**Annual Snowfall at Paradise**

- **Record High:** 1122 inches
- **Average:** 654 inches
- **1985-1990:** 692 inches
- **1991-1995:** 654 inches
- **1996-2000:** 606 inches
- **2001-2005:** 679 inches
- **2006-2010:** 655 inches

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**Winter Road and Driving Conditions**

Mount Rainier conforms to Washington state guidelines for traction devices.

- **Approved Traction Tires Required**: The road ahead is snowpacked or is falling or not yet completely plowed. Use caution and your own judgment.

- **Approved Traction Tires Recommended**: The road ahead is snowplowed during the winter. You can expect some difficulty. Proceed, your vehicle must have tire chains (link, cable or plastic) on the drive wheels. Approved snow tires are designated by the "M-3", "MIS", "MIS-", "MIS++", "All Season" lettering on the sidewall of the tire. Vehicles over 10,000 pounds GVW and busses must have chains installed when traction tires are required.

**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**.
  - **Stop only in pullouts to adjust or install tire chains**.

- **Use brakes sparingly. Apply light pressure to avoid locking your wheels.**
- **Leave extra room between vehicles to compensate for longer stopping distances.**
- **If your rear wheel drive vehicle skids, let up on the throttle and steer in the direction you want to go. For front wheel drives, accelerate slightly and steer in the direction you want to go.**
- **Obey posted traction requirements.**
- **Drive carefully and maintain control so you can avoid those who are less careful.**
- **Watch for snowplows operating on the road. Avoid hard braking when you meet them, and stay back when following plows.**

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**SNOW PLOWING & ROAD CLOSURES**

- **Paradise road closes each evening and reopens each morning as soon as temperatures permit safe travel. Check signs at the Longmire gate for time of opening. Park cars in the parking lot, not in line near the gates when waiting for the road to open.**
  - **Paradise Access** open by 10:00 a.m. Exact time of opening will be earlier or later depending on weather, snow depth, avalanche, or equipment breakdowns.
  - If you plan to camp anywhere above Longmire, first talk with a ranger at Longmire or Paradise to obtain a backcountry permit and to arrange for plowing your vehicle. Next morning, be sure snowplowing operations have been completed before moving your vehicle.

- **Highway 123 usually open from US Highway 12 north to the Ohanapecosh Ranger Station. Highway 123 north from the ranger station to Cayuse Pass is closed by snow from December through March.**

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**WAITING FOR THE ROAD TO PARADISE TO OPEN?**

- **Ski or Snowshoe**: 0.7 mile around Longmire meadow (easy).
- **Hike** 1 mile past Longmire Campground to national forest roads (easy).
- **Bicycling or Motorcycle**: 2 miles to Cougar Rock Campground
- **Paradise road is closed.** Do not ski or walk on the closed road. Skiers, snowboarders, bicyclists, or motorcyclists should return to the campground where they can wait for the road to open. Use safety precautions and park well off the road. Road conditions may be very hazardous.

- **Skiing is permitted only 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 nature and history exhibits.**
- **Please stay off the road toward Paradise**
- **Remember, sliding is permitted ONLY in the designated area at Paradise.**
Mount Rainier, North Cascades & Olympic Fund

Facilities & Services

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 21 - January 1, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Ohanaposocho: Closed for the season.

Sunrise: Closed for the season.

Ranger Stations

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

White River & Carbon River: There are no ranger stations open in winter within these areas of the park. The U.S. Forest Service District Office in Enumclaw, (360)823-6585, provides information, maps and permits for White River, Carbon River, and Mowich Lake areas.

Backcountry & Climbing Permits

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 at the U.S. Forest Service office in Enumclaw and at the north boundary arch on Highway 410 (self-service).

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. Sunday - Thursday; 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Friday, Saturday and holidays. For reservations call: Mount Rainier Guest Services at (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 21 - January 1. Food services, showers and gifts are available. A small indoor picnic area is available between the gift shop and Jackson Grill.

Paradise - Inn: Closed for the season.

Sunrise: 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.

Campgrounds

Sunshine Point: Located 6 miles west of Longmire and .25 mile east of the Nisqually Entrance. Sunshine Point has 18 sites for tents and trailers. Individual campsite fee is $6 per night on a first-come, first-served basis. Construction of accessible vault toilets and picnic facilities may cause minor inconvenience.

Snow and Ice

SNOWSHOE WITH A RANGER

Looking for something different this winter? Would you like to learn the reasons why Mount Rainier receives so much snow? Join a Park Ranger/Naturalist for an exciting introduction to the art of snowshoeing and find out how the plants and animals adapt to world record snowfalls at Paradise. If you can walk, you can snowshoe. No experience is necessary, but good lungs and a heavy dose of enthusiasm help.

Snowshoe walks begin on December 26, 1995, are offered daily through January 1, 1996, then on Saturdays and Sundays only through April 6, 1996. General public walks are offered at 10:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. and last for about 2 hours. These popular walks are limited to 25 people and are supervised by park rangers on weekends and holidays only.

The snowshoe route usually traverses 1.2 miles and takes in spectacular views of the Nisqually Glacier and the south face of Mount Rainier.

Meet the ranger near the information desk at the Henry M. Jackson Memorial Visitor Center at Paradise. You will need to bring warm clothes, preferably in layers that can be put on or taken off as weather dictates. Don't forget hats, mittens, suitable boots (you will sink into the snow even with snowshoes on), sunscreen and sunglasses. The National Park Service provides snowshoes for the walks for a $1.00 per pair donation to help defray the cost of snowshoe maintenance and replacement. You may join a walk for free using your own snowshoes. 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!

SNOW SLIDING

The Snowplay Area is now maintained on a limited basis in the east end of the upper parking lot at Paradise. Its relatively small size and gentle slopes are intended primarily for the use of young children. The Snowplay Area will normally be supervised by park rangers on weekends and holiday periods.

SLIDING IS PERMITTED ONLY WITHIN THIS DESIGNATED SNOWPLAY AREA. Because of the high potential for personal injury and frequency of accidents, no other area of the park is ever open to sliding activities (skiing and snowboarding excepted). Serious injuries and some fatalities have occurred elsewhere when people mistakenly slid over wetfalls, into trees, down slopes that were too steep, broken through thin snow into stream gorges, or slammed into other people.

For your enjoyment and safety, the following guidelines apply:

- Use ONLY inner tubes, plastic sleds, saucers or other soft sliding devices. No wooden toboggans, runner sleds or other hard devices are permitted. (Compressed air for inner tubes is NOT available at Paradise).
- Be sure the run is clear before starting your slide. Collisions may cause serious injury.
- Dress warmly and in layers with a wicking fabric such as wool or polypropylene next to the skin and a waterproof outer layer.
- Wear a hat, gloves and snowsealed boots.
- Do not wear lightweight blue jeans and T-shirts. They get wet easily and will not keep you warm.
- Rest, rewarm and snack frequently to help keep you comfortable and alert. Take a warm-up break at the Jackson Visitor Center before feet, ears or ears feel numb. The visitor center is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends and during holiday periods.

Public hearings regarding the management of snowplay in the park will occur this winter. Watch for press releases in Puget Sound newspapers or call the park for further information on hearing dates and locations. Your opinion counts.

Snowplay policy is experimental this season. Changes will be posted.

Volunteers

If you would like to make a personal contribution to assure that your national parks will continue to be enjoyed by future generations, then consider becoming a 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 Ganchet, Lead VIP Coordinator, P.O. Box 1344, Renton, WA, 98057-1344.
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 three trails for skiing. These are the Nisqually Vista Trail, the Narada Falls Trail, and the Paradise Area Trail. Each marked snow trail 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 booth, and 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 at the Visitor Center or on plowed roadways or in parking lots.

Cross-country ski trails are available at the Paradise Area Trailhead, Central Store daily during the winter season. Cross-country and telemark ski lessons are also available. Inquire at the General Store for details.

The OHANAPECOHS Ranger Station is the starting point for crosscountry ski trips from the Stevens Canyon Road. Routes 123 and on the Stevens Canyon Road to Box Canyon. Area trails are open to cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

Highway 123 north to Stevens Canyon Road offers a gentle 2-mile ski trip. The highway continues northward through a forest of aspens and birches, a route frequented by elk in winter. Skiing is not recommended beyond the Shinkpin Ranger Station. The road to Ohanapoco is unpaved, because of increased avalanche danger. 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 in this area, with permits available at the Ohanapecosh Ranger Station.

Cross-country travel is recommended because avalanche danger increases on the upper portion of the road.

From the Stevens Canyon Road, trails branch north along the Ohanapecosh River to the Grove of the Patriarchs and south past Silver Falls to the Ohanapecosh Campground. These trails can be hard to find and rough going through the snow. Conditions on these trails are often poor.

The MOWICH LAKE road, State Route 165, is unplowed for the last 10 miles. Four wheel drive vehicles are recommended for travel on this road during winter. This road is closed to all motorized vehicles beyond Paul Peak trailhead. The snowcovered 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.

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, Ohanapecosh Ranger Station, and the Stevens Canyon Road to Box Canyon. 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 at the Paradise Area Trailhead. The areas on the sides will impede snowplowing operations, could cause an accident, and will definitely result in your having to dig your car out of the snow. Refer to the Paradise and Narada Falls area maps on the back cover for the general location of these sites.

Use stoves only.
Open fires are not permitted.
Pack out all litter.
Camping in vehicles is allowed only at Sunshine Point camp ground.

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 campgrounds are 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 north side of the park, the Paradise Campus is open in winter. The Paradise Campground (360) 825-6585 provides in­formation, maps and permits for winter travel. On the east side of the park, Highway 12 is usually open to the Ohanapecosh Ranger Station. Highway 123 north from Paradise to Eatonville is plowed and closed by snow from December through March.

Snowmobiles are permitted on Highway 123 between the Ohanapecosh Ranger Station 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.

SNOWBOARDING

ES - Mount Rainier contains two of the three ingredients any snowboarder would want - SNOW and STEEP SLOPES... but no CHAIRLIFTS! So, if you're willing to make the hike, you can have your choice of some of the best backcountry snowboarding in the state of Washington. 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 campgrounds are 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.

Other than that - have at it! Build your jumps (from snow only) and have a hoot! You can be assured you'll stay off avalanche-prone slopes. Getting killed can really ruin your day! We can help you avoid that possibility by identifying danger areas and suggesting safer but exciting alternatives. Just ask! Cool!

TIPS TO STAY WARM

The cold temperatures, wet snow, and strong winds at the Paradise area make winter snowboarding a challenging sport. There are several things you can do to help you avoid hypothermia and another winter hazard, frostbite:

Dress Warmly - Keep insulation between you and the weather.
Stay Dry - Moisture robs your body of heat.

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 roadways or in areas to avoid being buried by snowblowers, at least 300 feet from buildings, and a minimum of 100 feet from the trail. The group size limits are not imposed. Leaders of large groups are encouraged to call the park for advice on avoiding those weekends when many other groups are expected.

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

When you finish camping, please collapse igloos and snowshafts so someone else does not fall through the roof. Snowshafts are not designed to support weight.

SNOWMOBILES

Treat avalanche hazard with utmost caution. Taking a route around an avalanche track is advisable in some circumstances, but becomes essential during the more hazardous conditions. Avoid being caught in an avalanche. The survival rate for victims buried in an avalanche is extremely slim. Only 50% of victims survive 30 minutes of burial. Take these steps in your rescue attempt:

1. Do NOT release survivors.
2. Mark positions where victims were caught and last seen.
3. Quickly search the snow surface immediately downslope from the last seen points for clues such as clothing and equipment. Scuffing the snow surface is a good procedure.
4. Search the avalanche debris using probes with probes, ski tails or ski poles, by probing the snow in a grid pattern.
5. Keep Searching! - The victim could be inches away from your boots.

SNOWMOBILES

While four feet of snow covers the ground — look for posted advisories. Other than that - have at it! Build your jumps (from snow only) and have a hoot! You can be assured you'll stay off avalanche-prone slopes. Getting killed can really ruin your day! We can help you avoid that possibility by identifying danger areas and suggesting safer but exciting alternatives. Just ask! Cool!

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Dress Warmly - Keep insulation between you and the weather.
Stay Dry - Moisture robs your body of heat.

Wear Wool or Synthetics like polypropylene - These are highly 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.

AVAILANCE DANGER

Group size limits are not imposed. Leaders of large groups are encouraged to call the park for advice on avoiding those weekends when many other groups are expected.

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Nisqually to Paradise

1. Longmire

2. Narada Falls

3. Paradise

Program & Activity Guide for Winter 1996-97
Snowdrift
Mount Rainier National Park

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24-Hour Information: (360) 569-2211     TDD: (360) 569-2177
Emergencies: 911