



## Astoria Scandinavian Heritage Association

PO Box 34 Astoria OR 97103

[www.AstoriaNordicPark.org](http://www.AstoriaNordicPark.org)

### WHO WE ARE

Astoria Scandinavian Heritage Association (ASHA) is a cultural non-profit with a mission to preserve traditional Nordic culture and heritage and to educate citizens and visitors about the culture and heritage of the Nordic countries. Its primary objective is to renew and celebrate Nordic heritage every June with a three-day festival of all things Scandinavian.

### BACKGROUND

The State of Oregon was home to only about 47 Scandinavians in 1870 but by the turn of the century they were coming to the Pacific Northwest in droves. Many came to the local area after 1870 when the railroad was completed from San Francisco to Astoria. Most of the large number of immigrants who settled in Astoria were loggers, fishermen, farmers, and small business owners. In 1900, the largest number of foreign born Astorians were from Finland, then Sweden, Norway, Germany, England, and Denmark. By the 1910 census there were 9599 inhabitants in Astoria and 35% of the population identified as Nordic. Although blood lines are intermingled now, Astoria is still proud of its Nordic roots and the contributions of early immigrants to the community.

### Rationale for Astoria Nordic Heritage Park

In addition to sponsoring an annual three-day Midsummer Festival, the Nordic community wanted to preserve and promote its heritage with a year-round accessible monument. Planning for Astoria Nordic Heritage Park began in 2015. After seven years of fundraising and with much community involvement, construction began in the fall of 2021 and was completed in June 2022 in time for a festive dedication just before the Midsummer Festival. Astoria Nordic Heritage Park is a testimony to the strong pride that still exists in Astoria's Nordic community and beyond.

### Why are there trolls in the Nordic Park?

Trolls are part of Nordic myths and folklore. Other words for trolls are gnomes, elves, and nisse, tomte, or tonttu in the Nordic languages. Some trolls are dwarves and some are giants. The small kind live in Astoria Nordic Heritage Park. Trolls can be mischievous and baffling to humans who they sometimes try to trick or deceive. Some trolls are helpful to animals and some may be only visible to children. Each troll in Astoria Nordic Heritage Park has its own story and they are collected in a booklet called **Astoria Nordic Heritage Park Troll Tales**.

### DETAILS

Information about Astoria Nordic Heritage Park is online at

[www.AstoriaNordicPark.org](http://www.AstoriaNordicPark.org).

Information about our three-day Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival is online at

[www.AstoriaScanFest.org](http://www.AstoriaScanFest.org).

# ASTORIA NORDIC HERITAGE PARK



## Storyline

### **Astoria Nordic Heritage Park Aerial View** (below left)

Astoria Nordic Heritage Park is located between Marine Drive and the Astoria RiverWalk across from the east entrance to Historic Downtown Astoria at 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Astoria Nordic Heritage Park is an enhancement to the site formerly known as Peoples Park and is owned by the City of Astoria.



### **Riverwalk Grand Entrance** (above right)

The staircase and accessible walkway from the Astoria RiverWalk to Nordic Heritage Park represent the immigrants' farewell to the Nordic lands ("We Said Our Last Goodbyes"). The flags as viewed from the RiverWalk fly according to international protocol.

### **Astoria Nordic Heritage Park from Marine Drive** (below left)

Five granite pillars represent Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Six flag poles fly flags of the Nordic countries and the U.S. on special occasions. Steamer trunks on the plaza reflect the meager prize possessions that Nordic immigrants brought with them to a new country.



### **Arrival Plaza with Midsummer Pole** (above right)

The Midsummer Pole is the main feature of the Arrival Plaza. It represents the traditions that the Nordic immigrants brought with them to the new land. Five metal bands set in the concrete reflect the five Nordic groups that came together to create the Nordic community in Astoria.

