

Olympic Coastal Strip



Olympic National Park offers 57 miles (92 km) of the most primitive natural coastline in the 48 contiguous United States. The views of ocean, cliffs, headlands, islands, and seastacks, coupled with the dramatic changing sea provide a unique experience. You can drive to Rialto and Kalaloch beaches, but hiking provides access to the whole coast.

With the rising number of hikers visiting this area, resource preservation efforts are essential. You can help protect this awe-inspiring area by using minimum impact techniques included below.

BACKCOUNTRY PERMITS are free and required for all overnight backcountry trips. They are available at ranger stations, visitor centers, and trailhead bulletin boards.

PROTECT YOUR VALUABLES - Do not leave valuables in your vehicle. Bring only what you use on your backcountry trip to a trailhead.



HIKING HINTS - Headland trails, marked by orange and black targets, lead over points that can't be rounded by shore. They receive minimal maintenance and are usually steep and muddy. Some require climbing "sand ladders" (wooden timbers attached to cables). Be wary of loose rocks that can easily crumble or fall from above.

Rocks and logs can be slippery and unstable and can tip or roll. Vibram soles do not give traction on wet or algae-covered rocks, so stay low, take short steps and keep your hands free to help maintain your balance.

SHELTERS - Coastal shelters are for emergency use only. For personal safety, carry a tent. If you build a driftwood structure or furniture, dismantle it before leaving. Wilderness areas are meant to be free of signs of people.

PURIFY YOUR WATER - "Ice-tea" stain from root tannins in creeks is not harmful, but drinking untreated water is risky. Giardia lamblia, a protozoan, can cause severe intestinal illness. Other bacteria in surface water can also make you sick. The most certain treatment to destroy giardia and other organisms is to boil water for at least one minute or chemically treat.

HANG YOUR FOOD - Raccoons, skunks, bears and other wildlife frequently raid unprotected food (not just at night). To keep food away from animals, hang it at least 6 feet (1.8m) above the ground and 6 feet (1.8m) away from tree trunks. Store it this way whenever you are away from your backpack or camp.

Groups hiking or camping along the coast are limited to a maximum of 12 persons per group. Organized or affiliated groups must camp at least 1/2 mile (.8km) apart.

Travel is mostly along beaches and rocky shores except for headland trails. The terrain includes sections of sand, cobbles, rocks, logs and forest.

CAMPING AREAS - Camping is permitted on the Olympic coast **except** between Ellen Creek and Rialto Beach **and** on all beaches south of the Hoh River (including Kalaloch Beaches). You should use existing campsites, areas devoid of vegetation or the beach above the high tide line.

CAMPFIRES are allowed on and adjacent to ocean beaches but they must be more than 10 feet (3m) from the nearest beach log and may not exceed 3 feet (1m) in diameter. Driftwood and "dead and down" wood may be used; do not cut live vegetation or use chainsaws. The use of portable stoves is encouraged.

HIKE BY THE TIDE - Rising water can cut you off. Current tide tables are posted at trailheads and coastal ranger stations. **DON'T GUESS!**, know when tides occur. Strong winds or off-coast storms make tides higher than tide tables indicate, sometimes making routes impassable even at low tide. If conditions are bad, turn back the way you came. In case of a tsunami warning, a Coast Guard helicopter will attempt to fly the coast advising you to head to higher ground.

RESPECT THE OCEAN - Water adjacent to long sandy beaches can develop treacherous riptides. Surf along steep gravel beaches can cause significant undertow. Strong currents, cold water and hidden rocks make swimming hazardous. Waves can move drift logs on the beach that can crush and kill. Be vigilant for large swells.

PACK OUT ALL TRASH - Please do not burn garbage except paper. Do not dispose of garbage by burying or putting in outhouses.

SANITATION - Human body waste must be disposed of in provided outhouses and nowhere else within 1/4 mile (.4km) of such locations. In other areas, it must be buried in organic soil away from campsites, trails, beaches and developed areas; at least 100 feet (30.5m) from any water source. Dig a shallow hole 4-6" (10-15cm) and dispose of used toilet paper by burying in hole. Do not wash dishes in streams. Soap should be dumped on well drained soil at least 100 feet (30.5m) from water sources.

DON'T BE TEMPTED to pick up marine mammals (i.e. seal pups) even if you think something is wrong with them. They are in their natural environment where nature will take it's course. Some marine mammal diseases are contagious to humans.

Tide pools are fascinating places, but don't collect or handle the plants or animals that dwell there. It is easy to disrupt the balance of this community.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY let a friend/relative know your trip plans and expected return time. They can inform rangers if you do not return. Rescue is not a sure or immediate service. Be prepared to survive on your own. If you experience an emergency, notify the closest ranger station: Lake Ozette (206-963-2725), Mora (206-374-5460), Kalaloch (206-962-2283) or call 911 at night (or if you can't get through).

VEHICLES (INCLUDING BICYCLES) are prohibited on all coastal trails and beaches.

WEAPONS are not allowed on the coast (including trails and beaches).

PETS are allowed on leash **only** in the following areas: Rialto Beach from Quillayute River north to Hole-in-the-Wall and the beaches at Kalaloch. They are prohibited everywhere else on the coast and on backcountry trails (except for guide and hearing dogs).

Many creeks and rivers (Ozette, Goodman, Falls, Mosquito etc.) can be difficult to ford during high runoff or high tide situations and may involve deep wading or swimming. The Hoh and Quillayute Rivers can never be crossed on foot.

CHECK WEATHER FORECAST - but, be prepared for unpredicted changes. The weather changes quickly from warm and sunny to cold and wet. Forecasts are available at ranger stations or by monitoring the NOAA Weather Advisory on 162.55mhz.

BEWARE OF EXPOSURE - Hypothermia (depressed body temperature) is the #1 killer in the outdoors. It may occur quickly from being wet and cold. To prevent: keep clothing warm and dry and eat high energy foods. Learn more about this condition before your trip.

LEAVE ALONE metal cylinders or other containers that have washed up on shore. They occasionally contain hazardous or explosive materials. If you see a suspicious object, notify a ranger with it's exact location.

EDIBLES - Edible fruits, nuts, mushrooms etc. may be collected by hand for personal consumption. The total quantity which may be possessed is limited to 1 lb. (.45kg) per day per person. Exotic species (apples, non-native blackberries) are exempt from daily limits.

Paralytic shellfish poisoning occurs in humans when they eat shellfish which have concentrated toxic "red tide" algae in their body tissues. Pacific Ocean beaches are closed from April 1 to Oct. 31 to shellfish harvest, except razor clams which have their own regulated season. Seasons are set by the state for the legal taking of clams, mussels, and fish on the coast. Check at a ranger station for current regulations.

COLLECTING SHELLS - Collection of unoccupied seashells is limited to a handful per person per park visit.

Coastal Strip

Shi Shi Beach to Cape Alava - 7.8 mi. (12.5km).
 Point of Arches: Caution-headland must be rounded at low tide. No overland trail. Will Point (stretch of rugged headlands starting 1/2 mile (.8km) south of Point of Arches): Danger-cannot be rounded. Must use very steep primitive overland trail with several rope belays. Just south of the trail, hiking over large boulders possible at low tide only. Recommended only for experienced climbers. Ozette River: Caution-the river often cannot be forded during winter and spring. During summer, ford at low tide. Points just south can only be rounded at low tide.

North Wilderness Coast Hike - Ozette to Rialto Beach via Cape Alava 20.8 mi. (33.5km).
 Cape Alava: Watch for whales offshore. Hang food. Sand Point: bear problems-hang food high. Yellow Banks: Caution-round at low tide. Use rock tunnel at medium tide. Cliffs not feasible to scale. Norwegian Memorial to Cape Johnson: Round at low tide. Cape Johnson: Caution-round at half tide-difficult to climb. Points immediately north and south of cape are extremely dangerous and cannot be climbed - round at low tide. Watch for sea otters. Lots of slippery boulder-hopping. Rich tidepools. Rialto Beach: paved road 13 mi. (20.9km) to Hwy 101. (No overnight camping south of Ellen Creek).

South Wilderness Coast Hike - Third Beach trailhead to Oil City 17.3 mi. (27.8km).
 Teahwhit Head: Danger-cannot be rounded or climbed. Taylor Point: Danger-use overland trail. Scott's Bluff: Caution-round at low tide, use trail at high. Next point to south needs to be passed at lower tides. Goodman Creek: Danger can't ford creek at mouth-use overland trail. Mosquito Creek to Hoh Head: Caution-use beach route at extreme low tide only (still must climb a few points). Overland trail begins at creek mouth. Hoh Head: Danger-must use overland trail. Oil City: No oil, no city. 1/2 mile (.8km) from beach to parking area. Partially unpaved road 11 mi. (17.7km) from Hwy 101.

All rocks and islands which lay offshore of the Olympic coastal strip are a part of Olympic National Park. Those that can not be reached by foot at low tide are also National Wildlife Refuges and are off limits to visitation.

KEY

- NON-PARK LAND
- ROAD
- TRAIL
- RANGER STATION
- MILEAGE MARKER
- CAMPGROUND
- RESERVATION BOUNDARY

DANGER: On map signifies points or areas that should never be rounded at low tide. Always use overland trail.

CAUTION: On map signifies points or areas that can be rounded at low tide. If no headland trail exists, hiker may have to wait out tide until it can be safely rounded.

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