



OUTDOOR RECREATION

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SEATTLE NORTHCOUNTRY AN OASIS FOR STEWARDSHIP-MINDED NATURE LOVERS AND OUTDOOR ADVENTURERS

(EVERETT, Wash.) — Seattle NorthCountry's geography, topography, and temperate climate are a siren song for nature lovers and outdoor adventurers. A year-round outdoor playground just minutes from downtown Seattle, the region stretches from the saltwater shores of the Salish Sea in the west, through rolling hills and fertile prairie land, to dense forestland and alpine wilderness in the east.

Such a diverse region is bound to open up a world of outdoor opportunities. In all, Snohomish County is home to 74 miles of coastline, seven Puget Sound beaches, 62,000 acres of national forest, 560 miles of trails, 132 summits, 110 park properties, five active volcanoes, 10 major mountains, 44 lakes, 19 rivers and streams, and 38 campgrounds.

With such a bounty, opportunities are almost limitless. Land a prized [salmon or trout](#), play some of the finest [public golf courses](#) in the Northwest, walk a [family-friendly urban trail](#) or [hike a peaceful forest trail](#), explore the region via [mountain or road bike](#), see whales, birds, and other [wildlife in their natural environment](#), paddle the Salish Sea or [kayak](#) or [raft](#) one of four major river systems, [scale a rock face](#), [ski or snowboard](#) the Cascade Range, [skydive](#) or [scuba dive](#). Whatever outdoor adventure appeals most to you, Seattle NorthCountry is sure to be an ideal destination.

Perhaps what most makes Seattle NorthCountry unique as an outdoor destination, though, is its proximity to one of the most vibrant urban centers in the country. By day, explore the rugged wilderness of the [Skykomish & Snohomish River Valleys](#) and the [Stillaguamish & Sauk River Valleys](#), or the shimmering seas of the [Salish Sea Coastal Communities](#). By night, embark on a culinary and cultural journey through Seattle NorthCountry's [Urban Basecamp](#).

Following are some of Seattle NorthCountry's favorite outdoor activities:

Hiking Seattle NorthCountry

With more than 500 miles of trails, the region is fertile ground for hikers. Whether for a family-friendly walk on an urban trail or for a more rugged full-day excursion or overnight backpacking trip, there is no shortage of breathtaking scenery to explore. The foothills of the Cascade Range are home to some of the

most interesting trails in the Pacific Northwest, and [Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest](#) presents endless terrain to explore. The Snohomish County Destination Alliance's [Hiking Guide](#) features some of the favorite trails in the region, including Jetty Island, Japanese Gulch, Lord Hill, Tonga Ridge, Mount Dickerman, and Green Mountain.

Whale watching and wildlife viewing

The first sight of a graceful orca or a majestic humpback whale takes your breath away. With a resident orca population, migratory humpback and minke whales, and visiting gray whales (nicknamed “sounders”) that come to feed for about three months each spring, Seattle NorthCountry is an ideal base to explore the whales and other wildlife of the Salish Sea. Kayak Point County Park's observation deck is an excellent land-based spot to glimpse these marvels, and numerous whale watching tour operators launch daily. In addition, several of Snohomish County's rivers are the sites of spawning salmon each spring and fall.

More than 350 species of birds either live or migrate through Seattle NorthCountry, making it a hub for birdwatchers, too. The Snohomish River Estuary, the lone wetland within an urban area on the West Coast, Everett's Legion Park, Edmonds Marsh, Langus Riverfront Park, and Spencer Island are all rich with native and migratory birds. And Stanwood's annual Port Susan Snow Goose and Birding Festival celebrates the region's birds each February.

Fun on two wheels

One of the best ways to experience Seattle NorthCountry is by bike — whether that means a mountain bike or road bike. The region is home to [hundreds of miles](#) of winding country roads and paved trails, such as the Interurban Trail, Centennial Trail, Lowell Riverfront Trail, and Langus Riverfront Park and Nature Trail. Each is family-friendly for biking or walking, and offer miles of paths. Mountain bikers will find miles of the best singletrack in the Northwest. Whitehorse Trail, North Mountain Bike Trail, Gold Mountain, Three Lakes Hill, [Japanese Gulch](#), Lord Hill Regional Park, Victoria Tract, Blue Mountain Ridge, and Alpine Baldy are some of the most beloved by mountain bikers.

A world on (and under) water

With the Salish Sea, 44 lakes, and 19 rivers and streams, much of Seattle NorthCountry is influenced by the water. That includes recreation, of course. Kayaking, standup paddleboarding, boating, river rafting, water skiing, windsurfing, jet skiing, swimming, scuba diving, crabbing, and fly, lake, and deep-sea fishing are all in a day's play in Snohomish County. [Lake Stevens](#), the largest lake in Snohomish County, and [Lake Ballinger](#) draw beachgoers, swimmers, fishermen, paddlers, SUPs and more. And scuba divers will discover rich aquatic life by diving at the 27-acre [Edmonds Underwater Park](#).

From open water on Puget Sound to wild mountain streams, kayakers and river rafters of all skill levels have much to choose from. Among the most popular kayaking explorations is via the region's backwaters and sloughs, including the Ebey, Union, and Steamboat sloughs on the lower Snohomish River. And river rafters will find year-round river tours that follow the seasonal rhythms of the Cascade and Olympic Mountain ranges.

Rock climbing, skiing, and snowshoeing

Rock climbers and boulderers of all skill levels have for generations flocked to the rocky cliffs of the Cascade Range. Climbers will find more than 600 routes up the 500-foot vertical cliff of the Index Town Wall, in the small town of Index in the Skykomish-Snohomish River Valley. Or they can scale the 1,100-foot face Witch Doctor Wall of Exfoliation Dome, a climb that has become a pilgrimage of sorts for Northwest climbers. Before you go, sharpen your skills and gain some local knowledge at the climbing wall at Vertical World in Everett.

With more than 1,100 acres of skiable terrain, Stevens Pass is one of the largest ski resorts in the Cascade Range and a hub of winter fun. While the skiers and snowboarders are busy, families can enjoy the tubing park and nordic center. The Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest is home to a vast 119-mile network of cross-country ski trails – perfect for nordic skiing and snowshoeing – and even more can be found nearby.

To learn more about Seattle NorthCountry, including events, attractions, and activities, visit SeattleNorthCountry.com.

ABOUT SEATTLE NORTHCOUNTRY:

Located just 15 miles north of Seattle, and stretching from the shores of the Salish Sea to the peaks of the Cascade Range, Seattle NorthCountry is characterized by its abundance and variety of outdoor recreation, urbanscapes, and rural vistas befitting its *True PNW* designation. Seattle NorthCountry comprises four primary regions of Snohomish County: Urban Basecamp, Salish Sea Coastal Communities, Skykomish & Snohomish River Valleys, and Stillaguamish & Sauk River Valleys. An unofficial fifth region, the Paine Field Aviation District, pays tribute to the aviation industry's profound impact on Snohomish County. Under the direction of Snohomish County Parks Recreation & Tourism, and in conjunction with the Snohomish County Destination Alliance, Seattle NorthCountry develops, curates, and delivers a year-round visitor experience that appeals to leisure, business, and group travelers, while working closely with our Native American tribal partners to preserve, protect, and be sound stewards of the ancestral homeland of the Coast Salish people. For more information visit www.seattlenorthcountry.com.

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