Winter Facilities and Roads

Winter is the perfect time to explore historic Longmire with its rustic buildings draped in snow, trail access, and, on clear days, views of the mountain. Activities and information are available at the Longmire Information Center. The National Park Inn offers meals, lodging, and a general store.

Stop by the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise on weekends and holidays to learn about the mountain’s winter ecology by taking a snowshoe walk with a ranger and viewing the exhibits and film. Warm up in the visitor center while enjoying the snow view from the great hall, having lunch, or browsing in the gift shop. Winter activities at Paradise include sliding, cross-country skiing, winter camping, and snowboarding. See the Facility Hours on page 4 for snowshoe and ski rental locations inside the park.

Most of Mount Rainier’s roads are snowed in and closed to vehicle access during winter. The road from Nisqually Entrance to Longmire is open year-round, but may close during extreme weather.

This winter the park is experimenting with day use hours at Paradise. In a significantly reduced and uncertain budget environment, this is an attempt to meet the park’s goal to provide daily, safe winter access to Paradise while managing staffing costs. Rangers and snow plow operators evaluate road, weather, avalanche, and staffing conditions each morning before making a decision on whether it is safe to open the gate to Paradise.

The Longmire to Paradise road hours are 9:00 am - 5:00 pm daily, under ideal conditions. The road may close early or remain closed the entire day due to avalanche danger, severe weather, or with a shortage of the necessary staffing to maintain safe access. Visitors will need to be heading down the hill from Paradise by 4:30 pm to clear the Longmire gate by its 5:00 pm closure. The uphill gate at Longmire closes at 4:00 pm.

While you are waiting for the Longmire gate to open, please park in the parking lot behind the National Park Inn, not in a traffic lane.

The Carbon River Road is closed to vehicles just past the entrance parking lot, but is open to pedestrians and bicycles.

See page 4 for winter driving safety tips and traction requirement information.

Winter on the Mountain: Are YOU Ready?

As one of the snowiest places on Earth, Mount Rainier National Park boasts a long season for outstanding winter recreational activities in a true wilderness setting. History has shown that snow, wind, and low visibility conditions resulting from winter storms significantly increase visitor mishaps and serious accidents in the backcountry. Many winter hikers and snowshoers are not prepared for the route-finding challenges or winter weather conditions that can occur at any time. Conditions change rapidly during the day, and freezing temperatures, wet snow, and high winds can be encountered at any time during your hike. This has left many day and overnight hikers, skiers, and snowboarders exposed and suddenly thrust into life-threatening situations due to weather resulting in injuries and fatalities.

Be aware that mountain weather changes rapidly—a pleasant outing can quickly be transformed into a survival ordeal. Make sure you are aware of weather forecasts for the area, and heed any cautions or warnings. Navigation in storm conditions can be extremely difficult. If you are ascending and clouds or fog start rolling in, turn around and head back to the trailhead. If that’s not possible, stop moving, dig in, and wait for better weather. Prepare for the fact that daylight hours are short in winter; you will have less time to get out to your destination and to return. Always carry a flashlight or headlamp, and extra batteries. Having proper gear (adequate boots, ice axe, the winter ten essentials, etc.) is a must.

Be prepared for route-finding conditions. Trails may be snow-free at lower elevations but anticipate and prepare for snow at higher elevations. If you plan on retracing your route back to the trailhead note important landmarks and consider using wands on snow-covered trails. Always carry a good map and compass and actively use them on snow-covered trails. If the trail becomes difficult to follow, stop and find where you are on the map before continuing. Also consider supplementing your map and compass with an external antenna GPS for best coverage beneath a forest canopy. Again, it is extremely important that you know how to use these tools.

Most importantly, plan your route ahead of time, have a backup plan, and never travel alone. If at any point you begin to feel uncomfortable or unprepared, turn around, get out safely, and call it a day. Mount Rainier will be waiting for you on your next trip.
Explore, Enjoy, and Stay Safe

Mount Rainier National Park was established in 1899 to preserve the natural and cultural resources in this area and to provide for public benefit and enjoyment. This information has been prepared to help you stay safe and protect the park during your visit:

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

Dress Warmly & Stay Dry
Cold temperatures, wet snow, and wind can easily rob you of body heat. 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, drink lots of water, and take warm-up breaks indoors.

Pay attention to the weather
It's easy to get lost or fall when the weather turns bad. The trail can quickly cover with snow, or thick fog can blanket your route. You need to know where you are and how to get to safety. You also need to know how to assess avalanche hazards to minimize potential risk.

Prepare
When hiking, climbing, skiing, or snowboarding, bring the “Winter 10 Essentials” 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!

Camping
Camp in designated campsites only. Sleeping in vehicles outside of campgrounds is not permitted.

Bikes in the Park
Bicycle only on roads, not on trails.

Fires in the Park
Make fires only in a fire grill. Accessible lodging is available inside the park and in local communities. In the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise, the audiovisual programs are captioned; assistant listening devices are available for the park film; an audio described tour of the exhibits is available, and the building and exhibits are accessible by wheelchair. The Kautz Creek Boardwalk Nature Trail is accessible in summer when snow-free. Two accessible trails lead to the base of the Paradise meadows, and a portion of the trails at Paradise are accessible with help when snow-free. TDD: (360) 569-2177.

Winter Wildlife
The snows of winter concentrate wildlife where life is easier—where shallow snow provides easier travel and access to food. Parking areas and roadways are efficient travel corridors for deer and foxes, and deer may find the most available forage along roadways. Many visitors mistakenly think that feeding the animals helps them through the winter months. But this brings wildlife closer to roads and people, where they can be injured or killed by vehicles. The feeding of wildlife poses a threat to wildlife by increasing the risk of disease transmission (among themselves and to you), unnaturally increasing populations which may prey on other species (e.g. jays feed on eggs and nestlings of other songbirds), and causing digestive problems (i.e. their systems are adapted to natural foods, not cheese crackers).

Keep your food away from wildlife. Pick up food particles and don’t leave your lunch on your bumber—a fox or a jay will find it. And lastly, feeding wildlife is illegal and you may be fined.

Become A Mount Rainier Steward
Turn your passion for Mount Rainier into action that will benefit visitors today and tomorrow!

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Consider
Joining our team as a park volunteer. Your contribution of time and energy will protect the magnificent natural and cultural areas entrusted to us, and you’ll go home with a sense of pride at having participated in something worthwhile. Volunteer in the park for a day, a summer, or on weekends as your schedule permits. Learn more at www.nps.gov/mora/supportyourpark/volunteer.htm.

Washington’s National Park Fund
Serves as the park’s official philanthropic partner. Founded by Governor Daniel Evans in 1993, the fund, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, accepts charitable gifts that are then given back to the park for projects focusing on these four main areas:

- Improving Visitors’ Experiences by maintaining trails, supporting the park’s Search and Rescue program, and improving campgrounds.
- Bringing more Youth and Families—many of whom might otherwise never visit—into the park.
- Funding necessary Science and Research on glaciers, rivers, flora, and fauna.
- Strengthening Mount Rainier’s Volunteerism and Stewardship activities. The Fund provides $50,000 each year so the park can support nearly 2,000 volunteers whose efforts are valued at $1.8 million!

Whether you adopt a trail mile, include Mount Rainier in your will, drop a few coins in the donation boxes at Mount Rainier’s visitor centers, or purchase a Washington State license plate for your vehicle, they all add up and have a major impact on this beloved place. Please consider giving back to Mount Rainier National Park through Washington’s National Park Fund.

For more information please go to the Fund’s website: www.wnpf.org or email Washington’s National Park Fund at fund@wnpf.org.

Mount Rainier National Park
Superintendent Randy King
Mailing Address
55210 238th Avenue East
Ashford, WA 98304
E-mail MORAInfo@nps.gov

Park Headquarters
(360) 569-2211
(360) 569-2177 TDD

Lost and Found
(360) 569-6608

Park Websites
Mount Rainier National Park
www.nps.gov/mora
North Coast and Cascades Science & Learning Network
http://nwparksscience.org/

Official Park Social Media Sites
facebook.com/MountRainierNPS
lickr.com/MountRainierNPS
v.twitter.com/MountRainierNPS
ountainriemips.tumblr.com/
youtube.com/MountRainierNPS

Mount Rainier National Park
Explore, Enjoy, and Stay Safe

NOTICE: Marijuana is Illegal in Mount Rainier National Park
While limited recreational use of marijuana is now legal in Washington State, possession of any amount of marijuana or other illegal drugs remains illegal in Mount Rainier National Park and all federal lands.

Fires
The use of firearms is prohibited within Mount Rainier National Park. Also, federal law prohibits firearms in certain facilities in this park; those places have signs at public entrances. People who can legally possess firearms under federal, Washington State, and local laws may possess them in the park.

Mount Rainier: An Active Volcano
Active steam vents, periodic earth tremors, and historic 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. Other geologic hazards, however, can occur with little warning. These include debris flows and rockfalls.

The more time you spend in an area with 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 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 200 feet or more above river level should be safe.

Detailed information is available at park visitor centers or from scientists at the U.S.G.S. Cascades Volcano Observatory, 1300 SE Cardinal Court, Building 10, Suite 100, Vancouver, WA 98661, vulcan.wr.usgs.gov.

Accessibility
Most comfort stations, visitor centers, picnic areas, and designated campsites are accessible or accessible with help by wheelchair. Accessible lodging is available inside the park and in local communities. In the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise, the audiovisual programs are captioned; assistant listening devices are available for the park film; an audio described tour of the exhibits is available, and the building and exhibits are accessible by wheelchair. The Kautz Creek Boardwalk Nature Trail is accessible in summer when snow-free. Two accessible trails lead to the base of the Paradise meadows, and a portion of the trails at Paradise are accessible with help when snow-free. TDD: (360) 569-2177.

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Tax ID#: 01-0869799.
Snow Camping

Snow camping requires a permit and sufficient snow depth to prevent resource damage. Camp in designated areas well away from buildings, marked trails, and parking lots. When you finish camping, collapse igloos and snow caves to keep others from falling in. Fires are not permitted. Free permits are available at the Longmire Information Center daily and at Paradise on weekends and holidays.

The park is open for overnight winter camping with a valid permit seven days a week, but the gate to the Longmire to Paradise closes nightly. Flows routinely operate on the wrong side of the road when it is closed. A sign at Paradise will indicate when the road is open and safe for downhill travel.

Groups of 13 or more and organized groups of up to 80, such as church and scout groups, are advised to pre-register at least two weeks in advance by calling (360) 569-6575. Access to 24-hour restrooms and an emergency phone are available in the upper parking lot near the Guide House. Others should use “blue bags” to remove human waste from the park and/or deposit blue bags in the special barrel provided. The blue bag barrel is located in the tunnel to the Paradise upper parking lot restroom. Do NOT throw blue bags in trash cans!

Proper food storage is required. Hang your food, garbage, and scented items or secure in approved hard-sided containers. Hard-sided containers are required for camping at Paradise, Reflection Lakes, Tatoosh, and Mazama. Wildlife-resistant food containers are available for loan—ask a ranger when you get your permit. Approved containers for winter camping at Paradise are five-gallon plastic buckets with tight-fitting lids, or manufactured wildlife resistant food containers.

Overnight parking is allowed in designated areas only. Do not set your parking brake; it may freeze. Stay clear of parking lots and roads until morning snowplowing activities are complete. Before driving downhill, check with a ranger or listen to Radio 1610-AM Paradise, 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. Discuss the ecology of the Paradise area during these two hour guided walks.

Snowshoes are offered on weekends and holidays through the winter permitting. Public snowshoe walks are offered at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm, and traverse 1.8 miles. 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 Visitor Center information desk one hour before each walk (all those attending must be present for sign-up).

Snowshoes for the ranger-led walks are provided by the park. A $5.00 donation from each snowshoe walk participant helps the park provide snowshoe walks, and repair and replace snowshoes. Don’t forget sunscreen, sunglasses, layers of warm clothes, hats, mittens, and suitable boots. You will sink into the snow even with snowshoes on.

Organized groups (up to 25 people) may reserve snowshoe walks. These walks begin at 2:00 pm on Saturdays and Sundays. For more information, inquire at the Longmire Information Center, the Jackson Visitor Center, or call (360) 569-6575. The park also offers snowshoe walks to school groups by reservation only. Call (360) 569-6592 for school group reservations.

Snow Play Area

Sliding and sledding are permitted only in the designated Snow Play Area (weekends & holidays).

Snow play is permitted because of the high potential for personal injury and frequency of accidents, no other area of the park is open to public sliding. Because of the high potential for personal injury and frequency of accidents, snow play is permitted. People have mistakenly slid over waterfalls, into trees, and snow-sealed boots. Take a warm-up break at the Longmire Information Center daily and at Paradise on weekends and holidays.

Snow play is permitted when the road is open or closed, snowplows may be working nearby. Never ski, slide, or camp on plowed roadways or parking lots! Whether the road is open or closed, snowplows may be working nearby.

Skiing, Snowshoeing, & Snowboarding

Before starting out for the day, check the weather forecast and determine the avalanche hazard. Avalanche information, a weather forecast, and winter maps that show marked trails and popular unmarked routes are available from the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise (weekends and holidays) and the Longmire Information Center (daily).

In early winter or in years of low snowfall, trees and other plants are damaged by skiers and snowboarders when snow depth is not sufficient to protect vegetation. Ski and snowboard only in those areas where the snow is deep enough to cover and protect vegetation. There should be at least five feet of snow before building jumps.
**PARADISE OVERNIGHT PARKING AREAS**

- **RADIO 1610-AM PARADISE FOR ROAD UPDATES AND CLOSURE INFORMATION**

**Lower Lot**
- Overnight Parking
- By backcountry permit only
- Park head-in to head
- To Longmire 12 mi.

**Jackson Visitor Center**
- (Open weekends & holidays in winter)
- Climbing self-registration kiosk

**Upper Lot**
- Overnight Parking
- Park head-in to bank

**Paradise Inn**
- (Closed in winter)

**Upper Parking Lot**
- Day use parking

**Overnight parking** in designated areas only. First come, first served.

**Day visitors**, please do not park in overnight parking.

**For your safety**, no camping in parking lots.

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**Follow Traction Requirements**

As road and weather conditions change throughout the day, traction requirements may also change. Tire chain requirement updates are posted on Twitter at www.twitter.com/MountRainierNPS. Listen to Radio 1610-AM at Paradise for updates to changing road information and requirements.

All vehicles are required to carry tire chains** when driving in the park in winter and spring. Vehicles over 10,000 pounds must carry a second set of chains and chain up whenever traction tires or chains are required. Traction tires or chains may be required at anytime in winter. Obey the posted traction requirement:

- The road ahead has patches of snow and/or ice. Your vehicle should have approved all-season tires, snow tires, or chains** on the drive wheels. Approved traction tires are designated by “M-S”, “M/S”, “-”, “-”, or “All Season” on the sidewall of the tires.

All vehicles must have chains** on the drive wheels including AWD and 4WD.

- **AutoSocks** are allowed for passenger vehicles under 10,000 pounds as an alternative traction device.

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**Winter Driving Safety Tips**

- Beware of poor visibility and reduced traction.
- Reduce your speed.
- Allow extra distance between vehicles.
- Stay well back when following plows.
- Use low gears, especially when driving downhill.
- Never stop or park in a traffic lane. Your life may depend on it.
- If your RWD vehicle skids: reduce gas, steer where you want to go.
- If your FWD vehicle skids: accelerate slightly and steer where you want to go.
- Brake sparingly to avoid skidding by locking your brakes.
- Keep your headlights on for visibility.
- Drive in the appropriate lane for your direction of travel. Avoid the center line.
- Ensure that your chains fit your tires and practice installing them before you need them.
- Stop in a chain-up area, pullout, or parking lot to install, adjust, or remove tire chains.
- When parking, avoid setting your emergency brake. It may freeze.
- Shady areas and bridge surfaces can be treacherously icy even when other sections of roadway are not.
- Stay alert, use caution, anticipate hazards, and slow down.

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**Become a Citizen Ranger!**

Quests are self-guiding learning adventures available at the Longmire Information Center and the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise. Begin your Quest to become a Citizen Ranger. Complete four Quests to receive the Citizen Ranger patch and certificate.

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**Park Partners**

Who’s responsible for protecting Mount Rainier National Park? Everyone!

Here are some groups that deserve special thanks.

- Mount Rainier National Park Volunteers: www.nps.gov/mora/supportourpark/volunteer.htm
- Discover Your Northwest: www.discovernw.org
- Washington’s National Park Fund: www.wnpf.org
- Student Conservation Association: www.thesca.org
- Washington Trails Association: www.wta.org

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**Food & Lodging**

For in-park lodging reservations, call Mount Rainier Guest Services at (360) 569-2275 or go to www.mrnpa.org.

- **National Park Inn at Longmire**
  - Closed January 1
  - Breakfast 7:00 am - 11:00 am
  - Lunch 11:30 am - 4:30 pm
  - Dinner 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
  - The dining room is open for dinner until 8:00 pm on Fridays, Saturdays, and holidays.

- **Paradise Inn**
  - Closed for the season

- **Paradise Camp Deli and Gift Shop**
  - **Closed for the Season**

- **Groceries, gifts, firewood, ski and snowshoe rentals and tire chain purchases are available in winter.**

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**2016 National Park Service Centennial**

National park sites across the country are gearing up for the Centennial of the National Park Service in 2016. Are you ready to join in the celebration?

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- Park head-in to bank

**Paradise Inn**
- (Closed in winter)

**Upper Parking Lot**
- Day use parking

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**Visitor Facility Hours**

- **Longmire Visitor Services**
  - (360) 569-6575
  - Information, exhibits, book sales, climbing and backcountry permits
  - 9:00 am - 4:30 pm daily
  - Closed January 1

- **Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise**
  - (360) 569-6571
  - Information, exhibits, movies, book sales, gifts, climbing and backcountry permits. Climbing permit self-registration is available at the Paradise Ranger Station.
  - 10:00 am - 4:15 pm weekends and holidays

- **Carbon River Ranger Station**
  - Call for hours
  - (360) 829-9639
  - Wilderness camping & northside climbing permits (Including Ipsut Creek Campground)

**All other visitor and information centers are closed for the season.**

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**GAS IS NOT AVAILABLE IN THE PARK**