

Fairly Easy Access

Kloutchy Creek Spruce

Seaside

The first tree to earn designation as an Oregon Heritage Tree, the “Seaside Spruce” as it’s called, was once the largest tree in Oregon. At 216 feet tall and 56 feet round, its presence eclipsed all else in the forest. For almost 800 years, it weathered every coastal gale and evaded every ax, but in 2007, a severe December storm brought about its downfall.

Today, the fallen titan’s stump, along with a portion of the trunk, remains at Kloutchy Creek County Park — just 2.5 miles east of Seaside on U.S. Highway 26 — and is definitely worth a look. An easy walk from the parking area to the heritage site, the path circles the mighty remnant, still impressive, then makes a wider, level loop through the surrounding temperate rainforest.

The Captain’s Sequoia

Short Sand Beach Trail, Oswald West State Park

This half-mile walk to Short Sand Beach in Oswald West State Park wanders through one of the most well-preserved coastal rainforest ecosystems in the Columbia-Pacific region. From the parking lot on U.S. Highway 101, following the gentle curves of Short Sand Creek, a wide gravel path meanders under a multilayered canopy of Western red cedars, Sitka spruce and Western hemlock.

At the halfway point, connect with the Old Growth Trail — an easy detour that will lengthen your time with the trees before rejoining the main trek, which ends at one of the prettiest beaches on the coast. Popular with just about everyone, prepare to share this well-trod path with surfboards, strollers and lots of friendly dogs.

Teal Slough Trail

Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

Tucked in the forest above Teal Slough, on the east side of Willapa Bay, stand some of the oldest cedars left in the Pacific Northwest. Part of a remnant old-growth forest within the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, the trees are accessed by a short (.57 mile-long) trail that picks up just 1.5 miles north of refuge headquarters on U.S. Highway 101.

Park near the gate (please don’t block it), and head up the old logging road for about 300 feet. This first section of the walk is moderately steep, but soon you’ll be directed to a spur road that levels off nicely. Arrow signs point the way to separate stands of trees. The enormity of these ancient cedars will take you very much by surprise. A handful of towering Sitka spruce hold court here as well. Don’t miss the tree at trail’s end, with a view of Willapa Bay.