Adventures on Water: One of Many Playgrounds for Outdoor Enthusiasts in Snohomish County, WA

From world-class rapids to tranquil waters to undersea worlds of wonder, the rivers, lakes and marine waters await to give outdoor enthusiasts – whitewater rafters, kayakers, canoeists, scuba divers, and other water-loving recreationists – of all ages and abilities a thrill of a lifetime.

White Water Rafting

The Sauk, Skykomish, Snohomish, and Stillaguamish river systems make Snohomish County one of the most popular rafting spots in the Pacific Northwest. Spring and early summer snowmelt from the Cascade Mountains make for heart-pounding, breathtaking whitewater rafting. In winter the bald eagle float trips offer up-close views of the birds and wildlife on calm waters.

A sample of the awaiting adventures:

- Day trips on the **Sauk River**. April through July is the peak season for whitewater rafting action. The river calms down in August, making it a perfect time for families and those wanting a more leisurely experience to enjoy the rugged Cascade scenery. [Downstream River Runners](#)
- Adrenaline junkies will love the boulder-strewn rapids on **Skykomish River** including the mile-long Class IV El Nino rapids, mid-March through mid-May and again in July. A heavy snow melt in June can keep rafting companies off the river. Wetsuits required; rentals available.
  - For day trips: [North Cascades River Expeditions](#)
  - For multi-day excursions: [Outdoors Adventure Center/Wave Trek](#)
- Birders, wildlife enthusiasts and photographers will see plenty of wintering bald eagles and spawning salmon on the north fork of the **Stillaguamish River**, a location with much fewer water craft than on other Northwest rivers. [Dickson’s NW Eco River Tours](#)

Visit [Snohomish.org/RiverRafting](http://Snohomish.org/RiverRafting) for many more whitewater river tour companies and their tour offerings.
Yurts: A New Way to Camp

Outdoor enthusiasts can continue their grand outdoor adventure in style and comfort by staying in a yurt! These circular, tent-shaped, wood-framed structures provide convenience camping where campers bring their own bedding and food. For even more convenience, restaurants and fast food options are nearby.

A yurt’s canvas walls let the sounds of nature in and keep chilly weather out. Gas-flame heaters keep the yurts warm and cozy year round. Campers will be lulled to sleep by the sounds of mountain breezes rustling pine boughs and awakened by dreamy sunlight at sunrise.

Paca Pride Guest Ranch, Granite Falls

Re-inventing the camping experience, this homestead campground offers a guest yurt with queen bed and linens, camp chairs and rustic mountain decor. Relax on the deck, breathe in the fresh mountain air, and enjoy the pastoral views of Mt. Pilchuck and the friendly resident alpacas. The guest ranch also offers grass and covered tent spaces. Mature guests like grandparents appreciate the comfort of the guest room with private bath in the main house.

Meal preparation is easy: use one of the propane barbecues or the cooktop stove and sink at the covered outdoor kitchen. Restroom and shower facilities are outside the main building. A hot tub, sauna and steam room are also available.

Campers can use Paca Pride as a base camp for day trips: fish for salmon or trout from the banks of the nearby south fork of the Stillaguamish River; hike the trails to mountain meadows, caves and waterfalls; see the remains of the old mining town of Monte Cristo; and explore the Mountain Loop Highway.

Visit Paca Pride Guest Ranch for more information.

Yurt Village at Kayak Point, Stanwood

Located in this saltwater shoreline park is a yurt village of 10 yurts that can comfortably accommodate up to five guests each. The structures are built with hardwood floors, electricity, screen windows, skylight, and light-colored canvas with a locking door. Restrooms and showers are close by.

Campers can catch breakfast or dinner by casting a line for flounder, sole, true cod and other fish from the beach or by crabbing off the 300-foot pier.

Catches can then be cooked up on the stand-up barbecue grills at one of the several picnic shelters. The large central shelter has electricity and seating for 45 people.
Kids can frolic on the playground and in the swim area under parental supervision.

Want to bring Fido? Because pets are not allowed inside the yurts, campers should request Yurt #10 and then use that campsite to bed down Fido inside their parked vehicle.

Visit Kayak Point County Park for more information or to make reservations.

Yurt Village at River Meadows, Arlington

The 150-acre county park is nestled in the bend of south fork of the Stillaguamish River. The six-yurt village was erected within the orchard area of the original McCaulley homestead. The apple, plum and cherry trees that grow between the yurts date back to the early 1900s and some of the original fencing still remains.

Campers can fish along the banks of the Stillaguamish River, hike the meandering trails, seek geocaches, bird watch, fly kites, or sprawl out in the meadow and watch the clouds float by.

Picnic shelters, tables and barbecue pits make meal preparation a breeze.

During the Stillaguamish Tribe’s popular Festival of the River, Aug. 10 & 11, the park is filled with vendors and activities, and public camping is not available. Visit Snohomish.org/Places-to-Stay for a list of nearby lodging and camping options.

Visit River Meadows County Park for more information or to make reservations.

Scuba Diving

On the shore of Edmonds is the 27-acre Edmonds Underwater Park, the most popular site in Washington State. About 25,000 divers – from beginners to experts – visit undersea playground each year, and it’s easy to understand why.

A rope trail system guides divers to dozens of places to explore and experience such the man-made reef structures like “Tube Henge,” a 60-by-100-foot ring of concrete arches placed in a pattern similar to Stonehenge in England, and “The Slinky,” a 72-foot, spring-like coil of plastic tubing.

Divers will spy gator-sized lingcod, cabezone with wing-like fins, flounder, sole, octopus, sea stars, hermit crabs, moon snails, and other creatures in and around concrete blocks, wrecked boats and ships, even a cash register and truck bed. Forests of white and orange plumose anemones, painted anemones, quill-shaped sea pens, and kelp cover the sea floor.
The 325-foot De Lion Dry Dock, sunk in 1935, serves as a buffer between the park and the adjacent ferry terminal. Several metal-hulled sunken ships can be explored: the 94-foot tug Atilak (sunk in 1972), the Fossil (1982), the Molly Brown (1996), and the 70-foot Triumph (1999). In addition to new features, about two wooden boats per year have been sunk in the park because wooden boats last only about two years before decaying.

Entry into the underwater park is at Brackett’s Landing North, on the north side of the ferry terminal. Divers can park their vehicles for up to four hours at Brackett’s Landing South park on the south side of the terminal from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. May through September and 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. October through April. Additional parking is available at private lots south of Main Street and east of Railroad Avenue.

The park has restrooms, a dry changing area, shower, and foot-wash station—necessary amenities before heading up Main Street for dining and shopping in downtown Edmonds. Charts, maps and information are on display near the restroom.

Divers can warm up with hot coffee from Waterfront Coffee Company across from Brackett’s Landing North.

One block south is Underwater Sports, a dive shop with certification classes, rentals for certified divers, gear, service, and information about tides and water conditions. Open daily. 264 Railroad Ave. 425-771-6322

Where to Stay:
- Best Western Plus Edmonds Harbor Inn

Where to Dine:
- Edmonds Marina: Anthony’s HomePort, Anthony’s Beach Café, and Arnies
- Downtown Edmonds: Chanterelle, Girardi’s Osteria Italiana, Las Brias Mexican Restaurant, A Very Taki Tiki Bar & Grill

Visit Edmonds Chamber of Commerce for more dining options.

Kayaking & Canoeing

The backwaters, lower sloughs and islands of the Snohomish River are a paddler’s paradise. The 1,400-acre estuary, where river waters mix with the saltwater of Possession Sound, is home to more than 300 species of birds, numerous marine mammals like river otters and seals, and a critical habitat for salmon.

Use the 10th Street Boat Launch in Everett or Ebey Waterfront Park in Marysville for water access. Both locations offer nearby cafes and facilities for picnics.

Where to Stay:
- Inn at Port Gardner, Everett
- Best Western Cascadia Inn, Everett
- Best Western Tulalip Inn, Marysville
- Holiday Inn Downtown Everett
- Tulalip Resort Casino, Tulalip
Where to Dine:
- Everett Marina: Anthony’s HomePort, Anthony’s Woodfire Grill, Lombardi’s Italian Restaurant
- Downtown Everett: The Irishmen, El Paraiso Mexican Grill, Thai E-San Cuisine, Brooklyn Bros Pizzeria, Café Zippy
- Marysville: Village Restaurant & Lounge, Las Margaritas Mexican Restaurant, Tulalip Resort Casino

More Fun on the Water

Fishing

Snohomish County is a fisherman’s dream with lakes, rivers, beaches and sea filled with all sorts of delectable rainbow trout, dolly varden, salmon, and more. Grab your fishing pole, bait and a bucket, buy the appropriate Washington State fishing license, then head to your desired fishing hole or pier.

Short on time? Choose one of more than a dozen outfitters who know where the fish are throughout the year and offer individual and group charters such as:

- Chinook Expeditions provides custom freshwater fishing trips for anglers on the rivers and waterways throughout Snohomish County.
- Northwest Fly Fishing Adventures casts for fish in the Sauk, Skykomish, Stillaguamish and Sultan Rivers.
- All Season Charters plies the waters of Puget Sound for salmon and bottom fish.

Visit Snohomish.org/Fishing for a complete list of fishing charters.

Rowing

- In partnership with the City of Everett Parks & Recreation the Everett Rowing Association offers four-hour introduction to rowing classes for ages 14 and over.

For more information Outdoor Adventures, high resolution images and other activities for visitors to see and do, contact Julie Gangler, media relations, 206-789-6647 or j.gangler@q.com. Or go to our website at Snohomish.org.

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