

# Portland Metro Paddling Destinations



## Gilbert River ★★☆☆

The Gilbert River extends 4.5 miles from Multnomah Channel to Sturgeon Lake on the north end of Sauvie Island. Access to the river is gained at the Gilbert River Boat Ramp. The north end of Sauvie Island is part of the Wildlife Management Area and parking in this area requires a \$7 permit that can be purchased from the store at the base of the bridge.

Interested in seeing bald eagles? Gilbert River is home to many, probably because Sturgeon Lake has a large population of Asian carp. In addition to bald eagles, look for great blue herons, river otters, beavers, walleye, bass, and sturgeon.

Paddlers wanting to paddle the river should consult the tide tables and ride the incoming tide up to Sturgeon Lake and ride the outgoing tide back to the boat ramp.

The river can get rather busy with fishing boats plying up and down the river.

To reach the boat ramp, travel north on Reeder Road—the road eventually becomes a gravel road. Travel about three quarters of a mile until you get to the Gilbert Boat Ramp turnoff.

[Click here](#) to view a video of the river.



## Hagg Lake ★★☆☆

(Henry) Hagg Lake, formed by the damming of Scoggins Creek, is located 35 miles west of Portland. It is one of the largest lakes within an easy drive from Portland that offers suitable paddling opportunities. The lake is fed by Scoggins Creek, Sain Creek, and Tanner Creek. There are several picnic areas situated around the lake, the best being the Sain Creek Picnic Area and Recreation Area C on the west bank of the lake.

Depending on the time of year and day, visitors to Hagg Lake are likely to spot coyotes, black-tailed deer, beaver, common mergansers, bufflehead, Canada geese, mallards, other dabbling ducks, cormorants, American kestrels, red-tailed hawks, ospreys, and bald eagles. Hagg Lake is stocked at various times during the fishing season with rainbow trout. Smallmouth bass is also frequently caught in the lake.

The best time to paddle Hagg Lake is November through February when the lake is closed to fishing. The lake opens to fishing in early March, and paddlers will have to compete with fishing boats from then through October. Water skiing and tubing are also popular on lake during the summer months. Once the lake opens for fishing season, there is a \$6 entrance fee. There is no entrance fee to the lake prior to fishing season; however, only the boat ramp in Recreation Area A is open.

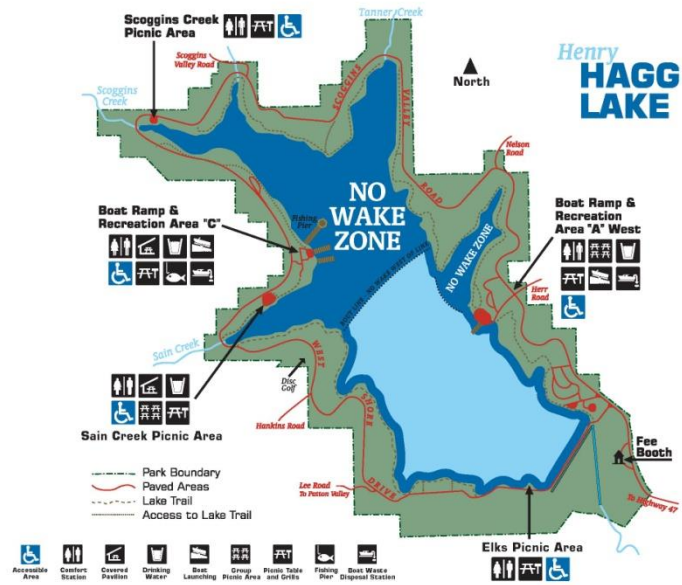
To reach Hagg Lake from Portland, drive west on Hwy 26 and take the Hwy 6 exit. Turn left onto Hwy 47 and follow it through Forest Grove. Turn right at the sign to Scoggins Park and Hagg Lake.

The lake is also within easy reach of Yamhill County residents who simply drive 30 minutes north on Hwy 47. Turn left about a mile past

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Gaston, Oregon, at the sign to Scoggins Park and Hagg Lake.

More information about the lake can be found [here](#).



## Lacamas Lake ★★

While not in Oregon—located just across the Columbia River in Camas, Washington—Lacamas Lake is an easy 30-minute drive from downtown Portland. At almost 2.5 miles, the lake isn't large, but it's perfect for those just learning how to paddle. The lake provides a view of Mt. Hood. You can extend your paddle a little by paddling into Round Lake or paddling up Lacamas Creek at the north end of the lake.

You can launch from Lacamas Lake Regional Park on the southwest side of the lake just off NW Lake Rd. There is also a small launch on the north side of the lake just off SE Leadbetter Rd.

Because of the number of housing developments around the lake, there is little wildlife. Birds are the most common sight you can expect to see: cormorants, ducks, and belted kingfishers.

Powerboats are allowed on the lake, but the limited 40-mph speed zone limits their numbers. Swimming and fishing is popular on the lake.

## Scappoose Bay ★★★★★

Can't travel to the Southeast to paddle amongst a mangrove forest? Scappoose Bay offers the next best thing. While you can paddle the bay year round, the bay is best paddled in the spring and early summer. During the spring, runoff from the melting mountain snowpack and an abundance of rain raises the water level in Scappoose Bay, inundating the woods surrounding the bay and giving paddlers the opportunity to paddle among alders. Paddle the bay in the October when the trees are in their fall colors.

A favorite trip is to explore the many creeks. A word of caution, however, the creeks can get very narrow, and there can be downed trees and very low branches, making navigating the creeks tricky. There can also be some shallow areas.



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The bay is an ideal place to paddle because of the restricted boat speed and little powerboat traffic during the spring. It is also the perfect spot to watch for eagles, osprey, an assortment of waterfowl, beavers, and otters.

Scappoose Bay is approximately 30 minutes north of Portland on Hwy 30. Tides affect the water level of the bay, so plan your trip accordingly.

Next Adventure offers kayak tours, rentals, and paddling supplies at the Scappoose Bay Marina. Already have a boat. There is ample parking at the marina for a \$3 fee, \$5 if you choose to use the boat ramp. There is also a dock specifically for canoes and kayaks.



## Smith and Bybee Lakes ★★★★★

Smith and Bybee Lakes, located just off Marine Drive on Swan Island in Portland, Oregon, are two lakes linked together. Be sure to bring a camera because the lakes are home to a plethora of wildlife. The lakes are home to the threatened western painted turtle, bald eagles, osprey, black-tailed deer, river otter, and beaver. There is also warmwater fishing on the lakes: largemouth bass, crappie, and bluegill. Paddlers will find a canoe launch just off of Marine Drive.

The lakes are linked to the Columbia Slough, so paddlers can put in at Kelley Point Park on the Columbia River and paddle to the lakes. There is one difficult portage on the North Slough paddlers need to make in order to get into the lakes, however.

[Click here](#) for more information.



## Tualatin River ★★★★★

Beginning in the Coast Range, the Tualatin River flows east 79.3 miles to its confluence with the Willamette River. The river winds through several towns, including Forest Grove, Hillsboro, Sherwood, Tigard, Tualatin, Lake Oswego, and West Linn. The Tualatin River also flows through the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge and provides some of the closest paddling for residents on the west side of Portland.

Don't let the murkiness of the river dissuade you from paddling the river. The turbidity of the water is due to the fine soil of the Tualatin watershed and erosion. The river is a popular paddling and bass fishing destination because of its proximity to Portland, and the narrowness of the river limits the size and types of boats that can navigate the river.

There are several places from which to launch a canoe or kayak. Some of the more popular sites are the 99W Bridge Launch in Sherwood, Cooks Park in Tigard, and Tualatin Community Park and Brown's Ferry Park in Tualatin. Both Cook Park and Brown's Ferry Park offer canoe and kayak rentals during the summer.

[Click here](#) for more information.

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### Vancouver Lake Park ★★☆☆

Though technically in Vancouver, Washington, Vancouver Lake is included here because it is close to Portland and a favorite lake for beginner paddlers to hone their paddling skills. It is a relatively shallow lake. The lake provides fantastic views of both Mount St. Helens and Mt. Hood. The lake borders the southern half of the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge.

There is a sandy beach that allows for easy launching of paddlecraft. A grassy area borders the beach, providing a nice place to have a picnic after a morning of paddling. The fee to enter the park has been eliminated.

**Important:** Dogs are not allowed on the beach/grass area from April to October.

[Click here](#) for more information.