Willapa Art – Cutthroat Trail, WA



Vicinity Location:
About 115 miles southwest of Seattle, WA and 87 miles northwest of Portland in the Willipa National Wildlife Refuge.

Directions:
From Portland: drive to Astoria and cross the Astoria-Megler bridge to Washington.
Drive about 13.2 miles and turn right onto US-101 ALT.
Drive 0.6 mile and turn right onto US-101 North.
Drive 8.4 miles and turn right into the parking lot.
This route could vary depending where in the Portland Metro area you start from.
For your own mapping purposes the address is:
3888 US-101, Ilwaco, WA

From Seattle: take I-5 South for about 60 miles.
In Olympia take Highway 101 N towards Montesano/Aberdeen.
Use the right 2 lanes to take exit 104 for US-101 N toward Aberdeen/Port Angeles.
Drive about 37 miles to Montesano and take Highway 107 South towards Ilwaco.
Drive about 60 miles on Highway 107 South and 101 South to the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge.
Turn left into the parking lot.
For your own mapping purposes the address is:
3888 US-101, Ilwaco, WA

The refuge office is open Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 4:00 pm. The office is closed on all federal holidays. For more information, contact the refuge by phone at 360-484-3482 or by email: willapa@fws.gov

There are currently no bathrooms or water at the trailhead.

Pets are not allowed.

No permit is needed to park.

Length and Elevation:
1.4 miles round trip. Elevation gain of 350 feet and loss of 350 feet. Elevation at the trailhead at 20 feet, highest point is at 260 feet. Lowest elevation is 20 feet.

Trails:
Willapa Art Trail, Cutthroat Trail

Trail Maps:
Topo Map, Download Garmin .gpx file, Open Garmin .gpx file

Review: August 27, 2020

From the parking lot it is easy to find the boardwalk for the art walk/interpretive trail by walking to the southwest.

There are little sculptures throughout this walk. This trail uses commissioned artworks to teach refuge visitors about the wildlife and habitat in the area. Students from the University of Washington Public Arts Program designed, constructed, and installed the artwork for the trail under the direction of professors John Young, Ian Robertson, and Jim Nicholls.

The first thing you see is the boardwalk that goes along the edge of the mudflats. Look across the wetlands to see a sculpture of a whale skeleton or perhaps a fish jumping. It is open to your interpretation. There are many different little metal sculptures of the northern red-legged frog. Some of them are somewhat hidden. Walk past several lovely little ponds and a nice little stream.

Enter into the trees and turn right on the boardwalk to overlook a small stream beneath a canopy of trees. Rejoin the main boardwalk and continue past small ponds and over a treed wetland. There is a lot of art along the way with some being hidden and waiting to be sought out. At the end of the boardwalk is a shady bench to sit on and listen to the sounds of the birds and wind. The length of the boardwalk is 0.25 mile and connects to the Cutthroat Trail.

To take the trail, turn left at the trail sign. Go up some stairs then turn left at the next trail junction which is about 100 feet from the boardwalk. Walk along the path through dense undergrowth with the sounds of a brook off to the left. You can see some old stumps that are now nurse logs and lots of ferns, salmonberries, and moss hanging down from the trees. Pass under hemlocks and Sitka spruce as you pass little bridges over the tiny streams and narrow boardwalks over the marshy areas. There are lots of interpretive signs for the children to teach them about the forest.

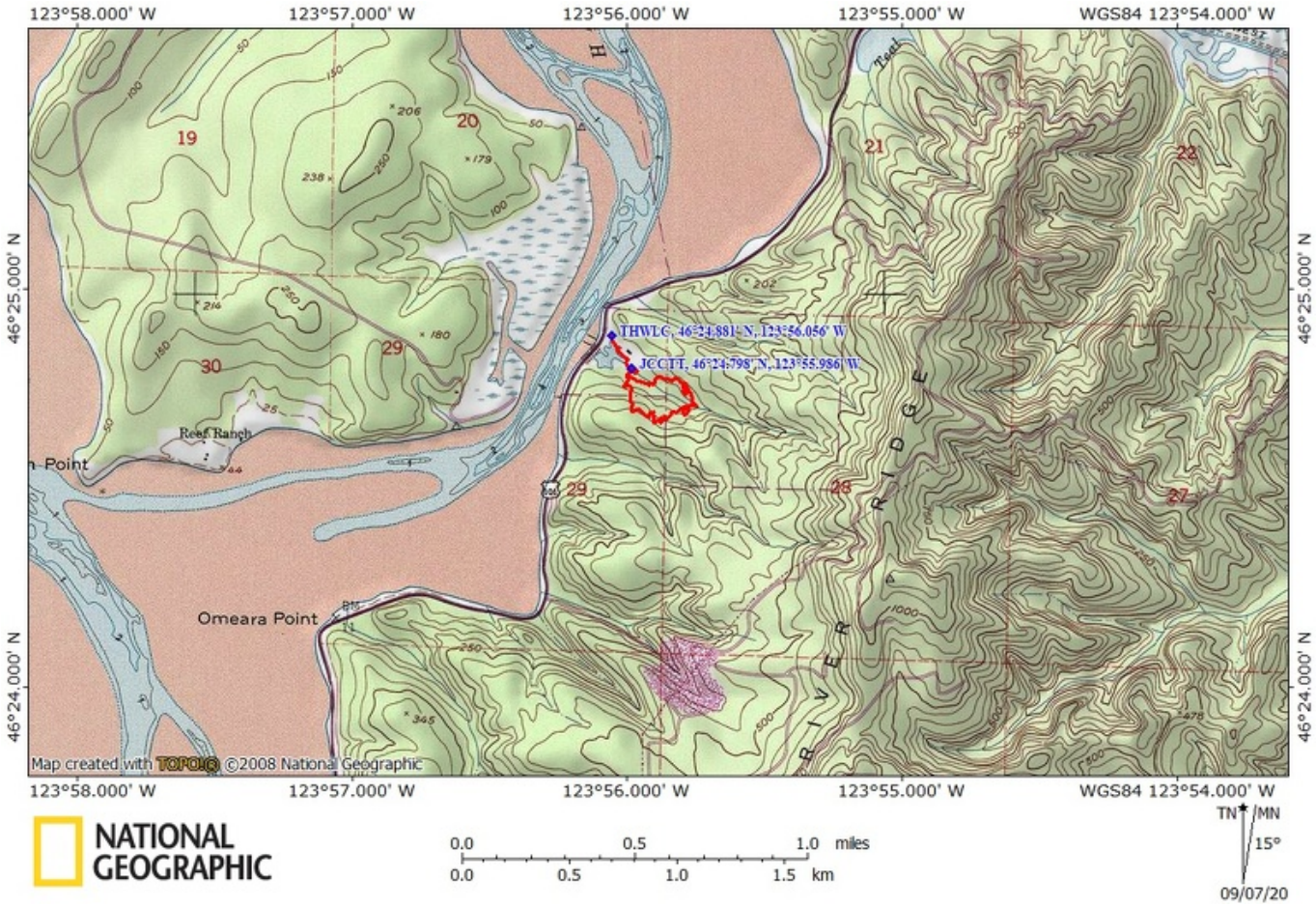
Then the trail starts climbing up stairs and an old forest road. Walk up the fairly steep trail to a bench, paving stone labyrinth, and a engraved basalt rock at the top of the first hill. Drop down through the dense forest to a nice little bridge over a stream then begin a series of up and down stairs along the narrow, rooty trail.

Finally descent down more rudimentary stairs to the trail junction and then back to the boardwalk.

Back on the boardwalk have a rest on a bench or walk back to the trailhead to sit at a shady picnic table with a dragonfly design.

This is a great hike for small children as long as they don’t mind all the stairs and the boardwalk is an ADA trail for people who can’t negotiate the Cutthroat Trail. The Willapa Art Trail is a joy to walk because you can see the care taken to make this trail a real gem,

Enjoy the Photos!
Gallery Pics
Switchback Steve


123°58.000' W
123°57.000' W
123°56.000' W
123°55.000' W
WGS84 123°54.000' W
46°25.000' N
46°24.000' N
THWLC, 46°24.881' N, 123°56.056' W
JCCTT, 46°24.798' N, 123°55.986' W
Reef Ranch
Omeara Point
RIVER RIDGE
Map created with TOPO! ©2008 National Geographic
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
0.0 0.5 1.0 miles
0.0 0.5 1.0 1.5 km
TN MN
15°
09/07/20