

# Travel the PNW with Tracy

Travel the PNW with Tracy is a weekly column about travel options from around British Columbia to northern California.



## Explore the Skamokawa Valley

Kayaking, golf just a half hour from Longview

**TRACY ELLEN BEARD**  
For The Daily News

Longview is ideally located to easily access the beach, the mountains, and two metropolitan cities: Portland, and Seattle. Adventurers and Sunday drivers will find plenty to do at any of those destinations, but don't disregard the unique and appealing stops in between. Skamokawa, located 34 miles west of Longview on Highway 4, is a peaceful rural community located adjacent to the mighty Columbia River.

Skamokawa was not always a quiet small town with fewer than 500 residents; it was once a bustling shipping town built on a network of sloughs and inlets that fed into the main river. No real roads reached Skamokawa until the 1920s, but it was a popular steamboat landing in its heyday.

Between watching the ships, hiking, kayaking, canoeing, golf, disc golf, and some tasty eats, there are plenty of ways to spend your time for an afternoon or a weekend in the quaint town of Skamokawa and the surrounding vicinity.

### Friends of Skamokawa/RiverLife Interpretive Center

1394 WA-4, Skamokawa Valley, open noon to 4 p.m. Thursday-Sunday, [friendsofskamokawa.org](http://friendsofskamokawa.org).

The RiverLife Interpretive Center, owned and operated by the Friends of Skamokawa, is the perfect place to begin your journey. Information from knowledgeable docents and century-old photos will transport you back in time to Skamokawa's hopping era and forward to today's quieter outdoor paradise. My favorite elements of the Interpretive Center were the 1894 central schoolroom exhibit and the old photos depicting the steamships at the dock.

### Skamokawa Resort

1391 WA-4, Skamokawa Valley, [funonthecolumbia.com](http://funonthecolumbia.com).

Eight renovated hotel rooms, two with balconies, sit above the Skamokawa Resort general store, and three luxury condo vacation rentals are available for rent next door. The balcony units overlooking the water will allow you to watch the ships traverse up and down the river. The vacation units have fully stocked kitchens, making preparing meals for friends or family easy. Some units come with fireplaces and Jacuzzi tubs to enhance relaxation during your stay. The on-site store stocks various groceries, beer, and wine, perfect for barbecues and picnics.

### The Lucky Mud Inn

44 Old Chestnut Dr., Skamokawa Valley, [luckymud.com](http://luckymud.com).

The Lucky Mud Inn, owned and operated by Adam and Sara Fletcher, boasts three rooms for rent, a fishing pond, and two frisbee golf courses. Adam is working on adding a tiny house to the property to use as another rental. The championship-level course, Raven, has 21 holes, and the beginner-level course, Woodpecker, features 10 holes. Disc golf is quite popular, and the courses at Lucky Mud are rated the second highest in Washington state.

You do not have to stay at the Inn to play, but you must call ahead and schedule a tee time at 360-795-8770. The fee to play is \$5 per adult, and kids under 12 are free. The on-site pro shop is equipped



TRACY ELLEN BEARD, CONTRIBUTED

The RiverLife Interpretive Center in Skamokawa Valley features a 1894 central schoolroom exhibit.



TRACY ELLEN BEARD, CONTRIBUTED

View from suite 1 at the Skamokawa Resort in Skamokawa Valley.



THE LUCKY MUD INN, CONTRIBUTED

Kyle Shaar plays disc golf on the Raven course at The Lucky Mud Inn in Skamokawa Valley.



TRACY ELLEN BEARD, CONTRIBUTED

The Captain's Platter at the Duck Inn Restaurant in Skamokawa Valley includes halibut, shrimp, clams and more.



TRACY ELLEN BEARD, CONTRIBUTED

Guests can watch the ships go by at Vista Park in Skamokawa Valley.

with everything you need.

### Skyline Golf Cathlamet

20 Randal Dr., Cathlamet, [skyline.golf](http://skyline.golf).

Just down the road, Skyline Golf features 18 holes of disc golf and nine holes of traditional golf.

### Vista Park

5 Vista Park Rd, Skamokawa Valley, [wahport2.org](http://wahport2.org).

Whether you are looking for partial to full hookups for your RV or trailer, tent sites in the trees or near the beach, or yurts to keep you sheltered for the night, Vista Park has it all. Day visitors can access the picnic tables, playgrounds, and the beach for free, but donations are appreciated. The camp-

ground is perfect for bicycle riding, and a quarter-mile nature trail follows the river, offering a forested escape with peek-a-boo views of the river.

### Columbia River Kayaking

957 Steamboat Slough Rd No. 1, Skamokawa, [columbiariverkayaking.com](http://columbiariverkayaking.com).

Book a canoe or kayak trip with Columbia River Kayaking for an exciting water adventure. The company offers intro and beginner classes, day trips, and multiple-day packages. I went on a day trip with Kyleen, the owner, and one of the guides. It was a typical Pacific Northwest day, gray and rainy. Kyleen covered all the safety precautions before we left, and I

climbed into my kayak, dressed warm and toasty in my wetsuit for the adventure.

I settled in and began paddling up the slough. We traveled along and admired Price Island on the right, part of the Julia Butler Hanson National Refuge for the Columbian white-tailed deer. This sanctuary and the nearby Lewis and Clark Wildlife Refuge provide an ideal habitat for local animals and a variety of birds. We spotted an eagle during our paddle, and a friendly seal followed us up the slough. We veered into a small waterway where juvenile salmon hang out. Paddling up the gentle waters, Kyleen pointed out various birds.

After exiting the juvenile habitat, we entered the river and

headed into the shipping channel. The waters here move quickly, and I paid close attention to any ships nearby. This route was the fast track back to the dock. Kyleen calculated that we went four times faster on the return than on the initial paddle up the slough.

### The Duck Inn

1377 WA-4, Skamokawa Valley.

The Duck Inn Restaurant offers an extensive list of American favorites, including the Captain's Seafood Platter with a deep-fried or sautéed option. My dinner of tender halibut arrived, half of it sautéed in garlic butter and the rest deep fried and accompanied with a dill tartar sauce. The shrimp cocktail was delicious, served with a spicy cocktail sauce. The platter included more than I could eat, but I loved sampling the crispy deep-fried clams piled high, the baked potato loaded with sour cream and butter, the sweet, crunchy coleslaw, and the Texas garlic toast.

Tracy Ellen Beard is a freelance writer, editor and photographer based in Longview. Her articles are published in more than 20 online and print publications including Upscale Living Magazine, Northwest Travel & Life, Wander With Wonder, Country Magazine, Luxe Getaways and more. She shares a unique perspective on the world as the founder of an international children's nonprofit. She attended culinary school in San Francisco and owned a catering company.

## New copy editor joins TDN

Dylan Farrell joined The Daily News on Oct. 17 as a copy editor. He edits sports content, assists in page design for the B section, and writes pieces for news and the Community page.

Though he doubts many readers will believe it, the incoming copy editor insists he has a passion for editing as much as writing, citing his college hobby of proofreading his friends' essays during finals season to take his mind off his own



Farrell

before attending the University of Oregon, where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in journalism in 2023. While attending the university, he spent

work. Farrell is a lifelong resident of the Pacific Northwest and grew up in Beaverton, Oregon.

two years copy editing for the Daily Emerald, UO's student newspaper, and as a sports contributor for KWVA, the student radio station.

Farrell said he has always had a knack for writing, but didn't seriously consider journalism until 2019, during his senior year of high school. That year, he realized the impact of local news on communities after the sudden death of his longtime favorite sports-

writer Jason Botchford. Farrell said the outpouring of appreciation and support for Botchford's family from the community struck a chord with him. From then on, he was determined to work in a newsroom.

Outside work, Farrell enjoys watching sports, especially hockey, as well as reading, writing and playing PC games.

The Daily News, Longview, Wash.

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