



## LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON Adventures and Natural Attractions

In a state renowned for its parks and wilderness areas, Southwest Washington's Lewis County boasts some of the best and most varied outdoor opportunities for camping, fishing, hiking, and family recreation. Lewis County's pastoral setting ranges from gently rolling prairies and lush river valleys in the west to the rugged Cascade Mountains in the east – ideal for skiing, mountain climbing, hunting, horse back riding, cycling, canoeing, water sports, rock climbing, and wildlife watching.

National and working forestland cover approximately one third of Lewis County. Within county borders are portions of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie and Gifford Pinchot National Forests and the Mt. Rainier National Park. These areas contain a full spectrum of recreational, scenic, biological, and botanical treasures.

### **Nature: Its Canopy and Creatures**

Lewis County possesses an incredible variety of flora and fauna. Old-growth forests of fir, hemlock, pine, spruce, and cedar cover the slopes. The forest understory and open meadows display a dazzling assortment of wildflowers, ferns, berries, and herbs. Black bear, cougar, bobcat, deer, elk, eagles, and mountain goats inhabit this wilderness. An abundance of upland lakes and streams throughout the mountains converge at lower elevations to create the Cowlitz River and some of the best fly-fishing spots in the Northwest.

### **Tri-Mountain Panorama**

Dominating the landscape for miles around is Mount Rainier, the second highest peak in the lower 48 states. Nowhere in the state are the major peaks of **Mount Rainier**, **Mount St. Helens** and **Mount Adams** more easily accessed than from the east end of Lewis County. Within the county's boundary is 7,950 foot, Old Snowy Mountain, near the Cascade Crest Trail.

**Mount Rainier National Park** encompasses a dormant volcano, old-growth forests, abundant wildlife, 240 miles of trails, and 600 overnight campsites for wilderness camping. The east entrance at Ohanapecosh is just outside of **Packwood**. Call Mount Rainier Guest Services at (360) 569-2275 or the National Park Service at (360) 569-2211. The town of **Randle** is the gateway to the **Mount St. Helens** National Volcanic Monument. A drive to Windy Ridge brings you within four miles of the gaping crater and provides the best views of Spirit Lake and blown down trees lying like toothpicks. The Coldwater Ridge Visitor Center and the Johnson Ridge Observatory, only six miles from the volcano's crater, are reachable along a scenic route by taking Exit 63 (Hwy. 505) off of Interstate 5 through **Toledo** to Hwy. 504 -- the Spirit Lake Memorial Highway.

The Tri-Mountain territory provides a bounty of outdoor opportunities during winter and summer alike. Individuals and families enjoy activities such as golfing, fishing and hiking, as well as aesthetic pursuits such as bird watching and photography. Adventurous endeavors such as white water rafting, creeking, hang gliding, and mountain climbing are also popular in this area. Horseback riding excursions leave from stables in Packwood, and backcountry trips into the parks and wilderness areas originate in Randle. Here, archaeological enthusiasts will experience a rare glimpse into the past at the Layser Caves, revealed as recently as 1982.

### **Winter Sports**

Ski enthusiasts will find the driest powder in the Washington Cascades at the **White Pass Ski Area**. With a 6,000-foot summit and 1,500-foot vertical drop, White Pass averages 300 inches of snowfall a year. This was the training ground for Olympic medal winners Phil and Steve Mahre. Call (509) 672-3100.

### **Generous Servings of Untrammelled Nature**

**The Gifford Pinchot National Forest** offers a myriad of hiking trails in the warm months, and 19 snow-parks and hundreds of miles of trails for cross-country skiing, snow-shoeing, and snow-mobiling during the winter. The William O. Douglas, Tatoosh, and Goat Rocks wilderness areas lie within the forest. Some of the best huckleberry fields in the Northwest can be found here with the berries ripening around Labor Day. Emerging wild mushrooms and a kaleidoscope of fall foliage mark the change of seasons.

### **Fishing Favorites**

**Riffe Lake**, an 11,830-acre reservoir situated on the Cowlitz River, with an abundance of cutthroat, brown and rainbow trout, coho and kokanee salmon, as well as largemouth bass is a fisherman's paradise. Mayfield Lake, only minutes to the west, has open season year round and is home to the fighting tiger muskies and rainbow trout.

### **Forest "Cathedral"**

The second state park to be established in the state was **Lewis and Clark State Park** in 1923. Home to the nation's last remaining old-growth lowland forest, huge hemlock and Douglas fir form a natural cathedral and softly carpeted forest floor that creates an inspirational setting. Adding to the appeal of the park are well-maintained campsites and excellent interpretive signage. The park is on the historic Jackson Highway, near Interstate 5, at Exit 68.

### **Camping & RV Facilities**

Memorable parks include Rainbow Falls State Park along the Chehalis River; Ike Kinswa State Park and Mayfield Lake Park on Mayfield Lake; Riffe Lake's Mossyrock Park and Taidnapam Park. Two city parks in Chehalis include Stan Hedwall Park (with recreational vehicle hookups and baseball fields) and Recreation Park with its extensive children's playground and swimming pool. Eight city parks in Centralia feature such attractions as an indoor swimming pool, ball fields, picnic shelters, playgrounds, access to lakes and rivers, and more. The Seminary Hill Natural Area in Centralia offers nature parks and periodic naturalist lectures and tours.

### **Public Golf Courses**

For devoted golfers, Lewis County has four public golf courses: 27 holes at the Newaukum Valley Golf Course (Chehalis), 18 holes at the Riverside Country Club course (Chehalis), and nine holes at both the challenging Centralia Public Golf Course and the more forgiving Maple Grove Golf Course (Randle).

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