Mount Rainier’s height and location influence the amount of snow that falls on its slopes. The mountain reaches into the atmosphere to disturb great tides of moist maritime air flowing eastward from the Pacific Ocean. The resulting encounter between moisture-laden air and the 14,411 foot mountain produces record snowfalls. The most recent record was set during the winter of 1971-72, when 1122 inches (93.3 feet) of snow fell at Paradise.

Located at 5400 feet elevation on the mountain’s south slope, Paradise receives the brunt of incoming weather. Although snow can fall here during any month of the year, the winter snowpack usually starts accumulating in late October or early November. This year, early winter storms had already left six feet of snow on the ground by the first weekend of November! It is no wonder Paradise is a favorite destination for winter enthusiasts.

Until snowplows were able to maintain a year-round road to Paradise during the 1930’s, Longmire was the hub of winter activities at Mount Rainier. Even today, skiing and snowshoeing along the forested trails which begin at Longmire and Cougar Rock can be a rewarding experience and may be an especially welcome option when blizzard conditions and high avalanche hazards exist higher on the mountain! During cold, wet winters when snow accumulates even lower in elevation than Longmire, skiing along the Kautz Creek Trail or up the Westside Road can also provide a pleasant winter outing.

Sheltered in the lee of Mount Rainier at 2000 feet elevation, snow depth and skiing conditions in the old-growth Douglas-fir forest which surrounds Ohanapecosh can vary considerably from one winter to the next. Trails may be completely snowfree during mild winters or they may have several feet of snow during cold ones. Winter hiking along the Ohanapecosh River past Silver Falls or further along the trail into the Grove of the Patriarchs offers the opportunity for breathtaking solitude under a forest canopy taller than a 20-story building.

Winter recreationalists who seek a more remote experience at Mount Rainier may want to explore the Carbon River Valley, which contains the only true inland rainforest in the park, or ski into the Mowich Lake area, where adventurous visitors may find themselves on the edge of the largest lake in the park during a magical time of year. Check current conditions before starting your trip.

The latest road condition reports, weather predictions, avalanche hazard forecasts, and ski route maps are available by calling Mount Rainier National Park, (206) 549-5211, or by contacting a park ranger in the Henry M. Jackson Memorial Visitor Center at Paradise, in the Museum at Longmire or in the ranger station at Ohanapecosh.
Visitor Centers

**Longmire** * Museum: 9:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., Monday - Friday; 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Saturday, Sunday and holidays.

**Paradise** * Henry M. Jackson Memorial Visitor Center: weekends and holidays only, plus December 17 - January 2, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Ohanapecosh**: Closed for the season.

**Sunrise**: Closed for the season.

**Carbon River**: Closed for the season.

Ranger Stations

**Paradise**: Open daily, located in the Jackson Visitor Center basement.

**White River**: There is no ranger station open in winter within the White River area of the park. The US Forest Service District Office in Enumclaw (206) or (360) 825-6585 provides information, maps and permits for White River, Carbon River, and Mowich Lake areas.

Permits/Overnight Camping

**Longmire** * Museum: Information on backcountry permits and maps are available. Permits are required for backcountry camping.

Highway 410 Entrance: Backcountry permits, required for all camping, and climbing register cards are available (self-service) at the north boundary arch on Highway 410 and at the U.S. Forest Service office in Enumclaw.

Food & Lodging

**Longmire** * National Park Inn: Lodging desk 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., daily. **Dining room**: 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Saturday - Thursday; 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Friday, Saturday and holidays. For reservations call: Mount Rainier Guest Services at (206) or (360)569-2275.

**Paradise** * Henry M. Jackson Memorial Visitor Center: 11:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., weekends and holidays only, plus December 17 - January 2. Food services, showers and gifts available. A small indoor picnic area is available between the gift shop and Jackson Grill.

**Paradise** * Inn: Closed for the season.

Ski Rentals

**Longmire** * Ski Touring Center: Located in the General Store adjacent to the National Park Inn. Rentals, lessons, supplies and information are available. Rentals include skis, boots, poles and snowshoes. Open 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday - Friday. 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Saturday, Sunday and holidays.

Winter Activities

SNOWSHOE WITH A RANGER

Join a Park Naturalist at Paradise for an exciting introduction to the art of snowshoeing. Discover how plants and animals adapt to record snowfalls. If you can walk, you can snowshoe. No experience is necessary, but a heavy dose of enthusiasm helps.

**Snowshoe Walks**: daily December 26, 1994 - January 2, 1995; then Saturday and Sunday only through April 9, 1995; 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., 1.2 miles, 2 hours. Limit: 25 people, ten years old and older. A sign-up sheet is available at the Jackson Visitor Center information desk starting at 10 a.m. for the morning walk and at 1:30 p.m. for the afternoon walk.

**Snowshoe Walks for Organized Groups**: Saturday and Sunday only at 12:30 p.m., December 31, 1994 - April 9, 1995. For groups of 10 to 25 people, by reservation only. Inquire at the visitor center or telephone (206) or (360)569-2211 x3314.

You will need to bring warm clothes, preferably in layers that can be put on or taken off as weather dictates. Include hats, mittens, waterproof boots (you will sink into the snow even with snowshoes on), sunscreen and sunglasses. The National Park Service provides snowshoes for the walks. A $1.00 per pair donation helps defray the cost of snowshoe maintenance and replacement. Expand your lungs and stretch your legs in a snowshoe exploration on the Northwest's greatest mountain! Did we say easy? No Fun? You bet?

ALL ABOARD WITH SNOWBOARDS

Yes - Mount Rainier has two of the three ingredients any snowboarder would want - SNOW and STEEP SLOPES... but no CHAIRLIFTS! So, of you're willing to make the hike, we'll provide the gravity. Not many rules to sweat either - just stay off plowed roads, keep out of the Paradise Snowplay Area and don't damage vegetation... (we're really paranoid about the vegetation)... so don't snowboard too early in the fall or too late into summer. Other than that - have at it! Build your jumps and have a blast! Oh yes... we strongly suggest that you stay off avalanche-prone slopes. Getting killed can really ruin your day! We rangers can help you avoid that possibility by identifying danger areas and suggesting safer but exciting alternatives. Just ask! Cool!
SNOW SLIDING

Snow sliding is a favorite pastime in winter. It is also one of the most dangerous activities. For your safety, sliding is permitted ONLY in the designated area above the upper parking lot at Paradise. Sliding is permitted only on soft devices or inner tubes. For the safety of participants, no hard sliding devices, such as toboggans or runner sleds, are permitted. The sliding season at Paradise begins with the accumulation of a 48" snow pack. The runs are supervised on weekends and holidays only, usually starting in late November or early December plus December 24 - January 2. Compressed air for inflating the inner tubes is available only at these times. Sliding season ends in early April.

- Slide ONLY in the designated area above the upper parking lot at Paradise. The area is marked with ropes, poles, cones and signs.
- Within the sliding area there is a challenging slope for thrill-seekers and a separate, more moderate slope for youngsters.
- Sliding is dangerous! Fatal accidents have occurred when people mistakenly slide over waterfalls or down slopes that were too steep or broke through thin snow into stream gorges. Slide only in the designated area at Paradise.
- For safety, be sure the run is clear before starting your slide. Collisions usually mean serious injury.
- Inner tubes, saucers and plastic sleds are the only sliding devices allowed.
- For your comfort, dress warmly and in layers. Warm and waterproof are best, e.g., wool, polypropylene, and pile hats, gloves and clothing and snow-sealed boots.
- Do not wear lightweight blue jeans and T-shirts. They get wet easily and do not keep you warm, factors that may lead to hypothermia.
- Take a warm-up break at the Jackson Visitor Center. The visitor center is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends and during holiday periods.

Warm up before feet, hands, noses or ears feel numb. Resting, rewarming and frequent snacking will help you comfortable and alert.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

With all the snow at Paradise, cross-country skiing is the most popular outing. When there is sufficient snow, Park Rangers mark some trails usually near Paradise for ski touring. These are the Nisqually Vista Trail, the Narada Falls Trail, and possibly the trail from the valley road over Mazama Ridge to Reflection Lakes. A map of these trails and other unmarked ski routes is available at the Henry M. Jackson Memorial Visitor Center. If you will be using waxable skis, prepare for fairly warm snow. A waxing guide is available at the Visitor Center information desk. Knowledge of the local avalanche danger is extremely important. Be sure to inquire at the Visitor Center or ranger station before you leave. A good handout on avalanches is available. For your safety never ski on plowed roadways or in parking lots.

Cross-country skis and snowshoes are available for rent at the Longmire General Store daily during the winter season. Cross-country and telemark ski lessons are also available. Inquire at the General Store for details.

The OHANAPECOSH Ranger Station is the starting point for cross-country skiing trips on snow-covered Highway 123, the Stevens Canyon Road to Box Canyon and area trails.

Snowmobiles can be rented on Highway 123 north to Stevens Canyon Road offers a gentle 2 mile ski trip. Highway 123 continues northward through Cedar Flats, a stretch of roadway frequented by elk in winter. Skiing is not recommended beyond the Shriner Peak trailhead, 3 miles one way from Ohanapecosh, because of increased avalanche danger.

HIGHWAY 123 north from Stevens Canyon Road to Box Canyon.

The Stevens Canyon Road is a more challenging ski trip, climbing over Backbone Ridge to Box Canyon. A beautiful view from Backbone Ridge is worth the effort to reach it. Overnight camping is permitted, with permits available at the Ohanapecosh Ranger Station. Travel beyond Box Canyon is not recommended because avalanche danger increases on the upper portion of the road.

The MOWICH LAKE road, at the end of State Route 165, is unpaved for the last 10 miles. Four wheel drive vehicles are recommended for travel on this roadway during winter. This road is closed to all motorized vehicles beyond Paul Peak trailhead. The snow-covered road between Paul Peak trailhead and Mowich Lake is a good 10 mile round trip for intermediate skiers looking to avoid the more popular areas of the Park.

SNOWMOBILES

In the southwest corner of the park, snowmobiles are permitted for three miles along the Westside Road from its junction with the main park road as far as Fish Creek. Beyond Fish Creek, the Westside Road is closed to motorized travel both winter and summer. Snowmobiles are also permitted on all the road loops of Cougar Rock Campground. The campground is closed to overnight use during winter and the roadway is left unplowed. Contact a park ranger at the Longmire Museum for maps and additional snowmobile information.

On the northside of the park no ranger station is open in winter. The US Forest Service District Office in Enumclaw (206) or (360) 825-6585 provides information, maps and permits for White River, Carbon River, and Mowich Lake areas.

Highway 410 is closed near its junction with Crystal Mountain Ski Area road, at the North Park Boundary. A State "Sno-Park" permit is required to park in the parking area 100 yards east of the park entrance arch. Sno-Park permits are available at the US Forest Service District Office in Enumclaw and the Greenwater Store.

Snowmobiles are permitted on the 12 mile section of unplowed road from the North Park Boundary on Highway 410 to the White River Campground. Be aware of avalanche danger and forecast.

The Mowich Lake road is closed to all motorized vehicles.

Backcountry permits (required for all camping and climbing registration cards are available at the north boundary arch on Highway 410 and the U.S. Forest Service office in Enumclaw.

On the eastside of the park, Highway 123 north from U.S. Highway 12 is usually open to the Ohanapecosh Ranger Station. Highway 123 north from the ranger station to Cayuse Pass is closed by snow from December through March.

Snowmobiles are permitted on Highway 123 between the Ohanapecosh Ranger Station northward to Stevens Canyon Road, and as far as Box Canyon on the Stevens Canyon Road. Snowmobiles are not permitted beyond Box Canyon because of the avalanche danger, or north of the Stevens Canyon junction because elk winter near the Grove of the Patriarchs and Cedar Flats.
Nisqually to Paradise

Mount Tahoma Scenic
Ski Trail System

Westside Road
(unplowed)
-Snowmobiling
for 3 miles
-Skiing

To Ashford
Nisqually Entrance
Sunshine Pt.
Campground
Nisqually River

Mount Tahoma Scenic
Ski Trail System

To Paradise
Paradise River

2. Narada Falls

To Paradise
Paradise River

-Ski Trail

Overnight Parking
Restroom
-Warning Shelter
-Trail Register

1. Longmire

To Paradise

Nature Trail
Restrooms
Museum & Information
National Park Inn
Ski Rentals
Residential Area
Maintenance Area
Overnight Parking

To Longmire

Ski Trails

To Longmire

3. Paradise

Nisqually Winter Camping
Vista Snowplay Area
Ski Trail

Overnight Parking
Visitor Center
Ranger Station

Winter Camping
Inn (closed for winter)

Restrooms
Day Use Parking

Ranger Station Trail Registration

Scale Approximate

Feet

Approximate 0

North
4. Carbon River

Carbon River Entrance

Carbon River Road may be closed at the entrance when impassable to 2WD vehicles.

Ipsut Creek Campground

Mowich Lake

Gate closed to all vehicles at Paul Peak trailhead

High clearance 4WD vehicles recommended

To Wilkeson

5. White River

Gate Closed to all vehicles in winter

Gate closed to cars and Snowmobiles from SR 410/White River Road to White River Campground

White River Campground (Closed in Winter)

White River Ranger Station (Closed in Winter)

Snowmobiling allowed on SR 410/White River Road to White River Campground

6. Ohanapecosh

Box Canyon

Stevens Canyon Entrance (Closed in Winter)

Snowmobiles allowed between Ohanapecosh gate and Box Canyon

Gate closed to cars and Snowmobiles

Gate closed to cars

Ohanapecosh Ranger Station

To and Packwood

Olympic National Park

Crystal Mountain Ski Area

Page 5
Winter Road and Driving Conditions

Mount Rainier conforms to Washington state guidelines for traction devices. Basically, four different signs will be displayed on park roadways. The restriction listed must be obeyed to reduce your chances of having an accident. You may be cited for ignoring snow tire and chain requirements.

- **"Watch for Ice"**: The road ahead is mostly bare with patches of ice or compacted snow.
- **"Approved Traction Tires Advised"**: The road ahead may be snowpacked. Use caution and your own judgment.
- **"Approved Traction Tires Required"**: The road ahead is snowpacked and snow is falling or not yet completely plowed off. To proceed, your vehicle must have approved snow tires or chains on the drive wheels. Approved snow tires are designated by the "M-S", "MS", "S-S", or "All Season" lettering on the sidewall of the tire. Vehicles over 10,000 pounds GVW and buses must have chains installed when traction tires are required.
- **"Chains Required"**: The road ahead is snowpacked or icy or snow is falling heavily. You can expect some difficulty. To proceed, your vehicle must have tire chains (link, cable or plastic) on the drive wheels. Four wheel drive vehicles may proceed without chains if they have snow tires on all four wheels, are in four wheel drive, and chains are available for use on one set of drive wheels.

Winter Driving Tips

The arrival of snow on mountainous roads should herald a warning to winter recreationists: It's time to change driving habits and techniques. Reduced traction, uncertain braking and poor visibility should all be expected on any winter day. The following tips should help you compensate for the poor driving conditions:

- **Reduce speed.**
- **Keep headlights on for visibility.**
- **Use low gears, especially when driving downhill.**
- **Maintain momentum while driving uphill.**

Snow Plowing & Road Closures

The road between Longmire and Paradise is open daily, weather permitting. At 4:30 p.m., the gate is closed to uphill traffic at Longmire and locked to all traffic at 6:00 p.m. This procedure facilitates snow removal the next morning. As the days lengthen toward spring, a later closing time will be posted.

Snowplows leave Longmire about 6:00 a.m. each morning to clear the road between Nisqually Entrance and Longmire. The road between Longmire and Paradise is plowed next, and is usually open by 10:00 a.m. Exact time of opening will be earlier or later depending on weather, snow depth, avalanches, or equipment breakdowns.

Always stay well away from snowplow equipment while it is working.

DANGER

Do not ski or walk on the plowed roadways. Never ski, slide or walk on the roadway above Longmire toward Paradise. Snowplows will operate even on the roads closed to the public. Skiing is permitted only on roads never plowed during the winter season. For more specific information ask at a park visitor center.

Waiting for the Road to Paradise to Open?

Often the road remains closed to Paradise after the scheduled opening time posted on the gate at Longmire. Blizzards, drifting snow, very poor visibility, avalanches or new snow so deep that it takes much longer to plow are the reasons for late or cancelled road openings.

While you wait we suggest the following activities around Longmire:

- **Ski or Snowshoe**
- 0.7 mile around Longmire meadow (easy)
- 1+ mile through the former Longmire Campground to national forest roads (easy)

- **2 miles to Cougar Rock Campground area on the Wonderland Trail (do not ski on the road) (easy to intermediate)**
- **Visit the National Park Inn and general store**
- **Visit the Longmire Museum for maps, information and to view the exhibits**
- **Please stay off the road toward Paradise**
- **Remember, Sliding is permitted ONLY in the designated area at Paradise.**
Snow Camping

For the hardy and prepared, snow camping offers a special kind of experience. At Mount Rainier, snow camping is allowed when the snow depth reaches five feet at Paradise and two feet elsewhere in the park. A handout is available with complete winter camping information. In snow camping, you choose your own campsite, but the site must be at least 200 feet from plowed roads and parking areas (to avoid being buried by snowblowers), at least 300 feet from buildings, and a minimum of 100 feet from water. Group size may number as many as 12 people. At Paradise and Narada Falls, groups larger than 12 persons are directed to camp 300 to 600 feet from restrooms and are required to use the restrooms to dispose of human wastes.

PERMITS ARE REQUIRED YEAR-ROUND for backcountry and wilderness camping, during the winter, permits are available at the Longmire Museum, Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise, Ohanapechoh Ranger Station and the USFS ranger station in Enumclaw.

When camping, be certain to park in a proper overnight area to avoid conflicts with snowplows. Refer to the Paradise and Narada Falls area maps on pages 4 and 5 for the general location of these sites. When you finish camping, please collapse igloos and snow caves so someone does not fall through the roof.

Snow camping requires many safety precautions. Be prepared for quick weather changes which can transform a pleasant tour into a survival ordeal.

* Use Stoves Only.
* Open Fires Are Not Permitted.
* Pack Out All Litter.

Winter Warnings

An avalanche is a volume of snow losing its grip on a slope and sliding downhill. Mount Rainier combines steep slopes, deep new snows and high winds to form ideal conditions for avalanches.

The daily avalanche hazard level is posted at the Nisqually Entrance, Longmire Museum, Henry M. Jackson Memorial Visitor Center at Paradise, ranger stations and is also available from any ranger. The four hazard levels are:

- **Low Hazard**—Snow is mostly stable; avalanches are unlikely, except in isolated pockets, on steep open slopes and gullies. Note: even with a low hazard avalanches can occur on some slopes.
- **Moderate Hazard**—Areas of unstable snow, and avalanches are possible on steep, open slopes and gullies. Backcountry travelers should use caution.
- **High Hazard**—Mostly unstable snow with avalanches likely on steep slopes. Backcountry travel is not recommended except on known, safe routes.
- **Extreme Hazard**—Avalanches are certain on steep slopes, with large destructive ones possible. Backcountry travel should be avoided.

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- **Extreme Hazard**—Avalanches are certain on steep slopes, with large destructive ones possible. Backcountry travel should be avoided.

Trouble with avalanches?

- **Ensure the safety of survivors.**
- **Mark positions where victims were caught and last seen.**
- **Quickly search the snow surface immediately downslope from the last seen points for clues such as clothing and equipment.** Stuffing the snow surface is a good procedure.
- **Search the avalanche debris below the last seen points with probes, ski tails or ski poles, by probing the snow in a grid pattern.**
- **Keep Searching! The victim could be inches away from you.**
- **Send any extra person for help.**

Tips to Keep Warm

The cold temperatures, wet snow and wind of a Mount Rainier winter can easily rob a person's body of heat. Excessive loss of body heat, called "hypothermia," is often a contributing cause of outdoor accidents. Hypothermia progresses from uncontrolled shivering to loss of coordination, impaired judgment, loss of consciousness and death. In the advanced stages of hypothermia, heat loss is so severe that the victim cannot recover without aid.

Hypothermia is more easily prevented than treated. For your safety here are some tips which will also help you avoid another winter hazard, frostbite:

- **Dress warm—Keep insulation between you and the weather.**
- **Stay dry—Moisture robs your body of heat.**
- **Wear wool or synthetics like pile or polypropylene—They are effective insulators even when wet.**
- **Avoid wind—Exposure to wind robs your body of more heat at any temperature.**
- **Snack frequently—Your body will require additional calories to replace those lost to the cold.**
- **Take a warm-up break—Rest and rewarming will keep you comfortable and alert.**

Overnight Parking

If you will be leaving a vehicle overnight, be sure to park in a designated overnight parking area at Longmire, Narada Falls, Paradise, Ohanapechoh Ranger Station, the snow park on SR 410 at the north entrance or at the Paul Peak trailhead. These areas are signed and maps are available at ranger stations or visitor centers. Parking outside these areas will impede snowplowing operations, could cause an accident, and will definitely result in your having to dig your car out of the snow.

If you are with a large group, try to carpool. Remember, camping in vehicles anywhere except in drive-in campgrounds is prohibited. In the winter, Sunshine Point Campground is open for car camping. Regardless of where you park, avoid setting your emergency brake if possible—it may freeze solid. Turn off windshield wipers before parking.
Mount Rainier and Olympic National Parks are home to some of the country's most extraordinary natural resources. The rain forests in Olympic National Park have been internationally recognized for their biodiversity and abundance. To experience Mount Rainier, is to encounter the moods and challenges of the great Northwest. Mount Rainier and Olympic National Parks are the jewels in Puget Sound's crown.

Mount Rainier and Olympic National Parks are two enchanting places where human endeavor and natural beauty coexist. But, over the last several years, the number of visitors has increased far more rapidly than federal funding. This funding gap must be filled in order to restore, enhance and preserve Mount Rainier and Olympic National Parks. If tomorrow's visitors to our great National Parks are to experience their extraordinary beauty and diversity, we must aggressively work for the Park's restoration and preservation. Private individuals once led the fight to turn these precious lands into National Parks. It's time once again for residents, organizations and visitors to band together and protect Mount Rainier and Olympic National Parks for future generations.

Many Americans have had a love affair with the national parks since Yellowstone - our first national park - was created in 1872. Today, the National Park Service is officially entrusted with preserving more than 350 national parks in the United States. Thousands of individual citizens who want to ensure that the best of America will be protected, assist the Park Service by volunteering their time and talents.

If you would like to make a contribution to assure that your national parks will continue to be enjoyed by future generations, then consider becoming a Volunteer-In-The-Park (VIP) for the National Park Service.

To apply for volunteer service at Mount Rainier National Park, or to receive more information on the VIP program, contact a park ranger at any visitor center or ranger station; or write: Clay & Dixie Gatchel, Lead VIP Coordinators, P.O. Box 1344, Renton, WA, 98057-1344.

The Mount Rainier & Olympic Fund was created to restore, enhance and preserve these two Parks for future generations. The Funds' purpose is to provide funding for the following projects:

- Educational Projects
- Trail Improvements
- Vegetation Restoration
- Vegetation Theft Prevention
- Wildlife & Fisheries Projects

For detailed information about how you can help, contact: Kim M. Evans, Executive Director, Mount Rainier & Olympic Fund, 1221 Second Ave., Suite 350, Seattle, WA, 98101, or call (206) 621-6565. Look for donation boxes and envelopes at all park visitor centers and at the National Park Inn. Thank you for your support. The Mount Rainier & Olympic Fund is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation. Your contribution is tax deductible.