Mount Rainier National Park

The Tahoma News

May - June 2004

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage. Mount Rainier National Park is a source of inspiration, providing boundless opportunities for exploration, solitude, and contemplation.

Signs of Spring

*Spring is a time of renewal, an awakening of nature.* Watch for the many signs of spring while traveling through the park. Look for colorful lowland wildflowers like the odorous yellow skunk cabbage and the tri-petaled western trillium that turns from white to pink or purple as the flower ages. Spring brings the return of many birds to Mount Rainier following their winter vacation. Look for the orange flickering of the wings of the Northern Flicker and listen for the call of the chickadee (some say it sounds like "cheese-burger"). Snowmelt fills rivers and streams with clear running water unlike the silted, muddied glacier-melt water of summer. Listen for the greeting of chattering Douglas squirrels as they scamper through the forest on their never ending search for food. Take time to enjoy these and the many other signs of spring.

Road Construction

Spring and summer are busy times for road construction in the park. These few snow-free months give park staff a very short time frame to improve park roads. If you are traveling on Nisqually Road beginning late June you may encounter up to 20 minute traffic delays along 5 miles of roadway, east of Cougar Rock Campground. Construction crews are trenching for an underground power line in the roadway to provide a reliable source of power to Paradise.

Rehabilitation of a 5 mile section of SR123 will begin in late June from Panther Creek Bridge to Deer Creek Bridge. Expect up to 20 minute delays.

Last fall, major flooding resulted in damage to several park roads and facilities. The White River Campground Road will be closed beginning June 21 opening at noon on July 2. Closure dates are subject to change dependent on funding approval. The campground will open on July 2 with the reopening of the road. Other roads and facilities that will be affected June - August are the closure of the Longmire back road (does not affect access to Longmire) and the closure of the Sunshine Point Campground Picnic Area parking lot (campground remains open).

We appreciate your patience as we continue to improve visitor facilities throughout the park. Please drive carefully. Buckle up, obey speed limits, and please slow down in construction zones!

Interpretive Activities

Stop by a visitor center for information on interpretive activities offered during your visit. Park rangers and volunteers may be presenting talks, guided walks, or evening slide programs. These free programs explore the park's natural and cultural history.

Hey Kids! Ask for a Junior Ranger Activity Book. It's FREE and available at visitor centers. Complete it and you'll earn a badge and certificate. You'll also learn lots of cool stuff about your park!

EPA Works With Park to Improve Air Quality

Air pollution blows into Mount Rainier National Park from the Puget Sound area, British Columbia, Portland, and as far away as Asia. Mount Rainier and some of the surrounding U.S. Forest Service wilderness areas (EPA Class I areas) receive a high level of protection for air quality and visibility under the Clean Air Act. Consequently, Mount Rainier National Park's staff is very involved in a comprehensive air resources management program designed to assess air pollution impacts and protect air quality related values. These air pollutants affect views from scenic vistas and processes in park ecosystems.

As part of our efforts to reduce air pollution from park operations, Mount Rainier National Park entered into an interagency agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to conduct a $500,000 demonstration project. This project is also supported by the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency. The funds will be used to retrofit the park's heavy-duty diesel engines with EPA certified air pollution reduction technologies and supply cleaner ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel for the park's entire fleet. Diesel engines are a significant source of air pollution throughout the country. The use of state-of-the-art air pollution technologies is expected to reduce the particulate emissions of modified park diesel engines by 2-30%, and carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon emissions by 40-90%. Other efforts to reduce air pollution originating in the park include the use of biofuels and hybrid bi-fuel vehicles, and working with tour bus operators to reduce engine idling.

How Can You Help Improve Mount Rainier's Air Quality?

- Bicycle, walk, or use public transportation
- Carpool, combine errands and shop close to home with a friend, and avoid wasteful idling

Welcome...

...to Mount Rainier National Park. I am Dave Uberuaga, Park Superintendent. I was selected for this job in November 2002 and am honored to be chosen to help protect this special place. Mount Rainier National Park was established on March 2, 1899 – 105 years ago! Our dedicated staff of permanent, seasonal and volunteer employees work very hard to assure that your visit is enjoyable. I thank them all for their commitment to this beautiful spot we call Mount Rainier.

As you visit the park during this shoulder season, some facilities will still be closed - buried deep in snow. However, there are many hidden treasures to enjoy if you take time to let Mother Nature entertain you. For example, this is perhaps the best time of year to view waterfalls such as Christine and Narada Falls, as they brim with sparkling clear water fed by melting winter snow. Trees are leafing out, yellow skunk cabbage is blooming in the marsh areas, and the birds are returning to The Mountain. Lowland trails are snow free and there are remnants of the winter's accumulation of snow at Paradise, which reached about 15 feet at its peak this year.

Last fall extensive flooding occurred in the park due to heavy rainfall on a fresh snowpack. Many trail bridges, such as the one on the popular Comet Falls trail were swept away. Additional damage occurred at Sunshine Point Campground, White River Campground and Amphitheater, and State Route 410 near the north park boundary. In addition, a windstorm caused heavy damage on the Paul Peak trail in the Mowich Lake area. Rangers are underway to repair the damage, but you may experience some inconvenience during your visit.

As you leave the park take time to visit our gateway communities who offer great food, arts, crafts and friendly hospitality. They are our partners in making your visit enjoyable.

John Muir wrote "Of all the fire mountains which like beacons, once blazed along the Pacific Coast, Mount Rainier is the noblest." Thank you for visiting this noble place – we hope you will come visit us again!

Dave Uberuaga
Superintendent

In This Issue:

Geologic Hazards 2
Park Partners 2
The Secret to a Great Hike 3
Animal Encounters 3
Wilderness Permits 3
Climbing Mount Rainier 3
Facility Hours 4
Road Opening Schedule 4
Campgrounds 4
Explore Mount Rainier From Home!

Learn more about park resources, recreation opportunities, facilities, and much more on our web at www.nps.gov/mora or go directly to one of the following website pages:

Education Page
www.nps.gov/mora/education/index.htm
Information on teacher workshops, professional development and more!

Employment Page
www.nps.gov/mora/employment.htm
Great information on jobs within the park.

Nature and Science Page
www.nps.gov/mora/pohutml/nature.html
Learn more about the park’s natural resources.

Weather Links
www.nps.gov/mora/current/weather.htm
Links to Mount Rainier and area weather and avalanche conditions.

Nature Notes
www.nps.gov/mora/notes/nn-intro.htm
Learn about the park through the writings of old-time rangers. Nature Notes were originally published from 1923 through 1939.

Doing Our Part!

We all share the responsibilities of caring for our environment and conserving scarce natural resources. You probably do your part at home by carpooling and by turning down your thermostat and switching off your lights. Staff at Mount Rainier National Park do these things and many more out of concern for the environment.

At Mount Rainier National Park we focus on using new “green” products as they are developed. Many of our park vehicles and one of our generators run on emissions-reducing fuel. Recently we added 18 new vehicles to the park fleet with a propane fuel option.

As an Esriarcia Soo Partner organization we are committed to lowering our energy consumption by purchasing Esriarcia Soo rated devices including refrigerators, furnaces, and computers.

Mount Rainier is a place of great beauty and inspiration.

You may be inspired to take a picture or to get a close-up look at a wildflower. But stop and consider your actions before you step off the trail.

Supalpine vegetation survives in a harsh environment. With a short growing season, plants may be stunted for years. Plant’s energy is spent on rapid flowering. Even if a plant survives the weight of your footstep, it may be stunted for years.

Please remember this when exploring Mount Rainier’s fragile meadows and...

Please hike only on maintained trails or thick patches of snow.

Experience Your America with a National Park Pass or a Mount Rainier Annual Pass

Mount Rainier: An Active Volcano

Recent research has improved our understanding of Mount Rainier, an active volcano. Active steam vents, periodic earth tremors, and reported historical eruptions provide evidence that Mount Rainier is sleeping, not dead. Seismic monitoring stations around the mountain should provide days or weeks of advance warning of impending eruptions. However, other geologic hazards like debris flows and rockfall can occur with little warning.

Needless to say, the longer you stay in an area where there are geologic hazards, the greater the chance that you could be involved in an emergency event. While most people consider the danger to be relatively low, you must decide if you will assume the personal risk of visiting these potentially dangerous locations.

If you are near a river and notice a rapid rise in water level, feel a prolonged shaking of the ground, and/or hear a roaring sound coming from upvalley – often described as the sound made by a fast-moving freight train – move quickly to higher ground! A location 160 feet or more above river level should be safe. Detailed information is available at park visitor centers and from scientists at the U.S.G.S. Cascades Volcano Observatory, 1930 SE Cardinal Court, Building 10, Suite 100, Vancouver, WA 98665, http://vulcan.wr.usgs.gov.

Accessibility

Most comfort stations, visitor centers, picnic areas, and designated campsites are accessible or accessible with help for wheelchair users. Accessible lodging is available inside the park and in local communities. In the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise, written information, exhibits, and scripts for unscripted audiovisual programs are available.

WASHINGTON’S NATIONAL PARK FUND

Every year millions visit Washington State’s spectacular National Parks: Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic. Since 1953, Washington’s National Park Fund has connected people to parks and inspired contributions of time, talent and money to help ensure that visitors have high quality, memorable experiences in our parks. This fund supports projects that enhance the visitor experience, promote volunteerism, engage communities, and provide educational opportunities. By securing financial contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations and businesses, Washington’s National Park Fund supports park restoration, enhancement and preservation. Washington’s National Park Fund is an affiliate of the National Park Foundation – a congressionally chartered 501(c)(3) nonprofit which was rated "A" by the American Institute of Philanthropy for responsible use of donor funds. For more information about how you can help Washington’s National Parks call (206) 709-0657, visit the website at www.wnpf.org, or look for brochures in any of the park’s visitor centers.

Visitors Like You

Just by paying the entrance fee, you make a difference. Eighty percent of the fees collected at Mount Rainier are kept in the park, while twenty percent are made available to other parks in need. Your money is helping several projects right now:

- Planning for a new Education Center
- Rehabilitation of park trails
- Meadow restoration at Sunrise and Reflection Lakes
- Upgrading exhibits and media
- Rehabilitating picnic areas

As you explore the park, look for signs of your fees at work!

Volunteers

Every year more than 8,000 volunteers donate over 3,000,000 hours of service in the national parks. They come from every state and nearly every country in the world to help preserve and protect America’s natural and cultural heritage for the enjoyment of this and future generations. At Mount Rainier National Park, 1,229 volunteers contributed a total of 38,681 hours in 2003. We express our deep appreciation to them and to all who are volunteering in 2004. If you are thinking about volunteering, contact Volunteer Coordinator,Tahoma Woods, Star Route, Ashford, WA 98304, (360) 699-2221, ext. 3389.

Northwest Interpretive Association

NWA operates bookstores in the park’s visitor and information centers. As a nonprofit organization benefiting educational programs in the national parks and forests of the Pacific Northwest, NWA plays an important role in making interpretive and educational publications available to travelers. It also funds several interpretive projects in the areas it serves. For more information or membership, call (360) 569-2220, ext. 3320, or visit NWA or the web at:

www.nwpubliclands.com

Washington’s National Park Fund

Volunteering helps to preserve and protect our National Parks. Washington’s National Park Fund supports the recreation, preservation, and enhancement of these parks. The National Park Fund is an affiliate of the National Park Foundation – a congressionally chartered 501(c)(3) nonprofit which was rated “A” by the American Institute of Philanthropy for responsible use of donor funds. For more information about how you can help Washington’s National Parks call (206) 709-0657, visit the website at www.wnpf.org, or look for brochures in any of the park’s visitor centers.

Emergency: Dial 911 from any phone located in the park
The Secret to a Great Hike...

Mount Rainier National Park offers excellent opportunities for adventure, exploration, learning, and just plain having fun! The secret to a great visit? Staying safe! Reduce your risk of spoiling your trip by following these guidelines:

Pay Attention to the Weather

Think about all the ways weather can gum up your plans. It’s easy to get lost or injured when the weather deteriorates, the trail is covered with snow, and you don’t know where you are. You might be in an avalanche zone and not even know it.

Eyes on the Trail

You may be hiking before trail crews have a chance to clear away fallen trees or replace missing foot logs at river crossings. Be especially careful at river crossings. Many people underestimate the power of the water and are unaware of the large, rolling boulders it carries. If you must cross, go in the morning when rivers are generally lower. Beware of snow-covered trails and steep, icy slopes; thin snowbridges over streams and crevasses; snow mounds; wet, slippery rocks, especially near rivers and waterfalls; and snow cornices.

Prepare and Take Care

Bring the "so Essentials" with you and know how to use them. Tell someone your travel plans so they can notify the park if you fail to return. Do not travel alone. If visibility is poor, do not travel at all. Taking these few precautions could save your day...and your life!

Prepare Yourself and Your Park

Mount Rainier National Park was established in 1899 to preserve its resources and to provide for public benefit and enjoyment. By observing the rules, you protect your park and yourself:

- Pets must be on leashes no longer than six feet and are not allowed in buildings, on trails, or on snow
- Do not feed or disturb the wildlife
- Stay on designated trails
- Make fires only in a fire grill. Collecting firewood is prohibited
- Weapons are prohibited in the park. Firearms transported through the park must be unloaded, broken down, and stored in a secure place.
- Bicycle only on roads, not on trails
- Camp in designated campspits only. Sleeping in vehicles outside of campgrounds is not permitted

Animal Encounters

The beauty and wonder of Mount Rainier National Park doesn’t just come from the scenic grandeur of a single, towering mountain. The presence of wild creatures remains an essential part of the experience of wilderness. Being in the home of large creatures like black bear and mountain lion (cougar) can make Mount Rainier an exciting—and sometimes scary—place to visit. Though you are not likely to see them, if you do meet one of these larger mammals, learning more about them serves as your best defense—and theirs!

Black Bear Sense

- Never feed a black bear, either intentionally or by leaving food unsecured
- Do NOT approach bears or cubs
- If a black bear approaches you, try to scare it away by shouting and making noise
- If attacked, fight back aggressively
- Report all sightings at the nearest ranger station or call (360) 569-2211 ext. 3373 or ext. 2354

Avoiding Mountain Lions

- Hike in a group rather than alone. Avoid running—don’t look like prey
- Keep children close to you—preferably in view just ahead of you
- Never approach cougar kittens—leave the area immediately
- Follow the rules regarding pets in the park—don’t take your pet on trails or in the backcountry and never leave it unattended at the campground—you could lose it!

Close Encounters With Mountain Lions

- DON’T RUN! Stand still and face the lion with your companions
- Immediately pick up and hold small children
- Stand upright to make yourself appear larger—wave your arms and make a noisy commotion if the animal moves toward you
- Back away slowly while facing the animal
- If attacked, fight back aggressively
- Report all sightings at the nearest ranger station or call (360) 569-2211 ext. 3373 or ext. 2354

Carrying the "10 Essentials" and know how to use them!

- map of the area
- compass
- extra food & water
- extra clothing (warm!) & rain gear
- emergency shelter
- first aid kit
- flashlight or headlamp
- sunglasses & sunscreen
- pocketknife
- matches (waterproof!)

Leave No Trace

Wilderness camping permits are required for all overnight stays in the park’s backcountry. Climbing permits are required for travel above 10,000’ and/or on glaciers.

Wilderness Permits

Wilderness Permits are required for backcountry camping and are available at all Wilderness Information Centers and most visitor centers. Permits are free, but an optional, fee-based reservation system for campers and climbers is in effect May through September. Reservations may be made between April 1 and September 30. Backcountry reservations are $20 per party (1-12 people) for 1 to 14 consecutive nights. Sixty percent of all backcountry sites and zones are available for reservation. The remaining 40% are issued on a first-come, first-served basis on the day the trip begins. Go to www.nps.gov/mora/recreation/wic.htm to learn more.

A Reservation Request Form is available at Wilderness Information Centers and on the Internet at www.nps.gov/mora/recreation/respdf.htm. Fax or mail completed forms to: Wilderness Reservation Office, Mount Rainier National Park, Sahhala Woods, Star Route, Ashford, WA 98304-9736. Fax (360) 569-3370.

Climbing Mount Rainier

Over 10,000 people attempt to climb Mount Rainier each year. About half actually make it to the 14,410-foot summit. Climbing information is available at ranger stations and on the park’s website at www.nps.gov/mora/guides/climb.htm. For pre-registered route conditions, call (360) 569-2211 ext. 2354. Climbers pay a Cost Recovery Fee of $30 per person, per calendar year.


Hiking the Muir Snowfield?

The Muir Snowfield, a permanent field of snow, ice, and rock outcrops, is located north of Paradise between 7,000 and 10,000 feet in elevation. Thousands of people hike on the Muir Snowfield each year en route to Camp Muir. On a clear day, the hike is spectacular. But when the weather deteriorates, as it often and unpredictably does, crossing the Muir Snowfield can be disastrous.

Don't Become a Muir Snowfield Statistical!

- Avoid the snowfield in questionable weather, especially if you are alone or unprepared. Weather conditions can change suddenly and drastically.
- If you're ascending and clouds or fog start rolling in, turn around and head back to Paradise. If that's not possible, stop moving, dig in, and wait for better weather.
- Without a compass, map, and altimeter, it is extremely difficult to find your way to the trailhead in a whiteout. Carry these items and know how to use them!
- Do not attempt to descend from Camp Muir in poor weather. Do not descend on skis or a snowboard in limited visibility—you could become quickly lost!
- When hiking to Camp Muir, be sure to carry emergency bivouac gear so that you can spend the night out if you have to.
- While it may be disappointing to abandon your hike to Camp Muir, remember that the snowfield will be there for you next time, in better weather.
- Hike only on trails or snow to protect fragile alpine vegetation.

Ask a ranger for tips on other areas to explore during your visit.
Emergency: Dial 911 from any phone located in the park

Visitor Centers

Longmire Museum (360) 569-2211 ext. 3314
Information, exhibits, book sales, climbing permits.
May - June: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. daily

Jackson Visitor Center - Paradise (360) 569-2211 ext. 2238
Information, exhibits, movies, book sales, food, service, gifts, showers.
May 1 - June 11: 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. daily
June 12 - September 6: 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. daily

Ohanapecosh Visitor Center (360) 569-6046
Information, exhibits, book sales.
May 28 - May 31: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Friday - Sunday and Holiday
June 4 - June 25: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. daily
June 26 - September 6: 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. daily

Sunrise Visitor Center (360) 663-2425
Information, exhibits, book sales.
June 25 - September 14: 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. daily

Food & Lodging

For lodging reservations in the park call Mount Rainier Guest Services at (360) 569-2275 or go to www.guestservices.com/rainier

National Park Inn - Longmire
Lodging, post office, and dining room serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Open year-round.

General Store - Longmire
Groceries, gifts, firewood. Open year-round.
May 1 - June 11: 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. daily
June 12 - Sept. 6: 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. daily

Jackson Visitor Center - Paradise
Grill, Gift Shop and Showers in the basement open during building hours.
May 1 - June 11: 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. daily
June 12 - Sept. 6: 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. daily

Paradise Inn
Lodging, lounge, gifts, and dining room serving breakfast, lunch, dinner and Sunday Brunch. Opens May 14

Sunrise Lodge
Food and gifts. Day use only/no overnight lodging.
June 26 - Sept. 6: 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. daily

Wilderness Information Centers

Longmire WIC (360) 569-HIKE
Wilderness camping & westside route climbing permits.
May - June: 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. daily

Paradise Ranger Station (360) 569-2211 ext. 2314
Climbing permits (Paradise routes).
May 7 - May 30:
1:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Friday
7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Saturday & Sunday
May 31 - September 6:
7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Sunday - Thursday
7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Friday
6:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Saturday

White River WIC (360) 663-2273
Wilderness camping & eastside climbing permits.
May 28 - September 27:
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Sunday - Wednesday
7:30 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. Thursday
7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. Friday
7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Saturday

Wil keson WIC (360) 829-5127
Wilderness camping & northside climbing permits.
May - June: 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. daily

Road Opening Schedule

Estimated Dates (subject to change)

Nisqually to Paradise
Westside Road to Dry Creek
Paradise Valley Road
Stevens Canyon Road
Chinook Pass (SR 410)
WASDOT (800) 695-ROAD
Cayuse Pass (SR 123/SR 410)
WASDOT (800) 695-ROAD
White River Road to White River
Campground Parking Lot
Closed for flood repair June 21-July 2
(Closed until subject to change)
Sunrise Road
Carbon River Road
Closed to vehicle traffic Sept. 13-24
Mowich Lake Road to Mowich Lake
Use caution while driving this spring. Roads can be snow covered, icy or slick!

Drive-in Campgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campground</th>
<th>Open Dates</th>
<th>Elev.</th>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Fee</th>
<th>Group Sites</th>
<th>Group Fees</th>
<th>Toilets</th>
<th>Water</th>
<th>Dump Station</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunshine Point</td>
<td>Year-round</td>
<td>2000*</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cougar Rock*</td>
<td>May 28 - Oct. 11</td>
<td>3180*</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>$12/15*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$40-64</td>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohanapecosh*</td>
<td>May 28 - Oct. 11</td>
<td>1914*</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>$12/15*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$40</td>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White River</td>
<td>July 2 - Sept. 17</td>
<td>4400*</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flush</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ipsut Creek</td>
<td>Year-round (Closed to car camping Sept 13-24)</td>
<td>2300*</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>$8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$20-25</td>
<td>Pit No Potable Water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mowich Lake</td>
<td>June 25 - Oct. 11</td>
<td>4950*</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pit No Potable Water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Advance reservations are required for Cougar Rock and Ohanapecosh Campgrounds from the last Friday in June through Labor Day (group sites from May 28 - October 11). Call 1-800-365-CAMP up to 5 months in advance or reserve your site on-line at http://reservations.nps.gov. The nightly fee during the reservation period is $15 per site. All other campgrounds are operated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Please Recycle!

Mount Rainier National Park has been involved in recycling since the late 1960s. We reduce our consumption of resources by reusing and recycling. We recycle aluminum cans, 
plastic, glass, office paper, mixed paper, cardboard, scrap metal, used oil, batteries, and a number of other items.

We also purchase recycled plastic products such as plastic bags, picnic tables, and plastic lumber; paper products made of pre- and post- consumer recycled paper; automobile products; and other products.

Be part of the effort! Please deposit aluminum cans, plastic bottles and glass in the recycle cans provided.

GAS IS NOT AVAILABLE IN THE PARK.