

# EASY WINTER HIKES ON THE NORTH COAST

## Places to go outdoors on chilly winter days

BY ANDY CAMERON

North Coast winters can bring a myriad of challenges for those seeking outdoor adventures. Short days, persistent rain and resulting mud can render many trails impractical or simply impassable. For those armed with rain gear and sturdy boots, however, several opportunities exist for getting outside and connecting with nature, even in the winter months.

The following trails are fairly short and gain little elevation, but are sure to connect hikers with the North Coast's natural beauty.

### LEWIS AND CLARK RIVER TRAIL

Connecting Netul Landing and Fort Clatsop, this 3-mile out-and-back trail follows its namesake waterway. While hikers can begin at either end, it's best in my view to start your journey at the canoe landing. From there, it's easy to imagine one's self as a Corps of Discovery member, strolling among the firs toward the awaiting (and reportedly dismal) shelter of the fort. Wildlife abounds in this area; herons, geese, and deer can frequently be seen.

### WARRENTON WATERFRONT TRAIL

Sometimes overshadowed by Astoria's other riverfront gem, this paved path offers nearly 9 miles of scenery. Though hikers can join the trail at several locations, Skipanon River Park is a good choice, featuring ample parking. From there, the trail heads north toward E.H. Carruthers Memorial Park, where the Lewis and Clark Viewpoint allows for picturesque vistas of Astoria and the Columbia River. More intrepid hikers can continue on to the Hammond Marina, where the trail connects to Fort Stevens State Park. Trail users often report traffic jams of elk

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Photos by Andy Cameron

**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: A heron on the Lewis and Clark River. Coffenburg Lake features a loop trail hike. A cow is seen from the Fort Sea Trail. A coastal fern stands aglow.**



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