

Summer kayak tours on the Lewis and Clark River are offered by the National Historical Park at Fort Clatsop. Day rentals of different types of paddle boats can be found at Quatat Park in Seaside.

“(For the yachtsman,) we’ve got fantastic sailing here,” said Paul Gascoigne, resident sailor and member of the Astoria Yacht Club. “It’s a challenge. The river’s got some good currents and a pretty big swing in tidal levels. There’s also a big sandbar in the middle of the river that you have to be aware of.”

Gascoigne has been involved in sailing since 2002.

“I’m still one of the ‘new guys,’” he said. “Norm Shatto has been racing his boat since the ‘80s. It’s amazing the number of people in town who don’t realize we’re out on the river racing.”

There are no organized classes in Astoria on sailing. Local sailors usually point people towards Portland, Gascoigne said. Portland’s Island Sailing Club offers classes and an introduction to sailing.

Other than that, “people around here will generally hook up with the yacht club and get on somebody’s race boat for crewing, just to get you out on the water. There’s a lot of people who started — me included — just by crewing on a boat, and pretty soon you buy your boat,” Gascoigne said.

Sailing the Columbia River is great, he said, “but it’s definitely more challenging here than farther up river. We have people in our club who are active sailors in the Portland area, but they come down and race here every week, just because it’s more challenging.”

Conditions for sailing the lower Columbia River are good, year round.

“Of course in the winter it’s a little chilly,” Gascoigne said. “We race generally May through September.”

The 20-knot winds are pretty strong, but “the conditions here are great. I don’t want to say ‘undiscovered,’ because there a lot of people who come in from other places who know how good it is.”

Sailors find stronger winds west of the Astoria-Megler Bridge, while the winds are lighter east of the bridge.

“For recreational sailing, that’s where I go,” Gascoigne said of the latter. “You have a lot more room to sail and you’re not dodging the shipping traffic. We don’t like getting in the way of the big ships.” 

## Places to Launch

For the bigger motor boats, fishing and crabbing vessels, mooring basins include the Port of Astoria’s east end mooring basin, at the intersection of 36th Street and Leif Erickson Drive; and the west basin marina, just west of the Astoria-Megler Bridge, with 335 slips available, with capacity for over 400.

Marina office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., every day. Contact the marinas at 503-325-8279, 503-791-7730 or [marina@portofastoria.com](mailto:marina@portofastoria.com).

In Warrenton and Hammond, boaters can find the Warrenton Marina (550 NE Harbor Place), Skipanon Marina (200 NE Skipanon Drive) and Hammond Marina (1099 Iredale St.).

## Other Boating Facilities

**Carnahan Lake** (graveled boat ramp access to Cullaby Lake, east side of Highway 101 between Warrenton and Gearhart). Day-use fee of \$5 per vehicle during summer season. A boat launch ramp and docks provides access to the lake.

**John Day County Park** (Highway 30, just east of Astoria). Public boat launch to Columbia River. Day-use fee of \$5 per vehicle.

**Westport launch** (half mile north of Westport). Access to Columbia River.

Smith Lake (off Ridge Road and Smith Lake Road in Warrenton). No county maintenance.

**Lewis and Clark River** (Lewis and Clark Road near Logan Road, south of Astoria near Fort Clatsop). No county maintenance.

**Coffenbury Lake** (part of Fort Stevens State Park). Great for smaller electric motor boats, canoes and kayaks. Also stocked with warm water fish species common to coastal lakes. Fees for both day use and overnight camping at Fort Stevens.

## Boating Licenses

In Oregon, no one may operate a motorboat if they are under age 12. Operators of powerboats greater than 10 horsepower, and youth 12-15 operating any size powerboat, are required to take a boater safety course on basic boating skills and/or pass a test to demonstrate basic boating knowledge.

Upon successful completion of the test, the Oregon Boater Education Card can be obtained and must be carried on-board while operating. Personal Water Craft operators in Oregon must be at least 16 years old.

Boaters can be certified in two steps at [boat-ed.com/oregon](http://boat-ed.com/oregon).

Study and pass the course (\$34.95), and pay a \$20 state fee; then print the online course completion document.

## What to Bring

Boats should have gear needed to meet minimum U.S. Coast Guard requirements. Depending on what size and kind of boat, this would include:

1. Personal flotation devices for all boaters. All PFDs must be Coast Guard-approved.
2. Fire extinguishers are required on boats with enclosed engine compartments, enclosed living spaces or permanent fuel tanks.
3. Visual distress signals or night signals are required when operating at night (date of manufacture must be within 42 months of the current date). And sound-producing devices such as a horn or whistle are recommended to signal intentions or position.