

Encounter History

16-mile stretch of Washington's Highway 14 offers engaging journey

Story and photos by Tracy Beard

Here's your chance to savor the distinctive cultures, art and relics of the past along a 16-mile stretch on the Washington side of the Columbia Gorge. Begin your journey at Milepost 86, near Lyle, Wash., on Washington's Highway 14 (about a 3-hour drive from Longview via I-5 and WA-14 or 2.5-hour drive via I-5, I-205, I-84 E to US-197, crossing the Columbia River at The Dalles, Ore.)

This Milepost marks the entrance to Horsethief Lake a part of Columbia Hills Historic State Park. You'll learn about Native American history through pictographs and petroglyphs and then venture east to historic Wishram to view a 1923 locomotive. Continue east and indulge in local wine tasting or stop along the way at Maryhill Museum and revel in a fine selection of historical art. End your excursion of days gone by as you take a slight detour from Highway 14 at Milepost 102 to the Stonehenge Memorial.

Columbia Hills Historical State Park's 3,637 acres extends to vistas rising high above the gorge down to recreational areas next to the river. The park offers visitors a vast array of activities like camping and water sports at Horsethief Lake, rock climbing at Horsethief Butte, and 12.4 miles of incredible hikes with



The Maryhill Stonehenge Memorial honors servicemen of Klickitat County who died in World War I.

stunning views of Mount Adams and Mount Hood. Campers and day-trippers to the 90-acre lake can rent pedal boats and stand-up paddle boards or bring their vessel and use one of the two launches that access the water. Picnic tables and barbecues are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The park offers a variety of campsites for both RVs and tents, one dump station and a restroom. Camping in the Columbia River Gorge can be quite windy, and all guests must bring or purchase a Discovery Day Pass.

Native American petroglyphs line a pathway in the park, and guided tours led by rangers escort adventurers back in time to additional carved petroglyphs and painted pictographs on fenced-in rock walls. The world-famous Tsaglalal (She Who Watches) is seen on the tour and is considered a Native American place of worship.

This dry area is laden with ticks, rattlesnakes and poison oak and is an active archeological site protected by state and federal laws. Ranger Mark Harris led my tour to see the artwork in May, beginning the tour by saying, "We will regularly be stopping to make "tick checks" to ensure that we have no unwanted hitchhikers."

We walked through a locked gate into an area full of volcanic basalt, the ground was covered with fields of pillow basalt formed from being underwater during the Ice Age flood. The Missoula Floods that carved the Columbia Gorge were cataclysmic floods that sporadically ripped across Eastern Washington during the end of the Ice Age. Geologists estimate that 40 to 60 floods took place over 2,000 years 13,000 – 15,000 years ago. The most significant flood occurred when the ice dam broke at Glacial Lake Missoula. This 2,000-foot deep lake stretched for more than 200 miles, comprising more than 500 cubic miles of

water. It was more water than Lake Erie and Lake Ontario combined and flowed through the area at speeds of up to 80 mph, tearing out the gorge.

Native Americans traded up and down the river. The petroglyphs and pictographs in red, white and black paint are estimated to be between 200 and 1,000 years old. The images of fish, monsters, people with auras, polymorphs and the famous "She Who Watches" depict life during that time.

Mark pointed out a spot that looked perfect for a vision quest. He wove a story about a young person coming there looking for their spirit guide or purpose in life. Each day the tribe shaman checked on the young person and asked if they had met their spirit guide.



Rangers conduct tours all summer at Columbia Hills Historical State Park. Below, pillow basalt forms terrain known as "channeled scablands" of Washington.

When leaving, he made a mark on the wall. The scores continued until the young person found their guide. Mark shared that the tally marks could also represent the number of people who were born or died in the tribe or how many years they had of good fishing. People have passed down stories or made up new ones over the years. I was sad to learn that once these images are gone, they will not be restored.

Summer tours in June, July and August are offered seven days a week at 9am. These tours are popular, and are limited to 25 visitors. Call 509-439-9032 a few weeks in advance to secure a reservation.

Wishram, Washington, is located at Milepost 201 and was once known as Fall Bridge. It is a centuries-old Native American settlement. Years ago, James J. Hill wanted to connect two



transcontinental railroads to profit from the lumber trade in Oregon. After a few years, lines connected between pertinent cities, and Wishram was the perfect spot to build a bridge across the Columbia River. Basalt rock stood above the waterline during periods with low tide, making it possible to construct piers to support the bridge. The railroad company built BNSF Railway Bridge 9.6, the first bridge to cross the Columbia River. Eventually, the rail line extended to Bend, Oregon, and Wishram and became a primary passenger terminal, roundhouse and freight switchyard for trains traveling to Bend.

To commemorate the railway, a P-2 Class locomotive built by Baldwin in 1923 rests enclosed next to the old railway station in town. This

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Stone depictions made by Native Americans may be seen at Columbia Hills Historical State Park.

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style of engine worked fabulously to transport passengers, but was replaced by the S-2 Northern. The P-2s were used as freight trains until they were retired in 1955. Number 2507 of the Great Northern Railway is enormous, and the mural across the street portrays an old post office and grocery store.

For refreshment, plan a picnic and visit one of the four wineries along this section of Highway 14: Cascade Cliffs Vineyard and Winery, Jacob Williams Winery, Maryhill Winery or Waving Tree Winery and Vineyard. You can also spend an entire day perusing the gorgeous art at Maryhill Museum.

The final stop is the Maryhill Stonehenge. Sam Hill's Stonehenge Memorial was dedicated in 1918 to honor the heroism and sacrifice of service members of Klickitat County, Washington, who fought and died in WWI. Stonehenge was the nation's first WWI memorial. Hill, along with others at that time, believed that the original Stonehenge was a place of sacrifice, and he drew a parallel between the lives lost in WWI and the sacrifices that took place at the initial site. Several top astronomers of the day designed the position of the altar stone to align with the sunrise on the summer solstice.

The altar stone was dedicated on July 4, 1918. It reads, "In memory of the soldiers and sailors of Klickitat County who gave their lives in defense of their country. This monument is erected in the hope that others inspired by the example of their valor and their heroism may share in that love of liberty and burn with that fire of patriotism which death can alone quench."

The Stonehenge Memorial was finally finished in 1929 and rededicated on Memorial Day. Samuel Hill died in 1931, and his body was cremated. His ashes now reside in a crypt beneath the memorial.

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PROVISIONS

ALONG THE TRAIL

By Tracy Beard

Tracy's Watermelon, Mango Caprese Salad

- 1/3 personal size watermelon
- 2 ripe mangos
- 1 ripe red tomato
- 1 ripe yellow tomato or yellow grape tomatoes
- 8 large basil leaves
- 1/2 C. balsamic vinegar reduced to 1/4 C.
- 3 Tbl good extra virgin olive oil

Cut watermelon into pretty wedges or bite-size pieces. Cut mangos and tomatoes the same as the watermelon. Chiffonade the basil. Place 1/2 cup balsamic vinegar into a saucepan and reduce by one-half or until of syrup-like consistency. Arrange the fruit in an attractive manner. Drizzle it with olive oil and reduced balsamic. Top with basil shreds. Serve at room temperature.



Grilled Chicken with Asian Slaw

- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 2 tsp rice vinegar
- 1/2 tsp toasted sesame oil
- 1 1/2 Tbl creamy peanut butter
- 1/2 tsp finely chopped fresh ginger
- 2 tsp finely chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/4 tsp sugar
- 1-1/2 C. coleslaw mix with cabbage and carrot
- 1/4 C. grated carrot
- 1 scallion – finely slice the green part of one scallion
- 1/2 thinly sliced romaine lettuce leaf
- 2 large naan bread
- 1 chicken breast grilled – or cut from a rotisserie chicken

Whisk together the soy sauce, vinegar, sesame oil, peanut butter, ginger, cilantro, sugar and scallion. Add the coleslaw mix and grated carrot, toss to coat. Arrange the grilled chicken breast in the middle of each naan bread and top with slaw and lettuce. Fold and enjoy.

