

Coast Weekend Road Trip

Knappa and Westport

BY CAITLIN SEYFRIED

When you're ready to slow down, you can find plenty to do and see near Westport and Knappa. Whether you plan to stay the weekend, all day, or just want to make a quick stop on a drive, there's plenty to enjoy.

Sloughs and islands of the lower Columbia

This region along the Columbia River east of Astoria is the traditional territory of the native Chinook, Lower Chinook, Clatsop and Kathlamet people.

The 20 islands in the Columbia River from Svensen to Westport are part of the Lewis and Clark National Wildlife Refuge, which is crucial bird habitat. U.S. Highway 30 crosses creeks that flow down to the river, including Gnat Creek, Big Creek and Hunt Creek.

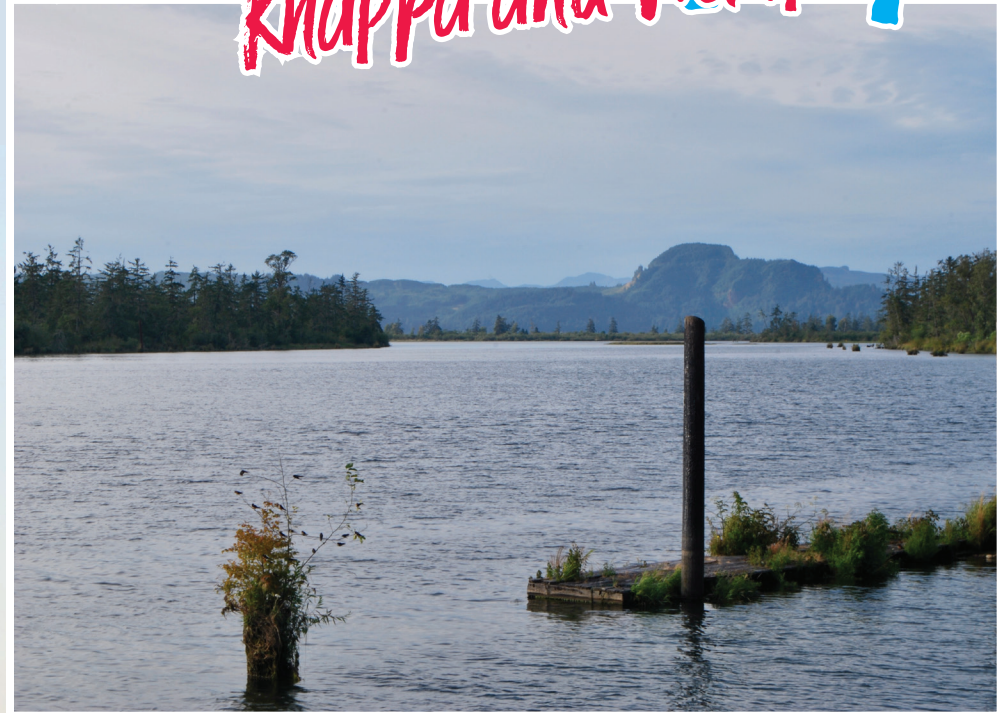
To really view the landscape, take a detour down Knappa Dock Road in Knappa or Ziak-Gnat Creek Road toward Brownsmead. On these roads you'll get a better

view of the creeks, sloughs and wetlands. Driving or biking slowly around Knappa and Brownsmead offers a tour of quirky older buildings, boat houses and farm animals.

Experienced cyclers can ride from Astoria or bring a bike along for shorter rides. In Westport, make a trip across the river to Puget Island on the Wahkiakum County Ferry, the last ferry crossing the lower Columbia River. It operates daily and leaves at a quarter past the hour from 5:15 a.m. to 10:15 p.m. Once on the island, take in the quaint and scenic landscape, then head over to the town of Cathlamet, Washington.

A boat or kayak is needed in order to experience most of the Columbia's islands. Make sure to take a look at maps and tides before you go. For boats, try the Aldrich Point Boat Ramp in Brownsmead or the Westport Boat Ramp.

When kayaking, launch from the Knappa Docks (use the riverbank to launch) for a quick paddle in Warren Slough around a



The Knappa Docks.

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A field of sheep in Brownsmead.

Morning activity: Stop by Big Creek Coffeehouse

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This cute cafe sits in Knappa right off of U.S. Highway 30. For a needed pick-me-up in the morning, stop by for a coffee. The cafe currently offers to-go service only for customers who order inside or at their drive-thru window, though there is a small gift shop inside.

Later in the day when you finish adventuring around this area, come back in for a sandwich and some Tillamook ice cream. The sandwiches are each named after a local creek, so you can chow down on lunch that's named after your favorite new spot, like Gnat Creek.

Photos by Caitlin Seyfried