reproducing climax forests, a unique, 274-acre stand of cedars that first sprouted during a dramatic West Coast climate change some 4,000 years ago.

The cedars average five to seven feet in diameter, although some are 11 feet wide. They average 150 to 160 feet in height. In 2005, a trail to the grove was dedicated to former Washington Congressman Don Bonker, who led efforts to preserve the cedar grove and Long Island for future generations.

The grove is just one small part of the island, managed by the Wildlife Service. Visitors to the island must provide their own boat to traverse an approximate 100-yard-wide channel from the boat launch at the refuge headquarters on U.S. 101, or launch at the Nahcotta Boat Basin for a crossing of approximately one mile.

Other refuge units around the Peninsula offer their own unique attractions.

LEADBETTER POINT

AMAZINGLY ACCESSIBLE WILDLIFE

Located at the northern tip of the Long Beach Peninsula, Leadbetter Point State Park is an amazing place. Adjacent to the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge this park features several hiking trails that either lead to the Pacific Ocean or along the Willapa Bay. The tip of the peninsula is an excellent birding location as many shorebirds rest and eat here. The forest is pristine and yet quite new in geologic terms. Wander through the forest carpeted by kinnikinnick and coastal strawberry plants. Stop and admire the diversity of mushroom species found here in the fall. Bring boots or waders in the winter as trails frequently flood. Stroll the bay-side trails for a respite from the ocean's winds or away from the summer's mosquitoes. This park is one of those few special places where nature rules.



INFORMATION:

Phone the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge headquarters at 360-484-3482. Also check out the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge at www.willapabay.org/~fwnwr/ or write to the Friends at P.O. Box 1130, Ocean Park, WA 98640.



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