Welcome to one of the snowiest places on Earth! The wildflower meadows of summer have given way to a winter wonderland. We've designed this edition of the Tahoma News to help you have a safe and enjoyable visit. See a ranger for more information.

Before you enjoy the SNOW here's what YOU should know!

Dress Warmly and Stay Dry
Cold temperatures, wet snow, and wind can easily rob you of body heat. To avoid hypothermia and frostbite, dress warmly and stay dry. Wear layers of wool or synthetics like pile and polypropylene under a waterproof shell. Avoid exposure to wind. Snack frequently, stay hydrated, and take warm-up breaks indoors.

Beware of Avalanches
Snow avalanches are common in winter. The greatest danger to you is an avalanche that you trigger by skiing, snowboarding, or climbing in avalanche terrain.

Learn more about safe travel in avalanche country.

Obey Traction Requirements
The road ahead is snowpack or icy and drivers can expect some difficulty. Your vehicle must have tire chains (link, cable, or plastic) on the drive wheels. AWD and 4WD vehicles may proceed without chains if they have snow tires on all four wheels.

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The road ahead has patches of snow covering the road surface. Your vehicle should have approved all-season tires, snow tires, or chains on the drive wheels. Approved traction tires are designated by "M-S" or "M+S".

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Mount Rainier offers excellent opportunities for exploration and adventure, but sometimes people get lost or injured. Reduce your risk by following these simple guidelines:

Prepare and Take Care

Beware
It's very easy to get lost or fall when the weather turns bad or thick fog blankets your route; the trail is covered with snow; you don't have a map, compass, and altimeter, know where you are, and how to get out; and/or you don't know how to assess avalanche hazard and avoid the danger.

Prepare
When hiking, climbing, skiing, or snowboarding, bring the "10 Essentials" listed above and know how to use them. In addition, obtain compass bearings to Camp Muir or other off-trail destinations; carry an altimeter; wear rain- and wind-resistant clothing; and take a whistle, a "space blanket," and a snow shovel.

Take Care
Tell someone your travel plans so they can notify the park if you fail to return. Do not travel alone or in poor visibility.

If you are not truly knowledgeable and prepared, or if the weather is questionable, don't push your luck!

Avalanche Level Descriptions
Slopes between 30 and 45 degrees pose the greatest avalanche danger.

Low: Generally stable snow. Travel is usually safe.

Moderate: Human-triggered avalanches possible.

Considerable: Human triggered avalanches probable.

High: Natural and human-triggered avalanches likely.


Confine travel to low angle terrain well away from avalanche path runouts.

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Welcome to Mount Rainier in winter, a truly amazing season to experience the Cascades. This is the time when the great fire-mountains recharge its store of snow to feed the rivers, creeks, and springs so important to the salmon of the Pacific Northwest. Snow is one of the greatest resources in mountain country because it melts slowly over the spring and summer, bringing water when we need it the most, for fish, for recreation, for power, for farming, and for drinking.

Last winter was a season of records. Mount Baker, managed by the U.S. Forest Service, surpassed our previous world record of 1122 inches of snow set at Paradise in the winter of 1971-72. Our accumulation of 1032 inches at Paradise during the winter of 1998-99 was still substantial. Maybe this winter we will recapture the title!

Snow is wonderful stuff as long as you don’t have to plow or shovel it. We do both, a lot of both. Long before you reach the park for a day of cross-country skiing or snowplay, our employees have been working for hours, making the park as safe as we can for your enjoyment. The rest of the safety responsibility is up to you. Snowplay, winter climbing, winter camping, and backcountry skiing are all great ways to experience Mount Rainier. The best piece of equipment you can bring is a healthy understanding of backcountry survival in snow country. If you are new to it, talk with one of our rangers and we will be glad to help you learn how to safely enjoy this great park in winter.

Jonathan B. Jarvis
Superintendent

Geologic Hazards

Recent research has improved our understanding of this active volcano. Although eruptive events are usually preceded by an increase in earthquake activity, other geologic hazards such as mudflows (also known as lahars), glacial outburst floods, or rockfall can occur without 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.

All river valleys in the park are vulnerable to geologic hazards. While most people consider the danger to be relatively low, YOU must decide if you will assume the personal risk of visiting and staying overnight in these potentially dangerous locations.

If you are near a river and notice a rapid rise in water level or hear a roaring sound coming from upvalley—often described as sounding similar to a fast-moving freight train—move quickly to higher ground! A location 150 feet or more above river level should be safe.

Detailed information is available from scientists at the U.S.G.S. Cascades Volcano Observatory, 5400 MacArthur Blvd., Vancouver, WA 98661.
Website: http://vulcan.wr.usgs.gov/

Your Fees at Work

Your fees at work are playing a vital role in fulfilling Mount Rainier National Park’s mission to protect park resources and to provide for visitor enjoyment. Ask as you travel around the park, look for signs of your fees at work!

Mount Rainier National Park is part of the Congressionally-authorized Recreation Fee Demonstration Program. The program allows federal land management agencies to increase and retain entrance and user fees. Eighty percent of the fees at Mount Rainier are kept in the park, while twenty percent are made available to other parks in need.

Current "Fee Demo" projects include:
- Completion of the Wonderland Trail
- Upgrading sewage treatment facilities
- Rehabilitating trails at the Grove of the Patriarchs and Reflection Lakes
- Upgrading interpretive exhibits
- Rehabilitating campgrounds

Projects that have been approved for future funding include:
- Replacement of the White River Entrance Station
- Repair of heavily used trails
- Creation of an education center
- Road chip and seal
- Toilet replacement at Sunrise, Tipsoo Lake, and the Grove of the Patriarchs.

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User fees funded new picnic tables at Ohanapecoh Campground.
Winter Recreation

Visitor Services & Activities, Winter 2000

Snowplay Area

Sliding and sledding is permitted only in the designated Snowplay Area, located immediately north of the upper parking lot at Paradise. Runs are constructed when there's 6' of settled snow on the ground. Because of the high potential for personal injury and frequency of accidents, no other area of the park is ever open to sliding (except skiing and snowshoeing). Serious injuries have occurred elsewhere when people have mistakenly slid over waterfalls, into trees, down slopes that were too steep, or broken through thin snow into stream gorges.

Use only inner tubes, plastic sleds, saucers, or other soft sliding devices. No wooden toboggans, runner sleds with metal edges, or other hard devices are permitted.

Compressed air is available on weekends from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Jackson Visitor Center, near the loading dock at the lower level entrance.

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, not in jeans or T-shirts. Wear a hat, gloves, and snow-sealed boots.

Rest, rewar, drink, and snack frequently. Take a warm-up break at the Jackson Visitor Center (open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends & holidays) before your hands, noses, or ears feel numb.

The Snowplay Area closes by 4:30 p.m. nightly.

Car Camping

Car camping in winter is permitted only in the Sunshine Point Campground, located 0.25 mile east of the Nisqually Entrance (SW corner of park). The campground has 18 sites. The camping fee is $10 per night. Camping in vehicles is not allowed in parking lots or along roadways.

Snow Camping

Snow camping requires a permit and sufficient snow depth to prevent resource damage. Camp well away from buildings, marked trails, and parking lots, beyond the range of snow blowers! When you finish camping, collapse igloos and snowcaves. Fires are not permitted. Free permits are available at Longmire daily, and at Paradise on weekends only. We request that groups pre-register by calling (360) 569-2211, extension 3373 or the nearest ranger station, for information at visitor centers.

Groups of more than 12 people may camp only in the immediate Paradise area where there is access to 24-hour restrooms. Others should use blue bags to remove human waste from the park and/or deposit blue bags in a special barrel provided. DO NOT throw blue bags in trash cans!

Park in designated overnight parking areas. Do not set the parking brake on your vehicle.

Stay clear of parking lots and roads until morning plowing activities are complete. Before driving downhill, check with a ranger to be sure the road is open and that your vehicle meets the traction requirement.

Ranger-led Snowshoe Walks

Join a Park Ranger or volunteer for an exciting introduction to the art of snowshoeing and find out how plants and animals adapt to winter at Paradise. Snowshoe walks will be offered daily between Christmas and New Year’s Day, and on Saturdays and Sundays only through April 9.

General public walks are offered at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., traverse 1.2 miles, and last for about 2 hours. Walks are limited to 25 people, eight years old or older, on a first-come, first-served basis. A sign-up sheet is available at the Jackson Memorial Visitor Center information desk one hour before each walk.

Organized groups (up to 25 people) may reserve snowshoe walks. These walks begin at 12:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. For more information, inquire at the Longmire Museum or Jackson Visitor Center information desk, or call (360) 569-2211 ext. 3314.

The park can loan snowshoes for the walks for a $1.00 (per pair) donation to defray the cost of snowshoe maintenance and replacement, or you may join a walk for free using your own snowshoes. Don’t forget hats, mittens, suitable boots (you will sink into the snow even with snowshoes on), sunscreen, and sunglasses!

Climbing and Backpacking

Backpackers and snow campers must obtain a Wilderness Permit. Anyone who plans to climb above 10,000 feet or travel onto glaciers must obtain a Climbing Permit. Rangers issue permits from the Longmire Museum on weekdays and at Paradise on weekends. Permits are also available by self-registration at the Wilkeson Ranger Station and at the winter closure of SR410 near Crystal Mountain. For information about guided climbs led by Rainier Mountaineering, Inc., call (253) 627-6242.

Permits are required for all overnight stays at the wilderness and for travel above 10,000' and/or on glaciers.

This is Mountain Lion Country!

Mountain lions, also called cougars or pumas, are reasonably common but rarely observed at Mount Rainier National Park. Consummate hunters, they prey primarily on black-tailed mule deer and elk calves in the western Cascades. Lions are quite large and distinctly cat-like in appearance, with a very long tail. From nose to base of tail an adult male may measure 50", and its tail may be 36" long. Mountain lions generally have gray to reddish-fur.

No lion-caused human injuries have occurred at Mount Rainier, although sightings and encounters have increased in recent years. Powerful hunters, lions can pose a threat to people, especially when just learning to hunt or when protecting their young. As humans have moved into relatively undeveloped rural areas in the past few decades, lion attacks have become more frequent. However, attacks on humans by mountain lions are still rare. It's very unlikely you'll see a mountain lion while you're here. If you do, remember:

Children and lone adults are most at risk:

• Don't hike alone.
• Keep children close to you.
• Running or jogging puts you at higher risk.

IF YOU MEET A MOUNTAIN LION:

• DON'T RUN! Stand still and stand together with your companions. Face the lion.
• Pick up and hold small children immediately.
• Stand upright and try to make yourself appear larger.
• Shout!
• If attacked, fight back aggressively.

Please report all sightings of mountain lions as soon as possible to the nearest ranger station, visitor center, or park headquarters at (360) 569-2211, extension 3373 or extension 2334.

Skiing, Snowshoeing, & Snowboarding

Before starting out for the day, check the weather forecast and determine the avalanche hazard. Avalanche information, a current weather forecast, and winter maps that show marked trails and popular unmapped routes are available from visitor centers.

Snowmobiles

A limited number of unplowed roads are designated for snowmobile use. Obtain maps and information at visitor centers.

Never ski or slide on plowed roads or parking lots. Whether the road is open or closed, snowplows may be working nearby.
Facilities & Services

WINTER HOURS

Visitor Centers

Longmire Museum (Longmire)
Tel. 360-569-2211 ext. 3514
Information, permits, exhibits, book sales.
Daily: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Jackson Visitor Center (Paradise)
Tel. 360-569-2211 ext. 2328
Information, permits, exhibits, movies, book sales, food service, gifts, showers.
Sat., Sun., and Holidays only: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Food service & gift shop: 11 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Food & Lodging

For lodging reservations in the park call Mount Rainier Guest Services at 360-569-2275.

National Park Inn (Longmire)
Lodging and dining. Open year-round.
Front desk: 7 a.m. - 10 p.m. daily
Restaurant: 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. Sun-Thurs.
7 a.m. - 8 p.m. Fri, Sat, & holidays.
National Park Inn Post Office (Longmire)
Open year-round. Closed Sundays and Holidays.
Monday - Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday: 8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

General Store (Longmire)
Open year-round. Groceries, gifts, firewood. Ski & snowshoe rentals & tire chain purchases are available through early April.
10 a.m. - 5 p.m. daily
Jackson Visitor Center (Paradise)
Grill & Gift Shop:
11 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. weekends & holidays
Open daily beginning in early May.
Showers: Open during building hours, located in the basement.

Gasoline, lodging, dining, and other services are available in local communities. A list of these services is available at park visitor centers and on the park's web site: www.nps.gov/mora. Religious services are available in the park and in local communities.

Waste处置

Mount Rainier National Park has been involved in recycling since the late 1960s. Today, we recycle aluminum cans, plastic (nos. 1 and 2), 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 located throughout the park.

Volunteers!

Thank You Volunteers!

From those of us who recognize both the value of your time and the value of Mount Rainier National Park, a heartfelt THANK YOU to each of the 833 volunteers who contributed a total 56,659 hours to Mount Rainier in 1999.

For information about volunteering at Mount Rainier, contact:
Volunteer Coordinator
Mount Rainier National Park
Tahoe Woods Star Route
Ashford, WA 98304
Tel. (360) 569-2211 ext. 2304

Park Planning

Planning for the future of Mount Rainier National Park is a monumental task and responsibility that is shared by park managers and the public alike. You may have already attended public meetings or seen newsletters about the planning process in which Mount Rainier is currently engaged. When completed, the product of this process, a General Management Plan (GMP) for Mount Rainier National Park, will outline a broad philosophical approach to managing the park and specify actions that are needed to reach identified goals as we move into the next century.

To be placed on the mailing list for future newsletters, please contact:
Superintendent
Mount Rainier National Park
Tahoe Woods Star Route
Ashford, WA 98304
Tel. (360) 569-2211 ext. 2301
E-mail: mora_sup@moria.gov

What do you get for someone who has everything?
How about 235,625 acres of Wilderness?

Just $30 buys the perfect gift for those hard to shop for people.

The Mount Rainier Annual Pass

Valid for one year from the date of purchase. Admits one non-passenger and two passengers in a single, non-commercial vehicle. Non-transferable. Non-refundable. Not valid for camping fees.

Call (360) 569-2211 ext. 2390 or stop by the Nisqually Entrance Station. 6 miles east of Ashford, Washington.

Volunteer Coordinator
Mount Rainier National Park
Tahoe Woods Star Route
Ashford, WA 98304
Tel. 360-569-2211 ext. 3320

Look for donation boxes and contribution envelopes at park visitor centers.