

The West Coast – Washington

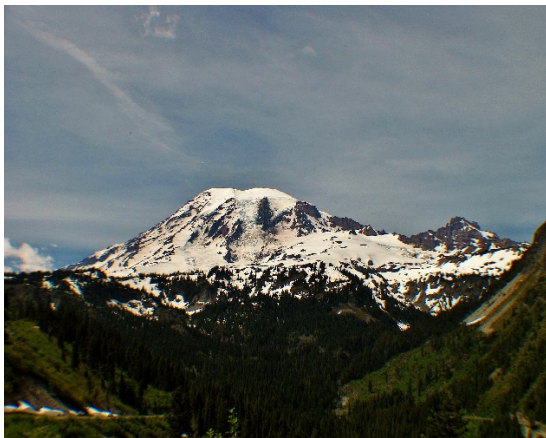
My 2 ½ weeks in Oregon has passed by so quickly. I definitely want to explore Oregon again. What a beautiful state. I've crossed the Columbia River and moved into Washington for the final leg of my West Coast adventure.

I've chosen a state park near Mossyrock in the southern portion of the state. This proved to be a very good base camp location for day trips to Mt Rainier and Mt Saint Helens. Mt Saint Helens dominates some of my views as I drive around the area. It looks like it's close to the campground but it takes more than an 2 hours to get there. Mt Rainier is about 1 hour away and I had a bonus unplanned stop along the way on one of my visits.

It's a beautiful drive to Mt Rainier, passing by Riffe Lake, numerous waterfalls, frozen streams and breathtaking scenery. At 14,410 feet above sea level, Mt Rainier boasts the most glaciers of any mountain in the lower 48. There are 27 major glaciers covering the mountain and numerous patches of snow and ice which is an active volcano. It is a very popular hiking and climbing destination, sometimes with tragic endings. About 4 weeks prior to my visit 6 climbers were lost while ascending the northface of the mountain to Liberty Cap. Officials believe the climbers were swept off the mountain by an avalanche and are presumed dead. There was a search for a single trail hiker in progress while I was there. I later learned the woman had died from exposure – the mountain took another.

While in route to my visit there I passed by a yard filled with metal and wood sculptures and a sign along the road inviting people to visit. Ex-Nihilo – something created from out of nothing – a sculpture park by Dan Klennert. As his website states he does not form shapes, he collects shapes to create forms. If you ever travel State Route 706 to the west entrance of the park you'll pass by this wonderful park. Stop and enjoy.

Photos include a view from the valley, First day of Summer at Mt Rainier, one of the glaciers, Rock-n-Roll, Rocking Horse. Visit one of the website for Ex-Nihilo for a better representation of this wonderful sculpture park.





Mt Saint Helens was south of the campground and about 2 hours away. It was an easy drive and interesting to see how the land is redeveloping after the devastation of the eruption. There are signs along the way identifying who is responsible for the new forest area and how long it has been growing. The movie at the Visitor Center is one of the best I have ever enjoyed. The presentation of how the events took place was well done and I recommend a viewing if visiting the park. The debris flow was 600 feet deep flowing down Toutle River for miles and causing devastation along the way. Mt Adams in the distance - about 50 miles East of Mt Saint Helens. Mt Adams is 12,702 feet of sleeping volcano.

Photos include a view of the mountain near the campground, into the center, Toutle River valley, Mt Adams.



The next home base area is a state park near Olympic National Park and my first visit to the Seattle area. I only scheduled 4 nights in the area and it was not nearly enough. This area requires a lot of travel getting from one side to another. I'll just have to visit the area again even if only to enjoy another visit to the Public Market. There is just too much to explore both here and Canada.

Photos include Seattle skyline, Dungeness National Wildlife Lighthouse, Crescent Lake, Olympia National Park, Jamestown Bay.



Time to head east and start my way home. I've been on the road for about 4 months. Two more months to enjoy including a side trip to Moscow Iowa home of HWH and a date to repair the slide. I'll

spend one night near Yakima, WA at a BLM campground on the Yakima river and then a quick 2 day ride through the northern section of Idaho before I reach my next destination, Glacier National Park in Montana. My route takes me through an area that has numerous barn quilts to enjoy and I take the long route to Yakima so I can do just that!

Photos include Barn Quilts near Ellensburg, WA, The Cascades in the distance, Horse Sculpture at Columbia River rest area

