

COQUILLE RIVER

PADDLE GUIDE



OREGON SOUTH COAST

The spirit of Oregon South Coast flows through its waterways, sharing common characteristics, offering similar bounties, yet each one distinct. Whether finding their sources high in the Cascades, like the Umpqua and Rogue, or rising from the rugged Coast Range, like the Coos, Coquille and Chetco, the rivers play a vital role, from wildlife and fish habitat to early-day transportation corridor and sport-fishing destination. For local tribes, "everything was about the river," and this profound connection is still very much a part of their culture. Today the rivers also enjoy a growing popularity with paddlers who have discovered these little-visited gems of Oregon South Coast.

Parts of Rogue and Chetco are federally-designated Wild and Scenic Rivers, and the Umpqua, Coos and Coquille flow into wide-ranging estuaries as they near the sea, with inlets, sloughs, channels and quiet back waters to explore. The waterways teem with wildlife as well, and a quiet approach in a paddle craft is the perfect way to get an up-close view. Every season brings its own rewards and experiences in their recreational wonderland – so let's paddle!



Myrtle Point area, photo by Elizabeth Gronert.

COQUILLE RIVER WATER TRAIL

The Coquille River is a prized estuary, with tidal influence reaching over 30 miles upriver, second only to the mighty Columbia. Along with one beautiful natural setting after another, paddling treks pass historic homesteads and townsites, a national wildlife refuge, old relic boats, Indian fish weirs and miles of peaceful countryside. Most of the riverbank is private property, but there are eight launch sites, mostly county boat ramps, from the river's outlet at Bandon to the inland town of Myrtle Point. The most scenic trips utilize the tides in the downriver sections and include a loop trip around the river's largest island.

As noted, the Coquille is a tidal waterway, so all paddling trips should involve careful consultation of tide charts. Wind is also a factor, with a strong north wind kicking up just about every summer afternoon. Fighting wind and tide is no fun and often dangerous. Trips should be planned in the morning, with favorable tides.

Autumn and winter can bring calm, windless days without a wisp of wind. The estuaries and inlets are smooth as mirrors, inviting paddlers to dip in and enjoy some of the year's best conditions.

The most scenic Coquille River trip takes off from either Old Town Bandon or Bullard's Beach State Park on an incoming tide, and goes upriver to Randolph Island and around it, with the tide turning about then for an easy trip back.

Farther upriver, near the communities of Coquille and Myrtle Point, the river is relatively placid in summer and fall, with no rapids or whitewater, making it fun and easy for beginners. During the winter, calm interludes invite paddlers, but beware of woody debris and fallen trees floating in the river.

The river has a fabled salmon fishery, which attracts bank and motorboat anglers during the early fall salmon run. Give them plenty of room. The rest of the year, the Coquille sees few visitors.

HISTORY & ECOLOGY

The name Coquille or Coquel is one that has been disputed over the years. The natives called the river and themselves Coquel, (pronounced "Ko-kwell") meaning eel, whereas the French fur trappers who made first settler contact adapted it to the French word coquille (pronounced "Ko-Keel") which means shell. Locals use the French translation Coquille when referring to the river and the city, while the tribes prefers "Coquille."

The region's bounty of wildlife and resources have drawn generations of settlers. It's hard to imagine, but over the years, a trillion board feet of lumber was shipped out of the Coquille Watershed. Logging continues to this day, although the river is no longer used as a transportation corridor. During winter months, the low pasturelands of the Coquille River Valley are regularly flooded, creating what locals call Winter Lake. The fields dry out in summer and fall, and the pastures return green and glowing from their yearly inundation. And the river flows on...

For many thousands of years before the first Europeans arrived, the native people of these lands lived and thrived off the bounty provided in the waters and forests. It is especially important to be sensitive to this cultural legacy when paddling along the banks of these rivers. Archaeological sites are protected in Oregon on both public and private lands and if you find any artifacts while using the river, be sure to leave them in place and to contact the local tribes or OPRD State Historic Preservation Office at (503)986-0690.



Parkersburg, 1900's.

RIVER ETIQUETTE

Be Courteous: Be considerate of other river users. Fishing and boating are popular on the Oregon South Coast, so before approaching ramps be ready so you can launch and take out quickly. Waterways have "lanes of travel" similar to a highway system, so move closer to shore to allow faster water craft to pass.

Respect Private Property: Public access is a privilege to us all. Out of consideration to private landowners, if you are unsure whether the land is private or public, please stay off. Public access is indicated on the maps within this guidebook.

PADDLING SAFETY

Proper planning and preparation will ensure your paddling experience is a positive one. Being knowledgeable about local weather, tides and currents will assist in making good boating decisions. Conditions can change rapidly. Check the current conditions before you hit the water and include them in your trip planning.

There are many in-water hazards to consider; educate yourself about what these hazards are and learn their locations. Understand that new obstacles can arise at any time, such as log 'strainers' - downed trees in the water that can be life threatening. As the tide goes out, the water in the rivers moves rapidly, so plan to paddle incoming and slack tides. Pick activities that match your ability, and consider taking classes to improve your skills and knowledge. Wearing a life jacket is critical - adjust it so it's snug and comfortable. Anticipate the chance of getting wet and dress accordingly, avoid cotton that retains water and accelerates cooling when wet. Wearing bright, noticeable clothing makes you more visible to other boaters. At night, a white light must be shown toward oncoming traffic.

Rules and Laws change periodically. Please visit the Oregon State Marine Board website at oregon.gov for current standards. Or call the Oregon State Marine Board at (503)378-8587.

BE PREPARED

- Wear your life jacket
- Carry proper safety equipment
- Preparation, knowledge and skill building is critical to safe paddling
- Beginners should consider paddling with a companion who knows local waterways and can assist in an emergency
- Let someone know where you are going and when you will be back
- Scout for river and water hazards
- Never grab a stationary object while moving on swift water
- Stay clear of a motor boats path
- Position your boat perpendicular to an approaching wake/wave
- Dress adequately for the water temperatures and weather conditions – avoid cotton
- Obtain an Aquatics Invasive Species (AIS) permit and carry on board.
(www.dfw.state.or.us)

ITEMS TO BRING

- Life jacket/whistle
- First aid kit
- Extra paddle
- Extra clothes
- Map & this paddle guide
- Dry bags
- Rope/Knife
- Pump
- Hat with brim
- Drinking water/food
- Sunscreen
- Flashlight
- Cell phone w/ emergency numbers (coverage can be unreliable)
- Oregon Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) permit

LEAVE NO TRACE

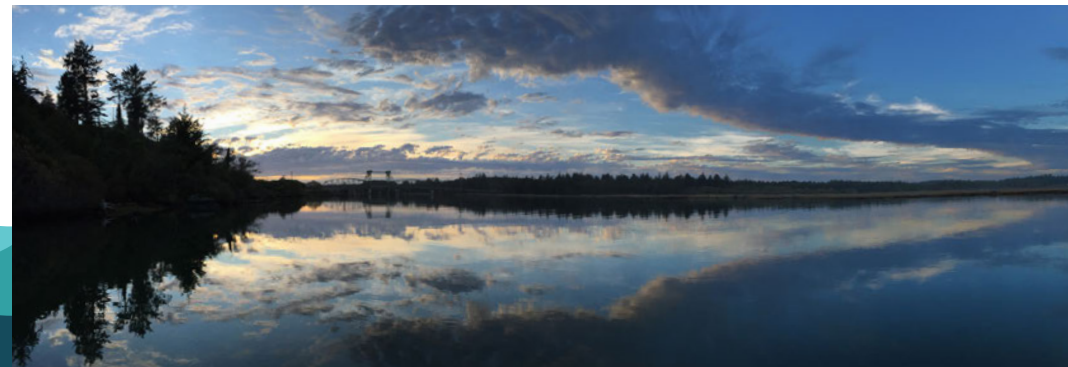
1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Travel and camp on established surfaces
3. Dispose of waste properly (pack it in, pack it out)
4. Leave what you find
5. Minimize campfire impacts
6. Respect wildlife
7. Be considerate of other visitors

Site Conservation: While enjoying the river, be aware of your direct impact on the surrounding area because your efforts will make a difference for the environment. When observing wildlife, allow adequate space so they are not disturbed. Do not remove rocks, plants, or other native objects, as these create habitat for the multitude of species living along these shores.

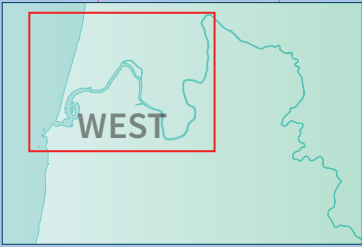
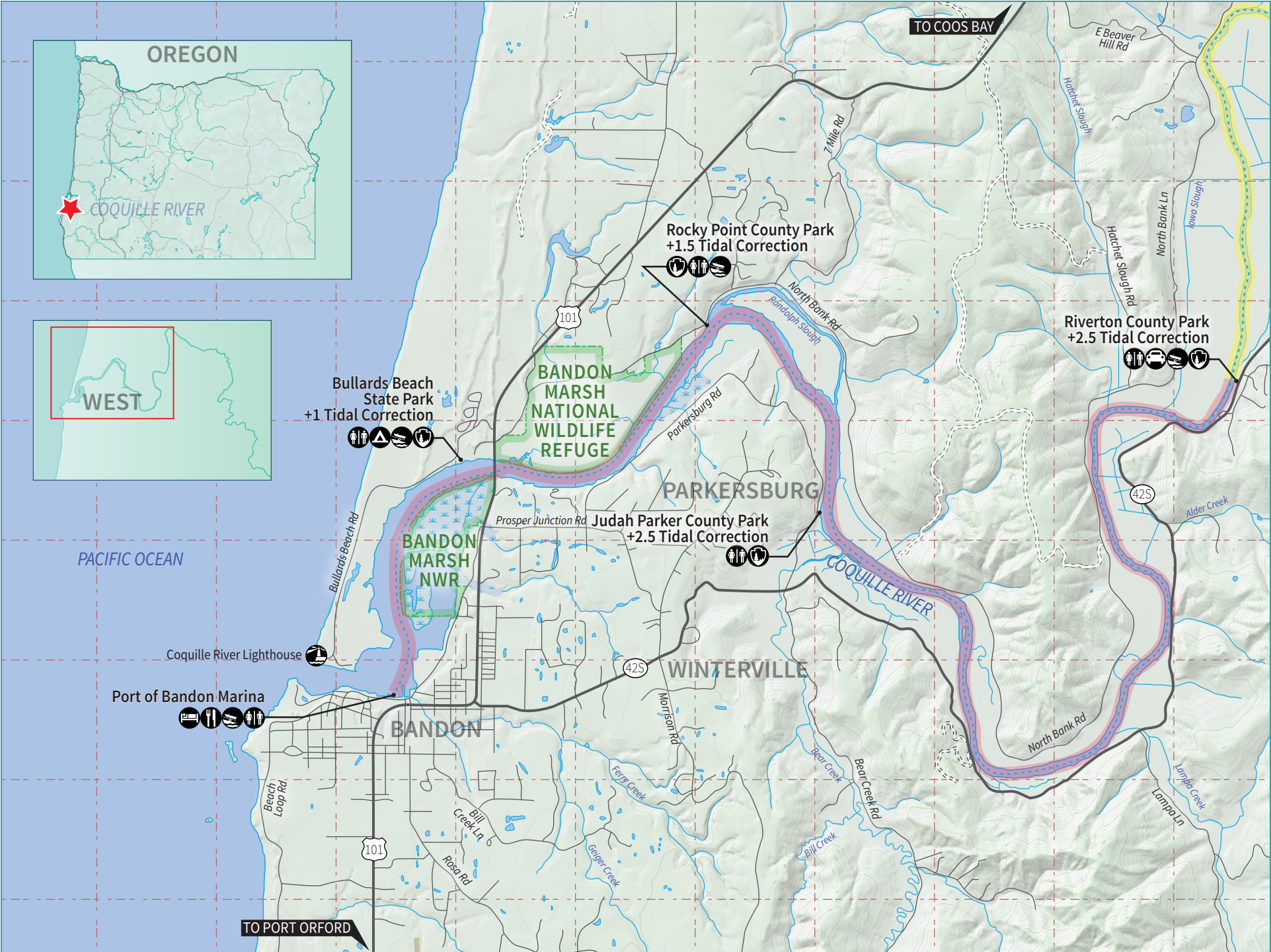
Waste Removal: Secure your garbage to your boat so that it cannot blow into the water and reserve restroom breaks for designated sites indicated on the maps. Strive to leave an area how you found it, or better.

Fires: Wildfires can dramatically impact the region. Respect local fire restrictions, make fires only where it's permitted, keep them small and put them out completely.

Invasive Species: Aquatic nuisance species are a serious threat to Oregon's waterways. Introduction and spread of harmful non-native species can upset the delicate balance of our fragile ecosystems. Aquatic nuisance species are often spread between waterways by hitching a ride on boats and gear. Please wash your boats when switching from one river to the next.

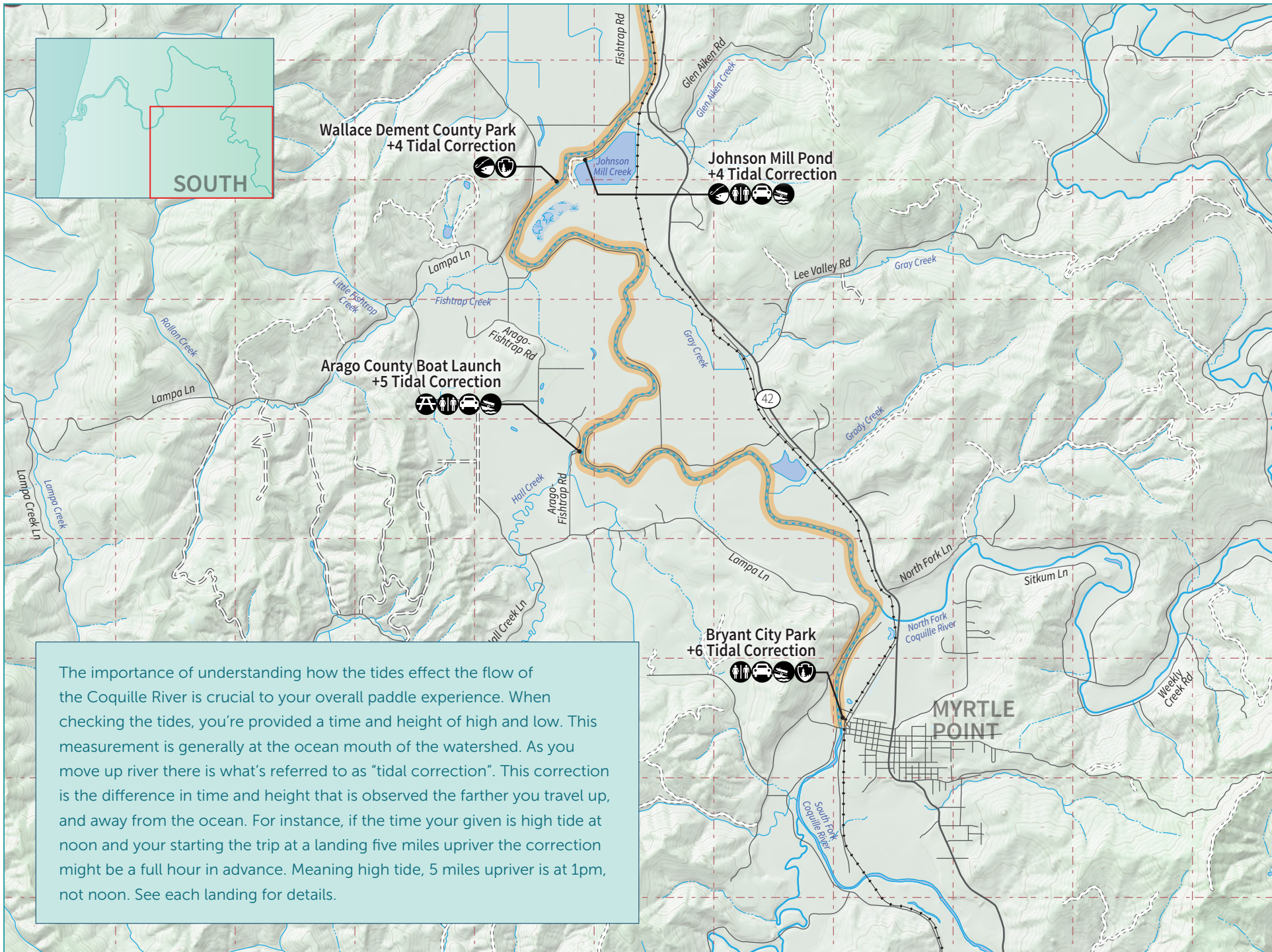


Bandon Marsh, photo by Brian Kraynik.



TO PORT ORFORD

TO COOS BAY



The importance of understanding how the tides effect the flow of the Coquille River is crucial to your overall paddle experience. When checking the tides, you're provided a time and height of high and low. This measurement is generally at the ocean mouth of the watershed. As you move up river there is what's referred to as "tidal correction". This correction is the difference in time and height that is observed the farther you travel up, and away from the ocean. For instance, if the time your given is high tide at noon and your starting the trip at a landing five miles upriver the correction might be a full hour in advance. Meaning high tide, 5 miles upriver is at 1pm, not noon. See each landing for details.

RESOURCES

GUIDES & OUTFITTERS:

South Coast Tours: www.southcoasttours.net / (541)373-0487

Coos Boat Tours: www.coosboattours.com / (541)999-6575

CLUBS + GROUPS:

<https://www.facebook.com/coquilleriverwatertrail/>

WATERSHED INFORMATION:

Coquille Watershed Association

<http://www.coquillewatershed.org>

390 N. Central Blvd.

Coquille, Oregon 97423

Phone: (541)396-2541

Fax: (541)396-2545

ENCOUNTERING WILDLIFE:

Quietly view wildlife, giving a wide berth to the birds and animals you may encounter. A small pair of binoculars can stow easily on your boat and help you maintain a safe distance while viewing. Do not disturb stranded or wounded animals. Instead, contact the Wildlife Center of the North Coast at (503)338-0331.

Birding: www.oregoncoastbirding.com

Wildlife Rehab: www.coastwildlife.org; (503)338-0331

Duck Hunting Regulations: www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/hunting/waterfowl/

Fishing Regulations: www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/

Shellfish Toxicity Alert: www.oregon.gov/ODA/FSD/shellfish_status.shtml

Oregon Wildlife Recreation Report: www.dfw.state.or.us/RR/

PERMITS:

Rules and permitting are subject to change, currently all boats over 10' need an invasive species permit with the state of Oregon.

<https://myodfw.com/articles/buying-aquatic-invasive-species-prevention-permit>

WEATHER & SAFETY INFORMATION:

USGS Real Time Water Data: www.waterdata.usgs.gov

Tide Predictions: www.saltwatertides.com

Surf Report: www.oregonsurfcheck.com

Local Weather: <http://weather.yahoo.com/forecast/USOR0239.html>

Wind Report: www.wrh.noaa.gov/pqr/buoys.php

Oregon Rivers: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/or/nwis/rt>

Tide Predictions: www.tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/tide_predictions.html

Tide tables provided at local markets.

NOAA: www.wrh.noaa.gov/pqr/; www.wrh.noaa.gov/; www.noaa.com

Buoys: www.wrh.noaa.gov/pqr/buoys.php

Surf Report: www.oregonsurfcheck.com

Road Report: www.tripcheck.com

State Marine Board: (503)378-8587

U.S. Coast Guard Sector North Bend: (541)756-9220

Station Chetco River, Harbor: (541)469-3885

Station Coos Bay, Charleston: (541)888-3267

Oregon State Police Headquarters, Salem: (503)378-3720

After Hours: Salem Dispatch: (503)375-3555

SW Region HQ: (541)726-2536

Coos County Sheriff Offices: (541)396-7800



River Otter, photo by Dimock Photography.

Thanks to our partners and sponsors, and a special mention to Tom Baake for his involvement in the creation of the South Coast Paddle Guides. Tom is a published author of many outdoor recreation guide books. Very few people have as much knowledge about our region's recreational opportunities. His guide books can be found online and at many area outlets. We thank Tom for his passion in helping visitors and residents alike discover the many recreational opportunities Southwestern Oregon has to offer.

We recommend this book by Tom Baake and Ron Wardman:
Oregon South Coast Canoe, Kayak and Stand-up Paddle Guide.

Coos Bay: Westways Press

Email: westways@frontier.com | Website: www.scod.com/guidebooks

This paddle guide printed on Polyart waterproof paper.



**TRAVEL
OREGON**



Arago County Park area, photo by Brian Kraynik. Cover photo by Erik Urdahl